

Posing & Ego

I got this comment from an unenlightened reader of *What is Enlightenment Magazine* who read my write up in the January 2008 issue: *"I must admit to being somewhat taken aback and a little perplexed by Andrew Cohen's interview with Frank Zane. On the one hand I take my hat off to anyone who achieves such exceptional feats of personal accomplishment as to be crowned Mr. Olympia, no less than three times! Mr. Zane, it seems, is also a pretty evolved individual on several other scales of spiritual awareness. However, has he not been driven most of his life by an extraordinary ego need to be #1? A few years ago, I remember having the pleasure of meeting Jack LaLanne at a social gathering in LA and marveling at his great shape and vigor for a man of his age, yet also thinking to myself that without the ego's help he would almost certainly not have been able to achieve his many extraordinary physical feats. Is there not a great paradox here for all of us interested in the mysteries underlying human motivation and our quest for fame?"*



The above photo shows Gold's Gym prior to the 1970 London Mr. Universe Contest where Draper, Serge Jacobs, and Arnold critique my physique and posing. It's not like I loved what I saw when posing. Quite

the contrary, I didn't like what I saw. This is what pushed me to strive for more development. And the ego is entirely involved. It was all about me separate from everyone else. I saw the external world as one big competitive arena. I focused intently on pushing the body toward perfection.

In effect I was never satisfied with this ego which created the development of my body, I always wanted something more. The ego grew and grew along with the physical development and reached a point where it became cumbersome. It was symbolized by the trophy I won for Mr. World 1969 in Belgium: a 6-foot 250-pound conglomeration of marble and sterling silver. I couldn't lift it and had to leave it in Bugge, taking only the sterling silver cup with me. I left most of my ego behind. But not entirely, the ego grew right up until my last competition in 1983. After retiring it wasn't about ego anymore. I had reached the peak of my physical development as well as the peak of ego building. Now the plan became about working with others by teaching bodybuilding. Been doing that since 1980 and am growing in a different way. It's interesting helping others progress through the stages I've gone through. I can really help them because I've experienced it.

Look at the physical display as an art form. When you look into the mirror think "that is not me, it's my body." Separate from your image and judge it objectively. Look in a rear-view mirror to see your backside. What's lacking? What's further ahead in development than other parts? How are you going to even out this artistic creation?

Perfect that statue in the mirror. You are more than your body; it will obey you if you treat it right. When observing, separate from your body image. See your body as others do. You are not narcissus.

Building my body developed a strong ego. With body and ego maximized there's no need to go any further in that direction. What started as ego development has become a way of personal growth. The way out is the way through ego.

