

# Primal Principles of Prismatic Pride: A Proprioception

Dr. R. Gnanasekaran

*Assistant Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, Arul Anandar College,  
Karumathur-625514*

**Abstract:** “Vanity not only distances us from God: it makes us look ridiculous.” -Pope Francis, October 31, 2015. When we’re talking about the ego, it goes hand in hand with a strong feeling: pride. To a healthy degree, pride promotes ambition, ideas and personal success. However, if you are not careful, it will grow over your head. Rarely does anything good grow out of an inflated ego, but a veritable narcissistic disorder is likely to do so. Then excessive pride makes us believe that success is actually our own birth or that we are the masters of the universe. And the greater the fame and the longer the applause, the more our pride in accomplishments becomes a dangerous attitude and a morbid trait. The term pride comes from the Middle English ‘prede’, from late Old English ‘pryto’, Kentish ‘prede’, Mercian ‘pride’ “unreasonable self-esteem, especially as one of the deadly sins; haughtiness, overbearing treatment of others; pomp, love of display”. Pride is a fundamental emotion that is innate, not instilled in us. It is part of our self-awareness, but also part of the social need for belonging and respect. This article is about the spectacle of Pride. Almost all human beings have this, but the magnitude alone decides whether it is healthy or not. In this article, we will find out why one is prideful and what dire moments this entails.

**Index Terms:** Pride, Vanity, Conceit, Hubris, Arrogance, Aggressiveness, Overconfidence, Haughtiness, Competition.

## INTRODUCTION

“In general, pride is at the bottom of all great mistakes.” -John Ruskin, *Modern Painters* (1856), Volume IV, part V, chapter III, section 22.

The feeling is also the same internationally and is expressed in all cultures through the same kind of gestures, such as an upright posture. It often has a negative aftertaste. You have to differentiate a little here. Many renowned psychologists established years ago that pride has a Janus face. It certainly knows two different forms - a healthy and socially recognized form and the unhealthy to neurotic pride.

## HEALTHY PRIDE

Healthy pride (also called authentic pride ) and satisfaction (with oneself) often form a symbiosis. If you are proud of something, it is usually what you have achieved – combined with the certainty that this is something special and worthy of recognition. Behind this pride, there is usually a great effort, perhaps also deprivation, which in the end led to the desired goal that also corresponds to one’s values. As a result, those affected can be proud of their work and themselves – as well as of their talents or the ability to achieve such successes again and again.

## UNHEALTHY PRIDE

“As if true pride  
Were not also humble!”

-Robert Browning, *In an Album*.

Unhealthy pride (also overbearing pride or false pride ) is mostly used synonymously with arrogance and vanity, with haughtiness and hubris. If he is injured, those affected tend to be outraged and defiant, even aggressive defensive actions or even revenge and think about the feeling of later satisfaction. Neurotic pride, in turn, can lead to people being proud of something they didn’t create themselves or of having made particularly destructive achievements - such as haters, trolls and con artists who pride themselves on having ripped off as many people as possible to have.

So, on the one hand, healthy pride drives people to bring out the best in themselves. He rewards them as much as he inspires them. Even in ambition, there is always a good portion of pride. But it also seduces people into pride, arrogance and lust. Too much power alongside pride is not good for people: first, it catapulted them out of bliss, and then it instigated numerous wars and vendettas.

“Vanity and pride are different things, though the words are often used synonymously. A person may be proud without being vain. Pride relates more to our opinion of ourselves, vanity to what we would have

others think of us.” -Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, Chapter 5.

#### PRIDE VERSUS VANITY

“when we place our hope in worldly vanities, in money, in success. Then the Word of God says to us: “Why do you seek the living among the dead?”. Why are you searching there? That thing cannot give you life! Yes, perhaps it will cheer you up for a moment, for a day, for a week, for a month and then?” -Pope Francis, General Audience of 23 April 2014 in Rome (23 April 2014).

In contrast to the proud person, the vain person also wants to be admired for qualities or attributes that he does not have. The proud would like to be admired, perhaps because he has written a book; the vain expects the admiration of his fellow men because a book has been published with his name emblazoned on the cover, but which was in fact produced by an anonymous scribe or ghostwriter.

One could also say: Those who are vain want to look better than they are. The vain has a lot in common with the narcissist. Both have the gout of the fraudulent drive to make more appearances than they are. Both lead to exaggerated self-assertion and self-portrayal. Above all, the vain wants to be admired by others - because of talents that he would like to see in himself and of which he is particularly proud:

1. Physical attractiveness (no matter what)
2. Professional success (regardless of how achieved)
3. Intelligence (whatever)
4. Wealth and status symbols (no matter how real)
5. Power (to whomever)

However, the vain, neurotic ego also fluffs up when it actually knows or can do something better, but mainly uses this to improve itself over others. Such people obviously need the repeated feeling of superiority in order to distract from the actual personality disorder and a veritable inferiority complex.

#### WHAT IS THERE TO BE PROUD OF?

The Bible already condemns pride as one of the seven deadly sins. It is no longer seen quite so drastically these days. As mentioned, psychology divides it into healthy and unhealthy pride. So, it's pretty clear what to be proud of. However, opinions differ on this. Or to put it another way: what one can and cannot be proud of is also a question of social consensus. In our culture,

the following applies as far as possible: You can only be proud of something that you have actively contributed to. And it is measurable, visible or at least noticeable. If a roofer covers a house, this is immediately recognizable to everyone. As a tax-paying citizen, however, you will not attract much attention. But some traits may not be apparent to the naked eye yet have a proven impact on how you are perceived. What you can be proud of, for example:

1. That you have found an apprenticeship even without a school-leaving certificate.
2. That you can rely on your friends.
3. That you have built up a network over the years.
4. That you don't give up immediately in the event of setbacks.
5. That people rely on you and place their trust in you.
6. That you are a good mother/father and teach your children important values.

#### SELF-ASSESSMENT: DO YOU HAVE AUTHENTIC PRIDE OR PRETENTIOUS PRIDE?

What are you particularly proud of? And is that still authentic or already presumptuous? As a first suggestion, you can complete the so-called “Pride Test”. Of course, you must answer the following questions relentlessly and honestly with yourself. Give yourself one to four points for each question and please add up all the points at the end. The points stand for: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = regularly. The test has been prioritized into four major criteria. They are Ignorance, Self-aggrandizement, Reduction and Aggressiveness.

#### IGNORANCE

1. I sulk and stop saying a word when I don't get my way.
2. I don't admit mistakes.
3. I refuse outside help, preferring to do it alone. That's who I am and I won't change. The others have to accept that.
4. I'm not flexible and don't change my plans.
5. I'm stubborn and determined.
6. I have a problem with authorities and I don't like it when others want to dictate something to me.
7. I'm not receptive to advice or guidance.

### SELF-AGGRANDIZEMENT

1. I'm worried about whether I'm getting what I deserve.
2. I brag about my achievements without giving credit to others.
3. I deserve special treatment because of my status or position. I embellish the truth to get more attention. Knowing important people makes me feel important.
4. I don't recognize the needs of others, I only care about my own.
5. I draw attention to my abilities, possessions or sacrifices made.
6. I'm obsessed with the things I can do better than others.

### REDUCTION

1. Do I point out my shortcomings to appear humble?
2. I cannot accept help or gifts. That would strike me as odd or embarrassing.
3. I work till I drop. It makes me feel valuable. I go above and beyond at work for validation.
4. I try to be perfect to be able to accept myself.
5. I like to whine for pity.
6. I have to do more than others to win her affection.
7. I depend on the approval of others to increase my self-esteem.

### AGGRESSIVENESS

1. I always pick the arguments I don't like and start an argument about them.
2. I control others to do exactly what I ask of them.
3. I take a very close look to see if others don't meet my requirements so that I can point out their mistakes. I do not accept opinions that are not my own.
4. I get upset easily and lash out at those responsible.
5. I assume the worst and exude this attitude.
6. I deliberately put others down by making disparaging or contemptuous comments.
7. I justify the bad treatment of others with my derogatory or disparaging comments.

How healthy is your pride? Have you added up all the points from the self-test? Then you will find the evaluation and your result here:

- 1 to 33 points: You are a role model in your humility and modesty without lacking authentic pride - valuable traits for a leader.
- 34 to 64 points: You're well on your way to turning dread into authentic pride.
- 65 to 96 points: Thank you for your honesty! This is the first step in letting go of the pride that might seem.
- 97 to 128 points: We're sorry, but you're probably proud — and still have a lot of work to do.

### CAUSES OF EXCESSIVE PRIDE

Typical behaviours are, for example:

1. Delighting yourself with minor typos – not to correct something in a friendly way, but to document your own linguistic superiority.
2. Pose yourselves as Wikipedia and claim the monopoly on the interpretation of any technical definitions.
3. Falling into the role of the critic, who elevates himself through his know-it-all, but always remains unassailable.

Defeats in subsequent discussions or references to disproportionality are also perceived by those affected as a personality-destroying degradation. Therefore, in order to avoid demotion, they react with excessive defence, counterattacks, personal hostilities and devaluations.

Of course, you can't argue objectively with someone like that. Maybe you shouldn't. Psychology has different approaches to explain why some people behave the way they do:

1. The perception is different. The self-image and the external image do not match. This is nothing unusual in itself, but the expression is much stronger with Pride than with others.
2. Social skills are low. There can be a number of reasons for this - be it that there is a personality disorder or a mental illness.

Not infrequently, people are only outwardly proud - in reality, self-esteem is often disturbed. This is caused by experiences in childhood: a lack of attention and recognition can lead to the person developing an extraordinarily strong urge to fill in something that was missing in the past.

#### CAREER FACTOR PRIDE: WOMEN BENEFIT

“He who is mounted on pride does not know how to sit still.” -Guigo II, *Twelve Meditations*, as translated by Edmund Colledge, OSA and James Walsh, SJ

A recent study has examined the selection and assessment of executives. According to it, women are believed to be more capable of leadership if they are proud of the successes they have achieved. If, on the other hand, they seem happy, they are said to have less willingness to lead. Negotiating better, building networks, designing career strategies - rich women don't do all of this when it comes to promotion. In doing so, the women – unfortunately – ignored the stereotypes that would play a decisive role in subconsciously assessing top personnel: Managers should be assertive, dominant and tough. But women are seen as balancing, friendly, and social. For example, recently joined employees were asked to assess the potentiality of their manager. This revealed what many have long suspected: the same behaviour by women and men in management positions is judged differently.

Men in managerial positions are still believed to be more assertive towards their employees. Surprisingly, some stereotypes towards women are even more pronounced among the women themselves - for example, if they are more willing to accept a dominant leadership style in men. In recent studies, psychologists also investigated the role that emotions play in this. Again, the subjects saw various scenarios in which men and women were sometimes happy, sometimes proud of their own achievements or showed no emotions at all. Lo and behold, those who appeared proud were immediately judged as more willing to lead. This effect was even more pronounced in women than in men.

#### 4 WARNING SIGNS THAT THE EGO IS GETTING TOO BIG

“Pryde will have a fall;

For pryde goeth before and shame commeth after.”

-John Heywood, Proverbs, Part i, Chapter x.

If pride gets too big, it inflates the ego. It can even lead to addiction. For example, egomaniacs are said to have very different characteristics: they were primarily looking for fans, not colleagues; they craved recognition and attention; like to pretend to be able to

do everything, but never get their hands dirty... For them, only short-term success counts, which puts them in the limelight in the short term - more appearances than real substance...

Of course, these are extreme forms. Not everyone tends to have such an oversized ego right away - partly due to a lack of opportunities. However, there are a few early warnings for future wind machines:

##### 1. LUST FOR GLORY

Striving for success is good. But it is unhealthy to only look for this in order to secure recognition and respect. The cause is confused with the effect here. Not infrequently, such people also envy the success of others. It becomes recognizable by the fact that they categorically denounce their ideas or projects or contradict them where possible. The fallacy behind this is a kind of zero-sum game: if others get less applause, I get all the more. nonsense!

##### 2. COMPETITIVE SPIRIT

Anyone who constantly compares themselves with others will soon fall into competitive thinking. All the others are then just competitors against whom you have to assert yourself and who have to be defeated. Every debate, every conversation, every negotiation mutates into a battle arena.

##### 3. BRAGGING

Even the most brilliant idea can be overshadowed by personal talents - if you put them in the foreground. Emphasizing one's own cleverness, however, rarely demonstrates it. And she's not particularly likeable either. Apart from that, craving for recognition acts like a drug that constantly needs higher dosages to be effective.

##### 4. DEFENSIVE

Anyone who thinks they have to constantly defend their ideas – even against constructive criticism – isolates themselves and becomes defensive sooner rather than later. The same applies to those who almost always take criticism personally and therefore immediately shoot back. Accordingly, narcissists are bad at building long-term or even reliable relationships. They constantly need new fan circles - or if they have already made it quite far: changing admirers and confirmations, be it through increasing bonuses or grateful fields of activity with a lot of fame inside.

Of course, an egomaniac would never admit to observing these very things about themselves. At least

not in public. But a bit of self-reflection in between doesn't hurt a healthy ego either...

#### MEN PANDER THEIR EGOS WITH POWERFUL ACQUAINTANCES

Can you think of yourself as more powerful just because you know someone who has power? Short answer: Yes, especially men can. There is something like an illusion of power transfer in men. Or in short: men like to pander to their egos with influential connections.

In fact, men instantly feel more powerful, more optimistic, and more confident when they feel a tenuous connection to someone with power. Women don't do that. Which definitely speaks for the realism and down-to-earthiness of women. However, the studies also showed that women generally feel more powerless than men, which in turn can be an impediment.

The decisive factor for the extent of the effect was whether the (male) subjects saw themselves in a more cooperative or more competitive relationship with their powerful counterpart. Clearly, the more cooperative the situation, the stronger the illusion of borrowed power.

#### ARROGANCE: HOW PRIDE HURTS

"Pride, where Wit fails, steps in to our defence, And fills up all the mighty void of sense."

-Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Criticism* (1709), line 209.

Unfortunately, there are always people who make you think: How can you be so arrogant? Such pronounced cases of arrogance can appear anywhere – especially at work: a colleague who thinks they always know everything; who improves the statements or work of others; puts his own actions first and is already convinced that without him the entire company would quickly descend into chaos. In short: A classic case of arrogance. Arrogance certainly doesn't make you popular, but often you don't even notice how arrogant your own behaviour can seem. The researcher explains how arrogance can hurt and gives you tips to help you appear less arrogant – He also offers an arrogance test to find out how arrogant you really are...

WHAT IS ARROGANCE?

Arrogance is first of all an ascribed quality. No one will claim to be arrogant but they do that. What is meant by this is someone who does not meet you on an equal footing, but thinks they are something better. Synonyms for arrogance are therefore also haughtiness, arrogance, vanity or conceit.

Typical behaviours of arrogance include:

1. Consider yourself special.
2. Exude excessive self-confidence.
3. Consider yourself irreplaceable.
4. Want to know everything better.
5. Ignore advice.
6. Judge and judge others.
7. Belittle the environment.
8. Demonstrate superiority.
9. Talking condescendingly about others.
10. Make others feel insecure and belittle them.

Arrogance is typically observed once an individual expresses or speaks or voices but Pride can be comprehended even when no words are articulated.

#### CAUSES: WHERE DOES ARROGANCE COME FROM?

Arrogance is lived pride, hubris, self-confidence and the open presentation of the attitude I am better. However, behind this, there is often a kind of self-protection. Behind the arrogant facade lies a fragile ego with a veritable inferiority complex: low self-esteem paired with a narcissistic insult.

Your own self-esteem should be protected by your own arrogant demeanour and the disparagement of others. One hides behind arrogance in order not to become vulnerable. But because arrogance is socially isolating, a downward spiral emerges:

- a. In order to enhance their low self-esteem, the arrogant crave attention and recognition and make themselves important.
- b. But that repels him, the environment avoids him. Instead of applause, the person concerned reaps rejection.
- c. The arrogant then increase the dose and acts up even more. A negative cycle is created.

In some cases, however, there is also an opposite effect, but with the same result: the arrogant unsettle those around him (at first) through his know-it-all attitude, which uses vehemence as a substitute for substance. But that strengthens him in his perception

and (supposed) superiority. The result: blatant hubris. Success literally goes to the head of those affected. Here, too, a negative spiral develops, which makes the haughty even more arrogant - but in this case, even more, convinced of themselves.

#### ARROGANCE TEST: ARE YOU ARROGANT?

Hand on heart: are you arrogant? Or do you suspect that you are perceived as arrogant? Then do our little self-test. You can also see which statements apply to one of your colleagues. Add up the points, and the evaluation follows at the end of the test.

1. The colleague accidentally spills coffee in the meeting - how do you react?

- I laugh and say what a funny face she made! (5 p.)
- I immediately rush to the tea kitchen next door and come back with a few kitchen towels. (1 p.)
- I look at the whole thing quietly from the table across from her - the colleagues next to her will help. (3 p.)

2. You bought an expensive new car. Do you tell?

- First I'll tell you in detail about it, why else would I make such a purchase?! (5 p.)
- When colleagues discuss the merits of certain brands, I mention it casually. (3 p.)
- No, what does my car have to do with my work? (1 p.)

3. On a scale from 1 to 10, rate how well you find yourself.

- 1 to 4. (1 p.)
- 5 to 7. (3 p.)
- 8 to 10. (5 p.)

4. What is your circle of friends like?

- I'm not the friendship type, I have loose contacts from training/study times, you never know what they might be good for. (5 p.)
- My circle of friends is fairly small but stable, with people I can rely on. (3 p.)
- I have contacts at work and in clubs, and I've also been close friends with my friends since I was a child. (1 p.)

5. Once you leave the company, then...

- is that going down the drain – only whistles work there anyway! (5 p.)
- everyone is replaceable, including me. (1 p.)

- I hope they will appreciate my efforts better. (3 p.)

6. Do you have to comment on everything?

- Rather rarely. (1 p.)
- Yes, finally an important aspect could be lost. (5 p.)
- It depends on the matter. (3 p.)

7. Has anyone ever accused you of being arrogant?

- No, not yet. (1 p.)
- Yes, more often. But that's pure envy. (5 p.)
- It happened once or twice. (3 p.)

8. An old friendship falls apart - what do you do?

- I seek dialogue and try to save what can be saved. (1 p.)
- I regret the end, but lately, the differences have become clearer. (3 p.)
- I do not care. Is her/his loss, not mine? (5 p.)

9. If you make mistakes...

- I admit them immediately. (1 p.)
- When asked about it, I admit it. (3 p.)
- What mistakes? (5 p.)

10. How do you feel about your colleagues?

- Most of them are quite ok. (3 p.)
- I get along well with everyone. (1 p.)
- Most are not at my level. (5 p.)

#### RESOLUTION TO THE ARROGANCE TEST

10 to 22 points:

Arrogance is quite foreign to you. On the contrary, you feel these braggarts were a thorn in my school days in the eye. Especially bad those who focus on the money their parents imagined and their only merit in it consisted of "daughter of" and "son of" respectively. That can cause you in some places perhaps to appear too modest. You already know: Modesty is an ornament, but you can get further without it. Therefore, when the opportunity arises, you should calmly refer to your services, otherwise, it could be that your work is not properly recognized. And that would ultimately be self-defeating. Here and there just have to do the advertising drum for yourself to be stirred, how else do you want one to justify a raise? Also, don't judge others too harshly do exactly that in the appropriate measure. As long as someone up is

proud of his own achievements and not everyone  
Small things make a big deal, that's fine.

23 to 35 points:

You seem to know your qualities, and that's good. This protects you from exploitation and gives you what you need Self-confidence in stressful or even tricky situations to appear confident. At one point or another, you come off as arrogant – that could be because you are an alert mind and sometimes react impatiently when other things are not captured immediately. A little more patience or understanding for people who tick differently would be an advantage. Your bonus: actually you know that too and depending on how you are doing on the day, it sometimes succeeds better and sometimes less good. Since you are quite reflective, you succeed with a criticism deal if you are accused of your misconduct becomes. Of course, it always depends on how something is presented, but in principle leave something to say. This will come in handy in conflict situations. You maintain friendships and social contacts if something finally breaks apart, then it was too really the worm in there.

36 and more points:

Someone can hardly do it because of sheer egomania to run. Are you simply the best? That may be true if you don't bother to see the qualities of others. And they can of course also not be discovered if by it is clear from the outset who really has a clue and who doesn't. Or when simply not being listened to when others are talking about it. Of course, that's difficult if you're busy all the time, from yourself talk. Every pause in speaking by the other person uses himself and them to praise one's own achievements instead of others entering. Of course, you can do that, but you'll shoot yourself with it to the social end. Justify yourself to a few contacts so that most people below be at your level. In reality, most flee as soon as they get to know you better. That leaves you in the end seeming quite lonely and sad. Tip: More restraint and sensitivity for it develop when something fits and when not and just honestly admire something good for others made. Still unsure if you exude arrogance or at least how it is perceived by those around you? Then you can look out for the following three warning signs. If you discover these in yourself, you run the risk of appearing arrogant:

Ignore: You're not listening properly. You ignore or brush off other opinions and stick to your point of view. And of course, your point of view is the only correct one.

Overlook: You rule out the possibility that you are wrong, as well as the possibility of making mistakes. In fact, with that flawless attitude, you no longer gain respect—you lose it.

Overfly: You no longer associate with people below your level. You simply don't have the time for that, or the desire anyway. That knowledge is just as important as prosperity – the thought never even crosses your mind.

#### RISKS AND CONSEQUENCES: ARROGANCE IS DANGEROUS

Arrogant contemporaries are not only unpopular in offices. For centuries people have had a hard time talking to arrogance. Sir Walter Raleigh had to find out that too... He was one of the most brilliant minds in the court of Elizabeth I. from England. The man wrote poems that are considered among the most beautiful of his time, he was a gifted scientist, a great seafarer, and a daring entrepreneur, he was proven to be able to lead people. He was still charming. So much so that he made it the Queen's favourite with his gifts. It was of no use to him. Eventually fell from grace and was sentenced to death. There were no advocates because Raleigh had previously made too many enemies with his perfection and arrogance. A classic example of an all-too-true proverb: Pride comes before a fall. Fortunately, the consequences of arrogance are no longer as fatal today as they were around 500 years ago. However, anyone who keeps showing others their own shortcomings through arrogant behaviour creates feelings of inferiority and a desire for revenge.

You definitely don't make friends with arrogance - neither privately nor at work. Here, in particular, an arrogant demeanour can have a lasting negative effect on the working atmosphere. The arrogance is way down the popularity scale in the office. Nobody wants to work with an arrogant colleague. Therefore, exclusion or bullying of the affected colleagues quickly occurs. The damage caused by conceit and arrogance should not be underestimated:

1. WORKING ATMOSPHERE SUFFERS

It can weigh down on the whole team if one colleague constantly acts up and dismisses the work of others as unimportant. A team quickly turns into a group of loners who only think about themselves. Instead of pulling together, we work against each other.

## 2. MOTIVATION DROPS

Anyone who no longer feels comfortable in their workplace no longer feels the drive to do their best. Only work to rule is carried out while the daily eight hours are served in the office.

## 3. PERFORMANCE DETERIORATES

The logical consequence of this is that the quality of the work also decreases. Deadlines are pushed back and more mistakes creep in due to a lack of concentration. Studies also show that those who are considered arrogant are judged worse by others and labelled as lazy underperformers - regardless of their actual performance. In addition, arrogance means that you are no longer involved in team projects and also perform poorly there.

### GETTING RID OF ARROGANCE: HOW TO APPEAR LESS ARROGANT

There is not always calculation behind an arrogant demeanour. In many situations a colleague simply has an advantage in knowledge, which he expresses in the most unfavourable way possible, thereby stepping on the toes of his office neighbours. Is the reputation of the arrogant know-it-all humility or a guide to more modest appearances and less arrogance:

#### 1. GIVE COMPLIMENTS MORE OFTEN

But be honest! Undeserved applause sounds like disguised mockery. It is important to stick to the facts and neither exaggerate nor downplay. The more specific the praise, the more believable the recognition.

#### 2. SHARE THE APPRECIATION

Allow others to be in your spotlight as well. You're much more likely to make loyal friends if you invite the instigator of your clever thought onto the stage with you.

#### 3. LISTEN TO

Knowledge is power, no question. But no one owns the truth. There is no such thing as an objective one anyway. It is also wise and tactically smarter to demonstratively allow other opinions. Ask questions about it – and feel free to admit that you don't know

the answer. After all, your enlightenment might just be an illusion.

#### 4. ADMIT MISTAKES

Nobody is perfect, everyone knows that. Still, it's one of the hardest sentences: "Sorry, you were right and I was wrong." But precisely this ability (to own up to your mistakes) is an essential leadership quality. Just like being able to laugh at yourself.

#### 5. CONSCIOUSLY INCLUDE THE ADVICE OF OTHER EXPERTS

Every person has individual strengths. Honour that. You wouldn't believe how connecting it is when you remember these talents and skills and specifically address them, motto: "Ravi, what do you say as a decision-making expert?"

#### 6. FIGHT YOUR PRIDE

It doesn't matter what you say - the others can sense whether you are really doing them a service or just want to produce yourself. So ask yourself: Why do you want to share your knowledge? Always wanting to know everything better can ultimately be an indication of insecurity.

#### 7. WATCH YOUR BODY LANGUAGE

Feel free to look at photos of yourself: Do you tend to lift your chin? A straight posture is important. But if you stick your chin forward, you seem arrogant in the truest sense of the word. The facial expressions – raised eyebrows, for example – can also make you appear arrogant. On the other hand, a more frequent smile and a facing posture appear more sympathetic to others.

### PROPER HANDLING OF ARROGANT COLLEAGUES

If you're unfortunate enough to have to work with an arrogant co-worker daily, chances are you've been annoyed by it before. With these three tips you will parry any arrogant behaviour in the future:

#### 1. KEEP CALM

No matter how annoying the guy is, don't be tempted to take rash action. Imagine the puke as a patient who has to treat his profile neurosis. Just pathetic and nothing to get upset about!

#### 2. STAY PROFESSIONAL

Remain professional – at all times. Parry arrogance with kindness, ignore blunt attacks and take the wind out of the guy's sails. Remember: often behind his behaviour is only vanity and insecurity.



### 3. EVADE

If all else fails, keep out of the way of your colleague. As a rule, such people stumble over their own naughtiness sooner rather than later. In the meantime, they are showing their size and sovereignty – and are making a career for themselves.

#### OVERCONFIDENCE: THE DANGEROUS OVERACHIEVER SYNDROME

I can do that... I know that... I'm the best... – Overconfidence is a common phenomenon. And believe it or not, chances are you're also glossing over your self-image. But where does the urge to put yourself in a better light come from? And more importantly, what impact does overconfidence have on everyday life? When self-overestimators meet, conflicts are programmed because no one wants to see that he or she is perhaps not as good as assumed. Taken to the extreme, overconfidence brings with it real dangers...

#### WHAT IS OVERCONFIDENCE?

Overconfidence is an overly positive misjudgment of one's own abilities or the assumption of one's own superiority over others. Psychologists also speak of a cognitive distortion of perception. The person concerned believes they can do more, last longer, or have greater influence than they actually do. Overconfidence is thus a close relative of arrogance. Accordingly, quite a few of those affected tend to attribute successes exclusively to themselves, while failures are attributed to the circumstances or others. There are also synonyms and technical terms for this: self-esteem earning attribution or presumptuous distortion.

#### CARELESS OVERCONFIDENCE IS AN EGO TRAP

The ego trap is not new. The phenomenon of Icarus is already described in Greek mythology: Because he was a prisoner on the island of Crete, he made an escape and flying machine out of feathers made of wax. But because he wanted to aim too high, he came too close to the sun. Consequence: The wax melted, and Icarus fell into the sea. Haughtiness comes before the event. At the same time, the myth shows that

believing in ourselves is an important part of our (survival) strategy. Without this conviction, there would be little progress, nor success. However, the border to self-overestimation is fluid.

#### OVERCONFIDENCE: IS EVERYONE REALLY THAT GOOD?

If you believe surveys, the population should only consist of the highly gifted, scanner personalities and intelligent high-flyers. In a survey of teachers, almost 95 per cent of those questioned rated their own pedagogical skills as above average. The picture is only slightly different for the students: 70 per cent consider their performance to be better than average. Overconfidence is a mass phenomenon. Whether it's an IQ test, job performance or driving talent, the majority believe they are better than the rest. Humans see themselves not only as the crown of creation but also as the one who sees King enthroned over a crowd of blind men.

#### OVERCONFIDENCE AND THE DUNNING-KRUGER EFFECT

Some say that overconfidence only increases self-confidence. But that is a short-sightedness: Real self-confidence is always based on actual abilities, which we also assess realistically. On the other hand, the self-overestimator always remains insecure inside and anticipates self-deception. Some exaggerated self-image turns out to be a cosmos of self-deception, whitewashing and self-righteousness in real life. Particularly incompetent people tend to overestimate themselves. This is what is known as the Dunning-Kruger effect.

#### THE DUNNING-KRUGER EFFECT IN 4 STAGES:

1. Incompetent people overestimate their ability,
2. They do not recognize the extent of their incompetence,
3. They do not increase their competence and
4. They underestimate the superior abilities of others.

#### PSYCHOLOGY: WHY DO WE SUGARCOAT OUR SELF-IMAGE?

The syndrome of careless overconfidence often has two causes:

## COMPETITION AND COMPETITIVE THINKING

The first reason has to do with our society. At school, at college, at work, and in sports, it is often not just about performance, but about competition. People compete with each other. Sometimes even in the neighbourhood (who has the bigger house, the newer car...?). It is anchored in our consciousness to be better, faster or smarter than others. So our brain helps us and gives our own skills a bonus to meet the high demands. We create a more beautiful self-image because it simply hurts when one's talents are average at best. For many, this is tantamount to an admission of their own inadequacy.

## SELF-EXPRESSION IS WORTH IT

The second reason for overconfidence: Because it's worth it. Those who praise their achievements to the skies can impress those around them and in many cases do quite well with it - until the bluff is blown. The cognitive bias is part of natural selection, say scientists James Fowler and Dominic Johnson from the University of California at San Diego. In your game theory experiments, you were able to show that overconfidence often prevails over realistic self-analysis. It's like a gorilla that drums on its chest to demonstrate strength and avoid an exhausting fight: overconfidence is intended to intimidate opponents in order to win the object of desire without a fight if possible. At the same time, it makes those affected more ambitious and courageous. As a result, some actually achieve more.

## DANGER OF OVERESTIMATING ONESELF: EXCESSIVELY HIGH

Despite positive side effects, overconfidence has a negative to dangerous effect in most cases. Example road traffic: A recent study has found that most drivers believe they drive better than average. Being so engrossed in one's own driving skills can quickly lead to carelessness at the wheel, daring driving manoeuvres and excessive speed because those affected believe they can control the situation. Numerous accidents are due to this.

Take the example of business: hubris is not uncommon, especially at the top of companies. Here,

too, the effects are devastating costly wrong decisions, mismanagement, fraud, infidelity, concealment, affairs, scandals, bankruptcies, bad luck and breakdowns. Power also leads to abuse of power.

“Let pride go afore, shame will follow after.” -George Chapman, *Eastward Ho* (1605), Act III, scene 1.

Do you remember Mark Hurd, CEO of the American IT group Hewlett-Packard? As a top manager, he earned around \$82,000 a day alone! In 2010, however, he had to resign from his post because of falsified expense reports. Their value at the time: was just under \$20,000.

## MANAGERS ARE PARTICULARLY AT RISK

Studies by Matthew Billett and Yiming Qian from the University of Iowa evaluated around 3,500 acquisition decisions made by more than 2,000 US CEOs between 1985 and 2002. Result: Initial successes regularly tempted the managers to overestimate themselves and the value of the company acquisition next time - with high financial damage for their company. This was often due to the proverbial loneliness at the top. Even on a small scale and in our everyday decisions, such an error in assessment can become a problem. For example, if you are sure that you have the necessary qualifications for a job and only realize afterwards that you are hopelessly overwhelmed with the tasks.

## THE EASIER THE TASK, THE GREATER THE DANGER

According to studies by Don A. Moore of Carnegie Mellon University, overconfidence is often related to the task level. Or to put it another way: When it comes to difficult tasks, we tend to underestimate our abilities. On the other hand, there is a tendency to overestimate easy and everyday tasks.

## WHO IS MORE LIKELY TO EXAGGERATE – MEN OR WOMEN?

Basically, no one is immune to overconfidence. Nevertheless, some groups can be identified that tend to have a positively distorted self-image:

## MEN

“O world, how apt the poor are to be proud!” -William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night* (c. 1601-02), Act III, scene 1, line 138.

In a comparison between the genders, it is the men who are more confident in themselves and their professional abilities and put themselves in a better light - just not always rightly so. Reason: In the male world, self-confidence, strength and success are important masculine values. If you can't do something or don't know something, you're quickly considered a loser. The tendency to overestimate oneself is, therefore, more pronounced.

#### YOUNG PEOPLE

"I do hate a proud man, as I hate the engendering of toads." -William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida* (c. 1602), Act II, scene 3, line 169.

Children and young people tend to overestimate themselves more often. This decreases with age and the associated experiences. This has to do with the fact that older people have integrated themselves into a hierarchy both privately and professionally and have found their social status. They know each other and don't have to prove anything to anyone anymore.

#### EXPERTS

"As proud as Lucifer." -Philip James Bailey, *Festus* (1813), scene A Country Town.

So-called experts regularly overestimate their abilities. Studies by neuroscientist Kevin Dunbar from the University of Toronto prove this. The more secure we feel in a certain area, the easier it is for us to fall into the trap of self-love and believe that just because we say it as the "Pontiff" of something, it's true.

#### OVERCONFIDENCE: HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT

There's a simple reason why most people have a hard time correcting their caricature and overconfidence: they don't know it. This is exactly what makes the wrong prognosis so dangerous. Because we unknowingly think we are stronger, smarter or better, sooner or later we run into problems. After all, you can do something about your overconfidence early on – and you are already doing it by reading this article.

In addition, the following three steps will help:

##### 1. QUESTION YOURSELF

Can I really do this? You should ask yourself this question again and again and answer it honestly. It's easy to fall into the delusion that you're good at something. On the other hand, if you regularly

question and honestly evaluate your abilities, your self-image will be closer to reality.

##### 2. GET FEEDBACK

For a realistic self-assessment, you should regularly get feedback from your family, friends or colleagues. Ask them for an honest opinion of your abilities and compare this external image with your own perception. If there are major differences here, you have a good clue as to where you might want to embellish.

##### 3. ADMIT MISTAKES

"We rise in glory as we sink in pride." -Edward Young.

The most important step is to admit to yourself that you don't know or can do everything and that you're not perfect. That's easier said than done, especially in front of an audience. Owning your weaknesses is an important part of your character and emotional maturity. This is the only way to achieve a healthy self-image. No one is made up of strengths alone.

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