

WHO'S DRIVING THE CAR?

The Aware Ego Process through the Artist's Eye

by Trina Swerdlow

INTRODUCTION

Trina Swerdlow is an artist, a self-help author, and a workshop facilitator. Over the last 15 years she has created many characters for various greeting cards, books, and corporations. Trina has found that some of the characters she's developed are based on parts of her own internal cast of characters. Getting to know these "outer characters" has assisted her in connecting emotionally to her "inner characters."

In one chapter of Trina's forthcoming book on this subject, she illustrates Hal and Sidra Stone's wonderful psychological car analogy. In doing so, she invites readers to explore the question: "who's driving my car?" As shown here, her illustrations depicting the emerging Aware Ego include four views.

This example is based on the dynamics of a thirty-five year old woman named Amy. Her inner character in the passenger's seat is her Agreeable (Conformer) Self: the part that "never rocks the boat." This Self thrives on going along with what others want. By contrast, the character driving her car is her Sad Self: the heavyhearted part of Amy. A strong role that Amy grew up with was continually trying to please her family members. Later this behavior got Amy labels such as the perfect employee and the perfect wife.

When feelings of sadness became more and more prevalent in her life, Amy began seeing a therapist and taking personal growth workshops. She attended one of my workshops and learned a lot about her "inner cast of characters." By inviting her Rebellious Self out of the trunk she was able to start setting healthy limits in her life, therefore taking care of herself with others. After further integration, she was able to connect with her Happy Self and give her Sad Self some much needed—time off.

Finally, by better understanding the opposites within, Amy now has "real choice" about many of the roads she takes in life. As a result, she also has access to a colorful cast of characters who make the experience much richer!

(Illustrations begin on page 2.)

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OPERATING EGO DRIVING THE CAR

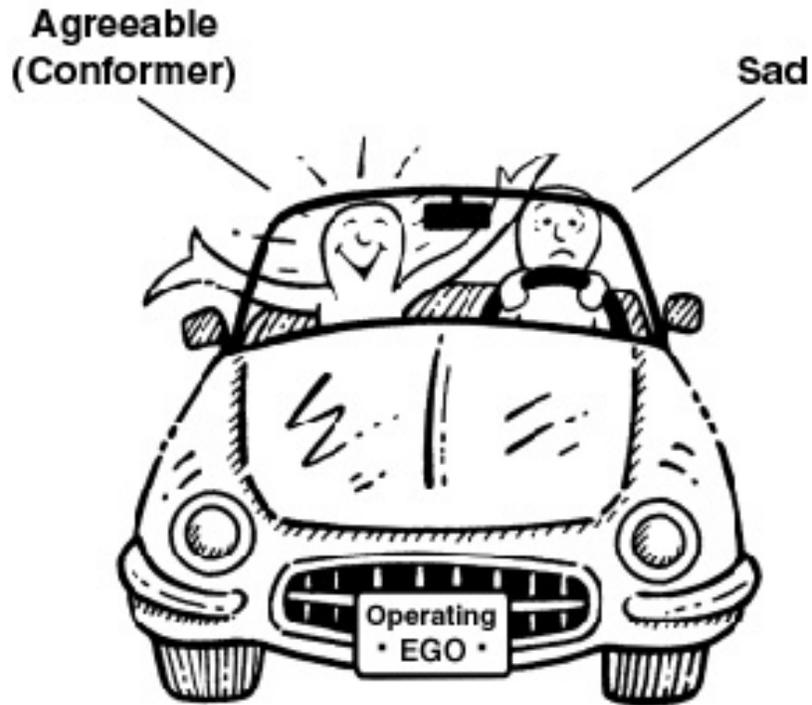


Figure 1



OPERATING EGO DRIVING THE CAR WITH DISOWNED SELVES IN THE TRUNK

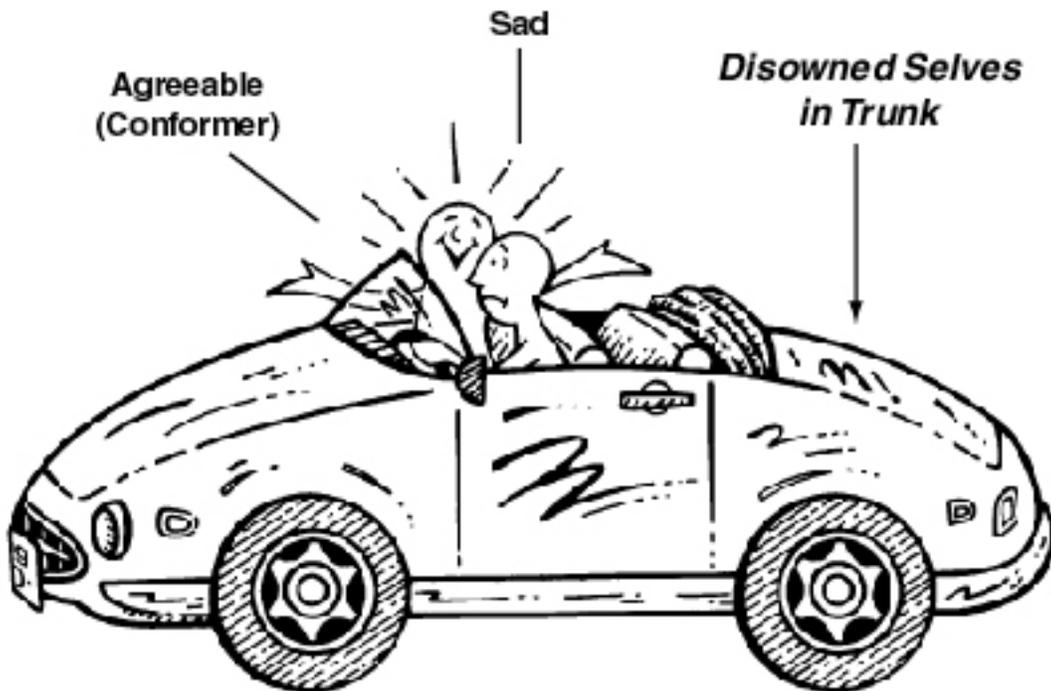


Figure 2

INITIAL RELEASE OF DISOWNED SELVES

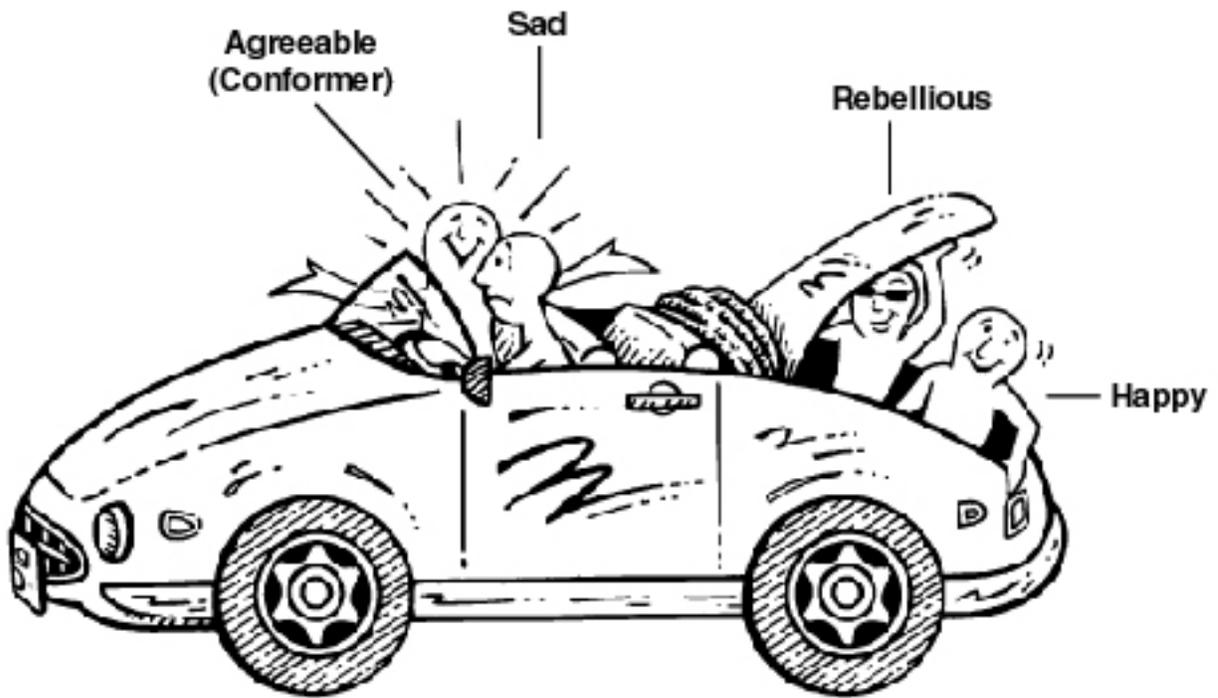


Figure 3

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AWARE EGO DRIVING CAR

Disowned Selves from trunk are now passengers

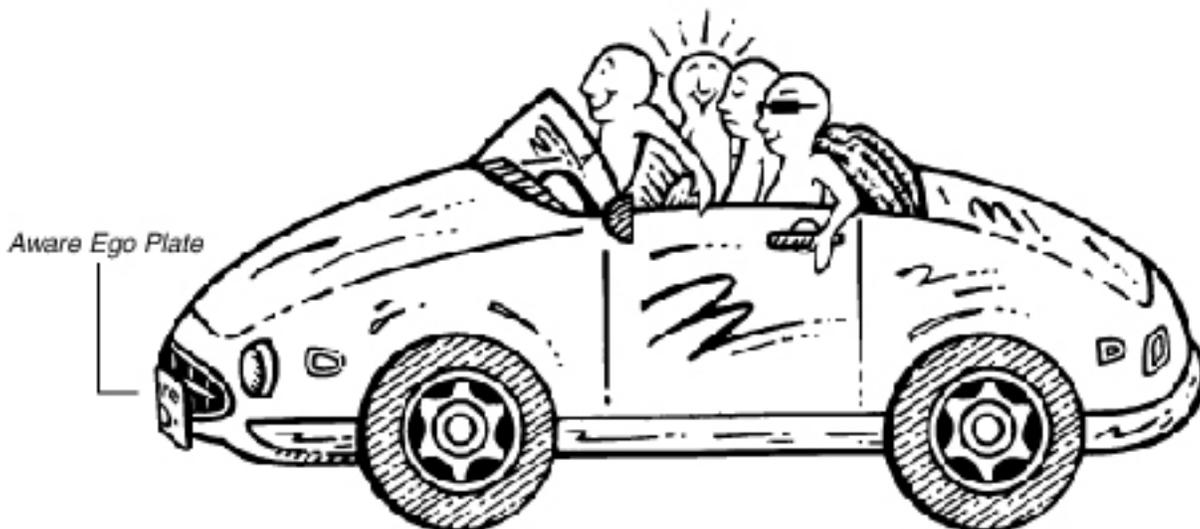


Figure 4