

A New Study Suggests People's Egos Get Bigger After Yoga & Meditation

(This is, in fact, not a 'new revelation,' but a study revealing what's commonly known as a "spiritual ego," in which an individual's spiritual practice make him/her FEEL more 'in tune' and 'better' than others... can also triggered by various 'classes' in spiritual development when the class instructor doesn't emphasize our Oneness and long-term dedication to service.... service to Earth and Humanity. In my experience, even revealing this to one affected by this phenomena may or may not effect an adjustment. ~ Don Chapin)

Published on June 25, 2018 By [Alanna Ketler](#) 

<https://www.collective-evolution.com/2018/06/25/a-new-study-suggests-peoples-egos-get-bigger-after-yoga-meditation/>

In Brief

- The Facts:

Study shows how Western practices of meditation and yoga can actually inflate the ego, rather than lower it — which is typically why people choose to do these practices in the first place.

- Reflect On:

What we do, no matter how spiritual it is, doesn't make you better than others. What is it that makes us want to feel or appear better than others?

In an attempt to try and limit our ego from running the show and move closer to our spirit and connection to the divine, many of us are on a path towards enlightenment.

This path generally includes a process of waking up to the reality around you, personal development books, plant medicine, yoga, and meditation can all be great tools along the way. We feel we are

becoming wiser, more connected and sometimes even more evolved than those who are not on the same path as us.

A [recently published study](#) directly contradicts that approach and found that typical meditation and yoga practices can actually inflate your ego. Who knew?

We all know those spiritual types, that seem to have it all together, they are diligent in their daily practices and are the first to give you advice and explain what you are doing wrong and why you haven't yet found peace within. Sure, these people generally have the best intentions, but the concept of being better, above or more enlightened than our fellow brothers and sisters on this planet is, believe it or not, pure ego! It is very easy to fall into this trap.

When I first “woke up” over a decade ago, I felt like I had so much information that no one else had yet awakened to, in this way I admittedly felt superior to many of my peers and put myself on a pedestal. This wasn't an intentional action however, it's just what happened.

Since, I have learned that the moment you think you have all the answers and have it all figured out is the exact moment that you need to take a step back and realize that in reality, you know nothing at all. What's true to you may not be the truth for someone else. We are all on different paths, and different journeys, yes to the same place, but not a single one is better or superior to any other. No matter how off track others may appear to be.

The Study

The [paper](#) was published online in the journal *Psychological Science*, researchers noted that Buddhism's teachings that a meditation practice helps overcome the ego conflicts with the US psychologist William James's argument that the practice of any skill at all ignites a sense of self-enhancement. So, the practice of bettering yourself does exactly that — makes you feel better, better than you were, but in many cases better than those around you.

There has already been a lot of evidence in support of James's theory, but a team from Mannheim, Germany decided to test it specifically including the practice of yoga and meditation.

93 yoga students were recruited and over the course of 15 weeks, researchers evaluated their sense of self-enhancement. A few measures were used to monitor this. First, they asked the participants how they felt they compared to the average yoga student in their class. Next, participants completed an inventory that assesses narcissistic tendencies by asking them to rate how deeply phrases such as "I will be well-known for the good deeds I will have done" related to them. Lastly, they administered a sort of self-esteem scale asking the subjects if they agreed with statements such as, "At the moment I have high self-esteem."

An hour after their yoga practice the participants showed significantly higher self-enhancement than when they hadn't done yoga within a 24 hour period.

Another study examined 162 people who practiced meditation, they were scouted through meditation groups on Facebook. These participants proved to have a similar impact on self-enhancement as those from the yoga study. Participants were asked to evaluate themselves in relation to statements like "In comparison to the average participant of the study, I am free from bias." The results showed that the participants had a higher self-enhancement in the hour following the meditation practice than when they hadn't meditated for a 24-hour period.

Participants level of well-being was also measured using two measures — the satisfaction with life measure and the eudemonic well-being measure, which assesses satisfaction with autonomy, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, environmental mastery and self-acceptance. They found that the level of well-being increased with self-enhancement, this suggests that self-enhancement correlated with an increased sense of well-being.

Authors of the study concluded that "Ego-quieting is a central element of yoga philosophy and Buddhism alike. That element, and

its presumed implications require some serious quieting is often called upon to explain mind-body practices' well-being benefits. In contrast, we observed that mind-body practices boost self-enhancement and this boost — in turn — elevates well-being.”

Another Theory

An alternate explanation for this study suggests that the participants may be in fact doing meditation and yoga all wrong. The participants were all based out of Germany and many academics have theorized that the Westernized practices of Buddhism fail to include an eye towards selflessness that would otherwise characterize the goals of these efforts.

Westernized versions of yoga and meditation marginalize the acts when compared to the more ‘pure’ forms, if you will.

What Now?

Should you stop doing yoga and meditation or laugh at those who are committed to these practices? Absolutely not! This study serves as a powerful reminder that regardless of your practice or lack there-of, not one person is above anyone else, regardless of the activities they choose to do. Yoga and meditation can be great tools to assist us along our journey and find the clarity and insight that we may be needed, but just remember to always keep that ego in check. It is fine to have an ego — we all have one and I hate to break it to you, we can never get rid of it. But a good question to ask yourself is whether or not doing these practices makes you feel superior to others, and if so, why?

We are all on a path to self-discovery, and we are all just walking each other home. We all face challenges, and some of these practices can help us to handle ourselves differently in times of struggle, but in reality, we are all one anyways!
