

## Chapter 12: Examples in fiction books, on TV and in the movies.

The quintessential image of the agenda-driven egopath in the 19<sup>th</sup> century has to be Uriah Heep. Ethel Spector Person remembers Uriah Heep in the book Unmasking the Psychopath. She writes, "In David Copperfield, Dickens characterizes humility as a disguise for manipulateness in the character of Uriah Heep (p. 256.)

Charles Dickens wrote, "Uriah Heep can worm his way into the confidence of an experienced man of affairs, gradually get the upper hand of his weakness, and reduce him to subservience." I wonder if he would see the resemblance with Leona Helmsley of the 20<sup>th</sup> century? She wormed her way into the confidences of Mr. Helmsley, got him to divorce his wife of 33 years, and then proceeded to reduce him to a shadow of his former self. She ended up going to prison because she felt paying taxes was a bother and unnecessary for a woman of her stature. Egopathic mission accomplished.

Was Meryl Streep an egopath in The Devil Wears Prada? Most likely, but her inherent meanness was not accentuated in the movie so the moviegoers were not able to feel the extent of her egopathy. Granted, she maneuvered and schemed behind the scenes in order to actualize her self-serving agenda. She was rude, ruthless, and brutal. Some might even classify her as a bona fide psychopath.

In the movie, Running with Scissors, based on a true biography (ostensibly), a Dr. Finch, a psychiatrist, treats a woman who is falling apart. The treatment began with her and her husband coming for marital counseling. Had Dr. Finch achieved even one hour of training in marital counseling? It didn't matter then and it doesn't matter today. An M.D. doctor is allowed not only to do marital counseling without training but is paid by the insurance companies 50% more than a person who has a Ph.D. in Marriage and Family Therapy. Does that seem ethical to you? Does it make any sense to you?

The good Dr. Finch made a complete mess of the woman's life, her marriage, and her son's life. The son grew up to become a writer and clearly has penned this memoir as a way to cathart his pain and to get the word out to the public about doctors practicing in areas in which they are untrained. The doctor used psychoanalytic techniques in the worst of ways and let his rampant and unrepentant need for power and control to run roughshod over everyone's needs. The ending credits told us that Dr. Finch eventually lost his license and died in 2000. Thank you, author, for giving us a clear picture of an egopathic doctor behaving very badly.

In 2005, the first Apprentice to be voted off the second "Apprentice" show was Michelle. She was lively and full of fun but she also showed another side to her personality. She was bossy and quick to find fault with her teammates and opponents. Her behavior was so abrasive that the others turned against her and it came down to a showdown in the 'boardroom.' Michelle showed no insight and no remorse for her behavior. She and the other young lady traded accusations and defenses. Trump fired them both. The lack of insight into dealing with or even reacting to people magnanimously under stress was completely apparent. With every accusation she reacted with hot-tempered insistence that she was wonderful and her opponent was completely incompetent.

It was shocking to watch such a display of disordered personality. How are young people being brought up in America and achieving two bachelor's degrees and two master's degrees and yet being completely lacking in character and social skills. As we have covered in chapter one, this set of skills is now being called emotional intelligence.

She was brought on to the Dr. Phil show a short time later. She was again bubbly and bright but completely without a clue about her egopathic personality style. She said the same thing to Dr. Phil that she'd said in Trump's boardroom. She couldn't work well with women because they were so jealous of her wonderful looks and style! Talk about an out of control ego defense! Girl, get a grip. She tried to construct a story of the events that created a Michelle that was totally innocent of any character flaw and tried to characterize her main opponent as a selfish b....! Was she remorseful or apologetic about her behavior? No way. "What did you learn from this experience?" Dr. Phil asked. She thought for a moment and then said, "I don't work well with people who aren't honest and bright." She was unable, on

national television, to say anything that she had personally learned from the experience. She was still in the ego defense mode of self-protectionism and denial. She had to protect herself from any hint of being at-fault or “less than.” This lack of character is appalling and sad. This behavior can be found in the boardrooms, the salesrooms, the showrooms, and the backrooms of America by the hundreds of thousands. It creates thousands of subsequent headaches and heartbreaks. And yet it goes, by and large, unchecked and unnoticed, and worse yet, un-held-accountable. These people, such as Michelle, just trip their merry way through life causing headaches and emotional dismemberment in their egopathic wake.

On Oct. 25, 2006 I watched yet another episode of Dateline, NBC. Yet another set of “normal” individuals, two sweet grandparents, decide the right thing to do is to get a gun and kill someone. And this wasn’t just some stranger; they decided to kill their son-in-law, the father of their granddaughter. How does a person who is not a criminal nor a psychopath decide to kill someone they know so well? It seems that people who are already egopaths find it easy to take one step further. They become so egocentric, so concerned about what THEY want, that they lose all sense of integrity, magnanimity and character. The rules of interpersonal conduct (RIC) are so far out of their minds, the rules may as well not exist. One searing thought floods their minds: “This person *deserves* to die. Killing him won’t be wrong because we deem that he is not worthy to live. We are doing the right thing.” The whole concept of “due process” is completely lost to them in their psychopathic moment. As they go through the motions of planning the murder there is no guilt because they feel they are doing the “right” thing. If we are going to stop senseless killings like this in the future we are going to have to understand this egopathic cognitive schema. Again, we see the process of being an egopath.

1. Thinking only of the self and the egocentric needs.
2. Not caring about the other’s needs or feelings.
3. Over time, beginning to feel judgmental of the person for wrongs they may not be guilty of.
4. Becoming punitive (we’ve got to punish him), retributive (we’ve got to get him back for what he did), and aggressive (we’ve got to kill him.)
5. Sadly, the son-in-law will never get the chance to remonstrate with the couple. If he could, they would have told him he was being ridiculous. “It was nothing against you, son. We just wanted to ensure that our grandbaby was safe.” Egopaths will say anything to win the argument.
6. The egopathic grandparents would have felt no twinge of guilt or remorse for their deed.
7. They would have then carried a grudge that he had said anything at all and would have looked for an opportunity to “teach him a lesson.”

#### On a personal note

The opposite of this depraved egopathic personality can be found in Little Lord Fauntleroy. What a charming tale of a delightful boy who had learned the lessons of high character early in life. He stayed genuine and empathic until his craggy grandfather’s heart melted and he moved away from egopathy and into the light of genuine love and magnanimity. It was all the more enchanting because he had my name. I was absolutely charmed when I saw the movie and vowed somewhere inside of me that I would always be like him. That was years before I began experiencing the stream of egopaths who were bound and determined to bring down my honorable drive toward self-actualization.

#### References:

David Copperfield: the movie  
 Wall Street: the movie  
 The Devil Wears Prada: the movie  
 Little Lord Fauntleroy