

Selfish Will

Will is so powerful that with it, we can create great good, or a royal mess. Which will it be?

Many people use their will to pursue selfish purposes, never mind the effects on others—or even on themselves. Stubborn mules who never back down; mates who fight like hell to get their way, or refuse to change hurtful habits. Countries or corporations that place their interests above the well-being of people. Selfish will always hurts. It is the cause of all the loneliness, conflict, and misery in the world today.

Passive expressions of selfish will are just as harmful, sometimes more. A man who doesn't pay attention to his wife hurts her. A person who won't speak against wrongdoing supports it. A person who won't pitch in is a drag.

Selfish will makes happy cooperation impossible, since selfishly willful people can't get fully behind someone else's idea, even if it's great. They might go along, but without much energy or enthusiasm. It's everyone's loss!

A popular non-solution. Often, carelessly willful people see the pain they're creating, and tone themselves down. For example, an opinionated man squashed his loved ones for years. Eventually he clams up. To him, shutting down seems compassionate. But most likely, his loved ones *miss* his participation despite its previous problems.

Fortunately, we don't have to *either* create problems or withdraw. We can use our will *harmoniously*—happily aligning ourselves with the real needs/desires of others. That way, I daresay, we're aligned with God's will, too.

Divided will. We all cherish high-minded dreams and great purposes: to help, to uplift, to love. But we may harbor selfish wants too (like avoiding inconvenience, saving face, being gratified, playing it safe). Beware: selfish motives undermine our higher, truly precious goals.

HOW CAN I HAVE THIS . . .

solid friendship with true intimacy

to leave this world a better place than I found it

IF I ALSO WANT THIS . . .

to do my own thing, and not be expected to consult

to live a selfish life, and try to get all I can

Also, selfish intentions turn otherwise beautiful goals ugly: wanting a partner so you can possess someone; wanting to be helpful mainly to boost your self-esteem. Pursuing good goals in a truly good spirit is the only real success.

Love or selfishness? The choice that matters most is between love and selfishness, true heart and ego. We stand at a crossroads each moment, and choose which way to go, what seeds to sow. It takes *will* to listen to your heart, *will* to live beyond selfishness. When our will is to love, great beauty—even miracles—can happen.