



Most of us seem to live our entire lives without truly understanding ourselves. We talk too much, give advice too quickly, get too angry or fail to keep our promises. If we are honest with ourselves, we would admit that sometimes we feel smug over a friend's plight or that we value looks and money over integrity and kindness. We rarely allow ourselves to go much beyond these realizations.

Understanding yourself is one of the most important tasks in hiding your goat. A lot of pop psychology says to accentuate the positive and push the negative aside. Unfortunately, without recognizing potential negatives, you can't cast them off. So, as you prepare to hide your goat, it may be helpful to discover your goat by answering the following questions.

Are you a faultfinder?

Critical people can't resist pointing out a problem. Nothing is ever good enough. Faultfinders expect perfectionism in themselves and others. Finding fault or criticizing exposes your goat and almost always derails relationships and drives people away. Criticism does not persuade people to change, even if your criticism is valid. Worse, others will not trust you because they know that, sooner or later, they, too, will fall prey to your criticism. People will put their guard up. Spontaneity will disappear as they carefully choose their words and watch their actions around you. Over time, they won't even want to be with you. Many roads lead to negativity. Sometimes a person is born into a family in which one or both parents are critical. As a result, the child grows up learning to look at the world through a negative lens. People can become faultfinders if they live or work with negative people. If someone around you is pointing out mistakes, flaws and injustices, it's easy to start focusing on mistakes, flaws and injustices yourself. If you think you're too critical a person, change.

Are you a jealous person?

Do you constantly compare, evaluate and feel badly when someone else wins. Jealousy is a flaw we often have difficulty acknowledging in ourselves. Not acknowledging someone else's achievements is one way jealousy rears its ugly head. I still remember the day a committee member informed me that I had been elected to the Speaker Hall of Fame. When I told a fellow speaker, whom I had known for over fourteen years, about the induction, he said, "I've been nominated several times and never got elected. Sounds like you had the right committee voting." Just as you do when herding your goats, you must look inside yourself for the reason you are jealous. The answer is there. Sometimes jealousy arises from insecurity. Eighteenth century scholar and mystic Moshe Luzzatto had great insight on jealousy when he wrote, "The one who envies gains nothing for himself and deprives the one he envies of nothing. There are those who are so foolish that if they perceive their neighbor to possess a certain good, they brood, worry and suffer to the point that their neighbor's good prevents them from enjoying their own."

Do you have to be the center of attention?

People who talk too much are attention-competitive. What they are saying is, "Pay attention to me!" Interrupting is another competitive behavior. Some people compete by starting a side conversation. They're proclaiming, "What I have to say is more important than what others have to say." People who seek to be the center of attention are terrible listeners, too. When someone else is talking, their minds wander and they rarely ask questions or contribute a comment.

Are you controlling?

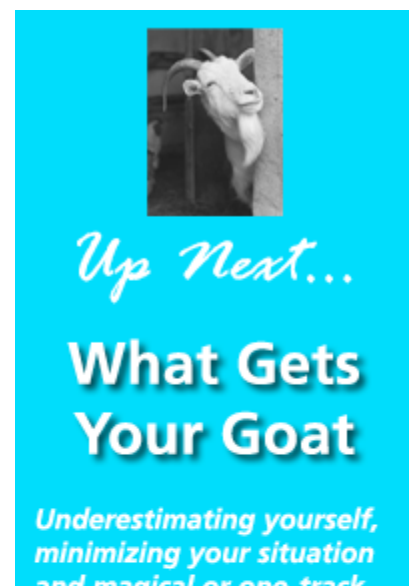
If you don't recognize your own controlling behavior, hiding your goat will be impossible, leaving it exposed and vulnerable. So how controlling are you?

- Do you talk too much?
- Do you frequently offer unsolicited advice?
- Do you have trouble apologizing?
- Do you pout and refuse to talk when you get angry?
- When you want something done, does it have to be done now?
- Are you habitually late?
- Are you often accused of not listening?
- Do you often finish other people's stories?
- Do you usually have the last word in an argument?

If you desire good relationships with your fellow workers, your spouse, your children and your friends, discover -- and then eliminate -- your controlling behaviors.

Do you get too angry?

You may not like to admit it, but you know if you have an anger problem. What you may not understand is what drives that anger, its consequences or what you can do to change. How you interpret events in your life could be



negative by default, thereby generating your own anger. The people you surround yourself with can play a significant role in how you interpret certain events as well. Negative people often gravitate toward each other, further fueling the situation. Things not going the way you expect can also ignite your anger by making you feel off balance, threatened, challenged and not in control. Maybe the worst byproduct of getting too angry is that you name-call, exaggerate and become sanctimonious.

I once read, "A life not examined is like an unopened letter." Just as it's impossible to reach your destination when you don't know where you are, you can't become who you want to be until you're sure who you are. I challenge each of you to take an introspective journey. Then change the parts of yourself you don't like and accentuate those you do. Having a clear self-image is essential in relationships, confidence and growth -- and the only way you can hide your goat is to discover it first.

minimizing your situation and magical or one-track thinking can conspire to get your goat. These things didn't appear overnight. Part seven of this series will examine the blueprint for self-directed positive action, which begins and ends with understanding what holds you back. It's time to get unstuck and, once and for all, rise above what gets your goat.

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"I have just returned from our kick-off meetings, and I want to express my thanks for your participation in helping to make our events a tremendous success. I spoke with several colleagues in all three cities where you spoke, and the feedback I received in Jacksonville, Orlando and San Diego was the same for each audience: 'Steve was the best speaker I have ever heard' and 'He made us laugh, and he made us cry.'

"Your ability to connect with the audience and deliver a powerful message earned a standing ovation at all three events! Thank you for sharing yourself (and your energy and passion) with our Adecco colleagues. You made a difference, and for that, I am grateful."
--Joyce Russell, President, Adecco

Steve's March 2013 Schedule

MARCH 2013

2 Lake Buena Vista, FL

AWARD





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