



CHAPTER II

SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF IMAGE

ALL OF US WOULD LIKE TO BE SEEN IN A POSITIVE LIGHT AND SO most often we keep our behavioral and moral imperfections to ourselves. To do this, we construct a false social facade to present to others. Carl Jung referred to this facade as an individual's persona. When this persona is developed to cover what are only minor imperfections, it does not create any significant emotional consequences. Each of us is entitled to some personal privacy. However, for those of us who suffer from significant low self-esteem and the many negative emotions and attitudes that accompany it, our personas must of necessity be more complex for there is so much more to hide from others, and even from ourselves.

Many who develop complex personas finally come to regard their outward image as an accurate representation of themselves, oblivious at the conscious level as to how untrue those images are. Such persons then have two sets of diametrically opposed ideas about themselves operating on their conscious mind: one set, of which they are only vaguely aware, is embedded deep in the unconscious, the other is on the edge of consciousness, readily available, as needed, to justify their behavior. This dichotomy creates extreme emotional confusion that can drive its victims to seek relief through some form of escape, providing fertile ground for alcoholism or other addictive diseases and abnormal or neurotic behavior. Unfortunately, the escape often exacerbates its cause.