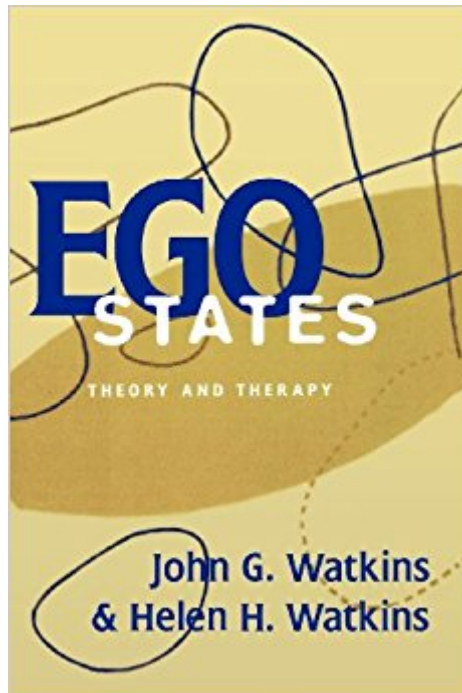




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# Ego States: Theory And Therapy



## Synopsis

Ego states are the parts of our personality that cause us to act different ways in different situations. Ego state theory links normal personality functioning with its extremes, such as found in dissociative identity disorder. The therapy integrates psychoanalytic practice and hypnoanalytic techniques to discover and explore covert ego states, thereby effecting behavior change. With clear language and case extracts, the recognized originators of ego state therapy explain this fascinating theory and how to put it into practice.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The authors live in Missoula, Montana.

I read this book because I am about to enter into some ego state work as a client. It's a solid introduction to the topic, written by the people who developed it. I would love to read about this theory in the light of more recent discoveries in neuroscience. This book was published in 1997. The book starts out with basic concepts, which assumes some history with traditional Freudian psychotherapy. If you have some basic understanding of the Freudian psychotherapy tradition, this may even seem remedial to you. I found rather annoying the discussion and use of "energy", that perennially undefined term in both mental health and new age circles. Some other fundamental concepts (subject-object, for example) are sketched out or muddily described rather than precisely defined. These problems aside, the authors provide a rough enough

understanding to proceed on to the main idea: that we all have a variety of more-or-less distinct personality states, which we shift amongst in our different life situations. Most people behave differently at work, with friends, and with family, for example. It's when these states become more distinct, separated from one another, or out of volitional control that we head into the realm of pathology. At the severe end of the spectrum is dissociative identity or multiple personality disorder. At the milder end are general difficulties or problems in particular situations, such as severe reactions to criticism or difficulty with public speaking. The idea there is that, typically, some early trauma or difficult situation that couldn't be resolved at the time resulted in the formation of an ego state stuck in that trauma, falling back on the same failed strategy every time a situation reminiscent enough of the original occurs. In ego state therapy, the therapist interacts with these different ego/personality states directly, often with the client under hypnosis. They present various techniques for revisiting and resolving trauma, either through direct confrontation or through enlisting the help of ego states not involved in the traumatic event as remembered. The theory and practice seem quite plausible to me, especially based on my reading in related topics. It'll be interesting to see how the work pans out for myself. If you are interested in this field, I would also recommend:

- The Haunted Self: Structural Dissociation and the Treatment of Chronic Traumatization, by Onno van der Hart, Ellert R.S. Nijenhuis, and Kathy Steele
- A Dynamic Systems Approach to the Development of Cognition and Action, by Esther Thelen and Linda B. Smith
- Thinking in Systems: A Primer, by Donella H. Meadows and Diana Wright
- Anything by V.S. Ramachandran

This book which gives some fundamental insights into the ego-state therapy. It is essential to have read this one for every hypnotherapist.

VERY BASIC

Went way over my head. Purchased it because the lecture I attended was based partially on the book. A book for those with the training

I am taking a graduate course on Advanced Therapeutics Techniques. Though this book was recommended I consider to be a MUST READ book. Much basic understanding came from chapter two. It helped me understand Freud's cathexis and how it connects the conscious and unconscious mind. Cathexis is an energy that binds thoughts together. My metaphorical understanding is as

follows: Tom (Conscious) and Dick (unconscious) are in a locked room looking at each other. The lights (cathexis) are turned off and Dick moves without sound to another location in the room. In Tom's mind's eye, he pictures Dick exactly where he was before the lights went out. However, the darkness (broken cathexis) has broken the visual bond so they are no longer visually in touch with each other even though they are still in the same room. This is just one example of the insight that I gained from reading this book. This book is helping me understand and use NLP and hypnotherapy techniques with greater effectiveness.

Mmmmm, I liked this one but do not, will not use it as much in my work. It was like remedial reading for something I skimmed over when in school. The book was recommended for background with dissociative disorder work and I'm glad I took the time with it. I disagree with some of the interventions used because others seem to cause less distress with clients and I'm not so much into the hypnosis stuff. I kind of took it with a grain of salt for being a good piece from the time frame the authors were doing the research and the work. For current ego state work I highly recommend April Steel.

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