



Be Yourself, Everybody Else is Taken

by Rob McKelvey

The art of being yourself at your best is the art of unfolding your personality into the person you want to be. . . . Be gentle with yourself, learn to love yourself, to forgive yourself, for only as we have the right attitude toward ourselves can we have the right attitude toward others.

Wilfred Peterson

Have you ever thought that you were supposed to be somebody... but you were never sure who that somebody was?

It is not surprising that that confusion is present really given the way that we are compared to other people as we grow up in our formative years. Comments like; "Why can't you be like your brother/sister?"; "He/she is such a good/courageous/hard working/kind/successful/beautiful/together (pick one) person." These comparisons can also be made in our adult lives as well. By implication these comments lead to the belief that we must be like them in order to achieve those qualities. Therefore, generally speaking, we embark on a journey of emulation and comparison. We try to emulate the perceived good qualities and activities of those held up to us in comparison. Those qualities and activities that are socially acceptable.

Think. When was the last time you did something because you thought you were supposed to act that way versus doing something because you wanted to. And did it make you feel uncomfortable? Did you feel that you were going against something that was a value of yours?

An analogy I use in my coaching practice is when a CEO, or any business person, gets up in the morning and has breakfast, gets dressed in his/her business suit and goes to the office. When they get into the office they take off the jacket they put on at home and put on another jacket. That jacket being the one of the person they are supposed to be in the office.

There is a big difference between "supposed to" and "want to". In many cases the "supposed to" is because we are living up to another person's expectation of what, and who, we are, rather than our own expectation of who we are or want to be. And this play acting can lead to an identity crises.

Who are you, really? Are you the person you present or are you hidden inside yourself and merely playing a role?