

Be True to Yourself

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“Know thyself,” says Carole Spiers, and all will be well in the world

The American poet EE Cummings said, “It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are.”

Most of us grow up in a society in which there is an underlying pressure to act and behave in a way in which others think we should. As individuals, we usually like to be accepted and to conform to the “norm” in order not to displease others. By doing so, however, we should be careful not to lose our identity and our personal aspirations.

Growing up

During our formative years, many of us like to feel “part of the crowd” and may even go against the advice of our parents just so that we feel a sense of belonging. Sometimes, we also ignore or subsume our own feelings because we are not sufficiently confident to try to convince others around us. So we rationalise it to ourself that “it isn’t the right time.”

Opportunities may pass right in front of you as you get older but you convince yourself, or others convince you, that the time is not really right for you. But do you even wonder if you are really being true to yourself by acting in accordance with what you believe and what you want to achieve in your life?

However, being true to yourself is not always easy. Pressures, opinions and claimed good “advice” from others, can have an adverse impact upon your decisions. You may worry about what people may say or think about you and you may find yourself agreeing with others just because you don’t want to upset or hurt them. Being true to yourself does take courage and you may need to look deeper into yourself



to find the necessary conviction. It is important that you do not allow others to define who you are and what you want to do with your life. That is a decision for you and you alone for, in the end, everyone must strive to live the life they choose, wherever possible.

Pleasing others

However, although it is important to gain acceptance from society and from your peer group, it is not always possible and this can be a challenge for many of us. Of course, pleasing others is good and can boost your self esteem but it shouldn’t always be at your own expense.

To know what you want and to pursue your ambition is important. You may make mistakes along the way – as we all do – but it is better to have tried than not to have tried at all. And even if things go wrong, you will have gained some learning from the experience. Life is not easy but we are expected to learn from both our own mistakes and those of others.

Your true friends should usually accept you for who you are and they will be the ones who will support your aspirations in life and will not

take offence if you don’t accept their advice or conform to their expectations. Remember that your life needs to go in your chosen direction and not in the way of someone else. To try to emulate a role model can bring a necessary focus to your ambition provided you always keep true to yourself and that you strive to live the life that you wish for yourself and your family. But in regard to role models, don’t forget that you usually only hear about their successes and rarely about their failures. The secret is that the former must always exceed the latter!

Each of us needs to take responsibility for the direction of our own life for only then can we find meaning and derive satisfaction from it every day.

Make sure you know the kind of person you want to be, what kind of life you want and what job or profession, then you can shape your goals to take you on your journey.

In the words of Apple’s late Steve Jobs: “Remembering that you are going to die is the best way I know to avoid the trap of thinking you have something to lose. You are already naked. There is no reason not to follow your heart.”

Don’t wait! *Seize the opportunity.*

Key points:

- Be yourself, not someone else.
- Keep true to your hopes and dreams.
- Your life is unique – live it!

about the author



Motivational Speaker, Carole Spiers has spent 20 years as CEO of a UK Stress Management Consultancy, working with equal success both in the UK and the Gulf. She is an acknowledged authority on corporate stress and a BBC guest-broadcaster. Carole is Author of a new book *Show Stress Who’s Boss!* Book Carole for a motivational presentation at your next conference or in-house event. www.carolespiers.co.uk.

