

## **Being authentic**

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Probably one of the greatest social pressures people feel today is the pressure to conform - to be like another or others in some way, shape or form. Early on life we learned that if we wanted the support of others, or the love, acknowledgment, or recognition, etc. of others, it was necessary to please those others. Another flavor of this dynamic is garnering the approval of others when we conform to their expectations of how they think we ought to be.

## **The quid-pro-quo of conforming**

The downside of conforming is that in order to gain, we lose. That is, in order to gain acceptance, approval, love and/or recognition of another, we give up something of our self. It's a costly dynamic. Caught in this dynamic, we create two selves - the self we know and feel we really are and the self, rather the impression or false self, we present to others. Most often, over time, the image that we effort to give others (in conforming) we often take on as our real self. In the process, we lose touch with our true and real self and, consciously and unconsciously, the result is pain and suffering. Becoming split off from our true and real self, from our true and real identity, we go through life sort of teeter- tottering and feeling off-balance, without really knowing why.

## **Conforming is like being a shark**

Living a life of conforming results in a state of unconscious confusion. In other words, when we become so outwardly focused - dependent on "it," "her," "him" or "them," to feel loved, acknowledged, seen, recognized and the like - we have this incessant need to move from person to person, place to place, thing to thing, etc. to feel fulfilled - not like a shark's need to continuously move to stay alive. The shark has its oxygen; the conformist has theirs.

Conforming, unconsciously, is what keeps us alive. Is not unlike a progressive drug - the more we use it, the greater the dose we need to get the same "high." Without it, we don't feel alive.

## **The antidote to conforming**

The antidote to conforming is the inner journey - giving up the externals and investing our time and energy on what's inside. After all, this is where true authenticity resides. This is where our true and real self resides.

The journey does not mean we give up the faux image we've been presenting to others, our persona, our faults or our limitations. The inner journey supports us to accept our faults, our foibles, and "fake" self, but in the process the inner journey supports us to live from the inside out - where the "I" we discover within now drives our do-ings and be-ings.

## **The non-conformist**

When we discover our true, real and authentic self, and live from the inside-out, we live life from

a place of clarity, a crystal-clear "knowing," that supports us to live as an independent being, no longer wanting or needing to be a conformist. From this place, we much more readily give, serve and support others for our mutual highest good.

From this place, we lead a much more "conscious" life. We feel alive, fresh, purposeful and authentic.

### **Questions for self-reflection:**

- Where in your life, do you tend to be a conformist? How so? Would others agree with you?
- What does conforming get you?
- Do you ever consider yourself to be value-less, or worthless? How so?
- Are there areas or aspects of your life you seem to be continually avoiding? Why?
- What are your earliest memories or experiences related to conforming?
- Did you ever talk about conforming with your parents or primary caregivers? What were those conversations like?
- What is one area of your life where you could stop being a conformist? Are you willing to give it a try? Why or why not?

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I'm grateful for the opportunity to share this reading with you and I hope you find it insightful and useful.

Perhaps you'll share this with others, post it on a bulletin board, and use it to generate rich and rewarding discussion.

What is the one thing that is keeping you from feeling successful, happy, confident, in control or at peace as you live your life - at work, at home, at play or in relationship? Maybe you know what that thing is maybe you don't. You just have a feeling that something has to change, whether or not you embrace that change. And how would that change support you to show up as a "better you?"

I'm available to guide you to create relationships that reflect honesty, integrity, authenticity, trust, and respect whether at work or outside of work. I support you to focus on the interpersonal skills that enable you to relate to others with a high level of personal and professional satisfaction - unhampered by personal inconsistencies, beliefs, "stories," and behaviors that create barriers to a harmonious, pleasant, conscious, compatible, healthy and productive relationship.

I coach by phone, Skype and in person. For more information, 770-804-9125,

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