

## Searching For Ourselves

By Wade Younger, CSP

To be nobody but yourself in a world which is doing its best night and day to make you everybody else, means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight, and never stop fighting. - E.E. Cummings

I believe no truer words were ever spoken. It is so hard to remain true to yourself if every message you hear, every person you know, everything you read, tells you you should be something else. In this great cacophony, it is all but impossible to hear that tiny voice inside you speaking your truth. Most of us never hear that voice until we've wasted years, maybe an entire lifetime, trying to live someone else's life.

Every day I meet people who've lived their lives for their children, men who've lived their lives for their employers, people who've lived their lives for their lovers or their friends or their families and are waiting for the big day when they will be rewarded with love or success or happiness. Any rewards they get are not enough because they haven't been true to themselves. If you hate the work you do, no matter how much you get paid, it will never be enough. If you are living your life for someone else, no matter how much they love you, it will never be enough. That's because no amount of money, no amount of love is worth the sacrifice of your life. Your task (and it's not an easy one) is to discover who you really are, and make the most of your gifts, your talents, and your life.

Why is this so hard? Because we have some impossible images we think we have to live up to. Go to a movie or watch television and see the perfect couple with the perfect children and the perfect bodies and the perfect house and the perfect cars. We are all experts at thinking everyone else has it together and we don't. We judge ourselves to be inadequate and constantly make ourselves miserable.

We keep listening to all the outside noise and desperately try to fit in, to meet these impossible standards, and we suppress the most important thing - the only thing that will bring us true happiness - being who we really are.

Being who you really are requires bravery because there is no road map. You have to find your own way. One guide I am sure of is pain. If you are hurting - you are not being true to yourself. If you hate your job, it is not where you belong. If your relationships make you feel bad, those are not the people you should be with. When you are happy, when you experience joy - then you are on the right path. It may not be the right path for anyone but you. That's okay, no one can take this journey for you. Many will try to get you to take the path they have chosen - to validate their choices. You have to find your own way and listen to your own heart, otherwise you are once again living someone else's life.

- How to find yourself?
- Follow joy, walk away from pain.
- Experience solitude.
- Take some time to get to know who you are.
- Take a walk.
- Meditate.
- Just be alone for a while.
- Think.
- Follow your curiosity - take a class, read a book, try something new.
- You can't find out who you truly are if you live the same life as your parents or your spouse or your friends. Discover YOUR life!
- Don't hide - use your brain, express your opinions, laugh out loud, sing!
- Your life should be a celebration of who you are, not a eulogy to everything you are not.
- You are a miracle - honor that by making the most of who you are.