**Being Yourself**

**Be yourself. Who else is better qualified? *(Frank J. Giblin II)***

**Be yourself. Well, maybe someone a little nicer. *(Barbara Bush)***

**The most courageous act is still to think for yourself. Aloud. *(Coco Chanel)***

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**It takes courage to grow up and turn out to be who you really are. *(E. E. Cummings, American poet)***

**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. *(E. E. Cummings, American poet)***

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**Mario Cuomo, former governor of New York State, once began a speech to the New York Press Club by relating some last-minute advice his wife, Matilda, had given him just before he left. “I know they’re a tough group,” she said, “but don’t be intimidated. And don’t try to be charming, witty or intellectual. Just be yourself. *(Quoted by Larry Wilde, in When You’re Up to Your Eyeballs in Alligators)***

**The Dalai Lama may be an enlightened being, but he's also something of a regular Joe. The Tibetan Buddhist leader sneaks chocolate chip cookies when he's supposed to be fasting and uses an air gun to scare away irritating birds. While he meditates, he likes to have a radio on in the background, playing news from the BBC World Service. His Holiness also admits that mosquitoes have caused him to question the fundamental Buddhist prohibition against taking life. "When I'm trying to sleep," he said, "their loud buzzing and their bites really annoy me." *(The Week magazine, July 15, 2005)***

**I would tell my younger self just be yourself -- that who you are is good enough. *(Viola Davis, African American actress)***

**Find out who you are and be that person. *(Ellen DeGeneres)***

**We did not change as we grew older; we just became more clearly ourselves. *(Lynn Hall, in Where Have All the Tigers Gone?)***

**We are so accustomed to disguising ourselves to others that, in the end, we become disguised to ourselves. *(Francois de La Rochefoucauld)***

**Always be a first-rate version of yourself instead of a second-rate version of somebody else. *(Judy Garland)***

**To play yourself -- your true self -- is the hardest thing in the world. *(Cary Grant)***

**When Helen Hayes was a young actress, producer George Tyler told her that, were she four inches taller, she could become one of the great actresses of her time. “I decided,” she says, “to lick my size. A string of teachers pulled and stretched till I felt I was in a medieval torture chamber. I gained nary an inch – but my posture was military-straight. I became the tallest five-foot woman in the world. And my refusal to be limited by my limitations, enabled me to play Mary of Scotland, one of the tallest queens in history. Helen Hayes succeeded because she chose to focus on her strong points, not her weak ones. *(Alan Loy McGinnis, in Reader’s Digest)***

**A young college student preparing for his first job interview was advised by friends to exaggerate his work experience (he had none, other than the usual summertime jobs college students get). He was also advised to be serious, dour, sophisticated and a lot of other things that he was not. When he arrived for the interview, he was escorted to an office by a genial woman he assumed was a secretary. They began chatting and because she seemed so open and friendly, he decided he could find out about what the job involved by asking the secretary questions. The conversation went smoothly and after an hour fear and trepidation had been replaced by enthusiasm about the position. He was about to ask some questions about the coming interview when the woman informed him that the job was his. The pleasant conversation had been the interview. The young man had learned an important lesson: Be yourself. *(Bits & Pieces)***

**After a long, formal reception at Buckingham Palace, King George VI and Queen Elizabeth withdrew with regal farewells, but a page failed to close the double doors properly. The lingering guests suddenly got a glimpse of the king and queen, who, thinking they were alone, went hand in hand, laughing and skipping down the corridor like a couple of teenagers allowed out on their own. *(Ann Morrow, in The Queen Mother)***

**Television journalist Charles Kuralt was asked how he deals with the effect of the camera on ordinary people. “People are a little inhibited,” Kuralt replied. “One day we were talking to a man who runs a country store in North Carolina, and he was full of good humor until we turned the camera on. Then he tensed up. He probably thought, Oh, this is going down for posterity. I have to watch what I say. “So you struggle all the time to prevent that reaction. We don’t act like big shots. And it helps to look the way I do – fat and unprepossessing – because people say, “Gosh, if that guy could look like that, I can just be myself.” *(Henry Kisor, in Chicago Sun-Times)***

**During a debate, Stephen A. Douglas accused Abraham Lincoln of being two-faced, "I leave it to you, my friends," Lincoln retorted, turning toward his audience. "If I had two faces, would I be wearing this one?" *(The Wit & Wisdom of Abraham Lincoln, edited by Alex Ayres, p. 186)***

**Be yourself. No one can ever tell you you’re doing it wrong. *(James Leo Herlihy, in The Season of the Witch)***

**Warning: When I am an old lady I shall wear purple with a red hat, which doesn’t go and doesn’t suit me. And I shall spend my pension on brandy and summer gloves, and satin sandals, and say we have no money for butter. I shall sit down on the pavement when I am tired and gobble up samples in shops and press alarm bells and run my stick along the public railings and make up for the sobriety of my youth. I shall go out in my slippers in the rain and pick the flowers in other people’s gardens and learn to spit. But maybe I ought to practice a little now so people who know me are not too shocked and surprised when suddenly I am old and start to wear purple. *(Liz Carpenter, in Modern Maturity magazine)***

**Although opera singer Rise Stevens performed onstage with great poise, the self-confidence she felt before audiences evaporated in social situations. “My discomfort,” she says, “came from trying to be something I was not – a star in the drawing room as well as onstage. If a clever person made a joke, I tried to top it – and failed. I pretended to be familiar with subjects I knew nothing about. Stevens finally had a heart-to-heart talk with herself: “I realized that I simply wasn’t a wit or an intellectual and that I could succeed only as myself. I began listening and asking questions at parties instead of trying to impress the guests. When I spoke, I tried to contribute, not to shine. Almost at once I started to feel a new warmth in my social contacts. They like the real me better.” *(Alan Loy McGinnis, in Reader’s Digest)***

Ordinary perfection is being true to ourselves, to the way things are. Do we go into the garden wishing that the pansies were taller than the daffodils, or thinking that the roses would be fine if they didn’t have thorns? Do we go into a kindergarten and wish that the children would fit into some model of perfection we hold, or can we see that variety makes the beauty of the gardens and humans, that our spiritual task is not to make perfection but to awaken to the perfection around us? *(Jack Kornfield)*

**Parton’s unlikely style icon: Dolly Parton’s signature style – bouffant blond hair, rhinestone-decked clothes, thick makeup – is as immediately recognizable as her music, said Emine Saner in The Guardian. It’s a look the country superstar says she modeled on the “town tramp,” a woman in her hometown of Sevierville, Tennessee, who wore short skirts, low-cut tops, and shoes with plastic goldfish floating in the heels. “I thought she was beautiful,” says Parton, 77. “When people would say, ‘She ain’t nothing but trash,’ I would say, ‘Well, that’s what I’m gonna be when I grow up.’” Her sharecropper father hated how the young Parton dressed, and her preacher grandfather whipped her for it. “I didn’t like being disciplined. But I’ve always been true to myself. I never cared so much that it keeps me from being me.” Beyond glamour, the town tramp represented freedom to Parton. Her mother had 12 children by the time she was 35. Everywhere she looked, the young Parton saw women worn down by poverty and child-bearing. “I grew up with women knowing how to be good mothers,” she says, “but that was not what I felt God had in mind for me. Because somebody’s got to entertain those people, to write songs about them. I can write a song as if I had a house full of kids, as if I’ve got a cheating husband, even though I never did. There’s no thing in this world that’s foreign to me.” *(The Week magazine, October 27, 2023)***

**There are times when the best acting means getting as close as you possibly can to yourself. *(Gregory Peck)***

**I give you permission to be yourself. Try it, you might like it. *(J. Sig Paulson, Unity minister)***

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**Playing myself is always a very challenging role. *(Ashleigh Brilliant, in Pot-Shots)* *\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\**Being yourself is not remaining what you were, or being satisfied with what you are. It is the point of departure. *(Sydney J. Harris, Field Newspaper Syndicate)***

**You don’t have to become something you’re not to be better than you were. *(Sidney Poitier, in Ebony magazine)***

**I am what I am and that's all that I am, I'm Popeye the Sailor Man. *(Popeye the Sailor Man)***

**The Hasidic rabbi Zusya was asked on his deathbed what he thought the kingdom of God would be like. “I don’t know,” he replied. “But one thing I do know. When I get there I am not going to be asked, ‘Why weren’t you Moses? Why weren’t you David?’ I am only going to be asked, ‘Why weren’t you Zusya? Why weren’t you fully you?’” *(Alan Loy McGinnis, in Reader’s Digest)***

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**His parents doted on Fred, but were possibly overprotective. Fred Rogers recalls that at his grandfather’s farm he always wanted to walk along its stone walls. His parents thought that was too dangerous, but when he was eight, old Mr. McFeely told the boy to go ahead. Fred had the time of his life scrambling over the walls. And Fred remembered what his grandfather told him afterward. “Fred,” he said, “you made this day special by being yourself. Remember there’s just one person in the world like you, and I like you just the way you are!” This is the essential message of the Neighborhood. *(John Sedgwick, in Reader’s Digest)***

**Now in its 27th year, the Emmy Award-winning "Mister Rogers Neighborhood" teaches and entertains children on more than 300 public-television stations nationwide. Years ago, the show's creator, Fred Rogers, thought he might be onto something big when he had an opportunity to take his program to one of the major networks. "I met with several executives," he recalls. "One asked me, 'What kind of costume will you be wearing for the show?' I told him that I don't need to wear a funny costume to communicate with children. But he insisted that anyone hosting a children's show must have a costume. That was the end of that meeting." *(Tom Lavis, in Johnstown, PA, Tribune-Democrat)***

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**Any salesman knows that you have to deal with people the way they are. Not how you'd like them to be. *(Helen DeWitt, in Lightning Rods)***

**Actually it was not until I was 40 that I was able to go into a room and say to myself, “What do I think of these people?” Before that, I had always thought, “What do these people think of me?” When I became 40, I said to myself, “You are either a whole person now, or you never will be. Believe in yourself.” *(Brooke Astor, in Footprints)***

**Be who you are, say what you feel. Those who mind don't matter. And those who matter don't mind. *(Dr. Seuss)***

**Becoming a public figure was not what Meryl Streep bargained for when she started performing in her high school's musicals in Bernardsville, New Jersey. Even back then, it was always the quiet life that agreed with her best. "When I was in high school and riding in a car with a boy who was driving real fast, there was never an ounce of enjoyment of the thrill," she says, shaking her head. "Part of it is that I've always felt older -- about 40. And I did have this moment when I turned 40 that I felt like my clothes finally fit. I didn't have to be anything other than myself." *(James Greenberg, in Entertainment Weekly)***

**The thing that is really hard, and really amazing, is giving up on being perfect and beginning the work of becoming yourself. *(Anna Quindlen)***

**Unshaven man in T-shirt to wife in curlers and robe: "Gladys, we've got to stop seeing each other like this." *(Hageman, in Weight Watchers Magazine)***

**Think for yourselves and let others enjoy the privilege to do so too. *(Voltaire)***

**Be yourself; everyone else is already taken. (*Oscar Wilde)***

**You are not being called upon to change yourself. You are being asked to be more of what you already are. The invitation is bold, the stakes are high, and the outcome is certain. Dare to live your destiny now. *(Alan Cohen)***

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