



Pause With Purpose

...to refresh

...to grow

Published monthly by
Free to Be
Life Coaching
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Volume 66 - Aug 2011

Pieces, Parts or Whole

In years gone by, there was a game that was quite popular at family reunions and church picnics. Married couples would group according to gender, and then the members of one group would try to identify their spouse by seeing only the feet of the other group members. The process always created laughter and good natured joking.

It's safe to assume that the game wouldn't have been as difficult or as much fun if the body part to be identified was the face. After all, it's common practice for us to use just a face to represent a whole person.

This practice of focusing on parts instead of the whole impacts our lives in interesting ways. Let's look at two of them.

1. As we think of our world in terms of pieces, we may forget that we also are a part of a larger whole. Whether it be a family, a nation, a religious system, or a business, we become the "face" of that larger group to others who observe us. Our speech, our attitudes, and our actions help form their opinion of the groups we are a part of, whether these opinions are accurate or not. Awareness of our ability to bless or embarrass our

affiliates can intimidate us into hiding. However, it can also inspire us to be our best as we seek to represent our groups well.

2. The "parts perspective" can also contribute to our practice of mentally separating our attributes (our actions, reasoning, values, habits, drives, etc.) into distinct pieces, and then working to keep these pieces from interacting with each other. Psychologists call such mental gymnastics "compartmentalization". Since these different (and often contradictory) parts of our self have their own special times and situations to show up, they never have to bump into or confront each other. Consistency is not necessary. Thus, we have Sunday behavior that has no connection to weekday behavior, and speech with family that has no similarity to speech with friends. Different value sets determine different behavior in different situations. Abusive speech is condemned, but then excused because "I was angry". Expressions of love turn into hurtful barbs as conversations change. Sexual indiscretion is dismissed because "it's only sex" and has nothing to do with the rest of our life.

The negative consequences of these separations are obvious. We become unpredictable and untrustworthy. Our identity becomes confused, and conflicting values and behaviors lead us to say things like, "I don't know why I did that - that's just not me!"

Yet, it need not be this way. Each of us needs to discover the person we really are in all types of situations. Feedback from those around us as well as the services of a trusted life coach are especially helpful in this quest. We can then ask ourselves these questions:

1. How willing am I to hear and learn from the feedback of others? How willing am I to grow?
2. What are my true values and beliefs? What am I willing to die for?
3. How willing am I to live out these values in all life areas, at all times?
4. Who do I really want to be, and how do I want to be known?
5. What changes do I have to make to be that person? What's the first step I can take that will start me on this new road?

Indeed, each part of us is unique. Yet, when all of these parts work together as a whole, they form the special person that is our true self.



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CONTACT INFORMATION

Your thoughts and comments are warmly welcomed. I would also be happy to share with you more about life coaching and how it can assist you to be your best, personally and relationally, at home and at work.

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Spirituality and Parts/Whole

Most of us are familiar with the idea that we are made up of body, mind, and spirit. While we often speak of these three human elements as separate entities, it is helpful to recognize that all three significantly influence each other and interact continually to form the unique individual each of us is.

So, what are the spiritual implications of this? Let's note just a few.

1. Everything we do has a spiritual dimension to it. This includes our thoughts, our feelings, our actions, our speech, and so on. They stem from and reveal our inner character and heart. Likewise, they have the power to impact (for better or worse) the spirit of those around us.

2. Our Creator God is not just a Saturday or Sunday God, but one who wishes to be involved in every aspect of our life, relating intimately with us at a very personal level.

3. Worship of our God need not be confined to certain days or places. Rather, every moment of our life is an opportunity to worship with our whole being - body, mind and spirit.

4. Love, like worship, is designed to be a way of life that, ideally, involves all that we are. It's ability to reach beyond our body and mind and touch our spirit is what makes it so powerful and so desired.

Indeed, we are, at our core, spiritual beings living through our bodies and minds. Let's honor this union and celebrate the One who created us as a whole.



"A single event can awaken within us a stranger totally unknown to us."

- Antoine de Saint-Exupery

"No man remains quite what he was when he recognizes himself."

-Thomas Mann