

EXERCISE #5: THE YOUNGER YOU



PART 1.

It has been speculated that we are our most authentic selves when we are around 10 years old. We are old enough to be independent, but we haven't yet entered the teen years with their intense peer pressure. If you think back to when you were 9 or 10 years old, you may see a part of yourself that you lost to adolescence.

Before you go on to the questions, I would like you to put yourself back into your life at around 10 years old. Picture what you looked like. What house were you living in? What school did you go to. (This is grade 5.) What year was it? What was going on in the world at that time. If you really want to get into it, go on YouTube and check out what the popular songs were that year (you probably heard them, even if you weren't into the music scene yet.) What were the TV programs you watched that year?

And now...

Think back. You're 9 or 10 years old. It's Friday night, and you have absolutely no plans for Saturday. The day will be all yours to do with as you please...

1. What are you going to do with this free day?

Now (and this is the hard part), how did that core of who you were translate into the rest of your life? (Example from my own life: when I was 10, I loved to read encyclopedias. As an adult I carried on this trend by earning several graduate degrees. As well, in my “retirement” I read research articles for fun.) Did you find yourself playing those roles in work? Did your 10-year-old interests translate into adult interests?

2. Who are you going to do this with? Alone, or with friends?

3. If you are with friends, what role do you have in the group? Are you the leader? A follower? The idea person? The person who takes care of the details? If you are just with one friend, what is that relationship about?

Secondly, did anything get lost back there? Did you leave anything behind? Do you think nostalgically about some of your activities and interests?

Part 2.

The years between 18 and 22 years old is often a time when we consciously, or semi-consciously, think about what we want our adulthood to look like. It's usually a time of optimistic dreams about our life's work and our adult relationships.

And then the realities of adulthood set in. Many of our dreams are shelved because we have to focus on paying rent, making car payments, maybe we had to give up dreams and interests in order to make compromises in a significant relationship, and then there are the sacrifices of being a parent.

So, I have three simple questions:

1. What were your hopes and dreams when you were 18 – 22 years old?
2. What did you have to give up as the realities of adulthood set in?
3. Ponder, can you go back, retrieve some of these dreams, and live them now?