

Become who you are



"Be yourself, everyone else is already taken"

Oscar Wilde

I hear a lot of people say things like, "I don't like her/his personality", or "his/her personality is unacceptable" or, even, he/she needs to change their personality"

Of course, most people saying the above are actually referring to people's behaviours and know very little about the person's personality

During my seminars, I often ask people to describe my personality; I usually get comments like, "calm", "organised", "assertive", "experienced"

To which I reply, "and what about my personality?"; "you've just described my behaviours, what about my personality?"

Maybe I have made the effort to be calm, organised, etc. but am normally excitable, impulsive and disorganised

Some of the more observant will say I am an extrovert and some of the very observant will say I'm an introvert – I have a preference for introversion, which most people don't see when I am facilitating

So, are behaviours personality, are behaviours part of personality, are they something apart?

Most people are familiar with Freud's Iceberg metaphor of the

personality (even if it should be attributed to Granville Stanley Hall or Gustav Fechner); 10% visible and 90% more or less invisible

Amongst the visible, we find behaviours; the things people say and do, the words they use, how they formulate what they say, their body language, their actions, their gestures – in fact virtually everything that we will “judge” them on and decide whether we like their personality or not.

Amongst the remaining 90% i.e., virtually everything, there is very little that we can “tangibly” see; people’s values, their beliefs, how they perceive the world around them, their desires, their experiences, their memories, their pulsions, their hopes & dreams and there’s a lot of

I’m not convinced that someone’s personality is something to be “liked or disliked”, personality “is”; it’s something that we develop during our formative years and impacts how we “function” (i.e., what goes on inside) and shapes our behaviours (what goes on outside)

For many people; what goes on inside is a complete and utter mystery to them; they have often never considered how they perceive the world around them or how they make their decisions, many people are unaware of their deep beliefs and values and will deny that they have, more or less, unfulfilled desires and pulsions lurking in there somewhere.

If you want to become who you are, you need to understand yourself and how you function; otherwise, you risk becoming who your partner wants you to be, who your children want you to be or maybe who your friends or your employer want you to be

“You can please some of the people all of the time, you can please all of the people some of the time, but you can’t please all of the people all of the time”

Abraham Lincoln

You don't need to become a zen monk and spend months on end sitting cross-legged in a mountain cave in order to discover yourself, nor do you need a weekly visit to the psychiatrist's couch; however, it does need to be a conscious and continuous process – in my opinion, it's not a "nice to have", it's an "essential to have".

"We all have two lives. The second one starts when we realize we only have one"

Confucius