

Profiles in personality

Self-examination promotes learning, growth



liant concept!" A brilliant concept from a brilliant person, but that's beside the point. The point is that I thought it was brilliant.

It also got me to thinking. I started wondering how it is possible to totally gauge your own personality. I mean, there are obviously some things about yourself that absolutely no one will know unless you tell them. On the other hand, everyone has some things that go totally unnoticed to ourselves. And if they're not unnoticed, we definitely perceive them differently than the wonderful world outside our brain.

It is, however, possible to look at yourself objectively. You just have to partially step out of yourself for a while. I know, I know, that's a big step for some of us, but it's not impossible. You can't step totally out of yourself, though. If you did that you would cease to be yourself — either that or you'll spontaneously implode, but that doesn't happen very often.

To step out of yourself you have to focus on yourself. And I don't mean start relating every single detail of the day back to you in order to get the attention of others. That's not how it works.

I mean pay attention to yourself sometimes. Listen to what you say to others and how you say it. That's not

so bad, is it? You just might realize that when you say something you think is positive or very simple, that it's not. Think about it. Did you ever say something, and everyone took it the wrong way? Well, think about what you said and how you said it, and you just might realize that you would have taken it the wrong way, too.

You have to pay attention to what you do, as well. Study your actions and body positions when reacting to certain statements, occurrences and even certain people. You just might discover that when you thought you weren't reacting at all, you were telling everyone else you hate the idea simply through your actions. Want to learn more about what body languages tell others? There's a theater class about it. You might want to check it out.

I warn you, though, doing these things can cause great stress on the mind. You could discover things about yourself you never thought you were capable of doing. Trust me, I know. There was a long period of time when I thought there was no way I could think or say racist thoughts.

Then I started listening to the things I said regarding certain situations and people. I scared the hell out

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of myself. I did, however, adjust myself to what I thought was right, but it wasn't an easy task.

It took months of paying attention to what I said and second-guessing myself before I found myself saying and thinking the way I thought was proper.

Don't get me wrong, I still have thoughts I prefer not to have. In fact, I really don't think I'll ever be up to par by my own standards, but I've changed a lot. I've learned to think through things before I say them.

I also have to constantly remind myself how I'd feel if someone said similar things to me. And it's not just about race, either. I've had to re-evaluate many of my feelings in the past few years because I started listening to myself, and I realized how out of it I was. Yes, it's a difficult process, and sometimes you want to just go back to the old way, but you can't.

You can't because the act of listening to yourself and evaluating

what you believe is a sign of growing up. Yes, we all still have some growing up to do. Everyone, I think, grows up a little more each day. And not just because we get a day older but because we get a day wiser as well.

Paying attention to yourself is very important in knowing who you are. You may think you know who you are at first, but you only really know who you are after you think about it. And just because my friend decided to use her friends in the process doesn't mean that everyone has to. That was simply her choice.

I will say that friends are a wonderful source of information about you. Why do you think they find someone that was close to you to speak at your funeral (aside from the fact there is absolutely no way you can speak for yourself)?

And to the wonderful lady that sent me that e-mail, thanks for stimulating my thought process once again.

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Dream a little dream

Living vicariously provides a lifetime of excellence

K. B.
Masterpiece
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Karen Brown



There is another world out there, and it is better than this one.

No, it's not "outer space," but it is full of stars.

This world exists in us all and can be found if you have the ability to lose yourself for minute scraps of time and become someone different, new, horrible or fantastic.

I don't know about you, but I'm not that exciting. I usually try to be, but things always seem to fall into place too easily after awhile.

I'm afraid of relationships because I fear patterns and routines like the plague.

I can't talk to my parents on the phone because it seems I have nothing new to say, even though we speak rather sparsely.

I need to enter into different realms of existence in order to quench my insecurities that exist in this life; at least for a little while.

For me, there is a constant blurring of fantasy and reality in life. This is probably because I daydream more than I should.

I lie awake at night because there, in my room, I can be anyone I desire. Nothing sick and twisted, just an escape from the life that wears me down, because sometimes life ain't no fun.

Of course, you always have to wake up and face the crowd, but there is always another night and more daydreaming to be had.

This past week, for instance, I was a rock star. Part of the Indigo Girls, to be exact.

Watching them perform on stage, my mind started to slip, and soon, I was up there with them, performing the way I know I could if only I knew

how to play the guitar and write profound lyrics to make 5,000 girls swoon (and about 10 boys).

But I can't do these things, and I probably won't ever get off my butt and do the things I only dream of, so I'm going to live their lives for a couple of hours.

I was also an outlaw this week, even though my mother would say I've always been one.

I spent 12 hours on Sunday watching the likes of John Wayne, Clint Eastwood and Jimmy Stewart tear it up on the TV screen.

I've always turned my nose up at Western movies. I've had a disposition to think they are boring.

Now, after seeing how tough Clint Eastwood used to be, I want to live in the mid-19th century. Give me saloons, whores and dust, dust, dust.

I shiver uncontrollably while hearing that lonely, whistle-like sound that is indicative of a duel at high noon.

Only in this Western world can I ride on the brink of danger, not knowing whether to let civilization take hold, or to go ahead and kill as a way of settlin' an argument.

Only in the West (the one that seems too good to have been true) can I hold a Winchester in my hands and shoot Liberty Valance right between the eyes as I grip my stogie tighter between my unbrushed teeth.

But, of course, all this is happening on screen and in my mind, because real life is full of automobiles and interstates, not horses and dirt roads.

In "real" life, I would never touch a gun to save my hide. Maybe a machine gun, but only for fishing, and that sort of takes the "sport" out of the sport.

Perhaps the most enticing moment to let go this week was the night I saw "The Nutcracker" at the Orpheum Theatre in Omaha.

My brother's wife, Sarah Brown, is a most superb ballerina (if it's cool to call them ballerinas) for the Omaha Theater Co. Ballet. Maybe,

instead of ballerina, they prefer to be called "pristine astronomical machinations of excellency." Who knows?

I had never seen "The Nutcracker," and nary did I know the plot.

Talk about one trippy tale. I think I missed the part about how Clara falls asleep, thus providing an even stranger premise.

I could have assumed that it was all a dream, but I didn't want to know for sure. I didn't ask for clarity of plot from my brother for the same reason why I didn't ask my parents if Santa Claus was real when I was a child.

A child? Hardly, I suppose. I think I was 11 when I finally had to be told that the big, round man in the red suit and beard was not real but was indeed my father.

Anyway, during the ballet, I couldn't figure out why giant mice were trying on tutus and what would possess a tin of candy to come alive and show us her "treats."

I didn't know snowflakes could be so big and non-melting and why an Arabian dancer just floated on the stage out of nowhere.

All this surely must have frightened the children in the audience, but as I looked around, there was nothing but joy and laughter.

I was so enchanted that I thought I was Clara the whole night.

I hate intermissions because they disrupt the surreal flow. "The Nutcracker" breeds in people's hearts and thoughts.

I can't believe Sarah does this for a living. She lives

and breathes ballet, but I don't know if she realizes how electrified I was in the audience and how jealous.

I wish I could have the grace she possesses and the ability to overlook the countless nights rehearsing just for the few hours to get up on stage and dance.

I scare myself by thinking I am already too old to be truly great at something — anything. But I'm content with day-dreaming and living vicariously through thousands of other people.

After all, they don't know that I'm, say, being John Malkovich for an afternoon.

I know I can't escape the real world all the time. Especially not right now. I have tons of homework to do this week.



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