



Watch Yourself: The Value of Self-observation

“Did you hear what you just said?” a good friend asked me recently. It was a close friend, a person who both cares about me and knows the real me. I had made a comment that surprised her, because what I said was not in alignment with what she knows I believe. Although I was caught unaware, I let her know that I valued the feedback because she had the courage and kindness to point out that I was having a moment of non-self-awareness and incongruity. It is important to me to be congruent with my values as much as humanly possible. And sometimes, when it comes to self-awareness, I get by with a little help from my friends.

Self-observation and awareness are some of our most powerful tools as we struggle to show up as our authentic selves. We

can observe under what circumstances we step out of our integrity and go along with popular beliefs, or notice when we spout off about something that we don't really have any knowledge about.

Regardless of any popular opinions, I find that I am happiest when I show up as the person I really am. This honesty, while sometimes painful, is one way I practice living in my highest integrity. Although I'm not able to be 100 percent authentic at all times, it is my most powerful way of being, and I continually strive for it.

When I am “in it,” I am my real, authentic self. My ego steps out of the way and lets the real me shine through. People I communicate with get the real me, open and honest, respectful and kind, warts and all. They

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“Your next year is too important to live it without a plan.” – Diane Vasarkovy

may not agree with my words, but they can rely on my authenticity. Trust builds, relationships strengthen, and my reputation increases.

I don't necessarily want the world to love me, (that comes under the heading of emotionally needy.) I strive to be authentic. And I find that often what others think of me is actually about them, not me. If others understand that what I'm saying is true for me, I can be content that I am indeed showing up authentically.

So, the ability to watch myself, or self-observe is key to validating how I show up in the world. The actual words I say are one indicator, and there are others. Let me share with you a Buddhist quote that I've cherished for years.

Watch your thoughts:
They become your words.

Watch your words:
They become your actions.

Watch your actions:
They become your habits.

Watch your habits:
They become your character.

Watch your character:
It becomes your destiny.

Over and over again, our results tell the truth about us.

So, why not give yourself a powerful gift and practice a bit more self-observation? Take the time to notice yourself, and whether your words (and actions) are true to what you actually believe. You might be surprised.

WHEN YOUR WORDS DON'T MATCH YOUR MUSIC

There is no magic formula to help ensure that you will always be in your integrity. It is a singular process that you can choose to practice yourself, as I do. I can remind you to stop and check in with yourself once in a while. And by all means, invite those few, very close friends to feel free to comment when your "words don't match your music." And be ready to receive any feedback in the loving spirit in which it is sent. It could be a true gift.

What I am describing is some of the hardest and most rewarding work in life. Watching our thoughts, words, actions, habits and character can seem daunting. It's not something to aspire to; it is a way to be. On any given day, we may notice that we are more authentic than others. And it is the striving that brings us into ourselves more fully. When we fall short, we can simply begin again and give ourselves the gift of self-compassion. And that's a great topic for another day... 🐺

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