
Country Philosopher

The Real Me



I'M TRYING TO FIND THE REAL ME.

My friends . . . if you reach the age of twenty-one and don't know the real you then you simply aren't trying. And you aren't being very honest. There is solace in searching for the "real you" if you know for a fact that the "real you" is a rotten, lousy human being. The pity of this masquerade is that there can be no correction, no new direction, if your beating your mother involved someone other than the real you.

How massive is this subterfuge? I wanted to find the answer to this question and so I stopped some people the other day and asked:

"DO YOU KNOW THE REAL YOU?"

Mark Haley: I'm afraid not. I've been unsuccessful in life and yet there is a potential within me that will someday bring release. I've just got too much pride. Pride is that one thing that motivates me and keeps me from achieving what you would consider normalcy. My entire being is wallowing in pride. I march to the beat of pride. And . . . by the way . . . could you let me have a quarter? You see . . . I have this sick sister . . . and . . .

Nellie Park: The real me? I'm afraid I don't. I become confused when I cheat on my husband. There is an awesome doubt when I realize how fantastically pure is the hate I have for

my children. I can hardly believe my ignorance. I hated the first one and then to plod on and have eight more . . . baby . . . is that logic? I haven't one single sincere friend in this world and every effort I put forth germinates

into disaster. Take the time I drowned the kittens. Who would have believed the reaction I got from my neighbors? From my children? Or the time I burned down the synagogue. No . . . I'm afraid I don't know the real me.

Bill Talley: I'm afraid I don't. There is a vast inconsistency to my life. On one hand I denounce the existence of God. I firmly believe that lying and cheating is the only path to happiness. I could eat an apple in front of a starving child and just relish the hell out of that apple. I think that when we sustain ourselves through something as fragile as friendship then we are doomed. On the other hand I support my blind mother. So you see . . . there is an inconsistency . . . and really . . . I'm still trying to find the real me.

Helen Trent: For the past thirty years I have searched, unsuccessfully, to find the real me. In each of my six marriages I have combed my conscience to find the cause of failure. Could it be my survival of the fittest philosophy? The fact that You look out

for number one? They blame me for my six bad marriages, and yet I had a husband (my fourth) who was still wetting the bed at forty years of age. Can you imagine? I keep preaching that the idiots have inherited the earth. Am I the only person in this world who has reached the absolute pinnacle of intellectuality? Is there not another living soul who could help me barricade the road that humanity uses in its march to oblivion? But with all the genius of my contribution there still flickers the question . . . AM I PERFECT? I do not ask this facetiously . . . but to erase my only doubt. AM I ABSOLUTELY PERFECT? So you see . . . there is a minute possibility that the real me isn't me at all.

Greg Gorkin: What a delightful question. The real me? Honey, I've known the real me for the past twenty years. I know where I'm going and where I've been. I know exactly who I am and what I am . . . and . . . by the way . . . your trousers are adorable.