

How to Find Yourself Through Business

by

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An extract from "How to Find Yourself (or a reasonable facsimile)"

<http://www.hidden-people.net/how-to-find-yourself.html>

There have been volumes written, published and consumed on the techniques and fundamentals of business. Business as a way of life, a way of being, as a replacement for being. There are thousands, even millions, who seek identity through business. Identity, however, should be approached as more than just a nine-to-five proposition. Ideally, it should be a round-the-clock occurrence.

Believe it or not, but there are people who get up in the morning not knowing who they are. They wash and eat breakfast actively shunning who they are -- they travel to work with blank looks on their faces -- only upon reaching their place of employment and going directly to their business spot, will a strange anxiety be quieted. They become Joe Blow or Suzy Nothing, desk five, cubicle thirty. They disappear into paper work. They are

competitive and eat sugared foods. Some are known to eagerly accept overtime, work through lunch and even to come in on Saturdays. These are hard-core Business Identity Substitutes and are usually pleasant, energetic, have pre-mature grey hair and die at an early age -- they also happen to make a lot of money, which some people think is much more fun than finding yourself.

As an illustration of this point, I offer the following excerpts from the diary of one Mr. Betts, a former Junior Executive at one of our more formidable multi-national corporations.

After a promising quick rise in the business world, Mr. Betts was stricken with Doubt, a usually fatal frame of mind within the business community. On the sly, Mr. Betts sought therapy, and due to a particularly fragile nature, his defense system rapidly fell into disarray and he was institutionalized. After intense psychotherapy, he developed a radical reaction to his own previous lifestyle.

June 2nd

The haze is clearing; I'm beginning to understand.

Most of my life I've possessed a driving urge to be a suit and tie. Even as a boy, I would sneak into my parents' bedroom, put a tie round my neck, finger my father's pinstriped suit and fall into a reverie. I would pretend to compose memos, make decisions and abuse my subordinates. Once, in childish curiosity, I did experiment with putting on my mother's jewelry and

underwear, and, although a somewhat pleasing, tranquil-making pastime, wanting to be a size 36-D brassiere just didn't come close to the *zing* and boom of being a suit and tie.

It never occurred to me to sit down and ask myself, Who Am I? Instead, I wondered what it would take to get into the Harvard Business School. The essence of my being was the bottom line. The Profit Margin and Me, I could write a book about it.

Nowadays, I have a totally different perspective. I find it very strange that people willingly say, *Hi, I'm Jones from IBM. I'm Schmidt from XYZ. I'm Harvey of ABC.* Most of my acquaintances have turned permanently into suit and ties: it's become more important to them which acronym they represented rather than who they were.

And that's where I've been. That's where I've come from.

But now I'm Betts from nowhere -- unemployed but in sure possession of self-knowledge.

The question remains, what type of job can I get with this qualification?

June 3rd.

Went for my first interview today. Was questioned about my qualifications.

"You've put down on your application, Mr. Betts, that you know yourself."

"Yes, that's true. I know who I am."

"I can understand your pride in the matter. Only shouldn't this particular information be with your Personal History and not under Previous Experience and Qualifications?"

"Well, it's what I feel I do best."

"Know yourself?"

"Yes."

"And that's what you're looking for? A job in knowing yourself? And what do you think your salary requirements would be? Really, Mr. Betts...."

I was not offered a position.

But now that I've given up Anglo-Saxon Capitalistic Materialism, I find the one thing I do really well, and enjoy doing endlessly, is knowing myself. I wish I could find a job where self-knowledge is a career. This lack clearly demonstrates the shortsightedness of the modern society's structure....

June 12th

What is the *use* of self-knowledge? The practical use?

I've been the rounds of over a dozen potential employers and not one of them has been seriously interested in my self-knowledge. Indeed, some are outright mocking about it.

"So you've found yourself? What did you do, lose it? Maybe you fastened a collar around its neck, reading 'In case of loss, please return to owner?'"

"My God, Mr. Betts, you know yourself! I'm sorry, but although we are an equal opportunity employer, we only hire confused people."

"Hmm ... self-knowledge ... do you have a diploma for this? What might be the final examination for this sort of thing: 'To the best of your ability, when did you first noticed your navel and what impact it had on your later life?' Really, Mr. Betts, I'm sure you're a nice person, but do you really know your ass from a hole in the ground?"

June 28th

More interviews. More abuse.

"Here, Mr. Betts, you're required to cook food fast -- we have no available facilities and very little time for our employees to sink suddenly into an introspective reverie while the buns are burning."

I'm not certain how long my self-respect and sensitive nature can take this. The crass commercial world is gnawing away....

June (July)

More of the same, only more so. Strange. It's all so strange. I feel strange.

July 31st

I don't believe it.

July 32nd

I still don't believe it.

August -5th through +20th

I think I'm starting to believe something.

Week before last

My brains are beginning to melt. I put in earplugs.

Day after Yesterday

Doctor came to visit me today, but I wouldn't come out of the closet. After all, I have all my friends in here. The pussycat that doesn't move any more, a torn T-shirt from my childhood, two funny bent matches, and a couple of minutes left of an all-day sucker.

How could I leave all my little friends? I'd been telling them all about myself for days, and they listened and seemed to understand....

Then the doctor sent in two very large people and after a long time they found me in my secret place in the corner and they grabbed me by my self-knowledge but I wouldn't let go.

Soon, though, I forgot everything and turned into a vegetable deep in the ground waiting for Spring.

Coda

There are those in the business world who claim that a little self-knowledge is a dangerous thing, but that a lot of self-knowledge can be terminal. Happily, this is still open to debate.

"Self-knowledge is an indulgent luxury. Tell me if I'm wrong, but I see it as a dog-eat-dog world out there, and it's better if you study closely the size of the other guy's canines rather than your Self."

"I usually just take two aspirins," Hopkins put in.

"It's the result of a permissive education," said a CEO. "There's too much emphasis put on individual integrity and not enough on social integration."

Hopkins said, "Last time I took two aspirins, they gave me a headache, so I took two more aspirins and that gave me a stomach ache, then I took two more aspirins because the room was wobbling, then I took some more aspirins and woke up in the hospital, a tube up my nose and a hose down my throat. Isn't that an interesting sidelight?"

"Shut-up, Hopkins," said another CEO.

"Yes, sir."

"Why can't there more employees like Hopkins? He's servile, meticulous, and we've got him by the nuts. Except for the occasional overdose, he's an ideal worker. Where are the major corporations going to find a high caliber of people if everyone gets a notion in their heads to start

asking metaphysical questions about themselves which no one can give a practical answer to?"

"Perhaps Free Radicals are beaming down Self-Doubt from their satellites?"

"My suspicions exactly."

"Yes."

"Hmm...."

"Harrumph!"

"Anyone have an aspirin?"