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Dear Reader:

A few days ago a book that I found particularly intriguing came into my hands. It addressed and named something that - because it is so common - we rarely are aware of, almost like a fish that doesn't know it lives in water. Author Parker J. Palmer describes how we live "divided lives", and the toll we are paying for that. With permission of the author, I have selected a few paragraphs that we're sharing with you here, as well as a comment by one of LIM's coaches, Dr. Camille Preston, whose work is focused on developing trusting relationships in the workplace. We hope you feel inspired to find out more about this topic.

Enjoy the reading!

Isabel Rimanoczy
Editor

Quote of the Month

"No one to fool but myself."

Parker J. Palmer



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DIVIDED LIVES

Extracted from "The Hidden Wholeness" ^[1]
by Parker J. Palmer

"The instinct to protect ourselves by living divided lives emerges when we are young, as we start

to see the gaps between life's bright promise and its shadowy realities. But as children, we are able to deal with those "dark abysses" by sailing across them on the "winged energy of delight" that is every child's birthright gift.

This energy comes from the soul- the core of pure being that children are so intimate with- that is, as the poet Rumi says, "here for its own joy". The remarkable resilience youngsters often reveal, even in the face of great hardship, comes from this place called the soul. [...]

As the outer world becomes more demanding [...] we stop going to our rooms, shutting the door, walking into the wardrobe and entering the world of the soul. And the closer we get to adulthood, the more we stifle the imagination that journey requires. Why? Because imagining other possibilities for our lives would remind us of the painful gap between who we most truly are and the role we play in the so-called real world.

As we become more obsessed with succeeding, or at least surviving, in that world, we lose touch with our souls and disappear into our roles. The child with a harmless after-school secret becomes the masked and armored adult - at considerable cost to self, to others and to the world at large. It is a cost that can be itemized in ways well known to many of us:

- We sense that something is missing in our lives and search the world for it, not understanding that what is missing is us
- We feel fraudulent, even invisible, because we are not in the world as who we really are [...]
- We project our inner darkness on others, making "enemies" of them and making the world a more dangerous place
- Our inauthenticity and projections make real relationships impossible, leading to loneliness
- Our contributions to the world - especially through the work we do - are tainted by duplicity and deprived of the life-giving energies of true self.

Those are not exactly the marks of a life well lived. But they are not uncommon among us, in part because the dividedness that creates them comes highly recommended by popular culture. "Don't wear your heart on your sleeve" and "Hold your cards close to your vest" are just two examples of how we are told from an early age that "masked and armored" is the safe and sane way to live.

But our culture has it backward. The truth is that the more dividedness we perceive in each other, the less safe and sane we feel. Every day - as we interact with family, friends, acquaintances, and strangers - we ask ourselves if "what we see is what we get". And all those other people are asking the same about us! Being cautious about the degree of congruence between outer appearance and inner reality is one of our species' most ancient ways of seeking safety in a perilous world.

"Is this person the same on the inside as he or she seems to be on the outside?" [...] When the answer is yes, we relax, believing that we are in the presence of integrity and feeling secure enough to invest ourselves in the relationship and all that surrounds it.

But when the answer is no, we go on high alert. Not knowing who or what we are dealing with and feeling unsafe, we hunker down in a psychological foxhole and withhold the investment of our energy, commitment and gifts. Students refuse to take the risks involved in learning, employees do not put their hearts into their work, patients cannot partner with physicians in their own healing, and citizens disengage from the political process. The perceived incongruity of inner and outer - the inauthenticity that we sense in others, or they in us - constantly undermines our morale, our relationships, and our capacity for good work.

So "masked and armored", it turns out, is *not* the safe and sane way to live. If our roles were more deeply informed by the truth that is in our souls, the general level of sanity and safety would rise dramatically. A teacher who shares his or her identity with students is more effective than one who lobs factoids at them from behind a wall. A supervisor who leads from personal authenticity gets better work out of people than one who leads from a script. [...]

Becoming Whole Adults

The divided life may be endemic, but wholeness is always a choice. Once I have seen my dividedness, do I continue to live a contradiction - or do I try to bring my inner and outer worlds back into harmony? [...] But next comes fear: if I let that inner voice dictate the shape of my life, what price might I have to pay in a world that sometimes punishes authenticity? [...]

But this I *can* claim: Every time we get in touch with the truth source we carry within, there is net moral gain for all concerned. Even if we fail to follow its guidance fully, we are nudged a bit further in that direction. And the next time we are conflicted between inner truth and outer reality, it becomes harder to forget or deny that we have an inner teacher who wants to lay a claim on our lives.

[...] The divided life is a wounded life, and the soul keeps calling us to heal the wound. Ignore that call, and we find ourselves trying to numb our pain with an anesthetic of choice, be it substance abuse, overwork, consumerism, or mindless media noise. Such anesthetics are easy to come by in a society that wants to keep us divided *and* unaware of our pain - for the divided life that is pathological for individuals can serve social systems well [...] Institutions have been known to punish people for living integral lives.

No one wants to suffer the penalties that come from living "divided no more". But there can be no greater suffering than living a lifelong lie. As we move closer to the truth that lives within us - aware that in the end what will matter most is knowing that we stayed true to ourselves - institutions start losing their sway over our lives.

This does not mean we must abandon institutions. In fact, when we live by the soul's imperatives, we gain the courage to serve institutions more faithfully, to help them resist their tendency to default on their own missions." 

[1] Parker J. Palmer. *A Hidden Wholeness. The Journey Toward An Undivided Life*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004.

About Trust

by *Dr. Camille Preston*

As I read about Parker's concept of the divided self, I became curious about how that would connect with being perceived as trustworthy. How do we rectify the dissonance inherent when we live divided lives? Are we

betraying ourselves when we ourselves do not act or speak in alignment with what we believe? If someone is living "a divided life", how do we know which life is real or authentic? We often speak about being trustworthy and yet what does that really mean - who defines trust and how can we become more trustworthy?

When pushed to describe trust, people often move into abstraction - "I just *know* it when we feel it...". Without a shared understanding about what trust is - how it is developed, how it can be broken, and how to build it - we are unable to talk about trust, let alone begin to strengthen or rebuild our trustworthiness.

The Chagnon & Reina Trust and Betrayal Model ^[1] provides a framework suggesting that there are three key components of trust - Character, Disclosure and Capability. We experience *Trust of Character* in individuals who keep agreements, establish boundaries and manage expectations consistently. We practice *Trust of Disclosure* when information is shared with good purpose, mistakes are admitted and confidentiality is maintained. We have *Trust of Capability* when we believe in people's skills, that they have the ability to do that which they promised.

The Chagnon & Reina model also argues that trust is built incrementally over time and that it is reciprocal - you have to give it to get it. By living in congruity with these three components of trust we develop our capacity to trust ourselves. As our capacity for trust expands, we have more to give AND thus we become more trustworthy to ourselves and to others.

Trust of character and disclosure reinforce Parker Palmer's concepts of congruity and the need to transparency. If our friends, family and colleagues are to trust us - we must act and speak consistently across all areas of our life.

This journey toward rebuilding trust begins within each of us. Finding moments for reflection, we can begin to peel back *the masks* of our divided lives and let down the *armor* that has built up overtime. Exploring our "so-called real world roles", we can uncover those areas where the inner and outer have become disconnected. With new knowledge and awareness, we are at choice to integrate, align and begin to close the gap. By beginning to be reacquainted with ourselves, we rebuild trust from the inside out, beginning with ourselves. 

[1] [Dennis S. Reina, Ph.D. and Michelle L. Reina, Ph.D. \(1999\) *Trust and Betrayal in the Workplace: Building Effective Relationships in your Organization*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers; 1st edition \(December 15, 1999\). Or \[www.trustinworkplace.com\]\(http://www.trustinworkplace.com\).](#)

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