



The Catalyst™

Catalyst - noun - pronounced (kat-l-ist):
A person or thing that precipitates an event or change.

A Monthly Inspirational Newsletter

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You CAN Make A Difference™

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Why You Need A Secret Identity

This week my faith in community activism was truly tested as a breakdown in communication and an inability to resolve issues forced me to tender my letter of resignation from the executive board of a well respected civic organization. It was really disconcerting, as we seemed to have the same goals, but we could not agree on the best way to achieve them. I wish the members and the organization well, concurrently, I chose to be solution-oriented and refused to be a part of decisions that do not incorporate “good sense” and industry best practices. This experience has taught me a valuable lesson about myself and human relations.

Have you ever wondered why superheroes need secret identities? They could just be “Super” all the time - right? The DC comic book hero Superman© stands for truth, justice, and the American way. He directs all his efforts in an attempt to help foster those values and to help others in a truly altruistic manner. Why should Superman© downplay his “Super-ness” and his desire to promote truth, justice, and the American way? Why the need for a secret identity?

A colleague of mine, Ms. Rashidah Madyun, pointed out that even Superman© can't be “super” all the time. She explained that Superman© uses his secret identity, Clark Kent, to acquire information, help others, and go places where Superman© can't, or would not be most effective: “He has to know when to be super and when to be mild mannered.” She said, “No one is threatened by Clark Kent. He's meek, cerebral, even a little clumsy or nerdy, but always like-able. No one's ego is stepped on by a personality like Clark Kent.” The analogy hit me like a ton of kryptonite. I was trying to be super all the time!

If you don't know me I'm a pretty big guy (6'6" 270lbs former collegiate basketball player) which gives me a very significant physical presence. I have a very strong personality. I am: confident, self assured, highly educated, worldly, and a collegiate debate champion - which means I can be argumentative. Rashidah pointed out that I might be too much for some people to handle, and that I might be intimidating. I paused and immediately thought to myself “what have I done to warrant such a response?” I'm professional, fair, a good listener, and hardworking. I have never done anything or exhibit character traits which would support such a claim. But I also suffer from an advanced form of B.B.S.: **Big Blackman Syndrome**, a condition the main stream media always seems to portray as: violent, uneducated, and prone to criminal behavior.

My size alone would be enough to cause most people to pause, so imagine what happens when you throw in my strong personality traits. Combine my size with those strong leadership qualities and you have a pretty dynamic person. Please know that I don't make these statements to impress you, but to impress upon you that mediocrity attacks greatness! Unfortunately, many people in contemporary American society suffer from low self esteem and low self love, and when you choose to use your talents and gifts in a way that will manifest greatness, their low self esteem will trigger feelings of envy, jealousy, and resentment which causes them to resist your efforts to help them.

Now am I comparing myself to Superman®? Not exactly. But I am saying that I definitely need to develop a secret identify so that my "David-ness" is not so in your face or intimidating. I will continue to say what I mean, and mean what I say - that's ok to do. I will continue to believe that I should never compromise the principles of honesty, hard work, accountability/responsibility, fairness, the pursuit of truth, and good communication - there's nothing wrong with that either. But one of the key tools to use in becoming a good communicator is understanding the difference between presentation vs. content.

The moral of the story is about timing - knowing when to present your "super" side and when to relax, listen, observe, and let your secret identity gather the information you will need in order to execute your plan in the most effective manner. Don't ever stop trying to help. Don't ever stop your efforts to be a resource to other people, even when the people you are trying to help don't appreciate or recognize it. It's always right to do right!

Take Action and Develop Your Super Powers - Be a Principle-Centered Person.

There is a saying: "Everyone has a price." Do you have a price? Do you know what you stand for? Do you know which principles in your life are non-negotiable? What do you value so much that you will not compromise for any cost? When should you compromise on the following: honesty, hard work, accountability/responsibility, fairness, the pursuit of truth, and good communication?

The answers will reveal a lot about your character.

Remember... You **CAN** Make A Difference!™

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