



OLD way! NEW way!

Attention! Attention! Attention! I was a 'go get involved' kind of a kid. **I was involved in everything. You name it, and I was most likely part of it.** I loved running around, made the most of the recesses, played and sometimes fought with friends. Even so, I was quite weary of overdoing it, because my step mom who was teaching at the same school would come to hear of it. Then, it would be an outpour of beatings on our return walk home. ;) So, I held myself back many a time.

I was a hands on fella, would get muddy and dirty like a pig. Yeah! You got it! My step mom would be fuming. She was especially concerned about the white pair of uniforms. The poor lady had to wash all our clothes with her hands, she would soak them in soap and then beat them against a hard washing rock and then squeeze them out to hang them to dry. It must have been awful for her, especially to whiten my browned uniforms. I do get it now, but at that time, I couldn't care any less. I loved my freedom and made the most of it. I was brilliant, did well for myself, but hardly ever focused on studies. I couldn't concentrate. **I was a great dreamer, loved day dreaming. Yes, of course all kids dream, but I think I was a little obsessive about it.**

In everything, **I was trying to get attention** and on that route **trying to find my identity and security**. The school I was attending had a tie up with the Compassion Child Project and guess what, the beauty about that was "Free Food". Wow! I knew the weekly menu by heart. Couldn't help it, I loved food and that is an understatement. My plate would be piled up with food and I ate everything, the tiniest morsel too. But why? Well, I was being practical. You see I didn't know what the situation at home would be in the evening. So, it just makes sense to fill my stomach when I could. I also proudly showed everyone that I could eat so much. Again I was trying to figure out my identity.

At the end of each school year, at the Annual Day Prize distribution, I would receive about 15 to 20 prizes. You do remember that I participated in everything. Why? Well, again that was one way I could find my identity. It could be elocution, essay writing, poetry, acting, singing, anything and I was there. I was pretty good at acting and singing.

Then there were these sports events and I always came first in them. Sports were my heart beat, I would always win prizes. Triple Jump, Long Jump, High Jump, Shot Put, Athletics, be it 100 or 200 meters sprint or the 4 x100 meters relay, Kho Kho, Volley Ball, Throw Ball and Kabaddi, I put my heart and soul in them. Although these sound professional and glamorous, remember the school I was studying at was very, very poor. There were no facilities, no play grounds, no tracks, no jumping pits, no running shoes, there was nothing. So, for the sprint, we would run touch the wall at the end and run back. High jumps were on sand and the back would hurt badly. But, you know what anything was better than what was happening at home.

With all those prizes, did I practice? Of course, I did. I jumped open drainages, open sewage gutters or jumped over barbed fences (I tore the skin on my thigh once). I would throw huge rocks and cement blocks, practicing my shots for the Shot Put. My imagination was vivid, so for practicing at sprints, I would imagine being chased by a gang and would run as though for my life. I did have a running commentary though to go with it. I ran on deserted roads to improve my speed.

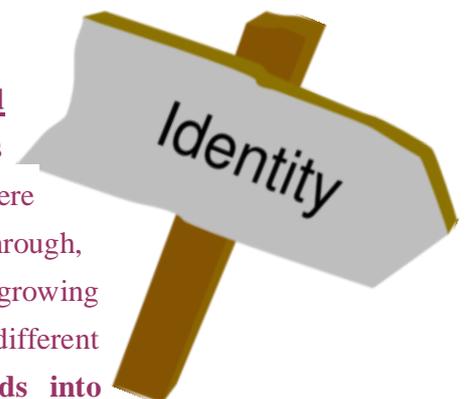
Today, I sit back and realise. **Ahhhh! I was so desperately trying to find my identity.** The environments I grew up at home, left me confused and hurt. While these above things seem great, there were also these other things that I did that were not so great.

Why? Well, they brought me attention and helped find my identity.

The dictionary defines a “masterpiece” as “a person’s greatest work of art,” or a “consummate example of skill or excellence.” Now, when God describes you as His masterpiece, what comes into your mind? Do you accept His assessment, or do you think, “Well, He must surely be talking about someone else...if He really knew me, He wouldn’t think that!”

Your personal identity—how you see yourself—is often shaped by your early experiences in life.

Maybe your parents said things to you as a child that made you doubt your worth. Maybe you were rejected or abused. If so, I can relate to what you have been through, because I experienced every kind of rejection and abuse as I was growing up. I was sexually, verbally, emotionally and physically abused by different people from the time. **I then carried those emotional wounds into**



my relationships and work. I would go on thinking, others need to change and then it struck me, “ahh... I need to change. I need to be secure.”

Even when I met and married Manju (my wife)—a wonderful, loving woman—I didn't know how to give or receive love. I was controlling, manipulative, angry, critical, negative, overbearing and judgmental. All I had grown up with, I had become. My problems were deep inside me, caused by years of abuse, a wrong mindset and my wounded emotions.

I had to take one step at a time. **First, find my security, then my purpose.** I will conclude with four questions that you could ask by pinpointing your purpose and finding true meaning and identity.

1. **Things I won't** (List them. Spend time thinking and write carefully. Your strong convictions and resolutions that you have now kept and practiced)
2. **Things I Can't** (Things you have learnt and got burnt from, in the past. You know it is a mistake and are determined not to do again)
3. **Things I Must** (Things you are working out right now in your life. Things that are becoming your perspectives and convictions)
4. **Things I can** (Things that you learn from others that you need to improve, you are good at etc. Things you need to work on and try)

Try to be aware of why you are doing what you are doing. What are you seeking to get out of it? Are you seeking to get someone's attention, approval, appreciation or applause, or are you doing what you are doing, because you like doing it? Doing things seeking attention from others is childish it's what we see toddlers do.

You should rather be doing things that you want to do, things that you know are right and should be done and they should be done the best way possible.

As far as possible try not to seek your identity in what you do, **rather seek your identity and purpose in who you genuinely are.** That my friend, is the key.

God has made you very special and unique. There is no one else like you. Engrave that on your heart's tablet :)



Your Security is your PURPOSE! Your Purpose is your SECURITY!