

## Being Authentic: Kindness, Not Nice-ness

By Sherry McHenry & Pamela Wilz

Many of us are taught at an early age that we have to be *nice* in order to be loved and accepted. “**Be nice**” says the parent while disciplining a child. *Nice* is how we are conditioned towards others. We want to be polite and respect others during our daily interactions. The sort of nice that I wish to address here is a different type of nice, the type that comes at a cost to our own well-being and peace of mind.

At times, being nice means that our own needs and true feelings get repressed. We can become afraid to honestly express what is *really* going on inside of us as this could lead to disapproval and judgment from others. Our conditioned beliefs remind us that we may be rejected or that it is selfish to think of ourselves. The internal dialogue says that “*I should put everyone’s needs before my own. I can’t get my needs met!*” The belief is that we do not have a choice. This can create unexpressed feelings of anxiety, anger, fear and resentment. We don’t always know how to convey what’s going on within us without coming across as mean-spirited or demanding. We may not even be consciously aware of our own habitual patterns of communication.

Often, we believe that it is much better to protect ourselves from being vulnerable by hiding behind a lifeless “mask” of niceness. Our true selves get lost or hidden away somewhere which can lead to feeling isolated and energetically drained. Others can often sense when we are not being honest and up front with them, which creates distance and mistrust.

The good news is that we have the ability change those patterns that no longer serve our well-being. It is our *personal responsibility* to become mindful and stay mindful of our own feelings and needs *as well as* the needs of our loved ones, associates and friends.

An internal shift can occur that brings more comfort, peace and connection with ourselves and our relationships. We can shift from being *nice* to being *kind*. Kind, authentic communication comes from the heart center. Being kind is far more internal in nature and speaks to our ability for empathy and a genuine desire to be merciful and helpful. We become consciously aware of our emotional and physical needs and connect with a sense of *kindness* toward ourselves and others. We can safely remove our masks and be more connected to who we truly are.

Our ability to listen becomes heightened as we tune into our authentic nature, *in the moment*. Kind people usually communicate with smiling eyes, warmth in the heart, true presence, and a genuine interest in the other person. We can recognize and acknowledge that we do not have to agree with everyone and everything. We can give ourselves a voice and find a common ground that provides a nurturing space for every person to grow.

“*I think that what we’re really seeking is an **experience** of being alive...so that we actually feel the **rapture** of being alive.*” Joseph Campbell

**Sherry McHenry and Pamela Wilz** are facilitating a one-day workshop titled **Being Authentic on Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>** from 10-4 at The Church By The Woods in Sharonville. Sherry is a guide and mediator, assisting groups and individuals in developing positive lifestyle patterns. Pamela is a counselor and coach dedicated to helping others uncover their authentic selves. For more information, contact **Sherry** at 513-708-9621; [sherrymchenry@fuse.net](mailto:sherrymchenry@fuse.net); [www.SherryMcHenry.com](http://www.SherryMcHenry.com) or **Pamela** at 513-827-8280; [pamela.wilz@fuse.net](mailto:pamela.wilz@fuse.net)