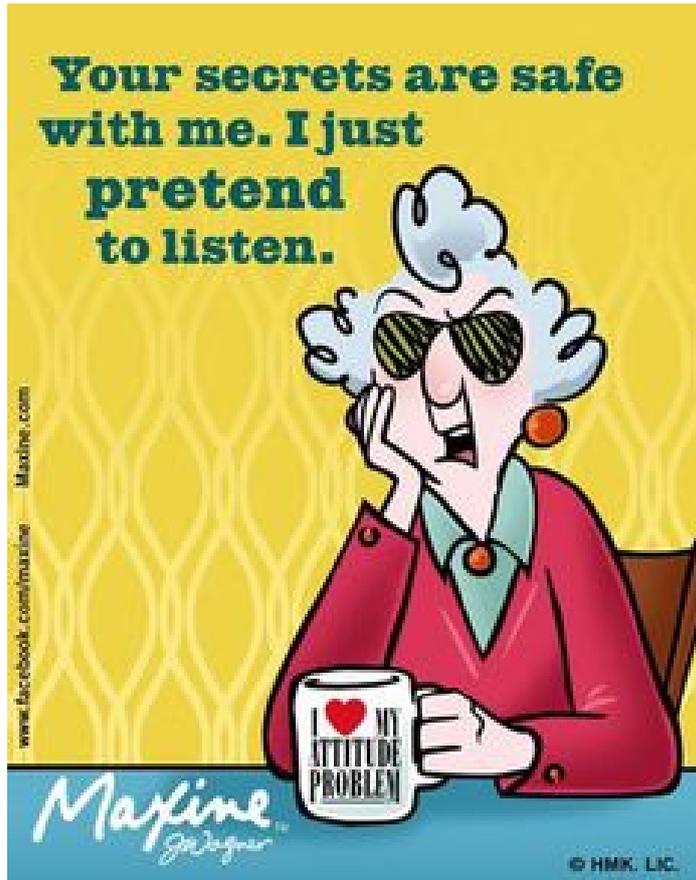


The pain of pretending



Both my daughters studied violin in high school. They excelled, taking lessons at SMU and playing in the Dallas Youth Symphony. For one concert, they played in the Meyerson Concert Hall (one of the best musical venues in the world). Mary and I were seated in the middle of the hall, our attention focused on Lauren and Sarah.

After the concert we went backstage to greet the girls. Sarah was crying. She held up her violin and said, “Dad, when we were tuning at the beginning of the concert, my E string broke. I didn’t know what to do; I was embarrassed and didn’t want to draw attention to myself; so the entire concert I pretended to play, but my bow never touched the strings.”

My heart was broken. I could only imagine the painful mix of emotions she endured: sadness, frustration, insecurity, embarrassment, hiding,

I’m not sure what alternative she had—should she have walked off the stage and left an empty chair?—but I do know that for 45 minutes she experienced the pain and discomfort of pretending.

I suppose all of us occasionally need to be temporarily inauthentic; social grace often mandates it (I dislike opera, but if I’m attending with a group of friends, I’m not going to leave at intermission). I’ve written a post titled [Sometimes fake it](#) in which I suggest that for professional reasons and for love, we often need to engage in counter-dispositional behavior.

But in general, don’t go through life denying or hiding your true self. Don’t pretend. Discover who you are, be who you are, and associate with people who accept you as you are.

Sadly, many people have never achieved a clear understanding of who their authentic self really is so pretending is their default mode. I’ve written a workbook—Signature Soulprint—that can help lead you in that discovery.

Don McMinn

Think with me

Coach Don Meyer said, "Be what you is. Because if you be what you ain't, you ain't what you is." C.S. Lewis was more lyrical in saying, "Be weird. Be random. Be who you are. Because you never know who would love the person you hide."