



Who Was That Masked Man Anyway?, by Lawrence Kushner

Humility is founded on creatureliness -- I have been created to do something that only I can do, just as you have been created to accomplish something that only you can do. It is founded on the notion that each life has a sacred, unique and never-recurring possibility. No matter who I meet or how beneath me she might "appear" to be intellectually, socially and financially, spiritually, she has a job that only she can do and it is an honor to meet her ... or him. [...]

The Talmud asks the question, "Who is wise?" and gives the surprise answer, "Someone who learns from everyone." We recognize humility in others by finding something that we can learn from them. Do you hear them? Are you paying attention? There's something you can learn from everyone, something that only he or she knows, that only he or she can teach you. [...] In my experience, no one seems to get issued a complete puzzle. Everyone's puzzle is missing, on average, seven pieces, and these puzzle pieces are distributed randomly into other people's puzzles. We spend our lives walking around saying, "Do you need a puzzle piece with a little yellow in the corner and a red line running through it?" Then we meet someone, and he or she says, "Oh, my God, I've been looking for it all my life." We say, "I don't know what to do with it, I wound up with it, take it, it's yours." It's rarely the author or featured speaker who has your puzzle pieces; it's usually someone who has a big part in your life whose name is not recorded in the program. I call it the "who was that masked man, anyway?" phenomenon. Usually, we don't know who it was until months, years, decades later when we look back realizing, with humility, that if it hadn't been for that person, our life wouldn't be the way it is now. --Lawrence Kushner, From This

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