

**Being The April Fool:  
The Fine Art of Saving Face  
By  
Dr. Darlene Treese**

*“You grow up the day you have the first real laugh – at yourself.”  
-Ethel Barrymore*

So you fell for it – hook, line and sinker. You made a fool of yourself. You fell short of expectations and have not maintained the image that makes you superior to all others. You feel so embarrassed that being around those you know is the second only in enjoyment to chewing on tin foil. Welcome to the ego’s slant on being human!

Our upbringing relied heavily on shame as a behavior modifier. Where Mom and Dad left off, your ego was more than willing to continue and intensify. “What will others think?” has become the prime decision-making factor over “What will I think of myself?” This easily translates into “How can I keep them from finding out?” as we have become a society of secret-keepers. Tremendous amounts of energy are needed to keep others from finding out who you really are. This energy could be used to propel you forward into all you truly desire rather than locking you into self (ego)-protection.

The only way to ever find contentment is to be your authentic self. This means giving up your obvious lies and exposing your secrets. Most people are oblivious to how secrets oppress them. The things that you do not want others to know about you touch on some aspect of shame and guilt. When you decide to open this darkness to the light of exposure and take the risk of being “real”, secrets no longer have their hold on you and you will feel a great weight lifted from you. It is not the initial feelings or activities that have kept you stuck. It is the defensive dodges and maneuvering that you have used to hide these quite human responses from others.

Mistakes obviously show us what we need to work on, yet some will avoid all situations where mistakes might be made or deny or defend every having made a mistake in their life. One of the best examples of how we have elevated ourselves above error is the definition of the word “sin”. In Roman times sin was an archery word that meant, “missing the mark.” At target practice each shot was either a hit or a sin. If you sinned, you made corrections and tried again. There was no need to find something or someone to blame. The miss is designed to allow you to make behavior corrections for a higher percentage of hits. It is an ongoing process as long as you inhabit this earth.

Being authentic allows you to correct behavior that has missed the mark. It allows you to say, “I didn’t say that in the way I intended” or “My actions have caused you discomfort and I apologize for that” or “I was not at my best – let me try that again”. Being authentic allows you to destroy your concept of maintaining superiority. Being authentic allows you to be fooled – to enjoy the laugh if it harms no one and to learn from a deception. An African proverb states: “Do not look where you fell, but where you slipped”. Being authentic means never giving up the right to be wrong, for by avoiding situations in which you might make a mistake is the greatest mistake of all.

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