

## **Are you caught in the Roles You Play in Your Life?**

What roles do you play in your life right now? We all take on a variety of roles throughout our lives. We start out as a son or daughter and perhaps a sibling. Later we become cousins, aunts, uncles, wives, husbands, mothers, or fathers. Within our family of origin we learn to play deeper roles: the responsible one, the lost one, the scapegoat, the mascot. Often these follow in the order of birth with the responsible one being the eldest and the cute mascot being the youngest. It's interesting to see how when one family member changes their role or stops playing the game, others will fill the void and take on new roles.

When we become adults and move out into the rest of the world we have more freedom to choose new roles, yet through habituation it is easy to keep playing the same ones, as if perfecting them. If we take our roles to the extreme we can lose sense of our true selves and give up our power to be who we really are. We become the over-responsible one at work taking on more than our fair share, or we use our charm and manipulation to get what we want in life while trotting over others, or we feel like a victim of life's circumstances and blame others for the drama we've been creating.

We may play different roles with different people or at different times. And within these roles there are further roles to be played: the nice person, the angry one, the drama queen, the righteous one, the storyteller, the clown, the ostridge and on the list goes. We also attach characteristics to professional roles such as the moody artist, the uptight accountant, the bulldozing lawyer. Roles can be fun to experiment with and to watch others play, but when we get stuck in them or their stereotyped definitions, we limit ourselves and those around us.

By transcending any boxed roles, we free ourselves up to live

how we want to live and to express ourselves fully, honestly and with integrity. We are much bigger than the roles we play and when we discover this, we are truly empowered.

Explore these questions to gain more insights into the roles you play:

\* What roles did you play growing up in your family? Which of these roles are you still playing now? What new roles have you adopted?

\* What triggers you to fall into a typical role? Are there certain situations or people you are more vulnerable with?

\* What role would you love to play in your life now? What would you have to do, let go of, and embrace in order to take on this new role?

Try these inspiring ideas to play with changing your roles:

\* Reflect over the various roles you get caught in and write down all of the motives, the payoffs you receive, and the costs you experience. Then think about what your life will be like a few years down the road if you keep playing these roles versus if you don't.

\* For any roles you would like to stop playing, brainstorm ways that you can meet your needs and satisfy the previous payoffs in a less costly way. Reflect over what you need to believe, think and do in order to let go of unhealthy roles and adopt healthier ones.

\*Imagine letting go of each of the roles you play. You could write each role down on a post-it-note and one by one move them off to side and notice how this feels. Then bring them back into a pile again to see what it feels like to re-own them. Or you could

close your eyes and imagine each role as a mask or piece of clothing that you are removing and notice how it feels as you let them go. Once they are gone, sit in stillness and fill up with your bigness of who you really are without any roles. From this place you can choose whether you want to take on any roles and for what purpose.

Gini Grey, founder of Celebrate Yourself, is a Transformational Coach and writer. She is the author of the book, *From Chaos to Calm: How to Shift Unhealthy Stress Patterns and Create Your Ideal Balance in Life*, and the CD, *Create What You Want In Your Life*. For more information visit her website at [www.ginigrey.com](http://www.ginigrey.com) or for articles, visit Insights & Inspiration at [www.ginigrey.com/wp](http://www.ginigrey.com/wp) or for relationship, friendship and family articles, visit [www.ginigrey.com/LoveBug](http://www.ginigrey.com/LoveBug).

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