

Discovering how to be open

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I once had neighbours, a young man, his young wife and child. He and I would meet often at one another's gate, chat and part, never ever inviting each other to the other's home.

Some months after I made his acquaintance I was standing outside my gate waiting to be picked up by a friend, when I noticed an old classmate of mine, one who I had been very fond of when in school but lost contact with for many years thereafter, come out of his gate. I ran upto my old classmate called out his name and we hugged one another. It is then that he told me he was visiting his son, who had been my acquaintance and neighbour. I had never once either revealed my identity to the young man or asked about his antecedents. I had held my private side to myself and he hidden his from me.

Many of us live our lives with our private side unexposed, nor do we ask others for feedback on what behavioural scientists called our 'blind' side; aspects we do not know about ourselves, yet others seem to know; such as that I gesticulate when I talk or often repeat the word 'actually' when I speak.

If I can be more revealing of myself, in a way that is of course not discrediting, yet factual and 'true' and I can ask and listen with interest what people say about me that I do not myself know, in a manner again that is factual and observed, my 'arena' or openness will expand, making me predictable, dependable and also tell people, that with me 'what you see is what you get'. In so being, I will be less of an enigma to people, more approachable and thus fully alive and human.

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