

Finding your own style

Finding, accepting, and enjoying your own personal style is a great achievement and a wonderful blessing. Spiritual wisdom allows you to step into a higher vision of your life as an expression of divine universal creative spirit.

From this higher viewpoint, you can look at yourself with a bit more objectivity. You can even look at your faults and mistakes without feeling too much ego discomfort. You can be like a comedian who appreciates and uses even his faults to get big laughs.

Knowing your inherent greatness increases your self-respect and also sets a foundation for exploring, refining, and weeding out any aspects of your expression that are not in harmony with your greater self.

Spirituality in Action

See how it feels for you to say and think these words: “I am great just as I am.” Say the phrase aloud and then repeat the words mentally as you breathe in, and again as you breathe out. Here are some possible reasons why you may not be fully appreciating and expressing your own style:

- **You may think that your style is boring.** However, thinking that you’re boring doesn’t mean you really are boring. I used to think I was totally boring during my years of monastic life, where the people around me seemed to have a lot more dramas and opinions than I did. Even now, on a day-to-day level, my life is generally quiet and not so outwardly exciting. But looking from a larger perspective, my life has been pretty creative and interesting. Sometimes you may think you are boring when you’re really percolating into a more fragrant cup of you. Your creative spark may be growing silently under a simple surface just as colorful flower seeds germinate quietly under a blanket of white snow.
- **You may think that your style isn’t good enough.** Maybe you don’t think you’re clever enough or considerate enough. Maybe you’re not a good listener or a caring son, daughter, mother, father, sister, brother, worker, or friend. Even if you find these kinds of shortcomings in yourself, you can still accept and love yourself while also taking steps to improve your personal style. Take a respectful inventory of your style. See which of your personality traits are natural, which have been created by imitating other people, which have come from the environments and cultures around you, and which aspects of your style and personality are serving you well versus creating obstacles to your greater good.

You are the artist of your life. Choose your colors. Choose your topics. Choose your modes of expression. If you don't want to have so many dark colors in your life-painting, then stop mixing so many dark colors and start opening up tubes of brighter yellows, oranges, and reds.

Spirituality in Action

Words from some who found their style

Here are some quotes by free-spirited creative folks who understood the value of following the beat of their own inspired drum:

“When I die and appear before the heavenly court, I will not be asked, ‘Why were you not Moses?’ I will be asked, ‘Why were you not Zusya?’”

—Rabbi Zusya

“The greatest thing in the world is to know how to be oneself.”

—Michel de Montaigne

“Loyalty to petrified opinion never yet broke a chain or freed a human soul.”

—Mark Twain

“Not to be bound by rules, but to be creating one's own rules—this is the kind of life which Zen is trying to have us live.”

—D. T. Suzuki

“Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind.”

—Dr. Seuss

Once you've done your best to change unwanted behaviors and personality traits, then make who you are work for you. If you have a cantankerous style and find other people getting offended by your comments, see whether you can add humor to make your expressions less offensive and more entertaining. You could even consider becoming a shock jock, or an opinionated blog writer or news host.

How many people must have said to Picasso, “Why can't you just paint a face that looks like a damn face?” However, Picasso stayed true to his own style, and that unique style is what has kept his name and works alive, unlike the works of so many other artists that have been covered by the sands of time.