

Speech for the Induction Ceremony of Alpha Chi

Friday September 22, 2017

By Dr. Marie-Odile Langhorne

Be who you truly are: Embrace your Real Self.

Good afternoon everyone. Thank you miss Rocko for the introduction. I also want to thank all the members of Alpha Chi for honoring me with the privilege to speak to you on such a joyous occasion.

As soon as I received notification of this great honor, a couple of topics came to my mind. Upon reading the motto of the society, I felt that the values I had envisioned to talk about: Truth, Authenticity and Service, were being validated.

So, what does it mean to be truly who you are? And to embrace your real self? This is a very complex question to answer.

In his Journals and Essays, R. W. Emerson, the great American transcendentalist writer of the 19th century said “To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment”. End of quote. I believe we may all agree that in this day and age, when we are constantly subjected to an over abundant flow of information through every possible media, whether we ask for it or not, it is more difficult to discern who we truly are, than it were for people of my generation , for example. But it is still possible.

It is crucial to have a solid, objective notion of who you are, so you can fully realize your true potential. The more you discover and understand your real self, the better equipped you will be to make decisions and choices which will have a significant impact on your destiny.

In order to feel that you are in agreement or in alignment with being true to yourself, you first need to have an adequate sense of self-esteem. I wanted to emphasize this concept first, because in my experience as a professor, a consultant, and a parent, I am still often surprised by the poor sense of self-esteem that many people display, especially young people.

Recognizing that you are a valuable being with unique talents has nothing to do with being vain, conceited or arrogant. Rather, it is to acknowledge your connection to a higher dimension. Every single person possesses a spark of divinity. In her book "A Return to Love" The best seller author and speaker, Marian Williamson says "Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate, but that we are powerful beyond measure" End of quote. When you express your true self, you inspire others. When you let your light shine, you are not casting a shadow on others, you also bring them into the light. Do not be afraid to sing your own song.

Maybe some of you have already found what you are passionate about in your life. For some the revelation comes early and for others it takes longer. And this is fine, there is no right or wrong in the timing. When you find your passion, have the courage to embrace it. Follow your vision, your dreams and your goals with determination. In his very famous book "Walden Pond and other writings," H.D. Thoreau said : "If one advances confidently in the direction of his/her dreams and endeavors to live the life that he or she imagined, this person will meet with a success unexpected in common hours" end of quote.

There is a difference between self-esteem and self-image. The two should not be confused. Self-image reminds us of who we were in a specific situation at a given time, not who we are in our core and

essence. Self-image takes its clues from the outer world, such as, the feedback we receive from others, or our need for approval.

On the other hand, Self-esteem is our sense of self influence. It is a true understanding of ourself.

How do we progress in self knowledge, how do we get there.? It starts with nurturing our body, mind and spirit. Those components constitute the Real Self. Remember that everything you concentrate on, increases. Therefore, by treating yourself with kindness, appreciation and love you expand your self-esteem. Prince Siddhartha Gautama, also known as The Buddha, said “You, yourself as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection. “ End of quote.

If your inner self is emotionally and physically depleted, you will not be able to be much help to others. Remember that you cannot give what you do not have. In order to help and serve others, you must first be ok yourself.

In an airplane, the flight attendant always tells the passengers, in case of an emergency, to take care of yourself first, then you will be able to assist others. This makes a lot of sense. Put your oxygen mask on, so you can remain alive, then help people.

When you are able to inspire and help others, you provide a real service. Martin Luther King Junior said “Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve” End of quote. A life of service is truly a life of greatness. Our purpose for being on this planet is simple: We are here to help each other, to give and receive love.

When we choose to serve, we embrace choices guided by our heart and spirit versus listening only to our mind. In his most famous book “The Little Prince”, The French writer, Antoine de Saint Exupéry, said “WE only see well with our heart, the essential is invisible for the eyes” End

of quote. When we search deep inside ourself we are able to hear, the still small voice, the guidance which tells us that we are going in the right direction or the wrong one. The answers we are looking for cannot be found on Google or Instagram. In order to connect to yourself, you must be willing to disconnect from the outer. This is called introspection.

When you start with pure intentions, honoring your inspiration , when you know that your actions are honorable, compassionate, useful, then you can rest assure that you will make a difference in someone else's life, as well as in your own. If success is meaningful to you, Then consider the words of Emerson again when he says "Successful is the person who has lived well, who never failed to look for the best in others or give the best of themselves." End of quote. Practice this, it will truly set you free.

In closing I would like to invite you to reflect upon a quote taken from the Bhagavad-Gita, One of the most ancient sacred texts of India.

"You are what your deep desire is. As your desire is, so is your will, as your will is, so is your deed, as your deed is, so is your destiny." End of quote.

Embrace your real self and you will live your life to the fullest. In being true to yourself you will be a blessing to the World. Have an attitude of gratitude every single day ,because you and your life are precious.

I wish you Godspeed!

Thank you for the honor, from the depth of my heart.