

SENIOR SCAPE: BE YOURSELF

By Dave LeGallais

Last week I received an interesting request from our daughter.

Her little girl Naomi is turning one soon. In lieu of gifts, she requested that family members make a video for her to open on her 16th birthday.

My initial reaction was: "No, I don't want to do that?" (I can be a little reactive at times!) But as the idea sunk in I started to like it and I decided that perhaps there are things I would like to tell her.

I started to think about what advice I would like to give her - but where do you start? I knew from my own experiences that one important thing to achieving a happy, fulfilled life was the simple truth that she should strive to be herself.

But this is often easier said than done.

Society, family and our peers can put enormous pressure on us to bend to their expectations, especially when we are young. Often this pressure comes from good intentions, a desire to keep us from being hurt, but it can also keep us from growth and accepting our true selves.

It would be a very dull world if we all strove to be similar, to avoid standing out or having unique qualities.

Often, those with different views or opinions are those that challenge us into personal growth. We are all individuals, and that should be encouraged.

Our son was visiting over the holidays from Montreal with his family. His little girl, Frances, has taken to wearing a tutu every day over her regular clothes. She loves it, but I must admit it seemed odd to me. I thought it ridiculous that she was allowed to wear it every day. But, as my wife pointed out, what harm was there in it? It made her happy - and what was wrong about something that brought joy to a two year old?

Frankie was expressing herself in her delightful, childlike way. Children should be encouraged to dream and not let anyone tell them "you can't."

If I had listened to my guidance counsellor in high school, who told me I didn't have the ability to become a veterinarian, I would have missed out on forty wonderful years of practicing veterinary medicine.

As adults, we also feel the pressure to conform.

Even as seniors we should have goals and aspirations, and not seek to simply fit in.

If you like to dance, then go ahead and take that Zumba class. If you want to learn a new skill, don't be afraid to sign up for a class.

Just because you are a little older, you are still valuable and you have much to offer.

My wife's aunt discovered her own artistic skill at the age of 95! A happy life is a life where you allow yourself to be, simply, yourself.

Seek out people who appreciate you for who you are and don't worry that you can't please everyone. No one can. Give that same courtesy to others. Just because they don't always think or act as you do doesn't make them less worthy. In fact, you may learn a thing or two from those with opposing viewpoints. They, too, have much to offer. Variety is the spice of life.

In conclusion, I think I will leave the final words to the great Shakespeare?

"This above all: to thine own self be true. And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man."

So, here I am, writing a letter for my infant granddaughter to open on her sixteenth birthday and smiling at the memory of my two years old granddaughter prancing around in her fluffy pink tutu. We can learn a lot from the Frankie's of this world - dance even if someone is watching!

HAPPENINGS

AT THE SENIORS' CENTRE

KNOTTY KNITTERS. The Knotty Knitters meet every Monday morning from 9 am to 12 noon. They knit, embroider, crochet, laugh, exchange jokes and share family happenings. They make a variety of items that are either donated to charity or sold at the Centre. All proceeds are given to the Aurora Seniors Association.

THE SILVER STARS THEATRE GROUP. Their next performance will be on Saturday and Sunday, June 22 and 23. In the meantime they will be meeting on Monday, March 18 at 3 pm at the Seniors Centre to discuss ideas and suggestions for future productions; a director for future productions; and who will be involved in acting, stage crew, scenery costumes, etc. If any of these roles interest you, come out to the meeting on March 18. You must be a member of the ASA to participate.

THE EVERGREEN CHOIR. The Evergreen Choir has just received the music for their May 25 concert, so if you are interested in joining a choir and enjoying all the benefits, why not come out and give it a try under the direction of Dan W.Lenz.