

Who Am I
(by Wade Welch)

What is Truth?

Before I decided to write an autobiography, I had previously decided not to...several times. My story seemed unique all along, but it had little meaning to me. It just appeared to be a pile of confusion. Now, there is a difference. The overall timing seems right, and I finally discovered a pattern...a theme...guiding me through this life. I now know that, in my life, everything happens for a reason.

If you remember the movie "Forrest Gump", he went through a series of unfortunate events that always turned out to be very fortunate. In my life, the pattern is similar. Each time I chose a quest, it backfired. Instead of living the easy life, and never learning the meaning of life, I found various degrees of suffering. Through this suffering, I eventually learned lessons that I would have otherwise never learned.

When I wrote "Deal Or No Deal; The True Meaning Of Life", I wrote about truth and facts. I had ten years of research behind my work. That is my writing style. I have a commitment to truth that goes beyond my words. I display it through my actions. Most people are hung up on taking and receiving. My writing is giving. Still, I expect that very few people will read what I write. They not only lack a commitment to truth and understanding, they also fear truth.

This is the story of my life. I will tell it through my memories, which will be an honest representation of the facts. I will also provide commentary...my opinions or theories. These theories will make sense as I see it, as well as offer varying possibilities. I will divide them into two categories...(1)editorial...and (2)theory. They will be paragraphs or chapters which will describe my (1)feelings and perspectives, and insight discovered after I lived this life...plus (2)possible explanations and speculation not yet substantiated by the facts.

My goal here is to provide factual information and possible conclusions, as well as make it easy for the reader to distinguish between truth and editorial. The facts will not have an indicator number. You will be able to draw your own conclusions.

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(1) Truth is a simple word. In my life, I found that humanity rarely deals with truth. Truth requires a commitment not ordinarily found in people. Society has an effect on honesty as well. (2) Ideally, in a perfect society, I would suggest that maybe 25-50% of people can be honest. Today, I estimate that far less than 5% are honest. If you read my "Deal Or No Deal", and you are capable of being objective, you will understand why.

It can be quite likely that a potential reader may choose to not believe the facts. Truth can be refreshing to an "enlightened" soul, while it may be painful and totally rejected by a soul consumed by the ego. I have formed a theory that helps to explain this. (2) People who commonly "assume" things...maybe even daily...defend themselves from truth. Assumptions take the easy way out...soothing the ego, and require no commitment.

(1) For example...a reader may assume I am non-committal towards truth...as most people are. This reader generally goes through life avoiding difficulty as much as possible, and commonly indulges oneself. A chain smoker is such a person. This person makes quick assumptions based on ease and quits on a quest rather than making a commitment. They choose lying, make excuses as to why they should lie, and blame others.

Or the reader may make a commitment to investigation...which leads to more understanding. An inquisitive mind...a scientific mind...easily makes commitments because it requires little investment. Truth is the goal. Taking the easy way out is a waste of time. Any person who displays his true self through actions, rather than using deceit to hide intentions, is such a person. Those who understand the meaning of life are commonly the ones who examine their individuality and see who they really are.

A scientist does not generally arrive at a truthful conclusion. Instead, he/she offers a summation of the facts...while the conclusion may change many times throughout the future. The conclusion is a separate statement. It is very common for the collective scientific mind to change periodically. So, truth...as it relates to a story...is the ability to state the facts. My goal here is to state the facts, and then provide insightful commentary.

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Actions, not words, display intent. People typically contradict their words with their actions. A person who invests years into researching and understanding difficult matters, and then writes about them, has made a commitment through actions. There was nothing easy about my investment and eventual writing. It is much easier to read, although it is certainly not easy reading. Before I wrote I had to live it and learn it.

(1)Life

A quick perspective of life can be seen in the game of Chess. It describes very well the dynamics of the ego, and how it relates to life.

The pawn represents a commoner, and is limited and predictable, but can do much. The rook represents a chariot...a tool. It can do more than a commoner, but is straightforward and predictable. The knight is a soldier...very skilled and dangerous. The bishop is a powerful controller...doing great damage, but always twisted and at an angle. The queen is most powerful and can do anything, but is not skilled like a knight. The king does little or nothing.

It is the pawn who survives, is freely charitable, lives with realistic goals, and builds the foundation that supports the kingdom. It is the pawn who goes to Heaven...not the powerful. Only when a pawn assumes the role of the powerful, can such a person go to Heaven...and only a pawn who remains a pawn throughout life, survives the ego. Surviving the ego is the purpose of life.

A pawn who remains a pawn, takes care of family and friends, lives each day as a pawn, and remembers who they are...is a chosen one. Giving is a product of living as a chosen one, and those around that person enjoy the benefits...learning to share. Learning is handed down from generation to generation, and life stays simple. Progress is slow and gradual. This kind of life builds a foundation for the future...providing inspiration and guidance.

When a pawn does not have the support of family and friends, it is abandoned. Our lives are dominated by the masses...who are the product of abandonment. The ego is a part of life, and once abandonment occurs, it takes hold. Ambition is only one of many corruptions of the soul. Unless a pawn who assumes the role of the other chess pieces...remains a pawn, that person becomes that piece...and is

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consumed by the ego. True leaders remain pawns.

Today, life is dominated by the ego. Pawns are rarely, if ever, born into the world of our ancestors. That world is gone. Our only chance is to discover the truth...by way of suffering. We cannot change the world. We can only hope to share truth with another.

Well I know...I could be just another stranger,
but to you...I guess I'm just another fool.
And you swear...you like to live your life in danger,
then you hide behind a wall of silly rules.

Nobody thinks the way I do,
I guess that nobody cares.
Your head's so full of things,
so set your mind free of them.
I'm breaking the rules.

Did you know...that in the truth there's nothing stranger.
I suppose..you think I think I know it all.

Nobody hears the things I say,
I guess that nobody cares.
My head's so full of things that
I set my mind free,
and then I'm breaking the rules.

Well I know...that you would love to go to Heaven,
but you know that you're just too afraid to die.
And I know...that you would love to know the answers,
but to you...the truth is just another lie.

Nobody hears the things I say,
I guess that nobody cares.
Empty heads...life's full of fools.

>Ozzy Osbourne

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Mike

Since 1977, I have enjoyed friendship with a pawn. He has always been a popular guy...a true people person. Even though we have not been best friends, and I have not gone out of my way to stay close, Mike seemed to always be around. On more than one occasion, I have done something to ruin the friendship. Mike was the one who made sure we did not part our ways forever.

In the last few years, Mike has saved my life, visited me when no one else has, supported me when I was truly alone, listened to me when no one would, and single-handedly kept me from the evil of the world. He was the only person who has stood by me...and respected me. He also got me out of the psyche ward, when my parents thought they had put me away forever.

Starting quests has been something I do naturally. It is the finishing of those quests that became difficult. I never lacked the inspiration, but what I discovered was that without family, help from a friend is necessary to triumph over evil. Mike provided me with the ability to finish. From what I can tell, Mike did these things only because he felt it was the right thing to do.

(2)It seems unrealistic, but from what I have seen, Mike was able to foil the well-planned intentions of the villains of my life...those who lie without remorse, and seem to have evil motivations...and he did it with very little effort on his part. This may be an exaggeration, but he did it with a few waves of his hand. I bet he has a few stories he could tell.

Age 4 my earliest memory (Santa Maria, CA)

I was outside in the yard, as always. Throughout my life at home with my parents, my one rule was to go outside and stay in the yard. My mom wanted to be undisturbed, as she always stayed in bed until it was time to make dinner before my Dad got home from work. She usually locked the doors. At first my sister (one year older than me) went outside too, but after only a few days she stayed inside too. (1) It may have been because she was a person who made her own decisions rather than follow directions.

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There was a boy about my age across the street who usually taunted me because he knew I had to stay in the yard. This day he threw some rocks at me. I picked up a rock he threw and pegged him just under the eye. I was surprised I hit him from so far away. He ran inside his house screaming. A few minutes later his mom brought him over while holding a washcloth on his face. She knocked on our front door until my mom finally opened it. We all went inside and I had to apologize. They left and I knew I was in big trouble. To my surprise, mom told me it was OK...because "she hated that woman", but not to throw rocks anymore.

Age 5-8 (Saint Louis, MO)

I remember my allergy to cut grass. I remember the hoagie I ate in downtown, as well as the awful brewery smell. I remember the first time I got in trouble for leaving the yard. And I remember a very strange experience...when I had to pee really bad but my sister was in the bathroom (we weren't allowed to use the master bath). I stood in the hallway outside the bathroom door, and the next thing I knew, I was looking down at the puddle on hardwood floor. I don't remember doing it...somehow my mind left for a few seconds.

Age 8-10 (Clearwater, FL)

Fishing. Water. Palmettos. Spanish moss. Sand.

Getting in trouble for staying gone all day. No A/C. The first time I ever went inside a neighbor's home...it had A/C. Wow it was nice. Those old people were so nice...and they liked me. I felt so awkward. I didn't know I was allowed to feel good.

Age 11 (Warner Robbins, GA)

Red clay. Pine trees. The man across the street had a Corvette...wow! In the winter, I walked over a mile to school in 20 degree weather...wearing a sweater. I discovered I am hot natured.

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Age 12- (Arlington, TX)

As we were entering Texas on I-20, moving from Georgia, I was listening to the Cotton Bowl game on the radio. It was New Year's Day, 1970. James Street just completed a long pass on fourth and one...near the end of the game. Texas beat Arkansas by one point. I was proud to come back to the state where I was born.

(1) This is where my life evolved from being a naive boy who believed in people, to a person totally alone in despair, and then to a spiritual person completely invested into destiny. It is simple to say the words, but seldom do we witness the actions. Without the suffering, we have little chance to walk the walk...as we would just blend into the background.

Golf

During the summer and after school, I was seldom at home. I rarely made it home in time for dinner. I found an old set of women's golf clubs in the garage, and this is when I started playing golf. I would ride my bike, with the golf bag on my back, five miles each way to the golf course. If the weather was bad, or if I had little time, I would ride down to the park...which was less than a mile.

By the time I was 14, I gave up baseball and basketball for golf. I was beginning to get really good at the game. I guess my handicap was around 10 in 9th grade, and 6 in 10th grade. I could beat all but two of the golf team members at my high school (Lamar), but I was not allowed to play, since I was not a member at the local country club....Rolling Hills.

In my junior year, the coach let me be on the team, because we had a new freshman who would turn out to be the best player in the district, and would later win the Texas State Open 4 times in a row...Terry Snodgrass. He was also not a member at Rolling Hills. But, the coach made a "B" team, which could not play in tournaments...and I was the top spot on the B team.

Our coach did not like me at all. I kept after him to let me play. I turned in my scorecards and he threw them away. He was a low-level football coach and couldn't even play golf. I never had the support of my parents, but it didn't bother me because I was used to it. But Larry was my best friend, and I had his support.

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I developed a bad attitude because I played with my two best friends...Larry-the number one player at Sam Houston HS, and Roy-the number two player at Lamar. I didn't usually beat them...but I always kept it close. And I could easily beat most other players. My handicap in 11th grade was about 4...but I was inconsistent with my driver. The rest of my game was as good or better than my friends. The fact that I did not have the support of my parents became very clear, because all the other players did.

My bad attitude was about to hurt me. In the three district tournaments hosted by the Arlington schools (Lamar, Sam Houston, Arlington), the B teams could play...but the scores did not count. I had to play in foursomes with guys who could not break 100. We each kept the scores of one opponent, and it was common for me to have to fight to get my scorekeeper to put down the correct score.

The first tournament I played was the tourney at LB Houston. My score wouldn't count. Coach gave me a ride that day, and of course he was late. When he pulled into the parking lot my group had teed off, but was still on the first tee. I had to run up and hit my tee shot in my street shoes...carrying a ball and my driver. I hit 6 inches behind the ball and my driver bounced up and nicked the ball...sending it into the trees on the right...about 50 yards away.

I got my shoes on, grabbed my clubs, and found the ball. I punched it into the fairway 130 yards from the green. I hit a wedge 15 feet from the hole, and made the putt for par. I had the only par...in fact, no one had better than 6. I told the "player" who had my card that I parred, and he put me down for a 5. I had to throw down on the second tee...but he pussed out and gave me a 4. I shot 82 that day...knowing that I would have had a 75 or so if I was a team member...with a good attitude and quality opponents.

The second tourney I played was at Grand Prairie. That was one course I could shoot par on. Going into the back nine I think I was one over par, but I gave up trying after I hit a drive OB. I could not maintain a good attitude. I remember that one of our B team players saw me on the 16th hole and asked me my score. I could par out for a 77. I went bogey, double, double instead. I four-putted the last green. I again shot 82.

Coach ran up to me as I walked off the green and said, "77?". I told him 82, and

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he yelled at me. I had no idea that he had the option in that tournament to throw out one score and use a B team score. As it turned out, a 79 would have put us in a playoff. Long ride home that day. (1) Of course it was my fault...I should know everything.

Towards the end of the school year we had the district tourney at our home course...Lake Arlington. I had shot under par several times there...since that was my home course too. Coach specifically told me up front that he could use my score if he needed to. On the 9th hole I picked up my ball and walked in. I was banned from the team.

That summer I won the Lewisville city junior tournament...a two-day tourney. Larry drove us the first day...him, me, and Roy. I shot 3 over, Larry shot 5 over, and Roy was 7 over... The second day I drove my mom's car. I picked up Roy, and drove to Larry's house. On the last left-hand turn onto Larry's street (Mitchell), I was waiting for a bread truck to turn left...which was also stopped, but was coming the other way...facing me. I gradually drifted to where I could see past the truck, on this four lane road (Collins).

It was clear, but as I started to move this clumsy four door car without power steering or brakes, and having just got my driver's license, a volkswagon beetle was flying up to the bread truck and switched lanes at the last minute...plowing directly into the doors on the passenger side. That beetle was flying. Roy was freaking out. He shot an 86 that day.

I was leading the tournament, and Larry was in third. We played in the final group together. Larry shot one over, and I had my usual one tee shot OB...again shooting 3 over. We tied. Sudden death. The first hole is a par 5, and Larry was laying two, fifty yards short of the green. I busted a monster drive right down the middle, and had a 9 iron for my second shot. I won the playoff.

I carried home two huge trophies...first place in my age division, and medalist. I also carried home a smashed car. This was a huge disappointment for me and my parents, but I remember what Larry said that day...as we drove home. He was very proud of me. He explained why I had a tendency to hit my drives straight right when I'm under pressure...I cup my left wrist at the top of my swing...instead of keeping it locked.

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(1) It is hard for me to describe how I felt when I won that tournament. I have always had my feelings subdued, because of the abuse I received from my mom. I stayed away from her, and my feelings...but I always sought the approval of my Dad. He never had words for me, but I could tell through his occasional actions that he cared about me. It would take me another thirty years before I had to dig down deep and pull out those feelings. The suffering would begin.

Next school year, my senior year, I was still banned...even though I was the only person in our school other than Snodgrass to have ever won a tournament. I hadn't planned it at all, but when we had our Homecoming pep rally, I decided not to go. For some odd reason, I had driven my Dad's Plymouth Gold Duster to school that day. Instead, I grabbed my Putt-Putt buddy, Mick, and we went and bought some beer...my first beer.

I drove right over to Rolling Hills, on that Monday (they were closed on Mondays), and went through the parking lot...waving at the greenskeeper. I then drove out toward the gate...but I veered off the road...straight to the #10 green. I did a wonderful and powerful donut around the hole...grass flying up all around. The whole time I was on the green, all I saw was Mick's face. He had the same look Roy had that day we crashed. Then I went back to school.

(2) It would be wonderful to be able to explain the jubilation I felt as I expanded my mind...with grass flying all around me. The truth is, I was not there that day. My only memory was the look on Mick's face. I was somewhere else. My theory is that after I die, I will be able to enjoy those moments when I was free. You might think that the feelings would last me a lifetime...those moments when I wasn't burdened with the guilt I received from my mom. Maybe it is because I am still a victim...she hasn't slowed down...she is just now hitting her stride.

As my short golf career ended, it did not go without meaning. I was charged with vandalism. I remember my Dad dressing up and taking me to Rolling Hills, in front of the board of directors. He cried that day...asking them to drop charges. He always seems to get his way. That was the first time I wondered if my Dad really did care about me.

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