

Image or Identity?

By Monty J. Sharp

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In Walt Disney's "The Kid", Bruce Willis portrays a successful, high-powered image consultant named Russ Duritz. While helping to shape and define the images of his clients, Duritz is spending his own incredibly empty life trying to forget the child he used to be. One day, however, he meets up with "himself" as 8-year-old "Rusty" and the two spend the better part of the film trying to figure the other out.

Rusty has his "Ah ha!" moment when he finally figures out how to explain what an image consultant does. In his moment of enlightenment he declares,

"You help people lie about who they really are so they can pretend to be somebody else."

In his best-selling book, "Life Strategies", Dr. Phil McGraw writes, "One of the most important choices you make, and make daily, is how you present and define yourself to other people."

You define yourself through either your image or your identity.

An image is a representation or facsimile of something real - a projection. It can be an accurate representation of the real or not - depends on how it's reflected or projected. What you see may or may not be what you get.

Identity, on the other hand, is much more substantive. It is who you are. It includes what things you stand for, your beliefs, convictions and ultimately your actions.

How are you defining yourself to others? Your friends? Your

spouse? Your customers? Yourself? Does your image match your identity? Defining yourself in this way is inherently less costly. Images can be expensive things to maintain.

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