



TO BE OR NOT TO BE...

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You are called an activist when you go out on the streets and proclaim to the world what your convictions are.

You are branded either a “leftist” or a “rightist”, depending on where you lean towards for a certain set of principles, or when you find yourself associated with ‘less orthodox’ views. You are termed a “centrist” when you are moderate about your views, most specifically your political ones. But an activist you definitely are when you join many others to declare your inclinations, whether political, religious or what have you. The important thing here is that you willingly stand side-by-side with many others just to get yourself heard.

When I was in the Sixth Grade and the K to 12 program had not yet been put into law (Okay, okay, that was several decades ago so you can now stop snickering!), I took a test along with several in my graduating class for possible entry into a Science high school in the big city. One of the come-ons for that opportunity was that once graduated from the Science high school, a student could automatically get into the country’s premier state university. Fortunately, majority of us who took the exam passed, and those who did were instructed to go to the big city for the final interview and deliberation. All of us who passed never underwent the final interview and the deliberation process. Our parents were all in unison: we were too young to contemplate being on our own that early. My parents had another concern: that students from the state university ultimately became activists, who took to the streets with the drop of a hat to express their anti-government stance and opinions. This goes to show how parents can be protective of their children, sometimes overly so.

On a more positive light, many of those who did not follow through with the Science high school opportunity still eventually studied in the state university for their degrees. In fact, many of my classmates who did not even take the Science high school entrance exams still attended the premier state university to complete their degrees. I guess all’s well that ends well. I, on the other hand, went to a Catholic university, but that’s another story.

Now, I wonder what would have happened if I had acted on that interview process and gone into the Science high school. Would taking a different set of actions back then have produced a different effect in my life? Of course it would. I would have blazed a different path and completely seen a different perspective. Sometimes, the actions we take find justification in where we end up. That’s the beauty of taking action and the substance of acting.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. If you were the writer, would you have gone for that final step? Why or why not?
2. Can children take responsibility for their actions? What, to you, is the age of discernment?
3. How can we teach children about accountability for whatever actions they take? Use specific examples, if needed.
4. Why is it essential for parents to lead by example?
5. Do you remember how old you were when you became more aware of the consequences of your actions? Talk about that period of your life.