

# Who Do You Want To Be?

BY BARRIE DAVENPORT

## **Create A Character Study For Your Ideal Self**

*“I pretended to be somebody I wanted to be until finally I became that person. Or he became **me**.”* ~Cary Grant

*Who do you want to be? I'm not asking who you are now or what kind of life you want to have, but what kind of person do you want to be? One of my favorite literary characters of all time is Atticus Finch from To Kill A Mockingbird. Gregory Peck played the role in the movie, and he perfectly captured the character of the quintessential wise father and a man of compassion, honor, and integrity. I wanted to know him, and I wanted to be like him.*

Role models are a good way to begin defining who we want to be. It may not be Atticus for you, but you probably know the people whose demeanor, behavior, and values are inspiring and motivating for you. You are a better person when you are around them.

**Sometimes we look at those people and think, “I wish I could be like that.” They have their act together, but I'm too emotional, angry, sad, insecure — whatever the story happens to be.**

- We feel stuck in our feelings, heartaches, and life events.
- We want to indulge our anger and feel glued to our pain.
- We feel incapable of becoming the who we want to be because life throws too much at us, so we must react.
- **We believe that our personality is “set” and that substantial change isn't really possible.**

**In relationships we seem to step farthest away from the “who” we want to be. Perhaps we defend our turf or feel certain we are right. We lash out because we've been wounded or misunderstood, and we want to equalize the pain.**

But is that really the highest vision we have for ourselves?

**Living that vision of our highest self, the “who” we want to be, is not impossible to achieve. In fact, you can be that person today if you first take a moment to step back and sketch out a character study for the “who” you want to be.**

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Here are some very simple exercises to help you define this vision for your ideal self:

1. Sit down with paper and pen and write down the qualities of this person, this new you. For example, I want to be a person who is honest. I want to be a person who **doesn't yell at my children. I want to be a person who follows through on commitments.** I want to be a person who solves conflicts without condemning or belittling. I want to be a person who lives simply.

2. Dig a little deeper and write some examples of how and when you will become this person. For example, as an honest person, I will be true to myself and my own needs, as well as being genuine and trustworthy with others. Even when my children push my most sensitive buttons, I will strive to remain calm and centered. In my effort to [live simply](#), I will have fewer daily tasks so I can focus on them mindfully and completely. Find the places where you are farthest from your ideal, and specifically define the actions that you aspire to.

3. Play the part of the character until it becomes natural for you. If you must pretend at first, then do it. Act as if. In your next encounter with your misbehaving children, act as if you are the calm mother next door. The next conflict you have with [your spouse or another relationship](#), act as if you are capable of giving unconditional love and support — and then give it, in spite of their reactions, comments, or misunderstandings. Yes, it will feel false at first, but with practice, you will transform.

4. Rehearse daily and be a creator, not a reactor. Now that you have a character study of your ideal self, continue to create this person every day. You are the [author of your life and your behavior](#). **Don't give away your vision just to defend your ego. It's never worth it. Don't let your initial reactions undermine your new creation. Revisit your** character study regularly as a reminder of the role model you have created for yourself.

5. You can always revise and re-write your ideal self. Because we are human, we fail and falter at being the who we want to be. But every day we have the [opportunity for a revision](#). We can correct our course and step back into our ideal self. And along the way, we might want to adjust our vision to accommodate our personal evolution. As we change and grow, we may want to expand our self-character study, adding more dimension, subtlety, and flexibility.

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So often we struggle to make everyone else conform to the “who” we want them to be. Think of the hours spent trying to script the behavior of others. But there is only one character in your life story whose behavior and reactions you can alter — your own.

Write the story of who you want to be. Create a character who could be a role model to others. Define the actions, responses, and values of this person. Then go live it. Before you know it, that new who will be you.

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