

My eyes practically popped out of my head!

When I was around 10-years-old, my parents were the leaders of our church's junior high school ministry. On a balmy, summer Southern California night, they hosted a pool party at our home. (I loved having those 'older' kids come to MY home!). After some swimming, a couple cannonball dive contests, and a few chicken fights, a bunch of the students went out to the front yard. I couldn't believe what I saw. One of the students (Greg White...I still remember his name!), grabbed my skateboard (with metal wheels!) and did a hand-stand on it and rode it down the driveway!

The students went crazy. And I was mesmerized.

I knew right then who I wanted to be when I grew up—Greg White. No question. Game-set-match.

So every day, for the next several weeks, right after school, I would steal away into the secret confines of my backyard. First, I learned to do a head-stand. From there, I notched it up to a hand-stand. And then it was the day of destiny—time to do a hand-stand, not on the backyard dichondra, but on my concrete driveway!

As any athlete destined for the halls of greatness, I entered the “zone” trying to visualize my grand expedition down the driveway, but reality set in and all I could see were body parts sprawled like a yard sale across the sidewalk.

So much for growing up to be like Greg White.

You know it as well as I do. Stashed away in this story is an indispensable lesson of life and leadership: you cannot be someone else. You've got to be yourself—comfortable and secure with who you are.

Personal security isn't a high-profile topic in the leadership literature; but from my seat and experience, it should be. Chuck Swindoll said it well: *This reminds me of something about which too little has been said. I can think of few ingredients more foundational to being a good leader than knowing oneself—and accepting oneself—and feeling secure about oneself inside one's own skin. The scene is nothing short of tragic when an insecure person is given a leadership responsibility.*

Need a little convincing? Take a look at the Old Testament storyline of King Saul's intense jealousy of David and his battlefield successes. It's extreme. It's not pretty. And

unfortunately, it's all too common.

In a word, leaders who possess personal security are at peace with who God has created them to be—which IS a pretty picture. They have chosen daily to lean into the truth of Romans 12:6: *In his grace, God has given us different gifts for doing certain things well.* They see themselves as uniquely created by God—a work of art, a masterpiece.

As you review your own personal security, how are you doing?

Here are a few self-measurement questions to assist you in your assessment:

- Do I recognize and accept my strengths?
- Do I recognize and accept my limitations?
- Do I celebrate the strengths of those with whom I work?
- Do I intentionally make room for the contributions of those more gifted than myself?
- Do I freely offer up words of affirmation for those in my leadership circle?
- Do I pave the way for others to pass me by?

From there, I'd encourage you to take your personal security appraisal one step further by asking a close friend to offer a candid perspective.

While each of us from time to time will be enamored by the abilities of others, there is arguably no greater gift you give to those you lead than knowing who you are, accepting who you are, and being who you are.

At the end of the day, it's fundamental to leading with your life.