

What Box Do You Fit in?

Yesterday I talked about self-identity. I'm thinking through this for a reason.

I highly suspect that:

1. Just as we tend to change careers every seven years, we also tend to need to redefine our boxes (which means teens aren't the only ones working on self-identity).
2. When we are solely defined by what others think of us, that impedes this process.
3. Men have an easier time of finding their box than women.

This last one deserves some explanation.

Men tend to lead in hierarchies. They think in boxes. In fact, when you move up the hierarchy, you just move your box up. When they leave work, they move to a different hierarchy, and switch hats to dad, or coach, or etc.

Women tend to lead in more of a web. We see the connectedness of things. We self-define through the lens of multiple relationships at a time. Therefore, we don't have just one box at a time. Neither do we wear one hat at a time.

It is not unusual to plan dinner, create a check list for next week, and council a teen while working on an extensive spreadsheet for next year's budget. Everything runs into each other, so it is a lot harder to define our "place."

I've been talking with friends lately about the lack of women in leadership. I hear from some friends that men would love to have more women in leadership, but when they look for them, they aren't there.

Where are all the women? They are sitting in 3 boxes, wearing 6 hats, hoping someone will notice the skill set they are so fantastically demonstrating—if anyone could see the whole

picture at once. But when they use their skill set to marshal the entire PTA to raise funds for kids' field trips, people see the soccer mom or school volunteer. When they navigate medical terminology and negotiate home health care contracts for their family members, they see a dutiful daughter.

I highly suspect that because women self-define several things at once, it appears they don't have the space to fill an open slot. There is a business adage of this: **If you want something done, ask a busy person.**

What are we missing?

What would you add to help further this conversation?

"For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7).

Kim Martinez *is a pastor, writer, speaker and ministry coach. You can hear more from her at .*