



What's your persona?

In the mood for Halloween, Christmas or a fancy dress party? See what U.S career coach Angela Beeching has to say about costumes and identity!

Outside of Halloween and costume parties we each, in a sense, adopt a persona (our 'professional' self) to deal with career-related interactions. The persona we adopt is typically our 'responsible adult' self, mixed in with our sense of whatever is appropriate in the moment.

Sometimes this professional persona can be at odds with whatever we consider to be our 'true' self. This can happen when we stifle our dreams to take on work or a career path to satisfy others: for example, a parent, a spouse, or a mentor. It can also happen in positions or work situations that aren't a good fit. And sometimes we simply outgrow our habitual work persona.

Bear in mind that most people have multiple careers and many more positions. Our 'true' self is the constant self and should be acknowledged.

Sample questions

Set 1: Use this set if you are already working

1. What is the persona you're adopting to get through your professional work this week?
2. Do you wear it lightly or does it chafe against your more natural self? (Do you have to be someone else in that role?)
3. How does it differ?
4. Can you experiment with bringing more of your natural self to your work?
5. While you may not be able to immediately change your work situation, you can change the persona you bring to it. Why not experiment with adopting an improved version: What's the best version of yourself you'd like to bring to your work? How does it differ from the usual version?

Set 2: Use this set if you are yet to begin work

1. When you imagine your future work, what is the persona you imagine adopting?
 - a. What does it look like?
 - b. What personality traits are needed?
 - c. Which of these do you have, and how will you develop the others?

2. Imagine adopting this persona: What does it feel like? Do you wear it lightly or does it chafe against your more natural self?

3. Can you imagine being BOTH your natural self and the professional you aspire to become?

4. Can you bring more of your imagined future professional persona behavior to your current work as a student?
 - a. How and when will you do this?
 - b. What are the difficult aspects of this?
 - c. How do you think it might change your interactions with others?
 - d. What version of yourself would you like to bring to your work?

Make it count!

Repeat this for other types of possible work, and then reflect on what you found. Note some of the characteristics of the different 'selves' you adopt for different situations. Write a short plan in which you commit to some steps needed to achieve your goals. If your studies are at odds with where you think your true self lies, take the opportunity to talk in confidence with a careers advisor.

This resource was developed by [Angela Beeching](#) and Dawn Bennett (Curtin University)