

You're Not the Only Person On a Quest

Quest, n. "a long or arduous search for something."

If, like me, you feel like you're on a quest in your life, it's very easy to treat other people as background characters at best and obstacles to be overcome at best.

After all, a quest is "a long, arduous search for something." If your search is long and arduous, it's reasonable to get some tunnel-vision. You're focused on becoming excellent at your job, establishing your new business, educating yourself in a new technology/science, or becoming a hero to your children. Your quest is and (probably) should be a focus for you. But maybe you're missing something important.

The reality is that every other human is also on his or her own quest. All the cars I sped past this morning on the way to "advancing my own quest" of my marketing job were also filled with other people who have their own goals which they're either approaching or failing to reach.

This matters for a couple of reasons:

1. You don't want to be surrounded by quest-less people. It would be a boring and bleak world if you were the only person who felt called to some great task or quest. Realize that everyone else around you has that same calling to deeper, better life - even if they happen to be ignoring it right now. Instead of treating people like background characters, treat them like fellow protagonists/heroes. That makes the world far more interesting.

2. You want to succeed in your quest, and you will need help (so will they). Helping other peoples' quests seems to be a recurring theme in adventure video games (and likely in the old quest stories themselves). This is a great way of gaining allies and resources and wisdom in stories and games. So why not take this model just as seriously in real life? You're all on interesting quests separately. Why not support each other? Why not band together from time to time?