



– Quotes To Live By –

"If the ones who tell you you're no good are no good, then, somehow,
that makes you good. Somehow."

- Psychologists John-Roger & Peter McWilliams

Of course, this quote makes no rational sense at all, and that's precisely the point. It's an example of a defense mechanism; a subtle, unconscious behavior that people engage in as a means of compensating for their own psychological insecurities. There are many different types of defense mechanisms, but this quote illustrates one of the most prominent ones. It goes a little something like this:

If my life is crappy, at least I can feel better believing your life is crappy too. And since we all are social creatures competing for a place amongst our group, this "bring yourself up by tearing others down" tactic seems universal to human nature. Nobody will ever admit to doing this, of course. It's an unconscious process, something we're not aware of doing. Yet we all do it. This defense is common when people feel ridiculed or threatened. Just think to the last time someone said something unflattering about you. Did you contemplate about how wise and wonderful that person is, or did you instinctively look for reasons to ignore it by finding faults in them? ("Who is she to talk about that anyhow . . . ") Many people engage in this tactic offensively rather than defensively, tearing others down to try and prop themselves up. Hence it is that so many people spend so much time merely pointing out the faults of others.

Nowhere is this defense more prominent than among teenagers, who by their very nature are unsure and insecure about themselves. (Yes, especially those who pretend otherwise.) So how do they attempt to alleviate this insecurity? Often by taunting, teasing, and being mean towards others, of course. By telling other people that they're no good, then somehow, that makes them good. Somehow.

It's silly, it's not right, and it may not make it any less painful when you end up on the wrong side of someone else's defense mechanism. But it can help to know why people engage in such behavior, and to recognize it for what it is: A defense against their own personal insecurities that has nothing to do with you.

