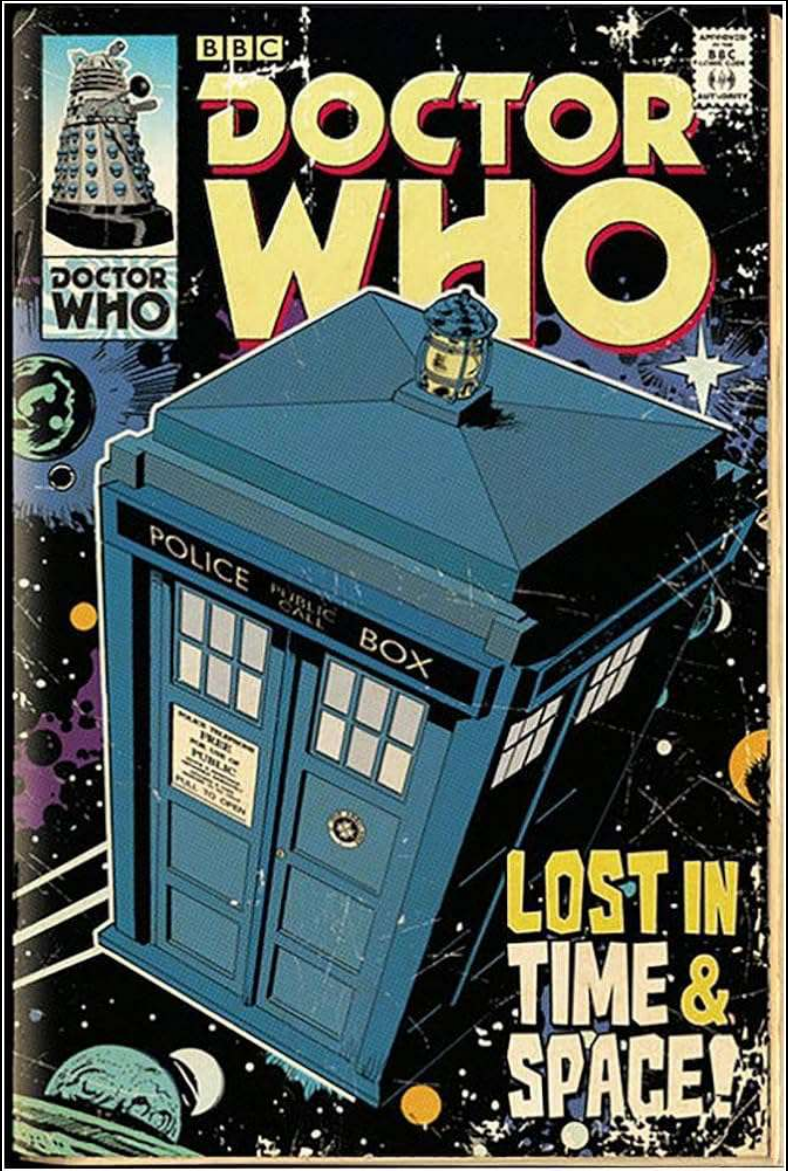
A diver is seen underwater, surrounded by a large school of fish. The scene is illuminated by a bright light source, possibly the sun, creating a shimmering effect on the water. The diver is positioned in the center-left of the frame, and the fish are scattered throughout the water, with a dense concentration on the right side.

Is there a  
better way  
to be than  
*“just be  
yourself”*?

Mark  
8:34–36

Slides from Mike Hood's  
sermon at the evening service  
Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2024



“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.”

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“just be yourself”



“For whoever wants to save their life will lose it,  
but whoever loses their life for me and the  
gospel will save it.

What good is it for someone to gain the whole  
world, yet forfeit their soul?”

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#1 *New York Times* bestselling author  
of *The Road to Character*

DAVID  
BROOKS

A stylized mountain range graphic consisting of several overlapping peaks. The top peaks are in shades of purple and blue, while the lower slopes are in shades of green and teal. The mountains are set against a yellow background that transitions into a dark blue background at the bottom.

THE  
SECOND  
MOUNTAIN

The Quest for a Moral Life

“Every once in a while, I meet a person who radiates joy. These are people who seem to glow with an inner light. They are kind, tranquil, delighted by little things and grateful for big ones. These people are not perfect: they get exhausted and stressed, they make errors in judgment, but they live for others and not for themselves. They’ve made unshakeable commitments...

They know why they were put on this earth and derive a deep satisfaction from doing what they have been called to do. Life isn't easy for these people - they've taken on the burdens of others – but they have a serenity about them, a settled resolve. They are interested in you – they make you feel cherished and known, and take delight in your good.

When you meet these people you realise that joy is not just a feeling, it can be an outlook. There are temporary highs we all get after we win some victory, and then there is also this other kind of permanent joy that animates people who are not obsessed with themselves, but have given themselves away.”

“... suddenly, they are not interested in what other people tell them to want. They want to want the things that are truly worth wanting.

... The world tells them to be a good consumer, but they want to be the one consumed - by a moral cause. The world tells them to want independence, but they want interdependence - to be enmeshed in a web of warm relationships.



The world tells them to want individual freedom but they want intimacy, responsibility and commitment. The world wants them to climb the ladder and pursue success, but they want to be a person for others. The magazines on the magazine rack want them to ask ‘What can I do to make myself happy?’, but they glimpse something bigger than personal happiness.”

# SELF-MADE



Creating Our Identities from  
Da Vinci to the Kardashians

**TARA ISABELLA BURTON**

“We must ask ourselves how often our desires are stoked by those with a financial interest in making us think that we both can and should shape ourselves - whether they are selling us self-help manuals, or skin cream.

How can our desires be the truest parts of ourselves when all too often they are shaped by others?”



“... the so-called ‘real world’ will not discourage you from operating on your default settings because the so-called ‘real world’ of men and money and power hums merrily along in a pool of fear and anger and frustration and craving and worship of self.”

“For whoever wants to save their life will lose it,  
but whoever loses their life for me and  
the gospel will save it.

What good is it for someone to gain the whole  
world, yet forfeit their soul?”

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.”

So what?