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Why Wear Only One Hat?

Paul Hook

I believe in wearing many hats. Not literally, of course. Rather, I believe in being involved in many facets of life. The foundation of this belief goes all the way back to some of my earliest memories, and is still becoming more concrete with each passing day.

Stereotypes seemed present at every turn of my life. Between real life and the media, it seemed as if everyone, including themselves, was trying to put labels on people and categorize them. The possibilities seemed endless: “the athletes”; “the popular”; “the unpopular”; “the band people”; “the smart people”; the list can go on and on. As for me, it seemed that I always seemed to carry the “the smart kid” tag around with me wherever I went. Now, I liked being associated with being smart. However, I didn’t like the whole idea of stereotyping anyone based on one aspect of their life seen by most people. Most kids my age that know me well see me primarily at school, so they automatically assumed that schoolwork was my entire life and that anything I did outside of school had to be linked with school in some way or another. I’ll never forget one of my friend’s responses whenever they found out I liked to ride quads outside of school. “Paul! You should be studying,” were the first words out of his mouth. Although the comment was more of a joke than a serious comment, it showed that he was surprised that I enjoy doing things in life that are not solely connected with school, which helps prove my point.

That moment helped confirm what I already believed: being associated with more than one activity and carrying different “labels” (which I still do not entirely like, but accept), is, in fact, a good thing. I like to refer to it as wearing many hats. By blending a variety of activities together and not concentrating all my efforts on one thing in life, I am able to have a unique collection of likes and experiences which ultimately make me the unique person that I am. I never have, nor never will, see myself as the person hidden behind mounds of books, doing nothing but schoolwork. Although a large portion of my time *is* spent hitting the books for homework and studying, I spend a lot of time doing other things outside the classroom. These activities include trout and bass fishing, archery hunting, quad riding, playing volleyball, practicing guitar, working at a part-time summer job, and hanging out with my friends and family. That’s what I call wearing many hats. This I believe.