



There are many ways to judge your own success in life, writes TARNYA DAVIS.

IN THE attempt to ensure they felt good about themselves, a generation or more of children have been rewarded for performing well and yet they have unintentionally grown into adults who feel their worth is only in what they do, not who they are. Their value is measured in how they perform compared to others and to feel OK they must perform better than at least half of everyone else. This in turn has been our individual and societal drive to be exceptional.

To have the best house, car, job, make the best art, write the best book, to be the busiest and the most successful is a very powerful force for many and is reinforced in a culture that worships the exceptional. Just as the cult of exceptional and busy carries us along with heroes being the rich and beautiful, so, too, is there a negative spin on the ordinary as if a simple life is somehow a failure. And yet, as "The school of life" describes, perhaps there is pain that is associated with the drive to be an over-achiever and the corresponding state of shamed at anything other than exceptional being a failure.

Perhaps it is those who are content to be present, to sit with the simple and the ordinary, and to be content in their own skin who are actually the ones that are the most balanced and are emotional superstars! Perhaps also there is some value in throwing off other people's expectations and learning to be content with the simple and even with one's self, separate from your achievement.

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