

Ripples From Authenticity

I love inspirational stories of people who triumph over the odds, who defy the norm, and come up trumps against significant challenges, who in the process have manifest extraordinary inner strength. I have just come across another hero, and in this case the amazing feat was his authenticity. The movie 'Searching for Sugar Man' won an academy award in 2012, but I have only just seen it, and found myself deeply moved.

In the 1970's Rodriguez wrote and performed two albums that were phenomenal flops in the USA, 'Cold Fact' and 'Coming from Reality'. Practically no one knew he existed. Yet, unbeknownst to him, copies of his music were circulating and inspiring a generation of people within South Africa. His earthy words and messages provoked recognition that the norm does not have to be accepted, particularly the political establishment, and his work inspired musicians during the rise against apartheid in their expression. My wife grew up in South



Rodriguez signing autographs in 2007

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Abstract

The inspiring story of the musician Rodriguez, his earthy authenticity and how he inspired a nation.

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Africa in the period and was well aware of this man and encouraged me to the movie.

Rodriguez came and went without being noticed within the USA, and carried on with his labouring near poverty while his name and music was stirring a nation. In South Africa it was believed he had committed suicide, with several grizzly stories circulating. Rodriguez was eventually discovered alive and well by South African fans seeking to learn more of their star. He subsequently performed a number of concerts to sell-out crowds of thousands, and did so with a modesty and groundedness that belied the newness of such adoration to him.

For me, the fantastic lesson and inspiration is how Rodriguez lived and played his music with authenticity, true to who he was, both in writing and singing, and also in failing as he continued with his labouring career, and even later attempted running for political office. His motivation was he wanted to make a difference.

For more information related to themes in this article, refer to chapter 9 (Developing Personal Power) of: Harrison, S. G. (2012). *Appreciate the Fog: Embrace Change with Power and Purpose*. Auckland, New Zealand: Xlibris Corporation.

His authenticity touched millions, went so very far beyond anything he knew existed, and it was only luck or serendipity that he learned he was a fabulous hit for a people he had no reason to know, millions of them. And in finding out, he was comfortably the same, as unchanged as any person could be with sudden fame, and my admiration increased as a result. Rodriquez is a reminder that when we align with our purpose and live it, we can have a fantastic impact on lives around us, and

may never know it. Sometimes we may be blessed with a glimpse of what we have created with our life.

Are you living your purpose? Are you true to who you are regardless feedback? Do you love and accept yourself and know your worth, even if the world has not caught on to support your belief? Are you living with authenticity to who you are even if there is no evidence that it serves any greater purpose?