

Text 8 What makes you special?

On Being Yourself

Everyone likes to feel that he or she is special. Unfortunately, many of us grow up believing that we're not special at all. We wish that we could be better at sports or more attractive. We wish we had nicer clothes or more money. Like the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, or the Cowardly Lion from *The Wizard of Oz*, we believe we're not good enough just as we are. In the movie, the Scarecrow wishes that he had a brain. The Tin Man wishes he had a heart, and the Lion wants courage. In the end, each of them realizes that he already has what he needs.

Most parents want us to be the best we can be. They sometimes try to encourage us to do better by comparing us to others. They mean well, but the message we often get is that we're not good enough. We begin to believe that the only way we can be special is by being better

than someone else, but we are often disappointed. There will always be someone out there who is better than we are at something. There are plenty of people around who may not be as smart as we are but who are better at sports. Or they may not be as good-looking, but they have more money. It is impossible for us to be better than everyone else all the time.

Like the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and the Cowardly Lion, we all want what we believe will make us better people. What we don't realize is that often we already have inside us the very things that we seek. Parents sometimes forget to tell us that we *are* special, that we are good enough just as we are. Maybe no one told them when *they* were growing up, or maybe they just forgot. Either way, it's up to us to remind them from time to time that each of us, in our own way, is special. What we are . . . is enough.