

We are all on our own personal journey through life. Along the way, our experiences have helped craft us into who we are. When we think back, there have been people we have met, things that have happened to us and places we have been, that have changed us. Of course, genetics played an important part in our development, creating a strong foundation, doling out traits both wonderful and cursed alike, that have been handed down through generations (without our advice or consent!). And although we do have a hand in our own development, fate itself has thrown us a few unexpected curves... some wondrous and others tragic. These forces have combined to chisel away at our raw character and our physical being, a chip here and a hefty piece there... until some of us actually end up looking and acting like completely different people. But for most of us, somewhere deep down inside, the essence of who we are remains firmly intact.

Our City is also on its own journey, growing and changing... building on its strong “genetic” foundation. Through the City’s “Community Branding Initiative” we have rediscovered some important information regarding who we are, where we come from and what’s important to us. Our community character revealed.

“Genetically”, we have the wonderful physical attributes of great weather, beautiful natural environment, beaches and waterways, but being in the sub-tropics we have also inherited some “anger management issues” in the form of heat, flooding and storms. As Bonitians, we treasure our natural environment and we are active caretakers. And for the most part we have learned to cope with the more difficult traits we’ve been saddled with.

Socially, we have grown from a small survey encampment of pioneers, to a City of 45,000 people. Now, this didn’t happen over night, but amazingly, in 1980 we were a community of only about 5,300 people. Friendly, welcoming... a place to fish, to relax and enjoy the outdoors... to share the good life with other people who were happy to be here.

The thousands of people who have moved here since then have treasured that relaxed, casual, feeling and have held onto it tightly. It is because of these people and their love of this community, that we have managed to keep our small town charm. Even though we have grown, with more traffic and more people, we are still at heart, a small town. People welcome you here, take you under their wing, invite you to join their club and show you their favorite hang outs. Newcomers quickly take possession of their new community and Bonita Springs becomes home... emotionally and physically. They become part of who we are.

To successfully mature and become the best that we can be as a person or a City, we need to occasionally step back and reexamine who we are and what we hold dear. But we should always keep that child or small town alive and well in us. It is the part of us that people love and enjoy the most.