

Chunks of Coal

In 1981, country singer, John Anderson released the song "**I'm Just An Old Chunk Of Coal (But I'm Gonna Be A Diamond Someday)**"

This song netted Anderson a Grammy Award nomination for Best Male Country Vocal Performance. This prophetic song helped Anderson who when he arrived in Nashville, TN, worked as a roofer at the Grand Ole Opry House, eventually to work inside its hallowed halls as one of it's featured performers.

I like this song a lot. It has a good message and I am a John Anderson fan. It is a song about hope and improving one's self. Here is a portion of the lyrics:

*I'm just an old chunk of coal
But I'm gonna be a diamond some day
I'm gonna grow and glow till I'm so blue pure perfect
I'm gonna put a smile on everybody's face*

*I'm gonna kneel and pray every day
Lest I should become vain along the way
I'm just and old chunk of coal now Lord
But I'm gonna be a diamond some day*

It is great when we work hard to improve ourselves, when we truly make a change for the better. It is a blessing when we use the gifts and talents that God gives to us to help those who are around us. We will truly shine like diamonds.

Frustration occurs when people can't forget when you were an old chunk of coal. This is partly understandable when you have been away from people for a while, they might not have witnessed your transformation. Jesus even had to deal with this attitude. Mathew 13:54-57

⁵⁴*Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked.*

⁵⁵*"Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas?*

⁵⁶*Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?"* ⁵⁷*And they took offense at him.*

But Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honor."

I haven't lived in my hometown in 30 years. I wasn't a bad kid when I lived there but I did have chunk of coal tendencies rather than the sparkle of a perfectly cut diamond. I cringe when someone from my hometown begins a sentence with, "Aren't you the boy that.....?" Whatever the "that" is, my response is always the same, "I am not that boy anymore." Since I am approaching 48 years of age, I can confidently say, "I am not that boy anymore." I have grown physically, mentally and spiritually.

The thing that is more frustrating and disheartening to us coal-to-diamond transformers, is those people who have been around us and know us. Even though we have grown and are glowing and admittedly we are not blue pure perfect, we still can't put a smile on everybody's face. To some, we may still be that old chunk of coal. We might be a little more shiny and a little more sparkly but the coal is still there.

Try not to be too hard on those who look past the diamond to see the coal. They are our friends, they might even be our family, they might even be reformed old chunks of coal themselves. Just keep growing and glowing, keep kneeling and praying until we are so blue pure perfect. To quote another song, this one by Pink Floyd, ***"Shine On You Crazy Diamond"***

Jeff