

EMBODY YOUR TRUTH

Living An

# AUTHENTIC

# LIFE



*Kari Shea*

This book is dedicated to my heroes;  
Mark, an unbelievably supportive & loving  
husband and our son Skyler who embodies  
being true to himself each day. You both symbolize  
kindness, courage, commitment, strength and  
genuine goodness. Thank you for believing in  
me, for loving me like you do & always  
living authentically.

*Kari Shea*



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# Words from **THE AUTHOR**

Living authentically begins with making a commitment to yourself; a promise to embrace each day with the awareness that life is truly what we make of it, and that we have the power to live a gratifying and joyful life that resonates with our values and beliefs.



While I have done my best to adhere to authenticity, including it in my life in its entirety truly began with the launch of 'Life, Happiness, and Inspiration' in December 2015. This blog had been a project on my to-do list for almost five years, the effect of a fast-paced business life that I had made my priority.

It was only when I came to terms with why I had delayed publishing that I realized: I was being inauthentic with myself. While I found my personal life to be energetic, rewarding, and filled with love, my career kept demanding more of my time and energy. In my haste, I had neglected to ask myself if I was both capable and truly willing to devote more of myself to my business. And if doing so, would it bring me inspiration that had always been a part of my personal life.

This discovery inspired me to make a change. Reconciling my personal and business lives became a priority. Embracing both aspects of me wholeheartedly, instead of feeling as though they were constantly at odds motivated me to be honest with myself. It was this journey of reconciliation that inspired 'Living an Authentic Life' which I am happy to share with you today.

My past experiences have taught me that the path to living authentically does not come without effort, but these are vastly outweighed by its rewards. In this book you'll find the steps that I took to embrace authenticity in all aspects of my life. I hope that it bring you the same sense of happiness and fulfillment that it has brought me.

*Kari Shea*  
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# Introduction to **AUTHENTIC LIVING**

There is no greater luxury than simplicity. While at first it may sound like a contradiction consider what we define as luxurious. They are designed to bring us a hassle-free, efficient and enjoyable experiences. They are meant to allow us to do more, to delegate, and to focus on what we consider to be valuable.

Many people desire a more balanced, graceful and uncomplicated life. But are we exercising simplicity each day? To fully live in a state of wholeness it requires that we allow our true self to come to light.

## WHAT IS AN AUTHENTIC LIFE?

An authentic life is the result of consistently choosing to live true to ourselves each day. Authenticity comes from a place deep within us. We live genuinely when our words and actions align with our beliefs and values. Living an authentic life involves trusting our own judgment, living a life where we feel free from constraints and making choices that leave us feeling happy & empowered.

When we choose authenticity we set in motion being honest with ourselves. It is the time we embrace our faults, our shortcomings and be proud of our distinctive talents and abilities. We recognize our limitations and embrace vulnerability. This may mean making difficult and confronting decisions or acknowledging aspects of our lives and ourselves that we once thought better to hide away. Accepting ourselves fully allows us to live more openly, truthfully and more engaged with the world around us. Living authentically requires us to recognize who we are and to consistently align ourselves to our own ideals & values.

Herein lays the opportunity to create an authentic life that is unique to you and you alone. So much of our beliefs and values are shaped by the people around us and our past experiences. There are many things that we adhere to which we've carried throughout childhood, some of which we are taught as facts, as things that we should not question. Of all the beliefs and values that we carry, which ones do we truly observe, and which do we simply keep in order for others to perceive us as we want them to?

# Why Choose An **AUTHENTIC LIFE?**

When faced with countless choices in a given day, we may ask ourselves, why should we choose to live authentically? The answer is simple. **An authentic life is a life of freedom.** It's a life wherein you do not have to second guess yourself, your decisions or the motives behind them because you are clear on who you are and the directions in life that you want to take.

An authentic life is also **a life of community.** Just as we are made to be aware of our own selves, living authentically teaches us to be more aware of other people and our day-to-day interactions. It brings us a new level of insight as to how people react and why they respond in certain ways. Living authentically gives us a deeper understanding of the world around us and allows us to be genuinely connected with one another because we are clear on who we are and how we want to live each day.

Authentic living inspires **a life of peace and harmony.** Accepting ourselves for everything we are and everything we are not brings a sense of calm. There is nothing in the world that can be quite as reassuring as knowing who you are and being able to trust yourself. However this self-assurance is not to be confused with being self-indulgent or being ego driven. Remember, living an authentic life requires us to continually look at things in an objective manner. You can be completely comfortable with who



you are as a person and still experience apprehension. An authentic life does not eliminate adversity or challenges but rather it allows us to not be consumed with what comes our way and provides us the ability to handle things with power and ease.

The rewards that come with adapting such a perspective are infinite. These benefits will continue to come to light as we move forward on the path of authentic living.

# Tell-Tale Signs You're Not **LIVING AN AUTHENTIC LIFE**

Have you ever considered what stands in the way of truly living a life that feels right and being fully in sync with yourself and the world around you? The first step is to identify internal stumbling blocks that interfere with living authentically. There can be a countless number of obstacles, so there is no need to judge them. It is important to know not one of them is more significant than another. Pause and evaluate your present moment. Consider if any of the statements below are familiar, how you respond, how you feel and how they affect your everyday life.

1

## YOU FIND YOURSELF FEELING STAGNATE OR UNINSPIRED

You wake up to bad case of the Mondays or even Sunday evenings dreading the week ahead. While it may only be the start of the week you already find yourself feeling anxious about what comes next. The conversation you have with yourself could be related to work or about life in general.



For instance, what once sounded like an amazing job opportunity has now become one of the sources of your discontent. You've tried to reinvigorate yourself by following guides that tell you to change your routine, immerse yourself in new projects, or reward yourself at the completion of each one but none of them seem to inspire you. You become irritable at work and home. Undoubtedly you are critical of both yourself and other people. Your job and some of the people around you have become a source of frustration and sadness, and what's worse is that these negative feelings have begun to affect other parts of your life. You're eager for change, but you're not sure where to start.

At first glance, these feelings may be the effects of an unrewarding job or perceived negativity from our peers, however it's worth considering that external factors may not be the only things affecting your situation.

We can feel like we are drowning when we aren't honest with ourselves. In this example, dissatisfaction work can be a *symptom* instead of a cause, and we can only find a solution once we take the time to listen to our inner voice. We become open to inspiration and opportunity only when we are at peace with ourselves; when we're not bogged down by worry and self-doubt. When such feelings of sluggishness occur, it's important for us to connect with our inner selves and discover where these feelings are originating from. This can be done through any activity that allows for introspection whether it is meditation, yoga, exercising, journaling, sketching or whatever brings you joy and contentment. Create and foster a connection with yourself, be patient and never quit discovering the best you.



## SOMETHING IS OUT OF SYNC

- You're dissatisfied at work.
- You're constantly arguing with your spouse or significant other.
- You can't seem to find time or motivation for personal projects.
- You're finding yourself being impatient and discourteous with your children and/or those closest to you.

While on the surface these may seem like the simple demands of everyday life, they can also be interpreted as the spark meant to ignite something greater within you is compromised in some way or missing entirely. There are many things in life that are outside our control, however we always have a choice how we respond. When these challenges occur, they give us the opportunity to ask ourselves, "What is triggering my response?" and more importantly, "Am I responding out of fear?"



Bringing awareness to what appears to be negative aspects can be easier said than done but we cannot learn from them until we have accepted these aspects as a part of ourselves. We want to allow ourselves to be courageous and face our concerns and anxieties. This can pave the path towards reconciliation and greater insight.

3

### YOU FEEL AS THOUGH YOU'RE BEING PUNISHED

We may find ourselves faced with situations so confronting that make us think, "This is happening because I deserve it or I did something wrong." We try to make sense of things by taking the blame and perhaps even engaging in negative self-talk. What if the trials that we encounter in life are intended to facilitate our growth and personal expansion? Consider that when we are faced with a challenge that we are being offered wisdom rather than relearning the same thing time and again. Adversity allows us to recognize our own strengths and teaches us to be resilient, tenacious, appreciative, and resourceful. It gives us the opportunity to continuously better ourselves.

Whenever you feel negative emotions arise it is time to pause and consider what you are saying to yourself. Examine exactly how you're feeling in the moment. Take a step back, breathe and realize you've done nothing wrong. Successful living requires us to be forgiving, self aware and receptive to all possibilities. A fresh perspective can transform 'feeling punished' to knowing the challenges are temporary.

There are many things in life that can lead us to doubt ourselves or make us feel afraid. When we find ourselves faced with such trials it is important to remind ourselves of the following:



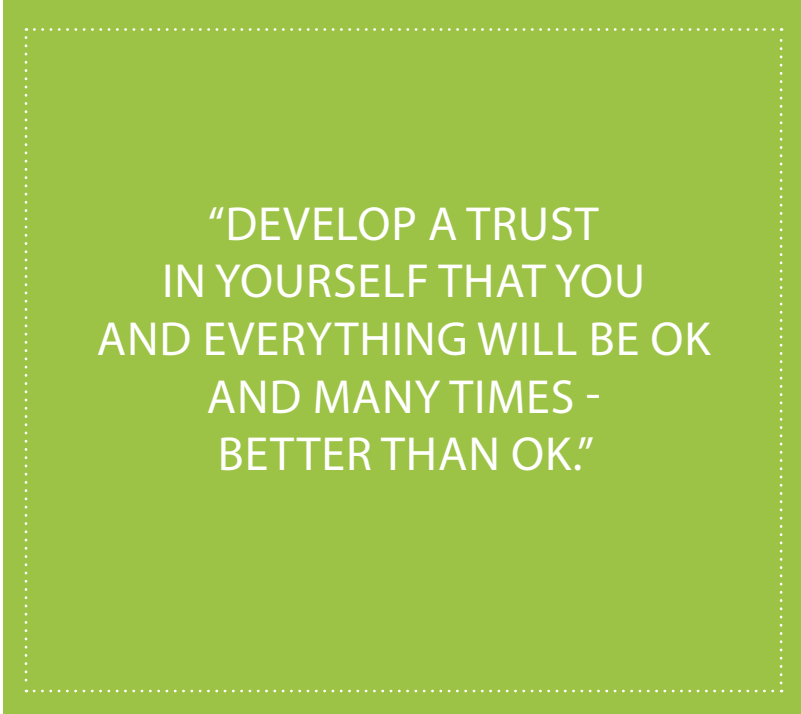
### IT'S OK TO BE UNCERTAIN

Sometimes one of the great challenges that we face is the fear of not knowing how something is going to turn out and what comes next. Fear is natural and yet it does not have to define us and negatively impact how we live our life. Take into account we can't control every aspect of a situation. Perhaps we're not sure of what we want yet or we don't feel that's it the right time to make a decision or we simply are not prepared.

When we find ourselves in such a state, it always helps to keep in mind that: It's ok to be tentative. Being unsure is in no way a failure of character. In fact it's the complete opposite. We are hesitant because we want to make choices that ultimately lead to us becoming a happier, more balanced person and at times serving the greater good. Uncertainty does not mean failure. It is simply part of the process to get us where we want to be. Keeping this into perspective will guide you on your journey.

### LEARN TO TRUST IN THE MOMENT

Unsettling things happen. This is a natural part of life, and while we may have prepared ourselves as best we can, dealing with feelings of worry and anxiousness bring about a different set of demands. While there's no way that we can anticipate everything that comes our way, we can, however, teach ourselves how to best respond to things – and it all begins with *trust*.



“DEVELOP A TRUST  
IN YOURSELF THAT YOU  
AND EVERYTHING WILL BE OK  
AND MANY TIMES -  
BETTER THAN OK.”

Develop a trust in yourself that you and everything will be okay and many times - better than okay. Create trust in the moment and believe that life will unfold as it is meant to and that all will be well at the end of the day. This is a mindset that you can cultivate over time by living consciously, trusting in yourself, and letting go of fear and saying to yourself “things always turn out the very best for me”.

### CREATE WHAT IS IMPORTANT

When faced with trying situations, it makes a difference to look at the bigger picture. Ask yourself: Will this matter to me in the long run? Will it matter next week, next month, next year, or maybe 10 years from now? Ask yourself “why something is important?”. Pondering these questions will assist to reprioritize and focus on what's truly important to you. It also allows you to see what is within your control, and which things you eventually let go of. Knowing what is important to you is living authentically and ultimately releases you from the constraints you place upon yourself.

# Cultivating An **AUTHENTIC LIFE**



Living an authentic life begins with introspection. In order for us to be true to ourselves, we want to establish a deeper understanding of who we are and what we stand for. It requires being open-minded, tolerant and accepting of change.

An authentic life also allows for continuous growth, improvement and enlightenment. When we choose the path to authenticity, we do so knowing that we are making a conscious decision to put into practice daily. Like any new habit,

adopting a mindful point of view requires us to pay attention moment by moment. As we progress, we are more aware of past pretenses and learn to let go of them with a lighter heart. This also allows us to free ourselves from emotional hang-ups and deep-seated frustrations. Opportunities present themselves to recalibrate our lives and focus on being the best version of ourselves.

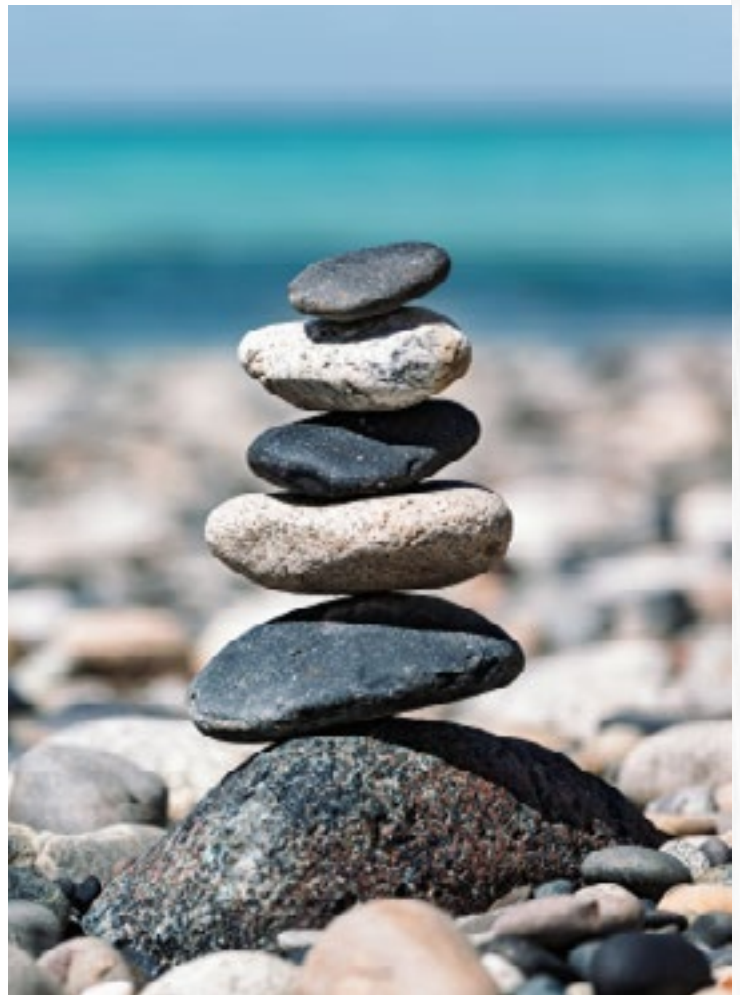
## GETTING STARTED

- **Establishing Your Values.** Sometimes it may be uncomfortable or even complicated to recognize your own ideals and desires. These are your core values and your sense of honor that establish the foundation for who you are. Often we hold onto the same values that we were taught and grew up with. However, some of those principles may have never resonated with us or our values have naturally changed over the course of time. By reevaluating what feels right to us in the present moment we bring ourselves clarity and establish our true self.

- **Fostering an Open Mind.** Authenticity best flourishes when we choose to experience the world as a whole, from a variety of different perspectives. When our thinking is rigid, we impose limitations upon ourselves that does not allow for much growth. It places us in one particular way of thinking and a result, one narrow way of viewing the world. This limited mindset stops us from being able to experience life fully or interacting with people who may not fit the rules that we adhere to. In turn, this stops us from revealing our authentic selves. That's why we want to make a commitment to ourselves every day to consider each situation from as many viewpoints as we can. Having an open mind allows us to welcome personal growth, take constructive criticism and find wisdom in each experience.

- **Recognizing Your Inner Wisdom.** Authenticity can also make you feel vulnerable, but at the same time it grants you access to your inner voice. This is the voice of truth that rings inside of you. It is the trusted influence that tells you things will be okay and that you will persevere. You may know it as your intuition and when you listen closely, it will guide you towards happiness and living the most magnificent life possible.

- **Knowing When You're Being Unauthentic.** We all encounter moments wherein we act or speak in a way that is unauthentic of who we are. We want others to like us or think highly of us so we present a false persona. Other times we do so because we feel unsafe, awkward or desperate in some way. It can be frustrating when this happens, and sometimes even painful. When we are unauthentic with ourselves because we're hiding and afraid to admit something difficult, then it limits us indefinitely. Fortunately, acknowledging when we we're untrue to ourselves and the reason behind doing so, moves us further along the path of leading a life you truly admire.





- **Being a friend to yourself.** The journey to a mindful life, begins within you, and your best companion on this journey is yourself. This is why it's important for you to take the time to develop a good relationship with who you are now. Explore how you honestly feel about yourself. Learn to forgive your shortcomings and accept the things that are out of your control. Discover your strengths, celebrate your successes, and most importantly, be true to yourself. Recognize what you like, what you don't like and don't be afraid to say it. If there is something you feel guilty about, identify it and transform it. It's much easier to be a friend to yourself when you're truthful. Love who you are, as you love a trusted friend.

**“LOVE YOURSELF FIRST AND EVERYTHING ELSE FALLS INTO LINE. YOU REALLY HAVE TO LOVE YOURSELF TO GET ANYTHING DONE IN THIS WORLD.”**

LUCILLE BALL

# Mindfulness and **AUTHENTIC LIVING**

Being fully aware and letting go of limiting beliefs creates a shift to conscious living. Mindfulness involves immersing ourselves fully in the present. It requires us to be in a state of active, open attention not just of ourselves, but of the world around us. When we are mindful, we observe our thoughts, our feelings from a distance and become the observer. We are fully aware of our experiences; we tell the truth and trust our intuition.

To best understand mindfulness, it is beneficial to identify what is happening when we actually disconnect from ourselves. Have you ever driven to a destination only to remember that a part of your route was closed off? Maybe there's a bit of roadwork going on and despite seeing announcements it simply slipped your mind. After all, you've taken the same drive dozens of times before. Perhaps you are driving your child to their music lesson and you end up driving to the market instead. In these moments consider you are on "autopilot".





As we grow and learn, we fall into habits of mind and body, of attention and inattention, of being open and then closing ourselves off. The result is not being present for our own lives. Sometimes we move so fast we simply forget and have no idea what is happening around us and operate solely on “autopilot”. Subconsciously we train ourselves to ignore the more mundane tasks so that we can focus more attention to what we want to accomplish or whatever it is that distracts us from the present moment.

There is nothing particularly wrong with living this way and sometimes it is a perfectly reasonable thing to do. After all, there’s only so much that we can do in a given day. However the more we “tune out” to life, the more we risk missing out on small miracles, the beauty around us, appreciating our lives and feeling grateful. Inattention can also cause us to overlook important information and messages. What happens when we disconnect is that we lose ourselves, sometimes relationships suffer and ultimately it can take its toll on our health. We become prisoners of deep-rooted routines.

“BEING FULLY AWARE  
OF WHAT WE’RE  
EXPERIENCING AND  
WHAT SURROUNDS US  
AT A GIVEN POINT IN  
TIME CAN LEAVE  
US CONSTANTLY  
FULFILLED.”



Being aware of how often we put ourselves on “autopilot” is the first big step towards dissolving old habits, being mindful and more present in our lives. Remember, mindfulness requires us to purposefully pay attention and there is a sense of satisfaction to be had in being attentive. Being fully aware of what we’re experiencing and what surrounds us at a given point in time can leave us constantly fulfilled. It allows us to be informed, responsive, and fully immersed in what’s going on in our life. While tuning out may have its own set of benefits, being mindful allows us to rediscover and appreciate the things we’ve become accustomed to and perhaps take for granted. It also instills a sense of wonder in us, giving us the opening to see every day as a new adventure.





# Practicing AUTHENTICITY

## LIVE IN GRATITUDE

Take the time to acknowledge and give back the kindness that you receive each day. Often we say “thank you” as an automatic response, without stopping to think if we actually mean what we say. Reciprocating kindness can go far beyond saying thank you. Being kind is the essence of grace, and keeping this in mind will naturally cause us to live a more authentic life. How often do you take the time to tell someone that you genuinely and wholeheartedly appreciate them? Expressing gratitude to someone for maybe not what



they necessarily do for you, but, rather what they mean to you creates a deeper sense of relatedness with one another. Make it a habit to share your appreciation with the people around you and let them know how happy you are to have them as part of your life. Be the catalyst to bring joy to people and open their hearts.

There is no reason to limit your expression of gratitude to only family and friends. Make a conscious effort to show appreciation to people outside your immediate circle. Whether it's your postal worker, your officemate, gym instructor, barista or grocery clerk, find a way to sincerely demonstrate gratitude.

## STOP BEING ABSORBED BY ROLES

We wear many hats throughout life. Parent, child, student, significant other, caregiver, employee, business professional – these are just some of the titles that you may hold at any given point in time. We take on so many different responsibilities that it becomes easy to get lost in them and think “This is me. This is who I am. This is my identity.” From time to time when our responsibilities grow or change it can leave us feeling lost, sad, angry or frustrated.



It can also happen that we limit ourselves by viewing things from the perspective of a single role, which is living one-dimensionally. We find ourselves lacking diplomacy when we get into an argument with a friend when we are perfectly capable of being thoughtful and considerate. Instead of viewing our various roles as something which in reality complements who we are, we tend to compartmentalize experiences because we view each role as something completely different and independent.

Remember, each role that you have is a facet of something greater, and that's you! While our responsibilities are both varied and, at certain times, overwhelming, they are not the core of our being. At the end of the day, when we are alone with our thoughts and feelings, these titles or roles are not what define us. We are so much more than the archetypes that we take on.

## CLEAR YOURSELF OF EMOTIONAL CLUTTER

There's a wonderful feeling that comes with letting go of the things that we no longer need or want, however not all forms of clutter are tangible. Begin the task of removing "emotional clutter". Here's how you can identify and take steps to clear the clutter that lives within:



**1. Find clarity.** Take note of where you are in life and get an idea of where you would like to go from this point. It may help to go back to your younger self and ask: What did I enjoy? Where did I envision myself being? Which of the dreams I had for my older self do I still want to pursue?

**2. Conduct a self-evaluation.** Recognize what drives you, your innermost thoughts, feelings, beliefs and how they relate to what you want. Are there parts of your life where you're more critical than others? Are you happy with your home life, work life and your relationships?

**3. Learn to let go.** Once you've determined the things that are limiting you, whether it's personal beliefs, relationships, feelings, make a conscious and consistent effort to remove them from your life. Create fresh beliefs that leave you feeling inspired and connected. Indeed the process

requires willingness and dedication. While we may logically understand that specific habits and behaviors are no longer good for us, changing them can be confronting. Just know that if you have any difficulty with this step, you have someone to talk to. And I would love to hear of your experiences.

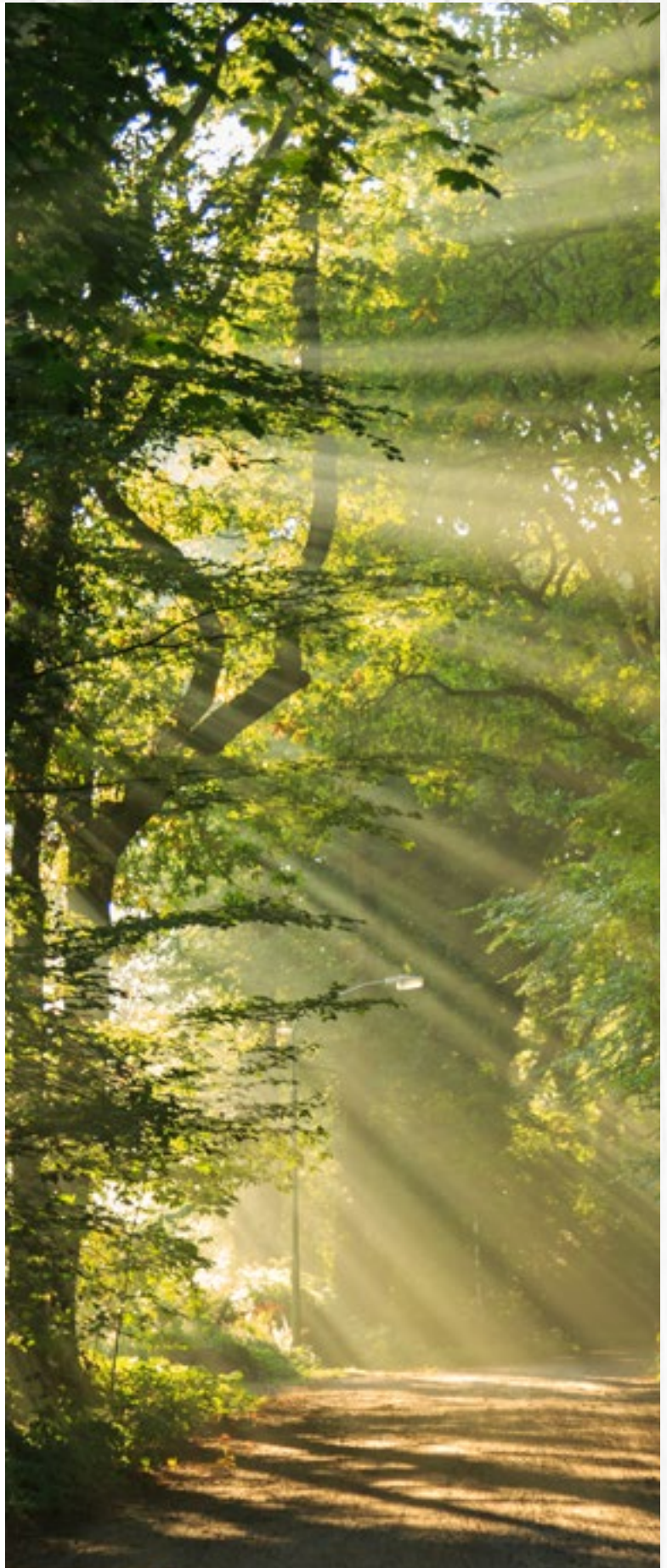
**4. Move forward.** Embrace your less-cluttered life. While at first you may feel you're being "tested", recognize the new insights that come with emotional decluttering. Celebrate and take pleasure in knowing that you're doing things differently. When you take steps in the direction you want to go – even if they are small - it will feel like a weight has been lifted. Welcome and accept the changes; let happiness and inspiration in!

## EMBRACE THE QUIET

Not everyone loves the quiet, but I invite you to make an effort. Silence leaves us alone with our thoughts, our emotions and ourselves. Maybe for some this can be frightening, unbearable, lonely, or boring. At times we may consciously avoid stillness by telling ourselves we are too busy. If any of the behaviors or feelings sounds familiar to you, then here's what I can recommend: Learn to embrace the silence. Settle down and be still if even for five minutes. You will be amazed at what you discover when you pause then grant yourself peace and quiet.

Relax, to hear out your own thoughts and feelings. Revel in your own tranquil surroundings, and cherish the insight and calmness that the quiet has to offer. We find ourselves surrounded by noise and sound so often we ignore our inner voice or forget the comfort that comes with silence. Quietude is an ideal way to center oneself and find perspective. It allows observing life from a place of calmness, objectivity and offers us the chance for deeper insight.

Make a promise to yourself to pause for at least a few moments each day. Reconnecting with your inner self is the key to lasting happiness and success.



## SURROUND YOURSELF WITH GENUINE PEOPLE

It is far easier to follow and remain on the path of authentic living when you associate with people who have similar values and ideals. True friends are honest with you and expect the same in return. More importantly, they encourage your own personal growth. They wholeheartedly share in joy, in sorrow, and everything in between. Living an authentic life may not come naturally in the beginning, but, surrounding yourself with people who sincerely care about your wellbeing can nourish you through your journey.

There may be twists and turns when you come to realize people in your life may undeniably be insincere and perhaps even toxic. This is not something to bring judgment upon, but, rather consider the fact that it is the perfect opportunity to edit unhealthy friendships, relationships and situations. As you become ever truer to yourself and discover what is important to you, what you admire in yourself and others, people from the past may not be in harmony with authentic living. Remember to bring compassion and kindness to everyone; however, it is okay to free yourself from people and/or situations that feel disingenuous.



# Moving Forward in **AUTHENTIC LIVING**



“ SO LET'S DO AND BE OUR BEST, EVEN IF IT'S NOT PERFECT. LET'S FOCUS ON PROGRESS AND INNOVATION AND FULLY EXPERIENCING WHAT LIFE HAS IN STORE. ”

An authentic life allows us to have a deeper and stronger connection with everyone and everything. Living authentically inspires us to experience life and discover our expansive self. By removing pretenses we are free to pursue that which truly brings us joy & peace of mind, without the pressure of having to measure ourselves against other people. Authenticity allows us to focus on living unrestricted because it does away with the concern of how others may perceive us or our actions. It lets us bask in simplicity.

The path to authenticity may seem challenging at first, but it is not one that you have to take alone. If you are ready to eliminate self-imposed boundaries and bring your *true nature* to light, then I welcome you take this exciting journey with me.

I'm not a writer, nor am I a famous person or even a recognizable name. What I am is a human being dedicated to fully immersing myself in every experience that comes my way. Creating '*Living an Authentic Life*' is a pure and honest expression for me. It is how I feel, it is how I live, it's what I believe in and it represents the genuine people I surround myself with and have a profound trust in each day.

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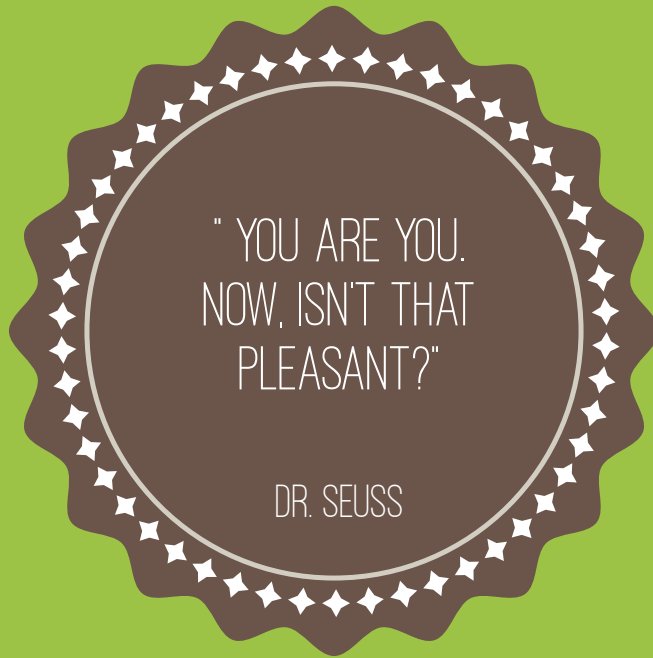
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