



Finding yourself, Alignment and Authenticity

To truly uncover your authentic self, you will have to let go of external influences, expectations, and behaviours that are not aligned with your core values and beliefs, making space for your true self to emerge. But to do that, requires of you to identify what your values are and what you want out of life.

What do I want from life?

So here is a question.

What if everything you knew about yourself was wrong? Who am I really?

It's a good question and worthy of some consideration. Here is a simple exercise to illustrate some questions to answer that. Be specific.

- Who is the person you want to be?
- Who do you look up to, admire, respect?
- What is it about them that you admire? (character, achievements, activities, status, possessions)
- Who am I envious of? What is their character trait that underlies that?
- I want freedom (to do what?)
- I want to worry less (Why do I worry now? How did I get here? What can I do to get out of that worrying situation now, as I am? How can I gain perspective?)
- I don't have any of that now – why not?
- What is keeping that from me? What am I doing to keep that away? Why don't I respect myself right now? How can looking up to someone I admire guide me to the right behaviour and thinking?
- What do I like about myself?
- What do I dislike about myself? (You might be being too hard or too lenient on yourself – you might need to talk this through with someone insightful that you trust)
- What do I need to do to get there?
- What do I need to do more of? What do I need to do less of? What do I need to stop doing?

3. What are the values (character traits) that are important to me?

Am I aligned with those? Give examples.

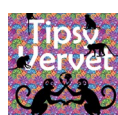
4. How does the life I am living compare to what is important to me?

What is important to me? Compare that with: How I spend my time now?

Be specific; include everything.

5. What do I want to change?

In an ideal world, if I could have anything, what would that be? Often I find that I have pushed this away, thinking that under the circumstances that I find myself right now (marriage, children, commitments,



things I need to put right, job/career) it is not possible. But identifying what it really is (in detail) and articulating it often shows me that it is not as far out of my reach as I think. It just might be achievable. At the very least, starting with small steps, I can begin to work towards it.

If I were to do this thing, how would I go about doing it? What needs to happen to make it happen? Be specific. Put anything on the table that needs to be done, no matter how unrealistic it might seem right now. This is about what could be, not necessarily about what is possible right now. But it will give you an idea of the direction in which you need to go.

e.g., I need to negotiate my working hours with my boss; work from home; I need to change my job; I need to move home.

If I were to do this thing. What would it look like? Answer as best you can. You might not have all the answers right now:

- What is it?
- What are the reasons for doing it?
- Where would it happen?
- When would it happen? If it's a regular activity, perhaps you might think of putting aside part of the day – so specify a time.
- Who would be there?
- How would I go about doing it?
- What do I need to make it happen?
- Do I need help from or collaboration with someone? Who?
- How much will it cost? How will I allow for that? What do I have to do to make it happen?

Being a people pleaser

When we grow up fitting ourselves to others' expectations so we can survive, we can end up becoming something that is insincere and not true to ourselves.

- People pleaser
- Perfectionist
- Someone who avoids people places and things out of fear of judgement and shame.

This is understandable. It is a protective strategy.

But all of these strategies are unhelpful as we grow older and emerge into adulthood. They prevent us from being authentically ourselves and living a rich, full life.

If we do not allow ourselves to be ourselves, nobody can get to know us. If we avoid doing what we are called to, we can never live authentically. If we place unrealistic expectations on ourselves, we will never appreciate the gifts we possess and the unique contribution we can make.

Dare to offer yourself to the world. That takes courage and vulnerability. Seek out others who will support you and encourage you.

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