

BE BOLD, BE AUTHENTIC

THE AUDACITY OF BEING AUTHENTIC TO ONESELF

'Trust your instincts'  
'Listen to your intuition'  
'Be true to yourself!'

How often have we heard these directives? As if there were some aim or accomplishment to be achieved. Somehow these words all boil down to the notion of being authentic to oneself.

From Ancient Greek *authéntēs* - lord, master - Greek *authentikós* - principal, genuine - Latin *authenticus* and French *authentique* (c. 1211), the word authentic is commonly used in law, or when speaking of a work of art, or when referring to facts. There it implies a meaning of what is original and corresponds to reality, conferring a sense of reliability, and of which is accurate.



Girl with a Pearl Earring, c.1665 | The Mauritshuis  
Master of light Johannes Vermeer's most famous painting  
Credit: Wikimedia Commons

When referring to a human being, authentic talks about what is natural, intrinsically pure, and true to each personality, spirit, or character. Sincere, stripped from conventions. Looking at it from such an angle, shining our light and being true to ourselves is not a must or some far-fetched fantasy goal to be achieved. Instead, it is our inherent quality with which each one of us is born.

Whether in life or at work, the benefits of authenticity are numerous. Research suggests that it creates happiness for oneself and thus for our surroundings. It increases wellness. Developing a sense of being and feeling aligned with our values contributes to strengthening our self-esteem and self-confidence, which stimulate the courage to achieve and 'to be' more. On the other side of the scale, people-pleasing, comparing oneself to others, fears of not being accepted or not belonging to a group, wandering in the past and future instead of being present to this moment, count amongst the number one enemies to authenticity.

While the benefits of shining our light are undeniable, it also presents some challenges, as it requires a sense of commitment and may sometimes involve certain risks.

In her poignant testimony 'The top five regrets of the dying', Australian writer and nurse Bronnie Ware states that the number one regret people express when they are dying is: "I WISH I'D HAD THE COURAGE TO LIVE A LIFE TRUE TO MYSELF, NOT THE LIFE OTHERS EXPECTED OF ME."

Somehow one often waits for life to offer us extreme wake-up calls to take action, including having the courage to live a life that is true to our core and values. However, being aware that thousands cells die in our body every second is a sharp reminder that we are all dying every moment and that our time is very limited. With that sense of immediacy in mind, I believe that authenticity is not an option. Instead, being true to our inherent nature is our responsibility, personal and universal.

While it certainly requires courage to express freely and sparkle the unique radiance of our true colors, it is a risk worth taking, with tenderness, and a terrain worth exploring, chunk by chunk, small steps at a time.

Oscar Wilde humorously coined it cheerfully:

*"Be yourself;  
Everyone else is already taken!"*

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An enthusiastic career coach, I am enriched with a multi-facet 20+ years of professional experience working internationally with fine jewels and people development. My mission is to help and guide talented individuals to manifest their vision in alignment with their values and swiftly turn their career life into a shiny brilliant gem.