

The Path of Authenticity: Seven Stepping Stones to a Life of Joy

by Melody Larson

What does it mean to live authentically? Authenticity holds a power that is almost mystical in nature. It's magnetic and we long for it now more than ever. Why? My view is that authenticity opens the doorway to a life of spirit.

What does the path of authenticity look like? Let's explore the seven stepping stones that lead to a life of freedom and joy.

First Stone: Be happy for no reason

There's nothing you need to become, nothing that needs to happen, in order for you to be happy. Happiness is simply a choice. Let go of the "when/then" game: When I lose 10 pounds, then I'll be happy. When I know my purpose, then I'll be happy.

Here's the deal: Happiness doesn't come when you've achieved your goals; it's what allows you to achieve them. The happiness that you seek is not the reward waiting for you at the end of your journey. It's what makes the journey possible in the first place.

Second Stone: End the blame game

Do you blame others for the way your life has unfolded or is unfolding? Is it the fault of your childhood, your spouse, your boss, or the current state of world affairs that you are not happy? Are you giving away your power by seeing yourself as a victim?

To become empowered you have to take responsibility for yourself and for the way your life is going. No person or event can determine the shape of your life unless you allow it. You allow it when you choose the safety of powerlessness over the risk of self-determination.

The only failure in life is not choosing for yourself

how you're going to live it. When you choose responsibility, a glorious thing happens: You stop living life in half measures and your life blooms in all its richness.

Third Stone: Simplify

Authenticity has a very hard time flourishing in the weed-strewn soil of complexity. You must pull out the weeds and make space for your soul desires to flourish. Simplifying involves ridding yourself of materials, activities, and people that drain or scatter your energy. Clutter is the most visible sign of an overgrown life. Go through your stuff and clear out everything that you don't use or that doesn't please you emotionally.

After you've cleared some physical space, see if you can free up some time. Without time to slow down and connect to your heart, you won't be able to hear its whisperings. Finally, you've got to rid yourself of people who are toxic to you, who weigh you down instead of uplifting you. When you've cleared a clean, fertile space in your life you can plant the seeds of your authenticity and cultivate your passion.

Fourth Stone: Relish being selfish

Oh no, I used the "S" word! We've been told for so long that being selfish is bad. If you stop to think about it, anyone who says so is probably saying it out of a selfish desire for you to follow their rules.

If you want to live freely you have to become selfish. There is nothing wrong with serving the self. You have to put your own needs and desires above everyone and everything precisely in order to serve everyone and everything.

It's exhausting to try to be all things to all people. You were never meant to apply your energy in this scattering

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