

What is Authenticity?

By
Kevin A. Rafferty

Authenticity is a popular word these days. Many authors and speakers on human development, psychology, spirituality, and motivation speak about being authentic, living authentically, and expressing one's Self from a place of authenticity. While this word may be newly circulated, its roots go way back, deep within the history of mankind and the varied texts that have attempted to capture the true nature of the human spirit.

The word “authenticity” comes from the Greek root *authentikos*, meaning:
- author, authority, original, primary.

The dictionary definition of authenticity includes:
- not false or copied, genuine, real, free from pretense or hypocrisy, sincerity.

Thus, being authentic means you are the author and authority of your life. It means the truth—your truth—fully exposed! It means being real, no phoniness, pretending or masking who you really are. It means being totally comfortable in your own skin.

My definition of authenticity is to know yourself, your real Self, and to live that truth in every moment. Know who are you at the core, and be that person in your daily life. Being awake and aware of your thoughts and feelings adds to the definition.

Having freedom from being held hostage by your ego and all its fears and demands, and just being who you really are at any moment, are elements of authenticity. Playing in roles that are a true expression of who you are is a way we show authenticity. Connecting with others without masks, willing to “get naked” and let others see you for everything you are is how intimacy plays a crucial part in authenticity. Willingness to walk away from situations where you cannot be yourself is a way we maintain authenticity.

Authenticity is not a skill or something we can buy. It comes from deep within, and when you touch it, you know it, you feel it, and so does everyone around you. Authenticity is about aligning your words with your deeds. It is also about practicing what you believe and preach. Authenticity requires that you get to know yourself, intimately. It also beckons you to be able to relate openly, honestly, with others at any time. Authenticity exudes passion, generates its own energy, is easily recognizable, and creates such things as joy, abundance, and happiness.

We become authentic one moment at a time. We choose authenticity in every thought, every feeling, every action and every creation.

Authenticity equals Truth. Truth you feel with every fiber of your being. Truth lives in your heart, not your head. You know it when you feel it. Truth resonates as a “feel good” feeling or

sensation in your body. We use our intuition, our feelings, to keep a reliable barometer on finding our own truth and in so doing you will find yourself!

Authenticity is being the real You, without concern for what others may think of you. Authenticity is having the courage to be that real You, with no need for masks or cover.

The search for authenticity begins by taking the first step, which in my experience is to begin a process of deep self-reflection. Are you willing to ask yourself the big questions? Are you willing to put everything in your life up to full scrutiny? Are you ready to discover your own answers to these questions? Are you willing to release old thoughts and belief patterns as you find your own truth? Deep reflection opens the door to personal awareness—an awareness that is not parroting what you have been conditioned to believe, or what first flows through your thoughts/ words/deeds. It comes when we quietly and honestly look within, and listen to the deep, inner voice that we all have had access to, but often keep blocked or buried. Authentic awareness speaks through the sound of feelings—when we *feel* it is right. That is awareness!

Authenticity is the complete puzzle of who we are—being seen for who we are, not what we do, what we own, or our past and present stations in life. Authenticity directly leads to being happy, living life on your own terms, and finding fulfillment, peace, joy, and freedom in your life.

Within each person, hidden behind their fears, doubts, and worries, lies an Authentic Self. This wise, loving and powerful "Higher Self" is the sum total of your unique passions, values, visions, talents, abilities, and sense of purpose. This "Higher Self" is, as Steve Snyder says in his blog (<http://bit.ly/5ictx>), "your true and unique identity — the doorway to personal and professional mastery, to purpose and passion in your life, right here, right now."

Ancient teachings say the Authentic Self comes from that creative spark that emerged to create the entire cosmos. We experience it, at the level of consciousness, as an energy, an impulse that seems to continuously strive to create, improve, expand – evolve - at every level of life. It's a most powerful drive, a passion that emerges from the ground of consciousness itself. Each living person is connected to this consciousness and has continuous access to this basic, most natural state, whether aware of it or not. When we become aware, and begin to live within the flow of that awareness, we tap into our authentic state, our most natural state of existence. When in this state, this state of conscious awareness, we live in the authentic states of joy, peace, love, freedom, abundance, gratitude, and other 'feel-good' sensations. Whether we tune into it for a moment, minutes, hours or a lifetime, this vast evolutionary conscious energy is always available to all of us. All we need to do is put the attention, intention and effort into tapping into it.

I developed a formula that may help see how authenticity drives other positive states of being:

**AUTHENTICITY = AWARENESS = PRESENCE =
CONSCIOUS CHOICE = PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY =
FULFILLMENT = SELF LOVE & ACCEPTANCE = HAPPINESS.**

Everyone alive, at their core, wants to feel good, be happy and have a good life. Authenticity allows all of us to live such a life. That in itself is enough motivation to re-focus one's attention and efforts from reaching for happiness through external sources, and to simply look within for your own well-spring of truth, joy and fulfillment.

© 2010 Kevin A. Rafferty