FREE CHAPTER

Authenticity

The Freedom to be Yourself

**Authenticity** is a topic that has been considered in many different areas, and more than ever it is being explored in the fields of personal development and spiritual practices. You may have considered for yourself, "Who is the authentic me? And how can I know if this is really me or simply my ego acting in the moment?" You are not alone on this path of inquiry, as all of us are looking for greater certainty and confirmation that we are acting as our best selves (also expressed as "being authentic"). The underlying idea for every spiritual practice is ultimately to become more connected to our true nature and be as closely aligned as possible to who we truly are. The one mistake we all may face at some stage of our spiritual growth is the hope that there will be a final destination that, once reached, could allow us to relax and enjoy that best expression of ourselves. We are all familiar with this train of thought, for example: "Once I become more loving, I will have more [insert desired outcome]." The secret of authenticity is, however, a process of recognizing the importance of the choices we make in each moment while remaining aware of the ongoing nature of life. Each day as we awaken we can ask ourselves: "Which of my actions and words best represent who I really am?"

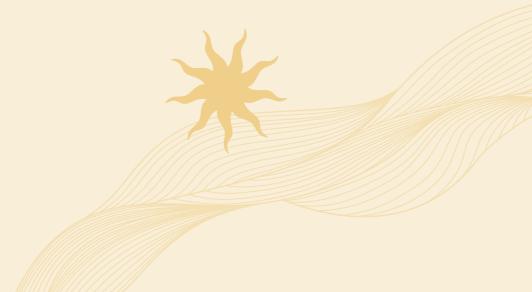
When asked often, this question can transform our lives.

To be authentic is a choice we can make that can lead us to a deeper connection to ourselves and a better understanding of who we are. It is through each experience that we gain the power to be ourselves despite the outside conditions. We become more connected to the ideas in which we believe, to the values we hold or aspire to, to the courage with which we approach our life, and to the honoring of our unique talents, preferences, and dreams. It is a liberating journey to experience a deeper sense of inner freedom, where we are no longer tied to external conditions, but instead guided by our inner impulses, fostering a deeper sense of trust in their expression. We become people who are living from our own integrity, gradually releasing the expectations of

who we need to be. We begin to trust in our hearts that we will have the inner knowing of how to respond to each of the situations we face without being afraid of the consequences of "getting it wrong." We begin to honor our authenticity above all else, and suddenly we awaken an inner sense of joy for life and experience the meaning of our existence. Through that, we serve our surroundings in the best way possible, experiencing a deep understanding of the purpose we all have on this Earth.

The path of authenticity is not easy, as it requires us to face our false beliefs, shadow sides, and the darkest aspects of our personality; but rather than choosing avoidance, we make a conscious choice to own these parts of ourselves. We accept everything that belongs to us and are ready to become the better selves we know that we can be. We have a hunger to know who we truly are without fear of what we might discover along the way. We face ourselves with understanding and compassion toward ourselves with regard to each of the new experiences we face.

Are you ready to make a difference in your life and embark on the journey to knowing yourself?



## TAKING FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY OWN LIFE

A sense of magic lies in the feeling of being fully responsible for our own lives. If you look at everything that you have lived up until today, you might find yourself feeling happy about many moments that you were able to experience, but at the same time you could find yourself very aware of the many experiences that seem unfair for you to have had to experience. Take an in-depth look and notice all of the aspects of your life: where you work, what relationships you have, where you live, and what you are surrounded by.

Despite all of the challenging situations we have to deal with in our lives, we are fully responsible for what we have today and where we are. Everything you are surrounded by is based on your expectations, hopes, preferences and comforts. Everything that is around you is your choice, even if you think that certain circumstances keep you where you are against your will. Conditions will always take different forms; but regardless of this, it does not change the fact that you are fully responsible for the life you have, and your work is to put in the effort to create the life that best represents who you authentically are.

If you were to be completely honest with yourself, how does it make you feel to observe where you are in your life right now? You might notice that there are some aspects of your experience that you are proud of because of what you have managed to create, and you might feel that some areas still need some work, which is totally okay, as life is never perfect and we will always have ambitions of where we want to move next.

For many people it is a turning point when, for the first time, they recognize that they are the only one who is responsible for their life. Throughout our lives, we will always be surrounded by people supporting us and guiding us in new directions, but the decisions we make and the resulting outcomes of those decisions will remain entirely our own responsibility. We direct our life in the way that we respond to situations and when we begin to blame others that is a warning that we are attempting to avoid taking responsibility for that situation.

If remain responsible for our actions, decisions, and thoughts, we begin taking different actions. This conscious accountability for our actions helps us to see our life through an entirely new lens.

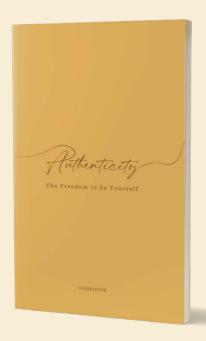
If you are new to this concept, take a moment and ask yourself the following questions:

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## **AUTHENTICITY**

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