

# How to Be Your Own Best Friend

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*Are there times when you wonder whether the choices you've made are right for you? Do you find yourself acting in ways that hide your true feelings, or spending a great deal of your time doing things you do not enjoy? If so, you're not alone. Most of us spend a great deal of time doing, speaking, and interacting in ways we have learned, rather than in alignment with our true selves. Let's look at how we can move toward becoming our own best friend and living a more authentic and fulfilling life.*

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We are born with high self-esteem. As babies, we didn't self-scrutinize, judge, and act as we imagined others would prefer. We lived in the moment, acting and reacting in our truth. But over time, as we grow and move out into the world, we learn to separate from our truth and become what people model and expect of us. This happens innocently enough under the influence of people who are acting out of love and in our best interests.

Our parents are our first teachers. They show us what is expected of us. They teach us how to behave and interact, and prepare us to enter the world. By the time we go to school, we are prepared for a whole new world of expectations, and ready for even more rules. In school, we learn non-stop how to fit in with peers, please teachers, and later, the ever-expanding circle of people who enter into our lives. In short, we learn to become whatever everyone expects us to be and carry out the tasks that others expect of us.

## ***The expected versus the authentic self***

Along the way, as we take in and take on the world, we can lose touch with our authentic selves. We become greatly influenced by rules and regulations, societal norms and ideals, our culture, our religion, our family's socio-economic status, gender judgments, restrictions, and expectations... the list goes on. Behaving in alignment with societal and family expectations is great... but only when it is not at the expense of our authenticity. Here's the million-dollar

question: How are we supposed to know who we are and what we want when we spend so much time and effort trying to fit into what others want us to be? After being taught, molded, and modeled to the point that we lose touch with our true ourselves, how can we get to know who we truly are? And what's the big deal about authenticity anyway?

## ***The big deal about authenticity***

Authenticity is defined in the Cambridge Dictionary as *'the quality of being real or true.'* In short, authenticity is being true to ourselves, our values, our interests, and our hopes and dreams.

Early in our lives, we knew nothing other than our true selves. We had no filters. We were self-loving, and lived spontaneously, trusting ourselves to do our best at the moment as it unfolded. But as children out in the world, when we felt bad or not good enough, if we didn't fit in, look or behave in a certain way — even if it was not in alignment with our true selves — we may have sacrificed our authenticity to fit in.

Further down the line, we may have sacrificed our authentic selves to conform in ways that we might never have imagined, to feel worthy of the love of a family member or partner. We may have allowed others to dictate whether to get married and — if not who to marry — the sort of person to choose as a partner. We may have pursued a career to please others, rather than follow the path we had secretly

preferred. We may have accumulated accomplishments and assets that are not in alignment with who we want to be and what we value.

We often place conditions on ourselves to feel worthy of love. We are worthy of love only if we are popular, accomplished, attractive, married, fit in, have children/family life, acquire assets, have a successful business or career.

Here's an example: Julia, at the age of six, is a very good student, and at the top of her class in reading. She enjoyed helping her classmates learn to read. By the time she enters high school, she is volunteering in ESL classes and has her heart set on becoming a teacher. But, with Julia's stellar academic record, her lawyer, and accountant parents had other ideas and plans for her future. Now, in university, she has abandoned her dream of becoming a teacher and, sacrificing her authenticity, is working toward becoming the doctor her parents have always dreamed she would be.

If Julia chooses to become a doctor because that is what she truly wants for herself, that's one thing. But by allowing her parents to impose their preference on her, she is sacrificing her authenticity. Julia's parents may be passing along their feelings of shame of having disappointed their own parents, who harbored dreams of their son or daughter becoming a doctor, but now, Julia is becoming someone she is not truly aligned to be.

### **Getting to the real you... here and now**

It's time to get connected to you. And here's how. Your heart centre links your mind and body. Your breath is the fastest way to connect to yourself, in the here and now. When you focus on your breath, you connect internally to yourself, in the present. This

opens a portal for you to get to know your true self. Any moment of any day, you can stop and check-in with yourself, and align with your heart centre. As you allow this to become part of your daily life, you will start to align with your opportunities, possibilities, joy, love, gratitude, and positivity amidst the chaos and uncertainty of life. And you will start to get to know someone very important in your life ... you!

### **Becoming your own best friend**

As you focus on moments and connect to the breath on a daily basis, this connection leads to even deeper internal connections. You will begin to align with your true nature and your authentic self. You will begin to see where you may have acted inauthentically, or made choices out of alignment with what you want for yourself. You begin to trust yourself. You imagine being able to manifest your ideal life. You begin to explore whether you are making choices that please others rather than yourself. You start to connect with what you want, who you want to be, and what brings you joy.

### **What we focus on expands**

What we focus on expands. In the here and now, you can plant a seed to connect you with your authentic self. It all starts with you, becoming your own best friend.

### **Exploring your true vs expected self**

**Ask** yourself who you want to be

**Take** stock of the things that you do to please others, versus pleasing yourself

**Imagine** your ideal life, in all aspects

**Make** a list of what brings you joy

**Prioritize** daily doing activities that bring you joy, happiness, peace and a calm state of mind

**Check-in** with yourself on a daily basis

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and take control of your future.

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*About the author*

*Dr. Monica Vermani is a Clinical Psychologist specializing in treating trauma, stress and mood & anxiety disorders, and the founder of Start Living Corporate Wellness. She is a well-known speaker and author on mental health and wellness. Her upcoming book, A Deeper Wellness, is scheduled for publication in 2021. <https://www.drmonicavermani.com/>*

*Dr. Vermani has recently launched an exciting online self-help program, A Deeper Wellness, delivering powerful mental-health guidance, life skills, and knowledge that employees can access anywhere, anytime. <https://www.adeeperwellness.com/>*

