



Reflections on Living Wholeheartedly

I have always been intrigued by Berne Brown's work. It speaks to me and makes me view life from a different perspective. In her book, Daring Greatly, she outlines ten guideposts for wholehearted living. I thought it would be intriguing to take each guidepost and truly live it out in my life. I was curious as to what that experience would be like and how it would impact my life and well-being.

I tell you, it can be a pretty damn humbling and terrifying experience to live wholeheartedly! But I figured if my experience could give someone else the courage to give it a go, why not share my story? This month we delve into the first guidepost.

Guidepost #1: Cultivating authenticity means letting go of what people think.

To a self-confessed people pleaser, this one rocked me to the core. What? How can I not consider what other people think? What about other people's feelings? I don't want to hurt someone. What if they don't like me because of what I say? (These are all thoughts that immediately popped into my head when I read this guidepost). But I kept an open mind and here's what I discovered on my journey to letting go...

Acting authentically needs to start from a place of honest self-examination and loving ALL parts of you – even the dark, less than desirable ones.

People pleasing takes us out of ourselves and into trying to be the person another wants us to be. I found myself doing or saying things to be nice or keep the peace rather than truly expressing the feelings or thoughts I was having at the moment. And you know what? It eventually backfired. It didn't create the connections I was desiring. Keep the peace? Maybe. But I was miserable inside and felt a strong sense of inner conflict.

Living authentically meant I had to have a strong enough sense of myself, so that whether or not I displeased someone else, I knew I was staying true to me. It also meant I had to love myself enough to make that, and the love of God, enough so that I wasn't dependent on seeking love and approval from others.

Living authentically makes people respect you more, not less

What a delightful discovery this was! I found that if I set boundaries and asked for what I wanted or needed, other people respected me for it. It felt really scary and awkward at first, but it paid off.

Living authentically has a magnetic energy that draws more of what you actually want into your life, and helps remove or repel that which you don't.

People pleasing comes from a place of fear and sucks energy out of you. It's different than doing something for another person out of true altruistic intentions. That's sharing energy. Instead, people pleasing is like pointing the end of the magnet away from you; directing all the positive energy away from yourself.

When I chose to live authentically it acted like a pruning process. Now I'll be honest and say sometimes the process of "pruning" hurt and was deeply challenging. It forced me to let go of attachments to things that, while making my life comfortable, really weren't serving me well anymore. It forced me to face fears. It took me to very uncomfortable places. I sobbed. I raged. I questioned. But living authentically also created space to turn the magnet around and drew things towards me that I deeply desired in my life.

Living authentically opens up the opportunity for deeper connection to other people.

Living authentically means you honor your feelings and share them when it's appropriate to do so. Sometimes that turns people off, but typically the people that get turned off aren't the people you want in your life anyway. I discovered that it's the very moments when I've spoken my truth, been vulnerable, and shared thoughts and feelings (even if it was scary to do so) that I had some of the deepest moments of connection with another human being. And what a blessing that was!

While it seems like the cost of living authentically is high, it's actually the reverse. How can we afford not to live authentically?

I encourage you to give authentic living a try. Experiment and see what unfolds in your life when you do. I would love to hear about what you discover in the process! I'd be delighted to come alongside you and support you in living authentically.

Shelly

Live with Intention, Love Yourself, Create Balance, Fulfill Your Purpose & Thrive!