



Self-Love Journey

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Step 16: Authenticity

If a person wishes to know themselves better, they must love themselves better.

The concept of “authenticity” can be very confusing. What is authenticity? What is the human expression that reflects authenticity, and what does not? When is a person authentic, meaning more real, and when are they not? Is it even possible for a person to be inauthentic? After all, everything a person expresses at any given moment is what they are authentically capable of expressing at that moment, is it not?

Somewhere, deep in human consciousness, the concept of authenticity evokes a longing for something that we usually feel is missing. Indeed, most people feel frustrated because, in the present, they are far from the parts within them that reflect inner truth and purity.

What makes a person feel they are living in a kind of lie or concealment?
What makes a person feel that they are not as authentic as they could be?
What makes a person feel they are hiding from themselves, running away from themselves, not knowing themselves enough, and not expressing what truly exists deep inside?

What is the thing that a person seeks so much and calls “authenticity”?
What are we truly looking for, and why, when we imagine a state of authenticity, do we feel that in it lies the missing, elusive, and precise part of us?

The answer to these questions is more or less the same, even though it can be expressed in many ways. The answer is not found in the place where logical explanations give a complete response to what is unclear to us. The answer to these questions lies in the places where we allow ourselves to let go, for a while, of the need to understand logically and fully. The answer to these questions is possible only when we release some of our cynicism and our need to organize what is happening in our minds. The answer requires openness and a creative, flexible mindset that allows new ideas to receive space and opportunity.

The answer lies in a knowing that exists within every person who has begun walking any path of self-awareness. The answer exists within the motivation behind all the searching people do from the moment they realize that their lives do not revolve solely around the routine and immediate factors of survival and daily existence, but

that there is something beyond what they usually see and hear. The answer connects to our desire to seek, to explore, to experience, and to question.

The developing person knows, even if they cannot explain precisely, that there are parts within them that reflect what is special, essential, and worthy in their life. Sometimes they understand that these things are connected to love, self-realization, satisfaction, and excitement. Sometimes they realize that they do not fully understand what it is they are looking for, yet this fact will not stop them from continuing to search for what is wondrous, moving, and meaningful in their complex life.

What is even more wondrous, though perhaps initially hard to grasp, is that the more we become skilled and deepened in our self-love, the more the unclear paths within us become clear and transparent. Self-love does not inform us of who we are, nor does it bring with it a special revelation of knowledge and insights about our self-realization or about the things that could change our lives and give them greater meaning than we currently experience.

All that self-love does, and that is immense, is connect us to the place in our personality that is often attributed to the right hemisphere of the brain, the place that has always known without ever being taught.

It is the place from which intuition emerges and from which strange ideas arise that later prove to be genius. It is the place where we feel, and often avoid approaching, because we fear entering a whirlpool of change, uncertainty, and too many surprises. We usually prefer the familiar, the known, the logical, the safe, and the routine. We prefer less to know ourselves and our deeper truths because we fear that things may emerge from there that, in our opinion, are better left hidden in the basements of our repression.

In vain we will try to penetrate our truth through ways that are not based on self-love. The sophisticated defense systems of the psyche will not allow us even to peek inside, and we will remain with more or less the same data, the same abilities, and the same modes of expression we have always had. Without self-love, we are crippled, limited, and narrow, and worst of all, ignorant of our inability to move to a better place within ourselves and in life.

This can confuse almost anyone. The concept of “truth”, derived from “authenticity”, sounds logical and clear enough. Why can we not know our authenticity through the familiar paths of reason and understanding? If it is our truth, why can we not simply explore it through conversation, reflection, and logical calculation of everything we have accumulated and understood about ourselves so far? Why should that not work for us?

The answer is simple, because this is how things work.

Our logical mind does not contain the tools required to pass through the barriers that separate it from the deeper and more hidden parts of us. These parts are not hidden because they cannot be seen or heard, but because what we consider logical, practical, and even scientific does not contain the tools, mostly emotional rather than

intellectual, necessary to see what is always available to anyone who observes through the right lens.

Somewhere deep inside, we know that our lives can offer us experiences that are more exciting, more meaningful, and more fitting for us. That knowing is what drives people toward processes of learning and awareness that never end. Somewhere within is the “I” that we do not fully know, yet we know well that it exists and longs for freer and broader expression.

When we cultivate self-love through various tools that turn it into a practical and consistent way of life, we begin to dissolve the wall between our reason and the mystery of our deeper truth. Self-love releases us from the need to defend ourselves or to play it safe. Self-love dismantles the fears that limit us only to what is familiar, accepted, or fashionable. Self-love connects us to the deep desire to create change that leads to a truer and more accurate life. Self-love is the main path to authenticity, the very authenticity that is so desired but remains so vague as long as we do not look at it with loving eyes that do not push for immediate understanding and that are willing to enter the fog without knowing what awaits there.

Even if a person considers themselves honest and not manipulative, that does not necessarily indicate high authenticity, because anyone who lacks self-love has significant parts of their truth hidden from them, and they are not even aware of it. Self-love opens gates for us, and without it, we remain outside and are not allowed entry into our inner world. Self-love is the gateway to authenticity, and over time and with practice, this new authenticity becomes a tool that in turn enhances self-love.

Practice Questions (Answer in handwriting or share in a practice group):

1. How do you feel about the expression “**my full authenticity**”?
2. How do you currently see the connection between **self love** and **authenticity**?
3. Self love allows us to **improve our ability to get to know ourselves**, including the parts that are sometimes difficult for us. How do you feel about this possibility?
4. What new things are you going to **discover within yourself** as you significantly increase the love you have for yourself?
5. When you connect the concepts of “**authenticity**” and “**love**”, what happens? What is “**born**” from this connection, in your experience?
6. Any other thoughts or feelings about this step that you would like to share?