

NOTES FROM THE ROAD TO AUTHENTICITY



*Observations, Thoughts and Feelings
About Becoming Authentic*

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NOTES, OBSERVATIONS, FEELINGS and THOUGHTS FROM THE ROAD TO AUTHENTICITY

INTRODUCTION: THE POWER OF THE ROAD



Roads provide powerful images for me, because the theme of “The Road” symbolizes journeys that can take you to exciting places in search of freedom of expression and stimulating experiences. I think the power of the road as a symbol of freedom began for me when I read Jack Kerouac’s novel, *On The Road*.

In this semi-autobiographical novel, the author recounts the travels of a group of friends who crisscross America in classic automobiles, experiencing the beat culture of the Fifties and immersing themselves in jazz, poetry and drug use. The book shamelessly romanticized the road as a place where you could experience life as it was meant to be lived.

Kerouac’s novel got me hooked on “The Road” as a symbol of freedom. I began hitch hiking to the south coast of England and sleeping rough on the beach. A whole community developed in the seaside town of Hastings, consisting of kids of the same age who were hitting the road the same as I was.

Alcohol was the drug of choice, as little in the way of real drugs were available and were considered to be the start of a very slippery slope. The Hastings community used to gather in a pub called The Anchor, where the owner served home brewed Cider that was so potent, he sold it in bottles stamped with lemonade labels to disguise the real contents. It all seems tame by modern day standards of debauchery, but it was an era that shaped the lives of many of my rock and roll generation.

The Road to Authenticity is a metaphor to depict the journey we all make through life, a journey that for some of us results in discovering who we are. Discovering yourself should be an automatic process that comes out of the experiences you have in life, but if you never take account of those experiences, you’ll discover nothing.

Every now and then, you need to stop the hustle and bustle of everyday life and, as well as smelling the roses, you need to take account of what life is teaching you. That means contemplating things that have happened to you and what you have learned from those experiences.

What is even harder, and infinitely worthwhile, is setting out to discover the real you, which is your higher self and the person you are at your core. When you discover this inner self and you become true to that person in everything you do, you become authentic. When you’re

authentic, you can achieve whatever goals you set your mind to, providing you show patience and persistence.

Without the authenticity that comes from knowing who you really are, you will constantly be distracted and will feel a lack of fulfillment along with feelings of dissatisfaction. This is because there's a part of you that will always know when you're being inauthentic and not seeking to know the real you. And when you set out on The Road to Self-Discovery, you need to be on the lookout for events that will help you grow. On the road, valuable lessons can come to you from unexpected sources.

PART ONE: A BLIND MAN SHOWS THE WAY

One sultry August night, I received a life-changing lesson. It came from a blind man who showed me the way forward and propelled me out of a self-imposed prison of despondency.

That night, I came to realize that the universe answers our prayers and exhortations with a synchronicity that we will never recognize without self-awareness, faith and trust.

In the space of about two hours, I learned that I should never give up on my dreams and never assume that prayers aren't being answered just because events refused to match the timetable my natural impatience demanded.



For more than a year after I moved to the United States, I had been trying to establish myself as a writer. I was making plenty of contacts, but I couldn't take paying work because my visa application hadn't been approved by INS (I was determined to do things by the book). Consequently, I was using up all my savings. Despite my growing spiritual awareness, I felt as if the financial side of my life was slowly falling apart.

For the first time in years, I prayed for help. Looking back, I realize that I was actually praying for money; a lottery win; an inheritance from a forgotten aunt or uncle; a windfall from some unimagined source. I didn't care where salvation came from as long as it arrived fast. I sent a prayer to the King of Souls requesting the gift of money. In return, He sent me the King of Soul and the far more precious gift of music.

A friend had given me tickets for a Ray Charles concert at one of the best venues in Atlanta. I had grown up in England with this man's music and regarded him as a legend. My other musical hero, Joe Cocker, had unashamedly based his singing style on Ray Charles. But my financial fears had taken over and I couldn't raise any enthusiasm for what would normally have been a landmark event. I went to the concert, but my heart wasn't in it. I was too busy lamenting my declining financial status and giving in to my fears.

My feelings changed when Ray Charles was led onto the stage. He wore an electric blue sequined jacket that seemed to reflect silver light from a far off galaxy. The moment he started playing and singing, I understood the message he had brought me. Ray Charles had been performing for 40 years, but this could have been his first concert.

I sat transfixed. Before me was a man well into his sixties who rose from crushing poverty with the terrible handicap of blindness, but who now glowed with joy, exuberance and infectious energy. He was true to himself and showed not one shred of doubt about the purpose of his

life. In front of several thousand people, Ray Charles celebrated life by doing what he loved and giving his gifts to the world without holding back.

It was a magical, transforming moment. How could I feel depressed and victimized? A man who had suffered more hardship than I would ever know was challenging me to be happy. I rose to that unspoken challenge. I whooped; I hollered; I stomped and danced. I shed unashamed tears of joy and gratitude as I breathed in the empowering energy of this man's appetite for life and the sweet inspiration of his music. Through him, I learned that we achieve inspiration only when we open our hearts and minds to its sources and say, "To heck with the difficulties. I'm meant to achieve this dream and nothing is going to stop me."

Ray Charles became a friend-from-afar that night. He showed me that teachers don't have to be saints. I've heard that he could be as difficult to get along with as any of us, but that was irrelevant to his ability to inspire millions of people through his musical genius. For many years, he struggled with drugs and alcohol and their effects later contributed to his untimely death.

None of that mattered that August night, when inspiration was there for the taking. I came away from the concert with a new attitude, determined that nothing would divert me from the path I had chosen. Barely two weeks later, my visa came through and I was able to take paying work.

As I continued my quest, full of my new-found inspiration, I was able to revisit other sources of inspiration I had put aside and see them differently. I revisited other friends-from-afar. I started with Alan Cohen, the author who had influenced me most. *I Had It All The Time* stimulated me to think about self-discovery, rather than self-help or self-improvement. To state that you need help or improvement suggests there is something wrong with you that needs fixing. If your starting point is a perceived need to be fixed, feelings of failure may distract you from the primary goal of discovering yourself.

With a more open mind, I discovered writers like Thomas Moore, who opens up new spiritual vistas in *Care of the Soul*. Gary Zukav came into my life through his book, *The Seat of The Soul*. He opened my eyes to a vision of what lies beyond the sensory world that leads us into misconceptions about our true nature.

I began reading and listening to Deepak Chopra, who uses his towering intellect to explain concepts from the obscure field of quantum physics with joyous simplicity. If you want to understand how close science has become to spirituality, and to understand the physiological explanation for miracles, listen to this amazing man on his tape series *The Higher Self*. Better still, get hold of a copy of the delightful audio program he recorded with Wayne Dyer, called *Living Beyond Miracles*. Listen and rejoice.

With a new surge of energy, I sought and found authors who have based their work on studies of *A Course In Miracles*, a miraculous guide to finding peace. I discovered Marianne Williamson, who shows us a way back to our true selves in her absorbing books. I learned that Gerald

Jampolsky and Diane Cirincione have explored ways of healing relationships through the power of love and forgiveness in their two companion books, *Love Is Letting Go of Fear* and *Love Is The Answer*. I love Gerald Jampolsky's definition of forgiveness: "Giving up all hope of a better past."

I stumbled across the work of Ernest Holmes, who developed the spiritual philosophy called *Science of Mind*. Through this author's remarkable work, I came to understand the true nature of prayer. In *Creative Living* he writes:

"Since we know we cannot do anything to God – God is most certainly not influenced by our thinking – then we know prayer must do something to ourselves, and what we do has to be mental, a thing of thought. What can it be other than that we ourselves believe? That is the secret of effective prayer."

At last the power of prayer made sense. God is not a cosmic entity perched on a cloud in the heavens listening selectively to our prayers and saying: "Yeah, that's cool, I'll allow that. No, I'll pass on that one." Prayer is a request to the real self within and, backed by faith and trust, the act of praying confirms our belief in our worthiness to receive what we are requesting. I realized that the process of prayer has a symmetry about it, as does everything in this miraculous universe.

Once I accepted that premise, I began to understand that if our prayers go unanswered, it means that what we have requested is not for our higher good at that particular point in our lives. The true inner self, the part of God that lies inside, knows what is right for us. But we have to learn to listen to the whispering voice of intuition and recognize the significance of what it says.

From Louise Hay, I learned to use affirmations and to recognize that the point of power is always in the present. Where else could it be? I saw that Louise is right when she says that we can do something about our lives right now, because we aren't controlled by anything or anyone. We control ourselves, but we give our power to others by imagining they're doing things to us that we are actually doing to ourselves.

I used to believe that my thoughts didn't exist anywhere except in my mind and that my mind was inside my body. Now I know that our minds can operate outside our bodies, giving us the ability to project our thoughts. What we think is transmitted through a cosmic fiber-optic network constructed from pure energy. It is the enlightenment superhighway that connects to the Supreme Intelligence and sets in motion a process that causes things to happen.

Like everyone else, I had to go through my life experiences to get to where I am now, which is in a more awakened state of mind than I have ever achieved before. Those experiences allowed me to metamorphose from a bogus persona into the real me and I began to see myself as the writer I have now become.

Occasionally, when I become distracted by the static created by my ego, I go back to the work of my friends-from-afar. I also turn to a lighthearted piece I wrote a couple of years back. It reminds me there are many parts of the self that are vying for attention and that I need to avoid further bouts of metaphysical myopia by remaining focused on the real me.

ME, MYSELF AND I

There are two entities vying for control of the self. One is **ME**, and the other is **I**. Deep inside, **I** want to like **ME** and to accept and approve of **ME**, but **I** can't do that until **I** discover the real **ME**. It has taken many years and many experiences to mold **ME**, who is different from **I**. Here's the difference: **I** am strident and demanding, saying things like: "I want this, I need that, I must be this, I must have that."

But little old **ME** is always trying to improve. There are exciting changes happening to **ME** all the time, but **I** will often try to disrupt this process of change. The ego **I** have is never satisfied and makes **ME** fearful.

I need to be perfect, but there will never be a state of perfection for **ME** because while **I** am driven by the ego, the real self is just **ME**. **I** can sometimes pose as **ME**, and pretend to be myself. When **I** do this, it confuses **ME**.

Sometimes, **I** and **ME** come together to form **WE**, which is a whole new concept. **I** can't explain the concept of **WE** but it's very clear to **ME**.

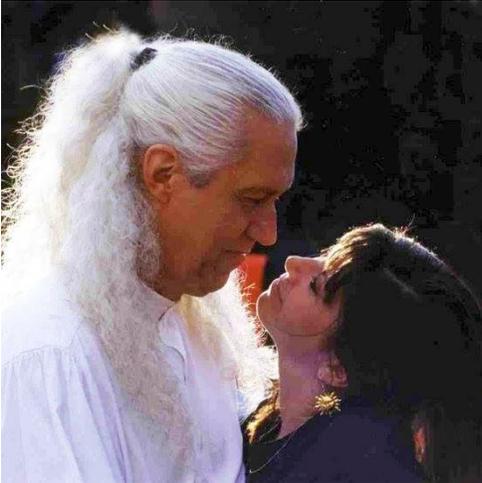
Often, **I** will stand up for **ME**. On one occasion when that happened, **I** said this to someone who wanted **ME** to be different: "If you don't like **ME**, then go and find someone else to change."

Which just goes to show that although **I** don't always like **ME**, if someone tries to change **ME**, **I** will get upset. Which of these two entities is it best to be? Well, speaking for myself, **I** would prefer to be **ME**.

PART TWO: THE VISION QUEST OF A FREE SPIRIT

“I’ll wander through my day, going through the motions
My thoughts will drift away, my heart will pound
It’s hard for me to say, but I’ve got this notion
Those dreams are coming true and they won’t let me down.”

From *What Is That Light?* by Marvin and Raven Taylor from the musical collection *Road Songs*.



The next part of this book is about my friends and song writing partners, Marvin and Raven Taylor. Their story is a wonderful example of how you can become true to yourself and change your life by changing your mind. It’s an inspiring story of a free spirit who made the journey in search of himself and found his soul mate too.

Marvin is a talented musician, producer and song writer who has played lead guitar with some of the best bands to be heard anywhere in the world. Marvin is also co-writer and co-producer of our music CD, *Songs From The Road To Enlightenment*, available at [CD Baby](#). Before he met Raven, Marvin had developed a keen interest in Native American culture and found himself irresistibly drawn to a ceremony called the “vision quest.” In this ancient rite, which often involves a pilgrimage to a sacred place of spiritual power, the practitioner brings intense concentration to bear on finding a direction in life.

The vision quest can be a figurative pilgrimage made in the mind, but Marvin heard an insistent inner voice telling him he should travel to Sedona, Arizona, to begin his quest. Sedona has become widely recognized as an energy center where many people have experienced feelings of spiritual vitality. After finding out more about Sedona, Marvin decided to spend his forty fifth birthday there and to follow the powerful intuition that was telling him to climb Bell Rock.

Despite his uneasiness about the height of this beautiful bell shaped monolith, Marvin set out for the top, negotiating its narrow trails and scaling its red rock escarpment. At the exact time of his birth plus forty-five years, he was sitting on a ledge near the summit. Closing his eyes, he began the deep, controlled breathing that he has perfected over the years to reach an alpha state of meditation.

At the time, Marvin had short, blond hair. For several years he had colored it to prevent his premature gray showing through. He had convinced himself that nobody would want to see a

gray-haired man play rock and roll guitar. This erroneous belief was about to be challenged in a spectacular way.

Shortly after achieving his deep meditative state, Marvin opened his eyes and looked down. He saw a man standing on an identical ledge a short distance below him. The man had long, flowing gray hair; he wore a work shirt over his jeans, tied at the waist, with a belt and moccasins on his feet. He resembled photographs Marvin had seen of Native Americans who inhabited the Southwest in the late 1800's.

This imposing figure was holding out his arms and chanting rhythmically. He seemed at once humble yet powerful and, above all, eerily familiar. As he studied the figure below, Marvin felt a surge of excitement. In that instant, he realized that he was looking at a different version of himself.

Suddenly, a strong gust of wind hit the man and his long white hair streamed out behind him like a banner. Not even a breeze had touched the ledge where Marvin sat, but as he watched the figure below swaying in the wind, he knew – he did not think, he *knew* – exactly how that gust of wind would feel.

Following his instincts, Marvin stood and adopted the same pose as the man below, chanting a phonetic version of what the man was chanting. Then, in a moment of pure magic, two dimensions of time united and forged a different future. A powerful gust of wind hit Marvin's face, tugging at his scalp as if wanting his hair to stream out behind him like the man below. In that instant, Marvin knew the message he was receiving. The figure he saw was a vision of the person he was meant to become. His true self.

Marvin came down from Bell Rock a changed man, determined to adopt new values and live his life differently. Soon after this intriguing event, he learned from his mother that his paternal grandfather had most likely been a Cherokee Indian. Marvin has never tried to verify this heritage. He believes that his vision is all the confirmation he needs.

As a result of his experience on Bell Rock, Marvin began to adopt a more spiritual approach to life and became true to his authentic self. Many old patterns and paradigms faded away. He stopped coloring his hair and let it grow long and white to his shoulders. This put his unconfirmed Native American ancestry beyond most people's doubt and gave him the same appearance as the other self he saw on Bell Rock. As more and more layers peeled away from his old self, previously unresolved aspects of his life began to come to completion. And then, a long-held dream came true. He met Raven.

Like many other people, Marvin sometimes mused about the woman of his dreams. Whenever he did this, she would appear in his mind's eye. Marvin gradually painted his dream woman's features into his mind, where they came vividly to life. Before he even met her, he knew how she looked. She looked like Raven.

Thinking back, Marvin is certain that his authentic self knew who he needed and guided his imagination in putting a face to his vision. When Raven came into his life, uncannily matching his vision in every detail, Marvin felt that he was at last beginning to live an authentic life.

One year later, Marvin and Raven married and spent their honeymoon on a Cherokee reservation. After the honeymoon, Marvin took his bride to Sedona and they climbed Bell Rock together. Raven now sees this as an important ceremonial act for them. She too, had been looking for her soul mate. Raven had once described her ideal man to a close friend: "He will be creative," she said, "Possibly a musician. Almost certainly a skater (which Marvin was), and he will definitely have *long hair*."

Their joint visit to Bell Rock had a feeling of completeness about it. Marvin felt he was saying to his guiding spirit, "It worked. Here she is and here am I. Finally, I caught up with the life I was meant to live." It was a deeply emotional experience. They started writing songs together and one year later their song, *Been There, Done That*, was a nominee for blues song of the year in the prestigious W. C. Handy Blues Awards.

Marvin looks the way he wants to look and isn't distracted by what people think of him. He doesn't parade his individuality with an aggressive "up-yours" attitude, but is one of the gentlest and most approachable guys you could wish to meet. He goes quietly about expressing himself and living the way he chooses, sharing his considerable talents. He writes songs with Raven and plays and records as often as he can with the musicians he most respects. When people meet Marvin, they know they are meeting someone who has chosen to be his true, authentic self.

We can all make similar choices to those that Marvin made. We can all become free spirits. If there is something in your life that symbolizes your quest for freedom, use it until the day comes when you can quietly discard it.

Model yourself not on other people, but on the best image of what you can be. Follow your own values and beliefs in free expression of the true self you always intended to be. Dare to be that self and follow your vision to wherever it leads you.

PART THREE: A TALE OF TWO SEEKERS

A Fable About Authenticity

A man and a woman, who are seekers of truth and reality, are searching for a place called Authenticity. They're traveling on foot and their journey has been arduous. Despite their weariness, they walk with an air of confidence, buoyed by the belief that they'll soon reach their destination.

Most people believe that Authenticity is an urban legend, but the two seekers believe that it's a real place. They believe that Authenticity is a community that has been established to allow people to be true to who they really are, unshackled by paradigms or conventions, free from the pressure to conform, and liberated from the impossible expectations of others.

Suddenly, a stranger approaches from the opposite direction. He shuffles along with his head down, looking dispirited and lost. As he draws abreast of the two seekers, the stranger looks up at them imploringly and asks a question.

"Excuse me, is this the road to Authenticity?" he asks.

The man looks at the stranger and wonders if he should tell him that he's heading the wrong way. The woman sees the torment of doubt in the stranger's eyes and makes a decision. "Yes, Authenticity's just up ahead," she replies, pointing in the direction in which the stranger is traveling. "Stay on this road. You should be there soon."

"Thank God," says the stranger, sighing with relief and smiling. "I thought this was the right road, but I couldn't be sure. Thanks for setting me straight."

Having received the reassurance he needs, the stranger strides away with more conviction, but still heading in the opposite direction. As the stranger leaves, the man turns to his traveling companion.

"Why did you tell him he's on the road to Authenticity?" he asks.

"Because we don't know that he isn't."

"But he can't be. We're heading toward Authenticity and we're sure this is the right road. So you must have sent him in the wrong direction!"

The woman smiles and says, "But you're forgetting one thing about Authenticity."

"What's that?"

“There’s more than one way of getting there.”

On a shiny black highway under a soft morning sun, the two seekers walk away from Authenticity, where they have resided for the past six months. They had anticipated staying for a lot longer, but they ceased to learn anything new about themselves.

As they walk, they contemplate the richness of life. They marvel at the unexpected turns it can take when you surrender yourself to a trust in the natural flow of the Universe. They think about how much they’ve changed as a result of the journey they took in search of Authenticity. They have now become *finders* who live authentically.

Thinking back, they remember what it was like to stand at a crossroads, unsure of who they were, and unclear about their true purposes in life. They recall how it felt to live with mistaken identities and not regard themselves as unique. They ruminate about the time they spent doing things they hated, instead of things they loved. They think about how they were disorganized and didn’t know how to learn from experience. Most of all, they marvel at their previous inability to live in the moment, which they now do all the time.

They try to visualize their past lives, but find it difficult. Their new-found inner peace and liberation from fear makes it hard to recall exactly how it felt to be riddled with doubt and anxiety; what it was like to suffer stress and uncertainty. They remember that although they haven’t eliminated fear from their lives, they have learned how to conquer and subdue it. When it returns, as it surely will, they’ll know what to do about it.

Suddenly, they see a stranger shuffling wearily down the road in the opposite direction, heading toward Authenticity. The stranger looks anxious and lost, his tired smile bearing testimony to many long days of travel. He pats his clothes in a dispirited attempt to remove the coating of road dust, screws up his eyes and peers at the two seekers. They know what his question will be, even before he asks it.

“Excuse me, is this The Road to Authenticity?”

“Yes, it is.” The first seeker turns and points in the direction from which he and the woman have come. “It’s farther down the road. Just keep going straight ahead.”

“Thank you so much,” says the stranger, immediately straightening his back and smiling. “It’s good to know I’m getting close.”

As they stand by the side of the road and watch the stranger head towards Authenticity, the woman says, “I guess we should have told him the truth about what it’s like in Authenticity, instead of encouraging his quest.” The man nods. “You mean that we discovered nothing there

that we couldn't have found by staying at home and looking at ourselves and our lives differently? By looking within instead of outside of ourselves?"

"Yes. That and the fact that the real learning lies in making the journey, not in actually reaching Authenticity. He may be disappointed when he gets there. I'd hate for that to happen."

"I had the same thought," replies the man. "But then I remembered something else we learned."

"Remind me."

"That the truth becomes the truth only when people discover it for themselves. They need to learn from their own experiences. That's how we became true to ourselves." The woman thinks for a moment, then nods and smiles at her friend's wisdom.

As if having the same thought, the two seekers turn and walk on. They both feel secure in the knowledge that although they're now heading away from the place they thought would reveal the meaning of their lives, they're still on the road to Authenticity.

PART FOUR: EXCUSE ME, IS THIS THE ROAD TO AUTHENTICITY?



At some point in our lives, most of us have turned to a stranger in the hope that he or she can help to reinforce our sense of direction and purpose.

Whenever we pick up a book, listen to a CD, or go online to a self-help website, we're asking a figurative question, "Is this the road to Authenticity?" There's nothing wrong with seeking that kind of advice, as long as you understand two things:

- 1) No one else can answer that question for you with certainty, no matter how good their intentions. If you ask someone else that question, they can only express an opinion. At worst, they may tell you what they think you want to hear. At best, they may tell you what they know or even recount their experiences in the hope that you'll learn something from them.
- 2) No matter what answer you receive, the question is irrelevant. It doesn't matter which road you're on. What matters is that you're making the journey and learning from the experiences you have while you're traveling; learning how to become true to who you really are.

Like many people, there was a time in my life when I was waiting for someone else to give me a magic formula and heal me with the wisdom of their words. Other people's words can create awareness and provide insights, but you can only bring about healing by taking action yourself to change your life for the better.

Over time, I've come to believe that living authentically is one of the greatest challenges we face. In this media-dominated world, people are encouraged to emulate the fame and wealth of others in the futile belief that it will make them happy. It's not easy to be true to who you really are; to march to the beat of your own drum; to honor your core person and be true to your real inner self. That thought lies at the heart of many of my books.

I also believe that one of the best signs that you're being true to yourself is when you shed the need to ask anyone else about your direction in life. When you're living the authentic life you were meant to live, pursuing your true purpose, and doing what you love, you don't need anyone to tell you that you're on the right road.

Another powerful sign that you're being true to yourself is when you can muster the courage to follow your dreams. They lie out there somewhere on the rocky-but-rewarding road to Authenticity. Those dreams never die, no matter how deeply you might bury them. Dreams refuse to die because they symbolize the purposes you've come here to achieve. Many people

have driven those dreams from their conscious minds by giving in to fear and its pernicious siblings, doubt and guilt.

Sometimes, being fearful is easy to justify. Switch on any TV news program, or watch any daytime talk show, and you'll find yourself wondering if society isn't already halfway to Hell without even the comfort of a hand basket. But if we allow ourselves to feel fearful, we'll perpetuate fear and ensure that unspeakable things continue to happen. Fear is the root cause of most of the despicable things that human beings do to each other. Often, fear is dressed up in the guise of religion, which makes it even worse.

Fear causes us to create self-fulfilling prophecies. The world is a frightening place, therefore I'm right to be fearful, but my fear guarantees that the world will go on being frightening. And when fear prevails, love will always struggle to express itself.

In talking about fear, I'm not referring to the survival reflex that nature gave our ancestors to ensure their survival in a harsh world. If someone shoves a gun in your face and demands money, you have good reason to feel afraid. When something threatens your life, your body produces chemicals that enable you to take off like you've been fired from a cannon. That kind of fear is natural. Long may it continue!

The type of fear that paralyzes without reason is the irrational anxiety that arises from a low sense of self-worth, the illusions we hold about our position in the world, and our misconceptions about who we are. When we harbor frightening illusions that undermine our confidence, we begin to doubt ourselves and believe that we're somehow inadequate in the estimation of others. That kind of debilitating fear can't be justified.

To be true to the real you – your authentic, inner self – and awaken your sense of uniqueness, you must pursue your true desires. I use the words "true desires" because the world makes it easy for you to pursue artificial goals and harbor false aspirations that aren't truly yours.

I should also explain my use of the word "desire," which is often associated with lust. I'm not talking about sexual desire, or any kind of desire that inflicts your needs on other people. I'm referring to the desire that stimulates the need to seek self-awareness and spiritual reality. This is the state of mind in which you give yourself permission to realize your full potential, achieve the things to which you truly aspire, and fulfill the purposes you came into the world to pursue.

I don't claim to have an infallible method for achieving authenticity, but I do have some theories about how to search for it. Here's one of them: When you set out on the road to Authenticity, you'll encounter an intriguing paradox. To eliminate fear and doubt, and find inner peace, you must begin a search for something you'll achieve by making the journey, not by reaching a destination.

The paradox works like this: You define a destination (a goal, an objective, an aim, a dream – it doesn't matter what you call it) and set out to reach it. The longer you travel, the more you discover; the more you discover, the more you realize that the first destination you defined was not the one you were meant to reach. You become aware of other destinations that offer more.

So you set off on in a different direction, down an alternative route to Authenticity, and the mystery of your purpose unravels a little further. Eventually, after roaming the road in search of several alternative destinations, you come to realize that it's the journey that's providing the spiritual growth you seek. Reaching a destination has become immaterial, because all your goals lie out there on the road.

The reason for the paradox is that, despite my spelling it with it a capital A, authenticity isn't a place that you reach and reside in permanently. It's an ever-changing, ever-expanding state of awareness and insight that's achieved while you're traveling.

Here's another twist in the paradox: Although it's the journey not the destination that matters, you need to define a destination, a goal, an objective. Otherwise, you would never begin traveling and wouldn't discover that authenticity isn't a destination. You could travel without an end point in mind, but that would render you purposeless. If you wander through life with no conscious purpose, you're unlikely to recognize authenticity even if you stumble across it by accident.

The Road to Authenticity appeals to me as a metaphor for life's experiences and the learning they offer. The romantic view of the journey down that road says that it's not linked to distance or geography, because you make the journey in your mind. But that's not a hard-and-fast rule that's always true.

Theoretically, it's possible to reach Authenticity without leaving the place in which you were born. However, that's unlikely to happen unless you were born in the middle of Manhattan, or some other big metropolis. This is the reason: You reach Authenticity through the experiences you have in life, which reveal more about who you really are. You're unlikely to have many experiences if you live your entire life in one small place, because you won't be exposed to new events, new people, or new insights. There are exceptions to this rule but, in my experience, they're rare.

The journey towards authenticity is a quest that may well continue in future lifetimes, because the Road to Authenticity may go on forever. One of the perils of traveling in search of spiritual growth in this lifetime, is that it's hard to tell if you're going in the right direction. Without faith and trust in the Universe, you may become like the weary stranger shuffling in the opposite direction to other seekers, who are stepping out with enviable confidence.

Many people will be able to offer you guidance, but no one can give you any lasting reassurances that you're on the right path. That's why no one can tell you where you'll find

Authenticity, or even define it for you. The word will have meaning only when you define it for yourself and live out that meaning every day of your life. Open your mind and your heart, believe that anything is possible, and trust your instincts.

One of the motives in writing my books is to help people become true to themselves and find their real purpose in life. So, keep traveling until you find authenticity.

For more details about my books, please go to JohnScriven.com