

AUTHENTICITY
by
HAL STONE, PhD ©

Jane, a therapist and teacher, wrote to Hal asking about the idea of "authenticity". Since this is a subject that is very dear to Hal, he was delighted to answer her, and here is his answer. His original letter was written in 2015 and he updated it in March 2019.

Dear Jane,

I'm going to write down a few thoughts about the topic of authenticity. The following quote is from one of the Google dictionaries under "Authenticity":

***Authenticity** concerns the truthfulness of origins, attributes, commitments, sincerity, devotion, and intentions.*

Genuineness -- This is a word used in many definitions of authenticity.

For myself, the use of the word "Authentic" falls into the same category as the words "Love" and "Compassion". We are taught in many different ways a spiritual dictum that Love is good and Compassion is good and that Being Authentic/Genuine is good. What this leads to is an attempt by people to *try* to be loving and *try* to be compassionate and, of course, is there anyone you know that doesn't want to be Authentic.

The key to understanding this issue is the word "Try." If you try to be genuine and loving then that means that the opposite energies go underground. Acting genuine is a self/energy system just as love and compassion are self/energy systems. They are

not good and they are not bad. This depends on which Self or Self System is running our life.

Many years ago my first analyst Jay Dunn shared with me a very interesting story that I wrote about in one of my recent articles: *A young physician in his late thirties came from a strong Christian background and was very strongly identified with love and compassion. He was trying to be of service to mankind. He made a decision to take off 6 months from his medical practice to live and work in what was still a very primitive area that was not totally safe. His wife was opposed to his going there but he felt he was strongly called to make this move. He was, for himself, living out of what he thought was his authentic self.*

A month before he was to leave he had the following dream: "He is with the tribe of people that belongs to the village where he will be living and working. They are sitting in a semi-circle around him and he is sitting on a throne chair in front of them that is quite elevated and he is eloquent. He is teaching them something about Christian values when he awakens."

The dreamer had been in analysis long enough to have some real feeling about the dream and he was quite shocked at the image. He had to begin to deal now with a part of him that he knew nothing about: his own "messianic" self-system. Here he is as the King/Teacher/Physician high above his flock of parishioners. One doesn't need to be a rocket scientist to understand this dream and its compensatory nature. It is this kind of deeper Intelligence that lies latent within each of us and when it is activated, it begins to systematically guide our process

in a way that becomes increasingly clear and organized.

Does this dream mean that he is not an authentic human being or not really compassionate or loving? Not at all! The Intelligence that lived within him was simply helping him to see and feel the reality of another part of him that is quite opposite to his highly spiritualized picture of himself. He has a chance now to find his own shadow side -- a part of him that has remained asleep until this dream awakens him to the task at hand. He has a chance now to feel opposites. He actually begins to wonder if it might be the best idea to go on this missionary journey. For the first time he is able and willing to hear his wife express her very deep concerns about the trip. He now begins to stand between the Spiritual/Authentic/Caring/Loving/Compassionate human being with which he has always been identified on the one side. On the other side stands the part of him that carries the awakening sleeping giant of his darker nature that would carry his unconscious power system, his selfishness and his Machiavellian nature. It is just the beginning of the emergence of the shadow side and it is something that he will be working with for the rest of his life. It is this challenge that belongs to all of us.

So now we need to understand the nature of the Authentic continuum. Authenticity has become a New Age Mantra for the way one is supposed to behave in the world. I have no personal interest in becoming Authentic. I do have an interest always in becoming more Conscious and this means for me the constant search for opposites within myself and learning how to live with these opposites in the world. I have a keen interest in paying attention to my judgments because I realize now that my judgments are always one of my primary selves judging one of my disowned selves that is being projected onto someone in my life.

The identification with Authenticity in someone's life can make life very difficult in the same way that we may be identified with the idea of always being loving and/or compassionate. There are many people in the world that we have to "handle" or deal with. They may be in your own family or they may be at work or they may be amongst lesser and better friends. If you try to be intimate and authentic to people who live identified with selves that are opposite to you, then you can easily become an emotional and psychological victim. If you are always trying to be authentic I suggest that you begin to watch your dreams and also your daydreams. Always remember that the Dream Ego is most of the time an expression of your primary self or selves in action. The Daydream Ego is the opposite and there you will find that the Daydream Ego is an expression of your disowned selves.

If you "handle" someone, or some group of people, does that make you inauthentic? Not at all! Someone who insists on always telling the truth and always expressing his "deeper" feelings would certainly say that the idea of "handling" would be a total negative. It just means that the primary self of "Goodness" is judging the disowned self of "Darkness."

Love/ Compassion/Authenticity are all very nice energies to be connected to in oneself. The issue is to not be married to them. If you are not married to them, then you don't have to try and be the selves you are married to. It is equally important to become aware and have available the energies of the dark side. It is our task to learn how to hold the balance between these two systems. It is this balance that is essential to our survival on the planet and, on an individual level, to minimize our chances of falling into victimhood.

I hope these ideas help.

Warmest wishes,
Hal