

Personal Authenticity in Challenging Times

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Being authentically who we are has many subtleties. Like an ever-shifting kaleidoscope, we manifest different energies in different situations. We could also think of ourselves as being layered. We may have an outer cosmetic or mask layer, particularly when we are uncertain of our ground. Then there is a rich juicy layer of emotions. We may be reactive, locked into our version of reality, triggered by what others say and do and move into defensive routines. However, our very core, our essential nature, is unchanging and basically good. Our authenticity is sourced from this basic goodness. Staying in touch with our inherent goodness, we purify our emotions and no longer need a mask. When all our layers are synchronized with each other, we radiate authenticity.

Authentic is *“a truth that is not learned but comes from within.”*

- Mary Whitehouse, founder of dance therapy which led to authentic movement

“Our state of being is the real source of our ability to change the world.”

- John J Gardener, professor of educational leadership at Seattle University

The authenticity of our basic nature is generic; the Five Authentic Qualities point to the diversity in people, places and situations. Ultimately we are all of the same nature, relatively we are different. These qualities or wisdoms, ancient teachings from the Buddhist tradition, are considered very skillful as they work very directly with the basic elements of our experience—body, emotions, mental activity and surroundings. We have the potential for all the energies—spaciousness, clarity, richness, passion and activity—and can display different energies in different areas of our lives. We are uniquely who we are and have our very special way to shine and a particular way to get stuck. Personal authenticity is the catalyst for the wisdoms to shine.

Discovering the particular way we perceive and interact with our world can yield enormous insight into our patterns of behavior, emotions and relationships. The Five Authentic Qualities are a vehicle for self-discovery and a ground for working with others. They are what we need in challenging times. Being genuine un.masks who we are; we discover we can be who we are with confidence. Living in a busy often chaotic world it is easy to lose our authenticity. However, if we think of those we most admire, they are the ones who seem to come from deeper values.

The “simple realization that people are our only real asset illustrates the core of what will probably determine which countries and which organizations will thrive in the 21st century... we must understand people better and more deeply than ever before... understanding the diversity of human functioning will play a central role in the success and sustainability of both organizations and societies.”

- Peter Senge, author of “The Fifth Discipline” and director of the Center for Organizational Learning at MIT

“When we touch our “open nature,” our emptiness, we exert an enormous attraction to other human beings... And if others are in that same space or entering it, they resonate with us and immediately doors are open to us. It is not strange or mystical, it is part of the natural order.”

- Francisco Varela, Buddhist practitioner and cognitive scientist.