

## V. Embracing Authenticity

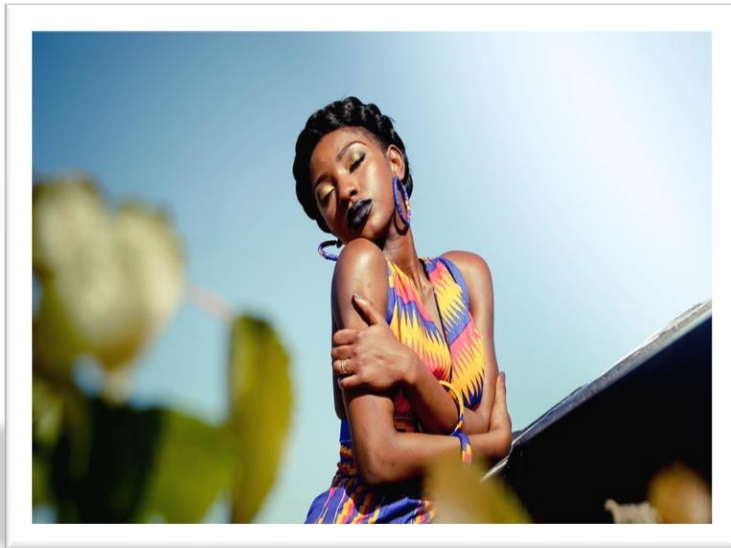


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### THE MEASURE OF AUTHENTIC BEAUTY

Have you ever wondered what the qualifiers are to be the judge on a panel at a beauty contest? What kind of experience must the judges have attained? Moreover, how long is the list of “their” beauty awards? Who creates the checklist to determine who is the sexiest man or woman alive? Explain what you think it means to be attractive and unattractive? Can you describe ugly and beautiful in detail? Who or what is your picture-perfect example and why? In the 1930s beauty was determined by facial measurements. In America today being fair-skinned, blonde, and blue-eyed is still a benchmark for determining what is most desirable in some circles. What about the majority who don’t quite fit the profile? Can the postman be sexy? Are gamers attractive? Ever seen a good-looking farmer? What is one to do when society tells them that they are not beautiful because they do not meet the standard.

**“Be yourself, everyone else is taken.” Oscar Wilde**

Do we think everyone should have eyes, hair, skin, and a physique like models or sports athletes in our favorite ads? Are television, commercial actors, or famous

movie stars automatically grafted in or entitled just because? Then that would suggest popularity, fortune, and fame make you beautiful. How many were just born into the old money bloodline of beauty? We all have a relative or neighbor that looks like the celebrity the world idolizes. They may not have the same platform or recognition but aren't they beautiful too? Unfortunately, no one will call them beautiful until their name appears in lights. When you are the "star" in your own life it is unnecessary to chase fame or use fame as a marker for success. How many of us have rejected our natural beauty and soulful fulfillment to fit into the world's definition of beauty? Our authenticity makes us beautiful!

**"Have the courage to be who you want to be, in a world that is trying to make you like everyone else." ATGW**

### **DISCOMFORT OF INAUTHENTICITY**

Comfort can make us delusional. Yes, sometimes it seems easier to hide in the crowd and attempt to blend in to be just like everyone else. Sameness and fitting in bring a false sense of comfort but how comfortable can we be when we stifle our originality to meet the status quo? Since we were born different why wouldn't we endeavor to maintain our individuality rather than conform? Social conditioning is a co-conspirator. For many of us, our definition is formed from social conditioning. Social conditioning is the process of training individuals in a society to accept norms, customs, and ideologies so that they respond in a way that is generally approved of or accepted by society. On the contrary, I submit to you, beauty is not about attaining specific markers. Beauty is our natural way of being. Further, beauty is in the eye of the beholder despite what the world says, it was always meant to be that way.

Yes, we do have similar needs and desires. People usually want to be seen, heard, and loved. At the same time, fighting against our authenticity is like going against the grain. It's like forcing yourself into a mismatched mold or wearing shoes that are two sizes too small. They just don't fit! If the life choice does not fit your journey and purpose-driven life, why force it? Why pretend to be someone we are not? Authentic people are supposed to have different perspectives and ways of being. Besides, all of us are different from each other whether we realize it or not. Don't reject it. Embrace it.

## **EMBRACE YOUR DIVINITY**

Our differences truly make us unique and beautiful. Our differences are not a mistake. It is the way All/Source/God/ and You intended it. (I will explain the “YOU” part, later). Everything about us is by divine design. When we reject our differences and conform, we are rejecting our authenticity.

No one else is your kind of beautiful! You are in a class all by yourself. The most important person that needs to embrace your kind of beauty is you! Everyone else’s opinion is relevant until you decide otherwise. If you are wondering about your “alleged” imperfections, don’t. Shame manifest because we think we are the only one. There’s someone else somewhere in the world who has the same hang-up as you do. Some people would gladly get in an exchange line to swap out their nose, laugh, stomach, feet, voice, family members, ears, or experience, etc. for another’s. They too have been programmed into thinking they just do not measure up. I encourage you to release, the shame.

We dupe ourselves when we find a false sense of relief and consolation in what we perceive as a common shortcoming. Just because we think “everybody” else does it or has it, that does not necessarily make it relevant for us.

Human perfection is an illusion. Find security within your divine beingness rather than in what appears to be the failings of others. Our authenticity is never in competition with others. We are validated simply because we exist! You are enough just the way you are! Our authentic differences are what make us beautiful!

Moreover, our soul/higher-self/spirit is further proof to that point. We came from All/God/Source. Therefore, inherently, the beauty of the Source is also our beauty in our being. Our beauty is more than skin deep. Our authentic beautiful exterior alone is not the true measure of who we are as a person. We are beautiful both inside and out.

We can all develop an awareness of our perceived limitations and weaknesses and learn to appraise them without judgment or condemning ourselves. Acceptance of self means owning it and releasing the desire to change what cannot be changed at that moment.

We exist at a time when plastic surgery is easily accessible. The choice of surgery is always one's prerogative. No explanation is ever necessary when exercising free will for our best interest. However, after elective surgery, gravity, age, and time may change that too. When the inevitable happens, we will again be faced with the choice to accept or reject what we see. All choices authentic or inauthentic, have both rewards and consequences depending on the perspective.

On the other hand, self-acceptance is the first step toward personal improvement. We cannot improve an area if we are in denial of its existence. First, we acknowledge that there is a need for improvement. Second, it is important to accept responsibility for managing the condition. Thirdly, commit to taking steps to manifest the change we want to see. The change should bring about an unveiling of our most authentic selves. This is the evidence that the choice made leads toward the best version of ourselves.

Unconditional love is the foundation on which self-acceptance is built. It's interesting, we want others to overlook or deal empathetically with our shortcomings. Let us first compassionately deal with them ourselves. Furthermore, our reluctance to respond lovingly to the weakness of others is usually a reflection of our own inability to be gentle and kind to ourselves. Once we begin to unconditionally accept ourselves, we can begin to unconditionally embrace others.

**"As I began to love myself. I found that anguish and emotional suffering are only warning signs that I was living against my own truth. Today I know this is authenticity." Charlie Chaplin**

### **Reflection Questions**

1. What makes a person authentically attractive?
2. *Fighting against our authenticity is like going against the grain.* In your own words explain what it means to live inauthentically.
3. Explain how your differences make you beautiful.
4. The author mentions self-acceptance is the first step to self-improvement in paragraph nine. Think about how you can apply these self-improvement steps to an area in your life. Write about what the process would be like for you.