

Be You and Live Free



Elizabeth M. Lykins

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Be you and live free. Trust that in living true to yourself, you will attract people that support and love you, just as you are. ~Jaeda deWalt

If you have children or have spent time with family members or friends who have small children, you have been privileged to witness the unfolding of personality.

When children are very young, typically before they have attended preschool or elementary school, they are free to be who they are. Of course parents and other family members attempt to domesticate this wild, energetic little being, but small children intuitively know what they want to do and not do in every moment. They laugh, they cry, they become angry when things do not go their way, then they get over it and move into the next activity. In other words, they are living in the present and acting on what impressions and feelings arise for them in each and every moment. They have no shame or embarrassment about themselves or how they look; that is until they are exposed to the relentless conditioning of others.

There are many moments in one's life that shape and forge how we show up in the world. We are all exposed to societal "norms", ways we should behave and not behave, things we should do and not do, what we can say and not say. Who we TRULY ARE retreats into a safe cocoon within, safe from the ridicule and displeasure of everyone around us who expects us to be like they are. This marks the beginning of sacrificing who we are, to be what others want us to be instead.

Everyone is subject to some form of multigenerational customs, traditions, rules, and family dynamics. Many are subject to the added layer of ethnic traditions and customs that function within a larger society without those norms. This can include speaking a different language at home than that of the country in which you live. Then there is the added complex layer of religious doctrine and expectations that dictate further how one should behave, think, and act to be accepted in that religion. Religious organizations have tremendous power over the lives of their members. In some religious traditions, people face excommunication or banishment from their religion, family, and friends, if they do not comply or even dare to ask questions. In some parts of the world, defiance of religious "order" can result in execution or imprisonment. Silencing individual dissent or independence is a powerful form of control, often with significant personal consequences.

After these numerous layers of conditioning, you find yourself firmly entrenched in living a life that you did not choose, for a life that you were born into instead. Everything about your desires, dreams, talents, and how you express yourself, has become subservient to the traditions and expectations of others. Your community, parents, and friends have met the same fate themselves, with the vast majority of them not knowing why they believe and behave as they do other than: “this is how it has always been”.

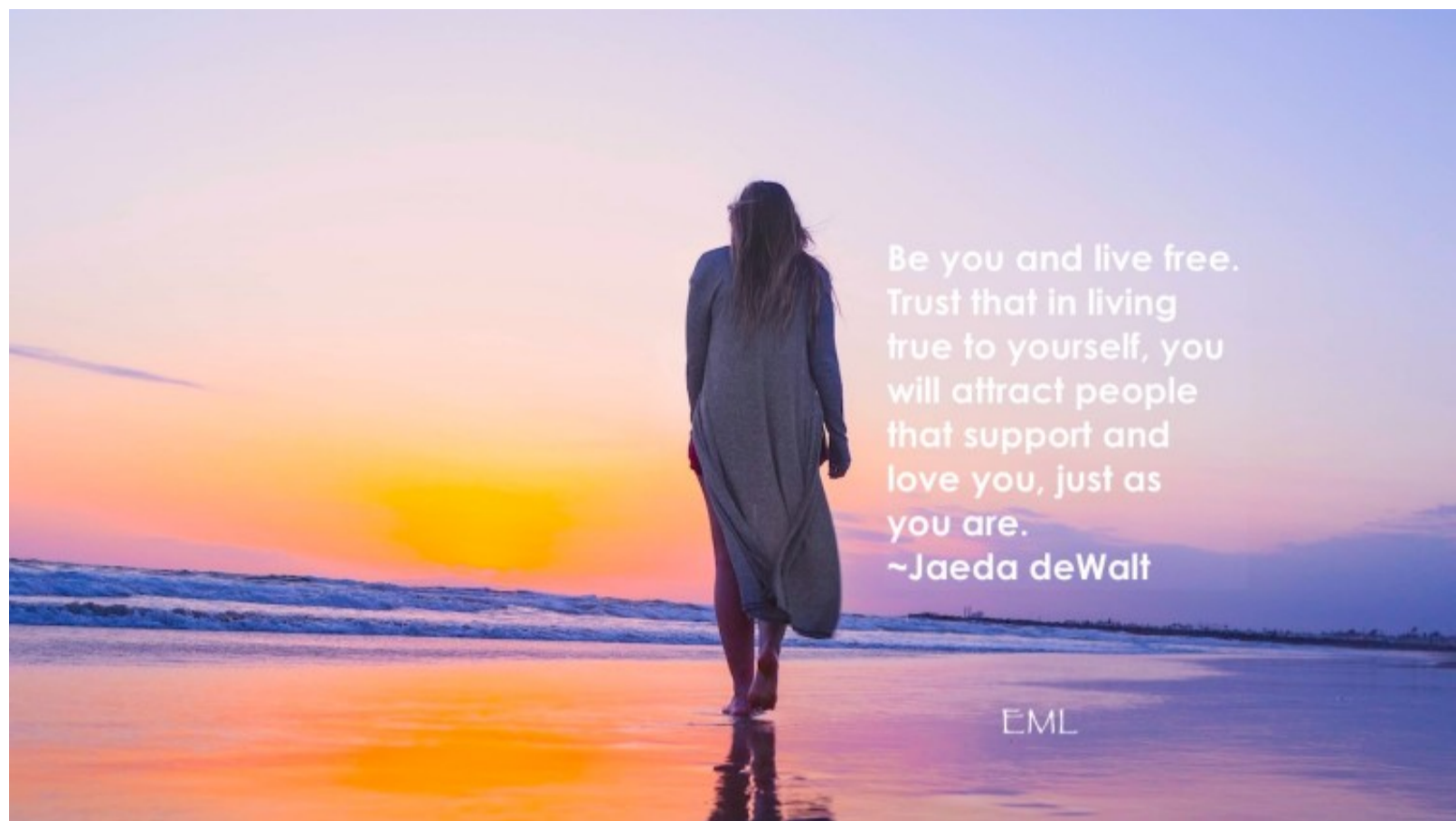
To challenge these long held social mores and religious beliefs can come at a great cost to you personally if you choose to live differently. Questioning authority and the reasons why things are as they are, are seldom met with open arms, even when living in a democracy.

Every child goes through the “Why?” phase early in their development. That phase is often squelched by “this is how we do it” or “stop asking stupid questions”. We are all conditioned to become dutiful sheep who do not question and blindly follow those who are in control of us. By the time we reach adulthood, we may not ever resume asking questions again, since we have been chastised so many times (some more violently than others). We have become accustomed to living smaller.

This plays itself out in every conceivable aspect of our lives as adults. We become people pleasers, accept cruel or disrespectful behavior, take jobs where we are taken advantage of and even abused, marry someone who may control and abuse us, and so much more. Those who rebel against this control, have often not yet learned how to get in touch with their inner self, long ago locked away inside. This may result in acting out by hurting others in a similar way to how they were treated. Some may turn to drugs, alcohol, sex addiction, and other unhealthy behaviors that numb their nearly constant feelings of worthlessness, despair, and emotional pain.

There is a more constructive and life transforming way of overcoming the effects of what has happened to you. This is not accomplished by learning how to “fix” yourself, but to realize that you were never really broken. You were merely conditioned by people who had access to you, who had also been similarly conditioned spanning generations, to become disconnected from their inner selves in a similar way.

The way to freedom to be yourself is through an UN-learning.



In my own life, layer upon layer of conditioning locked me deep inside for decades. My feelings and sense of self were carefully guarded against discovery by anyone. My career, relationships, and friendships were reflective of the chaos I felt inside. I tried to be the person others expected me to be. I had a career and made a good living, but I still felt empty inside, constantly looking for something to “fix” me. Underneath it all was this feeling that if people really knew me, I would no longer be accepted as the person they thought me to be. In my case, I reached a breaking point where I could no longer accept living someone else’s life, and that has made ALL the difference.

Standing up for yourself and living your truth, whatever that may be, is initially very frightening. You will likely lose some friends, perhaps some family members, and social standing in your current life. But, you will gain so much more by being who you are and living YOUR dreams; living the life YOU choose instead of the life someone else has chosen for you to make them happy; accepting the privilege it is to simply be who you are at your very core.

In this process of unlearning and allowing who you are to fully emerge, you will no doubt lose some friends and associates. But, you will discover new friends who will love you for who you are, if you allow them into your life. After all, someone who only loves an image of who they think you are, is not a true friend. It is important to remember that people are doing the best they can with their current

degree of understanding. The people who have held you down, have been held down too. You can change all of that and break free!

When you reconnect with your inner self and begin to live your unique truth, people will show up in your life who have gone through a similar metamorphosis. You will be amazed at how freeing it is, to be yourself; unaffected by the whims and expectations of others. You will still face challenges to your new way of living, but what you gain by being true to yourself, is worth it. This is when you are truly free to be YOU.

While all beings are part of the Universal whole (the spiritual being that lives in all things), the form that you take in this physical world is unique. Out of the billions of people who are now living or have ever lived on this planet, there is no one else who is exactly like you. You are unique with talents, intellect, and gifts that only you possess. Allow yourself to become all that you can be. The world needs you, now more than ever.

Here is how I can support you, as you transform into the best version of yourself:

- [Get Chapter One of My Book: *Reflections on Transcendence*](#) is a mindfulness-based book of meditations and reflections, featuring the artwork of renowned expressionist artist, the late Steve Lyons. Open the book to any random page for nuggets of wisdom and moving images to promote reflection and insights. [Enjoy Chapter One for free.](#) Available for purchase on [Book Depository](#) & [Amazon](#).
- [Resources & Publications](#) - Publications, resources, digital products and more to support your transformation.
- [Magnificent Metamorphosis Magazine](#) An online digital magazine that features inspiring mindfulness-based articles by a variety of global thought leaders and topics, to inspire you to become your best self.
- [Transformational Coaching & Mentoring](#) If you are having a difficult time in your life and everything you know to do is not helping, if you are ready for change, schedule a call with me to see if we are a good fit. To learn more about coaching options available to support you, [visit my website](#).