

Lesson 4

Stop Comparing

Introduction

Ever feel like everybody else is achieving more than you, more successful at work, and more positive about life in general? Everybody else has a bigger circle of friends... A closer-knit family... A more passionate love life... Stronger relationships... A better job... Greater life fulfilment?

Whilst it's incredibly difficult to live life without comparing yourself to fellow human beings, by living authentically, you can be happier and live a more fulfilled life.

Being authentic can mean a number of things, including, expressing and accepting your true self, including your feelings, making considered choices about how you live, and taking responsibility for those choices, and being focused and fully engaged.

The science

Findings from research on the so-called 'good life,' defined as encompassing happiness and engagement, show a positive relationship between authenticity and well-being and between authenticity and engagement, regardless of age or gender.

So, the more authentic you are, the higher your well-being and better work commitment, engagement, performance, and job satisfaction.

Authenticity can act as a 'protector' in relationships, for instance, when taking on the trials of motherhood, and a buffer for interpersonal conflict, distress experienced by LGB, and identity within a sociocultural environment.

Exercise

So if you feel out of touch with your true self, and have lost your identity, this next exercise is designed to help you rediscover your authentic self and behave in a way that's consistent with your inner experiences, whilst accepting external influences.

Values:

- What matters to you deep down?
- What do you consider to be important?
- Do you engage with life doing things that are important to you?

Answer the following questions. There might be values you think are important, and others that don't matter so much to you. There are no 'right' answers.

Value	Description
Family	What kind of relationships do you want to have with your family? How do you want to be in your familial relationships?
Marriage / couple / intimacy	What kind of husband, wife or partner do you want to be? What kind of relationship do you want to be in? How would you like to see it develop? What kind of person do you want to be in a relationship?
Parenting	What sort of parent do you want to be? What qualities do you want your children to learn from you? What kind of relationships do you want to build with them?
Friendships / social life	What sort of friend do you want to be? Which friendships are important to you? How would you like to behave towards your friends? What kind of social life matters to you?
Career / employment	What kind of work is valuable to you? What qualities do you want to possess as an employee? What kind of work relationships would you like to build? What kind of work matters to you?
Education / personal growth / development	How would you like to develop as a person? What skills would you like to learn? Does education and learning matter to you? What would you like to know more about?
Recreation/ fun / leisure	How do you enjoy yourself the most? What relaxes you?
Spirituality	What kind of relationship do you want with nature or God?
Citizenship / environment / community	What kind of community do you want to be a part of? How do you want to contribute? What kind of citizen would you like to be?
Health / physical wellbeing	What do you value about your physical wellbeing? How important is your health to you? How do you want to look after yourself?

Now use the table below to add a score of 0 – 10 relating to how successfully you've lived your life with these values in mind over the past month? (Rate 0–10, 0 = Not at all, 10 = Completely)

Value	Rating (0 - 10)
Family	
Marriage / couple / intimacy	
Parenting	
Friendships / social life	
Career / employment	
Education / personal growth / development	
Recreation/ fun / leisure	
Spirituality	
Citizenship / environment / community	
Health / physical wellbeing	

You might be surprised by the outcome of this exercise and it's hopefully helped you to detect any values in your life that you're not fulfilling. You might decide to do more of what matters to you and be the kind of person you want to be to yourself, others, and the world.

What have you learnt?

Once you realise there's no fun in competing with others, and accepting your true self and your circumstances, you'll start to live your life with a more realistic and positive mindset. You'll succeed in living life in accordance with your personal values, and being successful in your own right, rather than dancing to someone else's tune.

What next?

If you're wondering how else you can increase your happiness, in our next lesson, we'll be looking at the wide-ranging gains that an attitude of gratitude can bring.