

A sunset over the ocean with a heart-shaped sun. The sun is a bright, glowing heart shape in the center of the sky, casting a shimmering path of light across the water. The sky is a gradient of orange and red, and the water is dark with a shimmering path of light reflecting the sun's glow.

**Living a Courageously  
Authentic Life**

**Lesson Five:  
Follow Your Heart**

## Lesson 5: Follow Your Heart

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**“Follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Everything else is secondary.”**

~Steve Jobs

What does your heart want for your life?

**An authentic life is one that is aligned with our heart.** Our hearts know the type of life we want to lead and the work we want to do. Often as adults, we suppress what we want because of our personas, limiting beliefs and fears. This usually isn't the case when we are children, because we are more aligned with our heart and our heart's desires.

Deep down inside of you, you know the answer to this question. You may push it aside, saying that you don't think you could do that because of what is going on in your life right now or that you aren't smart enough, or rich enough, or deserving enough...the mental list of limiting beliefs of why we shouldn't do something is endless. But still, your heart keeps trying to get through to you.

You may spend hours on the weekends living your purpose and passion and keep having the idea of doing this type of activity as you life work. People may consistently come to you for help in one area and say to you time and time again that you should do this for a living. You may spend time on the Internet researching and visiting pages about the life you dream of.

**I am going to be blunt here: You are the creator of your life.**

You are the artist with the easel and paintbrush, painting the life that you live. The only thing holding you back from living the life you dream of, the life where you are courageously and authentically living your purpose every day, IS YOU!

Every client I have worked with has had a list of reasons why they can't begin to make changes to live the life their heart yearns for. Every one of them cites money, time, children, parents, and risk as reasons to not do it. I had a list of reasons and excuses as well. Here is what I discovered however: when we don't live according to our purpose and heart's desires, the universe has a way of letting us know that we are off track. Unfortunately, many of us only make changes when a situation becomes unbearable. It may start as a small nudge. Maybe we start having headaches or get a bad cold. If we ignore the small nudge, the nudges get stronger: perhaps we have a serious illness, or we lose our job. In my case, it took getting hit

by a minivan while walking across the street to wake me up and make changes. Believe me, I had plenty of time to think while I was stuck on a couch for six months!

So, what does YOUR heart want for YOUR life?

## Case story: Following Your Heart

I worked with a client who wanted to live more authentically. She struggled to identify her life purpose and how she could live that purpose. We spent time during a shamanic session defining her purpose and what was holding her back from living it. Armed with a list of action steps of things she needed to release – and things that she needed to amp up in her life – she spent several months focusing on herself.

At the end of this time, she said that she felt more “fully herself” and that she loved the transformation and fully loved the self that she had become. In fact, she felt capable of doing anything in the world.

It was during this time that she fully connected to her heart. She sat down and wrote a plan on how to fulfill her purpose, in infinite detail. She described the exact things that she needed, the type of workspace she needed, where she needed to be located, etc. She was so specific that she could see everything in her mind’s eye and see herself in her workspace doing her life work.

Less than a month after she wrote her plan, the workspace and materials materialized for her. She said it felt like a miracle to her, because everything was as she visualized it.

## Taking Action

Set aside a couple hours (all at once or in smaller time blocks) and find a quiet place to respond to the following questions. These exercises should be enjoyable. If you experience any feelings of regret or discouragement, please release them. You are exactly where you need to be. All of the choices and experiences you have had in the past have created the amazing person that you are. As you define your heart’s desire, recognize that each experience you’ve had will help you in some way going forward to living the life you desire.

- 1) Take a look at the life purpose statement you created in Lesson 4. Develop a list of ways you can begin to live your life and work aligned with that purpose.
  - a) Think about what you enjoy doing. What causes you to forget about time?
  - b) Review the jobs you have held in the past. Which ones did you really enjoy and why?

- c) Look around you. What are other people doing that you wish you could do? Why?
  - d) Spent time doing a Google search using your life purpose as the search words. What comes up? What do you think is interesting and appealing?
  - e) Go buy ten or so different magazines that appeal to you. Go through them, circling and highlighting things that you find interesting. Once you finish going through all of them, take a look at what you highlighted. What themes show up? Are there any things that jump out at you as being interesting?
  - f) Review online job postings. Don't worry about the job title; instead look for job positions and responsibilities that appeal to you. Make a list of those roles and responsibilities. What themes show up for you?
- 2) Go beyond work. What else would you like to have in your life?
- a) Where do you want to live? Why?
  - b) Who do you want to live?
  - c) What does a typical day look like for you?
  - d) Who are you living your life with?
  - e) What are you doing in your spare time?
- 3) Once you have a complete picture of the life your heart wants, create a visual or auditory (or both!) record of it. Some ideas include creating a vision board where you cut out pictures that represent the life you want to create and glue them to a board; developing a mantra; finding or even writing a song or poem that reflects what you want to create; or finding or creating a video. The list is endless, but the idea is to create something that reminds you and your heart what you want to create.
- 4) Spend time each day with your visual/auditory creation, letting your heart feel the joy of the life you want create.

Congratulations on completing Lesson 5! What special thing can you do for yourself to honor and reward yourself for the work you've done?