

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 dark water below. The sky transitions from a deep orange at the horizon to a darker, almost black, at the top.

**Living a Courageously  
Authentic Life**

**Lesson One:  
Release Personas that No  
Longer Serve You**

# Lesson 1: Release Personas that No Longer Serve You

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**“Don’t change so people will like you. Be yourself and the right people will love the real you.”**

~Unknown

Often when talking with clients, they tell me that they have reached a point in their life where they are experiencing pain and frustration about their current life situation. As we talk, they realize that are holding onto a persona that no longer fits their lives.

**Once you realize that a persona is holding you back from moving forward and growing in your life, what do you do?**

Most of us have developed personas that helped us navigate through childhood to reach adulthood. These personas allowed us to make sense of confusing times, and, if an experience was traumatic, provided us the means to survive. These personas may be defined for us by others – such as the smart one, the class clown, or the artist – or may be ones that we take on for ourselves because of our life circumstances – such as the caretaker, the recluse/hermit, or the listener.

Inherently, there is nothing wrong with these personas. They may, in fact, align with your overall life purpose. But sometimes a persona no longer “fits” our life and we have outgrown it. In other instances, we spend more time in the shadow or negative side of a persona than the light or positive side of the persona. From a spirit/energy perspective, personas that we have taken on that do not align with our purpose or higher self end up dragging us down because they cover up our true self. Think of them as heavy, dark blankets that don’t let your true light shine through. In situations like these, the personas no longer help you, and may hold you back from realizing your full potential.

To live an authentic life, you need to embrace those personas that align with your purpose and your heart, and release or reframe those that are holding you back or dragging you down. Let’s say, for example, that one of your personas is the class clown. You took on this persona out of a genuine desire to help make others laugh and be happy. In fact, helping others see joy in their lives is even part of your life purpose. But as time has gone on, you’ve noticed that not only does everyone expect you to be the life of the party, but they also don’t acknowledge or give you the space to express other emotions, such as anger or sadness, when appropriate and needed. As a result, you feel pressured to always be joking around and laughing and push down other emotions in your life.

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In this example, the persona is obviously not working for the person anymore. In fact, it may be causing quite a bit of pain. The question to ask yourself, if you were in this situation, is whether or not you completely release the persona or reframe it in some way. You could, for example, channel your class clown persona for only certain situations – such as birthday parties or other happy events. Or, you could create situations or spend time with people that see you for more than a class clown and give you the space to feel and express other emotions. There are many options. You need to find the one that is best for you.

One final word about personas: you may get resistance from others when you release or reframe your persona(s). Recognize that other people may tend to think of you in a certain manner, may not be comfortable with change, and may in fact be afraid. Send them love and blessings, be gentle, but continue to do what is necessary so that you are living a more authentic, heart-based life.

### **My story: Reframing my Caretaker Persona**

Years ago I realized that the caretaker persona I had created was no longer working for me. I spent time thinking about why I had created that persona and the role it played in my life. I knew I needed to reframe the persona, and decided to conduct a ceremony to do so.

I found a quiet place in the woods and created a sacred space, incorporating feathers, flowers, stones and other gifts from Nature. I asked my persona to join me in the sacred space. Once I fully felt her presence, I began by thanking her for her help – listing off the ways that she helped me through challenging times in my life to get to me this exact place in time. I spoke the words out loud to give more power to them and to fully honor the persona.

Then I explained to my persona that my life had changed, and, with that, my needs. I shared the areas in my life that I wanted to work on or needed help with, and asked my persona how she might be able to help me in those areas. I paused and listened for her answer in my heart, and then shared some ideas that I had as well. Together we defined a new responsibility for my persona that played off of the strengths and capabilities that she had, but redirected them to other areas of my life.

I thanked her for continuing to be with me, in this new responsibility, and asked for awareness if either of us fell into old habits so we could course-correct to the new responsibility. I selected a visual cue to remind me of my new partnership with the persona and ended the ceremony with gratitude.

After the ceremony, I started to see drastic, positive changes in my life. My persona was working with me, instead of holding me back. Within a couple months, I had

ended a relationship that was no longer working for me, sold my house, and moved across the country to a city that I loved. I was energized and invigorated with life...and was supported by both the Universe and my persona.

## 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. Please be gentle with yourself as you do this. Some of the questions or your responses may bring up emotions or memories for you that may be uncomfortable or painful. If that should happen, take several deep breaths, remind yourself that you are at a different point in your life at this time, the past is past, and release the emotion or memory. If necessary, seek out someone to help you process any emotions or memories, such as a therapist, counselor or friend.

- 1) List all of the personas you play in your life. Some ways begin identifying your personas are to:
  - a) Look at the key, defining moments of your and your family's life. These can include births, deaths, rites of passage and/or those family moments that are shared and remembered every time the family gets together. What is your standard persona at these times?
  - b) Think about the types of personas you are "known" for with your family and friends. What are they?
  - c) Think about your work environment. Are there certain things that co-workers consistently come to you for help on that are outside the standard requirements for your job (for example, asking for childrearing advice or hoping you could help them out of some drama or crisis)?
- 2) Once you have your list of personas, spend time with each and answer the following questions
  - a) What does this persona mean to you? How would you define and describe it?
  - b) Why and when did you first take on this persona?
  - c) What are the positive aspects and gifts of this persona?
  - d) What are the negative aspects of this persona?
  - e) Has this persona helped you in your life? If so, how?
  - f) Has this persona hindered you in your life? If so, how?
- 3) Armed with this deeper insight about the persona, determine if you want to keep the persona as-is, reframe it or release it from your life
  - a) For each persona that you want to keep as is

- i) Why do you want to keep it?
    - ii) How do you see yourself embracing and leveraging this persona in the future?
  - b) For the personas you want to reframe
    - i) What do you want to change about this persona? Why?
    - ii) What steps will you take to make the changes to this persona “stick?”
    - iii) How will you respond to people and situations that expect you to take on the “old” version of this persona?
    - iv) What type of reminder (visual, auditory, mental) will you use to help you reframe this persona?
  - c) For the personas you want to release
    - i) Why do you want to release this persona?
    - ii) What fears do you have about releasing this persona?
    - iii) What steps will you take to release this persona?
    - iv) Is there another persona that you want to take on in its place?
    - v) What steps will you take to make the release of this persona “stick?”
    - vi) How will you respond to people and situations that expect you to take on this persona?
    - vii) What type of reminder (visual, auditory, mental) will you use to help you release this persona?
- 4) Have a conversation with each persona. Visualize the persona sitting across from you and share your thoughts about how it has helped and what it needs to do now in your life. Ask the persona what its thoughts are about the situation and ask for ideas to help. Listen to ideas that come up inside of you. If it helps with the visualization, physically sit at a table with two chairs. Sit in one as you share your thoughts, and when it is time for your persona to respond, move to the other chair.
- 5) Spend some time thinking about yourself, your true self, that has been hiding behind these personas. Who are you really? What is the true essence of you?
- 6) Consider holding some type of ceremony or rite of passage for each persona. Write your feelings and impressions of the ceremony
- a) Spend some time with each persona before keeping, reframing or releasing it
  - b) Express gratitude to the role for everything that it has done to help you reach this point in your life. Be specific!
  - c) Clearly state your intention for the persona (keep, reframe, release)

- d) Close out your ceremony by surrounding yourself with love and peace
- 7) For the personas that you have kept or reframed, determine way(s) that you can remind yourself of the gifts and power they bring to you. Is there some type of symbol or image that will help you remember? Is there a song that conveys the gift(s)?

Congratulations on completing Lesson 1! What special thing can you do for yourself to honor and reward yourself for the work you've done?