



If you don't  
live the  
only life  
you have,  
you won't  
live some  
other life,  
you won't  
any life at  
all.

James Baldwin  
(1924 - 1987)  
Writer

There are many things to which we can be true. We can be true to our commitments, to our values, or to our faith. We can be true to our spouse and our friends. The Beach Boys remind us that we can be true to our school.

The starting point for truth, must be ourselves.

Being true to ourselves invites us to know ourselves. Logically, it is only when we know who we are that we can be faithful to our personhood. Self-awareness is a never-completed process and a never-exhausted source of revelation. We can always discover more about who we are, at whatever stage of life we find ourselves to be.

Being true to ourselves nudges us to accept ourselves. A sometimes challenging aspect of being true is being welcoming. Self-knowledge is not limited to only those things we find easy to accept. With self-knowledge we will encounter aspects of ourselves we find confusing, or embarrassing, or contradictory. Some things will bring us personal delight, but we might also worry about public judgement. Some things will be hard to embrace as real.

Being true to ourselves strengthens our courage. There is tremendous power in self-knowledge and self-acceptance. These two roots of being true to ourselves, ground us in our essential worthiness. We are then more able to weather the fear that often accompanies courage. We are more able to bear the bias that can accompany criticism. We are more able to risk rejection or acceptance, as we make genuine connections with others who are also being true to themselves.

We are more able to live our authentic life.

*What within me merits more of my attention? What within me merits more of my compassion?*