

## Authentic You. A Girl's Guide to Growing Up Fearless and True

**Achea Redd**

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Achea Redd's *Authentic You.* is a cute welcome-to-adolescence guidebook that's perfect for girls who are learning to navigate the mental and emotional changes of growing up.

In her own youth, Redd's experiences as a Black Christian and as the daughter of a preacher made her feel like she didn't belong. Here, her direct addresses to her audience couple with personal anecdotes to result in advice that's genuine, kind, and positive. Each chapter—on topics including friendship, self-care, mental health, and romance—is broken up into sections, and affirmations run throughout: “I am fearless,” “I am authentic,” “I am a rescuer,” and “I am a trailblazer.”

Redd's main message is that girls should accept themselves as they are, and then find the people and places that also accept the true versions of themselves. Her conversational, poignant, and empowering text includes wonderful, highlightable lines: “Trust your instincts and that little inner voice that's telling you who you're meant to be and what you're meant to do.” However, the book's general stance is heteronormative, and its chapter on romance assumes that the audience will only be interested in, crushing on, and dating boys. Its situational examples are of cisgender, heterosexual couples, too, while the book's acknowledgment that some will not be interested in boys is vague.

Elsewhere, the book introduces mental illness and therapy as common practices to undertake without shame. It includes an appendix with information about common mental illnesses, including depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and PTSD, with a list of resources to help, including national hotlines, Black mental health communities, books, podcasts, and mental health applications.

Empowering teenage girls with advice and affirmations, Achea Redd's *Authentic You.* is a must-have self-help book.

ASHLEY HOLSTROM (November / December 2020)

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