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SELF-HELP

Finding Me Again: A Journey to an Authentic Life
Nancy S. Kay
BookSurge
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Five Stars (out of Five)

Living an authentic and fulfilled life is the holy grail of existence for many, and finding a high quality way to achieve such actualization can be quite the quest. Nancy Kay, a licensed counselor and life coach, has succeeded in this elusive task, creating a wonderful guidebook to authenticity, suitable for everyone who seeks more fulfillment in their life.

In fewer than 130 pages, Kay has condensed all the key elements to living authentically into a very approachable and meaningful little book. She shares her own tumultuous path through the pitfalls of life, from an engagement broken just days before the wedding to being responsible for an accidental death and the brain damage of a close friend to an ugly divorce. She guilelessly bares her soul to the reader, offering up her shame and inadequacies as a testament to her humanity and the efficacy of her work. She artfully uses her own struggles with authenticity, coupled with several powerful stories taken from her practice, to show that change is possible and profoundly desirable.

The obstacles to growth are compassionately examined, and strategies for working with such barriers as addictions, hopelessness, and multiple tragedies are shared. Kay pulls in the expertise of a Who's Who of well-known authors and self-help gurus to supplement her own insights, interweaving quotes and poetry from such luminaries as Elizabeth Gilbert, Oriah Mountain Dreamer, and David Benner.

Kay has isolated four aspects of authenticity: hope, humility, forgiveness, and gratitude. For each of these qualities, she shows how its attainment is a necessary component on the path to a genuine life. "With hope," Kay writes about the first component, "we possess the belief that there will be a positive outcome regardless of life's circumstances. Hope is the key to living life authentically and genuinely connecting with others, with ourselves, and with God." The chapter on forgiveness is especially moving, and any reader would be hard pressed not to feel compelled to search through their life for opportunities to practice "authentic forgiveness." Kay's take on humility seems counter-intuitive but is refreshingly spot-on. She professes that humility is really

about taking care of oneself, setting boundaries, and being brutally honest. The final component to living authentically is gratitude. Kay explains it beautifully, “I am talking about the deep and spiritual thankfulness for every breath you take, every person you meet, every life season you live—the good, bad, and ugly.”

In the appendix are eight priceless exercises to help seekers succeed in their quest to authenticity. Exercise 5, for example, gives three steps to eliminating personal annoyances and sufferings. And Exercise 8 is a thirty question quiz documenting one’s present state of fulfillment. The other six exercises are equally wonderful and make for a perfect ending to *Finding Me Again: A Journey to an Authentic Life*.

Patty Sutherland