

AUDACIOUS AUTHENTICITY

LEADING AND LIVING WITH CONGRUENCY



**"...an authentic imprint that details
and directs you into
accepting and creating
one of the most important
people in your life
-yourself..."**
~Matt Wahnon
CEO, Les Brown Institute

**FOREWORD BY
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AUDACIOUS AUTHENTICITY

LEADING AND LIVING WITH CONGRUENCY

REVISED EDITION
WITH ADDED CHAPTERS

by

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“Your story is what you have, what you will always have. It is something you own.”
-Michelle Obama, Becoming

CHAPTER 1

BE-CUUMAN

“Becoming is a long ball view that focuses on what we can be not simply what we’re currently facing.”



You likely scratched your head when you saw the title of this opening chapter. I must admit, when I first became acquainted with it, I too was tempted to correct the spelling and make it becoming. Since the initial publishing of the first draft of Audacious Authenticity, the word “becoming” gained even greater traction with Michelle Obama’s best seller by the same name. Becoming is the memoir of the former first lady and was published in 2018.

In her book she allows us behind the curtain to get a glimpse into her deeply personal experiences about her childhood, life as a black woman at an Ivy League School and even shares the struggles in her marriage to former President Barack Obama. She also provides readers with a deep dive into her roots and how she ultimately found her voice during her time in the White House, her public health campaign, and her role as a mother.

The word "becoming" is a powerful word and carries with it tremendous clues to the journey we are all on toward reaching our potential. Interestingly, the word "*becoming*" has its origin in Old English as "*be-cuuman*" whose literal meaning is "*to come into being!*" This means that the life and career changes we experience are often inevitable, but we can transform them into incubators which help us "come into being". John Maxwell states, change is inevitable but growth is optional.

Becoming therefore really is about the evolution of you, and quite frankly, that is something that takes time and involves a process and a plan. However, "becoming" is intricately tied together with "putting away", thoughts, behaviors and emotions that prohibit growth. Too often we assume we can achieve success or become our better selves without discarding the inhibitors of greatness.

Most of us will never be president or first lady but, in each of us there exist variables and intangibles that make us perfect for the generation we were born into. Our ability to move, grow and build momentum in life by managing our moments, is the necessary evolution to ultimately come into being. Becoming is a long ball view that focuses on what we can be not simply what we're currently facing. It is about identifying our absolutes and holding firm to our unchangeable values.

What are the things that must change in order for you to become? Aristotle intimates that we become what we repeatedly

do. The thing we repeatedly do are simply habits. Habits are powerful forces and like the air we breathe, we all share them. Some we try to eliminate, others we try to cultivate. Frankly, most of us think more about eliminating bad habits than we consider fostering positive ones and yet, creating and cultivating good habits is one of the best skills you can develop.

Think of yourself, if you're like most people, you've got quite a few habits, many of which you aren't even you're aware of. You probably brush your teeth roughly the same way each time you do it. You likely eat the same source of food, drive the same way to work, and sleep on the same side of the bed.

You probably fill your car up at the same gas station. You might habitually do the same sort of exercise, at the same time. You may also habitually tear yourself down and build yourself up. You might defeat yourself before you even start, or give yourself a boost that makes your success more likely.

Habit is a strange and mysterious thing. On one side, a habit can consume us and become a self-limiting rut, and ruts are notoriously difficult to change. On the other hand, a habit can easily become a path that you can use to climb to greater heights and become the person you were meant to be. This is why it is important to identify the good habits that help you to become and the bad habits that draw you away from who you can be.

In preparation for my first book *Packaged For Greatness*, I spent quite a bit of time observing and reading about the behavior of ants. I was fascinated by their instincts and ability to operate in what we know as genetically-programmed behaviors. Like a bird who builds her nest year after year in the same way at the same time, so too do our habits drive how we live our lives. The difference with being human is this, unlike the bird or the ant, who have no choice in the way they behave, we have the ability to alter our habits.

When “*things we repeatedly do*” devolve into stifling habits which inhibit the evolution of who we were meant to be, we must call forth courage to change them. Like a river out of control, we must deny unhealthy habits the ability to sweep us out to sea, to drift out the remainder of our days. The beauty of being human and not an ant or a bird is, we can re-program our thinking. If somehow we can muster the courage to reprogram our thinking, ultimately, we can remove the unhealthy habits and change who we become.

However, any habit that is going to change requires discipline. It requires a new way of thinking, new attitudes and a new modus operandi. Becoming isn't pretending that life didn't happen to us rather like Michelle Obama shares in her book, it's “Your story is what you have, what you will always have. It is something to own.” Start now with a fervent commitment to your “Be-cuuman”, you're coming into being.

AUTHENTIC EXPRESSION FOR CHAPTER ONE

A REAL LIFE STORY FROM GERALD

I was born and raised in a strict religious environment, one in which people spoke very little of grace. We learned to live by a set of laws, both those found in the Old Testament and those contrived by our spiritual leaders, based on personal opinions and misinterpretations of Scripture. I learned to either get it right or look the part. Though our leaders meant well, they created a breeding ground for an inauthentic existence.

Life took on another major complication, as my mother passed away when I was 12 years old. She was a nurturer; whose attitude was the antithesis of what my father and our church leaders displayed. She and I were very close. Her departure at that age left me in a broken, empty emotional place. The depression that resulted from the lack of closure resulted in a series of ulcers, beginning at 15 years old.

In my environment, we touted realness, but because we lacked understanding of grace we didn't apply it, either to ourselves or others. I played the part fairly well, as did others. But in spite of being gifted and in demand as a pastor and itinerant speaker, I struggled with depression and the lack of self-confidence. As you can imagine, I hid it very well for many years. I had not received affirmation as the kind of person that

I was during the all-important formative years and had thus been conditioned to be something that I was not.

As I grew older eventually the weight of inauthenticity was too much. I learned to accept myself as the caring, nurturing man that I was. It was not until I reached the age of 40, when I hit a massive wall, that I began to pursue healing in earnest. My marriage dissolved, and as a man of the cloth, I carried a tremendous load of shame. As a matter of fact, most of the people around me were not concerned about my issue, even members of the church I was pastoring. But I was beset by deep feelings of guilt, shame, and depression. How could this be happening to me? How could I continue to preach and teach others, when I was in such a broken place?

Broken and alone, I finally resorted to professional counseling and committed to being as open as possible. After many years and innumerable sessions, I began to face the real me. At first, I had to look back at the lack of affirmation that I needed to develop a healthy sense of self. Healing was a slow process, but I made significant strides.

However, when I became exposed to the concept of coaching, it opened a new approach to life. Whereas counseling focuses on the past as it relates to the present, coaching helped me to focus on the real me and to face my assignment with clarity and to look ahead to what life has for me to do. Because of coaching, I was able to come to terms with the fact that I was

pre-packed by God for a unique life assignment. Because of a deeper understanding of who I really am, I have become more free, to be, and to respect who I am.

AUDACIOUS AUTHENTICITY

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AUDACIOUS AUTHENTICITY is inherently a developmental process and provides you clear steps to creating an authentic life that flows from the inside out; bringing harmony to your values, gifts, skills, abilities and desires. Along with The Authenticity Factor APP, The Audacious Authenticity System will empower you to be a better leader and experience life in a richer and more meaningful way.

YOU'LL GAIN UNDERSTANDING OF AND EXPERIENCE:

- What Authenticity Is and Isn't.
- How to Unlock Your Latent Potential?
- Learn and Develop The (8) Essential Elements of Authenticity.
- The Keys to Finding and Living from Your Core.
- What Does the Titanic Teach Us About Ourselves?
- What's O.I.H. And Why It's Critical to Living Authentically.
- The Importance of Mentors.
- Hear Real Life Stories from Executives, Business Owners and Soccer Moms.

What People Are Saying

"There are books written that you read and put down. But then there are manifestos whose intention is to promote a fresh way of thinking. This is a manifesto that will create an internal realignment of head, heart, and hands."

~ Simon T. Bailey, CEO
Simon T. Bailey International and author of 9 books

"The principle of being authentic was the key to the turnaround of my team's performance. As a result of these principles and this coaching system, my team has evolved to be one of the top teams in the company."

~ James E. Mackey III
AVP Wells Fargo Corporation

"This book is a poignant verity into discovering the most authentic self. It provides an authentic imprint that details and directs you into accepting a creating one of the most important people in your life – Yourself."

~ Matt Wahnon
CEO, Les Brown Institute

"Audacious Authenticity helps you create the vehicle and the map that allows you to drive to your dreams."

~ Phil Sorentino
CSP, Humor Consultants



KELVIN R. MCCREE, is an accomplished author, executive coach, entrepreneur, keynote speaker and mentor. For 17 years he has worked with churches, not-for-profit organizations, and corporations; empowering them to leverage differences to create phenomenal results. As a forward thinking visionary and fresh voice, his goal is to create a movement to help 500,000 people remove barriers to authenticity and unlock their latent potential to transform their lives and places of business.

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