Did you know there’s a video class to go with this? Click here to watch it.

Becoming who we are is a life-long process that can, at times, feel somewhat abstract. My aim with this video class is to inspire you to embark (or continue) to cultivate authenticity in your life and live a whole-hearted and courageous life. Below, you’ll find 10 key areas and starting points that you can begin exploring today.

Enjoy!
1. Get Clear on Your Values

Our values are **the qualities we desire to embody and to have embodied in the world around us**. We all have a set of internal values, whether we’re conscious of them or not. When we live in alignment with our values, we feel satisfaction, wholeness, and fulfilment. When we don’t, we feel dissatisfied, unfulfilled, and unhappy.

When we’re conscious of them, our values become a map. They help us make decisions that reflect our priorities and purpose. With our values in mind, we can show up as the best version of ourselves. We can also create an external world that reflects what’s most important to us.

To create your map, start by sourcing a list of values (such as [this one](http://www.becomingwhoyouare.net) from Steve Pavlina). Read through the list a few times mark the words that most resonate with you. Narrow down this list to your top 10 values, your top five, then your top three.

*What are your top 10, 5, and 3 values? Write them below.*
2. Define Your Boundaries

Boundaries are the **invisible lines that separate what we will and won’t allow in our lives**. To become who we are, we need to be conscious of two types of boundaries. The first type is boundaries with other people. The second is boundaries with ourselves.

Boundaries with other people help us define where we end and other people begin. They help us respect our needs, values, and preferences. As a result, boundaries enable us to create an environment that feels safe.

Healthy boundaries with ourselves help us behave intentionally. They influence how we spend our time, and make sure we’re meeting our key needs.

Both types of boundaries are equally important for our authenticity. Defining them is a life-long process that is invaluable to our growth.

The first step is to become aware of times when it feels like when your boundaries have been or are being crossed. Notice when you feel anger, either at yourself or other people. Ask yourself: what is the message behind this emotion? Notice when you want to blame other people for your circumstances or when you feel like a helpless victim. What responsibility can you take?

*Name one situation in your life where you’d like to pay more attention to your boundaries with other people:*

*Name one situation in your life where you’d like to pay more attention to your boundaries with yourself:*

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3. Get to Know Your Inner Committee

As a culture, we tend to think of personality as a single entity. In reality, our personality consists of many different “parts” that shape our feelings and behaviours. As the poet Walt Whitman famously wrote, “I am large, I contain multitudes”—and so do we.

An important part of becoming who we are is getting to know our “inner committee”. This includes the parts we find hard to accept, such as our inner critic, as well as more caring parts, like our inner mentor. As children, we usually internalise the voices of the people around us (positive and negative) which also become part of our internal dialogue later in life.

A great tool for getting acquainted with your internal dialogue is journaling. All parts of us are trying to protect us in their way. Journaling can help us explore how to have a constructive relationship with ourselves.

Stream-of-consciousness journaling is useful for giving the different parts of ourselves a voice. Using this technique, we can start to notice the different origins and motivations of these parts.

You can also use journaling to dialogue between different parts. The next time you experience an internal conflict, write out the different parts of the conflict like a play or movie script. This slows down the internal conversation and gives you a chance to mediate between them. With practice, you’ll also start to recognise these different parts in real time.

When we get to know our inner committee, we become more self-aware and self-connected. We experience less internal conflict; we become more effective at meeting our needs, and we are more authentic.
What are some of the parts you recognise on your inner committee? (If you have old journal entries, you might find it useful to read back through these) Write them out below…
4. Prioritise Self-Compassion over Self-Esteem

Most of us are raised to believe it’s important to have high self-esteem. According to professor and author Kristin Neff, however, the true ingredient for satisfaction is actually self-compassion.

Whereas self-esteem is self-evaluation based on what we do and achieve, self-compassion is based on the idea that we are all human and worthy of compassion, whether or not we have a particular job, salary, waist size, or other external attribute.

When we prioritise self-compassion over self-esteem, we feel safe to be ourselves. When we can accept and show compassion towards ourselves, we rely less on validation from other people. This acceptance allows us to embrace our feelings and needs. We feel safer taking reasonable risks and dealing with life's uncertainties.

*If you were to show yourself 5% more self-compassion today, what would you do differently?*
5. Make Comparison Work for You

As humans, we’re wired for comparison. For most of human history, we’ve needed to be accepted as part of a group to survive. Today, belonging and acceptance are no longer a life or death situations. Due to our neurological wiring, however, they still feel that way. We still experience that drive to fit in and evaluate ourselves compared to others.

The fact that we compare ourselves with other people doesn't matter as much as what we do with those comparisons. When we compare ourselves to people who are a few steps ahead of us in life, we have two choices. We can berate ourselves, wonder what's wrong with us, and question our worth. Or, we can explore what our comparison is telling us.

You might already be familiar with the concept of our shadow side. These are the uncomfortable qualities, desires and needs that we disown and deny. The things that annoy us most about other people are usually a reflection of the things we refuse to own in ourselves.

There is also a concept called "The Golden Shadow." This is where comparison can be helpful.

Just as the behaviours and qualities in others that annoy us are a reflection of the things we do not own in ourselves, the things we compare ourselves to in others are usually a reflection of our unacknowledged potential. We see in them what we have yet to see in ourselves, and that's what we connect with.

Once we know this, we can use comparison to our advantage. We can start looking for the underlying needs and desires. We can get curious about what our comparison is really telling us. Most of all, we can start to dream bigger and expand our sense of what's possible in our own lives.
Think about one situation or area in which you notice you compare yourself to others. What are the real needs and desires underneath that comparison? You might find it helpful to refer to this *List of Needs* from the Centre of Non-Violent Communication.
That desire for belonging and acceptance doesn’t just lead to comparison. We also want people to like us and validate us. As a consequence, a lot of us seek validation over connection.

When we seek validation, we change things about ourselves to become more like who we think other people want us to be. This strategy might be successful; we might end up receiving the validation we wanted. But, it’s not going to meet our need for belonging and acceptance. Why? Because we know deep down that the person being validated isn’t us—it’s who we’re pretending to be.

What does meet our need for belonging and acceptance is connection. Connection requires us to take a risk. When we focus on connection, we detach ourselves from the need to be validated right now. Instead, we build a foundation where we can see other people for who they are and vice versa. When we prioritise connection, we won’t receive validation every time. When we do, however, it’s going to be far more genuine and fulfilling.

In which situations do you notice you’re more likely to seek validation than connection? How would you show up differently if you were to prioritise connection first?
7. Examine Your Stories

We all have internal stories that aren’t necessarily a reflection of reality. Many of these come from meanings we’ve attached to previous experiences. Others are a result of messages we’ve received from other people.

To become who we are, we need to examine these stories and how they influence our lives. Once we're aware of what they are and where they come from, we can decide what's true for us.

Journaling and coaching are both useful tools for this. They give us space to examine our stories and whether they are serving us. Notice when you tell yourself you can’t do something and start responding with “Why?” The resulting justifications and reasons are usually clues about the underlying belief.

Write down one of the stories you notice you tell yourself about yourself. What purpose does this story serve? How would you feel and what would you do differently if you no longer believed it?
8. Create Your Tribe

Who we surround ourselves matters. As I mentioned earlier, we tend to internalise the voices of key figures in our lives. This means our tribe has a huge impact on our journey towards becoming who we are. Ideally, we want to create a tribe filled with people who will support our quest, even join us.

Author and coach Barbara Stanny describes five types of people that we might encounter. The first four are different kinds of supporters. These are true believers, confidantes, way showers, and messengers. We want to aim to have a combination of all in our tribe. The fifth category is the naysayers, who try to undermine and stall our journeys.

Who makes up your tribe? What kind of supporters do you have? How much time and energy do you spend on naysayers? What opportunities do you have to add more supporters to your tribe?
Learning about authenticity is one thing, living in an authentic way is entirely different. While authenticity is rewarding, it can also feel risky, vulnerable, even painful at times. We get busy thinking about authenticity and reading about authenticity without actually going out and practicing authenticity.

The reason for this is ego. We worry about what people will think of us. We don’t want to look silly, and we don’t want to get rejected. And these fears become roadblocks. Yes, authenticity is about us. Focusing purely on ourselves, however, is the fast track to fear and hiding.

Instead, focus on what you can offer other people. One of the most rewarding aspects of owning who we are is that we develop a much clearer idea of what we can contribute. Giving back to others through sharing ideas, time and skills is one of the highest expressions of authenticity we can embody.

When we shift our focus from self-consciousness to contribution, we can express our authenticity in the most meaningful way possible.

How could you contribute to other people in a way that’s aligned with your values and boundaries? Brainstorm a few ideas here…
10. Seek the Joy in the Process

Becoming who we are is a journey, not a destination. As people, we are constantly shifting and changing as we have new experiences, receive new information, meet new people, and grow.

We don’t find ourselves and then stop looking. As we evolve, what authenticity means to us will evolve as well. Within this process of exploration, we have access to tremendous joy. We find joy in being seen and letting ourselves be seen. We find joy in using our strengths and talents to make our corner of the world a better place. We find joy in life fully lived.

Embrace the journey, ride the waves, and seek out the opportunities for joy in the process.

Where can you find joy on your journey so far? Write down some of the opportunities for joy you can embrace in the future…
Thanks for reading! I hope you enjoyed this class :)

What was your biggest takeaway? I’d love to hear so email me at hannah@becomingwhoyouare.net to let me know.

Here is a list of books and resources I mentioned in the class:

- How to Become Who You Are {video version}
- List of Values by Steve Pavlina
- Overcoming Underearning by Barbara Stanny
- Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Kindness by Kristin Neff
- A List of Needs by Centre for Non-Violent Communication
- The Ultimate Guide to Journaling by Hannah Braime

If you’d like to take your journey even further, I’d love to support you.

- Continue the discussion in The Becoming Who You Are Community.
- Subscribe to the podcast via iTunes or Stitcher for access to 80+ episodes and interviews
- Peruse the books and courses on topics like journaling, self-care and being your own hero.
- Learn more about creating a life on the outside that reflects who you are on the inside with one-to-one coaching.