

CHAPTER 8

TRUE IDENTITY

My goal was to be married by thirty and have children by thirty-five. I was on track. I was engaged at twenty-eight, having an absolute blast planning the wedding. I had great friends and loved my work. I really was in my element, with two massive buckets of joy being filled and only one unresolved pain.

The Pleasure: My Bucket Being Filled

My first bucket filler at this time was the fun I had planning the wedding. We had decided and discussed with my dad and with Alexander's parents to go third/third/third on the wedding as Alexander and I were both earning. We were also very aware that his parents and family were having the extra expense of travelling to the UK from New Zealand for the wedding. We had a long engagement of eighteen months to give time for those who wanted to save up and join us for the wedding. This was amazing. All of Alexander's family, plus his godmother, chose to be with us. Gold.

The second was my brother, his wife and my newly born nephew, who had recently chosen to come and live in the same village as us. This

filled my heart. Richard and I had lived really separate lives until this point. He had been sent north to boarding school, while I had gone down south. He had spent his latter high school holidays with Dad, while I had spent mine with Mum. This was a real time of love, peace, joy and getting to know each other as adults. And for someone who had never had any interests in babies or children, I fell in love with my nephew big time. He stole my heart from day one. That was a real surprise as, up until now, I had been so detached from this part of the circle of life.

It was a super-productive time in my life. Reflecting and giving myself time to rest and process quietly is another key to massive success. I do it with God these days, and the revelations are out of this world, literally. He is always giving me new wisdom and insights I could never have thought up myself. It is so interesting that when my bucket is filled every day before 8am, instead of needing external things to fill me up, I now pour out all day from the overflow of my morning and evening routines.

The Pain. The Hole in My Bucket

I had been going for counselling for eighteen months at this point, as I desperately wanted a relationship with my mum. Our connection was superficial, distant and performance-based; I wanted more than that. We had always struggled to engage, and I wanted to find a way in, to be real and vulnerable. Circumstances and her past prevented her from being able to love Richard or I the way we wanted or needed to be loved. Sadly, the counselling for me was a disaster; all it did was bring up the hurt and increase the pain. I had blamed my mum for all my shortfalls. I believed she didn't love Richard or me, and I wanted to get this out in the open. I wanted to go into my marriage without all that excess baggage and pain.

I had no idea that Jesus had paid in full for all of this hurt and pain. I could literally give all my rubbish to Him, place it at the foot of the cross and walk away free of the guilt, hurt, sadness and grief. Remember the God Box/Tissue Box and the great exchange in Chapter

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Two. I believe the trajectory of my life would have been massively different for the better had I been given this wonderful tool at the time. It would have saved my relationship with my mum and years of me digging a deeper hole. Instead, I wrote Mum a detailed letter, telling her all the things she had done to hurt me. I dumped all my problems on her, letting her know how awful she was. I told her what a terrible mother she had been, cutting us out of her life and leaving us at boarding school just so she could have the life she wanted with her mates, without us. Unsurprisingly, she was deeply hurt and followed her mum's pattern: when someone was unkind to her, she cut them off completely. So much for having a healthy relationship with my mum.

All I wanted was to connect with her, for her to care, for her to hear me and see me and to love me. I wanted things out in the open, for her to know how I felt. In hindsight, this was a terrible way to off-load. I fired all my pain onto someone who may not have been perfect, but had done her best. This action was devastating for her and drove a wedge between us. Six months later, with no resolve and no clearer understanding of how to move forward, I stopped going for counselling.

Mum had surgery during this time for breast cancer. I drove three hours to the hospital to see her, naively hoping that this would be an opportunity to open a door. Her husband told me that she didn't want to see me. I really thought the fact that I had bothered to come all that way would have counted for something. I had hoped for some compassion. Mum's husband was my age and had a really strained relationship with his mum—he didn't have a healthy relationship to reference in this situation. His role was to love and protect my mum, especially when she was sick. He didn't want to stress her. He was trying to do the best for us both.

The letter I sent Mum caused a major blow-out between my brother and me. Thankfully, that didn't last. It ended up opening a door for connection and understanding for both of us. While it was a rocky period for us as brother and sister, my perspective was out there. From this point, healing started to come.

I wasn't going to let this bitterness and sadness ruin my life. I had done my best. I just had to let go and get on with it. I continued to try and make a connection with Mum, including inviting her to the wedding. She was going through treatment for breast cancer and didn't know whether she would make it even up until the day itself.

A Perfect Day

What made my wedding day so special was family, connection and community. So many beautiful people, in their lanes, doing what they loved, blessed us with their skills and talents in so many ways:

It was a perfect English Summer's Day. The sun was out, the flowers were in bloom, there was the smell of freshly cut grass, the birds were singing in the trees. Our nephews were the most delightful page boys: Richard four (who totally and utterly stole my heart), Ollie age three, James age two and Thomas age one. Everything was walking distance from our home —the church, the manor where we had our photos, and the hall where we had our reception. No waiting hours for the guests between the service and reception. It was a day of joy for all the community in the village; many came out to see us as we walked up and down the street.

My dad giving me away on my wedding day was gold; this was a truly precious moment. I will forever remember his reactor-light glasses, which in those days took a few minutes to adjust, from the bright sun outside to the dark inside the church. In effect he walked me down the aisle with his shades on. Rosey (who we had bought our little cottage from) and her team did all the flowers, which were stunning. They had used greenery and flowers from village gardens and created real beauty in the church and at the reception.

What joy it was to have New Zealand bubbles at an English Wedding. My part was to make and distribute the invitations by hand. Dave Rowland and his wonderful wife blessed us with their beautiful immaculately kept garden and their manor house as the backdrop for the wedding photos.

We had the most amazing live band: “The Doghouse Skiffle” group that lined the pathway out of the church playing as everyone poured out. This was one of those real moments of absolute joy. They also honoured the guests at the reception and played well into the night, and allowed me to sing a song just for Alexander. And one for all those present—“The hands that lead me” by Jane Macdonald, another amazing Yorkshire lass.

Heather Wright made the most amazing wedding cake. We kept a layer to celebrate our first child’s christening. We had an amazing photographer, who had only half an hour to take all the wedding photos at the manor. He did an outstanding job of capturing the candid and formal.

My wedding day was a supernatural day. It was abundantly blessed. It was here that I learnt my true identity, the reason that I was here on this planet.

Reflect and Reframe

This was one of the best days of my life. All I had lived for and all those I loved came together for the celebration. I had everything that I had ever asked for.

As I look back, I can see how much of my life was in alignment with my true identity. I understand now why these chapters in my life sat so well. Knowing why I have been placed on this planet and knowing my true purpose has been gold. It has brought meaning and understanding, peace and joy.

Life doesn’t always go the way you expect it. However, if you are open to it, it always turns out right in the end. Life is full of twists and turns, mountains and valleys. I have found that the clearer I have become on my why and my purpose, the straighter and higher the path has been. Life is so much more fulfilling when we know clearly what to say “yes” to and what to say “no” to.

There is nothing more frustrating or irking than being out of alignment with your true purpose and calling. It's like having a hole in your bucket, and every time you fill it up, it just pours out the bottom, leaving you empty again.

Identity is the core. It's the heart, the truth, and the real motivation for who we are and what we do. Without it, we are like lost sheep, meandering through the paddock not really knowing which paddock we are in, what for and why. We end up following everyone else. It is such a joy to shine the light in this space. To help people get back into alignment with their awesomeness, with their true value and their identity.

I have grown in my identity over the years, with a supernatural increase in the last five or six. The more I lean into who I am, the more solid and clear I become. The new Sally, passionate and full of fire, driven by love, compassion, wisdom, insight and discernment, is a far cry from the old Sally.

The old Sally was led by feelings and emotions, quick to react, and quick to defend her actions. I would hold onto my past believing that it was what defined me. I was desperate to be seen and heard, to be noticed, hoping someone would care. I sat in the victim space, fueled with hidden hurts, crippled by the gap between who I was and who I wanted to be.

Understanding who I am and why I am here, and which lane to run in has been L.I.F.E. giving.

Dear Reader

Are you ready to have some fun? Would you like to know your true "Why," your treasure within, that intrinsic motivation that people talk about? Knowing my why or true purpose for being on this planet has given me my North Star, my point of reference to focus and to guide me.

THE GREAT EXCHANGE

1. I encourage you to consider the best day of your life to date—the one where everything came into alignment and you were on top of the world. You genuinely felt like this was it—you had it all; it couldn't get any better.
2. Then I want you to pick out the verbs and nouns (from the lists below) that best describe this moment or day in your life. Reduce them down to three (verbs or nouns) and then one of each.

When I first did this, my words were “radiating” and “beauty.” That was not how I saw or see myself, so I couldn't relate to these being my true identity. I gave myself a four out of ten for this, as they really did not resonate with me. However, when I shared these words with the group I was with at the time, their response was that said that was exactly what I do for others. I “radiate beauty,” I see the best in people, their possibilities and their awesomeness. I radiate the beauty in them. The penny dropped—it made sense. It wasn't who I was, but it was why I was here; it was my true purpose.

Take the time to consider your words and let them come from your heart. They have been a real blessing to me, and I pray they are for you too.

Call to Adventure

This wonderful exercise was passed onto me by Wendy Fisher, psychologist and heart healer. In the bigger picture, when we coach this, we invite people to go deep and consider their three favourite memories. Those memories where you remember feeling amazing, like you'd made it, that life couldn't get any better than this. My wedding day was one of those memories, as shared in this chapter, and was my top memory when I initially did this exercise. I encourage you to take a moment now to consider those top memories for yourself.

We encourage people to choose the verbs and nouns that best describe how they felt at this time. I have popped the lists I use at the end of this chapter as a guide to help you. My lists are focused, not

exhaustive, so if you have a verb or noun that is not on my list and you really feel that is you, add it in.

Then see if you can get those lists down to your top five, then top three, before you go to your top one of each. When I did this more recently, using another memory coming up later in the book, the two words I got were “awakening” and “fulfilment.”

Remember, this is not about you personally. It isn’t necessarily about how you view yourself either. It is more about your purpose and what you do for others, the unique flavour or part you play in the world around you. It is the treasure within you that you can freely give to others. It was placed in your heart for all eternity as your innate gift to others.

I’d like you to insert your top verb and noun into the sentences below:

The reason I am on this planet is to “verb, noun” ie, “awaken fulfillment”

and

“noun, verb” i.e. “Awakening fulfillment” is what my life is all about.

Rate yourself out of ten as to how that sits for you. When sharing this in my “Finishing Strong Workshop” recently, once people could see the words through the lens of their purpose, the words really began to resonate with them. Sometimes you may need to swap a word with another from your top three in order to get the breakthrough.

Have fun with this—every person we have shared this with has found that it really resonated with their true identity. It’s like finding hidden treasure and your own personal pot of super power. Enjoy.

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23, NIV)

THE GREAT EXCHANGE

Verbs				
Initiating	Giving	Experiencing	Seeing	Building
Commanding	Inspiring	Feeling	Touching	Developing
Awakening	Imparting	Embracing	Beholding	Seeking
Igniting	Empowering	Sensing	Imagining	Discovering
Unleashing	Enabling	Savouring	Colouring	Honouring
Supporting	Radiating	Helping	Finding	Welcoming
Sustaining	Uncovering	Facilitating	Exploring	Championing
Growing	Relating	Achieving	Orchestrating	Restoring
Establishing	Deepening	Engaging	Transforming	Engineering
Nurturing	Loving	Attaining	Changing	Revealing
Nourishing	Cherishing	Realising	Influencing	Illuminating
Releasing	Enjoying	Birthing	Connecting	Cultivating

Nouns				
People	Life	Success	Fullness	Novelty
Lives	Hope	Achievement	Significance	Excitement
Community	Joy	Mountains	Creation	Depth
Generations	Love	Heights	Meaning	Champion
Family	Faith	Dreams	Purpose	Adventure
Friends	Kindness	Challenges	Simplicity	Newness
Others	Peace	Happiness	Destiny	Knowledge
Culture	Mystery	Possibilities	Fulfilment	Light
Connections	Beauty	Freedom	Generosity	Understanding
Relationships	Awe	Potential	Abundance	Wisdom
Friendships	Majesty	Growth	Value	Insight
Network	Wonder	Worth	Treasure	Revelation