

### **Angela Duckworth's Story: Passion and Perseverance**

Angela Duckworth, a psychologist and author, grew up hearing her father say she wasn't "*the smartest*." Instead of letting those words define her, Angela chose to cultivate the most important qualities: passion and determination. As a teacher, she observed that the students who stayed focused and committed over time often outperformed those with natural talent. This realization fueled her curiosity and led her to explore what drives Success. Angela's research became the foundation of her bestselling book, *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*. Her journey shows us that when we embrace our core values and consistently act in alignment with them, we can create meaningful, authentic lives. By living into her chosen attributes, Angela inspires us to do the same, to recognize our potential, and to embody the qualities that allow us to thrive.

### **The White Stone Ceremony: A Foundation for Transformation**

Last week's White Stone Ceremony invited us to choose an attribute we wish to embody this year, qualities like courage, resilience, or kindness. These aren't just aspirations; they're seeds of transformation waiting to take root in our lives. The challenge lies in carrying these attributes into daily life and letting them guide our actions.

### **Brené Brown's Wisdom on Authenticity**

As Brené Brown said, "*Authenticity is the daily practice of letting go of who we think we're supposed to be and embracing who we are.*" Living authentically means aligning with our highest self and letting our chosen qualities shine through our actions.

### **A Contemplative Practice: Choosing Your Guiding Attribute**

Close your eyes and settle into your seat. Take a deep breath and visualize yourself fully aligned with your highest self. Imagine embodying your chosen attribute in your daily life—how do you feel? How do you interact with others? Let a word, phrase, or image arise that stands for your authentic self. Please write it down and let it guide you throughout the year. If you were present for the White Stone Ceremony last week, use that word, symbol, or phrase that came to you then.

### **Challenges of Living Authentically**

Embracing our authentic selves isn't always easy. Fear of failure, societal expectations, and inner doubts can make us question our path. However, every challenge is an opportunity to deepen our connection to our authentic selves.

Howard Thurman reminds us, "*Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive, and go do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.*"

## Why Embracing Our Desired Qualities Matters

When we live authentically, we align with our highest purpose. This alignment fosters inner peace and creates a ripple effect, inspiring others to live authentically.

As Lao Tzu said, *“At the center of your being, you have the answer; you know who you are, and you know what you want.”* Authentic living bridges the gap between who we are and who we aspire to be, creating harmony within and around us.

## Five Steps to Living Authentically

### 1. Create an Affirmation

Craft a personal affirmation that embodies your chosen attribute. For example:

*“I am resilient and rise stronger from every setback, embracing life’s challenges as opportunities to grow.”*

### 2. Begin a Visualization Practice

Close your eyes and visualize yourself embodying your chosen quality in a specific situation. Imagine how you think, feel, and act, grounding yourself in this vision.

### 3. Challenge Yourself

Set a goal that allows you to practice your chosen attribute. For example, if you choose courage, commit to speaking up in a situation where you might typically stay silent.

### 4. Use the White Stone as a Reminder

Keep your white stone (or another meaningful object) in a visible spot to remind you of your commitment to authenticity.

### 5. Practice Gratitude and Celebrate Success

Reflect on moments when you’ve demonstrated your chosen attribute, no matter how small. Celebrate those wins to reinforce your growth.

## Call to Action

This week, commit to practicing these steps. Repeat your affirmation daily, visualize yourself thriving, and take on the challenge you set. Share your journey with someone you trust to stay accountable. Together, let’s make this year a journey of authenticity and transformation.

## Conclusion and Affirmation

Here is a suggested affirmation for this week.

*“By living with (insert your attribute), I align with my authentic self and fulfill my potential.”*

Remember, as Oscar Wilde said, *“Be yourself; everyone else is already taken.”* Every step you take toward authenticity is a step toward the life you’re meant to live. Let this be your year to shine.