

“A groundbreaking and well-written treatise on something we all need and that has before this eluded clarity. This is an excellent book!”—FRED LUSKIN, Ph.D., author, *Forgive for Good*, and director of the Stanford Forgiveness Project

be
yourself
*everyone else
is already taken*



TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE
WITH THE POWER OF

Authenticity

MIKE ROBBINS
author of Focus on the Good Stuff

More Praise for *Be Yourself, Everyone Else Is Already Taken*

“The title alone is such a profound reminder for all of us, and the book delivers a marvelous manual of authenticity. I’m so glad to recommend it and live its principles.”

—SARK, author/artist, *Juicy Pens*, *Thirsty Paper*

“In this book Mike Robbins challenges us to be ourselves, speak our truth, and live with authenticity. Utilizing these principles will allow you to take your life, work, and relationships to the next level.”

—Tom Rath, *New York Times* best-selling author, *StrengthsFinder 2.0*

“Mike Robbins has taken the concept of authenticity and put it on the map. With so many self-help books going over safe and well-worn territory, here is a groundbreaking and well-written treatise on something we all need and that has before this eluded clarity. This is an excellent book!”

—Fred Luskin, Ph.D., author, *Forgive for Good*, and director of the Stanford Forgiveness Project

“*Be Yourself, Everyone Else Is Already Taken* is a bold call for each of us to ‘wake up’ and be real. As Mike Robbins models, writes about, and teaches us, our world needs people who are willing and courageous enough to be vulnerable and authentic. This is an important book that gives you a pathway to being more real in your life, your work, and your relationships.”

—Lynne Twist, author, *The Soul of Money*, and cofounder of The Pachamama Alliance

“We criticize politicians for not being real with us, but when is the last time you tried to distinguish between

your own ‘public self’ and the real you? Mike Robbins has tackled this timely topic with great skill and depth. What does it mean to live authentically? Are you truly being yourself? The answers are all here in this highly accessible, eye-opening book that is certain to have an impact on your life.”

—Susan Page, author, *Why Talking Is Not Enough*

“Mike Robbins knows the secret about the difference between presence and performance that all we perennial adolescents have to learn in this culture to finally grow up. And he is very articulate about it! He teaches that authenticity, intimacy, joy in living, and success in life depend upon our ability to be present to each other and honestly report what we have done, what we think, what we feel, and what we notice. And he also knows that we have to stick with each other until we are clear and complete, whether, in the end, we agree or disagree—no schemes, no hidden agendas, no bullshit. More power to you, Mike! This is a wonderful book!”

—Brad Blanton, Ph.D., author, *Radical Honesty*

“I cannot think of a better person than Mike Robbins to write a book on authenticity. He totally gets it and he knows how to communicate it. This is one of those books that will have you say, ‘that book changed my life!’”

—Rich Fettke, coauthor, *Extreme Success*

“Mike Robbins is a model of everything he teaches. *Be Yourself, Everyone Else Is Already Taken* is a call to action. It challenges all of us to be who we are and to live authentic lives.”

—Yvonne and Rich Dutra-St. John, coauthors, *Be the Hero You’ve Been Waiting For*, and cofounders of Challenge Day

“Mike Robbins and I were both blessed to have Richard Carlson as our dear friend. It’s through Richard that I have

come to know Mike, whom I have discovered to be one of the most kind, positive, and loving human beings I've ever had the privilege to know. He has discovered how to be himself, his true Self, and with great candor, humility, and eloquence shares with the reader how to achieve the same in their own lives. This work is simple, complete, and profound. I highly recommend it for anyone who is done trying to be someone who they are not and wants to just be themselves."

—Joe Bailey, author, *Fearproof Your Life*

"*Be Yourself, Everyone Else Is Already Taken* is written with openness and passion. In this powerful book, Mike Robbins teaches us simple but profound ways to be more real and conscious in our lives and relationships."

—Kris Carlson, author, *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff for Women*

"Mike Robbins's wonderful new book, *Be Yourself, Everyone Else Is Already Taken*, is a brilliant, insightful guidebook on the path to freedom . . . freedom from the fear of being unacceptable and unworthy . . . freedom from the fear of not being 'enough.' Inside you—right now—a voice is crying out to be liberated from that prison of fear. Your heart longs to be free from pretense, deception, and insecurity. Your deepest, most 'authentic' being is crying out for honesty, acceptance, and unconditional love. Nurture that yearning and give that voice a song by reading and digesting this delicious, empowering book. I highly recommend it!"

—John Welshons, author, *Awakening from Grief*

"This book is for everyone who ever second-guessed themselves. Mike Robbins shows you how to face your fears and tell the world the truth about who you really are. An inspiring

writer—and a really cool guy—Mike Robbins is like Wayne Dyer meets Tony Robbins meets your most supportive friend. With inspiration, hope, and humor he takes you by the hand and shows you how to become who you were always meant to be.”

—Lisa Earle McLeod, syndicated columnist, author,
Finding Grace When You Can't Even Find Clean Underwear

“Mike Robbins writes with clarity and heart. *Be Yourself, Everyone Else Is Already Taken* gives you powerful tools and insights for living your life with greater depth, awareness, and authenticity.”

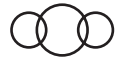
—Christopher Andersonn, author,
Will You Still Love Me If I Don't Win?

“An inspirational, accessible, and very practical book on cultivating essential practices and principles for maintaining one's authenticity, self-respect, and self-trust, in order to be a consistent and original contributing force in one's family, community, and the world. Relevant for all ages and professions!”

—Angeles Arrien, Ph.D., author, *The Second Half of Life*

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**Transform Your Life with
the Power of Authenticity**

Mike Robbins

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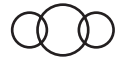
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contents



Acknowledgments ix

Introduction 1

Part One

Why It Can Be Hard to Be Authentic 21

1 Don't Step Out of Line 23

2 I Can't Say or Do That 51

Part Two

The Five Principles of Authenticity 83

3 PRINCIPLE 1: Know Yourself 85

4 PRINCIPLE 2: Transform Your Fear 115

5 PRINCIPLE 3: Express Yourself 141

6 PRINCIPLE 4: Be Bold 173

7 PRINCIPLE 5: Celebrate Who You Are 199

Part Three

Authenticity in Action 221

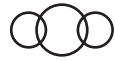
8 Living Your Authentic Life 223

Resources 233

About the Author 237

For my beautiful and amazing girls,
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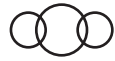
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be yourself
*everyone else is
already taken*

introduction



We live in a culture that is starving for authenticity. We want our leaders, our co-workers, our family members, our friends, and everyone else we interact with to tell us the truth and to be themselves. Most important, we want to have the personal freedom and confidence to say, do, and be who we really are, without worrying so much about how we appear to others and what they will think or say about us.

Sadly, however, even though we may say we want to live in a way that is true to our deepest passions, beliefs, and desires, most of us don't. We've been taught by our parents, teachers, spouses, friends, co-workers, politicians, the media, and others that it's more important to be liked and to fit in than it is to be who we truly are. In addition, many of us assume that who we are is not good enough, and therefore we're constantly trying to fix ourselves or to act like others we think are better than us.

However, the message of this book is, as the famous nineteenth-century author and poet Oscar Wilde so brilliantly stated, "Be yourself, everyone else is already taken."

Our Resistance to Authenticity

How often do you not do or say something you really want to because you're worried about what others might think? For most of us, including me, this happens many times on a daily basis. It's not that we intend to lie or deceive people in some overt or malicious way (although sometimes we do); it's mainly that we've been trained to do and say what we think others want us to, or what we guess will be "appropriate" in any given situation. We basically don't believe we can truly be ourselves and still "make it" in life.

When it comes to being authentic, the bottom line for most people I know or work with, and for myself as well, is that we're scared. We don't want to deal with what we imagine to be the consequences of authenticity—people's judgments and reactions, our own fears and doubts, possible failure or rejection, and more—so we just shut up and try to fit in. In addition, being true to ourselves takes real courage, commitment, and awareness. We often aren't willing to do what it takes to live our lives, do our work, communicate with others, create relationships, and look deeply at ourselves with a real sense of authenticity and truth. And, even when we do, it can be such a vulnerable and scary experience for us, we're not sure if we've ultimately done more harm than good—to ourselves and others.

As I travel around the country and speak to groups of all kinds—at businesses, nonprofits, government agencies,

universities, churches, schools, public seminars, bookstores, and elsewhere—the challenge and desire for authenticity resonate deeply with the people I talk to. Most of the clients I’ve worked with one-on-one as a coach over the years have also struggled with their desire to have a real sense of authenticity in their lives. This is the paradox of authenticity; we both seek it and fear it at the same time.

How This Book Works

Be Yourself, Everyone Else Is Already Taken is a book that shows you how to move through the fears and limitations that prevent you from living true to yourself and how to bring more authenticity into your life. This book is about noticing and taking responsibility for the societal forces, people around you, and personal beliefs that can stop you from being authentic, and, most important, how you can move beyond what holds you back and be even more real with yourself and others in your life.

The ideas, principles, exercises, and practices laid out in this book give you specific techniques that allow you to

- Confront and transform your fear
- Express yourself fully and with confidence
- Deal with conflicts directly and resolve them effectively
- Take risks and go for what you truly want

- Keep things in perspective and have more fun
- Trust, forgive, and celebrate yourself
- Have more freedom, peace, and confidence in your relationships, your work, and your life

Authenticity is a process. It's something that continues to evolve throughout our entire lives. We can't become "authentic" in the same way we can earn a degree or accomplish a financial goal. Authenticity—like love, health, courage, awareness, patience, and more—is an ideal we aspire to and is something we must practice in the moment-by-moment, day-by-day experiences of life. Our ability to be real can and will deepen as we move through our journey of life, if we're conscious about it. Becoming more of who we really are is a process that never ends. As the famous saying goes, "there is no way to peace, peace is the way." The same could be said about authenticity.

No book, workshop, teacher, or anything else can make you "authentic" in a quick and easy way. Authenticity has to come from deep within you. This book, however, will help you confront some of your own personal challenges with being honest and genuine, and presents many powerful principles that when integrated into your life on a regular basis can allow you to access a deeper place of truth within you. This book can be a catalyst for you to be yourself in a more real way—thus giving you the profound peace, freedom, power, liberation, joy, depth, and fulfillment that accompany authenticity.

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