

How are you?

**I'm
shitty**

Peace by Authenticity

100% BS free self-help book

Kevin Airgid

About the book

This book serves as a social media detox program, the antidote to the lies of advertising and a step to better sex (yes all in one book!). Kevin takes you through a very personal journey from an ego driven life to one of authenticity and humility. Using real-world examples and time tested principles, you will learn how to harness your authenticity and live from a place of truth. The goal of this book is to cultivate a life of peace. This peace can only be achieved by allowing yourself to be the most authentic version of you.

Why I wrote this book

This book started its origins as a book for business. Its original goal was to teach business how to be more authentic with external communication. The more I wrote the book the more it turned into a self-help book. It was as if the universe was calling me to write it, so finally I gave in and followed my writing muse. The book was written during a time in my life where I questioned who I really was. I was divorced, single, and struggling in many areas of my life. The book was written as a gift of gratitude for all the things I have learned along my journey. I hope these words help you learn to be the best version of yourself.

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

Dedication

I dedicate this book to my children. May these words guide you to authentic and happy lives, full of moments where you grow more comfortable with just being you. I love you to the moon, sun, and stars.

Table of Contents

Foreword: Words written from love

Chapter 1: Becoming Authentic

Chapter 2: Humility: A Fruit of Authenticity

Chapter 3: Living Your Financial Truth

Chapter 4: Anti-Social Media

Chapter 5: Sexual Growth through Authenticity

Chapter 6: Personal Stories of Growth

Chapter 7: Cultivating a Culture of the Authentic

Chapter 8: Epilogue

Throughout this book I've highlighted sections I think are important to pause and ponder.

Foreword

You are about to embark on a journey unlike any other you have attempted before. I know that is a very bold statement, but it is true. I truly believe that the teacher does not appear until the student is ready. You have found this book, and you are reading it because you are ready for its lessons. Much like I had to live many of the lessons in this book, they were my teachers much as the words in this book will be yours. As I wrote this book, I often questioned who I was to write these words? Or who am I to give advice? I'm not a sage or a Zen master. Despite my insecurities and nagging doubts, I felt compelled to write this book. You have to know that this book was written out of pure inspiration. I truly felt called to write this book. One of my greatest role models as an author was Wayne Dyer. If you have the opportunity to read any of his books I highly recommend it. Dr. Dyer had a style of writing that was so obviously written from a place of love that it leaves the reader feeling as if Dr. Dyer was a good friend truly concerned about your well-being. Indeed he was. My hope is you feel this love, and care in the words that I have written. I hope this book awakens the real you and empowers you to live an authentic life unshackled by the chains of the false self.

I wrote this foreword at the end of writing this book. I have always done this as an author. I feel it's easier to introduce something that is already known. Something that became apparent to me as I started to

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

finish this book is the need to be vulnerable. The act of becoming humble and vulnerable allows your ego to be quiet so you can be more authentic. Bob Marley sums it up best in this amazing quote which is about finding your soul mate. You could replace the soul mate part of this quote with a good friend, a career change or finding your life's purpose. It doesn't matter the intention, but it's stripping away the ego's need for lies and letting yourself be vulnerable. It's inside this vulnerability that we can truly connect with the true person we are.

“You find that being vulnerable is the only way to allow your heart to feel true pleasure that’s so real it scares you. You find strength in knowing you have a true friend and possibly a soul mate who will remain loyal to the end. Life seems completely different, exciting and worthwhile. Your only hope and security is in knowing that they are a part of your life.”

— Bob Marley

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

Chapter 1: Becoming Authentic

“To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man.”

— William Shakespeare

How many times have you read that quote from Shakespeare? Almost four hundred years ago it was written by one of the most prolific and widely read playwrights of our civilization. Today in the twenty-first century many continue to live in a world of the illusion, in the world of the unreal. People are still working on the assumption that working from a lie will create more happiness. I think in this age of social media, we are being trained to only show the best part of our lives, ever worse actually to lie about our lives. For instance, it is a popular greeting to ask “How are you?” regardless of the truth behind that answer we usually say “Good.” But what if “good” isn’t the truth? What if your life sucks right now? Are you late on your rent? Is your mortgage past due? Did your lover just leave you? Did you just get diagnosed with cancer? Could you answer, “No, it’s not good. My life sucks right now.” Why don’t we answer this question honestly? I think it is in large part to the fact we want to sanitize everything in our culture. We don’t want to deal with the real but in the fantasy. Proof of this is in the stats

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

behind movie sales. When the economy is doing poorly movie ticket sales are historically better than good times. People want to escape their real lives and have a few hours in the illusion. I truly believe that when we are only living our truth can we truly find peace in our lives. Imagine the world where when most people ask you, “How are you?” and they actually want the real answer. I believe living that type of truth would resolve many problems facing our society today.

“Be yourself. Unless you can be a unicorn, in that case, you should always be a unicorn.” — Elle Lothlorien, *Alice in Wonderland*

I like to use my author bio as an example of living my truth. Read this status quo bio that most authors would have on the back of their book jacket:

“Kevin Airgid is an award-winning author, speaker, and creative director. He has worked with brands such as Nike, ESPN and Amnesty International. Kevin has authored several web design books, and his work has been featured in HOW Magazine, Adobe.com, G4 Tech TV, Communication Arts, FITC, and the Globe and Mail. He has written and published about how to become a more effective business networker.

Now read this second author bio and tell me which one resonates more with you?

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

“Kevin Airgid was born in 1973 to a middle-class family in rural southern Ontario Canada. His early spiritual formation came from strong women such as his mother and other female role models that taught him to question everything and make it his own. He received a BA in Visual Arts from Western University in London Ontario where he met his wife. They were married seventeen years and had three children. Kevin started his own business fourteen years ago until it started to go downhill due to the recession. At the same time, stress of family life and mounting debt from living a lifestyle beyond their means brought his marriage to an end. Kevin lost his house, savings, and his family. Three years later Kevin emerged stronger, and more spiritual by being humbled. He was forced to his knees and from there found a new spiritual awakening that would not have been possible if he wasn't stripped of everything.”

Which of these bios tells you more about me? Of course, it is the second one. It's honest and raw. Who admits that they have lost all their money? Few do... but now you know more about me. The first bio is just bragging bullet points that really don't help you connect with me. In fact, I dare say they might even push you away. In our minds, we always compare ourselves with others. When we share our truth with others, it shows we are vulnerable, that we are open to connecting. Of course, you wouldn't share super personal stuff with just anyone. There is a time and place for deep sharing, but what is sad in this world is even close friends, and family don't share at that real level as often as they could. The aim of this book is to change that fact, to motivate your heart and soul to share who you are.

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

And in sharing who you are with no holding back, maybe just maybe you will change your small part of the world.

“Hard times arouse an instinctive desire for authenticity.”
— Coco Chanel

Being true to yourself is scary shit.

Yes, it is scary shit. It's very scary to be authentic and live from a place of truth. You expose yourself to ridicule and judgment by being authentic. I don't believe that is the main reason people don't live an authentic life. I think what scares people the most is what they will uncover about themselves. “The truth will set you free,” is a phrase you often read in Christian circles but from a psychological viewpoint, speaking your truth will set you free. When you speak aloud your truth, it brings a greater awareness of who you are.

There are three people who make up who you are.

1. There is who everyone thinks you are.
2. There is who you think you are.
3. And there is who you really are.

When you start living a truth centered life you move away from number one and two and start to learn more about who you are. The truth of who we are rests in our sadness, hopes, fears, failures and in our joy. It's not just our dark corners that we have been taught to hide. We have to hide our joy for

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

fear the people close to us will reject it as well. Do you see a pattern here? Anything we experience that is deep and meaningful, regardless of it being good or bad is avoided. So, I come back to the “How are you” statement. If you were to answer it like this: “I’m doing great! I just lost twenty pounds, and I got a new job.” We may tend to hold back the second sentence of that reply. I think that in sharing what is really going on, others around us are empowered to do the same. I hope this book inspires you to answer, “How are you doing?” with an authentic response. I want the ideas in this book to be a seed that is planted in your heart, mind and soul. My hope is that it grows a garden of truth that truly sets your life on a path to peace and joy.

“Wow, this is awesome and stuff but how do I start doing this?”

That is a great question. I’ve read my fair share of self-help books that just talk in theoretical mumbo-jumbo but don’t give you practical ways to improve your life. In the following pages, we will explore ways to help move you to a person who lives from the truth.

Prayer, Meditation or Vision Boards

It’s hard explaining how to be authentic without starting from the true source of all authenticity, God. If the word God is too loaded with negative connotations for you, then replace God with the source, or higher power, or truth. I don’t want you to stop reading this book because you get hung up on the language used to describe God or spirituality. In, “How to Expand Love” by the Dalai Lama, he wrote a great section to help Christians who believe in God to understand and benefit from his words despite the fact

that he does not believe in God. Buddhists believe everyone has been reincarnated over and over. The Dalai Lama wrote that everyone we have met in this life has been our mother, father, sister, brother, and best friend etc. He suggests the athiest readers take the lesson in a way that each person you meet should be treated like they were someone who loved you. Even if you don't believe in reincarnation there is still truth in these words. We are all connected. So, I ask you to extend the same mental leap for this book. If you do or don't believe in God, then read these pages with an open mind as the truth takes many forms. For some it's through prayer, for some it's meditation, and yet for others, it's just plain psychology. However, you arrive at the truth my goal for you is a life that is authentic and lived from the heart.

Prayer is an excellent place to start in this process. The first step is just to ask for what you want. If you are a person that has trouble finding the words here is a simple prayer to get you started:

“God, [Universe, Divine light, Allah, Yahweh, Jesus...] I ask that you open my heart to my truth. I ask that each day you bring me a moment to grow in a deeper understanding of myself and you. Help me to learn to live my truth, and express it to those around me. Thank You.”

The next step is to make authenticity part of your every day as described below:

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

“Authenticity is not a state of being but rather is a conscious choice of practice in daily living.”

— Heidi Mack, Psychotherapist

There is no magic formula for starting to be authentic. It's just a matter of making up your mind to start doing it. You don't have to start perfectly in order to start. Something is better than nothing. However, like many things you have to do it on a regular basis to make it a habit. If you were raised in a family where everything is a secret and living the truth was frowned upon then you may have some extra work to re-program your way of thinking. The good news is as human beings we are quite capable of changing. **Regardless of what you have been told, you *can* teach an old dog new tricks.**

Start each day with the affirmation above. I recommend writing it down on a piece of paper and placing it somewhere you have to look at each morning. A bathroom mirror is a good place. There is a whole science behind the concept that language becomes thought, thought becomes action and action will turn into a million dollars for you! Well, not that exciting but there is truth to it. If you read those words every morning, it will sink into your mind. There is a reason that Olympic athletes use sports psychology, because it works! If you are skeptical about reading the same affirmation each morning, then think of the affirmation as the training for your mind for an upcoming race in the Olympics. But instead of the race being on a track it's with your life and finding more peace. It has long been known that the

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

mind is very impressionable. Simply by focusing on the desired outcome, in this case, becoming more authentic, you will train your brain to work towards that goal.

“Your beliefs become your thoughts,
Your thoughts become your words,
Your words become your actions,
Your actions become your habits,
Your habits become your values,
Your values become your destiny.”

— Mahatma Gandhi

Meditation

One of the most valuable tools one can use towards becoming authentic is meditation. Meditation has been clinically proven to change the brains of those who meditate regularly. The negative responses to stress is greatly reduced in people who meditate. It is also proven to provide great health benefits such as lowering blood pressure and reducing anxiety. Meditation is also one of the best ways to dive deeper into your true self.

One of the reasons most people don't meditate is they have conditioned their daily lives to be filled with noise and busy work. I believe this is a way to avoid silence. In the silence, we start to uncover the truth. In a culture devoted to living a lie, this is to be avoided at all costs. Meditation gives us

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

the silence to know ourselves, and in the process to better understand and connect to the source. Psalm 46:10 says, “Be still, and know that I am God”. We can deeply connect to that infinite higher power in our stillness.

When I first started going through my divorce, my whole world was in a spin. My bank account was as empty as my heart. I found that meditation was one of the few things that brought me peace. I am a high energy person so the process of starting to meditate took a while, and I also struggle if I stop it for an extended period of time, but like anything, once you get into a habit of doing something it becomes easier to maintain.

The Chattering Monkeys: “I’ve tried meditation, but my mind wanders all the time. I can’t shut off the voices!!!!”

Yes, yes. I’ve heard this over and over. In the book “The Untethered Soul” by Michael Singer he gives a great answer to this issue. **He suggests you strive for awareness of the gaps in your thoughts. You could think of these gaps as “mini-vacations for your brain.”** It’s like focusing on the moment between heartbeats if you were taking your pulse or really listening to the silence between the notes in a piece of music.

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

I've tried meditation and it's just not my cup of tea.

If meditation just doesn't work for you, there are other wonderful ways to find silence and connect with your higher self. Self-hypnosis is another amazing tool that can greatly help you calm the storm inside your mind. When most people think of hypnosis, they imagine a performer that brings people on the stage and gets them to do embarrassing things in front of everyone. This is not the type of hypnosis I'm talking about. Think of self-hypnosis as just a very deep form of guided relaxation. In self-hypnosis, you find a quiet place and listen to an MP3 file on your phone or MP3 player. Most self-hypnosis tracks are great for people who need to be guided through the process of relaxation and quieting the mind. Just like riding a bike, the more you do self-hypnosis, the faster you can achieve a state of deep relaxation. I recommend you try it for at least three weeks. There are many wonderful resources online where you can find a variety of self-hypnosis MP3 files. One of the sites I recommend is <http://www.hypnosisdownloads.com/>. It is a great resource for many types of hypnosis tracks.

Find Yourself in Nature

“We can't blame children for occupying themselves with Facebook rather than playing in the mud. Our society doesn't put a priority on connecting with nature. In fact, too often we tell them it's dirty and dangerous.”

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

-David Suzuki

There is such a low-tech approach to discovering who you are. It costs no money and it is all around you: nature. It's a tragedy that many of us have become so disconnected from Mother Earth. We are so connected to the planet that our brains function at the same frequency as the Earth. You can read more about this here: <http://www.earthbreathing.co.uk/sr.htm>

Taking a walk in nature is a great way to find silence and reconnect with who you are. Making time for yourself to be alone in nature is very important to help become more self-aware and thus more authentic. I highly recommend you walk in nature without music playing. When you walk, practice mindfulness. Mindfulness is simply the act of "being totally present" where you are. Here is how practice it on your walk. (You can even use this on a busy train, bus or even in the middle of a mall.) Stop and close your eyes. Now start to say out loud (or in your head) the sounds you hear. For instance, if I were standing in the middle of the woods my mindfulness exercise would proceed like this: "I hear the sound of leaves, a few birds to my left, wind blowing through a pine tree. I hear voices of other people walking by and the sounds of other things outside." Keep going until you can describe all the sounds you hear with your eyes closed. This exercise will help force your attention right here, right now. Then proceed on your walk and pay attention to what you see and hear. It's ok if your mind wanders. Just bring your attention back to where you are and what you are doing. Do one of these walks each week to begin on a journey to knowing yourself and beginning to understand who you are.

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

Counselling

Imagine the typical person is like a house. The foundation of who you are is based off of our childhood and our past experiences. We grow up to become an adult from those experiences. For many of us, there is hurt and dysfunction that are part of our foundation. If our childhood has broken places that we have not dealt with properly, these cracks in our foundation can significantly effect our adult life in ways that we are not even aware of. I believe that the fear of living our truth stems greatly from wanting to avoid these cracks in our foundation. It is easier to blast the music, work long hours, spend more money than we have, drink/eat to excess than look at the hurt child that makes up who we are. When we confront this truth, we move towards healing and living a truly authentic life. One of the ways to start to shore up your foundation is through counseling. Diving into counseling and that type of healing is beyond the scope of this book. When you start to allow yourself to have quiet times and strive to be more authentic, you may start to see the cracks in your foundation that need healing. Know that healthy people seek out counseling and one of the gifts of living your truth is being able to see your darkness for what it truly is.

What wolf is chasing you?

When I started my divorce, I avoided the pain and loneliness by escaping into drinking and serial dating. I was running from a wolf that was chasing me. That wolf was loneliness and sadness. I wanted to avoid this wolf at all costs. I filled every moment with things, experiences and people to avoid it. The problem with running from the wolf is it will just chase you more until you stop and stand your ground. The irony of this life is you have to sit with the pain to make it go away. You have to feel it to heal it. When I finally stopped, and admitted to myself that I was not ok, it was the first step towards healing and living a truly authentic life.

I once knew this woman who grew up in poverty. She learned the ethos of scarcity at an early age. Her world-view was that everything would run out so you must take as much as you can from everyone around you. This “taking” extended to both money, but also to matters of the heart. She lived from a place of avoidance and fear. She was not self-aware when she made decisions. Many were automatic and reactionary. She struggled with her weight despite having surgery to reduce the size of her stomach. She always had to have the TV on in the background to avoid the “silence.” She tried to fill the hole with gambling, credit cards, trips she couldn’t afford and even a new puppy. It was like she was trying fill a pit of quicksand with water. The more she poured in, the worse the quicksand got and further down she sank. She isn’t a bad person. In fact, I dare say she had a kind heart deep down. She was such a damaged person that she reached for anything around her that would make the fear go away. In her search for the “quick fix,” she ended up divorced twice and on the edge of financial

ruin. Ironically, despite all her efforts her greatest fears came true. Why was this? If she turned and faced the dark wolves chasing her, they could have been defeated by the light wolves beside her.

The One You Feed

A wise old man was teaching his grandson about life. “A fight is going on inside me,” he said to the boy. “It is a terrible fight, and it is between two wolves. One is evil – he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego.” He continued, “The other is good – he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you – and inside every other person, too.” The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, “Which wolf will win?” The old man simply replied, “The one you feed.”

Chapter 2:

Humility: A Fruit of Authenticity

I feel like humility gets a bum rap as a concept in our society. I think many people believe to be humble you need to be less, or weak. Contrary to that idea, humility really means truly knowing your self-worth and understanding what makes you better. Humility and authenticity go hand in hand like peanut butter and jam.

We live in a culture that promotes egocentrism and narcissistic sharing on social media. One is only to look at the twitter feed of Kim Kardashian to have a reflective view of what mainstream culture values. Humility is important if an individual is to become fully authentic. I present to you a more modern view of humility. It isn't about thinking you are lower than others and it isn't about low self-esteem. Humility is actually about knowing your worth in such a way that you feel so great you have no need to impress anyone. True humility is being comfortable with your strengths and weaknesses and knowing your true value regardless of any outside judgments. Think about the people in your life that possess these qualities? For me, it was my grandmother. She had little education and raised six children on a shoestring budget in a northern Ontario, Canada. In her later years, she would never let someone's status or financial dominance over

her change how she interacted with them. She was as chatty with a doctor as she was with the bus driver. She had a great sense of humility and self-worth that stemmed not from her possessions or her status in life but her internal compass. How do we reset our internal compass, so it's pointed to the true north (or south if you prefer the warmer climates) of who you are?

The first step is to become mindful of who you are. As mentioned in previous chapters, becoming authentic is about truly knowing who you are. Knowing who you are with all positive and negative traits is the first step. For most people, this is just a mental concept until it is truly applied with vigor to their lives. Often the universe, through a series of events, forces us to submit to true humility. Companies that deal with big data know that unless you inject enough new data into a system, you cannot gather statistically significant change in the graphs and heads up display systems they use to inform their clients on what business decisions to make. Similarly, when we experience massive and abrupt change such as the death of a loved one, or the end of a marriage we have new data added to the system we call our lives. These events force us to change and can truly be opportunities to become authentic and humble.

“Sometimes God closes a door; you just have to be willing to climb through the window and kick that screen in!”

The gift of being humble: my journey to living my truth.

My story is much like many other people my age, I'm a forty something man that is divorced and working to rebuild and redefine who I am. One of

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

the greatest blessings I received in my life was the gift of being humbled. In my twenties and thirties, I had a lot of success in my career. I was a published author, speaker, and I designed websites and animation for clients like Nike and ESPN. I hung my hat on that success. It is where I derived much of my self-worth and identity from. The other area I defined who “Kevin” is was from my wife. I cherished her, and held her up as the central part of my happiness equation. That in itself isn’t bad, what was wrong with this was I primarily defined worth based on external things and the feedback of others. I am more than my relationships. I am more than my success. I am more than how much money I have in the bank. What happens when you remove the success, the money and even the relationships? Who am I then? I had the great fortune to experience this. I was stripped of all that I used to define who I was. What I was left with was a person who could either become bitter and cynical or someone who had an attitude of gratitude for what he did have.

Our attitude can determine our altitude. Winston Churchill said, “The pessimist difficulty in every opportunity. The optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty. I tend towards optimism. After all, it’s what I learned from my parents.

When it came to my divorce, something extraordinary happened, that I have yet to fully understand, but I decided to have an attitude of gratitude. I chose to learn from being stripped of everything and to rise above it and truly live an authentic life. The true gift of losing everything was I gained everything. The everything I gained isn’t something anyone can take away.

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

I grew to love who I really was without the external people and things that I defined myself for the first forty years of my life. It is my wish, dear reader that you experience this same kind of everything. And the good news is, it may not require a crisis in order for you to make this shift. Perhaps it will only require some adjustments from you.

I had to look deep inside to see who I really was. I was a simple boy who grew up on a farm, raised by two parents to did their best to love my brother and I. In dating after my marriage ended I heard many stories of others' childhood. I realized how extraordinary my childhood was. I developed an attitude of gratitude for where I had come from. This has guided me in how to handle my father as he goes throughIn learning to be thankful, I cultivated a worldview that changed how I see and handle my present struggle. This Chinese proverb describes exactly how my worldview changed.

Chinese Fable of the Good Farmer

A farmer had a horse that ran away. The villagers came to the farmer and told him of the terrible news. The farmer said, "Maybe good maybe bad?"

Later the horse came back bringing with her another beautiful horse. The villagers became excited at the farmer's great fortune. The farmer said, "Maybe good maybe bad?"

The farmer's son was thrown from the wild horse and broke his leg. All the villagers were very distressed. The farmer said, "Maybe good maybe bad?"

The army came to the village, and every able-bodied man was conscripted and sent into battle. The farmer's son did not have to go because of his broken leg. The villagers congratulated the farmer. "Maybe good maybe bad?" said the farmer.

While the many losses in my life were terrible to go through in the moment, in retrospect it was the best thing that could have happened to my soul. It forced me to grow and become more spiritual and ultimately a better person.

Cultivating Humility

There are a variety ways one can attain humility without having to be humbled by a devastating life experience. Here are a few pathways:

Volunteering with the Poor or Elderly

I can think of no better way to connect with humility than to stare it directly in the face. When you volunteer with the poor or those in nursing homes, it is nearly impossible to not to see your value, your gifts. I recommend volunteering at least one hour per week. You will find yourself going above and beyond that commitment because you will receive more than you give. If you build volunteering into your schedule, you will soon see how that

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

injection of new data will change your outlook for either you or your organization.

Drawing near to your Buddha / Teacher

We have all had a person in our life who we experienced conflict with. They could be a co-worker, a boss, a family member or even an ex-spouse. The very thought of them upsets us. Many could describe them as our nemesis or antagonist, but if we look closer, we can see them for more than that simple label. Often the traits that bother us the most about people are in reality, things we do not like about ourselves. It's only when we take a step back and see the situation from a different view can we truly understand why this person bothers us so much. I strive to reframe my experience with such people (trust me it's hard, and I often fail) in this way. When someone does something that makes me angry, I try to understand the lesson in their words or actions. Maybe there is a degree of truth to what they say, or maybe what they are saying is completely wrong. Regardless, getting angry is a natural response. What I strive to do is take their negative response and reframe it into a learning moment. How can I become more patient with this person? How can I do the opposite and show this person love when they don't deserve it. In Christian tradition, we would call this "grace." Grace is simply giving to someone something they don't deserve. Buddhist teaching tells us that someone we don't like is our teacher. What do your family member, in-laws, or ex-spouse have to teach you each time they upset you? How can you be more patient, expand love, or how to respond with kindness and love when none is deserved?

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

Perhaps the lesson is that they are teaching you that you need to establish healthy boundaries in terms of what you will and will not receive from them. In reframing your perspective of this person, you learn more about yourself and your humility. You can transcend your natural reaction and respond in a more effective and appropriate way for all involved.

Chapter 3:

Living Your Financial Truth

Our society is by every definition a consumer society. We are groomed from a small age to be good little shoppers. We are marketed to from the cradle to the grave. There are products for newborn babies and the elderly in nursing homes. Consumerism is so ingrained into the fabric of our civilization that I fear few could understand a day without shopping for entertainment or to relieve the boredom of everyday life. It is no wonder that with an ethos of spending burned into our minds that we spend more than we make. The ratio of household debt to income has risen sharply over the past few decades. We overspend, thinking these material things will make us feel happier, or fill the hole we have in our hearts. I truly believe there is an epidemic of loneliness and disconnection in our culture and overspending has become an unhealthy response to this perception of scarcity. We no longer live in a community where we help each other out.

Can you remember the last time you borrowed sugar from your neighbor?

I lived in a cul-de-sac in an upper middle-class neighbourhood when I was married. The area I lived in had one of the highest per capita household incomes in the region. My neighbours were all very nice people, but they kept to themselves and had a “hands-off” approach to any interaction that

may place them into a position that might require helping out. This hands-off approach is very much a part of most urban communities. People live in very dense neighbourhoods but are more isolated from each other than ever before. I believe this isolation and lack of community are some of the driving factors that are making us more materialistic. When we are connected to a community and derive our joy from people and not things our desire to try to “buy” happiness begins to diminish. **Where attention goes, energy flows.** If we focus our attention on family, friends and the people around us, it changes the way we see the world. When you buy a new laptop, a pair of shoes, or even a car eventually the novelty of the purchase wears off. It’s a “hit of happiness” that does not last very long. I compare it to trying to get out of quicksand by adding more water and sand.

The solution to the problem isn’t to add more water and sand, the solution is to get a helping hand. When we connect fully to people in our lives and begin to invest in people and not things we start to see wonderful changes in our hearts. I only came to this conclusion because I was forced too. I lost my house, money and many material possessions due to my divorce. I was stripped of everything I thought was important only to discover that these things were not important. In fact, I dare say my divorce was a gift, it taught me what was truly important. My hope, is you don’t have to go through such an experience to wake up to the truth.

There are many get out of debt systems and books you can purchase. Many of them are great at the mechanics of helping you get out of debt, but many of them miss the root cause of why you are in debt in the first place.

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

Living your financial truth is about living from a place of honesty and humility. The first step is to change your focus on people and community. When you truly engage in our community and invest in people, you will change your values. I recommend joining a church, a meditation circle, a social night or something that connects you to a group of people in a meaningful way. Maybe you just need to work on spending more time with your current circle of friends; maybe you have family members who would benefit from seeing you more often? When you invest in these people, you will begin to see a change in your heart. Most people, I believe, walk through this life on autopilot. We let advertising agencies and the media manipulate us and sell us false happiness in the form of consumerism. If you stop and take a measure of the state of your heart, you might find that you are overspending because you are trying to fill a hole of loneliness or sadness. The media uses fear, sadness, and loneliness to sell to us. When you disconnect from this lie by connecting to people, you step away from their program of materialism.

Perhaps you have connected to more people, and you are spending time with them. You're investing in human connections instead of the material. However, you may still feel the urge to keep spending outside of your means. The consumer society has set us up to make it as easy as possible to spend more money than we make. Credit cards, debit cards, and wireless payment options all reduce or even eliminate the pain our brains naturally feel when we spend money. There have been many studies done that when a customer hands over physical cash to purchase something there is a part of their brains that experience pain or distress. This distress

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

is not experienced when we pay with paperless transactions. Here are a few practical tips to help make you more aware and mindful of your spending habits.

1. **Start with a budget.** Using Excel or Google docs (free), write down where all your money is going each month by reviewing credit card bills and reviewing bank accounts.
2. **Use the “Jar Method”** Pay for all your expenses. Put money into several jars labeled for various purposes that month. “Groceries,” “Gas,” “Dining Out,” etc. You will see the money depleted in the jar and this will give you a visual clue to where your money is going. It will also help your brain feel “pain” as it spends money the old-fashioned way.
3. **Cultivate relationships with people who are not focused on money.** We are often influenced by people around us. Their values and habits rub off on us even if we don’t want them too. Someone who is always talking about the latest new thing or is consumed by quicksand is probably not going to help you. I’d even dare say materialism can be as much of an addiction as smoking or overeating.
4. **See a credit counselor.** There are many free services to help people out with credit and spending habits. The act of just trying to get help sets in motion a different energy in your life. “Where thoughts go energy flows.”
5. **Stop the Ads and Negative Media.** Disconnect from advertising by avoiding it. Cut your cable TV, and stop watching anything with

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

commercials. With services like Netflix and other streaming services, this is easy. Be mindful of your media consumption habits. I started watching “The Walking Dead” on Netflix, but I found it to be very negative and gory. I stopped consuming this because I felt it wasn’t good for me. Evaluate what you watch, and pay attention to how it makes you feel? Does it leave you feeling hopeless and disconnected or does it inspire you? What goes into a mind comes out in a life.

6. **Prayer, Mindfulness, and Meditation.** All of these things can cultivate a person who is more self-aware, who is in touch with their feelings. Why do you feel a need to shop? Is it because you are lonely or bored? Are you craving something shopping can’t give you? When you become more aware of your inner self, you will begin to live from a place of truth. Feeling lonely, scared, bored or sad are all ok. Feelings are not wrong, but how we deal with these emotions ultimately defines the course of our lives. Ask yourself if what you are about to purchase is a need or a want, and is it within your means. Pause, wait for your craving to pass and then your answer will bubble up. Your brain will literally generate the correct answer. You will know it is the right one because of the peace that will come with it.

7. **Pay Yourself First.** As soon as you get any kind of income, set aside a small percentage in a savings account or even one of those jars mentioned earlier. Make it a percentage that you won’t miss. In short order you will have more than you realize. The moment you

need or even want something important, you will actually have the money to pay for it.

There is a scene from the movie The Matrix where the main character Neo is disconnected from the Matrix and sits up from his pod. He awakens to see the world as it really is. When we disconnect from the lie of materialism, we start to see the world as it is.

“Trying to be happy by accumulating possessions is like trying to satisfy hunger by strapping sandwiches all over our body.” - author unknown

Much like the advice in the rest of this book, being mindful is the way to living an authentic life from every aspect of who we are. When we look inside and see who we are, we begin to live in a world of the real. The beauty of this approach is that thoughts, feelings, things and people who are not healthy for us diminish, and we attract new, positive and uplifting gifts into our lives. Watch and see the difference!

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

Chapter 4:

Anti-Social Media

The great irony of social media is that it trains us to be antisocial in many ways. We have the newest communication tool in human history and we sit behind little screens instead of having real and authentic conversations. We post the best or even fabricated “best” versions of our lives. How many times have you seen someone post the “happy family” picture to Facebook, but you know that the reality is the marriage is on the rocks, and they are about to separate? You can’t blame people for doing this kind of thing. We are being trained by the media and online “groupthink” to present the best package of our lives. There is, however, a silver lining in all of this. You are reading this book, and in that simple act have decided to no longer take part in this lie. Somewhere inside your person is a voice telling you to turn away from this. Kudos to you for taking this leap away from the groupthink. Just the act of reading this book has already changed the way you view the world. The larger goal is how to push back from a spiritual, emotional and practical way.

I think, one of the best ways to become more mindful is to start to become mindful of your online computer usage. It’s amazing how much of a time-suck Facebook and other social media can be. I have a good friend that deleted all his social media accounts. He like others, reported feeling better about their lives. The constant urge to share, and to check others’ feeds

can be an emotional drain especially if you are in a valley in your life. There are studies linked to depression and high use of social media usage.

Here are a few tips to become more mindful of your social media usage:

- Wean yourself to a set limit of checks in a day
- Don't follow the pack: Just delete your accounts and live free of it all. Don't worry, no one will miss the pics of your food they don't get to eat or the vacation they get to go on or relationship they don't have.
- When you do post media, post with a mindful heart. Post your life authentically.
- Unfollow or unfriend social media narcissists. These people are the ones that life stream everything in their lives. They are not good for your soul.
- Remove the social media apps from your phone. You will find that limiting yourself to a tablet or a laptop will discourage you from filling the gaps of your day with social media.

We live in a world where we can fill every moment with entertainment. I remember as a kid taking long car trips to visit my grandparents' who lived north of Toronto, Ontario. The trip was five hours from our family home. My brother and I would sit in the back with colouring books and maybe the odd Star Wars or GI Joe toy to play with. There was no smartphone or tablet filled with Netflix or games. We are quickly becoming a generation of people that need to be constantly entertained, amused and stimulated. We are losing touch with the quiet place that God can fill inside us.

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

We use social media to fill the gaps while waiting at the doctor's office, or waiting in line at the grocery store. Each time we fill these gaps with social media we train our brains to crave this stimulation. Think of social media as a hit of stimulation for our brains. We start to condition our brains always to crave this input. You will notice that if you are mindful of your feelings when you are out, that the urge to do this is particularly strong. If you remove the app from your phone, it enables you to be more conscious about how you spend the gaps.

A True Story of the Fruit of Mindfulness

Several years ago, when I first started practicing mindfulness, I was in Toronto at a business meeting. My meeting was at a busy restaurant downtown. It was going well, and the conversation with the client was positive. My client excused herself to go to the washroom. I was left at the table staring out at the streetcars going by. This free time is where I would normally fill in the gaps checking email, social media or texting friends. I decided to turn off my phone and put it into my pocket. I decided to be mindful of my surroundings. One of the gifts of being mindful is the universe/God will show you things you would have never seen if you had your face buried in a screen. As I looked outside, I watched a blind man trying to get on a streetcar. He used his cane to detect the front of the streetcar and then with his hands he felt for the opening of the streetcar until he reached out and felt the railing. He stepped up and onto the streetcar and the doors shut and the streetcar moved away. At that

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

moment, I had a profound attitude of gratitude for my sight. I was given a gift of being appreciative of something I take for granted each day. This moment would have never happened if I was posting to social media or reading someone's stream. I would have been robbed of this experience if I didn't allow myself to be mindful and turn off social media. Ultimately these experiences will make us all more authentic. How can you not be authentic if you are aware of the people in the world around you? You can see the divine in the mundane when you look with mindful eyes.

Cultivating a Culture of Authenticity

A large percentage of social media is nothing more than an echo chamber for the general public's narcissistic vanity. Even when individuals are authentic, their posts are trivialized with a "Like" button or a frowning face emoticon. Our experiences and lives are more than one picture, one line of text pushed out to hundreds of "Friends". When we share our intimate lives online with people we would never talk to in the real world I feel we reduce the importance of the emotion contained in the event itself. It's as if we are architects of our own lie in a way that is so subtle we don't even grasp the negative effects behind it. When we post our special moments to social media and people we don't know comment on these moments, they shape how we perceive the memory of this event. As time goes by and you look back at your timeline and review the images of your moments, the "public commentary" of the events will shift your perception of the events. Think of it this way, would you hand your photo album of your favourite vacation to someone you just met and let them scribble comments below each picture?

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

Of course you would never allow a total stranger to do this. Yet we allow this type of narrative to be applied to our lives in real time every day as we use social media. The way the brain works is still a mystery that science is continuously unraveling, but many studies have shown that memories can be influenced by current words and suggestions. How is it that we let total strangers hijack our most precious moments and change the narrative?

I can't dump Facebook! I use it to talk to Aunt Eunice in Idaho!

I don't think social media is all bad. It is a wonderful tool to share and connect with like-minded people or just family members. What I propose is we take back the narrative of our lives from people we don't know. We need to be more thoughtful, and mindful as we navigate social media. The following thought might help motivate you to change your ways when it comes to social media. When a service is free who do you think the product is? You! You are the product. Everything you do is tracked, measured, and calculated to help sell to you. Why would you hand over everything you do to such a system? Most people when confronted with this concept become much more mindful of how they use social media.

A cute story of a friend of mine's applies here. He's a high school teacher who has a blog for his classes. The platform he was using was free but that's because ads were being added to his posts. One day one of his students asked why there were ads for singles dating sites on his blog. He

replied that those ads are put there by reading the cookies and internet history of the people who've used that computer! The student's tongue-in-cheek smarmy attitude rapidly changed as the whole class went "woooooo!!!!" He suggested they clear their history.

Here are a few tips to stay mindful and more authentic with social media.

- Do a social media cleanse: Go through your friends list and if you haven't talked to the person in over six months in the real world unfriend them. Ask yourself if you would hand this person your photo album. It's a good litmus test of who should stay and who should go. This will filter the people who post to your status updates to those who mean something to you.
- Decide what you are going to use your particular social media for. For instance, I have over 1,000 friends on Facebook. I don't know 99.9% of them. I use Facebook as a crowdsourcing tool. In fact, I used Facebook to test the cover of this book and get feedback on it. I don't post pictures of my children or personal things. I have my "business hat" on when I use Facebook. What are you using Facebook for? Connecting with close friends and family? Then make it that! Remove everyone else that doesn't matter. If you use Facebook to communicate with your soccer league than make it just about that. Use social media strategically.
- When you are about post something to social media, become conscious of your emotional state. Why are you posting this? What is

the emotion behind it? I've found that often I post things based on how I'm feeling at the moment and go back days later and delete the post. Become mindful of your current "emotional temperature." You might want to have a post-it note to remind you to check in before posting.

- End compulsive sharing. You know that feeling that when you are out having fun, you need to take a picture and post to social media. It's almost like they have trained us to have this obsession with sharing. The best way to end this is to go cold turkey! Deactivate your account for two weeks. You will be amazed at how much more you will savour the experiences of your life when you make this change. Here's a link that will allow you to deactivate your Facebook account: <https://goo.gl/awWsV7>
- Post links to mindfulness and maybe even this book! (LOL) that make people more aware of becoming mindful about social sharing
- Become an advocate for your friends and family to spread the message in this chapter! **"Wake up the sheeple!"**

Chapter 5: Sexual Growth Through Authenticity

Sex is one of those basic needs in life, yet it's probably one of the most hyped topics in our culture. There are millions of books dedicated to the topic, a whole industry (porn) around watching people do it and volumes of church doctrine about what, not to do. The media uses it to sell us everything from gum to cars. Surprisingly, there is so much noise on this topic it is often hard for the average person to know what is "normal" or what is right for them. We learn from a very young age by our caregivers what is good and bad about sex. Our religious formation also can play a role in shaping our values around sex. For instance, I was raised Roman Catholic and from a young age, I was taught sex was something which was to be saved for marriage. The official teaching was sex was only for procreation and birth control was frowned upon. The reality is that most Catholic women of childbearing age are on birth control, and most have sexual relations before marriage. In fact, younger people (Millennials in particular) are waiting even longer to get married or not even getting married altogether. I point this out to highlight that the reality or the "truth" of a situation is often different from the advertisements or teachings we are swarmed with.

Living a life of authenticity and becoming a fully self-actuated person means that all of your life is lived from a place of truth, and this includes your sex life. There are so many people both men and women, who are still in their genesis stage of their sex life. Becoming authentic about your sex life is more than just learning new positions or feeling comfortable about your body. That is one aspect of it, the biggest and most important way to become authentic in regards to sex is to learn about who you are.

Porn Culture's Destructive Legacy

Growing up there was no internet, and I truly believe this was a blessing. My early sexual formation was not influenced by hard-core pornography because of its lack of availability. Contrast this to the current generation of children who have access to pornography on mobile devices they have on their person at all times. (This is why I highly recommend "NetNanny" for all your children's devices to block it)

Access to pornography has changed dating and relations between the sexes in many ways that are not positive. I was always of the mindset that pornography was a victimless crime. Everyone involved was consenting adults, and what was the harm of a little fun. But as one grows older and wiser you start to learn truths that you didn't know in your youth. Porn does have victims; the victims are the men and women it objectifies in the videos but even worse the end users are victimized even more. I am not an overly religious person, so the argument "You will go to hell for watching porn" really never deterred me. I would say that argument would probably encourage most people just to watch it more. I never really gave

the thought that porn was hurting me until one day I watched a great video series at my church. The video series was called “Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage, by Mark Gungor.” Mark did not take the approach of finger waving or shaming the audience into not watching pornography. His approach was so much deeper that as it has stuck with me and changed the way I see pornography. In his video series, Mark Gungor argued that when a man (or woman) watches porn, they reduce their emotional, spiritual, and physical desire for their mate. If you are a spiritual person, this argument may resonate with you. You can’t expect to give away your sexual energy to pornography and expect to have all of it left for your partner. It is a good thing to have this bottled-up energy and release it on our partners. They need to feel our longing, our desire for them. What about the argument “Porn just makes me want my spouse more,” or “It spices up our sex life.” I truly feel these are just pop-culture talk show arguments that don’t hold water in our authentic lives. When we give our energy away to pornography, we lessen it for our partners. In art history, there is a term called the “Infinite Longing,” it’s a term to describe our thirst for knowledge, God, and wisdom. We must have some of this infinite longing for our partners. It is good for us to long for them. **When a Japanese bowl or pot breaks, they do not throw it out. They repair the cracks with gold making the object even more valuable. Sex in our relationships is like this gold. It heals the hurts and cracks that form in any relationship. When we watch porn, we reduce the intensity of this powerful healing force in our relationships.** We live in an instant gratification culture, and I believe porn has become part of this problem. The more we use porn, the more we condition our bodies to respond to that type of stimulus. From

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

a purely physiological perspective, porn use reduces our bodies ability to be stimulated from the opposite sex if we use it too often.

So, what does this have to do being authentic? I truly believe to be authentic we need to live from a place of truth in our sexual lives. Pornography is a lie; it's a lie that popular culture has sold to everyone. It's time we take back our relationship and learn that instant gratification is not the path to a healthy sexual life. It is a good thing to have that longing, then express it with another human being.

Push Button, Get Banana

Our culture is built around instant gratification, look no further than fast food, the microwave dinner or the drive through ATM. We want what we want when we want it with no wait.

Unfortunately, this methodology has begun to creep into our sexual lives as well. There is a multi-million-dollar industry behind enhancing both male and female orgasms. We are taught our bodies are like a device where you push a button, and voila you get an orgasm. There are thousands of toys to help produce this with or without a partner. Orgasms are an important part of any healthy sexual life, the problem I see in our current culture is we focus too much on the destination and not the journey. To live a truly authentic sexual life we need to look deep into our motivations behind why we engage in sex. When we shine a light into aspects of our self that we normally don't look at we begin to develop a greater sense of self

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

awareness. Self-awareness in our sexual lives can lead to deeper and more fulfilling sexual experiences we never thought were possible.

Focusing completely on the orgasm during sex is such a bad idea on so many levels, it's hard to begin to explain why. When we focus on the orgasm, we short change our self, and our partner's true potential as sexual beings. The orgasm should be a natural part of the sexual union between two souls, but it should never be the absolute goal. When you remove the focus on the orgasm from your sex life, amazing things start to happen. The first thing I noticed in my sexual life was my partner began to feel more loved and appreciated. I was still more interested in her having an orgasm than me. I didn't focus on the orgasm though; I focused on making her feel cared for, loved and beautiful.

When you slow down and start to be more mindful of the person you are with you will discover new things about their body that you never knew. This can ring true for married couples or couples who just started dating. Mindfulness isn't just about sitting on a log in the middle of the forest. It also can apply to exploring your partner's body. I like to use the analogy of sipping fine wine. You don't gulp fine wine; you sip it. Think of your partner's body as fine wine; you want to enjoy the experience. Sip them, don't gulp. Practicing this will help cultivate a deeper sense of connection between you and your partner. In fact, the ironic part of working towards this "sipping" is you both will experience deeper and more fulfilling orgasms.

“Sipping” bedroom tips

If you and your partner have conditioned your sex life to be “wham bam, thank you ma'am” all the time I suggest a few tricks to get you out of this cycle.

- Have a 30 minute clothes on rule. For 30 minutes, you can do anything you want with clothes on. In the old world, we call this foreplay! =)
- Institute the 30-70 rule. 70% of sex should be “longies” and only “30%” should be quickies. I have found that this method works well to satisfy the quickie need we often have.
- During intercourse slow it down, I mean slow it right down. Start off abnormally slow for your normal routine. Each time you have sex, practice making actual intercourse last longer and longer without having an orgasm. This is typically more of an issue for men. One excellent technique to make intercourse last longer is to squeeze the base of your penis really hard to reduce the urge to have an orgasm. You can also have some nonverbal communication you discuss with your partner outside the bedroom that signals that you feel like coming and have her squeeze the base of your penis.

One of the benefits of slowing down your sexual life is so you can become more authentic with who you are and what you want. We often rush from one thing to the other and never pay attention to what we are really doing. Living a truly authentic sexual life means knowing what makes you filled with joy and light. It's hard to know what brings you joy when you constantly

do the same things over and over. This is the true definition of insanity:
Doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

Chapter 6:

Personal Stories of Growth

The stories in this chapter are based on real events. To maintain the privacy of the people who have given me permission to use their stories I have changed many of the events and names. I have tried my best to keep the spirit and truth of the story intact despite these changes.

Broken Heart

It was a hot July afternoon, and the cool spray from the breaking waves off the bow of the boat felt like heaven as we raced out into the middle of Lake Erie. It was a long weekend, and I was enjoying a boat ride with my boyfriend Roger. Roger and I had been dating almost four years, but we didn't see each other much because he had to travel a lot because of his family's business. The moments we did spend together were filled with euphoria because they were so rare. I looked forward to seeing him so much I would count the days until the next time we would be in each other's arms. We spent maybe five weeks a year total in each other's physical presence. I think my creative mind filled in the gaps of things that were missing. I filled in the spaces with unrealistic ideas of what the relationship was. They say love is blind, and I truly understand this phrase now as I was so in love with Roger I couldn't see all the signs that I was nothing more

than just a toy, like his boat. He would keep me and his other toys around as long as he derived pleasure from them. I was soon to discover the meaning of true love the hard way.

After this amazing day, out on his forty-foot speed boat we decided to go back to my house and relax. I made us both a cold drink and we decided to snuggle on the couch and watch Netflix. All I remember is watching the loading spinner while waiting for the movie to load. The next forty days of my life are completely missing and I have no memory of the following events. Roger looked over at me and I slumped with my head back on the couch. I was completely limp with no vital signs at all. Roger flipped me on the floor and took my pulse. I had none. He called for my son and told him to call the ambulance. Roger thankfully knew CPR and started to perform it on me. I was dead in every sense of that word. I had no heartbeat, no respiration, no vitals whatsoever. When most people die they also lose their bowels. I too literally shit my pants! There I was laying in the middle of the living room floor dead, lying in my own feces when the ambulance arrived. I can only imagine the horror and terror this must have caused both Roger and my son to see someone they love become just a lifeless body in front of them. The paramedics arrived and tore my favorite Lulu lemon top off as they proceeded to use a defibrillator to shock my heart back into beating. I had suffered a massive heart attack. Up until this point in my life I was healthier than the average person. I was a semi-professional mountain bike racer. My cardio was amazing and I had a lower body fat percentage than anyone I knew. I was fit, really fit, but none of that mattered when my heart decided to have a massive attack. I was shocked over six times on the way

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

to the hospital. I was finally revived when I arrived at the hospital. A week later, during my stay at the hospital, I suffered a massive stroke which caused my brain to swell. The doctors performed emergency surgery to remove part of my skull to relieve the pressure on my brain. I was unaware of any of this because I drifted in and out of consciousness. I was connected to feeding tubes and a respirator. I was hanging between life and death. The doctors say the only reason I made it through was due to my athletic body. After my massive stroke, the doctors asked my father to sign a do not resuscitate order telling him that if I did survive I would spend the rest of my days in a nursing home as a vegetable. Thankfully my father did not sign this document, and even more incredible, I did not need him to make this decision because I started to get better. After over sixty days in the hospital I was allowed to leave and go home. When I first woke up I asked for Roger but he was not there. I asked, and asked for him but everyone told me he did not visit me in the hospital. After I got out of the hospital I called him and he did not return any of my messages. He finally sent me a text message one day telling me he wanted to break up and he had found someone else. I was devastated, my heart was broken both spiritually and physically. In the months that passed I had a micro defibrillator wired into my heart so if I ever had another heart attack I would survive it. But there was no medical device to fix the spirit of my heart.

A friend of mine sent me this quote a long time ago, and it resonated with me because of the truth behind it.

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

“...I would like to beg you dear Sir, as well as I can, to have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and to try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language. Don't search for the answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer.”

Rainer Maria Rilke, 1903

in Letters to a Young Poet

This quote speaks to my heart because often when we are in the middle of something terrible we cannot understand why it is happening or even what good could come from it. Now that I am a year away from this terrible event in my life I can see myself and the situation with much more clarity. I am living my way to the answers each day. Before the heart break, I was like many young women in my position. I loved the finer things in life. I wore all the best brands. I was very concerned about my appearance and I enjoyed pleasure seeking as much as possible. I was much like Roger in that I truly sought to have fun above anything else. I was living a life on the surface of who I really was. The heartbreak and resulting health issues forced me to be humbled. In this humility, I found the real me, the person who had an attitude of gratitude for my family and my close friends. I had a huge scar on my head, and my teeth were all brown from being on a feeding tube for weeks. I was forced to become authentic, and to look at the reality of my life. I had a wealthy boyfriend who was only with me when times were

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

good. Now that I wasn't fun anymore, I was discarded like a toy that gave him no pleasure. As I spent more time healing my heart I started to see the relationship for what it was. Roger was a narcissist and he used me because of my beauty. I was "arm candy" to him. With greater clarity I realized he was unfaithful to me but because I was so lost in the idea of him I couldn't see what was right in front of me. I was forced to live an authentic life, and see things for how they are not the way I wanted to see them. Living this authentic life has brought a deeper sense of peace to my life. People often ask me how all this has changed me. I tell them it has made me cherish each day, and really hold onto what is important. In the end it doesn't matter how much money you have, or what clothes you wear or even what people think of you. In the end, it is how much you love. That is all we have in the end. Living an authentic life to me means that I don't worry about what people think anymore. I speak my mind, and tell people how I feel because all I have is right now, right here.

From Darkness to Light

My story is one of lies built on top of lies until the truth was so buried I could barely understand the truth anymore. I watched a TED talk that featured a psychologist that did research that showed that people who lied a lot suffered from more mental illness than those who told the truth. My life over the past decade is a living testament to this truth. I grew up in a small town with very conservative eastern European parents. We attended an evangelical church where the pastor and church leaders talked equally

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

about God as they did how the devil was going to get you. My early spiritual formation was one based on fear of God's wrath. I was the oldest of five children and much of the burden of setting a good Christian example was placed on my shoulders for my siblings. I did my best to follow my parents' lead and I did very well at school and lived according to their values. The problem was I was living someone else's ideals, and I felt a great deal of anger towards my parents. My father was a very controlling, and emotionally distant man. There was never any discussion in our house. His ideas and wishes ruled supreme. I believe this was the seed of my great discontent in both my life and my marriage. I was unable to show true vulnerability or sadness as this would be a sign of weakness in my house. I was taught to be a hard worker, and I did very well in school. Later in life I rose very quickly to the top of my company. I was one of the first female CEOs not only in my company, but in my industry in general. I was a trailblazer and I worked many long hours to achieve my success. I was married in my early twenties because that was common in our culture. My husband was very similar to my dad. I look back now and I understand that I was more comfortable in that dysfunction as it felt like home. Patrick, my husband, was much more modern than my dad on the outside. He supported my rise in the corporate structure and took on more of the household chores to help me do this. He was much like my dad in the fact that he never listened to me. He ignored my attempts to reach out to him when I was feeling sad. We were married almost ten years when I started an affair with my co-worker. I started the affair because I felt unheard at home and my co-worker "Michael" listened to me and truly understood my heart. He was a friend for many years before our relationship crossed the

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

line. We continued this affair for almost five years. Then one day I felt sick at work and I noticed that I stopped getting my period. I went to the doctor and discovered I was pregnant. I knew the baby was not my husband's, but that of Michael. I could not have an abortion. In addition to the sin over the five year affair, I knew I could not live with myself if I just added to the pile of wrong I had done. I went to my husband and admitted to the affair. I told him I was pregnant. He knew the child was not his as he had a vasectomy after the birth of our third child. Much to my surprise Patrick accepted the child as his own and from that day forth told me to speak no more of the affair. I was shocked, amazed and blessed. The problem is that the reason for the affair didn't disappear. While Patrick was an amazing man for doing what, he did he still did not listen to me, or truly hear me. Several years later our marriage broke down and Patrick left me. I was left with four children and a big house in a suburb of Toronto. I was forced to finally look at the ashes of my life and turn to the truth. At first I was filled with guilt and shame over what I did. I started a deep dive into many self-help books, meditation and prayer. Inside the quiet of meditation and quiet reflection I found the true me, the authentic person I was. That person was an angry teenager that was not allowed to act out or show sadness. The sadness, anger and rebellion exploded out of me in the form of an affair. I look back now and see that the affair was my way of dealing with all the shit locked up inside my heart. They say affairs have very little to do with sex. I can agree with this. For me the affair was about the excitement. It was about doing something that was wrong. The idea of getting caught made it all that more enjoyable. It was like a drug that I couldn't get enough of. In a spiritual sense, I was a teenager giving my parents/husband the big middle

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

finger as I rode off with a boy on a motorcycle every time I had sex with my lover. I felt alive for the first time in my life. What is sad is I had to destroy my family, my husband and disappoint my whole family to feel alive. I was filled with so much rage inside, yet I could not acknowledge or even allow myself to feel it. If I had been authentic and self-aware I would have found more constructive ways to deal with my inner turmoil. I was not living a mindful life. I was on autopilot. I was just moving towards whatever would quiet the angry voices inside my heart.

Flash forward to today. it has been six years since my marriage ended. I have sought counseling and I have made peace with my dark side. I am still working through the anger issues with my parents, but I am aware of them. I am authentic and live from a place of authenticity. I allow myself to be angry. I allow myself to express my hope, joy, and disappointment with life. I am like many, a work in progress, but at least I am authentic to who I am. I am the best version of myself right now, right here today. What can you learn from my experience? Never allow anything negative to settle in your heart. Unless you confront it head on, eventually this thing will manifest itself as something unpleasant in your life. You have to know it's ok to not be ok. Be true to yourself. This means allowing yourself to experience your emotions and let them out. Say all the things that are in your heart and be vulnerable to your close friends. Don't hold back any part of who you are to those who love you.

“How desperately difficult it is to be honest with oneself. It is much easier to be honest with other people. What is true is invisible to the eye. It is only

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

with the heart that one can see clearly.”

— Antoine de Saint-Exupery

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

Chapter 8:

Epilogue

You have read real world ways to become more authentic, more of who you are, the best version of you. One of the fruits of becoming authentic is people will like you more. This is the opposite of what social media and even those nagging doubts in your head tell you. It is exactly the opposite of what you have been sold by the media. A good example of this effect is in e-commerce websites such as Amazon. Products that have authentic product reviews both good and bad typically sell better than products that only contain marketing copy from the company. When you show people your authentic side, the good, the bad and the ugly, you create a vulnerable connection between you and them. By letting people see the real you it opens you to the ability to have connections that are deeper and more meaningful. Being authentic can have very powerful effects in all areas of your life. In business, it is well documented that people who are more authentic and honest do better in the workplace. If you are in sales being authentic will win more sales every time. In your personal life, such as dating or even with your spouse, being authentic will form deeper attachments and create a better relationship.

For years, I struggled with the relationship with my father. I always felt the two of us were oil and water. I resented him for not living up to what I thought a father should be. This resentment built into ways where I would

not share my authentic self with him. The conversations we would have would be shallow and truly lacked authenticity. Sometimes, like the stories in chapter six, the universe will force us to become authentic. My dad through a series of bad choices ended up in a nursing home at the age of 73. He was stripped of his money, his freedom and his dignity. I was his only family nearby, and I needed to rise to advocate for him. I knew that if the roles were reversed, he wouldn't do it for me, but this is where the healing came in our relationship. **My dad is vulnerable, and inside that vulnerability, we were able to connect on a deeper level.** Before my dad was placed in the nursing home, our egos would continually bump into each other. Both of us were stripped of our egos and just like our friend Bob Marley tells us, being vulnerable is the only way to enjoy deep and meaningful relationships. My relationship with my dad is now truly enjoyable and much deeper than I ever thought was possible. It was the act of us both being stripped to the core that made us closer. I am also glad I took this approach because I am showing my kids how to be authentic even in the messy, everyday situations we find ourselves in.

When I was first single, I wrote this poem and I think it is an excellent way to end this book. Its words are profound, and sometimes I find it hard to believe I wrote it even to this day.

“Grace from the Bottom Up”

Only when you have been poor in circumstance

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>

Only when you have been stripped to the core
Only when your heart has hit rock bottom
Then and only then the word grace has true meaning for you
For it's from the depths of our darkest night
that the light of day brings joy and true meaning to our lives
It's inside this enigma we live
as travelers on the road to wisdom and true fulfillment
– Kevin Airgid

Learn more, and have me speak!

I have been lucky enough to speak at many conferences. My experience and my passion often land me in the top 10% ranked speakers at the conferences I've spoken at. If you enjoyed this book and think a talk on being authentic would benefit your organization, group or conference please reach out and book me. I'd love to share what I've learned. You can contact me, follow my blog, watch my videos, and read updated articles about being authentic at my website <http://airgid.me/>

Hire me to speak about this topic: <http://www.airgid.me/>