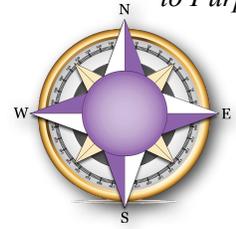


A Conversation With Dennis Merritt Jones

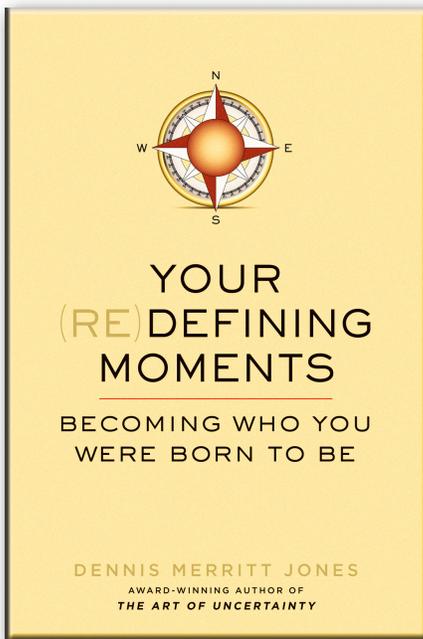
Author of

Your (Re)Defining Moments *Becoming Who You Were Born to Be*

*Guiding People
to Purpose*



1. Could you briefly describe what you mean when you refer to the “Original Self” and the “authentic self”?



The “Original Self” is that which is the omnipresent, originating source of all Life. The “authentic self” is a microcosm of the Original Self which personified Itself within and as each of us the instant we were given life. Because the Original Self is *uniquely* individuated within you, the authentic self you are automatically makes you unlike any other human being on the planet. There is only one of you in all of time and space. Your authentic self is the soul essence of that which you were (and still are) the moment you were born,

before taking on the many labels of the human condition. Using the classic metaphor of the ocean and the drop of water, the Original Self is the ocean and your authentic self is the drop of water in the ocean. Within you lies the entirety of the ocean solely contained within the drop.

NOTE: The terms “authentic self” and “Original Self” are not meant to be confused with the human “self,” meaning that part of you that is conscious and able to think and talk about yourself as both a subject and an object.

2. What is a (Re)Defining moment?

Any moment can be a *redefining* moment because within it lies the opportunity to be changed by what we see and experience. A *redefining* moment is that which can indelibly etch an imprint on our mind and heart of who we see ourselves to be that shapes the life before us. *Redefining* moments offer us the opportunity to perpetually reinvent ourselves and, as long as we occupy a human body, these opportunities will continue to present themselves. You were born to be you, to unfold the truth of who *you* are--not someone else's idea of who you "should be."

Every moment has the potential to be a *redefining* moment when we use the opportunity to look more deeply into the authentic self within and learn how to actualize its qualities in our daily lives. The practice is to be so mindfully present in the moment that we can witness the portal to the authentic self opening and step through it knowing it is offering us another opportunity to redefine who we are based on what we find *within* rather than what is happening in the world around us. A *redefining* moment always brings with it an awareness of our oneness with the authentic self.

3. In the first chapter, there is a section titled "Living Vertically in a Horizontal World" – what do you mean by "horizontal living" versus "vertical living" and how do they intersect?

As human beings we exist on what I refer to as the surface of life--a horizontal pathway--where we go about our daily routines, essentially "doing" life on the surface, most often unaware that there is more to life and who we are than simply existing or enduring until the day we leave the planet. We fail to realize the true nature of our "being"--the deeper place within us where the authentic self lies--gently calling to us, waiting for us to actualize that part of us in our daily lives. We don't often hear the serene call from the depths of our

“being” because we are very busy “doing” on the surface of life. The authentic self is eternally calling us to be who we were born to be. To merge our “being” with our “doing” is to create a sacred intersection-- it is the practice of witnessing our authentic self vertically ascending from the depths within to the surface of our daily life as we move along the horizontal pathway. With mindfulness, we remember that while we must live on the surface of life and exist in a human skin, the presence of the authentic self is always with us, every step, every breath, every sacred moment of our life.

Living vertically, closer to the center of our being is the practice of a lifetime, but so too is skillfully living on the horizontal plane—the surface of life—where our purpose for being on the planet is *uniquely* expressed and fulfilled. This then is how we can live vertically in a horizontal world; by mindfully bringing our being into our doing. The result manifests as a life truly worth living and an inner peace that passes all understanding.

4. You say, “Your true bliss will never be found by imitating others” – and yet we imitate others because we want to belong. How can we break free of this mindset?

As I say in the book, it is very comforting knowing you belong. The problem is that too often we confuse “belonging” with “fitting in” for the sake of being accepted. An authentic sense of belonging offers you the freedom to be who you truly are while in the presence of those you love and care about. On the other hand, fitting in means sacrificing your authenticity by striving to be like others. This offers restriction and a limited sense of self-definition because one is required to reshape themselves based on the opinions and expectations of others in order to fit in with the group. In contrast, you’ll know when you belong because you will feel a sense of freedom and expansion—a compelling call to be your authentic self, to express your unique individuality with no conditions attached.

Part of truly belonging is knowing that you are encouraged to bring the unique gift of your whole being in such a way that the innate wholeness of the group expands because of you; you are consciously enriching others by your presence and the gifts you choose to bring, rather than by conforming to their expectations. When you are free to be yourself, the essence of “something” larger than you (the Original Self) naturally and blissfully spills over into everything you say and do, bringing with it the affirmative life force of your authentic self. The practice is to remember that there is a profound difference between belonging and fitting in: One is an invitation to celebrate diversity and honor the innate wholeness of who you uniquely are--and one is a requirement to imitate others. Which do you believe is more likely to bring forth true bliss in your life?

5. You believe we are living in a “shame-based” society that is adept at reminding us of our self-perceived flaws and shortcomings, making us constantly feel less than whole. How should we approach the concept of “wholeness” and how do we get past the belief that wholeness equals perfection?

Main Street, USA, has made it its business to keep us feeling less than whole—that is, until we buy what they are selling, including that which makes us good enough, smart enough, desirable enough, rich enough, popular enough, healthy enough, and so on. Shame is a toxic belief that we are not “enough” just the way we are--that something essential to our wholeness is missing. This perspective is based on the idea that perfection is obtainable in the human condition and when that which is “missing” is manifest, then and only then, will we be whole. Wholeness is not a condition or a point at which we one day arrive when everything on the surface of life seems “perfect”, because that day will never come. Wholeness is a state of *being*; it’s about remembering to remember that at the center

of our being lies the essence of that which is now, and *always* been, perfectly whole--the authentic self.

Understanding that our thoughts (backed by our beliefs) contribute to creating our experience in life, it helps to remember that wholeness is not a process of addition—it's one of subtraction; it's a process of mindfully discovering and discarding erroneous thoughts and beliefs that tell us there is something missing "in" who we are. When we are able to lean into the challenges and conditions on the "surface" of daily life with a willingness to love and accept ourselves—warts, wrinkles, and all—the wholeness and perfection of the authentic self ascends naturally from our center and integrates with "whatever is" on the surface. Perfection at our center is a given and imperfection on the surface of life is but a mistaken perception that something is missing. As we correct our vision of who we truly are we'll see that life is essentially perfectly imperfect...and that's what wholeness is.

6. What is the most memorable redefining moment for you so far during your journey?

This is really a tough question because there have been so many moments in my sixty-five years on this planet that have offered me the opportunity to pause and turn inward and be reminded that I am more than what I see gazing back at me in the mirror--that there is more to me than the countless labels I have worn throughout my entire life. Perhaps that moment happened late one night while sitting all alone watching a baseball game on television. It was, unquestionably the darkest moment in my adult life when, at the flip of the channel, I had a spiritual awakening I didn't see coming; that was thirty-eight years ago. Then again, perhaps it was that pristine moment when my new born daughter was placed in my arms for the first time. As I peered into her eyes I saw a part of myself in her that I had never seen elsewhere and it would shape who I was yet to

become; that was twenty-nine years ago. Perhaps my greatest *redefining* moment was when I stood in the light of the full moon and gazed toward the stars and was reminded that I am part of something far greater than I can possibly conceive of and therefore, because I exist, I am here for a reason; that was twelve hours ago.

My point is that throughout our lives endless opportunities to remember who we truly are--and *why* we are--will appear before us and they will all be memorable. We will remember those moments because our lives will be invariably changed because of them. Sometimes they come in our darkest moments of desperation and other times in our brightest moments of inspiration. In either case, awakening to the deeper truth of who we were born to be is a matter of mindfully spotting the portals to those *redefining* moments when they open and stepping through them before they close.

7. Many people fear that we are too old to change, that we have already lived our lives and settled in our ways. Is there an ideal age for engaging in self-inquiry?

It is never too late to be who we were born to be, and self-inquiry is a powerful way to open the vertical passageway to the center of our being. In actuality, the older we are the more likely it is that self-inquiry will be a richer experience because, through our years, we have accumulated more wisdom. Wisdom is the acquired knowledge (through direct experience) of what works and what doesn't and applying the aforementioned and throwing away the latter. Self-inquiry is a mindfulness practice that can help us identify beliefs that are not serving our wholeness and happiness and challenge them. The practice of self-inquiry will create an opening for a *redefining* moment.

The bottom line is, irrespective of how young or old we are, it is never too late to change because our age is but one of the many

labels we wear that defines us and keeps us stuck on the surface of life--on the horizontal plane. Perhaps the most compelling reason to continually seek *redefining* moments is that there lies within us something that is sacred and beyond time and space. When we live from the authentic self we access that which is eternal and ageless and it revitalizes us and deepens our passion for living...and who isn't ready for that?

8. What is the biggest takeaway you hope your readers learn from this book?

While I think the “takeaway” from *Your (Re)Defining Moments* is multifaceted, perhaps the greatest single awareness is that it is never too late to be who you were born to be and that this is a guide book which points you to the brilliant light of your own North Star. After reading *Your (Re)Defining Moments* one will understand that they have a *responsibility* to be who they were born to be because contained within each of us is the unique gift that we each come to share with the planet. No one bears the same gift because it would be redundant in a Universe where no two things are exactly the same. What's more important, until one shares their gift with the world they'll feel a sense of incompleteness or restlessness as the authentic self continues to stir, seeking the freedom to “be.”

In this light the call of the authentic self is being heard globally--you are not alone in your desire to be who you truly are: The quest for freedom of authentic, individual, self-expression is becoming the clarion call for hundreds of millions of people everywhere. From the civil uprisings happening in the middle east and other regions, to the ongoing equal rights movements throughout the United States and beyond, the ripple effect of the call coming from the authentic self is being felt universally. Can you feel it moving in you? If you can and you are willing to honor the call your life will never be the same.

The encouraging message of *Your (Re)Defining Moments* is that with clarity, courage, conviction, and mindfulness, *any* moment can be a *redefining* moment when you actualize the authentic self *you* were born to be. At the end of the day that is what makes this life truly worth living--and there is that place within each of us that knows this is true.

#

YOUR (RE)DEFINING MOMENTS
Becoming Who You Were Born to Be

By Dennis Merritt Jones

Tarcher/Penguin Paperback | ISBN-13: 978-0-399-16580-1 | \$15.95

On Sale May 29, 2014

© Copyright 2014 - New Reality Press

www.DennisMerrittJones.com