

DISCOVERING YOU and your Authentic Self



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and your

Authentic Self



BEING REAL IN A WORLD YOU THINK WANTS YOU TO BE SOMEONE ELSE IS JUST... A LOT.

It can feel like wearing a mask.

Like you're supposed to...

Act a certain way,

Dress a certain way, or

Think a certain way to fit in.



That's a lot of pressure.



But, you know, you're actually kind of awesome just the way you are.

And right now, you're on this journey of figuring out **who** that is.



That's kind of cool, too!



WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

Your "authentic self" is the real **YOU** who knows:

What your
comfort zone is
(and when you
feel OK stepping
out of it)

What makes
you happy
(music, movies,
food, art?)

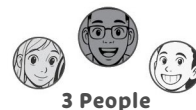
What
you
DON'T
like

What you value
(Honesty, Kindness,
Creativity)

XOXO
That you aren't perfect
(no one is),
and that's what makes
you, well, **YOU!**

That you have
OPINIONS about things
(even if other people disagree)
because **you can think**
for yourself

You're not trying to be
someone else.
You're rocking you.



3 People



Made a new song
it kinda slaps



BROOO!!! 🔥🔥🔥



Legit fire! 🔥



No cap its slaying

Ty



WHY BEING YOU MATTERS



Being your authentic self means you're making choices that reflect what you actually care about, especially when it comes to choices that feel hard, like saying no to drugs and other substances.



You're happier

Trying to be someone else is tiring. When you're being yourself, you're *more relaxed, more confident, and more content.*



You build real connections

Your friends like you for you, not who you're pretending to be.

These are the friendships that last.



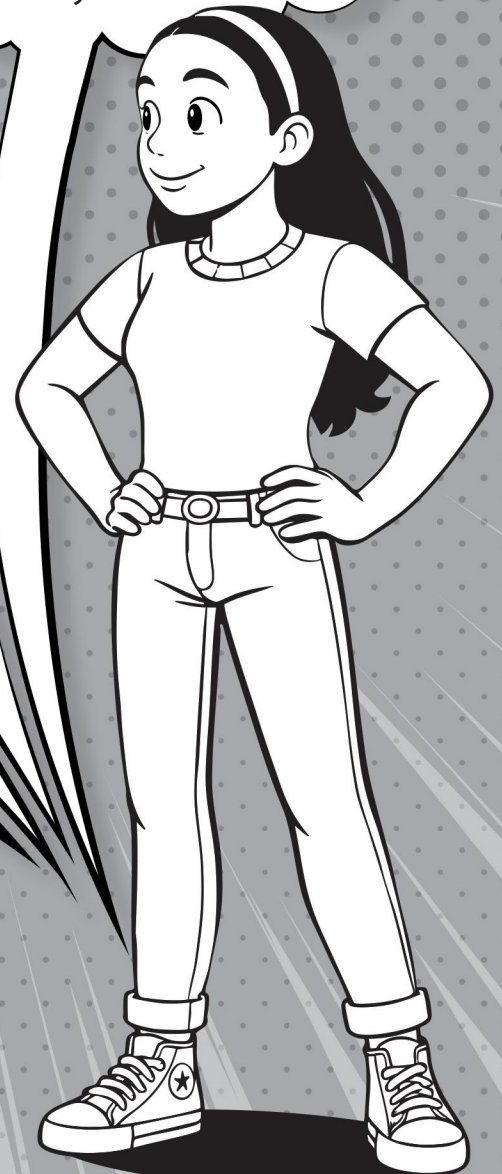
You're not as worried about peer pressure

When you focus on what you care about, you're *less* worried about what others think and *more* confident in your choices.

So, it's easier to say no.

You're not doing something just because everyone else seems to be.

You make choices that feel right for *your* health, *your* happiness, and *your* future.



HOW TO FIND YOUR AUTHENTIC SELF

Learning what makes you "YOU" is a journey. Here are some ideas to walk you through it.



Be kind to yourself

It's okay to change your mind and make mistakes.
It's okay to be a work in progress.



Journal

Write down your thoughts, feelings, and experiences to help understand yourself better.



Challenge your beliefs

Are you holding onto beliefs that aren't really yours?
Question them!



Embrace your community

Connect with your heritage, your culture, and your traditions to grow your sense of belonging and identity.

Explore your interests

Try new things! Join a club, take a class, volunteer, try different books and music. You never know what you might love.



Talk to people you trust

Share your thoughts and feelings with people who support you and accept you for who you are.



Spend time with your thoughts

Take time to reflect and connect with yourself without distractions or outside influences.



IT'S OKAY TO BE YOU!

Be true to yourself, and you'll continue to make the best choices for you (and **not** who you think people want you to be).



It can be scary to take off your mask, to feel like you stand out, to be different.

But you choose where to go on your journey. And those choices build up your unique, authentic self, which helps keep the world interesting.

And remember, you're not on this journey alone.
You can always reach out to a trusted adult, a friend, or a mental health provider if you ever need help along the way.

In a world that tries to tell you who to be, the most powerful thing you can do is be yourself.



How to Be Your Authentic Self

Discovering YOU: Being Real in a World That Wants You to Be Someone Else

Have you ever felt like you had to hide the real you just to fit in? Like there's pressure to look, act, or think a certain way so others will accept you? This graphic novel invites you to take off the mask and begin the most important journey of all—discovering who you truly are.

Created by the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, “How to Be Your Authentic Self” is a vibrant, relatable guide for young people learning how to stand strong in their identities. Through expressive illustrations and down-to-earth storytelling, it explores what it means to be authentic, why it matters, and how it connects to real-life choices—especially when it comes to resisting peer pressure around opioids, fentanyl, and other substances.

Being your authentic self means knowing what makes you happy, what you care about, and what you stand for. It's about making choices that reflect your values, connecting with your culture and community, and being confident enough to say no when something doesn't feel right. **It's not about being perfect—it's about being real.**



This graphic novel reminds youth that it's okay to be a work in progress. It's okay to change their mind, make mistakes, and learn as they grow. What matters is staying true to who they are and surrounding themselves with people who see and celebrate the real them.

<https://ospi.k12.wa.us>