How to Achieve True Happiness

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Right now, you are looking at a person who constantly lied and faked who I really was for the whole 7 years of elementary school. As a little girl, I had fears just like anybody else. But they weren't common little girl's fears like spiders, or ghosts, or monsters under beds. I feared isolation. I feared even thinking about losing my friends, and my status of belonging in a group. All I wanted at that time was to live a typical life with regular sleepovers and girl talks with best friends. It seemed like the scariest thing in the world for that to slip right out of my hands. So, to avoid this fear I had, I was willing to do anything. And so I did for my whole elementary years, and it made me realize something. It made me realize that self-expressions change and determine the shape and form of our lives. From the way we dress, from the way we interact with others, and even from the smallest decisions we make like choosing red over pink, there are endless ways to show who we are. They define the small parts of ourselves that add up, and make us who we are. Self-expression is a powerful thing. Depending on how you show it to others, the people, relationships, opportunities, and moments in our lives can differ.

My 7 years in elementary school were a series of false statements and actions about who I was. I had an ideal at that time to always have a group of friends alongside me, and to avoid my fear of being alone. I still remember begging my mother for a Barbie doll I didn't even want. I would desperately cry and beg for it, but not because I wanted the Barbie badly, but because I was afraid that if I didn't have a Barbie doll, all my friends would disappear and only isolation would be left to greet me. I'm sure everyone can relate going through something like this, and has either lied or changed yourselves just to fit in and feel more strong and perfect. Even I still sometimes fake myself to avoid judgements, and to feel like I belong somewhere. This is something we all do. How many times are we told "Be yourself"? But that's

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an impossible goal. We all know that being able to show your true self is much harder than it sounds. It's shocking how we can easily force ourselves to change our characteristics just to live as a perfect person in an ideal world we imagine. An ideal world coming to reality sounds great right? Who could say no to this? But from my experience of trying to obtain this "ideal world", I know that it only brings a small moment of satisfaction, and only ends in unhappiness. Living in the ideal world comes with a price. You'll have to sacrifice your true colours and live in it as a person that's not you. When you do that, you'll never find true happiness.

Please take a moment and imagine a family member or a friend who you feel you connect to without having to hide your true self. We live in a diverse society, filled with millions of people from an endless variety of ideas and viewpoints. So there are people we can connect, and accept us as we are, as long as we can make the same commitment. I want to tell the little girl I was in the past, who was living off of fake happiness that there's no need to shape out a certain form of our lives based on ideals and perfection. Forget about ideals, forget about perfection, and just think about the true you. Your life is not someone else's nor your ideal self. It's only yours and will always be yours, so why not express yourself the way you are, and live in the moments, in a place where you really belong to. That's how I believe we can find true happiness.