

Magic Shop

Step right up. Come one. Come all. Welcome to the Magic Shop! In this shop you will find any trait, quality or characteristic that you wish you had or wish you had more of. This isn't the shop where you find the Barbie Doll you wanted for Christmas when you were five or the chemistry set or telescope you wanted when you were 10. Nor will you be able to find perky breasts, six-pack abs, or a pill that instantly takes off unwanted pounds. In this shop, you can find qualities like peace, happiness, serenity, joy, hope, and authenticity. It is also a shop that helps you gain fulfilling relationships, better sex, success, prosperity, security, spiritual connection, a felt sense of safety, love, and self-esteem. All you have to do is name what you want and you are on your way to getting it.

Ah! But what is it that you truly want? This may be an easy question to answer, but if it isn't, think about the areas in your life where you feel the most longing, sadness, frustration, or fear. If you are struggling because you and your partner seem to be drifting apart and/ or are either not getting along or because you are tired of feeling alone, perhaps what you might be looking for is love or intimacy. If you feel like your life has become a meaningless blur of "get up, go to work, come home, sleep, repeat" or you feel like you are living on autopilot, perhaps you could use a little spontaneity. If you have a sense that you are not being true to yourself – living the life your parents, your partner, or the society laid out for you or living in a body that does not match how you feel inside, perhaps you'd like some authenticity. If you find yourself working your fingers to the bone but have nothing to show for it, perhaps you could use some success or some prosperity. If you feel hopeless, perhaps you could use a bit of spiritual connection or a dab of hope.

There is one little catch. In order to get this desired quality, you have to give up something else. It's only fair. Besides, there is probably something in your way – a characteristic or attribute that you have been holding on to that keeps you from getting what you want. For example, if you tend to be stubborn, your stubbornness has probably served you well. It might have even given you the tenacity you needed to survive your childhood or the gumption you needed to graduate. But stubbornness can get in the way of having intimate relationships, especially if being right becomes more important than hearing and respecting your partner. Going through the motions of life or living the life your parents dreamed of may be life sucking, but it's predictable and safe. As long as you don't take risks and express your true self, you don't have to worry so much about being rejected.

This is the hard part. You have to take a serious inventory of your life and decide whether or not you really want to change. Are you willing to give up being right or having the last word in order to have a better relationship? Are you willing to take the risk to be yourself in order to have more authenticity? Are you willing to give up or cut

back on your drinking and/or drug use in order to pursue your dreams full tilt? Can you let go of the story you have been telling yourself for years that you are a failure in order to notice how successful you really are and become even more successful?

Sometimes the cost of change seems too high. What would it take to make it worth it to you to give up your blocks, obstacles and excuses? Most people find it difficult to change. They need support. They need faith that they can actually do it. They need tools to help them change. And they need compassion for themselves for having difficulties and for the fumbling they are likely to do as they learn how to do things differently.

If you are serious about making changes, you don't really need to step into a magic shop. You already have everything you need to transform your world. You just need support. Few people succeed at making deep changes on their own. Successful businesspeople and successful artists often had at least one supportive parent, teacher, friend or partner that encouraged them and supported them. People who successfully quit smoking, drinking or abusing substances and people who successfully lose weight almost always do so in a supportive group who cheers them on, calls them on their shit and listens with understanding when the going gets tough. One partner can't save a relationship if the other person doesn't work to save it with them. So find yourself a group of people struggling with the same issue to work with, make a pact with a friend or partner who understands you, sign up with a coach or personal trainer or work towards the changes with a supportive counselor. Your support network can help you find the tools you need in order to live your life differently and help you find faith in your ability to change. They can also mirror compassion and empathy back to you in those moments when you beat yourself up for not changing fast enough, completely enough, or for needing to change in the first place.

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