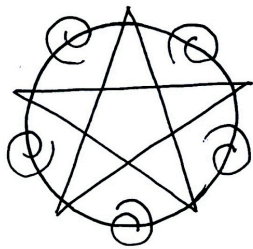
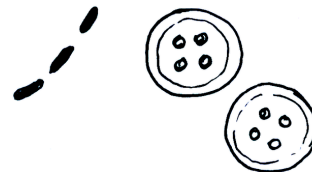


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BRIDGET OWENS
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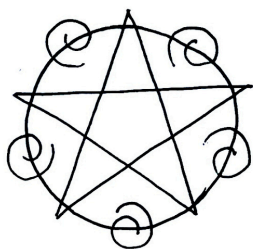
THE PERFECT FIT



IS YOUR
PATH
AND
PRACTICE
AUTHENTIC?

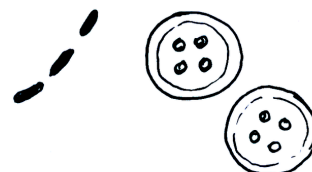
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THE PERFECT FIT



IS YOUR
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Our spirituality is like the clothes we wear.

We have lots of options to choose from.



Assumptions get made about us based on what we've chosen.

~ ~ ~
BUT WHAT MAKES A
SPIRITUAL PATH OR
PRACTICE AUTHENTIC?
~ ~ ~



Back to the clothing analogy...
It's not the clothes themselves which make your outfit "authentic."

~ It's how they fit you and express who you are! ~

What's authentic on one person can be a costume on someone else.

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WHERE TO START:

- Think about what aspects of path and practice are most important to you: community? ritual? tradition? support? answers? service? identity?...
Focus on finding the high priority stuff first — and they don't have to be found in traditional places!
- Consider taking some time away from active practice or participation in spiritual things to see what parts you miss and what parts you don't miss.
- Examine your own personal ethics and worldview. What do you believe? Build your practice on that foundation rather than trying to fit onto a path which might contradict your core beliefs.

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- The key to a path and practice that's authentic -
- is understanding what you need from it! -

Instead of shopping for a new path, start by digging into what you have found fulfilling, troubling, unnecessary, or missing in previous paths. Keep what works, let go of what doesn't.



Think about why you want or need different aspects of your practice so you aren't constantly chasing ideas and switching paths. Then you'll know more quickly what might fit and what will not.

Be prepared to tailor things to fit you!
You are unique, so you deserve a customized practice!



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So here's the big question:
((IS YOUR PATH JUST A COSTUME))
((OR AN ILL-FITTING OUTFIT?))

Does it make you feel comfortable, empowered, and confident?



Or do you feel like the fit isn't quite right?

Is it something you've chosen for yourself?

Or is it yours because you feel like it's what you should choose?



- Does it fit who you are -
- or do you change yourself -
- to fit into it? -

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We are all* born into and raised with a set of spiritual beliefs and/or practices that we don't choose for ourselves, just like the way our parents chose what we wore when we were kids.



*yes, even if you were raised atheist- those are still beliefs :)

But those choices reflect who our parents are, not who WE are!

So as kids, we wear and believe the things chosen for us.



We have fun playing dress-up and make-believe and wear costumes.

BUT WHAT ABOUT WHEN WE GROW UP AND AREN'T LITTLE KIDS ANYMORE?

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Or... some of us will turn to the most common, most accepted path based on where we are and who we spend time with. We put it on like a uniform.



BUT IS THE COMFORT OF BELONGING THE SAME AS THE COMFORT OF AUTHENTICITY?

Culture and community are valuable and important parts of spirituality, but pressure to conform can become as uncomfy as an ugly, unflattering uniform - and a common reason people leave their path.



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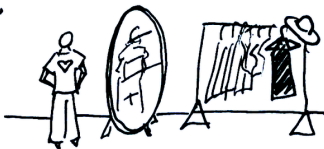
For many of us, the first instinct is to look at other people's paths and try out the ones which look interesting, kind of like modeling your look on people whose fashion sense you admire.



○ ~~~~~ ○
 (BUT HOW IS THIS THAT)
 (MUCH DIFFERENT FROM)
 (FOLLOWING YOUR BIRTH PATH?)
 ○ ~~~~~ ○

What fits someone else isn't necessarily a good fit for you, even if it looks interesting.

Most of the trial-and-error paths also get left behind because they aren't authentic - just like trendy clothes you never actually wear.



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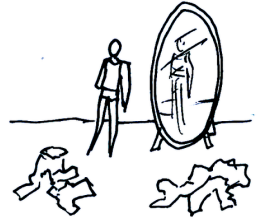
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As we get older, we all end up needing different things from our paths and practices.

There's no such thing as one-size-fits-all when it comes to spirituality!



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 (HAS IT EVER FELT LIKE)
 (SOMETHING WAS MISSING?)
 ○ ~~~~~ ○



We experience different things which shape who we are.

We outgrow things.

We set different goals for our lives and live in different circumstances.

➤ Eventually something ➤
 has to change! ➤

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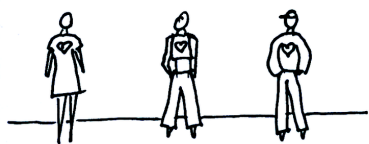
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If you're very, very lucky, the path your parents picked for you can grow with you and fill all your spiritual needs as you get older with very few or only small adjustments.

Like accessorizing an outfit,
you can add and change
elements of your
core practice!



And practices evolve over time, just like fashion trends.

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Lots of us end up feeling out of place on the paths we were raised to follow.



We struggle with fitting into the expectations or culture, like clothes in the wrong size.

We realize it doesn't reflect our values or who we are as an individual, like an outfit someone else picks out for us.



Even if there are parts that we like, we don't have to keep it all!

It's absolutely possible to find a path and practice which fits like a glove. The question is...

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