



Becoming yourself

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Becoming Yourself

Summary:

Becoming yourself is a continuous , non , linear journey of integrating your past , your culture , and your inner truths. It involves both shadow work , facing hidden emotions and past hurts , and aspirational work , actively building a future aligned with your values. The path requires daily choices to honor your authentic voice , leading to a life that feels genuinely your own , even within the context of family and cultural expectations. This is the foundational work for true peace and purpose.

Free Article Text:

Becoming Yourself: The Journey from Who You Were Told to Be to Who You Actually Are Becoming yourself is a continuous , non , linear journey of integrating your past , your culture , and your inner truths. It involves both shadow work , facing hidden emotions and past hurts , and aspirational work , actively building a future aligned with your values. The path requires daily choices to honor your authentic voice , leading to a life that feels genuinely your own , even within the context of family and cultural expectations. This is the foundational work for true peace and purpose.

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Becoming Yourself: The Only Journey That Matters

There is a quiet space inside you that knows. It knows when you're pretending. It knows when you're saying yes but meaning no. It knows when the life you're living belongs to someone else's script. This isn't about dramatic reinvention. It's about the slow, deliberate work of coming home to yourself. It's about becoming yourself. For many of us here, the question of who we are gets tangled with who we were told to be. Family expectations. Cultural scripts. Religious doctrines. Social media personas. They all layer over that quiet inner voice until it becomes a whisper you have to strain to hear. The journey of becoming yourself is the process of cleaning those layers away. Not to reject where you come from, but to integrate it with where your soul wants to go.

The Unspoken Truth About Finding Your Authentic Self

Listening to the discomfort that signals misalignment
Questioning inherited beliefs without disrespecting your roots
Embracing the parts of yourself you were taught to hide
Making choices that feel true, even when they're not popular
Building a life that reflects your internal values, not external validation

Why This Path Feels So Lonely and So Necessary

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I think about this journey a lot. I'm 28 , living in Ilorin , and some days it feels like I'm navigating two different worlds. There's the world of expectations , what a good son or daughter should be , what success looks like to my parents , what our culture says about responsibility and duty. Then there's this other world inside me. It's quieter. It's messier. It's full of questions and desires that don't always fit the template. Becoming yourself is about building a bridge between those two worlds. It starts with noticing the disconnect. That feeling in your chest when you're doing something because you 'should , ' not because you want to. The exhaustion that comes from performing a version of yourself that pleases others. The subtle anxiety that whispers , 'This isn't you.' That feeling is your authenticity trying to speak. It's not an enemy. It's a guide. For a long time , I thought becoming myself meant finding one true , fixed identity. I was looking for a finished product. A completed version of me I could point to and say , 'There. That's who I am.' Life doesn't work like that. We're not statues. We're rivers. We flow. We change. The you of five years ago isn't the you of today , and the you of five years from now is waiting to be discovered. Becoming yourself is a continuous process , not a final destination. It's about alignment , not perfection. A big part of this work is what some call shadow work. It sounds intense , but it's really about honesty. It's looking at the parts of yourself you've been taught to hide. The anger you swallow. The sadness you mask with a smile. The desires you're ashamed of. The past hurts you pretend didn't happen. In our culture , we're often taught to present a strong , unified front. To not air our dirty laundry. But your shadow isn't dirty laundry. It's just the parts of you that didn't get enough light. When you ignore those parts , they don't disappear. They control you from the basement of your psyche. A burst of unexplained anger. A pattern of self , sabotage. A deep , seated fear of rejection. These are often shadows knocking , asking to be acknowledged. Becoming yourself requires turning on the light in those basement rooms. It means sitting with your jealousy , your pettiness , your fear , your grief , and asking , 'What are you trying to tell me?'

This isn't about indulging negativity. It's about understanding it so it stops running your life. There's another side to this coin. The yin side , as some frameworks call it. This is the aspirational you. The part that dreams. The part that seeks growth , clarity , and love. This is the energy of intention. It's not enough to just dig into your past and your pain. You also have to actively build the future you want. You have to define what a good life means to you , not to Instagram or your extended family. This is where it gets practical. What do you actually value? Not what you were told to value. What are your core beliefs? What kind of person

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A personal exploration of the journey to authenticity from a Nigerian perspective. This is about integrating your past , your culture , and your deepest desires to build a life that feels true.

Completely free Article:

TL;DR Becoming yourself is not about creating a new person. It is about uncovering the person you already are. This idea , central to Shunryu Suzuki's teachings in his book Becoming Yourself: Teachings on the Zen Way of Life , offers a quiet antidote to the noise of modern life. It is a process of letting go of rigid self , concepts , societal pressures , and the constant need for external validation. For many in Ilorin and across Nigeria , where community expectations and personal ambition often intertwine , this path involves recognizing your inherent worth without the titles , achievements , or social media metrics. It means finding calm in the middle of Lagos traffic , patience during a power cut , and authenticity in daily interactions. Suzuki's work , available as a Becoming Yourself Suzuki PDF or in print , provides practical wisdom for this journey , emphasizing mindfulness , acceptance , and the courage to be present with whatever life brings , whether suffering or joy.

The Search for Self in a Noisy World

We spend a lot of time trying to become someone. Someone smarter , richer , more respected. Someone our parents will be proud of , our friends will admire , our community will celebrate. In Ilorin , as in many places , this pursuit is woven into the fabric of ambition. You see it in the student studying late into the night for JAMB , the trader expanding their business along Taiwo Road , the professional building a career in Abuja or Lagos. The goal is always ahead , just out of reach.

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But what if the goal is not ahead? What if it is right here , within you , already complete? This is the quiet , revolutionary question posed by Shunryu Suzuki's book , *Becoming Yourself: Teachings on the Zen Way of Life*. The title itself seems like a contradiction. How can you become what you already are? This puzzle is the heart of the matter. Suzuki , a Japanese Zen master who helped bring Zen Buddhism to the West , taught that our fundamental nature is already whole and enlightened. Our suffering comes from forgetting this , from layering on ideas of who we should be until we lose touch with who we are.

This is not abstract philosophy. It is a practical guide for living. When you are stuck in traffic on the Geri Alimi split , frustration boiling over , that is a moment to practice becoming yourself. It means feeling the frustration without letting it define your entire day. When you face disappointment , it means acknowledging the pain without building a story of failure around it. Suzuki's teachings , discussed in countless *Becoming Yourself Suzuki* reviews and on platforms like *Becoming Yourself Suzuki Goodreads* , point toward a way of life rooted in presence rather than projection.

Shunryu Suzuki's Core Teachings: Effort Without Struggle

Shunryu Suzuki's genius was in making profound wisdom accessible. He did not speak of lofty , unreachable states. He spoke about sitting , breathing , and chopping vegetables. His most famous book , *Zen Mind , Beginner's Mind* , laid the foundation , and *Becoming Yourself* expands on these ideas for everyday living. A common thread in *Becoming Yourself: teachings on the Zen way of life* reviews is how his words cut through mental clutter.

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One of his central teachings is to accept things as they are. This is often misunderstood as passivity. In the Nigerian context, it does not mean accepting corruption or injustice. It means accepting the reality of a situation as the starting point for clear action. You cannot fix a leaking roof by pretending it is not raining. Acceptance is the first step toward repair. It is about seeing the NEPA bill for what it is, a fact, before deciding how to manage the cost.

Another key teaching is the value of beginner's mind. This is an attitude of openness and curiosity, free from the preconceptions that experts carry. Imagine learning to make amala for the first time. You pay close attention to the yam flour, the water, the stirring. You are fully engaged. Beginner's mind invites you to bring that fresh attention to every aspect of your life, even tasks you have done a thousand times. It turns routine into discovery.

Suzuki also emphasized zazen, or seated meditation. This is not about emptying the mind or achieving bliss. It is about sitting with whatever arises, thoughts of work, the sound of generators, memories, plans, and simply observing without getting tangled up. It is training in being present. As one reader noted on Becoming yourself teachings on the zen way of life Goodreads, this practice creates a stable inner space amidst external chaos. We practice meditation to have an open, flexible, and awakened mind. [Shunryu Suzuki, Zen teacher, 1970] [1].

Key Takeaway: Suzuki's path is about effortless effort. It is the discipline of showing up without forcing an outcome, of accepting the present moment as the only place where real change can begin.

Becoming Yourself in Ilorin, Kwara: A Local Perspective

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The journey of self , discovery is universal , but it wears local clothes. In Ilorin , a city known for its blend of tradition , academia , and commerce , the pressures that shape identity are specific. There is the weight of familial expectation , the drive for educational excellence symbolized by the University of Ilorin , and the entrepreneurial hustle visible in every market from Oja , Oba to Kulende.

Becoming yourself here might mean navigating the space between individual aspiration and communal responsibility. It could be a young graduate choosing a creative path over a conventional civil service job , finding the courage to say , -This is who I am , - even when it defies expectation. It might look like a woman balancing her career with cultural roles , defining success on her own terms.

Local traditions also offer metaphors for this inner work. The patience and skill required for adire dyeing , tying , dipping , waiting , mirror the process of self , discovery. You cannot rush the pattern to emerge. The communal spirit of an esusu savings group reflects interdependence , reminding us that becoming yourself does not mean isolation. You are an individual within a community.

Even daily challenges become part of the practice. The infamous Nigerian -waiting- , for service , for electricity , for approval , can be a furnace for cultivating patience or a trigger for frustration. Suzuki-s teaching invites you to use that very waiting. Instead of fighting it , you can feel the heat , notice your impatience , and come back to your breath. In that small act , you reclaim your peace from the circumstance. A 2023 survey by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics noted that over 70% of urban residents cite daily stressors related to infrastructure and economic uncertainty as major impacts on their mental well , being [2]. Practices that build internal resilience are not a luxury; they are a practical necessity.

Key Takeaway: Your environment is not an obstacle to your growth; it is the very ground where it happens. The specific pressures of life in Kwara are the materials you work with to build a genuine self.

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What Becoming Yourself Is Not: Dispelling Myths

Before going further , it helps to clear up common misunderstandings. The phrase 'becoming yourself' can be hijacked by shallow or harmful ideas.

It is not self , indulgence. This is not about doing whatever you feel like without regard for others. Authenticity is not an excuse for rudeness or irresponsibility. True self , discovery includes compassion and respect for those around you.

It is not a final destination. You do not one day 'arrive' as your fully , formed , perfect self. Suzuki saw it as an endless , dynamic process. 'To be yourself is to be in the flow of life , constantly changing and growing.' [David Chadwick , biographer of Suzuki , 2022] [3]. It is more like a river than a statue.

It is not about rejecting all influence. You are shaped by your Yoruba heritage , your family , your faith , your education in Ilorin. Becoming yourself is not about erasing these influences but about consciously integrating them. You decide what resonates as true for you , rather than blindly following.

Importantly , it has no connection to harmful ideologies. Online searches sometimes mistakenly link the phrase to extreme topics. It is critical to distinguish Suzuki's Zen teachings from entirely unrelated and harmful materials. For clarity , the philosophical and spiritual journey discussed here is about liberation and peace , not control or abuse. Resources like the official publisher's page provide authoritative information on Suzuki's work.

Practical Steps on the Path: From Concept to Daily Life

How do you move from understanding to living? Here are ways to incorporate this wisdom into a busy life in Nigeria.

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Start with mindfulness. You do not need a silent retreat. For two minutes a day , just sit. Feel the chair under you , the air on your skin. When your mind runs to your to , do list , gently bring it back. This simple act trains your mind to be present. Apps like Insight Timer offer free guided sessions , but you need nothing but a few moments of quiet.

Practice one thing at a time. When you are eating jollof rice , just eat. Taste it. When you are walking to your gate , just walk. Feel your steps. We often eat while watching TV , plan while listening , multitask constantly. Single , tasking is a radical act of becoming present.

Question your -shoulds-. Where did the idea come from that you should be married by 30? That you should own a house before 40? Write down the pressures you feel. Ask yourself , -Is this truly my desire , or a script I inherited?-. This audit creates space for your own voice to emerge.

Embrace -good enough-. Perfectionism is a major barrier to authenticity. The pursuit of the perfect job , perfect body , or perfect post on Instagram keeps you chasing a phantom. Suzuki taught that enlightenment is found in the ordinary , imperfect moment. Sending a -good enough- report , cooking a simple egusi soup , having an imperfect conversation , these are the real stuff of life.

Connect with nature. Visit the University of Ilorin botanical garden or simply notice a tree in your compound. Nature does not try to be anything other than what it is. A flower blooms without checking Instagram for validation. Spending time in nature gently reminds you of this natural state of being.

Key Takeaway: The path is made of small , consistent steps , not grand gestures. Integrating mindfulness and self , inquiry into daily routines builds the foundation for authentic living.

Finding Guidance: Books , Reviews , and Community

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While the journey is personal , guidance helps. Shunryu Suzuki's *Becoming Yourself* is a primary source. You can find it in bookshops in Ilorin , order it online , or , for those seeking immediate access , look for a legitimate *Becoming Yourself Suzuki* PDF from reputable library or educational sites. Reading it slowly , a few pages a day , allows the ideas to sink in.

Engaging with others' perspectives can deepen your understanding. Browsing *Becoming Yourself Suzuki* review articles or the reader discussions on *Becoming Yourself Suzuki* Goodreads shows how different people apply the teachings. You will see that some struggle with the concepts , while others find them life , changing. This normalizes your own experience.

Consider if a local community exists. Are there meditation or mindfulness groups in Ilorin? Sometimes churches or community centers host sessions on contemplative practices. Connecting with others on a similar path provides support and shared insight.

Finally , remember the most important resource is you. Your own awareness , your breath , your daily life is the ultimate text. As psychologist Dr. Nneka Okeke notes , 'Therapeutic and spiritual frameworks from other cultures , like Zen , can be powerfully adapted. The core task , developing a non , judgmental awareness of one's own mind , is universally beneficial for mental health , particularly in high , stress environments.' [Dr. Nneka Okeke , Clinical Psychologist , 2023] [4].

The Continuous Journey

Becoming yourself is the work of a lifetime. There will be days you feel connected and authentic , and days you feel lost in old patterns. That is okay. The point is not to achieve a permanent state of enlightenment but to return , again and again , to the present moment with kindness.

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It is no wonder that some , as the initial question posed , find Suzuki's teachings to be a form of medicine for suffering. In a world that constantly asks you to be more , buy more , and achieve more , his voice is a gentle reminder: you are already enough. Your task is not to build a better self but to uncover the original one , like a sculptor revealing the statue within the stone.

This journey begins right where you are. In your office in Ilorin. In your kitchen. In the quiet moment before sleep. You do not need special equipment or to be someone else. You simply need to show up , as you are , and begin.

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