

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO AUTHENTIC EXPRESSION

Finding YOUR **Voice**

*Owning Your Authentic Voice —
In Your Career, Your Calling,
Your Relationships, and Your Sense of Self*

FINDING YOUR VOICE

A Practical Guide to Identifying and Owning Your Authentic Voice — In Your Career, Your Calling, Your Relationships, and Your Sense of Self

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In the following pages you will find a practical, story-driven guide that helps women identify the voice they buried under years of silence and others expectations, giving them the courage and the tools to reclaim it. Someone out there needs to hear your story and your authentic voice. Don't make them wait!

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INTRODUCTION: THE VOICE YOU BURIED

There was a version of you who spoke without apologizing first. Who said what she meant and meant what she said. Who walked into a room and didn't shrink to fit in.

Where did she go?

She didn't disappear. She got buried. Under the opinions of others who needed you quiet. Under the roles you took on because someone had to. Under years of “that's just how I am,” when the truth was, that's just how you learned to survive.

This is not a message within an E-book about becoming someone new. You don't need a new voice. You need to excavate the one that's already yours, and then have the courage to use it. That's the work. That's what we're doing here.

FINDING YOUR VOICE IN YOUR CAREER

Somewhere along the way, you learned that agreeable was safer than honest. That the fastest way through a meeting was to nod along, even when something in you was saying no. That being liked mattered more than being respected.

Ask yourself this: when was the last time you said what you actually thought in a room full of people who could say no to you?

Your voice in your career isn't about being the loudest person in the room. It's about being the truest one. It's the difference between asking for what you're worth and hoping someone *eventually* offers it. It's the difference between leading a meeting and surviving it.

Owning your voice at work starts small. Say the sentence you've been editing in your head. Ask the question everyone else is thinking but won't say out loud. Try changing every email from “I just wanted to.” You don't just want to. You want to. Say it plainly.

Your competence got you in the room. Your voice is what keeps you standing in it.

I've watched women with twenty years of expertise defer to someone with only two years experience, simply because they'd learned that speaking up cost more than staying quiet. It doesn't have to cost you anything. Practice saying your idea out loud before the meeting, to yourself, to a mirror, to a trusted friend, so the words are already familiar when the room goes quiet and waits for someone to fill it. Let that someone be you.

FINDING YOUR VOICE IN YOUR CALLING

Somewhere, someone told you that a godly woman is a quiet woman. That serving well means staying small. That your calling is only legitimate if it's comfortable for everyone else around you.

I want to challenge that, gently but directly. Esther didn't stay quiet. Deborah didn't stay quiet. The woman at the well didn't stay quiet once she'd met the truth. Scripture is full of women who found their voice at exactly the moment it mattered most, and used it.

Your ministry voice is not separate from your authentic voice. It's an expression of it. If you feel called to teach, then teach. If you feel called to lead, then lead. If God has put a truth in you that the people around you need to hear, your silence doesn't protect anyone. It only delays what was always meant to happen through you.

Ask yourself: am I staying quiet out of humility, or out of fear dressed up as humility? Those are two very different things, and only one of them is true.

Humility bows the knee. Fear ties the tongue. Learn to tell them apart in your own life, and you'll start to notice how often you called it modesty when it was actually self-protection. God did not gift you a voice so you could bury it in a closet marked "someday." He gifted it so you could use it now, in the classroom, at the pulpit, around the kitchen table, wherever He's placed you.

FINDING YOUR VOICE IN YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

This is where it gets personal, because the people closest to you are usually the ones who benefit most from your silence, and the ones most unsettled when you stop offering it.

You've learned to swallow what you feel to keep the peace. But here's the truth nobody tells you: what you don't say doesn't disappear. It just moves underground, and it comes out sideways, in health issues, as resentment, as distance, as a version of you that's present in the room but absent from the relationship.

Real intimacy or what I call in-to-me see requires a voice. You cannot be fully known by someone if you are only showing them the parts of yourself you've decided are safe. Your spouse, family members, friends, co-workers, or neighbors, cannot meet a need you never name. Your friends cannot honor a boundary you never set.

Your children, grand-children cannot learn to use their own voice if they never watch you use yours.

This doesn't mean every thought deserves to be spoken in every moment. Wisdom still matters. But there is a world of difference between choosing your words and erasing yourself. One is discernment. The other is disappearance.

Ask yourself: in my closest relationships, am I known, or am I just familiar?

Familiar is easy. Familiar is the routine, the roles everyone's memorized, the version of you that never surprises anyone because she never risks anything. Known is harder. Known means someone has heard your actual voice, not the edited one, and chose to stay anyway. That's not a risk you take once. It's a practice you return to, one honest conversation at a time.

FINDING YOUR VOICE IN YOUR SENSE OF SELF

Here is the foundation underneath everything else. You cannot speak with authority in your career, your calling, or your relationships if you don't first believe you have something worth saying.

This is where the real excavation work happens. Not in learning a new skill or memorizing the right words, but in going back and asking the harder questions. Who told you that you were too much? Who taught you that your opinions were a burden or didn't matter? Whose voice have you been living from instead of your own?

Somewhere along the way, most of us traded our authentic voice for an approved one. We learned to speak the version of ourselves that got the best reaction, instead of the version that was actually true. That trade off might have kept you safe for a season. But it will never make you whole.

Finding your voice in your sense of self means separating the gold from the fool's gold. The gold is the truth of who you actually are, underneath every role, every expectation, every apology you've made for taking up space. The fool's gold is the performance, the persona, the version of you that was built to be palatable rather than authentic.

You already know which one is which. You've known for a long time. The question is whether you're ready to stop mining for approval and start mining for truth.

This is the excavation work I do with every woman I coach. We don't build a new identity from scratch, because that's exhausting and it never lasts. We dig. We

remove what was piled on top of the truth by others fear, their comfort, other people's need for you to stay small. And underneath all of it, every single time, we find the same thing: a woman who was there the whole time, just waiting to be uncovered.

WHERE TO BEGIN

You don't have to overhaul your entire life this week. Start with one room. One relationship. One conversation. Notice the moment your voice wants to disappear, and instead of letting it, stay present. Say the true thing, even if your voice shakes. Especially if your voice shakes. A shaking voice is not a sign that you shouldn't speak. It's a sign that what you're about to say actually matters.

Keep a short list, in your journal or on your phone, of the moments you spoke when you wanted to disappear. Read it back on the hard days. You will be surprised how quickly the evidence adds up that the old story about you, the quiet one, the agreeable one, the one who takes up as little space as possible, was never actually true.

THE INVITATION

Your voice is not something you need to invent. It is something you need to reclaim. It has been there the entire time, waiting under the noise, waiting for you to stop apologizing for it and start using it.

This doesn't happen overnight, and it doesn't happen by accident. It happens one honest sentence at a time. One healthy boundary set in place. One unedited truth spoken out loud to someone who needed to hear it.

So here is your invitation. Say the thing. Ask the question. Take up the space you were always meant to take up. There is no need to apologize for who you are, the dreams you carry or the life you want to share with others.

Five Tips to Finding Your Voice You Can Use Today:

1. Say your next idea out loud. Practice it in the mirror, in the car, or to a friend, so the words are already familiar when the conversation goes quiet and needs someone to fill it.
2. Name the pull, write down in one sentence the thing you've been circling but haven't said out loud yet, whether it's "I want to lead," "I want to teach," or "I want to build something that matters," because putting it on paper makes it real. Statistics show that you increase reaching your goals when shared with

a trusted friend who is willing to encourage you to follow through. Like a buddy system.

3. Tell one truth in one relationship this week, it can be as small as "I'm not fine" when someone asks, or as brave as "I need something to change," but stop editing yourself long enough to let someone actually hear you.
4. Journal three unfinished sentences tonight, "The voice I've been performing sounds like ____." "The voice I buried sounds like ____." "The moment I stopped trusting my own voice was ____." You don't have to share it with anyone, just let yourself see it written down.
5. Start an evidence list, keep a running record on your phone or in your journal of every time you spoke up when you wanted to disappear, and read it back on the hard days when the old story tries to creep back in, because that list is living proof that the quiet version of you was never the truest one.

Your voice was never the problem. Your silence was.

It's time to stand up and speak.

CHEERS!

Coach Debra

YOUR EXCAVATION WORK

A few minutes with these questions and action steps from Finding Your Voice will help what you just read actually change something.

CAREER

When was the last time you said what you actually thought in a room full of people who could say no to you?

CALLING

Am I staying quiet out of humility, or out of fear dressed up as humility? Those are two very different things, and only one of them is holy.

RELATIONSHIPS

In my closest relationships, am I known, or am I just familiar?

FIVE TIPS CHECKLIST

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