

# Play it unsafe

*Always making safe decisions? It's time to shake up your life. Three coaches pose questions you need to ask yourself*

## *Q. IF I WERE LIVING AUTHENTICALLY, WHO WOULD I BE?*

*Kirsten Long, life coach: <http://coach4life.co.za>*

*A.* We often focus on “having” goals that leave us feeling empty when achieved. It's far more powerful and meaningful to focus on “being” or character goals. This kind of goal is about finding your wisdom, living to your strengths and being the sort of person you most want to be.

Start by contemplating – even better, writing in your journal – the question: “Who is the real me?” Spend a good 40 minutes writing. Remember, you didn't come into this world to shrink or play small. You came here to find your voice and take your place in the world. If you were living authentically, who would you be? What kind of thoughts and behaviours would you exhibit?



We often joke about wanting to be like someone else “when we grow up”. Who do you want to be like when you “grow up”? Think about the kind of person you admire. What characteristics do they display that you find inspiring? Write down 10 of those qualities you’d like to acquire.

Choose one characteristic a month that you’d like to develop. Remember, integrating a change takes time, so be patient. Focus on living every day with that attribute in strong focus. For example, if you want to be kind, behave in a kind way at least three times each day. At the end of each day, ask yourself: “When was I kind and when did I miss an opportunity to be kind?” After living as a kind person for a month, you’ll experience what it would be like to be kind. At the end of the month, run this value check: did living this way feel authentic? Did it allow for happiness? If it felt right for you, keep going with it. If not, pick another characteristic and work on that.

The most substantive goals are ones of “being”. Focus on becoming who you’re capable of being and the rest will fall into place.

### *Q. DOES THIS SERVE ME NOW?*

*Kate Emmerson, the Quick Shift Deva: [www.kate-emmerson.com](http://www.kate-emmerson.com)*

*A.* Clutter is anything that no longer serves you, for whatever reason. Whether it’s outdated clothes, messy paperwork, limiting beliefs that clutter your mind or congested circulation in your body, you can put clutter under the same all-encompassing definition. This opens up your perspective of what it entails. Even if you think that you’re the neatest, best-ordered and most organised person, you can start viewing your stuff (be it things, people or anything else) with a fresh perspective and scrutinising it with this broader definition.

Doing so also lets you off the hook a little – because at some point your clutter did, and possibly still does, serve you. Perhaps the red dress that once grabbed attention from

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admirers; the gym equipment you bought and started using to shed extra kilos; the papers that defined your life; the magazines you bought in anticipation of inspiring ideas; the knick-knacks and antiques that beautified your home; the stuff you needed to buy when more people lived there; the friends who completed your life; the smoking habit you took up to feel more confident at parties in your 20s; the pain, illness or even excess weight you manifested to protect yourself; the shopping you did when not knowing how to deal with your emotions –

all of those things somehow served you at *that* moment.

So the question: “Does this serve me *now*?” isn’t about judgement, which merely exacerbates how you feel about yourself. It’s not about guilt, shame or blame. It’s not about whether your clutter’s good or bad, valuable or rubbish, right or wrong, positive or negative, but about whether that stuff is still serving you *now*.

It simply means being in the present and evaluating everything and everyone in your life.

· *Extracted from Clear Your Clutter With Kate Emmerson (Metz Press), R160, available at all good bookstores and from Emmerson’s website*

### *Q. IS MY VALUE SYSTEM MY LIFE COMPASS?*

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*A.* Do you often find yourself faced with an overwhelming number of things to do and even more alternative ways of getting them done? As a coach, facilitator, mother and partner running a household of five (as well as three dogs!), I often feel far-stretched and this can cause much confusion in terms of where and what to prioritise.

Over the years I’ve found that the one simple truth which has always guided me and my clients is the question: “Is this thing/person/task helping me live in better accordance with my value system?”

What are values? They’re those inner standards from which you receive the motivation to act as you do and by which you judge behaviour (both your own and that of others).

Your value system is what’s at the core of you as a person; the fundamentals that make you who you are and allow you to feel that you’re living your truest life to the best of your ability.

The way we show that our life compass is driven by our value system is by evaluating whether our time, energy, resources and priorities are in line with what we claim our core values are. For example, you can’t claim to value imparting love and knowledge to your children if you don’t actively prioritise time to practise this. If you value having a mutually respectful intimate partnership, you should make time to be present and communicate with your partner. Perhaps you value success in your business, which requires you to spend time planning and actioning what you’re required to do, no matter how enticing other frivolous tasks might be.

The starting point is to clarify what your personal values are. A great way to do this is by creating a personal vision board.

Set yourself reminders to check whether your life compass is being driven by your value system and reflects the things you hold dear. **D**