



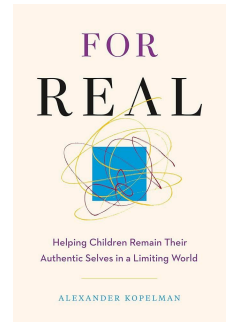
Wicked BooksmART - MAEA Book Study

For Real: Helping Children Remain Their Authentic Selves in a Limiting World

by Alexander Kopelman

Dates: 7/8; 7/15; 7/22; 7/29; 8/5; 8/12

Facilitator: Alexander Kopelman



Meeting Dates and Times:

Live Zoom Meetings: Wednesdays at 7:00–7:30 pm ET on 7/8; 7:00–8:00 pm ET on 7/15, 7/22, 7/29, 8/5, and 8/12

- Week 1 (7/8): Warm Welcome and Introduction
- Week 2 (7/15): Chapters 1 and 2
- Week 3 (7/22): Chapters 3 and 4
- Week 4 (7/29): Chapter 5, Interlude, and Chapter 6
- Week 5 (8/5): Chapters 7 and 8
- Week 6 (8/12): Chapters 9 and 10 and Good Goodbye

Practicing authenticity is not an intellectual exercise. It requires that we engage fully with our minds, emotions, bodies, and spirits. To help you bring your whole self to learning, each chapter opens with an exercise designed to encourage you to experience how the subject covered in the chapter expresses itself in your life. In each chapter, the hands-on experience is placed in context through presentation of research and interviews with practitioners, experts, and children. Every chapter concludes by exploring how you can share these ideas with children, suggesting how to use the opening activity, and others like it, with kids.

To get the most out of our work together this summer, please allow ample time to do the hands-on activities and to reflect on the thoughts and feelings that come up as you do them. Also allow time to think about how you might incorporate some of these tools and ideas into your practice.

We will use Google Classroom to share information, pose questions, and engage in conversations. If you are unable to attend a live Zoom session, you may respond to the corresponding reflection prompt(s) and/or activities in the Google Classroom to receive credit for the week.

The work of practicing authenticity is done best when we gather in community to witness and support each other. Please plan to attend at least five of the six meetings of the group.

Description:

This six-week book study will explore *For Real: Helping Children Remain Their Authentic Selves in a Limiting World* by Alexander Kopelman, founding President & CEO of the Children's Arts Guild.

In our post-pandemic world, being able to read and follow your inner compass has never been more vital—nor has supporting kids in discovering who they are and growing into the people they want to be. *For Real* offers a hopeful, inspiring roadmap for guiding the next generation toward self-awareness, genuine belonging, and authenticity. It reminds us that we, as caregivers and educators, are essential guides on that journey.

Drawing on original research, conversations with leading psychologists and experts on childhood, and interviews with parents, educators, and children, *For Real* presents a framework for unpacking the societal messages that lead children to suppress parts of themselves—and offers practical, creative tools for supporting authentic self-discovery and expression.

Objectives of this Book Study:

Participants will be able to:

- Understand authenticity as an ongoing, subjective process of self-discovery and expression that is central to psychological well-being.
- Examine the societal forces—including socialization, adultism, shame, and adult expectations—that can lead children away from their authentic selves.
- Apply the WHOLE framework (Witness, Honest, Open, Loving, Expressive) to their own practice of authenticity.
- Use the LOVE framework (Learn, Open Doors and Windows, Validate, Engage) to foster authenticity in the children they care for.
- Learn to practice empathic listening and mindful communication with children.
- Explore how to support children in using creative self-expression—including art-making and storytelling—as tools for self-discovery.
- Develop an individualized plan for engaging the children in their lives in practicing authenticity.

Book Study will meet its purpose by:

- Facilitating participant understanding through discourse, personal reflection, and creative activities that deepen engagement with the material.
- Creating a safe, supportive community of practice in which participants can witness and encourage each other's authentic development.
- Providing structured weekly reading and activities tied directly to the book's Learning Spotlights and Practice Spotlights.
- Offering ongoing asynchronous engagement through the Google Classroom platform between live Zoom sessions.

Professional Development Points:

Participants will earn 20 PDPs after successful completion of all of the book group sessions.