

This Book ***The 5 Principles of Authentic Living***
was graciously and generously
given to Stillness Speaks
by the author Robert Rabbin for free use.

This portion of the book - TOC, Foreword, Preface, and Part ONE **plus** the 1st page of Part TWO **plus** Author BIO page (22 pages out of the 125 page book) - is being made available for the audience of Stillness Speaks.

Robert was a passionate teacher, story teller, and lifelong lover of truth. He dedicated his life to finding honest meaning in the stories that make up an individual.

Robert passed away in December 2017.

For Robert's teachings and background, please [visit his teacher page](#) on [Stillness Speaks](#).

We honor Robert's legacy by sharing his teachings via excerpts from this wonderful and insightful book ... and on Stillness Speaks.

As one of the testimonials says "*Robert's book is a must read for anyone genuinely interested in living the authentic life ...*" so give yourself the gift of ordering the full book directly from Amazon by [clicking here](#).

We are most grateful to have known Robert and deeply appreciated his generosity, wisdom, and humor. His physical presence will be dearly missed but his message, particularly of speaking and living truthfully, lives on!

Chris, Sanjiv, & Cherie
Stillness Speaks



The 5 Principles of Authentic Living

How to Live an Authentic Life in 10 Words



Robert Rabbin

The 5 Principles of Authentic Living

How to Live an Authentic Life in 10 Words

Robert Rabbin



“This is not your mama’s self-help book. This book grabs you by the shoulders and shakes you awake. Robert inspires you to walk the high wire of your own truth. I hope you know how insanely rare that is. Robert’s book has blown my mind.”

~ **Lisa Duff**, owner, Wetware Media

“Robert’s book is a must read for anyone genuinely interested in living the authentic life. His writing is powerful, evocative, and incredibly economical. The 5 Principles of Authentic Living — as expressed in just 10 words — exemplify this conciseness, this power, this high-density wisdom.”

~ **John E. Renesch**, global futurist, author of *Getting to the Better Future: A Matter of Conscious Choosing*

“Robert’s book is the answer to all my questions. After reading it I felt washed by a torrent of truth and love. The five principles have become a 24-hour practice for me, a pain in the ass in the beginning, but a nice pain, the one that hurts but feels good too because the principles work, to a depth that is so fulfilling and honest, so pure and true, that there is no other way around it. This book hasn’t only helped me but the loved ones around me; every time they come and complain or need an answer, I sing them the five principles mantra and they come back to themselves. I can only thank Robert for embodying such a powerful work, for being an authentic person living an authentic life, and for sharing it through this book in such a simple and direct way.”

~ **Myriam Negre**, artist, ceramist, photographer

“I am having a love affair with Robert’s new book, and it is killing me softly. You know the feeling: you have butterflies when reading it or thinking about it, which is all the time because it has become your new favorite obsession. You savor every page and never want it to end. Suddenly a new world has opened up inside of you, *for* you, and it’s the biggest, brightest wonderland of love and lust, of hope and hell, of pain and pleasure; a fantasy and reality rolled into an experience so exciting, so riveting, so personal that it’s even hard to talk about.”

~ **Shakaya Leone**, founder, Earth Empress

“The 10 simple words that make up The 5 Principles of Authentic Living, divined by Robert, have led me to deep personal liberation. Through becoming a student of all the wisdom that arises from actively living with these principles in my life, I have changed the very heart of where I think from. I express myself in freedom and as an act of love and service to those around me. No more do I moderate myself and shrink, nor do I have only one volume of communication. I am still vulnerable but I take the risk to put my liberated voice into the world and it’s always exhilarating. I now live at an edge that is wide awake, electrified. I trust myself. I enjoy my truth. I set myself free, 10 simple words at a time.”

~ **Lotus Indigo Shakti Kruse**, creatress of Wild Fires, writer, wild woman

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With heartfelt shout-outs to

Özlem, who said,

“Why don’t you write a book about authenticity?”

my sister Gina

for honoring me with her Foreword

my sister Sandra

for being the best baby sister a guy could have

my brothers Rick and Nino

for being my brothers

and my purple angel Jane Green

for her wholeheartedness and magic.

“However you think it is, it’s different from that.”

Jelaluddin Rumi, Persian mystic and poet, 13th century

“If you can only rid yourselves of conceptual thought, you will have accomplished everything. But if you students of the Way do not rid yourselves of conceptual thought in a flash, even though you strive for eon after eon, you will never accomplish anything.”

Huang Po, Chinese Zen master, 9th century

“The man who is really serious with the urge to find out what truth is, has no style at all. He lives only in what is. If you follow any classical pattern, you are understanding the routine, the tradition, the shadow. You are not understanding yourself. Truth has no path. Truth is living and, therefore, changing. It has no resting place, no form, no organized institutions, no philosophy. When you see that, you will understand that this living thing is also what you are.”

Bruce Lee, Chinese-American martial arts master, 1940-1973

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FOREWORD

Gina Rabbin

I have known Robert for my entire life. He is one of my three brothers; I am one of his two sisters. Of the five of us, Robert and I are closest in age, a mere fourteen months apart.

Besides being closest in age, we are also closest in terms of the life path we have chosen and the work we do. Robert began his path many years before I did, and for that I am grateful, as he's been a source of inspiration, wisdom, and knowledge for me while I've trailed behind him.

Others will tell you Robert's story, of how he has traveled and worked and lived throughout the world; trekked over mountains and deserts in countries now forbidden to us; spent years in India studying with a meditation master. You will hear of what a brilliant author he is, of books and articles and commentary; after all these years I still cannot read what he writes without catching my breath in wonder. There are those who will sing his praises as a speaker; I don't know of anyone else who can so spectacularly mesmerize a roomful of people with his words and his presence, and his silence.

But I wonder how many people know the Robert I know? I've known him from the beginning. I remember the years that came before, the years that contributed as much to who he is today as his travels and his studies, his writing and his speaking. Even as children, I remember how Robert saw things differently. He questioned everything and never accepted the standard responses. I think he knew, deep within, that what the rest of the world saw as reality was all just a game, that there was something much more profound everyone was ignoring. I'm not sure our parents knew what to make of him. Perhaps they felt, on some level, that he was mocking them and their lives. He wasn't. He just didn't buy into it. Sadly, our father died young. Had he lived, I know without a doubt that Robert would have inspired him to live more fully and more authentically and with more joy, the way he now inspires others.

How is Robert able to do this? What makes him such an inspiration, such a brilliant author and mesmerizing speaker? Yes, he is certainly gifted, but that gift wasn't offered to him on a silver platter. Robert has worked tirelessly for more than four decades to let his light shine as brightly as it does. I laugh when I hear people say they've been on a path of self-discovery for a year, or two years or five years, and isn't it enough already?

For more than 40 years, Robert has done the hard work. He's turned himself inside out; he's looked in every corner of his mind, body, and spirit; he's dissolved and re-formed again and again and again; he's faced his

shadows, engaged them in mortal combat, and ultimately embraced them and acknowledged them and thus released their power over him. He's read and studied and meditated and believed and then threw away all he'd read and studied and meditated on and believed in so he could go to the only place that truly mattered, to inner silence.

And in that inner silence, he realized that the real questions for him, the only questions, were: Who am I? and How shall I live? When he realized that these were the only questions that mattered, he found his authentic self. In letting go of his need to know, to understand, to explain, to be right, he found his authentic self. In letting go of his search for answers, the answers that were "out there" somewhere, he found his authentic self. When he began to live in the present, in the here and now, and to enjoy every moment of the here and now, he found his authentic self. When he understood that shadow and light, depth and surface, conscious and subconscious, heaven and earth, enlightened and mundane, were not in conflict, he found his authentic self. In finding his authentic self, he truly began to live.

I think this is what makes Robert brilliant, and what makes his work so distinctive and so valuable and so unique and life-altering. He is one of the truly authentic people in the world. When he writes, he writes from this place of authenticity. When he speaks, when he coaches, when he teaches, when he interacts with others, he does so from this place of authenticity. Every moment of his life is lived with authenticity.

There is a card in tarot called The Devil. Traditionally, this card represents the embodiment of materialism, the representation of all that society holds as evil and base and unspoken; it's about fears and superstitions and taboos. It is considered a "bad" card. I do not hold this view. I believe The Devil encourages us to live life to the fullest, to live with passion and lust and to allow ourselves the pleasures of great food, great sex, great adventures, great everything. I love this card. It's one of my favorites.

Robert is The Devil. He lives life, every moment of it, with passion and beauty and grace. He doesn't get caught up in other people's opinion of him. He doesn't get tangled in right or wrong, good or bad, should or ought to. He doesn't try to please everyone, or even to please anyone! He doesn't play roles or pretend to be something he's not or say what others may want to hear. He's big and bold and real and authentic.

And this is how, and what, he teaches. And this is why my brother is so brilliant at it.

“We sense that there is some sort of spirit that loves birds and animals and the ants — perhaps the same one who gave a radiance to you in your mother’s womb. Is it logical you would be walking around entirely orphaned now? The truth is you turned away yourself, and decided to go into the dark alone. Now you are tangled up in others, and have forgotten what you once knew, and that’s why everything you do has some weird failure in it.”

Kabir, Indian mystic and poet, 1440-1518 (tr. Robert Bly)

“The more you talk and think about it, the further astray you wander from the truth. Stop talking and thinking, and there is nothing you will not be able to know.”

Sengstan, third Zen patriarch, 6th century

“I will not die an unlived life
I will not live in fear
of falling or catching fire.”

Dawna Markova, Ph.D., author & speaker, 1942-

“To me, poetry is somebody standing up, so to speak, and saying, with as little
concealment as possible, what it is for him or her to be
on earth at this moment.”

Galway Kinnell, poet, 1927-2014

PREFACE

Robert Rabbin

In the following pages, I share with you what I call The 5 Principles of Authentic Living, which represent nearly 50 years of studying my mind and my self from various perspectives and methods. These principles comprise 10 simple words, two words per principle. They are my scripture, the book I use to live an authentic life. Ten words? That's it? Yes. Ten words. One word every five years. Fifty years: five principles set out in 10 words. Within these 10 words, I found what I'd been seeking my whole life.

My search began when I was 11 years old, lying in bed with a broken leg after a skiing mishap in Cervina, Italy. With nothing else to do, I skimmed through all the volumes of our encyclopedia. I was filled with an energy that expanded and excited me with wonder and awe — and intense curiosity. Life was immense! I developed a restless and questioning spirit, needing to know: *Who am I? What is my purpose? What is real?*

A few years later I truly began my spiritual quest in search of answers to my questions about life and living, reality and truth, meaning and purpose. I had one adventure after another.

I studied zazen and aikido in northern California. I studied Eastern philosophies and read the writings of mystics. I wrote poetry and took up rock climbing. I drove trucks and worked in factories. I was a short order cook and then a mountain guide in the Sierra Nevada, a stunning mountain range in California. I traveled restlessly throughout Europe, Scandinavia, and Israel. I worked as a baker in Germany and I built ammunition storage bunkers in the Sinai Desert near the Suez Canal. I ran from police in Paris and spent a night in an Indian jail. I ran in front of bulls in Pamplona, and I smoked hashish in Afghanistan. I caroused in jazz clubs and the red light district of Amsterdam. My questions pushed me from one place to another, from one experience to another, all the while looking for answers.

In 1973, I embarked on the overland route from Europe to India, carrying a 90-pound pack, loaded with climbing gear. I had planned, along with three friends, one of whom traveled with me, to sneak into Bhutan and live in the high mountains. After three months, I crossed the border from Pakistan to India and headed to New Delhi to meet the two friends who had flown in from Europe. I caught up with them the night before they were returning to the U.S. India proved too much for them. Bye-bye Bhutan. I took leave of my traveling companion and wandered around India for several months. I stayed in ashrams and sat in meditation retreats.

I sat a 30-day vipassana retreat with Goenka. I spent two weeks in the ashram of Satya Sai Baba. And then, one day, I walked into the ashram of Swami Muktananda. I spent the next 10 years with him. He was a master of *kundalini shaktipat* (spiritual energy transmission), a teacher of Vedanta and Kashmir Shaivism. But his essential teaching was deceptively simple. What he said was: *God dwells within you as you. Therefore, meditate on your own Self. When you know your own Self, you will know everything because that Self is the creative, intelligent power behind this whole universe.*

I understood God, self (I don't capitalize *self*), and the creative, intelligent power behind this whole universe to be one and the same. I took what he said to heart. I began to meditate on my own self. It wasn't long before I found an inner oasis of stillness, and then silence. During those 10 years with Muktananda and the many that followed, the silence deepened and began revealing what I had been looking for. I don't know exactly when it happened, but somewhere along the way everything just settled. I can't say how or why, because I truly do not know how or why. I had my answers, but they were different from what I thought they would be. Instead of planting my flag on the summit of absolute truth and certainty, I found no mountain and non-answers, or anti-answers. My questions dissolved and then disappeared — and so did my confusion and anxiety about life. I can't write more about *what* I found. I'm not that brave, or foolish. I can, however, tell you *where* I found everything I was looking for: The 5 Principles of Authentic Living. You see, over the years, my teacher's simple "Meditate on your own Self" became these five principles, and God and Self became an authentic life. The principles reflect how I continued to explore the inside while expressing on the outside.

With these five principles I found the fulfillment of my search for self-knowledge, for meaning and truth, for my place in the world. These five principles revealed the answers, and they continue to illuminate my path, moment by moment, effortlessly and flawlessly. I am never lost or confused. I always know where to go and what to do, just as I know when to be still and do nothing. With these five principles as my mentors, I know how to live authentically. I am able to remain awake and alert and keenly aware of life from the inside out, and from the outside in. I know how to tap into and touch the very core of my inner creative consciousness and power, a nonphysical place of continuous microcosmic Big Bangs. I know how to express some of the unlimited extravagance of that core, the billions of galaxies and who-knows-how-many dimensions, in unique and enlivening ways. Today, I live within the nuclear emptiness of these principles; they are my default posture in life. With these five principles, I enlighten myself from moment to moment in

order to live what I call an authentic life.

This book is divided into three parts. In Part One, I sketch my notions of an authentic life. In Part Two, I share The 5 Principles of Authentic Living, the 10 words that have provided the context for my creative and expressive life and work. In Part Three, I respond to 24 questions asked by friends, colleagues, clients, and students. I've selected questions that I feel are representative of the questions people ask who are seeking to know themselves and seeking to express their own authenticity. In responding to these questions, I've endeavored to explore the implications of the 10 words and show how powerfully pragmatic and practical these 10 words are in their virtually unlimited application to our lives.

In this third part, called Snapshots, I do not offer lengthy responses or solutions to questions, nor do I say everything I could say in response to the questions. This book is not an advice column; it is not a forum for all my opinions. It certainly cannot take the place of an intimate, one-to-one mentoring session. I want only to present the five principles as simply and directly as I can and illustrate how I use them in my life and work, and how you might do the same. I don't want to betray these modest intentions. I do relate some of my experiences and, from time to time, I share some of what I have noticed by living with the 10 words. These are offered, not as Truth, but as my truth. Please don't grab hold of any of these examples too tightly; please don't turn them into Truth or lifestyle templates. Think of them as color commentary to accompany and amplify my descriptions of the 10 words, and to illustrate how I live and work with them. In real life, when I'm speaking with others, what I say is necessarily connected to all the constituent elements of that place and time. If the words have meaning and relevance, it's for that place and time. Tibetan sand paintings are beautiful creations, but after they've been created, they are then swept away. So it is with whatever I say, or write. If you want to hold tight, hold tight to the five principles. Embody them.

I am not trying to persuade you of anything, nor am I trying to refute anything you might say or believe. I never try to be right; I'm not afraid of being wrong. I'm interested in authenticity and authentic self-expression. I don't believe my beliefs, and my truth as an expression of the five principles is always under construction.

As I've learned to better understand and embody these five principles, I've been able to illuminate my life path, clarify and resolve personal and interpersonal issues, awaken feelings of connection and empathy, birth creative solutions of all kinds, choose projects that support my authenticity, and be extremely effective and productive in my work. That is a short list of the "outputs" of the five principles as I use them. The actual experience of

living with them is one of silence, shakti, and spontaneity. I said at the end of a recent talk that these five principles are the whole of my life: they are all I know and everything I do. Perhaps they will work wonders for you, too.

In several places, I incorporate into my response one or more sound bites from *Sound Bites from Silence*, the book which I thought would be the final word of my writing career. When I use a sound bite, it's because I feel that it is as close as I can come to expressing the inexpressible.

A few words about what's missing in this book. Communication loses something vital without the energy of physical proximity and intimacy and connection, as I have with people in my talks. Spoken words have more immediacy and power than written words, though they may be less precise. Spoken words have spontaneity and magical powers of transmission. The cadence of spoken words can be like drum beats, wooden mallet against ancient log, evoking experience and meaning beyond the literalness of the words themselves, even inducing direct recognition of wordless truths. In live situations, there are many ways other than through the literal word in which meaningful communication occurs: eye contact, facial expression, body language, tone of voice, poignant pauses, and — most importantly — energetic transmission, shakti, swirling gusts of shakti to settle the mind into stillness and then silence.

Finally, though I have tried, I cannot offer any tips or techniques to help you practice the five principles. I don't use any. These five principles have become self-evident and self-sustaining. They are natural, easy, and effortless — and within everyone's ability and reach. One principle flows into the next, one stimulates and reinforces the next. In my talks, workshops, and individual sessions, I spend most of the time speaking *from*, not *about*, these principles. As I speak with people *from* these principles, responding to their questions and issues and concerns and aspirations, they, too, come to understand the principles and how to use them. My responses to people are made up in the moment — relevant, meaningful, and useful to that person at that time and place. The “technique” I use to teach the five principles and to demonstrate their many and varied applications is conversation with people in real time, eye to eye and heart to heart. It's live television; there are no rehearsals, laugh-tracks, or re-runs. And there is always a lot of shakti, and silence, usually laughter, sometimes tears. My whole kit of tools, tips, and techniques is this: 10 words, shakti, and silence.

The 5 Principles of Authentic Living are the nuggets I have collected from 50 years of panning and sifting for gold in streams and rivers throughout the world and within my self. I am very happy to share them with you.

PART ONE

AN AUTHENTIC LIFE

“Each man has only one genuine vocation — to find the way to himself. His task is to discover his own destiny — and live it out wholly and resolutely within himself. Everything else is only a would-be existence, an attempt at evasion, a flight back to the ideals of the masses, conformity, and fear of one’s own inwardness.”

Herman Hesse, Swiss novelist, 1877-1962

AN AUTHENTIC LIFE

The dictionary traces the origin of “authentic” to the Latin *authenticus* and the Greek *authentikós*: original, primary, at first hand; acting on one’s own authority. Our current English definitions include: not false or copied; genuine, real, actual, truthful; of undisputed origin or authorship.

Are we living a genuine, real, and truthful life, or a copycat life? Is our life a collage of the thoughts, ideas, beliefs, and opinions we’ve collected from others? Is our life real or rehearsed, genuine or counterfeit, sincere or phony? Acting on one’s own authority is a daring challenge.

Today’s marketplace has an abundance of people and products telling us how we should live, what to think, what to believe. We can find answers and solutions to every conceivable question and problem. Expert advice is everywhere. Some people even purport to know and teach the Truth, which is, from what people tell me, absolute. I, too, talk about truth, but you’ll notice my truth is spelled in lower case.

Truth with a lowercase t is different from Truth. I do not think that life is about absolutes, certainly our actual living day-to-day is anything but that. In my Speaking Truthfully master classes, where telling one’s truth is vital, I define it in this way: telling the truth means to communicate, verbally and non-verbally, what you honestly think, feel, want, and don’t want. There is nothing “absolute” in this. Telling one’s truth is not about being right or wrong, good or bad. It is about self-expression. It is a report, and if that report comes from a deep enough place, then it is the authentic report of one’s authentic self. Speaking one’s truth is the same as living one’s truth, because speaking is how we move in and through life. It is our life. Our authentic self is a moveable feast; it expands and evolves, like existence itself. That’s why telling the truth is so important. It’s how we discover and express our authentic self — moment to moment.

Who am I? What is real? What should I do? Where should I go? How should I live? These questions are the precursors to an authentic life. *Your* authentic life is *your* response to these kinds of questions. We’ve got to question, to inquire, to wonder, to probe. We’ve got to kick the tires of our own life. How do we begin questioning? Any way you want. Any way you can. There are many ways that life itself will cause us to start questioning. An epiphany, an experience of synchronicity, or an angelic encounter. Perhaps an illness or brush with death. Maybe a sudden loss or reversal. We often start questioning when our expectations are disappointed, when our plans are thwarted, when our beliefs are challenged — when something in our neat and tidy world is inexplicably upended. We often start questioning then. That’s the

beginning of being genuine, real, truthful; of acting on one's own authority.

Can anyone tell you what and where *your* authentic life is? I don't think so. You'll have to work all that out for yourself, just as I have for myself. Do your own work. Ask your own questions, and then answer them from within your own self. Find your own core of strength and clarity, your own center of confidence and courage, your own path and purpose. Don't be fooled by the abstractions in your head; engage and express. Life is a game for action figures. Life is for living. But you've got to live *your* life, speak *your* truth, find out what *you* want. I'm not speaking against useful information from others. I need help to learn about a new computer program. I go to a dentist when my teeth cry. I consult people more knowledgeable or skillful than I am in many areas. But, as for living an authentic life — that is an inside-out job. That is a matter of *self*-discovery and *self*-expression.

This questioning, this self-inquiry, has been important throughout my life. It's been crucial. It's everything. For me, living at the effect of another's authority, of another's truth, of another's set of answers to their questions is no life at all. It is too painful, isn't it, to live this way? It's hard to breathe, to sleep, to eat, to work, to function if you aren't living *your* life. If you aren't living your authentic life, how can you have any life force in you, how can you feel connected to and a part of this huge and gorgeous thing we call life, existence, the world, the cosmos. Until we wake up to an authentic life, to authentic living, everything we do will have a shadow of sadness and a subtle feeling of weird failure.

I've been living this way of self-inquiry for a very long time. It's taken me almost 50 years of work to cobble together these five principles set out in 10 words, and I'm happy to pass them along to you. They have enduring value to me, because I've found my authentic life in them. Actually, they *are* authenticity, they are the formula for and means of an authentic life. They are the context in which I create the authentic content of my life. These 10 words do not tell me, or you, what is true and false, right and wrong, good and bad in any absolute way. There is no Truth in them at all, no certainty, safety, or security, — no beliefs to believe in.

I offer only my truth about them, based on years and years of experience using them and embodying them: they are authenticity itself, an easy access point to the mind-boggling immensity of existence, in which we live and of which we are a part, an existence so vast, so intricate, so complex and multi-dimensional that we can spend several eternities exploring and discovering who we can be and what we can do in the voluptuous vortex of authenticity. I'll end with a sound bite.

The Authentic Life

*to live authentically, to be truly alive
is to be deeply immersed in this moment
in love with and connected to existence
this moment is not the moment we imagine
not the moment of our thoughts and beliefs about this moment
but this moment, as it is
shocking and sudden, overflowing with energy and surprise
this moment of light and stillness
this moment of beauty and silence
its seams are bursting with miracle and more*

what is this moment

*it is the intersection of time and eternity
a collision in which no thoughts, concepts, or beliefs survive
to confuse the mind
it is the pure state of the heart opened wide towards all
filling us with wonder and awe*

*here we are, in this endless existence
we have no center, no beginning, no ending
our center is everywhere
we begin and end here and there, and here again*

*this life is more open than the sky and heavens
in this openness there is no fear, no hiding, no secrets
nothing to protect, nothing to project*

*everything lives without prejudice
without hatred, without violence*

*this instant as it is, in silence
is the authentic moment, the authentic life*

PART TWO

THE 10 WORDS

Be Present
Pay Attention
Listen Deeply
Speak Truthfully
Act Creatively

“If you use your mind to study reality, you won’t understand either your mind or reality. If you study reality without using your mind, you’ll understand both.”

Bodhidharma, Indian Buddhist monk, 6th century

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

ROBERT RABBIN

Robert is an iconoclastic self-awareness facilitator, speaker, and writer. For more than 25 years, he has provided unconventional programs in self-inquiry, authentic living, and public speaking; as well as being a mentor and advisor to individuals, entrepreneurs, professionals, and executives.

Robert has published eight books and more than 250 articles on the themes of meditation, self-inquiry, leadership, public speaking, authentic self-expression, and spiritual activism. He was commissioned to write original essays for three leading-edge anthologies and was interviewed for *The Awakening West*, a collection of conversations with contemporary Western wisdom teachers. He is the creator of *The 5 Principles of Authentic Living and Speaking Truthfully*.

To contact Robert, and for detailed information about his work, please visit his websites:

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www.robertrabbin.com/speaking-truthfully