

Roots

Description

â??I close my eyes // Only for a moment, and the momentâ??s gone // All my dreams // Pass before my eyes, a curiosity // Dust in the wind // All they are is dust in the wind.â?•

â?? *Dust in the wind, Kansas (1977)*

A few weeks ago I visited my hometown with my husband for the first time. He grew up in the center of Bogotá, Colombia- a city of more than 7 million people. My hometown had about 2000 people when I was a kid. A rural community in Northeast Kansas. Many corn and bean fields, zero stoplights. (The husband loved it!)

I try to get home to visit family several times a year, but most of my family no longer live in my hometown. My parents are still in the home where they raised us, in the country outside of town. So it really had been more than 20 years since Iâ??d walked around my little hometown. Itâ??s changed a lot; and so have I.

I took my husband to the high school and we walked through the halls. I tried to remember which one was my locker and was reminded how long Iâ??ve been away. We peeked into the gym, the setting at which all my best memories reside. I thumbed through the pages of graduating classes until I found my year and pointed out my senior photo. I didnâ??t even recognize that girl. Seeing her face in that photo prompted a rush of thoughts about all the experiences that have shaped my life since I was 17.

This visit home wasnâ??t about visiting friends or family. This time, it was a new step in my relationship, and a deeper journey of understanding who I am and where I come from. We were both on that journey. Walking those distantly familiar streets brought a flood of emotions and reflections about my identity, authenticity, and even some unexpected leadership lessons.

Our roots shape us in so many ways. For me, they provided my first sense of identity and belonging. I was fortunate to grow up in a safe and loving home and faith community. Going back to my hometown, I was reminded of the simplicity and clarity of those early years. It was like peeling back the layers to see the core of who I am. It got me thinking about this idea of revisiting our â??rootsâ?• whatever that might mean for each of us individually. Maybe, like me, it means reflecting on your childhood or hometown. Here are a few questions to reflect on:

1. **What are your standout childhood memories?**
2. **Who were the key people in your early life, and how did they shape you?**
3. **What values did you grow up with, and how have they changed?**
4. **What parts of your hometown or upbringing do you still feel connected to?**

In todayâ??s busy world, itâ??s easy to lose touch with our true selves. My trip back home helped me slow down and reconnect with my authentic self. Authenticity is about being real, accepting our strengths and weaknesses, and living true to our values. This is crucial not only for personal growth but

also for effective leadership. Authentic leaders inspire trust and loyalty by being genuine and transparent.

1. **What does being authentic mean to you?**
2. **When do you feel most authentic in your daily life?**
3. **Are there times you feel like you're not being true to yourself? Why?**
4. **What can you do to get back in touch with your roots?**

Going back to my hometown reminded me that our roots are not just part of our past; they influence our present and future. They help guide us in life and remind us of what's important. This journey also brought to light for me some key leadership lessons: the importance of staying grounded, understanding your background, and leading with authenticity and empathy.

Leadership Lessons from Our Roots

- **Stay Grounded:** Remember where you come from and let it guide your decisions. A strong foundation helps you remain steady in challenging times.
- **Empathy and Understanding:** Reflecting on your own journey helps you understand others' paths. This empathy can make you a more compassionate and effective leader.
- **Authenticity:** Being true to yourself sets a powerful example for others. Authentic leaders build trust and inspire those around them.
- **Resilience:** Revisiting your roots can remind you of the resilience you've built over the years. This resilience is a key trait for effective leadership.

Revisiting my hometown was more than a trip down memory lane; it was a powerful journey of self-discovery and reflection. It reminded me of the importance of staying connected to our roots and embracing our authentic selves. Whether it's reflecting on your childhood, reconnecting with core values, or understanding how your past shapes your leadership style, taking the time to revisit your roots can lead to a more grounded, authentic, and fulfilling life.

So, what does living true to your roots mean to you, and how can it guide you in your journey ahead?

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