

Leaving a Charmed Life: A True Story of Choosing Authentic Happiness
by Kadian Grant (www.KadianGrant.com)

A Reader's Discussion & Journaling Guide

Chapter 1: Remembering Authentic Happiness

Kadian recalls her “beach-breeze memory” of that time when she was four years old in Jamaica, describing the sights, smells and feelings of the moment. When was a time when you felt genuine happiness without material things involved? What are the things you loved to do as a kid without the influence of or prompting from others? Are you still doing the things that made you happy today? If no, why not? What is stopping you from reconnecting to that part of you?

Chapter 2: Love Was My Beginning

Kadian describes her early childhood life with her great-grandmother, Mama, and some specific moments of being nurtured, sometimes sternly even. Did you have someone as an “embodied horizon” in your life growing up? Someone who supported, loved, and protected you? Someone who reminded you of how important you are, that you matter? Someone who could see your light and let you stand in it? What has been or would be the impact of such a person on your life?

Chapter 3: I Wish I Didn't Live Here

We don't have to survive trauma, as Kadian did, to feel disconnected from our true self. As you were growing up, did you ever notice you were becoming less of who you are and more of who your family or society wanted you to be? How did your family or environment begin to change you? How early in your life did you begin to notice or witness changes within yourself?

Chapter 4: Get Out!

When Kadian's dad kicked her out, we witnessed her immediate survival instincts and the kindness of strangers who kept her safe. Has there been a time in your life when devastation or struggle elicited courage from you that didn't know you had? What (or who) gave you the courage you needed? How did you feel after you made a courageous choice?

Chapter 5: Landing in Depression's Cold, Dark Room

Have you ever considered yourself to be the antagonist of your own storybook life? What might be the benefit of seeing yourself in that way instead of as a protagonist? How does your antagonist bring value to your life? Do you see your antagonist as a hero or a villain in your story? Why? Assuming we have all felt disconnection at some time in our lives, when was a time you noticed that the life you were living wasn't being created by your authentic self? What effect did this have on your mental health?

Chapter 6: Escaping Depression's Cold, Dark Room

What has inspired or would inspire you to begin creating the life you want to live? How can you find the courage to be honest about your feelings, your circumstances, and/or what you want? What hinders or stands in your way?

Chapter 7: Unhealthy Unloading

What generational patterns do you notice in your immediate family? How are they affecting your relationships? What might change if you eradicated those patterns?

Chapter 8: Generational Patterns and Family Secrets

What stories do you recall about previous generations that shed light on their lived experience? What resources would help you to eradicate any generational patterns? What feelings are elicited as you notice patterns? Toward yourself? Toward others?

Chapter 9: An Inspiring Year

Kadian was able to travel to have new experiences and learn about meditation and Reiki. What can you do to begin your journey to authentic happiness? What is something you know you want but haven't acted on yet? What is your antagonist/inner voice calling your attention to? Asking for? What is a small step you can take to go in the direction you're being antagonized toward?

Chapter 10: A Guided Visitation to Remember the Past

Kadian consciously, carefully, guided herself to relive memories of her childhood, using writing and meditation as a way to heal. What do you need to be honest (with yourself) about in your life? What do you need to face that you haven't had the courage for yet?

Chapter 11: The Year of Honesty

How are you feeling about making changes in your life? Are you feeling crippled by fear? Is change difficult? Are more patterns coming up for you? What would it take to overcome the fear and challenges in your way? Where can you find support to help you continue on your journey to authentic happiness? [These questions might be best for private journaling vs. a discussion group.]

Chapter 12: The Year of Nurturing

How could you refer to the visualization, e.g., Imagine the moments before your own birth – what would you wish to say to or hear from your family members? How is your relationship with your antagonist/inner voice? How do you feel about taking care of yourself? What are some examples of choosing yourself that you have made? What has the effect been? What continued support do you need/would help?

Chapter 13: Leaving a Legacy

How is your journey so far affecting those around you? What new views or perspectives have you adopted? How do others respond to these changes? What has changed for you? What is the legacy you want to leave your future generations?

Chapter 14: Rewriting My Story

How might you describe your life from a place of healed scars? What is different about your life now? How do you feel about your past? Is it still driving you? Does it still have a hold on you? What is your next horizon?