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I Know I'm in There Somewhere: A Woman's Guide to Finding Her Inner Voice and Living a Life of Authenticity by Helene G. Brenner, PhD. (Gotham Books, \$24)

You know this book is trying to be different from the rest of the self-help genre by the stamp on the cover: "A Self-Acceptance Book." As Brenner explains, "I truly believe that you don't have to change or fix or improve yourself in order to be happy. I believe that living a fulfilled life comes from learning how to listen to your inner voice . . . and to live from it."

Brenner offers women realistic ways to pursue dreams, encouraging them to accept and interpret their feelings and then guiding them in action. Of unfulfilled desires, she writes: "Wanting is still a gift even if a want takes years, or even decades, to be fulfilled."

As a psychologist with more than 15 years' experience—she's director of Women's Counseling and Psychological Services in Bethesda and Frederick—Brenner elicits trust. I felt privileged to hear women sharing the intimate details of their lives in her therapy sessions, and it was thrilling to see their progress. A client complains of "not feeling anything for months" until Brenner helps her rediscover a long-held desire to teach sign language. The client eventually leaves her job of nine years to become an interpreter.

Brenner offers advice on topics such as how not to lose yourself in a relationship. She cites studies and psychological theories, such as "disidentification," a practice that allows you to listen to your feelings without getting overwhelmed by them. And she offers simple exercises—"innercizes"—for learning about yourself. One involves taking awareness breaks several times a day—simply stopping to notice your surroundings and describing to yourself how you feel.

While the book sometimes typecasts men and is often cluttered with terminology, it is empowering: "Strong feelings don't mean we're 'unbalanced,' and they certainly don't make us weak. The truth is, we are never more powerful than when we stand up for our feelings and act from them."



I Know I'm in There Somewhere: A Woman's Guide to Finding Her Inner Voice and Living a Life of Authenticity

—ELEANOR STABLES