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Authentic Leadership

DESCRIPTION

Authentic leadership represents one of the newest areas of leadership research. It focuses on whether leadership is genuine and “real.” As the title of this approach implies, authentic leadership is about the *authenticity* of leaders and their leadership. Unlike many of the theories that we have discussed in this book, authentic leadership is still in the formative phase of development. As a result, authentic leadership needs to be considered more tentatively: It is likely to change as new research about the theory is published.

In recent times, upheavals in society have energized a tremendous demand for authentic leadership. The destruction on 9/11, corporate scandals at companies like WorldCom and Enron, and massive failures in the banking industry have all created fear and uncertainty. People feel apprehensive and insecure about what is going on around them, and, as a result, they long for bona fide leadership they can trust and for leaders who are honest and good. People’s demands for trustworthy leadership make the study of authentic leadership timely and worthwhile.

In addition to the public’s interest, authentic leadership has been intriguing to researchers: It was identified earlier in transformational leadership research but never fully articulated (Bass, 1990; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Burns, 1978; Howell & Avolio, 1993). Furthermore, practitioners had developed approaches to authentic leadership that were not evidence based, and so needed further clarification and testing. In attempts to more fully explore authentic leadership, researchers set out to identify the parameters of authentic leadership and more clearly conceptualize it, efforts that continue today.



Authentic Leadership Defined

On the surface, authentic leadership appears easy to define. In actuality, it is a complex process that is difficult to characterize. Among leadership scholars, there is no single accepted definition of authentic leadership. Instead, there are multiple definitions, each written from a different viewpoint and with a different emphasis (Chan, 2005).

One of those viewpoints is the *intrapersonal* perspective, which focuses closely on the leader and what goes on within the leader. It incorporates the leader's self-knowledge, self-regulation, and self-concept. In Shamir and Eilam's (2005) description of the intrapersonal approach, they suggest that authentic leaders exhibit genuine leadership, lead from conviction, and are originals, not copies. This perspective emphasizes a leader's life experiences and the meaning he or she attaches to those experiences as being critical to the development of the authentic leader.

A second way of defining authentic leadership is as an *interpersonal* process. This perspective outlines authentic leadership as relational, created by leaders and followers together (Eagly, 2005). It results not from the leader's efforts alone, but also from the response of followers. Authenticity emerges from the interactions between leaders and followers. It is a reciprocal process because leaders affect followers and followers affect leaders.

Finally, authentic leadership can be defined from a *developmental* perspective, which is exemplified in the work of Avolio and his associates (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Gardner, Avolio, & Walumbwa, 2005; Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). This perspective, which underpins the approaches to authentic leadership discussed in the following section, views authentic leadership as something that can be nurtured in a leader, rather than as a fixed trait. Authentic leadership develops in people over a lifetime and can be triggered by major life events, such as a severe illness or a new career.

Taking a developmental approach, Walumbwa et al. (2008) conceptualized authentic leadership as a pattern of leader behavior that develops from and is grounded in the leader's positive psychological qualities and strong ethics. They suggest that authentic leadership is composed of four distinct but related components: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009). Over a lifetime, authentic leaders learn and develop each of these four types of behavior.



Approaches to Authentic Leadership

Formulations about authentic leadership can be differentiated into two areas: (1) the practical approach, which evolved from real-life examples and training and development literature; and (2) the theoretical approach, which is based on findings from social science research. Both approaches offer interesting insights about the complex process of authentic leadership.

Practical Approaches

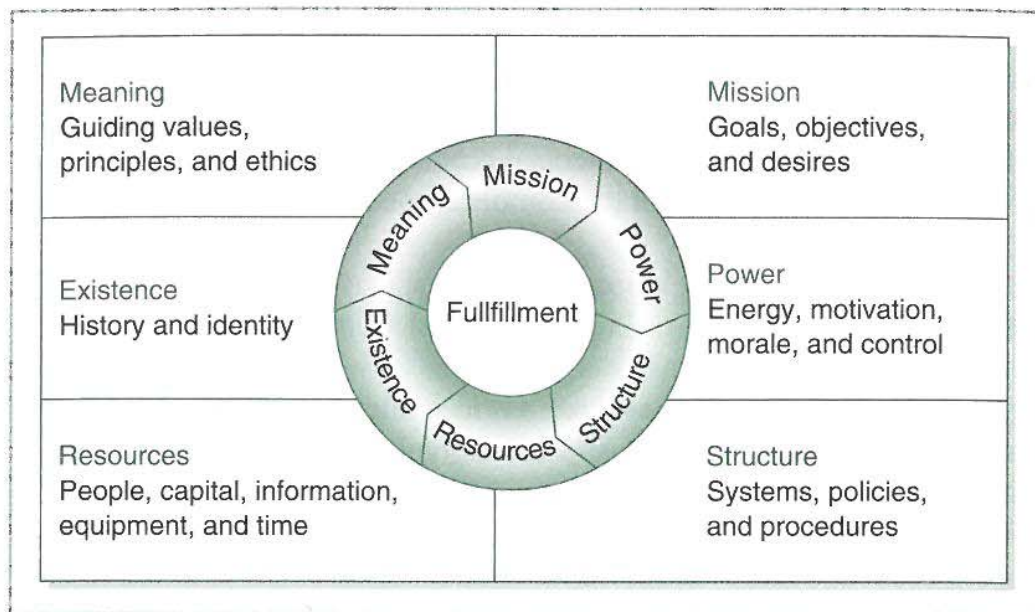
Books and programs about authentic leadership are popular today; people are interested in the basics of this type of leadership. Specifically, they want to know the “how to” steps to become an authentic leader. In this section, we will discuss two practical approaches to authentic leadership: (1) Robert Terry’s authentic leadership approach (1993), and (2) Bill George’s authentic leadership approach (2003). Each of these approaches presents a unique perspective on how to practice authentic leadership.

Robert Terry’s Authentic Leadership Approach. Terry’s approach to authentic leadership is practice oriented. It utilizes a formula or guide for “how to do” leadership. At its core, the Terry approach is action centered: It focuses on the actions of the leader, leadership team, or organization in a particular situation. The moral premise underlying this approach is that leaders should strive to do what is right. The framework of the approach serves as a guide to these actions.

In any given situation where leadership is needed, Terry advocates that two core leadership questions must be addressed. First, what is really, *really* going on? Second, what are we going to do about it? Authentic leadership involves correctly answering these questions. It includes knowing and acting on what is “true” in yourself (authenticity), in your organization, and in the world. The challenge for leaders is to distinguish between authentic and inauthentic actions, and then to commit to authentic actions over the inauthentic. Unless leaders know what truly is going on, their actions will be inappropriate and can have serious consequences.

Terry developed the Authentic Action Wheel (Figure 11.1) to help diagnose and address underlying problems in organizations. The wheel has six components: Around the top of the wheel are *Meaning*, *Mission*, and *Power*; clockwise around the bottom are *Structure*, *Resources*, and *Existence*. The center of the wheel is labeled *Fulfillment* and represents



Figure 11.1 Authentic Action Wheel

SOURCE: Adapted from *Authentic Leadership: Courage in Action*, by Robert W. Terry, 1993, p. 84, and Action Wheel Publishing.

the completion of the process. To answer the questions posed by Terry, two steps are required: (1) Locate the problem on the diagnostic wheel, and (2) strategically select an appropriate response to the problem.

The first step, locating the problem, is accomplished by doing an assessment of employees and their organizational concerns. Based on this assessment, leaders can identify on the action wheel the real concerns of the organization. For example, if employees make comments such as "We seem lost" or "Nobody cares around here," their concerns would be diagnosed as a problem related to *mission*. If employees are saying such things as "We are really stretched thin" or "We can't possibly do what they're asking us to do," their concerns could be diagnosed as *resource* issues on the wheel. Although there are an infinite number of possible issues within a group or an organization, the Authentic Action Wheel provides a structure that allows leaders to categorize various employee concerns into six major areas.

The second step, selecting the appropriate response to the issue, is also accomplished by using the Authentic Action Wheel. However, in this phase of the process the wheel is used prescriptively, to recommend a particular course of action. After a problem is identified, the wheel is used



to encourage leaders to explore alternative explanations for the problem and to select a response based on that information. For example, if employees seem to be struggling with issues related to *power* and who is in control, leaders may wish to pay attention to the *mission* of the organization and the goals and objectives of the people involved. Similarly, if employees are raising questions about the *meaning* of a particular program, leaders may want to focus on *existence* because their concerns may be about the history and identity that undergirds the program. In other words, the Authentic Action Wheel is used to explore the various possible responses to a problem and to select the response that comes closest to solving the issue. Authentic leaders try to address the real problem in the most appropriate fashion.

To illustrate how the Authentic Action Wheel is used, consider the following story about problems in a high school baseball program.

Troubles began when leaders of the booster club asked for an investigation of the coach because of alleged improper use of funds, favoritism (i.e., the coach selected his son over others to be on the team), and violations of school policy (i.e., the coach allowed a parent with a DUI on his record to drive players home from practice). The booster club's concerns made the front page of the local newspaper, and local blogs and editorial pages were filled with reactions by parents, former players, and community members.

To analyze the baseball problem, a leader should have asked, "What is really, *really* going on in this situation?" An initial diagnosis might have suggested that the concerns about the coach clustered around issues of *structure* (i.e., school policy). Leaders of the booster club thought the coach violated school policies and wanted something done about it, while the coach thought his decisions were reasonable and that the booster club was overreaching its authority. The leaders of the booster club and the principal had different opinions about the policies governing the coach and the baseball team.

Using the Authentic Action Wheel as a guide, an authentic leader might have surmised that the conflict was about *power*. Who had the power to make decisions about use of funds, the selection of team players, or which parents could give rides to students? Using the wheel, a leader should have explored how issues of *power* were operating in this conflict. In the end, because these questions were not addressed, effective conflict resolution was *not* attained. Power struggles became even more apparent as the principal replaced the disgruntled cochairs of the booster club with different parents.

In summary, the Authentic Action Wheel is a visual diagnostic tool to help leaders frame problems. Leaders, with their followers, locate the problem on the wheel and then strategically respond to the major issues of concern. The Terry approach encourages individuals to see things differently and more clearly. In essence, this approach urges leaders to be authentic or “true” to themselves, their organization, and their world, and to base their actions on what is really going on in the situation.

Bill George’s Authentic Leadership Approach. Although the Terry Authentic Action Wheel focuses on problem areas, the authentic leadership approach developed by George (2003; George & Sims, 2007) focuses on the characteristics of authentic leaders. George describes, in a practical way, the essential qualities of authentic leadership and how individuals can develop these qualities if they want to become authentic leaders.

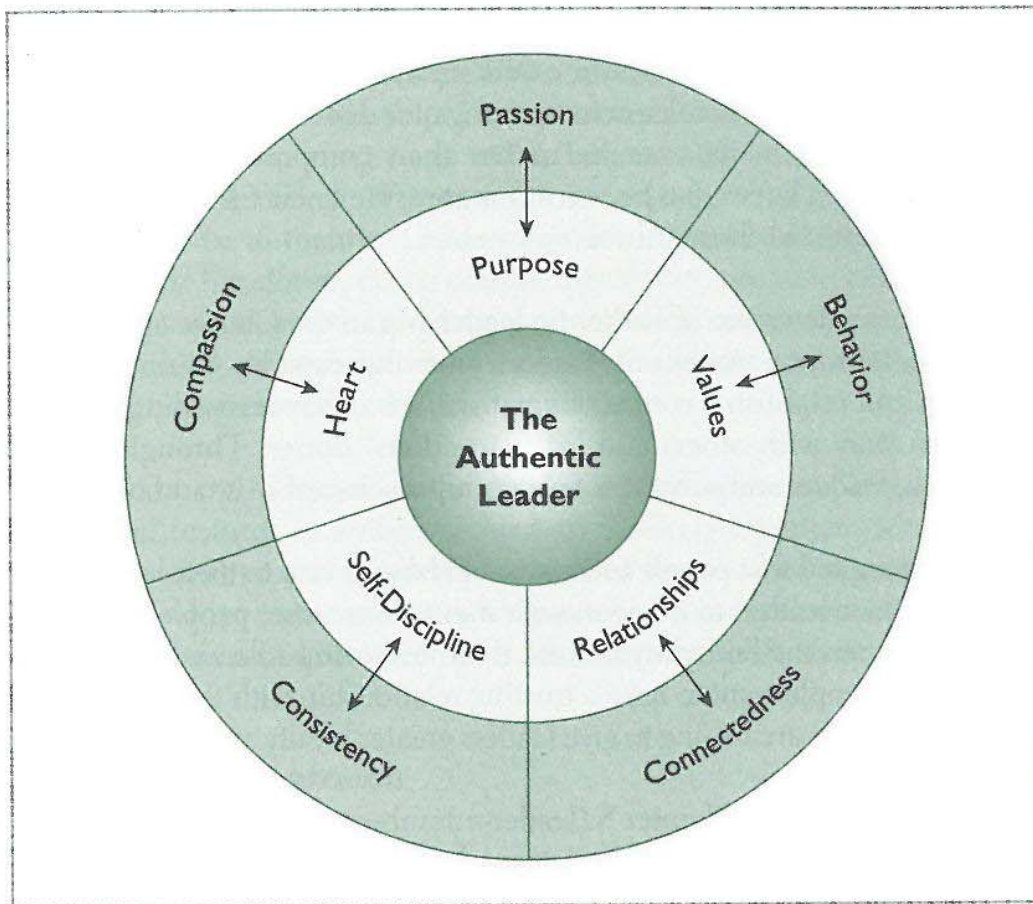
Based on his experience as a corporate executive and through interviews with a diverse sample of 125 successful leaders, George found that authentic leaders have a genuine desire to serve others, they know themselves, and they feel free to lead from their core values. Specifically, authentic leaders demonstrate five basic characteristics: (1) They understand their purpose, (2) they have strong values about the right thing to do, (3) they establish trusting relationships with others, (4) they demonstrate self-discipline and act on their values, and (5) they are passionate about their mission (i.e., act from their heart) (Figure 11.2; George, 2003).

Figure 11.2 illustrates five dimensions of authentic leadership identified by George: purpose, values, relationships, self-discipline, and heart. The figure also illustrates each of the related characteristics—passion, behavior, connectedness, consistency, and compassion—that individuals need to develop to become authentic leaders.

In his interviews, George found that authentic leaders have a real sense of *purpose*. They know what they are about and where they are going. In addition to knowing their purpose, authentic leaders are inspired and intrinsically motivated about their goals. They are *passionate* individuals who have a deep-seated interest in what they are doing and truly care about their work.

A good example of an authentic leader who exhibited passion about his goals was Terry Fox, a cancer survivor, whose leg was amputated after it was overcome by bone cancer. Using a special leg prosthesis, Terry Fox attempted to run across Canada, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, to raise awareness and



Figure 11.2 Authentic Leadership Characteristics

SOURCE: From *Authentic Leadership: Rediscovering the Secrets to Creating Lasting Value* by Bill George, copyright © 2003. Reproduced with permission of John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

money for cancer research. Although Terry died before he finished his run, his courage and passion affected the lives of millions of people. He also accomplished his goals to increase cancer awareness and to raise money for cancer research. Today, the Terry Fox Foundation is going strong and has raised more than \$400 million (Canadian) for cancer research (<http://www.terryfoxrun.org>). Of the dimensions and characteristics in Figure 11.2, Terry Fox clearly demonstrated purpose and passion in his leadership.

Authentic leaders understand their own *values* and *behave* toward others based on these values. Stated another way, George suggests that authentic leaders know their “True North.” They have a clear idea of who they are, where they are going, and what the right thing is to do. When tested in difficult situations, authentic leaders do not compromise their values, but rather use those situations to strengthen their values.



An example of a leader with a strong set of values is Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Nelson Mandela. Mandela is a deeply moral man with a strong conscience. While fighting to abolish apartheid in South Africa, he was unyielding in his pursuit of justice and equality for all. When he was in prison and offered early release in exchange for denouncing his viewpoint, he chose to remain incarcerated rather than compromise his position. Nelson Mandela knew who he was at his core. He knew his values, and his leadership reflected those values.

A third characteristic of authentic leadership in the George approach is strong *relationships*. Authentic leaders have the capacity to open themselves up and establish a *connection* with others. They are willing to share their own story with others and listen to others' stories. Through mutual disclosure, leaders and subordinates develop a sense of trust and closeness.

George argued that people today want to have access to their leaders and they want their leaders to be open with them. In a sense, people are asking leaders to soften the boundary around their leadership role and to be more transparent. People want to have a trusting relationship with their leaders. In exchange, people are willing to give leaders greater loyalty and commitment.

As we discussed in Chapter 8 (leader–member exchange theory), effective leader–follower relationships are marked by high-quality communication in which leaders and followers demonstrate a high degree of mutual trust, respect, and obligation toward each other. Leaders and followers are tied together in productive ways that go beyond the stereotypical leader–subordinate relationship. This results in strong leader–member relationships, greater understanding, and higher productivity.

Self-discipline is another dimension of authentic leadership, and is the quality that helps leaders to reach their goals. Self-discipline gives leaders focus and determination. When leaders establish objectives and standards of excellence, self-discipline helps them to reach these goals and to keep everyone accountable. Furthermore, self-discipline gives authentic leaders the energy to carry out their work in accordance with their values.

Like long-distance runners, authentic leaders with self-discipline are able to stay focused on their goals. They are able to listen to their inner compass and can discipline themselves to move forward, even in challenging circumstances. In stressful times, self-discipline allows authentic leaders to remain cool, calm, and *consistent*. Because disciplined leaders are predictable in their behavior, other people know what to expect and find



it easier to communicate with them. When the leader is self-directed and “on course,” it gives other people a sense of security.

Last, the George approach identifies *compassion* and *heart* as important aspects of authentic leadership. Compassion refers to being sensitive to the plight of others, opening one’s self to others, and being willing to help them. George (2003, p. 40) argued that as leaders develop compassion, they learn to be authentic. Leaders can develop compassion by getting to know others’ life stories, doing community service projects, being involved with other racial or ethnic groups, or traveling to developing countries (George, 2003). These activities increase the leader’s sensitivity to other cultures, backgrounds, and living situations.

In summary, George’s authentic leadership approach highlights five important features of authentic leaders. Collectively, these features provide a practical picture of what people need to do to become authentic in their leadership. Authentic leadership is a lifelong developmental process, which is formed and informed by each individual’s life story.

Theoretical Approach

Although still in its initial stages of development, a theory of authentic leadership is emerging in social science literature. In this section, we identify the basic components of authentic leadership and describe how these components are related to one another.

Background to the Theoretical Approach. Although people’s interest in “authenticity” is probably timeless, research on authentic leadership is very recent, with the first article appearing in 2003. The primary catalyst for this research was a leadership summit at the University of Nebraska. This summit was sponsored by the Gallup Leadership Institute, and focused on the nature of authentic leadership and its development. From the summit, two sets of publications emerged: (1) a special issue of *Leadership Quarterly* in Summer 2005, and (2) *Monographs in Leadership and Management*, titled “Authentic Leadership Theory and Process: Origins, Effects and Development,” also published in 2005. Prior to the summit, Luthans and Avolio (2003) published an article on authentic leadership development and positive organizational scholarship. The article also helped to ignite this area of research.

Interest in authentic leadership increased during a time in which there was a great deal of societal upheaval and instability in the United States.



The attacks of 9/11, widespread corporate corruption, and a troubled economy all created a sense of uncertainty and anxiety in people about leadership. Widespread unethical and ineffective leadership necessitated the need for more humane, constructive leadership that served the common good (Fry & Whittington, 2005; Luthans & Avolio, 2003).

In addition, researchers felt the need to extend the work of Bass (1990) and Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) regarding the meaning of authentic transformational leadership. There was a need to operationalize the meaning of authentic leadership and create a theoretical framework to explain it. To develop a theory of authentic leadership, researchers drew from the fields of leadership, positive organizational scholarship, and ethics (Cooper, Scandura, & Schriesheim, 2005; Gardner et al., 2005).

A major challenge confronting researchers in developing a theory was to define the construct and identify its characteristics. As we discussed earlier in the chapter, authentic leadership has been defined in multiple ways, with each definition emphasizing a different aspect of the process. For this chapter, we have selected the definition set forth in a recent article by Walumbwa et al. (2008), who defined authentic leadership as “a pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development” (p. 94). Although complex, this definition captures the current thinking of scholars regarding the phenomenon of authentic leadership and how it works.

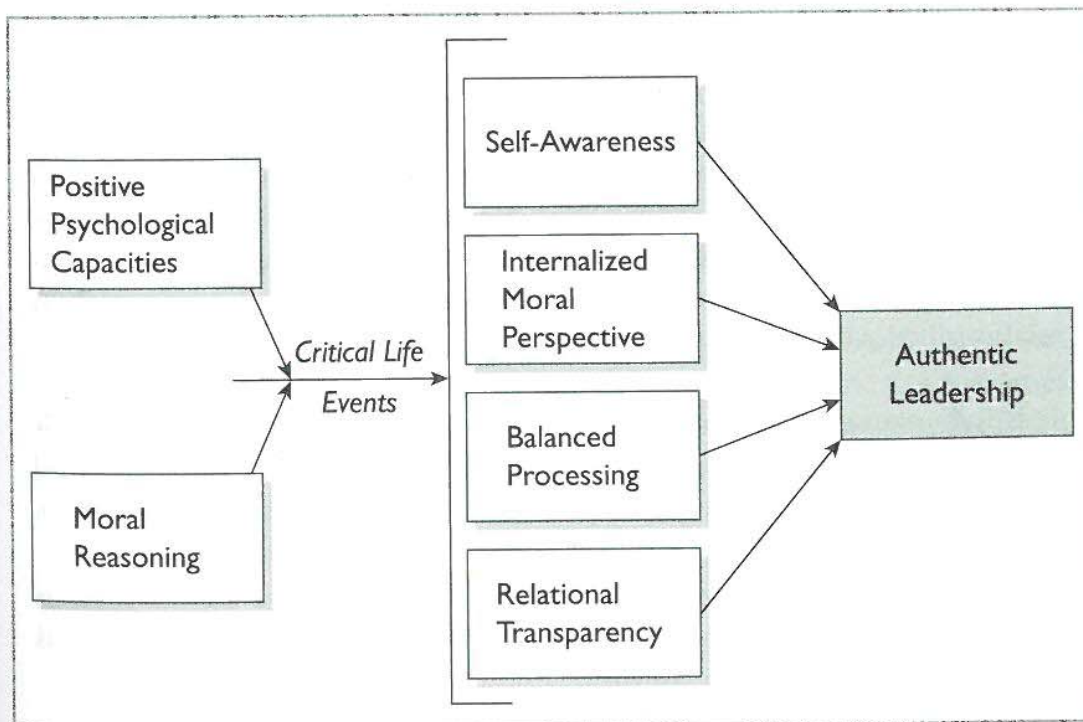
In the research literature, different models have been developed to illustrate the process of authentic leadership. Gardner et al. (2005) created a model that frames authentic leadership around the developmental processes of leader and follower self-awareness and self-regulation. Ilies, Morgeson, and Nahrgang (2005) constructed a multicomponent model that discusses the impact of authenticity on leaders' and followers' happiness and well-being. In contrast, Luthans and Avolio (2003) formulated a model that explains authentic leadership as a developmental process. In this chapter, we will present a basic model of authentic leadership that is derived from the research literature that focuses on the core components of authentic leadership. Our discussion will focus on authentic leadership as a process.

Components of Authentic Leadership. In an effort to further our understanding of authentic leadership, Walumbwa and associates (2008) conducted a

comprehensive review of the literature and interviewed groups of content experts in the field to determine what components constituted authentic leadership and to develop a valid measure of this construct. Their research identified four components: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency (Figure 11.3). Together, these four components form the foundation for a theory of authentic leadership.

Self-awareness refers to the personal insights of the leader. It is not an end in itself but a process in which individuals understand themselves, including their strengths and weaknesses, and the impact they have on others. Self-awareness includes reflecting on your core values, identity, emotions, motives, and goals, and coming to grips with who you really are at the deepest level. In addition, it includes being aware of and trusting your own feelings (Kernis, 2003). When leaders know themselves and have a clear sense of who they are and what they stand for, they have a strong

Figure 11.3 Authentic Leadership



SOURCE: Adapted from Luthans, F., & Avolio, B. J. 2003. Authentic leadership development. In K. S. Cameron, J. E. Dutton, & R. E. Quinn (Eds.), *Positive organizational scholarship* (pp. 241–258). San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2003; and W. L. Gardner, B. J. Avolio, F. Luthans, D. R. May, & F. O. Walumbwa, 2005. "Can you see the real me?" A self-based model of authentic leader and follower development. *Leadership Quarterly*, 16, 343–372.



anchor for their decisions and actions (Gardner et al., 2005). Other people see leaders who have greater self-awareness as more authentic.

Internalized moral perspective refers to a self-regulatory process whereby individuals use their internal moral standards and values to guide their behavior rather than allow outside pressures to control them (e.g., group or societal pressure). It is a self-regulatory process because people have control over the extent to which they allow others to influence them. Others see leaders with an internalized moral perspective as authentic because their actions are consistent with their expressed beliefs and morals.

Balanced processing is also a self-regulatory behavior. It refers to an individual's ability to analyze information objectively and explore other people's opinions before making a decision. It also means avoiding favoritism about certain issues and remaining unbiased. Balanced processing includes soliciting viewpoints from those who disagree with you and fully considering their positions before taking your own action. Leaders with balanced processing are seen as authentic because they are open about their own perspectives, but are also objective in considering others' perspectives.

Relational transparency refers to being open and honest in presenting one's true self to others. It is self-regulatory because individuals can control their transparency with others. Relational transparency occurs when individuals share their core feelings, motives, and inclinations with others in an appropriate manner (Kernis, 2003). It includes the individuals showing both positive and negative aspects of themselves to others. In short, relational transparency is about communicating openly and being real in relationships with others.

Fundamentally, authentic leadership comprises the above four factors—self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency. These factors form the basis for authentic leadership.

Factors That Influence Authentic Leadership. There are other factors such as positive psychological capacities, moral reasoning, and critical life events that influence authentic leadership (Figure 11.3).

There are four key *positive psychological attributes* that have an impact on authentic leadership: confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience, which have been drawn from the fields of positive psychology and positive organizational behavior (Table 11.1; Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Positive attributes predispose or enhance a leader's capacity to develop the components of



Table 11.1 Related Positive Psychological Capacities

-
- Confidence
 - Hope
 - Optimism
 - Resilience
-

SOURCE: Luthans, F., & Avolio, B. J. 2003. Authentic leadership development. In K. S. Cameron, J. E. Dutton, & R. E. Quinn (Eds.), *Positive organizational scholarship* (pp. 241–258). San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

authentic leadership discussed in the previous section. Each of these attributes has a trait-like and a state-like quality. They are trait-like because they may characterize a relatively fixed aspect of someone's personality that has been evident throughout his or her life (e.g., extraversion), and they are state-like because, with training or coaching, individuals are capable of developing or changing their characteristics.

Confidence refers to having self-efficacy—the belief that one has the ability to successfully accomplish a specified task. Leaders who have confidence are more likely to be motivated to succeed, to be persistent when obstacles arise, and to welcome a challenge (Bandura, 1997; Luthans & Avolio, 2003). *Hope* is a positive motivational state based on willpower and goal planning (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Authentic leaders with hope have goals they know can be accomplished; their hope inspires followers to trust them and believe in their goals. *Optimism* refers to the cognitive process of viewing situations from a positive light and having favorable expectations about the future. Leaders with optimism are positive about their capabilities and the outcomes they can achieve. They approach life with a sense of abundance rather than scarcity (Covey, 1990). *Resilience* is the capacity to recover from and adjust to adverse situations. It includes the ability to positively adapt to hardships and suffering. During difficult times, resilient people are able to bounce back from challenging situations and feel strengthened and more resourceful as a result of them (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003).

Moral reasoning is another factor that can influence authentic leadership (Figure 11.3). It is the capacity to make ethical decisions about issues of right or wrong and good or bad. Developing the capacity for moral reasoning is a lifelong process. Higher levels of moral reasoning make it possible for the authentic leader to make decisions that transcend individual differences and align individuals toward a common goal. They

enable leaders to be selfless and make judgments that serve the greater good of the group, organization, or community. Moral reasoning capacity also enables authentic leaders to use this ability to promote justice and achieve what is right for a community.

A final factor related to authentic leadership is *critical life events* (Figure 11.3). Critical events are major events that shape people's lives. They can be positive events, like receiving an unexpected promotion, having a child, or reading an important book; or they can be negative events, like being diagnosed with cancer, getting a negative year-end evaluation, or having a loved one die. Critical life events act as catalysts for change. Shamir and Eilam (2005) argued that authentic leadership rests heavily on the insights people attach to their life experiences. When leaders tell their life stories, they gain greater self-knowledge, more clarity about who they are, and a better understanding of their role. By understanding their own life experiences, leaders become more authentic.

Critical life events also stimulate growth in individuals and help them become stronger leaders (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). For example, Howard Schultz (founder and CEO of Starbucks) tells a story about when he was little: His father, who was a delivery driver, fell and was hurt on the job. His father did not have health insurance or worker's compensation. Seeing the problems that resulted from his father's difficulties, when Schultz built Starbucks he provided comprehensive health insurance for employees who worked as few as 20 hours a week. Schultz's style of leadership was triggered by his childhood experience.

As the theory of authentic leadership develops further, other antecedent factors that influence the process may be identified. To date, however, it is positive psychological capacities, moral reasoning capacities, and critical life events that have been identified as factors that are influential in a person's ability to become an authentic leader.

HOW DOES AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP THEORY WORK? _____

In this chapter, we have discussed authentic leadership from practical and theoretical perspectives. Both perspectives describe authentic leadership as a developmental process that forms in leaders over time; however, both perspectives provide different descriptions for how authentic leadership works.



The practical approaches provide prescriptions for how to be authentic and how to develop authentic leadership. For example, the Terry approach (1993) emphasizes that leaders should frame issues by questioning *what is really going on* in a given situation. Authentic leadership works when leaders and followers come together to define their “real” concerns and determine what is the “right thing” to do about them. Authentic leadership tries to determine what is truly good for the leader, followers, and organization.

The process of authentic leadership works differently using the George approach (2003), which focuses on five characteristics leaders should develop to become authentic leaders. More specifically, George advocates that leaders become more *purposeful*, *value centered*, *relational*, *self-disciplined*, and *compassionate*. The essence of authentic leadership is being a leader who strongly demonstrates these five qualities.

Rather than simple prescriptions, the theoretical approach describes what authentic leadership is and what accounts for it. From this perspective, authentic leadership works because leaders demonstrate *self-awareness*, an *internalized moral perspective*, *balanced processing*, and *relational transparency*. Leaders develop these attributes through a lifelong process that is often influenced by critical life events. In addition, the literature suggests that positive psychological characteristics and moral reasoning have a significant impact on authentic leaders.

To illustrate, in a study of 387 employees and their immediate supervisors, Walumbwa, Wang, Wang, Schaubroeck, and Avolio (2010) examined the impact of the components of authentic leadership on follower behaviors. Overall, their findings indicated that the more leaders were seen as authentic, the more employees identified with them, felt empowered, engaged in work roles, and demonstrated organizational citizenship behaviors.

Authentic leadership is a complex process that emphasizes the development of qualities that help leaders to be perceived as trustworthy and believable by their followers. The leader’s job is to learn to develop these qualities and apply them to the common good as he or she serves others.

STRENGTHS

Although it is in its early stages of development, the authentic leadership approach has several strengths. First, it fulfills an expressed need for

trustworthy leadership in society. During the past 20 years, failures in public and private leadership have created distrust in people. Authentic leadership helps to fill a void and provides an answer to people who are searching for good and sound leadership in an uncertain world.

Second, authentic leadership provides broad guidelines for individuals who want to become authentic leaders. Both the practical and theoretical approaches clearly point to what leaders should do to become authentic leaders. For example, Terry (1993) argued that to be authentic, leaders need to work with followers to find what is really going on in a given situation and address it. Similarly, the social science literature emphasizes that it is important for leaders to have self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency to be authentic. Taken together, these approaches provide a map for becoming an authentic leader.

Third, similar to transformational and servant leadership, authentic leadership has an explicit moral dimension. Underlying both the practical and theoretical approaches is the idea that authenticity requires leaders to do what is “right” and “good” for their followers and society. Authentic leaders understand their own values, place followers’ needs above their own, and work with followers to align their interests in order to create a greater common good.

Fourth, authentic leadership emphasizes that authentic values and behaviors can be developed in leaders over time. Authentic leadership is not an attribute that only some people exhibit: Everyone can develop authenticity and learn to be more authentic. For example, leaders can learn to become more aware and transparent, or they can learn to be more relational and other-directed. Leaders can also develop moral reasoning capacities. Furthermore, Luthans and Avolio (2003) contended that leaders could learn to develop positive psychological capacities such as confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience, and could use these to create a positive organizational climate. They contended that there are many ways that leaders can learn to become authentic leaders over a lifetime.

Finally, authentic leadership can be measured using the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ). The ALQ is a validated, theory-based instrument comprising 16 items that measure four factors of authentic leadership (Avolio et al., 2009; Walumbwa et al., 2008). As research moves forward in refining authentic leadership theory, it is valuable to have an established instrument of this construct that is theory-based and can be used to measure authentic leadership in future research.



CRITICISMS

Authentic leadership is still in the formative stages of development, and there are a number of questions that still need to be addressed about the theory. First, the concepts and ideas presented in the practical approaches (i.e., George, 2003; Terry, 1993) are not fully substantiated. Whereas both of these approaches are interesting and offer insights on authentic leadership, neither approach is built on a broad empirical base, and neither approach has been tested for its validity. Without research support, the ideas set forth in the practical approaches should be treated cautiously as explanations of the authentic leadership process.

Second, the moral component of authentic leadership is not fully explained. Whereas authentic leadership implies that leaders are motivated by higher-order end values such as justice and community, the way that these values function to influence authentic leadership is not clear. For example, how are a leader's values related to a leader's self-awareness? Or, what is the path or underlying process through which moral values affect other components of authentic leadership? In its present form, authentic leadership does not offer thorough answers to these questions.

Third, researchers have questioned whether positive psychological capacities should be included as components of authentic leadership. Although there is an interest in the social sciences to study positive human potential and the best of the human condition (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003), the rationale for including positive psychological capacities as an inherent part of authentic leadership has not been clearly explained by researchers. In addition, some have argued that the inclusion of positive leader capacities in authentic leadership broadens the construct of authentic leadership too much and makes it difficult to measure (Cooper et al., 2005). At this point in the development of research on authentic leadership, the role of positive psychological capacities in authentic leadership theory needs further clarification.

Finally, it is not clear how authentic leadership results in positive organizational outcomes. Given that it is a new area of research, it is not unexpected that there are few data on outcomes, but these data are necessary to substantiate the value of the theory. Although authentic leadership is intuitively appealing on the surface, questions remain about whether this approach is effective, in what contexts it is effective, and whether authentic leadership results in productive outcomes. Relatedly, it is also not clear in the research whether authentic leadership is sufficient to achieve organizational goals. For



example, can an authentic leader who is disorganized and lacking in technical competence be an effective leader? Authenticity is important and valuable to good leadership, but how authenticity relates to effective leadership is unknown. Clearly, future research should be conducted to explore how authentic leadership is related to organizational outcomes.

APPLICATION

Because authentic leadership is still in the early phase of its development, there has been little research on strategies that people can use to develop or enhance authentic leadership behaviors. There have been some prescriptions from the practical theories, but there is little evidence-based research on whether these prescriptions or how-to strategies actually increase authentic leadership behavior.

In spite of the lack of intervention research, there are common themes from the authentic leadership literature that may be applicable to organizational or practice settings. One theme common to all of the formulations of authentic leadership is that people have the capacity to learn to be authentic leaders. In their original work on authentic leadership, Luthans and Avolio (2003) constructed a model of authentic leadership development. Conceptualizing it as a lifelong learning process, they argued that authentic leadership is a process that can be developed over time. This suggests that human resource departments may be able to foster authentic leadership behaviors in employees who move into leadership positions. Another theme that can be applied to organizations is the overriding goal of authentic leaders to try to do the “right” thing, to be honest with themselves and others, and to work for the common good. Last, authentic leadership is shaped and reformed by critical life events that act as triggers to growth and greater authenticity. Being sensitive to these events and using them as springboards to growth may be relevant to many people who are interested in becoming leaders who are more authentic.

CASE STUDIES

The following section provides three case studies (Cases 11.1, 11.2, and 11.3) of individuals who demonstrate authentic leadership. The first case is about Sally Helgesen, author of *The Female Advantage: Women's Ways*



of *Leadership* (1990). The second case is about Greg Mortenson and how his mission to promote schools and peace in Pakistan and Afghanistan came under fire when he was accused of lying and financial impropriety. The final case is about Betty Ford, former First Lady of the United States, and her work in the areas of breast cancer awareness and substance abuse treatment. At the end of each of the cases, questions are provided to help you analyze the case using ideas from authentic leadership.

CASE 11.1

Am I Really a Leader?

Sally Helgesen was born in the small Midwestern town of Saint Cloud, Minnesota. Her mother was a housewife who later taught English, and her father was a college professor of speech. After attending a local state college, where she majored in English and comparative religion, Sally spread her wings and moved to New York, inspired by the classic film *Breakfast at Tiffany's*.

Sally found work as a writer, first in advertising and then as an assistant to a columnist at the then-influential *Village Voice*. She contributed freelance articles to magazines such as *Harper's*, *Glamour*, *Vogue*, *Fortune*, and *Inside Sports*. She also returned to school, completing a degree in classics at Hunter College and taking language courses at the city graduate center in preparation for a PhD in comparative religion. She envisioned herself as a college professor, but also enjoyed freelancing. She felt a strong dichotomy within her, part quiet scholar and part footloose dreamer. The conflict bothered her, and she wondered how she would resolve it. Choosing to be a writer—actually declaring herself to be one—seemed scary, grandiose, and fraudulent.

Then one day, while walking on a New York side street in the rain, Sally saw an adventuresome black cat running beside her. It reminded her of Holly Golightly's cat in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, an emblem in the movie for Holly's dreamy temperament and rootlessness. It made her realize how much the freedom and independence offered by her "temporary" career as a writer suited her temperament. Sally told the cat she was a writer—she'd never been able to say the words before—and decided she was going to commit to full-time writing, at least for a time. When she saw the opportunity to cover a prominent murder trial in Fort Worth, Texas, she took it.

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While covering the trial, Sally became intrigued with the culture of Texas, and decided she wanted to write a book on the role of independent oil producers in shaping the region. Doing so required a huge expenditure of time and money, and for almost a year Sally lived out of the trunk of her car, staying with friends in remote regions all over Texas. It was lonely and hard and exhilarating, but Sally was determined to see the project through. When the book, *Wildcatters* (1981), was published, it achieved little recognition, but Sally felt an enormous increase in confidence and commitment as a result of having finished the book. It strengthened her conviction that, for better or worse, she was a writer.

Sally moved back to New York and continued to write articles and search around for another book. She also began writing speeches for the chief executive officer (CEO) at a Fortune 500 company. She loved the work, and particularly enjoyed being an observer of office politics, even though she did not perceive herself to be a part of them. Sally viewed her role as being an "outsider looking in," an observer of the culture. She sometimes felt like an actor in a play about an office, but this detachment made her feel professional rather than fraudulent.

As a speechwriter, Sally spent a lot of time interviewing people in the companies she worked for. Doing so made her realize that men and women often approach their work in fundamentally different ways. She also became convinced that many of the skills and attitudes women brought to their work were increasingly appropriate for the ways in which organizations were changing, and that women had certain advantages as a result. She also noticed that the unique perspectives of women were seldom valued by CEOs or other organizational leaders, who could have benefited if they had better understood and been more attentive to what women had to offer.

These observations inspired Sally to write another book. In 1988, she signed a contract with a major publisher to write a book on what women had to contribute to organizations. Until then, almost everything written about women at work focused on how they needed to change and adapt. Sally felt strongly that if women were encouraged to emphasize the negative, they would miss an historic opportunity to help lead organizations in a time of change. The time was right for this message, and *The Female Advantage: Women's Ways of Leadership* (1990) became very successful, topping a number of best-seller charts and remaining steadily in print for nearly 20 years. The book's prominence

resulted in numerous speaking and consulting opportunities, and Sally began traveling the world delivering seminars and working with a variety of clients.

This acclaim and visibility were somewhat daunting to Sally. While she recognized the value of her book, she also knew that she was not a social scientist with a body of theoretical data on women's issues. She saw herself as an author rather than an expert, and the old questions about fraudulence that she had dealt with in her early years in New York began to reassert themselves in a different form. Was she really being authentic? Could she take on the mantle of leadership and all it entailed? In short, she wondered if she could be the leader that people seemed to expect.

The path Sally took to answer these questions was simply to present herself for who she was. She was Sally Helgesen, an outsider looking in, a skilled and imaginative observer of current issues. For Sally, the path to leadership did not manifest itself in a step-by-step process. Sally's leadership began with her own journey of finding herself and accepting her personal authenticity. Through this self-awareness, she grew to trust her own expertise as a writer with a keen eye for current trends in organizational life.

Sally continues to be an internationally recognized consultant and speaker on contemporary issues, and has published five books. She remains uncertain about whether she will finish her degree in comparative religion and become a college professor, but always keeps in mind the career of I. F. Stone, an influential political writer in the 1950s and 1960s who went back to school and got an advanced degree in classics at the age of 75.

Questions

1. Learning about one's self is an essential step in becoming an authentic leader. What role did self-awareness play in Sally Helgesen's story of leadership?
2. How would you describe the authenticity of Sally Helgesen's leadership?
3. At the end of the case, Sally Helgesen is described as taking on the "mantle of leadership." Was this important for her leadership? How is taking on the mantle of leadership related to a leader's authenticity? Does every leader reach a point in his or her career where embracing the leadership role is essential?

CASE 11.2

A Leader Under Fire

(The previous edition of this book includes a case study outlining Greg Mortenson's creation of the Central Asia Institute and highlighting his authentic leadership qualities in more detail. For an additional perspective on Mortenson, you can access the original case study at www.sagepub.com/northouse6e.)

By 2011, there were few people who had never heard of Greg Mortenson. He was the subject of two best-selling books, *Three Cups of Tea* (2006) and *Stones into Schools* (2009), which told how the former emergency trauma room nurse had become a hero who built schools in rural areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

His story was phenomenal: Lost and sick after attempting to scale K2, Greg was nursed back to health by the villagers of remote Korphe, Afghanistan. Greg promised to build the village a school, a monumental effort that took him three years as he learned to raise money, navigate the foreign culture, and build a bridge above a 60-foot-deep chasm. His success led him to create the Central Asia Institute (CAI), a nonprofit organization that "empowers communities of Central Asia through literacy and education, especially for girls, promotes peace through education, and conveys the importance of these activities globally." By 2011, the CAI had successfully established or supported more than 170 schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and helped to educate more than 68,000 students (CAI, 2011a).

Greg's story seemed too good to be true. In April 2011, television news show *60 Minutes* and author Jon Krakauer alleged that it was. *60 Minutes* accused Greg of misusing money and benefitting excessively from the CAI. The show's reporter visited schools the CAI had built overseas and claimed that he could not find six of the schools and that others were abandoned. The show featured an interview with Krakauer, who claimed Greg had fabricated parts of his best-selling book, *Three Cups of Tea*. When *60 Minutes* approached Greg for comment at a book signing, he refused to talk to the program.

The next day, Krakauer (*Into Thin Air* [1997] and *Under the Banner of Heaven* [2003]) published a short online book, *Three Cups of Deceit* (2011), in which he claimed Greg lied many times in *Three Cups of Tea*, starting with his initial tale of being in Korphe.

Greg and CAI were caught in a firestorm of media and public scrutiny. An investigation into the alleged financial improprieties was launched by Montana's Attorney General (the CAI is based in Bozeman), and two

Montana legislators filed a \$5 million class action lawsuit claiming he fooled 4 million people into buying his books.

Greg withdrew from the public eye. The day the *60 Minutes* program aired, he posted a letter on the CAI website saying he stood by his books and claiming the news show “paints a distorted picture using inaccurate information, innuendo and a microscopic focus on one year’s (2009) IRS 990 financial, and a few points in the book *Three Cups of Tea* that occurred almost 18 years ago” (CAI, 2011b). Many criticized the organization’s founder for not more aggressively defending himself.

What many people did not know, however, was that two days before the *60 Minutes* segment appeared, Greg had been diagnosed with a hole and a large aneurysm in his heart and was scheduled for open-heart surgery in the next few months. Meanwhile, the CAI worked to ensure its transparency by posting its tax returns and a master list of projects and their status. The report documented 210 schools, with 17 of those receiving “full support” from the CAI, which includes teachers’ salaries, supplies, books, and furniture and monitoring by CAI contractors (Flandro, 2011).

The Attorney General investigation was still not concluded by October 1, 2011, and the lawsuit has dropped the CAI as a defendant but continues its claims against Greg and coauthor David Oliver Relin. Greg’s legal advisers have advised him not to engage with the media, but he has begun to schedule a small number of public speaking engagements. Until the investigation is concluded, a cloud of suspicion hangs over Greg and the CAI. Former CAI board member Andrew Marcus says that is unfortunate and hopes the public will consider what Greg and the organization have accomplished.

“It’s hard to imagine anyone who’s done more for education in that part of the world,” Marcus has said. “It took a real human being to do that” (Flandro, 2011).

Questions

1. Would you describe Greg Mortenson as an authentic leader? Explain your answer.
2. In the chapter, we discussed moral reasoning and transparency as components of authentic leadership. Do you think Greg exhibited these components as part his leadership?
3. How was Greg’s response to the allegations against him characteristic of an authentic leader?
4. In the future, how will the investigations of Greg Mortenson affect the authenticity of his leadership?

CASE 11.3**The Reluctant First Lady**

Betty Ford admits that August 9, 1974, the day her husband was sworn in as the 38th President of the United States, was “the saddest day of my life” (Ford, 1978, p. 1).

Elizabeth Bloomer Ford was many things—a former professional dancer and dance teacher, the mother of four nearly grown children, the wife of 13-term U.S. Congressman Gerald “Jerry” R. Ford who was looking forward to their retirement—but she never saw being the country’s First Lady as her destiny.

As she held the Bible her husband’s hand rested on while he took the oath of office, Betty began a journey in which she would become many more things: a breast cancer survivor, an outspoken advocate of women’s rights, a recovering alcoholic and addict, and cofounder and president of the Betty Ford Center, a nonprofit treatment center for substance abuse.

The Fords’ path to the White House began in October 1973, when Jerry was tapped to replace then-U.S. Vice President Spiro Agnew who had resigned. After only 9 months in that role, Jerry became the U.S. President after Richard M. Nixon left office amidst the Watergate scandal.

In her first days as the First Lady, Betty became known for her openness and candor. At the time, women were actively fighting for equal rights in the workplace and in society. Less than half of American women were employed outside the home, and women’s earnings were only 38% of their male counterparts’ (Spraggins, 2005). Betty raised a number of eyebrows in her first press conference, when she spoke out in support of abortion rights, women in politics, and the Equal Rights Amendment.

Betty hadn’t even been in the White House a month when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She again broke with social conventions and spoke openly about the diagnosis and treatment for a disease that was not widely discussed in public. With her cooperation, *Newsweek* magazine printed a complete account of her surgery and treatment, which included a radical mastectomy. This openness helped raise awareness of breast cancer screening and treatment options and created an atmosphere of support and comfort for other women fighting the disease.

“Lying in the hospital, thinking of all those women going for cancer checkups because of me, I’d come to recognize more clearly the power of the woman in the White House,” she said in her first autobiography,

The Times of My Life. “Not my power, but the power of the position, a power which could be used to help” (Ford, 1978, p. 194).

After her recuperation, Betty made good use of that newfound power. She openly supported and lobbied for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, a bill that would ensure that “equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex” (Francis, 2009).

In an interview with the television news show 60 Minutes, Betty drew the ire of many conservatives when she candidly shared her views on the provocative issues of abortion rights, premarital sex, and marijuana use. After the interview aired, public opinion of Betty plummeted, but her popularity quickly rebounded, and within months her approval rating had climbed to 75%.

At the same time, Betty was busy with the duties of First Lady, entertaining dignitaries and heads of state from countries across the globe. In 1975 she began actively campaigning for her husband for the 1976 presidential election, inspiring buttons that read “Vote for Betty’s Husband.” Ford lost the election to Jimmy Carter and, because he was suffering from laryngitis, Betty stepped into the spotlight to read Jerry’s concession speech to the country, congratulating Carter on his victory. Betty’s time as First Lady ended in January 1977, and the Fords retired to Rancho Mirage, California, and Vail, Colorado.

A little more than a year later, at the age of 60, Betty began another personal battle: overcoming alcoholism and an addiction to prescription medicine. Betty had a 14-year dependence on painkillers for chronic neck spasms, arthritis, and a pinched nerve, but refused to admit she was addicted to alcohol. After checking into the Long Beach Naval Hospital’s Alcohol and Drug Rehabilitation Service, she found the strength to face her demons and, again, went public with her struggles.

“I have found that I am not only addicted to the medications I’ve been taking for my arthritis, but also to alcohol,” she wrote in a statement released to the public. “...I expect this treatment and fellowship to be a solution for my problems and I embrace it not only for me but for all the others who are here to participate” (Ford, 1978, p. 285).

Betty Ford found recovering from addiction was particularly daunting at a time when most treatment centers were geared toward treating men.

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"The female alcoholic has more emotional problems, more health problems, more parenting problems, makes more suicide attempts, than the alcoholic man," Betty explained in her second autobiography, *Betty, A Glad Awakening* (Ford, 1987, p. 129).

For this reason, Betty helped to establish the nonprofit Betty Ford Center in 1982 in Rancho Mirage. The center splits its space equally between male and female patients, but the treatment is gender specific with programs for the entire family system affected by addiction. The center's success has attracted celebrities as well as everyday people including middle-class moms, executives, college students, and laborers. Betty's activism in the field of recovery earned her the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1991 and the Congressional Medal of Honor in 1999.

Speaking at an alumni reunion of Betty Ford Center patients, Betty said, "I'm really proud of this center. And I'm really grateful for my own recovery, because with my recovery, I was able to help some other people come forward and address their own addictions. And I don't think there's anything as wonderful in life as being able to help someone else" (Ford, 1987, p. 217).

Questions

1. How would you describe Betty Ford's leadership? In what ways could her leadership be described as authentic?
2. How did critical life events play a role in the development of her leadership?
3. Is there a clear moral dimension to Betty Ford's leadership? In what way is her leadership about serving the common good? Discuss.
4. As we discussed in the chapter, self-awareness and transparency are associated with authentic leadership. How does Betty Ford exhibit these qualities?

LEADERSHIP INSTRUMENT

Although still in its early phases of development, the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) was created by Walumbwa and associates (2008) to explore and validate the assumptions of authentic leadership. It is a

16-item instrument that measures four factors of authentic leadership: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency. Based on samples in China, Kenya, and the United States, Walumbwa and associates (2008) validated the dimensions of the instrument and found it positively related to outcomes such as organizational citizenship, organizational commitment, and satisfaction with supervisor and performance. To obtain this instrument, contact Mind Garden, Inc., Menlo Park, California, or www.mindgarden.com.

In this section, we provide an authentic leadership self-assessment to help you determine your own level of authentic leadership. This questionnaire will help you understand how authentic leadership is measured and provide you with your own scores on items that characterize authentic leadership. The questionnaire includes 16 questions that assess the four major components of authentic leadership discussed earlier in this chapter: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency. Your results on this self-assessment questionnaire will give you information about your level of authentic leadership on these underlying dimensions of authentic leadership. This questionnaire is intended for practical applications to help you understand the complexities of authentic leadership. It is not designed for research purposes.

Authentic Leadership Self-Assessment Questionnaire

Instructions: This questionnaire contains items about different dimensions of authentic leadership. There are no right or wrong responses, so please answer honestly. Use the following scale when responding to each statement by writing the number from the scale below that you feel most accurately characterizes your response to the statement.

Key: 1 = Strongly disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly agree

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I can list my three greatest weaknesses. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. My actions reflect my core values. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I seek others' opinions before making up my own mind. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I openly share my feelings with others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I can list my three greatest strengths. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. I do <i>not</i> allow group pressure to control me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I listen closely to the ideas of those who disagree with me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. I let others know who I truly am as a person. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. I seek feedback as a way of understanding who I really am as a person. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. Other people know where I stand on controversial issues. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. I do not emphasize my own point of view at the expense of others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. I rarely present a "false" front to others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. I accept the feelings I have about myself. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. My morals guide what I do as a leader. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. I listen very carefully to the ideas of others before making decisions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. I admit my mistakes to others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Scoring

1. Sum the responses on items 1, 5, 9, and 13 (self-awareness).
2. Sum the responses on items 2, 6, 10, and 14 (internalized moral perspective).
3. Sum the responses on items 3, 7, 11, and 15 (balanced processing).
4. Sum the responses on items 4, 8, 12, and 16 (relational transparency).

Total Scores

Self-Awareness: _____

Internalized Moral Perspective: _____

Balanced Processing: _____

Relational Transparency: _____

Scoring Interpretation

This self-assessment questionnaire is designed to measure your authentic leadership by assessing four components of the process: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency. By comparing your scores on each of these components, you can determine which are your stronger and which are your weaker components in each category. You can interpret your authentic leadership scores using the following guideline: high = 16–20 and low = 15 and below. Scores in the upper range indicate stronger authentic leadership, whereas scores in the lower range indicate weaker authentic leadership.

SUMMARY

As a result of leadership failures in the public and private sectors, authentic leadership is emerging in response to societal demands for genuine, trustworthy, and good leadership. Authentic leadership describes leadership that is transparent, morally grounded, and responsive to people's needs and values. Even though authentic leadership is still in the early stages of development, the study of authentic leadership is timely and worthwhile, offering hope to people who long for true leadership.

Although there is no single accepted definition of authentic leadership, it can be conceptualized intrapersonally, developmentally, and interpersonally. The intrapersonal perspective focuses on the leader and the leader's knowledge, self-regulation, and self-concept. The interpersonal perspective claims that authentic leadership is a collective process, created by leaders and followers together. The developmental perspective emphasizes major components of authentic leadership that develop over a lifetime and are triggered by major life events.

There are two practical approaches to authentic leadership that provide "how to" steps to become an authentic leader. Terry's approach (1993) describes how leaders can utilize the Authentic Action Wheel to address *what is really going on* in a situation and determine what actions are truly good for the leader, followers, and the organization.

George's approach (2003) identifies five basic dimensions of authentic leadership and the corresponding behavioral characteristics individuals need to develop to become authentic leaders.

In the social science literature, a theoretical approach to authentic leadership is emerging. Drawing from the fields of leadership, positive organizational scholarship, and ethics, researchers have identified four major components of authentic leadership: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency.

In addition, researchers have found that authentic leadership is influenced by a leader's positive psychological capacities, moral reasoning, and critical life events.

Authentic leadership has several positive features. First, it provides an answer to people who are searching for good and sound leadership in an uncertain world. Second, authentic leadership is prescriptive and provides a



great deal of information about how leaders can learn to become authentic. Third, it has an explicit moral dimension that asserts that leaders need to do what is “right” and “good” for their followers and society. Fourth, it is framed as a process that is developed by leaders over time rather than as a fixed trait. Last, authentic leadership can be measured with a theory-based instrument.

There are also negative features to authentic leadership. First, the ideas set forth in the practical approaches need to be treated cautiously because they have not been fully substantiated by research. Second, the moral component of authentic leadership is not fully explained. For example, it does not describe how values such as justice and community are related to authentic leadership. Third, the rationale for including positive psychological capacities as an inherent part of a model of authentic leadership has not been fully explicated. Finally, there is a lack of evidence regarding the effectiveness of authentic leadership and how it is related to positive organizational outcomes.

In summary, authentic leadership is a new and exciting area of research, which holds a great deal of promise. As more research is conducted on authentic leadership, a clearer picture will emerge about the true nature of the process and the assumptions and principles that it encompasses.

Visit the Student Study Site at www.sagepub.com/northouse6e for web quizzes, leadership questionnaires, and media links represented by the icons.

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