POSITIVE LEADERSHIP

Authenticity

Leadership Begins with Self

1 Purpose & Outcomes

Purpose: To increase your understanding of Authenticity, its role in effective leadership, and its ability to amplify social force.

Intended outcome: This chapter prompts reflection on your authentic self and inspires you to choose actions that increase your capacity for being authentic.

> "We can keep ourselves so busy, fill our lives with so many diversions, stuff our heads with so much knowledge, involve ourselves with so many people and cover so much ground that we never have time to probe the fearful and wonderful world within. By middle life most of us are accomplished fugitives from ourselves." John W. Gardner

2 Self Assessment

Please rate yourself for each of the following items on the 1-7scale (1=no, 7=yes) before *reading the chapter.*

1. I fulfill various roles in my life by being essentially the same person in each role.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. I am comfortable resisting pressure to conform.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. I am aware of the gaps between how others see me and how I see myself.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. Other people feel comfortable being themselves with me.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. I reliably assess situations and relationships that allow and/or inhibit me to be my true self.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6. I consistently look at myself for opportunities to improve and create action steps.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

7. My current life situation (i.e. career, relationships, etc.) accurately reflects my true self.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3 Authenticity Defined

Authenticity is the matchless, irreplaceable essence that defines you. The most celebrated leaders live authentically as individuals first, using Authenticity as a source of personal strength and then infusing it into their communities to make them stronger. Authenticity is a highly potent aspect of *Positive Leadership*. We are compelled to trust people who know themselves. They command our respect because we know we are dealing with individuals who present themselves as they really are. We find them credible. We watch what they do and hear what they say. We realize they are not easy targets for manipulation, from us or others. We find ourselves listening to, trusting and even being led by them. Such is the force of "Authenticity." Almost every definition of Authenticity in leadership literature is simply "being who you really are." This is somewhat helpful, but provides minimal guidance for how to expand one's capacity for Authenticity. In terms of a capacity that can increase social force, think of Authenticity from your perspective: are you more available to someone's influence when you gauge them as authentic? Conversely, are you less willing to be mobilized by someone when your B.S. detector goes off?

Author Charles Guignon expounds on Authenticity in his book *On Being Authentic*:

> "The basic assumption built into the ideal of authenticity is that, lying within each individual, there is a deep, "true self"— the "Real Me"— in distinction from all that is not really me. The real, inner self contains the constellation of feelings, needs, desires, capacities, aptitudes, dispositions, and creative abilities that make the person a unique individual. The ideal of authenticity has two components.

> *First*, the project of becoming authentic asks us to get in touch with the real self we have within, a task that is achieved primarily through introspection, self-reflection or meditation. Only if we can candidly appraise ourselves and achieve genuine self-knowledge can we begin to realize our capacity for authentic existence.

> *Secondly*, this ideal calls on us to express that unique constellation of inner traits through our actions in the external world—to actually be what we are in our ways of being present in our relationships, careers, and practical activities. The assumption is that it is only by expressing our true selves that we can achieve self-realization and self-fulfillment as authentic human beings."

In this chapter, we will build upon the two aspects Guignon lays before us by adding two more critical phases that come between "getting in touch with" and "expressing" Authenticity. The additional two stages are *accept* and *embrace*. Our four principles for enhancing Authenticity are: Self-Awareness ("getting in touch with"), Self-Acceptance (accept), Self-Development (embrace), and Self-Assertion ("express").

4 Authenticity and Leadership

Positive Leadership originates in Authenticity

Have you ever sat in a meeting where something important is left unsaid? It seems so obvious to you and you think it's strange that people are talking around the issue— like an elephant on the table that everyone sees but nobody acknowledges. You begin to doubt yourself. Maybe what you want to say is totally off base and that's why nobody else has said it. Perhaps it's not off base, but maybe it's a taboo topic. If other people are thinking it but keeping quiet then maybe, you think, you shouldn't say it either. This unspoken thought seems important, however. The urge wells up to say something, but you repress it. The meeting continues and the course of the conversation affirms your observation that what you want to say is relevant and important. The urge to say something bubbles up again.

Despite your reservations, your hand shoots up and the speaker (the CEO, the Director, or someone of authority) calls on you. All eyes turn to you. It is time for you to speak up or sell out. These 'speak up or sell out' moments happen more often than we may realize because we develop habits that govern how we respond in those moments of choice. Your choice is influenced by your upbringing and shaped by your values; the thought that comes to you is a product of your unique strengths, experiences, skills and knowledge. What you do in these moments gives you one way to assess your Authenticity.

I'm not suggesting you should say every thing that comes to mind. Of course this is highly situational. I am saying that those moments where you feel apart from the crowd can be indicators of what's unique about you. I want you to carefully consider this: If you believe that a desired course of action is necessary and a true reflection of who you are, then do you act on it or let it pass? In *The High Impact Leader*, authors Avolio and Luthans provide several accounts of real leaders in defining moments. One that particularly resonated with me involved General Colin Powell. After giving a keynote speech to a large group of real estate agents and brokers, Colin Powell was asked this question: "General Powell, I understand that your wife once suffered from depression, had to take medicine, and was even in a mental hospital. Do you want to comment on that?" Everyone was aghast, and you could hear a pin drop as they awaited his answer.

What might you do in that situation? Play it safe? Go ballistic? Deflect with humor? In this defining moment for Powell (and for how others perceived him) he replied, "Excuse me sir, the person you love more than anyone is living in hell, and you don't do whatever you can to get her out? Do you have a problem with that, sir?" One journalist who observed this exchange declared, 'You felt Powell's values and principles fuse into deeply felt conviction. Talk about leadership! I said to myself 'I would buy a used country from that guy.'"

For the authentic individual, the chosen course of action often comes from an internal map rather than one sanctioned by external sources. Contrast this example of Authenticity with Powell's address to the UN where he assured the world that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. Since that moment is what many people will consider when we talk about Powell, it serves to demonstrate a valid point about Authenticity— it is not necessarily a steady state. According to Powell, he fully believed the information he presented to the UN was accurate. He later learned that the reports were filtered through the Vice President's office before coming to him. So, does this mean Powell was inauthentic in this instance? This situation raises an interesting distinction between sincerity and Authenticity that Charles Taylor makes in his book, *The Ethics of Authenticity,* that sincerity is truly believing what one says. I think Powell was sincere, he believed what he was presenting. But he wasn't authentic because what he presented was false. Authenticity isn't just believing what you say. It has the added criteria of what you say being consistent with truth and reality.
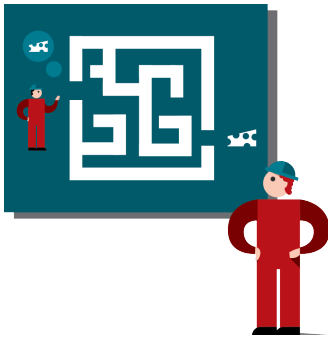
Sincerity is not necessarily "bad," especially in contrast to pretense. Pretense is saying the opposite of what is true. The worst reason for pretense is a deliberate intention to mislead, but pretense can also arise out of fear, or a desire to not "make waves." The Pretense, Sincerity, Authenticity model is based on concepts from Connolly and Rianoshek's book *The Communication Catalyst.*

We might present ourselves sincerely, but what if we don't really know ourselves? What if our sincerely held notions of who we are simply aren't true? I could sincerely believe that I feel a certain way about values I profess to have. I could profess that belief to other people. When I wrote out my values about 15 years ago my values statement sounded very noble. But when I thought about the values I actually live by, it turned out that "comfort" is something I value but was not on my original list. While it is not very noble sounding to say "I value my comfort," it is true for me. Until this realization, I sincerely believed my original version of values reflected my current state. It wasn't until I took a more rigorous look at myself that I was able to reach beyond sincerity and approach Authenticity. This is why self-knowledge isn't as simple as just being familiar with ourselves. Self-knowledge requires a much more intense and honest look.

Four ways Authenticity increases social force

AUTHENTICITY

SINCERITY

PRETENSE
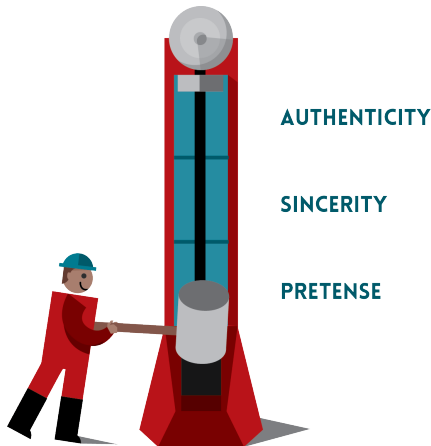
1. **People have a visceral response to Authenticity** Think of times when you spoke from deep conviction. As with the first Powell example, something changes— hesitancy vanishes, your mind is clear, the formation of your thoughts comes naturally, and your words are articulate and succinct. When we hear someone speak from conviction, in these acute moments of Authenticity, it is powerful and moving. Contrast that with a speaker who seems insincere. At some level, either subconsciously or mindfully, the listeners scan for Authenticity. When gaps in integrity emerge, deception detectors sound an alarm.

2. **Credibility rises to the degree one is authentic** To the degree a leader is viewed as authentic, less time is given to evaluating the leader and more time is available for creativity, solutions and progress. Researchers Adrian Chan, Sean Hannah and William Gardner use the term "leadership multiplier" to describe when leaders are more favorably received and the impact of their actions amplified. In the article, "Veritable Authentic Leadership," their research found that "Leaders who are authentic to themselves are able to achieve this leadership multiplier effect because they display behaviors that engender trust and allow followers to easily and confidently infer Authenticity from their actions." Authenticity multiplies your social force.

3. **Authentic leaders foster Authenticity in others** Authenticity is contagious. Community members take cues on how authentic they can be from their leader. If the leader is inauthentic, the implied message is 'it is not safe to be authentic.' In the absence of Authenticity, people play games like the one I call "Winking and Nodding." This essentially is the unspoken agreement between two people: "If you don't call me on my baloney then I won't call you on yours." "The dyadic effect," a principle from communication theory, holds that if one person self-discloses it triggers a reciprocal response of self-disclosure from others. This is truly an example of social force. If the desired response I want from others is greater connection and openness, then the positive action I can take is to model this openness by revealing more about myself first.

4. **Authenticity increases your level of engagement** I like the advice Tim Ferriss provides in his book *The 4-Hour Work-Week*. Forget about trying to figure out what makes you happy for a moment. It's a tough question to answer for most people. Instead, answer a more pointed question, "What makes you excited?" What are the things to which you look most forward? These are the most engaging activities for you. When your energy and attention is freed up for the things you most enjoy, you will find yourself aligning your activities with your positive personal traits. When that happens, you will experience more positive emotions. The result will be a sense of flow and engagement. Extending this further, when you create a climate of Authenticity for others, you foster their engagement.

5 Authenticity Principles

In *Positive Leadership,* Authenticity is comprised of four elements which can also be viewed as stages of Authenticity because each builds on the one before.

1. Self-Knowledge

2. Self-Acceptance

3. Self-Development

4. Self-Assertion

Instead of merely defining Authenticity as "being who you truly are," I hope you find that breaking Authenticity down into these four elements helps you connect more deeply to the capacity of Authenticity.

Only you are responsible for your Authenticity. The unfortunate truth is that there are few people that advocate for your Authenticity. Perhaps it's because each person is figuring out who they are as well, coming to terms with it, and being that person amid the many pressures on them to conform. Or, maybe other people do not give much thought to the topic of Authenticity— their own or anyone else's. Referring back to Guignon's two phases here: first we must get in touch, and then we must express our Authenticity.

The fortunate truth, however, is that nobody can stop you from being your authentic self. It begins with your choice. If you are not the author of your life, then who is?

"Now I become myself. It's taken time, many years and places; I have been dissolved and shaken, worn other people's faces." May Sarton

Principle 1: Self-knowledge

Self-knowledge is a continual process of looking inward and taking an introspective inventory of yourself: the positive, the negative and the unknown. Self-knowledge is elusive for a host of reasons. You are constantly changing. While your authentic essence may remain the same, your tastes, knowledge, and desires may change over the trajectory of your life. The concerns and interests of your teenage years are likely vastly different from those of your adulthood. Your circumstances when you chose your mate or profession may be leagues apart from those you are in now. Life experiences constantly shape us.

In addition, we view ourselves through a biased lens— both positively and negatively. For example, you are literally unable to see yourself objectively when you look in a mirror. The physical image you see is not the same as the physical image a stranger would see. You focus on a very specific feature (i.e. hair, eyes, or shoes) and are less able to take in the totality of your image as an observer would. While looking in the mirror you are "on stage for yourself," yet an onlooker sees you even when you are "off stage." This explains why some people look at a photograph of themselves and say, "Is that really what I look like?" Or hear a recording of themselves and hardly recognize the sound of their own voice.

Your personal bias carries through to more than just the physical representation of yourself. We tend to read our actions through a lens of excessive self-sympathy or self-criticism. Self-sympathy enables people to excuse even their most abhorrent behaviors. According to sociologists, we blame **our circumstances** for what happens to us, but we blame **other people** for their circumstances. This is called the "Fundamental Attribution Error" because preserving the way we want to see ourselves is so reflexive that we do not bother to question the judgments we make of ourselves. When someone else is late to one of your meetings, their "good reasons" can sound like sub-par excuses. "I guess this meeting isn't very important to you," you might think or even say. Yet, when you are late, you have a host of "good reasons": the traffic, the last minute phone call, the kids needing something, and just about anything except the possibility that you just didn't care enough to be there on time. The error is that when we make judgments, we are much more generous with ourselves than with others.

A strange paradox is that in addition to being our own best sympathizers, we are also our own worst critics. I have left social encounters thinking to myself, "I can't believe I said that. It came out totally wrong and that must have offended her and now she thinks I'm pompous." After obsessing over my poor behavior, I may even go so far as to follow up with an apology only to learn the other person hadn't even noticed whatever it was that caused me so much angst.

Between our overly sympathetic and critical self-assessments, we can begin to see how elusive it is to have an accurate self-picture. A mirror that makes you look worse or better than you actually are is not a very good mirror. Accurate self-knowledge is essential to Authenticity. Gaining clarity of both our positive and negative dimensions allows us to be more effective wielders of social force. With a greater sense of self, a leader knows the areas where he or she will confidently, competently, and consistently excel, and the areas where help is needed. So how do we improve the accuracy of our self image? How can people lead if they do not know who they are?

A recent study conducted at the University of Virginia found that many people would rather administer an uncomfortable electric shock to themselves than sit alone with their thoughts for 12 minutes. Participants agreed to not use any of their devices (i.e. cellphones) during that time, but over half of the participants confessed to cheating. As Erin Westgate, one of the researchers, pointed out "It may be that our minds... are not designed to withdraw from the environment, to withdraw from the people around us and to focus inwards." Or, as Blaise Pascal pointed out in 1654, "All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone."

In the electronic, 24-hour age of media there are plenty of distractions to keep us from looking inward. Most people lack accurate self-knowledge, and consequently do not live authentic lives. Instead, they adjust to the scripts the world gives them in areas such as relationships, career, definition of success, material possessions, etc. They lack an internal guidance system to define life on their terms.

Self-knowledge and social force: What affect does a person's lack of self-knowledge have on others? When I encounter a person with little self-knowledge, I know that person will be less approachable and this in turn leads me to doubt their judgment. It makes me question: if they are so unaware of their own demeanor, then in what other areas do they lack awareness? If I can not trust them to see their own blind spots, then how can I trust them to catch important blind spots in the community?

Principle 2: Self-acceptance

Have you done an accurate accounting of yourself and accepted yourself for who you are, what you stand for and taken responsibility for, and your conduct regardless of the assessment of others? If these matters are well considered, your leadership will be more resistant to self-doubt, ego traps born of self-deception, and falling prey to negative social force of others. The ancient Greeks espoused two great imperatives. The first, *know thyself,* was addressed under self-knowledge. The second, lesser known, imperative is *become what you are,* or *choose yourself*. This is what we mean by self-acceptance. It is a two-part proposition. Self-knowledge is the first part and self-acceptance is the second.

Self-acceptance is a constant evaluation each of us conducts throughout the day, ranging from self-acceptance to self-rejection. We monitor ourselves as we go through various activities and judge how well we did, how good we looked or how we were perceived. Self-acceptance means that not only are you aware of your strengths and your weaknesses but that you can equally accept compliments for where you excel and criticism for where you do not. A self-accepting person is someone we describe as "comfortable in his skin." For a good test of self-acceptance, think of your most embarrassing moment. The one that makes you want to crawl into a hole and wish you could erase from your memory. At some point, you need to be able to say, "That was me. I was there. I did that." Then laugh, or shrug it off, saying, "Yes that was kind of silly of me" or "Now I know better." Authenticity demands that we own up to the truths about ourselves that we would rather not own— addictions, mistakes, limitations, etc. Self-acceptance also demands that we embrace our virtues— natural gifts, ideals, and aspirations.

Authenticity comes through self-development. You may be struck by the paradox that, on one hand, Authenticity involves accepting yourself for who you are. On the other hand, authentic individuals strive to become better versions of their true selves. For example, you may come to realize that you are a creative individual and have had a hard time coming to terms with that— especially if your creativity has not been accepted by others. Accepting your creative side would be an important step on the road to Authenticity. The next step would be to develop those creative talents.

Self-acceptance and social force: People who do not accept themselves tend to be perfectionistic and self-critical. When you are self-critical it leads others to question why they should believe in you. The dyadic effect kicks in and others will also start to feel perfectionistic, or to doubt themselves. This causes questions such as 'If they can't accept themselves then how are they going to accept me?' to arise.

Principle 3: Self-development

What is the work of self-development? In his book *Soar with Your Strengths,* Donald Clifton, CEO of the Gallup Organization, shares the results of his research on people who achieved excellence in their pursuits. He found that they do not focus on turning their weaknesses into strengths. This does not mean we should ignore weaknesses— indeed, we need to manage them. Real excellence, Clifton found, comes from a focus on making their strengths even stronger. Why? Because the areas in which you are already strong are the areas where you have interest, passion and standards for excellence. You possess a native intelligence in those arenas and your chances for excelling are much higher. Self-development starts with a focus on the areas that are an extension of your authentic talents. The poet Rumi advised us to "water the flowers, not the thorns."

How do you know where you are strongest? Most people are unaware of their own talents and strengths. It reminds me of a story I once heard about a boy who begged his father for a baby bull. The father agreed to get him one under the condition that his son lift the baby bull over his head every day. As the boy matured, and the bull grew, people were amazed to see this young man lift a full-grown bull over his head. Soon, others would gather from far away to observe this incredible feat of strength. They were amazed. The young man failed to see what was so impressive about this feat. To the boy-turned-young-man, it was no big deal because he lifted the bull every day.

The areas where you excel may come so naturally to you that you view your talents as nothing special because you do them everyday. It is important to understand the areas where we naturally excel as those are the areas where we truly become excellent. Some exercises in the *Field Guide* are meant to help you identify your strengths. There are various ways to identify our unique gifts: feedback from trusted confidantes, tracking performance against others. By far, my favorite tool is the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment. Over 11,000,000 people have taken it and it has been the single most effective tool for my own development. Identification of our talents is a start, but self-development requires deliberate and continuous focus in the areas in which we want to grow.

It's often the areas where we excel that can also cause us to problems if we do not manage them correctly. Sometimes strengths can run amok. We have to learn how and when to tone them down as well. At the same time, as Clifton advises, we need to not spend too much time on our weaknesses at the expense of honing our strengths. Weaknesses can be managed in ways other than developing them. We can form partnerships with people who are strong where we are weak or we can develop systems or find tools to help us.

When does the work of self-development end? At what point does someone get to say, "Well, that's about all the work there is to do on me"? Self-development is a lifelong pursuit. I suggest that our purpose in life is to develop ourselves as much as we can in the time we have allotted. This is necessary to leadership for a couple of reasons. The more you authentically develop your personal potential, the more artfully you are able to lead change that you identify as meaningful.

Positive Leadership focuses on personal development. It begins with Authenticity and continues on through the other six capacities. As you experience the rest of the book over the course of the program, and through discussion with other members of your community leadership program, I hope you identify focus areas that resonate with you as we each need to create our own self-development plan.

Self-development and social force: if you do not embrace self-development, then it signals to other people that they do not need to develop either. You must model the behavior if you wish to see it in others. The Greek philosophers believed the people who should occupy the highest roles in society were those who had made the most progress on surfacing and living authentically. The reason authentic people should occupy top positions is so those below them would have a model to emulate. If the senior person in an organization does not develop, it caps the potential for the rest of the organization.

> "The more authentic you become, particularly regarding personal experiences and even self doubts, the more people can relate to you and feel safe to express themselves."
> Stephen Covey, *7 Habits of Highly Successful People*

Principle 4: Self-assertion

As children we are taught to be seen and not heard. A former teacher of mine had a quote by Abraham Lincoln over his door that read, "It's better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to open one's mouth and remove all doubt." For those who strive for Authenticity, however, this advice can be damaging if it mutes the true expression of our uniqueness. Self-assertion is not about showing off or bragging. Neither is it about preventing others from asserting themselves. In the book *Your Perfect Right: A Guide to Assertive Behavior*, authors Robert Alberti and Michael Emmons distinguish assertive behavior from passive and aggressive behavior. Think of it as a scale ranging from passive on one end and aggressive on the other. Assertiveness is right in the center.

Self-assertion is the quality of advancing one's self— your values, aspirations, views, etc. For some people this may be challenging. Many factors of our upbringing discourage us from asserting ourselves through a fear of being perceived as pushy or bossy. In New Zealand, for example, there is a cultural value termed the "Tall Poppy Syndrome." Tall Poppies are people who stand out from the rest and run a greater risk of getting "cut down" by those around them.

Passive behavior is foregoing things that are rightfully yours to pursue— seeking a promotion or advancing causes that are important to you. It means you hold yourself back even to your own detriment, anxiety and frustration. Aggressive behavior, on the other hand, is taking what you want at the expense of another person being able to do the same. Assertive behavior strikes the appropriate balance between the two extremes.

Alberti and Emmons define assertion as "that which enables a person to act in his own best interests, to stand up for himself without undue anxiety, to express his honest feelings comfortably, or to exercise his own rights without denying the rights of others." A silly metaphor I use to illustrate passivity, assertiveness and aggression is the last piece of pie. You would like some of the remaining pie. If you walk up and just take that last piece, that means others who may want it are not able to enjoy it. If you sit back, silently for fear of appearing greedy, then someone else may enjoy that piece of pie you so badly want. An assertive approach would go something like this, "Hey, that pie sure looks good. Anyone want to split it with me?"
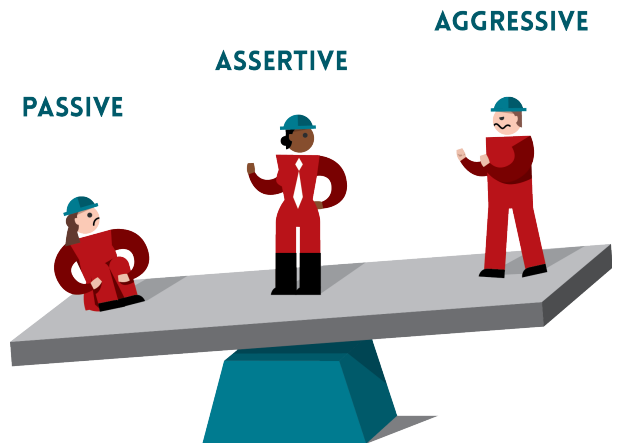
Self-assertion is a necessary component of *Positive Leadership* because it meets the right balance of taking appropriate action without waiting for permission from someone else. It allows you to pursue the directions you want to take while making space for others to do the same. *Positive Leadership,* positive actions that evoke positive reactions, requires self-assertion. Passivity might never produce the outcomes you believe to be necessary. Aggression invites resentment and resistance.

When tempered with self-knowledge, self-acceptance, and self-development, self-assertion becomes comfortable to you and is much more effective in producing results. You learn to recognize a need and, without waiting for permission or direction from others, you take the positive, forward-moving actions that produce positive reactions from others.

Self-assertion and social force: if leaders model aggression, their culture becomes more aggressive. If leaders model passivity, the overall culture becomes more passive. It is important to model the appropriate degree of standing up for yourself, saying what you want and need without going too far into aggression. Aggression breeds a critical and political culture. Passiveness leads to a culture of pretense and neglect— where people don't say what they think, forego meeting their needs, and sit idly by. Self-assertion creates a healthy social culture where people can say what is true for them without preventing other people from saying what is true for them.

6 Authenticity Inhibitors

For each capacity there are "force inhibitors", or things that can impede your social force. As you read through them, see if any relate to you. Identifying inhibitors can provide clues for areas where you could increase your Authenticity.

Other people's truths: When we see someone else's truth, (and if we do not realize it is not our truth,) it is tempting to be lured on a path away from our authentic selves. This could lead us to live someone else's life instead of our own. Just because something is true for one person does not make it true for us. In the absence of our own self-awareness and self-acceptance, we may look to others for the answers— how to live, what is important, how to behave, etc. Just because an outfit looks good on someone else, metaphorically speaking, does not mean the clothes will fit us. This is not to say that we cannot be inspired by other people, but that we must seek to find, live by, and lead by our own truths. What are some possible areas of your life where other people's truths have become your own?

Desire to please others: In our culture we place a premium on being liked. Through socialization from our earliest years we become trained— rewards for giving the correct answers, or behaving in expected ways. Conversely, we are sanctioned if we fail to give the "right" answers or meet expectations. We carry this desire to please others into adulthood. We develop an imagined audience (people whose opinions matter most to us) to guide the way we design our lives, from the cars we drive to the career decisions we make. This imagined audience can impede our authentic choices if we aren't mindful of their inhibiting influences. We don't often reflect on the question "who is my imagined audience?" It could be a parent, or a group of people. We might not fully realize how this imagined audience can have a profound effect on the choices we make.

Self-doubt: It is difficult to be authentic when you doubt your talents, experiences and insights. Lacking an internal sense of self, we look for external indicators of our worth. On this topic, a coaching client of mine once said, "Adam, I'm convinced that if I were to walk into a room with a chicken sitting on top of my head nobody would even notice." Bemused, I asked, "Why is that?" He replied "Because, people are so concerned with the chickens on their own heads that they wouldn't even notice the one on mine." This is a quirky, though memorable, way to understand that everyone has their own measure of self doubt and this "imagined audience" may deserve less deference than we yield to them.

False ideas about yourself: It is impossible to grow up without having your self-view influenced by those around you. From your earliest years you received messages about you that may have taken root. If you appeared a certain way to some people, the labels they put on you may have carried into your adulthood. Authenticity requires us to assess the ideas we have of ourselves. One of my favorite passages is the opening of *Deadeye Dick* by Kurt Vonnegut: "To the as-yet-unborn, to all innocent wisps of undifferentiated nothingness: Watch out for life. I have caught life. I have come down with life. I was a wisp of undifferentiated nothingness, and then a little peephole opened quite suddenly. Light and sound poured in. Voices began to describe me and my surroundings. Nothing they said could be appealed. They said I was a boy named Rudolph Waltz, and that was that. They said the year was 1932, and that was that. They said I was in Midland City, Ohio, and that was that. They never shut up. Year after year they piled detail upon detail. They do it still." An important aspect of Authenticity is to re-evaluate those voices that you couldn't previously appeal.

Absence of introspection: Virginia Woolf once said "If you do not tell the truth about yourself you cannot tell it about other people." Imagine a class called "You 101." We would learn about who we are and what makes us unique— our beliefs, preferences and passions. We could grow comfortable in the ways we are different from others and design our lives accordingly. Instead, many people mute their own particular excellences in order to conform— a sure path to mediocrity. When was the last time you took an introspective look at who you truly are?

Life's little trappings: People go into debt, distort their bodies, and make false promises for want of the external things that seem so important at the time but have little lasting impact. I have a perfectly decent car. Somewhere, however, I got in my mind that I needed to have a luxury car. It started with the thought, "Successful people drive luxury cars and I want to be seen as successful." Then it became a frenzy of desire, "I NEED that luxury car." I even went out looking and almost signed a 6-year commitment for something I did not need. I soothed that unnecessary hunger for a luxury car and mindfully became re-enchanted with my perfectly adequate car. My bank account is happier and so am I because those hungers can never be sated. How do life's little trappings pull you in directions that are not in line with your Authenticity?

These are just some examples of how inhibitors erode a leader's Authenticity. Consider if these, or any other inhibitors resonate with you.

7 Expanding Authenticity

This is where you develop your personal capacity for Authenticity. As with all seven capacities, you have already developed your Authenticity to some degree. The activities listed in the *Field Guide* are resources for expanding your level of Authenticity. Take time to go to the *Field Guide* now and do a couple of the activities.

Over the next month you can focus on Authenticity by completing some of the activities in the *Field Guide*:

We suggest completing 3-5 of the Authenticity Field Guide exercises.

Observe your capacity for Authenticity by journaling or sharing (with at least one other person).

Developing Authenticity in others

An effective leader not only develops the capacity in himself or herself, but in others as well. Consider ways you can do the following:

Share the concepts you found valuable from this chapter with your staff, co-workers, etc.

Have your team members or family complete one, or more, of the exercises in the Field Guide and discuss with others.

8 Connecting Points

Purpose: Authenticity harnesses leadership; purpose points the direction. Clear purpose begins with self-knowledge and what is important to you. Knowing your strengths and vulnerabilities will help you effectively achieve your purpose.

Advocacy: Advocacy is about championing the things that you view as most important and that you want others to value as well. Authenticity helps to clarify what you value so that your efforts are directed toward the things closest to your passions.

Resilience: This is the ability of something to return to its original form. As a leader, your original form is best described in terms of your authentic self. When the challenges of leadership get stressful, having a clear sense of Authenticity helps you stay true to your best form.

Community-Building: Communities reflect the leader's values. The kind of community you want to create is largely determined by your Authenticity. Even if you can not "create" a culture, you can shape it through the degree of Authenticity you bring.

Reason: Reason describes the degree to which the world, as it really is, will be represented in your mind. To avoid self-delusion, or the false influence of others, an authentic leader has a clear sense of who they are.

Gratitude: Gratitude is the capacity that acknowledges the value of others. By first acknowledging the value of your own Authenticity, you are better able to appreciate others. There's a profound difference between authentic gratitude and insincere gratitude.

> "Self-knowledge! All my study of happiness, and habits, brings me continually to the challenge of self-knowledge. It sounds so easy— after all, I hang out with myself all day long— but it's tremendously challenging. Every day, I remind myself to be Gretchen, to accept myself and also expect more from myself."
> Gretchen Rubin, author of *The Happiness Project*