

# Introduction

## Yours Truly: the 3 Hs of authentic leadership

What makes an authentic leader? To answer this question, I have identified three characteristics that set authentic leaders apart: *heart*, *habit* and *harmony*, depicted in Figure 1.0. I encourage you to explore these areas in your leadership and life to help identify attitudes and behaviours that will enable you to become authentic and remain so over time.

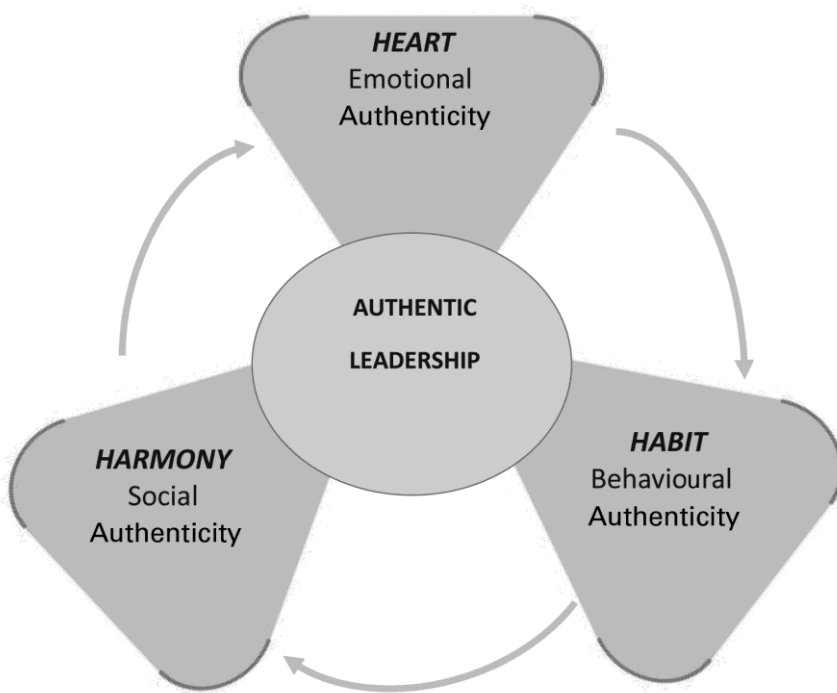


FIGURE 1.0 *The 3 Hs of authentic leadership.*

**Heart** – This is the emotional factor that characterizes authentic leaders. Learn to look inside yourself to find and cultivate passion. Infect your followers with the passion virus and win over their hearts to find their inner motivation.

**Habit** – The habit of learning is the key behavioural element of authentic leaders. Seek out honest feedback and develop a growth mindset. Ask for critical feedback to adapt, grow and progress.

**Harmony** – This is the final characteristic of authentic leaders that guarantees the social enrichment of authentic organizations. Look after others. Seek a harmonious unity between yourself and others to build an authentic context within which to develop followers. This way you will have enduring influence.

Authentic leaders embrace a process of emotional, behavioural and social enrichment to win the hearts of others, set the habit of learning and build harmony between themselves and others. Their authenticity makes followers feel good about themselves and their accomplishments.

First, emotional authenticity include ways to increase self-awareness through unbiased processing of your strengths and weaknesses, cultivating your passion and transmitting it to others with humility, as well as using parts of your life story to underscore the truth of your leadership.

Second, behavioural authenticity means acting in accord with your own principles while setting the habit of changing by fostering an optimistic outlook and staying in control of your destiny.

Finally, social authenticity describes ways to build authentic organizations with a caring mentality and collective identity, creating a community that changes with the times and achieving a balance between agency and communion.

*Yours Truly* captures the essence of authentic leadership in transforming organizations.

Each chapter tells an inspirational story combined with research-based studies, self-assessment tools and a practical, 10-step guide to help you stay true to your authentic self.

## Resolving the three paradoxes of authenticity

Authentic leadership has become a fashionable concept. It argues that leaders must be true to their values and principles if they are to be consistent and succeed. The underlying assumption is that authenticity is unchanging and individual, a matter of personal choice and belief. But my research over the last two decades suggests that behind authenticity lie powerful and largely ignored

dynamic social forces and contradictions. Authenticity is not simply being true to oneself, but also means being true to the protean, evolving and social self. If you want to develop and harness your authentic power, understanding the multidimensional, evolving and social process to authenticity is key. Authenticity is not simply about expressing your 'true' self. Instead, it involves identifying and resolving tensions and paradoxes.

The question at the heart of the book is simple but challenging: how do authentic leaders reinvent themselves and still stay true to themselves?

As I show, authenticity and change can go hand in hand:

- How can a company undertake an authentic transformation? The CEO of PERI, a multinational German construction company, called for greater communication to overcome the challenges of rapid international growth with a strong organizational identity: *We are PERI.*
- How can a stay-at-home mom reinvent herself? Dena Schlutz, a rancher's daughter on a Colorado sheep farm, changed roles from being a supportive wife to becoming a top executive at Hewlett Packard and then a successful real estate entrepreneur after her husband had a tragic accident.
- How can a designer produce the most authentic products? Hiroko Samejima left Chanel and her hometown in Japan to start a fashion company in Ethiopia to produce leather bags following her ethical principles of *slow fashion*.

What do these three stories have in common? The CEO of a German multinational, a US real estate entrepreneur and a Japanese fashion designer are all stories of people in search of authenticity. These are examples of authentic leadership during today's difficult times in a business organization that wants to grow internationally, of an entrepreneur true to herself in the face of adversity, and of personal transformation to become a successful authentic designer.

The authentic leaders I talk to in this book pave the way for powerful transformations by resolving three authenticity paradoxes.

First, they resolve the tension between their protean self and being true to their authentic self. They undergo a life review to discover and cultivate their passion, embracing all sides of their story to develop self-understanding and moral steadfastness.

Second, they change over time, finding the balance between growth and authenticity by reaching into the past to create a new future. Connecting the dots drives them forward to learning and experimenting with their possible selves.

Finally, their impact is enduring because they find harmony in the tension between their personal and social self. They build platforms, craft norms and advance social goals that thrive after they are gone.

By learning from these inspiring stories you can deal effectively with the three paradoxes of authenticity: how to stay true to your protean, possible and social self.

