



agility, flexibility, strength

Authentic Leadership

Do the right thing whilst being yourself

An e-book for Authentic Leaders

Introduction and Background

This e-book has been written to provide supporting information to RAF personnel who are participating in a piece of PhD research regarding Authentic Leadership within the RAF. This e-book has therefore been designed to be used in conjunction with a participant's personal 360° Authentic Leadership Report.

It is suggested that 'Authentic Leadership' is different to other leadership theories such as Situational Leadership or Charismatic Leadership in so much as the focus within Authentic Leadership is on leader self-awareness and ethical decision making.

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1. What is Authentic Leadership?

Authentic Leadership links who you are as a person (your beliefs and values), with how you lead and manage within your organization (your thinking and behaviours).

2. The 4 Aspects of Authentic Leadership

Different theorists conceptualise Authentic Leadership slightly differently. However, all agree that self awareness, self regulation and making the right ethical choices are critical components of it.

These aspects can be conceptualized into a model which links a leader's thoughts; their Self Awareness and their Ethical Virtue, with their subsequent actions; their Self Regulation and their Ethical Actions.

Authentic Leadership is therefore found in the overlap between these 4 aspects. This model is detailed below in Fig. 1

3. The Authentic Leadership Model

Fig. 1



4. How do Authentic Leaders Behave?

Authentic Leaders are congruent in that what they say, and their subsequent actions, are consistent. They “walk their talk”. They “say what they mean and they mean what they say”. And they say it simply.

In a work environment, Authentic Leaders are ethically sound. They are highly principled regarding their ethical integrity and have a reputation for being courageous in the face of what they consider to be unethical decision making on the part of others.

Authentic Leaders take a multi-perspective approach to problem solving and to difficult ethical issues. They are more likely than other leaders to take all stakeholder positions into account when thinking issues through and deciding what to do.

An Authentic Leader use everything that happens around them as an opportunity to learn more about themselves and others. As such, they continually develop their own self-awareness and understanding of others.

5. The Benefits of being an Authentic Leader

Authentic Leaders have a special relationship with their followers; one that is characterised by mutual respect, mutual support and mutual trust.

Authentic Leadership is a leadership multiplier; the actions taken by Authentic Leaders are received more favourably by others. Therefore the impact of their outcomes and their results are significantly increased. Authentic Leadership provides a lens through which all positive leadership outcomes are magnified, thereby leading to ‘better’ results.

Authentic Leaders get the best from their people; subordinates and colleagues are favourably influenced by them and follow their lead willingly.

Authentic Leaders are more successful; they accept themselves for who they are and are happier as a result. They have a congruence that others aspire to.

Authentic Leaders get themselves noticed; they have a higher profile than other leaders at work, regardless of their position in the organizational hierarchy.

Authentic Leaders get results that consistently out-perform their colleagues and other comparable leaders. They do this with an elegance and a humility that inspires others; even when facing challenging times, they consistently act as a role model to colleagues and subordinates alike.

6. The PhD research project; “The Manifestation of Authentic Leadership within the RAF”

Not only is the concept of Authentic Leadership relatively new within the study of leadership style, the vast majority of associated research has been conducted within the USA rather than in the UK.

This research project is being conducted out of Hull University Business School by Fiona Beddoes-Jones, an Occupational Psychologist. Fiona is a member of The British Psychological Society, The Association of Business Psychologists, The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and The Institute of Directors.

Participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time.

7. Links to the British Defence Doctrine

The British Defence Doctrine is a tri-service document which applies to the Royal Navy and the Army as well as to the Royal Air Force.

The British Defence Doctrine can be found at the following address:

http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/9E4BA75A-8E9F-4A52-983B-44A0226C4906/0/20080924_jdp0_01_3rdEd_U_DCDCIMAPPS.pdf

7a) Preface - Page 6, paragraph 2

“This third edition of BDD reflects recent operational experience, including the need for cross-Government and inter-agency cooperation, and the demands of contemporary military strategy and campaigning. The former, termed a Comprehensive Approach, encourages collaborative working and cooperative enterprises with Other Government Departments (OGDs), wider agencies and other actors. The latter encourages military planners to consider situations as a whole and to seek, through a range of activities, the achievement of outcomes which are both militarily and politically favourable”.

Ethical Actions – “Develops mutually beneficial relationships”

What is Authentic Leadership? – “A multi-perspective approach to problem solving’, ‘ to take all stakeholder positions into account”

7b) Chapter 1 – Security and Defence

103. *The significance of human security is recognized in the United Nation's 'Responsibility to Protect' agenda, which focuses on preventative and developmental lines of activity (including pre-emptive action) rather than purely reactive military intervention. Provision of human security demands an awareness of the particular needs of individuals*

Self Awareness – “Recognises when other need help”

103. The significance of human security is recognized in the United Nation's ‘**Responsibility to Protect**’ agenda (United Nations 2004 Paper ‘A more secure world: Our shared responsibility. Report of the Secretary General’s High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change’).

Ethical Virtue – “Leads to make a difference to the world and has a genuine desire to serve others”

7c) Diplomatic Instrument

118. *The diplomatic instrument of national power enables the achievement of the UK's, mainly foreign, policy objectives through diplomatic means. Successful diplomacy depends upon the power of persuasion, reinforced by the possibility of coercion, and enhanced by a combination of reputation and integrity, the skilful interplay of the other military and economic instruments, and effective communication.*

Benefits of being an Authentic Leader – “Authentic Leaders have a special relationship with their followers; one characterised by mutual trust and integrity”

138. *Above all, a Comprehensive Approach requires those dealing with a crisis to be predisposed to cooperation and structured to develop a shared understanding of a situation and its dynamics.*

What is Authentic Leadership? – “A multi-perspective approach to problem solving Taking all stakeholder positions into account”

Ethical Virtue – “Leads to make a difference in the world and has a genuine desire to serve others”.

141. *In these circumstances, military commanders need to recognize and promote the benefits of cooperation, in order to achieve unity of purpose, while not necessarily enjoying either unity of command or ownership. Effective collaboration requires flexibility, openness and sensitivity towards those who have a legitimate role in the area. A Comprehensive Approach may also confer or generate additional legal and moral responsibilities for communication and deconfliction, and generate additional force protection and sustainment requirements.*

On the benefits of being an Authentic Leader – “Authentic Leaders get themselves noticed..... regardless of their position in the organisational hierarchy”

Ethical Actions – “Displays moral and ethical courage”

7d) On Legitimacy

162. *The maintenance of legitimacy depends on a variety of issues, such as consistently reputable behaviour, moral and ethical considerations, and the prospects of a successful outcome. Should one or all of these elements falter, or be perceived to falter, this may readily change opinions about the validity of military action. Moreover, it bolsters morale and promotes cohesion, both within a force and between coalition partners.*

Ethical Virtue and Actions – [links to both](#)

7e) On Ethics and Morality

164. *Ethical and moral considerations underpin the law and the administration of justice, and are also reflected in operational decision-making and military conduct.... Commanders are Duty-bound to ensure that moral and ethical standards are imbued in their subordinates, through ... personal example”*

165 *The House of Commons Defence Select Committee, other NGOs and the media, continuously monitor UK Defence activities in relation to their moral and ethical impact.*

Ethical Virtue and Actions – [There are many connections in paragraphs # 164-166](#)

7f) On The Principles of War

205. *Commanders also need to take into account the legitimacy of their actions, based on the legal, moral, political, diplomatic and ethical propriety of the conduct of military forces, once committed.*

Self Regulation – “[Mental and physical self-discipline](#)”

7g) On Co-operation

223. *It is based on team spirit and training and relies on 3 inter-related elements: mutual trust and goodwill; a common aim (or at least unity of purpose); and a clear division of responsibilities, including understanding of, and compensation for, the capabilities and limitations of others.*

Benefits of being an Authentic Leader – “[Authentic Leaders have a special relationship with their followers; one characterised by mutual trust and integrity](#)”

Self Regulation – “[Authentic Leaders are comfortable evaluating their shortcomings](#)”

7e) There is a strong moral component to the leadership and management of war. Within the Authentic Leadership model, Ethical Virtue sees *ethics as an active choice*, and Ethical Action includes the *display of moral and ethical integrity and courage*.

411. Above all other considerations, warfare is a human activity and the moral component exerts a decisive psychological influence, individually and collectively.

416. Commanders are required to promote and maintain legal and ethical standards amongst their subordinates, regardless of what may be considered acceptable behaviour elsewhere.

8. Your personal 360° Authentic Leadership Report

Your report shows “a snapshot in time”. Leadership development programmes assume that leadership style is ‘developable’ and that leaders therefore can change should they chose to do so.

Receiving feedback on your leadership performance in the form of a 360° report may be a “call to action”, particularly if the feedback that you receive indicates a significant difference between your perception of your leadership style and that of your subordinates.

Usually, a 360° feedback report will also include feedback from your direct superior. However, within this research project, leadership is deemed to be “in the eye of the follower”. Therefore feedback has only been sought from a selection of subordinates and no feedback has been sought from any of your peers or your direct superior.

You will notice within your report on page 7 that more than 4 aspects of leadership style are identified and measured.

Along side Self Awareness, Self Regulation, Ethical Virtue and Ethical Action, the other 3 aspects of leadership style detailed in your report are Transparency, Idealism and Narcissism. The research project will identify whether these aspects are positively or negatively correlated with Authentic Leadership. Each of these aspects are briefly summarized for you on page 6 of this ebook.

Self Awareness

Understanding one’s thoughts, beliefs and values and how these influence one’s mental and emotional states. Being aware of the effect that we have on others and understanding how our words and actions may affect others to the extent of having the meta-cognitive capacity to be able to predict one’s own thinking processes and subsequent behaviours and those of other people.

Self Regulation

The conscious and deliberate control of one's thoughts and those subsequent behaviours that occur as a consequence of one's thinking and self awareness. Actively managing one's physical, emotional and mental states. Taking a multiple perspective approach to problem solving and decision making.

Ethical Virtue

One's ethical principles as a leader. One's internal sense of integrity and of what is the 'right' thing to do in any given circumstance. Viewing ethics as a conscious choice rather than a compromise. Believing that one's leadership role includes an ethical responsibility to peers and subordinates and to the wider community.

Ethical Actions

Actively displaying ethical integrity in one's resultant decision making and actions that are consistent with one's Ethical Virtue in all professional spheres. Being prepared to share one's ethical stance with others. Displaying ethical courage and being ethically steadfast in the face of dissent from others.

Transparency

Being honest with others and telling the truth. Saying what one means, and displaying actions and emotions which are consistent with what has been said. Encouraging others to speak their mind and also be honest. Admitting to one's mistakes.

Idealism

Believing the best in people and finding it easy to trust others. Accepting that others are telling the truth. Encouraging others to strive to achieve their goals and dreams. The inherent desire to always achieve a win:win that meets everyone's objectives.

Narcissism

Putting oneself first over and above all others. Believing that the "end justifies the means". Being ruthless and finding a way around someone if they get in their way. A lack of compassion and forgiveness. Never forgetting an insult or a slight.

9. Further Reading

Bill George, (2007) True North: Discover your Authentic Leadership. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco

Bill George, et al. Discovering Your Authentic Leadership. Harvard Business Review February 2007, (this article is available in pdf format)

Robert Goffee and Gareth Jones, (2006) Why should anyone be led by you? – What it takes to be an authentic leader. Harvard Business School Press, Boston.

10. Contact information

If you have any queries about this research project or the specific content of your personal report please contact Group Captain John Jupp or the researcher, Fiona Beddoes-Jones on 07950 337 099 or via fiona.bj@cognitivefitness.co.uk