

Authentic leadership essay sample

[Business](#), [Leadership](#)



Authentic leadership is a form of leadership that does not have a solid definition. This form of leadership is newly being researched, but the main focus is on how true or genuine the leader is. Because this leadership style is still in the formative stages of development, the description of this style is likely to change with more research in the upcoming years (Northouse, 2013).

There are two main approaches when it comes to this form of leadership. These approaches include Robert Terry's Authentic Leadership approach and Bill Georges Leadership Approach (Northouse, 2013). Both of these leadership styles have two different attitudes. Robert Terry's theory claims that authentic leadership is more practice oriented, and Bill George's theory focuses on the fact that the leader already has these qualities (Northouse, 2013).

Robert Terry describes this leadership style as a style that should be practiced. Terry created a formula that a leader would use in order to meet the goal of becoming an authentic leader (Northouse, 2013). This style is said to be action based and includes not only the leader, but also the leadership team or even the organization depending on the situation (Northouse, 2013). Terry claims the two questions in a situation that requires a leader are: "What is really happening?" and "What are we going to do about it," (Northouse, 2013). A true authentic leader would answer these questions correctly while staying true to themselves and their followers. Terry developed an Authentic Action Wheel to help leaders correctly answers. To use the Authentic Action Wheel you locate the problem on the outside of the wheel, and use the response that is connected to that type of

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problem. This wheel was designed to show leaders the best type of approach to take when solving problems (Northouse, 2013). Bill George's approach is similar but different. George's theory focuses more on leadership characteristics rather than problems leaders would run into (Northouse, 2013). George's theory does not support the idea that you can practice to get to this style, but more of that the leader already has these traits. George explains that authentic leaders have a passion for serving other people, and are naturally good at it (Northouse, 2013).

George defines five characteristics that authentic leaders demonstrate as: they understand their purpose, they hold high values, they have the ability to establish trusting relationships with others, they act on their values and demonstrate self-discipline, and they are passionate about their mission (Northouse, 2013). The components that remain stable in both of these approaches include: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency (Northouse, 2013). It is believed that these are the four characteristics that really make up an authentic leader. Self-awareness is a person's ability to reflect on their self and identify whom they really are, have self motivation, and being able to reflect on one's own core values and emotions (Northouse, 2013). This trait is important to a leader because it gives them the power to know what the goal they really want to reach, and gives them the ability to lead to the best of their ability. This benefits the followers as well, because a person with self-awareness is most likely going to earn trust from their followers because of these traits.

Another trait that is defined in an authentic leader is the internalized moral perspective trait. This describes the ability of an individual to stay true to their values without being influenced by outside behaviors. Once again, this gains respect from the leaders followers, and enables leaders to do what is right at all times (Northouse, 2013)). Balanced processing is the third characteristic of an authentic leader and is another self-regulated process that enables the leader to look at the big picture before making any decisions. This develops trust from the followers because it lets them have input in working towards the main objective. This benefits the leader because by being able to accept so many different options, the ending solution to reaching the goal is most likely to be more successful (Northouse, 2013). The last piece of authentic leadership is, relational transparency. This describes a leader that shares one's true self to their followers by being open and honest completely (Northouse, 2013). This trait gains respect and trust from followers, and enables the leader to remain true and ethical when making decisions.

I believe that all four authentic characteristics are extremely important for a leader to have, but the most important trait, in my opinion, is balanced processing. I believe this is the most important because it gains trust from one's followers, but it also means the leader has an open mind and takes in all points of view before making a decision. This type of person is more likely to select the best decisions and if they select a wrong decision they have a very good reason for it. In order to develop this type of characteristic, one would have to take every opinion into consideration when they are making decisions all the time. The more this characteristic is practiced, the more

natural it will come, and the stronger each decision one will make will become stronger. All-in-all authentic leadership is a form of leadership that has many different approaches and views. This form of leadership is still being researched, and will keep developing in the future. Authentic leadership describes a leader that has very strong values, self-regulated motivation, clarity when making decisions, and is honest with themselves and their followers (Northouse, 2013). Authentic leadership is a leadership style every leader should strive for in order to be the best leader they can possibly be.

References

Northouse, P. (2013). *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (Sixth ed.). Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE.