

Authentic Leadership

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History & Development

1970-1990's

- Initially studied within the research on Transformational Leadership but not fully conceptualized within the research model

2000- 2010

- The Enron scandal, 9/11 attacks and economic collapse caused by the failure of the major financial institutions, brought about a need for leadership that society perceived as being trustworthy and transparent. This point has been noted as the emergence of Authentic Leadership as a separate field of study.

Practical Approaches

Robert Terry's Authentic Leadership Approach

- Action Centered
- Focuses on the actions of the leader, leadership team or organization in a particular situation.
- Moral Premise: Leaders should strive to do what is right.
- Leaders must be able to distinguish between authentic and inauthentic actions.
- Locate the problem by doing assessments of employees and their organizational concerns.
- Select an appropriate response to the issue.
- Urges leaders to be authentic or "true" to themselves, their organization, and their world, and to base their actions on what is going on in the situation.

Bill George's Authentic Leadership Approach

- Focuses on the characteristics of authentic leaders, essential qualities of authentic leadership and how individuals can develop these qualities if they want to become authentic leaders.
- 5 Basic Characteristics
 - Purpose - Passion
 - They know what they are about and where they are going. They are inspired and motivated about their goals.
 - Values - Behavior
 - They have a clear idea of who they are, where they are going and what the right thing is to do. They do not compromise their values.
 - Relationships - Connectedness
 - The capacity to open themselves up and establish a connection with others
 - Self-Discipline - Consistency
 - Helps leaders reach their goals, stay focused and determined and to carry out their work in accordance with their values.
 - Heart - Compassion
 - Being sensitive to the plight of others, opening one's self to others and being willing to help them.
 - As leaders develop compassion, they learn to be authentic
 - Achieved by doing community service projects, being involved with other racial or ethnic groups or traveling to developing countries.

Strengths

- Fulfills an expressed need for trustworthy leadership in society
- Helps to fill a void and provides an answer to people who are searching for good and sound leadership in an uncertain world
- Provides broad guidelines for individuals who want to become authentic leaders.
- Has an explicit moral dimension, requires leaders to do what is "right" and "good" for their followers and society
- Authentic Leadership emphasized that authentic values and behaviors can be developed in leaders overtime.
- 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

Weaknesses

- AL is still in the formative stages of development and there are a number of questions that still need to be addressed about the theory. The concepts and ideas presented in the practical approaches are not fully substantiated.
- The moral component of authentic leadership is not fully explained.
- Researchers have questioned whether positive psychological capacities should be included as components of authentic leadership