

Authentic Leadership: Taking the Lead



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Yvonne Busisiwe Kgame

Authenticity is the alignment of head, mouth, heart, and feet - thinking, saying, feeling, and doing the same thing - consistently. This builds trust, and followers love leaders they can trust – Lance Secretan

Why Does Leadership Matter?

History tells us that a job and a salary was sufficient motivation for staff to perform. However receiving a salary in this day and age is not the only reason why people stay or excel in their jobs. When we feel much for others and little for ourselves, and exercise our benevolent affections we will constitute the perfect art of human nature. While the idea of managing people with greater care may strike some as intrinsically unattractive, research has proved that workplace leadership cannot succeed **without prioritising human relationships.**

A leader's call is to **enhance the goodness in each and every individual and to inspire greatness.** What matters most to people is how they are made to feel by the organisations that employ them, and by the bosses who manage them. Thus it is critical to demonstrate to staff that they're authentically valued. They must be presented with opportunities to grow and to contribute at a higher level. Their work needs to be appreciated and they need to feel they matter. Knowing it's rarely an appeal to our minds and hearts that inspires any of our greatest achievements.

Why do we need leaders?

Our chief want is someone who will inspire us to be what we know we could be - Ralph Waldo Emerson

- Leaders offer an exciting vision – a light that others are inspired to follow
- They provide a road map and instill a sense of belonging and ownership
- They transform spaces and souls, stretching societies to be more than what they have become
- They enable performance, celebrate achievements and raise spirits
- They leave landmarks of honour and historical legacies that serve as foundations for future generations
- They create culture, tradition and leave an inheritance that shapes our tomorrow

Why Does it Matter?

As incubators of life placed at the centre of business and business management, women are critical to the transformation and advancement of the South African economy.

The roots of South Africa's economy are entrenched and designed to have a society that's serve the economy instead of the economy serving the society.

South Africa's democratic dispensation, its constitution and the laws of life requires this status quo to change for sustainable and healthier living standards, for all the inhabitants of this country and those that depend on it.

Thus leading from the heart could be an enabler for leaders to re-inspire employees to serve effectively and passionately, in order not only to impact the business but the society at large.

We are not remembered for what we receive but rather for what we give.

Why Does it Matter?

It is for this reason that ethics are not just observed for the company's bottom line. The practice needs to translate in a manner that is mutually beneficial for both business and society with the aim of yielding a healthier future as return on investment

Leaders therefore need to be informed by the future we want to build as we journey through life and business. As givers of life, we need to do it in a manner that shapes a society we would appreciate to call home.

How do leaders take the Lead?

- Clarity of thought and understanding of why you lead the way you do, who you are doing it for, how you are going to do it, where you are going to do it and when you are going to do it. Be crystal clear about the outcomes and stay focused on your goal posts
- Listening integrity - listen to what is being said and what is not being said by others and by your inner voice. This means be silent and listen
- Travelling light – mastering the art of unloading your own baggage is critical. Be authentic and synchronised with what you do in public and privately
- Unveiling the mask –Be authentic– peel back your layers so what people see is real
- Expressing gratitude and gratefulness and communicating this to those we lead
- Creating and inspiring moments of fun and guiding those who we lead to experience happiness. If you don't enjoy it, it cant be done.
- Having a positive attitude – an inside out approach to life

What should we do?

- Tackling twilight (that moment between lightness and darkness). Life is about choices. Make sure your choices are informed by your values, then act out these choices with zest and zeal
- Reasoning from the heart and making decisions promptly no matter how hard it may be – before it gets too dark
- Operating with truth and honesty at all times and being driven by core values, ethics and morals in business, in a way that promotes healthy sleep at night
- Being vulnerable and open to listening and receiving good, bad and ugly feedback without malice
- Embracing, with clear knowledge and understanding who we really are. This should include our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, values, communication skills, decision making skills, barriers, possible blind spots, areas of development, knowing the ideal environment in which we operate and what inspires us

Know thy self and live your purpose

- To be authentic and ethical you first need to know who you are.
- Write your own eulogy
 - Imagine you are at your own funeral surrounded by friends, family and colleagues present to bid you goodbye. Write out what you think each person you have encountered would say about you and what you will be remembered for
 - What you have written should tell you more or less who you are, and who you are in relation to your universe
 - Evaluate if you are satisfied with what you read. Are you willing to make this your life guide (how you live your life)
 - If not adjust and develop this life guide so that you lead the life you would like to read about in your obituary

How can we institutionalise it?

Self	Organisation	Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self Mastery Classes (mastering the 7 levels that make up a human being: the body and its sense, breath, emotions, memory, intellect, ego and spirit)• Mentoring• Ambassadorship, Champions and Sponsors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leadership programmes• Communication and Organisational discourse (know what to communicate, how, in what language, on what platforms, when and by who)• Team Building Activities (formal and informal)• Dialectical relationship between leadership and staff• Be people driven	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand how the organisation fits in with SA community development – understanding this informs leadership and its activities• Shaping Schools – no silent partnership – be visible for example giving lectures• Adopting daughters of the industry from grade 12 to international practitioners; from marriage or to living life as a single woman

Journeying into the Future

Leading from the heart is a bold way to drive hope and a willingness to make a difference.

Engage, Inspire, Connect

Let's deepen critical thinking, expand debate, encourage dialogue, break barriers and build a far more superior future!

In order to awaken the greatness within us, our creative instincts must be nurtured. Life needs our inspired creativity, our intelligent solutions and our selfless action on which our continued existence depends.

Develop unity yet **Celebrate** diversity

Affirm all who come on our path

Tell the authentic, untold story

Inspire positive change

Respect each other

Embrace integrity

Show dignity

Just Be

Journeying into the Future

When you can truly understand how others experience your behavior, without defending or judging, you then have the ability to produce a breakthrough in your leadership and team. Everything starts with your self-awareness. You cannot take charge without taking accountability, and you cannot take accountability without understanding how you avoid it

Loretta Malandro

Fearless Leadership: How to Overcome Behavioral Blind Spots and Transform Your Organization