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*All leadership is example.
Anything else is coercion.*

Consulting & Coaching

Authentic Leadership Principles Authentic Leadership Conceptual Foundation Documents

By Bill Shirley, BT, MCC

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Authentic Leadership Principles The Journey of the Authentic Leader

By Bill Shirley, BT, MCC

The Leader vs. The Manager:

The assumption is often made that those in management positions are (automatically) leaders. There is a world of difference between being a manager and being a leader. Many managers are not good leaders. Many of the most effective leaders in an organization are not managers; they are not even in positions of formal authority.

Our university business schools have developed the Science of Management. Management, in its simplest terms, is the methodology for directing people to efficiently accomplish a particular task or an intended goal.

These same universities have attempted to develop the Science of Leadership. While Leadership can be learned – all those who desire to develop their leadership skills can do it -- I'm not persuaded that Leadership can be taught. *It can be coached*, but not taught. Yes, there are certain universal principles of leadership, but just knowing those principles will not make anyone a leader.

Managers are “created” from above. A manager is a manager by virtue of the authority vested in the manager’s position from above. The manager’s authority is extrinsic to the manager. The manager’s power comes from outside the person.

Leaders are “created” from within and below. A leader is a leader by virtue of the authority vested in that person by those who choose to follow. The leader’s authority is intrinsic to the leader; the leader’s authority has more to do with “Being” than “Doing.” The leader’s power comes from inside the person. (Authority is external, Power is internal.)

The Authentic Leader:

Authentic Leaders are transparent, curious, and vulnerable. They also possess a Beginner’s Mind. They have no facades; what you see is what you get. ALL they can ever offer those they lead is who they authentically are, nothing more, nothing less. They are neither superior nor inferior to their followers.

Authentic leaders show up with humility and quiet self confidence. For example, when asked a question, they can easily say “I don’t know. What do you think?” when they don’t know the answer. Or, when reviewing one of their unsuccessful projects, they can say “That sure didn’t work. Can you help me? What do you think we should try next?”

Three attributes define the Authentic Leadership. First, the Mastering the Art of Authentic Leadership is a life-long journey, not a destination. The effectiveness of all leaders dissolves the instant they think they have “arrived.”

Second, Authentic Leadership emanates more from the heart and less from the head, more from intuition and feeling, and less from logic and thinking. Yes, logical, analytical problem solving skills are necessary, but they are NOT sufficient if Authentic Leaders are to be successful at their most important Key Responsibility.

Third, Authentic Leaders must create “HOT” Relationships with those they wish to lead if they are to successfully fulfill their most important Key Responsibility. (“HOT” Relationships are relationships grounded in Honesty, Op openness and Trust. This concept is developed in the “HOT” Relationships Coaching Handout.)

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The Authentic Leader's Most Important Key Responsibility:

In today's uber-competitive, rapidly morphing markets, leaders have many and varied responsibilities, but there is one that trumps all the others: it is to protect the organization's "primary earning assets" that walk out of the building every night. It is the Authentic Leaders' job to have those people enthusiastically walk back in the next morning.

Research by Gallup shows that employees don't leave organizations, they leave bosses! When the employees are counting down to Friday, they are disengaged. *The organizational organism is infected with the 3D Virus: Distrust, Dissonance, and Disengagement.* When the working environment is not Safe, Effective and Motivating, when the employees are not finding fulfillment and meaning in their work, when they are not experiencing respect and recognition, they "fire the boss" and move on as quickly as possible.

Regardless of what they say in their exit interview, money is seldom the reason a person leaves a job. When they say "I got an offer I could not refuse." They are honest, even if it is for a cut in pay! Similarly, no amount of money will keep a desirable employee on a job where they have lost respect for their leader.

While I'm not persuaded that Authentic Leadership can be taught in a classroom or learned from a book, *I do know it can be coached!* The Authentic Leadership model has evolved from actual work and coaching experiences. It is presented in a series of brief (one to three pages) Coaching Handouts, designed to deepen the learning and advance the action *after* a live coaching session.

*"Life is about lessons. Whatever life lesson we are to learn at this moment will be repeated until learned. Once the current lesson is learned, we will be presented with our next lesson."
(From: "If Life is a Game, These are the Rules.")*

The same rules apply to mastering the art of Authentic Leadership. New permutations of the old lessons frequently arise. The Coaching Handouts serve as instantaneous, targeted reviews of the concepts involved. Authentic Leadership requires a conscious and intentional focus if the employees – the primary earning assets -- are going to enthusiastically walk back in the door the every day.

The Core Essence of the Authentic Leader:

Authentic Leadership is grounded in our relationship with ourself. We work in harmony with our Internal Team and learn from our self talk. Our relationship with ourself is the keystone of the arch that encompasses every relationship in our life. It is the quality of our relationship with ourself that determines the quality of ALL the relationships in our life. It is this relationship on which we focus when we *create a low stress, fulfilling life adventure of our own design.*

In all circumstances, Authentic Leaders treat themselves with loving kindness and gentle good humor. Criticism, especially self-criticism, never improved behavior or performance. They look for lessons, not mistakes and they regard all failures as valuable research.

Authentic Leaders live by two self-evident truths: 1) all leadership is example, anything else is coercion and 2) moment-by moment, we are choosing to create either Resonance or Dissonance in all of our human encounters. (This concept is expanded in the "A Simple Model" Coaching Handout.)

People willingly follow a leader because they see their leader as an authentic, vulnerable human being; complete but not perfect, knowledgeable, but not all-knowing, and most importantly, caring without being weak or smothering. (*"I must know how much you care before I care about how much you know!"*)

The essence of leadership is the ability to gain Buy-in to the leader's values, vision, priorities and purpose. Without gaining Buy-in, the leader's *only* alternative is the blunt instrument of coercion which is not an effective leadership tool.

In my judgment, the three keys to Mastering the Art of Authentic Leadership are to 1) hold those you lead as naturally creative, resourceful, and whole, 2) recognize that "all leadership is example", and 3) just accept, with gentle good humor, that your example will *not* always be one you want your followers to emulate!

Enjoy your Journey. A little learning happens when you are having fun!



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Authentic Leadership Principles The Agile, High Performance Team By Bill Shirley, BT MCC

Introduction:

In our practice as Executive Leadership Coaches, we consistently encounter a common organizational distress that transcends the size of the organization or its markets or its industry. This distress appears to be universal in response to three imperatives imposed by the 21st Century Global Economy. To prosper, a business must:

- Evolve at the velocity of change, which is continuing to accelerate,
- Consistently exceed the client's expectations for off-the-shelf delivery of customized products or services, and
- Create enduring relationships across companies, countries and cultures.

The executives leading these teams want more creativity, innovation and productivity for the team and less chaos, stress and overwhelm among the team's members. Each leadership team desires *their version* of the same goal:

**"An Agile, High Performance Team flourishing in a low-stress environment
where everyone enjoys a fulfilling live adventure of their own design."**

Our conventional wisdom regards high stress executive leadership as indigenous to a high performance organization. This belief is understandable when witnessing the ever accelerating rate of change brought on by the game changing disruptive technologies arising throughout the world. However, this is, literally, a destructive, unhealthy myth.

Stress is large factor in all of the preventable, "life style," diseases such as obesity, heart disease, stroke, diabetes and the more popular forms of cancer (breast, prostate and colon). Economically and morally, it makes no sense to tolerate a high stress working environment. Everyone deserves a "low stress, fulfilling life adventure of our own design." It is a birthright for everyone to create a life that is truly their own and then own it.

"An Agile, High Performance Team flourishing in a low-stress environment" is a proven concept; it exists! The Authentic Leadership Principles making it possible evolved over 30 years with the intention of creating High Performance in a Low Stress Environment!

The Authentic Leadership Model is an integral part of our coaching practice. The model unfolds as a series of brief (one to three pages) Coaching Handouts, designed to deepen the learning and advance the action *after* a coaching session.

Authentic Leadership rests upon two cornerstone concepts, "Temenos" and "HOT" Relationships. Temenos (Tem-enos) comes to us from Ancient Greece. It was a very dangerous and war like society in 400 BCE. Temenos identifies a sacred space next to a temple where it was safe for warriors to remove their armor. (Armor, n. "A safeguard or protection.")

In the present context, it identifies a very safe environment – a safe Ecosystem – where we can remove our armor, where we can be honest, open and trust others to be the same. Temenos is essential for risk-taking innovations, creative problem solving and effective communications.

"HOT" Relationships are relationships grounded in **H**onesty, **O**penness and **T**rust. Both Temenos and HOT Relationships are developed in detail in the Coaching Handouts.

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Authentic Leadership is modeled on the natural leadership style that exists in nature. All mammals who live in communities have leaders. These leaders, regardless of the specie, have similar leadership characteristics. The leaders are calm, confident and assertive. This is true of wolves, elephants, and primates of all types. The communities reject competitive, self-serving, behavior and they punish the aggressive screamers who try to lead by intimidation.

Authentic Leadership is grounded in Eight Core Principles that inform all of the other principles in the model.

The Core Principles of Authentic Leadership:

“All Leadership is Example, Anything else is Coercion.”

All effective executives authentically “walk their talk.” This is the only way to create enthusiastic, emotionally loyal and engaged followers. Competent people with a strong self-concept will not be coerced; they’ll just leave.

“Moment-by-moment, we are choosing to create either Resonance or Dissonance in all of our human encounters, even if we have a disagreement.”

The reality of both our personal and professional lives is this: *our joy, success and happiness are limited only by the quality of our relationships.* Authentic Leaders choose to create Resonant Relationships, not Dissonant Relationships. They disagree without being disagreeable.

“We are all leaders, all the time.”

We must be aware of the influence we have on those around us. A leader is anyone with followers. We all have people who look up to us. Every person is important. Every position has a leadership requirement: *Leading is Not Optional!* The only question is “will I choose to be a Resonant Leader or a Dissonant Leader?” There is no other option! Every day, in every human encounter, we make this choice and in making this choice, we model the way we want everyone we encounter to relate to us.

Authentic Leaders Gain Engaged Buy-in.

Without engaged Buy-in, coercion is the leader’s only option to get people to do what must be done. The coercion may not be explicit, it may be institutional, but it is coercion nonetheless. People do whatever they do one of two reasons. They do things because they are congruent with their belief system (their life purpose, vision, values, and priorities) OR because they are yielding to coercion.

People will become emotionally engaged with an Authentic Leader when their belief system and the leader’s belief system are congruent. This is a necessary precondition for emotional loyalty and engaged Buy-in. Conversely, people become disengaged, withholding discretionary energy when their personal belief system and the leader’s *actual* belief system – as revealed by the leader’s behavior – are not congruent.

“No event or experience has any intrinsic Meaning. It's only Meaning is the meaning we choose to attach to the event or experience.”

No two people experiencing the same event have the same reality about it because each person will choose to attach a different meaning to their experience. The meaning we attach to an event is shaped by our beliefs, especially our beliefs about ourself. Understanding that our reality is something we each “make up” has serious implications for the way we relate to ourselves, the world and everyone encounter.

We are responsible for whatever meaning we choose to bring into our life. For example, we are responsible for discovering and pursuing whatever it is that creates “a low-stress, fulfilling life adventure of our own design.”

“Our life's journey is all about learning, un-learning and re-learning.”

We learn very little when we live in the center of our comfort zone. All learning happens at the edges of our comfort zone. When we are in our comfort zone, we “know the answers” which is precisely why we are comfortable. It is only when we don’t know the answers – when we have “crossed over the edge” of our comfort zone – that we experience our lessons, i.e. when we learn or re-learn something we didn’t know before, whether it is about ourself or about something in our universe.

Tom Peters, the author of “In Search of Excellence,” made the point eloquently when he said, “Nobody who ever did anything interesting did it right the first time, or even the last time.”

The difference between a lesson and a mistake is *only* the label we attach to the experience. If the experience is labeled “mistake,” it is to be avoided at all costs, never to be repeated again. A mistake is usually accompanied by negative self talk and self-criticism.

If an experience is labeled a “lesson,” it is valued, integrated and cherished. Lessons are repeated until learned. We must embrace our current lesson with curiosity (“Isn’t *that* interesting! I wonder what I was thinking?”). The more we embrace our lessons with non-attachment, the more efficient the learning. “Non-attachment” means our ego – our self concept and self worth – is not attached to the outcome of the experience, i.e. “the lesson.”

Only by choosing to experience life as an interesting series of lessons, rather than self-incriminating mistakes, can we be true to the best that is within us and become the person we wish to become. Otherwise, life is little more than an exhausting struggle for survival in our self-perpetuated quicksand of shame, blame guilt and self-critical judgments.

This century will reward those who embrace and love life’s experiences as lessons. Alvin Toffler (author of “Future Shock,” circa 1970) recently stated: “The illiterate of the 21st Century will not be those who cannot read or write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn.”

Life’s abundance will flow to those life-long learners who label their “mistakes” as “lessons” and their “failures” as “research.”

Life is Binary: "1" or "0", in every life circumstance, we are either Responsible or a Victim.

In every situation, in every encounter, we are either Responsible for the way we respond to an experience or we are a Victim of that experience. There is no other option! Since we are at choice as to what meaning we attach to the experience, we are at choice in our ability to respond, i.e. our “response-ability.”

In the context of our Working Environment – Ecosystem – we are responsible for confronting any conditions that distract our focused enthusiasm or drains our discretionary energy. We are responsible for clearing all misunderstandings, communication disconnects and un-negotiated expectations. We are responsible for creating a personal Ecosystem that promotes our personal growth, well-being and career goals – or leaving!

Authentic Leaders test every concept or principle, every bit of wisdom, before owning it.

Once we act on any delivered wisdom, we own it just as if we created it out of our own reality. Therefore, we must test it all, internalize *only* that which is true to our values and consistent with our self-concept, jettisoning the rest. Otherwise we become unauthentic victims of our own gullibility.



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Authentic Leadership Principles The Organization & The Environment

By Bill Shirley, BT, MCC

"You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete." - R. Buckminster Fuller

We don't live in a world of reality as much as we live in a world of perceived reality. Our realities and our perceptions are all just perspectives and we can choose our perspective. Seeing reality from a new perspective enables us to build the new model that makes the old model obsolete.

Today's successful organization is not the "well-oiled machine," of the past. It is a "living, breathing evolving organism!" Today's successful organization is a healthy organism with sensitive feedback circuits that make it aware of changes in its environment, or more precisely, its "Ecosystem." The organizational organism must adapt to its changing Ecosystem or perish.

"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change." - Charles Darwin

The Organization as a Living Organism:

Every organization is nothing more than a mental construct. Thirty years ago, it was a firm, if not rigid, construct. However, in today's rapidly changing environment, it must be a "living, evolving construct." While it may be very adaptable and resilient, it is vulnerable to disease when in an unhealthy environment.

An organizational organism is a fragile idea to which people are drawn - and their resources committed - in pursuit of *their common Vision, Values, Purpose and Priorities*. An organization can be no more than the sum of the focused enthusiasm of the people drawn to it. Without the conscious and intentional discretionary energy of the people, all their talents and other resources are, at best, underutilized if not steadily decaying to a quiescent state.

The success of any organization lies more in the culture derived from its shared Vision and Values than in its business strategy, more in its enthusiastic commitment to its Purpose and Priorities than its technical expertise and management competence, important as these may be.

When people *believe* what they are doing is important, they easily focus on their tasks with enthusiasm and persistence; they have the passion of ownership. The operative idea is *belief*. The Essence of Leadership is the ability to gain Buy-in to the leaders' Vision, Values, Purpose and Priorities. Without gaining Buy-in, the leaders' *only* alternative is the blunt instrument of coercion.

When management fails to gain Buy-in and chooses to use coercion, resentment and revenge arise. This condition is expressed as **Distrust, Dissonance, and Disengagement** - A virulent "3D Virus." Once it gets started, it can be tenacious and difficult to eradicate. It saps the focused enthusiasm and the discretionary energy of the organism.

Like all living organisms, the organizational organism must always be in harmony with its ever-evolving ecosystem if it is to flourish. When in harmony, the organism receives vital nutrients such as new ideas, opportunities, etc. All healthy organisms have feedback loops, sensitive circuits, which guide the organism's response to changes in the ecosystem.

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However, when an organizational organism is infected with the “3D Virus,” the feedback loops shut down, then atrophy, and eventually, die. A 3D Virus infection makes the organism unresponsive to changes in its environment; it responds inadequately to change required to meet the expectations of its customers, suppliers, community and other stake holders. If the virus infection is not controlled, it will be fatal!

The 3D Virus is extremely virulent. Even a modest 3D Virus infection will easily defeat management’s best designed and most enthusiastically pursued Strategic Plan.

A company -- an organizational organism -- does not die from competition! If you will look closely, you will discover that the corpse was ravaged by the 3D Virus. It dies when the employees’ experience so much distrust that they no longer believe in the leader’s Vision, Values, Purpose and Priorities. It dies when the employees become dissonant and disengaged. (The Gallup Company reports that up 65% of a typical organization’s employees are disengaged!)

The best employees “fire the boss” and move on. This provides advancement opportunities for the less competent employees who willingly endure the negativity of distrust, dissonance and disengagement for a pay check. (Often an organization dies many years before anyone recognizes it is dead and someone provides a proper burial.)

The Environment as an Ecosystem:

The 3D Virus lives in -- and is indigenous to -- the working environment or the Organizational Organism’s Ecosystem. Whether (or not) the organism becomes seriously infected with the 3D Virus is determined by the choices management makes in creating a healthy (or unhealthy) Ecosystem. A healthy Ecosystem suppresses the virus. The 3D Virus may even become dormant but it is always present and ready to be pandemic (i.e., existing everywhere).

The Ecosystem consists of two distinct components. First is management’s view of its proper role. The twentieth century management model is called “Command & Control.” Its clear intent and focus is on central control and allows very little initiative, creativity and innovation. This Ecosystem is vulnerable to a virulent 3D Virus infection.

The twenty-first century management model is called “Values & Priorities.” It is designed to promote initiative, creativity, innovation and risk-taking. This is a decentralized approach. While is it more “messy” and requires leaders of higher Social Emotional Intelligence than the alternate model, it does support the “HOT” Relationships* that keep the organizational organism’s feedback circuits working optimally.

Generally, it is easier for the leaders to create a healthy Ecosystem by embracing the “Values & Priorities” philosophy. However, in certain specific situations, the “Command & Control” philosophy will work. It is just more difficult.

The second component of the Ecosystem involves the way the ownership (management) relates to the Stakeholder that constitute the organization’s environment. The organization’s environment consists of five stakeholders: 1) the owners (and management), 2) the community in which it is a responsible member, 3) its suppliers and subcontractors, 4) its customers, and 5) its employees.

The Ecosystem is healthiest when the owners (management) focus their energy first on the employees. The employees will then focus their energy on the customers, suppliers and the community. Loyal customers, supplies and community abundantly reward the owners (and management). Stated another way: when ownership builds “HOT” Relationships* with the employees, they will build “HOT” Relationships with the customers, suppliers and the community. Everyone prospers abundantly.

Conversely, the Ecosystem quickly becomes unhealthy when management puts itself, the owners or even the customers ahead of the employees. This policy guarantees the 3D Virus will infect the organizational organism. Whether the infection is fatal depends upon the degree to which management treats the employees as expendable or as interchangeable parts of a machine.

The Authentic Leadership Model was created in response to the need for a way to eradicate the 3D Virus from organizations. As soon as the organism’s leadership spots the first signs of distrust, dissonance or disengagement, their first move is to closely examine – and improve -- the health of its Ecosystem. This begins to suppress the virus. The second move is to apply the Authentic Leadership Principles wherever they find distrust, dissonance or disengagement.

A continuous infusion of Authentic Leadership Principles creates a healthy low-stress Ecosystem that supports the development of an Agile, High Performance Team and suppresses outbreaks of the 3D Virus.

* “HOT” Relationships are relationships built on **H**onesty, **O**penness and **T**rust.



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Authentic Leadership Principles Authentic Leadership: A Very Simple Model

By Bill Shirley, BT, MCC

Introduction:

Many, many years ago, the Dean of American Management Theory and Practice, Peter Drucker stated:

"The Purpose of Business is to create and keep a Customer."

Peter Drucker goes on to make the case that a *focus* on profits is harmful.* Of course, profits are essential. However, they are the result of focusing on what is truly important. With the exception of the rare monopoly situation, all sound businesses have adequate access to physical resources and financial capital.

The *only* thing that distinguishes the highly successful business from all the others is the leaders' ability to create and hold a customer. That ability is directly proportional to the leaders' ability to attract and hold enthusiastically engaged, creative and innovative talent: highly productive "human capital." (High quality human capital attracts high quality financial capital, not the other way around.) Success is proportional to the human capital competitive advantage!

Peter Drucker's simple, direct focus on what is truly important for business success is the Genesis of Authentic Leadership. The simple elegance of this model is the marriage of two self-evident truths:

- All leadership is example, anything else is coercion.
All effective executives authentically "walk their talk." This is the only way to create enthusiastic, emotionally loyal and engaged followers. Competent people with a strong self-concept will not be coerced; they'll just leave.
- Moment-by-moment, we are choosing to create either Resonance or Dissonance in all of our human encounters, even if we disagree.
The reality of both our personal life and our professional life is this: *our joy, success and happiness are limited only by the quality of our relationships.* Authentic Leaders choose to create Resonant Relationships, not Dissonant Relationships. They disagree without being disagreeable.

The Response to Three Challenges:

Authentic Leadership Principles evolved over the past 30 years as the 21st Century Global Economic Reality revealed its physiognomy. Prosperity in the 21st Century Global Economy imposes three imperatives. A prosperous business must:

- Evolve at the velocity of change, which is continuing to accelerate,
- Consistently exceed the client's expectations for off-the-shelf delivery of customized products or services, and
- Create enduring transcendent relationships across companies, countries and cultures.

Evolve at the Velocity of Change:

In 1965, Gordon E. Moore observed that the number of transistors that can be placed inexpensively on an integrated circuit doubles every two years. (Moore's Law.) In 1970, the Futurist, Alvin Toffler pointed out that the velocity of change was accelerating in all dimensions of our life and would do so far into the future. There is a tight correlation between the ever-shortening time available for management to make important business decisions and Moore's law.

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As our capacity to organize, process and transmit information doubles every two years, the velocity of change in the market also (approximately) doubles.

Mutating markets driven by disruptive technologies characterize this increasing velocity. Success requires multi-disciplinary, agile teams that make sound business decisions ever-more rapidly. In 2005, Gordon Moore stated this exponential growth in transistor capacity would reach its physical limit in another 10 to 20 years. Don't expect the acceleration of business decision cycles to shorten before that time, if ever.

Consistently Exceed the Client's Expectations:

The customer's relentless drive for *immediate* delivery of products designed to *their* specifications requires Agile, High Performance Teams capable of great flexibility, creativity and problem solving ability. It is not enough to *meet* the customer's expectations; the competition will do that! Agile, High Performance Teams must *consistently exceed* the customer's expectations for the business to prosper.

Create Enduring Transcendent Relationships:

It is imperative that suppliers, customers and communities be linked in enduring relationships; beneficial relationships that transcend companies, countries and cultures. The financial destiny of our entire economy is linked to our ability to create authentic Resonant Relationships with businesses throughout the global economy. Our position as a debtor nation no longer allows us the economic or political independence we enjoyed in the last century. Transcendent** relationships are necessary for our economic survival!

This is the Daunting, Three-Sided Face of Our Economic Reality!

Every organism, every business, either evolves so it is in harmony with its environment or it dies. These challenges are best met by Agile, High Performance Teams working in a "HOT" Environment, one characterized by **H**onesty, **O**penness and **T**rust. We call these Agile, High Performance Teams "HOT" Teams! In creating Resonance, they create "HOT" Relationships.

In this model, the leader's *primary* focus shifts from day-to-day tasks to the Resonant Relationships required to achieve the desired results: "Create and Keep a Customer." The implications of this shift are subtle but profound. The strong Authentic Leadership Principles that evolve from this subtle shift in focus produce organizational cultures that stay in-tune with their markets in our rapidly changing, uber-competitive, 21st Century Economy.

It is the front-line employees, not management, who actually create and keep the customer. There is a line of sight connection between the way management treats the employees and the way the employees treat the customer. When the employees are enthusiastically engaged, when their discretionary energy is high, they create customer loyalty that sustains and expands the business. These engaged employees also create loyal relationships with suppliers and the many "communities" that make up the organization's Ecosystem..

In summary, these "HOT" Teams excel in creating Resonant – "HOT" -- Relationships among their employees, suppliers and customers, many living in different countries and grounded in very different cultures. The result is an agile, highly profitable, *low-stress* enterprise competing in a high stress business universe!

The Benefits of this Simple Model:

The key benefit of embracing this leadership model is a workforce of enthusiastic, emotionally loyal and engaged employees committed to the Vision, Values, Purpose and Priorities of the organization. The principle benefits of shifting the *primary* focus from tasks to relationship dynamics are:

- Perpetually increasing productivity, creativity and innovation,
- Consistently high product quality, and
- An ever-expanding base of loyal customers.

These metrics are the real-time and leading indicators of performance. These three, synergistically, are what create the more classical measures of performance, which are actually the *secondary* benefits, or the *consequences*, of this model:

- Increased profits,
- Increased sales,
- Increased market share, and

- Increased shareholder value.

An additional *primary* benefit of this model is the measurable reduction in employee turnover. More precisely stated, Authentic Leadership significantly reduces the deterioration of your business's primary earning assets: a highly productive, loyal workforce.

The retention, development and selection of talented employees is the largest variable (and non-budgeted) cost within control of the management in every enterprise. The actual cost of losing a well-trained, productive employee is two to four times the employee's annual wages. When all of the indirect and hidden costs are included, the cost of replacing a productive \$75,000 per year employee easily exceeds \$200,000!

Test this Simple Model; Take Nothing on Faith!

There is nothing in this very simple model that must be taken on faith; every aspect can be personally tested and validated before adopting it. Its power and flexibility are in its logical, simple Beginning-State Design: each organization's personality, its constellation of Values, Vision, Purpose and Priorities, will shape its Ecosystem and from that, its Culture. This is in contrast to typical leadership models which prescribe the End-State Design or behavior, and do not provide for the expression and expansion of each individual's unique talents and creativity.

However, "simple" does not mean "easy." If integrating these concepts into an organization were easy, its benefits would be common place rather than powerfully unique. The concepts that flow from these two self-evident truths – "All leadership is example" and "Moment-by-moment, we are choosing to create either Resonance or Dissonance" – provide a congruent, flexible and robust leadership model on which to create an organization's sustainable prosperity.

* Drucker, Peter F.; "The Essential Drucker," Harper Business, ISBN 0-06-621087-9; p18-38.

** Transcendent (adjective): "beyond and outside the ordinary range of human experience or understanding."



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Authentic Leadership Principles The Philosophical Foundation of Authentic Leadership

By Bill Shirley, BT, MCC

"All Forms are continually arising from Source, manifesting and dissolving."

Ancient Tibetan Buddhism.

"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, or the most intelligent, but the ones most responsive to change."

Charles Darwin

"The Rate of Change is Accelerating."

"Future Shock" (1969) Alvin Toffler

"A Change Imposed is a Change Opposed."

"Who Moved My Cheese?"

"We must become the Change we want to see."

Mahatma Gandhi

"All Leadership is example; Anything else is Coercion."

Bill Shirley

"Gaining Buy-In is the Essence of Authentic Leadership. Without Buy-in, one must rely on coercion."

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 *Eagles don't flock. You find them one at a time.*



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"A Low-Stress, Fulfilling Life Adventure of Our Own Design"

Bill Shirley, BT, MCC

Our prosperity, health and happiness require us to discover new ways of dealing with the rapidly changing 21st Century Global Economy, its mercurial markets, disruptive technologies and sudden economic threats. Regardless of our business or profession, this unrelenting rapid change imposes varying degrees of anger, frustration, isolation and overwhelm upon our lives, both personal and professional. Anxiety abounds! Not only is the velocity of change accelerating, it has no known terminal velocity!

It is easy to understand how the ever-increasing chaos may cause us to grasp for control and security, abandoning our opportunity to create "a low-stress, fulfilling life adventure of our own design." However, consider this alternative view:

"Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature, nor do the children of men as a whole experience it. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure. Life is either a daring adventure, or nothing." --- Helen Keller

In 1970, Alvin Toffler's book, *Future Shock*, was the first to point out that the velocity of change was accelerating and discuss the implications. He accurately predicted what has transpired since then. At that time, it became my life's work to assist people (and their organizations) in learning to use the energy of change to their benefit. The Authentic Leadership model evolved from this clear purpose. These concepts apply universally to both our personal and our professional lives. They provide guidance in our pursuit of happiness and meaning in our life.

I know of no greater privilege and responsibility than for each of us to create a "low stress, fulfilling life adventure of our own design." In our pursuit of this creation, we quickly crash into the fact: "We are all Leaders, all of the time!" Our life is an example for everyone whose life we touch; "All leadership is example, anything else is coercion." Our emotions are contagious; we create either Resonance or Dissonance in all relationships, personal and professional. This includes family, friends, bosses, colleagues, other employees, suppliers, customers, and the general community.

Year by year, we are increasingly buried in information, choices and challenges, all demanding more time, energy and attention. Our natural, intuitive response is to run faster, do more and eliminate anything that is not focused on an immediate task in order to get everything done that must be done NOW! Yes, a "do more, faster" strategy may work for a while, but it ultimately ends in disaster! At the best, the "human being" becomes only a "human doing," a carbon computer: a multi-tasking "Bot," sans awareness. At worst, it destroys the individual's health and happiness.

"Nobody, as long as he moves among the chaotic currents of life, is without trouble". -- Carl Jung

The wisdom of both Jung and Maslow suggests that the only way to deal with the ever-accelerating rate of change is to slow down! We must slow down so we can focus on just two things: Clarity and Equilibrium. Only from this solid foundation can we create a "low-stress, fulfilling, life adventure of our own design." Let's examine each concept individually:

 *Eagles don't flock. You find them one at a time.*

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Clarity:

Clarity is knowing what is truly important to us; what it is we value. Most simply stated: "it is knowing what makes our life worth living." Clarity is also being decisive and courageous about whom and what to jettison from our life so we have room for the relationships and experiences that bring fulfillment to our life adventure. This is a singular act of courage:

"To find in ourselves what makes life worth living is risky business, for it means that once we know, we must seek it. It also means that without it, life is valueless." --- Marsha Sientar

To become clear as to our values requires a journey into our inner space. To coin a phrase, "to boldly go where no man has gone before!" It requires honesty in recognizing values we once adopted because of someone else's expectations, and replacing them with values we choose because they are integral to our Being and Purpose. We don't just value one thing; we each have a vast array of values. It is just as important to be clear about our priorities within our value array as it is to be clear about the values that populate it. We evolve only to the extent we are clear about our values and their relative priorities in the life we wish to live! Socrates figured it out 2400 years ago:

"An unexamined life is not worth living."

Nature is both relentless and unforgiving: Every organism must evolve as its environment changes or it will die. Both individually and organizationally, we connect to our "ecosystem" through our Values – and the belief system our values support. Our ecosystem is changing so rapidly, we must periodically check and update our Clarity. Are those things we once valued, those things to which we once dedicated our life's energy still calling us forth, or is it time to replace them with new, more compelling values that are more in-tune with who we are now and desire to become? Have our value priorities changed? Both individually and organizationally, we have a responsibility to update our conscious values and their relative priorities as we evolve in response to the ecosystem in which we are evolving.

Any necessary redirection of our Life Purpose flows naturally from the updated clarity of our values. Our Purpose is simply our reason for Being. Individually, it is expressed as our Vocation, our Calling in Service of a Life beyond our self-absorbed comforts. Organizationally, it is expressed as our Purpose, our reason for existence that transcends power, profits, and personal aggrandizement. A life lived "With Purpose" – individually or organizationally -- embodies Clarity and Equilibrium.

Equilibrium:

In this context, Equilibrium means "a *dynamically* stable system in which the forces balance each other; a harmonious arrangement of the elements within a design." How we each balance all of the competing demands on our time and energy is a very individual exercise. To do this successfully, we must have acute clarity; that is, we must be acutely aware of our values array and their relative priorities. We also must be very comfortable with who we are, our life purpose, and dedicated to living beyond our self-absorbed comfort.

For example, all business owners, executives, and individual professionals have competing demands between their personal and professional lives. The proper distribution of time and energy for every individual will be very different because we all have very different values arrays and relative priorities.

Regardless of the details of handling the chaos and frustrations in one's life, our life is in Equilibrium when it is a harmonious arrangement of Passion, Joy, Prosperity, and Ease:

Passion: we are passionately engaged in life; alive and curious about each ever-changing moment. (The alternatives to passionate engagement are partially engaged numbness or disengaged boredom; both are lethal states of non-existence.)

Joy: our compelling life purpose is the source of our Joy, a state of being quite different from pleasure or even happiness. (Living "With Purpose" is the *only* source of lasting Joy in life!)

Prosperity: our Prosperity has nothing to do with money or possessions; its source is abundance, – not poverty – a state of mind created by the beauty of being fully alive. It is the appreciation and awareness of our beauty within and

from that space, seeing the beauty in the world. It is grounded in our full appreciation of our intrinsic worth and our enthusiastic desire to share our unique talents with the universe.

Ease: It is not related to leisure. Its source is humility, humor, intuition, vision and vulnerability. We move through our day with Ease. For example, tough decisions are made with Ease. Though the decision may be tough, there is no self-doubt, agony, or anxiety surrounding the decision.

When Clarity & Equilibrium Are Lost:

The accelerating rate of change has left many of us maladapted to our Ecosystem as measured by the high stress levels in our chaotic lives. We are in the throes of the four Killer Emotions: Anger, Frustration, Isolation and Overwhelm. The stress we endure by ignoring any of these four Killer Emotions is life threatening; collectively, they are lethal. A partial list of chronic, degenerative diseases aggravated – if not actually caused – by stress includes heart disease, stroke, obesity, diabetes, IBS, depression and several forms of cancer. Prolonged stress severely damages our immune system, exposing us to unmitigated ravage.

At the very least, stress created by these four killers erodes self-confidence, happiness and health, leading to burnout and a sense of failure. We must deal with Nature's law: *Every organism must evolve as its ecosystem changes or it will die.* While it may take a while before the brain waves "flat line," the reality is that direct, unyielding and simple. (This applies to organizations as well as individuals.)

Ask yourself three questions: 1) Have my values become foggy? 2) Have I lost the focus on my compelling life purpose? And 3) Is my life no longer a "harmonious arrangement of Passion, Joy, Prosperity and Ease?" To the extent that any answer is "Yes," you are denying or suppressing your connection to your essential core:

"If the essential core of the person is denied or suppressed, he gets sick; sometimes in obvious ways, sometime in subtle ways, sometimes immediately, sometimes later." --- Abraham Maslow

The deep self-awareness embedded in these concepts of Clarity and Equilibrium is the ballast that keeps our ship from capsizing in the tempest created by anger, frustration, overwhelm and isolation. The resources to deal successfully with our exterior, cognitive reality exist, and can *only* be found, in the depth of our inner feeling reality!

Authentic Leadership is grounded in these concepts of Clarity and Equilibrium. *It is the model of choice for creating an Agile, High Performance Team in a low-stress Ecosystem!* It addresses the needs for collaboration and teamwork in organizations so they can be successful across companies, countries and cultures.

There is no need to take any Authentic Leadership Principle on faith; they can all be tested before you "Buy-in." You are encouraged to internalize only those principles that make sense to you and discard the others. Since the model is relationship oriented rather than task oriented, the principles apply equally well to an individual's personal and professional life.

Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, published in 1859, describes concepts popularly known as "survival of the fittest." A close reading of his concept of Natural Selection suggests that "survival favors the most adroit in sensing – and adapting to – subtle changes in the environment." Survival favors the most adaptable species! This is true of all "living systems," organizations and people alike.

**"We either evolve so we are continuously in harmony with our ecosystem--
or we will die. Nature offers us no other options!" (Charles Darwin)**