



Authentic leadership and eudaemonic well-being: Understanding leader–follower outcomes

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Abstract

We sought to examine the concept of authentic leadership and discuss the influences of authenticity and authentic leadership on leader and follower eudaemonic well-being, as well as examine the processes through which these influences are realized. This was accomplished in four ways. First, we provide an ontological definition of authentic leadership, rooted in two distinct yet related philosophical approaches to human well-being: hedonism and eudaemonia. Second, we develop a multi-component model of authentic leadership based on recent theoretical developments in the area of authenticity. The resulting model consists of *self-awareness*, *unbiased processing*, *authentic behavior/acting* and *authentic relational orientation*. Third, we discuss the personal antecedents (leader characteristics) of authentic leadership as well as the outcomes of authentic leadership for both leaders and followers and examine the processes linking authentic leadership to its antecedents and outcomes. Fourth, we discuss the implications of this work for authentic leadership theory and then provide some practical implications for developing authentic leaders.

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“Rising, streetcar, four hours in the office or the factory, meal, streetcar, four hours of work, meal, sleep, and Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday and Saturday according to the same rhythm—this path is easily followed most of the time. But one day the ‘why’ arises and everything begins in that weariness tinged with amazement” (Camus, 1991).

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Drawing from the principles of positive psychology, positive organizational scholarship is aimed at understanding positive human processes and organizational dynamics that make life meaningful (Cameron, Dutton, Quinn, & Wrzensniewski, 2003; see also Luthans, 2002). In this article, we make a case that an important introspective yet relational concept, *authenticity* (i.e. being one's true self), has substantial implications for the meaningfulness of employees' lives, especially in the process of leadership. In our view, when the 'why' arises in one's life, as in Albert Camus's famous quote above, hedonic happiness is not the only important criterion for assessing life's meaningfulness. How one lives one's life in relation to oneself and to others is at least as important as hedonic happiness. As we will show, authenticity has a substantial influence on how one lives one's life; furthermore, authenticity on the part of leaders influences not only leaders' own well-being, but also influences their followers' well-being and self-concept.

As a broad field of scientific inquiry, positive organizational scholarship emphasizes positive organizational phenomena leading to enhanced human well-being and, "is distinguished from traditional organizational studies in that it seeks to understand what represents and approaches the best of the human condition" (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003, p. 4). Within this emergent field, and in the context of the increasingly 'visible' discourse on the importance of the positive features of human functioning, such as the experience of positive emotions, self-confidence, hope, and goal-fulfillment for psychological and societal well-being (e.g., Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), recent theoretical discussions of the moral and ethical foundations of organizational leadership have converged into an effort aimed at distilling the essence of all positive approaches to leadership (Luthans & Avolio, 2003; May, Chan, Hodges, & Avolio, 2003). The outcome of this concerted effort has been the concept of *authentic leadership*, which is thought of as a root concept for positive leadership approaches such as charismatic, transformational and ethical leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Authentic leaders are deeply aware of their values and beliefs, they are self-confident, genuine, reliable and trustworthy, and they focus on building followers' strengths, broadening their thinking and creating a positive and engaging organizational context (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005).

In this article, our primary goals are to examine the concept of authentic leadership as it relates to two distinct yet overlapping philosophical approaches to human happiness and the worthiness of human life: hedonic happiness and eudaemonic well-being (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2001), and to analyze the influences of authenticity and authentic leadership on leaders' and followers' eudaemonic well-being, as well as examine the processes through which these influences are realized. It is our view that in order to understand such a root concept as authentic leadership, an ontological definition of the construct should first be developed. Defining authentic leadership in ontological terms, followed by operationalizing dimensions of authentic leadership will help shape future programs of research aimed at understanding the antecedents and outcomes of authentic leadership.

To analyze the processes through which authentic leaders influence their followers, we first propose a four-component model of authentic leadership, based on recent conceptual and theoretical developments in the literature on authenticity (Goldman & Kernis, 2002; Kernis, 2003). In the remainder of this article, we make a case for the importance of the effects of leaders' authenticity on followers' eudaemonic well-being (in addition to their level of hedonic satisfaction) in assessing the effectiveness of authentic leaders. In addition, we contend here that eudaemonic well-being matters as much as hedonic happiness, or, in other terms, that eudaemonic well-being should be explicitly included as a criterion in positive organizational scholarship. Before we proceed in our examination

of authenticity and authentic leadership, and of their effects on leader and follower well-being, we must distinguish between the hedonic and eudaemonic traditions for understanding human happiness and the worthiness of the human existence.

1. Hedonic and eudaemonic well-being

Hedonism refers to the basic motivational principle of approaching pleasure and avoiding pain (Freud, 1952; see Kahneman, Diener, & Schwartz, 1999). The hedonic approach to understanding human well-being has been translated into the assessment of *subjective well-being* (SWB; Diener et al., 2003) as a general subjective evaluation of life in terms of pleasantness versus unpleasantness or as a summation of evaluative reactions to life stimuli encountered in various situations or domains (Diener & Lucas, 2000; Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; Heller, Watson, & Ilies, 2004).

The two assessment approaches (general evaluation vs. summation of evaluative reactions) roughly correspond to the two varieties of hedonism that Haybron (2001) calls *the attitude model* and the *sensation model* of pleasure, respectively (though life satisfaction does not necessarily imply hedonic balance; see (Haybron, 2000). Furthermore, the two types of hedonic well-being assessments, general evaluations and evaluative reactions to discrete events and stimuli map onto what Kahneman (2004) calls the evaluative self and the experiencing self. Discrete experiences and evaluative satisfaction are, of course, related, in that individuals' discrete experiences influence their global life satisfaction. In addition, one's experiencing self does not only translate discrete emotional (hedonic) experiences into global assessments of satisfaction, but what people experience in their daily engagements with life, how they approach these experiences, and what they learn from them has profound implications for their personal growth and perhaps for the worthiness of their life from a more moral perspective (compared to hedonism).

The second perspective on happiness and the worthiness of human life, what we call *eudaemonic well-being*, reflects the Aristotelian concept of *eudaemonia*: Aristotle's view of human happiness that assesses the goodness of life based on "living in a manner that actively expresses excellence of character or virtue" (Haybron, 2000, p. 210; see also Waterman, 1990). Waterman (1993) described eudaemonia, or personal expressiveness, to occur when one feels intensive involvement, special fit with an activity, and intensively alive. At a discrete experiential level, eudaemonic engagement is closely related to peak experiences of interest, motivation, and joy that have been observed in artists at work (but also in other types of work), or what Csikszentmihalyi (2003) calls *flow*. In this sense, eudaemonia occurs when one is fully engaged in an activity and existing as one's true self. Therefore, eudaemonic engagement assumes introspective reflection upon one's values and reasoned choices for engagement in specific activities, and not only hedonic motivation.

Eudaemonic well-being can also be conceptualized in the context of realizing one's true potential across one's lifespan (Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002; Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Ryff & Singer, 1998). To capture human self-realization, Ryff (1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995), proposed a conceptual framework tapping six distinct aspects of wellness: self-acceptance, environmental mastery (the capacity to manage effectively one's life and the surrounding environment), purpose in life, positive relationships, personal growth, and autonomy or self-determination. Within this conceptual framework, worth noting is the fact that the wellness dimensions include positive relationships as an end criterion, which suggests that one's handling of interpersonal situations and relationships has great importance for one's self realization (see Ryff & Singer, 2000).

Various authors use different terminology to distinguish between hedonic and eudaemonic well-being and they also differ in their assessment of the relative inclusiveness of the two types of well-being (see Haybron, 2000, 2001; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Waterman, 1990, 1993) but their treatises of the topic seem to converge on defining eudaemonic well-being as reflecting self-realization, personal growth and expressiveness and, more generally, human flourishing and the fulfillment or realization of one's true nature.

2. Authentic leadership and human well-being

Luthans and Avolio (2003) define authentic leadership as a process that combines positive leader capacities and a highly developed organizational context. The authentic leadership process positively influences self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviors on the part of both leaders and followers, and it stimulates positive personal growth and self-development:

The authentic leader is confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, moral/ethical, future-oriented, and gives priority to developing associates to be leaders. The authentic leader is true to him/herself and the exhibited behavior positively transforms or develops associates into leaders themselves (Luthans & Avolio, 2003, p. 243).

More broadly, authenticity as a psychological construct reflects, “the unobstructed operation of one's true, or core, self in one's daily enterprise” (Kernis, 2003, p. 13). In our view, authenticity is a broad psychological construct reflecting one's general tendencies to view oneself within one's social environment and to conduct one's life according to one's deeply held values. At more specific levels, authenticity is manifested in concrete aspects of one's behavior and existence, such as in leading others. It follows that authentic leaders, by expressing their true self in daily life live a *good life* (in an Aristotelian way), and this process results in self-realization (eudaemonic well-being) on the part of the leaders, and in positive effects on followers' eudaemonic well-being.

To explore the specific links between authentic leadership and both leaders' and followers' eudaemonic well-being, starting from the recent multicomponent conceptualization of authenticity (Goldman & Kernis, 2002; Kernis, 2003), we propose a four-component model of authentic leadership that includes *self-awareness*, *unbiased processing*, *authentic behavior/acting* and *authentic relational orientation*. From a developmental perspective, these dimensions can be roughly mapped onto the six aspects of human wellness proposed by Ryff and Keyes (1995) to reflect human actualization (self-acceptance, environmental mastery, purpose in life, positive relationships, personal growth, and self-determination). That is, self-awareness and unbiased processing should lead to increased self-acceptance and environmental mastery, and also help one define one's purpose in life; authentic relational orientation should lead to positive relationships; self-awareness and unbiased processing should enhance one's personal growth through self-development; and authentic behaviors and actions are by definition self-determined.

The conceptual model that guides our theory-building endeavor is presented in Fig. 1. In this model, we list the components of authentic leadership as well as eudaemonic constructs that are influenced by authentic leadership, we illustrate the connection between authenticity and eudaemonic well-being on the part of the leaders, and list several mechanisms through which authentic

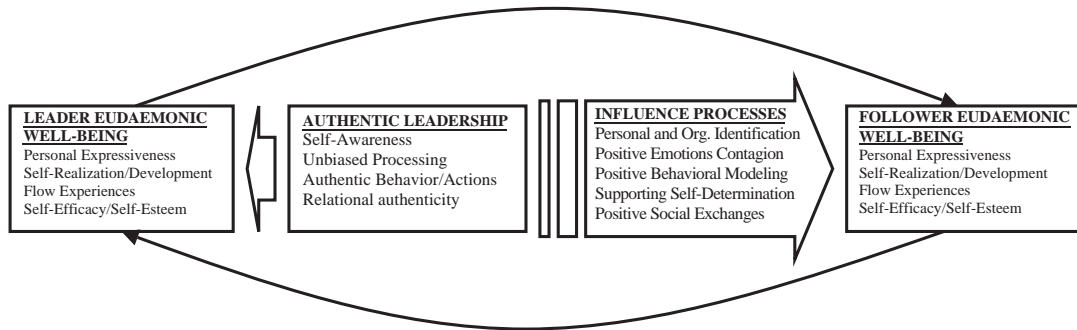


Fig. 1. Authentic leadership influences on leaders’ and followers’ eudaemonic well-being.

leadership influences followers’ eudaemonic well-being. However, to keep the model parsimonious, we decided not to portray the actual relationships among authentic leadership components and specific outcomes (e.g., self-awareness and expressiveness) in the model, but rather present specific propositions with respect to these relationships in the Sections discussing authentic leadership components and influence processes.

In addition, though we believe that authentic leadership does have implications for the hedonic well-being of both leaders and followers, it is not within the scope of this article to examine the mechanisms through which authentic leaders influence followers’ hedonic satisfaction and well-being. Because the links between various aspects of leadership and hedonic outcomes have been extensively explored in various leadership literatures (e.g., the impact of leader behaviors, transformational leadership and leader-member exchanges on follower satisfaction, (Bycio, Hackett, & Allen, 1995; Judge, Piccolo, & Ilies, 2004; Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997), we decided to focus exclusively on influence processes through which authentic leaders enhance followers’ eudaemonic well-being.

Below we define the authentic leadership components, we relate these components to personal characteristics that have been linked to leadership or well-being in existing theoretical models—positive self-concept, personal integrity, and emotional intelligence—and we explore the links between the components and leader eudaemonic well-being and present propositions reflecting our expectations with respect to the nature of these links. In the subsequent Section, we discuss the implications of the components of leader authenticity for follower well-being, from both experiential and developmental perspectives, and we develop propositions that specify the relationships between these components and follower eudaemonic well-being.

2.1. Self-awareness

Awareness as a component of authenticity refers to one’s awareness of, and trust in, one’s own personal characteristics, values, motives, feelings, and cognitions. Self-awareness includes knowledge of one’s inherent contradictory self-aspects and the role of these contradictions in influencing one’s thoughts, feelings, actions and behaviors. Specifically with respect to leadership, May et al. (2003, p. 248) argue that, “knowing oneself and being true to oneself are essential qualities to authentic leadership.”

Authentic self-awareness should be predicted by positive self-concept. As posited by the core self-evaluations theory developed by Judge and colleagues (e.g., Judge, Locke, Durham, & Kluger, 1998),

individuals with a positive self-concept believe in their self-worth (they have high self-esteem), believe themselves generally capable of accomplishing things (they have high generalized self-efficacy), are emotionally stable, and believe they are in control of their lives (they have an internal locus of control). In support of our proposed link between positive self-concept and self-awareness, the self-awareness component of authenticity has been found to be positively and significantly associated with self-esteem (Goldman & Kernis, 2002) and thus it should be predicted by individuals' core self-evaluations—the “fundamental, subconscious conclusions individuals reach about themselves, other people, and the world” (Judge et al., 1998, p.18).

Self-awareness includes being aware of one's strengths and weaknesses as well as understanding one's emotions and personality. Understanding one's emotions is a component of emotional intelligence. George (2000) proposed that emotional intelligence contributes to effective leadership (see also Caruso, Mayer, & Salovey, 2001), and linked emotional intelligence to the essential elements of effective leadership. These elements include developing collective goals and objectives, instilling in others knowledge and appreciation of work activities and generating and maintaining excitement, confidence, cooperation and trust. Emotional intelligence should also encourage decision making flexibility and adaptability, and establish and maintain a meaningful organizational identity (George, 2000). It is likely that some of the benefits of emotional intelligence for leadership are realized through leaders' emotional self-awareness.

As noted, from a developmental perspective, examining the wellness criteria proposed by Ryff and Keyes (1995), self-awareness should increase self-acceptance (“positive evaluations of oneself and one's past life” [Ryff & Keyes, 1995, p. 720]) and autonomy (one's sense of self-determination), and it should also enable one to develop more positive relationships with others and increase one's environmental mastery. In addition, leaders' self-awareness fosters positive emotions (Goldman & Kernis, 2002). In turn, positive emotions such as joy and interest are associated with eudaemonic states (flow and intrinsic motivation). Besides its influence on eudaemonic states through intense positive emotions, self-awareness should also lead to increased opportunities for personal expressiveness and flow because knowing oneself allows one to take on challenges that match one's skill level, which is one of the conditions for experiencing flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003).

In sum, leaders with more positive self concepts and higher emotional intelligence are likely to exhibit higher self-awareness, which has positive implications for leadership effectiveness and for the leaders' own psychological well-being. In a subsequent Section we will explore the implication of leaders' self-awareness for followers' functioning and well-being.

Proposition 1. *Leaders who (a) have a positive self-concept and (b) are emotionally intelligent will have greater self-awareness.*

Proposition 2. *Leaders who are more self-aware will experience (a) greater self-acceptance, (b) higher autonomy, (c) more positive relationships with others, and (d) eudaemonic states such as flow.*

2.2. Unbiased processing

This component refers to the processing of self-relevant information and it involves “not denying, distorting, exaggerating or ignoring private knowledge, internal experiences, and externally based evaluative information” (Kernis, 2003, p. 14). In our view, unbiased processing is at the heart of personal

integrity and character, and character and integrity not only influence leaders' decisions and actions but also have implications for their own well-being (Gavin, Quick, Cooper, & Quick, 2003).

Individuals (leaders) who exhibit unbiased processing of self-relevant information should more accurately interpret task feedback and should be able to better estimate their skill level, which are two important conditions for experiencing flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). On this point, Kernis (2003, p. 14) notes that unbiased processing,

Involves objectivity and acceptance of one's positive and negative aspects, attributes, and qualities. Some people, for instance, have great difficulty acknowledging that they may not be very skillful at a particular activity. Rather than accept their poor performance, they may rationalize its implications, belittle its importance, or completely fabricate a "new" score. Others may have difficulty accepting and incorporating into the self the various "ground" aspects of personal qualities. . .

Although Kernis (2003) views unbiased processing as the processing of information resulting from internal experiences or external interactions and not necessarily including the active selection of the situations in which such internal or external experiences take place, one can extend the unbiased processing component of authenticity to the active selection of information-generating situations. Just as "people may delude themselves into believing that a triumph over a clearly inferior opponent validates their own extremely high level of ability" (Kernis, 2003, p. 14), inauthentic individuals can actively seek "clearly inferior opponents" and avoid situations that may invalidate their ability. In this respect, the choice of performance situations that are likely to validate one's ability beliefs versus more challenging situations is thought to depend on individuals' self-theories (Dweck, 2000).

People with an "incremental theory" of ability believe that intellectual abilities can be increased and thus they actively seek challenging performance situations as opportunities for learning and development. In contrast, people with an "entity theory" of ability believe that intellectual ability is fixed, and they prefer easy successes where the risk to fail or to be outperformed by others is very low. Furthermore, those with an incremental theory of the self typically approach performance situations with mastery, or learning goal orientation (characterized by the desire to increase one's competence on the task) which is thought to be beneficial to learning (Dweck, 2000; Dweck & Leggett, 1988). Mastery oriented individuals have been characterized as being self-directed and self-regulated learners, they believe that ability is malleable and effort leads to success, prefer challenges, and engage in more complex learning strategies (Dweck, 2000; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Fisher & Ford, 1998).

In contrast, performance oriented people focus on task performance and comparisons with others, seek to prove their ability to others, and believe that intellectual abilities are immutable (e.g., Dweck & Leggett, 1988). For leaders, choosing self-validating (vs. self-developing) situations will likely have negative implications for organizational outcomes and for followers' learning and behavior, in addition to the lack of personal learning and development associated with such performance orientation induced by having an entity theory of the self.

In sum, it is our contention that the broader concept reflecting unbiased processing and choosing challenging and developmental self-relevant information generating situations is related to personal integrity and individuals' self-theories, and that unbiased processing defined this way is an indicator of psychological authenticity. It turns out, unbiased processing and choosing challenging situations with high

developmental potential have important implications for leaders' decision making and the organizational outcomes resulting from their decisions, for their own well-being, and for follower-relevant outcomes.

Proposition 3. *Leaders with (a) greater integrity, and (b) an incremental theory of ability (reflected in a mastery or learning goal orientation) will display greater unbiased processing.*

Proposition 4. *Leaders who engage in greater unbiased processing will (a) more accurately interpret task feedback, (b) better estimate their own skills, and (c) seek out challenging situations with learning potential.*

2.3. Authentic behavior/acting

The behavioral component of authenticity refers to “whether people act in accord with their true self [...] behaving authentically means acting in accord with one’s values, preferences, and needs as opposed to acting merely to please others or to attain rewards or avoid punishments through acting “falsely” (Kernis, 2003, p. 14). However, instances may exist where expressing one’s true self results in severe social sanctions, or where projecting a powerful image of one’s true self requires monitoring behaviors for the purpose of self-presentation. Authentic leaders will be sensitive to the fit between expressing their true self and the environment and be aware of the potential implications of their behavior (Kernis, 2003).

Although it might appear that being sensitive to the fit of their behavior with the environment would make a leader inauthentic, Kernis (2003) points out that, “authenticity is not reflected in a compulsion to be one’s true self, but rather in the free and natural expression of core feelings, motives and inclinations” (p. 14). Thus, it seems that authenticity does not have clear implications for the self-regulation of individuals’ expressive behavior to be in tune with situational demands. To further explore this issue, one needs to examine the relevance of authenticity for psychological processes and established constructs that have been linked to such self-regulation of behavior.

Individual differences in characteristic tendencies to control expressive behavior through active attempts to appear appropriate across different situations are reflected in the construct of *self-monitoring* (e.g., Gangestad & Snyder, 2000; Snyder, 1974, 1987). *High self-monitors* are concerned about the situational appropriateness of their behavior and they actively monitor and regulate their expressive behavior according to perceived expectations from their social environment. In contrast, for *low self-monitors*, “expressive behaviors are not controlled by deliberate attempts to appear situationally appropriate; instead, their expressive behavior functionally reflects their own inner attitudes, emotions, and dispositions” (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000, p. 531).

These definitions suggests that authentic leaders, because they behave in accord with their true selves, are likely to be low self-monitors. However, a closer examination of the self-monitoring construct (as measured with Snyder and Gangestad’s (1986) revised Self-Monitoring Scale) reveals that its component factors may have differential relationships with authenticity. That is, in our view, the Acting, or Public Performance factor (sample items: “I would probably make a good actor,” “I have never been good at games like charades or improvisational acting” [reverse-scored]) and the Extraversion factor (sample items: “In a group of people I am rarely the center of attention,” “At parties I let others keep the jokes and stories going” [both reverse-scored]) are *unrelated* to authenticity. However, we believe that the other-directiveness factor is strongly and negatively related with authenticity because actions and behaviors

such as those described by the self-monitoring items with high loadings on other-directiveness (e.g., “I am not always the person I appear to be,” “I may deceive people by being friendly when I really dislike them”) seem incompatible with authentic acting and behavior.

In short, we believe that the Acting and Extraversion self-monitoring factors are unrelated to authenticity and we propose that the other-directiveness factor is negatively related to authenticity. However, through self-monitored behaviors reflecting the Acting and Extraversion factors, authentic leaders will be more effective in conveying their authentic self to their followers and in projecting their own values and vision onto the followers, and thus we believe that *authentic self-monitoring* of expressive behaviors does predict leader emergence and effectiveness. This view on self-monitoring is consistent with previous research on self-monitoring and leader emergence (e.g., Zaccaro, Foti, & Kenny, 1991), which found that the Acting and Extraversion factors are largely responsible for the positive association between self-monitoring and leader emergence (average correlation across the two factors and two measures of emergence was .17; for other-directiveness, the average correlation across the two measures was .04; Zaccaro et al., 1991). Furthermore, in our view, examining the authenticity of self-monitoring behaviors has the potential to address some of the controversy and confusion from the self-monitoring literature (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000).

Because eudaemonia implies living in accordance to one’s true self (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Waterman, 1993), it follows that authentic behavior leads to eudaemonic well-being on the part of the leader. That is, leaders who behave in accordance with their deep-seated values are more likely to experience flow at work, and to be intrinsically motivated and personally expressive when leading. Goldman and Kernis (2002) found that authentic behavior was positively related to self-esteem and those who exhibited such behaviors also reported less *contingent self-esteem*. Contingent self-esteem is distinguished from true self-esteem in that the self-evaluations of individuals who possess contingent self-esteem are dependent on matching excellence standards and of external evaluations of achievements. Individuals with true self-esteem reflect secure, well-anchored feelings of self-worth that do not need continual validation (Kernis, 2003).

Proposition 5. *Leaders with low levels of other-directedness self-monitoring will display greater authentic behavior/acting.*

Proposition 6. *Leaders who engage in more authentic behavior/acting will (a) experience greater flow and intrinsic motivation at work, (b) have higher self-esteem, and (c) be more personally expressive in their leadership.*

2.4. Authentic relational orientation

The fourth component of authenticity involves valuing and striving for achieving openness and truthfulness in relationships. As Goldman and Kernis (2002, p. 19) note, “relational authenticity involves an active process of self-disclosure and the development of mutual intimacy and trust so that intimates will see one’s true self-aspects, both good and bad.” To achieve authentic relationships, one must be genuine and not false in one’s relationships with close others (Kernis, 2003). We should note here that relational authenticity, though distinct from the other authentic leadership components, is not independent of self-awareness, unbiased processing, and authentic behavior.

Though they did not explicitly discuss the components of authentic leadership that we proposed in this article, the description of authentic leadership given by May et al. (2003, p. 248) illustrates how self-awareness, unbiased processing, authentic behavior, and relational authenticity intertwine to describe authentic leaders: “. . .it is ultimately about the leader him- or herself, and being transparent in linking inner desires, expectations, and values to the way the leader behaves every day, in each and every interaction.” Thus, similar to its influence on authentic behavior, the other-directiveness component of self-monitoring should influence leaders’ relational orientation. In addition, leaders’ integrity will manifest in their relational orientation in that those with high levels of integrity will approach social interactions and relationships with openness and truthfulness.

Applying Kernis’s (2003) definition of authentic relationships to leadership, it follows that relational authenticity on the part of leaders involves striving for achieving openness and truthfulness in their relationship with their followers and associates. A key outcome of such openness and truthfulness is high levels of trust. In their review of the evolution of trust, Jones and George (1998) posited that the development of trust will lead to cooperative behavior. In the review, they put forth two distinct concepts of trust—conditional trust and unconditional trust. In unconditional trust, individuals experience trust through their shared values. Unconditional trust develops based on confidence in each other’s values, which is backed by repeated behavioral interactions. Authentic leaders are more likely to experience unconditional trust as they interact with followers with openness and truthfulness and earn their confidence in part because of shared values and repeated behavioral interactions. One of the indirect effects of unconditional trust that develops includes the free exchange of knowledge and information. This social process helps to develop synergistic team relationships and leads to superior performance (Jones & George, 1998). For authentic leaders, developing unconditional trust will lead to this free exchange of knowledge and information, which can then lead to positive outcomes such as increased performance and team satisfaction.

As mentioned in the introduction of this article, we believe that an important dimension of positive functioning concerns the quality of one’s relations with others (see Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Because relational authenticity should lead to the development of trust, it should also lead to positive and meaningful relationships with others; it thus follows that, from a developmental perspective, leaders’ authenticity influences their wellness partly through achieving positive relationships with others.

Relational authenticity, coupled with unbiased processing, also fosters personal learning and development. On this issue, Popper and Lipshitz (2000) note that transparency or “the willingness to hold oneself (and one’s actions) open to inspection in order to receive valid feedback” (p. 187) is a factor contributing to learning. It follows that through authentic relationships and unbiased processing of the information generated by interpersonal interactions, authentic leaders develop “a sense of continued growth and development as a person” (Ryff & Keyes, 1995, p. 720), which is another important indicator of wellness, according to Ryff and Keyes’s wellness theory.

Proposition 7. (a) *Leaders’ other-directiveness self-monitoring will negatively predict their authentic relational orientation.* (b) *Leaders’ integrity will positively predict their authentic relational orientation.*

Proposition 8. *Leaders who possess an authentic relational orientation will (a) realize greater learning and development, and (b) have more positive relationships characterized by unconditional trust.*

3. How leaders foster follower well-being

Authentic leadership thus defined, in this Section we explore how authentic leaders influence followers' eudaemonic well-being. First, the personal integrity and elevated self-awareness of authentic leaders, coupled with their striving for truthful relationships, leads to unconditional trust on the part of their followers, which enhances followers' organizational-derived self-concept by influencing followers' personal identification with the leader. Second, authentic leaders influence followers' well-being through emotions: authentic leaders provide an atmosphere conducive to the experience of positive emotions, and their own positive emotions influence followers' experiences. Third, leaders serve as positive behavioral models for personally expressive and authentic behaviors. Fourth, authentic leaders support the self-determination of followers, in part by providing opportunities for skill development and autonomy. Finally, through social exchanges, authentic leaders influence and elevate followers.

3.1. Personal and organizational identification

Authentic leaders' high levels of self-awareness, in combination with their authentic behavioral and relational orientation, can influence followers' feelings of identification with the leader and the organization, especially when a high degree of value-congruence exists among leaders and their followers. Organizational identification concerns employees' feelings of belongingness to the organization (e.g., Ashforth & Mael, 1989), and it is a concept rooted in social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982; Tajfel & Turner, 1985; van Knippenberg, 2000). More specifically, within the tenets of social identity theory, one's self concept is affected by not only self-relevant personal attributes, but also by membership in social groups. Identification with a group influences group members to perceive themselves more in terms of characteristics that they share with the other group members (they define themselves through shared social identity) than in terms of characteristics that differentiate them from the other group members.

Though not specifically studied with respect to authentic leadership, theories of leadership in organizations give a central role to followers' personal identification with the leader, as a leadership influence process (Conger & Kanungo, 1998; Howell, 1988). Furthermore, personal identification with authentic leaders is likely to influence followers' workgroup and organizational identification, because the leader represents the interests of the group and works toward achieving goals important for the organization. In turn, followers' personal and organizational identification will influence followers to become more authentic themselves through internalization of leaders' authentic values (see Howell, 1988; Shamir, House & Arthur, 1993). In addition, organizational identification influences how employees act across a variety of situations, especially when organizational identity is highly salient, or cognitively activated (van Knippenberg, 2000).

Proposition 9. *Authentic leaders will have followers who more strongly identify with (a) the leader and (b) the organization.*

Proposition 10. *The relationship between authentic leadership and identification will be moderated by value congruence, such that when the values of a leader and follower are more similar, the relationship between authentic leadership and identification will be stronger.*

3.2. Emotional contagion

By working together on daily activities, leaders' and followers' emotions and moods converge through the process of emotional contagion (e.g., Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994), and this process should be stronger for more charismatic leaders (Friedman, Prince, Riggio, & DeMatteo, 1980). Furthermore, Fredrickson (2003) suggests that leaders' positive emotions may be especially contagious and considers emotional contagion a process that enables organizational transformation, "because each person's positive emotions can reverberate through other organizational members" (p. 172). Indeed, recent research by Sy, Côté, & Saavedra (2005) found a link between leaders' moods, the moods of their work group members, and the affective tone of the group. These authors also found that the positivity of leaders' affective states (mood) was associated with better group coordination among their followers.

If authentic leaders experience more positive affective states (through self-awareness and relational orientation; (Kernis, 2003) than inauthentic leaders, through emotional contagion, their followers will experience more positive affective states, compared to followers of inauthentic leaders. Because leader authenticity is distinct from charismatic leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; May et al., 2003), however, charisma will moderate the leader–follower emotional contagion mechanism such that contagion is more likely for authentic leaders higher in charisma. In turn, followers' positive emotions experienced at work lead to momentary and global satisfaction (e.g., Ilies & Judge, 2002), self-realization and flourishing (see Fredrickson's (2003) broaden-and-build theory), as well as better physical health (Salovey, Rothman, Detweiler, & Steward, 2000). In addition, authentic leaders have more satisfied followers because their goals focus on values and well-being, in addition to individual and organizational performance. When followers experience positive affect and high satisfaction at work, they will also influence leaders' emotions through emotional contagion; thus, the positive emotional atmosphere created by authentic leaders will be sustained by a reciprocal affective exchange that enhance both leaders' and followers' hedonic well-being.

Proposition 11. *Authentic leaders will have followers who experience (a) more positive emotional states, and (b) higher levels of self-realization.*

Proposition 12. *The relationship between authentic leadership and follower positive emotional states will be moderated by leader charisma, such that charismatic leaders are more likely to transfer their positive emotions to their followers.*

3.3. Positive behavioral model

Although much learning occurs through direct experience, social learning theory suggests that vicarious experience can play an important role as well. In essence, social learning theory is predicated on the notion that individuals learn from observation (social learning), and future behaviors are guided by the consequences of past behavior (experience) and social learning (Bandura, 1977). Such social learning can help individuals acquire new behavioral responses, inhibit previously displayed or potential behavioral responses, encourage previously inhibited behaviors, or foster a new and creative response that represents a combination of existing behavioral options. As such, the general process of social learning represents a potentially powerful mechanism through which authentic leaders can influence followers.

In an organizational setting, Weiss (1977) provided an example of how subordinates take on the characteristics of their supervisors via social learning mechanisms. He found that the amount of similarity in leadership style between supervisors and subordinates was a function of subordinates' perceptions of supervisors' success and competence. This suggests that leaders can serve as role models (and are likely to be imitated) to the extent they are viewed positively by followers.

Authentic leaders are likely to represent particularly prominent behavioral role models for followers. In organizations, there is often a considerable amount of interaction between leaders and followers. As such, leaders are likely to be the most prominent role model in the organizational context. As Conger and Kanungo (1998, p. 479) noted, "a supervisor's exemplary behaviors empower subordinates to believe that they can behave in a like manner." Thus, followers can learn to behave and act authentically by observing authentic leaders' behaviors and processing of self-relevant information. In addition, as noted earlier, leaders can either choose to consistently place themselves in situations that are challenging, which promotes self-development, or in low-risk situations where success is assured, which is simply self-validating. This sends a strong message to followers in terms of the kind of challenge one should seek out, with attendant implications for well-being.

Followers' social learning experiences will shape their behavior over time (and may influence how followers process self-relevant information), thereby altering follower work behavior to be congruent with the principles of authenticity. In addition, leaders' authentic relational orientation will augment or enhance the modeling effects of authentic behavior on followers' social learning and behavior. As followers begin to behave in the same way as authentic leaders, followers' hedonic and eudaemonic well-being will be enhanced.

Proposition 13. *Authentic leaders will have followers who behave in a more authentic manner over time.*

3.4. Supporting self-determination

Self-determination theory suggests that the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are essential to eudaemonic well-being and that intrinsically motivated behavior is inherently authentic (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2001). For its part, intrinsic motivation reflects, "an inherent tendency to seek out novelty and challenges, to extend and exercise one's capacities, to explore, and to learn" (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 70). Although there is an inherent tendency for individuals to seek and pursue intrinsically motivated activities, it can be disrupted by a number of contextual conditions (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

For example, research has demonstrated that rewards (Deci, 1971; Greene & Lepper, 1974; Harackiewicz, 1979), surveillance (Plant & Ryan, 1985), anticipated evaluation (Harackiewicz, Manderlink, & Sansone, 1984), deadlines (Amabile, DeJong, & Lepper, 1976), and competition (Deci, Betley, Kahle, Abrams, & Porac, 1981) can serve to decrease intrinsic motivation. Other research, however, has shown that choice (Zuckerman, Porac, Lathin, Smith, & Deci, 1978), competence accompanied by personal control over performance (Fisher, 1978), and rewards and feedback that highlight non-controlling, informational aspects of performance (Enzle & Ross, 1978; Williams & Luthans, 1992) can enhance intrinsic motivation.

Cognitive evaluation theory (a sub-theory within self-determination theory; Deci, 1975; Deci & Ryan, 1980, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000) provides a framework within which these findings can be integrated. It

holds that the manner in which an individual perceives an event is central to the experience of self-determination, and, hence, intrinsic motivation. Events that promote a perceived external locus of causality are considered to be controlling and result in reduced intrinsic motivation. These can be thought of as pressures to think, feel, or behave in a particular manner. Events that promote an internal perceived locus of causality, on the other hand, are thought of as informational, signify competence, and serve to increase intrinsic motivation. These events can be seen as providing effectance-relevant feedback within the context of behavior that is initiated and regulated by choice. It is the relative salience of the informational or controlling aspects of the event that determines the functional significance for the individual, and, therefore, how it is construed.

Although much of the preceding research has not been conducted in organizational settings, other research has suggested that leaders are in a particularly advantageous position to foster an employee's sense of self-determination and subsequent intrinsic motivation (Deci, Connell, & Ryan, 1989). This is due to the fact that in most organizations, rewards, deadlines, competition, and performance evaluations are, to some extent, under leaders' control. Furthermore, the interpersonal styles of different managers and the interpersonal context they create with their subordinates will vary. As a result, the quality of the relationships between leaders and followers is likely to have a meaningful effect on follower well-being, and leaders can influence the quality of these relationships.

In particular, leaders who (a) provide support for autonomy, (b) provide non-controlling positive feedback, and (c) acknowledge the other's perspective will have quality relationships with their followers because, through these mechanisms, such leaders foster the experience of self-determination (Deci et al., 1989). Tetrick (1989) found that supervisors who engage in these behaviors were more effective at increasing worker motivation. Deci et al. (1989) found positive relationships between managers' support for self-determination and subordinates' trust in the organization, feelings within the work environment, and several satisfaction measures. This evidence suggests that leaders who support followers' self-determination should have a positive effect on their intrinsic motivation, their personal expressiveness, and their flow experiences, thus influencing followers' eudaemonic well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

In addition, positive relationships have been found between self-determination and: (a) self-esteem (Deci, Nezlek, & Sheinman, 1981; Ryan & Grolnick, 1986), (b) creativity (Amabile, 1983), (c) general health and well-being (Langer & Rodin, 1976), (d) conceptual learning (Benware & Deci, 1984), and (e) achievement (Grolnick, Ryan, & Deci, 1991). Though direct evidence of the link between authentic leadership and follower outcomes is absent, based on the suggestive evidence presented above, we propose leaders with an authentic relational orientation have a positive influence on followers' behavior and well-being because they provide developmental (non-controlling) feedback and support followers' self-determination.

Personal expressiveness and intrinsic motivation are important outcomes of the authentic leadership process in themselves, but they also lead to increased hedonic well-being for the followers (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi & Hunter, 2003; Waterman, 1993), and should result in higher job performance. Csikszentmihalyi (2003, p. 69), for example, notes, "adults who are more often in flow are not only happier, but they spend significantly more time at work actually working instead of gossiping, reading the paper, or surfing the Web."

Proposition 14. *Authentic leaders are more likely to support follower self-determination and thereby increase follower levels of intrinsic motivation, self-esteem, and creativity.*

3.5. Positive social exchanges

Finally, authentic leaders can foster follower well-being through the development of high quality relationships, where such relationships are based on the principles of social exchange (Hofmann & Morgeson, 1999; Liden, Wayne, & Stillwell, 1993; Settoon, Bennett, & Liden, 1996). A social exchange (as compared to an economic exchange) involves the perceived obligations of followers to reciprocate high quality relationships with their leaders (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960). Authentic leaders are particularly likely to develop positive social exchanges, and positive social exchanges will have a positive effect on follower well-being.

The development of leader–follower relationships has been hypothesized to occur in three distinct stages (Graen & Scandura, 1987). In the role taking stage, leaders seek to discover the talents and motivations of their followers through an iterative process of leader role sending and follower behavior. During this stage the initial interaction is influenced by leader and follower characteristics (Dienesch & Liden, 1986). It is during this stage that a leader’s authentic relational orientation will first become salient to followers. Such a relational orientation will form the foundation for subsequent trust, an important component of relationship development (Bauer & Green, 1996). In the role making stage, leaders and followers begin to refine how they will interact across a host of different situations, thereby defining the nature of their relationship. Over the course of this stage, followers become aware of leaders’ unbiased processing of self-relevant information and personal integrity. Coupled with an authentic relational orientation, this should lead to the development of respect, positive affect, and trust, key components of high quality leader–follower relationships (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden et al., 1997). In the final role routinization stage mutual expectations become implicitly or explicitly agreed upon and followers are likely to maximally benefit (in terms of well-being) from high quality relationships.

Research has suggested that high quality leader–follower relationships foster more open communication, strong value congruence, and minimal power distance (Fairhurst, 1993; Fairhurst & Chandler, 1989; Fairhurst, Rogers, & Sarr, 1987). These findings suggest that followers of authentic leaders are more likely to have similar values and thereby begin to behave more authentically as a result of working with their leader. In addition, recent research has suggested that followers reciprocate high quality relationships in a manner consistent with the type of behavior valued in their work environment (Hofmann, Morgeson, & Gerras, 2003). This also suggests that followers of authentic leaders will reciprocate by engaging in behaviors that are consistent with the behaviors and values of their leader. Such reciprocation will result in followers becoming more authentic, with its attendant implications for well-being.

Proposition 15. *Authentic leaders are more likely to have positive relationship with their followers, leading to greater value congruence and follower reciprocation that is consistent with authentic leadership values.*

4. Implications for theory and practice

4.1. Theoretical implications

The framework linking authentic leadership components to leader and follower well-being that we proposed in this article contributes to the theoretical development of authentic leadership in several

ways. First, it anchors the concept in the historical philosophical approaches to psychological well-being and links it to the larger positive psychology and positive organizational scholarship movements. This allowed us to capitalize on the advances made in these other literatures and discuss the implications for organizational leadership.

Second, in our conceptual model we define authentic leadership as a four-component construct, which complements other work that has examined the authentic leadership concept and process (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Gardner et al., 2005; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; May et al., 2003). We believe that adopting this multi-component conceptualization of authentic leadership will enable more focused research efforts aimed at examining the links between authentic leadership and follower outcomes and at uncovering the mechanisms responsible for leader–follower effects.

Third, we discuss how and why authentic leaders are able to positively influence the well-being of followers, and suggest that the focus on follower performance and satisfaction from previous leadership research should be complemented by examining the effects on followers' eudaemonic well-being. Further research is needed into each of these hypothesized mechanisms. For example, research into the extent to which individuals come to cognitively and affectively identify with their leaders and groups would be important. In addition, research into the process of emotional contagion, the moderating role of charisma, and the influence leaders can have on their followers and work teams is needed.

Fourth, we discussed the connections between self-esteem (e.g., contingent vs. secure), self-concept (individuals' beliefs about their self-worth, accomplishing capacity, and internal control), theories of the self (i.e., entity vs. incremental theories), authentic self-awareness, unbiased processing of self-relevant information, and self-developmental situational choice. We also discussed the implications of these constructs and of the relationships among them for individuals' self-determination and well-being and for lifespan self-realization along the wellness dimensions proposed by Ryff and Keyes (1995). We hope these efforts will stimulate conceptual work aimed at developing an integrated model of selfhood, happiness, and self-realization.

Finally, we developed a series of propositions for future research. These propositions represent testable hypotheses that can be pursued in empirical research. Prior to testing many of these hypotheses however, it will be necessary to develop a measure of authentic leadership that assesses each of four components outlined earlier. Research on authenticity may represent an excellent starting point in developing such a measure (Goldman & Kernis, 2002). In addition, future research should examine how authentic leadership relates to other leadership constructs such as transformational leadership, relational leadership approaches, and leader behaviors.

4.2. Practical implications

As we have detailed throughout this article, authentic leaders can have positive effects on a variety of follower and organizational outcomes. Given this, it is important to outline exactly how an organization, through its various human resource management systems, can enhance the authentic leadership of its existing leaders as well as increase the overall level of authentic leadership displayed across all leaders. Table 1 indicates that organizations can improve authentic leadership in two ways. First, when choosing leaders, there are certain individual differences that have been suggested to underlie each of the components of authentic leadership. Selecting or promoting individuals who possess these characteristics should yield higher levels of authentic leadership. Second, there are a number of different

Table 1
Strategies for increasing authentic leadership

Authentic leadership component	Selection criteria	Developmental interventions
Self-awareness	Positive self-concept Emotional intelligence	Multisource feedback
Unbiased processing	Integrity Learning goal orientation	Assessment centers
Authentic behavior/acting	Self-monitoring (low other-directedness) Self-esteem	Coaching/mentoring Behavioral role modeling
Relational authenticity	Past positive relationships Past behavior interview	Upward feedback Leader–member exchange training

developmental initiatives that can be used to foster each of the components of authentic leadership. We briefly discuss how each of the components can be addressed through these two means.

Self-awareness reflects an awareness and trust in one's own personal characteristics, values, motives, feelings, and cognitions. It reflects the extent to which a leader knows his or her strengths and weaknesses and is fundamental to any adaptation or development. Those with a positive self-concept are likely to be more self-aware (Judge et al., 1998). In addition, emotionally intelligent individuals have a greater understanding of themselves and their own emotions. These links suggest that leadership selection and promotion systems should be oriented around these two individual differences. In terms of developing self-awareness in leaders, one potentially fruitful strategy would be to utilize multisource feedback. This enables a leader to gain insight into how they are viewed by others (followers, peers, supervisors) and highlights potential disconnects between self- and other-perceptions. Such feedback can potentially lead to more accurate insight into one's own values and beliefs as well as more precise information about one's strengths and weaknesses.

Unbiased processing reflects the absence of distortion when processing self-relevant information. This lies at the very heart of integrity, thus suggesting that integrity should be an important selection criterion. In addition, because individuals who process information in an unbiased way are more likely to actively select information-generating situations, learning goal orientation should also be an important selection criterion for authentic leaders. It would seem to be rather difficult to actually develop unbiased processing in individuals. Because not all individuals will actively select information generating situations, one potential development strategy would be to utilize an assessment center to place people in such situations. Through the use of role plays, leaderless group discussions, and the like, it may be possible to help leaders process information in an unbiased manner (particularly if they receive objective feedback from multiple assessors) and help them develop more of a learning goal orientation.

Authentic behavior and acting simply reflects acting in a way that is consistent with one's true self. Two key personality characteristics that are likely to lead to authentic behavior (and thus should be used to select leaders) is the extent to which a leader is low in other-directedness (a component of self-monitoring) and has high levels of self-esteem. These two characteristics suggest that leaders will not attempt to behave in ways that are inconsistent with their personal values (low other-directedness) and will be secure in their own identity. In terms of developing such authentic behavior, coaching or mentoring programs may be the most effective tools because of the potential for positive behavioral role modeling and feedback. For example, mentoring initiatives that pair highly authentic leaders with aspiring leaders allow leader–trainees to observe the positive authentic behaviors of successful leaders.

Authentic relational orientation is reflected in openness and truthfulness in relationships with others. Unlike the other three components of authentic leadership, this component would appear to be best reflected in the pattern of past relationships a leader has had with others in the organization. As such, peer and follower ratings of trust or leader–member exchange may be the best way to determine promotions. If leaders are being hired externally and such data are unavailable, one possibility is to develop past behavior interview questions that explicitly assess the quality of past relationships a leader has developed with his or her followers.

Recent research has suggested that such constructs are effectively assessed through a structured interview (Huffcutt, Conway, Roth, & Stone, 2001; Posthuma, Morgeson, & Campion, 2002). Authentic relational orientation would appear to be difficult to actually develop. It reflects a style of interaction and exchange that would appear to depend on numerous factors, many that may be out of the control of any potential intervention. Upward feedback might be helpful because it can highlight low trust situations that could then be directly addressed. Indeed, there has been some research suggesting that training in leader–member exchange can yield higher quality relationships between leaders and followers (e.g., Scandura & Graen, 1984).

5. Conclusion

In this article we have outlined a four-component model of authentic leadership and then described the antecedents and outcomes of these components for both leaders and followers. In addition, we discussed the mechanisms through which authentic leaders can positively affect followers and provided implications for research and practice. Given the relative newness of the construct of authentic leadership, we hope that our model will (a) stimulate further conceptual development in the areas of psychological authenticity and authentic leadership, (b) lead to a programmatic effort to develop a multicomponent measurement framework for authentic leadership, (c) inspire empirical investigations of antecedents and outcomes of authentic leadership such as those specified herein, and (d) aid researchers and practitioners working on the design of interventional programs aimed at developing the authentic leaders of tomorrow.

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