

Your Journey to Leading Change Authentically

Chapter at a Glance

In this chapter you will learn the fundamentals of leading change in an authentic manner together with some self-assessments to enable you to gauge your capacity to do this right now. It further aims to give you an understanding of *what does it mean to be an authentic leader and leading change in an authentic manner?* This chapter, based on the real experiences of CEOs we interviewed, will illustrate the importance of aligning your values and beliefs with your actions when leading change. Real change starts with you – it stems from your willingness to own your weaknesses, confess your failures, and recognize that many life stories do not have a happy ending (Block, 1997). However, while many of our life stories are turbulent, we do not have to remain prisoners of our past. We have the power to influence our future and therefore can still create a bright and optimistic future for the people we lead through difficult times. Being authentic is a choice you have to make; nobody can do it for you. Leadership which is authentic is central to effective change leadership and the chapter consists of two major components. In the first part, authentic leadership is discussed and an opportunity is provided for you, the leader, to explore the influence of personal life events on your authenticity. In the second part of

the chapter, authenticity is linked to leading change. Complete the various exercises in the chapter, as this will provide you with powerful personal insights that are needed for leading change in an authentic manner.

Beginning Cases: Preparation

What does it mean to be authentic? The following quotations provide some perspectives of authenticity in practice. It seems an understanding of *who you are* and the *willingness to be true to yourself*, irrespective of the context, manifests in behaviour that is experienced by others as genuine and worth emulating.

Be true to yourself

'Well when you're running a big business, there are times when you cannot be nice, there's times when you have to make very tough decisions, there's times when you have to be very hard and tough and that is all part of one's character. But you also know when to smile and you also need to have a little twinkle in your eye, you need to know how to manage people. But it's only when you're really your own man can you really be yourself because the moment you're having to please other people and think, am I going to get the promotion, am I now going to be able to move from this company to that company because I want them to recommend me, think I'm a nice person – no different than in your activity in a university, you don't want to go around being right or being confrontational by saying well that's not right and this and that . . . they'll say, well he's a difficult bloke we don't want to work with him. People used to think I was difficult – not difficult – people used to think I was very aggressive when I was younger – I was, so what?'

Be authentic

'Well the way I've always thought about authentic leadership is exactly what it says in the description, it's the authenticity of an individual and whether people really believe that what they see versus what they hear a leader saying they believe in and what they're going to do and how closely those two correlate.'

Understand who you are and why

'My mum probably is very important in that. She's not the only one but she's important at two different bits of my life because she and I had a very feisty, very argumentative relationship, not very comfortable, not very happy when I was very small, not very happy at all and she asked a lot of me, she asked me to be very adult very early on and the older I got the more I resented that. We were rather alike temperamentally, so quick to temper and yet like my father, I don't like being angry but my mum rather relished it. So I got caught between these two personality types that I wanted – what my father seemed to be able to model which was a rather calm existence, a patient existence but in fact I was very easily wound up. And I think that battle has been very instructive in how I try to conduct myself and the sort of places that I've wanted to work in, the sort of roles I've wanted to take on. But also she and my father were ambitious for me and there was certainly a sense that nothing was quite good enough which again, when I was much younger I resented hugely – I don't anymore. But I listened none-the-less, the sense that praise didn't come very easily. The interesting question was why you didn't do better – always. So that drives me too, it also can be debilitating sometimes but it drives me for sure, always asking could it have been done better, could I have done it better? And the reason I say – there's a lot in between of course – but my mum passed away when I was 33 which is nearly eight years ago and that time in my life was quite a difficult one professionally which I might say a bit more about in a second, but having actually a very powerful experience (she was ill for a year, very ill) and so I had this extraordinary – I think in a way almost fortunate experience of having a very close relationship with her in that time which wasn't something that I think my mum and I thought we would have in our lifetimes and whilst I wouldn't have wished it on her, I think I have a much happier memory of her than perhaps I would've had if things had been different. And so it was very powerful – in a way, getting to know her, I think that's what I'm

saying – getting to know her and getting to know myself through that relationship at a time when I was having quite a complex professional struggle. And then a great loss which is very – “levelling” might be the word I’d use, that although it’s a bit of a cliché, it does actually put things in perspective and I think I am a happier, calmer (!) more strategic leader now and I think some of that is about losing my mum; that moment of crisis. The professional struggle at that time which I do think has shaped me before.’

Chapter Introduction

Some 500 years ago Machiavelli, in his book *The Prince*, highlighted problems we can expect when implementing change. He stated

. . . there is no more delicate matter to take in hand, nor more dangerous to conduct, nor more doubtful in success, than to set up as a leader in the introduction of changes. For he who innovates will have for his enemies all those who are well off under the existing order of things, and only lukewarm supporters in those who might be better off under the new (Machiavelli, 1992).

This is still true today. It is estimated that between 70–80% of all change initiatives fail to reach their objectives or achieve only partial success, or in the worst-case scenario, make the situation worse. In fact, some managers are actually surprised that so many change initiatives are successful! Either way, there is a great deal of opportunity for improvement. It seems that, despite the numerous change models, approaches and methodologies available in the literature, leaders do not fully appreciate what is required in guiding their organizations through change. Putting it differently, leaders continue to lack a clear understanding of change, its antecedents, its processes or the ability to engage employees in change initiatives (Armenakis and Harris, 2002).

Organizational leaders are responsible for developing the change strategy, strategy implementation and monitoring. They also act as change agents in the organization. While the execution of organizational change must be well-managed, fundamentally it requires effective leadership. There is growing evidence that leadership characteristics and behaviours influence the success or failure of organizational change. But change leadership is more than a skill, more

than the knowledge of change theories and requires more than just the effective use of cognitive abilities. It is the ability to act with purpose and ethically while constantly adjusting as the change situation requires. A successful change leader requires moral character, a strong concern for self, others and ethical values. Why is this important? As change leader you need to influence employees and they will only follow you if they trust you. This means you need to lead and act in a specific manner. George et al. (2007, p. 2) argue in this regard that,

. . . the essence of leadership is not trying to emulate someone else, no matter how brilliant they are. Nor is it having the ideal leadership style, achieving competencies or fixing your weaknesses. In fact, you don't need power or titles to lead. You only have to be authentic.

This is also true for the leadership of change.

What is Authentic Leadership and What is it Not?

In order to understand 'what does it mean to lead change in an authentic manner?', the starting point is to understand what we mean by the term *authentic*. Authenticity, the idea of being oneself or being true to oneself has been described in many different ways and there is no agreed definition for authentic leadership. Indeed the terms vary across culture. In Israel the term *mensch* is used to describe a fully rounded 'juicy' person of integrity and goodness. Kernis (2003, p. 13) describes authenticity as 'the unobstructed operation of one's true, or core self in one's daily enterprise' consisting of four components: awareness, unbiased processing, authentic action and relational authenticity. Walumbwa et al. (2008, p. 94) building on this definition regard authentic leadership as,

. . . a pattern of leader behaviour that draws upon and promotes both psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalised moral perspective, balanced processing of information, relational transparency on the part of the leaders working with followers, fostering positive self development.

Despite the different ways the concept is described, it is possible to identify themes from the literature. Authenticity is to be informed by the 'true' self, authentic leaders demonstrate high levels of self-awareness, have clarity about personal values and convictions and the connection between authentic leadership and moral leadership, are highlighted (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010; Cooper, et al., 2005; Shamir and Eilam, 2005).

Therefore, the core of authenticity can be regarded as ‘to know, accept, and remain true to oneself’ (Avolio et al., 2004, p. 402) and authentic leaders are not only aware of their personal values but act accordingly. Organizational change is inherently chaotic and puts enormous pressure on the change leader. Having a clear understanding of what your values are all about and acting according to your values, provides you with guidelines on how to act and behave during organizational change. Defining authentic leadership and identifying antecedents for authentic leadership, Gardner et al. (2005a) and Avolio, et al. (2009) argue that key variables such as *self-awareness* (which include the leader’s values, identity, emotions and goals) and *self-regulation* (which consists of balanced processing of information, internalized regulation, authentic behaviour and relational transparency) can be regarded as two important building blocks of authentic leadership. This means that authentic leaders are motivated from their values and convictions to act and are not obsessed or driven by prestige, status and organizational position. They are clear on what is important to them, how they feel and what their needs are. Putting it differently, change leaders who act in an authentic manner exhibit qualities such as honesty, integrity, credibility; they are straightforward and dependable. Our CEOs describe this as follows:

**When leading
change . . .**

**Authentic behaviour
creates trust**

**Congruence between
actions and words is
crucial**

**You cannot declare
yourself as authentic
– it is ascribed to
you by your
followers**

I think it’s very easy to say things but people will see you doing things, hear you saying things that they then will look at your body language, will look at what actions you then take, will look at your history and question whether, in their minds, it all adds up to genuineness and whether you really are a leader that does exactly what you say you’re going to do and the minute you cross that line and don’t, I think people then question how authentic you are. I think – there’s a great programme, The Office, which I think is the classic of when people are sort of challenging authentic leaders. The Office is a great example of a leader who nobody believes is authentic, who has picked up all the right phrases to say, all the right ways of leading that you’re meant to do, but in practice doesn’t do it and doesn’t believe it and you can see through that. So I think for me, authentic leadership is about probably what comes from the heart, what you genuinely stand for and particularly when things are tough, whether you’re true to everything you talk about. So I think it’s very much about the emotions that you share, that you show, the

Being authentic means also a willingness to share your emotions

Be willing to be open and honest about the 'self'

Being authentic is being consistently genuine and true to yourself

Authentic behaviour leads to identification with the leader

Authentic leaders do not hide behind masks

vision that you have, the values that you have and then what people actually see you doing and then they will make judgements based on that.'

'Authenticity for me – very simply – is you've got to be you. Don't be anybody else, therefore what that means is be prepared to self-disclose, be prepared to talk to people about your strengths, but absolutely in equal measure be very prepared to talk to people about your limitations and where you need their help because the more that you do that, as a leader, the more they will identify with you as a human being and the more they'll be likely to help you when they realize you're in trouble because you're in an area you know nothing about or that you're weak at. It also means only promising what you can deliver and not falling into the trap of over-promising – people hate that, they hate it. It means – for me, it means being utterly true to your own sense of purpose and belief and value. So I suppose the old beliefs and behaviours thing – if your behaviours, as a leader, are in sync with your beliefs as a person, you're going to be authentic and you can see my behaviours because they're manifest, but you can't see my beliefs. So it follows: If my beliefs are somewhere else and my behaviours are still what they are today I am a fraud and you'll probably be able to detect that even though you don't know what my particular belief sets are, it will become very clear to you because human beings are not stupid, unless I am the world's greatest actor, that my behaviour is not a reflection of my true beliefs and in that sense I am inauthentic and as an inauthentic leader I don't command any respect because you can't identify with me as a human being, you can't identify with me as somebody who would be a role model, for you to follow, if I don't set an example, you know I fail, on the rudimentary basics of being a leader. So for me, authenticity is critical and it's amazing to me, how many people get up in the morning with their partner or spouse or whatever and have breakfast with the family and they're themselves and they get in the car

or on the bus or the tube or whatever it is to go to work and they're all themselves and they get out of the car or off the bus or whatever and they come up to the front doors of the office and as they hit the front doors of the office they change and they start using language that they don't use at home and adopt a suddenly managerial tone of talking and think that they can get away with it! And of course everybody sees them for the sucker that they are. But they're there, they exist, they're all over the place, we see them all the time and they're not leaders, they're fakes.'

However, in an attempt to live up to organizational expectations and norms, managers do not always act authentically or act in accordance with their own values, that is, being able to be true to oneself. In some organizational contexts it may be dangerous to be yourself: perhaps in inauthentic organizations. However, too many managers believe that the road to success needs to be hidden in deception and they wear a mask of inauthenticity. This façade is used to manipulate and they are hardly ever able to reveal the true self. Exploring the dark side of leadership, Kets de Vries (1993) argues that narcissistic leaders need power, prestige, drama and enjoy the manipulation of others. He describes narcissistic leaders as follows: 'They do not tolerate criticism, are reluctant to exhibit give and take behaviour and surround themselves with sycophants' (p. 46). Some leaders are unable to express emotion and lack the ability to empathize, encourage creativity and respond appropriately to conflict. Palmer (1994, pp. 25–26) argues in this regard that,

. . . a leader must take special responsibility for what is going inside his or her own self, inside his or her consciousness, lest the act of leadership create more harm than good . . . I suggest that the challenge is to examine our consciousness for those ways in which we leaders may project more shadow than light . . . The problem is that people rise to leadership in our society by a tendency towards extraversion, which too often means ignoring what's going on inside themselves.

George, et al. (2007, p. 1) summarize the characteristics of authentic leaders as follows:

Passion	Authentic leaders demonstrate a passion for their purpose, practice their values consistently, and
Value-driven	lead with their hearts as well as their heads. They

Meaningful relationships Results	establish long-term, meaningful relationships and have the self-discipline to get results. They know who they are.
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Leaders need to explore their inner world and must be able to look inside themselves. This is important as who we are (and how much we understand about ourselves) determines how we lead change. You cannot become authentic by imitating someone else – you have to be yourself. Understanding and developing this capacity is important to successful leading change. However, authenticity is not defined by you; that is, ‘I am authentic’, but it is defined by what other people see in you. Putting it differently, *it is a quality that others must attribute to you*. Expressing and demonstrating your authentic self is a choice that you have to make (Goffee and Jones, 2000; 2007; Nicholson, 2013) and these authors ask a very pertinent question: *Why should anyone want to be led by you?* What does it take to lead change effectively, to engage people and revive their commitment to organizational change? The starting point on the journey of becoming a great leader is the expression of the authentic self and in the next section this will be explored in more detail. Dee Hock, founder of Visa put it like this:

Leadership starts with you	<i>‘Control is not leadership; management is not leadership; leadership is leadership. If you seek to lead, invest at least 50% of your time in leading yourself – your own purpose, ethics, principles, motivation, conduct. Invest at least 20% leading those with authority over you and 15% leading your peers.’</i>
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Becoming Authentic

The question then becomes, *are authentic leaders born or raised?* From previous research on how people can become and remain authentic, it seems that ‘an individual does not have to born with any universal characteristics or traits’ (George et al., 2007, p. 1), but it is possible to discover your potential and develop authentic leadership. Authentic leaders are defined by their unique life stories, and the way they frame and understand those life stories to discover their passions and the purpose of their leadership. Authentic leaders display different type of behaviours and in the next section this is discussed in more detail.

Understanding and making sense of the past

The personal history of the leader, that is, family, role models, early life challenges, educational and work experiences, can be regarded as key trigger events

which shape the individual in that they 'constitute dramatic and sometimes subtle changes in the individual's circumstances that facilitate personal growth and development' (Gardner et al., 2005b, p. 347). It is these *significant events* (e.g. personal struggles; extreme challenges; failures; triumphs; people) and how they made sense of these experiences *that have shaped them as leaders*. These significant events can take many forms and influence how we view and lead change. The loss of one or both parents or adversity associated with family poverty has a formative influence on (1) how change is viewed, (2) the capacity to lead, and (3) how change is managed. Fundamental life goals are formed by these experiences. The key to understanding the relevance and impact of the past is finding answers to two fundamental questions: what is going on here? and, what do I do next? (Weick et al., 2005). Some of these group sensing skills are learned at a very early age in either the family or amongst peer groups of friends. The role of early life challenges and making sense of these events can be explained as follows:

Awareness of challenge

'My own upbringing got a rude shock when I went into the Military. There, I learnt to do what I was told, to start off with, but about two-thirds of the way through it I became aware of my political side and I became aware that everything that I'd been fighting for was flawed – deeply flawed, and that's not a great place for a soldier to be. It's not a great place for a leader to be and I was a leader in the National Service, even though it was only a small stick or platoon of troops, it was nevertheless a position of leadership but a position of leadership in a war environment. When you have deep concerns about what the hell you're doing, I just thought this is nonsense, the vision that I'm fighting for is madness, it's never going to work – ever – EVER. So what the hell are we going to do about that? But I'm just one tiny little cog, so what do you do if you don't believe in the strategy of the company? If you don't believe in the strategy of the organization? You've got to get out. But I think that experience and my incredulity at the fact that my parents – who of course until then I had loved unquestioningly – clearly endorsed the wrong that was the white minority regime, was a massive problem for me, personally, at the time. So all of a sudden all of my benchmarks of solidity were shattered. So, my

Sense-making of the situation

Taking action

parents were wrong, I was right but I was on my own and I had to get out and so I came to Europe as a pretty vulnerable, mixed up but very resilient – I mean I had to be, to get through that – young man.'

The experiences of the military leader provide a set of circumstances, that is, his leadership role in a military context and his disillusionment with the purpose and objectives of the war he was involved in. This highlights a process in which Weick et al. (2005) suggested that sense-making starts with noticing and bracketing; that is, inventing new meaning as well as labelling ('everything that I'd been fighting for was flawed'). Making sense of the past also has an action component: *what do I do next?*, that is, choosing and commitment to act, developing the commitment to act. Sense-making therefore involves placing the life experience into a framework, deriving new self-relevant information from social experiences and imposing meaning on the information to inform one's understanding (Roberts, et al., 2005, p. 716). It is through life stories or self-narratives that the leader achieves self-concept clarity. It provides him or her with a meaning system 'from which to feel, think and act' (Shamir and Eilam, 2005, p. 402) and provide answers to questions such as, *how and why have I become a leader?*; making sense of the past and present. Two other processes can be used in the sense-making process: reflection and feedback. *Reflection* can be regarded as the process of analysing, reconsidering and questioning experiences within a broad context of issues (Murray and Kujundzic, 2005). This means we ask ourselves questions around strategic direction and relationships, for example: (1) Are we pursuing the right strategy before we implement it? (2) Do we relate well enough to each other to effectively co-ordinate our actions for goal achievement? An example of reflection is as follows:

Reflection *'So I've spent a lot of time understanding what happened – what's happened in my career that shaped the person that I am and why I do things the way that I do.'*

Reflexive assessment *'Constantly saying "Hang on, are we going in the right direction, let's just reassess, let's revalidate, let's reflect, let's bear in mind what's going on outside ourselves" and let's bring that knowledge back in and inform our behaviour as leaders.'*

It involves challenging our own assumptions; thinking in such a manner that it challenges our beliefs, values and our way of seeing reality in order to assess their impact on our lives. A further process used in synthesis and making sense

of history and trigger events is the use of feedback. Such feedback often has to be elicited to create self-awareness. The following narrative explains how feedback can be used as a sense-making tool:

Use measuring instruments to obtain feedback

'We are rigorous with 360°s and one-to-ones and feedback sessions and we use those as tools to ensure that we have the right dialogue, so I will always have brutal open dialogue with my people about my leadership style, their leadership style, how we're working together, areas where I can improve. And, everyone is flawed – everyone is flawed, we're all making mistakes all the time and so a massive part of the job of being a leader is to be self-aware enough to know when something's not quite right and then to seek guidance and counsel as to what it is that may be wrong behaviourally and then to act on it. But you can't do it without dialogue, you've got to have the tough conversations, the open, honest, mutually respectful conversations with your people because if they're frightened of you or if they think you're an idiot, you're not going to get those conversations but if you've got the balance right, if they do get inspired by you – in fact, if they get inspired by you, and then that very same person is asking them for advice that's doubly inspirational because you think 'Wow! Somebody who I'm inspired by is actually asking me for help and advice.' So it actually works – it's a double whammy if you like. So we identify – or I identify – my development needs through a mix of using tools like the 360° but overwhelmingly more importantly, through dialogue, through deep-rooted, open, honest, transparent dialogue. That's how you find out how you're doing.'

Engage in dialogue about your strengths and weaknesses

Be open and honest in receiving feedback

Do not be defensive

Getting *feedback*, as many of the CEOs interviewed have done, is an important mechanism that can be used in the sense-making process as it assists in understanding your own strengths and possible areas for improvement as well as identifying actions. The story about 360 also emphasizes the use of helping relationships, that is, being open and trusting about problems, and sharing them with subordinates. This also highlights the fact that sense-making does not take place in isolation but various social factors, for example dialogue and communication, assist in the sense-making process. What is important is that the leader

must not deny or distort or ignore feedback but uses the feedback to understand the relevance and importance of events. Leaders who do not encourage and support feedback during the change process weaken their positions considerably. Mechanisms to elicit feedback include asking employees how the change is going using ‘barometer surveys’ to gauge reactions; observation, and establishing ‘ginger groups’. A *ginger group* is a representative cross-sectional group of employees who provide feedback on the plan itself, its communication and its implementation. This may allow groups who are not part of the executive team to input in important ways and it is a way to respect the minority voice in the organization.

The quotations that follow highlight specific trigger events and express the story-tellers’ identities, ‘which are products of the relationship between life-stories and the organized stories of these experiences’ (Shamir and Eilam, 2005, p. 402). Gardner et al. (2005a) suggest that trigger events serve as positive forces in developing leader self-awareness. It seems that it is predominantly significant life events (in contrast with routine life experiences) that trigger changes in the self-knowledge structures of leaders. Roberts, et al. (2005) suggest in this regard that revisions in self-knowledge structures occur when ‘individuals undergo an “aha” experience or jolt – a discrepant or surprising event that causes people to pause and reflect on their experience’ (p. 716). It is not only the positive experiences that we can learn from but also from our negative life experiences or life events. These ‘crucibles’ of leadership, a transformative experience which forces you to examine your values, question assumptions and your purpose (Bennis and Thomas, 2002), and your ability to overcome adversity, distinguishes good from extraordinary leaders. A crucible refers to the vessel in which alchemists, during medieval times, attempted to turn base metals into gold. In other words, a crucible is a transformational experience which toughens and changes people and gives them a new sense of identity, motivation and purpose. A crucible is not the same as a life stage or transition, like moving from adolescence to adulthood, but is more like a test that corners individuals and forces them to answer questions about who they are and what is really important to them. It can be explained as follows:

Example of a crucible

I’m one of seven children and my parents were divorced when I was 11. Both of my parents were alcoholics, my mother from the age of seven was prescription drug dependent and she was drug dependent until she died. She had two nervous breakdowns after my father left and she was in and out of mental hospitals. My – I’m the third in the seven – my two elder sisters left home as soon as they possibly could, they both left at the age of 16.

Sense-making of the situation

Assuming responsibility in the family

At the age of 14, I was the mother to my four younger sisters and brothers because my mother just wasn't capable of looking after us. We lived on benefits and we – I cannot remember my teenage years being anything other than daily struggle. That's not an exaggeration, some days you got home from school and there was nothing to eat and you had to try and pacify four younger children who weren't going to get any tea before they went to bed. So that's what it was like and what that did – well there was a number of things that did for me – I am hugely independent and one of the things that I've had to deal with whilst being in this role is making sure I have a coach and a mentor myself. I needed a support structure because I couldn't do what I needed to do without it, but I very, very rarely asked for help. In fact I never asked for help before I came into this job because I'm hugely independent because I had to make sure that my brothers and sisters were OK, they were all looking to me to make sure they were OK. So I couldn't fall apart because I had a mother that was falling apart and I had a father that wasn't there so I was 'it.' So that sort of shapes your – well, definitely shaped my approach to life and change. The other thing it did was drive me to ensure that I was never ever, ever in that situation again.'

Learning to make decisions without support structures**Resolving never to be in such a situation again . . . ever**

Understanding or making sense of your history and meaningful moments of your life is a key building block on the journey of becoming an authentic leader. The following exercise will assist you in this regard:

Constructing your life story

The first step in becoming authentic is by constructing and understanding your life story. Life stories provide you with a meaning system from which you can act authentically, i.e. interpret reality and act in a way that gives your interpretations and actions personal meaning (Kegan, 1983, p. 220).

Think of your life as it were a novel. Divide your life novel into the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Early childhood (6–12 years)

Chapter 2: Adolescence (13–18 years)

Chapter 3: Young adulthood (19–35)

Chapter 4: Middle adulthood (36–55)

Chapter 5: Late adulthood (56+)

For each chapter identify and describe critical events in your life – incidences/challenges/key turning points in your life; disappointments; ‘crucibles’. Also describe the feelings you experienced, the people involved or who impacted on your life. (The analysis of your life story will take place in a later exercise.)

Being self-aware

Self-awareness refers to the extent the leader understands his/her own strengths, weaknesses, motives, how they are perceived by their followers and know what is important to them. Self-awareness refers to the extent to which the leader is aware of various aspects of the self and ‘to which their self-perceptions are internally integrated and congruent with the ways others perceive them’ (Klenke, 2007, p. 78). Sense-making can be regarded as the precursor to achieve self-awareness and it is through the use of different sense making processes that the leader gains insight and understanding of his/her values, identity, and emotions (Kernis, 2003). Avolio and Gardner (2005) as well as Walumbwa et al. (2008) argue in this regard that the starting point of authentic leadership is self-awareness which implies that a leader knows what he or she regards as important (May et al., 2003). Learning from the past can be explained as follows:

Self-awareness move beyond surface level thinking

‘And I think it taught me resilience. So frankly, after the horror of the war that I fought in, like any war, business issues are a walk in the park. I mean you know, stuff that goes wrong is just easy in comparison, you know, it’s not life and death and people take themselves far too seriously in business I always find. And I think that’s been a rock for me to depend on, that history.’

Self-awareness is making sense of events and interpreting your circumstances

‘I learnt that I shouldn’t be ashamed or embarrassed about the things that I’m good at and I also shouldn’t stress too much over the things that I’m not very good at. Perfection is one of my weaknesses and I continually strive for the perfect solution to

everything and actually you know, if it's 80% good enough, it's good enough but I beat myself up – I go home – and I say this to my team now – I go home some days and I stand in front of the bathroom mirror and I say “that was crap, you did a crap job today, you did this and you said this and that was completely and utterly the wrong thing to do, you stupid woman.” And I do that, I am my biggest critic of myself and what that tends to do is, it overshadows the things that I'm damn good at and what I think I've learnt in previous roles.'

Self-awareness is obtained through self-observation and reflection

'You've got to have that belief in yourself, I mean I'm right but you know, at my age, I don't have to worry whether I'm right or whether I'm wrong because I'm quite contented with my life, I've been through all the problems, I've been through more nonsense than 99.9% of people that would've – survived, built an empire, nearly lost it, lost a fortune, hanging over the side of the cliff with my fingernails and fighting back and building another empire.'

Self-awareness can be regarded not as an end in itself but a continuous process where the leader develops self-knowledge through understanding the meaning of their life-stories. Shamir and Eilam (2005, p. 402) state in this regard 'this creates self-concept clarity because it organises life-events into gestalt structures that establishes connections between those events so that the person's life is experienced as a coherent unfolding process'. Self-awareness helps a leader to understand his/her unique capabilities, knowledge and experiences and is achieved through self-reflection and feedback. It is through self-awareness that a leader understands their own biases, mental models and the impact these may have on their ability to lead change effectively.

Understanding your values

Values are learned through socialization processes, are formed by life experiences, are internalized and then become key components of the self (Gardner et al., 2005a). The importance of values is highlighted by authors such as Allport (1955) and Swartz (1994) and it is argued that values 'direct behaviour, serve as standards and once internalised, become an integral part of the self' (Gardner et al., 2005, p. 350b). A key dimension of authentic leadership is a clear

understanding of one's values, and is regarded as a prerequisite for authenticity and authentic leadership (George, 2003). This can be explained as follows:

There needs to be congruence between organizational and individual level values

'Well we have our values at Organization X and of course when I was being selected to come as a Chief Executive of Organization X from outside the business, one of the most important things was to ensure that my own values were very aligned to "Organization X" values because if there was a misalignment there I think it would cause real problems; to have a Chief Exec whose values were different from the values of the company. If you go through the Organization X values, it's about being enthusiastic and supportive in everything that we do – well that's very much how I think I am as an individual, it is very much about treating everyone with consideration and respect which are very much the values I was taught probably as a child by my parents. That what was expected of me as an individual and of everyone in society; that you should treat people with consideration and respect no matter who they were. And then the last one I suppose is about being open and honest and that is very much me, sometimes I would say possibly to a fault, I'll always be open and honest and – except that sometimes it doesn't make it an easy path for you to follow if you're being open and honest when you're being asked your views about things or when you need to give your view about things. So those values that I've just described are what would be written down that you would see written down for Organization X and I think they're very much the values that I would have. I suppose I'm very much someone who – the values that I was taught to stick up for the underdog, to stick up for those who can't really fend for themselves. I come very much from a working class background where, you know, times were tough when I was growing up, there wasn't a lot of money around and therefore I think you were taught the value of anything from clothing to treats to food on the table that, you know, you mustn't really take too much for granted in life because you never know when you're

Demonstrate your values through behaviours

Early life-experiences, parents, role models play an important role in value formation

personally not going to have much. So I think they're quite deep rooted ingrained values around respecting others, appreciating what you have and trying to do as much as you can to help those who are in a less fortunate position than you.'

Values develop through social interactions with role models for example parents, are learned and may result from personal introspection and reflection. The core characteristic of authenticity can be regarded as 'to know, accept, and remain true to oneself' (Avolio et al., 2004, p. 402) or as Shakespeare puts it 'This above all: to thine own self be true, And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man'. Authentic leaders are not only aware of their personal values (Avolio et al., 2004) but act accordingly (Ilies, et al., 2005). Values guide behaviour and the following serve as examples in this regard:

Understanding your own values takes a conscious effort on your part

'So I understand now what my values are and why they are that, why they are as strong as they are, because I've gone through this period of understanding of why I do things and why I think in certain ways and why I believe in certain things and not others. I wouldn't have had that understanding if I hadn't invested the time in understanding myself.'

Act according to your own values system – irrespective of the circumstances

'I'm a very straightforward honest person; what you see is that you get. That appeals to some people; it's not quite the English psyche because English people are very good sometimes at putting a smile on their face and not telling you what they really think. I tell you exactly what I think, if I don't like it, I'll tell you. I believe in what I believe in, I don't affiliate myself politically with different parties, I'm happy to work with all good politicians, whether they're left, right or centre, providing they're good people and sincere and what I think they're doing is good for the country and that's where I sit. So different leaders of different political parties ask my opinion on things from time to time – am I flattered about it? I'm one of the few people who'll give them a straight answer and if they don't want my opinion, don't ask me, it's quite simple but you know, I'm not here to be a sycophant, I'm not looking, either, to make too many new friends in my life.'

Authentic leaders are specific and clear about their personal values, understand how their values influence their behaviour and live their life according to these understood values (Ilies, et al., 2005). Not only is it important for the leader to act according to his/her own values and be authentic in their interaction with others, but the leader should also be resistant to social or situational pressures and not compromise those values. The following exercise will help you to identify and articulate your values:

My core values . . .

What are your values?

What in life is most important to me?

From the things you liked, can you identify any core principles or values?

What are your Top 5 values and when did they become important to you?

How do your values influence your behaviour?

(Examples of values: dependable; reliable; loyal; committed; open-minded consistent; honest; efficient; innovative; creative; humorous; motivated; positive; optimistic; inspiring; passionate; respectful.)

It is relatively easy to live according to your values when things are going well. The test, however, is the ability to act according to your values when you are under pressure. Martin Luther King summarized this succinctly by stating: ‘the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.’ A core set of values enable you to develop leadership principles, that is, values translated into action. Principles are guidelines and act as a compass to help us determine how to act in certain circumstances. Authentic leadership theory proposes that the authentic leader’s values guide his/her behaviour, possesses self-knowledge which reflects clarity about their personal values and convictions and are able to resist social pressure (Shamir and Eilam, 2005). Look at the following example:

Have a clear understanding of what your values are

‘I think the first thing is to be aware when a decision is actually really starting to test your values. It’s when – I think there’s almost a gut instinct that maybe something you are being tempted to make a decision on is not really in keeping with what you’ve previously said about your values and what you stand for and what the company stands for. So it’s almost – I don’t know, I think again if you can listen

Do not be afraid to articulate your values

to the signals that you tend to produce as a human being, that this doesn't quite feel right, probably that's when you're starting to get into uncomfortable territory. I find that it's helpful to almost voice that and let people know that that's the dilemma that you're facing, to openly say this is a difficult decision because it's really challenging my values, the values of the business and I want to remain true to the values but I'm finding the decision quite difficult for these reasons. And I think almost by airing it, you can start to get other people to engage in the same dilemma and debate and almost become more supportive, to help find a solution that still allows you to make the decision that needs to be made but not lose your values. And I think sometimes it's about courage, to say that you're being true to your values and if those values are going to mean anything, if they're really going to be worth anything, then you will be judged on that, not by what you say but by what you do and to remind yourself that that's how people will judge you as a leader. Everyone can say fine words about their values but people judge whether you're true to those values or not by what you're then seen to do. So I think there's a need for consideration, thought, engagement of other people into the debate, potentially that dilemma that you're facing and then lots of communication afterwards to explain to people that this was the decision-making process that you went through, but to remain true to your values this is the decision that you've taken and to say to people in line with my values this is the decision that I've taken.'

Use dialogue to gain situational clarity**Walk-the-talk**

Having a clear understanding of what your values are, knowing how your values influence your behaviour and a willingness to stick to your values are key components of becoming authentic. This also implies a willingness to take personal risks, articulating your values in hostile situations and environments.

Understanding and accepting who you are

Leader identity can be viewed as the knowledge a person has about him or herself and assists in organizing and give meaning to behaviour. Day and Sin

(2011) argue that identity integrates various elements of the self-concept and ‘it helps to ground individuals in terms of who they are, what their major goals and aspirations are and what their personal strengths and challenges are’. A clear understanding of who am I?; that is, having self-concept clarity, may also lead to the experience of feelings of self-liking and self-acceptance (Kernis, 2003) as well as a positive perception of their ability to perform across a range of situations (Judge et al., 1998). Authentic leaders are not only clear on who they are but accept themselves with their strengths and weaknesses. Kernis (2003, p. 3) argues in this regard that these individuals ‘are people who like, value and accept themselves, imperfections and all’. Look at the following examples:

Understand what is important to you

‘There are things that – actually there are things that I used to do that I have stopped doing; I used to apologize a lot for being regularly two or three minutes late which I wish I didn’t do but I used to devote hours apologizing about it and I used to devote similar numbers of hours apologizing for being quite a chaotic person in relation to paper – hopeless! Hopeless with paper – my desk is covered in bits of paper and I cannot – I’ve never been very good at filing things because I think they all have a completely separate identity, I don’t want to put them together because they don’t really quite belong together. And I used to waste a lot of time feeling I was failing by not having a tidy desk and therefore demonstrating a tidy mind or whatever I thought I was doing and I would apologise for that and I’ve stopped it, and I stopped after the leadership programme. I think which was yes one thing that really dropped in for me which was yes, I can try harder to be a better completer/finisher, a better filing clerk, be on time and I do and I will continue to and it works sometimes but it’s important that I’m me and I am better at starting things and I am being creative when I’m juggling 18 different bits of paper and I need to put structures in place that support that.’

You do not always need to live up to expectations of others

Accept yourself with your strengths and weaknesses

Believe in yourself and your own abilities

‘... so I’ve stopped worrying about that, I’ve got more confidence in myself that I know enough about what to do and how to get the best out of people and how to motivate people to think that I can make a

Make peace with your inner self

reasonable fist at most things. But it's only when you're really your own man can you really be yourself because the moment you're having to please other people and think am I going to get the promotion, am I now going to be able to move from this company to that company so I'm not going to piss anybody off along the way because I want them to recommend me, think I'm a nice person – no different than in your activity in a university, you don't want to go around being right but being confrontational by saying well that's not right and this and that . . . they'll say well he's a difficult bloke we don't want to – people used to think I was difficult – not difficult – people used to think I was very aggressive when I was younger – I was, so what! But you know, you are what you are! And I am what I am!

Leaders who are able to make sense of their history and trigger events are also able to achieve high levels of self-awareness (i.e. understanding their values and motives) and these formed key building blocks in the formation of the leader identity. It is therefore the ability to learn and find meaning, not only from positive events but also from negative life events that shape us, inspire us and teach us to lead (Bennis and Thomas, 2002). Leaders who have a clear sense of their self may strive for open and truthful relationships with others (Spitzmuller and Ilies, 2010) and are willing to reveal personal information about themselves (Avolio and Gardner, 2005). This also means the leader accepts his/her strengths and weaknesses and is open and willing to share information. Regarding openness in interpersonal relationships, some leaders emphasized the following:

Be human – humans are allowed to make mistakes, feeling uncertain and inadequate

'Be prepared to self-disclose, be prepared to talk to people about your strengths, but absolutely in equal measure be very prepared to talk to people about your limitations and where you need their help because the more that you do that, as a leader, the more they will identify with you as a human being and the more they'll be likely to help you when they realize you're in trouble because you're in an area you know nothing about or that you're weak at.'

You do not need to have answers to all problems

Do not be afraid to ask for help

'I said because I have to ensure that I'm not frightened to ask for help and I'm not fearful of saying

“actually I don’t know”, or “could you support me in this, this and this?”

The willingness of leaders to communicate personal learning and insights about themselves are very important, as these make followers aware of the leader’s core values and beliefs. Many managers feel uncomfortable sharing personal emotions with others in the workplace. Traditionally it was frowned upon to express and demonstrate emotions in the workplace. An important component of organizational change is how employees experience change, that is, it is about feelings and emotions. The starting point in helping employees dealing with their emotions and feelings is the ability to understand and manage our own emotions. Making sense of your life story will help you to understand how your life events have shaped you as a leader and provide a better understanding of your behaviour in your interaction with others.

Making sense of your life story

Reflecting on the chapters of your life novel, answer the following questions:

What life themes/messages can you extract from the different chapters?

What are the five most important things you have learned about your life; how did you overcome the crucibles or transformative experiences in your life?

How did it shape you as the person who you are?

What are your values and how did your life experience help you to develop these values?

How did your life experiences shape you as a leader or putting it differently, how have your experiences inspired you, shaped you and taught you to lead?

What drives you?

To what extent was it possible for you to act according to your own values and be authentic in your interaction with others?

Do you need to do certain things differently? If so, what are they and how are you going to do it?

Strategies for becoming more authentic

Despite all the information available to improve leadership, for example self-help guides, books on self-improvement and so on, no quick fixes or recipes exist. Becoming more authentic is about a choice that you make – you need to

choose to be you! The following narrative explains this 'personal choice' in more detail:

Making a choice to become authentic is the first step on the authentic journey

You have the power to make the choice

Are you willing to take personal risk?

How will you know if you act in an authentic manner?

'You know, you have to make a positive choice. No one else can do it except them, in other words, there's no rule book to follow, because everyone, by definition, is different, they are who they are. So it's about choice – you have to choose. I choose to be me and I'm fine with it. It's a bit like saying "I'm an alcoholic", and coming out with it at an AA meeting. You have to choose to be you. I'm OK with being me, me is fine, me is great, me is also not great in certain areas but I'm happy to talk about it. But it's a positive choice and I can encourage people to do that but ultimately it is their choice and if they choose not to, then, that's their choice, fine. But every single one of us has that choice and we have the power to choose to be ourselves. The great thing about being yourself of course is that you can't actually be dishonest then, it's marvellously secure, it's a bit like always telling the truth, it's a great place to be because you can never make a mistake, whereas if your leadership style is full of falsehoods and manipulations and misrepresentations, then I mean you're dead, because you just can't possibly remember by the time you get to my age what you said when to whom. I mean it's just hopeless. So it's just easier, just tell the truth, just be who you are, it's the easiest thing in the world then, you can't go wrong and people recognise that and people follow you more, people will be more loyal and they'll help you when you're down and they'll applaud you when you're up. So I think everybody – any CEO who's wondering how to be more authentic has got a real problem and whether they are a CEO or not, it should be the question because you just can't be a leader today without being authentic I don't think. It's a disaster. Certainly in our world – we see plenty of inauthentic leaders in other companies and that makes us pleased to be where we are because – I mean I couldn't bear to work for an inauthentic leader, it just wouldn't work for me at all and – it's vital.'

Becoming authentic is a journey you embark on and although there are no recipes, we can learn from authentic leaders in practice. It seems that not only do you have to make choices, that is, becoming more authentic, but you also need to understand and make sense of your life-story. It also involves a willingness to take personal risks and experimenting with behaviour in different contexts. The involvement of significant others, the creation of support structures and a willingness to invest resources in your own development are highlighted as helpful mechanisms in becoming more authentic. It also seems that (1) core values act as a compass that provides guidance in the development process and (2) you need to have confidence and a belief in yourself that you are able to change. Lastly, the importance of creating a work-life balance is emphasized and time for personal reflection is created. The following discussion explains these strategies in more detail:

**Draw your life-line
and make sense of
your life-story**

‘Know themselves, look at – not examine – your history and what makes you the person that you are and you know, I’d never done the life chart before and when I drew it, it was like “Oh my God”, you know, it wasn’t this sort of soft undulating little curve it was this huge peaks and troughs, huge, like icicles, it was weird. And that was a revelation for me, it really was a revelation for me and – but try not to overanalyse it because I think if you do, you can become very introverted and also very risk averse. You don’t want to get to a point where you’re questioning all your decisions and all your actions and thinking “Oh my God,” you know, “does that look authentic or doesn’t it? Does it look like a transactional leader or a transformational leader?” If you get to that point – and believe me, I know some people like that! You’ve lost the plot if you get to that point, so I would just say know yourself and don’t be too hard on yourself because you will make mistakes, you will, and I’ve made loads of them, loads of them, fortunately not many that have been catastrophic! I think if I had to play this over again, if I had to play this out again I’d be much easier on myself, I wouldn’t continually strive for the perfection because the 10% gain that you get with a 90% time investment just isn’t worth it.’

**Becoming authentic
is a journey**

**Be willing to
experiment with
behaviours**

**Have confidence in
your own ability**

‘Have confidence in your ability, celebrate your successes, don’t be too hard on yourself, don’t drive for

Create and make use of support structures

perfection, get support, put at least a coaching provision in place for yourself, especially when you're first new in a Chief Exec job, always have an eye to the future and the long term, put yourself at the bottom of the inverted triangle; you're there to support the rest of the organization and the rest of the organization isn't there to support you. Be humble, be guided by your values because usually they're right, usually people don't make it to a Chief Exec position unless they've got strong values and determination. Invest – invest in your leadership skill and hone it as much as you possibly can. Try to get some work life balance – says she who doesn't have any work-life balance at all! And create space to think, because your day can just get crowded out with stuff and you need space to think, because if you're not thinking, you can be damn sure the rest of the organization isn't either! And they need you to think – if you're the Chief Exec they need you to be thinking things through.'

Use your values as a guiding compass**Invest in your own development****Create work-life balance****Create space for reflection**

Leading Change Authentically

From the previous discussion it should be clear that successful leadership is not about emulating somebody else but leading in a way that is aligned with you as a person. This means your leadership style needs to be consistent with your values and your personality and this should be evident in your behaviours. Making sense of 'who you are' also implies that you need to have a clear sense of purpose and in this regard George (2003, p. 2) highlights the following: '. . . it is essential that you first answer the question, leadership for what purpose? If you lack purpose and direction in leading, why should anyone follow you?' Complete the following exercise:

Leadership for what purpose?

What three or four words would describe you as a leader?
What is your leadership purpose?
What motivates you to lead?
What are you passionate about?

Authentic leaders have a clear understanding of who they are, what their motivations and passions are, lead with purpose and demonstrate behaviours that

are aligned with their values. They understand their strengths and weaknesses, are consistent in their interaction with others and lead with their heads as well as their hearts (George et al., 2007, p. 130). Integrating the different authentic leadership perspectives from authors such as Ilies et al. (2005); Avolio and Gardner (2005); Gardner et al. (2005) and George et al. (2007), we can make the following linkages between authentic leadership and leading organizational change (Table 1).

From Table 1 it should be clear that being authentic in leading change is beneficial as it influences followers in a positive way. Shamir and Eilam (2005) state in this regard that if a leader's behaviour is consistent and aligned with his/her values and beliefs, followers develop trust in the leader. This is possible because the leader provides behavioural cues that followers use to construct and interpret events and this guides their behaviour. Putting it differently, if the change leader establishes alignment between values and actions, he/she will say what they mean and mean what they say. Trustworthiness is therefore inferred by displaying characteristics such as fairness, dependability, integrity and honesty and this can affect work attitudes and behaviours. Authentic change leaders also

Table 1 Linkages between authentic leadership and change

Authentic leadership characteristics	Influence on the change process or change recipients
A high level of self-awareness may lead to an understanding of personal biases and a good understanding of they are perceived by others	The way we implement and lead change is influenced by our own mental models. If we understand how our mental models influence our thoughts and behaviours we can be 'aware' of how our mental models impact on the change process. This is also true for the way we interact with others. Understanding the impact we have on others will enable us to be sensitive to how people act and react in the change process.
Authentic leaders do not distort, exaggerate or ignore information and pay equal attention to positive and negative information The leader is open to feedback and allows for openness and honesty in conversations	Being open to feedback and information sends a signal to change recipients that they can be open and honest in sharing their change experiences, it is allowed to take risks and experiment with new behaviours. It is especially important not to distort information about the change process – be open and willing to share relevant information with change recipients. This does not only relate to the change process but also to feedback the leader may receive about his or her style of leadership. Authentic leaders use personal feedback as a mechanism to improve and develop themselves to become even better leaders.

(Continued)

Table 1 (Continued)

Authentic leadership characteristics	Influence on the change process or change recipients
<p>The leader's motives, goals and values are transparent and evident to followers and is willing to disclose the 'true self' to followers</p> <p>Consistency exists between values and behaviours: for example, authentic leaders will say what they mean and mean what they say</p>	<p>Organizational change leads to uncertainty and followers need leaders who are consistent, trustworthy and leading by example. Being transparent creates trust between the leader and follower, fostering teamwork and cooperation. A key component of any change process is the creation of high levels of trust between change agents and change recipients. Articulating your values, goals and motives provides certainty – a much needed quality in any change process.</p>
<p>Authentic leaders are willing to share emotions and understand the role of emotions in other people</p>	<p>Change recipients experience different types of emotions during the change process. Before you are able to address their emotions, you need to understand and make sense of your own emotions. You need to reflect on questions such as 'why am I feeling this way'; what influenced my emotions'; how am I going to deal with it'. Putting it differently, you need to be able to recognize and understand your own emotions and their impact on others. It also means you need to be perceptive of the emotions of the change recipients. If you really understand how they feel, you will be able to assist them in managing their own emotions more effectively.</p>
<p>Authentic leaders have confidence, hope, self-efficacy and resilience and have an optimistic view of the future</p>	<p>In any change process, change recipients do not only need leaders they can trust, but also leaders who are able to show them the way forward. Being optimistic and hopeful about the change process creates energy and impetus for the change. Change is tough and if you are the change agent, you need to instil confidence in your followers that you are competent and the 'right' person to lead the change. You also need to demonstrate resilience – remember the proverb <i>when the going gets tough, the tough get going</i>, or putting it differently, when a situation becomes difficult, the strong will work harder to meet this challenge.</p>
<p>They are able to build long-term relationships with followers</p>	<p>Having personal integrity will enable you to build lasting relationships with your followers. Encouraging communication and dialogue, leading with purpose will enable you to forge relationships build on mutual understanding and values. They build strong relationships between individuals and teams and this leads to positive social exchanges.</p>
<p>A high emphasis is placed on the development of employees</p>	<p>Not only act the authentic leader as a role model for change recipients, but also places a high emphasis on developing authentic characteristics in followers. Furthermore, creating development opportunities for change recipients will support capacity and skills building that may be needed in the change process.</p>

exhibit patterns of openness and clarity in their behaviour toward others by (1) sharing information needed to make decisions, (2) accept others' input and provide constructive feedback to their followers. As a result, followers develop higher levels of psychological capital. This means followers (1) have more confidence in their own abilities (self-efficacy) and invest effort to be successful to succeed in demanding tasks; (2) have positive expectations (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevere toward goal attainment and when needed, redirecting paths to goals in order to succeed (hope) and (4) when experiencing problems and set-backs, bounce back (resilience) to achieve success (Luthans, et al., 2007, p. 3). The starting point to becoming better at leading change is to develop and express authenticity. This means that you need to constantly reflect, make sense of your experiences and use your insights to increase your authenticity in leadership.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter we explored the processes used in authentic leadership development and emphasized the importance of being authentic in leading change. We highlight the importance of *synthesis* and *sense-making* (through the use of specific processes) as key mechanisms in understanding key life changing events. This sense-making ability leads to a heightened sense of self-awareness and self-insight, and provides not only a platform for value creation and motive development, but also for a construction of the self, that is, the forming of a change leader identity. This provides a platform for change leaders to be more open in interpersonal relationships, to be authentic, show compassion and demonstrate self-transcendent behaviours. These are key resources in leading and managing change. As indicated, individuals use different processes in making sense of history and trigger events. Self-awareness and self-concept clarity are functions of the ability of the leader to make sense of the past and present. Shamir and Eilam (2005) argue that leaders' life stories should be regarded as 'repositories of meaning' and should be analysed from a variety of perspectives. They argue that life stories should also be compared to others (e.g. family members, followers, and ordinary people) to determine if leaders' life stories are selectively constructed by the leaders. This means that you should develop mechanisms that assist you in distinguishing between authentic and inauthentic life stories. The life-story approach should focus on revisiting your life events and the development of self-knowledge and interpretation, that is, sense-making. Remember, becoming authentic is a highly individualized process and you can seek help in making sense of the past. Talking to somebody that you trust, or making use of mentoring and coaching serve as examples in this regard.

KEY INSIGHTS FROM PRACTICE

Understand your purpose.

Be true to yourself.

Live your values.

Accept yourself with your strengths and weaknesses.

Walk-the-talk – actions are based on values and convictions.

Authentic change leaders are originals – not copies.

Use open, honest, direct communication.

Seek feedback from and advice from colleagues and subordinates on your development journey.

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