LEADERSHIP 2.0: AUTHENTIC TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND THE COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEADING IN ORGANIZATIONS

Building on the theoretical foundation of authentic transformational leadership (ATL), this paper integrates recent contributions into a simplified model and examines the impact of ATL on individual, group and organizational performance and thriving. It looks at the cross-level implications and collective responsibility for leadership. Finally, it highlights proven development approaches.

“Be the change you wish to see in the world.” - Mahatma Gandhi

Introduction

Barack Obama was recently elected to be the next president of the United States, bringing with him the message of change and possibility. Obama won the election by strategically balancing a carefully crafted leadership message from the top with a grass-roots movement. In keeping with the rapidly evolving technological landscape, Obama leveraged the power of Web 2.0 with his active use of text messaging, email and micro donations to leverage the ‘power of the people.’ He rallied more young voters than in any election in history with his message of hope for the future and his emotional, values-based approach. He and his wife Michelle Obama drew strength from their authenticity and in so doing connected to the hearts of not only the majority of Americans, but of people throughout the world.

Obama’s use of a strategic integration of crafted leadership messages and collective contributions of the masses is representative of the shift that is happening throughout society. The evolution towards “harnessing collective intelligence” (O'Reilly, 2005) is spreading and integrating into organizational contexts as well. With the advent of blogs, Twitter, Facebook and all the other social networking tools, a new landscape is emerging and forcing organizations to rethink how they run their businesses. The days of carefully crafting a clever television commercial that will persuade customers to purchase the products and services that a company is peddling are long gone. Corporate communication strategies are constantly changing with every blog post that emerges, whether from employees, customers, competitors or anyone else that feels like commenting. Organizations must be in constant dialogue with stakeholders groups, often listening more than they are speaking. This is leading to an iterative, dynamic leadership model in which every individual is responsible for contributing to the collective leadership of the organization. This could be called “Leadership 2.0.”

The evolution of social networking on the Internet, with Web 2.0, is a parallel example of authentic transformational leadership at its best. Individuals in the organization are leading from the perspective of organizational purpose, values and goals, and their own purpose, values and visions. It is the integration of corporate and collective authenticity that drives collective leadership and, ultimately, extraordinary results. Gardner, et. al., describe this as they propose that “authentic leaders will seek to develop followers...by modeling self-discovery processes, shifting them away from personal
identification with and dependence on the leader to identification with the collective and autonomy, and ultimately, internalization of the core values and mission of the collective” (2005: 361).

Every individual has the potential to be a leader. As organizations work to build the leadership pipeline, those firms that are able to access that potential are the ones that will truly go, as Jim Collins said, from “good to great” (Collins, 2001). It is up to each person within an organization to decide if they are willing to do the deep personal work required to become a leader. It is up to each organization to provide the context in which leaders can flourish. It is not the leader’s responsibility nor is it the follower’s responsibility to transform an organization. It is everyone’s responsibility - the collective responsibility. It is not simply about “doing” what needs to be done but as Gandhi so eloquently said, it is about “being” the change. True transformational change happens at the point of integration between individual and corporate purpose, between individual and corporate visions and between individual and corporate values. The greater the fit between these pieces, the greater the transformation is for individuals and organizations alike. As each entity authentically pursues its purpose, vision and values (assuming they are aligned), the collective outcomes become increasingly positive.

This paper attempts to simplify the existing literature on ATL into a comprehensive model that links ATL to certain states of being and ultimately to outcomes of performance and thriving. It bridges the gap between the solid foundation of authentic transformational leadership (ATL) research and the practical applications of the findings by suggesting possible approaches to developing leaders of tomorrow. The paper considers the cross-level implications and proposes a model of integration where leadership is occurring across levels, simultaneously. It builds on the theoretical foundation of ATL and finds the commonalities between recent approaches, then links it to some proven leadership development approaches. Finally, it outlines some limitations and areas for future research.

**Authentic Transformational Leadership**

“Setting an example is not the main means of influencing another; it is the only means.” - Albert Einstein

The construct of authentic transformational leadership is a term that was popularized by Bass and Steidlmeier (1999). Their model of authentic transformational leadership is comprised of four components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. They differentiate authentic from pseudo-transformational leadership by “the values for which they are idealized…the authentic leader calls for universal brotherhood; the pseudo-transformational leader highlights fictitious ‘we-they’ differences in values” (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999: 187). They further differentiate transformational leaders in saying, “true transformational leaders are concerned about developing their followers into leaders” (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999: 189). Inherent in ATL is “a commitment to growth and development, wherein they seek to continually promote and even restore these positive states in themselves and others” (Gardner and Schermerhorn, 2004: 272).

Transformational leadership has been well studied and documented (for an exemplar contribution see Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999). More recently, in the realm of positive organizational scholarship (Cameron, Dutton et al., 2003), the construct of authentic leadership has been gaining momentum in the literature as a separate construct from the transformational leadership literature. In the following section I will spend some time defining and summarizing the recent contributions to the construct of authentic leadership.
Authentic Leadership Components

“I believe that leadership begins and ends with authenticity. It’s being yourself; being the person you were created to be.”  Bill George, 2002

Authentic leadership has been a recent contribution through the work of Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS) and can best be described in the statement “to thine own self be true,” (Luthans and Avolio, 2003: 242). Authentic leadership is said to be a root construct to transformational leadership. One can be an authentic leader without being transformational. However, with authentic transformational leadership, one is true to one’s self, or authentic and attempts to transform followers into leaders themselves. ATL is the integration of authentic leadership and transformational leadership and is the most effective way to lead, according to the recent literature (Erickson, 1995; Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999; George, 2003; Avolio, Gardner et al., 2004; Aviolo and Gardener, 2005). The construct of authentic leadership is relatively new and is evolving with every contribution; however, there are some strong commonalities within the main body of work that has been published to date. The following model attempts to simplify and summarize those similarities and present the current understanding of authentic leadership in such a way that examines the role of integration of purpose, vision and values between individuals (leaders and followers) and across levels. See Figure 1:

Figure 1

The Win/Win Integration/Fitness Model of Authentic Transformational Leadership

![Authentic Leadership Components Diagram]
Authentic Leadership is a construct that is still evolving and there is not yet a single, unanimously agreed upon model. The model that I have proposed integrates components of many of the leading theoretical contributions. The primary commonality among all the literature is that authentic leaders are true to themselves and come from a place of service. In the following sections I will briefly outline the three core components of ATL: Purpose, Vision and Values.

Purpose

“He who has a why to live can bear with almost any how.” - Nietzsche

Authentic leaders are driven by a desire to serve, a commitment to a greater purpose and put the needs and development of others before themselves (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999; George, 2003; Luthans and Avolio, 2003). This provides a sense of meaningfulness in leaders and followers alike. Meaningfulness is a key component of authentic leadership. For example, Ilies, et. al. say that “authenticity…has substantial implications for the meaningfulness of employees’ lives, especially in the process of leadership” (2005: 374).

The study of meaning began long ago and was popularized in Viktor Frankl’s bestselling and profoundly important book, Man’s Search for Meaning. In it, he introduces his theory of Logotherapy, which he developed while he was a prisoner in a Nazi concentration camp. He describes logotherapy as being about “the meaning of human existence as well as on man’s search for such a meaning. According to logotherapy, this striving to find a meaning in one’s life is the primary motivational force in man” (Frankl, 1984: 104).

Since Frankl’s initial contribution in the 1950s, much has been written about meaning. A brief summary of the construct includes the evolution from job design research in the 1970s (Hackman and Oldham, 1975, 1976). Carl Weick made a major contribution with his work on sensemaking (Weick, 1995). Meaning making has been approached from the individual, or “grass roots” perspective, as with Wrzesniewski et. al.’s focus on the topic of “Jobs, Careers and Callings” (Wrzesniewski et. al., 1997), followed by a contribution through the construct of “job crafting” (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001). More recently, the construct of meaningfulness has contributed to the study of positive organizational scholarship (POS) and individuals creating their own sense of meaning (e.g. Wrzesniewski, 2003).

The construct of meaning has also been explored from the leader perspective, with a focus on the role of leaders in creating a sense of meaning. For example, Smircich and Morgan proposed that leaders are defined by how they “structure experience in meaningful ways” (1982: 258). In their recent contribution to POS, Pratt and Ashforth (2003) propose that organizations can enhance a sense of meaningfulness by fostering meaningfulness in working, fostering meaningfulness at work and fostering transcendence.

Of the three core components of ATL, articulating a sense of purpose, which leads to a sense of meaningfulness, came up most often in the literature.

Vision

In addition, authentic transformational leadership is connected to aligned visions which drive shared goals between individual and leaders, individuals and the group and individuals and the organization (Gardner, W., B. Avolio, et al., 2005). Authentic transformational leaders have a clear vision of what they would like to create in the future and set stretch goals to achieve that vision. They lead by example in setting their own challenging goals but also, through intellectual stimulation, raise the bar for their followers (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999). George (2003) also cites aligning work and life goals as a key component of authentic leadership.
Values

Authentic transformational leaders are guided by a strong sense of values and act according to those values (Luthans and Avolio, 2003; Avolio, Gardner et al., 2004; Gardner and Schermerhorn, 2004). As (Luthans and Avolio, 2003) say, “building and aligning the positive collective identification with an organization’s mission and values is one of the most important responsibilities of authentic leadership” (p. 248). Based on Rokeach (1973) and Swartz’s (1992) foundational work on values, Michie and Gooty (2005) propose that authentic leaders “will have both self-enhancement and self-transcendent values, but will give higher priority to self-transcendent values” (p. 445). The idealized influence component of Bass and Steidlmeier’s (1999) transformational leadership model also speaks of leading by example, or leading from values. A great deal of work has also been done on values, but for the sake of this paper, suffice it to say that authentic transformational leaders have a clear set of values and act according to those values.

The “Being and Doing” of Authentic Transformational Leadership

The ATL model presented above focuses on three key components of ATL: Purpose, Values and Vision. One way to conceptualize these three factors is to think of them as the “being” and the “doing” of authentic leadership. Having a clear sense of purpose, knowing the answer to the question “why are we doing this?” creates a state of meaningfulness. Clearly articulating values also leads to a sense of clarity about what one stands for and sets the boundaries for how to behave. Values answer the question “How do I do ‘it?’ These can be conceptualized as the “being” drivers of ATL. In summary, authentic leaders “lead with purpose, meaning and values” (George, 2003: 12).

A clearly articulated vision leads to specific goals and drives the action part of leadership. Goals set to achieve a vision answer the question “What am I doing?” This is the action part of leading. Authentic leadership occurs when individuals are self-aware of their purpose and values and act according to those. As they evolve as leaders, they undergo an ongoing process of generating awareness, then behaves according to that self-awareness. The transformational leadership model also implies a tension between “being” and “doing” as the leader is said to lead by example, but also behave in such a way to challenge followers to become leaders themselves (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999). They are being leaders in living true to their purpose and values. They are doing what transformational leaders do by challenging their followers, setting stretch goals and expecting their followers to play a leadership role. This tension between action and learning was best described by Whitworth, et. al. who described “deepening the learning” while “forwarding the action (1998: 5-6).”

States of Being

Now that I have outlined the three core components to authentic leadership, I would like to briefly discuss the “States of being” from the model. It is outside the scope of this paper to cover all of the states of being that have been linked to authentic transformational leadership. At the individual level, ATL is more likely to lead to a sense of identification with the purpose of the organization (Avolio, Gardner et al., 2004) giving a sense of meaningfulness, which leads to engagement and positive emotional states (Gardner and Schermerhorn, 2004). ATL has also been linked to higher levels of job satisfaction (Wrzesniewski, 2003), confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience (Gardner and Schermerhorn, 2004). Transformational leadership leads to a greater sense of empowerment which could lead to greater commitment by clearly articulating an inspiring vision and clear goals (Avolio, Zhu et al., 2004). Having a sense of meaning fulness drives many positive outcomes, including confidence (Bennis and Thomas, 2002a) engagement (Avolio, et. al., 2004), job and life satisfaction (Wrzesniewski et. al., 1997) and performance (Wrzesniewski, 2003).
Optimism. In reviewing the states of being that are caused by authentic transformational leadership, there is one state/trait that consistently appears: optimism. The simplest definition of optimism is: “Optimists are people who expect good things to happen to them” (Carver, C. and M. Scheier, 2002: 231). Optimism has also been defined as “a cognitive process involving positive outcome expectancies and causal attributions that are external, temporary, and specific in interpreting bad or negative events and internal, stable, and global for good or positive events (Seligman and Nathan, 1998, as cited in Avolio, Gardner et al., 2004: 813). In the discussion about optimism, it is alternatively seen as an antecedent to (Luthans and Avolio, 2003), outcome of (Luthans and Avolio, 2003) and state within authentic leadership development (Bennis and Thomas, 2002). Regardless of where each author has placed optimism, there is little question that it is a key ingredient to the understanding of ATL. Of great relevance to the current paper is the assertion that optimism can be developed in others.

Research shows that optimism is linked to authentic leadership and, according to Gardner and Schermerhorn, the “task of the authentic leader is to raise optimism” (2004: 275). Optimism is said to cause better resistance to depression, improved work performance (increasingly so with challenging jobs), better physical health (Seligman, 2002), harder work, greater satisfaction, higher morale, higher levels of motivational aspiration and likelihood to set stretch goals, perseverance and resilience (Luthans and Avolio, 2003).

The Win/Win Situation: Outcomes of Authentic Transformational Leadership

The model described above suggests the opportunity for collectively beneficial outcomes: the win/win situation. Although this phrase has been somewhat overused in corporate pep rallies, it is an effective description of the possibilities that this model provides. As Bill George describes, an authentic approach to leadership “benefits all a company’s stakeholders, the customers, employees, and shareholders.” authentic transformational leadership has positive outcomes across several levels, including the individual, group, organization and societal levels (Avolio, Zhu et al., 2004).

This model summarizes the following outcomes into performance and thriving. In keeping with cross-level analysis in this paper, these outcomes can be understood at the individual, group or organizational levels, in various capacities. I have outlined how many of the outcomes of ATL lead directly or indirectly to individual, group or organizational performance. Thriving is defined as feeling “progress and momentum marked both by a sense of learning (understanding and knowledge) and a sense of vitality (aliveness)” (Spreitzer, G., K. Sutcliffe, et al., 2005: 3). Although Spreitzer, et. al. examine this construct from the individual level, they propose that it can be understood at a collective group or organizational level.

Research suggests that ATL aligns with both hedonic and eudemonic perspectives. The hedonic perspective claims that individuals seek out pleasurable experiences. The eudaemonic perspective states that individuals strive to reach their full potential as human beings (Spreitzer, G., K. Sutcliffe, et al., 2005; Ilies, R., F. Morgeson, et al., 2005). The outcomes outlined in the following paragraphs support these assertions.

Individual Outcomes

Many of the suggested states of being that are created in having an aligned, authentic sense of purpose, vision and values lead individuals to improved performance and thriving. Engagement has been linked to performance outcomes, including productivity, customer satisfaction, profit, accidents and employee turnover (Avolio, Gardner et al., 2004). Positive emotions broaden an individual’s momentary thought-action repertoire and give them more capabilities, leading to greater performance (Fredrickson, 2003; Fredrickson, 2004). Positive emotions are also linked to creativity, coping with adversity,
commitment, satisfaction, stress, motivation, creativity, self esteem (Ilies, R., F. Morgeson, et al., 2005), well-being (Gardner, W., B. Avolio, et al., 2005) and performance (Avolio, Gardner et al., 2004).

**Group Outcomes**

There has not been a significant amount of research on group-level analysis of ATL. However, in her work on finding positive meaning, Wrzesniewski (2003) found that if there is a higher proportion of people with a Calling, stronger overall identification with the team, less conflict, more faith and trust in management, more satisfaction with coworkers and the work itself. More work needs to be done to understand the group level impact of ATL.

**Organizational Outcomes**

Organizations can also benefit from ATL with greater performance and thriving. Research shows that authentic leadership leads to better decision making which enhances organizational well-being (Avolio, Gardner et al., 2004) and positive emotional states causes high levels of engagement (Gardner, W., B. Avolio, et al., 2005) throughout the organization. Further, “engagement is positively and strongly related to a variety of key business performance outcomes, including productivity, customer satisfaction, profit, accidents, and employee turnover…we view engagement as an important consequence of authentic leadership that mediates its effects on follower outcomes” (Avolio, Gardner et al., 2004:805). Authentic leaders are said to create followers who more strongly identify with the organization and create greater value congruence (Ilies, R., F. Morgeson, et al., 2005). They also create more optimistic followers (Luthans and Avolio, 2003; Avolio, Gardner et al., 2004). Optimism leads to higher work motivation, performance (Gardner, W., B. Avolio, et al., 2005), job satisfaction and morale, resilience and invigoration (Avolio, Gardner et al., 2004).

**Integration**

The previous section outlined the three core components to authentic leadership that can be considered from the individual, group and organizational levels. I propose that authentic leadership becomes truly transformational at the point of fitness between two entities. The most positive outcomes will be seen where there are high levels of integration for each of the components of purpose, vision and values (Ilies, R., F. Morgeson, et al., 2005). This is true at multiple levels of analysis, including the intra-individual, individual-group, individual-organization and group-organization levels. The construct of authentic leadership can be considered from the organizational level, according to this model. For example, in their seminal work, *Building your company’s vision*, Collins and Porras (1996) argue that the most successful companies have a core purpose, core values and BHAGs, or “Big Hairy Audacious Goals.” The same can be true for groups within an organization. The concept of authentic leadership is one that can be considered across levels as individuals socially construct collective purpose, visions and values that are meaningful to the intended participants of that entity. Figure 3 illustrates multiple levels of integration.
Levels of integration in Authentic Transformational Leadership

For example, when discussing the concept of meaning-making, one can observe “how macro states at one point in time influence the behavior of individual actors, and how these actions generate new macro states at a later time (Hedstrom and Swedberg 1998 as cited in Weick, Sutcliffe et al. 2005: 417).” Another example from Wrzesniewski suggests “a dynamic view in which both the individual and the system act together to determine the types of meaning that will be experienced” (2003: 300).

In the following section I will use this model of integration as a foundation for my argument for the collective responsibility for leadership in organizations.

Leadership 2.0: The collective responsibility for leadership in organizations

“If you don’t like something, change it. If you can’t change it, change your attitude. Don’t complain.” - Maya Angelou

Many researchers have examined the topic of leadership either from a top-down, or leader-centric position (e.g. Bass and Steidlmeier 1999; Avolio, B., W. Zhu, et al. 2004), or from a bottom-up, or follower-centric position (e.g. Gardner, W., B. Avolio, et al., 2005). Leader-member exchange research examines the integration point between leaders and followers (Sparrow and Linden, 2005) but describes a transactional exchange, as opposed to one that is transformational. Conversely, I argue that authentic transformational leadership is not limited to either the leader or follower perspective. In their foundational work on transformational leadership, Bass and Steidlmeir argue that a participative versus directive approach to integration depends on context and “the naiveté or experience of the followers” (1999: 202). I disagree with this and assert that even in the example situations they use, where leaders are priests, physicians, parents, and teachers, there is a responsibility to question what is being espoused and to attempt to integrate individual values with those of the “leader.” Bass and Steidlmeir explain that if the values are immoral, then the leader isn’t transformational. From a pragmatic perspective, individuals should always question what they are being told and evaluate everything against their own values. It is every person’s responsibility to be a leader and to think through what is being asked of him or her. In order to be fully contributing to the moral and societal outcomes, there is a collective responsibility to use individual judgment.
Power to the people

Another way to look at the collective contribution to leadership is to consider it as a process that is conceptually similar the discussion of power. In particular, I draw the reader’s attention to the constructive tension between the polarities of deep-cultural power and deep-personal power (Bradshaw, 1998). Deep-cultural power describes, “how relations of power are sustained through the meaning systems that are created in organizational contexts...[it] exists to the extent that the meaning systems in which the relations of power are embedded are shared collectively by various interest groups” (Bradshaw, 1998: 130). As a polarity to deep-cultural power, Bradshaw proposes deep-personal power, where “the assumption that power is inherently diffused and shared amongst individuals located anywhere within a social system. This diffusion allows individuals to potentially become active agents who can deploy their power even if they are at the bottom of the hierarchy or relatively powerless...Empowerment is the process of uncovering this latent power (Bradshaw, 1998).” I propose that the concept is useful in examining collective responsibility for leadership through meaning making in organizations. Individuals have the responsibility to define their individual senses of meaning, values and vision in the organizational context, in tandem with interpreting and internalizing the formal organizational purpose, vision and values.

The suggested ways of accessing deep-personal power are also true for accessing individual sources of leadership. These include being authentic and acting true to one’s values, which is in keeping with the authentic leadership model. Bradshaw also recommends a certain amount of detachment in accessing autonomous choices (Bradshaw, 1998). Although she is referring to the empowerment process, there is a level of questioning and detachment required in actively engaging in the search for one’s own sense of meaning, values and individual goals within an organizational context. If there were no questioning of authority, individuals would passively internalize whatever their formal leaders are espousing. That is not the way to release the individual leadership potential within. Developing ATL is an active, iterative process that can only occur if an individual has identified and accessed a level of self-awareness that drives the capacity for authentic leadership.

ATL holds that leadership becomes transformational when people lead by example. By interacting with authentic transformational leaders, followers transform into leaders themselves. This is in keeping with the integration concept introduced above. It is the interaction between leader and follower that matters most. That is where the transformation, or alchemy, occurs. As Bradshaw suggests, “fundamentally we can move away from ‘either/or’ thinking towards a more inclusive model of ‘both/and’ thinking.” (1998: 122). It is through the integration of purpose, vision and values across all levels that the greatest impact on ATL occurs.

Implications for Leadership Development

This paper has proposed a simplified model of authentic leadership, has developed the core concepts that lead to states of being, which then lead to individual, group and organizational outcomes. It has considered a multi-level approach to authentic leadership and explored the implications of a collective responsibility for leadership. In the following section I will consider the pragmatic perspective in examining the implications for leadership development in organizations.

Every individual has the potential to be a leader. Whether or not they tap into that potential is the question. There are certain individuals that have a natural gift of leadership and an innate ability to inspire action in others. For example, no one can deny Barack Obama’s extraordinary ability to inspire hope and action in people through his authentic leadership style, his world-class oratory skills and his
willingness to listen. In addition, taking on a formal leadership role carries significant risks and responsibilities. Not every individual has the inclination or the ability to do this. However, every individual has the ability to be an authentic leader, as authentic leadership is based in self-awareness (Ilies, R., F. Morgeson, et al., 2005; Gardner, W., B. Avolio, et al., 2005). Every person has the capacity to be self-aware and authentic.

Every individual also has the capacity to transform others, just by their presence, just by being who they are. For example, there is a man in my neighbourhood that walks the boardwalk every morning. As he passes every person along his path, he yells out with a big smile on his face, “Good morning, have a great day!” In an otherwise gloomy, cold and unfriendly setting, he transforms the people he comes into contact with by “being the change” he wants to see. One greeting at a time, he creates a more connected, friendly and positive community. By being authentic, honouring his values and pursuing his purpose, he has a strong positive impact on all those around him. This is the definition of leadership.

People are not born as authentic leaders but instead commit to a lifetime of introspection and hard work to become more fully who they are (George, 2003). Research shows that the most effective way to develop future leaders is by modeling the characteristics and behaviours of authentic transformational leadership, including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999). By modeling these behaviours, leaders automatically influence those around them by “being the change.” In the following section I will build on the discussion of authentic leadership and focus on the perspective of authentic transformational leadership, which is one manifestation of authentic leadership.

The transformational leadership model best articulates how to develop authentic transformational leaders. Here is a summary of the four components of the transformational leadership model (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idealized Influence</th>
<th>Values-based leadership; set high standards and model desired behaviours; moral and spiritual dimensions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational Motivation</td>
<td>Provide purpose, shared goals, challenging people to be their best, stretch to what’s possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Stimulation</td>
<td>Open dynamic in vision formulation, implementation, openness to creative ideas from others; challenge followers to think for themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualized Consideration</td>
<td>Treat followers as human beings, individuals; provide coaching, mentoring and growth opportunities; help followers become more competent to provide better succession</td>
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Leadership development happens when leaders lead by example (Luthans and Avolio, 2003). The focus on this approach is not on the “doing,” but rather on the “being.” By being authentic transformational leaders, leaders will inspire followers to respond by becoming more authentic, by adopting the transformational approach to communication and thereby will become leaders themselves. This follows a pattern that looks something like this:
As followers interact with authentic transformational leaders, they become leaders themselves (Avolio, Gardner et al., 2004; Ilies R., F. Morgeson, et al, 2005). This requires an ongoing process of self-awareness and authentic action. Individuals must always be clear about their own purposes, visions and values and must be acting according to these (George, 2003; Luthans and Avolio, 2003). The integration with the group or organization’s purpose, vision and values is essential in driving collective results for individuals, groups and organizations.

There are many things at the organizational level that can drive authentic transformational leadership development. Leaders can clearly articulate a compelling purpose, giving followers a sense of meaningfulness about the work they are doing (Avolio, Zhu et al., 2004). An inspiring vision with clearly articulated goals can also lead to higher levels of empowerment and engagement (Avolio, Zhu et al., 2004). Finally, leaders can model “self-awareness, mak[e] self-transcendence motives salient, and [focus] followers’ attention on desired possible selves…causing them to seek out accurate feedback to facilitate personal growth and development” (Gardner, W., B. Avolio, et al., 2005: 362).

Organizational context is a key determinant to the development of ATL. As Gardner, et. al. propose, “unconstrained organizational contexts where members view authenticity as a quality of their ideal selves, the most authentic members will assume the role of leader, with followers working in cooperation with the leader to achieve shared goals, including a positive ethical climate” (2005: 364).

As leaders and organizations navigate through the current economic crisis, or any crisis, there is a rich opportunity for authentic transformational leadership development. Research shows that leaders use challenges, “trigger events,” (Luthans and Avolio, 2003), “crucibles” (Bennis and Thomas, 2002; Bennis and Thomas, 2002; Bennis, 2004), or “jolts” (Roberts, Dutton et al., 2005) as catalysts for further self-awareness and a renewed sense of purpose and values. Successful leaders learn how to find the positive meaning in a crisis and learn the lessons they need to learn to advance their leadership abilities. Providing the tools to help leaders through this process is one way that organizations can enhance leadership development. Whether through internal or external coaching, mentoring or informal support systems, there are ways to help individuals to process the emotional impact of the experience and direct their energy towards finding the positive benefit in the situation. For example, Fredrickson conducted an experiment where she had college students monitor their daily emotional experiences for a month. With half of the group she had them find the positive meaning in the experiences, whether positive or negative. By simply observing their emotional states and asking themselves what the meaning of the experiences were, she found that people developed more positive emotions, a greater sense of meaningfulness and more resilience (Fredrickson, 2004). Organizations can create these types of experiences in a planned, strategic way to provide individuals with both the experience of the event and the tools to reflect on why it happened and how they can learn from it (Bennis and Thomas, 2002; Luthans and Avolio, 2003).

One of the foundational constructs of positive psychology is learned optimism, popularized in the book *Learned Optimism*, co-authored by positive psychology guru, Martin Seligman (Seligman and Nathan, 1998). Helping individuals to become more optimistic is a key way to develop authentic
transformational leaders. Seligman offers one approach to developing optimism, called the ABCDE model, which stands for adversity, beliefs one holds, consequences of the beliefs, disputation of the beliefs, and energization that occurs after the beliefs have shifted (Seligman, 2002). Self-awareness is a key requirement for learning optimism, which is at the core of the ATL model. Coaching, mentoring and training on various techniques for learning optimism can lead to greater ATL capacity in an organization.

There are some specific development approaches that can lead to greater authentic transformational leadership. These include feedback, coaching (Whitworth, et. al., 1998), mentoring (Bennis and Thomas, 2002), behavioural role modeling, upward feedback (Ilies, R., F. Morgeson, et al., 2005), as well as recruitment, selection and socialization (Pratt and Ashforth, 2003).

It is not the job of managers to “motivate others, as if they were incapable of doing so for themselves” (Gardner and Schermerhorn, 2004: 278). Instead, “It is a responsibility of management to make it possible for people to recognize and develop these human characteristics for themselves” (McGregor, 1957, as cited in Gardner and Schermerhorn, 2004: 270). Of all the possible ways that individuals and organizations can work to develop leadership, “life is the most authentic leadership development process, and…the challenge for the field of leadership is to improve on life’s program of leadership development, making it more efficient, cost effective and perhaps less risky” (Avolio, Gardner et al., 2004). It is not only what people do to develop leadership, but also how they be. The more integrated an individual is – within themselves, with their team, or with their organization – the greater the possibility for transformational impact.

Contributions and Limitations

This paper makes several contributions to the study of authentic transformational leadership and it has some limitations, which I will outline in the following section.

In an attempt to aggregate and simplify the emerging literature on authentic leadership, I have proposed a model that links the core components of authentic leadership to the states of being that authentic leadership can create. I then propose the links to individual, group and organizational outcomes of performance and thriving. This paper simplifies multiple perspectives on the topic into a clear model. I then reintegrate the model into the transformational leadership literature in an attempt to explore the possibility for leadership development.

I make a further contribution by linking the theoretical understanding of ATL to current best practices from the practitioner perspective. This model underscores the opportunity for a win/win set of outcomes that benefit both employees and organizations. It is possible to teach all of these things, give people the tools to articulate and act according to their leadership agendas (e.g. Coaching, mentoring, etc.).

The model proposes a cross-level approach that applies at the individual, group and organizational level. The same leadership development approaches can be used with individuals, teams or the entire organization. The integration can happen at the intra-individual level, at the individual-group level, the individual-organizational level and the group-organizational level.

There are several limitations to this paper. The first is that it is not possible to cover all of the complex and, at times, conflicting approaches to ATL in a single paper. The field is both well established, with the work on transformational leadership, and emerging, with the contribution of authentic leadership. New research is being generated regularly which makes it difficult to incorporate all possible positions into the debate.
There is some ethical concern with the proposed direction for future research. In reaction to some famous experiments earlier in the last century (e.g. Milgram’s obedience and the Zimbardo prison experiments) it has been established that it is not ethical to cause physical or emotional harm to people being studied. A question remains as to whether it is ethical to induce people to feel good. POB holds that that is the role of the researcher but that is a strongly values-based assumption. The ethical concern over whether it is a researcher’s role to contribute to the well being of individuals or society at large remains.

The final restriction of this model is that it is based on self-selection criteria. This model is intended for and will only be effective if individuals self-select themselves into the leadership role. Only those individuals who truly desire to make a difference and to thrive would be appropriate for this type of leadership development. Based on self-awareness and the authentic integration of work and life, this approach to leadership development cannot be taught, trained or mandated onto others. It is a self-directed learning process that is based in a deep process of self-awareness and conscious action. Any individual has the potential to become an authentic transformational leader, but not everyone is capable or ready to engage in the significant amount effort required to achieve this quality of leadership.

**Future Research Directions**

Fred Luthans proposed positive organizational behaviour (POB) as a shift for the research direction in the OB field (Luthans, 2002). In his introductory work on POB, he called for “the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today’s workplace.” (Luthans, 2002: 698). Future research in this area should follow the POB model and develop research that is both theoretically and practically valuable.

There is a need for more research that is grounded in the engaged scholarship approach (Van de Ven, 2007). Researchers should work closely with practitioners in developing, conducting and applying research on authentic transformational leadership. Field experiments are one way to leverage the benefits of a pragmatic approach to theoretical understanding. For example, it would be useful to conduct a series of experiments with individuals, groups and/or organizations where the researcher would measure some outcomes of performance and thriving before and after an intervention. The intervention could be a series of exercises to generate self-awareness about purpose, vision and values and create accountability for acting upon this self-awareness. I have conducted many such programs for individuals, groups and organizations and have seen a great shift after there is alignment around purpose, values and vision. It would be a great contribution to measure the outcomes and to determine if there are any aggregate patterns, archetypes or processes. If such patterns were discovered, it would be possible to develop more theoretically and empirically tested prescriptive models for practitioners.

Positive organizational behaviour takes an axiological stand for the betterment of humanity (Luthans, 2002). In addition to using individuals in natural organizational contexts to conduct research, the nature of the experiments could be such that those involved in the research would experience growth through the process. Not only would the outcomes of the research contribute to the advancement of the human experience but the actual process of conducting the research could also be beneficial in and of itself. Some of the exemplar work in this are has been conducted in such a way that it was both theoretically sound and intrinsically beneficial to those being studied. For example, in conducting their interviews for Geeks & Geezers, Bennis and Thomas (2002) used open-ended questions that are in keeping with a coaching approach (Whitworth, Kimsey-House et al. 1998). They underlined the intrinsically positive nature of their research approach in saying “our interviewees had no intention of investing two or more hours of their time without learning something useful in the process” (Bennis and
Thomas 2002: 164). Roberts, et. al. (2005), used a reflection and narrative approach to their research, which would have generated increased self-awareness in all those that did the exercise, which is a key component to ATL. They added to the generalizability and reliability of the findings by aggregating the individual narratives an analyzing whether there was a common pattern that emerged. Finally, Fredrickson conducted an experiment on positive emotions and resilience by having the students in one of her undergraduate classes write a daily online entry documenting their emotional states throughout the day. She had half of the group then describe what the positive benefit of the experiences were and in so doing “induced a subset of these students to feel more positive (2004: 1374).” The experience of the research created a positive growth opportunity simply by participating in the process.

More work is needed in understanding the impact of the ATL model on diverse groups and in various contexts and cultures.

**Conclusion**

Authentic transformational leadership is the most effective way to drive performance and thriving at the individual, group and organizational levels. The combination of authenticity and transformational leadership practices leads to greater states of engagement, satisfaction, positive emotions and optimism. With the chaos that is occurring in the world today there has never been a greater need for authenticity and a transformational approach to leadership. As the recent American election proved, people are ready for change. They want to be transformed and they want to be led by authentic transformational leaders that work to understand what people, of all generations, value. We need to work to fill the leadership pipeline with people that know who they are, know what they are willing to fight for and have the integrity to get out and “be the change.”


