

## AUTHENTICITY

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Being authentic means you are honest and true to your real self. It happens when you are congruent – that is, when what you really believe and know to be true matches your behaviour, speech and body language. The opposite of authentic is political. It is playing games, hiding things, saying things you don't mean and doing things you don't agree with.

When you are authentic, others will see you as open, honest and trustworthy. They engage with you because you are genuine and real and not playing games with them. Authenticity isn't a popularity contest\*, far from it. Being true to yourself can mean having to say 'no' and having to disagree with others sometimes. It means standing up for yourself and your beliefs. This doesn't mean you have to be rude or hurtful. Being confident and standing up for yourself can be done in a respectful, kind and professional way.

\*Well it is! It is an internal popularity contest, to see how much can you understand, accept, like and be your true self!

Like many other personal and professional skills, authenticity can be developed. How can you be more authentic? authenticity develops as we gain a greater understanding of ourselves, as we learn to accept ourselves warts and all, and as we start to conduct ourselves in a way that is consistent with what we truly believe. It is a journey.

Part of the journey is reflecting, learning and course correcting. One exercise that can be helpful is outlined below. It is worth repeating frequently so you can keep making positive adjustments.

1. Think about a situation recently where you have felt you were inauthentic – i.e. you 'played the game' or behaved in a way that didn't sit comfortably with you. Describe the situation and what happened.

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2. Think about what made you feel inauthentic and not you in this situation? How did you behaved? What you did/didn't you say? What did/didn't you do? Jot them down.

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3. Think about why you behaved the way you did? Was it something external that triggered you to be inauthentic (e.g. the situation, the people, the place) and/or something internal (e.g. a worry, a fear, an assumption). Jot down any insights.

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4. Not think about what you could have done differently if you were being authentic and true to yourself in this situation?

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5. If faced with this situation again, what will you do differently? How will you be true to yourself in a way that is professional and respectful to yourself and others?

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6. How will you apply this learning to other situations so you can further develop your authenticity?

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7. Repeat this exercise regularly and keep applying your learnings to a wider range of situations.

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Living your life, both personal and professional, in a more authentic way, allows you to find more peace, to be more aligned and be more centered. It means you become more honest and real and as a result you become more trusted.

## NOTES

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