



# Authentic Leadership

Women in Leadership Event  
APRIL 29th, 2023



Washington Association  
of School Administrators



# The Impact of Authentic Leadership



Higher Levels of  
Employee Job  
Satisfaction



Increased  
Organizational  
Commitment

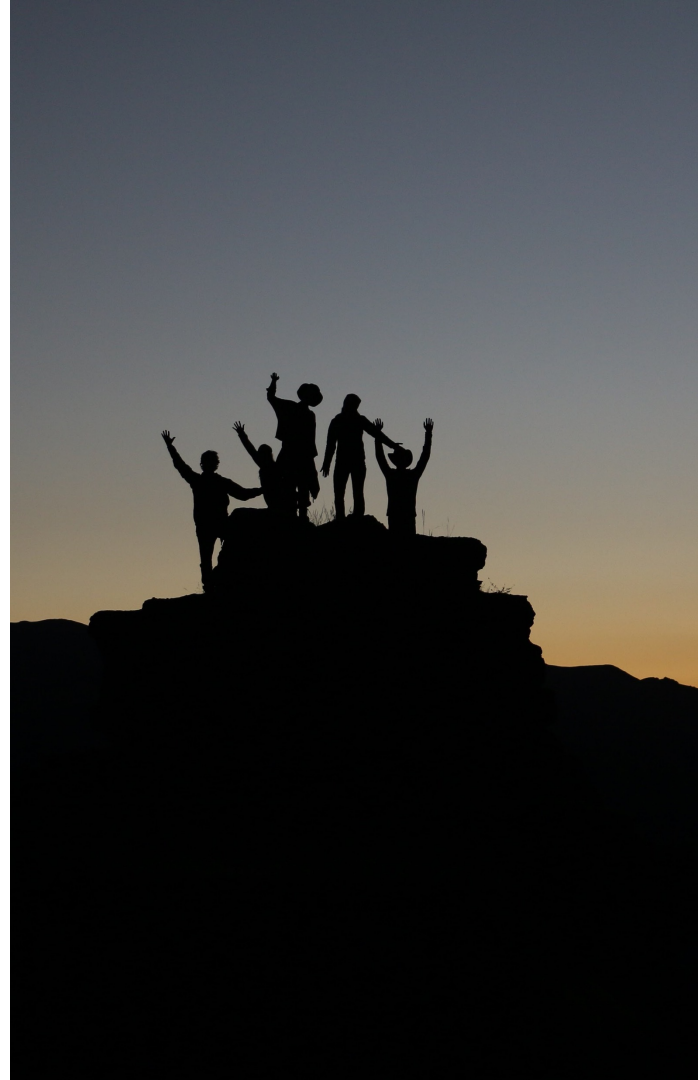


Higher Levels of  
Employee Well  
Being



Higher Levels of  
Performance

Sources: Journal of Business Ethics, Journal of Applied Psychology, Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies



# Agenda



1

The Authenticity Paradox

2

Getting to Know Yourself  
– and Your Purpose

3

The Authenticity Formula

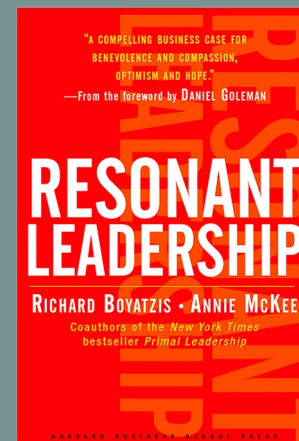
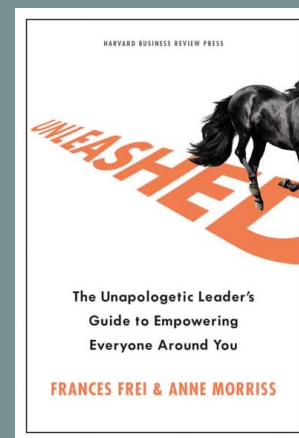
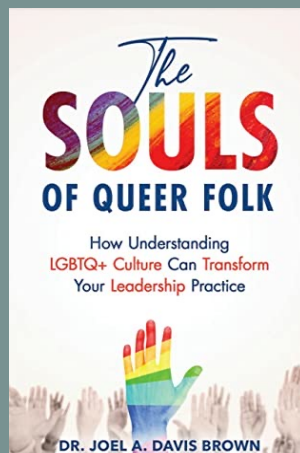
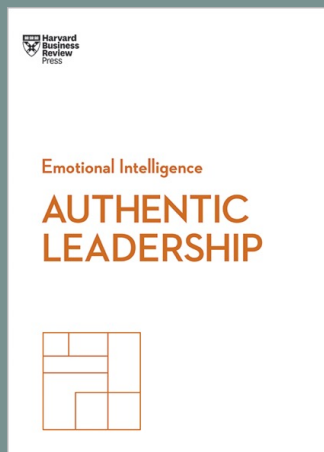
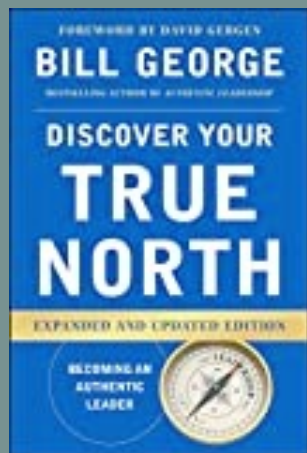
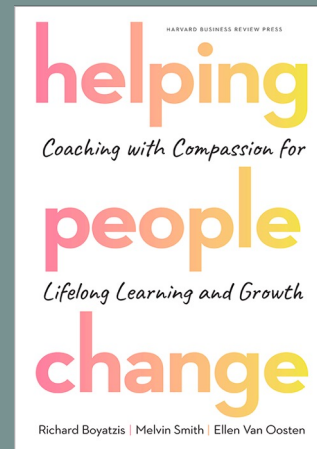
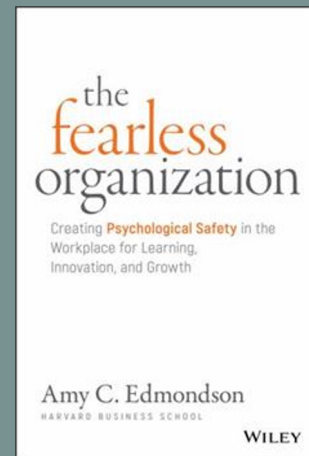
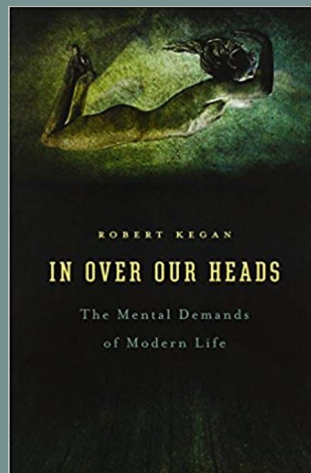
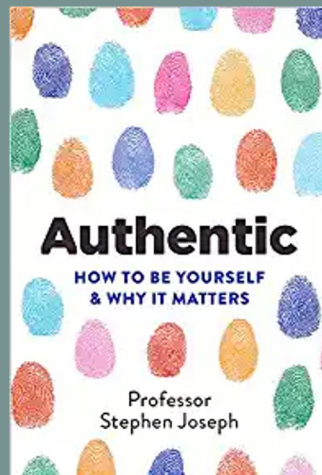
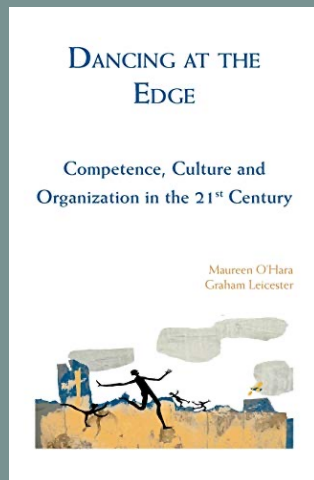
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From 'Tolerations' to  
'Authenticity' – a Practical Path

5

The Wisdom of Your Future  
Self











# The Authenticity Paradox



**How do you define "Authenticity"?**





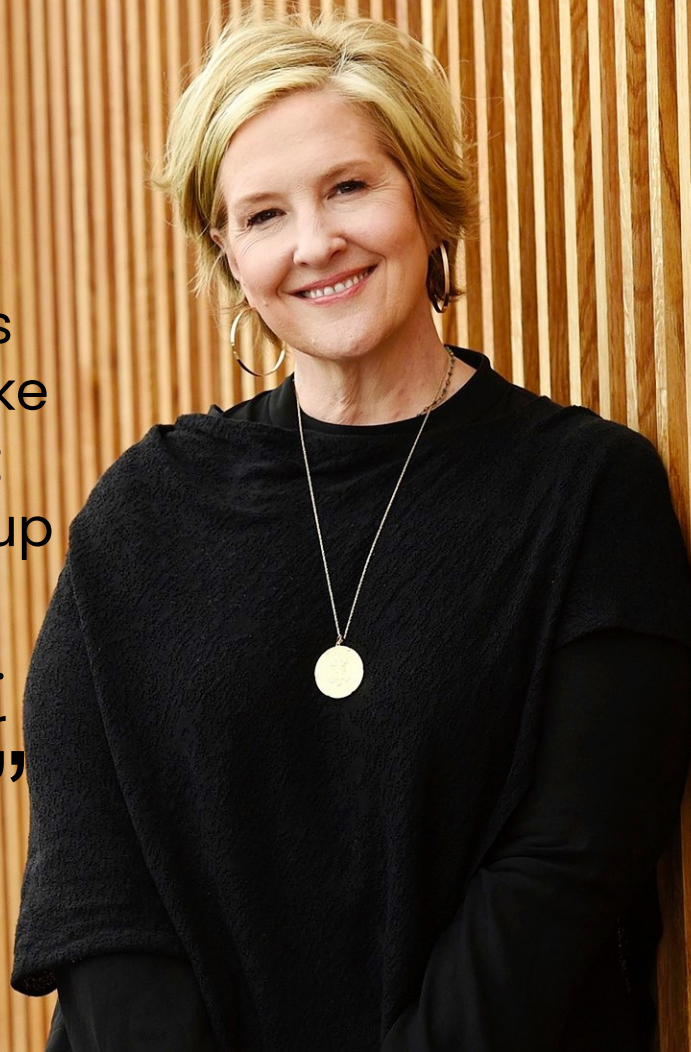
“not false or  
imitation, true to  
one's own  
personality, spirit,  
or character”

Source: Merriam-Webster Dictionary <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/authentic>



“Authenticity is a collection of choices that we have to make every day. It’s about the choice to show up and be real. The choice to be honest. The choice to let our true selves be seen.”

– Brené Brown





# What Is Authenticity?

A too-rigid definition of authenticity can get in the way of effective leadership. Here are three examples and the problems they pose.

## Being true to yourself.

Which self? We have many selves, depending on the different roles that we play in life. We evolve and even transform ourselves with experience in new roles. How can you be true to a future self that is still uncertain and unformed?

## Maintaining strict coherence between what you feel and what you say or do.

You lose credibility and effectiveness as a leader if you disclose everything you think and feel, especially when you are unproven.

## Making values-based choices.

When we move into bigger roles, values that were shaped by past experiences can lead us astray. For instance, “tight control over operating details” might produce authentic but wrong-headed behavior in the face of new challenges.

**SOURCE** HERMINIA IBARRA

HBR.ORG

<https://hbr.org/2015/01/the-authenticity-paradox>



**V**



VOLATILITY

**U**



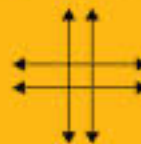
UNCERTAINTY

**C**



COMPLEXITY

**A**



AMBIGUITY



ROBERT KEGAN

# IN OVER OUR HEADS

The Mental Demands  
of Modern Life



**Authenticity:** Being the  
author of one's own life

CARL ROGERS





## Getting to Know Yourself – and Your Purpose



# Your Life Map

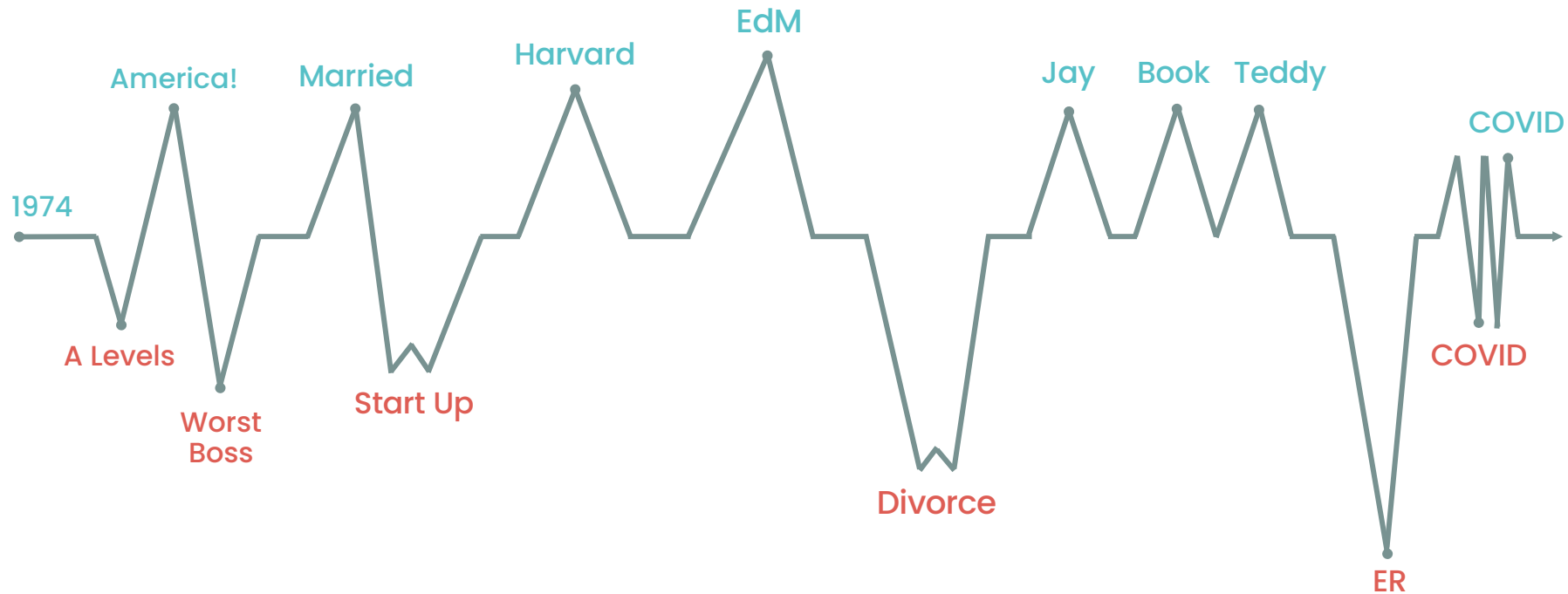


Reflect on the key events that you feel have shaped your life – both negatively and positively.

Record your birth on the left-edge of the paper.

Draw a continuous line mapping your life from the past into the future, mapping the high points with peaks and the low points with valleys.

Write a couple of words description and your age at each of the peaks and valleys (e.g. moved city, university, graduated, first leadership job, parents divorced etc.).



# Learning about yourself

What values do you notice reflected in the important events?

What were the best/worst decisions for you and why?

What risks did you take? Why?

How did you overcome obstacles?

What would you change about your life-map if you could?

Do you recognize any patterns?

How might you be holding onto the past?

Where are you going in the future?



Notice what your life map is telling



# Crucibles of Leadership

## **Why are crucibles important in our lives?**

They come when you least expect them

They are the real test of our character

They provide opportunities for learning and growth

Formative for what comes next in our life

Opportunity to look back and strengthen

Source: Amended from True North, Bill George



# Negative Views of Crucibles

They can be incapacitating

They can lead to feeling like a victim

They can result in unresolved anger, grief, or shame

They can cause denial and “shutting down”

They can create pain and avoidance of future issues

Source: Amended from True North, Bill George





# What pulls us through crucibles?

Belief in ourselves and our purpose in life

Affirmation and support from others

Courage: endure any hardship

Taking responsibility for your life

Authenticity

Adaptive capacity

# Learning about yourself (continued)

Have you had experiences earlier in your own life that are impacting you as an adult or holding you back from claiming your authentic voice?

In what ways can you reframe your experiences to realize the power in your life and discover the purpose of your leadership?

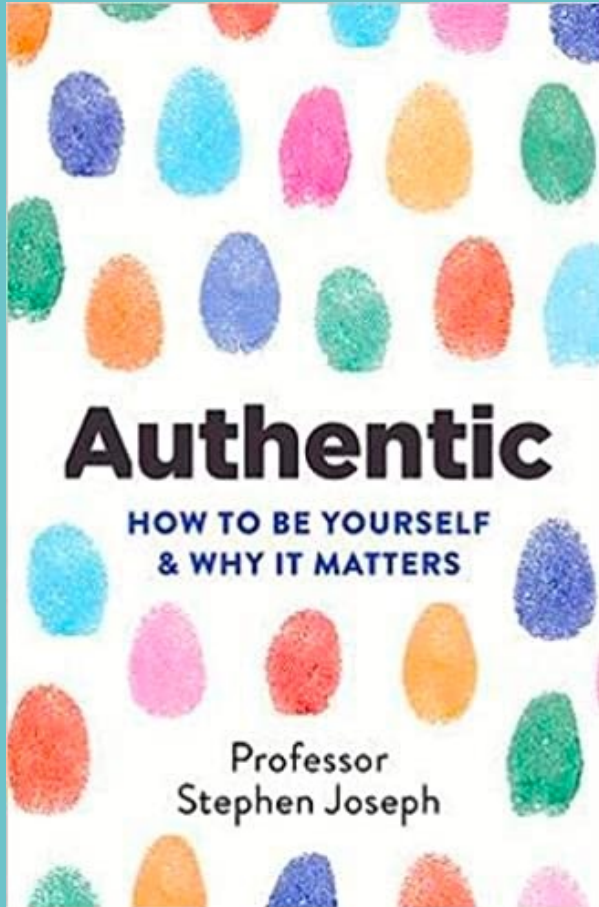


Crucibles Reflections



## The Authenticity Formula





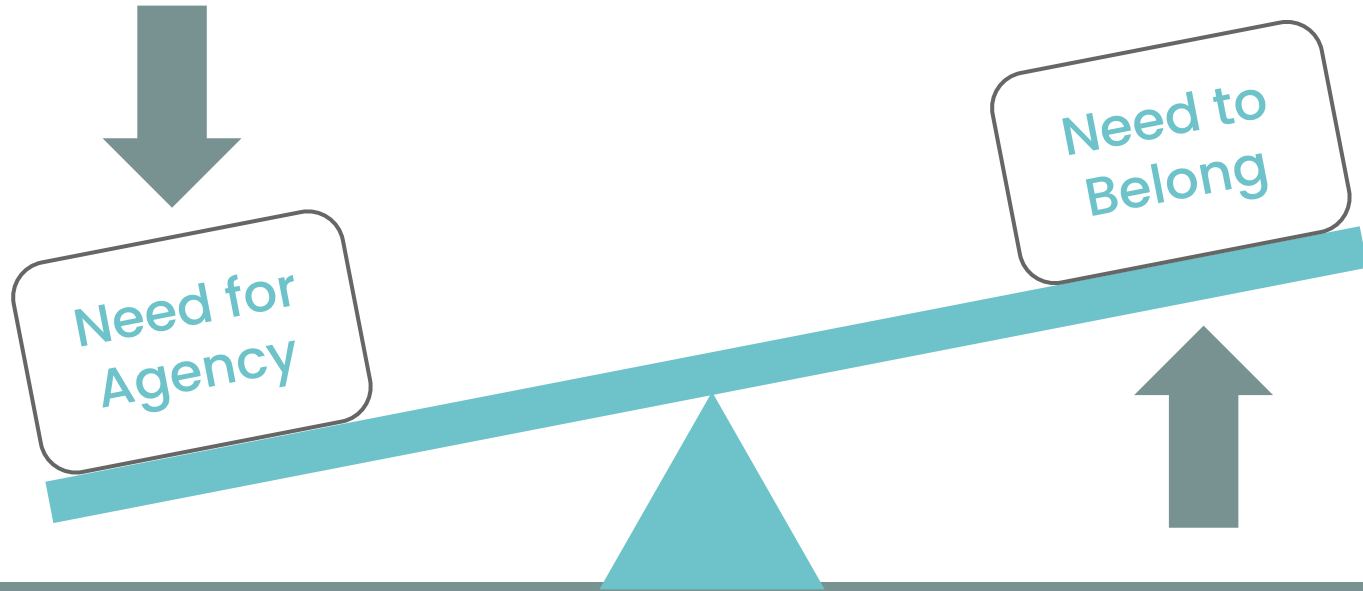
Step 1 – Know Yourself

Step 2 – Own Yourself

Step 3 – Be Yourself

...why is it  
challenging?





Source: The Authenticity Formula, Stephen Joseph



**Complete the following sentence – just quickly  
note what comes to mind:**

“If I am to be of value, I must \_\_\_\_\_.”



## Away from

- Facades
- Oughts
- Meeting Expectations
- Pleasing Others



## Towards


- Self-Direction
- Openness to Experience
- Acceptance of Others
- Trusting Yourself



4

From 'Tolerations' to  
'Authenticity' – a Practical Path



A photograph of a dirt path in a lush green forest. The path starts from the bottom center and splits into two paths that lead into the woods. The trees are tall and thin, with dense green foliage. The lighting is soft, suggesting a shaded forest environment.

***“We are kept from our goal not by obstacles but by a clear path to a lesser goal.”*** – Robert Brault

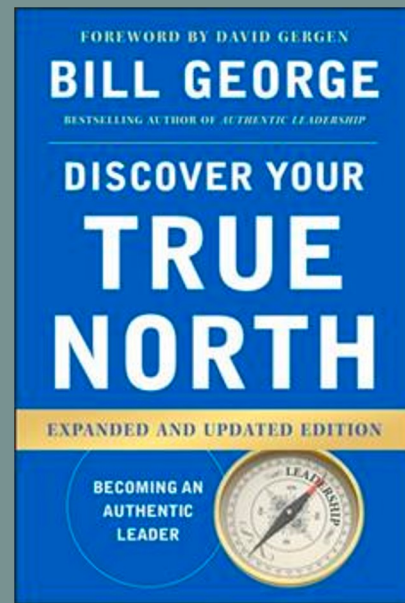
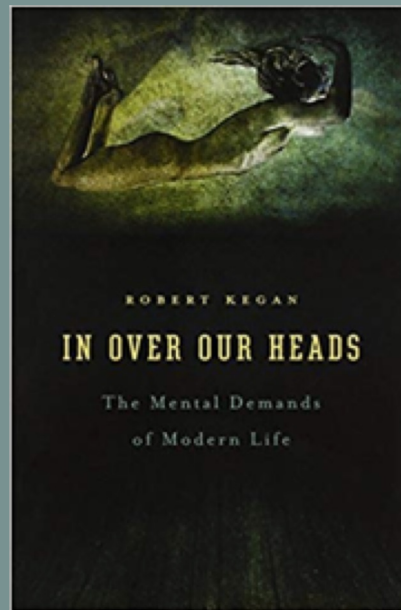
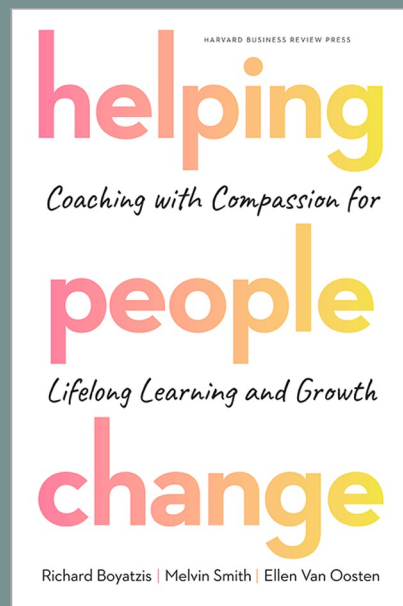
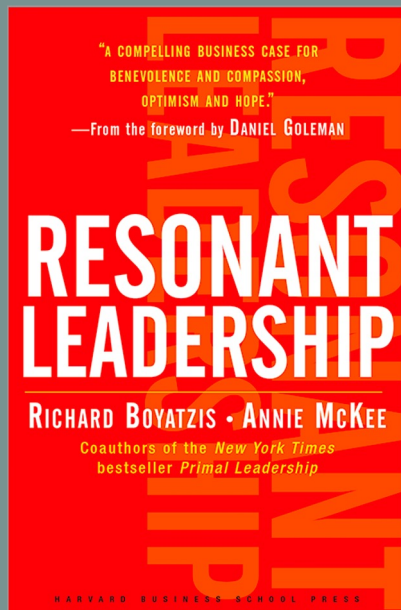




[Padlet.com/FutureEd/WASA](https://padlet.com/FutureEd/WASA)



## The Wisdom of your Future Self





Future →

← Past



# Resources

## Articles

The Authenticity Paradox, Herminia Ibarra  
<https://hbr.org/2015/01/the-authenticity-paradox>

Are You True to Yourself? Authentic people know their boundaries. Stephen Joseph, Ph.D.  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/what-doesnt-kill-us/201810/are-you-true-yourself>

## Videos (available on YouTube)

Why Authenticity Matters | Karissa Thacker | TEDxWilmington

The Authenticity Paradox | Professor Herminia Ibarra | TEDxLondonBusinessSchool

## Tools

The Authenticity Challenge, Stephen Joseph, Ph.D. <http://www.authenticityformula.com/>

Wired for Authenticity – Book Discussion Guide  
<https://www.transformleaders.tv/wired-for-authenticity-book-discussion-guide/>

Wired for Authenticity Leadership Toolkit:  
<http://www.transformleaders.tv/leadership/>

Seven Practices of Authenticity Assessment:  
<https://www.transformleaders.tv/assessments/>