



Ghassan Aouad

Chancellor of Abu Dhabi University, Past President of the Chartered Institute of Building (CI...
5d

Authentic Leadership: Being True to Yourself

I have been asked by a LinkedIn friend to write about authentic leadership. I think from my own humble experience, authentic leadership is all about being true to yourself as a leader. It's not about putting on a show or trying to be someone you're not. Instead, it's about tapping into your own strengths, values, and beliefs to guide your team. Authentic leaders are recognised by their integrity and so inspire trust. As a leader, you will not be able to please everyone, but authentic leadership will earn you respect.

The idea of authentic leadership has been around for centuries, but it really started gaining traction in the business world in the early 2000s. Researchers and leadership experts began to recognize that the most effective leaders were the ones who were genuine and transparent, rather than those who tried to project a perfect image.

When you're an authentic leader, you're transparent and open with your team. You don't try to hide your flaws or weaknesses. Instead, you're honest about them and you work to overcome them. This helps build trust with your team because they see you as a real person, not just a boss.

Authentic leaders also make decisions that are aligned with their values. They don't just do what they think others want them to do. Instead, they stay true to what they believe is right, even if it's not the easy or popular choice.

This can be really inspiring for a team. When they see their leader making tough decisions based on their principles, it shows them that the leader has integrity. The team is more likely to follow an authentic leader because they believe in them.

Authentic leadership isn't about being perfect. In fact, it's the opposite. It's about being honest about your flaws and using them to grow and improve. The best authentic leaders are always working on becoming better versions of themselves.

If you want to be an authentic leader, start by getting to know yourself really well. Understand your strengths, weaknesses, values, and beliefs. Then, use that self-knowledge to guide your actions and decisions as a leader. Be transparent with your team and admit when you're struggling. And always stay true to who you are, even when it's difficult.

Authentic leadership isn't easy, but it's worth it. When you lead with authenticity, you'll inspire your team and earn their trust and respect.

At ADU, we encourage our leaders to be authentic embracing the principle "what you see is what you get". By embodying this authentic ethos, ADU's leaders can serve as role models and set the tone for the entire institution. Cultivating authentic leaders who "walk the talk" is a powerful way to drive positive cultural change and achieve sustainable success.

"Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life." – Steve Jobs

[#leadership](#) [#AuthenticLeadership](#) [#integrity](#) [#respect](#)

[Hamad Odhabi Professor Barry O'Mahony Khulud Abdallah Abu Dhabi University](#)

