

Looking forward but learning from our past:
Potential challenges to developing authentic
leadership theory and authentic leaders.

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Abstract

Recently researchers have introduced a new leadership construct, referred to as authentic leadership. There has been considerable interest in this new area of study. Scholars conducting work on authentic leadership believe that the recent upswing in corporate scandals and management malfeasance indicate that a new perspective on leadership is necessary. In order to address these negative societal trends, proponents of authentic leadership take a very normative approach, placing a strong emphasis on the creation of interventions to facilitate the development of authenticity. We concur with the basic tenets of this initiative. However, in this article, we note that it is premature to focus on designing interventions to develop authentic leaders before taking further steps in defining, measuring, and rigorously researching this construct. We draw attention to these issues with the hope of insuring that any development initiatives that

are implemented are practical and effective for leaders and organizations.



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Keywords

Authentic leadership; Leadership development; Ethics; Training; Construct development

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