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# Only human: Exploring the nature of weakness in authentic leadership

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## Abstract

While the construct of authentic leadership includes the nondefensive recognition of weaknesses as well as strengths, scholars rarely hypothesize the role weaknesses play in strengthening authenticity and the effectiveness of authentic leaders. We begin by exploring possible unintended consequences of an overly positive strength based view of authentic leadership. We then propose that there are weaknesses associated with cognitive abilities, motivation, social cognition and group dynamics that spring from the need to belong that are part and parcel of human nature such that their integration into one's sense of authenticity not only enhances the authentic leadership attributes of self-awareness, balanced processing, moral identify and relational transparency but also benefits those who are led. We end with suggestions for future research on these attributes supplementing existing measures of authentic leadership with the use of implicit measures, promising assessment instruments and idiographic techniques.



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## Keywords

Authenticity; Leadership; Authentic leadership; Humility

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