



## TenStep Supplemental Paper

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### **Yours, Authentically!!**

In today's uncertain business environment, lip-service leadership means closing shop. "Authentic leadership" is what business demands and employees rely upon. Organizations have realized that ruthless leaders can be bad for productivity, growth and overall well-being. They tend to prefer leaders with clay feet rather than demi-gods. They want authentic leaders with self-knowledge, a reservoir of emotional security, and the ability to treat the company like a cohesive community, not a personal platform.

#### **What then are the characteristics of an "authentic leader"?**

**Self-awareness.** Authentic leaders do not have all the answers and are aware of this fact. They do not look for scapegoats when efforts fail. Instead they use failure as an opportunity to change.

**Down to earth.** The more successful and powerful people become, the harder it is to remain authentic. They play a role that corporate culture wants them to play. Reliance on their individual strength decreases while that on their job titles increases. They forget their feelings and lose the ability to see themselves and their responsibilities accurately. Authentic leaders do not identify themselves with their position at work. They are who they are as a person.

**Emotionally intelligent.** Authentic leaders are emotionally connected to their colleagues and employees. According to Daniel Goleman, it is emotion more than intellect that drives our thinking, decision-making and interaction with others. Leaders become memorable if they communicate emotionally. They know how to make their colleagues comfortable and develop bonds of trust.

**Unique, but not perfect.** Authentic leaders accept their limitations. They are receptive to others' ideas and opinions and integrate them well into their vision. True leaders understand that a single vision will never be complete.

Authentic leaders constantly try to figure out the heart of their ambition. They keep asking two questions:

- Why do I pursue the work and the life that I do?
- What do I act like during the most fulfilling times in my life?

This uncovers their behavior and provides them with an insight into the people they are. The answers to these questions unmask the fears, vulnerabilities and sensitivity within the person. This unmasked ingredient is the essence of an authentic leader.