Authentic Leadership

Practical Reflexivity, Self-Awareness, and Self-Authorship

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This assignment provides a process to facilitate student engagement in practical reflexivity and self-authorship through which students develop the self-awareness that is required to be an authentic and effective leader. It facilitates the development of students' personal leadership principles, which help guide their decision making and actions, and provides criteria on which to evaluate their leadership effectiveness. This facilitation of the development of students' personal leadership principles is accomplished by having students first identify and clarify their values and beliefs and to consider the impact of these on their day-to-day organizational lives and leadership. By explicitly defining themselves in the form of their values and beliefs, students have a clear sense of self on which to base their authentic leadership. Their beliefs are expressed in the form of self-narratives. These self-narratives are shared as audio recordings with fellow classmates to facilitate students' learning, self-understanding, and empathy.

Keywords: *leadership development; practical reflexivity; self-authorship; self-awareness; authenticity; values; leadership principles*

[I]f we know what kind of person we want to be, then what to do falls into place.

—Cunliffe (2005, p. 117)

Background and Rationale

Background

This assignment was developed for a Masters of Business Administration (MBA) leadership course in the United States. It is a required course of all students in the MBA program. Most students take the course in the first

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semester of the program. Each section of the course has on average 23 students enrolled. Students' work experience has ranged from 0 to 28 years. The assignment is now being used in an undergraduate leadership development seminar in the school of business of a private liberal arts college.

The assignment has three parts. In the first part, students identify their personal values, articulate what these values mean to them, ponder how they were acquired, grapple with whether their actions are consistent with them, and discuss the consequences of living out these values within the context of their work experience and role as a leader. In the second part, students write a short essay on a belief that they possess and articulate how this belief informs how they attempt to lead. Students audio record their essays, and in class, these audio recordings are played to the whole class and discussed among students. In the third part, based on their identified values and belief, students develop leadership principles that they plan to follow when leading and identify criteria for assessing the effectiveness and authenticity of their leadership.

The Authentic Leadership: Practical Reflexivity, Self-Awareness, and Self-Authorship assignment was conceived as an exercise that provides a structure to facilitate the students' development of practical reflexivity (Cunliffe & Easterby-Smith, 2004), self-awareness (Jopling, 2000; Natsoulas, 1998; Ryle, 1994), and self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 1999, 2001; Baxter Magolda & King, 2004; Kegan, 1994) to provide a basis for students' practice of authentic leadership. Practical reflexivity is a form of existential questioning. It is a questioning of one's self and can take place in the moment of action or retrospectively. Practical reflexivity allows us "to understand ourselves, our ways of relating to others, and how to participate in our social world" (Cunliffe & Easterby-Smith, 2004, pp. 35-36). It allows one to choose who to be, how to act and speak. Through the questioning of one's beliefs and assumptions, one is challenged to consciously take into account how these beliefs and assumptions affect how one relates with others in one's day-to-day life (Cunliffe & Easterby-Smith, 2004). Practical reflexivity creates self-awareness. Self-awareness is having conscious knowledge about one's self, about one's beliefs, assumptions, organizing principles, and structure of feelings and their consequences on one's

day-to-day lived experience (Jopling, 2000; Natsoulas, 1998; Ryle, 1994). Self-awareness is a prerequisite for self-authorship. "[Self-authorship is] the ability to reflect upon one's beliefs, organize one's thoughts and feelings in the context of, but separate from, the thoughts and feelings of others, and literally makes up one's own mind" (Baxter Magolda, 2001, p. 6). Although self-authorship has cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal dimensions, this article focuses solely on its intrapersonal dimension. This intrapersonal dimension of self-authorship exists when one develops one's self-understanding based on internally constructed values and beliefs, rather than based on external influences (Baxter Magolda, 1999, 2001; Baxter Magolda & King, 2004; Kegan, 1994).

This assignment is differentiated from similar approaches that facilitate leadership development in that it facilitates and develops the skills of practical reflexivity and self-authorship through its structure and the questions that students are required to answer. Although it is recognized that the identification of one's values and beliefs and the creation of personal leadership principles are important to one's leadership development, in order to continuously be an effective and authentic leader as one matures and enters new leadership contexts, one must be able to practice practical reflexivity and self-authorship. Values, beliefs, and principles are not hardwired in us nor are they a part of our essence. They can, and most often, do change as we mature. They have no materiality and are only realized as expressions of our being in the world. Thus, through the acquisition of the skills of practical reflexivity and self-authorship, students can continuously develop the basis on which to be authentic leaders in future leadership opportunities.

In addition to the planned benefits of the assignment, an additional benefit was realized. That benefit was its positive impact on learning through its transformational effect on students' relationships. This transformation was brought about through the students sharing their audio recorded belief statements in class. This sharing of their belief statements with one another created a space within which students began to see and interact with one another as unique individuals determined by their personal histories, rather than as members of particular social groups. Their interactions became more human like those described in Martin Buber's notion of "I-You" relationships (1970) through the promotion of reflective dialogue (Isaacs, 1999; Mirvis & Ayas, 2003) among the students. Reflective dialogue allows deeper levels of student learning by making them more empathetic and open to learning from one another's experiences. This reflective dialogue is a crucial form of learning that contributes to effective leadership and leads to the development of a community of inquiry (Dewey, 1908; Eriksen,

2001, 2004, 2007) in the classroom. It is a type of learning that includes emotions, as well cognition (Mirvis & Ayas, 2003). The more deeply a leader understands her followers as human beings and uses this understanding in her interactions with them, the more effective she can be as a leader. Finally, students' realization of their shared humanity can increase their authenticity as leaders through the facilitation of their self-acceptance.

Rationale for Assignment

The assignment provides a framework to facilitate students' self-awareness and develop their ability to engage in practical reflexivity and self-authorship. These skills are all seen as being paramount to becoming an effective and authentic leader (Bennis, 2003; Brown, 2001; Cunliffe, 2005; Eriksen, 2007, 2008; Friedman, 2006; George, 2007; Hanna & Glassman, 2004; Lee & King, 2001; Moshavi, Brown, & Dodd, 2003; Sparrowe, 2005; Zornada, 2005). More effective leaders appear to practice reflection and self-examination and enact their values and principles (Quinn, Spreitzer, & Brown, 2000). Through students sharing their self-narratives and the reflective dialogue that ensues, the classroom develops into a learning community in which students interact with each other in a more empathetic and compassionate way that leads to the possibility of deeper learning from each other (Isaacs, 1999; Mirvis & Ayas, 2003).

Rather than simply discussing the topic and theories of authentic leadership as abstractions from students' day-to-day lives, as is done in many leadership courses, this assignment facilitates students' authentic leadership development. It was created to help faculty develop our next generation of leaders (Herman, 2007). This development is accomplished through students' identification and articulation of their values and beliefs to allow them to develop and articulate meaningful personal leadership principles and criteria of effective leadership. The questions students are posed about their values, beliefs, leadership principles, and criteria of effective leadership facilitate students' engagement in practical reflexivity. These questions force students to think through the implications of living out their values, beliefs, and leadership principles to their lived experience. Through completing this assignment, students consciously develop their own self-understandings, understandings based on internally constructed values and beliefs, rather than based on external influences. In this act, they become self-authors.

Through reflecting on their experience, the consistency of students' leadership practice with their espoused values, beliefs, and leadership principles allows them to determine the authenticity of their leadership. Through a

comparison of their actual behavior with their criteria for effective leadership, students will be able to determine in what areas they could have been more effective leaders. Based on this understanding, students can create a development plan to improve their leadership effectiveness.

Part of self-authorship and authentic leadership is creating one's own leadership principles based on one's lived experience versus simply adopting someone else's, such as Colin Powell's 24 principles of leadership (Harari, 2003). When one looks at Colin Powell's principles, one has only the principles in and of themselves. These principles do not have personal meaning for anyone other than Colin Powell; they are mere abstractions for everyone else. Of course, when Colin Powell reads them, he also imagines his personal experiences that make these principles personally meaningful. If one creates one's own principles based on one's lived experience, these principles are personally meaningful and rich and thus can be effectively used to guide one's leadership practice.

According to John Dewey (1997), "The self is not something ready-made, but something in continuous formation through choice of action." Accordingly, this assignment is not meant to represent the discovery or authorship of a rigid, absolute, and terminal self or self-understanding, but rather to facilitate an understanding of one's self at a particular moment in time that will allow one to lead in a more purposeful and authentic way. The self should be seen as a work in progress that must continually be reauthored as one grows and develops.

This assignment facilitates the creation of self understanding from within, an understanding based on one's lived experience, rather than based on external referents such as "objective" self-assessments (e.g., FIRO-B, TKI, and Myers-Briggs) that place individuals into general categories (Cunliffe, 2005). This creation of a self-understanding from within is captured in the concept of self-authorship, which is the idea that the self, not one's present social surrounding, is the source of one's direction and value (Kegan, 1994). Rather than defining one's self through others' perceptions or an "objective" self-assessment, one who engages in self-authorship constructs one's self-understanding based on internally constructed values and beliefs (Baxter Magolda, 2001).

Peter Drucker (1999) asserts that to manage others one must first manage one's self, a principle that applies equally to leadership. To effectively lead one's self, one must possess self-knowledge and consciously and deliberately choose who one wants to be. It is only in this way that one can achieve one's potential (Taylor, 1992). Warren Bennis (2003) *equates* authenticity with leadership. In other words, leadership is an expression of

one's authenticity. Other authors and leaders believe that leaders must be authentic to be effective (Brown, 2001; Cashman, 2000; Friedman, 2006; George, 2003, George, 2007; George, Sims, McLean, & Mayer, 2007). As a representation of the importance now being placed on authenticity in academic circles, in 2005, a whole issue of *Leadership Quarterly* was dedicated to the topic of leadership and authenticity.

As well as knowing who they are and what they believe, it is paramount that leaders are able to articulate clearly who they are and what they believe to their followers. A leader's articulation of his or her self-understanding to his or her followers creates clear expectations that allow the followers to orient themselves toward him or her. If followers know their leader's values, beliefs, and the principles that guide the leader's actions, followers will be able to more accurately make sense of their leader's decisions and actions. Also, the followers will be cognizant of the framework through which the leader will evaluate their actions.

In this assignment, students express one of their beliefs in the form of a personal narrative describing how that belief was obtained. The ability to tell a meaningful story is essential to effective leadership (Gardner, 1995; George, 2007; George et al., 2007; Kouzes & Posner, 2006). "[S]tory conveys what it is to be human and gives humanity its voice" (Baldwin, 2005). The sharing of stories among a group of individuals allows a reflective dialogue to take place among them (Isaacs, 1999; Mirvis & Ayas, 2003) and transforms the nature of relationships among them. This sharing of stories transforms the nature of group members' interaction through the facilitation of the members' transcendence of their stereotypes of each other and thus, allows the possibility of more human interactions as envisioned by Martin Buber's "I-You" relationships (1970). Through the sharing of one's story, embracing others' stories, and our humanity, one opens up to seeing our own and others' fallibilities (Bushe, 2001). It allows a community (Peck, 1993) to develop in the classroom, a community of inquiry into leadership (Eriksen, 2007).

> Narrative allows us to enter empathically into another's life and being—to join a living conversation. In this sense, it serves as a means of inclusion, inviting the reader, listener, writer, or teller as a companion along another's journey. In the process, we may find ourselves wiser, more receptive, [and] more understanding. (Witherell et al., 1995, p. 40-41)

As Mirvis and Ayas (2003) describe it "you feel into them" (p. 46). Students connect with one another and thus are more willing to help one

another. The sharing of our stories with one another also increases our self-awareness through seeing ourselves in others' stories, as well as seeing how we are different (Mirvis & Ayas, 2003).

The learning objectives of this assignment are given below. Students will

1. increase self-awareness through
   - determining, clarifying, and articulating their core values
   - determining, clarifying, and articulating one of their core beliefs
   - listening to their classmates' belief statements and experiencing how they are similar to and different than those of their classmates
   - determining, clarifying, and articulating their leadership principles
2. identify their criteria for assessing the effectiveness of their leadership
3. develop the skill of practical reflexivity
4. develop the skill of self-authorship
5. experience the complexity and uniqueness of others (through the sharing of their belief statements with each other)
6. maturely engage with and openly consider values and beliefs different from their own (through the sharing of their belief statements)
7. realize the problematic nature of stereotyping
8. value empathy and gain the skill of being empathetic
9. develop a community of inquiry into leadership

Preparation and Setup of the Assignment

Preparation by Instructor

To increase the effectiveness of the implementation of the assignment, instructors should have or obtain knowledge of the following concepts: personal values, self-authorship, self-awareness, authenticity, authentic leadership, self-narrative, reflective dialogue, and practical reflexivity. To improve their understanding of the assignment, it is suggested that instructors should complete the assignment before using it in class.

Instructors should take the time to familiarize themselves with "Guidelines for Class Discussion of Belief Statement" at the end of Appendix B before the class members listen to and discuss their belief statements in class. The guidelines for discussion of belief statements should be emphasized to the students. Instructors must ensure that the discussion stays within these guidelines to create a safe environment for such personal disclosures. If students do not follow these guidelines, the potential exists for the exercise to have detrimental consequences for an individual or the class as a whole. The effectiveness and meaningfulness of the assignment will be jeopardized.

A student, or the class as a whole, might feel that his or her trust and dignity were violated by an insensitive classmate's comment about his or her belief statement. Rather than increasing the richness and meaningfulness of future class discussions, exchanges that degrade, rather than encourage and affirm, would shut down any meaningful future conversations.

If trust does not already exist among the students, the instructor should have the class engage in trust-building exercises. As part of my MBA leadership courses, students participate in a ropes team-building course to help build this trust. If students do not trust one another, the depth and meaningfulness of the stories they choose to share will be limited. Sharing will be seen as too risky. Students need to feel safe and comfortable enough to reveal themselves (Mirvis & Ayas, 2003).

Preparation by the Students

The major preparation required of students is to set aside the time to meaningfully complete the assignment. Students should begin thinking about the assignment a few weeks before its due date. Many students have said that they thought the assignment would be "a breeze" but found that once they delved into the assignment it was meaningful, and they wanted to spend an adequate amount of time to ensure that they created values, beliefs, leadership principles, and criteria of success that would allow them to improve the effectiveness and authenticity of their leadership. To combat this tendency of "waiting until the last minute," the instructor could incorporate early student progress reports into this assignment. To obtain feedback prior to submitting the assignments, students might want to share their values and beliefs with someone who knows them deeply to get their honest reactions. Also, students should be informed that it will most likely take a number of recordings until students clearly and lucidly record their belief statements. Finally, students should take the time to familiarize themselves with "Guidelines for Class Discussion of Belief Statement" before they listen to and discuss their belief statements in class for the reasons discussed above.

Implementation of the Assignment

This section presents an introduction to each of the three parts of the assignment. Along with the requirements for each of the three parts of the

assignment that can be found in Appendices A, B, and C, students should receive these introductions so they clearly understand the purpose of each part of the assignment.

The chronological order of the three parts of this assignment is important to the quality of the learning outcomes achieved by students. The structure of the assignment takes students from a general understanding of their selves (i.e., their values and beliefs) to specific guidelines for their leadership practice and sets the groundwork for their leadership development. The assignment begins with students identifying their values because these values are the basis of their beliefs (Lee & King, 2001). Then the use and sharing of their self-narratives to explore beliefs allows reflective dialogue among classmates that transforms the classroom into a community of inquiry. The students' leadership principles provide guidelines for acting on their values (George, 2007) and beliefs in their day-to-day interactions with followers. Finally, students' leadership effectiveness criteria establish a basis for learning and developing from their lived experiences. Through answering the questions asked about their values, belief, leadership principles, and criteria of effective leadership, students practice and develop the skill of practical reflexivity that will allow them to continuously be self-aware and, thus, practice self-authorship. The completion of all three parts of this assignment provides a basis for students' creation of a leadership development plan and facilitates their development of the critical skill of practical reflexivity that is necessary to continuously being an effective and authentic leader.

Student Introduction to Part I: Leadership Values

The purpose of this part of the assignment is to provide you with an opportunity to identify, reflect on, articulate your values, and what they mean to you in your role as a leader. As we have seen in the economic and political turmoil of 2008, world events are increasingly integrated and complex. The understandings we develop of these complex situations are simply inadequate to use as the basis for our decision making and deciding what actions to take in these situations. Values in which you have faith can provide powerful and ultimately practical frameworks through which to make decisions and choose actions that will allow you to be an effective leader in a world of increasing complexity, flux, and contingency. The utilization of a group of core values as the basis of an organization's decision making has been documented as a distinguishing factor of "great" companies (Collins, 2001).

Our values identify the type of person we want to be. To be authentic, it necessary for a leader to know his or her values, ground his or her decision making and actions in these values, and clearly communicate them to his or her followers to create clear expectations of what is important to him or her.

Values provide guidance for our decision making and actions. But when asked to articulate our values, most of us struggle to identify and clearly express them. Often, we intuitively know what they are but find it difficult to put them into words. Sometimes, what we explicitly state as our values is inconsistent with our day-to-day decision making and actions. In other words, our espoused values are incongruent with our enacted values.

Our values are frameworks that guide how we interpret our experiences and decide what actions to take.

> The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.
> Martin Luther King, Jr.

To increase the likelihood that we stand in a place based on our values "at times of challenge and controversy," as well as times of "comfort and convenience," we must consciously identify and clearly articulate our values and what they mean to us before these moments occur. Otherwise, we are likely to find ourselves standing with the herd of popularity rather than leading from a place of authenticity and self-truth. This standing in a place based on our values at times of challenge and controversy is the essence of authentic leadership.

If we are conscious of, clear about, and committed to our values, our decision making and actions will be more consistent with them. If we are not, our followers will find us to be inauthentic. Our operational values will vary from our stated values, and we will be less effective as leaders.

Student Introduction to Part II: Belief Statement

To be authentic, leaders must determine their beliefs (Brown, 2001). Because our values guide our beliefs (Lee & King, 2001, p. 55), you will next be asked to articulate a belief that you possess in a short essay in the form a story. Then you will be asked to reflect on how this belief manifests itself in your leadership. The essay should be based on an event in your life that has shaped one of your deep beliefs, what Luthans and Avolio (2003) refer to as a "trigger event." Two examples of belief statements are "I believe

that inner strength builds character" and "I believe that I should treat others the same way that I want to be treated."

Stories allow us to make sense of our past, interpret the present, and frame our future. They capture what we believe is possible in the world and determine how we live our lives (Baldwin, 2005). They are a form of self-authorship that develops our level of self-understanding. The ability to create life stories is a major element in the development of authentic leadership (Shamir & Eilam, 2005; Sparrowe, 2005).

This second part of the assignment will also provide you with an opportunity to share your belief essay with your classmates and listen to their belief essays. (The essay should be between 350 and 500 words in length and should take about 3 minutes to read at a normal pace.) Through this process, you will have a better understanding of others' beliefs because you will understand how they were developed. "[I]t is in experiencing and telling . . . stories . . . that we establish a connection to each other and the organization" (Wortmann, 2006, p. xiii). Also, through the comparison of your own belief essay with others' belief essays, you will obtain further clarity of the personal meaning and significance of your belief.

The sharing of your belief statement may provide a forum in which to practice being vulnerable, a characteristic that has been linked to effective leadership (George, 2007). Through the sharing of personal narratives and the reflective dialogue that ensues, you open yourself up to your shared humanity and experience yourself and your classmates more fully (Mirvis, 2002). This sharing increases the range and depth of possible learning within our community of inquiry into leadership. Feelings and subjective experience become legitimate knowledge, as well as objective knowledge in the form of leadership theories.

Student Introduction to Part III: Leadership Principles and Criteria of Success

Based on your values and beliefs (i.e., general guidelines employed to one's whole life), you will develop your personal leadership principles. The leadership principles that you develop will provide you with guidelines that you should apply to your decision making and actions in future leadership situations. Two examples of leadership principles are "I will treat my followers with dignity and respect" and "I will provide an open forum for all of my followers to speak about their issues, questions, concerns, or problems." Your consistency with these identified principles will provide a measure of the authenticity of your leadership.

The development of your leadership principles will allow you to more quickly discern which action you should take or what decision you should make to be an effective and authentic leader than if you were to use your values and beliefs as guidelines.

To enhance the possibility of your learning from your leadership experiences, you will develop criteria to evaluate your effectiveness as a leader. Two examples of criteria would be "80% of my employees believe that I treat them with dignity and respect," and "85% of my employees feel that they can speak to me about any issues, questions, concerns or problems they have at work." These criteria will allow you to assess where you fell short in your attempts to be an effective and authentic leader. Based on these shortfalls, you should then be able to create a developmental plan to increase your possibility of being an effective and authentic leader in future leadership opportunities.

Students' Responses

Through SurveyMonkey.com, an electronic survey was sent out to students enrolled in my MBA level Leading for Performance course about their experience of engaging in this assignment. Out of the 67 students enrolled in the class, 43 responded anonymously to the survey, for a response rate of 64%. To understand more deeply some of the students' responses, we followed up this electronic survey with a hand-written survey with three questions. Please see Appendix D for a listing of the survey questions. This survey was passed out in class, and students returned the surveys anonymously after class, if they so chose. Overall, the majority of students found the assignment to be meaningful.

Below is a summary of student responses to the questions:

- 95.3% of respondents stated that the assignment was meaningful to the development of their self-understanding.
- 97.6% of respondents verbalized that the assignment assisted them in clarifying their values.
  - "It was definitely valuable to list and prioritize the values and beliefs. By thinking through and evaluating each one, I was able to see clearly where I needed to go within myself."
- 90.2% of respondents agreed that this assignment assisted in clarifying one of their beliefs that they felt was essential to living out their day-to-day lives.

- 92.5% of respondents affirmed that listening to their classmates' belief statements was a meaningful activity.
  - "It helped me realize that I am not the only one with challenges in life. It also helped me see that the common experiences that we share help us all grow."
  - "I got to know the classmates on a different level."
  - "I always find it interesting to find out about other peoples' beliefs. In addition, we will spend the next 2 years with our cohort and I think having this added insight will be advantageous."
  - "Excellent assignment giving others to realize that everyone has different opinions, goals, and beliefs that influence their lives and that we all cannot expect others see it our way. An eye-opening perspective into others point of view."
- 72.5 % of respondents believed that the assignment was meaningful to their leadership development.
  - "I feel this was one of the more significant assignments in helping me understand myself better. When asked to rank my values, it was a lot harder than I anticipated. I do believe understanding my own values and beliefs are an important aspect of my leadership."
- Students responded generally positively when asked whether the experience of sharing their belief statement with their classmates was positive or negative and to explain why.
  - "It was positive—Wouldn't normally share such personal information but after hearing others I had the courage and afterwards was glad I did."
  - "Positive because it really helped me to connect with my peers and to see who they were outside of class. [The exercise] also gave me a different perspective on issues that other people face."
  - "It helped my classmates see me on a different level. Sharing a personal belief opens the door to other discussions/interactions."
- The majority of respondents stated that articulating their belief statement was the most difficult part of the assignment.

As the following student articulates, most students begin the assignment with the intention of "just trying to get it done." But as they engage in the exercise, they are drawn in by its practical relevance and meaningfulness, and they take the assignment seriously.

On my first attempt at this assignment, I was just trying to get it done. I listed my top 5 values and started trying to write about them. I was stuck for 30 minutes and could not write a sentence. I was getting very frustrated. I then thought to myself, do I really believe in these values? Do I practice them? Then I came to the realization that I was listing them just for the hell of it.

So then, I gave some thought and listed the values again. This time, they actually meant something to me, and I was able to write with ease. Same applied to my belief statement. This assignment showed me that sometimes you think that you practice something, when in reality you do not. It opened my eyes to the things I have to work on. (Student in Leading for Performance course)

Suggestions

In addition to its usefulness in graduate leadership courses, this assignment has been successfully implemented in an upper-level undergraduate leadership seminar. This assignment has additional beneficial effects on the depth and breadth of student learning when used at the beginning of MBA cohort programs, because participants will be taking almost all, if not all, of their courses together. It also could be used as a team-building exercise and in any group environment in which the shared goal is to create a sense of community among its members. If used as a team-building exercise, it would not be necessary to complete the third part of the assignment. Also, the questions about one's values could be changed to be meaningful to the particular team context in which it is employed.

Although in the past, all three parts of this assignment have been completed together, it might be desirable to complete each of the three parts individually over the course of a semester. This division of the assignment into three parts might be done to allow additional time to cover each of the three topics in more depth or to allow students more time to focus on each topic.

If used in an organizational setting as a team-building exercise, participation in this assignment should not be forced on group members. Group members should voluntarily agree to participate or it will lead to cynicism that will destroy any possibility of the exercise transforming the relationships among participants. Also, if organizational members do not agree to participate of their own volition, it is probably a clear indication that trust is lacking among group members, and rather than engaging in this assignment, it would be more fruitful for the group to first focus on trust building.

If you plan on playing the belief statements during class, it is suggested that you allocate about 7 minutes per belief statement. Each belief statement is about 3 minutes in length, and it takes a couple of minutes to upload each belief statement. Students tend not to make many comments about others'

belief statements. The belief statements seem to speak for themselves. After playing all of the belief statements, I engage in a 20- to 25-minute discussion with students about the experience of sharing their belief statement, listening to their classmates' belief statements, their experience of completing the assignment, their perceived value of completing the assignment, and any other thoughts that they might have concerning the assignment.

Some instructors might feel uncomfortable with the idea of sharing belief statements among students. They may believe that it is not a legitimate request to have students share stories of such a personal nature or that students might not be willing to share such information with other classmates. Although, I intuitively understood the value of the sharing of belief statements among my students, initially I felt uncomfortable about requiring students to share their belief statements. But through my experience and student feedback, I have become confident in the legitimacy, power, and value of the sharing of belief statements among students. One way to address this trepidation would be to allow students to share voluntarily. When students were asked to share voluntarily, consistently, about 90% to 100% of students shared their belief statements. The way the instructor facilitates student sharing is paramount. The instructor should *invite* students to share their belief statements, emphasize the value of sharing, thank the students who have shared their belief statement and provide them with affirmation, and be patient with those who are gathering up the courage to share. Some students who want to share still need to be gently asked to share. Of course, a couple of students may feel that their belief statements are too personal to share; their position should be honored. Initially the sharing might be slow, but in my experience, it quickly snowballs. Participation in trust-building exercises by students earlier in the semester will increase the level of participation. The instructor may influence the level of trust by sharing his or her own belief statement. Food and beverages also seem to help in creating an environment in which students are more likely to share their belief statements.

The meaningfulness of sharing their belief essays will be directly proportional to the depth of their revealed experiences. This point should be stressed to the students. If students are not willing to be vulnerable and reveal themselves, the sharing of the beliefs will be mundane, superficial, and a learning and growth opportunity will be lost. As one student stated, "I recommend students identify something they are comfortable discussing and putting out in the open for others to hear. Also, to really dig deep to determine, 'what do I truly believe in?'" Another student said, "If students take the time to truly reflect on their values, they will learn from the assignment."

Conclusion

Rather than merely presenting students with theories and concepts of authentic and effective leadership and then testing them on their ability to regurgitate those theories back to the instructor on a test, this assignment provides a basis for students' development of authentic and effective leadership practice. Employing self-authorship and self-narrative, students develop and articulate their values, a fundamental belief they possess, personal leadership principles, and criteria on which to judge the effectiveness and authenticity of their leadership to create a developmental plan to improve the effectiveness and authenticity of their leadership.

Through the sharing of their narrative belief statements and the reflective dialogue that takes place around this sharing, this assignment facilitates the transformation of student relationships from ones based on the categorization of others to ones based on students' shared humanity. These types of relationships create an environment that deepens the level of learning that takes place among students. The assignment increases the range of possible learning from purely "objective" learning to learning that also includes the subjective experience and feelings of students. Students' lives become the ultimate source of their learning. As Robert Greenleaf (1977) stated, "Nothing is meaningful until it is related to the learner's own experience" (p. 18).

Finally, the students find the exercise meaningful and based on this meaningfulness, most put more effort into it than they initially intended. The assignment provides a structure for students to actually employ what are often abstract concepts to the context of their day-to-day lives.

Appendix A
Part I: Values

Requirements

Please clearly and concisely address the following:

1. List, define and prioritize your top 5 values.
2. Provide a clear and concise description of what these 5 values mean to you and your day-to-day life.
3. Explain how you believe you obtained these values. For example, was it through a particular relationship with someone or a defining experience?
4. Explain why you prioritized your values in the above order.

(continued)

Appendix A (continued)

5. Do you discern a pattern, theme, relationship, or logic behind all of your values? In other words, what meaning do these values have as group beyond their individual meanings?

6. How do your values compare with your actions? In other words, are they consistent or inconsistent with your actions? Why or why not? If they are inconsistent, what might you do to make your actions more consistent with your values? In what type of situations is it hardest for you to remain true to your values? What elements of these situations are the strongest deterrents to living out your values?

7. *If you are currently employed or part of a work team or organization*, do your personal values complement or conflict with the organization's *official/stated* and *actual/operating* values? If they conflict, how so? How do you reconcile this difference to yourself? If they are consistent, discuss how they are consistent. What does this difference or consistency mean to your future in the organization? *If you are <u>not</u> currently employed,* how will your values affect your job search? In other words, how will your job search be different than if you did not take your values into consideration? If they will not affect your job search, why not?

8. What actions or behaviors do your values dictate with respect to your leadership? In other words, how will they affect who you will try to be as a leader and how you will act and make decisions as a leader?

9. Do you foresee a leadership situation in which your values might conflict with one another? If yes, how so. If no, why not. Please think about this; you might ask a friend what they think.

10. Write in the first person. Don't talk about the importance of your values to others; talk about these values importance to you and your life—this is an act of self-authorship.

11. Submit your written essay.

Example of Values

A leader should self-author his or her values. The below is a well-known and widely used framework for categorizing values presented by Milton Rokeach (1973) in his book titled, *The Nature of Human Values*. Its purpose is not to be an exhaustive list of values. Rather, it is to provide some examples of common values and intended to act as your point of departure.

In this book, Rokeach identifies two kinds of values: instrumental values and terminal values**.** Instrumental values are personal characteristics to which one ascribes great value, and terminal values are the goals in life that one believes are most important and desirable to achieve.

(continued)

Appendix A (continued)
Rokeach Values[a]

Terminal Values	Instrumental Values
A comfortable life	Ambitious
An exciting life	Broadminded
A sense of accomplishment	Capable
A world at peace	Cheerful
A world of beauty	Clean
Equality	Courageous
Family security	Forgiving
Freedom	Helpful
Happiness	Honest
Inner harmony	Imaginative
Mature love	Independent
National security	Intellectual
Pleasure	Logical
Salvation	Loving
Self-respect	Obedient
Social recognition	Polite
True friendship	Responsible
Wisdom	Self-controlled

a. *The Nature Of Human Values* by Milton Rokeach (T. 2.1, p. 28). Copyright 1973 by the *Free Press*. Copyright renewed in 2001 by Sandra Ball-Rokeach. Adapted with permission of the *Free Press*, a division of Simon and Schuster. All rights reserved.

Appendix B
Part II: Belief Statement

Background

The idea for this essay originated from, is based on, and will follow the format of Edward R. Murrow's 1950s radio program titled *This I Believe,* and the international project of the same name that engages "people in writing, sharing, and discussing the core values that guide their daily lives" (http://thisibelieve.org/index.php).

In 1951, the state of the Union was in flux. President Harry S. Truman had recently approved production of the Hydrogen Bomb, Senator John McCarthy had launched his war on communism, and Rosa Parks' views on public transportation had not yet ignited the civil rights movement. We were a nation torn between triumph abroad in the Second World War and failure back home on multiple levels. In an era of red fear and conflict swelling in Korea, it was at this time that the contributors to CBS's *This I Believe* radiocast instilled hope and faith through sober honesty about their beliefs.

Appendix B (continued)

Through *This I Believe*, Murrow sought "to point to the common meeting grounds of beliefs, which he believed to be the essence of brotherhood and the floor of civilization" (http://www.thisibelieve.org/aboutus.html). He hoped it would develop Americans' ability to actively listen to and empathize with one another. On a nightly basis, millions of Americans gathered around their radios to hear the words of Helen Keller, Albert Einstein, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Jackie Robinson, as well as cab drivers, cooks, and secretaries—anyone willing to articulate the guiding principles by which they lived their lives (http://www.thisibelieve.org/aboutus.html).

The "This I Believe" project has built on Murrow's work. As with Murrow's radiocasts, contributors to "This I Believe," who are from all walks of life, submit belief statement essays. The essays are then archived at www.thisibelieve.org, and some are selected to be featured on public radio in the United States and Canada (http://www.thisibelieve.org/index.php). The essays are aired on "All Things Considered" and "Weekend Edition Sunday." Through this project, "This I Believe" hopes to address the growing phenomenon of Americans simply disagreeing with one another and refusing to participate in meaningful dialogue to understand one another, respect others' beliefs, and find common ground (http://www.thisibelieve.org/aboutus.html).

Where do I begin? Suggestions to create a successful essay

1. Listen to prior essays:
   a. http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=7693473
   b. http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5587766
   c. or find all of them at:
      i. http://www.npr.org/templates/archives/archive.php?thingId=4538138&startNum=16&pageNum=1
2. Review your articulated values from Part I. Consider how your values might guide a personal belief.
3. Your essay should not be simply a regurgitation of your values exercise but rather a narrative recount of your belief told as a story.
4. "[R]ead your essay aloud to yourself several times, and each time edit it and simplify it until you find the words, tone, and story that truly echo your belief and the way you speak" (http://www.thisibelieve.org/essaywritingtips.html).
5. "We do not want a sermon, religious or lay; we do not want editorializing or sectarianism or 'finger-pointing.' We do not even want your views on the American way of life, or democracy or free enterprise. These are important but for another occasion. We want to know what you live by. And we want it in terms of 'I,' not the editorial 'We.'" (Adapted from the invitation sent to essayists featured in the original *This I Believe* series. Excerpted from *This I Believe 2*, copyright © 1954 by Help, Inc; http://www.npr.org/thisibelieve/orig_invitation.html).

(continued)

Appendix B (continued)

Requirements

1. Keep the essay short and to the point. It should be between 350 and 500 words. If the essay is kept to this length, it should take about three minutes to read at normal pace (http://www.thisibelieve.org/essaywritingtips.html).

2. Your belief statement essay should be based on *one* of you *core* beliefs. This belief should be a *concrete* belief or conviction and must be *explicitly* stated in one or two sentences within your essay (http://www.thisibelieve.org/faq.html).

3. Write your essay in the first person (i.e., "I"). Please avoid preaching or editorializing. "Tell us what you do believe, not what you don't believe. Avoid speaking in the editorial "we." Make your essay about "you" (http://www.thisibelieve.org/essaywritingtips.html).

4. Write a compelling story that accounts for how you came to hold the belief, describes a time the belief was challenged, or explains how the belief shapes or determines your day-to-day actions and interactions (http://www.thisibelieve.org/faq.html).

5. The story should be grounded in a defining personal experience, an experience that brought clarity to what is meaningful to your life or about the type of person you wish to be (http://www.thisibelieve.org/essaywritingtips.html).

6. "Your story need not be heart-warming or gut-wrenching—it can even be funny—but it should be *real*. Make sure your story ties to the essence of your daily life philosophy and the shaping of your beliefs" (http://www.thisibelieve.org/essaywritingtips.html).

7. Make it personal. Write in the language with which you are comfortable and use on a day-to-day basis. Articulate your feelings, your reaction, and your belief in relation to your experience (http://www.thisibelieve.org/essaywritingtips.html).

8. Digitally audio record your essay and upload it to your Blackboard discussion board.

9. Submit a written copy of your belief statement and a paragraph that explains how this belief informs how you lead.

Guidelines for Class Discussion of Belief Statement

The purpose of the dialogue about the belief statements is to facilitate clearer understanding of the complexity and uniqueness of others and through one's similarities and differences with others, one's self.

(continued)

Appendix B (continued)

In the class meeting for which the belief statements have been submitted, we will voluntarily play the belief statements in class. After we have listened to the belief statements, we will discuss our reactions to these belief statements.

When discussing a fellow student's belief statement, students should

- be empathetic, even when it is difficult to hear beliefs that do not support your world view
- seek to understand rather than debate
- seek to comprehend others' beliefs rather than attempt to change them
- be inquisitive rather than judgmental or critical
- express interpretations rather than judgments
- share relevant experiences rather than offer critique.

Appendix C
Part III: Leadership Principles and Criteria of Success

Requirements

1. Based on your previously identified values and belief, identify at least three personal leadership principles that you will use to guide your future leadership decision making and actions. Write these principles in the first-person. Make sure that you articulate them in a way that they could be shared with your followers and that your followers would understand what your principles mean to them in their roles as followers. In other words, if you lived out your principles, what expectations should they form about your leadership? Examples of leadership principles:
   - I lead by example
   - I will know myself and seek self improvement
   - I will develop trust and respect among my followers using honest communication
   - I will establish relationships based on mutual respect
   - I will invite feedback
   - I will be as transparent as possible
   - I will provide honest and constructive feedback to my followers
   - I will proactively listen to others
   - I will lead with integrity and consistency
2. Explain why you chose these particular principles and how they will ensure that you will be an effective and authentic leader. In other words, what will they allow you to accomplish through your leadership and how will they allow you to accomplish this?

(continued)

Appendix C (continued)

3. Identify the criteria that you will use to evaluate the success of your future leadership experiences. These are criteria that will allow you discern whether your leadership was effective and authentic. These criteria should be directly related to the achievement of your personal leadership principles.
4. Explain why you chose these particular criteria. In other words, why are these meaningful criteria to employ to assess whether you successfully achieve your leadership principle?
5. Identify possible challenges of actually employing these criteria. In other words, is there anything that would make it difficult to actually assess if you met these criteria (e.g., are the criteria measurable?) If so, how will you get around these challenges to make them meaningful?
6. What actions can you take to increase the probability of successfully achieving your criteria of success?
7. Write a *conclusion for the entire* Authentic Leadership: Leadership Values, Belief, and Principles assignment.
8. Submit your written essay.

Appendix D
Survey Questionnaires

Electronic Questionnaire

1. Was this assignment meaningful to the development of your self-understanding?
2. Did this assignment help you clarify your values?
3. Did this assignment help clarify one of your beliefs that you feel is essential to living in your day-to-day life?
4. Was this assignment meaningful to your leadership development?
5. What was your biggest challenge to successfully completing this assignment?
6. Was it meaningful to be able to listen to your classmates' belief statements?
7. Please provide any comments or suggestions that might improve students' learning from completing this assignment.

Paper Follow-Up Questionnaire

1. Was it effective to identify and prioritize your values before creating your belief statement? Please explain your response.

(continued)

Appendix D (continued)

2. Was the experience of sharing your belief statement with your classmates positive or negative? Please explain why.
3. Please describe the experience of listening to your classmates' belief statements.

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