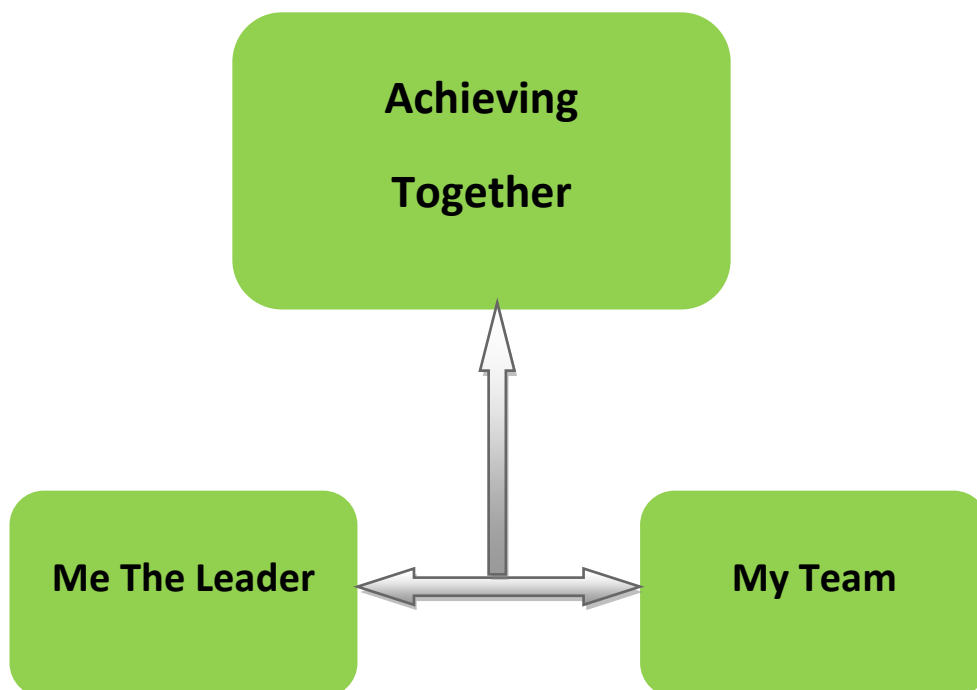

Authentic People *make* Authentic Leaders

A Journey Into Authenticity for Leaders



Contents

Introduction	3
1. The Story of Three Leaders	3
2. The Authentic Person.....	5
a. Definition of Authentic.....	5
b. The Authentic Me	5
c. Self Awareness	5
i) Building Self Awareness	6
ii) Journaling.....	6
iii) The Authenticity – Congruency Table	7
Authenticity - Congruency Table.....	8
d. Benefits of Self Awareness.....	12
e. The Results of Authentic and Inauthentic Actions.....	12
3. The Authentic Leader	13
a. Career and Role Alignment	14
b. Values and Vision Alignment	14
c. Honouring The Authentic Selves of Others	15
d. Linking Productivity to Values.....	16
4. Summary	17

Introduction

Authentic Leadership is about authentic people first and foremost. The more a leader understands their authentic self, the *real me*, the greater the authenticity in their leadership role. This is the foundational premise of this article. We will cover the following two areas:

1. The Authentic Person
2. The Authentic Leader

1. The Story of Three Leaders

Bob

Bob was the owner of a waste management company and was an incredibly passionate individual. His leadership style reflected some of the following traits:

- Assertive
- Energetic
- Fast paced
- Aggressive at times
- Direct
- Confrontational
- Non trusting
- Maintained personal control
- Initiator

His unique talent, his gift, was that of developing thriving businesses from the ground up. He was a developer and detested anything to do with the routine of daily management or maintenance.

Bob was solely focused on continual growth and expansion. Consolidation wasn't a phrase he would entertain. While he had the sense to bring in good people, many of them were developers like himself which simply continued to fuel the expansive sales fire that was already raging. Given the leadership traits that I mentioned above, the management team never had sufficient time to implement the strategies and plans to bring order due to his incessant growth pursuits. There would be a decision made by Bob and the team, only to be overturned soon after. He called incessantly, unable to fully trust his people. They in turn felt undervalued, not listened to, continually directionless (or if they did have direction it was very short lived) and never really felt like they were contributing anything of substance.

We could say that Bob was leading authentically as to who he was as a person. The traits I mentioned above was Bob through and through – at work and outside of work. His actions were consistent with this true self yet, his unchecked authentic style did more harm than good.

Here arises one of the key questions with the term Authentic Leadership: *How do I lead in a way that is authentically me yet also effectively lead my people toward the achievement of the companies goals, vision and mission?*

Ian

The second leader I would like to mention is the former Chief Executive of Orica. While I don't know Ian personally there was some excellent media coverage on his departure from the explosives giant.

From reviewing the articles it would appear that Ian shared Bob's top six traits - those being assertiveness, energetic, fast paced, aggressive at times, direct and confrontational.

What is interesting about his situation was that he was in the process of *style adaptation*. That is, he was seeking to modify (what I read to be) his authentic self with those he led. He was seeking to lead more authentically from understanding others.

Full credit to Ian for his very honest admissions and that I think every leader would do well to emulate.

One of the articles can be found at <http://www.smh.com.au/business/oricas-ian-smith-confesses-to-aggressive-behaviour-20150318-1m2019.html>

Tony

The last leader I would like to highlight is a man called Tony who was the managing director of a company in the industrial sector. Tony requested my assistance to increase the productivity of his management team (who were already performing highly) and to assist with the preparation and positioning of them for his future three year plan. I subsequently met with each manager to begin the consultative process and all of them expressed a similar perspective on Tony's leadership. It could be summarised as follows:

"I know that Tony values my contribution to the company. I feel valued by him and know that he will do anything to support me in my role but...I wouldn't want to cross him. "

Tony exemplified some of the traits that both Bob and Ian shared yet had the ability to exercise a style of leadership I term as tough love. He could be tough when required - thus the "I wouldn't want to cross him" as per above, but his people felt the love. A great balance. What was also interesting about Tony's leadership was that he had mastered the ability to be *authentically himself while leading his people in a way to allow them to be authentically themselves*. You could say that he honoured their authentic selves, freeing them to work in an environment of trust and autonomy.

So in summary:

- Bob was leading purely from his authentic self without thought to the effect it was having on his people or the company's results as a whole.
- Ian Smith listened to others and was adapting his style. He was in transition.
- Tony's leadership was out of his true self yet he was able to adapt his style in the leadership of each of his management team.

One Aspect of Authentic Leadership

The Authentic Leader is one who has a significant understanding of who they are at the core of their being. They are self aware, understanding their strengths and limitations. They are also other aware in that they understand the people they lead. Through this self awareness and other awareness they are then positioned to adapt their leadership style to create ongoing results through high performing teams.

2. The Authentic Person

a. Definition of Authentic

The word authentic simply means that of undisputed origin, not a copy, genuine, real, not false. When we bring this into the subject of leadership there are two facets of this that I deem as necessary:

- Understanding and honouring my own authentic self
- Understanding and the honouring of my teams authentic selves.

b. The Authentic Me

A Jewish writer once declared “I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” And what a great summary. We are in fact a total sum of parts, not just the tangible aspect of our make - up but also the intangible. Here are some of the elements that make up the wonderful you, the wonderful me.

- Purpose
- Values
- Skills
- Gifts and Talents
- Wisdom
- History – defining life moments; insights; memories etc.
- History and Present Disparity
- Core Behaviours
- Personality Traits
- Self Image
- Beliefs
- Major Goals
- Motivations and Needs
- Interests and Passions
- Weaknesses
- Addictions and Obsessions

c. Self Awareness

Daniel Goleman, in his book Emotional Intelligence mentions a number of pillars, two of which are *Self Awareness* and *Self Regulation*. Understanding our authentic selves is essentially self awareness. Adaptive leadership is in many ways self regulation. Out of the awareness of who we are, we are better equipped to be other aware and thus regulate our leadership style accordingly. True to ourselves, true to our people, true to the organisations goals and vision.

My observation in working with people, whether that be from the workers on the shop floor to the top echelons of management, is that the awareness of oneself and the corresponding management of one’s emotions and adaptive leadership styles tend to be very secondary (or absent in many cases). I find most people purely operate out of their genuine selves automatically, rather than stepping back, understanding others, assessing the best approach and then leading accordingly.

i) Building Self Awareness

Growing in self awareness doesn't happen on its own accord. Women by nature tend to be more self aware than their male counterparts yet for all of us, taking time on a regular basis to understand ourselves is essential for our ongoing leadership roles. Not only is this important in leadership but self awareness and the principles discussed here will stand us in good stead for the variety of relationships and interactions we have on a daily basis.

Here are some ways you can increase your own self awareness.

- Listen to your body. What is it telling you? e.g. Fatigue, muscle tension; playful, fun
- Listen to what others (especially those closest to you) are saying about you. Is the feedback consistent?
- Practice driving, walking or sitting in silence. Don't fill your world with noise and the ubiquitous mobile technology. What concerns, thoughts and feelings surface when you are quiet?
- Read information on basic psychology
- What pushes your buttons? People, comments, situations.
- What are your obsessions, addictions, weak areas?
- What brings you joy?
- What creates angst?

ii) Journaling

One of the disciplines I have maintained for the past thirty years is that of journaling. Most often it is daily but rarely longer than a week passes without writing. Not only do I have a thirty year documented history (that I am sure my kids will find a fascinating and enlightening read when I pass from this earth), but this one discipline has created a self awareness like nothing else could have. Here are some of the areas I document:

- Yesterday. The events, people, meetings, travel , encounters experienced
- Today. What I am thinking and feeling in the present. I try to connect with my dominant thoughts and moods.
- Reframe. I try to make sense of things, reframing as necessary to gain a more correct perspective, especially if my mood and thoughts are not particularly useful to the coming days work.
- My goals, dreams and plans. I heard recently that only one in four people write down their goals and only one in a hundred review these goals. By doing this exercise it sends you right to the top.

iii) The Authenticity – Congruency Table

Below you will find the Authenticity – Congruency Table that I created to facilitate a more analysis driven approach to the self discovery process. An online version can be found at <http://www.rayhodge.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Authenticity-Congruency-Table.docx>

Here is an explanation of the tables components.

Life areas. These are the areas that make up the self.

Who I am. This column seeks to identify who I am at the core of my being - my authentic self.

What I do. Here we seek to identify the behaviours that are incongruent to our authentic self.

Stretch areas. What are the areas within my career, relational or leadership spheres that are creating a stretch beyond the zone of my authentic self?

I suggest you keep this table handy over a period of a few weeks and as things come to light to complete it as you go.

Authenticity - Congruency Table

Life Areas	Who I am Authentic Self	What I do Inauthentic Behaviours	Stretch Areas: Relational, Career, Leadership spheres
Purpose What do you sense is your purpose for being on planet earth?			
Values What do you value? What does your time, thoughts, energy and money go towards? e.g. freedom, timeliness, power, education, personal development, health etc.	Example: Peacefulness	Go out to noisy bars every weekend and fill all space with people and activities	Managing the current conflict with Peter
Skills and Strengths What are the skills you have learned through life?			
Gifts and Talents What do you do that seems to be easy, you enjoy and experience very high results in?			

<p>Wisdom In what areas do you have experience, knowledge, and good judgement?</p>			
<p>History – defining moments What are the defining moments in your history? What are the key contributors that have led you to this point? Key people you have met that influenced your life.</p>			
<p>History and The Present What have you enjoyed doing that you no longer do or do little of?</p>			
<p>Core Behaviours Do we tend to be fast or moderately paced? People oriented or task oriented; detailed or big picture etc?</p>			
<p>Personality Traits What are the characteristics and qualities that make you you? e.g. introverted, playful etc.</p>			

Self Image Healthy and high; unhealthy and low?			
Beliefs e.g. Rich people are greedy			
Major Goals e.g. Move to Italy; Build a mansion: put my children through private school?			
Motivations and Needs Largely linked to your what you value. What motivates you? What needs drive you?			
Interests and Passions e.g. Soccer; dancing; wine etc.			

Weaknesses What are the weaker areas in your life? These can reflect career, leadership roles, relational etc.			
Addictions			
Obsessions Where do you tend to be obsessive in your life that can have a damaging effect? E.g. worrying intensely; focus on one thing to the exclusion of all else.			

d. Benefits of Self Awareness

The benefits of increased self awareness include:

- We are more at home in ourselves. There is an ease about our life.
- When we are tuned into ourselves we can regulate our actions and behaviours more effectively and quickly. We live congruently without ongoing internal conflict .
- Being *self aware* makes us better at being *other aware*.
- We are less likely to burn ourselves out.
- In becoming more personable we become more approachable.
- We gain a sense of understanding how our histories have contributed to where we are today; to the person we've become and the person we want to be.
- Awareness of our obsessions and addictions enables us to create strategies to either avoid them (addictions) or manage them (obsessions).
- Self aware leaders are better leaders.

e. The Results of Authentic and Inauthentic Actions

The graphic below demonstrates action alignment to the authentic self. In the case of Inauthenticity, the actions that we live out are at odds with the authentic self. This kind of living creates internal conflict within the person. We might experience high anxiety, stress and tension, torment, lack of happiness etc. right through to a self loathing/hatred. This can be highly damaging at one end of the spectrum and create low productivity and motivation on the other. The authentic person on the other hand who has closely aligned actions experiences an inner congruency with a sense of balance and internal ease.

Inauthenticity



Authenticity



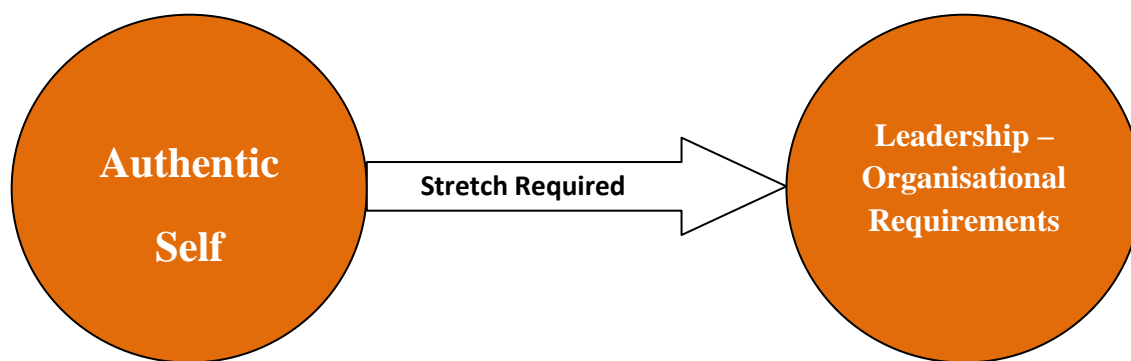
3. The Authentic Leader

Authentic leadership is first and foremost about the leader themselves. It is not so much about *what I must do* but more focused on *who I am*.

Here I would like to look at:

1. Career and Role alignment
2. Values and Vision alignment
3. Honouring the authentic selves of others
4. Linking Productivity to Values

One of the challenges faced when working with any organisation is the stretch. What is the distance between who and where I am at personally to what is demanded of me in order to achieve the synchronicity of alignment. It is worthwhile to consider what I call the stretch factor.



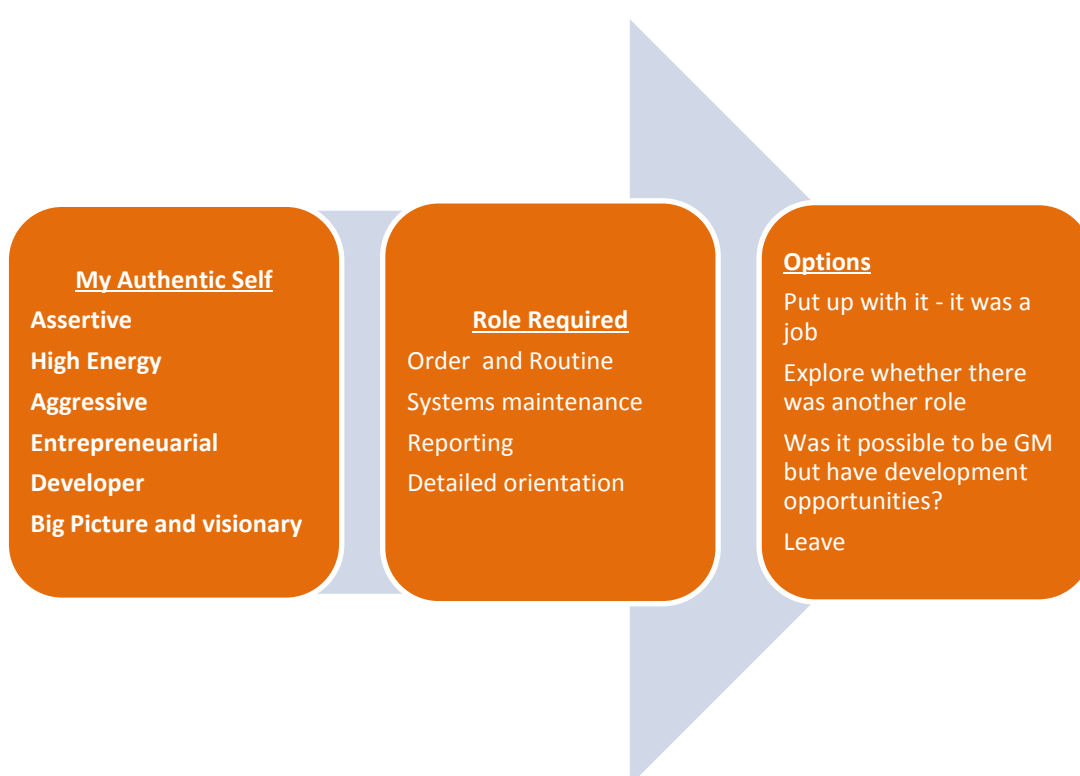
The question here is when I understand myself how do I lead in a way that is authentically me, yet meets the needs of my people and the companies vision and goals?

Thoughts on Maintaining Authenticity In The Stretch

- Being self aware is the best start. When you are self aware you can more rationally deal with one off situations.
- Can I make the stretch? Can I adapt in a way that meets the requirements yet maintain action alignment.
- How can you link the requirements to who you are? What are the benefits to you?
- If it's a stretch with people, find a common value in them that connects you with them and appeal to those highest values. Link improvement to their highest values helping them see the benefit in it for themselves.

a. Career and Role Alignment

At one stage in my career I accepted the role as General Manager for a company in the construction/ tourism industry. While I was able to perform the required tasks I found that the longer I maintained the role the increasingly unhappy I became. I would clock in at 8am and spend my days on reporting, financial management and dealing with the day to day issues. One of the staff members would stop by and reference me light-heartedly as the boring one. Meanwhile, in the office next to me was the business owner. He was constantly on the move building the business, negotiating the next contract and flitting around the country. I thought "I want his job." As time progressed I realised I had to make some changes. I chose to leave and align my role and career with who I was at the core. Below is a pictorial representation.



b. Values and Vision Alignment

I know someone personally who is a talented graphic designer yet he won't work for companies who are misaligned to his core values. One of these is his disagreement of gambling. He refuses to work on such projects that promote this service.

Our work must align to our person. Not just the role but an alignment of what the organisation stands for and promotes against our authentic selves.

Highly engaged workers are those who are psychologically committed to the companies goals and vision. They invest discretionary effort and give their utmost deriving high satisfaction from their work. When our true selves and our belief in the organisation is aligned, high engagement is much more likely along with higher productivity and greater satisfaction. Our work actions are in alignment.

c. Honouring The Authentic Selves of Others

Observing business owners and management across the country has caused me to come to the conclusion that most of us are so absorbed in the fulfilment of our actual roles, responsibilities and meeting performance goals that those we lead tend to come second place. Instead of viewing company growth as a team effort, much of the effort is individualistic. A classic example is how difficult it is for leaders to maintain regular team meetings. If you don't value 'team' then staff meetings go by the wayside. The companies that do place a high value on their people are more likely to meet consistently and socialise together on a regular basis.

The other observation is the perspective that we as people tend to see *different equals wrong* as opposed to *different equals different*. We tend to like people who are similar to us and discount the rest, leaving them to get on with their work with decreased support.

If we as leaders could see that different equals different and thus honour those differences within the people we lead, engagement levels would increase along with the resulting productivity. Below is a classic scenario we find in the workplace.

Life Areas	Gary – Vice President	Peter – General Manager
Values	Career and Money	Family
Skills	Organisation	Organisation
Gifts and Talents	Finance	Strategy
Wisdom	Makes sense of conflicting views	Understands people intuitively
History	No loss in his life	Loss of a previous wife to cancer and child to suicide
Behaviours	Dominant	Stable/Steady
Personality	Extrovert	Introvert
Self Image	High	Low
Beliefs	Everyone should work as hard as him	Results not time are what counts
Goals	Get to the top no matter how	Being a loving provider for his family
Motivations	Expansive public perception	The personal well being and engagement of his team
Interests and Passions	Work	Coaching his sons soccer team

You will notice the strong differences between the two people above. I have seen the case time and time again where someone like Gary will judge others like Peter for being slack in their work despite the fact that Peter may demonstrate high productivity. We tend to judge the surface of things as opposed to looking at actual results.

Tim Ferris in his book *The 4-Hour Work Week* speaks about his first job at an ice cream parlour where he was hired for eight hours a day but completed the job in one hour. He worked smart not hard. After three days he was fired with a parting comment from the boss saying that perhaps in the future he would understand the importance of hard work. This is the classic difference where one judges the other based on their own standards as opposed to seeing that different equals different and honouring the fact that the 'different' person may actually have some qualities that are worthwhile. The other issue here that companies would do well to emulate is the focus on outputs not inputs. Does it really matter if Peter is meeting or exceeding his performance criteria within the work day rather than staying till 7pm like Gary does every day?

Honouring the differences that each of us have, valuing those differences and allowing employees to have a sense of freedom within an environment of trust, autonomy and accountability is a powerful combination for high performance if managers are smart.

d. Linking Productivity to Values

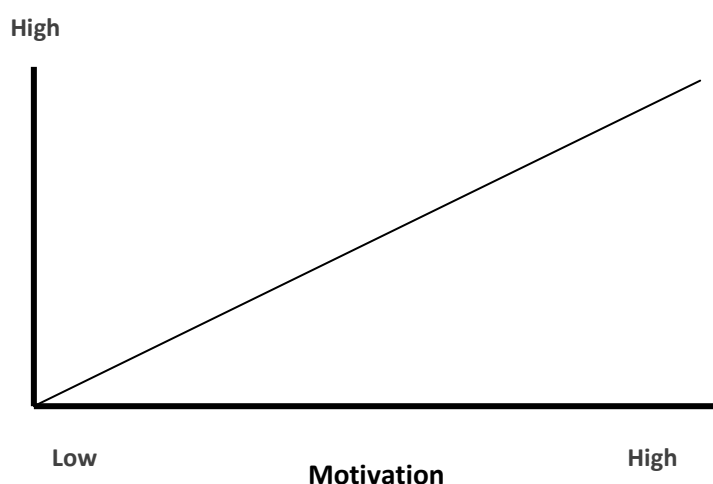
Some time back I consulted to an industrial firm. Part of the improvement initiative was increasing the sales performance of the account manager. His current performance was sub-par. He was always under budget, showed up and went through the motions, meandering his way through his days. I spent some time with him to understand who he was and in particular, what his highest values were. This man would do anything for anyone, was a very giving person and lived solely for his family. A couple of his goals were that he wanted to provide the best schooling for his children and to take his whole family to Disneyland at the end of that year.

Once I understood these higher values, I then showed him the data on his current (subpar) performance and the bonuses that could be reaped if he improved his sales. What was I doing? I was linking his daily actions, his work performance to his highest values – his family. He got it. He then understood that the more he produced, the more he would be paid and the better provider he would be for his family. His performance increased significantly. Understand what a person values, link their responsibilities to those values demonstrating how the person will be better off and you have a high chance of seeing significant shifts within both yourself and your team. This is part of the process of honouring another's authentic self and adapting our style accordingly.

I remember some time back I was working on getting my fitness back but it was a hard slog. My highest priorities at the time were financial and career with health somewhere near the bottom. Given that we are more likely to be motivated by the values at the top of the ladder and less motivated by those toward the bottom I had to find a way of *linking* my health (lowest) to career and finance (my highest) in order to increase my fitness. As I exercised I kept asking myself "How does my being healthy benefit my business and finances?" Linking any change required to our highest values assists in providing the motivation required for that change. Whether it relates to work performance, relationships, addictions and the like, establishing this link provides increased momentum and the intrinsic motivation to both make the changes and to see permanent transformation.

This graphic demonstrates the direct link between motivation and values. The more we value something the more likely we are to be motivated toward it.

Value



4. Summary

My observations from working with leaders for over twenty five years are that authentic leaders are those who live true to themselves yet adapt to the authenticity of the team member – to serve and lead them in a way that is most appropriate to that person. In order for them to do this they have an understanding of those they lead. It is about self awareness and other awareness. It is about getting the best results for the organisation by raising the bar high, keeping people accountable and working WITH them for the achievement of such.

I wish you all the best in your business and in your own personal journey into authenticity - in the developing understanding of yourself and others in order that you may be an exceptional leader in your field.

Contact Information

Ray Hodge

'Improving critical business efficiencies to dramatically increase key results'

Website: rayhodge.com.au

Direct Email: ray@rayhodge.com.au

Phone: +61 403 341105

About Ray Hodge

Ray improves critical organisational efficiencies to dramatically increase key results. Whether process, people, strategy, finance, sales and marketing etc, he works with startup companies through to large organisations - the Department of the Australian Prime Minister and Cabinet included on his list of accomplishments. Ray has held general manager positions, operated his own businesses and has over 25 years experience in public speaking, coaching and consulting.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with Ray if he can be of service.