

How Leaders Develop Their Authenticity

And how you can too



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Oct 24 · 4 min read ★



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have all heard the famous “fake it till you make it” quote. Commonly used by entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley acting like big shots until they either create a unicorn company or burn it to the ground.

Faking your sense of leadership may work at first, but through time, everything sneaks through the cracks. Your true colors will always show. Simon Sinek is famous for saying that leaders do not necessarily work in leadership roles. Entry-level employees can be more of a leader than their immediate boss.

Simon also explains how leadership is a skill and can be learned through practice and application.

True leaders know how silly the “fake it till you make it” mentality is. Otherwise, this article would have been named “How to Fake Leadership Skills.” Having a deeper understanding is key to becoming an authentic leader. Whether you’re a manager, parent, counselor, or CEO, leading is bringing the best out of those around you and growing together.

Below, I detail important steps on how to better understand yourself. Understanding yourself is the first step in becoming an authentic leader

1. Search for Feedback

Begin to engage with those around you and constantly ask what their perception is of you. Typically, we like to think we are more of a leader than what others think. Ask your co-workers how strong you are with certain leadership qualities such as motivation, integrity, passion, and creativity.

This step is critical to understand what your strengths and weaknesses are. We may think we are great motivators but find out from those around us that we just can’t excite people as much as we should be able to.

Building a foundation and learning what skills need developing is key to becoming an authentic leader. Being a great leader does not mean being great in every leadership quality. But knowing you must make continual improvements in those qualities.

2. Tailor your Style

Learning to adapt to different situations gives comfort to those around you. It shows you are confident walking into any room. Do not confuse this with cockiness or arrogance. Tailoring your style allows you to adapt based on the task at hand.

For example, you must display empathy towards those around you and let your guard down in tough situations at the same time as remaining stoic and confident during press releases. Having flexible styles is authentic as long as they come from an authentic place.

This is not to mean you change who you are depending on every situation. You always stay authentic but adapt to those around you to show you're there for them.

3. Reflect on Performance

Take time at the end of the day or week to review your actions. How did you improve your qualities? Did you jump into character or were you authentic? Were you there for your employees? Did you create an atmosphere to help them perform their best work? Did you make them better people?

Reviewing allows you to take a step back and see the progress you have made. Check off goals you wanted to hit and create new ones. This is the time to seek more feedback and see what qualities you've improved upon.

Leadership is like learning a new language. It must be practiced every day.

You must first understand what qualities need to be worked on before you go at it again tomorrow.

4. Passion and Purpose

You must first understand why you want to lead people. Are you doing it for the raise in salary of becoming a manager? The fancy position name on LinkedIn? The bragging rights of leading a division? All of these are the wrong reasons. Leaders are those who want to see the ones around them grow. Leaders want to make everyone into better people for the greater good.

You must have the passion inside of you to lead. Knowing that you must make all the tough decisions and take responsibility for failures is part of it. The passion to lead is not all about dreams and vision but also trials and tribulations.

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It takes years of practice in becoming a great leader. Knowing you must fail over and over to become a better leader is key. Authentic leadership is about being self-aware and improving your relationship with those around you.

You must understand great leaders do not try and hide their flaws, they seek to understand them.

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