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Authentic Leaders are happier, healthier and more successful

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Yes, I know it's a bold claim, but it turns out that it's true! In this short article I'm going to explain why it's true and back it up with the research evidence to prove it. Then I'm going to explain how you can become a more Authentic Leader, so that you can live a happier, healthier, more successful and yes, longer, life.

The thing about being authentic, which means being true to yourself and your own core personal and professional values, is that you have both an anchor, to steady yourself in the rough seas of unprofessional or unethical behaviour of others, and you also have a personal compass that keeps you aligned to your 'true north' (1).

Being authentic and self-aware enough to know who you are at your core and what's really important to you helps you make decisions that are congruent with your value-set. This helps to make you both happier, and less stressed. As a recent meta-analysis showed that living authentically is positively correlated with happiness and negatively correlated with anxiety and stress (2). In fact, even better, another recent review of 160 independent studies has shown that being happier in yourself and having a positive outlook leads to better health and a longer life (3).

My research, conducted with the RAF, as part of a PhD project, has identified 3 Pillars of Authentic Leadership: self-awareness, self-regulation and an ethical orientation. All of which help to improve the quality of the personal and professional relationships that you have with others.

"The strongest predictor of happiness is not money, or external recognition through success or fame, it's having meaningful social relationships."

Professor June Gruber at Yale University

So you see, because of the quality of their relationships, their increased levels of self-assurance, their personal courage and their self-awareness, Authentic Leaders really are happier, healthier, more successful and likely to live longer. So don't you owe it to yourself to become one?

References:

(1) George, B. (2007a) True North: Discover your Authentic Leadership. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco

(2) Susing, I. et al (2011) The potential use of the Authenticity Scale as an outcome measure in executive coaching. The Coaching Psychologist, vol 7, (1), 16-25

(3) Diener, E. & Chan, M. Y. (2011) Happy People Live Longer: Subjective Well-Being Contributes to Health and Longevity Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being, 2011, 3(1), 1-43

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