



# *Extraordinary Leadership*

*Connecting With Your Seven Core Abilities to  
Bring Out the Extraordinary Abilities in Others*

Cher Holton, Ph.D.



Liberty Publishing Group

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*Dedicated to Bil, my incredible husband, business partner, dance partner, and definitely “my person,” without whom I would never be the person I am ~ and to Ray Miklos, the best manager I ever had—an amazing leader who taught me more about leadership in the four years I worked for him than I learned in any class I ever took, any book I ever read, or from any other leader I ever experienced.*



*When leaders lead from the highest levels of  
their Core Abilities, people will respond in  
extraordinary ways!*

*(Cher Holton)*



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# *Introduction*

All leaders want to believe that deep within their souls there is a very special reason they are in leadership positions, that they have something valuable to contribute to the world, that they have a special purpose, that they are contributing to their organization through their leadership experiences. They also have a sense for the kind of lives they'd like to live and a desire to find the right kinds of opportunities which suit their talents and aspirations. And you can be sure that their colleagues and employees feel the same way.

Yet for far too many leaders, those inner promptings and ardent hopes have become detoured by the frustrations and lost opportunities associated with the daily grind of work expectations. Many leaders have given up on what they thought they could be. Hundreds have settled for ordinariness, or succumbed to the weariness and stress of the job. Hundreds more hold onto their dreams but fail to take the necessary steps to make those dreams real. To the extent this may describe you or the people you manage, let the portions of this book that speak to you be your call to action.

Psychologists have told us that we can't completely separate our personal lives from our work lives. We carry residues of our unrealized dreams, our frustrations and lost opportunities, and our negative self-concepts with us to work. All of our life experience, in one form or another, accompanies us to the office, to the work floor, to the board room. It impacts the way we show up as leaders, and seeps into every leadership action we take.

When we get busy at work, the deeper parts of us may seem to go away for a while by slipping into our subconsciousness—but guess what? These deeper parts are still there! Our effectiveness as leaders depends on how well we're able to manage our human vulnerabilities and virtues as we lead, and that depends on our state

of mind, our self-discipline, our commitment and focus to the work at hand. This determines how engaged or disengaged we are as we lead, which in turn determines how engaged or disengaged our employees will be. Luckily, you have incredible Core Abilities within you that guarantee your being able to become an Extraordinary Leader.

In this highly innovative leadership book, you'll discover guaranteed prescriptions to help you, as a leader, achieve the productivity, engagement, teamwork, and results you deserve by transforming yourself into an Extraordinary Leader—because you have aligned yourself with your Core Nature.

I guarantee more employee engagement as a result of your enrollment in the prescriptions I present. Why am I so confident—and enthusiastic? Because the type of engagement I'm offering is the genuine convergence of both your extraordinary qualities and the extraordinary qualities of those who work for you. And I've got the science to prove it!

*Your Core Nature is 'The  
Extraordinary You' waiting to  
be released, allowing you to  
become an Extraordinary Leader.*

The material in this book is grounded in the sciences of positive psychology, neuroscience, quantum physics, sociology, and positivity. I believe that including scientific research adds depth and credibility to the leadership theories and practices I provide, and creates an easy-to-understand guide for the practical application and use of the seven Core Abilities that can literally transform you and the people who work for you. The symphony of productivity that results from an engaged environment is extraordinary! I've seen it! Leaders who establish a climate of genuine and sustained employee engagement enjoy the benefits of leading involved and dedicated employees. Employees who feel valued for their talents and contributions will drive themselves toward unbelievable excellence. I've seen that too!

Unfortunately, in many cases organizations have not discovered the key for honest and sustained employee engagement. Consider the latest Gallop Poll statistics:

A new Gallup poll finds that 52% of all full-time workers in America aren't involved in, enthusiastic about or committed to their work. Another 18% are 'actively disengaged,' meaning they have gone beyond just checking out mentally, emotionally, and physically. That leaves just 30% of American workers who feel excited about their jobs.

That's an amazing set of statistics! You might want to compare your experience with what these numbers say. It's not for lack of leadership training ... there is a plethora of programs focusing on leadership! But something seems to still be missing, which is why this book remains a cut above traditional leadership and employee engagement programs. Traditional leadership development and employee engagement strategies, in and of themselves, are not the panacea for sustainable growth. Conventional practices such as open communication; job performance clarity and timely feedback; nurturing organizational culture; wellness and productivity programs; well-managed rewards and recognition systems; on-site day care and exercise rooms; amicable and respectful relationships between managers, peers, and hourly employees; career development opportunities; employee retention strategies; flexible work hours; and management transparency are all beneficial, but not sufficient to ensure sustainable employee engagement.

Most traditional employee engagement strategies are based on extrinsic incentives and rewards which work for a while, but then lose their luster. I call these strategies **e-Engagement**. In fact, most e-Engagement strategies will get people to work, and will even serve as initial motivators in order to maintain a certain life style level; however, once that level is obtained, e-Engagement techniques will have little impact on inspiring the higher levels of behavior we

desire from employees (such as initiative, creativity, innovation, commitment, and accountability).

For these high qualities, leaders need a different strategy—an intrinsic employee engagement I call **i-Engagement**. And it begins with looking at yourself! Too many bright, conscientious, talented leaders get so caught up in material success and ego pursuits (extrinsic incentives) that they neglect the one thing that will make them effective, productive, and successful leaders: connecting with their Core Nature, the deeper part of them that is the seat of their higher functioning, their phenomenal abilities, their incredible uniqueness, their realized potential! This is the ultimate intrinsic reward. Their Core Nature is that extraordinary part of them waiting to be released!

From my experience, leaders will not achieve what they want to achieve, be what they want to be, and do what they believe they are put here to do until they make this connection—the connection with their Core Nature. Once that connection is made, all the rest of their lives falls into place.

**It just makes good business sense to get in touch with your deeper, more positively oriented self—The Extraordinary You.**

I invite you to enjoy the experience of discovering your extraordinary nature and leading a team of truly engaged employees. I believe you have what it takes to nurture the deeper, more optimistic nature that's inherent in you and in all of your people. As a work and life enrichment impact consultant, that's my forte—helping you cultivate your Extraordinary Leadership abilities so you can help your people think and be more positive and engaged as they express their extraordinary abilities.

Here's my guarantee: Using the strategies outlined in this book *will* help you develop into an Extraordinary Leader—a leader who builds a team of people who feel good about themselves, recognize their skills and talents, and work together to be more productive and less complaining, more enthusiastic and less pessimistic, more engaged and less distracted, more positive and less moody, more present and less absent. And you will see that reflected in your

bottom line with increased profitability, market share sustainability, and happier, more committed, totally engaged employees.

No matter where you are in life, you want more of the things that you believe will make you happy, healthy, productive, and fulfilled. It doesn't matter how well you are already doing, or aren't; how prosperous you already are, or not; how professionally fulfilled you are, or not; how financially stable you are, or aren't—you have the choice of making the all important connection with the Extraordinary You, your Deeper Self, your Core Nature.

Making that choice is the difference between your leadership success and feeling that you're in the wrong career. It's the difference between feeling fulfilled and wondering if you'll ever achieve anything worthwhile. It's the difference between the current you and the leader you'd like to be.

*A Quick Exercise of "Futuring"*  
*Let's take a quick look back to the year 2001. What was going on?*

- George W. Bush was sworn in as the 43rd President of the United States
- NASCAR legend Dale Earnhardt died in a last lap crash in the Daytona 500
- Apple announced iTunes at the MacWorld Expo in San Francisco
- Wikipedia, a free Wiki content encyclopedia, went online and became "THE" source of information
- Millionaire Dennis Tito became the world's first civilian space tourist
- The Human Genome Sequence was revealed
- The Arizona Diamondbacks defeated the heavily-favored New York Yankees in seven games to win their first World Series
- 32 year-old Erik Weihenmayer, of Boulder, Colorado, became the first sight-challenged person to reach the summit of Mount Everest
- Enron filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy

- Apple released the iPod and Microsoft followed with the release of Windows XP
- Noah, a gaur (Southeast Asian ox), was born, and was the first animal of an endangered species to be cloned
- The Leaning Tower of Pisa reopened to the tune of \$27,000,000 to fortify it without fixing its famous lean
- On June 6th, Sasha Obama was born. She was the daughter of Barack Obama and Michelle Obama, who would later become the 44th President (and first African-American President) and the First Lady.
- Almost 3,000 people were killed in suicide attacks on September 11th at the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, and in rural Shanksville, Pennsylvania

The year 2001 was certainly a year to remember. Think for a moment. Where were you then? What were you doing? What were you like? How old were you? Who were your friends? What were your hopes and dreams? How did these events change your perspective about the world—about yourself?

What if someone had asked you then, “Where will you be twenty years from now?”—“What will you be doing?”—“What kind of career will you have?” “What will be your greatest accomplishments?” How would you have answered them?

Are you where you thought you’d be today? Have you accomplished what you thought you would? What is important to you now? Looking at your own life, what major personal and/or professional experiences have shaped your life over the last fifteen to twenty years? How many of the goals you have set over this time period have you actually accomplished? Have you discovered your life purpose yet? Are you the leader you thought you would be? Have you fulfilled your highest potential? Who is the real you?

There’s one thing the answers to these questions have in common: They all depend on the extent to which you’ve connected with what neuroscientists refer to as your Deeper Self and to what I call the Extraordinary You. This book will help you make that connection even stronger, and allow you to become an Extraordinary Leader.



## Understanding Your Core Nature

“Know thyself” is an ancient Greek aphorism that was inscribed in the forecourt of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. It has been used throughout history as an injunction for all of us to take getting to know ourselves seriously. There are a growing number of leaders who have taken the injunction seriously and have achieved the health, wealth, and happiness they sought. I believe that when each of us gets *us* right, our world will be right. The *us*, of course, is the Extraordinary Us, the *us* we discover when we are aligned with our Core Nature.

Your Core Nature is the foundation of your being. It is the wise you; the resourceful you; the you who has all of the answers; the you who has the strength to lift a car off a loved one; the you who has the ability to memorize a series of 500 numbers in their exact order; the you who can survive stage four cancer and go on to live a healthy, happy life; the you who can break cinder blocks with your bare hand; the you who can discover the innovative solution to a business issue; the you who knows how to create an environment conducive to engagement, productivity, and growth.

Your Core Nature is real. Philosophers and spiritual leaders have referred to it. But so have psychologists and sociologists. Psychologist D. W. Winnicott coined the term “True Self” in 1960 to describe a “sense of self based on spontaneous authentic experience, a sense of all-out personal aliveness” or “feeling real.” Psychologist Alice Miller agrees and says that when the “True Self” is liberated it “emerges like a butterfly liberated from its chrysalis and an unexpected wealth of vitality is released.” Psychologist Carl Rogers also referred to it as the True Self. Psychologist Daniel Stern calls it the Core Self; Psychoanalyst Eric Fromm called it the Original Self; neuroscientist Andrew Newberg refers to it as our Deeper Self. I call it our Core Nature—the “Extraordinary You!”

We all have that ‘Self’ psychologists, neuroscientists, and psychoanalysts talk about. You have it. Your colleagues have it. Your direct reports have it. Your customers and suppliers have it. Your key stakeholders have it.

Try reading the next paragraph out loud ... as you look at yourself in the mirror. Try replacing “you” with “me.”

*I believe in the Extraordinary You, the Wise You, the Spectacular You, the Authentic You, the Phenomenal You, the Peerless You, the Exceptional You, the Unparalleled You, the Legendary You, the Marvelous You, the One-of-a-Kind You, the Remarkable You, the Awesome You, the Astounding You, the Stunning You, the Electrifying You, the Sensational You, the Mesmerizing You, the Amazing You, the Spellbinding You, the Hypnotic You, the Fascinating You, the Fantabulous You, the Stupendous You, the Jaw-Dropping You, the Mind-Boggling You, the Dazzling You, the Brilliant You.*

If it sounds like I'm going over-board with those descriptions, I invite you to think for a moment about how much of your hidden potential goes unnoticed. I encourage you to think about leaders you admire who have done extraordinary things. And I certainly hope you'll research people who have amazing talents and abilities, who have pushed the limits of human capacity. The world is full of individuals who have expressed their extraordinary nature in one area or another.

You have an *Extraordinary You* hiding within you that is just waiting to be expressed. Your employees and colleagues have an "Extraordinary Nature" that's just waiting to be expressed, as do your customers, suppliers, and contractors. As an Extraordinary Leader, you have the privilege and responsibility to cultivate this core nature within those who work for you and with you, and bring out their Extraordinary Nature too.

## **A Quick Peek at the Science**

The underlying goal of this book to help leaders connect with their extraordinary nature. It is a hero's journey. It is a 'work-in-progress' personal journey of introspection, self-discovery (improving the everyday you), and Self-recovery (becoming consciously one with your Core Nature—the Extraordinary You, the Wise You, the Spectacular You, the Authentic You, the Fantabulous You, your Deeper Self ... you get the point). But even more, research has proven that when people are able to work in an



environment that reinforces their extraordinary nature, amazing things happen!

According to a study reported in *Personnel Psychology*, there are strong correlations between employee engagement and desirable business outcomes such as retention of talent, customer service, individual performance, team performance, business unit productivity, and even enterprise-level financial performance.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout this book, I will be citing various quotes, research findings, and relevant supporting data drawn from a variety of scientific fields. I felt it might be helpful to give you a quick peek at the major sciences I've included, so you recognize my approach is evidence-based and research-supported.



***Positive Psychology*** is a recent branch of psychology whose purpose was summed up by Martin Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in the following statement: “We believe that a psychology of positive human functioning will arise, which achieves a scientific understanding and effective interventions to build thriving individuals, families, and communities.” Positive psychologists seek “to find and nurture genius and talent,” and “to make normal life more fulfilling,” and not simply to treat mental illness.<sup>2</sup>

The current research in Positive Psychology supports my belief that you can, indeed, create a work environment that is conducive to employee engagement—that supports a strong work ethic, enhanced profits, and strengthened commitment to customer

satisfaction—while at the same time allowing employees to be enriched and encouraged to use their strengths and talents to the fullest. Throughout this book, I quote various research findings and thoughts expressed by scientists in this field, to help clarify the incredible impact the development of the seven Core Abilities can have in your organization and in the lives of every person working with you.

*Neuroscience* is the scientific study of the nervous system. Traditionally, neuroscience was seen as a branch of biology; however, it is currently viewed as an interdisciplinary science which collaborates with other fields such as chemistry, biology, engineering, linguistics, mathematics, medicine, computer science, philosophy, physics, and psychology. There is an incredible amount of research related to the brain, nervous system, and behavior which directly impacts how we can work more effectively and tap into our seven Core Abilities.

*And More . . .* Other major sources of our work include the neuro-scientific work of Dr. Andrew Newberg, Associate Professor in the Department of Radiology and Psychiatry, University of Pennsylvania; the Positivity research of Dr. Barbara Fredrickson, Kenan Distinguished Professor of Psychology and Principal Investigator of the Positive Emotions and Psychophysiology Lab at the University of North Carolina; the happiness studies presented by psychology professor Sonja Lyubomirsky, University of California, Riverside, Stanford University; research by neuropsychologist Rick Hanson, co-founder of the Wellspring Institute for Neuroscience and Contemplative Wisdom; physicist Paul Davies, Director of the Beyond Center, Arizona State University; astrophysicist, Bernard Haisch, former Deputy Director of the Center for Extreme Ultraviolet Astrophysics at U.C. Berkeley; cell biologist Bruce Lipton, former researcher at Stanford University's School of Medicine; and Michael S. Gazzaniga, Professor of Psychology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. It also includes the latest employee engagement books, studies, and best practices captured from my research. But be aware

that even as the ink was drying on this publication, there were already new books and articles coming out.

One thing I know for sure—every circumstance invites you to be who you are at your Core. Every situation demands your true colors. Each challenge you face requires you to think, choose, and act from the truth of who you really are.

I can categorically tell you from personal experience and from a thorough investigation of the last fifty years of human potential research that when your “ordinary self” (the everyday you) is aligned with your Deeper Self (the Extraordinary You), you can meet any human challenge with grace and poise. You can achieve things you thought were impossible. You can most assuredly find the happiness, success, prosperity, and sense of inner peace you seek. It will come as no surprise to you that this applies to those who work with you, too.

According to the latest research in the neurosciences, Dr. Andrew Newberg asserts, “Beneath the mind’s perception of thoughts, memories, emotions, and beneath the subjective awareness we think of as the self, there is a Deeper Self, a state of pure awareness that sees beyond the limits of subject and object, and rests in a universe where all things are one.”<sup>3</sup>

People who have aligned themselves with their Deeper Self, their Extraordinary Nature, recognize they have unlimited potential that can be tapped, a potential within them in the form of their Extraordinary Self. They also become aware that they have seven Core Abilities that make it possible for them to connect with their Core Nature at the deepest, most powerful level.

The good news is that all of us possess these Core Abilities; However, many leaders do not draw upon those qualities, making their work more difficult and less fulfilling. These exceptional

qualities lie dormant within most people, and remain either unused, under-used, ineffectively over-used, or repressed.

Research has uncovered this telling truth: *Nothing worthwhile has ever been achieved except by those who dared believe that 'something' deep inside of them was superior to anything they were going through.* It is a belief, a feeling of certainty about something that can be accomplished in our lives despite the rantings of naysayers who say it cannot be done. It's a compelling urge within ourselves that proclaims it is us who determines our success or failure and not outer circumstances.

I nicknamed it the *Bannister Effect*, after the Englishman Roger Bannister, who was the first to run a sub-four minute mile. Sports authorities and physiologists said it couldn't be done. Roger proved them wrong by running a 3.59.4 second mile at Iffley Road Track in Oxford. And once he proved it could, indeed, be achieved, many others were able to replicate it!



Accessing—and then expressing—these qualities begins with a belief that you are endowed with extraordinary potential, and that you can see that potential in others. Drawing out that potential is the key to sustained—and profitable—employee engagement—and that is exactly what this book is all about!

**Once you have connected with your Core Abilities as a leader, you'll be prepared to mentor your employees, leading them through this same seven-chapter process.** It will help them understand, connect with, and put into practice the seven Core Abilities that lead to an engaged workplace. You can choose the timeframe based on your specific situation; however, we recommend the process be completed in no less than seven weeks (where you would be meeting with your employees once a week, addressing a new Core Ability each week) and no longer than seven months (where you would be meeting with your employees once a month, with each month addressing a new Core Ability).

## **Understanding the Layout of This Book**

This Extraordinary Leadership book is designed to help you believe in and develop your own uniqueness first, realizing, of course, that those who work with and for you are unique as well. It is designed so you can connect with your own Core Abilities, then create an on-going discussion with your employees to build an environment conducive to employee engagement by helping everyone recognize and connect with their own “Extraordinary Nature.” As you guide your team in understanding and developing their seven Core Abilities, you will experience improved communication among team members, increased initiative and cooperation, heightened productivity, and an incredible sense of engagement among your people—at all levels—both internally and with customers/clients/vendors.

The book is divided into seven chapters following this Introduction, each of which focuses on one of the Seven Core Abilities you possess that, when cultivated, will transform you into an Extraordinary Leader. Each chapter includes:

- a detailed description of the Core Ability, with its impact on your leadership effectiveness,
- the science and research supporting this Core Ability;
- tips on how to strengthen the Core Ability;
- a summary of the Core Ability and its corresponding color, and how color can help integrate the connection with and use of the Core Ability;
- two strategies designed to help you use the Core Ability at its highest, most elevated level of expression (Laser Focus Technique and Self-Directed Activity);
- a Personal Reflection Page to capture your experiences.

According to social psychologists, self-awareness and self-reflection provide the emotional insights to identify and improve upon personal and professional areas of improvement while capitalizing on strengths and special abilities.<sup>4</sup>

Imagine how a high level of employee engagement would look in a work environment that encourages its employees, at all levels, to express their more optimistic, more creative, more decisive,

more authentic selves! The good news is it doesn't take expensive external incentives to achieve sustained employee engagement.

All it requires is a work environment that helps people connect with seven Core Abilities they already have, but rarely use to the degree they could if they knew they possessed them and understood how to access them.

## **A Quick Self Check**

*(Tip – There are no right answers, just honest ones):*

1. What are my greatest strengths as a leader?
2. What was one situation where my leadership ability did not work as well as I would have liked? What went wrong?
3. How would my employees describe me?
4. Am I more comfortable with rules and regulations, or flexibility and creativity?
5. How do I handle pressure and uncertainty?
6. How do I deal with employees who exhibit difficult behaviors or challenge my authority?

## The Seven Core Abilities and Their Colors

Here is a quick snapshot of each of the Core Abilities to help you realize you—and your people—have these qualities and everyone can develop them to fully realize the incredible potential that can be unleashed in your work environment.

I have included a color to represent each Core Ability, because research has shown that color can affect our brain in different ways, enhancing our learning experience and helping us be more productive, less stressed, and more creative.<sup>5</sup> At the end of each chapter, you will find ideas on ways to use color to enhance the connection to the Core Ability.



The seven Core Abilities that Extraordinary Leaders have in common are:

- Authentegrity (Red)
- Intuitive Wisdom (Yellow)
- Inner Strength (Russet)
- Questioning Unquestioned Answers (Blue)
- Optimistic Spirit (Orange)
- Self-Reliance (Purple)
- Mentoring Mindset (Green)

I hope you're thinking to yourself: *I already have those qualities within me, to some extent ... and so do my top performers!* That's good, because it's true. In fact, everyone has these qualities and is expressing them at varying degrees. The two questions I'm going to ask are:

- How often do you *consciously* use these qualities?
- How serious are you about developing them, so you can use them at a deeper, more intentional level?

You will be surprised at how much of the ‘potential you’ is still tucked away deep within you. I can tell you, without one moment’s hesitation, that when you get serious about developing each of these phenomenal qualities, you will become one with your Core Nature and fulfill your incredible potential as a leader. And the amount of influence you’ll have on those around you will encourage them to follow your lead. The result—take a moment right now to visualize how this would look to you:

*Extraordinary Leaders ... Extraordinary Employees ...  
Working Together for Extraordinary Results!*





## The Truth About Sustainable Employee Engagement

Before you jump into this “Extraordinary” material (hope you don’t get tired of that word), I’d like to pause for a moment to share a little research and insight into the whole idea of employee engagement. If you’ve been in management for any time at all, you know that traditional forms of engagement strategies work initially but then seem to lose their appeal over the long haul. Why? Because the traditional forms of engagement are not engagement at all! They are merely enrollment. The same thing holds true for sustainable employee engagement today as it did 125 years ago for motivating employees—you *can’t make people motivated or engaged if they don’t want to be motivated or engaged!* Psychologists have told us that for decades.<sup>6</sup>

Having said that, you can be sure there are things you can do to help foster genuine employee engagement. You can create an environment that cultivates engagement so people perform work tasks because they enjoy the assigned work tasks, rather than simply *doing* their jobs for fear of *losing* their jobs.

If I was going to offer you traditional employee engagement tactics, there would be no use in developing this *Extraordinary Leadership* book. You are, no doubt, already very well acquainted with thousands of conventional employee motivational and employee retention practices which have been around for years. These well-worn employee engagement strategies, in and of themselves, are valuable; however, they are not the panacea for sustainable growth. They may work for awhile, but they will not guarantee sustained employee engagement.

The conventional practices outlined earlier in the Introduction have slipped in their effectiveness to keep employees engaged. Extrinsic forms of motivation (material things) have become prerequisites and givens. They may attract top performers but not keep them. **It is the intrinsic motivators that will guarantee lasting engagement.**

Employees who are fully involved in, and enthusiastic about their work, will act in ways that further their organization's interests. You are very aware that engagement is the degree of employees’ positive emotional attachment to their job, colleagues,

managers, customers, and organization that profoundly influences their willingness to learn and perform at work. This level of immersion, as you know, is distinctively different from traditional employee satisfaction, motivation, and organizational cultures.

Here's what the research says about the clues that indicate there's a problem brewing (and don't forget to check yourself out too!):

1. *Mood Changes*: Your once vibrant employees begin to resemble ... zombies. Simply having unmotivated employees in the workplace is often enough to affect the moods and productivity of other employees. Often, a sudden change in an employee's mood signals something is brewing. If this goes unnoticed, employees may feel as if they don't matter.
2. *Weariness, fatigue, and lethargy*: When employees are no longer eager to complete tasks, something has caused their excitement about work to evaporate. They spend more time in meetings gossiping than they do involved in their work assignments.
3. *Increase in absences*: When certain employees who normally have a good record of attendance begin calling in sick or requesting personal leave more often than usual, your red flags should be rising. This is often a sign of either personal issues that are affecting the job, or as is often the case, it is a sign of disinterest, withdrawal, and disengagement.
4. *Complaints and Criticisms*: One of the final and most blatant signs of disengagement is outright complaining and unwarranted criticism about anything and everything: policies, work schedules, work environment, the parking lot, customers, coworkers, managers, and anything else they can think of to cause friction and dissention. Pay attention to "water-cooler conversations!" If you hear employees complaining about issues around your workplace, it could mean they're dissatisfied and they feel that the company's goals and values are not in line with their own goals and values. **Nothing is more infectious and damaging to employee spirit than contagious disengagement.**<sup>7</sup>



I've seen these symptoms repeated in the workplace many times, and I'll bet you have too. What happens is that external motivators—like most employee engagement programs—lose their shine. They are extrinsic motivators that work over the short run but do not have a lasting influence.

Employers have spent nearly a billion dollars on employee engagement in the past year, and current research is projecting that number will easily rise to \$1.5 billion. The 1.5 billion dollar question is: What are employers getting for this investment? Not much, if you accept the findings in the most recent Gallup report, *State of the American Workplace*.

The statistics on the level of employee engagement have virtually flat-lined, with about 30% of employees genuinely engaged since the initial Gallup reports in the late 1990's. So, the percentage of engaged employees has not improved at all in the last twenty-five years!

No amount of spending or energy devoted to extrinsic engagement strategies is likely to dramatically affect employee engagement unless people recognize that employee engagement, as it is currently being practiced, puts the burden for engagement on the employer and leaves employees to judge whether or not they want to be genuinely engaged. It goes way beyond whether an employee is “feeling happy” on the job. True engagement comes when leaders treat employees as key stakeholders in the business. That's where Extraordinary Leadership comes into the mix! Extraordinary Leaders know how to skillfully tip the balance of responsibility to each employee to be engaged.

**Here's a powerful piece of the puzzle: employees must do their part!** Employee engagement is a partnership. Employees need to recognize that both they and their employers are in the engagement business. Each has a role to play to make the workplace conducive to performance, productivity, and profits.<sup>8</sup>

The question employees, at all levels within the organization, must ask is this:

*Am I getting out of bed each workday morning and heading in to engage in something that is worth my time and effort?*

If the answer to that question is ‘yes,’ then investing in both intrinsic and extrinsic employee engagement would be a worthwhile investment. If employees are at their place of work for any reason other than sharing their talents, skills, and knowledge in work they truly enjoy, they will not be partners in the process.

Positive psychologists remind us that employees who are valued and respected, allowed to use their talents and abilities to the fullest, seen as partners in productivity achievements, rewarded for their optimism and creativity, and feel as if they can be authentically themselves will devote themselves to their work and drive themselves to unbelievable excellence.<sup>9</sup>

Unfortunately, there seems to be a pervading belief—one that originated in the early 1920’s—that in order to motivate employees and keep them engaged, there must be plenty of extrinsic incentives. This worn-out perspective continues to proclaim that if employees are not compensated adequately using extrinsic reward systems, they will be lazy, unmotivated, and habitually disengaged. This view also touts that all that’s expected of employees is that they just need to show up, do their job, and obey management. According to this out-dated motivational strategy, by using extrinsic motivation as a carrot, managers can expect exemplary performance. Sound familiar?

As I’ve indicated before, extrinsic employee engagement (*e*-engagement) strategies are not the elixir they used to be. They may make it more difficult for top performers to shop around for higher stimulus employment; however, as soon as they can find similar *e*-perks somewhere else, they will leave the nest! And in many cases they will leave knowing there may be less *e*-perks waiting for them. Why? Because people:

- value being respected,
- want meaningful work,
- need opportunities to be creative,
- want to contribute to something they feel is significant and worthwhile,
- want to be genuinely listened to,
- need to have their ideas valued and used,
- value being able to pursue personal growth interests,

- enjoy working in environments compatible with their own beliefs and values, and
- want to feel they are part of a ‘community’ that has a heart.

**Believe it or not, they want these things as much as,  
and often even more than money!**

These views on employee engagement are substantiated by the current research. The *e*-perks that characterize *e*-engagement strategies are simply temporary engagement drivers. Of course I advocate their continued use, but not their ‘pedestalled status.’ I categorically recommend *i*-engagement (intrinsic) strategies for sustainable and enduring employee engagement. It’s important to recognize that it has always been the intrinsic motivators (*i*-motivators) more than the extrinsic drivers (*e*-drivers) that have interested employees the most.

What’s required now is what’s always been required. It’s called “sustainable engagement.” The key factor, studies find, is a work environment that more fully energizes employees by promoting their physical, emotional, and social well-being. Add to that mental and spiritual well being—or more specifically, the increased energy derived from the capacity for true immersion in their work and a strong sense of purpose.

Many employers are pursuing a variety of wellness efforts, typically focused on giving thoughtful incentives and rewards to people who embrace healthy behaviors like exercise, good diet or effective management of a chronic illness, the report concludes.



These are important, but to sustain energy, employers have to go beyond these core programs and embrace the notion of workplace energy on a far broader plane. When they do, the consequences are nothing short of staggering. For organizations in general, and leaders specifically, the challenge is to shift from their traditional focus on getting more out of people, to investing in meeting

people's core needs so they're freed, fueled, and inspired to bring more of themselves to work.<sup>10</sup>

This *Extraordinary Leadership* book was developed in response to the rising voices of those researchers, scientists, and pragmatic organizational development consultants who are serious about guaranteeing sustainable, enduring, and practical employee engagement that uses both *i*-drivers and *e*-drivers to foster it.

While organizations need both intrinsic and extrinsic employee engagement strategies, there must be just as great, if not more, of an emphasis on *i*-drivers to make the employee engagement formula complete—and realistic.

This approach is visionary, but pragmatic; forward-thinking, yet present moment focused; strategic, yet tactical; founded on scientific principles, but proven to work outside the lab.

You will find the Extraordinary Leadership approach exactly what you've been looking for because it places just as much responsibility and accountability for exemplary engagement on your direct reports as it does on you. Employee engagement is a partnership, not an entitlement program. And it starts with your ability to make the connection with your Extraordinary Nature!



I'm not going to kid you. Establishing a conscious connection with your "Extraordinary You" isn't for the faint of heart. Why? Because it will take you, as a leader, having more willpower than won't power. It means being willing to discover the Real You. It asks you to believe in current research and apply it to yourself, your employees, and your work environment. It takes courage and patience. It demands commitment to being the best you can be—so your employees can be the best they can be. It requires disciplined effort and a belief in yourself.

Will it be worth it? You betcha! Will you be glad you stayed the course? Absolutely! Will you be seen as an Extraordinary Leader? Without one iota of a doubt! I have interviewed enough leaders, studied enough research, and know positively from my

own professional experience that discovering your Core Nature is the Holy Grail of the leadership experience! It is priceless and monumentally fulfilling! It's like hitting the 'leadership lottery.'

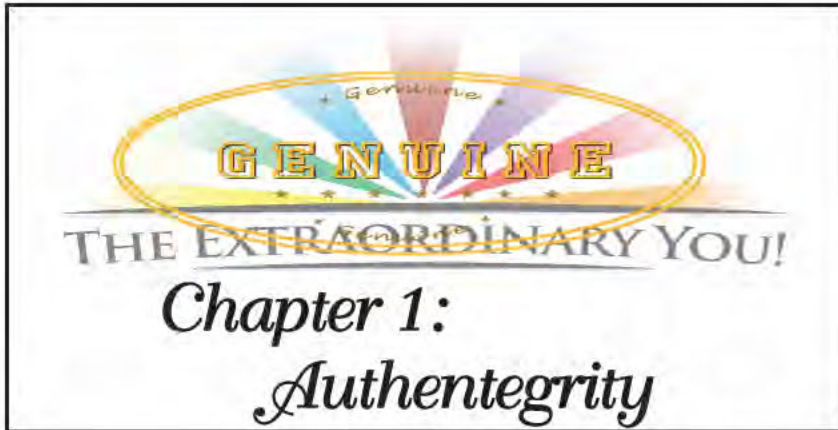
Spend some quality time with this book yourself before you share the concepts with your employees. Uncover the 'Real You.' Discover what an Extraordinary Leader ... what an extraordinary person ... you are. Begin to see the extraordinariness in others too ... and draw it out of them.

Let me know how you're doing. I'd love to get an email, text, or tweet that says, *"I've truly become one with my Extraordinary Nature and I'm having the most fulfilling leadership experience ever! I'm also helping my employees find their Extraordinary Nature. And I'm happy to report that employee engagement is at an all time high!"*









*The privilege of a lifetime is to become  
who you truly are." (C.G. Jung)*

**A**uthentegrity is one of the most essential Core Abilities, especially for leaders, so that's why it's the first one on the list. Okay—I think I made the word “Authentegrity” up! It is a combination of two valuable qualities: Authenticity and Integrity. And if it is consistently expressed in the way you manage people, it can lead to unlimited commitment, engagement, teamwork, and exceptional customer experiences—all of which open the way to the very highest possibilities for productivity and professional success. Michael Kernis and Brian Goldman defined authenticity as “the unimpeded operation of one's true or core self in one's daily enterprise.”<sup>1</sup> It relates to how we encounter external forces, pressures, and influences presented to us by the external world. Combine this with the meaning of integrity as defined by Alan Cohen who explained that “You are in integrity when the life you are living on the outside matches who you are on the inside”—and you have defined the Core Ability of Authentegrity. Authentegrity is the degree to which we are true to our own spirit, values, core beliefs, and character, despite external pressures and organization demands.

Here's a secret that can really help all leaders: People want to be led by someone "real." Leadership demands the expression of an authentic self. Try to lead like someone else, and you will fail. Employees will not follow leaders who invest little of themselves in their leadership behaviors. This is partly a reaction to the turbulent times we live in. It is also a response to the public's widespread disenchantment with politicians and businesspeople. We all suspect that we're being duped. Our growing dissatisfaction with sleek, artificial, airbrushed leadership is what makes Authentegrity such a desirable quality in today's business world—a quality that, unfortunately, is in short supply. Leaders and followers both associate Authentegrity with sincerity, honesty, and integrity. It's the real thing—the attribute that uniquely defines great leaders.<sup>2</sup>

Once you achieve that internal connection, you can be more harmonious with life around you, and more confident in your ability to lead. The question is, how can you live in that higher state of awareness that allows you to be more connected mentally, emotionally, and physically? The answer is that the more you live in the deeper parts of your being, rather than the superficial parts of your ego's wants and desires, the greater will be the affinity, connection, and harmony within you, and with your surroundings, including the people within your sphere of influence.

It's important to understand what guides you throughout your life — discover your signature strengths, and the basis of your true stature. Then you can intentionally apply those signature strengths in your everyday living. That means having the courage to acknowledge your limitations and embrace your vulnerabilities. It demands working toward integration, alignment, and the congruence of your ordinary self with your Extraordinary Nature.

## **What Does Science Say?**

In a ground-breaking study that remains the largest in-depth study of leaders based on first-person interviews, Bil George determined that authentic leaders are constantly growing and learning from their leadership experiences. They are able to reflect

on past experiences and apply what they have learned to new challenges they face ... and they are able to learn from other leaders.<sup>3</sup> Multiple studies reveal that leaders with a high degree of Authentegrity respond to their intrinsic motives rather than being influenced by power, money, recognition, or expediency. They exercise autonomy. They dismiss the illusions of outer appearances. They make a conscious effort to choose among the extrinsic motives available to them. Their thoughts, beliefs, words, and actions originate deep from within and they are secure enough in their own integrity to resist self-defeating and destructive external pressures.

According to researcher Laura Kinsler, authentic leaders with integrity embody both self-awareness and self-regulation. Their leadership reflects:

- objective decision-making;
- the ability to act honestly and openly;
- the courage to act in line with one's own beliefs and values;
- a sense of ethics and moral values;
- an invested interest in development and success of others.<sup>4</sup>

In short, the path they choose is congruent with their Authentic Self—their Authentegrity.

On the other hand, actions misaligned with our Authentic Self are alien, false, fake, pretentious, stressful, insincere, fraudulent, strained, bogus, and phony—to say the least. This is typical of leaders who are off balance, indecisive, chronically stressed, alienated, detached, and, well, just plain difficult to work with.

Of course, everyone wants to claim they are operating from Authentegrity! The problem is that anyone can make that claim and reap the benefits of what the word implies. I hear concepts like transparency, genuineness, trust, support, and open communication tossed around the workplace all the time. That's good, right? Well, it depends. Like the duckling that appears to glide across the water, there can be turbulence beneath the surface. If you pay attention, you'll notice quite a few people who want to stir up trouble while invoking the halo-effect associated with the words implying Authentegrity. As with the duckling, what's on the surface can be deceiving. So, which is authentic? What's on the surface or what's underneath?<sup>5</sup>

Leaders who are aligned with their Extraordinary Nature act with more interest, purposefulness, excitement, and confidence, often demonstrating superior performance, persistence, creativity, vitality, self-esteem, and general well-being than those who operate from deceptive or power-driven motives. Their employees tend to be more engaged, creative, and driven to perform than those who work for inauthentic leaders.

### Here's an Example of Authentegrity:

It's all about Rule 13-4c, which is professional golf's peculiar policy that prohibits a player from touching any loose impediment in a hazard—even a single leaf—as part of the maneuver to dislodge the ball. Golf's rules only allow for two options – certainty or, if a golfer isn't sure whether he/she broke a rule, then he/she is presumed guilty of breaking that rule.

In late October, 2012, Golfer Blayne Barber was unsure if his club had brushed a leaf in the bunker on the 13th hole at Callaway Gardens. His caddy was certain it had not moved. Barber went on to play based on his caddy's insistence that he had not moved the leaf. But three days later, the incident was still weighing heavily on his mind. He was just unsure about whether or not he had actually moved the leaf.

On November 2, six days after the tournament ended, Barber called the PGA to report his situation. Because he had signed an incorrect scorecard, he was disqualified. His decision potentially could cost him the opportunity of competing for millions of dollars. But Barber said there are some things more important than money. When interviewed, he said, "I don't know why all this is happening. I don't know what it will entail in the future, but maybe it will have an effect on someone, maybe someone will learn from it. It's a lot bigger than me. I just wanted to do my part to make it right and clear my conscience."

"I just feel peace about it," Barber adds. "Doing the right thing and doing what I know is right in my heart and in my conscience is more important than short-term success."



If you've ever met a leader with a high degree of Authentegrity, I think you'll agree that there's something very special about him or her. Authentic leaders are like magnets. They attract your attention. They have woven their scattered parts into a solid, coherent, integrated whole. Their thoughts, actions, and emotions stem from their essence, rather than old patterns, antiquated assumptions, and worn-out beliefs. They have a clear sense of what doesn't match with who they really are.

I'd like to pause for a moment to talk about the type of work you find yourself in. It's possible you aren't doing what you'd like to be doing. But just because you are doing work you are not completely passionate about does not mean you are out of integrity. It might be that you have found yourself in a position where you need a certain income or benefits to sustain your lifestyle. Doing work that creates stability in your life could be a way of working within your Authentegrity Core Ability.

The ultimate issue is *how* you are doing whatever work you do! If you are working in a job that forces you to consistently and regularly operate in conflict with your Authentegrity, red flag warnings should be popping up all around you! No amount of money or power is worth the sacrifice of your Authentegrity!

If you're not where you want to be in the work that you're doing, it might be because you are unweaving old belief structures, and this takes ongoing, persistent, and patient action. Take a good look at how your current work is serving the Authentic You and take the necessary actions to align your work with your Core Nature. Barbara de Angelis, relationship consultant, agrees. She says, "We need to find the courage to say NO to the things and people that are not serving us if we want to rediscover ourselves and live our lives with authenticity."

However, that does not mean that you should make hasty decisions—nor should you procrastinate. Take the right actions that make sense for you in this moment—NOW—to square yourself with the Extraordinary You.

It may mean staying right where you are and looking at your current work differently, or it may mean finding your true work somewhere else. Whichever route you decide to take, make sure

you can say, “I am absolutely clear that this is what I must do.” Sometimes it takes these moments of clarity to shift gears and embrace who you are rather than trying to be someone you’re not.

There’s no denying that we are being pulled in many different directions these days. Oftentimes it’s difficult for us to feel we can be effective, successful, and emotionally satisfied all of the time. Whether in business or in our personal lives, if seeking out our Authentic Self leads us to be more in tune with our core needs and more comfortable in our own skin, it’s a journey worth taking.

When you’re authentic, you’re true to yourself. When your brand is authentic, it is true to its mission and purpose. The power in authenticity, whether in your brand or person, is that it leaves no questions unanswered. People know where you stand, what you’re made of and what is important to you. Authenticity helps you define how they see you, without risking they’ll be confused.

When you’re wishy-washy, there’s a lack of definition. Thus, there’s a lack of authenticity. When you contradict yourself, there’s lack of definition. Thus, there’s a lack of authenticity. When you always agree, follow the crowd and never stand for something on your own, there’s a lack of definition. Thus, there’s a lack of authenticity.

Being authentic means you know who you are. You define your place and parcel in life. You stand for something. And by being true to that something, no one ever questions the truth about you.<sup>6</sup>

*(J. Falls)*

## **Authentegrity Versus Differentiation**

Executives ask one question on an almost weekly basis: “How can I differentiate my company in the marketplace?” Sohrab Vossoughi shared what he believed to be the only reply to every president, chief executive officer, or vice-president of marketing: “*Why* do you want to be different?” He went on to share a very interesting (and somewhat contrarian) viewpoint:

We are swimming in an overabundance of products and services. Different is no longer a differentiator. What is? Creating an authentic relationship with your customers. Authenticity in business is a distinctly 21st century concept made relevant by a confluence of factors. The public’s trust of businesses and institutions is in steep decline. Consumers’ media savvy has pulled back the wizard’s curtain on insincere marketing ploys that are only surface-sexy. Reality TV and online personae and avatars have redefined our sense of reality, bringing the question of what is real into mainstream dialogue. Consumers seek meaning and a brand they can trust. They are busy creating ways to cut through the noise in search of products and services that resonate with integrity and transparency; in a word, authenticity (*I would change that word to Authentegrity*). That quest for authenticity is a call to action for any company intending to be relevant in the 21st century.<sup>7</sup>

When you begin to awaken to your Authentic Self, the same “Self” neuroscientists call your “Deeper Self,” you discover that being fully alive and aware are suddenly recognized to be deep and profoundly creative experiences. You begin to appreciate the barest murmurings of your own struggle to become fully conscious of your incredible uniqueness and extraordinariness.

The alignment process—calibrating your ordinary self with your fine-tuned Deeper Self—is an experiential process. It demands our inner resolve and undivided loyalty. You cannot serve

two masters, as the saying goes. Author Sidney Sheldon strived very hard to be real by refusing to be tempted to ‘serve two masters.’ He asserted, “Believable action is based on authenticity, and accuracy is very important to me. I always spend time researching my novels, exploring the customs and attitudes of the country I’m using for their setting.” Anyone who’s read his novels can attest to the authenticity in his writings.

Most of the outer labels that define you place you in boxes or categories relative to other people. You probably join the majority of people who identify themselves by race, gender, religion, political views, occupation, and so on. Many of those labels were given to us by birth or awarded to us by circumstance; and all of them inform our point of view about ourselves and the world we live in. But none of them are who we really are. They are not our Core Essence. They are simply socialized labels that put us into convenient boxes that can be managed, directed, and controlled.

One thing is for sure, the more you live on the surface of who you really are, the less you are in touch with your Extraordinary Nature. The problem is that the more you look outside of yourself to create a sense of your True Self, the farther off track you get. How can you know who you truly are when you spend your time and attention trying to be something you’re not?

No amount of counterfeiting yourself to gain the approval of others is going to bring you any closer to really knowing yourself. Living from a place of profound Authenticity involves being rooted in your deepest beliefs, values, truths, and principles—and living a life that is a true reflection of those core essences. Each day becomes a self-editing process where you do more and more of those things that are in alignment with the Extraordinary You and less and less of those things which aren’t a reflection of who you really are. This is, indeed, the very essence of being an Extraordinary Leader.





## Strengthening Your Authentegrity

Here are some things you can do to strengthen your Core Ability of Authentegrity, to be an Extraordinary Leader:

- 1. Give up perfectionism.** Leaders who believe they need to be perfect never reveal their true selves to their people. As a result, their people feel uncomfortable admitting they need help or sharing problems they are experiencing. The workplace becomes a masquerade where everyone projects they know it all, and productivity suffers. Be vulnerable. Admit what you don't know. Let your employees be the heroes as they share their knowledge.
- 2. Admit mistakes and take responsibility for your decisions and actions.** This goes hand-in-hand with giving up perfectionism, because it asks you to acknowledge when you are wrong. Nothing brings people to your corner more than when you show you are willing to admit you are wrong. By focusing on how to fix it, you model behavior you want to see among your employees.
- 3. Be as transparent as possible while maintaining necessary confidentiality.** This is a difficult tightrope walk for leaders, but one that is vital to your credibility. Share information as openly as you can, because people cannot be empowered unless they have the information they need to make wise decisions. However, there are some things that cannot be shared, and it is perfectly acceptable for you, as an Extraordinary Leader, to simply let your folks know this is the case. This way, they can work with confidence, and believe the things you tell them.
- 4. Welcome contrarian opinions.** Truly authentic leaders know the value of gathering different points of view, and know how to generate them without creating unhealthy conflict.

- 5. Don't hesitate to make the right business decision, even when that choice may cost money.** Leaders operating out of Authentegrity realize that every business decision has an opportunity cost. They know that opportunity costs always include the cost of the second-best choice. For example, if they decide to spend money on the research and development team, it could mean their organization forgoes the chance to allocate money to an interest-bearing investment fund. The opportunity cost in this case is the amount of money their organization would otherwise have earned in the investment account.

Authentic leaders also know they must make choices related to non-cash assets, such as time and labor. For instance, the choice to have IT staff upgrade the firm's customer database may create an opportunity cost of upgrading the firm's accounting database. Coming from a place of Authentegrity requires a leader to consider both the seen and unseen costs associated with decisions, and be willing to do what is right ... even when it costs money, time, energy, and effort.

All of this being said, authentic leaders seldom, if ever, succumb to what is called 'the sunk-cost fallacy' (throwing good money after bad). They know when to say when, and pull the plug on projects that are not producing the results expected.

- 6. Be "fully present" when talking with others.** If you are busy planning what you are going to say when it's your turn to talk, there is no way you can really hear what the other person is saying. Nothing demonstrates Authentegrity more than paying attention.
- 7. Know your values, and walk your talk.** Why is it important to understand what you value most? Because when you know what you value, you can make decisions and lead others from a place of alignment and truth. Here's a quick personal values assessment to get you started:

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