7

Bringing the Inside Out: Enhancing Authenticity and Positive Identity in Organizations

Laura Morgan Roberts, Sandra E. Cha,
Patricia F. Hewlin, and Isis H. Settles

CONTENTS

Authenticity is an ideal that Western culture has recently embraced with unprecedented force (Liedtka, 2008; Trilling, 2006). Exhortations by classical Greek philosophers to "Know thyself" and "To thine own self be true" imply that authenticity is beneficial for individuals and society. Research supports these claims, in that authenticity has been associated with fewer physical and depressive symptoms, lower anxiety, lower stress, and greater subjective vitality (e.g., Lopez & Rice, 2006; Ryan, LaGuardia, & Rawsthorne, 2005).

In the 21st century, a growing number of organizational scholars have joined with philosophers, sociologists, and psychologists to examine the nature and benefits of authenticity. Much of this research is early-stage, conceptual work. Empirical work on authenticity in organizations is scant, and definitions of authenticity are broad and varied. The bulk of conceptual and empirical research related to authenticity in organizations has focused on the *lack* of authenticity rather than ways in which authenticity is manifested and supported. This focus on the "false self" rather than the "true self" has led scholars to address the negative consequences associated with inauthenticity. As a result, much remains to be understood about authentic experiences in organizations.

To fill this gap in the literature, our chapter has three goals. First, we offer our conceptualization of authenticity and delineate the assumptions of our definition. Second, we review previous research on authenticity in organizations and articulate the value of additional research on greater authenticity for individuals in the workplace. Third, we propose a model that highlights both the potential benefits of authenticity and the process through which individuals may become more authentic. Specifically, we explicate two ways in which becoming more authentic can enable positive identities and propose three pathways through which individuals can become more authentic at work. By offering this model, we seek to deepen understanding of the antecedents and consequences of authenticity in organizations. This focus on defining and enhancing authenticity illuminates how people develop more positive identities in organizations. We conclude the chapter by highlighting ideas for future research on becoming more authentic in organizations.

DEFINITION AND CORE ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT AUTHENTICITY

Despite its limited presence in organizational studies, authenticity has been a topic of discussion among philosophers, literary scholars, sociologists, and psychologists for centuries. Most discussions of authenticity deal, at least in part, with the understanding, embracing, and enactment of self-defining characteristics. Yet, scholars hold differing assumptions about the nature of authenticity. Whereas some scholars consider authenticity a moral virtue or set of character strengths that individuals possess (George, 2003; Peterson & Seligman, 2004), others view authenticity as an optimal psychological state that people should pursue (Goffee & Jones, 2006). Moreover, scholars differ in the extent to which they consider authenticity to be an intrapersonal versus relational construct. Those with an intrapersonal perspective define authenticity as the extent to which a person is true to himself or herself, in terms of living up to the moral standards that he or she endorses, absent considerations of others' experiences of him or her (Erikson, 1995). Others construe authenticity as fundamentally relational—determined by the extent to which two parties are true to the relationship. Specifically, authenticity is achieved when two parties experience one another as engaging with transparency and mutual commitment to understanding and appreciating one another's strengths, limitations, and unique social location (Eagly, 2005; Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005; Goldman & Kernis, 2002; Lopez & Rice, 2006; Smircich & Chesser, 1981).

In this chapter, we define authenticity as the subjective experience of alignment between one's internal experiences and external expressions (see Harter, 2002; Kahn, 1992; Roberts, 2007). By internal experiences, we mean thoughts, feelings, values, and behavioral preferences; by external expressions, we mean outward behavior, including verbal disclosures and nonverbal behavior, as well as displays such as attire and office décor. This definition is based on several key assumptions regarding the experience of authenticity. First, we adopt a phenomenological stance that privileges the actor's experience of authenticity. The authentic experience is determined by an individual's gestalt or overall feeling of having sufficiently communicated and acted on his or her genuine internal experiences in the workplace (Liedtka, 2008). Accordingly, our stance assumes that individuals are capable of reflecting on and assessing the congruence between their experiences and expressions.

Second, we view authenticity as a variable state rather than an individual trait; that is, we do not differentiate between authentic versus inauthentic individuals but instead examine where people stand on a spectrum of experiences that range from inauthenticity to authenticity at any particular moment in time. Some underlying factors may need to be present across situations for a given individual to characterize his or her experiences as authentic; however, the specific aspect of internal self that is expressed cross-situationally, as well as the way in which internal experiences are

communicated, may vary (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Endrissat, Müller, & Kaudela-Baum, 2007; Erikson, 1995). For example, a professor need not express himself or herself in exactly the same way with undergraduate business students as with a group of senior executives or with academic colleagues to characterize those experiences as highly authentic. What matters in each circumstance is whether the professor expresses those thoughts, feelings, values, and preferences that he or she considers important and relevant in each relational context.

Third, it is important to note that our phenomenological stance also leaves the content of one's authentic self undetermined. In contrast to other scholars (e.g., Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Gardner et al., 2005; George, 2003; May, Chan, Hodges, & Avolio, 2003), we do not make a priori assumptions regarding the specific character strengths, virtues, or skills that represent the "authentic self." However, we do assume that people are active agents who, under certain conditions, will attempt to "become more authentic" by increasing the alignment between their internal experiences and external expressions (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Erikson, 1995).

REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON AUTHENTICITY IN ORGANIZATIONS

Some limited research has explored the benefits of authenticity for organizational stakeholders. Specifically, scholars have discussed the value of "strategic authenticity," in which organizations construct authentic experiences for others by pulling out the desirable aspects of real experiences (see Liedtka, 2008 for a summary). Examples of this approach to marketing authenticity can be found in the tourist industry, in which consumers seek to "authentically" experience other cultures via historical tours, performances, art, and cuisine (Peterson, 2005). This approach can also be found in media productions, in which reality TV viewers are intrigued by watching "authentic" interactions between people in social, romantic, athletic, and professional contexts (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Rose & Wood, 2005). Aside from this work, however, there has been little empirical study of authenticity in organizational settings.

In contrast to the sparse body of work on creating authenticity within organizations, a substantial literature has examined the emotional and productivity costs of inauthenticity for individuals, work groups, and organizations (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Ely & Thomas, 2001; Hewlin, 2003; Roberts, 2005). For example, Hochschild's (1983) study of emotional labor described the pressures that flight attendants face to behave inauthentically (by suppressing negative emotions) to meet customer demands. Other studies emphasize the strong pressure individuals often feel, in groups of all kinds, to conform to the views and expectations they believe are held by the majority (Hackman, 1992). As a consequence, individuals often engage in self-censorship, suppressing their ideas and opinions because they perceive that others in their environment hold different or less controversial views (Avery & Steingard, 2008; Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003; Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Van Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003). In these cases, authenticity is curtailed because internal experiences (i.e., thoughts) are not aligned with external expressions (i.e., verbal statements). Moreover, when organizational members suppress their divergent ideas, values, and beliefs, they may limit creativity, innovation, and group learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Milliken et al., 2003; Morrison & Milliken, 2000).

Inauthenticity can also impose psychological stress on organizational members. People who feel that they must behave inauthentically (i.e., suppressing ideas, values, or behavioral preferences) to conform to social expectations may experience identity conflict or feelings of dissonance and distress (Bell, 1990; Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Hewlin, 2003; Higgins, 1989; Settles, 2006; Settles, Sellers, & Damas, Jr., 2002; Tunnel, 1984). Identity conflict is especially likely to occur when the identities being negotiated are important to the individual (Settles, 2004). "Identity work" to reduce identity conflict requires cognitive resources (Fried, Ben-David, Tiegs, Avital, & Yeverechyahu, 1998) that might otherwise be directed toward work-related tasks.

All of this work suggests that inauthenticity is costly for individuals and organizations. In comparison, research that documents the benefits of authenticity in organizations is scant. Nevertheless, research on the value of authenticity is timely for conceptual and practical reasons. A growing interest among researchers in positive organizational scholarship encourages scholars to focus on generative dynamics and potential rather than deficits and dysfunction within organizations to identify pathways toward building extraordinary organizations (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003). Along these lines, we can learn a great deal about the

possibilities for individual and organizational well-being and growth by focusing on authenticity rather than inauthenticity. First, learning about enhancing authenticity can help individuals and organizations to avoid the documented psychological and organizational costs of inauthenticity. Second, in the age of the nonlinear, self-guided career, many adults are seeking to enhance their experiences of authenticity at work (Sullivan & Maniero, 2007). Research on authenticity in organizations can promote career satisfaction by helping individuals and their employers to increase alignment between internal experiences and external expressions. Third, corporate scandals point to a lack of authenticity on the part of some organizational leaders, several of whom have deceived shareholders and employees for personal, financial gain. Leadership scholars have already begun to place a strong emphasis on developing "authentic leaders" who are willing and able to act with integrity to build more ethical organizations (for examples, see *The Leadership Quarterly*'s special issue on Authentic Leadership development with an introduction by Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

LINKS BETWEEN AUTHENTICITY AND POSITIVE IDENTITY

We stated earlier that one of our chapter goals is to deepen understanding of the antecedents and consequences of authenticity in organizations. We begin by developing theory on potential consequences of authenticity. Specifically, in this section we explicate the positive links between authenticity and individual identity. By identity, we refer to the various meanings that an individual attaches to individual, relational, and collective components of his or her self-concept (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004; Gecas, 1982). We acknowledge that there are various ways to construe the positivity of an identity in the workplace based on whether one focuses on the content, structure, functionality, development, or regard of one's self-concept (Dutton, Roberts, & Bednar, 2008). In this chapter, we define a positive individual identity in terms of private regard, the evaluative dimension of identity. Private regard reflects the extent to which one feels favorably about an aspect of one's self-concept (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004). We suggest that authenticity promotes the

construction of more positive identities by increasing private regard (i.e., how positively people feel about themselves).

Next, we present a process model of becoming more authentic in organizations. A core aim of this chapter is to consider the generative potential of increasing authenticity in organizations. Hence, our emphasis is on the flow of action and how each step in the model creates conditions that can give rise to the next step (see Mohr, 1982)—that is, how actions taken by individuals can lead to increased authenticity, which can lead in turn to more positive identities. This analysis is not meant to suggest that all individuals who embark on the three pathways will be successful in achieving more positive identities. In the final section of our chapter, we identify several key contingencies that may increase or decrease the chances of our proposed process unfolding, and we invite scholars to test our model by investigating the conditions under which these relationships will hold true.

The model involves two primary components that explain the positive relationship between authenticity and identity. First, we propose that the experience of increased authenticity likely increases private regard through one's self-construal as an authentic person and/or through the experience of eudaimonia. Second, we propose three pathways that increase the likelihood that one will become more authentic: deepening self-awareness, peeling off masks, and authentication. Figure 7.1 depicts this model.
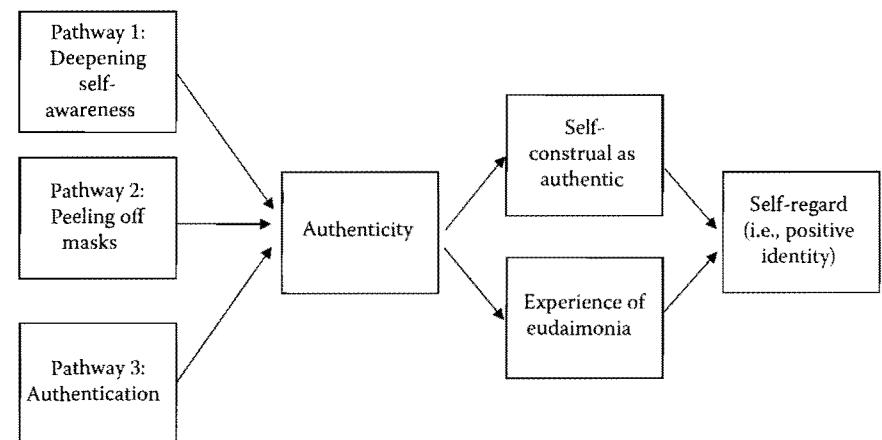
FIGURE 7.1

Process model of becoming more authentic in organizations.

AUTHENTICITY AND PRIVATE REGARD

As noted above, we propose two routes by which authenticity increases private regard: (a) via the self-construal as an authentic person, and (b) via the experience of eudaimonia. The first route is more cognitive and conscious, whereas the second route is more affective and less conscious.

To describe the first proposed route, we draw on Bem's (1982) self-perception theory, which focuses on how a person's outward behavior influences his or her self-concept. Bem proposed that people observe their own behavior and then draw inferences about who they are. Because individuals are likely to make dispositional attributions for their behavior, they will tend to conclude that their actions reflect their internal traits and dispositions. For example, a person who behaves in an anxious manner is likely to conclude that he or she is a dispositionally anxious person. (A similar process occurs when others observe one's behavior; they tend to attribute an individual's outward behavior to stable internal traits.) Thus, if one behaves authentically (engages in the outward expression of genuine internal experiences), one is likely to conclude that one is a dispositionally authentic person. In this way, engaging in authentic behavior helps to build a self-construal as authentic ("I am an authentic person because I observed myself behave authentically.").

The self-construal as an authentic person will lead to positive regard because current societal norms hold that being an authentic person is an aspect of virtuousness and worth[1] (Argyris, 1969; Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Because of the strength of these norms, the modal individual is likely to hold in high regard anyone who is seen as authentic (including himself or herself). In this way, one is likely to view oneself more positively (i.e., experience greater self-regard) as a result of experiencing alignment between one's internal experiences and external expressions.

The second route between authenticity and private regard involves the experience of eudaimonia. Eudaimonia is an optimal state of well-being that is characterized by feelings of happiness, enjoyment, intense

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[1] Peterson and Seligman identify authenticity as a virtue that is embraced across cultures. However, Western cultures may place more emphasis than do Eastern cultures on behavioral consistency across situations and over time when evaluating authenticity. Research supports that Eastern cultures value behavioral and self-concept consistency within relationships but are more comfortable with dynamism and contradictions across contexts (English & Chen, 2007).

personal meaning, and direction in life that result from living in accord with one's daimon—one's true, optimal self (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Waterman, 1993). When one behaves authentically, one's external expressions are aligned with internal experiences, and one is likely to feel as though one is living in accordance with the daimon (Ilies, Morgeson, & Nahrgang, 2005). Specifically, by enabling people to own and express their thoughts, feelings, and values that can benefit others, authenticity can create a pathway through which people are able to embrace and realize their potential to create value for themselves and for the world (Roberts, 2007). On the other hand, suppressing or deceiving others about one's internal experiences can inhibit one's ability to embrace and express his or her daimon. Living in accord with one's daimon can increase positive evaluations of oneself and one's past (Maslow, 1968; Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). The positive feelings associated with eudaimonia can enable one to develop a clearer and more expansive view of one's "best-self" (Roberts, Dutton, Spreitzer, Heaphy, & Quinn, 2005) and can promote feelings of self-acceptance (Ryff & Keyes, 1995), both of which are likely to increase private regard.

BECOMING MORE AUTHENTIC

We have described how authenticity is important for constructing more positive identities in organizations. How, then, can individuals become more authentic or enhance their experience of authenticity? On the surface, the answer to this question seems rather straightforward—"just be yourself." However, becoming more authentic in work organizations can be challenging. Being oneself requires a certain measure of self-awareness—one must know oneself to be oneself. Being oneself also requires a certain measure of courage—one must be willing to counter his or her tendencies to suppress counternormative thoughts, feelings, values, and behaviors. Being oneself is also challenging for people who face stereotypical expectations about how they should think, feel, and behave. In this section, we describe three pathways through which an individual can deal with these challenges and become more authentic: (a) deepening self-awareness, (b) peeling off masks, and (c) authentication. An individual may follow a single pathway or multiple pathways in concert to become more authentic.

Pathway 1: Deepening Self-Awareness

Deepening self-awareness involves two activities: the creation of narrative accounts and individuation. First, deepening self-awareness involves a narrative project of making sense of the connections between one's own past, present, and future. As Heidegger (1962) states, "Authenticity is the loyalty of one's self to its own past, heritage and ethos" (p. 117). The narrative project involves constructing a coherent story of one's life that weaves together disparate actions, feelings, and motivations of life events (McAdams, 1990; Sparrowe, 2005). Through short narrative accounts, people create causal links between life experiences and make sense of change, contradiction, and surprises. Narrative accounts enable people to develop a clearer and more coherent understanding of their recurring internal experiences in the context of their personal history.

Second, deepening self-awareness also involves critical participation in life—understanding the context, questioning contradictions inherent in that context, and then owning one's values and beliefs because they reflect one's personal experience, not because they are socially or politically appropriate (Heidegger, 1962; Shamir & Eilam, 2005). Developmental psychologists have made similar claims about the evolution of identity, theorizing that adults reach the highest or most mature stages of identity development when they have questioned their parents', peers', or society's values and practices and then internalized those that resonate with their experience as an autonomous agent in their social world (see Schwartz, 2001 for a summary; see also Erikson, 1980; Kegan, 1982; Phinney, 1990). Therefore, deepening self-awareness involves examining how one's internal experiences differ from others' expectations of thoughts, feelings, values, and preferences. In the process of individuating ourselves, we become more aware of our recurring internal experiences that differentiate us from other people. Through individuation, therefore, we develop greater clarity about our recurring internal experiences.

In sum, in both activities of creating narrative accounts and individuation, deepening self-awareness thus involves producing greater understanding of, or greater clarity with respect to, one's recurring internal experiences. That is, deeper self-awareness involves greater understanding of patterns among one's internal experiences, i.e., the thoughts, feelings, values, and behavioral inclinations that occur repeatedly. As a result of greater clarity about one's recurring internal experiences (one's internal experience "patterns"), one should by extension be able to express these internal experience patterns more clearly and accurately to others. Thus, the alignment between one's internal experiences and external expressions should be tighter. In this way, we propose that deepening self-awareness can increase authenticity.

Pathway 2: Peeling Off Masks, or Revealing More of the "True Self"

The second path to becoming more authentic is based on the assumption that individuals are capable of putting on masks or public personae that deny their own internal experiences or deceive others about their thoughts, feelings, values, or behavioral preferences to increase their stature, protect their image, or avoid conflict in relationships (Hewlin, 2003; Kahn, 1992; Neff & Harter, 2002; Roberts, 2005; Smircich & Chesser, 1981). Becoming more authentic often requires an individual to peel off such masks to reveal more of the true self.

Peeling off masks can be challenging for individuals who feel pressured to suppress aspects of internal experience to conform to others' norms and expectations, which distances the public persona from the private self. Peeling off masks involves countering suppression—adjusting external expressions to reveal previously suppressed internal experiences, even if these expressions defy social norms in a particular context. As noted earlier, people often engage in self-censorship, withholding their opinions because they perceive others in their surroundings to hold views that differ from, and are less controversial than, their own (Avery & Steingard, 2008; Milliken et al., 2003; Morrison & Milliken, 2000; Van Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003). After discovering how one differs from the crowd, becoming more authentic involves standing apart from the crowd to voice personal thoughts, feelings, values, and beliefs. For example, the emerging literature on authentic leadership emphasizes leaders' moral responsibility to stand apart (and even rise above) the rash of high-profile corporate scandals by engaging in ethical decision-making and providing honest, transparent disclosures about their company's financial transactions (e.g., Cooper, Scandura, & Schriesheim, 2005; George, 2003; Goffee & Jones, 2006).

Another important component of peeling off masks is the willingness to display aspects of one's cultural heritage, even when they do not conform

to mainstream stylistic preferences. This facet of becoming more authentic is especially relevant for women and racial minorities, who often perceive a devaluation of the diversity they bring into the workplace (Settles, 2006). As a consequence of this devaluation, women and minorities often feel unable to be authentic, and many conceal aspects of their personal lives that are not consistent with what is most acceptable within their organizations (Hewlin, 2003; Roberts, 2005). For women and minorities, social acceptance and career success are partially determined by how well they assimilate and conform to their work environments by adopting the behaviors of white men (Bell, 1990; Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Kanter, 1977). In these circumstances, becoming more authentic means finding ways to integrate one's gendered and cultural experiences into the values and practices of their work environment, perhaps even drawing on such aspects of one's background as a source of strength that enhances the quality of one's work and relationships (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Cha & Roberts, 2008; Roberts, 2007).

Pathway 3: Authentication

In this section, we build the argument that input from other people regarding their perceptions of one's alignment influences an individual's subjective experience of authenticity. As such, becoming more authentic may also mean negotiating perceptions of one's authenticity (Goffee & Jones, 2006).

Authentic experience is socially constructed, in that one's identity claims are accepted or rejected by others (Peterson, 2005). When valued and self-defining characteristics are recognized and affirmed by others, people are more certain of their place and purpose in the social world, and interactions with others unfold more smoothly (Swann, 1985; Swann, De La Ronde, & Hickson, 1994). However, social feedback that challenges the veracity and legitimacy of one's public expressions can create problems for one's social interactions. For example, Eagly (2005) discusses how followers play a critical role in legitimizing leaders' expressions of values and authority. Those leaders who belong to social groups that have not traditionally held positions of power may not possess the legitimacy to inspire follower identification, despite their public expression of internal experiences (Eagly, 2005). Shamir and Eilam (2005) similarly describe how followers authenticate leaders by judging a leader's claim for leadership as driven by personal values rather than the desire for status or power, as well as by judging the leader's behaviors as consistent with the leader's stated beliefs. When leaders are perceived as behaving in ways that are inconsistent with espoused values, followers no longer perceive leaders as being authentic; instead, they often attribute such inconsistencies to hypocrisy, and leaders' attempts to inspire and mobilize employees are less effective (Cha & Edmondson, 2006; Simons, Friedman, Liu, & McLean Parks, 2007; Simons & McLean Parks, 2000).

We acknowledge that the consideration of "authentication," or the degree to which people view others' behavior as genuine and appropriate and affirm internally aligned self-expressions, pushes the limits of our phenomenological stance. Authenticity, as we define it, is the subjective sense of alignment between one's own internal experiences and external expressions. However, becoming more authentic via "being true to oneself" is a social process whereby people rely on reflected appraisals to understand and assess their own values, preferences, and actions. As such, social feedback regarding others' perceptions of one's alignment (or "sincerity" as Erikson, 1995, and Trilling, 2006, conceptualize it) indirectly influences a person's beliefs about whether he or she is being true to himself or herself. People come to associate self-verifying evaluations with feelings of authenticity (Swann et al., 1994). Thus, the process of becoming more authentic may involve reshaping others' understanding of one's internal experiences or their acceptance of one's external expressions.

In this vein, becoming more authentic often requires an individual to defy or complicate other people's stereotypic, simplistic, and/or restrictive expectations of his or her role or group membership. For instance, leaders are highly visible figures who are scrutinized intensely by organization members (Tyler & Lind, 1995). They are also subject to heroic, possibly unattainable, expectations—of strength, altruism, and the ability to meet followers' needs (Cha & Edmondson, 2006; Rioch, 1975). Leaders may feel torn between wanting to meet heroic, but stereotypic, expectations and the desire to be authentic, especially when this requires them to reveal their limitations and vulnerability. Becoming more authentic would involve countering others' idealized images of leadership and revealing more of their humanity through public expressions (see Dutton, Frost, Worline, Lilius, & Kanov, 2002; see also Avolio & Gardner's [2005] discussion of how inauthenticity results from being overly compliant with stereotypes of the leader role). As an example, Mayor Rudy Giuliani publicly displayed grief in the wake of the tragedies on September 11, 2001, which opened the avenues for other New Yorkers to express their pain (Dutton et al.,

2002). Giuliani's emotional display was authenticated (seen as genuine and appropriate, and was welcomed) by the public, and as a result, he was evaluated more favorably as a leader during this time of national crisis.

Women and underrepresented minorities may also face authentication challenges with perceivers because they are often construed in stereotypical terms that do not reflect the diversity and strengths that exist within groups (Cox, 1993; Kanter, 1977). In this case, becoming more authentic may involve displaying aspects of one's gender, culture, or other identities that challenge group stereotypes. For example, African American medical students and women scientists may attempt to educate others about the inaccuracies of group stereotypes or differentiate themselves from stereotypes that do not reflect their personal characteristics (Roberts, Settles, & Jellison, 2008). Strategically displaying these positive aspects of one's racial or gender identity can enhance one's own experience of authenticity and can also help others to appreciate one's experiences as a member of a social identity group (Roberts, 2005). In this way, countering stereotypes can increase the likelihood of authentication and thus can further enhance one's experience of alignment between external expressions and internal thoughts, feelings, values, and preferences.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH: COMPLICATING THE MODEL

In this chapter, we highlighted three individual processes ("pathways") that can lead to enhanced authenticity in organizations. We also explicated how enhanced authenticity can lead, in turn, to more positive individual identities. However, the three pathways to becoming more authentic that we describe are by no means the only ones.

To complement our focus on individual-level processes, future research may wish to consider how the organizational context and organizational leaders can create conditions that facilitate the process of becoming more authentic. Organizational practices play a critical role in the process of members' bringing more of their selves into the work environment (Kahn, 1992). For example, over the past two decades, organizations have emphasized creating diverse work environments through initiatives that have centered on diversity-based attraction and selection processes, reward

systems, and socialization practices (Dass & Parker, 1999; Ely & Thomas, 2001; Kirton & Greene, 2005). These practices are intended to communicate a clear message in words and actions that "difference" is not a liability and that authentic expression of self is needed for the overall well-being of organizational members. As organizations earnestly create environments that foster authenticity, women and minorities may be more readily inclined to peel off their masks and leverage their uniqueness for the betterment of the organization.

In addition to expanding the pathways included in the model, future research may wish to further address the complexity associated with one's journey toward becoming more authentic by exploring key contingencies. We highlight several such important contingencies that should be explored. First, how does the content of one's authentically expressed thoughts, feelings, values, or behavioral preferences influence the impact of such expression on self-regard? That is, does the authentic expression of weakness or less favorable characteristics have the same positive impact on self-regard as does the expression of strengths or virtues? For example, one might construe oneself as authentic because one has fully displayed weaknesses and limitations. The increased positive regard created by an authentic self-construal may be counterbalanced by the decreased self-regard created by a focus on the weaknesses one has expressed.

Moreover, sharing thoughts and emotions relevant to work tasks can facilitate organizational effectiveness (Argyris, 1969), but full disclosure of all of one's internal experiences to all of one's colleagues is likely to interfere with organizational efficiency and create extreme vulnerability for the individual. Hence, tempering age-old exhortations, employees may find that "bounded authenticity" is a more functional approach for navigating the complex intrapsychic, interpersonal, and organizational dynamics involved in bringing one's "whole" self to work. Future research may wish to examine how individuals can become more authentic at work while also bounding their authenticity to maximize positive outcomes for themselves and their organizations.

Second, what motivates individuals to deliberately seek to become more authentic? Our process model assumes intentionality, in contrast to a person who unconsciously increases his or her degree of "just being himself or herself" over time. Future research on this topic should examine catalyzing events that prompt individuals to become more authentic. For instance, one person may seek to become more authentic after receiving feedback

from significant others that her external expressions appear inconsistent with internal experiences. Another person may seek to experience more authenticity in his daily work experiences because he believes it will enable him to contribute more fully to his organization. Corley & Harrison (this volume) examine this question from the organizational level of analysis as they study how and why organizations pursue authenticity through a never-ending process of action, reflection, and evolution. Research that spans levels of analysis may reveal similar processes for individuals and collectives who earnestly pursue authenticity.

Third, how might the lack of authentication by others influence feelings of authenticity and the process of one becoming more authentic? Although becoming more authentic can facilitate the development of transparent, growth-enhancing relationships (Kahn, 1992), authentic self-expressions may be met with resistance by other people. Others may judge one's behavior and reject those self-expressions that are deemed socially undesirable or inappropriate because they deviate from situational norms or status expectations. Further, the audience may be more likely to authenticate one's behavioral expressions if they are perceived as being consistent with one's previous behavior and personality. Future research could explore how individuals achieve authenticity when their behaviors are not authenticated by others.

Fourth, future research might explore the generalizability of our proposed model. Certain aspects of the model may be more relevant to certain groups, especially those facing distinctive challenges in becoming more authentic in organizations. For example, leaders and members of underrepresented social identity groups have in common a heightened visibility that may result in a greater likelihood of their being negatively scrutinized by others (Kanter, 1977; Tyler & Lind, 1995). As a result, leaders and minorities may find it more difficult to become more authentic via authentication (i.e., for external audiences to see their internally aligned self-expressions as genuine, appropriate, and of value) than less visible organization members because they face the challenge of countering others' stereotypical expectations that may be inconsistent with their internal experiences. In contrast, prototypical organizational members may face very few challenges to becoming authentic and thus may more easily reap the rewards of authenticity for positive identity construction.

CONCLUSION

This chapter sought to address the increasing interest in supporting authenticity in organizations by offering a clear definition of authenticity and a process model of pathways to authenticity and subsequent self-regard. This model is particularly important for uncovering new research questions on positive identities, given that authenticity often emerges as an idealized trait or state in discussions of identity and identity formation for individuals, teams, and organizations. Even in this volume, our colleagues point to authenticity as an important dimension of personal growth (Kreiner & Sheep, 2009), relationship formation, and team collaboration (MacPhail, Roloff & Edmondson, 2009; Milton, 2009), as well as generative organizational identity evolution (Corley & Harrison, 2009). As we discussed, becoming more authentic in work organizations can be challenging, particularly for organizational members whose "true selves" are counternormative. Despite these potential difficulties, our chapter suggests that individuals and organizations may benefit substantially from an increase in authenticity in the workplace. The question of how individuals and organizations can promote greater authenticity at work represents an important avenue for future research.

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