

Bailey & French.

**The power of
being yourself
at work**



Do you feel like you can be yourself at work?

Considering that, over the course of our lifetime, the average person spends **84,365 hours** working, it's an important question to ponder. If you're unable to show up as your authentic self, that's **9.6 years** you spend **pretending to be someone you're not**.

Authenticity is a concept that can be tricky to define as, by its very nature, it's expressed differently by different people. The psychologist Kennon Sheldon says: being authentic allows us to tap into and act in accordance to our individual strengths and values.

“Behaviour that we have freely chosen and which allows us to express who we are.”

So how can we encourage authenticity in our leaders?

The more self-aware leaders are, the more they know and can manage themselves and others.

Self-awareness leads to stronger 'other-awareness' and therefore stronger relationships.





1

Focus on strengths

Encouraging a strengths-based approach to work and performance helps people to be more comfortable being themselves.

It creates open dialogue, clarity and understanding about different colleagues' authentic strengths.

A background image showing a workshop or meeting. Two people are seated at a table, viewed from behind. One person is using a laptop with the 'B & F' logo on the lid. Another person stands in the background, gesturing towards a wall. The scene is brightly lit, possibly by a window or a lamp.

2

Build the development of self-awareness into leadership development activity

Encouraging leaders to reflect and share their personal life experiences openly through dialogue with others.

A background image showing two people, a woman and a man, sitting at a table in a bright, modern office setting. The woman is on the left, looking towards the right. The man is on the right, looking towards the left. They appear to be in a meeting or discussion. A laptop is visible on the table in front of the woman.

3

Reframe vulnerability

Too often vulnerability is seen as out of place in the working world. But actually, we should find strength in vulnerability.

Leaders demonstrating vulnerability creates connections with others: demonstrating that no one's expected to be perfect and encourages people to bring their true selves to work.

A blurred background image of a meeting in a bright office. A man in a white shirt is standing and pointing at a screen, while two others, a man and a woman, are seated at a table with a laptop. A teal pendant light hangs from the ceiling.

4

Devote space to help colleagues

Identify and drill into their personal sense of meaning and purpose.

What drives their authentic selves?



5

Encourage people to express themselves

Focus on creating a culture of psychological safety, where people are also free to fail safely.

Remember!

Self-awareness is core when it comes to developing leadership authenticity.

If a leader is confident in who they really are, their values and their purpose, and they consistently demonstrate authenticity in their actions, it shines through to others who then trust in them more.

75% of people said they want their co-workers to show up more authentically

According to one study quoted in the Harvard Business Review