

# AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK

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## INTRODUCTION

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# **AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP FUNDAMENTALLY DERIVES FROM INDIVIDUAL TRUTH SEEKING, CURIOSITY AROUND RELATIONSHIP COMPLEXITY, AND EVOLUTION.**

Whatever your intention or situation in relationship to leadership, I mean to shape this framework to be moldable to your context, giving you choice to trim edges, add, and shape to you. I believe each of us will lead something at some point. Some of us might actively seek to lead while others may be thrust into a leadership situation. On the other hand, some of us may take the role of leadership in their family outside of work. If nothing else, you lead a group of one. In each these situations, this framework applies.

MAIN POINT NO. 1

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# INDIVIDUAL TRUTH



**DEVOTE 80% OF YOUR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOCUSING ON UNCOVERING YOUR UNIQUE TRUTH; IT'S WHAT'S IN YOUR CONTROL AND WHAT WILL ALLOW YOU TO EFFECTIVELY INFLUENCE EVERYTHING ELSE.**

● AREA OF CONTROL    ○ AREA OF INFLUENCE

At the core of my framework for authentic leadership is your individual truth. While this sounds simple, and whether you chose an active or passive role, this will be a lifelong journey to make meaning of it. Your truth will likely shift—or at least it may appear to do so. What you believe to be truth, may upon closer introspection, be a defense mechanism meant to protect an old wound or an insecurity for example. We each have them. It's the idea of putting on a mask, whether consciously or unconsciously, to make someone see you in a controlled way.

It's an entrepreneur walking with swagger to the mantra “fake it until you make it” or the employee with a smile and blank eyes shielding tragic family loss. It's the politician that says whatever is necessary to each group of people to win support and obtain power. It's the avoidance to look within, and instead, just watch tv.

In a world often filled with threat, these layers may serve a purpose. The utility of unconscious defensive behavior patterns remain contingent on survival context. For conscious, deceptive choices, the debate still goes on as to whether the ends justify the means. While I withhold judgment here, I know what feels right for me—leadership focused curiosity to understand your conscious and unconscious patterns to understand your own authenticity.

**I posit that by becoming more aware of these patterns and digging into your truth—both on an analytical level and in your emotions, you will be given more choices. Additionally, by being more aware of your feelings, which current neuroscience suggests fire before rational thoughts, you become consciously grounded in what drives you.**



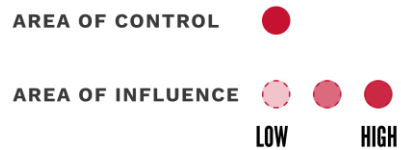
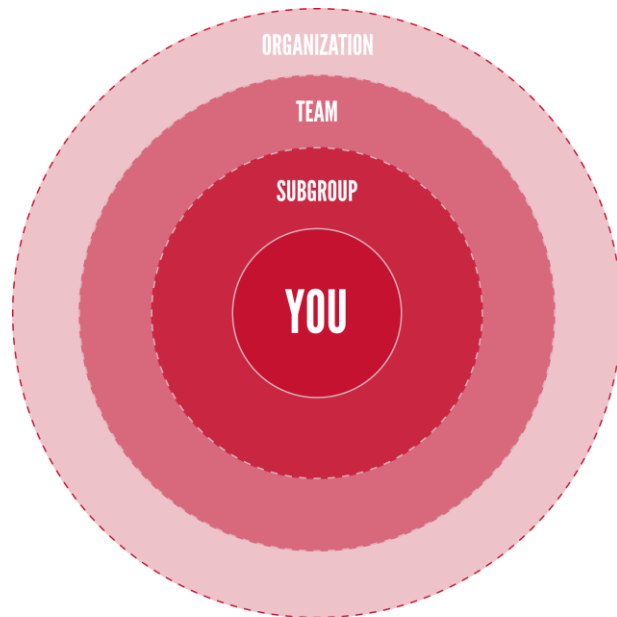
As an analogy, let's use AI and compare it to our brain. In the current application of AI, a computer will not figure anything out until it is given an objective--such as optimize my budget so I can retire in 20 years. Similarly, your emotions trigger an objective that your rational thought then executes--whether consciously or unconsciously. Awareness of these emotions and unconscious thoughts and behaviors opens up choice.

But to get there—it takes work. Some do it through yoga, painting, or music. Counseling—whether individual or group—can be very helpful. Marital arts or lifting weights might help. Writing is a strong way to activate that voice. Spirituality or religion may serve this purpose. Meditation and mindfulness are very helpful. You get the point. There are many paths. You chose, but do the work to excavate to the core, stable truth that I believe each of us has. As you get closer to feeling more love towards yourself and others—not lodged in ego, but rather in softness—you will know you are going the right way. Keep digging.

MAIN POINT NO. 2

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# RELATIONSHIP COMPLEXITY



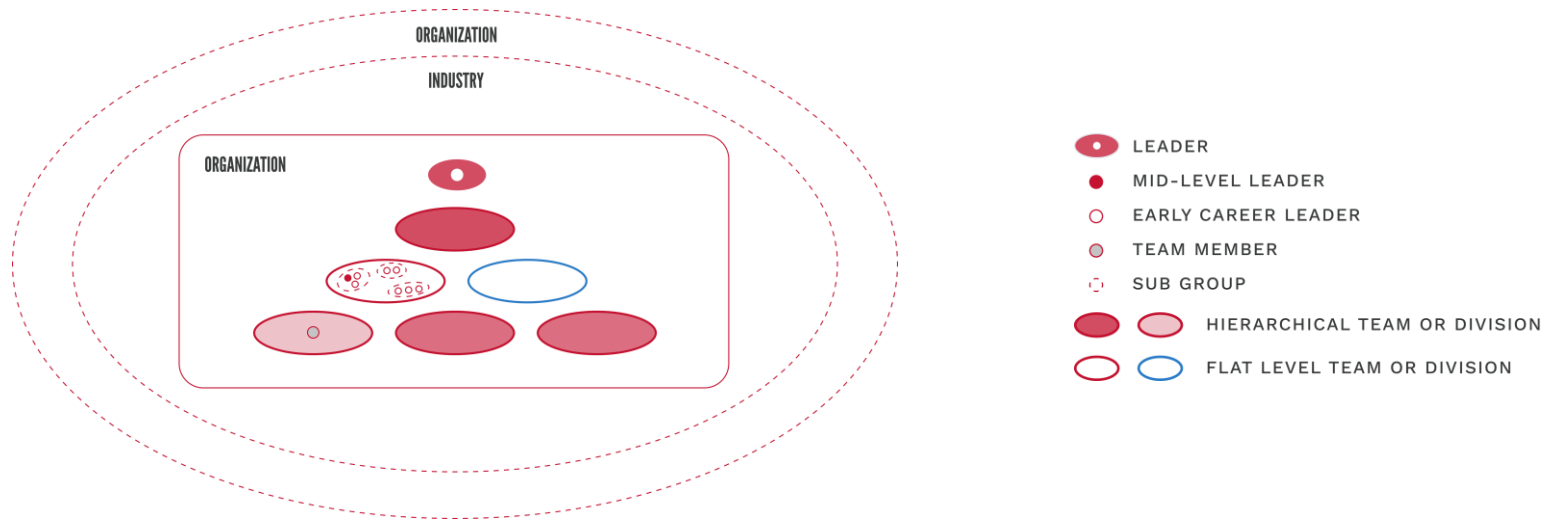
**DEVOTE 20% OF YOUR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOCUSING ON INCREASING YOUR AWARENESS OF COMPLEXITY IN SYSTEMS AND BEING AWARE OF CHOICES TO IMPACT THOSE SYSTEMS**





In this framework, you will need to become increasingly aware of the complexity between relationships and explore how the way you show up impacts your various relationships, groups, and in turn, the overall system.

It starts with you, but then you will become more aware of interpersonal, group, and intergroup dynamics and organizational forces. It's kind of like high school. You had yourself, and then you likely belonged to a group and noticed even subgroups (aka cliques) within your group. Also, whether you were at a performing arts school or one rooted in football tradition, those forces likely shaped your school spirit—even while you were making different choices to reshape your school culture in your own expression. It's complex. You push and forces push on you. Often it's hard to tell where your choices are beginning or ending.



In the above model, you can see how the leader, mid-level leader, and early career leader by virtue of their location in the organization more easily influence the parts of the organization where they hold the most proximity. While we may like to believe that the leader at the top moves the organization's destiny at a command, in my experience this rarely happens. Instead, using a corporation as an example, the CEO often needs to build consensus with the board

and other executives. Even with strong board and executive approval, which the CEO remains in more close contact to influence, how does the CEO know that the rest of the company will come along with a change in direction or that the market will look favorably on the change? Maybe the leader chooses fear to motivate, such as fear of losing a job. This might motivate people in the short term, but will likely poison the culture and productivity in the long run. Thus, just like the mid-level leader and early career leader, they each need to influence across their peers

and up and down their levels. Top, mid, early leaders may face similar challenges and each may hold high power to drive change—just think of the employees at Google organizing to form a union to derive power. Even strong command and control organizations like the military may face internal dissidents that passively aggressively sabotage the direction the leader desires to head. In other words, people, relationships, and power remain complex.

Therefore, wherever you find yourself in this hierarchy, you hold more similarities with the other leaders than you think. Seek to understand the similarities and complexities at play and to build bridges across the leadership hierarchy. As a top-level leader, you gain an invaluable insight by directly connecting and building relationships with mid and early career leaders to make better decisions. You also gain increased influence to roll out changes across an organization without using fear. Mid and early career leaders similarly benefit to build influence and grow skills to lead at higher levels.

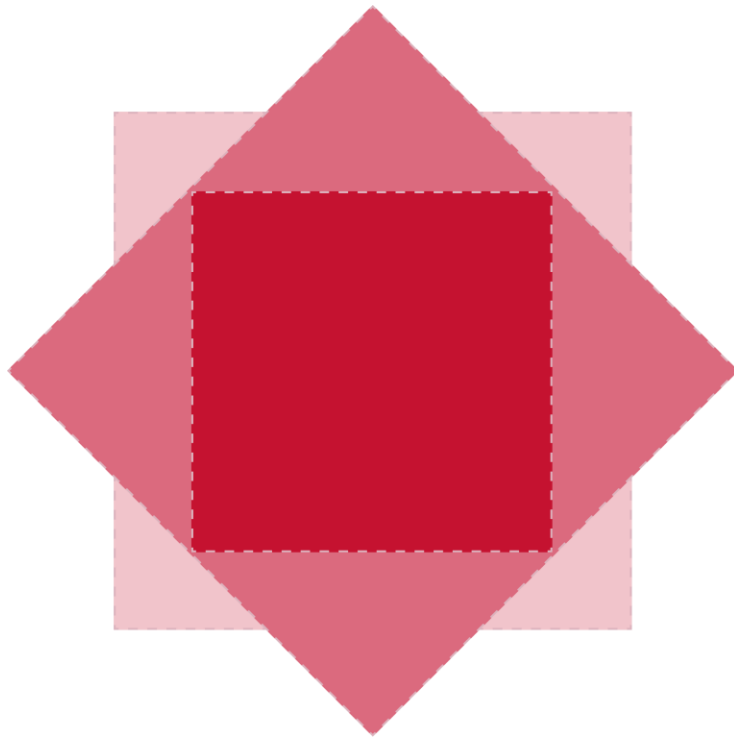
Last, an organization exists within an industry and a society at local, national, and global levels. Consciously and unconsciously, we are influenced by these external factors. In an industry, if one company chooses to cut corners on safety regulation to reduce prices and win market share, others may follow. Others might not to define a goodwill image they think will win the long run. There's a lot of variables at play in this game theory and a lot can change quickly in the world. Societal forces are even more diffuse and ethereal but live within us both as leaders and as followers, impacting us every day.

If you become lost in the complexities, go back to your high school or kindergarten experiences. What you learned there for how systems, groups, and subgroups function will likely still apply.

MAIN POINT NO. 3

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**EVOLUTION**



**CHANGE IS ONE OF THOSE FEW LIFE  
CONSTRAINTS. HOW CAN WE BOTH  
ACCEPT AND SHAPE THIS CHANGE?**

I'm evolving. You're evolving. This authentic leadership framework is evolving. Embrace it. My longtime and favorite yoga teacher, Lauralee Sikorski, a beautiful and brilliant person taught me a lesson I still hold close each day. Paraphrasing, she said "holding an intention and then letting go of the outcome to a higher power is just about perfect." In other words, still take agency for the direction you wish to go in your life, but recognize you a) hold the tiniest fragment of a collective knowledge, so apply grace to whatever outcome happens for you may be on an even better path than your initial intention and b) you are both infinitely powerful through choice and infinitely impacted by a trillion forces changing every second. Therefore, hold intention, but trust the outcome to something bigger.

If you found this framework helpful, please share and subscribe at [www.jpetrav.com](http://www.jpetrav.com) to receive updates and additional articles on authentic leadership.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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As a Senior Manager in Grant Thornton LLP's Strategy and Transactions practice, I serve as a trusted advisor to business leaders seeking thought leadership on how to thrive in a period of unprecedented and rapid change. By pulling from his diverse 18+ years of experience across consulting, entrepreneurship, and finance, I combine fundamental business acumen with a focus on people to achieve results. I have worked with large organizations including Fortune 100 clients and the federal government as well as middle market companies and startups.

I am a graduate from the Yale School of Management with 18+ years of experience. I am driven to create compassionate communities in organizations across sectors to impact change that addresses our global problems.