

Authentic leadership helps clients reach goals

Business coaches who possess qualities of authentic leadership (AL) are more likely to help clients reach their goals than those without, suggests research.

The study, which included a survey of 96 business coaches, looked at the extent to which coaches perceive they possess the qualities of AL and how this affects coaching performance. Coaching that involves the application of AL qualities enhances the work performance, life experience, self-directed learning and personal growth of clients, according to the research.

The study, by Anthony Gatling of William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration, University of Nevada in the US, describes AL as a leadership style in which the leader demonstrates to others a genuine and honest desire to understand their leadership in order to serve others more effectively (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing & Peterson, 2008). AL draws on and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical culture, according to the research. In the study, AL was evaluated by Walumbwa et al's (2008) 16-item Authentic Leadership Questionnaire, measuring the AL attributes of self-awareness, balanced processing, internalised moral perspective and relational transparency.

The study found that of the four AL factors, only self-awareness was statistically significant in predicting coaching effectiveness (CE), possibly because understanding our impact on other people enhances our ability to relate more effectively to clients in helping them achieve their goals (Kernis, 2003). Balanced processing, relational transparency and internalised moral perspective were not components of AL that significantly predicted CE.

However, the research suggests that business coaches should still seek to enhance their balanced processing qualities. Gardner et al. (2005) argued that coaches who possess balanced processing qualities solicit views that challenge their deeply held positions so that the best ideas can be expressed. "This factor is commonly in play within the coaching relationship since business coaches are constantly challenging clients to evaluate and re-evaluate their perspectives and knowledge about business so that new thoughts can be advanced," notes the study.

The research argues that coaching organisations should also consider how they could leverage all four AL factors to enhance coaching effectiveness. Read the paper here: www.bit.ly/1onHqAH

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