nature reviews psychology

https://doi.org/10.1038/s44159-024-00323-y

Review article

Check for updates

Distilling the concept of authenticity

Constantine Sedikides [1] & Rebecca J. Schlegel [2]

Abstract

Authenticity has long captured the imagination of literary figures, philosophers and scientists. The construct originated in Aristotelian thinking and serves as an injunctive societal norm in contemporary society. Although people have been fascinated with authenticity since at least the time of the ancient Greeks, the concept remains elusive. In this Review, we aim to clarify the construct of authenticity. First, we consider the evidence for conceptualizations of authenticity as self-accuracy, self-consistency, self-ownership and self-enhancement. We then differentiate between trait authenticity and state authenticity and highlight pertinent theoretical models and measurement approaches. Authenticity is relevant to psychological functioning, and we describe its associations with self-regulation, behaviour regulation, interpersonal relations, psychological health and consumer behaviour. Although authenticity has beneficial effects in these domains, it also has drawbacks such as the potential for hypocrisy, off-putting positive self-presentation and conflict in the workplace. We conclude by pinpointing empirical lacunae and proposing future research directions.

Sections

[1]Center for Research on Self and Identity, School of Psychology, University of Southampton, Southampton, UK. [2]Psychological and Brain Sciences, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX, USA. e-mail: cs2@soton.ac.uk

Introduction

The time from the late 1990s to the present has been called the age of authenticity[1,2]. Self-help books, magazine articles, TV shows and blogs extol the virtues of authenticity and proffer tips on how to achieve it; literature, song lyrics, art and design, and fashion emphasize genuine or unfiltered self-expression. 'Authentic' was even named word of the year in 2023 by Merriam-Webster[3]. Clearly, popular culture, at least in the West, mandates that it is important to feel authentic and be authentic in one's decisions, choices and behaviour.

Fascination with the construct of authenticity is not new. Aristotle (384–322 BC) argued that acting in harmony with one's true self is the hallmark of living well and doing well (eudaimonia[4]). Existential philosophers[1,5,6] and Japanese thinkers[7] also pondered the construct, as did social theorists and sociologists[8–10]. Authenticity is now a popular research topic in psychology and allied disciplines and is often evoked as an explanation for a range of outcomes. However, despite this long-standing interest in authenticity, disagreement remains about what exactly it is.

In this Review, we aim to clarify the concept of authenticity. First, we review four major conceptualizations of the subjective experience of authenticity. Next, we differentiate trait and state authenticity and discuss the relevance of experienced authenticity for self-regulation, behaviour regulation, interpersonal relations, psychological health, marketing and consumer behaviour. Last, we consider the drawbacks of authenticity and propose lingering issues in the study of authenticity that merit empirical attention. We focus primarily on the psychological literature on authenticity in individuals (as opposed to objects or organizations) but cover selective findings from related disciplines (for example, marketing, consumer behaviour, tourism and political science).

Conceptualizations of authenticity

In this section, we review four major views on what constitutes the experience of authenticity and the relevant empirical evidence for those views (Table 1).

Self-accuracy

According to one view, the essence of authenticity is self-accuracy, that is, the faithful representation or unbiased processing of attributes and beliefs that define one's identity[11,12]. Consistent with this view, self-reported authenticity is positively correlated with the self-reported tendency to explore identity-relevant information and negatively correlated with the self-reported tendency to avoid acknowledging aspects of one's identity[12]. Moreover, self-reported authenticity predicts reduced defensiveness in a behavioural assessment in which people are confronted with times they acted in ways that were incongruent with their ideals[13].

However, there are also reasons to doubt the self-accuracy view of authenticity. Accurate self-knowledge is notoriously difficult to attain[14–16]. In addition, people have strong and pervasive motivations to self-enhance[17,18], which renders unbiased processing of one's attributes unlikely. Thus, a self-accuracy view of authenticity implies that most people are inauthentic, which runs counter to the fact that self-reported authenticity tends to skew towards the high end of the scale[12]. Furthermore, people who think they are unbiased are the most likely to see themselves in self-enhancing ways. In an illustrative study[19], participants reported as many favourable and unfavourable self-attributes as they could, and then rated the degree to which their self-processing was unbiased. The number of favourable self-attributes was positively associated with self-rated unbiased processing, suggesting that participants who believed they were less biased reported more favourable self-attributes compared to those who believed they were more biased. Finally, another indicator of self-accuracy, namely conditional positive self-regard, is negatively associated with self-reported authenticity[20]; this result casts doubt on the role of self-accuracy in the experience of authenticity.

Self-consistency

According to a second view, the essence of authenticity is self-consistency. Early humanists conceptualized authenticity as a disposition towards behaviour that conforms to internal standards (self-representations, preferences, desires, motivations, needs, values, cognitions, feelings[21,22]) and is resistant to external influences. This alignment between internal standards and behaviour was incorporated in subsequent theoretical and scale developments[12,23,24]. However, support for this view is mixed.

One the one hand, self-concept consistency (self-perceived overlap across roles or aspects of one's life) is related to higher self-reported authenticity[25–27]. Similarly, experimental manipulations of identity integration across roles causally influence authenticity[28], and incongruence between one's gender identity (for example, female) and experimentally assigned self-presentation (for example, as masculine) reduces authenticity[29]. Additionally, a body of evidence supporting the self-concordance model (a specific model about goal pursuit that is rooted in self-determination theory) suggests that picking goals that are congruent with one's implicit (non-consciously accessible) motivations and potentials is important for persistent goal effort and better goal attainment[30].

On the other hand, people are inclined to perceive their socially desirable behaviours as authentic even when those behaviours do not align with their underlying self-concepts. For example, in a cross-sectional study[31], participants rated themselves on the Big Five traits and then indicated their authenticity as tethered to five roles (student, employee, child, friend and romantic partner). Self-consistency was operationalized as within-subject correlations between role–trait ratings and the corresponding general trait ratings. Participants felt more authentic in roles for which they had rated themselves positively, independently of their dispositional level on the general traits. Moreover, in an ecological momentary assessment study[32], participants perceived themselves as more authentic when their behaviours exemplified the positive pole of the Big Five traits, regardless of their dispositional

Table 1 | Four views on authenticity

View	Essence of authenticity	Strength of supporting evidence	Key references
Self-accuracy	Unbiased processing of self-attributes	Mixed	12,13
Self-consistency	Alignment between internal standards and behaviour across situations	Mixed	12,21,22, 24,30
Self-ownership	Perceived agency and self-ownership of one's actions	Good	38–41
Self-enhancement	Positive, moral and self-aggrandizing perceptions of the self	Compelling	47,53, 56,59

scores on these traits. In another ecological assessment study, participants perceived themselves as authentic in daily life not as a result of to trait–state consistency, but rather owing to their positive feelings[33].

The findings that people perceive socially desirable roles, behaviours or feelings as more authentic are reinforced by additional research[34]. In one study, participants listed a favourable or unfavourable self-attribute, described an event in which they acted congruently with the listed self-attribute (favourably or unfavourably), and rated the authenticity of that action. Participants deemed behaviours that reflected favourable (versus unfavourable) self-attributes as more authentic despite having previously generated both favourable and unfavourable self-attributes as examples of characteristics they possessed. In a follow-up study, participants imagined favourable or unfavourable behaviours that they authentically wished or did not wish to enact. Participants regarded the imagined favourable behaviours as more authentic than the imagined unfavourable ones, and this effect was significant even after controlling for perceived self-congruence. Similarly, women in law enforcement reported feeling authentic when they regarded their role as positive[35].

It is difficult to cleanly separate positivity effects (feeling more authentic for favourable than unfavourable attributes) from congruency effects (feeling more authentic for attributes that match one's self-concept), because self-concepts (implicit or explicit) tend to be positive[36]. Thus, when an attribute is favourable, authenticity might stem either from its positivity or its self-consistency. To disentangle these effects a researcher would need to cross self-concept positivity versus negativity with attribute favourability versus unfavourability[34,37]. Nonetheless, the findings we reviewed in this section bring into question whether self-consistency is indeed the essence of authenticity.

Self-ownership

According to a third view, the essence of authenticity is perceived agency and self-ownership of one's actions[38–40]. This view suggests that authenticity comes from people's meta-perceptions of why they do the things that they do[41]. For example, a behaviour feels less authentic when it is believed to have been caused by external pressure rather than by one's true self, even if those perceptions are manipulated after the decision has been made and do not reflect the actual decision-making process[42]. Moreover, intentional behaviours promote authenticity more than unintentional behaviours[43], and college students who are not sure why they are pursuing academic goals subsequently report lower authenticity[44].

The self-ownership view is additionally supported by research that highlights the role of perceived autonomy in the experience of authenticity[39]. For instance, using emotion regulation strategies attenuates the experience of authenticity unless people are unaware that the strategies are aimed at changing their emotional state[45]. Moreover, in perhaps the most direct demonstration of the role of self-ownership in authenticity, threatening people's belief in free will leads to a commiserate reduction in self-reported authenticity[46].

Taken together, the results favour a self-ownership view. However, the body of direct experimental work on the role of perceived agency is not as large as the body of work in favour of the final view of authenticity (self-enhancement) described below. Experimental research on the self-ownership view could prove fruitful for demonstrating the causal role of self-ownership in authenticity.

Self-enhancement

The final view on the essence of authenticity suggests that authenticity reflects perceptions of the individual that are self-enhancing. This view is bolstered by the fact that internal standards or self-views are predominantly positive[36]. Indeed, the belief that true selves are morally good is held both by actors and observers[47], is found panculturally[48], and emerges independently of pertinent individual differences[48,49]. Such findings are explained, at least in part, by self-enhancement motivation. For example, people endorse a favourable authenticity trajectory: they believe that their authenticity level has recently risen and will rise more in the near future, and that they will be more authentic in the future than in the past or present[50]. Conversely, the more favourably individuals evaluate changes in their lives, the more strongly they perceive them as driven by their authentic self[51].

Theories of an ascending authenticity trajectory resemble beliefs in the progression of other favourable, personally important traits[52], reflecting self-enhancement motivation[18]. Additionally, self-positivity is directly linked to authenticity. In exemplar studies, participants listed as many favourable and unfavourable self-attributes as possible. The number of favourable self-attributes was positively associated with authenticity, but the number of unfavourable self-attributes was not[19,53]. Likewise, participants who described a time when they had expressed a favourable trait considered this time more authentic compared to participants who described the expression of an unfavourable trait[53]. Moreover, authenticity involves strategic (that is, self-enhancing) self-presentation: participants made to think of themselves as authentic (via experimental instructions) adjust their behaviour so that they seem authentic[54].

Furthermore, although people believe in a morally good essence for both themselves and others, they judge their own essence more approvingly than that of others. For instance, people believe that they are more human than others[55], evaluate their own self-changes more positively than similar changes in a close friend[51], and regard their own authentic selves as more positive and moral than others' authentic selves[53,56]. These comparative judgments align with self-enhancement motivation[57,58].

Finally, trait self-enhancement is linked to higher trait authenticity, daily self-enhancement predicts concomitant variations in daily authenticity, manipulated self-enhancement increases authenticity, and manipulated authenticity increases self-enhancement[53,59]. The abovementioned findings are not driven merely by generic positive information but rather by positive information that is self-relevant (as opposed to other-relevant) and central (as opposed to peripheral) to the self[53], as a self-enhancement view of authenticity would predict[60,61]. Thus, there is compelling evidence to support the self-enhancement view of authenticity. Research into the neurological underpinnings of authenticity might provide further evidence for this view (Box 1).

In sum, authenticity has been conceptualized from multiple vantage points rather than as a unitary construct. This is a classic problem in science: analysis versus synthesis or, more prosaically, splitting versus lumping[62,63]. We favoured splitting, as it confers unique insights (hypotheses, methodologies and explanations) into the structure, dynamics, and correlates or consequences of authenticity. Yet, as research findings continue to accumulate, splitting is likely to give way to lumping, that is, to a broad, integrative theoretical model of higher explanatory potency than any of the views we discussed.

Trait and state authenticity

The four views we described refer, for the most part, to authenticity as a disposition that varies between persons (trait authenticity). However, authenticity can also refer to an in-the-moment experience that varies within persons (state authenticity). A trait is the chronic proclivity

Box 1 | The neuroscience of authenticity

Neuroscience might help to determine whether the basis of authenticity is self-enhancement. The medial prefrontal cortex is selectively engaged during self-referential judgments[226,227]. Indeed, lesions to the medial prefrontal cortex eliminate the self-reference effect (better memory for stimuli that are paired with the self versus control stimuli)[228,229]. Greater activation in the medial prefrontal cortex is observed even when comparing the self to close others[230,231]. Meta-analyses further corroborate the role of the medial prefrontal cortex in self-processing[232,233]. Moreover, multivoxel pattern analysis studies find that, although thinking about others can activate the medial prefrontal cortex, thinking about others does so for different reasons than thinking about the self (that is, thinking about others activates different patterns of neural activity than thinking about the self)[234]. Thus, medial prefrontal cortex activity increases with proximity to the self. If authenticity is at the core of the self, then the authentic self should produce stronger patterns of medial prefrontal cortex activity compared to control conditions.

Reward-related brain regions such as the striatum are also critical to self-processing[235,236]. Thinking about the self feels good and, to that end, activates parts of the striatum[237]. Self-relevance (relative to non-self-relevance) also increases striatal responses during emotional image viewing[238]. Evidence that the authentic self (versus other aspects of the self) increases striatal activity would support a self-enhancement perspective of authenticity. Other neuroscientific studies link self-enhancement to both structural[239,240] and functional[239] connectivity between the medial prefrontal cortex and striatum. If authenticity is a form of self-enhancement, it should be associated with particularly strong connections between the self and reward in the brain.

of an individual toward (or away from) certain emotions, cognitions, or behaviours whereas a state encompasses emotions, cognitions, and behaviours in a specific situation[64]. States and traits also differ along three dimensions: duration, continuity and abstraction (Table 2). Specifically, traits are long-lived whereas states are short-lived; traits often manifest low continuity but a given state episode is relatively uniform; and traits are abstract and require inference, whereas states are concrete and easier to discern[65]. Thus, traits are predictable from a sample of state episodes (constituting an accumulation of such episodes) but are not predictable from a single state episode[66,67].

Trait and state authenticity are moderately and positively related[68] (see Table 3 for representative measures). With enough authenticity assessment time points (4–5), a researcher can implement state–trait occasion modelling to parse trait from state variance in authenticity[69]. According to this logic, there is common variance across all assessment time points (trait authenticity) but there is also variance tethered to an assessment at a particular time point (state authenticity). In this section, we describe these two forms of authenticity and relevant theoretical models.

Trait authenticity

Humanists[21,22], role theorists[70,71] and positive psychologists[72,73] conceptualize authenticity predominantly as a trait. Authenticity is purported to be "the reduction of phoniness toward the zero point"[74] or "the unobstructed operation of one's true self in one's daily enterprise"[75], reflecting self-actualization[74] and the fully functioning person[22]. Relationships between trait authenticity and other factors are summarized in Table 4.

General classification models have been developed that specify the attributes of an authentic person. According to the multicomponent authentic functioning model[12] (Fig. 1a), authentic people are defined by four sets of partially interrelated attributes: awareness (being cognizant of one's motives, strengths, weaknesses, aspirations and beliefs, even if contradictory), unbiased processing (impartially processing and accepting both positive and negative self-relevant feedback), behaviour (acting in a way that aligns with one's needs, values and preferences as opposed to others' expectations, that is, not acting falsely to appease external influences), and relational orientation (striving for genuineness and trustfulness in one's relationships). This model is supported by evidence that these attributes (as a whole and when self-reported) are positively related to indices of hedonic well-being (for example, positive affect and life satisfaction) and eudaimonic well-being (for example, environmental mastery and purpose in life), self-concept (for example, self-concept clarity and self-esteem), and role-functioning (for example, balance and voice) and negatively related to stress[12].

Partly in response to dissatisfaction with the sprawling nature of the authentic functioning model, a subsequent conceptualization, namely the authentic personality model (Fig. 1b), condensed the above four attribute sets into three partially interrelated attribute sets[24]. These are authentic living (behaving in accordance with one's preferences, values, beliefs or goals), accepting external influence (combatting conformity to others) and self-alienation (conscious awareness of one's actual states). In line with this model, each attribute set is positively associated with indices of hedonic and eudaimonic well-being as well as self-esteem and negatively associated with anxiety and stress[24].

There are also domain-specific classification models that characterize authenticity within specific roles or contexts. The authentic leadership model[76] is concerned with authentic leaders in the workplace. An authentic leader is presumably characterized by four sets of attributes. Two of them — self-awareness and relational transparency — correspond to awareness and relational orientation in the multicomponent authentic functioning model. The other two attribute sets are internalized moral perspective (self-regulation guided by internal moral standards and values) and balanced processing (objectively analysing all relevant information and soliciting contradictory opinions before arriving at a decision). Authentic leadership as defined by these attributes predicts favourable work-related attitudes and behaviour, supervisor-rated job performance and employee basic need satisfaction[76,77].

According to the authenticity in close relationships model[78], authenticity in close relationships is characterized by unacceptability

Table 2 | Differentiating traits and states

Criterion	Traits	States
Definition	Chronic proclivities and/or dispositions	Subjective experiences in specific situations
Duration	Long-lived	Short-lived
Continuity	Low	High
Abstraction	High (requires inference)	Low (concrete and easier to discern)

Table 3 | Representative measures of authenticity in adults. For measures of authenticity in adolescents, see ref. 209

Domain	Measure	Number of items	Relevant model	Subscales and example items	Cronbach alpha (α)	Test–retest reliability (*r*)
Trait authenticity						
General	Authentic inventory[12]	45	Multicomponent authentic functioning model	Awareness: "For better or for worse, I am aware of who I truly am"	0.79	0.80
				Unbiased processing: "I find it very difficult to critically assess myself" (reverse-scored)	0.64	0.69
				Behaviour: "I find that my behaviour typically expresses my personal needs and desires"	0.80	0.73
				Relational orientation: "I want people with whom I am close to understand my weaknesses"	0.78	0.80
				Composite score	0.90	0.87
	Authenticity scale[24]	12	Authentic personality model	Authentic living: "I always stand by what I believe in"	0.79	0.78
				Accepting external influence: "I usually do what other people tell me to do"	0.77	0.81
				Self-alienation: "I don't know how I really feel inside"	0.82	0.79
	Authentic and inauthentic expression scale[210]	8	Authentic self-expression model	Authentic expression: "I express my real thoughts and feelings to others"	0.90	–
				Inauthentic expression: "I say the things I think people want to hear"	0.84	–
Leadership	Authentic leadership questionnaire[76]	16	Authentic leadership model	Self-awareness: "Accurately describes how others view his or her capabilities"	0.73	–
				Relational transparency: "Says exactly what they mean"	0.77	–
				Internalized moral perspective: "Makes decisions based on their core beliefs"	0.73	–
				Balanced processing: "Listens carefully to different points of view before coming to conclusions"	0.70	–
Relationships	Authenticity in relationships scale[78]	34	Authenticity in relationships model	Unacceptability of deception: "Sometimes I find myself trying to impress my partner into believing something about me that isn't really true" (reverse-scored)	0.90	0.70
				Intimate risk-taking: "I feel free to reveal the most intimate parts of myself to my partner"	0.90	0.76
Consumer behaviour	Consumer-based brand authenticity scale[79]	14	Brand authenticity model	Quality commitment: "Quality is central to the brand"	0.88	–
				Sincerity: "The brand has stuck to its principles"	0.78	–
				Heritage: "The brand reflects a timeless design"	0.61	–
Goals	Relative autonomy index[81]	24	Self-determination theory	Amotivation: "I once had good reasons for doing X but now I don't"	0.87	–
				External: "Because if I don't do X, people will get mad at me"	0.65	–
				Negative introjection: "Because I would feel guilty if I didn't do X"	0.80	–
				Positive introjection: "Because I want to feel proud of myself"	0.74	–
				Identification: "Because I strongly value X"	0.78	–
				Intrinsic: "Because I enjoy X"	0.81	–
State authenticity						
General	State authenticity as fit to environment scale[99]	15	State authenticity as fit to environment model	Self-concept fit: "Being at [university, organization] brings out who I am"	0.94	–
				Goal fit: "I often feel that [university, organization] is a place that allows me to realize my own goals"	0.86	–
				Social fit: "I feel that people at my [university, organization] understand exactly who I am"	0.89	–
	Southampton authenticity scale[96]	4	State authenticity tradition	Right now, I feel "authentic", "true to myself", "like the real me", "genuine"	0.79	–

Table 4 | Factors that influence and are influenced by trait authenticity

Factor	Relationship to trait authenticity	Key references
Trait self-esteem	Positive	24,93,155
Subjective well-being	Positive	12,149,211
Basic need satisfaction	Positive	77,149
Anxiety	Negative	31,212,213
Motivation	Positive	44,214
Interpersonal relationships	Positive	130,215,216
Resilience	Positive	132,157,217

of deception (unwillingness to engage in and endorse deceptive and inaccurate self–partner interactions or impressions) and intimate risk-taking (proclivity toward genuine and intimate self-disclosure or risk-taking with one's partner). Authenticity in close relationships predicts relationship satisfaction, controlling for self-esteem, commitment level, attachment orientation and gender[78].

Authenticity has also been characterized within the domain of consumer behaviour. According to the brand authenticity model[79], the authenticity of a brand refers to perceptions of its quality commitment (the extent to which the highest standards are applied to its production brand), sincerity (the extent to which the brand maintains its value) and heritage (the extent to which the brand reinforces its tradition). Brand authenticity is associated with brand trust, credibility and purchase intentions.

Finally, trait authenticity has been studied with respect to goals. Rooted in self-determination theory[30,80], the comprehensive relative autonomy index[81] assesses whether people perceive their goal-relevant behaviours as caused by internal factors (such as one's own desires) or external factors (such as the demands of others). Although authenticity is not in the name of the measure, the relative autonomy index (or perceived locus of causality) of spontaneously generated goals provides a window into how self-concordant (authentic) a person's goals are[30]. One benefit of this measurement approach is that it only requires that people know how they feel about their goals not what their implicit motives are[30]. Self-concordance predicts more persistent effort in goal pursuit[82], higher likelihood of achieving goals[83] and well-being[82,84].

The two major general models we described[12,24] are mostly compatible and partially redundant. For progress to continue on trait authenticity, it might be ideal to consolidate these models. In addition, as discussed above, authenticity has been conceptualized as self-accuracy (with mixed evidence), self-consistency (with mixed evidence), self-ownership (with good evidence) and self-enhancement (with compelling evidence). However, the existing models of trait authenticity emphasize, for the most part, accuracy and consistency. A new general model ought to integrate self-ownership and should consider how self-enhancement motives are influencing self-reported authenticity. This new model might also benefit from the creation of a scale that integrates these views.

State authenticity

The distinction between the back-stage self (away from the spotlight, free of obligation and unencumbered) and front-stage self (aware of evaluations or judgments by others, inhibited, and opportunistic)[85] has been used to describe authenticity and inauthenticity, respectively[86,87]. According to this perspective, a person can be considered authentic or inauthentic at any particular moment. Specifically, state authenticity is the subjective perception that one is being one's real self[88,89]. State authenticity is characterized by two components: authentic living and absence of self-alienation[90].

State approaches to authenticity are important, given that authenticity fluctuates more within than between persons[32,91]. Furthermore, state authenticity occurs more frequently than state inauthenticity[68,92], suggesting that experiences of authenticity are common and felt regularly by most people. Moreover, the emotional ambience of authenticity is largely positive, that is, state authenticity feels good[93,94]. In particular, state authenticity is mostly associated with positive, low-arousal emotions such as contentment, nostalgia, satisfaction, enjoyment and ideal-self overlap, alongside calmness, relaxation, flow and relief[68,90,95,96].

State authenticity is brought to the fore by a variety of triggers (Table 5) and situational factors. The state authenticity as fit to environment model (Fig. 2) offers a transactional and process account of the origins of state authenticity[97]. According to the model, authenticity reflects the relationship between the person and their environment. People are motivated to seek out environments that enable the expression of their authentic self. First, such environments represent a good match with one's central self-attributes (self-concept fit). These environments habitually activate those attributes, rendering them the default self-concept and promoting cognitive fluency. Given that fluently processed cognitions are judged as true[98], self-concept fit and cognitive fluency manifest as perceptions of the true self (state authenticity).

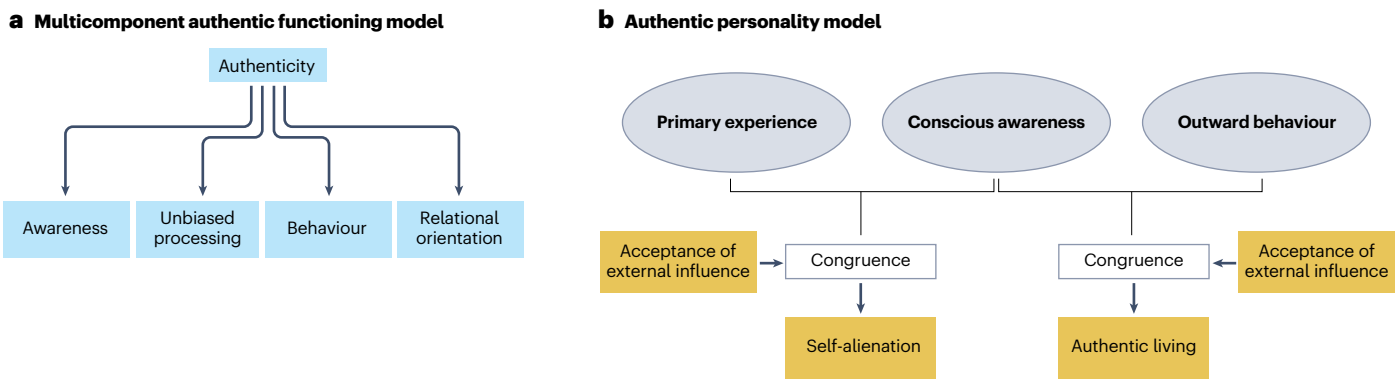

Fig. 1 | Theoretical models of trait authenticity. a, Multicomponent authentic functioning model[12]. **b**, Authentic personality model[24].

Second, such environments facilitate the completion of valued goals (goal fit) by matching the orientation of an individual towards a task. In this case, the individual will experience motivational fluency, coded as authenticity; as stated previously, authenticity facilitates goal pursuit[30]. Third, such environments indicate belongingness (social fit), that is, acceptance and validation of one's true self by others in the environment. By contrast, a mismatch between the environment and central elements of one's self-concept, valued goals or need to belong can be alienating, leading to state inauthenticity. State inauthenticity is likely to have adverse consequences both for individuals (by leading to frustration, disappointment and exit tendencies) and society (by reinforcing social inequalities through self-segregation).

We summarize two state authenticity scales in[96,99] Table 3. There are many other examples of state authenticity scales or minor adaptations (for example, from trait to state) of existing ones[32,33,53,68,93,100–104]. As a case in point, the authentic inventory[12] and authenticity scale[24] have been converted into a state format by adding the stem 'right now' (or similar) to scale items. The proliferation of face-valid scales or adapted scales may present a threat to research credibility, as they lack other forms of validity. Thus, standardized scales need to be developed[105–107].

Psychological relevance of authenticity

We next consider the relevance of authenticity for psychological functioning.

Self-regulation

Authenticity is an integral part of self-regulation and decision-making. For example, when faced with self-control conflicts, people are inclined to perceive self-controlled actions as more authentic than impulsive actions (though they are inclined to perceive impulsive actions as more authentic in others)[108]. In addition, authenticity is positively associated with self-reported self-control[109], promotion focus[110], problem-focused coping (for example, planning and active coping)[12] and mindfulness[111,112], whereas it is negatively related to suboptimal coping (for example, mental disengagement, behaviour disengagement, emotion venting and denial)[12] and mindwandering[40]. All of these findings suggest that authenticity might promote healthy forms of self-regulation (and/or that healthy forms of self-regulation feel authentic).

Furthermore, consistent with the state authenticity as fit to environment model[97], authenticity carries motivational properties such that individuals are more motivated to do things that feel authentic[113]. For example, in one study, women were instructed to self-present in a job interview either as competitive, aggressive and assertive (stereotypically masculine traits) or as team-oriented, rational and cooperative (non-stereotypically masculine traits). Women in the former condition reported feeling less authentic and, in turn, less interested in the position than women in the latter condition[29].

In addition, authenticity is involved in the regulation of decisions. Individuals widely endorse the lay theory that their authentic self ought to guide their decisions and actions[114]; this lay theory, in turn, influences the way people make and appraise their decisions[115]. Indeed, participants feel more satisfied when they are instructed to make strategic decisions by relying on their authentic self compared to alternatives[115,116] (independently of whether using the authentic self actually guides their decisions[117]). Conversely, increases (versus decreases) in decision satisfaction raise state authenticity[115].

The role authenticity plays in decision-making is particularly pronounced in the moral domain. For example, striving to be authentic (versus rational or realistic) attenuates willingness to engage in immoral workplace behaviours[118] and to violate moral norms[119]. Manipulated authenticity (versus inauthenticity) also strengthens the likelihood of donating money to protect the environment[120]. Moreover, people believe that the authentic self motivates them to be moral and behave morally[47,121]. In line with this finding, reminders of past moral behaviour promote state authenticity[101,118,122] as does behaving less selfishly in a dictator game[123].

Authenticity is implicated in the regulation of behaviour in other domains as well. For example, authenticity is positively linked to job engagement and performance[124] and to creativity (through openness to experience)[125]. In addition, authenticity is negatively associated with self-handicapping (placing barriers on one's successes as an excuse for possible failure)[126].

Interpersonal relations

Authenticity confers interpersonal benefits. For example, being perceived as authentic is associated with positive interpersonal outcomes. In one line of research[127], verbal authenticity (assessed using Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count[128]) was related to a variety of interpersonal outcomes. In study 1, strangers conversed in an MTurk chatroom "about

Table 5 | Triggers of state authenticity or inauthenticity

Effect	Trigger	Mediators	Key references
Decreases state authenticity	Ostracism	Basic needs dissatisfaction; rejection anxiety	218
	Social role disruption	None	70
	Objectification	None	141
	Threat to free will	None	46
Increases state authenticity	Positive mood	None	95,219
	Self-compassion	None	220
	Awe	Self-transcendence	214
	Microdosing psychedelics	None	221
	Fluency	None	99
	Handwritten (vs printed) restaurant menu	None	222
	Perspective-based reappraisal	None	45
	Nature involvement, exposure or connectedness	Basic need satisfaction (especially autonomy); positive affect; mindfulness; self-esteem	223
	Self-esteem	None	223
	Power	None	100
	Promotion focus	Satisfaction of autonomy and competence needs	110
	Approach goals	None	224
	Future self-continuity	None	143
	Moral behaviour	None	101,118, 122,123
	Nostalgia	None	225

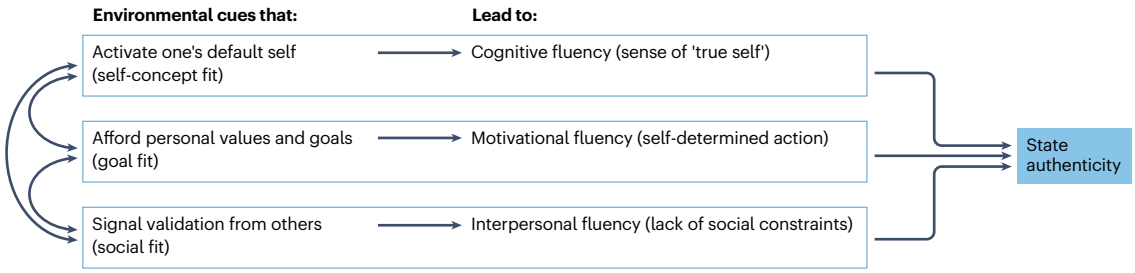

Fig. 2 | The state authenticity as fit to environment model. According to the state authenticity as fit to the environment model[97], state authenticity arises when environmental cues that promote fit lead to fluency. Adapted with permission from ref. 97 Sage.

what the one thing you would change about yourself would be," and verbal authenticity predicted stronger partner liking and interpersonal connection. In study 2, TED talks that were higher on verbal authenticity received more comments and views. In study 3, pitches from the television show Shark Tank (where aspiring entrepreneurs promote their business models to an investor panel) that were higher on verbal authenticity were more likely to be rewarded with investment. In study 4, posts on X (formerly known as Twitter) that were higher on authenticity were associated with more social media engagement (more likes and re-posts).

Authenticity can also strengthen interpersonal bonds. In fact, researchers have suggested that interactions with close (versus distant) others promote well-being partly because these interactions facilitate authenticity[129]. Trait authenticity predicts the positivity of participants' interactions over a 2-week period[130]. Moreover, authenticity is associated with conflict resolution in close relationships[131] and buffering the emotional consequences (for example, stress) of relational conflict over a 2-week period[132]. Additionally, authenticity is associated with relationship satisfaction[12], although this association is moderated by psychopathy, such that authenticity is stronger among individuals low (versus high) on that trait[133]. Believing that one's partner acts authentically[134] and knows one's true self predicts relationship quality[135]. By contrast, inauthenticity is linked to disparagement of others through humour[136] and aggressive behaviour[137].

Psychological health

Inauthenticity poses a strain on psychological health (Box 2). For example, in two daily diary studies, inauthenticity predicted struggles with finding meaning in life[138]. Furthermore, inauthenticity is associated with higher levels of anxiety or stress[24,139] and depression[24,31,140] as well as with lower levels of well-being[141].

Conversely, authenticity is related to, predicts and increases the presence of meaning in life[86,142–144] It is also related to and predicts greater well-being[41,96,141,145,146] even when social desirability is controlled for[147]. However, this relation between authenticity and well-being is moderated by the dark tetrad (Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy and sadism), such that it is stronger among individuals low (versus high) on the dark tetrad traits — a pattern that cannot be explained by social desirability[148]. Furthermore, authenticity is associated with basic need satisfaction (autonomy, competence and relatedness) and mediates the link between need satisfaction and well-being[149]. In organizational settings, authenticity enhances job satisfaction, intrinsic motivation and work engagement[105,150] (Box 3).

Moreover, authenticity is a vital part of maintaining positive self-views. The cross-sectional association between (both trait and state) authenticity and high self-esteem is well established[24,68,90,151–153]. In addition, authenticity predicts high self-esteem over a 2-week period[93], a 4-week period[154] and longitudinally, especially among participants who view time as limited rather than open ended[155]. Participants high (versus low) in authenticity also report that their self-esteem is less contingent on achieving specific outcomes or evaluations[12,75]. Indeed, authenticity has been argued to serve as the foundation for an optimal, secure form of self-esteem[156].

Crucially, authenticity is protective of psychological health. Higher authenticity is associated with lower verbal defensiveness[13]. In addition, authenticity buffers against anxiety and depression[157–159], stress[158,159], and negative mental health symptoms associated with breastfeeding problems among mothers[160]. Moreover, authenticity aids in coping with occupational stress[35], and restoring authenticity in objectified participants increases well-being[141].

The view of authenticity as self-enhancement partially explains its psychological health benefits. Self-esteem[161] and self-enhancement[162] predict psychological health. As such, self-esteem and self-enhancement might mediate the relationship between authenticity and psychological health.

Marketing and consumer behaviour

Marketing and consumer behaviour are concerned with product or service authenticity, or with whether a product or service reflects the true essence of the qualities it is supposed to possess[163,164] (see Table 3 for associated measures). The search for authenticity has become important, given the proliferation of reproductions or homogenous products in contemporary marketing[165]. Authentic products are thought to facilitate a connection with history, culture, or places[166] and are characterized by heritage, stylistic consistency, and relationship to method of production, while downplaying commercial motives[167,168]. Thus, authenticity is a critical positioning device for goods and services[169].

Perceived authenticity influences consumer quality perceptions, satisfaction and purchase intentions[170,171]. For example, beauty products and wine branded as authentic are liked better[172], intended to be purchased more frequently[173], and are actually purchased more frequently[174]. In addition, positioning suboptimal foods (those that deviate cosmetically from optimal foods) as authentic increases consumer choice for those foods more than price discounts[175]. Finally, perceived authenticity of frontline service employees predicts purchase intentions[176]. Clearly, authenticity sells.

Drawbacks of authenticity

As described above, authenticity contributes to psychological functioning. However, it also has drawbacks. For example, authenticity

might be used as an excuse for negative attitudes or behaviours or for being hypocritical[177]; people might believe that their prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviours are authentic and defend them on those grounds[178]. In line with this possibility, people are motivated to deem behaviours that align with their ideologies as more authentic than behaviours at odds with their ideologies[121,179].

Other drawbacks of authenticity are related to the view that authenticity reflects self-enhancement. Self-enhancement entails benefits (for instance, psychological health[162]) but also costs. For example, self-enhancing individuals might engage in overly sanguine self-presentation and create unfavourable impressions[180,181]. Indeed, education researchers have suggested that students who strive for authenticity and authentic self-presentation might be seen as entitled and arrogant, if not narcissistic[182,183], or as believing that everything is equally acceptable as long as the person's choice is authentic[184], thereby risking social exclusion.

Organizations encourage authenticity in the workplace, given that they regard it as pivotal to job satisfaction and productivity[185]. Indeed, employees or leaders high on authenticity are more likely to be vocal, articulating their concerns about problematic situations and thereby initiating timely problem solving[186,187]. However, authentic expression or behaviour can also conflict with others' values or the organizational mission, conveying the impression of self-enhancement or narcissism, thereby provoking a backlash[188]. The possibility of conflict between authentic expression and the values of others is compounded by the fact that perceivers find it difficult to correctly identify authentic actors who report being authentic[189]. Thus, perceivers are likely to misinterpret authentic behaviour and misattribute it to ulterior motives. Whether authentic behaviour will lead to interpersonal benefits or consequences depends on the extent to which the employee (or leader) identifies with the relevant social environment. Among those who strongly identify with the social environment, authentic behaviour signals similarity to others, palliating interpersonal conflict; conversely, among those who only weakly identify with the social environment, authentic behaviour signals dissimilarity, exacerbating interpersonal conflict[190]. Likewise, the interpersonal benefits or liabilities of authentic behaviour might be contingent on whether employees communicate compliance or lack of compliance with organizational standards, respectively[105].

Authenticity can also present challenges for bicultural individuals (individuals who identify with two cultures). These individuals vary in the extent to which their cultural identities are compatible and harmonious (high bicultural integration) versus divided and conflicting (low bicultural integration). When cultural conformity (versus nonconformity) was experimentally induced (listing examples in which one behaved congruently versus incongruently with cultural norms), individuals low on bicultural integration felt inauthentic because their cultural identity was threatened, whereas those high on bicultural integration felt authentic. However, experimental induction of self-kindness (for example, a long phone call with a close friend) relative to a control condition (for example, surfing the internet) put low bicultural integration individuals at ease and increased their authenticity[191]. More generally, bicultural individuals who are low on bicultural integration often switch cultural frames behaviourally. These individuals are likely to be perceived as less competent, likeable, warm, trustworthy and desirable dates compared to those who do not switch cultural frames behaviourally. These perceptions are partially weakened when observers are informed that these individuals are authentic despite their seemingly inconsistent behaviour[192]. Taken together, the manner in which bicultural persons navigate their current culture can have authenticity-related costs both intrapersonally and interpersonally.

Finally, authenticity might sometimes be or be seen as self-righteousness or self-enhancing[50,59]. Authenticity accompanied by inadequate consideration of others (ego-centric authenticity[193]) might engender lower well-being and discordant interpersonal relationships than when authenticity is accompanied by adequate consideration of others[194,195]. However, a person might easily abandon their views or values to genuinely capitulate to the expectations of others (other-distorted authenticity[147]). Consequently, the optimal level of authenticity resembles Baby Bear's porridge in the Goldilocks fable: neither too ego-centric (Daddy Bear's porridge) nor too other-distorted (Mommy Bear's porridge). In support of this view, balanced authenticity is a stronger predictor of well-being than either ego-centric authenticity or other-distorted authenticity[147].

In sum, authenticity is generally beneficial to the individual. Whether it is beneficial to others depends on whether it is accompanied by suitable regard for them and on the injunctive norms of the sociocultural context (Box 4).

Box 2 | Emotional labour

Emotional labour provides an example of the strains of inauthenticity on psychological health. Some occupations demand that employees excel at 'handling' people[241]. To fulfil job demands, employees regulate the expression — if not the experience — of their emotions (for example, 'service with a smile')[242]. Consequently, employees might come to feel alienated from their own emotions and hence inauthentic.

Emotional labour (the process of managing feelings and expressions to fulfil the emotional requirements of a job) varies along four dimensions: frequency of role-specific emotional displays, attentiveness to stipulated display rules (for example, duration and intensity of emotional display), variety of emotions required to be expressed and emotional dissonance (having to display emotions that are not genuinely felt). High levels across the four dimensions have harmful intrapersonal consequences for service employees[243]. Both deep acting (striving to modify one's emotions, thereby thwarting the transmission of negative emotions to customers) and surface acting (faking positive emotions) can adversely impact the psychological health of employees[244–246].

Although emotional labour is generally associated with positive affect of customers, service quality evaluation (through emotion contagion processes)[247], and perceptions of employees as friendly and competent[247–249], it is costly for employees. Emotional labour is related to increased risk for depressive mood[250,251], psychological or job stress[251–253], job dissatisfaction[252,253], turnover intentions[252], and burnout[251,254–256]. Many of these outcomes are mediated by emotional exhaustion[257,258]. Although, there is disagreement in the literature about whether the outcomes are due mostly to deep acting or surface acting, an 8-month, four-wave longitudinal study has clarified the picture[257]. This study found that surface acting was associated with higher employee anxiety and depression over the study period. However, deep acting was associated with fewer employee anxiety and depression symptoms in the short term but more symptoms in the long term. Deep acting might be initially linked to better psychological health due, in part, to harmonious (rather than obsessive) passion[259].

Summary and future directions

Most people believe they are authentic to a greater extent than others. Authenticity has become a valued commodity, promoted by cultural norms, institutions and folk wisdom. The construct has long been of interest to thinkers from several walks of scholarship. Our Review suggests that authenticity is best conceptualized in terms of self-ownership and self-enhancement rather than self-accuracy and self-consistency. Authenticity can be conceptualized and measured at both the trait and state levels. An integrated model of trait authenticity and better scales of state authenticity would move research forward. Despite its drawbacks (such as the potential for hypocrisy and conflict in the workplace), authenticity is a major contributor to self-regulation, interpersonal relations, psychological health and consumer behaviour. Authenticity also predicts physical health[31] and buffers against physical symptoms such as alcohol-related problems[157] and chronic pain[196].

There is still more work to be done in fleshing out the nature of authenticity experiences. For example, most of the literature has focused on the level of authenticity (high or low). Another property of the construct is variability, which captures fluctuations in state authenticity. In one study[91], low authenticity variability predicted more positive affect, less negative affect and reduced emotion regulation strivings compared to high authenticity variability. Future research should explore additional potential benefits or costs of low authenticity variability.

In addition, the bulk of the literature has focused on individual authenticity, However, authenticity might arise at the collective level. For instance, people can authentically express their group membership, which is associated with greater well-being[71]. Alternatively, a group or even nation can behave more or less authentically (for instance, congruently with its cherished values). Collective authenticity might covary with collective narcissism[197,198], thereby engendering problematic relations between the group and outgroups and leading to unfavourable perceptions of the group by outgroups. Future research is needed to test these possibilities.

Authenticity might also refer to the psychological climate at, for instance, festivals[199] or the workplace[200–202]. An authentic psychological climate would afford a safe environment[97] for festivalgoers or employees to express their identity. Authentic climates foster job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behaviour (discretionary or extra-role behaviour that is not recognized explicitly by the formal reward system and is intended to help the organization) and reduce burnout[200]. Consequently, an authentic climate might contribute to higher well-being and facilitate goal achievement.

Box 3 | Authenticity in organizational life

Authenticity is relevant to organizational life. For instance, initial socialization into an organization that prioritizes the authentic selves of newcomers (versus organizational identity or mission) predicts higher customer satisfaction and employee retention 6 months later; further, initial socialization leads to stronger engagement and higher satisfaction with one's work as well as improved performance[150]. More generally, authenticity is positively related to engagement in altruistic and sportsmanship behaviours within an organization[200]. In addition, employees higher in authenticity are more likely to be helped by a co-worker, especially when organizational politics are perceived as low[260]. Employees are more authentic and behave more morally when they experience identity integration, that is, when they perceive their identities (for example, work self and home self) as compatible and overlapping[28] compared to when they perceive their identities as incompatible and non-overlapping. However, the expression of authenticity might be impeded by norms and expectations[97], especially among individuals from minority groups[261] as they strive to achieve an optimal dynamic between authenticity and being socially accepted in the workplace.

Employees sometimes present themselves inauthentically, that is, they suppress their values and pretend to endorse organizational values[262]. Antecedents of work inauthenticity are procedural unfairness (lack of consultation with organizational members prior to decision-making), minority status, self-monitoring (heightened responsiveness to social cues), collectivism (interdependent self-construal)[263], job insecurity[264] and, paradoxically, leader integrity, which promotes organizational norms[265]. The resulting cascades of conformity are linked to stronger turnover intentions via emotional exhaustion[263,264].

Authentic leadership (the extent to which managers feel that they enact their true selves in their role) impacts on organizational life[266]. Authentic leadership is predicted by both personal resources (for example, resilience and self-efficacy) and contextual resources (for example, ethical organizational climate)[267]. Leaders are more likely to be labelled as authentic when they are seen as high on self-knowledge and self-consistency[268] and when their decisions — particularly in the moral domain — are not regarded as motivated by status attainment (for example, reputation or self-promotion)[269].

Authentic leadership predicts a favourable follower orientation toward the leader (for example, high leader identification and perceptions of leader trustworthiness[270]), satisfaction with the leader and organizational commitment[268], as well as improved organization performance and organizational citizenship behaviours[268,271]. Some of these positive outcomes (such as job satisfaction) arise from perceptions of the leader as having a good work–life balance; these perceptions encourage employees to strive for a positive work–life balance themselves[272].

Authentic leaders are viewed approvingly and reacted upon favourably, not only in the organizational domain but also in the political sphere[273,274]. Authenticity is considered critical in political communication[11] and success[275]. Voters judge the authenticity of politicians based on three attributes: ordinariness (for example, endorsement of items such as "is down to earth" and "talks in a way that makes me feel familiar with him/her"), consistency (for example, "presents positions consistent with his/her true beliefs" and "stands by his/her opinion even if it will cost him/her votes"), and immediacy (for example, "shares private thoughts, opinions, and feelings" and "often acts emotionally")[276]. Political leaders deemed authentic elicit stronger party identification and voting intentions[276,277]. It is therefore not surprising that politicians endeavour to appear authentic[278,279] in the hope of reaping benefits, a trend that is pronounced among populist party politicians who capitalize on their proclaimed status as outsiders[280].

Box 4 | Authenticity across cultures

Eastern cultures are presumed to place a high premium on harmony and hence interdependent self-construal, whereas Western cultures are presumed to value individualism and hence independent self-construal[281]. As such, many have assumed that authenticity will be lower and less beneficial in Eastern than Western cultures. However, there is little evidence for this hypothesis. Trait authenticity is associated with stronger independent self-construal but is not associated with interdependent self-construal[153]. Yet, among Japanese participants, authenticity is associated with higher positive affect and lower negative affect, irrespective of their level of independent or interdependent self-construal[282]. In addition, individuals from non-Western countries (such as China, India, Russia and Singapore) report higher trait authenticity than individuals from Western countries[153,283], although this pattern might be partially accounted for by other variables (for instance, holistic versus analytic thinking)[284].

Instead, the weight of the evidence indicates cross-cultural similarity. Authenticity has similar psychometric properties[285], is predicted by similar situations (heightened optimism and reduced evaluation apprehension)[220] and generally confers similar benefits[200,286] across cultural contexts. These benefits include positive affect and low negative affect[153], life satisfaction[285,287], low anxiety[285], eudaimonic well-being[96,283,287], moral behaviour, job satisfaction, and meaning in the workplace[118,124]. In addition, participants from Eastern and Western cultures are equally likely to endorse the idea that using the authentic self as a guide in making decisions is important, and this endorsement predicts well-being[114].

Although there are few cross-cultural differences in the predictors and benefits of authenticity, authenticity might be expressed differently in Western versus Eastern cultures[288]. For example, in one study, German participants made strong authenticity inferences when the target person manifested both likes and dislikes but Chinese participants did so when the target person manifested likes but not dislikes. The authors suggested that this pattern reflected prevailing cultural norms[289]. Inner or felt authenticity might be culturally invariant, but outer or expressed authenticity might be subject to cultural variation. Follow-up research could explore additional cultural contexts to test the generalizability of these findings.

Our Review focused on authenticity in adults. However, children acquire this concept as early as the age of 4, and children aged 4–12 years place higher value on authentic compared to control objects[203,204]. The concept of authenticity becomes more embellished with age[203], and both children and adolescents are concerned about their authenticity[205] and reap well-being benefits from authenticity[149]. More research on authenticity's development, especially at older ages, is needed. Such research could examine real-life antecedents of authenticity such as parenting styles, family structure and environment (for example, school or work).

Finally, a good deal of evidence for the benefits of authenticity is derived from cross-sectional designs, although the volume of experimental and ecological momentary assessment studies is substantial. More longitudinal, three-time point designs would complement the picture of said benefits. Future research should also test whether the momentary or long-term benefits of authenticity can be harnessed via interventions[206]. For example, state-level authenticity is associated with autonomy and approach goals, which in turn predict academic adjustment (for example, help-seeking behaviours, learning strategies and academic achievement)[207,208]. Thus, inducing authenticity might promote academic adjustment.

Published online: 28 June 2024

References

1. Ferrara, A. *Reflective Authenticity: Rethinking the Project of Modernity* (Routledge, 2002).
2. Taylor, C. *A Secular Age* (Harvard Univ. Press, 2009).
3. *Authentic: Merriam-Webster's Word of the Year* https://www.merriam-webster.com/wordplay/word-of-the-year (2023).
4. Tredennick, H. & Barnes, J. *The Nicomachean Ethics* (Penguin Classics, 2004).
5. Golomb, J. *In Search of Authenticity: Existentialism from Kierkegaard to Camus* (Routledge, 1995).
6. Steiner, C. J. & Reisinger, Y. Understanding existential authenticity. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **33**, 299–318 (2006).
7. Bennett, E. A. Alienation and its consequence: an exploration of Marxism, hikikomori, and authenticity via relational connection. *Humanist. Psychol.* **48**, 257–270 (2020).
8. Erickson, R. J. The importance of authenticity for self and society. *Symb. Interact.* **18**, 121–144 (1995).
9. Umbach, M. & Humphrey, M. *Authenticity: The Cultural History of a Political Concept* (Springer, 2018).
10. Williams, J. P. *Authenticity in Culture, Self, and Society* (Routledge, 2009).
11. Jones, B. Authenticity in political discourse. *Ethical Theory Moral. Pract.* **19**, 489–504 (2016).
12. Kernis, M. H. & Goldman, B. M. A multicomponent conceptualization of authenticity: theory and research. *Adv. Exper. Soc. Psychol.* **38**, 283–357 (2006).
13. Lakey, C. E., Kernis, M. H., Heppner, W. L. & Lance, C. E. Individual differences in authenticity and mindfulness as predictors of verbal defensiveness. *J. Res. Personal.* **42**, 230–238 (2008).
14. Vazire, S. & Carlson, E. N. in *Handbook of Personality: Theory and Research* 4th edn (eds John, O. P. & Robins, R. W.) 837–852 (Guilford, 2021).
15. Vazire, S. & Wilson, T. D. (eds). *Handbook of Self-Knowledge* (Guilford, 2012).
16. Vazire, S. & Carlson, E. N. Self-knowledge of personality: do people know themselves? *Soc. Personal. Psychol. Compass* **4**, 605–620 (2010).
17. Alicke, M. D. & Sedikides, C. Self-enhancement and self-protection: what they are and what they do. *Eur. Rev. Soc. Psychol.* **20**, 1–48 (2009).
18. Sedikides, C. & Gregg, A. P. Self-enhancement: food for thought. *Perspect. Psychol. Sci.* **3**, 102–116 (2008).
19. Gillath, O., Sesko, A. K., Shaver, P. R. & Chun, D. S. Attachment, authenticity, and honesty: dispositional and experimentally induced security can reduce self- and other-deception. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* **98**, 841–855 (2010).
20. Murphy, D., Joseph, S., Demetriou, E. & Karimi-Mofrad, P. Unconditional positive self-regard, intrinsic aspirations, and authenticity: pathways to psychological well-being. *J. Humanist. Psychol.* **60**, 258–279 (2020).
21. Maslow, A. *Toward a Psychology of Being* (D Van Nostrand, 1962).
22. Rogers, C. R. *On Becoming a Person* (Houghton Mifflin, 1961).
23. Barrett-Lennard, G. T. *Carl Rogers' Helping System: Journey & Substance* (Sage, 1999).
24. Wood, A. M., Linley, P. A., Maltby, J., Baliousis, M. & Joseph, S. The authentic personality: a theoretical and empirical conceptualization and the development of the Authenticity Scale. *J. Couns. Psychol.* **55**, 385–399 (2008).
25. Boucher, H. C. The dialectical self-concept II: cross-role and within-role consistency, well-being, self-certainty, and authenticity. *J. Cross Cult. Psychol.* **42**, 1251–1271 (2011).
26. Kraus, M. W., Chen, S. & Keltner, D. The power to be me: power elevates self-concept consistency and authenticity. *J. Exp. Soc. Psychol.* **47**, 974–980 (2011).
27. Sheldon, K. M., Gunz, A. & Schachtman, T. R. What does it mean to be in touch with oneself? Testing a social character model of self-congruence. *Self Identity* **11**, 51–70 (2012).
28. Ebrahimi, M., Kouchaki, M. & Patrick, V. M. Juggling work and home selves: low identity integration feels less authentic and increases unethicality. *Organ. Behav. Hum. Decis. Process.* **158**, 101–111 (2020).
29. Dormanen, R., Sanders, C. S., Maffly-Kipp, J., Smith, J. L. & Vess, M. Assimilation undercuts authenticity: a consequence of women's masculine self-presentation in masculine contexts. *Psychol. Women Q.* **44**, 488–502 (2020).
30. Sheldon, K. M. Becoming oneself: the central role of self-concordant goal selection. *Personal. Soc. Psychol. Rev.* **18**, 349–365 (2014).
31. Sheldon, K. M., Ryan, R. M., Rawsthorne, L. J. & Ilardi, B. Trait self and true self: cross-role variation in the Big-Five personality traits and its relations with psychological authenticity and subjective well-being. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* **73**, 1380–1393 (1997).
32. Fleeson, W. & Wilt, J. The relevance of Big Five trait content in behavior to subjective authenticity: do high levels of within-person behavioral variability undermine or enable authenticity achievement? *J. Pers.* **78**, 1353–1382 (2010).

33. Cooper, A. B., Sherman, R. A., Rauthmann, J. F., Serfass, D. G. & Brown, N. A. Feeling good and authentic: experienced authenticity in daily life is predicted by positive feelings and situation characteristics, not trait-state consistency. *J. Res. Personal.* **77**, 57–69 (2018).
34. Jongman-Sereno, K. P. & Leary, M. R. Self-perceived authenticity is contaminated by the valence of one's behavior. *Self Identity* **15**, 283–301 (2016).
35. Jacobs, R. & Barnard, A. Authenticity as best-self: the experiences of women in law enforcement. *Front. Psychol.* **13**, 861942 (2022).
36. Sedikides, C. Self-construction, self-protection, and self-enhancement: a homeostatic model of identity protection. *Psychol. Inq.* **32**, 197–221 (2021).
37. Sedikides, C. & Green, J. D. What I don't recall can't hurt me: information negativity versus information inconsistency as determinants of memorial self-defense. *Soc. Cogn.* **22**, 4–29 (2004).
38. Baumeister, R. F. Stalking the true self through the jungles of authenticity: problems, contradictions, inconsistencies, disturbing findings — and a possible way forward. *Rev. Gen. Psychol.* **23**, 143–154 (2019).
39. Ryan, W. S. & Ryan, R. M. Toward a social psychology of authenticity: exploring within-person variation in autonomy, congruence, and genuineness using self-determination theory. *Rev. Gen. Psychol.* **23**, 99–112 (2019).
40. Vess, M. Varieties of conscious experience and the subjective awareness of one's "true" self. *Rev. Gen. Psychol.* **23**, 89–98 (2019).
41. Rivera, G. N. et al. Understanding the relationship between perceived authenticity and well-being. *Rev. Gen. Psychol.* **23**, 113–126 (2019).
42. Kim, J., Christy, A. G., Rivera, G. N., Hicks, J. A. & Schlegel, R. J. Is the illusion of authenticity beneficial? Merely perceiving decisions as guided by the true self enhances decision satisfaction. *Soc. Psychol. Personal. Sci.* https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550620903202 (2020).
43. Vess, M. & Maffly-Kipp, J. Intentional mindwandering and unintentional mindwandering are differentially associated with the experience of self-alienation. *Personal. Individ. Differ.* **185**, 111289 (2022).
44. Kim, J., Christy, A. G., Schlegel, R. J., Donnellan, M. B. & Hicks, J. A. Existential Ennui: examining the reciprocal relationship between self-alienation and academic amotivation. *Soc. Psychol. Personal. Sci.* https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550617727587 (2017).
45. Anderson, C. L., Chen, S. & Ayduk, Ö. When does changing emotions harm authenticity? Distinct reappraisal strategies differentially impact subjective and observer-rated authenticity. *Self Identity* **19**, 590–612 (2020).
46. Seto, E. & Hicks, J. A. Disassociating the agent from the self: undermining belief in free will diminishes true self-knowledge. *Soc. Psychol. Personal. Sci.* **7**, 726–734 (2016).
47. Strohminger, N., Knobe, J. & Newman, G. The true self: a psychological concept distinct from the self. *Perspect. Psychol. Sci.* **12**, 551–560 (2017).
48. De Freitas, J., Cikara, M., Grossmann, I. & Schlegel, R. Origins of the belief in good true selves. *Trends Cogn. Sci.* **21**, 634–636 (2017).
49. Maffly-Kipp, J., Truong, T. N., Edens, J. F. & Vess, M. Dark triad traits are associated with a weaker morally-good true self bias in self-perceptions. *Self Identity* **22**, 832–848 (2023).
50. Seto, E. & Schlegel, R. Becoming your true self: perceptions of authenticity across the lifespan. *Self Identity* https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2017.1322530 (2017).
51. Bench, S. W., Schlegel, R. J., Davis, W. E. & Vess, M. Thinking about change in the self and others: the role of self-discovery metaphors and the true self. *Soc. Cogn.* **33**, 169–185 (2015).
52. Wilson, A. E. & Ross, M. From chump to champ: people's appraisals of their earlier and present selves. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* **80**, 572–584 (2001).
53. Bailey, E. R. & Iyengar, S. S. Positive — more than unbiased — self-perceptions increase subjective authenticity. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* **125**, 1351–1372 (2023).
54. Hart, W., Richardson, K., Breeden, C. J. & Kinrade, C. To be or to appear to be: evidence that authentic people seek to appear authentic rather than be authentic. *Personal. Individ. Differ.* **166**, 110165 (2020).
55. Haslam, N., Bain, P., Douge, L., Lee, M. & Bastian, B. More human than you: attributing humanness to self and others. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* **89**, 937–950 (2005).
56. Zhang, Y. & Alicke, M. My true self is better than yours: comparative bias in true self judgments. *Pers. Soc. Psychol. Bull.* **47**, 216–231 (2021).
57. Zell, E., Strickhouser, J. E., Sedikides, C. & Alicke, M. D. The better-than-average effect in comparative self-evaluation: a comprehensive review and meta-analysis. *Psychol. Bull.* **146**, 118–149 (2020).
58. Sedikides, C. & Alicke, M. D. in *The Oxford Handbook of Human Motivation* (ed. Ryan, R. M.) (Oxford Univ. Press, 2019).
59. Guenther, C. L., Zhang, Y. & Sedikides, C. The authentic self is the self-enhancing self: a self-enhancement framework of authenticity. *Pers. Soc. Psychol. Bull.* https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672231160653 (2023).
60. Gebauer, J. E., Wagner, J., Sedikides, C. & Neberich, W. Agency-communion and self-esteem relations are moderated by culture, religiosity, age, and sex: evidence for the "self-centrality breeds self-enhancement" principle. *J. Pers.* **81**, 261–275 (2013).
61. Sedikides, C. & Strube, M. J. Self-evaluation: to thine own self be good, to thine own self be sure, to thine own self be true, and to thine own self be better. *Adv. Exper. Soc. Psychol.* **29**, 209–269 (1997).
62. Checkland, P. *Systems Thinking, Systems Practice: Includes a 30-Year Retrospective* (Wiley, 1999).
63. Gimbel, S. *Exploring the Scientific Method: Cases and Questions* (Univ. Chicago Press, 2011).
64. Endler, N. S., Parker, J. D., Bagby, R. M. & Cox, B. J. Multidimensionality of state and trait anxiety: factor structure of the Endler Multidimensional Anxiety Scales. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* **60**, 919–926 (1991).
65. Fridhandler, B. M. Conceptual note on state, trait, and the state–trait distinction. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* **50**, 169–174 (1986).
66. Fleeson, W. Toward a structure- and process-integrated view of personality: traits as density distributions of states. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* **80**, 1011–1027 (2001).
67. Nezlek, J. B. A multilevel framework for understanding relationships among traits, states, situations and behaviours. *Eur. J. Personal.* **21**, 789–810 (2007).
68. Lenton, A. P., Bruder, M., Slabu, L. & Sedikides, C. How does "being real" feel? The experience of state authenticity. *J. Pers.* **81**, 276–289 (2013).
69. Cole, D. A., Martin, N. C. & Steiger, J. H. Empirical and conceptual problems with longitudinal trait-state models: introducing a trait-state-occasion model. *Psychol. Methods* **10**, 3–20 (2005).
70. Liu, J. J., Dalton, A. N. & Lee, J. The "Self" under COVID-19: social role disruptions, self-authenticity and present-focused coping. *PLoS One* **16**, e0256939 (2021).
71. Wessel, J. L., Huth, M. L., Park, J. Y. & Welle, B. The importance of role-based and collective authenticity on well-being and withdrawal. *Soc. Psychol. Personal. Sci.* **11**, 207–216 (2020).
72. Seligman, M. E. P. *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment* (Simon and Schuster, 2002).
73. Medlock, G. The evolving ethic of authenticity: from humanistic to positive psychology. *Humanist. Psychol.* **40**, 38–57 (2012).
74. Maslow, A. H., Maslow, B. G. & Geiger, H. *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature* (Penguin/Arkana, 1993).
75. Goldman, B. M. & Kernis, M. H. The role of authenticity in healthy psychological functioning and subjective well-being. *Ann. Am. Psychother. Assoc.* **5**, 18–20 (2002).
76. Walumbwa, F. O., Avolio, B. J., Gardner, W. L., Wernsing, T. S. & Peterson, S. J. Authentic leadership: development and validation of a theory-based measure†. *J. Manag.* **34**, 89–126 (2008).
77. Leroy, H., Anseel, F., Gardner, W. L. & Sels, L. Authentic leadership, authentic followership, basic need satisfaction, and work role performance: a cross-level study. *J. Manag.* **41**, 1677–1697 (2015).
78. Lopez, F. G. & Rice, K. G. Preliminary development and validation of a measure of relationship authenticity. *J. Couns. Psychol.* **53**, 362–371 (2006).
79. Napoli, J., Dickinson, S. J., Beverland, M. B. & Farrelly, F. Measuring consumer-based brand authenticity. *J. Bus. Res.* **67**, 1090–1098 (2014).
80. Ryan, R. M. & Connell, J. P. Perceived locus of causality and internalization: examining reasons for acting in two domains. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* **57**, 749–761 (1989).
81. Sheldon, K. M., Osin, E. N., Gordeeva, T. O., Suchkov, D. D. & Sychev, O. A. Evaluating the dimensionality of self-determination theory's relative autonomy continuum. *Pers. Soc. Psychol. Bull.* **43**, 1215–1238 (2017).
82. Sheldon, K. M. & Elliot, A. J. Goal striving, need satisfaction, and longitudinal well-being: the self-concordance model. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* **76**, 482–497 (1999).
83. Koestner, R., Lekes, N., Powers, T. A. & Chicoine, E. Attaining personal goals: self-concordance plus implementation intentions equals success. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* **83**, 231–244 (2002).
84. Sheldon, K. M. & Lyubomirsky, S. Achieving sustainable gains in happiness: change your actions, not your circumstances. *J. Happiness Stud.* **7**, 55–86 (2006).
85. Goffman, E. *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life 12* (Knopf Doubleday, 1959).
86. Schlegel, R. J., Hicks, J. A., King, L. A. & Arndt, J. Feeling like you know who you are: perceived true self-knowledge and meaning in life. *Pers. Soc. Psychol. Bull.* **37**, 745–756 (2011).
87. Lehman, D. W., O'Connor, K. & Carroll, G. R. Acting on authenticity: individual interpretations and behavioral responses. *Rev. Gen. Psychol.* **23**, 19–31 (2019).
88. Sedikides, C., Slabu, L., Lenton, A. & Thomaes, S. State authenticity. *Curr. Dir. Psychol. Sci.* **26**, 521–525 (2017).
89. Sedikides, C., Lenton, A. P., Slabu, L. & Thomaes, S. Sketching the contours of state authenticity. *Rev. Gen. Psychol.* **23**, 73–88 (2019).
90. Lenton, A. P., Slabu, L. & Sedikides, C. State authenticity in everyday life. *Eur. J. Personal.* **30**, 64–82 (2016).
91. Landa, I. & English, T. Variability in state authenticity predicts daily affect and emotion regulation. *Emotion* **22**, 1995–1999 (2022).
92. Huber, C., Germar, M. & Mojzisch, A. Authenticity occurs more often than inauthenticity in everyday life. *Soc. Psychol.* **53**, 63–72 (2022).
93. Heppner, W. L. et al. Within-person relationships among daily self-esteem, need satisfaction, and authenticity. *Psychol. Sci.* **19**, 1140–1145 (2008).
94. Rice, C. & Pasupathi, M. Reflecting on self-relevant experiences: adult age differences. *Dev. Psychol.* **46**, 479–490 (2010).
95. Chen, K., Zhang, H. & Schlegel, R. J. Does being angry feel authentic? A test of how affective valence and motivational direction differentially influence state authenticity. *Motiv. Emot.* **47**, 828–841 (2023).
96. Kelley, N. J. et al. Nostalgia confers psychological wellbeing by increasing authenticity. *J. Exp. Soc. Psychol.* **102**, 104379 (2022).
97. Schmader, T. & Sedikides, C. State authenticity as fit to environment: the implications of social identity for fit, authenticity, and self-segregation. *Personal. Soc. Psychol. Rev.* **22**, 228–259 (2018).
98. Reber, R. & Unkelbach, C. The epistemic status of processing fluency as source for judgments of truth. *Rev. Philos. Psychol.* **1**, 563–581 (2010).
99. Aday, A. et al. The SAFE model: state authenticity as a function of three types of fit. *Pers. Soc. Psychol. Bull.* https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672231223597 (2024).
100. Gan, M., Heller, D. & Chen, S. The power in being yourself: feeling authentic enhances the sense of power. *Pers. Soc. Psychol. Bull.* **44**, 1460–1472 (2018).

101. Smallenbroek, O., Zelenski, J. M. & Whelan, D. C. Authenticity as a eudaimonic construct: the relationships among authenticity, values, and valence. *J. Posit. Psychol.* **12**, 197–209 (2017).
102. Kifer, Y., Heller, D., Perunovic, W. Q. E. & Galinsky, A. D. The good life of the powerful: the experience of power and authenticity enhances subjective well-being. *Psychol. Sci.* **24**, 280–288 (2013).
103. Shelton, J. N., Richeson, J. A. & Salvatore, J. Expecting to be the target of prejudice: implications for interethnic interactions. *Pers. Soc. Psychol. Bull.* **31**, 1189–1202 (2005).
104. Stephan, E., Sedikides, C. & Wildschut, T. Mental travel into the past: differentiating recollections of nostalgic, ordinary, and positive events. *Eur. J. Soc. Psychol.* **42**, 290–298 (2012).
105. Cha, S. E. et al. Being your true self at work: integrating the fragmented research on authenticity in organizations. *Acad. Manag. Ann.* **13**, 633–671 (2019).
106. Elson, M., Hussey, I., Alsalti, T. & Arslan, R. C. Psychological measures aren't toothbrushes. *Commun. Psychol.* **1**, 25 (2023).
107. Gelman, A. & Loken, E. The statistical crisis in science. *Am. Sci.* **102**, 460–465 (2014).
108. Garrison, K. E., Rivera, G. N., Schlegel, R. J., Hicks, J. A. & Schmeichel, B. J. Authentic for thee but not for me: perceived authenticity in self-control conflicts. *Pers. Soc. Psychol. Bull.* **49**, 1646–1662 (2023).
109. Li, Q., Ren, X., Zhou, Z. & Wang, J. Reciprocal relationships between self-control and self-authenticity: a two-wave study. *Front. Psychol.* **14**, 1207230 (2023).
110. Kim, J., Chen, K., Davis, W. E., Hicks, J. A. & Schlegel, R. J. Approaching the true self: promotion focus predicts the experience of authenticity. *J. Res. Personal.* **78**, 165–176 (2019).
111. Tohme, O. & Joseph, S. Authenticity is correlated with mindfulness and emotional intelligence. *J. Humanist. Psychol.* https://doi.org/10.1177/0022167820940926 (2020).
112. Toper, A., Sellman, E. & Joseph, S. Examining the structure of authenticity: a factor analytic study of the Authenticity Scale and Authenticity Inventory subscales. *Humanist. Psychol.* **50**, 304–319 (2022).
113. Maffly-Kipp, J. et al. Civic hope and the perceived authenticity of democratic participation. *Soc. Psychol. Personal. Sci.* **14**, 419–427 (2023).
114. Kim, J. et al. True-self-as-guide lay theory endorsement across five countries. *Self Identity* **21**, 939–962 (2022).
115. Schlegel, R. J., Hicks, J. A., Davis, W. E., Hirsch, K. A. & Smith, C. M. The dynamic interplay between perceived true self-knowledge and decision satisfaction. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* **104**, 542–558 (2013).
116. Chen, K., Zhang, H., Friedman, M. & Schlegel, R. J. The authentic catch-22: following the true self promotes decision satisfaction in moral dilemmas. *J. Exp. Soc. Psychol.* **102**, 104376 (2022).
117. Kim, J., Christy, A. G., Rivera, G. N., Hicks, J. A. & Schlegel, R. J. Is the illusion of authenticity beneficial? Merely perceiving decisions as guided by the true self enhances decision satisfaction. *Soc. Psychol. Personal. Sci.* **12**, 80–90 (2021).
118. Zhang, H., Chen, K., Schlegel, R., Hicks, J. & Chen, C. The authentic moral self: dynamic interplay between perceived authenticity and moral behaviors in the workplace. *Collabra Psychol.* **5**, 48 (2019).
119. Kim, J., Christy, A. G., Rivera, G. N., Schlegel, R. J. & Hicks, J. A. Following one's true self and the sacredness of cultural values. *J. Exp. Soc. Psychol.* **76**, 100–103 (2018).
120. Yang, Y., Zhu, S., Gan, Y. & Dang, J. To be authentic, to be eco: exploring the link between authenticity and pro-environmental behavior. *Front. Psychol.* **12**, 755860 (2021).
121. Newman, G. E., Bloom, P. & Knobe, J. Value judgments and the true self. *Pers. Soc. Psychol. Bull.* **40**, 203–216 (2014).
122. Christy, A. G., Seto, E., Schlegel, R. J., Vess, M. & Hicks, J. A. Straying from the righteous path and from ourselves: the interplay between perceptions of morality and self-knowledge. *Pers. Soc. Psychol. Bull.* **42**, 1538–1550 (2016).
123. Wei, L., Zhang, H., Liu, Z. & Ge, X. Goal completion moderates the association between immoral behavior and self-perceived authenticity. *Self Identity* **21**, 644–659 (2022).
124. Metin, U. B., Taris, T. W., Peeters, M. C. W., van Beek, I. & Van den Bosch, R. Authenticity at work — a job-demands resources perspective. *J. Manag. Psychol.* **31**, 483–499 (2016).
125. Xu, X., Xia, M., Zhao, J. & Pang, W. Be real, open, and creative: how openness to experience and to change mediate the authenticity-creativity association. *Think. Skills Creat.* **41**, 100857 (2021).
126. Akin, A. & Akin, U. Examining the relationship between authenticity and self-handicapping. *Psychol. Rep.* **115**, 795–804 (2014).
127. Markowitz, D. M., Kouchaki, M., Gino, F., Hancock, J. T. & Boyd, R. L. Authentic first impressions relate to interpersonal, social, and entrepreneurial success. *Soc. Psychol. Personal. Sci.* **14**, 107–116 (2023).
128. Boyd, R., Ashokkumar, A., Seraj, S. & Pennebaker, J. *The Development and Psychometric Properties of LIWC-22* (Univ. Texas at Austin, 2022).
129. Venaglia, R. B. & Lemay, E. P. Hedonic benefits of close and distant interaction partners: the mediating roles of social approval and authenticity. *Pers. Soc. Psychol. Bull.* **43**, 1255–1267 (2017).
130. Baker, Z. G., Tou, R. Y. W., Bryan, J. L. & Knee, C. R. Authenticity and well-being: exploring positivity and negativity in interactions as a mediator. *Personal. Individ. Differ.* **113**, 235–239 (2017).
131. Tou, R. Y. W., Baker, Z. G., Hadden, B. W. & Lin, Y.-C. The real me: authenticity, interpersonal goals, and conflict tactics. *Personal. Individ. Differ.* **86**, 189–194 (2015).
132. Wickham, R. E., Williamson, R. E., Beard, C. L., Kobayashi, C. L. B. & Hirst, T. W. Authenticity attenuates the negative effects of interpersonal conflict on daily well-being. *J. Res. Personal.* **60**, 56–62 (2016).
133. Seto, E. & Davis, W. E. Authenticity predicts positive interpersonal relationship quality at low, but not high, levels of psychopathy. *Personal. Individ. Differ.* **182**, 111072 (2021).
134. Wickham, R. E. Perceived authenticity in romantic partners. *J. Exp. Soc. Psychol.* **49**, 878–887 (2013).
135. Rivera, G. N., Smith, C. M. & Schlegel, R. J. A window to the true self: the importance of I-sharing in romantic relationships. *J. Soc. Pers. Relatsh.* https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407518769435 (2018).
136. Barnett, M. D. & Deutsch, J. T. Humanism, authenticity, and humor: being, being real, and being funny. *Personal. Individ. Differ.* **91**, 107–112 (2016).
137. Pinto, D. G., Maltby, J., Wood, A. M. & Day, L. A behavioral test of Horney's linkage between authenticity and aggression: people living authentically are less-likely to respond aggressively in unfair situations. *Personal. Individ. Differ.* **52**, 41–44 (2012).
138. Wilt, J. A., Grubbs, J. B., Exline, J. J. & Pargament, K. I. Authenticity, presence of meaning, and struggle with ultimate meaning: nuanced between-and within-person associations. *J. Res. Personal.* **93**, 104104 (2021).
139. Xia, M., Lv, H. & Xu, X. Validating the Chinese version authenticity scale: psychometrics in college and community samples. *Curr. Psychol.* **41**, 7301–7313 (2022).
140. Grijak, Đ. Authenticity as a predictor of mental health. *Klin. Psihol.* **10**, 23–34 (2017).
141. Cheng, L., Li, Z., Hao, M., Zhu, X. & Wang, F. Objectification limits authenticity: exploring the relations between objectification, perceived authenticity, and subjective well-being. *Br. J. Soc. Psychol.* **61**, 622–643 (2022).
142. Lutz, P. K., Newman, D. B., Schlegel, R. J. & Wirtz, D. Authenticity, meaning in life, and life satisfaction: a multicomponent investigation of relationships at the trait and state levels. *J. Pers.* **91**, 541–555 (2023).
143. Hong, E. K., Zhang, Y. & Sedikides, C. Future self-continuity promotes meaning in life through authenticity. *J. Res. Personal.* **109**, 104463 (2024).
144. Schlegel, R. J., Vess, M. & Arndt, J. To discover or to create: metaphors and the true self. *J. Pers.* **80**, 969–993 (2012).
145. Bailey, E. R., Matz, S. C., Youyou, W. & Iyengar, S. S. Authentic self-expression on social media is associated with greater subjective well-being. *Nat. Commun.* **11**, 4889 (2020).
146. Sutton, A. Living the good life: a meta-analysis of authenticity, well-being and engagement. *Personal. Individ. Differ.* **153**, 109645 (2020).
147. Wang, Y. N. Balanced authenticity predicts optimal well-being: theoretical conceptualization and empirical development of the authenticity in relationships scale. *Personal. Individ. Differ.* **94**, 316–323 (2016).
148. Womick, J., Foltz, R. M. & King, L. A. Releasing the beast within? Authenticity, well-being, and the Dark Tetrad. *Personal. Individ. Differ.* **137**, 115–125 (2019).
149. Thomaes, S., Sedikides, C., van den Bos, N., Hutteman, R. & Reijntjes, A. Happy to be "Me?" Authenticity, psychological need satisfaction, and subjective well-being in adolescence. *Child Dev.* **88**, 1045–1056 (2017).
150. Cable, D. M., Gino, F. & Staats, B. R. Breaking them in or eliciting their best? Reframing socialization around newcomers' authentic self-expression. *Adm. Sci. Q.* **58**, 1–36 (2013).
151. Boytos, A. S., Costabile, K. A. & Logan, T. R. Describing autobiographical memories: effects of shared reality and audience attitude valence on perceived authenticity and self-esteem. *Self Identity* **22**, 77–101 (2023).
152. Harter, S., Waters, P. L., Whitesell, N. R. & Kastelic, D. Level of voice among female and male high school students: relational context, support, and gender orientation. *Dev. Psychol.* **34**, 892–901 (1998).
153. Slabu, L., Lenton, A. P., Sedikides, C. & Bruder, M. Trait and State authenticity across cultures. *J. Cross Cult. Psychol.* **45**, 1347–1373 (2014).
154. Diehl, M., Jacobs, L. M. & Hastings, C. T. Temporal stability and authenticity of self-representations in adulthood. *J. Adult Dev.* **13**, 10–22 (2006).
155. Davis, W. E., Hicks, J. A., Schlegel, R. J., Smith, C. M. & Vess, M. Authenticity and self-esteem across temporal horizons. *J. Posit. Psychol.* **10**, 116–126 (2015).
156. Kernis, M. H. Toward a conceptualization of optimal self-esteem. *Psychol. Inq.* **14**, 1–26 (2003).
157. Bryan, J. L., Baker, Z. G. & Tou, R. Y. Prevent the blue, be true to you: authenticity buffers the negative impact of loneliness on alcohol-related problems, physical symptoms, and depressive and anxiety symptoms. *J. Health Psychol.* **22**, 605–616 (2017).
158. Zou, X., Sedikides, C. & Wildschut, T. What good is organizational nostalgia in the time of pandemic? Unpacking a pathway from COVID-related stress to authenticity at work. *Self Identity* **22**, 620–638 (2023).
159. Maffly-Kipp, J. et al. The role of perceived authenticity in psychological recovery from collective trauma. *J. Soc. Clin. Psychol.* **39**, 419–448 (2020).
160. Hammond, M. et al. Feelings of parental authenticity moderate concurrent links between breastfeeding experience and symptoms of postpartum depression. *Front. Glob. Womens Health* **2**, 651244 (2021).
161. Orth, U. & Robins, R. W. Is high self-esteem beneficial? Revisiting a classic question. *Am. Psychol.* **77**, 5–17 (2022).
162. Dufner, M., Gebauer, J. E., Sedikides, C. & Denissen, J. J. A. Self-enhancement and psychological adjustment: a meta-analytic review. *Personal. Soc. Psychol. Rev.* **23**, 48–72 (2019).
163. Nunes, J. C., Ordanini, A. & Giambastiani, G. The concept of authenticity: what it means to consumers. *J. Mark.* **85**, 1–20 (2021).
164. Gilmore, J. H. & Pine, B. J. *Authenticity: What Consumers Really Want* (Harvard Business, 2007).
165. Brown, S., Kozinets, R. V. & Sherry, J. F. Teaching old brands new tricks: retro branding and the revival of brand meaning. *J. Mark.* **67**, 19–33 (2003).

166. Graefe, D., Mowen, A. & Graefe, A. in *Craft Beverages and Tourism, Volume 2: Environmental, Societal, and Marketing Implications* (eds Slocum, S. L., Kline, C. & Cavaliere, C. T.) 27–47 (Springer, 2018).
167. Beverland, M. The 'real thing': branding authenticity in the luxury wine trade. *J. Bus. Res.* **59**, 251–258 (2006).
168. Youn, H. & Kim, J.-H. Effects of ingredients, names and stories about food origins on perceived authenticity and purchase intentions. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* **63**, 11–21 (2017).
169. Grayson, K. & Martinec, R. Consumer perceptions of iconicity and indexicality and their influence on assessments of authentic market offerings. *J. Consum. Res.* **31**, 296–312 (2004).
170. Carroll, G. R. in *Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioral Sciences* (eds Scott, R. A., Kosslyn, S. M. & Pinkerton, N.) 1–13 (Wiley, 2015).
171. Beverland, M. B. & Farrelly, F. J. The quest for authenticity in consumption: consumers' purposive choice of authentic cues to shape experienced outcomes. *J. Consum. Res.* **36**, 838–856 (2010).
172. Smith, R. K., vanDellen, M. R. & Ton, L. A. N. Makeup who you are: self-expression enhances the perceived authenticity and public promotion of beauty work. *J. Consum. Res.* **48**, 102–122 (2021).
173. Lee, S., Sung, B., Phau, I. & Lim, A. Communicating authenticity in packaging of Korean cosmetics. *J. Retail. Consum. Serv.* **48**, 202–214 (2019).
174. Spielmann, N. & Charters, S. The dimensions of authenticity in terroir products. *Int. J. Wine Bus. Res.* **25**, 310–324 (2013).
175. van Giesen, R. I. & de Hooge, I. E. Too ugly, but I love its shape: reducing food waste of suboptimal products with authenticity (and sustainability) positioning. *Food Qual. Prefer.* **75**, 249–259 (2019).
176. Matthews, L., Eilert, M., Carlson, L. & Gentry, J. When and how frontline service employee authenticity influences purchase intentions. *J. Bus. Res.* **114**, 111–123 (2020).
177. Ibarra, H. The authenticity paradox. *Harv. Bus. Rev.* **93**, 52–59 (2015).
178. White, M. H. & Crandall, C. S. Perceived authenticity as a vicarious justification for prejudice. *Group Process. Intergroup Relat.* **26**, 534–554 (2023).
179. Pillow, D. R., Crabtree, M. A., Galvan, M. J. & Hale, W. J. Not simply in the eye of the beholder: authenticity as a product of candidate preference and unfettered speech. *Polit. Psychol.* **39**, 849–868 (2018).
180. Sedikides, C., Hoorens, V. & Dufner, M. in *Self-Concept, Motivation and Identity: Underpinning Success with Research and Practice* (eds Guay, F., Marsh, H., McInerney, D. M. & Craven, R. G.) 29–55 (IAP, 2015).
181. Van Damme, C., Hoorens, V. & Sedikides, C. Why self-enhancement provokes dislike: the Hubris hypothesis and the aversiveness of explicit self-superiority claims. *Self Identity* **15**, 173–190 (2016).
182. Hotchkiss, S. *Why Is It Always About You?: The Seven Deadly Sins of Narcissism* (Simon and Schuster, 2008).
183. Barry, C. T., Kerig, P. K., Stellwagen, K. K. & Barry, T. D. *Narcissism and Machiavellianism in Youth: Implications for the Development of Adaptive and Maladaptive Behavior* (American Psychological Association, 2011).
184. Aloni, N. *Enhancing Humanity: The Philosophical Foundations of Humanistic Education* (Springer, 2007).
185. Opie, T. & Freeman, E. Our biases undermine our colleagues' attempts to be authentic. *Harvard Business Review* https://hbr.org/2017/07/our-biases-undermine-our-colleagues-attempts-to-be-authentic (2017).
186. Knoll, M. & van Dick, R. Authenticity, employee silence, prohibitive voice, and the moderating effect of organizational identification. *J. Posit. Psychol.* **8**, 346–360 (2013).
187. Monzani, L., Knoll, M., Giessner, S., van Dick, R. & Peiró, J. M. Between a rock and hard place: combined effects of authentic leadership, organizational identification, and team prototypicality on managerial prohibitive voice. *Span. J. Psychol.* **22**, E2 (2019).
188. Chamorro-Premuzic, T. *4 Pieces of Career Advice it's Okay to Ignore* https://hbr.org/2020/10/4-pieces-of-career-advice-its-okay-to-ignore (2020).
189. Bailey, E. R. & Levy, A. Are you for real? Perceptions of authenticity are systematically biased and not accurate. *Psychol. Sci.* **33**, 798–815 (2022).
190. Karelaia, N., Guillén, L. & Leroy, H. When being oneself is socially rewarded: social identification qualifies the effect of authentic behavior at work. *Hum. Relat.* **75**, 2058–2090 (2022).
191. Mok, A. Feeling at home in two cultural worlds: bicultural identity integration moderates felt authenticity. *J. Cross Cult. Psychol.* **53**, 179–212 (2022).
192. West, A. L., Muise, A. & Sasaki, J. Y. The cost of being "true to yourself" for mixed selves: frame switching leads to perceived inauthenticity and downstream social consequences for biculturals. *Soc. Psychol. Personal. Sci.* **12**, 829–838 (2021).
193. Schmid, P. F. Back to the client: a phenomenological approach to the process of understanding and diagnosis. *Pers. Centered Exp. Psychother.* **3**, 36–51 (2004).
194. Helgeson, V. S. Relation of agency and communion to well-being: evidence and potential explanations. *Psychol. Bull.* **116**, 412–428 (1994).
195. Kwan, V. S. Y., Bond, M. H. & Singelis, T. M. Pancultural explanations for life satisfaction: adding relationship harmony to self-esteem. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* **73**, 1038–1051 (1997).
196. Reed, D. E. et al. Authenticity as a resilience factor against CV-19 threat among those with chronic pain and posttraumatic stress disorder. *Front. Psychol.* **12**, 643869 (2021).
197. Cislak, A. & Cichocka, A. National narcissism in politics and public understanding of science. *Nat. Rev. Psychol.* **2**, 740–750 (2023).
198. Golec de Zavala, A. & Lantos, D. Collective narcissism and its social consequences: the bad and the ugly. *Curr. Dir. Psychol. Sci.* **29**, 273–278 (2020).
199. Robinson, R. N. S. & Clifford, C. Authenticity and festival foodservice experiences. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **39**, 571–600 (2012).
200. Ostermeier, K., Cooper, D. & Caldas, M. Can I be who I am? Psychological authenticity climate and employee outcomes. *Hum. Perform.* **35**, 1–30 (2022).
201. Ostermeier, K., Medina-Craven, M. N., Camp, K. M. & Davis, S. E. Can I be me with you at work? Examining relational authenticity and discretionary behaviors in the workplace. *J. Appl. Behav. Sci.* **58**, 316–345 (2022).
202. Reis, G. G., Braga, B. M. & Trullen, J. Workplace authenticity as an attribute of employer attractiveness. *Pers. Rev.* **46**, 1962–1976 (2017).
203. Frazier, B. N. & Gelman, S. A. Developmental changes in judgments of authentic objects. *Cogn. Dev.* **24**, 284–292 (2009).
204. Gelman, S. A., Frazier, B. N., Noles, N. S., Manczak, E. M. & Stilwell, S. M. How much are Harry Potter's glasses worth? Children's monetary evaluation of authentic objects. *J. Cogn. Dev.* **16**, 97–117 (2015).
205. Harter, S. in *Handbook of Positive Psychology* (eds Snyder, C. R. & Lopez, S. J.) 382–394 (Oxford Univ. Press, 2002).
206. Kipfelsberger, P., Braun, S., Fladerer, M. P. & Dragoni, L. Developing authenticity: a quasi-experimental investigation. *Personal. Individ. Differ.* **198**, 111825 (2022).
207. Vasconcellos, D. et al. Self-determination theory applied to physical education: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *J. Educ. Psychol.* **112**, 1444–1469 (2020).
208. Elliot, A. J. & Hulleman, C. S. in *Handbook of Competence and Motivation: Theory and Application* 2nd edn (eds Elliot, A. J., Dweck, C. S. & Yeager, D. S.) 43–60 (Guilford, 2017).
209. Alchin, C. E., Machin, T. M., Martin, N. & Burton, L. J. Authenticity and inauthenticity in adolescents: a scoping review. *Adolesc. Res. Rev.* https://doi.org/10.1007/s40894-023-00218-8 (2023).
210. Al-Khouja, M., Weinstein, N., Ryan, W. & Legate, N. Self-expression can be authentic or inauthentic, with differential outcomes for well-being: development of the authentic and inauthentic expression scale (AIES). *J. Res. Personal.* **97**, 104191 (2022).
211. Ariza-Montes, A., Giorgi, G., Leal-Rodríguez, A. & Ramírez-Sobrino, J. Authenticity and subjective wellbeing within the context of a religious organization. *Front. Psychol.* **8**, 1228 (2017).
212. Nazari, F., Khoshnood, Z. & Shahrbabaki, P. M. The relationship between authenticity and death anxiety in cancer patients. *OMEGA J. Death Dying* **86**, 966–979 (2023).
213. van den Bosch, R. & Taris, T. W. Authenticity at work: development and validation of an individual authenticity measure at work. *J. Happiness Stud.* **15**, 1–18 (2014).
214. Jiang, T. & Sedikides, C. Awe motivates authentic-self pursuit via self-transcendence: implications for prosociality. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* **123**, 576–596 (2022).
215. Brunell, A. B. et al. Dispositional authenticity and romantic relationship functioning. *Personal. Individ. Differ.* **48**, 900–905 (2010).
216. Le, B. M. & Impett, E. A. When holding back helps: suppressing negative emotions during sacrifice feels authentic and is beneficial for highly interdependent people. *Psychol. Sci.* **24**, 1809–1815 (2013).
217. Zhang, H., Chen, K. & Schlegel, R. How do people judge meaning in goal-directed behaviors: the interplay between self-concordance and performance. *Pers. Soc. Psychol. Bull.* **19**, https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167218771330 (2018).
218. Borawski, D. Ostracized and unreal: does cyberostracism affect authenticity? *Personal. Individ. Differ.* **189**, 111486 (2022).
219. Lenton, A. P., Slabu, L., Sedikides, C. & Power, K. I feel good, therefore I am real: testing the causal influence of mood on state authenticity. *Cogn. Emot.* **27**, 1202–1224 (2013).
220. Zhang, J. W. et al. A compassionate self is a true self? Self-compassion promotes subjective authenticity. *Pers. Soc. Psychol. Bull.* **45**, 1323–1337 (2019).
221. Pop, I. & Dinkelacker, J. Unlocking the self: can microdosing psychedelics make one feel more authentic? *Nordisk Alkohol Nark.* **41**, 142–155 (2024).
222. Yu, X., Huang, H., Liu, S. Q. & Lu, Z. Signaling authenticity of ethnic cuisines via handwriting. *Ann. Tour. Res.* **85**, 103054 (2020).
223. Yang, Y., Sedikides, C., Wang, Y. & Cai, H. Nature nurtures authenticity: mechanisms and consequences. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* **126**, 79–104 (2024).
224. Impett, E. A., Javam, L., Le, B. M., Asyabi-Eshghi, B. & Kogan, A. The joys of genuine giving: approach and avoidance sacrifice motivation and authenticity. *Pers. Relatsh.* **20**, 740–754 (2013).
225. Baldwin, M., Biernat, M. & Landau, M. J. Remembering the real me: nostalgia offers a window to the intrinsic self. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* **108**, 128–147 (2015).
226. Craik, F. I. M. et al. In search of the self: a positron emission tomography study. *Psychol. Sci.* **10**, 26–34 (1999).
227. Kelley, W. M. et al. Finding the self? An event-related fMRI study. *J. Cogn. Neurosci.* **14**, 785–794 (2002).
228. Marquine, M. J. et al. Impaired personal trait knowledge, but spared other-person trait knowledge, in an individual with bilateral damage to the medial prefrontal cortex. *Neuropsychologia* **89**, 245–253 (2016).
229. Philippi, C. L. et al. Preserved self-awareness following extensive bilateral brain damage to the insula, anterior cingulate, and medial prefrontal cortices. *PLoS One* **7**, e38413 (2012).
230. D'Argembeau, A. et al. Distinct regions of the medial prefrontal cortex are associated with self-referential processing and perspective taking. *J. Cogn. Neurosci.* **19**, 935–944 (2007).
231. Heatherton, T. F. et al. Medial prefrontal activity differentiates self from close others. *Soc. Cogn. Affect. Neurosci.* **1**, 18–25 (2006).
232. Denny, B. T., Kober, H., Wager, T. D. & Ochsner, K. N. A meta-analysis of functional neuroimaging studies of self- and other judgments reveals a spatial gradient for mentalizing in medial prefrontal cortex. *J. Cogn. Neurosci.* **24**, 1742–1752 (2012).
233. Murray, R. J., Schaer, M. & Debbané, M. Degrees of separation: a quantitative neuroimaging meta-analysis investigating self-specificity and shared neural activation between self- and other-reflection. *Neurosci. Biobehav. Rev.* **36**, 1043–1059 (2012).

234. Feng, C., Yan, X., Huang, W., Han, S. & Ma, Y. Neural representations of the multidimensional self in the cortical midline structures. *NeuroImage* **183**, 291–299 (2018).
235. Berridge, K. C. & Kringelbach, M. L. Neuroscience of affect: brain mechanisms of pleasure and displeasure. *Curr. Opin. Neurobiol.* **23**, 294–303 (2013).
236. Delgado, M. R. Reward-related responses in the human striatum. *Ann. N. Y. Acad. Sci.* **1104**, 70–88 (2007).
237. Enzi, B. et al. Is our self nothing but reward? Neuronal overlap and distinction between reward and personal relevance and its relation to human personality. *PLoS One* **4**, e8429 (2009).
238. Northoff, G. & Hayes, D. J. Is our self nothing but reward? *Biol. Psychiatry* **69**, 1019–1025 (2011).
239. Chavez, R. S. & Heatherton, T. F. Multimodal frontostriatal connectivity underlies individual differences in self-esteem. *Soc. Cogn. Affect. Neurosci.* **10**, 364–370 (2015).
240. Chester, D. S., Lynam, D. R., Powell, D. K. & DeWall, C. N. Narcissism is associated with weakened frontostriatal connectivity: a DTI study. *Soc. Cogn. Affect. Neurosci.* **11**, 1036–1040 (2016).
241. Wharton, A. S. The psychosocial consequences of emotional labor. *Ann. Am. Acad. Pol. Soc. Sci.* **561**, 158–176 (1999).
242. Hochschild, A. R. *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling, Updated with a New Preface* (Univ. California Press, 2012).
243. Morris, J. A. & Feldman, D. C. The dimensions, antecedents, and consequences of emotional labor. *Acad. Manage. Rev.* **21**, 986–1010 (1996).
244. Liu, X.-Y., Chi, N.-W. & Gremler, D. D. Emotion cycles in services: emotional contagion and emotional labor effects. *J. Serv. Res.* **22**, 285–300 (2019).
245. Rafique, T., Tasleem, S., Hassan, Q., Tariq, A. & Mumtaz, S. Antecedents and consequences of emotional labor, a review. *Bull. Bus. Econ.* **6**, 157–165 (2017).
246. Zhao, X., Fu, N., Freeney, Y. & Flood, P. C. Revisiting the effect of emotional labor: a multi-level investigation in front-line service teams. *Front. Psychol.* **11**, 570048 (2020).
247. Pugh, S. D. Service with a smile: emotional contagion in the service encounter. *Acad. Manage. J.* **44**, 1018–1027 (2001).
248. Andrzejewski, S. A. & Mooney, E. C. Service with a smile: does the type of smile matter? *J. Retail. Consum. Serv.* **29**, 135–141 (2016).
249. Grandey, A. A., Fisk, G. M. & Steiner, D. D. Must 'Service With a Smile' be stressful? The moderating role of personal control for American and French employees. *J. Appl. Psychol.* **90**, 893–904 (2005).
250. Han, K.-M. et al. Emotional labor and depressive mood in service and sales workers: interactions with gender and job autonomy. *Psychiatry Res.* **267**, 490–498 (2018).
251. Jeung, D.-Y., Kim, C. & Chang, S.-J. Emotional labor and burnout: a review of the literature. *Yonsei Med. J.* **59**, 187–193 (2018).
252. Jung, H. S. & Yoon, H. H. Moderating role of hotel employees' gender and job position on the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotional labor. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* **43**, 47–52 (2014).
253. Pugliesi, K. The consequences of emotional labor: effects on work stress, job satisfaction, and well-being. *Motiv. Emot.* **23**, 125–154 (1999).
254. Riforgiate, S. E., Howes, S. S. & Simmons, M. J. The impact of daily emotional labor on health and well-being. *Manage. Commun. Q.* **36**, 089331892110413 (2022).
255. Kariou, A., Koutsimani, P., Montgomery, A. & Lainidi, O. Emotional labor and burnout among teachers: a systematic review. *Int. J. Environ. Res. Public Health* **18**, 12760 (2021).
256. Aung, N. & Tewogbola, P. The impact of emotional labor on the health in the workplace: a narrative review of literature from 2013–2018. *AIMS Public Health* **6**, 268–275 (2019).
257. Xiong, W. et al. How emotional labor affect hotel employees' mental health: a longitudinal study. *Tour. Manag.* **94**, 104631 (2023).
258. Chen, C.-C., Lan, Y.-L., Chiou, S.-L. & Lin, Y.-C. The effect of emotional labor on the physical and mental health of health professionals: emotional exhaustion has a mediating effect. *Healthcare* **11**, 104 (2023).
259. Chen, K.-Y., Chang, C.-W. & Wang, C.-H. Frontline employees' passion and emotional exhaustion: the mediating role of emotional labor strategies. *Int. J. Hosp. Manag.* **76**, 163–172 (2019).
260. Tang, Y., Xu, E., Huang, X. & Pu, X. When can display of authenticity at work facilitate coworker interactions? The moderating effect of perception of organizational politics. *Hum. Relat.* **76**, 27–52 (2023).
261. Hennekam, S. & Ladge, J. J. Free to be me? Evolving gender expression and the dynamic interplay between authenticity and the desire to be accepted at work. *Acad. Manage. J.* **66**, 1529–1553 (2023).
262. Hewlin, P. F. And the award for best actor goes to…: facades of conformity in organizational settings. *Acad. Manage. Rev.* **28**, 633–642 (2003).
263. Hewlin, P. F. Wearing the cloak: antecedents and consequences of creating facades of conformity. *J. Appl. Psychol.* **94**, 727–741 (2009).
264. Hewlin, P. F., Kim, S. S. & Song, Y. H. Creating facades of conformity in the face of job insecurity: a study of consequences and conditions. *J. Occup. Organ. Psychol.* **89**, 539–567 (2016).
265. Hewlin, P. F., Dumas, T. L. & Burnett, M. F. To thine own self be true? Facades of conformity, values incongruence, and the moderating impact of leader integrity. *Acad. Manage. J.* **60**, 178–199 (2017).
266. Oc, B., Daniels, M. A., Diefendorff, J. M., Bashshur, M. R. & Greguras, G. J. Humility breeds authenticity: how authentic leader humility shapes follower vulnerability and felt authenticity. *Organ. Behav. Hum. Decis. Process.* **158**, 112–125 (2020).
267. Fladerer, M. P. & Braun, S. Managers' resources for authentic leadership — a multi-study exploration of positive psychological capacities and ethical organizational climates. *Br. J. Manag.* **31**, 325–343 (2020).
268. Peus, C., Wesche, J. S., Streicher, B., Braun, S. & Frey, D. Authentic leadership: an empirical test of its antecedents, consequences, and mediating mechanisms. *J. Bus. Ethics* **107**, 331–348 (2012).
269. Bai, F., Ho, G. C. C. & Liu, W. Do status incentives undermine morality-based status attainment? Investigating the mediating role of perceived authenticity. *Organ. Behav. Hum. Decis. Process.* **158**, 126–138 (2020).
270. Gill, C. & Caza, A. An investigation of authentic leadership's individual and group influences on follower responses. *J. Manag.* **44**, 530–554 (2018).
271. Banks, G. C., McCauley, K. D., Gardner, W. L. & Guler, C. E. A meta-analytic review of authentic and transformational leadership: a test for redundancy. *Leadersh. Q.* **27**, 634–652 (2016).
272. Braun, S. & Peus, C. Crossover of work–life balance perceptions: does authentic leadership matter? *J. Bus. Ethics* **149**, 875–893 (2018).
273. Clarke, N., Jennings, W., Moss, J. & Stoker, G. *The Good Politician: Folk Theories, Political Interaction, and the Rise of Anti-Politics* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2018).
274. Valgarðsson, V. O., Clarke, N., Jennings, W. & Stoker, G. The good politician and political trust: an authenticity gap in British politics? *Polit. Stud.* **69**, 858–880 (2021).
275. Ceccobelli, D. & Di Gregorio, L. The triangle of leadership. Authenticity, competence and ordinariness in political marketing. *J. Polit. Mark.* **21**, 113–125 (2022).
276. Luebke, S. M. & Engelmann, I. Perceiving politicians as true to themselves: development and validation of the perceived political authenticity scale. *PLoS One* **18**, e0285344 (2023).
277. Stiers, D. et al. Candidate authenticity: 'to thine own self be true'. *Polit. Behav.* **43**, 1181–1204 (2021).
278. Gaden, G. & Dumitrica, D. The 'real deal': strategic authenticity, politics and social media. *First Monday* https://doi.org/10.5210/fm.v20i1.4985 (2015).
279. McShane, L. & Cunningham, P. To thine own self be true? Employees' judgments of the authenticity of their organization's corporate social responsibility program. *J. Bus. Ethics* **108**, 81–100 (2012).
280. Enli, G. & Rosenberg, L. T. Trust in the age of social media: populist politicians seem more authentic. *Soc. Media Soc.* **4**, 2056305118764430 (2018).
281. Markus, H. R. & Kitayama, S. Culture and the self: implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychol. Rev.* **98**, 224–253 (1991).
282. Ito, M. & Kodama, M. Sense of authenticity, affectivity, and cultural construal of the self among Japanese university students. *Psychological Rep.* https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.100.1.83-86 (2007).
283. Robinson, O. C., Lopez, F. G., Ramos, K. & Nartova-Bochaver, S. Authenticity, social context, and well-being in the United States, England, and Russia: a three country comparative analysis. *J. Cross Cult. Psychol.* **44**, 719–737 (2013).
284. Miyamoto, Y., Nisbett, R. E. & Masuda, T. Culture and the physical environment: holistic versus analytic perceptual affordances. *Psychol. Sci.* **17**, 113–119 (2006).
285. Xia, M. & Xu, X. Does authenticity always breed mental health? A cross-cultural comparison between the United States and China. *Asian J. Soc. Psychol.* **26**, 132–145 (2023).
286. Sariçam, H. Life satisfaction: testing a structural equation model based on authenticity and subjective happiness. *Pol. Psychol. Bull.* https://doi.org/10.1515/ppb-2015-0034 (2015).
287. Rathi, N. & Lee, K. Does it pay to be authentic? Implications of authenticity for life satisfaction and psychological well-being in a collectivist culture. *J. Happiness Stud.* **22**, 147–161 (2021).
288. Sedikides, C., Gaertner, L. & Cai, H. in *Advances in Motivation Science*, Vol. 2 (ed. Elliot, A. J.) 185–241 (Elsevier, 2015).
289. Kokkoris, M. D. & Kühnen, U. "Express the real you": cultural differences in the perception of self-expression as authenticity. *J. Cross Cult. Psychol.* **45**, 1221–1228 (2014).

Author contributions

The authors contributed equally to all aspects of the article.

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

Additional information

Peer review information *Nature Reviews Psychology* thanks Erica Bailey, Michael Knoll, and the other, anonymous reviewer(s) for their contribution to the peer review of this work.