# CRITICAL LEADERSHIP THEORY AND PRACTICE

# `THE `LIGHT` SIDE

- **Learning outcomes**
- By the end of this session you will be able to:
- Define:  ethical leadership and by contrast  authentic leadership; responsible and sustainable leadership
- Consider how these might be recognised and the challenges of spotting unethical or inauthentic leaders
- Debate the issues surrounding these concepts

# WHY  THE INTEREST IN THE `LIGHT SIDE`?

# DEFINITIONS

- Ethical leadership is a two-part process (Johnson, 2012)
  - Personal moral behaviour of the leader/s
  - Moral influence over others

- An ethical leader has to both promote positive directions and engage in them:
  - `erect effective sanctions and barriers to those thinking of being unethical` (French, Rayner, Rees and Rumbles, 2015:294)

# LINKS TO ETHICAL THEORY

- Ethical theory dates back to Plato (427-347 B.C.) & Aristotle (384-322 B.C.)

- Comes from the Greek word: `*Ethos*` meaning:

  - Customs, conduct, character

  - So ethics is concerned with virtuousness of individuals and their motives

- Or is it?

# EXPECTATIONS (LINKED TO ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES)

- We expect leaders to:

  - (Teleological perspective)

  - (Deontological perspective)

- We hope leaders will be virtuous (Character perspective)
  - Leadership virtues: perseverance, public-spiritedness, integrity, truthfulness, fidelity, benevolence, humility (e.g. Velasquez, 1992)

# RECOGNISING ETHICAL LEADERS

- Ethics-talk in everyday communications and decisions

- Facilitate the dissemination of a code of ethical conduct

- Recognize and reward ethical behavior by others

- Speak out publicly against unethical or unfair policies and practices

- Encourage and protect those who oppose unethical decisions or practices, initiate support services

- Refuse to share in the benefits of unethical activities

- Oppose unethical decisions and seek to get them reversed

- Typically viewed as ethically courageous (Greenbaum et.al., 2014).

Is ethical behaviour good for business?

See: CIPD (2004); Valentine & Fleischman (2008); Greenbaum et al., (2014)

**TABLE 14-1** Suggested Criteria for Evaluating Ethical Leadership    Bass & Steidlmeier (1999)

| Criterion | Ethical Leadership | Unethical Leadership |
|---|---|---|
| Use of leader power and influence | • Serves followers and the organization | • Satisfies personal needs and career objectives |
| Handling diverse interests of the multiple stakeholders | • Attempts to balance and integrate them | • Favors coalition partners who offer the most benefits |
| Development of a vision for the organization | • Develops a vision based on follower input about their needs, values, and ideas | • Attempts to sell a personal vision as the only way for the organization to succeed |
| Integrity of leader behavior | • Acts in a way that is consistent with espoused values | • Does what is expedient to attain personal objectives |
| Risk taking in leader decisions and actions | • Is willing to take personal risks and actions to accomplish mission or achieve the vision | • Avoids necessary decisions or actions that involve personal risk to the leader |
| Communication of relevant information operations | • Makes a complete and timely disclosure of information about events, problems, and actions | • Uses deception and distortion to bias follower perceptions about problems and progress |
| Response to criticism and dissent by followers | • Encourages critical evaluation to find better solutions | • Discourages and suppresses any criticism or dissent |
| Development of follower skills and self-confidence | • Uses coaching, mentoring, and training to develop followers | • Deemphasizes development to keep followers weak and dependent on the leader |

What are the issues for leaders trying to act ethically?
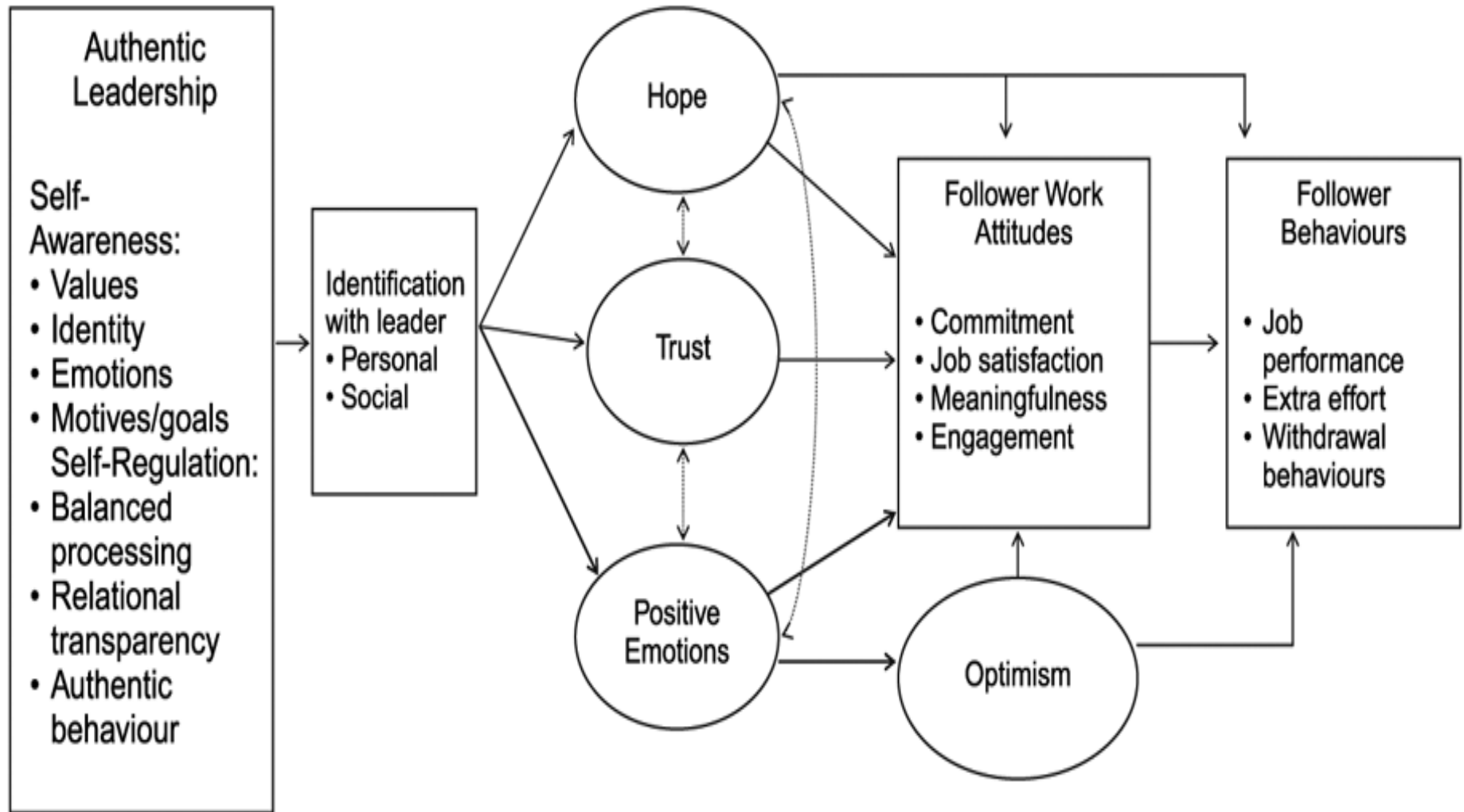
# WHAT IS AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP?

# AUTHENTIC LEADERSHIP

- Real and genuine, leaders perceived by others as being sincere and non hypocritical

- A relative concept with four characteristics (Alvolio & Gardner, 2005)

▪ Has to be perceived by the followers

# AUTHENTIC LEADERS ARE PERCEIVED BY OTHERS AS BEING SINCERE AND NON-HYPOCRITICAL

# Authentic Leadership Model



**Source:** Adapted with permission from Avolio *et al*. (2004)

What are the issues for authentic leaders?

# DO WE LIKE THEM? AND ARE THEY GOOD?

# IDEAL SCENARIO?

- A socially accepted ethical perspective and high levels of authenticity to provide:
  - Conviction in decision making and actions
  - That attune with the values of followers
  - Which builds trust
  - Drives long-term results
- Sustains organisational success through good and bad times (George et al, 2007).

# RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP

- "a social-relational and ethical phenomenon, which occurs in social processes of interaction" (Maak & Pless,2006 p99).

- High degrees of diverse stakeholder inclusion (including employees) (Donald & Preston 1995; Schneider 2002)

- Leadership which combines societal, environmental as well as economic responsibilities (Doh & Stumpf 2005; Waldman & Galvin 2008; Waldman 2011)

- Decisions that are informed by ethical considerations (De Hoogh & Den Hartog 2008; Doh & Stumpf 2005; Pless 2007; Waldman & Siegel 2008)

Respect
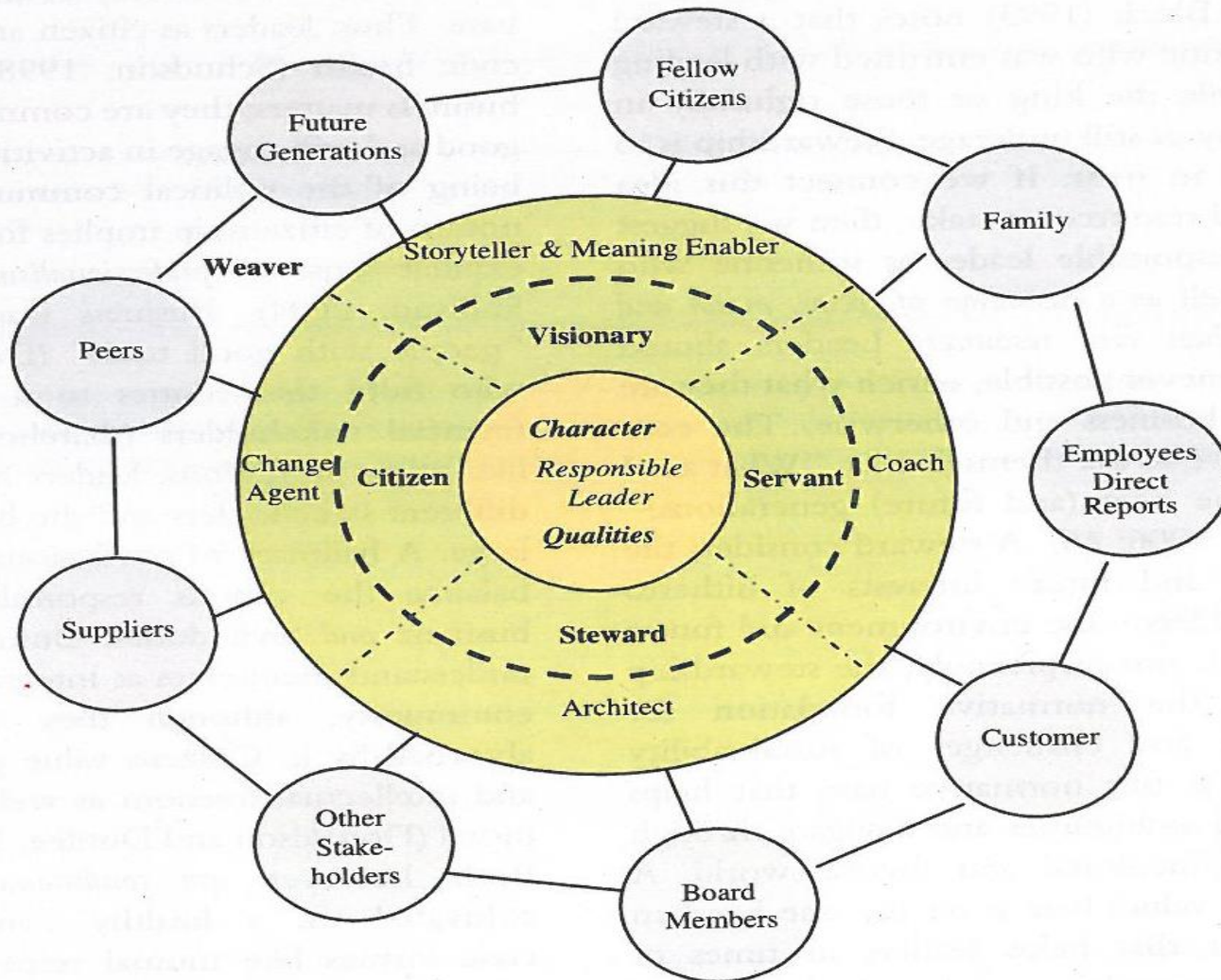
# The roles model of responsible leadership



Figure 1. The roles model of responsible leadership.

**Maak & Pless 2006**

# SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP

A leader crafts a vision and inspires people to act collectively to make it happen, responding to whatever challenges arise along the way

A sustainable leader is someone who inspires and supports action towards a better world` (Polly Courtice, Director CISL)

an approach  aimed at delivering better and more sustainable returns, reducing unwanted employee turnover and accelerating innovation (Avery & Bergsteiner 2011)

"Sustainable leadership practices reflect good management, often at lower costs, [whilst] enhancing reputation and brand" (Kantabutra & Saratun, 2013 p 363)

# BENEFITS OF SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP?

# 7 PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP

See Hargreaves and Fink ( 2012)

# DISADVANTAGES OF SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP

See: Avery and Bergsteiner (2011)

# REFLECTION

- Can we recruit ethical, authentic, responsible and/or sustainable leaders?
- Can we train leaders to be ethical, authentic, responsible and/or sustainable?

**See articles:**
- Bragues (2008). The ancients against the moderns:  Focussing on the character of corporate leaders.
- Cooper et al (2005). Looking forward but learning from the past: Potential challenges to developing authentic leadership theory and authentic leaders.
- George, et al. (2007).  Discovering Your Authentic Leadership

**Useful references**

Bernard M. Bass, B. & Steidlmeier, P. (1999). ETHICS, CHARACTER, AND AUTHENTIC TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR. *Leadership Quarterly*, 10(2), 181–217.

Greenbaum, R., Quade, M. and Bonner, J. (2015).  Why do  leaders practice  amoral management? A conceptual investigation of the impediments to ethical leadership. *Organizational Psychology review*, 5 (1), 26-49