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# An existential approach to Authentic Leadership Development: A review of the existential coaching literature and its' relationship to Authentic Leadership

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*Authenticity is a key concept within Existential thought and practice, yet despite the growing interest in the field of Authentic Leadership, very little has been written that brings together these two fields. This review explores the existing work that does attempt to bridge these two areas, specifically considering how Existentialism might relate to the actual development of Authentic Leadership. It examines the tension behind the two opposing epistemologies of science's rationalist approach to Leadership and Authenticity and philosophy's phenomenological perspective. It argues the effectiveness of an existential approach to Authentic Leadership Development and proposes a phenomenological model of Authentic Leadership Coaching and illustrates how this might address the key existential issues pertinent to Authentic Leadership such as authenticity, values, meaning, purpose and finitude.*

**Keywords:** Leadership Development; Authentic Leadership Development; Executive Coaching; Existential Coaching; Existentialism.

## Introduction

THE IDEA OF TAKING AN existential approach to business and leadership is a relatively new phenomenon though existential thought itself can be traced back to European philosophers of the 19th and 20th century. The central premise of Existentialism is that each human has a responsibility for giving meaning to their own lives rather than *unthinkingly* accepting an external meaning-structure offered, for example, by society or religion. This branch of philosophy emerged following the Enlightenment, when a lot of the world started moving away from superstition and Religion towards rationalism and Science and was originally espoused by thinkers and writers such as Kierkegaard (1846) and Nietzsche (1883) and later Heidegger (1962) and Sartre (1969). The field of Psychiatry also found value in existential thinking and it was adopted through the work of psychiatrists such as Binswanger (1946), Jaspers

(1971) and Laing (1971). This in turn influenced existential psychotherapists who also wanted to base their therapies more on a philosophical than a medical approach, such as Frankl (1963), Yalom (1980) and May (1994). These fields of Existential Philosophy, Psychiatry and Psychotherapy provide a rich heritage for Existential Coaching, however, each in themselves are too copious to review here, so this review focuses purely on the latest application of existential thought and practice, that is the development of Existential Coaching. The overarching aim of this review is to assess the existing literature that brings together existentialism and leadership with a particular examination of how this then relates to the growing field of Authentic Leadership Development. To achieve this, we will summarise the argument in the literature from the existential-phenomenological perspective and its criticism of the leadership field's insis-

tence on the prevailing empirical positivist approach to leadership research and explore why this paradigm is proving problematic for the development part of Authentic Leadership Development. The review looks at the work of contemporary writers, practitioners and theoretical contributors and as the existential perspective is relatively new to the field of leadership coaching, it includes both peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles as well as published book chapters. Finally, to enable the review to provide an original contribution to the literature, it moves on to propose and detail an existential-phenomenological approach to Authentic Leadership Coaching.

### **Existentialism and Leadership Development**

Existential thinking has often been used to frame various issues beyond philosophy itself, for example, education (White, 2001), mental health (Jones, 2001) and organisational theory (Kelly & Kelly, 1998). Although somewhat limited in size, there is also existing literature that applies an existential perspective to a range of business issues, in particular business ethics and decision-making (Agarwal & Malloy, 2000; Ashman & Winstanley, 2006; Jackson, 2005; and West, 2008). West (2008) has proposed an ethical decision-making model based specifically on Sartrean existentialism, considering the issues of *choice*, *freedom* and *responsibility*. Ashman and Lawler also discuss Sartrean existentialism in business leadership in a sequence of articles, (Ashman, 2007; Lawler, 2005, 2007) adding to the discussion the Sartrean topics of *meaninglessness*, *nothingness* and *bad-faith*. These writers also bring in other key figures such as Karl Jasper and Martin Buber. Considering leader-communication, they introduce further existential concepts such as; *inter-subjectivity* and *being-in-the-world* with a particular focus on Buber’s idea of communication as relationship (Ashman & Lawler, 2008) and Sartre’s perspective of leader-authenticity, (Lawler & Ashman, 2012). Other writers have similarly

focussed on particular philosophies such as Bolle (2006), who is one of the very few to consider existential leadership development and looks at management specifically through the work of Heidegger. He argues philosophy is a form of self-management, self-regulation and self-insight and suggests that each of these are, in turn, based upon principles derived from thinking about ‘existence’. He even proposes Heidegger’s classic *Being and Time* as a handbook of management skills.

Leader development is the key focus of this paper and herein we propose that genuine and efficacious Authentic Leadership Development should be based upon existential inquiry. We explore how Authentic Leadership Coaching in particular is an existential-phenomenological inquiry that aims to help people live more authentic lives based on ‘...an awareness of the human condition’ (LeBon & Arnaud, 2012). Confronting existence in such a direct manner goes far beyond a behavioural or trait approach to leadership development as we shall see, and can have a profound impact on those involved as they contemplate the significant matters of their existence, including their: beliefs, values, meaning, freedom and finitude. Each of these *existential concerns* are addressed throughout our discussion, in particular how they each relate to Authentic Leadership and Authentic Leadership Coaching specifically. First, we consider more broadly the field of Authenticity from the existential perspective.

### **The Authenticity debate**

Very little has been written about how existentialism relates to Authentic Leadership, even though Authenticity is a key concept within Existential thought, making them obvious and natural bedfellows. What has been written fundamentally takes issue with how the construct of Authentic Leadership has been developed, with little or no consideration of what the field of philosophy has to say about Authenticity. For example, in *Theorising Leadership Authenticity*, Lawler and

Ashman (2012) make the point 'Whilst the number of articles discussing authenticity in relation to leadership may be increasing, few overtly relate the concept to philosophical foundations...' (p.327). They take issue with various assumptions made in the Authentic Leadership literature and the lack of '...a convincing ontological basis for the concept of authenticity as it is applied to leadership' (p.327). They criticise the developing orthodoxy of AL research being based upon a positivistic epistemology which they believe limits the scope for the development of the Authentic Leadership concept. They argue that the implied objective in this approach, as indeed with most leadership research, is to '...identify and define the core characteristics of a universal model of leadership' (p.331). They argue that this positivistic approach to research is ultimately concerned with an objective, quantified and generalised theory of Authentic Leadership which they believe '...is unlikely to be successful and more importantly... restricts our potential understanding of authenticity in relation to leadership' (p.331). This they believe creates internal difficulties and unresolved inconsistencies within the Leadership literature leaving Authentic Leadership as '...a construct with no philosophical roots' (p.333). Algera and Lips-Wiersma (2012) concur stating '...in its haste to be operationalised (Walumbwa et al., 2008) the concept of authenticity as it is currently used in authentic leadership is limited as there have not yet been sufficient attempts made to gain an understanding of the ontological roots of authenticity' (p.118). Hayek and Williams (2014) also criticise the current research on Authentic Leadership for focusing on primarily leader traits and behaviours and make the point that phenomenological views of authentic leadership are all but absent. They observe that '...maintaining that individual virtues are traits, reflects a deterministic view of authenticity that contrasts with the attitudinal/phenomenological view of authenticity espoused by existentialist philosophers' (p.293) and they conclude that the existentialist view of authenticity is all but missing from the Authentic Leadership debate.

Representing the science-philosophy debate, Lawler and Bilson (2010) present a matrix upon which to place the different approaches to leadership research. On one end of the axis sits the rational-objectivist approach and at the other the reflective-pluralist approach. They place much of the leadership theory and research on the rational-objectivist end of the scale. Lawler and Ashman (2012) suggest that '...developing an existential authenticity perspective adds to the relatively unrepresented theorising in the reflective-pluralist category' (p.340), and conclude that '...the authentic leadership process needs to move away from prescriptions of how leaders behave' (p.341), this they suggest will allow each leaders own unique approach to emerge. Ford and Lawler (2007), Ashman (2007) and Algera and Lips-Wiersma (2012) all agree that the existential perspective has something important to offer the study of leadership precisely because it goes beyond the traditional and limited rationalistic-objectivist approach discussed above. It can deepen our understanding of leadership as it focusses more on the individual leader '...rather than on the abstract generalisations common to leadership research' (Algera & Lips-Wiersma 2012, p.121). In so doing it can '...provide a deeper understanding of the human experience which has long been ignored in leadership theory. If AL theory embraces its existential roots...a substantial contribution to leadership theory can be made' (p.126).

In this review we try to address these points by introducing a form of ALD that substitutes the positivist approach, with its generalised character traits and competency models, with a constructivist-phenomenological approach that takes participants through the individual experience of their own life and leadership. However, before focussing specifically on this form of Existential Authentic Leadership Coaching, let us briefly consider the development of existential coaching generally.

## Existential Coaching

There are various forms of coaching that can be integrated with existential ideas, (Lewis, 2012). For example, it can be combined with NLP (Reed, 2012), CBT (Mirea, 2012), a Solution Focussed approach (Langdrige, 2010), with psychometrics such as MBTI or FIRO-B (Pringle, 2012) or with other theoretical approaches such as Attachment Theory (Fraser, 2012) and Mindfulness (Nanda, 2012). It can also be an effective approach for particular coaching applications such as coaching through conflict management (Hanaway, 2012), stress-management (Krum, 2012), decision-making (LeBon & Arnaud, 2012), creativity (Deurzen-Smith, 2014) and career development (Pullinger, 2012). When describing Existential coaching generally, Deurzen (2012) and Peltier (2010), list a variety of things a client can expect, that we paraphrase here: Existential coachees are encouraged to speak up for themselves and the values they hold. They are helped to gain clarity on who they are and what they want from their life. They are encouraged to challenge the assumptions they hold about themselves and others. They will be enabled to recognise their own personal life-ideology and any distortions, bias or prejudice held within it. In turn they will develop a wider perspective on life generally and their own life more specifically. They will explore new and more meaningful ways in which to engage with their life with a meaningful and unique purpose. Overall, they will get a better sense of who they are, what they want to become and the kind of life they want to live. Deurzen (2012), however, makes a pertinent point when she asks *‘How many of us can afford to think about life in this way? In this contemporary culture of rushing and competing. Perhaps it is true that it is precisely because of the pressures we are under that we have to stop to take the time to ponder and consider’* (p.16). Authentic Leadership Coaching can create just this opportunity and within it the chance for individual leaders to address such questions as *‘What kind of leader do I want to be*

*and how can I lead in a way that is meaningful to me?’* (Jopling, 2010). But how do individuals actually go about addressing these sorts of issues? Even if a busy leader can find the time to step back from their own theatre of operations long enough to *ponder and consider* the human quest, what questions exactly do they explore? How does one effectively question their quest? There are a number of key existential concerns common throughout the philosophic literature that effectively guide this enquiry and are therefore, we contend, key to effective Authentic Leadership and Authentic Leadership Development. Each of these issues we will come on to discuss and illustrate how each fit within our proposed coaching model of Existential Authentic Leadership Development.

## Existential Authentic Leadership Development

Authentic Leadership and Existentialism are uniquely Western ideas that both aspire to the same ideals of *‘...living (and leading) with meaning and purpose’* (Deurzen, 2012, p.xix). Although drawing on philosophy’s lofty and often dense erudition, Existential Coaching remains a very enabling and pragmatic approach with its emphasis on individual choice and freedom. In *Existential Perspectives on Coaching*, Deurzen (2012) describes the existential approach as one that uses *‘...the ordering of thoughts, feelings, experiences and actions, enabling people to bring their behaviour and actions in line with their best intentions, motivations and purpose’* (p.xix). This summary highlights its relatedness to Authenticity and in turn Authentic Leadership which is described in the AL literature as *‘a process whereby leaders become self-aware of their values, beliefs, identity, motives and goals, and grow to achieve self-concordance in their actions and relationships’* (Gardener, Avolio & Walumbwa, 2007, p.392). As an overarching existential concern, Authenticity is achieved through the exploration of human issues such as personal beliefs and values, meaning and purpose, freedom, responsibility, uncertainty, ambiguity, temporality and ultimately

finitude. It is a rare leadership development intervention that covers such matters of profound personal significance, but that's precisely what we believe Authentic Leadership Development should involve itself with. An authentic leader needs to be an authentic person and an authentic person, it could be argued, needs to have confronted such issues of life (and death) to fully understand themselves and to have arrived at a personal philosophy for their life and their leadership. As Algera and Lips-Wiersma (2012) comment, *'the concept of authenticity goes to the heart of what it is to be human and hence dwelling on "what it is to be authentically human" before asking "what is it to be an authentic leader" seems... essential...'* (p.122). This is why we argue Existential Coaching possibly forms the most effective and genuine form of ALD and why we propose the coaching model detailed below.

### **Existential Authentic Leadership Coaching Model**

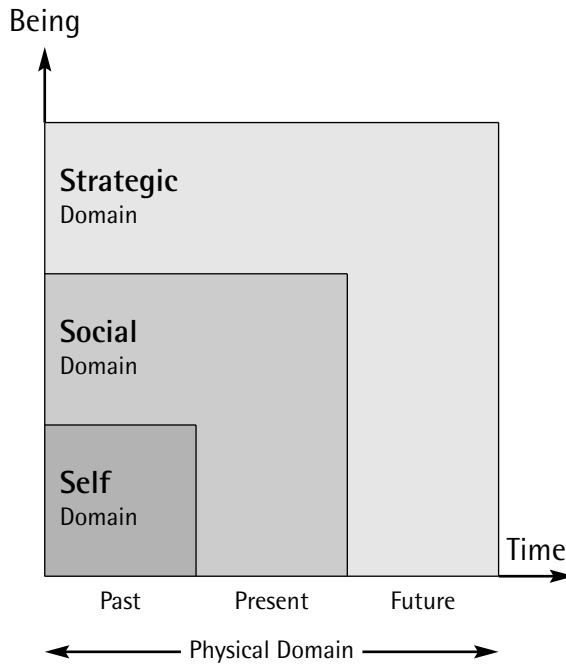
Here we would like to propose a new Authentic Leadership Coaching model that addresses each of the key existential concerns based around the four perspectives of existence (Deurzen, 2012); The Umwelt, Mitwelt, Eigenwelt and Uberwelt dimensions. These are: the Physical Dimension; the Self Dimension; the Social Dimension; and the Spiritual Dimension, or as we have renamed it, the Strategic Dimension. These four domains have been adapted for our proposed new model of Authentic Leadership Existential Coaching, described below.

#### **The Physical dimension**

The *Physical* dimension is made quite explicit in this Authentic Leadership coaching approach in a very particular way. Although this domain relates to how we interact with our bodies and the worlds other natural features, we also place in this dimension the existential concerns of temporality and finitude, which brings into

focus the fact that we *travel through a shard of light between two dark abysses* (Yalom,1980) and that ultimately we are always *living and being towards death* (Heidegger,1962). This might seem to some like a rather deep and potentially depressing fact to include in a simple leadership development programme and indeed it might be for a simple one. However, we suggest that a deep and enduring Authentic Leadership programme is not a simple intervention. Rather, it is a potentially profound experience for those involved, especially for those facing significant 'life-events', job change, promotion, retirement, etc., which are already forcing them to look carefully at themselves, their careers and their lives. For these it is not a depressing exercise, but quite the opposite. It brings clarity of what is important to them, what they stand for and what next they want to achieve with their life. Pondering our finitude can bring tremendous clarity on such issues thus enabling us to act with more deliberate self-determination. It is, therefore, perhaps no coincidence that the people who appear to get the maximum value from this approach to ALD are the more mature and experienced leaders. Those individuals who are perhaps becoming more aware of the passage of time and, therefore, more attuned to the larger existential issues relating to their life and their leadership and more prepared to break from the herd in this self-determining fashion. However, it can be a significant exercise for any participant to look at their lives through a temporal lens, that is, to ponder in turn, their past, their present and their future. It is for this reason that we don't just include the *Physical* perspective but we place it as the baseline x-axis (Figure 1) as it forms the fundamental direction of travel within this proposed new model of Authentic Leadership Existential Coaching. On the y-axis is then placed the various domains that guide the leaders reflection and exploration, the Self, Social and Strategic domains.

Figure 1: Authentic Leadership Existential Coaching.



### The Self dimension

The first dimension for explicit reflection and discussion in this model of AL Coaching is the domain of *Self*. The Self perspective relates to issues such as personal identity, strengths, weaknesses, etc. In existential terms the Self is always considered as something *becoming* and there is a palpable sense of this through the journey of AL Existential Coaching. As a starting point it asks participants to look back over the significant events in their lives and to make sense of how these have influenced how they have become who they are and how these are continuing to influence who and what they are continuing to become as a person and as a leader. AL Existential Coaching invites leaders to reflect on their past in an attempt to understand how and where their key life-lessons were formed, and how this in turn informs their leadership principles and philosophy. The process of mapping out one’s life trajectory

seldom fails to present the individual with, often unexpected, self-insight and understanding.

This exercise brings into focus the two key existential concerns of Temporality and Finitude. These issues are certainly core among the great sources of existential anxiety and ones that we can invest considerable amounts of unconscious energy in preventing them from seeping into conscious thought, busy being busy if you will. Being a self-conscious creature man is (probably) unique in being aware of the passage of time and his inevitable demise as the unavoidable conclusion to his life. This ability leads us to construct myriad ways and means to keep this awareness at bay. Yet paradoxically, though death ultimately ends us, contemplation on the idea can save us, (Yalom, 1980). It is the conscious appreciation of our temporality and ultimate finitude that makes us realise that our lives are not

automatically underwritten by significance or meaning, but that we should accept self-responsibility and consciously choose what it is we value and how we want to live our lives. Accepting and allowing this awareness of our *being-towards-death* (Heidegger, 1962), can help us genuinely confront the limited time we have and create for ourselves a life that is meaningful and authentic. As Peltier (2001) poignantly comments, *Death's presence serves as a values clarifier*' (p.161). As described above, AL Coaching facilitates this appreciation of temporality and finitude by asking leaders to reflect on their life-stories. It requires them to reflect upon their past and how this has informed their career choices and their leadership values. It asks them to contemplate their present and how satisfactorily they believe they are living and leading. And finally, it asks them to consider the future and what sort of legacy they want to create. Seldom do leaders get such an opportunity to consider deeply the interconnections between their lives and their leadership, how they inform each other and what they want to actively achieve with each. Genuine Authentic Leadership Development, we suggest, is a fundamentally existentially-contemplative endeavour.

### **The Social dimension**

The next sphere of consideration is the *Social* domain. This relates to a leader's relationships with others as it is in the present in the cultural and organisational networks within which they are embedded. This domain is a key feature within AL Existential Coaching as this is the context within which individuals enact their leadership role. This Social domain becomes ever more pertinent in the format of Authentic Leadership group-coaching (Fusco, O'Riordan & Palmer, 2015). Authentic Leadership coaching groups bring the participants social world right into the here-and-now of the group as each leader relates individually and collectively with all other group members. They engage with other members in much the same way as they engage with

significant others in their outer worlds, so this particular dimension invariably comes to life in the group. The work that can happen in this group context, in terms of observational feedback, questioning and challenging, is already a well know therapeutic factor in group-therapy and its relevance for group coaching, and in particular AL group coaching, is now also becoming apparent, (Fusco, O'Riordan & Palmer, 2014).

### **The Strategic dimension**

Finally, there is the *Spiritual* dimension. As can be seen in Figure 1 we have taken the arbitrary decision to rename this in our model as the *Strategic* dimension. We made this decision for the simple pragmatic purpose of *face validity*. The word *spiritual* brings with it unavoidable connotations of faith and religion which we have found to be more of a hindrance than a help in the field of leadership coaching. Spirituality can be an issue of great significance for some leaders but more often than not it can be an irrelevance or cause for distraction in the practice of leadership coaching. However, what does have considerable resonance in leadership terms, and significance in existential terms, are the subjects of meaning and purpose. A strategic and long-term system of meaning and purpose (which may include a spiritual element but certainly doesn't require it) is highly relevant in Authentic Leadership Coaching as it is an individual's way of *operationalising* all that has significance for them by drawing on their ideals, values, principles and philosophies. It is when they bring all of these into their world that they can achieve a *strategic* sense of meaning, purpose and, of course, authenticity. Key to the existentialist view is that humans are self-determining and that they can, and indeed should, create their own personal meaning and purpose. However, as part of a wider organisational community, some leaders embrace this responsibility while others recoil from it, identifying too easily with the communal character of their existence, Algera and Lips-Wiersma (2012,



p.123). There is an inherent complexity of human life within the organisational constellation and ‘...the autonomy and freedom required for the expression of authenticity will always be restricted and challenged by the need for co-ordination and direction within the organisation’ (p.128), but at the same time authentic leaders are mindful that ‘Authenticity involves a connection to, and expression of, a higher aspiration or purpose...a purpose beyond profit’ (p.128). So from an existential perspective it is important to explore, to understand and to reconcile this domain. In so doing the *Strategic* perspective builds on the previous *Social* and *Self* dimensions and invites leaders to ponder this ultimate higher purpose and consider what sort of future legacy will have personal significance for them and their authentic selves. This means contemplating their individual authenticity based on their core values, meaning and purpose, and mindfully accepting their individual freedom, choice and responsibility. Each of which we consider in more detail below.

### **Individual authenticity**

The idea of choosing one’s own life and living it sincerely and authentically is a theme that runs throughout most Existential writing. Therefore, Authenticity is the overarching idea that links Existentialism and Authentic Leadership. Kierkegaard (1846) first spoke of Authenticity as a *way of being* which was then further pursued by the writings of Heidegger (1927), who believed less in absolute authenticity, more that we live in constant tension between being authentic and inauthentic. More recently Mandic (2012) talks of authenticity in *Authenticity in Existential Coaching* and suggests the existential approach takes the ontological as fundamental. What this means is that the more usual coaching issues around knowing and doing emerge from the exploration of the individuals being in the world, ‘*The Existential approach simply emphasises and attends to the individuals being who they are and the possible implications that follow from this*’ (Mandic, 2012, p.22). In Existential terms, Mandic

talks of authenticity as a fundamental aspect of human existence and engagement with the world and others, that is, *being*. But what specifically in existential terms, does being authentic mean and how does one achieve it? As we have already discussed, it means confronting the core of human existence and what this means to our own individual lives. It means confronting and contemplating the unique human absurdities and anxieties that we are usually more prone to distance or distract ourselves from. We have become the intellectual masters of our known universe and acquired such evolved imagination as to be able to conjure at will; myths, legends, ghosts and gods. Yet, in existential terms, we come from nought and return to nought. It is easy to understand why we distance and distract ourselves from that potential *zero that lurks beneath* (Lawler, 2005). But the existential perspective compels us to face and accept this absurdity and finitude and to use this knowledge to help us choose what in our own individual life holds genuine value and meaning for us. It means making choices and accepting responsibility for these choices and the purpose they imbue into our existence.

### **Individual values, meaning and purpose**

In *Existential Coaching and Major Life Decisions* LeBon and Arnaud (2012) bring together the core existential concerns of values, meaning and purpose by saying ‘*If we live according to our values we cannot only be said to live authentically, but we are also likely to lead more purposeful lives*’ (p.52). These are closely connected, as the purpose someone chooses for their life gives it an inherent meaning and will be inextricably linked to what they value. Business, Political and Military leadership biographies often show us how an individual’s North Star (George, 2009), the guiding light for their life’s purpose and meaning, is formed and developed in relation to what they have learnt to value. The Existential approach to ALD Coaching helps leaders discover or define what is of true value to them personally. Autonomy in

thought and self is encouraged over ‘...*herd mentality and group morality*’ Peltier (2001, p.164). However, this is learning that cannot be directly taught and is achieved only through a process of self-discovery. From Gandhi to Google, clear and confident leadership is invariably built upon a deep and enduring sense of values, meaning and purpose.

### **Individual freedom, choice and responsibility**

However, it is not just about *having* values, meaning and purpose, it is also about having the *freedom of choice* on these and indeed the *responsibility* to make such choices. This being condemned to freedom (Sartre, 1969) and having both the opportunity and responsibility to consciously decide on each of these matters for our own life, brings with it huge potential anxieties that can lead us into a state of ‘*inauthentic avoidance or withdrawal*’ (Mandic, 2012, p.27) and potentially lead us to live our lives in *bad faith* (Sartre, 1969). Bad Faith being of two minds or two hearts, intentionally or unintentionally duplicitous, fraudulent, inauthentic. The prospect of leading in *bad faith* is an omnipresent issue for the leader as the cacophony of competing calls of significant organisational others demand to be heard. The Board, the shareholders, the consumers and the staff, all wanting their voices heard as to what the leader should do and how they should do it. It is clear that the leader who has a solid foundation for their life and leadership, based on authentically chosen values, meaning and purpose, can take both these responsibilities and these decisions with much more clarity and conviction than those who have not. Existential Authentic Leadership Coaching gives individual leaders a phenomenological perspective of their own lives that helps them author or re-author just such concerns.

### **Conclusion**

The tradition of leadership research to date has generally been one of a rationalist paradigm. In the past the primary focus of leadership research has been an attempt to distil down the essence of leadership to identify its ‘...*composite qualities/behaviours/competencies*’ (Ford & Lawler, 2007, p.409), the ultimate aim of which has been to seek objectivity and generalisability. In this respect, the phenomenological approach to Authentic Leadership Coaching described above, sets it aside from most other forms of leadership development. Rather than attempting to standardise the leadership phenomena it creates a heightened awareness and deepened understanding of the existential-humanistic issues that all authentic individuals and leaders face. This existential approach emphasises reflection and exploration of experience over immediate goals or performance. Spinelli (2014) summarises this saying, ‘*Existential coaching’s primary focus is on the clients worldview – which is to say, the whole range of beliefs, values, attitudes, assumptions, affects, feelings and behaviours that make up, maintain and identify a person’s “way of being”*’ (p.94). As such, the individuals most likely to benefit from this approach to coaching are often found to be those who are open to the challenge of grappling with complex and paradoxical issues (Spinelli & Horner, 2007). Such existential grapples are not without tangible benefits, however, and are ‘...*as likely to provoke performance-focussed change as is any other model of coaching*’ (Spinelli, 2014, p.101). As Deurzen (2012) comments about contemporary life, ‘*It is more urgent than ever before for human beings to take time out to wonder about their lives and be in wonder for long enough to take stock*’ (p.16). We echo this call for those leading in this postmodern world, and propose that the existential approach to Authentic Leadership Coaching described above, creates just such an opportunity for leaders to wonder and take stock of their lives and their leadership, in a way far deeper than is usually permissible in most leadership development interventions.

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