

# **AUTHENTICITY & FEMINIST LEADERSHIP**

## **A Learning Exchange**

Facilitated by:

- Lysa John
- Faith Pienaar
- Sophia Seawell

# **Feminist Leadership & Authenticity**

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# Part I : INTRODUCTION

## Principles & Agenda

*Sophia Seawell*

**10m**



**FAIR SHARE**  
of Women Leaders

## **Our Vision**

We envision a global social impact sector that walks the talk on gender equality and embraces feminist principles and culture at all levels of our organisations.

# Shared Principles

**Confidentiality:** We will uphold the principle of confidentiality - what is said in the online room will stay in the room, unless permission is given to do otherwise (and only hosts' input will be recorded)

**Listening:** We strive to create an environment where everyone listens deeply, with curiosity and respect

**Self-awareness:** We encourage everyone to cultivate an awareness of their respective levels of power and privilege in relation to others - we invite you all to consider what this means for how you show up in the online space

**Discomfort:** We won't shy away from difficult conversations - they are so necessary to our growth

**Intervention:** We will support each other to interrupt expressions of oppressive power, should they occur in any of the sessions

**Peers:** There may be hierarchies and unequal relations of power between us as participants/facilitators, but even in a hierarchy, we can be equal as thinkers. We will treat each others as peers, with valuable insights to share

# Agenda

00:03 Introduction

00:07 Agenda outline

00:10 Why Authentic Leadership?

00:30 Group activities

01:15 Closing

# Part II : PRESENTATION

## Why Authentic Leadership?

*Lysa John*

**20m**


# About me...

- 28 years of studying about and working with civil society, with over half this time spent working with large-scale networks and coalitions.
- Much of this work has required steering away from a one-size, one-voice approaches to decision making; and has involved navigating a spectrum of possibilities for shared leadership.

# And why I am here...

- To share reflections on activism and leadership; with a focus on how we can strengthen the connection between individual and institutional experiences of authenticity, recognising them as mutually reinforcing parts of a wider ecosystem of solidarity and collective action.
- In an age of extreme uncertainty, reinforcing our sense of purpose and how this connects us with wider actors and allies of change is critical to remaining hopeful, relevant and resilient in an ever-changing world.






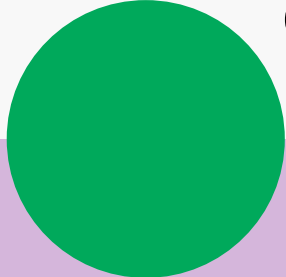
The present era of '**leader-full movements**' points to the increasing importance of agency and leadership that beyond ascribed roles and traditional structures.

Feminist leadership, with its emphasis on **purpose, authenticity and collective engagement**, is a universal need and is integral to societies and workplaces of the future.

A central piece of the effort to claim Authentic Leadership is to enable and align the affirming outcomes of **Identity, Intent and Awareness**

Engaging with these questions allow us to make proactive choices about how we invest the **building blocks of agency and leadership** - our time, focus and energies.

Recognising this is a life-long process of learning and evolving. We invest in **developing the core strengths** we need to activate bigger and more complex shifts or stretches.



# 1. IDENTITY

## Why?

- Experiencing connectedness across personal & public spheres
- Having a sense of being 'whole'; feeling integrated
- Reducing fragmentation and conflict between identity and motives

## Qs for Self:

- How do I describe myself?
- My origins and background
- My defining roles & beliefs

## Qs for Affiliations:

- What do we stand for?
- Who do we serve?
- How are we perceived?

What aspects of my identity are enriched by the purpose of my affiliation?

What does authenticity look like in a multicultural context? How do we own and integrate diverse aspects of our identity as leaders?

OVERALL ROLES: 1. Resourceful and successful campaigner and networker;  
2. Unconventional and effective parent; 3. Self-driven (non-conformist) in personal and social roles;  
4. Trustworthy, fun and supportive friend & colleague;  
5. A happy, inspired & determined person

# 2. INTENT

## Why?

- Experiencing value, fulfilment, achievement in a context of uncertainty and impermanence
- Recognising leadership in self and others; moving beyond the “glorify or crucify” impulse to leadership

## Qs for Self:

- What aspects of my life represent joy & accomplishment?
- What are my strengths?

## Qs for Affiliations:

- What are we celebrated & recognised for?
- How do we add value?

**How do my strengths & accomplishments align with what is valued and celebrated in my affiliation?**

**How do feminist principles enable us to overcome stereotypical expectations of women leaders?  
Can we harness our true potential despite norms and systems that define how we work and engage with others?**

<i>Bringing people together for a cause</i>	<i>Finding joy &amp; inspiration on a daily basis</i>
<i>Taking initiative; acting towards goals</i>	<i>Not being bored or dejected</i>
<i>Being adventurous, having fun</i>	<i>Creating and expanding trust</i>
<i>Improving &amp; adapting</i>	<i>Helping plan and upscale ideas</i>

# 3. AWARENESS

## Why?

- Being open to learning, adapting and transforming
- Experiencing empathy & humility
- Nurturing compassion and creativity

## Qs for Self:

- What do I fear?
- What are my triggers & barriers?
- What drives my choices & actions?

## Qs for Affiliations:

- What do we fear?
- What limits us or holds us back?
- What are our key enablers and limiters?

**How do I/we respond when pressed to choose between our values and our fears?**

**How do we embrace our vulnerability as feminist leaders and make space for others to show up authentically?**

**WHEN CONFIDENT/AUTHENTIC: 1. Vocal 2. Trusting 3. Creative 4. Risk taking / problem solving 5. Supportive, taking people along 6. Engaged and engaging 7. Ability to bring people together and foster shared purpose**

**WHEN INTIMIDATED/OVERWHELMED: 1. Worried about acceptance within the group 2. Unsure of relevance and hesitant to speak up 3. Disengaged, distant, distrustful**

# Part III : ENGAGEMENT Learning Exchanges

*Faith Pienaar & Lysa John*

**45m**

# Individual work (Poll):

10m for this exercise.

**Reflecting on the three components of Authentic Leadership presented in the session. Does this represent a Strength or a Stretch?**

## IDENTITY:

- Experiencing connectedness across personal & public spheres
- Have a sense of being 'whole'; feeling integrated
- Reducing fragmentation and conflict between identity and motives

## INTENT:

- Experiencing value, fulfilment, achievement
- Knowing one's strengths & accomplishments are valued and celebrated

## AWARENESS:

- Having opportunities to learn, adapt, transform
- Experiencing empathy & humility; compassion and creativity
- Being vulnerable, making space for others to show up authentically

**STRENGTH**



**STRETCH**



# Group work:

15m for this exercise.

Space to reflect on the session through Break Out rooms or an online Jam Board.

**Please share:**

➤ An insight that you may have gained

➤ A question that you'd like to raise

➤ A suggestion or contribution from your experience



# Conclusion:

Summarising reflections and responding to questions.  
20m for this exercise.

- **Faith summarises group contributions & invite reactions**
- **Lysa responds to questions raised**



**Find resources from this  
session and others at  
[fairsharewl.org/explorefeminist  
leadership-resources](https://fairsharewl.org/explorefeminist-leadership-resources)**

**Thank you!**