

COLUMNIST



Andrew Thornton

Being authentic

The 10 principles every store's leader should adopt to make their staff feel valued, confident and trusted

Last month, we discussed creating a safe environment for people to thrive in. Having that safety in place enables us to be more authentic. Here are my 10 principles of being an 'authentic' leader.

Be your purpose. To be a truly authentic leader, you need to be clear on your purpose – why you're here, why you get up in the morning and what the whole point of your life is.

Be in flow. This is defined as doing what you love and are really good at.

Within Thornton's Budgens, we focused on making sure most people in the organisation spent as much time as possible in flow. Happy people who are in flow will energise your business.

Be of integrity. I believe that you need to be in a state of integrity with yourself and others. That means being congruent with your values and beliefs, and it starts with being

honest with yourself.

Being in integrity with others is crucial to so many aspects of business life and would have prevented some of the chronic business failings of recent times.

Be clear and consistent about who you are and what you stand for. If you do this, people will know where they stand with you and be willing to follow you.

I know my personal clarity helped me to bring the Thornton's Budgens team with me on an amazing journey.

Be organised. In today's 24/7 e-world, it's easy to become overwhelmed and let some balls drop. If you're unreliable and chaotic, it's almost impossible to be an effective authentic leader.

Be appreciative. Appreciating people is one of the easiest ways to build relationships and help people feel valued.

An authentic leader appreciates people every day and does it



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naturally, not just for gain.

Be humble. Humility is one of the most underrated leadership qualities. Too many leaders are too full of themselves – and that doesn't encourage people to open up to you.

Be vulnerable. Having the ability to admit that you don't know something, or that you are scared or in pain, enables you to be honest and show your moral principles. For me, vulnerability creates trust and psychological safety.

Be present. Being in the present moment means being fully aware of what's happening right now.

How often do you find yourself in your mind, thinking about stuff that happened years ago or worrying about the future?

Or in a conversation, planning what you're going to say when the other person finishes speaking? Being fully present at all times is easy to say and really hard to do.

Be trusting. I added this principle after I sold the Belsize Park store. In discussions with the team during my leaving process, the most significant aspect of the heart journey for them was the trust that they felt from me and the leadership team – trust that helped them to grow their confidence and truly be themselves, knowing it was safe to do so.

Andrew Thornton is the former owner of Thornton's Budgens, founder of Heart in Business and author of 'Putting the Heart Back into Business', scheduled for release on 21 April 2022

* A word about habits

+ A HABIT IS defined in the Oxford Dictionary of English as "a settled or regular tendency or practice, especially one that is hard to give up". The process of becoming an authentic leader requires you to become aware of unhelpful habits and let them go, while at the same time developing new habits that will help you become more authentically yourself. When I was a child, growing up in a busy household as the eldest of four children meant I developed a 'good-boy' strategy that I hoped would me get some attention from my parents. All very well as a child, but alas – as is often the case – I brought that strategy into adulthood. Trying to please everyone is a habit I am working hard to give up, while at the same time cultivating new habits, such as being present, or being clear and consistent.