

[Authentic leadership?](#)

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At the end of September **in the US**, I don't think I met anyone who did not use the word "[authentic](#)" in some way. "Authentic" was coupled with loads of words - "authentic leaders", "authentic brands", "authentic messages", "authentic ideas"... It raises the question of what purpose "authentic" serves in such pairings. And more than this, other new words seem to be slipping in around it too. Words like "appear" and "create". Yet it is very seldom that "reveal" gets in there.

The objective seems to be how to appear to be authentic. The view is that we should accept that authentic is an illusion - but an important illusion which needs to be created. And this in the context that we are addressing an audience, whether they are customers, stakeholders or citizens, that has largely lost the ability to discern what is authentic anyway. Given that we are often presented with leaders who claim that one identity after the next is the really authentic one, it's not surprising that we begin to lose our ability to discern the real one.

As one new authentic version appears, no-one seems to spot that its very presence puts in doubt the previous authentic version (and indeed this one too). When the leader cries, is he or she authentic? Is authenticity only revealed in the toughest of times, when a leader gets into a fight, a real scrap?

Then the other word that slips in near to authentic is "moments", and that's the finale. Is authenticity revealed in moments, or is it in fact unveiled over time and over a period that the moments have little impact on? Except very occasionally to dramatically destroy it in one stroke!<http://commonpurpose.wordpress.com/>

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<http://mycommonpurposeexperience.wordpress.com/>

Vision - Common Purpose's vision is for a society full of informed and active citizens

For a democracy to be strong, it needs an active civil society, in which citizens are both informed and connected. Common Purpose's vision is that we can improve the way society works by increasing the number of informed and engaged individuals who are actively involved in the future of the areas in which they live and work.

The leaders of this civil society are likely to be leaders already within their own areas: companies, hospitals, communities. But they need to see themselves as leaders of society too - and use their talents accordingly.

Common Purpose is all about finding, encouraging and developing these leaders: wherever they are and whatever they are currently doing.

We have always believed that, fully engaged and properly informed, individuals are capable of changing and improving society themselves rather than waiting for others to take the lead. We believe that with the right information, skills and networks, they will find the money, build the buildings and solve the problems.

Especially if they work together rather than ploughing isolated furrows on their own.

We aim to open people's eyes. Show them where the levers of power are and how they work. Give them the information they need or show them where to find it. Introduce them to their peers in other fields. Respect diversity and individual ability. Harness energy and focus talent. Build teams with greater strength than the sum of the individuals within them.

That is the vision of Common Purpose.

It is also the height - and limit - of our ambition. **We have no other agenda. There is no underlying social, political or economic "master plan" and we guard our independence keenly.**

As everyone who comes into contact with Common Purpose discovers, it is up to them to decide how to apply the knowledge, insight and contacts they gain.

<http://commonpurpose.wordpress.com/our-vision/>

[contd]

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