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Real is What You Make It: An Analysis of Authenticity and Inspiration in Daily Life

Cameron Shifflett

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Real is What You Make It: An Analysis of Authenticity and Inspiration in Daily Life

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Psychological Sciences from The College of William and Mary

by

Cameron T. Shifflett

Accepted for ___________Honors__________________
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__________________________
Todd M. Thrash
Todd Thrash, Director

__________________________
Kate Harrigan
Kate Harrigan

__________________________
Anya Lunden

__________________________
Joanna Schug

Williamsburg, VA
May 3, 2020
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Abstract

Authenticity remains an elusive and poorly defined construct in academia. While many researchers have attempted to measure authenticity and its relation to other variables, few have done so with a strong theoretical groundwork to stand upon. Furthermore, none have investigated the relation of authenticity to inspiration. In the present research, the concept of authenticity was grounded in the multidimensional framework offered by Kernis and Goldman, and inspiration was conceptualized as a motivational state in which the individual is compelled to bring ideas into fruition (Thrash & Elliot, 2003). It was theorized that authenticity and inspiration may be positively related not only at the between-person level (individual differences), but also at the within-person level (dynamic changes over time). A 14-day daily diary study was conducted to measure state-level authenticity and inspiration of participants in their everyday lives. Inspiration and authenticity were found to be positively correlated at both between-person and within-person levels of analysis. Analyses of specific authenticity facets indicated that only two facets of authenticity, authentic awareness and authentic behavior, were correlated with inspiration at the between-person level. These findings indicate that although inspiration and authenticity tend to vary together within persons across time, individuals prone to inspiration are high only in certain facets of authenticity. Further research ought to examine temporal precedence and causality between inspiration and authenticity. Further research ought to examine temporal precedence and causality between inspiration and authenticity.
Real is What You Make It: An Analysis of Authenticity and Inspiration in Daily Life

We have to dare to be ourselves, however frightening or strange that self may prove to be.

– May Sarton

The privilege of a lifetime is to become who you truly are.

– Carl Jung

Authenticity is a central theme in the modern world; leaders are critiqued on how authentically they present themselves to the world at large (Harris et al, 2019; Oc et al, 2019; Rosenblum, 2019), people flock to authentic restaurants (Kovács, 2019), and droves of self-help books now harp upon the benefits of authentic living (Kovács, 2019). Authenticity has also been studied in the academic sphere, with scholars since Aristotle debating the definition and conceptualization of the construct (Baumeister, 2019; Chen, 2018; Kernis & Goldman, 2006). Despite the pervasiveness of the concept, researchers have struggled for years to adequately define and study authenticity (Baumeister, 2019; Chen, 2018; Hicks, Schlegel & Newman, 2019; Jongman-Sereno & Leary, 2018; Kovács, 2019; Newman, 2018), with some theorists arguing that authenticity in its current state is unworthy of scientific inquiry. Furthermore, although researchers have studied the relationship of authenticity to a host of factors including well-being (Borawski, 2019; Goldman & Kernis, 2002; Josephs et al, 2019; Kernis & Goldman, 2006; Ryan & Ryan, 2019; Sutton, 2018; Wickham et al, 2016; Zhang et al, 2019), leadership (Harris et al, 2019; Oc et al, 2019; Rosenblum, 2019), and the Big Five traits (Aday & Schmader, 2019; Chen, 2018; Lawn, Slamp & Vella-Brodrick, 2018), none has examined the role of authenticity in inspiration. Inspiration, which has been theorized to concretize and transmit insight, could be impacted by authenticity, a state of being wherein an individual is constantly evaluating
information and stimuli against their own behaviors and values. The goal of the current study, therefore, was to determine the relationship between authenticity and inspiration.

**Authenticity**

While authenticity is pervasive in today’s world, its origins can be found much earlier within the philosophy of ancient Greece. Both Socrates and Aristotle emphasized the importance of awareness of one’s own actions and beliefs about the world, with Aristotle theorizing that such awareness was in pursuit of the highest good man could achieve (Baumeister, 2019; Kernis & Goldman, 2006). While Aristotle framed such pursuits in terms of a eudaimonic mindset, or the belief that life’s meaning was derived from pursuing value-driven work, the implication that individuals ought to ponder their actions and bring them into line with internal values is unmistakable. Later philosophers like Descartes broke with Aristotle and Socrates on the role and importance of self-consciousness in everyday life, but the seeds had been sown (Kernis & Goldman, 2006). These ideas lay dormant until the arrival of Hume, whose emphasis on the relationship of the individual with others brought to the fore virtues, essential qualities that individuals ought to strive for. This emphasis on virtues and acts one commits out of a sense of intrinsic motivation brought self-consciousness and acting according to one’s self-reflections back into the intellectual arena (Baumeister, 2019; Kernis & Goldman, 2006). Existentialists such as Kierkegaard expanded upon this line of thinking, emphasizing the role of acting in accordance with one’s absolute truth, or living in according with one's true way of being (Kernis & Goldman, 2006). As it is currently debated and studied, however, authenticity did not arrive on the stage until Heidegger, Sartre, and philosophy’s phenomenological movement in the 20th century. Heidegger especially brought into focus the struggle of the individual to exist in and make meaning of a world they had no choice but to exist in. For Heidegger, the answer to that
struggle was to develop a sense of self, embrace one’s individuality, and live according to that constructed sense of self and value. Sartre furthered this line of theorizing by shifting the focus to the realm of choices; specifically, Sartre theorized that individuals radically create their identities through their actions. It was therefore essential that care be taken with one’s actions, and that special attention be paid to how those actions either supported or undermined the identity the actor was constructing. Recently, however, many scholars have begun to level critiques at authenticity and its past conceptualizations.

Perhaps the broadest critique of authenticity as a construct involves the conceptualization, or even the existence, of a true self for individuals to adhere to (Baumeister, 2019; Chen, 2018; Hicks, Schlegel & Newman, 2019; Jongman-Sereno & Leary, 2018; Kovács, 2019; Newman, 2018). Indeed, while the term “true self” often permeates lay definitions of authenticity (Kovács, 2019), the concept of a monolithic, psychological “true self” that reflects both the self and reality perfectly is difficult to support empirically. It is unlikely, for example, that a singular true self would be able to accurately capture an individual’s multifaceted interactions with different environments; it is well documented that normally functioning individuals adapt to different situations as needed, rather than rigidly clinging to a singular presentation of self (Baumeister, 2019). Instead, some researchers claim that it is more accurate to say that individuals have multiple self-concepts that, while occasionally contradictory, are nevertheless still accurate. In fact, Baumeister (2019) suggests that authenticity is better conceived of as an ongoing process, rather than a static trait. This process involves the adjustment and revision of one’s multiple self-concepts to better pursue a desired reputation, or how the individual wants to be perceived by others. Therefore, taking actions that support or maintain the desired reputation would be judged as authentic, and actions that damage the attainment or maintenance of the desired reputation
would be judged inauthentic. While this conceptualization of authenticity is more empirically feasible than hunting for a mythical true self, it falls short conceptually. Namely, it is questionable that living a life oriented towards a desirable reputation would necessarily lead to authentic behavior. The child who sets aside their desire to attend art school to pursue a doctorate in medicine may be pursuing a desired reputation among her peers, but such a decision seems more akin to yielding to external influence than authentic decision making. Therefore, this conceptualization of authenticity, while superior in some respects to the idea of pursuing a true self, is unsatisfactory.

In an attempt to distance from the concept of a true self entirely, other theorists have narrowed in and focused on behavioral consistency as a core element of authenticity. In attempting to sidestep the self issue, however, this conceptualization reveals a different trap. Namely, it is misleading to define authenticity as simply being consistent with past behavior; it is questionable to argue that authentic individuals do not change over time. Anyone may exhibit novel, inconsistent behaviors that are nonetheless still in line with their previous motivations or values (Jongman-Sereno & Leary, 2018). The authenticity literature has also occasionally fallen prey to the false belief that authenticity is morally bound. While several studies have shown that being viewed as authentic by others tends to lead to higher social approval (Chen, 2018; Lawn et al, 2018), authenticity as a construct is orthogonal to morality. As a result, any conceptualization of authenticity must divorce itself from the concept of authenticity as the sole province of prosocial individuals; it is reasonable that antisocial authenticity, or being authentically cruel or morally incorrect, exists in the world (Jongman-Sereno & Leary, 2018). Womick and colleagues (2019), for example, demonstrated that the Dark Tetrad (Machiavellianism, narcissism, psychopathy, and sadism) do not impact authenticity and the attainment of need satisfaction,
indicating that authenticity and antisocial behavior can coexist within persons. In fact, individuals high in both authenticity and the Dark Tetrad were aware of and accepting of their own self-concepts, and were not self-deluding or inaccurate in their conceptions of themselves as individuals high in the Dark Tetrad variables.

Given these critiques, a satisfactory theory of authenticity would require that theorists conceptualize authenticity as not reliant upon a true self, that it allow for variation in behavior, and that it sidestep entanglement in morality but maintain the self-awareness aspect that was prominent in the construct’s history. Kernis and Goldman’s (2006) multicomponent conceptualization of authenticity satisfies each of these requirements and is rooted firmly in history and theory. From this perspective, authenticity is defined as the unobstructed operation of one’s self in daily experience and is comprised of four separate subfactors of authenticity: awareness, unbiased processing, authentic behavior, and relational orientation.

*Awareness* refers to an individual’s ability to continuously and reliably interrogate inner motives, feelings and cognitions (Kernis & Goldman, 2006). An authentically aware individual, for example, is aware of and accepts that they are comprised of multiple, multifaceted and potentially contradictory self-concepts, as opposed to splitting off or denying aspects of their identity in an attempt to cling to a singular “true” self. The awareness of self is aided by the second component: *unbiased processing* of self-relevant information. This component involves the ability to take in and process information regarding one’s emotions, experiences, and private knowledge, without denying or distorting external evaluations. This is the absence of delusion or defensive, self-serving biases. Unbiased processing is crucial to authenticity, because an individual who cannot accept aspects they become aware of will be unable to accept and integrate them into their multifaceted self-concept. The benefit of unbiased processing is an
accurate sense of self that is consistently updated and evaluated, allowing for easier facilitation of the third component, authentic behavior.

*Authentic behavior* is defined as behaving in accordance with one’s own values and preferences, as opposed to acting falsely according to external desires or pressures. The awareness of one’s own self-concepts and the unbiased processing of information relative to those self-concepts facilitates authentic action by providing a clear picture of what values and preferences are those of the individual, and which ones are externally focused. Authentic behavior, however, is not a compulsion to be one’s self; it is the freedom and conscious choice to act upon one’s values and preferences. The authentic behavior is helpful in assessing the fourth and final component of authenticity: relational orientation. *Relational orientation* is comprised of one’s striving for openness and truthfulness in close relationships. It is characterized both by honesty in one’s intentions and actions with close others, as well as accurate assessment of beliefs about one’s relationships with close others.

Although the four facets of authenticity are related to each other, they are indeed separate components of authenticity. For example, a person may find herself in a situation wherein her authentic behavior is inhibited; perhaps she wishes to express her authentic thoughts and opinions about a given situation but is otherwise thwarted. Her unbiased processing, awareness, and even relational orientation may all continue unimpeded.

Authenticity within the multicomponent framework has been shown to relate to aspects of well-being, leadership and personality (Borawski, 2019; Goldman & Kernis, 2002; Harris et al, 2019; Josephs et al, 2019; Kernis & Goldman, 2006; Oc et al, 2019; Rosenblum, 2019; Ryan & Ryan, 2019; Sutton, 2018; Wickham et al, 2016; Zhang et al, 2019). Neff and Harter (2002) found that lower authenticity in close relationships was linked to a felt lack of power and poorer
psychological outcomes. Higher levels of authenticity have also been shown to attenuate negative effects of interpersonal conflict such as stress (Wickham et al, 2016). In keeping with authenticity research and relationships, Borawski (2019) found that authenticity mediates the relationship between loneliness and felt meaning. Furthermore, authenticity has been shown to predict well-being above and beyond behavioral and personality consistency across time (Sutton, 2018). Oc and colleagues (2019) found after an examination of several leader/follower cohorts that authentic leaders were more likely to elicit vulnerability and authenticity from followers, whereas Harris and colleagues (2019) discovered that leader authenticity tended to lead to higher leader adaptability and success, as well as higher follower satisfaction. Some researchers have conducted cross-cultural investigations into authenticity (Aday & Schmader, 2019; West et al, 2018) with Petrocchi and colleagues (2019) demonstrating that among a sample of 327 Italian LGBTQ+ individuals, authenticity was the sole predictor of positive psychological functioning after controlling for other measures of well-being.

Inspiration

The relation between authenticity and inspiration, however, remains underspecified and warrants a closer look. The concept of inspiration has existed for centuries or millennia in areas such as theology, music, engineering, and mathematics, to name a few. Most recently, psychologists have investigated inspiration as a complex state with multiple component processes. The predominant conceptualization of inspiration today, the tripartite conceptualization developed by Thrash and Elliot (2003), indicates that there are three core characteristics necessary to define inspiration: epistemic transcendence, evocation, and approach motivation. Epistemic transcendence is the aspect of inspiration that involves insight or illumination, and results in the individual seeing or becoming open to new or better possibilities
(Thrash & Elliot, 2003; Thrash & Elliot, 2004; Thrash et al, 2014). Individuals who are inspired have the inspiration *evoked* within them; that is to say, something else is attributed responsibility for the inspired state as opposed to the self. Finally, inspiration is characterized by approach motivation, or the desire to bring to fruition the new ideas or illuminations brought to the individual. Taken all together, the tripartite conceptualization of inspiration depicts an epistemic state wherein an individual is exposed to insights which awaken them to new or better possibilities and compel them to bring these evoked possibilities to fruition in some form.

How this process occurs is explained by the component processes of inspiration (Thrash et al, 2010; Thrash, Maruskin et al, 2010; Thrash et al, 2017; Thrash et al, 2014). A bout of inspiration involves two distinct but connected processes: being inspired *by*, and inspired *to*. Inspired *by* involves being awoken to the noetic, intrinsic value of some object which elicits inspiration. Being inspired *to* is characterized by the motivation to actualize and extend the qualities one found inspiring in the eliciting stimulus. The connection here between the component processes and the tripartite conceptualization is plain to see; inspired *by* is closely linked with transcendence and evocation, whereas being inspired *to* involves aspects of approach motivation.

It is possible to conceptualize inspiration as more than just the tripartite conceptualization and its component processes. A final key element of inspiration is its purpose in the world and the evolutionary function that it serves. Inspiration serves an approach function in that it facilitates the transmission of an object’s perceived important or noetic qualities across time (Thrash et al, 2010; Thrash et al, 2017; Thrash, 2020). To speak in looser terms, inspiration is a culture’s quality control machine: the best and inspiring qualities are compelling; they are transmitted onward in a culture, while the uninspiring ideas fall away, forgotten. The
evolutionary implications of this process are clear. The process likely enhances human adaptation to the environment by preserving and distributing those ideas, values, and cultural artifacts that we regard as most valuable (Thrash, 2020).

**Relation Between Authenticity and Inspiration**

Given the theorized function of inspiration, it follows that inspiration may be related to authenticity. If authenticity requires awareness of oneself and constant attunement to that self in order to better assess incoming information, it is reasonable to theorize that such attention may have an impact on inspiration. More specifically, the awareness of one’s values and preferences may lead to the search for stimuli that would possess noetic qualities more relevant and inspiring to the individual, and the ability to process such information in an unbiased manner could potentially prevent an individual from distorting or missing inspiring, evocative qualities of an object.

Alternatively, Thrash and Elliot (2004) have theorized that the inverse may be true, such that inspiration leads to authenticity as defined in self-determination. While in an inspired state, the individual is awoken to their authentic selves (Thrash, 2020). Authenticity has previously been studied through the lens of self-determination theory by researchers such as Ryan and Ryan (2019), who theorized that authenticity is composed of *autonomy*, the ability of an individuals to knowingly enact and own their actions; *genuineness*, being honest with oneself and others concerning internal states and motivations; and *congruence*, or behaving in accord with what one truly desires or values. Given the similarities between autonomy and authentic awareness, congruence and authentic behavior, and genuineness and both unbiased processing and relational orientation, Thrash and Elliot’s (2004) theorizing remains relevant in the current Kernis and Goldman framework. While both approaches postulate a potential positive relationship between
inspiration and authenticity, the current lack of data on the subject renders any definitive conclusions beyond speculation impossible. The current study was conducted in order to address this gap in the literature. Authenticity and inspiration were both measured in a daily diary study across 14 days, with the expectation that inspiration and authenticity would be positively correlated at both the between-person level (individual differences) and the within-person level (dynamic fluctuations over time).

**Method**

**Participants.** The sample consisted initially of 220 undergraduate students who participated for research credit in introductory psychology courses (59 male, 155 female, 6 non-binary/gender-nonconforming). Additionally, participants were offered feedback on their scores on several personality assessment scales used in the study as a further incentive. Following data cleaning but prior to analysis, the final study sample consisted of 209 participants. The ethnic distribution of the sample was as follows: 72% White; 22% Asian; 11% Hispanic; 8% Black; 1% Native American; and < 1% Other. These percentages of ethnicity in the sample exceed 100%, as participants were allowed to indicate all ethnicities with which they identified, and as a result many multi-racial participants identified with several ethnicities. The final sample gender distribution was as follows: 73% female; 24% male; 3% non-binary/gender-nonconforming.

**Procedure.** Upon enrollment in the study, participants were asked to complete an initial online trait personality questionnaire. Following completion of the initial questionnaire, participants were sent a link to a daily diary survey with directions to complete the survey each night before they went to sleep for 14 consecutive nights. Daily reminders were sent out each evening of the 14-day span, and a validity item was included in the daily survey to track diligence in participant responses.
The data were cleaned according to the following criteria: (1) submissions were deemed compliant (e.g., complete, not redundant with other submission), and (2) submissions were deemed valid (the participant responded correctly to a validity item, reported that their data as a whole were valid, displayed adequate variability across items, and (3) did not have implausibly short completion times. This cleaning process resulted in a final dataset consisting of 2,078 cases.

**Measures.** The original full measures of authenticity and inspiration were deemed too long for a daily diary study; therefore, items from each scale were selected based on their factor loadings and are presented below. Full versions of the Kernis-Goldman Inventory and the Inspiration Scale can be found in appendices B and D, respectively. The Kernis-Goldman Inventory-Short Form items were used to assess authenticity, and the full version can be found in appendix C. The full version of the daily diary survey administered to participants can be found in appendix A.

**Authenticity.** One item from each subscale of the Kernis-Goldman Authenticity Inventory-Short Form (Bond et al., 2018) was used to assess authenticity. Authentic awareness was measured with the reverse-scored item “I was not in touch with what’s important to me.” Unbiased processing was measured with the reverse-scored item “I found it difficult to assess myself critically.” Authentic behavior and relational orientation were assessed with “I found that my behavior expressed my values” and “I was open and honest in my close relationships,” respectively. Each item was rated on a seven-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree). Cronbach’s α for this four-item authenticity scale was .61, indicating adequate internal consistency.
Inspiration. Three items (“I was inspired to do something,” “I felt inspired,” and “Something I encountered or experienced inspired me”) from the Inspiration Scale (Thrash & Elliot, 2003) were used to assess inspiration. Response options for the frequency subscale ranged from 1 (never) to 7 (very often). Cronbach’s α for this three-item inspiration scale was .93, indicating excellent internal consistency.

Data were also collected on the following variables as part of an unrelated project: approach and avoidance temperament; awe; the Big Five Traits; chills; circumplex affect; grit; inclusion of others and self; integration and differentiation; interpersonal orientation and styles; meaning in life; mysticism; need satisfaction; satisfaction with life; truth, beauty and goodness; and vitality.

Results

Analysis was conducted via a random-intercepts multilevel model using Mplus v. 8.4. A latent partition was created such that inspiration and authenticity were partitioned into within-person and between-person components. Descriptive statistics for the multilevel variables in our model appear in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Within-Person Variance</th>
<th>Between-Person Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authenticity</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspiration</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Both authenticity and inspiration displayed greater variance at the within-person level than the between-person level. This finding indicates that individuals’ means are fairly similar to one another and that individuals vary quite a bit around their means.

Consistent with hypotheses, authenticity and inspiration were found to be significantly positively correlated at both the within-person ($r = 0.31$, S.E. = .030, $p < .001$) and between-person ($r = .16$, S.E. = .059, $p < .01$) levels. The between-person correlation indicates that individuals who experience high mean levels of authenticity also experience high mean levels of inspiration. The within-person correlation indicates that levels of inspiration and authenticity rise and fall together in the average individual. Notably, the within-person correlation is stronger than the between-person correlation.

Although, as composite variables, authenticity and inspiration were positively and significantly correlated, individual items from the authenticity and inspiration scales tell a slightly more complex story. Descriptives for authenticity items can be found in Table 3.

**Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Authenticity Items**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Within-Person Variance</th>
<th>Between-Person Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authentic Awareness</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic Behavior</td>
<td>5.06</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unbiased Processing</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As with the composite descriptive statistics of authenticity displayed in Table 1, the four authenticity items display greater within-person variance than between-person variance, indicating that individuals’ scores on these items tend to vary widely around individuals’ personal means. Descriptive statistics for individual inspiration items can be found below in Table 4, and are also consistent with the higher within-person variance than between-person variance demonstrated in the composite variable descriptives.

**Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Inspiration Items**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Within-Person Variance</th>
<th>Between-Person Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inspiration 1</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I was inspired to do something”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspiration 2</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I felt inspired”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspiration 3</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>1.98</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Something I encountered or experienced inspired me”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlations among individual inspiration items and authenticity subscales at the between-person level are shown in Table 5. All authenticity items and inspiration items were
found to be significantly correlated at the within-person level \((p < .05)\). This finding indicates that an individual’s scores on any authenticity item tended to rise and fall similarly to their inspiration scores around their own means. However, only authentic awareness and authentic behavior were consistently significantly correlated with the three inspiration items at the between-person level. These findings indicate that individuals who display high means on inspiration items would only reliably display high means on authentic awareness and authentic behavior, as opposed to high means on all authenticity items.

**Table 5. Inspiration item and authenticity subscale correlations (between-person)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspiration Item</th>
<th>Authentic Awareness</th>
<th>Authentic Behavior</th>
<th>Unbiased Processing</th>
<th>Relational Orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 “I was inspired to do something”</td>
<td>0.17*</td>
<td>.21*</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 “I felt inspired”</td>
<td>0.25*</td>
<td>.24*</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 “Something I encountered or”</td>
<td>.21*</td>
<td>.24*</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As Table 5 demonstrates, unbiased processing was not significantly related to any inspiration items, and relational orientation was significantly correlated only with inspiration item 2.

**Discussion**

These findings are broadly consistent with the hypotheses that guided this study, though the results spin a more complex story than was previously suggested in the literature. It was confirmed that authenticity and inspiration are, as composite variables, positively and significantly correlated at the within and between-person levels. Furthermore, it was demonstrated that individuals exhibit greater variance at the within-person level for both inspiration and authenticity. These findings help shed light on the dynamic nature of both of these processes that a trait or cross-sectional approach may have missed; it is clear that even individuals who are both more inspired and authentic on average still experience a wide range of these states in their day-to-day functioning.

Additionally, these data support the theoretical leaning posited earlier that these two processes may in fact have a more complex relationship than has been previously explored in previous research. The findings open the door to further exploration into the relation between authenticity and inspiration, though greater nuance may be called for. Such nuance is necessary given that only certain aspects of authenticity were shown to be significantly related to inspiration at the between-person level. It appears that authentic awareness and behavior may be more closely tied to the process and experience of inspiration than unbiased processing and relational orientation. It is possible, for example, that authentic awareness and behavior are
conducive to inspiration’s proposed purpose of cultural transmission, such that attention to one’s values and acting in accordance with those values may make an individual more open to extending noetic and evocative qualities they find in line with their own authentic expression. It is perhaps unsurprising that relational orientation is unrelated to inspiration, which seems to be a mostly individual rather than collective experience and is thus not dependent upon interaction with others. That unbiased processing was not related, however, indicates that having an authentic and undistorted view of the world may not necessarily encourage or facilitate a bout of inspiration. Given that unbiased processing is oriented mostly towards the filtration of self-relevant information, rather than information concerning one’s surroundings or the world at large, it is tenable that inspiration processes would bypass this aspect of authenticity entirely.

**Limitations and Future Directions**

The current study has several limitations that could be corrected in future research. Firstly, the necessity of brevity in a daily diary design resulted in the shortening of both the authenticity and inspiration scales in order to minimize participant fatigue. It is therefore possible that these variables and their relationship could be more fully studied in a design that permits the use of their full scales. Secondly, the current sample of college students at a competitive American university may not generalize to the general population. It is possible that, in an intellectually stimulating and generally open environment, these individuals may be more exposed to inspirational stimuli, or may feel less constrained in exhibiting authentic behaviors. Future research could address these concerns, as well as furthering our understanding of the causal relationship between inspiration and authenticity. Given that this study was a preliminary analysis into the relationship between authenticity and inspiration, some in-depth analyses that could have illuminated the current findings were not conducted. For example, this study
examined in part the connection of authenticity to the component processes of inspiration, but there remain no studies examining the relationship of authenticity and inspiration’s transmission process. Researchers wishing to expand upon this research can investigate the exact mechanisms underlying authenticity’s connection to inspiration’s function of transmission. Furthermore, examining the finer temporal relationship between authenticity and inspiration ought to be a focus for continuing research in this area. Although these findings indicate correlation at the daily level, finer analyses examining hourly or even minute-by-minute states could provide greater insight into the temporal relationship of these two processes.

**Conclusions**

In conclusion, authenticity and inspiration, although separate states, have been shown to be interconnected at both the within-person and between-person levels. Prior to this study, no previous researchers have sought to examine the link between authenticity and inspiration; going forward, it would wise to examine more closely the link between authentic awareness, behavior, and inspiration. Understanding how authenticity works alongside inspiration might unlock new avenues for research into what our culture values and transmits throughout time, and may also indicate if living more authentically could lead to brighter, more illuminated futures.
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https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327752jpa4901_13


http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2015.11.006

http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2018.08.022

http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0146167218820914
Appendix A

Daily Diary Survey Scales

*Circumplex*

Likert scale from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Extremely)

*Today, I felt…*

1. Unhappy, troubled, miserable
2. Aroused, hyperactivated, intense
3. Happy, content, pleased
4. Proud, enthusiastic, euphoric
5. Tired, sluggish, dull
6. Anxious, jittery, nervous
7. Gloomy, down, sad
8. Tense, agitated, fearful
9. Soothed, peaceful, at ease
10. Calm, relaxed, at rest
11. Full of awe, full of wonder, awestruck
12. Quiet, still
13. Energetic, alert, excited

*Lumping-Splitting Questionnaire (LSQ)*

Likert scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree)

*Today…*

1. I saw core similarities that unite all people or all things
2. I saw fundamental differences that distinguish types of people or types of things
3. I recognized that things that were previously distinct should be grouped together as examples of a broader category
4. I recognized that an existing category should be split into specific kinds or types
5. I saw that seemingly unrelated ideas, people, or things can be integrated into a single, unified system
6. I saw that a set of ideas, people, or things that are usually treated alike can be divided into distinct parts, types, or roles
7. I recognized how the separate parts of a group or system may be unified by a shared purpose or principle
8. I recognized how a group or system may be divided into parts that serve distinct, specialized roles
9. I focused on similarities and analogies between things
10. I focused on differences and contrasts between things
11. I drew conclusions about general patterns, while others were distracted by exceptions
12. I drew nuanced conclusions, while others overgeneralized

*Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ)*

Likert from 1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very Much)

**Today…**

1. How much did you feel your life had meaning and purpose today?

*Satisfaction with Life Questionnaire (SWLQ)*
Likert from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree)

Today, I felt that…

1. I am satisfied with my life

Vitality

Likert from 1 (Not at all true) to 7 (Very true)

Today…

1. I had energy and spirit

Mysticism

Likert from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree)

Today…

1. A new view of reality was revealed to me; deeper aspects of reality were revealed to me
2. Something greater than myself seemed to absorb me; my own self seemed to merge into something greater

Interpersonal Affect Scale (IAS)

Likert from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (Extremely)

Today, I felt…

1. Unaggressive, shy, forceless
2. Crafty, boastful, calculating
3. Kind, tenderhearted, softhearted
4. Forceful, assertive, firm
5. Uncheery, distant, introverted
6. Uncunning, uncalculating, unargumentative
7. Outgoing, enthusiastic, friendly
8. Unsympathetic, warmthless, ironhearted

Grit
Likert from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree)

Today…

1. I was a diligent, hard worker

Chills
Likert from 1 (Not at all) to 7 (Very Strongly)

Today, in response to something emotionally significant to me, I…

1. Felt a shiver or a shudder
2. Felt cold or felt a chill
3. Had goosebumps or a hair-on-end feeling
4. Had a tingling or ticklish feeling

Need Satisfaction
Likert from 1 (not at all) to 5 (Very much)

Today, I felt…

1. Close and connected with other people who are important to me
2. That I was successfully completing difficult tasks and projects
3. A strong sense of self-respect
4. That my choices were based on my true interests and values
5. That I was “becoming who I really am”

**Individual/Other Scale (IOS)**

Please select the number corresponding to the picture below that best describes your relationship with others (friends, family, etc.) **today**.

![IOS diagram]

**Authenticity**

Likert from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree)

**Today…**

1. I was open and honest in my close relationships
2. I found that my behavior expressed my values
3. I was not in touch with what’s important to me
4. I found it difficult to assess myself critically

**Inspiration**

Likert from 1 (Never) to 7 (Very often)

**Today…**

1. I felt inspired
2. I was inspired to do something
3. Something I encountered or experienced inspired me

**Truth, Beauty, Goodness**

Likert from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree)

**Today, I felt a sense of…**

1. Connecting with what is holy
2. Seeing a truth that is ordinarily hidden or obscured
3. Having an aesthetically pleasing experience
4. Creating something original
5. Embodying moral goodness or integrity
6. Having unbiased views grounded in reality
7. Sharing in the openness of all people or things
Appendix B

Kernis-Goldman Authenticity Inventory Items

AUT3

The following measure has a series of statements that involve people's perceptions about themselves. There are not right or wrong responses, so please answer honestly. Respond to each statement by writing the number from the scale below, which you feel most accurately characterizes your response to the statement.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neither Agree Nor Disagree
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

1. I am often confused about my feelings.
2. I frequently pretend to enjoy something when in actuality I really don’t.
3. For better or for worse I am aware of who I truly am.
4. I understand why I believe the things I do about myself.
5. I want people with whom I am close to understand my strengths.
6. I actively try to understand which of my self-aspects fit together to form my core- or true-self.
7. I am very uncomfortable objectively considering my limitations and shortcomings.
8. I’ve often used my silence or head-nodding to convey agreement with someone else’s statement or position even though I really disagree.
9. I have a very good understanding of why I do the things I do.
10. I am willing to change myself for others if the reward is desirable enough.
11. I find it easy to pretend to be something other than my true-self.
12. I want people with whom I am close to understand my weaknesses.
13. I find it very difficult to critically assess myself.
14. I am not in touch with my deepest thoughts and feelings.
15. I make it a point to express to close others how much I truly care for them.
16. I tend to have difficulty accepting my personal faults, so I try to cast them in a more positive way.
17. I tend to idealize close others rather than objectively see them as they truly are.
18. If asked, people I am close to can accurately describe what kind of person I am.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I prefer to ignore my darkest thoughts and feelings.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I am aware of when I am not being my true-self.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>I am able to distinguish those self-aspects that are important to my core-or true-self from those that are unimportant.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>People close to me would be shocked or surprised if they discovered what I keep inside me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>It is important for me to understand my close others’ needs and desires.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>I want close others to understand the real me rather than just my public persona or “image.”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>I try to act in a manner that is consistent with my personally held values, even if others criticize or reject me for doing so.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>If a close other and I are in disagreement I would rather ignore the issue than constructively work it out.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>I’ve often done things that I don’t want to do merely not to disappoint people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>I find that my behavior typically expresses my values.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>I actively attempt to understand myself as best as possible.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>I’d rather feel good about myself than objectively assess my personal limitations and shortcomings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>I find that my behavior typically expresses my personal needs and desires.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>I rarely if ever, put on a “false face” for others to see.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>I spend a lot of energy pursuing goals that are very important to other people even though they are unimportant to me.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>I frequently am not in touch with what’s important to me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>I try to block out any unpleasant feelings I might have about myself.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>I often question whether I really know what I want to accomplish in my lifetime.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>I often find that I am overly critical about myself.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>I am in touch with my motives and desires.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>I often deny the validity of any compliments that I receive.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>In general, I place a good deal of importance on people I am close to understanding who I truly am.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>I find it difficult to embrace and feel good about the things I have accomplished.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

42. If someone points out or focuses on one of my shortcomings I quickly try to block it out of my mind and forget it.
43. The people I am close to can count on me being who I am regardless of what setting we are in.
44. My openness and honesty in close relationships are extremely important to me.
45. I am willing to endure negative consequences by expressing my true beliefs about things.

Subscales

Awareness: 1R, 3, 4, 6, 9, 14R, 20, 21, 29, 34R, 36R, 38
Alpha = .79

Alpha = .64

Alpha = .80

Relational Orientation: 5, 12, 15, 17R, 18, 22R, 23, 24, 26R, 40, 43, 44
Alpha = .78

Composite Scale Alpha = .90

***NOTE: R = Reverse Scored Item
### Appendix C

Kernis-Goldman Authenticity Inventory-Short Form CFA & Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor loading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sample 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Awareness</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I am often confused about my feelings.</td>
<td>0.582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I understand why I believe the things I do about myself.</td>
<td>0.748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I actively try to understand which of my self-aspects fit together to form my core- or true-self.</td>
<td>0.398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I have a very good understanding of why I do the things I do.</td>
<td>0.695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I am not in touch with my deepest thoughts and feelings.</td>
<td>0.636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I am aware of when I am not being my true-self.</td>
<td>0.462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. I frequently am not in touch with what's important to me.</td>
<td>0.753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. I often question whether I really know what I want to accomplish in my lifetime.</td>
<td>0.475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unbiased processing</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I find it very difficult to critically assess myself.</td>
<td>0.736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I tend to have difficulty accepting my personal faults, so I try to cast them in a more positive way.</td>
<td>0.661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. I'd rather feel good about myself than objectively assess my personal limitations and shortcomings.</td>
<td>0.427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. I try to block out any unpleasant feelings I might have about myself.</td>
<td>0.687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. I often find that I am overly critical about myself.</td>
<td>0.379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. I often deny the validity of any compliments that I receive.</td>
<td>0.547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. I find it difficult to embrace and feel good about the things I have accomplished.</td>
<td>0.675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. If someone points out or focuses on one of my shortcomings I quickly try to block it out of my mind and forget it.</td>
<td>0.673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behavior</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I frequently pretend to enjoy something when in actuality I really don't.</td>
<td>0.546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I am willing to change myself for others if the reward is desirable enough.</td>
<td>0.331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. I try to act in a manner that is consistent with my personally held values, even if others criticize or reject me for doing so.</td>
<td>0.714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. I've often done things that I don't want to do merely not to disappoint people.</td>
<td>0.307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. I find that my behavior typically expresses my values.</td>
<td>0.750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. I rarely if ever, put on a “false face” for others to see.</td>
<td>0.388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. I spend a lot of energy pursuing goals that are very important to other people even though they are unimportant to me.</td>
<td>0.418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. I am willing to endure negative consequences by expressing my true beliefs about things.</td>
<td>0.538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relational orientation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I want people with whom I am close to understand my strengths.</td>
<td>0.585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I make it a point to express to close others how much I truly care for them.</td>
<td>0.610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I tend to idealize close others rather than objectively see them as they truly are.</td>
<td>0.397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. It is important for me to understand my close others' needs and desires.</td>
<td>0.642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. I want close others to understand the real me rather than just my public persona or “image.”</td>
<td>0.718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. If a close other and I are in disagreement I would rather ignore the issue than constructively work it out.</td>
<td>0.598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. The people I am close to can count on me being who I am regardless of what setting we are in.</td>
<td>0.752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. My openness and honesty in close relationships are extremely important to me.</td>
<td>0.811</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Bolded items were kept in the 20-short form. Numbers correspond to item numbers from original 45-measure.
Appendix D

Inspiration Scale Items

Inspiration Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement/item no.</th>
<th>Statements and items</th>
<th>Subscale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statement 1</td>
<td>I experience inspiration.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 1f</td>
<td>How often does this happen?</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 1i</td>
<td>How deeply or strongly (in general)?</td>
<td>Intensity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement 2</td>
<td>Something I encounter or experience inspires me.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 2f</td>
<td>How often does this happen?</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 2i</td>
<td>How deeply or strongly (in general)?</td>
<td>Intensity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement 3</td>
<td>I am inspired to do something.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 3f</td>
<td>How often does this happen?</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 3i</td>
<td>How deeply or strongly (in general)?</td>
<td>Intensity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement 4</td>
<td>I feel inspired.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 4f</td>
<td>How often does this happen?</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 4i</td>
<td>How deeply or strongly (in general)?</td>
<td>Intensity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The four Frequency items are rated on a scale from 1 (never) to 7 (very often). The four Intensity items are rated on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very deeply or strongly). An f in item numbers indicates that the item belongs to the Frequency subscale; an i indicates that it belongs to the Intensity subscale.