

Foreword by MARSHALL GOLDSMITH,
Author of the *New York Times* bestsellers
MOJO and *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*

BECOME THE REAL DEAL

*The Proven Path
to Influence and
Executive Presence*

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Introduction

What Is the Real Deal?

“Just be yourself.”

As a piece of advice, it’s common—even clichéd. But it’s far more demanding than it sounds, isn’t it? Every day, you’re flooded with stories and images of people whose personal qualities you may admire and want to emulate.

Haven’t you secretly wondered if just being yourself is really enough? After all, to succeed in a competitive world, you need to measure up to some pretty high standards.

“Be yourself,” you’ve been told. But while you’re at it, be as visionary as Apple cofounder Steve Jobs. As hard-charging as Yahoo! CEO Marissa Mayer. As courageous as Nelson Mandela. As financially savvy as Warren Buffett. As athletic as LeBron James. As intuitive as Oprah Winfrey. As effortlessly beautiful as Halle Berry. As prescient as fashion mogul Michael Kors.

**Just be
yourself is
incomplete
advice**

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“Be yourself,” the world tells you. But this tidy little tidbit is woefully incomplete advice. “Be yourself, *but measure up*,” is what the world is *really* telling you if you want to reach your highest potential.

The missing chunk is how you get there

If you’re a leader, you’re on the receiving end of relentless and often conflicting advice about how to present yourself to the world. Perhaps you’re urged to be active on social media in order to stay visible and to engage others. But what if you’re naturally private? Maybe you’ve been prodded to display your vulnerable side in the conference room so that your staff will find you relatable. But what if you feel that exposing your personal experiences leaves you susceptible to career-limiting rumors—or even a leadership coup?

“Just be yourself” is well-meaning but inadequate guidance. It begs for more substance and measurement.

Over the past decade, I’ve been privileged to work with senior executives at some of the world’s biggest corporations. These leaders, whose massive corner offices are often perched 50 stories above the concrete jungle below, appear poised, all-knowing, untouchable. And some of them are.

But the truth is, many executives fear that they’re falling short of their full potential, and they worry about how they come across to others. That’s where executive coaches like me come in: Our role is to help them reach their performance goals and motivate others while conquering the paradox of twenty-first-century leadership:

The world demands perfection, yet craves authenticity.

Think about the paradoxes in your life. You want to exude executive presence—yet still be genuine. You want to hone your speaking and influence skills—but not appear manipulative. You want to inspire top performance from others—yet not drive away top talent with your demands.

You want to be—*and to be seen as*—the real deal.

How do you balance the polarities of *perfection* and *authenticity* to lead at your peak level?

Like the rest of us, the super achievers I work with every day feel that the pressures of society and their work are constantly knocking them off-center. I've written this book to help anyone—from senior leader to junior hopeful—stay centered and be the real deal, using the lessons I've learned in boardrooms and conference rooms around the globe.

In today's hyperconnected, social-media-fueled world, public figures are immediately mocked for any perceived mistake or slip-up. Society tends to tear down anyone who seems *too* perfect. The truth, of course, is that we're all human—so we all make mistakes. That means no one can be perfect *and* authentic. But that doesn't stop us from trying.

As a recovering perfectionist, I've struggled with this for years. When I look back on my two decades on television, I'm amazed that I survived with my sanity intact. I'd set off a feeding frenzy when, heaven forbid, a hair got out of place. So I

No one can be perfect *and* authentic

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shellacked my locks into place. My hair didn't move—it was teased, it was lacquered, it was a *helmet*. And yet, beneath the façade, I was still expected to come across as warm and authentic. My Q-score—a measure of popularity that can determine whether a television personality keeps the job or gets the boot—depended on it.

So what's real and what's not? And what does it matter, anyway?

Real versus Fake

Some leaders who were once branded “the real deal” were faking it in plain sight. Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong converted seven yellow jerseys into 87 million yellow wristbands—and hundreds of millions more in personal endorsement deals. But the former champion was disgraced and stripped of his titles and status when his use of performance-enhancing drugs was revealed in 2013.

Bernie Madoff was a former NASDAQ chairman turned financial advisor to high-society individuals and nonprofit organizations, an expert trusted by the elite to grow their financial assets. But in 2009, once his Ponzi scheme was exposed—along with the devastating reality that he'd inflicted up to \$50 billion in losses on his clients—he was sent to prison.

And news of General David Petraeus's extramarital affair in 2012 undermined the reputation that he'd spent years building—among the Washington elite, with the thousands of soldiers he led, and with an adoring public.

The mismatch between what these people *wanted* us to believe and what we learned to be true made it clear that they weren't the real deal.

We are living in an almost excessively “faux” world. Think about it: you witnessed *faux singing* at Barack Obama’s 2013 presidential inauguration. Pop singer Beyoncé later admitted that she lip-synched the national anthem because she wanted her performance to be perfect for the momentous occasion. And it *was* perfect—until the United States Marine Band threw her under the bus by exposing that she wasn’t singing live.

You’ve seen a *faux girlfriend* exposed. The heart and soul of Notre Dame football’s 2012 season, senior linebacker Manti Te’o, was humiliated when the touching story of his girlfriend’s death—the narrative that catapulted him into the limelight and the Heisman Trophy race—was later exposed as an Internet hoax. Not only did this girl *not* die of cancer as Te’o had claimed, she *had never even existed*. Even worse, Te’o had told reporters that he was—*wait for it*—“completely devoted” to this girl—a fake person he’d never met. You may still be scratching your head over that one.

As Catholic cardinals from around the world met ahead of the conclave to ultimately elect Pope Francis in 2013, a *faux cardinal* snuck in. An impostor wrapped a purple scarf around his waist and managed to slip past the Swiss Guard in Vatican City. The impostor shuffled right up to the real cardinals and even posed with Italian Cardinal Sergio Sebastiani before the guards noticed he was wearing a fedora instead of the traditional headgear. “He’s not a cardinal—he’s a fake!” they realized, and escorted him out.

**What’s real
and what’s
not?**

It seems that no one and no place is sacred. What's real? And what's not? Shams and phony posturing extend beyond inner qualities to external features. Seemingly tight tushes are actually "Spanx'd" in place to conceal jiggling flesh. Glowing tans are airbrushed over pasty white skin. Voluminous-looking hair is clipped in to make thin tresses look fuller. The list goes on.

Tidy narratives trash the truth

Digital manipulation is especially rampant. Even network news anchors have been sucked into this vortex. When *CBS News* introduced Katie Couric as its new *CBS Evening News* anchor in 2006, the network admittedly Photoshopped her promotional picture to make her look 20 pounds thinner. Katie was fooled at first, too. "Wow! I look good," was her first impression, she told *More* magazine, before she learned of the electronic alteration.

Savvy television viewers realize their favorite so-called reality shows are anything but real. The performances are contrived and heavily edited—more trumped-up than Donald Trump himself.

Reality-show producers want to deliver tidy, audacious narratives that trash the truth. They want people to make spectacles of themselves to generate headlines. The programs have too much at stake to leave real storylines to chance. So they fabricate narratives, coach participants on what to say, and then cobble together provocative programs. Make it snappy. Chop, chop. If something is dull or lukewarm, they juice the footage by shuffling scenes out of order and out of context.

J. Ryan Stradal, a story editor on *The Bachelorette*, told *Time* magazine in 2006 that this technique is called “Frankenbiting.” He explains, “We’re using things said at different times, put together to imply a statement or observation.” Of course, some producers beg to differ. They lean on author James Frey’s “essential truth” defense. Tony DiSanto, executive producer of *Laguna Beach*, told ABC that the show was “enhanced” but genuine. Right.

Coming from a broadcast journalism background, I understand the editing-room mentality. Editing can transform run-of-the-mill interviews and facts into something much more compelling. It’s akin to the ingredients in a salad—when everything’s tossed together, the product comes out enhanced, depending on which ingredients you put in or leave out. My college professors trained me to keep it real; in the 1980s, the focus was on Journalism with a capital *J*. But today, with the Internet frontier providing an environment as wide open as the Wild, Wild West, that’s certainly not the case anymore.

I also learned the protocol for how to present myself as a TV news anchor, a position that I held for many years. The first rule of anchordom is to project a spit-shined version of yourself. When you sit behind the anchor desk, act like a news anchor. Smooth out your rough edges.

Our opinions about and actions toward others flow from this one simple question: *Is this person the real deal?* When we believe that someone—particularly a leader—is the real deal, we trust them, we listen to them, and we willingly follow

**We willingly
follow the
real deal**

them. When someone doesn't strike us as the whole package, the opposite occurs. We suspect their motives and second-guess their ideas. We stall and sabotage instead of following their lead.

In the 13 years that I've been preparing to write this book, I've discovered why being the real deal is so crucial. I've explored the reasons as I studied leadership influence, working on the root causes of why some leaders have a consistently strong influence on their followers, while others manage to influence others only episodically.

I surveyed more than 3,500 leaders at my executive coaching sessions and corporate programs around the globe: the Americas, Asia-Pacific, Australia, and Europe. I interviewed leadership teams, sales teams, human resources professionals, engineers, and more.

Their answers electrified me and can change your approach to leadership.

What especially struck me was how people explained *why* they wanted to be influential. I kept hearing the words, "I want to be the *real deal*." At a recent corporate leadership class, I asked the seasoned leaders how they wanted others to view them. "One word," I said. Table by table, they revealed their one word aloud. Some shared terms like *powerful*, *influential*, or *bold*—but more than half answered *real*. *More than half*.

***Being is more
challenging
than doing***

They told me that *being* is much more challenging than *doing* and that most of leadership influence is achieved by learning how to *be*.

I believe the most powerful step you can take in the competitive modern marketplace is to be *real*. The sooner you develop this ability, the farther you will go. The benefits are clear. When you are the real deal:

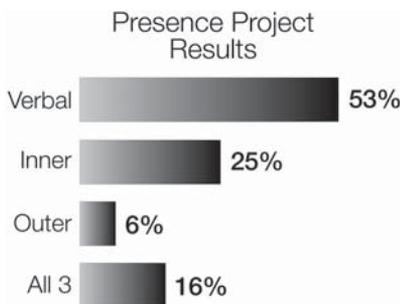
You earn trust. People become committed to you and follow your lead; they respect and value your input.

You elevate performance. Not only your own performance, but that of everyone else around you.

You interface beautifully with the world. You're free from costly communication misfires and broken relationships.

The study participants went even deeper into why they wanted to be the real deal. They cited “presence” as a crucial factor—which raises the question, what exactly is *presence*?

The Presence Project



Of the 3,500 people surveyed, the largest group by far—53 percent—felt that their *verbal skills* give them presence and constitute the primary factor in their ability to influence others. The next largest

percentage—25 percent—said their *inner presence* is most important to their leadership influence skills. A mere 6 percent believed that their *outer presence* made them influential.

Here's where it really got interesting: 16 percent attributed their influence to combining inner, outer, and verbal presence.

Let's focus on that 16 percent, since these are the ones who report they're able to consistently influence others. Who *are* these awesome people? How did they get there? And how do the rest of us get there, too?

The 3 Layers of Presence

When my team assimilated the answers, we discovered that the ability to be the real deal is based on what I now call *The Three Layers of Presence*®:

1. Inner presence
2. Verbal presence
3. Outer presence

Let's spend a moment discovering what these layers are.

Layer 1: Inner Presence *How You Experience Yourself*



- If you're centered, you don't get caught up in your own head. You live your values and have a purpose greater than yourself.
- If you have *too little* inner presence, you're *The Worrier*. Anxiety may throw you off-center and cause you to lose influence.

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