Determinants and Implications of Self-perceived Authenticity: Beliefs About Authenticity and Reactions to Behavioral Incongruence

by

Katrina Pelagia Jongman-Sereno

Department of Psychology & Neuroscience
Duke University

Date:_______________________
Approved:

___________________________
Mark R. Leary, Supervisor

___________________________
Rick H. Hoyle

___________________________
Steven R. Asher

___________________________
Lynn Smith-Lovin

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of Psychology & Neuroscience in the Graduate School of Duke University

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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

Although many perspectives suggest that authenticity is important for well-being, people do not always have direct access to the psychological processes that produce their behaviors and, thus, are not able to judge whether they are behaving consistently with their personality, attitudes, values, motives, and goals. Even so, people experience subjective feelings of authenticity and inauthenticity, raising the question of factors that influence people’s judgments of whether they are being authentic. The present studies used descriptive, correlational, experimental, and experience sampling designs to examine possible influences on self-judgments of authenticity, including the congruence between people’s behavior and inner dispositions, the positivity of the behavior, their personal beliefs about authenticity, features of the interaction, and trait authenticity. Studies 1A and 1B examined the role of people’s beliefs about authenticity in self-judgments of authenticity. Studies 2A and 2B investigated the criteria that people use to judge their behavior as authentic versus inauthentic and challenged those criteria to see whether self-perceived authenticity was affected. And, Study 3 used an experience sampling design to study people’s experiences of state authenticity in daily life. Together the studies offer insights into the determinants of self-perceived authenticity and show that many factors that influence people’s feelings of authenticity are peripheral, if not irrelevant, to actual authenticity.
Contents

Abstract ......................................................................................................................................... iv
List of Tables .................................................................................................................................. x
Acknowledgements ..................................................................................................................... xi
1. Introduction ............................................................................................................................... 1
  1.1 Conceptualizations of Authenticity ............................................................................... 3
    1.1.1 Person-centered Approach ......................................................................................... 3
    1.1.2 Self-determination Theory ......................................................................................... 4
    1.1.3 Kernis and Goldman’s Conceptualization ............................................................... 5
    1.1.4 Interpersonal Authenticity ......................................................................................... 6
  1.2 Operationalizations of authenticity ............................................................................... 8
    1.2.1 Congruence Between Inner Dispositions and Behavior ........................................ 9
    1.2.2 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motives ................................................................................. 10
    1.2.3 Self-perceived Authenticity ..................................................................................... 11
  1.3 A Goal Competition Perspective on Authenticity ..................................................... 14
  1.4 The Paradox of Feeling Inauthentic ............................................................................. 17

2. Studies 1A and 1B: Lay Construals of Authenticity ........................................................... 18
  2.1 Study 1A .......................................................................................................................... 18
    2.1.1 Method ........................................................................................................................ 19
      2.1.1.1 Participants ......................................................................................................... 19
      2.1.1.2 Procedure ............................................................................................................ 19
List of Tables

Table 1: Perceptions of Authenticity Based on Construal Preference ........................................... 23
Table 2: Self-Ratings of Behavior ..................................................................................................... 35
Table 3: Number of Responses to Coded Reasons for Feeling Inauthentic ........................................ 41
Table 4: Common Reasons for Feeling Inauthentic and Corresponding Rebuttals .............................. 44
Table 5: Effect of Behavior Valence Condition on Endorsement of Reasons for Feeling Inauthentic ......................................................................................................................... 48
Table 6: Effect of Valence of Behavior and Experimental Condition on Self-ratings ...................... 51
Table 7: Individual Behavioral Congruence Items Predicting Indices of State Authenticity ............... 76
Table 8: Mean Self-ratings in Intake Session and Experience Sampling Phase ............................ 78
Table 9: Correlations among Indices of State Authenticity .................................................................. 80
Table 10: Correlations Between State Authenticity and Features of the Interaction ...................... 83
Table 11: Features of the Interaction Predicting Feelings of Authenticity ........................................ 86
Table 12: Features of the Interaction Predicting Feeling Like Oneself ............................................. 87
Table 13: Features of the Interaction Predicting Feeling In/Out of Character ................................ 88
Table 14: Correlations Between Measures of Trait Authenticity .................................................. 93
Table 15: Multilevel Models Predicting State Authenticity from Only Trait Authenticity ............... 94
Table 16: Adding Trait Authenticity to Full Level 1 Multilevel Models ............................................ 96
Table 17: Correlations Among State Authenticity and Emotional and Relational Ratings ............... 97
Acknowledgements

First, I want to give thanks to my family, Allard, Joan, and Mark, for their unconditional love and support. They have been incredible role models, inspiring, motivating, and encouraging me from day one. Ik hou van jullie. To my friends—especially the Core Four—who have both celebrated and commiserated with me and who always provide a needed dose of fun. To my advisor, Mark Leary, without whom none of this would have been possible. I could not have asked for a more supportive, kind, understanding, and intelligent mentor who cares about my development as a student and as a person. To my committee—Rick Hoyle, Steve Asher, and Lynn Smith-Lovin—for always providing constructive criticism and feedback. To my undergraduate mentor, Simine Vazire, without whom I would not have applied to graduate school in the first place. I dedicate my dissertation to my grandparents, Rena, Charles, Jeanne, and Kees who have always embodied the importance of hard work, education, creativity, and passion. This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship under Grant No. DGE 1106401.
1. Introduction

Authenticity has been considered a fundamental aspect of well-being for centuries (Harter, 2002; Kernis & Goldman, 2006). As early as 350 BCE, Aristotle argued that being authentic—which he defined as behaving congruently with one’s higher-order personal goals—is the highest good that people can attain (Hutchinson, 1995). Since then, philosophers, psychologists, and sociologists have studied—and generally advocated—authenticity.

With the rise of humanistic psychology in the 1950s, authenticity was explicitly studied by psychologists for the first time. Humanistic psychologists suggested that authenticity is central to becoming fully-functioning or self-actualized (e.g., Jourard, 1964, 1966; Maslow, 1968; Rogers, 1959, 1961). They argued that authenticity—resisting external pressures and self-disclosing honestly—is key to promoting personal relationships in everyday life (as well as in therapist-client relationships in a counseling context) and is an important determinant of psychological well-being. More recently, positive psychology has brought renewed attention to the concept of authenticity as a fundamental human strength (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman, 2002).

Authenticity is highly valued by laypeople as well. From an early age, people are admonished to “be themselves,” to stand up for what they believe in, to avoid hypocrisy, and, as Thoreau advocated, to march to the beat of their own drummer. We expect others to be who and what they say they are (Goffman, 1959), and people who
appear to behave contrary to their true inclinations are regarded as fake, deceitful, weak, self-deluded, or Machiavellian. The importance of authenticity is ingrained in pop culture and can been seen in song lyrics, popular idioms (“Be real”), self-help books, relationship advice, and professional guidance.

Although authenticity has been of interest to philosophers for centuries and behavioral scientists for decades, no consensus exists about what authenticity is, if and when it is beneficial, or its role in psychological and interpersonal well-being. The goal of this project was to provide an overarching conceptualization of authenticity that offers a basis for empirical research on the topic and to examine factors that influence the degree to which judge themselves as authentic versus inauthentic. After reviewing existing conceptualizations and operationalizations of authenticity, a new goal competition perspective on authenticity is described that, if accurate, has two important implications for understanding authenticity: (a) people are never truly inauthentic because all behavior is goal-directed and all goals are genuinely held, and (b) people are not in the position to judge their own authenticity anyway because they are not aware of the relevant intrapersonal processes that would allow them to assess whether their actions are congruent with their inner dispositions. Even so, scientists and laypeople agree that feelings of authenticity and inauthenticity are psychologically important, so five studies (two pilot studies and three primary studies) are described that examine possible influences on self-perceived authenticity.
1.1 Conceptualizations of Authenticity

Scholarly understanding of authenticity has been stymied by the lack of a clear, agreed-upon conceptualization of the construct. In fact, researchers use the word “authenticity” to refer to several distinct concepts, so to begin, this section describes various conceptualizations of authenticity.

1.1.1 Person-centered Approach

The person-centered approach to authenticity, which can be traced to ideas endorsed by Rogers (1959, 1961) and Maslow (1968) and was later expanded by Barrett-Lennard (1998), is based on the relationships among people’s inner psychological processes, their perceptions of these processes, their behavior, and external influences upon them (Barrett-Lennard, 1998; Wood, Linley, Maltby, Baliousis, & Joseph, 2008). People’s internal states—what they are thinking, feeling, and experiencing physiologically—include both conscious thoughts and unconscious processes of which they are not directly aware. Given that people’s perceptions of these internal experiences involve only conscious thoughts, they may not accurately reflect what people are truly experiencing either because people are unaware of their internal experiences or because they misinterpret or mislabel them. The difference between people’s actual experiences and their perceptions of their experiences is referred to as “self-alienation” (Wood et al., 2008). Of course, no one can know him- or herself perfectly, but lower self-alienation is assumed to be associated with better psychological adjustment. Congruence between
people’s perceptions of their internal experiences and their explicit behavior is called “authentic living” and is also associated with well-being (Wood et al., 2008). Accepting external influences—as when people are strongly influenced by other people’s desires and expectations—can lead to self-alienation and undermines authentic living (Horney, 1951; Winnicot, 1965; Wood et al., 2008). According to the person-centered approach, people are authentic to the extent that they have insight into their internal experiences, behave accordingly, and resist external influences.

1.1.2 Self-determination Theory

Self-determination theory (SDT) also distinguishes between internal and external influences on behavior but in a different way than the person-centered approach. SDT focuses primarily on the extent to which people’s behaviors are motivated intrinsically versus extrinsically. Behaviors that are motivated intrinsically are pursued because they are inherently interesting, enjoyable, and satisfying. Such behaviors are considered authentic, whereas behaviors that are motivated extrinsically are not. According to SDT, human beings have a fundamental desire to behave in accordance with goals that are intrinsically motivated—that is, to behave authentically. (Ryan and Deci use “authenticity” and “autonomy” interchangeably but seem to prefer “autonomy.”)

However, people vary in the degree to which they pursue intrinsically motivated goals because of pressure from external influences.
SDT proposes four types of extrinsic motivation that vary in the extent to which they are regulated externally versus internally (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). The first type, externally regulated behavior, is completely extrinsically motivated. This type of motivation involves behavior whose sole goal is to comply with external demands or obtain external rewards. The second type of extrinsic motivation, introjected regulation, involves behaviors that are enacted to protect one’s ego or self-worth. The third type of extrinsic motivation, identified regulation, occurs when people view a goal as personally important even though they pursue the goal for external reasons. The fourth type, integrated regulation, is the most intrinsic form of extrinsic motivation. In this case, reasons for pursuing integrated behavior are completely aligned with one’s self-concept and goals. Although behaviors pursued through integrated regulation are congruent with one’s values and needs, it differs from true intrinsic motivation in that behaviors pursued through integrated regulation are not pursued for their inherent interest or enjoyment. SDT considers only behaviors that are completely intrinsically motivated to be authentic.

1.1.3 Kernis and Goldman’s Conceptualization

Kernis and Goldman conceptualized authenticity as behaving in accordance with one’s true self (Goldman & Kernis, 2002; Kernis, 2003; Kernis & Goldman, 2005, 2006), although their conceptualization of “true self” is murky at best. According to Kernis and Goldman (2006), authenticity is composed of four related components: (a) awareness, (b)
unbiased processing, (c) behavior, and (d) relational orientation. Awareness, which is similar to the first component in Barrett-Lennard’s (1998) theory, refers to awareness of one’s thoughts, emotions, desires, and goals. Kernis and Goldman assumed that people cannot act authentically if they are not aware of these things, although the point is debatable. Unbiased processing refers to processing one’s experiences in an objective and accurate manner, without ignoring or distorting them. This component is similar to self-alienation—the contrast between one’s true experiences and one’s perceived experiences (Barrett-Lennard, 1998). Behavioral authenticity involves acting in ways that are congruent with one’s “true self” rather than for external reasons such as to obtain rewards and avoid punishments. Again, this component is reminiscent of both the person-centered approach and SDT in that it focuses on the extent to which behavior is externally motivated. The final component of Kernis and Goldman’s conceptualization, relational orientation, involves behaving openly and truthfully in one’s close relationships.

1.1.4 Interpersonal Authenticity

Most conceptualizations of authenticity assume that authentic behavior is motivated by an inherent intrapsychic motive to behave in accordance with one’s true self or intrinsic goals (e.g., Barrett-Lennard, 1998; Kernis & Goldman, 2006; Wood et al., 2008). In fact, most conceptualizations explicitly state that being motivated by external reasons is, by definition, inauthentic (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Although the
conceptualizations of authenticity summarized above view authenticity as driven chiefly by intrapsychic processes, the interpersonal aspects of authenticity have received attention as well. Evidence of this can be seen in Kernis and Goldman’s (2006) inclusion of a relational component of authenticity, as well as Lopez and Rice’s (2006) work on relationship authenticity that focuses on the expression of authenticity within romantic relationships. However, even conceptualizations that are explicitly relational emphasize the intrapsychic importance of “being oneself” over the interpersonal importance of behaving to please other people as the key component of relational authenticity (e.g., “I would rather upset my partner than be someone I’m not;” Lopez & Rice, 2006).

Interpersonal authenticity is certainly important to laypeople as can be seen in the ways that authenticity is often interpreted in everyday life—as consistency, honesty, and trustworthiness. Ratings of the likableness of 555 personality traits revealed that the most positively rated traits included sincere, honest, and truthful, and the most negatively rated traits included liar, phony, and dishonest (Anderson, 1968)—traits that presumably distinguish “authentic” and “inauthentic” people, respectively. Yet, equating authenticity with honesty and trustworthiness precludes the possibility that a person might be authentically dishonest or untrustworthy. Furthermore, being perceived as sincere, honest, and truthful has many interpersonal benefits, raising the possibility that seemingly authentic behavior may reflect an effort to be viewed as authentic in order to be accepted and maintain positive social relationships. That is,
people may strive to appear consistent, honest, and intrinsically motivated because other people reward these traits and punish inconsistency, hypocrisy, and being excessively influenced by external factors (Schlenker, Forsyth, Leary, & Miller, 1980; Rosenfeld, Melburg, & Tedeschi, 1981; Tedeschi, Schlenker, & Bonoma, 1971). In addition, behaving consistently makes people’s interpersonal interactions smoother and more predictable (Goffman, 1959; Swann & Buhrmester, 2012; Swann, Stein-Seroussi, & Giesler, 1992). The numerous connections between authenticity and adaptive interpersonal behaviors and outcomes suggest that people may be motivated to behave in ways that appear authentic for interpersonal reasons in addition to intrapsychic ones—a possibility for which existing conceptualizations of authenticity do not account.

1.2 Operationalizations of authenticity

Even though a variety of conceptualizations of authenticity exist, researchers often do not base their operationalizations of authenticity on any particular conceptualization. Thus, much research in this area reflects whatever conceptualization of authenticity is implied by however the construct was operationalized. Moreover, researchers often operationalize authenticity in ways that do not reflect any existing conceptualization. Given the diversity in the ways that authenticity has been measured, it appears that many different constructs have been labeled “authenticity,” which has added further to confusion in this area.
Operationalizations of authenticity tend to fall in one of three broad categories involving (a) congruence between some psychological disposition (usually a trait, goal, value, belief, or attitude) and actual behavior, (b) the degree to which a behavior is intrinsically or extrinsically motivated, and (c) the respondent’s subjective judgment of the degree to which his or her behavior is authentic.

1.2.1 Congruence Between Inner Dispositions and Behavior

The most common operationalizations of authenticity involve asking respondents to rate the degree to which their behavior is congruent with their personality, true self, or some other indication of what they are really like (e.g., Fleeson & Wilt, 2010; Harter, Marold, Whitesell, & Cobbs, 1996; Kernis & Goldman, 2006). In addition, indirect measures of personality-behavior congruence also exist; many of these measure the extent to which people’s behavior varies across social roles under the assumption that greater behavioral consistency across situations or roles reflects greater authenticity (Côté, Moskowitz, & Zuroff, 2012; Donahue, Robins, Roberts, & John, 1993; Sheldon et al., 1997). (I will return to problems with this assumption below.) In this dissertation, I use the term, “congruence,” to refer to behaving in accordance with one’s inner dispositions and “consistency” to refer to behaving in the same ways across time and situations, whether or not one’s behavior reflects one’s inner dispositions.

Just as people can behave in ways that do or do not reflect their personality, people can behave in ways that do or do not reflect their attitudes or beliefs. In some
studies, authenticity has been operationalized as congruence between one’s behavior and one’s attitudes or beliefs (Kernis & Goldman, 2006; Wood et al., 2008). Measures of attitude-behavior congruence usually ask people to report on their willingness to stand up for their beliefs in the face of opposition or to convey agreement with another person’s views even though they disagree. Measures of integrity, which involves acting in accordance with one’s personal values or morals (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), also use this approach to assess attitude/belief-behavior congruence.

### 1.2.2 Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motives

Studies that use an SDT framework attempt to measure authenticity by determining the degree to which people’s behavior is motivated by intrinsic or extrinsic concerns. The theory itself identifies certain goals as inherently intrinsic versus extrinsic. For example, SDT posits that goals to pursue self-development and personal health are intrinsic and that goals to obtain wealth and power are extrinsic (Williams, Cox, Hedberg, & Deci, 2000).

However, such distinctions between intrinsically and extrinsically motivated goals often seem arbitrary. For example, SDT categorizes interpersonal affiliation as an intrinsically-driven motive. According to SDT, people pursue interpersonal relationships because doing so is inherently satisfying rather than because they desire to obtain external rewards. However, people can also be motivated to affiliate with others for extrinsic reasons such as to obtain desired reactions, resources, and outcomes. Because
SDT assumes interpersonal affiliation is an intrinsic motive, such behaviors are labeled authentic even though the desire to affiliate is sometimes driven by extrinsic reasons. Assuming that certain goals are always intrinsic and others are always extrinsic muddles the distinction between authentic and inauthentic behavior and obscures that actual source of people’s motivation.

1.2.3 Self-perceived Authenticity

Authenticity has also been measured by asking participants to rate how authentic they (or a particular behavior) were or to rate how authentic they feel (Heppner et al., 2008; Kernis & Goldman, 2006; Kraus, Chen, & Keltner, 2011; Sheldon et al., 1997). The obvious problem with self-perceived authenticity is that how authentic one feels or perceives oneself to be may not reflect how authentic one actually is, a discrepancy that is explicitly acknowledged in both Barrett-Lennard’s (1998) and Kernis and Goldman’s (2006) approaches. Because people’s perceptions of their experiences may not reflect their actual experiences, people may feel authentic even when they are behaving incongruently with their personality, attitudes, beliefs, or intrinsically-held goals; likewise, they may feel inauthentic when they are, in fact, behaving congruently with their personality, attitudes, beliefs, or intrinsically-held goals.

To complicate matters, people’s judgments of their own authenticity are systematically biased by the positivity of the behavior being judged (Jongman-Sereno & Leary, 2016; Sherman, Nave, & Funder, 2012; Wood, Christensen, Hebl, & Rothgerber,
People perceive their own positive behaviors and characteristics as more authentic than negative ones (Fleeson & Wilt, 2010; Gino, Kouchaki, & Galinsky, 2015; Harter, 2002; Jongman-Sereno & Leary, 2016; Lenton, Slabu, Sedikides, & Power, 2013; Newman, Bloom, & Knobe, 2014; Sheldon et al., 1997). For example, Harter (2002) found that, although adolescents report behaving in ways that reflect both true-self and false-self traits, they tend to believe that their positive traits more accurately reflect what they are really like than their negative traits do. Assuming that people can authentically behave in ways that reflect both positive and negative characteristics, adolescents’ ratings of the authenticity of their traits seem to be confounded with the valence of these traits.

Similarly, people rate themselves as more authentic when they behave in more positive ways. In a study that examined authenticity and consistency across people’s various social roles (e.g., son/daughter, student, employee, friend), participants rated themselves as more authentic in roles in which they were more extraverted, agreeable, conscientious, open to experience, and emotionally stable (Sheldon et al., 1997). Given that these traits are more desirable than their opposites (John & Robins, 1993; Rushton & Irwing, 2011), this finding reflects a tendency to view enactments of positive characteristics as more authentic than enactments of negative characteristics.

Similar to Sheldon et al.’s (1997) findings, participants in another study rated themselves as more authentic on occasions in which they behaved in more positive ways.
Furthermore, this effect occurred regardless of people’s actual trait levels of these characteristics. So, for example, introverts indicated that they were more authentic when they were being extraverted than introverted, and disagreeable people felt more authentic when they were being more agreeable. Paradoxically, people may regard desirable actions that are incongruent with how they really are as more authentic than less desirable actions that are congruent with their attributes.

My own research that tested the relationship between self-perceived authenticity and behavioral positivity showed that, controlling for the objective authenticity of the behavior, participants rated behaviors that were positive as more authentic than behaviors that were negative. This effect held even when the extent to which people felt that the positive and negative characteristics were a part of them was controlled. These results show that people’s judgments of the authenticity of their behavior are contaminated with their perceptions of the valence of their behavior even when the objective authenticity of the behavior is held constant (Jongman-Sereno & Leary, 2016).

As we have seen, multiple conceptualizations of authenticity exist, most operationalizations of authenticity are not based on existing conceptualizations, and some operationalizations are questionable in terms of their ability to measure how authentic a behavior or a person actually is. In part, these conceptual and methodological problems in the literature may arise because of a fundamental misconstrual of authenticity. The following section proposes and describes a novel goal
competition perspective on authenticity and discusses the methodological implications of this reconceptualization.

1.3 A Goal Competition Perspective on Authenticity

Most, if not all, human behaviors are goal-directed (Lewin, Heider, & Heider, 1936; Tolman, 1932). Presumably, people possess a very large number of goals (as reflected by the abundance and variety of goal-directed behaviors in which they engage), and people typically hold multiple goals simultaneously. Although not all of people’s goals are active, let alone conscious, at any moment, they pursue many goals over the course of a given day (Bargh & Ferguson, 2000; Cantor & Blanton, 1996; Kruglanski, 1996; Kurzban, 2010).

Moreover, all of the goals that people have are held genuinely (at some level) in the sense that people truly desire to fulfill whatever goals they have. In fact, suggesting that people have goals that they genuinely do not want to achieve would seem absurd (although they certainly may have goals that they wish they did not have). Thus, people cannot have inauthentic goals—that is, they cannot have goals that are not congruent with some disposition, value, belief, motive, or desire. And, if people’s goals are genuine, then all behaviors that arise from those goals must be authentic. Viewed in this way, people are never truly inauthentic because all of their goals are genuine reflections of their psychological inclinations. Even when people engage in actions under duress, behave in ways to please other people or obtain rewards, act in ways that are contrary to
their general inclinations, or do things that they wish they did not do, they do so to satisfy a goal that they hold—a goal that is always buttressed by genuine dispositions, motives, beliefs, attitudes, or desires. Even disingenuous or duplicitous behaviors are necessarily authentic.

In contrast to SDT’s conceptualization of authenticity, the goal competition perspective assumes that all goals are genuine regardless of whether they are intrinsically or extrinsically motivated. As a result, people can be authentically motivated to pursue extrinsic goals like obtaining tangible rewards such as money, status, or power. Moreover, according to the goal competition perspective, authentic behavior can be motivated interpersonally as well as intrapersonally. However, people may feel more authentic or inauthentic depending on the externality of the goal they are pursuing. Although the goal competition perspective holds that all goals are genuine, extrinsically motivated goals may be experienced as less authentic than intrinsically motivated goals, and SDT may be correct that pursuing intrinsically motivated goals is preferable to pursuing extrinsically motivated ones, as research suggests (Ryan, 1995; Ryan & Deci, 2000b; Ryan & Deci, 2004). But this is not a matter of authenticity.

The multiple goals that people hold simultaneously can be related to each other in a compatible or incompatible manner (Fishbach, Friedman, & Kruglanski, 2003). In the case of compatible goals, attaining one goal can help to attain another goal. For example, the goals of losing weight and exercising are compatible. On the other hand,
goals are incompatible if satisfying one interferes with satisfying the other (Emmons, King, & Sheldon, 1993; Fishbach et al., 2003). For example, having the goal to enjoy a piece of cake is incompatible with the goal of losing weight. People’s goal pursuits are mediated by a variety of psychological processes involving their personality dispositions, motives, beliefs, attitudes, and desires, all of which, again, are genuine, authentic aspects of their psychological make-up. So, although people may hold multiple goals that interfere with each other, according to the goal competition perspective, any behavior that arises from any of these competing goals is authentic. So, behaviors that are fully authentic manifestations of one goal may be incongruent with another goal.

For example, when a person’s alarm goes off in the morning, he or she probably holds competing goals. On one hand, the person has the goal to get up and go to work. But, on the other hand, the person has the goal to turn his or her alarm off and go back to sleep. These goals are contradictory and incompatible. But does that mean that one of those goals is inauthentic? No; although these two goals conflict, they are both goals that this person genuinely holds. A behavior can violate certain desires and motives that one holds, but these violations occur because the behavior is authentically enacted in the service of another desire or motive. Thus, whichever behavior the person chooses—going to work or staying in bed—is necessarily authentic.
1.4 The Paradox of Feeling Inauthentic

Even though people cannot behave inauthentically according to the goal competition perspective, they nonetheless experience feelings that they interpret as inauthenticity. The present research examined why people experience feelings of authenticity and inauthenticity even though true inauthenticity—as conceptualized by both researchers and laypeople—may not exist. These studies aimed to show that the ways in which people conceptualize authenticity and accompanying emotional experiences are related to their self-perceptions of authenticity.

Five studies were conducted, conceptually divided into two pairs of studies (Studies 1A and 1B; Studies 2A and 2B) and a final single study (Study 3). Each pair of studies included a pilot study that provided data for the development of materials for a primary study. Study 1A provided preliminary evidence that people conceptualize authenticity in different ways. Study 1B then manipulated people’s construals of authenticity to examine how the way that people frame authenticity affects their self-judgments of authenticity. Study 2A collected data on the reasons that people judged past behavior as inauthentic, and then Study 2B challenged these reasons. Finally, Study 3 employed an experience sampling methodology (ESM) to examine factors that contribute to people’s state authenticity—their subjective experiences of authenticity—in their daily lives and to examine how state authenticity relates to emotional and relational outcomes.
2. Studies 1A and 1B: Lay Construals of Authenticity

People seem to have differing notions of what it means to be authentic. Evidence of this can be seen both in the various ways that authenticity has been conceptualized in scientific research and in how laypeople construe authenticity in their daily lives.

2.1 Study 1A

The purpose of this pilot study was to determine basic ways in which people construe authenticity. This study used three distinct construals of authenticity that vary in the criteria that people use to consider behavior “authentic.” The strict construal of authenticity suggests that authentic people behave in essentially the same way in all circumstances and are relatively unresponsive to situational influences. According to this view, authentic people are highly consistent across time and situations. A second, flexible construal of authenticity suggests that, because people are multi-faceted and often possess contradictory traits and motives, authentic people may behave in variable, and even contradictory, ways as they adapt to different circumstances while still remaining true to themselves. A third view of authenticity that is consistent with the goal competition perspective, the inevitable construal, states that people are always authentic (i.e., that authenticity is inevitable) because all of their actions spring from their traits, motives, goals, values, attitudes, and other inner dispositions. Even when people perform a behavior under duress or behave duplicitously for external social rewards, they do so in response to internal motives and goals to obtain certain rewards or avoid
certain punishments. In this third view, people cannot be inauthentic. The purpose of this pilot study was to provide evidence that laypeople distinguish among these three ways of construing authenticity and to see whether different construals are associated with different patterns of self-ratings and perceptions of behaving authentically.

2.1.1 Method

2.1.1.1 Participants

Two hundred and thirty-six adult participants (99 men, 137 women, \( M_{age} = 35.9 \) years, \( SD = 11.8 \)) living in the United States were recruited from Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (MTurk). Participants were compensated $1.00 in Amazon credit for their time.

2.1.1.2 Procedure

After giving informed consent, participants read the strict, flexible, and inevitable construals of authenticity:

**Strict construal:** Being authentic means being yourself in all situations, regardless of what is going on or who else is there. People who are authentic act basically the same way no matter where they are or who they are with because their actions are an expression of who they truly are. Furthermore, the image of themselves that they present to others is the same all of the time. Authentic people express the same personality characteristics and core values in every situation, regardless of who they are with or what situation they are in.

**Flexible construal:** Being authentic means being yourself in all situations, regardless of what is going on or who else is there. However, people who are authentic may act quite differently depending on where they are or who they are with because different parts of who they truly are come into play in different situations. Furthermore, the image of themselves that they present to others may also differ in different situations as they adapt to different circumstances. Authentic people may express different
personality characteristics and core values in different situations, depending on who they are with or what situation they are in.

**Inevitable construal:** Being authentic means being yourself in all situations, regardless of what is going on or who else is there. But people are always authentic because their actions are always an expression of who they truly are. Even if they feel pressure to behave in a particular way or to present an image of themselves to others that is not true, their behavior is still authentic because it reflects their true motives, values, and goals. People may express different personality characteristics and core values in different situations, depending on who they are with or what situation they are in, but everyone always behaves authentically in every situation.

The construals were presented in random order and participants rated the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with each construal on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = moderately disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = slightly agree, 6 = moderately agree, 7 = strongly agree).

Participants also rated the importance of behaving authentically (1 = not at all, 2 = slightly, 3 = moderately, 4 = very, 5 = extremely) and how easy or difficult it is for them to behave authentically (1 = very easy, 2 = moderately easy, 3 = neither easy nor difficult, 4 = moderately difficult, 5 = very difficult).

As a measure of behavioral consistency/variability, participants indicated how often they engage in each of seven behaviors (tell others personal information about themselves, are funny, say things that they do not really believe, are aloof or unfriendly, criticize others if they did something wrong, try to get others to like them, and are selfish or self-centered) when interacting with seven targets (friends or peers; authority
figures such as a boss, teacher, or religious leader; women; men; people they are meeting for the first time; a romantic partner; and family members). Participants answered on 5-point scales (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = occasionally, 4 = often, 5 = very often).

Finally, participants completed the Behavioral Authenticity subscale of the Authenticity Inventory (Kernis & Goldman, 2006), which measures the degree to which people report acting in accordance with their values, preferences, and needs, as opposed to acting in ways to obtain rewards, avoid punishments, or please other people. Example items include, “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” and “I frequently pretend to enjoy something when in actuality I really don’t” (reverse-scored). Participants answered these items on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree, 5 = strongly agree).

2.1.2 Results

The percent of participants who “slightly agreed,” “moderately agreed,” or “strongly agreed” with each construal of authenticity (i.e., ratings of 5, 6, or 7 on a 7-point scale) was showed that 83.5% of participants (n = 197) agreed with the strict construal, 51.7% of participants (n = 122) agreed with the flexible construal, and 42.8% of participants (n = 101) agreed with the inevitable construal.

Among participants who clearly preferred one of the construals of authenticity, operationalized as agreeing with one of the construals more strongly than the other two,
the strict construal was most popular: 57.2% of the participants ($n = 135$) preferred the strict construal (in that they agreed with the strict construal more than they agreed with the other two construals), 17.8% ($n = 42$) preferred the flexible construal, and 7.2% ($n = 17$) preferred the inevitable construal. The remaining 17.8% of the participants ($n = 42$) did not prefer any one construal.

To examine how participants’ scores on the other variables correlated with the construal they preferred, participants were assigned to a group based on which of the three construals they favored. A measure of behavioral consistency/variability was calculated for each participant using the ratings of how frequently participants engaged in each of seven behaviors when with each of the seven targets. The standard deviation of the ratings was calculated for each behavior across the seven targets and then averaged across behaviors. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA; Pillai’s trace) was conducted to examine whether the three preferred construal groups differed on ratings of the importance of authenticity, the ease of behaving authentically, behavioral consistency/variability, and self-ratings of authenticity. Box’s test ($p = .047$) revealed significant heterogeneity across the variance-covariance matrices of the dependent variables, but inspection of the within-cell correlation matrices revealed that the patterns of correlations were similar across groups, and Levene’s tests revealed no violations of homogeneity of error variances across the dependent variables (all $p$’s > .194). The MANOVA showed a significant multivariate effect, $F(8, 378) = 3.54, p = .001, \eta^2_p = .070$, so
univariate analyses of variance (ANOVA) were conducted. Results of the ANOVAs are shown in Table 1. Participants who endorsed different views of authenticity differed in their ratings of the importance of authenticity, how difficult it is to be authentic, how much variability they show in their behavior, and their self-rated authenticity as measured by Kernis and Goldman’s (2006) Behavioral Authenticity subscale. As can be seen in Table 1, participants who preferred the strict construal rated behaving authentically as more important and harder to do than participants who preferred the inevitable construal of authenticity. Participants who preferred the strict construal also rated their behavior as less variable than participants who preferred the inevitable construal. In addition, participants who preferred the strict construal rated themselves as more authentic than participants who preferred the flexible construal of authenticity or the inevitable construal of authenticity. Clearly, how people construe authenticity is related to their views about authenticity as well as how variable they are in their behavior.

<table>
<thead>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance of authenticity</td>
<td>4.3\text{a} (0.70)</td>
<td>3.9\text{ab} (0.82)</td>
<td>3.8\text{b} (1.09)</td>
<td>5.63 (F) (2, 191)</td>
<td>.004 (\eta^2) .056</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of authenticity</td>
<td>1.9\text{a} (0.94)</td>
<td>2.3\text{ab} (1.00)</td>
<td>2.5\text{b} (1.18)</td>
<td>5.03 (F) (2, 191)</td>
<td>.007 (\eta^2) .050</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Variability in behavior</td>
<td>.65\text{a} (0.21)</td>
<td>.69\text{ab} (0.19)</td>
<td>.78\text{b} (0.21)</td>
<td>3.51 (F) (2, 191)</td>
<td>.032 (\eta^2) .035</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-rating of authenticity</td>
<td>41.2\text{a} (6.82)</td>
<td>36.7\text{b} (5.56)</td>
<td>35.6\text{b} (5.97)</td>
<td>11.53 (F) (2, 191)</td>
<td>&lt;.001 (\eta^2) .108</td>
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\textit{Note.} Means that do not share a subscript are significantly different from each other.
2.2 Study 1B: Manipulating Construals of Authenticity

According to Study 1A, people conceptualize authenticity in different ways, and these differences are related to how they judge their own authenticity. Given that some people believe that authenticity entails consistency (if not rigidity) across time and situations, some believe it allows for behavioral and attitudinal flexibility, and some believe that all behaviors are authentic, how people conceptualize authenticity should affect how authentic or inauthentic they feel about their own behavior.

The purpose of Study 1B was to build on Study 1A by experimentally leading participants to construe authenticity in a strict, flexible, or inevitable manner to examine whether doing so differentially affects how authentic or inauthentic they feel about self-incongruent behavior. Because inauthentic behavior can be either positive or negative, —both good deeds and bad deeds can be inauthentic—Study 1B examined both positive and negative inauthentic behavior. In addition, because reactions to instances of inauthenticity may depend of whether people frame them as “inauthentic” or as “not authentic” (Lenton, Bruder, Slabu, & Sedikides, 2013), participants were presented with strict, flexible, and inevitable construals that were framed in terms of either authenticity or inauthenticity.

The primary hypothesis of Study 1B was that people in the inevitable construal conditions (whether framed in terms of authenticity or inauthenticity) would feel most authentic, honest, genuine, trustworthy, and good, as well as least inauthentic,
dishonest, fake, untrustworthy, and bad. In contrast, participants in the strict construal conditions should feel least authentic, honest, genuine, trustworthy, and good and most inauthentic, dishonest, fake, untrustworthy, and bad. Participants in the flexible condition were expected to fall somewhere in between the inevitable and strict conditions.

In addition, consistent with research showing a positivity bias in people’s self-judgments of authenticity (Fleeson & Wilt, 2010; Harter, 2002; Gino et al., 2015; Jongman-Sereno & Leary, 2016; Lenton et al., 2013; Newman et al., 2014; Sheldon et al., 1997; Sherman et al., 2012; Wood et al., 1997), participants who wrote about a positive inauthentic behavior should rate their behavior as more authentic and less inauthentic across all conditions than those who wrote about a negative inauthentic behavior.

2.2.1 Method

2.2.1.1 Participants

Two hundred and fifty-five participants (132 men, 123 women, $M_{age} = 35.2$ years, $SD = 12.1$) were recruited from MTurk. Participants were at least 18 years old and residents of the United States. Participants were compensated $0.50 in Amazon credit for their time.

2.2.1.2 Procedure

Participants read an informed consent form and indicated their willingness to participate. After reporting their age and gender, participants described in writing an
occasion in the past when they felt they behaved inauthentically (Appendix A). Half of the participants were randomly assigned to write about a past inauthentic behavior that was positive (or better than they normally are), and half were randomly assigned to write about a past inauthentic behavior that was negative (or worse than they normally are).

After writing about the inauthentic behavior, participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions that differed in the construal of (in)authenticity that they read: the strict view, the flexible view, or the inevitable view. In addition, within each of these three construal type conditions, participants were randomly assigned to read a construal that was framed in terms of authenticity or inauthenticity. That is, they read a strict, flexible, or inevitable construal of either authenticity or inauthenticity:

**Strict authenticity construal:** People are authentic when they behave consistently with who they really are and what they are really like. When people are authentic, they act basically the same way no matter where they are or who they are with. The image of themselves that they present to others is the same all of the time. When people are authentic they express the same personality characteristics and core values in every situation, regardless of where they are or who they are with. On the other hand, people are inauthentic when they act in different ways depending on what situation they are in or who they are with.

**Flexible authenticity construal:** People are authentic when they behave consistently with who they really are and what they are really like. However, when people are authentic, they may act quite differently depending on where they are or who they are with because different parts of who they truly are come into play in different situations. The image of themselves that they present to others may also differ in different situations as they adapt to different circumstances. When people are authentic they may express different personality characteristics and
core values in different situations, depending on where they are or who they are with. On the other hand, people are inauthentic when they act in ways that are not consistent with any of the different parts of their personality or values.

**Inevitable authenticity construal:** People are authentic when they behave consistently with who they really are and what they are really like. Therefore, people are always authentic because all of their actions are always an expression of who they truly are. Even if they feel pressure to behave in a particular way or to present an image of themselves to others that is not true, their behavior is still authentic because it reflects their true motives, values, and goals. People may express different personality characteristics and core values in different situations, depending on where they are or who they are with, but everyone always behaves authentically in every situation. Thus, people are never truly inauthentic.

**Strict inauthenticity construal:** People are inauthentic when they don’t behave consistently with who they really are and what they are really like. When people are inauthentic, they act quite differently depending on where they are or who they are with. The image of themselves that they present to others is different in different situations as they adapt to different circumstances. When people are inauthentic they express different personality characteristics and core values in different situations, depending on where they are or who they are with. On the other hand, people who are authentic act basically the same way no matter where they are or who they are with.

**Flexible inauthenticity construal:** People are inauthentic when they don’t behave consistently with who they really are and what they are really like. When people are inauthentic, they behave in ways that are not consistent with any of the different parts of their personality or values. The image of themselves they present to others does not express any of the true parts of themselves. Inauthentic people express different personality characteristics and core values in different situations that don’t express who they really are. On the other hand, people who are authentic may act quite differently depending on where they are or who they are with but their behavior is always consistent with a part of their personality or values.
Inevitable inauthenticity construal: People are inauthentic when they don’t behave consistently with who they really are and what they are really like. However, people are never inauthentic because all of their actions are always an expression of who they truly are. Even if they feel pressure to behave in a particular way or to present an image of themselves to others that is not true, their behavior is not inauthentic because it reflects their true motives, values, and goals. People may express different personality characteristics and core values in different situations, depending on who they are with or what situation they are in, but no one ever behaves inauthentically in any situation. Thus, people are always authentic.

Thus, the design of the study was a 2 (behavior valence: good/bad) × 3 (construal type: strict/flexible/inevitable) × 2 (construal frame: authentic/inauthentic) between-subjects factorial design. An offset control group was also included in which participants did not read any construal of authenticity. Participants then completed measures that assessed self-ratings, beliefs about authenticity, authenticity-related goals, how important behaving authentically is, and how difficult it is to behave authentically. Before each rating, participants were reminded of the construal of authenticity they read earlier.

First, participants rated how authentic/inauthentic, honest/dishonest, genuine/fake, trustworthy/untrustworthy, and good/bad they currently felt about the inauthentic behavior they described on 7-point bipolar adjective scales. Participants then rated how much they agreed with the following statements about authenticity on 7-point scales (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = moderately disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = slightly agree, 6 = moderately agree, 7 = strongly agree): (1) authentic
people must resist situational influences at all costs; (2) even the slightest bit of variability in behavior can be interpreted by other people as inauthenticity; (3) your personality, desires, goals, attitudes, or values should not change depending on the audience or situation; (4) sometimes it is necessary to behave flexibly in order to accommodate the demands of the situation; (5) people should live by the following statement: “I am who I am and I’m not going to apologize for it!”; (6) people who change their behavior across different situations or audiences are weak; and (7) if you truly believe something, you should stand by your views in every situation.

Participants then rated the importance of each of the following goals on 7-point scales (1 = not at all, 7 = extremely): (1) behaving consistently for their own sake, (2) appearing behaviorally consistent to others, (3) changing their behavior to meet different situational demands, (4) pleasing other people, (5) being themselves or expressing their “true” self, and (6) standing up for what they believe in.

Participants also rated the importance of behaving authentically (1 = not at all, 2 = slightly, 3 = moderately, 4 = very, 5 = extremely), how easy or difficult it is to behave authentically (1 = very easy, 2 = moderately easy, 3 = neither easy nor difficult, 4 = moderately difficult, 5 = very difficult), and how good or bad the behavior they described was (1 = very bad, 2 = moderately bad, 3 = neither good nor bad, 4 = moderately good, 5 = very good). Finally, all participants who were not in the offset control group were presented with the construal of (in)authenticity they saw earlier and rated how much they agreed with it (1
= strongly disagree, 2 = moderately disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = slightly agree, 6 = moderately agree, 7 = strongly agree).

2.2.2 Results

2.2.2.1 Manipulation Checks and Preliminary Analyses

An ANOVA showed that participants who were asked to write about a negative behavior (M = 3.2, SD = 1.5) rated the behavior as worse than participants who were asked to write about a positive behavior (M = 5.6, SD = 1.07), F(1, 253) = 216.10, p < .001, η² = .461. Thus, participants appeared to follow the experimental instructions.

To examine the effects of the construal manipulation on participants’ beliefs about authenticity, a MANOVA was conducted on the effect of the valence of the behavior (good, bad), the type of construal (strict, flexible, inevitable), and the frame of the construal (authenticity, inauthenticity) on participants’ agreement with seven statements about authenticity. Levene’s tests revealed no violations of homogeneity of error variance (all p’s > .160). A significant multivariate main effect of the type of construal (strict, flexible, inevitable) was obtained, F(14, 404) = 2.30, p = .005. Univariate ANOVAs showed that participants differed in their agreement with three of the statements: “Authentic people must resist being influenced by social pressures at all costs,” F(2, 207) = 5.17, p = .006, η² = .048; “People’s personality, desires, goals, attitudes, and values should not change depending on the situation they are in or who they are interacting with,” F(2, 207) = 9.75, p < .001, η² = .086; and “When people truly believe
something, they should stand by their views in every situation no matter what,” $F(2, 207) = 3.32, p = .038, \eta^2_p = .031$.

Tukey’s post hoc tests revealed that participants who were in the strict construal condition ($M = 5.2, SD = 0.17$) agreed more strongly that authentic people must resist being influenced by social pressures at all costs than participants who were in the inevitable construal condition ($M = 4.4, SD = 0.18$). The flexible construal condition ($M = 5.0, SD = 0.19$) fell in between the strict and inevitable conditions and did not differ significantly from either. A $t$-test revealed that the control group ($M = 5.2, SD = 1.5$) agreed significantly more than the inevitable construal condition, $t(35) = -3.19, p = .001$, but not the flexible, $t(35) = -0.80, p = .214$, or strict construal conditions.

Tukey’s test also showed that participants in the strict construal condition ($M = 5.5, SD = 0.18$) agreed more strongly that people’s personality, desires, goals, attitudes, and values should not change depending on the situation they are in or who they are with than participants in the inevitable construal condition ($M = 4.6, SD = 0.19$) or the flexible construal condition ($M = 4.4, SD = 0.20$). The inevitable construal and flexible construal conditions did not differ significantly from either. $T$-tests revealed that the control group ($M = 4.7, SD = 1.7$) did not differ significantly from any of the experimental conditions (all $p$’s > .148).

For the third statement, Tukey’s post hoc tests indicated that participants who were in the strict construal condition ($M = 5.2, SD = 0.16$) agreed more strongly that
people should stand by their views in every situation than participants in the inevitable construal condition \((M = 4.7, SD = 0.17)\). \(T\)-tests showed that the control group \((M = 5.1, SD = 1.7)\) did not differ significantly from any of the experimental conditions (all \(p’s > .082\)).

To determine the extent to whether participants agreed with the construal they read differentially across conditions, an ANOVA examined the effect of behavior valence, construal type, and construal frame was conducted on ratings of agreement. A main effect of construal type was obtained, \(F(11, 207) = 18.62, p < .001, \eta^2_p = .15\). Tukey’s post hoc tests showed that participants who read the inevitable construal agreed less strongly with that construal \((M = 3.8, SD = 1.6)\) than both participants in the flexible condition agreed with the flexible construal \((M = 4.9, SD = 1.6)\) and participants in the strict condition agreed with the strict construal \((M = 5.3, SD = 1.5)\). Agreement did not differ significantly between the flexible and strict construal conditions.

### 2.2.2.2 Primary Hypotheses

The primary hypotheses suggested that (a) ratings of behavioral authenticity would be higher when participants rated positive inauthentic behaviors than negative inauthentic behaviors and (2) ratings of behavioral authenticity would be influenced by the construal of authenticity that participants read such that ratings of authenticity would be lower in the strict construal condition than in the flexible and inevitable construal conditions; the flexible construal condition should between the other two, but
whether it would differ from one or both was unclear. Thus, planned comparisons were conducted to test these two hypotheses.

First, as predicted, a planned comparison showed that participants who described a positive behavior ($M = 3.8$, $SD = 1.7$), 95% CI [3.47, 4.11], rated their actions as more authentic than those who rated a negative behavior ($M = 3.0$, $SD = 1.7$), 95% CI [2.70, 3.37], replicating Jongman-Sereno and Leary (2016).

Second, planned comparisons were conducted to test differences among mean ratings of inauthenticity-authenticity on the 7-point bipolar scale in the three construal type conditions. As predicted, participants’ ratings of their behavior’s authenticity was lowest in the strict construal condition ($M = 3.1$, $SD = 1.8$) and highest in the inevitable construal condition ($M = 3.9$, $SD = 1.8$), with the flexible construal condition in between ($M = 3.2$, $SD = 1.6$). Planned comparisons revealed that the inevitable condition differed from both the strict condition, 95% CI [-1.45, -0.11], and the flexible condition, 95% CI [-1.41, -0.01]. However, the strict and flexible conditions did not differ, 95% CI [-0.76, 0.62]. A $t$-test revealed that the control group ($M = 3.0$, $SD = 1.8$) differed significantly from participants in the inevitable condition, $t(67) = 2.41$, $p = .007$, but not the flexible, $t(62) = 0.56$, $p = .712$, or strict conditions, $t(64) = 0.37$, $p = .645$.

2.2.2.3 Supplemental Analyses of Rated Authenticity

To determine whether the independent variables affected ratings of authenticity beyond the predicted effects just described, a 2 (valence of behavior) by 3 (type of
construal) by 2 (construal framing) ANOVA was conducted on ratings of authenticity. Only the two main effects previously tested were obtained, and there was no evidence that these effects were moderated by either the valence of the behavior or by construal framing, all other $p$'s > .30.

In addition, to examine self-ratings of the behavior other than its authenticity, a MANOVA examined the effect of the valence of the behavior (good, bad), the type of construal (strict, flexible, inevitable), and the frame of the construal (authenticity, inauthenticity) on how honest/dishonest, genuine/fake, trustworthy/untrustworthy and good/bad participants felt about their behavior. Levene’s tests were not significant for any dependent variable (all $p$’s > .060). Again, Box’s test of the equality of the variance-covariance matrices was significant ($p = .012$), but inspection of the within-cell correlation matrices revealed similar patterns of relationships across conditions. The results showed only a significant multivariate main effect of the valence of the behavior, $F(4, 204) = 44.24$, $p < .001$. Univariate ANOVAs, shown in Table 2, indicated that participants who wrote about a positive inauthentic behavior felt more trustworthy and better about their behavior than participants who wrote about a negative inauthentic behavior.
Table 2: Self-Ratings of Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Behavior Valence</th>
<th>$F$ (1, 207)</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>$\eta^2_p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive $M$ (SD)</td>
<td>Negative $M$ (SD)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Honest/Dishonest</td>
<td>4.0 (1.8)</td>
<td>3.6 (1.8)</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>.122 .012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fake/Genuine</td>
<td>3.8 (1.8)</td>
<td>3.6 (1.8)</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>.680 .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthy/Untrustworthy</td>
<td>4.4 (1.6)</td>
<td>3.3 (1.6)</td>
<td>24.66</td>
<td>&lt;.001 .106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good/Bad</td>
<td>4.6 (1.6)</td>
<td>2.4 (1.3)</td>
<td>122.23</td>
<td>&lt;.001 .371</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2.2.4 Ancillary Analyses

A MANOVA was conducted examining the effect of the valence of the behavior (good, bad), the type of construal (strict, flexible, inevitable), and the frame of the construal (authenticity, inauthenticity) on participants’ ratings of the importance of various goals pertaining to authenticity. Levene’s test was significant for the goal of appearing behaviorally consistent to others ($p = .018$) and changing one’s behavior to meet different situational demands ($p = .004$) indicating possible violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variances. However, examination of the condition variances revealed that the largest variance was not more than 10 times the size of the smallest variance, so analysis and interpretation of these items proceeded. Box’s test of the equality of the variance-covariance matrices was not significant ($p = .062$).

The results showed only a significant multivariate main effect of the type of construal, $F(12, 406) = 1.94, p = .029$. Univariate ANOVAs showed that participants differed in their ratings of how important it is to behave consistently for their own sake,
F(1, 207) = 4.55, p = .012, \( \eta^2 = .042 \), and to appear behaviorally consistent to other people, 
F(1, 207) = 5.78, p = .004, \( \eta^2 = .053 \). Tukey’s post hoc test showed that participants who were in the strict construal condition thought it was more important to behave consistently for their own sake (\( M = 5.6, SD = 1.4 \)) and to appear behaviorally consistent to other people (\( M = 5.0, SD = 1.7 \)) than participants in the inevitable construal condition (\( M_{\text{own sake}} = 4.9, SD = 1.6, M_{\text{other people}} = 4.2, SD = 1.5 \)). For both goals, the mean of the flexible construal condition fell between the strict and inevitable conditions and did not differ significantly from either (\( M_{\text{own sake}} = 5.0, SD = 1.4, M_{\text{other people}} = 4.4, SD = 1.6 \)).

An ANOVA was conducted examining the effect of the valence of the behavior, the type of construal, and the frame of the construal on participants’ ratings of how importance behaving authentically is. Results showed a significant effect of the behavior valence condition on ratings of the importance of authenticity, 
F(1, 207) = 5.67, p = .018, 
\( \eta^2 = .027 \). Specifically, participants who wrote about a positive inauthentic behavior (\( M = 3.5, SD = 1.0 \)) indicated that behaving authentically was less important than participants who wrote about a negative inauthentic behavior (\( M = 3.8, SD = 0.9 \)). An ANOVA that tested the effect of the valence of the behavior type of construal, and frame of the construal on participants’ ratings of how difficult it is to behave authentically was not significant.
2.3 Discussion

Studies 1A and 1B examined how people’s construals of the nature of authenticity relate to their reactions to their own inauthentic behavior. Together, the studies showed that how people construe authenticity is related to their judgments and feelings of authenticity.

Study 1A revealed that people construe authenticity in different ways and that the construal of authenticity that people prefer is related to how important and easy they believe it is to be authentic, their self-reported behavioral variability, and self-ratings of trait authenticity. In addition, although the majority of participants preferred the strict construal of authenticity, a large number agreed to some extent with each of the construals of authenticity, suggesting that laypeople seem to have a murky view of what it means to be authentic.

Study 1B built on Study 1A by experimentally manipulating people’s construals of authenticity. As predicted, Study 1B found that participants who were presented with the inevitable construal of authenticity (i.e., all behavior is inevitably authentic) rated their behavior as significantly more authentic than participants in the control, strict construal, and flexible construal conditions. Moreover, the control, strict construal, and flexible construal conditions did not differ from each other, suggesting that the inevitable construal condition created a different framing than the other conditions. Interpreting one’s own inauthentic behavior through the lens of the inevitable construal
led participants to conclude that the actions were more authentic because those actions reflected their true motives, values, and goals.

Furthermore, the fact that self-ratings of authenticity did not differ between the control condition and the strict and flexible construal conditions suggests that the default construal of authenticity that people use to judge their own authenticity is more akin to the strict and flexible construals than the inevitable construal.

The inevitable construal condition also led participants to have a less stringent view about authenticity in general. They were more lax in what they considered behavioral requirements of authenticity, as shown by less agreement with the statements about authenticity, and allowed for more variability in personality, desires, goals, attitudes, and values across situations. Notably, however, behavioral congruence is central to all three construals of authenticity. But, the manipulation led participants in the three conditions in different ways. The strict construal assumes that behaving congruently with one’s personality, attitudes, values, motives, and goals leads to behavioral consistency across time and situations. The flexible construal assumes that congruence can manifest as variability in behavior because different parts of one’s inherent nature are displayed in different situations. The inevitable construal assumes that all actions are reflections of who one really is and, so, are congruent. But, all three construals of authenticity entail behavioral congruence.
Based on the pattern of results, the inevitable construal may have released participants from conventional, strict construals of authenticity that require unattainable standards of behavioral consistency. Interpreting one’s own behavior through the inevitable construal allowed participants to hold themselves to more reasonable and attainable standards of authenticity and to feel more authentic about their past behavior.

However, Study 1B showed that varying people’s overarching construal of authenticity does not change all of their views about authenticity. Participants differed only in their agreement with three (out of seven) statements about the nature of authenticity. So, to examine how people’s beliefs about authenticity affect self-judgments of authenticity more closely, Studies 2A and 2B examined the specific criteria that people use to judge their inauthenticity.
3. Studies 2A and 2B: Why do People Think Their Behavior is Inauthentic?

3.1 Study 2A

Although questions may be raised regarding whether people can accurately assess the authenticity of their behavior (and, indeed, the goal competition perspective states that behavior is always authentic), people nonetheless judge the authenticity of their actions and experience feelings of inauthenticity (see Heppner et al., 2008; Kernis & Goldman, 2006; Kraus, Chen, & Keltner, 2011; Sheldon et al., 1997). The purpose of Study 2A was to collect people’s explanations for why behaviors they engage in feel inauthentic so that those reasons could be used in the subsequent study (Study 2B).

3.1.1 Method

3.1.1.1 Participants

Seventy-nine participants (40 men, 39 women, $M_{\text{age}} = 33.9$ years, $SD = 11.1$) were recruited from MTurk. Participants were at least 18 years old and residents of the United States. Participants were compensated $0.50 in Amazon credit for their time.

3.1.1.2 Procedure

Following the same procedure as in Study 1B, participants were asked to briefly describe an instance in which they felt they behaved inauthentically or out of character in a positive or negative way (Appendix A). Next, participants were asked to describe how they knew their behavior was inauthentic. Specifically, they were asked, “How did you know that this behavior was not consistent with what you are really like? What led
you to conclude that you had responded in a way that was not really you? Please
answer in a few phrases.”

3.1.2 Results

Two raters independently categorized participants’ written responses to why
they thought their behavior was inauthentic. Coders grouped responses with similar
basic themes together. Responses were classified into the following categories: (a) I don’t
usually behave in this way; (b) I responded in a way that didn’t reflect my true feelings,
mood, or values; (c) I responded in a way that I knew was untruthful. For example, I
pretended, exaggerated, or lied; (d) It didn’t feel right to respond this way. I didn’t like
behaving this way. I felt guilty or uncomfortable; (e) Other people told me my behavior
was inauthentic; (f) I couldn’t control my actions because I was experiencing strong
emotions like stress or anger; and (g) I conformed to social norms or other people’s
desires. All of the responses provided by participants fell into at least one of these
categories, and 48 responses fell into multiple categories. The number of responses in
each category is shown in Table 3. These categories were used as response stimuli in
Study 2B.

Table 3: Number of Responses to Coded Reasons for Feeling Inauthentic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Stimulus</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I don’t usually behave in this way.</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I responded in a way that didn’t reflect my true feelings, mood, or values or in a way that I knew was untruthful. For example, I pretended, exaggerated, or lied.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It didn’t feel right to respond this way. I didn’t like</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
behaving this way. I felt guilty or uncomfortable.

I couldn’t control my actions because I was experiencing strong emotions like stress or anger.  

I conformed to social norms or other people’s desires.  

Other people told me my behavior was inauthentic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>behaving this way. I felt guilty or uncomfortable.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I couldn’t control my actions because I was experiencing strong</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emotions like stress or anger.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I conformed to social norms or other people’s desires.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other people told me my behavior was inauthentic.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.2 Study 2B: Rebutting Reasons for Feeling Inauthentic

According to the goal competition perspective, people cannot be inauthentic. Yet people often feel inauthentic even though their behaviors reflect traits, attitudes, goals, or motives that they genuinely have. Studies 1A and 1B suggested that one determinant of people’s self-judgments of authenticity is how they construe authenticity. Studies 2A and 2B used a more nuanced approach to lay beliefs about authenticity by examining the specific criteria that people use to judge their own behavior as authentic versus inauthentic. In Study 2A, common reasons for judging one’s own behavior as inauthentic were collected. In Study 2B, participants were asked to indicate the extent to which each of those reasons applied to a particular self-generated instance of their own inauthentic behavior. Then Study 2B presented rebuttals that challenged participants’ reasoning. These rebuttals were based on the premise of the goal competition perspective and the inevitable construal of authenticity that all behaviors are authentic. The hypothesis was that the rebuttals would release participants from commonly-held (strict) assumptions about authenticity, leading them to feel more authentic about their past inauthentic behavior.
3.2.1 Method

3.2.1.1 Participants

One hundred and thirty participants (68 men, 62 women, \( M_{age} = 35.6 \) years, \( SD = 14.1 \)) were recruited from MTurk. Participants were at least 18 years old and residents of the United States. Participants were compensated $1.00 in Amazon credit for their time.

3.2.1.2 Procedure

Participants read an informed consent form and indicated their willingness to participate. Following the same procedure as in Studies 1B and 2A, participants briefly described an instance in which they behaved inauthentically or out of character and were randomly assigned to describe either a positive or negative behavior (Appendix A). Next, participants rated the valence of the behavior they described on a 5-point scale (1 = very bad, 2 = moderately bad, 3 = neither good nor bad, 4 = moderately good, 5 = very good). Participants were then shown the reasons that people may judge their behavior as inauthentic derived in Study 2A (see Table 3) and rated on a 7-point scale the extent to which each reason applied to the behavior they wrote about (1 = definitely not a reason, 7 = definitely a reason).

Participants were randomly assigned to the experimental or control group. In the experimental group, “feedback” was presented that challenged the reasons people give for feeling inauthentic. Specifically, participants were told:

People often receive feedback about their attitudes and beliefs. Sometimes it’s important to listen to feedback and let it change your mind. Other
times the feedback is stupid or unhelpful and you can choose to ignore it. We are interested in how you interpret different pieces of feedback about the reasons you just rated. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each piece of feedback on the following pages.

Below is a reason why people sometimes feel out of character or inconsistent with what they are really like. Regardless of how you rated this reason on the previous page, imagine you received the feedback about the behavior you just described. How much would you agree or disagree with the feedback?

On each subsequent online page of the questionnaire, one of the reasons that people feel inauthentic was shown, along with a rebuttal. One reason and rebuttal pair was shown per page. Table 4 shows the six reasons and corresponding rebuttals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Feeling Inauthentic</th>
<th>Rebuttal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I don’t usually behave in this way.</td>
<td>Just because you don’t usually behave in this way doesn’t mean that it was inauthentic to behave in this way. People’s personalities are quite complex, and you may authentically behave in many different ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I responded in a way that didn’t reflect my true feelings, mood, or values or in a way that I knew was untruthful. For example, I pretended, exaggerated, or lied.</td>
<td>Your behavior was probably motivated by another goal that you had. In other words, you responded in this way in order to fulfill another goal you had at the time. So, the behavior was not actually inauthentic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It didn’t feel right to respond this way. I didn’t like behaving this way. I felt guilty or uncomfortable.</td>
<td>Experiencing negative emotions doesn’t mean that your behavior was inauthentic. You might have felt this way because the way you acted was in conflict with other goals that you had at the time or because the behavior was negative, but this doesn’t mean that your action was inauthentic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I couldn’t control my actions</td>
<td>Responses caused by strong emotions are still</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Common Reasons for Feeling Inauthentic and Corresponding Rebuttals
because I was experiencing strong emotions like stress or anger. authentic expressions of what you felt and wanted to do at the time.

I conformed to social norms or other people’s desires. Conforming to social norms or other people’s desires can reflect an authentic desire to do what other people want you to do in order to fit in, maintain social relationships, or make a desired impression. Whether or not you liked behaving in these ways, there’s nothing inauthentic about it.

Other people told me my behavior was inauthentic. Other people don’t have access to your private, internal thoughts and feelings, so they are not in the position to judge whether your behavior was authentic. Their judgments don’t include the whole picture.

After reading each rebuttal, participants rated the extent to which they agreed with it on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = moderately disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neither agree nor disagree, 5 = slightly agree, 6 = moderately agree, 7 = strongly agree). To encourage participants to read the rebuttals carefully, they could not advance to the next page until 10 seconds had passed. Participants in the control group were not shown rebuttals.

The measures and response scales were similar to those used in Study 1B. Participants rated how authentic/inauthentic, honest/dishonest, genuine/fake, trustworthy/untrustworthy, and good/bad they currently felt about the inauthentic behavior they described on 7-point bipolar adjective scales.

Then participants rated how much they agreed with the following statements about authenticity (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = moderately disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 =
neither agree nor disagree, 5 = slightly agree, 6 = moderately agree, 7 = strongly agree): (a) authentic people must resist situational influences at all costs; (b) even the slightest bit of variability in behavior can be interpreted by other people as inauthenticity; (c) your personality, desires, goals, attitudes, or values should not change depending on the audience or situation; (d) sometimes it is necessary to behave flexibly in order to accommodate the demands of the situation; (e) people should live by the following statement: “I am who I am and I’m not going to apologize for it!”; (f) people who change their behavior across different situations or audiences are weak; and (g) if you truly believe something, you should stand by your views in every situation.

Next, participants rated the importance of each of the following goals on a 7-point scale (1 = not at all, 7 = extremely): (a) behaving consistently because consistency is important, (b) appearing behaviorally consistent to others, (c) changing their behavior to meet different situational demands, (d) pleasing other people, (e) being themselves or expressing their “true” self, and (f) standing up for what they believe in. Participants also rated the importance of behaving authentically (1 = not at all, 2 = slightly, 3 = moderately, 4 = very, 5 = extremely) and how easy or difficult it is to behave authentically (1 = very easy, 2 = moderately easy, 3 = neither easy nor difficult, 4 = moderately difficult, 5 = very difficult).
3.2.2 Results

3.2.2.1 Manipulation Checks

An ANOVA showed that participants who were asked to write about a negative behavior ($M = 3.6$, $SD = 1.2$) rated the behavior as worse than participants who were asked to write about a positive behavior ($M = 1.8$, $SD = .62$), $F(1, 128) = 121.41$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2_p = .49$.

3.2.2.2 Background Statistics

Overall, participants in the rebuttal condition tended to agree with the rebuttals (mean agreement ranged from 3.94 to 5.06 on a 7-point scale). A MANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of behavior valence condition on participants’ endorsement of reasons the behavior they described was inauthentic. (These measures were collected before introducing the rebuttals, so only valence was tested.)

Levene’s test was significant for three reasons why behaving authentically is important, but examination of the within-condition variances revealed that the largest variance was not more than 10 times the size of the smallest variance, so analysis and interpretation of these items continued. Box’s test of the equality of the variance-covariance matrices was significant ($p < .001$). A significant multivariate effect of behavior valence (good, bad) was obtained, $F(6, 121) = 12.06$, $p < .001$. As seen in Table 5, ANOVAs showed that participants differed in their agreement with five of the six reasons. Specifically, participants who wrote about a negative behavior were more likely
to endorse the following reasons for judging their behavior as inauthentic: “I don’t usually behave in this way,” “It didn’t feel right to respond this way. I didn’t like behaving this way. I felt guilty or uncomfortable. I regretted my behavior,” “I couldn’t control my actions because I was experiencing strong emotions like stress or anger or was under the influence of alcohol or drugs,” and “Other people told me my behavior was out-of-character or inauthentic.” Participants who wrote about a negative behavior were less likely to say their behavior was inauthentic because they conformed to social norms, pressure, or other people’s desires. Participants did not differ in their agreement with the reason, “I responded in a way that didn’t reflect my true desires, values, or feelings or in a way that I knew was untruthful. For example, I pretended, exaggerated, or lied.”

Table 5: Effect of Behavior Valence Condition on Endorsement of Reasons for Feeling Inauthentic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Feeling Inauthentic</th>
<th>Behavior Valence Condition</th>
<th>F (1, 126)</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>η²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive M (SD)</td>
<td>Negative M (SD)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t usually behave in this way.</td>
<td>5.4 (1.3)</td>
<td>5.9 (1.2)</td>
<td>6.68</td>
<td>.045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I responded in a way that didn’t reflect my true feelings, mood, or values or in a way that I knew was untruthful. For example, I pretended, exaggerated, or lied.</td>
<td>5.1 (1.9)</td>
<td>5.0 (1.8)</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>.883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It didn’t feel right to respond this way. I didn’t like behaving this way. I felt guilty or uncomfortable.</td>
<td>3.6 (2.1)</td>
<td>5.8 (1.3)</td>
<td>54.36</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I couldn’t control my actions because I was experiencing strong emotions like stress or anger.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>p*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I couldn’t control my actions because I was experiencing strong emotions like stress or anger.</td>
<td>1.8 (1.5)</td>
<td>3.7 (2.3)</td>
<td>28.57</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I conformed to social norms or other people’s desires.</td>
<td>4.2 (2.1)</td>
<td>2.9 (2.1)</td>
<td>10.87</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other people told me my behavior was inauthentic.</td>
<td>2.2 (1.5)</td>
<td>2.8 (1.9)</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>.033</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.2.3 Primary Hypotheses

The primary hypotheses were that (a) participants would rate positive inauthentic behaviors as more authentic than negative inauthentic behaviors and (b) participants would rate behaviors as more authentic if they read the rebuttals compared to participants in the control condition. Planned comparisons were conducted to test these two hypotheses.

First, participants who described a positive behavior ($M = 3.5$, $SD = 1.9$), 95% CI [3.02, 3.98], rated their actions as more authentic than those who rated a negative behavior ($M = 2.8$, $SD = 1.8$), 95% CI [2.37, 3.24], $F(1, 127) = 4.60$, $p = .034$, confirming the hypothesis and replicating both Study 1B and the findings of Jongman-Sereno and Leary (2016).

Second, participants in the rebuttal condition ($M = 3.8$, $SD = 1.9$), 95% CI [2.09, 2.83], rated their behavior as more authentic on the 7-point bipolar scale than participants in the control condition ($M = 2.5$, $SD = 1.5$), 95% CI [3.30, 4.27], $F(1, 127) =$
18.66, \( p > .001 \). Thus, being presented with rebuttals that supported the inevitable construal of authenticity led participants to rate their actions as more authentic.

### 3.2.2.4 Ancillary Analyses

To examine participants’ ratings of their behavior on dimensions other than authenticity (for which no predictions were made), a MANOVA was conducted testing the effects of the valence of the behavior (good, bad) and the experimental condition (rebuttals, control) on how honest/dishonest, genuine/fake, trustworthy/untrustworthy, and good/bad participants felt about their behavior. Levene’s tests revealed no violations of homogeneity of error variances across the dependent variables (all \( p \)'s > .088), but Box’s test of the equality of the variance-covariance matrices was significant (\( p = .003 \)). The results showed significant multivariate main effects of the valence of the behavior, \( F(4, 121) = 21.71, \ p < .001 \), and of the experimental condition, \( F(4, 121) = 4.18, \ p = .003 \). As shown in Table 6, ANOVAs revealed that participants who wrote about a positive inauthentic behavior felt more trustworthy than participants who wrote about a negative inauthentic behavior and also rated their behavior as more favorable on the good-bad item.
Table 6: Effect of Valence of Behavior and Experimental Condition on Self-ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior Valence Condition</th>
<th>Behavior Valence Condition</th>
<th>Rebuttal Condition</th>
<th>Rebuttal Condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Honest/Dishonest</td>
<td>3.8 (1.8)</td>
<td>3.7 (1.8)</td>
<td>4.2 (1.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F (1, 124)</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>.825</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eta^2</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fake/Genuine</td>
<td>3.5 (2.0)</td>
<td>3.6 (1.9)</td>
<td>4.1 (2.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F (1, 124)</td>
<td>0.292</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>.590</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eta^2</td>
<td>.099</td>
<td>.099</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthy/Untrustworthy</td>
<td>4.6 (1.6)</td>
<td>3.4 (1.7)</td>
<td>4.4 (1.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F (1, 124)</td>
<td>14.54</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>.105</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eta^2</td>
<td>.105</td>
<td>.052</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good/Bad</td>
<td>4.6 (1.9)</td>
<td>2.3 (1.6)</td>
<td>4.0 (2.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F (1, 124)</td>
<td>52.90</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
<td>M (SD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>p</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
<td>.299</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eta^2</td>
<td>.299</td>
<td>.083</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition—and shown in Table 6—ANOVA for the effects of rebuttal condition revealed that participants who were in the rebuttal condition felt more honest, genuine, trustworthy, and better about their behavior than participants in the control condition who did not read the rebuttals.

A MANOVA examined the effects of the valence of the behavior and the presence of rebuttals on agreement with seven statements about authenticity. No multivariate effect was obtained for the valence of the behavior, $F(7, 117) = 1.42, p = .204$, rebuttals, $F(7, 117) = .693, p = .678$, or their interaction, $F(7, 117) = .470, p = .854$. Likewise, a MANOVA on participants’ ratings of the importance of six goals pertaining to authenticity also revealed no significant effects: valence of the behavior, $F(6, 117) = .083, p = .998$; rebuttals, $F(6, 117) = .309, p = .931$; valence by rebuttal interaction, $F(6, 117) = 1.87, p = .092$.

Two additional ANOVAs examined single items that did not fit conceptually within any of the MANOVAs already described. First, no effects were obtained on participants’ ratings of how important it is to behave authentically (all $p$’s $> .280$). In addition, an ANOVA on participants’ ratings of how difficult it is to behave authentically revealed an interaction between behavior valence and rebuttal condition, $F(1, 123) = 5.83, p = .017, \eta^2_p = .045$. Specifically, participants who wrote about a positive inauthentic behavior indicated that behaving authentically was easier if they were in the rebuttal condition ($M = 1.9, SD = 0.7$) than the control condition ($M = 2.5, SD = 1.1$), $p <$
.05. However, participants who wrote about a negative inauthentic behavior did not differ across rebuttal conditions ($M_{rebuttal} = 2.4$, $SD_{rebuttal} = 1.0$; $M_{control} = 2.2$, $SD_{control} = 1.0$), $t(126.2) = 1.14$, $p = .870$.

### 3.3 Discussion

Study 2B showed that using the conceptual basis of the goal competition perspective and inevitable construal of authenticity to challenge participants’ reasons for feeling inauthentic about past behavior led participants to judge their behavior as more authentic than participants whose reasons for feeling inauthentic were not rebutted. However, participants in the rebuttal and control conditions did not differ in various beliefs about authenticity, suggesting that the rebuttals did not change participants’ overarching views of authenticity. So, the rebuttals seemed to influence participants’ judgments of a particular inauthentic behavior rather than their overarching construals of authenticity.

Again, support was found for a positivity bias such that participants rated positive behaviors as more authentic than negative behaviors. Participants also felt more trustworthy and better overall about positive than negative inauthentic behaviors, replicating results from Study 1B. In addition, participants who wrote about negative behaviors endorsed the reasons for feeling inauthentic more strongly than participants who wrote about positive behaviors. The only reason for which this pattern did not emerge was, “I responded in a way that didn’t reflect my true feelings, mood, or values
or in a way that I knew was untruthful. For example, I pretended, exaggerated, or lied.”

In general, the reasons for feeling inauthentic seem to contribute more strongly to judgments of negative inauthentic behavior than judgments of positive inauthentic behavior.

Overall, Study 2B sheds light on the specific criteria that people use to judge their behavior as authentic versus inauthentic and shows that rebutting people’s reasons for feeling inauthentic leads them to judge their past behavior as more authentic.

Interestingly, many of the common reasons for feeling inauthentic are conceptually peripheral to authenticity. At its core, authenticity entails behaving congruently with one’s personality, attitudes, values, motives, and goals. However, only one of the reasons for feeling inauthentic reflects the meaning of authenticity (“I responded in a way that didn’t reflect my true feelings, mood, or values or in a way that I knew was untruthful. For example, I pretended, exaggerated, or lied”). The other reasons reflect behavioral consistency across time and situations, lack of control, conforming to other people’s desires or external demands, and receiving feedback from others that one’s behavior was inauthentic. These results suggest that people use peripheral cues to judge their own authenticity. Rather than using behavioral congruence to indicate authenticity, people seem to be using their emotional experience and perception of external pressures.

The studies described thus far required participants to report on self-selected instances of past inauthentic behavior. Allowing participants to choose what behaviors...
to report is essential to obtaining personally important instances of inauthenticity. In addition, what is authentic for one person may be inauthentic for another person, and this methodology gives participants freedom to write about instances that they experienced as inauthentic, regardless of what happened. However, obtaining retrospective accounts of inauthentic behavior has drawbacks. First, the instances that participants chose to write about may have differed from instances of inauthenticity that they did not report. For example, perhaps participants did not report on instances of inauthenticity that were particularly negative or embarrassing. Such omissions could bias the results. Second, because participants reported on past behavior, questions may be raised regarding the accuracy of their reported thoughts and emotions. Study 3 was designed to study feelings of authenticity and inauthenticity as they occur in people’s everyday lives.
4. Study 3: Authenticity in Everyday Life

Research has shown that people’s subjective sense of authenticity can vary a great deal across time, situations, targets, and social roles (Côté, Moskowitz, & Zuroff, 2012; Lenton et al., 2013; Sheldon et al., 1997). A person may feel steadfastly authentic at one moment and then highly inauthentic shortly thereafter. Because authenticity is variable, examining only single instances of inauthenticity that occurred in the past misses important details about feelings of authenticity in real life contexts. Studying state authenticity—the subjective experience of authenticity—in daily life provides a more comprehensive picture of factors that might influence feelings of authenticity in a particular situation.

To examine determinants of state authenticity in everyday life, Study 3 used an experience sampling methodology (ESM) to assess feelings of authenticity at multiple times each day over a period of seven days. Study 3 focused specifically on state authenticity in the context of social interactions because, although people may occasionally feel authentic or inauthentic when they are alone, feelings of authenticity and inauthenticity arise most frequently in social situations (Bargh et al., 2002; Gillath, Sesko, Shaver, & Chun, 2010; Lenton et al., 2013). Study 3 focused on four sets of variables that were predicted to be related to state authenticity—behavioral congruence, personal beliefs about authenticity, features of the interaction, and trait authenticity.
4.1 Behavioral Congruence

At its core, authenticity involves the extent to which a person’s behavior or reaction is congruent with his or her personality, attitudes, values, motives, and goals. Not surprisingly, behavioral congruence emerged as an important theme in people’s beliefs about and self-judgments of authenticity in the previous studies. Behavioral congruence was a key factor in people’s construals of authenticity and the specific reasons people gave for judging their actions as authentic versus inauthentic.

Behavioral congruence is also important to psychological conceptualizations of authenticity. The person-centered approach requires congruence between people’s internal processes and their behavior despite external pressures (Wood et al., 2008), self-determination theory states that the more self-congruent (i.e., intrinsic) the motives underlying one’s behavior are, the more authentic the behavior is (Ryan & Deci, 2000), and Kernis and Goldman (2006) defined authenticity as congruence between one’s behavior and true self.

Study 3 examined the role of behavioral congruence in state authenticity by comparing participants’ self-ratings of how they usually are with their self-ratings of how they behaved during actual social interactions. Specifically, participants first rated themselves on a number of personal characteristics (e.g., silent/talkative, kind/unkind, arrogant/modest) during an intake session. They then rated how they behaved on the same characteristics in each social interaction they had during the experience sampling
phase of Study 3. To obtain indices of behavioral congruence, participants’ ratings of how they behaved in each interaction were subtracted from their ratings of how they usually are and the absolute value was taken.

People’s perceptions of their own behavioral congruence were evaluated as well, allowing us to distinguish actual congruence from perceived congruence. If people are attuned to the degree to which their actions are congruent with their characteristics on an ongoing basis, the effects of actual and perceived congruence should be similar. However, perceived congruence may be more important to feelings of authenticity than actual behavioral congruence.

4.2 Personal Beliefs

As we have seen, people’s beliefs about authenticity—how they construe authenticity and judge behavior as inauthentic—influence self-judgments of authenticity. The previous studies showed that these overarching construals affect self-judgments of past behavior, but the role of construals in state authenticity has not been examined. On one hand, construals of authenticity may be important to momentary feelings of authenticity just as they are to judgments of past behavior. People may readily use their beliefs about authenticity to judge specific behaviors in daily life. Certainly, people’s broad beliefs often guide reactions to specific behaviors and situations (Blackwell, Trzesniewski, & Dweck, 2007; Chiu, Hong, & Dweck, 1997; Eagly...
& Chaiken, 1993; Katz, 1960; LaPiere, 1934). So, people’s construals of authenticity may be related to their subjective experiences of authenticity in daily life.

On the other hand, people’s construals of authenticity may play less of a role in state authenticity than in retrospective judgements of past behavior or in evaluations of people’s authenticity in general. The broad nature of the three construals of authenticity may make them difficult to apply to self-judgments of authenticity in specific situations because they are based, in part, on patterns of behavioral variability across situations or explicit comparisons of behavior to how one “really is.” Furthermore, people may not explicitly consider their construals of authenticity in ongoing interactions and may judge their authenticity only retrospectively. If so, construals of authenticity may more strongly affect people’s self-judgments of past behavior.

The reasons that people use to judge behaviors as inauthentic were examined in Study 3 as well. These reasons reference the specific criteria that people use to judge their behavior as inauthentic. The reasons also encompass feelings and experiences that lead to or accompany self-judgments of authenticity. For example, people may feel inauthentic about experiencing strong feelings of anger. If people are using their emotional experience as a sign of authenticity in daily life, the reasons may be related to state authenticity. Using the six reasons identified in Study 2A, Study 3 asked participants to rate the degree to which they tend to feel inauthentic in their daily lives for each of the reasons.
4.3 Features of the Interaction

People sometimes feel inauthentic even when they behave congruently with their personality, attitudes, values, motives, and goals, and sometimes feel authentic even when their behavior is not congruent with how they (think they) really are. One explanation for this discrepancy between congruence and authenticity is that people’s subjective experience of authenticity is affected by features of the social interaction that are unrelated to congruence, yet they use these features to judge their behavior as authentic versus inauthentic. Study 3 measured features of social interactions that may lead people to feel inauthentic even when they are behaving congruently.

One such feature is the degree to which people are concerned about how they are being perceived and evaluated by others. Authenticity is related to a general concern for the social impression one is making, such that greater awareness of how one is viewed by others is inversely related to self-ratings of authenticity (Bargh et al., 2002; Lenton et al., 2013). In addition, being concerned about negative evaluations from others is also related to lower state authenticity (Gillath et al., 2010); people feel less authentic the more concerned they are with others’ evaluations. So, greater concern about others’ perceptions and evaluations was expected to be negatively related to state authenticity.

Most conceptualizations of authenticity suggest that succumbing to external social pressures reflects lower authenticity. According to self-determination theory, for example, behavior that is enacted for external rewards is considered inauthentic, even if
the reward is personally important (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Conceptualizations of interpersonal authenticity also emphasize the importance of behaving in line with one’s own desires rather than to please other people (Lopez & Rice, 2006).

In contrast, the goal competition perspective suggests that all behaviors are authentic regardless of whether they are motivated by internal desires or external demands. Even when people pursue a goal for external rewards or to please others, their behavior is authentic because the goal is always bolstered by genuine dispositions, attitudes, values, and goals. Importantly, however, people may still experience certain goals and behaviors as more or less authentic. So, the degree to which people feel their behavior was motivated by internal desires versus external demands may contribute to people’s feelings of authenticity irrespective of behavioral congruence.

Perceptions of how easy versus effortful an interaction is may also contribute to state authenticity. First, all other things being equal, interactions are probably easier when people behave congruently with their personality, attitudes, values, motives, and goals, rather than conform to social norms, role-based expectations, or others’ desires. Behaving in ways that are not congruent with one’s inner dispositions is likely more effortful than behaving congruently (Gallagher, Fleeson, & Hoyle, 2010). Second, an easy interaction may be a sign of relational harmony. So, to the extent that people behave more congruently with how they see themselves with people they like, they may feel more authentic in easy interactions. Third, an easy interaction may contribute to positive
feelings overall, and being in a good mood leads people to feel more authentic (Lenton et al., 2013). Fourth, social interactions may be easier when people behave in more positive ways, and people perceive positive behaviors as more authentic than negative behaviors (Jongman-Sereno & Leary, 2016). Behaving in positive ways may contribute to easy social interactions as well as feelings of authenticity.

People may also use the extent to which they feel in control during a social interaction as another sign of authenticity. Feeling a lack of control may be an experiential cue that people use to judge whether a behavior is inauthentic. The extent to which participants thought consciously about their behavior during the interaction was assessed because conscious consideration of one’s actions may indicate more careful and tactical behavior which may predict low state authenticity. On the other hand, not thinking consciously about one’s actions may represent behavior stemming from nonconscious inclinations which may predict high state authenticity.

The subjective experiences of concern with social evaluations, pressure from external demands, control over one’s behavior, the ease of an interaction, and conscious consideration of one’s behavior may serve as experiential cues to authenticity. Study 3 examined how each of these features of the interaction, along with behavioral congruence, relates to state authenticity.
4.4 Trait Authenticity

Finally, Study 3 examined the relationship between trait authenticity—people’s ratings of how authentic they think they generally are—and state authenticity in specific social interactions. Findings regarding the relationship between trait and state authenticity have been mixed. Some studies have found no relationship between trait and state authenticity, whereas others have found consistent but small correlations (Fleeson & Wilt, 2010; Gillath, Sesko, Shaver, & Chun, 2010; Ito & Kodama, 2007; Lenton et al., 2013). Two measures of trait authenticity were included in Study 3—the Behavioral Authenticity subscale of Kernis and Goldman’s (2006) Authenticity Inventory and all three subscales of Wood et al.’s (2008) Authenticity Scale (Authentic Living, External Influence, and Self-alienation).

In brief, Study 3 employed ESM to provide information about how authenticity is experienced in everyday life and various factors that relate to state authenticity. Actual and perceived behavioral congruence, beliefs about authenticity, features of the interaction (concerns about others’ evaluations, effects of internal desires, external demands, and pressures to act against one’s desires, the ease of the interaction, and one’s degree of control over and conscious consideration of behavior) and trait authenticity were examined as predictors of state authenticity.
4.5 Method

4.5.1 Participants

One hundred and fifty-seven undergraduate students (58 men, 99 women, \( M_{\text{age}} = 19.1 \) years, \( SD = 1.1 \)), recruited from a psychology department subject pool, participated as partial fulfilment of a course requirement. Participants were compensated .5 credit for completing the intake session of the study and an additional .5 credit for each 1-9 surveys they completed during the experience sampling phase. That is, participants who completed the experience sampling survey 1-9 times were compensated a total of 1 credit, participants who completed it 10-19 times were compensated 1.5 credits, participants who completed it 20-29 times were compensated 2 credits, and participants who completed it more than 30 times were compensated 2.5 credits, which was the maximum number of credits that could be earned by participating in this study. In addition, participants who completed more than 42 experience sampling surveys were entered into lottery to win a $50 Amazon gift card. Participants were at least 18 years old and were required to have a smart phone in order to participate in the study.

4.5.2 Procedure

4.5.2.1 Overview

Participants completed an in-person intake session in which they gave informed consent and answered the demographic questions and baseline measures described below. The subsequent experience sampling phase took place over seven days and was
administered using Qualtrics. An event-contingent sampling strategy was used in which participants were asked to complete a questionnaire each time they had a face-to-face interaction with another person that lasted for 10 minutes or more (Reis & Wheeler, 1991). During the ESM phase, participants completed measures of state authenticity, features of the interaction, and emotional and relational outcomes as described below.

4.5.2.2 Intake Session

Participants provided their age, gender, and email address. They were also assigned a unique participant ID number.

4.5.2.2.1 Beliefs about Authenticity

Participants rated the extent to which they tend to feel inauthentic for the reasons that were collected and coded in Study 2A on a 7-point scale (1 = definitely not a reason; 7 = definitely a reason): (a) I don’t usually behave in this way; (b) I responded in a way that didn’t reflect my true feelings, mood, or values or in a way that I knew was untruthful. For example, I pretended, exaggerated, or lied; (c) It didn’t feel right to respond this way. I didn’t like behaving this way. I felt guilty or uncomfortable; (d) Other people told me my behavior was inauthentic; (e) I couldn’t control my actions because I was experiencing strong emotions like stress or anger; and (f) I conformed to social norms or other people’s desires.

Participants also rated the extent to which they agreed with the strict, flexible, and inevitable construals of authenticity from Study 1A:
**Strict construal:** Being authentic means being yourself in all situations, regardless of what is going on or who else is there. People who are authentic act basically the same way no matter where they are or who they are with because their actions are an expression of who they truly are. Furthermore, the image of themselves that they present to others is the same all of the time. Authentic people express the same personality characteristics and core values in every situation, regardless of who they are with or what situation they are in.

**Flexible construal:** Being authentic means being yourself in all situations, regardless of what is going on or who else is there. However, people who are authentic may act quite differently depending on where they are or who they are with because different parts of who they truly are come into play in different situations. Furthermore, the image of themselves that they present to others may also differ in different situations as they adapt to different circumstances. Authentic people may express different personality characteristics and core values in different situations, depending on who they are with or what situation they are in.

**Inevitable construal:** Being authentic means being yourself in all situations, regardless of what is going on or who else is there. But people are *always* authentic because their actions are always an expression of who they truly are. Even if they feel pressure to behave in a particular way or to present an image of themselves to others that is not true, their behavior is still authentic because it reflects their true motives, values, and goals. People may express different personality characteristics and core values in different situations, depending on who they are with or what situation they are in, but everyone always behaves authentically in every situation.

The construals were presented in random order and participants rated the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with each construal on a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *moderately disagree*, 3 = *slightly disagree*, 4 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 5 = *slightly agree*, 6 = *moderately agree*, 7 = *strongly agree*).
4.5.2.2.2 Dispositional Authenticity

Participants completed the items on the Behavioral Authenticity subscale of the Authenticity Inventory on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree (Kernis & Goldman, 2006). This subscale assesses how congruently people think they behave with their values, preferences, and needs. Only this subscale of the Authenticity Inventory was included as it is most conceptually relevant to behavioral congruence, which was of particular interest.

Participants then completed all three subscales of Wood et al.’s (2008) Authenticity Scale (Authentic Living, External Influence, and Self-alienation) on a 7-point scale from does not describe me at all to describes me very well (Appendix B). The Authentic Living subscale assesses the extent to which people behave in accordance with their thoughts, beliefs, emotions, and psychological states, sharing conceptual overlap with Kernis and Goldman’s (2006) Behavioral authenticity subscale. The External Influence subscale measures the extent to which people are affected by external pressures. The Self-alienation subscale assesses the degree to which people are aware of their emotions and internal processes.

4.5.2.2.3 Self-ratings

Participants were then asked to “describe yourself” on 13 9-point bipolar adjective scales: silent/talkative, unkind/kind, irresponsible/responsible, at ease/nervous, dishonest/honest, immoral/moral, submissive/dominant, unfriendly/friendly, laid-back/uptight, modest/arrogant, close-minded/open-minded, rude/polite, and untruthful
about myself/truthful about myself. Finally, the experience sampling phase, along with the compensation and incentives were fully explained to participants.

4.5.2.3 Experience Sampling Phase

During the experience sampling phase, participants were asked to complete a short questionnaire on Qualtrics each time they had a face-to-face interaction that lasted for 10 minutes or longer over the 7-day period. Participants read the following description of an interaction that was adapted from previous research that used the Rochester Interaction Record methodology (Reis & Wheeler, 1991, p. 287):

An interaction is any situation involving two or more people in which the behavior of each person is in response to the behavior of the other person. An interaction must be face-to-face—this includes in person interactions and face-to-face video conversations (e.g., FaceTime, Skype, video chats). However, phone calls without video and texting do not count. A conversation is the most obvious example of an interaction, but there are many other sorts of interactions as well. Merely being in the presence of another person is not enough by itself. For example, watching television and not talking to the person next to you is not an interaction. In order to count as an interaction, you must be responding to each other, such as by talking about what you are watching. Any social activities that involve mutual responding count: work, hanging out, conversing, doing things together, etc.

Each morning, participants received an email with the survey link and brief instructions as a reminder. Before completing each interaction survey, participants entered their unique participant ID. Then participants indicated whether the interaction was in person or a face-to-face video conversation and how many other people (not including themselves) were part of this interaction.
To reduce participant burden, participants responded to the questions about their interaction partner(s) in the experience sampling phase in one of two ways depending on how many other people were part of the interaction. Following Reis, Nezlek, and Wheeler (1980), if three or fewer other people were part of the interaction, participants indicated the type of relationship they had with each person (close friend, friend, romantic partner, acquaintance (e.g., classmate), stranger, family member, authority figure/someone of higher status (e.g., boss, professor), or other) and how well they knew each person (1 = not at all, 2 = slightly well, 3 = moderately well, 4 = very well, 5 = extremely well). (If participants indicated the relationship type was “other,” they were given the option to describe the relationship in an open-ended response.) If more than four other people were involved in the interaction, participants indicated how many other people were part of the interaction and indicated the number of people who were in each type of relationship and familiarity category.

Participants then rated 10 features of the interaction. To measure concerns about being evaluated during the interaction, participants rated the extent to which they (a) were concerned with how the other people in the interaction were perceiving and evaluating them and (b) thought other people would judge them negatively if they expressed their true feelings, beliefs, attitudes, or opinions. To measure perceived behavioral congruence, participants rated the extent to which (a) their behavior was...
congruent or incongruent with their personality, desires, goals, attitudes, and values, (b) their behavior in the interaction was reflective of how they usually behave, and (c) the impression the other people had of them was consistent with how they really are.

Participants also rated the extent to which (a) their behavior during the interaction was affected by their personality and internal desires versus by demands of the situation and external pressures, (b) they felt they were in control of how they acted in the interaction, (c) they thought consciously about their behavior, and (d) they felt pressured to do or say something they did not want to do or say. They also rated how easy versus effortful the interaction was. Each feature was rated on a 7-point scale.

4.5.2.3.3 State Authenticity
Participants rated how authentic they felt during the interaction on a 7-point scale from 1 (completely inauthentic; not at all authentic) to 7 (completely authentic; not at all inauthentic). As additional assessments of experiences of authenticity, participants also rated the extent to which they felt they were or were not being themselves and how in or out of character they felt on 7-point scales. Together, these three ratings (feelings of authenticity, feeling like oneself, and feeling in/out of character) are referred to as state authenticity.

4.5.2.3.4 Self-ratings of Behavior in Interaction
Participants rated how they behaved during the interaction on the same 13 bipolar adjective scales from the intake session (i.e., silent/talkative, unkind/kind, irresponsible/responsible, at ease/nervous, dishonest/honest, immoral/moral,
submissive/dominant, unfriendly/friendly, laid-back/upright, modest/arrogant, close-
mined/open-minded, rude/polite, and untruthful about myself/truthful about myself).
As in the intake session, ratings were on 9-point scales.

### 4.5.2.3.5 Relational and Emotional Reactions

Then participants rated whether they felt more or less connected to the other
people in the interaction than they did before the interaction (1 = a great deal less
connected, 7 = a great deal more connected). Finally, participants were asked, “Looking back
at the interaction, how do you feel now?” They rated themselves on 7-point bipolar
scales for the items: (a) extremely bad/extremely good and (b) sad/happy.

### 4.6 Results

#### 4.6.1 Descriptive Statistics

Across all 157 participants, a total of 3,624 face-to-face interactions were
recorded. The number of interactions reported by individual participants ranged from 1
to 57. On average, participants reported on 23 interactions over the seven-day
experience sampling phase, with the modal number of reported interactions being 21 (n
= 9). Of the reported face-to-face interactions, 3,296 (90.0%) were in person and 328
(9.1%) were through video chat (e.g., FaceTime or Skype).

The number of interactants ranged from one other person to 75 other people, but
most (75.1%) were with only one other person. Another 12.7% of interactions were with
two interactants, 5.5% were with three, and 6.8% were with more than three other
people. Across all interactions, a total of 2,017 (33.3%) interactants were friends, 1,768
(29.2%) were close friends, 1,084 (17.9%) were romantic partners, 372 (6.2%) were strangers, 277 (4.6%) were family members, 235 (3.9%) were acquaintances, and 86 (1.4%) were authority figures or someone of higher status (e.g., a boss or professor). Participants reported having a type of relationship that was not captured by the given options (reported as “other”) with 209 (3.5%) interactants. Generally, these interactants were described in open-ended responses as roommates, children that the participants tutor or babysit, teammates, or coaches.

These figures show the variety of people with whom participants interacted during the experience sampling phase. However, interactions with large groups of people contribute disproportionally to these numbers compared to interactions with fewer people. Because one-on-one interactions accounted for more than three-quarters of reported interactions, the types of relationships in one-on-one interactions is important to consider as well. Specifically, in one-on-one interactions, 885 (33.0%) interactants were close friends, 813 (30.3%) were friends, 254 (9.5%) were romantic partners, 237 (8.8%) were strangers, 157 (5.9%) were family members, 76 (2.8%) were acquaintances, and 55 (2.1%) were authority figures or someone of higher status. In addition, 203 (7.6%) interactants were categorized as “other” and were generally described with the same open-ended responses reported previously.

In terms of familiarity, across all interaction partners, participants reported not knowing 742 (12.5%) interactants at all, knowing 1,142 (19.3%) interactants slightly well,
knowing 1,537 (26.0%) moderately well, knowing 1,269 (21.4%) very well, and knowing 1,228 (20.8%) extremely well. For one-on-one interactions, on average participants reported knowing the other person moderately to very well (\(M = 3.5\), where 1 = not at all, 2 = slightly well, 3 = moderately well, 4 = very well, 5 = extremely well). Specifically, participants reported not knowing 213 (8.0%) interactants at all, knowing 444 (16.6%) slightly well, knowing 649 (24.2%) moderately well, knowing 600 (22.4%) very well, and knowing 773 (28.9%) extremely well.

4.6.1.1 Features of the Interaction

Two variables were created that assessed features of the interaction that were predicted to contribute to feelings of state authenticity. First, a variable assessing participants’ concerns about being evaluated during the interaction was created by averaging the items that assessed the extent to which (a) participants were concerned with how the other people in the interaction were perceiving and evaluating them and (b) they thought that other people would judge them negatively if they expressed their true feelings, beliefs, attitudes, or opinions.

Second, a variable that assessed participants’ perceived congruence with how they usually are was created by averaging (a) the extent to which participants thought their behavior was congruent with their personality, desires, goals, attitudes, and values; (b) the extent to which their behavior in the interaction reflected how they usually
behave; and (c) the extent to which the impression the other interactants had of the participant was consistent with how the participant really is.

The remaining features of the interaction were conceptually distinct from each other and were kept as separate items: (a) how easy versus effortful the interaction was, (b) the extent to which their behavior during the interaction was affected by their personality and internal desires versus by demands of the situation and external pressures, (c) the extent to which they felt pressured to do or say something they did not want to do or say (d), the extent to which they thought consciously about their behavior, and (e) the extent to which they felt they were in control of how they acted in the interaction.

**4.6.2 Behavioral Congruence**

A measure was created to index the degree to which participants’ behavior during the interaction was congruent with how they had rated themselves during the intake session. This was done by calculating a difference score between their rating on each of the 13 characteristics (e.g., unkind/kind, irresponsible/responsible, at ease/nervous, unfriendly/friendly) at the intake session and their ratings on these scales during the interaction. Specifically, participants’ ratings of how they behaved in each interaction were subtracted from their ratings of how they generally behave. Then the absolute value of each difference was calculated.
First, analyses were conducted to examine how behavioral congruence on different characteristics related to state authenticity. Because participants reported on multiple interactions throughout the 7-day experience sampling phase, the data are nested. Multilevel modeling (MLM) was employed using maximum likelihood (ML) estimation with Level 2 as the participant level and Level 1 as the interaction level. ML estimation is robust when the number of units (in this case, participants) is greater than 50, and the present data includes 157 participants. In addition, ML estimation produces relatively unbiased parameter estimates even when data are missing at random (Collins, Schafer, & Kam, 2001; Graham, 2009).

Multilevel models were built examining the relationship between behavioral congruence and state authenticity. Behavioral congruence indices on all 13 characteristics were entered individually to predict feelings of authenticity, feeling like oneself, and feeling in/out of character in separate models. All behavioral congruence variables were person-centered to reflect differences in congruence from the person’s average levels (see Curran & Bauer, 2011). All measures of behavioral congruence were entered into each model as both fixed and random effects, and an unstructured covariance type was used (to allow all variances and covariances to be freely estimated). Results from these analyses are presented in Table 7.
Table 7: Individual Behavioral Congruence Items Predicting Indices of State Authenticity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Feelings of Authenticity</th>
<th>Feeling Like Oneself</th>
<th>Feeling In/Out of Character</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Est.  95% CI  t(df)  p</td>
<td>Est.  95% CI  t(df)  p</td>
<td>Est.  95% CI  t(df)  p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silent/talkative</td>
<td>0.05  -0.02, 0.12  1.44 (122.438)  .152</td>
<td>-0.03  -0.09, 0.04  -0.85 (133.149)  .397</td>
<td>-0.02  -0.09, 0.04  -0.80 (124.686)  .432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unkind/kind</td>
<td>-0.10  -0.18, -0.02  -2.49 (119.089)  .014</td>
<td>0.11  0.03, 0.19  2.79 (119.961)  .006</td>
<td>0.10  0.01, 0.18  2.32 (120.380)  .022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irresponsible/responsible</td>
<td>-0.04  -0.10, 0.03  -1.06 (107.366)  .291</td>
<td>0.07  -0.01, 0.14  1.86 (122.717)  .065</td>
<td>0.04  -0.04, 0.11  1.00 (130.000)  .318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At ease/nervous</td>
<td>0.14  0.08, 0.20  4.83 (134.498)  &lt;.001</td>
<td>-0.16  -0.23, -0.09  -4.68 (141.503)  &lt;.001</td>
<td>-0.15  -0.22, -0.08  -4.31 (143.322)  &lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dishonest/honest</td>
<td>0.05  -0.04, 0.13  1.07 (124.223)  .286</td>
<td>-0.07  -0.15, 0.01  -1.64 (133.629)  .103</td>
<td>-0.06  -0.14, 0.03  -1.33 (129.69)  .185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immoral/moral</td>
<td>-0.11  -0.18, -0.03  -2.83 (110.840)  .006</td>
<td>0.13  0.06, 0.21  3.41 (122.503)  .001</td>
<td>0.11  0.03, 0.18  2.71 (122.864)  .008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submissive/dominant</td>
<td>-0.03  -0.08, 0.03  -0.90 (99.957)  .370</td>
<td>0.08  0.02, 0.14  2.67 (123.029)  .009</td>
<td>0.08  0.02, 0.14  2.57 (120.258)  .011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfriendly/friendly</td>
<td>-0.09  -0.17, -0.01  -2.12 (124.473)  .036</td>
<td>0.10  0.02, 0.18  2.44 (130.643)  .016</td>
<td>0.09  0.01, 0.17  2.14 (124.369)  .034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laid-back/upright</td>
<td>0.15  0.10, 0.20  -13.35 (111.535)  &lt;.001</td>
<td>-0.15  -0.12, -0.09  -5.05 (141.480)  &lt;.001</td>
<td>-0.14  -0.20, -0.08  -4.66 (134.050)  &lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modest/arrogant</td>
<td>0.04  -0.02, 0.09  1.27 (96.826)  .207</td>
<td>-0.03  -0.08, 0.03  -0.85 (115.271)  .398</td>
<td>-0.02  -0.08, 0.04  -0.71 (115.794)  .481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close-/open-minded</td>
<td>-0.09  -0.16, -0.02  -2.59 (102.867)  .011</td>
<td>0.08  0.02, 0.15  2.44 (124.033)  .016</td>
<td>0.08  0.02, 0.15  2.59 (121.780)  .011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rude/polite</td>
<td>-0.06  -0.12, 0.01  -1.93 (108.983)  .057</td>
<td>0.07  0.01, 0.14  2.16 (129.153)  .032</td>
<td>0.11  0.04, 0.17  3.19 (117.783)  .002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untruthful/truthful</td>
<td>0.01  -0.07, 0.08  0.09 (118.781)  .928</td>
<td>0.03  -0.05, 0.11  0.80 (123.931)  .428</td>
<td>0.04  -0.04, 0.12  1.08 (124.100)  .284</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Looking at Table 7 shows that, with one exception (truthful/untruthful), behavioral congruence consistently predicted scores on the three indices of state authenticity. However, behavioral congruence on certain characteristics predicted higher state authenticity (as would be expected), whereas behavioral congruence on other characteristics predicted lower state authenticity. Across all three indices of state authenticity, behavioral congruence on ratings of silent/talkative, at ease/nervous, dishonest/honest, laid-back/uptight, and modest/arrogant significantly predicted lower state authenticity or trended in that direction. These five items were examined to determine why this might be the case.

Given that the socially desirable pole of the bipolar adjectives (i.e., whether 1 or 9 represented a socially desirable response) varied across the 13 characteristics, I examined the possibility that the characteristics predicted state authenticity differently depending on their response scale. However, the pole of the socially desirable response varied among the congruence items that negatively predicted state authenticity showing that this effect was not simply an artifact of the pole of the socially desirable response.

Furthermore, examination of the means of participants’ self-ratings in the intake and experience sampling phases showed that the negative relationship between congruence and state authenticity was not due to systematic differences in ratings across items. The means, which are presented in Table 8, did reveal that participants tended to rate themselves more positively in the experience sampling phase than they did in the
intake session. However, this effect was found for all items (except immoral/moral, rude/polite, and submissive/dominant), and so it did not differentiate between congruence items that positively and negatively predicted state authenticity.

Table 8: Mean Self-ratings in Intake Session and Experience Sampling Phase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-rating</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intake Session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silent/talkative</td>
<td>5.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unkind/kind</td>
<td>6.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irresponsible/responsible</td>
<td>6.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At ease/nervous</td>
<td>4.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dishonest/honest</td>
<td>6.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immoral/moral</td>
<td>7.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submissive/dominant</td>
<td>5.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfriendly/friendly</td>
<td>7.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laid-back/uptight</td>
<td>4.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modest/arrogant</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close-minded/open-minded</td>
<td>6.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rude/polite</td>
<td>7.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Untruthful/truthful</td>
<td>6.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The content of the items also did not reveal why these particular items negatively predicted state authenticity. In fact, some of the items that negatively predicted state authenticity were similar in content to items that positively predicted state authenticity.

Conceptually, no reason could be found to explain why behavioral congruence on silent/talkative, at ease/nervous, dishonest/honest, laid-back/uptight, and modest/arrogant, predicted lower state authenticity (or trended in that direction). Even so, because combining the 13 items into a single index of behavioral congruence would cancel out
the effects of ratings that were positively versus negative related to state authenticity, two indices of behavioral congruence were calculated for use in subsequent analyses. One variable included the behavioral congruence items that positively predicted state authenticity, and the other variable included the items that negatively predicted state authenticity. Both indices were calculated by averaging the absolute values of the behavioral congruence scores (i.e., differences between ratings at intake and during specific interactions). The index of the items that positively predicted state authenticity (or trended in that direction) will be referred to as Group A and contains the following items: unkind/kind, irresponsible/responsible, immoral/moral, submissive/dominant, unfriendly/friendly, close/open-minded, rude/polite, and untruthful/truthful. The index of the items that negatively predicted state authenticity (or trended in that direction) is referred to as Group B and contains the following items: silent/talkative, at ease/nervous, dishonest/honest, laid-back/uptight, and modest/arrogant. To keep the number of variables in the multi-level models as small as possible, these two variables (Group A and Group B) were used in subsequent analyses as indices of behavioral congruence, along with features of the interaction.

4.6.3 Unconditional Models

First, unconditional models were fit for each of the three dependent variables that assessed state authenticity: feelings of authenticity, feeling like oneself, and feeling in/out of character. Although each of these three outcome variables was conceptually
related to authenticity, the decision was made to analyze them separately rather than combine them into a single index of perceived authenticity because only the measure of feelings of authenticity directly assesses the sense of state authenticity that is of primary interest in this project; the other two measures, though related, are not explicitly indices of state authenticity.

Because participants rated the three indices of authenticity each time they completed the experience sampling survey and participants responded to the survey different numbers of times, correlations between Level 1 variables were calculated in the following way. First, correlations between each pair of indices were calculated separately for each participant. (For example, across all interactions feelings of authenticity were correlated with feeling like oneself for each participant.) Then these within-person correlations were transformed using Fisher’s $r$-to-$z$ transformation and averaged across all participants. Finally, these values were back-transformed to Pearson correlations, which are presented in Table 9.

**Table 9: Correlations among Indices of State Authenticity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State authenticity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Feelings of authenticity</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Feeling like oneself</td>
<td>-.68***</td>
<td></td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Feeling in/out of character</td>
<td>-.60***</td>
<td>.81***</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. All $p$’s < .001.
Three parameters were estimated for each null model: the fixed intercept, the random intercept, and the residual. The variance components covariance structure was used. Each of the unconditional models is explained below.

4.6.3.1 Feelings of Authenticity

The fixed effect for the intercept, which represents the average rating of feelings of authenticity across all interactions, was 5.68 ($p < .001$), indicating that, on average, participants felt reasonably authentic (ratings could range from 1 to 7, with 1 indicating feeling completely inauthentic and 7 indicating feeling completely authentic) ($-2$ log likelihood = 11236.777, $df = 3$). The variance component at Level 1, which represents within-person variance in feelings of authenticity, was 1.25 ($p < .001$), and the variance component at Level 2, which represents between-person variance in feelings of authenticity was 0.51 ($p < .001$). The resulting intra-class correlation (ICC) was .29 which indicates that 29% of the total variability in feelings of authenticity is due to between-person differences. As expected, substantial dependence in feelings of authenticity existed, supporting the use of MLM.

4.6.3.2 Feeling Like Oneself

The unconditional model for feeling like oneself showed that, across all interactions, the average rating of feeling like oneself was 2.20 ($p < .001$), indicating that on average participants reported feeling like themselves rather than unlike themselves (1 indicated feeling like oneself, and 7 indicated feeling unlike oneself) ($-2$ log likelihood =
The within-person variance in feeling like oneself was 1.23 ($p < .001$), and the between-person variance was 0.63 ($p < .001$). The ICC indicated that 34% of the total variability in feeling like oneself was due to between-person differences.

### 4.6.3.3 Feeling In/Out of Character

The unconditional model for feeling in character (as opposed to feeling out of character) showed that, across all interactions, the average rating of feeling in/out character was 2.22 ($p < .001$). On average participants reported feeling more in character than out of character across all interactions (1 indicated feeling in character, and 7 indicated feeling out of character) (-2 log likelihood = 11213.809, $df = 3$). The within-person variance in feeling in character was 1.22 ($p < .001$), and the between-person variance in feeling in character was 0.69 ($p < .001$). The ICC indicated that 36% of the total variability in feeling in/out character was due to between-person differences.

### 4.6.4 Level 1 Predictors of State Authenticity

Correlations between indices of state authenticity (feelings of authenticity, feeling like oneself, and feeling in/out of character) and features of the interaction are presented in Table 10. To obtain these values, correlations between each pair of Level 1 variables were calculated using the same procedure described earlier.
Table 10: Correlations Between State Authenticity and Features of the Interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Features of the interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Concern with impression</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Effort</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Perceived congruence</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. External demands</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Control</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Conscious of behavior</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Pressure</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State authenticity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Feelings of authenticity</td>
<td>-.53</td>
<td>-.51</td>
<td>-.61</td>
<td>-.61</td>
<td>-.46</td>
<td>-.42</td>
<td>-.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Feeling like oneself</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Feeling in/out of character</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. All p’s < .001.

Next, multilevel models were built to examine Level 1 predictors of feelings of authenticity, feeling like oneself, and feeling in/out of character, as models that include Level 1 predictors should be finalized before including Level 2 predictors (Nezlek, 2008). Level 1 predictor variables were person-centered to reflect the difference from the person’s average level (see Curran & Bauer, 2011). All Level 1 predictors were entered into the models as both fixed and random effects. Only fixed effects are reported because they provide information about the slopes and intercepts of the variables of interest.
Unless otherwise noted, an unstructured covariance type was used (to allow all variances and covariances to be freely estimated).

For each dependent variable, the same procedure was used. When building multilevel models, forward inclusion (rather than backward elimination) is recommended due to the large number of parameters that need to be estimated if all predictors of interest are added to the model simultaneously on the first step (Nezlek, 2008). However, in the present analyses, the two composites of behavioral congruence (Group A and Group B) were always entered first because behavioral congruence reflects “objective” authenticity as people typically view it. Thus, a model was fit using the two indices of person-centered behavioral congruence to predict feelings of authenticity. Then, forward inclusion began.

Separate models were fit predicting each index of state authenticity with the two indices of behavioral variability (person-centered) and each of the following person-centered predictors: (a) the composite item capturing the extent to which participants were concerned about their interaction partners’ evaluations of them, (b) the composite item capturing participants’ perceived congruence with how they usually are, (c) ratings of the extent to which participants’ behavior during the interaction was affected by their personality and internal desires versus by demands of the situation and external pressure, (d) ratings of the degree to which they felt they were in control of how they acted in the interaction, (e) ratings of the degree to which they thought consciously
about their behavior, (f) ratings of the extent to which they felt pressured to do or say something they did not want to do or say, and (g) ratings of how easy versus effortful the interaction was. The predictor that explained the greatest amount of unique variance in the dependent variable, based on the value of $t$ as the criterion, was retained in the model. After adding the variable on Step 2 that enhanced fit the greatest amount, the process was repeated to see which of the remaining predictors predicted the largest portion of remaining variance in Step 3. This forward stepwise process was repeated until all significant predictors were included in the model.

4.6.4.1 Feelings of Authenticity

For the model predicting feelings of authenticity (“How authentic or inauthentic did you feel?”), the forward MLM analysis added predictors to the model in the following order: (a) Group A and Group B behavioral congruence (which were forced to enter in Step 1), (b) perceived congruence, (c) the extent to which participants’ behavior during the interaction was affected by internal desires versus by external demands, (d) the extent to which they felt pressured to do or say something they did not want to do or say, and (e) how easy versus effortful the interaction was. Three items did not enter the model: the extent to which participants were concerned about others’ evaluations, felt in

1 The value of $t$ was used in favor of the fixed effect estimates because the fixed effect estimates are unstandardized and cannot be compared across models.
control of how they acted, and thought consciously about their behavior. Table 11 shows the results of each predictor on the step on which it entered the model.

Table 11: Features of the Interaction Predicting Feelings of Authenticity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order Entered</th>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>t(df)</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Behavioral congruence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>-0.39</td>
<td>-0.54, -0.25</td>
<td>-5.30</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.21, 0.42</td>
<td>5.99</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Perceived congruence</td>
<td>-0.60</td>
<td>-0.66, -0.53</td>
<td>-17.97</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>External demands</td>
<td>-0.16</td>
<td>-0.22, -0.10</td>
<td>-5.01</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pressure</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>-0.19, -0.10</td>
<td>-6.92</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Effort</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.10, -0.02</td>
<td>-3.19</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The \(-2\) log likelihood of the full model was 9464.710 \((df = 36)\), and a chi-square difference test showed a significant improvement over the unconditional model \((p < .01)\).

4.6.4.2 Feeling Like Oneself

For the dependent variable feeling like oneself ("How did you feel during the interaction?", where 1 = like you were being yourself and 7 = like you were not being yourself), predictors entered the equation in the following order: (a) Group A and Group B behavioral congruence (forced into Step 1), (b) perceived congruence, (c) concerns about being evaluated by others, (d) the extent to which they felt pressured to do or say something they did not want to do or say, (e) how easy versus effortful the interaction
was, (f) the extent to which their behavior during the interaction was affected by internal desires versus external demands, and (g) the extent to which participants felt in control of how they acted in the interaction. Table 12 shows the results for each predictor on the step on which it was entered.

Table 12: Features of the Interaction Predicting Feeling Like Oneself

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order Entered</th>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Est.</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>t(df)</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Behavioral congruence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.33, 0.63</td>
<td>6.46</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>-0.36</td>
<td>-0.47, -0.25</td>
<td>-6.38</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Perceived congruence</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.64, 0.74</td>
<td>27.62</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Concern about evaluation</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.13, 0.25</td>
<td>6.37</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pressure</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.10, 0.18</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Effort</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.06, 0.13</td>
<td>5.105</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>External demands</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.04, 0.11</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>In control</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.03, 0.10</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A chi-square difference test showed a significant improvement of the full model (-2 log likelihood = 8553.070, df = 55) over the unconditional model (p < .01)

4.6.4.3 Feeling In/Out of Character

For feeling in/out character (“How did you feel during the interaction?,” where 1 = in character; 7 = out of character), predictors entered in the following order: (a) Group A
and Group B behavioral congruence (forced into Step 1), (b) perceived congruence, (c) the extent to which they felt in control of how they acted in the interaction, (d) the extent to which they felt pressured to do or say something they did not want to do or say, (e) the extent to which their behavior during the interaction was affected by their personality and internal desires versus by demands of the situation and external pressure, and (f) how easy versus effortful the interaction was. Table 13 shows the results of each predictor on the step on which it was entered.

Table 13: Features of the Interaction Predicting Feeling In/Out of Character

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order Entered</th>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Group A</th>
<th>Group B</th>
<th>t(df)</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Behavioral congruence</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
<td>6.15 (143.110)</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>0.31, 0.59</td>
<td>-0.42, -0.19</td>
<td>-5.32 (135.893)</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Group B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Perceived congruence</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>0.64, 0.74</td>
<td>26.41 (119.524)</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>In control</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.13, 0.22</td>
<td>8.34 (105.788)</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pressure</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.09, 0.17</td>
<td>6.23 (125.453)</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>External demands</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.06, 0.13</td>
<td>5.25 (1069.008)</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Effort</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.001, 0.07</td>
<td>2.02 (88.337)</td>
<td>.047</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The -2 log likelihood of the full model was 8460.500 (df = 45) and, again, a chi-square test showed a significant improvement over the unconditional model (p < .01).
4.6.4.4 Summary of Level 1 Predictors

Both indices of behavioral congruence—Group A (predictors that positively predicted state authenticity) and Group B (predictors that negatively predicted state authenticity)—significantly predicted feelings of authenticity, feeling like oneself, and feeling in/out of character when forced into the first step. However, the sizes of the estimates revealed that behavioral congruence did not account for the majority of the variance in state authenticity.

Beyond behavioral congruence, the three indices of perceived state authenticity were predicted by four of the same features of the interpersonal interaction: (a) participants’ perceptions of behavioral congruence, (b) the extent to which they felt pressured to do or say something they did not want to do or say, (c) the extent to which their behavior during the interaction was affected by their personality and internal desires, and (d) how easy versus effortful the interaction was. In addition, Participants’ sense of control over their behavior was a significant predictor of feeling like oneself and feeling in/out of character but not of feelings of authenticity. Participants’ concern with being evaluated by their interaction partners was a significant predictor of only feeling like oneself.

For all three indices of self-perceived state authenticity, participants’ perceived behavioral congruence was the strongest predictor with all significant predictors in the
equation. Notably, this effect was found while controlling for actual behavioral congruence.

4.6.5 Level 2 Predictors of Feelings of Authenticity

To understand participants’ feelings of authenticity further, Level 2 (participant-level) predictors were added to the final models just described for feelings of authenticity, feeling like oneself, and feeling in/out of character. Level 2 variables were grand mean-centered unless they were categorical variables, in which case they were entered in their raw form. An unstructured covariance type was used to allow all variances and covariances to be freely estimated.

Each Level 2 predictor was added individually to the models to see which, if any, added to the fit of the model. Significant predictors were included and model improvement between the final Level 1 only model described above and the final Level 1 model that included each Level 2 predictor was assessed with a chi-square difference test. The Level 2 predictors that were tested were: participants’ endorsement of the three construals of authenticity (both ratings of each construal and preferred construal), common reasons for feeling inauthentic (ratings of six reasons), and both measures of trait authenticity. Fixed effects are reported.

4.6.5.1 Construals of Authenticity

Participants’ agreement with the strict, flexible, and inevitable construals were individually added to the final Level 1 multilevel models. Agreement with each of the
definitions did not significantly add to the models’ predictions of feelings of authenticity, feeling like oneself, or feeling in/out of character (all p’s > .31).

Next, participants’ preference for the construals was examined. If participants agreed with one of the construals of authenticity more strongly than the other two construals, they were assigned to a group based on which construal they preferred. Forty-three participants (27.3%) preferred the strict construal, 78 participants (49.7%) preferred the flexible construal, and 9 participants (5.7%) preferred the invariable construal. Twenty-seven participants (17.2%) did not prefer any single construal of authenticity. Construal preference was added as a categorical predictor to the final MLM models for feelings of authenticity, feeling like oneself, and feeling in/out of character. Entering the construal of authenticity that participants preferred did not significantly add to any of the models (all p’s > .15).

4.6.5.2 Reasons for Feeling Inauthentic

Next, participants’ endorsement of the six reasons for feeling inauthentic (obtained from Study 2A) were examined. Each of the six reasons were entered individually into the Level 1 models for feelings of authenticity, feeling like oneself, and feeling in/out of character.

Feelings of authenticity were significantly predicted by three of the common reasons for feeling inauthentic: “I responded in a way that didn’t reflect my true feelings, mood, or values” (-2 log likelihood = 9456.468, df = 37), estimate = -0.09, 95% CI
[0.16, -0.03], $t(149.699) = -2.79, p = .006$, “I couldn’t control my actions because I was experiencing strong emotions like stress or anger” (-2 log likelihood = 9308.700, $df = 37$), estimate = -0.16, 95% CI [-0.23, -0.10], $t(140.580) = -5.22, p < .001$, and “Other people told me my behavior was inauthentic” (-2 log likelihood = 8823.084, $df = 37$), estimate = -0.13, 95% CI [-0.22, -0.03], $t(141.375) = -2.69, p = .008$. Chi-square difference tests showed that adding each of these three reasons to the full Level 1 model significantly improved model fit ($p$’s < .01). The fixed estimates represent the slopes of the linear functions that predict feelings of authenticity for each reason. So for instance, for every unit increase in participants’ endorsement of the reason, “I responded in a way that didn’t reflect my true feelings, mood, or values,” a decrease of 0.09 units in feelings of authenticity is predicted. Thus, the more participants indicated at intake they tend to feel inauthentic because they responded in a way that did not reflect their true feelings, mood, or values, the more inauthentic they felt in actual social interactions.

Feeling like oneself was significantly predicted by endorsement of one reason: “I couldn’t control my actions because I was experiencing strong emotions like stress or anger” (-2 log likelihood = 8480.685, $df = 56$), estimate = 0.11, 95% CI [0.05, 0.18], $t(81.928) = 3.50, p = .001$. Chi-square difference test indicated significant improvement in model fit ($p < .01$) when this reason was added to the full Level 1 model.

Feeling in/out of character was also predicted by ratings of: “I couldn’t control my actions because I was experiencing strong emotions like stress or anger” (-2 log
likelihood = 8389.590, \( df = 46 \), estimate = 0.14, 95% CI [0.07, 0.21], \( t(139.684) = 3.83, p < .001 \). In addition, feeling in/out of character was predicted by ratings of: “9” (-2 log likelihood = 8056.302, \( df = 46 \), estimate = 0.08, 95% CI [0.01, 0.16], \( t(47.509) = 2.22, p = .031 \). Chi-square difference tests showed that adding each of these reasons to the Level 1 model significantly improved model fit (\( p < .01 \)).

4.6.5.3 Trait Authenticity

Although the measures of trait authenticity were correlated with each other as shown in Table 14, their relationships with perceived state authenticity were assessed separately because they involve conceptually distinct operationalizations of self-reported trait authenticity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Behavioral Authenticity</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Authentic Living</td>
<td>.58***</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. External Influence</td>
<td>-.57***</td>
<td>-.35***</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Self-alienation</td>
<td>-.44***</td>
<td>-.39***</td>
<td>.48***</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First, the amount of variance in state authenticity that was predicted only by trait authenticity was examined. All four subscales of trait authenticity were individually entered into multilevel models predicting each index of state authenticity. Results from these analyses are shown in Table 15.
Table 15: Multilevel Models Predicting State Authenticity from Only Trait Authenticity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Feelings of Authenticity</th>
<th>Feeling Like Oneself</th>
<th>Feeling In/Out of Character</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Est.</td>
<td>95% CI</td>
<td>t(df)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.05, 0.09</td>
<td>7.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-2 log likelihood</td>
<td>11185.400, df = 4</td>
<td>-2 log likelihood</td>
<td>11200.563, df = 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic Living</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.07, 0.12</td>
<td>6.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-2 log likelihood</td>
<td>11198.935, df = 4</td>
<td>-2 log likelihood</td>
<td>11226.359, df = 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Influence</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.08, -0.03</td>
<td>-4.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-2 log likelihood</td>
<td>11092.355, df = 4</td>
<td>-2 log likelihood</td>
<td>11138.906, df = 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-alienation</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.08, -0.04</td>
<td>-6.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-2 log likelihood</td>
<td>10997.942, df = 4</td>
<td>-2 log likelihood</td>
<td>11062.043, df = 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When added to the final Level 1 models described earlier, Behavioral Authenticity predicted feelings of authenticity, feeling like oneself, and feeling in/out of character. Chi-square difference tests indicated that all three models significantly improved the fit compared to the full Level 1 model ($p$'s < .01). In addition, all three subscales of Wood et al.'s (2008) Authenticity Scale predicted feelings of authenticity, feeling like oneself, and feeling in/out of character. Again, chi-square difference tests indicated that all three models significantly improved the fit of the models ($p$'s < .01). Estimates, confidence intervals, and $t$-tests are presented in Table 16.
Table 16: Adding Trait Authenticity to Full Level 1 Multilevel Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Feelings of Authenticity</th>
<th>Feeling Like Oneself</th>
<th>Feeling In/Out of Character</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Est.</td>
<td>95% CI</td>
<td>t(df)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.06, 0.09</td>
<td>8.02 (151.168)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic Living</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.07, 0.13</td>
<td>7.07 (147.104)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Influence</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.08, -0.03</td>
<td>-4.41 (144.253)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-alienation</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>-0.08, -0.04</td>
<td>-7.20 (143.985)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

-2 log likelihood = 9412.614, df = 37
-2 log likelihood = 8508.969, df = 56
-2 log likelihood = 8429.398, df = 46
-2 log likelihood = 9425.131, df = 37
-2 log likelihood = 8522.308, df = 56
-2 log likelihood = 8435.561, df = 46
-2 log likelihood = 9315.805, df = 37
-2 log likelihood = 8480.749, df = 56
-2 log likelihood = 8394.876, df = 46
-2 log likelihood = 9238.853, df = 37
-2 log likelihood = 8433.653, df = 56
-2 log likelihood = 8330.132, df = 46
4.6.6 Emotional and Relational Ratings

In a separate set of analyses, feelings of authenticity during the social interactions were used to predict emotional and relational reactions to the interactions. Correlations among the indices of state authenticity and emotional and relational ratings are presented in Table 17.

**Table 17: Correlations Among State Authenticity and Emotional and Relational Ratings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Connected to interactants</th>
<th>Feel bad/good</th>
<th>Feel sad/happy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional and relational ratings</td>
<td>Connected to interactants</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel bad/good</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel sad/happy</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State authenticity</td>
<td>Feelings of authenticity</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling like oneself</td>
<td>-.27</td>
<td>-.56</td>
<td>-.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling in/out of character</td>
<td>-.26</td>
<td>-.50</td>
<td>-.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. All p’s < .001.

4.6.6.1 Unconditional Models

First, unconditional models were fit for participants’ ratings of how bad/good, sad/happy, and connected to the interaction partners they felt after the interaction. The variance components covariance structure was used for all unconditional models.

For feeling bad/good, the fixed effect for the intercept was 5.21 (p < .001), indicating that on average participants felt good across all interactions (1 indicated
feeling extremely bad, and 7 indicated feeling extremely good) (-2 log likelihood = 10845.085, \(df = 3\)). The variance component at Level 1, which represents within-person variance in feeling bad/good, was 1.14 (\(p < .001\)), and the variance component at Level 2, which represents between-person variance in feeling bad/good was 0.40 (\(p < .001\)). The resulting ICC was .26 which indicates that 26% of the total variability in feeling bad/good is due to between-person differences. As expected, substantial dependence existed in ratings of feeling bad/good.

For ratings of sad/happy, the fixed effect for the intercept was 5.33 (\(p < .001\)), indicating that on average participants felt happy across the interactions (1 indicated feeling extremely sad, and 7 indicated feeling extremely happy) (-2 log likelihood = 11057.687, \(df = 3\)). The variance component at Level 1, which represents within-person variance in feeling sad/happy, was 1.20 (\(p < .001\)), and the variance component at Level 2, which represents between-person variance in feeling sad/happy was 0.47 (\(p < .001\)). The ICC was .28.

For ratings of feeling connected to the other people in the interaction, the fixed effect for the intercept was 3.60 (\(p < .001\)); on average, participants felt more connected to their interaction partners after the interactions than they did before (responses were on a 5-point scale with 1 indicating feeling a great deal less connected and 5 indicating feeling a great deal more connected) (-2 log likelihood = 7299.622, \(df = 3\)). The variance component at Level 1 (within-person variance in feeling connected) was 0.42 (\(p < .001\)),
and the variance component at Level 2 (between-person variance in feeling connected) was 0.11 ($p < .001$). The ICC was .21.

4.6.6.2 Level 1 Predictors of Emotional and Relational Ratings

Next, separate models were run in which feelings of authenticity during the interaction predicted participants’ ratings of bad/good, sad/happy, and connected to the other interactants vis-à-vis the specific interaction. Level 1 predictor variables were person-centered and entered into the models as both fixed and random effects, but again only fixed effects are reported. An unstructured covariance type was used to allow all variances and covariances to be freely estimated.

Feelings of authenticity significantly predicted all three outcomes, bad/good: $-2 \log \text{likelihood} = 10114.054, df = 4, \text{estimate} = 0.41, 95\% \text{ CI} [0.38, 0.44], t(3382.023) = 27.78, p < .001$; sad/happy: $-2 \log \text{likelihood} = 10371.314, df = 4, \text{estimate} = 0.41, 95\% \text{ CI} [0.38, 0.44], t(3389.249) = 26.75, p < .001$; and connected: $-2 \log \text{likelihood} = 6967.631, df = 4, \text{estimate} = 0.17, 95\% \text{ CI} [0.15, 0.19], t(3412.000) = 17.73, p < .001$. Chi-square difference tests showed significant improvements for all three models over the corresponding unconditional models (all $p$’s < .01). Because the predictors were person-centered, the results should be interpreted relative to a person’s average level of the predictor. So, for every unit increase above participants’ average feelings of authenticity, participants felt 0.41 units better, 0.41 units happier, and 0.17 units more connected to the other interactants. When
participants felt more authentic than usual during a social interaction, they felt better, happier, and more connected than usual.

4.7 Discussion

As predicted based on common conceptualizations of authenticity, behavioral congruence predicted all three assessments of state authenticity (feelings of authenticity, feeling like oneself, and feeling in/out of character). Participants reported feeling more authentic to the extent that their behavior during social interactions resembled their general, intake ratings of their personal characteristics. That state authenticity was predicted by behavioral congruence was not at all surprising. More interesting is the fact that participants’ perceptions of their behavioral congruence predicted state authenticity over and above actual congruence. This finding suggests that subjective perceptions of congruence consistently exerted a separate influence on state authenticity. People seem to be using self-perceptions of congruence in addition to whether or not they are actually behaving congruently to infer their own authenticity. This finding also suggests that perceptions of congruence do not parallel actual congruence. What might cause a mismatch between actual behavioral congruence and perceptions of behavioral congruence?

First, people may not be aware of their actual behavioral congruence. Assessing one’s own congruence requires insight into numerous instances of behavior across large periods of time. People may have difficulty assessing their behavioral congruence in this
way. Or, the threshold at which people perceive behavioral incongruence may be high, leading people to be unaware of behavioral incongruence unless they behave in extremely incongruent ways. Indeed, people behave in different ways across situations, interactions, and social roles (Fleeson, 2001; Funder, 2006; Mischel, 1968), regularly acting at almost every level of the Big Five traits throughout a single day (Fleeson, 2001). Yet, people still tend to view themselves as consistent (Festinger, 1962; Heider, 1944; Newcomb, 1953).

Alternatively, in this study, participants’ perceptions of congruence probably encompassed more than just behavioral congruence on the characteristics that we assessed. Self-perceived congruence was assessed with a composite item that included perceptions of congruence with other inner dispositions such as one’s personality, attitudes, values, motives, and goals, as well as how congruent the impression one is making on others is with how one “really” is. Many factors may contribute to people’s self-assessments of congruence that are not captured in Study 3’s measure of behavioral congruence.

In addition to actual and perceived behavioral congruence, state authenticity (across all three outcome variables) was predicted by the extent to which participants felt their behavior was affected by external demands and pressures and the extent to which they felt pressured to behave in ways in which they did not want to behave. These findings suggest that participants feel less authentic when they believe their
behavior is not motivated by their own desires, as SDT suggests (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Indeed, the fact that perceived external pressures predicted state authenticity independently of actual and perceived congruence suggests that the mere presence of external pressure may promote feelings of inauthenticity irrespective of whether they believe that are behaving congruently.

In addition, state authenticity was predicted by the extent to which the interaction was easy versus effortful. Given that research has shown that behaving congruently with one’s personality, attitudes, values, motives, and goals is less effortful and depleting than behaving incongruently (Gallagher et al., 2010), people may use effort as a cue for inferring authenticity. In addition, easy interactions may signal other determinants and correlates of state authenticity such as relational harmony, positive emotions, or behavioral positivity (Jongman-Sereno & Leary, 2016; Lenton et al., 2013).

For the two secondary assessments of state authenticity (i.e., feeling like oneself and feeling in/out of character), participants’ sense of control over their behavior was also a significant predictor, but this was not the case for the primary measure of feelings of authenticity. In addition, being concerned with other people’s evaluations predicted feeling like oneself but not feelings of authenticity or feeling in/out of character.

The way that participants construed authenticity—operationalized both as ratings of agreement with the three construals and as their preference for one construal—was not related to state authenticity. Whereas in Study 1B participants were
explicitly asked to reevaluate their past behavior through the lenses of the different construals of authenticity, participants in Study 3 rated the construals at intake and were not reminded of them in relation to specific interactions or behaviors. In daily interactions, people may not explicitly consider broad construals of authenticity but rather judge their authenticity on the basis of specific criteria. Perhaps simply making the construals of authenticity more salient in daily life would influence participants’ state authenticity.

Four reasons for feeling inauthentic significantly improved overall fit when added to the Level 1 models predicting the three indices of state authenticity. “I couldn’t control my actions because I was experiencing strong emotions like stress or anger” predicted all three indices of state authenticity. In addition, “Other people told me my behavior was inauthentic” and “I responded in a way that didn’t reflect my true feelings, mood or values or in a way that I knew was untruthful. For example, I pretended, exaggerated, or lied” predicted feelings of authenticity. “I conformed to social norms or other people’s desires” predicted feeling in/out of character. People who are inclined to feel inauthentic for these reasons are more likely to feel inauthentic, unlike themselves, or out of character in daily life. These four reasons seem to act as criteria for judging inauthenticity. That is, experiences of state authenticity tend to be higher overall among people who tend to feel inauthentic when they cannot control their actions due to strong emotions, receive feedback from others that their behavior is
inauthentic, respond in ways that do not reflect their true feelings, mood, or values, or conform to other people’s desires. People who use these criteria more frequently—as indicated in their ratings in the intake session—tended to feel less authentic in actual social interactions. This finding suggests that having explicit criteria for judging authenticity increases the likelihood that people will feel inauthentic.

Although research has shown mixed results about the relationship between trait and state authenticity, all indices of trait authenticity predicted state authenticity in Study 3 (Fleeson & Wilt, 2010; Gillath et al., 2010; Ito & Kodama, 2007; Lenton et al., 2013). When entered alone into multi-level models predicting state authenticity, the measures of trait authenticity accounted for only small amounts of variance. But, the effects of trait authenticity remained significant (though still small) when entered into the full Level 1 models that controlled for behavioral congruence and the features of the interaction. So, what are measures of trait authenticity assessing besides actual and perceived behavioral congruence? A close examination of the items on the measures of trait authenticity reveals that they assess aspects of motivation to be authentic and self-insight that are not captured by the measures of features of the interaction.

Specifically, many of the items on the Behavioral Authenticity subscale assess motives to behave authentically such as masking disagreement or behaving in ways that do not reflect one’s true self in order to meet other people’s desires or demands. For example, two such items are “I’ve often done things that I don’t want to do merely not to
disappoint people” and “I spend a lot of energy pursuing goals that are very important to other people even though they are unimportant to me” (emphasis added). Similarly, the External Influence subscale measures how much one is influenced by other people’s opinions, wishes, and expectations (e.g., “I am strongly influenced by the opinions of others”). In addition, some of the trait authenticity items incorporate consideration of negative consequences of inauthentic behavior. For example, “I am willing to ensure negative consequences by expressing my true beliefs about things” and “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” (emphasis added). None of the experience sampling ratings in Study 3 specifically assessed motives to behave authentically or a disregard for the negative consequences of acting authentically. In addition, the Self-alienation subscale assesses awareness of one’s thoughts and emotions (e.g., “I feel as if I don’t know myself very well”), which was also not measured in Study 3 (because it is not directly related to authenticity).

In sum, the trait measures of authenticity may assess not only one’s tendency to behave congruently with one’s dispositions, goals, and motives but also motives to be authentic, consideration of negative consequences of being authentic, and self-insight. These factors, which were not assessed in Study 3, may explain why trait authenticity predicted state authenticity over and above actual and perceived behavioral congruence.
and various features of the interaction. These factors should be investigated in future research as dispositional features that contribute to state authenticity.

State authenticity was significantly related to all emotional and relational ratings. Participants tended to feel good, happy and more connected to their interaction partner(s) when they felt more authentic than usual during the interaction. These findings extend research showing that trait authenticity is related to positive psychological and interpersonal outcomes. People who rate themselves as authentic on measures of trait authenticity score higher on numerous indices of positive psychological functioning such as self-esteem, mindfulness, self-actualization, vitality, and life satisfaction (Kernis & Goldman, 2006; Kernis, Lakey, Heppner, Goldman, & Davis, 2005; Lakey, Kernis, Heppner, & Lance, 2008; Wood et al., 2008). In terms of interpersonal benefits, trait authenticity is related to positive relationship behaviors such as self-disclosure, partner validation, actions that promote partner trust and intimacy, less conflict, and positive (rather than negative) reactions when conflicts do arise (Goldman, Brunell, Kernis, Heppner, & Davis, 2005; Kernis & Goldman, 2006). Not surprisingly, then, trait authenticity is related to higher relationship satisfaction (Brunell et al., 2010; Kernis & Goldman, 2006). The present research extends these findings to state authenticity. Simply experiencing feelings of authenticity may contribute to people’s emotional and interpersonal well-being.
Importantly, all emotional and relational ratings were made at the same time as ratings of feelings of authenticity, so we do not know whether being authentic leads people to be happier (as Aristotle would have suggested; Hutchinson, 1995). Alternatively, positive emotions may lead people to feel more authentic, the same interpersonal factors that increase happiness may be associated with contexts in which people believe they are authentic, or people may judge positive behaviors (which are more likely in pleasant interactions) to be more authentic. As noted earlier, people claim their own positive behaviors and characteristics are more authentic than negative ones (Fleeson & Wilt, 2010; Gino et al., 2015; Harter, 2002; Jongman-Sereno & Leary, 2016; Lenton et al., 2013; Newman et al., 2014; Sheldon et al., 1997; Sherman et al., 2012; Wood et al., 1997). So, if people feel happier when they enact positive behaviors and they believe that positive actions are more authentic, happiness and perceived authenticity would be spuriously correlated. Additional research is needed to determine the direction of the relationship between feelings of authenticity and positive emotions.

Finally, the relationship between state authenticity and feeling connected to others could be another reflection of the role of positivity in self-judgments of authenticity. Again, the direction of the relationship is unknown. Feeling connected to other people may contribute to positive emotions which contribute to feelings of authenticity (Lenton et al., 2013), behaving in positive ways may lead people to feel more connected to others as well as more authentic (Jongman-Sereno & Leary, 2016), or
feeling authentic may lead people to feel more connected to others (Lenton et al., 2013). Additional research is needed to determine the causal direction of the relationship between feelings of authenticity and positive emotional and relational outcomes.

5. General Discussion

This final section consists of four major sections. To begin, I summarize and integrate the findings with respect to five primary sets determinants of people’s self-judgments of authenticity. I then explore the limitations of the present research, discuss future directions and the goal competition perspective, and end with some general conclusions.

5.1 Determinants of Self-perceptions of Authenticity

The goal of this project was to investigate factors that influence people’s perceptions of their own authenticity. Specifically, aspects of the studies examined congruence between people’s self-views and reported behaviors, the valence of their behavior, beliefs about authenticity, features of social interactions, and trait authenticity. The following sections will address each of these five themes.

5.1.1 Behavioral Congruence

At its core, authenticity involves congruence between one’s behavior or reaction and one’s personality, attitudes, values, motives, and goals. Across all studies, behavioral congruence emerged as a central element of people’s beliefs about authenticity, judgments of the authenticity of their past behavior, and state authenticity.
Although people construe authenticity in different ways, the key to authenticity in all three construals is behaving congruently with one’s personality, attitudes, values, motives, and goals. The strict construal assumes that self-congruence leads to consistent, if not rigid behavior, the flexible construal assumes that self-congruence can manifest as variability (because people are “really” many variable things), and the inevitable construal assumes that all actions are reflections of who one really is and, thus, self-congruent. In all instances, however, behaving congruently with one’s true inclinations is key.

Study 3 provided a direct test of the relationship between congruence and state authenticity by comparing participants’ self-ratings of how they usually are at intake with their ratings of their behavior during daily interactions. Indeed, discrepancies between these sets of ratings predicted subjective feelings of authenticity.

The findings also provided support for the link between perceptions of behavioral congruence and perceived authenticity. In Study 2B, participants’ beliefs about the degree of behavioral variability allowed in self-congruent behavior was changed which affected their self-judgments of authenticity. Participants who were led to believe that authenticity allows for a great deal of behavioral variability (by the inevitable construal) rated their inauthentic behavior more authentic than participants who were exposed to construals of authenticity that allowed for less behavioral variability. Likewise, in Study 3, state authenticity was predicted by perceived behavioral congruence above and
beyond the effects of measured congruence (as operationalized by the difference between self-ratings at intake and self-ratings within interactions).

5.1.2 Positivity Bias

Although people’s feelings of authenticity are influenced by the degree to which they behave congruently with their personality, attitudes, values, motives, and goals, perceived authenticity is affected by other factors that bear little or no conceptual connection to behavioral congruence. The present studies supported previous work showing that, all other things being equal, people tend to judge their positive behaviors as more authentic than their negative behaviors (Jongman-Sereno & Leary, 2016). In Studies 1B, 2A, and 2B, participants judged instances of their own inauthentic behavior as more authentic when the behavior was positive than when it was negative.

The question remains why people are biased to infer that positive actions are more authentic than negative actions. Motivated reasoning likely plays a role. People may resist interpreting negative behaviors as an authentic part of who they are to protect their ego and self-concept. Self-serving biases lead people to attribute positive behaviors to internal dispositions and negative behaviors to external, situational factors (Carver, DeGregorio, & Gillis, 1980; Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1982; Jones & Nisbett, 1971; Mullen & Riordan, 1988). So if people are biased to believe that their internal dispositions are good rather than bad, this bias would lead them to judge
positive behaviors as more congruent with their inner dispositions than negative behaviors.

People are also biased to believe that they have a greater number of positive characteristics than negative ones and that they behave in positive ways more frequently than in negative ways (Dunning, Meyerowitz, & Holzberg, 1989; Kruger & Dunning, 1999; Messick et al., 1984; Williams & Gilovich, 2008). Simply due to this distortion in the estimation of the frequency of positive versus negative behavior, people may be more likely to perceive a link between positive characteristics and behaviors and their self-views.

In contrast, the goal competition perspective does not allow people to distance themselves from negative behaviors by considering them inauthentic. If people believe that all of their behaviors are authentic, they are stripped of using the label of inauthenticity as a form of self-protection. Instead, they must integrate negative behaviors as well as positive behaviors into their self-concepts.

Of course, self-serving biases exist for a reason—they protect people from disturbing information about themselves. Integrating horrible behaviors into one’s self-concept, as required by the goal competition perspective, is often difficult and psychologically troubling. In the present studies, however, participants did not seem to react negatively when they viewed past inauthentic behavior as stemming from their true characteristics, motives, values, and goals. In fact, informing participants that their
inauthentic behaviors were, in fact, a reflection of their motives, values, and goals led participants to judge their behavior as both more authentic (Studies 1B and 2B) and good (Study 2B). Although participants were randomly assigned to write about positive or negative inauthentic behavior, all behaviors were self-selected, and participants may have elected not to write about truly horrible behavior. On the other hand, participants’ positive (and at least not negative) reactions to the rebuttals may also suggest that most instances of “inauthentic” behavior are not highly negative and so incorporating them into participants’ self-concepts may not be terribly troubling.

The positivity bias in judgments of authenticity may also explain some cases in which people feel less authentic when their goals are motivated extrinsically rather than intrinsically. Instead of being due to the inherent nature of the goals as SDT suggests (i.e., some goals are intrinsic and some goals are extrinsic), feelings of inauthenticity may arise because people are socialized to value intrinsically-motivated goals more than extrinsically motivated goals (Kasser, Ryan, Zax, & Sameroff, 1995; Kilby, 1993; Kohn, 1990; Ryan, 1993; Ryan & Lynch, 1989; Ryan, Stiller, & Lynch, 1994; Waters, Wippman, & Sroufe, 1979). Consequently, people may feel inauthentic when they pursue extrinsic goals. For example, a person could desire a promotion to feel more fulfilled at work (an intrinsic motivation) and/or to make more money (an extrinsic motivation). Though this person may be equally motivated to feel fulfilled at work and to make money (i.e.,
behaving congruently with either goal would be equally authentic), the latter, extrinsic goal is generally judged to be less authentic.

In sum, although self-judgments of authenticity were predicted by behavioral congruence as expected, behavioral positivity also played a role. Behavioral positivity has no conceptual connection to the basis of authenticity and has been shown to systematically bias self-perceptions of authenticity.

5.1.3 Beliefs about Authenticity

People’s beliefs about authenticity—how they construe authenticity and think about instances in which they behave in ways that are incongruent with their self-perceptions—are important determinants of their feelings of authenticity. Studies 1A and 1B showed that people construe authenticity in three distinct ways and that changing participants’ construals of authenticity affected their self-judgments of authenticity. To gain insight into the specific criteria people use to judge their behavior as authentic versus inauthentic, participants’ reasons for feeling inauthentic were challenged with rebuttals in Study 2B. As hypothesized, the rebuttals, which were based on the inevitable construal and the goal competition perspective, led participants to feel less inauthentic about their past behavior. Studies 1A, 1B, 2A, and 2B together show the importance of people’s beliefs about authenticity—both how they think about authenticity in everyday life and the specific criteria they use to judge their authenticity.
However, Study 3 showed that participants’ beliefs about authenticity played only a small role in state authenticity in daily interactions. In fact, the way people construed authenticity did not contribute at all to state authenticity, and only four reasons for judging one’s behavior as inauthentic emerged as significant predictors of state authenticity when added to the multi-level models. The fact that four reasons emerged as predictors of state authenticity, whereas the construals did not, may suggest that people use specific criteria (rather than broad beliefs about authenticity) to judge their behavior in daily life. Construals of authenticity may be important in retrospective reevaluations of inauthentic behavior, but specific reasons may be important in momentary evaluations of state authenticity.

5.1.4 Features of the Interaction

In Study 3, indices of state authenticity were predicted by the extent to which participants felt pressured to do or say something they did not want to do or say; the extent to which they thought their behavior during the interaction was affected by their personality and internal desires (versus by demands of the situation and external pressure); how easy versus effortful the interaction was; how much control they felt they had over their behavior; and how concerned they were that their interaction partners were evaluating them. Again, these features may serve as experiential cues that people use to judge their behavior as authentic versus inauthentic. Importantly, these features of the interaction predicted state authenticity over and above actual and perceived
behavioral congruence in Study 3. Moreover, although these features are quite peripheral to the fundamental meaning of being authentic, they were consistently related to multiple indices of state authenticity. This pattern suggests that although they are conceptually peripheral to authenticity, they are important factors in the subjective experience of authenticity.

However, researchers should be careful to distinguish central aspects of state authenticity from tangential causes and consequences as failure to do so has made research on authenticity difficult to interpret (Harter, 2002). Furthermore, confusing state authenticity with its accompanying features clouds the relationship between authenticity and emotional and behavioral outcomes. Whether various outcomes are related to feelings of authenticity per se or to the kinds of situations and experiences that are associated with feelings of authenticity is not clear.

5.1.5 Trait Authenticity

Although the focus of this project was on feelings of authenticity, measures of trait authenticity were included in Study 1A and Study 3. Study 1A examined how trait authenticity, as measured by Kernis and Goldman’s (2006) Behavioral Authenticity subscale, was related to how people construe authenticity. Participants who preferred the strict construal of authenticity scored higher on trait behavioral authenticity than participants who preferred the other construals.
In addition, Study 3 examined how trait authenticity—as measured by Kernis and Goldman’s (2006) Behavioral Authenticity subscale and Wood et al.’s (2008) Authenticity Scale—related to state authenticity in social interactions. Results showed that all of the measures predicted state authenticity with all Level 1 (social interaction level) predictors controlled. That is, trait authenticity uniquely predicted state authenticity while controlling for behavioral congruence, self-perceptions of behavioral congruence, the extent to which participants felt pressured to do or say something they did not want to do or say, whether participants’ behavior was affected by internal desires or external demands, the ease of the interaction, and how much control participants felt they had over their behavior.

However, trait authenticity accounted for only a small amount of variance in state authenticity, suggesting that trait and state authenticity may assess different aspects of authenticity. The measures of trait authenticity seemed to assess factors that contribute to state authenticity that were not otherwise captured in Study 3 such as motives to be authentic, consideration of negative consequences of being authentic, and self-insight.

5.2 Limitations

The present studies used descriptive, correlational, experimental, and experience sampling designs to examine potential determinants of self-perceived authenticity. Each methodology provided insights into authenticity, but each also has limitations. The
retrospective reports used in Studies 2A, 1B, and 2B may have been influenced by erroneous memories and motivated biases. For instance, participants may not accurately recall details of their past inauthentic behaviors. Or, the instances that participants chose to write about may be biased. Perhaps people are unwilling to report certain negative or embarrassing inauthentic behaviors. If so, the present research may not represent the full range of inauthentic behavior. However, participants’ responded online which may have increased anonymity and participants’ willingness to disclose negative personal information.

Of course, using a controlled experimental design in which the variables of interest are manipulated is preferred, but doing so is particularly difficult in the study of authenticity. Asking participants to behave in ways that are contrary to important inner dispositions is unethical. Using retrospective reports of inauthentic behavior circumvents this concern.

Study 3’s use of ESM to examine state authenticity as it is experienced in daily life complemented the first two pairs of studies of past behavior and contributed notably to the literature on authenticity. However, Study 3 was nonetheless correlational, and conclusions cannot be drawn about the causes of feelings of authenticity or their effects on emotional and relational outcomes.

Another limitation, especially in the experience sampling phase of Study 3, is the use of single item measures. Using a single item to capture a construct may compromise
the reliability and validity of the measurements. However, using single items was a
methodological choice made to reduce participant burden and to increase likelihood and
frequency of responding, making the tradeoff worthwhile.

Finally, the present studies did not account for cultural differences in how
authenticity is judged and experienced. Overall, research has shown that people’s
subjective experiences of authenticity and inauthenticity are similar across cultures
(Slabu et al., 2014). The greatest difference found in state authenticity between the
United States, China, India, and Singapore was in the settings in which authenticity is
experienced. The present studies did not directly examine the settings in which
participants judged their own authenticity, but context may be an important factor to
consider, especially when examining subjective experiences of authenticity cross-
culturally.

In addition, Western cultures tend to score higher on measures of trait
authenticity than Eastern cultures (Slabu et al., 2014). This difference may be in part
because Wood et al.’s (2008) Authenticity Scale, the measure of trait authenticity used,
confounds authenticity with an independent self-construal. Whereas Westerners tend to
have independent self-construals, Easterners tend to construe themselves in
interdependent ways (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Because self-judgments of
authenticity rely heavily on self-construals, differences in how people think about
themselves likely impact how they judge their own authenticity. For instance, people in
Eastern cultures may not feel inauthentic if they conform to other people’s desires because others’ desires are incorporated into their collectivist sense of self. Therefore, when Easterners behave in accordance with other people’s demands, they may still perceive their behavior as congruent with their inner dispositions and, thus, less likely to feel inauthentic.

5.3 Future Directions

5.3.1 Extraneous Contributors to Authenticity

With the exception of behavioral congruence and perceived behavioral congruence, the other factors that were related to participants’ feelings of authenticity (behavioral positivity, beliefs about authenticity, features of the interaction, and trait authenticity) are not conceptually related to the construct of authenticity. Why, then, are these extraneous factors related to people’s self-perceptions of authenticity?

People may use their subjective experience to judge their own authenticity. Rather than judging their authenticity based simply on behavioral congruence, people may feel inauthentic when they are particularly concerned with others’ evaluations, feel external pressure to act in ways that are not congruent with their desires, or experience an encounter as difficult or effortful. In addition, feeling inauthentic may be a catch-all for certain negative feelings. People may feel uneasy, anxious, uncomfortable, awkward, guilty, or bad and attribute these feelings to having behaved inauthentically.
Another possible reason is that, because authenticity means different things to
different people, people differ in the criteria they use to judge their own authenticity.
The fact that people use different standards to judge authenticity creates a challenge to
examining relationships between state authenticity and its determinants. More
importantly, if people construe authenticity in ways that are not central to its meaning,
such peripheral factors may influence people’s self-judgments of authenticity.

Instead of ignoring determinants because they are conceptually peripheral to
authenticity, more attention should be paid to them. Research is needed to examine in
what ways extraneous predictors are related to self-perceived authenticity. For example,
are they antecedents or consequences of feeling authentic? Which are necessary versus
sufficient conditions for feeling authentic? In addition, research is needed to determine
causal mechanisms. The present studies provided some causal evidence for relationships
between behavioral positivity and beliefs about authenticity with self-judgments of
authenticity; however, many avenues are left to be investigated.

Future research should also continue to examine the role that people’s beliefs
about authenticity play in experiences of authenticity. In doing so, research should focus
on the inevitable construal of authenticity. Although the inevitable construal was the
least preferred by participants, it is arguably more correct than the other two.
Evolutionary psychologists claim that the human mind is designed in such a way that
behavioral inconsistency is to be expected (Fodor, 1983, Kurzban, 2010). According to
this perspective, the human mind is composed of many evolved, specialized modules that allow (if not encourage) the brain to hold incompatible information. People’s behavior can seem contradictory because it is motivated by independent modules that do not communicate with—or even hide information from—each other (Kurzban, 2010). Furthermore, inconsistent behaviors may be optimally functional in different contexts, so natural selection would probably not have favored internally-enforced consistency. If people are not designed to behave consistently, behavioral consistency should not be a requirement for authenticity. According to the modular perspective, the strict construal of authenticity—that people should behave in the same ways across time and situations—is not only unrealistic but also incorrect and evolutionarily implausible. Research should continue to address conceptually irrelevant predictors of authenticity and consider implications of the inevitable construal when doing so.

5.3.2 Motives to be Behaviorally Congruent

People value authenticity, both in themselves and in others, and they appear to be motivated to behave authentically—that is, congruently with who they “really are.” Furthermore, as the results showed, many people hold a high, if not unattainable, standard for behaving authentically. But why are people motivated to be authentic? Is being authentic as psychologically important as many believe?

Many theorists view self-congruence as integral to psychological well-being (Allport, 1937; Block, 1961; Donahue et al., 1993; Funder, 1995; Jourard, 1963; Kernis &
Goldman, 2005; Lecky, 1945; Maslow, 1968; Rogers, 1959, 1961; Sheldon et al., 1997).

According to these perspectives, people are motivated to maintain congruence among their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in order to avoid psychological discomfort from conflicts among these components. Moreover, these views suggest that incongruence is maladaptive because it signals instability and an unintegrated sense of self. Indeed, many conceptualizations of authenticity emphasize the importance of an integrated “core” self not only as a basis for authentic behavior but also as necessary for psychological well-being (e.g., Kernis & Goldman, 2006; Wood et al., 2008).

Other perspectives suggest that people may be motivated to behave congruently for interpersonal rather than intrapsychic reasons (Schlenker et al., 1980; Rosenfeld & Tedeschi, 1981; Tedeschi et al., 1971). According to these views, people strive to be authentic because doing so results in interpersonal rewards rather than because they possess an internal drive to be congruent. For example, one study showed that people presented themselves congruently with their self-views and private expectations of performance on a task only when they believed that other people would be aware of their performance and not when they thought their performance was private (Schlenker, 1975). These results suggest that people are motivated to behave congruently for interpersonal rather than intrapsychic reasons.

Past research has disproportionately focused on intrapsychic motives to be authentic or congruent with who one “really is” (Kernis & Goldman, 2006; Ryan & Deci,
Future research should examine interpersonal motives to be congruent, as doing so may provide additional information about determinants of self-perceived authenticity.

### 5.3.3 Judgments of Others’ Authenticity

The present research examined only self-perceptions of authenticity, but research is needed regarding judgments of other people’s authenticity as well. Determinants of judgments of others’ authenticity may be the same as for self-judgments, they may be different, or the direction of the relationships may change.

For instance, as in self-judgments of authenticity, behavioral positivity may bias people’s judgments of others’ authenticity. Similar results have been shown for morality, such that people judge others who behave morally as more authentic than other people who behave immorally (Newman et al., 2013). Alternatively, attribution biases suggest that the opposite pattern may emerge. People tend to judge other people’s behavior as dispositional rather than situationally determined (Jones & Nisbett, 1971). Furthermore, this effect is heightened with negative behaviors such that people tend to judge others’ negative behavior as more indicative of internal attributes than positive behaviors (Jones & Davis, 1965). Thus, people may be more likely to perceive negative behaviors as dispositional, and therefore, authentic.

In addition, behavioral congruence will likely contribute to judgments of others’ authenticity. However, actors and observers may disagree in their perceptions of an
actor’s behavioral congruence because they have access to different information (Vazire, 2010). Whereas actors have direct access to their own cognitions and emotions (to some extent), observers do not. Observers may deem another person’s behavior incongruent and inauthentic even when it arises from the actor’s inner dispositions. Research examining determinants of judgments of others’ authenticity is needed.

5.4 Conclusion

The present project examined factors that influence people’s self-judgments of authenticity, both in response to past inauthentic behaviors and during the course of actual social interactions. Overall, the determinants of self-perceived authenticity examined in these studies—behavioral congruence, behavioral positivity, beliefs about authenticity, features of the interaction, and trait authenticity—suggest that although self-congruence does play an important role in self-judgments of authenticity, other factors that are peripheral to the fundamental meaning of authenticity also contribute to feelings of authenticity. Although the present studies provided information about determinants of self-perceived authenticity, research is needed to further examine the causal directions of these relationships. In addition, little is known about why people are so concerned with being authentic. Why do people become distressed when they think they behaved inauthentically? Why did people come to construe authenticity in such unattainable ways? People seem to experience psychological distress about a phenomenon that they cannot define or agree on what it means. Perhaps authenticity is
important not in its own right but rather because the various determinants of feelings of authenticity are important.
Appendix A

Everybody experiences situations in which they act out of character and do things that seem inconsistent with who they are as a person. In some instances in which people do things that are inconsistent with what they are really like, they behave in ways that are better or more desirable than they really are. In other instances in which people do things that are inconsistent with what they are really like, they do things that are worse or less desirable than they really are.

To begin, think of something that you said or did that wasn’t really you that was [better (or more positive)/worse (or more negative)] than you are really like. In other words, we want you to think of a time in which you said or did something inauthentic that was [better/worse] than you normally are.

Describe what you said or did in a sentence or two:
Appendix B

Behavioral Authenticity subscale (Kernis & Goldman, 2006)

Note: Participants rated the following items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

1. I frequently pretend to enjoy something when in actuality I really don’t.
2. I’ve often used my silence or head-nodding to convey agreement with someone else’s statement or position even though I really disagree.
3. I am willing to change myself for others if the reward is desirable enough.
4. I find it easy to pretend to be something other than my true-self.
5. 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.
6. I’ve often done things that I don’t want to do merely not to disappoint people.
7. I find that my behavior typically expresses my values.
8. My behavior typically expresses my personal needs and desires.
9. I rarely, if ever, put on a “false face” for others to see.
10. I spend a lot of energy pursuing goals that are very important to other people even though they are unimportant to me.
11. I am willing to ensure negative consequences by expressing my true beliefs about things.
Authenticity Scale (Wood et al., 2008)

Note: Participants rated the following items on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = does not describe me at all to 5 = describes me very well.

1. “I think it is better to be yourself, than to be popular.”
2. “I don’t know how I really feel inside.”
3. “I am strongly influenced by the opinions of others.”
4. “I usually do what other people tell me to do.”
5. “I always feel I need to do what others expect me to do.”
6. “Other people influence me greatly.”
7. “I feel as if I don’t know myself very well.”
9. “I am true to myself in most situations.”
10. “I feel out of touch with the ‘real me.’”
11. “I live in accordance with my values and beliefs.”
12. “I feel alienated from myself.”

Authentic Living subscale: total items 1, 8, 9, and 11

External Influence subscale: total items 3, 4, 5, and 6

Self-alienation subscale: total items 2, 7, 10, and 12
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doi:10.1037//0022-3514.76.1.72


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**Biography**

Katrina Pelagia Jongman-Sereno was born in Nijmegen, The Netherlands on October 2, 1989. She attended Washington University in St. Louis and received a B.A. in Psychology and minor concentrations in Environmental Studies and Spanish in May 2011. While pursuing her Ph.D. at Duke University, Katrina earned her Master’s degree in Psychology in January 2014. Katrina received a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship in 2013, a Student Research Award from the American Psychological Association in 2013, and Graduate Travel Awards to the Conference for the Society for Personality and Social Psychology in San Diego, California in 2012 and the International Convention of Psychological Science in Amsterdam, The Netherlands in 2013. She was also a finalist for the Society for Personality and Social Psychology’s Student Research Award in 2013.

List of Publications:


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