

Pretence

The quiet distance between what we say and what we are willing to practise

By Kalpesh Raichura | Perspective | 3 min read

Pretence is not always deliberate dishonesty. Sometimes it is the gap between the life we describe and the choices we repeatedly make.

The promises that sound right

We say health matters, but sleep is the first thing we trade. We say family comes first, but give them what remains after work has taken the best of our attention. We say people are empowered, yet every meaningful decision still returns to us. We say we want change, but protect the routines that keep the present unchanged.

This is not always hypocrisy. Often, it is pretence without conscious intention: the comforting act of speaking from our ideals while living from our habits.

Why the gap survives

Words give us an immediate experience of alignment. Declaring an intention feels like movement. A leader who announces empowerment can temporarily feel like an empowering leader. A person who buys a fitness plan can briefly feel committed to health.

Practice is less flattering. It asks us to tolerate inconvenience, uncertainty and visible imperfection. It asks us to surrender the identity created by our words and examine the evidence created by our choices.

The organisational version

Pretence scales. An organisation may speak about trust while rewarding only control. It may celebrate innovation while punishing the first honest failure. It may run listening sessions and then leave difficult feedback untouched.

Employees learn the real culture through repetition, not presentation. What leaders consistently notice, permit, reward and avoid becomes more credible than any value displayed on a wall.

Replace accusation with evidence

The way out is not self-criticism. Shame creates more performance, not more truth. A better question is: what does the evidence say?

If I say this matters, where did it receive time, attention or courage this week? If I say I trust someone, what decision did I allow them to make? If I say I value a relationship, what did that person actually experience from me?

Evidence makes alignment visible without making the human being wrong.

One honest movement

Choose one declaration that has become familiar: “I will prioritise my health,” “I want my team to take ownership,” or “I will have that conversation.” Reduce it to one observable action small enough to complete and important enough to count.

Authenticity is not saying everything we feel. It is reducing the distance between what we claim matters and what our life repeatedly demonstrates.

Pretence ends gently. It ends the moment we stop defending the story and become willing to create different evidence.

A question to carry forward

Which promise in your life needs less explanation and one visible piece of evidence?

With respect and possibility,



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