Towards a ‘New’ Cultural Politics of Work?
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This chapter outlines the emergence of a new turn in managerial discourse and practice that calls on employees to express their authentic identities. It briefly defines personal authenticity and its historical significance in western philosophical thought before exploring it evocation in work organizations. The chapter argues that the managerial exhortation for employees to ‘just be themselves’ is both a continuation of the neo-human relations attempt to adjust employees to the labour process, and a break with that tradition. The difference lies in the importance of non-work themes being celebrated in the sphere of production. An empirical example is then examined. The chapter concludes by demonstrating how this managerial ideology represents a more insidious form of control rather than the demise of control. The politics of authenticity comes to the fore in the analysis.