Agenda Item 9

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pRFXu_jBJec

Compare

Repair a flat tire	Raise healthy, productive children
Conduct bypass surgery	Create robust, cross-team collaboration
Complete an audit	Change a community's eating habits
Put out a house fire	Care for aging parents

Technical vs. Adaptive Challenges

Technical Challenges

- Easy to identify
- Often lend themselves to cut-and-dried solutions
- Often can be solved by an authority or expert
- Require change in just a few places; often contained within organizational boundaries
- People are generally receptive to technical solutions
- Solutions can often be implemented quickly -even by edict

Adaptive Challenges

- Difficult to identify, easy to deny
- Require changes in values, beliefs, roles, relationships and approaches to work
- People with the problem do the work of solving it
- Require changes in numerous places; usually cross-organizational boundaries
- People often resist even acknowledging adaptive challenges
- "Solutions" require experiments and take a long time to implement – cannot be implemented by edict
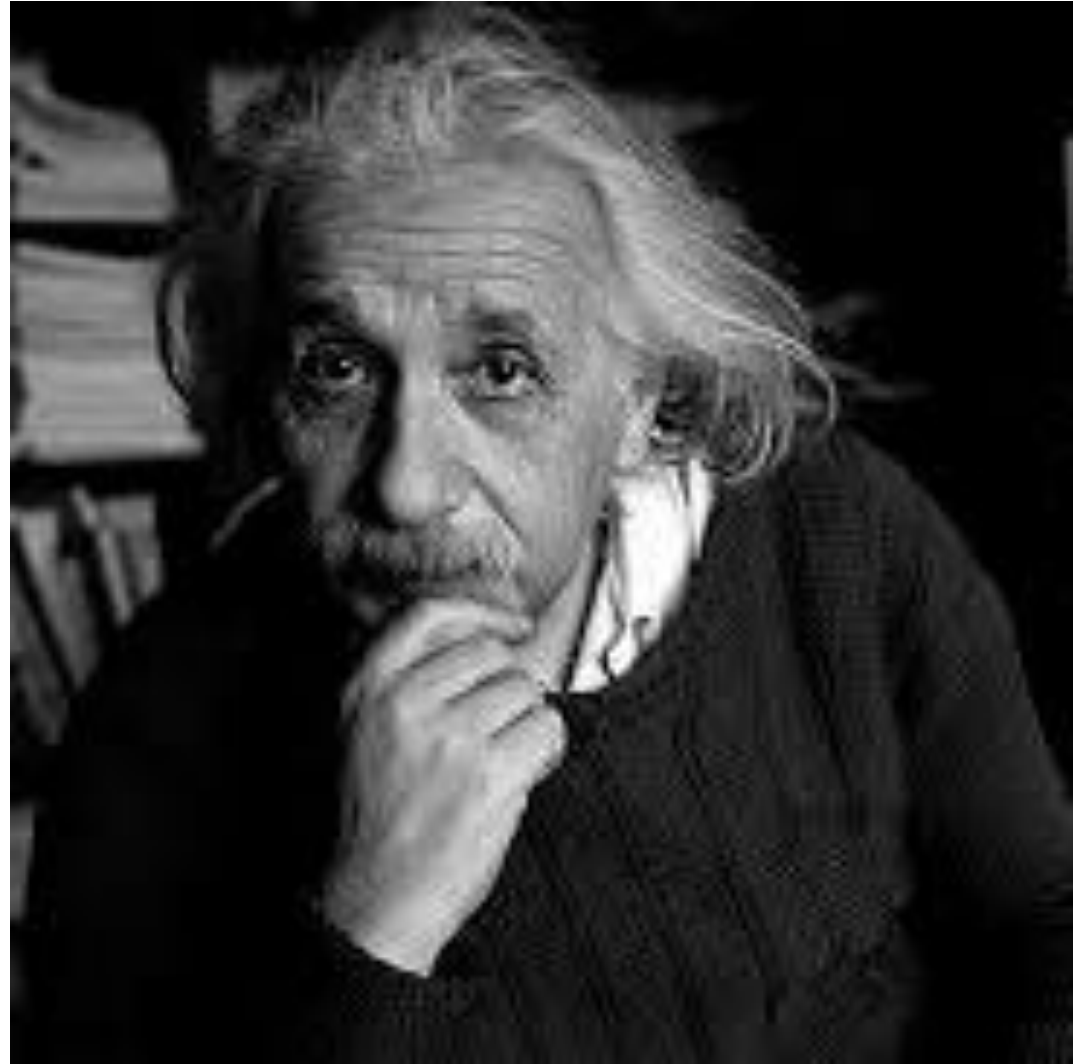
Adaptive Challenges

- To attain aspirations or goals requires a response from outside known repertoire .

- Developing a new response requires difficult learning.

- The learning requires identifying what is precious & essential and what is expendable. This will lead to losses.

- Losses often involve learning to refashion loyalties and develop new competencies.

- Adaptive work is experimental and risky; it requires a longer time frame than technical work.

- Adaptive challenges generate disequilibrium and avoidance.

Technical vs. Adaptive Work

Kind of work	Problem definition	Solution definition	Locus of work
Technical	Clear	Clear	Authority
Technical & Adaptive	Clear	Requires learning	Authority and stakeholders
Adaptive	Requires learning	Requires experimentation	Stakeholders

"We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them,"

- Albert Einstein

Adaptive Leadership: A Framework for Engaging with Sticky Challenges

Developed by Ron Heifetz, Marty Linsky and their colleagues at Harvard's Kennedy School, adaptive leadership is a resource for thinking strategically about seemingly intractable, often unprecedented challenges. The framework has been built over the last 30 years while working with groups of participants from across sectors and around the world.

Core principles of adaptive leadership:

◊ **To survive and thrive, identify and iterate on strategic adaptations.**

While change is incremental in time and monumental over time, every system is in constant adaptation. And yet most adaptation happens unconsciously. This framework puts adaptation in the foreground, helping organizations identify the 5-10% of their legacy work and behavior that is expendable to create space for innovation. The catch: **adaptation is always contested terrain.** What one group points to as vestigial, another sees as vital.

◊ **To operate strategically, distinguish technical problems from adaptive challenges.**

Technical problems—repairing a flat tire or performing bypass surgery—are those that require expertise and for which there are successful known protocols. Both the problem and solution are clear. **Adaptive challenges**—changing a community's eating habits or creating sound immigration policy—have markedly different characteristics. Here the problem definition and the solution metrics are open to multiple interpretations; no sure-fire protocol exists; to make progress, the people with the problem will have to refashion their priorities, values, and behaviors. **The single biggest waste of time and resources is treating an adaptive challenge as though it were technical**.

◊ **To mobilize people, speak to purpose and acknowledge loss.**

Leadership exists only in the context of purpose. **To make progress on an adaptive challenge requires keen diagnosis:** the ability to get up on the balcony to see more of the system, while resisting the leap to instant action (or repeated meetings). Central to the work of leading adaptively is raising the heat so that people can no longer avoid confronting inevitable losses. To sustain this heat as productive energy requires a clear purpose. In the face of resistance, amping up purpose helps tamp down real and perceived losses.

◊ **To ignite broad ownership, uncouple leadership from authority.**

Authority is a role or position in an organization or hierarchy. With that authority comes a contractual expectation: to provide protection, order, and direction to those authorizing you. When the work is technical, authority is an excellent resource for execution. However, when the work is adaptive, organizations need a strategy for engaging people across the system they aim to change. **Leadership** is an act or behavior which anyone may step into, at any time, from anywhere in an organization. **The work of leadership is mobilizing people to make progress on a shared adaptive challenge**. Those with authority may or may not step into the work of leadership. Thus the good news: the work of leadership is everyone's to claim.

Want to learn more? Visit jillhufnagel.com

COMMON GOOD

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

DIAGNOSE SITUATION
- Explore tough interpretations
- Distinguish technical and adaptive work
- Understand the process challenges
- Test multiple interpretations and points-of-view
- Take the temperature
- Identify who needs to do the work

MANAGE SELF
- Know your strengths, vulnerabilities and triggers
- Know the story others tell about you
- Choose among competing values
- Get used to uncertainty and conflict
- Experiment beyond your comfort zone
- Take care of yourself

ENERGIZE OTHERS
- Engage unusual voices
- Work across factions
- Start where they are
- Speak to loss
- Inspire a collective purpose
- Create a trustworthy process

INTERVENE SKILLFULLY
- Make conscious choices
- Raise the heat
- Give the work back
- Hold to purpose
- Speak from the heart
- Act experimentally

FOR THE COMMON GOOD

QUICK GUIDE

LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES:

1.
Leadership is an activity, not a position.

2.
Anyone can lead, anytime, anywhere.

3.
It starts with you and must engage others.

4.
Your purpose must be clear.

5.
It's risky.

Leadership is mobilizing others to do difficult work for the common good. Today, thousands of people are working to exercise the type of leadership described here. Keep this card handy and do the same. Your organization and community will be better off because of it!

www.kansasleadershipcenter.org

DIAGNOSE SITUATION

- What's our story about what's going on here?
- What story do we imagine others are telling?
- What aspirations do we have related to this issue?
- What needs to change to reach those aspirations?
- What values might be in conflict here?
- What processes need to be created to address this challenge?
- What factions are involved with this issue? What does each faction value?
- For real change to happen, who has to work on this? Who else?

MANAGE SELF

- What difficult choice or unpopular action might be necessary?
- Among us here, what are our strengths? How are we vulnerable?
- How do we leverage our strengths?
- How do we transform our vulnerabilities into assets?
- What's our part of the mess?
- Are there risks we need to take or hard choices we need to make?

ENERGIZE OTHERS

- How will we build bridges between factions?
- What do our opponents and members of other factions care about?
- What would it look like to "start where they are?"
- Does a collective purpose exist among the factions?
- How can we inspire a collective purpose?
- Who could lose because of our activity?
- How will we speak to that loss?
- What can we do to help everyone trust the process?

INTERVENE SKILLFULLY

- Do we need to raise or lower the heat? Why?
- What is our typical approach to issues like this?
- What new approaches might be necessary?
- What actions or interventions are needed now?
- What would be the purpose of those interventions?
- Do they connect with our larger purpose?
- What is our plan? Who will do what, when?

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