

Finding the Courage to Lead: There are no silver bullets!

At a time when our organizations and our world are more complex than ever, it is tempting to look for a quick fix, a magic pill, or even a silver bullet! We want the one solution that will solve all problems simultaneously, and ideally we want it to be **quick, inexpensive, and painless**.

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Courage

- To engage the skills and capabilities of everyone in the organization
- To hold ourselves, our teams, and our institutions accountable
- Courage
- Must have courage to lead real transformation
- Must understand that change can promote deep resistance
- Must develop the capacity to respond continuously to change

Reflections on Leading with Courage

- Assume “goodwill”
- Nurture workplace ecology
 - Localness – Merit – Openness - Leanness
- Focus on coherence, not control
- Support self-organizing behaviors

Dialogue

Listening – Only by deeply listening can we speak with true authority.

Respecting and Reflecting – Only by taking time to reflect can we act with true effectiveness.

Suspending – Set aside your assumptions. Inquire with GENUINE curiosity, seek out diverse perspectives.

Voicing- Speak from your deepest, most authentic self.

Understanding Systems, lets us...

- See the role we play in them
- Anticipate systemic behavior so we can be proactive rather than reactive
- Work with them rather than being controlled by them
- Become designers (rather than mere operators)
- Improve the quality of our lives

“Fixes that Fail”

A solution to a problem symptom alleviates the symptom but has unintended consequences that eventually can worsen the original problem.

- Lead by anticipating the effects of your actions
- Things often get worse before they get better
- Easy answers usually make problems worse
- Unintended consequences emerge when and where we least expect
- Easy answers usually make problems worse

QUOTES

“Managers continually find themselves drawn into reacting to symptoms. Frequently, problems are *defined* by their symptoms. ... While the willingness to tackle important problems is a necessary characteristic of effective leadership, the wise leader appreciates that efforts to manipulate problem symptoms are rarely successful in complex systems.” ...Peter M.Senge

“In a real sense, problems do not exist. They are distractions from real situations. The real situations from which they are abstracted are messes. A mess is a system of interrelated problems. We should be concerned with messes and not problems. The solution to a mess is not equal to the sum of the solution to its parts. *The solution to its parts should be derived from a solution to the whole—not vice versa...* The lack of mess-solving capability is the most important challenge facing us.” ...Russell Ackoff

“The future is not a result of choice among alternative paths offered by the present, but a place that is created—created first in mind and will, created next in activity. ...The paths are not to be found, but made, and the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination.

There are no silver bullets!” ...John Scharr

“All mankind is part of the web of life and whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves.” ...Chief Seattle