The Art and Skill of Leading Adaptively

James Fausto, MD MHA FAAHPM
Medical Director, UW Medicine Palliative Care

Question for the Viewers

How familiar are you with the concept of adaptive leadership?

A. Very familiar
B. Somewhat familiar
C. Not at all familiar

What is a leadership challenge you are currently facing?
Learning Goals

Understand why leading adaptively is important in today's healthcare environment

Learn five foundational principles of Adaptive Leadership

Consider how you will apply these principles with your own leadership challenge

Leadership Challenges

Technical Challenge

Values
Teams
Websites
Meetings & Emails

Adaptive Challenge

Source: Val Ulstad, MD
What is required of you, as leaders, to drive change?

The Goal

Influence how you think about, and ultimately act on, this thing called leadership

Why Adaptive Leadership?

People adapt more successfully to their environments by facing painful circumstances and developing new attitudes and behaviors.

Adaptive Leadership

Work of Ron Heifetz, M.D.
5 Principles of Adaptive Leadership

1. Recognizing the difference between technical and adaptive challenges
2. Choosing to lead
3. Go to the Balcony (to gain perspective)
4. Recognizing and sensing a productive range of tension
5. Mobilize people to act

Principle 1

Recognize the difference between technical and adaptive challenges

Technical vs. Adaptive Challenges
Indicators of an Adaptive Challenge

✓ No known solution
✓ People would rather avoid the issue
✓ Varied points of view
✓ Recurring problems
✓ Involves facing loss; emotional responses
✓ Moving forward feels risky
✓ People must work across boundaries (standardize vs. Customize)

Technical vs. Adaptive Challenges

**Technical work**
- Clear answers, minimal uncertainty
- Straightforward, few big choices
- Execute using standard process, instructions
- Requires hands, feet, mouths
- Focus on tasks
- Linear, demands precision

**Adaptive work**
- No clear answers, often high uncertainty
- Time consuming, difficult choices (losses)
- Demands many conversations
- Requires hearts, eyes and ears
- Focus on people
- Non-linear, demands creativity

Principle 2
Choosing to lead
Images of Authority or Leadership?

Are these images of authority or leadership?

Can they be both?

Can leadership exist without authority?

Can an authority figure fail to lead?

Authority ≠ Leadership

Leadership is an activity.

Authority, power and influence are tools but do not guarantee leadership (necessary but insufficient)

Leading by Choice

Resist the seduction of your own authority.

Ask:
To whom does the work really belong?
Principle 3

Go to the balcony (to gain perspective)

Get off the dance floor...

...and onto the balcony.
The Balcony

- Changes our view
- Allows us to remove ourselves and see with fresh eyes

Recognizing and sensing a productive range of tension

**Principle 4**

Question for the Viewers

How do you see the strain of change impacting your place of work?

A. Burnout
B. Compassion fatigue
C. Lack of engagement
D. Workforce turnover
E. Dispersed workforce
F. Other (please type in chat)

Sensing the Productive Range

OBSERVE  INTERPRET  INTERVENE

Principle 5

Mobilize others to act
Mobilize Others

“Give the work back to the people”

- When faced with an adaptive challenge it is only the people in the challenge who can identify a solution
- Giving the work back to the people highlights the need to place the work where it belongs in order to direct a solution

Be Mindful of the Heat

...regulate it to a point where people are challenged, but won't run out of the room

Recognizing and Sensing a Productive Range of Tension

Recognizing and Sensing a Productive Range of Tension

Question for the Viewers

Which of the five adaptive leadership principles do you think would be applicable to the leadership challenge you identified at the beginning of the webinar?

A. Recognize the difference between technical and adaptive challenges
B. Choose to lead
C. Go to the balcony to gain perspective
D. Recognize and sense a productive range of tension
E. Mobilize people to act
F. None of these apply to my leadership challenge

Exercising leadership to do adaptive work means disappointing people’s expectations...

...at a rate they can tolerate.

Key Takeaways

Adaptive Leadership is an activity.

These 5 principles require active engagement and practice to become an adaptive leader:

1. Recognize the difference between technical and adaptive challenges
2. Choosing to lead
3. Go to the balcony (to gain perspective)
4. Recognizing and sensing a productive range of tension
5. Mobilize people to act
Implications for Your Work

What do you see differently?

What will be different in your approach to your work?

A Chat with James Fausto

Aliene Mares

James Fausto

QUESTIONS?

To ask a question, please click the icon in the Zoom toolbar to open your Q&A Pod.
Resources

- Liberating Structures – Innovation through participation
  www.liberatingsstructures.com
- Switch: How to Change Things When Changes is Hard
  Chip and Dan Heath (2010)
- Teaming: How Organizations Learn, Innovate, and Compete in the Knowledge Economy
  Amy Edmondson (2012)
- Leadership Can Be Taught
  Sharon D fooled Parks (2005)
- Leadership Without Easy Answers
  Ronald Heifetz (1998)
- The Practice of Adaptive Leadership
  Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009)

Thank you.