

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**

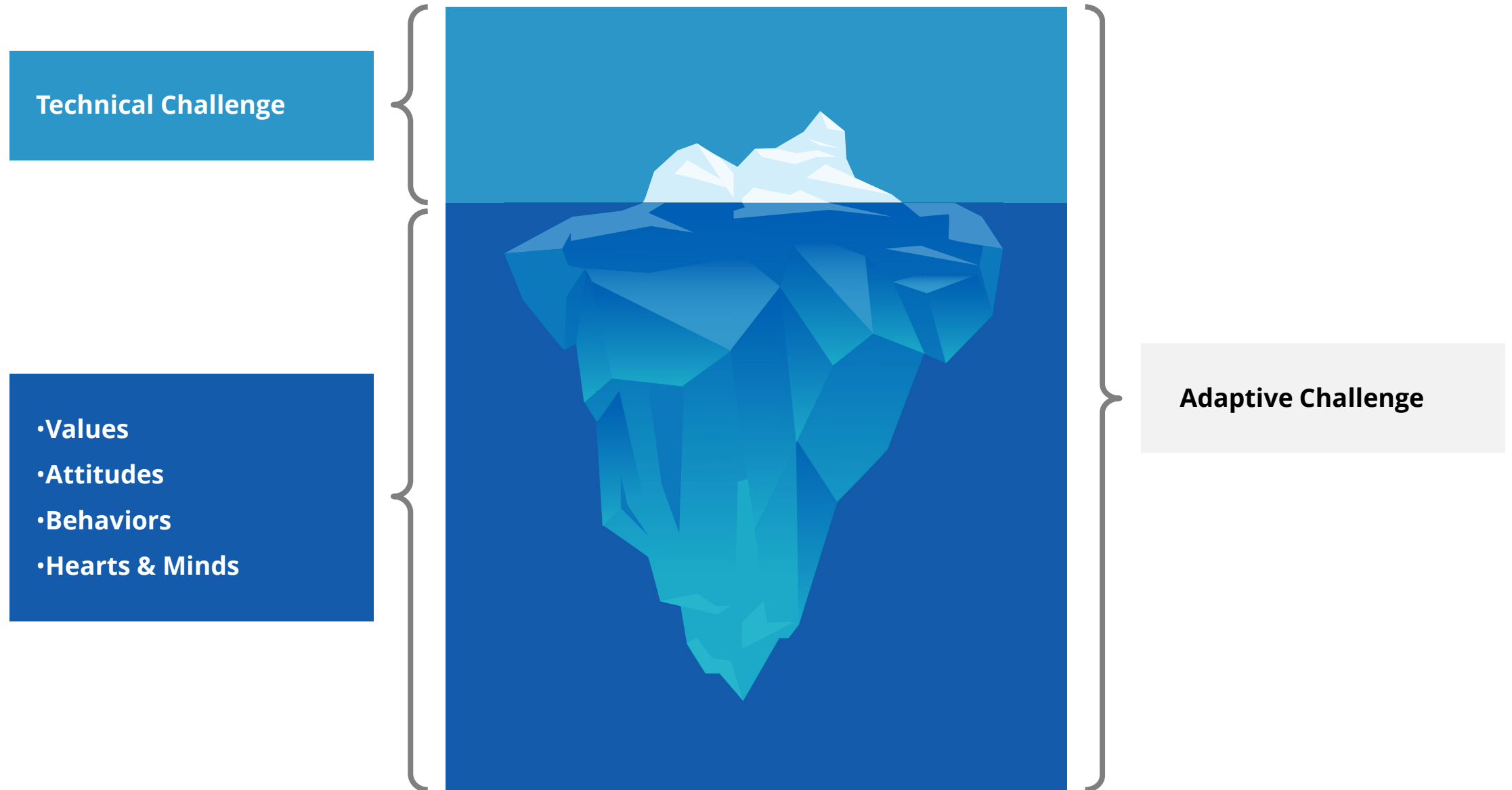
**Learn five
foundational
principles of
Adaptive
Leadership**


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

Leadership Challenges



Leadership Challenges



The background of the slide features a dark blue, reflective surface with several small, blue paper boats. The boats are scattered across the frame, with some in sharp focus and others blurred in the background, creating a sense of depth. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the paper and the reflections on the surface.

What is required
of you, as leaders, to
drive change?

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

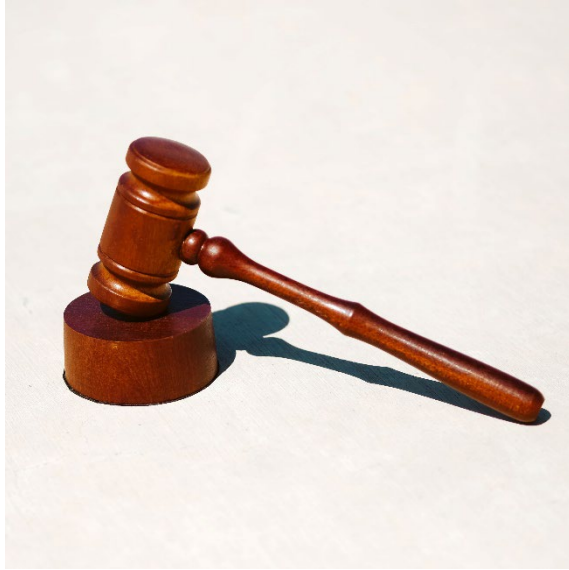


Principle

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

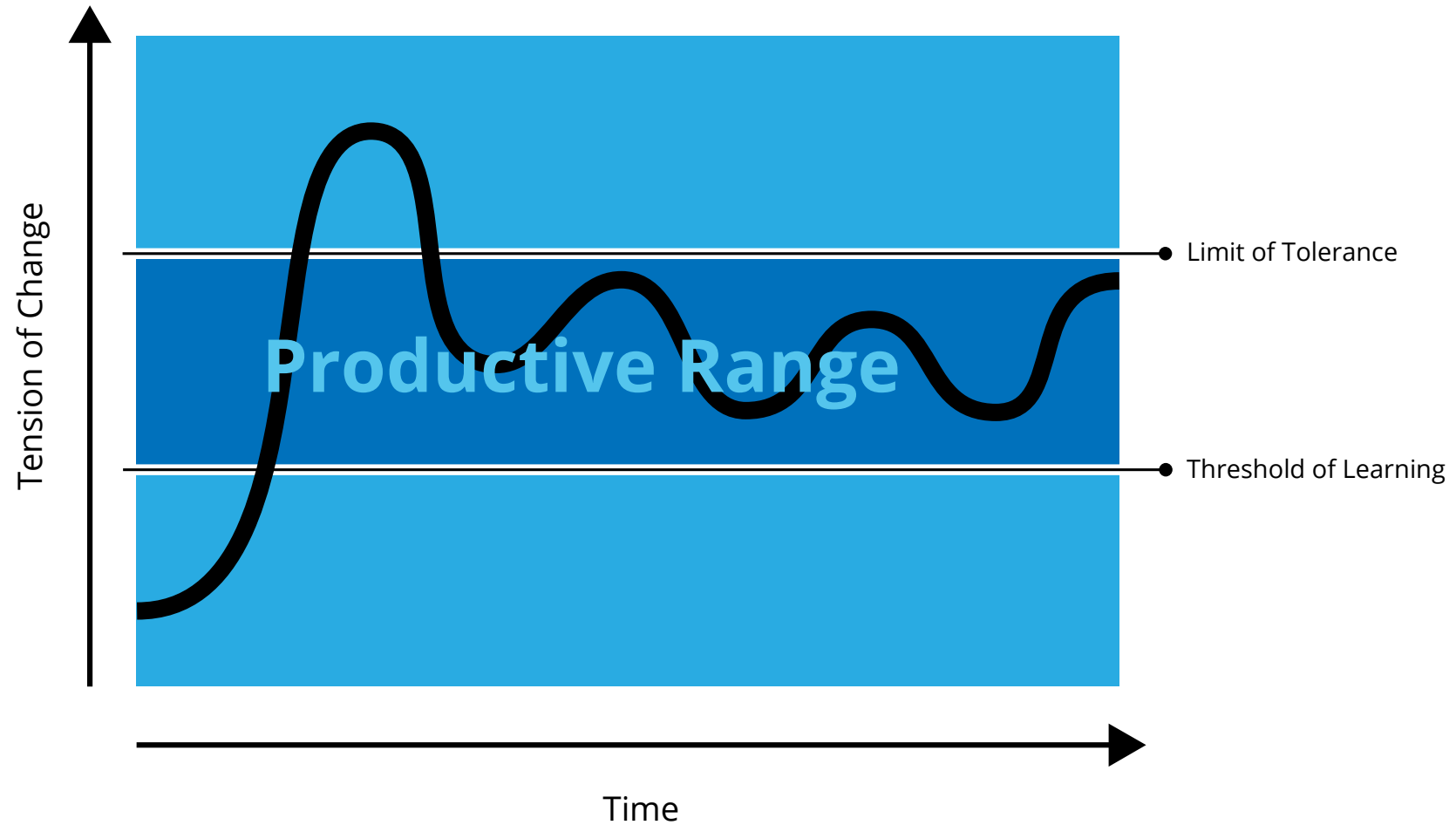


Principle

4

Recognizing and sensing a
productive range of tension

Recognizing and Sensing a Productive Range of Tension



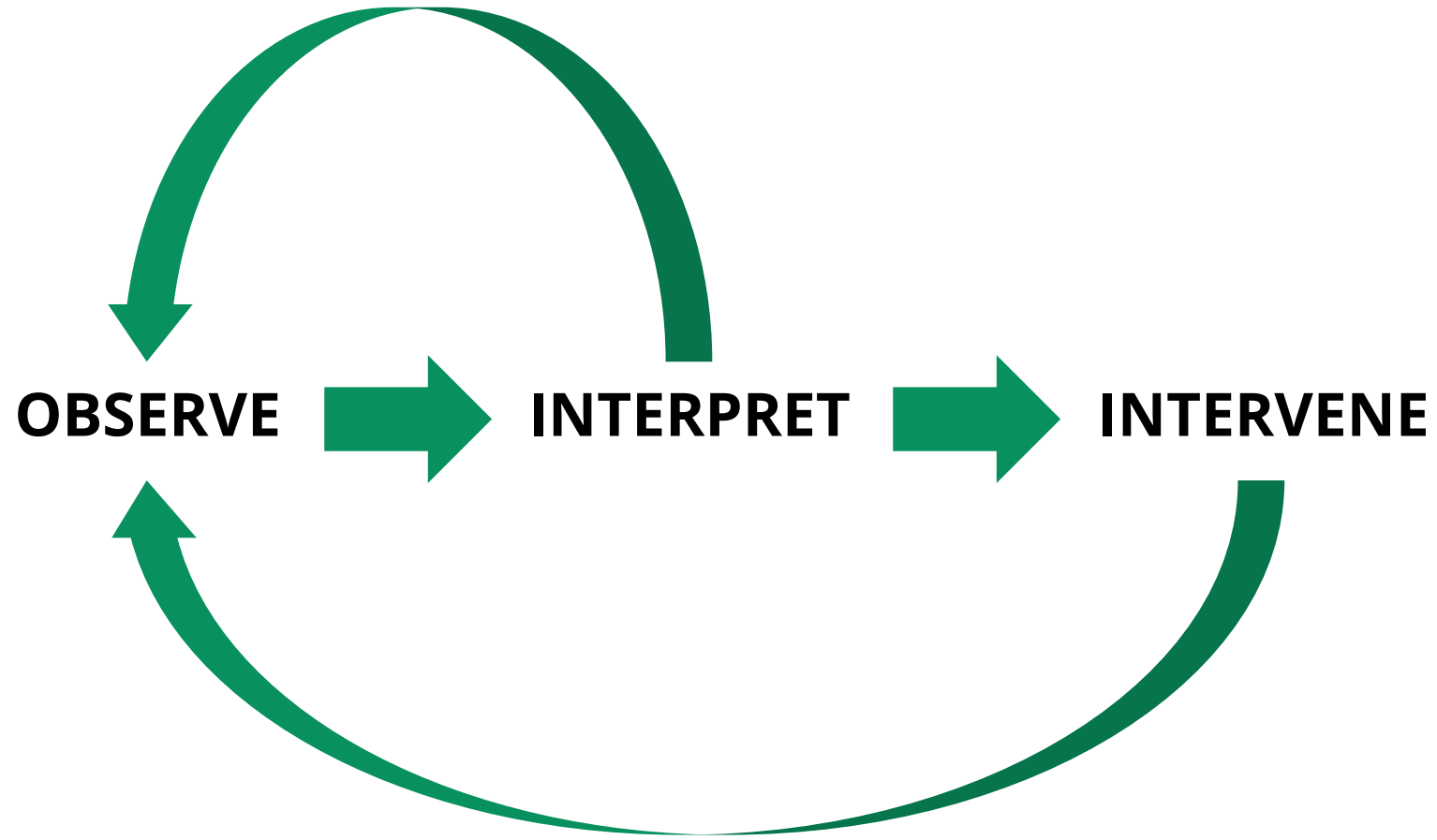
Question for the Viewers



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





Mobilize others to act

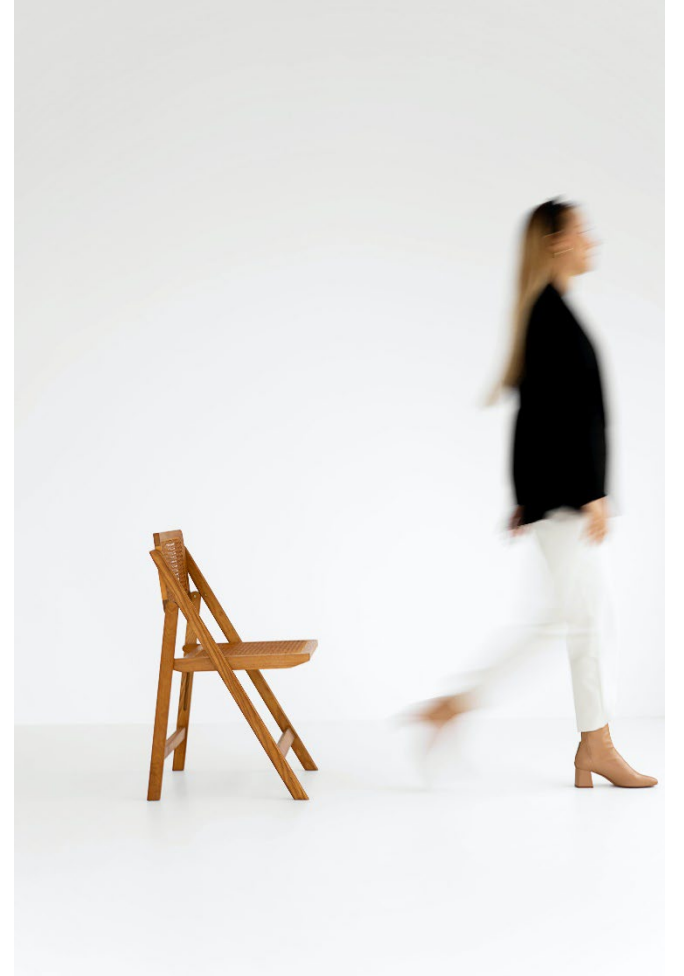
“Give the work back to the people”

- 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



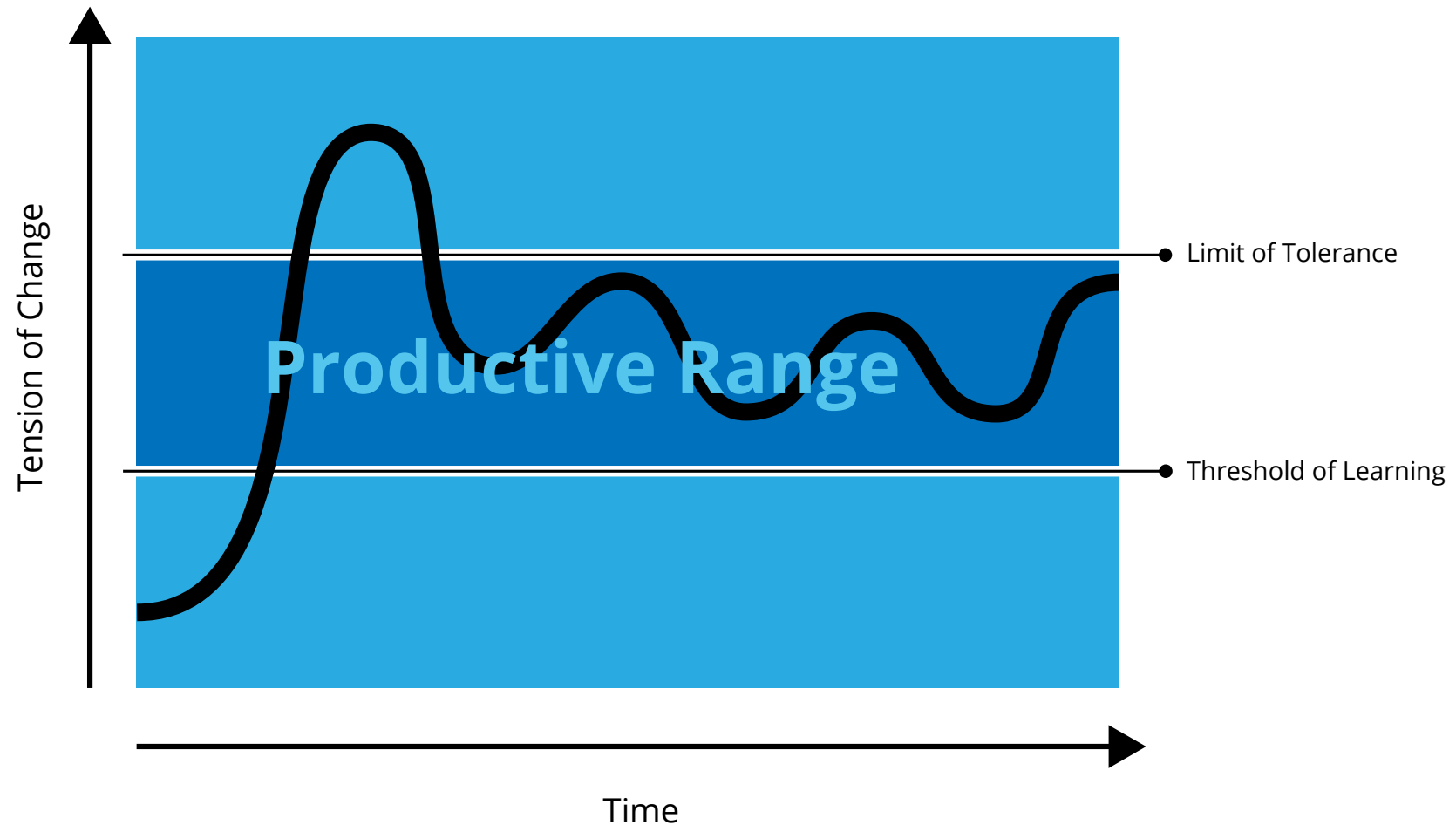
...regulate it to **a point where people are challenged**, but won't run out of the room



Recognizing and Sensing a Productive Range of Tension

Principle

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.**

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



Allene Mares



James Fausto

QUESTIONS?

To ask a question, please click the



icon in the Zoom toolbar to open your Q&A Pod.

Liberating Structures – Innovation through participation

www.liberatingstructures.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 Daloz Parks (2005)

Leadership Without Easy Answers

Ronald Heifetz (1998)

The Practice of Adaptive Leadership

Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009)



Thank you.