

Adaptive Leadership and Leadership Fit

Rural Health Care Services Outreach Program

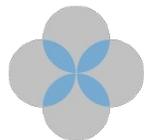
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Eric Baumgartner, GHPC TA Program

Adaptive Leadership

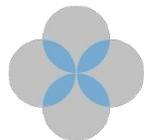
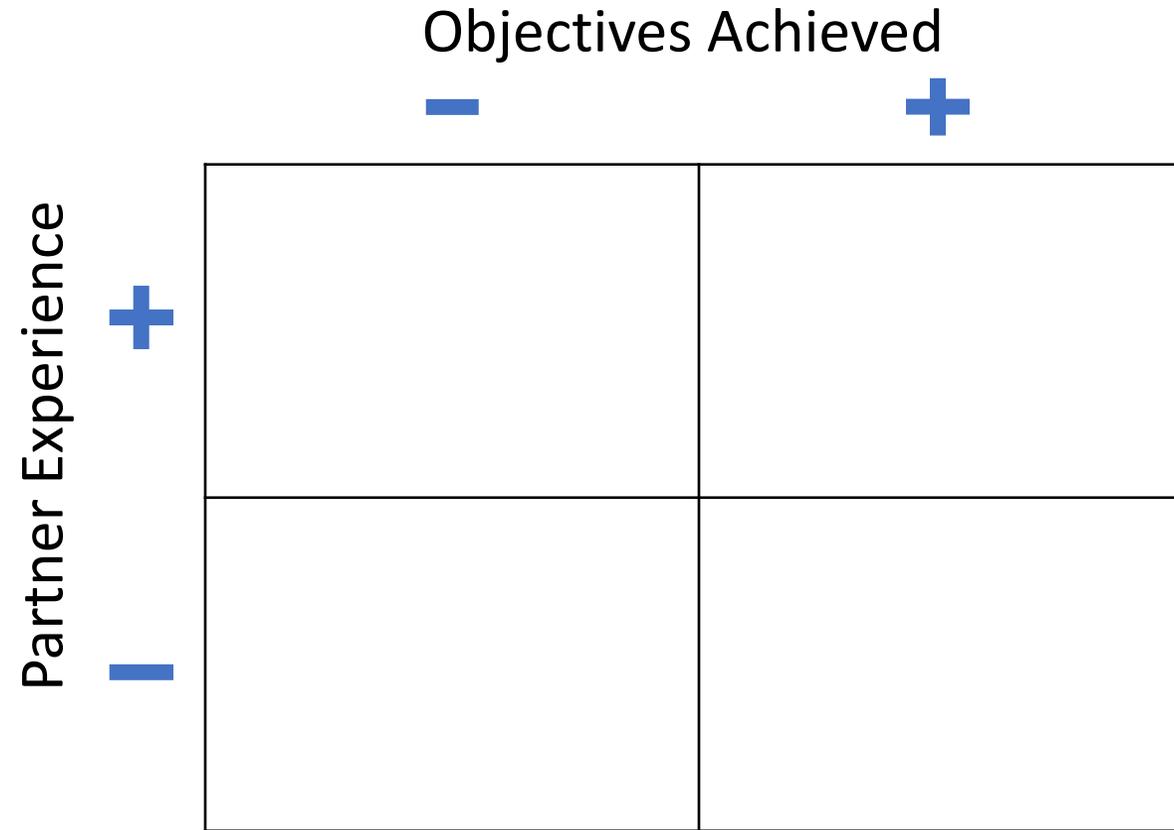
Leadership in the context of:

- **Collaboration** not authority = Adaptive Leadership advances partner cohesion and capacity to do leveraged work
- Complex and actively changing health environment = Adaptive Leadership for solutions for wickedly complex **“Adaptive” Challenges**

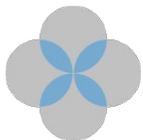
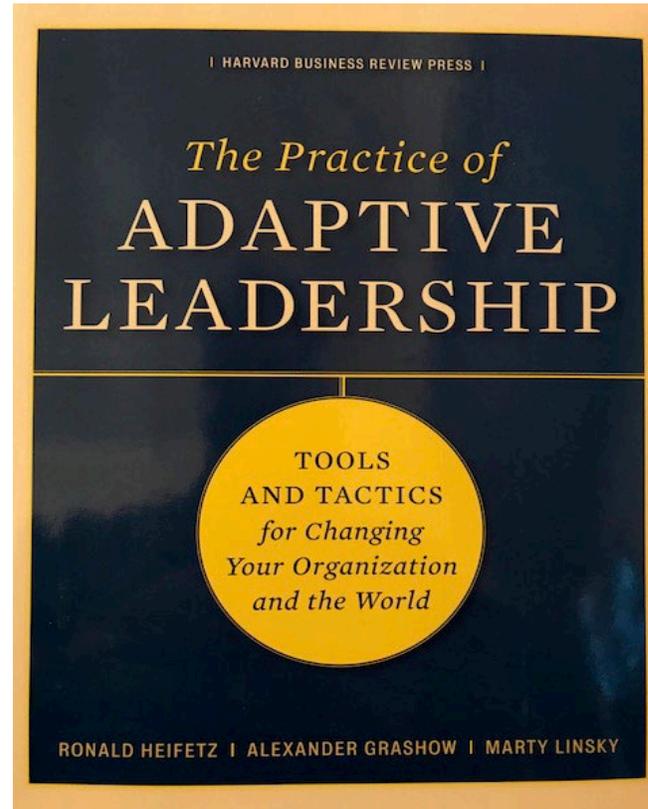


Context #1: Collaboration

Success and Failure = The What and the How



Context #2: Leadership for Adaptive Challenges



Technical vs. Adaptive Challenges

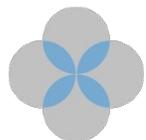
Adapted from *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, Heifetz, R et al

Technical

- May be complex and critically important but problem is clear
- Have known solutions
- Can be resolved by applying current structures and procedures

Adaptive

- Problem definition not clear
- No set of known solutions, requires learning
- Requires shared solutions among stakeholders = collaboration
- Requires changes in peoples'/partners' beliefs, habits and loyalties



Technical vs. Adaptive Challenges

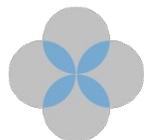
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Technical

- Led by authority
- It's about following protocol
- Compliance
- Quality control
- Linear approach – manufacturing model
- LEAN, Six Sigma
- Often short-term benefit or mitigation
- Example: building a hospital; space mission

Adaptive

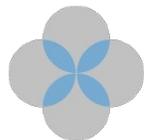
- Led by collaborative influence
- It's about scanning and sense-making to co-create shared deeper understanding of the issue, past and future
- Co-creation among stakeholders of new solutions
- Unpredictable course
- PDSA
- More inclined towards pro-action and strategic value
- Example: population health



Adaptive Leadership Qualities

- Comfortable working with ambiguity
- Connected to purpose - applies both “head” and “heart”
- Constantly scanning and sense-making as first nature
- Understands role and limitations of authoritative approaches vs collaborative
- Experiments with smart risk-taking
- Learns and adapts

Adapted from: Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World*, 2009



Leadership As “Fit”

Adapted from “Leadership as Fit: A Tool to Assess Leadership Capacity”; Eoyang and Olson, 2016, Human Systems Dynamics Institute

- Why do leaders succeed and fail?
- Not just about leadership skill when dealing with complex human systems
- Spectrum of leadership approaches from more authoritative to more collaborative
- Effective leaders apply the right approach to the context = Fit
 - They co-evolve with the environment - structured and demanding when needed or more open to shared exploration when more appropriate

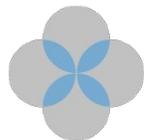


Leadership As Fit

Adapted from “Leadership as Fit: A Tool to Assess Leadership Capacity”; Eoyang and Olson, 2016, Human Systems Dynamics Institute

Adaptive Leaders understand the importance of:

- *discerning technical from adaptive challenges, and*
- *“fitting” their leadership approach to best support the stakeholders*



Leadership Perspectives

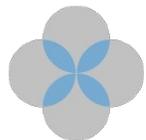
From “Leadership as Fit”, (2016) Eoyang, G.
Human Systems Dynamics Institute,

“Traditional”

- Control (Authority)
- Predictability
- Accountability
- Reliability
- Stability
- Maintenance

Complex Adaptive

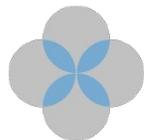
- Emergence
- Surprise
- Innovation
- Creativity
- Patterns (sense-making of the complex systems)
- Creative Destruction



Leadership Fit Examples

adapted in part: Human Systems Dynamics Institute

- Would you want a wild, crazy friend running a nuclear power plant?
- Do you want a tight-laced colleague to lead new market opportunities?



Getting Unstuck with Adaptive Leadership

Example #1

- Members of your Consortium are not engaged. Interest is waning. Fewer and fewer stakeholders attend the meetings. Only a couple of partners are participating in the planning.
- What do you do?

Example #1:

Technical (Transactional) Approaches

- Send additional email reminders of meetings
- Remind participants of their responsibilities as staff or as partners
- Shame them
- Threaten expulsion

Example #1:

Adaptive Approaches

- Be genuinely curious about the underlying causes
- Explore honestly with partners why loss of interest and/or trust in the collaborative.
 - ✓ Has opportunity lost appeal?
 - ✓ Don't see enough effective action?
 - ✓ Perceive power imbalance/low trust?
- Engage with partners to co-create the strategies that all would value and get you unstuck – esp. if you need to evolve!
- Implement strategies earnestly
- Have honest feedback and adjustment
- Reinforce the refreshed mission and culture

Example #1: Getting Unstuck with Adaptive Leadership → Leadership Fit

Technical (Transactional) Approaches

- Send additional email reminders of meetings
- Reminded partners of responsibilities in their MOU
- Shame them
- Threaten expulsion

Adaptive Approaches

- Be genuinely curious about the underlying causes
- Explore honestly with partners why loss of interest and/or trust in the collaborative
 - ✓ Has opportunity lost appeal?
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Getting Unstuck with Adaptive Leadership

Example #2

- You have tried mightily to both retain staff and recruit new hires and still find yourself with a workforce shortage.
- What do you do?

Example #2:

Technical (Transactional) Approaches

- Beg staff not to leave
- Post existing Position Description on recruitment websites
- Try to recruit away from other, sometimes partner, organizations
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Example #2: Getting Unstuck with Adaptive Leadership

Adaptive Approaches

- Be genuinely curious about the underlying causes
- Explore honestly internally and with some external partners why loss of staff and/or failure to recruit
 - ✓ Review exit interviews – What are reflections on reasons for leaving and how to change?
 - ✓ Consider entrance interviews – What is appealing and how to accentuate?
 - ✓ Do your current position descriptions reflect the real opportunities for new hires?
 - ✓ Is there an organizational brand perception issue?
 - ✓ Are you failing to fully anticipate where to find like-minded people?
 - ✓
 - ✓
- Engage to do honest reflection and then co-create the strategies that get you unstuck – esp. if you need to evolve!
- Implement strategies earnestly
- Have honest feedback and adjustment

Example #2: Getting Unstuck with Adaptive Leadership → Leadership Fit

Technical (Transactional) Approaches

- Ask staff not to leave
- Post existing Position Descriptions on recruitment websites
- Try to recruit away from other organizations
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Adaptive Approaches

- Be genuinely curious about the underlying causes
- Explore honestly internally and with some external partners why loss of staff and failure to recruit
 - ✓ Does opportunity of employment have repelling aspects (culture?)?
 - ✓ Does the opportunity not seem appealing enough?
 - ✓ Do your current position descriptions reflect the real opportunities for new hires?
 - ✓ Is there an organizational brand perception issue?
 - ✓ Are you failing to fully anticipate where to find like-minded people?
- Engage to do honest reflection and then co-create the strategies that get you unstuck – esp. if you need to evolve!
- Implement strategies earnestly
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Your Real, Sticky Challenges

- Efforts towards achieving population health through consortium collaboration present sticky, complex challenges that can limit progress
- May have been dealing with a challenge for a while
- Tried solutions but still there
- Might even have had consultants to try to help

- Write down your sticky challenge in a sentence or two
- Think for a moment and list what is driving the challenge
- Think about what you have tried to solve it and why it was insufficient

Unstick Your Challenges

- With your Sticky Issue in mind:
 - Reflect with others and bullet:
 - The **REAL** underlying Drivers and Influences on the issue
 - Ideas for appropriate Technical responses to apply/re-apply, AND
 - Ideas for effective Adaptive responses to effectively address the underlying drivers
 - Be excited about how you together are generating new ideas through reflection and embracing what you didn't consider before to now get unstuck
 - Adopt together this reflective, adaptive approach to leadership fit as your core leadership strategy going forward
 - **Remember: Adaptive leadership is a Team Sport – co-discover and co-create with partners, stakeholders, esp. those with lived experience**

Making Adaptive Leadership Your Core

- Leadership skills improve with constant reflective practice, learning and ongoing internalization
- Routinely bring reflection to your daily work
- **Remember: Adaptive leadership is a Team Sport – co-discover and co-create with partners, stakeholders, esp. those with lived experience**
- Excite the leadership inclinations of teammates and partners
- Access the boundless resources online for adaptive leadership
- Ask your TA provider to help you practice (or to grab me)

Thank You