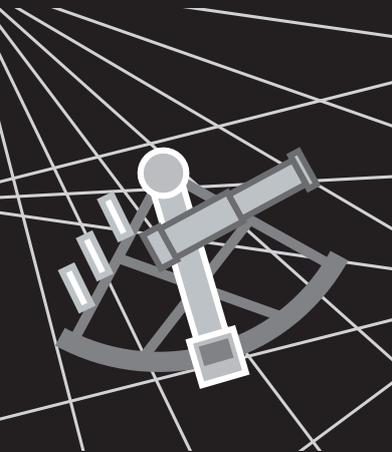


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*The Centre for Social Impact believes we need effective leadership in our social purpose ecosystem to catalyse change for a better world. We believe that it doesn't matter where you work in the organisation; everyone has a role to play in creating positive social change. This means that leadership is shared by everyone. The Navigator is here to provide different ways of understanding leadership across your system, your organisation and the self so that you can find own path to practicing effective leadership.*

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## THE CHANGE COLLECTION

*The purpose of The Change Collection is to build the capacity of everyone working towards a more effective social impact system. The collection provides the foundation knowledge and tools for social change.*

### THE CHANGE COLLECTION INCLUDES:

- *The Compass: your guide to social impact measurement*
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- *The Navigator: Your guide to leadership for social purpose*

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# FOREWORD

At Macquarie, we believe the best investment an individual can make is in themselves. This maxim is just as important for people working within the social purpose sector and why we are pleased to present the latest in CSI's Change Collection: The Navigator: Your guide to leadership for social purpose.

Leaders in the social purpose ecosystem face unique challenges and we hope this guide helps shine a light on one of the keys to achieving social impact, that of effective leadership.

It provides a comprehensive, critical review of literature on leadership for social purpose to draw out:

- Key concepts, questions and principles of leadership for social purpose organisations;
- Challenges and facilitators of good leadership in social purpose organisations; and
- How effective leadership can be delivered at different levels to achieve social purpose.

We hope this will help people working in social purpose to understand how they can deliver effective leadership at all levels of their work, including systems leadership, organisational leadership and, importantly, self-leadership.

It is also an example of how we at the Macquarie Group Foundation can support positive, meaningful and sustainable systems change for the benefit of our community, particularly for those working to assist those who are disadvantaged due to complex, long-term systemic issues.

We thank the Centre for Social Impact for its work in researching and producing this guide.

*Lisa George*

*Global Head, Macquarie Group Foundation*

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# INTRODUCTION

*In this chapter you will find:*

- Who this guide is for
- How to use the guide

## WHAT IS THIS GUIDE ABOUT AND WHO IS IT FOR?

The Navigator is your guide to leadership for social purpose. At the Centre for Social Impact (CSI), we believe that effective leadership for social purpose is one of the keys to achieving a better world, where people have the opportunity to achieve their goals free of discrimination and social inequality, where complex social problems are addressed, communities are diverse and thriving, and where organisations across sectors work together to grow positive social impact.

*What does great leadership look like in the context of social purpose?*

*What are the factors that enable great leadership?*

The guide draws on a wealth of resources including the latest and seminal ideas on leadership. It is intended for emerging and established leaders across the social purpose ecosystem, from not-for-profits through social enterprises to socially responsible businesses.

The guide is an accessible publication for anyone who wants to be a catalyst for social purpose and effect change at a complex, systems level. You do not need to be in a position of formal leadership or power to use this guide; it has been developed for everyone working towards the creation of positive social impact in Australia. We believe that everyone can develop the leadership capacities to make a difference.

This guide can help you if you are:

- A senior leader of a social purpose organisation
- Moving across sectors into the social purpose ecosystem
- Developing leadership capacity in your social purpose organisation
- Part of a collaborative network of organisations, or
- In any role in the social purpose ecosystem but hoping to embark on a leadership career.

This guide is written with some of the unique and common leadership challenges in the social purpose ecosystem in mind. Within the social purpose ecosystem, we face:

- Complex and rapidly changing contexts
- Multiple stakeholders
- Uncertainty of funding sources
- Mission-led and values-based organisations
- A purpose often focused on wicked problems
- A volunteer workforce
- Collaborative networks rather than competitive advantage.

The guide will help you understand how you can deliver effective leadership for social purpose in your organisation, your community, and your life. We will also look at some of the challenges and facilitators of good leadership in social purpose organisations. The Navigator offers different ways of understanding leadership so that you can find different ways of practicing leadership.

We call this guide The Navigator, because leadership often comes down to two questions:

1. 'Where do we wish to go?'
2. 'How might we best get there?'

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Leadership can be thought of as a hologram. The most complete view of a hologram comes from looking at it from as many angles as possible. The same applies to leadership -- the more views or perspectives you adopt, the more complete your view of leadership. In this guide we introduce you to a range of perspectives and theories. These theories should be understood as providing different insights into leadership. There is no 'right' theory or 'right' approach.

The guide is divided into four chapters. Each chapter looks at a facet of leadership. These facets are integrative, non-linear and present different challenges.

**Chapter 1, The Leadership Challenge**, considers the leadership challenge within the social purpose ecosystem.

*In this chapter you will:*

- Recognise how the concept of leadership has changed over time
- Consider new ways of thinking about leadership

**Chapter 2, Navigating the System**, is represented by a telescope. Telescopes allow us to take a long view over time and space. The long view allows us to see interconnections, positive and negative feedback loops, and the unintended consequences of our actions. Also, just like a telescope, we use our understanding of systems leadership to draw out patterns and connections.

*In this chapter you will:*

- Understand the following strategies and how you can use them to help social purpose organisations navigate systems and complexity - Systems thinking - Complexity leadership - Appreciative Inquiry

**Chapter 3, Navigating the Organisation**, is depicted by a framed landscape. Pictures of a landscape provide us with an overall sense of a particular environment (or organisation) -- and we can zoom in or out, or pan across. In this chapter we consider a range of perspectives relevant to organisational leadership. We will talk about shared leadership, visioning, trust, enabling leadership in others, and capturing a sense of purpose and vision.

*In this chapter you will:*

- Learn how to implement a culture of shared leadership throughout your organisation
- Explore what it means to be an ethical organisation

**Chapter 4, Navigating the Self**, is where we turn the focus to you as a leader. We use the metaphor of a mirror, because underpinning effective leadership is a capacity for critical self-reflection and self-knowledge.

A central thread through each of these chapters is the idea of ethical leadership. It is the foundation stone upon which leadership is built. Without ethical leadership practice, we are left with toxic, or worse, despotic leadership.

*In this chapter you will:*

- Look at how to build a strong inner foundation for working with others to achieve positive outcomes
- Learn how to develop a reflective practice

Each of these chapters gives step-by-step guidelines and exercises on how to implement these elements of leadership in your organisation.

# PHRASE BOOK: THE LOCAL LANGUAGE

- **Adaptive challenges:** Complex problems that are difficult to clearly define, have many interdependencies and are multi-causal<sup>1</sup>.
- **Formal leader:** An individual with positional authority.
- **Informal leader:** Leaders that can emerge from anywhere within the organisation who may not necessarily hold a position of authority.
- **Leadership:** 'the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives <sup>2</sup>.'
- **Management:** the set of activities required to ensure that an organization will reliably produce results, especially as it grows larger and/or becomes more complex. Management's core activities include goal setting and budgeting; establishing systems, organizational structures, and processes; and monitoring performance and problem-solving.
- **Positional authority:** A position of formal or official authority, for example Manager, CEO or Director.
- **Social purpose ecosystem:** All those who deliver, or support the delivery of, services or programs to improve the lives of individuals or communities. It is an increasingly mixed ecosystem where government and for-profit, not-for-profit, and philanthropic organisations, as well as individuals, work either separately or together towards improved social outcomes.
- **Stakeholders:** Any group or individual who can affect, or is affected by, an organisation or its activities. Also, any individual or group that can help define value propositions for the organisation.
- **Systems thinking:** Understanding a whole system – e.g. the social system – by examining the links and interactions between the components.
- **Wicked problem:** An issue that emerges from complex systems, with many possible cause-and-effect pathways and numerous people and parts to the system. The behaviour of one part will affect the behaviour of others and there may be intended and unintended consequences<sup>3</sup>.

# 1. THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE

*'The 21st century will be the century of the social sector organization. The more economy, money, and information become global, the more community will matter. ...The leadership, competence, and management of the social sector ... organization will thus largely determine the values, the vision, the cohesion, and the performance of the 21st century society.'*

– Peter Drucker<sup>4</sup>

## **In this chapter you will:**

- Recognise how the concept of leadership has changed over time
- Consider new ways of thinking about leadership

Leadership is a key issue in every organisation and every collaborative network. In a survey of over 7,000 HR and business leaders from over 130 countries, 89% of organisations said leadership was a critical factor in their organisation's future<sup>5</sup>. Leadership provides a foundation for organisational culture(s), as well as an organisation's success or failure.

This means there is often pressure on people in positions of formal power (e.g. CEOs, Directors, and managers) to be everything to everyone and to have all the answers. If you are in a leadership position, you may have experienced some of these paradoxical demands:

1. To maintain 'a strong sense of self while simultaneously maintaining humility'
2. To maintain 'control while simultaneously letting go of control'
3. To stress 'continuity while simultaneously stressing change'
4. To pursue socially responsible business practices to enhance profit while simultaneously pursuing social responsibility for ethical reasons<sup>6</sup>
5. To maintain hope and optimism in the midst of anxiety and complexity
6. To encourage experimentation and innovation in safe and stable ways.

While most of us agree that good leadership is fundamental, there is no settled formula that ensures and enables it. We are urged to build and manage efficient and high quality systems and processes -- and also to innovate, inspire and 'disrupt', but how? There are thousands of leadership sources in the scholarly, practitioner and popular literature<sup>7</sup> and attempts to simplify the field often have the opposite result. The 'leadership industry' is big and growing, with 'countless leadership centres, institutes, programs, courses, seminars, workshops, experiences, trainers, books, blogs, articles, websites, webinars, videos, conferences, consultants, and coaches claiming to teach people – usually for money – how to lead.'<sup>8</sup> Yet many short-term leadership courses only have a short-term impact.<sup>9</sup> As a result, 'quick-fix' leadership interventions can fail to bring about meaningful change, with people typically returning to their default behaviours and ways of operating.<sup>10</sup> Often deeper change to organisational cultures (and to our understanding of leadership) is needed.

Leadership is also strongly embedded in our cultural imagination, with the archetype of the ideal, heroic leader portrayed in fairy tales, books, films and plays. We bring these ideas with us to work, perhaps believing that leadership is something that we can only participate in once we have a title, power and authority. Our experience tells us otherwise: we may have worked alongside influential people who do not occupy a position of authority. But we may also have encountered people offering effective leadership who do not fit the archetypal mould, who may achieve results through quiet diligence, collaboration and serving others, rather than charisma and command. It seems that there are as many leadership 'blends' as there are leaders.

Whatever our beliefs and ideas, the fact remains that good leadership is necessary in all organisational forms; from families to start-ups, from small to multinational businesses and in all social purpose organisations and networks of organisations. Regardless of the organisational type, all groups benefit from consciously creating a leadership strategy that best suits their culture, needs and circumstances. Effective leadership is at the heart and mind of any organisation.

*'It's best to frame leadership in terms of the collective challenges we face together: what new approach do we need to create change?'*

– Doug Taylor, *Uniting*

## A NEW ERA

There is no doubt we are in a time of great flux. Many of the taken-for-granted areas of our lives are being questioned as we face the geo-political, social, environmental and economic challenges of the 21st century. Globalisation, financialisation, environmental vulnerability and the emergence of new economic powerhouses have brought new challenges. In the political realm, we have seen fragmentation, nationalism, and geopolitical tensions. It may be that we are witnessing a transformation more profound and far-reaching than the Industrial Revolution, as the world has transformed from the industrial age, through the knowledge era, to an age of uncertainty. The World Economic Forum has named this period 'the fourth Industrial Revolution'.<sup>11</sup>

We have observed how technological change has progressed -- in successive waves, growing exponentially -- so that 'in a few decades, the world [will] be unrecognizably different'.<sup>12</sup> Much of this change has been discontinuous, resulting in paradigm shifts such as in the way technology is used, with far-reaching implications. On the positive side, information technologies have become more accessible across the globe, even in remote and small-scale settings. For example, health care is being transformed by new technologies. However, there are always unintended as well as intended consequences associated with any use of technology, giving rise to health, environmental and ethical concerns.

The work environment has changed from a 9-5 structured hierarchy to a complex, fluid dynamic enabled by technology. The workplace is now rich with dynamism, diversity, and multiple perspectives. Women are represented in greater numbers in the workforce, particularly in the social purpose ecosystem<sup>13</sup>. Yet we have also seen a growth in youth unemployment, the replacement of secure full-time jobs with precarious employment arrangements, and a polarisation of labour markets<sup>14</sup>. Philosopher Zygmunt Bauman has labelled these times 'liquid' -- we are moving into an era where routines, behaviours and patterns of thinking can no longer hold their shape, and long-term action is difficult<sup>15</sup>.

What this means is that leaders must grapple with chaotic and often uncertain contexts. Paradoxically, it is in times such as these that we expect leadership to provide a clear vision and direction for the future. The 'reality' for leadership has changed, with leaders needing to navigate between earlier paradigms of stability and growth to those of change and complexity; from control, to empowerment; from competition, to collaboration; from uniformity to diversity; from self-centredness to higher purpose; and from heroism to humility.

For organisations to survive this era of increased uncertainty, ambiguity, disruption and change, they need to innovate, adapt and develop new capabilities<sup>16</sup>. This requires rethinking our approach to leadership. Increasingly leadership is being thought of as a 'shared social process' that *occurs throughout organisations*<sup>17</sup>. This represents a transformation in the way that many organisations approach leadership.

*'There has been a paradigm shift in all sectors, and the leadership challenge is to articulate this new territory. In the 80s and 90s, having a predictive strategy for an organisation was expected, like a map for the organisation. Now the pace has changed. Strategies need to be emergent, and more like a compass.'*

Jayne Meyer-Tucker, JMT inc

## FROM LEADERS TO LEADERSHIP

For centuries, leadership was understood in terms of the way 'leaders' in positions of authority exerted power in relation to others. Individuals who did not possess an official title were treated as passive followers of the 'Leader'. Early leadership work focused on the innate traits or characteristics of individual leaders, who were typically portrayed as charismatic, self-confident, determined and sociable individuals. This 'trait approach' to leadership even pointed to particular characteristics such as height, extraversion and verbal fluency as being instrumental to effective leadership.<sup>18</sup>

In the 1980s, ideas around leadership evolved towards seeing leadership as the interaction between a 'leader' and their 'followers' -- what has been termed a 'process' approach<sup>19</sup>. This approach saw leadership as 'available to everyone'<sup>20</sup>, as it entailed a suite of behaviours that could be learnt. Several theories emerged to analyse leadership processes taking into account the needs and characteristics of followers and the specifics of the context. You may be

familiar with perspectives such as situational leadership, contingency theory, path–goal theory, and leader–member exchange theory, all of which focused on the building blocks for effective leadership<sup>21</sup>. These approaches have provided us with useful insights, and reinforce the multifaceted nature of leadership.

At the same time a distinction between ‘transactional’ and ‘transformational’ leadership emerged. Transactional leadership is understood as a reciprocal exchange between a formal leader and their followers: if you do this or that, you will be rewarded in some way. Transformational leadership, on the other hand, involves exercising leadership by encouraging and inspiring others to bring about major, positive changes by ‘moving group members beyond their self-interests and toward the good of the group, organisation or society’<sup>22</sup>. Transformational leaders are often strong role models whose influence is based on inspiration, motivation and ethical leadership.<sup>23</sup>

Transformational leadership may resonate with many working in the social purpose ecosystem, but the idea of leadership resting in the hands of one person has been increasingly questioned. It has become clear that in a world where problems and their underlying systems are increasingly complex, ‘no one person will ever have all the answers.’<sup>24</sup> As such, many long-held ideas about leadership have needed revision. We all have important perspectives, experiences and ideas that may help a group or organisation find positive ways forward. Even dissident voices may provide critical questions or insights,<sup>25</sup> or introduce us to alternative perspectives. Leadership can therefore be considered a ‘collective accomplishment’, emerging out of ‘joint action, interactions and relationships’ amongst collaborators<sup>26</sup>.

*‘We need to deconstruct the mythology around leadership. There is so much in our culture and tradition that takes you down the path of seeing leadership as being something that’s innate to a special class of people. This is elitist and disempowering for the rest of us who have enormous potential to lead.’*

– Doug Taylor, *Uniting*

## WHAT DOES LEADERSHIP LOOK LIKE IN THESE ‘LIQUID’ TIMES?

We have evolved from a top–down, individualistic, heroic notion of leadership to a collaborative, shared, systems approach to leadership.

Leadership is no longer just the responsibility of leaders with formal authority.

Leadership is accessible to everyone, at all levels of an organisation or collaborative network.

Those in positions of authority need to see the leadership capacities of those around them as a central resource to be grown and developed well.

## DEFINING LEADERSHIP

There are many different definitions of leadership, depending on whether the focus is on politics, religion or organisations. It is a highly sought–after and highly valued commodity. The concept of leadership has been compared to the concept of quality<sup>27</sup> – something that cannot be precisely defined or measured but which forms the essence of (organisational) life. Like quality, we know it when we see it. And, like poor quality, we know poor leadership when we see it.

Leadership can be understood as:

‘the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives<sup>28</sup>.’

In this way, leadership is ‘a verb rather than a noun; it is not something that an individual has but something that he or she does<sup>29</sup>.’ In this context, leadership:

- Can come from anywhere (or anyone);
- Is emergent, interactive, dynamic and responsible; and
- Produces positive outcomes<sup>30</sup>.

Leadership can be demonstrated by anyone who contributes to influencing organisations, initiatives, sectors and complex problems in their directions and outcomes. Those practicing leadership are catalysts and conversation starters, who use their behaviour as an example.

Any consideration of leadership needs to grapple with the issue of power. Power is essentially a resource that people draw on when seeking to influence others. It can manifest as authority systems, rewards, coercion or even access to information (characteristics of a position) or through the characteristics of a person -- their expertise, charisma or status. But early management theorist Mary Parker Follett reminds us of the value of expanding our view of power, in observing that 'leadership is not defined by the exercise of power, but by the **capacity to increase the sense of power among those led**<sup>31</sup>.

Formal 'leaders' - individuals with positional authority - will always be part of the leadership story. Indeed, they have a critical role: for leadership to function well, the organisation must have 'clear patterns of authority' including systems of accountability and communication<sup>32</sup>. Importantly, those in positions of authority are best placed to enable and encourage a culture of leadership, so that leadership is the product of a culture, rather than a position description or personality trait.<sup>33</sup>

The Higher Education Research Institute developed a 'Social Change Model of Leadership', in which three spheres of leadership -- each associated with a set of core values -- were identified:

1. Individual values of Consciousness of Self, Congruence, and Commitment;
2. Group values of Collaboration, Common Purpose, and Controversy with Civility; and
3. Society/Community value of Citizenship.<sup>34</sup>

These spheres of leadership are interrelated, drawing on foundational values as individuals, group members, and as part of a whole. This is what social purpose leadership looks like: flowing in and out of dynamic identities, while serving the overall system.

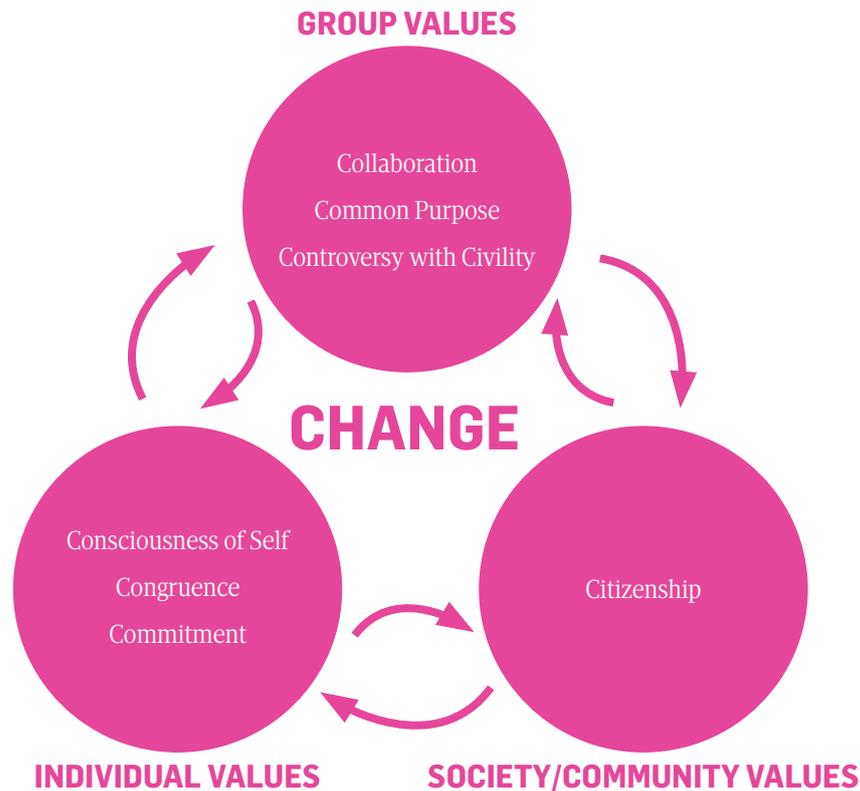


Figure 1. The Social Change Model of Leadership Development.<sup>35</sup>

*'A leader [is] one who is able to effect positive change for the betterment of others, the community and society. All people, in other words, are potential leaders. Moreover, the process of leadership cannot be described simply in terms of the behaviour of an individual; rather, leadership involves collaborative relationships that lead to collective action grounded in the shared values of people who work together to effect positive change*

D.C. Roberts<sup>36</sup>.

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT?

You will probably have seen much potential for overlap between the concepts of management and leadership. Indeed, many managers exercise leadership, while good leaders often have to be good managers, in order to gain the trust and respect of their followers. Management is the set of activities required to ensure that an organization will reliably produce results, especially as it grows larger and/or becomes more complex. Management's core activities include goal setting and budgeting; establishing systems, organizational structures, and processes; and monitoring performance and problem-solving. Some key differences between management and leadership are highlighted in Table 1 below.

Both leadership and management are important for organisations.

Table 1: Comparing Leadership and Management<sup>37</sup>

	Management	Leadership
Direction	Planning and budgeting Keeping track of the bottom line	Creating vision and strategy Keeping eye on the horizon
Alignment	Organising and staffing Directing and controlling Creating boundaries	Enabling shared culture and values Helping others grow Reducing boundaries
Relationships	Focusing on tangibles – producing/selling goods and services Relationships based on position power	Focus on people – inspiring and motivating Influence based on personal power
Personal qualities	Emotional control Expert mind Talking Conformity Insight into organisation	Emotional connectedness Open mindedness Listening Courage and non-conformity Self-awareness
Outcomes	Maintains stability Builds culture of efficiency	Enables change Builds culture of integrity

## MORE TOOLS AND RESOURCES

There are several academic journals dedicated to the study of leadership, including The Leadership Quarterly, Journal of Leadership Studies, European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology and the International Journal of Management, in addition to practitioner publications such as the California Management Review and the Harvard Business Review.

If you are interested in reading more about the history or evolution of leadership theories, we recommend:

Bryman, A., Collinson, D., Grint, K., Jackson, B. and Uhl-Bien, M. (2011) *The Sage Handbook of Leadership*, Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Northouse, P. (2010) *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (5th ed.), Thousand Oaks: Sage.

# 2. NAVIGATING SYSTEMS AND COMPLEXITY

## *In this chapter you will:*

- Understand the following strategies and how you can use them to help social purpose organisations navigate systems and complexity
  - Systems thinking
  - Systems leadership
  - Adaptive leadership
  - Complexity leadership
  - Appreciative Inquiry

Do you remember the 'barrel of fun' ride in the funhouse of an amusement park? It's the revolving barrel that keeps turning and you need to make it through to the other side. Your entry needs to be timed well, and you must use quick, sure-footed steps to ensure you don't fall down.

Imagine, then, if the barrel of fun occasionally moved its position, so that it was changing its location at the same time as it was turning. You wouldn't know where you were going to exit, and you would come out feeling dizzy and disoriented.

This can be a bit like working in the social purpose ecosystem: not only are you trying to stay upright amidst the 'spinning' of your own organisation, you are also working in the context of an unpredictable and constantly changing system. Systems, whether local or global, often challenge and confound leaders interested in bringing about lasting and positive social change.

When we understand systems we see the world differently, and are better able to address complex and dynamic problems. Big-picture systems such as national economies, health care systems, markets or political systems all have sub-systems, which themselves have interconnected component parts.

Australia faces a number of challenges in social purpose leadership. Significant among these is the fact that those contributing to leadership in such contexts are often caught up in the **challenge of addressing our complex social problems, and are often trying to do so in a resource-constrained environment**. Social purpose leaders need to manage up, out, and down across organisations, sectors and schools of thought. Leaders often face 'wicked problems', which are complex problems that are difficult to clearly define, have many interdependencies and are multi-causal.<sup>38</sup>

Adopting a systems mindset changes not only how we think about a problem in the first place, but what the solutions might look like. For leaders, this may mean letting go of the need to find quick, 'definitive' answers. In a complex, interconnected world it is simply unrealistic to expect heroic leaders to come up with solutions to problems and take organisations forward on their own.

## **WHAT DOES LEADERSHIP LOOK LIKE IN THE CONTEXT OF A COMPLEX PROBLEM OR SYSTEM?**

*We must 'think systemically and act long term... Outstanding leaders achieve through a combination of systemic thinking and acting for the long term benefit of their organisation. They recognise the interconnected nature of the organisation...'*

- *The Work Foundation*<sup>39</sup>

### *An example of Systems Leadership - 90 Homes for 90 Lives*

Project 90/90 was a collaboration between government, community, corporate and philanthropic stakeholders to create a long term strategic approach to a complex problem: over thirty years of entrenched homelessness in inner city Sydney. There were at least 90 people sleeping on the street in the Woolloomooloo area and the objective of the project was to find a collective impact community housing solution for them all.

The Project partners included UBS, City of Sydney, United Way, Freehills, Neami Way2Home, Colliers International, and Bridge Housing. Each partner brought different skills and assets to the coalition. Doug Taylor was CEO of United Way during the project. His role was to coordinate the cross-sectoral coalition of agencies. In carrying out this role, Doug had to navigate the system. He found the following leadership capacities helpful:

- Recognising and utilising the leadership capital of others with more formal power, for example business and political leaders
- Focusing on purpose: finding 90 homes for 90 people sleeping on the streets
- Creating cohesion across the coalition of partners from the business, community and government sectors. This included resolving conflict and directly confronting the issues that inevitably arose.

In the midst of this navigation, Doug found that his most important leadership contribution was keeping people focused on the overarching vision of the project. He played a 'backbone' support role translating across sectors, as each sector had its own language and imperatives.

What was achieved:

- \$3.5 million was raised through the NSW Government and 83 people were housed out of the area by Bridge Housing by 2014. This project has been independently evaluated and has achieved impressive health outcomes and sustained over 80% of long term tenancies.
- The Project has inspired the '50 Lives 50 Homes' projects in Brisbane and Perth.

## SYSTEMS THINKING

Within the social purpose ecosystem it is typically beyond the scope of individual organisations - regardless of sector or resourcing - to address complex social issues or generate social change at scale. The system as a whole can be very different from the sum of its parts. Complex systems have the following characteristics. They are:<sup>40</sup>

- *Constantly changing*
- *Tightly coupled and interconnected*, with the various 'actors' interacting strongly with one another and with the natural world
- *History dependent*; many actions are irreversible (you can't unscramble an egg)
- *Governed by feedback*; our decisions alter the state of the world, causing changes in nature and triggering others to act, thus giving rise to a new situation, which then influences our next decisions
- *Nonlinear cause-effect relationships*
- *Self-organizing*; small, random perturbations are amplified and moulded by the feedback structure, generating patterns in space and time
- *Adaptive and evolving*, with the capabilities and behaviours of the agents in complex systems changing over time
- *Characterized by trade-offs*, with the long-run response of a system to an intervention often different from its short-run response
- *Counterintuitive*; our attention is drawn to the symptoms of difficulty rather than the underlying causes, and high-leverage policies are often not obvious
- *Policy resistant*; many seemingly obvious solutions to problems fail or actually worsen the situation
- *Holism*; systems have many interconnected parts, but the system is more than the sum of its parts
- *Openness*; systems receive input from, and send output into the external environment
- *Feedback loops*; systems have many positive and negative feedback loops that have unpredictable consequences
- *Sub-systems*; all systems have sub-systems or 'systems within systems'
- *Internal elaboration*; systems can adapt in order to survive<sup>41</sup>

You will no doubt recognise at least some of these elements within your own social purpose organisation. The lack of clear guidelines and rules for achieving social change presents a unique set of constraints for those working within the ecosystem.<sup>42</sup>

Adopting a systems approach allows us to recognise the inherent interconnectedness among actors in the social purpose ecosystem and the need to combine resources and efforts towards a collective cause. Systems thinking requires us to see how our actions feedback to shape our environment.<sup>43</sup> It allows us to take a step back from the frontline activities we are engaged in to see the wider context of our work, and to acknowledge all of the parts that make up the system. It also allows us to understand the root causes of problems (which are often a product of social systems) rather than the fault of any individual.

## SYSTEMS LEADERSHIP

Applying a systems approach to leadership asks us to consider the interconnected and emergent nature of the leadership context. Leading the system starts by understanding its needs. Systems are adaptive, and yet have a tendency towards homeostasis (a stable equilibrium between interdependent elements). When we understand the system as a whole, we can plan our intervention in that system and 'evaluate the likely impact of that intervention on each component part.'<sup>44</sup>

It is one thing to recognise and agree that complex systems are ever-changing, unpredictable and uncertain. It is another to **actually change our behaviour in response to the system**. As the system is dynamic, we must be dynamic. Our old ways of operating may not work anymore. We may need to draw on strengths that we have never used before, or that we have only used in other contexts. It is important for leaders to recognise that 'they do not stand outside the system, but are participants and are impacted by changes to it.'<sup>45</sup>

In systems leadership, leaders are seen as agents of change who are encouraged to collaborate in a process for collective benefit. The systems leader is 'a person who catalyzes collective leadership.'<sup>46</sup> Leading the system (as well as the self and the organisation) has been referred to as a movement from an 'ego-system' of leadership (with a focus on one's own well-being) to an 'ecosystem' of leadership, where the focus is on 'the well-being of all, including oneself.'<sup>47</sup> Systems leadership is therefore a shared process that achieves outcomes for the group.

### *Creating change in complex systems<sup>48</sup>*

One of the pioneers of systems thinking, the late Donella Meadows<sup>49</sup>, offers advice for leaders seeking positive change in complex systems:

- 1. Get the beat of the system:** Observe how systems behave before you try to make changes. Surfers do this all the time – the best surfers study the pattern of waves, the weather and the tides for some time before choosing the best spot. As Meadows notes; 'If it's a social system, watch it work. Learn its history...' This helps to overcome a tendency to define a problem 'not by the system's actual behaviour, but by the lack of our favourite solution'.
- 2. Expose your mental models:** Our thinking and knowing reflects, and is reflected by, our dominant mental models, so we need to explicitly identify them, get others to challenge our assumptions, invite alternative hypotheses – and discard if they are no longer supported.
- 3. Honour, respect and distribute information:** don't distort, delay or withhold it.
- 4. Use language with care and enrich it with systems concepts:** Think of the terms we use to describe something; what kind of thinking are they prompting/supporting?
- 5. Pay attention to what is important, not just the things we can count:** While measurement is valuable, it is also important to remember that not everything is quantifiable and this doesn't mean it is not important.
- 6. Make feedback policies for feedback systems:** In other words, 'design learning into the management process'.
- 7. Go for the good of the whole:** The aim should be to 'enhance total systems properties such as growth, stability, diversity, resilience and sustainability' – even if they aren't easily measured.

8. **Listen to the wisdom of the system:** Pay attention to the value of what's already in the system before racing ahead to make things better, .
9. **Locate responsibility in the system:** Design systems with 'intrinsic responsibility', so that they send feedback about the consequences of decisions directly to decision makers. Donella Meadows cites the example of having a pilot sit up at the front of the plane – where consequences are certainly direct and immediate!
10. **Stay humble – stay a learner:** Remember that our own mental models are incomplete, so reflective trial and error and seeking feedback from others is important.
11. **Celebrate complexity:** Accept and embrace the messiness of the world – as Meadows says, it's 'what makes the world interesting, what makes it beautiful, and what makes it work'.
12. **Expand time horizons:** Short term thinking – in all spheres of life, can be damaging; we should remember that in systems, actions taken now have some immediate effects, and some that 'radiate out for decades to come'.
13. **Defy the disciplines:** Don't stick to your own comfortable discipline (whether it is economics, social work, politics, theology or chemistry); listen to other perspectives and be open to learn from them.
14. **Expand the boundary of caring:** leading in a complex world means not only expanding our time horizons and thought horizons, but also our 'horizons of caring'. In this sense systems thinking reinforces ethics.
15. **Don't erode the goal of goodness:** be conscious of the race to the lowest common denominator in the media, popular culture and politics; as Meadows noted more than a decade ago 'it is much easier to talk about hate in public than to talk about love'.

Systems leadership is therefore based on 'exploration, new discoveries and adjustments.'<sup>50</sup> We are looking for 'informal emergence'<sup>51</sup> or the type of unexpected changes that emerge from interventions in a system. When a positive change emerges, we support and develop that intervention. When a negative change emerges, we close that intervention and try something new.

Formal system leaders are called to enable a space for all parts of the system to come together. Then the most useful leadership contribution is to facilitate an environment where people feel safe to speak openly and honestly, to reflect as a group on creative ways through, and to plan the most effective ways to intervene in the system.

*'Continuing to do what we are currently doing but doing it harder or smarter is not likely to produce very different outcomes. Real change starts with recognizing that we are part of the systems we seek to change. The fear and distrust we seek to remedy also exist within us – as do the anger, sorrow, doubt, and frustration. Our actions will not become more effective until we shift the nature of the awareness and thinking behind the actions.'*

*Senge, Hamilton and Kania<sup>52</sup>*

### *An Example of Systems Leadership – The Growth Project ([www.thegrowthproject.com.au](http://www.thegrowthproject.com.au))*

The Growth Project was founded and launched by Peter Baines OAM and Larry Fingleson in 2015. It is a leadership development program that aims to positively impact 100 charity leaders and 100 business leaders over the course of five years to 2020. It connects individuals, companies and philanthropists with charity and business leaders to impact the future of the social purpose ecosystem. The program runs for 12 months and pairs charity and business leaders so that both are educated and enriched by the experience. The Growth Project is a creative, cross-sectoral way to educate people in systems leadership. The Growth Project represents true leadership learning with the outcome being maximum positive social impact.

## ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP

Adaptive leadership is a practice to be used in situations without known solutions.<sup>53</sup> It is based on 'mobilising people to tackle tough challenges and thrive.'<sup>54</sup> For this reason, it is an effective model for use in complex systems and is well suited to leadership challenges in the social purpose ecosystem.

Adaptive leadership involves three activities:

1. Observing events and patterns around you;
2. Interpreting what you are observing (developing multiple hypotheses about what is really going on); and
3. Designing interventions based on the observations and interpretations to address the adaptive challenge you have identified.<sup>55</sup>

Adaptive leadership might come in the form of provocative questions and ideas; novel solutions to endemic problems; cross-sectoral collaborations; acting spontaneously on gut instinct rather than following organisational protocol, and unexpected initiative-taking.

These actions are indicative of adaptive leadership. They require courage and are not carried out for the purpose of creating discomfort, but rather to create a degree of disequilibrium needed to sustain adaptive change.<sup>56</sup>

Disequilibrium might come in the form of challenging the expectations of your team; 'finding a way to disappoint people without pushing them completely over the edge. And it requires managing the resistance you will inevitably trigger.'<sup>57</sup> When you practice adaptive leadership, you confront the 'elephant in the room' of your organisation: what everybody knows but is afraid or unwilling to say. This is an important and necessary leadership contribution. Adaptive leadership may also involve initiating uncomfortable conversations and facilitating constructive conflict<sup>58</sup>.

In order to establish how adaptive leadership might be implemented throughout your organisation, you can ask the following questions:

*'Who's talking with whom? Who responds to whom? What are the alliances and relationships beyond the organizational chart? What is the history of the problem we're facing? What are the different views of it? What are the patterns of behaviour relevant to the problem that are not visible unless you're looking for them? How are the organization's culture and structure affecting people's behaviour?'*<sup>59</sup> *What could go wrong?*

Adaptive leadership asks us to look below the surface of the organisation to face adaptive challenges.

### EXERCISE: Adaptive leadership

A suggestion for practicing adaptive leadership is to reflect on the value of taken-for-granted group processes. One way to do this is to ask a member of staff to act as a 'fly on the wall' in a team meeting. 'This person's role is to sit in the back of the room and take notes on what happens, recapitulating participants' various comments and behaviours... Ask the person to tell the group initially what he or she observed, just the facts, without any interpretation, as if the group were watching a [recording] of a soccer game without any commentary.'<sup>60</sup>

## COMPLEXITY LEADERSHIP

If we apply complexity theory to leadership, we frame leadership as 'a complex interactive dynamic from which adaptive outcomes (e.g. learning, innovation and adaptability) emerge.'<sup>61</sup> Leadership becomes adaptive, administrative and enabling.<sup>62</sup> As complex systems involve many interrelated parts, complexity leadership involves enabling outcomes and collective intelligence, rather than controlling or directing them. As enablers, leaders disrupt existing patterns of behaviour, encourage novelty, and make sense of emerging events for others.<sup>63</sup> Three processes become important:

- Connecting and working with others;
- Distributing leadership responsibility: drawing on collective intelligence and multiple perspectives; and
- Mobilising all participants in the system to generate solutions, increasing information flow, enabling decisions and sharing what has been learned.

The process of bringing people together can cause a positive change in all of the participants, regardless of the outcome. Our brains are wired to engage in activities that promote connection and social engagement. Based on this idea, the simple act of convening a large group and facilitating constructive dialogue can change the minds of the people present and can have unexpected flow on effects to their organisations and communities. Therefore, we start to change a complex system simply by coming together and talking constructively about the system.

Where conflict arises (and it inevitably will), we identify the conflict as a sign of resistance in the complex system. The parties to the conflict are simply acting out the resistance on behalf of the group. When we reconstruct the conflict in this way, we can ask the group: 'Where in the system are we experiencing resistance, chaos or rigidity?'<sup>64</sup> This shifts the focus of the conflict from an interpersonal exchange, to a sign of a deep blockage in the system.

*'Adaptive responses to complex challenges commonly involve changing directions, responding to changing circumstances or to seemingly intractable dynamics. They mean journeying into the unknown, with its personal uncertainty and system unpredictability. They need everybody to engage with the challenges, and contribute to the solutions, to be open to both collective learning and personal transformation.'*<sup>65</sup>

*Peter Kaldor*

There are three capabilities that system leaders can develop in order to foster complexity and systems leadership, as laid out by Senge, Hamilton and Kania:

### *1) The ability to see the larger system*

This capacity refers to the importance of systems thinking and mapping. 'In any complex setting, people typically focus their attention on the parts of the system most visible from their own vantage point. This usually results in arguments about who has the right perspective on the problem.'<sup>66</sup> It will be helpful to situate our organisations in the context of the larger system.

Ask: what problem are we trying to solve? Who are the other organisations who are also trying to solve this problem? Who are the stakeholders in this issue, and what might the ripple effects of our work be? Answering these questions allows the organisation to develop a shared narrative about the complexity of the problems. 'This understanding enables collaborating organizations to jointly develop solutions not evident to any of them individually and to work together for the health of the whole system rather than just pursue symptomatic fixes to individual pieces.'<sup>67</sup>

### *2) Fostering reflection and more generative conversations*

Reflection can be a powerful tool for 'holding up the mirror' to see our habitual, often taken-for-granted ways of seeing the world -- our 'mental models'.<sup>68</sup> However it is also necessary to use reflective processes within the group or organisation, for example through the reflective practice of double-loop learning.

One way of dealing with complex issues involves adopting new 'habits' of learning, and critically examining the taken-for-granted ways in which we always look at things. How we look at an issue is shaped by the mental models we adopt, as well as the underlying assumptions and shared 'truths' about a situation. But we rarely question them. So if a problem occurs, we go into error-correction mode. We scan the environment and act. This is what Chris Argyris and Donald Schön (1978) called '**single loop learning**'. Single loop learning is based on an ability to detect and correct errors, solve problems or ask how best to achieve current objectives. However, **double loop learning** is often

needed.

Double loop learning is deeper. It involves taking a 'double look' at a situation or set of objectives – a reflexive inquiry into underlying assumptions, by questioning the relevance of norms or objectives, or shared truths.

For example, if you created and helped launch a project that is not achieving its outcomes, you may look for ways to revive or 'fix' the project because you do not want to admit that it has failed. This is single loop learning. Or, in another example, if you are accustomed to adopting habitual roles when working with members of your team, you may believe that these roles represent your entire capacity. This is single loop learning. In the first scenario, double loop learning would challenge you to acknowledge your attachment to the project, and in the second scenario, double-loop learning would encourage you to swap roles with your co-workers.

'Double-loop learning occurs when people focus on the improvement of their inner values as opposed to merely understanding them. People begin to question the underlying assumptions behind their techniques, goals and values in order to understand why they do what they do.' Double-loop learning takes us out of our comfort zone, and is a fundamental element of leadership effectiveness. Figure 2 illustrates.

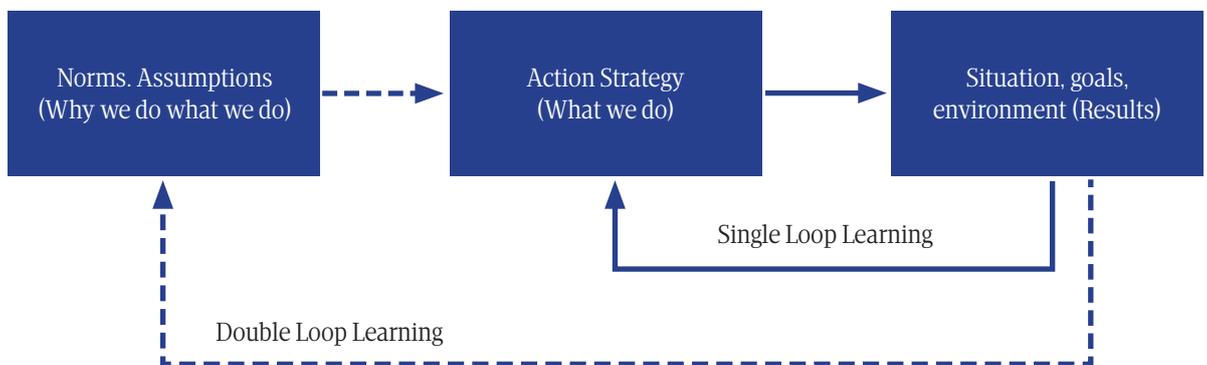


Figure 2 Double loop learning

Deeper conversations enable groups to identify the mental models that they operate from, and whether these models are useful. This builds the emotional intelligence of the group,<sup>69</sup> as shared reflection is a critical step in enabling groups of organizations and individuals to actually 'hear' different points of view different from their own, and to appreciate each other's reality.<sup>70</sup>

You can put this into practice by:

- Being aware, and expressing acceptance of individual team members' emotions;<sup>71</sup>
- Asking at the end of meetings: 'Are there any perspectives we haven't heard yet or thought through completely?'<sup>72</sup> and
- Making time to discuss difficult issues, and addressing the emotions that surround them.<sup>73</sup>

### 3) *Shifting the collective focus from reactive problem solving to co-creating the future*

This capability speaks to the importance of integrating our personal and collective visions. Social purpose organisations are called to integrate these visions for the future rather than merely reacting to the 'spot fires' that might come up on a regular basis. It's about the direction the group is facing: backwards to the past, or forwards to the future. This is where a clear vision helps, 'as people articulate their deeper aspirations and build confidence based on tangible accomplishments achieved together. This shift involves not just building inspiring visions but facing difficult truths about the present reality and learning how to use the tension between vision and reality to inspire truly new approaches.'<sup>74</sup> This brings a deeper awareness to the work of the organisation.

## APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Appreciative Inquiry is a large group method that can be used as a complexity leadership exercise. It is a 'collective discovery process'<sup>75</sup> that brings large groups of people together to catalyse organisational and systems change. The five principles<sup>76</sup> of Appreciative Inquiry are:

- 1. The constructionist principle:** 'what we believe to be true determines what we do, and thought and action emerge from relationships.'<sup>77</sup> The large group method forms social bonds and generates the interconnectedness that becomes the foundation for action.
- 2. The principle of simultaneity:** the original questions we ask shape the outcomes we see, and at the same time, the system changes as a result of our analysis. 'Questions are never neutral, they are fateful, and social systems move in the direction of the questions they most persistently and passionately discuss.'<sup>78</sup>
- 3. The poetic principle:** Our work is the result of conversations we have, and the ideas we reinforce. Therefore, 'organizational life is expressed in the stories people tell each other every day, and the story of the organization is constantly being co-authored.'<sup>79</sup>
- 4. The anticipatory principle:** our present action is based on our sense of what will happen in the future. 'Human systems are forever projecting ahead of themselves a horizon of expectation that brings the future powerfully into the present as a mobilizing agent.'<sup>80</sup> It is important to collectively and creatively visualise ideal futures in order to invite them into our present actions and decisions.
- 5. The positive principle:** we must generate affirmative emotions and bonding experiences in the large group that is working towards system change. This emphasises the importance of interpersonal biology in creating momentum and systems change. 'Sentiments like hope, excitement, inspiration, camaraderie and joy increase creativity, openness to new ideas and people, and cognitive flexibility. They also promote the strong connections and relationships between people, particularly between groups in conflict, required for collective inquiry and change.'<sup>81</sup>

Systems and complexity leadership are founded on conscious processes of organising collective responses to complex adaptive systems. They identify the gaps between what is being done, and what needs to be done in the future to create change. The essential leadership contribution at a systems level is to monitor for emergence. This means that we must identify any changes that emerge from our interventions in the system, as these could signify the next step in the process. We read the signs and symbols to answer the crucial question of social purpose leadership: **what does the system need from me today?**

Ron Heifetz, known for his seminal work on leadership, tells us that adaptive challenges in the social purpose ecosystem cannot be overcome by traditional 'authority' approaches to leadership, which look for certainty and quick results.<sup>82</sup> It is only by seeking the collective input of stakeholders, and embracing distributed leadership -- leadership across and throughout an organisation -- that systems thinking can be operationalised. We will consider this in more detail in the next chapter.

### *So what? Key questions to consider*

- *What, if anything, makes the system you work in complex?*
- *What is good and right within the system? What is flourishing?*
- *What is the shared purpose for members of the system in which you work?*
- *Can you map the system in which you work?*
  - » *Who are the players (people)?*
  - » *What are the current changes coming from within the system or being imposed?*
  - » *What are some external influences?*
  - » *What are the key political, social and economic issues?*

## MORE TOOLS AND RESOURCES

### Reading

*Appreciative Inquiry Commons* - a worldwide portal devoted to the sharing of academic resources and practical tools on Appreciative Inquiry: <http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu>

Australian Public Service Commission (2007) *Tackling Wicked Problems: A Public Policy Perspective*. Australian Government: Canberra.

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Marjolin, A., Powell, A. and Muir, K. (2015) *The Travel Companion: Your Guide to Working with Others for Social Outcomes*, Sydney: The Centre for Social Impact.

Plowman, D.A. Solansky, S., Beck, T.E., Baker, L. Kulkarni, M., and Travis, D.V., (2007) The role of leadership in emergent, self-organization. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 18: (4): 341–356.

Scharmer, O. and Kaufer, K. (2013) *Leading From the Emerging Future*, San Francisco: Berrett Koehler.

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Uhl-Bien, M., Marion, R., and McKelvey, B. (2007) Complexity Leadership Theory: Shifting Leadership from the Industrial Age to the Knowledge Era. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 18 (4): 298–318.

Whitney, D. and Trosten-Bloom, A. (2010) *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry* (2nd ed.) San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.

### Videos and audio

Splansky Juster, J. (2015) 'System Leadership and Collective Impact,' [Audio podcast] *The Collective Impact Forum Podcast*, The Collective Impact Forum, Retrieved from: <https://collectiveimpactforum.org/resources/collective-impact-forum-podcast-003-system-leadership-and-collective-impact>

Senge, P., Kania, J., Baldwin, M. and Khazei, A., [FSG] (2015, May 19) *Catalyzing Collective Leadership* [Video file] Retrieved from: <http://www.fsg.org/tools-and-resources/catalyzing-collective-leadership>

Snowden, D. [Cognitive Edge] (2010, July 11) *The Cynefin Framework* [Video file] Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N7oz366X0-8>

Kahane, A. [The RSA] (2012, November 7) *How to Change the Future* [Video file] Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XiGS9Vq0FGA>

# 3. NAVIGATING THE ORGANISATION

## In this chapter you will:

- Learn how to implement a culture of shared leadership throughout your organisation
- Explore what it means to be an ethical organisation

When organisations face complex adaptive challenges, it is helpful to think of leadership as a process, that is shared and distributed throughout an organisation, rather than thinking of ‘heroic’ individual leaders. When we understand that formal leaders cannot be everything, manage everyone, and make all operational decisions, we can focus on leadership as a shared, participative process that shapes the organizational culture. Most people in organisations flow in and out of different leadership roles, regardless of position. As a result leadership can be thought of ‘as a continuum representing the variety of behaviours we all exhibit in groups as we move through roles as supporters, collaborators, advocates, influencers, and leaders.’<sup>83</sup>

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM ABOUT LEADERSHIP	LEADING FOR PURPOSE
Top down leadership based on the model of the ‘command and control’ leaders at the top of the hierarchy.	Leadership is shared by all participants in the organisation: there are different types of leadership e.g. a volunteer may exercise ‘frontline leadership’ while a CEO may exercise systems leadership.
Information belongs to a few at the top.	Information is shared by all.
Formal authority is ‘won’ by those who seek power: these people may or may not be suited for the role.	Formal authority is exercised by the right people for the job: this may change as the situation demands, with people stepping into ad hoc leadership roles.
Ability to influence others depends on popularity, likeability, networks, time in the system (experience) and perceived productivity.	All participants in the organization collaborate to achieve positive outcomes. Decision-makers are influenced by results and the new language of change.
The logics, mindsets and values of competition are dominant.	The logics, mindsets and values of collaboration (intra- and inter-organisational) prevail

Table 2: Leadership, Then and Now

*‘It’s time to end the myth of the complete leader. Those at the top must come to understand their weaknesses as well as their strengths. Only by embracing the ways in which they are incomplete can leaders fill in the gaps in their knowledge with others’ skills. The incomplete leader has the confidence and humility to recognize unique talents and perspectives throughout the organization – and to let those qualities shine.’*

Ancona, D., Malone, T.W., Orlikowski, W.J., Senge, P.M.<sup>84</sup>

Shared leadership often requires a shift in mindset because it involves a diffusion of authority and responsibility and a shared sense of purpose among team members<sup>85 86</sup>. Shared leadership encourages people to take a holistic perspective. Importantly, when leadership is shared, it can engender **diversity** -- of gender, ethnicity, culture and age.<sup>87</sup> Shared leadership enables different leadership styles to co-exist.

Feminist approaches to leadership (one critical perspective) emphasise a shift away from heroic, individualistic, hierarchical notions of leadership, and towards community development and collaboration based on shared power and empowerment.<sup>88</sup> In feminist literature, ‘(l)eadership is a relational and ethical process of people together attempting to accomplish positive change.’<sup>89</sup> Interestingly, feminist notions of leadership are similar to contemporary research on the most effective leadership styles.<sup>90</sup>

An organisation can be described as leaderful when it ‘intentionally creates the structure and culture needed to share leadership among staff, board, volunteers, and other stakeholders.’<sup>91</sup>

## WE ALL PARTICIPATE IN LEADERSHIP

*Shared leadership is 'characterised by collective and collaborative processes of information gathering, analysis, decision making, and implementation. An organization with a strong culture of shared leadership will equip and encourage staff (and even volunteers) at all levels to take part in discussions and decisions about organizational priorities. These processes will be infused into work teams, work units, and the organization as a whole. And when confronted with the need to make immediate decisions, employees and work teams at all levels will feel confident in taking action.'*

*Routhieaux, R.*<sup>92</sup>

The notion of shared leadership, distributed throughout an organisation, has had many iterations. You may be familiar with terms such as 'collective', 'plural', 'collaborative', 'emergent' and 'co-' leadership which have some common theoretical and practical origins.<sup>93</sup>

*Distributed leadership is not something 'done' by an individual 'to' others, or a set of individual actions through which people contribute to a group or organization . . . [it] is a group activity that works through and within relationships, rather than individual action.'*

*Bennet et al*<sup>94</sup>

From this perspective, skills, knowledge, communication and conflict-management capabilities are more important than formal status.

A model for distributed leadership, developed at MIT, identifies four capabilities required for effective leadership, which can be applied regardless of your organisational role.<sup>95</sup>

- 1. Sensemaking.** Understand the organisational context in which you are working. This means using your observations, data, experiences, conversations and analysis to map out your environment.<sup>96</sup> To engage in sensemaking, ask yourself: 'How do people see the situation? Who are the different stakeholders? What are their viewpoints?'<sup>97</sup> How can I contribute my strengths to this team? Sensemaking is an important step towards embedding ourselves into a team. It allows us to see what the team values and doesn't value; how the team operates. In sensemaking, we interpret how our skills might be best applied in the organisation.
- 2. Relating.** Build relationships within and across organizations, by inquiring, advocating and connecting. Inquiring means listening with the intention of genuinely understanding the thoughts and feelings of the speaker. Advocating means explaining one's own point of view. Connecting involves cultivating a network of confidants who can help you accomplish a wide range of goals. Those who are good at relating usually have many people they can turn to who can help them think through difficult problems or support them in their initiatives.' Relating is built on effective communication, which leads to mutual trust and rapport.
- 3. Visioning.** Create a compelling picture of the future. This produces a map of what the future of the organisation could be.<sup>98</sup> Failing to form a vision will lead to the organisation maintaining the same course. This short-sightedness may involve missing possible opportunities, or being shocked by change. In contrast, active visioning opens the organisation to a new way of being. It invites unlimited thinking and creativity. It inspires teams to think in 'what if...?' rather than 'what now...?' patterns. This may lead to a new strategy for the organisation, a refinement of the organisation's product or service, or new ways of working.
- 4. Inventing.** Develop new ways to implement and achieve the vision. This moves the organisation from the abstract vision towards concrete execution and implementation.<sup>99</sup> Inventing takes the visioning process and turns it into something practical. Inventing aligns the leadership vision with management practices.

## ENGENDERING A CULTURE OF SHARED LEADERSHIP

Leaders in formal positions of authority still have a crucial role to play in enabling leadership to flourish throughout their organisation or network. Formal leaders can encourage a culture of shared leadership by identifying the

strengths of their team members. The biggest resource for most organisations, including those in the social purpose ecosystem are people; 'having the right team who are willing to commit themselves to a purpose.'<sup>100</sup> Once the team is assembled and individual strengths are clarified, formal leaders can create lines of authority and delegate tasks.<sup>101</sup> This creates the boundaries within which team members can contribute leadership.

A culture of leadership can be encouraged by strongly articulating the identity of the organisation: this is who we are, what we stand for, and how we do things differently. In the same way as a sports team has a strong identity with a uniform, team song and home ground, your organisation needs its own strong identity to inspire its participants. Seek to make this identity as open and dynamic as possible to include a variety of perspectives and approaches. The idea of leadership must be ingrained in your organisation's values (for example, in the mission and performance reviews). You can also avoid singling out certain individuals for leadership programs, and instead encourage all members of your organisation to practice leadership.<sup>102</sup> This can be done through formal and informal mentoring programs.

### **TO FOSTER A LEADERSHIP CULTURE, WE CAN ASK:**

*Are all people at all levels of the organisation empowered to lead?*

*Is leadership shared fairly and equally throughout the organisation?*

*Is authenticity encouraged?*

*Is there a leadership ethic that is known and practiced by all participants in the organisation?*

### **FOSTERING A LEADERSHIP CULTURE IN SOCIAL PURPOSE ORGANISATIONS**

Culture is a multi-level social process, and organisational cultures are rarely homogenous. There are cultural norms that are known and understood by members of the organisation, and there are unconscious or tacit cultural elements that are hidden beneath the surface. As such, it is impossible for formal leaders to single-handedly create or implement cultures. It is more apt to say that formal leaders can shape and enable a culture. This section explores how to foster a leadership culture.

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*Sam Refshauge, CEO batyr*

'In a social purpose organisation, formal leaders often have a head start because the people we work with have a clear purpose and they are personally invested in the cause. Leading the organisation is less about giving people a 'why' for their work and more about offering a 'how.'

It's easy to be motivated by the opportunity to impact the lives of so many people. The real challenge for a formal leader in the social purpose ecosystem is to channel that passion to work constructively as a team rather than people working individually for the cause. We need to help people realise how passion can be directed in a productive way.

This can be done by giving people clarity around their role in the organisation: what are they responsible for? How will they be held accountable? How does their job fit in with everyone else around them?

These things are taken for granted in an established for-profit company but are important for emerging social purpose organisations: to take the passion and turn it into a day-to-day operation.'

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When you think about your organisation culture, what comes to mind? You might think about shared values, or commitment to a specific purpose. Thinking about organisational culture means that we turn our minds to aspects such as:

- **Overt or observable elements** (artefacts) – such as the physical layout of the workplace, the forms of language

people use, the rituals or ceremonies that may be observed. What is their significance, their meaning?

- **Norms of behaviour** – how people solve problems, or interact with each other, or with clients, for example
- **Values** – the explicit beliefs that are used in order to guide members of the organisation in their actions. They represent philosophies or ideals. There can be a difference between the espoused values and the values that are acted out on a day-to-day basis (values-in-use).
- **Underlying assumptions** – the unconscious, taken for granted beliefs, habits of perception, thought and feeling. They are the ultimate source of values and actions, but because they are held tacitly, they are not typically surfaced and held up for scrutiny.<sup>103</sup>

Organisations are often like icebergs with large portions hidden beneath the surface. These under-the surface elements include taken for granted beliefs and assumptions, norms and ways of seeing the world, in what has been called the 'deep structure' of organizations. These structures are not simply characteristics of individuals - they are shaped by underlying social institutions and what has been called 'institutional logics' -- organising principles that shape what we see as important and legitimate. Examples of deep institutional structures include the logics and values of financialised global capitalism, and those of patriarchal systems<sup>104</sup>. Embedded in language, symbols, and norms and routines of behaviour, they 'reflect power dynamics and keep them in place, and have an impact on decision-making and action'<sup>105</sup>.

Deep organisational structures can act as 'informal constraints' on people's behaviours, impede the functioning of the group and can 'fail to correct the mistakes of their members.'<sup>106</sup> So if we are interested in fostering cultures of shared leadership, it is important to consider not just the above-the-surface ways of doing things, but also to surface and challenge what may lie below. It may involve encouraging a different view of power -- as relational and unlimited rather than positional and fixed<sup>107</sup>.

## LEADING THE CHANGE TO SHARED LEADERSHIP

Letting go of traditional notions of top-down leadership and accepting shared leadership can be challenging for many, as most of us are wired to resist change. Large-scale changes trigger the 'fight or flight' centre of our brain, and we usually change because we are forced to, not because we want to.<sup>108</sup>

This means it is useful to adopt a strategic approach to change, allowing participants to feel a sense of ownership in the process. John Kotter's seminal change model<sup>109</sup> proposes eight steps for change leadership, which can be implemented by individuals at any level of the organisation:

1. **Create a sense of urgency:** the first step in changing the leadership culture in your organisation is to paint a picture: what is the cost of staying the same, and what is the big opportunity associated with change? This stage involves winning over hearts and minds of your co-workers.
2. **Establish a powerful guiding coalition:** identify and mobilise the people across your organisation who will enable and guide the large-scale change. They need to believe in it and want to work for it. They may already have influence in the organisation or be connected with external networks, regardless of their official title.
3. **Form strategic initiatives:** Kotter defines strategic initiatives as 'targeted and coordinated activities that, if designed and executed fast enough and well enough, will make your vision a reality'<sup>110</sup>. These are the concrete ways that the big idea can be implemented.
4. **Enlist a volunteer army:** this gives all of those individuals who are excited about the opportunity for change a chance to be involved in it. Transformation will be more successful if there is a large group of people invested in the outcome. This step allows people to work towards the change.
5. **Enable action by removing obstacles:** in this step, you remove the management practices associated with the old style of leadership. What are the ways in which your organisation is still adhering to the old norms of leadership? What have been the barriers to successful change in the past? How can these be overcome? Find practical solutions to adopt the new practices of shared leadership.
6. **Generate short-term wins:** wins provide a positive narrative for your transformation that can motivate the volunteer army. 'Wins must be collected, categorized, and communicated - early and often - to track

progress and energize your volunteers to drive change<sup>111</sup>. Wins in changing the leadership culture could be an improvement in team satisfaction and morale; success in reaching outcomes; or higher efficiency. Does your organisation share and celebrate wins? When has your organisation successfully navigated change?

- 7. Sustain acceleration:** a commitment to the change process needs to be made every day in the life of the organisation. Even if there is a small step towards shared leadership, or a conversation about it, this keeps the change alive and sustains the process. This is also the step where change management needs to be aligned with change leadership. Are management practices (budgeting, staffing, the day-to-day work of the organisation) supporting the new model of shared leadership, or are they anchoring the organisation in 'the old way'? Are managers getting in the way of leadership opportunities?
- 8. Institute change:** this step embeds changes in the culture<sup>112</sup>. The change is embedded when the 'wins' are attributed to the original change. People openly connect the better results, higher productivity and morale with the new culture of shared leadership. This is a sign of collective buy-in to the change.

## LEADING THE ORGANISATION: ORGANISATIONAL ETHICS

In addition to distributing leadership and enabling shared leadership cultures, organisations in the social purpose ecosystem must embed ethical norms, values and practices in their day-to-day operations. For social purpose organisations in particular, ethical behaviour is a vital element of the leadership process. Organisations in the social economy are typically dependent on public trust and goodwill and 'are instrumental and critical to building social capital.'<sup>113</sup> Yet many face what has been termed a modern 'hydra,'<sup>114</sup> with a complex array of stakeholders and perspectives.

When we place ethics on the table, we move our attention to questions of what is right or wrong, whether people (clients, communities, employees) might be harmed, and how ethical practice can be infused throughout an organisation. We aim to discover how things ought to be, rather than simply how things are.

When we think of ethics, we think of ethical concepts such as rights, duties, justice, consequences, integrity, character. Ethical thinking is relational, compelling us to think of the 'face of the Other' as philosopher Emmanuel Levinas has put it.<sup>115</sup> Ethical thinking involves:

- moral imagination
- an understanding of ethical issues
- sensitivity to the consequences of decisions
- critical thinking and analysis
- the ability to defend viewpoints
- analysing and reaching ethical conclusions.

There are numerous ethical frameworks, each with a pedigree in moral philosophy throughout the ages, and each with differing applicability depending on the specifics of the situation.

But virtue ethics, grounded as it is in an end-goal of human flourishing, provides us with a template for action. If we practice ethical leadership, and our organisations embody ethical cultures in the way they operate, then we will develop ethical habits, and become ethical organisations. Ethical leadership also requires us to be mindful of the diverse approaches to leadership and collaboration.<sup>116</sup> This means that all individuals must be brought into the leadership narrative and given equal opportunities for advancement, regardless of background and identity.

### *Practical Applications of Ethical Leadership*

Ethical leadership means that ethics are openly and regularly talked about in the organisation. The following decision-making model can assist you in developing 'habits' of thinking that will embed ethical thinking into your leadership practices.<sup>117</sup> In considering a situation, Preston suggests that we ask two key questions:

1. What is going on here?
2. What is appropriate or 'what fits?'

The question of 'what is going on here?' supposes that we adopt the broadest possible frame of reference – we reflect, 'what is really going on?' In answering these questions, we can incorporate the various elements suggested in the Figure below.<sup>118</sup> If you go through the steps in this process, you will be able to develop 'sound' reasons, and your decision can be defended. The process of reflecting on ethics and sustainability principles and considering multiple stakeholder perspectives is likely to lead not only to 'better' decisions but also to decisions that are easier to implement.<sup>119</sup> The application of a framework such as this allows a shift from corporate social responsibility to corporate social responsiveness. And it allows the development of leadership capabilities that can help sustain organisations. Preston suggests that the framework is used for consultation and collaborative dialogue rather than as a rigid formula. The framework can be refined for particular contexts, professions or roles.<sup>120</sup> Indeed, different people may arrive at different positions in the same situation.

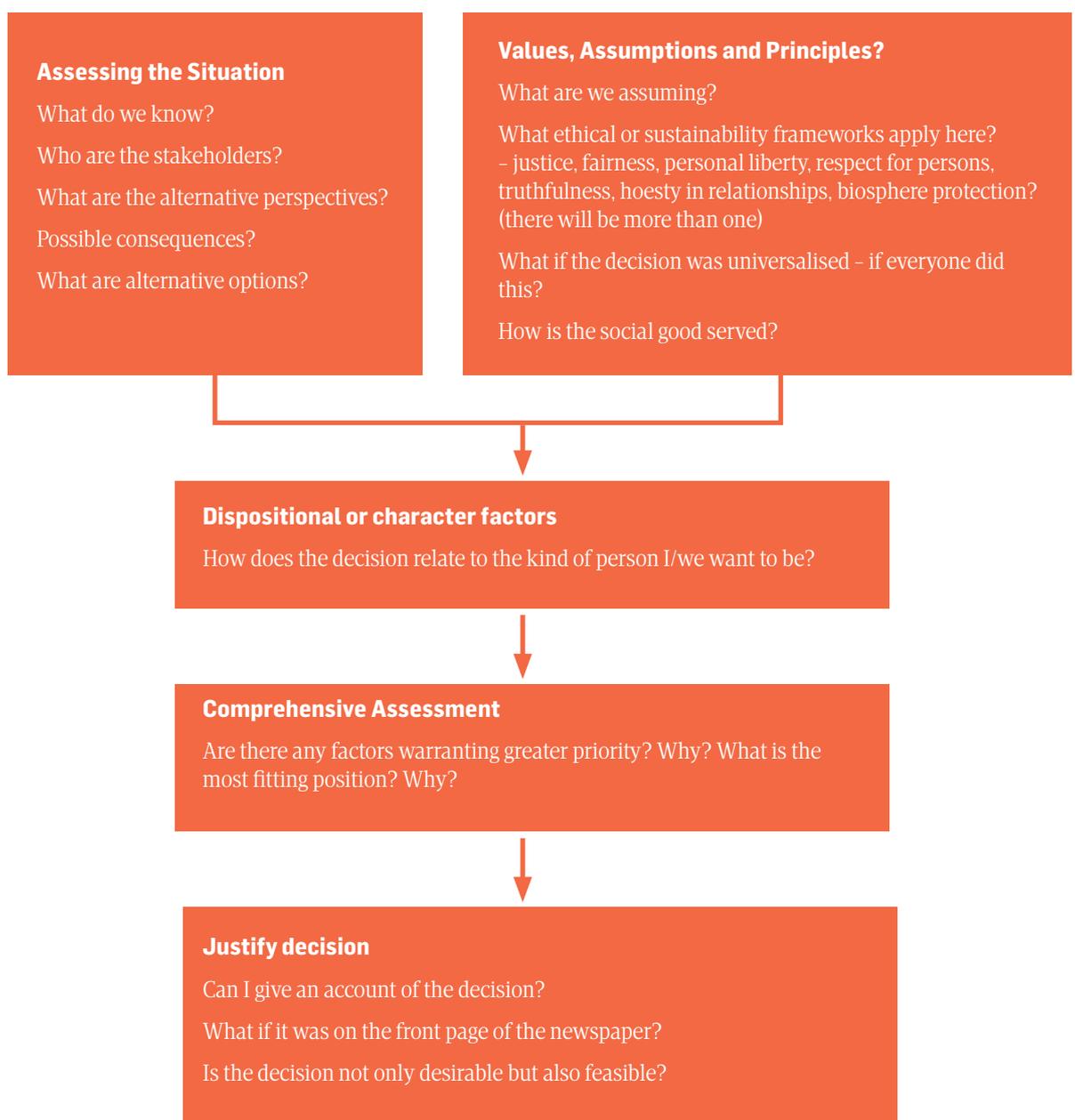


Figure. 3. Preston's (2001) Ethical framework<sup>121</sup>

## *So what? Key questions to consider*

- *Thinking about your own leadership (regardless of your role):*
  - » *Are you able to make sense of the context in which you are working?*
  - » *Are you able to relate to other people?*
  - » *Do you have a clear sense of purpose or vision for your work and that of your organisation?*
  - » *Do you create opportunities for everyone to develop their leadership potential?*
  - » *Do you encourage people with diverse skills and abilities to take-up formal and informal leadership roles?*
  - » *Do you respect and support people of all identities who take on leadership roles?*
- *Can you describe your organisational culture?*
  - » *What are the behaviour norms, shared values and taken for granted beliefs?*
  - » *What is the culture you would like to see in your organisation?*
- *Thinking about your organisational culture, ask yourself to what extent do leaders:*
  - » *involve people throughout the organisation in conversations about the kind of culture the organisation needs to be successful in the medium to longer term?*
  - » *talk openly about the current culture in relation to what is required for the future?*
  - » *seek to understand the culture as the people at different levels or in different parts of the organisation experience it?*
  - » *reflect on how their own behaviour might be contributing to dysfunctional aspects of the current culture?*
  - » *seek to clarify and communicate values as guides to decision-making?*
  - » *work to translate these values into specific behaviours, and illustrate their application through stories and examples?*
  - » *coach people in how to apply the values in dealing with specific business problems?*
  - » *try to model the desired values and behaviours, and invite feedback on how effective their efforts are?*
  - » *ensure that organisational systems and processes are consistent with and support the organisation's declared values?*
  - » *assist other managers to develop the skills they need in leading and supporting cultural change?*
  - » *ensure that recruitment, induction, management development and related programs are in line with the organisation's values?*
  - » *ensure that people are recognised and rewarded for behaviour that strengthens the organisation's focus on its values?*

## MORE TOOLS AND RESOURCES

### Reading

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### Videos and audio

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*Stanford Social Innovation Review Podcasts: Audio Talks by Leaders of Social Change* (2017) [Audio podcast] Retrieved from: <https://ssir.org/podcasts/rss>

Stocking, B. and Ancona, D. [MIT Tech] (2005, July 10) *Leadership in an age of uncertainty* [Video file] Retrieved from: <http://techtv.mit.edu/videos/16053-leadership-in-an-age-of-uncertainty>

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# 4. NAVIGATING THE SELF: SELF-LEADERSHIP

## *In this chapter you will:*

- Look at how to build a strong inner foundation for working with others to achieve positive outcomes
- Learn how to develop a reflective practice

*'Mastering others is strength. Mastering yourself is true power.'*

- Lao Tzu

Responding to the internal and external expectations created by our work requires self-leadership. This means ensuring that your thinking, feeling and behaviours help you achieve your objectives.<sup>122</sup>

In a rapidly changing environment, it is necessary to regulate our mental and emotional states. Current levels of communication and engagement at work are unprecedented. There are round-the-clock emails, constant meetings, multiple work locations, work-at-home days, different team members, forums, conferences, and contact with external stakeholders – all in addition to our normal workload. Increased collaboration within and outside organisations involves managing up and down, which also poses new challenges.

This level of engagement is highly stimulating and offers unlimited opportunities. However it can also lead to stress, burn-out, vicarious trauma and 'compassion fatigue,'<sup>123</sup> particularly when our work relates to helping people experiencing distress or disadvantage. It is necessary to set boundaries around technology, build resilience, and consciously detach from the work environment. Self-leadership has become an adaptive skill. In the midst of such change and complexity, it is important for individuals to be able to relate and reflect, be open to vulnerability, have refined senses and intuitive capacities.

According to Norman Drummond, there are three vital questions we all need to ask ourselves if we are to feel fulfilled in our work:

- Who am I?
- Why am I living and working in the way that I am?
- What might I yet become and do with my life?<sup>124</sup>

*Self-leadership requires that we change ourselves before we can change the organisations and systems in which we operate.*<sup>125</sup>

Scharmer and Kaufer suggest self-leadership requires a person to:<sup>126</sup>

- open the mind (to challenge our assumptions),
- open the heart (to be vulnerable and to truly hear one another), and
- open the will (to let go of pre-set goals and agendas and see what is really needed and possible).<sup>127</sup>

## THE CYCLE OF SELF-LEADERSHIP

Navigating self-leadership involves a cycle of relating and reflecting, as shown in Figure 4 below. These practices evolve and expand over time.

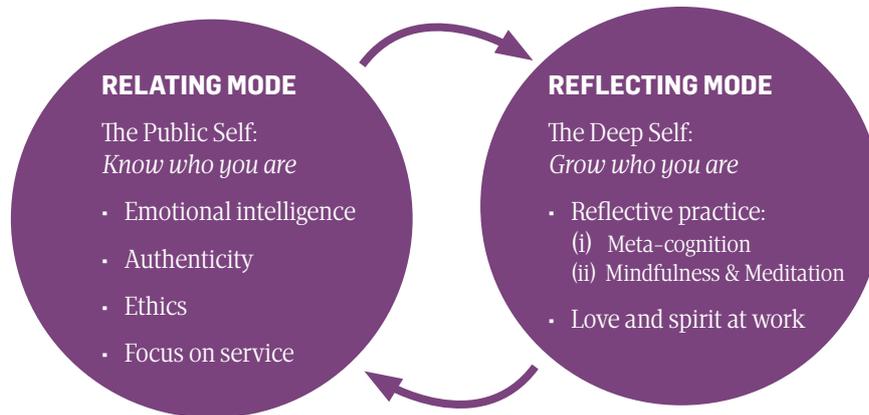


Figure 4. The Cycle of Self-Leadership

### RELATING – THE PUBLIC SELF

Relating to others requires that we engage our public self in interactions with others in our organisation. The process of leadership relies upon key interpersonal skills such as authenticity, honesty, trust, ethics, service, humility and wisdom.<sup>128</sup> The leadership dynamic has been shown to be inherently relational.<sup>129</sup> As such, positive leadership contributions occur when we facilitate interconnectedness. New developments in neuroscience demonstrate that the emotions that we feel and express at work have an impact on the people around us, and have even been described as contagious.<sup>130</sup> Our team is more like a collective whole than a collection of individuals.

As leadership is based on collaboration, our capacity to master and manage our emotions to create interconnectedness is particularly useful. It is difficult to complete our work productively and effectively if we are feeling anxious or upset as a result of our interactions with co-workers. As such, a large part of self-leadership is training ourselves to experience emotions that support positive collaboration. If we can generate and contribute thoughts and emotions that are conducive to a fulfilling team experience, we enable others to do the same. Therefore, contributing leadership is often about cultivating positive common ground among colleagues in our organisations. Leadership unfolds in our interactions and relationships rather than large displays of authority or power. If we want to work on leadership, we first need to focus on how we relate to others.

***Can we speak freely with our colleagues? Can we be ourselves? Do we invite and honour diverse perspectives? Do we feel comfortable admitting that we don't have all the answers? Do we feel respected? Do we feel 'at home' in our organisation?***

If we can answer 'yes' to these questions, we are better placed to engage in the process of leadership. These elements of organisational culture largely determine our day-to-day working experience, and our overall work satisfaction.

*Know who you are...*

As we have already outlined everyone has the capacity to engage in and practice leadership, regardless of their role. While this may seem daunting, the good news is leadership can come in many forms. We need to find the leadership styles that have integrity for us, that also allows us to work effectively alongside others. This means that a key part of our work as leaders is discovering our personal leadership strengths, and how best to contribute these to the organisation or social purpose ecosystem.<sup>131</sup> We may use curiosity to find creative solutions. We may use forensic analysis to balance the budget. We may use quiet perseverance to encourage the work of others. We may deliver eloquent presentations to articulate the strategy of the organisation. All of these contributions are worthwhile and create the leadership culture.

The way that you engage with leadership is different from the way that others will. Your motivations at work will come from particular sources, and your leadership work is to recognise and reinforce these motivations. Your disruptive impulses and moods will be triggered by certain patterns, and your leadership work is to identify the early signs of these triggers in order to neutralise them. For example, after three days of relentless work and three nights of poor sleep, you may decide to work from home because you know that you cannot be productive and useful in a group setting. It is our responsibility to keep our energy and relational capacity flowing so that our contributions to our team are positive and useful. We must counteract our negative tendencies in order to enhance our positive contributions. This is the gift of self-leadership, where we discover the unique strengths that we bring to a team or organisation. Our leadership style exists in the space between our personal context and the culture of our organisation, as shown in Figure 5 below.

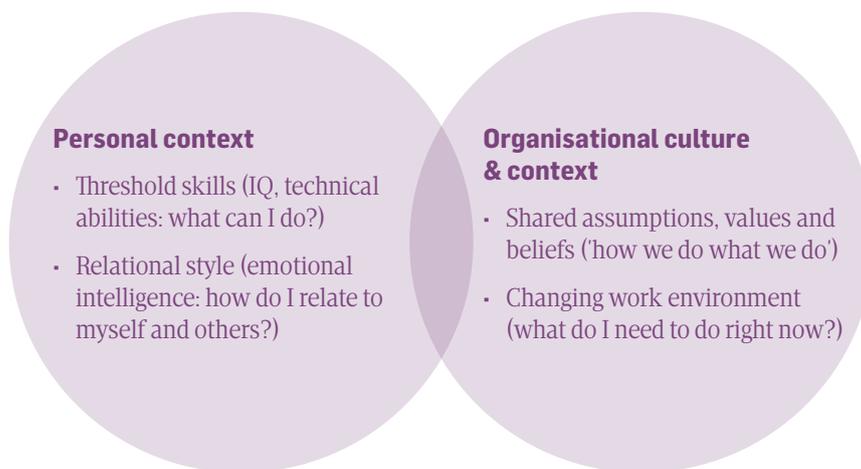


Figure 5: My Leadership Style

### *Kristy Muir, CEO Centre for Social Impact*

For me, self-leadership is a key to having the mindset, energy and resilience to be an effective leader. I've by no means 'nailed' this yet, but it's something I continuously work on. Some of the things that help me are:

- understanding, reflecting on and holding onto who I am: my passion for and belief in social justice, my values of integrity, authenticity and humanity and my driving purpose to make some positive difference to the world
- fuelling my energy levels and resilience with swimming, cycling and running and spending time with my partner and puppy
- becoming better at sharing my own vulnerabilities and asking for help
- practicing mindfulness daily
- having and using an amazing leadership support network (through a leadership group, one-on-one coaching and mentoring)
- trying to be cognisant of and regulating my own emotional state and how it affects others
- constantly reflecting on my actions and interactions: what went well, badly or needs improvement and always asking myself, "What's my part of the mess?"
- adopting a non-judgemental mindset and a belief that everyone has rights, deserves to be given a chance and that we can't always know what else is going on in people's lives.

I see self-leadership a little like eating and drinking – it fuels my mind and body and enables me to function (well or poorly); it's something that needs my attention multiple times a day. Sometimes I make bad choices but as long as I make enough good choices, it's usually ok; and, most importantly, it's something I really enjoy (like a daily dose of coffee and chocolate).

You may find the following capacities helpful in discovering your leadership strengths and relating to others:

- Emotional intelligence
- Authenticity
- Focusing on supporting others; and
- Ethics.

### *Emotional Intelligence*

The concept of emotional intelligence has evolved significantly<sup>132</sup> but was made popular by Daniel Goleman in 1995.<sup>133</sup> Emotional intelligence is 'the ability to accurately perceive your own and others' emotions; to understand the signals that emotions send about relationships; and to manage your own and others' emotions.'<sup>134</sup> The concept of emotional intelligence was ground-breaking when it first emerged, as it revealed that our success depends more upon the quality of our socio-emotional interactions than our technical abilities or academic credentials (these are described as threshold requirements for success at work).<sup>135</sup> Emotional intelligence is essential for work in complex systems as it allows us to be open to change and comfortable with ambiguity.

Emotional intelligence has the following components<sup>136</sup>:

1. **Self-awareness:** 'having a deep understanding of one's emotions, strengths, weaknesses, needs and drives.'
2. **Self-regulation:** 'the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods.'
3. **Motivation:** 'a passion for work that goes beyond money and status.'
4. **Empathy for others:** 'the ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people' and 'skill in treating people according to their emotional reactions.'
5. **Social skills,** such as proficiency in managing relationships and building networks.<sup>137</sup>

### *Authenticity*

Authenticity<sup>138</sup> is a core element of self-leadership that enhances our relational and collaborative capacities. Being authentic, genuine, trustworthy and transparent with others may seem to be self-evident aspects of leadership. Yet authenticity is actually revolutionary for leadership, because it requires us to be comfortable with vulnerability. In the past, a position of formal authority was like armour, leading to a persona of strength and certainty at all times. Authenticity in leadership pulls away that external armour and asks contributors to engage with honesty and to draw strength from inside.

Demonstrating authentic leadership requires:

1. **Self-awareness:** accurate knowledge of one's strengths, weaknesses, and idiosyncratic qualities
2. **Relational transparency:** genuine representation of the self to others
3. **Balanced processing:** the collection and use of relevant, objective information, particularly that which challenges one's prior beliefs
4. **An internalized moral perspective:** self-regulation and self-determination, rather than acting in accordance with situational demands<sup>139</sup>

These capabilities are linked to the three elements of authentic leadership, all of which can be developed and nurtured in individuals:

1. **Intrapersonal.** Authentic leadership is something leaders have – what might be called their personal authenticity. It incorporates self-knowledge, self-regulation and self-concept, as well as integrity in terms of our values.

- 2. Developmental.** Authentic leadership comprises behaviours we can learn, and includes the adoption of a moral (or ethical) perspective, balanced processing (or making balanced decisions by adopting multiple perspectives and analysing an issue from all sides) and relational transparency (showing your true self – so that ‘what you see is what you get’).
- 3. Interpersonal.**<sup>140</sup> Authentic leadership is about the relationships we have with others, and the process of leadership. It captures the fact that leadership involves relating to, and influencing, followers in order to gain their support in achieving a particular goal.

*‘Leaders need to have a sense of self-awareness and authenticity. You can’t be one person in a boardroom and then walk outside and be a different person to others, even though you might be communicating in a different way. You can’t lose the integrity of who you are when faced with multiple priorities.’*

– Sam Refshauge, CEO batyr

Engaging in authentic leadership is more than just smiling and behaving in a polite and courteous manner. Authenticity requires us to reveal our true selves at work, and not just a façade. This does not mean revealing intimate details of our private lives to colleagues. Rather, it requires us to share our authentic emotions as and when they arise, in a sensitive and respectful way. Authenticity asks us to show the same face in public and in private, allowing colleagues to engage with us personally and emotionally. People ‘are deemed authentic when their actions are seen as consistent with their personal values and beliefs; and it is this authenticity that inspires positive outcomes.’<sup>141</sup> We practice how to be authentic at work through ‘disruptive engagement,’ which means ‘learning how to engage with vulnerability, and recognizing and combating shame.’<sup>142</sup> This will occasionally require us to navigate a variety of interpersonal dynamics as our relationships unfold in the day-to-day life of the organisation.

Authenticity is built upon honest and open communication between colleagues. Authentic people ‘know who they are, what they believe and value, and they act upon those values and beliefs while transparently interacting with others.’<sup>143</sup> Authentic leadership development involves ‘ongoing processes’ whereby team members ‘gain self-awareness and establish open, transparent, trusting and genuine relationships, which in part may be shaped and impacted by planned interventions such as training.’<sup>144</sup>

### ***What does authentic leadership look like in practice?***

Authenticity means that we are open, honest and transparent with our team. For example, we may share some aspects of our personal lives that are influencing our work: ‘My mother is sick so I am not as focused on this project as I could be. Could you please help me out with this?’

Authenticity means that we are open and proactive, not passive and reactive. We admit when we are wrong: ‘Sorry, I misheard you- that was my mistake.’

Authenticity means that we consider our self-development and mindfulness to be an integral part of our leadership work.

Authenticity means that we regularly empower others through acknowledgment and gratitude (and not just at performance reviews). For example, we might say to a colleague: ‘You have a real gift for listening to others. Your empathy is one of your great strengths.’

Authenticity is enabled by a management structure that encourages individuals to exercise leadership at all levels of the organisation. This includes transparent processes of accountability to follow up and give feedback, with roles and expectations clarified in writing.

## Supporting others

Focusing on supporting others means that we adopt service-oriented, humble and wise leadership approaches. It rethinks the relationship between colleagues, beginning with a commitment to support or serve others. Instead of asking, 'Am I a good leader?' we ask: 'Have I leadership to contribute?'<sup>145</sup> The leader does not pursue his or her self-interest but rather is primarily concerned with serving others and the organisational purpose. This has also been referred to as 'servant leadership'. It is thought to have seven dimensions:

1. Being sensitive to the personal setbacks of colleagues
2. Creating value for the community, such as encouraging collaborators to engage in volunteer activities that benefit local communities
3. Conceptual skills, or the problem-solving abilities and task knowledge that are prerequisites for providing help to colleagues
4. Empowering
5. Helping colleagues grow and succeed
6. Putting colleagues first
7. Behaving ethically<sup>146</sup>

As Drummond writes, 'if we are with others only in a selfish, dominant and arrogant way, there is no happiness to be found, no sense of connection, either within ourselves or with them.'<sup>147</sup> An attitude of service brings us joy as we care for those around us.

Humility is also an effective basis for participating in leadership,<sup>148</sup> and has been associated with feelings of inclusion in work teams.<sup>149</sup> '(H)umility inspires loyalty, helps to build and sustain cohesive, productive team work, and decreases staff turnover.'<sup>150</sup> Displays of humility in organisations lead to greater feelings of inclusion.<sup>151</sup> When we focus on service and humility, our relationship to leadership and the people with whom we collaborate can become a source of meaning and inspiration.

### Practical applications of service and humility

Switch old ways of leading...	To...
Hiding mistakes and vulnerability Always appearing strong and in control	Admitting to your own imperfections as opportunities to 'legitimise the growth and learning of others' and to 'remind group members of their common humanity and shared objectives.' <sup>152</sup>
Winning debates and persuading others to accept your point of view	Genuinely engage with different points of view. Be humble enough to 'suspend (your) own agendas and beliefs.' <sup>153</sup>
Pretending to have all the answers	Admit that ambiguity and uncertainty are inherent in the work and that no individual has all the answers. This 'invites others to step forward and offer solutions' and to 'rely on each other to work through complex, ill-defined problems.' <sup>154</sup>
Emphasising the differences and disparities between leaders and followers	Role model being a 'collaborator' so that the distinction between leader and follower is diminished. 'Inclusive leaders empower others to lead.' <sup>155</sup>

### What does service leadership look like in practice?

Some organisations use a fishbowl method for facilitating dialogue. At a fishbowl gathering, 'a small group of employees and formal leaders or managers sit in circle at the centre of the room, while a larger group of employees are seated around the perimeter. Employees are encouraged to engage with each other and leaders on any topic and are invited into the innermost circle. In these unscripted conversations, held throughout the year in a variety of venues, leaders routinely demonstrate humility – by admitting to employees that don't have all the answers and by sharing their own personal journeys of growth and development.'<sup>156</sup>

## EXERCISE: Supporting others through ethical leadership

An action framework for 'Giving Voice to Values'.<sup>157</sup>

'The to-do list'

'Giving Voice to Values' is about learning how to act on your values effectively – not about wondering whether you could.

**Values.** Know and appeal to a short list of widely shared values: for example, honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness and compassion. In other words, don't assume too little – or too much – commonality with the viewpoints of others.

**Choice.** Believe you have a choice about voicing values by examining your own track record. Know what has enabled and disabled you in the past, so you can work with and around these factors. And recognise, respect and appeal to the capacity for choice in others.

**Normality.** Expect values conflicts so that you approach them calmly and competently. Over-reaction can limit your choices unnecessarily.

**Purpose.** Define your personal and professional purpose explicitly and broadly before conflicts arise. What is the impact you most want to have? Similarly, appeal to a sense of purpose in others.

**Self-knowledge, self-image and alignment.** Generate a 'self-story' about voicing and acting on your values that is consistent with who you are and that builds on your strengths. There are many ways to align your unique strengths and style with your values. If you view yourself as a pragmatist, for example, find a way to view voicing your values as pragmatic.

**Voice.** Practice voicing your values in front of respected peers, using the style of expression with which you are most skilful and which is most appropriate to the situation, and inviting coaching and feedback. You are more likely to say those words that you have pre-scripted for yourself and already heard yourself express.

**Reasons and rationalisations.** Anticipate the typical rationalisations given for ethically questionable behaviour and identify counter-arguments. These rationalisations are predictable and vulnerable to reasoned response.

## REFLECTING - THE DEEP SELF

In order to sustain our practice of positive relating, self-leadership also requires us to reflect on our experience and our purpose. When we are in a reflective mode, we move from our public self to our deep self. The regular process of reflection can be guided by meta-cognition, mindfulness and meditation. Our reflective practice is also tied to our overarching purpose or sense of mission in our work. Reflection can take place at work or outside of work.

When we reflect, we process and integrate our work: How is my work affecting my wellbeing? Does my work give me a sense of purpose? Do I believe in my work? Do I feel positive about my work? How can I think differently about what I am doing?

When we reflect, we also renew, and leave work behind: Who am I outside of work? How do I detach from work entirely? What inspires me? How do I rest and relax?

*Grow who you are...*

In order to contribute conscious leadership, it is important to develop a formal reflective practice. You may find the following activities useful in your practice of reflection:

- Meta-cognition
- Mindfulness and meditation

## *Reflective Practice: Meta-Cognition*

A useful reflective practice is meta-cognition, which is our ability to reflect on how we think and operate (to think about how we think). We often engage in the process of meta-cognition without realising it, whenever we are alone with our thoughts; perhaps when we are walking, driving or carrying out household chores. We play our experiences over in our heads in order to better understand them, and to work out ways to improve next time. In meta-cognition, we absorb ourselves in our mind; reflecting on our mental processes in order to understand them. It is our 'capacity to engage in the process of 'second order thinking.'<sup>158</sup>

*'I need to build skills around conflict resolution- sometimes it's just necessary to have uncomfortable conversations.'*

*'Why did I say that?'*

*'I think I handled that quite well.'*

*'Next time, I'll definitely use that example.'*

*'I can't believe they responded like that to my simple request... Or was I being pushy?'*

Meta-cognition 'is believed to accelerate leader development by allowing for awareness of leaders' cognitive strengths and weaknesses, their understanding of what they know and don't know, as well as the ability to monitor and adapt their learning as needed.'<sup>159</sup>

Metacognition allows us to understand how we operate and where we need to improve. When we reflect on ourselves and our lives, we get to know ourselves better. This awareness feeds back to enhance our emotional intelligence at work. This is key to high achievement and ongoing personal and professional development, and leadership. Metacognition can be strengthened through debriefing, think-aloud learning, formal training, coaching and mentoring.<sup>160</sup> Once we have effective processes for reflecting on ourselves as a leader, we are able to focus our attention on serving and mentoring others.

## *Reflective Practice: Mindfulness and Meditation*

*'The best way to capture moments is to pay attention. This is how we cultivate mindfulness. Mindfulness means being awake. It means knowing what you are doing.'*<sup>161</sup>

*- Jon Kabat-Zinn*

Navigating the self requires us to regularly unplug and detach from our work so that we can renew. We renew through practices such as mindfulness, meditation, rest, exercise, nature-based activities and creative pursuits. It is essential to renew (in some form) on a daily basis, even if it involves a nourishing conversation with a loved one, a walk, run or a good night's rest.

Ideally there should also be a daily period of being 'offline,' especially in the hour before going to sleep. Have dedicated time each day when you are away from technology and screens, with no computer, TV or phone within reach. Our brains need time to renew in 'low stimulation' mode. After diving into the deep self through restorative practices, we can re-engage with our organisation with vigour and enthusiasm. Just like learning a new language or a musical instrument, we can train our brain to learn well-being.<sup>162</sup>

Two effective practices for reflection and renewal are meditation and mindfulness. Both have been shown to have lasting positive impacts on our brain.<sup>163</sup> Meditation can take many forms, from a simple focus on the breath to a daily practice using a silent mantra. An ongoing practice of daily meditation **rewires the brain** so that some neural connections wither away while new connections are created.<sup>164</sup> This allows us to see ourselves and others from a clearer perspective. Anxiety reduces, and our capacity to regulate stress is strengthened. One study showed a faster decrease in levels of the stress hormone cortisol following a stressful laboratory task after five days of meditation training at twenty minutes a day. Participants also reported less anxiety, depression, and anger compared to a group of participants that received relaxation training.<sup>165</sup> After learning and practising meditation, we stop thinking in familiar loops of 'what if?' and start experiencing life with heightened empathy, gratitude and compassion.<sup>166</sup>

While meditation is intensely focused time in silence, mindfulness can be practiced all throughout the day.

'Mindfulness is defined as a moment-to-moment awareness of one's experience without judgment.'<sup>167</sup> In the practice

of mindfulness, we allow our thoughts, feelings and senses to pass through our mind like clouds. We observe them without becoming attached to them. There are many benefits of mindfulness, including emotion regulation, decreased reactivity, decreased anxiety, empathy, and compassion.<sup>168</sup> We can practice mindfulness whilst eating, showering, driving, walking, working and relating. Mindfulness can also be thought of as 'a mental state in which a person is fully absorbed in a feeling of focus, involvement and enjoyment during an activity.'<sup>169</sup>

Not only do mindfulness and meditation enhance our overall wellbeing, they also enhance our leadership capacity. The first study of mindful leadership was conducted in 2016.<sup>170</sup> It found '98% of participants described a transformation of their fundamental understanding of what effective leadership is, and 79% of participants reported stronger interpersonal relationships resulting from greater authenticity, honesty, and vulnerability in their interactions with others.'<sup>171</sup> The study concluded that formal mindfulness training is key to effective organisational leadership. It may be the mindfulness simply improves our emotional intelligence, capacity for collaboration, and openness to complexity, all of which enhance our leadership effectiveness. It may also be the antidote to modern life!

### *Love and Spirit at Work*

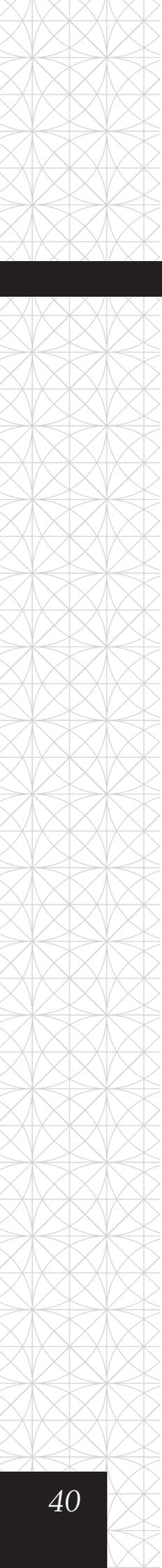
The final form of reflection we explore here is bringing love and spirit to work. The basis for this idea is that we spend most of our lives at work, and that love and meaning are the keys to our overall wellbeing.<sup>172</sup> With the declining rates of active participation in religion, political parties and local associations, work is now an important source of community, connection and belonging for many.<sup>173</sup>

In this guide, we refer to spirituality in its broadest sense; as 'part of humanity's search for meaning and purpose.'<sup>174</sup> If our work is not infused with spirit - with our wider search for meaning - we will experience burn-out, stress and fatigue much more readily.

Spiritual intelligence is 'the ability to access higher meaning, values and purpose through a greater level of self-awareness and consciousness.'<sup>175</sup> According to Scott and Zappala, a high level of spiritual intelligence allows us to 'lead with meaning, purpose and compassion - to surrender to, embrace as well as address complexity, and begin to design institutions that we are yet to imagine.'<sup>176</sup> Rather than a spiritual practice being compartmentalised into our personal lives and pursued solely in our free time, work becomes another expression of our spirituality. If rational intelligence is 'what we think,' and emotional intelligence is 'what we feel,' then spiritual intelligence is 'what we are.'<sup>177</sup> The practice of spiritual leadership involves the following principles: self-awareness, spontaneity, being vision and value-led, holism, compassion, celebration of diversity, field independence, asking why, reframing, positive use of adversity, humility and vocation.<sup>178</sup> There is also a link between spiritual leadership and sustainability leadership, whereby leaders design sustainable solutions from a deep inner foundation.<sup>179</sup> Spiritual intelligence makes our leadership practice sustainable as we balance self-care with care for wider society.

From the perspective of spiritual leadership,<sup>180</sup> the disruption and chaos that we experience in our outer world is a reflection of our inner world. As such, leadership can be the process through which we integrate our inner and outer worlds. It can even be our initiation into a deeper awareness, and an anchor for our lifelong search for integration and self-actualisation.<sup>181</sup> If a person has a high spiritual intelligence and low emotional intelligence, they may be charismatic, inspiring, and aware of the interconnections between all of life, but extremely difficult to work with. They could lack self-awareness in their interactions with colleagues and be disparaging and destructive bosses.<sup>182</sup> Self-leadership is the practice of holding a mirror to our values and behaviours, ensuring that we are serving both our stakeholders and our colleagues.

The beauty of bringing love and spirit to work is that we can infuse love and spirit into an organisation's value system.<sup>183</sup> The processes embedded in these reflective leadership approaches can potentially transform a time-poor, resource-constrained environment into a vehicle for transformation and purpose. They allow us to harness the sense of mission and service that often characterises those who are drawn to the social purpose ecosystem. This desire to contribute to social good can be channelled and sustained for positive purposes rather than used up and burnt out. It doesn't mean that the pressure of the work is taken away; it just means that we are energised by the work because it serves a higher purpose. Through the process of relating and reflecting, we make meaning out of our relationships with others and with ourselves.



### *So what? Key questions to consider*

- *Can you identify your personal values?*
- *Do you let your emotions and feelings determine your reactions?*
- *How does your own behaviour contribute to your organisational culture?*
- *Do you listen to the ideas of people who disagree with you?*
- *Do you listen to the ideas of others before making decisions?*
- *Do you admit your mistakes to others?*
- *Do you judge people according to your own perspective of what is right?*
- *Can you acknowledge that ambiguity and uncertainty are inherent in your work?*
- *When making decisions, ask yourself:*
  - » *Would you be happy to be on the receiving end of that decision?*
  - » *Would it be ok if everyone did it?*
- *How can you think differently about the work you do?*
- *Does your work affect your wellbeing?*
- *How do you detach from work?*

## MORE TOOLS AND RESOURCES

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# PRACTICING YOUR LEADERSHIP

Whether you are starting out on your leadership journey in the social purpose ecosystem, or you are in a senior management role, we hope that the CSI Navigator has delivered some useful signposts to help you on your way.

As you will have realised, leadership across the system, organisation and self is a continual endeavour if we want to tackle today's complex social challenges. It is not something we learn and then forget about. The Navigator has hopefully broken down the myriad concepts and jargon around leadership, provided some questions to think about in developing your own leadership practice and the leadership capacities of those you work with, as well as providing some useful resources.

Whatever formal role you hold and whatever your level of leadership experience, we encourage you to practice your leadership skills and wish you luck in achieving the change you want to see in the social purpose sector.

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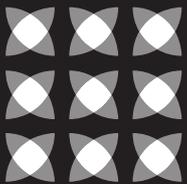
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