# Adaptive Leadership in Military and Government Settings

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Evolutionary biologists and anthropologists have amassed a trove of irrefutable data that trace the slow and methodical development of *Homo sapiens* over 6 million years. With surgical precision, nature has carefully trimmed, deleted, and added infinitesimally small pieces of human DNA to ensure the survival of the fittest for the environment in which they live. This adaptation process holds invaluable lessons for the twenty-first-century leaders and their followers and is the core of the Adaptive Leadership model.

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As the pace of change continues to rise, leaders of organizations must adjust their strategies and systems to thrive in new environments. This chapter describes the practice of adaptive leadership, an approach that leaders can use to maximize their effectiveness in challenging conditions. We review the strategic principles of adaptive leadership, discuss key competencies, and provide coaching techniques for coaches and leaders interested in employing the wisdom of this model to seek solutions to extraordinarily complex challenges.

In his book, *Leadership without Easy Answers*, Heifetz introduces the concept of adaptive leadership (Heifetz, 1994). Synthesized after decades of work with leaders from every field of endeavor, he hypothesized that our current world requires a different approach to leadership. The situations we face are "embedded in complicated and interactive systems" to the extent that one person in authority at the top of a hierarchal pyramid would rarely have the answer that is needed (Heifetz, 1994). The solution to this conundrum is to build and maintain an organizational environment that is curious enough to venture beyond the known, brave enough to ensure the pain of change, and persistent enough to implement the actions they have identified.

Toward this end, Heifetz is clear that leadership and authority are two separate entities, which are unfortunately and frequently confused. In the traditional organizational chart, leaders at the top are recognized as the authorities for that


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organization and are expected to produce answers to difficult problems. They have the experience and perspective that warrant being perceived as the experts to whom all others should turn for direction, protection, and order in times of crisis. This has worked well for technical problems for hundreds of years, allowing humankind to conquer difficult problems with methodical, meticulous, and coordinated work. From the construction of the Hoover Dan to the conquering of polio, leaders have done amazing things.

However, the multisystem, interrelated challenges of the twenty-first century demand far more complex strategies. There are no ready answers from the leaders at the top of the pyramid of power and they can no longer function as experts to provide quick solutions. In those situations, Heifetz believes that adaptive leadership is required from every member of the team. All must correctly diagnose the challenges in their surroundings, adjust their values, change their perspectives, and develop new habits of behavior.

An excellent example of adaptive leadership was seen during the Apollo 13 spaceflight, when a series of events set the stage for a catastrophic mission failure. Three astronauts were being hurled through outer space in a crippled ship with little power and no heat. With only hours to devise a recovery strategy, this was an adaptive challenge of epic proportions.

Quite understandably, the head of NASA did not have a quick answer for the situation. The leader at the top of the pyramid was not an expert for this extraordinary challenge and could not provide the degree of direction, protection, and order that is normally expected from senior leadership. The traditional hierarchical mindset of turning to the person holding the senior position of authority was not going to be able to produce the solution.

The Apollo 13 remedy was going to require collaboration, innovative thinking, and an astronomical amount of creativity among the NASA team. This was the Adaptive Leadership model in heart-stopping reality. NASA personnel had to create an adaptive solution to the unique reality before them. They had to discard their assumptions and what they believed to be true, explore multiple options quickly, mentally test all proposals, brainstorm with each other, and agree to the best course of action. In an interview with CBS news, Apollo 13 astronaut Fred Haise stated, “Hundreds of people in Mission Control refused to fail and did whatever they had to do to give Apollo 13 its Plan B’s, C’s, and D’s”. Their response was an “outside-the-box” solution that saved the lives of Fred Haise, James Lovell, and Jack Swigert.

Just like in the Apollo 13 scenario, Heifetz argues that leaders must address two types of problems: technical ones, which are addressed by applying largely known approaches relying on expertise, high-quality science and technology, and good management, and adaptive challenges, which require learning and innovation. When facing adaptive challenges, leaders must recognize the inadequacies of utilizing approaches that are appropriate for solving technical problems. To succeed, leaders must be willing to forsake the old approaches and find new ones, while inspiring many, if not all, members of the organization to do the same (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001).

While this sounds easy, the reality is that problems normally come bundled (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009a). Those in authority must first ascertain if the problem is technical or adaptive or a mix of both. Adaptive leaders dissect the technical components from the adaptive challenge and begin to engage the team members to find solutions. The following questions can assist leaders in assessing whether or not the challenge is an adaptive one[1]:

1. Is the problem a recurring one?
2. Does it challenge values, assumptions, policies, mindsets, or current procedures?

[1]The questions were formulated based upon the logic presented in Heifetz’s (2001) article cited throughout this chapter.

3. Does it require people to face issues they would prefer to avoid or have been avoiding?
4. Is there no previously identified solution to this problem?
5. Is there no recognized expert for this problem?
6. In order to solve this problem, will new learning or new ways of doing business be required?
7. Is the solution embedded in both the people in authority positions and the entire team?
8. Will the solution involve change and subsequent discomfort and sacrifice by the members of the team, the authority figures, and external stakeholders?
9. Will the solution require some experimentation before advancing to implementation?
10. Will the solution take time and perseverance in order to change a former routine?
11. Will the solution require more than just logic and data?
12. Will the solution require courage to implement because it involves risk to reputations or relationships?
13. Will the solution require the loss of employment or other sacrifices?
14. Will the solution require collaboration across silos, stovepipes, or other organizational boundaries?

If the answer to one or more of these questions is yes, then the problem at hand may likely be an adaptive challenge.

To further understand adaptive leadership, it may be useful to address some of the myths surrounding the concept. First, contrary to popular belief, adaptive leadership is not an approach to leading that requires a superior set of capabilities that a few, unique, leaders possess. Most people, if not all, can learn and apply the practices necessary to cultivate adaptive leadership and to help build an adaptive organization. Second, adaptive leadership, contrary to its name, does not suggest that a leader is focused on adapting to change. Adaptation implies a response, a reaction to change. Adaptive leaders are proactive; they anticipate change and, when possible, shape or create it (Govindarajan, 2016). Third, and again, contrary to its name, adaptive leadership does not focus the spotlight upon the organization's top leader; rather, it shifts the focus to others. Lastly, adaptive change causes modification of people's beliefs and behavior as they become able to live with losses, preserve the essential, and develop a new capacity to thrive (Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009a).

As noted earlier, the term adaptive leadership implies distributed leadership. Every member of the workforce representing every measure of expertise and every level of seniority has a leadership role in performing analysis and making decisions, including strategic decisions. Adaptive leadership is less a description of the top leader's behavioral approach to leading than a description of the organization's use of each workforce member to build an all-inclusive leadership team to help the organization adapt to changing conditions, build new capacity, and achieves its goals (Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009a, 2009b).

Adaptive organizations, so called because they utilize and benefit from adaptive leadership, are superior to other organizations in facing conditions that the US military describes as VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous). While leaders of local, state, and federal government entities typically operate in environments that are less VUCA than the military faces, the civil sector does nonetheless face similar conditions occasionally and therefore must be able to leverage adaptive ideals. An increasingly vocal and angry populace is demanding innovative solutions from their leaders.

The superiority of an adaptive organization, especially when compared to its organizational antithesis, the hierarchical, top-down command and control organization, is attributable to leveraging the wide-ranging, collective expertise and wisdom of the whole workforce, not merely the upper echelons to meet the demands of VUCA conditions. Perhaps it is not altogether surprising that the impetus behind building adaptive organizations within the military and government is an expectation that the future presents a murky set of unpredictable conditions – the very conditions

from which Heifetz's "adaptive challenges" spring forth.

The distributed nature of adaptive leadership does not relieve a military organization's commander or senior government leader of responsibility. The top leader is faced with one of leadership's most daunting challenges – to mobilize workforce members to do the difficult work of leadership. To convince all-too-often reluctant workforce members to accept responsibilities for which they feel either unqualified, unprepared, or maybe both often leads to high levels of stress and anxiety which result from having to accept all that accompany new responsibilities: new roles, new approaches, new behaviors, and new relationships (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001).

Leaders are responsible for monitoring situations, considering courses of action, and then intervening when problems arise. To do so, leaders must be comfortable with holding incompatible ideas in their mind while searching for the most efficient solution to a problem. Furthermore, the role integrates multiple intelligences as the leader combines the intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual elements, as well as connecting with their own heart and the hearts of others. Adaptive leaders need to connect to a larger purpose that orients their lives and work in order to be committed to their actions (Heifetz et al., 2009a).

## Heifetz's Seven Principles for Leading Adaptive Work

Ideas for cultivating adaptability in leaders have evolved since Heifetz first introduced four principles in 1994 (Heifetz, 1994). Heifetz and Laurie identified two additional principles in 2001 (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001), and Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky added another critical principle in 2009 (Heifetz et al., 2009a). These seven principles that include "getting on the balcony," identifying the adaptive challenge, regulating distress, maintaining disciplined attention, giving work back to the people, protecting voices of leadership from below, and, more recently, guiding leaders to take care of themselves are designed to teach adaptability to leaders (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Laurie, 2001; Heifetz et al., 2009a, 2009b). *The "surge" in 2007 can be illustrated in a couple of the Heifetz's Seven Principles described below.*

"Getting on the balcony" serves as the first principle and refers to top-level leadership facilitating the development of a broad-based, comprehensive perspective of the organization's logic and of the environment in which the organization operates. At the individual level in an emergent situation, this is the "fog-of-war" ability to reflect, "zoom-out," and see the situation in the midst of action. This is the first step in the iterative process of observing events as objectively as possible from afar (balcony) and then interpreting and developing a successful intervention to meet the adaptive challenge (Heifetz et al., 2009a). From the balcony, instead of focusing on the urgent, the talented workforce is free to concentrate on the important. Leadership can foster a comprehensive perspective by, for example, teaching the workforce about the organization's history, values, and purpose (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Laurie, 2001).

The second principle, identifying the adaptive challenge, is necessary to ensure that the workforce understands where to focus its talents – by recognizing the underlying causes of problems that threaten the effectiveness of the organization. Leadership can elevate the collective ability to analyze by ensuring that the workforce listens to and understands the perspectives of a broad array of stakeholders, inside and outside the organization. *This principle can be illustrated by the adaptation, specifically in terms of beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, of US coalition forces during President Bush's 2007 "surge" operations in Iraq. Prior to 2007, the power vacuum created by supporting a Shia/Kurd-dominated government led to a ferocious Sunni-backed, Al Qaida in Iraq (AQI) insurgency. However, during the 30,000 troop surge, the previously disenfranchised Sunni insurgency found cause to partner with USA and coalition forces to target true AQI forces; primarily with the prospect of removing a common threat and gaining a greater voice in future government allocations and decisions. This allegiance shift may have been easier for the*

*Sunni militias than for returning US forces who could assume that their partners in this newly formed Arab Awakening were the very same insurgents from previous deployments. However, the environment had changed drastically, requiring a necessary adaptation on the part of the coalition surge troops. Prior enemy combatants now played prominent partner roles, necessitating not only a significant shift in previously held beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors but also in the trustworthiness aspect of adaption seen later in this chapter.* Leaders can also foster norms of problem identification that include asking fundamentally important questions, such as whether there may be a need to challenge the organization's beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, traditions, habits, attitudes, priorities, resource allocation decisions, or relationships within the workplace (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001).

Heifetz's third principle of regulating distress recognizes that some stress is needed as a motivator, acknowledging that too much stress can exhaust and demoralize the workforce before it can assert itself to solve problems. Regulating just the right amount is no easy task, as the right amount varies with individual personalities and the collective personality of the workforce. Nonetheless, leadership must recognize that the very nature of the VUCA environment and of the adaptive challenges it creates can overwhelm all but the stoutest. Thus, leadership is well advised to ensure the workforce knows it is not being held to an unrealistically high standard with regard to certainty or timeliness of an expected answer.

Maintaining disciplined attention, the fourth principle, equates to avoiding distraction. To maintain attention on the adaptive challenges, leaders must themselves be transparent and in all ways evident regarding their own commitment to resolving the adaptive challenges to maintain the support and focus of others. Leaders might also have to perform a type of monitoring function to ensure that the technical components of the challenge do not swamp, displace, or otherwise interfere with the essential work of redressing adaptive challenges. If, for example, workforce members stray from the adaptive parts of the challenge at hand to focus on the parts that fit current procedures and know-how, the leader must step into the fray to focus the effort once again (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Laurie, 2001).

The fifth principle is giving work back to the people that must own the problem, and often are intimately familiar with it, in other words, leveraging their expertise (e.g., analysis and decision-making) to solve problems and their need to make adjustments in their operation. This reflects a belief that shielding the workforce from responsibilities and the difficulties of leadership, including the need to change, promotes individual and organizational complacency and failure. Leaders therefore need to challenge and support the workforce, not control it. Additionally, leaders must cultivate another necessary condition: building collective self-confidence, so that the workforce, and the large community of relevant stakeholding parties, would have the necessary courage to struggle with uncomfortable challenges (Heifetz et al., 2009a, 2009b; Heifetz & Laurie, 2001). *This principle can be illustrated by the adaption across organizational levels during President Bush's 2007 "surge" operations in Iraq. As this influx of tactical units flooded areas previously dominated by Al Qaida in Iraq (AQI) forces, they were met with tenacious insurgent opposition. Most notable was the AQI's ability to rapidly change both their tactics and munitions to combat this new coalition threat. The AQI employed new, sophisticated ambush techniques and perfected improvised explosive devices (IED) created with homemade materials undetectable by the coalition's mine-sweeping equipment. The offensive-oriented US forces had to adapt to and defend against these new AQI tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs). While it took many casualties before the USA shifted into that strategy, leadership adapted to the tactics of the enemy. After initially reviewing, assessing, and communicating with them within their internal units (i.e., battalion tactical forces operating in the same area of operations), the information was also reported to their higher headquarters. Alert Battle Majors at the brigade and division levels then shared these reports across the battle space to ensure not only the widest distribution of the latest AQI TTPs but also to encourage wider*

*sharing between units on detection and counteraction techniques to defeat the new threat. In essence, they were able to discern the adaptive challenge through exhaustive environmental scanning, create vast communication networks for rapid information sharing, and orient the organization for collective action.* Authorities shift from providing answers to framing the challenges, key data points, and sequence of questions, and creating the conditions that would direct local adaptability and decision.

Protecting voices of leadership from below, the sixth principle, means that all echelons of the organization are encouraged, not punished, for offering experimental and sometimes disruptive ideas or unpopular or critical opinions that might sting other members of the workforce. Top leaders have to ensure, for example, that criticism is seen as an offering for betterment, not an attack on the fortress of pride. Of course, demanding decorum in the criticism levied is recommended, but the bigger matter is to ensure that guaranteed psychological safety underscores every decision to speak out. Leaders must also show patience, recognizing that most members of the workforce are likely to be inclined, as well as conditioned through past experiences, to avoid confrontation (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001).

The last principle concerns the leader at and away from work, taking care of oneself (Heifetz et al., 2009b). Caring for oneself despite the rapid pace of work is a challenge for many. There are several things that the leader can do. Leaders have to manage their thinking, emotions, work, family/significant others, and overall well-being. Leaders need to find white space or a place of sanctuary and reset while asking; "Am I pressing myself or others too hard or too little?" Leaders should maintain relationships with a coach, colleague, or mentor to debrief their thinking and actions. By bringing emotions, feelings, and poise to the job, leaders can catalyze action at work. Lastly, leaders don't define themselves through work alone. Instead, they engage family, friends, and people at work and away from work and accomplish something meaningful with those around them each day (Heifetz et al., 2009b).

## Necessary Personal Competencies and Coaching for an Adaptive Organization

Assuming the leader does all that Heifetz and his collaborators suggest, the likelihood of success remains largely dependent upon the competencies that reside within the leadership and the workforce. There are five competencies the top leaders cultivate to maximize the potential to transform a conventional organization into an adaptive one. These five competencies are trustworthiness, communicativeness, emotional intelligence (EI), tolerance of ambiguity, and hardiness. Each of the five competencies individually represents a necessary but insufficient condition to enable an organization to operationalize and practice the seven principles of adaptive leadership, and thus, to leverage the advantages of adaptive leadership. Furthermore, the five competencies are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.

Trustworthiness of all members of the workforce, both laterally among peers and vertically with authorities, is a necessary precondition for members to distribute and accept leadership responsibilities. Three traits in aggregate identify trustworthiness: ability (competence), benevolence (i.e., shared values), and integrity (ethical standards) (Mayer, Davis, & Shoorman, 1995). And yet, the very existence of these three antecedents to trustworthiness is not likely to be recognized without an abundance of communicativeness, EI, tolerance for ambiguity, and/or hardiness.

Communicativeness, for example, determines how accurately individuals are able to convey to others their values or abilities and so also helps to identify benevolence. EI's self-awareness dimension allows individuals to act authentically, which, in turn, helps assure that individuals' values are apparent to observers and, thus, identifies benevolence. EI's social awareness helps an observer empathize with others and so provides for a measure of their motives and their integrity. Tolerance for ambiguity underscores the cognitive patience needed for a member of an organization to suspend judgment and avoid making

premature decisions. Hardiness provides the mental attitudes and abilities to tolerate, and even thrive, on the adverse conditions of the adaptive challenge.

Without communicativeness, EI, tolerance for ambiguity and hardiness, there is no recognition (or at best, fuzzy recognition) of trustworthiness even if the individual being judged is indeed inherently trustworthy. The perceived absence of the elemental competency of trustworthiness would subsequently preclude the formation of adaptive leadership and, in turn, prevent the emergence or sustainment of an adaptive organization. The capacity for a military organization to anticipate, shape, and respond to the murkiness of a VUCA environment, or for government leaders to respond to crises of all origins, would be constrained. The advantages that Heifetz envisioned in an adaptive organization, where all levels of the organization work collaboratively to resolve issues through a collective intelligence in and outside of the executive suite, would be lost.

Techniques for promoting each competency are now described in order to coach the leader while simultaneously enhancing the leader's ability to coach and teach their subordinates. Coaching through an inquiry process can help leaders reach answers to the problems they are trying to solve. At times when leaders may cause unintended negative consequences to themselves or their enterprise, more directive advice can be provided.

Interviews with subject-matter experts in coaching and results from a practice-analysis survey conducted by prominent consulting psychologists identified several critical techniques used by successful coaches with their respective clients (Vandaveer, Lowman, Pearlman, & Brannick, 2016). These best practices and processes included empathic listening, clarifying communication and Socratic questioning, as well as some commonly used organizational and individual development techniques (i.e., goal setting, self-reflective homework, brainstorming ideas, a consultative feedback, and cognitive restructuring of ideas). In the next section, we expand on these techniques and processes and how they can influence adaptive leadership.

## The Adaptive Leader Development Process

Just prior to becoming Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey came to a critical conclusion based on the high-consequence lessons learned following years of combat engagement within the two theaters of Iraq and Afghanistan. He recognized that the rapid pace of environmental change with a diverse and dynamic threat, coupled with vast decentralization of command authority and responsibility, necessitated a more adaptive leader capable of agile and innovative decision-making (Brafman & Pollack, 2013). This leadership capacity required a more formalized process of conscious development than the natural self-guided evolution after multiple deployments.

Instead of depending on the ultimate crucible of on-the-job training in an uncertain combat environment, General Dempsey championed this development through the introduction of a more systematic design process as highlighted in the current Army and Joint doctrine (Cojocar, 2011; also see FM 5-0, The Operations Process). Indeed, the Army Field Manual (FM) 6-22 highlights that the challenges facing today's contemporary military leader require a sense of comfort with ambiguity, a flexible mental model, and an ability to quickly identify and make sense of critical environmental input.

Despite their application in vastly different domains, approaches designed to develop and/or enhance these competencies tend to adopt a similar three-pillar system, traditionally labeled as operational, educational, and self-directed (see Table 19.1 for a sampling of the techniques and opportunities). While obviously not an all-inclusive list, we have attempted to highlight some of the more popular and established methods for developing and enhancing this chapter's competency foci.

The operational pillar is the most familiar and most utilized, representing experiences and opportunities a leader is naturally exposed to through on-the-job training. As the leader assumes the duties and responsibilities of a particular position, he or she is expected to leverage

**Table 19.1** Pillars of adaptive development

| Operational | Educational | Self-directed |
|---|---|---|
| On-the-job training<br>Stretch or developmental assignments | Professional education systems<br>Armed Service's Professional Military Education (PME) system<br>Internal/External Executive Leadership Courses *or* Senior Leadership Programs | Mentorship<br>Academic Programs (resident; online) |

past experience and successfully apply it to achieve organizational success. Some research suggests that due to its inherent action orientation, this domain provides the most appropriate and impactful opportunity to practice one's craft (see Bass & Stogdill, 1990). Sink or swim, leaders experience firsthand practice in applying, modifying, and perfecting their repertoire of key leader competencies. In real-world workplace environments, working in either their current experiential comfort zone or being "stretched" in an assignment that forces rapid growth, leaders' actions and behaviors result in immediate feedback ranging from success (producing validation of competency level) to failure (requiring reassessment of personal gaps and relearning of appropriate responses).

The educational pillar represents a much more formalized process for assessing skill levels, providing opportunities for gap identification, access to new material content and process, and occasions to practice newly found competencies in a low-threat/risk environment. Traditionally, these formal systems are progressively and strategically spaced throughout a leader's career growth with certified, subject-matter expert instructors and an approved curriculum designed to match specific leadership levels. For example, the United States Army adopts a sequential program of professional military education (PME) that provides formal instruction opportunities at the junior (i.e., Basic Officer Leader Course; Captain's Career Course), mid-career (i.e., Command and General Staff College), and senior (i.e., War College; Capstone) levels to ensure preparation for the next series of duty responsibilities and authorities (see Headquaters, Department of the Army, 2014). An example of this at a war college is the Adaptive, Agile, Leadership Network (currently called Leadership for Innovation or L4I) concentration that was recently established at The Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy (National Defense University). This concentration was established to develop an adaptive leadership approach to three broad strategic challenges for the military and nation: veteran reintegration, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, and energy and environment.

The final developmental pillar is that of self-directed activities. As the name implies, the onus is placed on the leader as to where, when, and how to engage in this developmental approach. Research indicates that self-directed (or self-paced) education programs are preferable (and arguably more successful) than the more formal, organizationally developed programs, especially in adult learners, mainly due to perceptions of control and self-motivation (Kanfer, Chen, & Pritchard, 2012; Merriam, 2001). The challenge remains how to carve enough "white space" on one's calendar in order to create opportunities to experience self-growth. Although many organizations encourage (and sometimes provide guidance and intellectual capital in terms of directed mentorship programs), this third approach requires additional self-motivation due to its application and execution beyond the scope of a typical business day. Additional options for self-directed development include taking advantage of the numerous resident and online courses offered at both academic and leadership-oriented programs. While certainly not an exhaustive list of examples, our purpose remains to illustrate that there are numerous and varied opportunities within both the personal and professional domains for additional exposure to, and growth from, the challenges of leadership.

Ideally, the leader would gain training and experience through these methods for adaptive

leader development. The areas that become more critical to leaders as they progress in their career are interpersonal skills and conceptual skills. Due to the limitations of this chapter, we focus on five competencies, recognizing there are other areas in which leaders need to continually develop.

## Trustworthiness: The Indispensable Personal Attribute and Enabler of Adaptive Leadership

This segment of the chapter proposes that two principles of Ronald Heifetz's notion of adaptive leadership, giving work back to the people and protecting voices of leadership from below, require trustworthiness and thus the prevalence of three traits throughout an organization's workforce: ability, benevolence, and integrity. When all three traits apply to any given individual within the organization, that individual is deemed trustworthy (Hurley, Gillespie, Ferrin, & Dietz, 2013) and is, in turn, an excellent candidate for enabling the two principles that are central to adaptive leadership (Table 19.2).

**Table 19.2** The adaptive leader and trustworthiness

| | Giving work back to the people | Protecting voices of leadership from below |
|---|---|---|
| Ability | Leadership gives responsibility to competent subordinates and builds reciprocal trust and respect through a collective act of leadership | The able subordinate entrusted and protected to operate with the new responsibility has equal confidence in the collective leadership and that the leadership has the ability to identify expertise |
| Benevolence | Cultural shift into collective leadership with subordinates that have similar values and goals and desire to benefit the organization | Collective decisions are encouraged and guided by shared values between leaders and subordinates for the good of the organization |
| Integrity | Distribution of leadership roles based on who the primary leader recognizes as truthful and honorable | Protection of subordinate decision-making is done transparently and in a timely manner and allows those in the group to speak out in settings such as commanders' call or open meetings |

The three traits are worthy of reflection by the leader to assure that trustworthiness is a part of the organizational culture. Ability, a near synonym for expertise, refers to having the skills or means to accomplish a specified or implied task or set of tasks. Benevolence, though often thought of in terms of acts of kindness or an inclination toward acts of kindness, means something different in the context of an organization. Here, benevolence refers to individuals sharing the same or a similar set of values, which, in turn, suggests a parallel desire to benefit the organization in a similar way. Integrity refers to honesty, but also to consistency in thought, purpose, and action, and implies transparency.

Heifetz's principle of giving work back to the people dictates that two or more persons are involved in a transaction whereby one person – vested with responsibility and authority – delegates some, or all, of the responsibility and/or authority to another person(s) through an agreement. It follows that no devotee to the organization would give responsibility and authority to another unless he or she had some certainty that the prospective subordinate(s) possesses the ability to execute the responsibilities, displays a proclivity to work toward similar results, and is shown to be honest and consistent (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001).

Giving work back to the people requires more than a decision to delegate or apportion, however. The prospective subordinate(s) has to accept the new task(s), yet do so only with a healthy regard for the leader's trustworthiness. The prospective subordinate(s) would want to know that the

leader had the ability to identify expertise (Mayer et al., 1995). Otherwise, the subordinate might doubt his or her own ability to meet the new challenges attendant to the enhanced role in analysis and decision-making. The prospective subordinate would also want to know that his or her values were essentially aligned with the leaders as a guarantee that the parties don't have conflict over the approach or results of subsequent analysis or decision-making.

The same three traits are necessary for protecting voices of leadership from below and providing top cover to individuals with disruptive ideas, since their voices can present risk; they always impose costs, and no ideas are certain to yield the desired results (Mayer et al., 1995). The decision to provide protection, then, is essentially a calculated risk, reflecting the likelihood of success and the benefits that will accrue if successful. The greater the ability of the source of the disruptive idea, the more the idea is likely deemed to succeed. The greater the similarity of the idea generator's values to those of the leader, the more likely the leader will believe that the aimed-for results, if achieved, will mirror the organization's purpose. Lastly, a leader must be confident that the estimations of ability and benevolence reflect reality, a condition guaranteed only when the source of the disruptive idea is honest and transparent. Without the guarantee, the prospective subordinate would likely feel threatened by the prospect of apportionment. Finally, the prospective subordinate would need near certainty of the integrity of the leader so as to have confidence that his or her perceptions of the leader are accurate.

As with giving work back to the people, providing protection for voices from below is not a one-way transaction. The subordinate must be willing to accept the leader's protection, and this willingness is contingent upon the belief that the leader is indeed able to protect. This belief is typically correlated with the leader's reputation, which is itself contingent upon the general abilities the leader displays at work. The subordinate would also need to be assured of the leader's values being similar to his or her own; since aligned values suggest that the protection will remain in place even if some transactional disagreements arise. Finally, the perception of the leader's integrity determines whether the subordinate accepts that his or her judgments concerning the leader are well founded.

## A Real-World Example of an Organization Emphasizing Adaptive Leadership

From 2010 through 2012, Captain Matthew Feely, USN, was the commanding officer of the US Navy's Fleet Logistics Center Yokosuka (FLCY), an organization that provided logistics services to the US Seventh Fleet and several other US allied and partner-nation entities operating within the Pacific Rim and Indian Ocean Regions. The organization's multilingual, multinational, and multicultural military and civilian workforce resided in 14 locations across 9 nations and territories. The organization's work was completed aboard ships and aircraft at sea and ashore at the headquarters in Yokosuka, Japan, and several regional offices in locations as far afield as Sydney, Australia; Jakarta, Indonesia; Diego Garcia, British East Indian Territory; and Singapore. The organization served an area of responsibility (AOR) representing approximately one-third of the globe's surface area.

The sheer size of FLCY, the interdependencies of the elements within it, and the breadth and nature of the logistics services offered, point to FLCY being a complex organization executing complex operations. FLCY runs the supply department for an industrial shipyard and operates the largest liquid refueling infrastructure within the Department of Defense. FLCY provides US Postal Services mail services throughout the AOR. The organization also contends with the "tyranny of distance," leveraging multiple supply chains originating at points on opposite sides of the globe. It must adhere to the imperative to deliver provisioning, repair parts, and commodities' support in the right quantities, at the right

time, and at the proper location to ships in port and at sea, which quite literally represent small, moving targets over an enormous span of ocean.

The challenge of complexity and its characteristic likelihood that any number of variables would change at any time and, thus, present unanticipated and unpredictable challenges to success, painted the need for FLCY's commanding officer to practice and cultivate adaptive leadership to help make the organization more responsive. That is exactly what Captain Feely did – to a large extent placing trust in others through decentralizing authority, by articulating and then implementing a values-based leadership philosophy that explicitly emphasized notions that underscore trustworthiness: ability, benevolence, and integrity.

Although a cogent argument can be made that the success of an organization is best measured by observing performance over long periods of time in the face of a myriad of conditions, crises place an organization's effectiveness in stark relief. Indeed, FLCY faced two crises while Captain Feely was in charge: first, immediately after military forces of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea fired artillery shells and rockets into Yeonpyeong Island, Republic of Korea, in November 2010 and, second, in the aftermath of the cascading tragedies resulting from the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011.

Shortly after the Yeonpyeong incident, leaders at FLCY recognized the likelihood that the 7th Fleet would respond by deploying multiple ships as a signal that USA maintains a high level of vigilance and robust capability. Without the need of explicit direction from Captain Feely, due to the qualities of adaptive leadership within the organization, the workforce devoted considerably extra time, effort, and resources to readying the fleet. Their preparations were prescient. Indeed, the 7th Fleet commander subsequently ordered a large-scale deployment, and because of FLCY's preparations, the deployment occurred with no delay.

As another example, in the immediate aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake, Captain Feely began to organize the command for what he thought would be a major humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) operation in northeast Japan, to begin within a few days. What he could not have anticipated, however, were some immediate needs to assist the local government of Yokosuka, Japan. The earthquake had damaged the fuel oil delivery system to the city's wastewater treatment facilities. Without the fuel oil, a considerable pollution release would have contaminated Tokyo Bay. The mayor of Yokosuka asked for help. Here again, members of the FLCY workforce led the way. Through their collective leadership, mid-level managers recognized the legitimacy and importance of the request from the city, made the determination to deliver the fuel, and then – in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations – made all arrangements to deliver it. These were activities that in a traditional organization would have entailed a decision by the highest level of leadership. In this case, collective decisions made by "lower levels" allowed FLCY to act expeditiously, saved Tokyo Bay from environmental disaster, and allowed Captain Feely to focus on the prospective HA/DR, an operation that would become the largest HA/DR action in Japan's history.

Both remarkable events precipitated unforecast spikes in the demand for logistics services, including the need to make ships ready for deployment and, in the case of the earthquake, providing humanitarian relief and disaster assistance to victims. These two novel events required a degree of tolerating ambiguity to address the delicate situations at hand. Due to the rapidly changing situations, FLCY had to reflect on and analyze the situation in order to identify the adaptive challenge prior to taking action. This sudden demand placed FLCY under considerable strain, but FLCY met all of the necessary missions.

Three organizational traits may be credited with paving the way for FLCY to respond adaptively. First, most members at all levels of the workforce possessed the ability to act expeditiously and effectively. The workforce's collective knowledge of supply chain management,

applicable law and regulation, and operational planning and execution was superb. That ability underscored the confidence the workforce needed to act in both contingencies without explicit direction from the commanding officer. The high-level ability of the workforce also encouraged the commanding officer to feel comfortable that devolving operations to the workforce would result in successful logistics support. And indeed, success characterized both operations. FLCY delivered fuel to Yokosuka within a few hours of the request. And in the case of the earthquake HA/DR, the expertise of the workforce was manifested in locating and delivering commodity inventories from locations around the world, leveraging multiple novel supply chains, and letting new contracts to expand commodities' availability and delivery.

Second, a strong, values-based organizational culture assured all members of the workforce that they shared fundamental work-related values, which were derived when the FLCY identified the adaptive challenge. Leaders were also able to return the work to the people based upon their social awareness. Through leader, self, and social awareness, they were able to minimize distress and ensure that members were able to work at optimum levels during adaptive challenges. This assurance translated into the morale-boosting knowledge that all members were working to their best ability to do their part to prepare the fleet for deployment or to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. No member dared let another member down, and so the entire chain of effort was strengthened.

Third, when the workforce did make mistakes, the transparency that is part of integrity helped pinpoint the problem that, in turn, helped FLCY apply collective wisdom to fashion a fix. The organization's possession of these traits ultimately ensured that members of the organization felt that their shipmates reflected the indispensable personal competency, trustworthiness. And trustworthiness, in turn, enabled adaptive qualities to come to the fore.

Leaders demonstrate trustworthiness through their talent, ethics, and honesty. To gauge their organization's culture of trustworthiness, leaders must reflect and ascertain that they and their organizations have the critical components of ability, benevolence, and integrity.

## Coaching Trustworthiness

Leaders play a primary role in establishing trust, in organizations. Transformational leadership has four key components: Individualized Consideration encourages leaders to be attentive to the individual needs and goals of those around them. Idealized Influence carries an ethical aspect by encouraging leaders to act in a way that their followers wish to emulate. A recent study focused on the latter two areas of transformational leadership. Inspirational Motivation (communicating an inspiring vision) and Intellectual Stimulation (challenging followers' ideas) are two dimensions of transformational leadership that are important for leaders to develop trust with their teams (Boies, Fiset, & Gill, 2015). Intellectual Stimulation (IS) is important for creative performance, while Inspirational Motivation (IM) is important for task performance. When developing teambuilding through communication, both IS and IM appear to be effective and trainable approaches.

**Coaching Techniques** These transformational leadership dimensions may serve as a guide for the coach working with the leader toward building trust in their organizations. These dimensions may be used to develop trust through the following methods:

- Strengthening the capacity to understand when you do not know something. Keeping work at the center of integrity allows leaders to "operate at the frontier of competence," while they "enable others to push their frontier of competence to be experimental, without shame or the need to cover up" (Heifetz, personal communication, April 3, 2017)
- Fostering greater communication among team members through Intellectual Stimulation

- Uniting the team through development of a collective vision
- Developing this collective vision through Inspirational Motivation
- Assisting leaders with empathy for members in their organizations and help leaders understand how their morals, values, and ethics impact their organization through Idealized Influence
- When practical, consult with team members when making decisions
- Sharing common values with the leader is important
- (Boies et al., 2015; Brown, Treviño, Harrison, 2005; Gillespie & Mann, 2004)

**Further Instructions** This research suggests that leaders influence team trust when they facilitate greater communication among team members. Coaching leaders in developing their vision, empathy, and challenging thinking enables them to train their personnel and foster greater openness for creative and effective thinking. These transformational leadership dimensions provide coaching techniques for leaders looking to develop trust while building their organizations.

## Communicativeness

Communicativeness is an important characteristic of an adaptive leader due to the influence it has not only on the individuals under the leader, but also on how other organizations view and interact with the adaptive organization itself. As with regular organizations, communication is vital when dispersing information, delegating tasks, and conducting day-to-day routines. In adaptive organizations, leadership, listening, and communication are even more imperative due to the flexibility demanded to deal with the ever-changing tasks that come with the adaptive challenge.

Noted leadership researchers, Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner, wisely espouse that all leaders, regardless of their level, should be able to "paraphrase, summarize, express feelings, disclose personal information, admit mistakes, respond non-defensively, ask for clarification, [and] solicit different views" (Kouzes & Posner, 2006, p. 164). These baseline individual communication abilities greatly facilitate numerous related leadership requirements that range from simple (establishing friendships) to challenging (perfecting the art of persuasion in order to influence others) and to complex (adopting wide-ranging strategic communication strategies). Ironically, a leader's capacity for effective communication tends to be an overlooked adaptive competency, mostly because it is generally considered a necessary behavioral manifestation of a leader's overall interpersonal tool kit of skills.

Those leaders that are ineffective or inconsistent in their ability to transmit information (in written and oral formats) to provide guidance, direction, motivation, and coordination or are hardpressed to see their vision for organizational success, may hinder the organization rather than help it. Although one's ability to communicate effectively may become an increasingly important leadership competency as one progresses from direct positions, through operational positions, and potential strategic-level positions (Mumford, Campion & Morgeson, 2007), it still remains directly attributable to one's ability to interact with and influence others for organizational effectiveness. As duties and responsibilities increase commensurate with position, the scope of work, the recognition/awareness of change, and the coordination needed to achieve short- and long-term alignment throughout the vertical and horizontal layers found within and external to an organization requires an ever-increasing repertoire of communication abilities. Similar to leadership, being an effective and adaptive communicator is both a science and an art.

This section argues that communicative capacity (hereafter referred to as communicativeness) of a leader within an adaptive organization can be best described as a two-directional process that ensures "information is clearly and accurately exchanged between two or more team members in the prescribed manner with the proper terminology; it is the ability to clarify or

acknowledge the receipt of information" (Cannon-Bowers, Tannenbaum, Salas, & Volpe, 1995). Previous references to early adaptive leadership work conducted by Heifetz and Laurie (2001) advocated a technique relevant to communicativeness, termed "Get on the Balcony." Whether taken literally or figuratively, this technique reveals a leader's ability to reflect and gain a more holistic or systems' perspective above the chaos of a particular field of play. Upon this reflection and identification of the adaptive challenge, the leader can communicate and frame key components, orient the team to adapt roles and responsibilities, manage conflict, and shape/influence norms conducive to effective and efficient execution. Listening enables one to sense people's adaptive capacity and to adjust the pacing of change, and empowering the organization to leverage diversity through horizontal and vertical communication can offer needed ideas from voices below. For our purposes, we offer a visual representation using a ladder of increasing difficulty to show that a leader's ability to vertically and horizontally communicate progresses from a common perspective of *why*, *what, how, and when* (Fig. 19.1).

The first two steps of this adaptive communication ladder are more universal and represent a more commonly accepted science. The extant literature is replete with examples of the traditional motives for *why* a leader needs to be an effective communicator. Leaders must possess the obvious ability to effectively interact internally with their team/organization in order to fulfill traditional roles of leading, transforming, inspiring, directing, and motivating. Additionally, leaders must also possess the ability to communicate externally, to collaborate, influence, and negotiate with customer, partners, and stakeholders in order to gain or maintain a competitive advantage within the business environment. This transmission is typically realized through a combination of written or orally communicated interactions that express topics that range from the mundane (i.e., policy, general operational guidance, annual reports, newsletter, e-mails) to the more strategic (i.e., mission, vision, strategy, goals, objectives, values), all of which are designed to achieve *what* the strategic leader determines are the desired organizational goals, objectives, and outcomes.


**Fig. 19.1** Communicativeness difficulty ladder

The last two rungs of the communicativeness ladder reflect slightly more difficult and nuanced actions of the leader. Instead of being primarily descriptive like the first two rungs, the last two represent more challenging, behaviorally oriented actions and reflect more of the art of adaptive communication. *How* a leader approaches opportunities to provide direction becomes even more complex when the manner and tenor of the communication may change with regard to audience (i.e., individual employees, teams, customers, and external stakeholders) to regulate stress. Indeed, existing research indicates that the style in which a leader communicates is more highly correlated with organizational effectiveness and performance than the actual content of the message (Geertshuis, Morrison, & Cooper-Thomas, 2015). Maintaining attention to a disciplined communication style as well as focusing on effective content is a powerful competency for adaptive challenges. Self-help and best practice books abound and address the power of persuasion and influence that is progressively complemented by a strong sense of emotional or social intelligence. These popular and well-researched books and journal articles espouse important behavioral leader traits such as humility, confidence, objectiveness, trustworthiness, and the ability to actively listen as critical factors in developing, nurturing, and creating the buy-in required to align the organization (Carnegie, 1998; Goleman, 2006; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Communicating clearly with empathy, enthusiasm, and compassion to

make a point in interpersonal and organizational interactions is key to conquering the *how* of communication.

Similarly, adaptive situations, especially at the operational and strategic-leader levels, require the ability to communicate change and provide new directions and guidance following periodic review and revision as conditions change in today's VUCA (Dubik, 2013). It is important to note that the effectiveness of the communication is further enhanced by actual (or at least perceptions of) trust. Research suggests that knowledge and expertise, openness and honesty, and concern and care are all highly correlated with determining the credibility of a communication, especially in a high-risk environment (Peters, Covello, & McCallum, 1997). Once the credibility of communication is established, the door is opened for individuals to place trust in their organization; eventually leading to the organization being deemed as trustworthy.

The final rung is paradoxically the most difficult to achieve: knowing *when* to leverage this art of communicativeness. On one hand, initial direction and periodic follow-ups with respect to *what* information/guidance is needed to ensure proper continued alignment are fairly standard and predictable. However, in today's frenetic 24-h news network environment, the landscape and the surge of information change and flow at an exponentially faster rate. Leader and organizational actions in this complex decision space sometimes have both delayed reactions and unintended second- and third-order consequences. How early is too early to decide whether or not a new mission and vision for the organization is achieving its desired effects? How does the leader determine if calling an audible is required, to adapt the plan to fit new conditions rather than pursuing a failed plan or strategy? At an even more nuanced level, knowing when to step in and provide additional guidance to key peer or subordinate leaders or allow the friction of ambiguity to challenge and develop one's bench of future talent is certainly more art than science, with no available guidebook.

## Coaching Communicativeness

Although much of the advice and recommendations on leader competency and effectiveness derives predominantly from more traditional leadership (see Burke et al., 2006; Conger, 1993) and medical fields (see Aspegren, 1999; Rider & Keefer, 2006), the material is easily translatable to facilitated coaching in this critical dimension.

**Coaching Techniques** In order to instruct a leader to become a better communicator, you must first establish a baseline of verbal competency. This should be a combination of self-reported assessments (via interview) and practical/constructive feedback *in situ* from superiors, peers, subordinates, and other relevant personnel (i.e., customers, external stakeholders, significant others) – an important combination that offers the communication expert an effective assessment with regard to what is being transmitted by the communicator versus what is being received by his or her audience. We recommend that communication experts use a variety of techniques to capture this information via one-on-one interviews, survey instruments, and voice/video recordings in order to provide multiple perspectives capable of targeting the following key areas that can be shared with the coach:

- Overall effectiveness of delivery, captured primarily by the level of interest/engagement of intended audience
- Content: word/phrase choice, grammatical syntax (i.e., is the content appropriate for the audience), reliance on fillers (i.e., use of "ah," "um," "like")
- Prosody: intonation of voice, inflection points
- Volume: finding the happy medium between soft and loud delivery
- Rate: speed of delivery
- Nonverbal indicators: appropriate use of body language (i.e., eye contact, gesticulations, posture)

**Further Instruction** The coach can then shadow or discuss and monitor communications progress with the leader. These feedback mechanisms allow

a coach to guide the leader through a modified Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis of their communicativeness. Mutually agreed upon goals in the work environment, designed to sustain observed strengths and develop exercises to address weaknesses, will greatly enhance the leader's ability to adapt and modify any or all of the mechanisms above. Once mastered, these individual techniques can then be applied to more interpersonal communication situations to facilitate team/group/organizational coordination and synchronization dynamics. Interested readers can find additional techniques and assessment protocols in recent research performed by Gallo (2014), Geertshuis et al. (2015), Mayfield, Mayfield, and Sharbrough (2015), and Schwartzman et al. (2010).

This section offers coaches several important communication methods, as outlined by a communication expert that may be helpful when working with leaders to assess and improve their communication effectiveness. Assessing leaders' baseline communication skills through recordings, self and coaches' assessment can offer leaders greater self-awareness for developing these adaptive leader competencies. The ability for communicativeness clearly plays an integral role in positioning the leader, the led, and the organization for proactive and reactive adaptive responses.

## Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the capacity to recognize and act effectively on others' and one's own emotional states in intrapersonal or interpersonal interactions. There are threads of emotional intelligence seen throughout Heifetz's adaptive leadership principles. The importance of EI and leadership has been explored in the literature and research with some support (Stein & Book, 2011). More recent literature and research on leadership, leader competencies, and performance have helped identified behaviors that contribute to superior leadership performance. These behaviors were categorized into seven leader skills groups and placed into one of the two categories: these being core skills or adaptive skills (Bradberry & Greaves, 2012).

Emotional Intelligence has been identified as a component of adaptive leadership. In their research, Bradbury and Greaves conceptualized Goleman's four main dimensions of emotional intelligence as one of the four critical categories of adaptive leadership (Goleman, Boyatis, & McKee, 2013).

The four common Goleman EI dimensions are self-awareness, self-expression and management, social awareness, and relationship management (Goleman et al., 2013). While using these four general dimensions, Bradberry and Greaves (2012) identified different underlying factors that were related to Golemen's conceptualization. This section examines the important EI dimensions and their factors for adaptive leadership based on several frameworks (Bradberry & Greaves, 2012; Goleman et al., 2013; Stein & Book, 2011).

The first EI dimension is *self-awareness*. This dimension is composed of the following contributing attributes: self-assessment, reflection, emotional awareness, and mindfulness. Self-assessment and reflection help to gain better insight into past, current, and future situations regarding thoughts and emotional connection. Research suggests that the maturation of self-reflection for executives occurs around the age of 40 (Tamir & Finfer, 2016). Suri and Prasad (2011) found that *self-awareness* is positively correlated to transformational leadership in information technology managers in India. Moore and Mamiseishvili (2012) found that awareness of one's emotions was more closely related to team cohesion than the other EI dimensions. This may have been due to members' ability to reflect upon, know, and discuss their feelings with others. *Self-awareness* allows one to differentiate between thoughts and emotions and provides clarity of thinking for decision-making. *Self-awareness* may be enhanced through mindfulness practices of simply focusing on the present moment. If leaders encompass mindfulness practices, it would aid them to "get

on the balcony," lead their unit in an objective manner, question personal theories, examine personality issues, and demonstrate the intellectual flexibility of contrasting the real with the ideal. With greater emotional awareness or mindfulness there is an increased capability for the leader to self-monitor their behavior and lead and address a great range of adaptive challenges. Through this reflection on self- and social-awareness, leaders can recognize patterns of change internal and external to the organization (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001). Through identifying and examining the organization's emotional temperament, and resources, there is a better risk assessment conducted to determine the capacity of the organization to meet the adaptive challenge (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001).

*Self-Management* is a collection of attributes that recognize and effectively communicate emotions in order to afford oneself a concentrated drive and energy to accomplish defined goals. Having self-control or self-regulation allows one to manage emotions, impulses, and develop stress tolerance for disturbing emotions so that thinking remains clear during chaotic events.

The Center for Creative Leadership (CCL), when examining 302 managers taking the Bar-On EQ-I emotional intelligence test and the CCL Benchmarks, a multirater leadership assessment, noted that there were areas that could derail leaders. Those behaviors included lack of stress tolerance and poor impulse control when adapting to change (Ruderman et al., 2001). Leaders with confidence and competence can manage stress and take action during uncertain events. Developing the right amount of stress tolerance with the collective workforce can be done by educating the organization to recognize and develop awareness of how and what changes are needed for the future (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001). Though not focusing on leader research in emotional intelligence, Armstrong, Galligan, and Critchley (2011) found that emotional self-awareness, expression, self-control, and self-management were attributes that could aid in mitigating the effects of aversive situations and were important for psychological resilience. Leaders should have the emotional capacity to tolerate uncertainty, the self-awareness to manage their distress, and the social awareness to recognize the stress of others.

*Social awareness* is the ability to connect in meaningful relationships through recognition of others' emotions under a variety of conditions. Barbuto and Burbach (2006) found that empathic responses of political leaders were related to the transformational leadership traits of Individual Consideration (for employees) and Intellectual Stimulation (the ability to cause self-reflective change for employees). Additionally, Kafetsios, Nezlek, and Vassiou (2011) found that school directors' use of emotions was positively related to subordinates' work emotionality and attitudes. Being empathetic to a subordinate's challenges can press leaders to be open to rethinking the problem and contemplating what they can learn as a leader about the topic or challenges with which their subordinates grapple (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001). Therefore, it is important for leaders to be in touch not only with their own feelings, but also with the feelings of the individuals under them.

*Relationship management* is addressing others' emotions through persuasion and negotiation to come to a consensus when adaptive leadership is required. Leaders must be independent, confident, and optimistic thinkers who can assert their will through the social network in order to instill a corporate self-confidence in leaders who, in turn, take responsibility and risks (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001). Researchers found that emotional appraisal skills and social skills positively impacted team performance. They also found that leaders with high EI or teams that had a high average EI demonstrate high levels of performance (Chang, Sy, & Choi, 2012). Moore and Mamiseishvili (2012) found groups with high EI were more cohesive than groups with low EI.

In order to maintain focused attention on developing EI skills, leaders must be self-directive. This allows them to maintain cohesion for adaptive challenges through relationship management; such as behaviors involving scapegoating, losing focus on technical issues, or the behavior of attacking others rather than critiqu-

ing themselves (Heifetz & Laurie, 2001). Furthermore, leaders are able to influence and serve as a change catalyst to engage key members of networks based on past collaborative relationships for new initiatives. These leaders will mentor staff into leadership roles to prepare for the leader's departure so that the organization is adaptive and can adjust to internal and external changes.

## Coaching Emotional Intelligence

The development of EI can occur on the job through a knowledgeable boss, through formal civilian, government or military education, self-education, leader mentorship, and/or coaching. CCL recommends the use of 360-degree assessments as a way to expand emotional intelligence (Ruderman et al., 2001). In this section, we look at some coaching approaches that may be beneficial to develop the four abovementioned dimensions. Specific self-assignments created by other authors (Stein & Book, 2011; Stein, 2017) may be of use in coaching leaders in the four dimensions.

**Coaching Techniques** The following are some ways to develop skills as a coach for leaders in the four areas conceptualized by Goleman et al. (2013) with some of Stein and Books EQi (2011) factors integrated into EI coaching.

*Self-Awareness* Self-awareness involves being attuned to one's own emotions, thoughts, and reactions and being aware of one's own strengths and limitations. In order to assist leaders to become more self-aware, these areas should be emphasized:

- Teaching the leader to scan his or her body and recognize body physiology, emotional reactions, and body language that can offer greater self-awareness in preparation for interactions interpersonally.
- Educating the leader about the capacity of the brain ability for cellular change, thinking in terms of emotional traits leaders would like to change. Also called neuroplasticity, this process occurs through creating different behaviors, thinking, and emotions. The emotional brain may be impacted by mindfulness (Davidson & McEwen, 2012) and the coaching of mindfulness may be valuable for self-awareness and self-reflection.
- Helping the leader develop the practice to set aside time each day for greater awareness of self and others through reflection of positive and negative events of the day. The leader can think about various leadership scenarios and concepts put forth; such as balancing optimism with realism (Heifetz et al., 2009b) – a useful tool when thinking in terms of planning and decision-making.
- Coaching art-based group leadership through participant observation of a performance; as well as the reflection, discussion, and written material relating to the performance. Researchers found that art-based leadership programs helped enhance self-awareness as well as contributed to areas of self-management in improving humility and stress modulation (Romanowska, Larsson, & Theorell, 2014).

*Self-Management* Self-management is the ability to regulate emotions, manage energy, and modulate one's stress and impulses and to stay focused in accomplishing goals. Assessing sleep, exercise, eating and drinking, and impulsive or relaxing behaviors can provide insight into the ways of energy management. This can also be achieved by having leaders examine what they value in life (i.e., health, family, free time, work) and how are they prioritizing these values in their daily life.

- Coach leaders into developing energy management practices toward a healthy lifestyle.
- Help leaders develop and accomplish positive SMART goals with risk assessment consideration and determine how goals, values, and

beliefs might be linked to personal and organizational values.
- Assist leaders with communicating their emotions effectively (as described in the communicativeness competency section), and developing self-regulation behaviors and other attributes that relate to creativity, innovation, and psychological resilience.

*Social Awareness* Social Awareness is the ability to convey empathy by taking interest in others as well as recognizing and developing meaningful interpersonal relationships. On an organizational level, empathy is the ability to recognize the different powerful relationships inside and outside the organization that are relevant to thrive.

- Coach leaders to recognize when others are experiencing challenging emotions, articulate this recognition, recognize the prevalence of emotions in relationships, and take an interest in offering support to the person/groups/organization as appropriate.
- Review how to speak and write collaboratively during problem solving for positive solutions as discussed in communicativeness competency section. Discuss ways to communicate issues with others, keep everyone involved, and develop better working relationships through respectful empathy.
- Discuss ways to recognize and assess emotional states, which interact with intellectual, religious, monetary, and/or political power networks internal and external to the organizational environment.

*Relationship Management* Relationship management is the process of influencing and developing desirable responses in others or in the organization in order to create cohesion (e.g., a healthy work environment or a strong supportive social network). Additional leaders should be developing important leadership relationship skills such as emotional appraisal skills, social skills, conveying corporate confidence, and optimism while influencing and negotiating with others.

- Institute weekly after-action reviews to develop and utilize the question at the end of the chapter to create an adaptive leadership environment fostering self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. The weekly process will utilize three or more regular or rotational questions to keep the leader and their organization adaptive, agile, and resilient and maintain a culture of innovation and well-being.
- Guide leaders to communicate clearly and in the right tone, to recognize the problems and the feelings of others, to foster commitment, and consensus for a mutual positive outcome.
- Coach leaders to delegate within this process and work with mentees to develop distributive leadership. Check that leaders create systems to reward and develop leaders in organizations.
- Coach the leader to refine relationship skills in order to utilize and expand their networks.
- Stress the importance of leader's awareness regarding regulation/policy and/or have that capacity with others to follow, change, and/or create needed guidance in crises situations.
- Assess with the leader important personnel policy areas such as (1) a respectful work-family environment with these competing institutions; (2) emotional health of the work force through prevention and inspirational resources; and (3) enforcement of emotional and physical workplace environmental safety and cyber security threats.

**Further Instructions** Evidence-based practices that can enhance relationship management skills for leaders may also be found through the American Psychological Association's online Center for Organizational Excellence in their evidence-based Psychologically Healthy Workplace Program. Coaches need to encourage and develop greater self-awareness, stress regulation, relationship building, and influencing skills for leaders as

some of the important emotional intelligence abilities in the adaptive environment.

## Tolerance of Ambiguity

A common and essential competence for effective leaders is the capacity to make good decisions. Effective data analysis provides the foundation for good decisions. That can be a very complicated process due to the amount of data collected and needed to understand today's complex environment.

Most people see the world in particular ways and often focus on data they are comfortable with or that conform to their views of how the world is. However, to see the world in its complexity or as it changes, necessitates a systems view and a consideration of as wide a range of data as possible. Heifetz and Laurie (2001) refer to the ability to see systems and patterns as being "on the balcony." Tolerance of ambiguity includes the capacity to free oneself of a specific mental model and to see the environment through a broad form of reflection and practice. This enables a more complete picture upon which to base decisions; however, this demands cognitive patience, a recognition that one's view of the world is incomplete, and the suspension of judgment (Mendenhall et al., 2008).

To ease anxiety, the human psyche needs a sense of reality through which it may process new data within the context of that perspective. However, as the world changes, new paradigms or mental models are needed. This dynamic enhances anxiety thereby increasing the potential to make faulty judgments or inaccurate inferences about data. Leaders can ease anxiety by "getting on the balcony," or deciphering what data is relevant to the task at hand, and then communicating what is important. Consequently, subordinates trust that their leaders communicate what is vital, allowing them to avoid feeling inundated or distressed by unnecessary information. This freedom from irrelevant data can help them better focus their attention on important tasks in order to avoid the stress from uncertainty.

To develop a new view of reality requires the letting go of the old and tolerating the ambiguity of not knowing what to replace it with. Without that tolerance, people jump too quickly into a new paradigm that may be incomplete or inaccurate. They do so to relieve the anxiety or discomfort that comes from not having a paradigm within which to act or make decisions (Hofstede, 1984). The pressure to jump into a new paradigm is especially felt by organizational leaders since followers look toward their leaders to make sense of what is happening. Absent of that understanding, people are either incapacitated to act or act in ways that only produce more chaotic conditions.

Another need for tolerance of ambiguity derives from the limitations of binary thinking. Many people see the world in terms of good or bad, right or wrong, and black or white. When binary choices are perceived as the only options, there is minimal ambiguity. It's either one or the other, and yet we know that in a VUCA world where wicked problems exist, there is rarely ever clarity, certainty, or lack of ambiguity.

Tolerating ambiguity means suspending judgment and decision-making until more facts are known or more interpretations or perspectives are articulated (DiBella, 2013). In effect, a leader must refrain from making a decision until the best decision or a better decision is found. Tolerating ambiguity requires being comfortable with the anxiety and uncertainty that come from not knowing what is to be done. Lack of this competence leads to what is known as a rush to judgment (on the other hand, too much patience leads to "paralysis from analysis"). Effective leaders should accept and grapple with uncertainty for as long as it takes to fully understand the problem and its solution, or take action in uncertainty with a contingent, experimental mindset. A person intolerant of ambiguity is less apt to solicit different points of view around a problem or decision and thus unable to integrate broader understandings required of robust solutions. Leaders who engage in self-reflection can identify their capacity for tolerating ambiguity. Such an insight can enable them to avoid premature decisions.

An excellent illustration of an effective leader tolerating ambiguity can be seen in the movie *Ike: Countdown to D-Day*. Arguably the most critical decision General Dwight Eisenhower had to make as Supreme Commander of allied forces in World War II was choosing when to launch the invasion of Normandy. Eisenhower had to consider a range of variables including the level of operational readiness, tides, and weather as he deliberated the decision. Despite the angst and uncertainty experienced by his command staff, he deferred choosing the date of the invasion until what seemed like the last possible moment.

Another consequence of intolerance of ambiguity on the part of military commanders is a tendency to micromanage. When leaders cannot tolerate the ambiguity of not knowing what their subordinates are doing, they are apt to overspecify the rules, regulations, and procedures that subordinates must follow. Such conditions reflect low trust in an organization and its leader's inability to trust. The result is the incapacity to delegate effectively, leaving subordinates unable to adapt to changing circumstances.

## Coaching Tolerance of Ambiguity

There's a dilemma when it comes to assessing an individual's tolerance for ambiguity and coaching in ways to promote or enhance it. Assessment is about increasing clarity and reducing uncertainty. We want to know whether someone has a particular competence. Some forms of coaching can be prescriptive or directive to make clear what a leader can or should do to enhance some competence. However, to promote the capacity to tolerate ambiguity, coaches may need to acknowledge uncertainty and promote humility.

**Coaching Techniques** Encouraging tolerance of ambiguity can be achieved through various personalized techniques. Coaches may follow and encourage these practices in accordance with their best judgment and knowledge of the individuals with whom they will be working. Such techniques are as follows:

- Debriefing current professional cases.
- Exercises in holding steady during uncertain times.
- Implementing Leadership Coursework with a strong experiential methodology (i.e., Parks [2005], *Leadership Can Be Taught*).
- Learning to manage expectations of certainty.
- Coaches must encourage humility in their clients in order for them to acknowledge that their views are not the only ones. This creates a wedge that allows a leader to suspend judgment, delay decision-making, and promote inquiry about the situation being confronted.
- Coaches must instruct individuals to handle the anxiety that comes from uncertainty in the delay in taking action or making a decision.
- The incapacity to handle anxiety leads individuals to rapidly move up the ladder of inference (Senge, 1994).
- Coaches must be aware of selective choices of data. These result in misinterpretations due to a limited mindset, belief system, or preexisting paradigm or mental model.
- Mindfulness practices, defined here as awareness of thoughts and feelings, have become popular to reduce anxiety and eliminate distractions. Coaches may use mindfulness practices to quell dysfunction and encourage timely decision-making (Hofmann, Sawyer, Witt, & Oh, 2010).
- Increasing mindfulness can make individuals more aware of the inferences they make as they interpret the world around them. Coaches may communicate this awareness with their followers.
- Coaches may also encourage meditation as another practice to reduce anxiety and build cognitive patience.
- Encourage leaders to engage in outside activities to enhance their well-being and develop greater knowledge in areas that may apply to their adaptive challenge at hand.

**Further Instructions** If coaches specify to prospective leaders their need to tolerate ambiguity,

their current capacity for it, and the ways they can build that competence, they are acting prescriptively and reducing uncertainty. However, in the process they are doing for the individuals what they need to do for themselves. The reality is that the medium becomes the message, and so we face a dilemma. The more we assess competence and are directive about how to enhance it, the more we reduce ambiguity rather than promote its tolerance. In effect, the more prescriptive coaches are, the less their clients need to think for themselves. Leaders need to trust their coaches and the coaching process, and they must possess the self-confidence that they themselves can work through their own ambiguities.

Coaching tolerance of ambiguity involves working with the leader to develop humility, suspend judgment, recognize other viewpoints, develop situational awareness, and engage in other activities to provide the leader with greater knowledge. Tolerance of ambiguity serves as a method to cope with the stresses of adaptive leadership as well as a guide to maintaining and encouraging humility. This competence encourages more robust decision-making required to solve complex problems.

## Hardiness

In discussing adaptive leadership, Heifetz and Laurie (2001) recognize that personal attitudes, behaviors, and habits have a lot to do with how well an individual can take on the adaptive leader challenges. Hardiness is a set of attitudes that can have a major influence on a person's capacity to adapt. Considerable research has shown that people who remain healthy and continue to perform well under highly stressful conditions possess the three interrelated qualities of commitment, control, and challenge, the three Cs of hardiness (Bartone, 1999; Bartone, Roland, Picano, & Williams, 2008; Kobasa, 1979).

Commitment reflects a strong interest and engagement with the world, and an abiding sense that life is meaningful and worthwhile. Control is the belief that through effort and action one can influence important outcomes. Challenge is an attitude of curiosity, a receptiveness to the variety of changes in life. When faced with new or changing conditions, high hardy persons tend to perceive these as challenging opportunities to learn and grow. These leaders also prefer proactive problem solving and coping strategies.

Hardiness facilitates several of Heifetz's principles of adaptive work for leaders. Most importantly, hardiness-challenge establishes an attitude in which change is expected and even welcomed. The high hardy leader is thus better equipped to address Heifetz's second principle, "identify the adaptive challenge." This leader would perceive important changes in the environment more quickly and thus be able, and willing, to identify how the organization needs to change in order to cope with the new environment.

Hardiness likewise enhances the capacity of leaders to "get on the balcony" and see what is going on across multiple levels in the organization. This is mainly a function of hardiness-commitment, which extends to three important spheres of life: the social world, the physical world, and the world of self, what existentialists called *Mitwelt, Umwelt,* and *Eigenwelt* (Binswanger, 1963). Those high in commitment routinely pay more attention to all three spheres, and so are better able to take a broad view of the organization as well as the external environment. There is a conceptual similarity here to emotional intelligence, as the high hardy person is both more socially aware (*Mitwelt*) and also more attuned to his or her own emotions and reactions (*Eignewelt*). With greater awareness of how people are reacting to the stressors of change, the leader is able to take the right steps to "regulate distress" across the workforce, another key principle of adaptive leadership.

The control dimension of hardiness also facilitates adaptive leadership work, particularly in regards to the principle of "give the work back to the people." High hardy leaders understand the importance of having a sense of control, and that one's own actions matter. They are motivated to

find ways to involve workers at all levels in decision-making, while also making sure to maintain good communications.

## Coaching Hardiness

There are a number of things that leaders can do to build up hardiness attitudes and behaviors in themselves and their organizations, thereby facilitating the work of adaptive leadership. The focus should be on the three Cs of psychological hardiness: commitment, control, and challenge.

Hardiness-commitment is all about being engaged in the surrounding world and in the self. Leaders build up hardiness-commitment throughout the organization by communicating a strong and clear vision. Multiple methods and repetition inculcate the vision in ways that foster engagement by the workers in significant ways. Seeking their input and ideas is the next step. Leaders also should strive to model engagement, by being available, visible, and curious about all aspects of the work within the organization. Perhaps most important, leaders should take the time and trouble to communicate and explain to workers what they are doing and why. The more workers understand the overall purpose and meaning behind their activities, the greater will be their sense of commitment.

Hardiness-control is the belief that one's actions can influence events within one's own life as well as having the ability to influence the world. Leaders can increase the sense of control by ensuring that the tasks and duties assigned to workers are within their capabilities and skill levels. Tasks that are too easy can lead to boredom, while those that greatly exceed worker abilities can be overwhelming and anxiety-producing. Whether in training programs or production activities, it is best to follow a graduated schedule in which small, manageable tasks are presented first, followed by more demanding ones as skill and confidence develops. In this way, the leader creates what Heifetz and Laurie (2001) call a "holding environment" in which workers feel safe, while at the same time pushing them somewhat beyond their familiar comfort zones.

The third C of hardiness, challenge, involves taking a positive outlook on change, being actively interested in new things and situations, and being curious about options and avenues for making advancements. The challenge aspect of hardiness can be encouraged across the organization by a number of leader actions and workplace policies. Of primary importance is the role-modeling established by leaders. The high-challenge person enjoys variety and sees change as a chance to learn and grow, rather than something to be feared and avoided. Leaders should demonstrate this approach in their own daily lives, especially where they are most visible to employees – at work. When confronted with surprising events, the high hardy leader will show a calm demeanor and an interest in learning more and solving the problem. He or she accepts responsibility for failures, and avoids blaming others when things go wrong. Also, the high hardy leader is willing to shift and change approaches in the face of changing conditions, and to experiment with new ideas. In addition to modeling these qualities, the leader also seeks to create a work environment that rewards and reinforces them across the workforce. This can be done, for example, through policies that permit flexible routines and schedule changes.

Below are some more specific coaching strategies for building up hardiness-commitment, control and challenge in leaders and organizations.

**Coaching Techniques** Techniques for coaching focus on the three primary hardiness facets of *commitment, control,* and *challenge*

*Hardiness-Commitment* To build commitment, leaders should be encouraged to:

- Take some time each day to think about what's important and interesting; reflect on personal goals and values.
- Work on increasing skills and competencies in some area that's important. Take pride in past successes and achievements.
- Pay attention to what's going on around you and in the world: read, observe, and listen!
- Allow workers to have input into workplace policies and activities; seek their input and ideas.
- Perform team- and cohesion-building activities that also enhance commitment to the group and to the shared values of the organization.
- Be fair, and do not take special privileges. When hardship occurs, such as pay cuts or long hours to meet production deadlines, hardy leaders share that hardship evenly, and do not exclude themselves.
- Interact visibly with employees regularly. Get around and be seen!
- Take time and trouble to communicate and explain policies and decisions to workers. The more workers understand the purpose and meaning behind their activities, the greater their sense of commitment.

*Hardiness-Control* To build hardiness-control, leaders should be encouraged to:

- Focus their time and energy on things they can control or influence. Don't waste time on things that are outside of one's capabilities to fix.
- Give work assignments which match or slightly exceed worker abilities, allowing them to engage fully and realize success, enhancing the sense of control and mastery.
- For difficult jobs, break them up into manageable pieces so progress can be seen.
- Provide employees with the needed resources to accomplish assigned tasks.

*Hardiness-Challenge* The third C of hardiness, challenge, involves taking a positive outlook on change and being actively interested in new things and situations. To build hardiness-challenge, leaders should be encouraged to do the following:

- Don't follow a rigid schedule. Allow for variation and surprises. Consider rotating employees into different jobs to give them some variety, while also building their knowledge of the overall organization (this also builds commitment).
- When failure occurs, first ask: what can I learn from this? Employees who fail at a task should be counseled, and encouraged to view the experience as a learning opportunity and chance to improve and do things better next time.
- Try out new things and take reasonable risks. While some stability and routine are necessary, the willingness to experiment is also important. This fosters a climate of innovation and challenge.

Together, these approaches can lead to increased attitudes of personal hardiness in leaders and throughout the workforce, which in turn will support leader efforts to create a more adaptive organization. Additional information on building hardiness in leaders and organizations can be found in Bartone, Eid, and Hystad (2016) and Bartone (2017).

## Summary Coaching Questions for the Adaptive Leader

The Adaptive Leadership model requires leaders to refrain from offering solutions when none are clear or sufficient. The responsibility is shifted to the collective intelligence of the team who own the problem as well as the solution. Those in positions of authority can help the team resolve long-standing, unresolved problems, or assist them in responding to new, unexpected crises, by asking the team members powerful questions. These questions are equally applicable to the leaders and can be used at any time during the problem-solving cycle:

1. What percentage of this problem is technical problem, an adaptive challenge, or both?
2. What values could be preventing the team from seeing the solution to this challenge and implementing it?

3. How could team members be resisting the changes needed to obtain a solution?
4. What sacrifices would be required by the team or individuals to achieve a solution?
5. What outside threats are there to this solution?
6. How our stakeholders are impacted by the challenge or would be by the solution?
7. How accurate is my view of this problem when I stand on the balcony and when I stand on the dance floor? What could I be missing?
8. What conflicts have not been addressed and need to be discussed in order to get to a right solution for this challenge?
9. What biases are hindering the team's vision of this problem?
10. How can the stress/distress levels of the team be monitored? What symptoms do team members display when the stress is too high?
11. How would the leader protect the voices from below and actions (good and bad) that are taken without authority?
12. What sacrifices will be required by the team for the solutions?
13. What options may have been eliminated prematurely?
14. How would the leader know if team members are receiving the appropriate level of direction, protection, and order?
15. How well is the team using their collective differences to stimulate creativity?
16. How can the leader make the team more comfortable in assuming responsibility for the solution to the challenge?
17. How committed is the leader to backing up the team if they make mistakes?
18. How committed is the team to learning what we need to learn to solve this challenge?
19. How accurate is the team's understanding of this challenge? What are other explanations?
20. What loyalties may be impacting the team's perceptions of the challenge?
21. To what extent has the leader successfully connected with the values, beliefs, and anxieties of the team?
22. How could the team's expectation of success be too narrow?
23. How could a desire for power and control be preventing the discovery of the solution to this challenge?
24. How clearly has the leader communicated the "perspiration" part of the inspiration message for this challenge?
25. Before taking action on the solution, to what extent has the team clearly described the challenge, identified the major players, solicited partners, described the actions to be taken, and identified the potential positive and negative impact of those actions?

## Future Direction and Conclusion

Habits and attitudes are hard to change because they offer stability. Adaptive change fosters resistance because people have to question their identity and competence. The greater the adaptive change, the more learning is needed. This change will typically cause greater resistance, risk, and difficulty for the leader (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). The leader and the organization need to recognize and embrace conflict as a guide for change and new directions to face adaptive challenges.

This chapter has provided an overview of seven of Heifetz and colleagues' strategic principles for adaptive leaders and five competencies we feel are critical for adaptive leaders. Adaptive leaders clearly need to mobilize their teams and larger organization in the VUCA environment to thrive. The competencies we identify are important for leaders to continually develop and foster in their organization. The five competencies (trustworthiness, communicativeness, emotional intelligence, tolerance for ambiguity and hardiness) are areas that leaders can be coached in and proceed to coach and guide their organizations through the complexities of current events. Part of leaders taking care of themselves is finding trusted advisors or confidants that nurture these competencies of the adaptive leader. The adaptive leader competencies are skills that civilian, government, and military leaders would need in kinetic, diplomatic, and international conflicts (Table 19.3).

**Table 19.3** Adaptive leadership and the five competencies

| | Trustworthiness | Communicativeness | Emotional intelligence (EI) | Tolerance of ambiguity | Hardiness |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| "Getting on the Balcony" | | Communicate insights on adaptive challenge by framing key challenges, orienting team to adapt to roles and responsibilities, managing conflict, and shaping/influencing norms conducive to effective and efficient execution | Through reflection on self and social awareness, leaders can recognize patterns of change internal and external to the organization | The capacity to let go of a frame of reference or mental model and see the environmental systems and patterns more broadly through reflection and practice | Reflect on how to garner workers' engagement (commitment) and develop their sense of autonomy (control) and build this in the organization |
| Identifying the Adaptive Challenge | | Communicate change and provide new directions and guidance following periodic review and revision as conditions change in today's volatile and complex environment | Through identifying and examining the organization's emotional temperament and resources there is a better capacity to determine the organization's ability to identify and meet the challenge | | Leaders high in commitment are fully engaged and aware, can see broadly to identify changing needs, and build commitment by listening and supporting workers' good ideas in times of adaptive change |
| Regulating Distress | | Attention is especially required when modifying the manner and tenor of a communication based on the targeted audience (i.e., individual teams and external stakeholders) to regulate stress | Develop the right amount of stress tolerance with the collective workforce by educating the organization to recognize and develop awareness of how and what changes are needed for the future<br>Leaders should have the emotional capacity to regulate uncertainty, the self-awareness to manage their distress, and social awareness to recognize the stress of others | Capacity to handle the stress that comes from uncertainty | Provide the proper challenge and build in the proper training for a sense of control to build confidence and reduce stress and shape the new norms and provide employees with manageable tasks and needed resources |
| Maintaining Disciplined Attention | | Maintaining attention to a disciplined communication style as well as focusing on effective content is a powerful competency for adaptive challenges | Leaders must be self-directive in maintaining a focused attention on adaptive challenges through relationship management of behaviors such as scapegoating, losing focus on technical issues, or attacking others rather than their behavior | Staying in an inquiry mode | To keep leaders focused and committed, recognize conflict from diverse thinking and new ideas and openly restore equilibrium while allowing polarization that can affect the mission |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Giving Work Back to the People | Giving work to a subordinate who possesses the ability to execute responsibilities and a proclivity to work toward similar results | Leaders must use personnel to determine whether or not the communicated mission and vision for the organization is achieving its desired effects and possessing the fortitude and capacity to adapt and collectively communicate the revised plan to fit new conditions | The leader must be an independent, confident, and an optimistic thinker that can assert his or her will through the social network to instill a corporate self-confidence in others to take responsibility and risks | Letting go of control while also knowing when to step in and provide additional guidance to key personnel Allow the friction of ambiguity to serve and challenge the development of future talent | Leaders build hardiness control in the organization by delegating authority to subordinates and trusting workers to perform (while also verifying). Control is reinforced by listening to workers' input |
| Protecting the Voices of Leadership from Below | Ensuring those to whom responsibility is delegated are protected and encouraged to foster their ideas | Recognizing that "listening" is an important component of protecting communication Leaders can empower the organization to leverage the diversity of thought, background, and experience via free-flowing horizontal and vertical communication | Be empathic to the challenges from subordinates and ask, What can I learn about the topic or situation? | Appreciating alternative points of view | Building challenge can be done through allowing workers to experiment, and when failure occurs using this as a learning opportunity |
| Leader: Take Care of Yourself | | Communicating clearly with empathy, enthusiasm, and compassion to make your point in interpersonal and organizational interactions | Setting aside time each day for greater self and other awareness. | Learn new information outside your job | Encourage leaders to reflect on successes, build hardiness-commitment, self-esteem and competence, as well as control and confidence in their abilities to influence |

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