Leading from the Middle

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Our focus today... Tools & Perspectives to deal with the complexity of Leading From the Middle

Developing capabilities for:

✓ Managing change
✓ Balancing tensions
✓ Unleashing the energy in your organization
1. Name
2. Where I’m From
3. One Word or Phrase That Describes My Relationship to Change
Why Lead Change from the Middle?
70% or more of change efforts typically fail.

Bill Pasmore, The Tipping Point
Reflect and write: (for a minute at your table)

What does it feel like when change is ‘done to you’?
What does it feel like when change is ‘done with you’?
What is the difference? Why does it matter?
What do we know about Change?

- It’s constant
- The “human” side of change needs attention – it doesn’t ‘take care of itself’ with a good operations plan or just the “technical” side getting attention
So what’s a leader to do?

**Successful change leaders...**

Manage task AND relationship – focusing on both/and not an either/or approach

What have you seen in your organizations?
Rule #1

Don’t wait for 100% clarity
Instead...embrace ambiguity

One of the best thing change leaders can do?

MAKE CHANGE DISCUSSABLE!
What doesn’t belong in the change conversation?

- Politics?
- Emotions?
- Questions?
- Style?
- Challenge?
- Aspirations?
- Mindsets?

ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING GOES!!!
Change is coming…
What? Wait, **WHAT??**
CHANGE CONVERSATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Old</th>
<th>New</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: Quinn & McEvoy, 2017
### CHANGE CONVERSATIONS

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<tr>
<td>What do we need to <strong>HOLD ON</strong> to?</td>
<td>What do we need to <strong>LET GO</strong> of?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do we need to <strong>BUILD &amp; GROW</strong>?</td>
<td>What do we need to <strong>WATCH OUT</strong> for?</td>
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Source: Quinn & McEvoy, 2017
Change Conversations

Reflect and write: (for a minute at your table)

What does the 1, 2, 3, & 4 look like in your organization?

Which “BOX” needs attention?
Has been neglected?

What’s a change conversation you can invite? First step?
HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH A PARTNER AT YOUR TABLE
### Which side is better? Old vs. New?

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Source: Quinn & McEvoy, 2017
ADDING TO THE PERSPECTIVE OF:  either/or
TO THE POWER OF:  both/and
INTRODUCING THE CONCEPTS
FEELING THE ENERGY

INHALE and EXHALE

Source: Barry Johnson, Polarity Management
Energy System

Get Oxygen

Clean out Carbon Dioxide

Too much Carbon Dioxide

Too little Oxygen

Source: Barry Johnson, Polarity Management
Polarities exist:

When a “problem” has...

1. Two or more right answers
2. Interdependence
3. Energy flow

Source: Barry Johnson, Polarity Management
## Problem or Polarity? Differentiating...

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Problems to Solve</th>
<th>Polarities to Manage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Should we hire person A or B?</td>
<td>1. Task and Relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What is the appropriate radiation protocol for this patient?</td>
<td>2. Candor and Diplomacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What is the appropriate level for the performance of this equipment?</td>
<td>3. Cost and Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What are the courses we need to provide this year for our new residents?</td>
<td>4. Centralize and Decentralize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Do we have the right controls in place for radiation hazards?</td>
<td>5. Strategic and Operational</td>
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Source: Barry Johnson, Polarity Management
When dealing with increased complexity and resistance to change...

Polarity Management is an essential perspective & tool

either/or  AND  both/and

Source: Barry Johnson, Polarity Management
Is there a Polarity here?

Advantages

Values

Disadvantages

Fears

Old

Stability

What do we need to HOLD ON to?

New

Change

What do we need to BUILD & GROW?

What do we need to LET GO of?

What do we need to WATCH OUT for?

Source: Quinn & McEvoy, 2017
10 Strategic Polarities

Living with contradiction, holding together polarities, making room for divergence leads to vitality and enables us to see opposites not as dead ends but as a series of open doors.

-- Elizabeth J. Canham

1. Stability AND Change
2. Cost AND Quality
3. Compete with Others AND Partner with Others
4. Structure AND Flexibility
5. Candor AND Diplomacy
6. Operational AND Strategic
7. Logic AND Creativity
8. Employee Satisfaction AND Leader/Administrator Satisfaction
9. Logic AND Creativity
10. Individual Competency AND Team Competency

Source: Barry Johnson, Polarity Management
With facilitator support - as a table group discuss the polarity randomly selected through the roll of the dice.

FIRST:
Take one minute to **reflect and write** the **value** you see in both sides of the polarity selected for your table. What are the disadvantages or the **fears** you see if one is focused on **to the exclusion** of the other?

AFTER EVERYONE HAS REFLECTED - DISCUSS:
- What are the values and fears you identified?
- How might you use this concept to lead from the middle and invite a different conversation about tensions or conflicts in your organization?
Unleashing the energy & wisdom from the middle
What did you notice earlier when we had you reflect and discuss?
The way we’re working isn’t working...

Conventional structures used to organize how people routinely work together in organizations stifle inclusion and engagement.

Examples????

Source: Liberating Structures
Microstructures...

- Organize routine interactions
- Guide and control how groups works together
- Enable *and* constrain what is possible

**WHAT & HOW**

**HOW = Good Math**

Source: Liberating Structures
1, 2, 4, Whole Group - a microstructure

1 = Reflection, Invested, Gather thoughts

2 = Practice, Thinking, Sharing, Being Heard

4 = Learning Together, Building Dialogue & Common Ground

Whole group = Quickly captures the ‘Wisdom of the Crowd’. Generative and Engaging.

Source: Liberating Structures
**Introduction**

When you feel included and engaged, do you do a better job? Do you think teams in which people work well together produce much better results? Have you noticed the best ideas often come from unexpected sources? Do you want to work at the top of your intelligence and give the same opportunity to others?

If YES, we have found this is the kind of organization and community that people want to be part of. AND, Liberating Structures help make it happen.
FIRST STEP?
Thank-you!

LaurA and NancY