Leadership for Enhancing Private Sector Readiness

*Insights and Observations from Adaptive Leadership*

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Core Beliefs & Mission

Everyone leads, every day.

Success demands democratized access to the best leadership resources.

Continuous change is normal.

People matter most.

To democratize leadership. Putting leadership tools that drive change into the hands of anyone who drives outcomes.
What is Adaptive Leadership?

Mobilizing people to tackle challenges that have no known or easy answers.
Getting on the Balcony

The ability to view the situation from a mental “balcony” – a place from which to diagnose patterns of behavior, including one's own.
Activity - What is this?
See it now?
### Activity - What’s the difference between columns A and B?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Build a submarine</td>
<td>Build organizational culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write a plan/budget for a new</td>
<td>Instill in others a sense of ownership for a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>project</td>
<td>project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fix a flat tire</td>
<td>Change how people use their discretionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create a diet/exercise plan</td>
<td>Lose weight and keep it off</td>
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Properties of Technical vs. Adaptive Problems

**Technical Problems**

- Lend themselves to cut-and-dried solutions
- Can be solved by an authority or expert
- Require change in just a few places
- People are generally receptive to change
- Solutions are quick and generalizable

**Adaptive Problems**

- Demands responses outside the current repertoire
- The people with the problem are the problem, and they are the solution
- Solutions often lie within the society
- People resist
- Solutions require experimentation and local contextualization
Problems Come Bundled

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Problem Definition</th>
<th>Solution Definition</th>
<th>Locus of Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>Authority figures; experts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical and Adaptive</td>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>Unclear; requires learning and loss</td>
<td>Authority figures; experts; stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptive</td>
<td>Unclear; requires learning and loss</td>
<td>Unclear; requires learning and loss</td>
<td>Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Enhancing private sector readiness
…a Technical Problem or Adaptive Problem?
The most common mistake...
Treating adaptive challenges as if they were technical.

• Why do we do that?

• How much time are we spending on technical “solutions”?

Social and political tension are part of meeting adaptive challenges. Social contracts of trust between authorities and private sector must be “renegotiated.”
Your charge today...

1) Identify what parts of the problem are technical and what parts are adaptive.

2) Identify who has a direct and indirect stake in the adaptive work.

3) Diagnose what each stakeholder, including you, needs to give up.

4) Help each other disappoint your constituencies at a rate they can tolerate.
Whose Work is it?
…Six Key Stakeholders

1. **Opposition** – Stay close; empathize with their loss
2. **Partners/Allies** – Differentiate from allies
3. **Troublemakers** – Protect them
4. **Casualties** – Treat them well
5. **Authorities** – Watch for signals
6. **Yourself** – Stay out of the middle
Overcoming resistance = embracing loss

TIME
Adaptive work does take time, but the excuse that we don't have "enough time" is often a proxy protecting against other things that we value.

SELF-RELIANCE
Rather than going it alone, adaptive work means relying on others more than you're accustomed to.

RESOURCES
Similar to time, the excuse of "not enough resources" is also often a proxy for something else.

JOB/SECURITY/LIVELIHOOD
When unaddressed early on, large-scale adaptive challenges like war or economic crisis can lead to extreme losses.

IDENTITY AND COMPETENCE
When the ability to problem-solve is overly tied to expertise, saying you don't know or are unsure about the answer becomes more difficult.

REPUTATION
People resist any real or perceived risk to their personal "brand" or legacy.

COMFORT
Status quo and momentum are sometimes all that's needed to impede a new idea.

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Avoid Work Avoidance

DIVERTING ATTENTION

1. Focusing on only what you know how to fix or defining the problem to fit your current expertise
2. Turning down the heat in a meeting by telling a joke or taking a break
3. Denying that the problem exists
4. Creating a proxy fight, such as a personality conflict, instead of grappling with the real problem
5. Taking options off the table to honor legacy behaviors

DISPLACING RESPONSIBILITY

1. Shooting the messenger by marginalizing the person trying to raise the issue
2. Scapegoating someone (usually someone not in the room)
3. Externalizing the enemy and not owning up to your part of the mess
4. Attacking authority
5. Delegating the adaptive work to those who cannot do anything about it, such as consultants, committees, and task forces.
Adaptive Leadership™ – developed at Harvard Kennedy School over the past 35 years – is a framework and set of strategies and techniques for mobilizing change in challenging and uncertain environments.

For more information visit: theleadershipmoment.info and adaptivechangeadvisors.com

Articles by Eric R. Martin:
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Leading Consequential Change Through the Blockchain
Democratizing Leadership in the Age of Authoritarianism
How Google Stays Innovative (Fast Company)
The Gift of Grantee Inclusion (SSIR)
How Not to Solve Fake News
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Adaptive Leadership in the US Energy Sector (Environmental Leader)