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Royal Roads University

Ecomodeling Leadership and Social Change

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Moderated by Dr. Ann Dale and Roberta Martell

Participants

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Dialogue

Ann Dale

Welcome everyone to our second learner-led e-Dialogue on eco-modeling, leadership and social change by Roberta Martell. I would like to kick start this one by asking each of you to post what you think the characteristics of a good leader are?

Karen Dawson

What a juicy question with which to begin. Hi gang, I'm going to be brave and just jump in. An effective leader is courageous, self-aware, a learner, a listener, and cares about making the world a better place...no matter what part of the world that might be. I think I'll stop there.

Judy Lorinczi

Hi Anne! I recently engaged in an e-Dialogue where I described my impression of what the characteristics of leaders are. This is what I came up with:

Leaders are all around us. They are people from all walks of life whose engaging influence can stir within us the emergence of sometimes previously dormant emotions. Leaders may inspire us to such degree that we can surprise ourselves with the powerful

engagement of our emotions toward our secret passions. This invisible force may inspire a group of us, somehow triggering emotions in our heart, which seem to have emerged from nowhere. Once our individual consciousness is raised to face this inspired vision, it may spread its wings to the collective and its force will exceed what would have been expected from the mere totality of the force of individual spirits alone. To a certain extent leaders show their vulnerable selves to us. They show their feelings, and listen to those of others. They allow for their intuitions and pay attention to the emotions of others.

Leaders can only inspire you if they breathe life into the sparkle that is already in your heart. Leaders don't teach you, they learn from you. They don't tell you, they listen to you. Leaders articulate what you already feel, what you already know in your heart. Leaders may choose the colors and the medium, but the painting is within you.

The beauty of leadership is not the end result, the object of art, but rather the process of getting to the masterpiece. You don't "see" leadership; you sense it. Revolutions can be sparked by a simple poem or by a flower placed on a grave, or by a speech delivered at a gathering. What sparked the revolution is not the simple act of the poet, the mourner or the speaker. They only reflected and touched upon what was already in the heart and consciousness of the collective.

Roberta Martell

Karen, I'm glad you're digging in!

Sally Wilcox

Greetings all. Thanks Ann for kicking off the game. Interesting and loaded question, I am having difficulty with reducing "leaders" to characteristics and judging them as "good". That will be my perturbing initial contribution sent with loving intention for an open honest dialogue on the subject of leadership.

Karen Dawson

So Judy you just wrote beautifully...and you wrote way more than me and it didn't make me mad at all! It only made me think and smile and nod my head, "YES!" I especially like the ending piece about not knowing what actually "sparked" the change to occur...the flower on the grave image is so clear.

And I'm aware in my own life that there seems to be little rhyme or reason to what actually leads me to change. Anything or any person or any piece of art can have that incredible influence.

Brian Malone

Hi everyone. Brian here. The characteristics of a good leader? I'm at a bit of a disadvantage here, only being in year one of MALT. So I'll have to go with partially informed common sense. I think a good leader has a sound grasp of a unifying vision for the community; a good leader 'grows' leadership in herself and others; a good leader understands organizations and people are complex (Badaracco; Leading Quietly); and a good leader works hard at understanding the future consequences of present two decisions (Malone; whenever I give strategic planning workshops.)

There's more -- lets see where we go from here.

Karen Dawson

Sally, I'm wondering if a question around "what is leadership" is more inviting to you?

Judy Lorinczi

Yes Karen! It is like I always say it is not "learning about"... it is about "becoming". There are those "things" that emerge that make us become. It is that same thing about leadership.

Ann Dale

From your postings, I get the sense that everyone can lead, and I am not sure I agree. I think 'good' leaders have incredible integrity, ego strength, self-awareness, and courage--all traits that not everyone possesses.

Doug Seeley

Liked what you wrote Judy... I wonder about leaders not teaching. It seems to me that they teach through their Being... when they deeply listen to us, when they receive us as they are, and when resonate in their Being at the creativity emerging from us all, Being is infusing both of us... and teaching occurs.

Peter Robinson

Hello everyone ... and hello again Ann. I think I'll begin by saying that leadership is the constant and consistent application of moral principles. Why do I say that? Well ... the media is full of obvious examples of people who have succumbed to the pitfalls of

"working in a corrupting environment." This, for me, is the real current and future challenge, being able to remain clear on one's moral principles when theirs an environment that invites people to either participate in or turn a blind eye on transgressions.

Karen Dawson

Ann do you think that everyone has the potential to develop, grow or learn those characteristics/attributes/skills?

Roberta Martell

Yes, I love the imagery... I miss the imagery of leadership... And the chaos! The sensitive dependence upon initial conditions that Judy speaks of... the simple action. I will expand on that shortly... the notion of emergent leadership.

Judy Lorinczi

I do agree Ann, but I believe that good leaders with the skills that you describe will use those talents that they possess to set up the supporting conditions for people around them.

Ann Dale

Karen, you are keying in on my issue, after 24 years of managing, training and developing people I have 'learned' that there are some characteristics one can never teach or change, you either have integrity or you don't. Peter, good to talk with you again, what do you think? It ties in with morals?

Roberta Martell

Hey Ann, I know what you mean... Perhaps not everyone is skilled at directed leadership, (the 'how to get things done' part) AND I am delineating leadership into two distinct yet interrelated components: emergent and directed leadership. In this, everyone by definition is an emergent leader. Some definitions: Emergence I follow Johnson's definition of Emergence from his book of the same name, where emergence is the existence of a characteristic or behavior in a system which could not have been predicted by examination of the constituent parts. (Johnson, 2002) Emergent leadership is the diffuse, yet powerful effect that our interactions cumulatively have on our world. Waldrop, in Complexity explains, "In every case, moreover, the very richness of these interactions allows the system as a whole to undergo spontaneous self-organization. Thus, people trying to satisfy their material needs unconsciously organize themselves

into an economy through myriad individual acts of buying and selling; it happens without anyone being in charge or consciously planning it...Organisms constantly adapt to each other through evolution, thereby organizing themselves into an exquisitely tuned ecosystem. In every case, groups of agents seeking mutual accommodation and self-consistency somehow manage to transcend themselves, acquiring collective properties such as life, thought, and purpose that they might never have possessed individually." (1992, p.11).

What do you all think of this notion of emergent leadership? The power of the 'BILLIONS OF RUDDERS' to influence the direction of the ship.

Reference: Johnson, S. (2002) Emergence: the connected lives of ants, brains, cities, and software. Touchstone Books, Rockefeller Center, 1230 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY. 10020. 288 pp. 4

Peter Robinson

I think Ann is saying the same thing as me. I mentioned the problem of working in a corrupting environment. Increasingly, business is being exposed to this problem ... it's almost an unintended consequence of globalization. Corruption is a fact of life in many areas, and as international businesses are exposed - they often have to make decisions that compromise their ethical integrity. That's why leaders need to clearly know their principles - and be able to articulate them constantly. This requires strong self awareness and confidence.

Brian Malone

Everyone is capable of leadership. Not everyone that exercises leadership does it in a charismatic, heroic, visible way. In the big scheme of things, the many, many little things a lot of people in an organization do are probably what contributes most to the health and leadership development of the organization.

Sally Wilcox

I'm wondering if one could substitute "receptive" leader for "good" leader. A receptive leader might be responsive to the environment (physical as well as non implicit) based on what is propriocepted...tacit as well as acquired "knowledge".

Karen Dawson

This is an exciting area for me to explore, Ann. According to Edwin Friedman (Generation to Generation) the best leaders raise the pain threshold of

others...leadership care compassionately about others, and yet they give anxiety and fear and toxic emotions back to their rightful owners. And there are many "immature people" out there who constantly blame others for their misfortunes, and won't take responsibility for their own problems/worries/trauma. Friedman writes about how we grow other people's resilience by being courageous enough to let them handle things themselves, challenging them to be the best that they can be in coping with things. Some never make it. They live their entire lives as "victims." Many, however, after a huge crisis or horrible string of mishaps emerge as more leader-like.

Judy Lorinczi

I see where you are coming from Roberta. As human organisms we have the biological, structural physiological, psychological "design" to experience the emotion of sadness, joy, compassion or sense the smell of a beautiful flower, or feel the touch of another human being. Clearly we don't react to the same touch or the same smell the same way. The interplay of our outer and inner world, our personal identities, fears, passions, personal histories and relationships, will all have an impact on how we react to the same stimuli or if we react at all. To me this is relevant in the context of discussing the difference between designed leadership and emergent leadership.

While in organizations we may have the "design" through planning, organization structures, job descriptions, policies, systems and resources what emerges from those "designs" is impacted by a lot more than any planning can forecast. The individual elements, the constituent parts of the larger system (the organization) are the human beings who are but sub-systems. They bring their own family histories, emotions, intuitions and consciousness to work. These will all impact on the relationships they develop at work, and on the way they perceive things around them, interpret the policies, learn or relate to clients and colleagues, or feel about the changes around them. Emergent leadership recognizes the existence and significance of such relationships, and the interplay of the outer and inner worlds of human beings. I think this is what you are talking about?

Roberta Martell

Hey Sally, I like that! 'Good' is quite loaded value wise. Yes, Responsive... I like the notion of receptivity to tacit knowing and other forms of knowing....

Peter Robinson

Ann implies that there are some characteristics of leadership that can't be taught. That a person either has the integrity or not. I disagree to a point. I agree you can't teach leadership - but you can learn it. And learning does not mean text books, classes or articles in the Harvard Business Review. It means finding the opportunities to work with

those who know how to do it - or taking the longer road of learning it by trial and error. In either case it means practicing it.

Judy Lorinczi

I agree with you Peter. I just wonder what the "it" is?

Doug Seeley

Emergent leaders are open and sensitive to the evolving connections between participants that they themselves may only be vaguely aware of... They are able to resonate with and reinforce 'constructive' connections, and stymie 'destructive' connections as they arise, gently guiding the direction of the unexpected emergence. They add coherence rather than chaos to stirring the stew.

Karen Dawson

I want to know what all of you think "it" is. What IS leadership?

Ann Dale

But Peter, what about Karen's posting. And I'll be a little provocative here, if someone has not developed, has not dealt with their personal issues, if they are a 'victim' they do not have the 'design' capability to be a leader. Roberta, would you care to comment?

Roberta Martell

Hey Karen, I think you're right on with that... that's kind of the heart of the dialogue. If emergent leadership is the way the world is 'lead' by the interdependent relations of billions of individuals, then the INDIVIDUAL MATTERS! Where do we see THAT expressed in leadership models? So, as Ann has said, (and I'm paraphrasing here, so forgive me Ann) People need to deal with their issues!

Peter Robinson

Judy ... "it" is certainly an amorphous and intangible quality (how's that for dodging the question). Seriously, leadership is situation dependent. To that extent, it is a bit amorphous. The circumstances will dictate the qualities that are required. What I would

say is a constant is a strong personal sense of capabilities, personal values and what Ann referred to as "courage". The rest is variable.

Scott Davis

As a person who has reluctantly concluded that he is not an executive type, I do admire those who can inspire others to action, and even get them to do things they don't particularly want to do. But that's one kind of leadership, that of action. Leadership in social change is a different animal. Rather than administrative, where the goal is to express the values of the governed, leadership in social change is a creative process. It was probably Gandhi who said "If the people will lead, then the leaders will follow". Social change leadership means creating an alternative reality, if only in your mind, and embodying it enough that others think that they had the idea themselves.

Karen Dawson

I confess to still being on my Edwin Friedman soap box here, but he believes that in any situation, the person(s) who emerge as the leader(s) are the individuals who can most clearly name/explain/articulate the reality of whatever is going on...without laying blame. They stay calm, they name what "is so", and they don't point fingers. They set out to make things different/better. Comments?

Karen PS: In dysfunctional families, it is very often a young child who is able to do this...go figure, without even taking MALT!

Sally Wilcox

"It" may not be reducible to ingredients in a recipe because the environmental factors differ constantly as illustrated by humidity or altitude altering a cake. We may recognize an effective leader by the results of their actions, and given the same variables or leader characteristics, the results would/could/should be profoundly different in each instance based on emergence and subtle differences in the initial influences.

Roberta Martell

Hi everyone, I want to draw out some of the themes of the dialogue so far:

- Leadership is receptivity,
- Leadership is based on some personal characteristics and/ or skills,
- Leadership can be small and large acts.

At this point, I'd like to post my model for your consideration.

- I believe there is emergent leadership
- I believe there is designed leadership
- I believe the two interact.

What do I mean?

Emergent leadership is the way our billions of individual actions interact to create the world. For instance, in the Kyoto leadership dialogue now on, people are talking about what our 'leaders' should be doing. I would suggest that if each and every Canadian had chosen to hook up to alternate energy rather than the grid, the discussion about our 'leaders' would be moot. That is an example of emergent leadership. Directed leadership, on the other hand, is goal-directed. The two are distinct, yet interrelated. Any comment?

Peter Robinson

Ann posed the "provocative" question as to whether a person has the capability of being a leader if they are "not developed." If leadership is an ongoing journey, it's not so much the current status of the individual (i.e., if they are a victim) as to whether they are growing and developing through the process. An adaptive individual, like an adaptive organization, makes lots of mistakes -- leadership mistakes included. To me it's irrelevant as to whether the mistakes were due to a lack of development. It's far more important to define a leader as one who can change, adapt and grow as they go forward.

Karen Dawson

Sally, your statement makes so much sense to me. And I'm wondering if your statement implies that a highly effective leader in one context, may be highly ineffective in another. And that's one of the reasons why attempting to "teach leadership" is so darn hard? Or do you suppose that there are some "universal qualities" that we could say would make for effective leaders in almost any sort of situation or context? Not there is a magic recipe, but that there may be a few key ingredients that up the chances for any leader to be more effective.

Ann Dale

What is interesting in this discussion is that we are talking about leadership on many different levels--individual and collective, social change and organizational, emergent and directed, and contextual. Perhaps leaders have the ability to hold many things in tension, and to work with others around them to resolve those tensions? Is this what you mean by coherence, Doug?

Doug Seeley

I take issue with the sense I get here and elsewhere (i.e. in the knowledge management literature) with the understanding of emergence. It is emergence from a lot of inter-connections of "individuals", and this can happen on a purely random basis (theoretically). However, I do not really sense that the connections are really random... that they really are interdependent, not chaotic means that there is an underlying thread that is doing the weaving.

Judy Lorinczi

Roberta, in relation to leadership and learning I see an emergent approach to leadership and learning as one that does not simply look at people in organizations as rational agents, or as parts of a machine, but as distinct individuals, with histories, diverse emotions, feelings and identities. While recognizing these individual identities emergent leadership will use a non-hierarchical approach where individual perspectives and differences are incorporated into a learning process as people learn together.

Roberta Martell

Hey Scoot! Yeah, I love that quote, isn't it something about, There go my people, and I should follow, for I am their leader? I agree! Maybe I should call this whole model inside-out leadership? Because, as individuals, we have the power to place our grain of sand wherever we choose to. So, why do we so often feel the need to support what IS with our grain of sand, rather than building reality (such as it is!) around what we SEE? It is an expression of the principle of increasing returns... or 'them that has, gets!'

Emergent leadership is the neglected side of the leadership equation. We focus on how to 'get things done!' in directed leadership, but where is the equivalent myth of the power of the individual? I saw Sam Keene speak once in Vancouver, and he said that in society, we need to develop the shadows of our ignored myths.... The MYTH of men's kindness, and the MYTH of women's cruelty... I would suggest a leadership analogue, in that we need to develop the myth of the Individual's Power, and the 'Leader's' Impotence.

Doug Seeley

Yeah Ann... I think that emergent leaders have a sensitivity to the waves of intention, feelings and spirit that are already connecting us, the surface connections just reflect those underlying currents.

Sally Wilcox

I agree Peter, this seems the receptive/proprioceptive responsiveness of leadership that can motivate. This motivation may be toward a goal (would this be your "directed" leadership Roberta?), or toward bringing the leader out in the people around. The leader would then be sending leaders everywhere. There could be a pandemic of leaders!

Brian Malone

Does 'readiness to lead' mean that a person has no leadership to contribute until they are 'fully formed'? Until they entirely have their shit together? Can we say that anyone meets that standard? I think everyone is able to lead, within the limits of their capacity. Roberta's "Billions of Rudders" isn't premised on each contribution being gold. And it isn't premised on each contribution being honorable, widely held, or cooperative. It says that, in a chaotic and complex environment, there will be influences and combinations of actions and effects that will advance the organism. And enough nudging in the right direction creates a more successful organism, which generates a feedback loop. Darwinian leadership.

Karen Dawson

Going into my own little mini-universe here to say that I am motivated to grow, learn and change when I feel open and invited "not to change." What do I mean? If I lived next door to Roberta and she was using an alternative energy source, and I got curious, and I watched her 'doing her alternative thing' and I got to asking her some questions...I think I might just get off my arse and do some investigating and changing myself. If, however, my mayor ordered us all to change over, and wrote policy and sent out alternate energy police I would likely comply (because I hate being bad and getting even parking tickets) but I would resist...both consciously and subconsciously because I despise being told what to do!

So when I consider Roberta's designed versus emergent leadership question...I get to thinking about the power that each of us has as individuals by just living our learning, reflecting on our values, and DOING them on a day-to-day basis. Am I even in the ballpark?

Scott Davis

Emergent leadership seems to be particularly important to cultivate if it appears that our designed leadership is not representing our best interests. It is also likely that a society

that is not representing our best interests would waste talent by limiting leadership opportunities. Its hard to lead when everything is either compulsory or forbidden... And so the question of recognizing and developing emergent leadership is doubly important.

Judy Lorinczi

I completely agree with you Doug! Working for a large Public Sector organization I am constantly struggling with us only looking at those surface connections without considering the "underlying currents". I think that it is significant, and good leaders will go below the 'surface'...

Peter Robinson

So ... Ann - you're taking ethics out of the discussion? A leader can be everything you describe and still do something evil? Which prompts me to talk about "emergent leadership". There is, of course, a problem with blanket statements about leaders following or the actions of the many. I've worked in too many areas of the planet where the "tyranny of the masses" meant that leaders / leadership based on popular notions of what is good were in fact just plain wrong.

Sometimes leadership means saying no to the majority (for example, the death penalty). If so, leadership is sometimes about making tough / unpopular decisions. And I don't mean this in the sense of "directive" leadership by a few, but collective decisions that are also for the common good.

Ann Dale

Sally, and I hope I am not focusing too narrowly, I once had an employee come into my office and ask me to stop asking her to be what she didn't want to be. She was happy doing exactly what she was doing, and did not want to exercise leadership in our organization. People have to chose to exercise leadership or not, one of the most difficult examples is unfairness directed at one individual, and the rest of the room is not speaking up, this is when courage comes in, to dare to be different, to stick your head up and be counted. And not everyone is personally capable of that. So, perhaps we may agree more than we think, it is in the 'exercise' of leadership, what Roberta refers to as 'emergence' and 'directed'.

Doug Seeley

Hey Roberta... good topic about directed (or intentional) leadership! Although it is my experience that at rock bottom, and every present moment it all is really emergent... this is does not reflect the human level world with its organizations and societies. What is

there is both emergent & directed leadership doing a dance with each other, in dynamic balance.

My favourite example is that if we left the construction of a jet plane to emergent leadership and behaviours, we would never be able to fly!

Scott Davis

Yes, Karen, social change is best led by example. If you point to something, a dog just looks at the end of your finger. They only pay attention to what you do. Embodying your ideas is a leadership requirement.

Ann Dale

Peter, talk about synergy between ideas, I wrote and posted at the same time as you. I guess what I mean by integrity is ethics, it is both your higher-order ethical base as well as the ethical exercise of leadership, for what ends?

Sally Wilcox

Karen, You and Doug have been talking! this notion of the awareness threshold of the leader to empathy or resonance with others and the situation, may align the leader with "what is required" at that moment. Vision immediately in front as well as further down the road. Like driving the Duffy Lake road in a snowstorm.

Roberta Martell

Yes, Scott, this goes to one of my questions... what is the interrelationships between the two. The principle of increasing returns is that 'them that has, gets!'

p. 37 "Increasing returns, lock-in, unpredictability, tiny events that have immense historical consequences – "These properties of increasing-returns economics shocked me at first," says Arthur. "But when I recognized that each property had a counterpart in the nonlinear physics I was reading, I got very excited. Instead of being shocked, I became fascinated."

Waldrop, M.M. 1992 Complexity: the emerging science at the edge of order and chaos. Touchstone, New York, New York. 380 pp.

So, how does what doesn't yet have GET?

I see the notion of fitness landscapes. In essence, we don't need to put our grain of sands on piles that already exist, but rather we can place them where we think they should be.... and to do that, perhaps we need a new myth; that of the power of the individual... not a romantic notion, despite what Doug is suggesting to me over the cubicle wall!

Brian Malone

"If we left the construction of a jet plane to emergent leadership and behaviours, we would never be able to fly." If we left art to directed leadership, we would never have music. Somewhere there must be integration of the two.

Roberta Martell

It's funny, but when I bring up the notion of the power of the individual, or Emergent Leadership, somehow I become tagged as 'romantic' or soft... I have never suggested that Emergent Leadership is all that there is. I say again "have never suggested that Emergent Leadership is all that there is!" So, yes, if emergence was all there is, then only birds would fly... but, as leaders (in my definition, people attempting to influence change; in your example our flightlessness) we were best served by understanding the dynamics we inherited from the natural world, to which we could best respond with our 'designed leadership' Kapishe?

Doug Seeley

So perhaps we should see directed/intentional leadership as Derivative from the emergent, and take some care about which levels we are talking about in any given context. If we are in a knowledge-based organization, it has certain current intentions that it is following... so this shapes the directed leadership to achieve its mission... but at a deeper more emergent level another underlying current could re-shape the organizational intent? Or am I too damn abstract?

Ann Dale

Scott, I have large dog companions, and once had a female dog that was so secure, so intelligent, she was the leader of the pack, her male companion had no wish to be other than her follower. My dogs vary tremendously first in their abilities, and in their leadership abilities. What is interesting, however, is that there are quite subtle shifts in the dominance/leadership according to the situation. When it required brute strength, the male went forward, so they lead, according to the situation, as Peter talked about earlier, but again, there were innate qualities which made some stand out as leaders.

The pack stability changes dramatically when the leader is older and the leadership is changing. Any analogues for we humans?

Peter Robinson

Brian ... why do the two have to be integrated. Somewhere back a few messages I stated leadership was always situation dependent. If this is so, the style of leadership will never integrate (and in this case, good leadership is adaptive leadership). I think we might be trying to shoehorn too much into a consistent / common definition (although the dog looking at my figure is a pretty darn good metaphor).

Brian Malone

Here is my 'Emergent Learning for Dummies' explanation of emergence: "Emergent learning is like crossing a shallow river using stepping stones. Some you can see from the shore. Some are barely covered with water and cannot be seen until you reach them. Some stepping stones don't exist until you place them where required. And the wise traveler does not step to the next untested stone until the current one is mastered. In the end, the route used is very obvious from the far shore ...but unknowable in the beginning." Continue the metaphor; there seems to be a role for directed leadership here too.

Karen Dawson

So I'm really, really thinking hard about how the designed leadership and emergent leadership co-exist. Darwin said, "In the long history of humankind (and animal kind too) those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed."

So with the aircraft designers, we need some directed leadership who "knows" something about aeronautical engineering to design/direct/lead. Then we need those brave souls who let thoughts and impulses emerge in the moment. Asking "What if...?" and saying "Yes, and...." to the leadership team.

Doug Seeley

Peter and Ann about ethics... does this not come down to the kinds of relationships (connections) between people that promote the trust to make more connections, building towards emergence. Hence, ethics is one of those underlying currents, and rests in the relationship itself. In fact, is it possible that the relationships actually have more reality than the individuals?

Ann Dale

Doug, Brian & Karen, what do you think about Peter's comments about no need to integrate, it is situational, sometimes one is directed and other times, flows with emergence. I would hate to build a jet through emergent leadership!

Judy Lorinczi

Maybe I am missing something. But, somehow I see us talking about emergent leadership as only relating to a particular approach exercised by a particular individual the "official" leader. To me emergent leadership is one that recognizes, and is sensitive to, the interplay of relationships, and inner and outer worlds of those around them and facilitates, or sets up the supporting conditions accordingly. Am I on the wrong track?

Judy Lorinczi

Doug, you are touching exactly on what I am talking about! "Relationships" more than the individuals!

Sally Wilcox

Doug, am I hearing Bohm's wholeness and the Implicate Order in your voice? What if there were a variety of ways of "knowing" (as we instinctively "know" that there are) and we consulted these, as Roberta is suggesting, would we then be informed by intuition, information, culture, the lessons from nature etc as we do/be our leadership thing. My guess is the leaders might be available to being informed from both the implicate and explicate orders.

Roberta Martell

Hey Doug, earlier on, you talked about waves. I heard you mention something about David Bohm. Have met him? Can you tell us more about Love and Implicate Order?

Brian Malone

Senge (Fifth Discipline) returns a few times to the notion that commercial air travel didn't really come together until the DC-3. There were numerous design (i.e. planned) innovations in airplane design up until then, but until a critical threshold of the innovations in combination occurred (i.e. emergent) there was no commercial flight.

Ann Dale

Doug, I think that both relationships and individuals are real. But there are many different types of leadership, and one of the most coercive I have experienced is the 'cult of personality' leadership, where leaders use personal relationships to enhance their power. What do you think, Karen and Scott?

Ann Dale

Brian, my father was in aviation, and did you know that the DC3 is still regarded as one of the safest planes ever designed?

Peter Robinson

Doug ... I've always thought that ethics (or integrity) was on a higher order than just an underlying current. In fact, I think it's the highest ... although being able to assess the consequences of decisions ranks pretty high too. Leadership in this case might be pretty lonely. I think of those who have resisted oppression and suffered in the process. Pretty impressive leadership. The individual could have had a comfortable life but chose actions that led to personal suffering because they believed they were doing the right thing.

Roberta Martell

Yes, Karen you are so bang on! My sense is that we, as people attempting to lead, take a bit of responsibility for yanking on the reins of power. So, using my alt. energy as an example, I am a member of the friends of renewable energy B.C. list serve. Last year, there was a discussion about the most effective way of moving Canada to alternate energy. As I have chosen to live off- grid, with a hybrid solar/wind powered electrical generation system, I posted about what I did... the panels I got, the costs, the trade-offs etc. In response, one member... and remember, this is FRIENDS of renewable energy, not enemies posted in response, that if I was TRULY interested in affecting change, that I would have hooked up to the grid, and spend the extra cash (about \$2000) lobbying for some Federal policy changes.

Which made me wonder what the hell we believe about the role of the individual in 'leading' change? I mean, if what I chose to do... place my grain of sand (my individual actions) in alignment with what I want the world to be?

Judy Lorinczi

Ann, I have seen that many times in work situations. My issue with that is that we are equating leadership with power. Is leadership power?

Doug Seeley

Roberta... yeah this is how I got all into this back in the 70's, first through Karl Pribram (holographic memory) and then I published a paper called "The World is a Hologram in Your Heart." Later when David Bohm came out to BC, first to Vancouver, then to Metchosin to open the Krishnamurti school, I had a chance to talk in depth with him and make a video with him on the Observer and the Observed. For the past number of years I have been running Bohm Dialogues here in Victoria... in my view, an essential development tool for Emergent Leadership.

Karen Dawson

I'm diving into the relationship theme. I do a lot of work in improvisational theatre. We spend a lot of time maintaining generative relationships with each other and when in doubt on stage, improvisers attend to the other people in the scene. Rather than going for the big laugh, the best actors try to set up their fellow players...it's an "I shine by making you shine" approach. This tendency towards generosity only increased the possibilities in a scene, and encourages collaboration and best possible use of the range of ideas.

Focusing on myself as an individual constrains action and shifts the goal away from serving the story to serving myself (the actor). The spirit of generosity makes relationships among actors onstage more fruitful, creating stories that are infinitely more intriguing and satisfying. Organizationally (and systemically) this ethic translates to more options, more possibilities, and stronger teams/units.

Peter Robinson

To the question, is leadership power? Well, no, it isn't - but it is powerful. But, for the purposes of exploring the complexity of the issue - when would leadership be power? There are examples of times when power based leadership is completely appropriate.

Take, for example, the response to a disaster (i.e., a forest fire is approaching your town). Having someone who "commands" both evacuation and response is absolutely necessary.

Ann Dale

Judy, I think you have raised a very critical point, that of, power. And there is a corollary, how do leaders exercise their power? I find that the theory that everyone can learn to be a leader is based on the premise that we are all equal, but we do not all have equal abilities. And it varies according to the situational context. Yes, a leader has power, because you are influencing, why do I conduct research, because I want to influence social change, so, Roberta, who prevails and when?

Sally Wilcox

Did you say love? Here's the deal...I wonder if the state of unconditional love places us in a vibrational frequency that aligns with universal wisdom (or Bohm's "universal Flux") where truth, emergence and dare I say, miracles, may reside. Me thinks that this "flow state" may be the connector between the implicate and explicate orders that set the leader's gyroscope into "right" alignment with our higher self and a with others' higher selves.

Doug Seeley

Brian... nice point on Emergence and Innovation, never thought of that, I like it. I knew that innovation was different than light-bulb creativity (which all the administrators think is intellectual capital that should make their organizations wealthy)... when I started a high-tech company it was all those mini-micro creative acts accumulating over a long implementation spell that resulted in a usable innovation. So great... instead of accumulation, emergence. Thanks Brian.

Judy Lorinczi

Somehow Peter I don't see that as "leadership". There is no question that we need those people but in my mind they are not 'leaders' they are great commanders, or managers or supervisors, but that does not fit my definition of leadership?

Brian Malone

I did a bit of relating Game Theory to leadership in LT 535 this autumn. The easy conclusion is that 'cooperative' game theory (shared information, second pick, awareness of other's options, etc.) led to the best group outcomes -- the Nash Equilibrium. Are effective leaders those that frame their influence with cooperative game

theory, and work towards a Nash Equilibrium. Figuratively that is. President Bush probably can't spell equilibrium, and he probably thinks Nash is a car.

Ann Dale

Sally, I think human beings are the poorest species at 'unconditional love'. I have learned a lot about it from my dogs, regardless of the sentiency argument.

Ann Dale

Why do leaders lead, if not to try and influence others?

Peter Robinson

But Judy why aren't they leaders. If they need to be flexible, adaptive, aware of what's going on around them and sensitive to their decisions - the only thing that might distinguish them from other "leaders" is the need for them to make quick decisions. But speed of decision making shouldn't be a defining factor of leadership - it will, again, vary depending on the circumstances. Nevertheless, in the event of a large and chaotic fire, I'd sure want single points of accountability and decision making.

Judy Lorinczi

Now 'influencing' Ann, that does fit! It is the 'command' part that bothered me!

Doug Seeley

Hi Sally... language especially Anglo-American does a really botchy job of getting this flow (Tao) stuff out. The way I have experienced is that the quantum potential of Bohm's implicate order is what we tend to call "spirit", the nature of spirit is unconditional love, and there is Never, Never anything else. It's our separative identifications that build this massive illusion that that there are separate things that may or may not Love, rather than an oceanic flow that cannot help be love!

Scott Davis

Ann, I like anthropology and ethnology as scientific hunting grounds for leadership topics. Although humans are social animals, they aren't as obsessively pack oriented as dogs and can kind of do what they want. This is a problem. We're all modern people here, but civilization is a pretty thin veneer over our long evolution. Most humans that

have ever lived, lived in small societies. I lived in the Lilloet district of the interior of BC for a long time and found that the local First Nations people, before white contact a couple of hundred years ago, had leaders for every occasion, but not the same leaders for all occasions. There'd be a hunting chief while they were hunting and another person would be the war chief during the war. Then they'd all go hunting or fishing.

Sally Wilcox

Ann, I hear you. I guess that's why, as leaders, we should/could be consulting many different dynamics to inform our practice of leadership...lessons from nature, dogs and children included! Sometimes our consumer/business worldview may colour our lens of HOW to BE in the world, not WHAT to DO in the world.

Doug Seeley

Ann another reason for leading is to cultivate a living environment that is much more fulfilling... when others are empowered to lead, but may not activate it, they are empowering me as well, its really non-local and hence of immense practical value to "little me."

Karen Dawson

Ann, I want to respond to your great prompting questions about power, influence, why do leaders lead if not to influence? It's so hard to do this concisely. I think that we are never going to be 100% there...as leaders. And I'm not looking at leadership as a formal position. I'm looking at leaders as people who create/support/nurture change. I think that we can do our best to make a difference in the world...no matter what our formal title, job position, place in society, or lifestyle.

But there will always be people/events/situations that 'push our buttons' or make us spin circles...and when faced with these situations we might not make 'leader-full choices.' We might lose our courage, we might back down, we might lash out and get really angry, or we might stay awake at night worrying about things over which we have no control.

Somehow those don't seem like leader-full choices, and yet we are human and I think that we succumb to that every once in awhile. (Even if we are RRU people!) Leadership to me emerges organically when its at its best. And the 'goal-oriented leadership' also has a vital role to play in creating positive change. I'm still mulling over the relationship between the two ideas. OK I'd better be honest, I'm still mulling over what the two ideas really mean!

Brian Malone

I cooked up a bit of a Bellwether Leader concept this fall, that basically said sometimes leadership is attributed by the group -- and the bellwether leader is the one that can be depended upon to make a lot of small choices a little bit faster and a little more reliably than others. And the leader can't be too far out in front of the group, or they will have to take risks to catch him again. Yes, this is based on the herding behaviour of sheep. And yes, it isn't very flattering for the followers. But it offers a different lens to view organizations. I have a short think-piece on this is anyone is interested later.

So to answer the earlier question directly, sometimes leadership isn't exactly driven by a desire to influence, because sometimes leadership is as much about the followers as it is about the leaders.

Ann Dale

Scott, I disagree that humans are not necessarily as pack oriented as dogs, but that is a conversation over a glass of wine. And Sally, I learn the most from children and dogs, their world is very clear, as well as interestingly from older people nearing the end of their life. I haven't heard anyone talk about a leader being someone who deliberately and actively encourages diversity, as Doug is referring to somewhat obliquely, I think, a learning environment.

Doug Seeley

Ann... when discussing Power, it is always helpful for me to distinguish between Coercive Power and Personal Power... this is especially crucial I believe in working out the role of Power in Leadership. Its personal, inclusive power that is desirable in my view... noticing the Coercive stuff and keeping it out of the discourse (which is hard when you work with Heroic types) is an issue.

Roberta Martell

Hey Ann, Leadership is, in my definition, influence with, rather than power over. So, I agree with Sally that leadership isn't Power Based.

Once again: EVERYONE is an Emergent Leader.

Perhaps: Everyone tries to implement Directed Leadership; however, some may be more skilled than others at that.

Yes, there are situations in which decisions need to be made, Direction Consolidated, AND AND AND, how do we best consult the Emergence to best implement our attempts at influencing change in Directed Leadership?

Peter Robinson

Hi Ann. Alas, I have to log out now. Thanks for the opportunity to participate ... interesting discussion. Makes me think I should have taken the MALT program instead of the MACAM. Best wishes to all, come and visit me at MEC's Head Office when you're next in Vancouver! Cheers Peter

Doug Seeley

Brian.... can you give me some more reference or sources on this Bellweather Leadership notion?

Roberta Martell

Oh Peter! I agree! It's always Malt!!! Thanks for your participation! Great points! Say Hi to Tasch for me.

Ann Dale

Karen, I sense we both have a psychology background. A question, and it also involves the exercise of leadership? What happens when the leader is down?

Scott Davis

Why do leaders lead? In many anthropological societies, being a leader was a lot of trouble. A primary aim of governance used to be the redistribution of wealth and luck. In many hunting societies, if you kill something and bring it home, everybody gets some. There's no refrigeration, you have to eat it up. That way, if you don't get something next week, you'll get fed by someone with better luck. You get glory by giving things away (the spirit of the gift).

And so leaders were constantly giving things away to maintain their status. Why lead? Not so very long ago, people used to be much more a part of their societies, and it would be your calling, duty and pleasure to do it.

Karen Dawson

Karen to Brian re: sheep. I just spent a day at one of our local high schools, and watching the cool packs of kids roaming the hallways at noon hour felt very much like watching sheep...with one of your bellwether leaders slightly ahead of the "gang"...deciding which locker bank to swagger past, which table in the cafeteria belonged to them, and which poor kid would be the recipient of their snickers and sneers. It was as if the gang "looked to the leader" for some guidance...and yet he wasn't really doing anything (that I could tell) to act like "a leader."

Roberta Martell

Peter, (who is now gone, but I found this post lingering on my desktop)

I agree with your assessment about leadership not always being comfortable... I was asking myself that just the other day.. As my dishes were frozen into a block of ice, and my water (collected in a cistern, fed onto my deck through a garden hose) was frozen... I wondered why on earth I was living with an alt. energy system? It indeed wasn't comfortable; however, IT aligns with my values, and I'm placing my grain of sand to support the sand dune I want to see develop in this world....

In that sense, my emergent leadership is about understanding the relationship between what I call the 'holarchic spheres of influence' and placing my value (or my two cents worth) where I think it will do the most good. As Karen pointed out, others might choose to follow, but they won't feel compelled, and isn't that a welcome change! ?

The spheres of influence, as I see them are physical, situational, social and cultural, temporal and ecosystem spheres. They radiate outwards in diminishing proximity from the individual, and in the alt energy example, I would say that I am concentrating my value in the ecosystem sphere...

ALTHOUGH there is an initial vacuation of comfort in the immediate physical/situational sphere.

Any comment?

Ann Dale

Doug, you raise an important point about the kind of power exercised, it makes me think about how each of us enter a room and how our energy is expressed. Self-awareness is so critical, for example, if I have to be let's say, more coercive, I sit at the head of a table in a meeting, if I am in a position to consult and be informed, I sit in the middle?

Roberta Martell

O.K. Pencils down for just a second.... We've got 15 minutes left in the dialogue, so I'd like to raise my last research question, which hopes to bring together all the rich dialogue we've had tonight... How are emergent and goal-directed leadership related and interdependent? I will post on that in a minute... Thanks everyone for your input!

Ann Dale

Scott, what a wonderfully integrated response. I am tired, it is almost 10:00 p.m. EST, and I am not a night person, sorry to be so inarticulate.

Sally Wilcox

Ah, creating the container! The environment, those little influences that may not even be perceptible, that can have huge impact on the outcome of leading or learning or

I experienced this "container care" in first residency at RRU, where the care taken in setting the stage for the improvisation of our emergent learning took place. It was a fully intentioned, diverse, loving act of carving a safe, non-judgmental space for our collective growth to occur.

I have implemented this container care model with my parent groups with great results. (Those being measured by active participation and attendance and program recommendations to the group.)

Judy Lorinczi

Ann I have been pondering your question on "what happens when the leader is down"? What do you mean? I am considering it from a very practical organizational perspective. Would you mind to elaborate?

Brian Malone

Doug... Seriously, I made it up. CBC was doing an interview with the author of Bellwether, Connie Willis. It's a social satire type book (Lewis Carroll-ish) that gives an elementary but entertaining view of the role of chaos in our world. And it talked about fads by highlighting the herding behaviour of sheep. It occurred to me that there were elements of the story that could apply to leadership, and so the Bellwether Leader was born. Very neat in an emergent-type way.

Karen Dawson

In direct response to Bertie's question, I will attempt to collect my thoughts. I see these two forms of leadership as interdependent in these ways:

When there IS a clear goal, that all constituents buy into, (ie. Let's kill something to eat, Let's put on a play, Let's fight this forest fire...) then some goal-directed leadership works pretty darn well. We use our knowledge and understanding of the situation and all of our learning to meet the goal...and with effective goal-directed leadership, there will be an emergent quality to the process...innovation might even happen as we discover new and better ways of reaching our goal.

When there is no clear goal, or perhaps everyone is at odds with each other about the "right goal" then there is a greater opportunity for emergent leadership to work its magic. Individuals (at least some individuals) can't quite 'buy into' any prevailing goal so they set out to place their grain of sand where they truly believe it should be...living true to their values. Others may follow, or mimic, or be influenced. Or they may not.

My two bits...

Ann Dale

Judy, I once had an incompetent employee and was hesitating in getting rid of her, and had some very dedicated staff who had worked with me for a long time. She was psychopathological, manipulative and I for many reasons, was unaware. After a year of damage to my organization, I asked my oldest and most trusted employees why they hadn't come and talked to me, that I was only as good as they allowed me to be. We all learned from the situation, but they so counted on me to be on top of everything, they couldn't believe I was truly unaware of the situation.

Doug Seeley

Hi Sally... I like the container notion you are expressing... wonder whether it is analogous to a notion I try to use... a kind of "spiritual maintenance"... if one cares for the maintenance of the space (wrapping it in an embrace, as it were), then the participation in the space experiences to be the freedom and creativity that it already is. Have to keep reminding me about this... currently I keep saying "Take care of the temple..." That is, "this is not my body this is a Temple of God."

Ann Dale

Doug, I don't think anything can be contained, only ourselves.

Roberta Martell

Alrighty everyone!!! Here we are with five minutes left to go, and I'd like to invite everyone to respond to this quasi-orphaned post.... What are the relationships between emergent and directed leadership?

Karen gets an A for her suggestions!

O.K. Pencils down for just a second.... We've got 15 minutes left in the dialogue, so I'd like to raise my last research question, which hopes to bring together all the rich dialogue we've had tonight...

How are emergent and goal-directed leadership related and interdependent?
I will post on that in a minute...

Thanks everyone for your input! This is a fabulous dialogue!

Doug Seeley

Thanks for the dialogue everyone. It has been stimulating and I have re-framed some stuff in this old craw of mine. Let's carry it onwards some time, some how.

Karen Dawson

Karen on "container."

I feel compelled to add this after my rather negative narrative about the hallways of the high school I was at this afternoon.

In the "container" of the drama studio I discovered the most trusting, creative, open, and spiritually generous group of students you can imagine. Their container was so safe, and so well maintained by their beloved teacher, that they shared, laughed, played, cried, and created art for two full hours...it was delightful to watch.

And although created by a teacher who designed that container quite 'directly' and in a goal-oriented manner (from my perspective)...there was a real sense of emergent leadership happening within the space.

Judy Lorinczi

Thank you Ann for your clarification. I think when the leader is down and the leader is seen as human, the followers will be able to identify with the leader even more!

Sally Wilcox

Emergent leadership...the tacit, intuitive, environment-sensitive, leader as BEING, implicit-ordered side of the coin. Seems appropriate in community development.

Directed leadership...the goal-directed, intentional, land-in-sight, leader as DOING, explicate- ordered side of the coin. Seems appropriate in emergency and managing tasks, ie: building airplanes!

Interdependence? ..sometimes they are the same coin, where both sides are required and consulted in a synchronous harmony, sometimes one side will need to be the stronger influence.

Thanks for a very fast and fun e-dialogue. I'd participate again in a heartbeat!

Cheers

Scott Davis

Even in the most helplessly goal oriented leadership situations, like a sailboat for example, emergent leadership needs to be cultivated. After all, leaders get sick, promoted or whatever. A situation that is entirely dependent upon goal oriented leadership may work well for a long time, but still be dangerously dependent upon a single person's health, sanity and talent.

Ann Dale

I would like to thank each of you for your time, your creativity, and your sharing of your thoughts. As well, your trust in this still emerging e-dialogue process is deeply appreciated. May we all meet in person sometime, and as my son used to say, it's been a slice.

Brian Malone

Emergence is not necessarily purposeless, and it is not without consequence. There is an "Islands of Mastery' concept (which I can't cite sources for right now, but I'll dig it out from my notes if you like) that says we need to master certain emergent events, before we can access others. If you follow my stepping stone across the river metaphor, there is a clear role for a goal-directed leader to help the organization frame that next choice, consistent with the unifying vision. But the complex world of organizations and relationships dictates that only the next step can be considered with any certainty.

There is almost a quantum physics Schrödinger's Cat dilemma occurring here. Seeing the next step precludes other possibilities.

Scott Davis

It's been a pleasure, dialoging...

Karen Dawson

It's been a pleasure. I've only ever met Ann and Roberta face to face...but I can only imagine the excitement of sitting together in a room. All it would take would be one provocative question and we'd be good for hours. With a few bottles of good wine...we'd be good for days! Thanks y'all.

Thanks to Roberta for the invitation to participate and to Ann for creating this medium/space.

Good night.

Roberta Martell

Thank you, to each and every one of you for your time, energy and thoughts! When we get the transcription I'll be forwarding it on to each and every one of you....

Sleep tight, wherever you are!

Judy Lorinczi

Karen and Sally you both touched on how I feel. In an environment where emergent leadership is practiced we are all leaders. Those in the "official" role of leadership will be part of their team, and their role in the process is that of facilitating or setting up the conditions under which the team can develop their future together.

Sally Wilcox

...should have added "in my humble opinion" to my last strong sounding post!

Thanks!

Brian Malone

Thanks Roberta for the invite. Thanks Ann for letting us play with your toys. Thanks all, for the entertaining evening. Neat; very neat.

Thanks

Roberta Martell

Yes, Thanks Judy! Good points all of them! And Sally, I love the strength of your postings. Thank you everyone!