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Royal Roads University

Leadership for Sustainable Development

BSC-Environmental Management 322

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Moderated by Dr. Ann Dale

Participants

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Dialogue

Ann Dale

This should be an interesting discussion this afternoon. I would like to make sure that we keep the focus on leadership for sustainable development, and not just leadership in general. Our first question is difficult, "what does living in an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, ecologically, mean for Canadian leadership?" and I would like you to think of the characteristics of sustainable development issues themselves as a lead-off?

Karen Larson

Bob Boppelt's article on "Overcoming the Seven Sustainability Blunders" defined what sustainability meant as a cradle to grave mentality being turned to a mentality of cradle

to cradle. He describes it as a revolutionary economic paradigm. In my opinion some of the real issues with this model in the Canadian system is that not all levels of management are buying in. Managers and leaders need to perform and show "outcomes" within a 2-5 year time frame whereas sustainable development decisions may take several years to see any cost savings or "outcomes". What manager or leader wants to wait that long when performance evaluations are made on a yearly/bi-yearly basis?

Lori Marchand

Ann, leadership in Canadian sustainability requires an awareness of the interconnectedness and interdependence, and other similar linkages. Since Canada has been criticized "Decline in Canada's credibility as a world leader in creating a visionary agenda for the environment..." it would seem that a lack of understanding of these linkages exists and prevents Canadian leaders from creating a clear future vision. This is further complicated by the accelerated rate by which the dynamics of these linkages are changing.

Lori Marchand

Hi Karen, Boppelt was my favorite reading by far, because he had a plan- a tangible plan. He made a seemingly insurmountable task; somehow possible-I think the idea of shifting a paradigm is an overwhelming task for anyone who is considering leadership.

Karen Larson

I have noted in our organization with our sustainable development initiative the bottom line is money if there are no savings managers do not do it...prior to getting sustainable development on the agenda as a national and international issue all levels of business and government must have a plan and "buy into it". Otherwise it is just rhetoric and an exercise in failure.

Matthew Paisley

Good Afternoon, everyone! With sustainable development as the primary goal, obviously the three imperatives of social, economic, and environmental capital, must be acknowledged. Canada has a very strong regime of energy development policies, and the social system in this country has been envied around the world for decades. What is now required is an integration of the environmental/ecological imperative into the existing system.

Joanne Roach

The increasing interconnectedness of the world means that we have to expand our scope to think of the entire world as a system. Our activities will affect the whole system, not just our country. SD issues, by nature, deal with values that can vary amongst societies and usually involve a change in the status quo. I was thinking about it earlier today, how could I be convinced to buy a house for my great great grandchildren to live in that would meet their needs. It is a bit like investing in sustainability initiatives for the benefit of future generations.

Lynne Magee

Characteristics of sustainable development issues - the major problem is equal implementation of all 3 parameters of SD, social, economic and environmental. It seems that economics are the overriding focus at this time.

Cassandra Counce

That is a tough question, Ann! Especially for a Sunday! [Smile]

When you speak of Canadian leadership, I'm assuming you are referring to governance in both the private and public sectors. Becoming as linked as we are makes it difficult for leaders - decision makers - to make the "right" decision in that there are so many angles to consider. Even the most educated person would not be able to consider every angle of an ecological problem. Something will always be missed so teamwork is essential. I guess that is part of the interconnectedness.

Shannon Pagotto

I think it would be difficult to make decisions that would benefit all Canadians. Especially when it appears to be taking from one group (ie. industrial) to entertain another (ie. environmental). We see the benefit in the long term, but short term sees it as a loss of income. It's difficult for a politician to convince people that their decisions are for the good of tomorrow.

Joanne Roach

I agree Shannon. Now imagine making decisions for the benefit of the entire interconnected world. I think that our system of international communications needs to be expanded so we can discuss these issues as a globe. Very challenging considering the barriers of historical conflicts or mistrust, language and cultural differences.

Toni Lightwood

I agree too but they need to be well-calculated risks! And once a strong leadership plan has been set in place, there need to be measurable goals that can monitor the effectiveness of the plan within a real-life framework.

Ann Dale

Some good stuff here, I love working with guys--never a right decision, difficulty of pleasing all in a plural society, difficulty of making paradigm shifts, money is the pervasive bottom-line, time-line of natural systems very different from that of political decision-making. All of this seems to point to a strategy of making critical linkages, reconnections?

Dan Sonmor

The leaders in Canada already realize that the world is interconnected through previous trade agreements and other interconnected topics. However, to ensure the actions we are taking do not affect our own ecology and the ecology of our neighbors will take a huge shift in the way the leaders look. Now, it will not be enough for the leaders to get together at a quiet resort in the country to discuss things. They now have to put plans into action. These plans must be much more inclusive than previously, such as looking at all aspects of our actions and how this affects our ecology and the ecology of those around us.

Rae-Ann Shaw

Sustainable development is comprised of ecological, economic and social imperatives. I agree with Matt that sometimes the ecological/social imperatives do not have as much of an emphasis as economic.

Karen Larson

Rae-Ann, yes I agree the bottom line with managers is the money...they need to ensure profit.

Toni Lightwood

Rae-Ann, very true, there are many benefits and difficulties associated with globalization. Being able to share resources that are abundant in some locations yet lacking in others can be a positive connectedness. However there are many problems

that occur with the sharing of ecological resources. Take for instance the affect that the mad cow crisis is having on Canadian Farmers.

The economy has become so dependant upon exports and political decisions to close boarders are having a dramatic affect upon the industry. Ecologically speaking, the meat industry already takes more energy from the earth (ie grain/grasses feed to cows) then it produces in energy when consumed by humans. Now with a halt on exports an increasing amount of feed is being given to the animals while they wait to become food products themselves, so an even greater amount of energy is being wasted.

With the increase of products and people moving around the world we see how disease can be more easily spread and harder to control.

Jennifer Black

I think it becomes difficult to ensure that the specific needs of Canada are being met in terms of sustainability, without compromising the sustainability of the entire world. It's true the goals of all countries should be same, to work towards a sustainable future, but of course everyone will have their own views of what sustainability is, how to achieve it and everyone will continue to look out for themselves. We need to come together to find a way of linking the nations together.

Lynne Magee

I agree with Karen's point that implementing SD will take time and often industry and government aren't willing to take the time for pay back to occur - they need quick results to continue on with programs. It's important also that once an organization has made a commitment to SD, that they turn plans into action and constantly re-assess their progress and make updates.

Cassandra Caunce

Regarding Rae-Ann's quote, especially with the "old school" thinkers-- economics and making money is the paradigm of the last generation, which is slowly changing. Generating wealth is essential but is very slowly being recognized that you cannot continue generate wealth at the expense of the environment.

Shannon Pagotto

After reading Rae-Ann's post, I think of my poor Director. He lives for SD but trying to get it through his boss, senior management is next to impossible. He's often singled out

as "not a team player" and getting in a lot of trouble. I can guess that he won't move up the corporate ladder although he is the best leader in the organization.

Ann Dale

What about the fact that most sustainable development issues are issues where the information may always be incomplete and knowledge uncertain and science imprecise?

Dan Sonmor

Ann, The fact that we are acting on sustainable issues and learning from the information we gather (hopefully) shows that SD is possible. The tough part is to have everyone along for the ride. To make SD initiatives truly work, you need the cooperation of the whole team.

Lynne Magee

Matt, not only the cooperation of all the team within the organization, the cooperation and buy in of all similar organizations, all working together.

Deb Webster

That is true Dan, but with everybody having different views and lack of the same knowledge do you think that is possible?

Lori Marchand

Ann, well personally, I feel that is where the precautionary principle comes into play. However, I feel that although many of our legislation claims to reflect this ie. Canada's Ocean's Act, it seems that we are actually still using adaptive management approaches to the majority of our sustainability issues, probably because so many environmental consequences are coming to a head at once- a stopgap measure.

Lynne Magee

We need to go with the best science available and use the precautionary principle to implement new ways of doing business.

Shannon Pagotto

A good leader takes risks!

Deb Webster

Good point Shannon, but at the same time you want to ensure people are going to follow too great of risks could scare others from following

Jennifer Maxwell

The increasing interdependence and interconnectedness of the world requires that leaders recognize this shift. It has occurred over a very short period of time. A lot of our leaders were educated and began their careers 20 or 30 years ago when the world existed in a different paradigm. Our leaders need to be educated in this new thinking and recognize the different relationships we have with the world. I also think in this context that we need more than one leader - multiple leaders that work together toward a common goal of sustainability.

Karen Larson

Jennifer M., I would see this as our present managers are from 20-30 yrs ago. I think we can be leaders each of us and yes education is vital. Although the Japanese saying of like a nail on board she who sticks her head out will be hammered was recently quoted to me by a manager.

Dan Sonmor

I agree that the leaders need to have new information pumped into the gray matter. However, if we went with multiple leaders, everything, I feel, would grind to a halt. You can't even have individuals who have the same political beliefs agree on specific points. I shutter to think what you would have if there were different leaders from different parties trying to run things.

Cassandra Caunce

Dan, are you suggesting a dictatorship? One ring to rule them all.... [Smile]

Jennifer Maxwell

Hi Dan, when I think leaders, I don't think of your traditional politician. I have not seen a politician in Canada recently that I view as a true leader, someone with vision and integrity, someone who is working for the "greater good". Mostly I see politicians who have their own agendas and are not working toward a common goal. When I made this statement, I was referring to new kinds of political leaders who agree to work together toward a common goal. Do you really think that one person can initiate the transformation of a country from unsustainable to sustainable?

Rae-Ann Shaw

Ann, I find this incredibly frustrating in our field. It seems like every scientist will have a different point of view on climate change, for example, based on "scientific evidence". How can there be so many interpretations of the evidence?

Jennifer Black

I think we must be willing to take risks and make mistakes. The key is how much risk is acceptable and what are the consequences of these mistakes. With limited scientific knowledge, we are bound to make mistakes.

Cassandra Caunce

Ann, this is where the precautionary principle comes in....we have to take what we know and make the best decision we can while taking on an acceptable level of risk.

Matthew Paisley

Do we really need to take from one group in order to entertain another? Our quality of life is dependent on the governance of the three imperatives of social, economic, and environmental capital. Perhaps what is more needed is a rebalancing of priorities to ultimately give to the end-user the quality of life that we all desire – and by this I mean long-term quality. Agriculture as a whole did not collapse, even with the downturn in the cattle market. Diversification may lead to a more sustainable economy... investment into ecologically sound practices and ideals may be the only truly sustainable choice.

Lori Marchand

As well, when there is uncertainty, because of the interconnectedness, we are able to draw on successful models and initiatives used by other countries. Such as the

Netherlands, etc. As noted by Bregha, 2002: Review of selected foreign governance approaches.

- Long-term planning for sustainable development
 - Strategic environmental assessment
 - Environmental accounting
 - Coordinating mechanisms
 - Performance reporting
 - The precautionary principle
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Shannon Pagotto

Matthew, "Do we really need to take from one group in order to entertain another? Our quality of life is dependent on the governance of the three imperatives of social, economic, and environmental capital. " I understand that we are trying to come up with a balance, but explaining that to some industries is difficult because they think that regulations, legislations, green peace, whatever, it there to slow them down and cost them money.

Kurt Fehr

Yes I would also agree with Matt and the others that the economic part of SD is overpowering at this time. With our country being so resource-based it makes it difficult to be otherwise. Economic prosperity is of course good for our country but at what cost? Proper leadership will balance out these factors.

Matthew Paisley

Shannon, ideals and vision statements of companies are often very self-centered. The focus is typically around shareholder, and keeping customers and clients happy. Is it possible to alter the focus of "client" to a more global perspective?

Lynne Magee

I think you are right on Matt - we need to look at what we are doing and what works and doesn't work, and change what doesn't. There is research by the US Republican party

showing that the states with the highest environmental standards are showing higher economic growth than those without.

Rae-Ann Shaw

This is obviously easier to do in government than private industry. Although we do have a mandate to keep clients "happy", we also have a mandate to protect the environment through our sustainable development strategy (which is legislated).

Karen Larson

I agree with you here as well Lori, and Jennifer Maxwell's insight into the paradigm of existing management being uneducated...this is where we can be leaders by educating. Bringing in "guest speakers" who can revolutionize and help to educate on the interrelatedness.

Murray Ball

Lori and Lynne have suggested the precautionary principle, but the risk with that is of limiting our options unnecessarily. The paper we read on Canada's policy options suggested another approach as used in Sweden where estimated risks are used to set guidelines in scientifically unknown circumstances.

Lori Marchand

Hi Murray, I think that the precautionary principle is imperative (no pun intended) as a sustainability safeguard. Otherwise for example, using my favorite issue salmon farming, scientists are portrayed as fear mongers, and Canadians are asked to trust in the word of economists (Cochrane) and politicians (Mayor of Port MacNeil).

Dan Sonmor

Murray, this is precisely what we are doing with the management of contaminated sites across Canada - using our best estimations to determine the correct course of action. With SD it may be slightly different. But you are right Murray. Being too cautious will limit our ability to act.

Kurt Fehr

I like what the Swedes are doing! I think that basing the SD prosperity on accounting principles helps give a sense of what direction the country is going and at what cost. I also give an indication for areas of improvement.

Jennifer Black

I have to agree that economics drives everything. I don't see that changing in the future. A good leader is always going to be considering economic gain.

Perhaps instead of trying to change the focus from economy (which I'm not sure is possible), we should try to promote sustainability as a economic benefit. It does not have to be a liability, but can provide cost savings. It can also increase public acceptance and earn respect of regulators. All of which can increase profits.

Rae-Ann Shaw

I agree Jennifer. We obviously need to be concerned with economic gain, especially when living in a resource based province (BC). But, economic incentives should be provided to companies, etc. that promote/integrate SD into business decisions.

Cassandra Counce

I agree with you on that Jen - very good! Actually I'm starting to see a bit of this way of thinking in the mining industry, believe it or not. The Dow Jones Sustainability Index is a good example.

Lori Marchand

I totally agree that that philosophy is the dominant paradigm in Alberta. I also think that there are great examples that support your synopsis. The shingles made of 100% recyclable materials, that last forever, my favorite geothermal heat (Cochrane) etc.

Toni Lightwood

It's all about balance [Smile]

Matthew Paisley

...and the action of rebalancing. What we do, and what we achieve are often different things...

Toni Lightwood

We can learn a lot from nature, all of the earth natural systems work in a closed loop type system. Take the forest for example, the litter of trees falls to the ground and becomes nutrients for the soil. Nothing is wasted, we need more leadership plans and business models that adapt this same kind of thinking it would likely also save money to be that efficient.

Erin Gorman

Leaders need to encompass any and all of the scientific information we have to date, be it incomplete or uncertain. This is the only information we possess so far with regards to the environment and in order to start acting not just discussing, our decision makers need to embrace the information available and run with it. New discoveries are made each day, and reports are coming out faster than we can read them in order to start acting and making a difference our leaders really need to take what they've got so far and do something, act, make some sort of difference. I cannot foresee and detrimental effects to the environment by acting on the information we've obtained so far from the scientific community.

Ann Dale

All of this seems to point to a strategy of making critical linkages, reconnections? What could we as Canadians do to make some of these critical linkages or connections?

Matthew Paisley

Good point, Ann.

I'm not usually one to copy/paste, but Mme Johanne G  linas, Canada's Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development, at the IAIA Conference in Morocco, last year, (http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/domino/cesd_cedd.nsf/html/c20030618sp_e.html) indicated that the key features of good governance include:

- Transparency
- Accountability
- Information

- Expertise sharing
- Mechanisms for meaningful public participation
- Vertical and horizontal collaboration among stakeholders.

This, of course, is coupled and supported with and by good analysis and decision-making tools, such as:

- full-cost accounting,
- Life-cycle assessment
- Compliance monitoring and enforcement
- Environmental impact assessment (at the project level)
- Strategic environmental assessment (at the policy and program level).

There may be strategies in place, but may not follow the status quo that has been in existence for so long. Perhaps this is a "crisis situation" that will invoke a change to a new ideal...

Lynne Magee

From the readings, it seems strategies are in place but there is no follow through to see that the strategies are followed and no indicators to measure progress. Crisis management or putting out fires doesn't seem to be as effective in long term change as an integrated program that sets a value or mission and educates the entire organization to buy into the project. And, it means giving more people in the organization accountability and responsibility for participating in the process - kind of hard to change the "old boys club" mentality.

Karen Larson

Ann, in response to your question:

- Educate, educate, educate and build capacity
- The federal government needs to set strong clear directions on SD, and have buy in from business, other levels of government and the public (policy instruments need to be used -more money into education etc)
- All levels of government need to work together and information needs to be shared and "bought into" horizontally and vertically
- Without a vision or goal business, government, and everyone is working in a stovepipe and silos scenario

Shannon Pagotto

What could we as Canadians do to make some of these critical linkages or connections? I think in some areas we are moving in the right direction. People are

slowly becoming educated about the world around them and the importance of SD. Groups are standing up to decision makers and legislation is starting to allow for that.

Lori Marchand

Hi Shannon, What do you think of Guy Dauncey's opposing view (from the public forum)? "We will not drift towards success. We are already drifting - but along with the rest of the world, the current is carrying us the wrong way, towards greater emissions, not fewer. We have to steer, power and finance our way towards success - and that will require a very firm hand on the wheel of the good ship Canada. That's what leadership should be all about."

Shannon Pagotto

Hi Lori! re: Dauncey's view:

"We will not drift towards success. We are already drifting - but along with the rest of the world, the current is carrying us the wrong way, towards greater emissions, not fewer. We have to steer, power and finance our way towards success - and that will require a very firm hand on the wheel of the good ship Canada. That's what leadership should be all about." I think he's right but that's not to say that we aren't educating ourselves. I agree that emission rates are rising even though we know what causes them and what effect they have on the environment. I think the link is doing something about it, hence "the firm hand on the wheel". Maybe it's time that we shifted gears from "educate" to "action"?

Lynne Magee

Ann, as Canadians we could put pressure on our governments at all levels to create the linkages and connections. We can be leaders in our own organizations to set a good example.

Rae-Ann Shaw

Canadians can:

- Change the dominant mindset through the imperative of achieving sustainability
- Rearrange the parts by organizing sustainability through transition terms
- Change the goals by crafting an ideal vision and guiding sustainability principles.
- Restructure the rules of engagement by adopting new strategies.
- Shift information flows by communicating the need, vision and strategies for achieving sustainability.
- Correct feedback loops by encourage and rewarding learning and innovation

- Adjust the parameters by aligning systems and structures with sustainability
 - Use an interactive process, which includes: decision making and accountability, information generation and sharing, distribution of resources and wealth
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Ann Dale

Matthew, re: Mme Johanne G elinas... good points...

Joanne Roach

I think that some of the linkages that we could form or facilitate are the ones between different scientific disciplines. Leaders trying to make decisions in an integrated world will need integrated scientific information. Collaboration among scientists could help take some of the unknowns out of the info.

Murray Ball

What could we as Canadians do to make some of these critical linkages or connections? We really do need some horizontal connections in government. My work in supplying water, for example, is hindered by provincial government policy promoting the use of aquifers for deep-mining of hydrocarbons. We should look to the example of the UK where each ministry has a SD under-secretary.

Ann Dale

Rae-Ann, I like the points you presented... what in your opinion is the criteria of a good leader.. what gives someone the impetus to begin taking leadership?

Rae-Ann Shaw

In my opinion, criteria of a good leader would be:

- Someone who takes all aspects of a situation into consideration before making a decision
- Someone who is adaptable/flexible and can respond to a situation.
- A good listener

In the readings, there was an interesting quote:

"Leadership is hard because it asks so much of us: to be wide, compassionate, visionary, good people skills, know our stuff, make something important happened, keep sense of humor, do battle with egos".

I think sometimes someone assumes a leadership role, not only because they possess some of the above qualities, but because maybe they don't agree with the way something is being run currently by someone else. They feel they can make a difference.

Lynne Magee

All good points and would be welcome in a leader, but it also seems that people get promoted on the basis of seniority, who they know and not necessarily their skills at management.

Erin Gorman

I very much agree with you there, Lynne, its not what you know, or what you are passionate about anymore, its all in who's backing you...

Rae-Ann Shaw

Unfortunately in the federal government I've witnessed this on more than one occasion, because that's the way the organization/system is set up.

Kurt Fehr

I found that same article very interesting. Lack of Ego is an important quality in a leader. Everyone is more comfortable and will follow a leader that is not egocentric.

Jennifer Maxwell

I think dialogues (e-dialogues and face-to-face dialogues) are a good place to start, but I think we need to be more active than this. Perhaps we could start off on a project-by-project basis where people are actively involved in creating something sustainable, collaboratively. I am trying to think of an illustrative example...physically building something... It is through these interpersonal relationships where there is trust, mutual respect that barriers are broken down.

Karen Larson

Jennifer, these things work however if the top does not buy in then it is not going anywhere. If the upper management does not share that vision then it will not work.

Lynne Magee

And in some organizations, if the vision is not the idea of upper management, it came from lower in the hierarchy of the organization, it will never be recognized.

Cassandra Caunce

Sad but true...

Lori Marchand

As cynical as I can be at times :-), it seems to me that this type of resignation underestimates the power of "leading from the middle" Basler and undermines hope.

Jennifer Maxwell

Yes, I agree with Lori. I think we have a responsibility as citizens of this world with the knowledge we hold to challenge and question our leaders as well as create our own solutions.

Cassandra Caunce

Maybe I should have added more to my post....

Sad and often true, BUT not always the case. I'm not even middle management and just being pleasantly and almost nauseatingly persistent, I've managed to institute a few small changes in my organization. I'll not get recognized for it but I don't care. It's the changes that were made that matter...not my pride.

Ann Dale

Cassandra... sometimes the most effective leaders lead from the side or behind.

Lynne Magee

I think we are seeing more and more workplace champions who aren't in a leadership role who are making changes - we all have a role in leadership such as educating and living what we believe - eventually someone will notice and changes can occur.

Jennifer Maxwell

Karen, I understand where you are coming from (I work in the provincial government too!!), but it seems cynical and disempowered. Maybe, I am naive, but I am thinking grassroots on a large scale.

Think about Clayoquot Sound. That was a grassroots initiative and it did make a difference. There was something special there, something magic, but it had an effect on the decision makers.

Karen Larson

Yes I hear you, we have many groups here in the agricultural sector who are building a sustainable society, grass roots orgs, food democracy etc. I love the energy. In this case the point is that the CFIA and Agriculture and Agri-Canada is so globalized in their thinking that small grass roots orgs and sustainable farming for example has become obsolete...and are working in a silos or stovepipe as their vision of sustainable does not match Agri-Canadas. I am not saying that it is not possible to have SD occur I just find that there are so many visions that every-one is working in isolation...The leaders for example are not clearly focused on a vision as what the federal government who sets the policies and agendas sees as sustainable is not necessarily what the grass roots see as sustainable.

Ann Dale

Does the fact that you are making decisions about complex dynamic living systems mean anything for leadership? Are there critical ethical dimensions?

Dan Sonmor

To really make this work, multidisciplinary teams are needed, working in conjunction with one another to a common goal. One person, one leader, one community, not even one country will make truly SD initiatives work.

Jennifer Black

In my industry (oil and gas), it can be a great benefit to go beyond the regulatory basics. That is, exceed acceptable contaminant levels, go beyond the call of duty when building roads, etc. Getting on the good side of landowners ensures that you will get new leases in the future and you build a solid reputation among the public. Also, the regulators tend to leave you alone and they may let some things slide. So, it may cost initially to start up good sustainability practices, it will definitely pay off in the long run.

Cassandra Caunce

Same thing anywhere, really, especially in resource-based industry. Building a reputation as a responsible company takes a very long time and is extremely valuable once built. The trick is maintaining that reputation. Doesn't take much to make it all go down the drain. Reputation is more valuable than economics because without a good reputation, there will be no economics!

Karen Larson

Ann, it should mean something for leadership, but in my organization the bottom line is money. Of course there are critical ethical dimensions "to every action there is a reaction". Global warming - melting of ice caps which effects the livelihood of the Inuit. Globalization of food systems; making the 'third world' economies suffer and the social health and well being of over farming an ecological, economic and environmental disaster. If our managers could see the linkages and if there were federal policies in place to rebalance the economics of the situation perhaps the ethical would meet the sustainable.

Ann Dale

Jennifer raised an important point about multiple leaders working together toward the common goal of sustainable development. Matthew talked about quality of life and points from the Commissioner's office (good research) and of course, again the dominance of the economic bottom line over the other imperatives. How then, does one lead/manage in such a complex world? You have started to touch on it, multidisciplinary teams, horizontal connections, think of the spider web design we had for this website?

Matthew Paisley

The interdependence and interconnectedness of the present world has caused environmental problems to be stretched across the planet, and are not simply confined to the country where they surface. The livelihoods of a number of groups are at stake whenever a sanction, decision, policy is put in place. I suppose that this is where the balancing of the social side of SD comes in...often times the most difficult to rationalize, as it is not always empirically or quantitatively able to be balanced.

Lori Marchand

Ann, I think that obviously there are, but I think that there is a huge lack of awareness about "interconnectedness" and "complex dynamic living systems" in general. Maybe this example seems very simplistic, but to me it seems that "lack of effective communication" is an obstacle, that could be overcome by leadership improvements. For example, if people become aware of an issue, (ie. water shortage-don't water the lawn), people seem to readily comply. Or missing person, please help search. People readily comply.

Dan Sonmor

One would hope that the decisions being made are for the benefit of the ecosystem, not to just simply take without return (as is the case now). The ethical components with these decisions should be covered, as you are not doing something that you and you alone will personally gain from. You do what you know and think is best based on the knowledge you have and if it turns up to be a mistake, then it was a mistake. It's all part of sticking your neck out there to take a chance to do something you feel is right.

Toni Lightwood

Lori, you're very correct it's just so unfortunate that solutions are so often reactive, rather than proactive.

Deb Webster

"Does the fact that you are making decisions about complex dynamic living systems mean anything for leadership? Are there critical ethical dimensions?"

Ann, yes I think it is very important in leadership, as there are many unknowns within the living systems. There are many complex ethical dimensions also say people have so many diverse values, heritage and beliefs that could be impacted by your decision in leadership.

Jennifer Black

How then, does one lead/manage in such a complex world? I think an important attribute of a leader is to encourage and listen. It is not necessarily up to the leader to develop new ideas and pass them onto those around them, but to encourage those under their direction to grow and develop in their own right. It is the encouragement to allow for technical, professional, education and personal growth that will bring about new way of thinking.

Ann Dale

Dan, regarding sticking your neck out... sometimes it is a big step to make a stand for what you feel is right... sometimes is it amazing to find out that once you do speak out... you realize that there are many others out there who are on the same page as you in your beliefs, however, they were too afraid to make the first step. Sometimes we are leaders without even knowing it... and this also inspires leadership in others.

Cassandra Caunce

Ann, that is so true. All you have to do is build the right bandwagon and the right time and it's amazing what will happen if you just speak up about it.

Lori Marchand

I couldn't agree more; so often as individuals we don't take small actions that we know are right because we are afraid of what other people think. Then to our amazement when we actually take those actions, we see how well received they are and how infectious the whole process is.

Lynne Magee

"Does the fact that you are making decisions about complex dynamic living systems mean anything for leadership? Are there critical ethical dimensions?"

It should but it seems a lot of people get focused on their individual responsibilities or area of expertise and don't look at the complexity and interconnectedness of the situation. Or consider the law of physics that for every reaction, there is an equal and opposite reaction. Andrew Nikiforuk in his book the "Fourth Horseman" talks about how our progress in the world - globalization, agricultural practices and industrial/technology has created ideal conditions for plague, famine, and diseases - and how it the "super-

organisms" natural reaction to fight back and to maintain our capacity for food and population, and life on our planet.

Shannon Pagotto

Ann, yes I think it is very important in leadership, as there are many unknowns within the living systems. There are many complex ethical dimensions also say people have so many diverse values, heritage and beliefs that could be impacted by your decision in leadership. I think Deb is right but we first need to understand and more importantly respect the ethical dimensions. One reason for aboriginal self-government is because we didn't respect their ethics, values and culture. Perhaps it was more that we didn't understand it. A good leader would take that time to first understand and then be able to respect.

Matthew Paisley

The NOVARTIS Foundation (<http://www.novartisfound.org.uk/>) believes that: "Good governance" puts people into the center of development. "Where people grow, profits grow": this well-tried business rule is applicable to development policy as well. Building on your "spider web" prompt, and this quote, I believe that the evolution of responsible and effective leadership begins on an individual basis, and expands outward, both horizontally and vertically. The establishment of a leadership position does necessarily imply leadership - that takes both respect and devotion.

Karen Larson

I think that the spider web management design is a good one. It involves every person each one of spiritually, emotionally, economical, ecologically connected.. In the web the center is connected to each and ever other point - it is horizontal and lateral...socially all have a voice...each link is recognized as being a part of the whole and as being valued. Can our society grasp this management approach? The social dimension of being valued is so important to this cradle-to-cradle movement.

Erin Gorman

Very true Matt! It is sad though that some leaders in the "leadership positions" with the authority to make changes and better the community, city or country are just sitting ducks while others who want to make a difference and want to change things for the better of the environment and sustainable development just don't have the means or power to.

Toni Lightwood

I think another important issue of leadership is enforcement, too many times in the Ontario Government I've seen rules and regulation put in place, but there is no one to impose them. With all of the funding cut backs and lost positions, there appear to be more rules than there are people to put them into effect.

Cassandra Caunce

Toni, It's not just the Ontario Government that does this! [Smile]

Lori Marchand

I totally agree Toni. What comes to mind is the land use management plans. If a municipal land use plan that took years to develop is simply "policy" or that can be thrown out the window by the province, what does that do to the moral of the municipality? It robs people of their sense of empowerment, and divides people. You need that horizontal harmonization as well as power to enforce policy.

Rae-Ann Shaw

Lori, but how do you harmonize municipal, provincial, and federal governments mandates and policies?

Lynne Magee

Rae-Ann, communication and dialogue between the groups towards common visions. Educate of the public to elect officials who will work towards these goals.

Jennifer Black

Ann said: Dan talked about sticking your neck out. I think this is an important point when you know there will never be one right decision and that will always be alienation, this takes courage. Isn't this one of the key qualities of a leader? A leader must be willing to take a risk and to be open to new ideas, exploring possibilities that may end in failure. It is through successes and especially failures that we learn. Being a leader, in this regard, is a difficult task. You must put yourself forward and be open to scrutiny, criticism and failure. If you don't have the courage to do this, I question how effective a leader you can be?

Matthew Paisley

I wonder if we sometimes confuse leadership with management. Does leadership not imply a voyage and movement towards something or somewhere? Perhaps one of the key aspects of a leader, then, is a level of vision to act as a guide. The better the vision, the more dedicated the followers.

Ann Dale

Matthew.... "the better the vision, the more dedicated the followers".... Maybe a good leader is someone who inspires others to see the possibilities and opportunities in the world, and inspires others to be the change they wish to see...

Jennifer Black

Yes, I do agree Matt. A leader must show some level of vision, but I think it is up to the leader to put forth the initiative to cover new territory towards what you describe as a "voyage or movement". This means the leader must be the one to take the risk. I also think a good leader should not only encourage "dedicated followers", but people that will also develop their own vision. A leader may not always have the best solution. A good leader will recognize this and look to others for inspiration.

Murray Ball

Ernest Shackleton is an example of a leader not always having the best solution. He caved in to the point of view of one of his followers while stranded for a year in the Antarctic - and only because of that was successful in bringing his entire crew home safe - a definite contrast with other Antarctic explorers.

Ann Dale

How do you think our individual approaches to leadership would change if we did not let fear or ego get in the way?

Deb Webster

I think more people would be willing to speak up and lead...but I think most fear is driven by the unknown which leads us back to knowledge and education if somebody is willing to educate you on the direction you are more willing to follow than just being told to change your ways.

Rae-Ann Shaw

If we didn't let fear get in the way, I think many unsuspecting leaders would emerge. Someone said earlier that people just stick to their area of expertise, etc. I agree-people to go work from 9-5, work in their cubicle (only within their area of expertise), then go home and start the whole routine over again. They are not challenged to think "outside the box". Perhaps this is due to fear of being an outcast or "trouble maker".

Kurt Fehr

Without fear and ego, change would flourish.

Lori Marchand

Yes, I really liked Balser's take on that: " I may have knowledge that they don't; but I am not better than they are... it simply puts a greater responsibility on me to help them understand what I understand and they do not". Sounds like he has spent some quality time at the monastery :-)

Kurt Fehr

Just think how good this world would be if everyone thought this way?

Lynne Magee

If fear and ego didn't get in the way, if we are respected and valued for our beliefs and knowledge, great changes would happen. We are all unique individuals and that should be celebrated.

Cassandra Caunce

Being human, it is only natural to fear the consequences of doing something "radical". However, I believe that a reasonable person trying to institute changes gradually, reasonably, and without excessive force need not have fear. Catch more flies with honey... In terms of bringing up new ideas, if fear was not a factor, people would be more bold and changes might take place more quickly. However, this could lead to problems with acceptance. While everyone generally agrees that sustainability is the key to the future, the path on how to get there will be subject to many of an opinion.

Shannon Pagotto

How do you think our individual approaches to leadership would change if we did not let fear get in the way? I think it depends on our surrounding environment. If it's encouraged to lead, then there is nothing to fear. Our department encourages leadership by encouraging people to use the 7 identified leadership qualities. Fear is not what stops me from leading, it's that in this organization (fed government) senior management stops listening. My director on the other hand, has no fear of getting in trouble so he often raises his SD voice. He takes it as far as he can until management tells him to sit down. I think if his fear was gone, he would take it all the way, he would have no hesitations to say no to the pipeline and say no to the big diamond mines even though Canadians are apparently going to benefit lots.

Ann Dale

Several of you have raised the issue of respect. Bravo, what about if more leaders respected all their employees equally and at the same time, regarded all with compassion? But then, I could be accused of naiveté, as there are lots of power and control issues. As well, what about integrity? And what about leading through power with people rather than power over people?

Dan Sonmor

There have been a few things that this course has shown me that I have managed to take back to the workplace. However, some of the SD issues that I read over the last week may prove to be the most valuable so far. Our regional director is driving our SD wagon and has basically put all of her future job aspirations on our department reaching our SD goals. Who knows, with some of this information, I may even get that promotion I have been looking for. Is this ethical? I think so. I will be out there trying to lead by example and telling people what I know and what I have found so they can follow along and learn more if they want. Those that can - do.

Karen Larson

"What a wonderful world it would be". As in the spider web...all are interconnected and the strength of the org. is every-ones ideas, visions.

Toni Lightwood

An effective leadership strategy that I have found to be successful, is to lead by example, people are often defensive when you try to impose your thoughts and opinions upon them, but when they can visualize different and effective ways of doing things, they're more open minded about making life-style choices of the same.

Karen Larson

Also having a clear vision or goal in place without the knowledge of what the path is people do not know where they are going...

Deb Webster

Toni, that is very true, nobody wants to feel belittled by somebody's ego and change can be hard when the outcome is unknown. Example is a great means of leading...that is if there is an example to follow.

Lori Marchand

Yes, a good example of that is the paper towel composting bins in RRU campus washrooms. What a great idea! But haven't seen that anywhere else. I have taken the idea to the EM co-coordinator of our building. Was it Eisenbach that mentioned that people change far more readily when they are "attracted" to a new idea, rather than told to "comply" with something?

Matthew Paisley

Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains. One thinks himself the master of others, but is indeed a greater slave than they. Or something like that... Power over the people will only work if that power is given. Also, with tight control over employees, in true micro management style, the chance for advancement is minimal. In fact, there would be little impetus to do more than is absolutely necessary. Only through a mutual respect and a level playing field can success be achieved. There will always be a hierarchy, but let it be a mutually agreed upon one, where all players have a stake and say in matter, regardless of how small.

Shannon Pagotto

Ann, again, I go back to my Director. He has a directorate of close to 70 people all in the environment and conservation field. When it came time to express the regions opinions

on drafting our SD policy, he gathered us up and sent many to a meeting. We share his vision, why? Because he is a good leader and we believe what he is saying. So, instead of one voice at meeting, he has 70. He also has 70 people reviewing projects and issuing permits.. another example of power with people.

Cassandra Caunce

I can't help but sharing what happened in our company. And this is just between us.... All was going well. The Board of Directors approved our Charter of Corporate Responsibility created by the environment & corporate affairs staff and we worked HARD on it. It was published. Then one of the board members - an accountant - looked at it, re-wrote it and then informed us of the changes. No consultations at all. It was a total slap in the face and the new version was regarded as ridiculous by our staff. We took one step forward, then in a heartbeat - three backwards. Respect is everything

Deb Webster

Shannon that sound likes a great leader. Where I work there is great leadership as my bosses have great passion but being the contractors the stakeholder gets the last say and sadly many of BC resources are not Canadian owned and they are looking at the economic bottom line. So i guess I am with Cass watching 1 step forward 3 back many times

Ann Dale

"I wonder if we sometimes confuse leadership with management. Does leadership not imply a voyage and movement towards something or somewhere? Perhaps one of the key aspects of a leader, then, is a level of vision to act as a guide. The better the vision, the more dedicated the followers".

Matthew this question earlier. And several of you have talked about empowerment, being reactive rather than proactive. How does all this fit with leadership for sustainable development? Do you have to be even more strategic, able to see both the forest and the trees?

Joanne Roach

I'm beginning to think that the most effective leaders will understand or embody these assertions:

- Leadership starts with deep caring
- Battle to subordinate the ego

- Passion to make a difference
- A sense of humour

I also think that the people who are true leaders may not recognize this for themselves, but others will recognize the traits, trust their judgment and maybe even suggest they take up formal leadership roles.

I guess what I'm saying is that you can be leading and not even know it.

Dan Sonmor

You are so right Joanne. In fact, if you are in that position you certainly have to be careful. An old saying "What you do speaks so loud that I cannot hear what you say" is something any leader should follow.

Matthew Paisley

Sounds like a definition for effective leadership... inspirational. I would concur, except for the difficulties one would see in overcoming our own ego...

Lori Marchand

Was it ego that caused Ralph Klein's to immediately remove and dispose of the solar panels installed on his home by Greenpeace? LOL.

Lynne Magee

Maybe the outcome would have been different if Klein had a choice in the issue? Accepting a choice or a change is always more palatable than having it forced on you.

Karen Larson

In Bob Doppelt's article he states that "Warren Bennis and Bert Nanus (1985) contributed to the discussion by listing several key differences between leaders and managers. They said that leaders:

1. Do the right things
2. See people as great assets
3. Seek commitment
4. Focus on outcomes
5. See what and why things could be done
6. Share information

7. Promote networks.

In contrast they list as manager's attributes that they:

1. Do things right
2. See people as liabilities
3. Seek control, create and follow the rules
4. Focus on how things should be done
5. Seek compliance
6. Value secrecy
7. Use formal authority (hierarchy).

In the following years these ideas have been adopted and built upon by authors in the conceptual academic sphere (Conger, 1992; Czarniawska-Joerges & Wolff, 1991; Rost, 1991; Spreitzer & Quinn, 1996)."

Perhaps Klien was being managed by the oil giants (lol).

Shannon Pagotto

Lynne, knowing Ralph Klein... not personally, just through the media... it was probably ego!

Lori Marchand

Maybe Ralph should have thought about that when he told the people at the homeless shelter to get jobs :-)

Lori Marchand

Hi Joanne, Don't you think another critical aspect to leadership is the ability to facilitate change and action? To me there is so much convoluted speech, red-tape, lack of transparency and wildly complicated org charts of accountability that nothing seems to get accomplished, at times. To me the ability for a leader to have some simple, well communicated plans that people can easily understand and execute would go a long way too.

Joanne Roach

I do agree Lori. Leaders need to facilitate change by providing the vision, the plan, and the support to their teams.

Jennifer Black

Lori, I completely agree. I think in the same regard, there must be a clear timeline. A leader must address the value of time.

Ann Dale

Joanne, do you think a good leader creates the conditions where all who want to lead are empowered to do so?

Joanne Roach

If you are talking about leading as in embodying the traits and being encouraged and respected to contribute, then yes. If you are talking about a formal leadership role, maybe not. In my experience serving on boards, there still has to be one official leader, but all opinions and ideas are respected and encouraged.

Rae-Ann Shaw

I often observe in the Federal Government the reactive vs. proactive approach. We are trying to change that now. For example, when conducting a project, we try to incorporate a project design that will better the environment (ie. creating storm water management ponds, etc.). Leadership for SD should be something long term, looking into the future. I agree that management and leadership are often confused. How many managers do you know that don't possess one leadership skill?

Jennifer Maxwell

From Eisenbach et al. (Transformational leadership in the context of organizational change): "The conflict between the forces for and against change are two opposing actions that 'work at each other' until one dominates and the resulting outcome is a synthesis that is distinct but contains elements of the forces for and against change. This model assumes that dissatisfaction with the status quo is necessary before change can occur. In contrast, the logic of trialectics proposes that change occurs through attraction. Changes do not result from 'pushes' or pressure to move away from the present situation, but instead result from being 'pulled' toward or attracted to different possibilities." If we wait until the vast majority of Canadian society is dissatisfied with the unsustainability of our culture, it will probably be too late. What our leaders or us, as individuals, do to attract more people to living more sustainably? Many businesses that are adopting the 'cradle to cradle' model are seeing actual cost savings. That's got to be attractive to other businesses. What other attractions are there in moving toward a more sustainable existence?

Ann Dale

Kurt, ... "Just think how good this world would be if everyone thought this way?" what is it that holds us back from critical mass in this direction?

Jennifer Maxwell

I think it is the feeling of disempowerment. A number of people talked today about their own feelings around this. We think action must come from the top. We need to arouse our inner leaders - we can make a difference!! I am desperately trying to think of the quote from a visionary woman (even her name is escaping me right now) about the actions of one person making a difference...indeed it is the only thing that ever has... Can someone help me out??

Ann Dale

Jennifer, that is the quote on my social capital website, by Margaret Mead, "Never doubt the capacity of a small group of people to make a difference. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has".

Our research in this area is trying to show governments that they can actually destroy existing social capital in a community by their interventions and that they have to work much more closely with community leaders to enhance it. There seems to be a link between not being heard, being disempowered and then disengaging.

Kurt Fehr

Hi Ann. It's the choice between the high road the low road, or the "Road Less Traveled." In order to really execute these beliefs that "I'm not better than someone else; it requires us to be at our best and to examine ourselves. If you want to lead you must set an example. I believe Palmer Jarvis (in the Balser document) hit the nail on the head when he stated: "[As we go deeper into ourselves] the ultimate source of the shadows we project onto other people. If we do not understand that the enemy is within, will find a thousand ways of making someone 'out there' into the enemy, becoming leaders we oppress rather than liberate others."

Jennifer Maxwell

OK - let's add that to the list of good leadership qualities: the ability to empower.

Lori Marchand

Fear. "The fear of failure keeps us from trying to succeed. The fear of losing keeps us from trying to win. The fear of what everyone else will think keeps us from stepping out boldly " DeVos.

Ann Dale

Rae-Ann raised the point about "feeling you can make a difference" which of course relates to empowerment. Does a leader empower their people so that they are not the sole spokesperson, but have a network that spreads out, with 70 spokespeople all sharing the same vision, and perhaps ethical beliefs. What does this require in a leader in terms of communications skills and some of you have touched on personal characteristics?

Shannon Pagotto

A good leader needs to communicate by being sincere, trusting and honest when he speaks. He needs to be approachable and he needs to be able to listen!

Ann Dale

Cassandra raises an all too common problem. But if you are in the business of change and leadership, then it will be sometimes one step forward and two back, that is where strategic thinking comes in. One of my mentors once taught me that every time I became discouraged or angry, my 'enemies' won, as I lost my ability to think strategically.

Karen Larson

Yet the disappointment of being told "she who sticks her head out, get's hammered (by a manager in relation to SD in the workplace) is discouraging. I think not to show one's reaction is positive and then to go home think strategically and continue is positive. For me my "frustration" fuels me to search for new ways to come at the issue.

Ann Dale

Karen... you are right here... I think that if we can look at every challenge as an opportunity, we have the ability to glean some important information from the situation... in essence it allows us to have a broader view.

Lori Marchand

I know I am totally getting off track here, but I try to remember, "those that don't do, criticize", that way I don't take things quite as personally.

Cassandra Caunce

Committing to something is essential if a battle is to be waged and won. A good leader will commit to what they believe in. In the face of defeat, re-group with a new battle plan, gather resources and lay siege. Eventually a committed, well-organized, effective leader will win the war and change will emerge.

Karen Larson

I thought it was those who can do and those that can't teach (LOL).

Cassandra Caunce

Growth cannot be achieved without failures to serve as fertilizer. [Smile]

Lynne Magee

Good point Cassandra - I know I learn more from the mistakes I make, than always doing things right.

Karen Larson

One thing I always wonder about is the issue of burnout...if we keep fighting strategizing trying to lead by example is this process supposed to be energizing? Personally I find it tiring...what can we do to stay energized? Become personally sustainable.

Cassandra Caunce

I hear you in so many ways - even in relation to taking this program! I wish there was an easy answer but in truth I believe it is different for everyone. As long as you know where your threshold is, you can retreat, recharge and start anew with a refreshed perspective.

Jennifer Maxwell

It can be energizing. Maybe it is strategic to work toward some short term, readily attainable goals to provide energy for working toward the long-term vision.

Lynne Magee

And if a small success is recognized, then more people might be convinced to buy into the vision and take on some of the load.

Jennifer Maxwell

Some leadership characteristics:

- Charismatic
- Excellent speaker
- Vision/ideas that resonate with people
- Compassionate
- Respectful
- Good listener
- Open

There's a start.

Ann Dale

Karen raises a very critical point "if we keep fighting strategizing trying to lead by example is this process supposed to be energizing? Personally I find it tiring...what can we do to stay energized? Become personally sustainable".

What strategies do you think an effective leader uses?

Matthew Paisley

A key strategy to stay motivated may be the same ones used on those being led. Given a sense of empowerment, of attaining short-term goals (as Jennifer Maxwell alluded to). These are tools that leaders can use on themselves to stay motivated. Any leadership given to the team would also be applicable to the leader as well, as they are integral to the team.

Toni Lightwood

Matthew, well I guess we've come full circle, I think it's imperative that a good leader "practice what they preach", leading by example may not be the only thing that they do, but in order to maintain that ever important "respect" I still think it is key.

Dan Sonmor

The main component I can think of is a leader will stick up for what they feel is right - damn the consequences. If they are not willing to stand up for their own beliefs, then sure as hell they will not back you on yours when the going gets tough.

Lori Marchand

Nobody even talks about solidarity anymore, Dan :-).

Cassandra Caunce

Lori, very true but one must be patient as well. Nobody went up to Gandhi and said "Hey man - thanks for doing that. Keep up the good work." Sometimes it takes time for people to realize what good you've done before they even think about thanking you for it. Leadership - it's a thankless job but somebody's gotta do it!

Jennifer Black

Dan, although, I understand where you are coming from, I disagree. I think an effective leader should always be aware of the consequences of their actions. Often, pushing too hard will only result in failure and making enemies of those you need as allies. I suppose there is a fine line here.

Murray Ball

Jennifer B., sounds like politics with a small "p" to me. We do have to keep in mind what is possible in any situation.

Dan Sonmor

Jennifer, if you believe in something and you defend it to the end, regardless if you win or lose, it shows character and dedication to a cause. Besides, why would you want any cooperation from an idiot that disagrees with you when you know you are right?

Lori Marchand

Sounds like politics with a small "p" to me...can you elaborate Murray? That sounded really interesting.

Murray Ball

Leadership and Kyoto, In going through the postings and readings for this e-dialogue, I have realized that leadership is not something I have thought about a great deal. Nonetheless, I do have a point of view on this topic. Yes, leadership is necessarily built of courage and risk-taking and of doing the right thing in a difficult time. But I think there is another aspect of leadership, which relates to the question of a tree falling in the forest. Is a courageous act of sacrifice and vision-pursuing really leadership if no one follows? I know that the art of doing what is possible is otherwise known as politics, but surely there must be an element of politics in all leadership. And this brings us to the implementation of the Kyoto accord and sustainable development more broadly. Canada's decision to implement Kyoto has all the hallmarks of leadership; the courageous setting-off in a new direction that the world needs to turn to. I think, however, that the degree to which this is an act of leadership in our times depends very much on how it is seen to be done and how it is seen to work – two aspects, which are very political. If we can manage to implement the Kyoto reductions with broad public support, and without serious economic fall-out, then it will be seen to be an act of leadership. If we fail, and thereby give the sustainability movement a set-back, Kyoto ratification will not be considered leadership.

Kurt Fehr

Dan, do I hear ego? (LOL) Leaders that pave the way encourage more followers. If you are pushing an issue you believe is right and you win (whether it be short or long term) you will gain the acceptance of others. If you lose and there are other people that share the same beliefs, they will find a way to pave the road in another fashion.

Deb Webster

I would have to agree with Jennifer on this one. It is a personal flaw of my own but even if somebody could be right but are too aggressive and pushy I close down and back off. I think you have to look at what is achievable and gather support on those goals. You can always get bigger later.

Dan Sonmor

I am not saying that you are aggressive and pushy. Just believe in what you are doing. After all, I'm a lover, not a fighter.

Ann Dale

Dan, maybe you have to know when to be a lover and a fighter:), again a delicate balancing act.

Dan Sonmor

Fortunately the training for both these disciplines is very similar. However, I would caution those whom wish to do both at the same time. If you insist on doing this, leave the house. It's a lot safer that way.

Cassandra Caunce

Whatever you say, Michael. LOL [Wink]

Deb Webster

I think you mean Dozer as in Bull Dozer. [Wink]

Lori Marchand

Everyone is different, Deb, Jennifer, everyone has a right to their opinion, and we need different types of people and views for sure. On this topic, I agree with Dan 100%. We just don't have enough Dan's to make a difference, it seems. The people that really inspire me as a human being, my heros, are not people who backed down to appear politically correct, they are the people that dug their heels in despite how they appeared to others, and were able to incite change despite the statistical odds stacked against them (i.e. Martin Luther King).

Lynne Magee

Leadership characteristics include one knowing themselves enough to realize when they are losing their effectiveness and taking the time to take care of themselves and building up their strength to continue.

Rae-Ann Shaw

I think knowing when to ask for help is required in order to become "personally sustainable".

Cassandra Caunce

Lots of the visits to the spa! [Smile]

Reflecting on why you are doing what you are doing. Remembering what got you started down this path to begin with. It's a matter of staying focused, recognizing and accepting your limitations and still have the staying power to continue onward.

Lori Marchand

According to Bass (1995), "charisma, attention to individualized development, and the ability and willingness to provide intellectual stimulation are critical to leaders whose firms are faced with demands for renewal and change". Personally, I also think that people need to be validated by verbal appreciation and acknowledgement of their efforts, in order to continue, I hear that complaint so often, that people get burnt out because they don't feel appreciated, and what they do doesn't matter to anyone.

Karen Larson

Personally the times that I have led and really made a difference were the times that I was energized on a spiritual level. However this level of participation takes much meditation, staying focused and having the time and deep commitment to the cause. And yes having someone say they believe in you is helpful, but without the inner commitment to the goal one does get burnt.

Jennifer Black

Good point Rae Ann. I think we must remember that we are all just human and we have limitations. Those that push themselves too far are often least effective.

Ann Dale

I think there is also a distinction to be made. Thinking about something does not make it happen... but doing it without commitment behind it does not necessarily make it happen either. When there is commitment behind it, taking action will in most cases override any barriers that stand in the way... so maybe another criteria for being an effective leader is commitment?

Shannon Pagotto

Ann, exactly, so often we've thrown up our arms in frustration but with more voices saying the same things, the day will come when senior management throws up their arms in frustration. And we will have won!

Toni Lightwood

There are many quotes that echo the sentiment: "Half of doing anything is believing that you can." "Success = 1% inspiration + 99% perspiration."

Ann Dale

Jennifer posted some good characteristics. What about being able to admit you were wrong and not thinking you know all the answers, to get back to drift and steer, a good leader knows when you have to steer and when you have to drift? If you are more interested in this analogy, you may wish to look at Roberta Martell's e-dialogue archive when it is posted.

Deb Webster

Ann, that is a very good point. You will get more respect from your followers if you show you are human and have the courage to say you are wrong instead of sweeping it under the carpet.

Joanne Roach

Ann, my work partner has always told me that he has more respect and confidence in people who admit when they do not have the answer to a question, instead of trying to make something up.

Dan Sonmor

Anyone committed to a cause can surely be a leader. How committed do you have to be to convince people to take their shoes off to wait for the spaceship behind Saturn? If you are committed, you can influence others - right or wrong.

Jennifer Maxwell

Not to get off track, but I see some parallels to parenting here. My ability to admit I am wrong and to say I am sorry goes a long way in gaining and keeping my daughter's respect. Likewise, I also have recognized that there are times that I should let my daughter explore the cliff edges on her own, and other times when I need to steer her clear.

Jennifer Black

Exactly. A parent is a leader. Lead by example.

Ann Dale

And does an effective leader know that not every battle can be won, but what is important is winning the war, and that therefore some battles may be foregone? (Incidentally, in my career as an executive in the Federal Government, I wished I had not taken on every battle for the principle of it).

Cassandra

I guess that reveals another trait of a good leader...knowing which battles are worth fighting for and which ones are inconsequential.

Toni Lightwood

I also think that to lead or manage in a world of increasingly inter-connectedness and interdependence, a balance must be achieved between managing peoples needs against their wants. Rich countries often find themselves with an abundance of resources, to the point that people end up consuming more than they actually need. We need to reduce the "rich-poor divide", resources need to be managed as efficiently as possible through production and distribution, and they need to be protected from

abuse, misuse and destruction. In order to do so, technology, education and laws must play important roles.

Matthew Paisley

Seems that everyone has an idea of what characteristics a leader should have. But I wonder, can a leader be created, or are they realized?

Lori Marchand

Matthew, does that lead into emergent leadership?

Matthew Paisley

As compared to a puppet government?

Murray Ball

Another aspect of leadership that is needed for the SD movement is (and I know this challenges Dan's point of view!) political skill. Building consensus and energy is not the only requirement of good leadership. Being able to direct that energy - to avoid pitfalls and setbacks is also important.

Rae-Ann Shaw

I agree that you must pick and choose your battles. My supervisor constantly tells me this. He makes me look at the long term: what is the advantage of pursuing this battle? Some things you need to let go.

Lynne Magee

Matthew.... I wonder, can a leader be created, or are they realized?
Probably some of both - some people are naturals, others have to learn and practice and become a leader.

Karen Larson

The Deepak Chopra Reading:

"How do leaders emerge from ordinary lives? In the deeper reality, a family in disarray, a company without vision, a school without heart or a nation struggling toward a new level of freedom need to respond to hidden spiritual drives. Once this is understood, leaders can be made who rise to the highest levels of greatness. Any person, man or woman, can begin on the same road, not by being born a leader but by looking inward".

Was Winston Churchill born? In one of our readings I think it said that he planned on being a leader...Look at Saddam Hussein he planned his role...strategize, or Hitler he too strategized...not the best examples but history books have said they planned and had an opportunity

Shannon Pagotto

Ann, How did you manage to survive as an executive with the Federal Government? No doubt you had very different viewpoints from your colleagues??

Dan Sonmor

One interesting point I read in leading from the middle was "Leadership is having the courage to put wisdom and compassion into action in the name of a powerful vision, while knowing that one's ability to do so is often flawed." You do what you can and go forth with it. Any action is better than inaction. The leaders who sit on their fat hands waiting for someone else to make the first move are the ones that should be removed and replaced.

Shannon Pagotto

I think a good leader leads when he needs to and then hands the ropes back to his followers who lead from there. He only steps in when he needs to or when his followers need a boost or change of direction.

Deb Webster

Shannon, good points this would keep the passion alive in more people, spread the knowledge as well as give the leader a break.

Ann Dale

Shannon asked me how I survived as an executive with the Federal Government. First, I believed passionately in my work and my ability to make a difference. And when that was no longer the case, I changed my career to one where I thought I could make more

of a difference (teaching). But there is a time and place to all of this, I believe I am a far better teacher now than if I had taught earlier, so, perhaps we should all have an entrance and exit strategy and transition plans. Some of you are probably doing that by becoming mid-career learners. I also realized the importance of credentials, so I obtained my M.A. part-time, and believe it or not, also completed my doctoral degree part-time. And beauty and harmony are very important to me, so flowers, candles, good friends, art, and hikes with my dogs always restore my inner balance. Did I get discouraged, and yes, I cried a lot, but somehow or other, I always kept the trees uppermost in my mind, literally the trees, and the fact that I had brought a son into this world, and I was deeply committed to trying to make the world a better place for him. And I sought out the best minds I could work with, and took a lot of risks, paid dearly for some of them, but was never bored, and believed I made some of a difference. What gets me down, especially after my son's death, as is the case for most of my family, is the cruelty and pettiness that we see people exhibit in the workplace, life is so precious, there is so much to do, and we all need to work together to optimize the beauty of the world we are privileged to walk in.

Cassandra Caunce

Ann - I have to say it despite what others may think. Wow. What you have done with your life and how well you have succeeded in it both in your teachings and personal aspects of it are an inspiration to us all.

Karen Larson

Thank-you Ann, your story is inspiring. That you continue on and changed careers, educational pursuits when it was time. Very beautiful. Thanks sustainability in our personal lives is such a challenge at times.

Toni Lightwood

Ann, thank you for sharing that.

Shannon Pagotto

Ann, You make an awesome leader. Everything we spoke of in this dialogue, you have. Commitment, never giving up, passion.... It's not often executives leave the government because the perks are way to great. I understand about the office pettiness. On the day of September 11th, our region was going through a labour dispute. There were picketers at the front door and people that weren't getting along came out to tell the others the news. The groups united, the strike ended and everyone came back to work quietly. It's sad that it takes something sad or tragic to make us realize what is really

important. You must have truly believed you could make a difference by teaching and I think you have!

Ann Dale

Many of you have raised one of the most critical points of being a leader--having a vision. But it is a delicate balancing act between leading others to your vision, which is often far ahead of your people, and knowing when to adhere to that vision, push it forward, when to draw back, and sometimes when to discard it. And as you all know, working for sustainable development, many are simply resistant to change. One of the most difficult things I found was to manage people who always see the glass half empty, and when my staff were over-balanced in this respect, I often felt disempowered, and yet, they are critical for the team, you can't have all who believe the glass is always half-full.

Joanne Roach

Ann, do you think that keeping the vision alive is paramount to keeping the faith of your followers? If you abandoned the vision, what would be the psychological consequences for them, confusion, and disappointment? I wonder if the problem lies more in the strategic plan to implement the vision, than with the vision itself. People need to see how they are going to get there.

Shannon Pagotto

Having a vision--this would be a difficult place in the government because people are hired for you. It would be much easier if you hand selected people who were positive to change and shared your vision.

Ann Dale

A few points, I think perhaps more than your vision, is the integrity you hold around that vision, and perhaps the most critical part is being able to communicate it to your people, share it in a way that gets them to commit to it. And incidentally, and we are running out of time, this is a major failure of the environmental movement, to change their communications strategies from the 1970s doom and gloom, although they are starting to change now. And you can't use 'blame and judging". Someone thought they were digressing by introducing leadership is like parenting, yes it is, and think about what kind of families we come from, a lot of blaming and criticism. How much of that is in the workplace? And with respect to my own leadership in this class, I am only as good as you are, a caring leader realizes they are only as good as the team, although sometimes a good leader has to raise the team up, but what a joy, to be working with a

group of people who also want to explore, to learn, to discover, and my performance is very dependent upon your quality. So, thank you, for daring to experiment in these crazy e-Dialogues and public forums, I know we have a long way to go.

Karen Larson

Workplace health is an interesting issue. I work in a toxic environment, which recently went through a management change. It is interesting to participate in the managements new leadership role to move from toxic to health...many of the things talked of here are part of the solutions - shared vision, every-ones ideas, respect, etc. Great things can and will happen. How do we move from smallness to greatness...mutual respect from bickering, shared visions from silos. All a very interesting - workplace sustainable development...

Cassandra

I agree with you, Joanne. It's all fine and dandy to set a goal of a zero-emission, sustainable society. The strategy for getting there needs to be implemented with the vision but sometimes the vision is just so darn big and requires such drastic change, it becomes unmanageable. Small steps in implementation towards the vision are the key and each of those stages needs to be realistic and "visionable" to the average Joe.

Lynne Magee

Working for the same organization, one of things that is missing right now with the new management is the vision of where we are going and how we can all be a part of it. We have changed from a manager who looked at the half empty glass to one who is looking more at the half full glass but there hasn't been enough time or communication yet to see what all our roles will be in making it a sustainable, health workplace. Hopefully that will come soon and we can all feel valued and respected in the organization.

Matthew Paisley

You're right Lynne. Balancing the good and the bad, and looking at all aspects of an issue, can be a daunting ambition. There must be a mandate to connect social and economic development with ecological obligations. What is needed here is the authority and mandate ability within the government to lead the nation through these needs. Leadership is more than just governance, and effective governance cannot be attained without respected leadership. Though distinct, one is not separate and independent of the other...

Kurt Fehr

As previously discussed Economics is the driving force behind all things at this point in time. Because we are not going to be able to change this, then maybe we should convert our social and ecological sides into economic terms? The Swedes are leading this front already. What are the disadvantages of this?

Joanne Roach

I don't know that everything can be boiled down to dollars and sense. It is too arbitrary. The strategy could only take you so far. I guess some things are invaluable.

Jennifer Maxwell

Hi Kurt, economics are a good lure, but once you reel them in, you've got to present the integrated vision and benefits.

Murray Ball

Kurt, I don't see how we can sustain the SD triumvirate of environment, social health and economic health if we reduce everything to the language of economics. We need to stretch ourselves beyond that.

Lori Marchand

A major failure of the environmental movement, to change their communications strategies from the 1970s doom and gloom, although they are starting to change now." Do you think that is why David Suzuki is labeled a fear-monger by so many Canadians? Do you think if he changed his delivery, he would appeal to a broader demographic and would gain wider acceptance and support?

Lori Marchand

I agree, but it's a start. Just like Kyoto, even if we successfully reduce emissions to the letter of the accord, we won't put a dent in reversing global warming. However, it's a start.

Shannon Pagotto

Good point Lori. Maybe persuasive writing would benefit him!

Dan Sonmor

Kurt, I am not sure of the resources base in Sweden, but Canada is rich in natural resources, ergo it is cheap to continue along the same path we are traveling. For Sweden, it may be significantly cheaper to do things along a SD path than to keep importing expensive raw material to produce the things they need. Not sure if this is the case, but just throwing another stick into the pot.

Deb Webster

I think it is happening organic foods, forest stewardship stamped lumber...but there is a cost to become certified and many people value their money more than the value could be getting-- meaning they would rather spend less as a consumer this being the disadvantage.

Kurt Fehr

If we could put a dollar value to the ecological and social aspects then at least we could put a plan together that would satisfy our resources based economy on a short scale and our ecological and social aspects on a long scale.

Ann Dale

Thank you everyone. Final comments before we break. Again, it's been a slice, a unique moment in time.

Joanne Roach

Thanks Ann and comrades. It was fun.

Lori Marchand

Karen, "Those who can't do; teach, those who can't teach, teach gym" Woody Allen.

Karen Larson

I agree I have to say many of the teachers, like Ann are inspiring...and excellent teachers!!

Karen Larson

Yes thanks every-one I feel inspired...thanks for every-ones thoughts and voices....