EMPOWERING WOMEN LEADERS IN RESEARCH THROUGH ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS

ALICIA J. KNOEDLER, CRA, PHD

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

RACHEL DRESBECK, PHD

OREGON HEALTH & SCIENCE UNIVERSITY

IN HONOR AND MEMORY OF….

- Another eclectic generalist

- A deep and broad thinker

- A person of many interests, who seemed compartmentalized to others but was an experienced dot-connector and a leader to many

James L. Knoedler (1939-2016)

LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AND GENDER SYMPOSIUM

- Held at Purdue University, March 28-30, 2016

- The purpose of the symposium was to *present research and evidence-based practice on the creation and sustainment of work, organizational and occupational environments to support gender equality, career success and leader excellence in organizations*

  - Gender and STEM

  - Supervisor-Subordinate Relationships

  - HR Practices and Gender

  - Gender in Higher Education

  - Leadership and Gender

  - Women at the Top

  - Entrepreneurship and Leadership Identity

  - Gender in Diverse Contexts

LEADERSHIP, RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT, AND NORDP

- RD professionals bring together people, ideas, and resources from many domains. They bring together faculty who never considered working together, connect them with new tools and new sources of funds, and open up possibilities for creative thinking that were simply not possible without their guidance. Using interactional expertise and knowledge of transdisciplinary and collaborative work, they serve as bridges among scientists and scholars from many disciplines.

- A major leadership role for RD professionals is that they "create spaces and suggest possibilities for faculty collaborations, crossdisciplinary collaborations, multi-institutional collaborations, translational possibilities, commercialization possibilities", in essence, forging a path for success for individual faculty, teams of faculty, and the institution as a whole (Stone, 2015).

- This role is currently underappreciated as a space for women leaders, but, we would argue, has great potential. RD work commands significant institutional resources and plays a major role in faculty development. RD professionals thus have important, demonstrated contributions and impacts at their institutions.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT (LDRD)

- In the 2016 program, we have 8 talks related to this *Research Development Pillar*

- In the 2015 program, LDRD was mentioned 0 times

- **Leadership Development in Research Development** (David Stone, 2015)

  - Leadership is an essential component of effective research development. Training and skill development in leadership are essential to the development of research development professionals and to the profession of research development.

  - The combined leadership strategic, organizational, and collaborative skills exercised by research development professionals make them excellent candidates for other leadership positions, both on campus (VPR, AVP, Associate Provost, Chief of Staff) and off campus (leadership roles in research institutes, government, industry, and foundations). Leadership training will advance these possibilities for research development professionals.

  - Leadership training will better prepare NORDP members to take leadership roles in NORDP (committee chair, Board member, NORD leadership, etc.).

- To address these needs, NORDP should establish a leadership training program (LDRD) that would provide webinars, guided readings, and other programming, including programming offered at the annual conference.

WE CAN APPROACH THIS MANY DIFFERENT WAYS…

- Do we need a definition of leadership? Goals? objectives?

- Is leadership about a position or action (with or without authority)

- Do we need a gender-based version of LDRD?

- Is *formal* leadership development essential for career development in RD? Other domains?

- Is leadership development an individual notion? Can it be accomplished WITH others?

- What if research development has already helped you to cultivate leadership qualities and *the challenge is* to communicate that to others?

EVERYTHING I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT LEADERSHIP, I LEARNED IN RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT
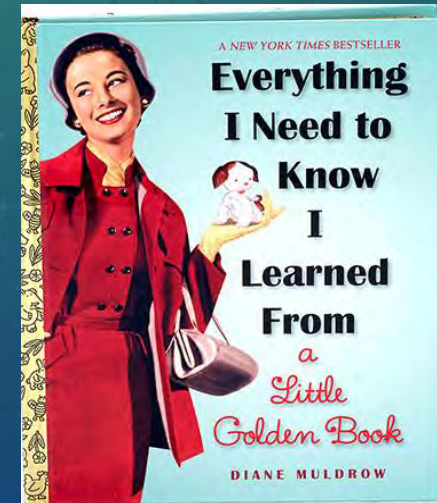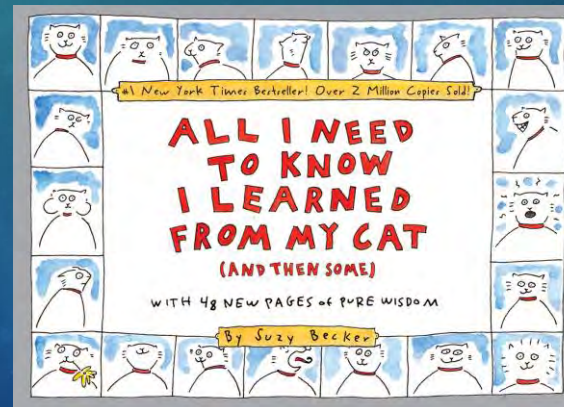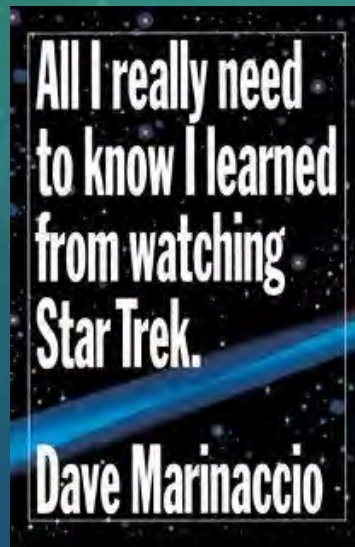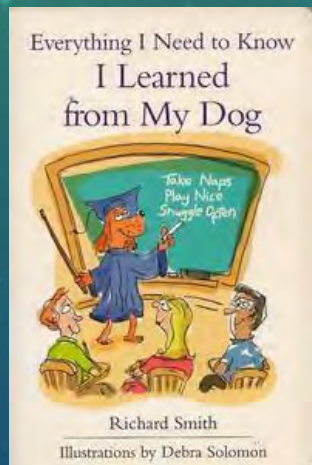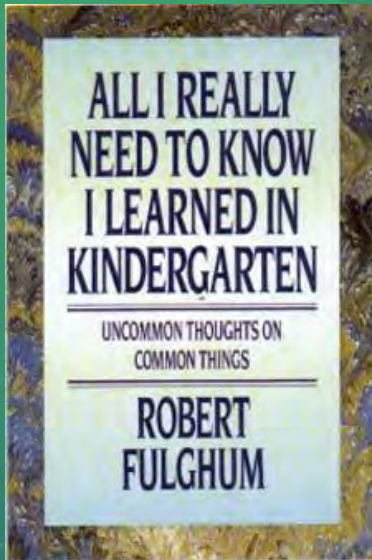
WE ARE ALREADY LEADING - MAYBE OUR CHALLENGE IS TRANSLATING THOSE SKILLS TO OTHER EXPERIENCES AND CONTEXTS

Adapted from "The Practice of Adaptive Leadership" by Heifetz, Lensky & Grashow
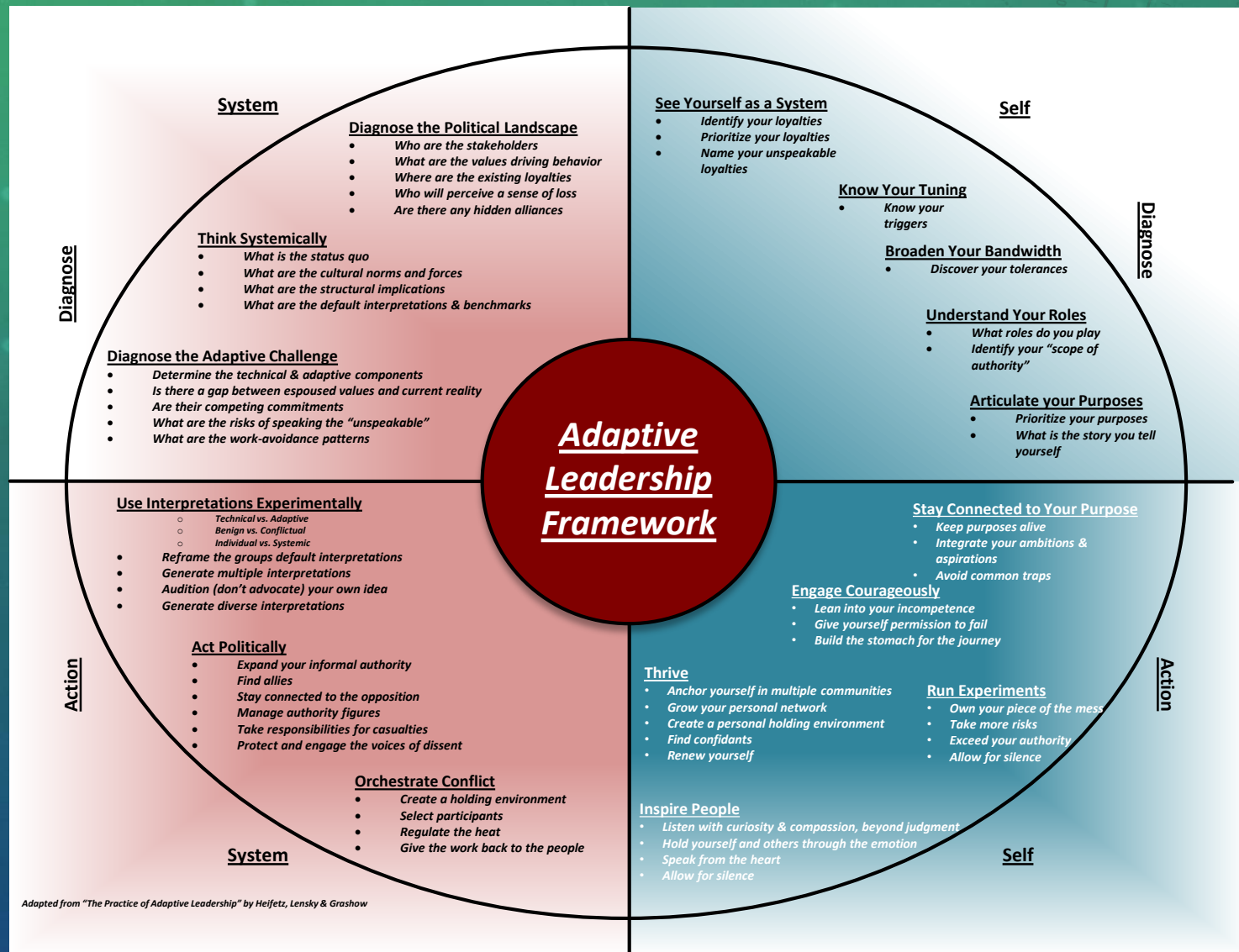
PRINCIPLES OF LEADERSHIP – ONE EXAMPLE

- Ron Heifetz – *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (1994)

    1) diagnose the situation in light of the values at stake, and unbundle the issues involved;

    2) keep the level of distress within tolerable limits for doing adaptive work ("keep the heat up without blowing up the vessel");

    3) identify the issues that engage the most attention and counteract avoidance mechanisms such as denial, scapegoating, pretending the problem is technical, or attacking individuals rather than issues;

    4) allow people to take responsibility for the problem, but at a rate they can handle; and

    5) protect those who raise hard questions, generate distress, and challenge people to rethink the issues at stake.

REFRAME THE PRINCIPLES…

1. Assess the question and get on the balcony to get the big picture

2. Ask hard questions and bring in perspectives to guide the evolution of defining the challenge

3. Broadly define the challenge and begin to include additional characteristics, meaningful and alternative perspectives, etc.

4. Put the work back on the people but regulate it consistent with capabilities

5. Invite and include _positive_ disruptors and provide some protection

TRANSLATED TO RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT

- Get the Big Picture

  - What are the funding priorities?

  - Where is the innovation?

- Ask the hard questions

  - What has already been done?

  - Who are the world's experts?

- Define the challenge/question to be addressed

  - This would likely be the research question(s)

- The researchers do the work

  - They work on the technical scope and research needs

- Provocateurs/challengers push investigators

  - Building out the team to not just include the usual suspects

WHY IS THIS LEADING AND NOT FACILITATING?

- People must work across boundaries

- Failure to resolve competing priorities

- Progress is not linear

- Recurring Problem(s)

- No known solution(s)

- Moving forward feels risky

- People would rather avoid the issue

- Reason and logic alone won't get you there

- Emotional Response(s)

- Casualties

Adapted from Heifetz, "The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World" (2009)

WHAT'S NEXT FOR LDRD?

- Do we need a definition of leadership? Goals? objectives?

- Is leadership about a position or action (with or without authority)

- Do we need a gender-based version of LDRD?

- Are *formal* leadership development activities needed? Are they essential for career development in RD? Other domains?

- Is leadership development an individual notion? Can it be accomplished WITH others?

- What if research development has already helped you to cultivate leadership qualities and *the challenge is* to communicate that to others?

- What else?

INTERESTED IN LDRD?

Contacts:

Alicia Knoedler

aknoedler@ou.edu

Rachel Dresbeck

dresbeck@ohsu.edu