

# *In Search of Creative Leadership*

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Commitment at Work**

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# Get Lucky

- To the extent that I expect a positive outcome, I increase the likelihood of a positive outcome
- To the extent that I expect a negative outcome, I increase the likelihood of a negative outcome
- There are no guarantees ...
- Is my glass half empty or half full? I can choose
- Luck is where preparation meets with opportunity

# Paradox



## Informality

Chaos? Order? Structure? Culture? Choice?

How to behave, how not to behave around here?

Horses for courses, or throw over the traces?

Push the envelope? Think outside the box?

Do what's expected? Ignore what they think?

Relax – go with the flow... What / whose flow?

Lead from the front, drive the change?

Live with uncertainty? Wait for inspiration?

***See 'The Paradox of the Liberating Structure' -  
William Torbert on learning...***

## Purpose

***Creativity and purpose – and risk/change***

**Stuck in the past? Or bursting with ideas?**

**Knowing what's wanted and not knowing how..**

**Plenty of know-how and no sense of goals..**

**Not knowing what's wanted or how to get it..**

**Constrained by rules, procedures, precedents..**

**Lacking courage, time, resources.. Or bold..**

**Afraid of rocking the boat, fearing failure..**

***Burning platform? See Sumantra Ghoshal***

## Perception

*There's what occurs, that's observable and verifiable (ish), and there's my interpretation. These coincide to a small extent: this territory can be called "the truth" to the extent that we agree upon it. Unfortunately I tend often to conflate the two domains of occurrence and interpretation into one and believe that this one larger zone is "The Truth". And so I am unaware of my prejudice. And I am not alone in doing this.*

***Beware assumption and inference. See Peter Senge.***

## In Search of Creative Leadership: Facilitating for Climates of Informality

# Listening

Listening is rare. There are talking, 'out to lunch', waiting to speak – none of these is listening.

***Be present. Say when I'm not. Listen actively:***

- ***Listen generously – give my full attention as a gift***
- ***Listen as if my life depends upon it***
- ***Rather than to agree or disagree, listen in order to report back accurately - and do so***
- ***Check for understanding to the point of embarrassment – rather than be very upset later, risk causing a little upset now.***

## Not knowing

One person's creative idea may be another's nightmare – or inspiration...

Encouraging creativity may challenge processes and could result in tampering or too many changes at once without the means to link cause and effect...(Deming)

Find ways to liberate creativity within boundaries - 3Ms Post-It Notes example

## In Search of Creative Leadership: Facilitating for Climates of Informality

# Motivation

**Motivation is idiosyncratic and unique. Motivational preferences differ markedly (see Elias Porter: Strengths Deployment Inventory) with implications for how to lead and reward individuals differently.**

**Unless I have a big enough reason, consciously or unconsciously, to take action I will not do so – the question is what’s in it for me?**

**I am likely to waste time and effort as a leader seeking to motivate others and to inculcate purpose and gain “buy in” – instead I will do better to enquire into what this person is like when well motivated and what conditions prevail such that they perform at their best with the recognition they want, then seek to create those conditions.**

**Preoccupation with my and others’ weaknesses and effort to remedy these can be wasted. Instead I will be more effective by concentrating on what I am good at and improving this whilst compensating for what I lack by making alliances with those with complementary skills.**

**People who play to their strengths are most often powerfully motivated.**

***See Marcus Buckingham.***

## Intuition

*Intuition may seem like instinct or innate wisdom – and is the expression of an accumulation of largely unconscious observations and assessments.*

*Individuals differ in their use of intuition – complete the Myers Briggs Type Inventory for an indication of your own profile, and to gain insights into how differences in personality types hinder and help our communications and relationships.*

*See Lynne C. Levesque’s “Breakthrough Creativity” for a guide to your creative talent whatever your profile.*

## Creativity

- + ***Creativity: expression of the new (original; new in this setting; offered in a fresh way)***
- + ***Innovation: successful application of the new; taking the new into the culture / market ahead of others***
- “There is a deep longing to create within the soul of humanity” – Robert Fritz, ‘Creating’**
- “If one wanted to select the best novelist, artist, entrepreneur, or even chief executive officer, one would most likely want someone who is creative” – ‘Handbook of Creativity’, edited by Robert J. Steinberg**

# Leadership

- *provides desire, inspiration, vision, direction, stimulus, encouragement, energy, example, support, challenge, expectations, standards*
- *evokes response, engagement, followership*
- *is distributed – occurs wherever there is motivation, expertise and initiative*
- *begins with me, and how I lead myself*
- *requires me to lead others according to individual differences and situational requirements (Blanchard)*

**whilst “..being true to yourself and not trying to force yourself to be anything that deep down you know you cannot be” Ian McDermott**

- *provides choices – Level 5 Leadership (Collins), Servant Leadership (Greenleaf), turning the organisation “upside down”...*

## Know the context, and influence the **Mood**

- **Be aware of context, *purpose, values and ethos***
  - ***Identify customers, stakeholders, drivers, and priorities***
  - ***Notice what is changing, internally and externally***
  - ***Recognise the culture and climate, politics and emotions***
  - ***Assess morale and personal motivation***
  - ***Focus on opportunities and levers for success***
  - **Be self-aware: *beliefs, thinking, feelings, behaviours, needs, learning preferences, capabilities, experience, leadership style***
  - ***Seek feedback, listen, check for understanding - Johari***
  - ***Shape and influence the **Mood** – be assertive, lead by example ‘I’m OK, You’re OK’, Thomas Harris***
  - ***Explore the iceberg, manage my own state - NLP***
- “Replace criticism with curiosity” (Anna Maravelas)***  
***Rather than ask what’s wrong and who’s to blame, ask what’s missing and what next?***

## Relationship and Connections

***For a creative exercise of discovery, ask myself and others:***

- What is my role? What are my responsibilities?
- What skills does my job require of me?
- What would happen if I did not do my job? What value do I add?
- Draw a map of my job and share what I discover with stakeholders
- Identify key relationships, insights and opportunities for positive action, and implement these actions

***For a creative exercise of possibilities,***

- Find someone I have been avoiding and have a conversation
- Ask several other people for their ideas of how I can do better
- Notice what best ideas I have and act on these
- Ask outsiders to question me about what I do and my reasons
- Make unlikely links and associations and notice opportunities

## Dilemmas, questions, making a difference

**What does the research tell me, about leadership, about creativity, about climate, about facilitation?**

**There are many studies, and even more opinions, so experiment.**

*Find out, and do/be what works for me...*

**Can the leopard change its spots? Probably not, so ask instead what is the leopard like when it is resting, hunting, climbing, eating, fighting, mating, sleeping? What am I like at my best?**

*Be present as a wonderfully resourceful leopard...*

**What do I do about the elephant under the table (the question no-one dare ask)? *Have fierce and crucial conversations... (Susan Scott)***

**How can I broaden and deepen my creative talents and creative leadership and facilitation?**

*Learn, get a coach, find a mentor; study and model the excellence of the successful. Observe and attend to others. Stay curious.*