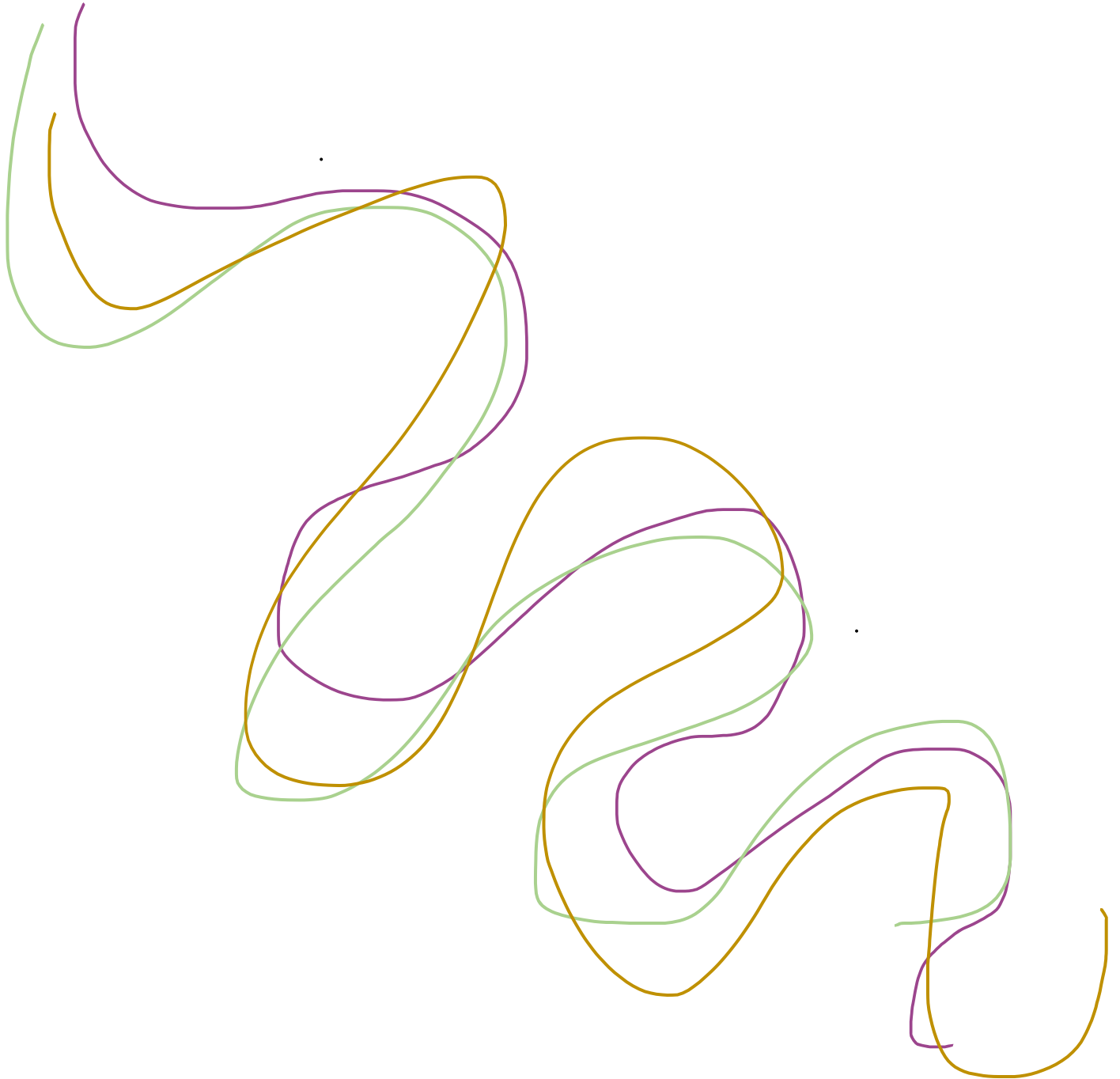


**WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE
QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION
CREATIVE LEADERSHIP
SPRING 2019
AUDREY HUNT**



WEEK 1

This was such an interesting collection of readings! Sharon Turnbull put forth an idea that I've been thinking about recently: that leaders are heroic and without human flaws, and when they make a mistake, they are seen as a failure. How can we ever expect to have a leader who never makes a mistake or has a bad habit? Of course, some flaws aren't fitting for a leader to have, but we are all human and should understand that we can respect someone and not agree with every decision they've ever made. When someone can admit that they are wrong, take the steps to educate themselves, and continue to grow instead of constantly repeating the same mistakes, they have the makings of a good leader.

Margaret Wheatley and Deborah Frieze's piece expands on the idea of a humble image of a leader, one we don't expect to be infallible and able to save us all. When reading this, I couldn't help but think of the issues with management at my current job. **Focusing too much on surface problems without taking the time to fix underlying issues isn't the way to success.** My workplace is a perfect example of employees with a "wait-and-see attitude, no longer interested in participating because past invitations weren't genuine or didn't engage them in meaningful work." It's a new business, so at the beginning we were told that management wanted us to help them make things work well, especially because we would be the ones working with customers and experiencing how the business works each day. But now, the few people who really cared at first have quit or been fired, and the rest of us took that as a signal to not waste energy trying to make things better. I have felt for a long time that this isn't how a job should be but haven't had the words to explain why. Striving to be a leader as host instead of hero, listening to people at lower levels, truly being open to change and new ideas, and working together instead of following a long chain of command are keys to strong leadership.

It was encouraging to read about A Rocha. I grew up going to a Baptist church and remember being confused by other church members' attitude toward the environment. If we believe that God created this planet and everything on it, and trusted humans to live on it, shouldn't we take care of the earth? My mom and I used to volunteer to serve coffee at the morning service. One morning, a man who worked at the church had brought his own travel mug, so my mom complimented him for saving trees. He replied by saying he just happened to have the cup, he figures God will destroy the earth when He's ready, so why should we bother trying to save it? That moment stuck with me, so it's always good to hear about religious groups that work to help the environment. The line that stood out to me from Bookless' piece was **"Leadership, I learned the hard way, is deeply flawed if results become more important than people and if leaders stop listening." This seems to happen in all areas of leadership: those in positions of power become more and more removed from the group's core principles and the people at the bottom who make things work. Groups and companies that are transparent and stay connected to all members are more sustainable and truly successful.**

Building off the idea of focusing on community rather than the individual, I really liked how Ian Skelly said, "we are Nature." Instead of seeing nature and humans as parts in a "mechanistic model," there is value in seeing how we are all connected, and nature is in us and we are in nature. Instead of fighting nature, we should learn from it and work with it. **Biomimicry can be**

applied to product design, architecture, service design, and even the way we interact with other humans.

A small but important insight I had was when reading Susan Clark's interview with Tim Smit. The part about how 87% of people visiting the Natural History Museum didn't know the what word "biodiversity" means really stood out to me. Regardless of how precise the statistic was, it still must be at least somewhat close to the true number. I should have realized that most people are unfamiliar with the word, considering how few people understand what I mean when I say I am studying sustainable design. **However, it makes an important point that language can be a barrier to people caring and taking action to help the environment. How can people understand the problem if they don't understand the words being used? Speaking in a way that sounds educated and intelligent is the go-to for most experts but learning to cater to your audience and simplify your speech is important. We talk about how children and young adults are the future, but how can we teach them if we use words that aren't in their vocabulary or even that of some of their parents? Learning how to make your message clear and direct relies on careful word choice.**

I've learned so much from these readings, it makes me excited about how much the rest of the course will cover!

WEEK 2

The new concept of leadership is centered around authenticity, open-mindedness, humility, and the ability to be flexible but staying true to core values and goals. **Modern leaders are expected to never stop learning, listening, and asking questions- just because they've made it to the top doesn't mean their need for growth has ended.** This goes against the traditional view of a boss: rigid, aloof, unapproachable, focused on increasing profits and growing the business above all else.

The old idea of a leader isn't without some value: being stoic when employees are anxious or fearful of what the future holds, being able to solve problems without showing signs of stress or indecision, and having self-confidence that doesn't waver in the face of criticism are traits that can be useful. However, being honest and open with employees and other shareholders is a healthier way to gain respect. Being the feared and distant leader becomes lonely, and without people who are comfortable telling you when you're wrong, things can take a turn for the worse. Being approachable and having an open dialogue with coworkers and peers can give insight into decision making and keep the leader from making bad decisions.

When reading the CEO Report, it was surprising to me that these were new traits CEOs were learning. I assumed that communicating, being transparent, and being authentic and approachable were basic characteristics of any successful leader. I could see these being forgotten along the way, once someone became the CEO, but they seem like the qualities one would want in their leader. Their anxiety over increased transparency made me think of older comedians who say things like "You can't say anything these days without offending someone!" The jokes they've made have always been offensive (especially to the group the joke is about), but now, because of the internet, audiences can be more vocal about their opinions and directly call out the comedian on social media. It's an exaggerated comparison, but what it boils down to is this: **if you're doing the right thing, you shouldn't worry about people finding out. Integrity matters, even if the public doesn't know what you do behind closed doors.** If a someone makes a mistake or learns later on that they were wrong in the past, the right thing to do is to admit it, apologize, and learn from their mistake. Of course, because the public has such a wide range of perspectives and opinions, it is impossible to make a move that won't be criticized by at least one person. The gap between the inner workings of an organization and the public has almost disappeared with the popularization of social media and the 24-hour news cycle. But a contemporary leader has to adapt and find a balance between knowing what to sharing with the public and what to keep to themselves.

Contemporary leaders embrace all areas of diversity as opportunities for their organization: diverse opinions, cultures, and backgrounds. While most of us know it is valuable to include people regardless of race, gender, background, or sexuality, statistics have proven that diversity helps business and innovation. **Someone who can guide work with people with different opinions (or guide a team of people who disagree) to reach a shared goal is a strong contemporary leader.**

One of the most important qualities of contemporary leadership is the ability to actively listen. I was struck by **Nelson Mandela's idea of leading from the back and hearing how he sometimes went through entire meetings barely speaking at all.** This is a quality that totally goes against the idea of a heroic leader. Instead of lecturing followers and taking charge at every chance, "leading from the back" is subtler and **puts trust in followers to do the right thing, nudging them in the right direction without being aggressive.**

In this same vein, the concept of leader as servant has the person in charge take a backseat and trust that they have provided followers with the tools to become leaders and spread their mission. While this is a more extreme version, leadership has been shifting to a more down-to-earth role. The reasons why leaders are held to a different standards and required to be more transparent aren't far from why leaders need a global mindset. Technology has opened leaders to feedback from the public, and it has also connected organizations across the world. **Because we are more connected, decisions made in one industry or corporation can affect other industries or economies internationally. Leaders need to be able to predict the reach of their decisions, from the smallest sub-section of their system to the broader super-**

system. Using systems thinking and learning about other cultures and what they value can help people become better leaders and make better decisions.

WEEK 3

Why aren't leaders and organizations learning from nature?

The traditional model of leadership has one person at the top, and the main goal of the organization is growth, expansion, and forward movement at any cost. As we learned from last week's readings, **change is difficult and essentially painful once habits have set in.** This traditional leadership model has been in place for centuries (at least in Western society), so it's a deeply ingrained societal habit. The people at the top, who feel that they have reached peak success, benefit from this model, which makes them not want to change. Some, like Ray Anderson, are more flexible and realize that there are better, more sustainable models of leadership. However, until current leaders realize that change is worthwhile and beneficial, it is up to those of us at lower levels to take initiative.

This matters for a few reasons. As mentioned above, the traditional style of leadership mostly benefits those at the top, while relying on everyone else to do most of the work. There is a divide between leadership and employees, which can breed resentment and discourage open communication. **One person can never be as successful as a group with different perspectives, knowledge, and experiences. When decision-making is left to one person who is closed off from the rest, their choices aren't as well-informed as those made by a balanced group.**

What could Creative Leaders do to help organizations integrate more of the lessons from nature into their leadership practices?

Tomorrow's Natural Business has a good starting point: businesses need to be asking *how* to be more sustainable, rather than *why*. Once we get there, it's easier to get change started. Dropping the idea that only a select few have the capabilities to be leaders is another beginning step in the shift toward natural leadership.

One concept that organizations can take from nature is the idea of being both system-focused and self-focused. Following the path of transformational leadership, where **people are encouraged to use their own insights and skills to grow and benefit the organization, a group can become better as a whole while providing room for its members to reach their full potential.** People are more likely to put forth their best effort if it benefits them directly, rather than putting out energy that only benefits the group. **When members of an organization feel that they are growing as individuals while doing their best work for the group, they are motivated to continue growing and supporting the system as whole.** In a conventional leadership model it's common for the boss and other top leadership to be affected by the company's performance, with

little to no consequence for the lower level employees. For a real-life example where this tactic could be useful:

At my own workplace, ticket sales to the exhibit have no effect on my own income, so long as they are high enough to keep the place open. My fellow experience specialists and I are generally apathetic about how successful the business is, because whether ticket sales are high or low, we are treated the same. If anything, high-volume days are more stressful and draining, while days with low ticket sales are more enjoyable. If I do a great job at work one day, I still haven't grown as an individual or used any high-level skills. If the job used some of my skills, valued my individuality, or if the business's success was at all related to my own professional success, I might feel more appreciated and put forth more effort.

A more radical idea to integrate is that of a heterarchy. Rotating leadership gives each member a chance to be heard and a chance to rest. **Each member of the group has a higher level of accountability if they are expected to be the leader at some point.** Instead of having a group of mindless followers to carry out orders and be used for whatever skills they have, a heterarchy depends on group members to have their own thoughts and ideas that help the system. **Everyone does their part, and everyone's part is valuable.**

Both of these ideas fit the overall theme of collaboration instead of competition. Valuing each member of the organization and understanding that a group can always accomplish more than an individual is a lesson we can learn from nature. In the videos we saw that even when fighting or protecting themselves from a bigger, stronger animal, the smaller animals can win if they band together. Keeping a balance with nature and making sure everyone is taken care of- like the penguins rotating to keep each other equally warm- is a lesson in leadership that organizations should integrate into their practice.

WEEK 4

Given what you've learned about Inclusive Leadership, why is empathy a key leadership competency?

Inclusive leadership and inclusive diversity, which go beyond traditional ideas of diversity in the workplace, are based around people having empathy. **One of the key parts of inclusive leadership is cultural intelligence, which is impossible to fully achieve without having empathy.** To succeed in a global marketplace, we have to learn how to understand different cultural perspectives because "not everyone sees the

world through the same cultural frame". This ranges from people from your same area, but from different backgrounds, to people from all over the world.

To understand consumers and what they want, what will move them to buy your product or follow your teaching, empathy is also important. Diversity of customers is easier to achieve now than it ever has been, and having the ability to find out what they value and what makes them feel a connection is important for leaders and their teams.

To successfully collaborate with a diverse team and be able to innovate freely, we must also have empathy. Dismissing someone's idea because you don't know where they're coming from or aren't used to hearing their type of perspective is a bad habit of old-fashioned leadership. **Inclusive leaders take the time to understand their team members and encourage active listening and sharing within their followers.** Having a team of people from different cultural backgrounds, genders, ages, and education levels will make for stronger decision making and give a group the ability to see all sides of an issue. In addition, the **individual members grow and learn from one another.**

Toni Carter's message of inclusive diversity was a point of view I hadn't heard before. Most of the time, leaders of marginalized groups want nothing to do with the people in positions of power. **This doesn't help the way most members of the majority react when an underrepresented group fights for representation: they feel like they are being pushed out, having their rights and power taken, and they feel like the new people don't deserve those to have those same rights and power because there isn't enough to share.** However, like Carter said, **for sustainable change, we must have empathy and work with people from all sides. If an underrepresented group pushes to have the same role traditionally held by straight white men, they aren't making progress, they're still following the damaged structure set up by straight white men in the past.** People in power are the ones who have the ability to get others on board with change and give the more diverse leaders a platform to speak and share their mission. Having empathy and listening to each other's ideas, worries, and hopes is the best way to work together to build a more inclusively diverse future.

Furthermore, in light of what you've learned about the Fourth Industrial Revolution (aka Industry 4.0), why is empathy becoming even more important to leadership?

In a nutshell, **technology can't learn to express true empathy: only humans can.**

As technology becomes more advanced and is able to perform more jobs that used to be done by humans, people have begun to think that tech can be a replacement for human interaction. However, replacing real human interaction just makes us even more distant and removed from real, honest emotion; leading to more loneliness, depression, and loss of social skills.

Leaders in technology need empathy to keep their innovations human-centered and empowering. Loss of empathy can cause innovators to create technology to replace humans in **areas where robots can never replace humans: in emotion, creativity, and real listening, processing, and understanding what someone is saying.**

Empathy is what keeps us from heading toward a dystopian sci-fi future where people

don't know how to (or want to) interact with each other, robots are our closest companions, and we don't know how to do anything without the help of technology.

Empathy is what keeps humans relevant, in a way. I used to work at a funeral home and we used to joke that it's one of the few jobs where you can never be replaced by a robot. A robot might be able to complete the tasks, but they can't be comforting, show sympathy, or understand when to be quiet and wait while someone takes a few final moments with their loved one who has passed. In keeping with this type of thought- that emotional intelligence is important to most jobs and *all* relationships, we can keep humanity from forgetting the importance of empathy. We must remember that all humans share the same basic needs, and in the end, we are all connected.

WEEK 5

The first step in collaborating with people is finding people with whom to collaborate. This is something I struggle with- being outgoing enough to reach out to others and ask them to work on a project has never been a strength of mine. I was inspired by Ken Blanchard's talk and how he was able to be open to ask people to collaborate with him. I've tried working with people in the past and it usually doesn't work out, either because I don't want to feel like I'm pushing someone into helping with a personal project of mine, or because our goals and values don't align. Many times, I've tried working with people who go straight to form, instead of starting with essence. I never had the words for it, but Blanchard's description really stood out to me. I know so many creative, talented people who I can imagine making great work with, but I can't seem to follow through. We've learned that **the most innovative results happen when people collaborate across disciplines and departments**, so it would be good to be better at reaching out to these people who have so much to offer.

I also have a tendency to either fall back in a group and let more outspoken people take the lead, or take on all the work myself, thinking "if I don't do it, who will?" This ends up following the path of domination or compromise that was described in *Collective Genius*. Being able to speak up when I have a good idea or can add to someone else's idea or, on the flip side, being able to trust that my teammates are capable and dependable are skills I want to develop. I tend to doubt that people will understand or support my mission, values, goal- whatever it is that requires collaboration.

In order to be a better collaborative leader, I need to have more confidence in myself and in the people I work with. It takes me a while to get to know people and fully trust

them, so being more open would help in future collaborations. Like Margaret Heffernan said, **teams produce better results when they know each other well.** Teams that have spent a lot of time together are more comfortable with each other and able to be more open with sharing their ideas. I've never been great at sticking with one group or including myself in a "collective identity," as discussed in *Collective Genius*. This is important to drive innovation and support collaboration: **without a collective identity or shared purpose and goals, there's not much reason to continue working together and trying hard to be as innovative as possible.**

It's also important to work on finding the balance between patience (giving room for exploration and experimentation) and a sense of urgency and structure. I tend to get lost when there's too much room for exploration and have a hard time staying focused on one end goal. However, when there's too much focus on the end goal, I freeze up and have trouble letting loose and letting ideas flow. It's an important balance to find not only for oneself, but as a leader guiding a team on a project.

WEEK 6

Given what you've learned this week, describe:

- A time when you were a Follower (according to Rethinking Followership article).

I've been a few of the types of followers. At my current job, I'd say I'm the alienated. Managers are always changing the way we do things and adding new rules to follow, but because they've never spent much time on the floor doing our job, they don't fully understand what does and doesn't work. They say they want our feedback, but most of us have given up on trying to have an input because we've seen that it doesn't usually work, and the managers see you as difficult or aggressive and treat you differently if you speak up. I choose to follow the rules that I think matter, and do my job well, but don't follow the more micro-managed type of rules that have been added. I think the managers have picked up on this because they've started to ignore me and stopped asking for my opinion on things, knowing it doesn't line up with their established views. Fortunately, I just got a new job, so hopefully I will be pulled out of this type of followership and back to the better, more positive role I've had in the past.

At my last job I was a star follower. I was able to see what needed to be done and do it without being asked, I found better ways to do tasks that my boss had trouble with, and I did every task to the best of my ability. I think this shows how leadership styles affect the way followers behave. **A supportive, hardworking leader who trusts their**

subordinates and genuinely asks for their feedback will be more likely to have star followers.

- A situation in which you lived Participative Leadership in action (done well or gone wrong!) - either as the leader of part of a team.

As mentioned above, my previous manager was open to feedback and he worked harder than anyone else. The business was a screen printing shop with just a few employees, and the manager ended up taking on more work than other leaders I've had. He would ask me to try out a new machine or process and ask how it went and how I think we could improve the process. It made me feel valued and made me want to pay more attention to the work I was doing. I respect a leader who is willing to take on the difficult tasks that others don't want to do, but isn't just doing it because their subordinates don't listen to them. The only reason I left that job was because I wanted to move to a different city, but the leadership style at the shop is something I really miss. It was the type of participative leadership done right as described in the video we watched: creativity was encouraged and rewarded, and everyone's opinion was valued. I was the lowest-level employee there, and even though I was doing messy, manual labor types of tasks, I felt just as important and everyone else.

- A time when you lived Distributive Leadership (again, done well or gone wrong!) - either as the leader of part of a team.

My current workplace utilizes Distributive leadership, and it's not working very well. There are many different managers in charge of specific areas, with two general managers at the head of the management team. The CEO and members of the creative team (who designed and created the business) live across the country and we only hear their input when we've done something wrong or they want to tighten up our presentation. The managers who are at the Color Factory (my workplace) on a regular basis don't always communicate well, which leads to confusion and frustration. They don't work interdependently, like Alma Harris says they should, so having distributed leadership isn't beneficial for the group. Some managers in charge of specific tasks need more help that they aren't being given, and others are just given busywork instead of being encouraged to help out in those areas that are lacking. I think that if there was more communication between management and certain leaders were given more help (for instance, having two scheduling managers because the one person in charge of the schedule is always overwhelmed and stressed and is unable to respond to all the emails she receives), distributive leadership could work well for the company, because around 80 people work there and that can't be handled by just one leader.

WEEK 7

Before starting this class, I thought that Creative Leadership meant leadership for artists and designers, or how to lead artists and designers. Now I realize it's about creative ways to lead.

A common theme seems to run through all the different frameworks we've learned: **collaboration and sharing ideas, working with a diverse group of people, breaking down traditional hierarchy, and keeping an open mind are included in the different types of creative leadership.**

Concepts that especially stood out to me are inclusive diversity and integrated thinking. **We all know that diversity is important and valuable, but it can be hard to include people from the majority group (who historically tend to be the oppressors) in the minority's fight for equality.** I can't speak for racial minorities, but as women, we don't always want to ask men to help us. However, this is what makes men feel threatened and fight back, making our mission more difficult. Toni Carter is right in saying that we have to include everyone, even those who seem like the enemy, if we want to achieve sustainable equality and diversity that is truly beneficial to all.

Integrated thinking was inspiring because it seems like such a simple idea, but it's not used often enough. **We settle for either/or and wring our hands over picking the right option instead of working harder to find a solution that utilizes the best aspects of each option.** Before we learned about integrated thinking, I took note of the quote in the video where Nelson Mandela and Barack Obama were being discussed. Richard Stengel said that when he asked Mandela what his motivation was for making a specific decision, **positioning the question as an either/or, Mandela said, "Why not both?" He believed that a person could do something for more than one reason, or as a solution to more than one problem.** Roger Martin built off of that simple idea to find ways to use the best of multiple options instead of settling on a compromise or miss out on a potential result. This concept is one of the things about creative leadership that was totally new to me, but seems like something we've all known all along- that **there has to be a more innovative way to make decisions than choosing one way over the other or making each option a little less innovative by compromising.**

This week, it's been interesting to learn how systems thinking applies to creative leadership. I took the systems thinking course last semester but hadn't thought of using it from a specific leadership perspective, possibly because I haven't really been in a professional or organizational leadership position yet. When making decisions, it's important to understand how the whole system is affected. Leaders must be able to map out the system they are working within and understand how their smaller system fits into a larger system. Like Geoff Mulgan said in *Joined-Up Innovation*, **if you want to make a change in a system, first you have to understand that system.** I'm glad to be able to add what I learned in systems thinking to what I'm learning in this class.

I originally had a pretty vague idea of what creative leadership is, mainly because I've never learned much about traditional leadership. The only knowledge I have is from

experience, so it's nice to now have words to put to the qualities I value or dislike in a leader. It's encouraging to learn how the path to achieving a goal can change along the way. A phrase that has stuck with me since the first weeks was how a **leader should be rigid in their goal, but flexible in the method**. I think this can apply to personal goals outside of leadership. **It's easy to get discouraged and give up on plans when something goes wrong in the process that was planned out. A creative leader (even if they're just leading themselves) is able to bounce back and adapt to changing conditions**. It's rare that a plan is carried out without any problems, so being flexible and able to continue through unexpected issues is the only way to achieve a goal.

I'm excited to learn more about creative leadership. My horizons have already been broadened and having new language to describe ways to be a better leader has already helped me in my personal life. I think this class might have helped me get my new job- in the interview, they asked a lot of questions about teamwork and what makes a good or bad leader, and I was able to give some great answers!

WEEK 8

This week's readings and videos were a nice continuation of last week's material. It's encouraging to hear so many people from different areas of business talk about the importance of compassion and awareness in leadership. However, I feel like so many people are saying the same thing, but little is being done on a larger scale to implement their ideas.

John Renesch had a lot of great things to say, but when people were asking questions at the end of his interview, he didn't give the concrete advice or examples they were asking for. He had a lot of nice talk and flowery language, but without giving specific steps to transforming a business, it's not as effective. When so many people are saying the same thing without it having the widespread, lasting effect they intend (I assume that's their intention), it makes me wonder what's going wrong. Why aren't all leaders adopting a more conscious, compassionate style of leading? And **how do we convince followers to be their best and not take advantage of a more kind, understanding leader?**

Mindfulness and consciousness are words that have become so popular and trendy that they've almost lost their meaning. In my experience, the people who speak the most about being mindful are already in a place of privilege to take the time to develop those skills and don't have real hardships that keep them from living in a mindful way. From

what we've read, it does seem like a useful concept, but it's become such a trendy subject that to me, it's lost some of its meaning.

On a more positive note, I found the 5 Intelligences of Leadership to be interesting and insightful. It seems like a lot for one person to embody, but these qualities should be taught in grade school and onward. If we all started learning at a young age how to embody these traits and how to continually develop these intelligences, the world could be a better place. It helps to be aware of the shadow side of each intelligence- that's something that's been missing from other lists of characteristics of creative leaders. Being aware of the signs that a trait is being expressed in a negative way can help us catch ourselves before we let it go too far. While reading about each intelligence, I recognized both wisdom and shadow traits in leaders I've worked with and in myself.

Bob Chapman's talk was also inspiring. It's another idea that seems like common sense, but isn't put into practice often enough. I like how he explained his moment of realization that he could care for and support each employee like they were his own child- that seems like it could become complicated and turn into coddling, but the way he described it sounded like a healthy point of view for leadership to take. Caring about the quality of employees' personal relationships and individual growth is so valuable. Too often, we are treated as cogs in a machine: replaceable and only noticed when we do something wrong. The idea of Truly Human Leadership falls in line with what we've learned about the value of a diverse team. **By helping people grow to reach their full potential, you receive the benefits of encouraging the development of different skills and talents, instead of trying to fit people into a role that you've designed.** Letting people find ways to improve their job and their impact benefits management by relieving some of their workload, and it benefits employees by making them feel engaged and valued and able to make positive changes in their workplace.

A point that stood out to me was in the Conscious Capitalism piece. What they said about **happiness- that it's a by-product of other things (service to others, friendship, generosity, love, growing, living a life of purpose) and not a goal in itself.** That's a perspective that makes so much sense, but is rarely heard. Too often we just seek happiness and don't focus on the sustainable parts of life that create happiness. It's a complicated journey, but happiness shouldn't be something we only access on the weekend or when we're away from work. It can be integrated into our lives if we find meaning in our work and appreciate and work on our relationships, and are grateful for what we have instead of only seeing what we don't have. Finding the Space to Lead applies here- **taking the time to not be distracted and to be truly present can help us be happy in a single moment.** Instead of thinking of all the other parts of our lives that aren't how we want them to be, we should slow down and take the time to appreciate something good.

WEEK 9

Choose 1-2 sentences from each video and explain why they caught your attention.

Caroline McHugh, in reference to the thread linking successful people: **They figure out their unique gift that the universe gave them and put it at the service of their goals. This doesn't dictate your job, just how you do it.**

-I think that too often, **we think that certain gifts mean that we have to take certain jobs. While this does have some truth, we can all use our unique gifts and apply them to whatever we are passionate about.** We get too caught up in being defined by our job, instead of having a strong sense of self that isn't reliant on a job title. The most successful people (truly successful, not just based on money or fame) aren't trying to imitate another successful person, they're just being the best version of themselves.

I also really like how McHugh said **"If you could be the woman of your dreams, who would you be?"** That type of thinking opens up so many possibilities, instead of just being the best version of what you think you can be, held in by your own self-doubts and society's archetypes.

Quotes used by Andrea Pennington: "Become such as you are, having learned what that is." -Pindar; "If you're always trying to be normal, you'll never know how amazing you can be."-Maya Angelou

-Both of these ideas lean on self-reflection and following your true self and inner guide. I like the Maya Angelou quote because it's a good reminder that personal growth and success doesn't always follow a conventional path. I sometimes see other people my age who look more successful- they're married, own a house, have a solid career and their future is pretty stable- and feel like I've taken the wrong path because I'm not at that level. But then I reflect on the choices I've made and realize that I'm happy with where I am, and this is my own path to success, even though it might not look that way to other people.

Bethany Butzer: **"Stop trying so hard at things that don't matter to you, and start trying at things that do."**

-This one is important because we often believe that working hard means you're doing the right thing, just because you're busy and working. Butzer continues the thread that goes through all the videos when she talks about how we have to get in touch with our inner self to make authentic life decisions. If we're just working because that's what we think we're supposed to do, instead of working on something that really matters to us, we won't feel true, authentic success. I do think that her ideology is best applied to overachievers like herself- if you tell a lazy person to work in a way that feels right, or to take a break when challenges arise, they might never get anything done. I think that downstream effort and seeking authentic success can be applied outside of career

goals, so when someone is stuck in a lower level job that they aren't passionate about, they can have a fulfilling life outside of work. I struggled after college to find a career path that I was qualified for and was interesting to me, and it took four years to realize sustainable design was something I wanted to pursue. I could relate to her talk, because grad school is a lot of work and can be difficult, but it feels good to be putting in all this effort when it's something I care about.

Does the Covey chapter strike you as timeless or old-fashioned? Substantiate your opinion.

I think that the only part of the chapter that was old-fashioned were some of the specific examples he gave, like how his example of a woman's personal mission statement was about balancing family and work and focused on more practical things like doing what's best for her kids and seeking financial independence over time, while his friend Rolfe's statement felt more empowered and lighthearted. Maybe I'm reading too much into it, but I'm tired of the narrative that women have to find the perfect balance between home and work.

However, the chapter's content was enlightening. When I first read it, I felt like I've been doing a good job of living a principle-centered life. But later, upon more reflection, I realize that I sometimes am swayed to center my family or friends, and should keep that in mind when making decisions. While I like the idea of having a personal mission statement, I think that can become restricting if it's not regularly reflected upon and updated as we learn and grow. I'm not sure how I feel about using your own funeral as a way to find out what's important- it just reminds me of a quote by the art collector Charles Saatchi when asked what he wanted on his epitaph and how he thinks of his legacy: "Just how dull do you think I am? What kind of tw** is interested in epitaphs or legacies?"

His response is a little dramatic, but thinking about how people will remember me doesn't inspire me to make changes. The activity on the last page felt strange to me- I'd rather do the right thing that has a positive effect on those around me just because it's the right thing and has a positive impact, not because it will add to a list of accomplishments. I think that Covey has the right idea about how we should be aware of our actions, what drives them, and their impact. It's also important to practice self-reflection and have goals that are based on our values and passions. Overall, I really liked the reading, but found its framing a little ineffective for my personal perspective.

WEEK 10

One of the strengths that people brought up was my willingness to help others. This has been a driving force in my life and has affected many of the choices I've made about my education and career goals. I'll do anything to help the people I care for, and I feel more driven to complete any task if I know it helps someone else.

My friend Cy dropped out of college after her freshman year, and recently decided to apply to school again. She has trouble with self-discipline and staying focused, so the application process was difficult for her. She had to write an essay about why she was interested in this specific program at The New School. I'm pretty good with grammar and sentence structure, and have more experience writing essays and cover letters (she's only 21), so I offered to help. I kept checking in with her as the deadline approached. She wasn't making much progress, and didn't really get going until the day the application was due. We were on a shared Google doc, so I was able to give her feedback from afar. I stayed up late helping her revise and edit her essay until it was good enough to submit. In a way, I was able to help her because I recognized my own value, as Peter Drucker described in *Managing Oneself*. I have come to understand what I have to contribute, some of my strengths that balanced my friend's weaknesses, and therefore was able to lead her through her essay-writing process.

I was more dedicated to her staying on task and writing a great essay than I am to my own work. I can make a schedule for someone and help them stay focused and push them to do work that's better than they thought they were capable of accomplishing. However, I can't do it for myself. It's like the motivation to help others is so strong that when I need to do something for myself, it doesn't seem as important. It's not that I don't value myself or think I'm important, I just don't try as hard when I don't see an impact beyond myself. Lars Sudmann's talk resonated with me because it made me realize how this trait is holding me back. **I'm not good at leading myself and really following through. I can help other people realize their potential and follow through with their goals, but I lack the ability to discipline and regulate my own actions.** Even if I have a goal that does help other people, I have trouble getting people to collaborate with me because I don't like to ask for help, I'd rather be the one who is offering to help. When I'm the one who has a great idea, I need to be able to lead myself and be strong enough to ask for help and assume that because it's such a great idea, others will want to help out. I should be able to accomplish more things for myself, as opposed to needing others as a motivation. I'd rather disappoint myself than someone else, but that's not the most productive or fulfilling way to live.

WEEK 11

It's been interesting this week to learn about how theories of individual leadership compare to studies of organizational culture. **The traits of a good leader line up with traits of a strong, positive culture: values-based, interdependent, and being passionate about and believing in what they are doing.**

I like how Edgar Schein broke down the levels of organizational culture. It seems like we often focus on the artifacts when studying a culture or trying to improve the culture at in our group or workplace. However, it's the underlying assumptions that guide and determine what those artifacts look like. Simon Sinek said that a company should **start with "why" and build from there. The "why," is what keeps people going- the goals, beliefs, philosophies, and greater purpose beyond day-to-day duties.**

This sentiment was repeated throughout this week's material. Starting with a set of values that are uniquely meaningful and different from other groups is what gives an organization a deeper purpose. When there's a purpose beyond profits or fame or any other materialistic or unoriginal goal, an organization is more sustainable and people are more likely to be engaged and fulfilled.

My last workplace had a lot of problems. It was poorly managed by people with little to no leadership experience. Until this week, I couldn't quite identify what was wrong, other than the types of managers and leadership. I knew the place didn't line up with my own morals or values and even if the management was great, it wasn't a company I cared to stay with. Now I can put my finger on the deeper problem- it has no "why," no set of defined values. The most we ever heard was "We make people happy!" This was true for some guests, but many people were just visiting to take pictures for Instagram. Jay Wilkinson was correct in saying that defining the guiding principles is the way to build a company's culture. Of the culture styles listed in *The Leader's Guide to Corporate Culture*, they seemed to be aiming for was a combination of enjoyment and organization, and only achieving the disadvantages of both.

My new job has a set of guiding principles: to be generous, just, trustworthy, inventive, and interdependent. These are clearly expressed in the programming and policies of the company. It's a new arts and culture center that has been in the works for over ten years, and just opened last week. While it's still working out issues, these principles are keeping things on track and I can see how they are aspirational- the goal that our CEO has for this new endeavor.

Surprisingly, what has really been on my mind this week is what Daniel Coyle said about lunch time at work. I have always liked having my lunch break by myself. It's a nice quiet moment to myself in the middle of the day. However, at my last job, I did notice that when I ate at the break room table with coworkers, it often led to deeper connections and helped build friendships. It's a challenge for me to give up that chance for solitude and use it to socialize with coworkers, but I do understand that it's important. When things really started going south at my last job, it was shortly after the managers had stopped eating with us at the break table and had started taking their breaks in their office. It's so important for leaders to socialize with their followers, to build relationships

and break down the us-vs-them mentality that can emerge between the levels. I really agree with what Coyle said about the need for vulnerability to create a feeling of safety. It seems backward, but **when a manager has opened up and shown their vulnerable side, that's when a more open, supportive workplace starts to exist.** Leaders have to open that door by leading by example- lower level members will feel safe expressing their doubts or weaknesses only when their leaders do so.

WEEK 12

I nominate Mari Copeny, also known as Little Miss Flint.



Mari Copeny has been working to end the water crisis in Flint, Michigan. In March of 2016, at the age of 8, she wrote a letter to President Obama asking him to help. Although people told her he would be too busy, she did what she could, just like the hummingbird dropping water on the forest fire. Obama responded and came to meet with her, authorizing \$100 million to be used to repair the water system.

Since then, her activism has grown. She's organized free film screenings for kids, the distribution of 15,000 fully stocked backpacks for school children, an anti-bullying campaign, and bike giveaways. She also has organized the distribution of bottled water, going so far as to deliver water to those who lack transportation. Fueled by her natural altruism, she's enhanced cooperation in her community. Copeny's work has inspired many others, including adults and kids, to get involved in the fight for clean water. Her older sister believes Flint will be stronger after the crisis because they all went through it together.

In his speech "You are Brilliant, and the Earth is Hiring," Paul Hawken told students to **not get discouraged by what seems impossible**. Little Miss Flint seems like she has no doubt that her goals will be achieved. Despite all the work she's done, her family still has to use bottled water. However, **Copeny's boundless optimism and determination have kept her activism going with no signs of stopping**. She's organized fundraisers for fixing the water and raised awareness of the crisis.

She has her eyes set on the future. Copeny sees her current work as preparation for her goal of running for president in the future. She says, "Obama was once a Black kid with a dream, and he was able to achieve it, so I can, too. When I'm president, I'll make sure I use my voice to speak for the people—especially kids." She's not doing this work for the fame, she truly wants to help people. She's an inspiration for young people who feel powerless. She didn't let her age affect her actions- if anything, she used it to her advantage. She knows the power that a child's voice can have in times of crisis- people are always more sympathetic to a child than an adult. However, she's felt how adults so often dismiss kid's feelings and goals. Hearing "you're just a kid" no longer holds her back.

Mari Copeny is the living embodiment of Anand Giridharadas' description of the way to change the world. She's not a wealthy, powerful business owner. She's just a girl with determination who has worked hard to gain support. Her early actions have enhanced the efforts to fight for clean water and raised awareness across the country. She is confident, smart, unstoppable, and creative. Her advice for young activists? Never let adults dull your sparkle- don't let your age hold you back, start small and work up to big problems and making a larger impact, use the power of social media for good, have fun along the way, and never give up. With that attitude, I think she's going to continue making a difference and inspiring the world. I look forward to watching her grow and hope to see her as president one day.

WEEK 13

I liked the lighter tone of Dave Morris and Paul Osincup's talks. Not taking yourself too seriously is a great way to be more approachable and it makes it easier to admit when you're wrong. If a leader projects an image of perfection and seriousness, when they make a mistake, it can be hard to admit or it can damage their credibility. This links to the article "Leading With Integrity." When a leader does something wrong, they must work to regain their followers' trust. If their initial persona is one who never makes a mistake, who is better than everyone, who has figured it all out, it can be harder to regain that trust. But if they are always open and humble, and make it known that they don't have all the answers (but are willing to learn and try to find them), it is easier to mess up and be quickly forgiven without a loss of trust.

I've been skeptical of Simon Sinek ever since hearing his talk about [millennials. \(Links to an external site.\)](#) I recently read more about him, and learned that part of why he's been so successful is the way he chooses his words. He never presents an idea as an opinion, and drops scientific words to make his point sound more believable, even if the science isn't totally relevant. He got his start in marketing, which is part of why he's so good at convincing people to agree with his ideas. Even when I watched his talk about millennials, I fully agreed with him until a little while after watching it, when I had started thinking for myself again and realized I didn't agree with everything he said. There's something valuable in speaking with such confidence and not leaving room for doubt. Women especially are more prone to softening their words with "maybe," "I think," or "I feel" type of phrases. When we're confident that we know what we're talking about, we should speak more like Sinek- leave no room for doubt or for people to disagree. That said, his driving point of "start with why" that we've learned about this week and in weeks past is a strong point that sets organizations apart. Those that know their "why" are more sustainable and adaptable and more likely to gain a strong following.

I really like how Allan Pease spoke about body language. Paul Osincup would probably appreciate how he made his point with humor, instead of making it a boring lecture. I work at an arts and culture center and my role sometimes consists of a lot of wayfinding. We've been told to never point with one finger, but to use an open hand or at least two fingers with directing someone. Like Pease said, pointing with one finger feels like a directive, an order. It seems condescending, while an open palm is more welcoming.

John Mattone's "Tips for Passionate Leadership" are what led me to the article I'm adding to the toolbox. I've always been a fan of the Victorian art critic John Ruskin. In line with some of the material we've covered this semester, he once said, "Skill is the unified force of experience, intellect, and passion in their operation." I first learned about him when I read his book *On Art and Life*, in which he was influenced by the growing industrial revolution and its effects on arts and crafts. A key concept from this book can be summarized in this quote:

"You must either make a tool of the creature, or a man of him. You cannot make both. Men were not intended to work with the accuracy of tools, to be precise and

perfect in all their actions. If you will have that precision out of them, and make their fingers measure degrees like cog-wheels, and their arms strike curves like compasses, you must unhumanize them.... Let him but begin to imagine, to think, to try to do anything worth doing; and the engine-turned precision is lost at once. Out come all his roughness, all his dulness, all his incapability; shame upon shame, failure upon failure, pause after pause: but out comes the whole majesty of him also...."

[This article \(Links to an external site.\)Links to an external site.](#) tells a story of when the roads leading to Oxford University needed ditches dug to help with draining. No one was taking care of it, so Ruskin, who was the professor of fine art, went out with his class and they dug the ditches themselves. How many leaders of today would go out and fix a problem like this?

The article also goes into detail about how Ruskin believed that the person who is more of a thinker should do physical work, and the worker should take time to think.

He was a prime example of many of the qualities we've learned about in this course. He leaned into his uniqueness, spoke out about what he believed was right, and wanted people of all class levels to be able to experience luxury and art. He saw equal value in the fine artist and the lowly laborer. Ruskin sought to educate people on the value of humility, kindness, imagination, and finding a balance between hard work and creativity.

So much of what he wrote and said are still relevant today, and especially relevant to creative leadership. Some examples:

"In order that people may be happy in their work, these three things are needed: They must be fit for it. They must not do too much of it. And they must have a sense of success in it."

"The country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings."

"A little thought and a little kindness are often worth more than a great deal of money."

"The first test of a truly great man is his humility. By humility I don't mean doubt of his powers or hesitation in speaking his opinion, but merely an understanding of the relationship of what he can say and what he can do."

Each of these, along with the rest of his writings and speeches, fall in line with what we've learned in this course, which is what the article linked above is a good addition to our toolbox.



SUMMARY

- Creative leaders must be adaptable, willing to be vulnerable and approachable, passionate, empathetic, open to new ideas, ready and willing to learn, willing to listen and give space for followers to share their ideas, thoughtful, transparent, and authentic
- Leaders need to be able to admit when they're wrong and show that they're learning from their mistakes in order to build and maintain trust
- Leadership is nothing without followers- a good leader brings out the best in their followers, assembles a team or people with diverse skills, perspectives, knowledge, and experience; encourages their followers to grow and work on what they're passionate about; and gives their followers the opportunity to share their ideas and have real input in the organization because they're truly valued
- We're all leaders in one way or another: our words and actions affect those around us, even when we don't notice. We also lead ourselves every day- reflecting on our own strengths and weaknesses and our passions and goals is important before we begin to lead anyone else
- To be sustainable and successful, an organization must begin with guiding values. Members should be aware of why they're doing what they're doing and have that be the core reason that they're part of the organization.
- In addition to guiding values, an organization must have a clearly stated mission and goals so that its members can have a shared purpose
- In seeking solutions, there doesn't have to be a compromise between either/or. The most innovative solutions take the best from each option instead of settling for a sub-optimal result.
- It is important for leaders to reflect on themselves and their organization, and to do so often. Staying tuned in to what they're working toward and how their actions- both personal and organizational—are affecting the

world is important. Reflection keeps us in line with our guiding values and helps us stay aware of what we're capable of and what we're accomplishing.

- It's important to be interdependent: a group can always accomplish more than one person, and having a variety of opinions, skills, expertise, and backgrounds can lead to more innovative ideas
- There's more than one way to be a good leader: finding your unique strengths and using that uniqueness is more important than fitting a mold. Different leadership styles are effective in different situations and individuals respond differently to leadership styles. A leader must be adaptable to changing scenarios while staying true to their core values and the values of the organization (which should be the same or at least in line with each other).
- Anyone can be a leader. It doesn't require a specific personality type or upbringing, and it's something that can be learned.

