
Leadership: Building Your Personal Development Plan!

People and Organizations
Session 17

*How do you know a
good leader when you
see one?*

An MIT Perspective on Leadership

- Traditional Definition: “Leadership is the process of influencing others to contribute to a shared set of goals”
 - Note: Not just use of power, coercion or mandating behavior
 - Not just exercise of positional authority
- Some MIT Additions: Leadership is :
 - a ***distributed process***; not something just done by CEOs or managers or others in high level positions
 - ***personal & developmental***; not “hard wired” in personalities at birth; not “one best way”
 - a process that ***creates change***
 - involves deep ***personal values/ethics***

Your Personal Leadership “Crucible”

- Leadership Crucible: “A major life event from which you learned lessons that will shape your leadership behavior in the future.”
- Examples: coping with death of a loved one
- Losing a job
- Overcoming some big adversity (like 8.01)!!
- Taking action in an emergency
- Not taking action in an emergency

Crucibles are key opportunities to develop leadership but only help us do so if we take the time to reflect and learn from them

(Warren Bennis & Robert Thomas, *Geeks and Geezers*)

Your Crucible

So, what has been your most important leadership crucible and what did you learn from it?

**TAKE 5 MINUTES TO WRITE YOURS
DOWN AND REFLECT ON IT.**

Sloan Leadership Model Part 1: Change Signature

“Each person’s change signature, like a fingerprint, is unique. Each person brings unique values, skills, experiences, tactics, and personality to the leader role...The change signature is made up of a credo and the characteristic way in which the leader creates change.”

Credo: core values and beliefs—your moral code that guides your approach to leading an effort or an organization

Sloan Leadership Model Part II; The Four Capabilities

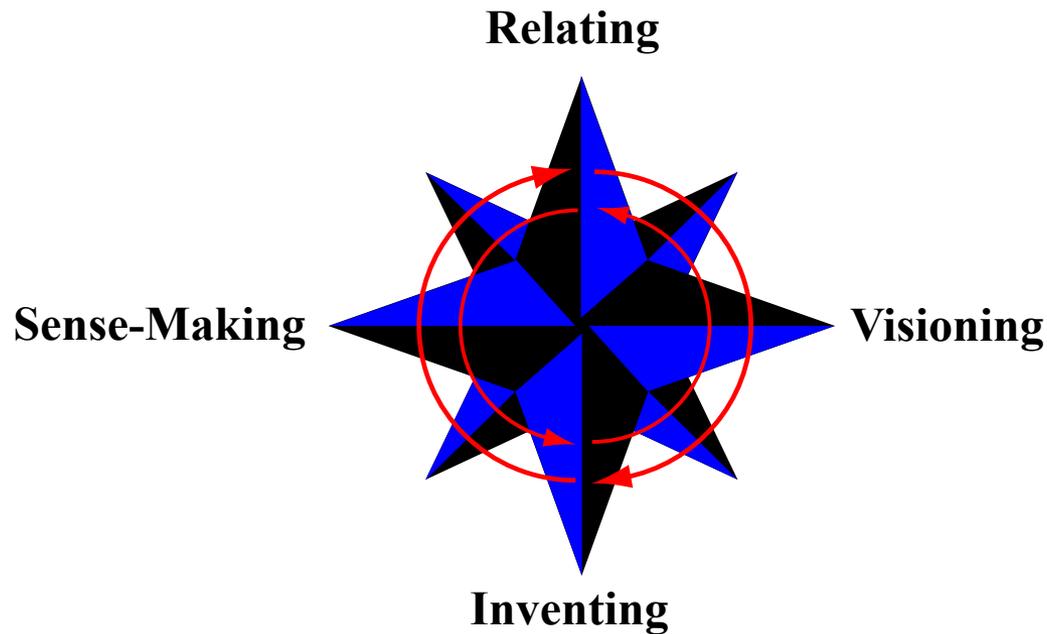


Image by MIT OpenCourseWare.

Key Competencies

- Sensemaking [*Decomposing the pieces*]
 - identifying your own motivations (credo, values) and strengths/development needs—“Is this something I can do???”
 - understanding the group and organizational interdependencies (cultural, political & structural lenses)
 - Framing the issue: What is the problem here?
- Relating [*Building support; neutralizing opposition*]
 - mapping key stakeholders: allies and adversaries
 - building networks
 - negotiating and mediating

Key Competencies (continued)

- Visioning [*Observing the Gaps*]
 - creative thinking
 - reframing the problem or challenge
 - choosing a strategy—direction-action plan
 - goal setting
- Inventing & Implementing [*Making it Happen*]
 - building & empowering the team/organization
 - aligning incentives (broadly defined); motivating
 - providing necessary resources
 - communicating a consistent message (often)
 - time & stress management
 - conflict management
 - holding people accountable; evaluating results
 - feedback and learning

Case Study

Wangari Maathai

2004 Nobel Peace Laureate

Background

- Kenya
 - Colonized and ruled by the British from late 19th century to early 1960's
 - Won independence in 1963
 - 30 million people
 - 2/3 of population live in abject poverty with high rates of malnutrition
 - Land is primarily semi-desert with forested area < 2%

Wangari Maathai

- Born: 1940 in Nyeri, Kenya
- Outside and inside formal education
 - B.S. Biology, Mount St. Scholastica College, Atchison, Kansas, 1964
 - M.S. Biological Sciences, Univ. of Pittsburg, 1966
 - Doctoral studies in Germany
 - PhD Anatomy, Univ. of Nairobi, 1971
 - Chair, Department of Veterinary Anatomy, Univ. of Nairobi, 1976
- Introduced idea of planting trees using ordinary people in 1976
 - Launched Green Belt Movement (GBM) in 1977
 - Over 30 million trees planted across Kenya
 - Similar initiatives successfully launched in other countries
- Nobel peace prize in 2004

Building a Critical Mass

I'm very conscious of the fact that you can't do it alone. It's teamwork. When you do it alone you run the risk that when you are no longer there nobody else will do it.

* Wangari Maathai, *The Green Belt Movement: Sharing the Approach & the Experience*, Lantern Books, 2004, p. 136

Wangari Maathai's Change Signature?

- Family and educational background
 - Father: Peasant farmer
 - University: Studied biology

Change signature: Eco-friendly, betterment of country in context of history

Maathai's Crucibles & Lessons Learned?

- 1. UN Human Settlement conference
- 2. Meeting Mother Teresa
- 3. Drought that killed tree nursery
- 4. 1975 International Show -> She had to work hard to raise money and stuff.

How did she lead? Change Capabilities

Sensemaking

- Problems she found
- Rural women didn't have necessary resources (water, food, income)
- Associated problems with lack of trees, and lack of group effort
- Women were primary care-takers emphasizing importance of environment, when environment degraded women were not able to provide for their families

Relating

- Watching her husband get elected to parliament
- Connections from family friends – ie forester; identify realistic plan
- Participation in conferences and lectures – make connections, identify following, get feedback
- Encouraged women to take initiative, develop own skills

Inventing-Implementing

- People liked planning trees; one tree per person
- Turned local problem into global problem (Red Cross, etc)
- Went to other organizations for resources
- Enviro-care failed at first; Harambee ceremony

Visioning

- Used network effectively – proposed idea while on council
- Used fact that she was a women to her advantage
- Persistence ie her motto catching on
- Took advantage of opportunities that presented themselves – ELC

To Become a Better Leader

- Practice, practice, practice!
- Now at MIT
- Take time to reflect on experiences
- Learn from your failures!!!
- Observe—analyze leaders
- Keep a journal—now and in your internship
- Make a developmental plan—stretch yourself
- Get systematic feedback
- Look for Leadership Crucibles

Coming Attractions

Fred Salvucci and the Big Dig

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