The New Design for Leadership: Creating Change, Innovation, and Inspiration

Mary Banwart, PhD
Associate Professor, Department of Communication Studies

Andi Witczak
Director, Center for Service Learning
Dakota tribal wisdom says that when you are riding a dead horse, the best strategy is to dismount.
Manage Self

Identify your capabilities, vulnerabilities and triggers

Distinguish self from the role

Understand the role you play in the system

Choose among competing values

Do what is needed, not what is comfortable
Energize Others

Pace the work

Speak to loss

Speak from the heart

Orient to purpose

Empowerment (engage others in designing intervention)

Start where they are, not where you are
Diagnose Situation

Test multiple stories/interpretations

Push against default interpretations, which tend to be technical /individual rather than adaptive/systemic

Look for data regarding temperature in system and assess/diagnose the degree of disequilibrium

Distinguish technical vs adaptive work

Distinguish content from process
Skillful Intervention

Capture attention
Engage unusual voices
Work across factions
Raise or lower the heat; orchestrate conflict
Give the work back
Make conscious choices about intervention
Create conditions for collaboration
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<th>Technical Work</th>
<th>vs</th>
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DISEQUILIBRUM

Limit of Tolerance

Threshold of Change

Productive Zone of Disequilibrium
Economist and Nobel Laureate, Herbert Simon defined design as

“concerned not with the necessary but with the contingent, not with how things are, but how they might be. Design devises courses of action aimed at changing existing conditions into preferred ones.”

According to Simon’s definition, design thinking is always about an improved future
Design is a collaborative planning activity that proactively manages the process of change (understanding it, embracing it, creating for it).

Andi Witczak
(not as famous as Herbert Simon)
The Power of Questions
“How do I do this?”

The question is a defense against the action. It is a leap past the question of purpose, past the question of intentions, and past the drama of responsibility.

The question “How?”—more than any other question—looks for the answer outside of us.

*It is an indirect expression of our doubts...*

Peter Block

*Stewardship*
What if...?
What if we shift our conversations from the problems of my unit to the possibility of my unit?
What if we shift our conversations from the problems of my unit to the possibility of my unit?

How might we shift our conversations from the problems of my unit to the possibility of my unit?
Creation vs. Problem-Solving

When you are solving a problem, you are taking action to have something go away: the problem.

When you are creating, you are taking action to have something come into being: the creation.

Notice that the intentions of these actions are opposite.

Robert Fritz
The Path of Least Resistance
If the [problem-solving] process is successful, you might eliminate the problem.

Then what you have is the absence of the problem you are solving.

But what you do not have is the presence of the result you want to create.

Robert Fritz
_The Path of Least Resistance_
How long will it take?

becomes

What commitment am I willing to make?
How do you get those people to change? becomes

What part of the problem do I own?
How are departments doing it successfully?

becomes

What do we want to create together?

Peter Block

*The Answer to How is Yes*
The Power of Constraints
Constraints

• Serve as boundaries to the creation

• Elements of challenge in the creation space

• Serve as stimuli to the creative adaptation of practices and techniques from other disciplines

• Serve as friends, not enemies
Invent an idea for a new business—
in 15 minutes. . .
What do Rollerblades, Haagen-Dasz ice cream, and Spider-Man movies have in common?
Let’s reframe the earlier question:

Think of an idea for a new business based on reproducing something that was emotionally powerful to you as a kid in an expensive form for adults.
Hi!

This is your new box.
Whenever you come across a new idea that you think is really creative, ask:

What question would have caused me to see this opportunity?
The Power of Optimism
Opportunity

To qualify as a good opportunity, the situation must meet two conditions:

• it must represent a future state that is desirable

• it must be achievable
The pursuit of opportunity without regard to resources currently controlled.

Howard Stevenson
Avoid True but Useless Information
The Power of Process
Convergent Thinking
Divergent Thinking

Our Box
also known as our toolkit
Prototype and Iterate

- prototyping is simultaneously an evaluative process—it generates feedback and enables you to make mid-flight corrections—and a storytelling process. It’s a way of visually and experientially describing your strategy.

- the goal is not to create a close approximation of the finished product or process; it is to learn strengths/weaknesses and identify next steps.
The Power of Time
Spend it now or spend it later...
The Power of Ambiguity and Paradox
Innovation

The fundamental ability to respond creatively and critically to a shifting, ambiguous environment, and to anticipate the future by creating it.

Idea Factory
An innovation must meet two criteria:

- **Novelty:**
  innovations need not necessarily be original, they must be new to the user, context, or application.

- **Improvement:**
  a process or outcome must be either more effective or more efficient than pre-existing alternatives.

Phills Jr, Deiglmeier, Miller
think about

Questions to ponder...
Are you on the balcony or the dance floor?
If every organization (including yours) is perfectly structured to get the results it currently gets, what is the one question that, if you had the answer, would move your organization toward positive change?
Thank you!