Like the organization (department, unit) in which you work, you as an individual are complex system. You have competing values, interests, preferences, tendencies, aspirations, and fears. “Exercising adaptive leadership is about you (an individual system) making interventions in a social system of which you are a part. You have to understand not only the larger system you step into but also yourself in its full complexity, multiplicity, and inconsistency. And then you have to think about how the two systems interact.”

The following exercise will help you do just that. In order to help your unit make progress on the adaptive challenge(s) it faces, you have to also consider your role in the system. Doing so will create an opportunity for you to make progress on at least one element of the challenge that you have control over, as well as allows you to model the accountability you are asking of others in making progress on this challenge.

### Column 1
Consider the adaptive challenges on which you want your unit to make progress. Then ask yourself: **What are the adaptive challenges we face?** [remember, not a technical problem!]

### Column 2
Choose one of the challenges you listed in Column 1. As you consider that challenge, ask yourself: **What would help us make progress on this challenge if we did it more often or less often?**

### Column 3
Reflect for a minute on your Column 2 responses. Consider the values and/or commitments that set the foundation for those responses. For each ask yourself: **What values or perceptions are at the core of my response?**

### Column 4
Choose two values/commitments from Column 3. For both of these ask yourself: **What am I doing or not doing that keeps me from honoring that value/commitment?**

### Column 5
For each behavior from Column 4, consider the commitment driving that behavior. Then, complete the following sentence: **I may also be committed to…**

### Column 6
As you reflect on your responses in Column 5, consider what “bad outcomes” you are protecting yourself from by engaging in the behaviors listed in Column 4. Ask yourself: **If I did not do [column 4 behavior], then what would happen?**