

Living System Characteristics

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Leading through disruption: a living systems path to rapid adaptation

Living systems adapt rapidly

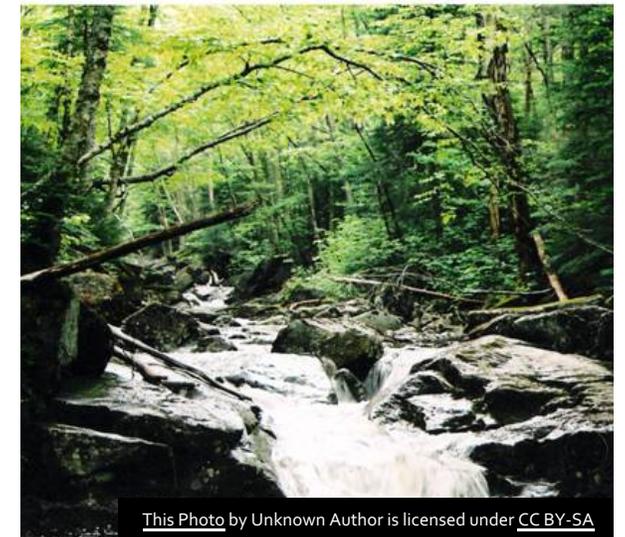
When we lead with a living systems mindset, we unleash the elements of the system to help us adapt and innovate

We will focus on three aspects of living systems

Interdependence

Dynamic movement

Learning through feedback



Living systems are interdependent

What does interdependence mean to our ability to lead through disruption?

- Disruptions are amplified by interdependence.
- We are relearning how interconnected we are.
- Actions in one part of the system creates implications for other parts of the system
- It ripples through families, schools, economies, public health, organizations, policy, and business.
- Complexity emerges from interdependence

Leadership Lessons:

- Make decisions with the whole system in mind.
- What will strengthen the resilience of the whole organization?
- Strengthen interdependent awareness.
- Help others see how their actions and decisions impact other parts of the system.
- Embrace complex frameworks for problem solving.

Living systems
are always in
motion – never
static

Dynamic movement = life!

- We are living systems – heartbeat, breath, circulation: always in movement
- Disruption amplifies dynamic movement that already exists.
- Increases the unknowns and unknowable in the system.
- More variables emerge every minute in every day.

Leadership Lessons:

- Pay attention to what is moving.
- Look for patterns in the movement (a balcony perspective of the movement on the dance floor)
- Strategies can be discovered from patterns
- Become comfortable with not being able to know or discover every aspect of a challenge

Living systems scale, evolve, and learn from feedback and information

Active ongoing learning strengthens rapid adaptation

- We grow with information and feedback
- When we deny information that we don't agree with, we hurt our ability to adapt.
- Emotional intelligence increases our ability to manage our emotions and therefore be able to let in feedback that triggers our emotions.

Leadership lessons:

- Transparency increases information that helps people adapt naturally.
- Accelerated learning = accelerating adaptation.
- Feedback lets us know when a form, process, or structure no longer serves our purpose.
- Seek out and track rich and diverse feedback loops to see the dynamics in play in the external disruption you are adapting to.