

# 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*

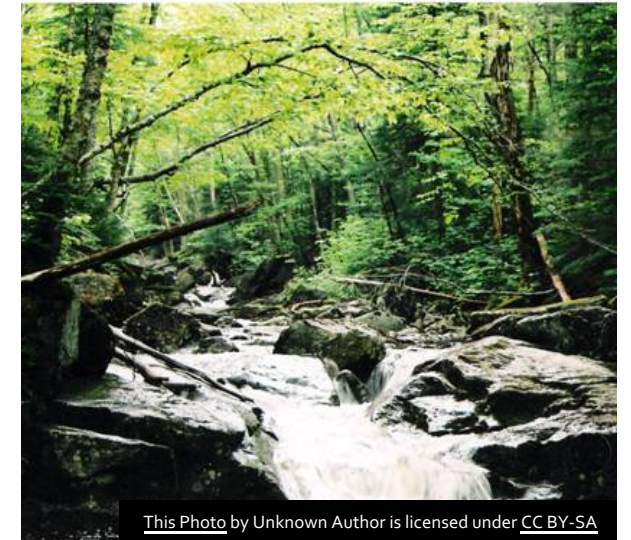
*Learning through feedback*



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# 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.