



Leading Adaptive Change

Presenter: Shoshana Boyd Gelfand

Based on the teaching of: Professor Ron Heifetz, Harvard University

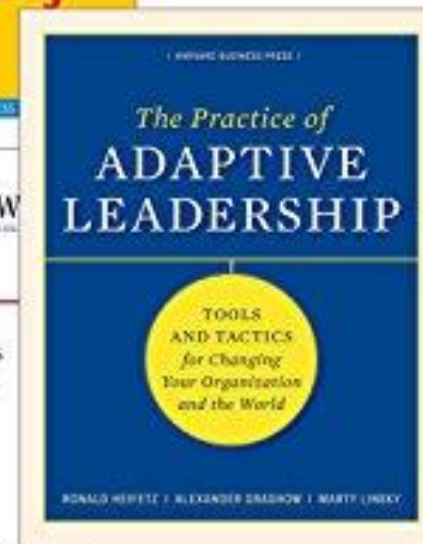
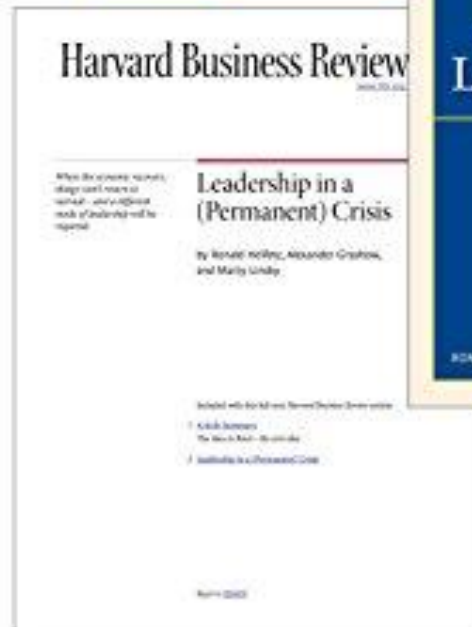
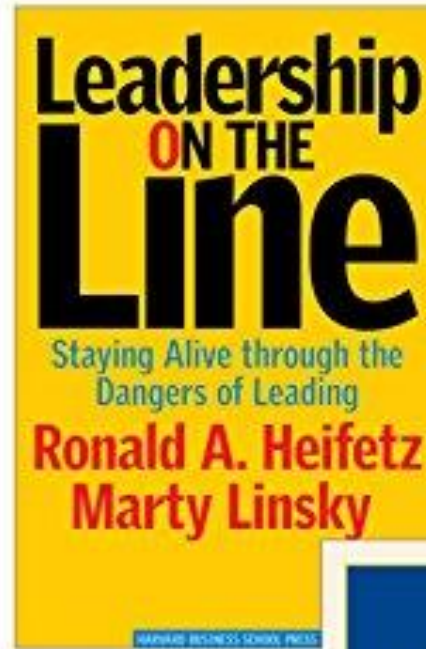
Prof. Ronald Heifetz

Leadership on the Line

Leadership without Easy Answers

The Practice of Adaptive Leadership

“The Work of Leadership” - HBR



Defining Terms

▶ LEADERSHIP

Can be exercised with
or without a role

▶ AUTHORITY

Connected to a role

Technical vs Adaptive Challenges

TYPE OF PROBLEM	TECHNICAL (fixing a broken arm)	ADAPTIVE (heart attack)
Problem	Clear - easy to identify (it's been seen before)	Unclear - difficult to identify (requires learning)
Solution	Clear - based on experience/expertise	Unclear - often requires change in numerous places/people or experimentation over time
Locus of work	Experts / Authority figures	Stakeholders - (those affected by the challenge)
Obstacles	Resources (time, money, attention)	Deeply held resistences (Values, loyalties, relationships, hearts and minds, LOSSES)

Adaptive Leadership - Definition

- ▶ “mobilizing and sustaining people through the period of risk that comes with adaptive change”

Adaptive Leadership - Definition

- ▶ “Leadership means disappointing your own people at a rate they can absorb”

- Ron Heifetz

Exercising Adaptive Leadership

- ▶ Identify the learning that needs to happen
- ▶ Mobilize people to overcome their resistance to it
- ▶ Sustain them through the period of change

Exercising Adaptive Leadership

- ▶ Identify the learning that needs to happen
- ▶ Mobilize people to overcome their resistance to it
- ▶ Sustain them through the period of change

Identify the learning

- ▶ Get on the balcony



Getting on the Balcony

- ▶ What are the adaptive challenges that COVID-19 presents to our country?
- ▶ What learning needs to take place in order to address these challenges?
- ▶ Who needs to be involved in this learning process? Why?
- ▶ What are the values / loyalties / behaviours that will need to adapt in order to overcome this challenge?
- ▶ What losses do people fear they will have to face if the challenge is addressed?

Exercising Adaptive Leadership

- ▶ Identify the learning that needs to happen
- ▶ Mobilize people to overcome their resistance to it
- ▶ Sustain them through the period of change

Mobilise people

► Orchestrate conflict

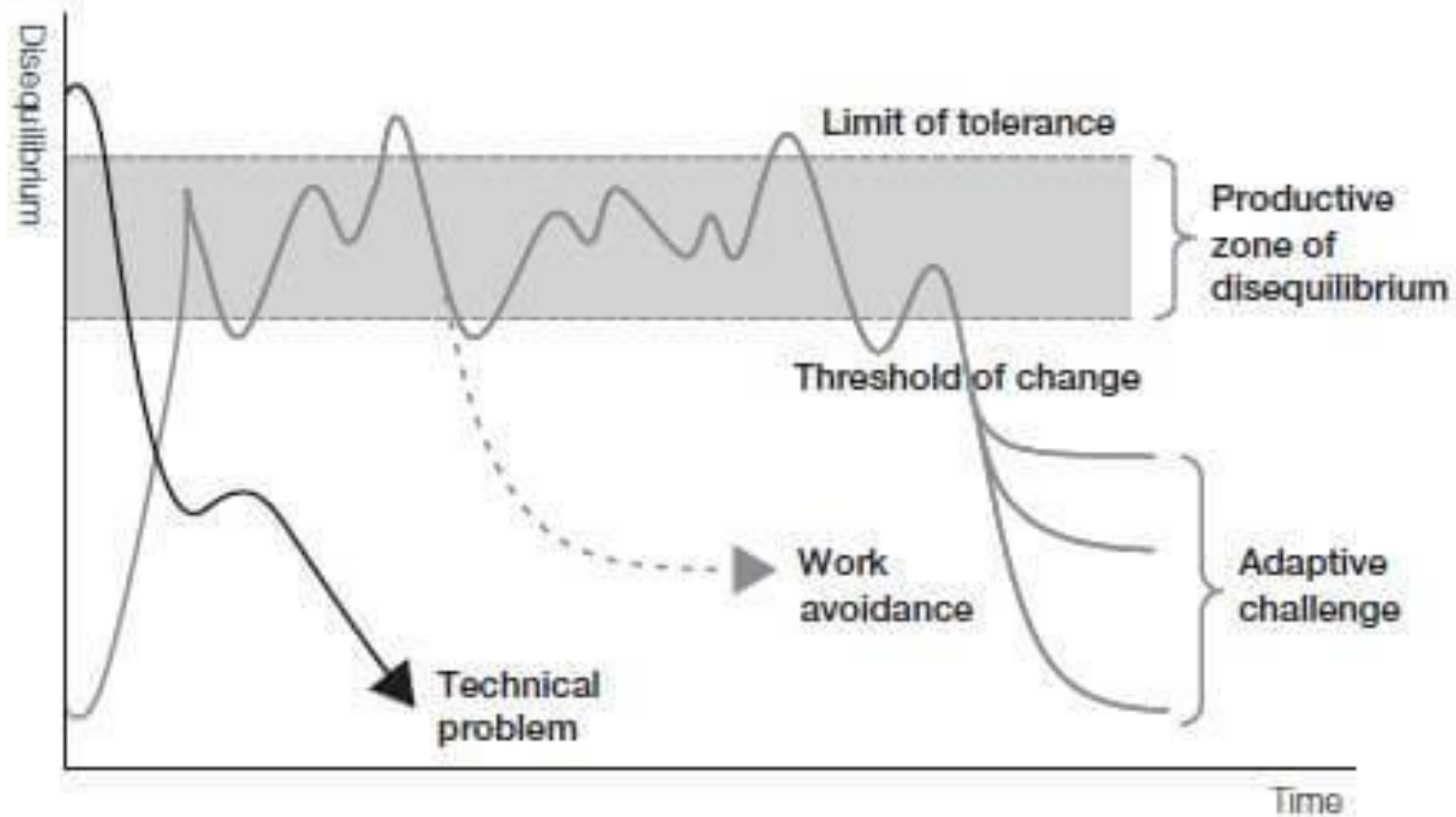
Disturb equilibrium without letting system explode

Leading with authority:
need external heat source

Leading without authority:
need ally with authority



The productive zone of disequilibrium



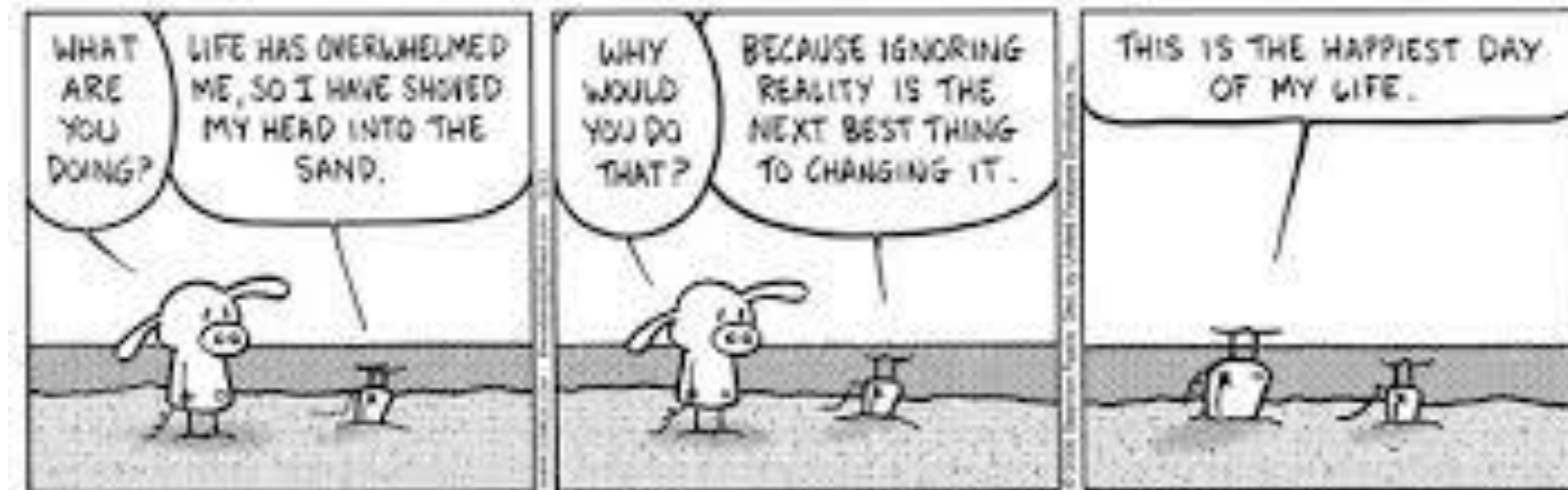
Source: Adapted from Ronald A. Heifetz and Donald L. Laurie, "Mobilizing Adaptive Work: Beyond Visionary Leadership," in *The Leader's Change Handbook*, eds. Jay A. Conger, Gretchen M. Spreitzer, and Edward E. Lawler III (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998).

Exercising Adaptive Leadership

- ▶ Identify the learning that needs to happen
- ▶ Mobilize people to overcome their resistance to it
- ▶ **Sustain them through the period of change**

Sustain through the change

- ▶ Maintain disciplined attention



© Stephan Pastis/Dist. by LFP, Inc.

9GAG.COM/GAG/3994767



Prof. Ronald Heifetz

Leadership on the Line

Leadership without Easy Answers

The Practice of Adaptive Leadership

“The Work of Leadership” - HBR

