



Simple Habits for Complex Times: Powerful Practices for Leaders

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When faced with complex challenges or uncertain outcomes, many leaders believe that if they are smart enough, work hard enough, or turn to the best management tools, they will be able to find the right answer, predict and plan for the future, and break down tasks to produce controllable results. But what are leaders to do when this isn't the case?

Rather than offering one-size-fits-all tips and tricks drawn from the realm of business as usual, *Simple Habits for Complex Times* provides three integral practices that enable leaders to navigate the unknown. By taking multiple perspectives, asking different questions, and seeing more of their system, leaders can better understand themselves, their roles, and the world around them. They can become more nimble, respond with agility, and guide their organizations to thrive in an ever-shifting business landscape. The more leaders use these simple habits, the more they enhance their performance and solve increasingly common, sticky business issues with greater acumen.

Whether in large or small organizations, in government or the private sector, in the U.S. or overseas, leaders will turn to this book as a companion that helps them grow into the best version of themselves.

Simple Habits for Complex Times: Powerful Practices for Leaders Details

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From Reader Review Simple Habits for Complex Times: Powerful Practices for Leaders for online ebook

James Dalziel says

Making complexity practical part 2.

Jules says

A practical guide for acting as a leader in increasingly complex environments. Effective storytelling, and tactics that connect very well to what I see day-to-day in my organizational development work.

Jane says

Told through a fictionalized account of a business and an nonprofit learning the principles in the book, and through real life examples and evidence from research. The authors make a case that in these complex times, we need to ask different questions, get multiple perspectives, and think systems rather than linear solutions. All of that fits nicely with the work I do, so obviously I thought they were spot on :)

KB says

This is a great book for thinking about organizational complexity. I found the narrative story that runs through it cheesy, but effective.

Sean Goh says

Feels like recommended reading for REAL, what with the constant references to VUCA.
Got to stop picking up business and leadership books for the immediate future, they are really boring ...

Leadership, is by definition, about taking people and ideas to new places.

Identify your current mindset and its suitability by asking two questions:

- Am I opening to explore or narrowing to decide?
- Am I dealing with a threat or an opportunity?

In a complex system, paying attention to the inclinations of the current situation is key. Understand the system by conducting safe-to-fail experiments.

A lot of organisations talk about learning but reward perfection and uncertainty, which is counter-productive.

The human brain has an enormous capacity not only to not see the whole picture but also to not notice that it

hasn't seen the whole picture.

In a complex world the vision is the place at which the past and future come together in a way that guides peoples' action in the present. Leaders need to take a careful look at the past: at the values, history, cycles of change, and core myths and stories. A vision that isn't carefully tied to the shared history of an organisation is disconcerting for people and risks that there isn't enough to make the organisation familiar to people in the future.

When we treat polarities (e.g. short-term vs long-term thinking) as problems to be solved, we tend to oscillate between the two extremes.

In the Marshmallow Challenge, the highest towers are built by architects based on sound design principles. The second highest towers are built by children, because they prototype instead of discussing, and they have fun.

The general guideline for safe-to-fail experiments is that there must be several of these experiments running in parallel so that info-gathering can be simultaneous. More importantly, some of the experiments should contradict each other, so that one can cast as wide a net as possible.

A perceived absence of emotions is actually merely the absence of talking about emotion (or even noticing our emotions)

As long as you're dealing in a space that is relatively predictable, painting a clear picture of the future is still the most helpful and inspiring thing you can do.

Forms of mind: <http://www.sup.org/books/pages/21771/...>

Self-sovereign

Socialised

Self-authoring

Self-transforming

If you really want to hire people who have learned how to notice and learn from their mistakes, you'll have to tolerate conversation about failure without seeing it as a weakness. More specifically, you'll have to listen to a conversation about failure and judge whether or not it is a weakness. The key thing to look out for is the recovery system for dealing with failure.

Brad Herbert says

Clear Framework For Leading In Complexity

I am an Executive Coach focused on adult development with deep interest in organizational adaptability and neuroscience. The book does a great job framing the difference between complicated and complex environments and the crucial differences required of leaders. It also nicely maps how higher stages of adult development would help make this much easier and perhaps even enjoyable, and I intend to share these tips with my clients. I believe the shift to thriving in complexity is this decade's most crucial change if we are to thoughtfully evolve our organizations and societies in a just, sustainable way.

Don says

I thought this job did a more effective job than her previous book (Changing on the Job: Developing Leaders for a Complex World) in providing concrete advice. I especially appreciated the delineation between complicated and complex situations. Also valuable was her suggestions to tie future actions to past efforts, both successful and unsuccessful. I reiterate the outline in the summary because it provides the core of what is helpful. In complex times, leaders need to:

take multiple perspectives,
ask different questions, and
see more of their system

Rebecca Scott says

This insightful and very readable book is a must-read for modern leaders.

Naomi says

A really good choice if you're eager to get bored.
