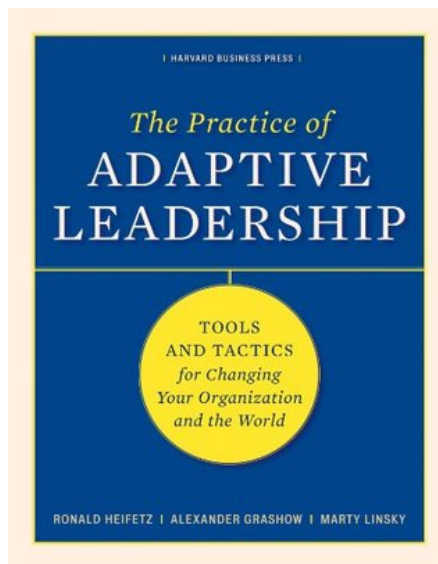




The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World

Ronald A. Heifetz , Marty Linsky , Alexander Grashow

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We live in a time of danger and opportunity. Individuals, organizations, communities and countries must continuously adapt to new realities to simply survive. Wanting more, wanting to thrive even under constantly shifting and often perilous conditions, people in all sectors are called upon to lead with the courage and skill to challenge the status quo, deploy themselves with agility, and mobilize others to step into the unknown.

Ron Heifetz first mapped a groundbreaking theory of leadership in the seminal book, *Leadership Without Easy Answers*. Followed by the bestselling *Leadership on the Line*, he and long-time Harvard colleague Marty Linsky offered a compelling set of arguments and stories to show how to lead and stay alive through the dangers of change.

Now Heifetz and Linsky, joined by Alexander Grashow, have distilled the learning from their combined sixty-plus years of leadership consulting, teaching and training around the globe into a practical hands-on guide to making your leadership both more effective and more powerful.

The Practice of Adaptive Leadership will help you think and execute amidst profoundly changing complexity. With its comprehensive and systemic approach to assessing candidly the situation and yourself, and then taking action, its wisdom and advice are drawn also from the experiences of people like you, committed to advancing what you care about most.

The book is anchored in the framework of Adaptive Leadership, but goes beyond the theory to provide a practical set of stories, diagrams, techniques, and activities that will help you both assess and address the toughest challenges that lie ahead. Dozens of tools and tactics are presented in an exciting, clear, and reader-friendly design.

The Practice of Adaptive Leadership is your handbook to meeting the challenges of leadership in a complex and rapidly changing world.

The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World Details

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From Reader Review The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World for online ebook

Shane Orr says

I was really looking forward to this book, but there was a lot more "what" than "how" and much of the "what" was intuitive.

Elissa says

I think I was looking for more of an update and deeper dive into the content of "Leadership On the Line." instead it felt like they pulled back from the core of the individual in the larger system and lost the attention to purpose and values or and their quality of analysis. Less from the heart and the gut, more from the head. Still quite useful though.

Almeer says

I use lessons from it every day in my leadership training.

Fred Leland says

I found this book this past year as I was part of a steering committee put together to develop emergency first responders. Cops responding to crisis to be specific who need to be flexible of thought. I have taught and even written on adaptability myself but this book had a great way of explaining what adaptability was and how to implement it in an organization. it took into account things I had experienced first hand such as the resistance to the idea of developing adaptable cultures capable of dealing with both technical problems and adaptive challenges. The whole book is packed full of great information but Chapter 3 hit me straight across the brow "Before You Begin: DON'T DO IT ALONE! A mistake I made first hand in my own organization as I went it alone. And meant nothing but a lot of resistance from above, who felt the ideas we a waist of time. If you are trying to develop an organizational culture that thrives and continually learns and improves this book will give you the ideas and tools to do just that. I am glad I found this book, wish I found it early as perhaps I would have less bumps and bruises and few more hairs. I highly recommend it.

Alyssa Foll says

This is the best leadership book that I have read. "The Practice of Adaptive Leadership" is about leading change, but how to do so in leading others through loss and how to lead yourself. It's one of the first leadership books that I have come across that made sense, intuitively, to me.

I would highly recommend this book to anyone who is leading in their organizations, schools, churches, or communities.

Rebecca Fenerty says

Overall, good leadership resource. Very specific tools and techniques related to adaptive challenges within the workplace. Not an introductory resource for new leaders necessarily, but excellent for someone who is getting ready to tackle a major change/shift within an organization.

Rachael Mackie says

This was required reading for a leadership class so not one I chose. The concepts made sense, but it was boring to read and I found myself skimming to get to the end.

Corinna says

Great book about leadership. This book or something similar should be required reading for all human beings...

Jenny (Reading Envy) says

It is hard to know what to say about this book. I took on a new position in January, and the other new assistant director and I have been reading this (along with the library director), periodically discussing it at our meetings. It has been great for that, but I haven't been ready to hear some of the ideas, and some of them aren't quite appropriate. This is a book I will keep, and consult from time to time.

The only chapter I really balked at was the "Inspire" chapter. I'm just not sure every person needs to try to be inspiring, or if it can be manufactured using the methods suggested. (Really? Speak more musically, and bam! inspiration? Huh.) I also laughed at the chapter that told me to seek delight from my spouse, so I wouldn't seek it at work. Hahaha. (I get what the author was trying to say, but it took him a while.)

I did get a lot out of it, particularly the sections that served to remind me that it is okay to fail, that people don't always have to like you, and that you have to let go of the past.

"When you make a distinction between the roles you play and yourself, you gain the emotional strength to ignore personal attacks your opponents hope will stymie your initiative. People make attacks personal specifically to divert you from your message. The next time someone tells you that you're 'too aggressive' or 'uncaring' when you're representing a difficult point of view or change initiative, remind yourself that you (as a person) are not your role (as someone seeking to lead change). Though a change may feel personal (and be intended as personal), it is *not* a statement about your character or your worth as a human being. It is a strategy and an attempt to manipulate you." (chapter 16)

Jeff says

I pretty gave up on the leadership genre of books several years back. I've picked up a few having to do with leadership in the missional church in recent years but found those to basically be more of the same. So, "The Practice of Adaptive Leadership," which was assigned reading for a class, was not a book I would have otherwise picked up to read. There is a lesson to be learned somewhere in there as this might be the best thing I've ever read on Leadership. The authors view leadership as the necessary adaptive response to the challenges presented over time to any systematic effort towards a goal. In their understanding, there are two core processes involved; diagnosis and action, both of which must be understood and carried out within the system and by the leader. This book is no mere "how to" of leadership or leadership theory. There is a great deal of practical wisdom looking at the organization as a system and for the individual leader. There is some good straightforward consideration given to the politics involved in leadership while not reducing leadership to a political exercise. Recommended.

John says

It feels more like a workbook than I had imagined. The table of contents is essentially a three-level outline. Each chapter is clearly organized with headers and bullet points, with crisply written sidebar case studies and exercises. The opening chapter encourages workbook-like uses, saying that in addition to reading the text from start to finish, readers can browse for "concepts and tools most useful for understanding or deal with the particular adaptive challenge you are facing."

If you're looking for philosophical underpinnings and controlling images, you'll find some in the second chapter on "The Theory Behind the Practice." The authors draw upon evolutionary biology, reminding readers of the adaptation that has taken place in human society during four million years of cooperation and competition. After defining adaptive leadership as "the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive," the authors write, "the concept of thriving is drawn from evolutionary biology, in which a successful adaptation has three characteristics: (1) it preserves the DNA essential for the species' continued survival; (2) it discards (reregulates or rearranges) the DNA that no longer serves the species' current needs; and (3) it creates DNA arrangements that give the species the ability to flourish in new ways and in more challenging environments."

I found myself wondering more about who has the power to judge that something in an organization's DNA no longer serves current needs, and thinking we should be mindful of the ethical dimensions when our organization "discards." Discarding action may have as its object a poor understanding of a chronic challenge or an ineffective strategy for coping with a chronic challenge. But, sometimes, discarding action may mean changing roles and/or eliminating positions, and I think it's important to keep clearly in mind that such actions involve real people with legitimate fears, concerns, and obligations, who should be treated justly. A living organism that discards the wrong cells may end up consumed by cancer, and I imagine that an equally unpleasant end may be faced by an organization that makes poor judgments about what or who to discard.

Among the most helpful sections for me, speaking to my need for understanding and dealing with my particular adaptive challenges:

- Chapter 2, pp. 19 ff. "Distinguishing Technical Problems from Adaptive Challenges"
- Chapter 5, pp. 70 ff. "Determine the Technical and Adaptive Elements"
- Chapter 10, "Act Politically"
- Chapter 12, "Build an Adaptive Culture"
- Chapter 19, "Stay Connected to Your Purposes"

- Chapter 23, “Thrive”
-

Zach says

This book would be amazing if it went to the depth of inquiry necessary. You read a section, and are left just wanting more, but not in a good way like a solid novel. Instead, you being to understand the topic the authors are getting at, and are ready for more, and the chapter ends. Very unexpected, and not very useful.

Kim says

I'd have liked this book better had I worked in a larger organization and that it's shorter. The book's illustration is not inspiring.

Jaclyn says

Two very useful things from this book, for me, were the separating out technical problems from adaptive challenges (and how important it is not to use strategies for solving the first for solving the second) and the idea of creating holding environments and embracing silence. Additionally, the notion of "getting on the balcony" (to remove yourself from the immediate action in order to gain perspective and/or clarity) was useful. This, in conjunction with Senge's Fifth Discipline, are a strong case for emphasizing organizational learning and creating practice spaces were folks can flex some of these leadership practices.

Ichinkhorloo Khosbayar says

Change doesn't come easily. In order to change people around you, your community and the world, you should adapt the leadership. I really enjoyed reading it and the message I got is that you have to have that willing to be changed.

I think I'll reread when I become a part of any organization.
