



Collaborative Leadership

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Collaborative Leadership

Why differentiate Collaborative Leadership from leadership in general?
What makes it unique and challenging?

Collaborative Leadership typically means...

- Leading Across Boundaries (such as organizational, cross-sector, political jurisdiction, etc.)
- Leading Without Authority (or with narrow/limited authority)

Collaboration is hard work. It requires dealing with complexity and is typically filled with frustration. It takes time, effort, energy and perseverance.

Collaborative Leadership Worksheet

Essentials for Long-term Success	Community/ Region (A,B,C,D,F)	Personal Practice (A,B,C,D,F)	NOTES: Opportunities to Grow/Strengthen our Regional (or Personal) Leadership
Partnering – We are partnering where it is beneficial and at desired levels. And, we work to build reliable and trustworthy relationships.			
Learning – Learning is a top priority. Experimenting and risk-taking are common practices. Feedback loops and reflective practices are incorporated into all that we do.			
Vision & Communication – A clear and compelling vision for the future has been developed, is shared by many, and is communicated frequently, regularly and in various ways to all stakeholders.			
Empowered & Shared Control – People feel empowered. Control is shared. No one person/entity tries to dominate. All stakeholder voices are heard. Leaders remove obstacles and enable others to act.			
Inclusive Team – We use a team approach. We are intentional about being inclusive and have broad stakeholder representation. We provide for varying depths of engagement.			
Culture & Psychological Safety – There is cultural awareness and acceptance that people and organizations may accomplish objectives in their own and unique ways. People are truly comfortable being themselves. And, mutual trust continues to grow.			
Urgency – A sense of urgency has been established. People are responding to opportunities as well as crises. While working toward the big-picture vision, we intentionally design for short-term wins.			
Conflict – Underlying conflict is skillfully brought to the surface. When conflict arises, it is handled quickly and effectively.			

Collaborate Only When Beneficial

As was already stated...

Collaboration is hard work. It requires dealing with complexity and is typically filled with frustration. It takes time, effort, energy and perseverance.

So...

Don't take it on unless the benefits outweigh the investments (of time, effort, resources, etc.)

Collaboration is not a moral imperative. It is a business decision.

Think...



Think...

Slime Mold

- Sticky, reddish jelly-like stuff sometimes found under half-rotten bark
- Not really mold at all – rather a single-celled, amoeba-like organism



- Most of the time alone, minding its own business
- But when resources get scarce (water, nutrients), they join together/cooperate in a way that resembles a more complex organism that behaves as one...can actually crawl, move together to find food
- No one element directing the show
- And, when water and nutrients are no longer scarce, the cells disband and go their separate ways



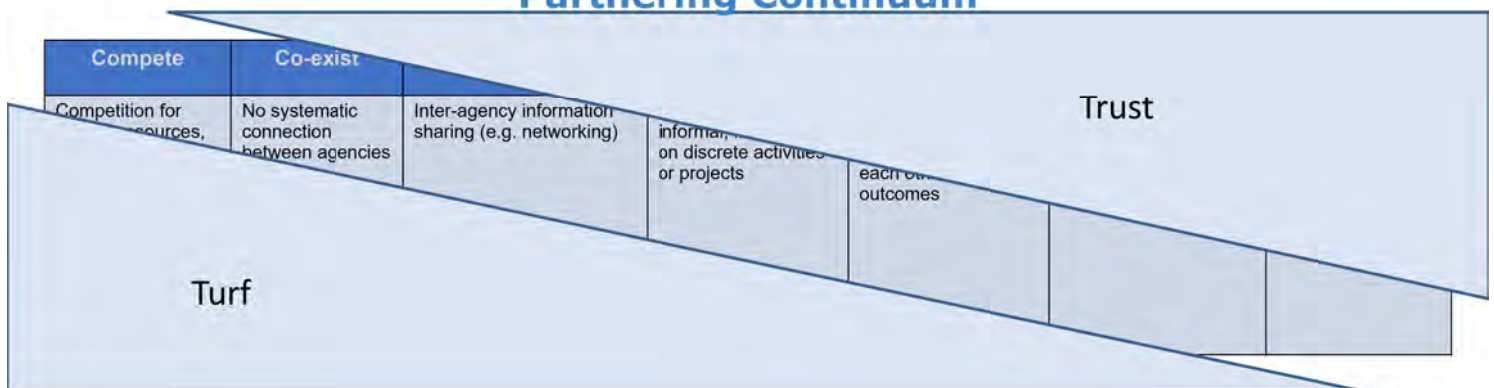
Partnering Continuum

Compete	Co-exist	Communicate	Cooperate	Coordinate	Collaborate	Integrate
Competition for clients, resources, partners, public attention	No systematic connection between agencies	Inter-agency information sharing (e.g. networking)	As needed, often informal, interaction, on discrete activities or projects	Organizations systematically adjust and align work with each other for greater outcomes	Longer term interaction based on shared mission, goals, shared decision-makers and resources	Fully integrated programs, planning, funding

Assessing Along the Continuum

1. Where on the continuum does your organization's relationship with that other organization lie?
2. Where might be the ideal level for that relationship? If different than what you have now, what could be potential benefits?
3. What might it take to enable that relationship to develop/progress?
4. With whom could you collaborate that it might lead them to assume a more leadership role in the community?

Partnering Continuum



Don't let fear of failure impede progress

Shift mindsets to...

There is no failure, only learnings



We benefit most in the long-term by assuming a Learning orientation.



Learning...

It's all about Learning. If we knew all of the answers, then our only task would be to simply implement them.

Each region/each community has characteristics that make its combination of solutions unique.

We must Learn what works, so we can proceed to implement it, replicate it, and scale it up.

We must Learn what doesn't work, so we can stop doing it and allocate our resources in other ways.

Various Ways of Learning

- On your own
 - From others
 - From practice
 - From feedback and reflection
-

Learning on Your Own

- Reading
- Attending trainings/webinars
- Watching videos (like documentaries, YouTube)

Learning from Others

- **Research**
 - What have others done and learned
 - Ask experts
 - **Engage** (open-endedly)
 - Inquire to truly understand
 - Prepare for interviewing but then allow the conversation to happen
 - Ask “Why?” to uncover deeper meaning. Elicit stories
 - **Observe** – be open to Discovery
 - ...in the context of their lives
 - Notice any disconnect between what they say and what they do
 - Assign roles to team members (like interviewer, note taker, photographer)
 - **Watch and Listen** (guided tour)
 - Ask someone to show you how they complete a task
 - Ask them to explain why they do each step
 - If you notice something in their environment, ask them about it
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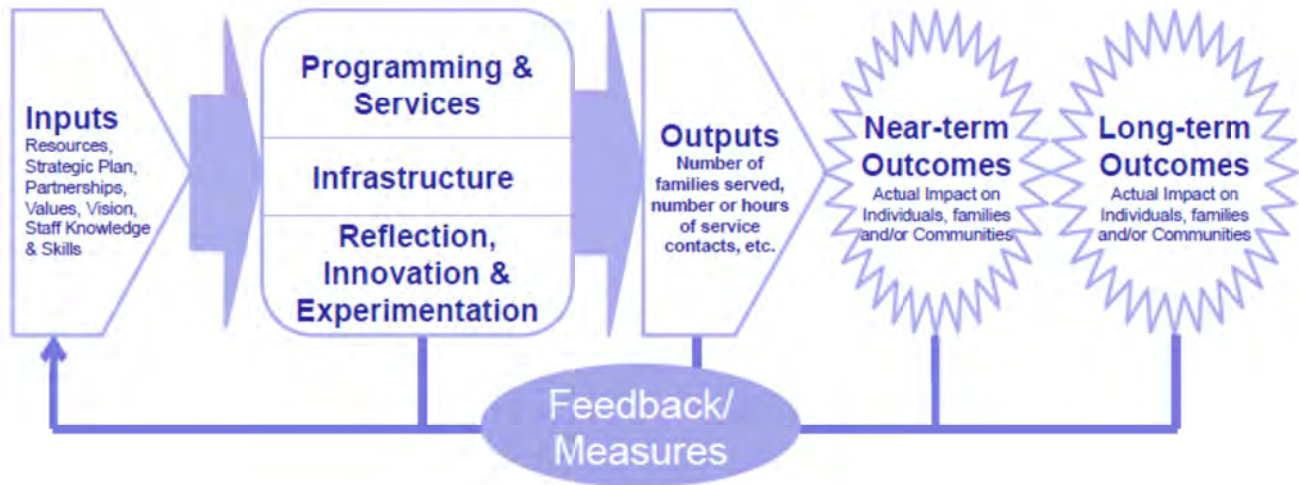
Learning from Practice

- **Develop Shared Measurement, then Collect Data** (Collective Impact)
- **Experiment; Take Risks** (or no innovation)
 - Test...check results...adjust accordingly...test again...
 - Be okay with failing
- **Prototype**
 - Test on a small scale – what’s quick and at low cost (Silicon Valley “Fail often and quickly in order to succeed sooner”)
 - Test what is unknown/uncertain

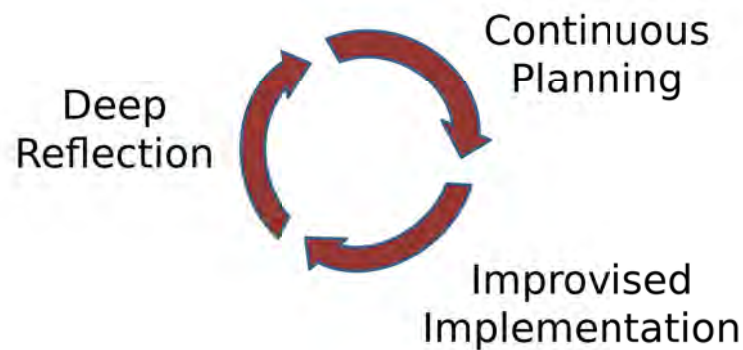
Learning from Feedback and Reflection

- **Invite feedback**
 - Be accepting of unsolicited feedback (find the nugget of truth)
 - Seek feedback deliberately
 - **Build in feedback loops**
 - Outcome evaluations
 - Output measures
 - Process checks
 - **Reflect**
 - Set aside time to reflect on what worked and what can be improved
 - Find ways to include all stakeholder groups in reflecting
 - Look for emerging patterns
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Nonprofit Logic Model



Strategic Learning Cycle





A Vision that is clear,
compelling and shared

All are aligned,
working toward
the same vision
of future success

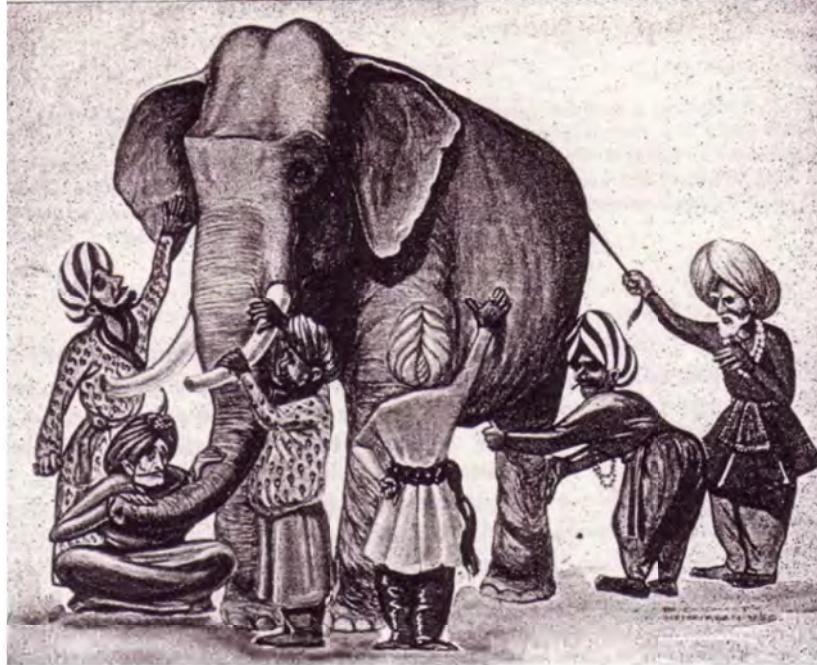


A key role of
leaders is to
Inspire that
Shared Vision

Leaders do not have to create the vision on their own. In fact, the more others are involved in the formation of a vision, the stronger will be their sense of ownership.



- Be able to share a compelling Vision in less than 5 minutes. (It may be all the time you have to hook someone enough to give you more time to get into the details)
- Communicate the Vision in multiple ways (as in meetings, one-on-one's, emails, newsletters, billboards, social media)
- Revisit the Vision at least once per month (for even the best communication of vision needs to be repeated...again...and again)



Ancient Sufi parable of the Six Blind Men and the Elephant



Be enriched with a wide range of perspectives.

Do we have representation from all stakeholder groups?

Let's not assume we know what people need. Let's ask. We may be pleasantly surprised at solutions others come up with, and what may have the greatest impact for the amount of effort invested.

Be intentional.



**Leaders
Enable Others
to Act**

Leaders Remove Barriers



**Leaders
Enable Others
to Act**

**Leaders help find ways over,
under and around obstacles**



Be aware that our own actions may unintentionally be a roadblock.



For instance...

- We exercise our power – often without recognizing the power society has given us (like position, class, race, gender, age) -- and unintentionally disempower others
- Our need to control things. We simply want things done “right”. But, “right” in who’s eyes?

Control has to be Shared

- Recognize that you won't be as successful on your own
- Purpose/Vision must be Shared
- ...Common Goal(s), but differing Objectives
- Loosening control / letting go
- ...not just for you, but also for those you lead
- Doesn't mean giving power to others so they can function without you. It means recognizing need for alignment and making decisions together...being able to act independently (within agreed limits)
- It means giving people enough latitude to accomplish things in their own way
- Seek order rather than control





Don't try to be a Lone Ranger and go-it-alone

It takes a **TEAM**

You need a team with
complementary perspectives, skills,
connections and true representation

A team also provides support and
mutual accountability



Utilize Workgroups

Develop workgroups to tackle definable objectives, as needed and appropriate

Include/involve others (those not on the core team)

- Tap into the expertise of others

- Provide others with limited commitment opportunities

- Let folks gain experience in smaller, less-risky situations

Avoid letting workgroups turn into committees

- Stay focused on the work and making progress

- Have a target end date

- Meet only as needed



Culture



- "Culture eats strategy for breakfast" (Peter Drucker)
- Culture clashes are the most commonly cited cause of the breakdown of a partnership or collaboration
- Understand your own culture; learn the culture of others
- Get comfortable with differences
- Learn how to build on the strengths each has to offer and find best fit
- Instead of "Great American Melting Pot" metaphor, think "Tossed Salad"
- Diversity is to be Valued
 - Don't just accommodate diversity, embrace it/value it
 - Use that diversity to find innovative solutions to problems that need a new approach.
 - Look for where value might be created at the rough edges between the different cultures in the relationship

Google's Quest for the Perfect Team Project Aristotle

- In ascending order...
 - **Impact** – the work is making a difference
 - **Meaning** – sense of purpose; the work is meaningful
 - **Structure and Clarity** – clear role expectations; goals are specific, challenging and attainable
 - **Dependability** – team members reliably complete quality work on time
 - **Psychological Safety** – perceived consequences of taking personal risk

Psychological Safety

- People are comfortable being themselves
- Interactions are characterized by mutual respect
- Conversational turn-taking is common – may be within a given conversation or over time across multiple conversations
- Inclusiveness characterized by social sensitivity and cultural awareness
- Interpersonal risk-taking is perceived as safe
- Interpersonal trust is evident
- As a leader...help convert anxiety to excitement



Psychological Safety Assessment

1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree

1. If you make a mistake on this team, it is not held against you.
2. Members of this team are able to bring up problems and tough issues.
3. People on this team embrace others for being different.
4. It is safe to take risks in this team.
5. It is not difficult to ask other members of this team for help.
6. No one on this team would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts.
7. Working with members of this team, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilized.

Psychological Safety Score:

7-16 Low
17-26 Moderate
27-35 High

Amy Edmondson

5 Ways to Help Create Psychological Safety

- 1) **Make psychological safety an explicit priority** – talk about its importance, and model it
- 2) **Facilitate everyone speaking up** – show genuine curiosity; honor truth-telling; be empathetic when someone speaks bravely
- 3) **Establish norms for how failure is handled** – encourage learning from failure; share own mistakes and lessons learned
- 4) **Create space for new ideas (even wild ones)** – give explicit permission; explain potential value
- 5) **Embrace productive conflict** – promote dialogue and productive debate; resolve conflicts productively and do not delay



Without a sense of Urgency, people are not likely to act.

(According to Kotter, #1 reason change initiatives fail)

Why now?

How is now any different than waiting a couple of months... or a year... or a few years?

While calm, we create a sense of Urgency, so folks will...



We respond to crises with a sense of urgency...

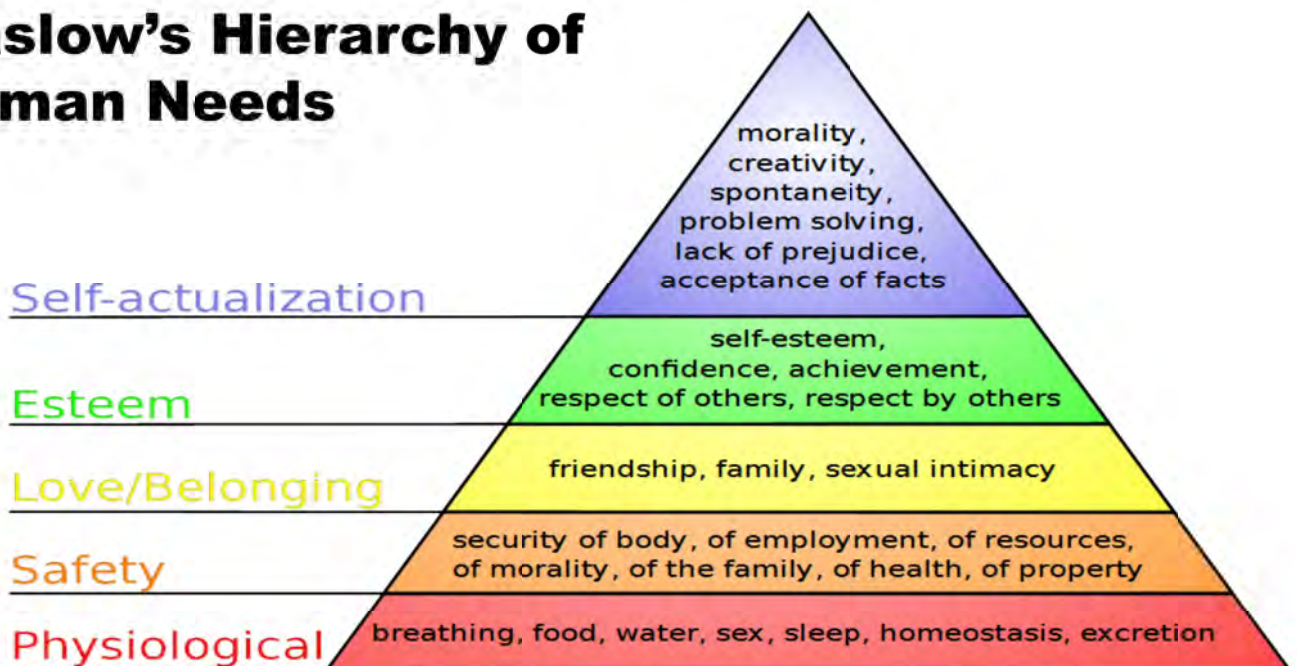


But, do we urgently pursue opportunities?

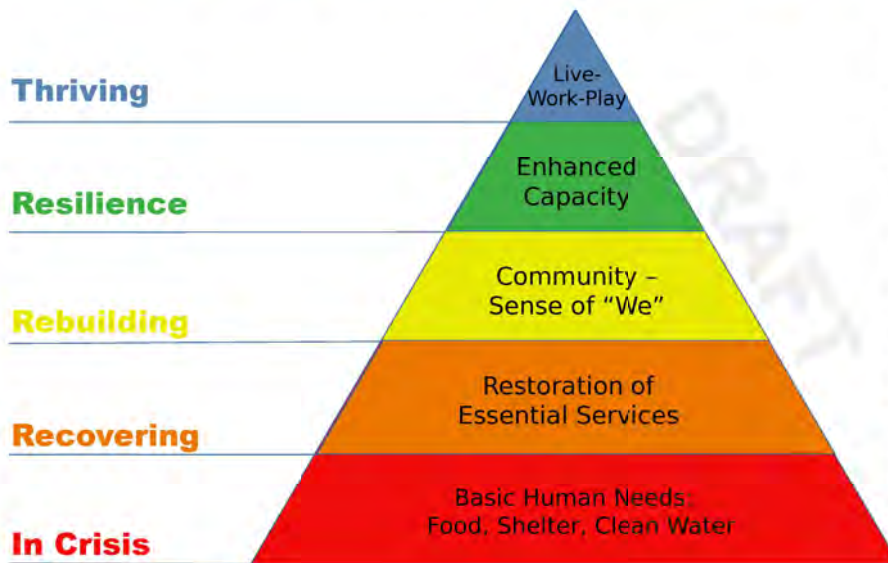
And, to keep folks motivated,
not only celebrate successes along the way,
design for short-term wins.



Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs



Hierarchy of Community Needs



Leaders need to balance meeting-people-where-they're-at with envisioning and building toward a preferred future

Leaders need to intentionally pull back - taking a broad, holistic view of both challenges and opportunities. Get off the dance floor and onto the balcony.

We are drawn to managing - managing a crisis can be energizing - decisions made; actions taken; and progress is apparent. But, leading through a crisis requires taking the long view - anticipating what comes next week, next month, next year, even next decade.



Collaborating?



Conflict



Almost inevitably, conflict will arise.

Recognize that conflict may be essential.



Leaders need to develop skills for surfacing and dealing effectively with conflict.



Conflict = the condition in which people's concerns appear to be incompatible

— Thomas & Kilmann

Probably the most common feeling underneath and feeding conflict is...

FEAR

Things like, fear of...

- ☐ change (I know the way things work now, but...)
- ☐ the unknown (How might that affect me?)
- ☐ loss of control (What if others make decisions that I don't like?)
- ☐ becoming less valued/important (Will people will no longer need what I'm good at?)
- ☐ loss of identity (How might people view me differently?)
- ☐ loss of competence (Will I be less competent in this new world?)
- ☐ Loss of the world that I know (I will miss this)



Collaborative Leadership Insights

The basic task of the collaborative leader is the delivery of results across boundaries between different organizations. They say "Getting value from difference is at the heart of the collaborative leader's task... they have to learn to share control, and to trust a partner to deliver, even though that partner may operate very differently from themselves."

Archer & Cameron, Collaborative Leadership