



The Tools of Leadership

Adaptive Leadership

- MA Leadership

Today we will...

*Reflect on what
we've noticed
about leadership
& skills*

*Adaptive situations:
What are they?*

*What leadership
approaches are
needed?*



Routine Problems vs. Adaptive Challenges



Routine Problems

- Easily defined
- An obvious, proven solution
- Often an expert on whom we can call to solve the problem for us

There is, in other words, a routine for dealing with the problem.

Adaptive Challenges

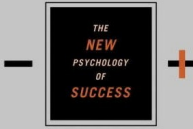
- Often hard to define
- No clear solution, and different people hold different views about its source
- No expert who can solve the problem for us

They are fundamentally different.



Individuals?
Organisations?

MINDSET



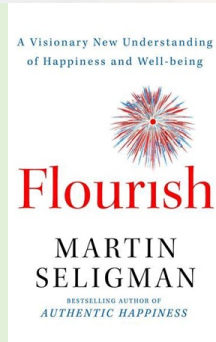
CAROL S. DWECK, PH.D.

Set learning goals toward mastery
Believe learning, talent and ability can all be developed
Effort and persistence
Embrace challenge and new ideas

'I never stopped trying to be qualified to do the job'

Darwin E Smith, CEO, Kimberly-Clark Corporation 1971-1991

Know your key strengths
and use them daily
Know how you learn best &
get more from learning
Ask questions



"Re-craft your life, work, love, play and friendships around your top strengths"

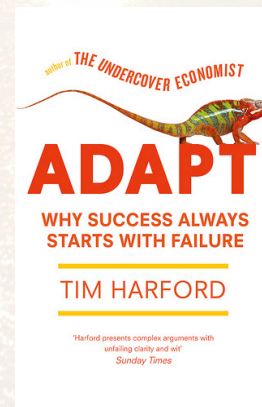
**Dr Martin Seligman,
founder of Positive Psychology**



Give your full attention to learning
Recognise the emotions you feel &
the impact they have
Allow yourself time to reflect & find value
Value the difference of others

'You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf'

Jack Kornfield, Buddhist Teacher & Psychologist

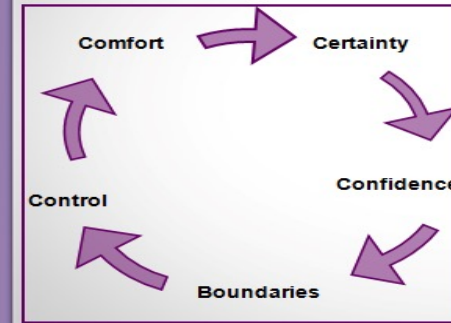


Design an experiment to test new ideas
Make the test small scale and failure survivable
Keep what works
Share your learning with others

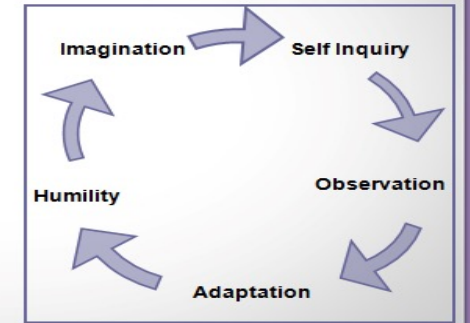
'Adapt: Why success always starts with failure'

Tim Harford, economist & author

Positive Capability



Negative Capability



Knowing more, understanding less
Be open to new ideas that challenge current thinking
Personal sense of inquiry
Reflecting on your performance

"What got you here won't get you there"

Marshall Goldsmith, leadership thinker, author, coach



From last time...

...your reflections on Leadership Development:

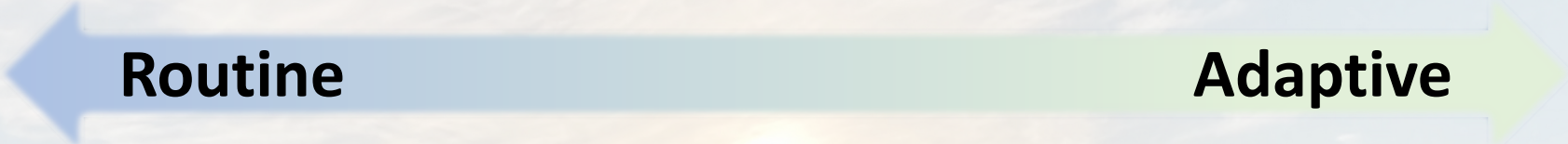
Where have you noticed leadership around you? What have you been thinking about?

What have you noticed about leadership that needs developing? What would you do to help the individuals?

How would you know impact?

Routine Problems vs Adaptive Challenges

Heifetz & Linsky (2009)



Routine

- ☐ Easily defined
- ☐ Proven solutions
- ☐ Use of expert to know what to do next (based on history)
- ☐ Policies, procedures and protocols can be developed and used

Knowns: use of experience, hierarchy and process

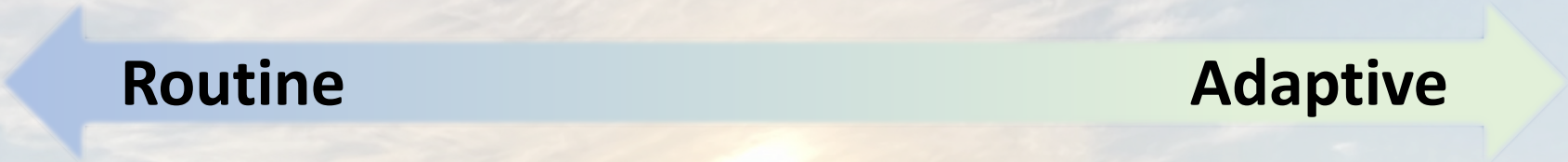
Adaptive

Often hard to define issues
No clear known solution
Lots of perspectives as to how to deal with the challenge
Single expertise cannot solve the problem

Unknowns: learning and collaboration are key

Routine problems vs Adaptive Challenges

Examples



Routine

Adaptive

Farming/eating
Building/shelter/housing
Transport
Technical work (e.g.
transactional services)

Technical & Adaptive

Bringing up children
Wellbeing
Education

Covid Pandemic response
Climate change
Global food security
Poverty
Good health and care

Adaptive Situations: ...what are your experiences?



Discuss:

- When/where have you noticed adaptive situations where people try to treat them as technical problems?
- What are your reflections?
- Is there anything you think you might have been done differently?

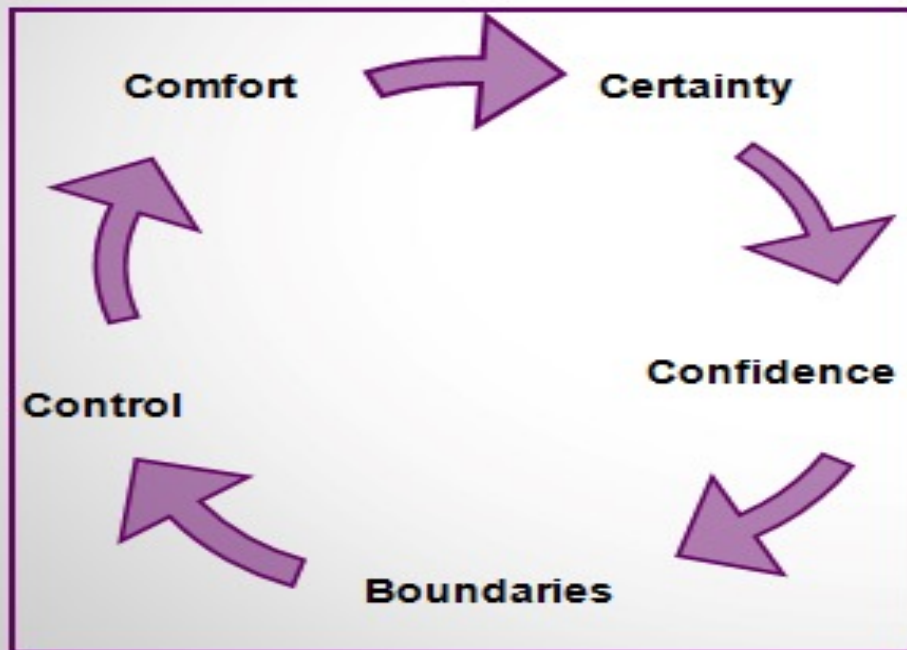
Picking the right leadership skills...

← Routine

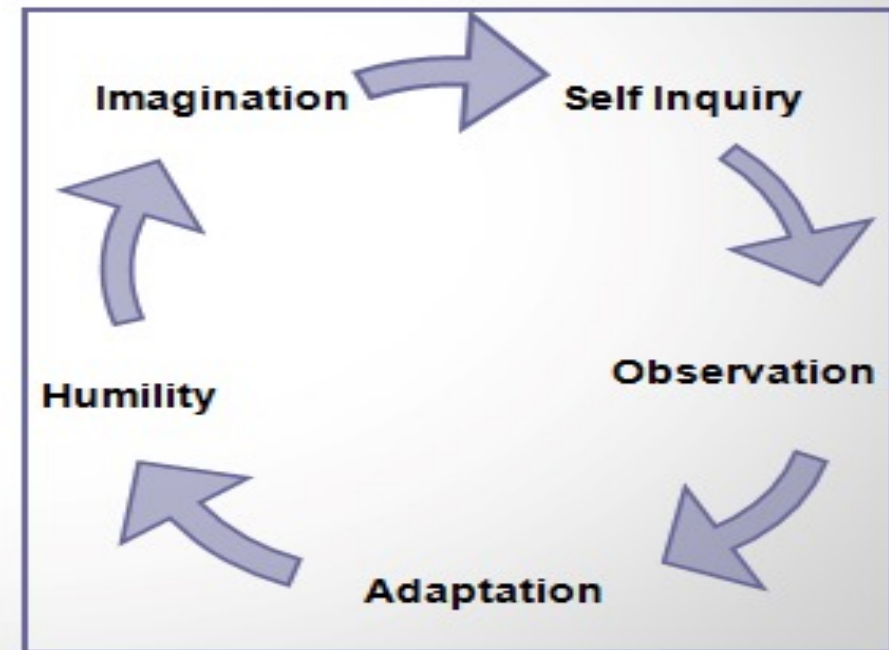
Adaptive →

Direction	Define the problem and point to solution	Identify issues/challenges are adaptive; ask questions
Protection	Protect the team/ organisation from external threats	Share awareness of external threats
Order Orientation	Focus people on their current roles	Disorient current roles; resist settling into new roles (too quickly)
Conflict	Restore order and minimise any conflict	Expose healthy conflict and/or let it emerge
Norms	Maintain – focus on keeping people “in line”	Challenge norms; make it safe for them to be challenge
Reward	Achieving agreed outputs	Challenge; humility; testing;

Positive Capability



Negative Capability



“What got you here won’t get you there”

Marshall Goldsmith, leadership thinker, author, coach

Adaptive Situations: ...explore challenges in your world?

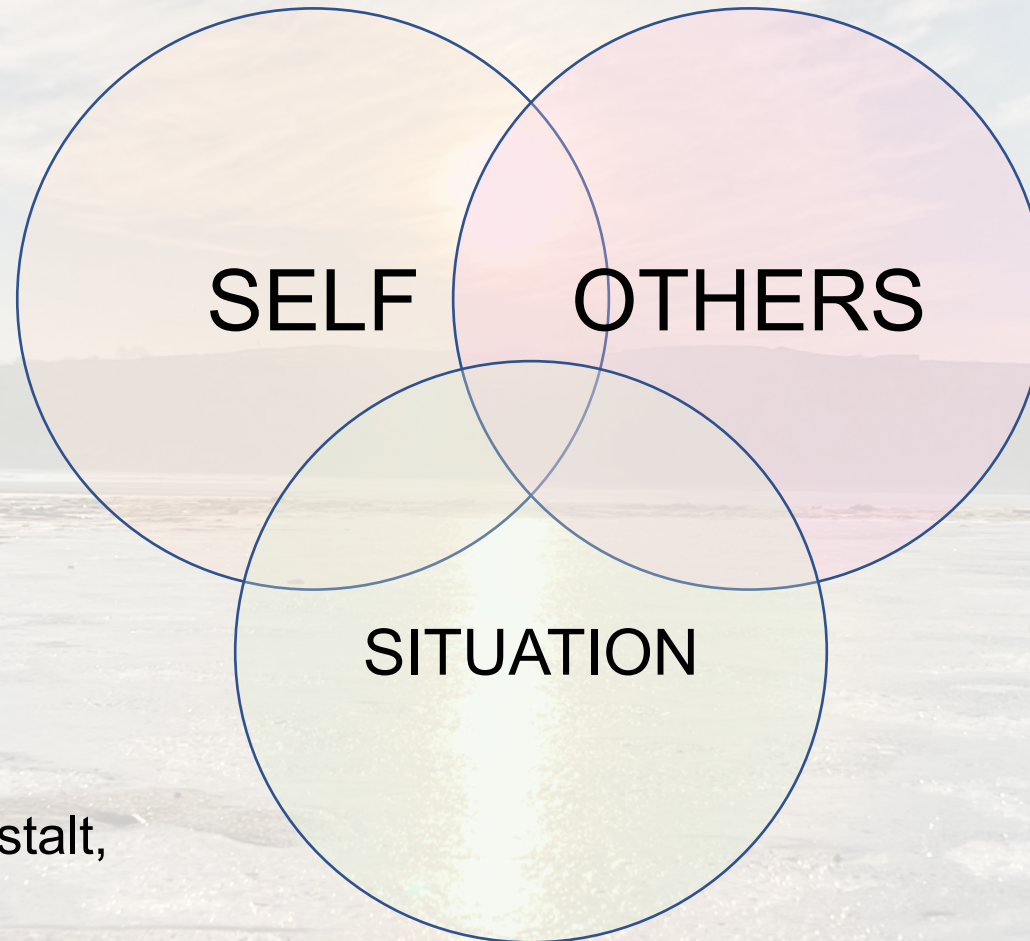


Discuss:

- What is going on in your world? Share an example each. Explore % technical vs adaptive.
- Pick one “case” – identify what are the technical & adaptive challenges
- Consider what the leadership behaviours are needed by people involved. Who has the most power? What role do they need to play?



SOS: Self, Others & Situation



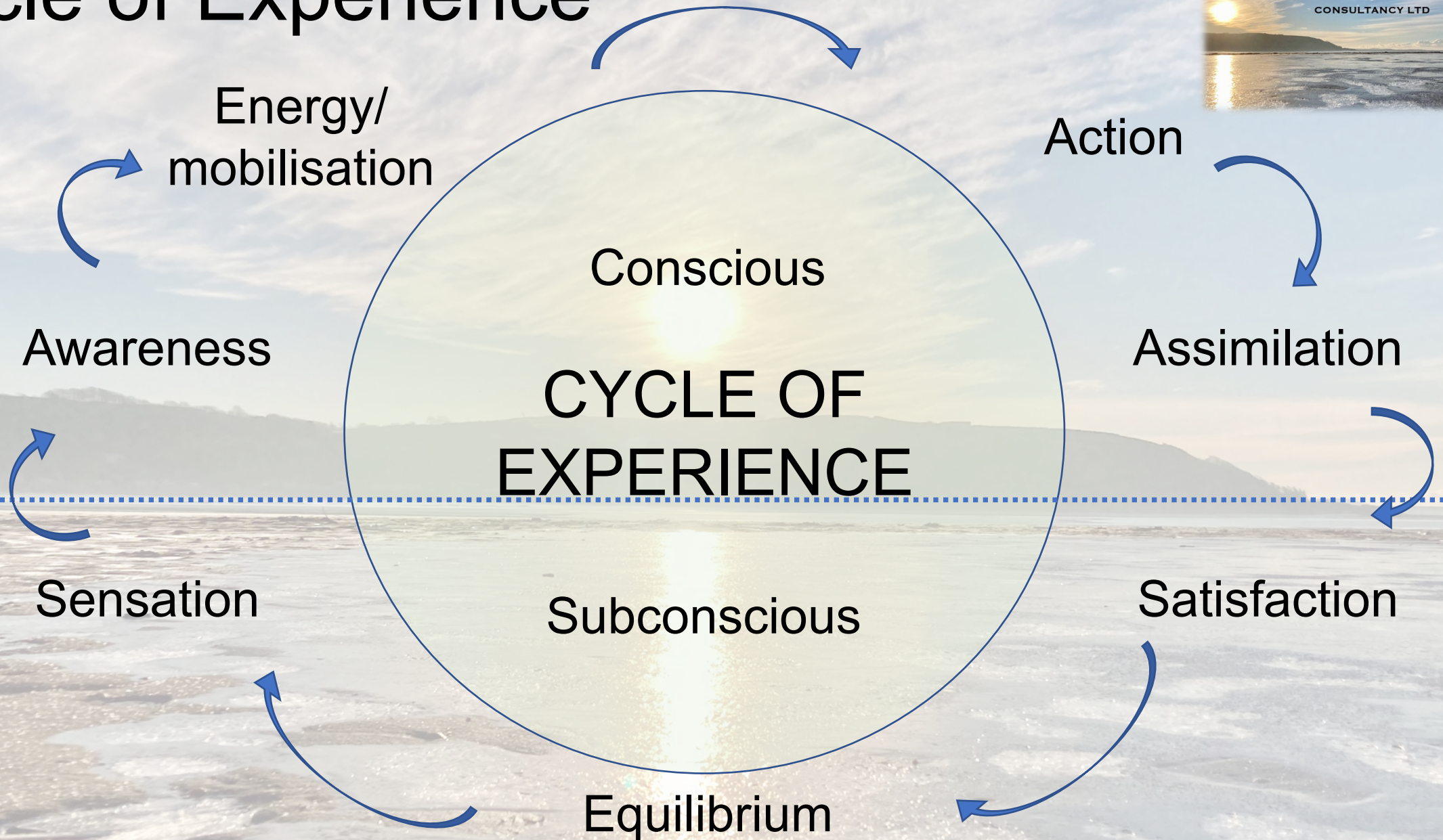
Constantly
evolving:

Focus, size,
boundaries =
Dynamic

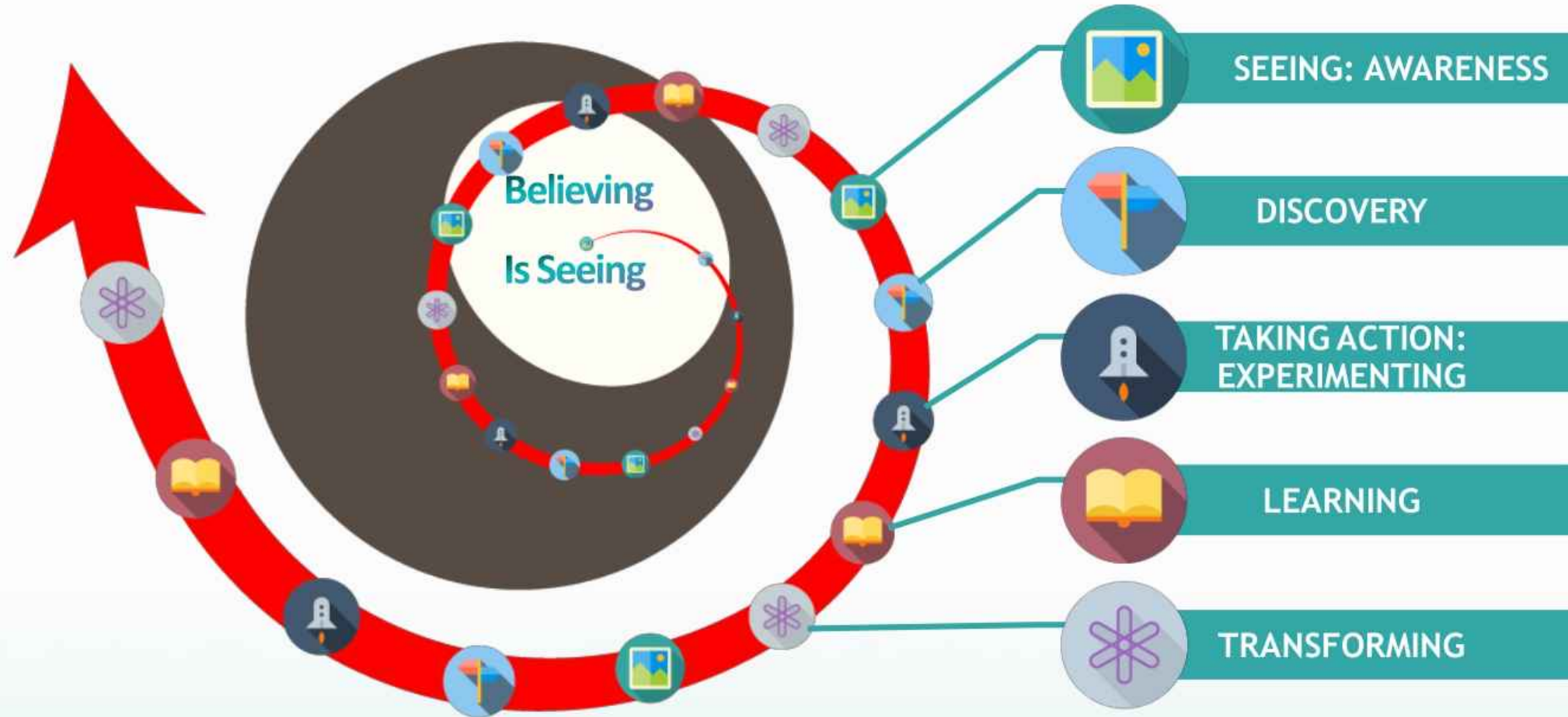
Our role: notice
bring attention,
adapt

Relational Organisational Gestalt,
Chidiac (2017)

Cycle of Experience



How: An Adaptive Leadership Framework



Adaptive leadership: my reflections...



- Relationships are adaptive: therefore working with other people is a constant adaptive challenge
- Include everyone: no-one has the wisdom to see/know everything
- Deliberately focus on and reward negative capability (e.g. listening, questioning, humility, experimentation)
- Let go of as many “control”/governance mechanisms as you can; make any remaining rules/processes as simple as possible (e.g. Netflix, Timpsons) and understood why they exist
- Value discomfort, challenge and healthy disagreement...**but** recognise that this is counter-cultural...so support individuals and teams/groups

[Helpful reading](#)

Reflecting on Adaptive Leadership:

Discuss:

- What have you noticed about technical problems and adaptive challenges?
- How do you see this playing out in your world?
- How will you consider issues/challenges in the future?
- What one action are you going to take from today?

The Tools of Leadership Assignment:

Attributes and Impacts of Leaders

Choose an organisation within any industry/sector, and critically analyse the impact that poor leadership has had upon the organisation and its environment.

It would be useful to review a range of organisations to generate different perspectives, for example: BHS, Toys R Us, Blockbuster, Manchester United, Northern Rock and FIFA etc.

Discuss the significance of leadership and critically evaluate how different leadership styles and emotional intelligence can be applied by leaders within organisations to different people and contexts. Use appropriate models/theories to support your discussion.

Discuss the enduring dysfunctional qualities of character which mark the toxic leader, with consideration of the impact and effect that toxic leaders can have upon the performance and culture of an organisation.

Critically review and appraise the role and feasibility of leadership development programmes, with reference to the benefits and limitations of such programmes.

Reference should be made to the importance of leaders understanding their own strengths and limitations as a leader.



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