

Leading from the Roots

Nature Inspired Leadership Lessons for Today's World
By Dr. Kathleen E. Allen

Living Systems...

are interdependent— change in one part of the system influences other parts of the system in expected and unexpected ways.



become more diverse as they evolve

Growing diversity is characteristic of a living system and a sign of evolution.

Our organizations are filled with diversity of perspectives, viewpoints, functions, ages, ethnicities, experiences, talents, gender and gifts. How can we leverage diversity to help our organization evolve into a generous system? Focus on what we can contribute rather than consume.

Notes:



are in constant change

Once we begin internalizing the notion of interdependence, it's important to know that everything we're connected to is always changing. This of course means we are too. Adapting is a fundamental principle of nature and human beings.

Notes:



are filled with feedback loops that facilitates evolution

Nature is filled with feedback loops that reinforce certain behaviors and discourage others. This is how the living system thrives over time. Some feedback loops reinforce behavior to encourage more of the same behavior and other feedback loops balance the system by discouraging behavior.

Notes:



cannot be steered or controlled – only nudged and attracted

Being interdependent and connected by feedback loops means that organizations behave more like networks than hierarchies. Networks inherently resist control. Living systems can only be attracted or nudged to gain the active cooperation of people.

Notes:



only accept solutions that the system helps to create

When people are actively engaged in co-creating change, there isn't a reason to resist change. We can take this a step further and say that, like all living systems, people support what they help to create.

Notes:



only pay attention to what is meaningful to them here and now

In a living system, we need to articulate why things matter. If we want employees to actively support the larger purpose of the organization, we need to answer these questions:

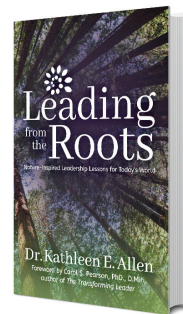
- Why does this matter to the individual employee?
- Why does this matter to the organization?
- Why does this matter to the larger society?

Notes:



“When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.”

- John Muir



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