Designing the Adaptive Organisation

Eduardo Nofuentes

neu²¹

Eduardo —
Investor, Director, Advisor *inhale*
and Leadership and Ways of Working expert.

About me

neu²¹

BORN IN BARCELONA

LIVE IN MELBOURNE

IN 1972

SINCE 2005

About me

neu²¹

We are a —
Transformation Consultancy, Ventures Studio
inhale
and Product Lab.

We combine creativity, innovation and insight to create unstoppable organisations — creating effective solutions to the world's most meaningful problems.

We make work better for a new world.

We are Neu.

Humanising the
world of work

neu²¹

How we transform organisations —

Agility & Ways of Working

Adapt your organisation to constant change.

Dreaming of a strategy that doesn't just sit in the bottom drawer? How about designing your future state and unlocking a culture that rolls with change? Our happy place is getting teams working more effectively.

Leadership

Develop trusted and authentic leaders.

Level up leadership from foundations to futures through our learning experiences, programs and coaching for teams and individuals that focus on leading self, leading teams and leading the future!

Innovation

Drive cultures of innovation. Launch product. Invest in the future.

Ready to revamp your organisation's innovation game? We don't just talk, we empower your organisation with the thinking, tools and experience to build sustainable innovation.

Product & Service

Create game-changing digital experiences.

Looking to improve your customer experience, unlock new business value or create new digital products to serve your customers and your business better? We help you find the right problems, create & test service models and products to design game-changing digital experiences users love.
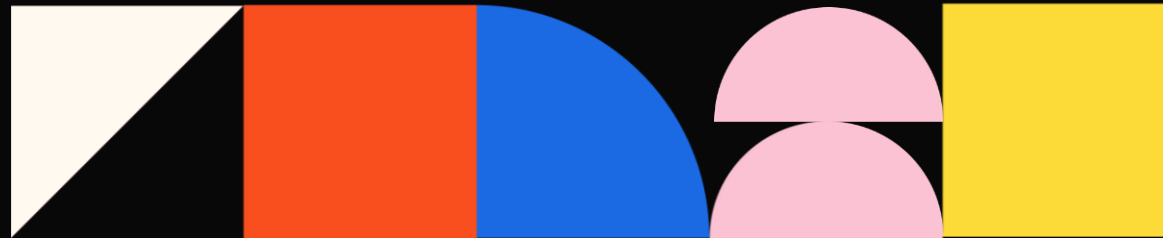
AI

Transform your productivity and growth with AI.

Looking for unbiased and honest support to explore the power of AI? Need to get your head around what this platform offers your business, but don't know where to start? We can help you understand AI's potential and ways in which you can maximise on this new technology.

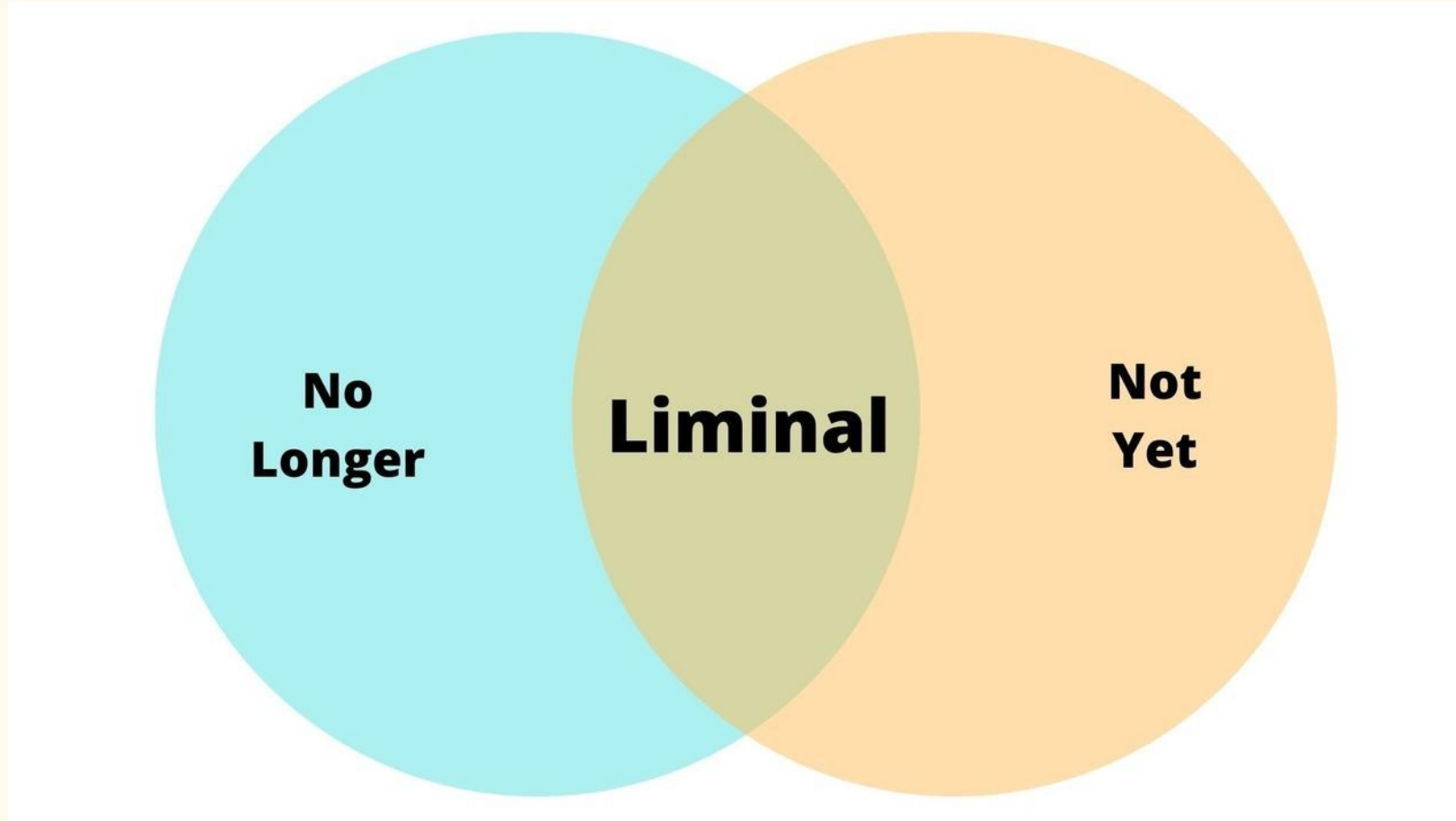We are an adaptive organisation

neu²¹

The Cultural Agility Model—

	The ability to understand multiple local contexts and work within them to deliver superior services to end users				
Cultural Agility Category	Misses the differences	Judges the differences	De-emphasises the differences	Deeply comprehends the differences	Bridges the differences
Organisational Metaphor	ARMY	PRODUCTION LINE	FAMILY	LIVING SYSTEM	EVOLVING SYSTEM
Cultural Experience	Compliance	Standardisation	Cooperation & Consensus	Collaboration & Cohesion	Evolutionary & adaptive
Ways of Working	• Task-centred • Only those with authority lead • Seeks approval from authority • Forced respect of hierarchy • Very low tolerance for ambiguity • Always follow the leader	• Organisation-centred • Collective compliance • Consistent adherence to expected cultural norms • Low tolerance for ambiguity • Collective exhaustion from adherence to policy • Look to the leader	• Employee focused • Shared vision • Shared values • Customer centricity • Empowerment • Collaboration led and enabled by those in assigned leadership roles	• Customer and employee centred • Shared vision • Higher purpose • Interlocking circles of responsibilities • Collaboration led by anyone depending on the work	• Human and system-centred • Evolving vision and purpose • Development over performance • Experimentative • Distributed and organic leadership
Ways of Relating	• Power • Fear • Needs direction • Low innovation • Low tolerance for change • Strongly values qualifications, tenure and seniority	• Blame • Control • Strong processes • Avoidance of conflict • Judges non-conformers • Values qualifications tenure and seniority	• Balanced needs between stakeholders • Values emotional intelligence • Empowerment • Sharing of Knowledge • Effective cross-functional collaboration • Appreciation demonstrated	• Distributed decision making • Strong values & emotional intelligence • Whole-self acknowledgment • Organic cross-functional collaboration • Whole-hearted leadership • Human centric communication • Embedded systems of learning	• Teams build and evolve their own purpose in connection with organisational purpose • Develops emotional intelligence in others • Stories of living values shared across organisation
Ways of Thinking	• Perceived absence of choice • Collective acceptance of unethical behaviour • Self centred • Tick-the-box • Risk aversion • Lack of autonomy • Here and Now Perspective	• Right/wrong, good/bad, win/lose us/them • Short-term perspective • Budget/Profit maximisation • Quality/Cost/Delivery mindset	• Culture over strategy • Continuous improvement • Trusting relationships • Tolerance of ambiguity • Autonomy	• Whole System outlook • Strategy with Culture • Innovation • Anti-fragility • Change means opportunity • Greater acceptance of ambiguity • Looking ahead	• Constantly adapting and evolving • Change is the norm and not feared • Thrives in ambiguity • Structure may be present but it is not conflated with authority or power • Long-term thinking
Enabling values	• Status quo • Security • Inferiority • Order	• Productivity • Quality • Control • Process orientation • Compliance	• Respect • Trust • Love • Accountability • Teaching	• Creativity • Agility • Innovation • One team mindset • Transparency	• Change • Altruism • Shared leadership • Purpose-led
Derailing values & behaviours	• Control through Fear • Siloed Systems & Communication • Anti-Accountability	• Bureaucracy • Caution • Presenteeism • Individualism	• Perfectionism • Presenteeism • Decision by Committee	• Self indulgent • Disconnection from commerciality • Idealism	• Disorganisation • Intellectualism • Romanticising risk

neu²¹

The key to becoming an adaptive organisation

neu²¹

Learn to live in a state of liminality

No
Longer

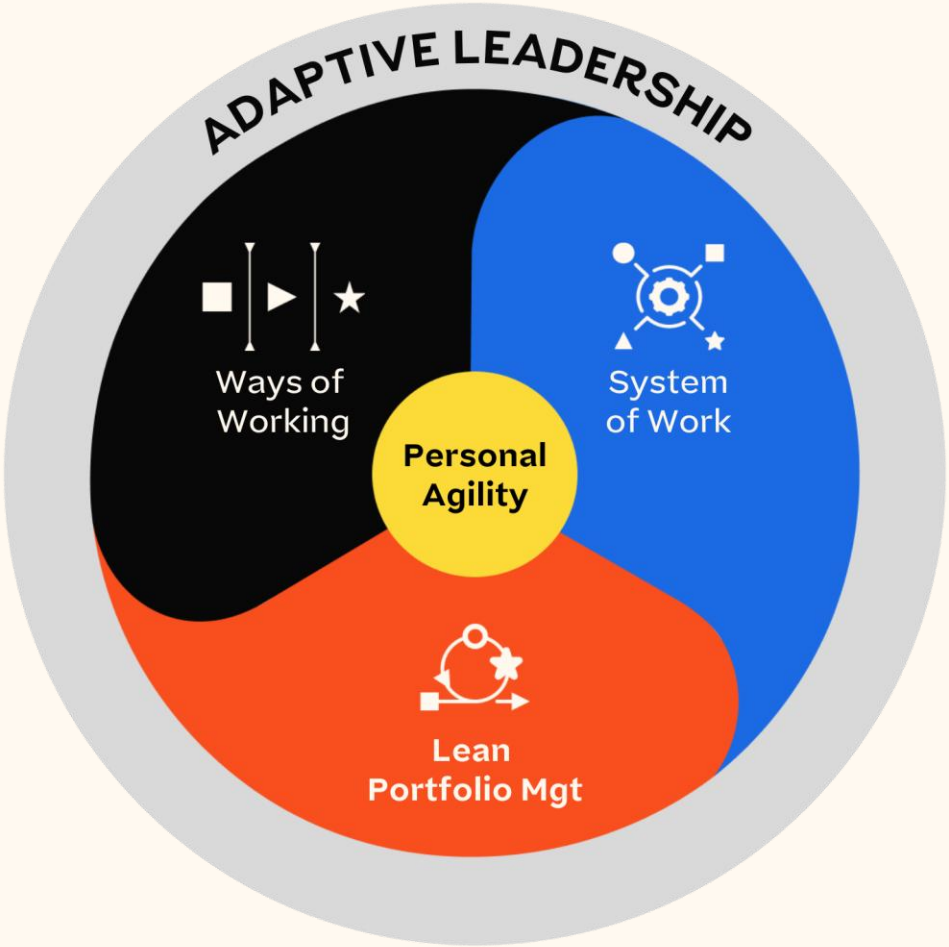Liminal

Not
Yet

Liminality

neu²¹

How have we become an adaptive organisation

neu²¹
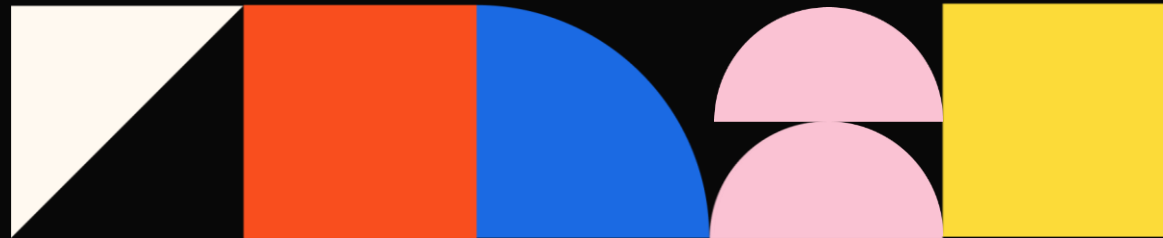
1. We use effectively Ways of Working

neu²¹

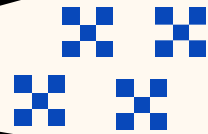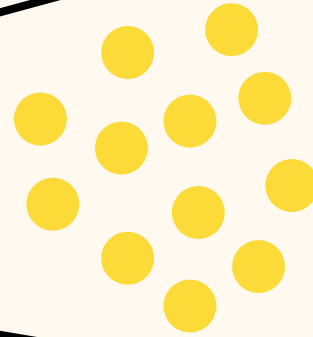# Our Ways of Working Approach
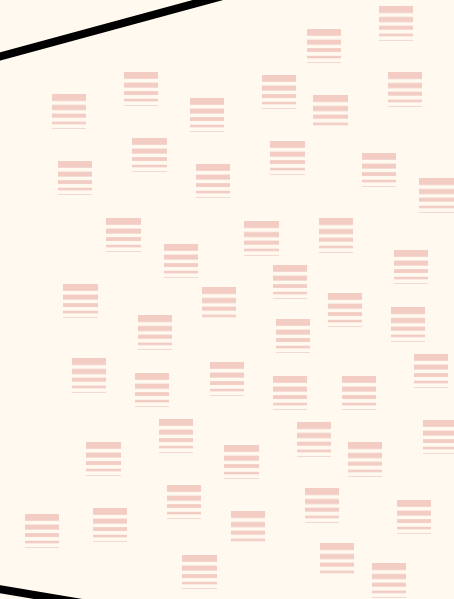
ag-ile
"the ability to move quickly and easily"

neu²¹

In summary —

Agile is a
MINDSET

Described by
4 VALUES

Defined by
12 PRINCIPLES

Manifested through an
**UNLIMITED NUMBER
OF PRACTICES**

Agile is a mindset

neu²¹

The mindset —

TRANSPARENCY

of all data, actions, and decisions

Truth in every

COMMUNICATION

RESPECT

for the worth of every person
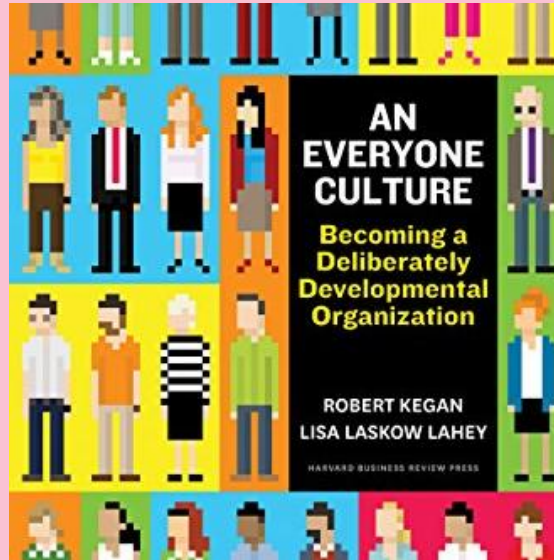
TRUST

that each person will support the team

Commitment to the team and to the team's goals shows

COLLABORATION

The agile mindset

neu²¹

2. We put personal growth at the centre of our strategy

An Everyone Culture
Becoming a
Deliberately
Developmental
Organization

ROBERT KEGAN
LISA LASKOW LAHEY

HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW PRESS

A Deliberately Developmental Organization (DDO) is a company that
places personal growth at the core of its operations, integrating
employee development into everyday work processes to foster
continuous learning and collective success.

An Everyone Culture - By Robert Keegan and Lisa Lahey

neu²¹

This is where Personal Agility comes in...

neu²¹
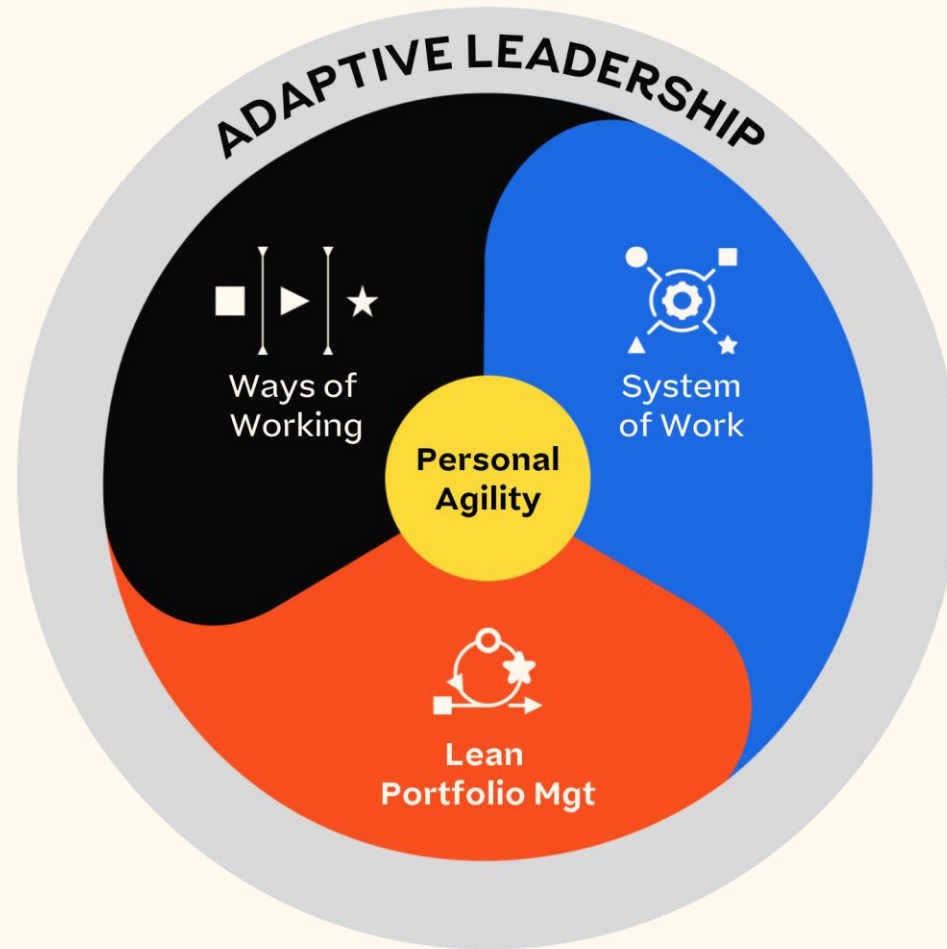
Personal agility, refers to an individual's ability to adapt, learn, and grow in response to changing circumstances by continuously developing their skills, self-awareness, and mindset.
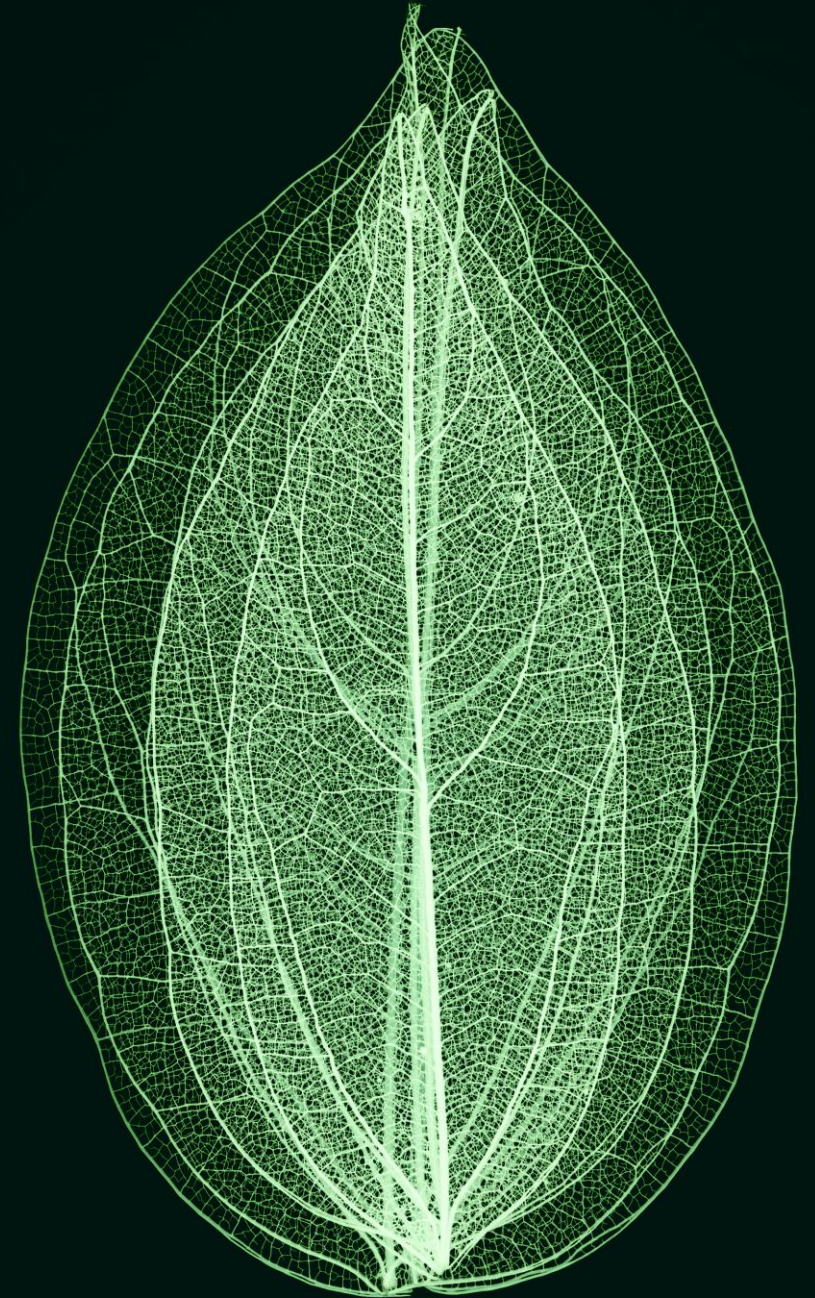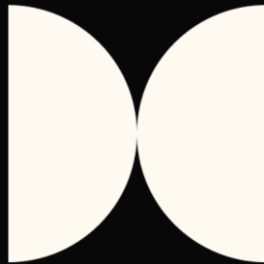
ADULT DEVELOPMENT

It is the way we grow and evolve over time

IT IS THE STORY OF OUR LIVES

- Vertical development is about changing **HOW** we know and view the world. Horizontal development is about expanding **WHAT** we know

- It's vertical because we include and transcend as we move through stages
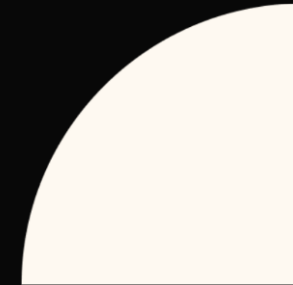
Adult Development

The three components to develop Personal Agility—

House

Supportive
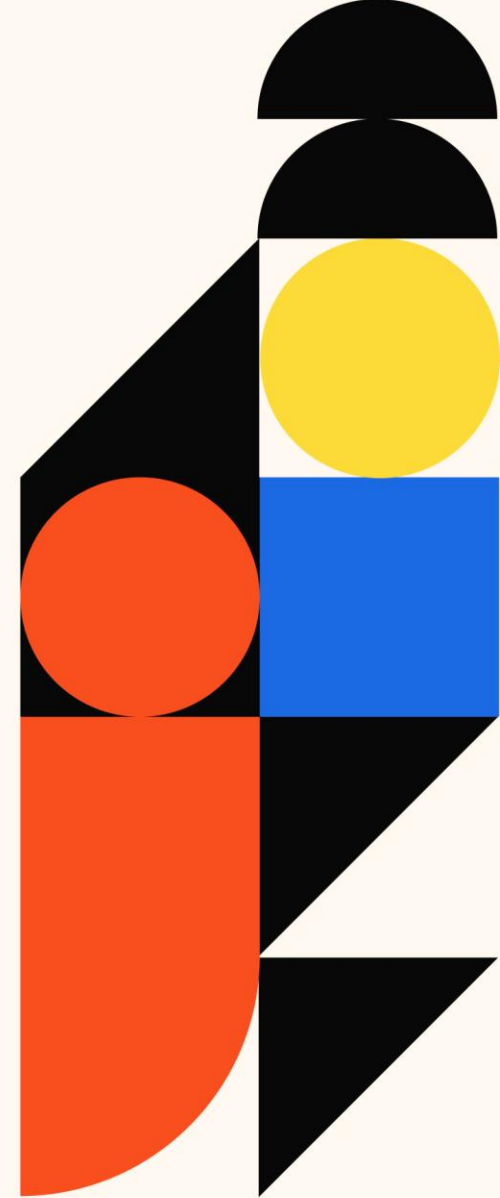Environments

Edge

Embracing one's
edge

Groove

Embedded practices
for development

neu²¹

Principles

1.Personal Growth is a Primary Activity
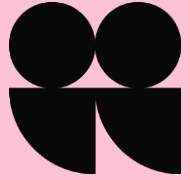
2.Psychological Safety is Paramount

3.Feedback is a Gift

4.Collective responsibility for each other's growth

5. See the Big Picture (Align personal goals with business goals)

neu²¹

3. We apply Futures and Systems Thinking

neu²¹
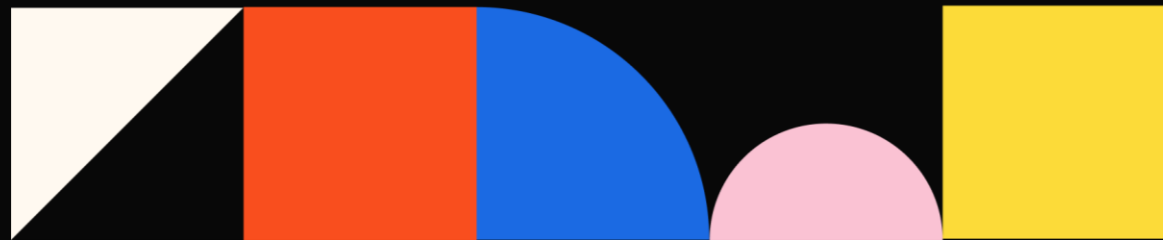
Futures Thinking

"The future can't be predicted, but it can be envisioned and brought lovingly into being"

— Donella Meadows, Thinking in Systems

neu²¹

Actively seeking to discover alternative futures not yet identified in support of making more informed decisions about our futures in the present.

neu[21]

What is futures thinking?
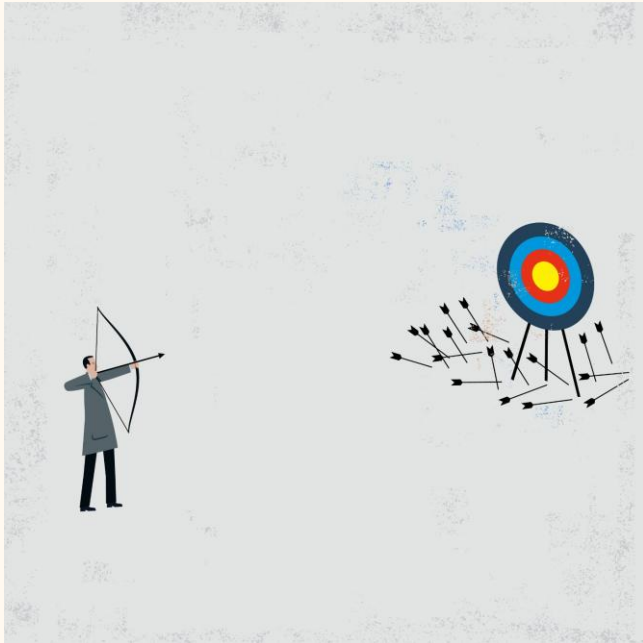
Law Number One

"The Future" cannot be "predicted" because the future does not exist.

Law Number Two

Any useful ideas about the futures must first appear ridiculous.

Law Number Three

Futures are not static nor passive — we shape our futures and thereafter our futures shape us.

Three laws – by dr. jim dator
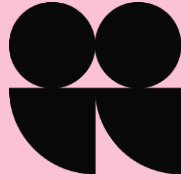
Systems Thinking

"Every system is perfectly designed

to get the results it gets."

— W. Edwards Deming

neu²¹

Definitions—

A system

A set of interdependent objects interacting dynamically for a common purpose.

Systems thinking

The art and science of making reliable inferences about behaviour (of a system) by developing an increasingly deep understanding of the underlying structure of that system.

neu²¹

Linear thin

Systems thinking

Short term
solutions with
unintended
consequences.

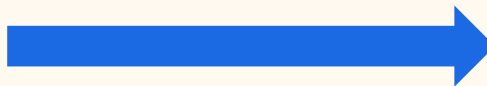Takes a holistic
view of the problem.

neu²¹

Levels of systems thinking —

6	**Paradigm Shift**	What 'basic concepts' govern how the system is organised?	TRANSFORMATIVE
5	**Purpose / Vision**	Why does the system exist? What result / 'truth' is the system seeking?	GENERATIVE
4	**Mental Models**	What values, assumptions and beliefs shape the system?	REFLECTIVE
3	**Structure/ Processes**	How are the parts related? What influences the patterns?	CREATIVE
2	**Patterns (of behavior)**	What are the trends over time?	ADAPTIVE
1	**Events**	What is happening?	REACTIVE

LEVERAGE INCREASES

neu²¹

4. We are a team full of
"subtle" leaders

neu²¹

THE JOURNAL OF VALUES-BASED LEADERSHIP

JVBL

An international publication exploring ethics in business and governmental leadership

Journal Home
About This Journal
Editorial Board
Journal Information

Submit Article

Most Popular Papers

Receive Custom Email Notices or RSS

Select an issue:
All Issues | Browse

Enter search terms:
[ ] Search
in this journal

Advanced Search

VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY
BUSINESS

Subtle Leadership: When Referent Power is Subtly Powerful

Luz E. Quiñones-González, *University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez Campus*

Follow

Corresponding Author
Luz E. Quiñones-González, PhD

Abstract
The following research presents the construct of "subtle leadership" in a conceptual discussion as a new way of perceiving and studying leaders of the twenty-first century. Its core objective points toward the conceptualization of "subtle leadership," sharing a basic definition to provoke discussion and emerging theoretical framework in order to better understand the current organizational reality. Some leadership styles such as servant leadership, shared leadership, and authentic leadership are discussed to compare and contrast them with "subtle leadership," emphasizing that leadership is viewed as a process and not only as styles or personal traits. Subtle leadership is primarily based on a high level of referent power and a holistic perspective of the personal and process factors essential for leading and influencing today's workplace. Considering the potential of "subtle leadership" for further discussion in the academic world, it aims to generate provoking theory building.

Recommended Citation
Quiñones-González, Luz E. (2022) "Subtle Leadership: When Referent Power is Subtly Powerful," *The Journal of Values-Based Leadership*: Vol. 15 : Iss. 2 , Article 14.
DOI: https://doi.org/10.22543/1948-0733.1405
Available at: https://scholar.valpo.edu/jvbl/vol15/iss2/14

⬇ Download

INCLUDED IN
Business Administration, Management, and Operations Commons, Business Law, Public Responsibility, and Ethics Commons, Human Resources Management Commons, Industrial and Organizational Psychology Commons, Leadership Studies Commons, Organizational Behavior and Theory Commons

SHARE

Luz E. Quiñones

Leadership

neu²¹

What is Leadership?

Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, as well as the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives.

neu²¹

Leadership is about giving meaning to your life beyond your own ambition

neu²¹

What is Power of Influence?

Power of Influence is defined as the absolute capacity of an individual agent to influence the behaviour or attitudes of one or more designated target persons at a given point in time.

neu²¹

The five types of power —

COERCIVE

is based on authority over punishment

REWARD

is the perception by the target person that an agent controls important resources and rewards desired by the target person

LEGITIMATE

is the power stemming from formal authority over work activities

EXPERT

is present when task-relevant knowledge and skill constitute the most fortuitous way to perform a task or solve an important problem

REFERENT

is derived from the desire of others to please an agent toward whom they have strong feelings of affection, admiration and loyalty

What is Leadership —

neu²¹

Subtle Leadership is a way of influencing others through "referent power".

In other words, Subtle Leadership is based on the ability of anyone in the organisation to influence others based on the values, personal traits and way of showing up without the need for formal power or even a following.

neu²¹

The five traits of a Subtle Leader —

INTRINSICTLY MOTIVATED

driven by their values, a higher purpose
and a system bigger than themselves

AUTHENTIC

an inner confidence and openness to

vulnerability, which attracts others to follow

them

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

the ability to empathise with multiple
perspectives while making balanced decision

EMPOWERMENT

assuming trust in people,
communicating with clarity to evoke
confidence and providing the safety to
act

INTEGRITY AND TRUSTWORTHY

possesses wisdom and reliability, and listens
attentively

Subtle Leadership —

neu²¹

The path towards becoming a great leader, then, is less about adopting new techniques and strategies, and more about the journey of self-discovery and alignment with one's deeper values.

neu²¹

What can you do to help your organization become more adaptive?

neu²¹

Be a transitional character

neu²¹

Thank you

neu²¹