Complexity

Leading Change in an Uncertain World

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OrgDev Live Conference

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7 Takeaways

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1. Complexity is not just complicated
2. Look for patterns, not just problems
3. Start with what is already there
4. Notice what is emerging
5. Plan lightly and adapt often
6. Lead with humility and wisdom
7. Seed the future through your actions

What this means in practice

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1 Complexity is not just complicated

A complicated problem may be difficult but knowable. Complex systems involve people, relationships and context, so prediction has limits and adaptation matters.

2 Look for patterns, not just problems

Notice the repeated behaviours, relationships and assumptions that shape what happens. Patterns often explain why the same issues keep returning.

3 Start with what is already there

Change begins in a river that is already flowing. Understand the current reality, history and strengths before deciding what needs to shift.

4 Notice what is emerging

Pay attention to weak signals, small changes and new possibilities. What is emerging may point to risk, opportunity or the beginning of something different.

5 Plan lightly and adapt often

Plans still matter, but they are not guarantees. Pilot, review, learn and adjust rather than treating any change of course as failure.

6 Lead with humility and wisdom

Complexity asks leaders and practitioners to be humble, thoughtful and open. Use evidence, but also value judgement, experience and intuition.

7 Seed the future through your actions

The future is co-created through what we do now. The way we lead, relate and intervene shapes what comes next.

Reflective question

What patterns in your organisation have become so familiar that nobody questions them anymore?

One action to try

At the end of your next team meeting, leave five minutes and ask: 'What is new, interesting, surprising or worrying that we should be paying attention to?'