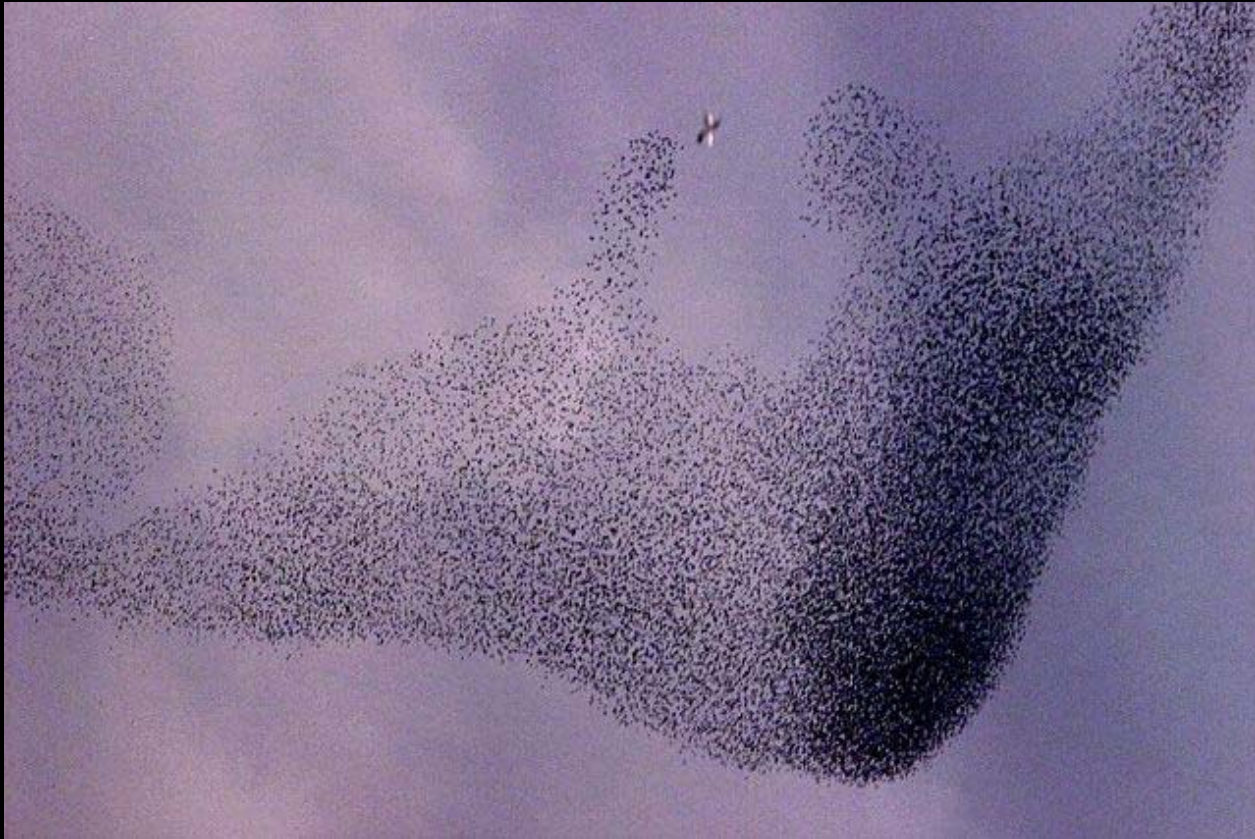


Leadership in Complex Organisations



**PENZ Leadership for Learning Conference
November 16th – 17th 2009**

Chris Jansen – University of Canterbury, New Zealand

Overview

- generate a collaborative conversation
- explore dimensions of leadership and management
- discuss the nature of complex organisations such as schools
- unpack the qualities required to lead effectively in these settings



Rationale

"We must reject the idea – well intentioned, but dead wrong – that the primary path to greatness in the social sectors is to become 'more like a business'

indeed tomorrows great leaders will come from the social sectors, not the other way around.

(Collins, 2005)

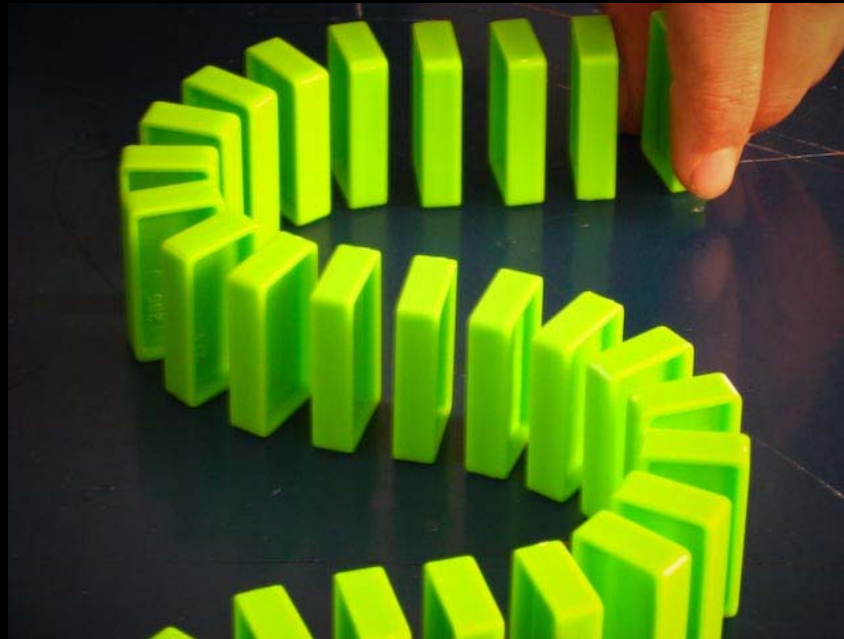
Good to great in the Social Sectors.



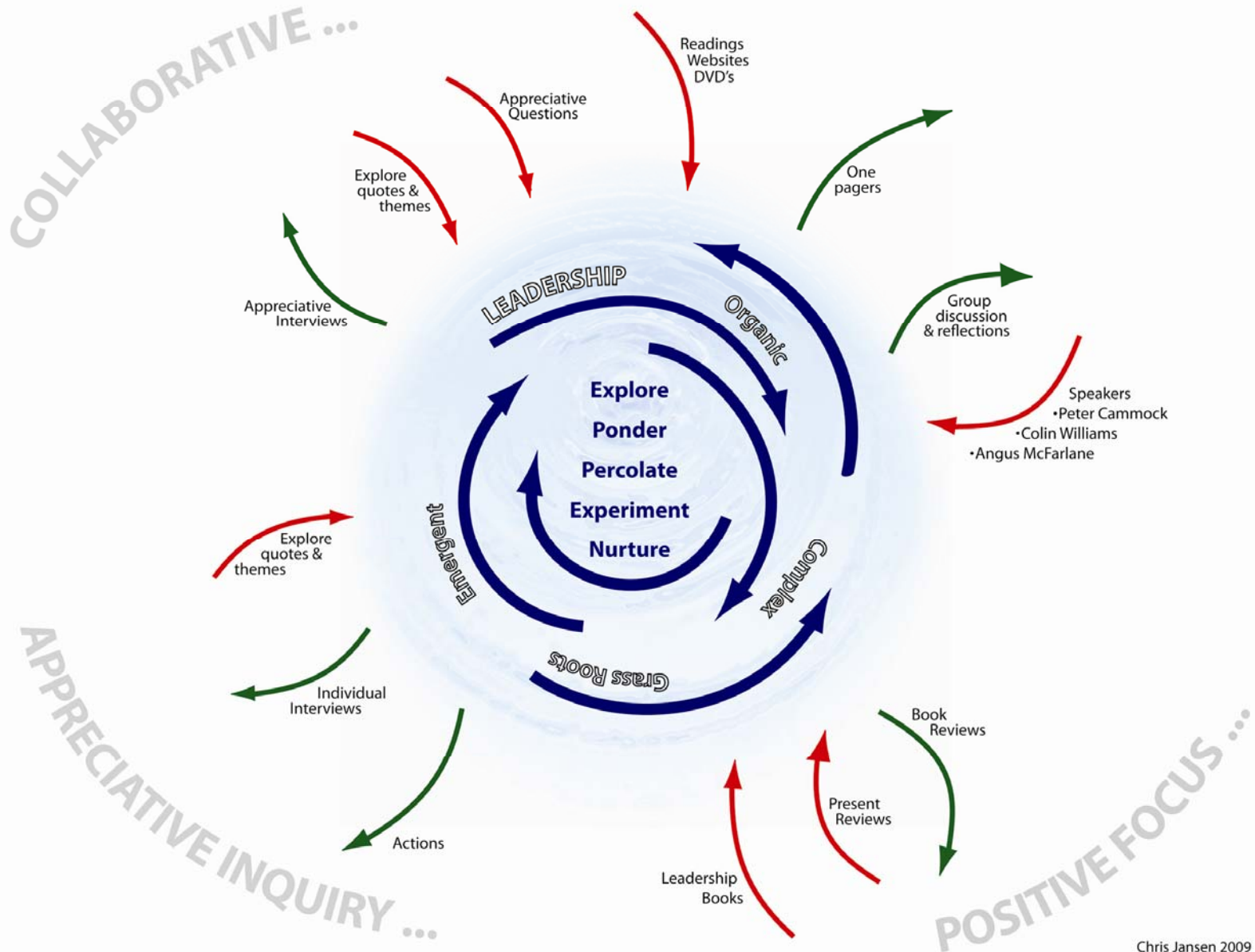
Leadership Project: Key areas of inquiry:

1) *"What beliefs, values and actions characterise leaders in adolescent focussed NGO's in NZ?"*

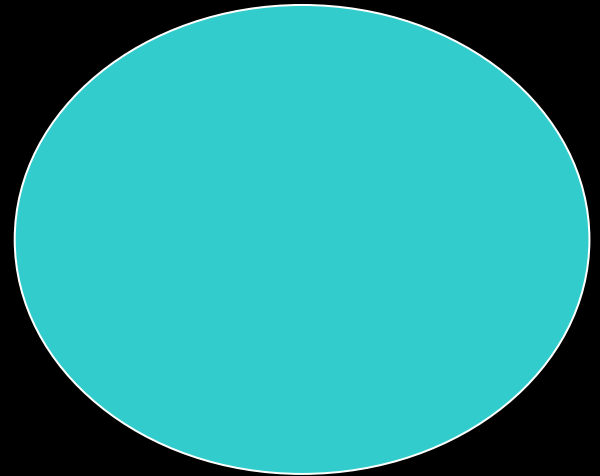
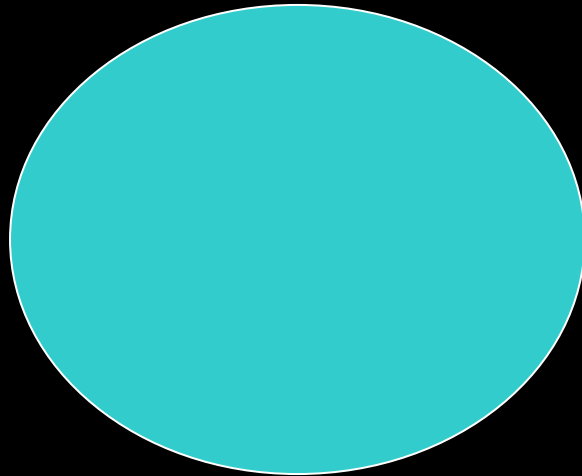
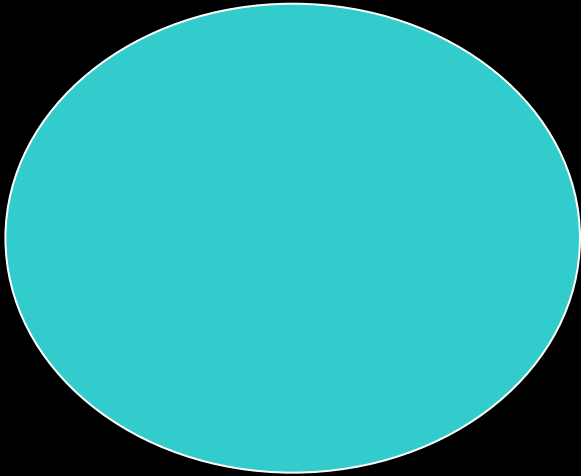
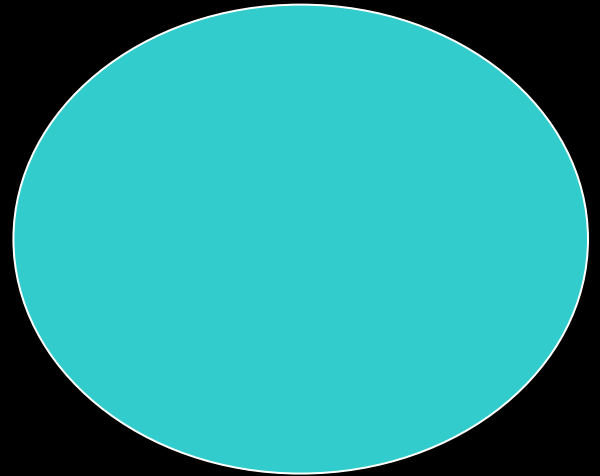
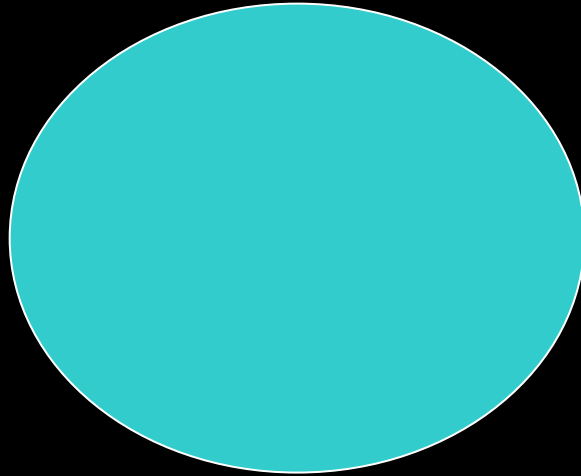
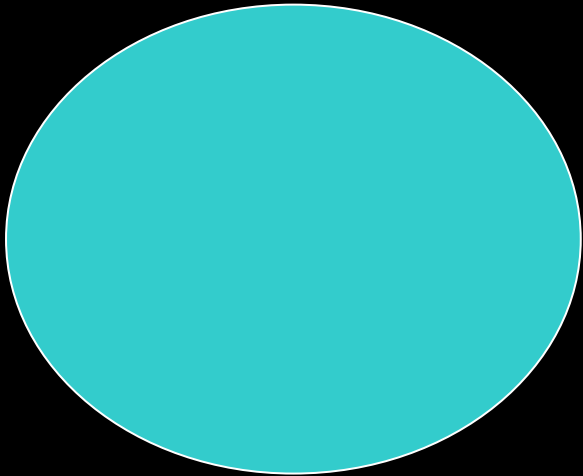
2) *"How does exploring NGO leadership appreciatively impact our practice?"*



Exploring our Leadership



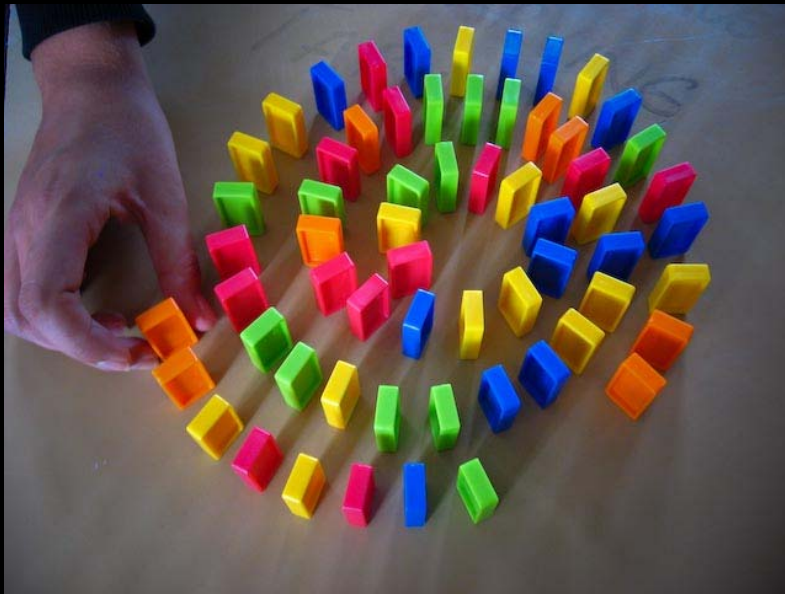
Questions to ponder



Leadership Literature

Leadership as a concept has been widely studied from multiple professional viewpoints.

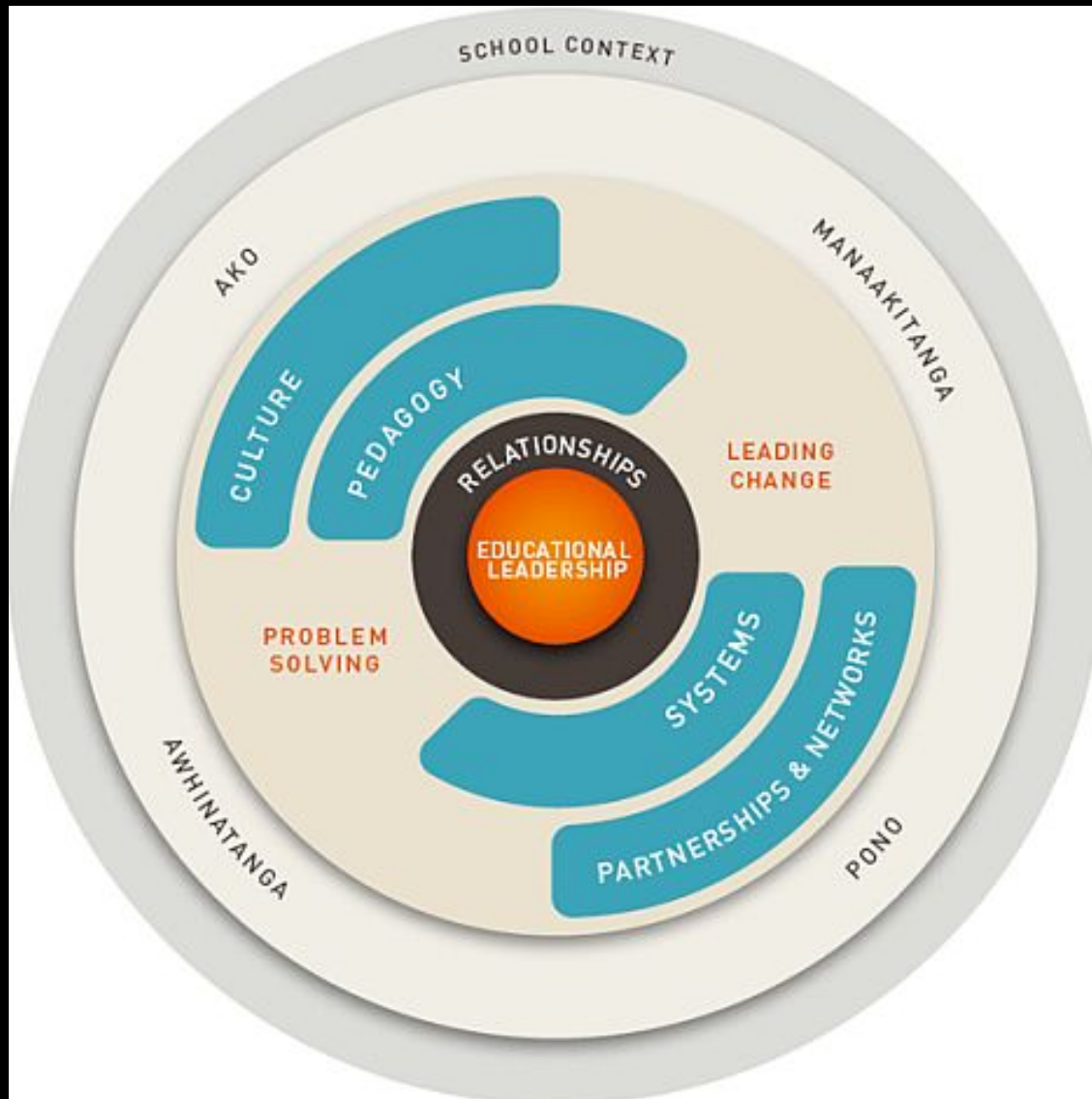
- In excess of 3000 studies focusing on leadership - Stoghill (1990)
- UC Library database has record of 14 international journals with "Leadership" in the title
- Burns (1978, 2003), Kouzes & Posner (2002), Fairholm (1998), Senge (2004), Covey (2004), Goleman (1996), Bass (1990), Seligman (2004), Buckingham (2001), Zenger & Folkman (2002), Jung (2003), Jaworski (1996), Collins (2001, 2005), Cammock (2001,2008), Fullan (1993, 1997, 2001), Hargreaves (2004), Robinson (2008) etc



Range of Leadership Models;

- Transactional, Transformational, Instructional, Moral, Participative, Situational, Distributed, Authentic, Primal, Positive, Reciprocal, Personal, Servant, Level 5, Sustainable.....

Kiwi Leadership for Principals



The Role of a Manager

Vision
Meaningful Contribution
Values
Engage and develop
People
Create context

Plan
Organise
Control
Administer systems
Critique
Create Order

Leadership
(Vision & people driven)

Management
(Office bound/paper driven)

Professional
Technical
Work/Service

Compliance
& Status-Quo
Efficiency

Commitment,
Change & Hi-
Performance

Cammock (2001) The
Dance of Leadership



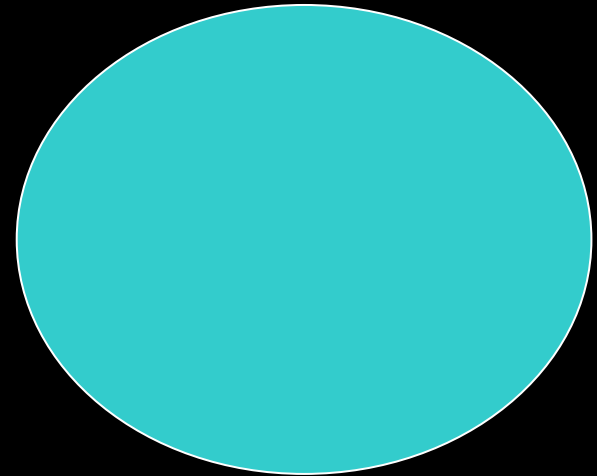
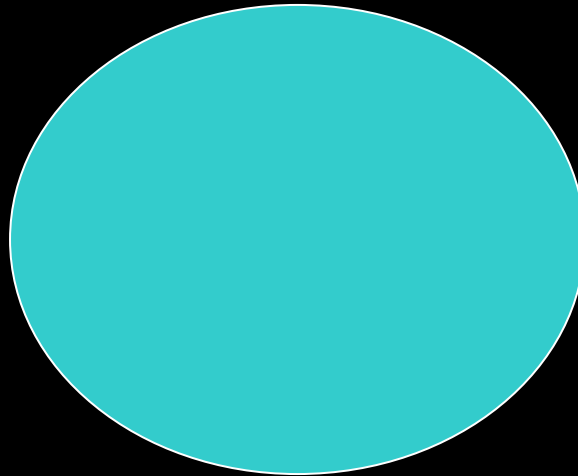
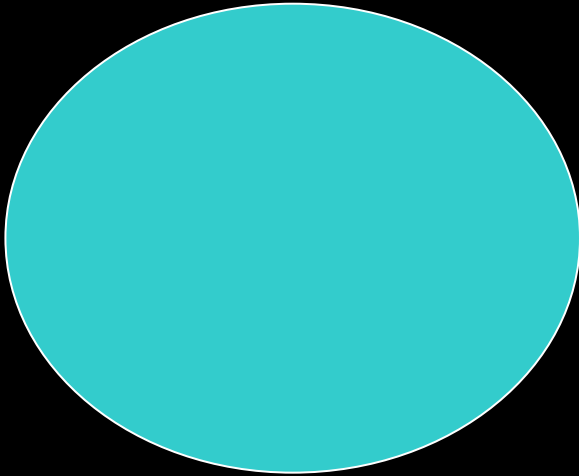
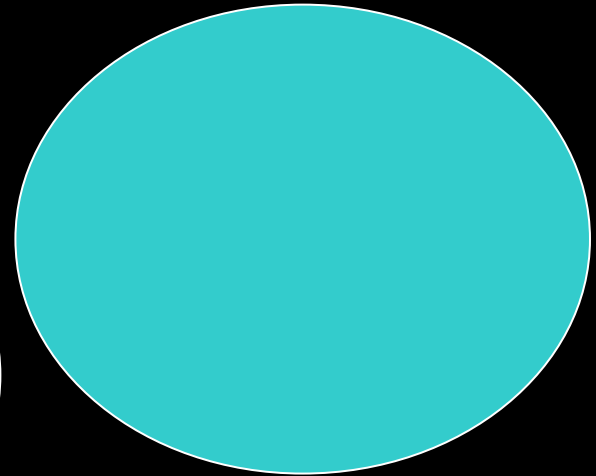
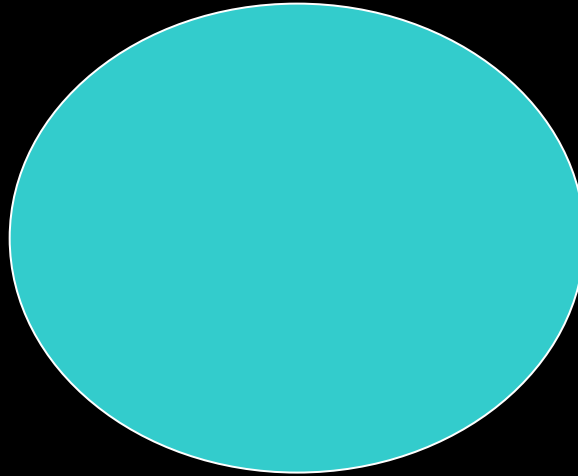
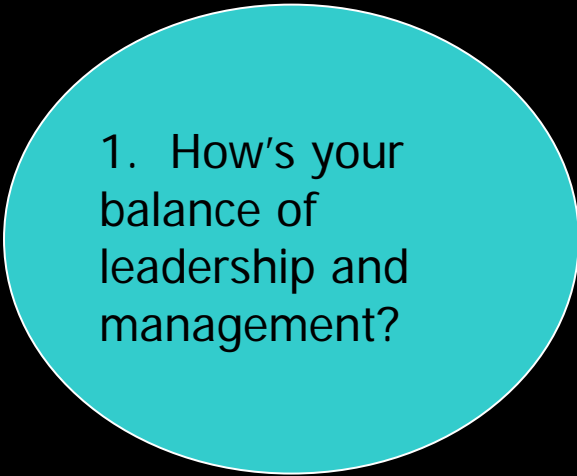
Management and Leadership

Management Focus	Leadership Focus
Tasks/things	People
Control	Empowerment
Efficiency	Effectiveness
Doing things right	Doing the right things
Speed	Direction
Practices	Principles



Question 1

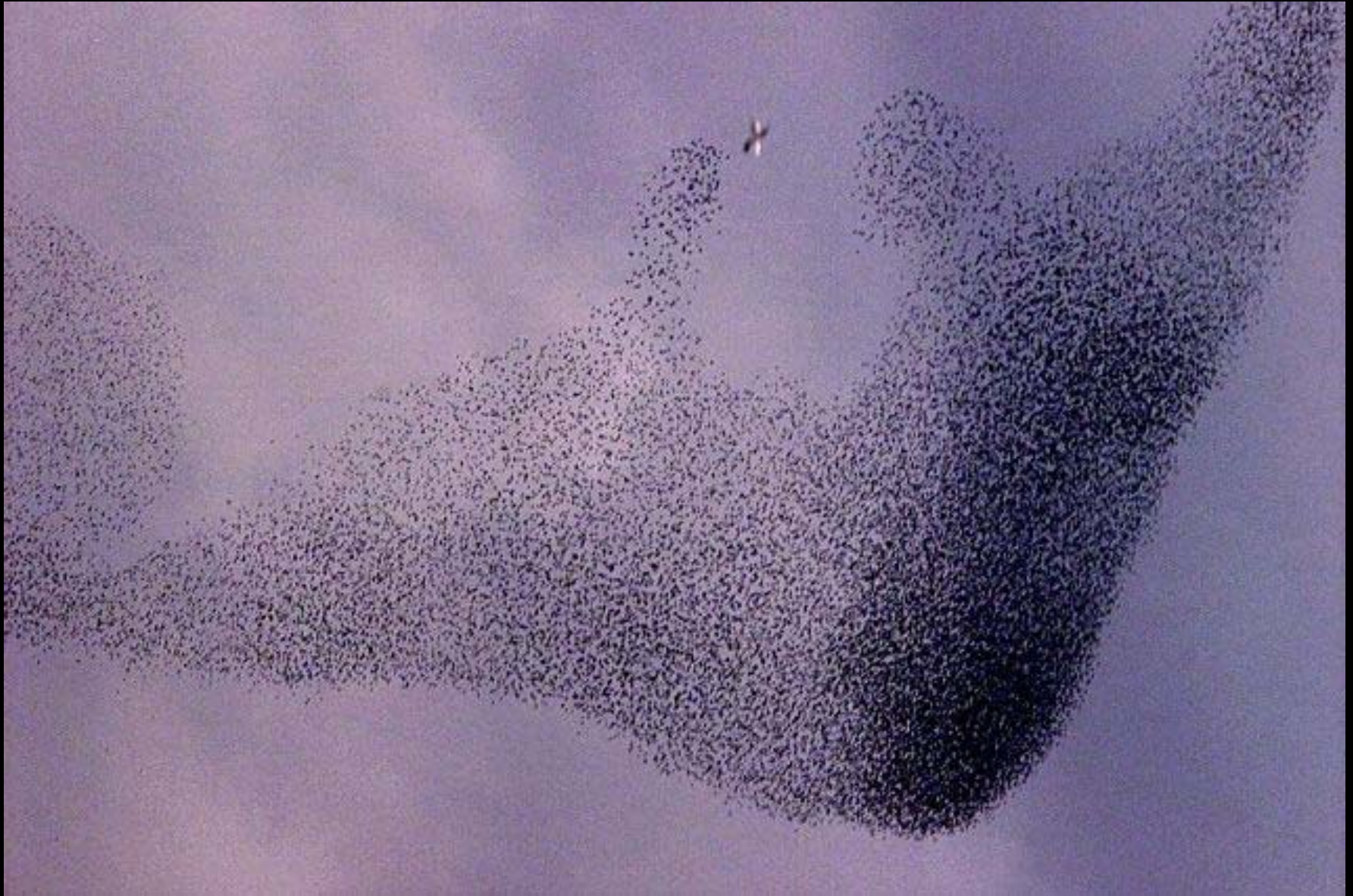
1. How's your balance of leadership and management?



Focusing on leadership

- *Holding together 10,000 half wild short hairs – now that's another thing all together....*
- *Managing the complexities....what does this mean?*

Self organising complex systems



Individual Agents

“... a collection of individual agents with freedom to act in ways that are not always totally predictable, and whose actions are interconnected so that one agent’s actions changes the context for other agents”

(The Challenge of Complexity in Healthcare,
Plsek and Greenhalgh, BMJ 2001)



Short range relationships



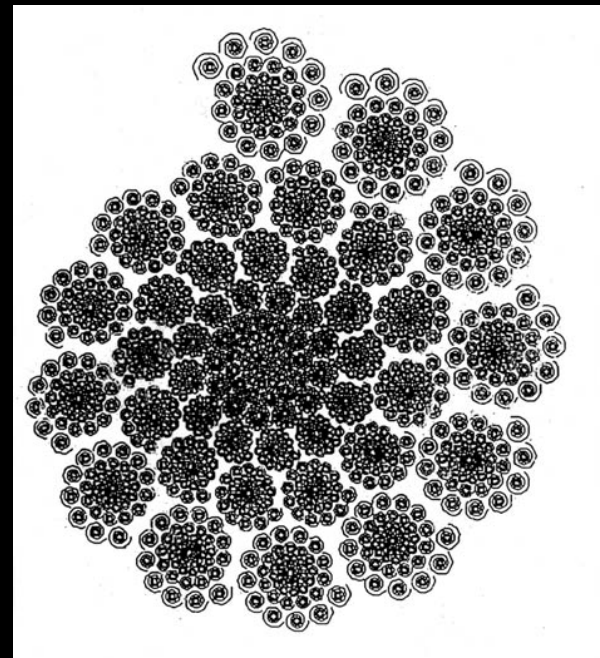
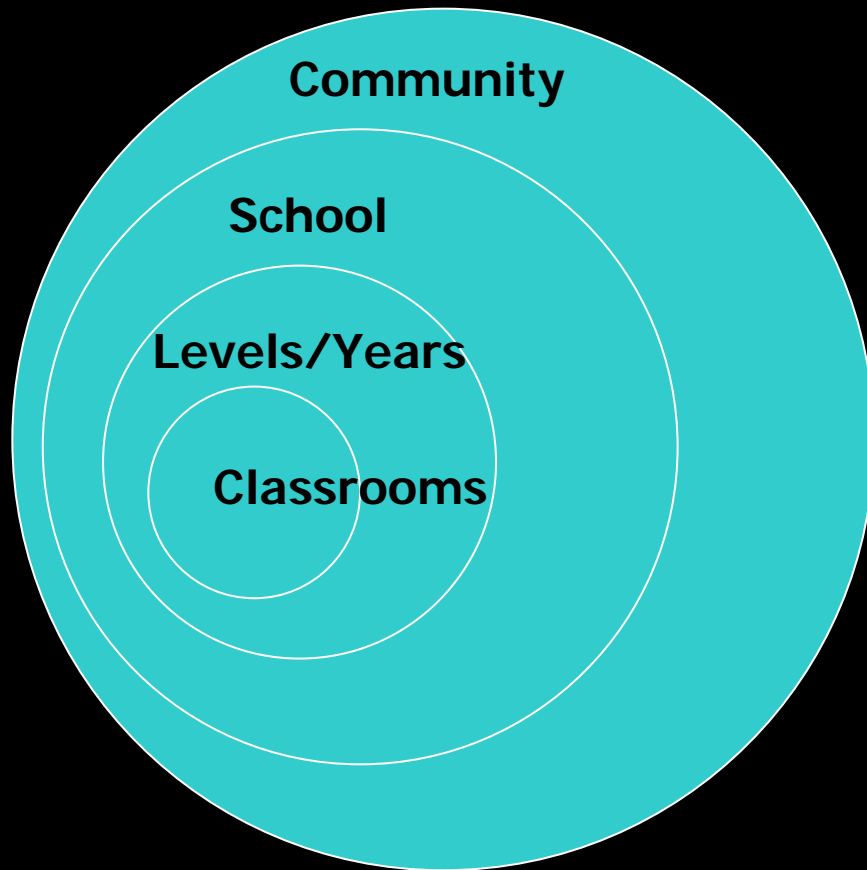
- Most of the information is exchanged among close neighbours
- Systems coherence is depends mostly on agents immediate interdependencies, not centralised control.

“In a linear world, things may exist independently from each other, and when they interact they do so in simple, predictable ways. In a non linear, dynamic world, everything exists only in relationship to everything else, and the interactions amongst agents in the system lead to complex unpredictable outcomes. In this world, interactions, or relationships, among its agents are the key organising principle”

Lewin and Regine (2000), Relationships – the new bottom line

Nested Structure

- Systems embedded within other systems



Nested Structure

- Exhibit self similar patterns, fractals
- Potential for level jumping



Bottom up / emergent / organic / innovative

- Manifest properties that exceed the summed traits and capacities of the individual agents
- Non linear, cyclic feedback loops, unpredictable, far from equilibrium, has a life of its own
- Dynamic complexity creates/generates surprises. There are still patterns and links but not linear relationships
- Continually emerging behavior

Top down strategies don't win too many ball games these days – we need a different definition of strategy and a different way to generate it. In the past, strategy was the exclusive domain of the senior management team.....but the top cant possibly have all the answers. The leaders provide the vision and are the context setters. But the actual solutions of how to best to meet the challenges of the moment have to be made by the people closest to the action – the people at the coal face.

The leader becomes a context setter, the designer of a learning experience – not an authority figure with solutions. Once the folks at grassroots level realise they own the problem, they also discover that they can help create and own the answer – and they get it very quickly.....very creativity, with a lot more ideas than the old than the old-style strategic direction could ever have prescribed from the headquarters.

Pascale et al (2000), Surfing the edge of chaos.

Characteristics of self organising complex systems

- Individual agents
- Short range relationships
- Nested structure
 - Systems embedded within other systems
 - Self similar patterns, fractals
 - Level jumping
- Bottom up / emergent / creative / organic / innovative



Davis and Sumara (2006) Complexity and Education

Question 2

2. In what way does your setting fit the characteristics of a complex system?

So what might leadership in a
complex system look like?



Layer 1: Proactive mentoring

- Creating a space to empower people
- Looking out for others development
- Leaders role is creating 'container'- within which to foster the development of their staff
- Going out of your way to let them know about things, appreciating their contribution, checking in with them, asking them how they are going, advocating for them?

" you need a monthly face to face , one to one meeting with all your key reports- for engagement, appreciation and development"

Cameron (2009) Positive Leadership



Voices from the Leadership Project....

I've tried to have a heightened awareness of what is their passion, what are they really good at, what can they do with ease, that's not stressful for them? And then, how can we build on that?

I've got a whole series of doors there, that's what I'm trying to create, all these different doors, and then people are kind of choosing to open them, sometimes they don't even realise they're opening them, and by opening that door their world kind of expands. Individually and collectively.

Creating a space where other people's dreams are realised, and that's what hope to achieve with the team of people that I work with...

Actually I wonder if she'd like a crack at doing that. And she absolutely did, her whole face lit up when I suggested it, and she really put in a lot of time and effort and researched what was the best way to do things, and did fantastic, much better job than what I could do

Question 3

*3. Who are you
looking out for?
Whose looking
out for you?*

Layer 2: Create a Learning Context

- Developing a reciprocal learning culture
- A learning system is an adaptive and self organising system
- Learning off each other – Ako – each person can say ‘I am a teacher, I am a learner’

“BES – School Leadership and Student Outcomes – identifying what works and why” – MOE 2009

Released last week – key leadership determinants on students achievement

‘Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development’

Dimension 4 (from direct evidence) and

“Creating a community that learns how to improve student success” Dimension D (indirect evidence)

Leadership role is creating a learning organisation – cf 'context setter; from Pascale earlier

" We build learning organisations where people continually expand their capacities to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together. It is no longer sufficient to have one person learning for the organisation, a Ford or a Gates. Its just not possible any longer to figure it out from the top, and have everyone else following the order of the 'grand strategist'. The organisations that will readily excel in the future will be the organisations that discover how to tap peoples commitment and capacity to learn at all levels of the organisation "
Senge (2002) The Fifth Discipline - The Art and Practice of the Learning Organisation

Everyone's intellect is needed...

"For complex change you need many people working insightfully on the solution and committing themselves to concentrated action together"
Fullan (1993). Change Forces

Problems are our friends.... lead to generative learning...opportunity to grow and innovate

"Problems are inevitable but we can produce creativity through the inquiry process. We cannot develop effective responses to complex situations unless we actively seek and confront the real problems which are in fact difficult to solve. Problems are our friends because it is only through immersing ourselves in problems that we can come up with creative solutions. To often change related problems are ignored, denied or treated as an occasion for blame and defence"

Fullan (1993). Change Forces

"a healthy organisation is one in which all participants have a voice"

Peck (1988). A Different Drum.

Voices from the Leadership Project....

So personally, I think I'm on a journey, I don't have all the answers, I want to be learning, I want to be around people who can teach me and can inspire me I suppose everybody within the organisation, 37 people I think, I think everybody equally feels that they're on a journey of lifelong learning and this is a good place to be to achieve that.

Its an attitude to learning. I firmly believe that I haven't got it all together, there's some things that I'm quite good at, but learning and reflecting on that, that's something I can sort of model in terms of it's not about 'I'm the boss, this is right or wrong'

We do quite a lot of work with our staff, what are our expectations for each other, how they articulate that, what are our strengths, you know. We have the conversations where we try and work out small things like that, where are our gaps, how do we rectify those, how do we deal with conflict, how do we resolve that sort of stuff. , We do a lot of asking those questions, reflecting, debriefing, processing and try to put that into practice.

Question 4

4. Who are you learning from?,
Who has a voice
in your
organisation?

Layer 3: Shared power and decision making

- Both top down and bottom up strategies are necessary
- Balance of structure and emergence – delicate balance
- Too tight – cant change, too loose – nothing happens, just right – forms a creative space for innovation to emerge.



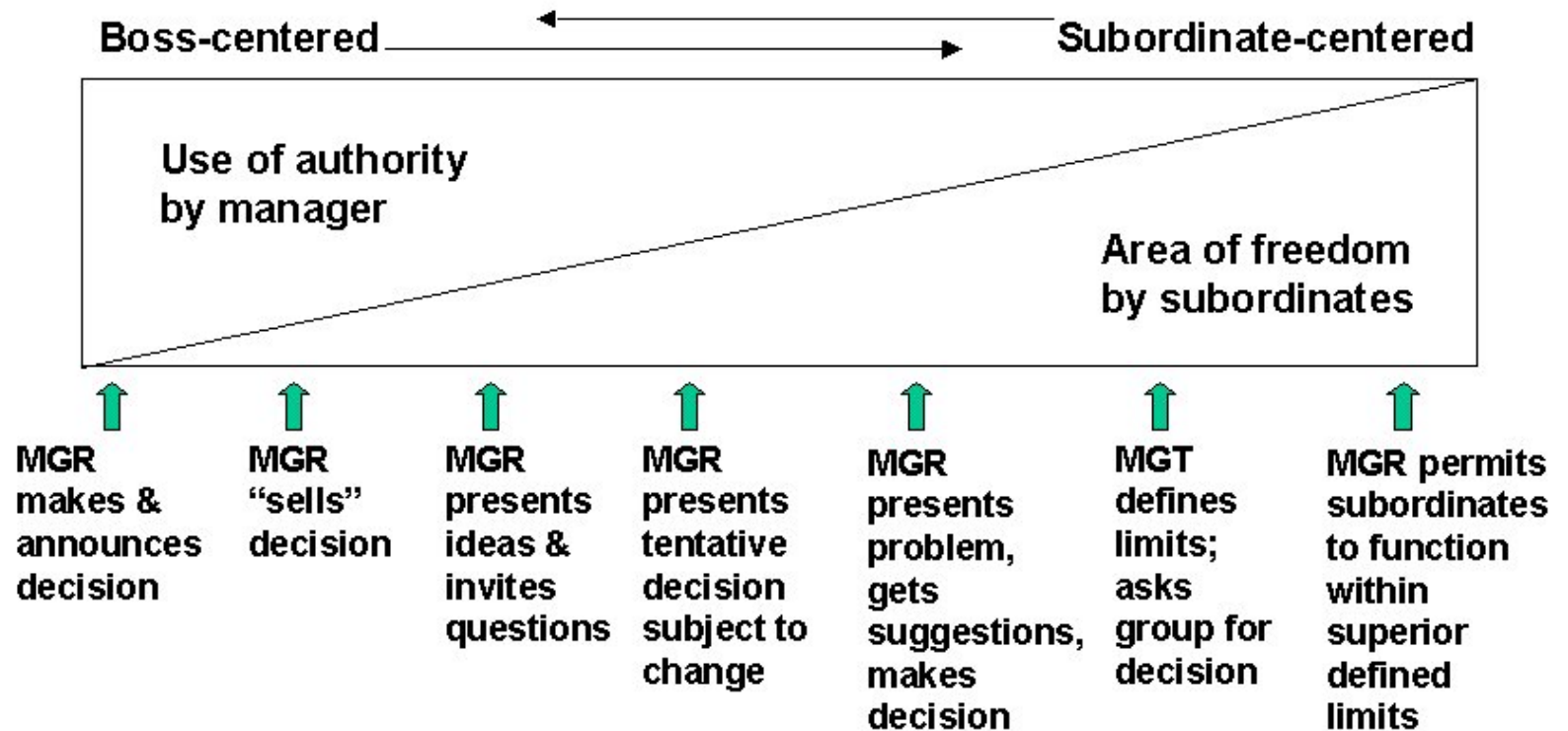
No one can control a complex organisation from the top. We have known for decades that top down change doesn't work, leaders keep trying because they don't see an alternative and they are impatient for results"

Fullan (1993). Change Forces

"Traditional organisations require management systems that control peoples behaviour, learning organisations invest in improving the quality of thinking, the capacity for reflection and team learning, and the ability to develop shared visions and shared understandings of complex issues"

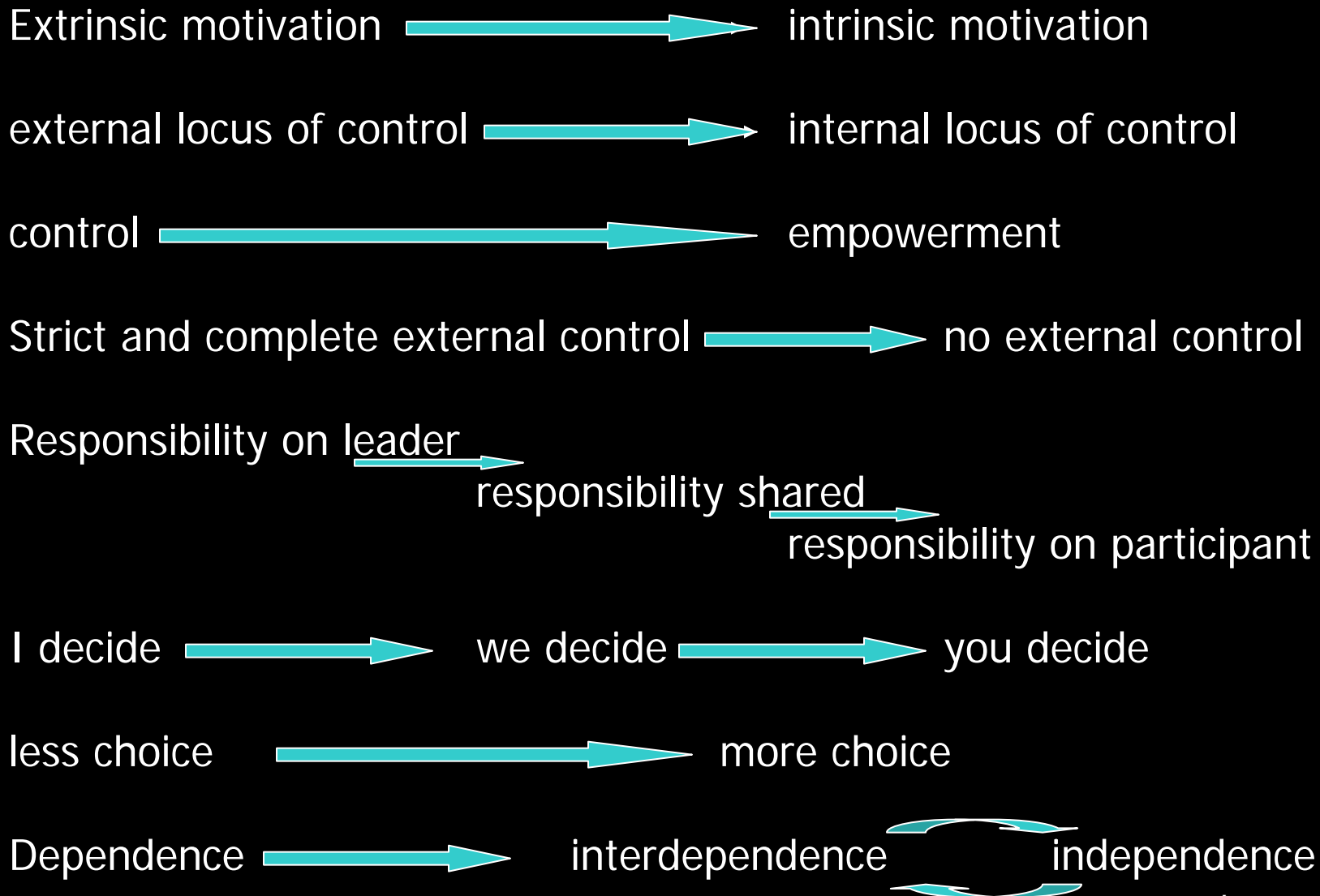
Senge (2002) The Fifth Discipline - The Art and Practice of the Learning Organisation

Continuum of Leadership Behavior



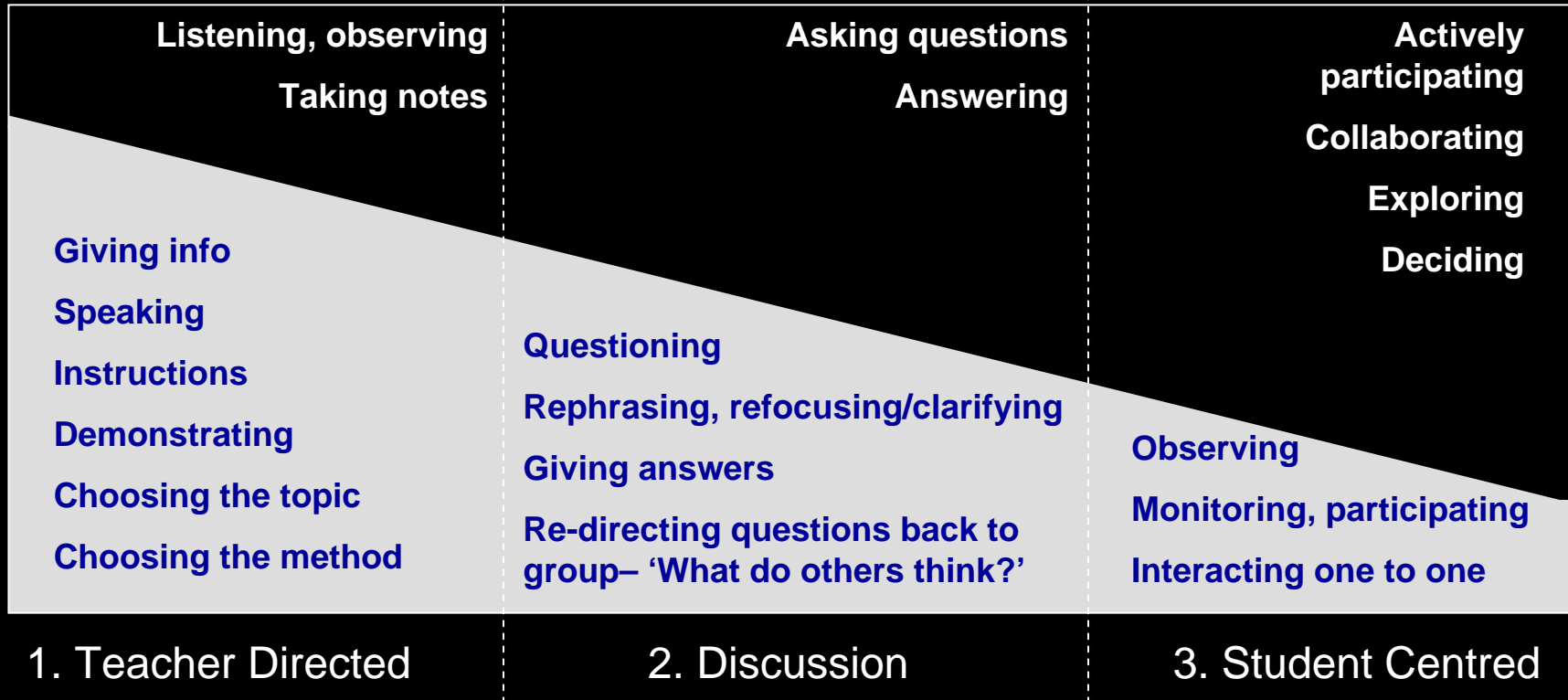
Tannenbaum & Schmidt (1973)

A framework for empowerment



Teaching Styles Continuum...

Amount of ownership/active involvement by students



Amount of ownership/active involvement by teacher

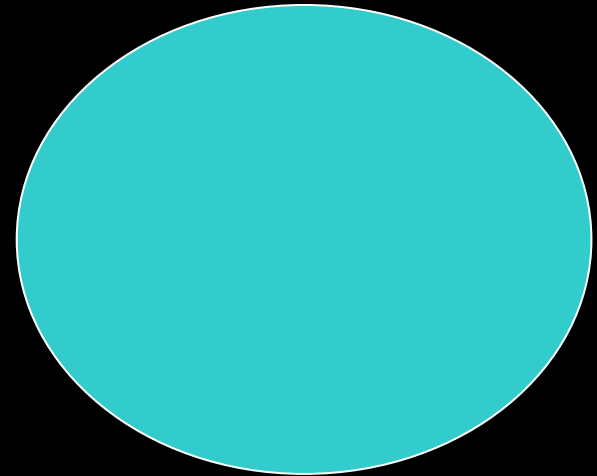
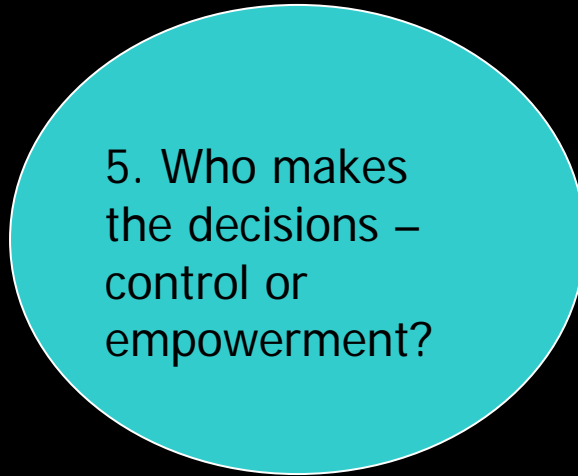
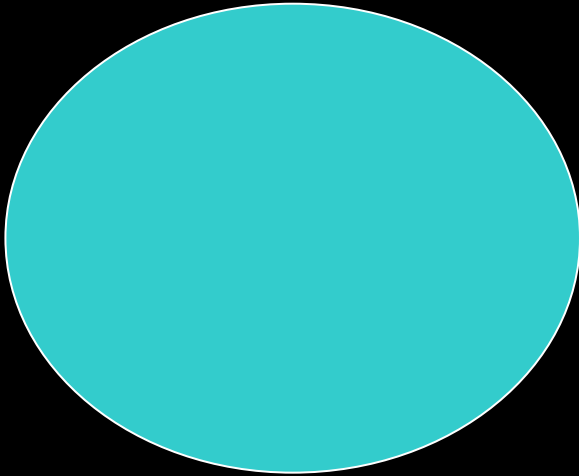
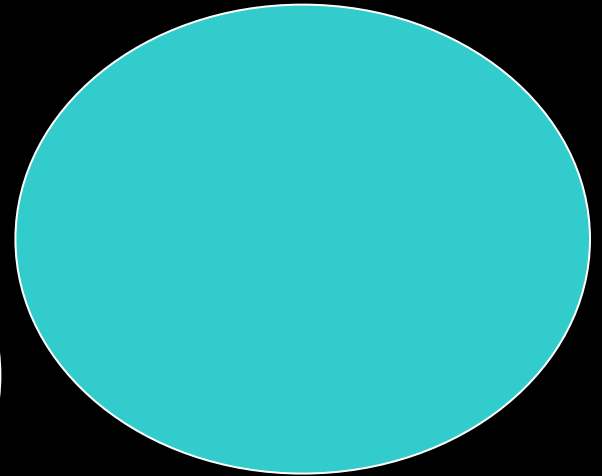
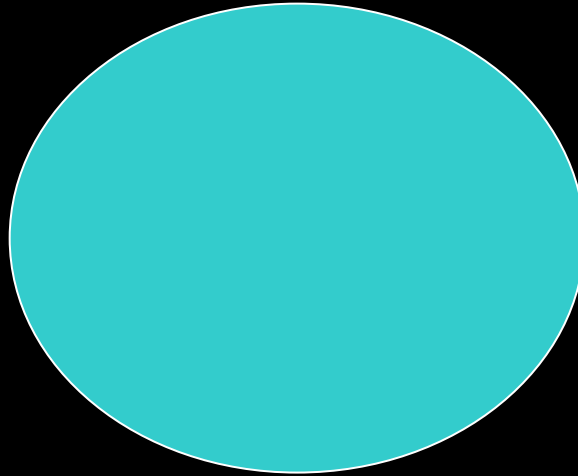
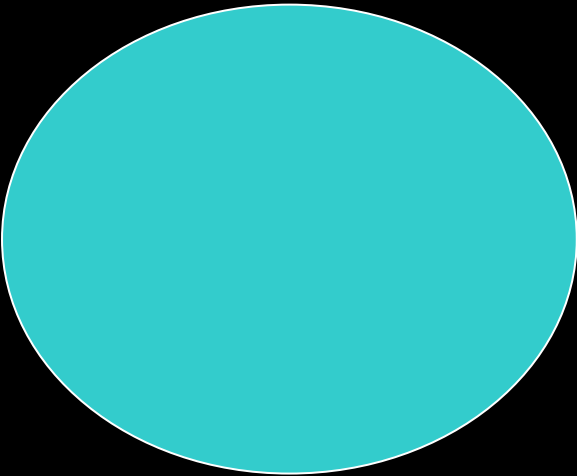
Voices from the Leadership Project....

I'm not a formal leader but I have a formal role as a leader in an organisation. That doesn't mean that I'm always at the front, or in control. That concept of leadership as being a fluid, movable thing, and enabling thing, and you know even our clients all at different times have the ability to lead and do, and I love to encourage and see that, and it's the same in our staff, you know.

One of my key beliefs is that leadership can come and should come from all places in an organisation, so leadership is not necessary in one person, who then sets the direction and sets the tone and makes the decisions. So I think leadership is a shared experience in an organisation. So one of the things that I value most, that I think I personally bring, is around trying to develop a whole range of leaders in lots of different ways in the organisation.

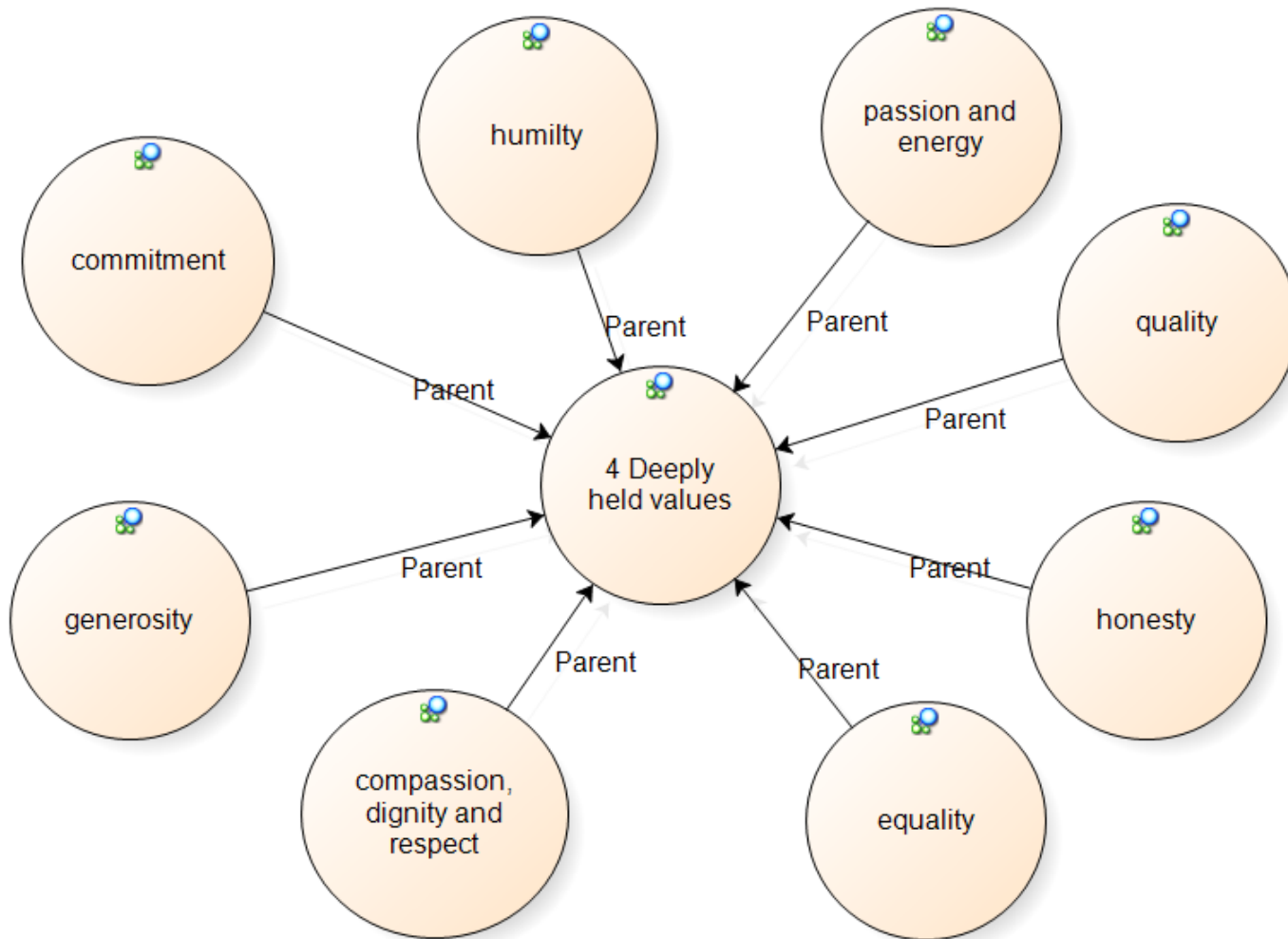
A lot of it is about power, sharing power, and if you've got people who have got enormous vision and desire and willingness to explore all sorts of possibilities, and who are capable of handing stuff over and saying 'hey, I'm liking this, go for it', and 'what can I do to support you?'

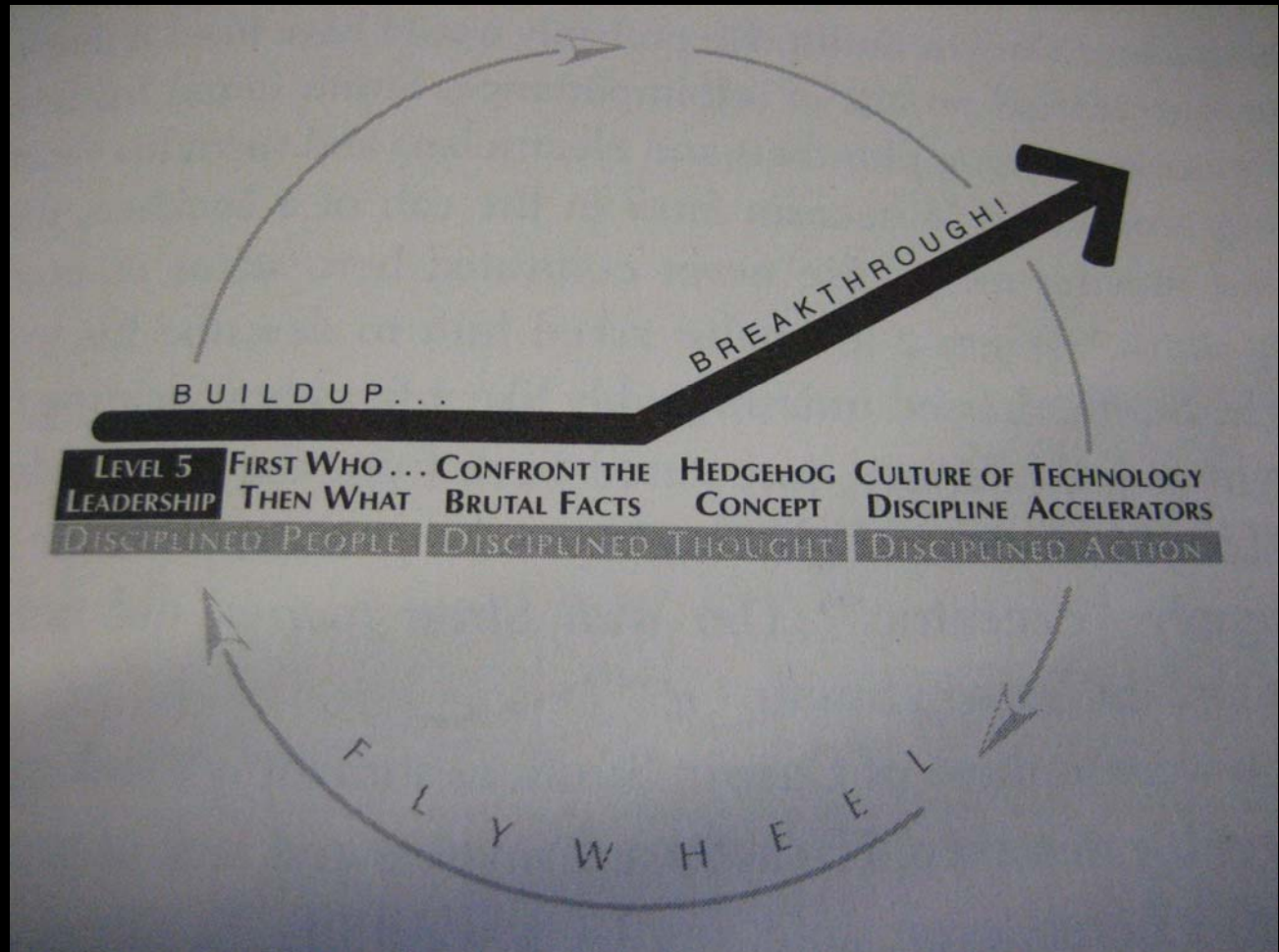
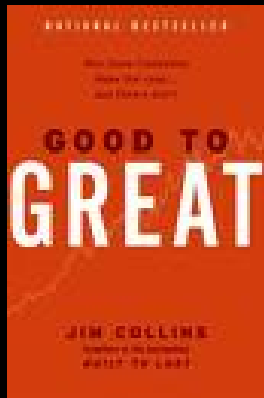
Question 5



5. Who makes the decisions – control or empowerment?

Layer 4: Deeply held values





"Good is the enemy of great "

Collins (2001) Good to great: why some companies make the leap and others don't

Level 5 Leadership

A level 5 leader – an individual who blends extreme personal humility with intense professional will'

"self effacing individuals who displayed the fierce resolve to do whatever needed to be done in order to make the company great"

"Level 5 leaders are a study in duality – modest and wilful, humble and fearless"



Level 5 Hierarchy

Level 5 Leadership

Level 5 leadership channel their ego away from themselves and in the larger goal of building a great company. It not that Level 5 leaders have no ego or self interest, - indeed they are incredibly ambitious – but their ambition is first and foremost for the institution, not themselves.

Those who worked with these leaders used words like: quiet, humble, modest, reserved, shy, gracious, mild-mannered, self effacing, understated etc...

The Window and the Mirror

Level 5 leaders look out the window to apportion credit outside themselves when things go well, and at the same time they look in the mirror to apportion responsibility when things go badly. The comparison leaders did just the opposite. They'd look outside the window for something or someone outside of themselves to blame for poor results, but would preen in front of the mirror and credit themselves when things went well.

Voices from the Leadership Project....

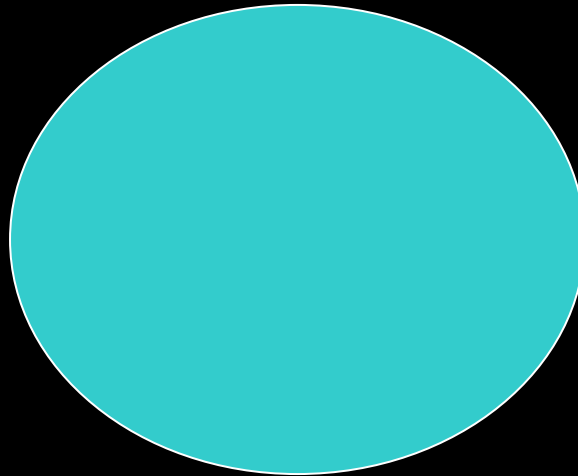
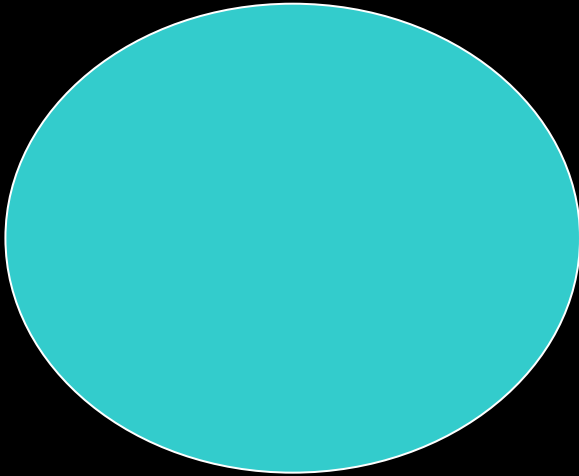
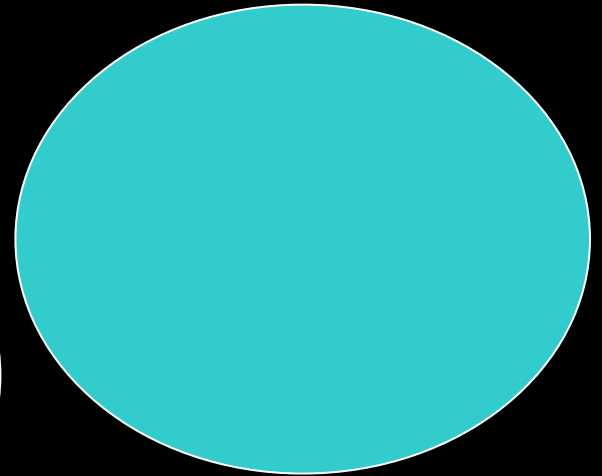
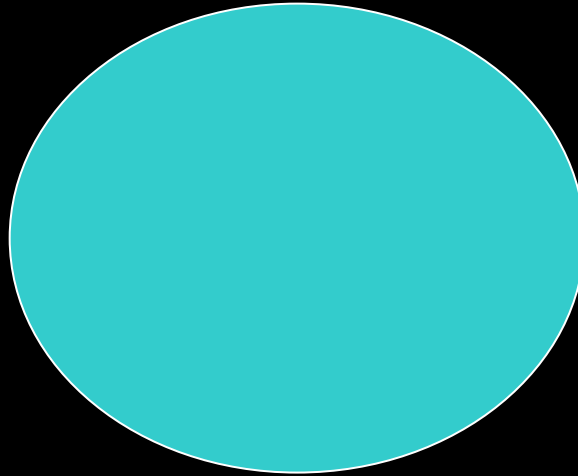
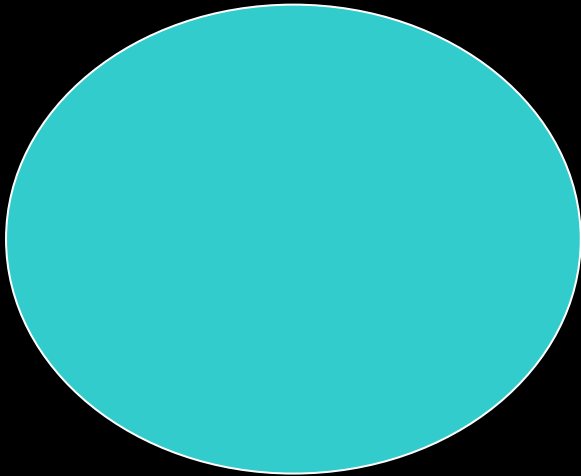
"I struggle with speaking about myself, once I get into a vein I'm ok, but I do struggle with it. Um, I just draw from the Maori proverb that the kumara doesn't speak of it's own sweetness"

What I mean by that, is that I'm not driven by the need to have my name up in lights, and to be, you know, to enter some NGO management award scheme and win the gold medal, you know

And its been huge, because she's had a huge amount of praise from the organisation, nationally, as a whole, and she's been able to take that on, instead of me jumping in and saying 'actually, I'm a manager and so I should actually be getting that credit', do you know what I mean?

I'm at a place in my life that the highest qualities for me are things like character, love, strength, um, servant, a servant heart, servant attitude, those are the greatest things for me, and um, really you've got two cars, ten cars or no cars, none of that matters."

Question 6



6. What level
leader are you?

Level 5 Leadership



Level 5 Hierarchy

Leadership in Complex Organisations

- Proactive mentoring
- Create a learning context
- Shared power and decision making
- Level 5 leadership



What is success?

To laugh often and much
To win the respect of intelligent people
And the affection of children
To earn the appreciation of honest critics
And endure the betrayal of false friends
To appreciate beauty
To find the best in others
To leave the world a bit better
Whether by a healthy child, a garden patch
Or a redeemed social condition
To know even one life has breathed easier
Because you have lived
This is to have succeeded

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

