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Creative Leadership – my choice POV

Summary:

With growth in technology and machine intelligence, the world has given rise to new societal and global challenges, and leaders must face these head-on by using bold and creative solutions. Disruptive leaders tackle these large-scale global issues using systemic approaches to local solutions, which require intimate and empathetic knowledge of the contexts, needs and culture.

Creative leadership is a philosophy and an act: it develops and realizes innovative ideas through the shared ambition of improving the world through enterprise formation. As a philosophy it embraces change as a given while seeking opportunity everywhere. Through a generous, inclusive purpose deeply rooted in pragmatic idealism and empathy, it gives rise to a transcendent consciousness that goes beyond individual gratification. Creativity, critical analysis, experimentation, big vision, collaboration, bold action, calculated risk taking, agility and hard work all drive participative value and serve the triple bottom line (planet, people, profit).

Creative leadership is a natural progression from three theories (Transformational, authentic and servant leadership), incorporating not just moral values, but inspirational influence, pushing beyond these into the realms of social impact, inter-enterprise collaboration, while actively safeguarding planet Earth and its resources.

Creative leadership is not industry specific, nor is it one-size-fits all. In contrast to analytical forms of leadership, where the act of problem-solving culminates in one truth, creative leadership presupposes that the drive for a solution to a problem or challenge can have several outcomes and is to a significant degree shaped by the leader.

Characteristics of creative leadership:

- Exploration, independent, contrarian thinking, embracing change and anticipating the unexpected
- Visionary thought leadership, thinking big with social passion and general purpose
- Casting and conducting of creative teams, cultivating courage, and optimistic experiment

- Directing towards sustainable enterprise and triple bottom-line

Styles of Creative leaders:
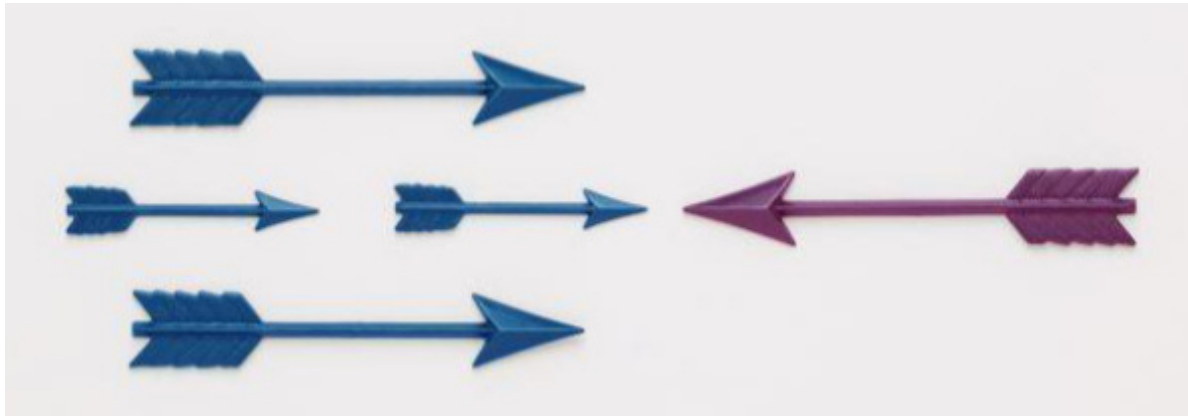
The more systemic and volatile challenges of today require change at the core of what leaders are doing, feeling, and thinking and call for a tailored approach (Schwenk and Shrader, 1993; Palich and Bagby, 1992). Creative leaders deal effectively with paradoxes, intuitively combining:

- Clash and Flow'

- Vision and Presence

- Strategy and Serendipity

- Pride and Humility

- Provocative and Tolerant

- Experimentation and Perfection

- Rigor and Fun

Building on the three styles of leadership as stated above, It goes further by understanding the interdependency of its actions on larger ecosystems, reframing competition into collaborative relationships, and treating experimentation, failure and learning as an implicit state, rather than a reward structure. They feel need for change and allow people around them to feel safe about the change. Examples of creative leaders include Elon Musk, Muhammad Yunus, Princess Reema bint Bandar Al Saud, Richard Branson and Wangari Mathai.

Discussion:

Creative leadership is just "WOW" in my opinion. It has all the attributes – sense of purpose, motivation, challenge, authenticity everything I am looking for. Being you and being a creative leader with original thinking seem to be extremely hard in diplomatic and political corporate world. Creating a workplace and culture that fosters creativity, innovation and boundless purpose and sense of feel for employees is not easy. I was searching for companies that create and foster creative work culture and I came across stitchfix algorithms tour:

It shows someone's passion, sense of purpose and how the business problems are viewed in its original form. I just get fascinated by this creative thinking, artistic science, exploration and exploitation driven by curiosity which in turn drives innovation for good. In the blog Eric Colson, mentions "For companies ready to jump on the data science bandwagon I offer this advice: think less about how data science will support and execute your plans and think more about how to create an environment to empower your data scientists to come up with ideas you've never dreamed of". Creative work like this feels as inspiring as reading about creative leadership. When these are combined, the world may be a phenomenal place to live in.

References

1. https://www.thnk.org/insights/what-is-creative-leadership/ Creative Leadership, Menno van Dijk, Grant Davidson, Valeria Mecozzi

2. https://multithreaded.stitchfix.com/blog/2019/01/18/fostering-innovation-in-data-science/