



Holistic Principles of Sustainability Leadership



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Sustainability Leadership Practices

Redefining Leadership for a Sustainable Future

A sustainability leader is anyone who chooses to engage in the process of creating transformative change with others aimed toward a sustainable future: economically, environmentally and socially.

Facilitating Outcomes

A. Using Sustainability Frameworks for Integrated Analysis and Action E.g., Five Domains of Sustainable Communities framework for integrated analysis, planning, designing and implementation.

B. Assessing Opportunities and Risks in a Changing Context Cost-effectively assessing opportunities and risks associated with sustainability and organizational performance. Supporting a risk-taking environment.

C. Marshalling and Amplifying Resources for Optimal Impact Learning to acquire and leverage the optimal impact of resources through process building strategic partnerships.

D. Making Things Happen

- Knowing how to collaboratively construct and implement strategic initiatives.
- Governing with Responsibility and Creativity: initiating productive thinking and action within existing laws and policies

Redefining leadership for a sustainable future *(continued)*

while initiating changes in laws and policy needed to achieve sustainable outcomes.

- Developing monitoring techniques that help people hold themselves and each other accountable for achieving agreed-upon outcomes.
- Working creatively within the accepted rules of the game.

Engaging in Authentic Interaction

E. Grounding Conversations and Actions in Personal Integrity Being clear about one's own identity, principles and intentions before engaging others in the work of change. Frequently reexamining personal integrity to guide action in the present moment in the context of complex and ever-changing circumstances.

F. Creating Spaces for and Participating in Constructive Conversations Inviting inquiry that stimulates one's own and others' thinking as a matter of course; crafting good questions and holding them open long enough to explore and discover perspectives and connections that might otherwise be overlooked. (See Leadership Engagement Framework)

G. Building Authentic Relationships Building and expanding authentic relationships for developing and implementing integrated solutions, i.e., long-term partnerships, inter-generational engagement, learning relationships, support relationships.

H. Reflective Consciousness Continually noticing self in relationship with others and the work; engaging in authentic interaction (words and actions); encouraging joint reflection about what is happening, has happened, why, and what it means for future thinking and action.

I. Understanding and Working with Human Dynamics of Change Drawing from new social change models that help describe the ways in which diverse people experience the dynamic, natural rhythms of change in a chaotic environment when unconventional ideas are being introduced.

J. Making Sustainability Relevant to Others Articulating the ways in which sustainability strategies are relevant to the immediate and long-term success of business, organization or community; to understand and make visible the ways in which sustainable solutions are often the best solutions for core challenges.

K. Sustaining Energy and Momentum Finding ways to sustain one's own and others' energy, momentum and belief in what is possible in the face of daunting challenges; i.e., developing practitioner communities of reflection, learning and development.

Working with Conflict/Tension/Expansion

L. Inviting Diverse Voices and Perspectives: Expanding the Network of Leaders Inviting and acknowledging diverse points of view, while simultaneously seeking common ground and figuring out solutions for the collective good.

M. Understanding and Working with Paradox, Ambiguity and Conflict Letting go of the need certainty in the face of contradictory "truths; holding open the space for disagreement and conflict, recognizing that the associated tension is a potent source of energy for generating creative shifts in understanding and direction.

N. Understanding and Working with Relational Power Dynamics Understanding the complex nuances of dynamic power relationships, and associated creative tension, when working with others whose active support is critical for learning and success.

Learning with Others

O. Engaging Experts as Collaborators Engaging outside resource people willing to work as part of a team in ways that invite collaboration, collective discovery and the learning needed to broaden system capability.

P. Sharing Information and Knowledge as it Unfolds Letting others know thinking behind, rationale, and what is happening while it is happening -- in an effort to invite others to learn with you in process, and to strengthen the collective practice of experimentation, adaptation and learning.

Q. Learning through Experimenting Stretching, being willing to learn in new ways; taking calculated risks to test emerging ideas; reflecting on and learning from experiences of all kinds; looking for unrealized potential through experimental thinking and doing with others.

R. Noticing and Making Sense of Patterns Understanding what people do and say, individually and collectively, from a behavior pattern perspective; experimenting with strategies to interrupt existing patterns that serve to galvanize the status quo.