



ARC EDUCATION PROJECT



9TH

ARC

ThoughtMeet

A FOCUS ON LEADERSHIP

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ARC TALK: STEVE MUNBY

“Nobody is ready for leadership. It is always a big step up.”



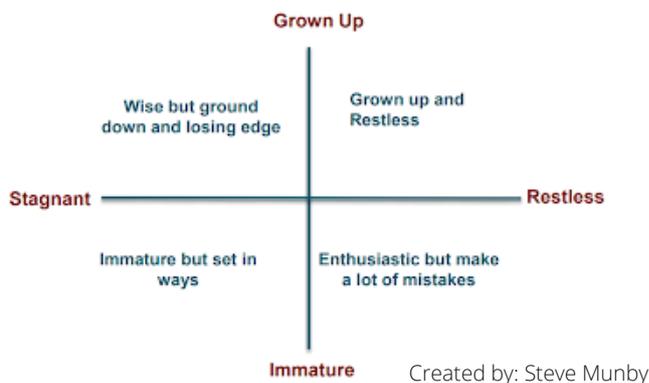
(As an imperfect leader) I realized that “feeling good is a skill. You can learn it. I reflected upon my own practice and each time I tried to improve what I had done, based on my previous performance.”

“How do we get improvement as leaders when the need to change is not urgent?”



BEING A RESTLESS LEARNER

- Leaders develop habits to operate and succeed; however, the risk is that they get stuck in these habits and fail to change when the context changes.
- An imperfect leadership mindset emphasizes that leaders are not finished products and should be endless learners.
- Strong self-awareness is crucial for a good imperfect leadership mindset: It is not just about the conditions, it is about you as a person (reactions and responses to stress and fatigue, motivations and drive, etc.)
- As leaders, we want to be grown up and wise, and still learning and restless (refer to the quadrant below).



3 points to stay restless and to continue learning:

1. Create an open-to-learning culture.
2. Review when things haven't gone well and then practice self-compassion.
3. Use 360 feedback in a focused and time-specific way to improve aspects of your leadership.

DEVELOPING FUTURE LEADERS

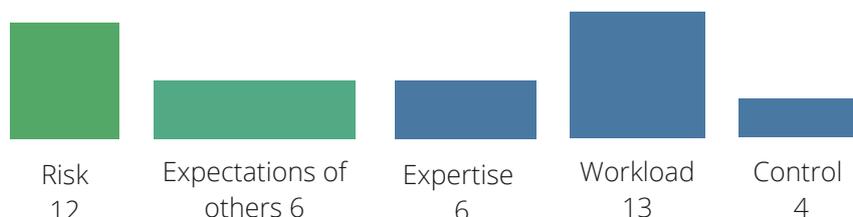
- How do we support our colleagues to improve and develop as leaders?
- How can we find ways and opportunities to delegate some of our challenging tasks as leaders?

5 aspects of effective leadership development:

1. Learning on the job
2. Receiving targeted feedback from credible peers, mentors or coaches
3. Being exposed to outstanding practice in other work contexts
4. Having access to high-quality research, case studies and materials
5. Having time for reflection



Thoughtmeet attendees were asked about the two reasons for not delegating some of the really hard aspects of their role and 41 delegates responses are shown below:



- All members in a team have the potential to be leaders. It is our job as leaders to provide them with the confidence to step up and take leadership roles.
- Each of our teams will be different and will have various leadership development needs.
- Imperfect leadership is not about personality but about expertise.

To create an imperfect leadership culture means:

1. Investing in our young leaders by supporting their leadership development and giving them opportunities to take risks with help.
2. Not reinforcing one simple stereotypical view of leadership to welcome (potential) leaders from diverse backgrounds.
3. Providing different roles to experienced leaders to renew and re-energize them.

PANEL DISCUSSION: RESPONSES FROM STEVE MUNBY

How do leaders cope with negative organizational cultures?

Reflect on what you can do to influence the working culture. If the work culture is overwhelming, the best is to shift to another workplace.

How do we "grow together" to create an expectation of sharing power and decision-making that demonstrates power grows rather than weakens in this way?

To build improvement, as is demonstrated in ARC, is to value stakeholder engagement as a shared endeavour. This can contribute to what good policy leadership is about, and what imperfect leadership entails as well.

What do you do when you experience failure as a leader?

Apologize authentically and take responsibility for your failures. If both actions are done, your credibility as a leader improves.

What role do you think diversity plays in leadership?

Diversity in organizations is not just about fairness, it's about having a better team as you can have a wider range of perspectives that are representative of the people in a community.

How do we recognize the value of difference and diversity in leadership and ensure we do not appoint just one type of leader?

Conceptualizations of talent are narrow and fixed, and we need to find ways that challenge our conceptions of talent. We need to go beyond perpetuating a single kind of stereotypical leadership and encourage specific group members to be leaders.



QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

- What approaches can be taken for leading in a virtual post-covid context?
 - What is the difference between leadership and management?
 - Is there a need to focus on adaptive leadership - being self-aware of our individual strengths and default styles and equally aware of when a situation needs a different approach? How do we recognize whether we are the person to respond to or not?
 - How do we balance the system/political aspect and the personal side of leadership?
 - How do we manage the external pressures that leaders face while also providing conditions for aspiring leaders to grow and make mistakes?
 - How do we prevent or avoid the burnout of leaders at all levels? What kind of support is helpful in that respect?
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REFLECTIONS FROM THE ARC COMMUNITY

What are some of your greatest challenges as a leader? What hinders you from being at your best?

- Lack of time to prepare for events and meetings, and alternatively, rushing becomes the choice
- Feeling tired, exhausted, and overworked
- A fear of scrutiny, bias, and racism, and not knowing the social-environment
- The polarized reality of self-doubt versus confidence
- The resilience to stay true to personal values
- Opportunities for development, and accessing the expertise to grow as a leader



What are some of your greatest successes as a leader? When have you been at your best?

- When a team aims to challenge assumptions and prioritize direction with clear purposes
- When a workplace provides space to think, reflect, and plan
- One's leadership has had an impact on an organization being able to transition smoothly with new leaders.
- A work culture that values trust with colleagues
- Providing leaders and newcomers with time, space, and support
- Transforming an institutional culture previously defined by control, to one that prioritizes collaboration and shared leadership
- Resolving difficult conversations, and working towards positive and meaningful change

What do you want to hold on to from the ThoughtMeet?

- Leadership is important; we need to make time and invest in it.
- Professional learning reflects the human aspect of leadership: We need to be authentic, humble leaders who reflect on our practices in order to remain committed and to ensure such practices line up with what we hope to accomplish.
- We have to be intentional about renewing successful leadership practices that may have been abandoned during the pandemic.
- In leadership, it is important to value diversity regarding gender, race and ethnicity as well as leaders with different expertise and experience. We need to recognize the capacity of others; everyone should be represented and heard.
- We should aim to understand the complexity of our work in an effort to increase engagement within our organization. We have to acknowledge the goals and demands of leadership at each level, from political leadership to teacher leadership.
- Dialogue, collaboration and recognition are important at all levels of leadership.

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