

1: Leadership Metaphors | Joseph Koontz

Leadership, Myth, & Metaphor reports on the findings of a professional development study-funded by the Gates Foundation-of more than superintendents and principals, celebrating educators' unique individual core values while acknowledging their shared intrinsic beliefs, including.

One night in , I was watching a TV news program when the newscaster began interviewing a survivor of a massive oil rig explosion see story below. For months, I had been looking for the right metaphor to describe a pattern of commitment I had uncovered and the story was exactly what I needed. It caught me off guard, however, because it appeared out of a story of disaster—the last place from which I thought a metaphor about commitment would have emerged. Let me back up a little. Several months before I saw the newscast, we found a very distinct success pattern related to the nature and level of commitment that senior leaders demonstrate during major successful initiatives. What was revealed in that pattern is common knowledge today, but this was in the pioneering days of early change management and we were still groping in the dark for even basic answers. They also displayed a sense of distress related to their current state. What was becoming clear was that the high cost of maintaining the status quo played an important role in sustaining the motivation needed to truly realize change objectives. The Burning Platform At nine-thirty on a July evening in , a disastrous explosion and fire occurred on the Piper Alpha oil-drilling platform in the North Sea off the coast of Scotland. One hundred and sixty-six crew members and two rescuers lost their lives in what was and still is the worst catastrophe in the fifty-year history of North Sea oil exportation. One of the sixty-three crew members who survived was Andy Mochan, a superintendent on the rig. From the hospital, he told of being awakened by the explosion and alarms. Badly injured, he escaped from his quarters to the platform edge. Beneath him, oil had surfaced and ignited. Twisted steel and other debris littered the surface of the water. Despite all that, Andy jumped fifteen stories from the platform to the water. When asked why he took that potentially fatal leap, he did not hesitate. Andy jumped because he felt he had no choice—the price of staying on the platform was too high. There were many parallels. The execution process is uncertain and the risk of poor outcomes is high. I have to get it done and done right. He was badly hurt from the explosion and the last thing he wanted to do was plunge 15 stories, with no guarantee of rescue, into a frigid sea full of flames and debris. The interviewer asked how he found the nerve to make the jump. His response stunned me. I knew that if I stayed on the platform, I was going to fry. Andy chose probable death over inevitable death. That was a powerful moment for me. I recognized in Andy the same kind of determination to act that I heard from the leaders I had interviewed. In their own way, they were saying they were also frightened—scared of jumping into all the ambiguities and jeopardy that came with major change. Yet, the price for not doing so was simply too high. They moved toward their changes with seriousness and sobriety. They executed their initiatives for only one reason—they were essential to businesses growth, if not survival. From that point on, I have used the burning-platform story in my writing, speeches, and executive seminars, as well as my consulting work, to convey the intensity of the leadership commitment needed to succeed with major change. In , I included it in my first book, *Managing at the Speed of Change* , and the story really started to spread—first within the U. Before long, I began hearing about people attempting to make the same points I was expressing but using stories about burning buildings or bridges. I soon realized that releasing something into public space can become a double-edged sword. While I enjoyed seeing the story gain popularity, I also had to come to grips with its widespread misinterpretation. Some important amplifications are not drawn out and without them, the story can be easily misconstrued. Not only were details about the tragedy itself distorted, but some of the most important implications that made the story such a powerful change metaphor were lost or twisted into interpretations unrecognizable to me. It has been particularly gratifying to hear from so many people over the years who told me how meaningful the story was for them. They not only got the main points I was trying to convey, but they also felt that it accurately explained their circumstances when introducing major change in their organizations. Some described the deep, tenacious commitment that existed, which resulted in the successful execution of their initiatives; others recounted the lack of necessary resolve, which explained the

failure of their change projects. All in all, I can say that, for the most part, the story worked as I had hoped. More people added their own revisions than I wish were the case and their modifications resulted in a message that, in some circumstances, was different from the one I intended; but in others, it was antithetical. Here are two of the most prevalent misconceptions: These characterizations have sometimes been attributed to the story and have even been described as representing my own personal view of how change should be architected. I assure you, neither is the case. Once I learned that these sorts of distortions were proliferating, I quickly set about to try to help people understand the actual intentions behind my use of the story. I first attempted to correct the misconceptions when I published my second book, *Leading at the Edge of Chaos*. I included a section that retold the story and offered some clarification. I have also offered as much interpretation as I can in speeches and during my consulting work with clients. Regardless of these efforts, however, some false impressions still persist. What is particularly fascinating is how the fallacies resurge periodically with renewed fervor. So, here we are. In the next post, I will discuss the four types of burning platforms. The Real Story of the Burning Platform.

2: The Real Story of the Burning Platform | Conner Partners

Leadership Metaphor: The Myth of Sisyphus The obvious metaphorical link here is to see school administration like Sisyphus's task of pushing a bolder up a hill each day, only to have it roll back down the hill.

Its most effective practices typically come from hard-won experience, tradition and craft learned on the job. However, many of its common beliefs are really just myths, rumors, or clever marketing that have been repeated enough times. Even though the research is garbage, getting people to think about connecting with others and doing things on the job, usually turns out to be a good thing. Identifying the specific roles of dopamine or serotonin in established management practices, based on some study of 20 college kids, is of little practical value. But, no harm, no foul! On the other hand, some stuff that has gotten baked into the collective mindset of the profession really gets us off track. The Blank Slate At least as far back as Aristotle, there has been this idea that the mind is a kind of blank slate on which new ideas are written. Medieval thinkers, like Aquinas, called it *tabula rasa*. In Latin that actually means a wax tablet not slate, but you get the idea. You can call it a white sheet of paper like John Locke in the 17th century. You may not have read any of those guys, or Jean-Jacques Rousseau for that matter, but the people who built our educational system did. Their ideas shaped a lot of what we all experienced in school. Whatever term we use, that thinking also shapes a lot of traditional training. If people are blank slates, I can just tell them what I want them to do write the instructions on that white sheet of paper and then they should be able to go do it. Leaders are Not Blank Slates Now philosophers and cognitive scientists can, and do, argue exactly how blank a slate the human mind is at birth. They can have a ball making fine distinctions about social construction, reification, and how anyone knows what a chair is. I sometimes read stuff like that for fun. But no matter where the academics land, this much is clear: In fact, they have a lifetime of experience written on those tablets. That experience drives how they perceive the world and how they behave. Why, you may ask, should anyone care about obscure learning metaphors? There are websites, videos, and lots of posters with pillars or radial diagrams. That could be painful and risky. Why bother if we can just give them a new set of marching orders and be done with it? These days, my team does a lot of work with leaders on things like coaching and collaboration. Not coincidentally, those two things show up on a lot of culture change wish lists. About half of the work is getting people to see what they actually do currently. We help them recognize bad habits that get in their way and produce unintended results. We help them explore why that stuff happens to all of us. In the absence of that, we could throw all the tools and techniques we want at people. Where could you have more impact with a closer look at the current state?

3: What's Your Metaphor for Leadership? | CCS Consulting, Inc.

"Cherry and Spiegel provide a valuable addition to the current literature on educational leadership. As the book demonstrates, metaphors and myths can provide educational leaders with a way to clarify for themselves and to communicate to those they lead the central themes, vision, and mission they have for the group.

Former Director and Chair of Teacher Education at Manchester University Author, Consultant in Higher Education Thursday, September 26, Servant leadership has emerged as a significant influence across many organizations during the past decade. However, as the concept has emerged, so too have the myths of servant leadership, myths which serve as barriers to its influence. The most prevalent ones are summarized and briefly discussed below. There are at least two reasons why this first myth is false. Servant leadership does not work because people cannot be trusted. This second myth is based on the erroneous assumption that most members of organizations are inherently dishonest. In his article in the book *Focus on Leadership, Leadership for the 21st Century*, Max DePree writes that servant-leaders strive to build mutual trust. It leads to closed doors and a silo mentality. People must be coerced to perform. People are inherently selfish. Servant leadership is not about acquiring power or gaining control over others. The assumption underlying each of these myths is that members of the organization will serve only their own interests. I vividly recall a new president who arrived at one university; and, acting upon this assumption, nearly destroyed the organization, itself. Prior to his arrival, faculty and staff regularly met at the student union coffee shop, where many conflicts and issues were informally resolved. The new president made it known that he alone had authority in the institution. He dismantled all political structures, removing heads of departments, and discouraging the coffee shop meetings. Noteworthy were the closed office doors all across campus. Great Leaders are responsible for creating environments in which people care about each other, share pride in a common goal and celebrate the successes of all. Goals in organizations which espouse servant leadership are not well defined. Servant leadership does not contribute to the financial health of an organization. These myths are based on the assumption that servant leadership is an inadequate structure for achieving organizational goals. It describes the journey of a band of travelers accompanied by a servant named Leo. He provided many of the seemingly mundane services that allowed the band to make needed progress. After a period of time, Leo disappeared, only to reappear as the host and leader when the band reached its ultimate destination. The accreditation of a university and its flagship program had been suspended, pending further evaluation by a national accreditation body. Just before the accreditation agency returned to campus, the college president required the dean of the program to place expensive ficus trees in a dark hallway of a recently remodeled building. As months passed by, the dead leaves of the dying ficus trees accumulated on the carpet, a symbol of mistrust. One day without warning the dead ficus trees disappeared—right after the president had passed through the building for the first time since the visitation. They were never mentioned again. While the story of Leo is a metaphor of servant leadership, so is the ficus tree story a metaphor of an opposite philosophy. Awareness of these myths and underlying assumptions is the first step to removing barriers to servant leadership. We all know or have worked in situations where a leader has modeled servant leadership. In a line from T. To the extent that servant leaders foster and model these values is the extent to which their colleagues can become servant leaders themselves. To paraphrase the statement reported by Max DePree, trust is a grace that fosters creativity and initiative. It applies equally to all members of an organization. It is essential where individual good is intentionally linked to the good of the organization.

4: The Myths of Servant Leadership - Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership

Based on findings of a Gates Foundation-funded professional development study, this handbook illustrates the significance of symbols and metaphors in understanding and facilitating organizational.

Dr Robert Long By: Despite widespread belief and incorporation in modern leadership discourse, using heroic attributes to predict leadership capacity has been empirically demonstrated to be a myth [3]. Drawing on the work of Haslam, Reicher, and Platow [4], Mintzberg [5], Sinclair [6] and Long and Ashurst [7], this essay explains the hero myth and the process of how the metaphor of heroic leadership has found widespread acceptance in modern leadership writing, development and discourse. The nature of the heroic leadership discourse is also analysed, with respect to language, imagery, power arrangements and discussion, with particular reference to what is, and is not, said and who benefits from the discourse. The limitations of the hero model for effective leadership are discussed with particular reference to leadership in risk. In particular, conclusions are made about the trajectory that an inherently individualistic model of leadership can put an organisation on. Flowers contends that there is no distinction between the leader and hero in early stories, because leadership was usually a function of heroism in war [9]. So how has the hero myth become such a dominant metaphor in modern leadership books, development and discourse? This need for psychological security intensifies during a crisis [17]. Do the attributes of heroic leaders enable a capacity for greater leadership? A study by Richard Mann evaluated attributes commonly associated with heroic leaders intelligence, adjustment, extroversion, sensitivity, masculinity, conservatism and dominance and empirically demonstrated that any correlation between these attributes and leadership capacity was, at best, weak [18]. Fourteen had left or been dismissed following poor or questionable performance [19]. Mintzberg also reviewed the results of an article by Charan and Colvin that reviewed the failure of thirty-eight CEOs [20]. Despite any factual basis, the heroic leader has become the dominant paradigm in leadership [21], particularly leadership in risk [22]. Sinclair provides insight into the process by which myth becomes accepted wisdom "by the discourse framing and limiting understanding of what leadership can be and persistently and habitually canonising heroic leadership [25]. From a social psychology perspective, commitment to a leadership approach based on assumptions is an example of groupthink. The sunk cost of investment in heroic leadership can create further resistance to change within an organisation. In subsequent sections this essay discusses how the hero myth is evident in modern management and leadership discourse and the limits of an inherently individualistic approach to leadership in risk. The Hero Myth in Modern Management and Leadership Discourse The dominant view of the heroic leader is evident in modern leadership discourse, including how leadership is written about, discussed and power arrangements. This section identifies this discourse, including what is overtly written or stated, what is hidden, the meaning carried by the words, power arrangements and how the discourse can frame and prime perceptions of what leadership is [26] and could be [27]. Leadership writing often reflects a traditional hierarchical approach to leadership, founded in the hero myth and led by an individual with the right attributes. Flowers identifies the consistent theme of individuals bravely following their own dreams in books and tapes on leadership [30]. Mintzberg [31], Bligh and Kohles [32] and Hook [33] all identify a tendency to attribute achievements to an individual leader even where there is no direct evidence to support this belief. Those who profit from leadership development and writing have a vested interest in promoting heroic leadership over alternate models of leadership [39]. This discourse of heroic leadership is inherently individualistic, about self and centralisation of power to an individual "with limited reference to the perceptions, needs or contribution of followers. The discourse is about leadership and control over others, rather than with others [40], by a leader with the superior attributes, reinforced by the imagery of a hero leading others against all odds. What is not said is as informative as what is said. A clear omission from the discourse of heroic leadership is the role of women [41] [42], or others perceived as not having the right attributes. This is in contrast to the empirical research of Mann who found no association between heroic attributes and leadership ability [43]. Similarly, Mintzberg cites numerous examples of male leaders who have created substantial damage to the organisations they led [44]. In contrast, Fletcher notes that

relational attributes, identified as important in post-heroic leadership models – such as empathy, community and collaboration, are culturally assigned as feminine [45]. Power arrangements inherent in the discourse are also not stated. The hero myth centralises power to the individual and dissent is not tolerated [46]. Sinclair describes a cyclic process, whereby aspiring leaders need to be compliant and perform within the accepted structure and tools of leadership [48]. The language supporting the dominant paradigm in safety risk leadership zero, control, compliance, non-compliance, requirements, systems, hierarchy of control, penalties, regulation identify, normalise and prime a discourse and ideology of control, power, non-questioning and a system of thought whereby the transformational leader and regulator are focussed on saving idiots from their own mistakes. As Long and Ashurst note [51], the hero myth is represented even more starkly in risk related leadership literature. The discourse of control and fear [53] is also reflected in the power, communication and language of regulators [54]. The critical question of the trajectory this discourse sets an organisation on is further discussed in the next Section. Limitations of the Hero Myth for Effective Leadership in Risk Long and Ashurst contend that the hero myth is represented more starkly in literature relating to risk management [55]. This section examines the limitations of the heroic approach to leadership in risk, how it can enable significant risk events and the trajectory it can set an organisation on. It is a model that relies on the assumed powers of an individual that simply do not match reality [59]. The individualist model almost inherently limits cultural change because, as Long notes, culture is determined by the group [60] and ignores the expert knowledge of those performing workplace tasks that create risk. Haslam, Reicher and Platow identify heroic leadership as an old psychology and articulate a new, relational model [61]. Sinclair also argues that leadership is socially constructed and relational [62]. Similarly, Long and Ashurst suggest a relational following-leading approach to leadership in risk [63], whilst Long identifies a hidden social contract between leaders and followers, which provides leaders with, and can remove, their moral authority [64]. Haslam, Reicher and Platow identify that cults of personality often enable corruption [65], or actions that set the organisation in a direction that creates significant risk with limited oversight or accountability [66]. This seduction of followers by leaders, in conjunction with obedience to authority, has enabled leaders such as Hitler and Mussolini to exploit followership for evil purposes [68]. The transfer of such substantial power to an individual also creates unrealistic expectations of the individual and can enhance their sense of infallibility, inflexibility, entitlement and a perception of themselves as outside the constraints applied to ordinary people [69]. The discourse of heroic leadership creates a hidden trajectory of perfectionism, self and control – leaving no room for human judgement [70].

Conclusion Despite the predictable outcomes of a perfectionist trajectory, and heroic leadership being a demonstrated myth, heroic leadership continues as the dominant paradigm in leadership, particularly leadership in risk. Why organisations continue on this trajectory is, in some cases, simply a lack of understanding of social psychology. Even where the limitations and risk of the hero model are recognised, change can be resisted by those in power, through the dissonance and sunk cost associated with admitting failure in a strategy and through a tendency to stick with a dominant paradigm that is normalised and accepted as fact. Alternate models, identifying the fundamental social and relational nature of leading rather than just leadership, provide a model more suited to management of risk in complex business environments. They also enable harnessing of the expert knowledge of the group and facilitate commitment and human judgement in risk.

5: Leadership Development Myths - Part 1 - Cambridge Leadership Group

Leadership, Myth, & Metaphor reports on the findings of a professional development study-funded by the Gates Foundation-of over superintendents and principals, celebrating educators' unique individual core values while acknowledging their shared intrinsic beliefs, including.

Leadership metaphors help ground my thinking by putting big ideas into perspective. They also help me communicate my thinking about leadership and guide my critical reflection. In some ways this is correct and can be true in life in general. I see this as a metaphor for leadership because leadership is never ending and each day is like starting over. Like Sisyphus, I find joy and happiness in the metaphorical walk down the hill each day knowing how much I accomplished. I recently found inspiration from an unlikely small business owner, Sam Calagione. Sam is the owner of a small craft brewery in Delaware. One particular passage that spoke to me states: People learn best from watching, and you should never underestimate how much coworkers learn about the company by watching how the leader goes about a typical workday. Once you have established the philosophies that you believe are most intrinsic to your company, and you have instilled these philosophies in the people you work with, then you need to make an effort to step back and see the forest through the trees. In so many ways a principal is running a business. You have employees, and budgets, and HR issues. You also must be a salesman and good at PR. Small business owners need to understand all the parts of their operation, but they can not be involved in the minutia of each moving part. Principals can learn a lot from the best practices of small business. Allegory of the Cave: Perception is Reality I have studied the Allegory of the Cave on two other occasions. There are several leadership metaphors within this story. The most obvious is that we as leaders see the absolute truth because we are outside the cave. Leaders need to understand that our constituents only see the reflection that is in their cave. In other words, teachers see things from a classroom perspective, the bus driver sees things from a different perspective, etc. Upon reflecting on this further, I have come to realize that we are ALL in a cave and that we all see things as reflections within our own cave. For a school administrator, that means seeing things from the point of view of the classroom teacher, the custodian, the parent, or the student. The images they see are reflections of real objects that lie outside a cave. A light shines on the object and projects an outline of the object on the wall. To someone outside the cave, the projected image is a false reality, but to the prisoner within the cave, it is the only reality they know. He or she interprets an ethical dilemma from his or her own personal frame of reference. Individuals bring their prejudices, their religious convictions, and their life experiences into the ethical decision-making process. John Rawls understood this and created a framework that tries to eliminate those biases and create a universal understanding of ethical dilemmas. He challenges individuals to step behind a veil of ignorance in order to make an unbiased decision. He uses justices as fairness as a gauge for ethical decision-making. While his system is not perfect and nothing can completely eliminate personal preconceptions, it can be an effective way of analyzing an ethical dilemma. By using the veil of ignorance and having an ethical decision-making process, individuals are better able to make consistent ethical decisions. Excerpt my Personal Leadership Platform A leader needs to have the ability to understand his or her constituents and also have the ability to see the bigger picture. The people in the cave can only see a reflection of real objects. While this is not a true image of the object, it is their true reality. The leader in the the Allegory of the Cave is the one who can go above ground and see the images for what they really are. The leader sees what is real, as well as the shadows cast on the cave wall. Socrates is arguing that these enlightened individuals must go back down into the cave to partake in the labors of the people in the cave. A leader needs to not only understand the reality of their organization, they also need to understand the perceived reality of the constituents. For a principal, that means getting into classroom and working with teachers and students. For a chief executive, that might be visiting factories and retail locations. A leader needs to find the balance between understanding the needs of the individual constituents and the needs of the organization as a whole. By spending time understanding the reality of the constituents, the leader will be able to better communicate with them. The leader and the constituents need to be able to communicate and a leader should have the ability

to communicate differently with various groups and individuals. That does not mean that a leader and constituents should be equal in the communication. Understanding and communication are two key factors in interpersonal influence. Therefore, the leader needs to maintain a relationship where they are still the authority while still being able to communicate effectively with their constituency. I particularly like this picture of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge as a metaphor because it is not just one bridge, but a series of different bridges that connect together to cross the bay. Just like this bridge, at times leaders need to be one type of bridge on one end and other type of bridge on the other. Within this frame, the bridge could be a new schedule or a change in policy or procedure. Within this frame, the bridge could be bringing two individuals or groups together that do not agree on something. Within this frame, the bridge could be dividing a limited number of resources in an equitable way. Within this frame, the bridge could be creating a new ritual or ceremony that busts morale or recognizes people. Escher This image is as much a metaphor about organizations as it is about leadership. We discussed this image briefly in one of our classes and it stuck with me as a powerful metaphor. This image represents the state that organization can fall into without leadership. Everyone in this pictures seems to be going in the right direction and no one has a face. No one seems to be communicating either. I imagine that everyone in this picture thinks they are in the right place, moving in the right direction. This is a metaphor for why it can be so hard for leaders to create change.

6: The Hero Myth in Modern Management â€¢ www.enganchecubano.com

8 Myth, Metaphor and Leadership Politicians and metaphor In this work I have tried to demonstrate that analysis of political speeches provides insight into how leadership is communicated and.

7: Leadership, Myth, & Metaphor : Daniel Cherry :

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