ON GLOBAL
LEADERSHIP

EVERYDAY LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

By Doug Guthrie & Sarah Kellogg

EVERY DAY, A LEADER

In the last few decades, society has come to worship the charismatic leader – strong in crisis, magnetic in personality and passionate of vision. Yet, after years of the born-to-lead culture, today's public space is sorely lacking individuals who are capable of mastering their organizations, leading movements and inspiring change.

That is especially true today, as we ride the disorienting waves of fear and indecision in the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic, widespread geopolitical disaffection, global economic upheaval, and racial unrest. This moment, with its complexity and fragmentation, demands a new type of leader and an improved approach to leadership.

There is no doubt that the dominant leadership theories that guided public discussion and scholarship in the mid-20th century have fostered generations of leaders in industry and government. They have a solid track record of achievement, and they should not be discarded. Effective leaders do have a vision for the organization; a passion for executing that vision; and have established an environment of transparency and integrity to ensure the organization succeeds.

The second wave of leadership scholarship in the 20th century brought us the charismatic leader. Harvard Business School Professor Abraham Zaleznik in his 1977 essay, "Managers and Leaders: Are They Different?", dramatically changed the trajectory of leadership scholarship. By turning leadership into a personality trait, Zaleznik laid the foundation for the cult-based view of leaders. Only visionary, charismatic and inspiring individuals need apply for the ranks of leadership.

These are great albeit clichéd notions of leadership that must evolve to meet the needs of today's individuals and organizations. Leadership isn't the province of the magnetic personality, and it isn't solely reserved for the individual at the top of the corporate ladder. It doesn't depend exclusively on a passionate vision or assume that integrity alone will guarantee effectiveness.

Everyday Leaders, quite simply, are forged in the day-to-day work of organizations; that only by mastering organizational and human complexity can leaders align strategy with organizational dynamics; and that leaders must know themselves, alert to their failings and graces, in order to better serve the organization.

The anchors of our framework are organized around five key themes: complexity and alignment, humility and being wrong, democracy, introspection, and creativity.p might seem mundane and quotidian in comparison to flashier manifestos. What we are proposing is a simple framework – built on a deep understanding of human behavior and interpersonal relationships – that's sole purpose is creating an effective organization. In leadership, sometimes the best choice is not counting on a single individual to save the day but rather looking for a more versatile and universal leadership that engages everyone, every day.

Everyday Leadership Main Components

Creativity

Complexity & Alignment

Introspection

Humility & Being Wrong

Democracy
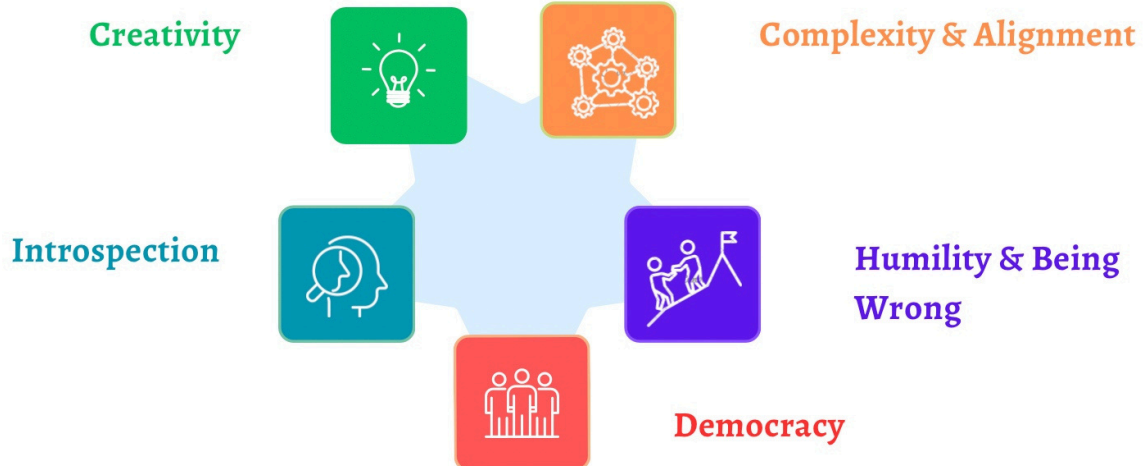
Everyday Leadership's Main Components

Complexity and alignment. Leaders must embrace complexity for the opportunities it holds, both the complexity of the organization and of the human dynamics within the organization. Only by thinking deeply about these intricate patterns and relationships can a leader align organizational form and function, and craft strategies that create new and unexpected avenues for organizational growth and innovation.

This complexity is also one of the reasons we are intensely interested in the care and feeding of organizational culture. Without a strong, deeply embedded, transparent, and engaging culture that serves both the organization and its people, there is no opportunity for any enterprise to truly succeed.

Humility and being wrong. Leaders must have an innate understanding of who they are and be able to define their strengths and weaknesses. While some debate whether acknowledging weakness and apologizing for errors undermines leaders, we contend that by admitting mistakes leaders can gain credibility and trust within the organization. Humility is a powerful tool for personal and institutional growth.

Democracy. Individuals at every level of the organization are capable of leadership. In fact the success of the organization depends on each individual being empowered to lead, because leaders are not born, they mature in the workplace and in civic life.

Introspection. Everyday leaders do not lead by intuition or charisma alone, but instead by having the patience to think analytically about how the parts of their organizations fit together as a whole. They think deeply about their role in their organizations and how best to lead – or to evolve as leaders – based on their profound understanding of themselves and their institutional cultures.

Creativity. The infinite complexity of the organization and the individuals who make up its workforce should be celebrated. Good leaders understand that complexity adds depth, and they embrace it. When leaders follow the typical mindset of strategy and economics, they gravitate toward what is common, comfortable and known. By embracing creativity, leaders can find endless opportunities to discover something new. The real world is much more exciting and interesting, and it requires creativity in its leaders to respond to the unpredictable moment.

Some may even wonder about the description of our theory: Everyday Leadership. The dictionary definition of "everyday" is simple, "an adjective that means commonplace, ordinary, or normal." Describing our leaders as common or ordinary doesn't diminish our view of the everyday leader. We believe it elevates the notion, ensuring equity and agency for everyday leaders in every position in an organization.

Finally, this kind of leadership is built and sustained through everyday action because it insists on the full participation of everyone. Our leadership goal isn't the creation of effective leaders alone, it is the creation of successful organizations that are guided by far-sighted, humble and creative leaders.

This thinking about leadership might seem mundane and quotidian in comparison to flashier manifestos. What we are proposing is a simple framework – built on a deep understanding of human behavior and interpersonal relationships – that's sole purpose is creating an effective organization. In leadership, sometimes the best choice is not counting on a single individual to save the day but rather looking for a more versatile and universal leadership that engages everyone, every day.

EVERYDAY LEADERSHIP & EQ

Emotional Intelligence (EI) or being a leader with a high EQ complements our Everyday Leadership theory by providing the tools necessary to navigate complexity, foster alignment, build trust, and create dynamic, innovative organizations. Leaders who develop and apply emotional intelligence can more effectively manage the human aspects of the workplace, leading to stronger, more cohesive teams and better organizational outcomes.

EI enhances a leader's ability to navigate organizational complexity by improving interpersonal awareness and relationship management. Leaders with a high EQ are better equipped to understand the diverse emotional and motivational dynamics within the workforce. This awareness allows them to see complexity not as a challenge but as an opportunity to foster a more cohesive and aligned organization.

Alignment in an organization isn't just about strategic goals and processes; it's also about aligning the emotional and psychological states of individuals. Leaders who cultivate emotional intelligence can create an environment where employees feel valued, understood, and motivated. By recognizing and responding to the emotional needs of their teams, leaders can better align individual aspirations with organizational goals.

Regular analysis of organizational culture requires leaders to be in tune with the emotional undercurrents that drive behavior and performance. EI helps leaders to detect and address issues such as burnout, disengagement, or conflicts that might undermine performance and work satisfaction. By continuously engaging with the emotional landscape of the organization, leaders can make more informed and empathetic decisions.

Governing emotions in a company experiencing change is critical for leaders. It requires knowing what we feel, no matter how negative, and responding in a positive way. By recognizing and addressing both positive and negative emotions, leaders are better able to handle the feelings of their colleagues and employees. The greatest gift a leader can give to his or her colleagues are keeping their emotions in control, allowing room for others to experience difficult times and provide the support needed to survive them.

Achieving an effective organizational culture involves recognizing the human element in every workforce decision and challenge. Leaders with strong EI are more likely to appreciate the unique contributions and perspectives of their team members. This appreciation leads to a more inclusive approach to leadership, where the intricacy of human experience is seen as a strength rather than a complication.

A work culture of innovation thrives when people feel psychologically safe to express ideas and take risks. Leaders who prioritize emotional intelligence can build this safety by fostering trust, open communication, and empathy. This environment not only supports innovation but also aligns individuals with the broader vision of the organization.

EDL: MAIN COMPONENTS

Complexity and Alignment

If creative leaders are forged in the day-to-day work of organizations, not simply born or gifted with their strengths and talents, then the organization, both its character and complexity, becomes a critical ingredient in achieving any success as a leader.

That's why creative leaders are more than individuals with vision. They must be key players in their organizations and take the time to assess the complexity of the organization and the individuals who work there. They must see beyond the apparent limits of complexity to the opportunities it presents.

One of the central tenets of Everyday Leadership is the importance of complexity and alignment within the organization, as well as its relationship to nurturing and sustaining dynamic organizations and creative leaders.

Everyday leadership is built on the idea that everyone at every level in the organization is a leader; that only by mastering complexity – both human and organizational – will leaders be able to achieve alignment; and that leaders must know themselves, alert to their failings and graces, to better serve the organization.

Complexity and alignment have been constants in organizational theory in the past, though often casually dismissed as the duty of managers and not the province of visionary leaders. Recent calls to focus on complexity are welcomed, but they also miss the point by stressing only the inner psychology. In our view, both are ultimately shortsighted. Both are damaging to leaders striving to build great organizations.

Thanks largely to globalization and the revolution in information technology, institutions have become far more complex. The distance between New York and Bangalore has been reduced to mere bits and bytes, allowing organizations to grow beyond the constraints of time and place. These changes naturally introduce more competition, processes and sophistication.

Moreover, individuals at every level of the organization contribute to complexity as employees look for new ways to achieve strategic goals or add value. It is this element of human dynamics in the workplace that injects another level of complexity – one that cannot always be addressed with a process or system change, or the right mental state. Instead, it demands a more robust and profound understanding of everyday leadership inside organizations.

The everyday leader sees opportunity in this organizational and human complexity. By analyzing the organization and by focusing on the power of alignment, leaders create harmony among all the various components of the organization. The result? What we all want: a culture of innovation and change.

Witnessing lagging performance, we are too quick to point to the poor vision of uncharismatic leaders; or we call for deep cultural change. Yes, great leaders and cultures of innovation drive business success. But leadership and values are also emergent traits: they come from building environments where thought, behavior and group dynamics can align. We believe that understanding organizational complexity can provide unheralded opportunities for change.

Some leadership experts press for simplicity and eschew complexity. We do not. The infinite complexity of the organization and the individuals who make up its workforce should be celebrated. Good leaders understand that complexity adds depth, and they embrace it. In fact, we would argue they embrace both the intricate workings of individual *and* organizational complexity. When leaders follow the typical mindset of strategy and economics – simplifying assumptions and working toward theoretical abstractions – they gravitate toward what is common, comfortable and known. By embracing complexity, leaders can find endless opportunities to create something new. The real world is much more exciting and interesting than the staid assumptions of theoretical mathematical models.

Let's face it. Much of today's business whether in the private or public sector is carried out by complex organizations that are populated by individuals with varying capabilities. Not everyone has the same strength or aspiration. Only by developing a deeper understanding of the organization – both internally and in relationship to the wider ecology – can leaders create environments that catalyze human potential and align the institution for success.

To get the right fit of strategy, processes and people, leaders ask the hard questions about their institution and their goals, as well as analyze the capacities of each individual worker. Leaders need strategic road maps that help the organization and individuals, both separately and together, achieve clearly defined outcomes.

Our call for understanding organizational complexity is not meant to serve as a quarterly review. Solid analysis and finely tuned alignment is not reserved for periodic changes in leadership or a call for reforming organizational structure. The life of the organization is renewed by thorough and regular reviews of institutional complexity that are followed by creative leaders weighing their options and aligning today's reality with tomorrow's goals.

Humility and Being Wrong

During one of the 2004 presidential debates, an audience member stood up and asked Democrat John Kerry if he could give an example of when he had been wrong about something. The questioner was asking the question as a measure of character and trying to divine whether Kerry, like President George W. Bush, was a leader who never admitted an error in judgment. (Bush had been adamant in the contention that "no mistakes were made" in the Iraq War.)

Confronted with this opportunity, Kerry not only swung and missed, he didn't even understand the question being pitched. Kerry immediately launched into an answer about how "his side" had not been wrong about the war; that Bush's team was the group that deserved blame; and he spent his 90 seconds recounting Bush's failures. Kerry was unable to perceive the value in admitting error. The message to voters was clear: he would probably be a leader not much different from Bush.

This is not uncommon for leaders. After all, the ego structure of people who rise to the top of organizations, and in politics, is such that the more confident you are, the surer of yourself you are and the more successful you are likely to be.

In an era where out-size, narcissistic business leaders are treated like rock stars, with the requisite cult followings, of course, elevating humility as an essential trait for creative leaders may seem quaint, even a bit anachronistic. Yet, humility and the ability to admit error may be two of the most important qualities a truly creative leader must have.

Everyday leaders must be more than big personalities if they hope to lead successful organizations. They must be deeply in tune with human behavior, and, most critically, understand who they are and what motivates them to success and what precipitates their failures.

One of the central precepts of our new theory of Everyday Leadership is that by embracing humility, everyday leaders advantage their organizations and themselves. Moreover, leaders must not only recognize their failures but also acknowledge them publicly. In being wrong, they can find both authenticity and opportunity.

Everyday leadership is built on the idea that everyone at every level in the organization is a leader; that leaders must know themselves, alert to their failings and graces, to better serve the organization; and that only by mastering complexity – both human and organizational – will leaders be able to achieve alignment.

The dictionary defines humility as modesty and lacking in pretense, but that doesn't mean humble leaders are meek or timid. A humble leader is secure enough to recognize his or her weaknesses and to seek the input and talents of others. By being receptive to outside ideas and assistance, creative leaders open up new avenues for the organization and for their employees.

An everyday leader is self-aware and not weighed down with insecurities, constantly worrying about how they are perceived by their employees and peers. Their egos reflect the reality of their personality and circumstance. They are not selfless and without ego; they have a healthy sense of self that doesn't respond to threats. From this emotional vantage point, they are able to effectively lead their organizations. Leaders who cultivate humility don't trade on hubris, nor are they guilty of denigrating their colleagues or competitors to aggrandize themselves. Quietly confident, they inspire others to tap their talents and to seek achievement, all in service to the organization and its mission.

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Keith Reinhard is just this type of leader. We are unabashed admirers of Keith, the CEO Emeritus of DDB Worldwide, the global marketing and communications giant. We have known him for several years through our work with the Berlin School of Creative Leadership, and he has been a source of great wisdom and advice about creative leadership. The self-effacing Reinhard has said one of his highest goals as a leader is empowering his people as much as possible. He believes that, "people respond to leaders who give credit to their team for success and take responsibility upon themselves for failures."

Some leaders contend that admitting error is a sign of weakness and an open door for allegations of illegitimacy. So often the opposite is true. What is more powerful than an individual who can stand in front of his or her employees and admit that the failure was his or hers? What better way to gain the respect and admiration of your team than to take the blame and responsibility on yourself rather than calling out someone on your team? By admitting you are wrong, by taking blame, you will have a group of more committed followers.

The work of Kathryn Schulz, the author of Being Wrong, is particularly on point here. Schulz notes: "As a culture, we haven't… mastered the basic skill of saying 'I was wrong.' This is a startling deficiency, given the simplicity of the phrase, the ubiquity of error, and the tremendous public service that acknowledging it could provide."

We are frequently taught that leaders, especially aspiring leaders, should hide weaknesses and mistakes. This view is flawed. It is not only good to admit you are wrong when you are; but also it can also be a powerful tool for leaders—actually increasing legitimacy and, when practiced regularly, can help to build a culture that actually increases solidarity, innovation, openness to change and many other positive features of organizational life.

But there is a deeper, more profound, point that Schulz makes in her wonderful book. It is that when you are open to the idea of being wrong, when you truly believe that another path might be better and are not cowed by it, you will be a more creative and innovative person. You will take more risks; you will explore more paths with unknown outcomes; and you will build a better organization.

Introspection

In an old edition of *Inside Higher Education*, Richard Greenwald wrote a great essay on the challenges of leadership in today's higher-education climate. The system is under historic pressure (financial and other) to change in ways that have not been encountered for more than a century.In this column, we have recently been discussing leadership. Given that introspection is an important part of the Everyday Leadership model we have been proposing, I thought it was high time to turn the microscope on myself, and Greenwald's insightful essay seemed like a nice invitation to do so.

Greenwald suggests new models of leadership using colorful technology and gardening metaphors in his piece, "New Kinds of Leadership". As he eloquently puts it, "Gardeners must know when and what to plant, but they do not control growth. They need to guard against the wind, sun, and lack of water among other forces. They also must know what can grow in their soil and what is their growing cycle, as every plot of land is slightly different from another. Just like a college, no two are alike. College leaders must prune the dying parts to allow the young, growing buds to thrive."

Over the last few years, we have learned that nothing quite prepares you for leading. I found that out in the first weeks of my tenure as the dean of the School of Business at The George Washington University (GWSB). The responsibility and expectations I welcomed, and there was a wide group of university leaders, alumni, faculty, staff and students who seemed excited about my arrival at a time when the business school was in transition.

But I also was met with some skepticism and doubt. After all, I had less direct managerial experience than most dean candidates. I had never been a department chair nor an associate dean, not that these jobs would actually prepare you for the dean's position.

I quickly learned that being a dean is a lot more like being a chief executive officer or a division president than it is being an academic. You spend a lot of time thinking about market strategy, budgets, profits and losses, negotiating with the central administration and raising revenues while also maintaining quality and efficiency. And always, there is fundraising.

When I stepped into the job, I admit I had very little experience with any of these.

I did have a couple of things working in my favor. I was a longtime China scholar and China was hot. I had built a successful executive education program at my previous institution. I am an able speaker and enjoyed the prospect of jumping into the fundraising process. And I had taught leadership from a strategic perspective for a decade and knew much about how to integrate leadership with strategic positioning in the market and how to build an organization that was aligned with this strategy.

You might wonder how far my experience in teaching leadership at other institutions would take me. It's a good question. For me I was confident that years of teaching leadership had prepared me to run a large-scale organization. Frankly, I was wrong.

Everyday Leadership is built on the idea that everyone at every level in the organization is a leader; that leaders must know themselves, alert to their failings and graces, to better serve the organization; and that only by mastering complexity – both human and organizational – will leaders be able to achieve alignment. I had much to master in becoming dean.

Becoming dean

When I arrived at GWSB, I found that the school was very different than the institution from which I came – much more decentralized, much more ground-up in terms of the evolution of programs. In some ways, it was underfunded if we were going to reach our aspirational goal of becoming an elite school. It was clear to me that we would need to grow and do a few things differently.

As a newbie in organizational leadership, I have to admit I panicked a bit. I had seen complexity in organizations before, but to manage the complexity, shift directions and grow, I felt like I really needed a strong plan going forward. So, I rolled up my sleeves, dug into the research of the place, and began an organizational analysis that would lead to a business plan – one I hoped would help the school find a way to grow as I thought we needed to.

The business plan was a frontal attack on the school's decentralized structure (and the fact that it was underfunded). This is what I thought we needed strategically. It included an analysis of the market and the organization, along with a detailed plan for revenue growth. With new resources, we would be able to invest in key areas and thus grow without diluting quality. We hit all of our numbers, and even had a record-breaking year in fundraising in the second year. The financial problems were resolved.

All seemed grand, except it wasn't. Somewhere along the way, I realized I was losing the faculty. Or perhaps I had already lost them. No matter how much I talked about the benefits of our business plan, or why we needed to move quickly on it, or how it was translating into resources for the faculty, it was still my plan, and many of the faculty viewed it that way. It was not our plan and nothing I said would change that. And this was a failure in my leadership.

A leadership prescription

One of the funny things about teaching leadership in a business school is that most of us have never run a large-scale organization, so we have never had to practice the theories we espouse. As a dean, I found myself at many junctures thinking about what I had taught in leadership class that might prove helpful in specific situations. Sometimes the answer was there, sometimes not. The one conclusion I am certain of is that when I teach leadership now to GWSB students I approach it with a far different attitude and emphasis than in the past.

That doesn't mean I don't value scholarship in the field of leadership. The structure of leadership teaching (and research) has broken down along four levels of traditional analysis: (1) vision and strategy—how well does an individual understand the competitive environment in which their organization is embedded, and how well can they create the competitive advantage the help this organization win in the market?; (2) alignment — given that strategy, how well is this organization going to be able to be aligned to meet these strategic ends?; (3) interpersonal motivation—how well is this leader and this organization going to be above to motivate people to work for these ends?; (4) and introspection — how well is this individual going to be able to think about him or herself in an honest way? This is often referred to as the V-A-M-I framework — Vision, Alignment, Motivation and Introspection.

The majority of leadership professors and scholars are "micro" in their orientation (so more on the M-I end of the spectrum). Most of them come out of the fields of psychology or Micro-Organizational Behavior, which focuses on the psychological aspects of interpersonal interaction in the workplace.

There is a second group or movement that has been central to the development of leadership education over the last 40 years. Let's call it the Harvard School. In his 1977 essay, "Managers and Leaders: Are They Different?", Harvard Business School Professor Abraham Zaleznik dramatically changed the trajectory of leadership scholarship, and not for the better in my view. By turning leadership into a personality trait, Zaleznik laid the foundation for the cult-based view of leaders. Only visionary, charismatic and inspiring individuals need apply for the ranks of leadership. This view of leadership is wrong and depresses me.

In my leadership teaching, I took a different tack. I followed the thinking of Mike Tushman and David Nadler. Their Strategic Alignment Framework focuses on the "macro" and "messo" that integrate vision and strategic thinking with organizational alignment. Under this theory, the key question is: how do you create an effective organization culture that will serve the strategic imperatives of the organization?

I built my leadership teaching around this question. I actually used to joke, somewhat dismissively, that I was not a psychologist (as many micro-OB people are), so my students wouldn't be getting any therapy sessions in my class. I told my students that it would all be about the tools of analysis and strategic alignment. They would learn to break down their organizations and rebuild them into a harmonious whole.

Going forward

After two years of leading a large, complex organization, I think I might have been mistaken. Don't get me wrong, I still think that vision, strategy and alignment are important. Nevertheless, I think my psychologist and micro-OB colleagues might have understood something that I did not. Human resources professionals often talk about pay and incentives, but I think motivation relates directly to how much people perceive whether you are listening to them or not. Listening is much more crucial than I thought. In my leadership classes, I would spend less than 20 percent of the time on personalized motivation, but I realize now that this is probably more important than anything else in the leadership oeuvre.

In my first days as dean, I was so taken with strategic issues, the business plan and the prospects for the future that I had forgotten that the successful organization is built on the respect and commitment of faculty and staff, people who have a keen understanding of the organization and are just waiting to be asked to contribute. When I realized I had taken a wrong turn, I was flustered and chagrined. I was acting like economist Robert Taylor (of the failed movement, Taylorism), who viewed employees as cogs in the wheel, rather than Richard Thaler, the highly regarded University of Chicago behavioral economist who offers a more profound understanding of human behavior in the organization.

Leaders need to ask hard questions, but first and foremost, they must pose those questions to themselves. How much are you thinking about and analyzing yourself, your own motivations, your own anxieties and your own goals? To what extent are you being honest about all of these issues? I have always thought being honest and real is an important part of leadership, but it was always given short shrift in the classroom. I used to joke: "Of course these issues are important, but I am not a therapist; if you need a good therapist, I can give you the number for one…" This would always draw a few laughs. Today I feel chagrined that I made light of these issues.

Taking a step back and assessing yourself honestly and critically, admitting where you have made mistakes and failed, and adjusting your course in response to those failures are truly the marks of creative leaders. Two years into the job of leading a fairly complex organization, I realized I had spent a lot of time thinking strategically and trying to convince people of the importance of this strategic vision and not nearly enough time listening and engaging. A rookie mistake from a leadership perspective and a hard lesson learned.

My years as a dean taught me that leadership is a difficult, double-edge sword. If you are a leader who thinks too much about consensus, being liked and walking softly, you will not get many things done. Organizations are institutionalized spaces that sometimes resist change, and the individuals who live and work within these spaces, when they become comfortable, resist change as well. Moreover, if you have followed the leadership prescriptions I used to teach—strategic alignment, incentives, structure and design—you may very well lose the help of those you need most. I realize now that it takes more emotion and personal investment to be a leader than I thought. It takes patience, connecting with people, and personally convincing them that you care and that they can trust you. Leadership isn't gained by browbeating colleagues with a good strategy and economic success. It can only be achieved when you believe in your people and respect their opinions and input.

In my life, no longer a dean and working on the faculty, my goal is to try to do a lot of listening. And maybe a little gardening.

Democracy

If you want to be a leader in your organization and you're not one now, what are you doing about it? Maybe you're toiling away hoping your boss will see your leadership potential, or you're certain the higher-ups might have sensed your interest in leadership in the myriad of memos or reports you've carefully written and submitted. Call it your stealth leadership campaign.

How's that working for you? Leadership, especially everyday leadership, isn't the result of stealth. Leadership comes to you because you exhibit the traits and initiative that encourage your boss to further empower you to leadership and a guiding role in your department, division or company.

For me, everyday leadership is not about the position you hold inside the organization, it is about how you live in that position. It is your state of mind and how you approach your work and the values you bring to that work that makes you a leader. The rest is merely a title that can be taken away as easily as it is awarded.

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Creative leaders must be more than big personalities. They are not born to leadership. Their charisma does not determine their success. Good leaders, first and foremost, understand who they are and what they contribute to the organization. It is a form of democracy that recognizes the unique role and contributions of every member of the team.

An essential quality for these types of everyday leaders is their courage, even while facing the potential of great personal or professional loss. It is that kind of personal courage that defines everyday leaders. Its absence is equally telling. Often I encounter executives in organizations who are frozen in place, unable to take the steps they need to improve the companies they lead because they are fearful. They are afraid to rock the status quo, afraid to challenge the powers that be, afraid to rise above their discomfort to do the "right" thing to move the organization more fully toward its goals.

When I see their fear, it reminds me that truly effective leadership demands much from individuals, frequently even more from front-line workers than the executives above them. By taking on the mantle of leadership, everyone at every level of the organization takes a risk, albeit one that is hopefully leavened by the other elements of Everyday Leadership such as humility, introspection and trust.

Everyday Leadership thus seeks small-d democracy in organizational settings, although I do not believe in a shared, Kumbaya-style leadership where no one is in charge and decisions are made by consensus. That is a recipe for disaster for any organization, whether it be a family or a multinational corporation. My vision of organizational democracy is one where individuals eschew victimhood and seek to actively support and influence the organization's vision and goals.
One of the people I like to call out as a great leader is Don Davis, a former two-time Super Bowl champion and a regional director of the NFL Players Association and the director of the NFL Programs for Pro Athletes Outreach, a conference based ministry for professional athletes in the National Football League.

Davis believes in the transformational power of education to advance players in their post-football careers, because it provides the knowledge and expertise they need to be leaders in other fields and to develop businesses that allow them to leverage their extensive backgrounds. Toward that end, Davis has sought that kind of business intelligence for himself and other players through the STAR EMBA program, an innovative executive MBA program that provides key business skills and knowledge to participants.

Davis has a tremendous amount of passion for his work. He also has insight into how best to elevate players' concerns and motivate them to greater leadership. In that sense, he understands how best to maneuver a complex system like the NFL and align the players personal and professional goals with the needs of their teams.

What continually impresses me about Davis is his ability to recognize the desires, skills and experiences that NFL players bring to the table. He sees the advantage to giving them the tools they need to become creative leaders who contribute in large and small ways to their organizations, whether it's their current teams or their own businesses after their gridiron careers have ended.

Let me reiterate, creative leadership is not the province of the person at the pinnacle of the organization. Instead, it is available to everyone who has the capacity to influence and change that organization. All they need to do to become leaders, in this sense, is to seize leadership moments every single day.

What comes from this kind of leadership? Creativity, risk-taking, openness to new ideas and innovation, to name a few. Leaders must take the risk of casting aside perfection in order to support a creative and democratic chaos. In exchange they will breed a more innovative, more committed and more effective organization, all of which can lead to greater organizational and individual success. That doesn't mean that things can't go wrong and people won't fail. Empowering everyone inside an organization can lead to trouble if the organization doesn't see advantages to this type of wholesale engagement.

Creativity

Creativity always leads. The best leaders are often creative leaders in that they possess some or many creative qualities. And somehow, for some unknown reason(s), we have ignored creativity as a factor in growing everyday leaders. The time has come to recognize creativity as critical to contemporary and future leadership. That is, if we truly hope to get better.

Creatives thrive on a challenge, especially to the status quo. The times they are a changin' (a creative wrote that), and fast. Creatives rise to a challenge. Creative people are fond of saying things like "that's not good enough" and "It can be better." That's not their egos talking, it's their vision. It's frustration at and with the status quo. Right now, we need leaders who are eager to change the world, and who aren't afraid to let go of what isn't working.

Creative leaders are curious AND open minded. They are open to new experiences, new ideas, and new expression. They intentionally seek them. They like the novel, the uncharted. Creatives are uncomfortable when they get too comfortable. No one is contented right now. We need creative leaders who are wide eyed and open minded.

Leaders infused with a creative spirit not only imagine, but can imagine how to get there. We need new ways to approach new problems and new ways to approach old problems. Einstein (great creative leader) famously said that, "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again but expecting different results." Creative people look for different answers but also know that people, by nature, resist change. And so, they figure out how to build the bridge that others will cross and to solve problems others are afraid to tackle.

Creative leaders know when to use intuition or their EQ over institution. This one is a bit tougher. The understanding of leadership has become heavily institutionalized. And there is tremendous value that comes from knowledge and understanding. But creative people learn to listen to their intuition. They have to.

Creative people have to make things, build bridges, engage others, and find compromise. It's their basic operating system. It's like breathing. This is very different than a leader who is simply commanding and moving people in a direction. We do need leaders who are going to give more than they take, either in salary or Twitter attention. People who model the kind of behavior they are trying to incite.

Finally, Everyday Leadership

The *Everyday Leadership* way of viewing and thinking about the world is fundamentally different. For leaders, "everyday" thinking can be challenging because it requires recognizing the primacy of individuals and their roles in organizations, not as isolated lone wolves but rather as central to the formation of organizational culture, strategy, and vision. That is, it is a way of seeing and thinking that embraces complexity and the grassroots thinking of the individual to advance success rather than relying on the reductive simplicity preferred by age-old academic models of leadership development or contemporary media kingmakers captured by charisma and cash. By vesting the individual worker, organizations can ensure forward this simple philosophy: Every day, a leader.

ON GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

On Global Leadership invites organizations and individuals to look for new ways of thinking about leadership development, organizational change, executive education, geopolitical economics, and smart capitalism to propel growth, innovation, and opportunity. Our work – research reports, insight posts, podcasts, books, reports (a subscription business), and advisory services – are mindful of new ways of thinking and how to move organizations and individuals forward in the 21st century.

We optimize opportunities and relationships because we are able to look beyond the obvious, especially given our expertise and experience in the subject matter. Through strategic knowledge sharing, we not only provide insight into global problems and challenges through our digital communications, we also are able to make our sister companies stand out in the crowd with thought-leadership-based executive education and leadership development.

Doug Guthrie, OGL Chairman

Doug is Professor of Global Leadership at the Thunderbird School of Global Management and Director of China Initiatives. Doug has spent his career researching, writing, teaching and advising companies about two topics: organizational development, where he has focused on issues of leadership, organizational culture and corporate social responsibility; and the Chinese economic reforms, where he has focused on the intersection of economic and political forces that lead to successful economic development models. From 2014-19, Guthrie was a Senior Director at Apple, based in Shanghai China, where he led Apple University efforts on leadership and organizational development in China. Prior to joining Apple, from 2010-14, Guthrie was Dean of the George Washington School of Business, Vice President for University China Operations, and Professor of International Business. Prior to his time at GW, from 1997-2010, Guthrie held faculty positions at NYU's Stern School of Business, where he was Professor of Management and Director of custom Executive Education, and NYU's Faculty of Arts and Sciences, where he was Professor of Sociology and the Founding Director of the University's Office of Global Education.

Sarah Kellogg, OGL COO

Sarah is a tested strategist, researcher, and editor, has written widely about the courts and U.S. and international law, Congressional operations, U.S. government policy and regulation, leadership development, and economic policy. As a program leader, she has served as OGL's lead on engagements for leadership development, organizational change management, and urban economic development. She has focused her research and writing on urban politics and community development, working with Doug Guthrie in producing economic reports that explored the economic vitality of the District of Columbia under the administration of former Mayor Gray. She also serves as the managing editor of OGL Insights, city reports, and podcasts.