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Complex Adaptive Leadership

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"Complex Adaptive Leadership" that argues leadership should not be something only exercised by nominated leaders. It is a complex dynamic process involving all those engaged in a particular enterprise. The theoretical background to this lies in complexity science and chaos theory - spoken and written about in the context of leadership for the last twenty years, but still little understood. We all seem intuitively to know leadership 'isn't what it used to be' but we still cling to old assumptions which look anachronistic in changing and challenging times. Organisations and their contexts are increasingly paradoxical and uncertain. A broader approach to leadership is needed. Nick Obolensky has practiced leadership in the public, private and voluntary sectors. He has also researched it, and taught it over many years in leading business schools. In this exciting book, he brings together his knowledge of theory, his own experience, and the results of 15 years of research involving 1,500 executives in 40 countries around the world. The main conclusion from that research is that the more complex things become, the less traditional directive leadership is needed. Those operating in the real world, nonetheless, need ways of coping. The book is focused on helping practitioners struggling to interpret and react to increasingly complex events. To that end, it is arranged in four manageable parts and provides a number of exercises, tool and models: Part One looks at Why the context for leadership has changed, and why complexities in organisations have emerged. Part Two looks at What complexity is and what lessons can be drawn from this emergent area of scientific study. Part Three looks at How Complex Adaptive Leadership can be exercised in a very practical way at two levels - organisationally and individually. Part Four looks at specific actions as well as appendices for wider application including leadership development. The book will particularly appeal to curious practitioners with a thirst to add usefully to their theoretical knowledge of issues they have heard something about but do not fully comprehend.

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