Dr. Seuss on the Loose!
The Leadership Lessons of Dr. Seuss
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One of the most famous authors of all times is
Dr. Seuss.

Purposes:
• Facilitate your leadership journey in an innovative way
• Inspire you to look beyond traditional sources to enhance your leadership development
• Examine key leadership concepts inspired by Dr. Seuss (and others!)
His real name was Theodor Seuss Geisel
His friends called him Ted, or Mr. Geisel
Seuss was his middle name
The doctor part he made up
Also wrote and published under Theo LeSieg

When Ted went to college, he drew cartoons for the school newspaper
He was the class clown and a practical joker
Was voted least likely to succeed in his class.

After college and travel, Ted Geisel went into advertising in New York City.
Life was tough until he got a job to make ads for Flit, a company that made bug spray.
• Dr. Seuss thought of his first idea for a children’s book in 1936 while on a vacation cruise.

• The rhythm of the ship’s engine helped him think of the rhyme of his first book.

  Can you guess which one?

  ![Mulberry Street](image)

• Forty three different book companies rejected this book!

• Finally one of his friends, who was a book publisher, decided to make it a book.

These were his next 3 books.
One day Dr. Seuss was sitting in his office with the windows open. A breeze lifted a piece of paper with an elephant sketched on it and laid it down on another drawing of a tree.

“All I had to do was figure out what that elephant was doing in that tree.”

That story became...

• In 1941, Dr. Seuss took a break from writing books.
• He cared about politics and during World War II drew many cartoons for a magazine.
• He also joined the United States Army and helped to make movies for the soldiers.
In 1950, John Hersey studied how kids learn to read. His report said children were having a hard time learning to read because their books were boring!

Geisel’s publisher made up a list of 348 words he felt were important and asked him to cut the list to 250 words and write a book using only those words.

It took Dr. Seuss 9 months and he used only 220 easy words. Everybody loved it!

That book was...?
A few years later a friend gave him another challenge. Could Dr. Seuss write a book with only 50 different words in it?

So Dr. Seuss wrote another very popular book. Dr. Seuss said, “It was the only book I wrote that still makes me laugh.”

And that one is.......
It has sold more copies than any other title — over 6,000,000!!!

Fourth-bestselling English-language children’s book (novel) of all time

Dr. Seuss is different from many writers because most of his books are written in rhyme.
To make his rhymes, he would often make up new words, like the Sneetches, The Lorax, and Zizzer-Zazzer-Zuzz.

Dr. Seuss’s books were fun to read but they taught kids about life too.
A person's a person, no matter how small!
Horton Hears a Who!

Dr. Seuss teaches us to care about others.

Come on! Open your mouth and sound off at the sky.
Shout loud at the top of your voice,
I AM I !!!!!
ME! I am I! And I may not know why
But I know that I like it. Three cheers!!
I AM I !!!

Dr. Seuss teaches us to care for ourselves.

You have brains in your head.
You have feet in your shoes.
You can steer yourself
Any direction you choose.
You're on your own.
And you know what you know.
And YOU are the guy
Who'll decide where to go.
Dr. Seuss can teach us to be fair and treat people well.

I know up on top you are seeing great sights. But down at the bottom we, too, have rights.

And the turtles, of course All the turtles are free As turtles, and maybe, all creatures should be.

Dr. Seuss wrote *The Sneetches* to address how different groups of people didn't like each other during World War II.

I'm quite happy to say that the Sneetches got really smart on that day. The day they decided that Sneetches are Sneetches. And no kind of Sneetch is the best on the beaches.

Dr. Seuss books can teach us about diversity. We see them come. We see them go. Some are fast. And some are slow. Not one of them is like another. Don't ask why. Go ask your mother.
Dr. Seuss wrote books with messages about getting along and pollution.

Dr. Seuss books teach us about how to help the world.

Plant a new Truffula. Treat it with care. Give it clean water. And feed it fresh air.

Grow a forest. Protect it from axes that hack.

Then the Lorax
And all his friends
Can come back.

UNLESS someone like you
Cares a whole awful lot.

Nothing is going to get better. It's not....

Dr. Seuss was still writing books when he died on Sept. 24, 1991 at the age of 87.
In 1997, schools all over the United States chose March 2, Dr. Seuss's birthday, as a day to celebrate reading. We want people to know that reading is important and lots of fun!

The more that you read,
The more things you will know,
The more that you learn,
The more places you'll go.

Dr. Seuss

The High Cs of Leadership
Commitment
Courage
Creativity
Change
Conflict
Management

Commitment
Courage
Creativity
Change
Conflict
Management
Dr. Seuss’s publisher wagered $50 that Seuss could not write a book using only fifty different words.

**Case Study**

**Green Eggs and Ham Case Study**
- Change
- Creativity & problem solving
- Communication / Conversations
- Commitment, loyalty and trust
- Conflict
- Collaboration
- Courage
- Context, Circumstances and Perspective
Green Eggs and Ham Case Study

- What leadership qualities is each character exhibiting?
- What qualities is each failing to exhibit?
- What are the implications for the leader’s vision?
- What does Sam finally do differently that helps him achieve his goal?
- What does all of this have to do with your community, with your leadership behaviors and abilities, and with the leadership visions you want to create?

- What does each character want and expect?
- How well are they communicating?
- What are the relationships among the characters, and what happens to those relationships throughout the story?
- How does the context affect each character?
- How do each characters’ actions affect the context and the other characters?
- What does Sam finally do differently that helps him achieve his goal?
- What does all of this have to do with your change efforts?

Our World is Changing
What does this mean for you, your office, and your community?
Debrief

- What did you do well?
- What could you have done differently?
- What was missing?

Barriers to Creativity

1. Fear of rejection.
2. Environment unwilling to take risks.
3. No expectation that ideas are everyone’s responsibility.
4. Utopian.
5. Too much time between creation and implementation.
7. No support structure to see the idea through to implementation.
8. Only left brains allowed.
10. Valuing only BIG ideas.

Keys to Creativity and Innovation in the Public Sector

- How does your organization’s environment support or create obstacles to creativity?
- How can we enhance creativity and innovation in our communities?
And I said, “You can stop, if you want, with the Z.
Because most people stop with the Z.
But not me!!
In the places I go, there are things that I see
That I never could spell if I stopped with the Z.
I’m telling you this cause you’re one of my friends.
My alphabet starts where your alphabet ends!”

“If you stay home with Zebra,
You’re stuck in a rut.
But on beyond Zebra.
You’re anything but!
When you go beyond Zebra.
Who knows…?
There’s no telling
What wonderful things
You might find yourself spelling!”

So you see!
There’s no end
To the things you might know.
Depending how far beyond Zebra you go!

Conflict and Collaboration

The Zax
Leadership and Conflict
• Organizations tend to be allergic to conflict
• Conflict is the primary engine of creativity and innovation
• Leaders must have the courage to surface and orchestrate conflicts

Conflict and Collaboration
• Can’t improve collaboration until you’ve addressed the issue of conflict
• Conflict is the “crucible” in which solutions are developed and trade-offs between competing objectives are made
A Public Paradox

Public officials who bicker are considered uncivil and counterproductive. When public officials get along well, they are accused of back scratching and suppressing debate.

The Politics of Ugliness, Governing, June 1997

Harvard Business Review

• "Strong leaders create the kind of conflict that can spark creativity and innovation."

• "A good future-looking fight has three qualities: It speaks to what is possible, it's compelling, and it involves uncertainty."


How to Pick a Good Fight

Conflict is healthful only when people's energies are pointed in the right direction and when carried out in a productive way.
1. Make it Material
   • Does it have “game-changing” potential?
   • Does it create lasting value?
   • Does it lead to a noticeable and sustainable improvement?
   • Does it address a complex challenge that has no easy answers (Adaptive Challenge)?

2. Focus on the Future
   • Does it speak to what is possible?
   • Does it shift the debate away from what happened to what could happen?
   • Is it compelling focusing people so intently on real achievable benefits that they are willing to work through any costs and controversies?
   • Does it involve uncertainty? (because if things are certain, there’s no need to fight technical problems)

3. Pursue a Noble Purpose
   • The right fight connects people with a sense of purpose that goes beyond their own self interest
Three Principles:

1. Make it sport, not a war.
   - Sports have rules; reasonably matched opponents; leader defines the parameters so all understand how to participate and what it takes to win.

2. Set up formal structure, but work informally.
   - Structure the fights through the formal organization, but allow people to take advantage of informal networks.
   - It’s the informal processes that accomplish goals the formal structure cannot.

3. Turn Pain into Gain
   - Find a way to turn disappointing news into an occasion for personal development
   - Give people manageable challenges that stretch their skills and open up opportunities
   - Find ways to help people adjust
Sources of Conflict
- Personal Differences
- Conflicting Objectives
- Lack of Information
- Role Incompatibility
- Environmental Stress

Personal Differences
- Different:
  - Expectations
  - Perceptions
  - Values
  - Beliefs

- The emotional component of these conflicts makes them challenging to resolve

Conflicting Objectives
- People can quite legitimately run into conflict because their objectives are different.
- The resulting differences in objectives can fuel intense and passionate conflict.
Lack of Information
• Misinformation, misrepresentation, and miscommunication are all common sources of conflict within organizations.
• Typically once the information gap is bridged, conflicts can be solved efficiently.

Role Incompatibility
• When a person’s goals and responsibilities are out of line with his or her expectations or values, conflict often arises.
• Unfortunately, this conflict is difficult to foresee and often lies dormant until triggered by something within the organizational setting.

Environmental Stress
• Scarcity of resources and uncertainty are two very large stressors and sources of conflict.
• When people feel threatened they retreat and protect themselves, and this can exacerbate other sources of conflict that exist.
• These sources of conflict are intense, however, they dissipate quickly once the stressor is removed.
Reflection

• Identify at least one conflict you've experienced, or are experiencing, per category. (May overlap)
  - Personal Differences
  - Conflicting Objectives
  - Lack of Information
  - Role Incompatibility
  - Environmental Stress

• Which category is represented the most?
• Why do you think this is so?

What is your preferred conflict management strategy?

- Forcing
- Collaborating
- Compromising
- Avoiding
- accommodating
- Assertive
- Unassertive
- Uncooperative
- Cooperative

Conflict Management Approaches

COOPERATIVENESS
(attempting to satisfy the other party's concerns)
**When to Use Conflict Management Techniques**

- **Avoiding**: small issue, limited time/resources
- **Accommodating**: keeping harmony, using small favor to get larger one
- **Forcing (competing)**: emergencies, when only one right way exists, prevent others from taking advantage
- **Compromising**: late in conflict, when partial win is better than none for both parties
- **Collaborating**: for important issues when time is not a problem, where organizational support exists, when win-win solution is possible

**Likely Outcomes for Conflict Approaches**

- **Forcing**: You feel vindicated, but the other party feels defeated
- **Avoiding**: Problems don’t get resolved
- **Compromising**: Participants seek expedient, not effective, solutions
- **Accommodating**: Other person can take advantage of you
- **Collaborating**: Problem likely to be resolved
Matching the Conflict Management Approach with the Situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situational Characteristics</th>
<th>Force</th>
<th>Accommodate</th>
<th>Compromise</th>
<th>Collaborate</th>
<th>Avoid</th>
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<tr>
<td>Issue Importance High Low Med High Low</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship Importance Low High Med High Low</td>
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<td>Relative Importance High Low Equal-Equal High Low Equal-Equal</td>
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Moving from Positions to Interests

Interest-Based Relational Approach

- Relationships are the first priority ... quality of interaction must be maintained at all times
- The person and the problem are separate entities the problem is exasperating, no the person
- Pay attention to the interests that are being presented to determine why the person has taken the position he/she has.
**Interest-Based Relational Approach**

- **Listen first, talk second** to solve a problem you need to understand where a person is coming from before defending your own position.
- **Explore option together** be open to the idea that a third position may exist and that you can get to this together.
- **Set out the “facts”** seek to identify and agree upon the objective, observable elements that will have an impact on the decision.

**5 Steps to the IRR Approach**

1. **Set the Scene**
   - Establish ground rules
   - Active listening
2. **Gather Information**
3. **Agree on the Problem**
4. **Brainstorm Possible Solutions**
5. **Negotiate a Solution**

**Satisfaction Triangle**

- How we feel with regard to making a decision
- How the decision is made
- The bottom line: staff
**Triangle of Durable Agreements**

Durable agreements are honest, acceptable and workable.

- They are **honest** when they:
  - involve all parties;
  - use the best available, jointly developed information;
  - are founded on realistic assessments of capacity;
  - are ensured by all parties’ intent to implement the accord.

- They are **acceptable** when they:
  - resolve the source of grievance among the disputants;
  - acknowledge past problems and address them;
  - minimally satisfy the important interests of all parties;
  - do not harm any excluded parties;
  - are achieved through a process perceived as fair by all.

- They are **workable** when they:
  - build working relationships among the parties to carry out the accord;
  - anticipate possible problems or changes in the future, and...
  - have a procedure to deal with them, or acknowledge the need for re-negotiation.

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**Traffic Jam**

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**The Lax**

"As I live by a rule
That I learned as a boy in South Going School.
Never budge! That’s my rule. Never budge in the last,
Not an inch to the west! And an inch to the west!
I’ll stay here, not budging! I am and I will.
If it makes you and me and the whole world stand still!"

- How can I create a culture that is supportive of compromise and collaboration and direct energies toward the work, rather than who owns the road?
- How can I create a context that focuses on the work to be performed?
- Does my organization suffer from the effects of PIES (personal importance elevation syndrome)? How much Ego-based communication is present in my organization?
- How can I help people in my organization trade a "heels dug in" position for an exploration of possibilities?

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**The Question**

- How can I create a culture that is supportive of compromise and collaboration and direct energies toward the work, rather than who owns the road?
- How can I create a context that focuses on the work to be performed?
- Does my organization suffer from the effects of PIES (personal importance elevation syndrome)? How much Ego-based communication is present in my organization?
- How can I help people in my organization trade a "heels dug in" position for an exploration of possibilities?
• Only 19% of the public trusts the federal government always or some of the time.
• 65% say they trust their state government most or all of the time.
• 74% have a great deal or fair amount of trust in their local government.

Results for this Gallup poll are based on telephone interviews conducted Sept. 6-9, 2012. The sampling error is plus or minus four percent. 

What does this mean?
"I meant what I said and I said what I meant: An elephant’s faithful one hundred percent."

**Commitment**

**When Trust is Broken**

- Observe and acknowledge what has happened
- Allow feelings to surface
- Reframe the experience
- Take responsibility
- Forgive
- Let go and move on.

**Commitment, Loyalty and Trust**

- Does my commitment go beyond my own “wants”? Does it demand a “could be” future that can be brought into existence?
- How does leadership communicate its commitment to the vision? To the process? To the community?
- What will that commitment look like as you play it out in your position during the weeks and months ahead?
- Ask others “What can I do to help you keep your commitment?”
- What do you need from your colleagues so that you can most easily keep your commitment?
People don’t resist change, they resist *being* changed.

Adaptive Leadership

- *Leadership Without Easy Answers* - Linsky, Heifetz
- *Leadership on the Line* - Linsky, Heifetz
- *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership* - Linsky, Heifetz, Grashow
Adaptive Change

“The single most common source of leadership failure -- in government, community life, business, or the non-profit sector -- is that people treat adaptive challenges like technical problems.”

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Technical Problems vs. Adaptive Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem Definition</th>
<th>Solution</th>
<th>Locus of the Work</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical</td>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>Expert/Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>(Just fix it and celebrate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical and Adaptive</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Expert/Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>Stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptive</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
<td>- Unclear-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Adaptive Change

• Requires new roles for leaders:
  • Help people face reality
    • What values do we stand for? Are there gaps between those values and how we actually behave?
    • What are the skills and talents of our organization? Are there gaps between those resources and what the environment demands?
    • What opportunities does the future hold? Are there gaps between those opportunities and our ability to capitalize on them?
  • Mobilize them to make change
Adaptive Change

• If new role is to face reality and mobilize change, ask:
  • What is precious, and what’s expendable?
  • Which values and operations are so central to our core that if we lose them, we lose ourselves?
  • Which assumptions, investments, and functions are subject to radical change?
• At the highest level, the work of the leader is to lead conversations about what’s essential and what’s not.

Adaptive Change

• Requires experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in the organization and community
• People can’t make the adaptive leap necessary to thrive in new environment without learning new ways changing attitudes, values and behaviors
• “The sustainability of real change depends on having the people with the problem internalize the change itself.”

Skills Needed to Respond to the Resistance and Dangers

• Get on the Balcony
• Think Politically
  • Orchestrate the Conflict
    • Create a Holding Environment
    • Control the Temperature
    • Pace the Work
    • Show them the Future
• Give the Work Back
• Hold Steady
What are some important ways to keep heart when facing the difficulties and stress of leadership?

- **Manage Your Hangers** of power and control, affirmation and importance, and intimacy and delight.
- **Anchor Yourself** by distinguishing role from self, keeping confidants and not confusing them with allies, and seeking sanctuary.
- **What's On the Line** - asking the question: Why lead? And remembering that leadership is a labor of love for others.
- **Sacred Heart** - keeping an innocent, curious and compassionate heart through the hurts and scars of leading by finding ways to refresh your body and spirit.

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What was I scared of?

“I said, “I do not fear those pants with nobody inside them.”

I said, and said, and said those words. I said them. But I lied them.”

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- How can you help the people in your organization face reality and mobilize them to change?
- Ask: What’s precious and what’s expendable?
- What values and operations are so central to our core that if we lose them, we lose ourselves?
- And which assumptions, investments, and businesses are subject to radical change?
Unless someone like you
Cares a whole awful lot,
Nothing is going to get better.
It's not.
Courage

Is “fear” lurking in your organization or community?

Symptoms include a widespread reluctance to:

- speak of the “unmentionables,” (and every organization knows what they are—just ask privately);
- make decisions that are known to be politically charged, (small p or capital P);
- speak the truth to power (the parable of the emperor’s clothes is not simply a fairy tale); and
- speak the truth about performance shortcomings to subordinates.

—Ray Blunt, Courage in the Corridors

Attitude

Can’t find a “C” word!

“Just tell yourself, Duckie, you’re really quite lucky! Some people are much more... oh, ever so much more... oh, muchly much—much more unlucky than you!”
The High Cs of Leadership

Commitment
Courage
Context
Creativity
Collaboration
Change
Conflict
Management

Leadership Lessons from the Dancing Guy
And will you succeed?
Yes indeed, yes indeed! Ninety-eight and three-quarters percent guaranteed.
Thank you!
Sources:

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- Leadership Without Easy Answers - Linsky, Heifetz
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