

The Ark of Leadership: An Integrative Perspective

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Preface

“The biblical figure Noah was a remarkable leader. Among other things, he was sensitive to the coming of change. In this specific instance, he was aware that a considerable amount of rain was about to fall on his planet. Whether or not there was a divine message, it is said that Noah recognized that something had to be done if his own tribe/family was to be saved. He built an ark to save his family and, as a systems thinker, realized that he needed to preserve the environment (at least all animals living in the environment) if his family was to exist after the water receded. . . . Noah’s flood still seems to be threatening us. The mid-21st Century finds us in a world filled with impending or currently present Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity (VUCA) as well as Turbulence and Contradiction (VUCA-Plus).

Imagine an ark such as Noah constructed that was devoted to leadership. It can face up to a VUCA-Plus world and weather the storms by leveraging various leadership mindsets, models, approaches and tools. The basic structure of this ark consists of five fundamental principles and practices of leadership (Legacy Leadership™). They provide both the outside structure (protecting the ark from the storm) and the foundation of the ark (upon which other leadership perspectives will reside). With the ark having been built, a wide diversity of leadership schools, perspectives, frames of reference and practices are invited to populate the ark.”

Peter Armantraut and the Ark of Leadership

“Peter now had a business that employed 50 people. He had created a website that enabled him to sell both plants and gardening tools online. Peter also offered podcasts on landscaping and gardening tips that brought people to this website. All of this was well and good for Peter (and Sarah). However, Peter found that he was once again spending a whole lot of time attending meetings and was no longer doing what he really loved—which was landscaping and working outside. Excel spreadsheets were now occupying his attention rather than the spread of ground-covering plants. He was listening to other people rather than to the rustling of leaves on young trees that were growing up under Peter’s caring hands.

It seems that Peter was not just unhappy—neither was he terribly competent in leading a growing and geographically extended enterprise. From the very start, Peter Armentrout had been a dreamer. This was probably a carryover from his days as a college professor. Ideas and visions drew his attention—not the daily reality of running a business. He enjoyed viewing Mt. Shasta on the way to his Oregon nursery much more than he enjoyed actually working with the staff of his Oregon operation. Faced with the gentle urging of

Sarah, Peter did hire an Operations person to complement his lack of grounding in reality. However, Peter was a bit of a control-freak. He probably was turned off by committee meetings at his college and was attracted to sole ownership of a new business in large part because he could run the business himself, while he could not run the committee (or the college). The strong need for control surprised Sarah – and even Peter himself. The combination of vision and control proved to be a bit toxic. His newly hired Operations manager left after six months. Peter was finding it difficult to recruit a new operations person—especially after he decided to be honest and tell those who applied for the job about his need for considerable control.

Having worked with an executive coach in her corporate position, Sarah suggested that Peter find his own executive coach to assist him in addressing the challenges and preparing for succession and leaving a legacy. There is an executive coach with whom Sarah worked. This gifted coach (Catherine Townsend) has also been doing quite a bit of training in the field of leadership development. She provides a program called Legacy Leadership and guides her own executive coaching around the five basic Practices and Principles that serve as the foundation for Legacy Leadership. Catherine Townsend is engaged by Peter Armentrout and invites him into her Legacy-based Ark of Leadership and Coaching.”

Section One: Competencies and Chaos on the Ark

Chapter One

The Ark of Leadership We Must Build: Five Leadership Competencies

“Leadership can be complex – especially as we consider how 21st Century organizations must be led effectively. Together with her colleague, Dr. Lee Smith, one of us [Dr. Jeannine Sandstrom] has simplified and distinguished five core competency platforms and associated critical success skills for successful leadership.”

Chapter Two

On Board the Ark: The Chaos We Are Facing

“As leaders, we often face the “perfect storm” of organizational challenge and anxiety. Perhaps the easiest way to sum up the multiple sources of challenge and anxiety is to evoke the now commonly used acronym: VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity). To this we add conditions of turbulence and contradiction (VUCA-Plus). The challenges in a VUCA-Plus environment involve both determining what is “real” and how one predicts and makes decisions based on an assessment of this elusive reality.”

Section Two: Styles of Leadership on the Ark

Chapter Three

A Leadership Spectrum on the Ark: I. Three Primary Perspectives and Practices

“We propose that no one leadership style is best and that there are strengths associated with three primary styles, as well as strengths associated with various blends of these three styles. We will be using the metaphor of color in describing (and hopefully making memorable) each of these primary and blended styles.”

Chapter Four

A Leadership Spectrum on the Ark: II. Blended Perspectives and Practices

“What about those leaders who blend several styles or want to “mix it up” with other people and seek to engage in collaborative leadership, generating ideas, intentions and information through discussion and dialogue? And what about those leaders who choose to use all three leadership styles and even to find a way in which to integrate all three?”

Chapter Five

On Board the Ark: Interplay of Leadership Practices and Styles

“Important relationships exist between each of the five leadership practices and the styles of leadership we identified in our two previous chapters. Some practices fit beautifully with certain styles—it is like hand and glove. Other practices and styles are much harder to engage at the same time.”

Section Three: Leadership on the Ark: Context, Styles and Practices

Chapter Six

Leadership on the Ark I: The Context

“We are always making decisions in relationship to the environment in which we find ourselves. There are moments and places within an organization when specific types of leadership are needed to address specific issues and manage specific modes of anxiety. In short, each of us can provide certain kinds of leadership functions in specific moments and places.”

Chapter Seven

Leadership on the Ark II: Convening Task

“Each production and service task in an organization relates directly to one or more of the Best Practices and to one or more of the leadership styles. This chapter provides an analysis of these tasks and related best practices and styles.”

Chapter Eight

Leadership on the Ark III: Nature of Issues and Environment Being Engaged

“Organizations face many different kinds of issues and work in diverse environments. They often need different approaches to leadership in working with these issues and in these environments.”

Chapter Nine

Leadership on the Ark IV: Four Characteristics

“In this chapter, we explore the five final characteristics: organizational structures and operations, ownership of the organization, nature and maturity level groups with which the leader is working, and prevalent organizational climate. We will briefly consider each of these characteristics and suggest ways in which each of the five Best Practices and seven leadership styles relates to this characteristic.”

Chapter Ten

Six Cultures on the Ark: Leadership Coaching Perspectives and Challenges

“Our Ark – and all Arks in our contemporary mid-21st Century world – resides in a powerful, change-resistant cultural context shaped by the customs, traditions and dominant beliefs of those living in the society/sea in which this ark is sailing. There are also cultures operating within all arks that help to determine the relative predominance of and influence provided by each of the seven leadership styles and five best practices. In this chapter, we describe six of these cultures and relate each of these cultures to the leadership styles and best practices we have highlighted in this book.”

Section Four: Shifting Leadership Strategies and Interpersonal Needs on the Ark's Journey

Chapter Eleven

Nourishment on the Ark: Interpersonal Needs and The Leadership Spectrum

“This chapter concerns the personal dimension of life in a group or team – and particularly the interpersonal needs of those who participate in this group or team. The specific premise underlying the concepts presented in this chapter is that a group is more likely to become a functioning, productive, collaborating team if the interpersonal needs of all members have been acknowledged and are being met.”

Chapter Twelve

Forty Days and Forty Nights on the Ark: The Journey from Group to Team

“We begin our narrative regarding the journey from group to team by identifying the key stages to be found in this journey – and the interpersonal need and leadership style most closely associated with each stage and the Best Practices that best serves this stage.”

Section Five: The Ark and Art of Leadership Development

Chapter Thirteen

A Framework for Leadership Development on the Ark: Strategies for Change and the Coaching Process

“How do we bring about change – leading to improvement in leadership performance – especially in a VUCA-Plus environment? How might professional coaching processes complement this change?”

Chapter Fourteen

A Framework for Partnership on the Ark: Organizational Coaching and Leadership Development

“Training and education have become prominent features in the professional development curricula of many contemporary organizations. In this chapter, we briefly identify several of the reasons for this growing interest. We suggest ways in which training and education are

enhanced by several complimentary coaching activities. Our attention then turns to the nature of and reasons for shifting concepts of training and education--and to the closely related emphasis on retention and transfer of learning."

Chapter Fifteen

Development on the Ark: A Comprehensive and Appreciative Approach

"How can one appreciate the strengths of another person while also planning their further development? We would propose that these two terms, appreciation and development, are not contradictory. They are quite complimentary. Development is not just about acquiring new skills and knowledge; it is also about nourishing and building on existing strengths and enriching one's own understanding of self and other people."

