

Transformational Leaders in the New Educational Scheme

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Leadership is hard work, and it's getting harder. To truly excel, to be truly a great leader over the long term, you must have the courage and persistence to do the hard work of leadership. Delivering consistent financial results, attaining high team performance, executing strategy, managing multiple and often conflicting priorities, and driving innovation isn't easy. You must realize that there is hard work that you alone as a leader can and must do, and if you don't do it, you'll set yourself and your organization back.

However, in my experience I find many leaders who are reluctant to dig in and choose instead to avoid the hard work. Others act as bystanders, watching things happen. And then there are those leaders who simply look for the easy way out, thinking that some quick fix idea will make everything better, only to be surprised when these quick fixes don't fix anything. We need to stop underestimating what it takes to be a consistently great leader.

Sure, leadership can be easy if you're satisfied with mediocrity. But that's not what the leadership contract is all about.

It's time that we as leaders understand that the real work of leadership isn't easy. We also need to understand that we'll need resilience, determination, and a deep sense of personal resolve to be effective. This is what the third term of the leadership contract is all about. Evolving how you lead-you may already sense-is hard work. It's hard for multiple reasons. It taxes an ability that most of us have in limited supply, which is being able to see ourselves objectively. People who have studied and worked with thousands of leaders-people like Robert Kegan and Keith Eigel-help us understand that developing this ability to put ourselves in perspective is how we progress as leaders.

Transforming how you lead is hard because leadership is a curious amalgam, different in nearly everyone, and made up of ideas, skills, and behaviors we may not know the origin or validity of. Finally, transforming how you lead is difficult because leadership has become, more than ever, a team sport. A leadership team's ability to become more adaptive requires not just individual change, but collective and coordinated change. Great transformation will be observable.