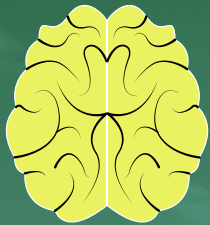




TECHNICAL VS ADAPTIVE WORK

Got some issues to work on? Odds are you do. Here's what to do first. Start by diagnosing issue to determine what type of work needs to be done.

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TECHNICAL PROBLEMS

Technical problems reside in people's heads and can be solved with logic and technology by authority figures and experts. The problem is clear. The solution is known. Those involved can realistically expect relatively quick results.

ADAPTIVE CHALLENGES

Adaptive challenges live in people's hearts and guts. They are not easily diagnosed and their solutions are unknown. Adaptive challenges must be addressed by the people with the challenge. This is because the work required involves modifying deeply held values, loyalties and beliefs.



COMPLEX CHALLENGES

Complex issues are multi-faceted and include both technical and adaptive aspects. So, the trick is to diagnose which parts can be addressed with a technical fix and which parts will require the more painstaking work of adaptive leadership.

INDIVIDUAL ADAPTIVE WORK

Adaptive work doesn't just occur on the systems level, it also takes place on the individual level. Adaptive work involves examining our own values, loyalties and beliefs. It also requires us to try new behaviors, take risks, and venture out beyond our comfort zone.



CHARACTERISTICS OF ADAPTIVE WORK:

- There is a gap between the way things are and the desired state.
- There are multiple perspectives on the issue.
- New learning needs to happen.
- Behaviors and attitudes need to change.
- Old ways need to change, creating a sense of loss.
- People with the problems are essential to solving the problems.
- Resistance is triggered in stakeholders.
- It takes longer than technical work.

	Technical Work	Adaptive Work
The Problem	• Is clear	• Requires learning
The Solution	• Is clear	• Requires learning
Whose work is it	• Experts • Authority	• Stakeholders • Self
Type of work	• Apply existing know-how	• Experiment • Stretch one's boundaries
Objective	• Fix the problem	• Make progress
Timeline	• Shorter term • Predictable	• Longer term • Illusive