

Adaptive Strategies

- *Getting on the Balcony.* This requires stepping up onto the metaphorical balcony to survey the broader context and relevant history, the patterns, data, emerging themes and processes. This ability to be both involved in the work and observing it more broadly is viewed as a prerequisite for the remaining strategies. The danger is becoming mired solely in the day-to-day efforts and unable to identify broader leverage points for change as well as the adaptive challenges.
- *Identifying the Adaptive Challenge.* This requires diagnosing, identifying, and naming the adaptive challenge(s). This work occurs through gathering information, identifying points of conflict that may be proxies for differing norms and values, and leadership understanding that they, too, are contributing to the adaptive challenge.
- *Regulating Distress.* In short, regulating distress requires attending to pacing and sequencing the change and setting priorities. There needs to be a continuing sense of urgency that does not overwhelm those doing the work.
- *Maintaining Disciplined Attention.* In many ways this is a corollary to *regulating distress*. One way of avoiding tension is to return to comfortable ways of work, even when those ways of work are not resulting in desired outcomes. Key to forward progress is recognizing ‘work avoidance’ and redirecting energies back to the difficult work at hand.
- *Giving the Work Back to the People.* This involves creating conditions to let groups and individuals take the initiative in addressing challenges. This is a shift away from a hierarchical system of leaders leading and others taking direction and following. This means rewarding risk-taking, engaging in ‘trial and learning’, and encouraging meaningful participation in defining challenges and proposing solutions.
- *Protecting All Voices.* Sometimes the most insightful perspectives are provided in discomfoting ways. When people are mustering the courage to speak their truth and perhaps offer critical insights, they may not always choose the right time and place to do so. Or they may cover their anxiety by speaking so fervently that *how* they are communicating gets in the way of *what* they are trying to say. There is a need to hear all voices and continue to focus on what is being said while helping to regulate how issues are being communicated.