

Natural Guides to Leadership

Beverly Winterscheid & Cheryl Charles

Natural Guides To Leadership	Operating Principle	Example in Nature	Examples Of Use In Leadership
Energy	Nature runs on sunlight.	Leaves use the sunlight for photosynthesis.	Where is energy being directed to in yourself, or your organization? SELF - Personal priorities - Time & money allocation - Personal peer group ORGANIZATION - Strategic goals - Benchmarks & measures - Focus on teams or Individuals?
Niche	Nature demands local expertise.	Every organism in nature has a contribution to make to living ecosystems.	SELF - How are you developing your expertise? - Knowing your niche - Seeking out people with complementary skills ORGANIZATION Clear identity, strategy & position within your organization's ecosystem and stakeholders
Self-Regulation	Nature curbs excesses from within.	Forest fires clear out space for new healthy growth.	SELF - What thoughts or practices have you outgrown? - What do you need to say "no" to? - Mindful practices where you monitor your sense of responsibility and accountability for outcomes ORGANIZATION - What's your appropriate size for effective communication, relationships, & action? - Group processes for healthy questioning and dissent

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Diversity	Nature thrives on diversity.	Diversity tends to be an indicator of a healthy ecosystem.	<p>SELF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are your relationships with others from different socio-economic & cultural backgrounds? - Empathy & compassion for others - Sensing in from different perspectives - Varied learning styles & preferences <p>ORGANIZATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hiring, training & promotion practices
Optimization	Nature uses only the energy it needs.	It optimizes and leaves energy in reserve.	<p>SELF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Burn-out in time, money, energy or love?? - Nourish yourself to nourish others <p>ORGANIZATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Succession plans - Financial practices - Sabbaticals, rotations
Conservation	Nature recycles everything.	Oak-hickory forests Litter composition and nutrient dynamics of these two tree species are supportive of each other.	<p>SELF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What have I learned from this? <p>ORGANIZATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can we re-use the by-products of our experience? - After-action analyses - Cross-team sharing

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Cooperation	Nature rewards cooperation.	Cooperation is at least if not more prevalent in nature than competition, beginning with cells.	<p>SELF How are you embodying the "Give what you can, take what you need" principle?</p> <p>ORGANIZATION - Sharing Economy - Virtuous circles</p>
Connectedness & Community	All organisms, species and habitats are interconnected in nature. Nature creates communities of life, interdependent and demonstrating diversity, niche, cooperation, self-regulation, optimization, and connectedness.	<p>A form of ecological succession which occurs on abandoned farmland, for example, is referred to as old field succession.</p> <p>When a plowed field is abandoned, it represents a new habitat for plant and animal species to colonize, but because it is basically bare soil, it is a stressful habitat for many plants.</p>	<p>SELF - What mutual relationships are you in for advice & support, personal and professional growth? - Mentors & mentoring</p> <p>ORGANIZATION - Who are your peer organizations? - Online workspace and communication tools for project status - Support for professional organizations & networking - Celebrations!!</p>

C. Charles & B. Samples, 2004

J. Benyus, 1997
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