

LEAD WELL

BOOK REVIEW

Canoeing the Mountains

Tod Bolsinger

KEY PRINCIPLE

How are you building Adaptive Capacity to address Adaptive Challenges?

APPLICATION

Bolsinger offers an intriguing perspective of adaptive leadership through the lens of Lewis and Clark who were sent by President Thomas Jefferson to explore and create a path to the west coast of the United States. They brought canoes to paddle a river they thought would take them to the west coast - instead they met mountains and had to adapt. He discusses how adaptive leadership can be applied to churches - yet the information can be applied to any organization where leadership matters.

He distinguishes between technical problems and adaptive challenges. And goes on to share that leadership becomes transformational through the integration of adaptive capacity. His definition of adaptive capacity is the person's ability to lead a process of shifting values, habits and behaviors in order to grow and discover solutions to the greatest challenges brought on by changing world.

A part of adaptive leadership is also relational congruence of the leader. A quote from Margaret Whatley: "It is possible to prepare for future without knowing what it will be - the primary way to prepare for the unknown is to attend to the quality of our relationships, to how well we know and trust one another." A relational congruent leader is someone who can manage their own reactivity to the automatic reactivity of others - take stands at risk of displeasing others.

Another facet of adaptive leadership is knowing necessary changes will disappoint some people. Disappointing people at a rate they can absorb is a skill that requires wisdom in order to address the two-front battle of:

Challenges that come in a changing world and community that resists the change necessary for its survival.

Kathy Crockett

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