

Leadership Under Uncertainty

Jim Berry

Director – The UCL MBA

Assistant Professor in Organisational Behaviour

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To Lead...

You Need Courage



and to lead well...
Doubt!

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THE LEADER!



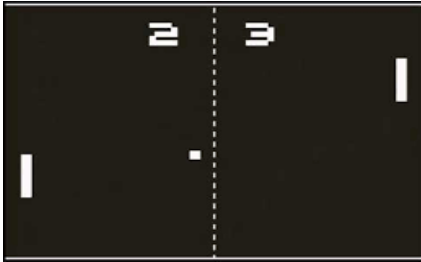
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Leaders are people too!



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Increasing Complexity and Uncertainty



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Paralyzed by Choice

Research has found that when decision makers are presented with more options, they are less likely to make any decision at all. This paralysis of choice occurs even when there are clear benefits of selecting any alternative (such as joining a company retirement plan).



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Reaction to Overload

People do not make a choice
Move to the default
Follow others



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Leaders are Different



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Leaders Two Types

Certain Leader

- Has a single clear answer
- Forces everything into this framework
- Knows the answer
- Steadfast
- Conviction

Uncertain Leader

- Holds several viewpoints
- Choses options based on best available info
- Knows the general goal
- Adaptable
- Curiosity

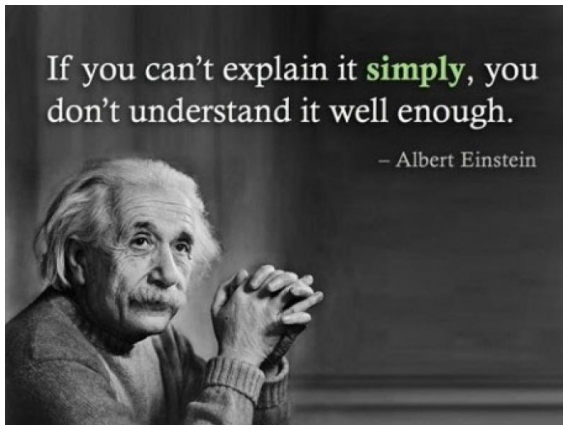
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Dunning- Kruger Effect on Certainty

Those most certain probably don't understand the problem.

If you can't explain it **simply**, you
don't understand it well enough.

– Albert Einstein



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What is:

1 + 1

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Answer - 2?

- 2 – math problem, addition
- 11 – concatenation
- 3 – reproduction
- 1 + 1 – text
- Absence of light on a lit background – physics
- All colours on a background with no colour – art
- A representation of the metaphysical - philosophy

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It Gets Worse - Bias

Compounding effects of incompetence

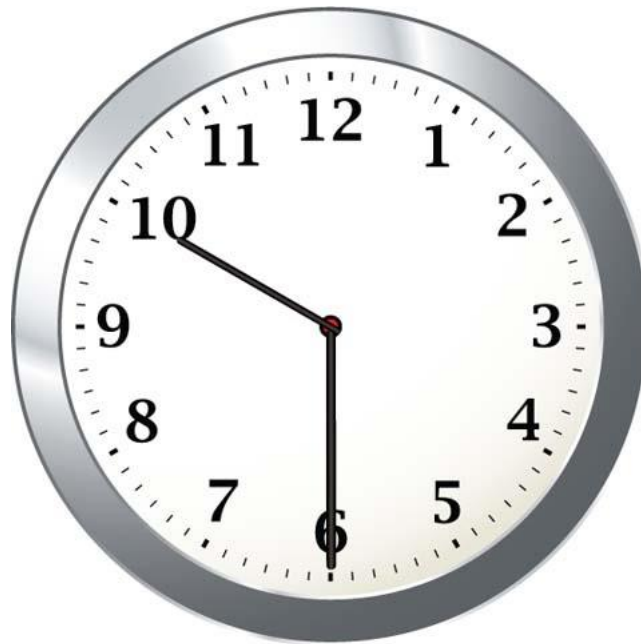


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Leaders Acting with Certainty



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True leaders act **under(standing)**
uncertainty...

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Human Tendency

Natural human tendency to want to reduce uncertainty



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The sun will rise tomorrow!



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Leaders Make Assumptions

To move you have to have something solid to push against.



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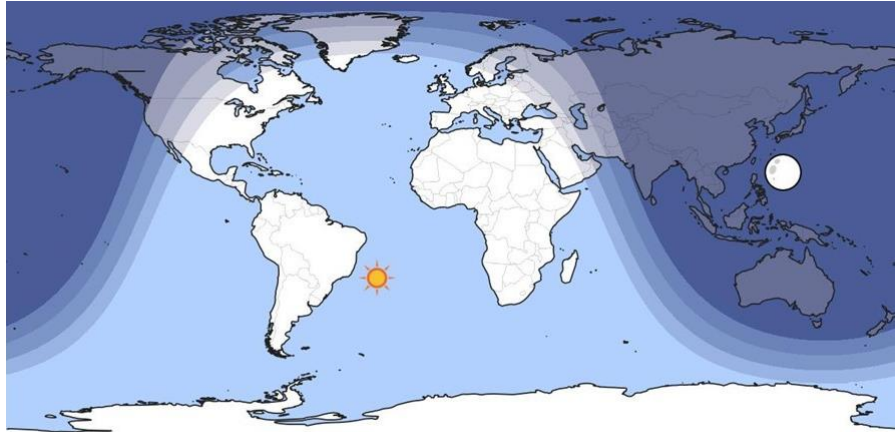
Firm or Loose - Questioning



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Sunrise – Always?

Everywhere?



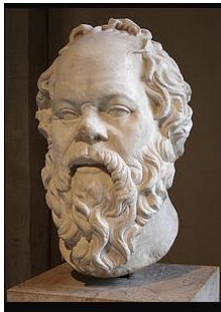
Sun, Moon, and Daylight position at 6 AM PST (7 AM if we had year-round DST) on December 21, 2018

Source: <https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/sunearth.html>

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Openness to options – Accepting Uncertainty

Intelligent people tend to equivocate...



True wisdom comes to each of us when we realize
how little we understand about life, ourselves, and
the world around us.

(Socrates)

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Curiosity a Survival Necessity



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Curiosity, A Leaders Best Friend

Assuming you don't have the perfect answer - Doubt

- Gather information
- Explore options
- Consider different futures
- Give yourself a choice

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Unique Creatures - People



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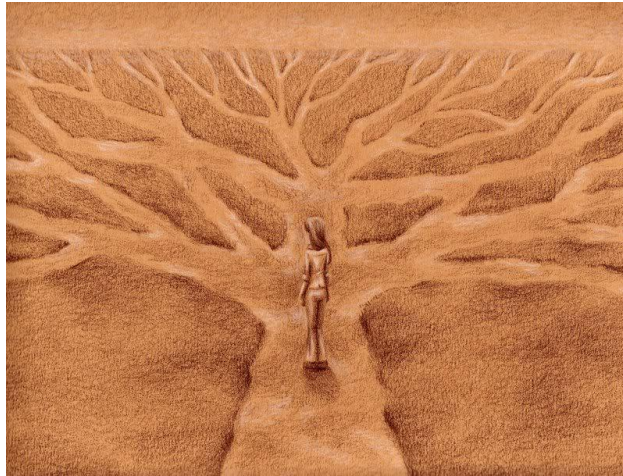
Take Action

Acting without certainty takes - courage

- What if you are wrong?
- Try multiple options - Experiment
- Taking the responsibility is part of leading

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Decisive Under Uncertainty



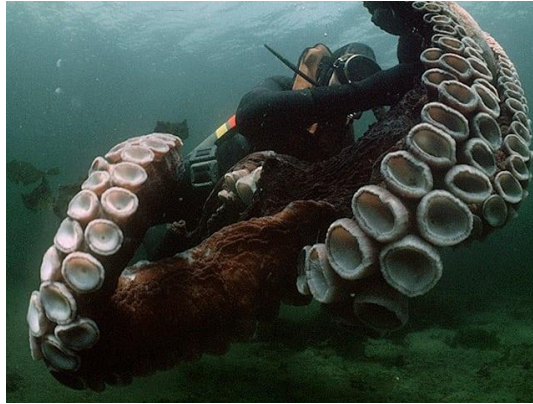
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Building the Capability to Act Under Uncertainty

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Capabilities

- What is your capability or limitations in handling uncertainty?



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Openness to Experience

- Personality trait with subfactors



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Opening to Uncertainty

- Personality trait with subfactors - fixed
- However there are factors that can open you up to new perspectives:
 - Mindset
 - Interaction
 - Framing - Neuroscience

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Growth vs Fixed Mindset



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Creating Interaction and Experience

- Travel
- Debate
- Complexity
- Inquiry



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Framing

Threat

System: Fear
Chemical: Cortisol
Behaviour: Protect, retreat, submit



Opportunity

System: Seeking
Chemical: Dopamine
Behaviour: Play explore, extend



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You Can Be A LEADER!



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In Closing...

Every hero leader you have ever seen, read or heard about
...was human.

They were not perfect.

They had to make decisions while in doubt and
...exercised courage.

Or they were insane idiots who got lucky!

Don't count on luck, be a leader who accepts uncertainty!

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Uncertainty is an Opportunity to express Leadership

Thank You
– Jim Berry