TED: Manage for collective creativity

While looking through TED for innovative thinking and approaches I can learn from, I came across this talk by Linda Hill. I encourage you to watch the full video if you have an interest in the topic and want to be challenged. The ideas come from a significant amount of time and effort spent tracking select global leaders, and cataloging what makes them effective in driving innovation.

While watching this video, I pulled some key thoughts from the talk and copied the transcripted notes here. The key thought I pulled from here that I feel sums up the notes below is as follows: The idea of leading innovative organizations is more about creating an environment for the organization, as opposed to “owning the vision”. In Agile terminology, there is an idea of servant leadership, meaning getting out of the way and supporting the success of the team. This concept is a powerful part of innovation leadership as well.

- Leading innovation is not about creating a vision and inspiring others to execute it.If we want to build organizations that can innovate time and again, **we must unlearn our conventional notions of leadership.**

- Leading innovation is not about creating a vision, and inspiring others to execute it.

- When many of us think about innovation, though, we think about an Einstein having an ‘Aha!’ moment. But we all know that’s a myth. **Innovation is not about solo genius**, it’s about **collective genius**.What we know is, at the heart of innovation is a paradox. You have to unleash the talents and passions of many people and you have to harness them into a work that is actually useful. **Innovation is a journey**. It’s a type of collaborative problem solving, usually among people who have different expertise and different points of view.

- **three capabilities**: **creative abrasion, creative agility and creative resolution**. Creative abrasion is about being able to create a marketplace of ideas through debate and discourse. In innovative organizations, they amplify differences, they don’t minimize them. Creative abrasion is not about brainstorming, where people suspend their judgment. No, they know how to have very heated but constructive arguments to create a portfolio of alternatives.

- **innovation rarely happens unless you have both diversity and conflict.**

- if we want to build organizations that can innovate time and again, we must recast our understanding of what leadership is about. **Leading innovation is about creating the space** where people are willing and able to do the hard work of innovative problem solving.

- What can we do to make sure that all the disruptors, **all the minority voices in this**

organization, speak up and are heard? And, finally, let's bestow credit in a very generous way."

- Bill said, "I lead a volunteer organization. Talented people don't want to follow me anywhere. **They want to cocreate with me the future**. My job is to nurture the bottom-up and not let it degenerate into chaos." How did he see his role? "I'm a role model, I'm a human glue, I'm a connector, I'm an aggregator of viewpoints. I'm never a dictator of viewpoints." Advice about how you exercise the role? Hire people who argue with you. And, guess what? Sometimes it's best to be deliberately fuzzy and vague.

- They stopped giving answers, they stopped trying to provide solutions. Instead, what they did is they began to see the people at the bottom of the pyramid, the young sparks, the people who were closest to the customers, as the source of innovation. They began to transfer the organization's growth to that level. In Vineet's language, this was about inverting the pyramid so that you could **unleash the power of the many by loosening the stranglehold of the few**, and increase the quality and the speed of innovation that was happening every day.our role as leaders is to set the stage, not perform on it.