



# Paradoxes of Compassionate Leadership

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## LEADERSHIP:

*“The process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives”*

Yukl, 2010, 26



Three dimensions:

Personality

Individual followers

Group

development

structure

dynamics



## Leadership in Compassionate Communities

- Beyond the classic view on leadership
- Experience of wellbeing
- Key concepts: social capital, collective compassion, mutual solidarity

## Paradoxes in compassionate communities

- Shift in power balance: leaders weaker, followers stronger (Keller 2012)
- Simultaneous development: strong return of the desire for security and authority
- Strong needs for connection and security, often shown as fear of uncertainty and fear of death
- Acceptance of mortality serve the needs for connection and security

= Paradox of compassionate communities: connection and security & reinforcement of unpredictability

# CHANGES IN CONTEXT (EUROPE)

Individualization

De-institutionalization

Globalization

Agnosticism

Secularization

Professionalization

Provisional commitment

Multiple religious belongings

No apriori authority



What's not changing:

- drive for self-enhancement
- drive for connectedness
- drive for mastery
- drive for conservatism

## Paradoxal questions in Leadership

- Need for individualization and flexibility versus need for connectedness and social acceptance
- New social groups will be both more fluid and provisional as more conservative
- Experiences of chaos and unpredictability lead to hide in social bubbles, reinforcing denial and simplification of global problems (self-reinforcement)
- To meet uncertainty and vulnerability, leadership must provide a frame of certainty, emotions versus knowledge / facts
- Compassion for uncertainty and mourning must be combined with a perspective of realistic hope



# What do you need as a leader?

Self-knowledge and self-awareness

Selftrust

Clear norms and values

Openness

Learning attitude

Imagination!!

= Personal leadership

Transformative & self-  
directed wisdom

Healthy self-knowledge  
Norms and values  
Open and learning attitude  
Focus on personal truth

= Spirituality

# WHAT IS HELPFUL?

Know yourself and know your group!

Strive for flexibility

Create room for disagreements

Get the maximum out of diversity

Care for group cohesion

Include feedback

Widen your cognitive frame and repertoire

Benefit from humor 😊

Clear priorities

Open mind and attention

Keep autonomy

= Learning as basic  
attitude

THANK YOU!

