UnLeading invites us to challenge common-sense assumptions and center often-silenced approaches to leadership, allowing us to re/imagine possibilities for leading, learning, and being in relation to ourselves, each other, and the more than human world.

https://www.yorku.ca/edu/unleading/

Season 1:
Facilitator Guide

"UnLeading requires a commitment to holding multiple truths, troubling common-sense assumptions, living the inquiries and sitting in the ambiguities of complex ideas such as leadership, schooling, and society. UnLeading asks us to engage in the praxis of leadership, a continual interplay of action towards systemic change and deep, inner reflection. In this way, it is a process of becoming, with no predetermined destination or finite goal. UnLeading asks us to look for leadership in unfamiliar places and challenge the notion of the individual leader." (The UnLeading Project, York University)

SUMMARIZE by identifying several themes/concepts that arise in this conversation with the guest speakers. Note similarities, differences, tensions, connections, and possible contradictions between and among them. Additionally, note the perspectives, ideas, and voices that might be missing as well in this conversation. You are also invited to draw out compelling quotes from the speakers and comment on them

MAKE CONNECTIONS to your experiences in/with communities and to larger socio-political and historic contexts. Think about and comment on how the thoughts and ideas presented by the speakers connect to similar themes/concepts in other contexts of leadership.

REFLECT on how the conversations with the speakers inform your understanding of leadership outside of familiar frameworks using the guided reflection questions posed below.

ACT by committing to possible actions (immediate and long-term) that you will engage in to disrupt the status quo, which will steadfastly guide you in actualizing the type of leader you hope to be in and with communities.

YORK U

The Four I's: Embracing Fractals as Possibilities for Leadership

"A fractal is a never-ending pattern. Fractals are infinitely complex patterns that are self-similar across different scales. They are created by repeating a simple process over and over in an ongoing feedback loop.

How we are at the small scale is how we are at the large scale. The patterns of the universe repeat at scale. There is a structural echo that suggests…that what we practice at a small scale can reverberate to the largest scale.

These patterns emerge at the local, regional, state, and global level—basically wherever two or more social change agents are gathered. And this may be the most important element to understand—that what we practice at the small scale sets the patterns for the whole system." (adrienne maree brown)

Individual Relates to the emotions, biases, perceptions, thoughts about ourselves.

Interpersonal Concerns relationships, how we treat one another as individuals and communities.

Institutional Applies to structures, policies, curriculum, professional learning, parent and family engagement, classroom and school climate, and larger policies.

Ideological Connection to ideas about each other and the world.
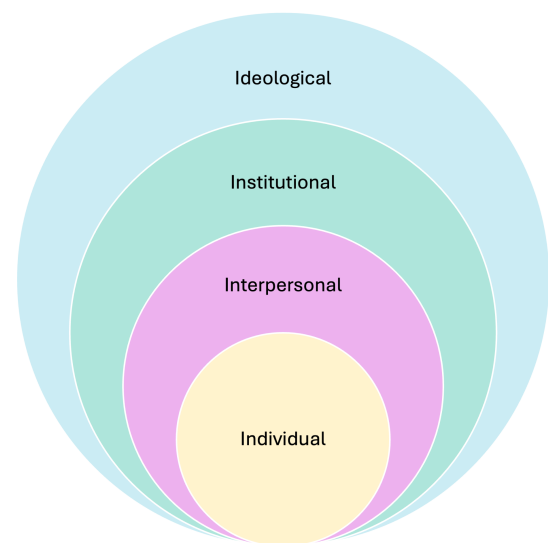
SEASON 1

CRITICAL SPIRITUALITY IN LEADERSHIP

(Click image to listen)

Guiding Reflection Questions:

As educational leaders, what if each of us deeply reflected on the question posed by Paul Kivel "What do I stand for" (Helfand & Zimbardo, 2021) in connection to and with all our relations?

Reflection Questions:

1. What are the ways in which we continuously examine how we are showing up as educational leaders with the critical awareness of ourselves in relation to others and our environment?
2. Within our current educational settings, what do secularism and pluralism offer and foreclose?
3. How might acknowledging spiritual and faith-based leadership practices disrupt taken-for granted assumptions of neutrality that mask Christian hegemony, settler colonialism and white supremacy?
4. Who do we need to be as leaders to lead in critically spiritual ways?
5. How might we apply this understanding to the work we do in communities, schools, and academies?

Individual Relates to the emotions, biases, perceptions, thoughts about ourselves.

Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

"When I think about critical spirituality in leadership, I really think about the whole in self, right? With a "W" and with a "h"." (Ixchel Bennett)

"This idea of multiplicity of truths, right- that people come to the world as they are. And as they see and they understand who they are in the context of that. For me, there was this deep question about who am I?" (jeewan chanicka)

"Spirituality for me does not often equate to that notion of pious platitudes or pious piffle, but calls us more to that sense of being attentive to the experiences of the divine in our life." (Bruce Rodriques)

Reflection:

How do these statements resonate with you
in terms of how you see yourself leading?

Ideological
Institutional
Interpersonal
Individual
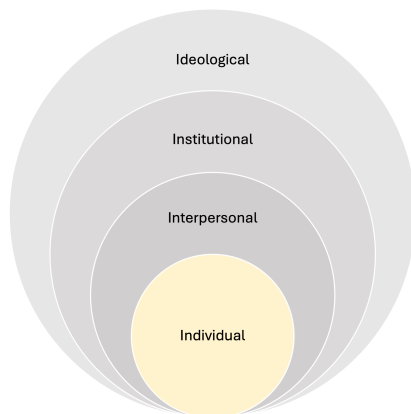
Action:

- Consider the quotes that you find yourself drawn to and drawing away from. Investigate your response to them.
- Take a few moments to write down a self-description. What does the description tell you about your values, your long held beliefs, and the actions that spring from them?
- What parts of yourself do you see as separate from your role as a leader? Consider how the various parts of yourself directly influence how you lead.

Interpersonal Concerns relationships, how we treat one another as individuals and communities.

## Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

"I was sitting with an Elder, his name is Dave Cusheen, out at Turtle Lodge. I said to him, I don't know how to keep doing this work without being angry all of the time because I get people coming to me with all the trauma and the really, really tragic ways that the system doesn't support them. And he asked me this one question, and I would say that it's been one of the most profound questions that I've been asked in many years. He was like, well, how can you come at it from a place of love?" (jeewan chanicka)

"People come to share their stories, their stories of pain, their stories of joy, of confusion, of discernment and we need to be with them through their experience." (Bruce Rodriques)

Reflection:

How might we approach leadership rooted in love and implement actions that uphold our core values which are influenced by our differing conceptions of knowing and being?
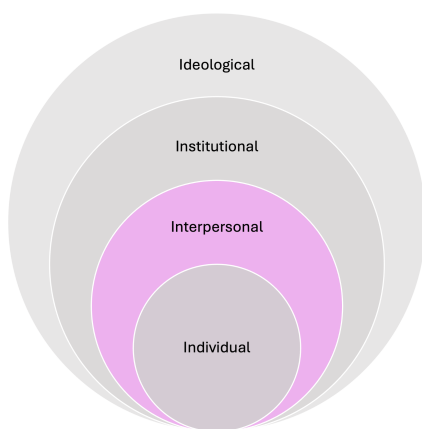
Action:

- Practice deepening truth and integrity in your relationships. What emerges as supports and barriers in acting this way?
- What prevents you from opening your heart in relation to others? What supports you in opening your heart in relation to others? What steps are you willing to take towards heart opening as a practice?
- What is your relationship to the more-than-human world (e.g., the two legged world, the four legged world, the lands and waters, etc.)? How might you deepen these relations?

Institutional Applies to structures, policies, curriculum, professional learning, parent and family engagement, classroom and school climate, and larger policies.

## Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

"Neoliberal logics, mindfulness, yoga and the consumption of holistic practices as programs for self-improvement, empowerment, borrowing from Hinduism, Buddhism, Indigenous ways of knowing, in Kabbalah have proliferated in and out of educational spaces." (Hiren Mistry)

"How can I not make the kinds of assumptions that might be getting in the way for myself and to other people, but also looking at what are the assumptions that are part of how the organization operates and how that is influenced by the general culture, the social structures in which we are all operating." (Fiona Gardner)

Reflection:

How can educational institutions hold leaders accountable from a critically spiritual space and ensure that they show actionable care?
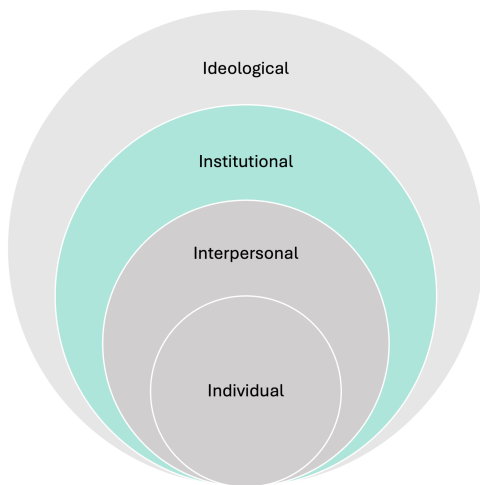
Action:

- How do students from various faith traditions experience schooling in my school/district? How might they feel about themselves and about their school? How do I know and what can I do to address their concerns?
- Consider creating curricular or professional learning opportunities that invite multiple and contradictory truths, that value multiple worldviews, beliefs and practices. What guiding principles might be required to create this space with care and intentionality?

Ideological Connection to ideas about each other and the world.

Quotes to provoke our thinking and guide us in our actions:

"The increased presence of non-Christian students and families throughout the GTA continue to demonstrate the tension of the secular and the presence of Christian norms and values in

schools. Colonialism continues to cast a shadow on Indigenous cultures and ways of being throughout the world." (Hiren Mistry)

"I always have to come from an assumption or belief that change is possible. I think for me, that's part of my personal self, as well as my professional self to say, if we're really looking for what's meaningful for people, if we're really valuing each person and their sense of possibility, then we have to act in ways that are looking for socially just change. That's part of my way of working with critical spirituality." (Fiona Gardner)

"Interrogate systemic practices and ways of knowing that we take for granted. We sometimes identify them as status quo, things like, positioning our points of entry to conversation and leadership in a Judeo-Christian, White centered manner." (Bruce Rodriques)

Reflection:

How might critical spirituality invite us into holding multiple and contradictory truths, simultaneously?

reflection teach me about my edges of growth?
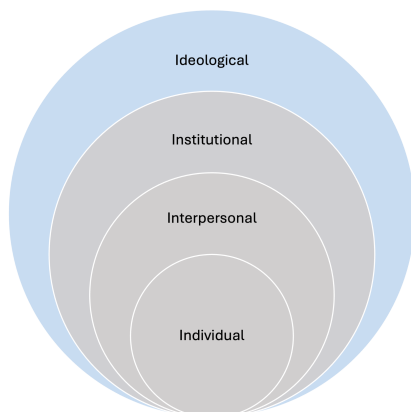
Action:

- In what ways does my understanding of spirituality support or inhibit human rights and equity for all?
- Which truths, perspectives, and experiences do I reject about myself and others? If I were to soften this gaze, what might be "true" in what I deem to be "untrue"? What does this