



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.

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.

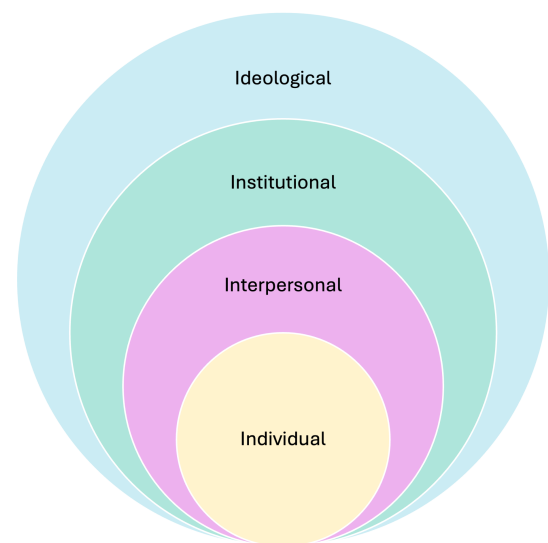
These patterns emerge at the local, regional, state, and global level—basically wherever two or more social change agents are gathered. And this may be the most important element to understand—that what we practice at the small scale sets the patterns for the whole system.” (adrienne maree brown)

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



DECOLONIZING & UNCOLONIZING LEADERSHIP

(Click image to listen)



Guiding Reflection Questions:

How do we undo and disrupt coloniality and engage in decolonizing and uncolonizing leadership?

If these terms are new to you, this is the place for you to be!

1. How might understandings of interconnectedness and relationality influence leadership practices?
2. How might we unpack, unsettle, and sift through current educational leadership competencies to decolonize and uncolonize?
3. How do we lead with love and humility, honouring all our humanity through relational accountability?
4. Who do we need to be as leaders to lead in ways that disrupt coloniality?
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:

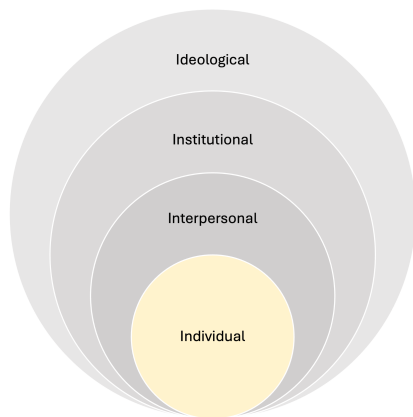
“When I think about decolonizing and uncolonizing leadership, the first thing that comes to me is liberation. You know, the possibility of true liberation. What will emerge from this way of leadership is freedom and love and ultimately peace.” (Aina-Nia Ayo'dele)

“One of our elders talked to me about leadership. And what he said was this. He said, ‘A leader does not stand above the people; a leader in true fact stands underneath the people.’” (Kahontakwas Diane Longboat)

“It is so important to bring in the knowledge that was already there of our ancestors that was passed down through the stories. The colonizers made us feel as if we are without knowledge.” (Ann Lopez)

Reflection:

How do these statements resonate with you in terms of how you see yourself as a leader? What might be some decolonizing and uncolonizing leadership practices that we should engage in?



Action:

- What does liberation mean to you? What does it feel like in your body? What grows this feeling of liberation? How does your liberation influence the liberation of others?
- What is the wisdom of your ancestors? How does that wisdom live in you?
- Discomfort is a precursor for transformational change. What is your relationship to discomfort? How might you build your capacity to stay in discomfort?

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

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

“It’s so important to think about our connections to community. How do educational leaders honour that space? What must be dislodged, revoked, what must be reclaimed as we begin to think through decolonizing, and uncolonizing educational leadership?” (Ann Lopez)

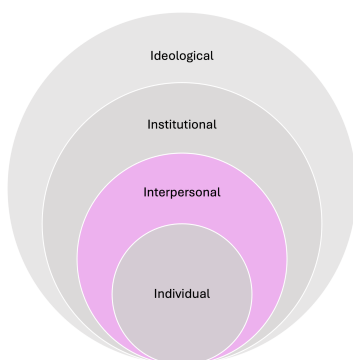
“And until we, as human family, make that sacred connection to the land, and understand that all of those beings, whether it’s animal life, plant life, the winds, the waters, the bird life, the living beings that are in the waters. They are sentient beings. There’s a language of spirit that can communicate with them.” (Kahontakwas Diane Longboat)

“If we think about relational accountability, what that means is that at all levels of the system, all across what is education, we need to invest the time to authentically build relationships.” (Nick Bertrand)

“I want to also remind us that we are thinking about our relationship to not only each other, but also to the land that we walk on every day and the relationship that we’re in with all aspects of all living beings.” (Pam Agawa)

Reflection:

How might we bring people together to locate leadership in spaces between people, structures, and ideas committed to racial and other forms of social justice?




- Look for opportunities to practice relational accountability in the next week. Relational accountability could include apologizing, owning up to a mistake, acknowledging someone else’s contribution, standing up for someone publicly, and more. What comes up for you as you consider this? What stands in the way of relational accountability for you?
- What is your relationship to the lands, the water, and the more-than-human life? What might it mean to deepen your relationships here? What does it mean to be responsible to the more-than-human world?

Action:

- Try giving up some of your power in your relationships with colleagues, students, and families. What

happens? How do you change? How do the relationships change?

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:

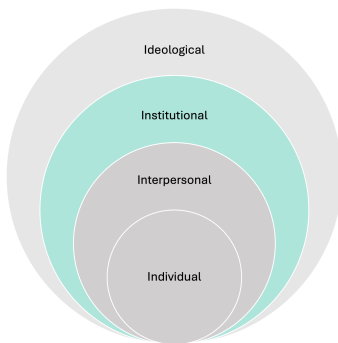
“What I would hope for in education is that it'd become a place of absolute love and safety for our children. Then when our children go into that school, they just adore their teachers who are more like aunties to them, that they respect the teachers, and the teachers respect them.”
(Kahontakwas Diane Longboat)

“In a decolonized system, kids need to be at the table and not in a tokenized way where we have one voice and it's a position and we check the box, but that they're there in a way where there are structures of advocacy behind them to gather up their voices and to bring a united voice.” (Nick Bertrand)

“I remember Dr. Alan Luke said to really facilitate change or lead change, you need to lead for anywhere from seven to eight years. Well, when we're moving administrators in the system every three to four years, how can we really have change in that particular school building?”
(Pam Agawa)

Reflection:

How can educational institutions decenter the human and open possibilities for leading and learning from the land as decolonizing and uncolonizing leadership approaches?



Action:

- Create professional learning opportunities to share Canada's history and present from the perspective of multiple Indigenous Elders, authors, scholars, artists, and poets. Challenge yourself to speak about settler colonialism, manifest destiny, residential schooling, and the Indian Act.
- Create opportunities for authentic student voice, in which students are not simply sharing what we want them to share, or what makes the school/district look good, but are involved in important decision-making practices in the school.

Ideological Connection to ideas about each other and the world.

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

“Leadership has always been wrapped up in systems of power that has often reinforced ideologies and practices of the status quo and also in many ways perpetuated coloniality.” (Ann Lopez)

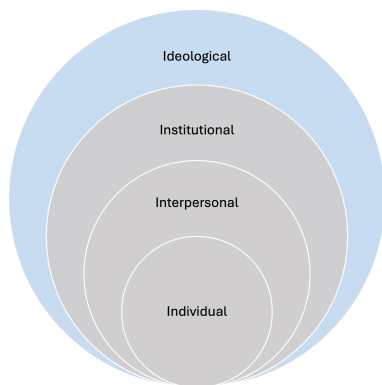
“Could you imagine a system that treated one another like family and that positioned love at the core of everything that we do?” (Nick Bertrand)

“Compassionate leadership...And that is, a natural human being with a good mind, sharing a real sense of consciousness, of relationship to all the beings in creation, equitably across all creation, being inclusive and embracing the richness of diversity.” (Kahontakwas Diane Longboat)

“Remove the idea of saviourism because nobody needs you to save them.” (Aina-Nia Ayo'dele)

Reflection:

What might it mean to undo and unlearn educational leadership ideologies and practices that are rooted in colonialism, settler colonialism, and coloniality?



Action:

- Look for examples of saviourism around you. How might you interrupt this thinking in yourself and among those around you?
- The status quo is a term that speaks to how things are or the existing state of affairs. What approaches to leadership challenge the status quo? What approaches to leadership uphold the status quo?