



HR LEADERSHIP IN COMPLEXITY & CHANGE

Dr Sharon Varney

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HELLO!

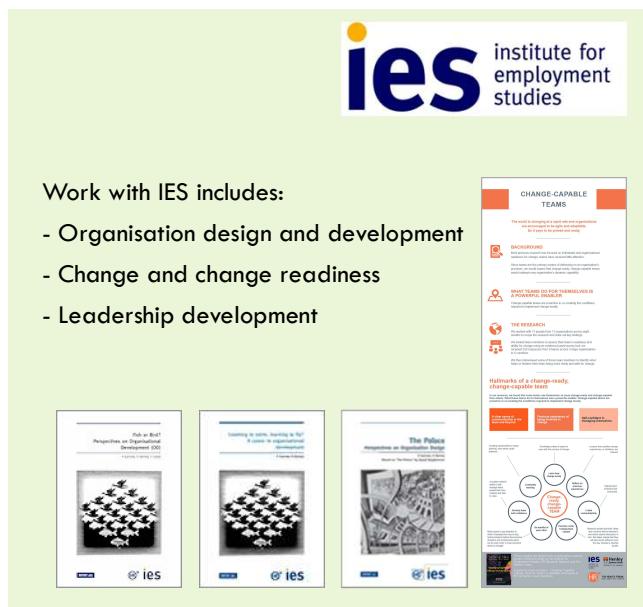


Sharon Varney

Associate with IES since 2008
Consulting, development, research
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Work with IES includes:

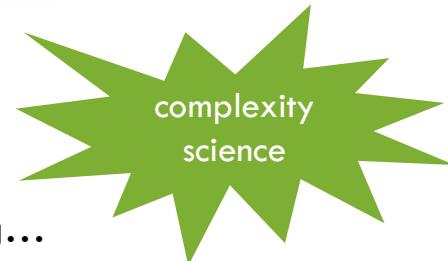
- Organisation design and development
- Change and change readiness
- Leadership development

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HOW I GOT TO HERE



It's really compelling...
but what can we do?

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Application

What is
complexity?

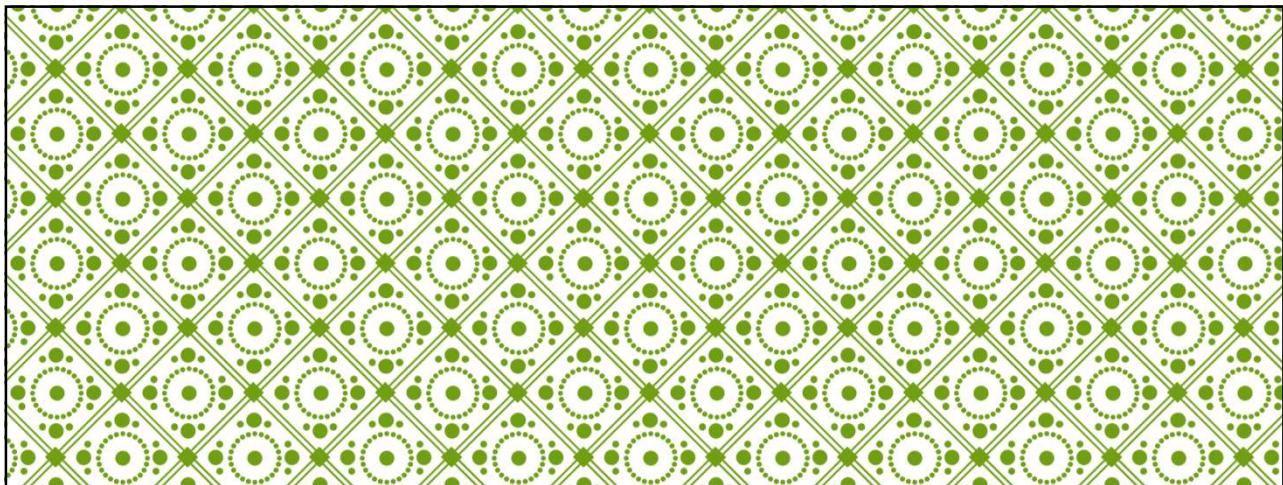
Tools for HR
leadership

Complexity
in practice

WHAT WE'LL COVER

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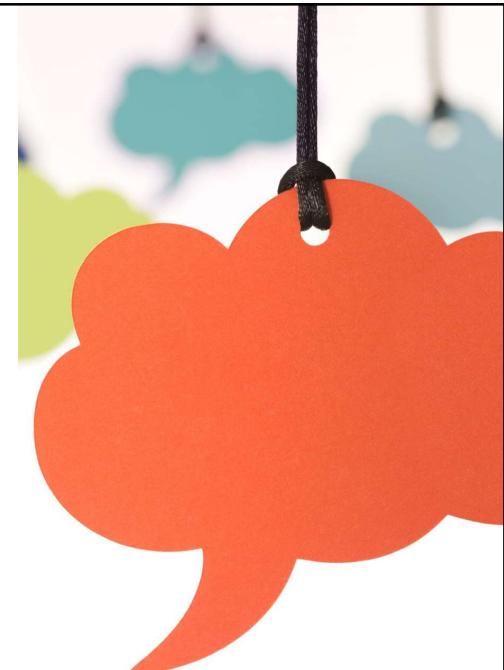
1. WHAT IS COMPLEXITY?

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WHAT IS COMPLEXITY?

Think for a few moments

Share 1 or 2 words that say something to you about complexity



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COMPLEX ADAPTIVE SYSTEMS (CAS)



in constant motion

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Gamble & Blackwell (2001)

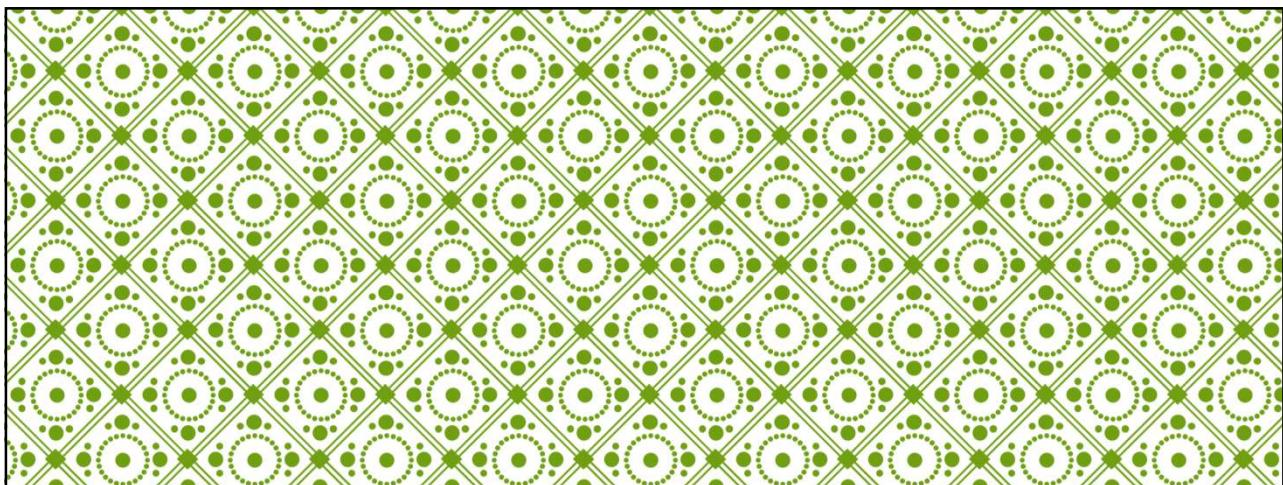
COMPLICATED VS COMPLEX

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WHAT COMPLEXITY IS NOT

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2. COMPLEXITY IN PRACTICE

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Image: Vanessa Randle, The Henley Forum Listening Project

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THE COMPLEXITY CONUNDRUM

- **Volatility –**

there's too much happening, too fast, to ever take it all in when making a decision

+

- **Complexity –**

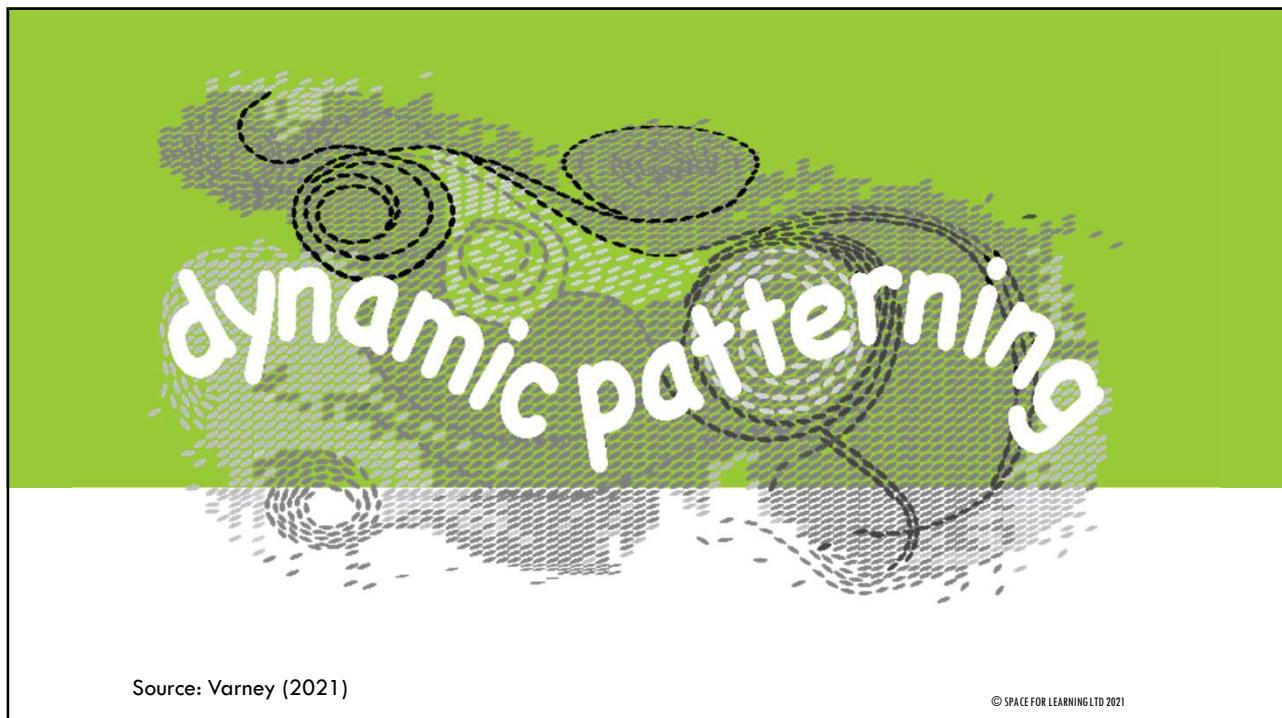
things are so connected that it's *never* safe to leave anything out when making a decision

} creates perpetual
Uncertainty
+
Ambiguity

Source: Varney (2021)

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Source: Varney (2021)

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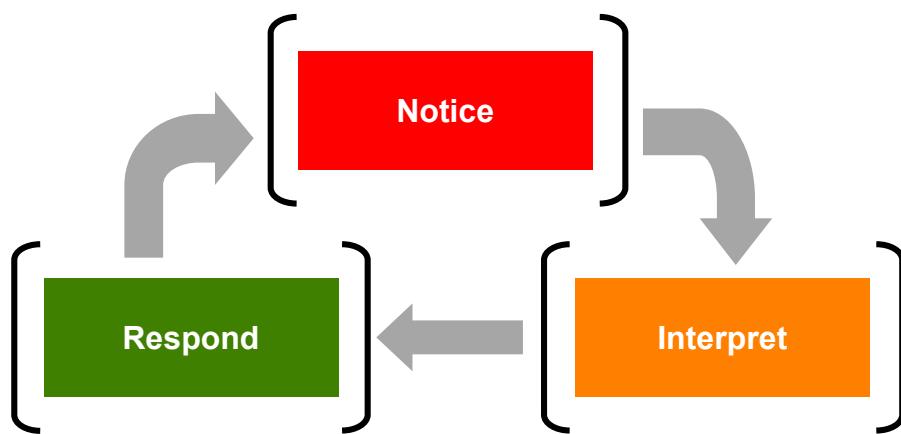


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COMPLEXITY LEARNING CYCLE



Source: Varney, S. 2021. *Leadership in complexity and change*, De Gruyter.

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WHAT IS NEW?

WHAT IS DIFFERENT?

WHAT IS SURPRISING?

WHAT IS PUZZLING?

WHAT IS UNEXPECTED?

Source: Varney (2021)

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GOOD NEWS!

Human beings
beat machines
in handling
complexity and change



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GET ON THE FRONT FOOT

Data doesn't have to be BIG to be clever!

Source: Varney (2021)

- Small data
- Qualitative
- Humanscale
- Freely available

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4. APPLICATION

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HOW WILL YOU
USE THESE TOOLS
IN YOUR
CONTEXT?



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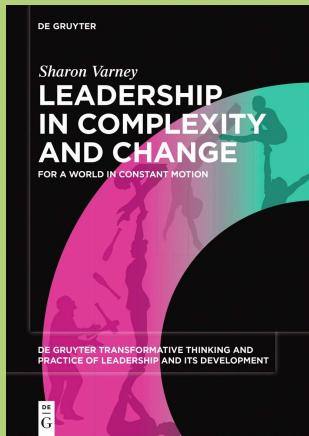
LEARNING INFORMED LEADERSHIP

Exploring the leading edge of now
Shades of grey
Nuances, small changes
Continuous changing
Emerging issues and opportunities
In the space between

Source: Varney (2021)



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Sharon Varney
Leadership in Complexity and Change
For a world in constant motion
 In: [De Gruyter Transformative Thinking and Practice of Leadership and Its Development, 1](#)
 De Gruyter | 2021

<https://www.degruyter.com/document/isbn/9783110713428/html>

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IES RESOURCES

Organisational change: finding your way as you journey into the unknown

A paper from 'HR in a disordered world: IES Perspectives on HR 2015'

<https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/resource/organisational-change-finding-your-way-you-journey-unknown>

Organisation design in a VUCA world

A paper from 'HR in a disordered world: IES Perspectives on HR 2015'

<https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/resource/organisation-design-vuca-world>

Change capability in the agile organisation

IES Perspectives on HR 2018

<https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/resource/change-capability-agile-organisation>

Article on LinkedIn - Reflections on the Future: In the here and now

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6790871361217712128>

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STAYING IN TOUCH

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