Leading in
Ambiguity
How are you doing today?

- Work responsibilities are going great!
- Personal life responsibilities are going great!
- My life balance is perfect!

Scale:
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Results:
- Work responsibilities: Strongly agree (31)
- Personal life responsibilities: Neutral (22)
- Life balance: Disagree (25)

Mentimeter
What types of ambiguity are you juggling right now?
“Ambiguous”

Etymology: from Latin - ambigere "to be undecided," from ambi "around, both," and agere "to drive, do"

: able to be understood in more than one way

Merriam-Webster
Even before “Pandemic-Times” we have been called to lead others through a great deal of ambiguity... The things listed here are common in our higher education/academic environment, and challenging to lead amidst. They also enhance ambiguity, increase anxiety, and add leadership challenges.
What shifts in demands and expectations are you experiencing right now?

From “above”?

From those you lead?
What do great leaders do to manage anxiety?

In self?

In others?

In self and others...? Ease the comfort zone boundaries? *Uncertainty FEEDS anxiety, Knowledge CALMS it.”

Self:
* ask questions, gain clarification and direction where you can
* participate in the process
* use personal stress-management techniques
* talk with a mentor
* keep EQ in mind – amygdala response, time to let the frontal lobe kick in (6-8 seconds!!)

Others:
* be as transparent and consistent as you can in your leadership
* “interpret” for people, and help translate what it means to them
* acknowledge the emotions and stress related to changing times, expectations, ambiguity, etc.
* provide consistent communication and updates – even if there’s nothing new to report
* encourage their questions
* empower their collaboration and problem solving
* bring conflict into the open, help resolve it
* stay connected, remain accessible
What words do you think most people associate with "Change"?
What does your orientation to workplace change tend to be?

- 44% LOVE IT! Tend to be quick to adopt
- 56% CAUTIOUS; Slow to adopt
Note stages, and emotions associated with each.

Note self vs self as leader; others — all move at their own pace...

Need different things at different stages from the leader. The challenge of moving through change together, you don’t get a head start. In iterative processes, where we’re literally all figuring it out as we go along, this presents new and different challenges than we’re used to.
What about you?

- How are you managing your own reactions and needs?
- What do those you lead need, and what are you doing to help?
- How are you keeping a pulse on ongoing shifts?
So, what now?

- What additional things do you need to be doing for yourself?
- What additional things do you need to be doing for and with others?
- How do we pay more conscious ongoing attention to the quality of our relationships during times of change, ambiguity, stress?