

Leading through Systems Change



Our Facilitation Team

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Racing toward Solutions & System Change



Go slow to go fast!

Questions we will address and engage you in during this session:

- What “change” are you experiencing and/or leading?
- Why would Systems Thinking be important to your leadership efforts?
- What next steps will help you lead through systems change?



slido



In a word or 2, what adjectives describe the systems change you are experiencing and/or leading through?

① Click **Present with Slido** or install our [Chrome extension](#) to activate this poll while presenting.

Use your race car cutout to write down

- The change you are experiencing or wish to lead through in your leadership role,
or
- Something you learned at this Roundtable that you want to bring to action in your state.

Briefly share with others at your table.





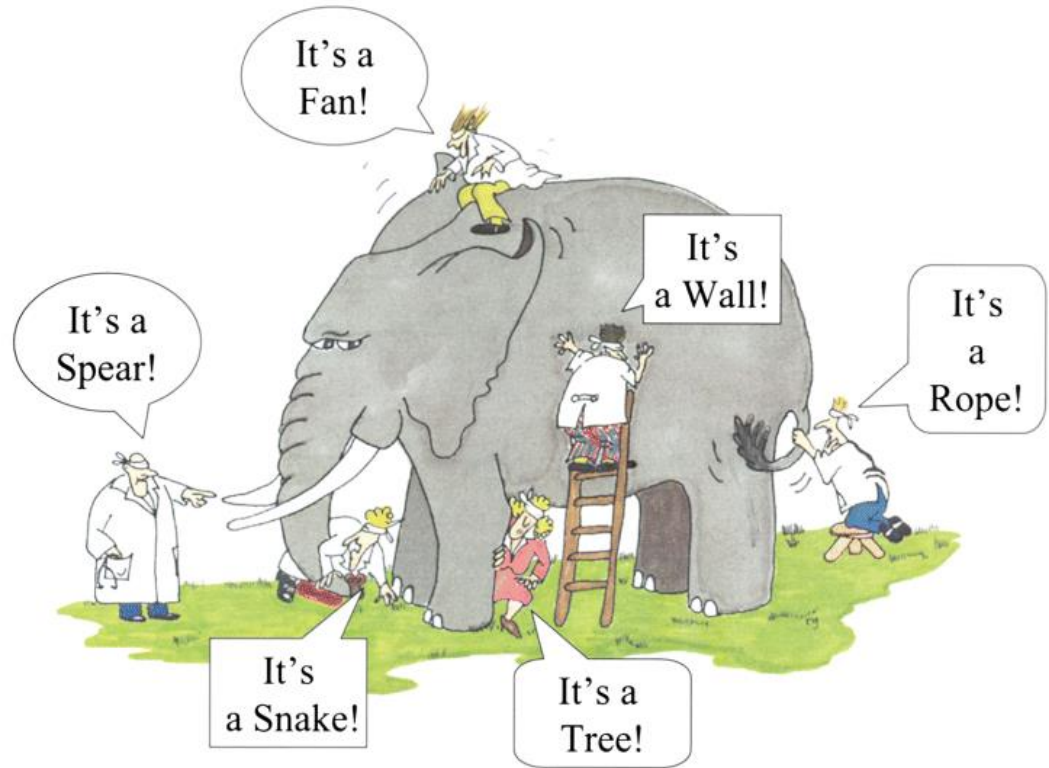
Systems Thinking is a reflective approach to accelerating impactful change.

The Habits of a Systems Thinker provide **conditions for reflection that inform actions** and help you lead through systems change.

Without reflections, we go blindly on our way, creating more unintended consequences, and failing to achieve anything useful.

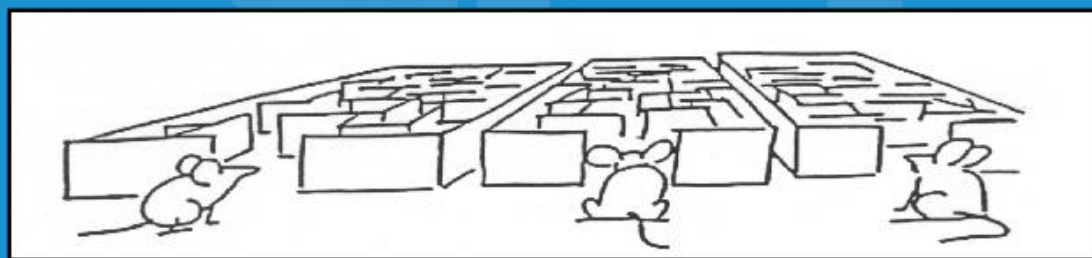
Margaret Wheatley
Author

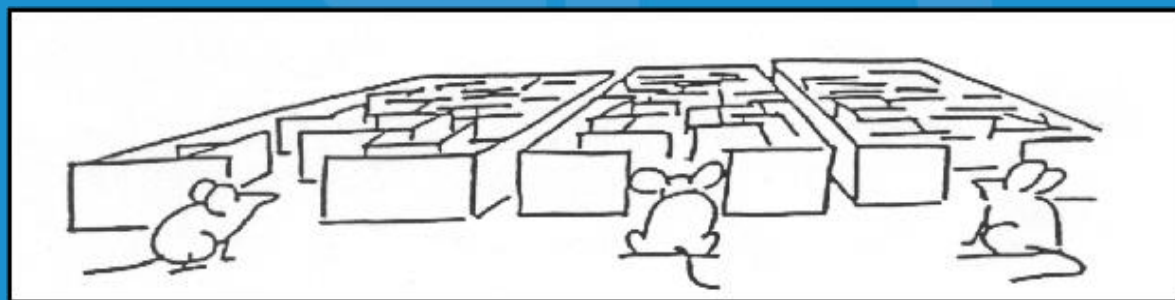
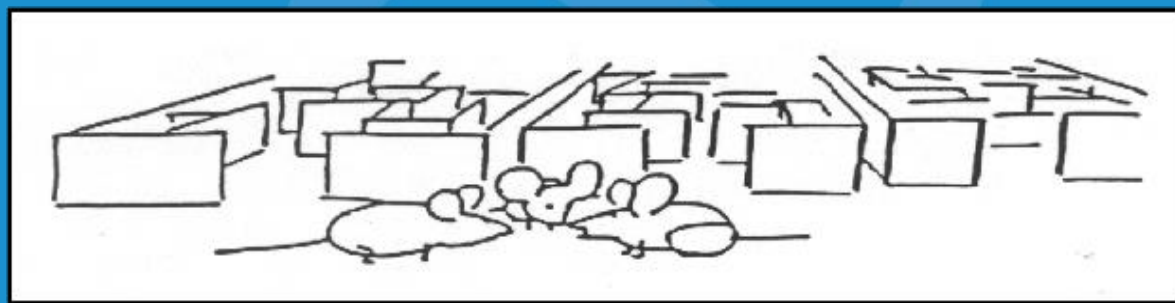
How does an incomplete understanding of the system create barriers to our efforts to achieve desired outcomes?

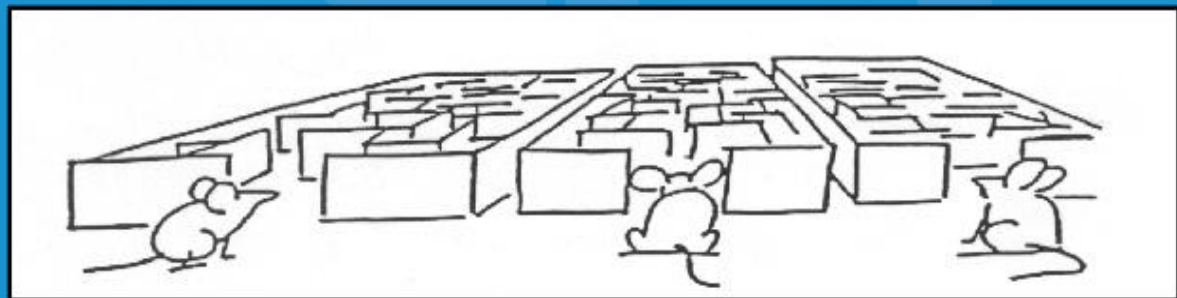
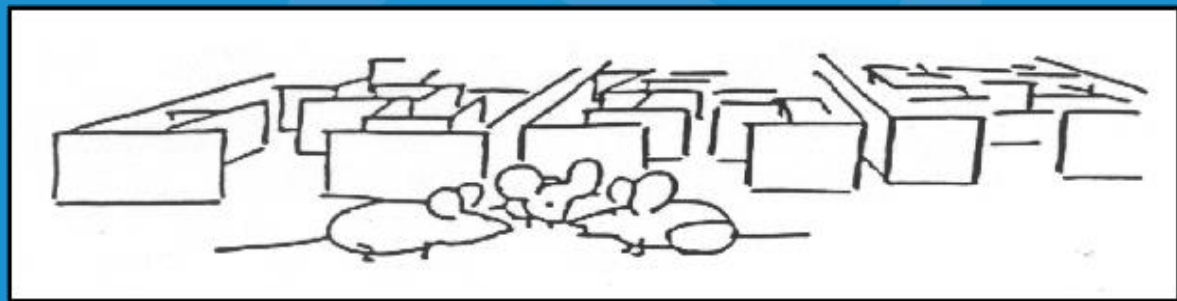


How might our view of the system limit our understanding of the system?







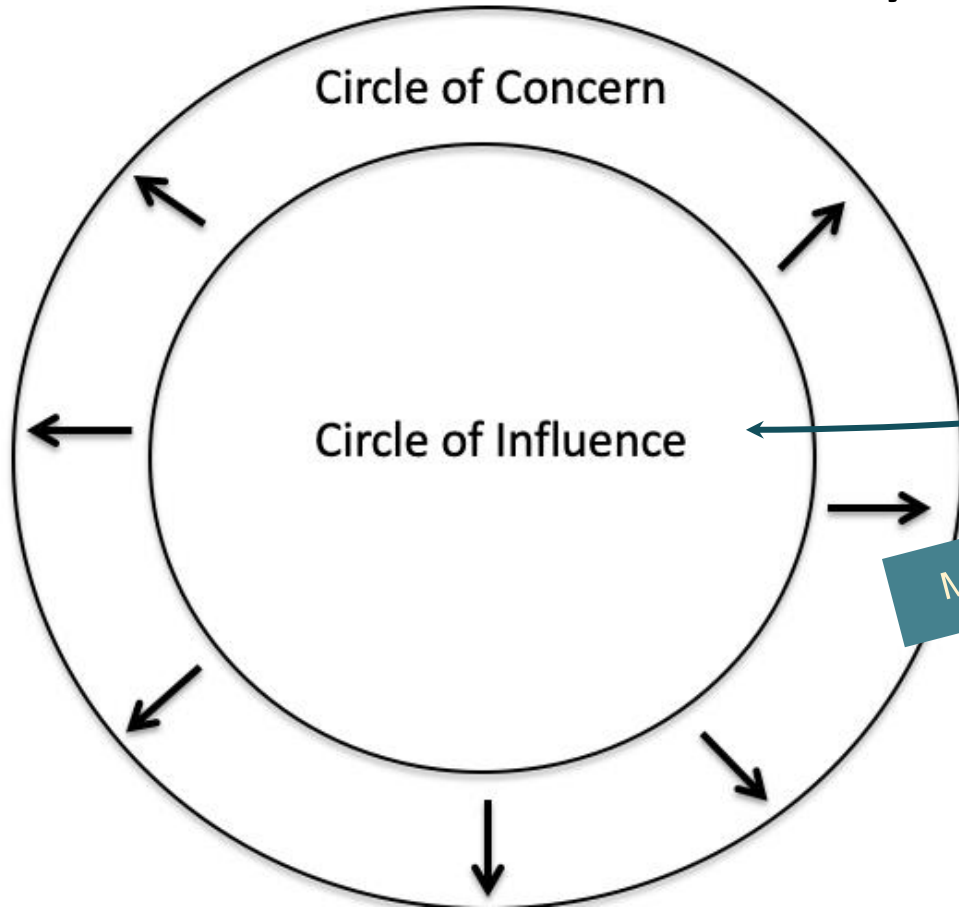


Systems thinking is a vantage point from which you see a whole, a web of relationships, rather than focusing only on the detail of any particular piece. Events are seen in the larger context of a pattern that is unfolding over time.



**Systems Thinking
requires collaboration.
It is not a solo pursuit.**

Leaders are ones who influence the system.



Maintain focus on what you and we can influence.

Consider your boundaries of influence

Adapted from S. Covey

How your influence can spread and grow...



SEEKS TO UNDERSTAND
THE BIG PICTURE

OBSERVES HOW ELEMENTS WITHIN
SYSTEMS **CHANGE OVER TIME**,
GENERATING PATTERNS AND TRENDS

HABITS OF A SYSTEMS THINKER

2020 Edition

RECOGNIZES THE IMPACT OF
TIME DELAYS WHEN EXPLORING
CAUSE AND EFFECT RELATIONSHIPS

CONSIDERS HOW **MENTAL MODELS** AFFECT
CURRENT REALITY AND THE FUTURE

CONSIDERS AN ISSUE FULLY
AND RESISTS THE URGE TO COME
TO A QUICK CONCLUSION

USES UNDERSTANDING OF SYSTEM
STRUCTURE TO IDENTIFY
POSSIBLE **LEVERAGE ACTIONS**

CHANGES PERSPECTIVES TO
INCREASE UNDERSTANDING

RECOGNIZES THAT A SYSTEM'S
STRUCTURE GENERATES ITS BEHAVIOR

**CONSIDERS SHORT-TERM, LONG-TERM AND UNINTENDED
CONSEQUENCES OF ACTIONS**

CHECKS RESULTS AND CHANGES
ACTIONS IF NEEDED:
"SUCCESSIVE APPROXIMATION"

SURFACES AND **TESTS ASSUMPTIONS**

IDENTIFIES THE **CIRCULAR NATURE**
OF COMPLEX CAUSE AND
EFFECT RELATIONSHIPS

PAYS ATTENTION TO **ACCUMULATIONS**
AND THEIR RATES OF CHANGE

MAKES **MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS**
WITHIN AND BETWEEN SYSTEMS

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For Systems Thinking

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**Changing the way
we think and act can
be challenging.**



How are you already a Systems Thinker?

Exercise:

Choose your Personal Strength Habits

- 
1. Choose 2 cards that you see as your personal strengths. To help you, think of a recent time you the Habit card into practice. Be ready to share those examples.
 1. Move to the poster that matches your 1st card.
 1. Meet with another person and share your story of practice.
 1. Repeat with 2nd card.

View of the Room: Debrief



What do you notice about where you are standing?

What do you notice about where others are standing?

The Habits of a Systems Thinker provide

- Common language
- Visual tools
- Conditions for reflection that inform actions



The Nature of Systems



Your system...any system is perfectly designed to produce the results you are obtaining.

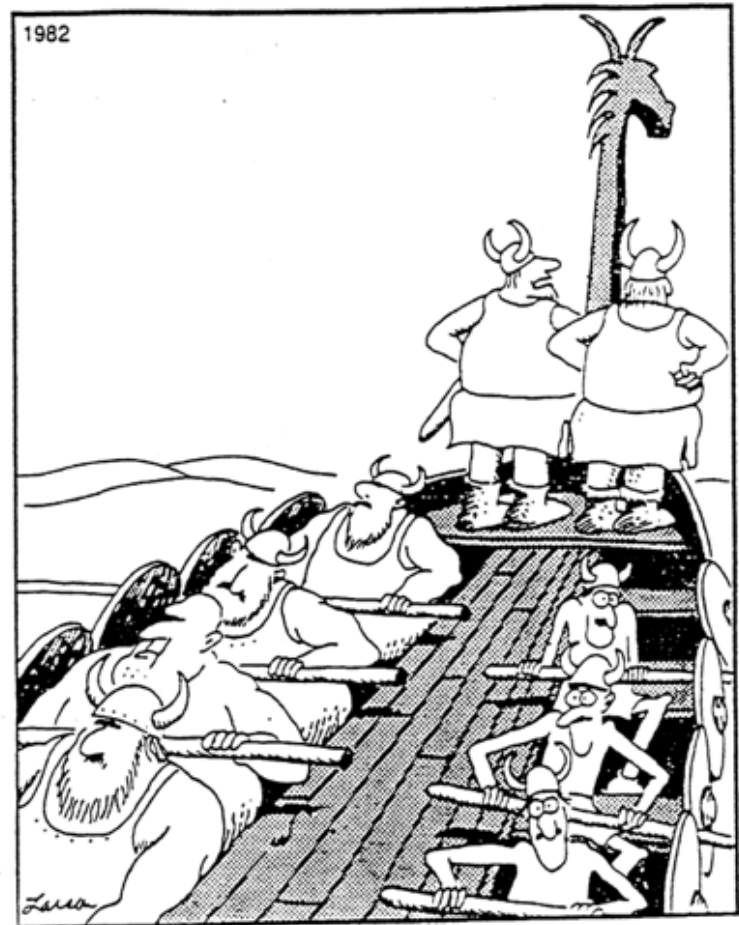
Dr. Paul Batalden

Why Systems Thinking?

“Ever feel like you’ve been going in circles and not getting anywhere?”

Which Habits of a Systems Thinker would help us here?

How does this relate to your work or life?



“I’ve got it, too, Omar.... a strange feeling like we’ve just been going in circles.”

MENTAL MODELS

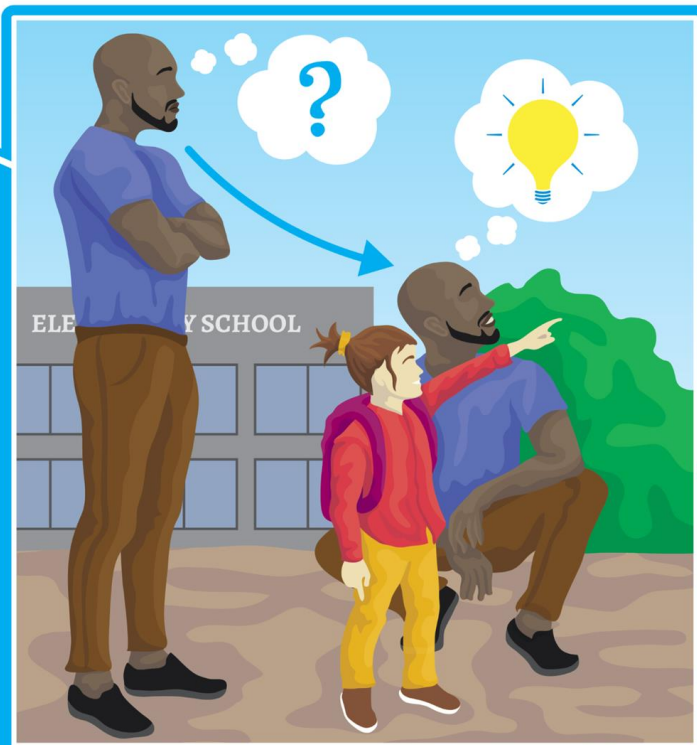


Mental models are deeply ingrained assumptions, beliefs, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action. Peter Senge

What did you hear?



CHANGES PERSPECTIVES TO INCREASE UNDERSTANDING



CHANGES PERSPECTIVES TO INCREASE UNDERSTANDING



A Systems Thinker increases understanding by changing the way they view aspects of the system.

Questions to Ask

Am I open to other points of view?

How do different points of view influence the way I understand the system?

Who should I approach to help me gain new perspectives on an issue?

As I learn about new perspectives, am I willing to change my mind?

CONSIDERS AN ISSUE FULLY
AND RESISTS THE URGE TO COME
TO A QUICK CONCLUSION



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A Systems Thinker takes the necessary time to understand the dynamics of a system before taking action.

Questions to Ask

How much time do we need to allow for consideration of this issue?

How can we manage the tension that exists when issues are not resolved immediately?

How can I help others to be patient while living with unresolved issues?

Table Talk: Applying Systems Thinking to Your Leadership

What habits of a systems thinker resonate most with your work now? How can this habit(s) support you in leading systems change?



NEXT STEPS

Identify at least one commitment that you can make to drive systems change within your state and/or agency?

Ideas for the future

- Share your Habits of a Systems Thinker with others,
- Share how you may have applied what you have learned,
- Commit to your next step for applying your Roundtable learning
- Continue your systems thinking learning

To continue your learning

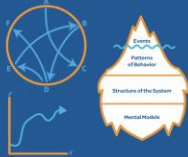
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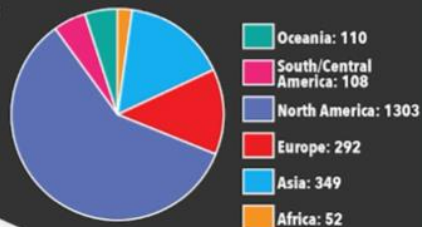
Providing free, high-quality systems thinking learning resources available on demand, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

One thing we do really well at the Waters Center is bringing people together from a variety of ages, places and walks of life to use systems thinking to engage around diverse topics. The Thinking Tools Studio and its live offering, Open Studio, are key to creating that community. The Waters Center team looks forward to a weekly email showing new TTS subscribers and their locations – an indicator that our work is spreading and impacting the world.

Currently we have over 10,500 total subscribers to TTS.

2023 brought us an additional 2,200 TTS subscribers from 103 countries.

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