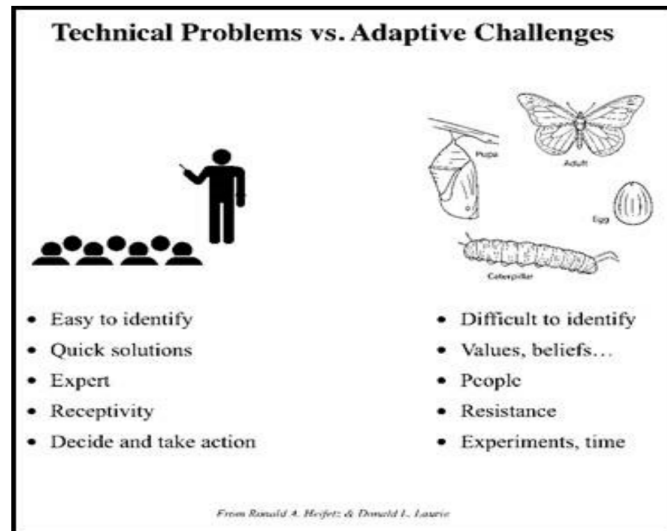


Explanation of Technical and Adaptive Challenges

Heifetz identifies two types of challenges in change: adaptive and technical. The technical is defined as those that can be solved by the knowledge of experts, whereas **adaptive requires new learning**. When the problem definition, solution, and implementation is clear, Heifetz calls this technical change. **For the adaptive, change must come from the collective intelligence of the employees at all levels. So, together they learn their way toward solutions.**



The single biggest failure of leadership is to treat adaptive challenges like technical problems.

TECHNICAL PROBLEMS	ADAPTIVE CHALLENGES
1. Easy to identify	1. Difficult to identify (easy to deny)
2. Often lend themselves to quick and easy (cut-and-dried) solutions	2. Require changes in values, beliefs, roles, relationships, & approaches to work
3. Often can be solved by an authority or expert	3. People with the problem do the work of solving it
4. Require change in just one or a few places; often contained within organizational boundaries	4. Require change in numerous places; usually cross organizational boundaries
5. People are generally receptive to technical solutions	5. People often resist even acknowledging adaptive challenges.
6. Solutions can often be implemented quickly—even by edict	6. “Solutions” require experiments and new discoveries; they can take a long time to implement and cannot be implemented by edict
Examples: 1. Take medication to lower blood pressure; 2. Organize a short-term mission trip; 3. Building a hospital	Examples: 1. Change lifestyle to eat healthy, get more exercise and lower stress; 2. Shift the mindset of doing mission for your neighbors to a lifestyle of living out mission with your neighbors; 3. Eliminating poverty

Explanation of Experiments for Innovation (or Pilot projects)

The essence of experimenting is a willingness to learn from the experience. Success of an experiment is considered in terms of how much we are transformed by the experience rather than by our impact on others.

Experiments are:

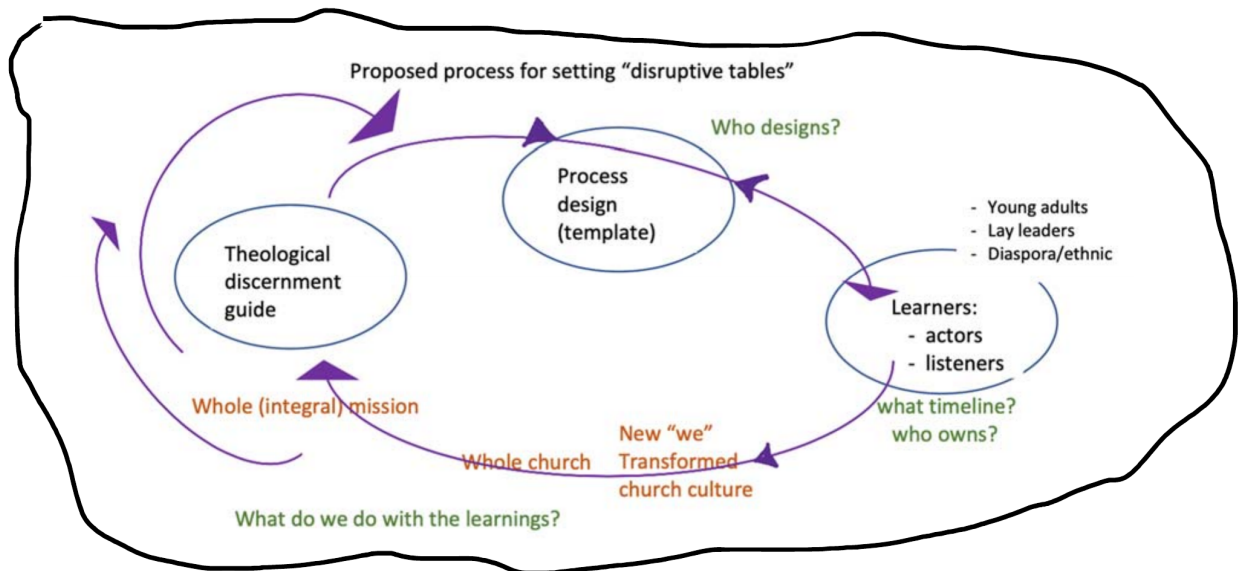
- ✓ Grounded in contextual listening and discerning so will be unique to your context
- ✓ Light on structure
- ✓ Open-ended
- ✓ Requiring no expertise
- ✓ Allowed to 'fail'
- ✓ A way of creating further curiosity
- ✓ Challenging; they move us out of what is comfortable and "normal"
- ✓ Beyond what you are already good at and have practice doing

Experiments are not:

- ✗ Controllable
- ✗ The "right" choices
- ✗ Complex initiatives designed to solve a problem
- ✗ Plans that lead to an expected outcome
- ✗ Initiatives that have "high stakes" attached
- ✗ Meant to address structural or organizational change

According to Ronald Heifetz, in *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*,

- Leadership is an improvisational art...
- **Everything you do in leading adaptive change is an experiment.**
- Framing everything as an experiment offers you more running room to try new strategies, to ask questions, to discover what's essential, what's expendable, and what innovation can work. An experimental frame creates permission and therefore some protection when you fail in your educated guesses.
- An alternative way to adopt an experimental mind-set is to design longer-term experiments, complete with clear objectives, specific timelines, performance measures, systems for collecting data, and structured midcourse evaluations.



Action-Reflection Learning invites us to reflect on, learn from, affirm and encourage one another in our personal and communal practices and experiments. For this reason, part of our action plan must include slowing down "in order to engage in reflection *in* action and reflection *on* action practices" as well as continuing to "embody the vision and changes imagined." Ammerman, *Studying Congregations*

(Prepared for Resonate Berlin Regional Leaders Gathering, Jan. 2020)