

Polly LaBarre – Topic Descriptions

LEADING IN THE NEW WORK ORDER

A monster wave of change has set off a vast reckoning with our taken-for-granted beliefs about every aspect of how and where work gets done. Every leader today must grapple with the inescapable imperative to create and embrace a comprehensive agenda for meaningful change on the design of work and the interconnected urgent challenges of our time—deep inequities, structural dehumanization, environmental calamity. Polly LaBarre takes leaders on a journey across this new landscape—inspiring them with fresh thinking on the work of leadership and equipping them with powerful new approaches for this new work order, including:

- How to transcend the seemingly intractable tradeoffs between performance imperatives and responsibility for people and planet
- How to cultivate an “audacity of imagination” and galvanize people around a shared sense of purpose
- How to “leader-proof” your organization
- How to design platforms for involving, equipping, and connecting people
- How to build organizational respond-ability by enlarging individual responsibility
- How to grow your own resilience in the face of daunting uncertainty

ROLL WITH CHANGE: RECIPES FOR REINVENTION & RESILIENCE

Who hasn’t been rocked by change in the last few years? While we’ve all been forced to rethink, adjust, and adjust again, the gravitational pull of the status quo remains a stealthy enemy of innovation. What does it take to wake up an organization’s inner insurgent to change ahead of change? These times demand every organization dramatically amp up its agility, inventiveness, and adaptability. Drawing on her research and work inside some of the world’s most innovative and progressive organizations, Polly LaBarre lays out actionable strategies for building a perpetual innovation engine:

- What mindsets, practices and behaviors allow you to see the world differently and subvert the status quo
- Where to look for the future—and how to generate a whole new map of possibility
- How to embed innovation as a social process
- What it takes to create a robust architecture of collaboration for a distributed, ever-evolving cohort of innovation peers and partners
- How to build a resilient organizational microbiome by embedding the mindset and methods of experimentation into everything you do

THE HUMAN EDGE: DESIGNING WORK TO CREATE A CULTURAL ADVANTAGE

Today’s whirlwind of challenges—pandemic, social turbulence, economic uncertainty, looming climate catastrophe—has revealed just how inhospitable our organizations are to the human beings who work inside them. It’s not enough to ask which is the right hybrid work policy. It’s past time to ask: what kinds of organizations would we design if we genuinely believed in the inherent value, fundamental goodness, and unlimited potential of every person? Short answer: they’d be very different. In this talk, Polly LaBarre unpacks design rules for unleashing your organization’s full human and creative capacity and lays out a path for humanizing work, including:

- How to unleash, mobilize and amplify the often unruly, but essential human qualities—imagination, energy, resourcefulness, curiosity, intuition, empathy, artistry, eccentricity, passion, and more—without losing control
- How to cultivate a culture of agency, activism, and ownership where every person makes it their job to change things for the better
- How to equip and involve every person in the organization as a creator, strategist, and entrepreneur
- How to build a community of peers that amplifies belonging, contribution, and voice
- How to maximize engagement by investing in wellbeing and widening the circle of care

DESIGNED TO FLOURISH: DEVELOP PEOPLE, DEFEAT DISRUPTION

Change is an inside-out job. It’s not about reacting to external events or chasing trends, so much as it’s about developing your respond-ability—your elasticity, maturity, plasticity, openness, emotional dexterity, regulatory power, and more. Organizations that deliberately develop that capacity in every individual shore up their own resilience. In other words, “adult development” doesn’t just promote individual growth, it’s a cornerstone of

organizational flourishing. Polly LaBarre takes the audience on a quick tour of the organizations and leaders investing in human flourishing in powerful new ways—and offers up a short course in “adult development,” including:

- How to begin, again (and again)
- How to change your mind—cultivating consciousness, mediating mindsets, biases, blinders
- How to develop intuition—learning to tune into your inner knowing
- How to train like an artist, a monk, and an athlete
- How to design and run self-experiments to accelerate your growth loops
- Principles for adult capacity building