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Introducing the JUST Leadership[©] Activity Cards

Activity Card 3: Tentativeness and Flexibility

- *Principle:* Tāwariwari - Flexible, adaptable¹; Whakarerekē – to change, alter [position], edit, amend, modify, reorganise²; adapt to changing needs and circumstances³
- *Western Principle:* Embrace willingness for familiar ideas and beliefs to be changed, added to or confirmed

One way of including, valuing and honouring people is to learn, value and honour the different cultural contexts that people associate with. If diversity is embraced and treated as a rich resource that helps organisations adapt and thrive then organisations will need to be flexible, adaptable and open to change.

To be flexible and adaptable it is important to hone the skill of tentativeness. Tentativeness is akin to humility. It is not viewed as indecisiveness but as keeping an openness for diversity and complexity. This involves being open to the idea that there are many worldviews that are all equally valid and worthy. It takes humility and openness to learn and appreciate alternative views. It takes humility and openness to hold our own worldviews lightly enough to be able to embrace others.

A helpful skill to learn is appreciative curiosity. This is the art of asking questions we do not know the answer to in order to gain greater understanding and appreciation of others' lives and experiences. This kind of curiosity means listening to others' stories and resisting the urge to judge, measure or compare.

¹ Māori Dictionary. (n.d.). Retrieved from maoridictionary.co.nz/

² Māori Dictionary. (n.d.). Retrieved from maoridictionary.co.nz/

³ Kohere, R. (2005). *Tāwakewake: An historical case study and situational analysis of Ngāti Ruawaipu Leadership* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from https://mro.massey.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10179/2837/02_whole.pdf?sequence=1

Tentativeness and curiosity provide ways to take a breath and ask “What is needed here, whose involvement is important and how can we work together so that best outcomes can be reached?”

Here are some questions you may wish to consider

- What response do you notice as you read about concepts of tentativeness, humility, curiosity, suspending judgment and openness for diversity?
- How easy or difficult is it to exercise these concepts in your leadership and organisation?
- Who stands to benefit most and least if these concepts were exercised in your leadership and organisation?

References

Kohere, R. (2005). *Tāwakewake: An historical case study and situational analysis of Ngāti Ruawaipu Leadership* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from https://mro.massey.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10179/2837/02_whole.pdf?sequence=1
Māori Dictionary. (n.d.). Retrieved from maoridictionary.co.nz/

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Category
Relationship

Concept
Tentativeness and flexibility

Principle Māori
Tāwariwari - Flexible, adaptable
Whakarerekē - to change, alter [position], edit, amend, modify, reorganise, adapt to changing needs and circumstances

Western Principle
Embrace willingness for familiar ideas and beliefs to be changed, added to or confirmed

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Activity
When instigating or responding to change ask -

1. What does the change mean to me and others?
2. How does this need to be acknowledged and attended to well?
3. What are the potential benefits and how can these be best harnessed for the greater good?

Tip - change can affect people in different ways - all are valid and understandable