



Book Review of Leadership and the New
Science. Author: Margaret J. Wheatley

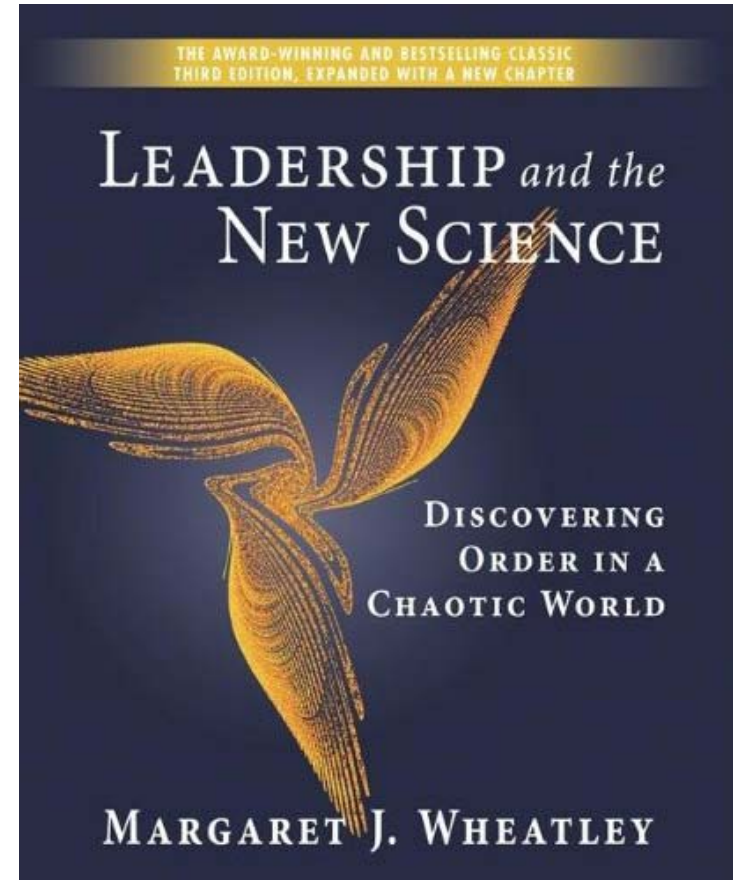


by Joseph South



Key Messages from this Book

- The book applies scientific principles drawn from quantum physics, biology and chaos theory to leadership and organizations
- Describes the 'The New Scientific Management' where information is free flowing, organizations are evolving with adaptive networks and employees are empowered
- Provides two examples of how 'The New Scientific Management' can be applied to real world examples: Response to Hurricane Katrina and Global Terrorism





Quantum Physics

- Organizations are focused on structure and organizational design. This 'Newtonian Organization' limits their reactive ability
- Organizations in the quantum world need fewer descriptions and structure
- Acting should precede planning and we see what we want
- Quantum particles are engaged with the world and interact
- Fields exist between particles and enable interactions, both directly and indirectly, and shape the organizational behavior
- Adaptive networks replace historic command and control approaches and empower the individual with information
- Hurricane Katrina failures are due to the inability of the organizations structure to adapt and engage



Biology

- Equilibrium and stability by imposed control limits individual freedom and local change
- Enforcing unnatural equilibrium can lead to destruction
- Biological systems are self-organizing systems. Systems seek a natural equilibrium due to the imposed stimulus
- Systems are dynamic, adaptive and creative
- Biological systems participate together openly, while Newtonian organizations attempt to build layered order
- Self-organized systems provide greater access to information
- Networks appear that distribute information that allows individuals to respond quickly, intelligently and assume responsibility



Chaos

- There is order in chaos and disorder is an opportunity
- Chaos is an opportunity to awaken creativity
- Organizations can have order without control
- Order will emerge but it may not be instantaneous
- Linear approaches do not work in a non-linear world
- Values and meaning are the deep driving purpose
- Organizations that display a strong commitment to values and meaning develop patterns with self-similar behavior
- Global terror is an adaptive network driven by a deep driving purpose



What this Book Meant to Me

- Historic view of organizations limits the ability to adapt and change to the environment
- The new science empowers the individuals and is build upon their relationships
- Information determines our ability to grow, interact adapt and evolve
- Networks distribute information, empower the individual and allow the system to participate together
- Disorder is an opportunity and organizations can have order without control