

LILA Summit Perspective and Provocation #1: Tight *and* Loose: How Rules Shape Our Lives

Dr. Michele Gelfand

In this session, I'll discuss how societies and organizations will need to navigate new social norms in the face of COVID-19, and in particular, strike a balance between *tightness* and



looseness. Tight cultures, such as Singapore, Japan, and China, have strict rules and punishments for deviance, while loose cultures, such as the U.S., Italy, and Brazil, have weaker norms and are more permissive. Differences in tightness versus looseness are not random.

Tight nations often have extensive historical and ecological threats, including greater historical prevalence of natural disasters, invasions, population density, and pathogen outbreaks. From an evolutionary perspective, strict rules help groups to coordinate, providing the glue that helps keep people together during times of crisis (Gelfand, 2019).

We would expect that the spread of COVID-19 will tighten communities around the world. Yet loose cultures, accustomed to prioritizing freedom over security, may have more difficulty coordinating in the face of COVID-19. We can also expect that the tightening of cultures will have longer-term social consequences at least until the threat of COVID-19 subsides. Tightness is related to more order, synchrony, and self-regulation, yet is also linked to less tolerance and lower creativity. Likewise, excessive tightening is related to higher suicide, depression, and lower happiness.

Accordingly, communities will need to negotiate social norms so that there is a healthy balance between freedom and constraint, or *tight-loose ambidexterity* (Gelfand, 2019). Tight rules regarding social distancing are critical, yet looseness within these constraints are needed to spawn the development of creative technical solutions that are needed to contain the pandemic, as well as creating novel tools to help people feel connected. This also applies to organizations who will need to find the right balance between tightness-looseness in their organizational cultures. As many workplaces tighten in response to their shaky economic standing, successful organizations will benefit from having *flexible tightness*—rules which bind employees together, accompanied by the right dose of looseness by affording employees latitude and employee autonomy where possible.

Michele is a Distinguished University Professor at the University of Maryland, College Park. Gelfand uses field, experimental, computational, and neuroscience methods to understand the evolution of culture--as well as its multilevel consequences for human groups.

Gelfand, M. (2019). [*Rule Makers, Rule Breakers: Tight and Loose Cultures and the Secret Signals That Direct Our Lives*](#). Scribner.

LILA Summit Perspective and Provocation # 2: Dynamics of competition and cooperation and what they mean for individuals and organizations in the current world

Dr. Michael Muthukrisna

What conditions create a willingness to share knowledge rather than keep it to yourself? To compete virtuously by working harder rather than compete destructively by harming others?



Part of the answer lies in whether the world is positive-sum or zero-sum in reality or in perception. In a positive-sum world, resources are plentiful - we can both win and your success may even be predictive of my success if I learn from you. In a zero-sum world - only one of us can win and your success is predictive of my failure. To put it another way, it's easier to be nice when there's lots to go around. Imagine trying to find a parking spot. If you arrive at a spot around the same time as another car and there's plenty of open spaces, you might graciously allow them to take the spot. But if everything is full and you've been driving around for 30 minutes looking for a spot, your behavior may functionally change.

We'll discuss the dynamics of competition and cooperation and what they mean for individuals and organizations in the current world. You can read about some of these ideas and how they relate to COVID-19 here: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/businessreview/2020/04/22/long-read-cultural-evolution-covid-19-and-preparing-for-whats-next/>

Michael Muthukrishna is an Associate Professor of Economic Psychology at the London School of Economics (LSE). His other affiliations include Associate of the Department of Human Evolutionary Biology at Harvard University, Affiliate of the Developmental Economics Group at STICERD, and Technical Director of The Database of Religious History.

Michael's research focuses on answering three broad questions: (1) Why are humans so different to other animals? (2) What are the psychological and evolutionary processes that underlie culture and social change, and how is information transmitted, maintained, and modified? (3) How can the answers to these questions be used to tackle some of the challenges we face as a species? He uses a two-pronged methodological approach to answer these questions, combining mathematical and computational modeling (evolutionary models, social network models, etc.), and experimental and data science methods from psychology and economics. He uses the "Theory of Human Behavior" that emerges from this approach to tackle a variety of related topics, including [innovation](#), [corruption](#), the [rise of large-scale cooperation](#), and the [navigation of cross-cultural differences](#).

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LILA Summit Perspective and Provocation #3: An Everyone Culture: An Immunity-to-Change Approach to Create Inclusive Cultures at Work

Dr. Lisa Lahey



Thanks to the current pandemic, our VUCA world just got a lot more volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. Leaders are under unprecedented pressure to make decisions quickly within this context, and many are understandably worried that their business may collapse. Stress and anxiety are natural responses in these conditions. Research shows that when stressed, individuals tend to take mental shortcuts and unconsciously operate more from habits and biases, rather than make thoughtful, goal-directed choices. This means that even the best-intentioned leaders who value diversity and inclusion may need to double-down on this priority. Lahey will present a case based on a large research university that suggests the value of using an immunity-to-change approach to surface unintentional biases in action. We will then discuss the viability of using this approach. Of particular interest are the following questions, “How can we encourage senior leaders to look at possible gaps between their good intentions and actual decision-making that impact underrepresented individuals?” and “What are the possibilities of creating a diverse and inclusive culture if this is not a top priority for senior leadership?”

Lisa Lahey is Founder and Co-Director of Minds At Work, a coaching and consulting firm helping individuals, businesses and institutions around the world close the gap between their good intentions and actual behaviors using the Immunity-to-Change approach. She is also on the faculty of the Harvard University Graduate School of Education, where she leads a two-year course “Practicing Leadership Inside and Out” in the Doctor of Educational Leadership program.

Lisa is co-author of several books. *How The Way We Talk Can Change The Way We Work* (Wiley, 2001), and *Immunity to Change* (Harvard Business Press, 2009) have been published in over a dozen languages. Her latest book, *An Everyone Culture* (Harvard Business Press, 2016) was named “Best Management and Workplace Culture Book of 2016” by 800-CEO-READ. Her work has been featured in *The Atlantic*, MSNBC News, *Harvard Business Review*, *The New York Times Sunday Business Section*, *Oprah Magazine* and *Fast Company*.

A passionate pianist and nature lover, Lisa has two sons and a daughter-in-law and lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts, with her husband.

LILA Summit Perspective and Provocation # 4: Moving from Either/Or Thinking to Yes/And Thinking

Dr. Barry Johnson

When dealing with polarities, Or-thinking makes things worse. To work with polarities, you need to be able to see both perspectives clearly and at the same time. The trick isn't to solve a polarity or to make a choice and move on. Instead, you handle a polarity by first, recognizing what it is, and second, learning how to mentally and practically move through the ebbs and flows a polarity presents.



In today's world, many think we need to choose between Individual Freedom *And* The Common Good. This creates a false choice. We can't afford to have this battle on two fronts become a battle between two fronts. If it does, we all lose. Our leaders must leverage this tension to work for us. If they do, we all win. This session will create an opportunity for us to identify the polarities we are currently dealing with and how to make progress on them.

For 37 years Barry has shared his enthusiasm and passion for Polarity Thinking™ with tens of thousands of people and hundreds of organizations around the world. As Chairman and Chief Thought Leader in the company, he continues to extend the boundaries of what we know about and can do with the powerful energy systems contained in all polarities.

Barry is both humbled by and proud of the worldwide learning and practice community dedicated to the study and application of Polarities that he has helped create. His personal mission is to help people to deliberately leverage the polarity wisdom that can be found in human culture for thousands of years into conscious, active use for the advantage of all people today.

His seminal book, *Polarity Management: Identifying and Managing Unsolvable Problems*, captures the foundation of this power approach. More recent articles and a book he coauthored on polarities in congregations is where you'll find Barry's latest thinking. He and his wife Dana enjoy traveling the open highways in their "5th Wheel" camper stopping to visit old and make new friends, bicycle and kayak.

LILA Summit Perspective and Provocation #5: Leadership that supports human flourishing in this new era

Dr. Jennifer Garvey Berger



In this session, muse with Jennifer about what leadership might most support human flourishing in organizations in this new era. Using theories of how adults grow over change over time (adult development theories) and very early research into the differences between self-authored leaders and self-transforming leaders, we will explore what it means to grow the leaders we need for the future we desire.

Now is the time for this conversation as we are standing at the threshold of a new world, the old world just beginning to fade, the new one just beginning to sprout. All around us are seedlings of possibility.

Some of the seedlings could grow strong fruiting trees that would support our collective flourishing—increasing our understanding of global interdependence and adding to our compassion, increasing our understanding of the interconnection between humans and nature and changing our organizations to protect the ecosystem and the most vulnerable people and places. Some of those seedlings could bring poison to the land—increasing disparity between those who are thriving and those who are faltering and using the fear and confusion of this time to create a dark and difficult next chapter. In any case, organizations will be a key part of this story, and those who lead them will make a huge difference into what emerges next. We will think together about those leaders and how to grow the ones we need for the organizations the world needs.

Jennifer has a masters and a doctorate from Harvard University. Eschewing work/life balance for a life that feels like fun across the board, Jennifer loves to [write](#), to walk her dog through the streets of London, to scuba dive, to travel with her husband and their nearly-adult children, and figure out how to make whole organizations work better. Formerly an associate professor at George Mason University, Jennifer learned about deep change a more than a decade ago when she turned down the tenure offer and moved to a small seaside village in New Zealand with her husband, two kids, and the family dog. Transformation is not a one-time event, though, so two years ago Jennifer and her family moved to central London to see what joys urban living holds.

LILA Summit Perspective and Provocation 6: Moving from frustration to progress in new situations: Seven attitudes that support learning

Dr. D. Christopher Kayes



This session will help you understand the importance of learning attitudes. In addition, it will show how these attitudes differ when you are progressing in your learning versus when you are frustrated with your learning. We all face a common learning challenge. As people who value achievement, we can easily become frustrated by slow progress and new situations. Attitudes are underlying beliefs, behaviors, and thoughts that you can develop over time. Our research shows seven attitudes associated with learning: positive emotional engagement, creative problem solving, learning identity, social support, focus, flexibility, and recognizing progress. By cultivating these attitudes, we can enhance our learning in a variety of areas and overcome the frustration associated with slow progress and new situations.

The session will present the results of research on nearly 1,000 leaders involved in leadership development and self-improvement activities. You will explore your own attitudes towards learning. A better understanding of these attitudes will help you:

- overcome challenges
- improve progress towards desired outcomes
- make periods of perceived lack of progress more productive
- improve learning
- overcome periods of frustration
- face change with an open mind

Dr. Chris Kayes is professor and the department chair of Management at the George Washington University. Chris' research focuses on how leaders learn in the face of complex and novel situations. He has studied learning, leadership, and teamwork in a variety of settings in an effort to uncover hidden sources of vulnerability in organizations and identify ways that leaders build continuity in times of change and turmoil.

References

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- Kayes, D. C. (2020). *The improvement attitudes questionnaire*. Available online.