

THE CHAIRMAN'S PLAYBOOK

Leadership wisdom distilled in 1,000 words or fewer

PLAY 62

Leadership and Complexity

Use these questions to examine how you make sense of complex situations, challenge your own assumptions, and help others develop the shared understanding needed for sound decisions. Answer with a current leadership challenge in mind.

- 01 What challenge are you currently treating as merely complicated when it may actually be complex?
- 02 Which people, processes, or interests interact in ways your present analysis does not adequately capture?
- 03 What consequences of a recent decision surprised you? What connections might you have overlooked?
- 04 What mental model or assumption is guiding your interpretation of the situation? What evidence might challenge it?
- 05 Are you considering the problem from enough different perspectives, including those of people closest to it?
- 06 Which perspectives or competing priorities have you not yet brought together into a coherent understanding?
- 07 Where might your attempt to simplify a problem be hiding a relationship or consequence that matters?
- 08 What are the few critical relationships you need to understand before deciding - and what can remain uncertain?
- 09 How well do colleagues understand how their decisions affect other teams and the organization as a whole?
- 10 What one action will you take this week to improve shared understanding and enable better collective decisions?

Clarity is not the absence of complexity. It is understanding what matters without losing sight of the whole.