Book Review

Fitch, P., & Van Brunt, B. (2016). A guide to leadership and management in higher education: Managing across the generations. New York, NY: Routledge.

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A Guide to Leadership and Management in Higher Education: Managing Across the Generations is a welcome addition to the literature on higher education administration, educational leadership, the aging workforce, and four generations in the workplace. With demographic trends highlighting declining birth rates, fewer young people, an ageing population globally, and more people opting to remain in the workforce post retirement age, the university and college workplace is changing (Statistics Canada, 2013, 2015; United Nations, 2015). For the first time four generations are working side-by-side. Sharing classrooms, offices, faculty and staff lounges, collaborating, and comingling are millennials (also, Gen Y), Generation X, Boomers, and Matures (also, the Silent Generation). The implications for education, educators, and educational leaders are far reaching.

Fitch and Van Brunt describe their book as a "text" a "useful manual for the reader to undertake as they wish-in a single read, or by referencing the chapters as they call to you" (p. xiii). The book is well organized with a detailed table of contents and an index that allows the reader, if they wish, to do as the authors suggest and select those chapters or parts of chapters that call to them. Each chapter begins with Key Take-a-Ways from the chapter and concludes with Discussion Questions and Just One Thing (that one simple but true thing those in leadership positions in higher education want us to know about leadership). Noteworthy is the belief the authors have in the power of the narrative, of stories, to connect us with ourselves and with each other. Their book therefore includes, as starting points for self-reflection and critical discussion, both first person accounts of educational leaders' experiences and observations, and case studies. This structure of *A Guide to Leadership and Management in Higher Education: Managing Across the Generations* lends itself very well to use as a resource for practical advice on issues in the workplace. However, those who wish to understand more about ageism, age, and social discrimination and those who wish to delve more deeply into power, organizational culture, and leadership approaches, will need to look for additional resources to supplement Fitch and Van Brunt's book.

In Part I, Chapters 1-6, Fitch and Van Brunt shine a spotlight on the increased generational diversity in the workplace. At the same time as the authors remind us of the need to "move beyond clichéd views of specific generations" (p. 21), they point out that students, faculty, and staff bring to the workplace generational similarities in addition to their individual differences. Each of us as members of a particular generation experience similar historical events and social trends at similar ages and stages in the life course. These shared generational experiences mean that we develop, and therefore share, some similar values, beliefs, and expectations. While all the challenges we face in the course of a work day cannot be attributed to generational differences, those differences are not insignificant. Institutions of higher education need to find a way to lead and to manage across generations if they are to attract, engage, and retain students, faculty, and staff. The authors also focus in Part I on the differences between leadership and management, on team building and professional development, and on the concept of bringing to work "love, care and hope" (p. xiii). They ask us to consider how we would apply those words in the workplace and they challenge us to move from a top-down style of leadership and management with an emphasis

on outcomes and metrics and the technical skills of management, to a strengths-based, collaborative style which focuses on relationship building, on building connections, and on empathy, mutual respect, and communication.

Part II, Chapters 7-10 of *A Guide to Leadership and Management in Higher Education: Managing Across the Generations,* is particularly strong. The authors show us how to put strengths-based leadership and management into practice. Through case studies and first-person accounts, generational challenges are highlighted and interventions are explored. Chapter seven focuses on establishing the supervisory relationship. Chapters eight and nine both address, through nineteen case studies, common staff problems and supervisor mistakes, and chapter ten explores organizational change, surviving a difficult boss or colleague, navigating a hostile system, and grief and loss in the workplace. As I read through these chapters, more than one scenario elicited a smile of recognition. Readers will no doubt see themselves and others in the scenarios presented. Case studies are compelling for just this reason.

Fitch and Van Brunt's extensive experience in higher education leadership and counselling is reflected in their book. They draw from humanism, narrative therapy and story, and positive psychology to provide readers with three theories for managing difficult situations and generational challenges in the workplace. In chapter four, Fitch and Van Brunt provide an overview of these three theories while cautioning the reader that, "their goal is not to turn supervisors, managers, and directors into therapists" (p. 51). The same cautionary note should apply to chapter five and the use of such assessment tools as the Gallup Strength Finder and the Myer-Briggs Type Indicator, as cited in Fitch and Van Brunt. Wisely the authors recommend that we "tread carefully . . . maintaining a keen eye to appropriate application and utilization" (p. 72). We also need to consider the expertise we bring to our own work as educational leaders. Both Fitch and Van Brunt work, or have worked in Student Affairs as academic and personal counsellors. They each have an academic background and practical experience in counselling, as do I. In the absence of such background and experience, and in the absence of a colleague with such experience with whom one can collaborate, rushing to put into practice for example, the "narrative and metaphor approach" (pp. 59-61) or guided imagery or the Myer-Briggs Type Inventory is, in my opinion, not a good idea. Educational leaders and supervisors need to "adopt a stance of reflection and humility" (p. 6). We need to "carry [our] authority lightly" (p. 99). The authors note that we can gain self awareness and we can get to know and understand those we lead by exploring informally preferences for making decisions, approaching work, resolving conflicts, and communicating. Whether we use formal or informal measures, such an upstream approach is key to the relationship building and strengths-based leadership approach strongly advocated for by Fitch and Van Brunt.

The book concludes with an intriguing "Afterword." Fitch and Van Brunt take us on a journey to the Burning Man Festival in Nevada. An "intentional community," Black Rock City rises out of the Black Rock Desert in late August. In early September the festival ends, the city is dismantled with no trace of its human inhabitants left behind. No money exchanges hands, and nothing is bought or sold. Black Rock City operates on a gifting economy; something is given with no expectation of something in return. The ten guiding principles of Burning Man, written in 2004, are a reflection of the Festival's philosophy and culture. Fitch and Van Brunt believe there is a connection between the Festival's guiding principles and their book's subject matter. Those principles include: "radical inclusion, gifting, decommodification, radical self-reliance, radical self-expression, communal effort, civic responsibility, leaving no trace, participation, and immediacy" (pp. 174-185). I will leave it to the reader to discover how the authors connect the guiding principles of Burning Man to the content of their book.

At the age of seventy I began work on my PhD in Education. Prior to entering the program, I had not considered the challenges and the joys of teaching and learning side-by-side with students, faculty, and staff who ranged in age from their early twenties to their mid seventies. With a forty-year career in education from primary to post-secondary behind me, and with year two of my doctoral studies completed, much still seems new and different. The oft remarked upon generation gap feels, on some days, like a chasm. Do my students feel the same after meeting me? Do younger graduate students with whom I share classes? Do faculty and staff? Does my supervisor? Do they sometimes struggle to understand me as I struggle sometimes to understand them? Do these generational differences impact on productivity and a general sense of satisfaction with one's place in the organization? If so, in what ways? And most importantly how do we bridge the divide? So many questions.

By providing discussion questions, first person accounts, and case studies Fitch and Van Brunt en-

courage us to engage in much needed critical discussions on leadership and management in higher education at both the macro and micro level. They also encourage us to reflect on our own practices and imagine innovative possibilities and practices. As a manual, Fitch and Van Brunt's book is a worthwhile resource for supervisors, educational leaders, and managers and those aspiring to administrative positions. It is a useful resource as well for mentor teachers supervising teacher candidates and teacher candidates struggling with being supervised. *A Guide to Leadership and Management in Higher Education: Managing Across the Generations* offers us a way forward. The time is right for just such a book.

References

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