

Transcript | [Replay] How to Improve Your Strategic Thinking

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00:00:00.030 --> 00:00:19.080

Presenter: Welcome to this event on how to prove your strategic thinking. My name's Amelia Poltridge, and I am a community manager here at Apolitical It's really great to have you all with us today, so do use the chat to introduce yourselves, share where you're joining us from, what organization you work for, and say hello to your fellow attendees.

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00:00:19.670 --> 00:00:33.770

Presenter: Today, we're bringing back one of our highly-rated recorded masterclasses on strategic thinking for public servants. It doesn't matter what department you work in, or how senior you are, government moves fast, and the problems are rarely simple.

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00:00:33.870 --> 00:00:42.429

Presenter: We'll cover practical tools and frameworks for navigating complexity, spotting emerging opportunities, and making decisions that hold up under pressure.

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00:00:42.760 --> 00:00:51.259

Presenter: Our speakers, experienced public sector leaders and strategy setters, will share insights you can put to work in your next policy challenge.

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00:00:51.840 --> 00:00:55.820

Presenter: For those of you who may be joining us for the first time, welcome.

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00:00:55.940 --> 00:01:05.820

Presenter: Apolitical is the world's largest online network for government, used by more than half a million public servants and policymakers across 170 countries.

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00:01:06.030 --> 00:01:20.760

Presenter: We're a strategic partner to governments, helping them prepare their workforces for the future, and we do this by upskilling through short online courses and peer communities, as well as by building innovative learning tools designed for and with governments.

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00:01:21.380 --> 00:01:27.770

Presenter: We'd also love you to join your peers in the public sector across the world in the systems thinking community.

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00:01:27.820 --> 00:01:41.940

Presenter: It is a space to access conversations, insights, ideas, and resources on the application of systems thinking in government from your peers across the global public service. This community is open to all Apolitical members.

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00:01:43.130 --> 00:01:50.440

Presenter: Before we introduce our speakers, we're going to run a quick poll, just to get a sense of how you are thinking about today's topic.

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00:01:51.660 --> 00:01:58.080

Presenter: The poll is... Which area do you find most challenging when applying strategic thinking?

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00:01:58.670 --> 00:02:03.660

Presenter: Which area do you find most challenging when applying strategic thinking?

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00:02:04.390 --> 00:02:08.460

Presenter: Is it balancing long-term strategy with short-term demands?

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00:02:08.800 --> 00:02:12.170

Presenter: Is it identifying and analyzing emerging trends?

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00:02:12.890 --> 00:02:16.620

Presenter: Is it communicating strategic insights to stakeholders?

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00:02:17.030 --> 00:02:20.809

Presenter: Is it encouraging a strategic mindset within my team?

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00:02:21.230 --> 00:02:24.830

Presenter: Or if it's something else, then feel free to share that in the chat.

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00:02:25.210 --> 00:02:26.550

Presenter: I'll give you a moment.

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00:02:30.520 --> 00:02:36.120

Presenter: Now, let me introduce the two brilliant speakers featured in today's Masterclass, Janine and Alan.

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00:02:36.370 --> 00:02:41.899

Presenter: Janine Richot, Assistant Deputy Minister Multilateral Relations and International Trade.

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00:02:42.040 --> 00:02:45.219

Presenter: Intergovernmental Affairs Privy Council Office.

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00:02:45.770 --> 00:02:51.490

Presenter: Janine joined Intergovernmental Affairs Privy Council Office in April 2022.

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00:02:51.730 --> 00:03:10.760

Presenter: As the Assistant Deputy Minister of Multilateral Relations and International Trade, she's a senior member of the team of Canadian civil servants, advising the Prime Minister on matters such as national unity, the evolution of the Federation, and removing interprovincial barriers to trade as a means to bolster Canada's economic resilience.

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00:03:11.330 --> 00:03:15.390

Presenter: Alain Rouche is a former EU senior official living in Brussels.

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00:03:15.620 --> 00:03:23.919

Presenter: He worked for nearly three decades at the UN, the World Bank, and mainly at the EU External Service, with assignments on four continents.

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00:03:24.060 --> 00:03:31.330

Presenter: Alan has focused on complexity and how to look at things from another angle, including the role of artists in social change.

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00:03:31.810 --> 00:03:38.859

Presenter: You can read the full bios by visiting the Resources tab at the bottom of your Zoom screen, and heading to the Speakers section.

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00:03:39.820 --> 00:03:42.350

Presenter: Now let's get into Janine's masterclass.

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00:03:44.230 --> 00:03:48.340

Presenter: I'm very grateful that you think of me and I'm happy to share some of my experiences.

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00:03:48.400 --> 00:04:01.370

Presenter: along the way. One of the things that you have to do when you become an executive is go through what can be a pretty grueling interview, and you have to demonstrate that you meet six key leadership competencies.

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00:04:01.370 --> 00:04:10.349

Presenter: I'm not going to go through all six of them, but I am going to focus on one of the six, which is create vision and strategy, which is what we're talking about today.

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00:04:10.760 --> 00:04:29.610

Presenter: And the way that we define it in the Canadian Public Service is... I'll just read it to you, so if you'll bear with me. Leaders define the future and chart a path forward. They are adept at understanding and communicating context, factoring in the economic, social, and political environment.

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00:04:30.110 --> 00:04:40.879

Presenter: Intellectually agile, they leverage their deep and broad knowledge, build on diverse ideas and perspectives, and create consensus around compelling visions.

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00:04:41.230 --> 00:04:48.529

Presenter: Leaders balance organizational and government-wide priorities and improve outcomes for Canada and for Canadians.

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00:04:49.360 --> 00:04:50.160

Presenter: So...

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00:04:50.760 --> 00:05:06.609

Presenter: I had been an executive for about three or four years when I felt, okay, you know, I kind of like being an executive. I think I'm ready to go to the next level. We have five executive levels in Canada. I was an EX one and I wanted to move in to an EX two.

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00:05:06.760 --> 00:05:09.910

Presenter: And so I had to do a competition, I had to do an interview.

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00:05:10.150 --> 00:05:11.329

Presenter: and I will.

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00:05:11.990 --> 00:05:26.469

Presenter: I will readily admit that I thought I didn't have to prepare for it, that my record of achievement spoke for itself, that clearly I demonstrated all six of the key leadership competencies because of the work that I did on a day-to-day basis.

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00:05:26.620 --> 00:05:38.029

Presenter: And so I went to the interview feeling super confident. I came out of the interview thinking, you nailed it. You're going to get this job, no problem. And three weeks later, I was told that I failed the interview process.

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00:05:38.220 --> 00:05:42.099

Presenter: And I failed on strategic, on creating strategy and vision.

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00:05:42.790 --> 00:05:58.190

Presenter: And I was shocked. I was shocked because I had just finished a three-year stint as the director of medical marijuana. This is prior to cannabis being legalized in Canada. And this was a program that was...

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00:05:58.330 --> 00:06:09.930

Presenter: Very badly organized. I had to take us out of a huge backlog of applications that was landing us in court. I was Canada's crown witness in a number of court cases.

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00:06:10.000 --> 00:06:27.330

Presenter: I reformed the program through a huge regulatory process, from consultations with stakeholders, to writing policy, to writing regulation, to drafting in the room with the lawyers, everything. Technical briefings to parliamentarians. And in my little head, there was no way

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00:06:27.370 --> 00:06:31.230

Presenter: That I did not use strategic thinking on a daily basis.

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00:06:31.920 --> 00:06:39.969

Presenter: So once I kind of got over my bruised, my little bruised ego, I actually hired an interview coach.

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00:06:40.260 --> 00:06:47.770

Presenter: And I started to work with her. And the very first thing she did to me was she put me through with no prep, a mock interview.

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00:06:48.040 --> 00:06:55.860

Presenter: And again, I did it. I answered all her questions. I thought I nailed it. And she said, oh, yeah, I see why you didn't pass on strategy.

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00:06:56.150 --> 00:06:57.260

Presenter: and vision.

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00:06:58.110 --> 00:07:02.330

Presenter: And I thought again to myself, what am I doing wrong? How am I not communicating?

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00:07:02.480 --> 00:07:04.000

Presenter: Strategy and vision.

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00:07:04.350 --> 00:07:08.160

Presenter: And the advice she gave me then has stuck with me.

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00:07:08.670 --> 00:07:13.920

Presenter: my entire career, and that's what I kind of wanted to share with all of you today.

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00:07:14.370 --> 00:07:22.939

Presenter: She told me that what I was failing to communicate, I was able to communicate my role, my responsibilities, my achievements very well.

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00:07:23.200 --> 00:07:29.130

Presenter: But what I wasn't showing her was what she considered the most important part of strategic thinking.

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00:07:29.280 --> 00:07:33.120

Presenter: And that was that I could make connections between my work.

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00:07:33.220 --> 00:07:36.360

Presenter: And my role, and the broader environment around me.

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00:07:37.090 --> 00:07:50.789

Presenter: I just wasn't showing her that I had a clear understanding of how everything around me was impacting my job and my role and my responsibilities. And to me, this lesson has stuck with me my entire career.

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00:07:51.270 --> 00:07:55.449

Presenter: And it is the crux of strategic thinking in my mind.

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00:07:56.700 --> 00:08:04.009

Presenter: I think it's really important that we all understand our role and our lane and our responsibilities and our priorities.

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00:08:05.140 --> 00:08:13.229

Presenter: And doing our job within that lane and executing those responsibilities is very, very important, and it's key to success.

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00:08:13.420 --> 00:08:23.420

Presenter: And sometimes if you enter into somebody else's lane, they can get their elbows up, they can get a little upset with you. So it's really important to understand and work in your lane.

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00:08:23.990 --> 00:08:31.850

Presenter: But if you can't understand how your lane interacts with the roles and the responsibilities and the priorities.

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00:08:31.990 --> 00:08:36.190

Presenter: Of your colleagues, of your boss, of your government.

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00:08:36.570 --> 00:08:42.600

Presenter: Then you're not able to really drive an agenda forward.

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00:08:42.710 --> 00:08:53.469

Presenter: Because you're doing your work with blinders on as opposed to making connections to a broader agenda. And to me, that is where

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00:08:53.700 --> 00:08:54.620

Presenter: Umm.

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00:08:54.730 --> 00:09:09.059

Presenter: that is where the magic of strategic thinking kind of happens. It's when you can figure out how you connect into a broader picture that you're able to actually amplify your own mandate, your own message.

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00:09:09.060 --> 00:09:18.169

Presenter: You're able to link it to something that is on everyone else's radar, even if it might not seem obvious. And you're able to deepen your own understanding of your work.

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00:09:18.230 --> 00:09:24.199

Presenter: You know, and drive it forward as a consequence, because you know how it is interacting with the world around you.

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00:09:24.560 --> 00:09:29.980

Presenter: And so, if I could, just to finish, I thought I would use an illustrative example.

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00:09:30.120 --> 00:09:42.600

Presenter: of present day versus me 15 years ago, trying to move up to the next level of how, how in my everyday work, it's so important to connect strategy and vision to drive forward.

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00:09:43.500 --> 00:09:53.189

Presenter: So Joel mentioned that I am responsible for internal trade in the government of Canada. I'm the senior official who is responsible for health.

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00:09:53.190 --> 00:10:04.630

Presenter: helping working with my provincial and territorial counterparts to remove interprovincial barriers to trade. So there's a number of regulatory differences, for example, between provinces and territories.

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00:10:04.680 --> 00:10:15.360

Presenter: that make it difficult for goods to flow seamlessly across the country, labor mobility restrictions, and Canada has been harshly criticized for having,

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00:10:15.740 --> 00:10:30.269

Presenter: quite a declining productivity, and this is one of the major reasons cited by economists and think tanks around the world that interprovincial trade barriers are getting in the way of a productive Canadian economy and competitive Canadian economy.

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00:10:31.030 --> 00:10:41.680

Presenter: We have estimates that if we remove all federal and provincial barriers to trade, we could gain 4% GDP, or \$200 billion added to our economy, which is significant.

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00:10:42.120 --> 00:10:49.580

Presenter: And you would think that that would be enough motivation to get things done, but this is a file that has moved at a snail's pace.

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00:10:49.720 --> 00:10:52.839

Presenter: for since we signed an agreement in 2017.

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00:10:53.470 --> 00:10:54.700

Presenter: For...

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00:10:55.080 --> 00:11:02.459

Presenter: Not out of bad will by governments, but priorities. It hasn't been a priority. There's been other things to focus on.

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00:11:02.770 --> 00:11:10.940

Presenter: In May 2024, I looked in my boss's calendar and noticed that she was going to a meeting that was just called Economic Security.

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00:11:11.450 --> 00:11:20.209

Presenter: And I said to her, Tashara, what's this meeting? And she said, I don't actually know, and I can't go. Can you go for me? So I went to the meeting on her behalf.

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00:11:20.460 --> 00:11:28.660

Presenter: And it was bringing together people from the national security community, Natural Resources Canada, Canada-US, International Trade.

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00:11:29.150 --> 00:11:36.829

Presenter: And they were talking about no definition, economic security. And I put my hand up at one point and I said.

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00:11:37.420 --> 00:11:41.929

Presenter: It seems to me that this meeting is about trying to chart a path.

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00:11:42.320 --> 00:11:44.539

Presenter: to strengthen Canada's economy.

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00:11:45.000 --> 00:11:49.049

Presenter: In the face of an uncertain sort of global environment.

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00:11:49.170 --> 00:11:53.190

Presenter: I just wonder why aren't we talking about internal trade at this table?

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00:11:53.900 --> 00:12:10.050

Presenter: And my colleague said, oh, no, no, Shannon, this isn't about... this isn't about FedProv stuff, this is about critical minerals, national security, Canada, US, like, there's no room for that topic at this table. And I said, yes, but if we could gain \$200 billion GDP,

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00:12:10.230 --> 00:12:13.629

Presenter: Shouldn't that be part of an economic security discussion?

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00:12:13.990 --> 00:12:28.180

Presenter: And that lanes, knowing your lanes that I talked about earlier, that was the reaction I got from some of my colleagues was, Jenin, that's not your lane. Economic security is not your lane. So just stick to your lane and let us stick to ours.

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00:12:29.070 --> 00:12:38.629

Presenter: Fast forward to November 2025, President Trump is elected, and the in or sorry 2024 is he's elected, and the infamous

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00:12:38.830 --> 00:12:46.370

Presenter: Truth Social post about 25% tariffs. And all of Canada is galvanized behind this.

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00:12:46.680 --> 00:12:52.119

Presenter: very challenging moment in a relationship with the US.

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00:12:53.310 --> 00:13:03.929

Presenter: And that was the moment where I looked at my minister, my deputy minister, and I said, now is the time to put internal trade on the table with premiers and the prime minister.

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00:13:04.100 --> 00:13:08.020

Presenter: Because if we can't use the threat of tariffs, which

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00:13:08.170 --> 00:13:22.519

Presenter: was very quickly not a threat and a reality. And the harm that that is going to do to our economy, to get our act together internally, to drive forward internal trade at this moment in our history, we are never, ever going to be able to do so.

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00:13:22.720 --> 00:13:39.319

Presenter: And luckily for me, my minister, my deputy minister, they all saw the case, saw the argument. And since I would say January, the interprovincial trade file has been put on steroids and it's been moving at a very quick pace.

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00:13:39.450 --> 00:13:48.149

Presenter: Maybe some of the Canadian participants on this call will have seen in our media a lot of attention is being paid to interprovincial trade.

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00:13:48.250 --> 00:14:06.329

Presenter: Provinces and territories are tabling legislation to remove barriers. The federal government is about to table legislation, that my team has been working on to remove barriers. We're all sort of working on labor mobility. And it's gained this enormous amount of momentum and attention.

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00:14:06.740 --> 00:14:18.930

Presenter: Because we were able to show that now is the moment to bolster... if the North-South relationship is not going to work, then we have to fix the East-West relationship, and we have to do it in a hurry.

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00:14:19.440 --> 00:14:31.470

Presenter: And had there not been, you know, all that thinking leading up to that, even if they weren't giving me a seat at the table, me and my team were still thinking every day about how to, how to hook this file.

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00:14:31.570 --> 00:14:33.880

Presenter: To something that was gonna let it take off.

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00:14:34.160 --> 00:14:50.270

Presenter: And some days I think maybe it's taken off a little bit too much. I don't always get enough sleep. I feel like I'm always working. Running to table legislation is a big job. Running around to Saskatoon and other places with First Ministers to have these discussions.

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00:14:50.290 --> 00:14:58.119

Presenter: is a big, hectic job, but it is a way that we were able to finally make the case, and I really think that that's a big part of

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00:14:58.240 --> 00:15:13.069

Presenter: creating vision and strategy. So, I'm gonna leave it there, and I hope that that has given you a bit of a grounding in what we look for in the Canadian government, at least, in terms of strategic thinking, but also a,

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00:15:13.510 --> 00:15:20.960

Presenter: also a bit of a practical example of how we're living that in real time here in the Canadian government. So thank you very much.

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00:15:23.120 --> 00:15:36.930

Presenter: Okay, that was Eugene's presentation. What a brilliant speaker. I really loved that story about pushing international trade onto the agenda when a colleague told her it wasn't her lane. Such a clear example of connecting your own work with the bigger picture.

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00:15:37.130 --> 00:15:39.519

Presenter: Now, on to your Lance Masterclass.

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00:15:40.250 --> 00:15:52.299

Presenter: Thank you very much. Today, I'd like to take you on a journey into an unexpected strategic territory, a space where complexity isn't a problem, but a source.

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00:15:53.610 --> 00:16:09.000

Presenter: I was then in charge of development cooperation in Dhaka, Bangladesh, the EU representation, when all the country was flooded, in particular a remote island, and I decided to go and make myself an assessment.

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00:16:09.010 --> 00:16:15.140

Presenter: So I see landed there, and I met the chief of the village and asked him, tell me what you most

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00:16:15.290 --> 00:16:31.179

Presenter: Need now. I had in mind my menu of the EU, nice menu with blankets, oil, stuff, materials, construction things, and so on. And then he looked at me and quietly answered, peace on Earth.

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00:16:31.590 --> 00:16:49.480

Presenter: I was speechless, struck by his wisdom, and this extraordinary and complete disruption of what I thought, as with my Western mindset of what development aid is worth. I had been assuming that nothing happens.

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00:16:49.670 --> 00:16:51.510

Presenter: Unless we make it happen.

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00:16:51.640 --> 00:16:56.070

Presenter: Everything good must be the result of our intervention.

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00:16:56.150 --> 00:17:01.120

Presenter: Efficiency and planning are what matter most, and risk must be

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00:17:01.190 --> 00:17:16.920

Presenter: avoided. Then I decided to, from that day, to look at the things in the world with another pair of glasses, to look at things according to the angle of complexity, connecting the dots, and creating space for serendipity.

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00:17:19.010 --> 00:17:21.940

Presenter: I built two mantras.

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00:17:22.060 --> 00:17:41.850

Presenter: The first one is, every word counts. We live in a complex, interconnected, unpredictable, and rapidly changing world. And the second is learning to feel comfortable with the unknown, dancing with it, and catching its rim.

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00:17:42.110 --> 00:17:45.640

Presenter: Uncertainty is the birthplace of wisdom.

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00:17:46.020 --> 00:17:53.990

Presenter: Think also of a compass rather than a map, because we don't know what the destination will be.

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00:17:54.150 --> 00:17:56.679

Presenter: And values matter more than skills.

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00:17:57.470 --> 00:18:05.070

Presenter: I tried to gather seven counterintuitive statements for engaging with complicity and strategic thinking.

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00:18:05.300 --> 00:18:08.619

Presenter: The first is... Yes to the mess.

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00:18:08.790 --> 00:18:18.219

Presenter: It's one of the best books in my personal library, a treatise on improvisation by a pioneer and a professor in management.

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00:18:18.520 --> 00:18:25.020

Presenter: And to have the courage to hide, to have the courage to act without guaranteed outcomes.

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00:18:25.300 --> 00:18:41.179

Presenter: And so, as a case study, look at this. It is the organigram from the Pentagon that the head of U.S. military force found in front of him when arriving in Afghanistan.

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00:18:41.480 --> 00:18:52.850

Presenter: A total mess, of course. Then he decided to improvise, to accept the mess and make an innovative, which became a gold standard.

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00:18:52.930 --> 00:19:01.240

Presenter: landmark in how to guide operation teams in combat, which is shared consciousness.

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00:19:01.240 --> 00:19:15.340

Presenter: Like a brain with all the neurons, everything in real time shares the data. It's acting without waiting for orders. It's a common understanding across all levels of organization.

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00:19:15.420 --> 00:19:30.550

Presenter: Of course, he adapted to the enemy because Al-Qaeda was a network, so he had to adapt it to the enemy, coping the enemy, but to the same complexity. He didn't copy them. He adapted to the same complexity. You can see the difference on the left.

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00:19:30.550 --> 00:19:35.939

Presenter: The traditional thing and the right Al-Qaeda mounting.

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00:19:37.460 --> 00:19:42.539

Presenter: My second is coherence appears retrospectively.

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00:19:43.480 --> 00:19:48.160

Presenter: Humility matters. Thank you, Janine, for giving us a lesson of humility.

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00:19:48.390 --> 00:19:54.579

Presenter: What is not there, says the Zen proverb, is matters as much as what is there.

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00:19:54.860 --> 00:20:11.290

Presenter: Also, the unintended consequences of a past and current policy and policies of the others. Causality is circular, it's not linear. Uncertainty is a permanent condition, it's not a problem to solve.

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00:20:11.670 --> 00:20:21.639

Presenter: Retrospectively basically works for sense making, but it works also, not always, but it also works for strategy.

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00:20:21.990 --> 00:20:25.860

Presenter: We often speak of strategy as a forward-looking design.

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00:20:25.980 --> 00:20:30.010

Presenter: But it's only retrospectively that we recognize that

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00:20:30.220 --> 00:20:37.240

Presenter: What was truly strategic? Of course, we start with intent. The big word, the first word we all know.

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00:20:37.430 --> 00:20:41.979

Presenter: But we call strategy in the end, it's usually the result of adjustment.

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00:20:42.170 --> 00:20:49.150

Presenter: Unexpected consequences and real-time learning. In other words, we call strategy what works.

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00:20:49.840 --> 00:20:50.970

Presenter: After the fact.

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00:20:55.200 --> 00:20:59.810

Presenter: 3. What happens at the edges is critical.

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00:21:00.210 --> 00:21:05.020

Presenter: Snow melts at the edges, and so do systems.

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00:21:05.180 --> 00:21:07.170

Presenter: begin to transform.

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00:21:07.490 --> 00:21:13.420

Presenter: And we have also the remarkable work of Ben Ramalingam applied to the aid sector.

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00:21:14.070 --> 00:21:23.730

Presenter: In complexity, the edges... Are where early warnings appear, but only if we are paying attention.

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00:21:23.970 --> 00:21:28.189

Presenter: Becoming peripherally aware is no longer optional, it's strategic.

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00:21:28.360 --> 00:21:30.620

Presenter: This means moving away.

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00:21:30.750 --> 00:21:37.559

Presenter: From rigid plans toward adaptive capacity by listening to weak signals.

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00:21:37.700 --> 00:21:47.860

Presenter: Building safe spaces for experimentation, recognizing inflection points early, and encouraging continuous learning and external listening.

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00:21:47.980 --> 00:21:56.519

Presenter: A very good example is indigenous knowledge often emerges at the edges, at the edge of land, language, and narratives.

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00:21:56.720 --> 00:22:02.390

Presenter: What may appear to us is art is often a living strategy.

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00:22:02.630 --> 00:22:05.579

Presenter: This is a tradition, embrace complexity.

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00:22:05.700 --> 00:22:13.600

Presenter: And without trying to control it, they teach us pattern, move, recycle, and act through relationship.

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00:22:14.620 --> 00:22:27.619

Presenter: For public institutions, this is critical. In such environment, control does not build legitimacy, responsiveness, humility, and the courage to say with uncertainty do. Okay.

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00:22:29.310 --> 00:22:34.360

Presenter: Okay, no need to understand before acting. This is a tough one.

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00:22:34.870 --> 00:22:35.860

Presenter: And

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00:22:36.030 --> 00:22:44.729

Presenter: We have the model by David Snowden. I worked a lot with this, as you can see, because you can see we have the simplest system.

163

00:22:45.250 --> 00:22:59.090

Presenter: With best practices, we many times put it in complex system. We have the complicated system, the word of the expert and the complex system when the things to do and the act to do is probe.

164

00:22:59.390 --> 00:23:13.680

Presenter: sense, he responds. So you have emergence that happens. This is where things shift fundamentally. And this is why scaling up in the traditional sense simply doesn't work.

165

00:23:17.730 --> 00:23:28.160

Presenter: We have a nice illustration. This is a study by the EU on this field of the model of by David Snowden. I strongly recommend you.

166

00:23:28.220 --> 00:23:39.300

Presenter: We have a magic metaphor called the magic roundabout. It's well known possibly to you, the central roundabout surrounded with five.

167

00:23:39.420 --> 00:23:48.420

Presenter: Mini roundabouts with traffic flowing for both clockwise and counterclockwise with no central traffic lights. And it works.

168

00:23:48.690 --> 00:23:55.539

Presenter: The better safety records and more conventional design. Why? Because drivers are forced to slow down.

169

00:23:55.700 --> 00:24:02.410

Presenter: paying attention and adapt in real time. There is no single correct path.

170

00:24:02.640 --> 00:24:07.800

Presenter: This is complexity in action, emergence, not control.

171

00:24:09.000 --> 00:24:09.970

Presenter: 5.

172

00:24:10.470 --> 00:24:13.140

Presenter: Questions matter more than answer.

173

00:24:13.450 --> 00:24:17.309

Presenter: I like powerful question in complex system.

174

00:24:17.750 --> 00:24:25.189

Presenter: Good strategy begins not with answer, but with powerful question, like asking why or what if.

175

00:24:25.610 --> 00:24:29.769

Presenter: The art of asking meaningful questions drive insight and action.

176

00:24:30.040 --> 00:24:36.550

Presenter: Good questions create reflective spaces where new possibilities can emerge.

177

00:24:37.770 --> 00:24:46.619

Presenter: But are our institutions and leaders cultivating a culture that encourages and nurtures powerful questions?

178

00:24:47.180 --> 00:24:51.110

Presenter: If no, Why don't we ask a better question?

179

00:24:51.320 --> 00:24:53.389

Presenter: This is a question I like actually.

180

00:24:54.100 --> 00:24:59.419

Presenter: The focus should be on asking the right question rather than seeking the right answer.

181

00:24:59.660 --> 00:25:03.490

Presenter: We have also the crucial dimension of unlearning.

182

00:25:03.790 --> 00:25:08.940

Presenter: The dimension of asking powerful question is not the opposite of learning.

183

00:25:09.190 --> 00:25:15.980

Presenter: Is simply to let go of outdated beliefs, mental models, and assumptions that no longer serve us.

184

00:25:16.580 --> 00:25:23.809

Presenter: It's an experiential and multisensory process with three anchorage points: our body, mind, and purpose.

185

00:25:25.420 --> 00:25:26.320

Presenter: 6.

186

00:25:26.840 --> 00:25:29.600

Presenter: Relational everything.

187

00:25:30.050 --> 00:25:33.080

Presenter: Relationships are... Pivotal.

188

00:25:33.210 --> 00:25:35.589

Presenter: They are the living fabric of strategy.

189

00:25:36.000 --> 00:25:43.520

Presenter: They hold greater significance than structure. I will repeat this. They hold greater significance than

190

00:25:43.700 --> 00:25:53.880

Presenter: Structure because it's through relationship that we begin to perceive differently, sense more deeply, and act more wisely.

191

00:25:54.580 --> 00:25:57.469

Presenter: This requires a fundamental shift.

192

00:25:57.690 --> 00:26:04.500

Presenter: From being architects who design, control, and manage systems, to gardeners who cultivate living and evolving systems.

193

00:26:05.000 --> 00:26:06.789

Presenter: The organic approach

194

00:26:06.900 --> 00:26:20.750

Presenter: It's very important, very important to illustrate the kind of relationship that exists. And also we have to be aware of the monoculture trap, not living in that.

195

00:26:21.290 --> 00:26:26.410

Presenter: Escaping this trap means embracing diversity and interdependence.

196

00:26:27.280 --> 00:26:28.700

Presenter: When in doubt.

197

00:26:29.070 --> 00:26:45.709

Presenter: Return to community, especially communities of practices. Relationships also include our relationship with ourselves, self-reflection, inner coherence, and the observer's role in shaping what emerge. This is quantum approach.

198

00:26:46.730 --> 00:26:51.340

Presenter: Strategic planning for zombies, number seven, and my last, counterintuitive.

199

00:26:51.970 --> 00:27:00.699

Presenter: In 1994, Harvard Business Review published a similar article called The Fall and Rise of Strategic Planning.

200

00:27:00.940 --> 00:27:06.049

Presenter: Strategic planning had become too rigid, too abstract, and disconnected from reality.

201

00:27:07.830 --> 00:27:14.069

Presenter: Actually, it began evolving, but let's be honest, in many institutions, it hasn't evolved much.

202

00:27:14.340 --> 00:27:17.410

Presenter: Strategic planning behaves like a zombie.

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00:27:17.650 --> 00:27:22.370

Presenter: Is that still coming back? It no longer has a sound.

204

00:27:22.710 --> 00:27:24.519

Presenter: In adaptive system.

205

00:27:24.630 --> 00:27:33.750

Presenter: Strategy no longer separated thinkers from doers. I worked a lot of what is the gap between research and policymaking, just to realize that this is not a good question.

206

00:27:34.050 --> 00:27:38.599

Presenter: Action generates insight that informs the next move.

207

00:27:38.970 --> 00:27:45.379

Presenter: Projects emerge in response to evolving needs, not from abstract planning session.

208

00:27:45.850 --> 00:27:52.349

Presenter: Strategy at its heart is about navigating uncertainty through informing choices.

209

00:27:54.530 --> 00:27:56.630

Presenter: We have to anti-example.

210

00:27:56.790 --> 00:28:07.070

Presenter: A couple of years back, I had to work with a World Bank project, structural adjustment, where we still have 128 conditions imposed on an African country.

211

00:28:07.210 --> 00:28:26.580

Presenter: And in a EU recent project, one friend of mine was in charge of following it up with 72 indicators concerning the implementation of this project. This is what I call the zombie strategy. It walks, talks, it reports, but it no longer thinks.

212

00:28:28.430 --> 00:28:33.590

Presenter: People still ask me, what does Strategic Thinking actually mean in policymaking?

213

00:28:33.700 --> 00:28:42.699

Presenter: Well, actually, it means to hold multiple truths without needing to resolve them. It's a mindset. It's not a 5-year plan.

214

00:28:43.110 --> 00:28:47.859

Presenter: It's, for example, five of those truths we rarely name out loud.

215

00:28:48.670 --> 00:28:57.129

Presenter: Foresight is not prediction. It's the discipline of noticing weak signals most people ignore before they become loud crisis.

216

00:28:57.990 --> 00:29:02.240

Presenter: Systems, insight and awareness. Everything is connected. That is a problem.

217

00:29:02.710 --> 00:29:06.599

Presenter: Purpose-driven, not everything that counts can be counted.

218

00:29:06.940 --> 00:29:14.650

Presenter: Strategies doesn't live in documents. It lives in decisions, conversation, and what we are willing to unlearn.

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00:29:15.840 --> 00:29:17.990

Presenter: The situation is rather simple.

220

00:29:18.330 --> 00:29:26.720

Presenter: The Newton in this Despair, meaning this reductionist and mechanist approach.

221

00:29:26.900 --> 00:29:30.260

Presenter: Is making us and the world crazy.

222

00:29:30.910 --> 00:29:45.300

Presenter: We know it well. One of my favorite authors, Marian Wheatley, described it so well in an anecdotal way, what she has come to call her Newtonian despair. I'll leave you 20 seconds to read this slide.

223

00:29:55.320 --> 00:29:59.739

Presenter: And now... We know what is to be done.

224

00:30:01.330 --> 00:30:06.420

Presenter: Shifting... From a word of certainties to a word of.

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00:30:06.610 --> 00:30:08.010

Presenter: possibilities.

226

00:30:08.790 --> 00:30:13.540

Presenter: Basically, Strategic thinking today means looking at problems through another lens.

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00:30:13.720 --> 00:30:21.950

Presenter: So my call regarding strategic thinking is view it as a mindset and a culture, not a toolbox.

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00:30:22.620 --> 00:30:28.180

Presenter: Center it within complexity, emergence and unlearning and adaptive improvisation.

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00:30:28.780 --> 00:30:32.019

Presenter: Shift from a mechanistic and Newtonian metaphors.

230

00:30:32.360 --> 00:30:33.919

Presenter: to organic ones.

231

00:30:34.420 --> 00:30:39.550

Presenter: Place purpose, powerful question, relationship at the heart of strategic thinking.

232

00:30:39.820 --> 00:30:42.350

Presenter: Be challenged with caring provocateurs.

233

00:30:42.480 --> 00:30:47.699

Presenter: Above all, be yourself. Authenticity is your compass.

234

00:30:48.150 --> 00:30:52.730

Presenter: Enter into the dance and afterwards you will see that you have been strategic.

235

00:30:53.380 --> 00:31:00.280

Presenter: Strategy is not a static plan. It's a lived experience. Actually, this is an invitation to shift.

236

00:31:00.390 --> 00:31:08.730

Presenter: From the Newtonian to a quantum approach, which is already floating in the air like a memoration from prediction to resonance.

237

00:31:08.920 --> 00:31:17.270

Presenter: My final slide, the one I hold dearest, I hesitated to include it in the main presentation, as I felt almost too brilliant to fit. Thank you.

238

00:31:18.730 --> 00:31:21.580

Presenter: That was a brilliant presentation. Thank you.

239

00:31:22.290 --> 00:31:28.549

Presenter: So, we've selected the most upvoted questions from the live event. Here's the first one for Janine.

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00:31:28.680 --> 00:31:35.190

Presenter: Is there a part of leadership, strategic and visionary thinking, that involves receiving and responding to challenges?

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00:31:35.300 --> 00:31:36.650

Presenter: Here's what she said.

242

00:31:37.230 --> 00:31:40.259

Presenter: Absolutely. And I think it's funny.

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00:31:40.990 --> 00:31:48.349

Presenter: I was just saying this to somebody the other day. I've never really fancied myself a strategic policy mind, because I've always

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00:31:48.590 --> 00:31:51.489

Presenter: Thought of myself a little bit more as an action.

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00:31:51.770 --> 00:32:07.809

Presenter: oriented person, like, roll up my sleeves and get stuff done kind of a person. And I used to think those two are very different things, but they're not, because you can't roll up your sleeves and get stuff done and jump into action.

246

00:32:08.300 --> 00:32:14.579

Presenter: You can do it very reactively without an understanding of context, but you're probably not going to do it very well.

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00:32:14.740 --> 00:32:17.850

Presenter: And so I do think,

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00:32:18.510 --> 00:32:28.670

Presenter: And we are in a very fast-paced environment right now, where we're being asked to do a lot, and we're being asked to do things very quickly, and it doesn't always feel like there's time.

249

00:32:28.690 --> 00:32:43.150

Presenter: to just take a minute and think strategically, but I actually always try to sort of, like, take a deep breath when somebody's asking me to do something or piling another, you know, item on my list. Take a breath and just think, okay.

250

00:32:43.180 --> 00:32:48.220

Presenter: Five minutes, Jenin. How is this connected to some... to whatever else is going on?

251

00:32:48.300 --> 00:32:55.169

Presenter: And how will that impact how you are going to get it done? Because if you don't know where your

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00:32:55.370 --> 00:32:59.679

Presenter: Detractors are, where your supporters are, you're never going to be able to, like.

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00:33:00.250 --> 00:33:14.689

Presenter: action something and move it forward anyway. So, I think there's always... there's always... it doesn't always feel like you have the time, but there's room for strategic thinking in doing that, and I would argue it will make you a much better and a much more action-oriented

254

00:33:14.790 --> 00:33:21.179

Presenter: Or it will give you much better success if you're an action-oriented person, if you just take that beat and think for a minute.

255

00:33:22.600 --> 00:33:24.550

Presenter: The second question was for Alan.

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00:33:24.730 --> 00:33:33.440

Presenter: How can you promote buy-in for a roundtable, cross-sector approach, versus one that's more siloed, where one group holds all the decision-making authority?

257

00:33:33.850 --> 00:33:35.170

Presenter: Here's his answer.

258

00:33:36.230 --> 00:33:47.099

Presenter: I understand you are also like me, like everybody vulnerable to the Newtonian despair. It means that the problem I see is.

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00:33:47.300 --> 00:33:54.029

Presenter: From the start, being Concern with efficiency and impact.

260

00:33:54.700 --> 00:34:00.509

Presenter: I think it is a dangerous path. It's the path of productivism.

261

00:34:00.720 --> 00:34:07.450

Presenter: And experience show us that it's difficult to have result result in there.

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00:34:07.960 --> 00:34:19.589

Presenter: Especially when we have a silo approach. It's not possible. When you have a complex situation, a complex problem, we have so many today, like education, it's impossible.

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00:34:19.600 --> 00:34:30.889

Presenter: to work in silo, because police, education, parental education, every... so many sectors are involved. The only thing is a complexity approach, which means

264

00:34:31.460 --> 00:34:38.500

Presenter: You just... Sense respond. You take a step, you experiment.

265

00:34:38.880 --> 00:34:48.330

Presenter: You see and you watch the impact of what step you have done, and then you take another step, and then you go forward.

266

00:34:48.850 --> 00:34:51.900

Presenter: And, of course, you don't have objectives.

267

00:34:52.050 --> 00:35:00.320

Presenter: Because when we have objectives, our main objective becomes to put aside everything what we have between us and this objective.

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00:35:00.470 --> 00:35:07.270

Presenter: not playing with words. You have a purpose which is much higher. What is the call

269

00:35:07.440 --> 00:35:10.750

Presenter: The Word is asking to us.

270

00:35:10.860 --> 00:35:14.379

Presenter: Our community, this is a purpose.

271

00:35:14.510 --> 00:35:28.100

Presenter: It's not an objective, it's not a goal. And then the problem we have, we are obsessed with maps. As I said, we should be much more working with compass telling us where we are.

272

00:35:28.900 --> 00:35:29.860

Presenter: Thank you.

273

00:35:30.760 --> 00:35:38.080

Presenter: All right, so much practical wisdom and so many frameworks that you can take into your next big decision or policy challenge.

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00:35:38.280 --> 00:35:42.820

Presenter: And thank you to all of you for joining us today and investing in your learning.

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00:35:42.980 --> 00:35:49.179

Presenter: If today's session sparked any questions, then do head over to the Systems Thinking community and share them there.

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00:35:49.370 --> 00:35:54.490

Presenter: It's a great place to keep the conversation going with peers in the public sector, including speakers.

277

00:35:54.700 --> 00:35:56.869

Presenter: The link is in the resources tab.

278

00:35:57.340 --> 00:36:07.929

Presenter: You'll see a quick poll pop up in just a moment to find out how you felt about today's session, which will help us continue improving our content for you. We really appreciate your responses.

279

00:36:08.910 --> 00:36:19.850

Presenter: On a scale of 1 to 10, rank your agreement with a statement. This event was a valuable use of my time. 1 meaning you completely disagree, and 10 meaning you completely agree.

280

00:36:23.140 --> 00:36:31.180

Presenter: Okay, so that's all we have time for today. We hope you found it helpful, and a huge thank you to everyone who has made today happen.

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00:36:31.410 --> 00:36:43.669

Presenter: Keep an eye out for the email coming your way with today's recording and the accompanying resources, and we hope to see you at another Apolitical event very soon. Have a great rest of your day. Goodbye.

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