

# The Nature of Leadership: Creating Space for Innovation

by Bradford Glass

Whenever I want to learn something new about leadership, I start by thinking about great leaders, about great companies, about great books - and then I turn the other way. For years, I've found most of my leadership lessons out there in nature. Here's a snapshot of how I see it, twisted into a lesson on how nature creates space for **innovation** - one of the keys to great leadership.

Nature has a pretty impressive resume: over four billion years of sustainable excellence, without a hint of stress. How does she do it? She must have learned early on (oh, perhaps only three billion years ago) that fighting with her own process as a way to achieve results didn't leave a lot of winners around; so she chose a different tack. She decided to open millions of "conversations for possibility" all at the same time, then just listen to the natural feedback inherent in the conversations as the guide for her next steps. In times of relative calm, she chooses **replication** as her strategy, simply making more of whatever "works." When things get a little crazy, like after a storm, she chooses **improvement** as a strategy, starting with what works and making it a bit better. And after heavy-duty turmoil, such as glaciations, volcanic explosions and tidal waves, she steps in with **innovation**, starting with "what isn't" and creating something entirely new.

Creativity is the lifeblood of innovation, whether in nature, business, or our own lives. Creativity demands open space, freedom, and acceptance of the unknown. Those things come from trusting the process, a place where nature excels. I can't help wondering how much better we'd be as leaders if we were able to slow down, see "what is," and then step into "what isn't" with trust, enthusiasm and creative spirit.



*Bradford L. Glass is a Life Coach, with over 30 years experience providing leadership for individuals, organizations and businesses. His love of nature and his passionate belief in "nature as teacher" form the backdrop for his coaching, where he weaves story, metaphor and possibility together in a way that offers meaning for how we might live our lives - personally and professionally. You may ponder a journey on "The Road Not Taken" via his website at [www.RoadNotTaken.com](http://www.RoadNotTaken.com). Brad is a member of the CLI Alumni - Class of 2005.*