



DEAD METAPHORS AND WHAT THEY TELL US

AND WHY WE SHOULD LISTEN

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'SHUFFLING THE DECKCHAIRS ON THE TITANIC'

**B) 'Shuffling deckchairs on the Titanic'
stands for**

A) Focusing on the wrong problem

In context this person is discussing organisational restructuring as a solution

Rather than increased funding as a solution

WHAT IF INSTEAD THE PERSON HAD SAID:

*'This organisation is suffering from
'Corporate Anorexia'*

**B) 'Corporate Anorexia'
stands for**

A) An organisation starved of funding

Dead metaphors cannot be heard

- People say ‘shuffling deckchairs on the titanic’
- Management consultants and academics say ‘corporate anorexia:
So people must :
 1. Read academic texts
 2. Absorb the metaphor of corporate anorexia
 3. Associate it with their own ‘shuffling’ metaphor
 4. Then utilise the creative metaphors in order to be heard??

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT

1. To understand what is needed to create sustainable change we must hear those who are telling us.
2. We must take time to understand context and how the metaphor is 'reanimated' within that context.
3. We must consider our own need to be engaged and take care not to put our needs above understanding



Dead metaphors may not be vivid, new or academic
but they **are key indicators** of the problems and the
solutions if we chose to listen.