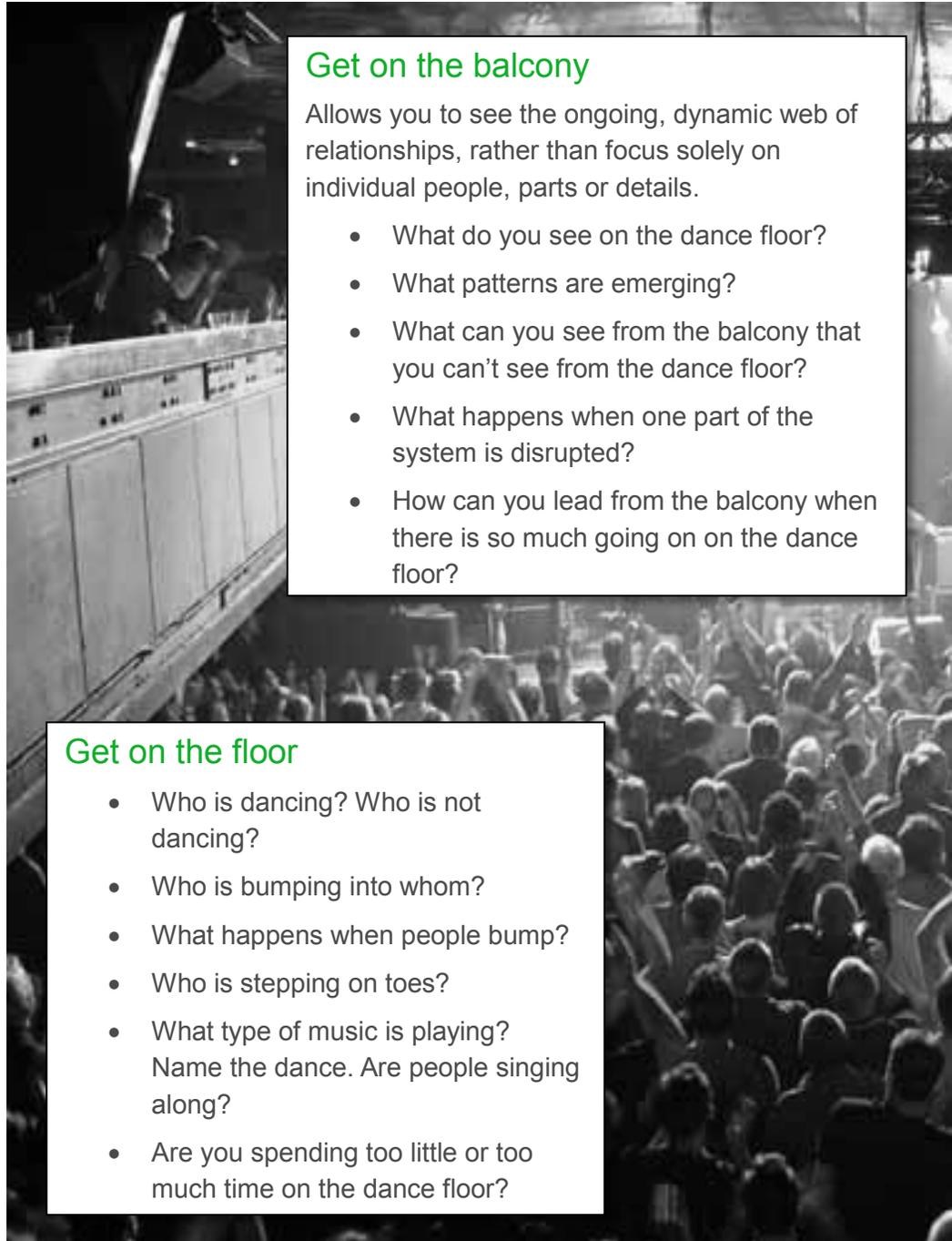


Shifting perspectives as a leader

“ Leadership is both active and reflective. One has to **alternate between participating and observing**. Although the principle may be easy to grasp, the practice is not. Rather than maintain perspective on the events that surround and involve us, we often get swept up by them.

Consider the experience of dancing on a dance floor in contrast with standing on a balcony and watching other people dance. Engaged in the dance, it is nearly impossible to get a sense of the patterns made by everyone on the floor. Indeed, we often get carried away by the dance. Our attention is captured by the music, our partner, and the need to sense the dancing space of others nearby to stay off their toes. To discern the larger patterns on the dance floor – to see who is dancing with whom, in what groups, in what location, and who is sitting out which kind of dance – we have to stop and get to the balcony. ”

Ronald Heifetz, *Leadership without Easy Answers*



Get on the balcony

Allows you to see the ongoing, dynamic web of relationships, rather than focus solely on individual people, parts or details.

- What do you see on the dance floor?
- What patterns are emerging?
- What can you see from the balcony that you can't see from the dance floor?
- What happens when one part of the system is disrupted?
- How can you lead from the balcony when there is so much going on on the dance floor?

Get on the floor

- Who is dancing? Who is not dancing?
- Who is bumping into whom?
- What happens when people bump?
- Who is stepping on toes?
- What type of music is playing? Name the dance. Are people singing along?
- Are you spending too little or too much time on the dance floor?