How Do You "Do" Culture?
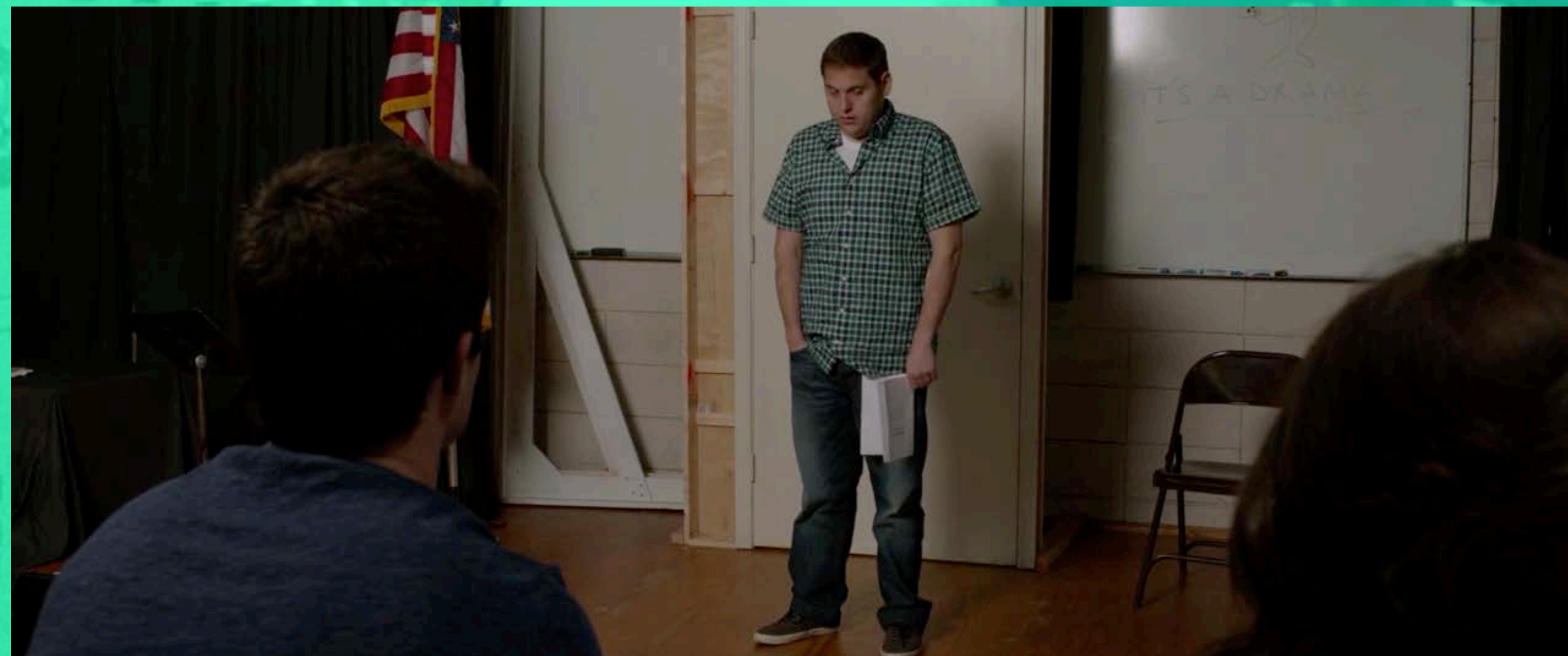
Kyle Stapleton
WarnerMedia Studios

The future is already here — it's just not evenly distributed.

— William Gibson

ksta.ps/soahr

I'M "LEARNDING."

Employee

Leader

You
want
great
culture.

Culture =
"the way
we do
things."

Great
culture =
great
doing.

Why is this a thing now?

What makes a culture?

How can we guide our evolution?
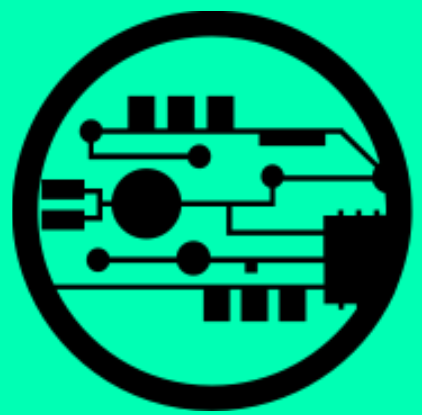
How do we get people aligned?

Grounding

+

People

+

Systems

Why is this
a thing now?

The world's
changed.
A lot.
And fast.

(But work hasn't.
At least not enough.)

"We now face one of the most important challenges of our times, as fundamental and disruptive changes in working life inherently **affect our entire societies**. New forces are transforming the world of work. The transitions involved create **urgent challenges**."

Technology

Climate

Demographics

Globalization

GLOBAL COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF WORK

Work for a brighter future

International Labour Organization

100 1919-2019

344
MILLION JOBS

Employment

344 million jobs need to be created by 2030, in addition to the 190 million jobs needed to address unemployment today.
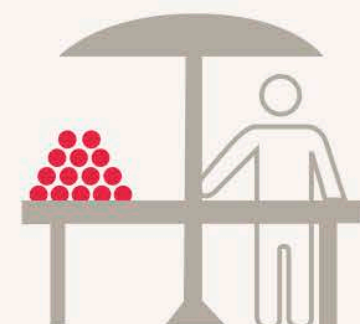
ILO Economic Trends Model (May 2018)

190
MILLION PEOPLE

Unemployment

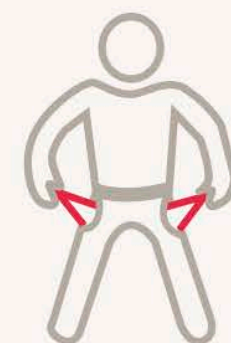190 million people are unemployed, of whom 64.8 million are youth.

ILO, 2018b

2
BILLION PEOPLE

Informal employment

2 billion people make their living in the informal economy.

ILO, 2018a

300
MILLION PEOPLE

Working poverty

300 million workers live in extreme poverty (<$1.90/day).

ILO, 2018b

2.78
MILLION PEOPLE

Fatal work-related injuries and illnesses

2.78 million people die every year as a result of occupational accidents or work-related illnesses.

ILO, 2018b

36.1%

Working time

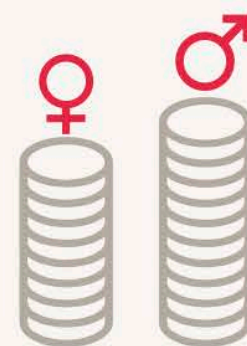36.1 % of global workforce works excessive hours (more than 48 hours per week).

Messenger, 2018

1.8%

Wages

Wage growth declined from 2.4% to 1.8% between 2016 and 2017.

ILO, 2018d

20%

Gender pay gap

Women are paid around 20% less than men.

ILO, 2018d

1%

Inequality

Between 1980 and 2016, the richest 1% of the world's population received 27% of global income growth whereas the poorest 50% received only 12%.

Alvaredo et al., 2018

53.6%

Digital divide

Only 53.6% of all households have internet access. In emerging countries, the share is only 15%.

ITU, 2017

GLOBAL COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF WORK

International Labour Organization
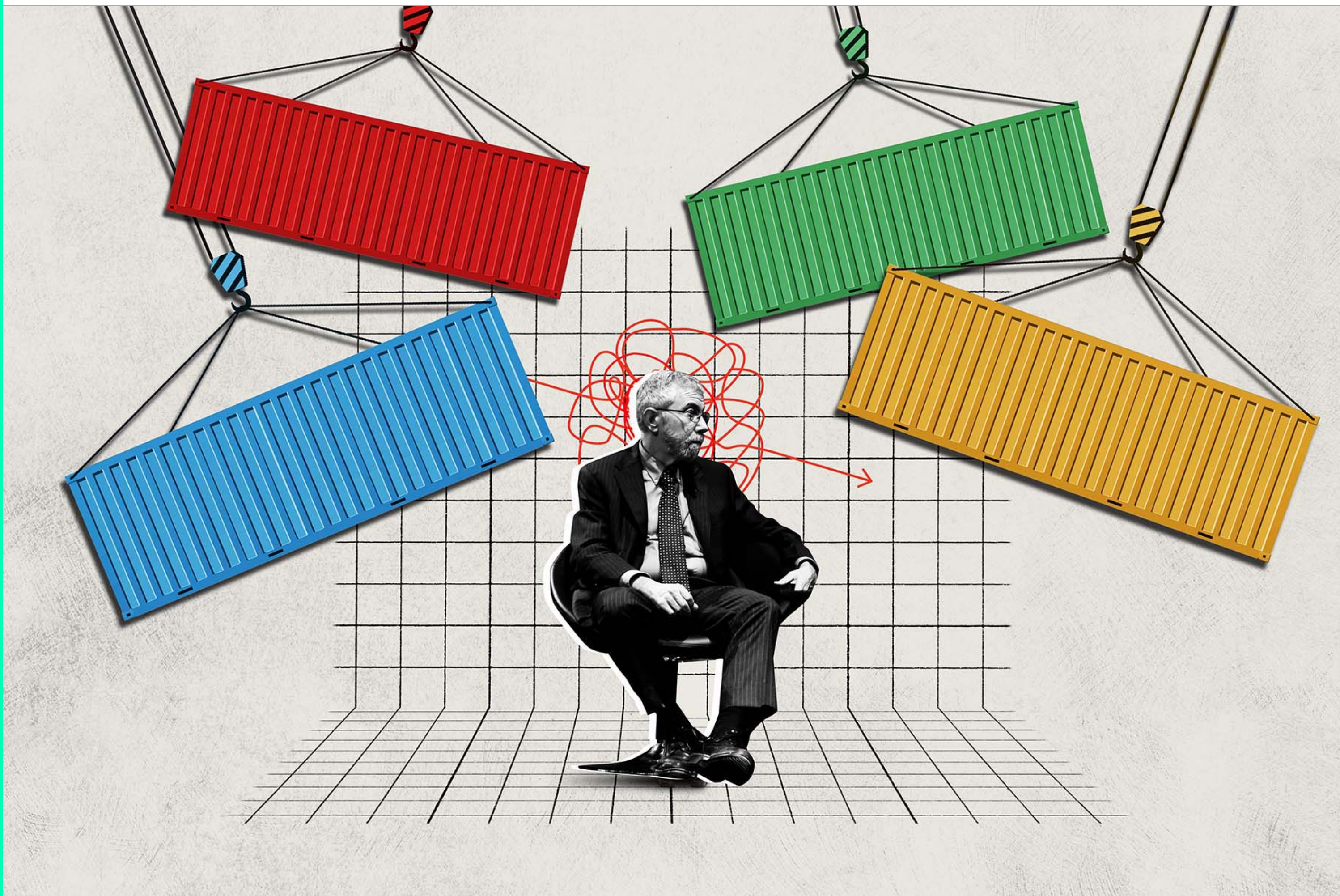
100
1919-2019

Work for a brighter future

"Paul Krugman and other mainstream trade experts are now admitting that they were **wrong** about **globalization**:

It **hurt American workers** far more than they thought it would."

FP Foreign Policy

THE BIG THINK

ECONOMISTS ON THE RUN

"**No one knows exactly what will come**, but … **society**— government, healthcare, the economy, our lifestyles and more —**will change.**"

POLITICO

Coronavirus Will Change the World Permanently. Here's How.

A crisis on this scale can reorder society in dramatic ways, for better or worse. Here are 34 big thinkers' predictions for what's to come.

Highly engaged teams improve outcomes (duh)

4x

success in KPIs* between
orgs in 99th percentile vs. 1st

+10%
customer loyalty

+21%
profitability

+20%
productivity
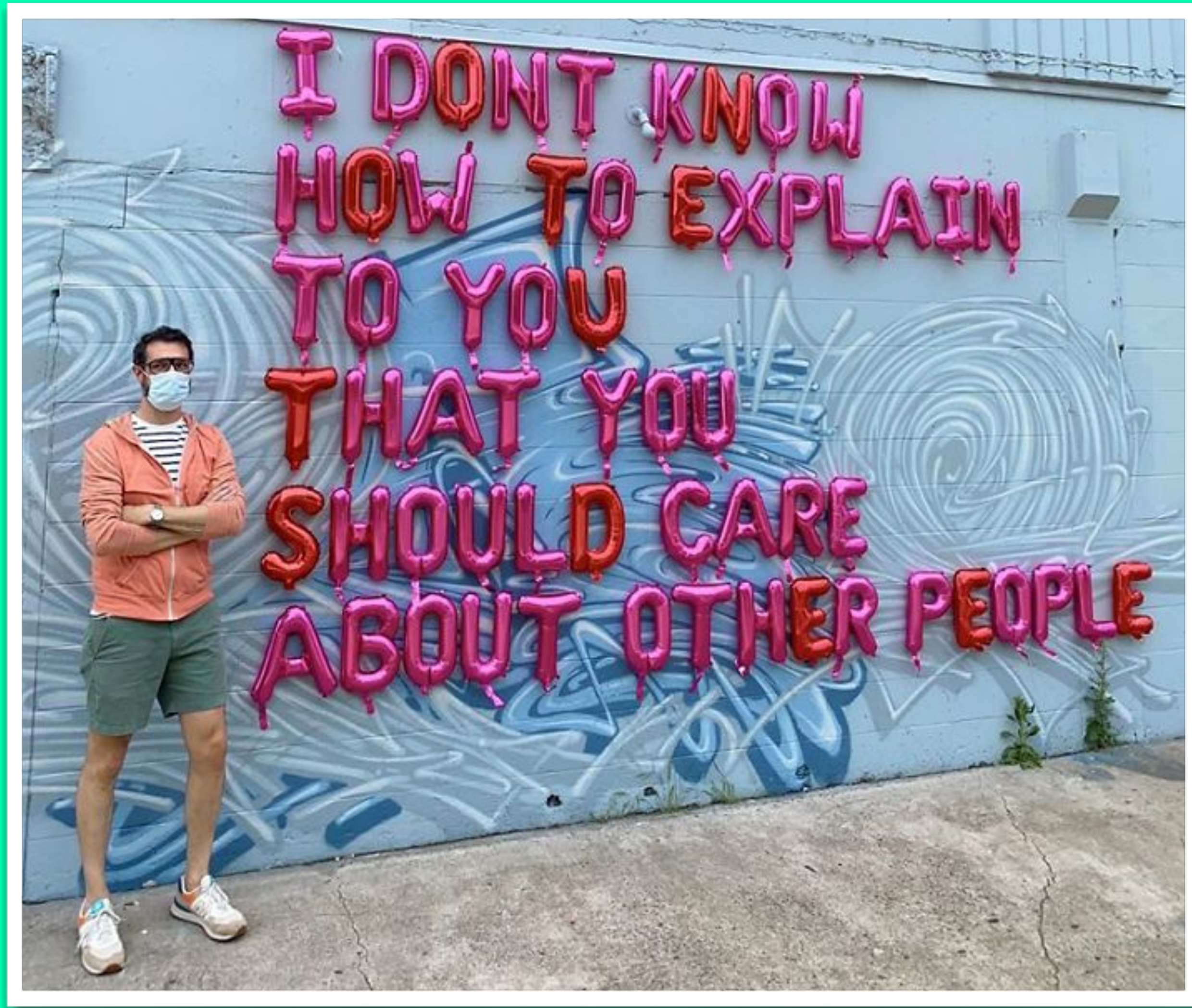
Digital drives value. People drive digital.

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY INC. citi

JPMorgan Chase & Co. WELLS FARGO

BANK OF AMERICA

Apple Microsoft intel
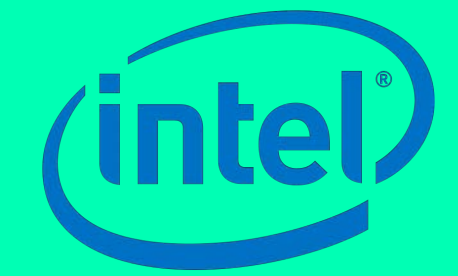
Alphabet verizon

$ 718B revenue

$ 184B profit

$ 1.1T market cap

1.4M employees

4.7% more revenue

8.1% less profit

2.13x market cap

45% employee base

"The past decade has been marked by **radical change**, by a 'newness' that has evolved at a pace that can only be described as exponential.

Technology invaded the workplace at a speed that would have been unimaginable a decade prior.

Workforce demographics shifted substantially, with five generations in the workforce, a decline in working-age populations in many advanced economies, and an increase in the focus on equality for all workers as it relates to pay and treatment.

And as the workforce evolved, so did **worker expectations** — with calls for organizations to do more to help improve individuals' lives, address societal problems, mitigate technology's unintended consequences, and act equitably and ethically."

Deloitte.
Insights

The social enterprise at work: Paradox as a path forward
2020 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends
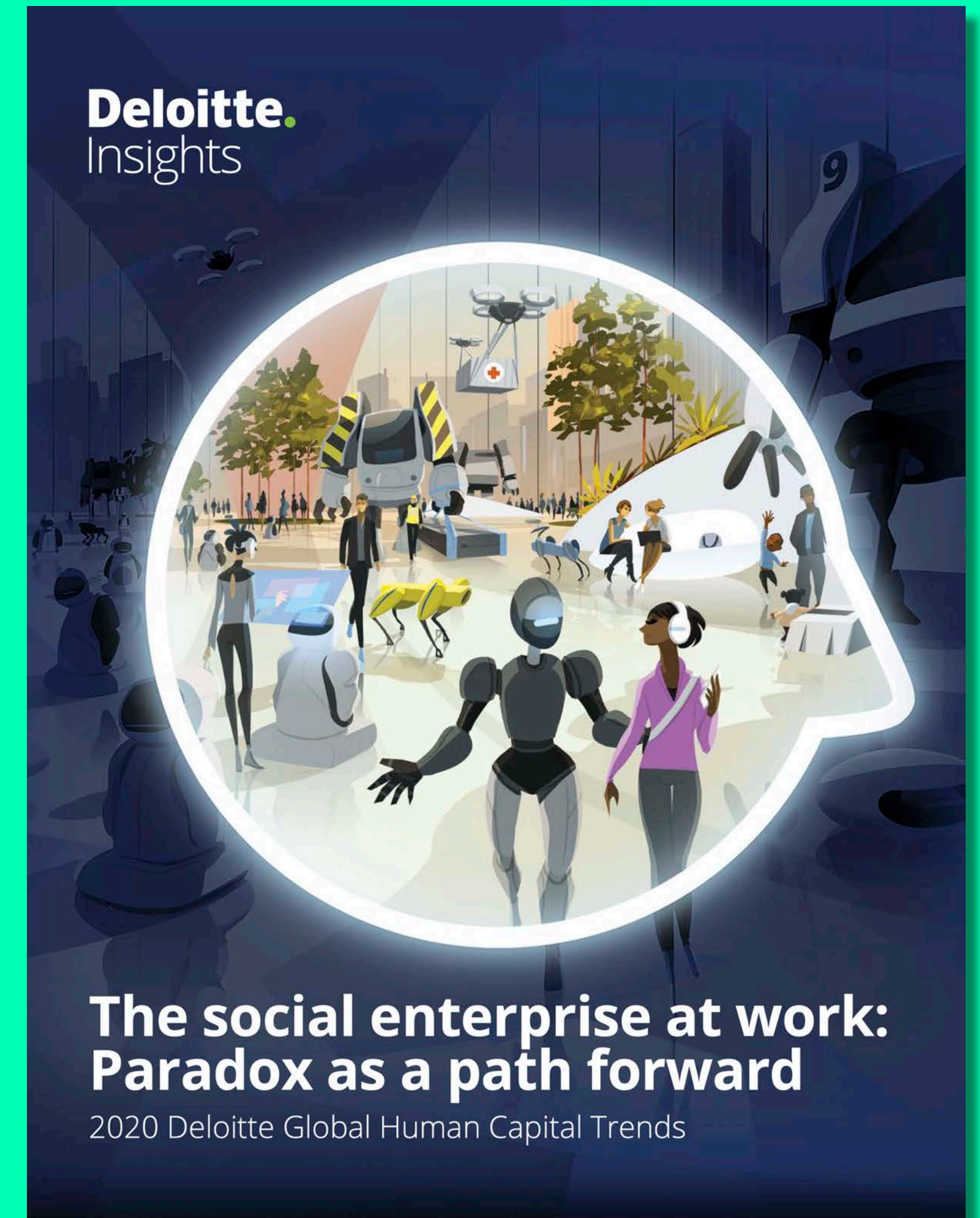
Assumptions grounding traditional HR

Outcomes are **stable**
(orgs know what they need to do & how to do it)

Jobs are **predictable**
(work is fixed & task-based)

People are **fungible**
(most humans can do most jobs)

Deloitte.
Insights

**The social enterprise at work:
Paradox as a path forward**
2020 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends

New truths of modern enterprises

Outcomes **change continuously**

(constant flux means constant reimagination — orgs must factor the future into the present)

Jobs are **fluid** + **dynamic**

(hierarchies, routines, & specialization giving way to networks, "job canvases," & generalists)

People are … **people**

(must embrace full humanity + unique value, which adds complexity to management)

Deloitte.
Insights

**The social enterprise at work:
Paradox as a path forward**
2020 Deloitte Global Human Capital Trends
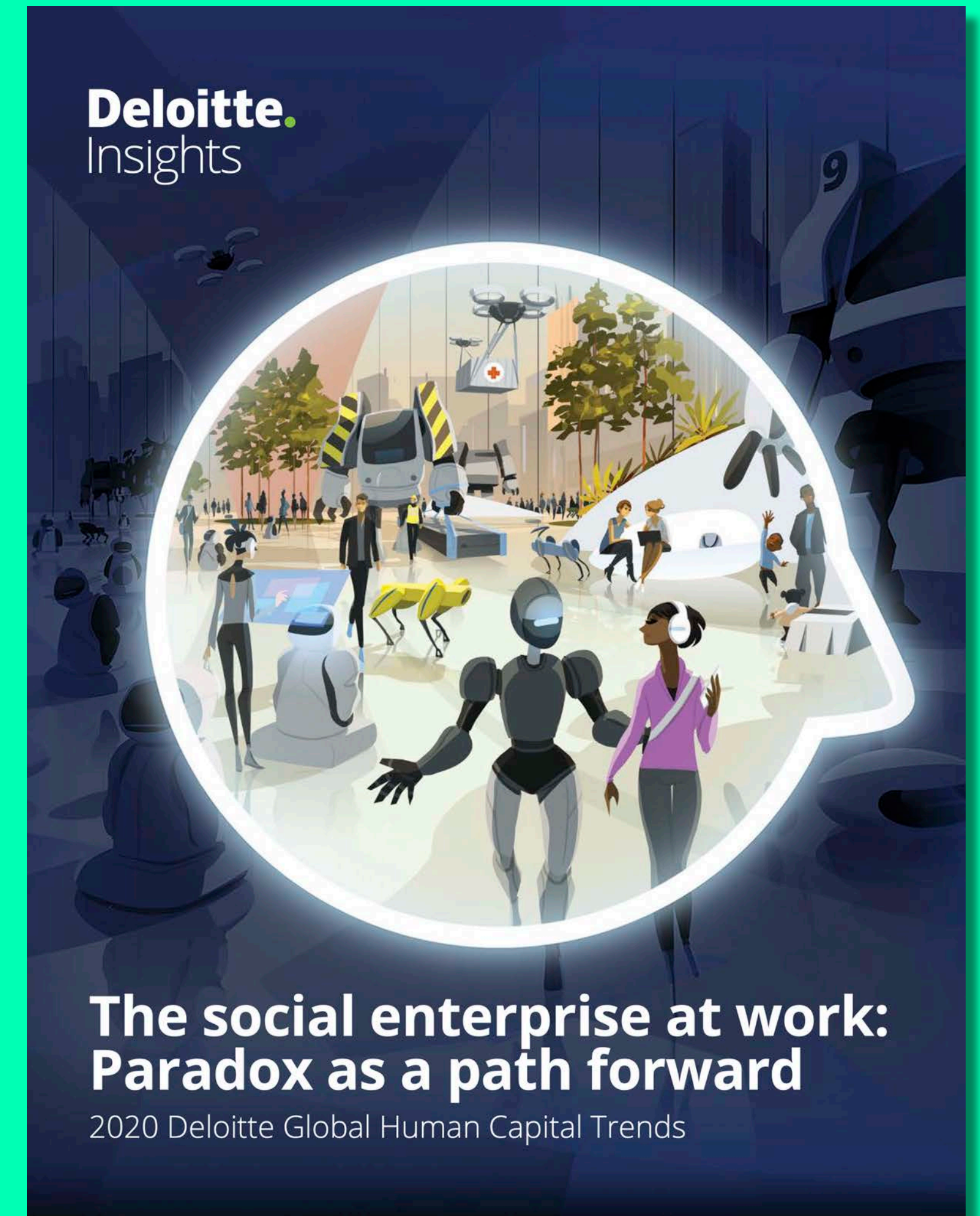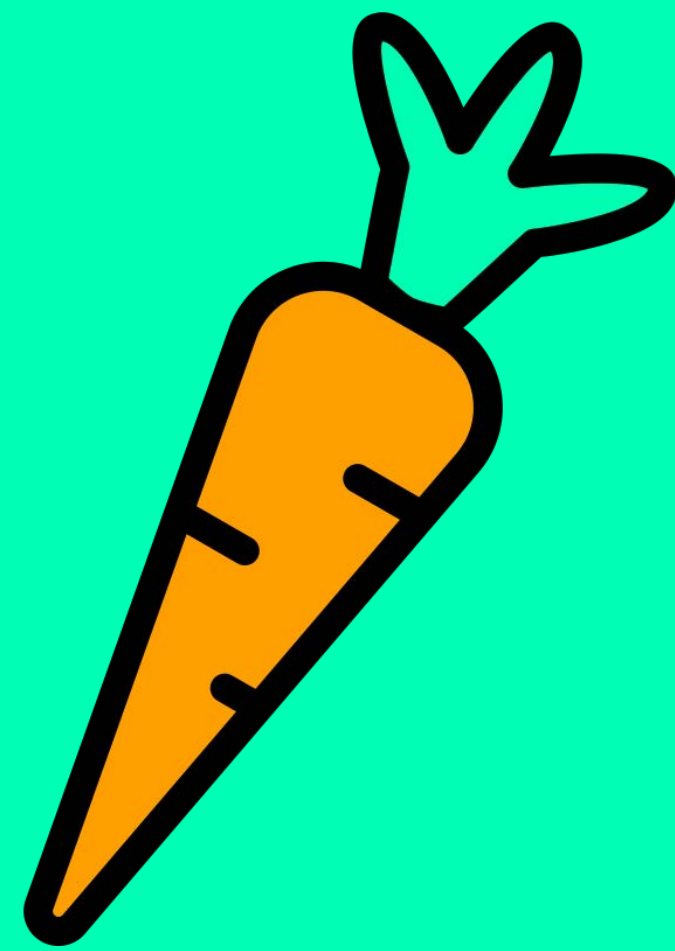
The problem with making an **extrinsic** reward the **only destination that matters** is that some people will choose the **quickest route there**, even if it means taking the **low road**. Indeed, most of [today's] scandals and misbehavior … involve **shortcuts**.

Daniel Pink, *Drive*
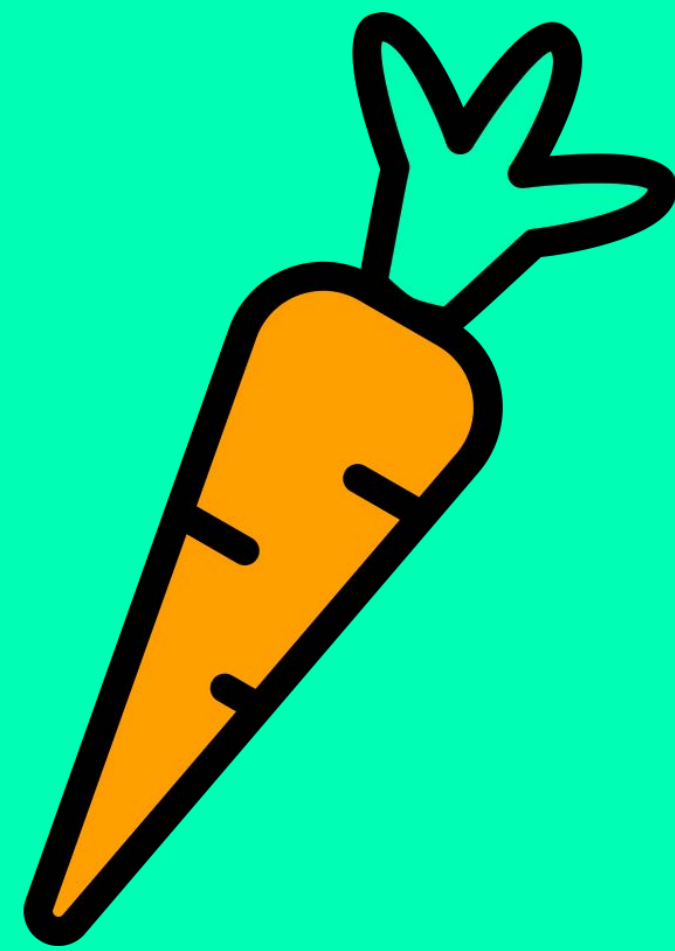
We are what we **repeatedly do**. **Excellence**, then, is **not an act** but a **habit**.

What makes a culture?

Grounding

+

People

+

Systems

Culture can be compared to **natural forces** such as winds and tides. These elements are there in the background, sometimes unnoticed, sometimes obvious. Endowed with **immense power**, they can waylay plans and inhibit progress. They **can't really be tamed** or fundamentally altered.

But if you respect them and understand how to make the most of them, if you work with them and **tap into their hidden power**, they can become a **source of energy** and provide powerful assistance.

tl;dr:
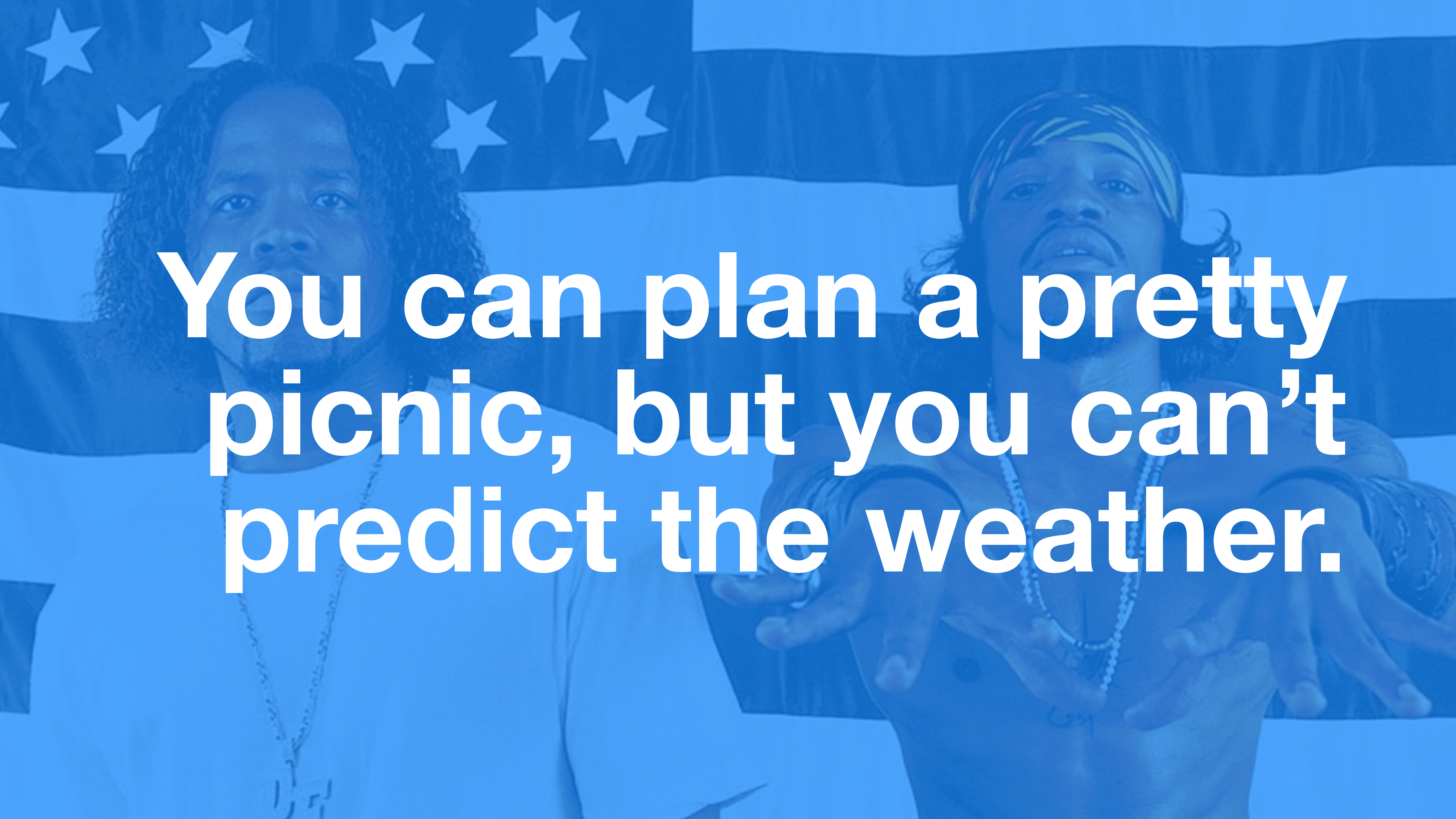
You can plan a pretty picnic, but you can't predict the weather.

"People will be fully employed **no matter what you do** …

… **How much** of their talent are we **prepared to use**?"

Culture

=

Doing

(practices)

+

← **not** versus!

Being

(priorities, or "telos")

Rethink your role

HR: Doing (ensure compliance, decrease liability)	Informed	Reactive	Tactical	Narrow
	Told about decisions & expected to execute	Responds to issues & emergencies as they come up	Executes tasks	Works within traditional "HR practice" boundaries
"PEOPLE TEAMS": Being (maximize employee experience)	Consulted	Deliberate	Strategic	Holistic
	Brought into strategic decisions to add value with insights + opinions	Understands biz goals & designs programs to help achieve them	Creates goal-based programs & incentives	Takes wider view of business & uses people tools to address them

Source: "HR reinvented: The new people teams". Greenhouse.

engagement manifests itself as

**Industry leadership
Clear vision
Performance management
"Results-only" (ROWE)
Growth & development**

How do we get our people aligned?

Grounding

+

People

+

Systems

Not like this.

Mindsets, Feelings, Values

Behaviors

Context

ENRON

Source: Y. Morieux, "Resistance to Change or Error in Change Strategy?" (2011)

Mindsets, Feelings, Values

Behaviors

Like *this*.

Context

Purpose creates context
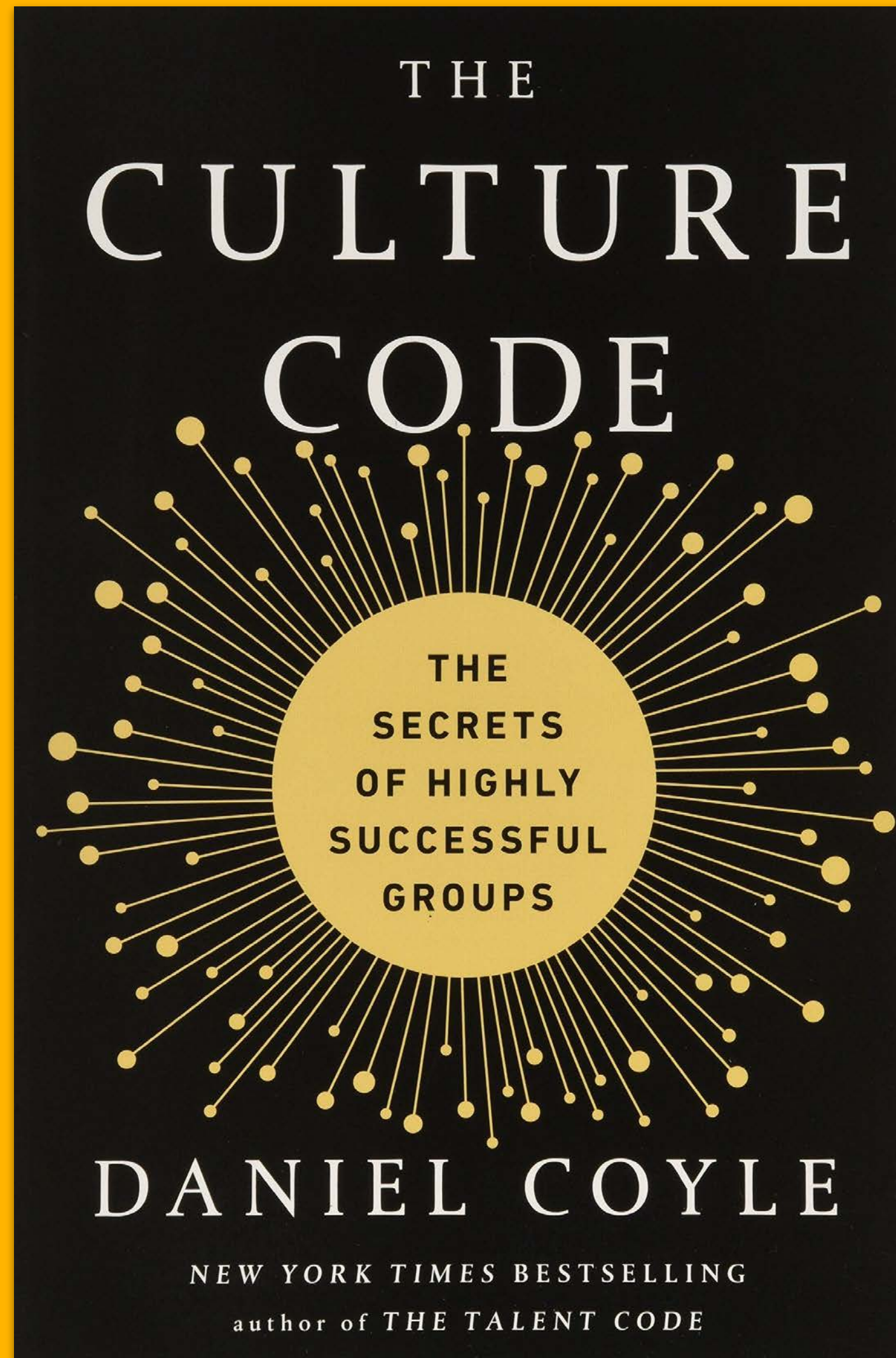
Build safety through belonging cues
energy invested in exchange
+ valuing individuals
+ signaling relationship will sustain

Share vulnerability to help cross "threshold moments"
Two critical moments in group formation that chart a path for
collaboration or competition: first *vulnerability* & first *disagreement*

Use narrative to orient, not just to inspire
Purpose is a narrative connecting present to a meaningful future —
create alignment by over-communicating priorities in everyday language —
point to concrete "bar-setting behaviors" that embody group's purpose

Design for micro-experiences, not milestones
EX is net of peak and valley moments

… And people make or break context
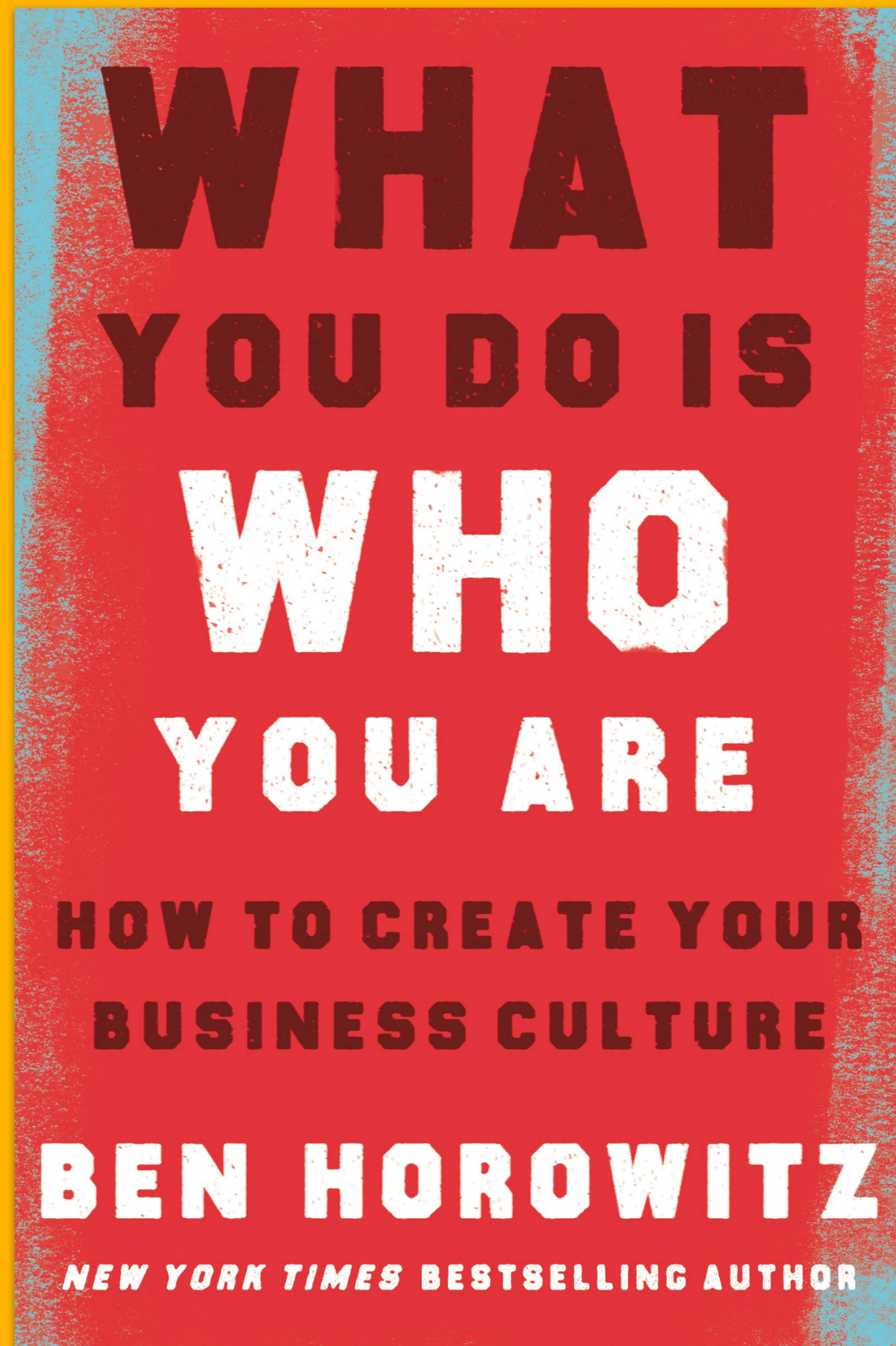
"One way to think about designing your culture is to conceive it as a way to **specify the kinds of employees you want**. What virtues do you value most in employees?

Making your virtues precisely the **qualities you're looking for in an employee** reinforces an important concept from bushido: virtues must be based on **actions** rather than **beliefs**. Because, trust me, it's really easy to fake beliefs in an interview.

If you **hire for what people can do**, on the other hand, you can find out through reference checks if they've done it in the past, and you can even test for it in the interview.

Making your **hiring profile** a big part of how you define your culture makes enormous sense—because **who you hire determines your culture** more than anything else."

SCORECARD

SKILLS + EXPE-RIENCE	Employee life cycle / culture support (formal or informal)	☹	😐	☺
	Planning + executing events & experiences	☹	😐	☺
	Generating + executing ideas	☹	😐	☺
	Systems mgmt. / organization *(for inventory, processes, etc.)*	☹	😐	☺
	Verbal comms *(for tours)*	☹	😐	☺
	Design *(for Sprout boards)*	☹	😐	☺
TRAITS	Problem-solving / " +1" mindset	☹	😐	☺
	Adaptable / resilient (will thrive in fast, tough, chaotic culture?)	☹	😐	☺
	Good attitude / open-minded (esp. about menial tasks)	☹	😐	☺
	Service-oriented (thinks of others / impact before self)	☹	😐	☺
DETAILS	Passion	☹	😐	☺
	Polish	☹	😐	☺
	Potential	☹	😐	☺
	"Maverick Spirit"	☹	😐	☺
Do you think you would enjoy working with this person?		☹	😐	☺

Moments of choice
ID gaps on your team
What's more important?
Invest in the description
Bold sourcing
Resume review
Interview panel selection
Craft thoughtful questions
Structured interview process
Debrief with panel
Make your selection
Onboard your new hire
Feedback loop

Review parameters

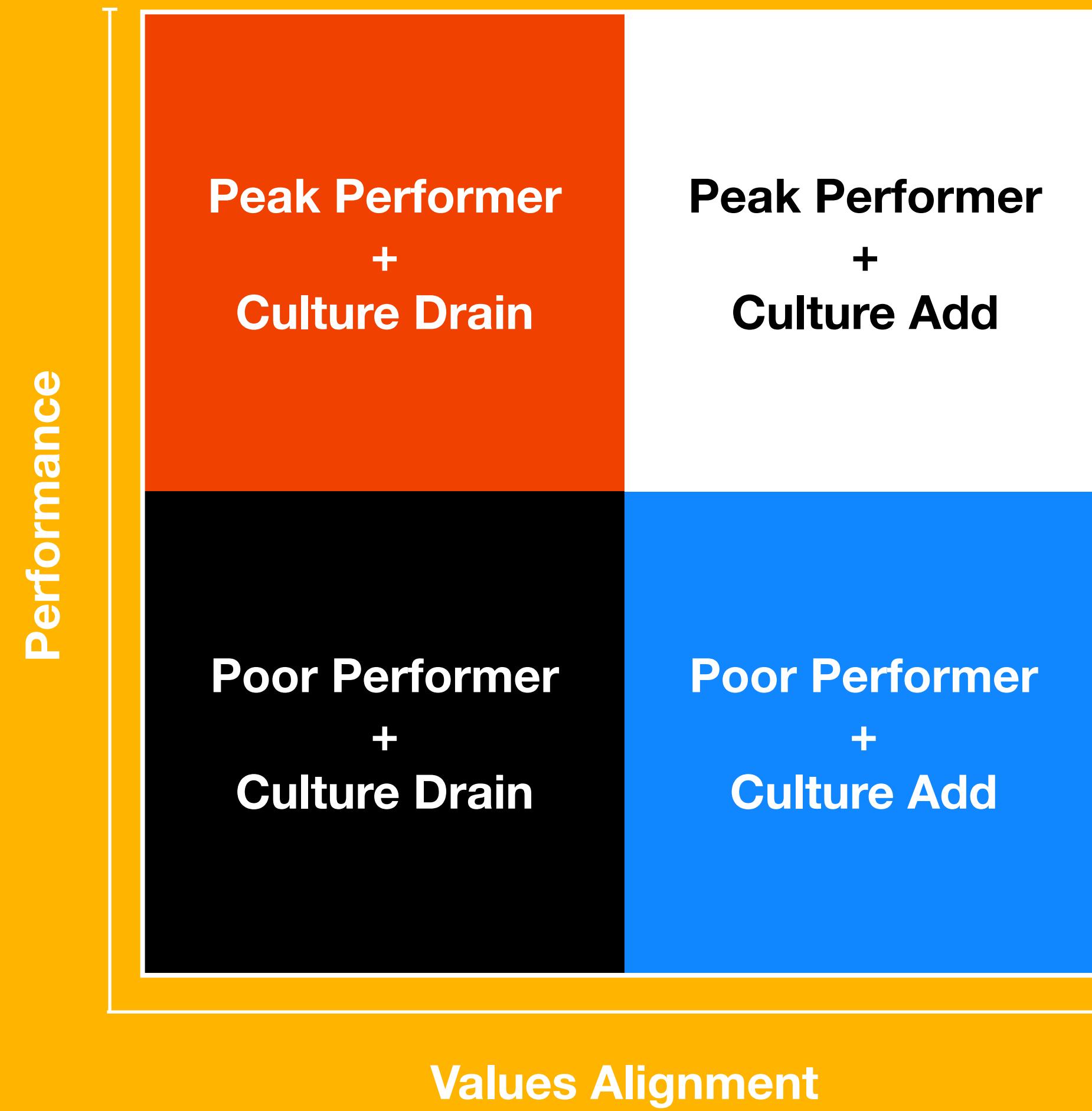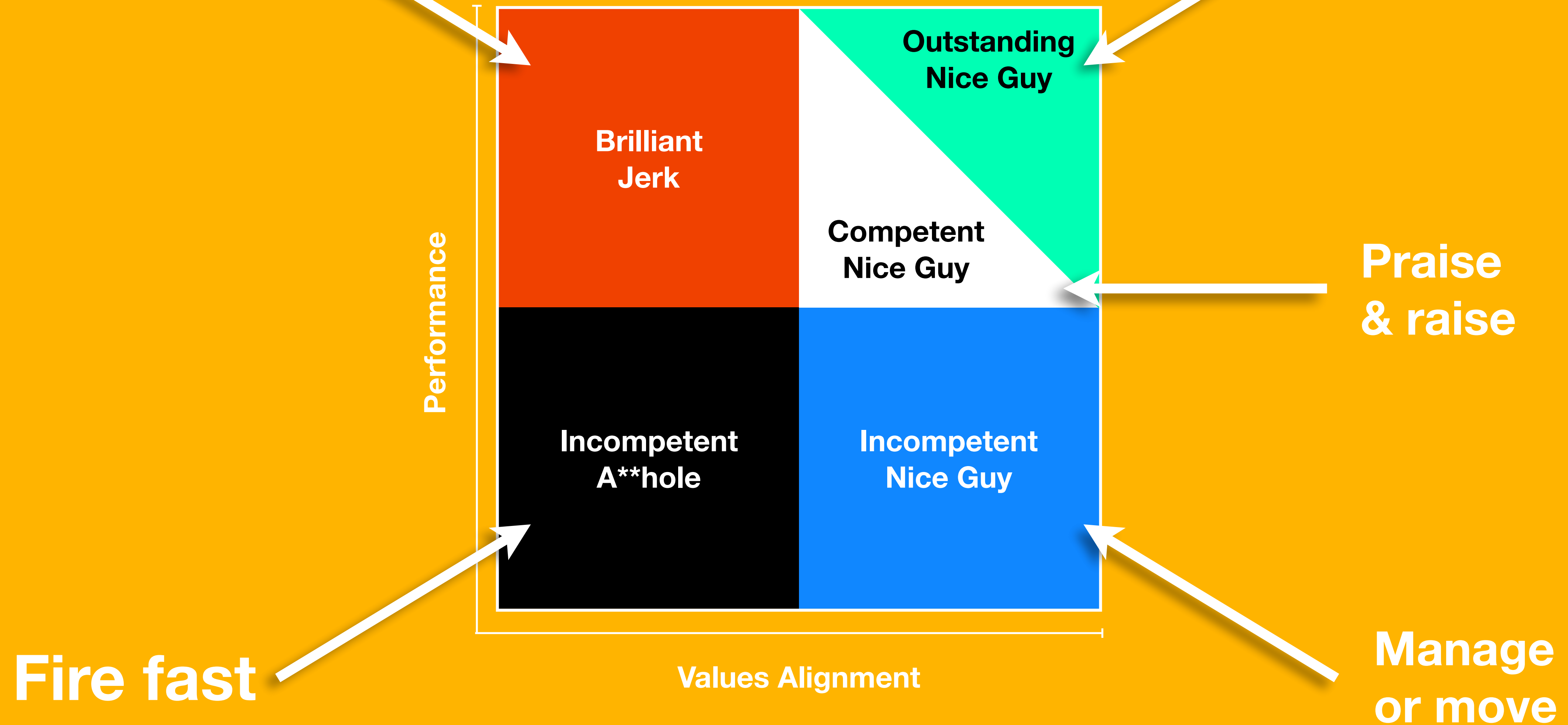| **CONTRIBUTIONS**	**CULTURE**	**CAPABILITY**	**CAREER**
Are you delivering what's needed?	Are you practicing The Ways We Work*?	Are you taking responsibility for your growth thru self-directed learning?	Are your career aspirations aligned with our org's opportunities?

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO TO GROW?

*We believe our culture is shaped by focusing our intention and action toward these six clearly explained expectations: We succeed together. We aim high. We focus on the future. We are agile. We act courageously. We create connection.

Performance

Peak Performer + Culture Drain

Peak Performer + Culture Add

Poor Performer + Culture Drain

Poor Performer + Culture Add

Values Alignment

Remediate or separate

Nurture, cherish, & clone

Praise & raise

Fire fast

Manage or move

Performance

Values Alignment

Brilliant Jerk

Outstanding Nice Guy

Competent Nice Guy

Incompetent A**hole

Incompetent Nice Guy

Source: "Your Company's Culture is Who You Hire, Fire, & Promote"
Dr, Cameron Sepah, USCF School of Medicine

A few great people practices

Cultural orientation
Do Day 1 on purpose + get it right

Shocking rules
Make people ask "Why do we have this?"

Incorporate outside leadership
Bring in an old pro from the culture you aspire to have

Object lessons
What you say means far less than what you do — be heard loud & clear

Make ethics explicit
Don't assume people will "do the right thing" when it conflicts with other objectives

Give virtues deep meaning
Inform the hard choices for employees by emphasizing the "why" behind your values every chance you get

Walk the talk
"Do as I say, not as I do" never works … don't talk it if you can't walk it

Make decisions that demonstrate priorities
If they're necessary to shifting the culture, they will feel brutal

Shift to build resilience

Build skills $\longrightarrow$ Cultivate capabilities

Upskill to address immediate needs $\longrightarrow$ Leverage "passion of the explorer" to ID gaps & reinvent

Formal training + traditional adult learning $\longrightarrow$ Learning "in the flow of work" (guide thru experiences)

Reward based on output $\longrightarrow$ Reward based on continuous learning / adapting / improving

Prepare workforce with internal focus $\longrightarrow$ Prepare workforce to benefit org AND society

"Look at **resistance** as information. People are **telling you something** when they **resist change**. Your job is to **find out what**. Resistance is an invitation to talk, **listen**, and **learn**."

How can we guide our evolution?

Grounding

+

People

+

Systems

BRAVE NEW WORK

ARE YOU READY TO REINVENT YOUR ORGANIZATION?

WORK

AARON DIGNAN

—FOUNDER OF THE READY

Criteria for a good experiment

✅ 8 weeks or less

✅ Within your control

✅ Financially & culturally safe to try

✅ Addresses a shared tension
(while not necessarily solving it)

✅ Tests some kind of actual change in the org
(as opposed to creating a plan)

Where could this lead?

Orgs make trade-offs to excel at DEI

Regenerative operations (net-zero is table stakes)

Public benefit equal to fiduciary duty (e.g. B-corp)

Employee ownership expected

More private companies, less short-term pressure

Less rigid regulation

Growth as result, not goal (*human flourishing* is goal)
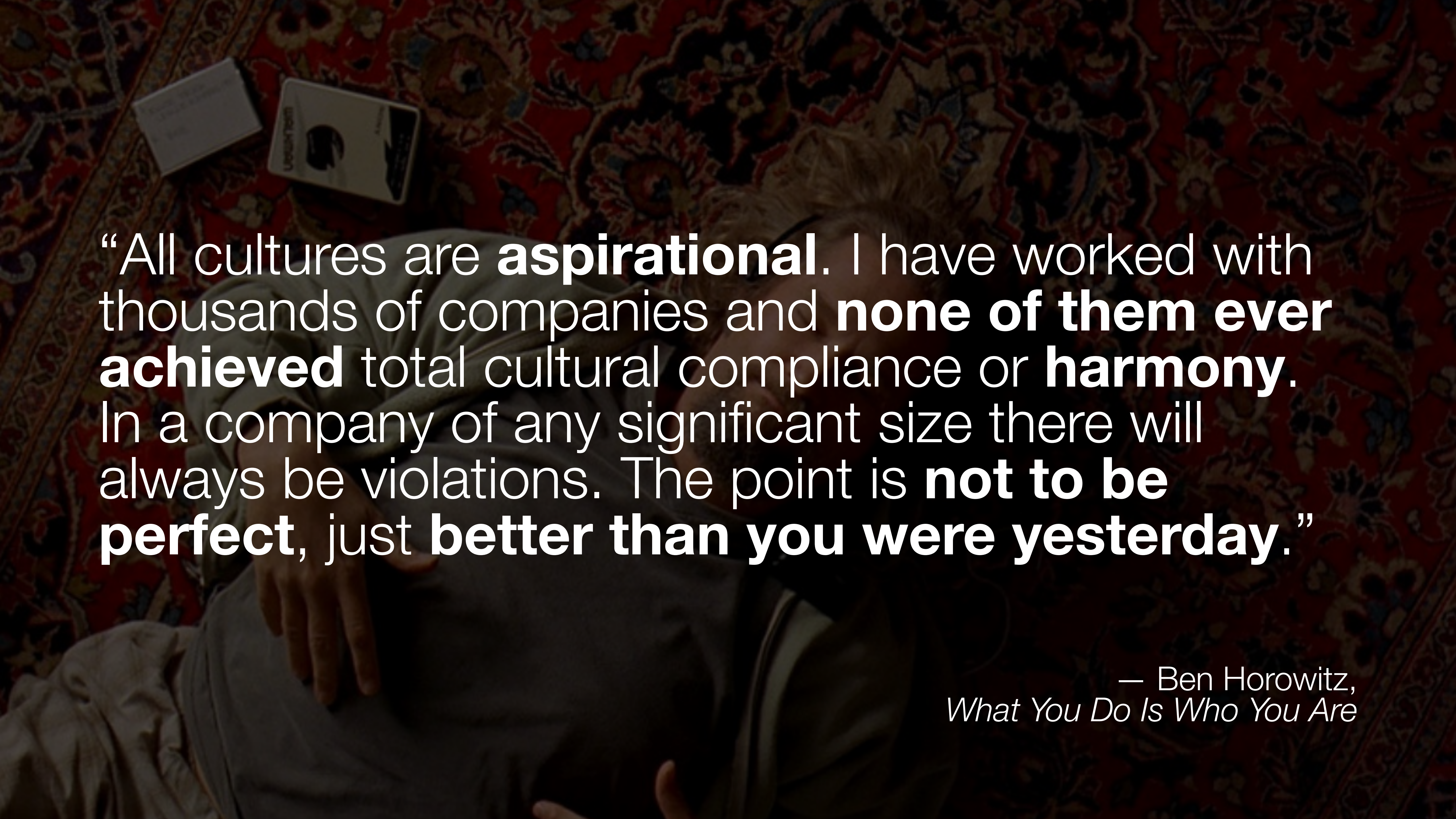
Alternatives to traditional incorporation (massive distributed collaboration, pay thru blockchain)

Creativity & complex problem-solving prioritized in schools

Where (else) could this lead?

'Spectacular and terrifyingly true'
Owen Jones

David Graeber

BULLSH*T JOBS

THE RISE OF POINTLESS WORK AND WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT
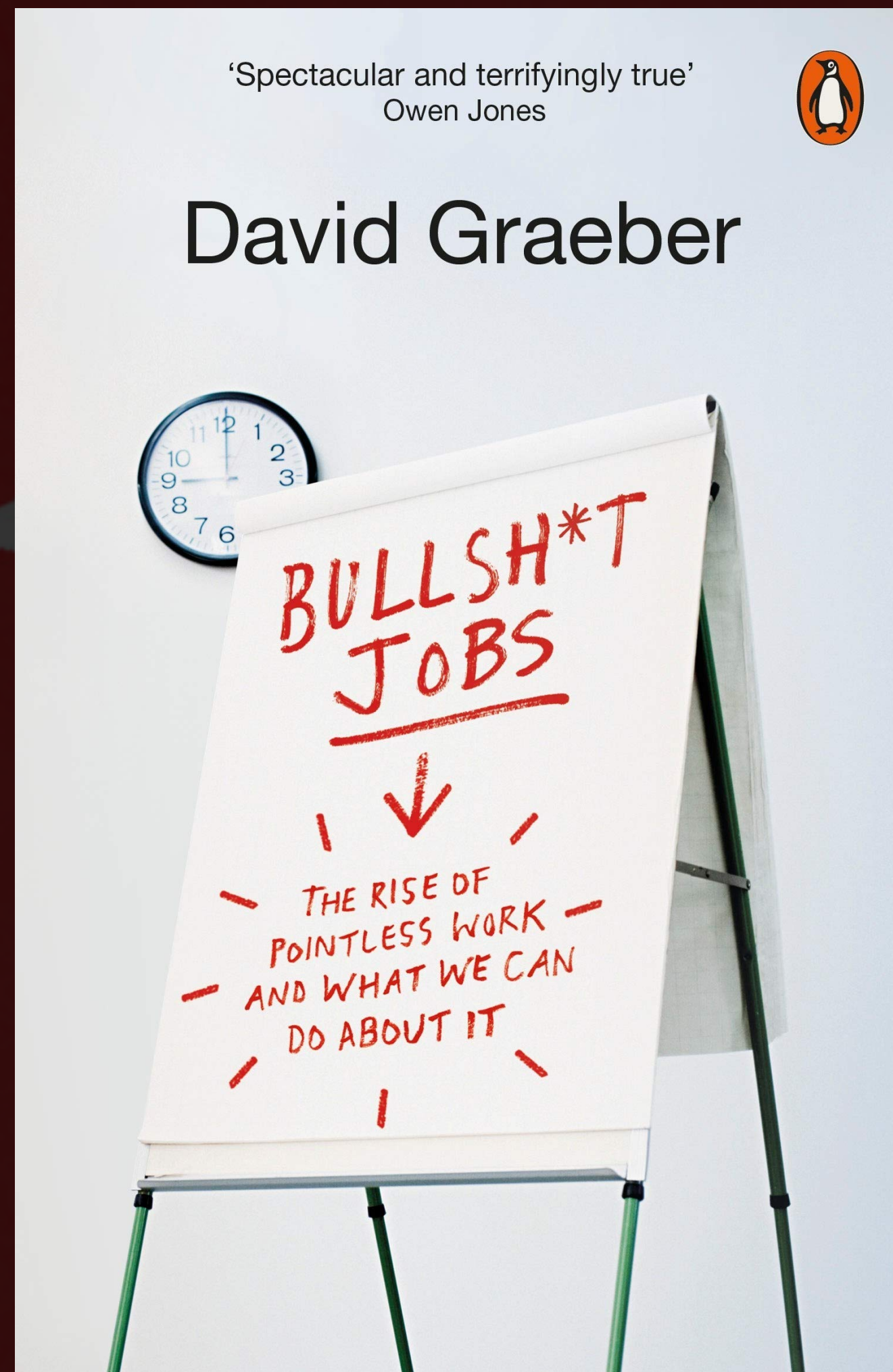
"There is something **very wrong** with what we have made ourselves. We have become a civilization **based on work** — not even 'productive work' but work as an **end and meaning in itself**. We have come to believe that men and women who do not work harder than they wish as jobs they do not particularly enjoy are bad people unworthy of love, care, or assistance from their communities. It is as if we have collectively **acquiesced** to our own **enslavement** … This is a **disastrous** state of affairs. **I wish it to end.**"

Source: D. Graeber. *Bullsh*t Jobs*.

"All cultures are **aspirational**. I have worked with thousands of companies and **none of them ever achieved** total cultural compliance or **harmony**. In a company of any significant size there will always be violations. The point is **not to be perfect**, just **better than you were yesterday**."

— Ben Horowitz,
What You Do Is Who You Are

Be part of the solution

ok, that's all