

How Do You “Do” Culture?

A man with a serious expression, wearing a red baseball cap and a red jacket over a grey t-shirt that says "MUSIC BAND". He is holding a skateboard. The image is darkened, and a multi-colored rainbow outline is drawn around the man's head and shoulders.

Kyle Stapleton
WarnerMedia Studios

The background is a dark, atmospheric scene. At the top, there are jagged, bright white lightning bolts against a dark grey sky. In the center, a car is visible, its rear facing the viewer. The car has a license plate that reads "OUTATIME" in blue letters on a white background. The car's taillights are glowing red. The bottom of the image shows a dark, rocky surface with bright orange and yellow flames or fire rising from it on both sides, creating a sense of a fiery chasm or a hellish landscape.

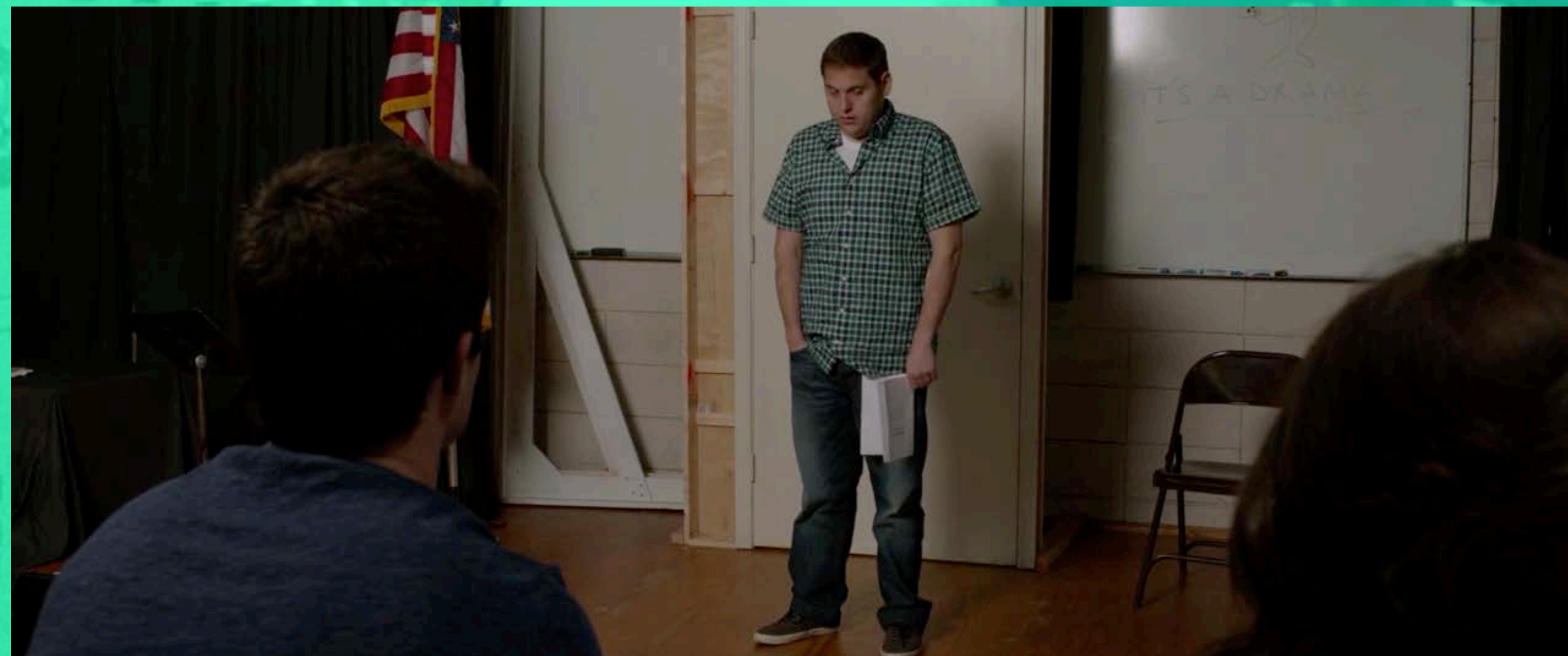
**The future is already here —
it's just not evenly distributed.**

— William Gibson

ksta.ps/soahr

I'M "LEARNINDING."







**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

+

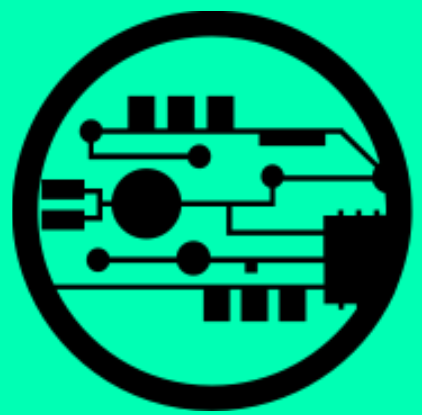
Systems

**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





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)

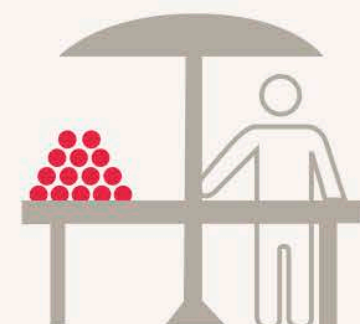


190
MILLION PEOPLE

Unemployment

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

ILO, 2018b

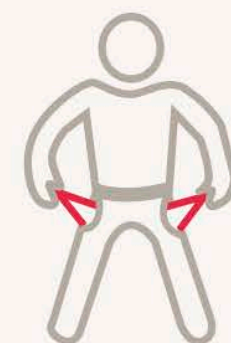


2
BILLION PEOPLE

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 work-force works excessive hours (more than 48 hours per week).

Messenger, 2018

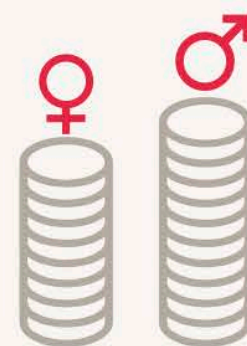


1.8%

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



Source: "Work for a Brighter Future."
Global Commission on the Future of Work (ILO).

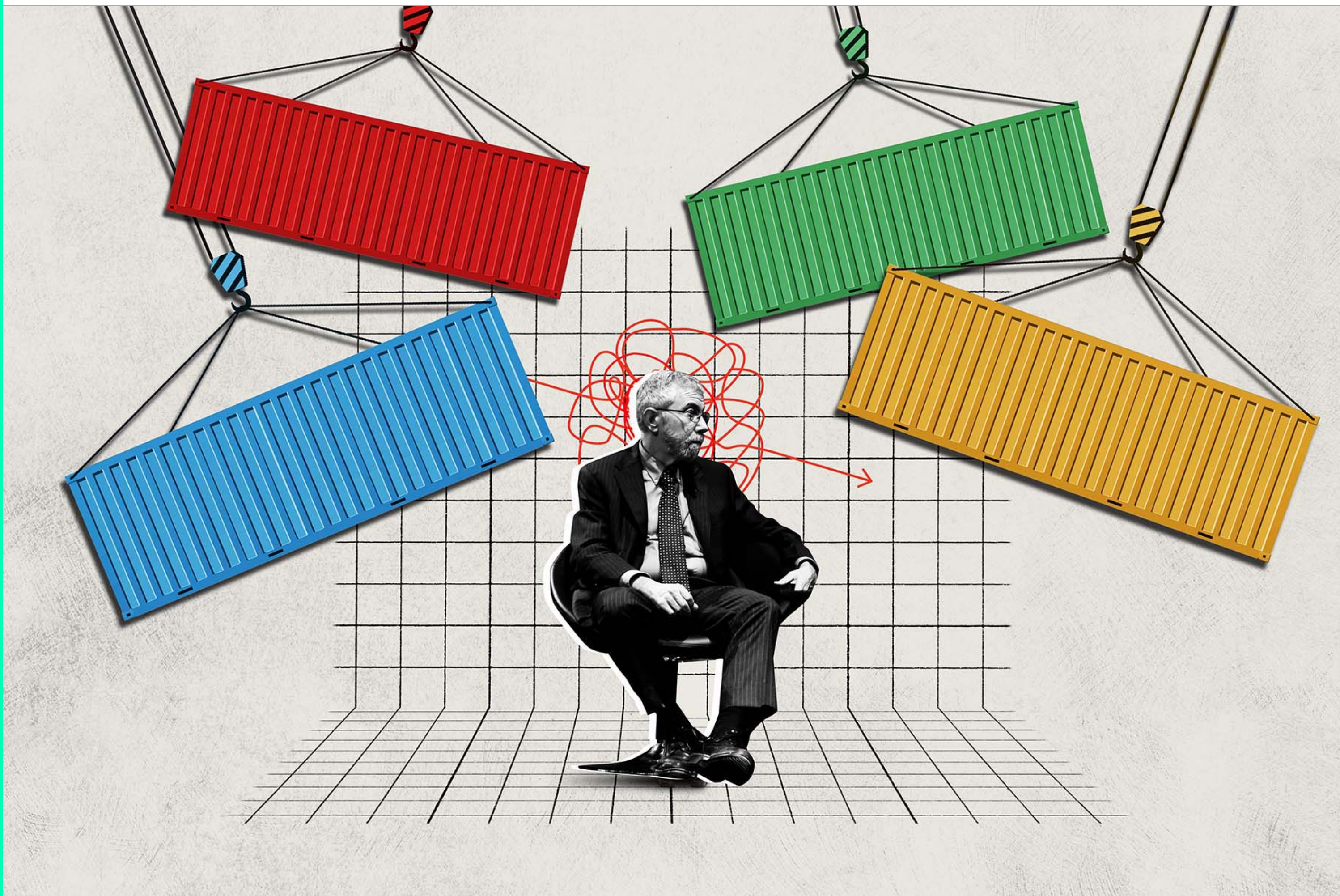
“Paul Krugman and other mainstream trade experts are now admitting that they were **wrong** about **globalization**:

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



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.



Source: [Politico](https://www.politico.com). March 19, 2020.

Highly engaged teams improve outcomes (duh)

4x

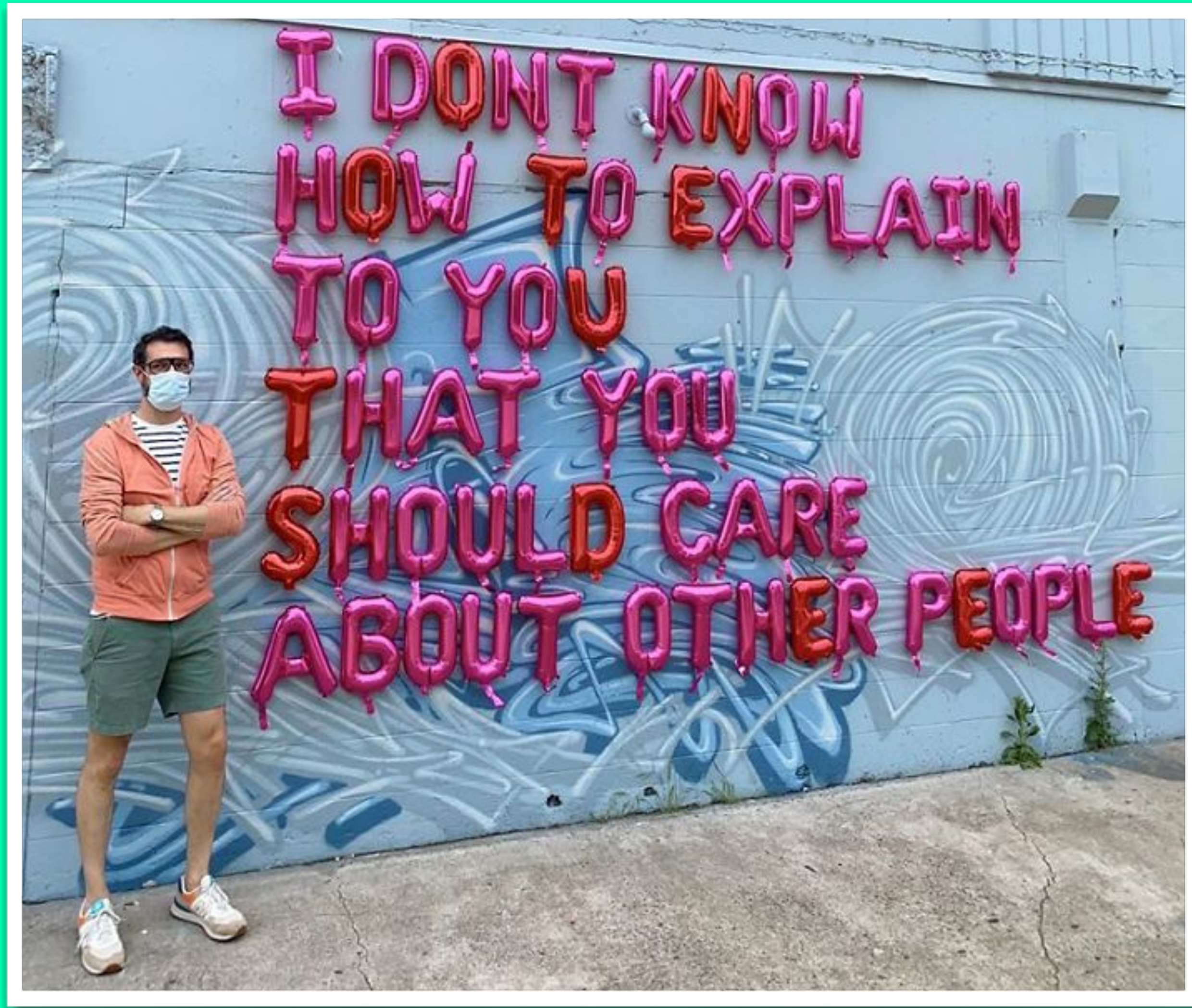
success in KPIs* between
orgs in 99th percentile vs. 1st

+10%
customer loyalty

+21%
profitability

+20%
productivity

*customer loyalty, profitability, productivity (sales & production),
product quality (defects), turnover, shrinkage, absenteeism, safety incidents



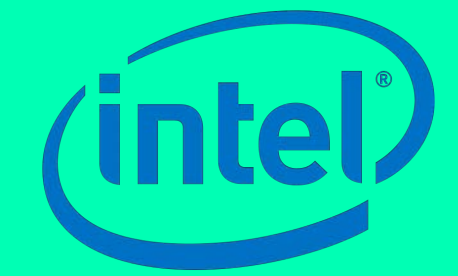
Digital drives value. People drive digital.



BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY INC.

JPMORGAN CHASE & CO.

BANK OF AMERICA



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

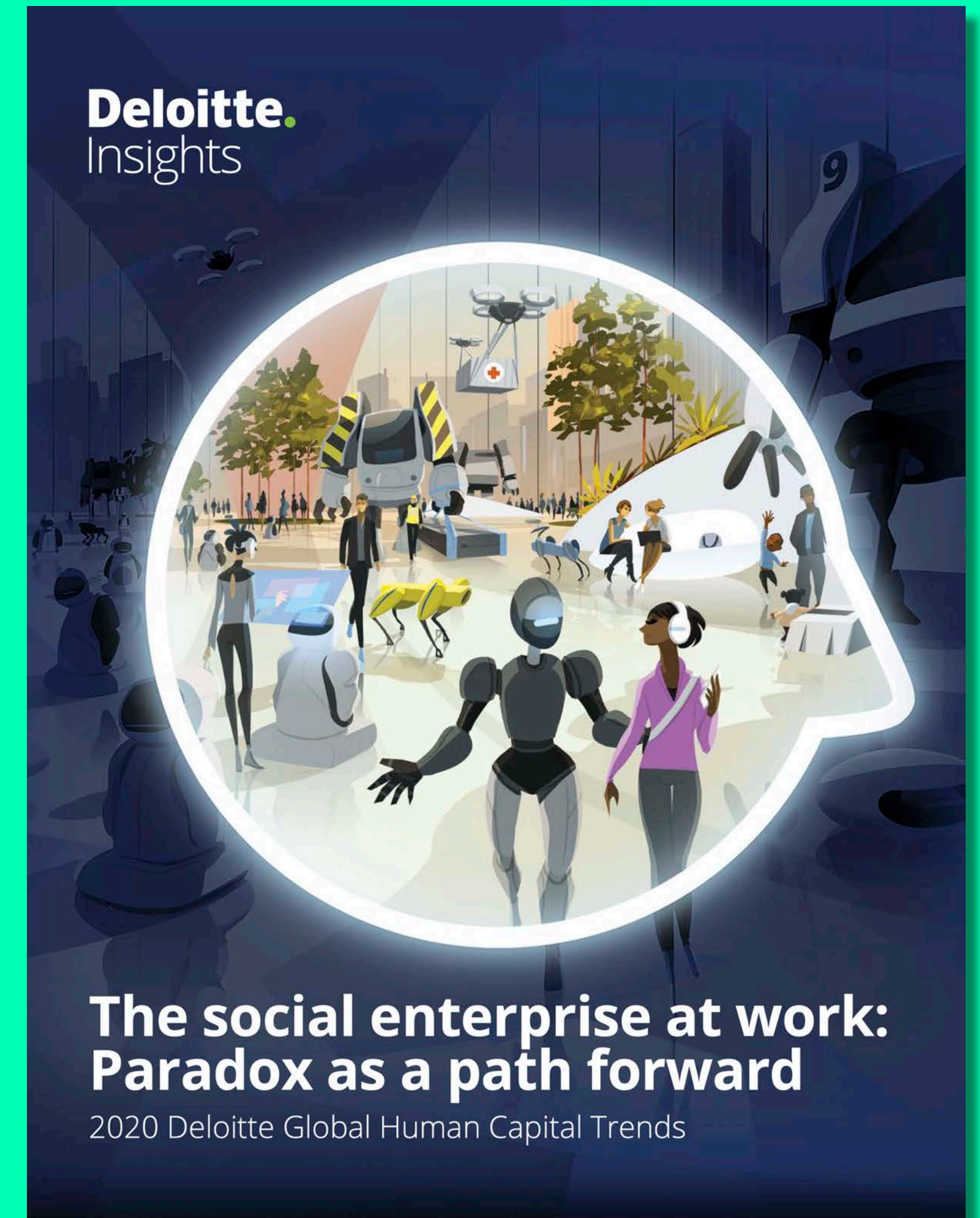
45% employee base

“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.”



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)



New truths of modern enterprises

Outcomes **change continuously**

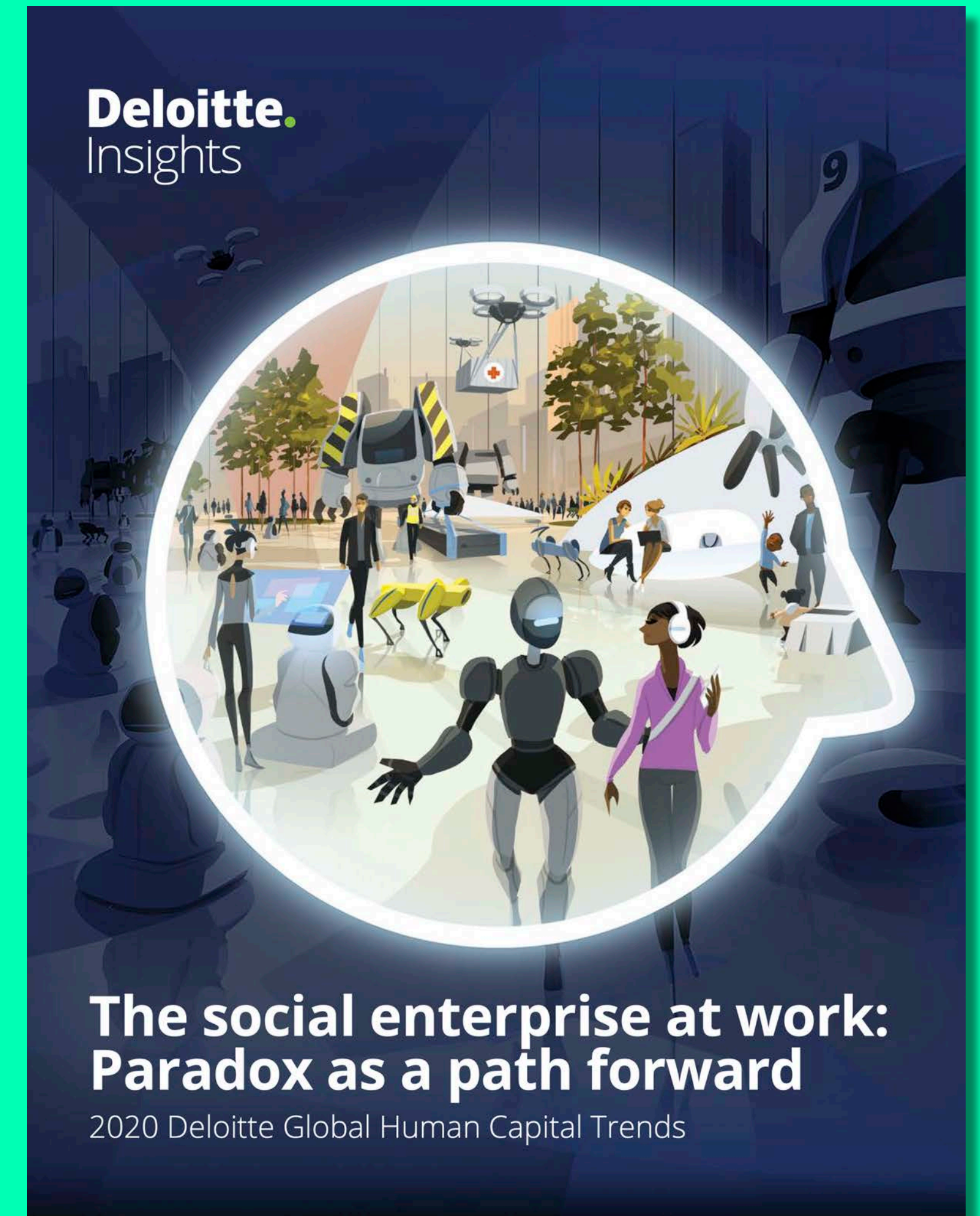
(constant flux means constant reimagination — orgs must factor the future into the present)

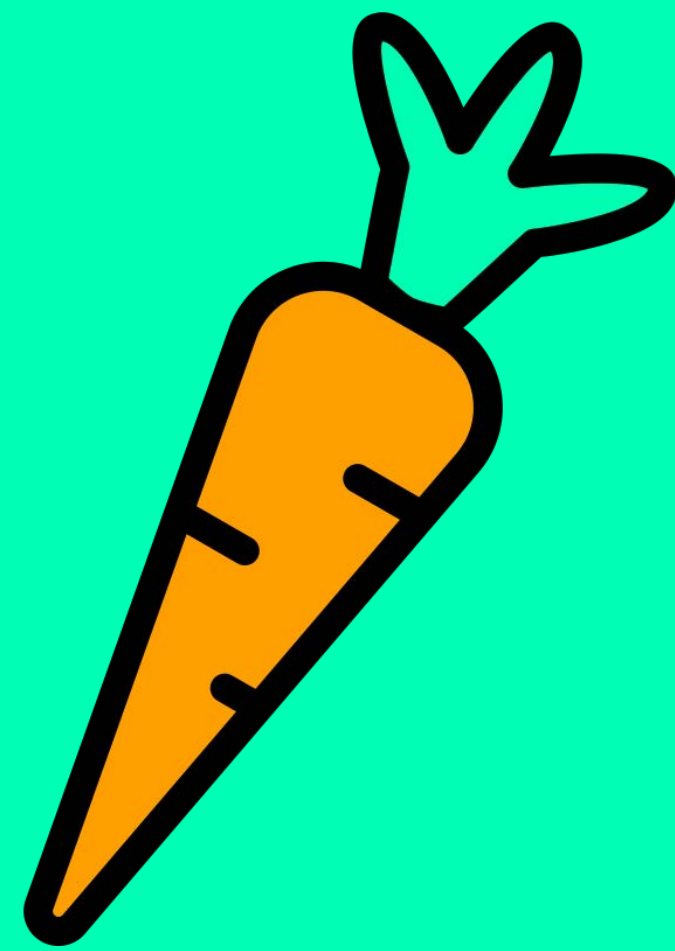
Jobs are **fluid + dynamic**

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

People are ... **people**

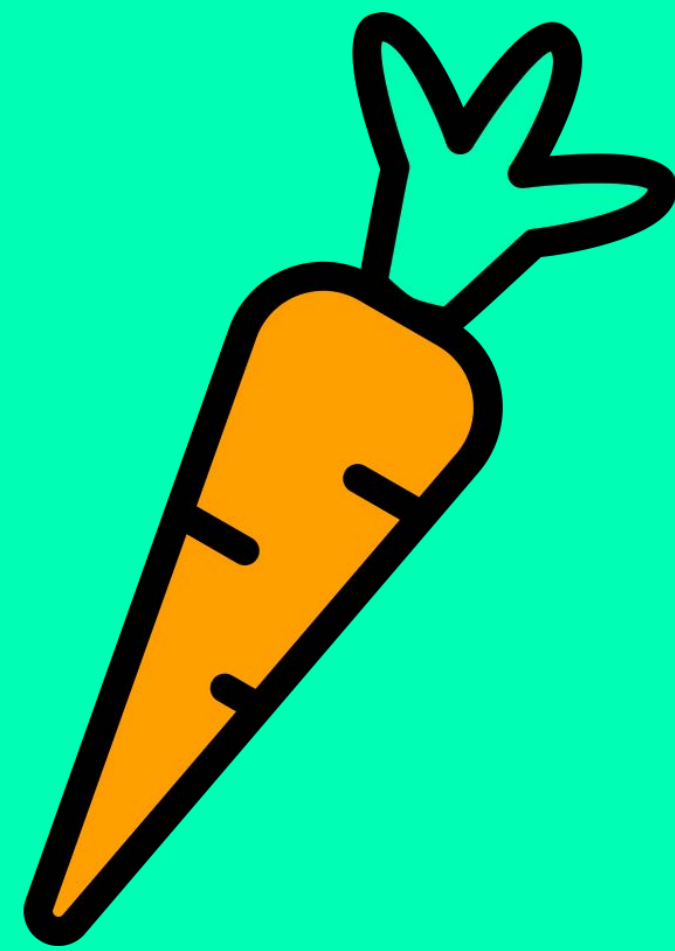
(must embrace full humanity + unique value, which adds complexity to management)





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.**

Will Durant
*(The Story of Philosophy:
The Lives and Opinions of the
World's Greatest Philosophers)*

**What makes
a culture?**



Grounding

+

People

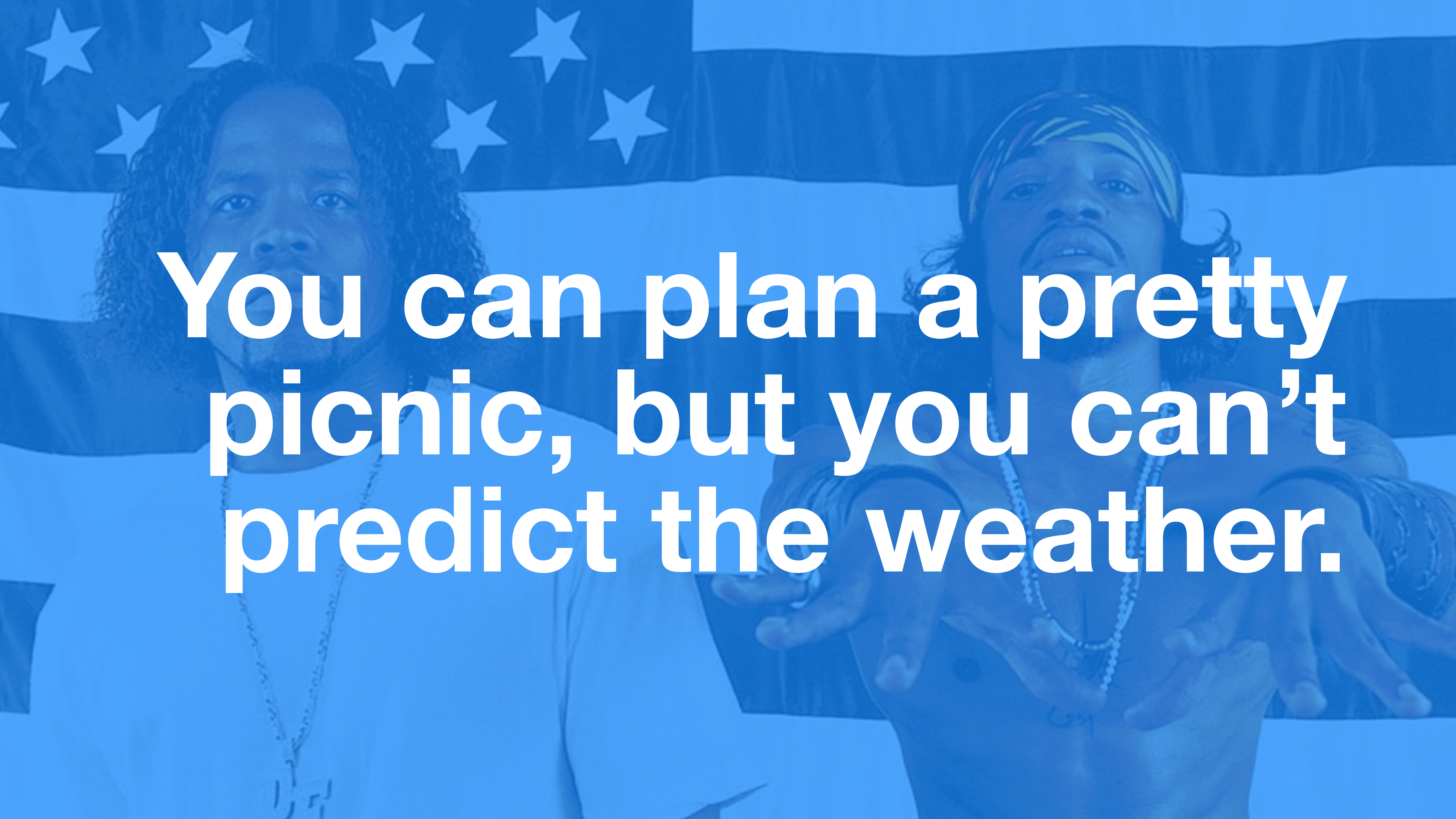
+

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

Told about decisions &
expected to execute

Reactive

Responds to issues
& emergencies
as they come up

Tactical

Executes tasks

Narrow

Works within
traditional “HR practice”
boundaries

“PEOPLE TEAMS”: Being

(maximize
employee experience)

Consulted

Brought into strategic
decisions to add value
with insights + opinions

Deliberate

Understands biz goals
& designs programs to
help achieve them

Strategic

Creates goal-based
programs & incentives

Holistic

Takes wider view of
business & uses people
tools to address them



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

**Like
*this.***

**Mindsets,
Feelings,
Values**

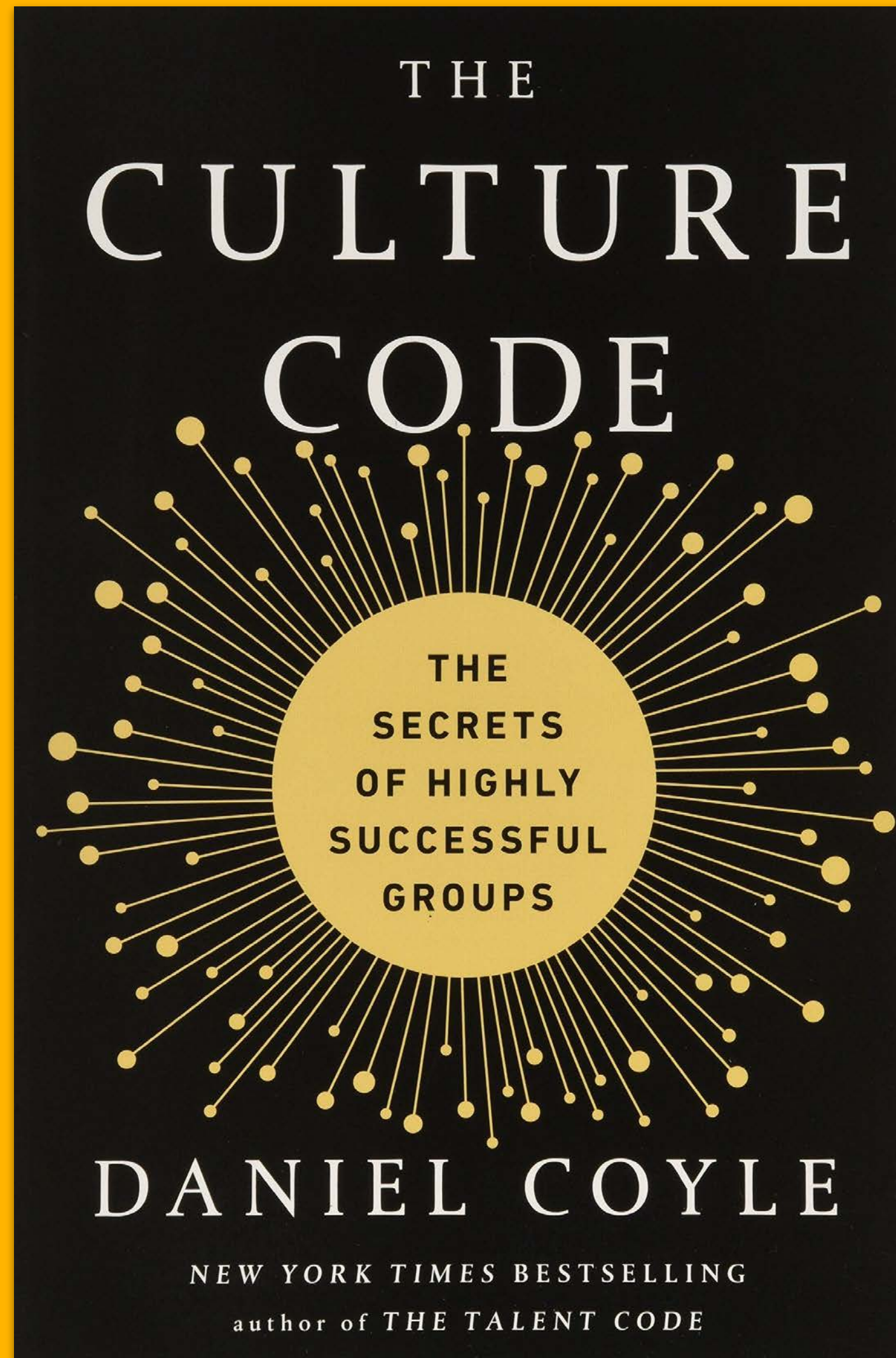


Behaviors



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*

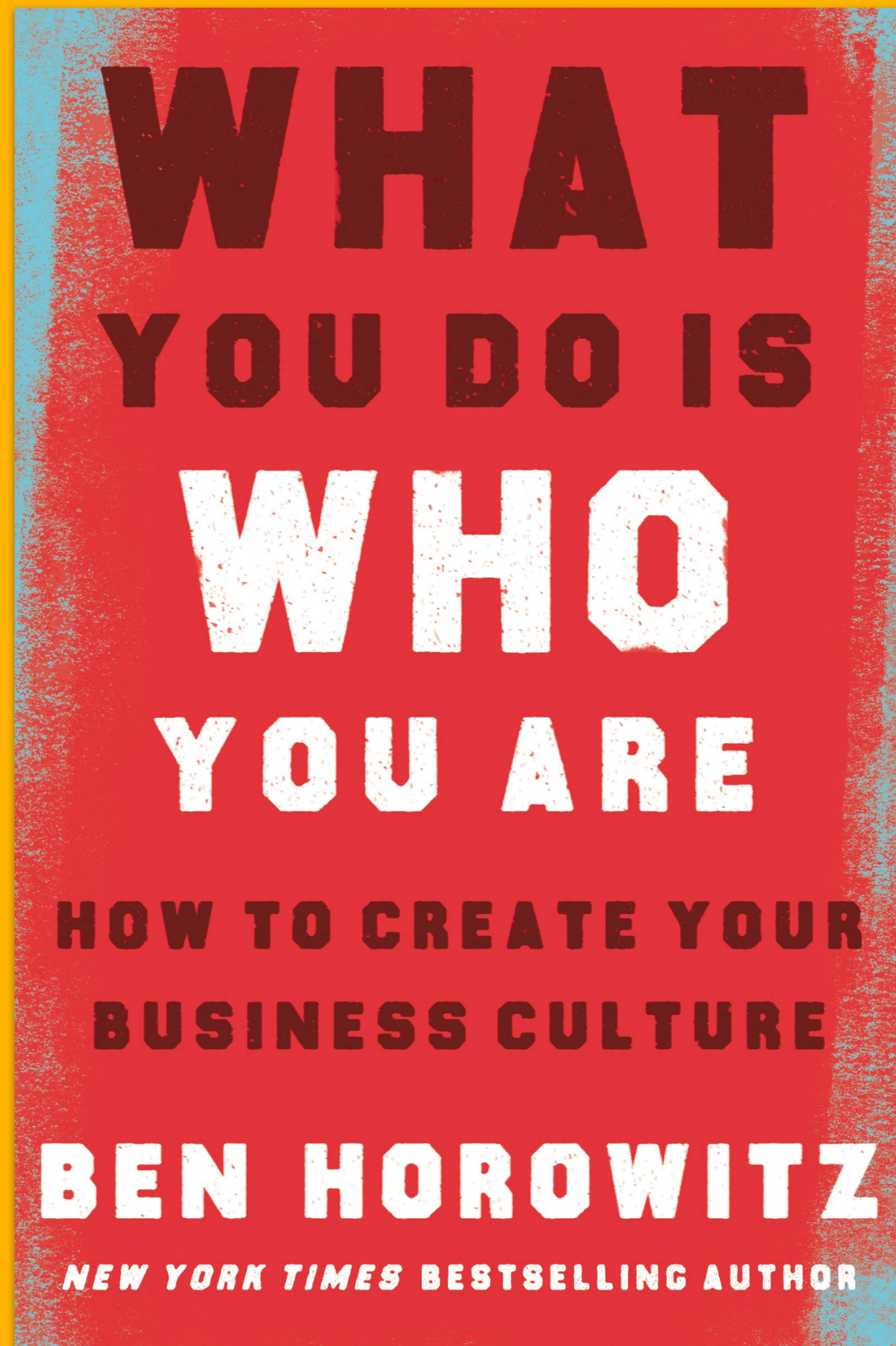
Use narrative to orient, not just to inspire

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

Are you delivering
what's needed?

CULTURE

Are you practicing
The Ways We Work*?

CAPABILITY

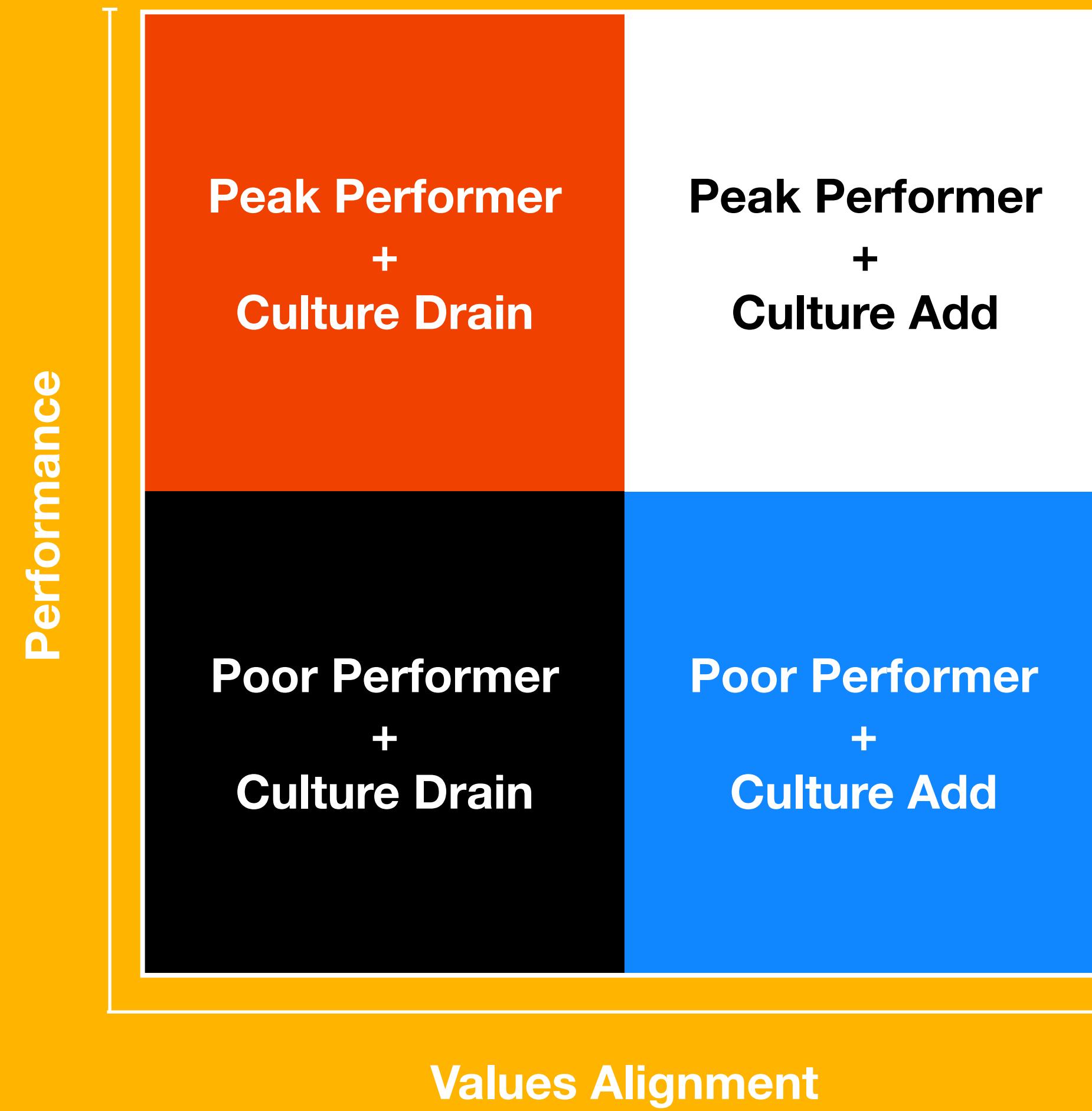
Are you taking responsibility
for your growth thru
self-directed learning?

CAREER

Are your career aspirations
aligned with our org's
opportunities?

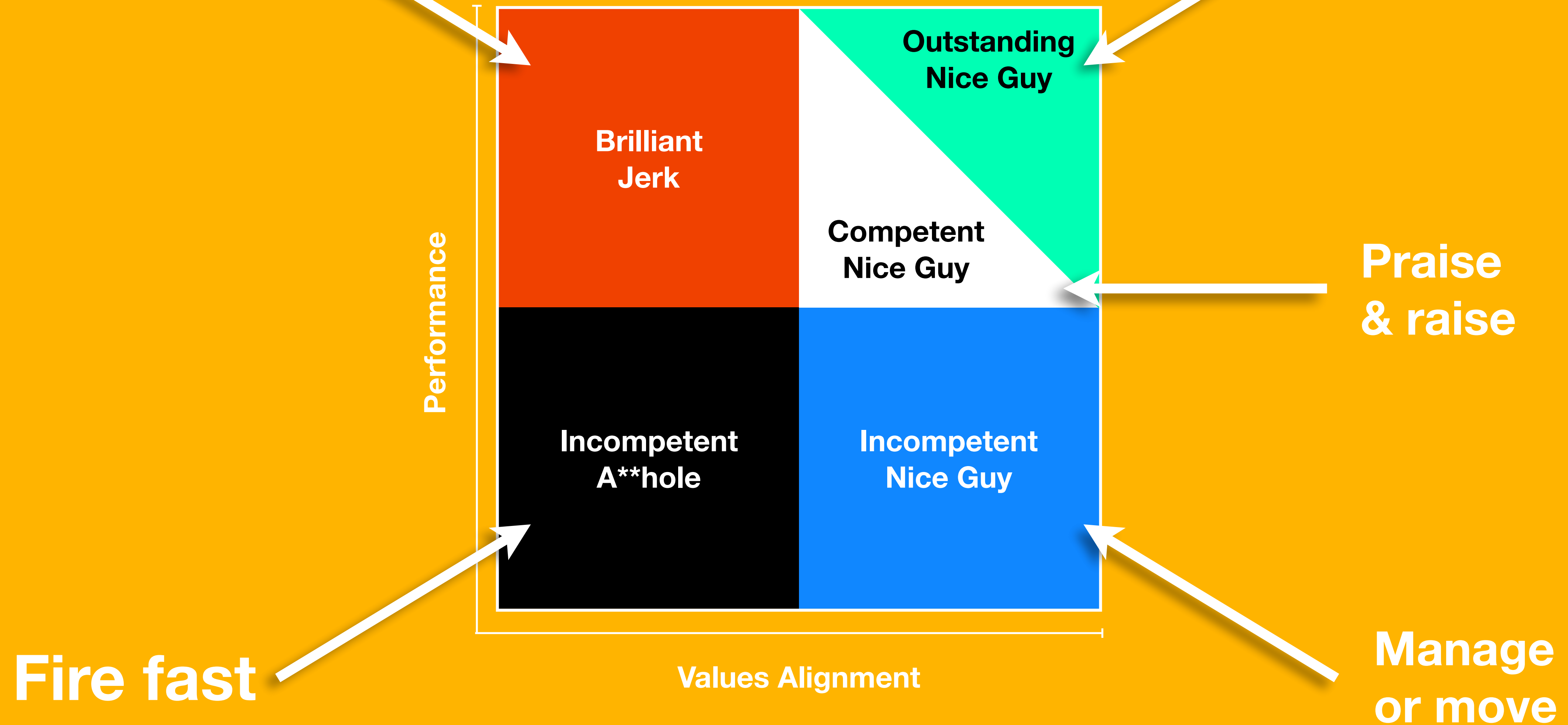
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO TO GROW?

**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.*



**Remediate
or separate**

**Nurture,
cherish,
& clone**



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



Cultivate capabilities

Upskill to address
immediate needs



Leverage “passion
of the explorer” to
ID gaps & reinvent

Formal training +
traditional adult
learning



Learning “in the flow
of work” (guide thru
experiences)

Reward based
on output



Reward based on
continuous learning /
adapting / improving

Prepare workforce
with internal focus



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

+

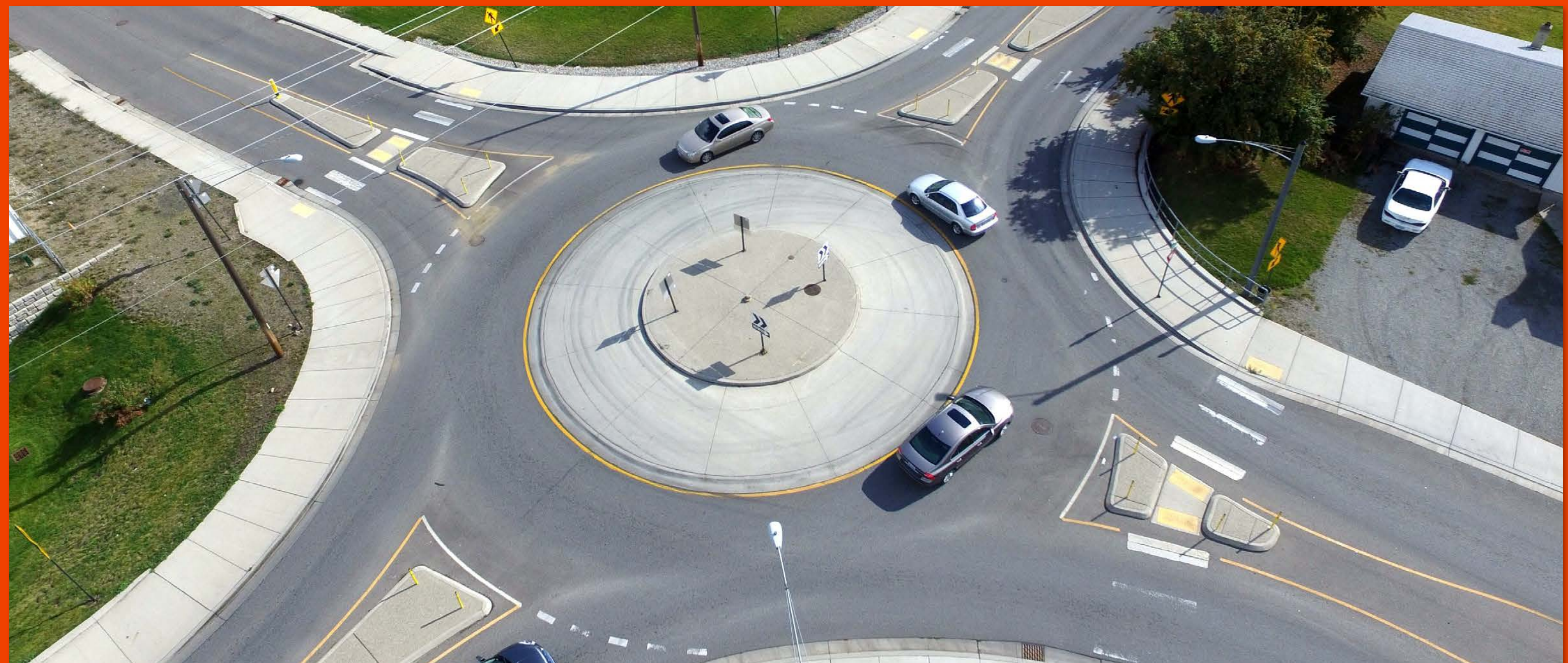
Systems

BRAVE NEW WORK

AARON DIGNAN

ARE YOU
READY
TO REINVENT
YOUR
ORGANIZATION?

— FOUNDER OF THE READY



BRAVE NEW WORK

AARON DIGNAN

— FOUNDER OF THE READY

ARE YOU
READY
TO REINVENT
YOUR
ORGANIZATION?

PURPOSE

How we orient
& steer

AUTHORITY

How we share power
& make decisions

STRUCTURE

How we organize
& team

STRATEGY

How we plan
& prioritize

RESOURCES

How we invest
our time & money

INNOVATION

How we learn
& evolve

WORKFLOW

How we divide
& do the work

MEETINGS

How we convene
& coordinate

INFORMATION

How we share
& use data

MEMBERSHIP

How we define &
cultivate relationships

MASTERY

How we grow
& mature

COMPENSATION

How we pay
& provide

TENSION

(what it is + a story about how it manifests)

PRACTICE

(your hypothesis + what we should do)

PARTICIPANTS

(who's involved, what they're committing to)

DURATION

(how long it lasts, when you retro)

LEARNING METRICS

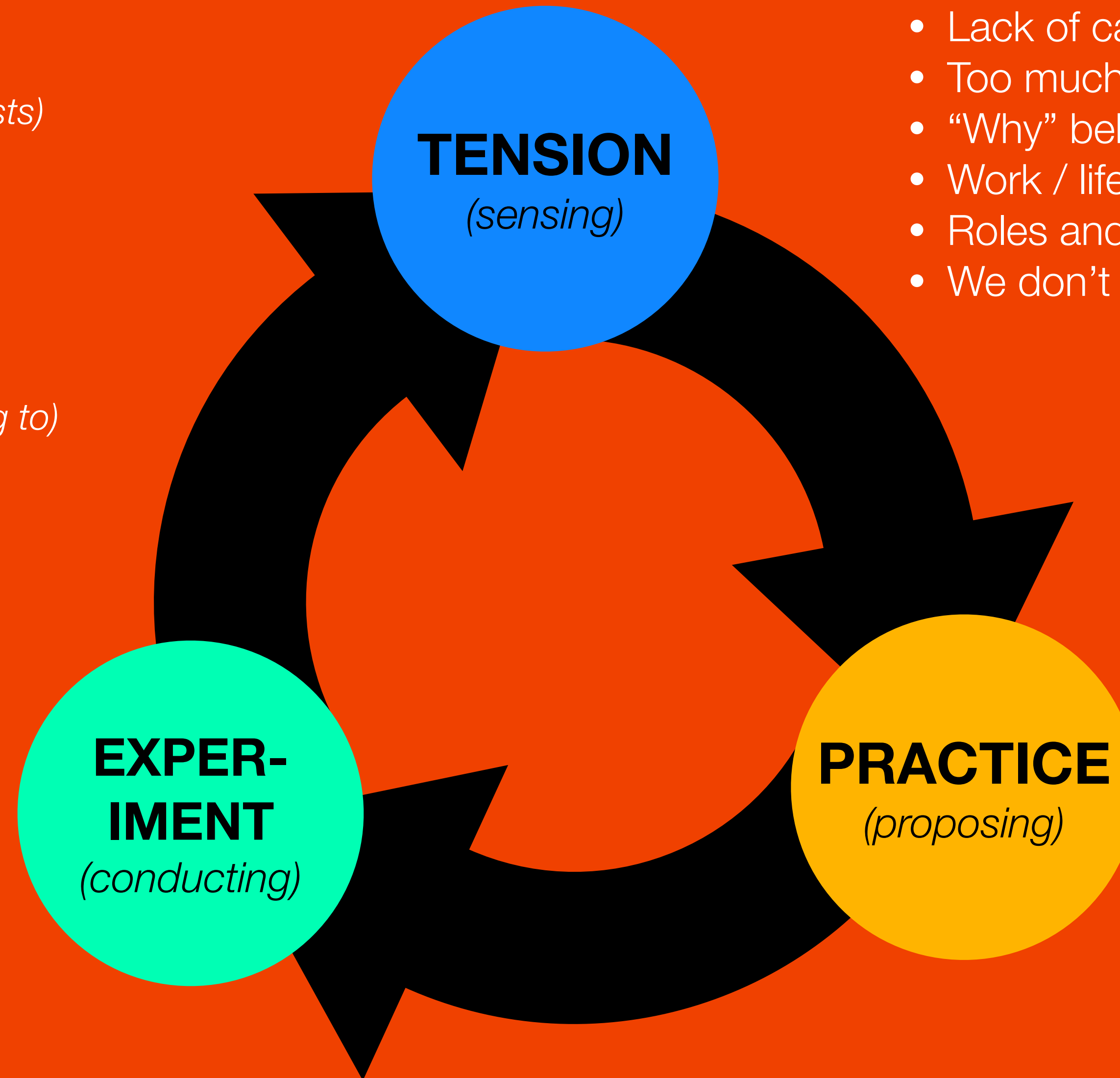
(how we'll know if it was good or bad / stories you hope to hear)

REQUIREMENTS

(resources, space, funding)

SAFETY

(support / consent)



- We work in silos
- Meetings to prepare for meetings
- Lack of candor
- Too much consensus
- “Why” behind decisions isn’t always clear
- Work / life boundaries not respected
- Roles and/or career paths are unclear
- We don’t take risks

- End a meeting or process
- Form SLAM teams
- Crowdsourcing & eliminate unnecessary policies
- Recognize & celebrate noble failure
- Fill leadership roles thru consent or election
- Cap # of projects in progress
- Adopt proven meeting structures

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

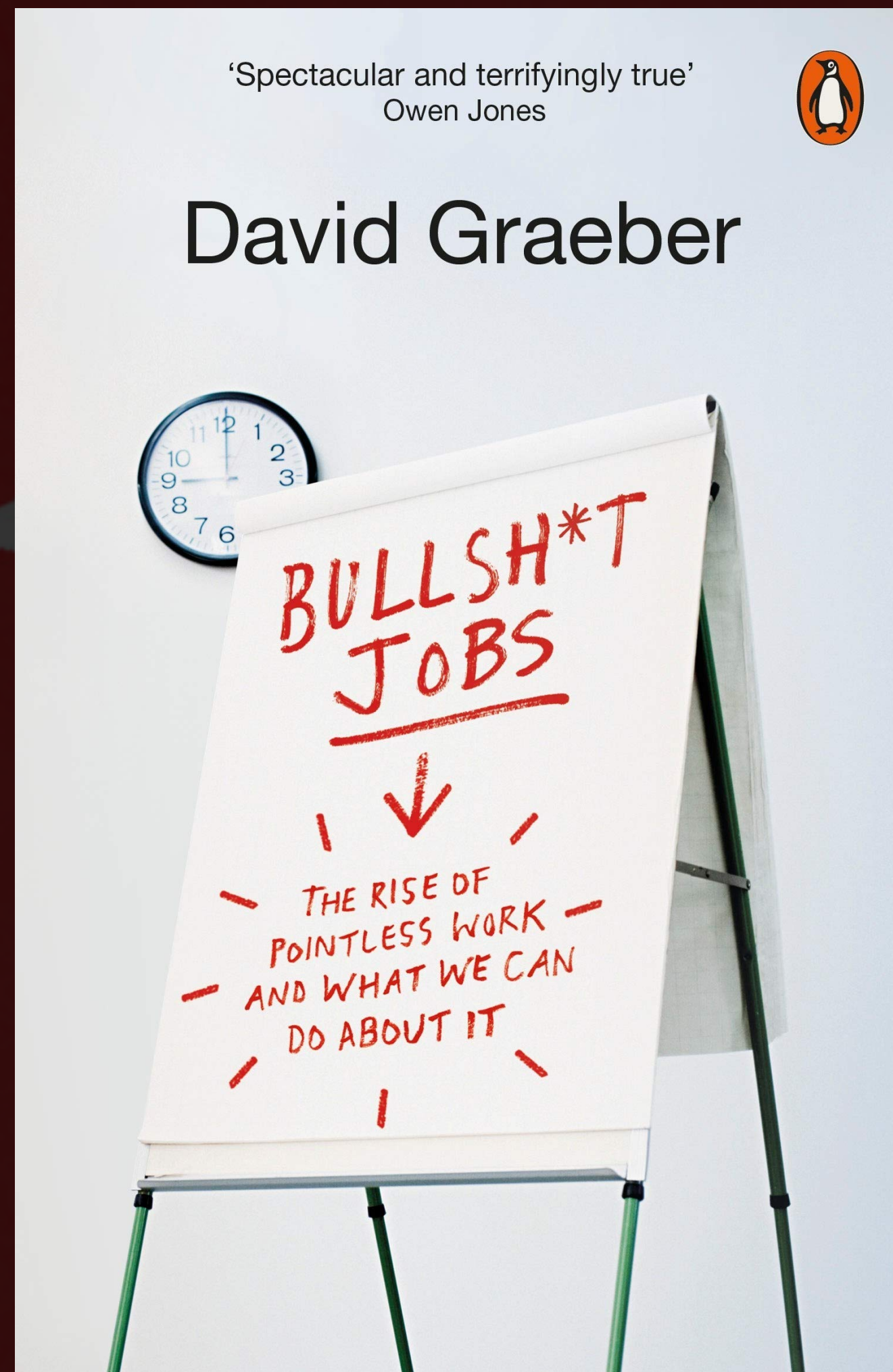
Less rigid regulation

Growth as result, not goal
(*human flourishing* is goal)

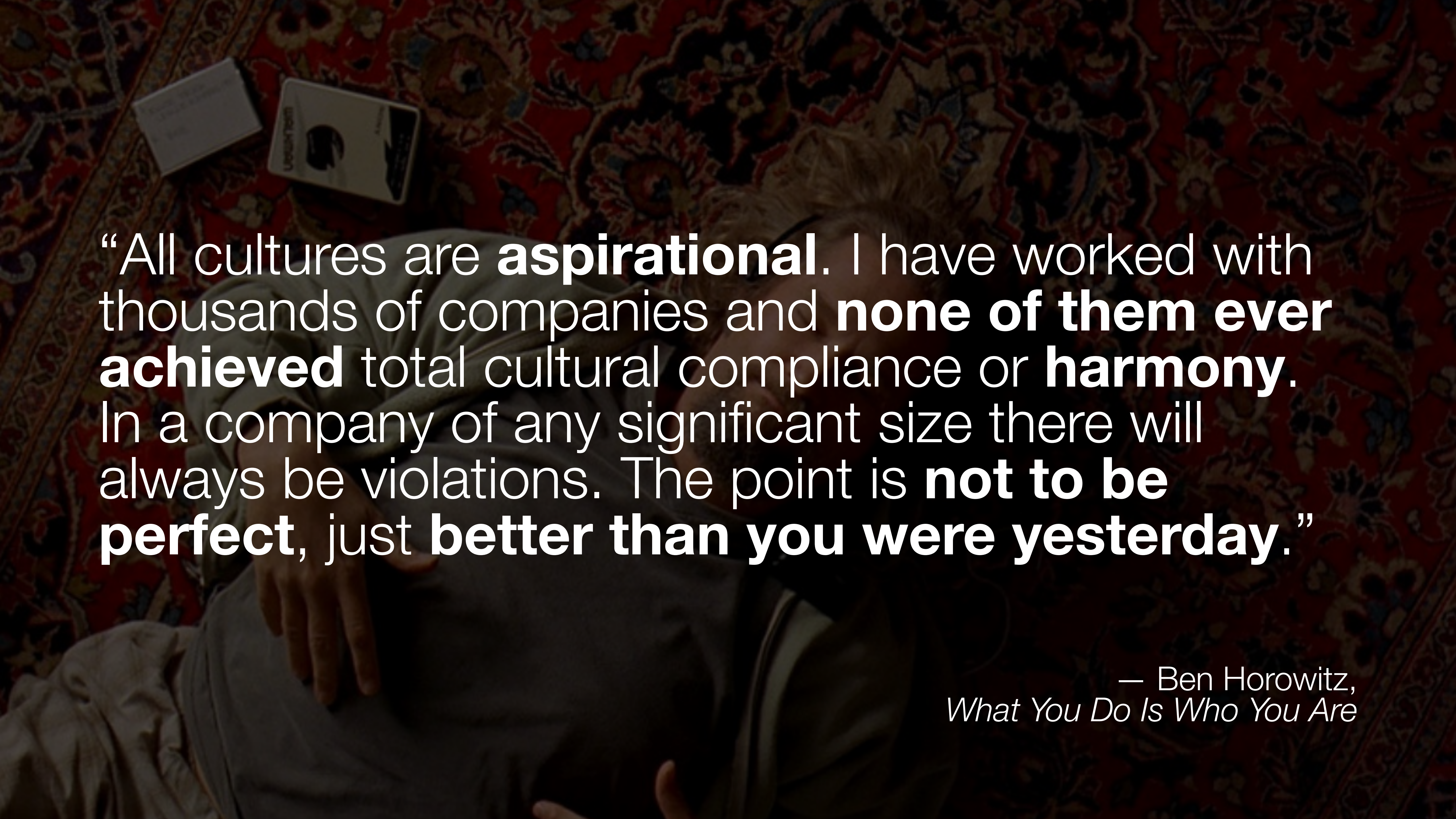
Alternatives to traditional incorporation
(massive distributed collaboration, pay thru blockchain)

Creativity & complex problem-solving prioritized in schools

Where (else) could this lead?



“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.**”

A person is lying on their back on a red and gold patterned rug. They are wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt and dark pants. Their hands are resting on their chest. A smartphone and a small white card are lying on the rug near their head. The background is dark and out of focus.

“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

Welcome

The world of work has been on a slow evolution for decades. Legacy practice roots run deep in how we design work experiences and build people systems to support them. What if we designed work from the ground up today?

Lars Schmidt

- All Ideas
- Your Ideas
- Newest Ideas
- Benefits
- Compensation
- Culture & Values
- Data

- Employee Experience
- Other
- Inclusion
- Performance
- Recruiting
- Remote
- Wellness

Our workplaces are being transformed by COVID-19. Practices that have been scaling incrementally (i.e. remote) are now making giant leaps forward. Businesses have had to make significant adjustments and rapidly rethink the constructs of “work” in order to support employees sheltering in place, juggling childcare, struggling with isolation and mental health, and more.

Many companies are now developing their “return to work” plans. What are we returning to? When are we returning to it? What will “it” look like? The truth is we don’t fully know — we only know it will never be the same as it was.

What if this is our chance to reimagine work altogether?

All Ideas

Add New Idea

Idea Overview	Categories	Idea Details	Vote	Upvoters	Author	Date
Reallocate commercial real-estate and travel & expenditure budgets to programs that support remote work and wellness	Benefits Remote Work Practices Employee Experience	With less employees traveling for work or coming into the office, companies have an opportunity to re-allocate those budgets towards programs that optimize remote work and employee wellness.	40		Lars Schmidt	4/16/2020
Mental health becomes a core benefit (Categorize as Self-Care that incorporates Physical, Emotional, & Psychological and also has a positive connotation)	Benefits Wellness	Mental health and wellness support becomes a foundational part of company benefits.	28		Lars Schmidt	5/8/2020
Shift nomenclature of 'remote work'	Remote Inclusion Performance Employee Experience Work Practices	When we use the term 'remote' work we push against diversity of locations and inclusion of those not physically located in the defined and central location. Remote means far or not connected and we are certainly not that in the world of technology we live in. Shifting to "distributed work" (see Matt Mullenweg's work at Word Pres), just defining a colleague's geographic location (I'm working from NJ or I am working from TX) and or simplifying to "I'm working at the organization's Center City Philadelphia location" or "I'm flexibly working from downtown San Francisco today."	24		Susan Stray...	5/11/2020
Design more autonomous learning strategies	Remote Other Employee	Refocus on remote training: self-directed and peer learning, micro-lessons and content that	20		Kristen Lisanti	5/9/2020



ok, that's all