Beyond One-Size-Fits-All Leadership:
Leading in a Complex World

• Julia Västrik

Julia Västrik

Agile Coach

Facts

- Located in Tallinn, Estonia
- Education: Computer Science
- Organizer of Agile Saturday Tallinn conference

Previously also:

- Software Engineer
- Project Manager
- Scrum Master

- Languages:
  - English
  - Estonian
  - French
  - Russian

Sports

- [x] Running, strenght training, HIIT etc.
- [x] Roller skating
- [x] Winter sports

Hobbies

- Drawing
- Reading (a lot)
- Professional communities
- Healthy food cooking
- Wine tasting

A quote reflecting my philosophy:

"The price of excellence is discipline. The cost of mediocrity is disappointment."

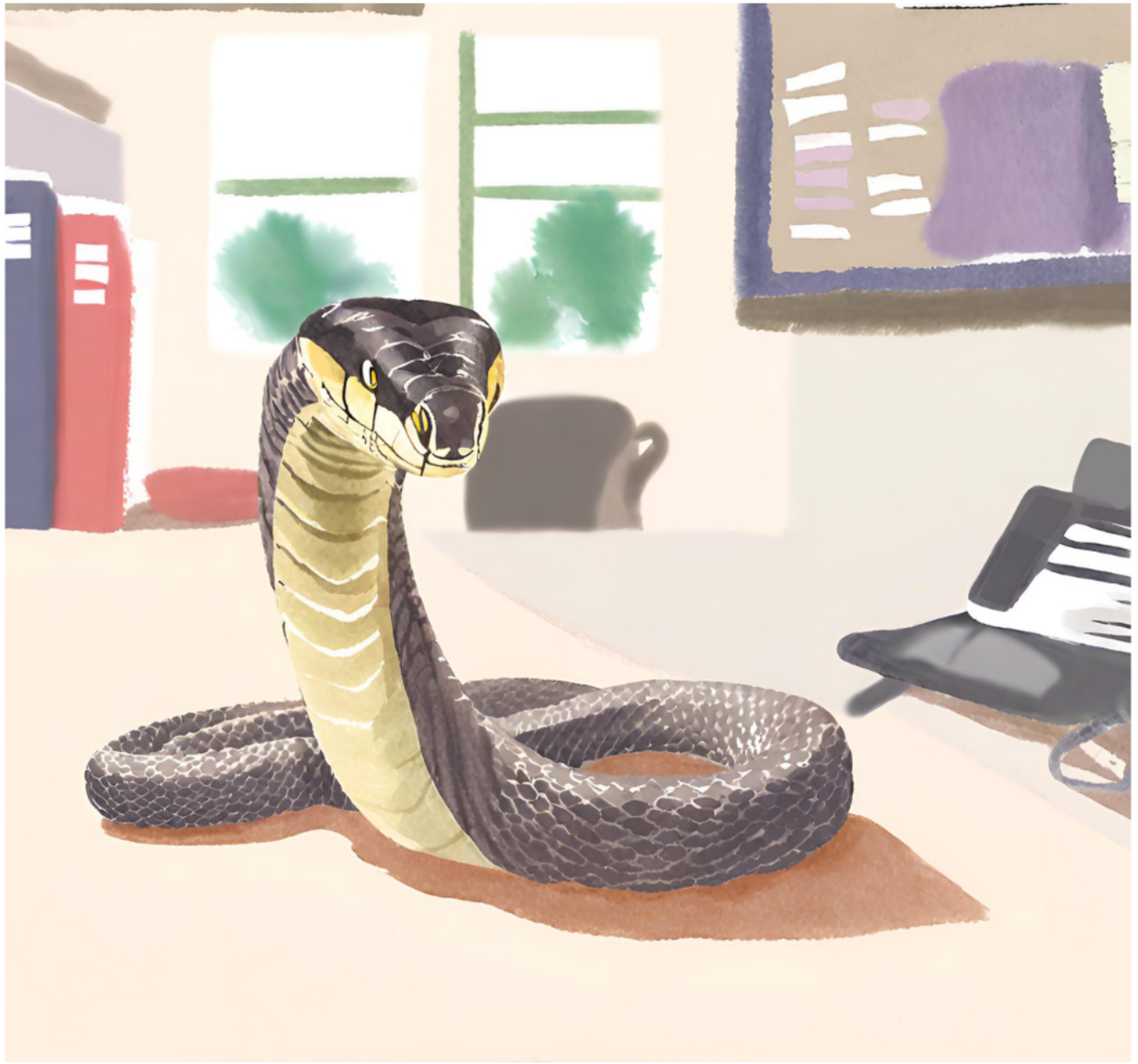
William Arthur Ward

Or maybe this one ?

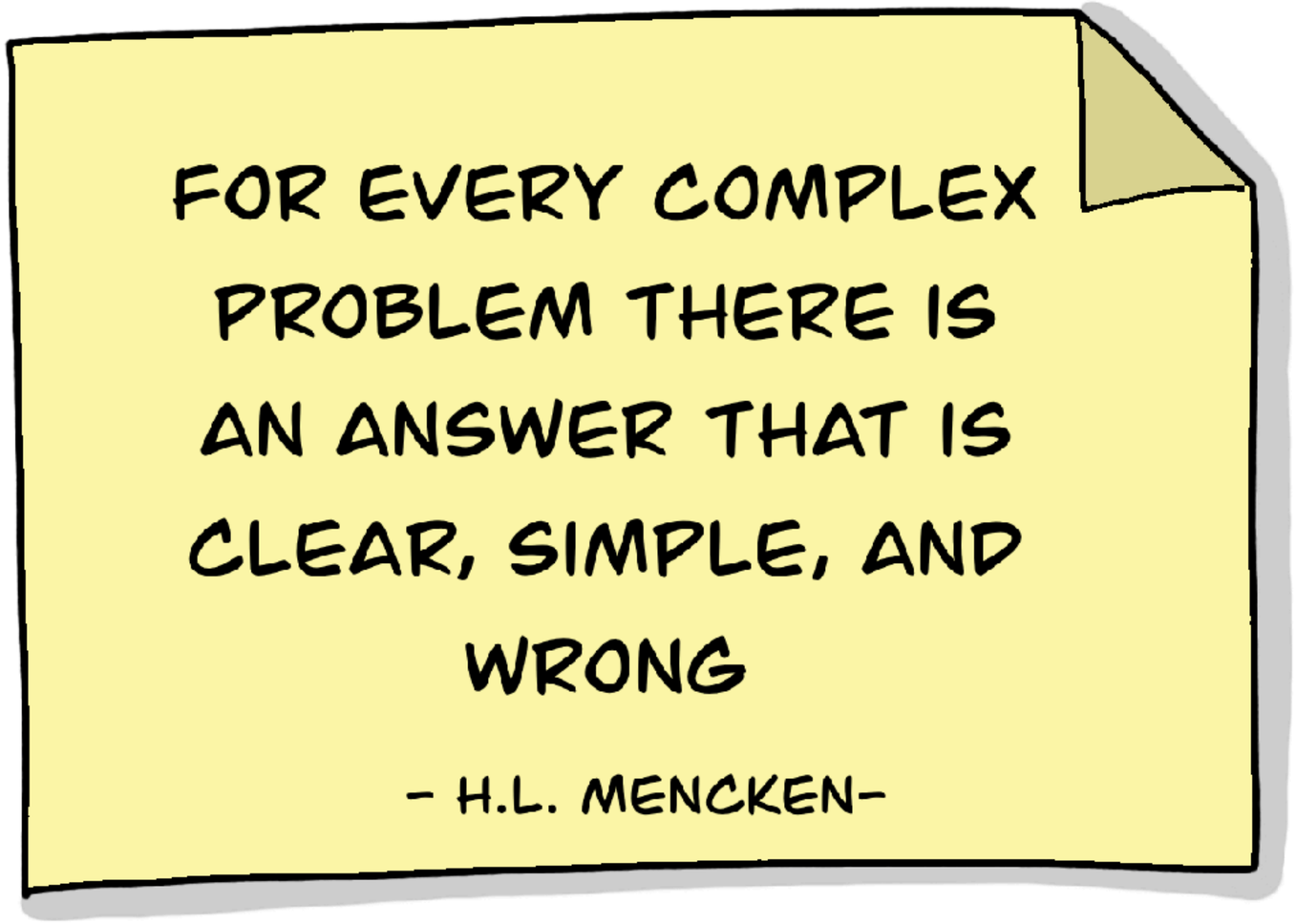
"I don't have talent, so I just get up earlier."

Henry Rollins

Enjoy Life!



The Cobra Effect


FOR EVERY COMPLEX
PROBLEM THERE IS
AN ANSWER THAT IS
CLEAR, SIMPLE, AND
WRONG
- H.L. MENCKEN-

⚒️ 3 Steps to Delegate

⚒️ 5 Steps to Solve Conflicts

⚒️ 7 Steps for Giving Feedback

⚒️ 9 Steps to run 1-on-1 meetings

⚒️ 11 Steps to Build Effective Teams

⚒️ 13 Steps to Motivate Your Employees

⚒️ 15 Steps for Better Employee Performance

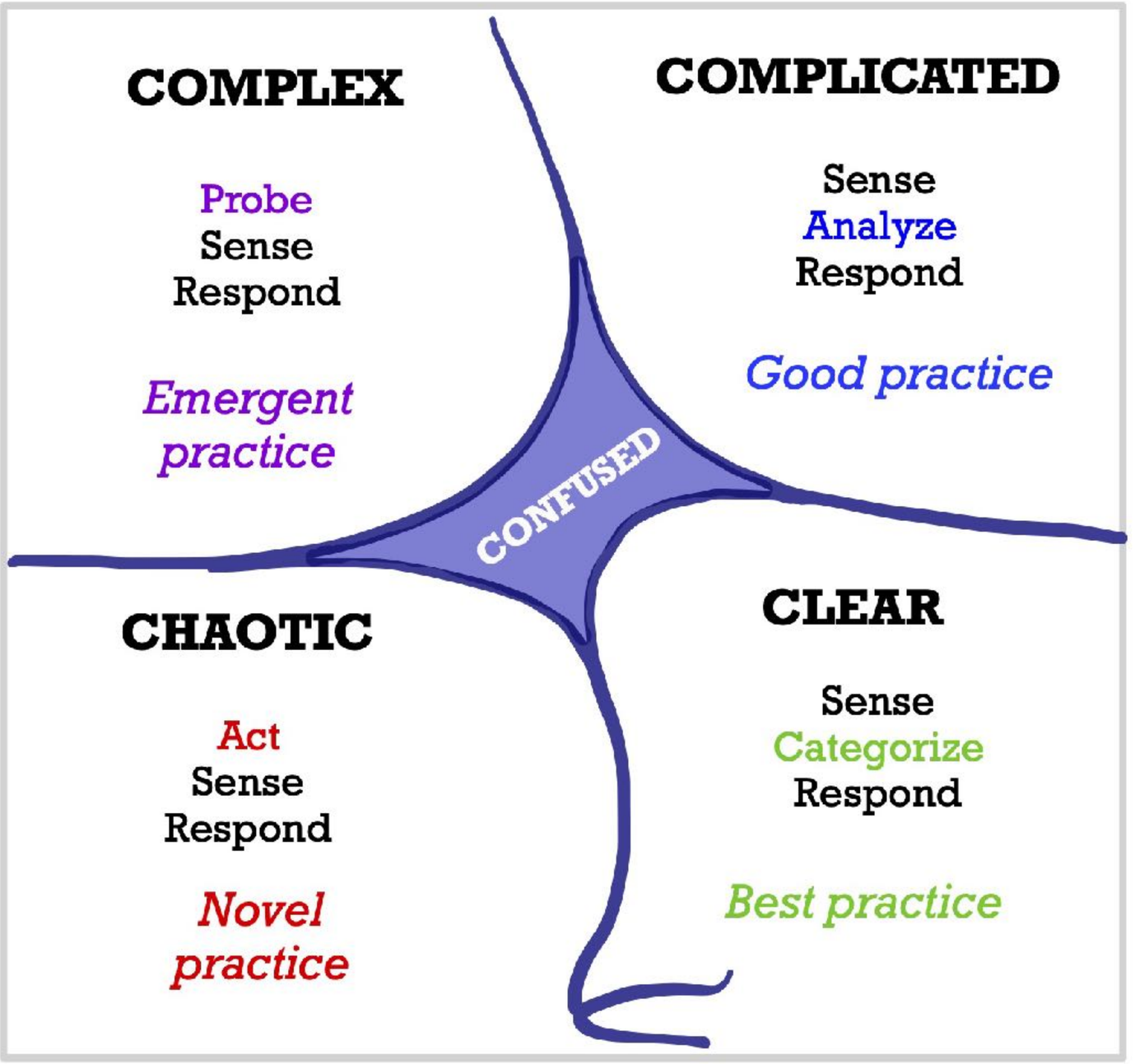
⚒️ 27 Indispensable Steps to Drain the Life Out of Your Team

CYNEFIN

Unknown
Unknows

UNORDERED

Unpredictable



Known
Unknows

ORDERED

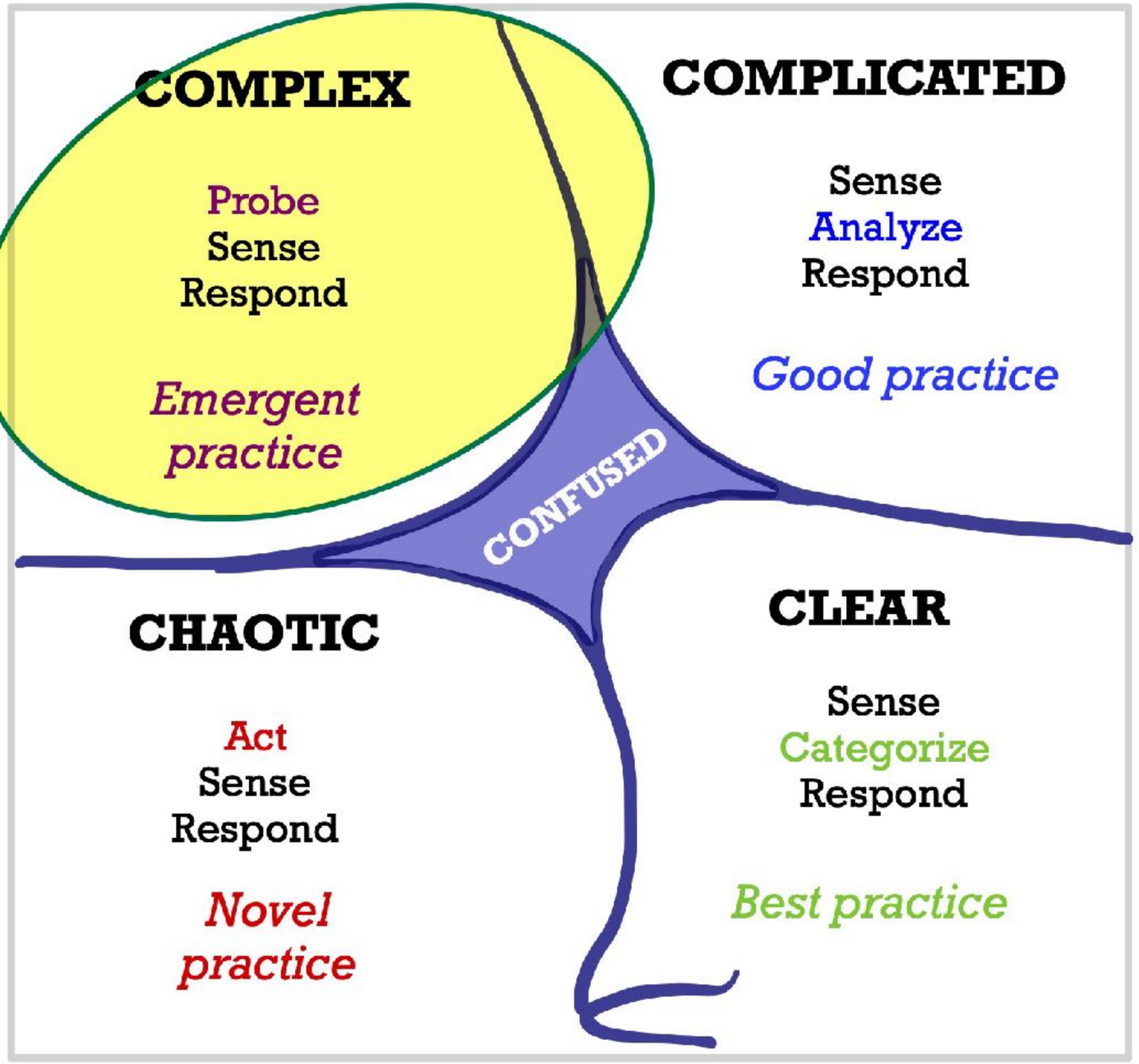
Cause and Effect Are Predictable

Known
Knowns

(by Dave Snowden)

Agile belongs here

CYNEFIN



UNORDERED

Unpredictable

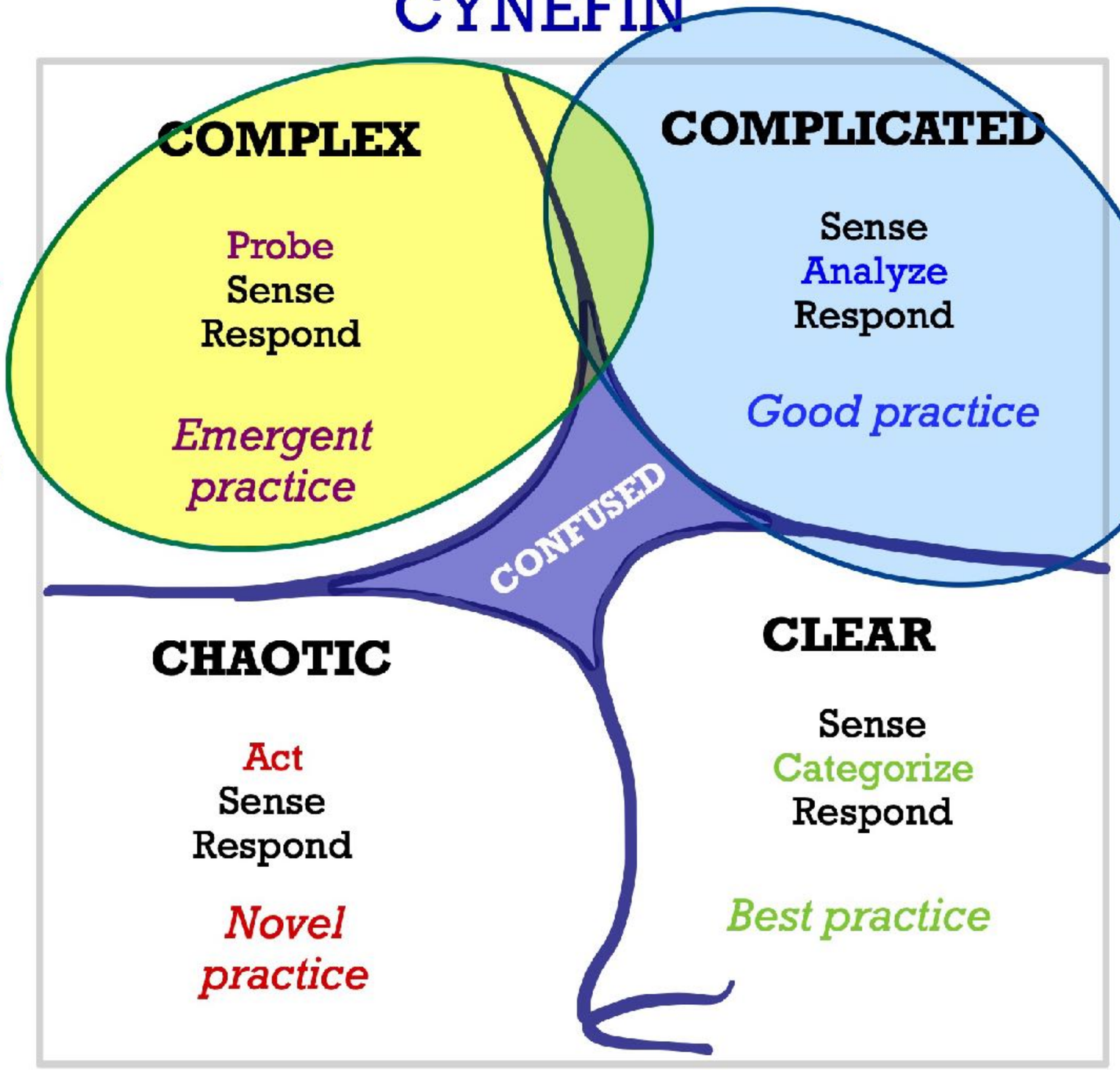
ORDERED

Cause and Effect Are Predictable

CYNEFIN

Agile belongs here

Traditional Project management (aka Waterfall) belongs here



UNORDERED

Unpredictable

ORDERED

Cause and Effect Are Predictable

Not VAT registered

Leadership Styles to fit a Complex World

DIRECTING LEADERSHIP STYLE

"PEOPLE ARE SOLDERS"

RESOLVES OBSTACLES ON THEIR OWN

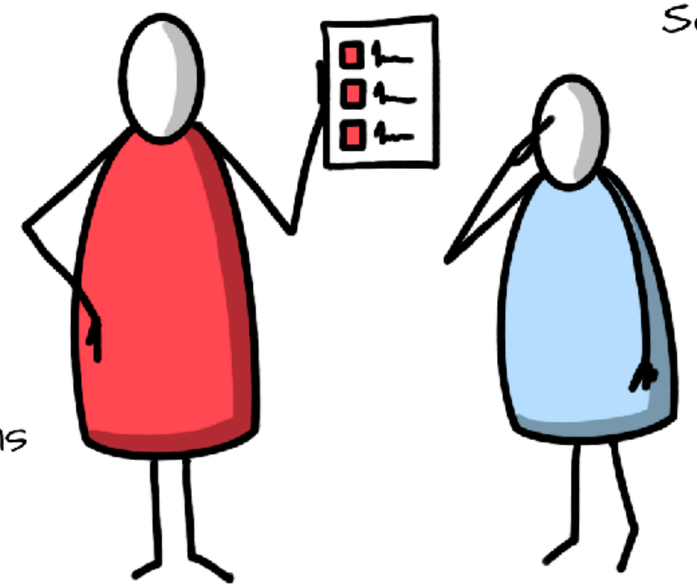
Expert

Top-Down

Problem-Solver

Expects compliance

Discussions are not welcome



Fast decision-making

Tactical

Always busy

High control

PROVIDES:

CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS

FOCUS ON TASKS

TELLS HOW TO DO

CLOSED TO FEEDBACK

PACESETTING LEADERSHIP STYLE

"PEOPLE ARE RACEHORSES"

EXPECTS QUICK RESOLUTION OF OBSTACLES

Demanding

High standards

Motivates with goals

Fast-paced

Competitive

Sets a personal example

Short-term

High pressure

PROVIDES:

TARGETS

FOCUS ON RESULTS

... AND PERFORMANCE

TELLS WHAT TO DO

ACCEPTS FEEDBACK IF IT HELPS TO WIN

COORDINATING LEADERSHIP STYLE

"PEOPLE ARE GEARS"

Coordinates collaboration

Defines rules and procedures

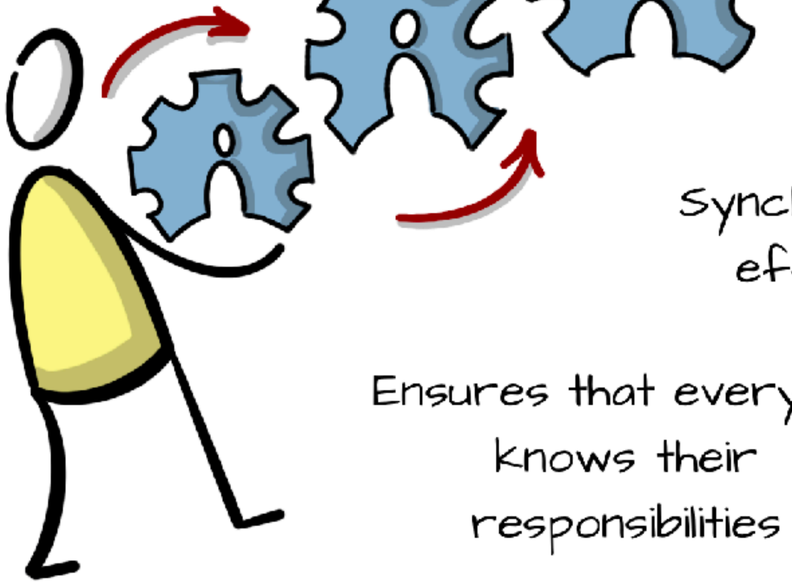
Gate-keeper

Protects team from the external world

Synchronizes efforts

Ensures that everyone knows their responsibilities

Controls all the workflows



PROVIDES:

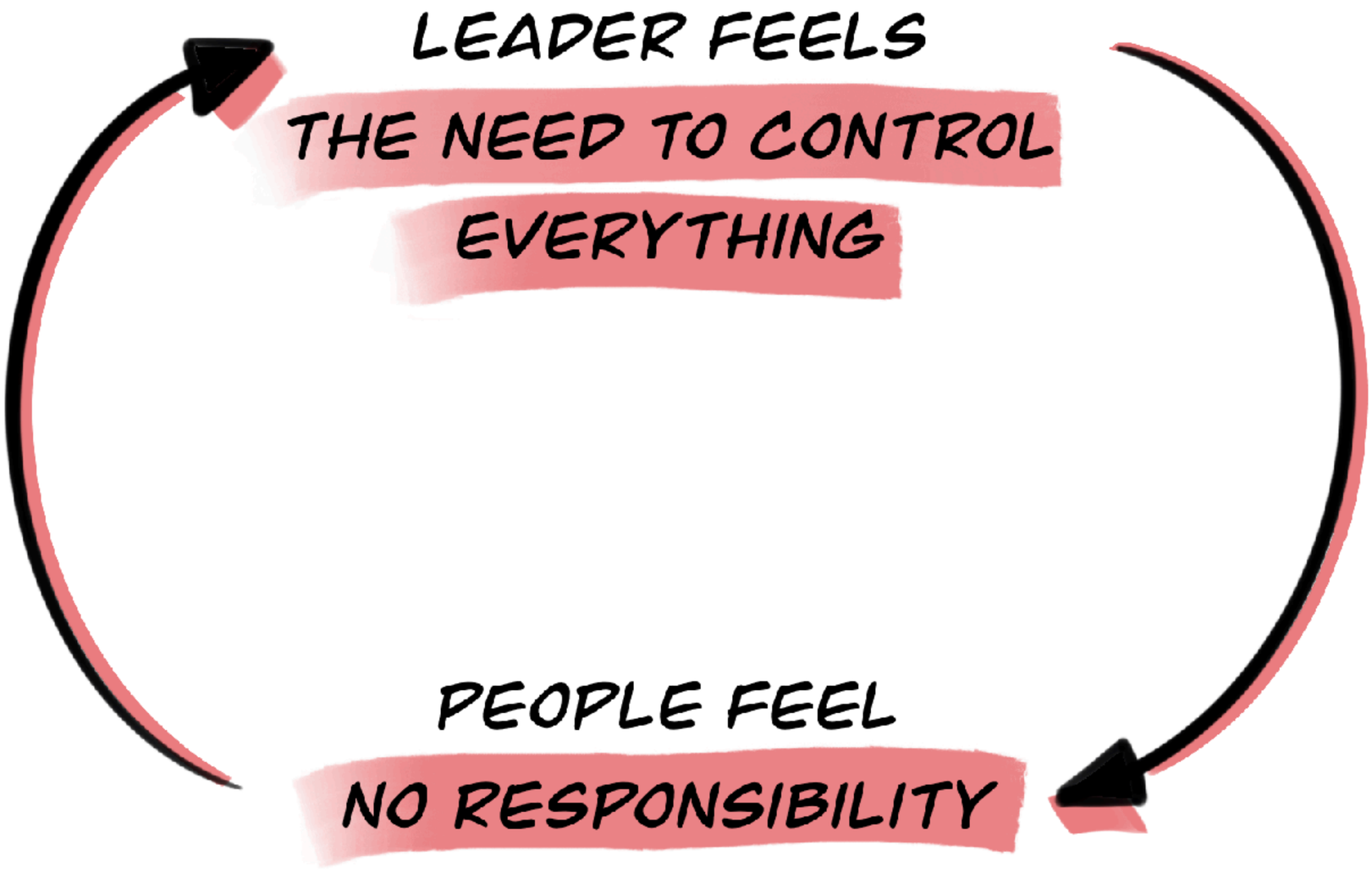
STRUCTURE AND ORDER

FOCUS ON EFFICIENCY

TELLS WHEN AND IN WHAT ORDER TO DO

MOSTLY RESOLVES OBSTACLES ALONE

USES FEEDBACK TO INCREASE EFFICIENCY

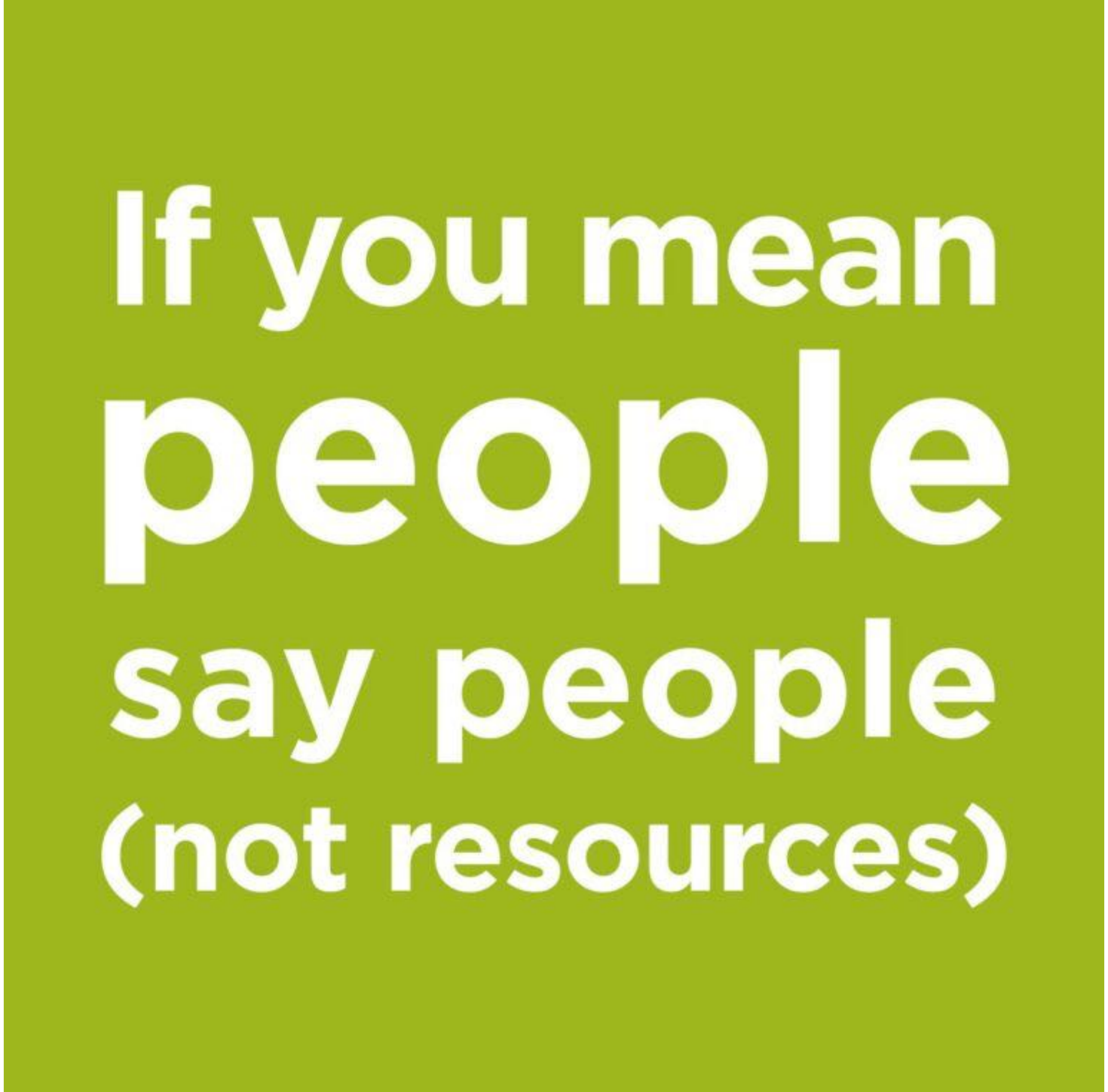

LEADER FEELS
THE NEED TO CONTROL
EVERYTHING
PEOPLE FEEL
NO RESPONSIBILITY

“PEOPLE ARE RESOURCES”

Please raise your hand if you you like being called a resource!

Raise your hand if you've heard people being called 'resources' at your workplace.

What could we say instead?


If you mean
people
say people
(not resources)

A WARNING FOR MANAGERS

If you call people “Resources”

be very careful -

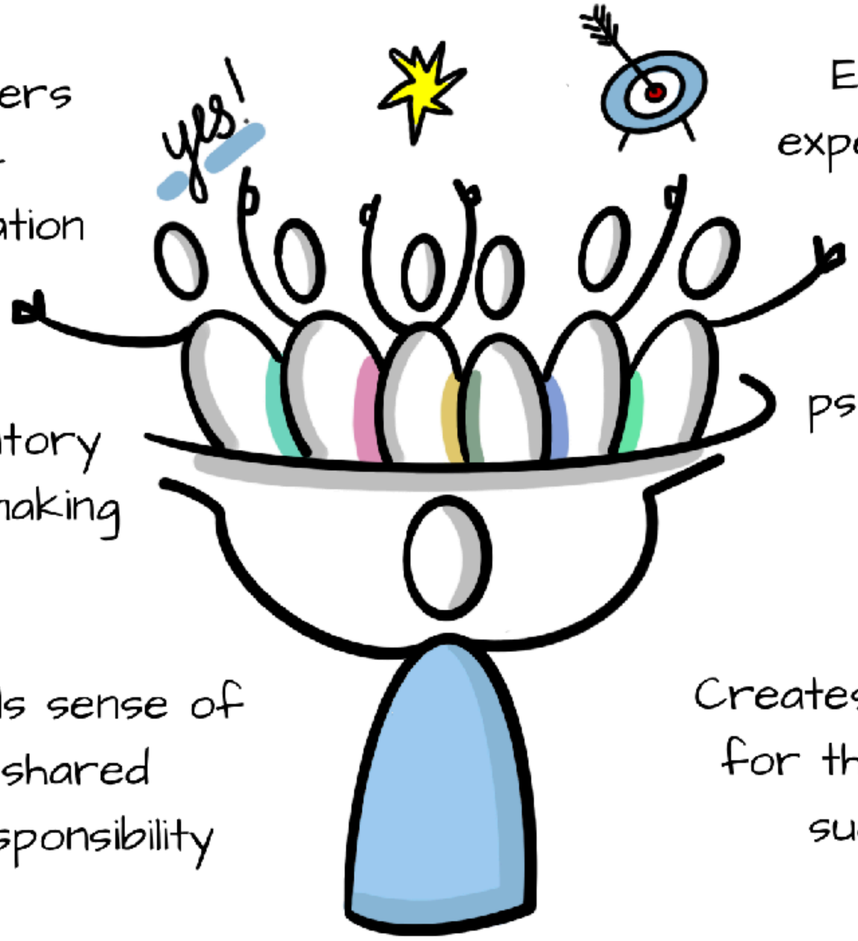
they might call you “Overhead”

ENABLING LEADERSHIP STYLE

"PEOPLE ARE ASSETS"

Empowers self-organization

Encorages experimentation



PROVIDES:

INTENT AND CONTEXT

Participatory decision-making

Fosters psychological safety

"It is ok to fail"

FOCUS ON OUTCOME

ENSURES THAT THE OBSTACLES ARE REMOVED

Instills sense of shared responsibility

Creates conditions for the team to succeed

FOSTERS FEEDBACK CULTURE

TELLS WHY TO DO

COACHING LEADERSHIP STYLE

"PEOPLE ARE POTENTIAL"

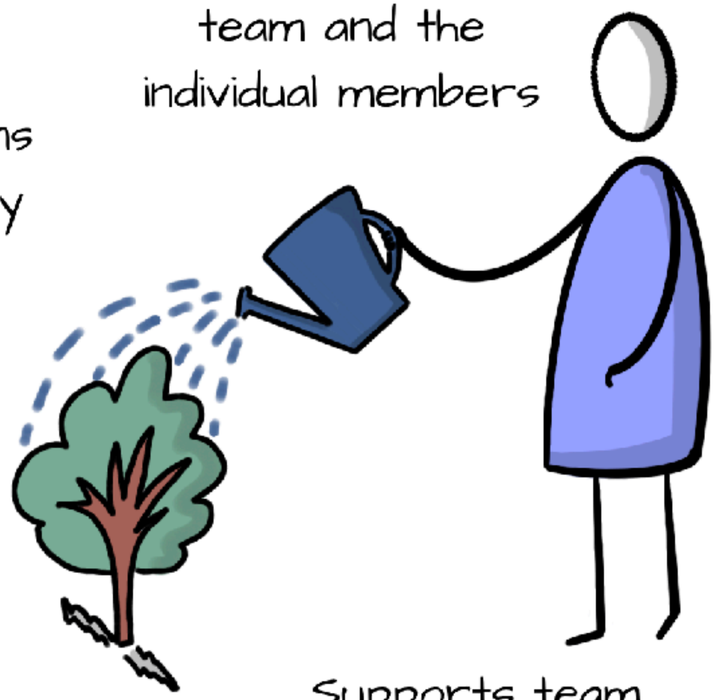
Listens deeply

Lets the team fail

"Failure is a learning opportunity"

ENCOURAGES THE TEAM TO REMOVE OBSTACLES THEMSELVES

Coaches the whole team and the individual members



Supports team members with their growth

PROVIDES:

Empathetic

Poses challenging and forward-thinking questions

Enables the team effectiveness through coaching

ASKS RATHER THAN TELLS

FEEDBACK AS A TOOL FOR GROWTH

CATALYZING LEADERSHIP STYLE

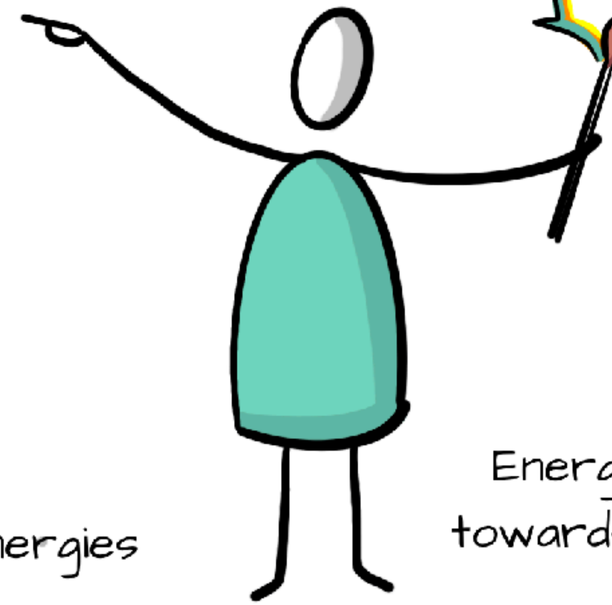
"PEOPLE ARE SPARKS"

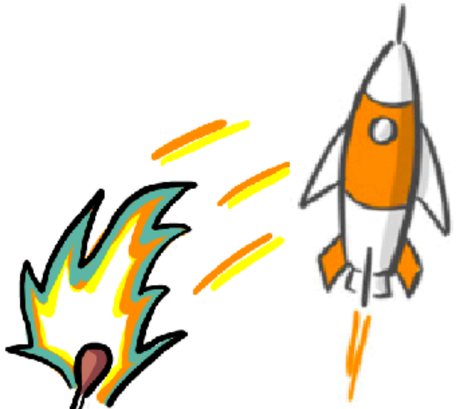
REFRAMES OBSTACLES AS OPPORTUNITIES

Inspirational

High purpose

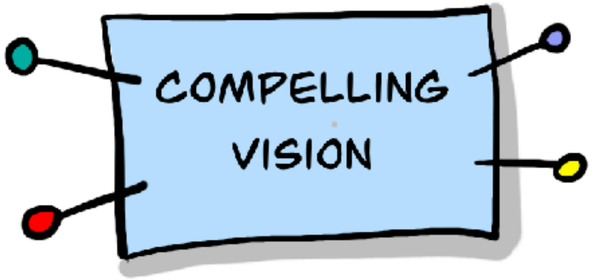
Encourages innovation





Transformative

PROVIDES:



Challenges the team

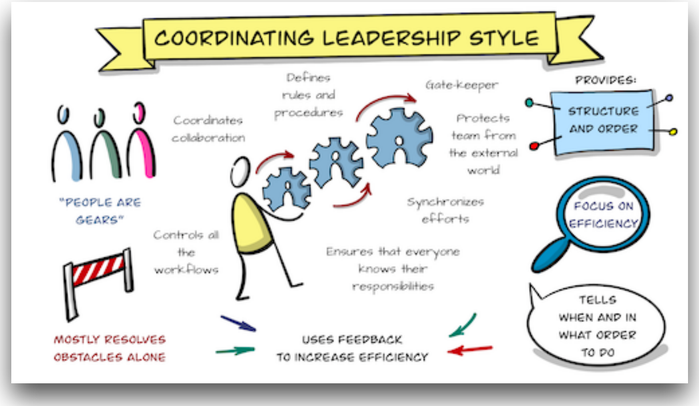
Boosts their success

Enables synergies

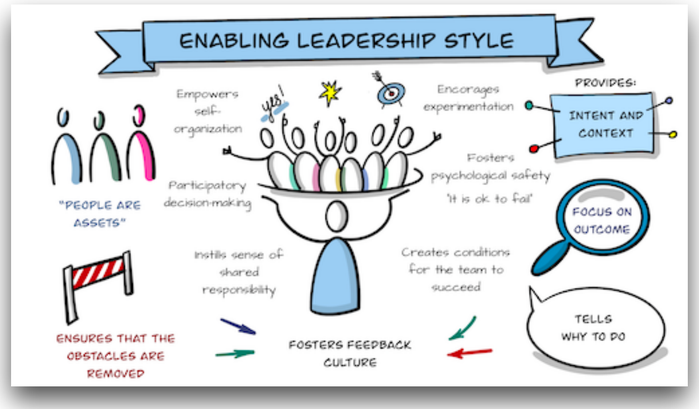
Fosters cross-team collaboration

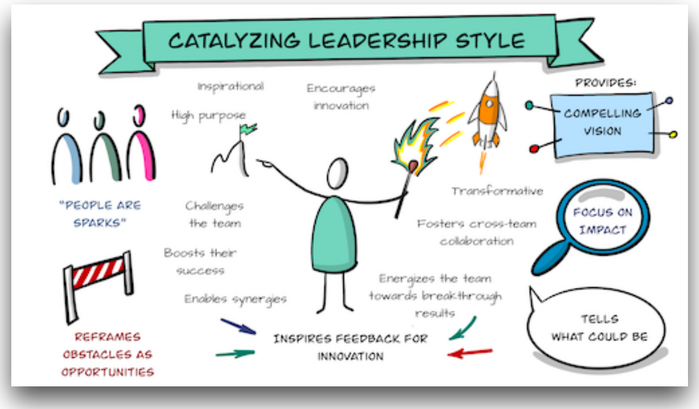
Energizes the team towards breakthrough results

INSPIRES FEEDBACK FOR INNOVATION

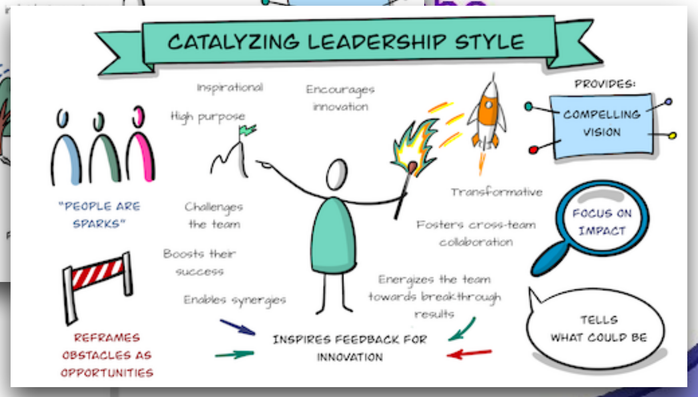


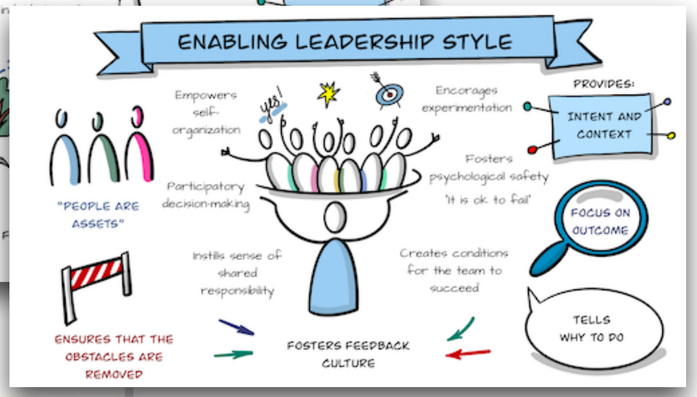
What is the Best Leadership Style?





CYNEFIN

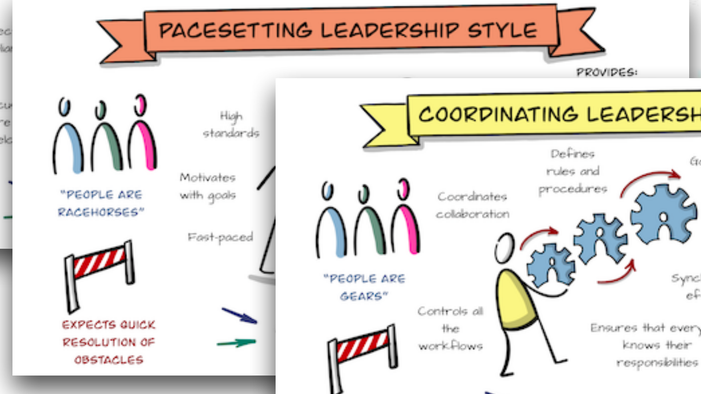


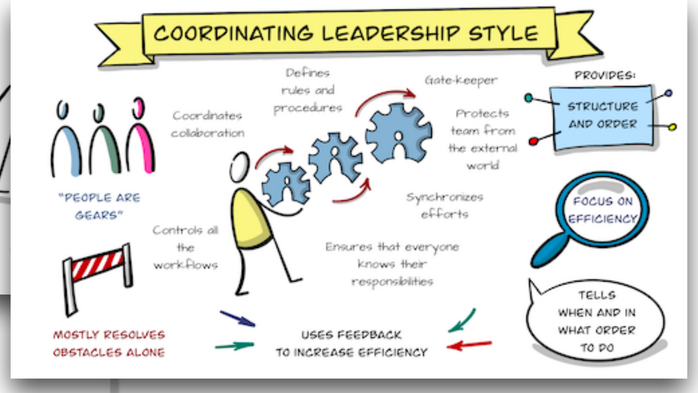


CONFUSED

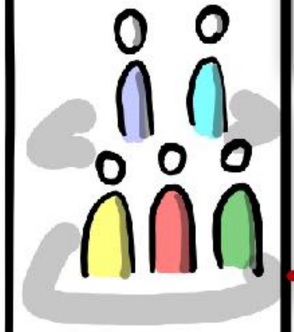
COMPLEX

CHAOTIC





Team Dynamics



Working Group

Performance

Forming

Storming

Norming

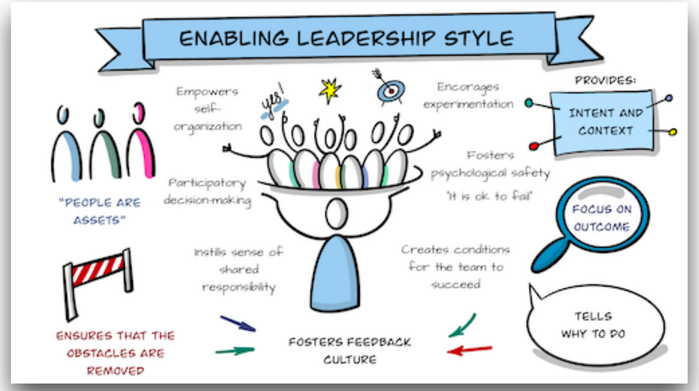
Performing

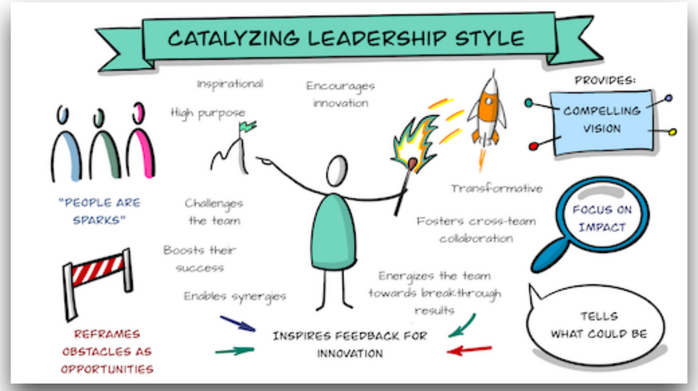
Time

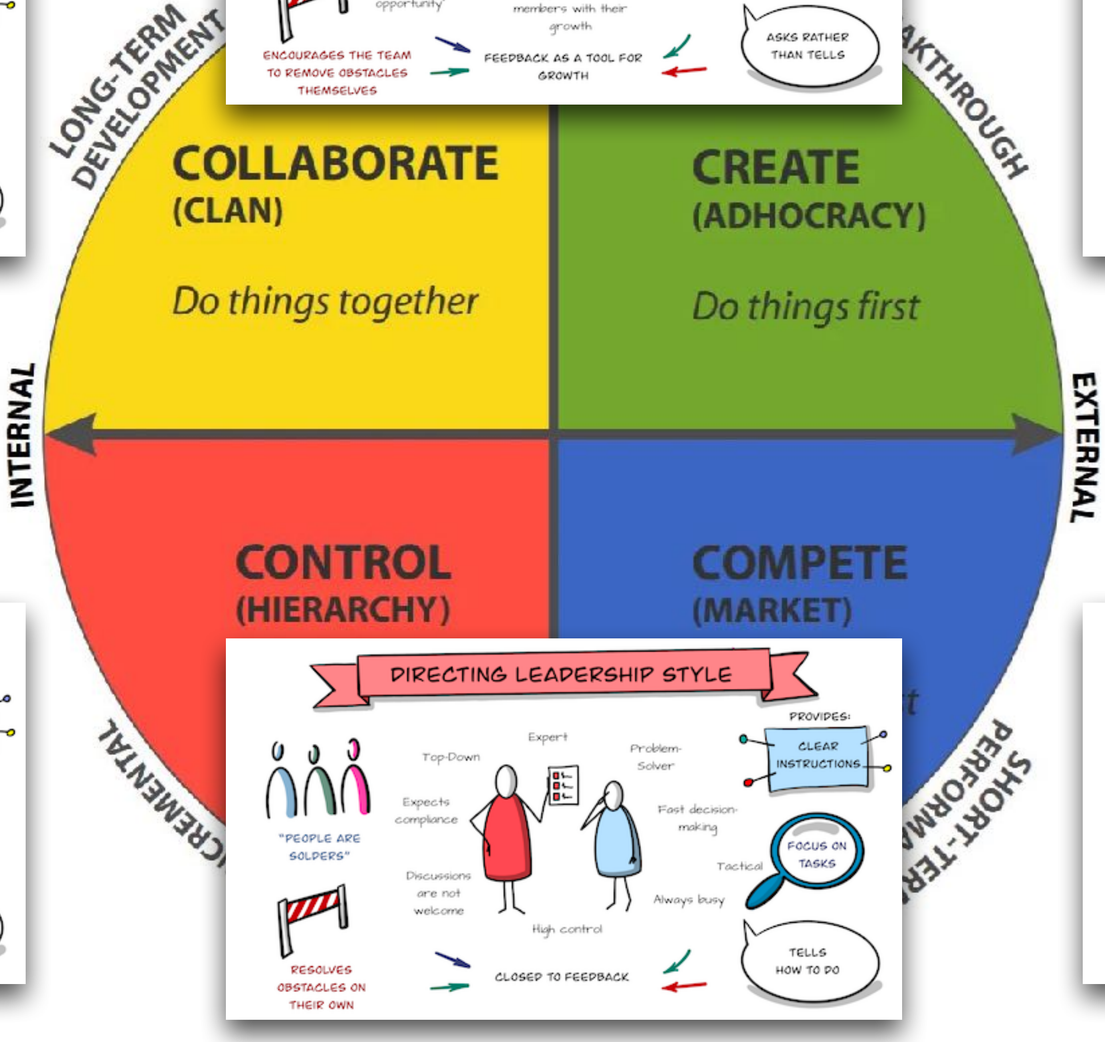
High-Performing Team

Bruce Tuckman (1965)

The Culture

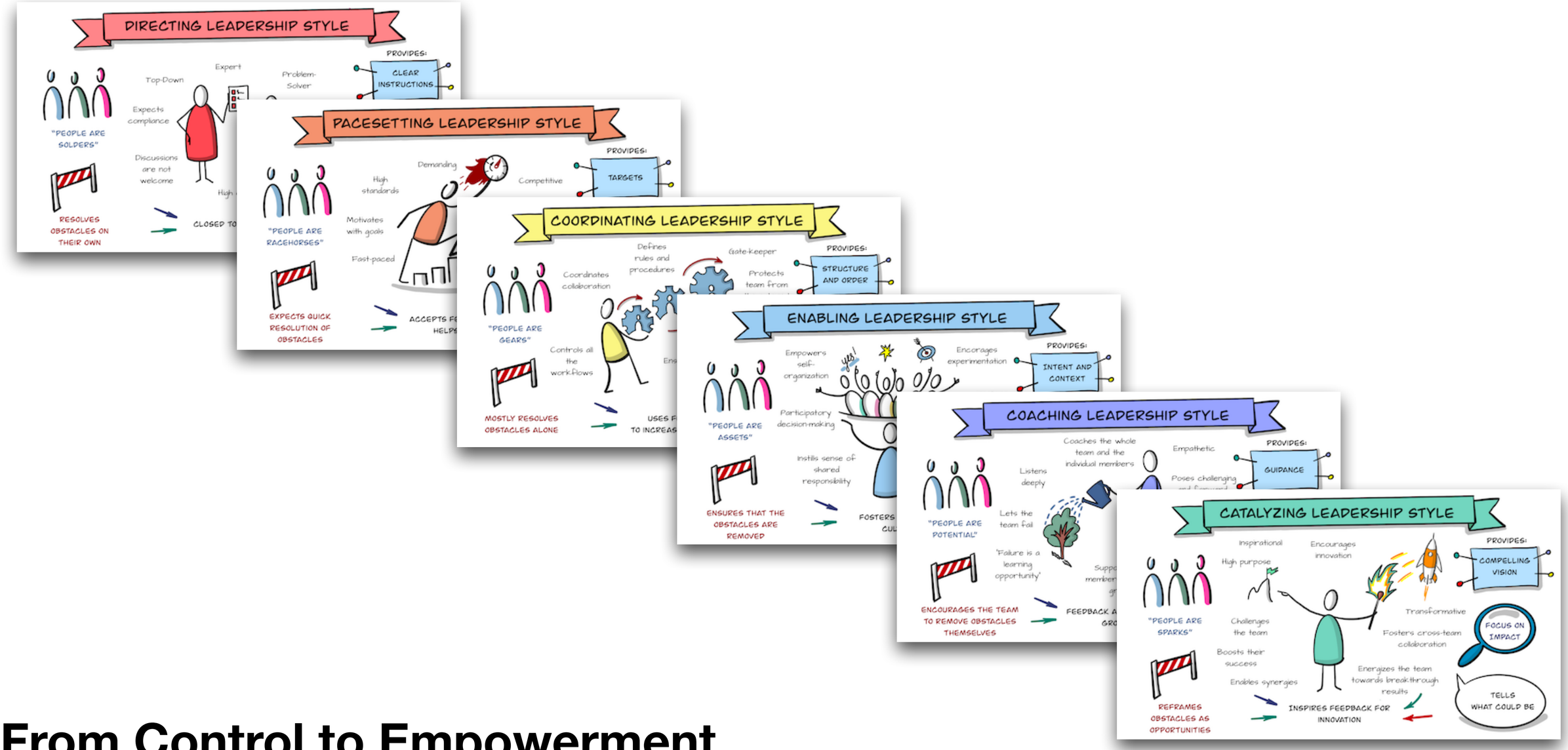






Competing Values Framework

Evolution of Leadership Styles



From Control to Empowerment

Listen more than talk

Encourage risk taking

Express your opinion last

Delegate decision-making

Give candid feedback with kindness

Provide guidance

Nurture psychological safety

Ask rather than tell

Empower team autonomy

Challenge the team

Your personality

Act as a role model

Combine behaviors from various styles to create your very own unique approach

Let the team fail

Focus on growth

Promote inclusiveness

Promote a culture of experimentation

Provide compelling vision

Coach individual members

Foster continuous improvement

Coach the team as a whole

Leadership Behaviors That Foster Innovation, Autonomy, and Resilience in Teams

Act as a role model

Acknowledge when you don't know something

Admit your mistakes

Ask rather than tell

Coach individual members

Coach the team as a whole

Connect the team with the rest of the organization

Challenge the team

Cultivate innovation

Delegate responsibility

Empower team autonomy

Encourage risk taking

Encourage the team to take ownership in removing obstacles

Energize the team by telling what is possible

Ensure that the team has everything they need to succeed

Express your opinion last

Facilitate intra-team and cross-team collaboration

Facilitate participatory decision-making

Focus on growth, outcome and impact

Foster continuous impr

Foster feedback culture

Give candid feedback w

Have faith in team mebe

Help the team to remov

Let the team fail

Listen deeply

Listen more than talk

Manage the environmer people

Nurture psychological s

Pose forward-thinking q

Promote a culture of ex

Promote inclusiveness

Provide compelling visi

Provide guidance

Provide the intent and c

Reframe obstacles as o

Seek feedback

Support personal growt members

Leadership Skills for Navigating a Complex World

Addressing Team Dysfunctions

Active Listening

Articulating a Compelling Vision

Articulating Goals

Building Relationships

Change Management

Coaching Individuals

Coaching Teams

Clear Communication

Creating a Sense of Belonging

Delegating Responsibility

Emotional Intelligence

Empathy

Facilitating Participatory Decision-Making

Facilitating Disagreements and Conflicts

Fostering Collaboration

Fostering Inclusiveness

Fostering Trust

Giving Feedback

Guiding Innovation Processes

Inspiring and Motivating Teams

Mastering Team Dynamics

Mentoring Team Members

Patience

Posing powerful questions

Receiving feedback well

Strategic Thinking

Systems Thinking

Visionary Thinking

Your personal development plan as a leader

1. Select up to 3 skills that you believe are essential for navigating leadership in a complex world and that you would like to become better at.
2. On a scale from 1 to 10:
   a. Asses your current state
   b. Envision your desired state in 6 months
3. Think how you can develop these skills

Your Leadership Skills Development Plan	***Your current state, 1..10***	***Your desired state in 6 months, 1..10***
Skill 1.		
How could you develop it		
Skill 2.		
How could you develop it		
Skill 3.		
How could you develop it		

4. Select up to 5 behaviours that you would like to practice during the upcoming 6 months
   Behaviour 1. _____
   Behaviour 2. _____
   Behaviour 3. _____
   Behaviour 4. _____
   Behaviour 5. _____
5. Share with your team
6. Exchange ideas on other ways you could develop the skills

Your Personal Leadership Style

Your Name

Select up to 5 behaviours that you would like to practice during the upcoming 6 months ↓

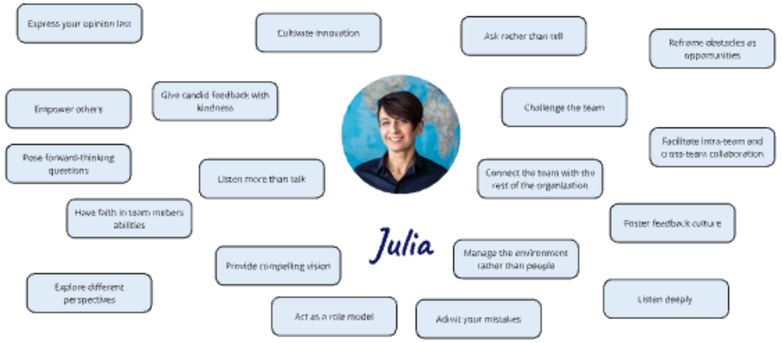
Acknowledge when you don't know something	Act as a role model	Admit your mistakes	Coach the team as a whole	
Ask rather than tell	Challenge the team	Coach individual members	Connect the team with the rest of the organization	
Cultivate innovation	Delegate responsibility	Empower team autonomy	Empower others	
Encourage risk taking	Encourage the team to take ownership in removing obstacles	Ensure that the team has everything they need to succeed	Express your opinion last	
Facilitate intra-team and cross-team collaboration	Foster continuous improvement	Explore different perspectives	Fosters participatory decision-making	
Foster feedback culture	Focus on growth, outcome and impact	Give candid feedback with kindness	Have faith in team meibers abilities	
Let the team fail	Listen deeply	Listen more than talk	Manage the environment rather than people	
Nurture psychological safety	Promote a culture of experimentation	Promote inclusiveness	Pose forward-thinking questions	
Practice small talks	Provide the intent and context	Provide guidance	Provide compelling vision	
Reframe obstacles as opportunities	Seek feedback	Support personal growth of team members		

Your Leadership Skills Development Plan

Desired skills and how could you develop them	Your current state, 1..10	Your desired state in 6 months, 1..10
Skill 1.	...	...
How could you develop it ...		
Skill 2.	...	...
How could you develop it ...		
Skill 3.	...	...
How could you develop it ...		

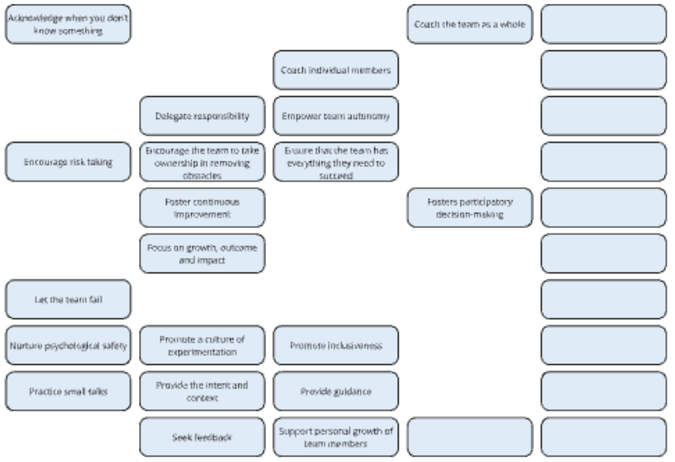
Addressing Team Dysfunctions	Active Listening	Articulating an Inspiring Vision
Articulating Goals and Purpose	Building Relationships	Change Management
Clear Communication	Coaching Individuals	Coaching Teams
Creating a Sense of Belonging	Delegating Responsibility	Emotional Intelligence
Empathy	Empowering Teams	Facilitating Participatory Decision-Making
Facilitating Disagreements and Conflicts	Fostering Collaboration	Fostering People Growth
Fostering Inclusiveness	Fostering Trust	Giving Feedback
Guiding Innovation Processes	Mastering Team Dynamics	Mentoring Team Members
Organizational Development	Patience	Posing powerful questions
Receiving feedback well	Self-Awareness	Strategic Thinking
Systems Thinking	Visionary Thinking	

Your Personal Leadership Style



Select up to 5 behaviours that you would like to practice during the upcoming 6 months ↓

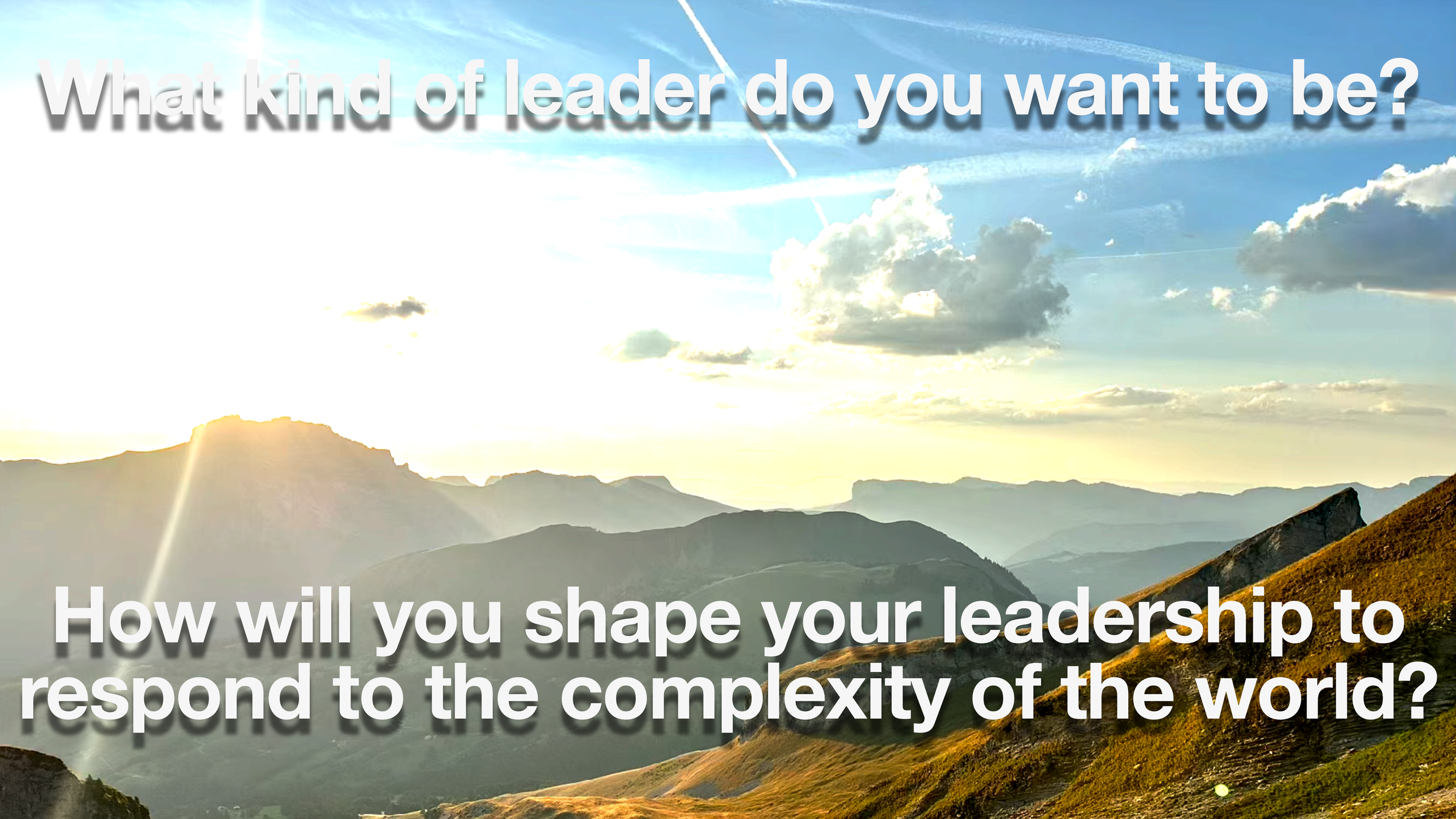
Give candid feedback with kindness | Listen more than talk | Explore different perspectives | Challenge the team | Pose forward-thinking questions



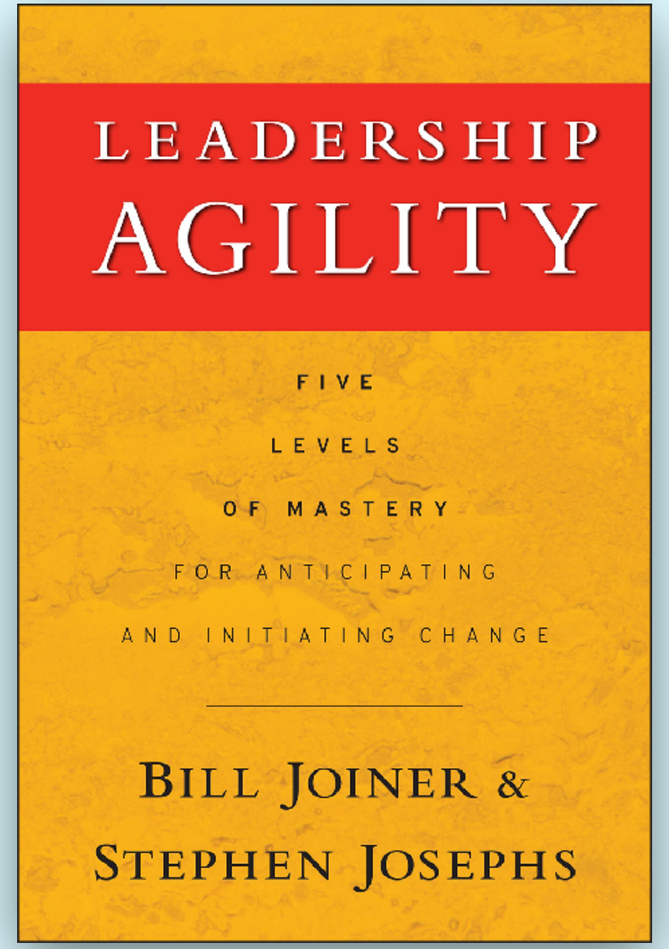
Your Leadership Skills Development Plan

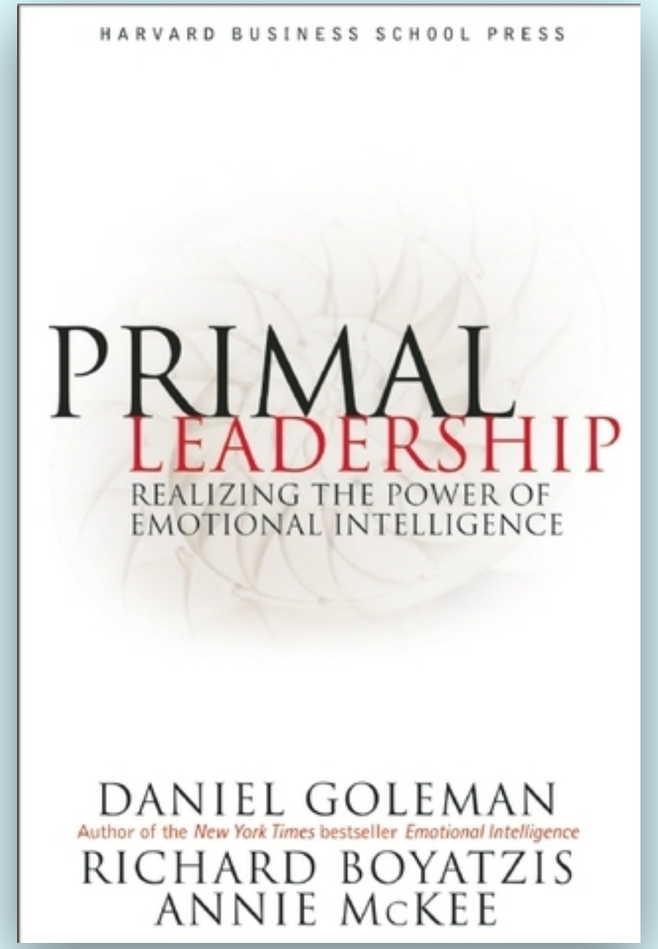
Desired skills and how could you develop them	Your current state, 1..10	Your desired state in 6 months, 1..10
Skill 1. Strategic Thinking	3	5
How could you develop it 1. Books ("This Is Strategy", "Good Strategy, Bad Strategy") 2. Participating in as may strategic sessions as possible 3. Find an opportunity to facilitate a strategic session		
Skill 2. Guiding Innovation Processes	7	8
How could you develop it 1. Find an opportunity to run Design Sprint 2. Learn more ideation techniques from Design Thinking 3. Learn about AI Design Sprint		
Skill 3. Facilitating Disagreements and Conflicts	6	7
How could you develop it 1. Books "Difficult conversations" and "Collaborating with the enemy" 2. Using bridging questions as often as possible		

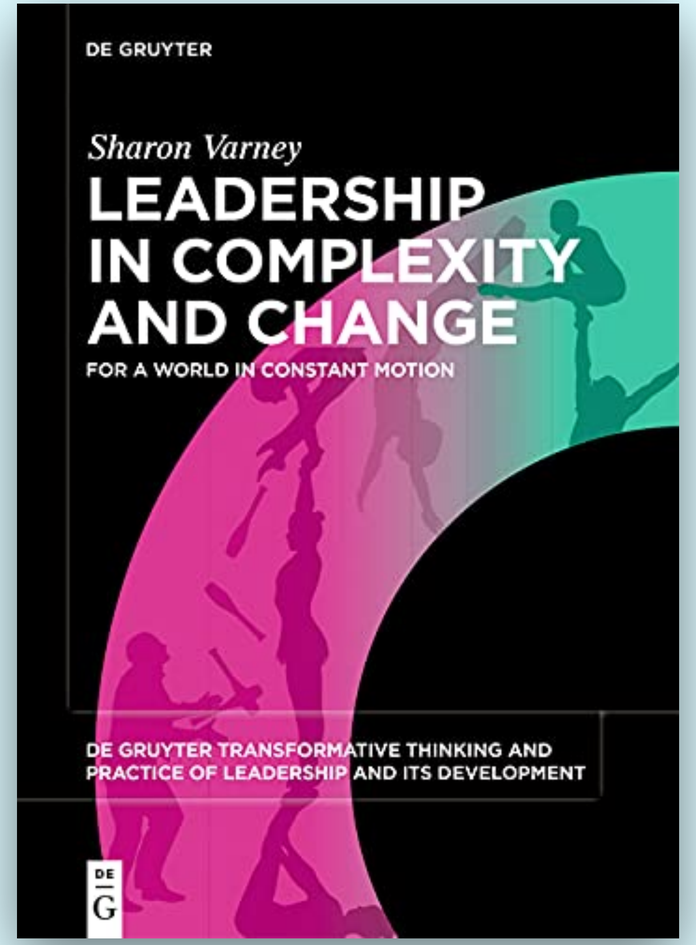
Addressing Team Dysfunctions	Active Listening	Articulating an Inspiring Vision
Articulating Goals and Purpose	Building Relationships	Change Management
Clear Communication	Coaching Individuals	Coaching Teams
Creating a Sense of Belonging	Delegating Responsibility	Emotional Intelligence
Empathy	Empowering Teams	Facilitating Participatory Decision-Making
	Fostering Collaboration	Fostering People Growth
Fostering Inclusiveness	Fostering Trust	Giving Feedback
	Mastering Team Dynamics	Mentoring Team Members
Organizational Development	Patience	Posing powerful questions
Receiving feedback well	Self-Awareness	
Systems Thinking	Visionary Thinking	


What kind of leader do you want to be?
How will you shape your leadership to respond to the complexity of the world?

Further Reading







Additional materials:

JULIAVASTRIK.COM

Connect with me on