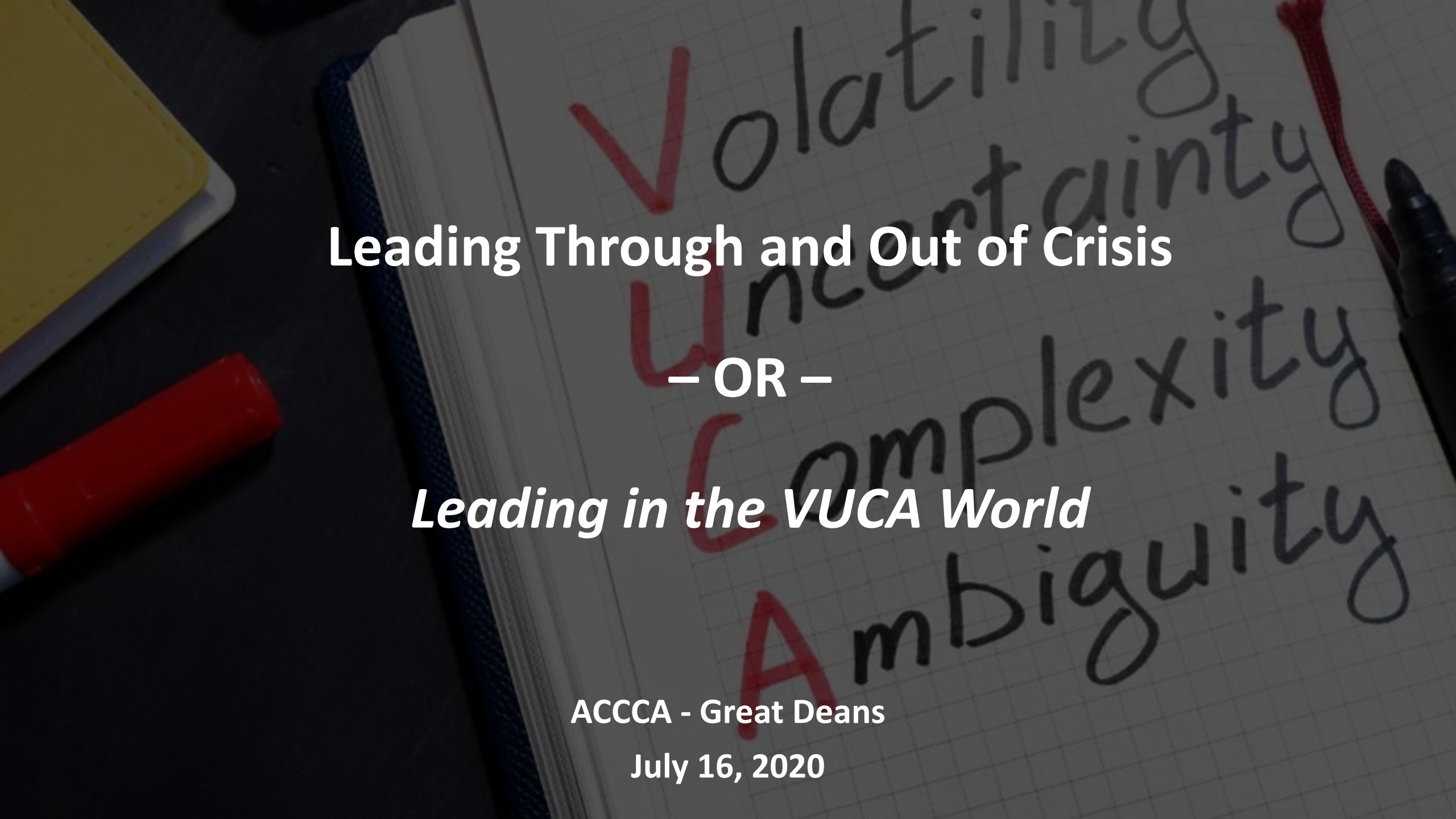


Leading Through and Out of Crisis

– OR –

Leading in the VUCA World

ACCCA - Great Deans

July 16, 2020

Think back to four months ago …

When I awoke on March 9, 2020 - I was expecting:

This would be another typical crazy, chaotic week in the community colleges

By the end of the week, I would be thinking about converting my programs and services to remote delivery

A miracle would occur later in the week that would fully-fund and simultaneously reduce all of my responsibilities

The Sweet Meteor of Death (SMD) would make its long-predicted appearance at 7:59 EDT March 10, 2020

Start the presentation to see live content. Still no live content? Install the app or get help at **PollEv.com/app**

Regarding the Coronavirus Pandemic

I am confident that I know when things will return to normal

I don't have a clue when things will return to normal

I don't expect things to return to normal

The Sweet Meteor of Death is actually sounding better with each passing day

Start the presentation to see live content. Still no live content? Install the app or get help at **PollEv.com/app**

What happened to normal?

Long-range planning?

The Choluteca Bridge in Honduras.

Originally constructed in 1930s.

Rebuilt in 1996 to be “hurricane-proof.”

Disruption!

In 1998, Category 5 Hurricane Mitch hit Honduras.

Every other bridge in Honduras was destroyed.

The Choluteca Bridge survived in near perfect condition.

With only one minor problem …

This is the “new normal” …

… or rather …

this is simply “normal!”

A brief interlude …

OR

How I got the nickname “Disaster Doug”

YCCD

YUBA COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

Established in 1927; first CA “county-wide” college district

Today, YCCD spans portions of eight counties (4,200 square miles):
Yuba, Sutter, Yolo, Colusa, Lake, Butte, Glenn, Placer

13,000+ students/ 7,100+ FTES (FY 19-20)

Campuses in 5 counties:

- Yuba College: Main Campus (Yuba County); Sutter County; Beale AFB
- Woodland College: Main Campus (Yolo County); Lake County; Colusa County

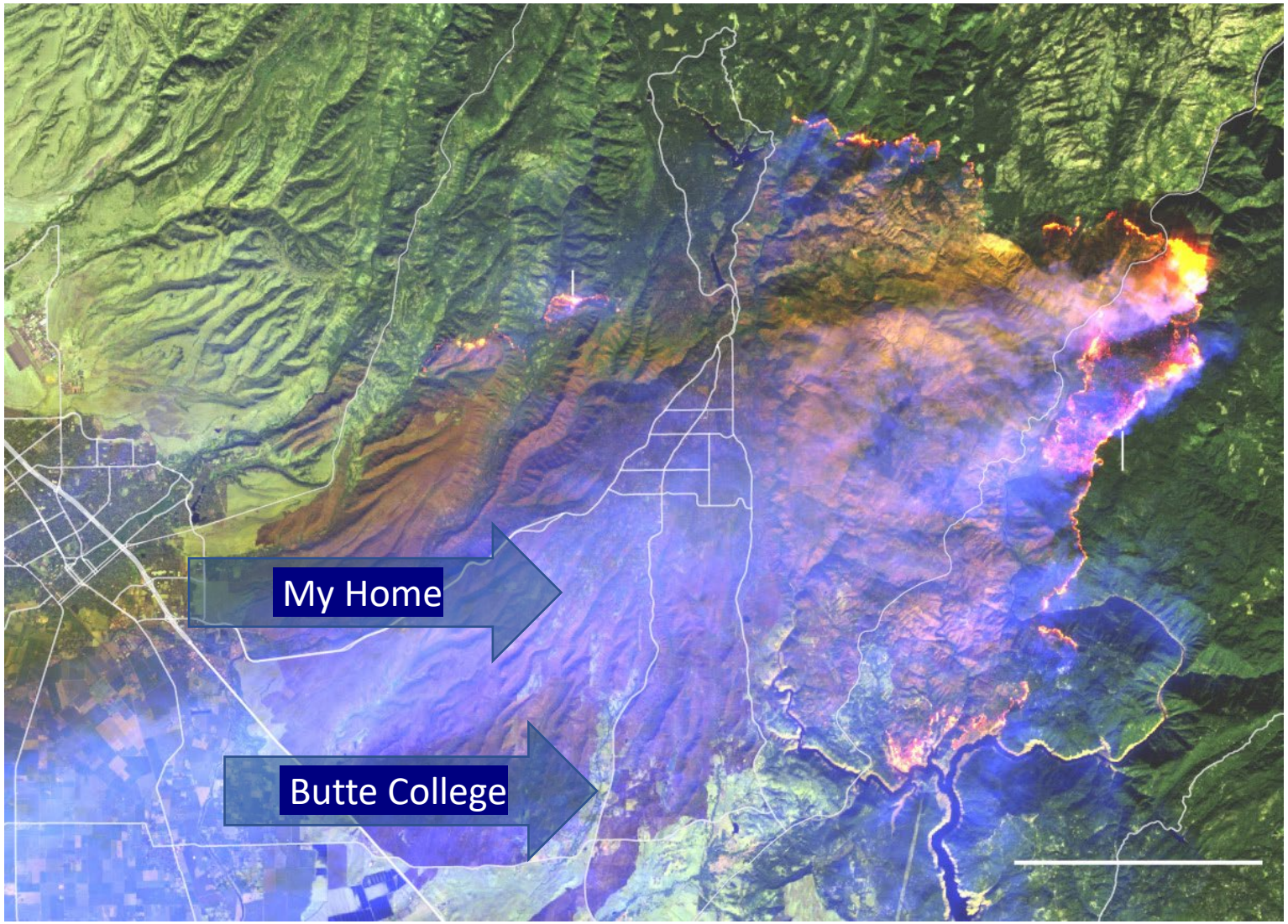
Fires, Floods and now a Pandemic

- 2015 – Rocky & Valley Fires (Lake County) – 4 killed; 2,000 structures destroyed
- 2016 – Clayton Fire (Lake County) – 400 homes destroyed
- 2017 – Oroville Dam Flood Warnings Evacuations (180,000 evacuated)
- 2017 – Sulfur Fire (Lake County) – 160 homes destroyed
- 2017 – *Tubbs Fire (Sonoma County & Santa Rosa) – 22 killed; 5,600 structures destroyed*
- 2018 – Multi-county Mendocino Complex Fire (largest in CA history)
- 2018 – *Carr Fire (Shasta County & Redding) - 1,600 structures destroyed*
- 2018 – Camp Fire (Butte County & Paradise) - 85 killed; 19,000 structures destroyed
- 2018 – Widespread flash-flooding in Camp Fire burn area and downstream
- 2019 – Multiple, repeated **Public Safety Power Shutoffs** (some for multiple days)
- 2020 – COVID-19 Pandemic

Camp Fire

November 8 – 17, 2018

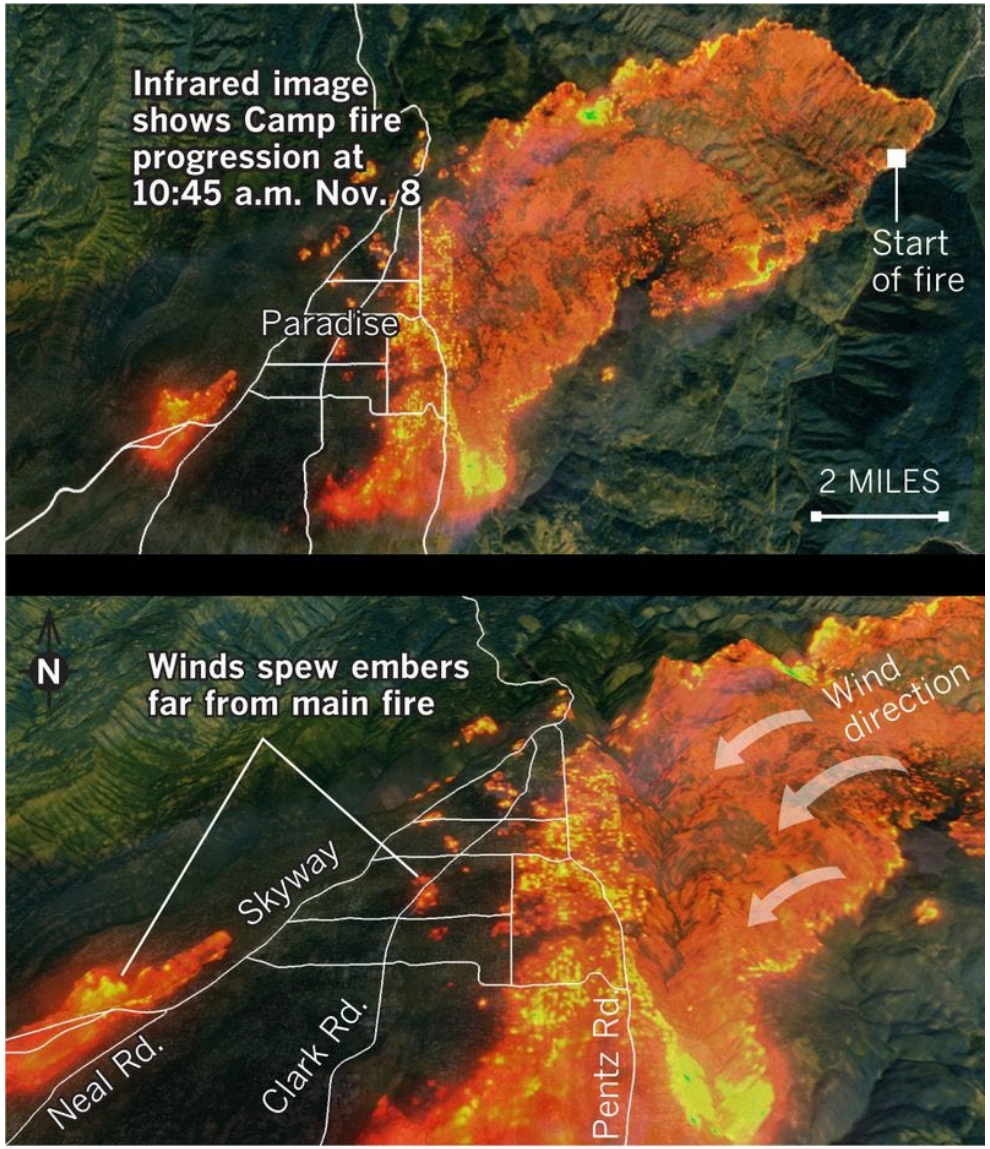
- 153,336 acres
- Deadliest CA wildfire
- 85 fatalities; 17 injuries
- 19,000 structures destroyed, including 14,000 homes
- Most destructive wildfire:
  - Total damage: $16.5 billion;
  - $4 billion: uninsured



Ground-level & Wind-driven

Wind-driven embers & spot fires 4 miles in advance of main fire.

It grew far faster than anticipated; at some times by as much as “8 football fields per minute.”



My wife and I “stayed and defended” our homestead and those of evacuated neighbors

The day after the fire, this is what remained of much of our property

Many of our neighbors homes looked like this one

We rounded-up neighbors scattered livestock and pets and repaired fences/corrals

... and cared for neighbors' homesteads until the evacuation was lifted

So let’s talk about your preparation for ***crisis leadership***

In terms of my preparation for crisis leadership

I was comfortable from the start of the Pandemic that I knew all I needed to know about leading in a crisis

Throughout the Pandemic, I encountered issues for which I wish I was better prepared but I did learn

I still pretty much don't have a clue what I am doing but feel that I am faking it well

I don't have a clue what I am doing and I'm afraid that it shows

The Sweet Meteor of Death is sounding better and better

Start the presentation to see live content. For screen share software, share the entire screen. Get help at **pollev.com/app**

In terms of my leadership/management mindset, I feel:

That I have absolute clarity on all matters and know exactly how to proceed

Supported and able to take risks in the face of ambiguity and learn from my decisions

Unable to act or decide on matters that would improve what we are doing

Frustrated, alone and unsupported

Where is that Sweet Meteor of Death when I need it?

Start the presentation to see live content. Still no live content? Install the app or get help at **PollEv.com/app**

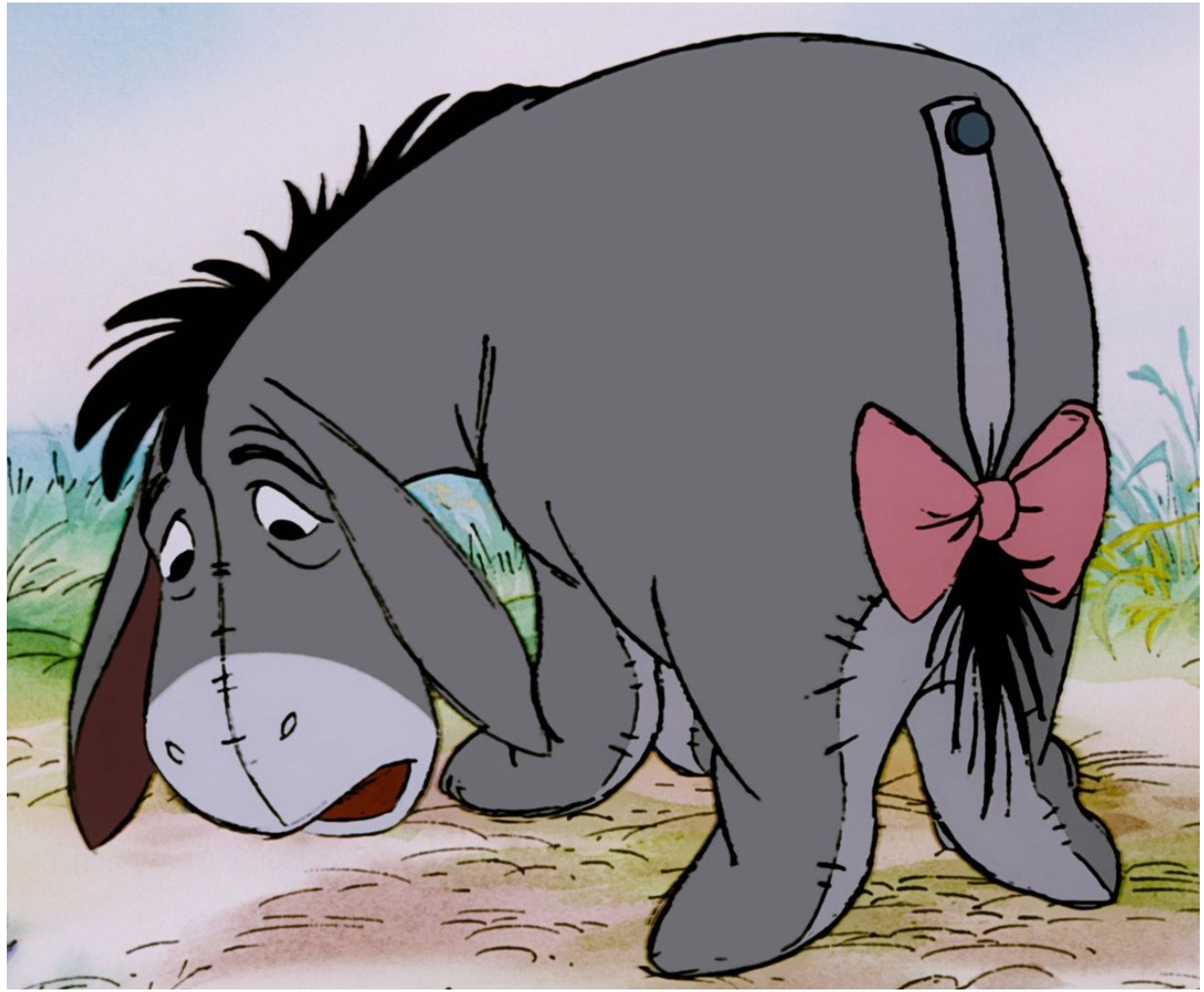
This is the “new normal”

V U C A

VUCA

How well you can predict results +		
	Complexity Many interconnected parts and variables. Overwhelming amount of information; difficult to process or understand.	**Volatility** Unexpected challenges; unstable/unpredictable context; unknown duration but it's not necessarily hard to understand.
-	**Ambiguity** Causal relationships are completely unclear. No precedents; you face "unknown unknowns."	**Uncertainty** Despite a lack of other information, the event's basic cause and effect are know. Change is possible but not assured.
	- **How much you know about the situation** +	

How do you lead in a VUCA world?



V U C A Leadership

Vision **In the face of ambiguity:** Create meaning. Start with "why." Partner with team to develop a "picture" of a common future; forge internal and external identity.	**Courage** **In the face of uncertainty:** Be bold; make audacious decisions that embody risks even if against the grain. You cannot afford to act as though to void criticism or minimize risk.
Understanding **In the face of complexity:** Understand interconnections and make them transparent. Think strategically. Plan from the desired result backwards.	**Agility** **In the face of volatility:** Be flexible. Plans are obsolete before implemented. Use flexible tactics for rapid adaptation to changing circumstances without altering strategic course.

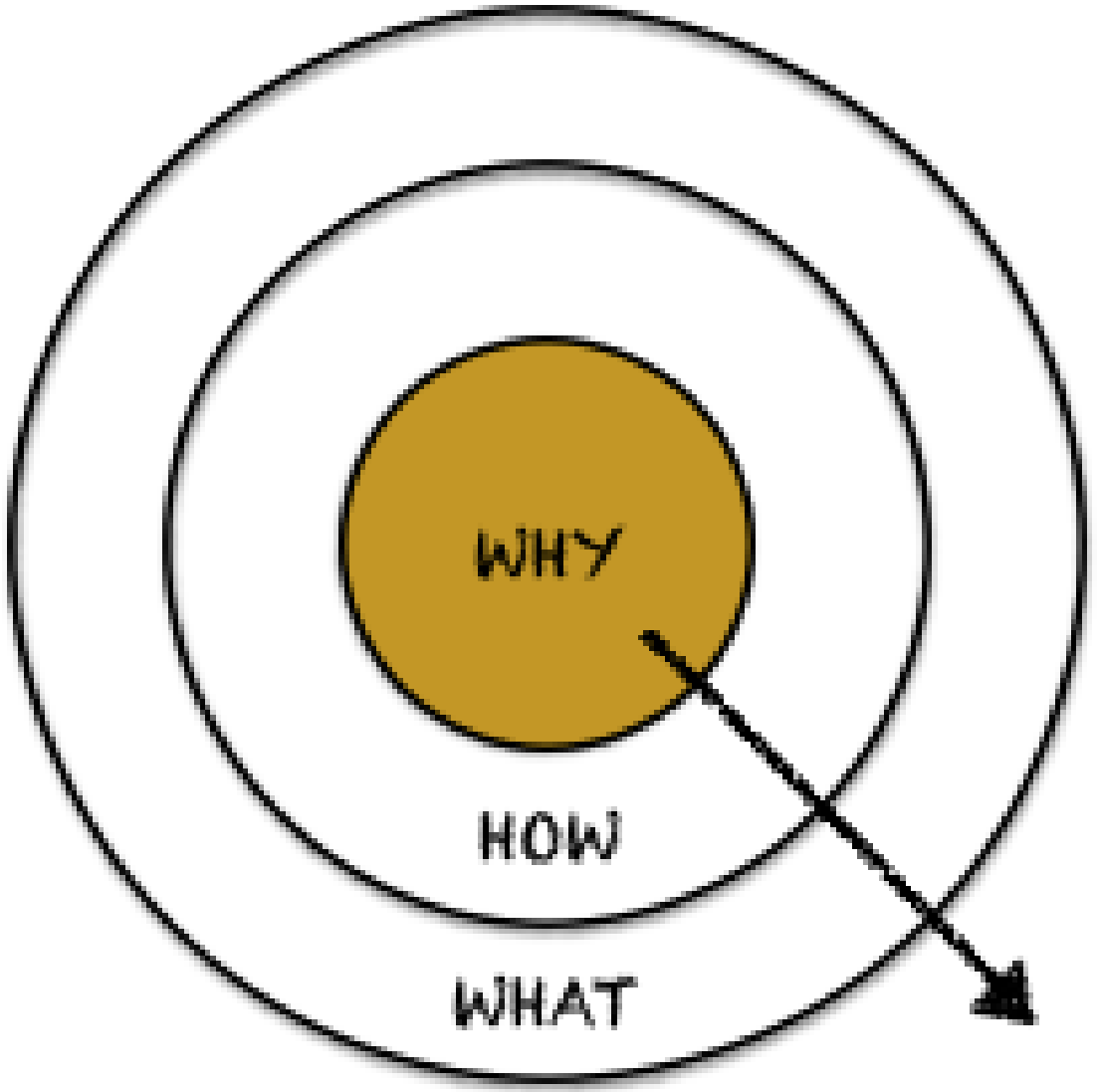
Vision

Simon Senik's Golden Circle: Start with Why

The best way to inspire is to start with "why" (purpose) and communicate out through "how" (values) to what (actions).

"People don't buy WHAT you do; they buy WHY you do it."

Simon Senik

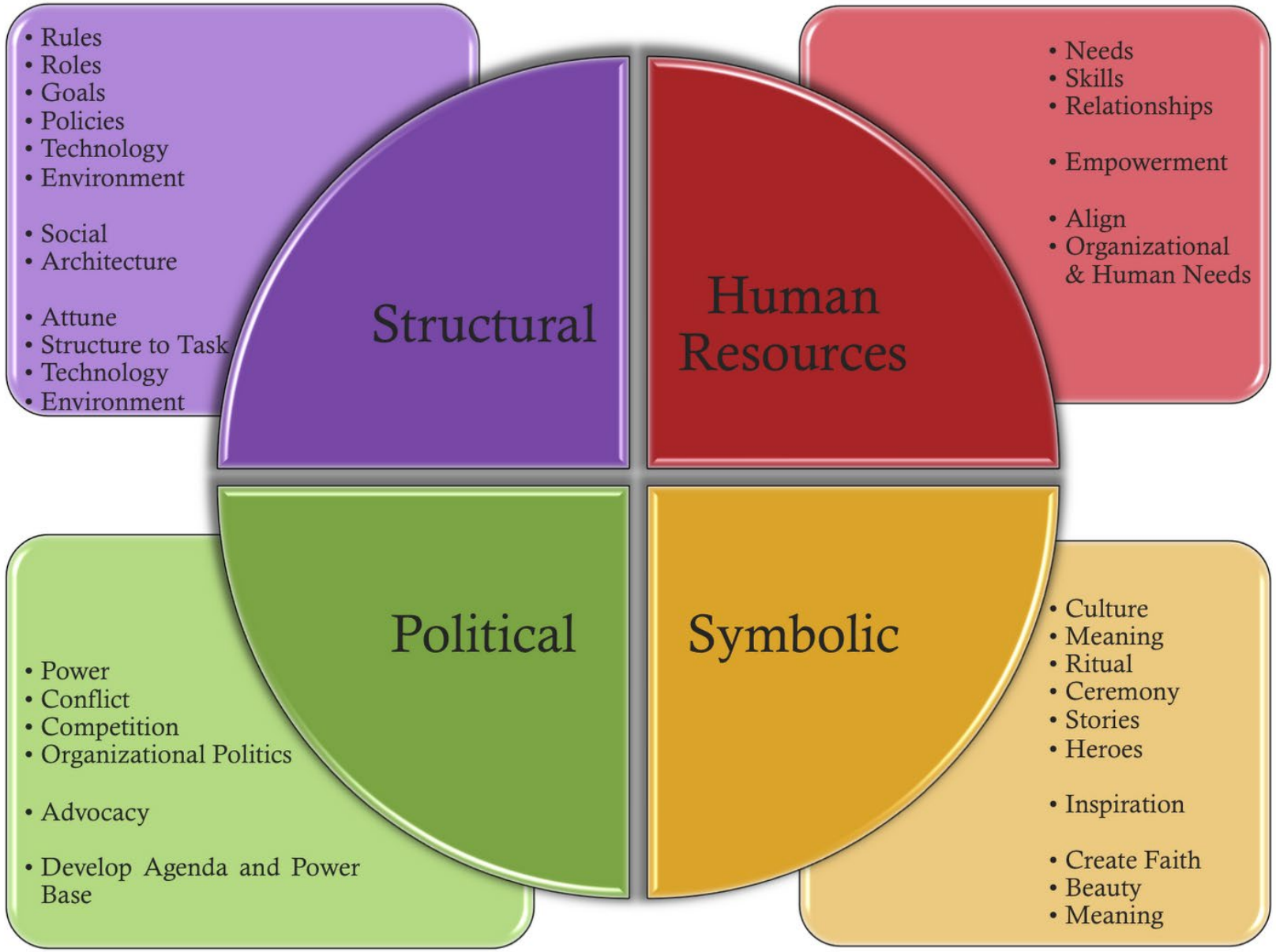


Understanding

Understanding Complex Organizations!

"Leaders who can reframe—look at the same thing from multiple perspectives—think better. They create a lucid portrait of what's going on around them and have a clearer vision of what's needed to achieve desired results."

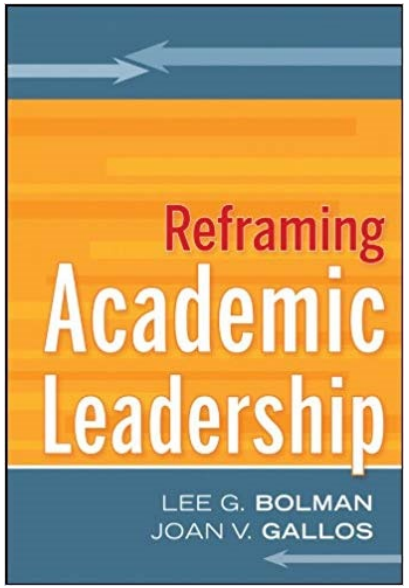
Bolman & Deal
Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership. 2017

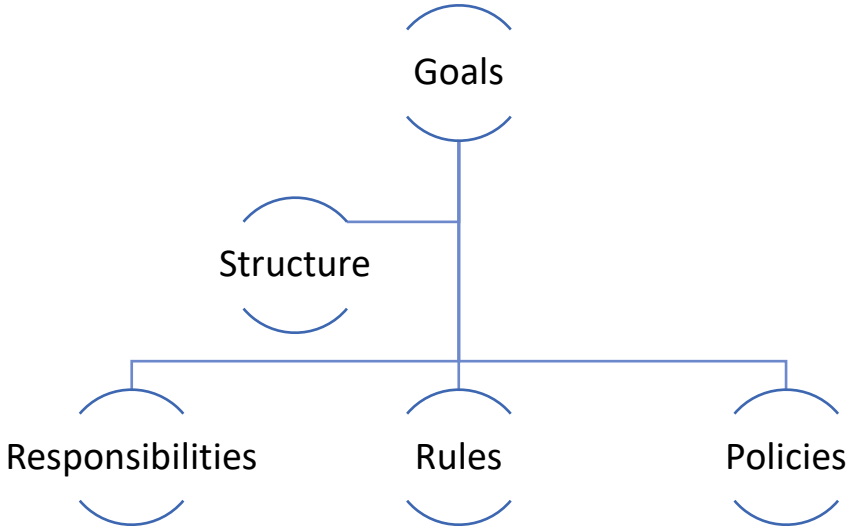


Structural Frame

- Origins - sociology & management science.
- Goals, specialized roles, and formal relationships.
- Structures fit organizations environment and technology.
- Responsibilities, rules, policies, procedures.

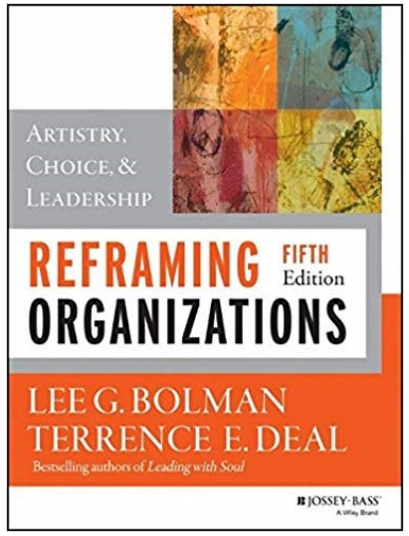
Problems arise when the structure does not fit the situation.





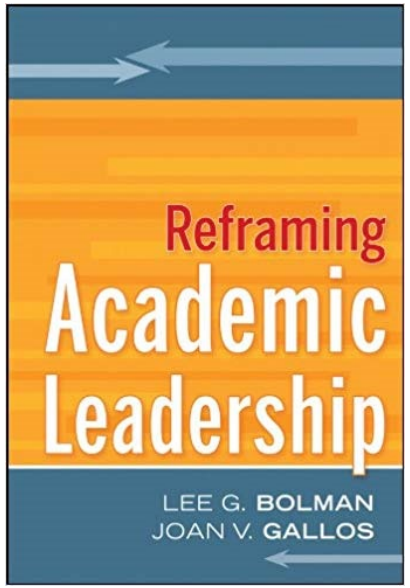
Human Resources Frame

- Origins – Organizational psychology.
- Organizations as extended family.
- Individuals with needs, feelings, prejudices, skills and limitations.
- Capacity to learn and capacity to defend attitudes and beliefs.



Problems arise when people and organization are not aligned in common values/needs/purpose.

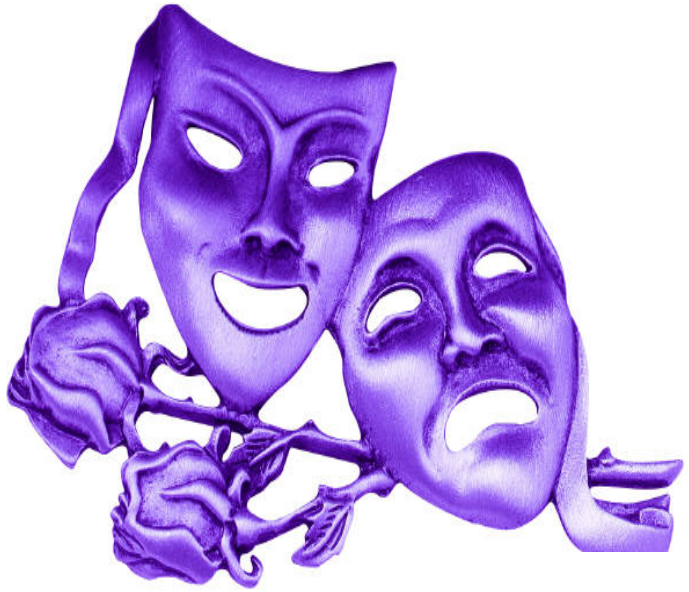
Political Frame



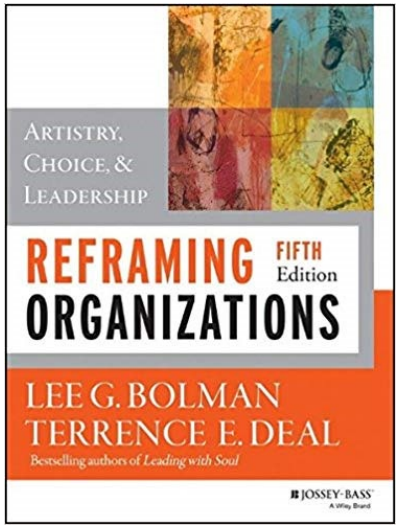
- Origins - Political Science.
- Organizations as arenas, contests, or jungles.
- Different interests competing for power and resources.
- Bargaining, negotiation, coercion, compromise, and coalitions.

Problems arise when power is concentrated in the wrong places or is too broadly dispersed.

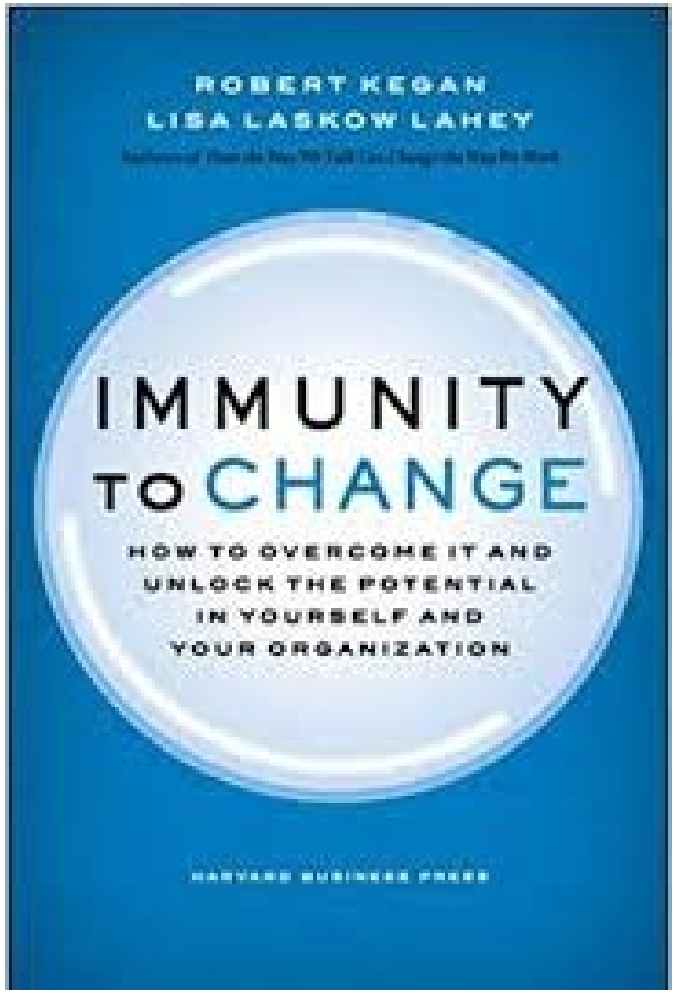
Symbolic Frame



- Origins - Social and Cultural Anthropology.
- Organizations as tribes, theatres, or carnivals.
- Culture – rituals, ceremonies, stories, heroes, and myths.



Problems arise when actors play their parts badly, when symbols lose their meaning, and/or when ceremonies & rituals lose their potency.



Immunity to Change

"We all know that change is hard, but we don't know enough about why it is so hard and what we can do about it.

"We uncovered a phenomenon we call "the immunity to change," a heretofore hidden dynamic that actively (and brilliantly) prevents us from changing because of its devotion to preserving our existing way of making meaning."

- Robert Kegan

Courage

Ku … ku … ku … Kurage

Costa Concordia –
capsized Jan 13, 2012 with loss of 32 lives

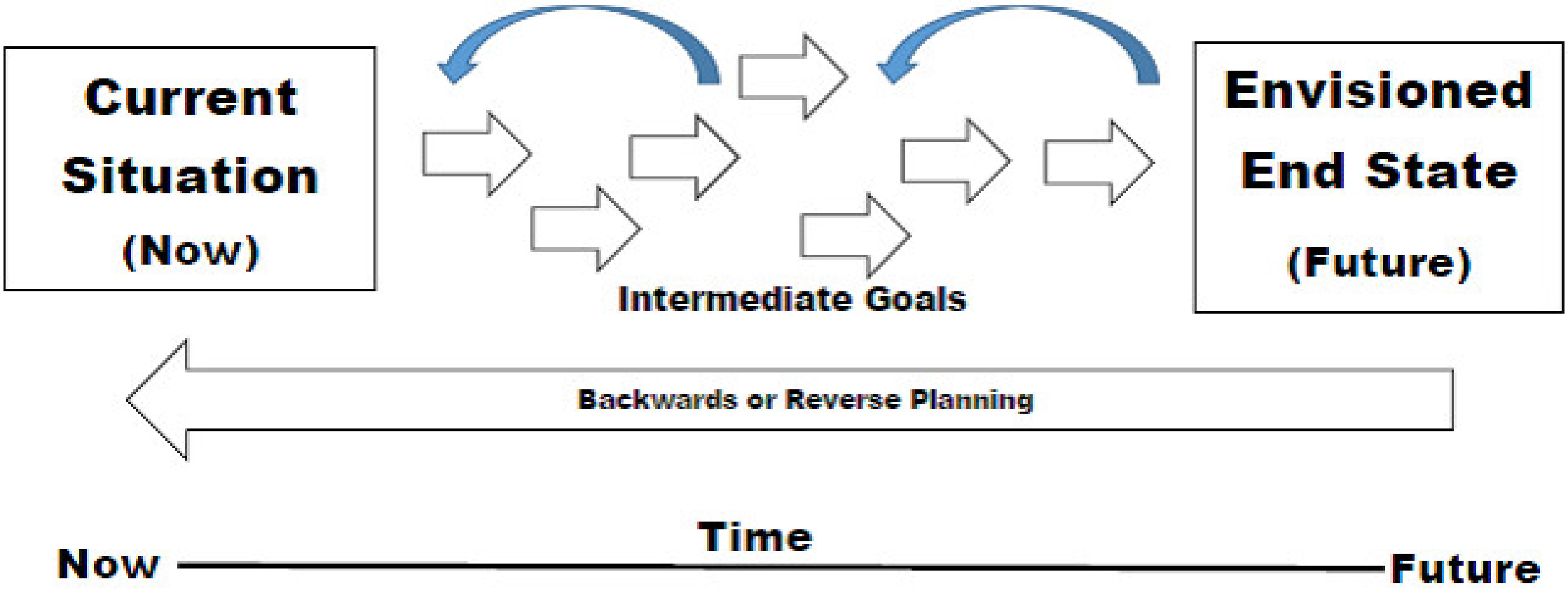
US Airways Flight 1549
afloat in the Hudson; January 15, 2009

“Spontaneous courage is not a form of self-control … it results from a long-term moral cultivation, not a mindless impulse.”

Xinyan Jiang – *Courage and Self-Control*
The Proceedings of the Twenty-First World Congress of Philosophy (2007)

Agility

Plan Backwards



No plan survives contact with reality!

“Anyone who has grabbed a bull by the tail knows five or six more things than someone who has not.”

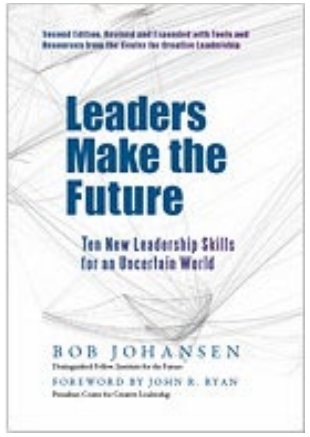
- Mark Twain

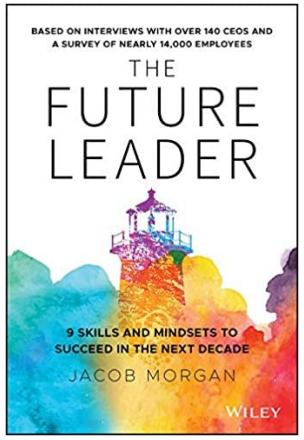
Learning Organizations

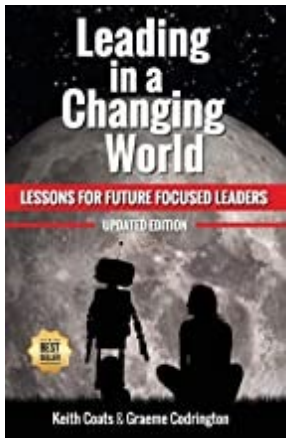
"…organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together."

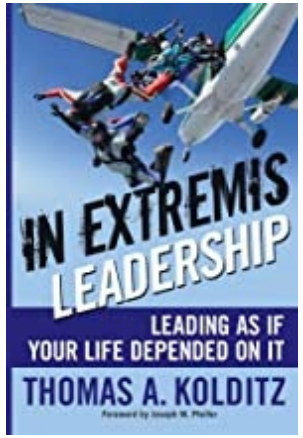
- Peter Senge

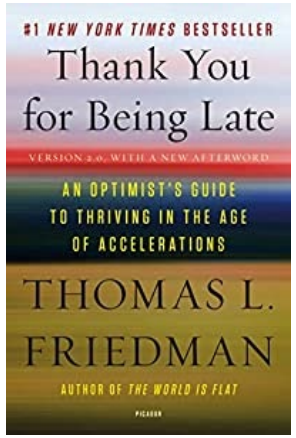
Some closing thoughts

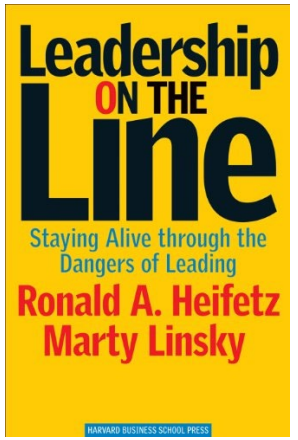


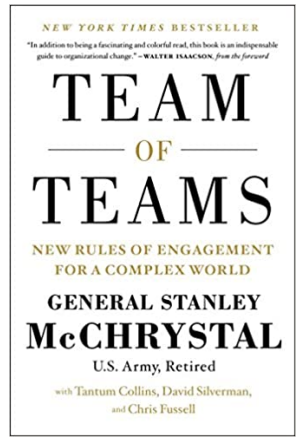


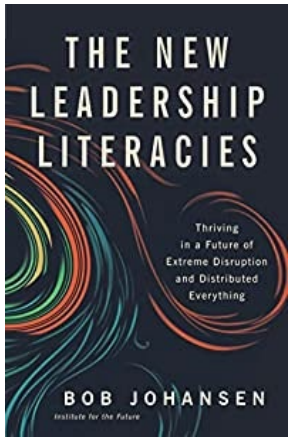


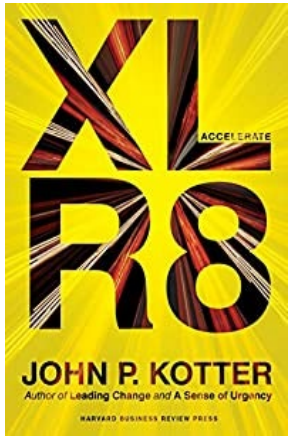


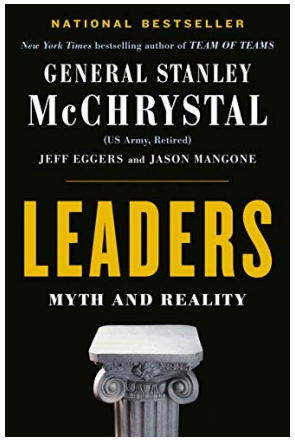


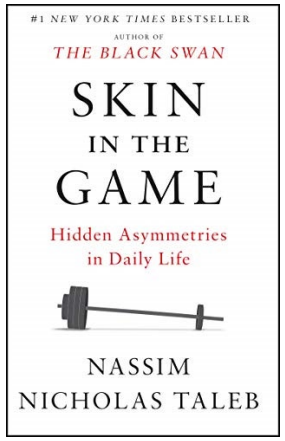




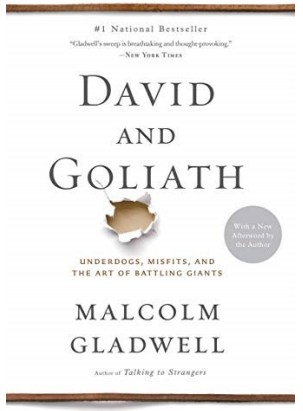


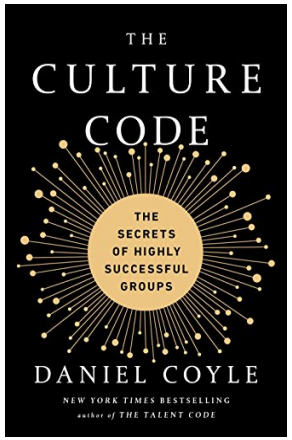


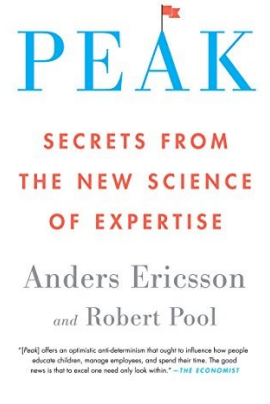


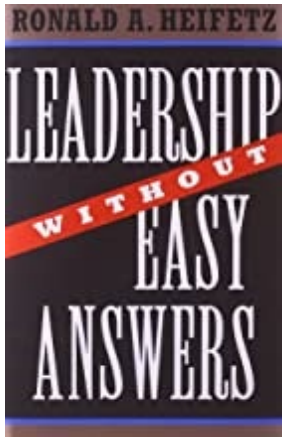


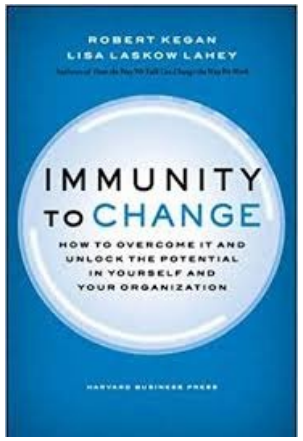
Some suggested readings

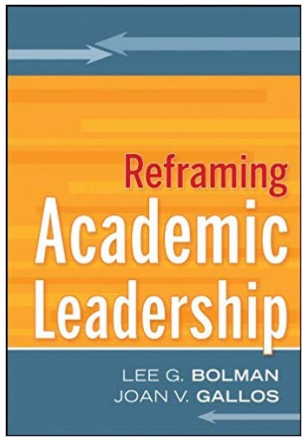


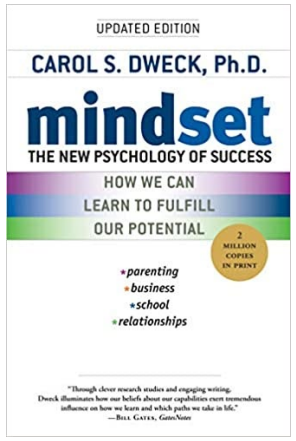


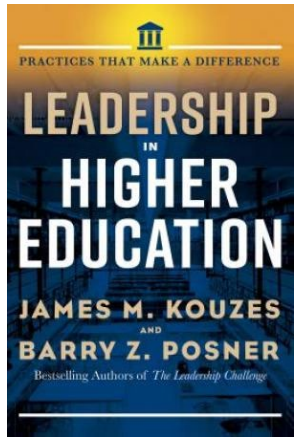


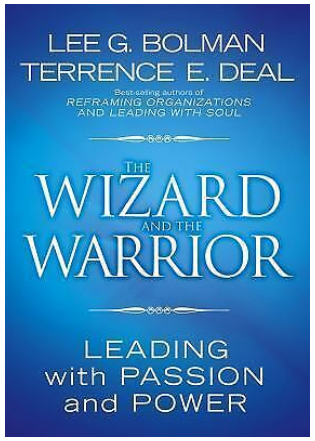


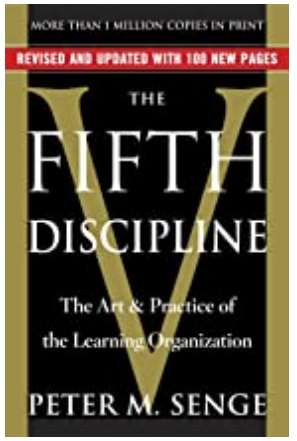












Some closing thoughts on your roles as ***Leaders*** and ***Managers***

Some closing thoughts …

- People will look to you for **certainty**; provide them **clarity** instead
- **Test your thinking** - find a mentor, mentor others … and network
- Get on the **balcony** occasionally; **reflect** on your performance & growth
- **Plan** for the **long** game; you may never see fruits of your labors
- Learn to be "a **change agent** in a **consensus culture**"
- **Don't** use **all** your time planning; follow "**1/3rd & 2/3rd's rule**"
- **Be prepared**; **rehearse** mentally (and physically?)

Some closing thoughts …

- Pause, reflect; most issues **don't** require **immediate** reaction
- **Understand** your "boss's **intent**" & think at that level; **lead up**
- Keep your eye on the **big goals**; don't get distracted by side shows
- **Study intensely** your profession; develop **agile thinking**
- Don't be **afraid** to **fail**; plan only enough to start and learn as you go
- Develop **resiliency**; learn from failure and criticism

➢ **Lead** with ***Vision***, ***Understanding***, ***Courage*** and ***Agility***

What are your questions / comments

Doug Houston

Chancellor, YCCD

dhouston@yccd.edu