

Things Fall Apart: Leading through Disruption, Derailment, & Disaster

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Conflict of Interest Statement

I have **no real or perceived conflicts of interest** that relate to this presentation.

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Charles D. Callahan, PhD, MBA, FACHE is Executive Vice President for Health Affairs and Chief Executive Officer of UToledo Health at the University of Toledo. He holds a PhD in Clinical Psychology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and MBA from the University of Illinois at Springfield. He is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives and the American Psychological Association and a Lean Six Sigma Black Belt. Dr. Callahan has over 50 professional publications and has presented nationally and internationally on healthcare leadership, process improvement, emergency/trauma medicine, and brain injury rehabilitation. Callahan was a 2018 Baldrige Executive Fellow through the National Institute of Standards and Technology and is currently serving a three-year term on the American Psychological Association's Board of Professional Affairs. He previously held various c-suite roles (CEO/COO/CQO) at Memorial Health in Springfield, IL. Callahan was honored with the 2022 American College of Healthcare Executives Senior Level Healthcare Executive Regents Award. Charles.Callahan@utoledo.edu



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Learning Objectives

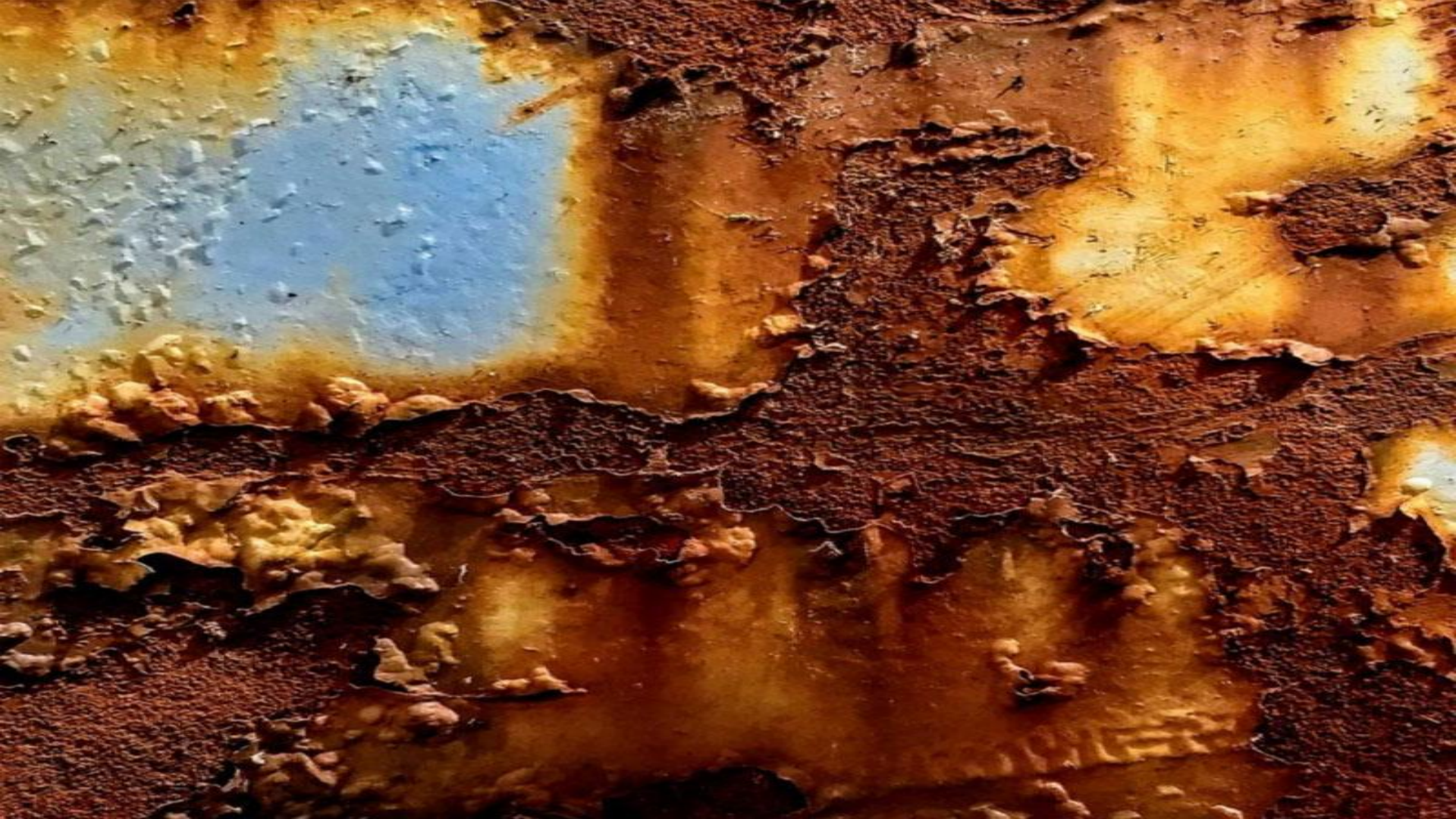
- Define the features of today's "VUCA" world
- Appreciate four voices for analyzing threat situations
- Understand adaptive vs. maladaptive coping responses to disruptive change
- Strengthen your Core for personal and professional success



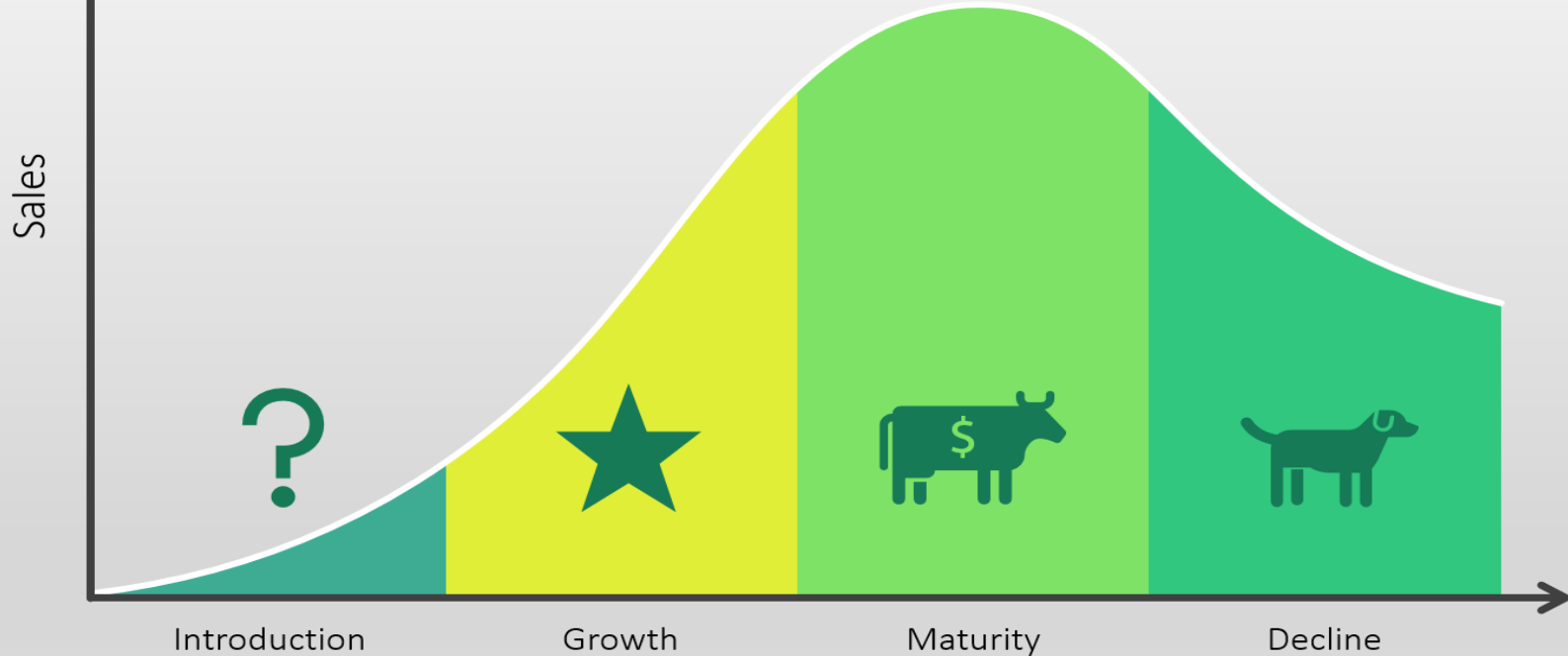
Prelude: On the Brink



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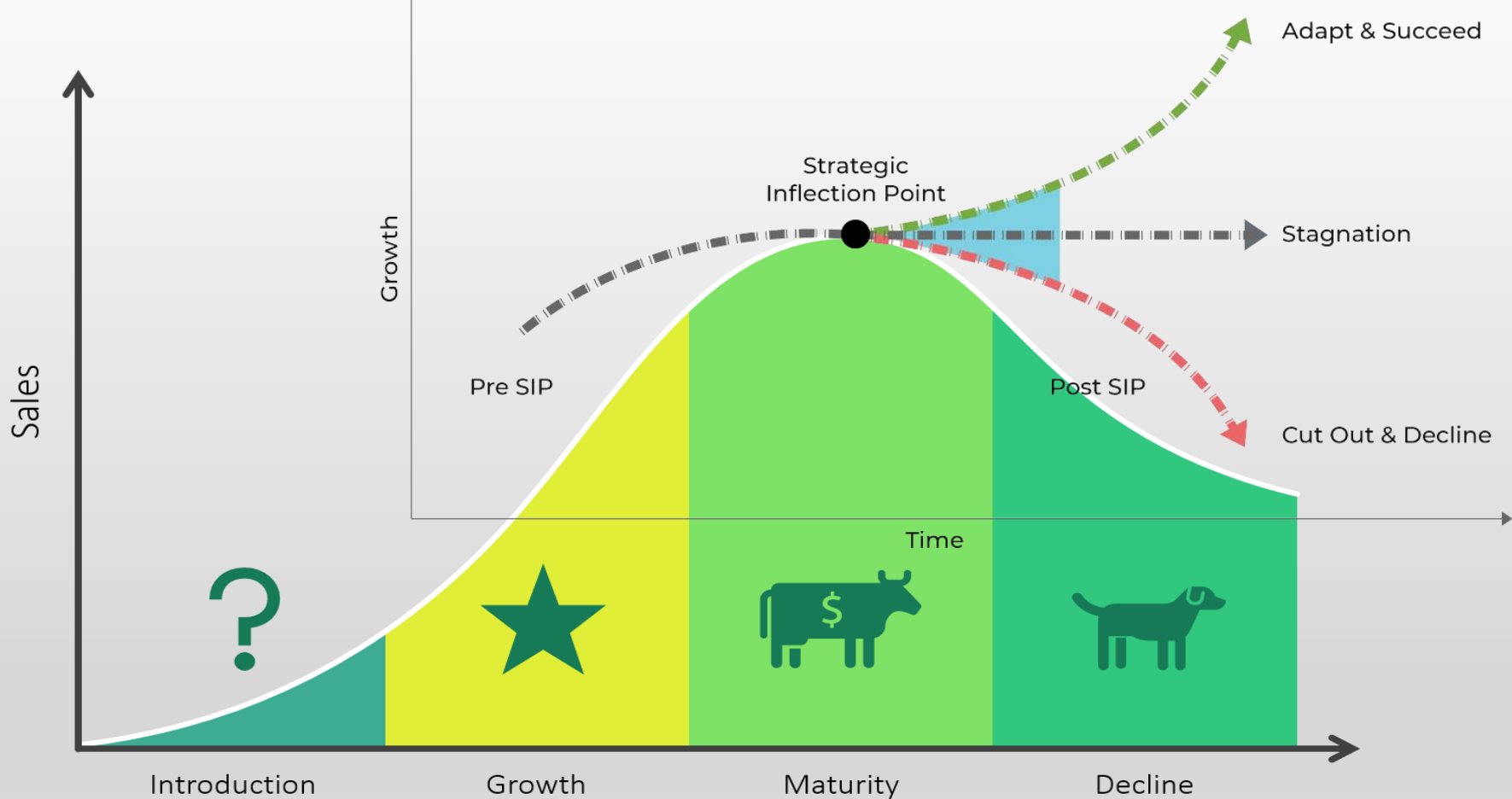


**87% of companies on first FORTUNE 500 list in 1955
NO LONGER EXIST!**



Sources: Henderson, B. (1970). *The product portfolio*. The Boston Consulting Group, Boston, MA.; Naim, M. (2013). *The end of power: From boardrooms to battlefields and churches to states*. New York: Basic Books.

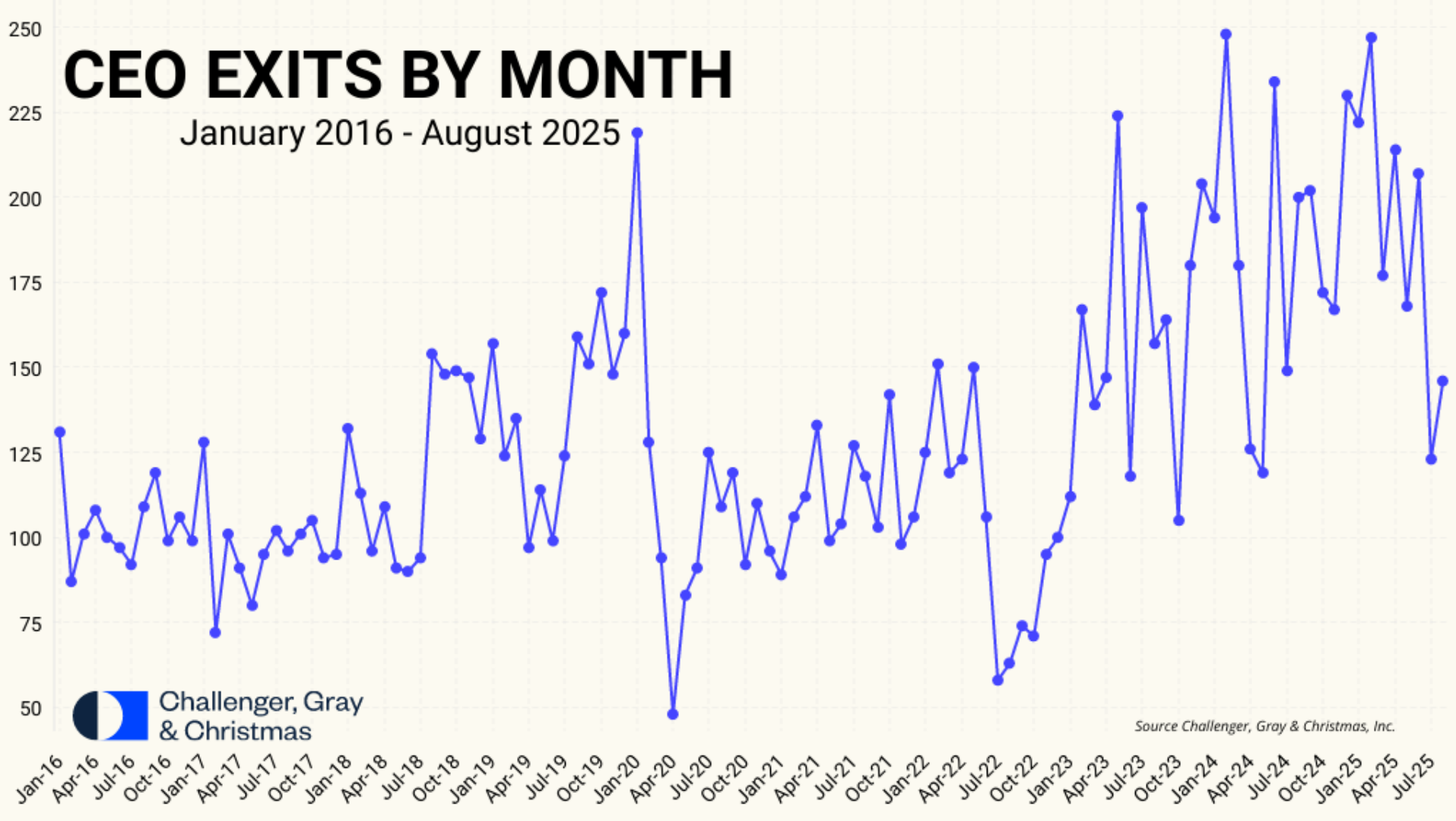




Sources: Henderson, B. (1970). *The product portfolio*. The Boston Consulting Group, Boston, MA.; Grove, A.S. (1999). *Only the paranoid survive: How to exploit the crisis points that challenge every company*. New York: Crown Currency.

CEO EXITS BY MONTH

January 2016 - August 2025



Challenger, Gray & Christmas

Source Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

Healthcare Leadership on the Brink

- 2025 AMN Healthcare/BE Smith Survey:
 - 46% of 600 healthcare leaders planned to leave current job within 12 months; 26% immediately to 6 months
 - 79% extremely or somewhat dissatisfied (improved from 82% in 2024)
 - Leaders with 1-5 years tenure most likely to leave; those with 10+ years least likely
 - Financial pressure, life reassessment post-pandemic, work culture, burnout



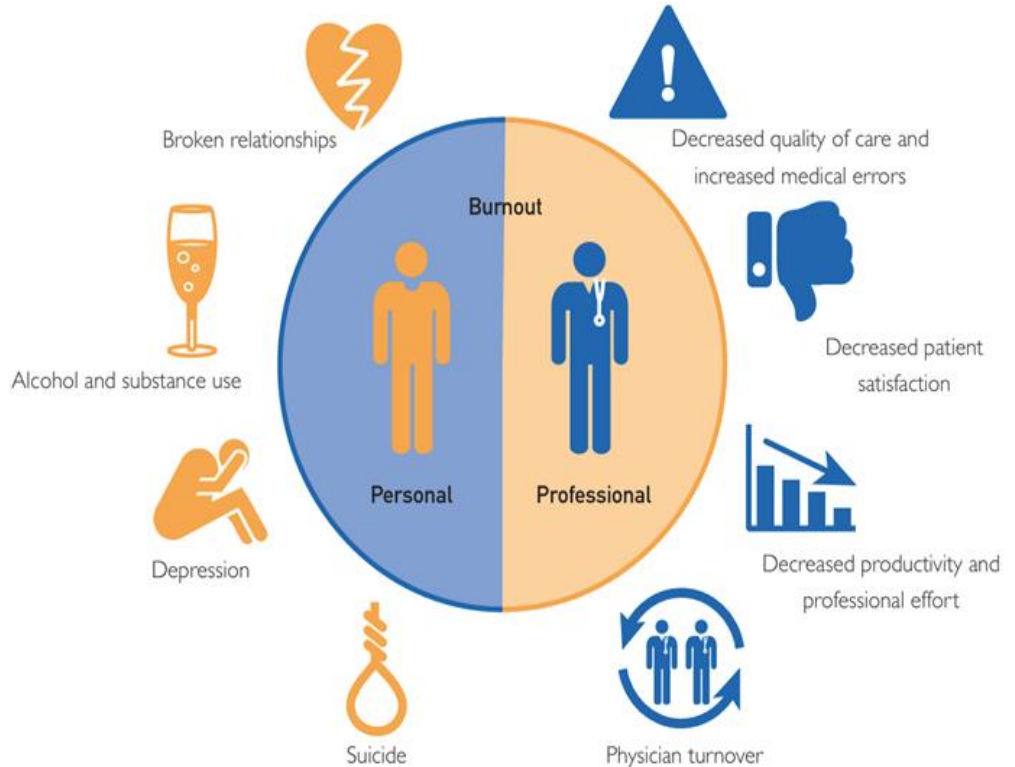
Healthcare Leadership on the Brink

- Stanford WellMD & WellPhD Center
 - Tait Shanafelt, MD – Chief Wellness Officer
 - Physicians had higher personal resilience scores than other fields
 - 29% physicians with highest possible resilience scores burned out
 - Loss of autonomy, decreased control over work environment, inefficient use of time, *little time for most personally meaningful parts of role*



Healthcare Leadership Burnout

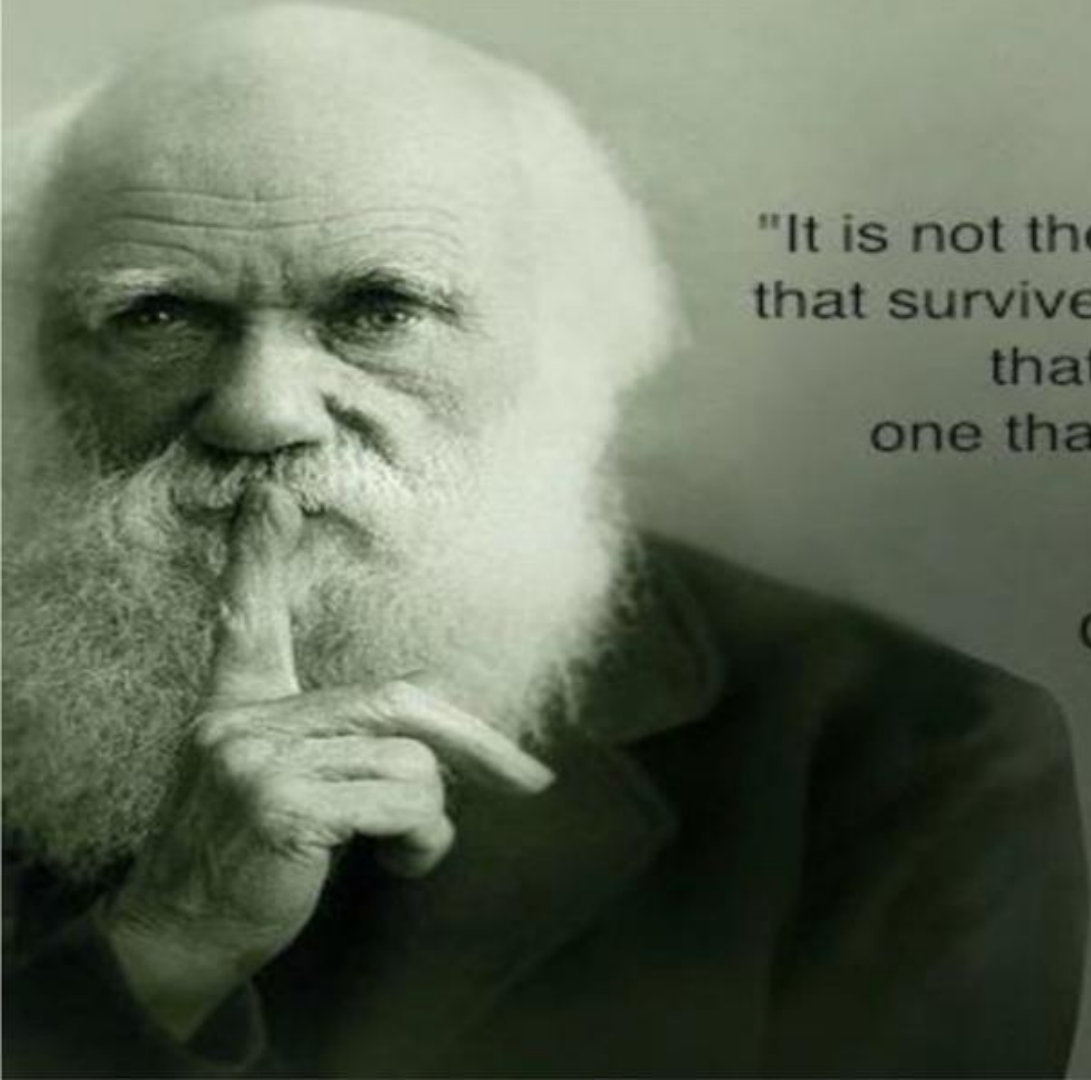
- A syndrome of:
 - depersonalization (treating people like objects);
 - losing enthusiasm for work (emotional exhaustion);
 - sense that work is no longer meaningful (low personal accomplishment)



Act I: *VUCA* Adaptation



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"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change".

Charles Darwin



Volatility
Uncertainty
Complexity
Ambiguity



Volatility
Uncertainty
Complexity
Ambiguity

→ Values



THE 5 KEYS

SAFETY • COURTESY • INCLUSION • SHOW • EFFICIENCY

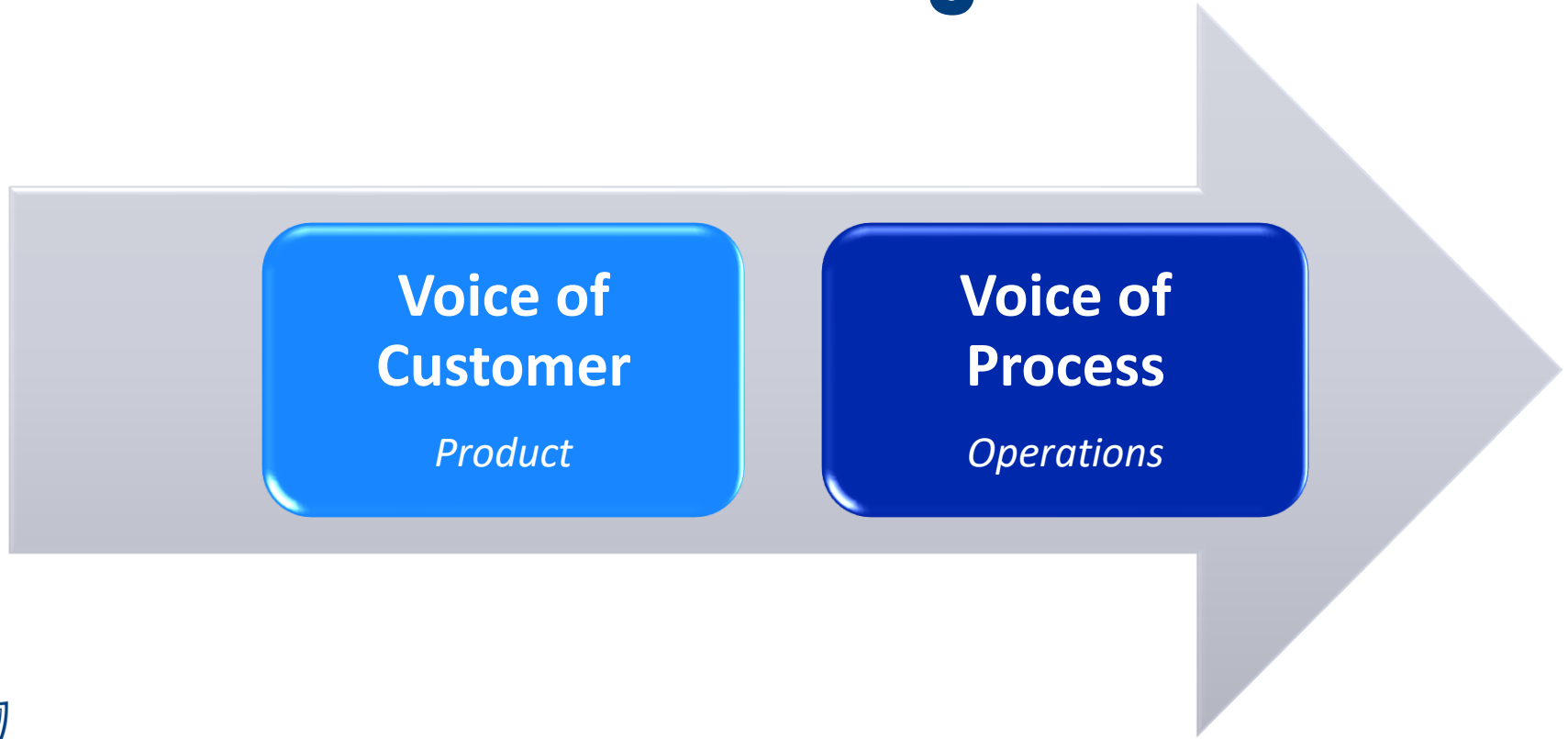


Volatility
Uncertainty
Complexity
Ambiguity

→ **Values**

→ **Understanding**

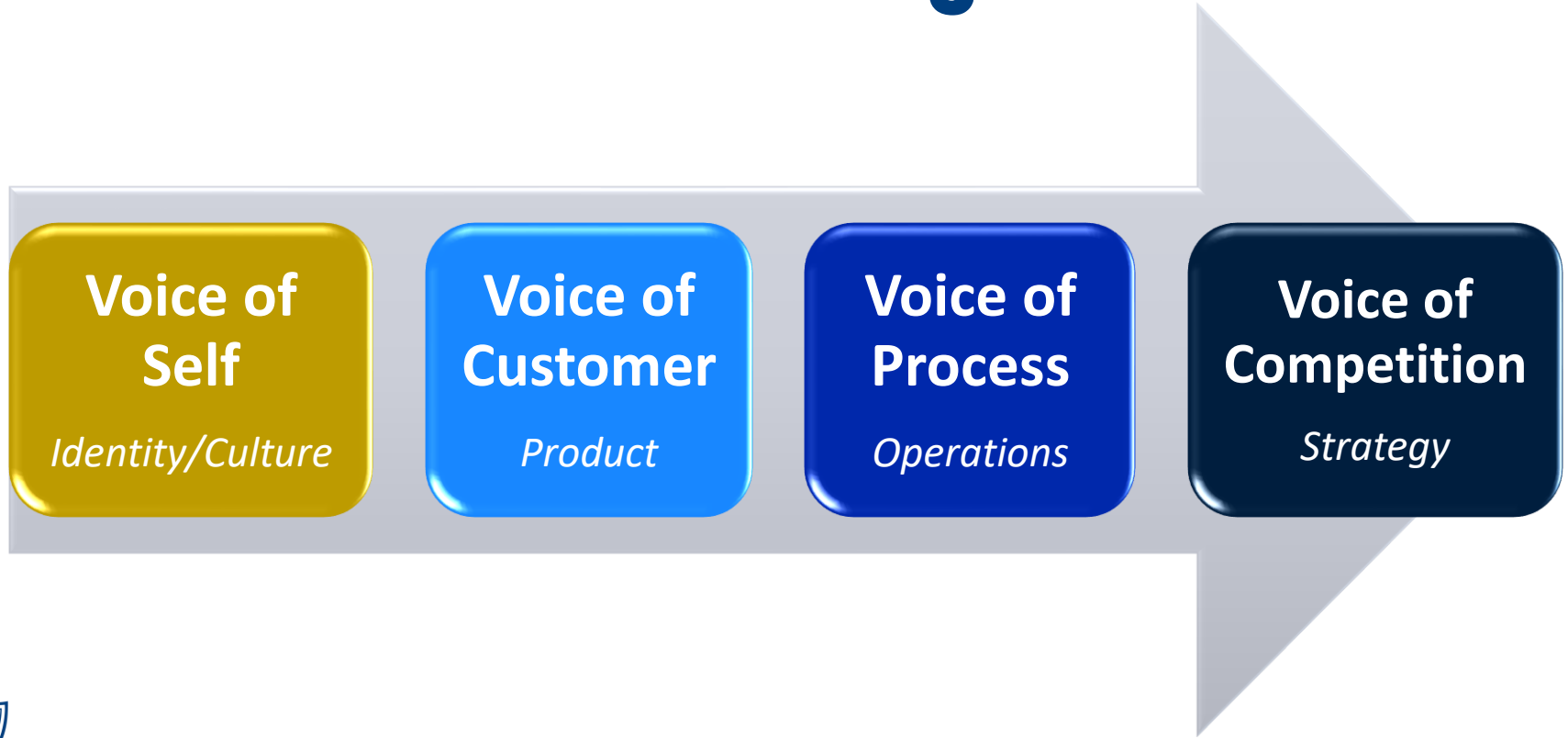
Voices for Understanding



Voices for Understanding



Voices for Understanding





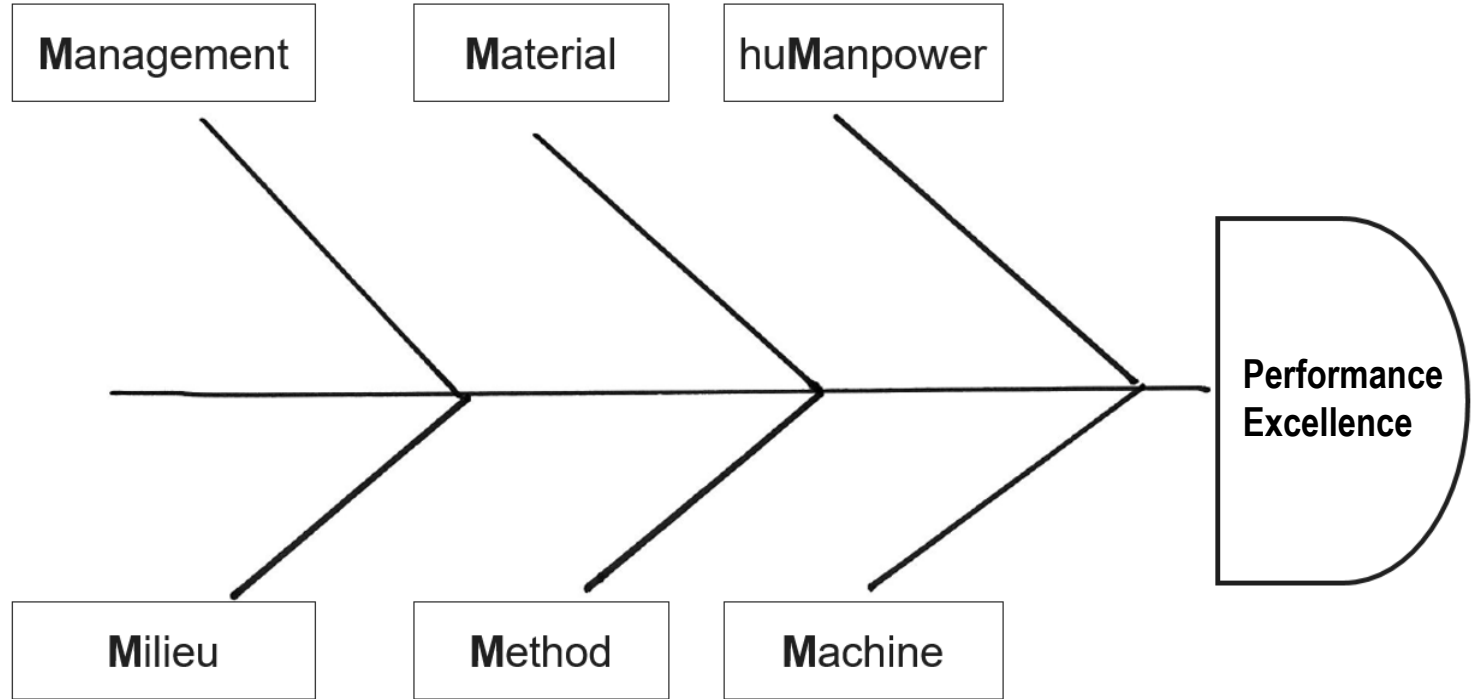
Volatility
Uncertainty
Complexity
Ambiguity

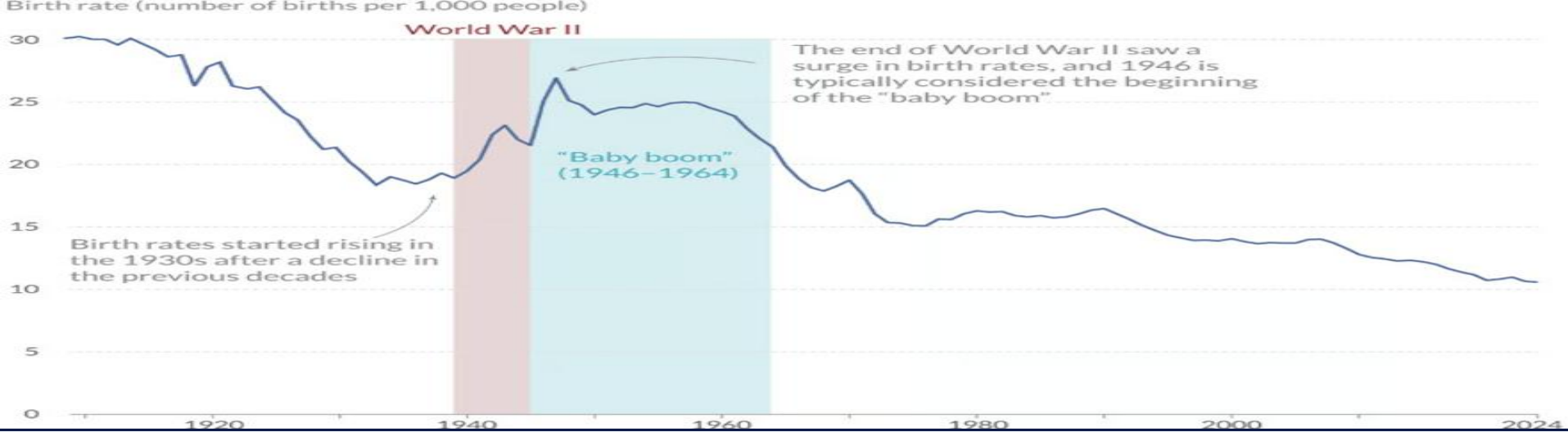
→ **Values**

→ **Understanding**

→ **Constraints**

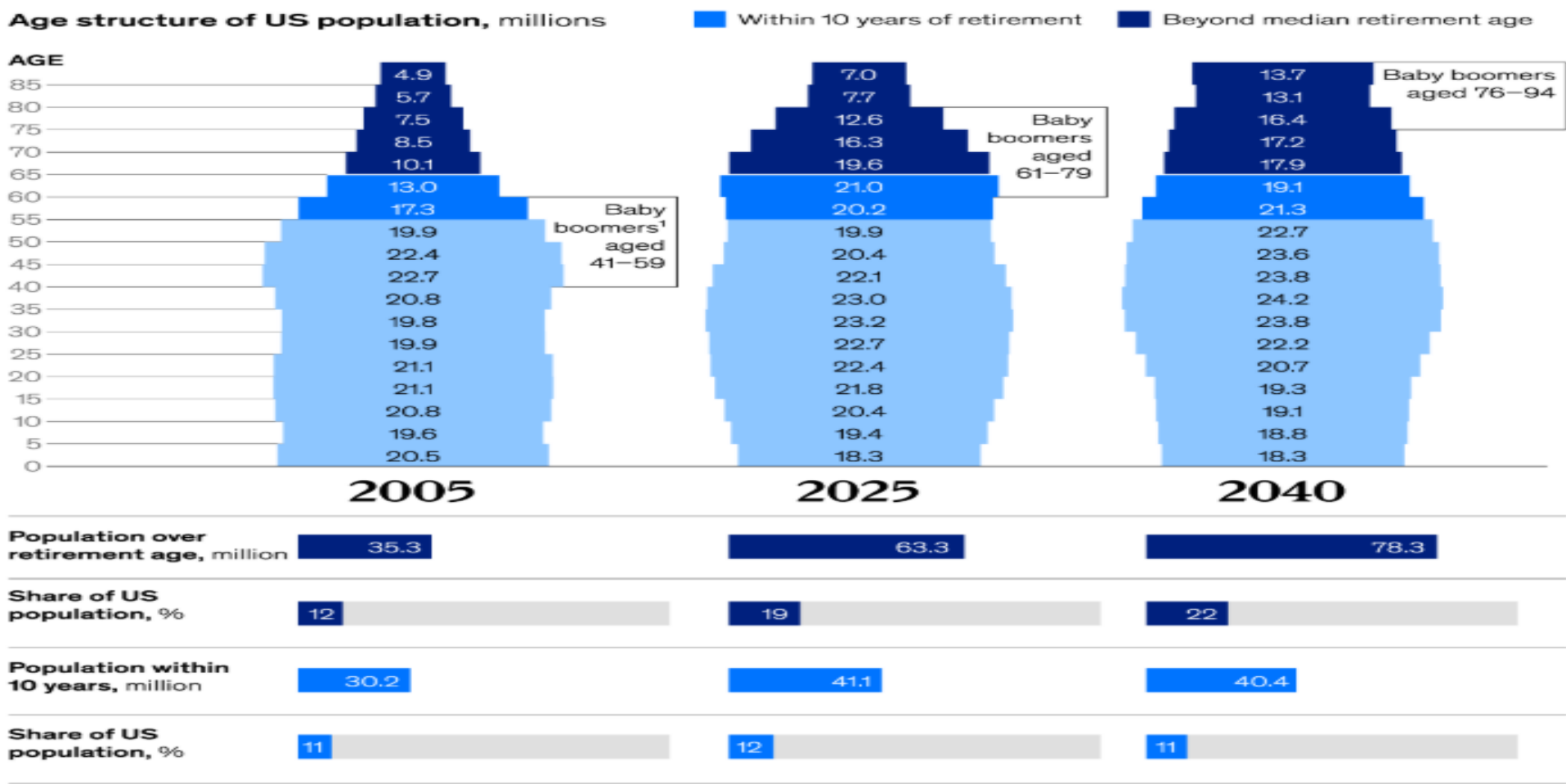
Constraints: The 6'Ms





Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics via FRED®
Shaded areas indicate U.S. recessions.

A wave of baby boomer retirements is underway.



¹Baby boomers were born between 1946 and 1964.
Source: US Census Bureau

Source: <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/week-in-charts/boomers-and-the-business-baton>

Job →
interview



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BILL



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YOUS



Volatility
Uncertainty
Complexity
Ambiguity

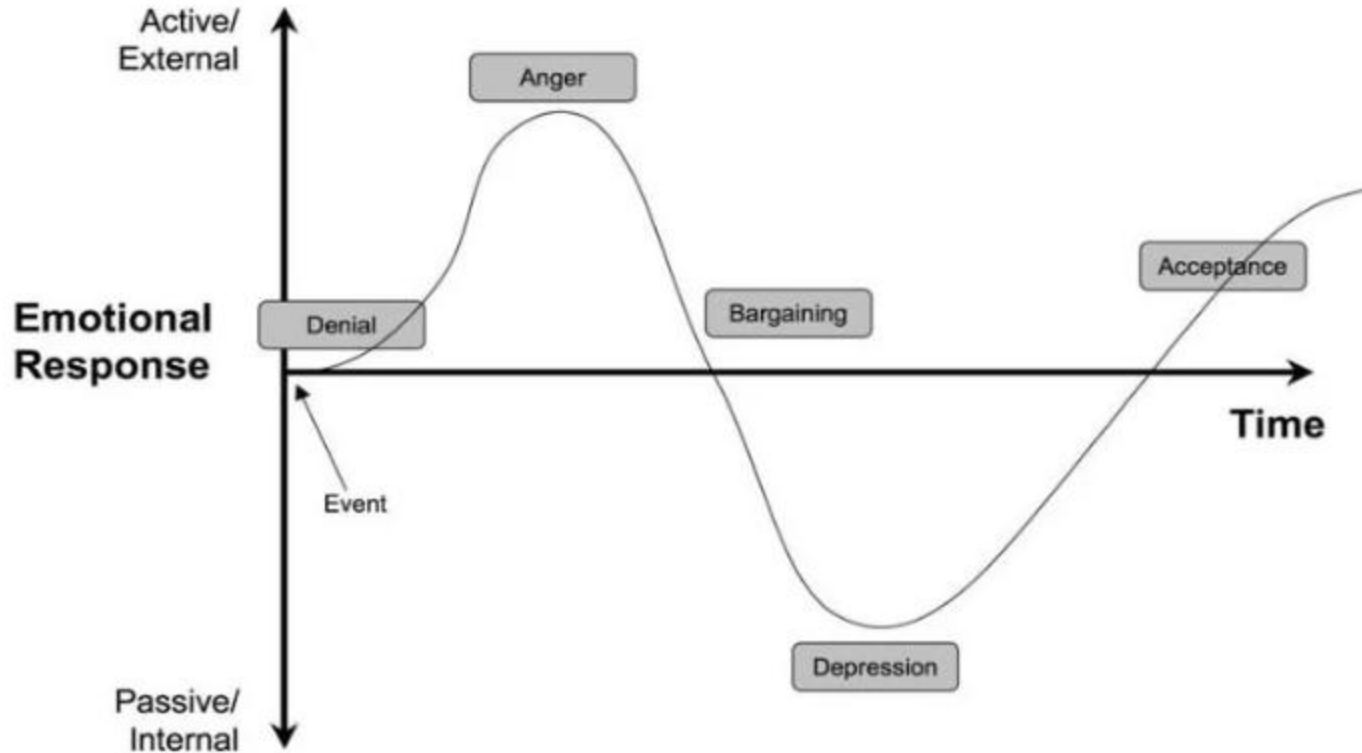
→ **Values**

→ **Understanding**

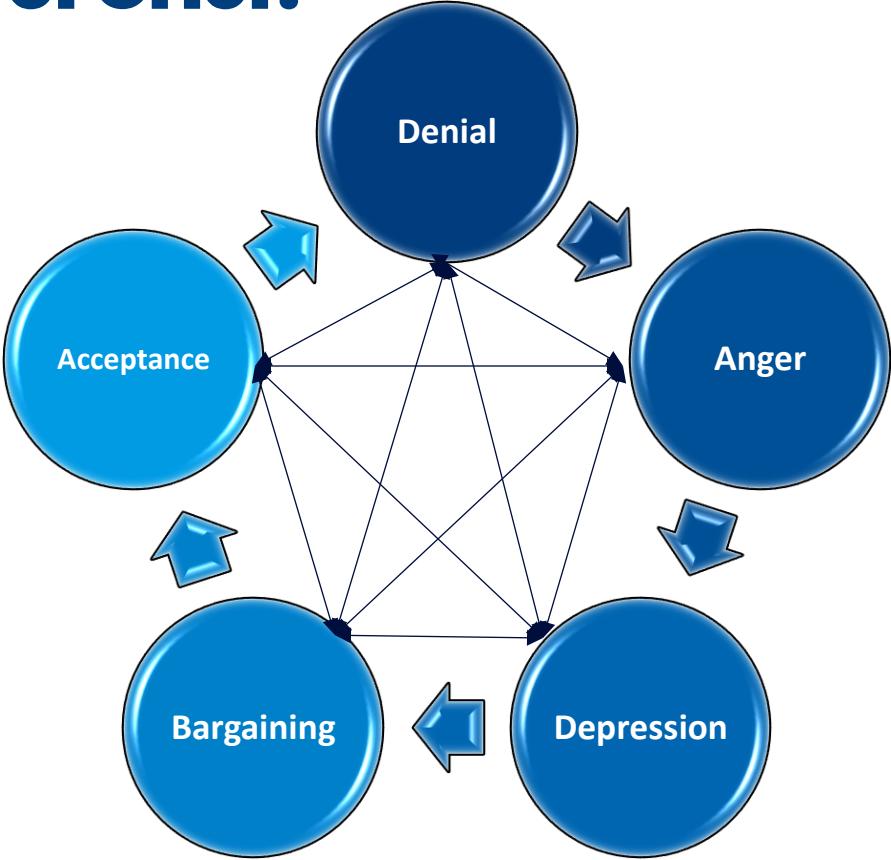
→ **Constraints**

→ **Action**

Stages of Grief?



Circumplex of Grief?





FAST



SLOW



Adaptive vs Non-Adaptive Action

- Information Seeking
- Seeking Social Support
- Cognitive Reappraisal
- Relaxation Techniques/
Meditation/Exercise
- Planful Problem-Solving

- Denial
- Isolation
- Magical Thinking
- Self-blame/Rumination
- Substance Abuse
- Displacement





“The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function. One should, for example, be able to see that things are hopeless and yet be determined to make them otherwise.”

F. Scott Fitzgerald (1936)



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Learned Helplessness vs Optimism

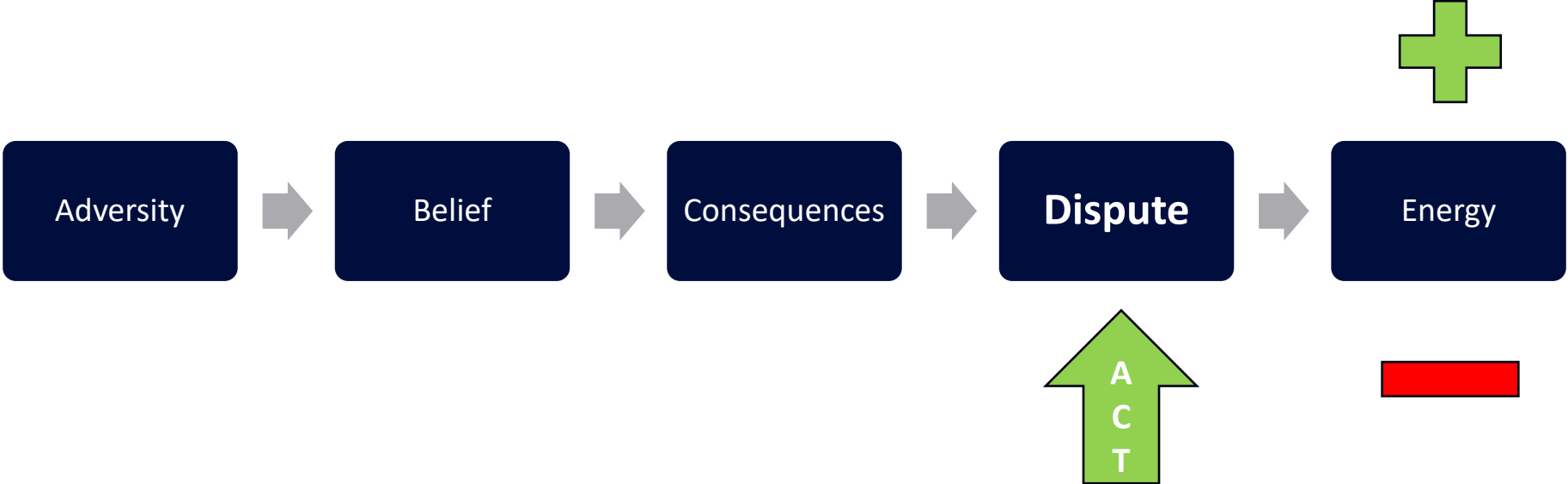
	Pessimist	Optimist
Source	Personal/Internal “It’s my fault”	Environment (External) “It was outside my control”
Duration	Permanent “It’s going to last forever”	Temporary “It won’t last long”
Impact	Global “It’s going to ruin everything”	Specific “It only affects this aspect”
	“Nothing I do will make a difference”	“I can try again and do better next time”

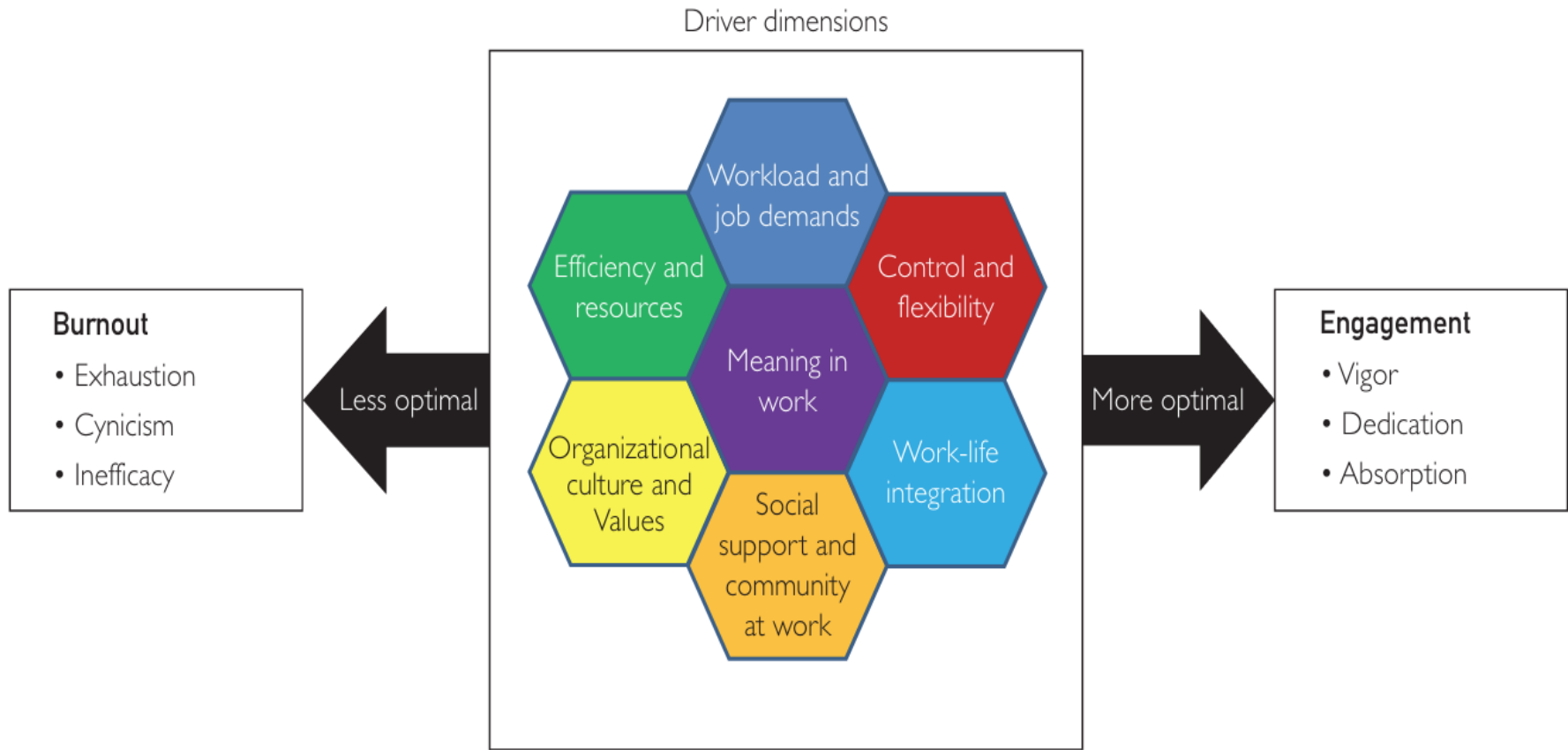


Learned Helplessness and Pessimism

- Individual acts as if powerless to change negative or stressful situation after learning through past experience that their efforts don't matter
 - **Passivity:** Giving up quickly on tasks or failing to try
 - **Low Motivation:** Procrastination and a lack of drive
 - **Poor self-esteem:** internalizing failures and feeling inadequate
 - **Difficulty making decisions:** letting other choose or avoid choices entirely
 - **Emotional numbness:** feelings of apathy or disconnection

Learned Helplessness vs Optimism





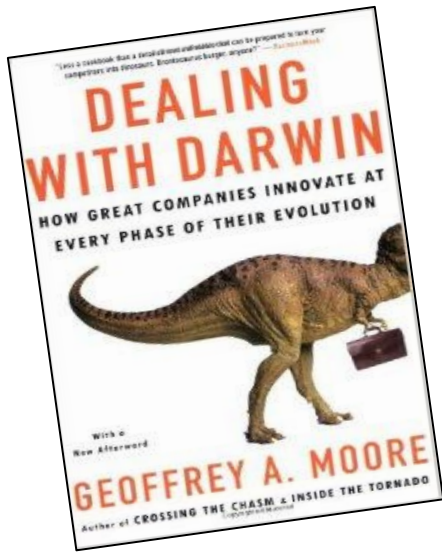
Source: Shanafelt, T.D. & Noseworthy, J.H. (2017). Executive leadership and physician well-being: Nine organizational strategies to promote engagement and reduce burnout. *Mayo Clin Proc*, 92(1): 129:146

Act II: Finding Your Core



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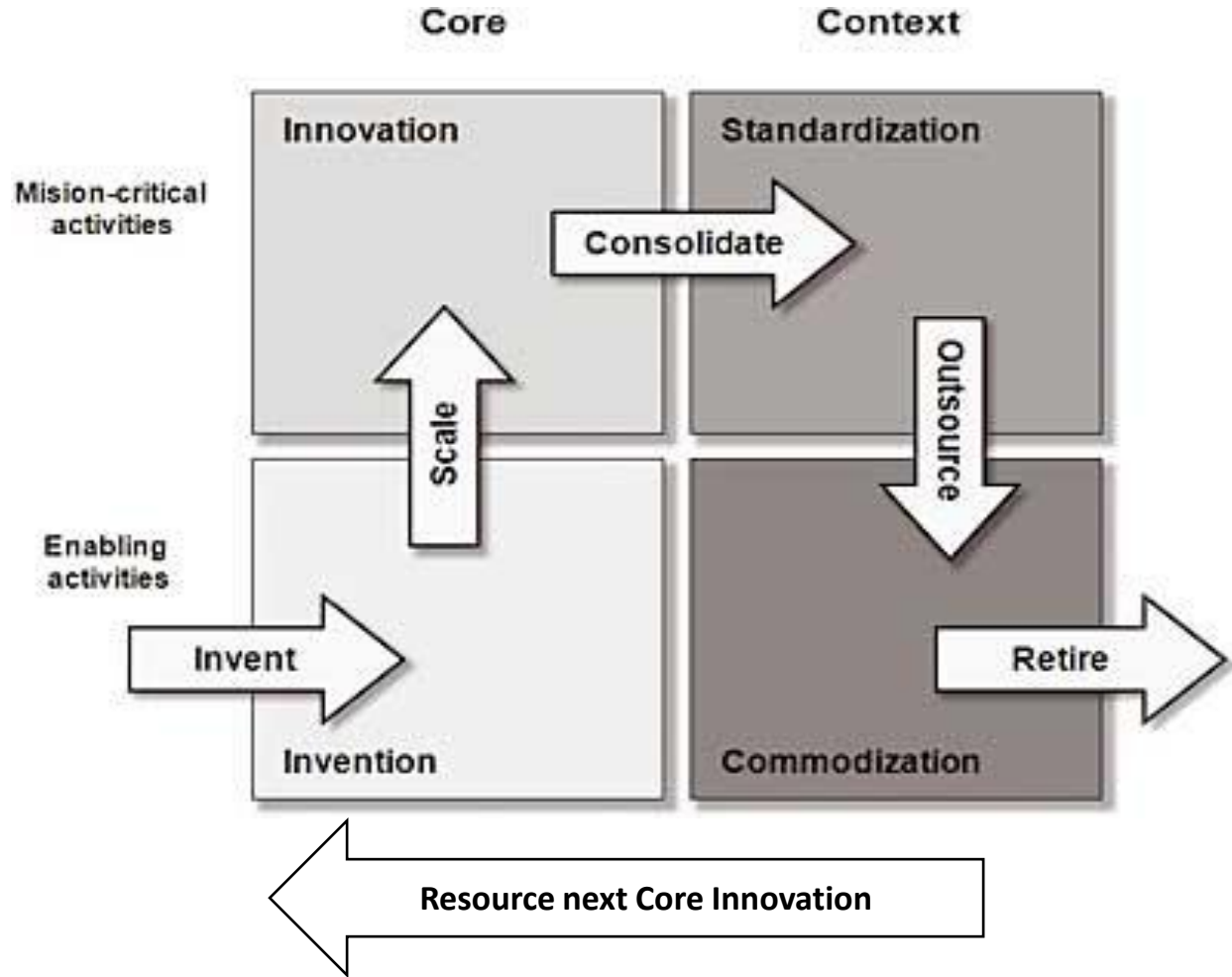
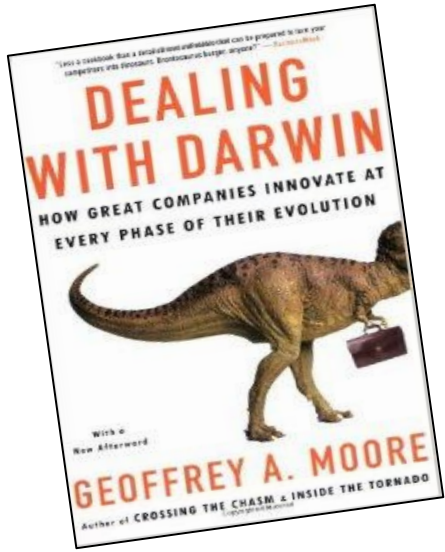




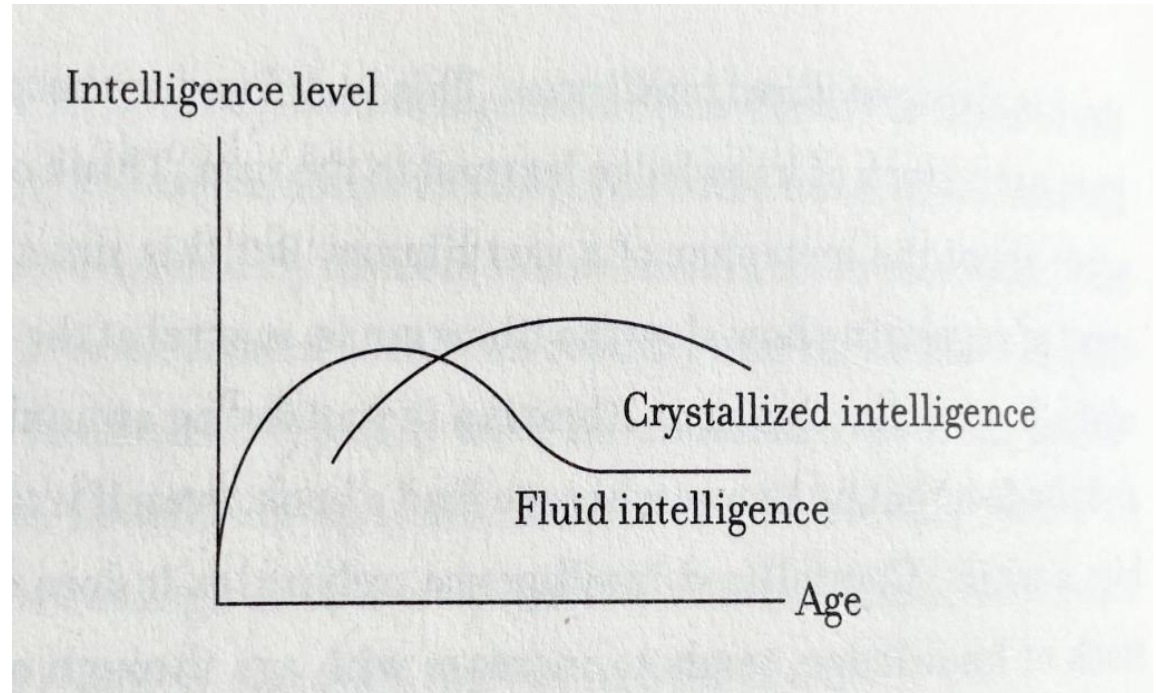
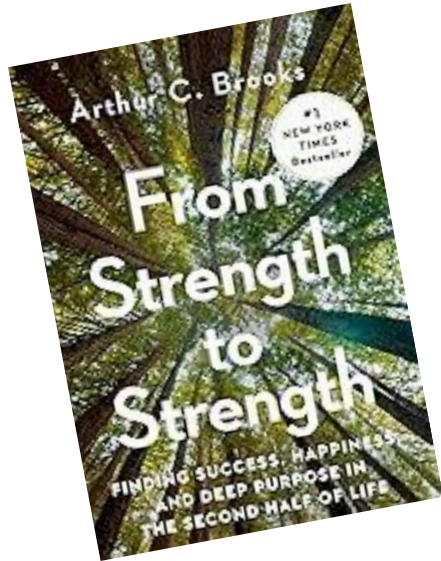
*“Extract resources from **context** in order to repurpose them for **core**”*



CORE	CONTEXT
That which differentiates to create sustainable competitive advantage	Everything else you do
Most of your strategic value	Most of your time
Fail to renew=no margin	Do badly=punished; Do well=nothing
Risk=core competence is no longer core	Today's context is legacy of past core

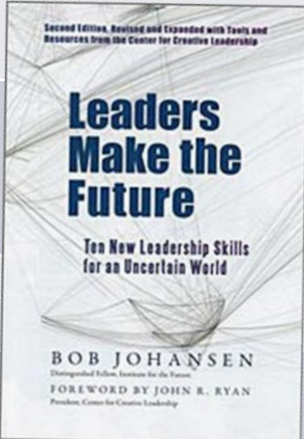
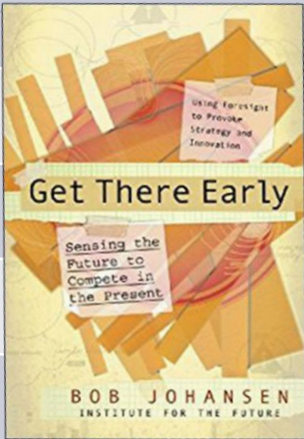


Jumping to Your Personal Second Curve



Source: Morrison, I. (1996). *The second curve: Managing the velocity of change*. New York: Ballentine Books.; Brooks, A.C. (2022). *From strength to strength*. New York: Portfolio/Penguin.

Problems	vs	Dilemmas
“The Engineer”		“The Diplomat”
Solve		Manage
Finite		Ongoing
Independent Options		Interdependent Options
Win/Lose		Commons Creation
Either/Or		Both/And
Left Brain / Fluid Intelligence		Right Brain / Crystallized Intelligence
Complicated		Complex
Management		Leadership



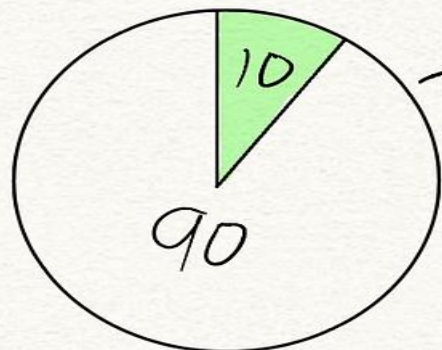
Act III: Escaping Alcatraz



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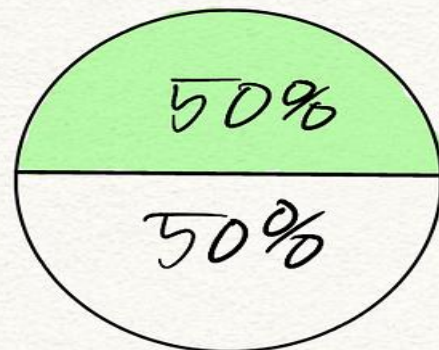
People



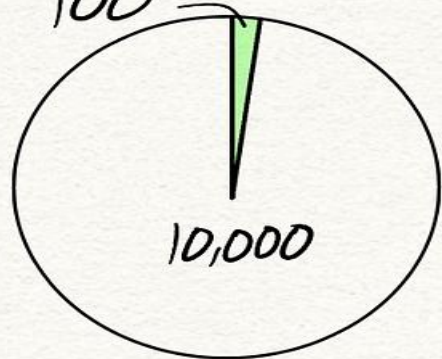
Price's Law

SP → 50% of Work

Total Work



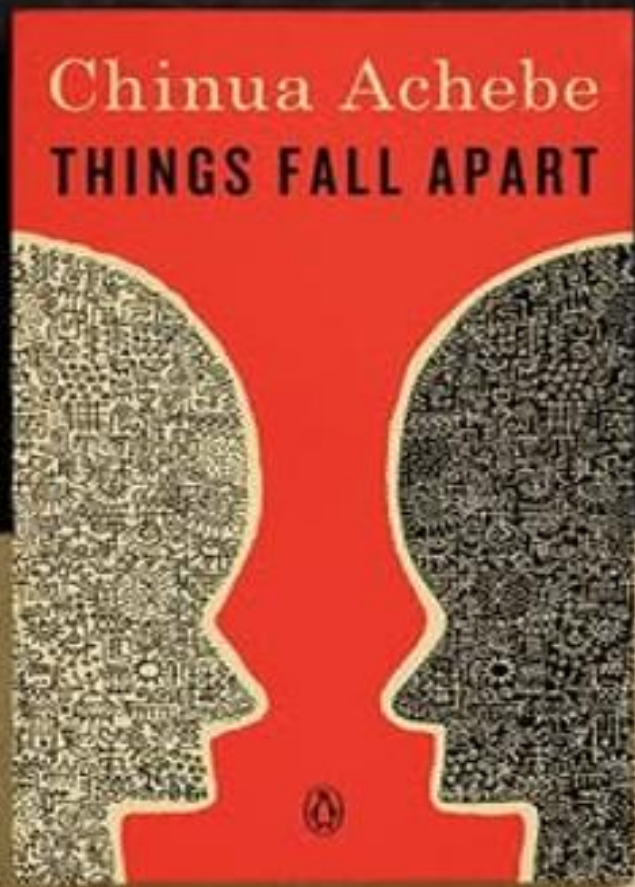
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