



Leadership  
for change

# Leadership for Change Programme

## Residential 1

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> – Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2015

Welcome!

# Purpose of the programme

- To develop systems leadership skills and capacity amongst public leaders
- To support public leaders to make progress on complex systems challenges in their places
- To make tangible improvements for the people and communities we serve, and in which we live and work



# Meet the team

**Chris Lawrence-Pietroni**

Residential  
Facilitator



**Liz Goold**

Residential  
Facilitator



**Alix Morgan**

Programme  
Director



**Tony Watton**

Programme  
Manager



# Forming our learning community

- Who am I?
- Who are we?
- What are we here for?
- How are we going to do it?



# What are we here for?

## Aims for Residential 1

- To introduce concepts and frameworks associated with systems thinking and systems leadership and to apply them to:
  - your systems leadership challenge
  - the systems leadership in your place
  - your own systems leadership practice.
- To explore the role of culture in enabling or inhibiting systems change, to identify ways of working with cultural difference.
- To apply learning to develop next-step actions you can take to make progress on your Systems Leadership Challenge.
- To enable Place Teams, Home Groups and the cohort as a whole to form so that they can provide effective support and challenge.



<b>Timing</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>09:30 – 10:00</b>	<b>Arrival and registration</b>
<b>10:00</b>	<b>Introduction &amp; Welcome</b>
<b>11:00</b>	<b>BREAK</b>
<b>11:15</b>	<b>Masterclass: Working with living systems</b>
<b>13:00</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>
<b>14:00</b>	<b>Applying systems thinking: Developing your systems leadership challenge</b>
<b>15:20</b>	<b>BREAK</b>
<b>15:45</b>	<b>Applying systems thinking: Marketplace</b>
<b>16:45</b>	<b>Applying systems thinking: Forming Home Groups</b>
<b>17:45</b>	<b>Reflection in Action</b>
<b>18:30</b>	<b>CLOSE</b>
<b>19:15</b>	<b>Peter Hay, Director of People, Birmingham City Council</b>
<b>20:15</b>	<b>DINNER</b>

# How are we going to do it?

- Drawing on the extended leadership capacity and experience in the room
- Experiential exercises, group work and 'using the pause button'
- Formal inputs and speakers
- Informal evening discussions
- Reflection-in-action – 'Moleskine Moments'
- Home Groups
- Create the conditions for transformational learning- offering balance of support and challenge and responding to different learning styles
- Providing the necessary springboard for you to experiment and take action on your Systems Leadership Challenge between Residentials

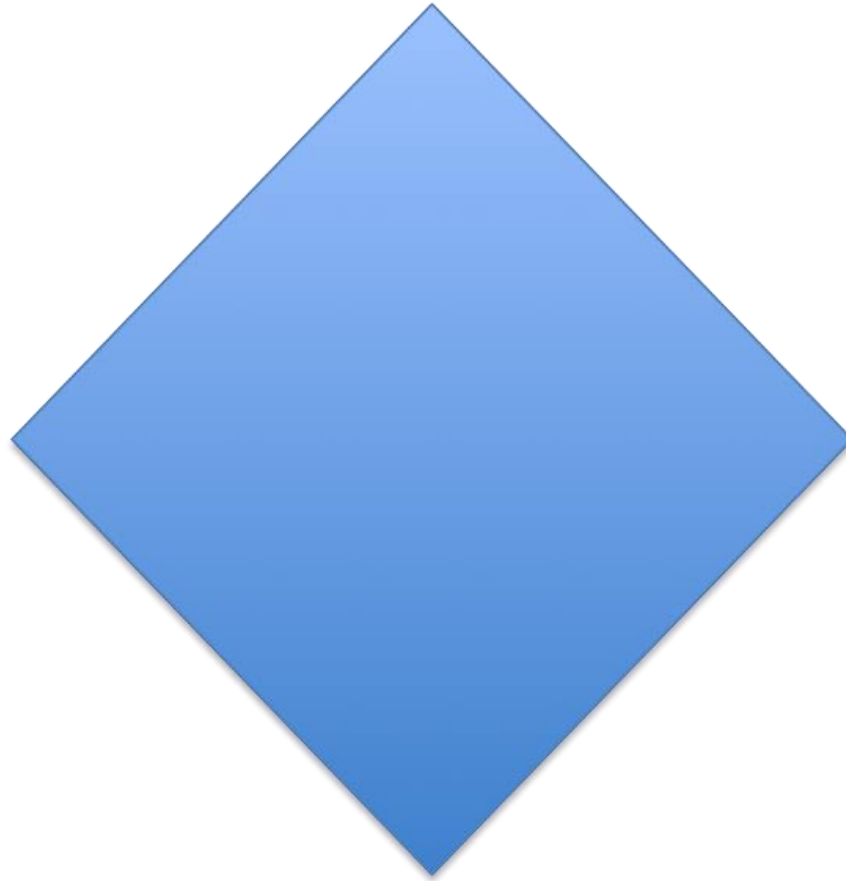


Connectivity

Confidentiality

Curiosity

Courage



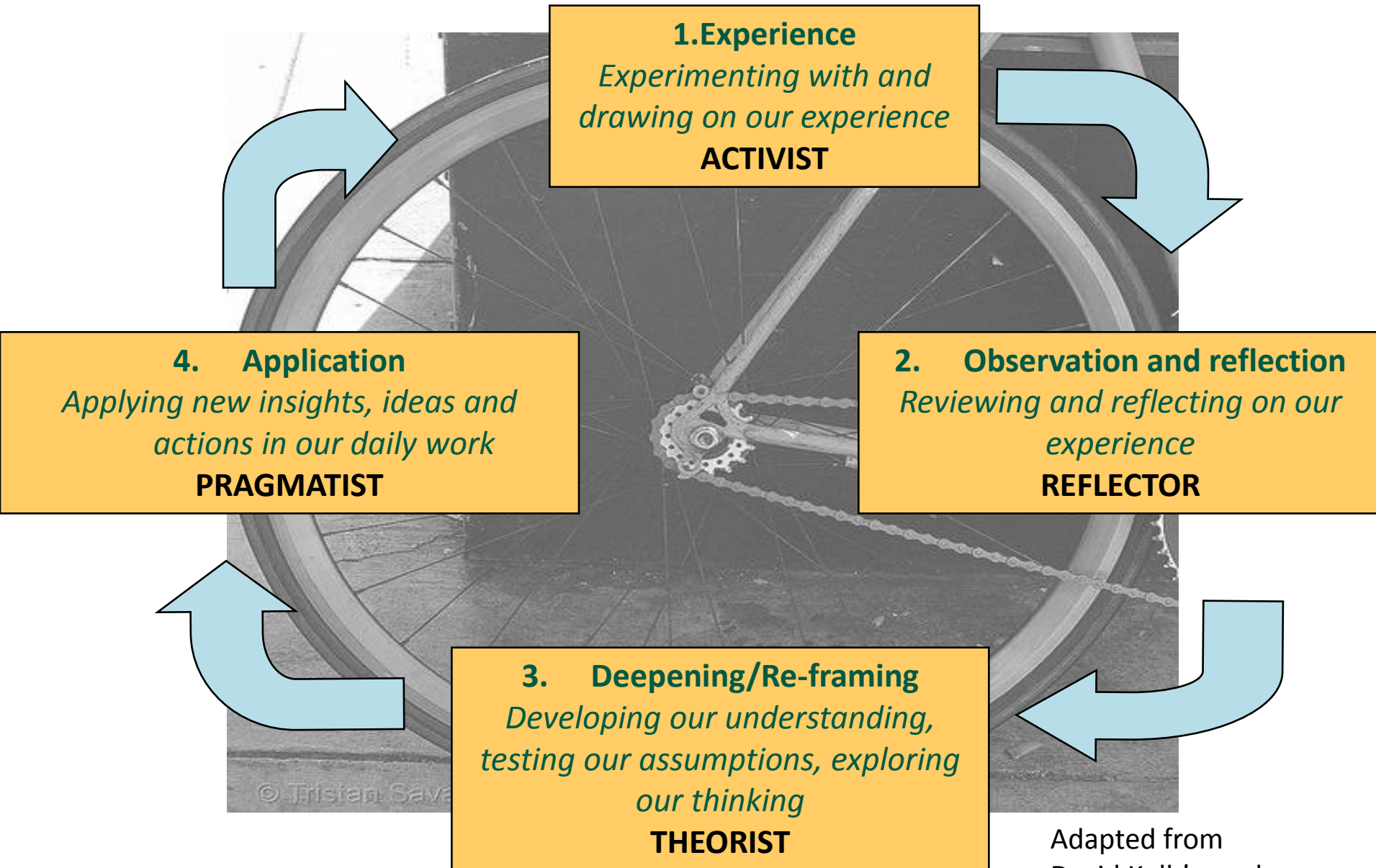


# For the programme as a whole, we are asking you to commit to...

- Being present and participating fully throughout the Residentials
- Actively participating in your team's agreed actions between the Residentials
- Getting the necessary support/agreeing with your LC how you will work together over the course of the Programme including regular contact with the whole team
- Paying attention to your individual and team's learning during the programme and working with your LC to capture this
- Doing the necessary prep and background reading



# Learning Cycle



Adapted from  
David Kolb's work



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Break

# Masterclass:

# Working with living systems

John Atkinson

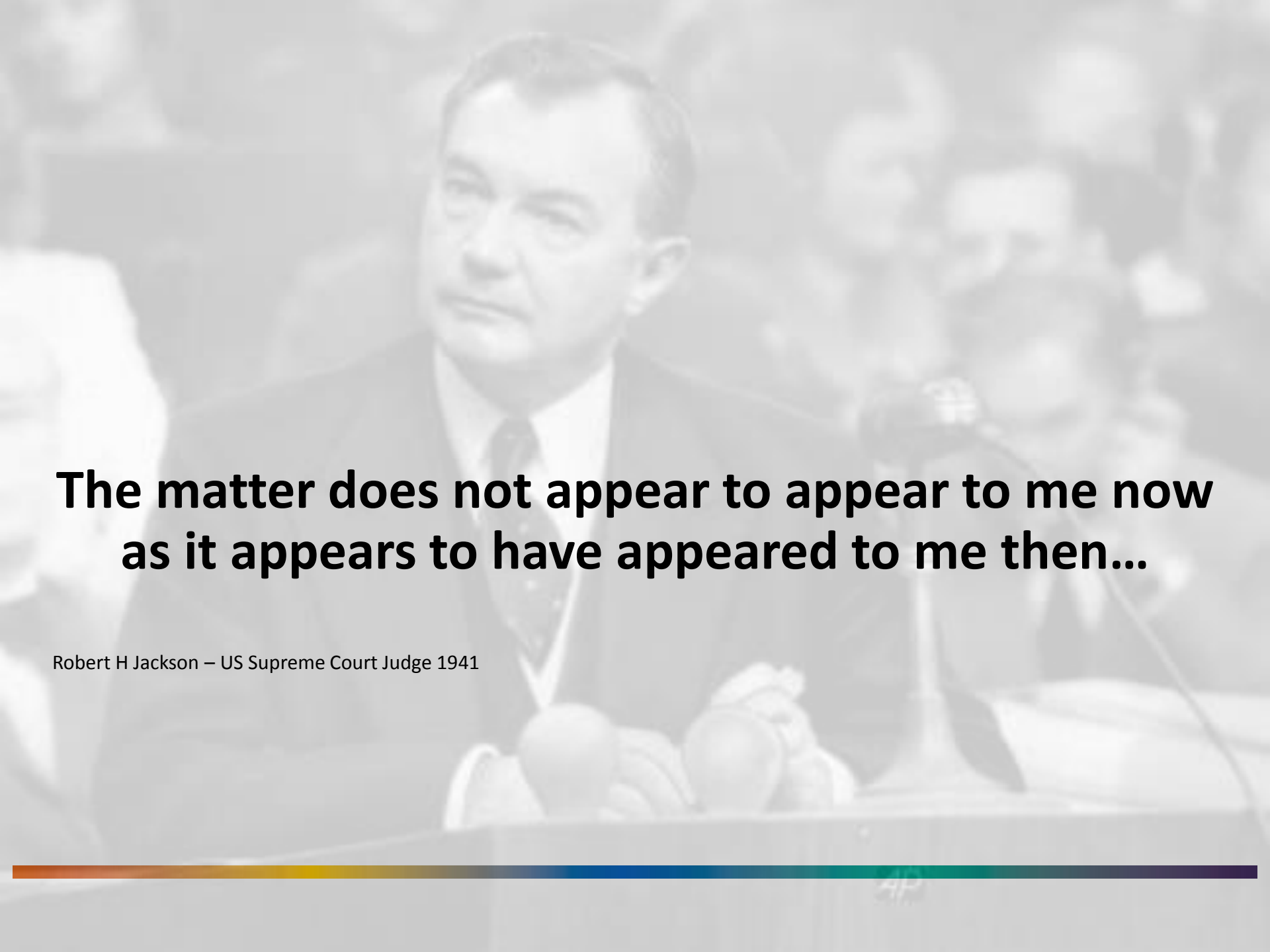




# **Working with Living Systems**

**What is going on here?**

**How do we know?**

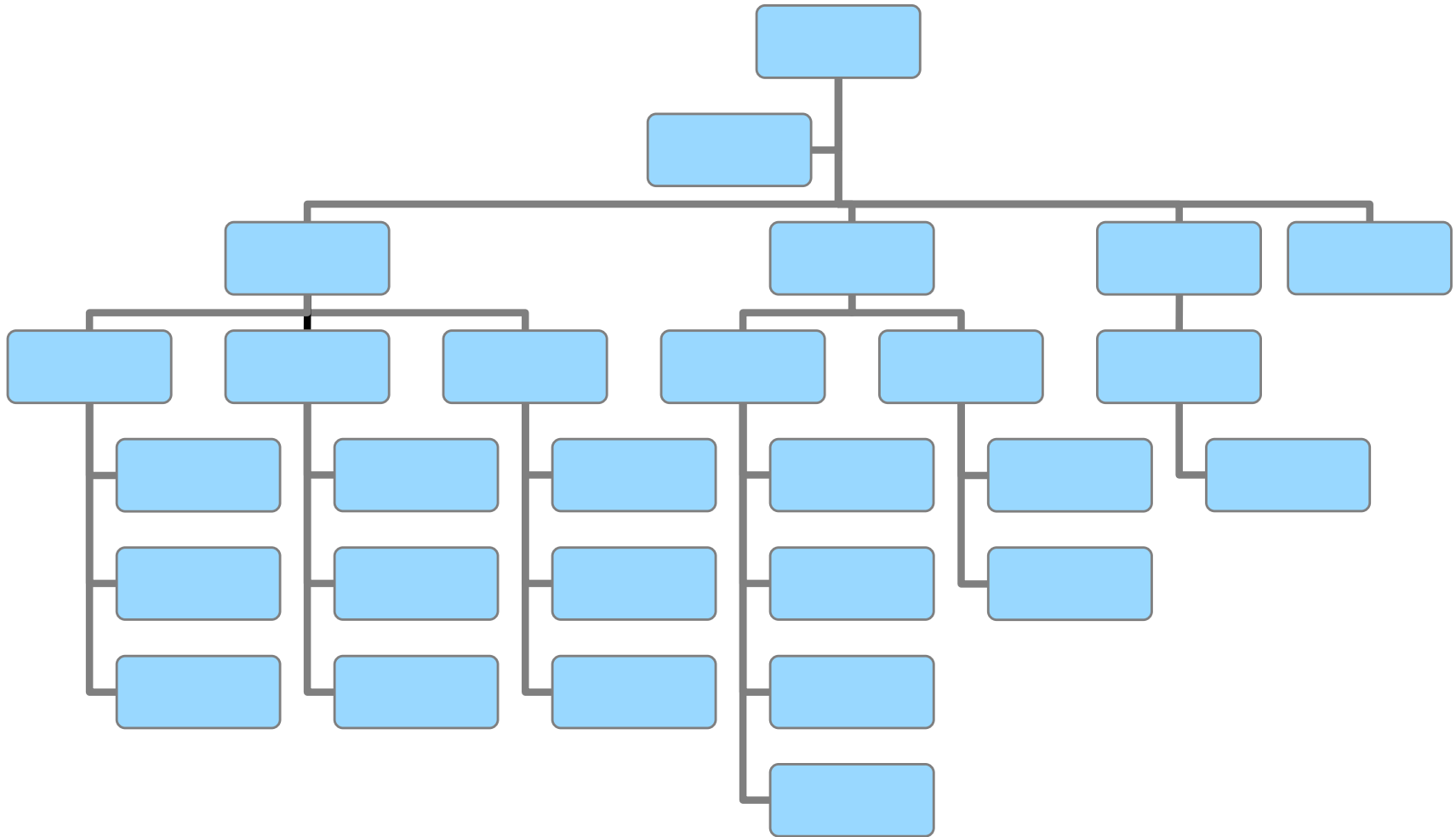
A black and white photograph of Robert H. Jackson, a US Supreme Court Justice, speaking at a podium. He is wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie. He is looking slightly to his left. The background is blurred, showing other people. The text "The matter does not appear to appear to me now as it appears to have appeared to me then..." is overlaid in large, bold, black font.

**The matter does not appear to appear to me now  
as it appears to have appeared to me then...**

Robert H Jackson – US Supreme Court Judge 1941

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# How do human systems work?

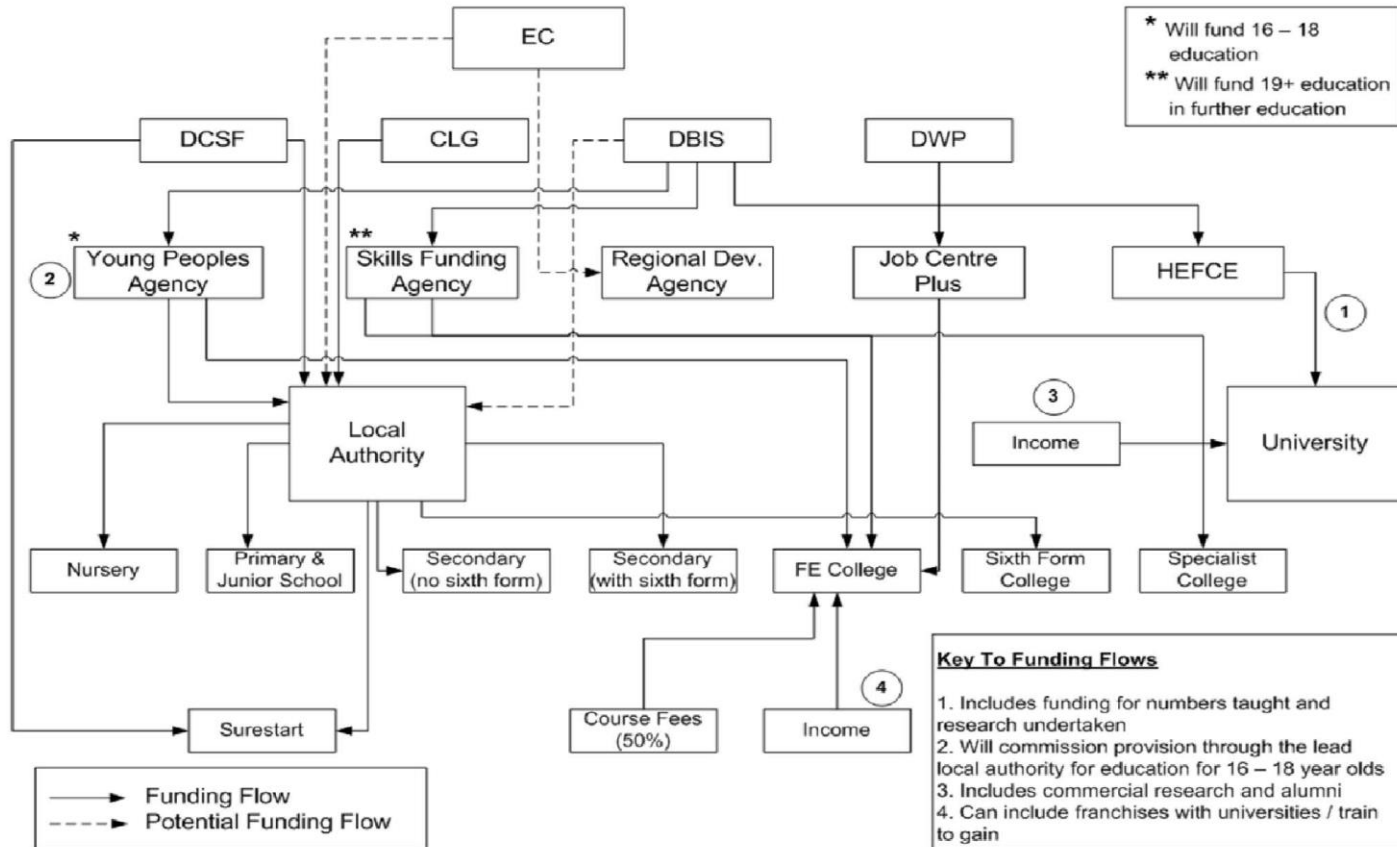




# And it grows in complexity

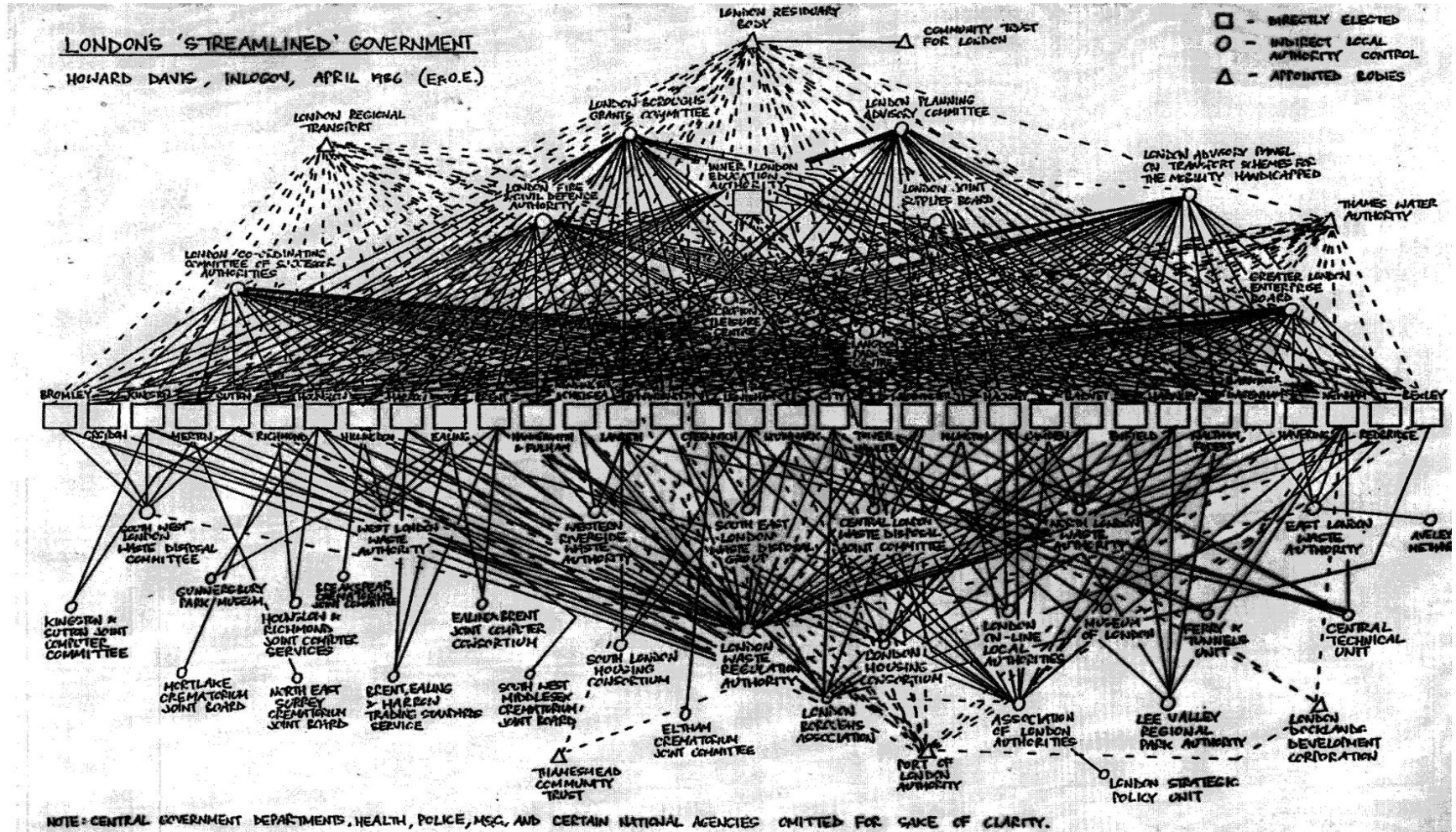
And it adds cost and delay

## Learning and Skills



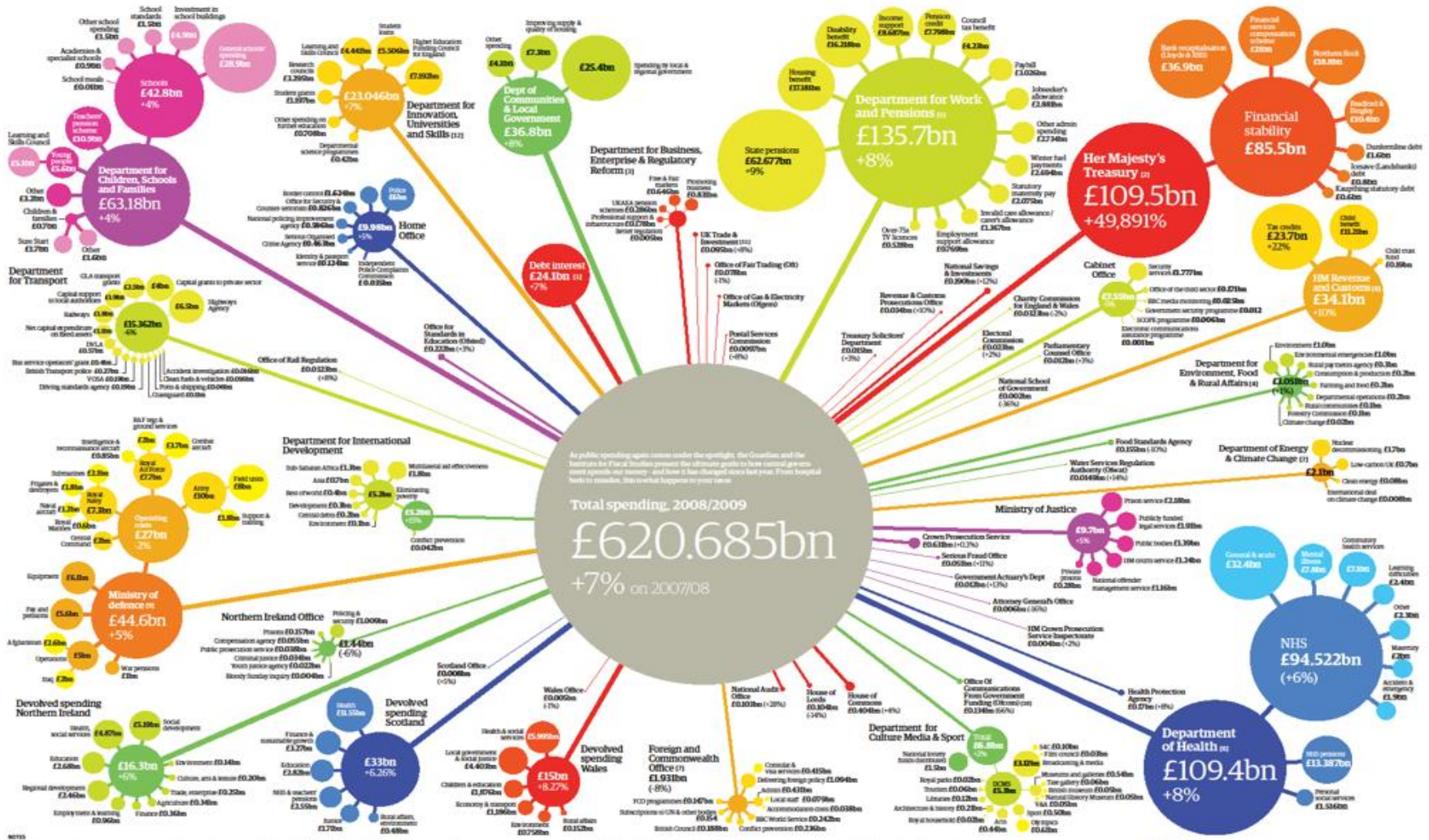


And that is real





Although they try to make it look pretty

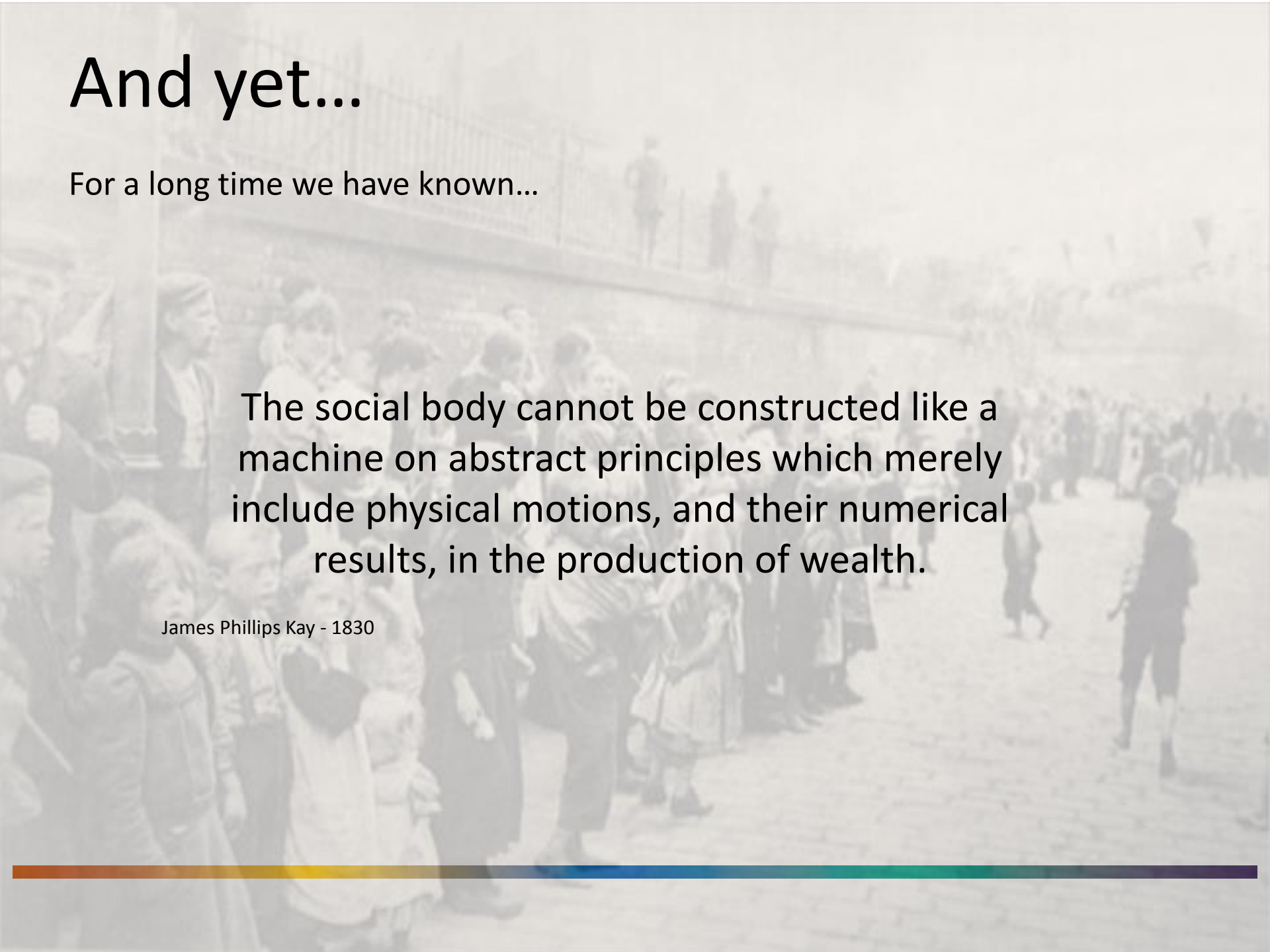


# And yet...

For a long time we have known...

The social body cannot be constructed like a machine on abstract principles which merely include physical motions, and their numerical results, in the production of wealth.

James Phillips Kay - 1830





# We live in a networked world

And we know how networks behave...



# Maturana & Varela

Treating networks as living organisms - autopoiesis

- Biological systems have a distinct sense of identity – everything they do is about preserving this identity
- They are composed of lots of different parts that interact and relate to each other
- There are no set rules for how this must happen, only that it must
- The organism decides this for itself according to its needs and desires, it makes its own rules
- This determines structure – it is self-constructing
- It defines its own limits of what it decides is safe
- It understands itself by what it knows –it understands ‘now’ through the lens of what has gone on before



# Maturana & Varela

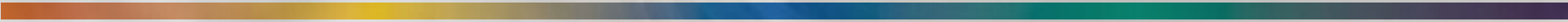
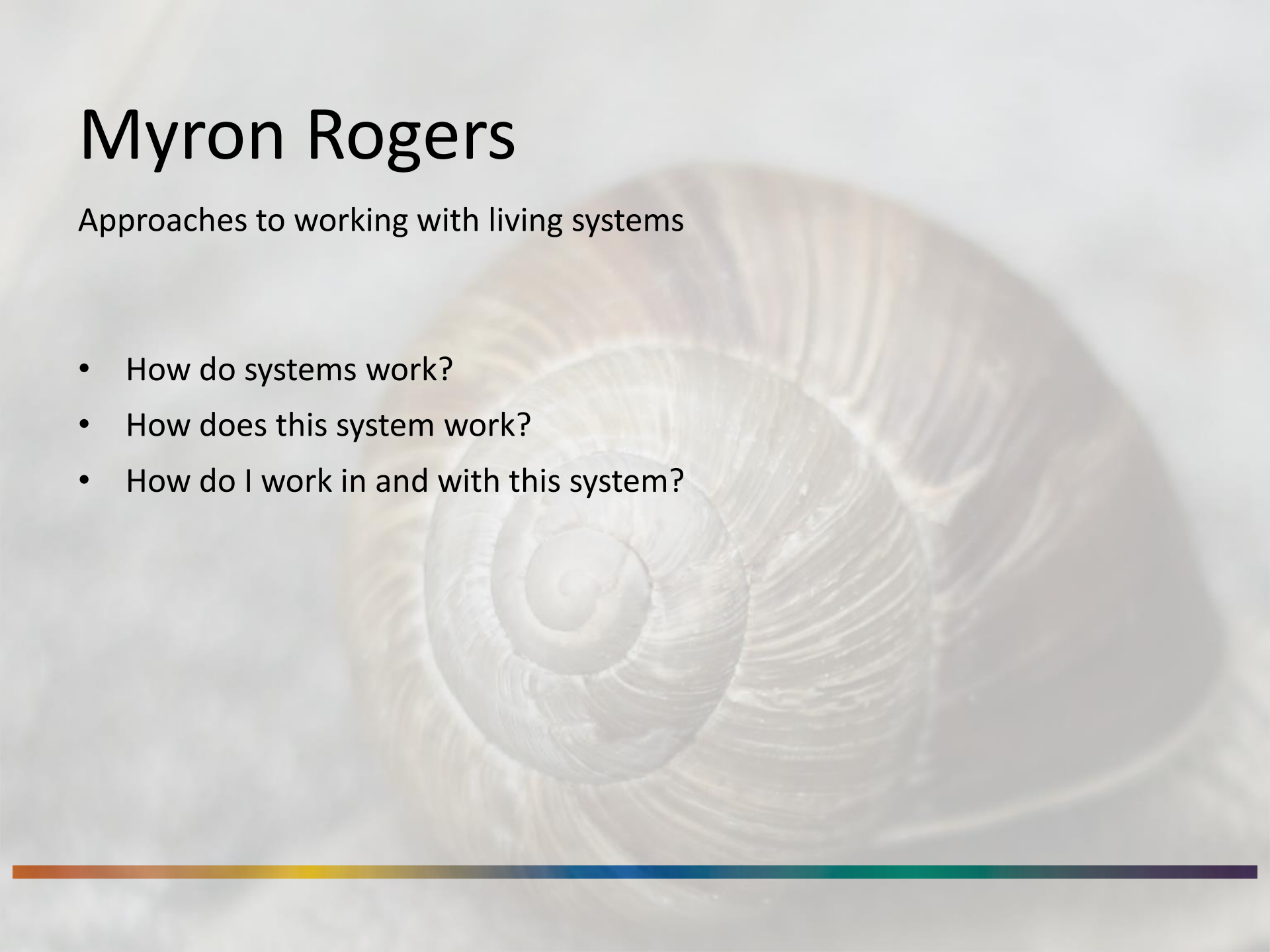
## Treating networks as living organisms

- Organisms, from single cells to eco-systems have a variety of characteristics in common
- They have evolved to be in a perfect relationship with their environment
- It is a symbiotic relationship, the organism/organisation defines the environment and the environment defines the organism
- If there is an external source of perturbation the organism acts to kill it, be it internal or external.
- If the organism is held perturbed for sufficient time it adapts to this new condition.
- By cultural behaviour we mean the transgenerational stability of behavioural patterns ontogenically acquired in the communicative dynamics of a social environment.

# Myron Rogers

Approaches to working with living systems

- How do systems work?
- How does this system work?
- How do I work in and with this system?



# Working with complexity

## Myron's maxims

- People own what they create
- Real change happens in real work
- Those who do the work do the change
- Start anywhere but follow it everywhere
- Keep connecting the system to more of itself



# So let's get started

You have a systems leadership challenge...

- What is the 'system' you are referring to?
- What is the real 'challenge'?





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Lunch



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# Applying systems thinking:

## Developing your systems leadership challenge

# Rich Pictures

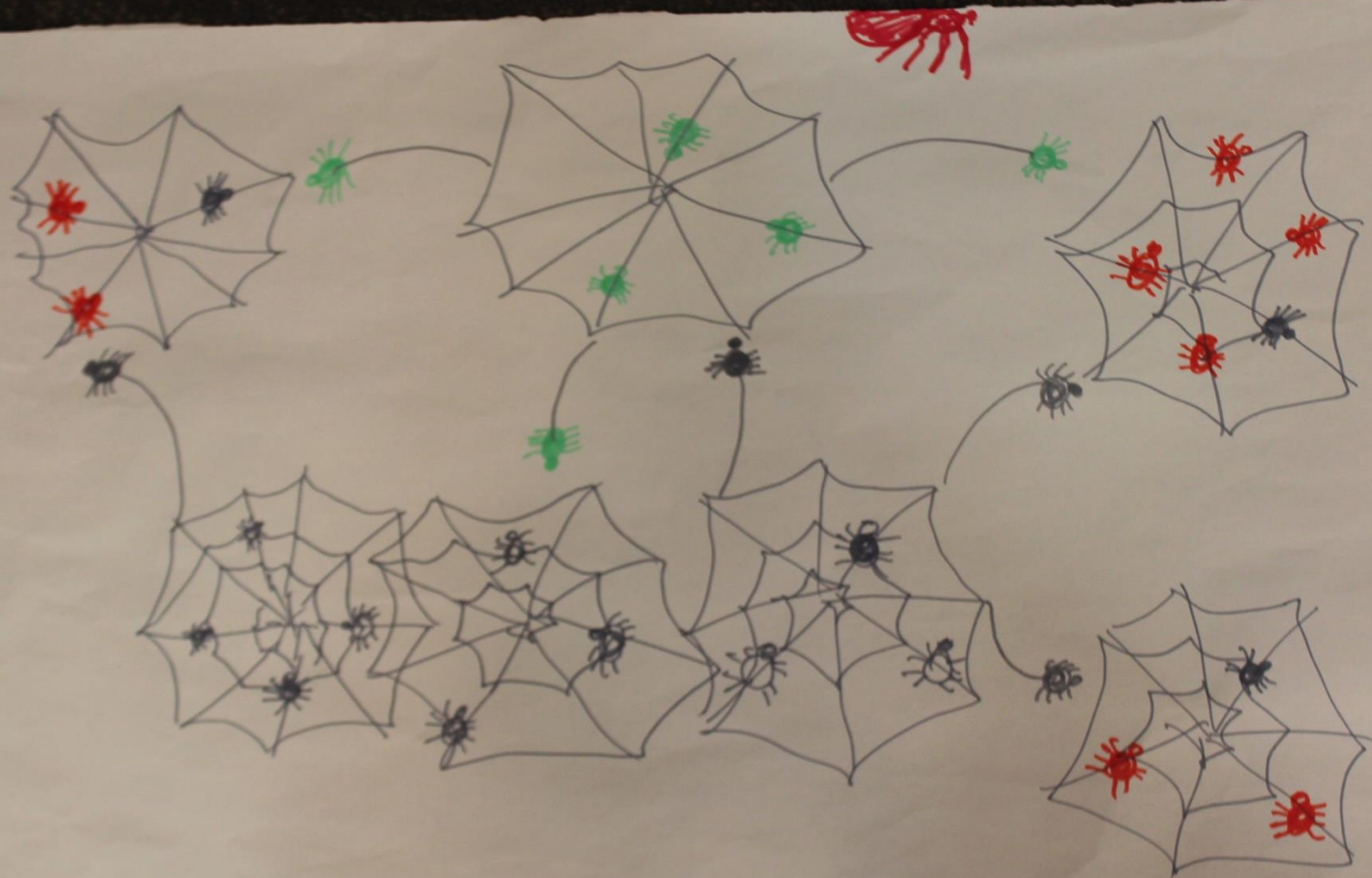
- Convey a visual impression about the issue or problem
- It seeks to represent *your* perception of everything that is relevant to the issue or situation
- Not a diagram
- Not complete
- Do not need to be an artist (in fact it helps not to be!)
- Use colour
- Avoid lots of words, if needed, use speech bubbles



# Rich Pictures

- Choose symbols/images that represent the key players in your situation
- Sketch in whatever connections you see between them – indicate the quality and dynamics of these relationships with symbols
- Don't forget to put yourself in it





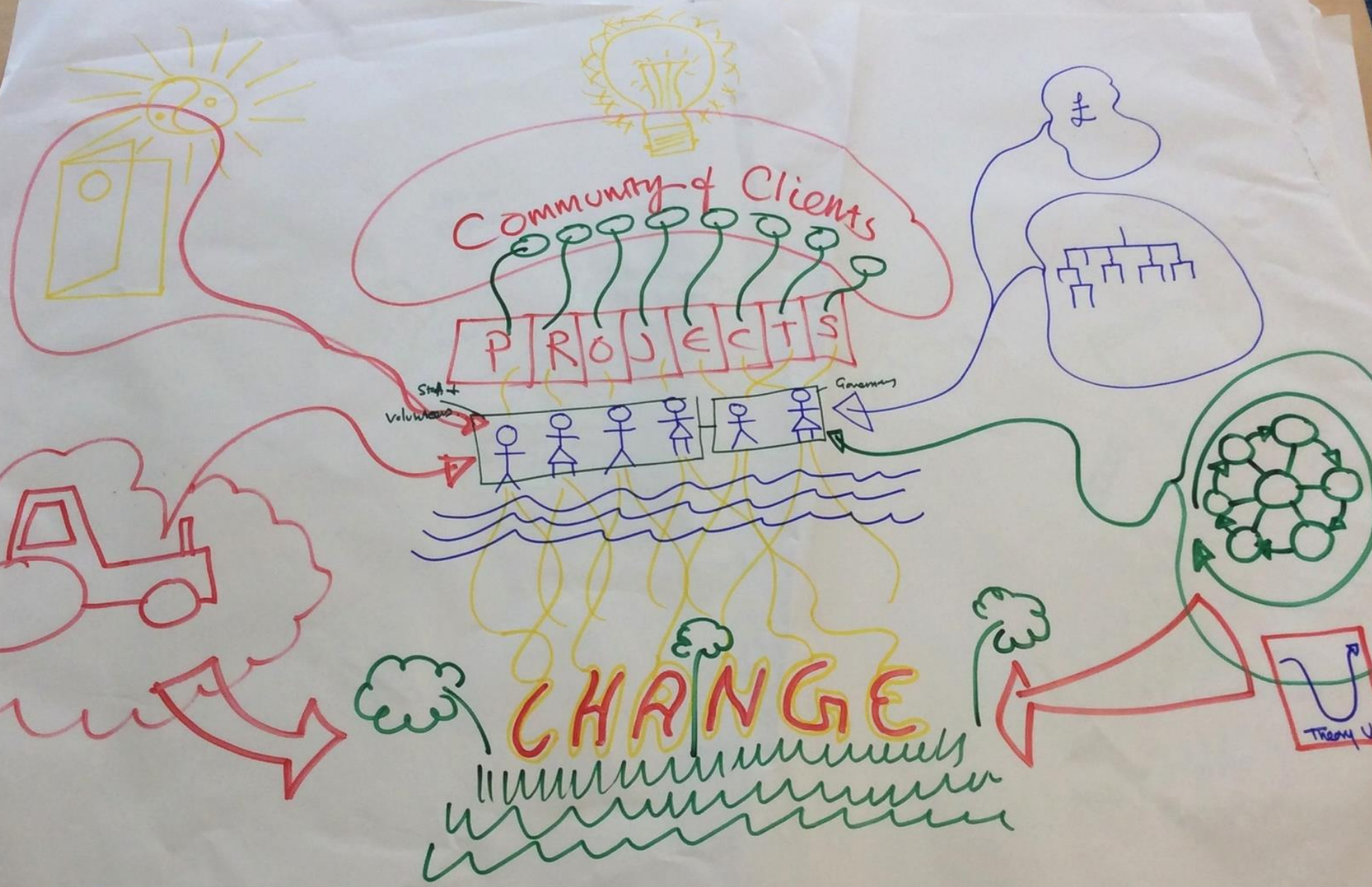












# Rich Pictures – Place Team Reflection 1

For each picture:

- What strikes you most?
- What strikes you about the quality of the relationships?
- Anything new, different, missing?
- What relationships and/or perspectives might you need to pay attention to?



# Rich Pictures – Place Team Reflection 2

For your systems leadership challenge collectively:

- Is it 'wicked' enough as currently framed?
  - Where do you need to focus your attention?
  - What may need to shift?
- 
- Capture your reflections and keep them for further work on Day 2.



# Rich Pictures – Place Team Reflection 3

Create a new Rich Picture as a whole team that captures your current understanding of your systems leadership challenge and which you can share with others at the Marketplace.





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Break



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# Applying systems thinking: Marketplace

# Market-place

- One person stays with your 'stall'. The others travel. Make sure you have enough time to swap.
- Travel to other 'stalls' and find out more about others' systems leadership challenge
- Be curious, inquire, notice what resonates with your own situation, what is different, what you like to find out more about. Be prepared to share what you have discovered back in your place teams



# On the balcony

- What struck you most from the other systems leadership challenges? What connections, patterns, similarities and differences did you notice? Any implications for your own Systems Leadership Challenge?
- What does this tell us about this learning community/system and the wider system we are part of?
- Who might you want to learn more from, find out more about?





# Multiple ways of seeing

*'We all construct the world through lenses of our own making and use these to filter and select...we need a constantly expanding array of data, views and interpretations if we are to make a wise sense of the world. We need to include more and more eyes. We need to be constantly asking, 'who else should be here? Who else should be looking at this'*

Wheatley, 1999



# Multiple dance-floors

*In systems leadership, we know that there may be multiple dance floors and the unpredictability of complex systems may keep some of these out of view, no matter how high the balcony. Thus, for systems leaders, whilst on the balcony, they must also constantly visualise the aspects of the context that are out of view....including what is heard and how it is heard'*

VSC Systems leadership synthesis paper, 2013





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# Applying systems thinking: Home Groups

# Purpose of Home Groups

- To provide an ongoing space to learn from and apply your learning through the programme with peers from other places and backgrounds
- To offer appropriate challenge and support on both your systems leadership challenge and the development of your own systems leadership practice



# Criteria for forming Home Groups

- Self-organise into 6 Home Groups
- Each group must have a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 6 members
- Each Home Group must have no more than 1 person from any one Place Team
- Think about who you want to learn from and with e.g. geographic, professional, organisational similarity or difference?





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# Applying systems thinking: Home Groups

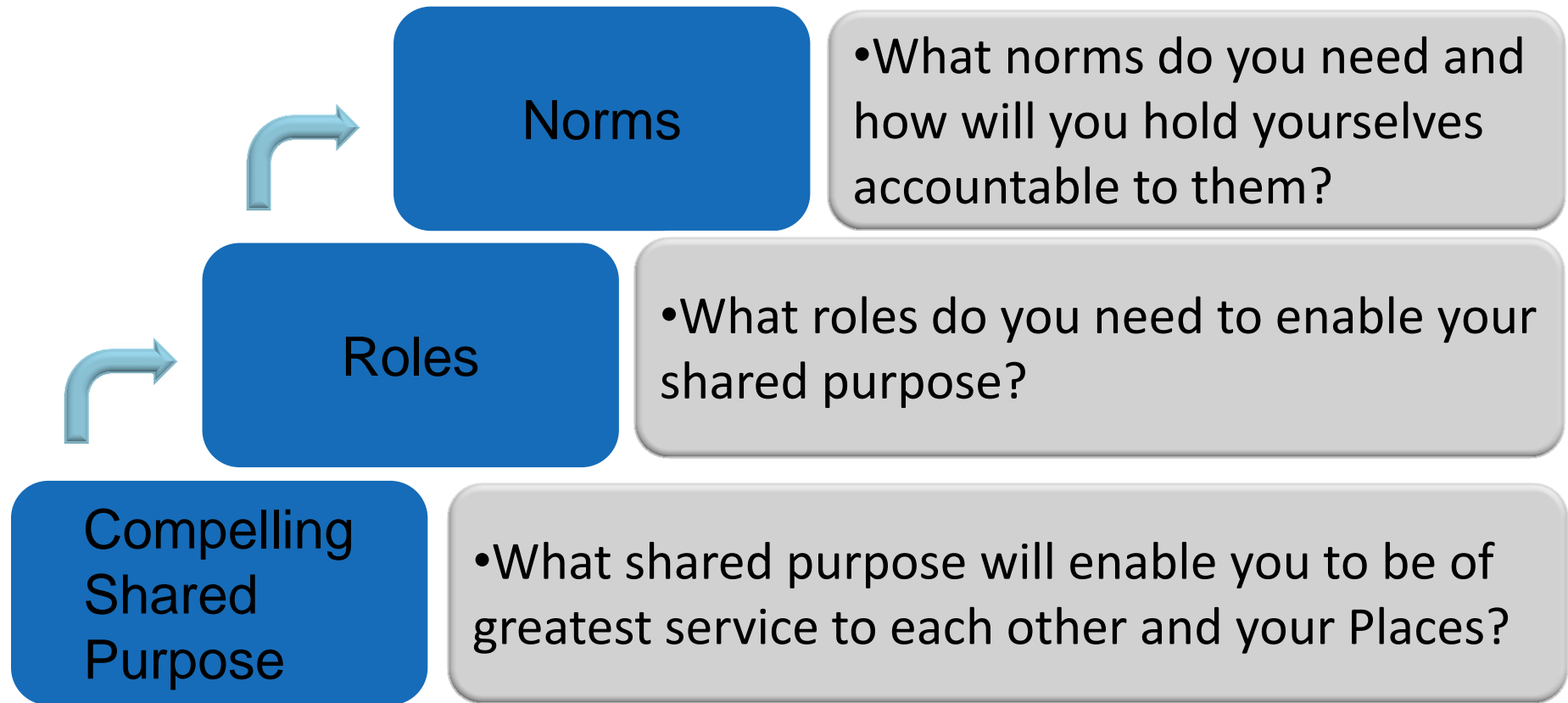


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# Group Work



# Home Group Team Formation





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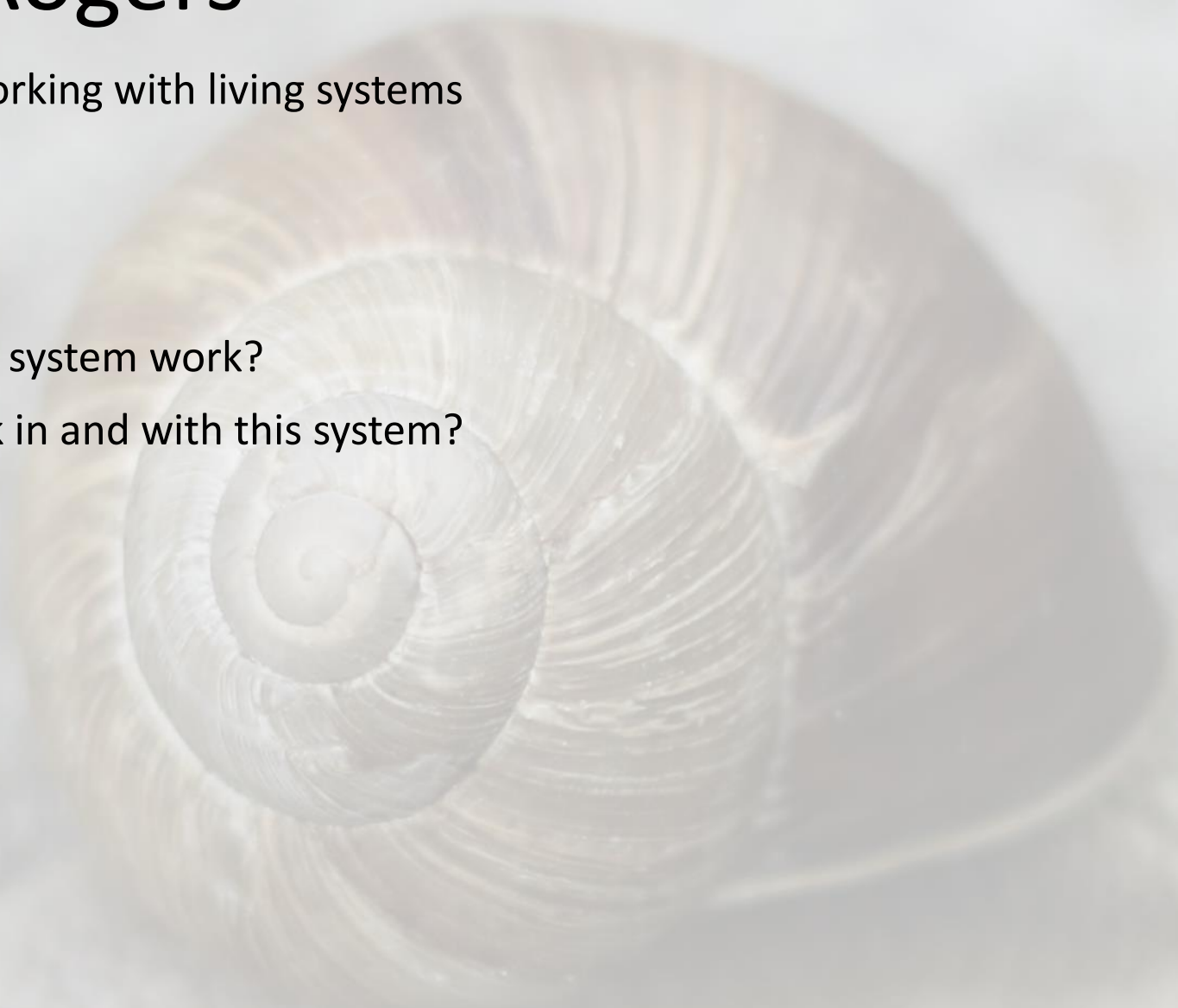
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# Myron Rogers

Approaches to working with living systems

- How does this system work?
- How do I work in and with this system?



# Learning styles

## ACTIVISTS:

- enthusiastic about the new
- here & now
- brainstorm
- act first, think later
- bored with implementation

## REFLECTORS:

- range of perspectives
- think, then think again
- cautious
- action based on 'big picture'
- listen, then contribute

# Learning styles

## THEORISTS:

- logically sound theories
- step-by-step approach
- perfectionists
- analytical
- rational more than subjective

## PRAGMATISTS:

- problems are a challenge
- like to experiment
- like to get on with things
- impatient with open-ended discussions
- practical, down-to-earth
- if it *works*, it's good



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# Reflection on Action

# What is reflective practice?

Maybe reflective practices offer us a way of trying to make sense of the uncertainty in our workplaces and the courage to work competently and ethically at the edge of order and chaos...

Ghaye, T. (2000) Into the reflective mode: bridging the stagnant moat. *Reflective Practice*, 1(1) 5-9



# Elements of reflective practice

- Learning through and from experience
- Gaining new insights of self and/or practice
- Examining assumptions
- Being self-aware
- Critically evaluating responses



# Final reflection

On the formation of home groups:

- what did you notice?
- What were you thinking/feeling?
- Application of systems principles?
- What did you learn about yourself/others/leadership and living systems?





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Close



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Welcome Back!



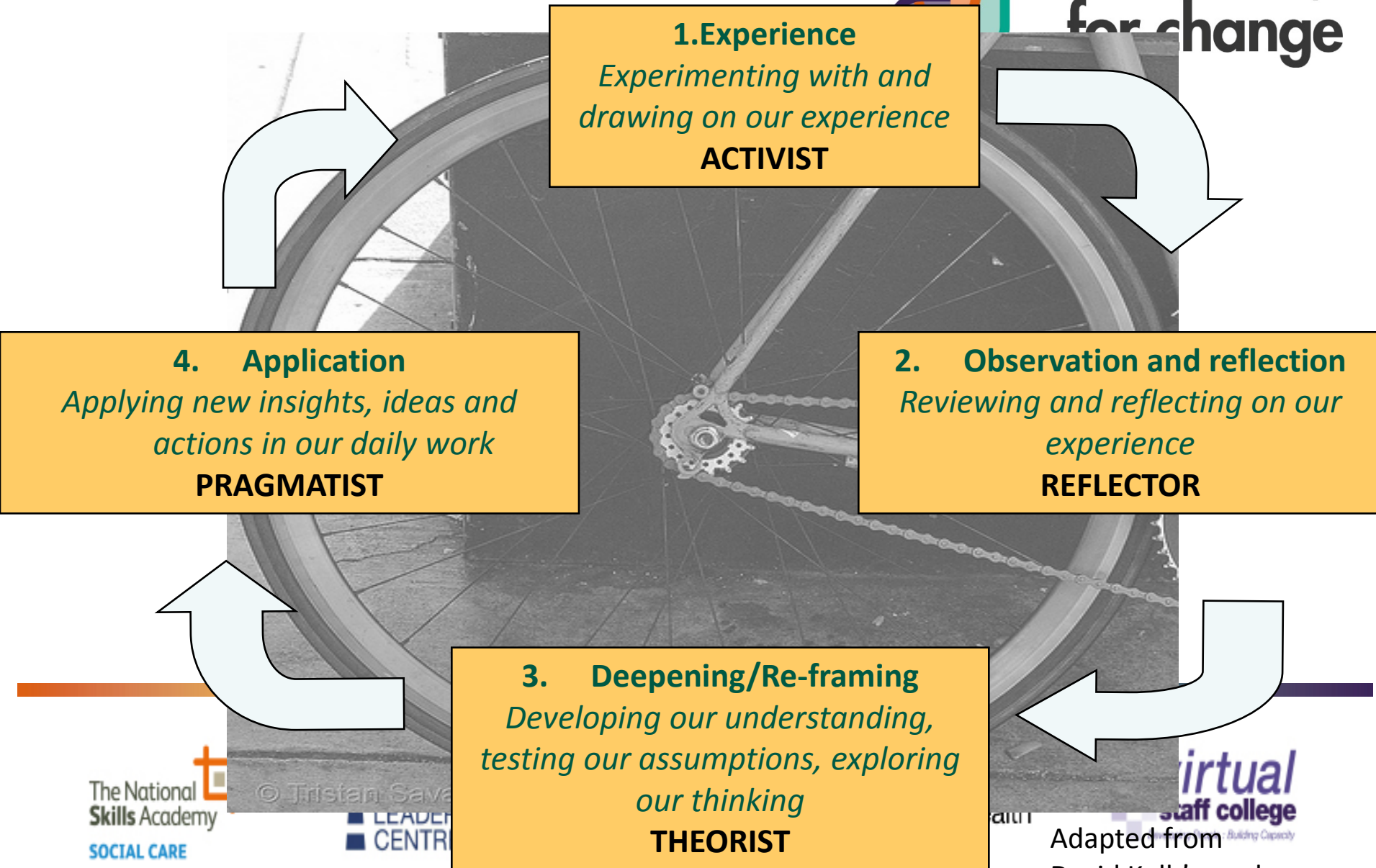
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# Check-in

# Learning Cycle



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Adapted from  
David Kolb's work

<b>Timing</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>08:30</b>	<b>Check-in and introduction</b>
<b>08:45</b>	<b>Systems Leadership</b>
<b>9:30</b>	<b>Systems Leadership in our place</b>
<b>10:45</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>11:15</b>	<b>Working across cultures</b>
<b>12:45</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>13:45</b>	<b>Designing safe-fail experiments</b>
<b>15:30</b>	<b>Reflection in Action</b>
<b>16:00</b>	<b>Close</b>



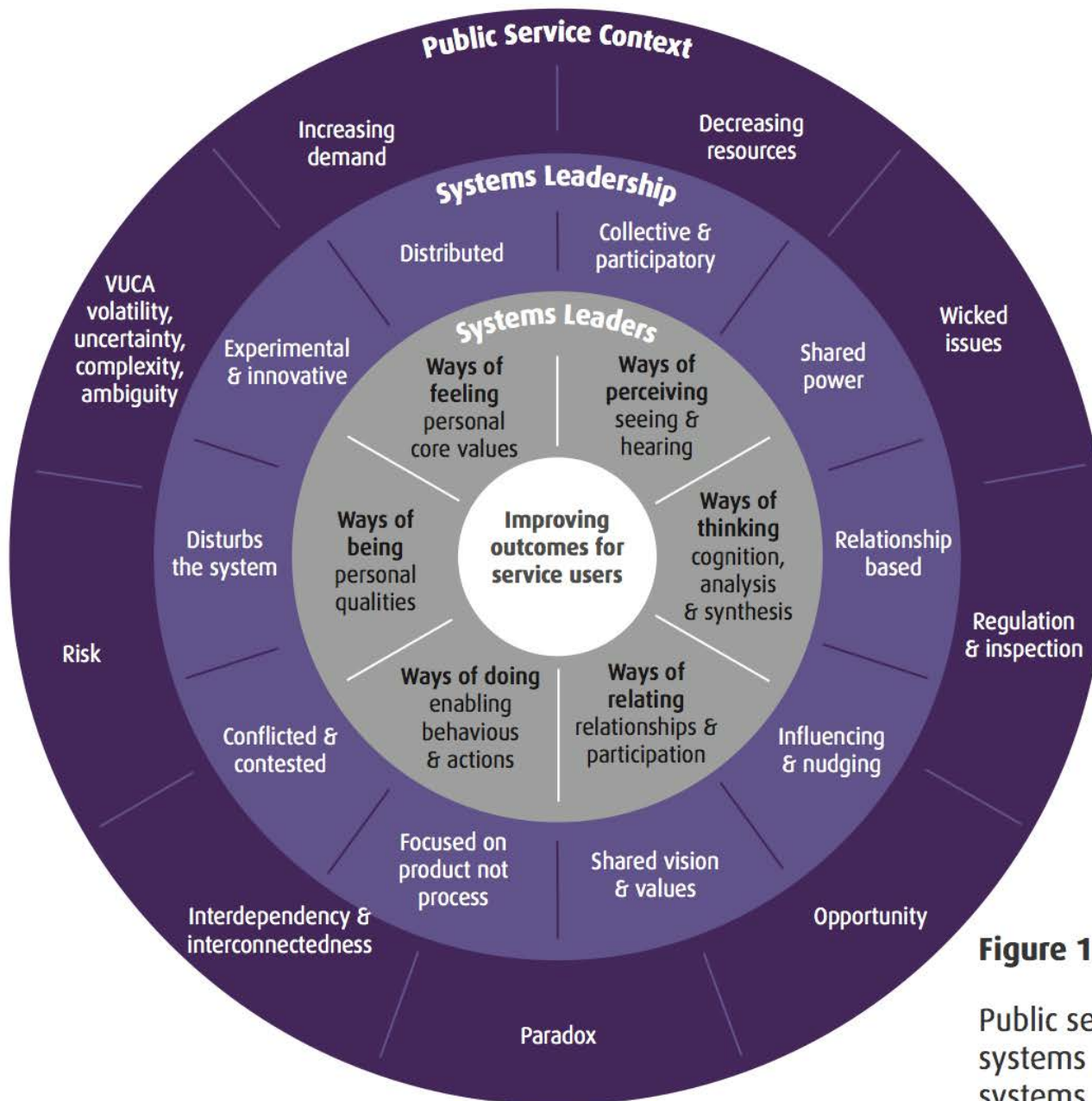




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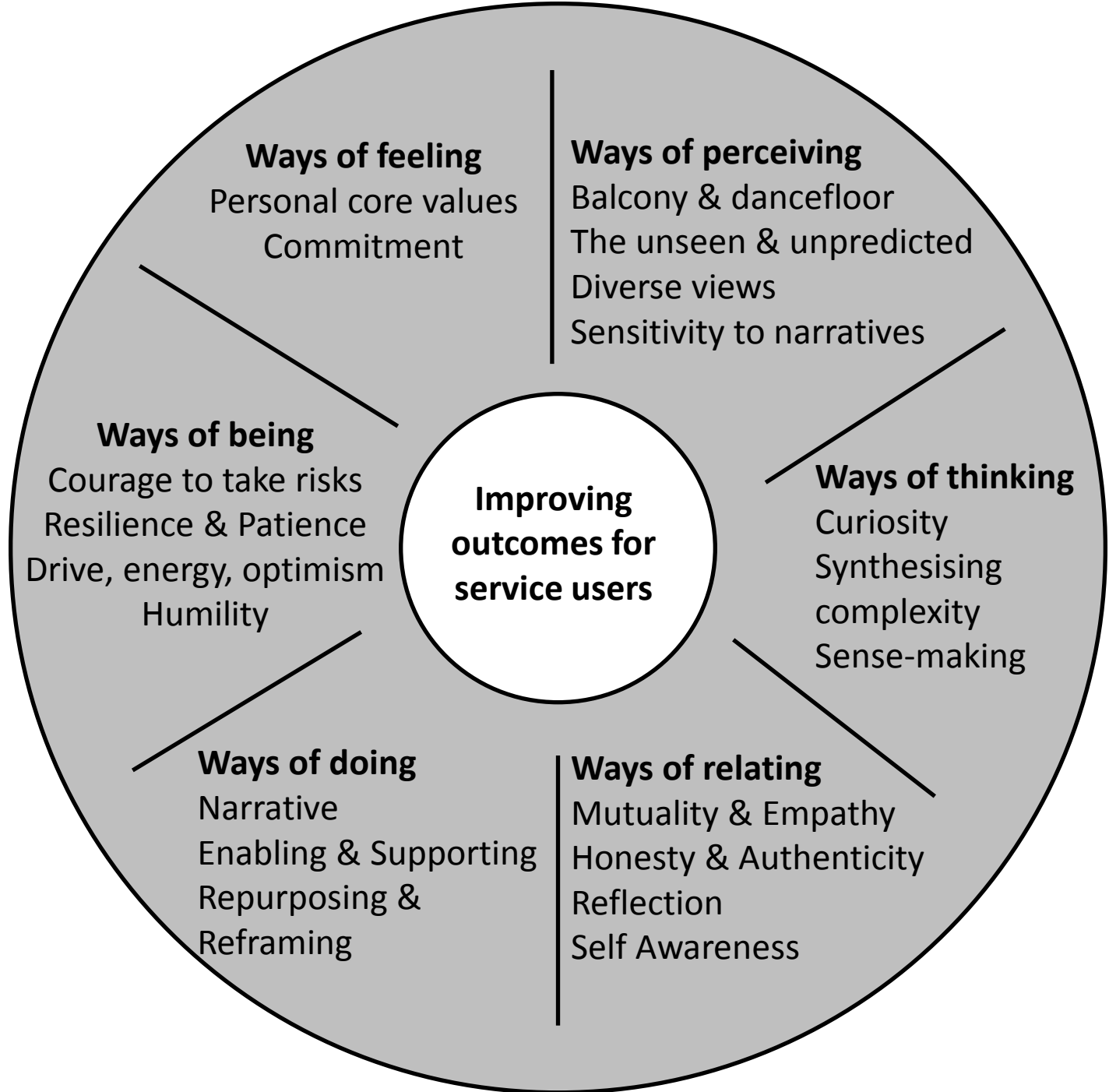
# Systems Leadership: Exceptional leadership for exceptional times

Six Dimensions of Systems Leaders



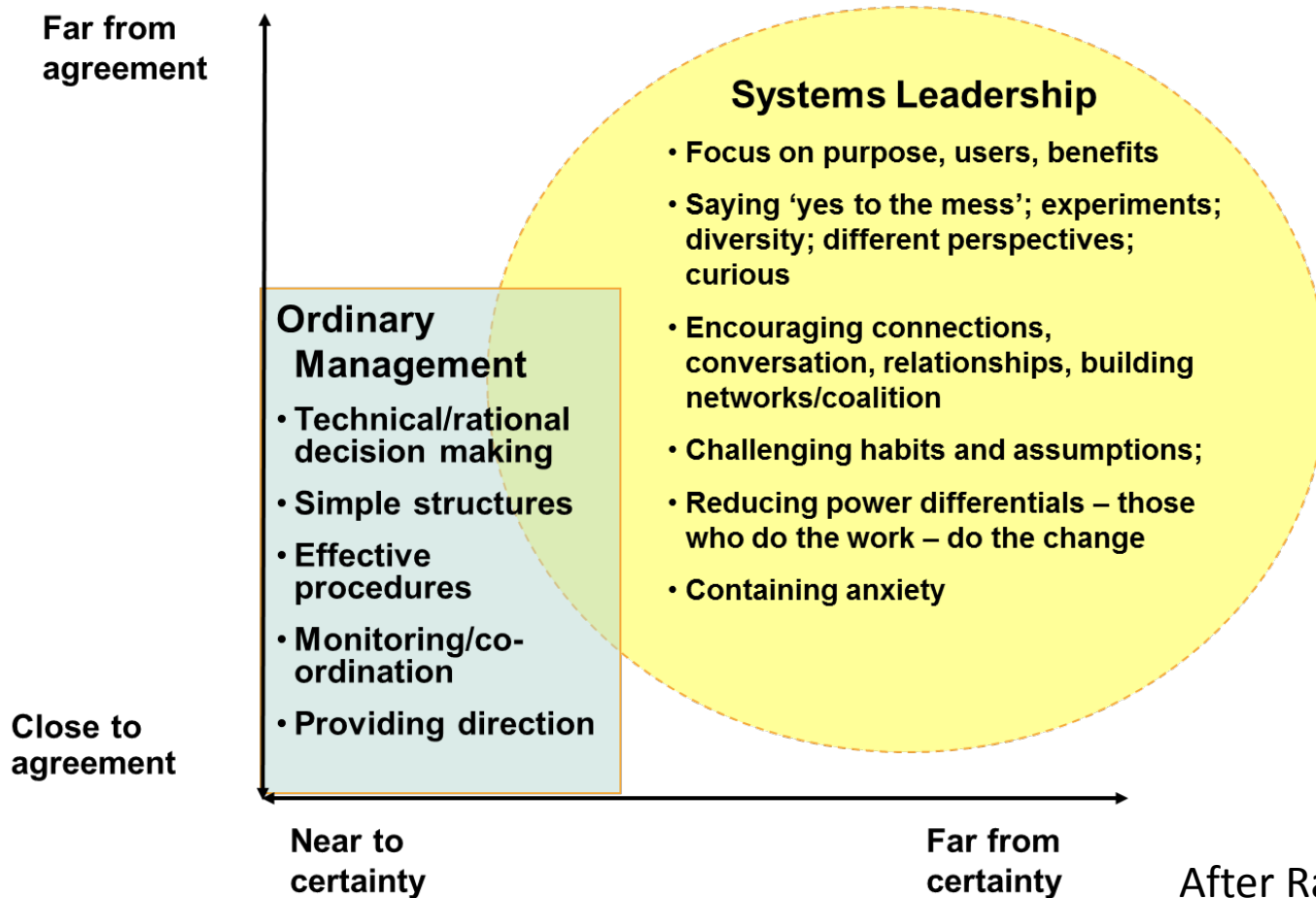
**Figure 1**

Public service context, systems leadership and systems leaders - an integrated model



# Tame vs wicked issues

## Technical vs adaptive challenges



After Ralph Stacey

# Reflection Questions

- What do the 'six ways' suggest about your learning focus for this programme?
- What leadership is required of me? What is my leadership stretch?

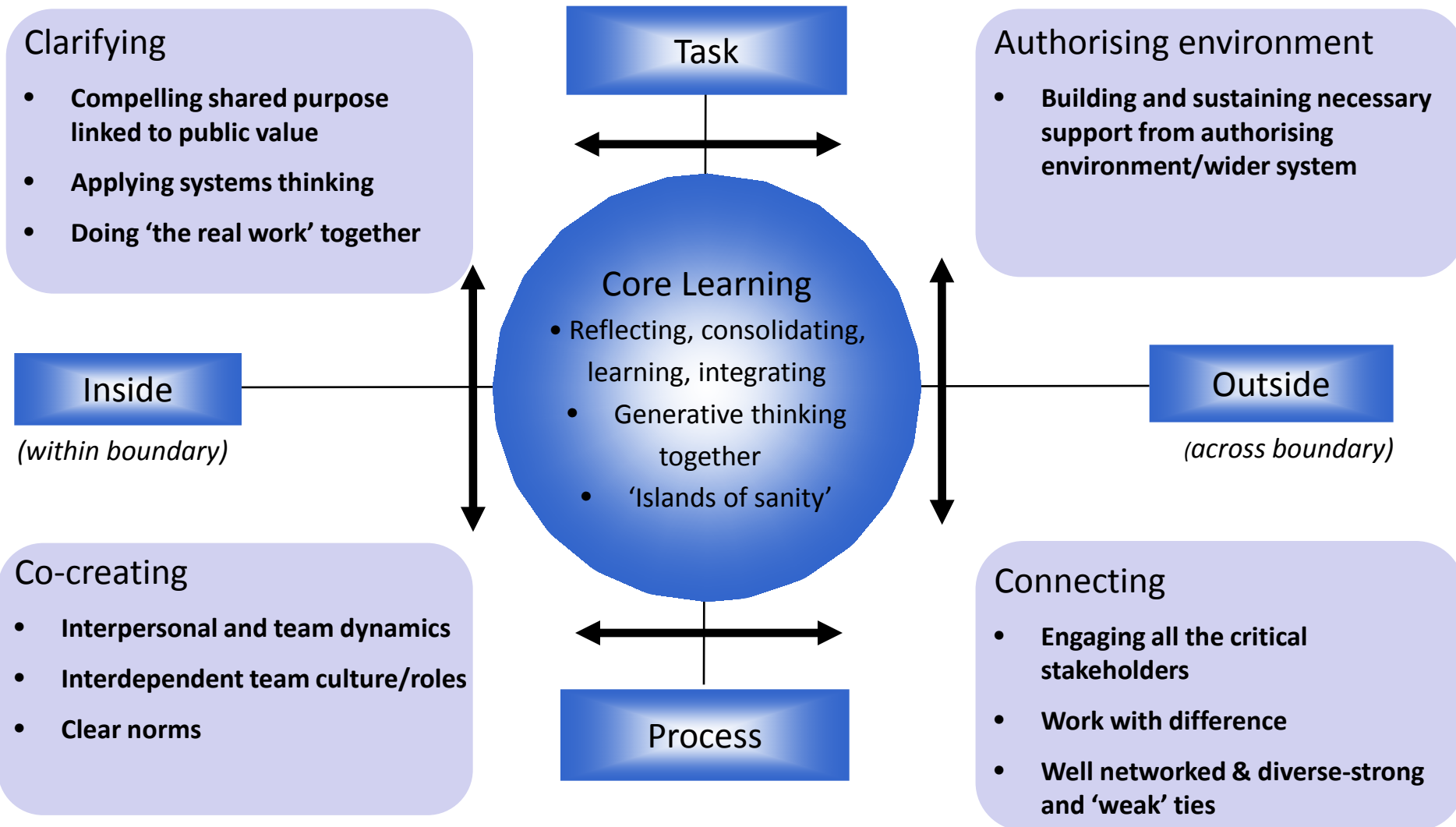


# Leadership in your place

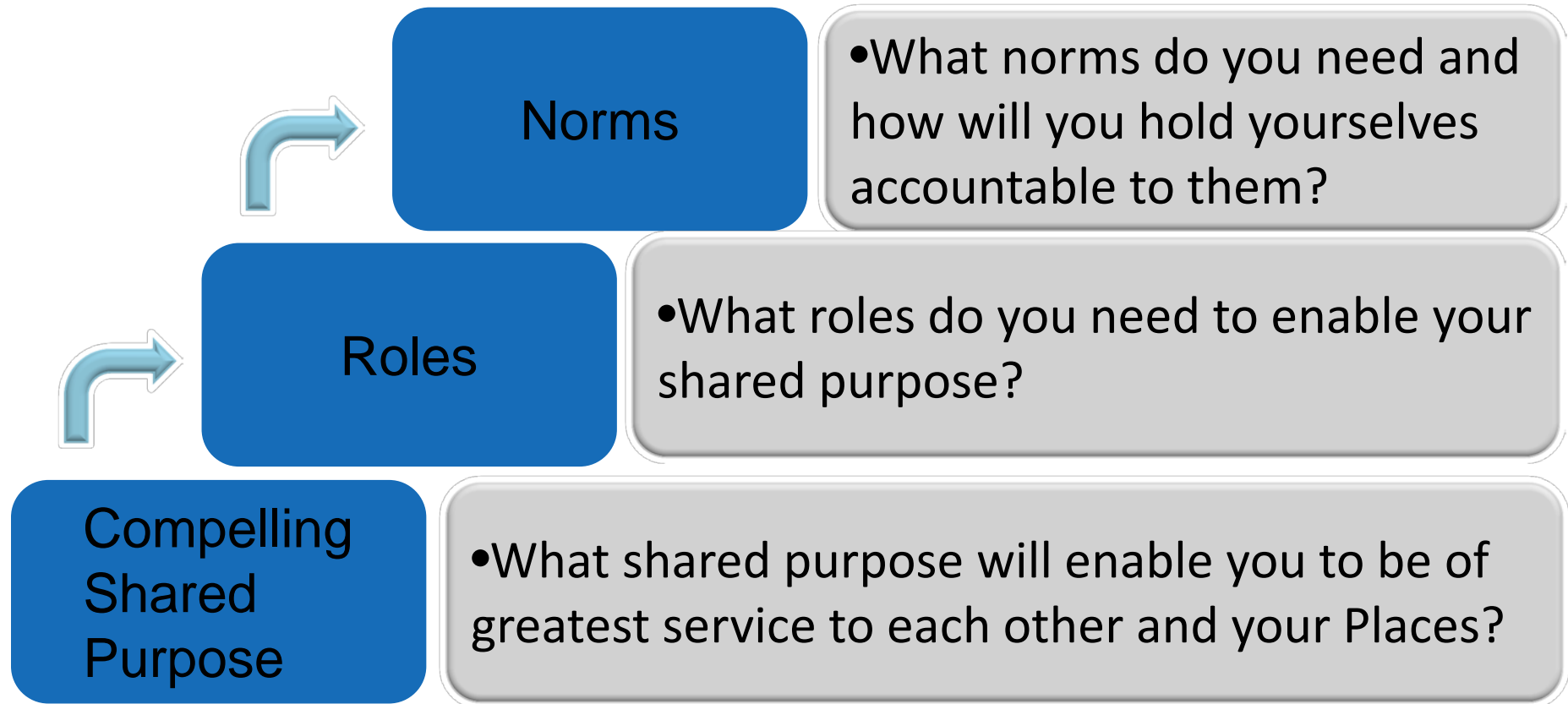
- Reflect on the kind of leadership that is being exercised in your place now.
- Where is it happening?
- What's working, what else might be needed?
- What support might you need e.g. from a Leadership for Change Coach?



# Key capacities for systems leadership teams







# How do we understand organisational culture?

..... how things are done around here.

*Ouchi and Johnson, 1978*

..... the collection of traditions, values, policies, beliefs and attitudes that constitute a pervasive context for everything we do and think in an organisation.

*McLean and Marshall, 1983*

‘values and basic assumptions which organisational members come to share’. *Van*

*Maanen and Schein, 1979*

‘ Culture is the *result* of all the everyday conversations and negotiations between members of an organisation’

*Seel 2000*





By kind permission of Bill Crooks

# Levels of culture (Hawkins and Smith)

## **Artefacts**

Outward manifestations, buildings, furnishings, objects, settings, PR, high profile symbols. Rituals. Stated values. Policies, procedures and systems.

## **Behaviour**

Spontaneous actions, routine responses, enacted realities and values. Repeated patterns/norms of behaviour. Often absorbed via role models.

## **Mind set**

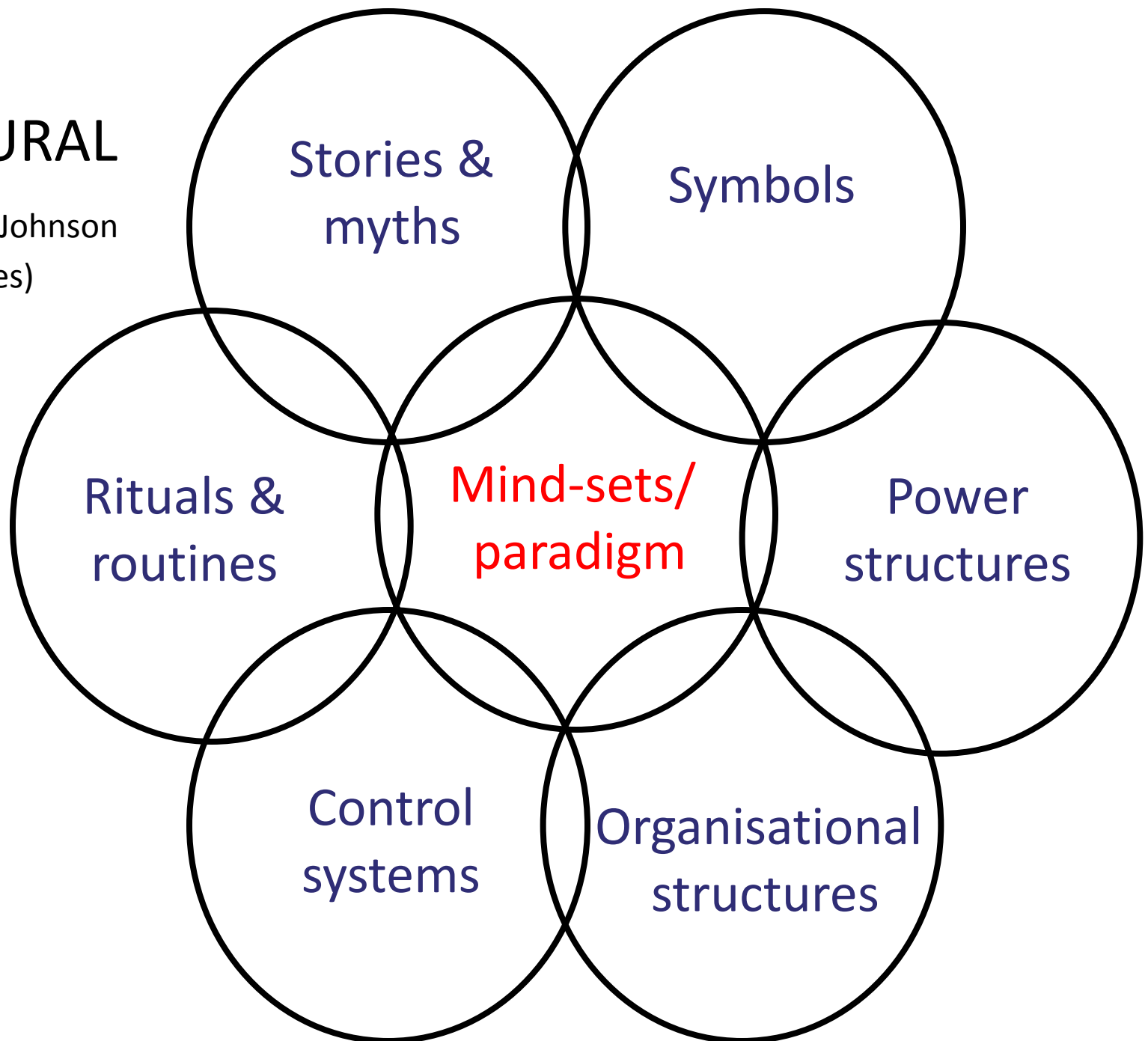
Basic assumptions and world view that underpin thinking and behaviour.  
Mostly unconscious. Paradigms.

## **Emotional ground**

The passions, aspirations, motivations and projections that represent the emotional energy within a culture. Often well camouflaged, muted or expressed in distorted forms.



# The CULTURAL WEB (Johnson and Scholes)



# Culture and change (Seel)

- Unless the paradigm is at the heart of culture change, there will be no lasting change
- Paradigms are not imposed by CEOs or invented by consultants, rather

*‘they emerge from a multiplicity of interactions between individuals within the community’*

- Therefore, change needs to move away from ‘planning change’ onto ‘facilitating emergence’



# Inquiring into culture – being creative

- Using metaphors/pictures
- Heroes and Villains
- Find an object
- Complete the sentence..

*'our organisation always....'*

*'our organisation never....'*

*'our organisation loves...'*

*'our organisation hates..'*

- Tell stories
- Unofficial induction
- Amateur anthropologist/alien visitor/journalist





# Cultural inquiry

- Have a conversation in your group about how the dominant culture in your organisation/sector/professional background shows up. Use one of the creative exercises to do this.
- Send inquirers to other groups (with some remaining) and inquire into their culture using a similar exercise and the cultural web handout. In the conversation, try to draw out the underlying mindsets and how they show up.
- How are they different from yours? What might be needed from each other to work with these differences well?



# Sense-making and application

- What did you learn/discover about other cultures? Any surprises? Assumptions confirmed or challenged? Be prepared to share headlines
- How might you apply this to the way you work with and across different cultures around your systems leadership challenge?



# Some implications for systems leadership

- Be curious and appreciative— seek to understand and share underlying mind-sets
- Work with informal processes and conversations
- Encourage greater connectivity between people from across different organisational cultures
- Support spaces for thinking/talking differently together *“a talent for speaking differently, rather than arguing well is the chief instrument of cultural change”* Rorty
- Nurture and model new behaviours- develop ‘simple rules’





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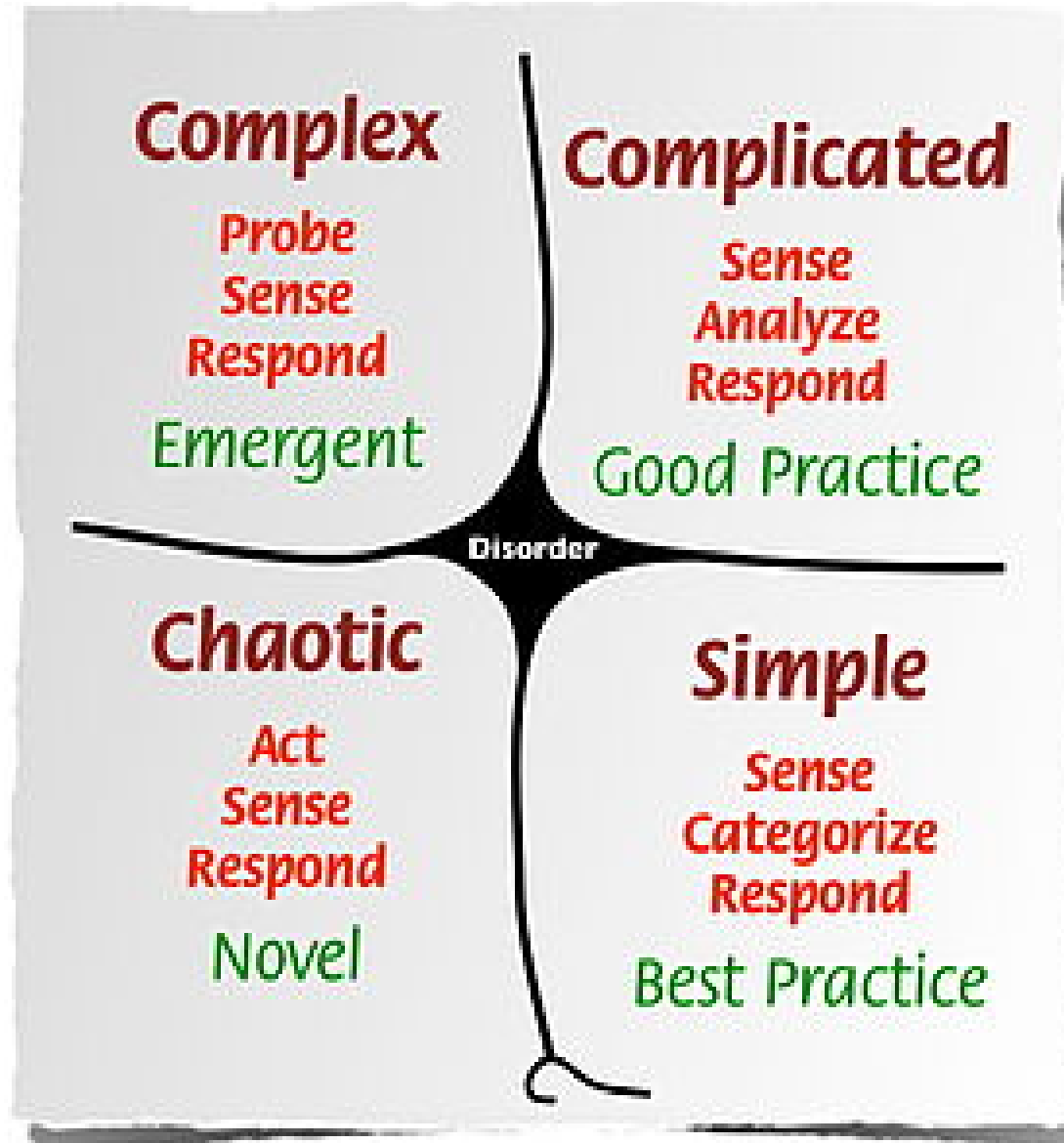
Lunch



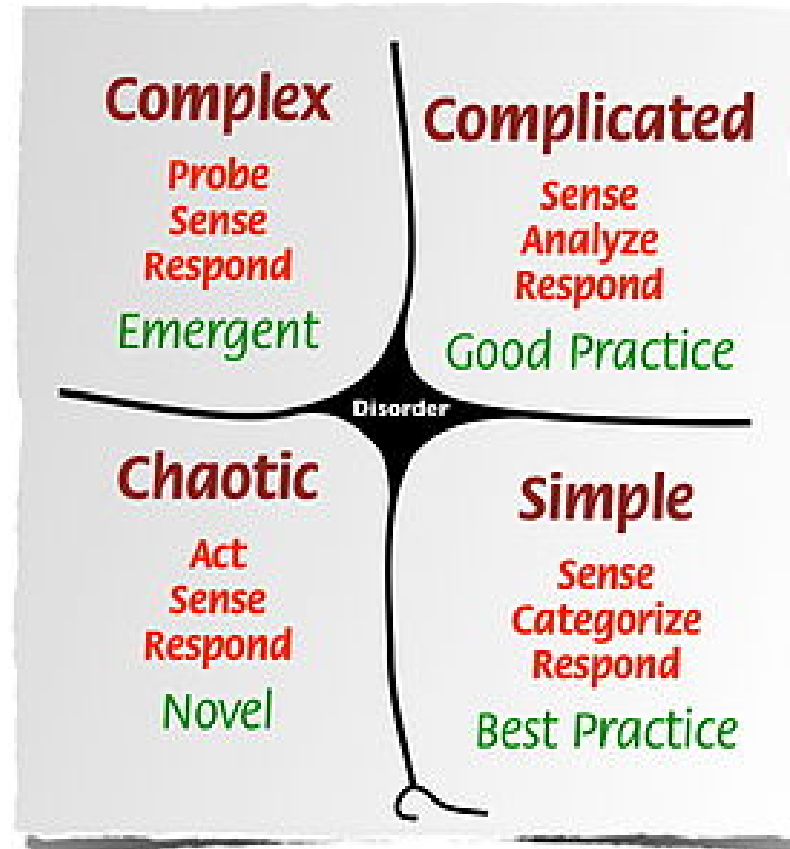
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# Designing safe-fail experiments

# Cynefin model



# WICKED



T  
A  
M  
E

# CRITICAL



# Simple

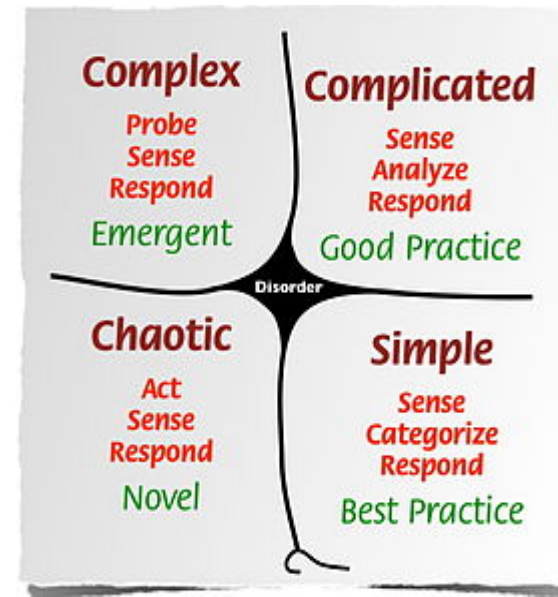
- Clear cause and effect
  - Stable
  - Sense, Categorise, Respond
  - Best Practice
- 
- Complacency



# Complicated

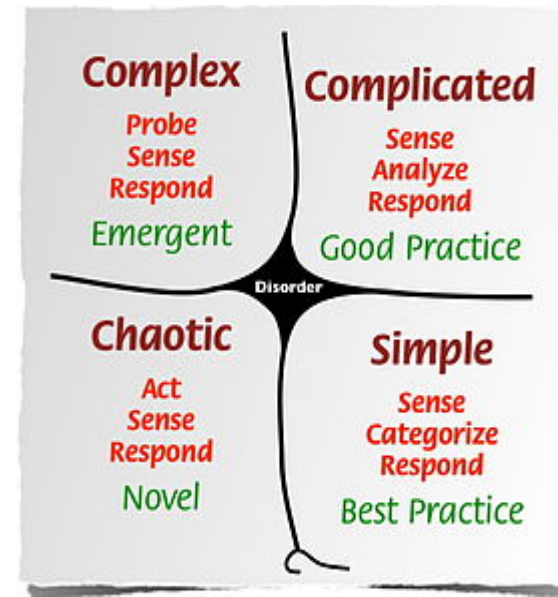
- Hidden cause and effect
- Multiple right answers
- Sense, Analyse, Respond
- Good practice

- Analysis paralysis
- Ignoring innovative suggestions by non-experts



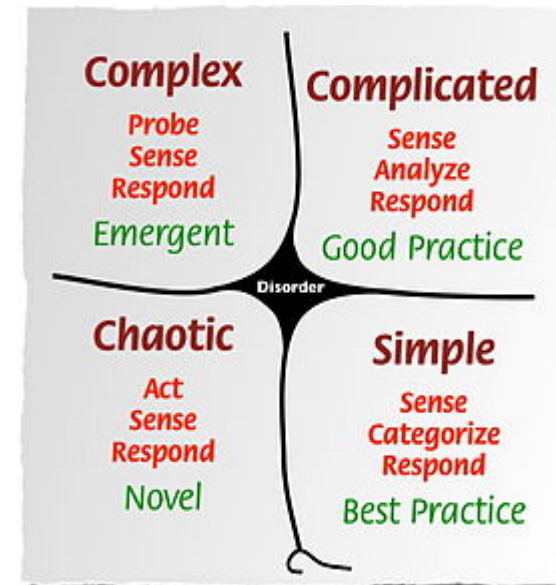
# Complex

- Cause and effect coherent in retrospect
  - Unpredictability & flux
  - Probe, Sense, Respond
  - Emergent
- 
- Temptation to fall back into command and control
  - Difficulty in tolerating failure



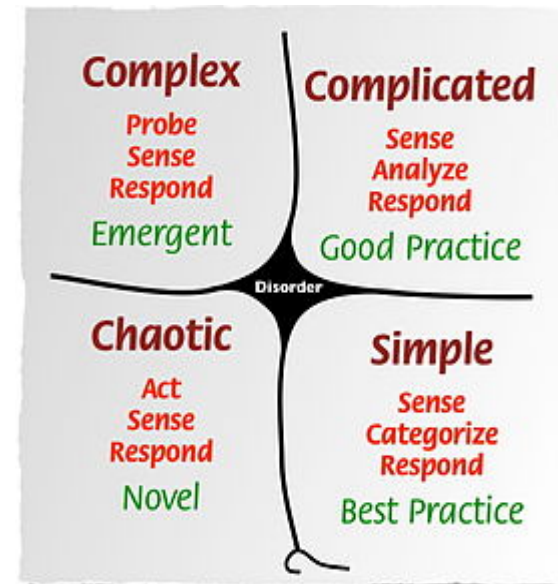
# Chaotic

- No perceivable cause and effect
  - Rules have broken down
  - Act, Sense, Respond
  - Novel
- 
- Authoritarianism



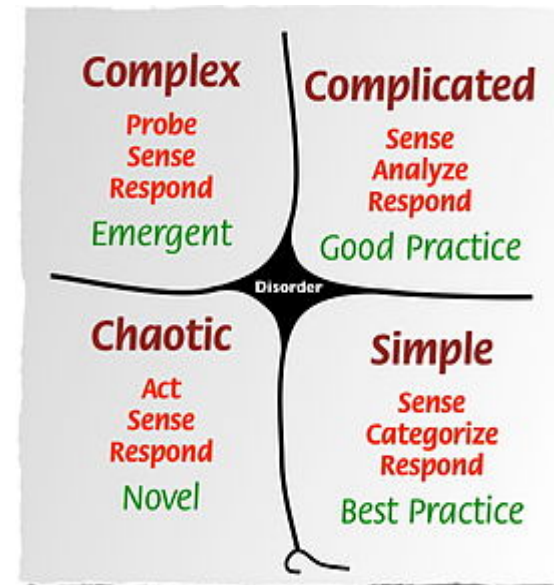
# Simple/Chaotic Boundary

- More like a cliff edge
- Success breeds complacency
- Catastrophic failure



# Disorder

- Unclear which context is predominant
- This is where you spend most of your time



# Designing a safe-fail experiment

- Experiment freely and expect failure.
- Consider as many ideas as possible
- Start with experiments where failure can be tolerated. Be comfortable with 'safe uncertainty' –
- Design experiments that can be monitored.
- Run multiple experiments in parallel.
- Share the results of your experiments with others
- Learn from the results of their experiments, including about your own practice





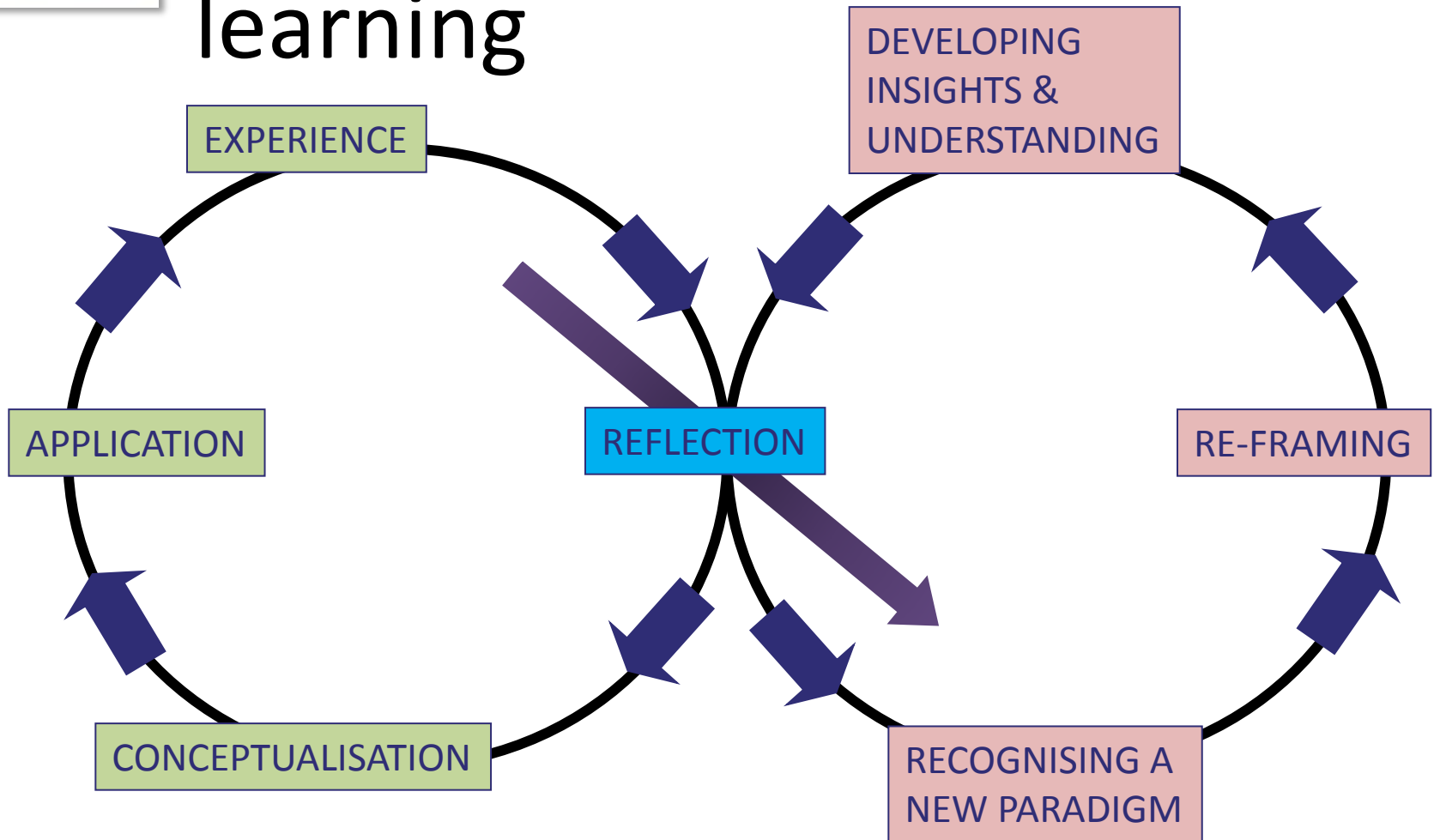
# Criteria for a safe fail

- Not too big or vague e.g. Reduce inequalities
- No one gets hurt if it fails but you do learn
- Something you're not sure about how to do (yellow circle rather than blue box), and it matters to you (connects to your purpose/an important outcome)
- Others?
- Can be helpful to express as a “how to statement” e.g. “how to transfer frugal, healthy cooking skills from older generation to young families” (as part of reducing obesity)





# Chris Argyris: double loop learning



# Home Group session

- Coachee outlines their current objectives for their shared safe fail experiment – and their learning edge
- Coaches listen in silence and then take time to reflect before offering **one good idea each** for a possible safe fail experiment
- Coachee reflect on the ideas they have received



# Commitments

- Based on these last two days, identify one personal action/experiment that you are willing to try out between now and when we next meet





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## Residential 1

### Review and Evaluation

Thank you, safe journey!