The (IMHO) #1 reason why Agile transformations fail

...and what you could do about it

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AGILE TOUR KL 2023

Future Work
Agile. Product. Innovation

The Agile Promise

At its essence, Agile's promise to organizations is the ability to navigate uncertainty with resilience, ensuring timely delivery of high-quality outputs aligned with market demands.

The Agile Journey?

Part 1:

Why Agile transformations fail...

What's actually going on?

Common Failure Symptoms*

Additional Governance Overhead

Introducing additional layers or processes that stifle agility and hinder quick decision making.

Operational Inefficiencies

Encountering bottlenecks and delays, despite adopting Agile, due to lack of streamlined processes.

Misalignment on Transformation Goals

Teams and stakeholders lacking a shared vision, leading to divergent paths and diluted outcomes.

Poorer Financial Performance

Despite Agile adoption, seeing a decline in business metrics, increased costs or missed revenue opportunities.

*Summarized by ChatGPT-4 from a variety of publicly available information

Common Failure Root Causes*

Inadequate Training & Skills Development

Insufficient knowledge and expertise hinder effective adoption and practice of Agile methods

Technical Debt Accumulation

Neglecting to address legacy issues and shortcuts can impede agility and slow progress.

Lack of Executive Support

Without top-down endorsement and commitment, Agile transformations can struggle to gain traction and resources.

Resistance to Change

An ingrained culture of sticking to old ways can stifle innovation and impede the shift to Agile mindsets

#1 reason why Agile transformations fail and what you could do about it

(According to ChatGPT4)

what is the #1 reason why Agile transformations fail? Summarize it in one sentence

The #1 reason why Agile transformations fail is often cited as a lack of proper engagement and support from top management, which is crucial for fostering an agile mindset and driving the transformation process throughout the organization[1].

ons fail is often cited as a lack of proper engagement

Why Agile Transformations Sometimes Fail | Scrum.org

Here's my guess at what's the actual reason.

But first, about me
(In case you were wondering, or asking yourself why should I believe this guy)

Tang Tze Chin (Tze)

- Husband, Father of two, Son
- Proud Malaysian! 🇲🇾
- Product Developer, Delivery Manager, Agile Practitioner (since 2005), Professional Coach, Trainer, Consultant, Budding OD Practitioner
- Former Head of Agile Practices at Seek Asia
- Lead multiple Agile teams and agile adoptions
- Currently running my own practice
- Agile Malaysia Community Organizer
- Cat-lover
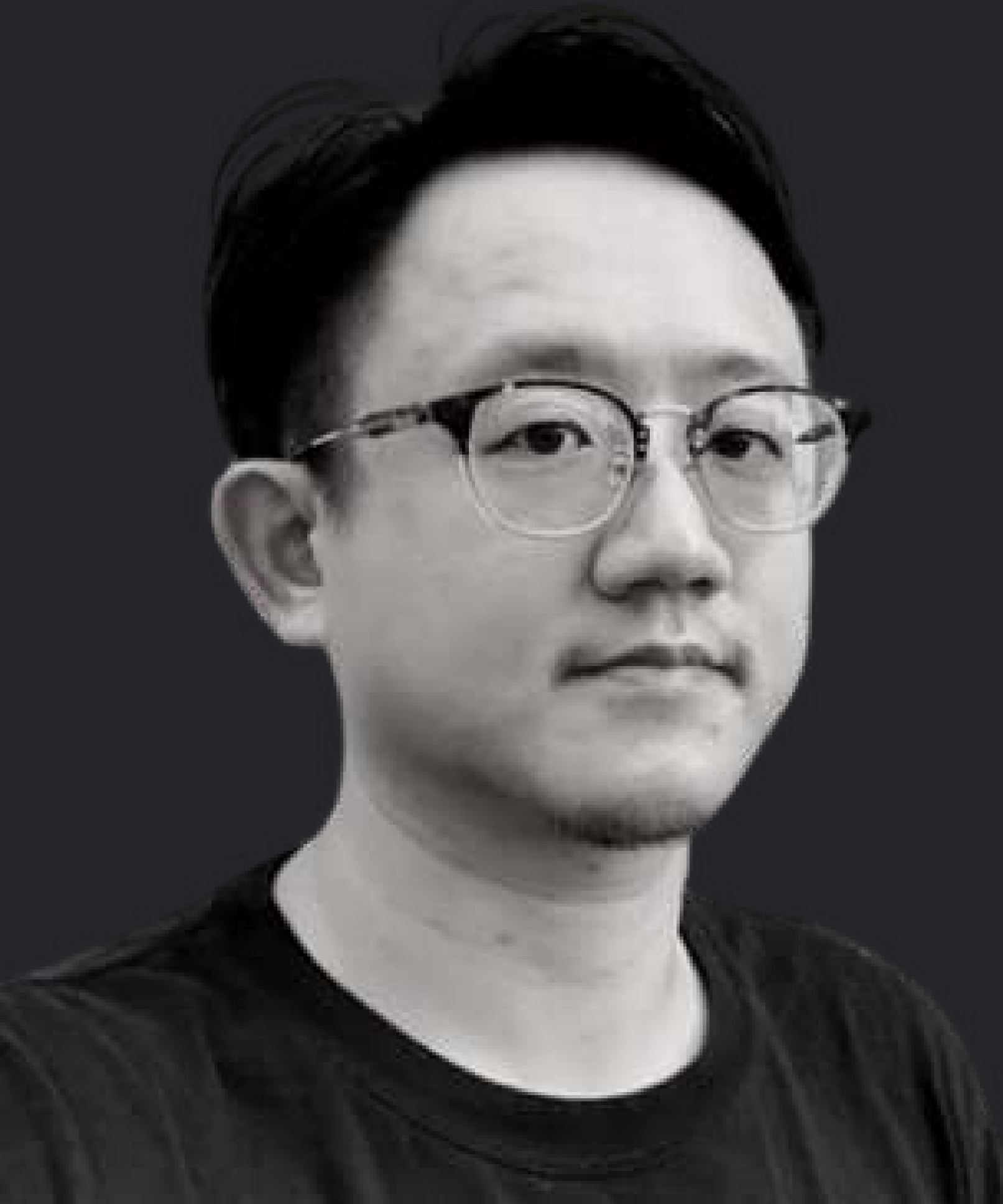
Here's my guess at what's the actual reason.

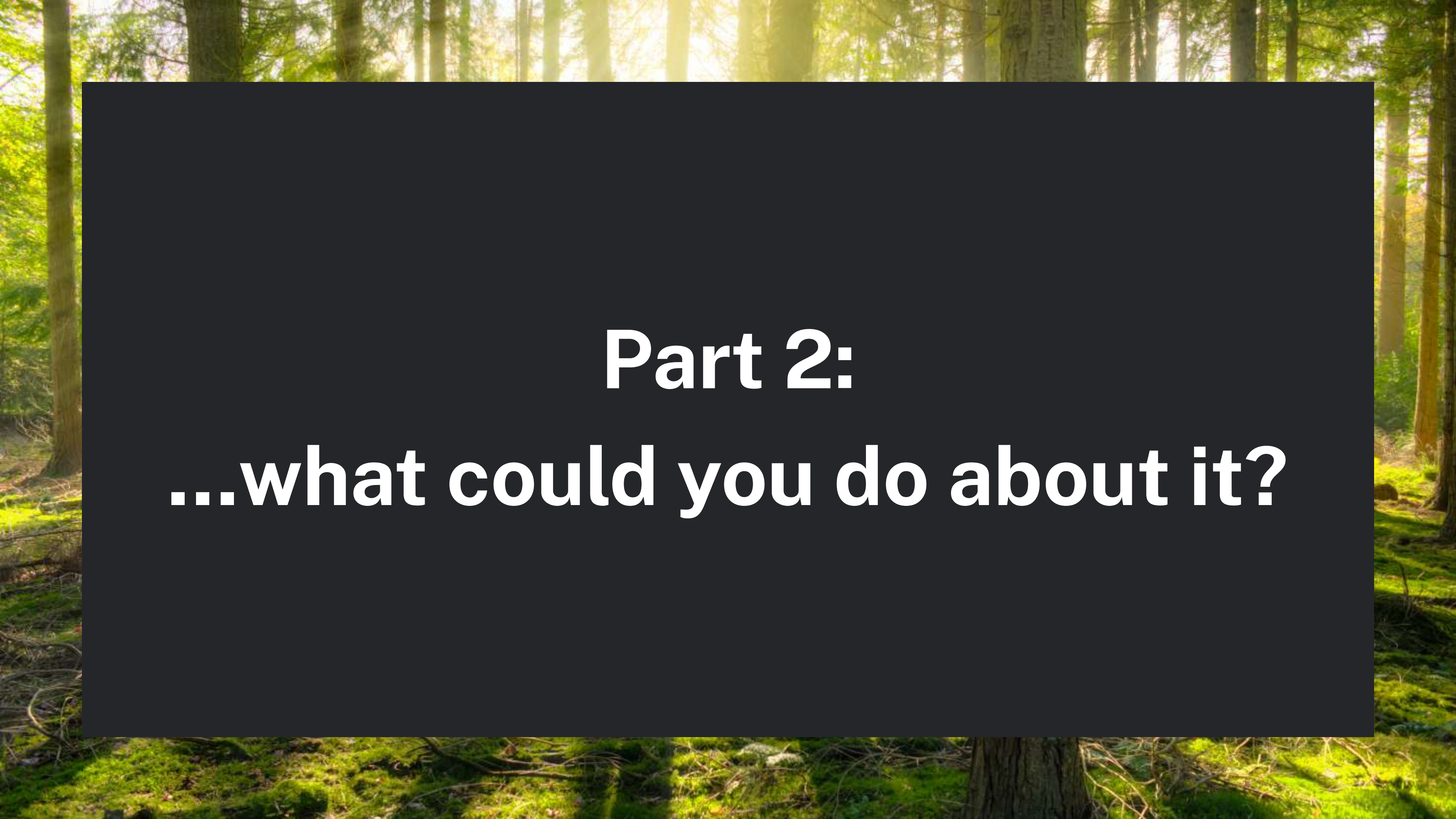The agile transformation lacked agility

Unveiling the Agile Paradox

The challenge where organizations, aiming for adaptability and collaboration through an Agile transformation, often, in practice, end up entangled in rigid processes, over-emphasis on tools, and a departure from the core Agile principles

Install Agile

Do Agile

Implement Agile

Roll out Agile

Certified Agile

Part 2:
...what could you do about it?
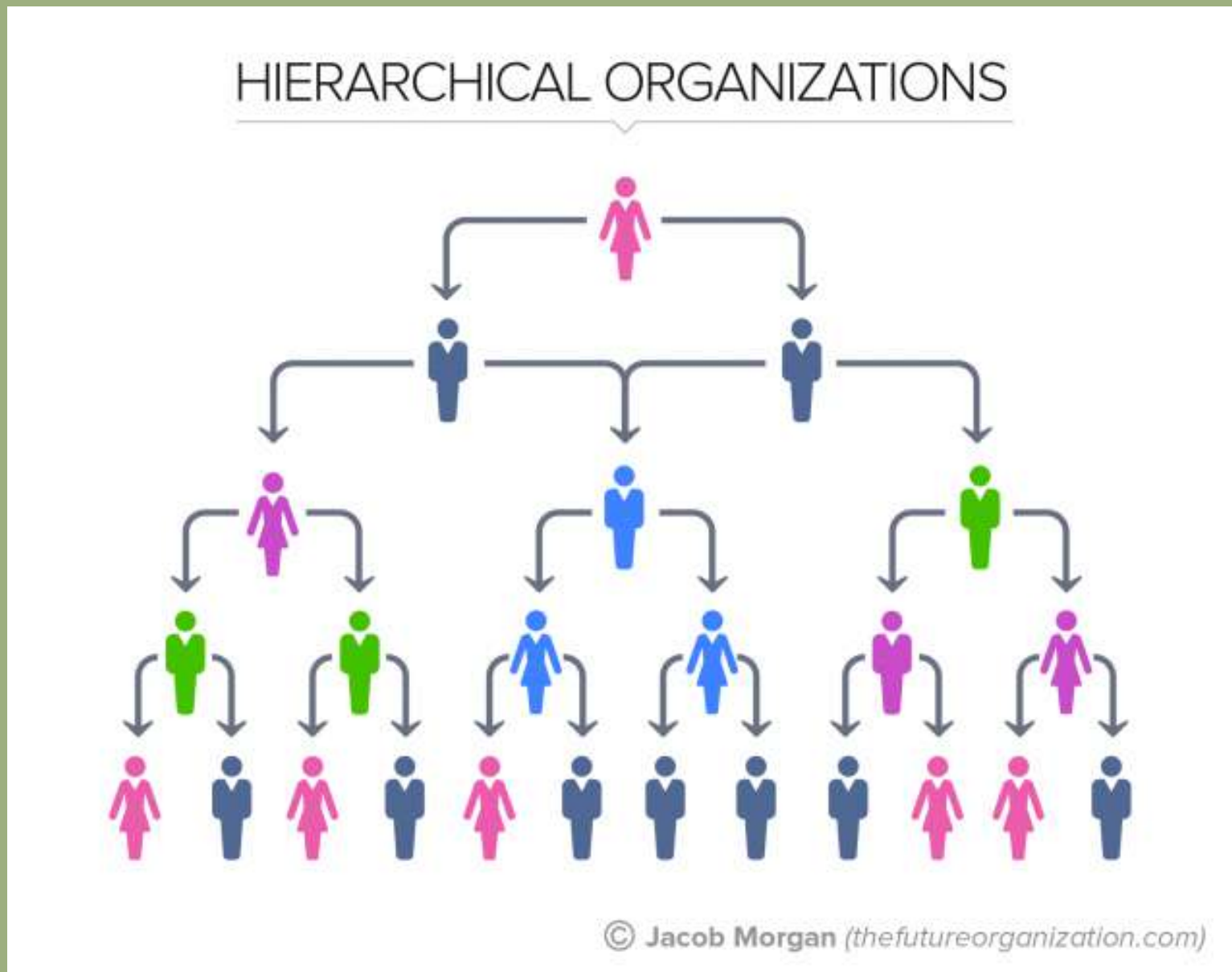
#1 Selecting the Right Metaphor

Factory Metaphor
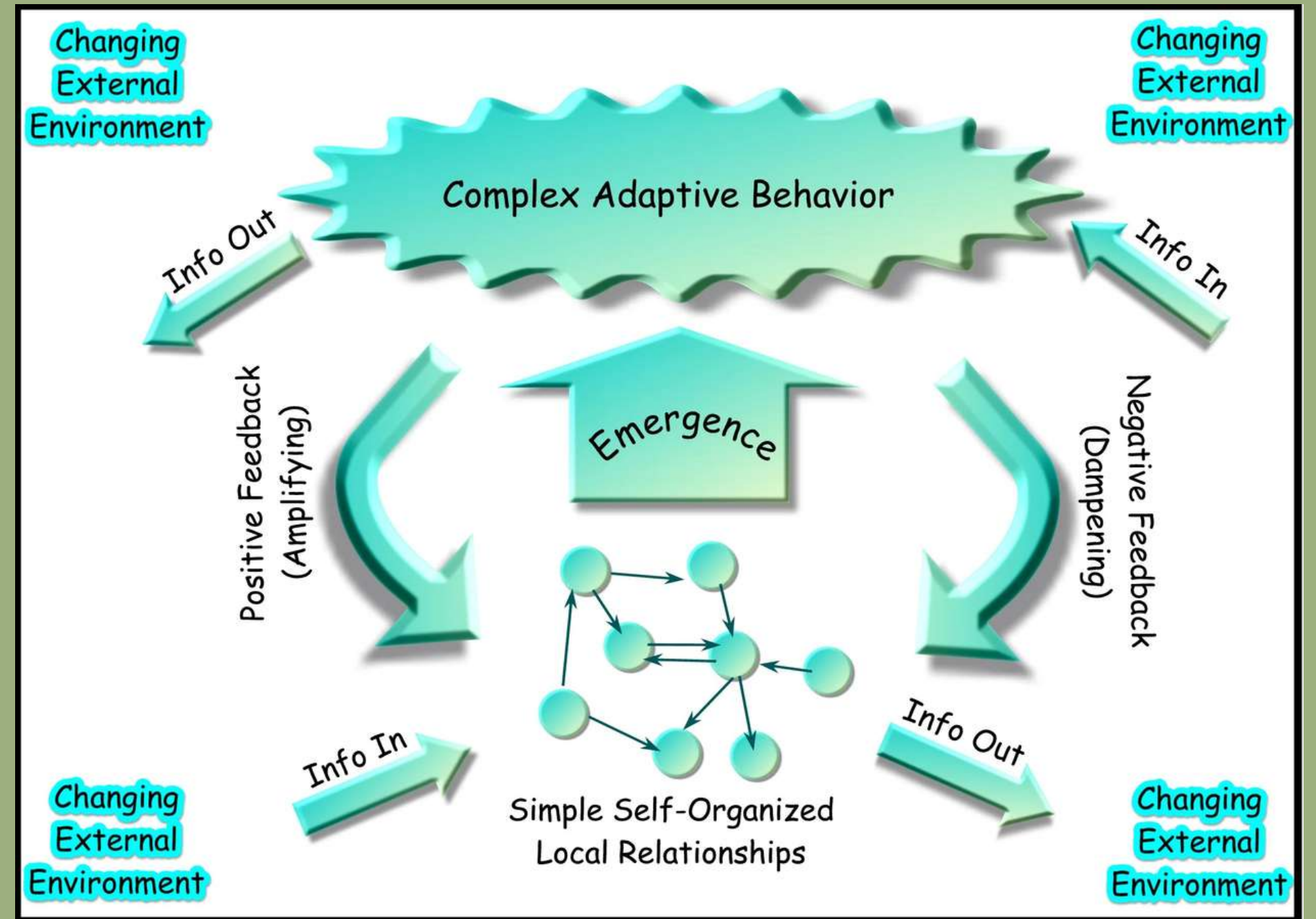
(Managing process)

Ecosystem Metaphor

(Managing complexity)

Organizations are complex adaptive systems comprised of multiple living individuals

Scientific Management / Taylorist View (1880s)

Complex Adaptive Systems View (1968)

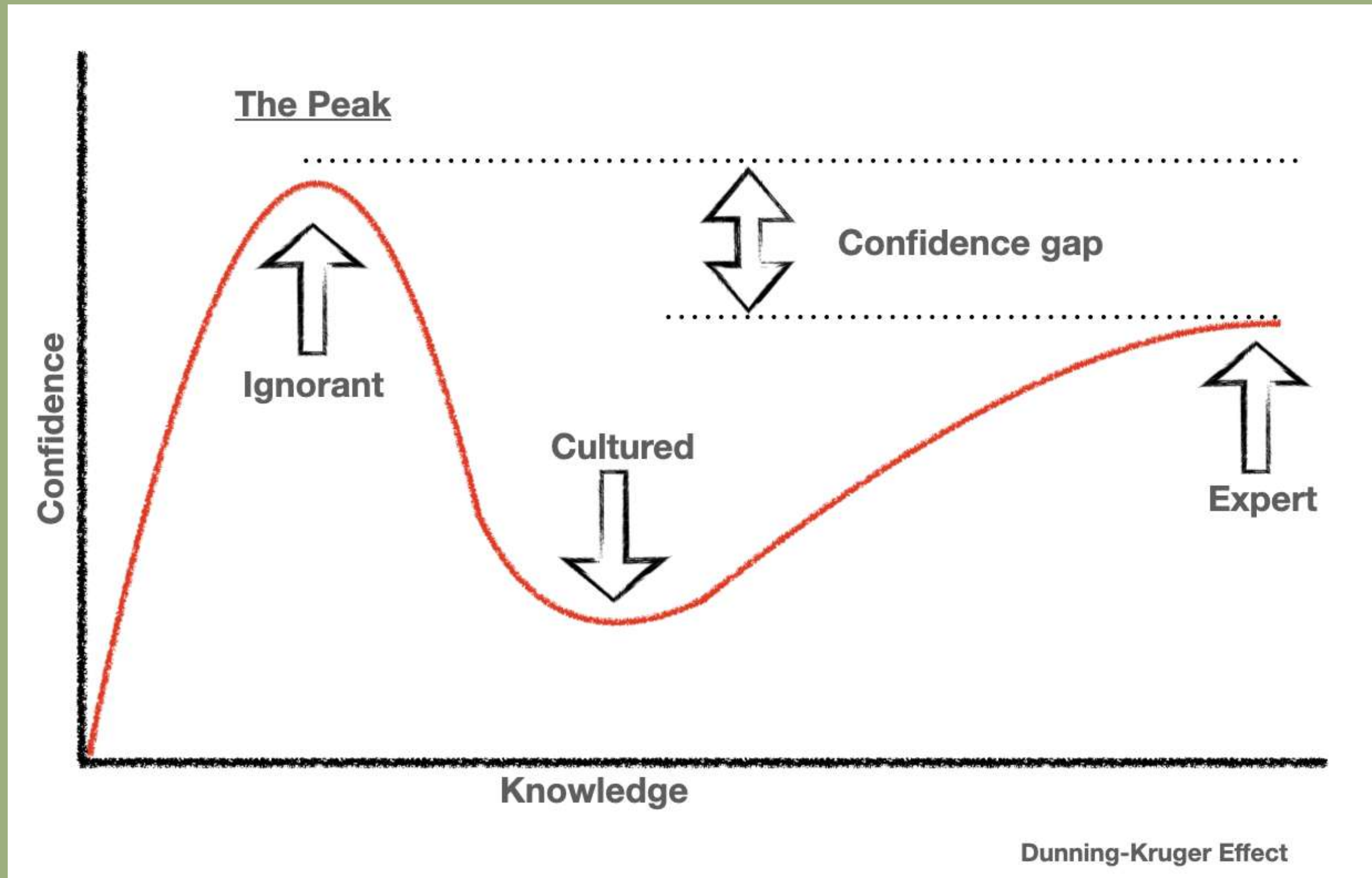# You can't telll a living thing to change, but you can nurture it.

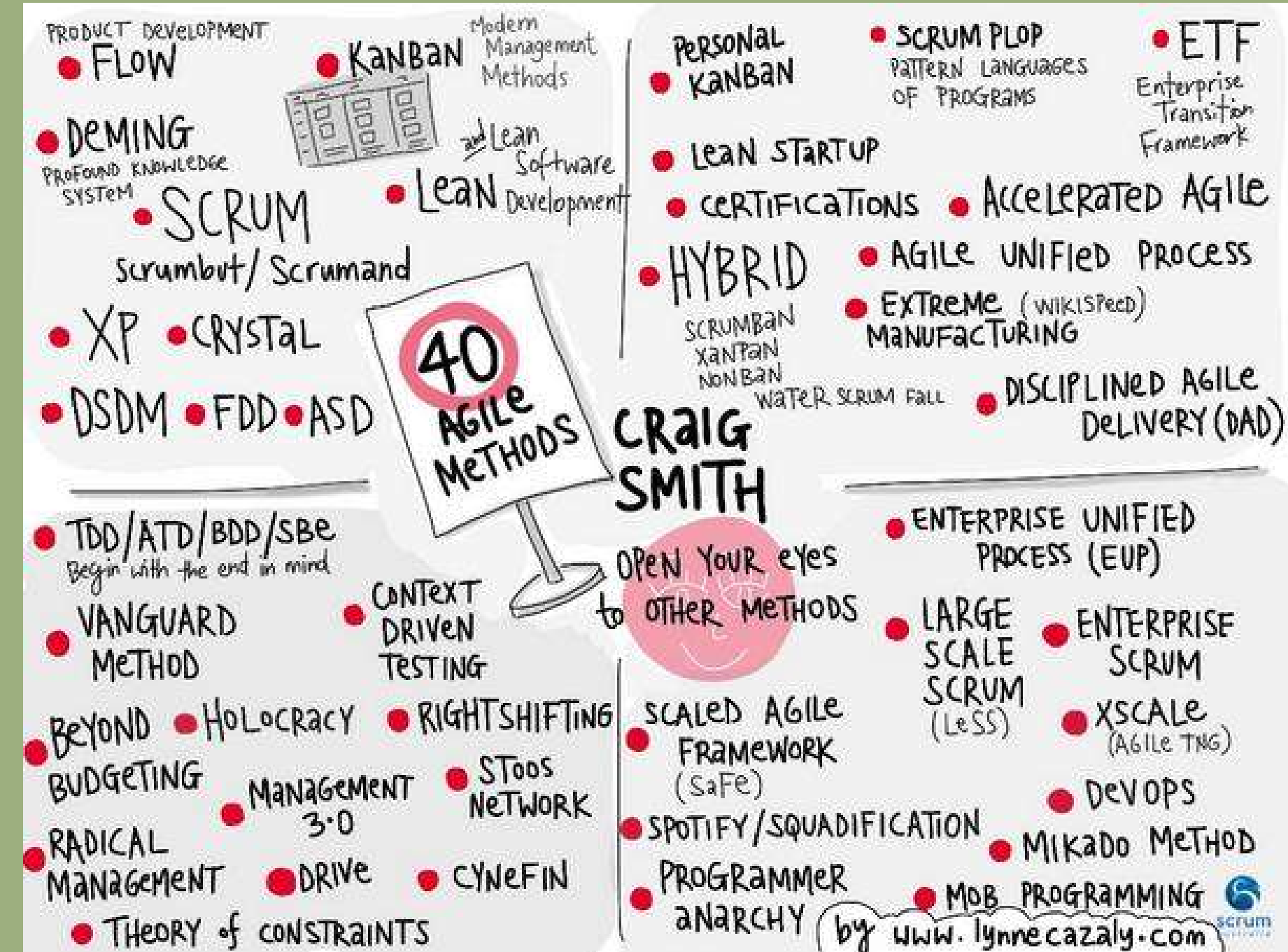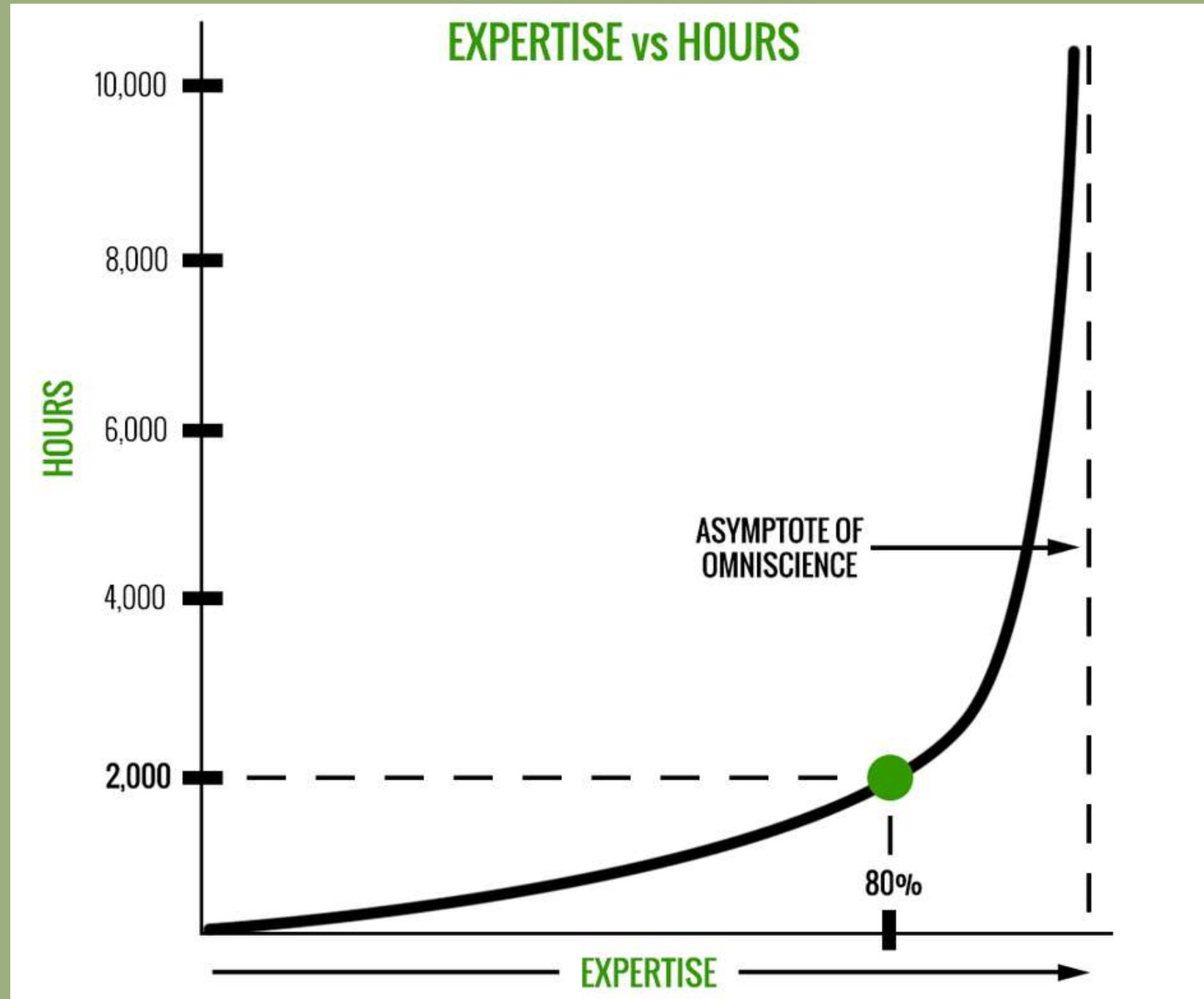# #2: Certification is Great, but Keep Practicing!

Dunning-Kruger Effect:
How competent are you really?

Hacking the 10,000 hour rule
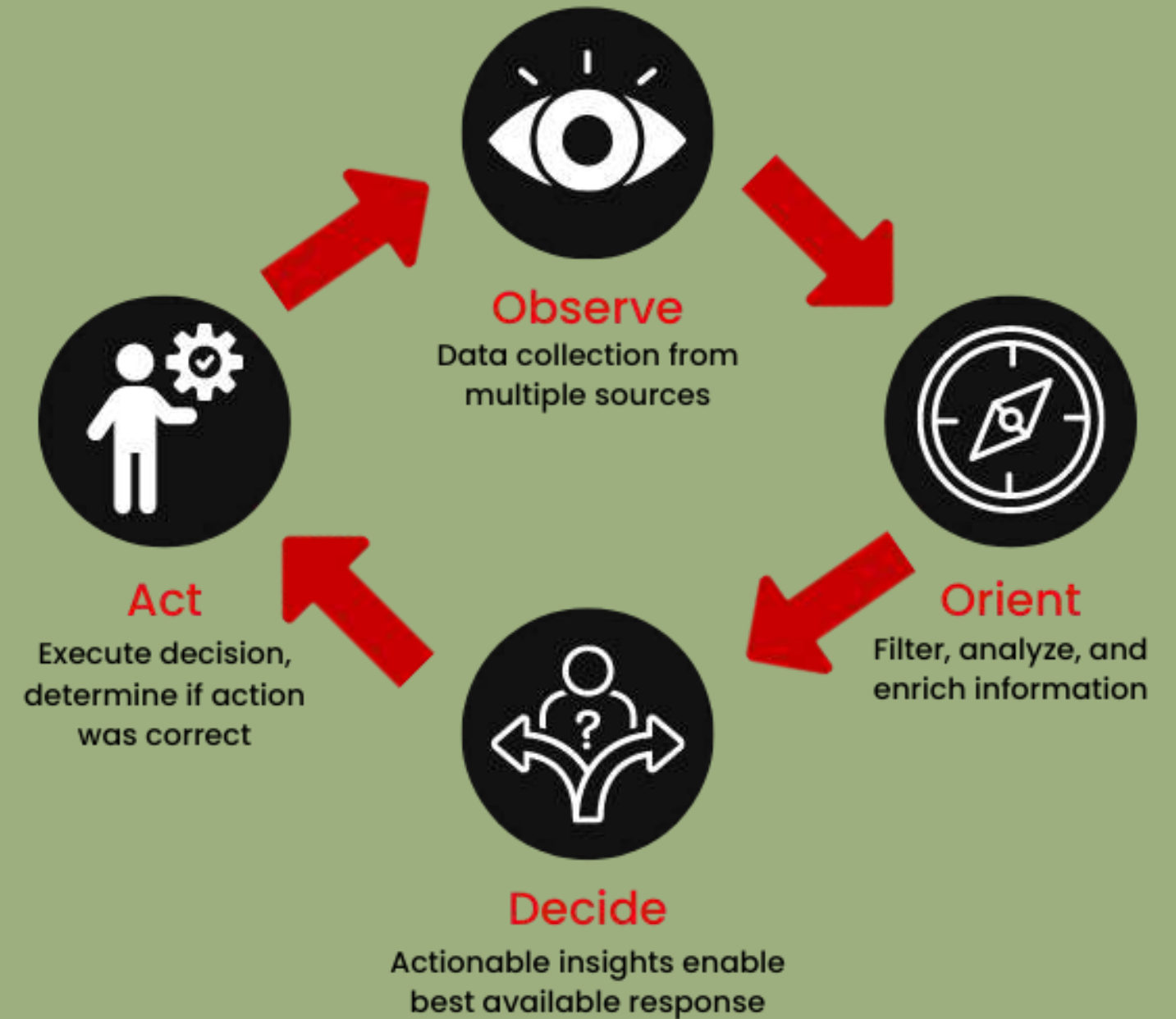
Be a life-long learner!

Join a community!

#3: Cultivate Agility within the Agile Transformation

An agile transformation be

like...

OODA in an Organization

Observe

① 1

Constantly collect data relevant to the organization.

Orient

② 2

Analyze and make meaning of that data.

Decide

③ 3

Generate insights (learnings), options and decide.

Act
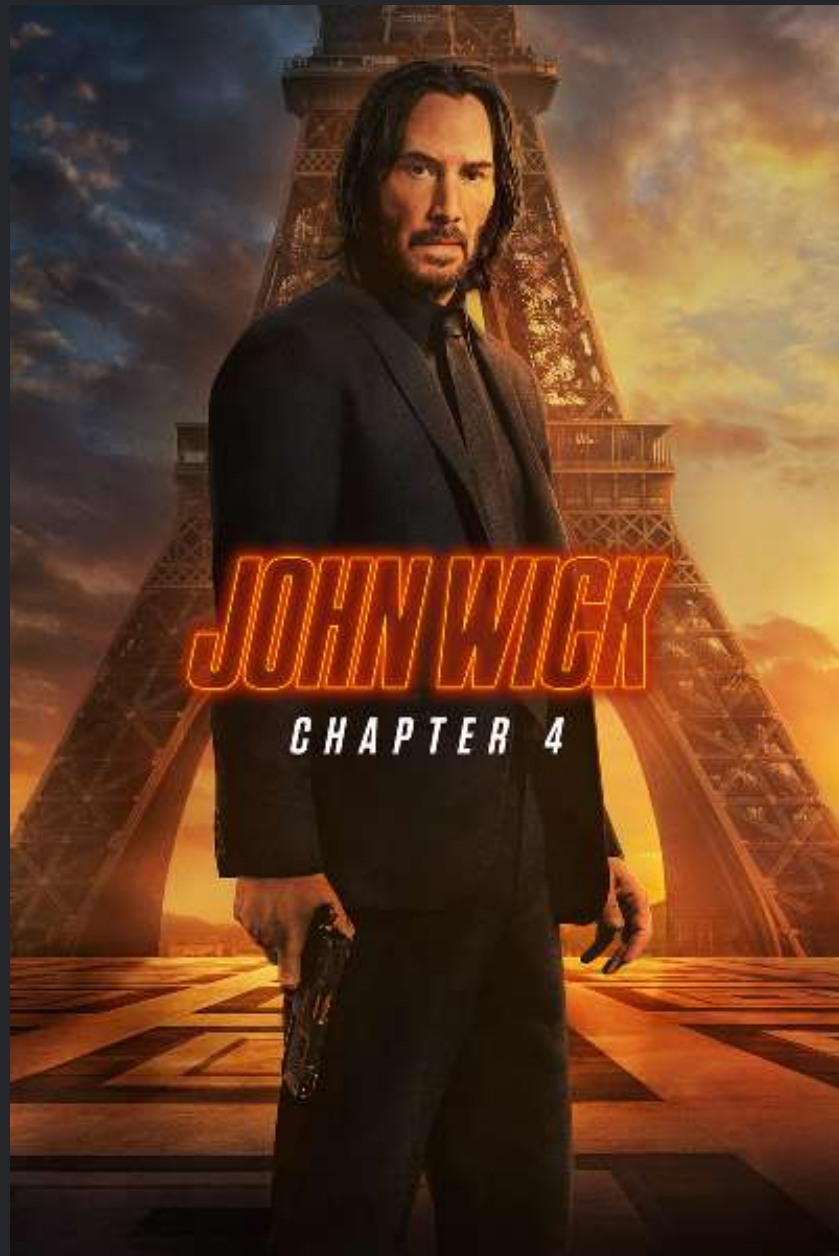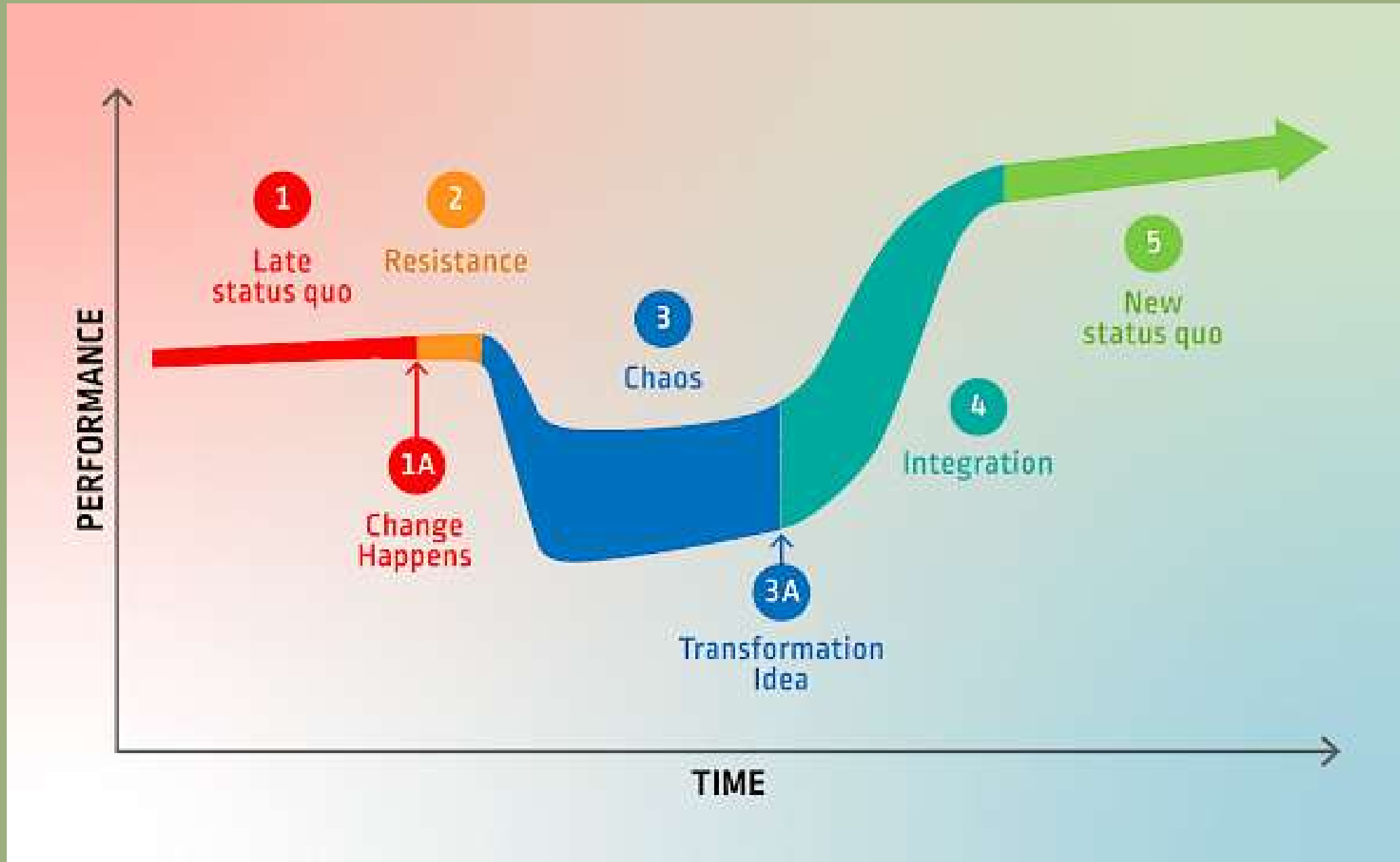
④ 4

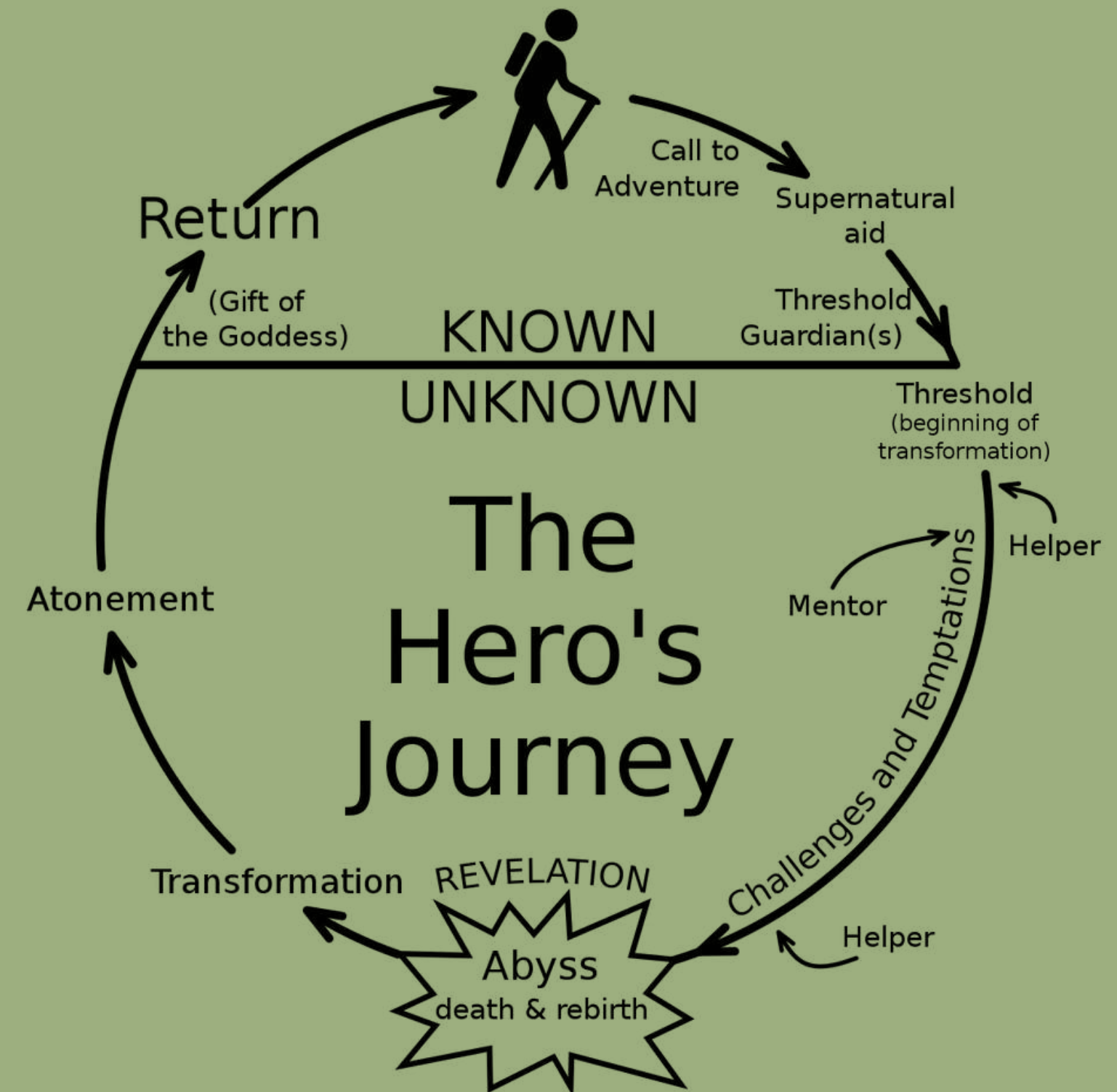Execute, with feedback! Then repeat.

#4: Become Storytellers

A Model of Change

Satir Change Model

https://hbr.org/2022/07/organizational-transformation-is-an-emotional-journey

Your agile transformation is a story

The Hero's Journey

A story of a (mostly) successful transformation

BUSINESS **AGILITY**
CONFERENCE
GLOBAL

TZE CHIN TANG
A STORY OF HOW REINVENTION TO STAY RELEVANT LED TO BEING AN AGILE GREAT PLACE TO WORK

MARCH 22 – 25, 2021
ALL CONTINENTS, ALL TIMEZONES

How Reinvention to Stay Relevant Led to Being an Agile Great Place to Work | Tze Chin Tang

Have you ever been looking for actual case studies of how a once successful company reinvents itself through agile, to continue being a relevant, market leading organization that is also a great place to work? If yes, then this talk is for you!

Bai

MAKE PEOPLE BETTER BY EMPOWERING THEM.

WORLD AGILITY FORUM | Agile Great Place to Work 2020
Seek Asia

@gapingvoid

The Agile Promise

Agile is not just about a set of processes, or even a framework *ahem Scrum*.

It is a set of values and principles that guide teams in adapting to change, delivering value quickly, and fostering a collaborative environment, which in turn, develops trust and further continuous improvement.

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Questions?

I'll be at the clinic after this session.

Talk with me about:

Using AI with Agile, Change Leadership, Agile Coaching, Organizational Development, Professional Coaching, Scrum, Kanban, Cats, pretty much anything...

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