

# WORKING IN AN AGILE CULTURE

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# Agenda

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- Mindsets
- Working iteratively
- Self-organization
- Business Value
- Continuous Improvement / Transparency

Elements of the following will be weaved into presentation

- Conflict
- Negotiation
- Facilitation
- Change (Adaptive Leadership)
- Influence

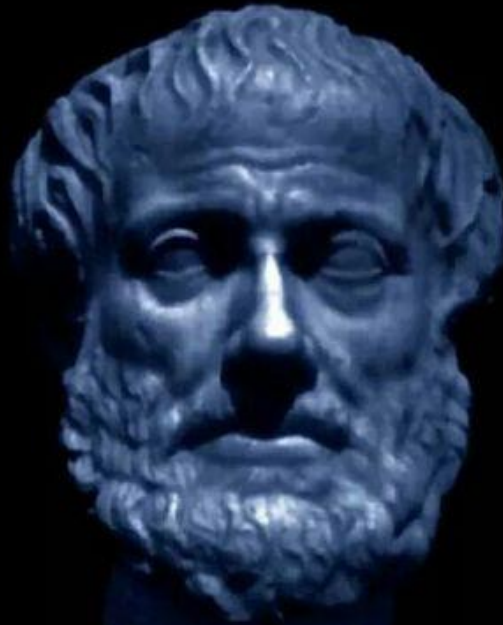
# Initial Questions

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- Are you working within an Agile Squad that is Agile in Practice only? In what context? Why do you believe this?
- What are some of your primary concerns (with Agile)? What are some of your hopes for how it (Agile) could work?
- What do you see as the most critical element of any Agile Culture?

## Agile Practitioner Must Understand and Believe not just do

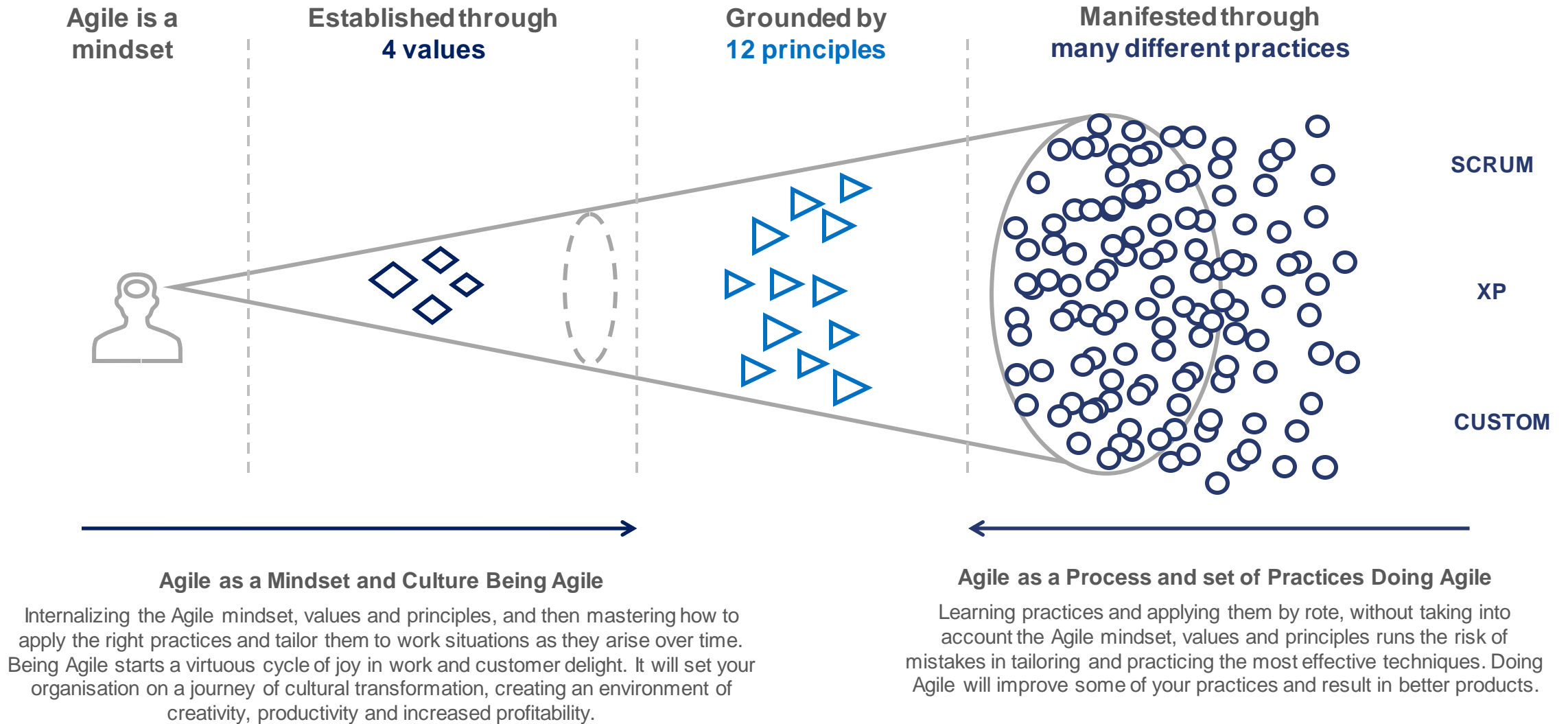
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**"Educating the mind without the heart  
is not education at all."**

*- Aristotle -*

# THE AGILE MINDSET: OPEN AND EXTENDABLE



# THE MANIFESTO FOR AGILE SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

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We are **uncovering** better ways of developing software by doing it and helping others do it.

Through this work we have come to value:

**Individuals and interactions** over **processes and tools**,  
**Working software** over **comprehensive documentation**,  
**Customer collaboration** over **contract negotiation**,  
**Responding to change** over **following a plan**.

That is, while we value the items on the right, we value the items on the left more.

# MODERN AGILE GUIDING PRINCIPLES



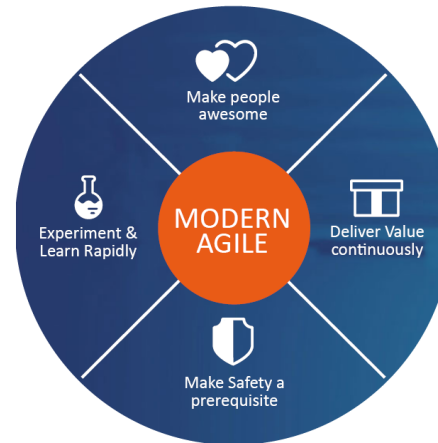
## MAKE PEOPLE AWESOME

Steve Jobs used to ask his colleagues, “What incredible benefits can we give to the customer? Where can we take the customer?” In modern agile we ask how we can make people in our ecosystem awesome. This includes the people who use, make, buy, sell or fund our products or services. We learn their context and pain points, what holds them back and what they aspire to achieve. How can we make them awesome?



## EXPERIMENT & LEARN RAPIDLY

You can't make people awesome or make safety a prerequisite if you aren't learning. We learn rapidly by experimenting frequently. We make our experiments “safe to fail” so we are not afraid to conduct more experiments. When we get stuck or aren't learning enough, we take it as a sign that we need to learn more by running more experiments.



## MAKE SAFETY A PREREQUISITE

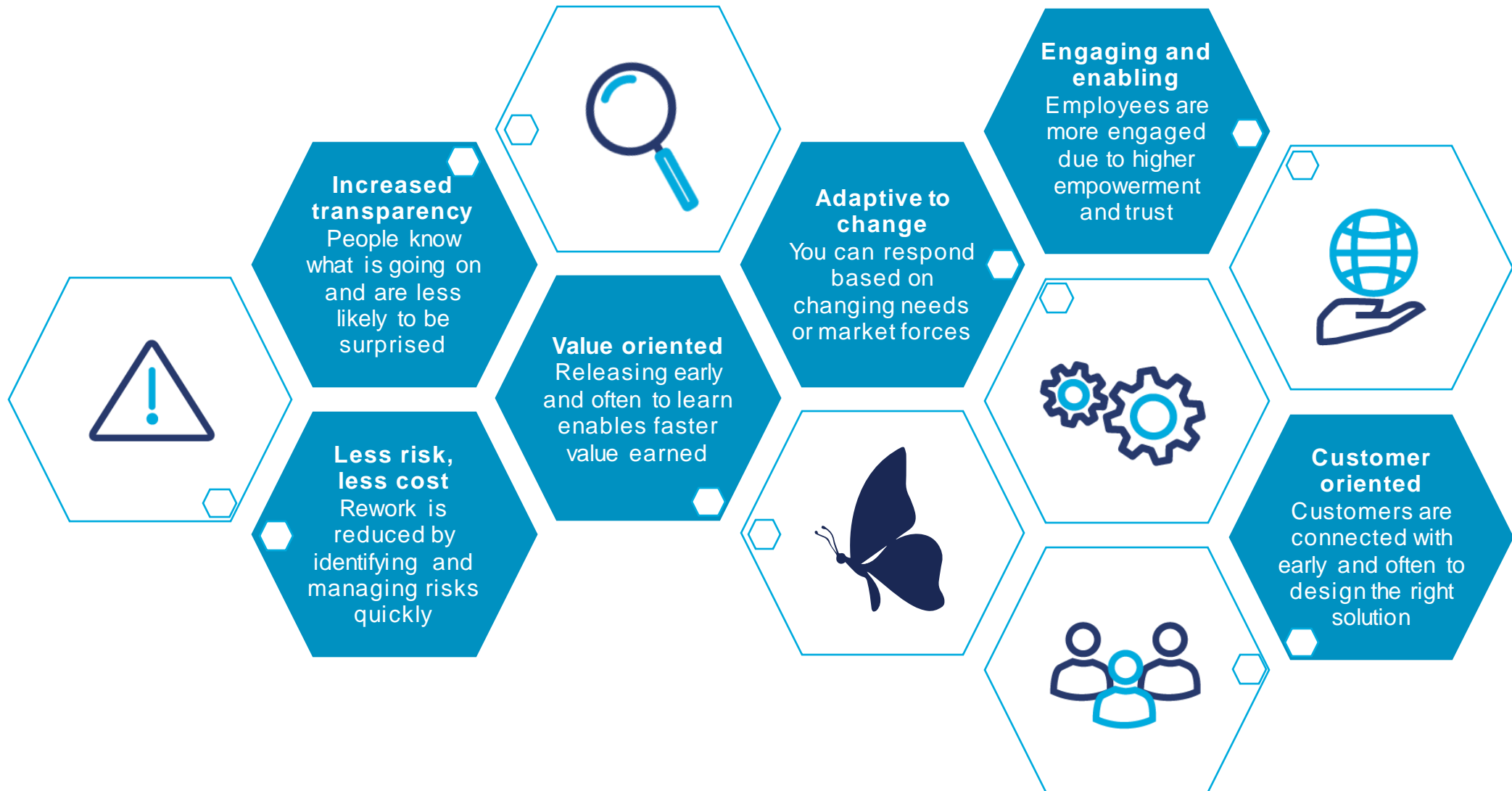
Safety is both a basic human need and a key to unlocking high performance. We actively make safety a prerequisite by establishing safety before engaging in any hazardous work. We protect people's time, information, reputation, money, health and relationships. And we endeavour to make our collaborations, products and services resilient and safe.



## DELIVER VALUE CONTINUOUSLY

Anything that isn't delivered isn't helping anyone become more awesome or safe. In modern agile we ask ourselves, “How could valuable work be delivered faster?” Delivering value continuously requires us to divide larger amounts of value into smaller pieces that may be delivered safely now rather than later.

# MANY ELEMENTS IN AN AGILE WAY OF WORKING





# Criticality of Growth Mindset

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- I can learn anything I want to
- When I'm frustrated, I persevere
- I want to challenge myself
- When I fail, I learn
- Tell me I try hard
- If you succeed, I'm inspired
- My effort and attitude determine everything



- I'm either good at it, or I'm not
- When I'm frustrated, I give up
- I don't like to be challenged
- When I fail, I'm no good
- Tell me I'm smart
- If you succeed, I feel threatened
- My abilities determine everything

# Adaptive leadership, Leadership Throughout not Position or role based

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Solutions to adaptive challenges reside not in the executive suite but in the collective intelligence of employees at all levels”

“Adaptive Leadership is the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive”

**Ronald A. Heifetz & Donald L. Laurie**

***Get the book: The Practice of Adaptive Leadership***

# Questions, Thoughts: Something to Think About

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- What element of Modern Agile is most critical from your prospective?
- Delivering value continuously aka delighting the customer, do you see this as something that can be accomplished with internal stakeholders?
- Who owns safety in agile work environments?
- Do you believe you can be a leader without positional authority?

# Agile Cultural Foundation #1: Embracing Iterative work

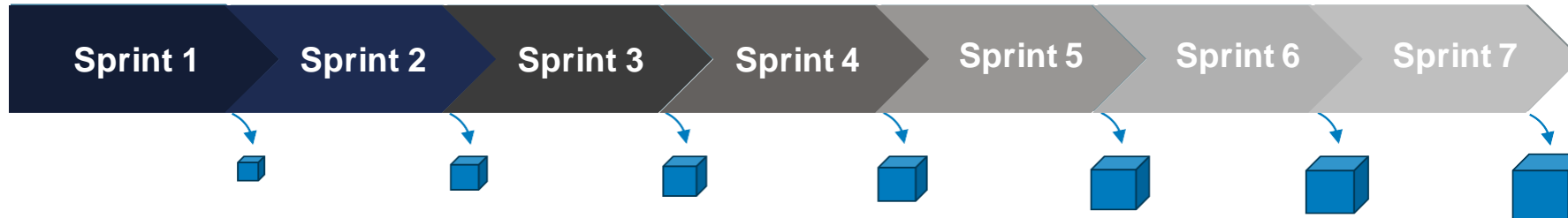
In traditional plan-driven approaches, the project is typically laid out like this:



Each phase is completed before the next phase begins. Value is realised at the very end of the project.

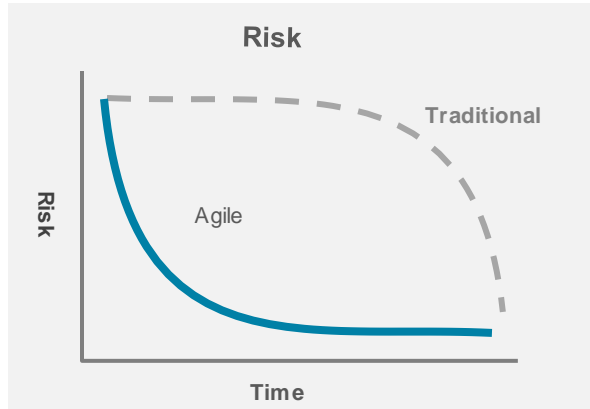


In Agile, we don't have phases. We have short Sprints of 1-4 weeks:

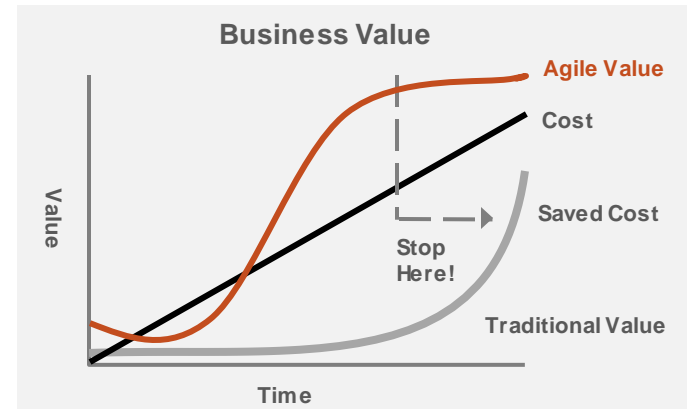


Each Sprint contains some requirements-work, some analysis and design work, some building and some testing. This means that every Sprint results in a production-ready product increment. Value is realised throughout the project.

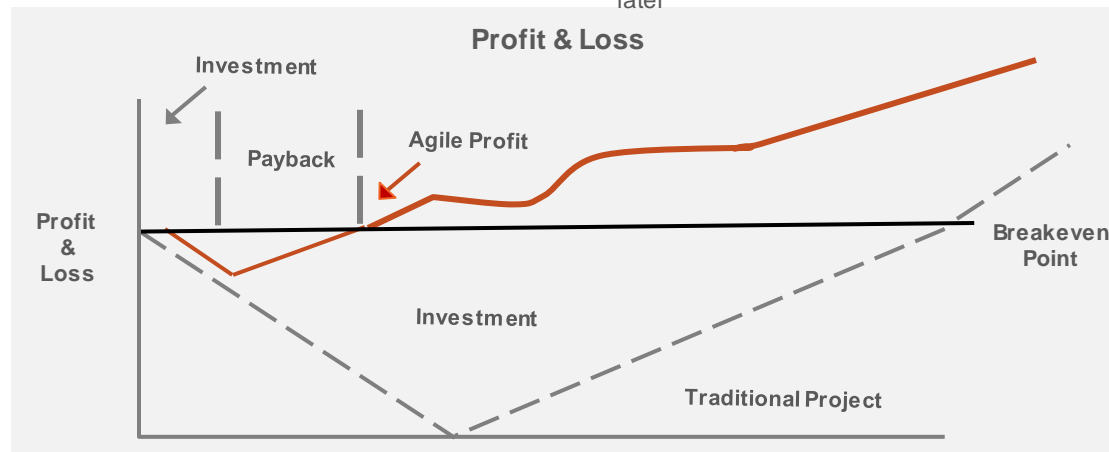
# BUSINESS VALUE OF WORKING ITERATIVELY



In Agile, risks are exposed early, while for traditional projects, risks can be hidden until later



In Agile, as higher business value is delivered earlier, this allows business owners to reduce wastage



Agile provides payback and breakeven earlier, due to iterative delivery

# Questions, Thoughts: Something to Think About

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- Is working 100% iteratively possible in today's complex and complicated environments?
- Can you work Iteratively without management support?
- Does working Iteratively provide any tangible value? Do you “believe” the value slide?
- What can you do to make iterative work possible as speed and complexity increase?

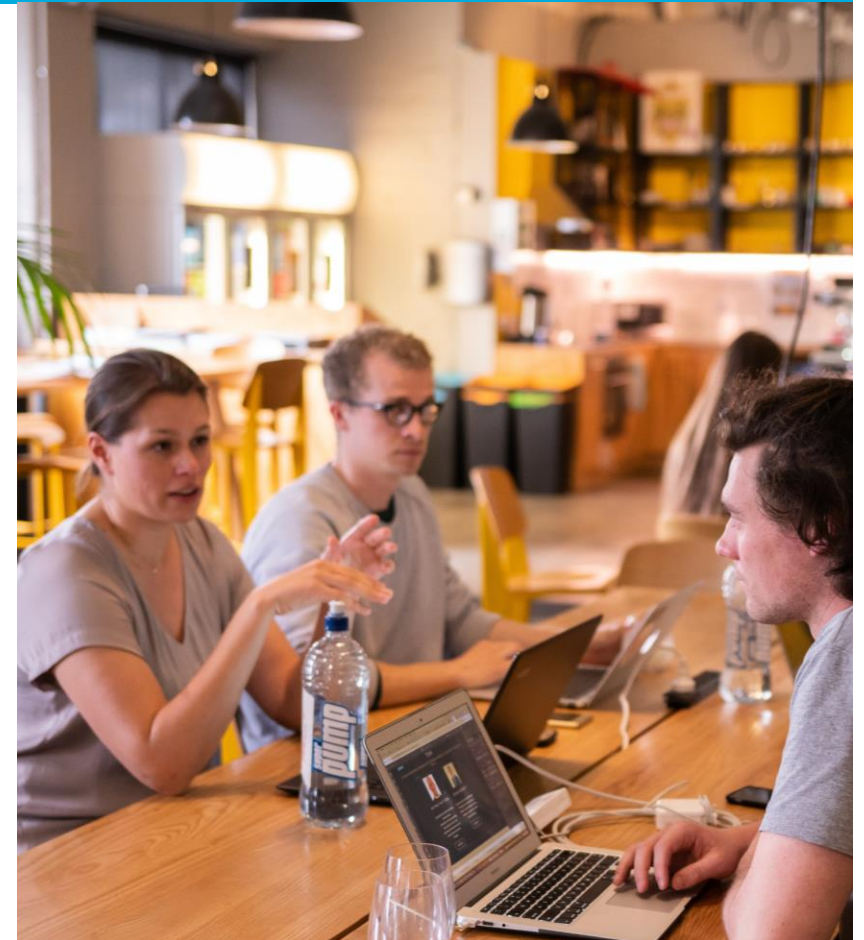
# AGILE CULTURAL FOUNDATION #2 SELF-ORGANISING

A self-organising team is one where the team takes both individual and collective accountability for its success and approach to work

## Each individual takes responsibility for:

- Their contribution to the team's success
- Their interactions with and support of other team members
- The joint decisions the team makes

Primary outcome: Pushing decisions to where work is done and driving ownership in outcomes of work



# Definition of self-organization

1. Ability of a system to spontaneously arrange its components or elements in a purposeful (non-random) manner, under appropriate conditions but without the help of an external agency. It is as if the system knows how to 'do its own thing.' Many natural systems such as cells, chemical compounds, galaxies, organisms and planets show this property.
2. Animal and human communities too display self organization: in every group a member emerges as the leader (who establishes order and rules) and everybody else follows him or her, usually willingly

Source: BusinessDictionary.com



Why do human communities tend towards a leader?

How does this impact self-organization and the value it provides?

**Zappos example, Holacracy push and attrition impact**



# Self-Organized... Being an adult?

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- A Leader must consider the team a group of adults  
(Going to work to see the “kids” construct must go away)
- What does it mean to be “treated like an adult”
- Acting like an adult
  - Adult definition
    - N: One who has attained maturity or legal age
    - Adj: Fully developed and mature
  - Adulthood
    - The state (responsibility) of a person who has attained maturity
- **All ties to autonomy**

# Definition of autonomy: Fuels Self-Organization

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## Level 1

- Independence or freedom, as of the will of one's actions: the autonomy of the individual

## Level 2

- The condition of being autonomous, self-governing, or the right of self-government; independence
  
- Entire basis of the self organized team

# Responsibility of autonomy; employee

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- Understanding of and commitment to shared guiding principals (aka core values)
- Understanding of corporate and department goals
- Development of and commitment to personal professional goals that align with departmental and corporate goals
- Commitment to and demand for communication
- “Actualized” trust
- Confidence and commitment to do your job and to ask for help when needed
  - Act vs. waiting to be told
  - Accepting and compromise vs wanting everything your way
  - Accepting the balance between your needs and the group’s

# Responsibility of autonomy; employer

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- Develop and adhere to core values
  - Corporate and department level
- Align core values to personnel reviews
- Develop corporate and department goals
  - **Realistic** goals
- Communicate goal status, good or bad
- Do what you say
- Provide support and guidance, knock down barriers don't create them
  - Coaching vs. micro-management
  - Empowerment vs. control
- The death of agile would come at the hands of the middle manager

# Questions, Thoughts: Something to Think About

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- Is self-organization even possible?
- What are the hardest elements of self-organization
- Is autonomy possible in complex and complicated work environments?  
Which side has more responsibility to make autonomy real, the employee side or leader side?
- What are your thoughts around conflict and negotiation in self-organization?

# Agile Cultural Foundation #3 Business value

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**“The Three C’s”:**  
Currency  
Compliance  
Customer satisfaction



**Achieve compliance**



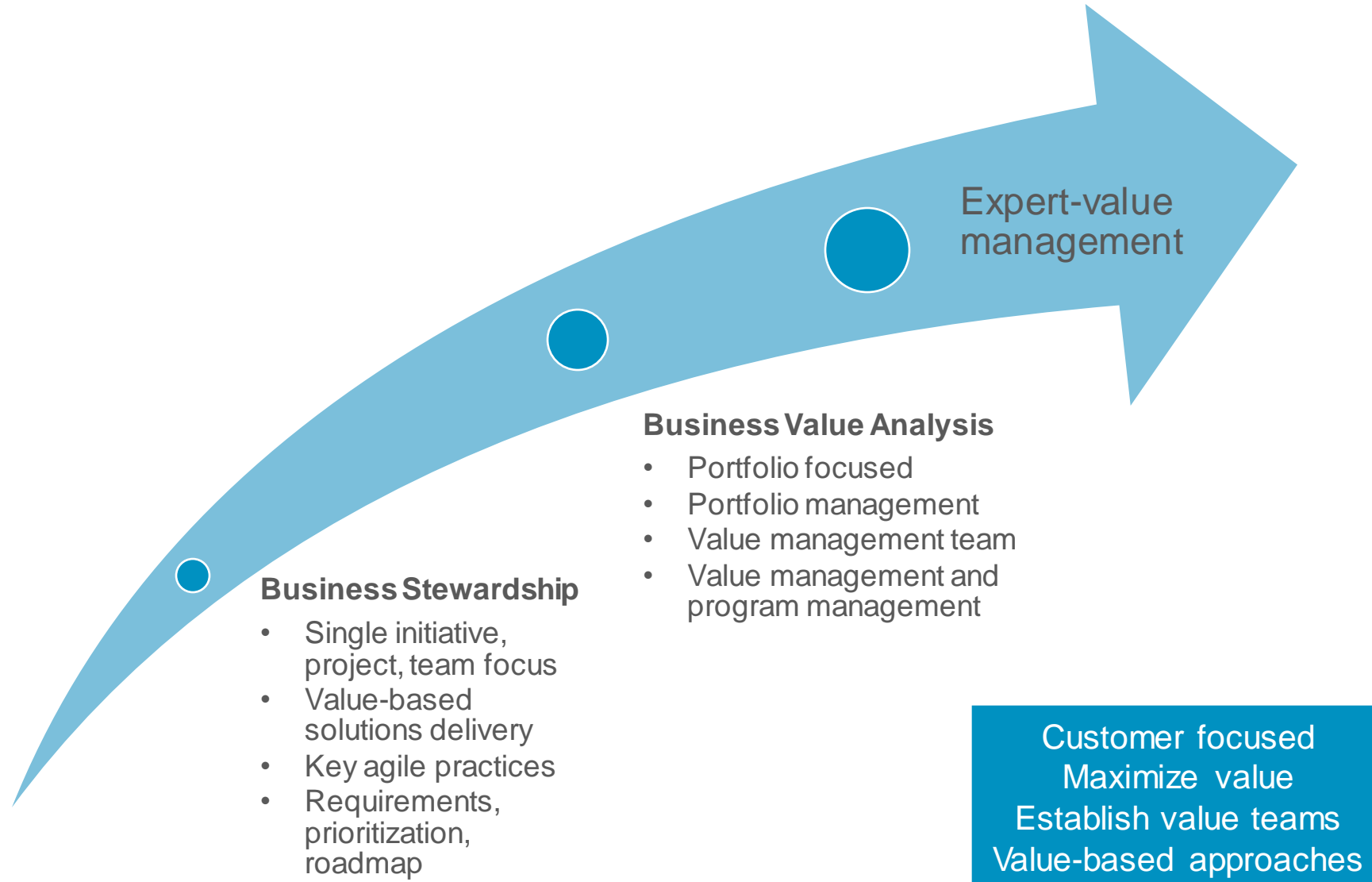
**Increase/protect revenue**  
**Reduce/prevent cost**



**Improve service**  
**Position the organization**  
**Social obligations**  
**Develop staff**

# Levels of value management

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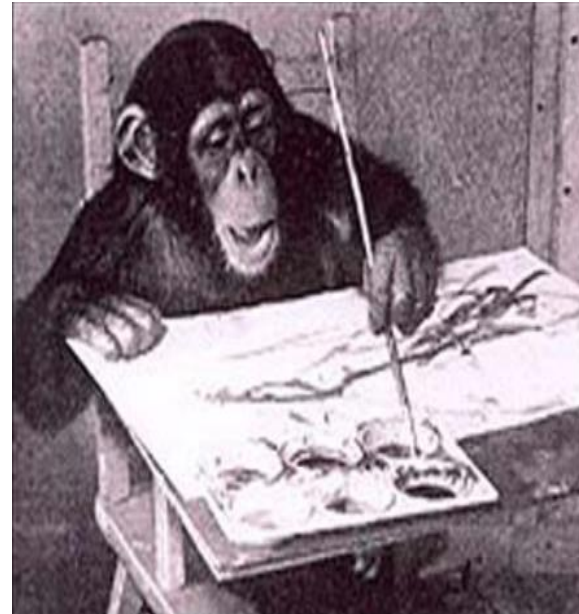
# Technical Problems vs Adaptive Challenges

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Technical Problems

VS.

Adaptive Challenges





# Critical thinking

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## Thinking about one's thinking:

- To organize and clarify
- Raise efficiency of thinking
- Recognize errors and biases
- Improve process of thinking,  
Not to solve problems

Wikipedia



Critical thinking is essential if we are to get to the root of our problems and develop reasonable solutions. After all, the quality of everything we do is determined by the quality of our thinking.”

- [www.criticalthinking.org](http://www.criticalthinking.org)

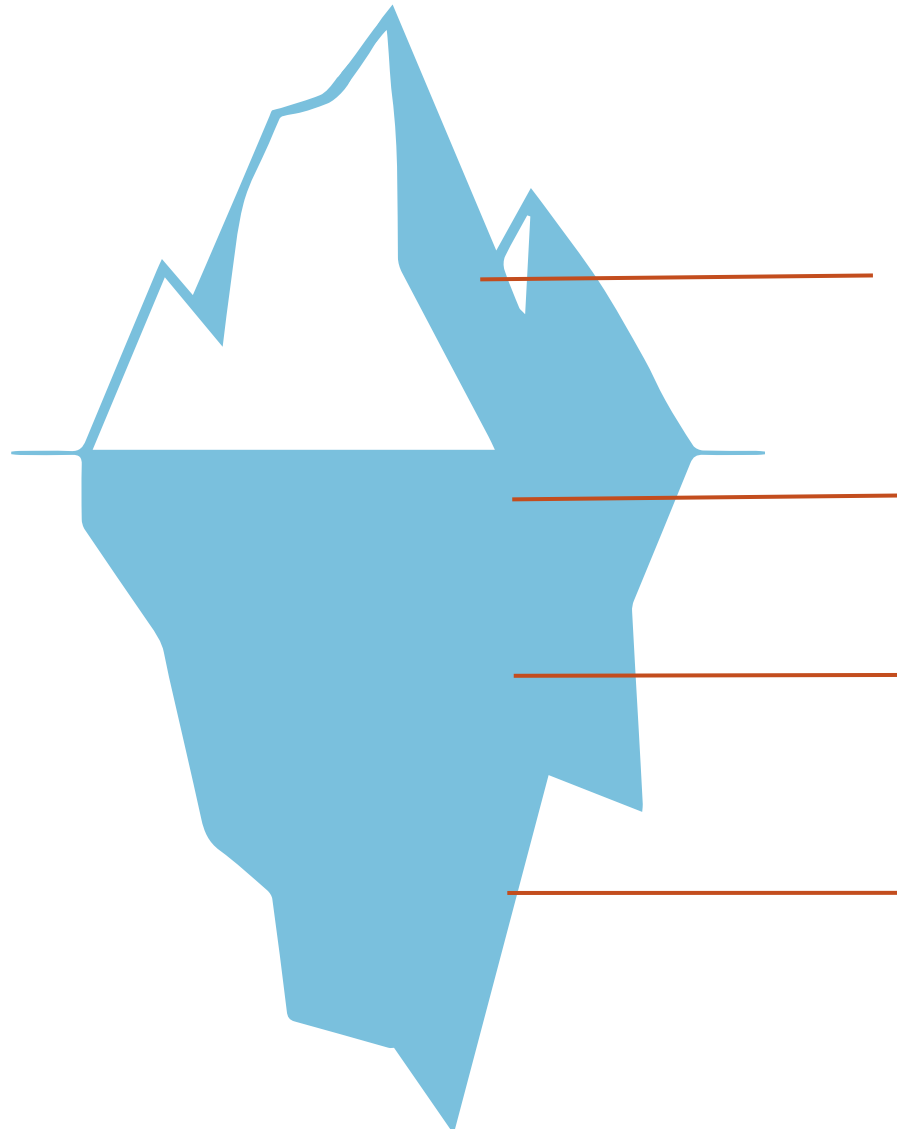
# Systems thinking

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- Technique, problem-solving mindset
- Set of general principles
- See patterns instead of snapshots
- View “problems” as parts of an overall system
- See interrelationships instead of seeing things
- Gives us perspectives on problems and what we might do differently
- Treat organizations as systems, e.g. team

# Systems thinking: the iceberg

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## **React**

**Events:**  
What just happened?

## **Anticipate**

**Patterns/Trends:**  
What trends have there been over time?

## **Design**

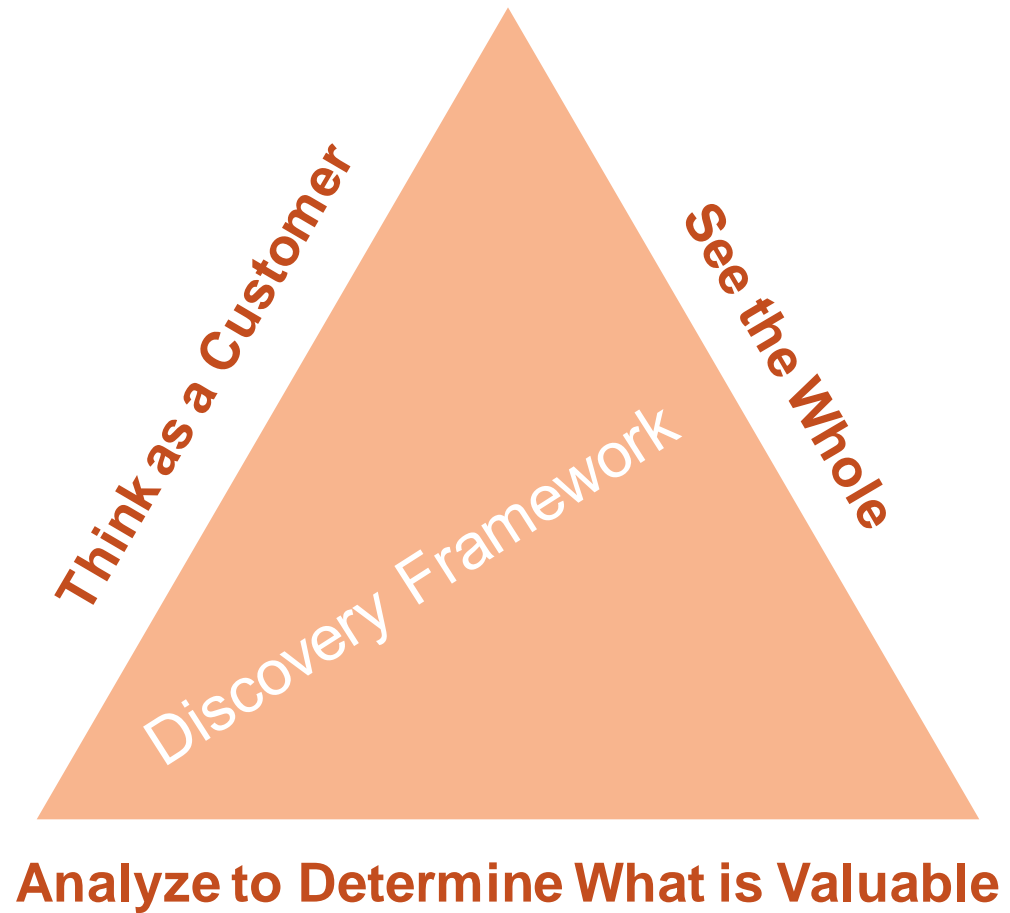
**Underlying Structures:**  
What has influenced the patterns?  
What are the relationships between the parts?

## **Transform**

**Mental Models:**  
What assumptions, beliefs, and values do people hold about the system? What beliefs keep the system in place?

# Be Comfortable With Ambiguity

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# Questions, Thoughts: Something to Think About

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**You will see some of these as polls and we would love to see your thoughts in chat on the others**

- What tools / techniques do you use to understand value?
- What are the critical elements of value you must understand?
- Is the value the responsibility of everyone in the organization? Much like Adaptive Leaders? If yes, how does that work?
- Do you think there is enough training available on Systems Thinking?
- What is the primary difference between Technical and Adaptive problems?

# AGILE CULTURAL FOUNDATION #4 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

1. Improve everything continuously.
2. Abolish old, traditional concepts.
3. Accept no excuses and make things happen.
4. Say no to the status quo of implementing new methods and assuming they will work.
5. If something is wrong, correct it.
6. Empower everyone to take part in problem solving.
7. Get information and opinions from multiple people.
8. Before making decisions, ask “why” five times to get to the root cause (5 Why Method).
9. Be economical. Save money through small improvements and spend the saved money on further improvements.
10. Remember that improvement has no limits. Never stop trying to improve.

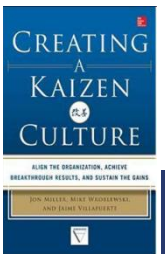


**Kai** = Change

**Zen** = Good

**Learn more...**

Jon Miller et al, *Creating a Kaizen Culture*



# Transparency, Radical Candor, Psychological Safety



How is Transparency and Continuous Improvement linked?

What is Transparency, Really?

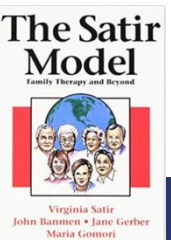
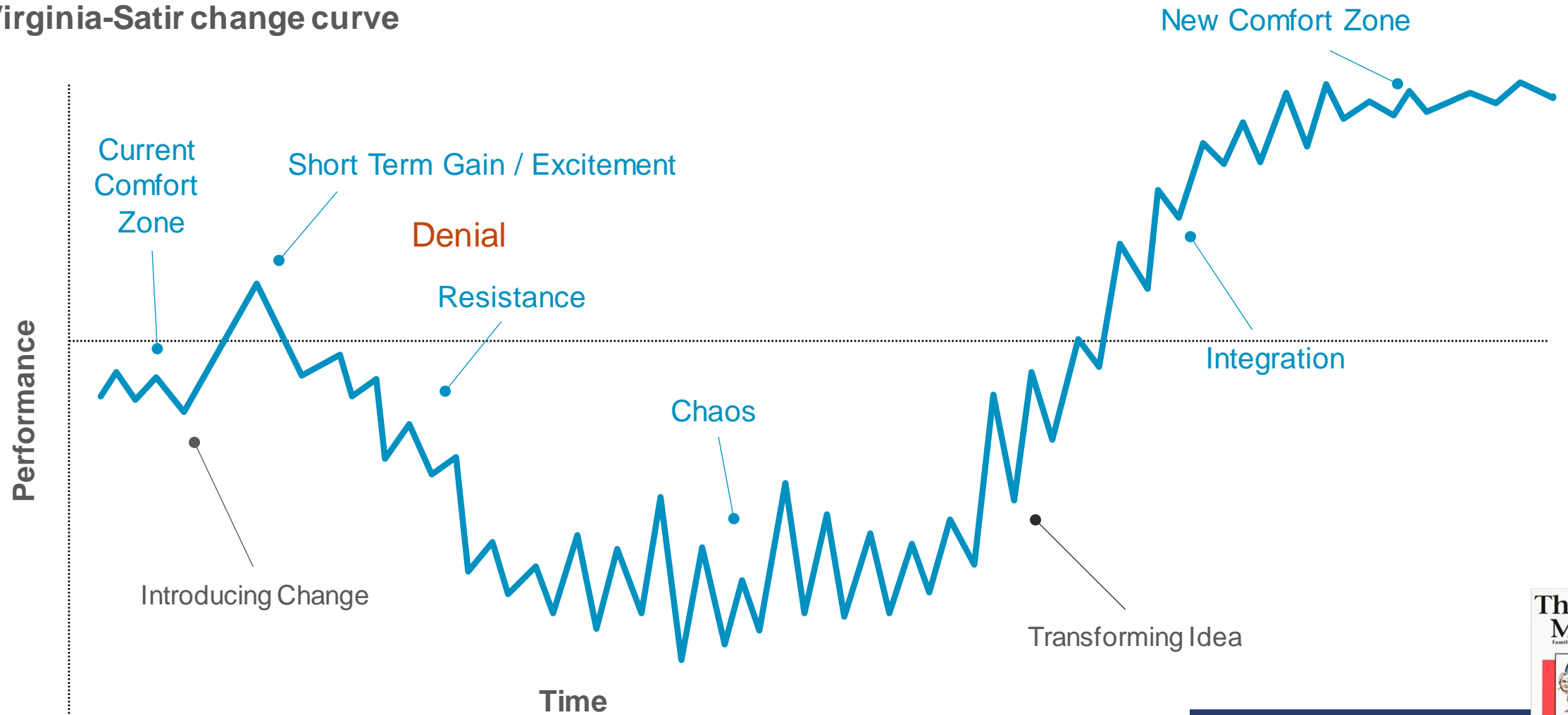
How does Radical Candor fit? What is it? Get the book!!!

Putting it all together, let's talk **Psychological Safety**

<https://www.softed.com/learning-hub/podcasts/the-better-work-project-radical-candour/>

# CHANGE TAKES TIME

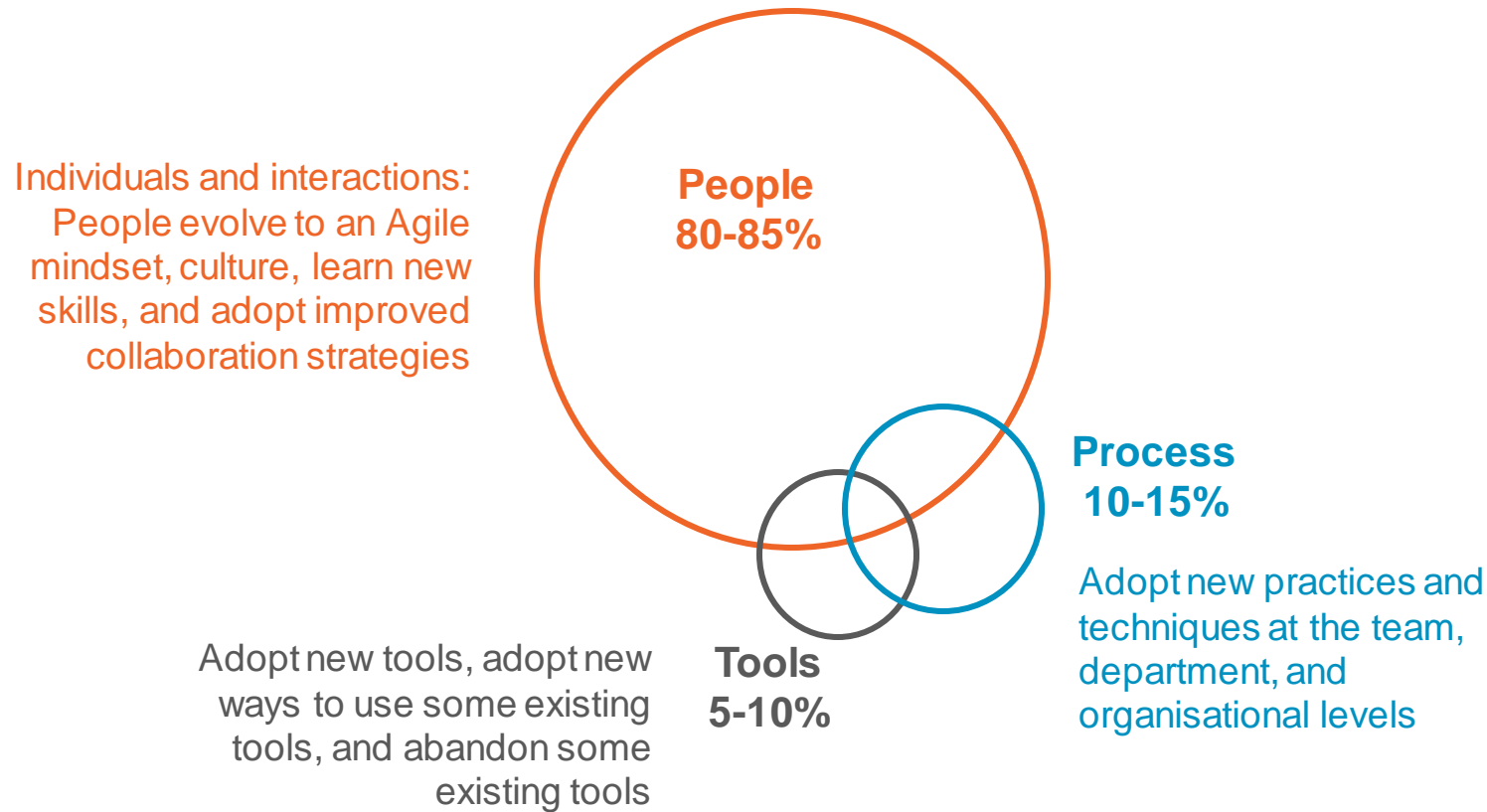
## Virginia-Satir change curve



Learn more ...  
Virginia Satir et al, *The Satir Model*



# FOCUS OF EFFORT



**He aha te mea nui o te ao**  
What is the most important thing in the world?

**He tangata, he tangata, he tangata**

It is the people, it is the people, it is the people.

**Māori proverb**

**Learn more...**

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/stevedenning/2018/11/04/the-twelve-stages-of-the-agile-transformation-journey/#1ce193a53dd4>

# Questions, Thoughts: Something to Think About

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- How is radical candor done without offense?
- Is it natural to want to improve?
- What mindsets does continuous improvement connect to?
- How does psychological safety and the change curve connect?
- Why are people aka understanding how to work within an Agile culture so critically important to Agile from your prospective?
- Is it possible to train someone on how to continuously improve?

# THANK YOU

# ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS!

BOOKS:

RADICAL CANDOUR

THE PRACTICE OF ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP

MONEYBALL: THE ART OF WILLING AN UNFAIR GAME

FREAKONOMICS

THE SATIR MODEL

CREATING A KAIZEN CULTURE