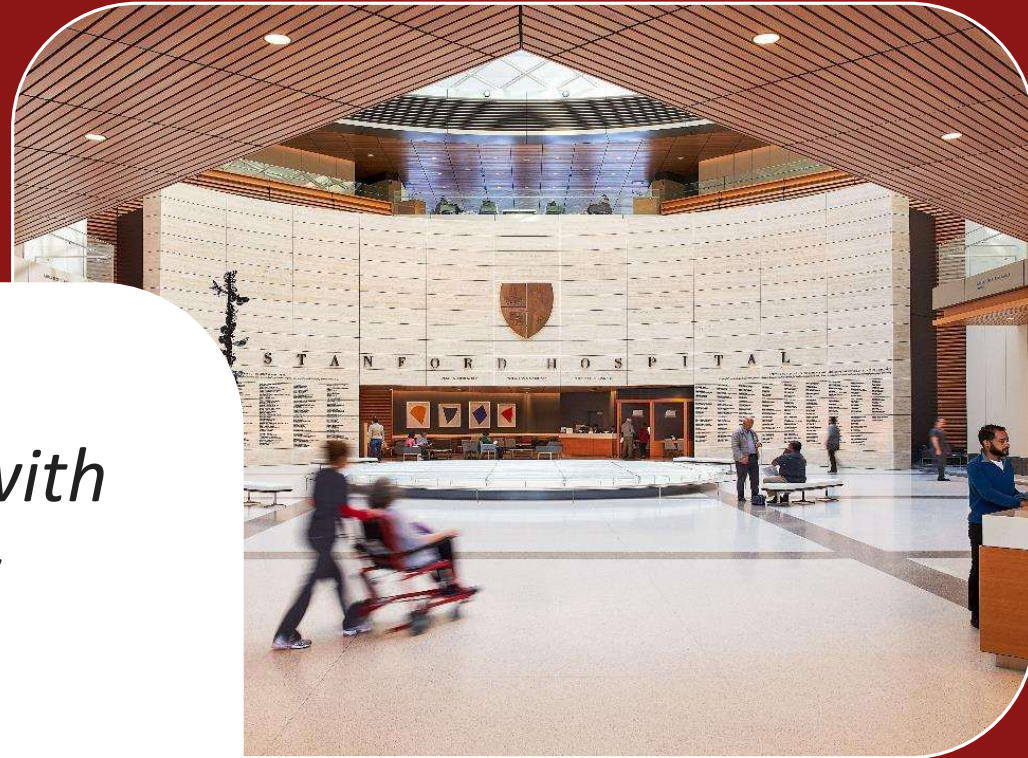


Jerks at Work: How to Engage with Team Members that Think They Know EVERYTHING!

Michael Cavanaugh
Stanford Medicine Supply Chain

Thursday, September 11th, 2025





Key Points

1 Connect with your Jerk



2 Empower your Jerk



3 Learn from your Jerk



Engagement Agreement

Be Curious!

Be Present!

Be Fearless!



Discuss with the People Around You...

What is your job?

What do you do for a living?



About this Presentation

Michael Truman Cavanaugh, CSP-SM, CSPO, PMP

- Senior Training and Communications Specialist
- Supply Chain Change Management Lead for ERP Transformation

Tiffany Lash, CMRP (co-author)

- Purchasing Supervisor
- Procurement Lead for ERP Transformation



Stanford Medicine Supply Chain is #2 the Gartner Healthcare Supply Chain Top 25 for 2024





How do you define a JERK?

① The Slido app must be installed on every computer you're presenting from

slido

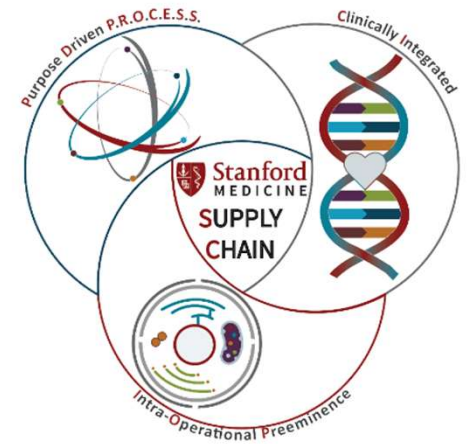


What do you want to know about engaging jerks at work?

① The Slido app must be installed on every computer you're presenting from

slido

Connect with Your Jerk



Know Your Jerks



The Narcissist

The Know-It-All

The Early Adopters

The Late Adopters

The Luddite

The "I-Told-You-So"

The "This-Is-The-Way-We-Have-Always-Done-It"

The Goofball

The Runaway Train

The "Poor Me"

The "Wolf Crier"



Connecting with Your Jerk’s Purpose

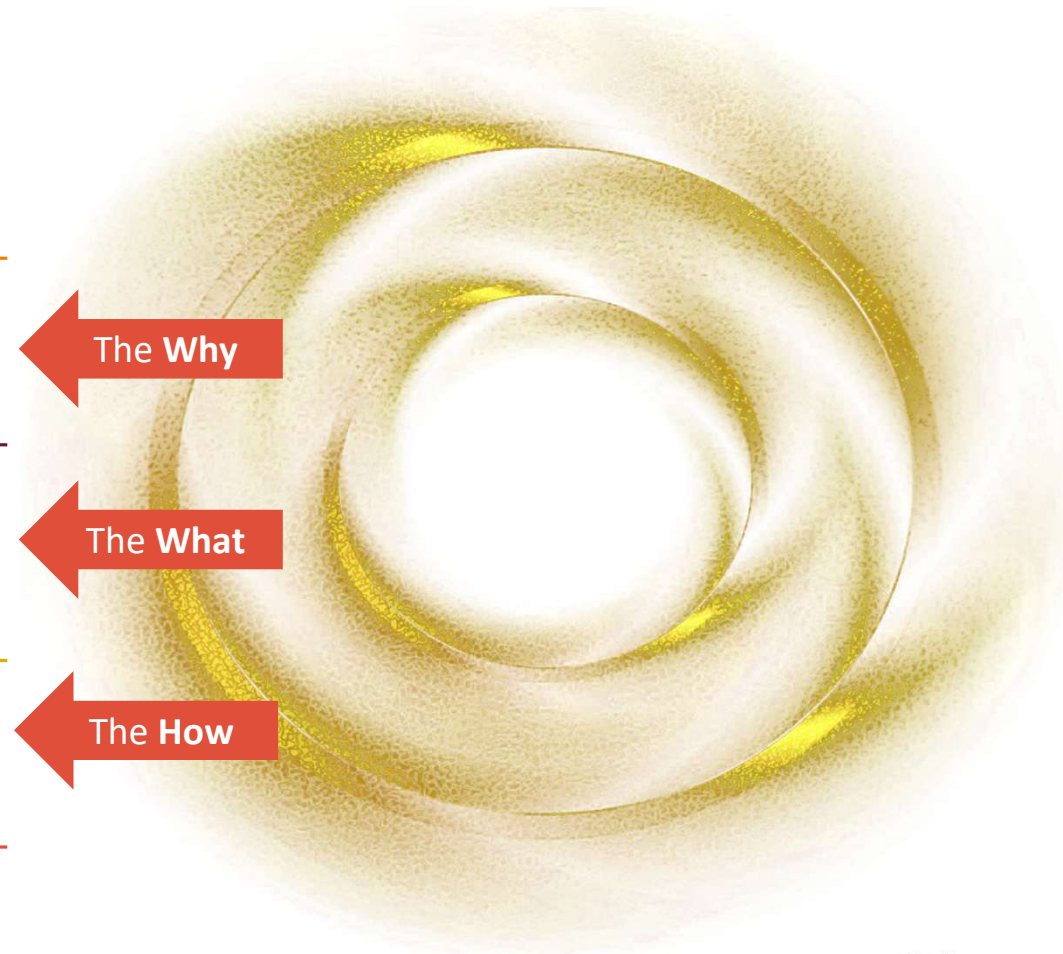
What if I told you I'm going to buy a watch from a computer company? You'd think I'm crazy, right?

“Everything we do, we believe in challenging the status quo. We believe in thinking differently.”

The way we challenge the status quo is by making our product beautifully designed, simple to use, and user friendly.

We happen to make great watches...
Wanna buy one?”

Apple. Think Different



Start with Why (but not “Why are you a Jerk?”)

Have you asked your jerks what **their** why is?

We started with: “What do you do for a living?”



What if I Introduced Myself Like this...

Everything I do, I believe in satisfying and delighting the lives of my coworkers.

I utilize my passion for comedy and my skillset for organization, facilitation, agile values and collaboration to support my supply chain stakeholders and end users with an empirical approach as we navigate change, communications, and stakeholder engagement, reducing the fear of the unknown.

I provide best-in-class training, communications, and engagement practices to curate, document, and disseminate our end-to-end workflows, improves processes and building proficient teams.

Wanna hire me?



The How Come

Your “Why” is not your
“How Come”

Here is my “How Come”



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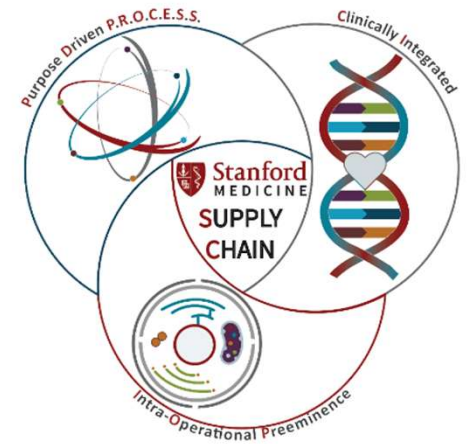
The 5 Whys of Connecting to Purpose

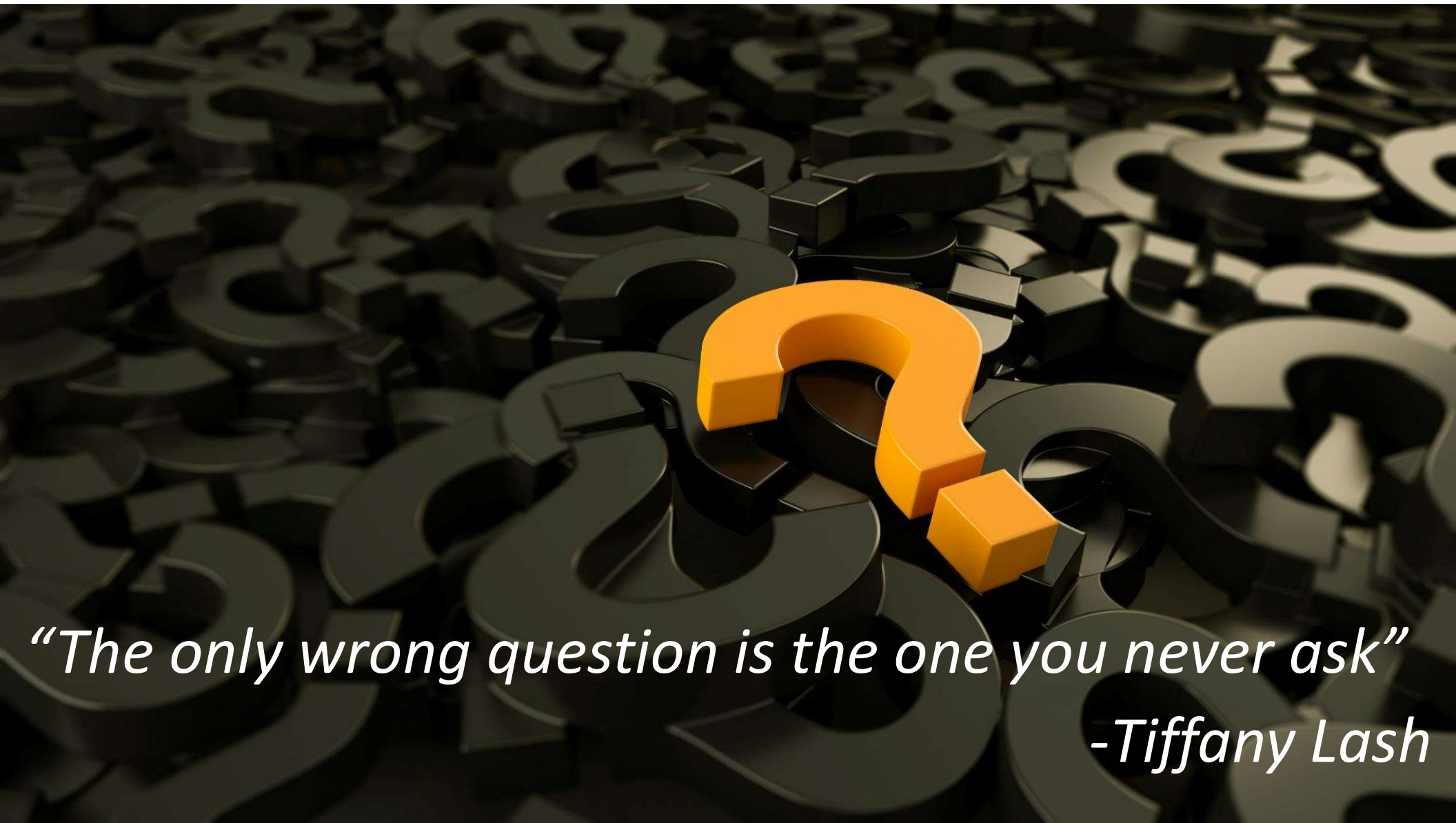


As a Leader, What is YOUR why?
What is your TEAM'S why?
What is your DIVISION'S why?
What is your DEPARTMENT'S why?
What is your ORGANIZATION'S why?



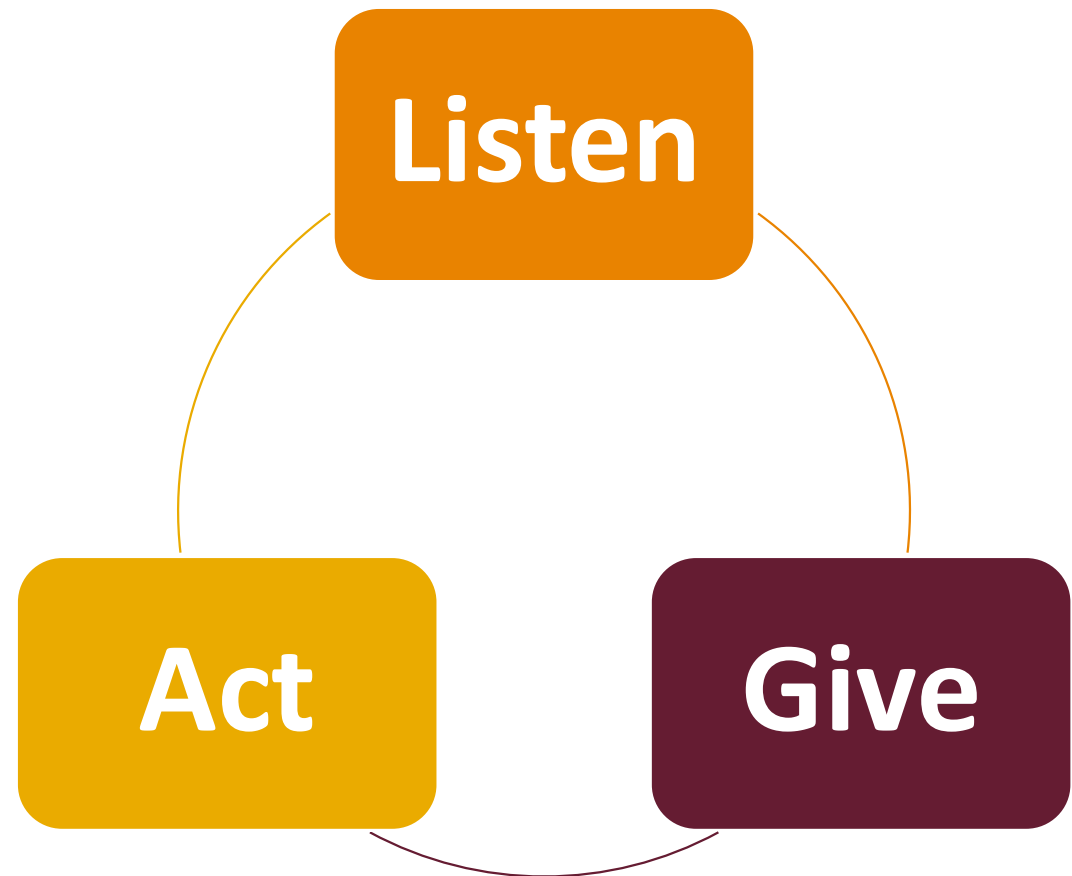
Learn from Your Jerk





*“The only wrong question is the one you never ask”
-Tiffany Lash*

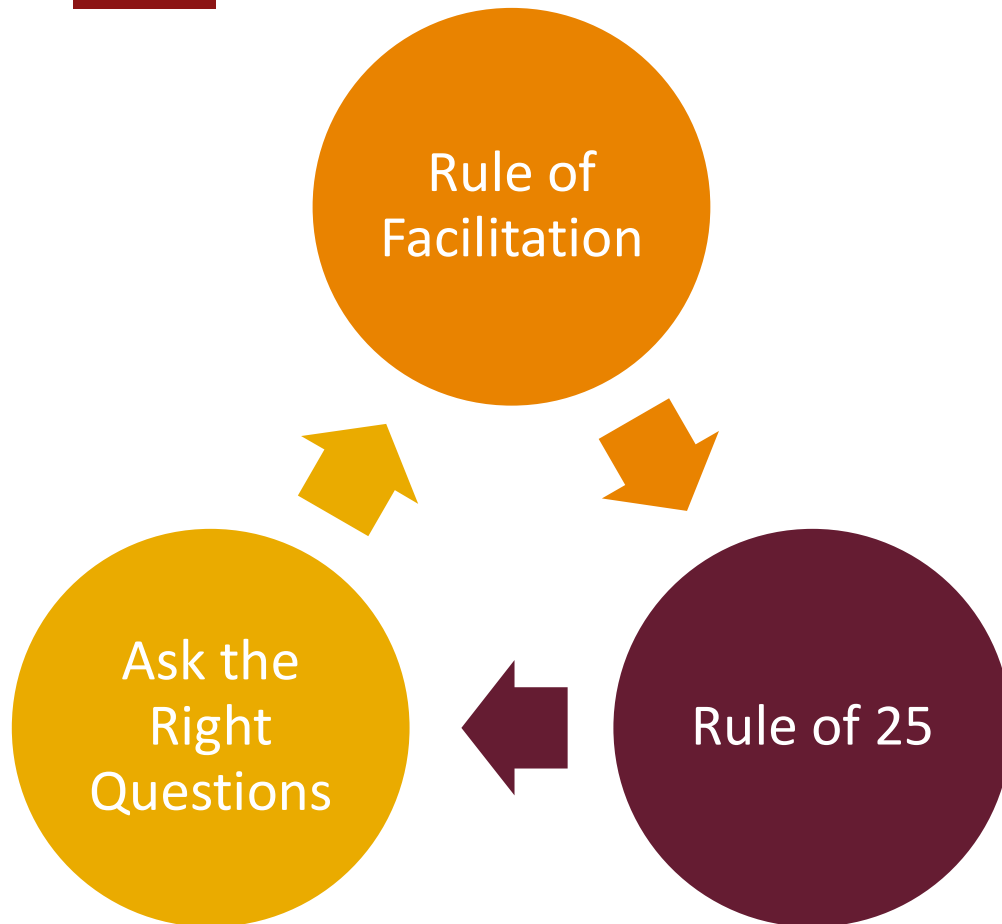
What do *They* Need from *You*?



IT'S **NOT**
ABOUT
THE
NAIL



Question Your Jerk



Game of Questions



Debrief the Game of Questions



Examples of Powerful Questions

What does success look like?

What/Who do you see as a barrier?

How would you respond if the roles were reversed?

What do you hope will come from this?

What is your biggest worry?

What is the biggest barrier you are facing?

Who might have helpful information?

Who else might be able to coach you on this?

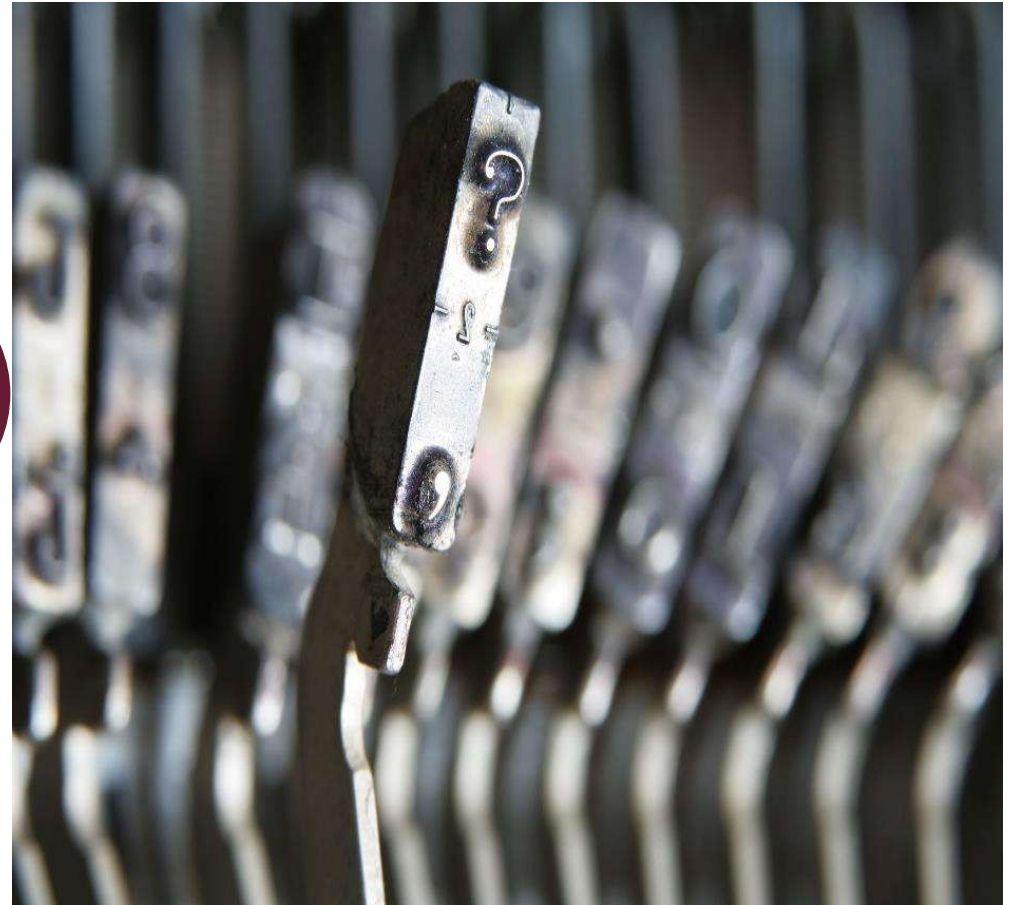
What if this went poorly?

What if this went well?

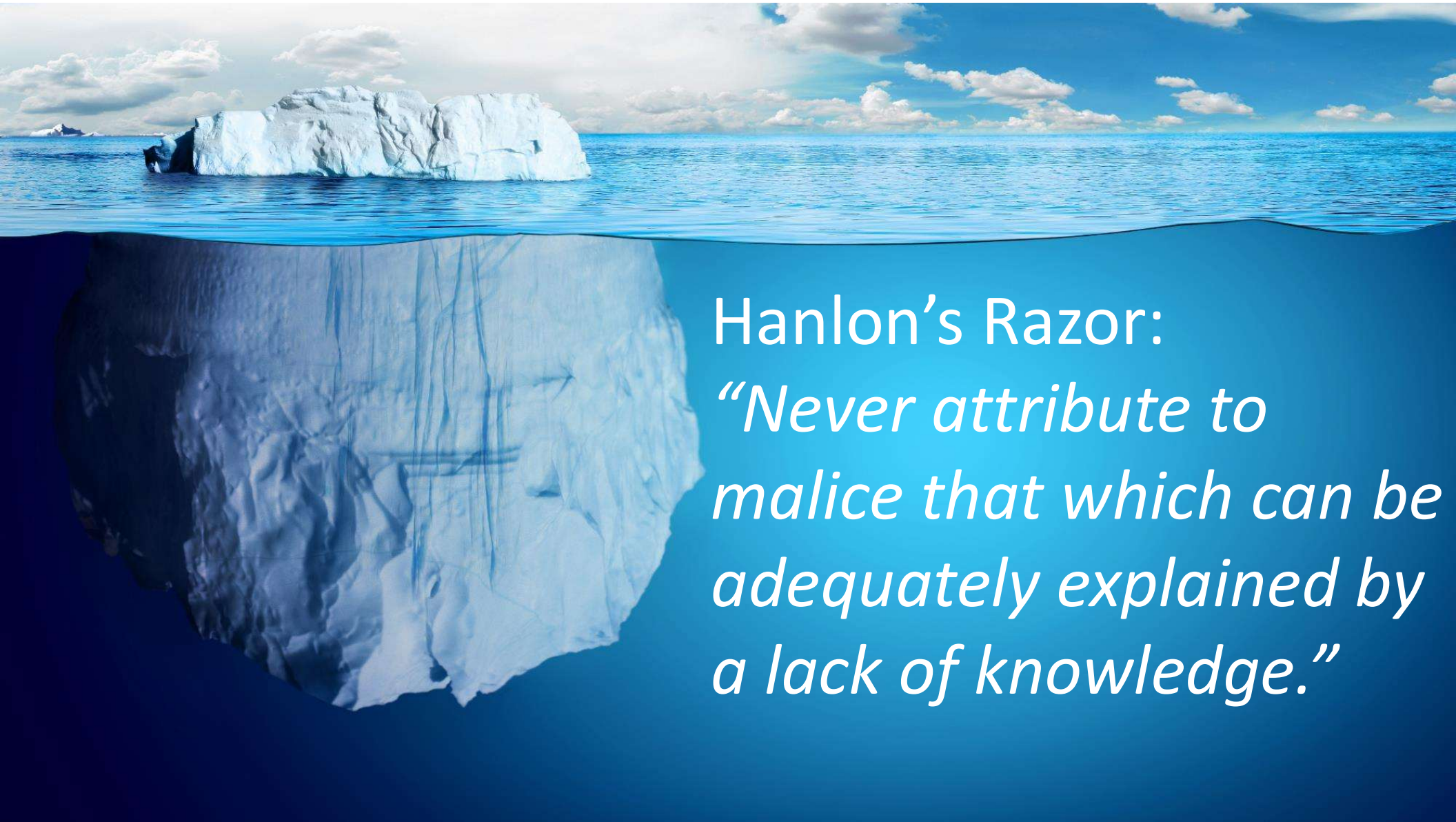
What will be your next step?



Why Ask Powerful Questions?

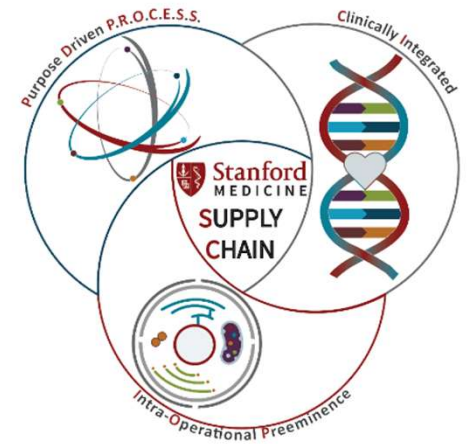


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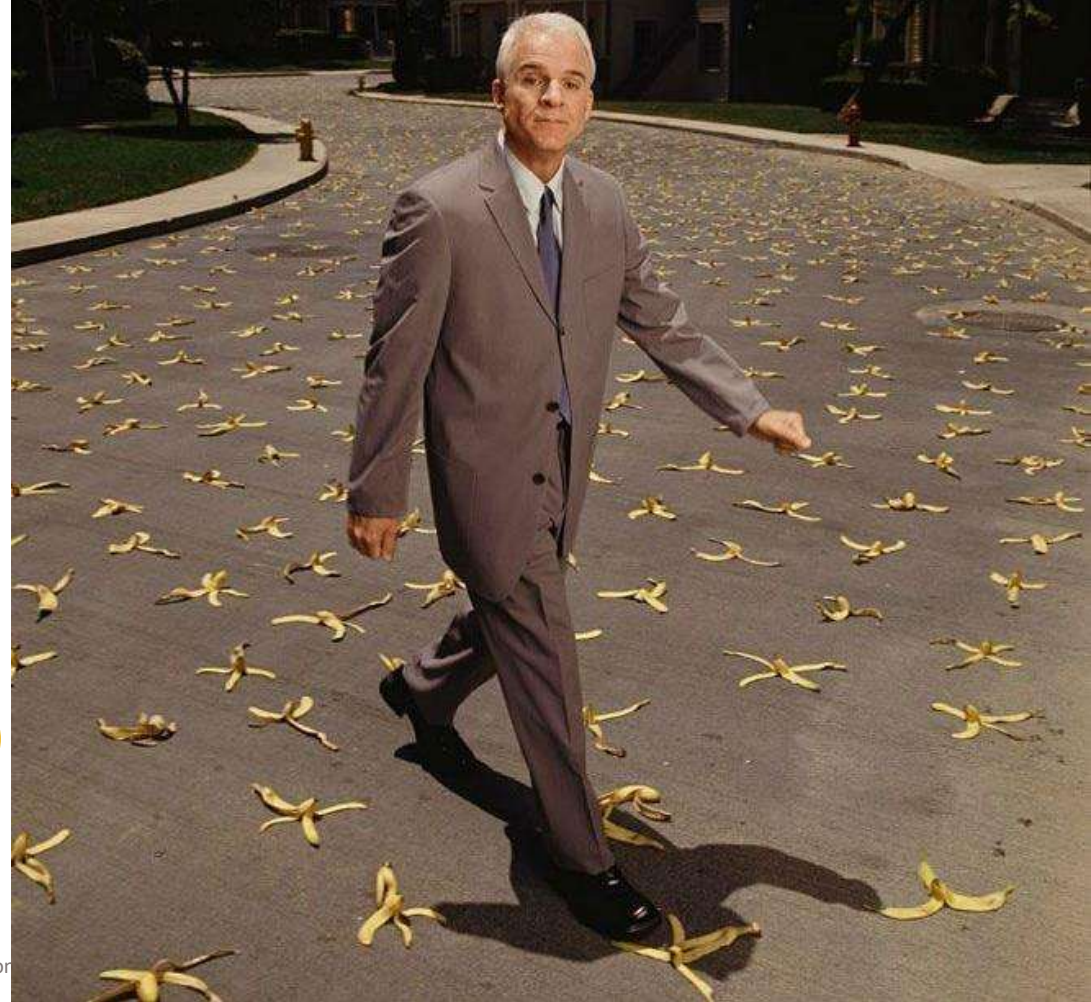
Hanlon's Razor:
*"Never attribute to
malice that which can be
adequately explained by
a lack of knowledge."*

Empower Your Jerk



Have you Created a Culture of Failure?

Let your Jerk know it's
OK to fail



Game of Failures



Debrief the Game of Falioures



Shift your Culture by Celebrating Failures

Be vocal about failing

Lead with your own failures

Have an open-door policy

- Check-in frequently
- Put problem-solving on the calendar
- Empower your employees

Future-proof your failures

Get great at failing

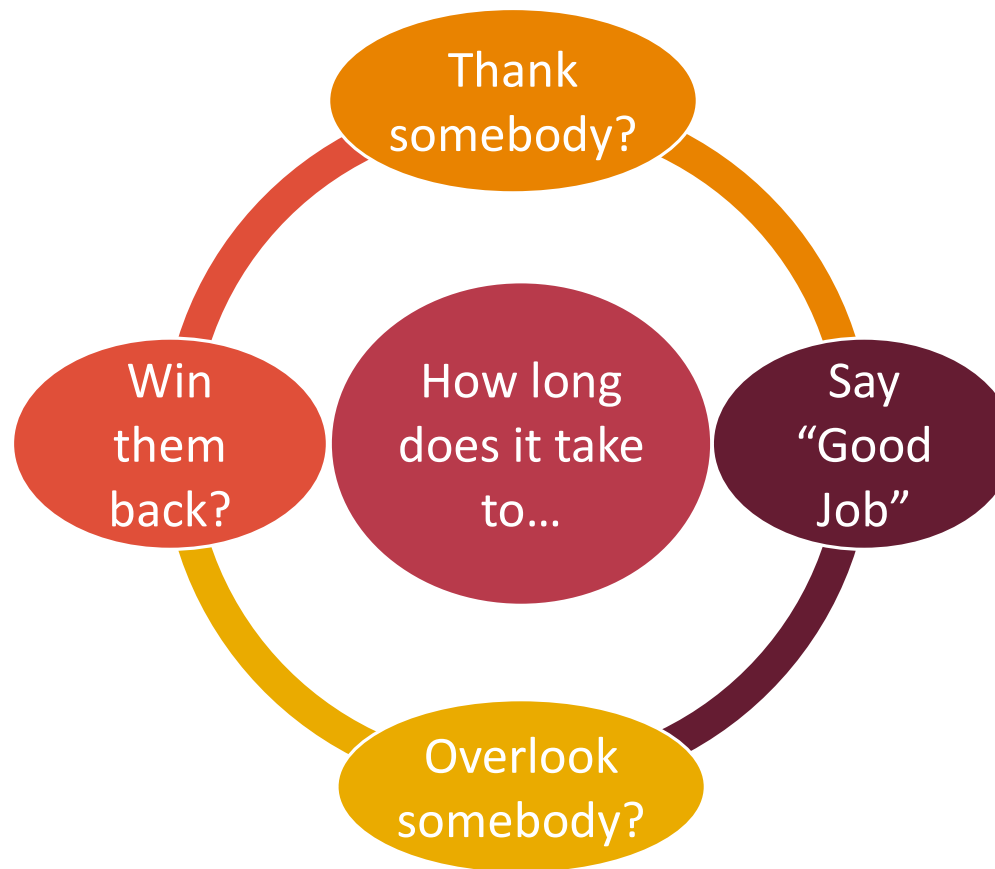
Can you build a culture able to cross the street of banana peels?



30 Seconds Can Cost
You Three+ Days of ROI



Cost of Not (The Leadership Failure)

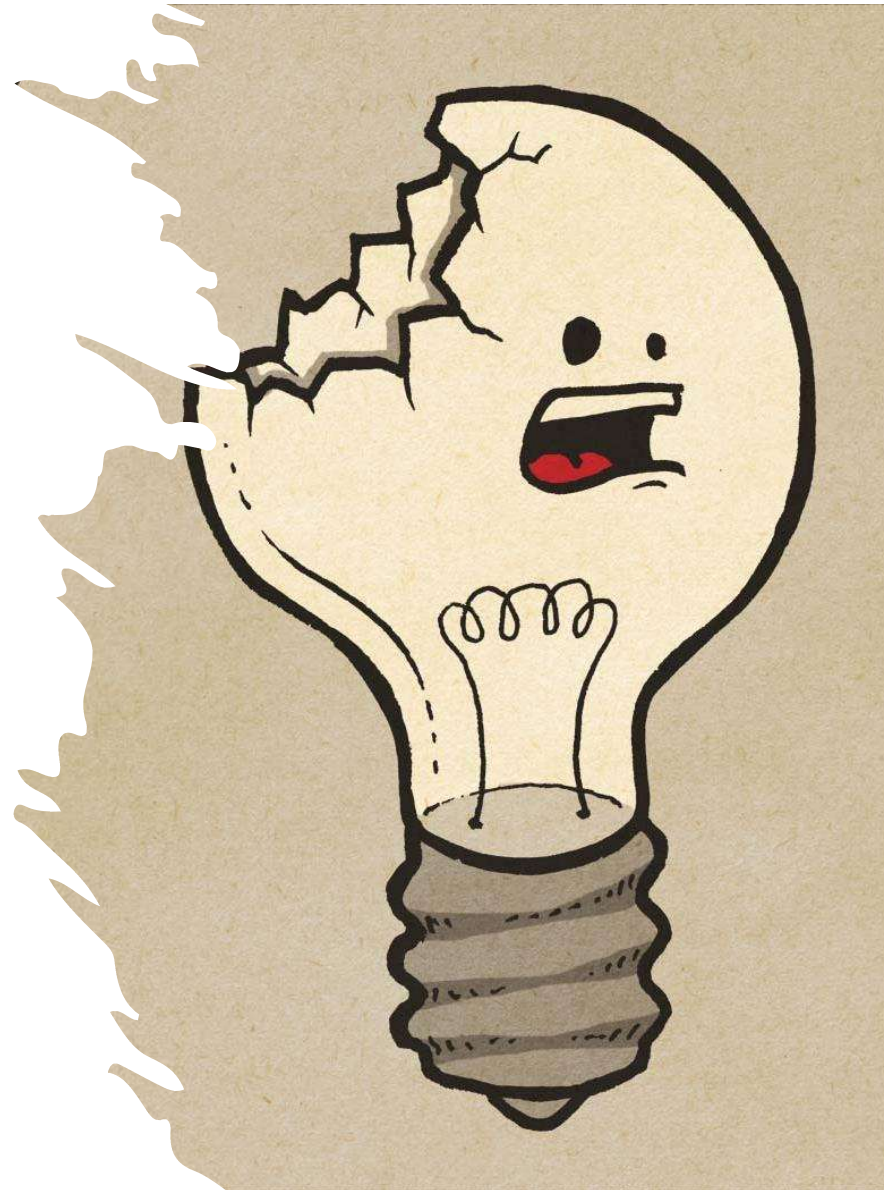


This One Time, at a Fireside Chat...



What is **one word** that summarizes how this would make you feel?

How might you spend the weekend?



You might you spend the weekend thinking...

Did I do
something
wrong?

Did I
misunderstand
the assignment?

Did I not add
value?

Was it poor
quality?

Is leadership
disappointed?

What is my role
in the
organization?

Does the VP
take me
seriously?

Why did no one
else speak up?

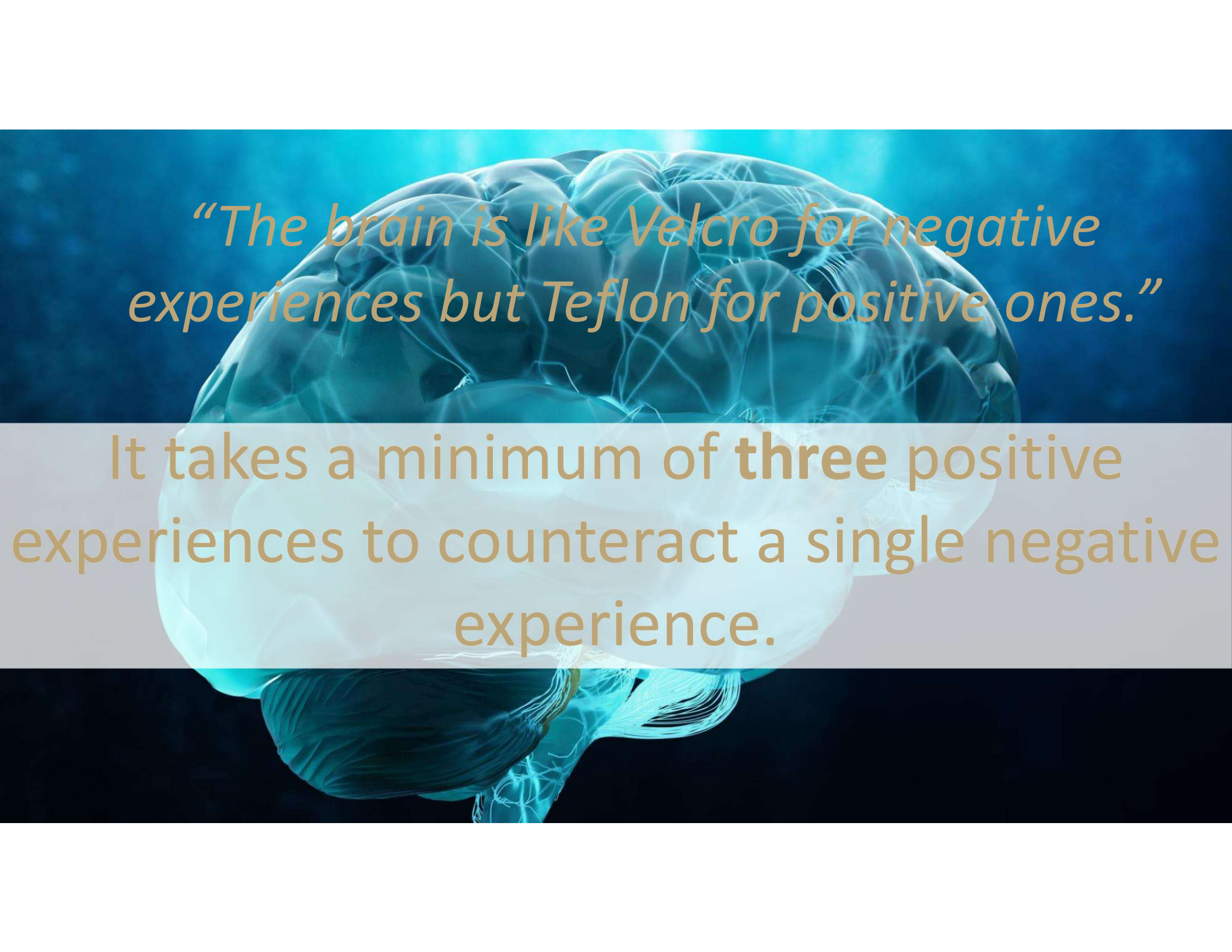
Should I look for
another job?



Do you ever want your employees feeling this?

*Should I look for
another job?*





“The brain is like Velcro for negative experiences but Teflon for positive ones.”

It takes a minimum of **three** positive experiences to counteract a single negative experience.

The Thrive Mind vs the Survive Mind

Negativity has a longer shelf life than positivity because of nature's elegant and hard-wired design of your nervous system.

Scientists have discovered it takes three positive experiences to offset one negative experience.

*Applying the 3-to-1 ratio builds a collaborative relationship between your **survival mind** and your **thrive mind**.*

According to Dr. Barbara Fredrickson “for every heart-wrenching negative emotional experience you endure, you need to experience at least three heartfelt positive emotional experiences that uplift you.”

Positivity doesn't mean we should follow the axioms “Grin and bear it” or “Don't worry, be happy,”



As Individuals

Rewrite the story your negativity bias tells you

Look for the opportunity in the difficulty

Don't let one negative event rule your whole life pattern

Frame a setback as a lesson to learn, not a failure to endure

Reach out to others.



Is it ever too late?

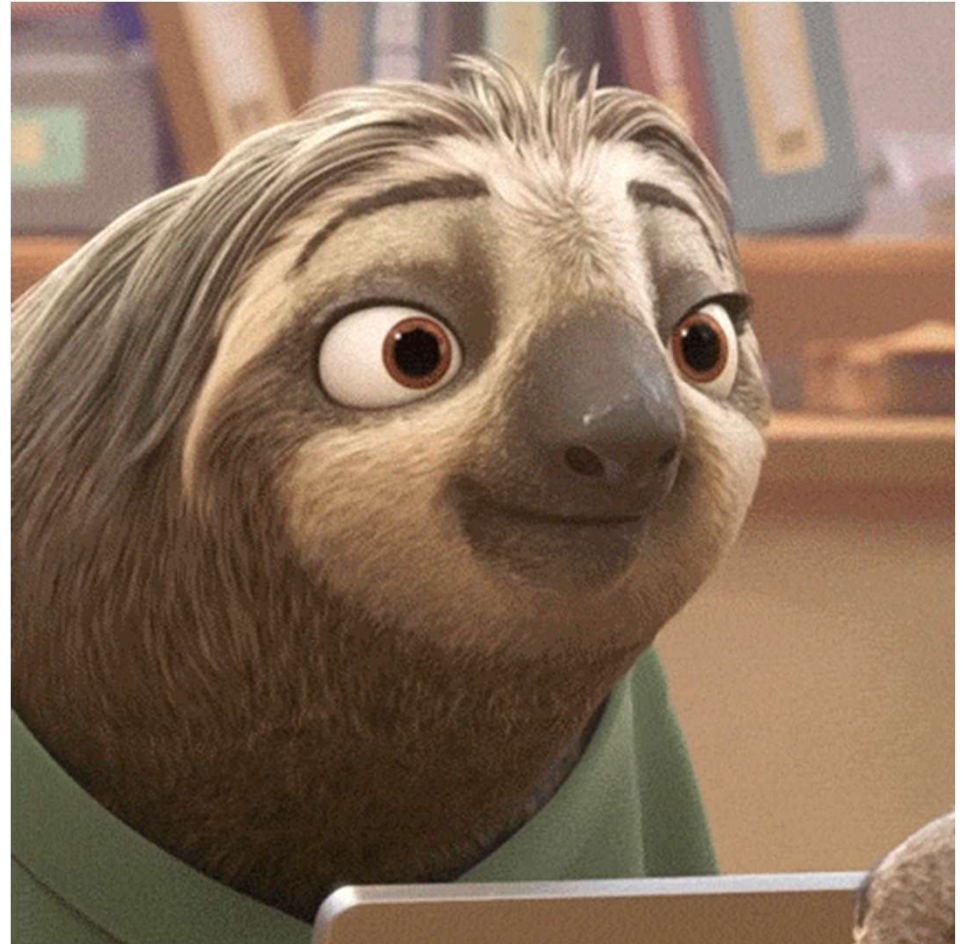


Words < Actions < Feelings

People will forget what you *said*.

People will forget what you *did*.

But people will never forget how
you made them *feel*.



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Putting the Pieces Together







What is one tool or technique you will take back to your teams and try?

Remember to stop, reflect, and ask...

...am I the jerk?



Any Questions?



Thank you for inviting me to present, and for participating.

Let's Connect!

- Scan the QR code to view my LinkedIn profile

