

Leading in Times of Crisis & ▼ Conflict

Creating Intentional Workplace Culture

Michigan Probate Conference

October 24, 2025



Agenda

- Welcome
- Introductions
- Leadership & Court Culture
- What is Leadership?
- Leading through Crisis and Conflict
- The Art of Communication
- Decision Making
- Wrap Up



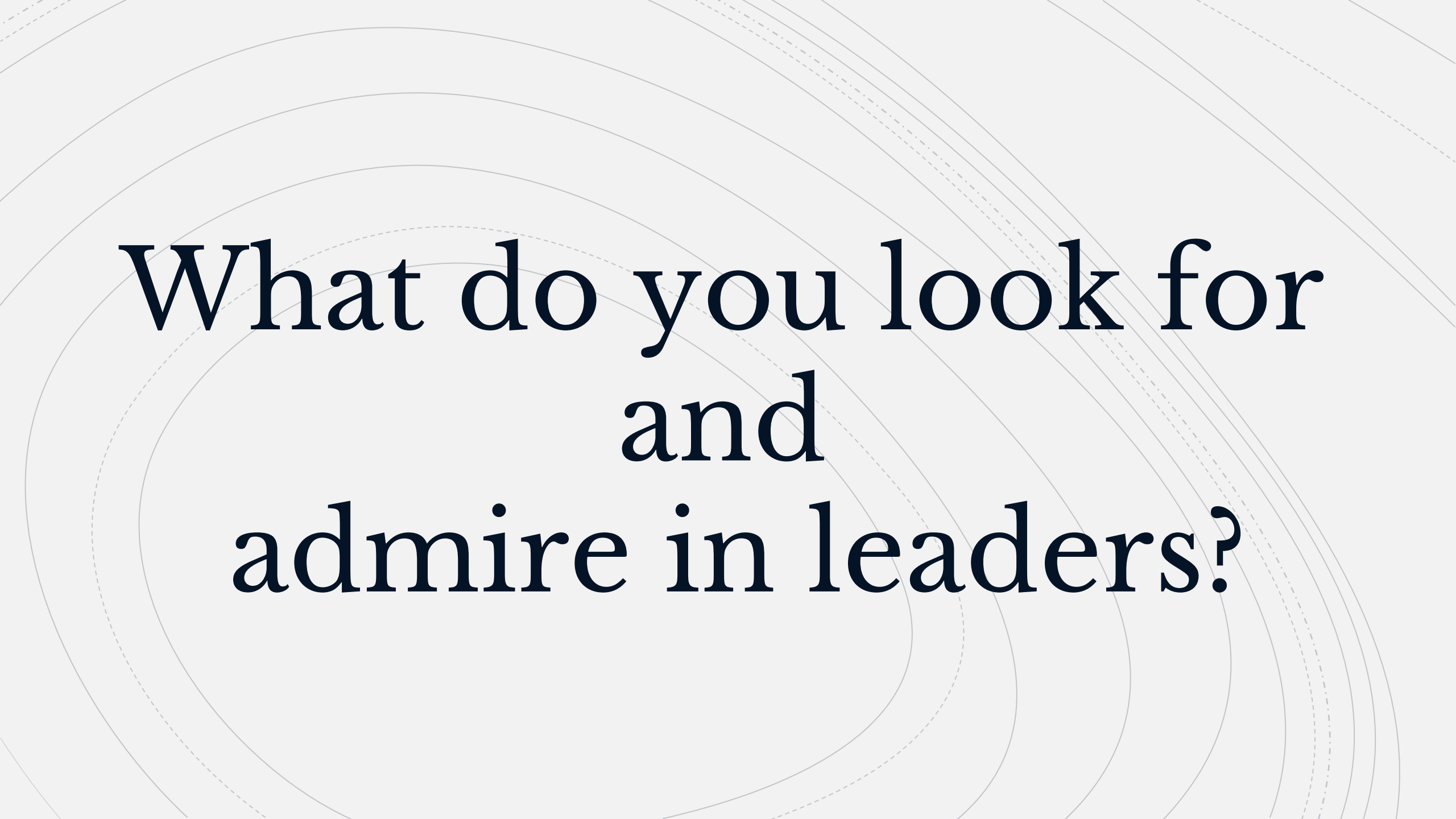
Jawwaad Johnson
Director, Center for Jury Studies
Principal Court Management Consultant



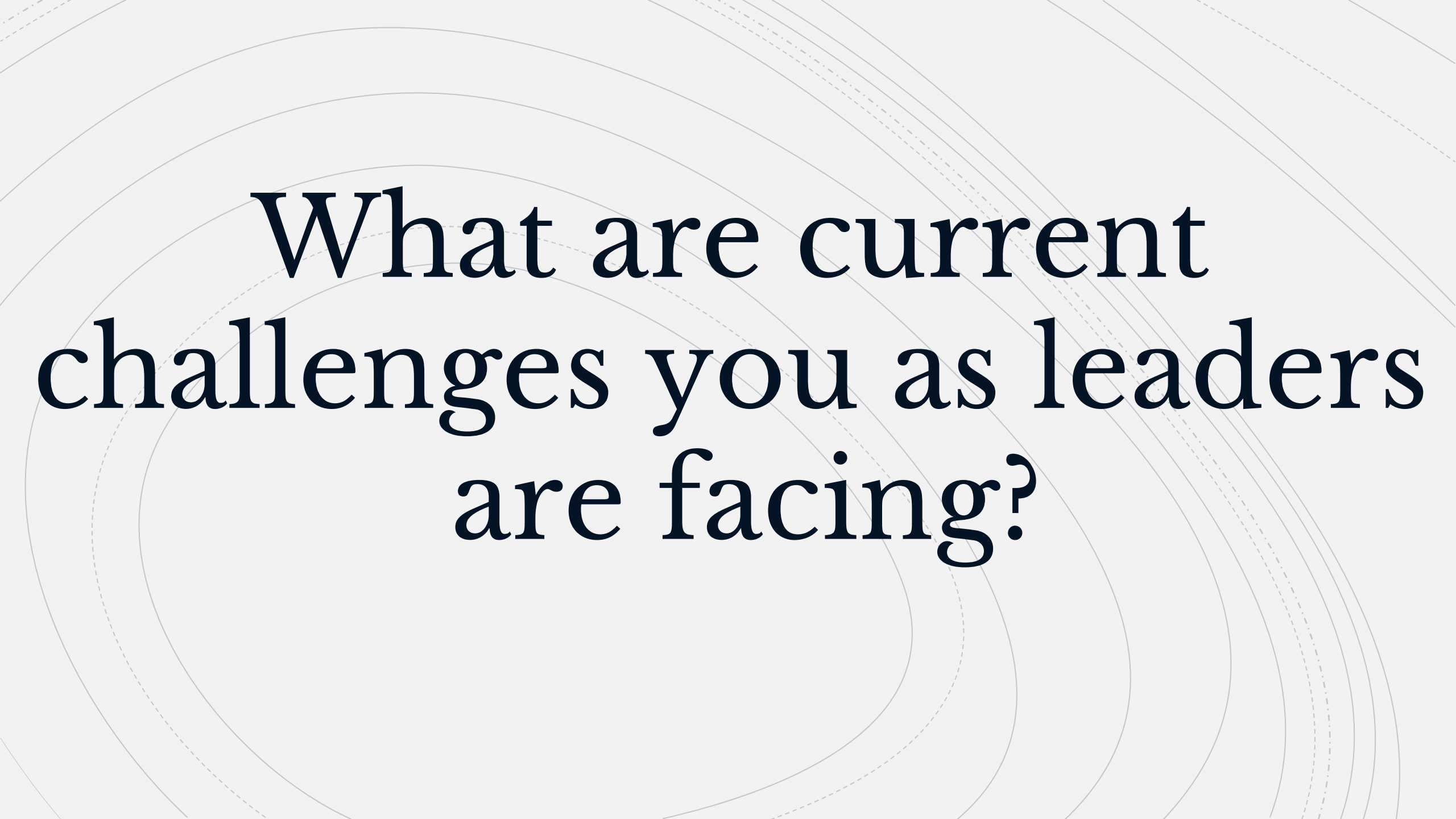
**Leadership
& Court Culture**

Top 3 Greatest Leaders in the World



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**What do you look for
and
admire in leaders?**

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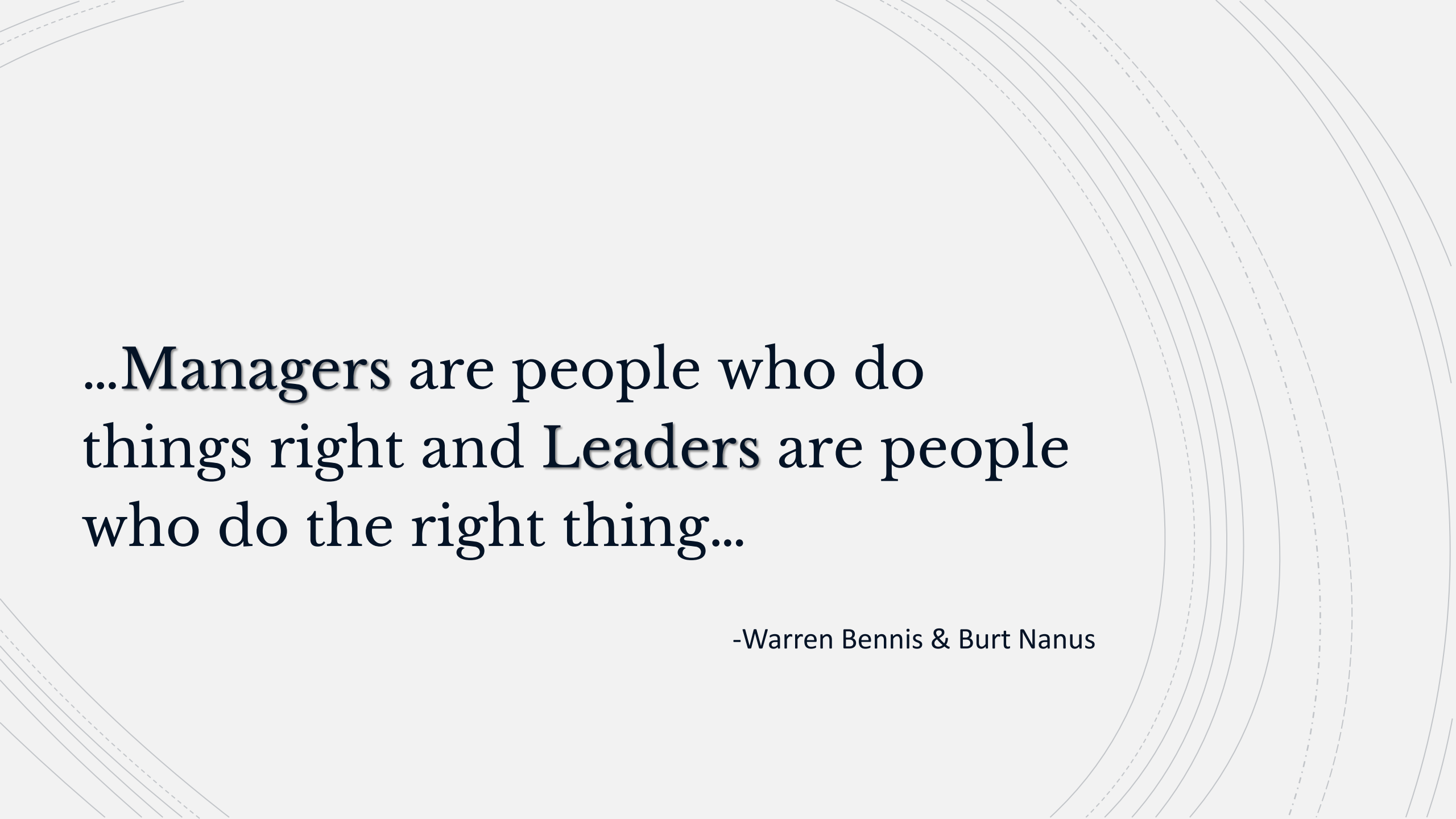
What are current
challenges you as leaders
are facing?

Leadership Characteristics

- **Honest**
Model the behavior they ask of others, authentic and true
- **Competent**
Necessary skills to lead effectively
- **Inspiring**
Passion & heart that comes through their role

Leadership Characteristics

- **Forward-Thinking**
Clear direction for the future, anticipate big changes
- **Ambitious**
Energy, enthusiasm, and drive
- **Caring and Compassionate**
Genuine interest in others

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...Managers are people who do things right and Leaders are people who do the right thing...

-Warren Bennis & Burt Nanus

Leadership & Importance

Leaders are responsible for using available resources to implement specific, achievable actions that coordinate and propel an organization toward its goals.

- Understand & interpret leadership's vision
- Endorse the organizational culture
- Develop & implement tactics
- Think in terms of execution
- Provide actionable instructions
- Plan and organize training
- Connect present activities to future outcomes
- React to change
- Advocate for subordinates
- Drive success of direct reports

A Talented Leader Can...

Leadership & Importance

Leaders determine an organization's overarching vision, goals, and direction while managers handle the nuts and bolts of charting the course to get there. Leaders see the larger picture and focus on aligning, influencing, and motivating people to support their vision.

- Identify and articulate a vision
- Ask probing questions
- Seek insight
- Recognize organizational strengths & weaknesses
- Detect opportunities
- Anticipate business-wide challenges
- Create change
- Look toward the future
- Shape the culture
- Develop leadership in others

**Leadership &
Success rely
on individuals
who can...**

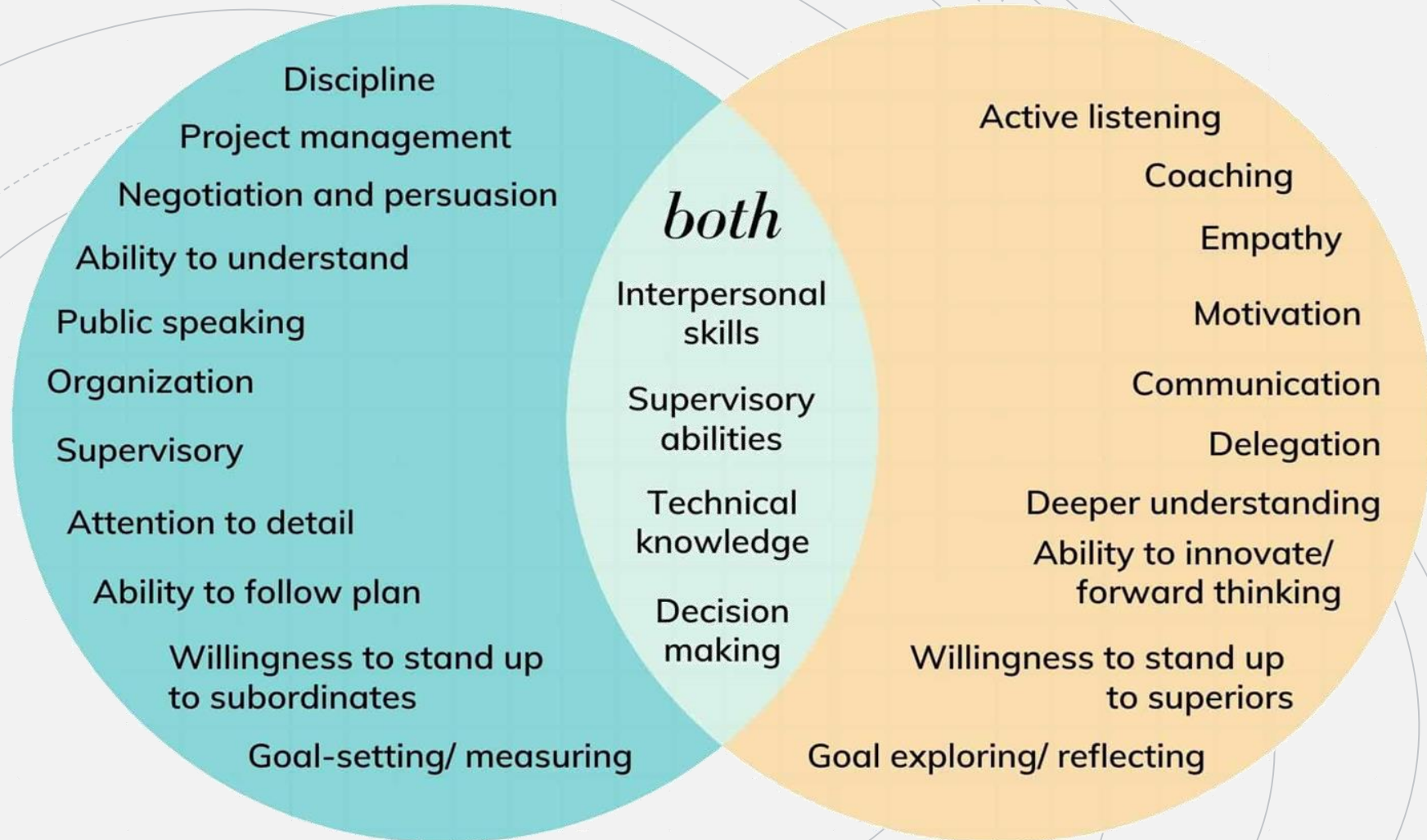
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▼ Similarities between Management & Leadership

MANAGEMENT *VS* LEADERSHIP

SKILLS

SKILLS



Why Both Roles Have Value

MANAGERS

- Managers may not have large spheres of influence, but they can be masterful at running projects and getting things done.
- Great managers know how to plan, organize, and coordinate. A smart manager knows how to execute complex projects.

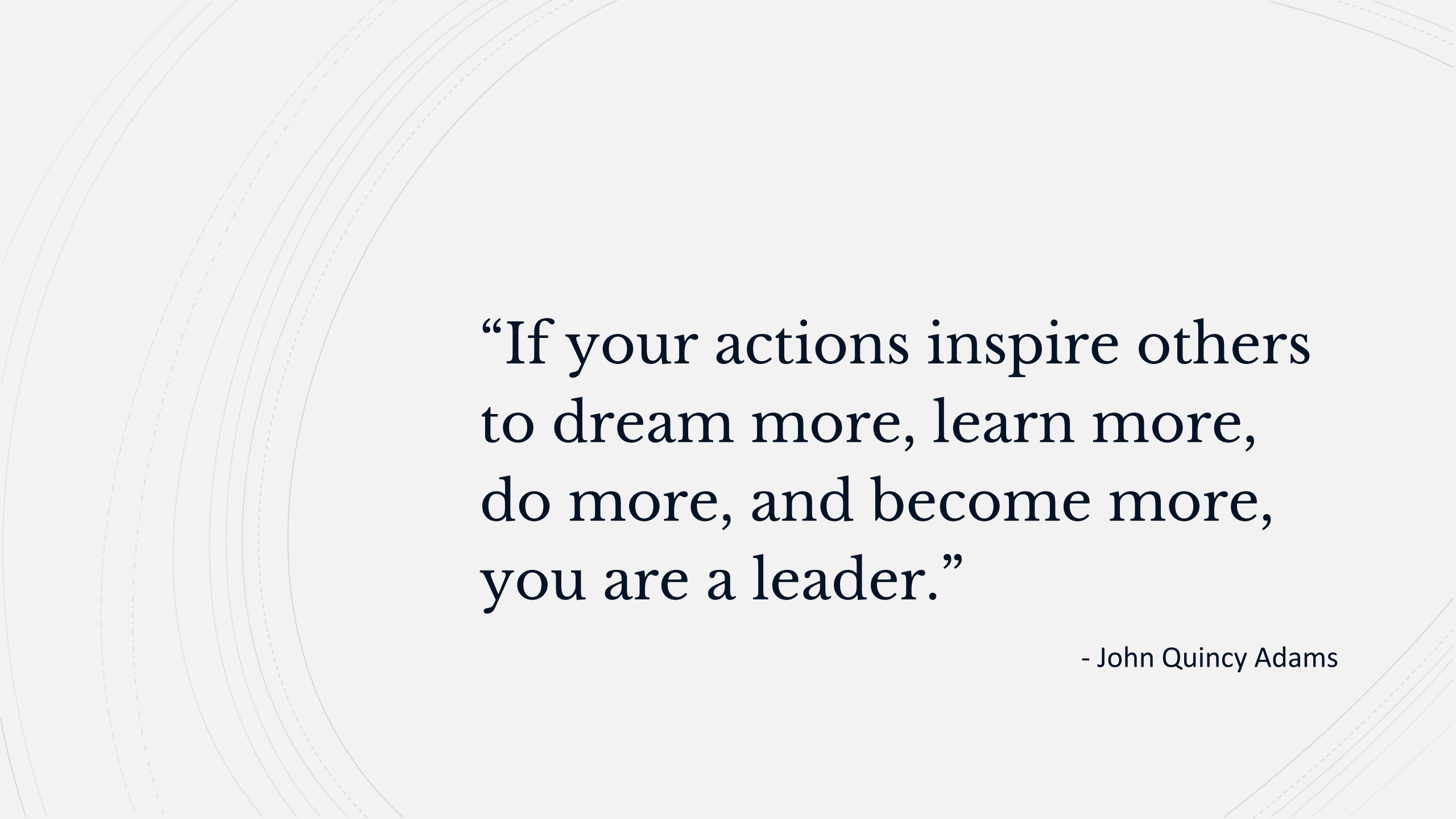
LEADERS

- May be influential and have fantastic new ideas but may not be so adept at managing the many ongoing details involved with getting a project done.
- Leadership is more about inspiring, motivating, and innovating.

Review: Key Leadership Characteristics

- Establishing a clear vision
- Sharing that vision with others so that they will follow willingly
- Providing the information, knowledge and methods to realize that vision
- Coordinating and balancing the conflicting interests of all members and stakeholders.

A leader steps up in times of crisis and can think and act creatively in difficult situations.

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“If your actions inspire others
to dream more, learn more,
do more, and become more,
you are a leader.”

- John Quincy Adams

- It starts with the belief that people are creative, collaborative, and full of potential.
- People with this kind of leadership are inspired to become the best version of themselves and to produce their best work.
- People don't want to be managed; they want to be led.

- Stephen M. R. Covey

How do we inspire others?

Trust and Inspire is the new way to lead. Its goal is to unleash people's potential – to truly empower and inspire them – rather than try to contain and control them. It's about trusting people to do the right thing and inspiring them to make meaningful contributions. It's about connection with people, through caring and belonging.

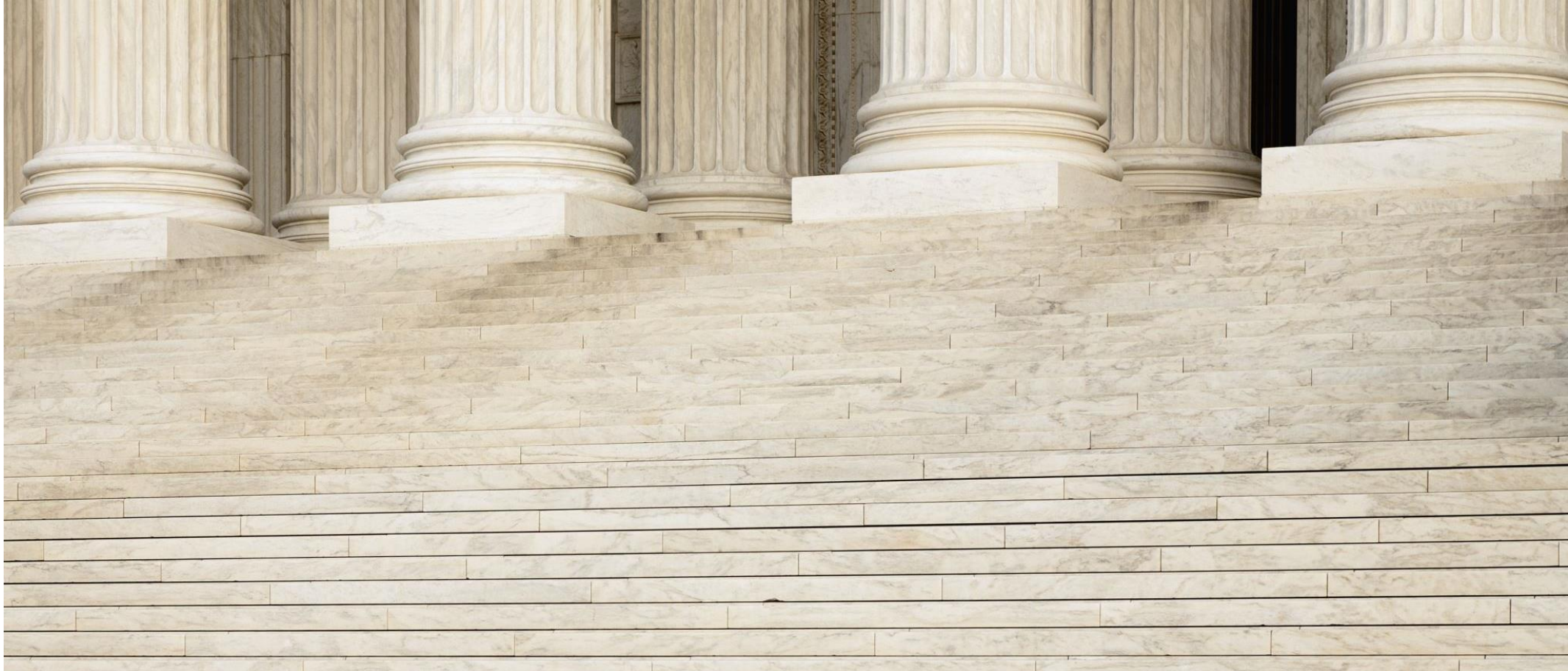
-Stephen M. R. Covey



Let's Take a Break...

See you back here in 10 minutes

EXAMINING COURT CULTURE



CULTURE BY DEGREES

Solidarity

- The degree to which a court has clearly understood shared goal, mutual interests, and common tasks

Sociability

- The degree to which people are able to work together in a cordial fashion

COURT CULTURE = COURT PERSONALITY



The values emphasized in each court can be thought of as court culture or court personality.

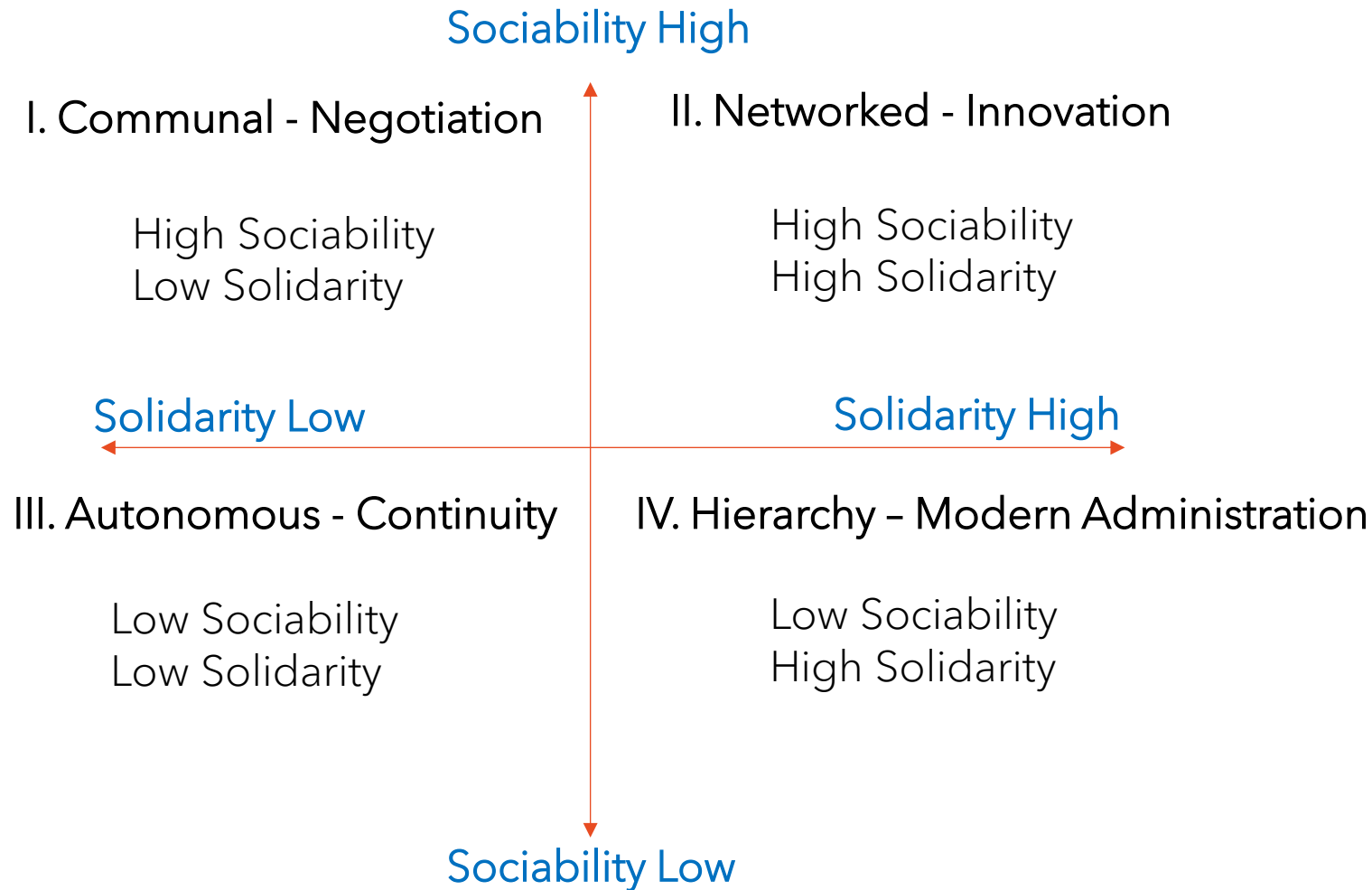


An assessment instrument is used to assess value orientation in courts.



Responses provide a picture of court personality.

STYLES OF COURT CULTURE





COURT SYSTEM CULTURES

Communal

- Emphasis on "getting along," or, acting collectively
- Following agreed-upon norms rather than established rules or lines of authority

Networked

- Thrives on inclusion, communications and coordination

Autonomous

- Judges have wide discretion to conduct business
- Little centralized control

Hierarchical

- Focus on rules and procedures
- Strong belief in order and efficiency



Leadership Styles

5 Team Dysfunctions



- Absence of Trust
- Fear of Conflict
- Lack of Commitment
- Avoidance of Accountability
- Inattention to Results



Characteristics of Effective Teams

- Clear leadership
- Defined goals and roles
- Open communication
- Ability to collaborate
- Trust

7 Key Tensions Every Leader Faces

Harvard
Business
Review





Leadership Tensions Activity

- Identify a challenge that you are experiencing.
- Discuss the leadership styles (from the emerging and traditional lists) that may fit the solution to those challenges.

Traditional Leadership

- Power holder
- Tactician
- Constant
- Perfectionist
- Intuitionist
- Miner
- Teller

Emerging Leadership

- Power Sharer
- Visionary
- Adapter
- Accelerator
- Analyst
- Prospector
- Listener

Activity



CRISIS

Leading During
Times of Conflict
and Crisis



Types of Conflict and Crisis

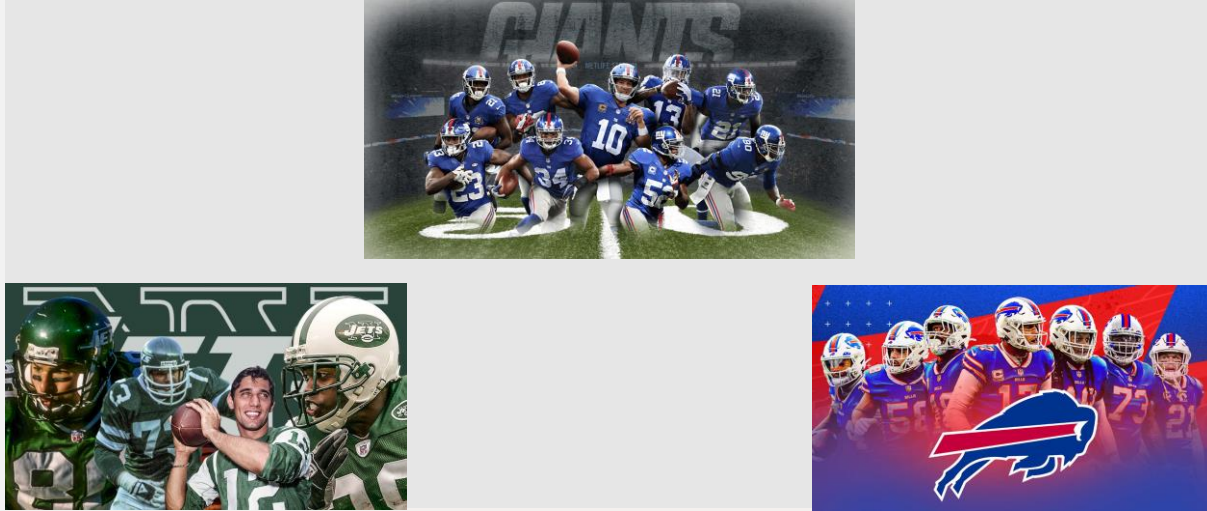
- Health
- Economic
- Racial Inequality
- Political
- Workplace
- Personal



The Infinite Game

Simon Sinek





Finite versus Infinite Games

- Known and unknown players
- New players can join at any time
- Rules are changeable, play however you want
- Objective is to stay in the game as long as possible



“When we play in an infinite game with a finite mindset, when we play to win in a game that has no finish line there are predictable and consistent outcomes...”

- Decline of Trust
- Decline or Cooperation
- Decline of Innovation

“The only true competitor in an infinite game is ourselves.”

- Simon Sinek



All
Times Are
UNCERTAIN



Examples of Using Both Finite and Infinite Mindsets Challenging Times



- Infinite mindset is not the absence of a finite mindset. It is the context in which the finite exists.
- We should have wins and losses when a finite objective.
- What does it take to be healthy?
- I want to lose 15 pounds in 9 months – Finite
- Those objectives are motivating, help count progress, it is tangible.

- In crisis or challenging situations, it is a matter of survival to get through the situation.
- Approaching a crisis or challenging situation with an infinite game gives you a greater chance of long-term success versus simply achieving a tactical win!



Working hard for something
we **don't care about** is called **stress**.

Working hard for something
we **love** is called **passion**.

- *Simon Sinek*





How do we navigate a challenge or crisis using an infinite mindset?



Just Cause

Are you offering your people something to feel a part of, something bigger than themselves, a vision, or “just cause” to advance that they think is worth the sacrifice?

- Giving up better pay somewhere else.
- Working long hours on occasion to get the job done.
- Time away from their family.

I choose to stay here at this job not because I like those things but because it feels worth it!

**You must have a
“just cause” to play
in the infinite game!**

Building Trusting Teams

If you don't have trusting teams, you have a group of people who show up to work who are...

- Lying
- Hiding
- Faking

A trusting team is when people feel safe, they can raise their hand and say I made a mistake, I don't know what to do, I need more training, I'm having trouble at home....I need help!



How do we
create an
environment
in which our
people can
work at their
natural best?

*Instead of
trying to
beat them,
we can
learn from
them!*



Study 47 Worthy Rivals

A “Worthy Rival” is an organization that...

- does one or more things better than you;
- their strengths reveal your weaknesses;
- motivate you to step up your game.

*There is no winning or losing,
sometimes you are ahead, other times
you are behind.*

**The best players in business play for
the good of the game!**

Prepare for Flexibility



- If you aren't willing to make changes to your organization that your "customers" want, others will pass you up and do it for you.
- You must know your Just Cause first and have Trusting Teams to do this.

The ability to make 180-degree strategic shifts to advance your cause.



Demonstrate the Courage to Lead

All effective leaders must have courage because it is hard! It is hard to stand up against outside pressure.

Doing the right thing under overwhelming pressure!

Courage is external and comes from the support we feel from others.



“I got your
back...”

Others will
follow your
example.



Creating a Culture of Cooperation

- Develop clear expectations and shared values.
- Regularly communicate the organization's vision and goals.
- Encourage an infinite mindset by emphasizing growth and adaptability.
- Create systems for ongoing feedback and recognition.

Culture eats strategy for breakfast, but culture must be built on trust, alignment, and shared purpose.



Let's Take a Break...

See you back here in 10 minutes



**The Art of
Communication**



Communication

- Leaders are expected to engage in communication daily and effectively communicate across a variety of mediums to various audiences

The
Art of
LISTENING



The background features a dark blue gradient with several concentric circles of varying radii. A dashed white line forms a circle that encloses the text. The text is white and has a subtle drop shadow.

Tell Me More...



Go On...

How to become a better listener...

- Seek to understand what the other person is communicating
- Convey interest and engagement with the person they are talking to

How to
become
a better
listener...

3 Parts of Active Listening

- Cognitive
- Emotional
- Behavioral

Active Listening

Cognitive: Paying attention to all the information being conveyed by the speaker including body language.

Emotional: Ability to manage emotional and physical reactions during conversations. Staying calm and receptive to what the speaker is saying, managing feelings of boredom or annoyance.

Behavioral: Ability to convey comprehension and interest verbally and nonverbally to the speaker.

**Nine tips to
become a better
active listener:**

1. Repeat the speaker's last few words back to them
2. Don't rephrase what the speaker has said, unless you have to
3. Nonverbal cues such as eye contact, nodding, and attentive posture to convey that you are listening
4. Pay attention to the speaker's nonverbal cues
5. Ask questions
6. Minimize internal and external distractions
7. Acknowledge your shortcomings, and when appropriate, let the speaker know
8. Stay engaged with your emotions
9. Most important, practice and continue to work to improve

Listening Skills Activity

- Divide into pairs & face each other
- One person will take the role of the speaker and the other the listener
 - Speaker will talk about a current personal or professional goal that has you excited and why and how you're working to achieve that goal.
 - The listener's role is to practice active listening.
 - Speaker will talk for 3-5 minutes; listener will report back what they heard for 1 minute at the end.
- Switch
- Report out on how things went

WHAT IS A COURAGEOUS CONVERSATION?

Opinions vary
Stakes are high
Emotions run strong



Uncomfortable
CONVERSATIONS



Choose the
Right Topic



Focus on One Issue



Addressing the *right*
issue, will avoid
ending up in the
same conversation
over and over again



Why We Choose the Wrong Topic

- **Easy over Hard**
We have a bias for choosing the topic we think we can win with.
- **Recent over Right**
Tend to focus on the most recent event or behavior rather than on the one that matters most.



Three Signs You're Having the Wrong Conversation

- Your emotions escalate
- You walk away skeptical
- You're in a déjà vu dialogue



F.B.I.

Feelings, Behavior, & Impact

Be Focused & Flexible

- Pay attention to other's unintentional or intentional efforts to change the topic.

What stands between us and what we really want is *lag time*.

- The problem is not that we have problems.
- Problem is the *lag time* between when we know we have them and when we find a way to effectively confront, discuss, and resolve them.
- If you reduce this *lag time*, everything gets better.

Progress not perfection!

**It's not about communication,
it's about results!**

and you're absolutely right.

The image features a dark blue, rounded rectangular shape in the center, containing the text "Decision Making" in white. This shape is set against a background of light gray, curved lines that create a sense of motion or a circular path. A blue, curved shape is also visible behind the main dark blue shape, partially overlapping it.

Decision Making

Eisenhower Matrix

- Urgent-Important Matrix
- Helps you decide on and prioritize tasks by urgency and importance
- Sorts out less urgent and important tasks which you should either delegate or not do at all
- Dwight D. Eisenhower served in the US Army during World War II and had to make tough decisions continuously about which of the many tasks he should focus on each day. This led him to invent the Eisenhower principle.



“What is important is seldom urgent and what is urgent is seldom important.”

- Dwight D. Eisenhower, 34th President of the United States

Decision Charting Can Help!

Negotiate a clear and shared understanding of roles, authority, communication, and decision processes

Gives us a richer language to describe participation and involvement

Gives us a way to understand work in the “seams”

Helps people to articulate authority, roles and responsibilities

Decision Charting

RACI

- Project Management
- High-Level Strategic Decision-Making
- Process or deliverable management
- Clarifying roles & project responsibilities
- Identifies the responsible party for completing the task

DACI

- Project management
- Clarifying roles & responsibilities for a decision-making process
- Formulating engagement & communication plans with internal &/or external stakeholders
- Decides the course of action for a task

R **Responsible**
The person who takes the initiative in the particular area, develops the alternatives, analyzes the situation, makes the initial recommendation, and is accountable if things go poorly.

A **Approve/Accountable**
A person who must sign off on a decision before it is implemented or selected from options developed by the R role; accountable for the quality of the decision.

C **Consulted**
A person who must be consulted prior to a decision being reached but with no veto power.

I **Informed**
A person who must be notified after a decision, but before it is publicly announced; someone who needs to know the outcome for other related tasks but need not give input.

Key Roles in the Decision-Making Process

- “A/R” is for those persons who are both responsible for developing the decision and for approving it.
- “NR” indicates that a person has no role in a particular decision.

D Driver
Responsible for leading the project and ensuring its execution.

A Approver
The person who makes decisions about the project and has veto power.

C Contributor
Subject matter experts who support the driver in their process. Contributors have a voice but no vote.

I Informed
Persons who are told of the project status or final decisions. They have no vote or authority to change outcomes.

Key Roles in the Decision-Making Process

- DACI framework can illuminate the need for specific communication plans to disseminate project status updates and outcomes to various stakeholders.

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Wrap Up

Adjourn