

Leading Design, 2023

It's Okay to Be the Boss

A talk in four acts

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Where we are going...

Act 1: A Tale of Two Leaders

Act 2: Authentic Connections

Act 3: Making Things Happen

Act 4: Mapping the Territory

With a brief foray into leadership embodiment.

What you will learn...

- An understanding of two essential skills of effective leadership
- The basics of leadership embodiment
- A useful tool for managing paradoxes
- Get a little more comfortable being the boss

Act 1: A tale of two leaders



The Action Leader

- ✓ Goal focused
- ✓ Makes decisions
- ✓ Makes things happen



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The Collaborative Leader

- ✓ Cares about thoughts and feelings
- ✓ Invites curiosity
- ✓ Collective sense making



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- ✗ Nothing happens



Building trust and getting things done.

the right

Building trust and getting things done.

the right

Building trust and getting things done.

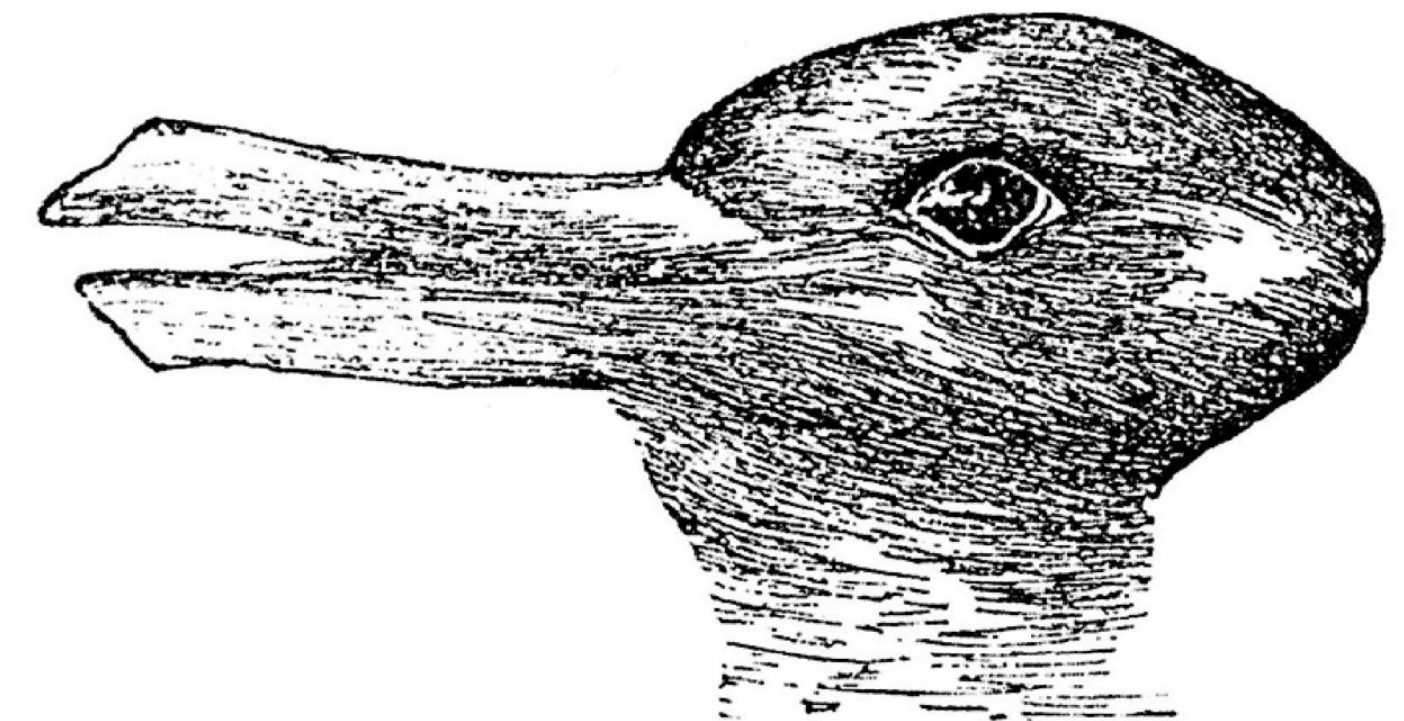
Relational and strategic.

Should a leader be relational or strategic?

Should a leader be relational or strategic? Yes.

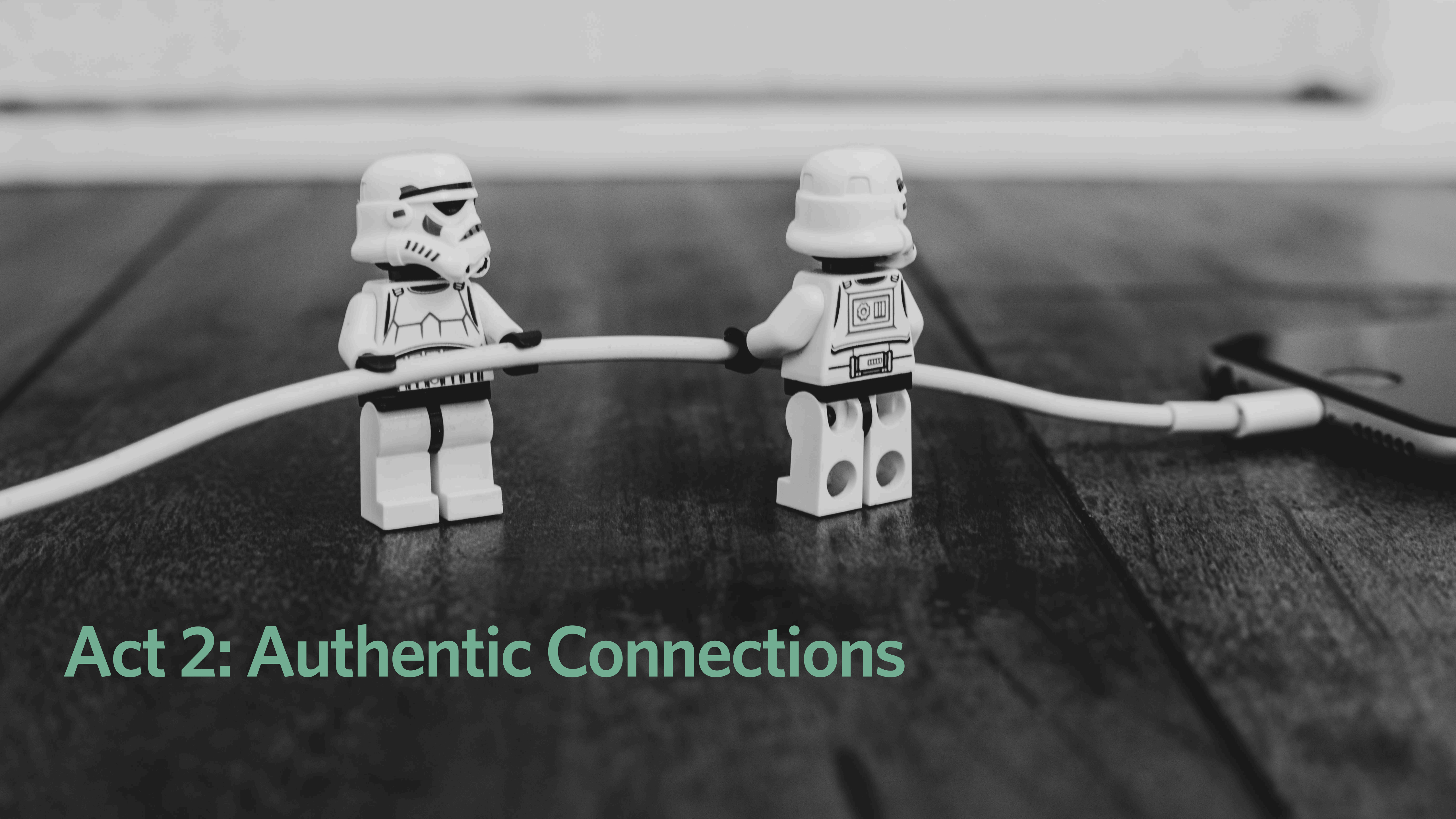
You are not just problem solvers.

You are also *paradox managers.*



One more thing...

Relational and strategic *interactions*.



Act 2: Authentic Connections

Relational interactions are not...

- Check-ins
- Offsites
- Team outings
- Knowing the name of someone's dog/cat/goldfish

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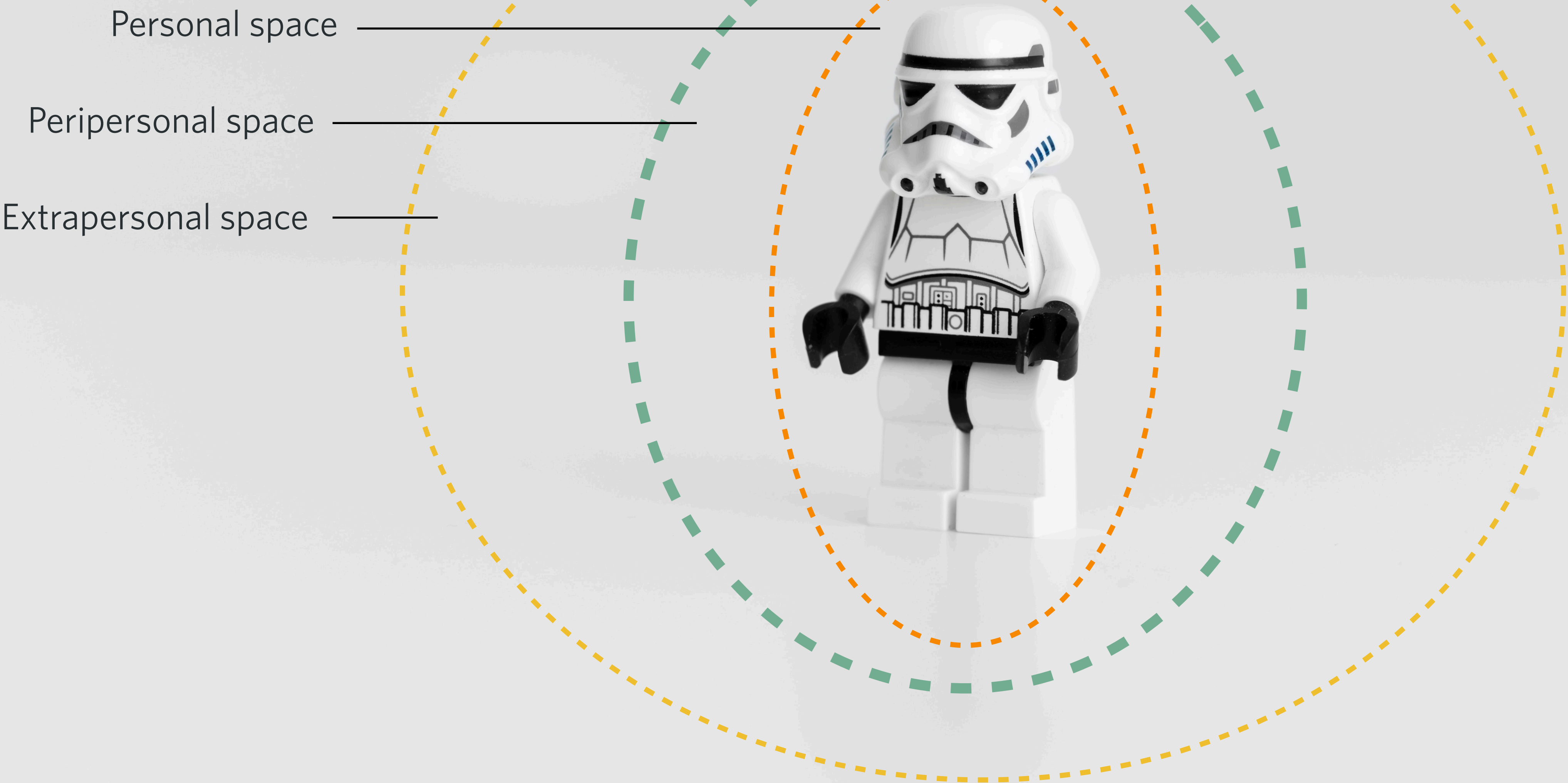
*Relational interactions **do not require** honest and full disclosure!*



Relational interactions...

- **Genuinely caring** about what each person is thinking and feeling
- **Connectedness** is a goal in and of itself
- Being together in **mutually powerful ways** (hierarchy disappears)
- Generates **curiosity** and **understanding**
- A commitment **not to blame** oneself or others

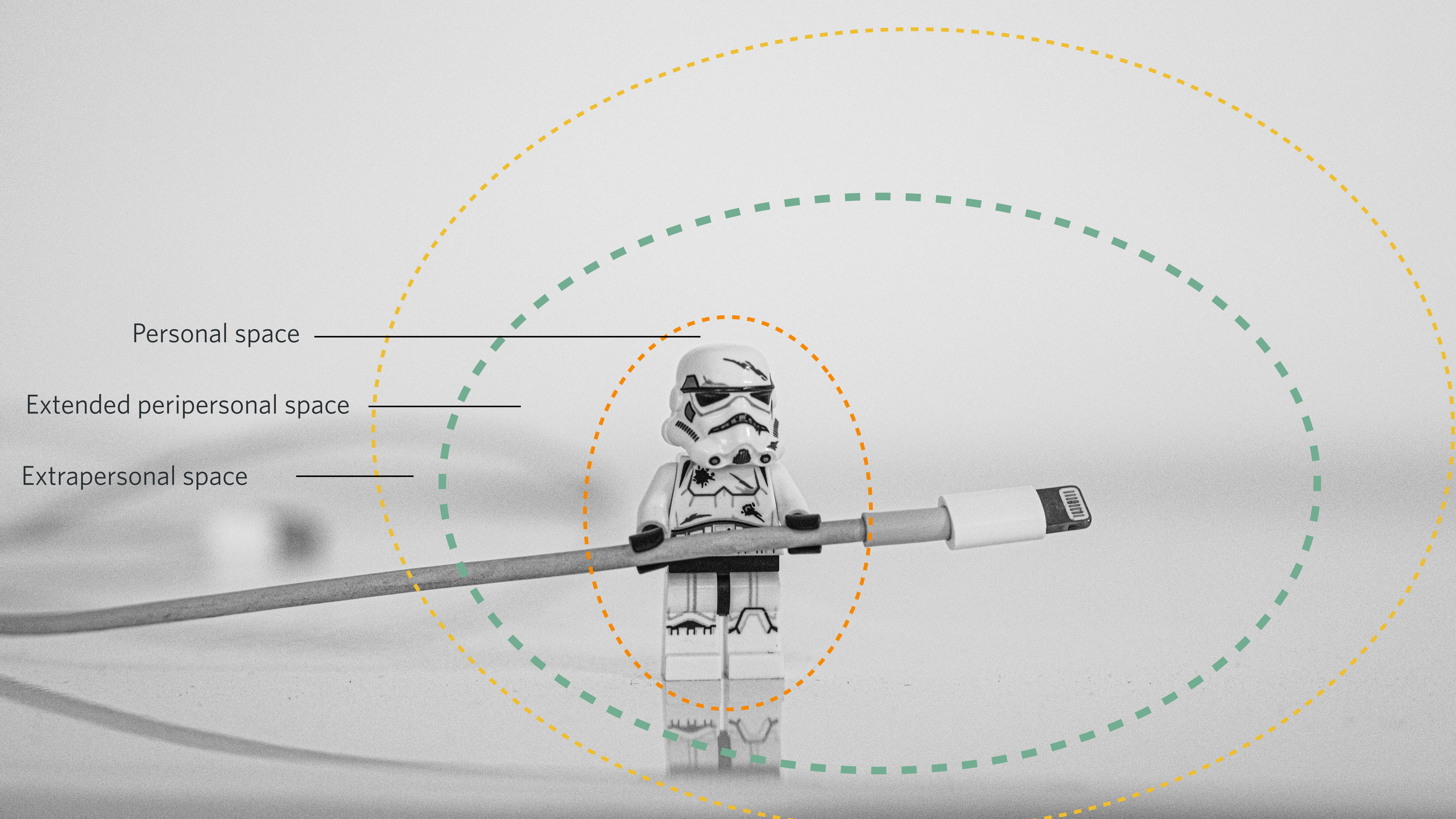
**Leadership isn't just about what you do, it's
about how you do it.**



Personal space

Extended peripersonal space

Extrapersonal space



How?



Source: *Leadership Embodiment*, by Wendy Palmer and Janet Crawford

How?



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How?



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Act 3: Making Things Happen

Strategic interactions are not...

- Domination
- Being right
- Getting your way
- Making unilateral decisions
- Micromanaging
- Too much structure

Strategic interactions...

- Stay **focused on a goal** without being deflected by emotions
- Willingness to **lead** and willingness to **follow**
- Willingness to step into **action-based exchange**
- Acceptance of **hierarchical differences** relative to authority
- The ability for those in the system to **make/follow unpopular decisions**
- The ability to make **clear** decisions





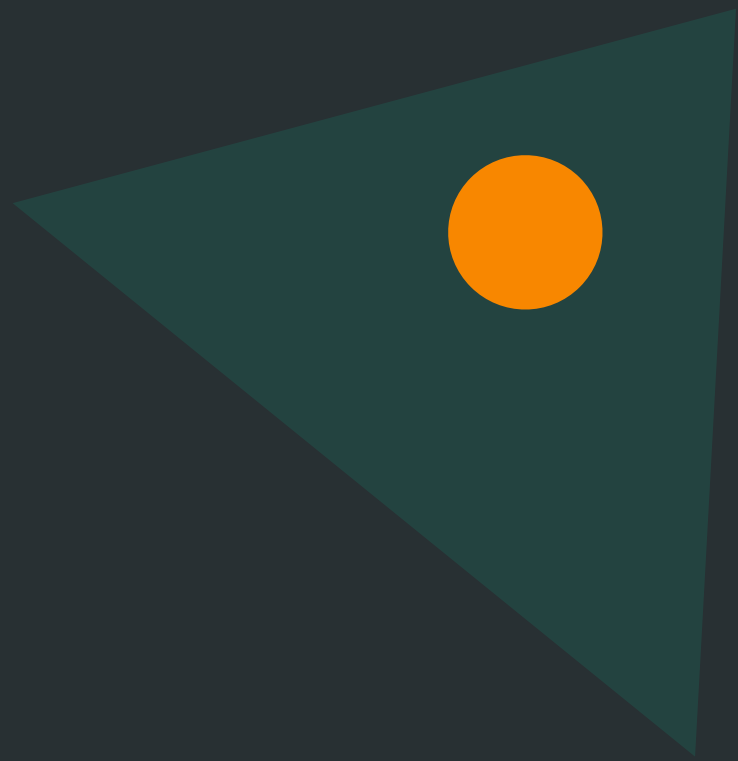
Strategic interactions also require connection to be effective.

Delegation.

“Delegation without follow-through is abdication.”

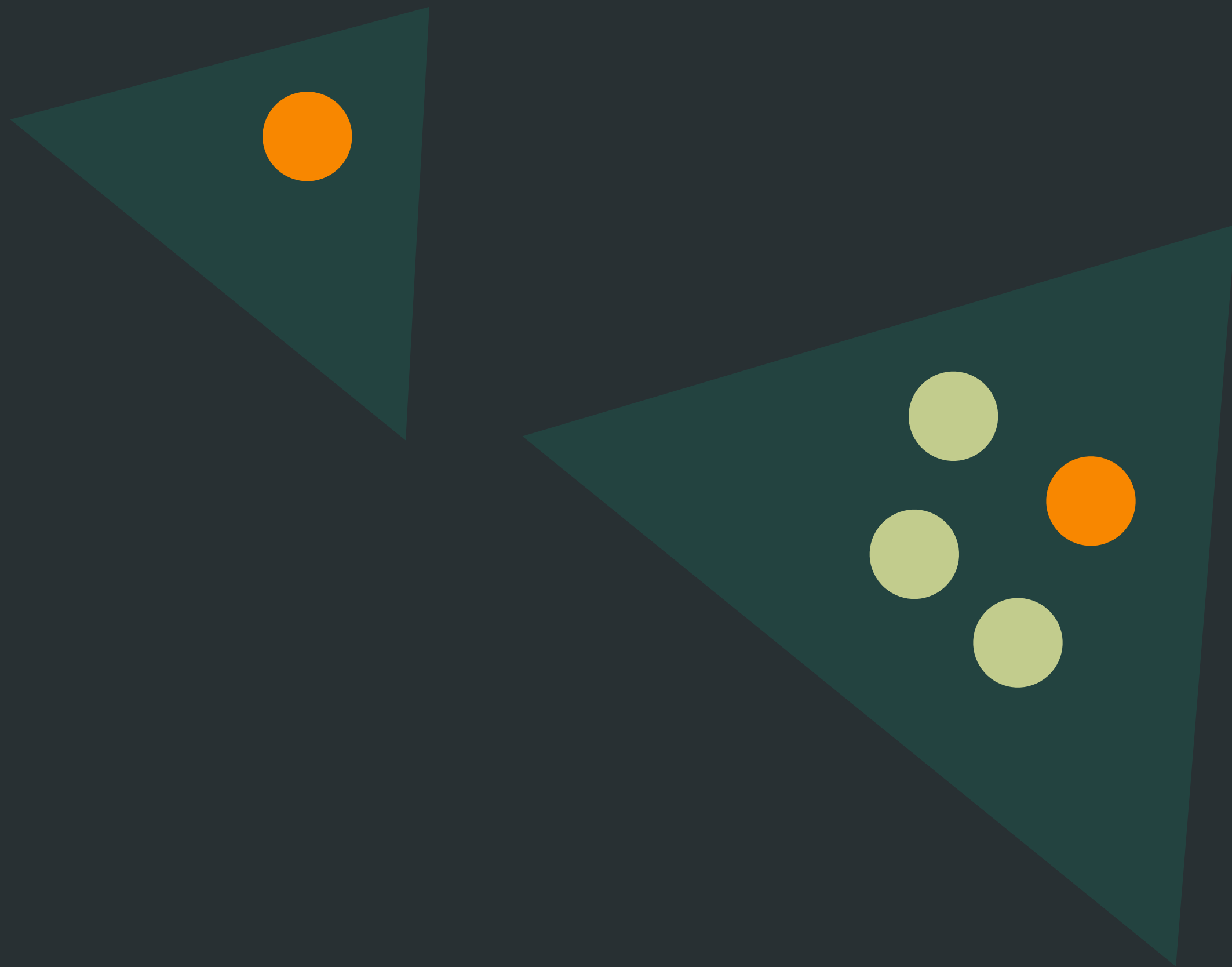
- Andy Grove

How?



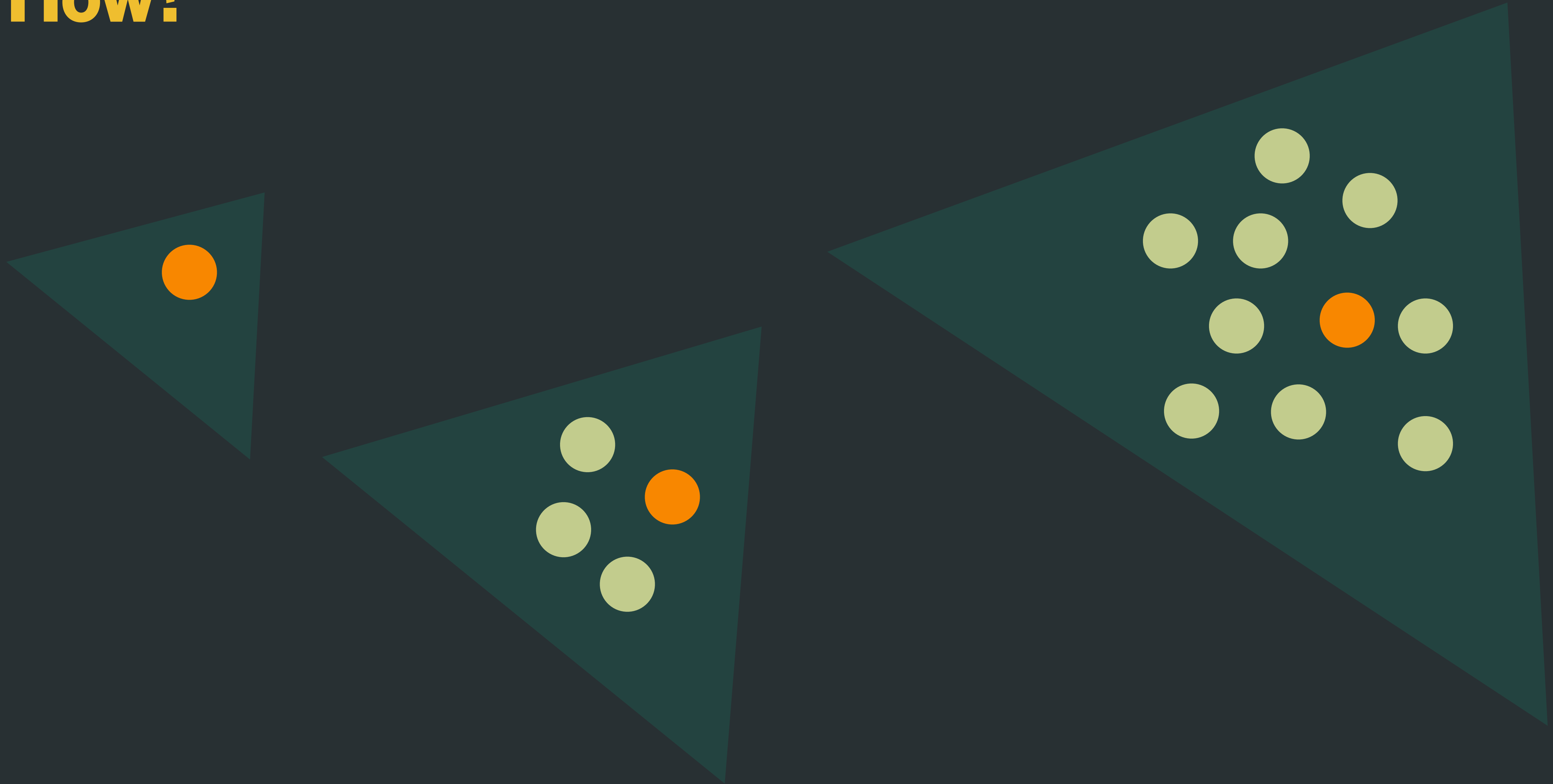
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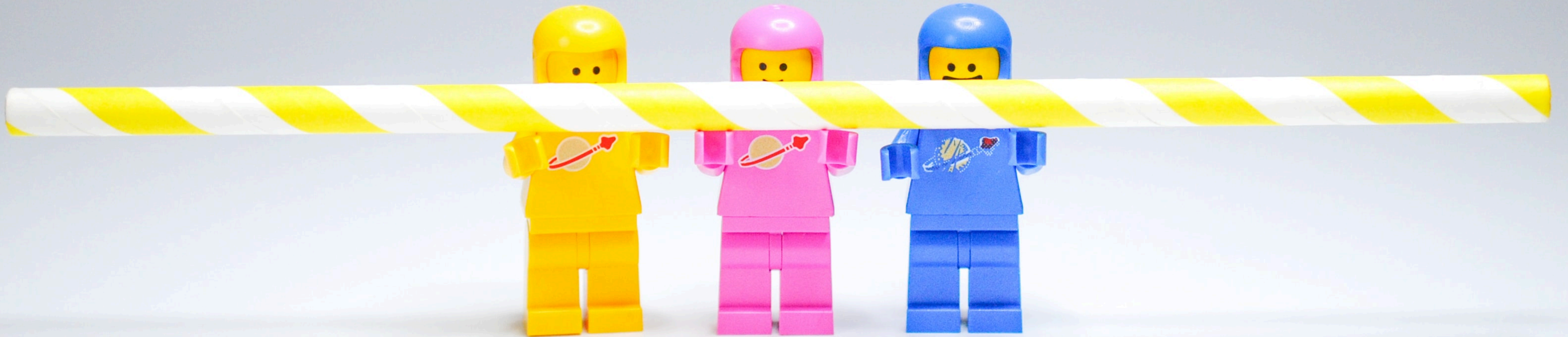
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Act 4: Mapping the Territory

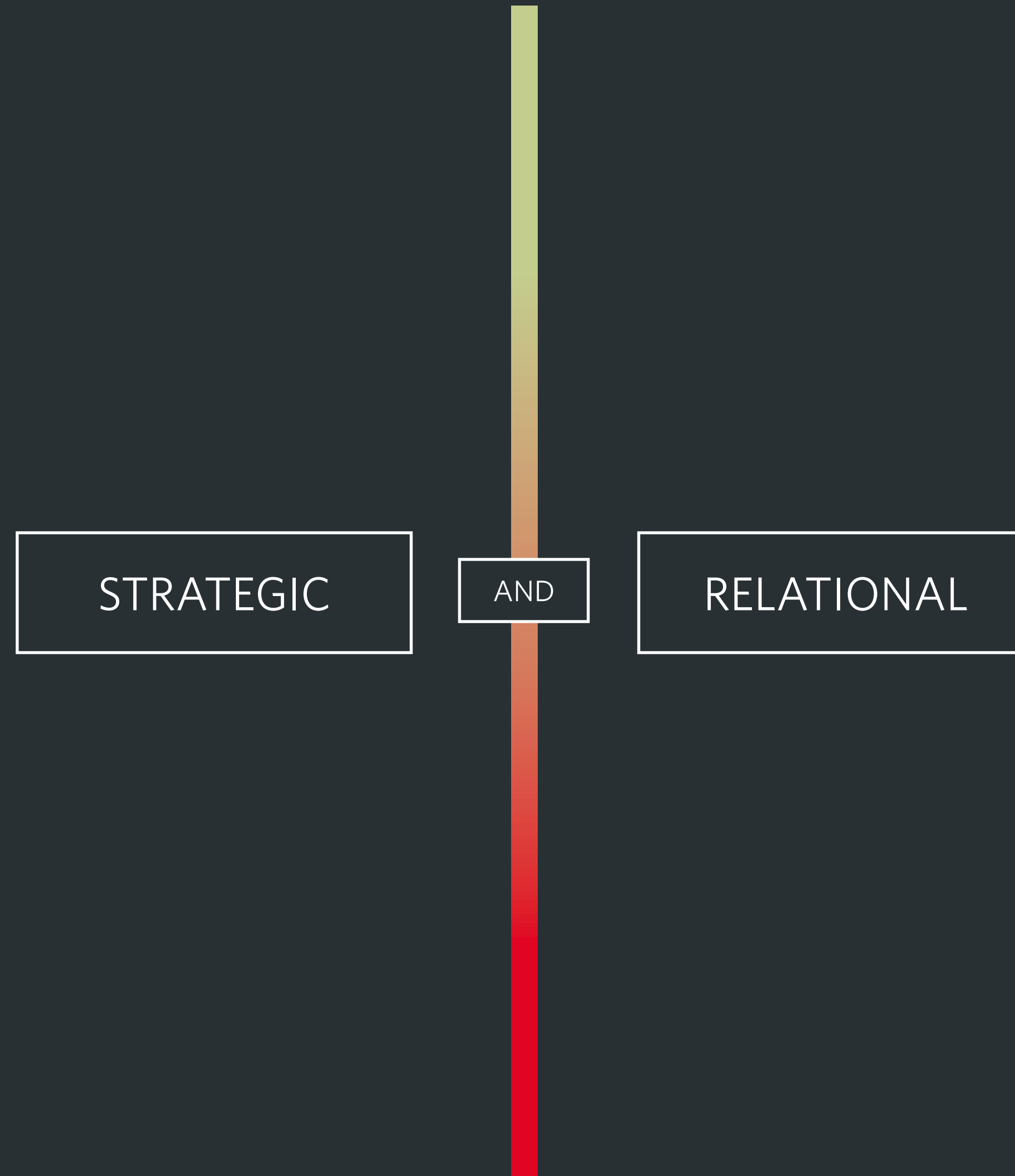


STRATEGIC

AND

RELATIONAL

GREATER PURPOSE
Effective Leadership



DEEPER FEAR
Ineffective Leadership

GREATER PURPOSE
Effective Leadership

- Focused on a goal
- Efficient
- Decisions get made
- Clear accountability
- Hierarchy is okay
- Exciting

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- Emotions are ignored
- Lack of trust
- Lack of safety
- Isolation and loneliness
- Withholding information

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- Focused on the present
- Inclusive
- Dialogue is sustained
- Humor and spontaneity
- Hierarchy is suspended
- Trust and belonging

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- Feelings become facts
- Lack of action
- Lack of leadership
- Lack of direction
- Decision by consensus

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ACTION STEPS (+)

- Set clear goals and milestones
- Embrace a faster pace
- Define success
- Delegate (and follow-up)
- Hold people accountable

- Focused on a goal
- Efficient
- Decisions get made
- Clear accountability
- Hierarchy is okay
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- Focused on the present
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- Slow down
- Check in
- Get curious
- *Do not blame*
- Give and receive
- Have fun!

ACTION STEPS (+)

EARLY WARNINGS (-)

- Playing the blame-game
- Low morale
- Checking-out
- Disruption in communications and sharing of information

- Emotions are ignored
- Lack of trust
- Lack of safety
- Isolation and loneliness
- Withholding information

- Feelings become facts
- Lack of action
- Lack of leadership
- Lack of direction
- Decision by consensus

- Deadlines missed
- Inability to make efficient and effective decisions
- Too many meetings

EARLY WARNINGS (-)

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Ineffective Leadership

More paradoxes:

Efficiency <> Quality

Individual <> Team

Work <> Rest

Decentralized <> Centralized

Planned <> Emergent

Short term <> Long term

Challenge <> Support



Now you know...

The difference between relational and strategic interactions

Leadership embodiment practices for each type of interaction

What a Polarity Map is

How to use a Polarity Map to manage the relational/strategic paradox

That it is okay to be the boss.

Photo Credits

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Thank you.

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