

**SEEING & OVERCOMING
THE IMMUNITY TO CHANGE**

change



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Harvard Graduate School of Education

minds at work

For Wexner Summit Participants Use Only

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1. Improvement Goal

What's the One Big Thing I could get better at that would make the biggest difference to me?



Why important? *If I could make progress on this goal, what would be different/better?*

Guidelines:

- ✓ It interests you.
- ✓ It implicates you.
- ✓ It's not an outcome. It's something you'll get better at.
- ✓ There's room for improvement.
- ✓ It's stated in the affirmative.
- ✓ It's important to you (a 4 or 5/5).

1. Improvement Goal

To be a better listener

5. I know I unintentionally hurt people who I care about by my impatience. Plus, I would feel more connected to them and others.



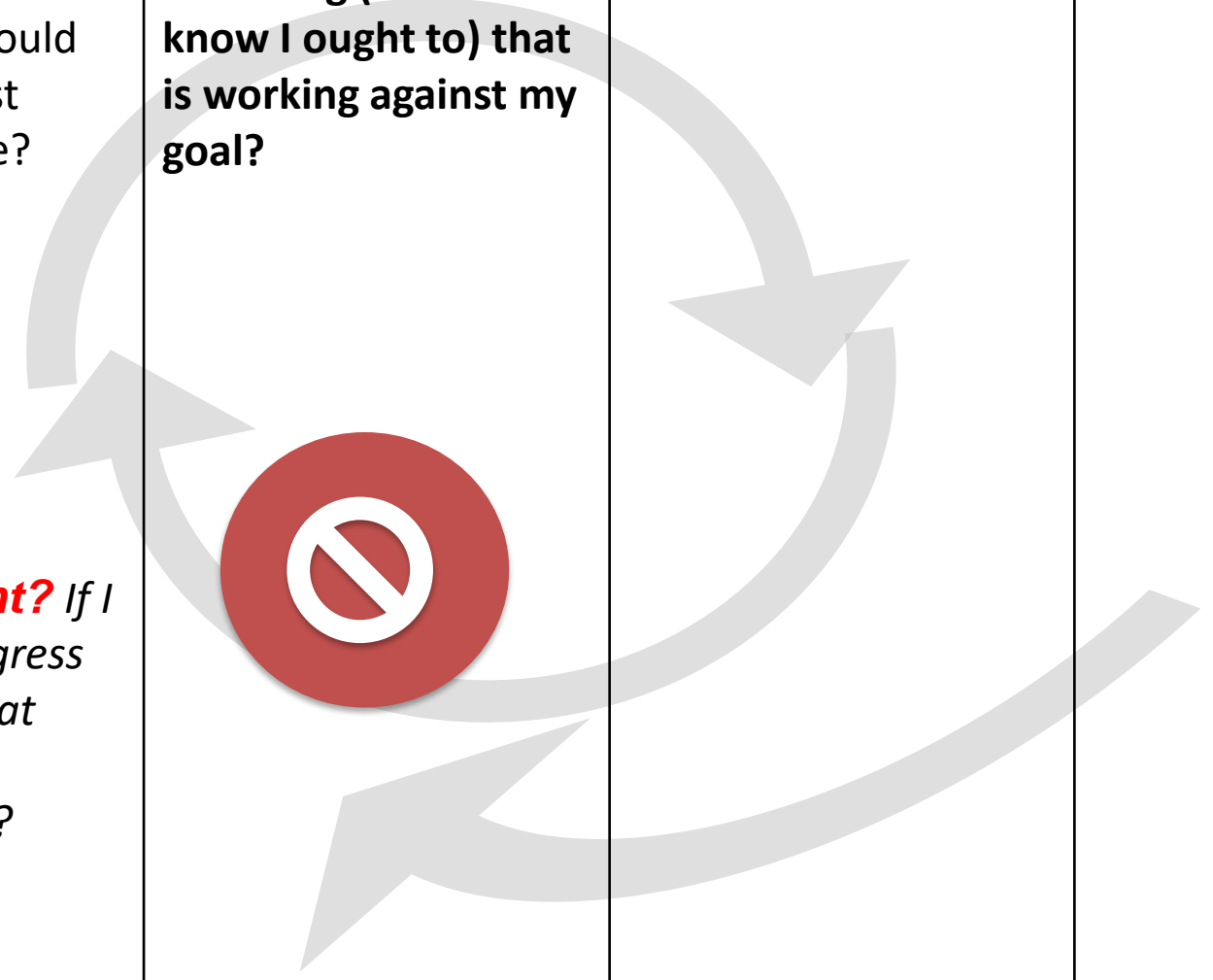
1. Improvement Goal


To be more relaxed and at ease with people I work closely with

4.5: I spend the majority of my life at work and I'm tired from keeping a wall between me and others.

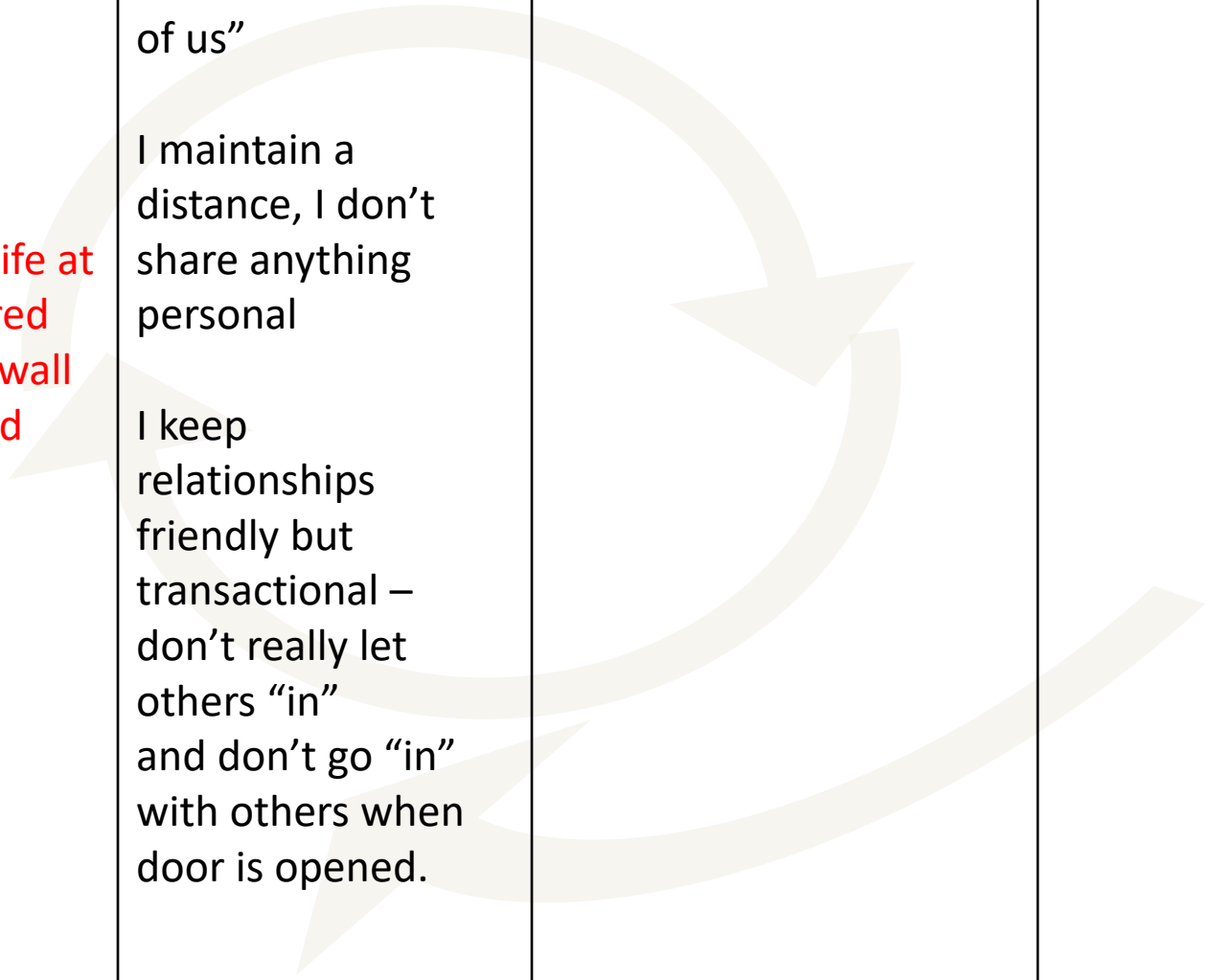


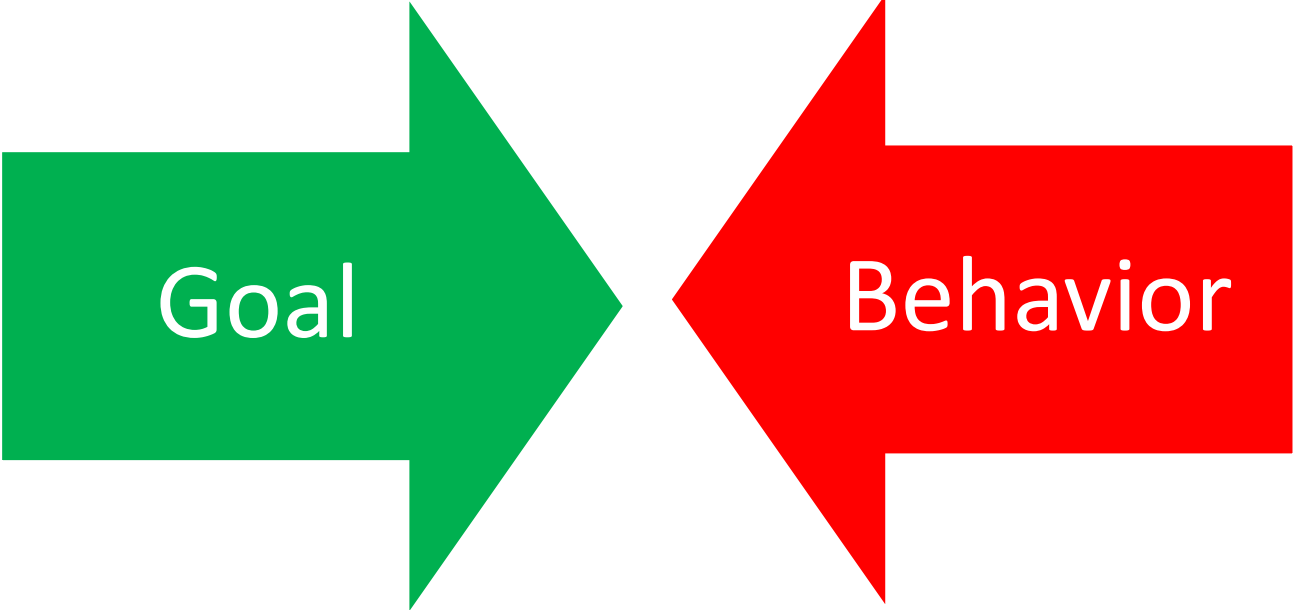
| 1. Improvement Goal | 2. Doing/ Not Doing | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>What's the One Big Thing I could get better at that would make the biggest difference to me?</p> <p>Why important? <i>If I could make progress on this goal, what would be different/better?</i></p> | <p>What am I doing and not doing (that I know I ought to) that is working against my goal?</p> | | |



| 1. Improvement Goal | 2. Doing/ Not Doing | |
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| 1. Improvement Goal | 2. Doing/Not Doing | | |
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| <p>To be a better listener</p> <p>5. I know I unintentionally hurt people who I care about by my impatience. Plus, I would feel more connected to them and others.</p> | <p>I speak over people, interrupt them</p> <p>I don't ask people questions</p> <p>When I "listen" to people, I'm waiting to make my point</p> <p>I speak more than others</p> <p>I decide the agenda</p> <p>I impose my ideas</p> | | |

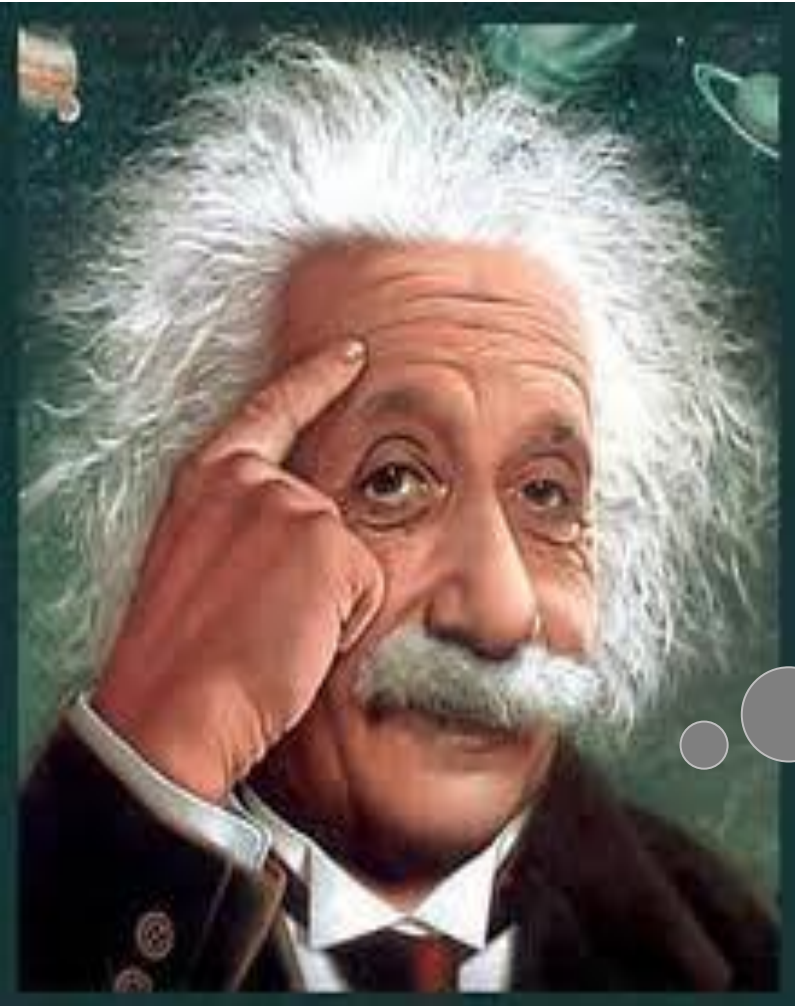
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For Wexner Summit Participants Use Only

What's the Problem We're Trying to Solve?



‘Get a better grasp of the problem before moving to the solution’

*“The single biggest failure of leadership is to treat **adaptive** challenges like **technical** problems”*

Heifetz and Linsky, Cambridge Leadership Associates

Technical vs. Adaptive Challenges

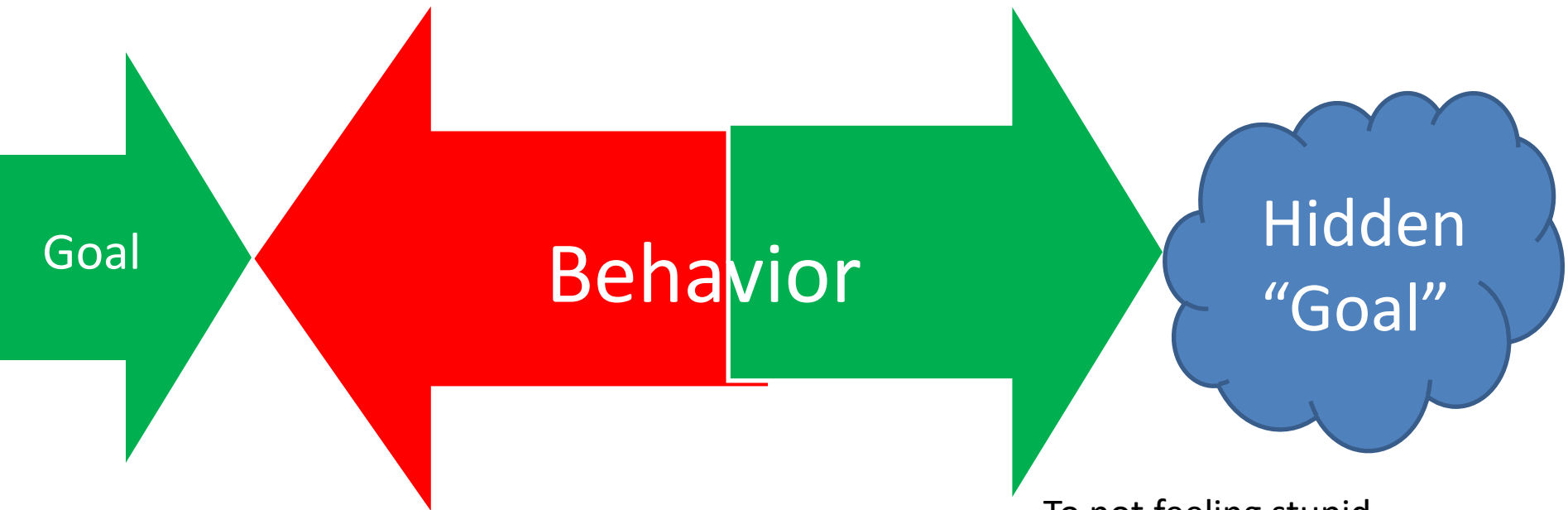
Technical

- Has a solution that's already known (knowledge and capacity already exist)
- Can be solved by an authority or an expert, or by tested procedures, norms, systems


Adaptive

- Has no known solution; solution is outside people's current repertoire
- Can only be addressed through changes in people's priorities, beliefs, habits and loyalties

*Most challenges involve **BOTH** technical and adaptive dimensions*



- To not feeling stupid
- To not being vulnerable, open to rejection
- To not feeling weak & ineffective
- To not being seen as controlling or a micro-manager
- To not being a loser
- To always looking good
- To not being vulnerable
- To not being alone
- To hiding my powers
- To not being unloveable
- To hiding my feelings of being superior

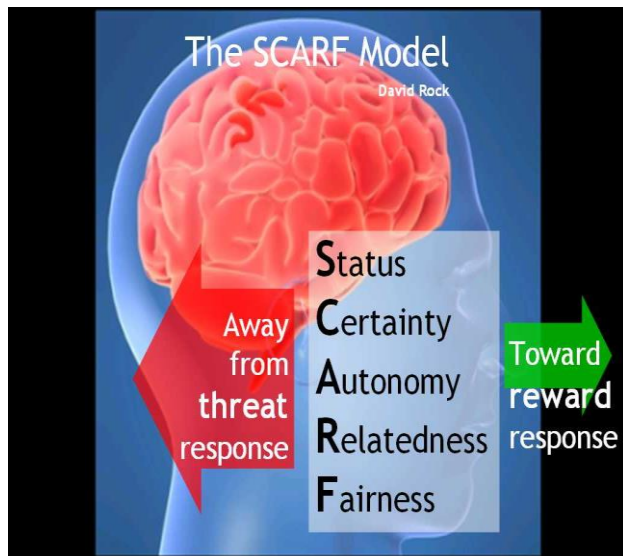
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| <p>What's the One Big Thing I could get better at that would make the biggest difference to me?</p> <p>Why important? <i>If I could make progress on this goal, what would be different/better?</i></p> | <p>What am I doing that is working against my goal?</p> | <p>Step 1: WORRIES: Imagine trying to do the OPPOSITE of each of your Column 2 behaviors.</p>  |

Examples:

- I'll look weak.
- People won't like me.
- I won't be seen as competent.
- I'll lose my good reputation.
- I'll be in over my head and fail.
- I will lose relationships.
- I'll be too vulnerable.
- I will have turned out to be just like [my father].
- I'll lose everyone's respect.
- I'll be stereotyped as...
- I'll lose control.
- I'll screw it up.

| 1. Improvement Goal | 2. Doing/Not Doing | 3. Hidden/ Competing Commitment | |
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| <p>To be a better listener</p> <p>5. I know I unintentionally hurt people who I care about by my impatience. Plus, I would feel more connected to them and others.</p> | <p>I speak over people, interrupt them</p> <p>I don't ask people questions</p> <p>When I "listen" to people, I'm waiting to make my point</p> <p>I speak more than others</p> <p>I decide the agenda</p> <p>I impose my ideas</p> | <p>Fears: I'll give up my power; I'll lose my value and be useless; I <u>won't be respected.</u></p> | |

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David Rock's **SCARF Model**

The key social domains that are **threatening** or **rewarding**

Status:

Where you feel you are in the pecking order

Certainty:

Your perception of how well you can predict the future

Autonomy:


How much you feel you have choices, being able to make choices






Relatedness:


How safe do you feel with other people – trust v mistrust

Fairness:

Your perception of how fairly other people are treating you

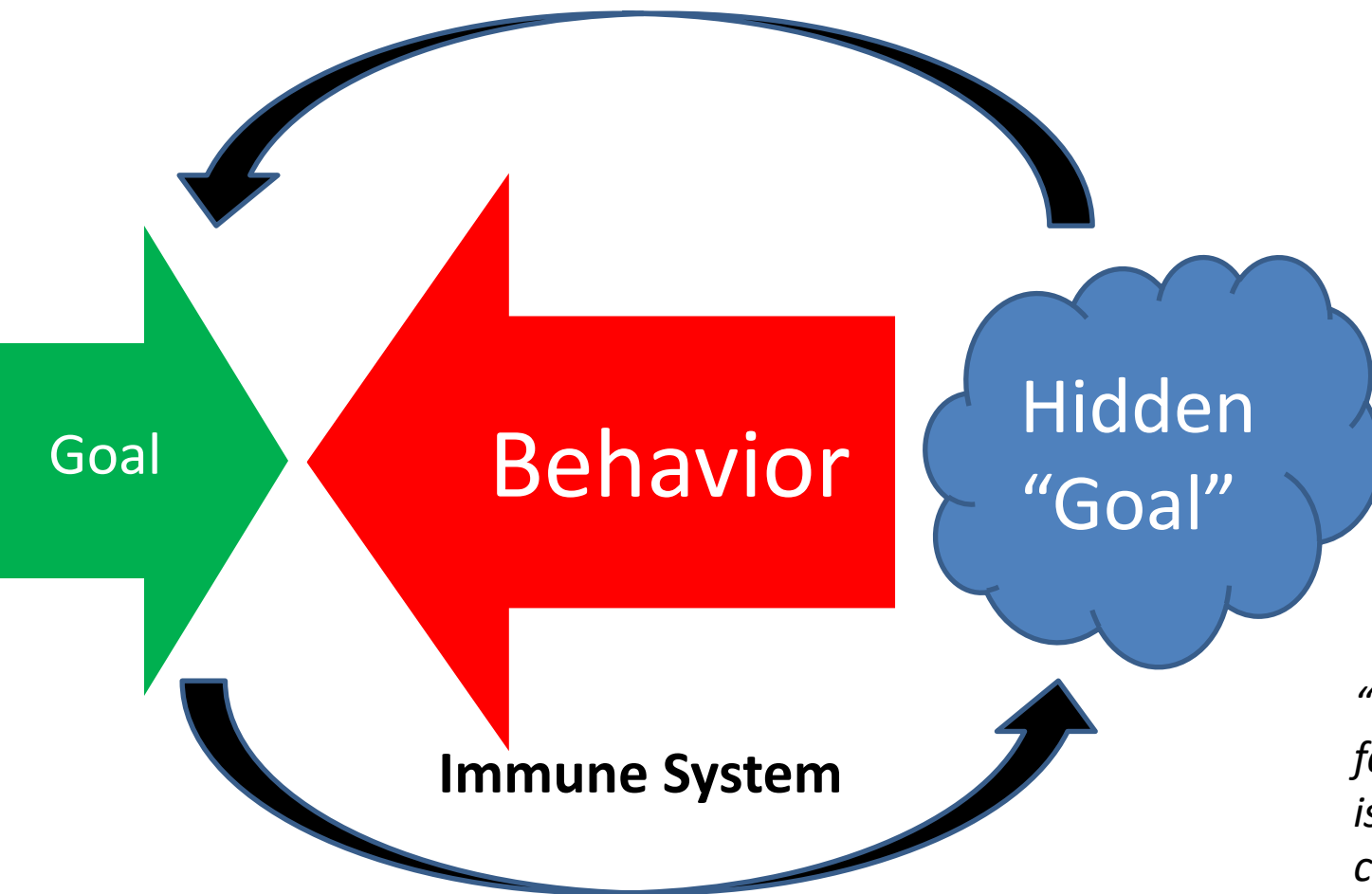
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| | |
|---|--|
| I'll look weak.  | I'm also committed to not looking weak. |
| People won't like me.  | I'm also committed to not being not liked. (Or ... to not running the risk that others won't like me.) |
| I won't be seen as competent.  | I'm also committed to not being seen as not competent. (Or ... to never doing anything that would lead others to think I'm not competent.) |
| I'll lose my good reputation.  | I'm also committed to not losing my good reputation. |
| I will have turned out to be just like... [my father].  | I'm also committed to not feeling like I've become my father. (Or... to proving I'm not just like my father.) |

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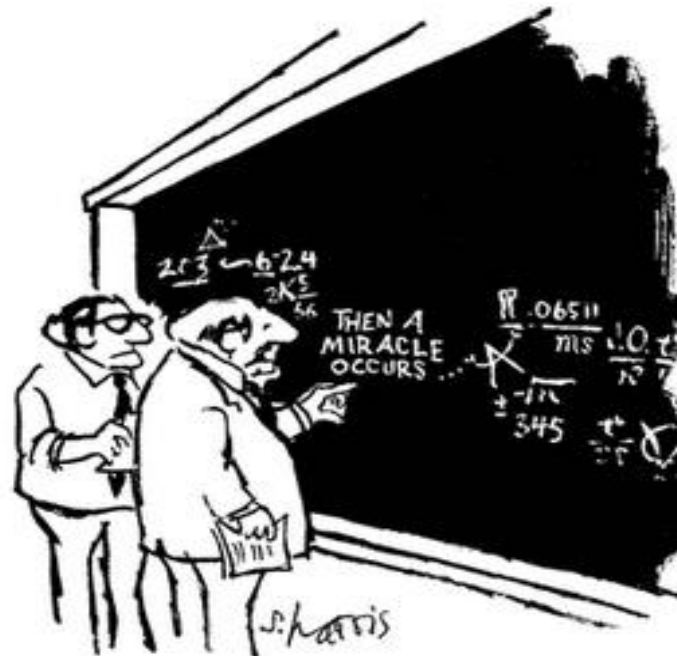
“The single biggest failure of leadership is to treat adaptive challenges like technical problems”
Heifetz & Linsky

UNCONSCIOUSLY
"IMMUNE"

CONSCIOUSLY
"IMMUNE"

CONSCIOUSLY
"RELEASED"

UNCONSCIOUSLY
"RELEASED"



"I think you should be more
specific here in Step 2."

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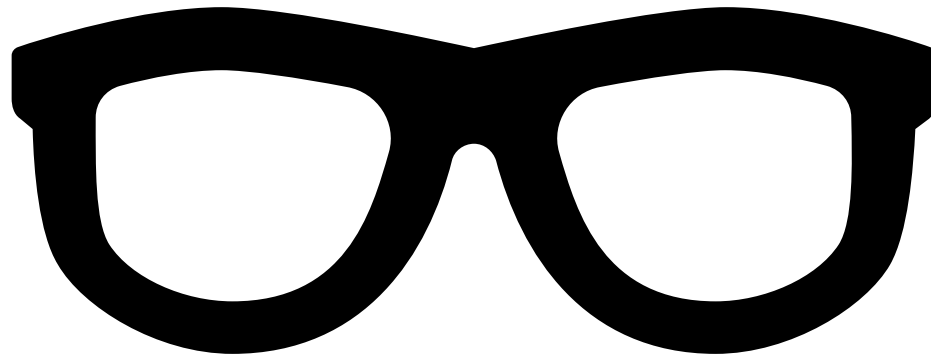
Column 4: Big Assumptions

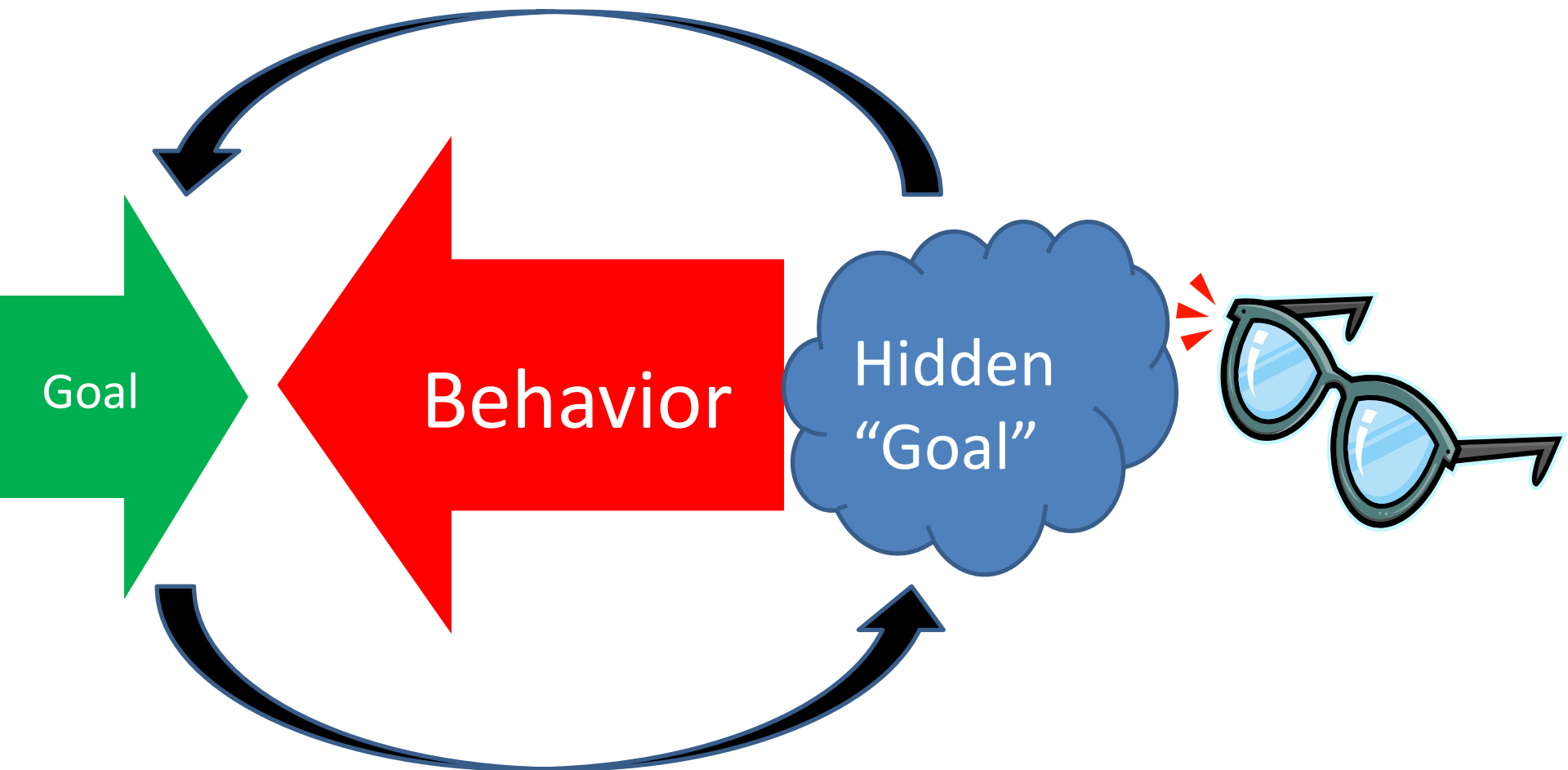
A Big Assumption is a
powerful and
unexamined belief that
is so big

IT holds YOU.



We look at the world THROUGH our
Big Assumption.





Immune System

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Generating Big Assumptions

Look at the Whole Map:

- What might we believe that keeps this immune system in place?
- What might we believe that makes it so necessary to protect ourselves with our Column 3 Commitments?

The Risks of Changing Column 2 Behaviors:

- If we do the opposite of a Column 2 behavior, then... (a bad outcome).

The Risks of Abandoning a Hidden/Competing Commitment

- If the dread we named in Column 3 happens, then... (a REALLY bad outcome).

Examples of real Big Assumptions

- If I try something new and it's unsuccessful, I'll be a disappointment and lose everyone's respect.
- Nothing good comes of conflict.
- If I say what I really think, I'll be seen as a troublemaker and people will distance themselves.
- If I step back and let other people share the leadership, I'll make myself irrelevant and never recover.
- I have to choose between being approachable and having authority.

| 1. Improvement Goal | 2. Doing/ Not Doing | 3. Competing/ Hidden Commitment | 4. Big Assumptions |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p>What's the One Big Thing I could get better at that would make the biggest difference to me?</p> <p><i>Why important? If I could make progress on this goal, what would be different/better?</i></p> | <p>What am I doing that is working against my goal?</p> | <p>Guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Makes avoiding 3rd column dread necessary ✓ Connects back to fears, takes fear deeper ✓ Has a BAD conclusion for you ✓ Can <i>feel</i> real and powerful (even if you know it's wrong) ✓ Displays a limited world | <p>What unexamined beliefs are holding my Immune System in place?</p> <div> </div> <div> </div> |

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Overturing Immunity to Change Model of Change

WILLPOWER



CURIOSITY



EXAMINE YOUR LENS
Bias? Distortion? Always true?



Follow up work to overturning your Immune System

First, choose one Big Assumption you want to explore, then:

- STEP 1:** Observe the big assumption in action
- STEP 2:** Stay alert to natural challenges & counters to the big assumption
- STEP 3:** Write the biography of your big assumption
- STEP 4:** Design a first test of your big assumption
- STEP 5:** Examine the results of your first test
- STEP 6:** Develop / run / evaluate further tests
- STEP 7:** Consolidate your learning

Overturning your Immune System

Collecting data on the truth or non-truth of your Big Assumption



Testing the big assumptions

How?

- 1) Choose one Big Assumption you are open to exploring.
- 2) Answer this question: “What would constitute **disconfirming data** of that BA?”
- 3) Imagine a realistic situation that could yield that disconfirming data.
- 4) Drawing on that realistic situation, design a test that is:
 - **Safe**
 - **Modest**
 - **Actionable**
 - **Research (data-driven)**
 - **Tests your big assumption**

A good experiment on your BA will be S-M-A-R-T

- **SAFE**: *The risk is small and acceptable*
- **MODEST**: *You intend to learn a little bit at a time*
- **ACTIONABLE**: *It will be easy to find a chance to do it*
- **RESEARCH-FOCUSED**: *Its purpose is to learn vs. improve*
- **TEST OF YOUR BIG ASSUMPTION**: *It will generate helpful data about the accuracy of your BA.*

Experiment/Test Design Template

| 1. My Big Assumption says: | 2. And I want to find out whether: | 3. So I will change my behavior in this way: | 4. In order to collect the following information: |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--|---|
| | | | |

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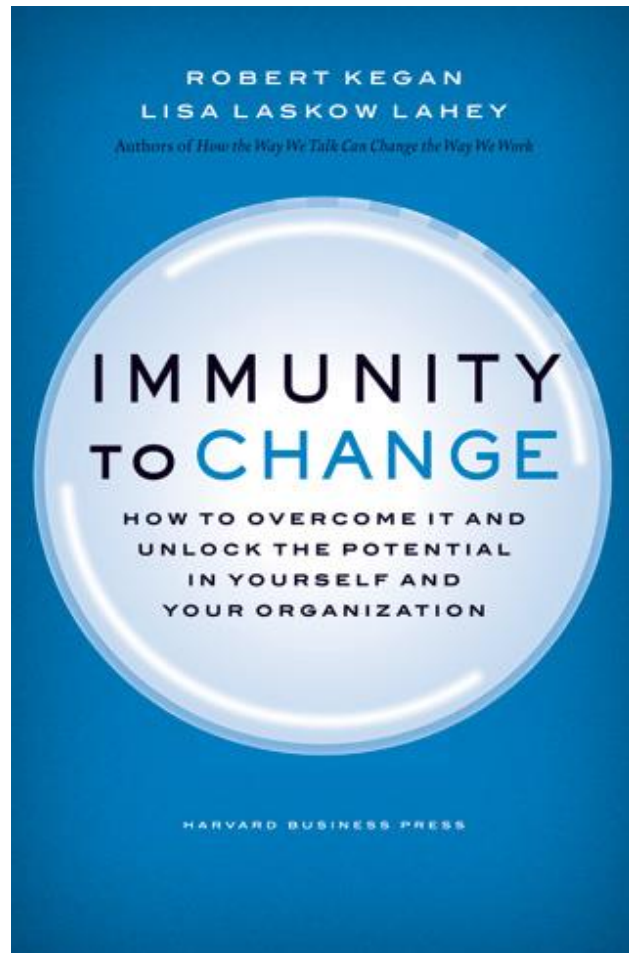
EXAMPLE TEST DESIGN:

| My Big Assumption Says: | So I will (Change my Behavior This Way)... | And collect the following data ... | In Order to Find Out ... |
|--|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being nice keeps me safe and peaceful and protects my relationships • There are no costs to my being nice | <p>I'm due to meet individually with each member of my leadership team next week. I'll plan for them like I usually do. And then I'll watch myself "being nice". I will ask the person what s/he is taking away from our meeting.</p> <p>I'll write down everything right <u>away</u> so I don't skip over anything.</p> | <p>How do I feel when I am nice? When I sugar coat? How do I feel about myself? What does the person walk away with?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ <i>Is there anyone to whom you'd like to give a "heads-up" or ask to serve as an observer who can give you feedback after the fact?</i> <p>Not <u>really</u>; I will ask each person what s/he is taking away from our meeting.</p> | <p>Does being nice bring me a feeling of peace and safety? Does it work as well as I think it does? How costly is it for me to be nice?</p> |

REFLECTIONS ON YOUR TEST RESULTS:

| | | |
|--------|------------------------|---------------------|
| My Big | So in Order to Test it | And This is What it |
|--------|------------------------|---------------------|

Resources



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programs-
services/immunity-to-
change-online/](https://mindsatwork.com/programs-services/immunity-to-change-online/)