Building Your Adaptive Capacity

Strengthening Professional Resilience
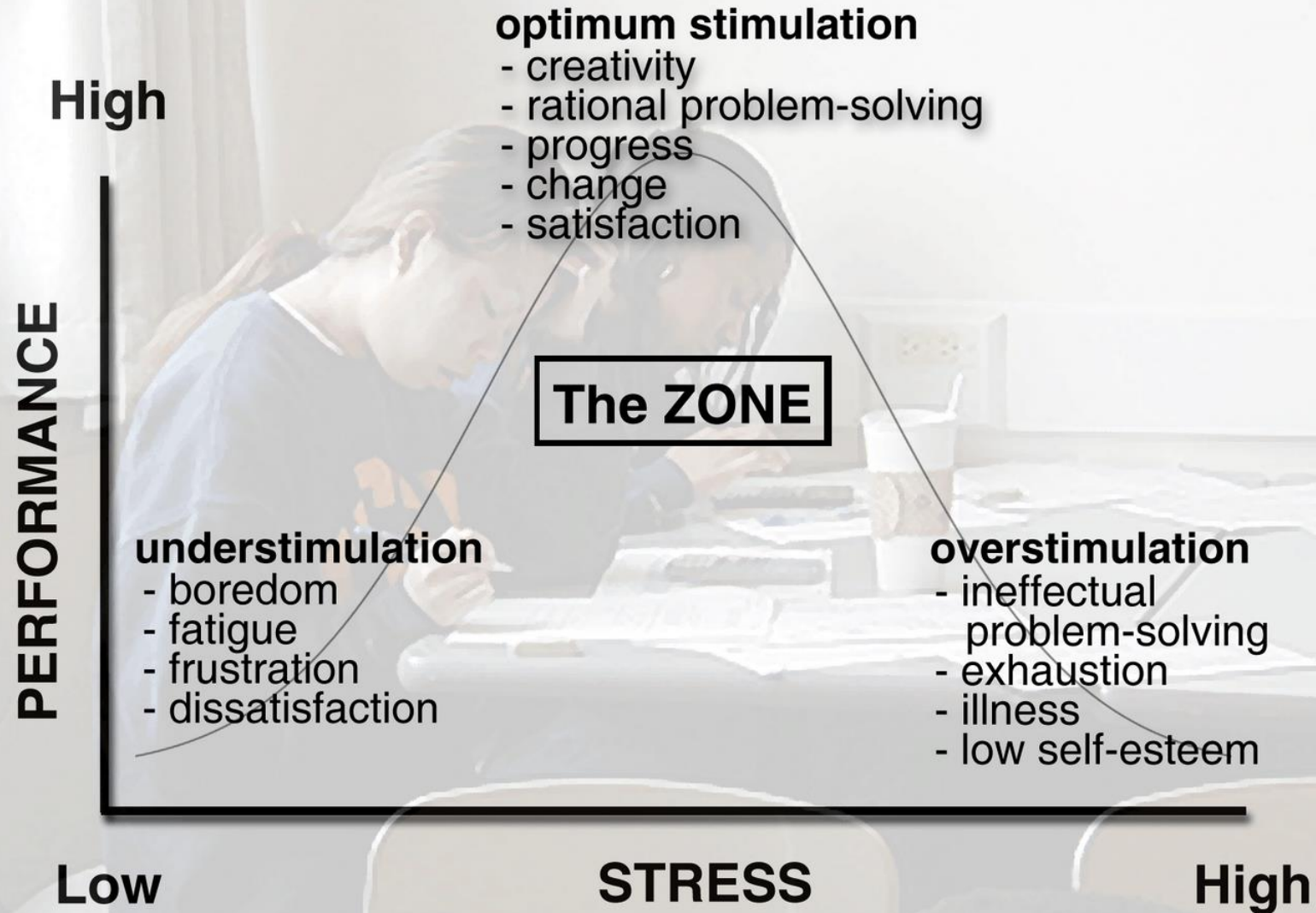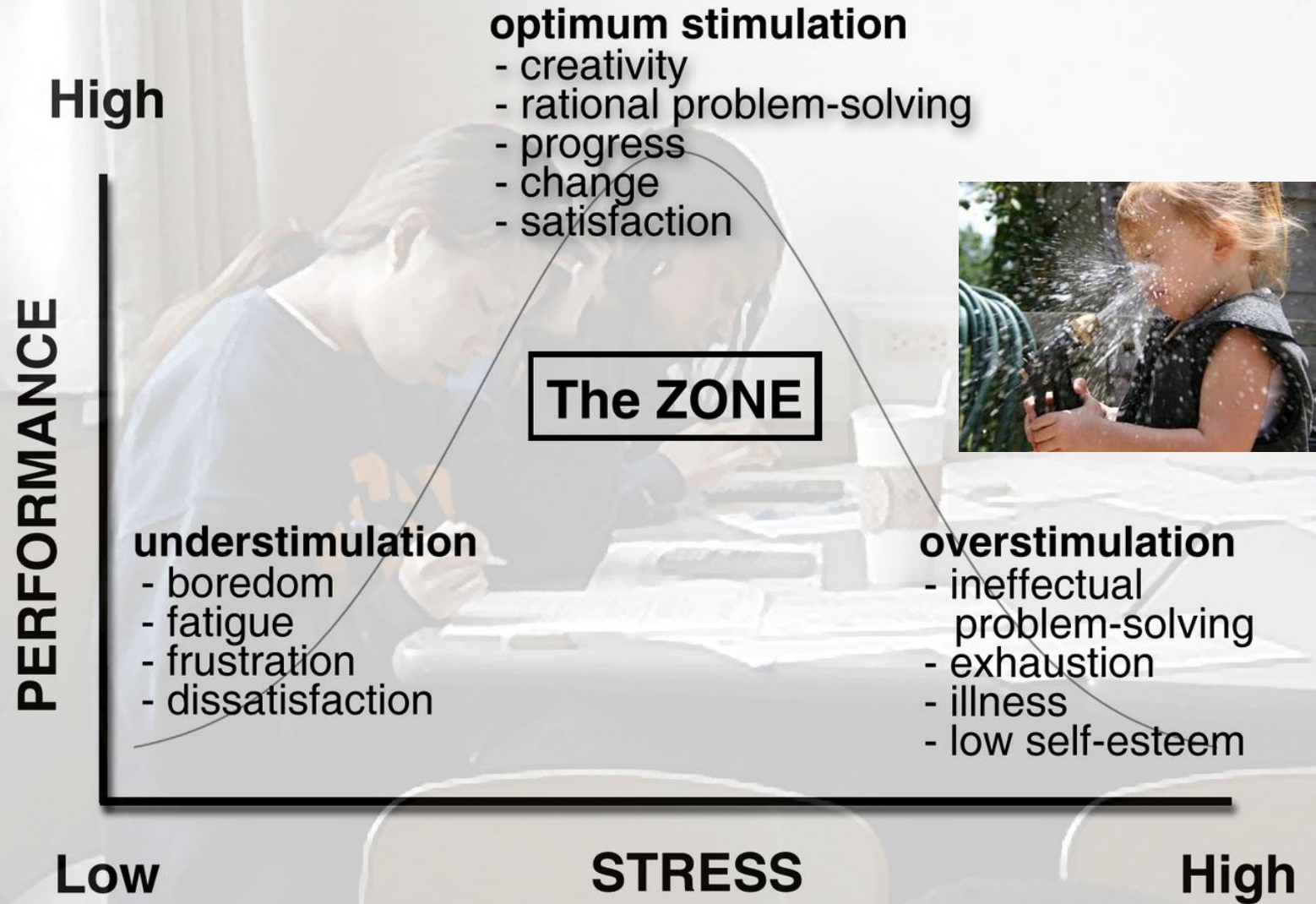
Stress Reduction Kit

Bang Head Here

Directions:
1. Place kit on FIRM surface.
2. Follow directions in circle of kit.
3. Repeat step 2 as necessary, or until unconscious.
4. If unconscious, cease stress reduction activity.

The YERKES-DODSON Curve

The YERKES-DODSON Curve
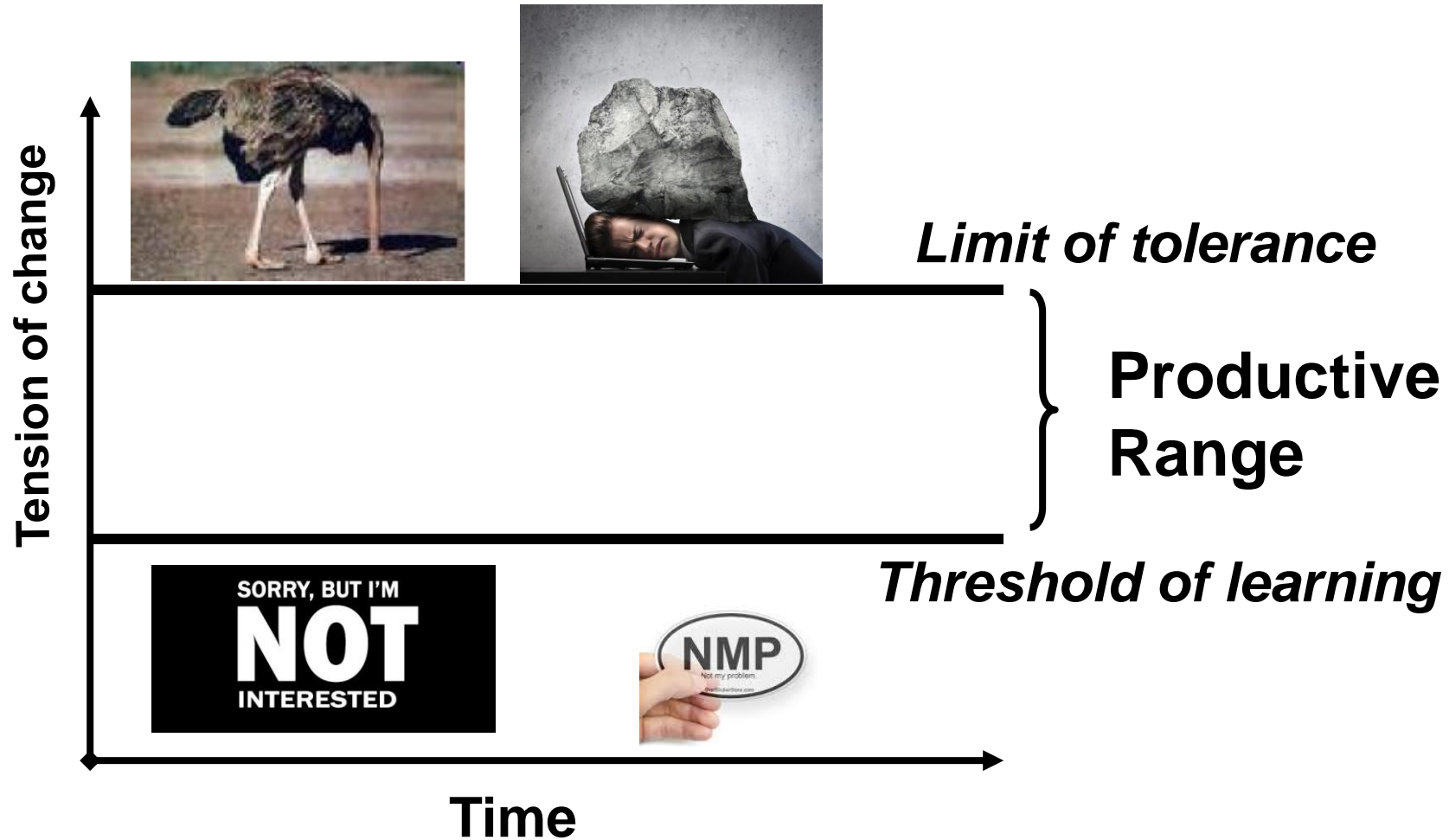
optimum stimulation
- creativity
- rational problem-solving
- progress
- change
- satisfaction

High

PERFORMANCE

The ZONE

understimulation
- boredom
- fatigue
- frustration
- dissatisfaction

overstimulation
- ineffectual
  problem-solving
- exhaustion
- illness
- low self-esteem

Low   STRESS   High

Human Systems

Tension of change (y-axis)

Time (x-axis)

Limit of tolerance

Productive Range

Threshold of learning

SORRY, BUT I'M NOT INTERESTED
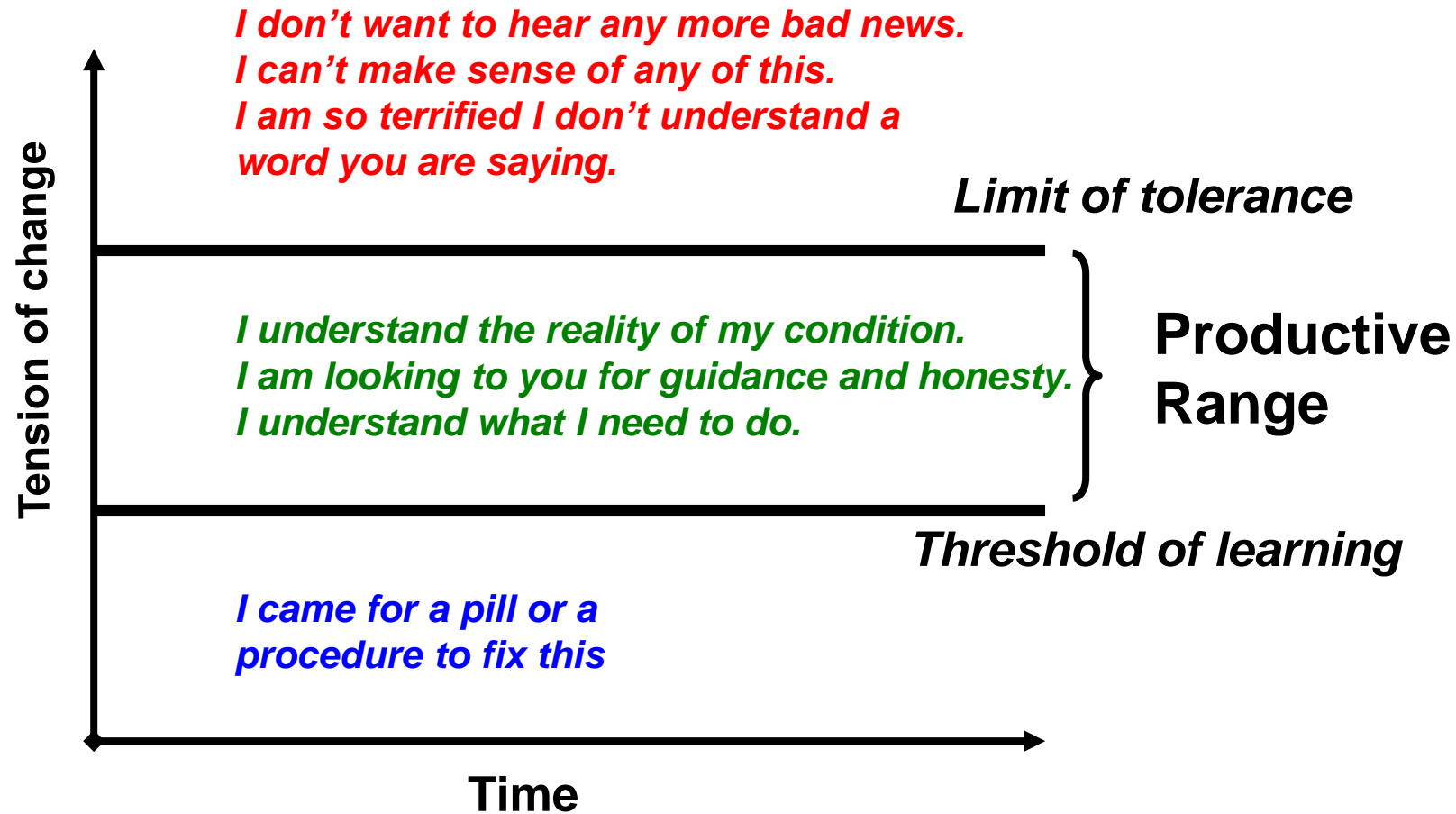
NMP
Not my problem.

Based on R. Heifetz. and M. Linsky. *Leadership on the Line*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA, 2002, pg. 108.

Human Systems

I don't want to hear any more bad news.
I can't make sense of any of this.
I am so terrified I don't understand a
word you are saying.

Limit of tolerance

I understand the reality of my condition.
I am looking to you for guidance and honesty.
I understand what I need to do.

Productive Range

Threshold of learning

I came for a pill or a
procedure to fix this
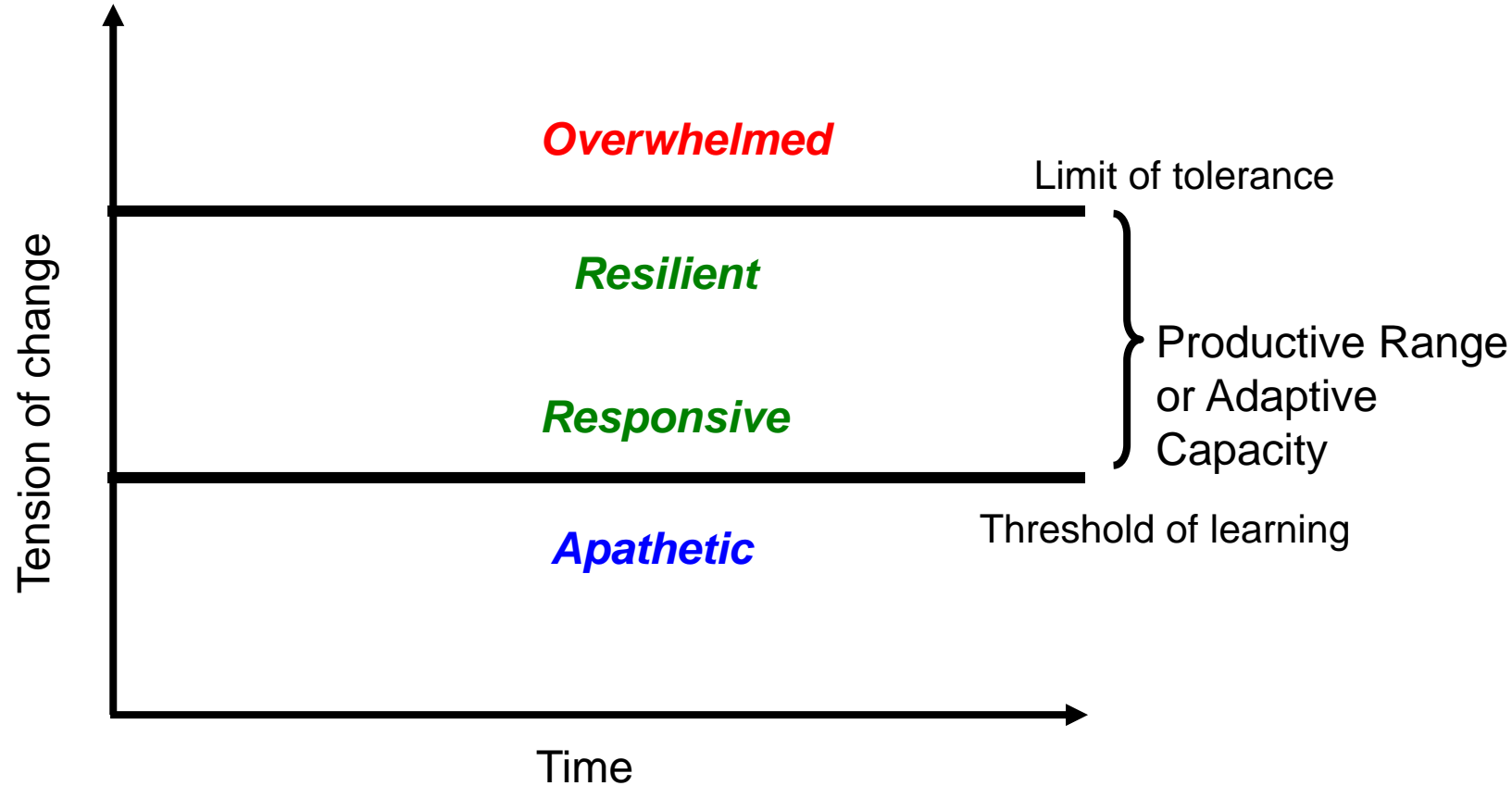
Tension of change (vertical axis)

Time (horizontal axis)

Based on R. Heifetz. and M. Linsky. *Leadership on the Line*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA, 2002, pg. 108.

Productive Range of Tension
Zone of Resilience and Responsiveness

Organizations are illusions; they are just groups of relationships

- Parker Palmer

Develop and sustain your ability to constructively influence others through your exercise of leadership.

Your Success at Influencing Another

- Their capability to do what you ask
- **Plus +**
  - (Their **Perception** of Potential Benefit X Their **Perception** of the Probability of the Benefit Really Happening)
- **Minus -**
  - (Their **Perception** of Cost -Their **Perception** of Risk)

It's all about perception.
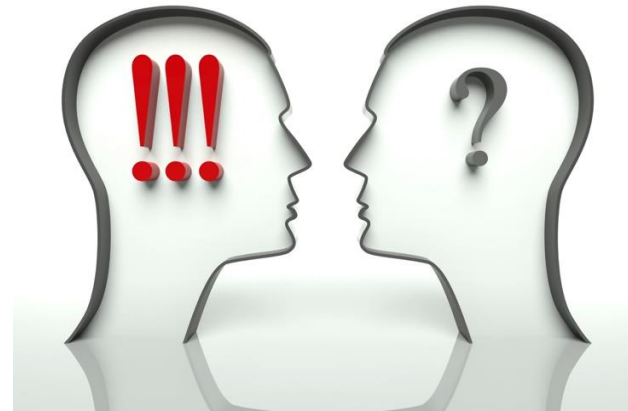
Exercising Leadership is Risky

10 Skills
to foster resilience in the exercise of leadership

Skill # 1 Distinguish between technical and adaptive work

Technical - Apply abilities that already exist in the system's capabilities

Adaptive - People deeply and broadly within the organization need to learn new capabilities
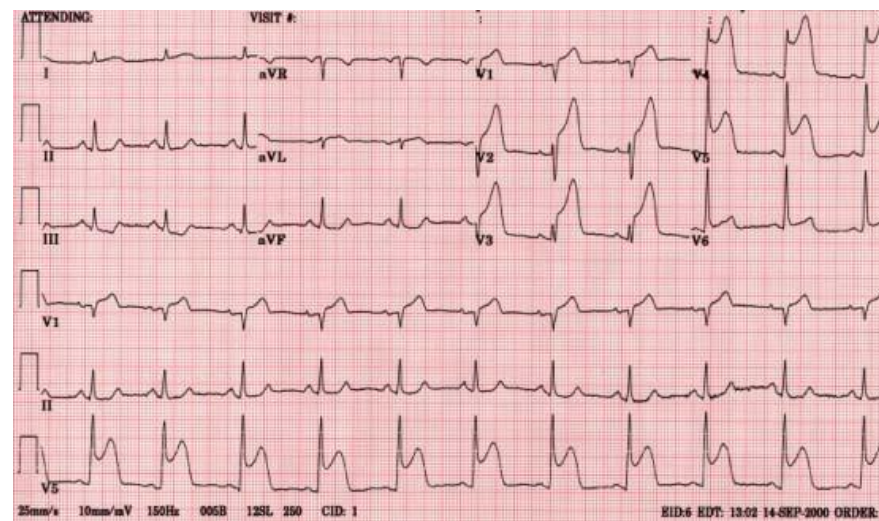
Technical and Adaptive

- AIM statement
- Gap analysis
- Stakeholder analysis
- Measurement tools

Technical pieces are necessary and insufficient for adaptive work.

The conversations and the insights they stimulate will help with the adaptive work.

What has been challenging about your work in improvement?

Properties of an Adaptive Challenge

- Gap between way things are and desired state

- Varied points of view

- Requires difficult learning

- Involves facing loss

- New competencies must be developed

- People with problems have problem solving responsibility

- Takes longer than technical work

- Requires trying things

- Generates disequilibrium, distress and work avoidance

Technical vs. Adaptive Work
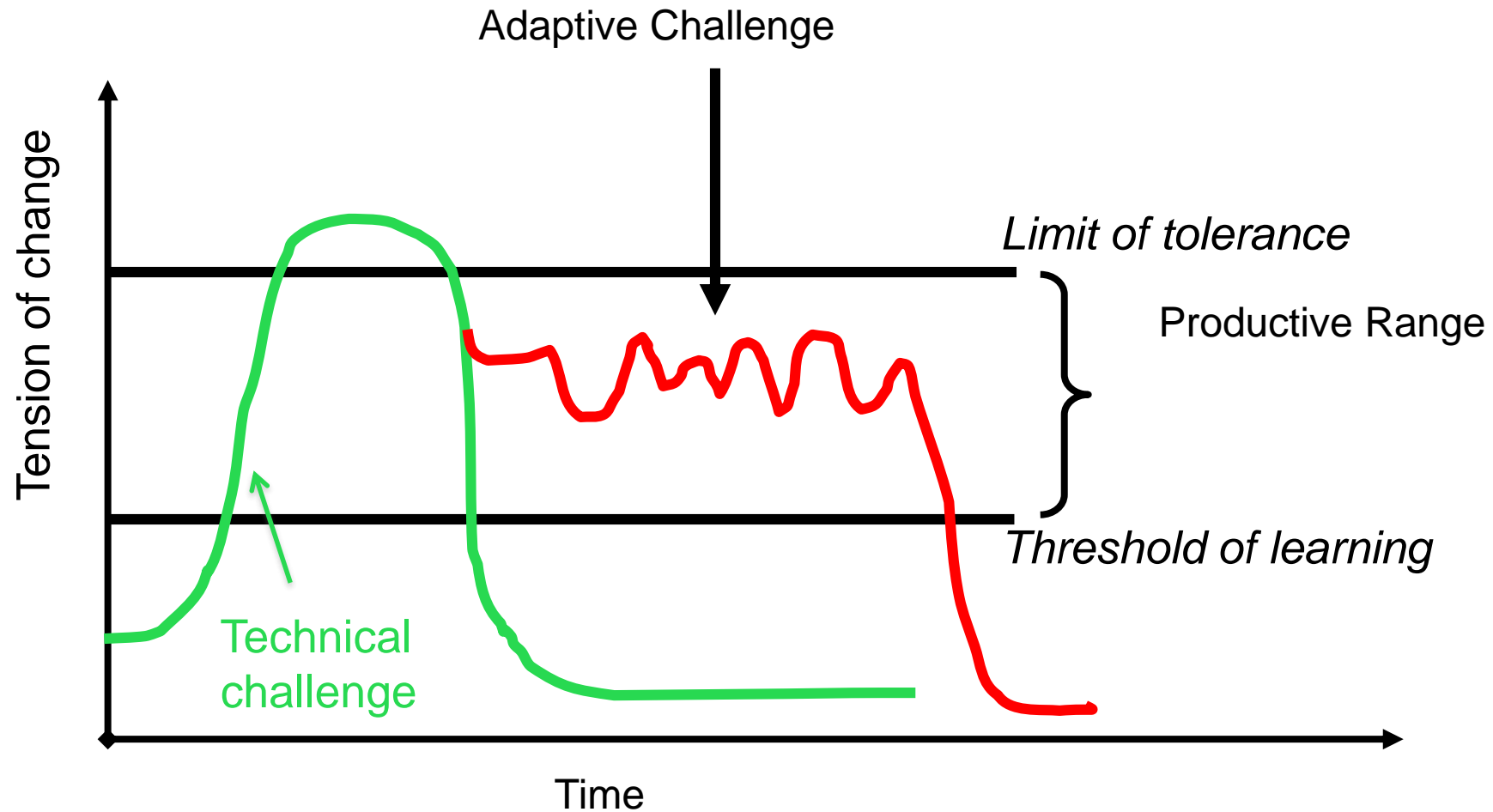
Based on R. Heifetz and M. Linsky. *Leadership on the Line*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA, 2002, pg. 108.

Adaptive Work

Diminishes the gap between the way things are and the way things need to be to create a better future

Adaptive leadership is the activity that mobilizes people to perform needed adaptive work

Your Challenges

Technical work

- Clear answers, minimal uncertainty
- Straightforward, few big choices
- Execute via precise instructions
- Requires hands, feet, mouths
- Focus on task
- Linear, demands precision
- Runs smoothly

Adaptive work

- No clear answers, often high uncertainty
- Time consuming, difficult choices (losses)
- Demands lots of conversations
- Requires hearts, eyes and ears
- Focus on people
- Spiral, demands creativity
- Conflict, distress and fear

The most common cause of leadership failure is treating an adaptive challenge with a technical fix.

DUCT TAPE!
TURNING "NO, NO, NO"
INTO "MMM, MMM, MMM"
SINCE 1942

**Skill #2
Reflect in Action**
Get on the Balcony and Dance
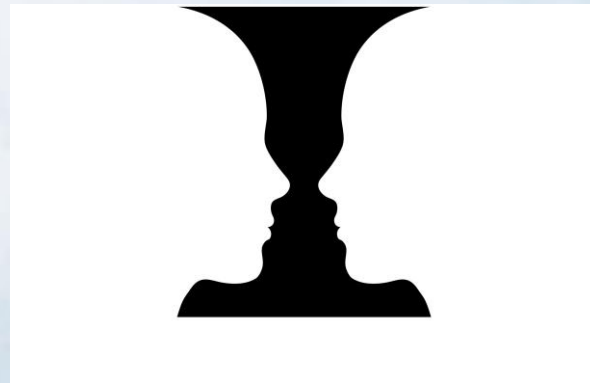
Balcony AND Dance Floor

Over focus on Balcony

Over focus on Dance floor

Skill #3 Learn to interpret resistance

Making Progress on Your Work
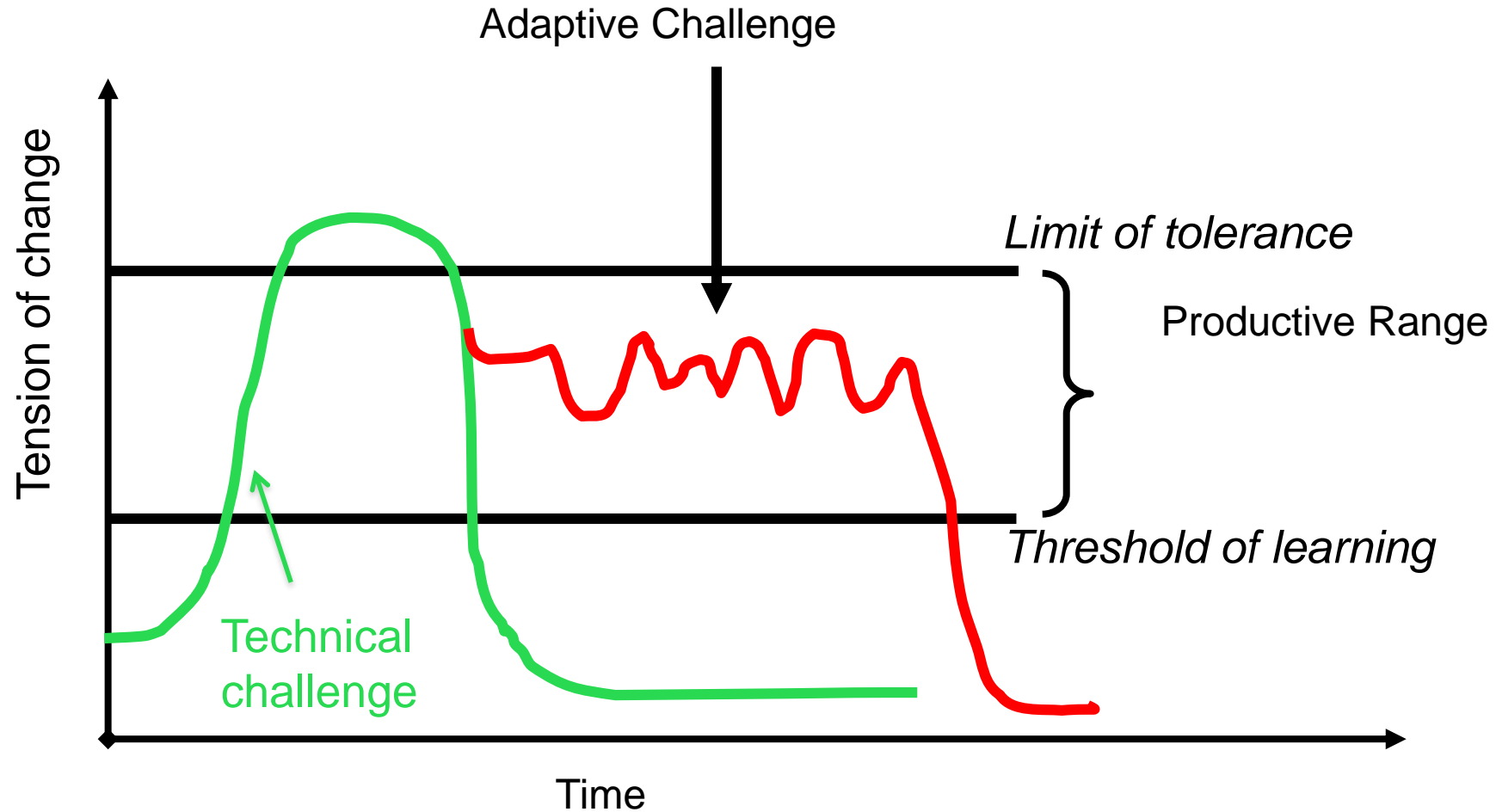
Based on R. Heifetz and M. Linsky. *Leadership on the Line*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA,2002, pg. 108.

Making Progress on Your Work
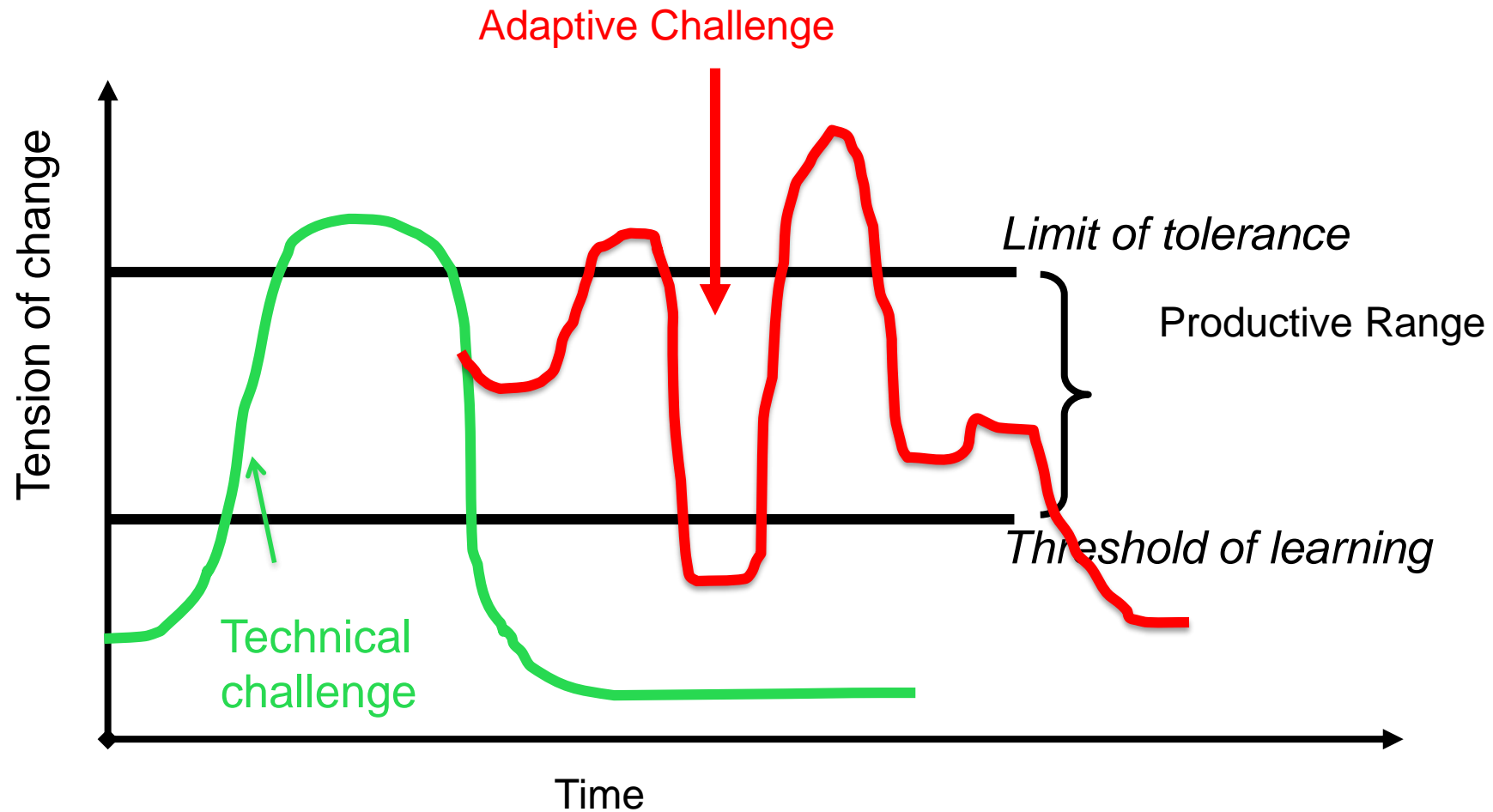
Based on R. Heifetz and M. Linsky. *Leadership on the Line*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA, 2002, pg. 108.

The Work

Tension of change (vertical axis)

Time (horizontal axis)

Distress

Limit of tolerance

Productive Range

Threshold of learning

Distress

Based on R. Heifetz and M. Linsky. *Leadership on the Line*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA, 2002, pg. 108.

The Work
What People Will Not Tell You, Their Behavior Will Reveal

Blame others, distract attention, denial

Distress

Limit of tolerance

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Blame others, distract attention, denial

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Based on R. Heifetz and M. Linsky. *Leadership on the Line*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA,2002, pg. 108.

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What does resistance sound like in your context?

Resistance as a Signal of Being Outside the Productive Range of Tension

Resistance
(passive or active)

- **A signal** that you are losing influence and are exceeding the amount of
loss and uncertainty they can tolerate.

- **Clarify** your intentions

- **Refine your approach** to the tensions between perspectives (conflicts) inherent in the issue

- **Try again** to help the group make progress

Check in question - Resistance

True or false

When people resist the change you are helping them face

a.They are just trying to ruin your day

b.The rate of change is too much for them to tolerate

c.It means you are gaining influence because you got their attention

d.It means you need to try a new "test of change"

Skill # 4 Start with Compassion

Common belief:
Those who resist don't care

The YERKES-DODSON Curve

Strain of uncertainty

High

PERFORMANCE

optimum stimulation
- creativity
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- progress
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The ZONE

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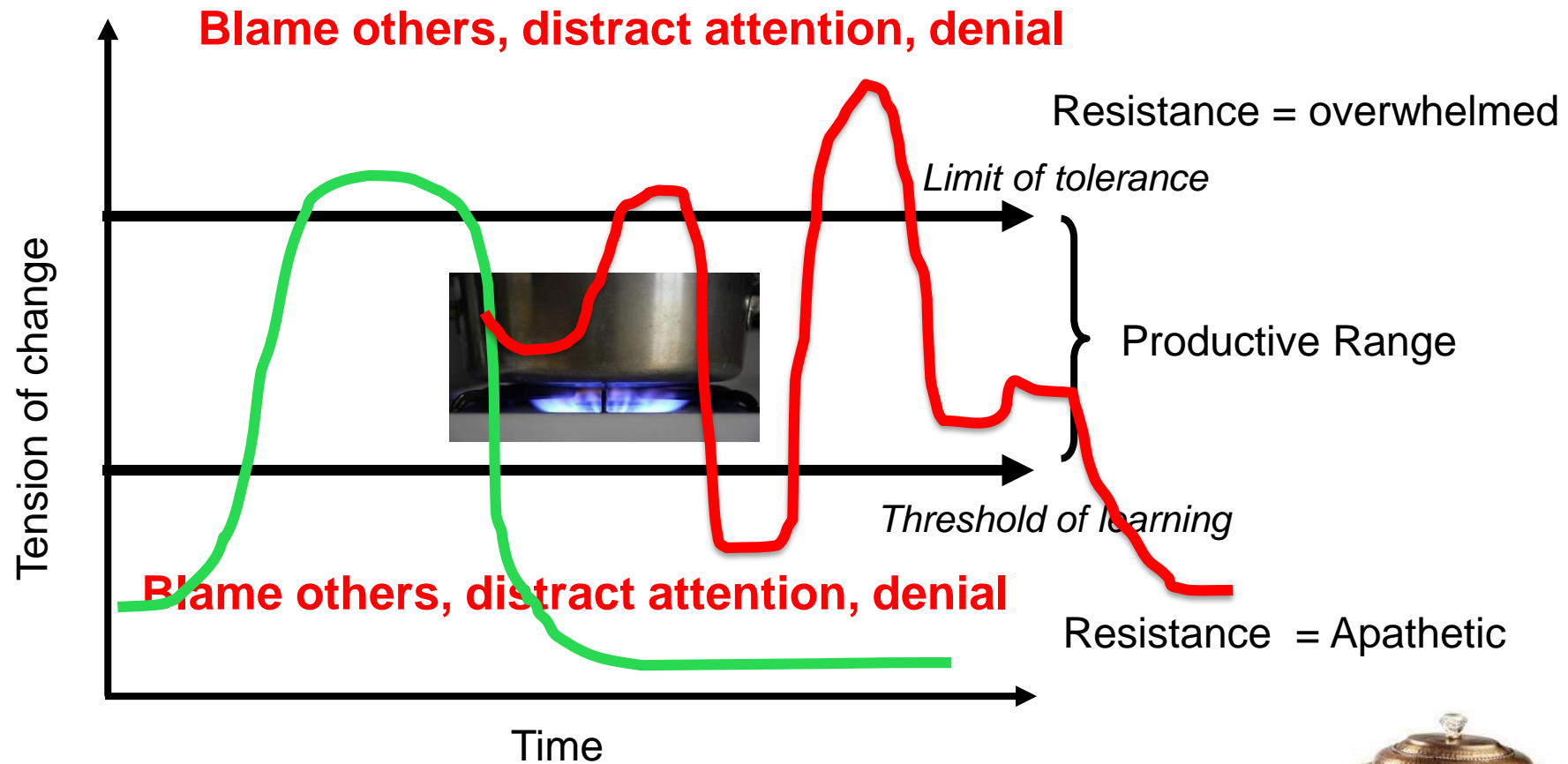
Blame others, distract attention, denial

Resistance = overwhelmed

Limit of tolerance

Productive Range

Tension of change

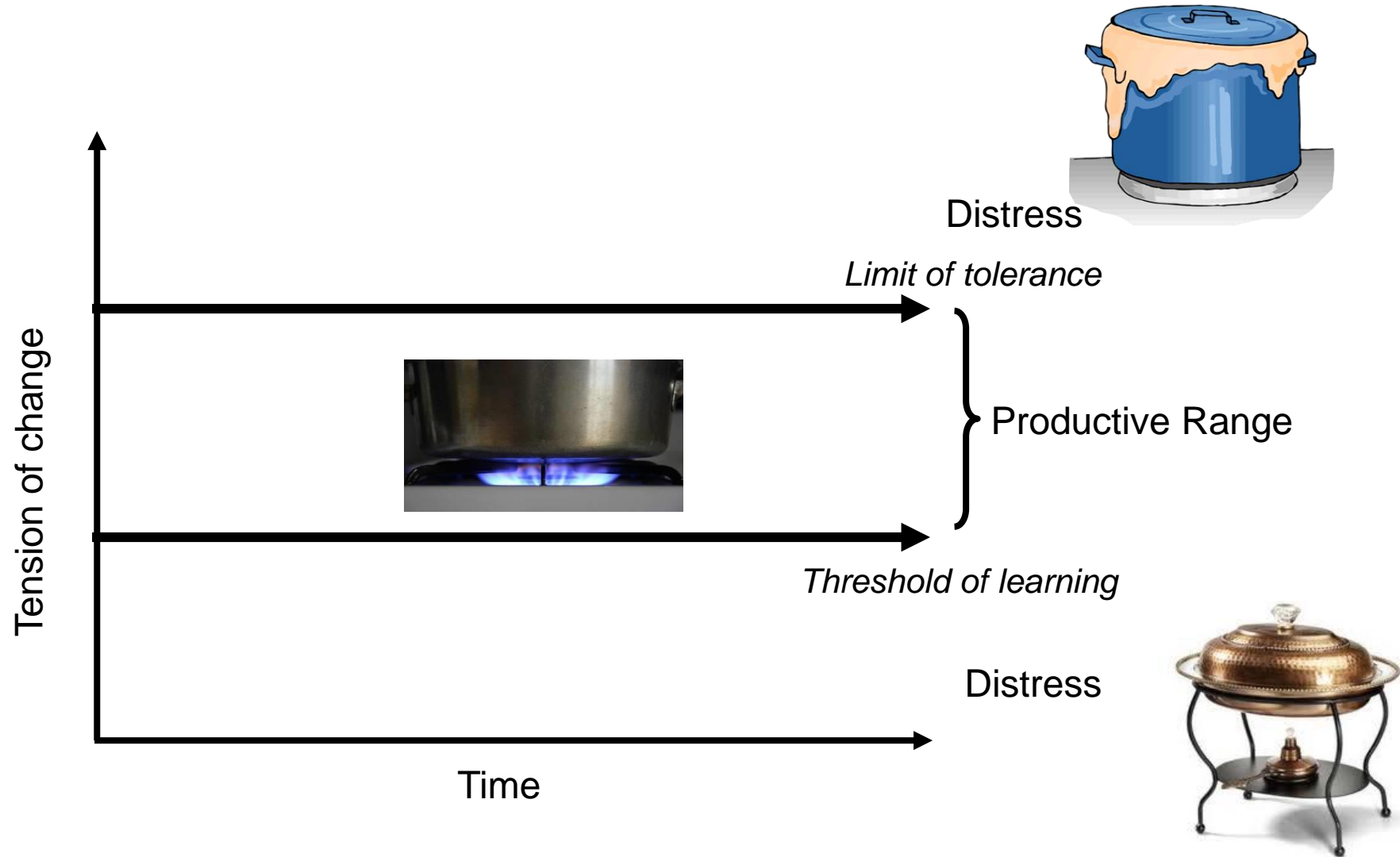**Blame others, distract attention, denial**

Threshold of learning

Resistance = Apathetic

Time
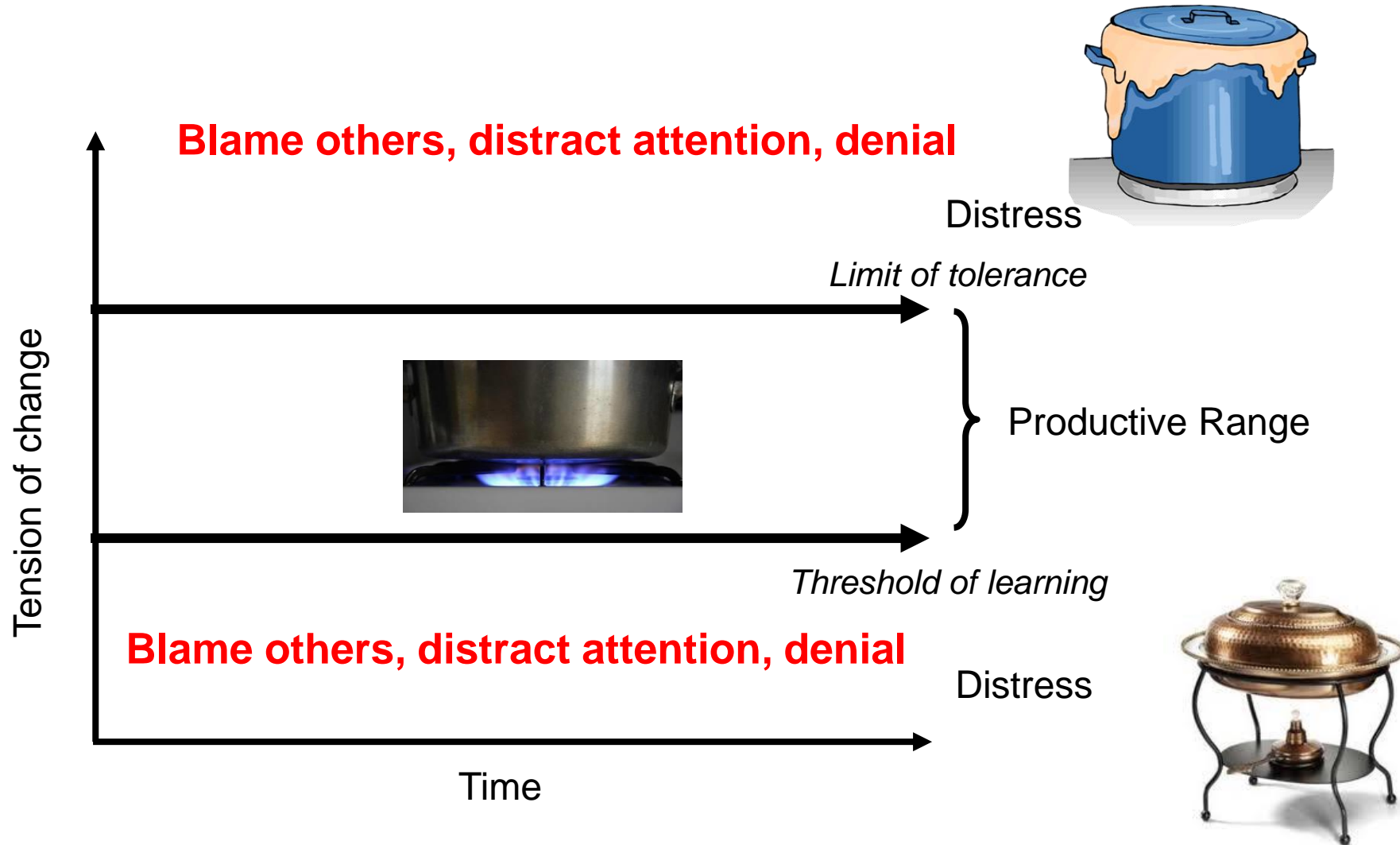
Based on R. Heifetz and M. Linsky. *Leadership on the Line*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA,2002, pg. 108.

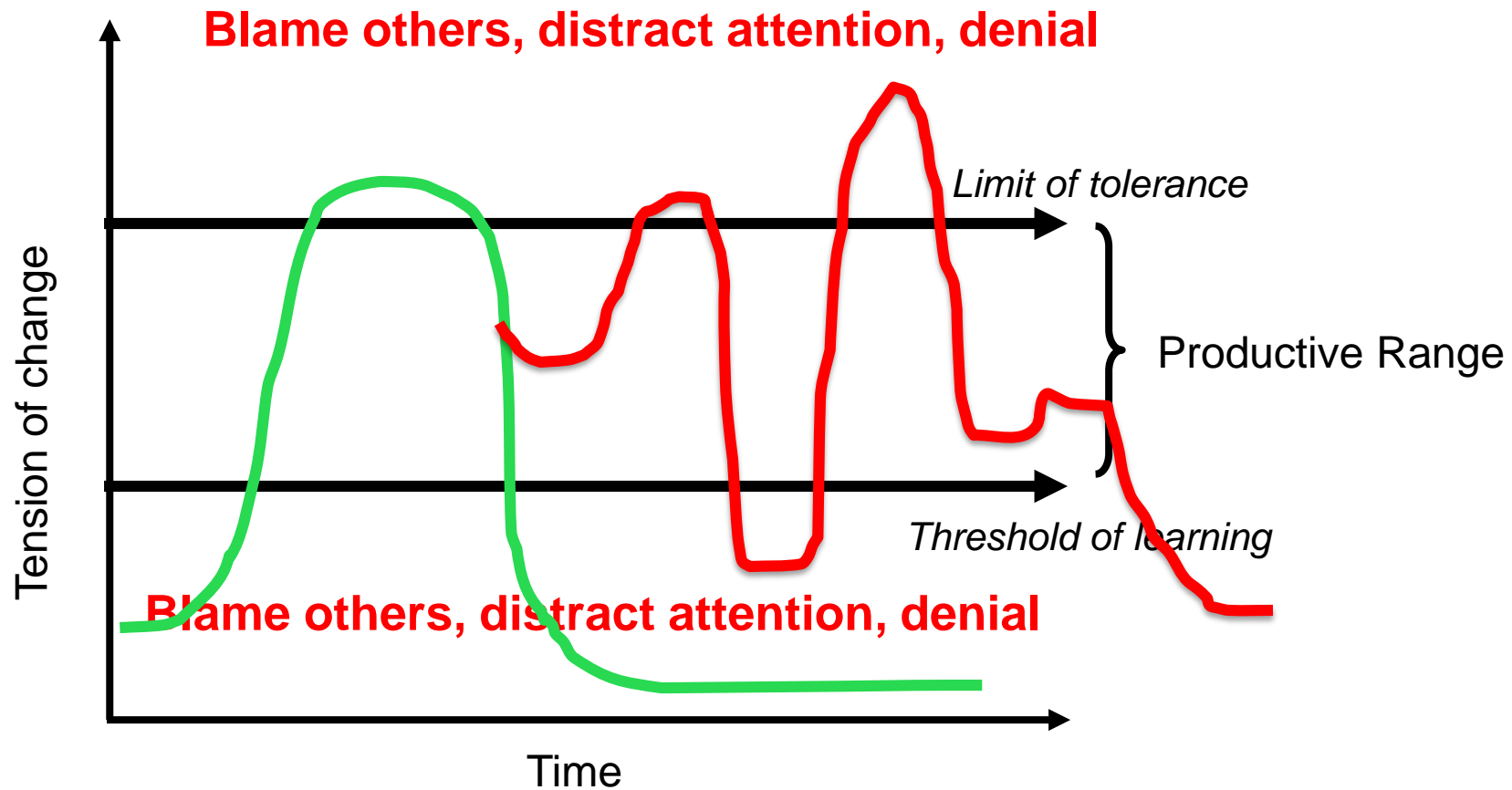# Distressed System, Strain of Uncertainty Compressing Adaptive Capacity
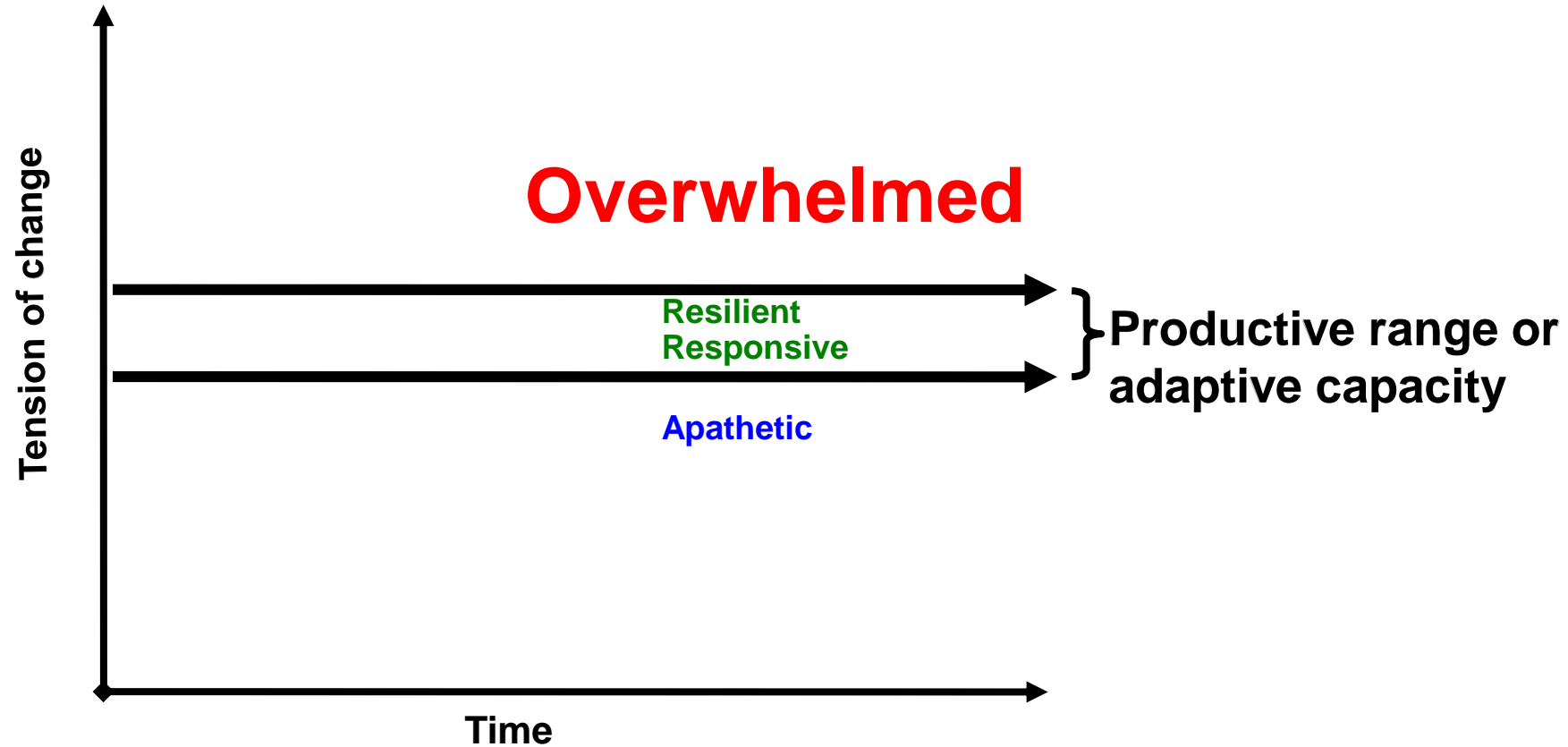
Adaptation based on Heifetz, Ronald A. and Marty Linsky. Leadership on the Line, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA,2002.

Nobody misbehaves from a place of strength
Start with Compassion
When you don't know what to try first,
lower the heat

- Validate feelings; acknowledge loss; empathize
- Simplify and clarify
  - Address the technical aspects
  - Break the problem into parts
- Restore, add or reallocate resources
  - Temporarily reclaim responsibility for tough issues
  - Give your attention, listen
  - Take stock of what is available
  - Allot more time, enrich knowledge and skills

Enhancing Resilience Which Lowers the Threshold (Enhances) Responsiveness
Lowering the Heat

- Validate feelings, acknowledge loss

- Simplify and clarify

- Restore, add, or reallocate resources

Desired State
Increase Capacity for Adaptive Work
Widen Range for Holding Tension of Uncertainty Productively

Raised threshold to continue to be resilient

Increased adaptive capacity

Lowered threshold for responsiveness

Tension of change

Time
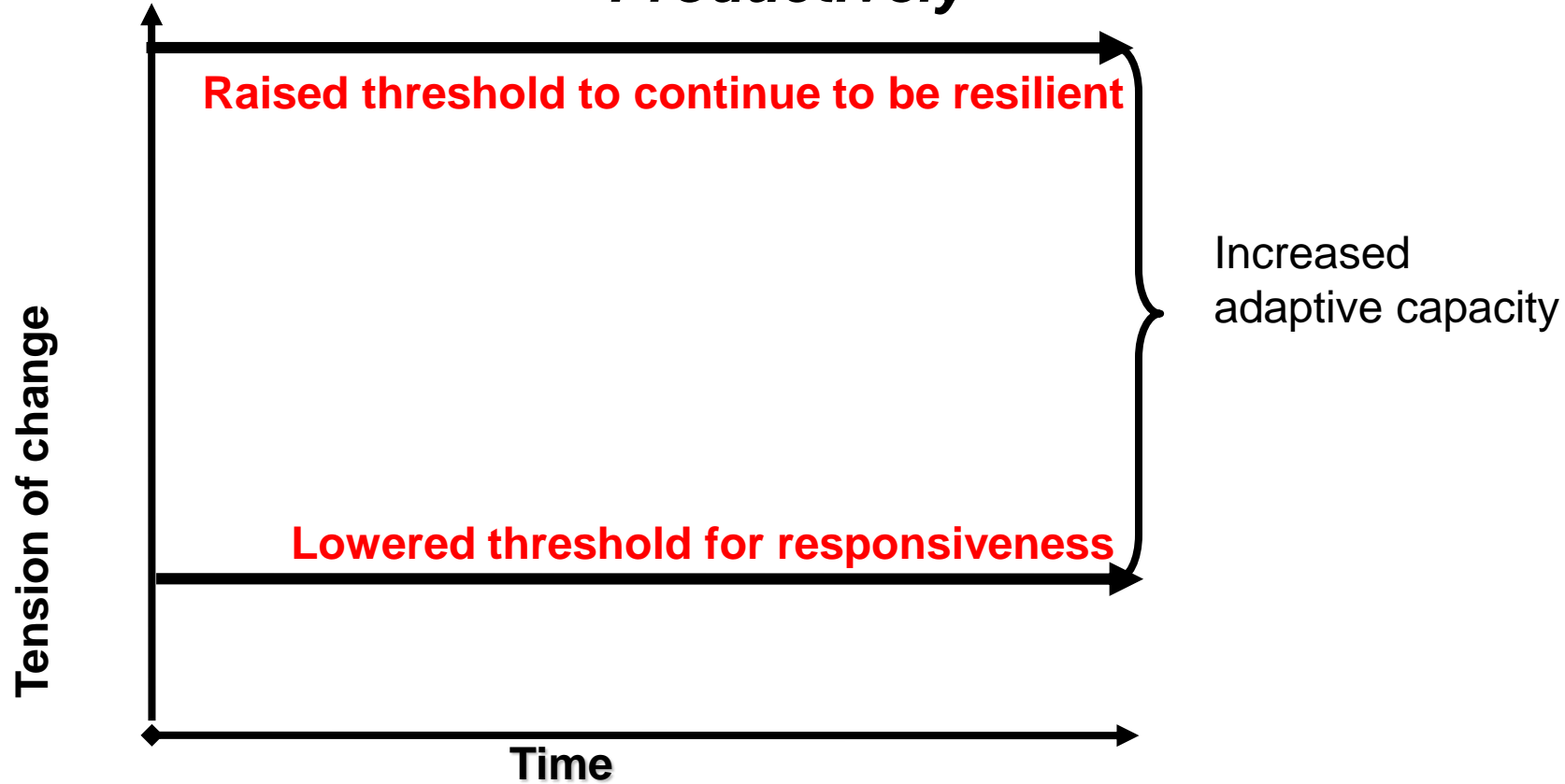
Activate and Expect Responsiveness
Raising the Heat

- Raise the standards

- Increase accountability

- Change the task to something more motivating

- Refocus on higher, more widely shared and yet compelling purpose

Resistance

(passive or active)

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- **Try again** to help the group make progress

Exercising leadership requires keeping an experimental mindset

- Resistance looks the same when the heat is too high or when the heat is too low.

- Keep rechecking your assumptions.

- What looks like laziness may be exhaustion.

- If what you try makes things worse try the opposite.

- When you don't know what to do - try lowering the heat first
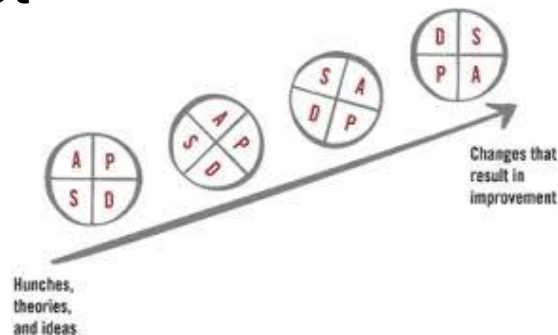
Skill #5
How can you bring yourself back into the zone?
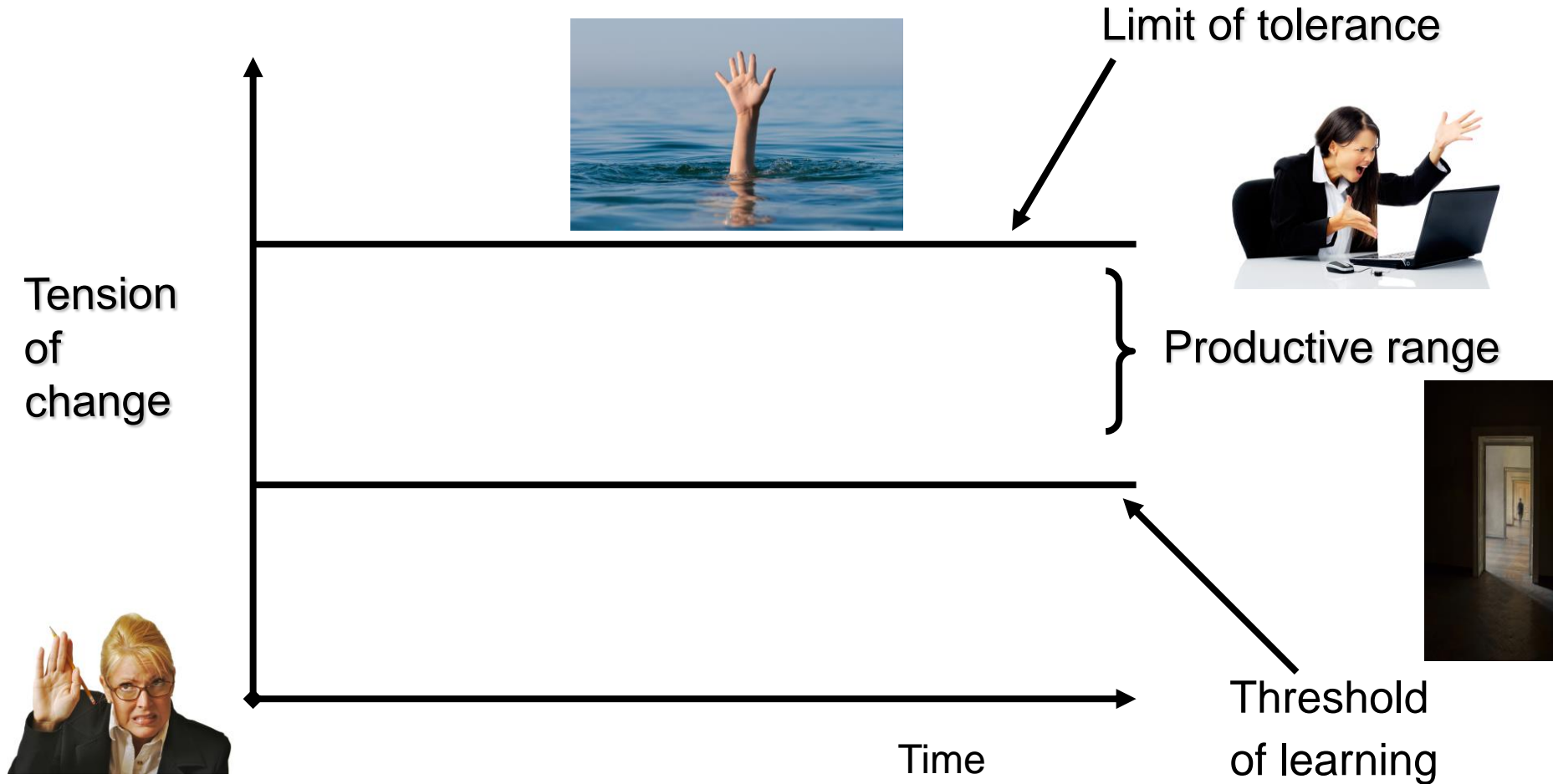
Limit of tolerance

Tension of change

Productive range

Threshold of learning

Time

Based on Heifetz, Ronald A. and Marty Linsky. *Leadership on the Line*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston, MA, 2002, pg. 108.

Emotional Triggers

- Events or people that consistently set off intense emotional reactions within us – "hot buttons"

- Can feel like they come out of nowhere

- If not managed they can cause acute toxic stress, discontent and interpersonal conflict

Reflexive aspects of self

- What triggers you
- How you behave when you are triggered
- Deeply held beliefs, fears and motivations
  - May be unconscious

Reflex responses to triggers

- ## Fight
  - Aim outward: angry outbursts, complaints
  - Aim inward: corrosive self-talk, anger at self

- ## Flight
  - Withdraw, disengage
  - Passive-aggressive behavior

- ## Freeze – "Play Dead"
  - Mind goes blank – problem solving skills plummet
  - Emotions go cold – empathy dries up

Triggers have profound impact on our brains

- **Happen fast and have side effects:**
  - In the moment we have 10 to 15 *seconds* to stop the trigger
  - In the aftermath of a trigger it takes 5 to 6 *hours* to recover

- **Impair our capacity to think:**
  - Under good circumstance we can use up to **8 - 12** pieces of information at one time
  - When we have a full "amygdala hijack," we can only use **1** piece of information at a time

Adapted from Goleman, D: *Emotional Intelligence*
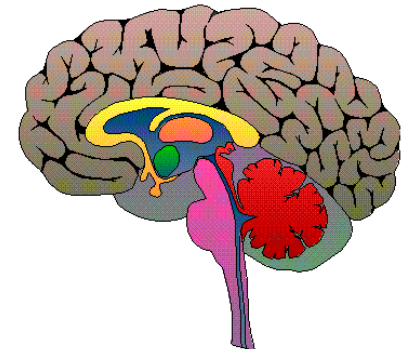
Creating a Pause
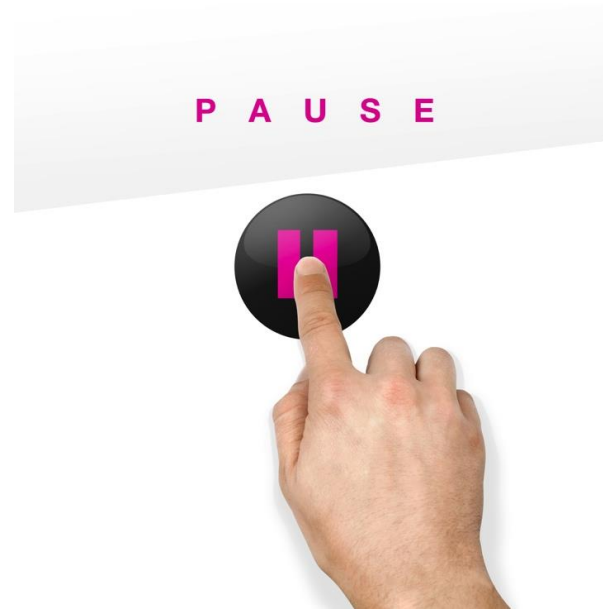
"Freedom is the ability to pause between stimulus and response and in the pause to choose."

Rollo May

Pause

- Begin to notice body sensations and emotion assoc with triggering
- Use these as cue to slow down
- Maintain capacity to think
- Be curious, not reactive
- Choose how to respond

Managing Triggers
In the Moment Mindfulness Techniques

- **Breathe:**
  - One mindful breath: **"4-7-8" takes less than 20 seconds**
- **Be aware:**
  - Tune into your senses or body sensations
  - What is your body stance? Body language?
- **Move:**
  - Shift position, get up, sit down, walk, shake out tension
- **Key image or phrase: your "talisman"**
  - Mental image of person, object or place
  - Repeat key word to yourself: "Pause;" "WW_D?"
- **Get "on the balcony":**
  - Imagine you are observing the situation
  - What can you see from a different perspective?

Skill #6

Be curious about
what you can't know

	Mine	Other's
Intention	**My intention**	**Intention of other**
Impact	**My impact**	**Other's impact on me**

Harvard Negotiation Project

	Mine	**Other's**
Intention	X	
Impact		X

Harvard Negotiation Project

	Mine	Other's
Intention	**X**	**Our assumptions about intentions are often wrong**
Impact	**Good intentions do not make bad impact unimportant or irrelevant**	**X**

Harvard Negotiation Project

	Mine	Other's
Intention	X This is what I meant	*Is that what you meant?*
Impact	*How did it feel/land with you?*	X This is how it felt/seemed to me

Harvard Negotiation Project

What they **think** they heard is much more important to the listener than what you are **sure** you said.

The perception of the other is just as true as what you intended to say.

Skill #7
Learn not to take it personally even though it is meant to feel personal.

It Is Not Personal

- People attack when you represent a message they do not like

    - You are disappointing their expectations at a rate they can't tolerate

- When you take attacks personally you:

    - Conspire to take yourself out of the action

What You Do Next Matters

- Place the focus back on the message and the issues - reframe

- Your management of an attack (not substance of the accusation) determines your future effectiveness – ask a question

- Use trusted others to help you see what you have come to represent to others

Skill # 8 See polarities

Polarities are present in all adaptive work and can be managed.
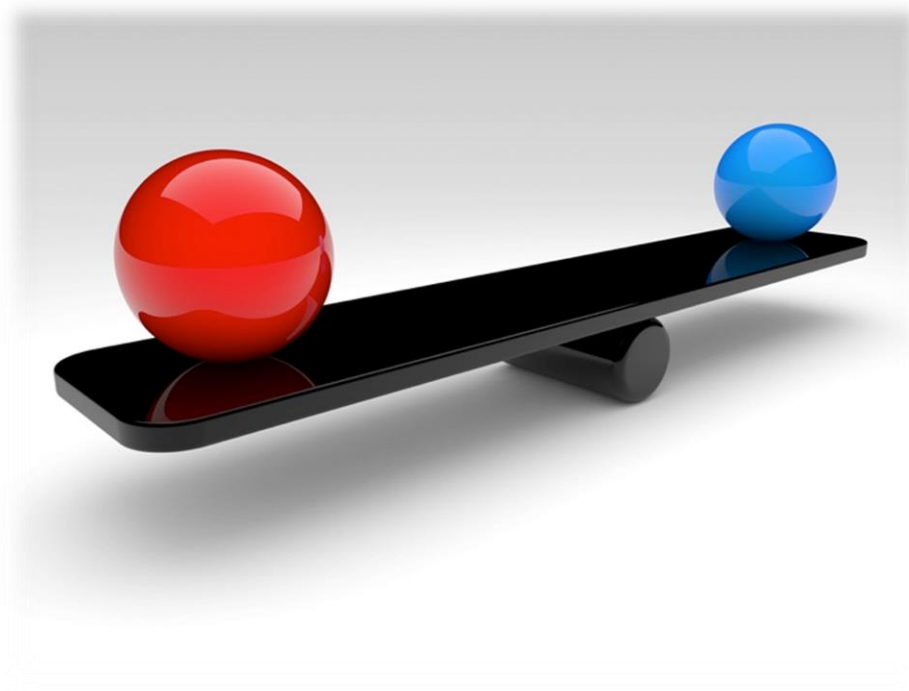
Definition of Polarity
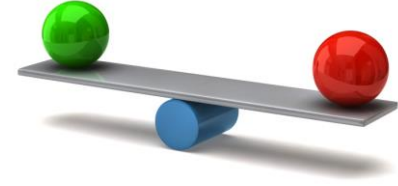
"A polarity is the possession or manifestation of two opposing attributes, tendencies or principles that are interdependent. They identify a relationship that is ongoing and raise issues that do not go away."

Barry Johnson

Consider Stability and Change

- We are preoccupied with change, however to focus on change alone is insufficient
- With polarity thinking, even with all our preoccupation with *change*, we should focus equally on *stability*—core values, principles, the parts of a culture worthy of preserving and maintaining.
- Not either/or… Both/and.

Properties of Adaptive Challenges
Wicked Problems

- **Gap between way things are and desired state**

- ***Varied points of view*** ← **Polarities**

- **Requires difficult learning**

- **Involves facing loss**

- **New competencies must be developed**

- **People with problems have problem solving responsibility**

- **Takes longer than technical work**

- **Requires trying things**

- **Generates disequilibrium, distress and work avoidance**

Effectiveness AND Efficiency

Optimal patient experience AND Healthy engaged professionals
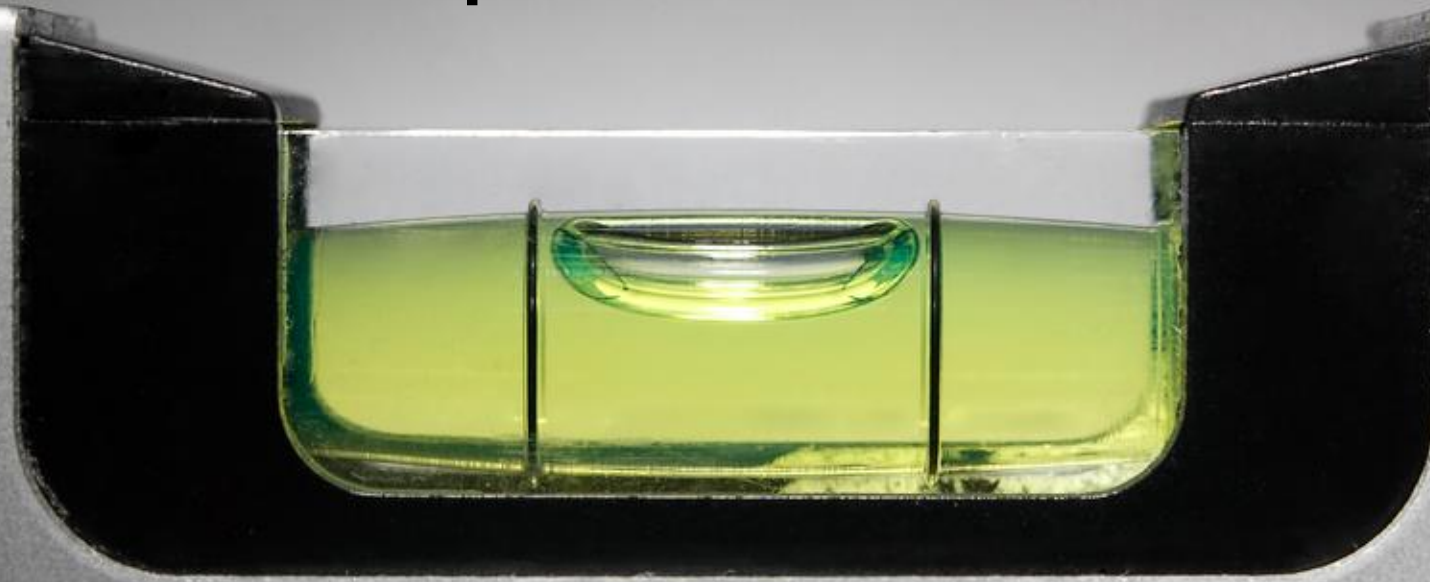
Teamwork AND Individual Contribution

Standardization AND Customization

"Either/or"

- One right answer
- When you are right, those who disagree are wrong!
- ***Technical***
  - Not wrong but insufficient for adaptive work

"Both/and"

- More than one right answer
- When you are right, those who disagree may also be right
- ***Adaptive***

Problem or Polarity?

Problem
- Not ongoing
- An end point
- Solvable
- Independent alternatives
- Can stand alone
- No need to include an alternative for the solution to work

Polarity
- Ongoing
- No end point
- Not solvable
- Must be managed together
- Cannot stand alone
- The alternatives need each other to optimize the situation over time

The most common cause of leadership failure is treating an adaptive problem *(polarity)* with a technical fix
(as a problem).

"People who thrive in difficult times do two things...
face reality and remain hopeful."

-Victor Frankl
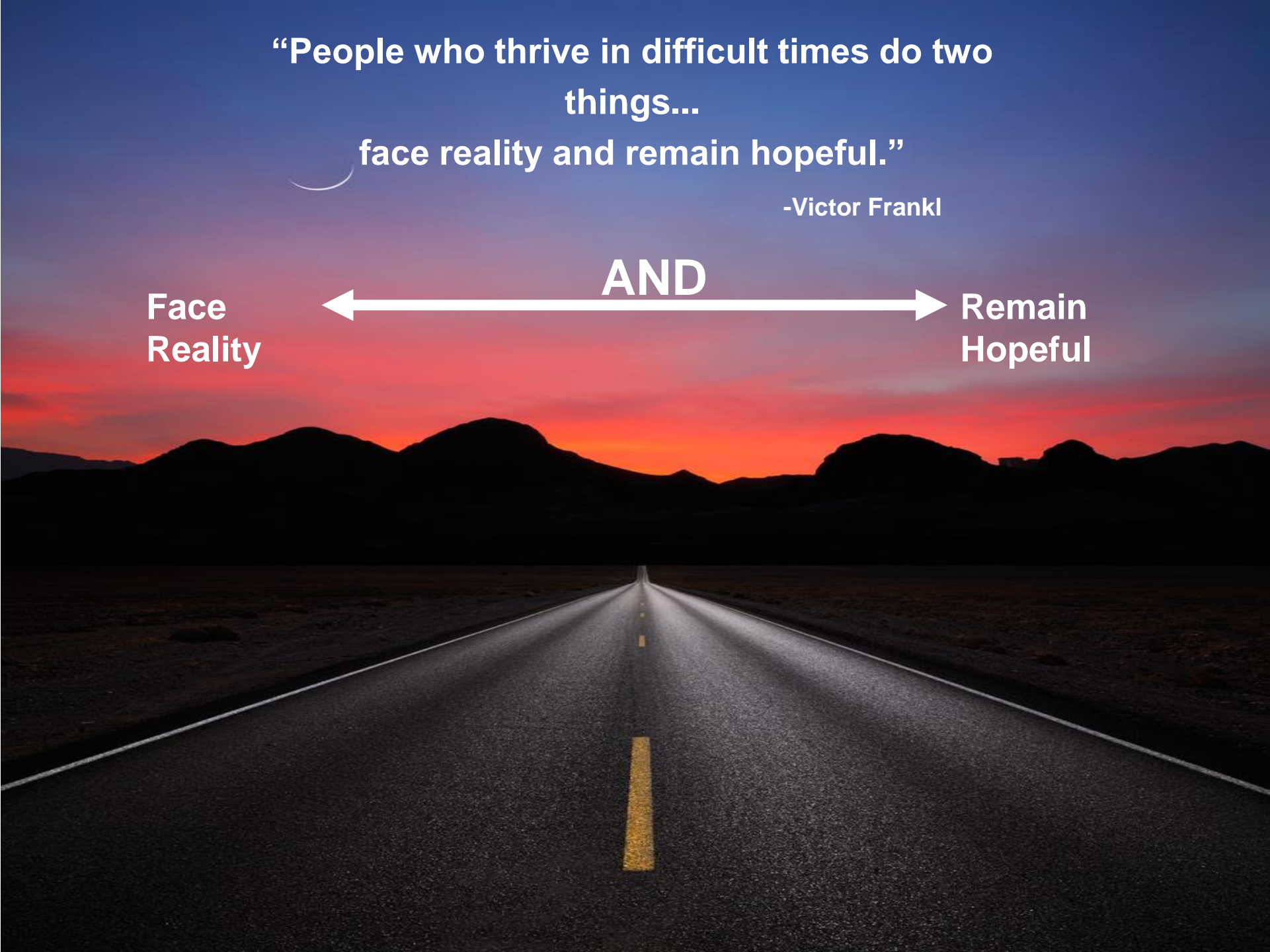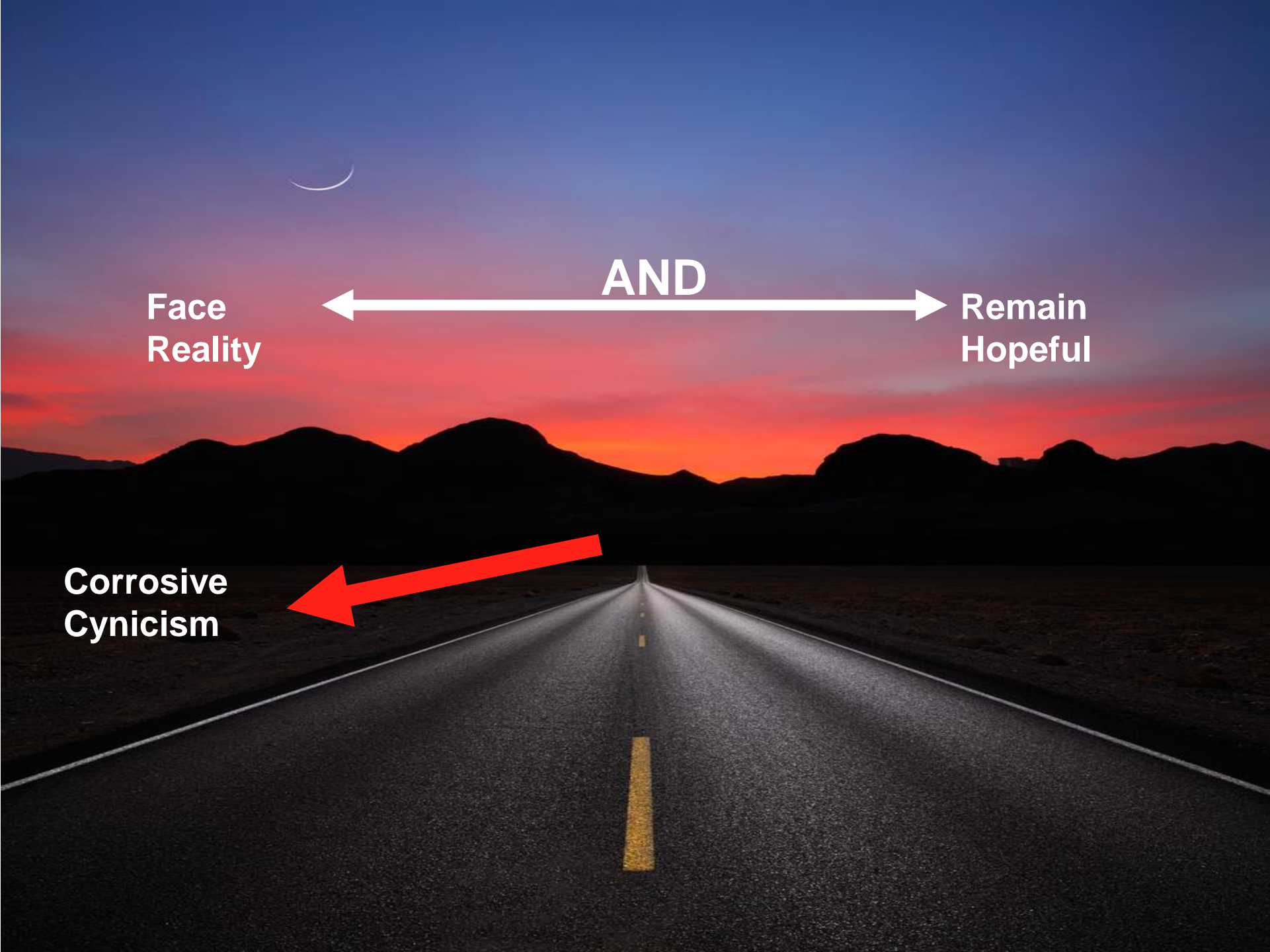
AND
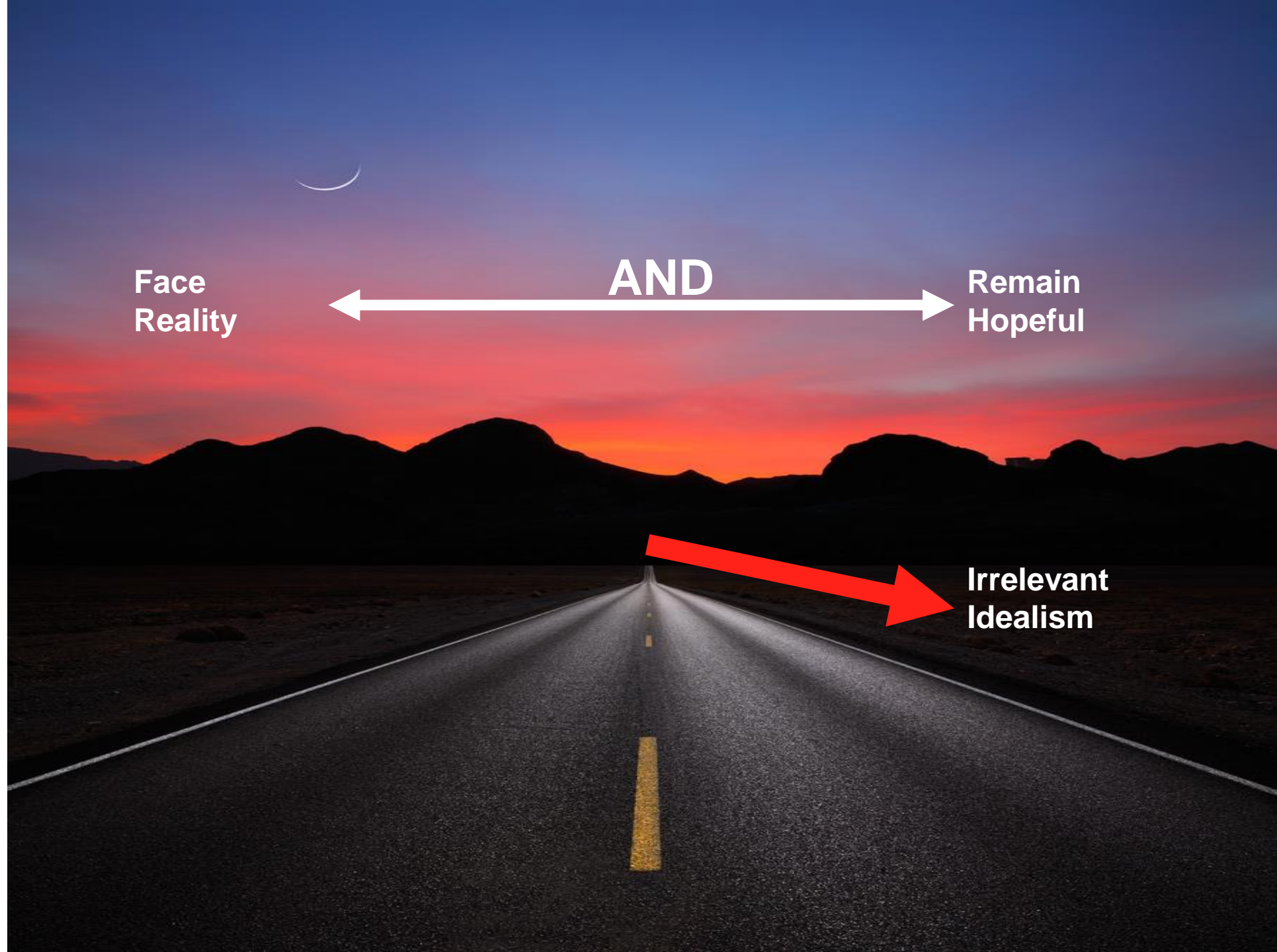
Face
Reality

Remain
Hopeful

Polarities

- In all difficult, wicked or adaptive problems
- Power and truth in both aspects
- AND is the key
- Either taken to extreme alone is nonsense

Polarity Management

A technique which makes the most of polarities to take advantage of positives and reduce negatives

Polarity Map

Why

Greater purpose statement or the desired state

GAP or "the work"

Leading Clinical Quality Improvement at the Front Line Going Slow to Go Fast

What optimal focus on this pole looks like

What optimal focus on this pole looks like

Standardization AND **Customization**

What over focus on this pole at the expense of the other pole looks like

What over focus on this pole at the expense of the other pole looks like

Quick Fixes for Deeper Problems

Deeper fear if things stay as they are

Polarity Map

GAP
or
"the work"

Leading Clinical Quality Improvement
at the Front Line
Going Slow to Go Fast

**Positive results
focusing on standardization**
Best practices create pull for
organizational resources
System can make it easy to do right thing
Patients get consistent best care
Consistently do what works
Save resources to work out solutions where
answers are not clear

**Positive results
focusing on customization**
Empower and engage creativity on front line
See new possibilities
Unleash ability to do more of what works
Invite exercise of leadership deeply and broadly
within org
Increase sense of ownership of the work

Standardization | AND | Customization

**Results of over-focusing
On standardization at the expense
of customization**
Cook book medicine
Disempowered professionals
Disengaged hearts and minds
Professionals feel disrespected
I am a widget

**Negative results of over-focusing
on customization at the expense
of standardization**
Chaos
More variation than system can support
Scattered energy and no cohesive vision
Practice alone together

Quick Fixes for Deeper Problems

Polarity Map

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Quick Fixes for Deeper Problems

Constant Motion in a Constant Predictable Direction

GAP or "the work"

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Quick Fixes for Deeper Problems

Resistance

GAP
or
"the work"

Leading Clinical Quality Improvement
at the Front Line
Going Slow to Go Fast

**Positive results
focusing on standardization**
**Best practices create pull for
organizational resources
System can make it easy to do right thing
Patients get consistent best care
Consistently do what works
Save resources to work out solutions where
answers are not clear**

**Positive results
focusing on customization**
**Empower and engage creativity on front line
See new possibilities
Unleash ability to do more of what works
Invite exercise of leadership deeply and broadly
within org
Increase sense of ownership of the work**

Standardization

Customization

AND

**Results of over-focusing
On standardization at the expense
of customization**
**Cook book medicine
Disempowered professionals
Disengaged hearts and minds
Professionals feel disrespected
I am a widget**

**Negative results of over-focusing
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**Chaos
More variation than system can support
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Quick Fixes for Deeper Problems

Leadership Intervention
Adjusting the Tension

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Optimize by Paying Attention

Maximize the Upsides of Both Poles

Constant Motion in a Constant Predictable Direction

GAP or "the work"

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Mindless Pull of Gravity

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Mindful Continual Readjustment

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GAP or "the work"

Resilient Leader

Optimal focus on facing reality
Credible evidence
Measured solutions
Stakeholders can see it too
Work with what is true now

Face Reality

Over-focus
On facing reality at the expense of remaining hopeful
Corrosive cynicism
Decreased morale
Hopelessness
Scare self and others
More critical than is useful

AND

Optimal focus on remaining hopeful
Foster enthusiasm and invite ideas
Imagine possibilities and creative solutions
Appreciate what is working and how you can do more of that in new ways
Work towards what can be

Remain Hopeful

Over-focus on remaining hopeful at the expense of facing reality
Fantastical thinking
Collude in ignoring given conditions
Being in lala land
Irrelevant idealism

Exhausted leader

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Exhausted Leader

"The key to effectively
managing polarities is the
ability to tap the *infinity factor*.
Once you understand
the energy flow
you can anticipate the down sides
and prevent going there."

Barry Johnson

**Skill #10
Find sanctuary**

Find Sanctuary
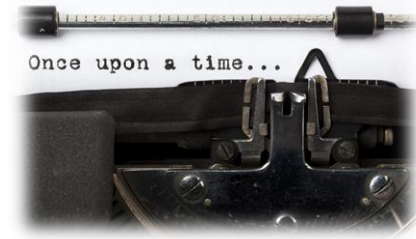
Feel physically and psychologically safe

Reflect and capture lessons

Regain courage and perspective

Reaffirm a deeper sense of self and purpose

Restore spiritual resources

Three Good Things

Three Good Things

- What went well today and what was my role in bringing them about?
- Memories are tricky: good ones are like Teflon, they slip away, while the bad ones stick like Velcro (especially when we are tired)
- Three Good Things retrains our brains so we can remember good things, and our role in bringing them about
- Preloading our prefrontal cortex to engage the positive

Positive Psychology Progress

Empirical Validation of Interventions

Martin E. P. Seligman and Tracy A. Steen   *University of Pennsylvania*
Nansook Park   *University of Rhode Island*
Christopher Peterson   *University of Michigan*

Positive psychology has flourished in the last 5 years. The authors review recent developments in the field, including books, meetings, courses, and conferences. They also discuss the newly created classification of character strengths and virtues, a positive complement to the various editions of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders *(e. g., American Psychiatric Association, 1994), and present some cross-cultural findings that suggest a surprising ubiquity of strengths and virtues. Finally, the authors focus on psychological interventions that increase individual happiness. In a 6-group, random-assignment, placebo-controlled Internet study, the authors tested 5 purported happiness interventions and 1 plausible control exercise. They found that 3 of the interventions lastingly increased happiness and decreased depressive symptoms. Positive interventions can supplement traditional interventions that relieve suffering and may someday be the practical legacy of positive psychology.*

application (Linley & Joseph, 2004). Can psychologists take what they have learned about the science and practice of treating mental illness and use it to create a practice of making people lastingly happier? That is, can they create an evidence-based practice of positive psychology?

In this article, we first review the recent growth within positive psychology. Next, we describe basic research that bears on whether people can become lastingly happier, and then we present the results of our own happiness interventions that we rigorously tested with a randomized, placebo-controlled design.
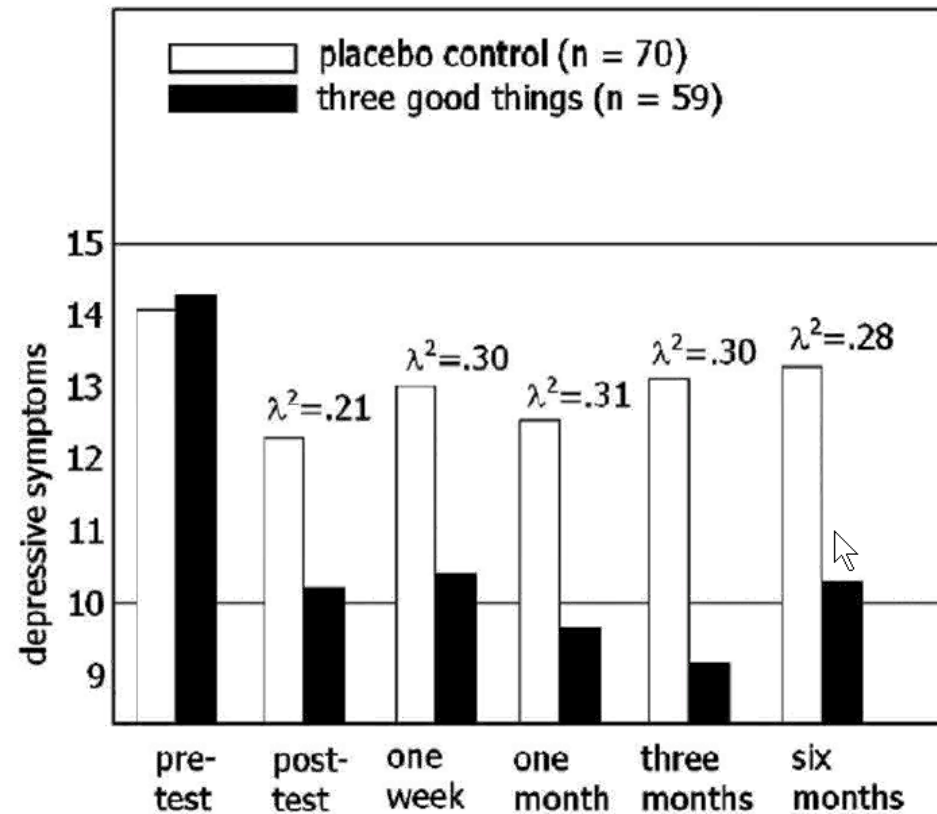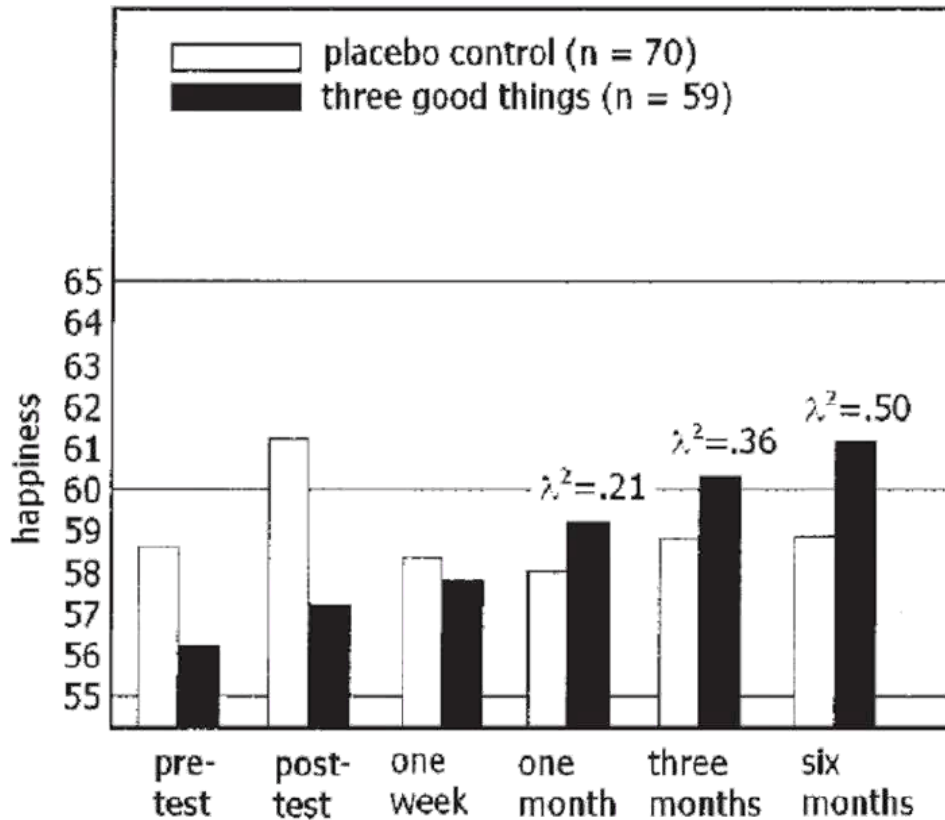
Progress Report

Positive psychology is an umbrella term for the study of positive emotions, positive character traits, and enabling institutions. Research findings from positive psychology are intended to supplement, not remotely to replace, what is

Three good things

- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwkDEM4gFBA

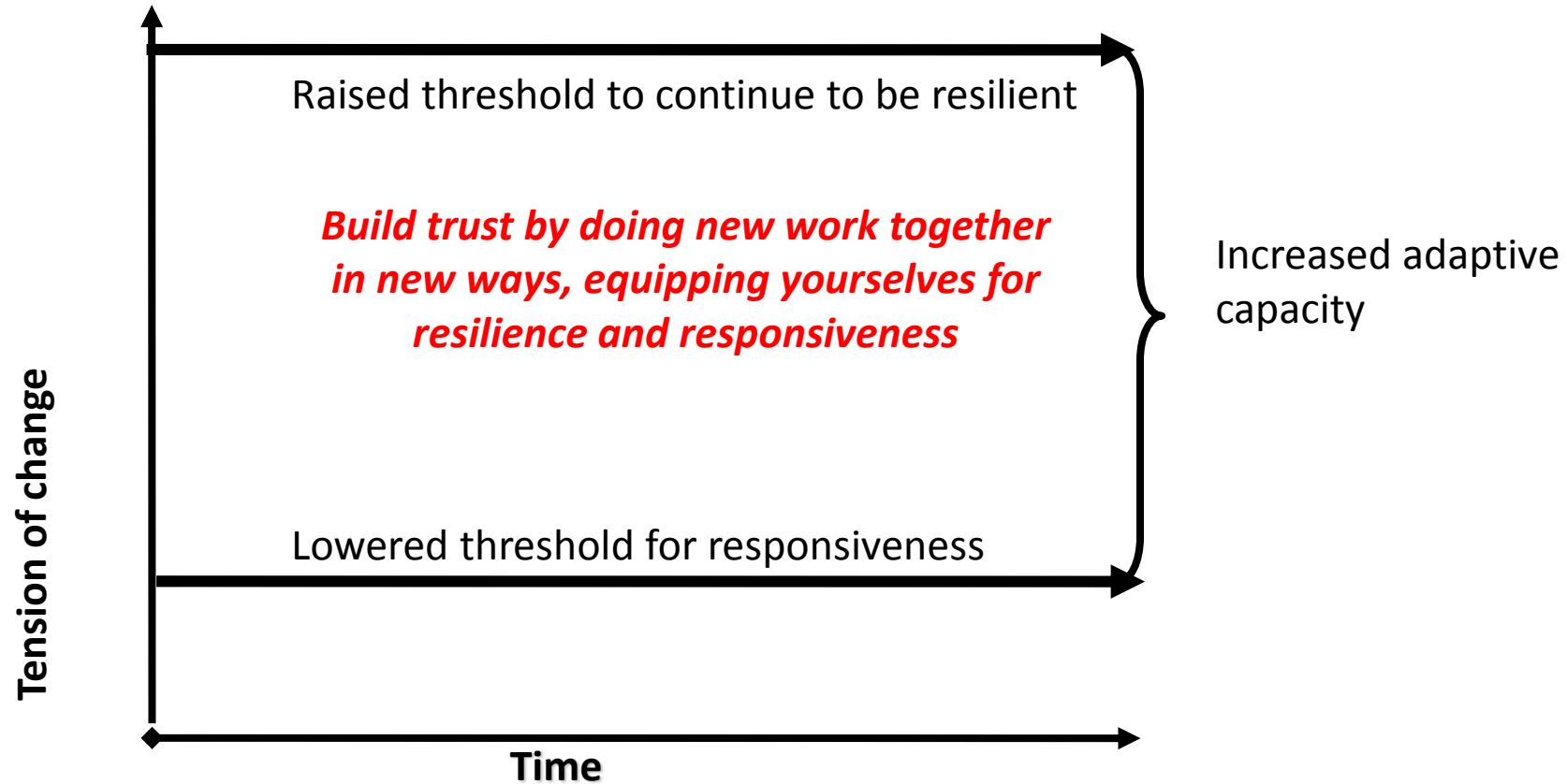Seligman, Steen, Park & Petersen, 2005

Three Good Things

- Exercise works if it gets you to reflect on the positive, and you role in bringing it about

- Have to do it 14 days

- Best time right before sleep onset

- Learning how others use it can be helpful and inspiring

- Beware of transitions – some people fall off their 3 Good Things in transitions to and from weekends.

The Heart of Health Care
Is Relationship

Increase Capacity for Adaptive Work
Holding Tension of Uncertainty Productively

Raised threshold to continue to be resilient

Build trust by doing new work together in new ways, equipping yourselves for resilience and responsiveness

Increased adaptive capacity

Lowered threshold for responsiveness

Tension of change

Time

Stay Resilient and Lead

- Distinguish technical from adaptive work
- Reflect in action
- Recognize resistance means being outside the zone of resilience and responsiveness
- Start with compassion
- Create a pause
- Stay curious about what you can't know
- Don't take it personally
- See polarities
- Face reality and remain hopeful
- Find sanctuary