

# ***Epidemic Leadership: How to Lead Infectiously in the Era of Big Problems***

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Epidemic Leadership

*Prepared for*  
TGI Leadership Conference | April 10, 2022



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**nrc**  
HEALTH

1

## Today...

- Identify the implications of The Pandemic on current and future state of healthcare leadership and healthcare organizations.
- Describe how epidemics reveal insights into leading in complex times.
- Describe Key Leadership Insights for adapting positively to the challenge of the epidemic age.

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2

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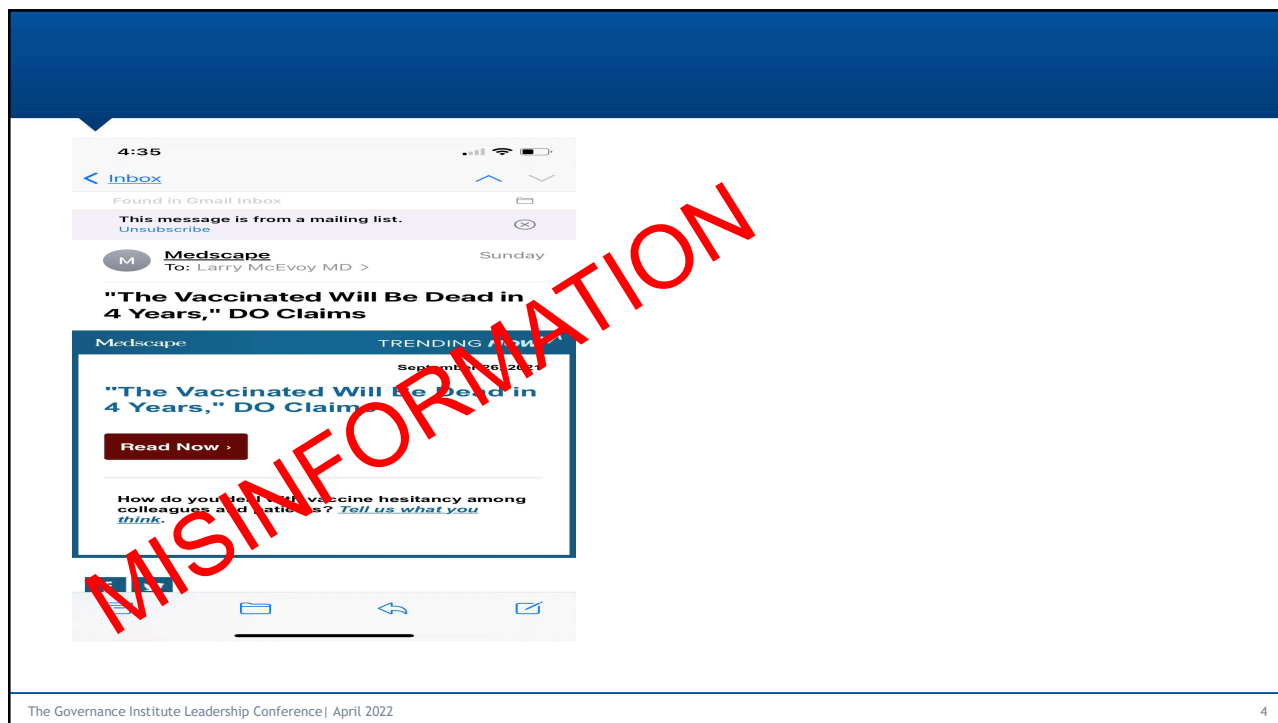
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New Word:



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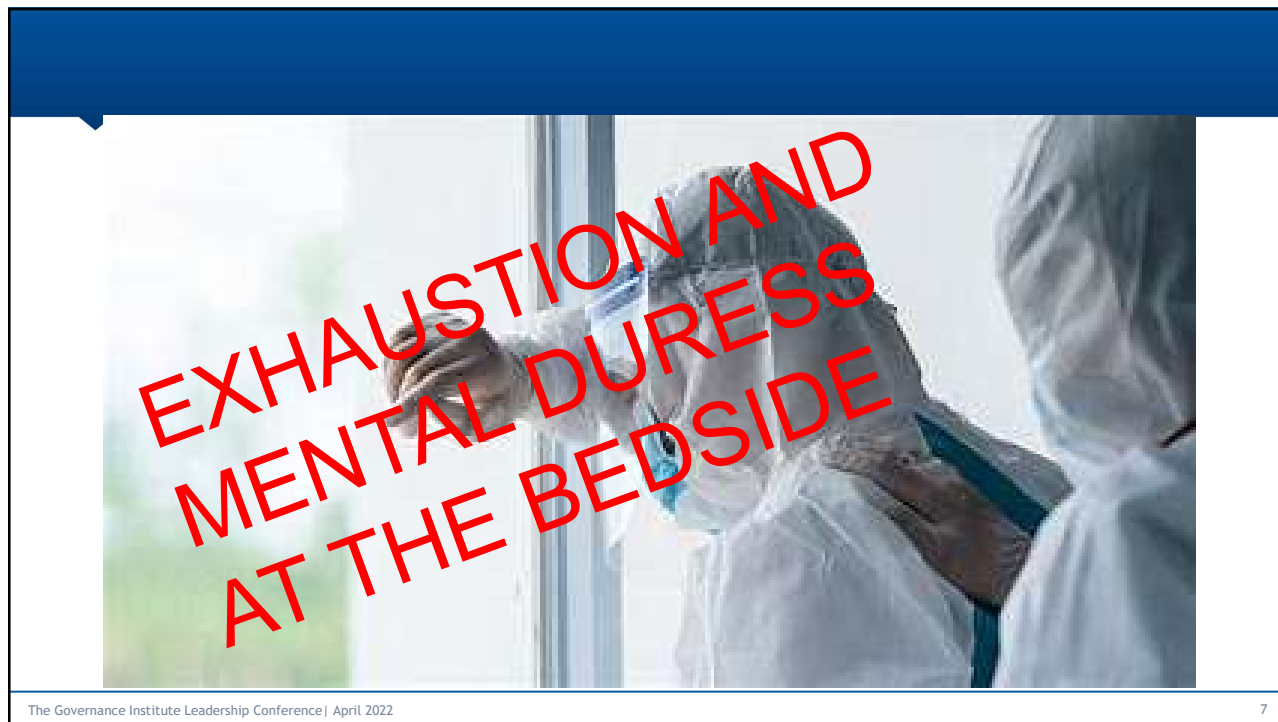
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5



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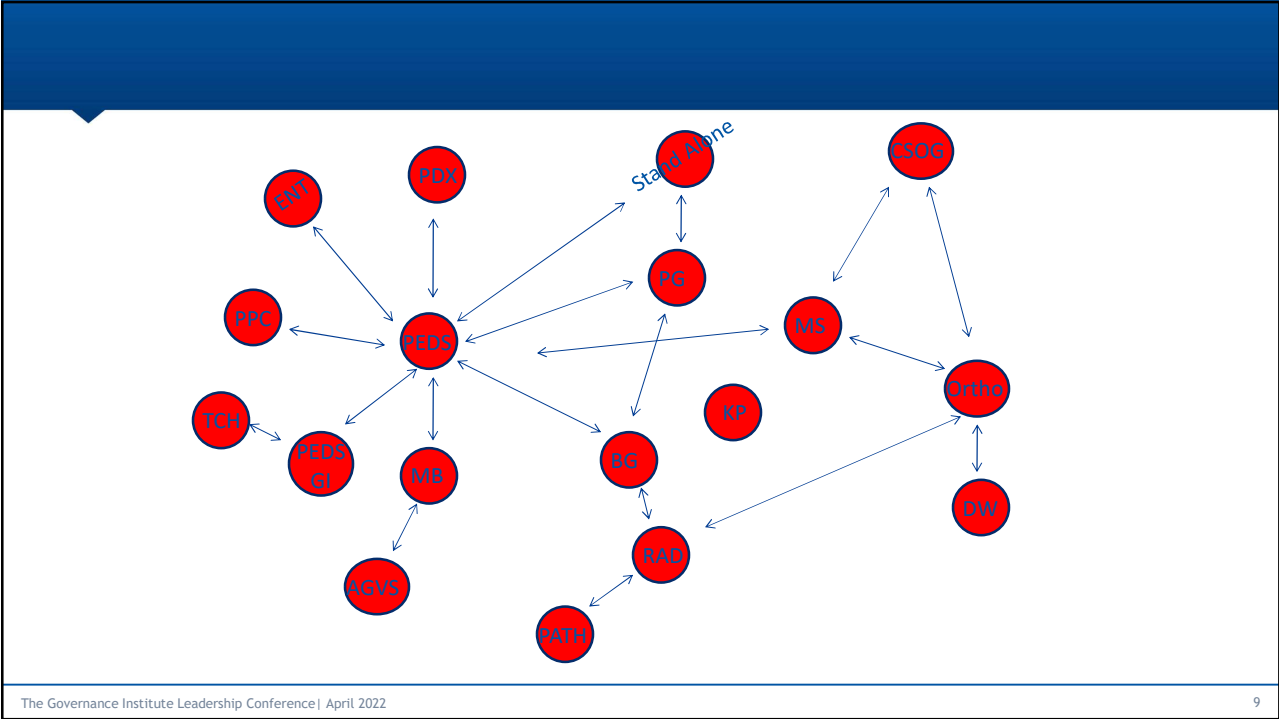
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7



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9

## The END of our Usual Recipe for Leading...

too much to do, not enough time, everybody is exhausted....

10

Where we live, work, and lead..

# VUCA

- Volatile
- Uncertain
- Complex
- Ambiguous

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11

## Why is VUCA such a disruption?

VUCA

human interactions

issues

infrastructure

size

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12



# This doesn't work any more...

The spreadsheet shows a table with columns for 'Cost for Activity' and 'Participant'. The 'Participant' column lists 'Person 1' through 'Person 10'. The 'Cost for Activity' column lists 'Check 1' through 'Check 10'. Below the table, there are summary rows for 'Total Paid', 'Total Owed', and 'Difference'.

Cost for Activity	Participant	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3	Person 4	Person 5	Person 6	Person 7	Person 8	Person 9	Person 10
Check 1											
Check 2											
Check 3											
Check 4											
Check 5											
Check 6											
Check 7											
Check 8											
Check 9											
Check 10											
Total Paid											
Total Owed											
Difference											



13

# What did the pandemic actually do, in its own terms...?

A microscopic image of a virus particle, likely a coronavirus, with three green ovals overlaid. The ovals are labeled 'Performance', 'Learning', and 'Vitality'. The virus particle is shown in a 3D perspective, with its characteristic spike-like surface.

14

## Why was the pandemic so successful!?

Self-organizing, self-propagating adaptive phenomenon ideally designed for complexity (aka the world we live in)

It knew what many of us do not and played by rules many of us don't understand or believe.

It did this *without a brain!*

15

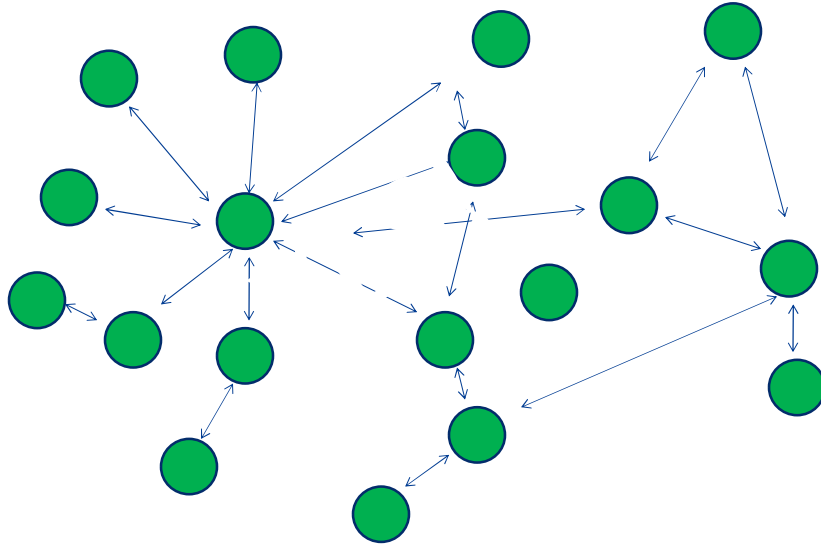
## The Virus: biology as THE operating



16



## Can we do that, *positively*?



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17

17

## Leaders, Teams, and Organizations...

Performance...

...Learning...

...Vitality

Everywhere...(at scale)

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18

18

18

PAGE 9

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# Constrictive Bureaucracy, Adaptive System?

## □ Bureaucracy

- Endless Tasks, Never done
- Relentless Analysis by a few
- Exhaustive tasking by many
- Counting, Measuring >> Sensing, Responding
- Administration >> Action
- Too Many Metrics
- Projects and Initiatives
- Policy and Mandate
- Demotivating and Constricting at Scale

## □ System

- Important priorities, unwavering focus
- Energetic participation by many
- Sustained and Sustainable action by all
- Sensing, Responding >> Counting, Measuring
- Action >> Administration
- Dense, Formative Feedback
- Action and Reflection
- Purpose and Mobilization
- Energizing and Adaptive at Scale

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19

19

How? Leadership is now the creation of cloud capacity via self-organizing propagation in human networks...



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20

20

PAGE 10

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VUCA requires *a whole new leadership operating system*

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21

# You have choices...



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22



## This is not a metaphor...

- Ebola, Influenza, Cancer
- Cloud Computing
- Visa
- Social Physics
- Gardens and Galaxies
- Networks—Facebook, Twitter
- Rumors, Fake News
- Brains, Beehives, Termite Mounds



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23

23

## Problem!



24

# Is there science?



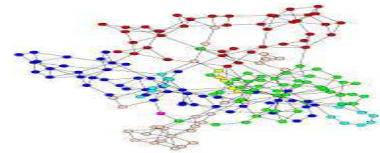
Complexity Science



Neuroscience

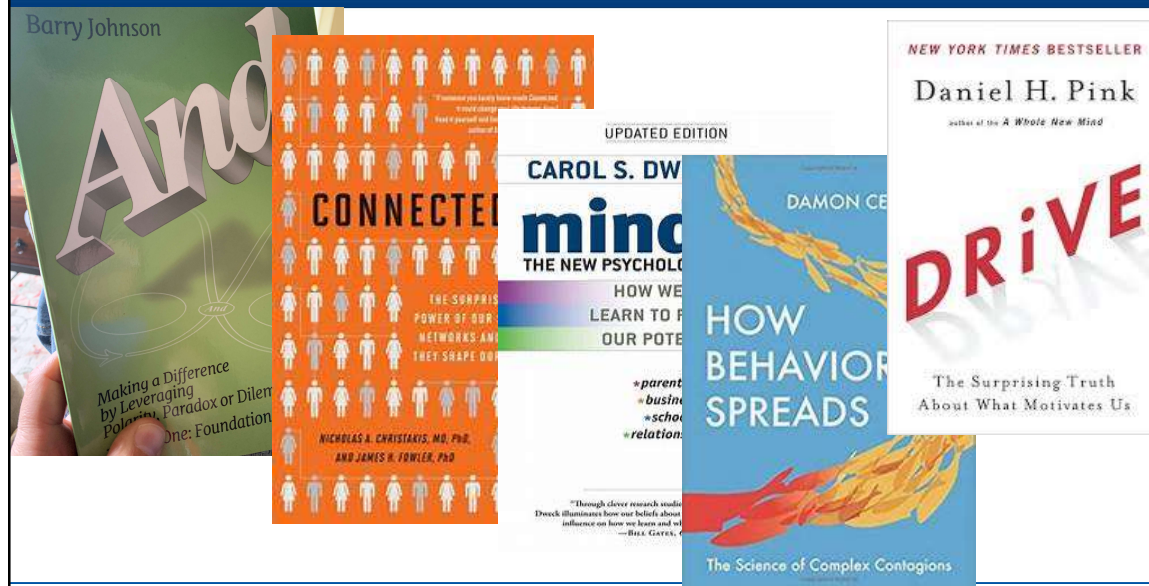


Network Science



25

# Are there books?



26

# Is there a map?

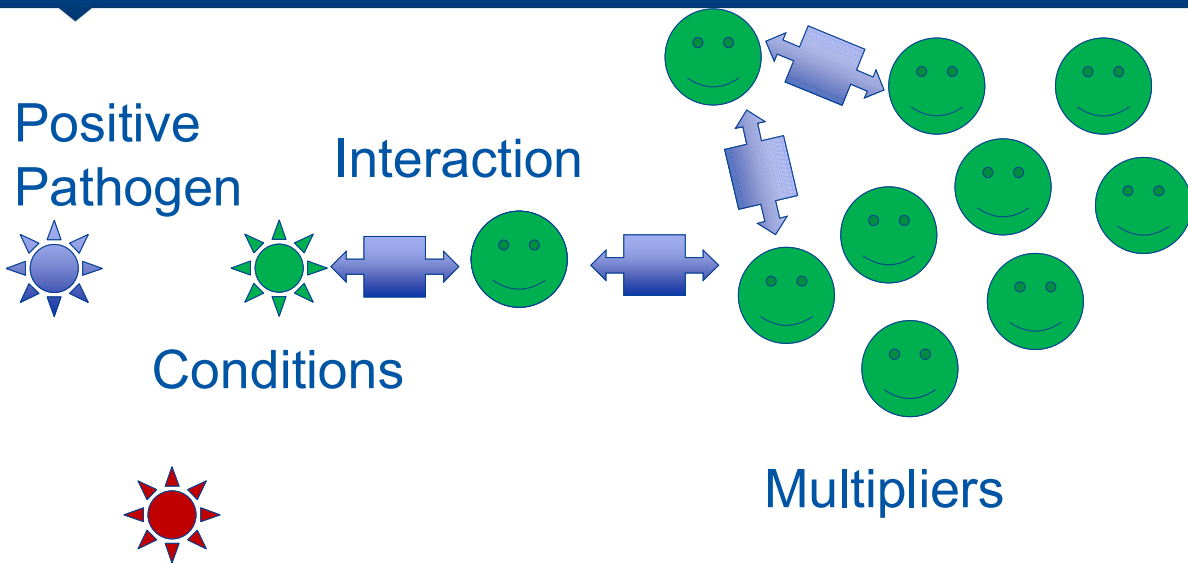


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27

27

# Huh? germinal idea and three organizing principles...



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28

28



## A school in Uganda



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29

29

## Their secret?

A change of pathogen

From Confining Obedience to  
Infectious Creativity

Conditions

Post-traumatic conformity to  
relational community

Interaction

Appreciation-Affirmation.  
Curiosity. Empathy.

Everywhere

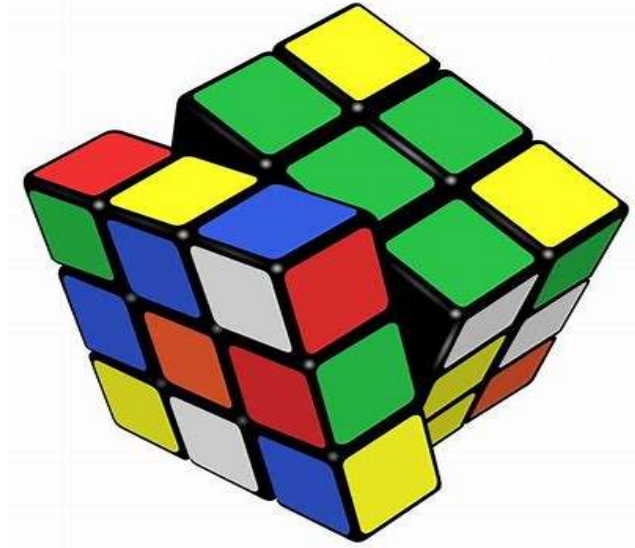
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30

30

## Microsoft: “Not exactly where the kids want to go.”

- There was no network to support and develop young talent, careers, and social context....
- so they built one, and solved a problem for themselves and MSFT

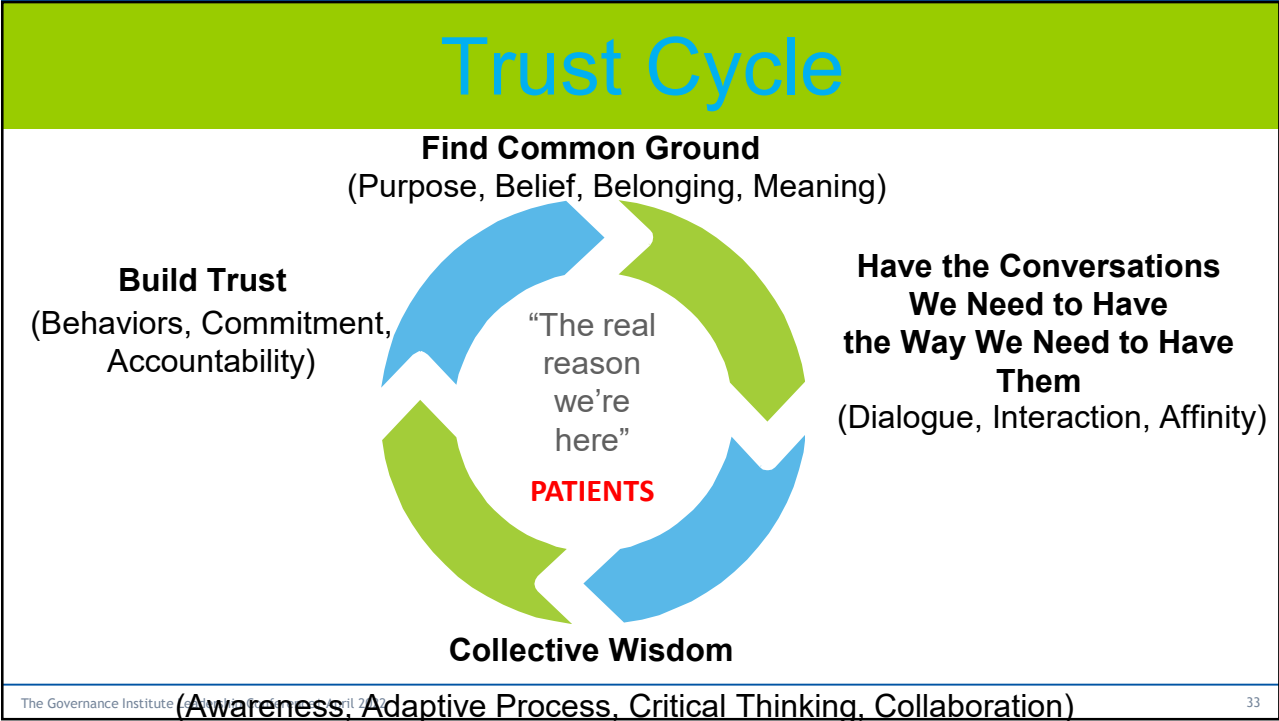


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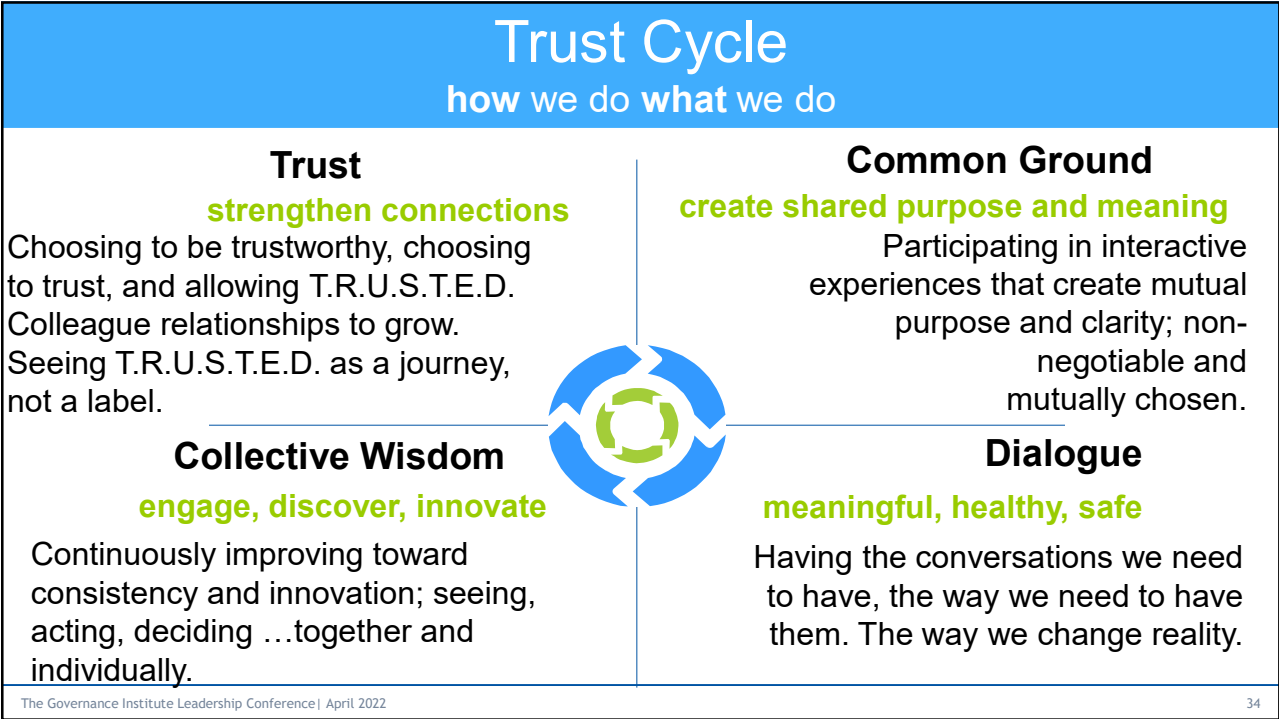
## My story...?



32



33



34



## Why does it work?

*“...because there’s a betrayal cycle constantly at work...and we all feel it.”*

*AKA—because ideas/actions propagate through networks*

35

## I saw something come from nothing, by everybody



- 100 million dollars
- 3.5 million in implant expenses
- A 3-fold increase in safety
- Arguing cardiologists figured it out
- Solved a 12-yr problem in 48 hours, without “bosses” or mandates...

36

# Seeking the *Syndemics of Health*

LEADERSHIP; leaders as positive epidemic makers

INNOVATION; swarming departure from the not-working norm

COMMUNITY; a high-growth ecosystem where we all belong, create, care, and steward



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37

37

## Insights for leaders

- Pandemic exposed a disintegration of human community as well as points of renewal.
- Pandemic unveiled how epidemics leverage biology as an OS to scale PLV.
- Leaders can scale PLV as a function of human community by understanding Biology as an OS.



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38

38

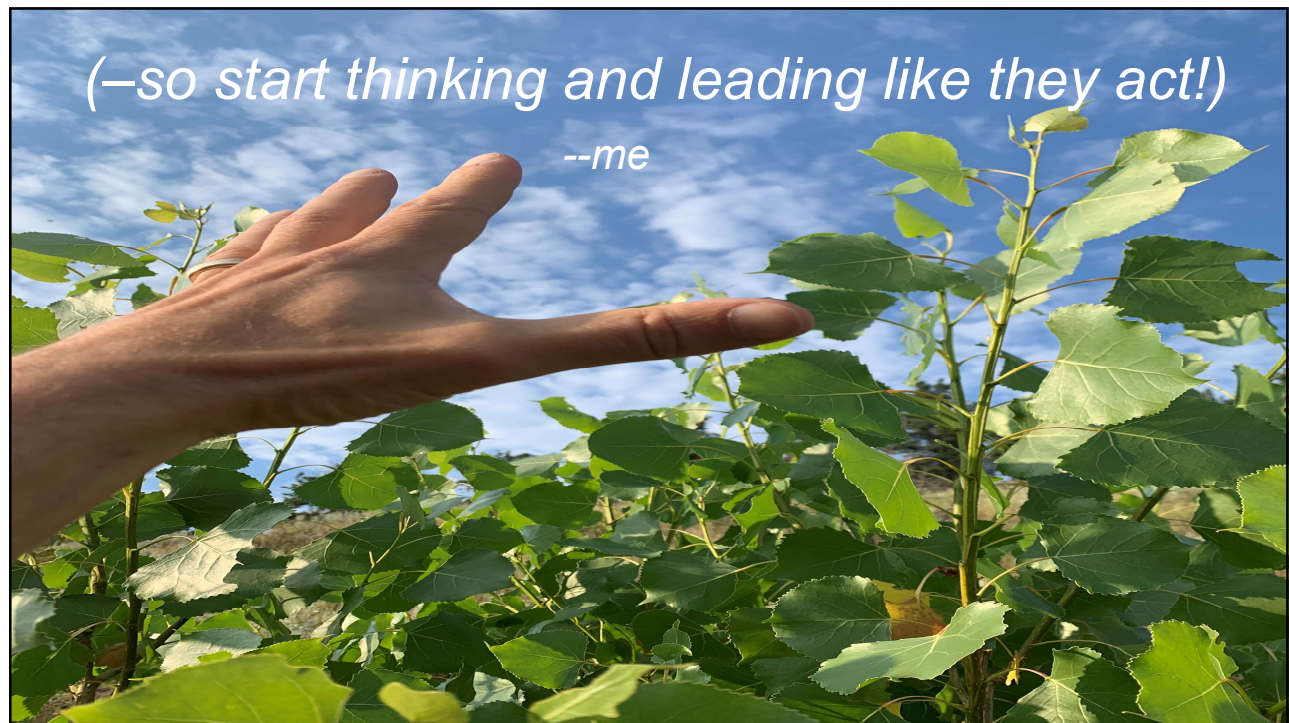
PAGE 19

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*“We live on a  
microbial planet...”* Andrew

Knoll,  
2022 Crafoord Prize Winner,  
Harvard University Professor of Natural History

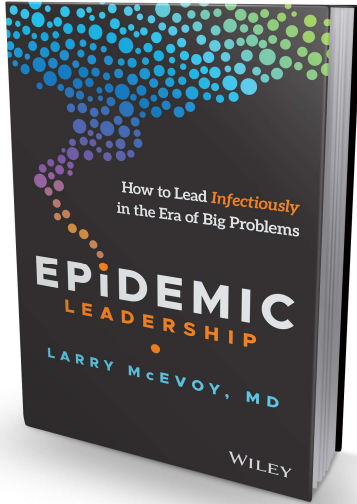
39



40



## Swarm on with your *intentional epidemic*...



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41

41

## Appendix slides

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42

42

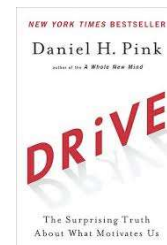
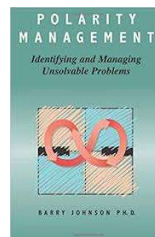
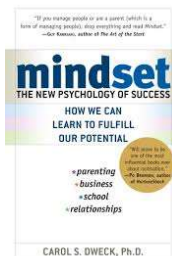
## Organizing Principle #1 Germinate the founding idea

- **Must** encode authorship, not just harvest, of PLV
- and immunize against:
  - misinformation
  - mistrust
  - marginalization



43

## Organizing Principle #2: Unleash Growth



44

## Organizing Principle #3: Model Interactions

- Model = Embody, Example, Role Model
- Model = Design patterns that work when you're NOT AROUND



45

## Organizing Principle #4: Create Multipliers

- Collective Intelligence Design
- Ground-up approaches via network design and leverage
- Early action-orientation
- Short and accelerating feedback loops, not long waits for data



46