

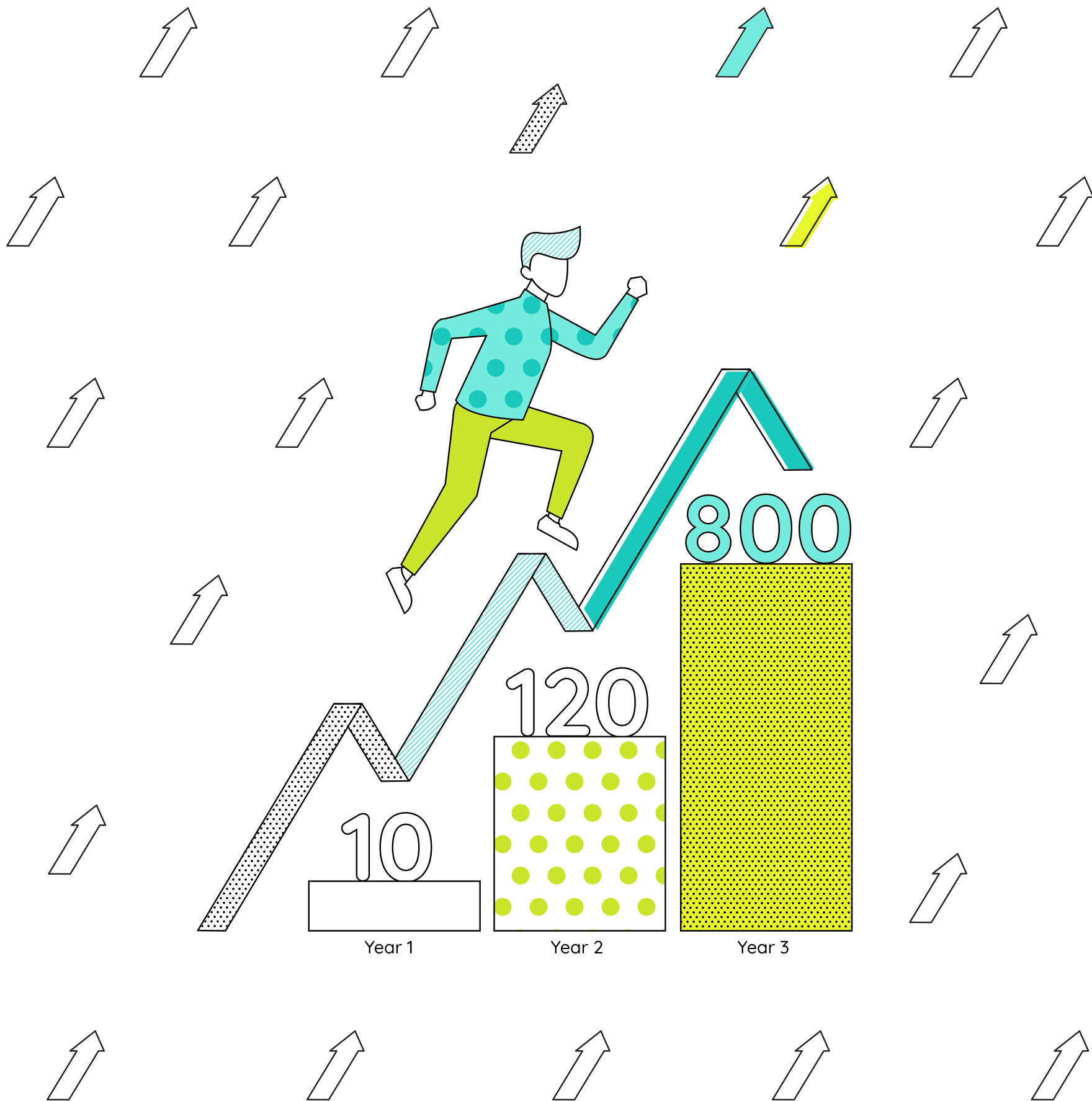


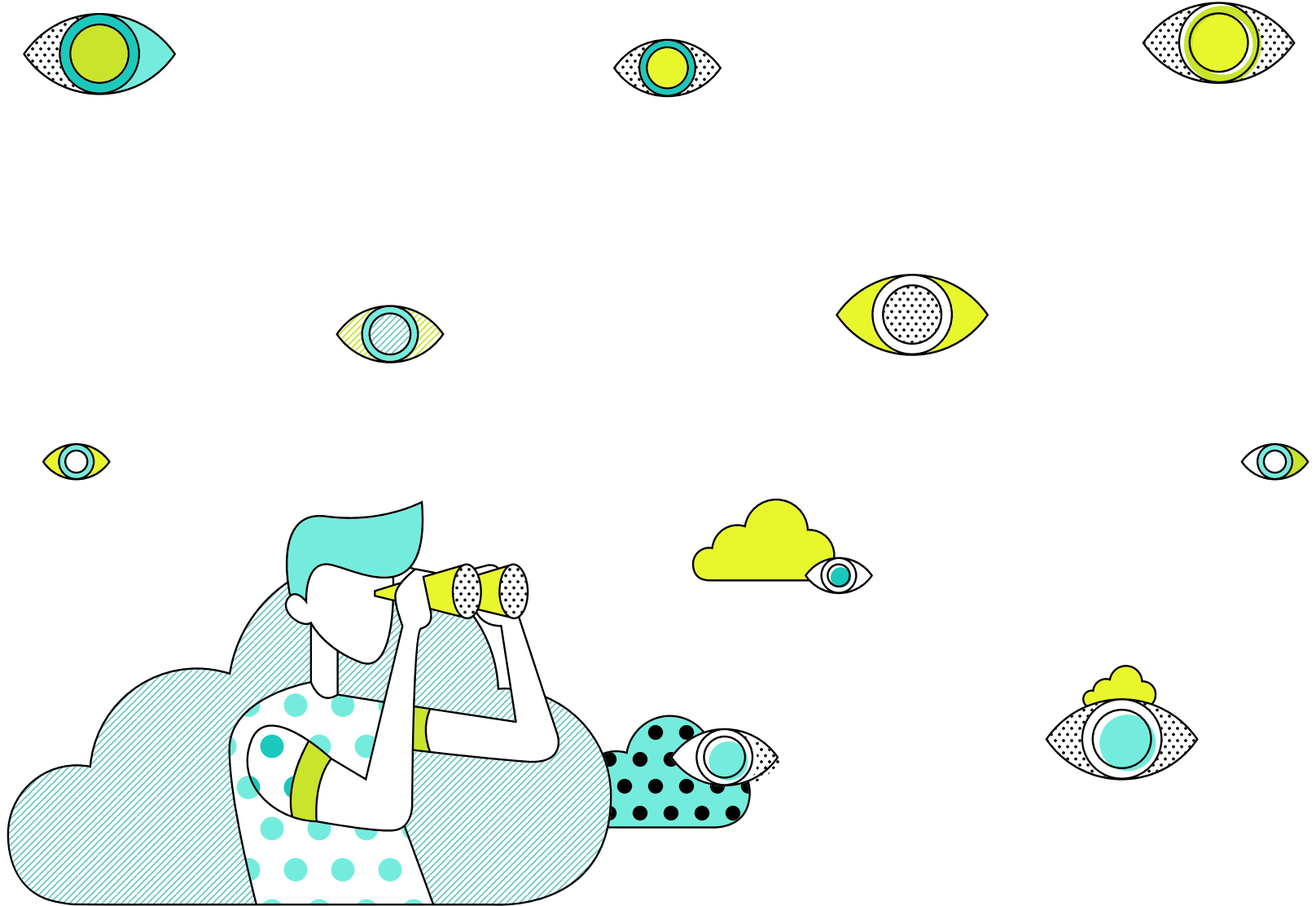
Author: Ankur Warikoo | Visuals: Shreya Shah

When I became the CEO of Groupon India in 2011, the biggest team I had led until then was 10 people!

In less than 12 months, I was to go on and lead 120 people.

In 2 years, I was to go on and lead 800+ people. And I learnt a thing or two about leadership...



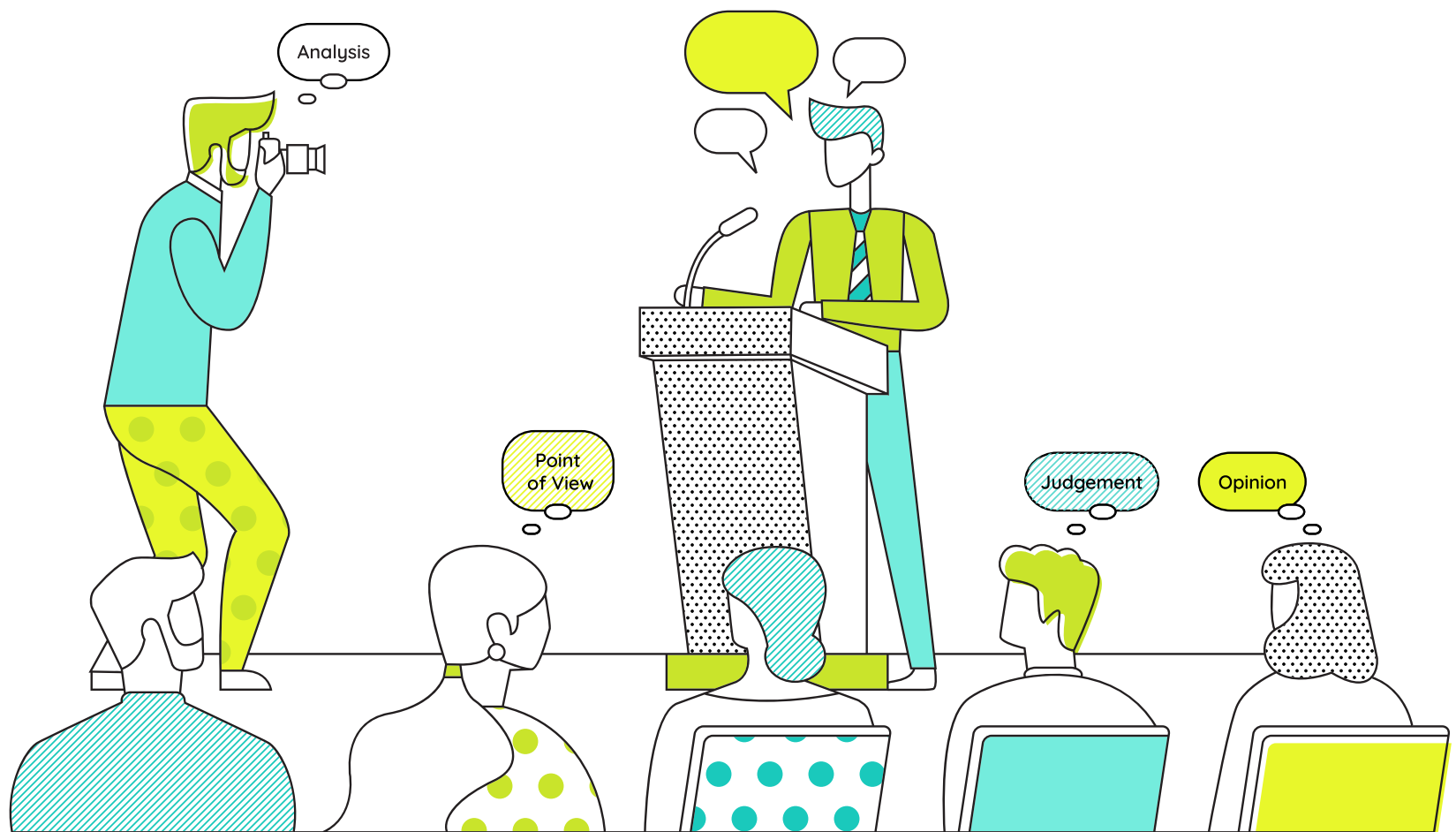


A great leader is dispensable when it comes to their tasks and actions.

And indispensable when it comes to their thought and vision.

As a leader, you are a celebrity, whether you like it or not. Every word you speak will be analyzed, every action of yours will be reproduced, every standard you allow will set a new standard.

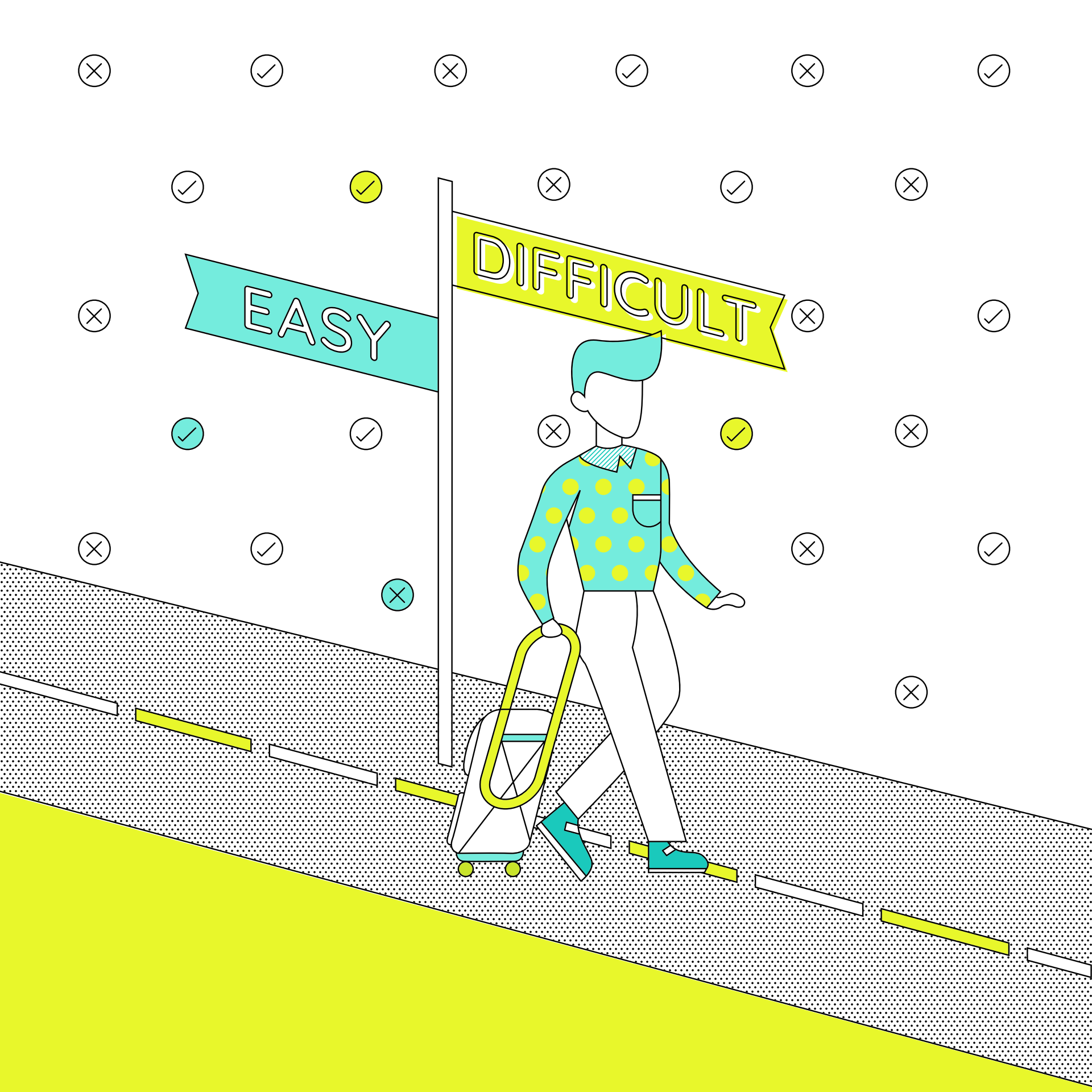
Think of how you speak, how you act and the standards you accept.

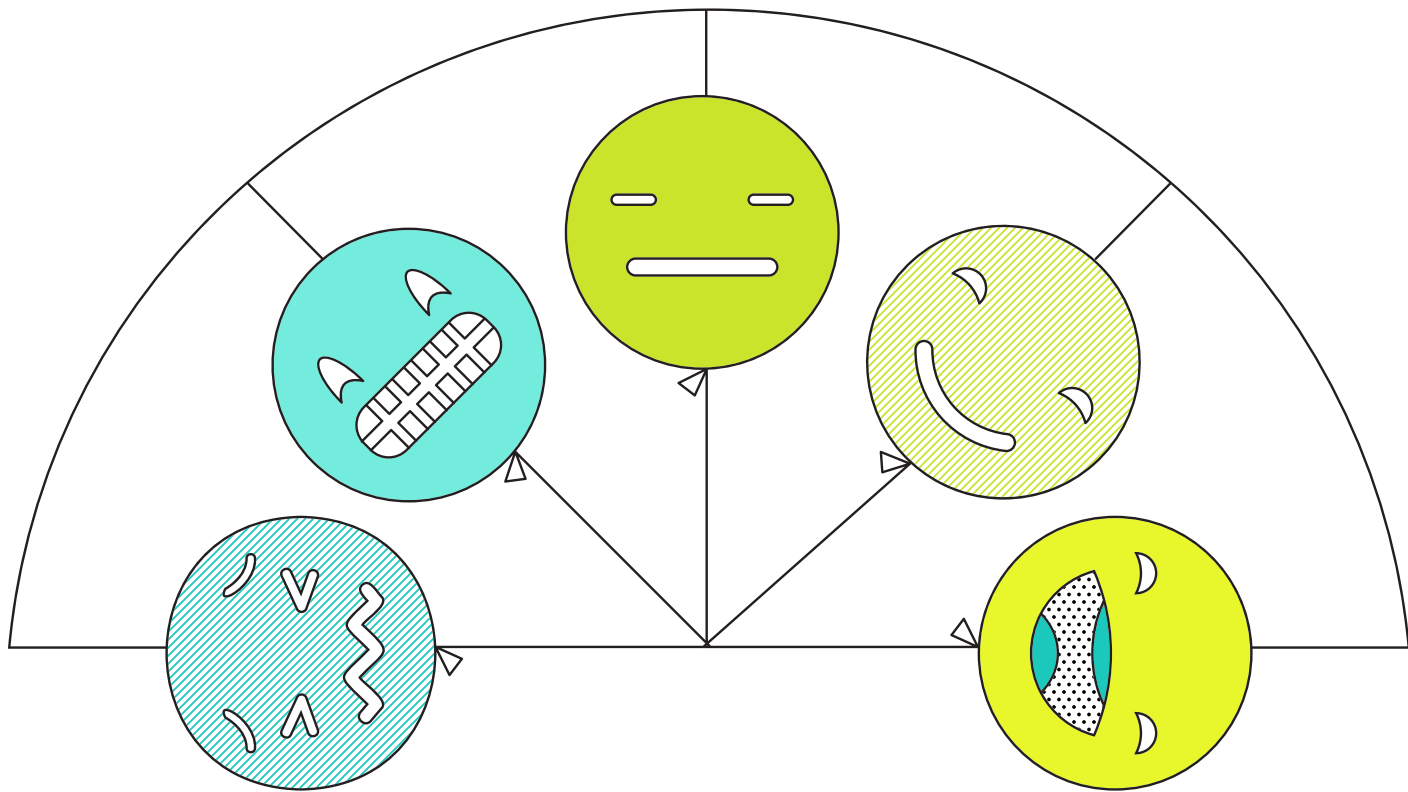


As a leader, the only time you are successful is when you take unpopular decisions AND they work out. Taking popular decisions is “easy”. No credit for that.

And if your decisions don't work out, then you are as good for nothing.

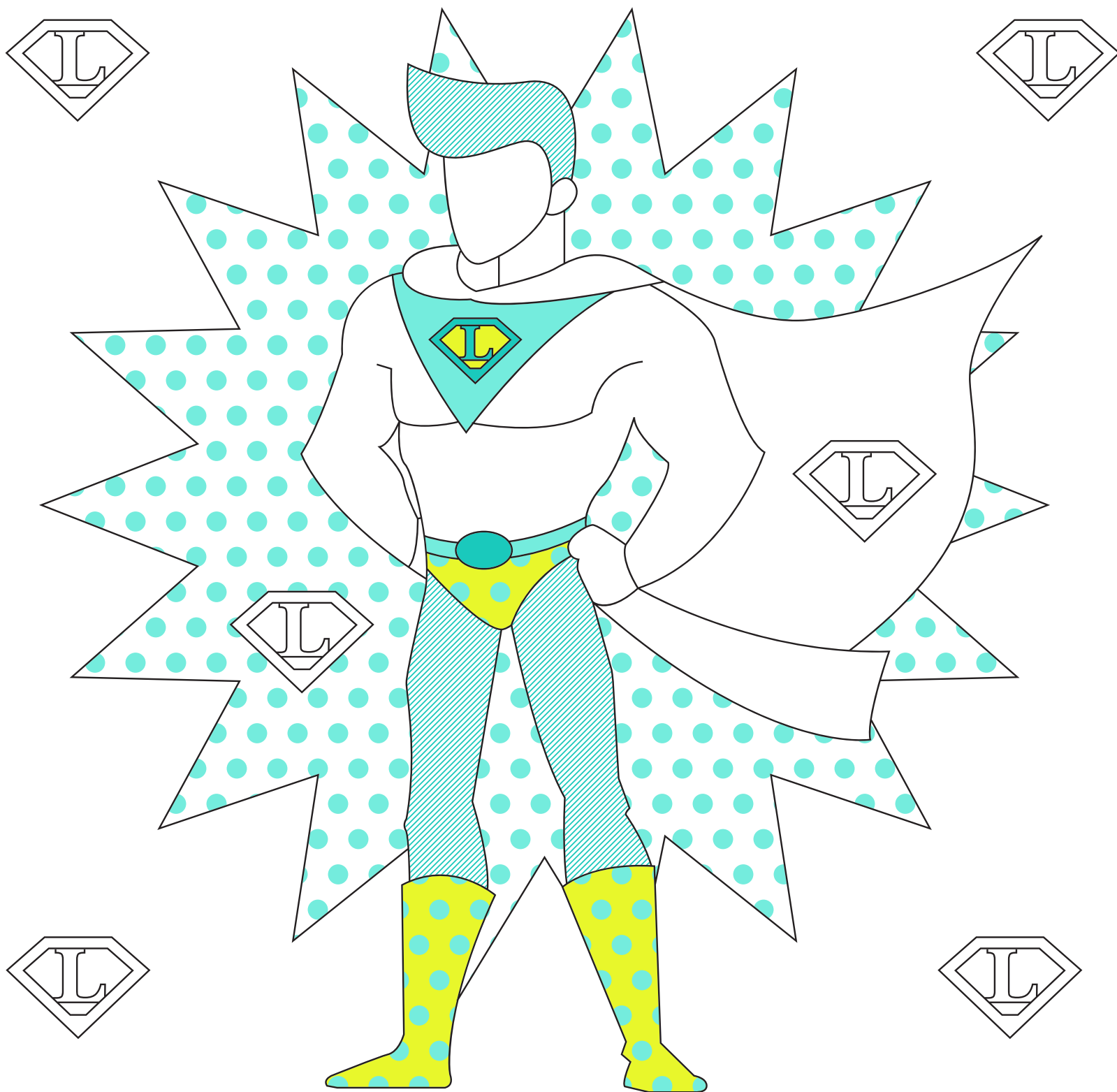
Those are massive odds against you.

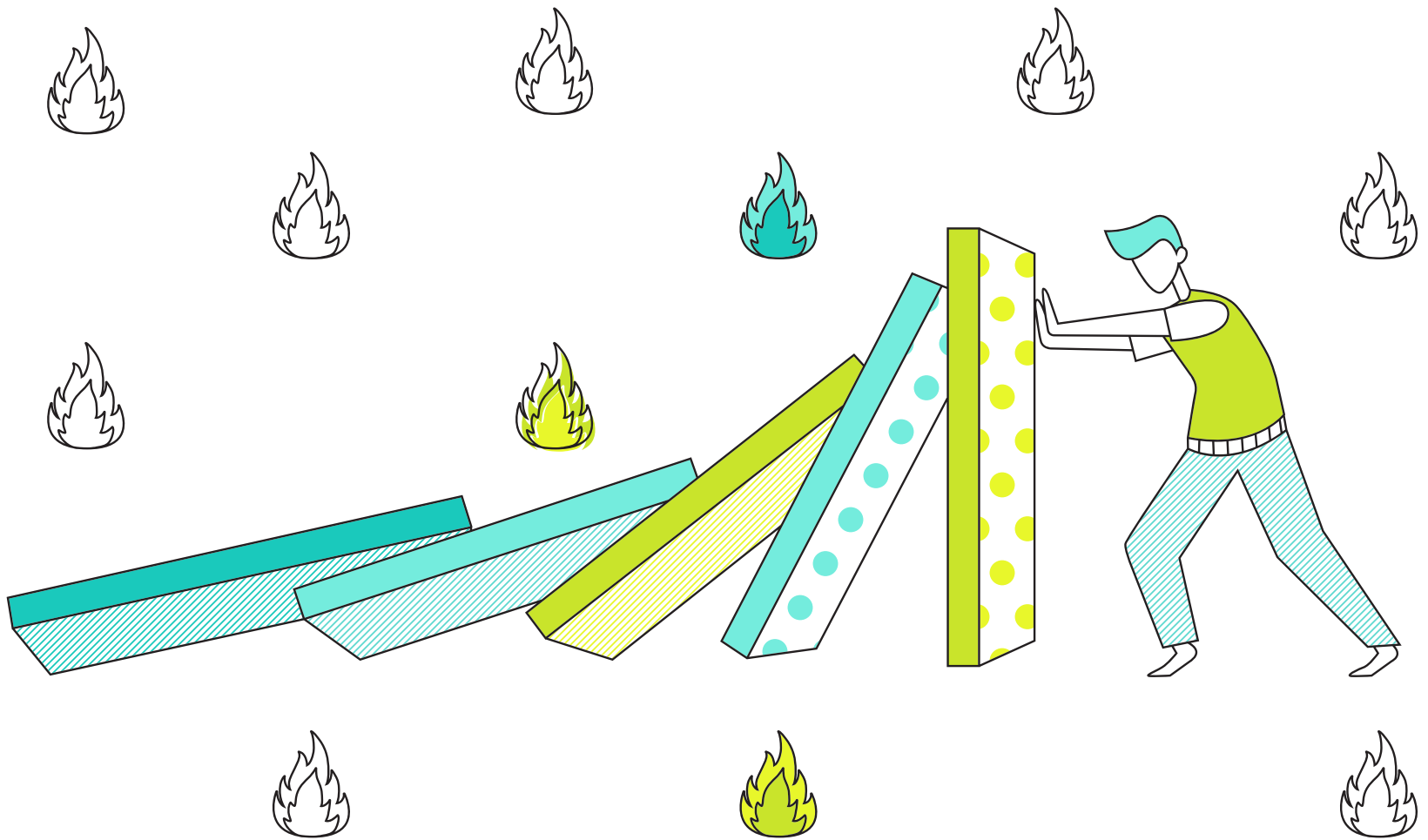




Your emotional and mental state as a leader has a direct impact on your team.

People see that you are anxious or happy. They know when you are depressed or ecstatic. Don't pretend to wear red underwear over your pants. Be human. No one was born knowing how to be a leader.



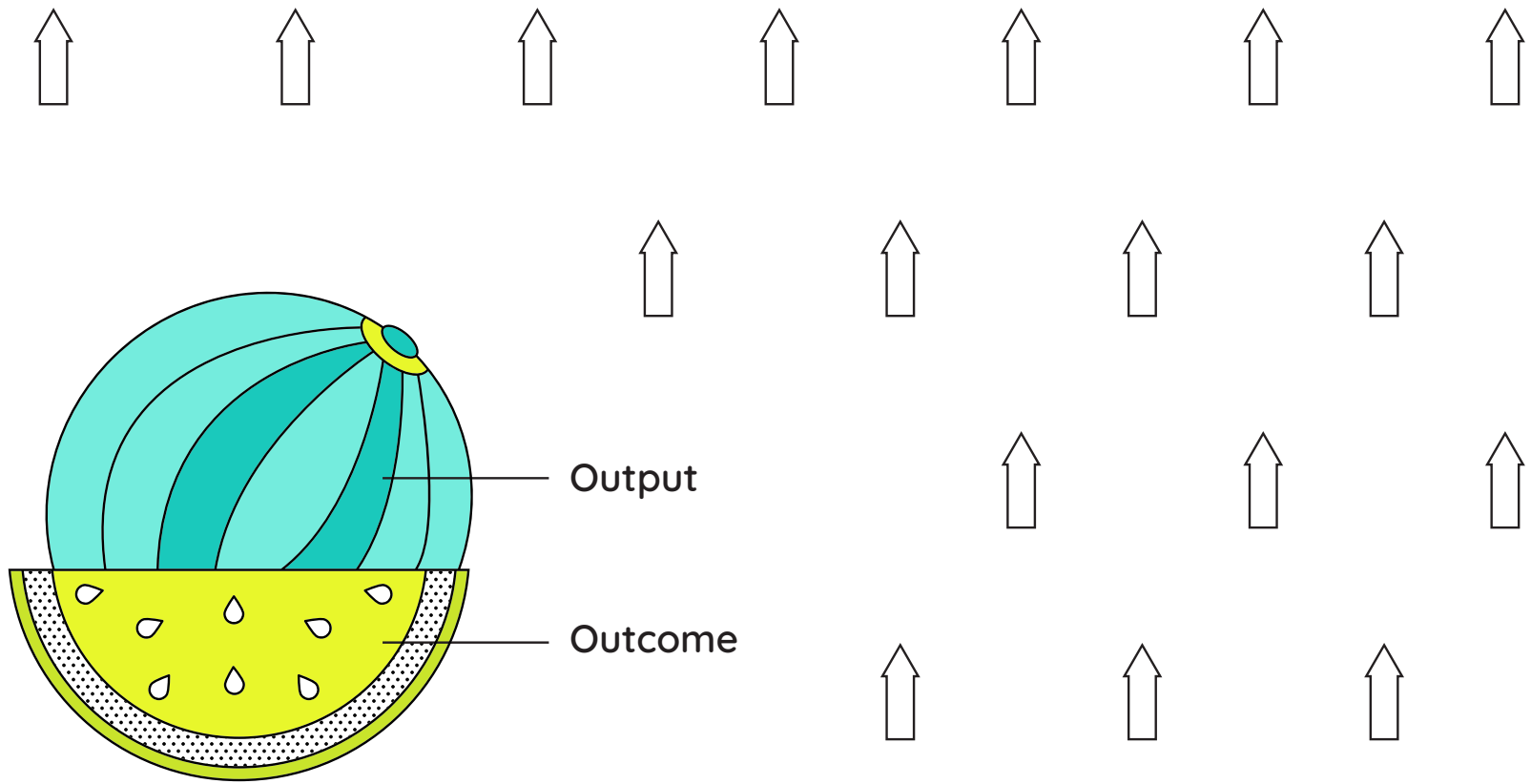


Your true character as a leader will emerge during a crisis. This is when your team will see the real you. Until then, they saw the image you wanted them to see.

You cannot lie on stage. The audience will always know it is within your heart.

As a leader, you will most likely suffer from what I call “the curse of intelligence” - the desire to solve every problem thrown at you.

Great leaders don't solve problems.
They ask the right questions.
And the questions solve the problems.



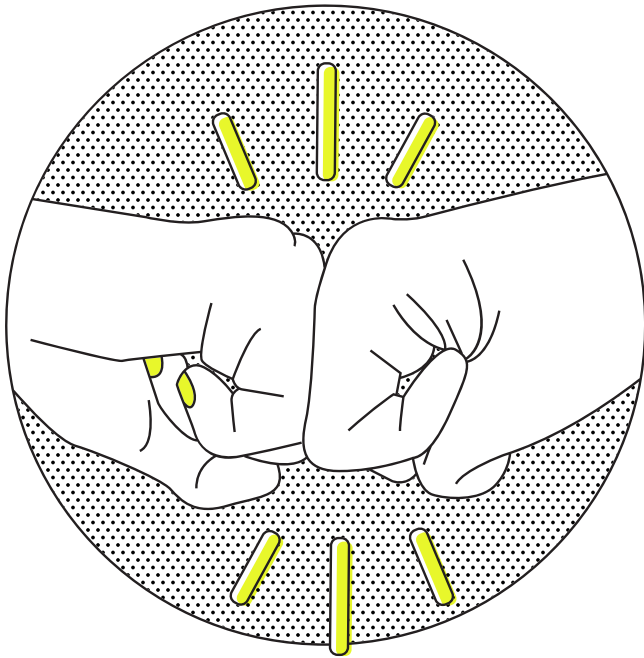
Output = what you are supposed to do
Outcome = what you are supposed to achieve

Leaders own the outcome.
Not the output.

I gained the most as a leader by having lunch with a new colleague everyday. Leaders, consciously, on a daily basis, spend time with people who are nothing like them.

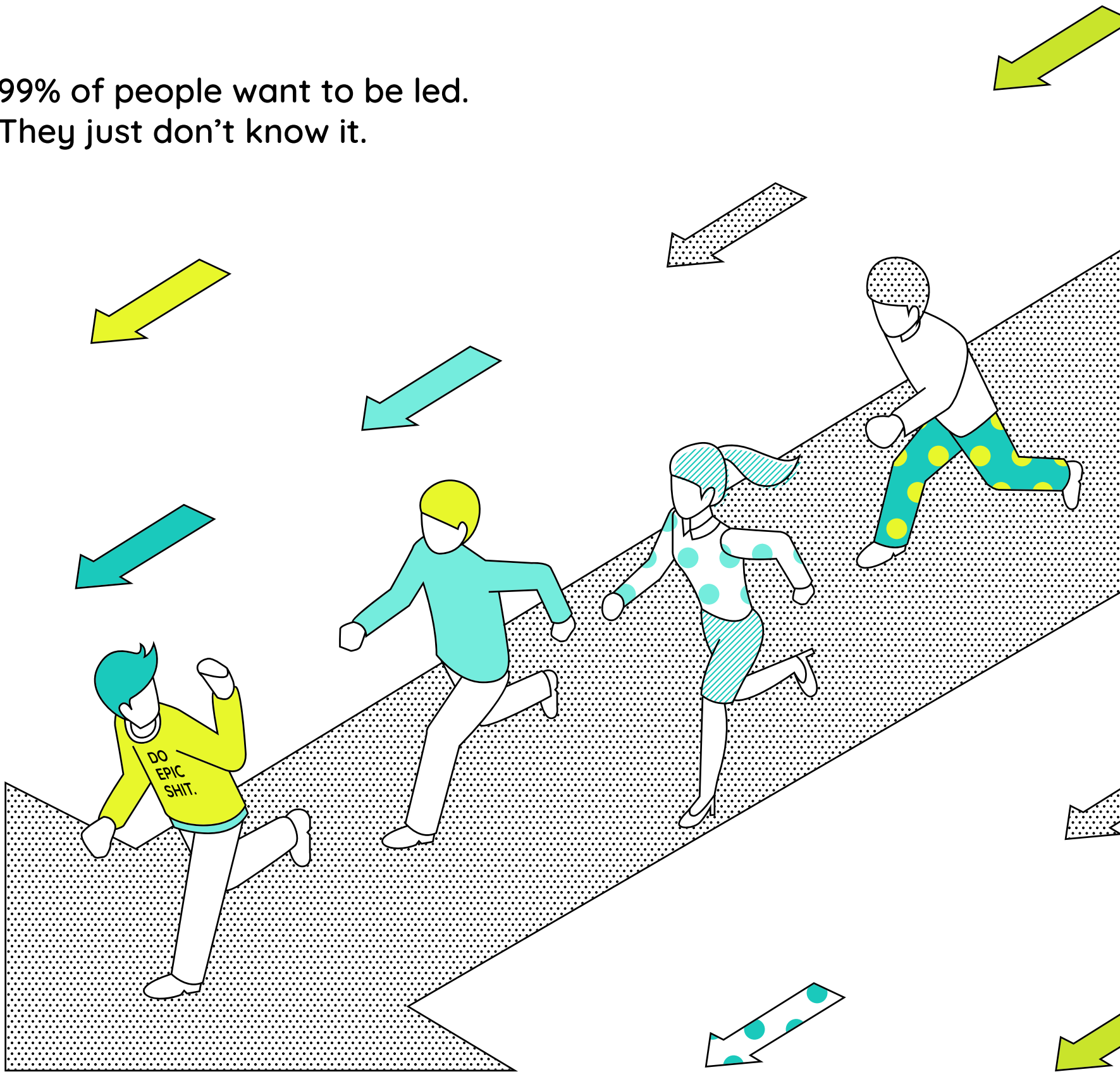
So that they become a better version of themselves, not a bigger version of themselves.





Yours teams may seem naive, inexperienced and not ready to be trusted. Leaders trust anyway.

99% of people want to be led.
They just don't know it.



Its not that optimists don't see the problems around them.
Its that they imagine improving themselves to solve those
problems.

“The tone you set as a leader has an enormous effect on the
people around you. No one wants to follow a pessimist.” - Bob
Iger

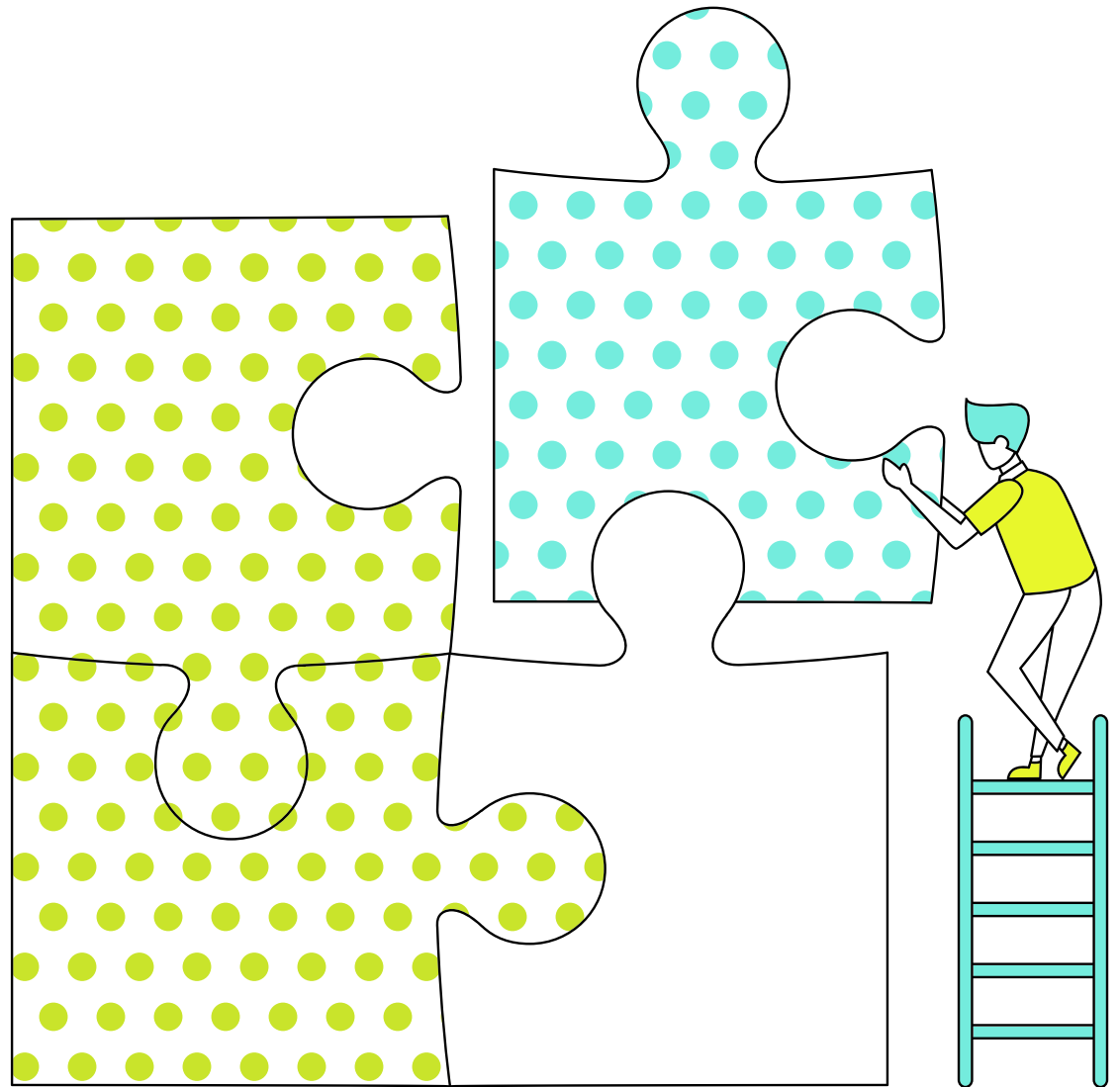


A big mistake managers make is that they don't truly solve problems.

They address them only tactically - at an individual level, circumstantial level, momentary level.

They don't solve the problem.

They solve the situation.



If a leader finds it easy to lead their team, as the team grows, they have most certainly become a poor leader.
Leading people can/should never “scale”.

People are people.
They are not data points on an excel sheet.

A

B

C

D

E

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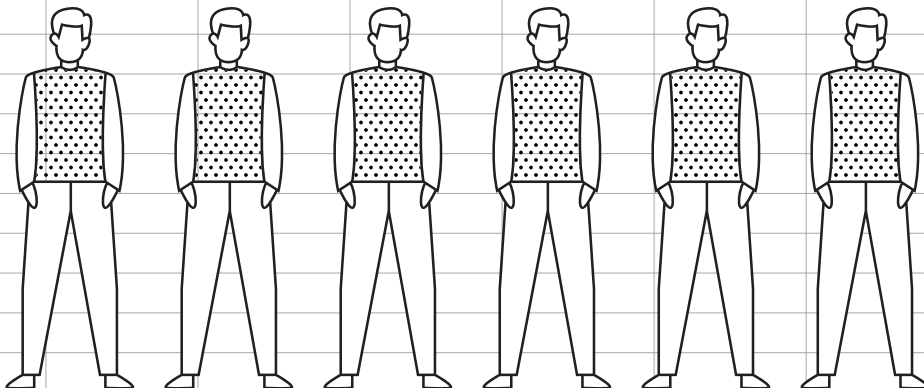
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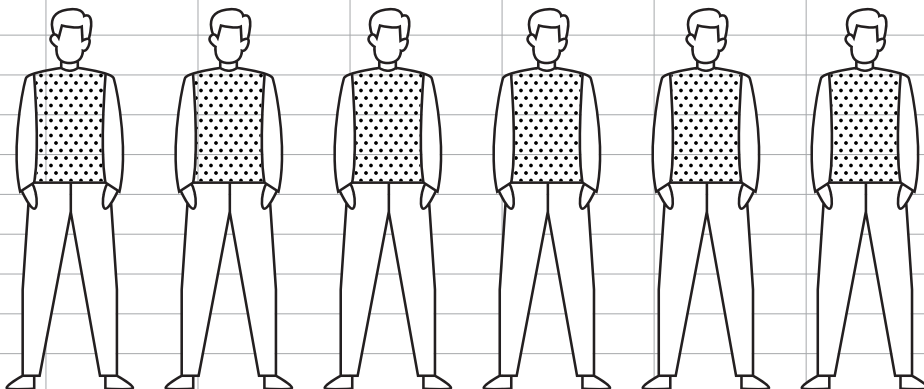
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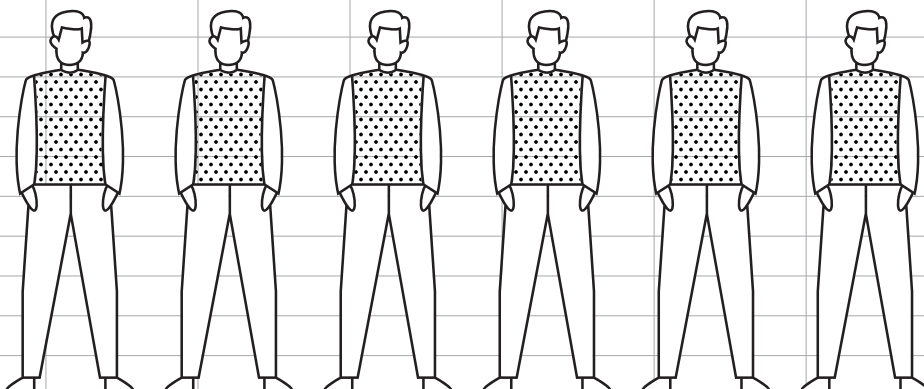
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Sheet 1



Ready

People would much rather have a competent asshole as their leader, than have an incompetent nice person as one!

A leader's check for the right way to fire people.

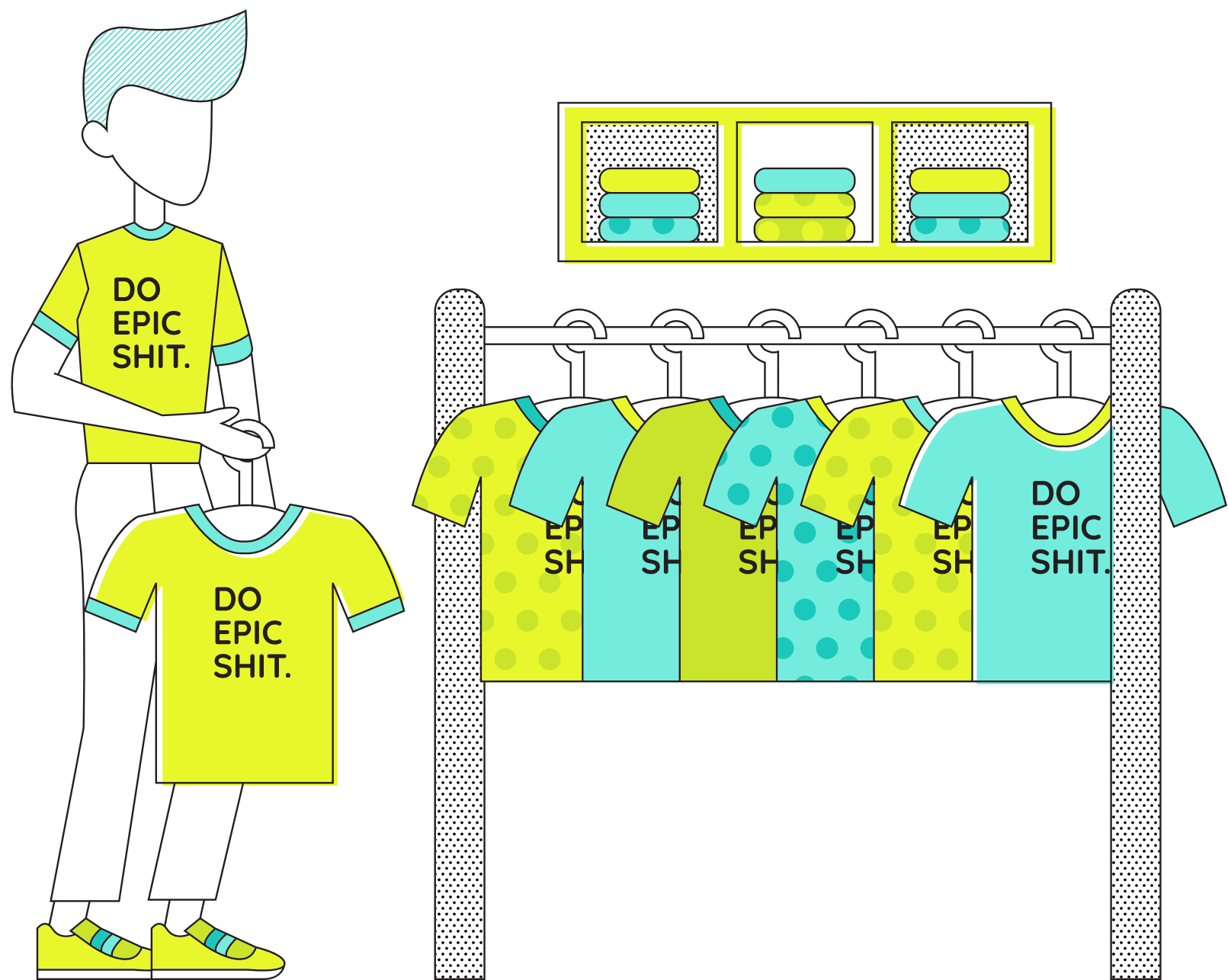
Did it come as a surprise to them? If yes, you did it wrong.



The biggest success of a leader is the ability to give feedback instantly, in a manner that makes the opposite side feel respected, acknowledged and challenged. It rarely happens!



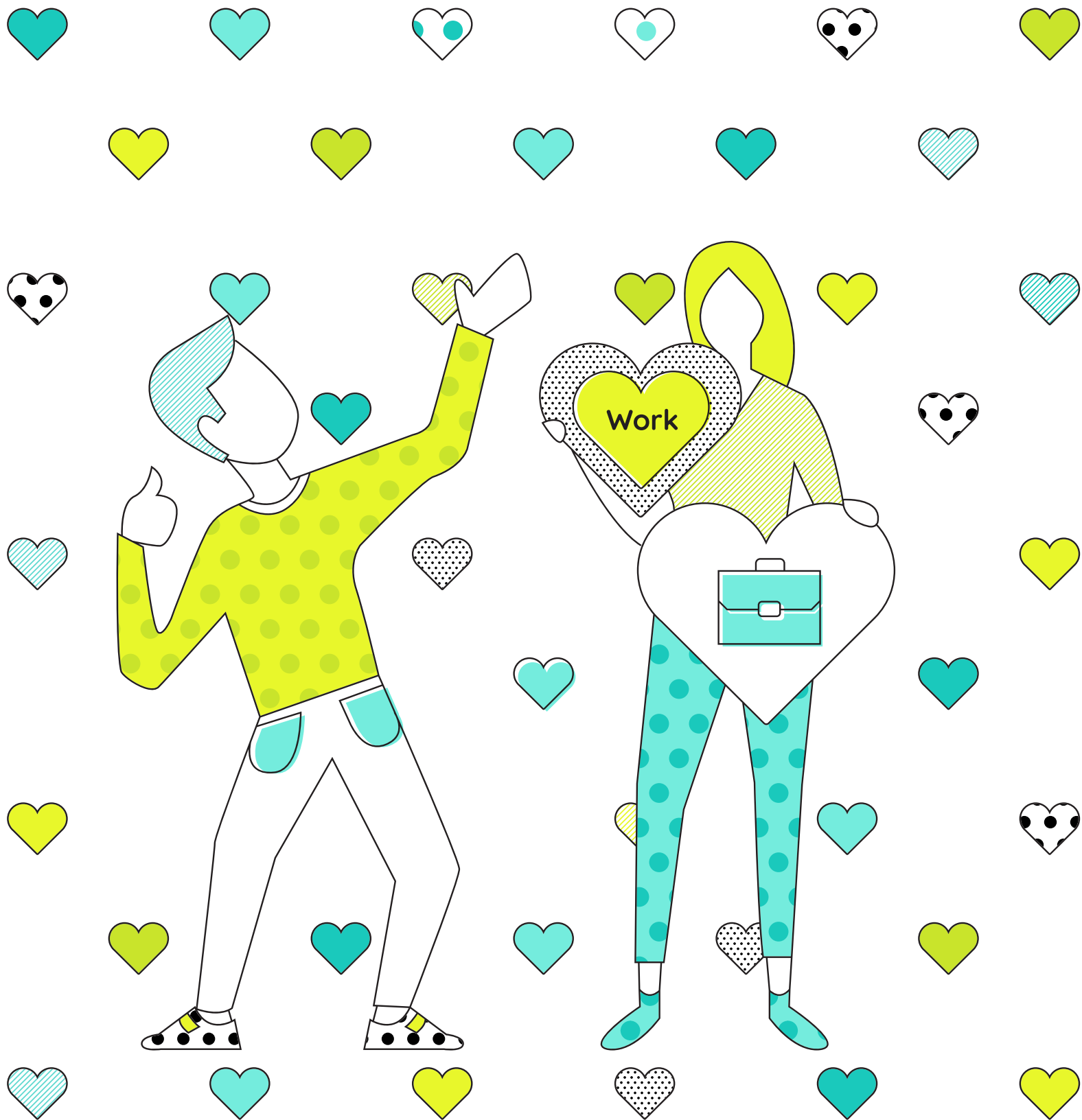
As a leader, the most precious gift you can give your team is the belief that they too can become a leader.



It is getting easier to build a cool company, have a cool office, grow like weed, get press, have free lunches and fancy perks.

A leader recognizes that it has never been easy to build an institution where people love to come to work.

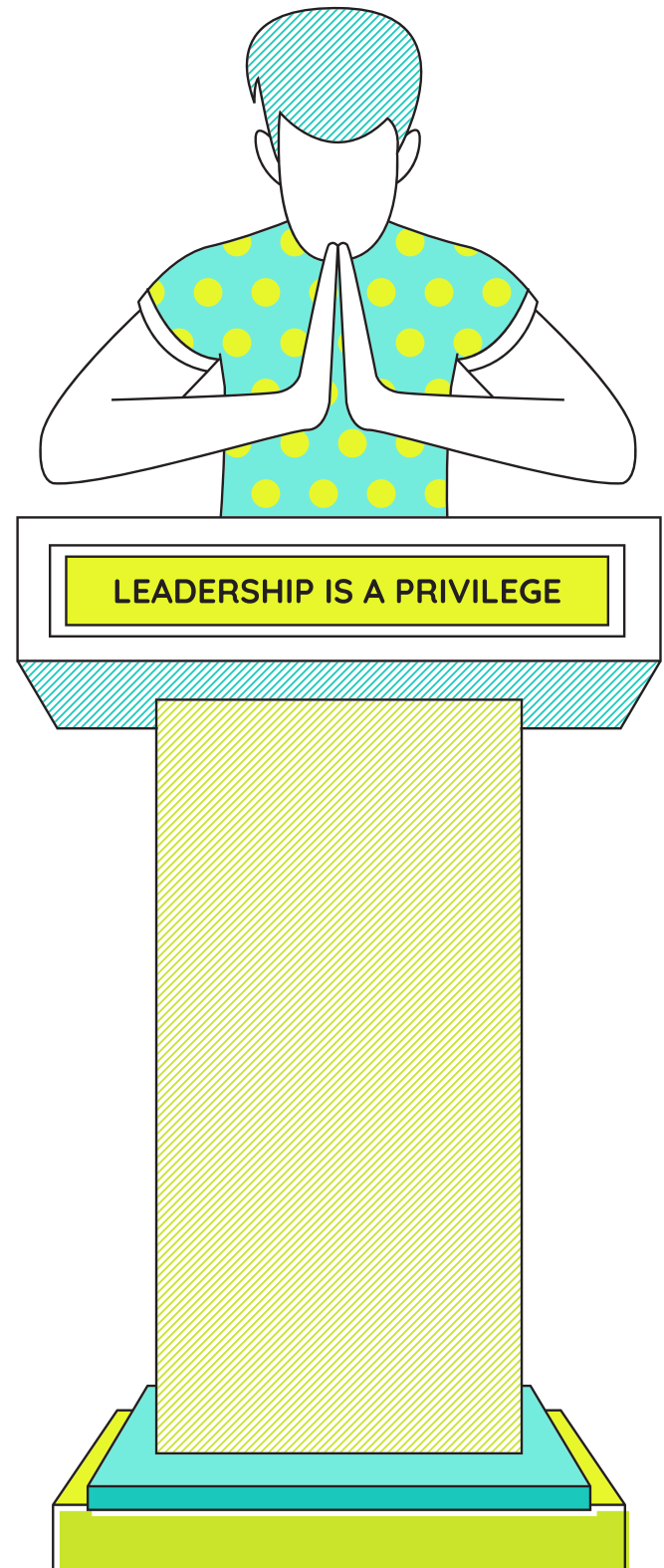
Asshole leaders don't create institutions. They merely run companies.



Everyday, I reminded myself that leadership is a privilege. Through this role, someone's definition of a leader might be shaped up.

Through this role, I can influence the trajectories of people's careers.

Perhaps even their lives.



This ebook emerged from a twitter thread I wrote in May 2020, which was appreciated, shared and celebrated beyond I imagined it would be.

Encouraged by the response, I worked with Shreya to convert this into a shareable book as a quick read and a daily reminder of how critical and how hard leadership is.

While the words are mine, the true soul has been lent by Shreya www.instagram.com/visualnarratives23/ for which I am deeply thankful.

If you enjoyed this, please connect with me on www.twitter.com/warikoo

Warikoo



a thread on
Leadership

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