



What Good Looks Like — Stories of CIO Allyship

Tori Paulman (they/them)

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Dynamic Leadership Is Allyship

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Language Is Changing



allyship

equity BIPOC

intersectional

practices commitment

inclusion

stand with

empowering

advocate

genuine

race

address

visible

ask

complex

believe

direct

behaviors

AAPI

network

opportunity

authentic

complicated

opportunity

leadership

bias

cis

empathy

reflect

policy

justice

taking action

diversity

demonstrate

nationality

uncomfortable

LGBTQ+

latinx

navigate

think

understand

acceptance

race

address

genuine

human

biases

leadership

gender

acknowledging privilege

foundational

reflect

justice

policy

complex

believe

consistent

inclusion

advocate

authentic

complicated

latinx navigate fairness genuine
understand think **equity** BIPOC religion
acceptance race address
gender **acknowledging privilege**
foundational reflect visible
justice policy ask
taking action
better diversity allyship authentic
demonstrate complex consistent inclusion advance
nationality uncomfortable believe commitment opportunity
LGBTQ+ intersectional practices direct
uncomfortable behaviors
intersectional AAPI
network
stand with
empowering



allyship

al·ly·ship

noun

A **foundation commitment** to have **empathy** for lived experiences other than my own

verb

Take action to speak up and stand with those who are underrepresented or marginalized



Something you can be for
an entire group of people



Only after an incident



Just a white man's challenge



Something you can call yourself



Acknowledging Privilege

Skin
Color

Hair
Texture

Gender
Expression

Abilities

Language

Sexual
Orientation

Religious
Rituals

Helped me escape a bully.

Took the time to listen to my story.

Amplified my voice when I was being talked over in a meeting.

Hired me and gave me a chance.

Helped my team get my new name right.

Donated to my fundraiser for a cause important to me.

Spoke out about hurtful comments made about my religious rituals.

Created a team culture where I felt like I belonged for the first time in my career.

Asked me my pronouns.

Ensured I was recognized for my work.

Learn About Allyship Through Someone Else's Negative Experience



50%

Source: Change Catalyst

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The CIO has more influence
on positive employee
experience than the CHRO.

n = 4,238; All digital workers, excluding "not sure"

Q: Who are the top 3 executives, whose policies and actions have had the most positive influence on your employee experience?

Source: 2022 Gartner Digital Worker Survey



43.9%

IT



20.1%

Non-IT

Employees Looking for a New Role

Source: 2Q23 Gartner Market Labor Survey

People with at
least one ally at
work are
nearly

2X

more likely to ...



**Be satisfied
with their
job**

Source: Emporia

What Good Looks Like



A man in a black polo shirt is being doused with a bucket of ice-cold water by a woman with blonde hair. Water is splashing all over him. The background shows a city street with trees and buildings. Four circular callouts with dashed orange borders are overlaid on the image, containing the following text:

2.4 million videos

**187% ↑
donations**

\$220 million

322 new grants

Executive Leaders Are Defined by Two Aspects

Build Talent

Set Direction



Empathy



Action

Executive Leaders Are Defined by Two Aspects

Empathy

Listen and respond without judgment.

Recognize emotion in someone else that you have felt before.

Understand someone's response to a situation.

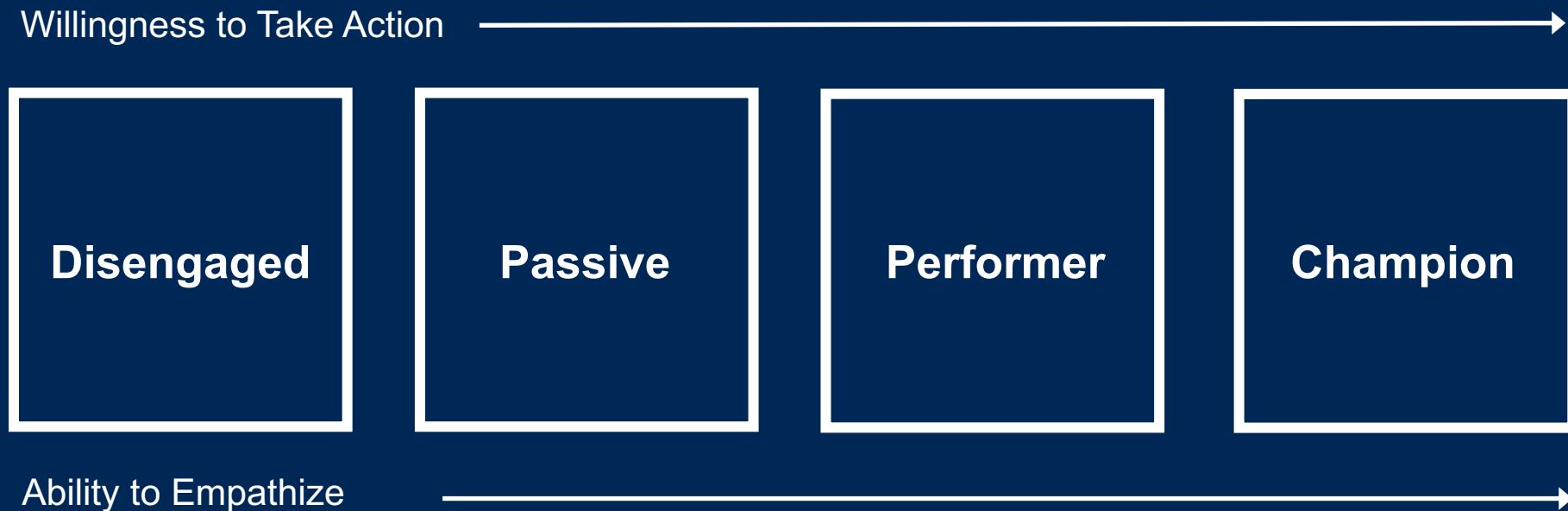
Action

Educate oneself and model changed mindset.

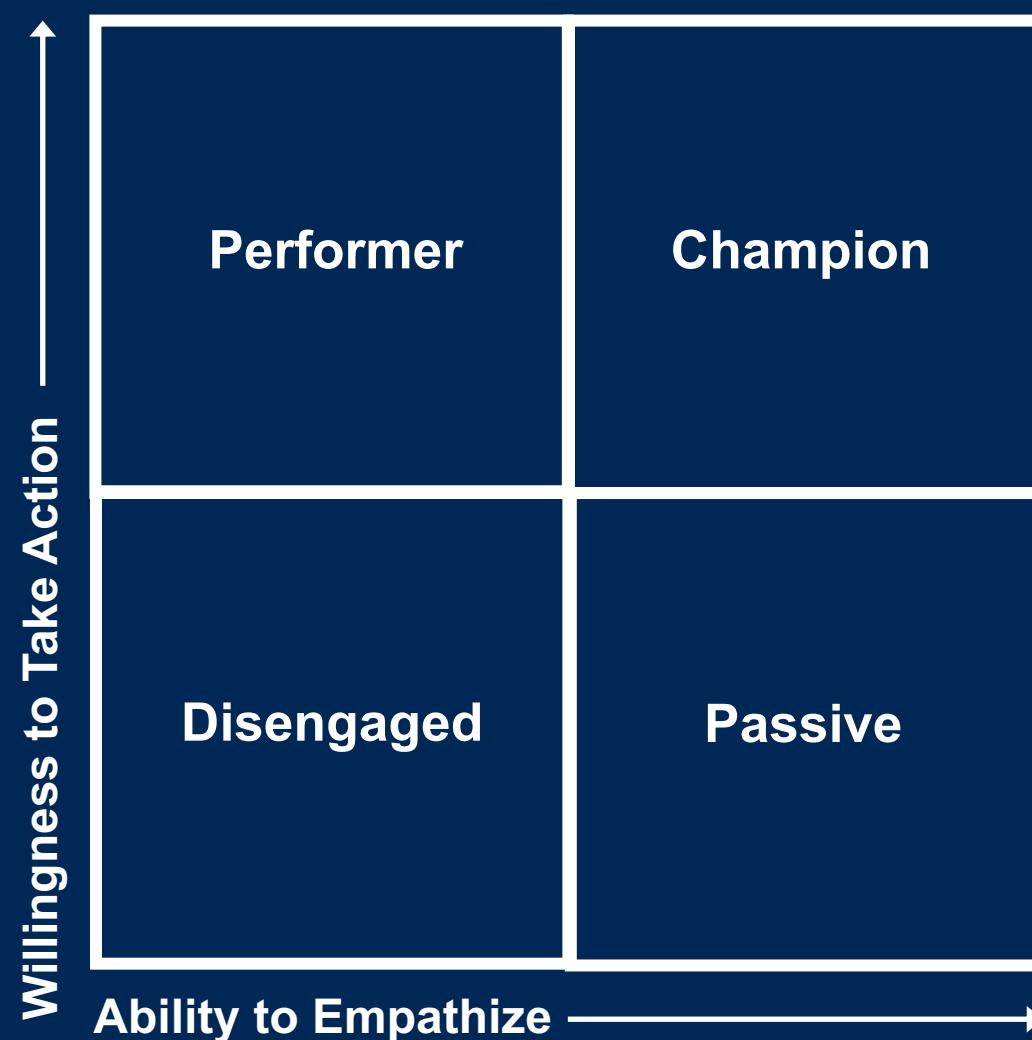
Surface issues and change day-to-day team dynamics.

Disrupt systems or structures of discrimination and inequity.

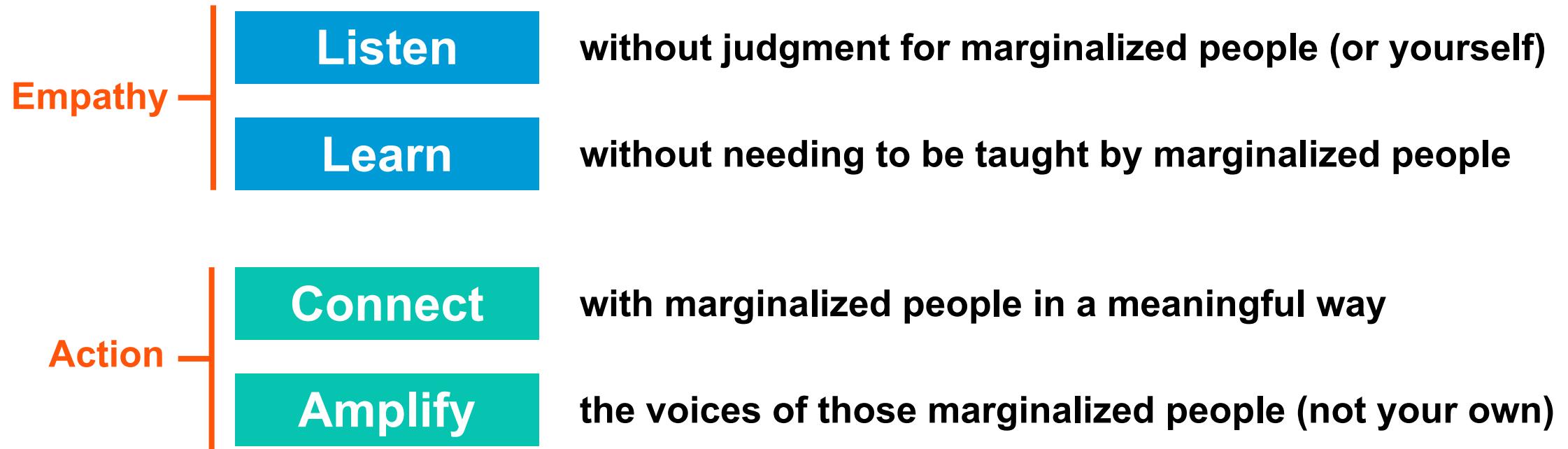
Four States of Allyship



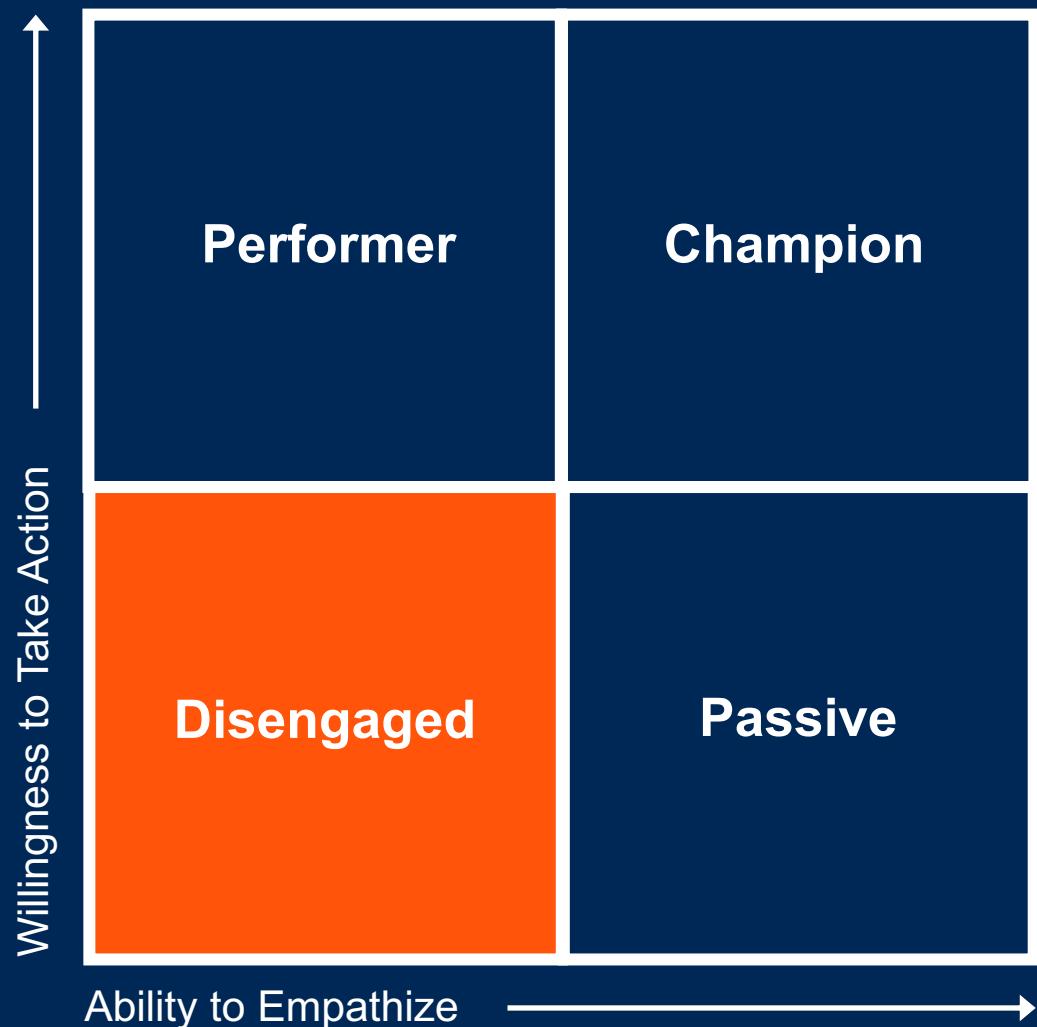
Introducing Gartner's Magic Quadrant for Allyship



Critical Capabilities for Allyship



Disengaged Allies Exhibit



**Low Empathy
Low Action**

Obligation



Inspiration



Termite Biases

Brief, subtle and indirect biases that unintentionally or intentionally communicate stereotypes, prejudices, derogatory or negative attitudes about others often masked as a casual comment, humor or compliment.

Source: P. Luthra, "The Art of Active Allyship: 7 Behaviours to Empower You to Push the Pendulum Towards Inclusion at Work," Talented Consultancy APS, 2022.

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Microaggressions

28%

Witnessed

15%

Reported





It's difficult to challenge the status quo, especially since it often means going against my peers.

Cancel culture is so confusing — I'm worried that I'll put myself or my enterprise in trouble!

It often feels there's more risk involved in getting it wrong than in doing nothing.

I'm afraid of making mistakes, appearing patronizing or being seen as a "bad" ally.

Almost Half of Senior IT Leaders Are Deeply Concerned About Damaging Their Reputation If They Mishandle Addressing Sensitive Issues

Source: 2022 Gartner Leadership Success in the New Environment Leader Survey

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Flight

- Avoiding conflict to preserve harmony
- Avoiding risks-holding status quo



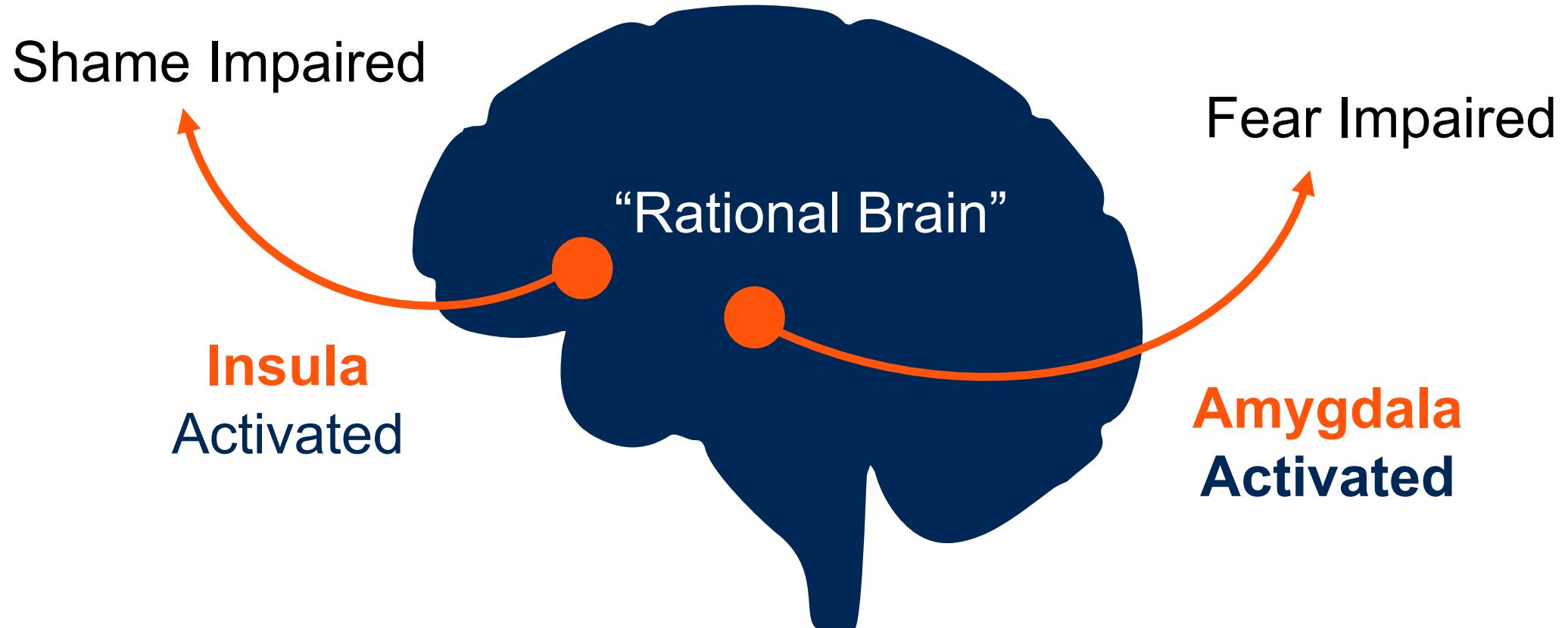
Fight

- Waiting for others to speak up or take action
- Holding rules and norms rigidly
- Quick to judge or be cynical
- Prioritizing logic over empathy

Freeze



Fear and Shame Hijack the Brain



Source: [Case Study: Fear-Awareness Leadership Workshop for Optimal Behaviors](#) (G00769480)

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Stories Interrupt Our Fear and Shame Response



Source: [Case Study: Fear-Awareness Leadership Workshop for Optimal Behaviors](#) (G00769480)



100%

Recommendations for Disengaged Allies

Empathy

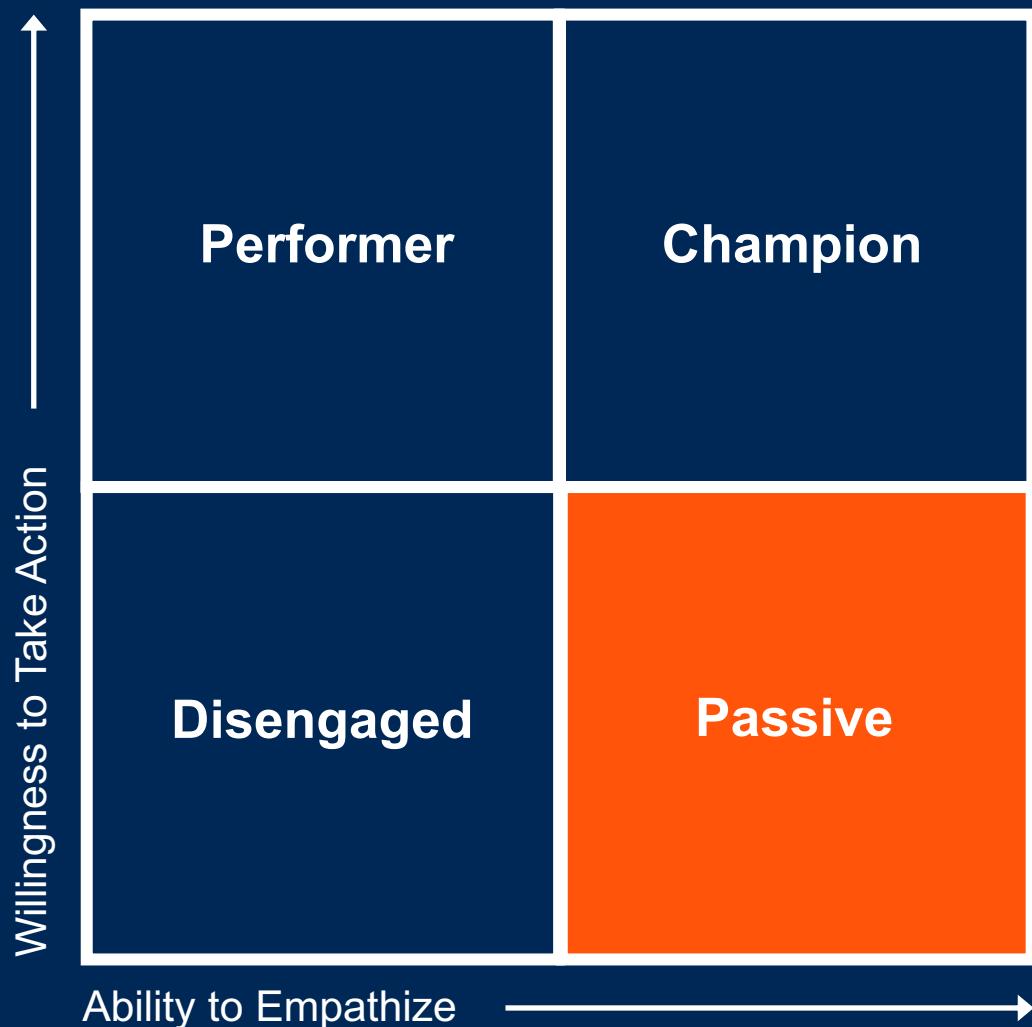
Seek out a book, podcast, or documentary* about a lived experience of a marginalized group.

Action

Rewrite your own story by identifying the fear response that feels most authentic to you and new interrupt actions.

*Find a list of suggestions in appendix

Passive Allies Take Limited Action



**High Empathy
Low Action**

Stories Of Allyship



Empathy: Speaking on a panel at a Grace Hopper Celebration event, to support individuals in early career stages, I was asked, “What advice would you give a woman?” to advance in her career. I pivoted to another speaker because it occurred to me, we must honor what we can and cannot represent.



Action: Sometimes the right action for us to take is no action at all.



Allyship Happens
Before

Recommendations for Passive Allies

Empathy

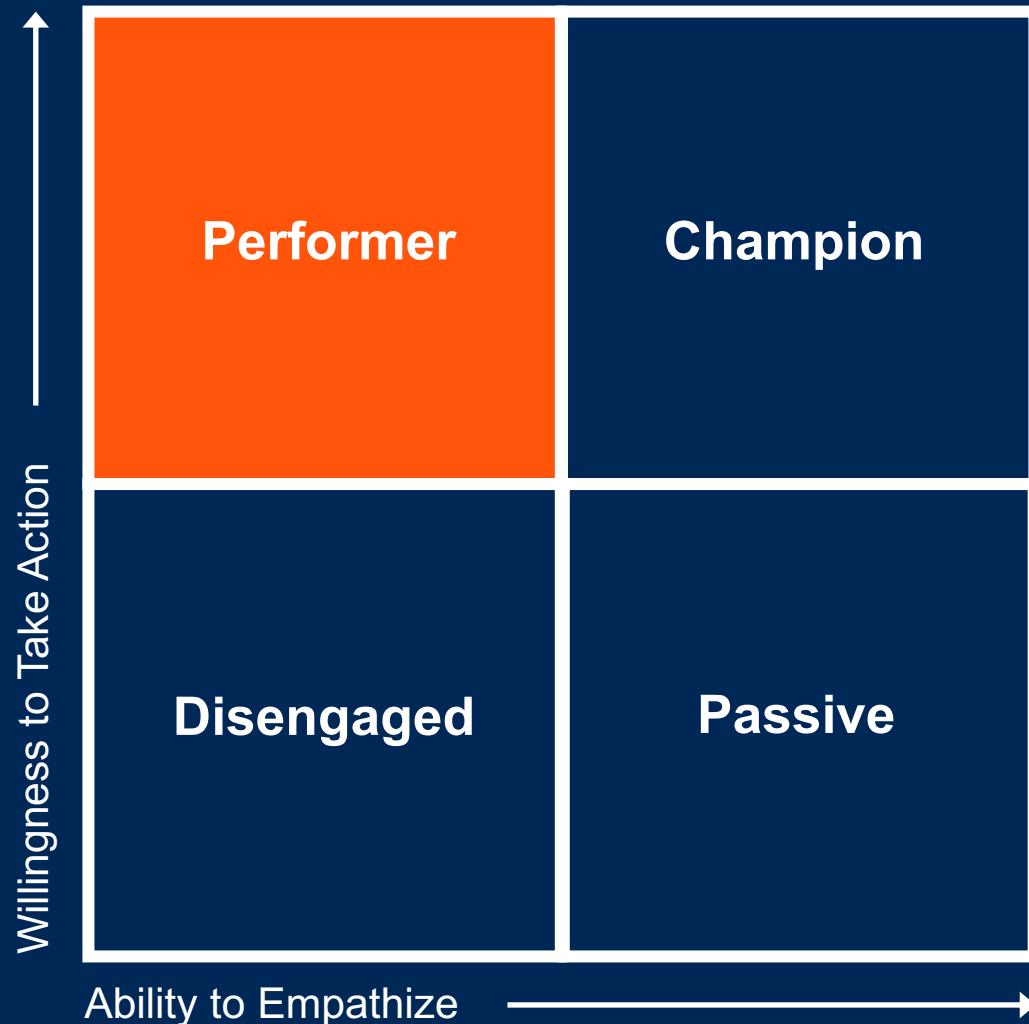
In one-on-one settings, with marginalized people you have authentic relationships with, ask what action(s) they would (*or would not*) like you to take on their behalf.

Action

Prioritize engaging in open and honest conversations with your peers about supporting marginalized people. Begin to establish team norms for addressing microaggressions.

*Find a list of suggestions in appendix

Performative Allies Take Have Limited Empathy



**Low Empathy
High Action**

The Fourth Fear Response: Fawn



Seek approval for our actions.

Act outwardly at the expense
of honest progress.

Blackout Tuesday

Recommendations for Performative Allies

Empathy

Inventory actions you or your organization take to support or recruit marginalized people. Ask yourself who is benefiting and when does our allyship happen?

Action

Ensure your organization supports the foundational needs of marginalized people (e.g., equitable support for affirming healthcare, parenting journeys and career pathing).

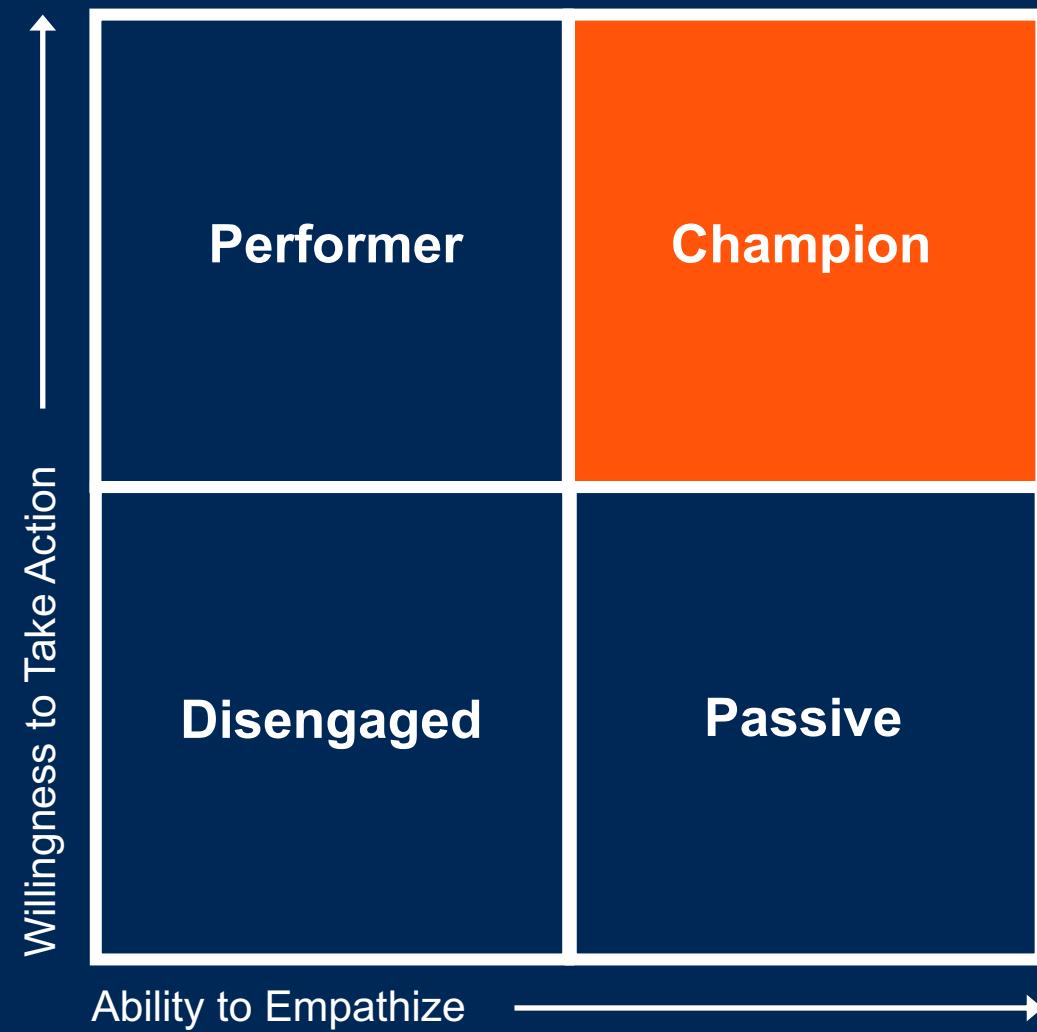
*Find a list of suggestions in appendix

Good Is the Enemy of Great

Jim Collins

**Greatness, it turns out, is
largely a matter of conscious
choice and discipline.**

Jim Collins



Stories Of Allyship



Empathy: I've long been frustrated that there are people in teams who have their names pronounced wrong, shortened, or worse avoided. And even when we did ask about pronunciation, I observed that we were only asking some people which set them apart unfairly.



Action: It just struck me as such a simple way to avoid the microaggression of mispronouncing someone's name to put phonetic spelling in our signatures. Including my own!

Stories Of Allyship



Empathy: I noticed a lack of diversity in security communities and began recognizing women. I was challenged by a black woman for recognizing only white women. It was hard to be called out while trying to do the right thing but leaned in and sincerely asked for support growing my community.



Action: Today I have leveraged this community to hire a team which is made up of more than 80% under-represented minorities. I have also been able to demand that industry panels are diversified and network in new voices.

Stories Of Allyship



Empathy: As the executive sponsor of the LGBTQIA+ employee resource group I noticed that more than 50% of the members were allies. I asked the leader of our Black employee ERG if she would deem it appropriate if 50% of the group was non-Black and she said no.



Action: I worked with my team on the diversity council to create a policy for new Affinity Groups that ensure that members can be in community and a program for allyship that cuts across all groups.



Allies

Walk the path with you and help to remove barriers so that you may continue.



Mentors

Help you see the path you can walk and plan for the barriers you may encounter.



“I've asked ... **her** ... to join us today. She's got some really great ideas for the next phase of our project ...”

Stories Of Allyship



Empathy: Before helping anyone else with mistakes they've made, I must start with myself. To encourage others to learn from their mistakes, I must first admit to my own.



Action: Each person, one opportunity at a time. Make **one difference** for **one person** to do **one thing** in a better way by creating an allyship agreement for his IT organization.

Drive Allyship by Creating an Allyship Agreement

IT Employee Allyship Agreement

This allyship safety agreement acknowledges that I will help people around me when they make mistakes while practicing allyship — and I will be open to additional insight when I make mistakes.

The allyship agreement helps to assume positive intent by recognizing that we aren't perfect, and can learn and grow from mistakes by giving each other the room to do so.

Drive Allyship by Creating an Allyship Agreement

IT Employee Allyship Agreement

This allyship safety agreement acknowledges that I will help people around me when they make mistakes while practicing allyship — and I will be open to additional insight when I make mistakes.

- When it comes to being an ally, I know what behavior is expected of me.
- I acknowledge my privilege(s) and choose to take actions that will help deconstruct systems of oppression.
- As an ally, I will help others understand their mistakes by being inquisitive and empathetic.
- When I make mistakes in my allyship journey, I will:
 - _____

The allyship agreement helps to assume positive intent by recognizing that we aren't perfect, and can learn and grow from mistakes by giving each other the room to do so.

By encouraging employees to outline what they will do when they make a mistake helps them understand that they won't always get it right. It also helps them understand and prepare for the "next steps" after making a mistake.



I'm really struggling to use Ravi's correct pronouns. Next time we meet, please ask me what I'm doing to practice and improve.

- 
- 1. Support and optimism**
 - 2. Learning and managing risks**
 - 3. Rich peer feedback**

That's a great idea! Next time you can ask me about how I'm diversifying my mentee and mentor base!

Stories Of Allyship



Empathy: Allyship is not about you. When you are engaging in authentic allyship, you are putting your needs, and preferences, and instincts secondary to what someone else needs.



Action: You could get it right 99% of the time and wrong 1% or less. Focusing on the 1% is an act of ego. Instead, focus on what you can take away from your mistake.

Sorry + Action

Committed



Making deliberate
and visible
choices that
reflect importance.

Taking intentional
action to include
those who have
limited access.



Affirmative

Follow Through



Following through to
see that unintended
harm is acknowledged
and repaired.





Begin Your Training Today

- Introduce yourself with your pronouns and ask others for theirs.
- Make a commitment to evolving your language without humility.
- Bring your own authentic self to the workplace.
- Participate and/or offer to sponsor communities within your organization.
- Demonstrate assuming positive intent and practicing forgiveness.
- Hum to yourself...

Recommended Gartner Research

- [Understanding and Improving the Transgender Employee Experience](#)
Tori Paulman, Janel Everly and Others
- [Innovation Insight for Digitally Enabled Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#)
John Kostoulas, Emi Chiba and Others
- [What Workers Want: Top 10 Insights From the Digital Worker Experience Survey](#)
Tori Paulman, Jim Murphy and Others

Reading and Viewing Recommendations for Allyship

- The Art of Active Allyship – Poornima Luthra
- Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents – Isabel Wilkerson
- I Never Thought of it That Way – Mónica Guzmán
- The Urgency of Intersectionality – Kimberlé Crenshaw
- Disability Visibility – Edited by Alice Wong
- It's Not About the Burqa – Edited by Mariam Khan
- Trans Allyship Workbook – Building Skills to Support Trans People in Our Lives – Davey Shlasko