

A GUIDE TO US **WORKING TOGETHER**

Accomplished executive with 18 years of genuine hands-on team leadership and product development experience in creating successful ventures across mobile, platform, web, and emerging technologies.



Let's start with a horror story.

It's a story that I'm sure *everyone* can relate to.

I once joined a company for all the wrong reasons. I went through a lot of interviews over a long period of time. I met a lot of people and asked a lot of questions. Eventually they made an offer.

However, I declined it. Too many red flags emerged during the interview process and I knew it wasn't right. Foolishly, I allowed myself to get talked into taking it.

A little while later I was ready to admit I had made a terrible mistake. I was miserable, uninspired, and underwhelmed. I also couldn't see a way to make things better. I wasn't my authentic self. So I prepared my letter of resignation. Foolishly, I allowed myself to get talked out of submitting it.

Aaaaand... less than a year later I was no longer there. I will never do that again.

I will only work with and for people who share my purpose.

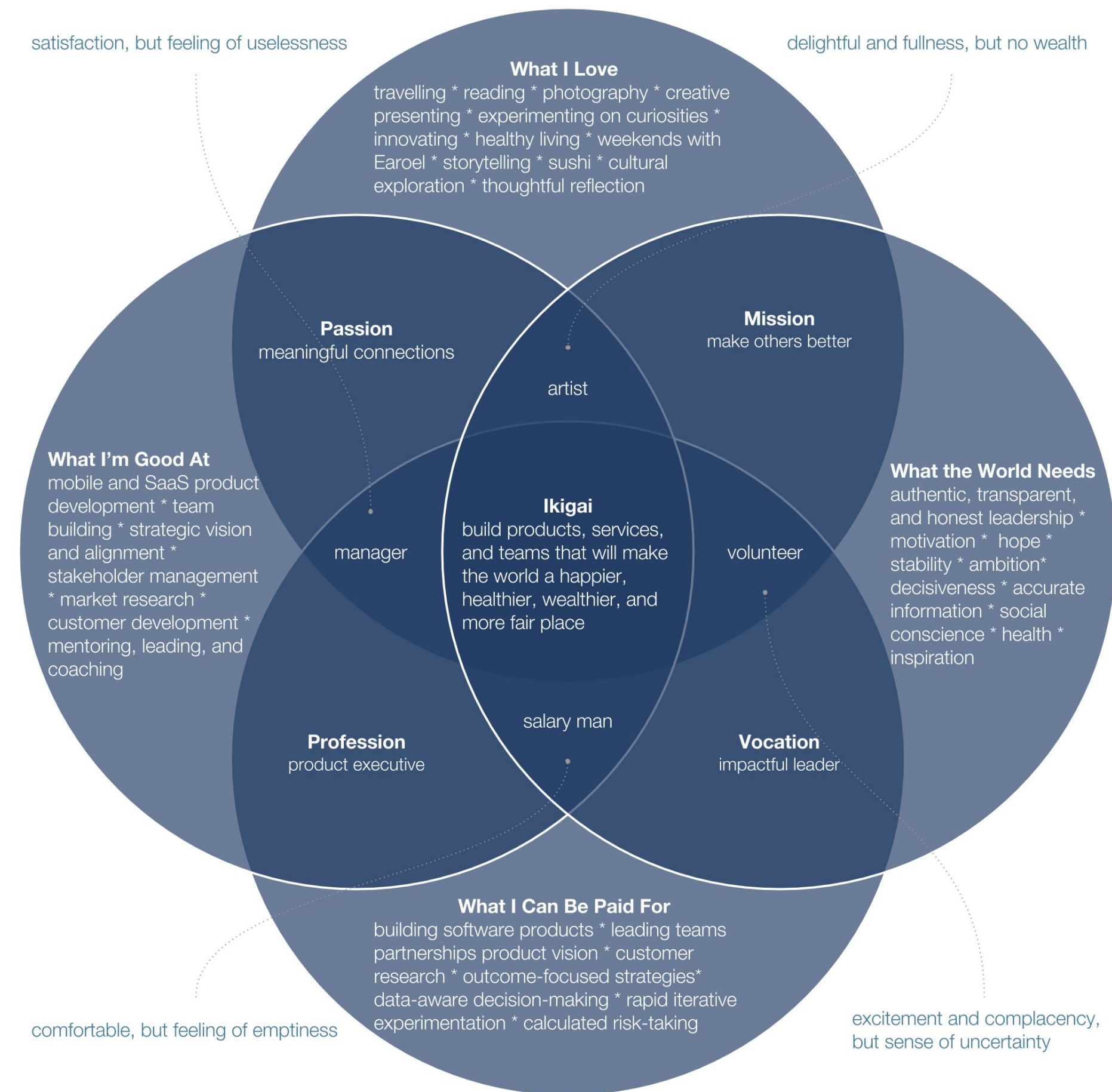
I'm purpose driven.

No exceptions.

The hard truth is that I'm unlikely to save the world.
But I *can* make it a better place.

I'm at my happiest, healthiest, and most productive
when I'm certain that the impact of my work is
going to measurably improve how others do theirs.

Maybe that's by creating a life saving device. Or
maybe it's just by making software more fun and
intuitive to use.



A strong **leadership culture** is the result of everyone being self-motivated to make their biggest impact every day.

My Culture Map is as diverse...

... as the diverse cultures I've worked in.

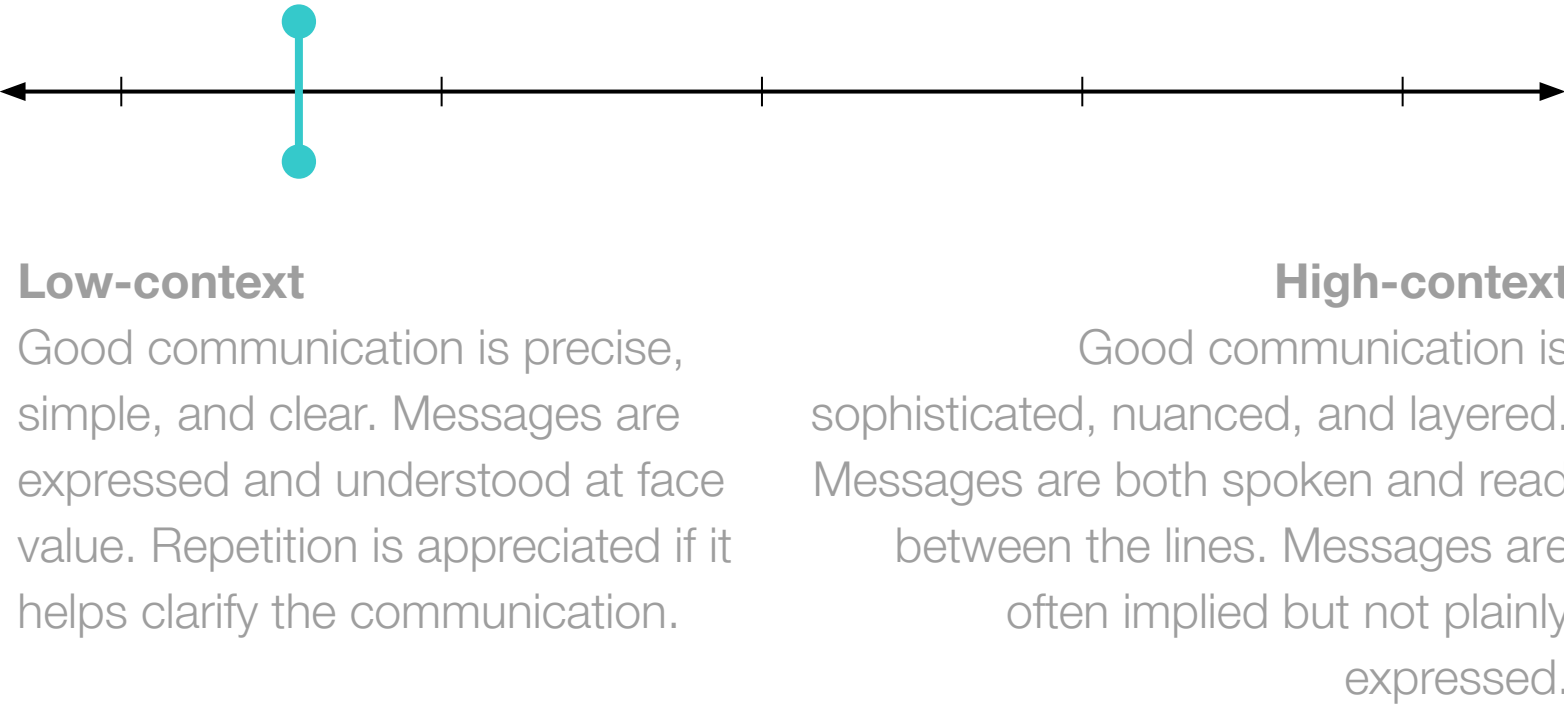


To do our work, we all have to read a mass of papers. Nearly all of them are far too long. This wastes time, while energy has to be spent in looking for the essential points.

WINSTON CHURCHILL



When **communicating**, I prefer **direct, thoughtful, and articulate messaging**. I don't assume I understand what you're talking about, so I'll ask plenty of clarifying questions. I'll often summarize findings and conversations in writing. Brevity is highly appreciated.

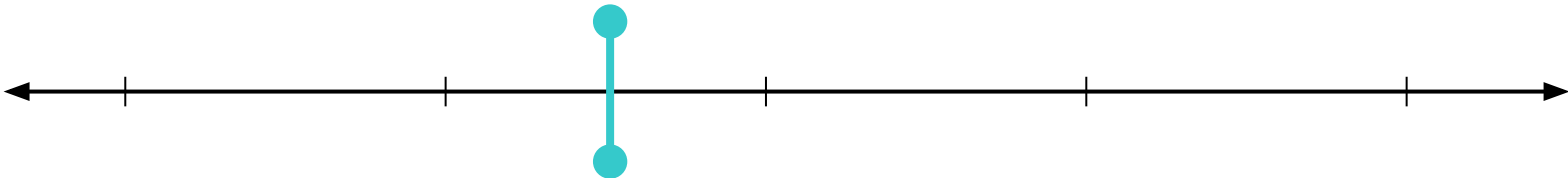




The most important thing about giving feedback is that it must be about behavior, rather than some essentializing characterization of a person, like “you’re unfocused.”

PATTY McCORD | NETFLIX

When **evaluating**, I prefer honest direct **feedback delivered with empathy and integrity**, and always in private. It's important to provide clear examples of how behavior impacts others along with practical advice to improve for the future.



Direct Negative Feedback

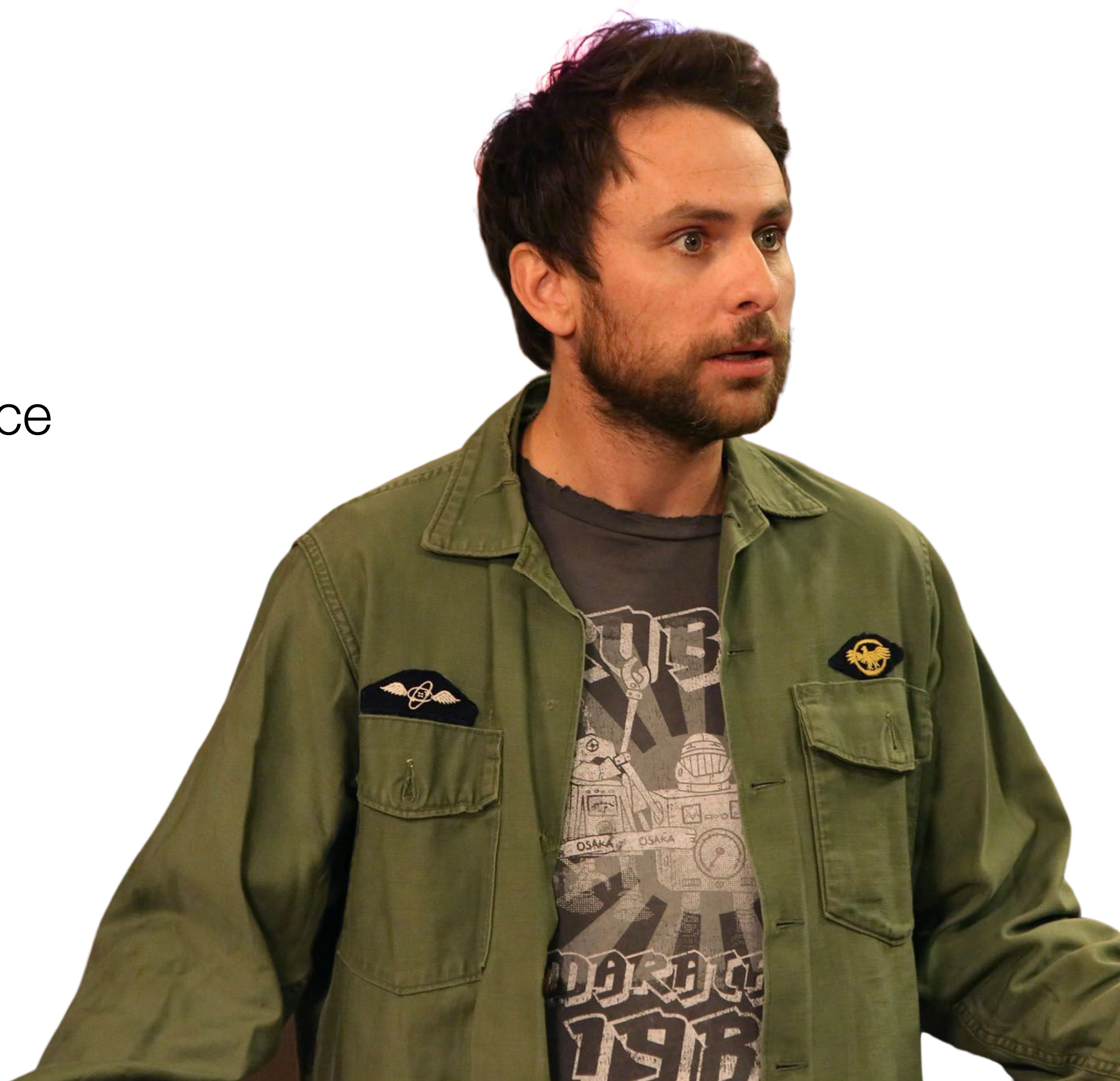
Negative feedback to a colleague is provided frankly, bluntly, honestly. Negative messages are often uses (totally inappropriate, completely unprofessional) when criticizing. Criticism may be given to an individual in front of a group.

Indirect Negative Feedback

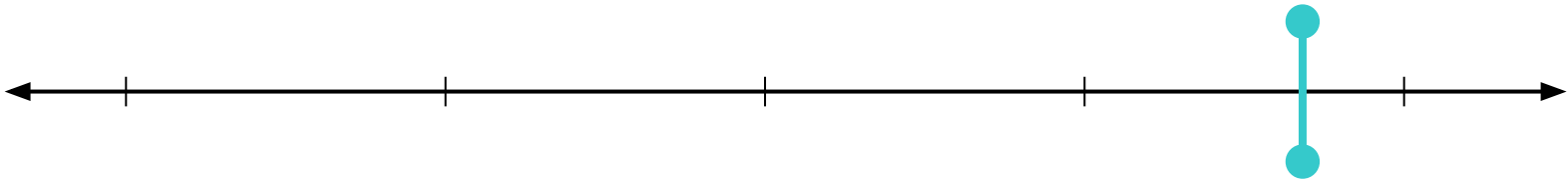
Negative feedback to a colleague is provided softly, subtly, diplomatically. Positive messages are used to wrap negative ones. Qualifying descriptors are often used (sort of inappropriate, slightly unprofessional) when criticizing. Criticism is given only in private.

I just don't think there's any science
to support that, buddy.

CHARLIE KELLY | IT'S ALWAYS SUNNY IN PHILADELPHIA



When **persuading**, I prefer pragmatic **data-aware arguments** to academic or philosophical ones. Whenever possible, I try to prove validity through experiments, POCs, case studies, or other factual approaches before engaging in a conversation. I always defer to the vision when I'm unsure.



Principles-first

Individuals have been trained to first develop the theory or complex concept before presenting a fact, statement, or opinion. The preference is to begin with a message or report by building up a theoretical argument before moving on to a conclusion. The conceptual principles underlying each situation are valued.

Applications-first

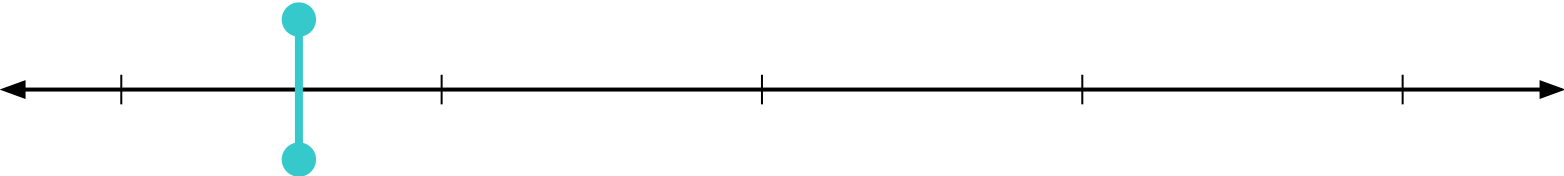
Individuals are trained to begin with a fact, statement, or opinion and later add concepts to back up or explain the conclusion as necessary. The preference is to begin a message or report with an executive summary or bullet points. Discussions are approached in a practical, concrete manner. Theoretical or philosophical discussions are avoided in a business environment.



It is amazing what you can accomplish
if you do not care who gets the credit.

HARRY TRUMAN

When **leading**, I prefer **flat organizations** that encourage the people closest to a problem to solve it. Managers are just team members, and solid leadership is found at all levels. Titles aren't relevant and rewards are based on impact and merit.



Egalitarian

The ideal distance between a boss and subordinates is low. The best boss is a facilitator among equals. Organizational structures are flat. Communication often skips hierarchal lines.

Hierarchal

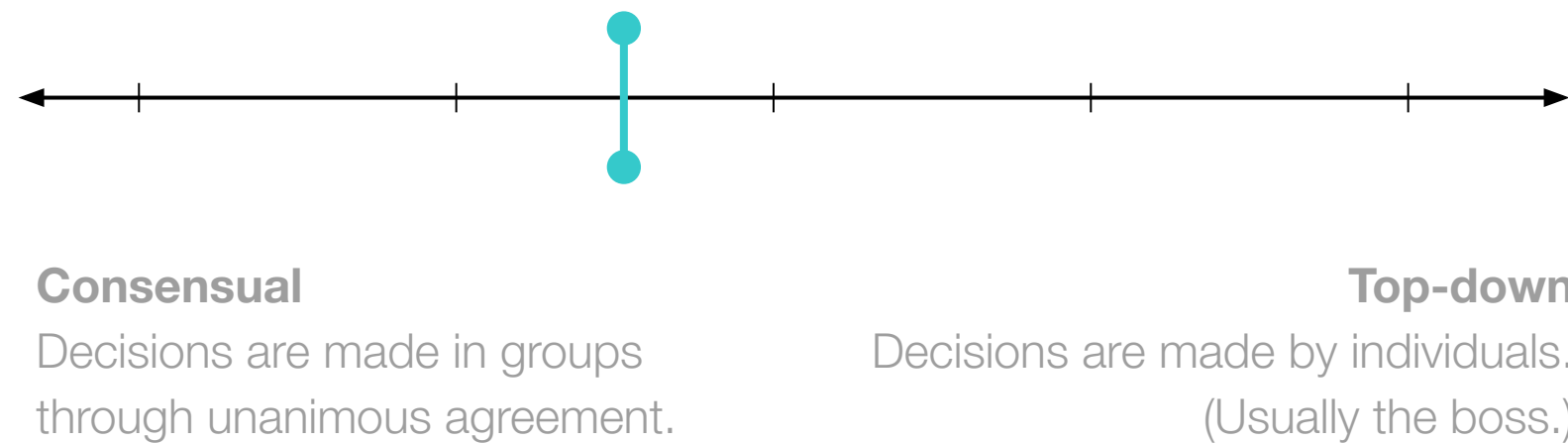
The ideal distance between a boss and a subordinate is high. The best boss is a strong director who leads from the front. Status is important. Organizational structures are multilayered and fixed. Communication follows set hierarchal lines.



If you walk through and don't like what you see on the other side, you can't get back to where you were before. We can call these Type 1 decisions. But most decisions aren't like that – they are changeable, reversible – they're two-way doors.

JEFF BEZOS

When **deciding**, I prefer making quick decisions **that are reversible** if necessary. While I don't like strictly top-down decision-making, I also don't like group consensus. Commitment is prized above all. It's really hard to make a bad decision, so move as cheap and fast as possible.

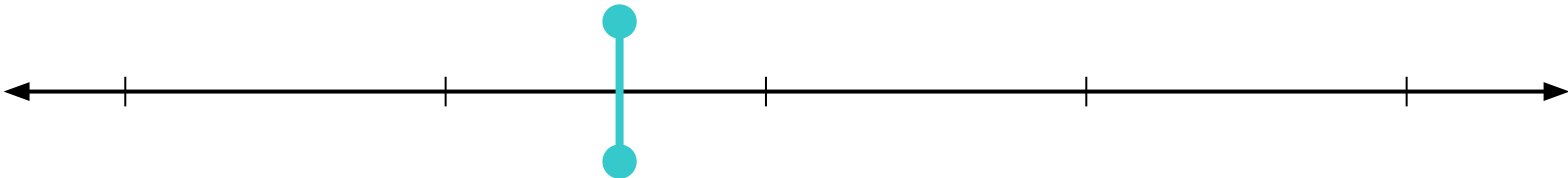




I don't have to agree with you to like
you or respect you.

ANTHONY BOURDAIN

When **trusting**, I prefer to rely on **competency, consistency, and reliability** more than personal connections. However, meaningful relationships are essential, especially with those who I've shared war stories with. I need to trust that we're teammates.



Task-based

Trust is built through business-related activities. Work relationships are built and dropped easily, based on the practicality of the situation. You do good work consistently, you are reliable, I enjoy working with you, I trust you.

Relationship-based

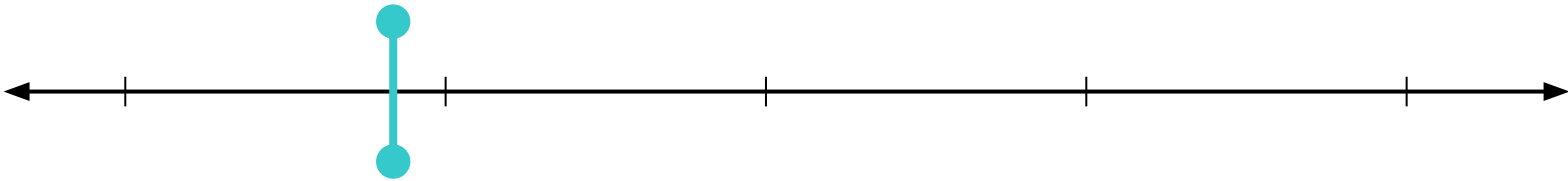
Trust is built through sharing meals, evening drinks, and visits at the coffee machine. Work relationships build up slowly over the long term. I've seen who you are at a deep level. I've shared personal time with you. I know others well who trust you. I trust you.



Make sure that you are seeing each person on your team with fresh eyes every day. People evolve, and so your relationships must evolve with them. Care personally; don't put people in boxes and leave them there.

KIM MALONE SCOTT | RADICAL CANDOR

When **disagreeing**, I prefer to let the best **argument win**. Differences in opinion can be broached professionally. Everyone should feel comfortable disagreeing with anyone about anything. It's usually easier to mitigate problems by agreeing to a decision-making framework prior to debate.

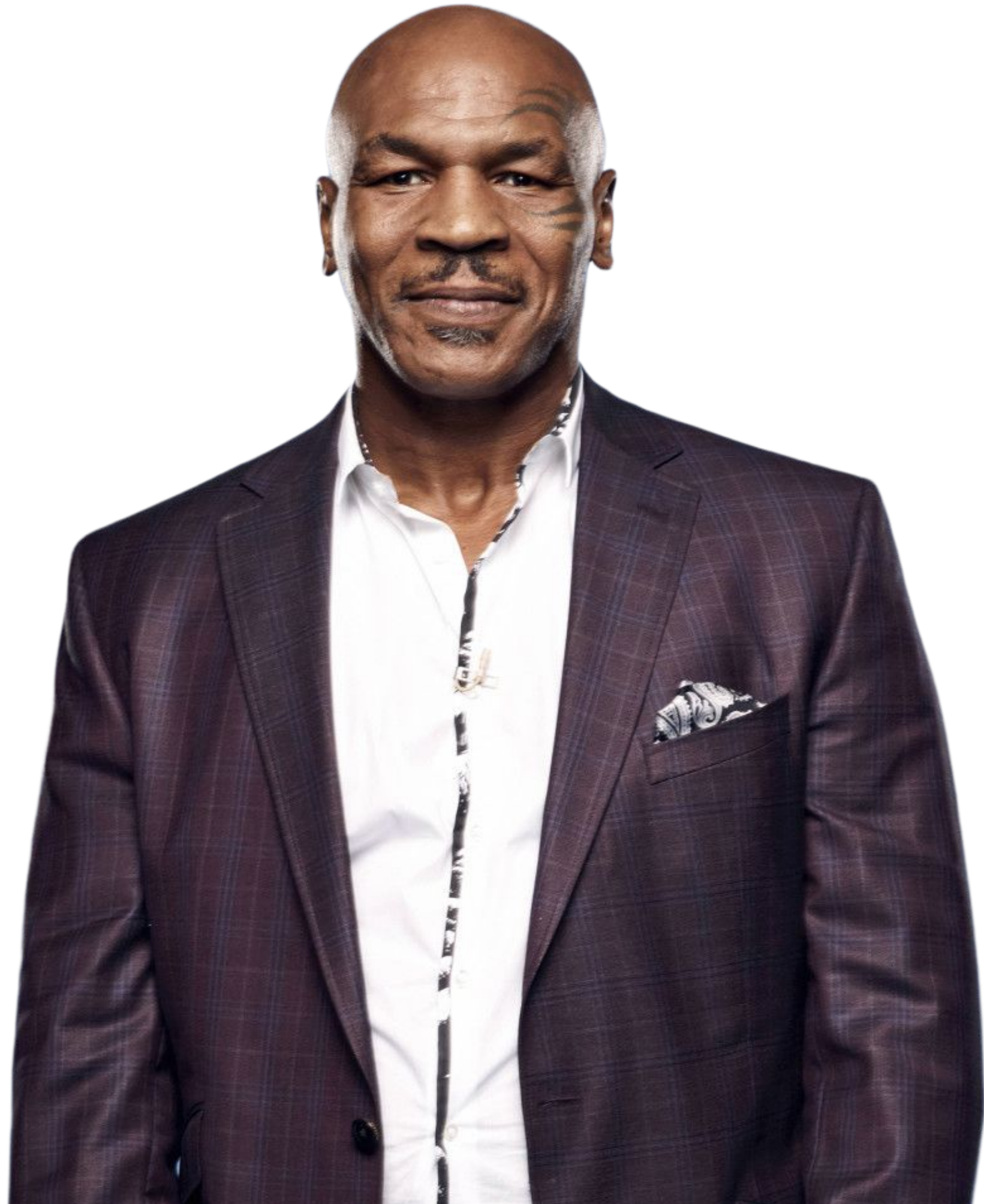


Confrontational

Disagreement and debate are positive for the team or organization. Open confrontation is appropriate and will not negatively impact the relationship.

Avoids confrontation

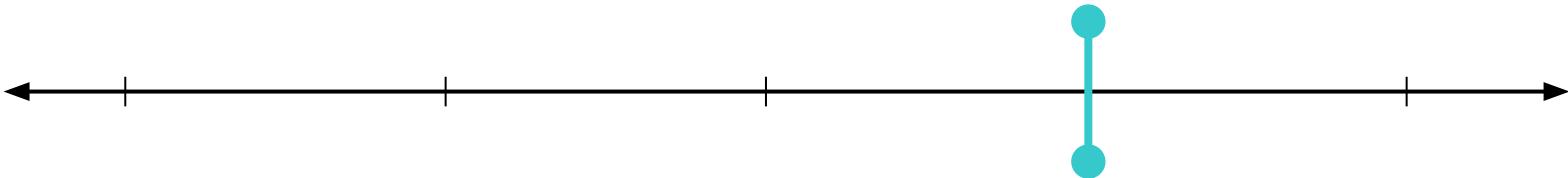
Disagreement and debate are negative for the team or organization. Open confrontation is inappropriate and will break group harmony or negatively impact the relationship.



Everyone has a plan 'til they get punched in the mouth.

MIKE TYSON

When **scheduling**, I prefer **adaptability and flexibility, but commitment to small deliverables**. Plans are just guides, not contracts. However, once started, it's important to focus clearly on completing the deliverable before re-assessing next steps. Oh yeah, and keep tasks as small as possible.



Linear-time

Project steps are approached in a sequential fashion, completing one task before beginning the next. One thing at a time. No interruptions. The focus is on the deadline and sticking to the schedule. Emphasis is on promptness and good organization over flexibility.

Flexible-time

Project steps are approached in a fluid manner, changing tasks as opportunities arise. Many things are dealt with at once and interruptions accepted. The focus is on adaptability, and flexibility is valued over organization.

My **owner's manual.**
(a.k.a. How to hack me.)

I am **motivated** by...

...uncomfortable but not unrealistic ambitions. I want to rally the team around a serious challenge that drives creative and meaningful outcomes.

...authentic, transparent, and honest leadership. I expect you to have a strong story about how you want to change the world. I'll take it from there.

I **value people** by...

...valuing their time. I only care about high value outcomes, so let's work together to remove low value impediments.

...understanding their motivations. (See how *I'm often misunderstood when* for more.)

...helping them win on their terms. We're all motivated by different things. I will work hard to understand yours so we can win together.

I have **no patience** for...

...complacency. It's worse than toxicity.

...busy people. Our purpose at work is to drive meaningful impact, not stay connected all day.

...perfectionism. Problems are often solved quickly. Usually 10% solved is enough for me.

...poor communication discipline. I strictly enforce meeting times. I relentlessly re-write emails for brevity. I expect the same from you.

Communicate with me by...

...whatever method allows you to thoughtfully deliver the intent of your message.

...an in-person conversation. It's a lot easier to ask and answer questions face-to-face in real-time.

...writing thoughtful and concise messages. Be clear about your expectations and motivations.

Help me by...

...telling me a story. We make informed decisions based on the interpretation of stories, not data.

...setting clear expectations. Hit me over the head with your needs. I can't read your mind.

...communicating early and often. It's so much faster and cheaper to solve a problem when it's still germinating than later on.

I'm often **misunderstood** when...

...I question your motivations. I'm not judging or criticizing you or your ideas. I'm simply curious about why you think what you think.

...I don't demonstrate positive body language. I'm too stoic. I know it. If you're unclear, please ask me what I'm thinking. I'll be mindful of this too.

...I'm passionate. Help me by feeding my passion rather than interpreting it as anger or frustration. I'll work with you on this.

But enough about me, let's **talk about you.**
(In the context of me.)

You've mastered the tenpees!

Or at least you're genuinely trying to master them. It's not easy.

You have a genuine need for a **product** organization, and not just a feature factory.

You have the best **people**, and they have the latitude (and attitude) to perform.

You are **principled**, and you stand by those principles when making challenging decisions.

You have a unique **personality**, and you encourage diverse feedback.

You are on the **path to profitability**, or you're already profitable! (Bonus points for bootstrapping.)

You value **performance and productivity**, not efficiency and punch cards.

You exercise **push and pull** leadership, and your team is free to step up *and* step aside.

You are **pragmatic**, and you're not bogged down by investors or market expectations.

You are **pioneers** in your industry, and your product is at the forefront of it.

You are **purpose** driven, and that purpose is shared and evangelized by your team.



Graham Kennedy

Conversations are free, and the easiest way to start one with me is through LinkedIn at [linkedin.com/in/graham-kennedy-cpo](https://www.linkedin.com/in/graham-kennedy-cpo).

Oh, and just in case you're interested, I'm an **INTP-A**. As it turns out, I'm a logician. But only by the *slightest* of margins.