

## MOVING FORWARD

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As Boutellier remarks (2013), complexity without direction paralyzes.

The feeling of powerlessness that permeates the case studies can be traced back to these five underlying syndromes, which will each be further explored throughout the book. But before we go on, it is important to realize that the proponents of the nineteen case studies in this book are actually all very good organizations, which have operated successfully in their respective domains for many years. The people in these organizations are highly educated, highly skilled, well-meaning, experienced, motivated, clever, and proactive. The fact that such impressive organizations find themselves staring at these new types of problems in a dumbfounded manner is what sparked the writing of this book.

And we have to realize that shifting these old ways of problem-solving is not going to be easy. The five syndromes that prevent us from addressing these open, complex, dynamic, and networked problem situations in novel ways are literally as old as humanity. This is why they are so recognizable—they are deeply rooted in us, and in our professional cultures. In fact, these patterns of thought can be chased all the way back to the big books of humanity. “Lone warriors” already populated the Bible, the Koran, and the Bhagavad-Gita. Even though the lone warrior pattern with all its heroism and dysfunctional romanticism was brilliantly mocked by Cervantes in his *Don Quixote*, the long line of archetypal lone warriors has continued, extending unabated to today’s children’s books and Hollywood blockbusters. Likewise, the idea that a “frozen world” is necessary to solve any problem is another assumption that permeates our stories, films, and literature—think about crime stories, for instance. The Sherlock Holmeses always discover the perpetrator from a select group of suspects that is isolated in a house, on a train, in a specific family constellation, or (nowadays) in a spaceship. The “self-made box” of received wisdom and conventional practices is often considered the very core of the culture of our societies, and eagerly reinforced by popular media. The “rational high ground” that is often implied in this claim to authority sparks another archetype: the clever outsider who runs circles around accepted behavior. These jester-like figures are consistent across time and cultures: examples range from Loki in Celtic mythology to the Tengu in Japan, and the stand-up comedian of today. But this carnival of ritualized dissent implicitly recognizes the importance of the consensus and the powers that be (Le Roy Ladurie 1979). The dark logic behind the state apparatus in Orwell’s *1984* offers us a dystopic view of what the enforcement of a