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Turn Conflict
Into High Performance
With Polarity Thinking

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Your attention, please!

- Stay fully engaged for the whole session.

- Close email and other applications entirely. Silence your phone and notifications.

- Mute yourself when you're not talking.

- Leave your video on.

- Move into Gallery View if you're not already, so you can see others.

- Please remember that we are on open channels so only <u>unclassified conversation</u>.

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Topics we'll address today:

- What are polarities and why are they important?

- Identifying polarities

- Mapping polarities

- Leveraging polarities: strategies for success

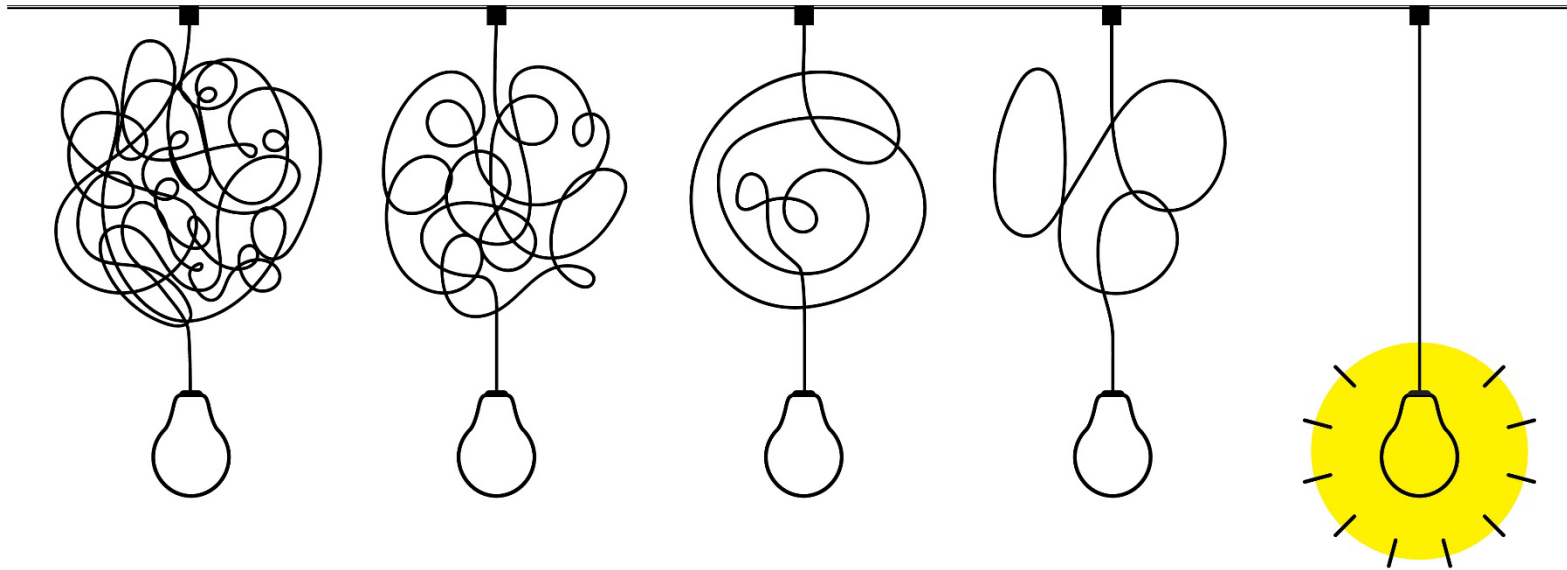- Identifying polarities in our work and life

- Recap and next steps

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Wisdom for our time...

"The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence. It is to act with yesterday's logic."
— Peter Drucker
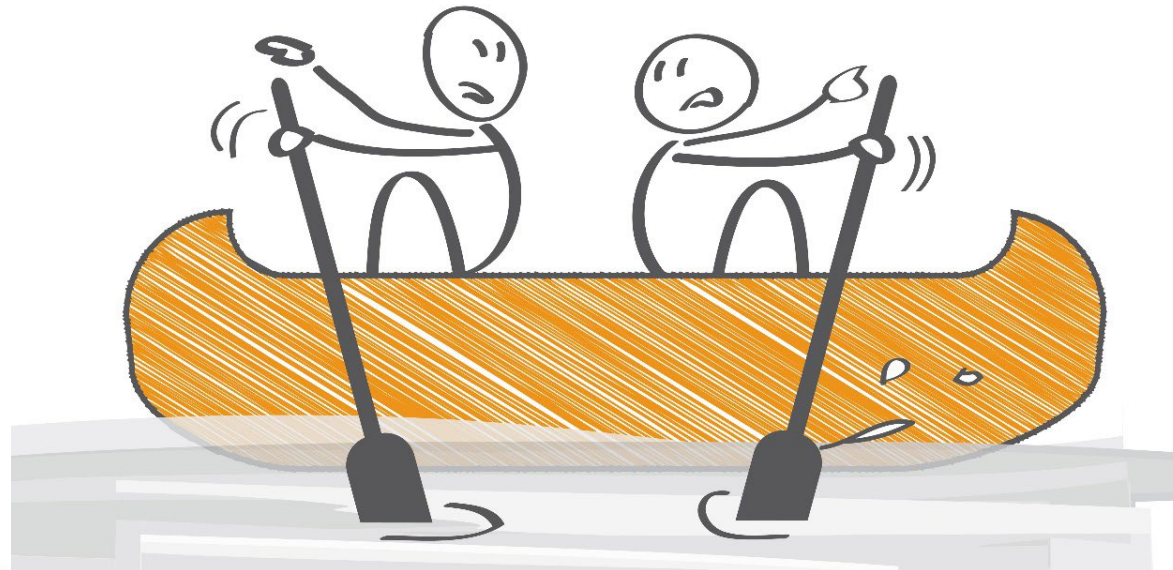
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Common Logic

If we're…(fill in the blank), we'll be able to "solve" every problem with one "right" answer or solution.

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"Unsolvable" Problems

- Dilemmas

- Dualities

- Paradoxes

- Tensions

- Adaptive problems

- Wicked problems

- **Polarities**

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"Unsolvable" Problems

- Ongoing conflict

- Divisiveness

- Blame

- Lack of engagement

- Failure to get results

Polarity Thinking

A tool for leveraging opposing viewpoints to get results AND improve relationships.

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Polarities: A Definition

Interdependent pairs of values or ideas that need each other over time for success.

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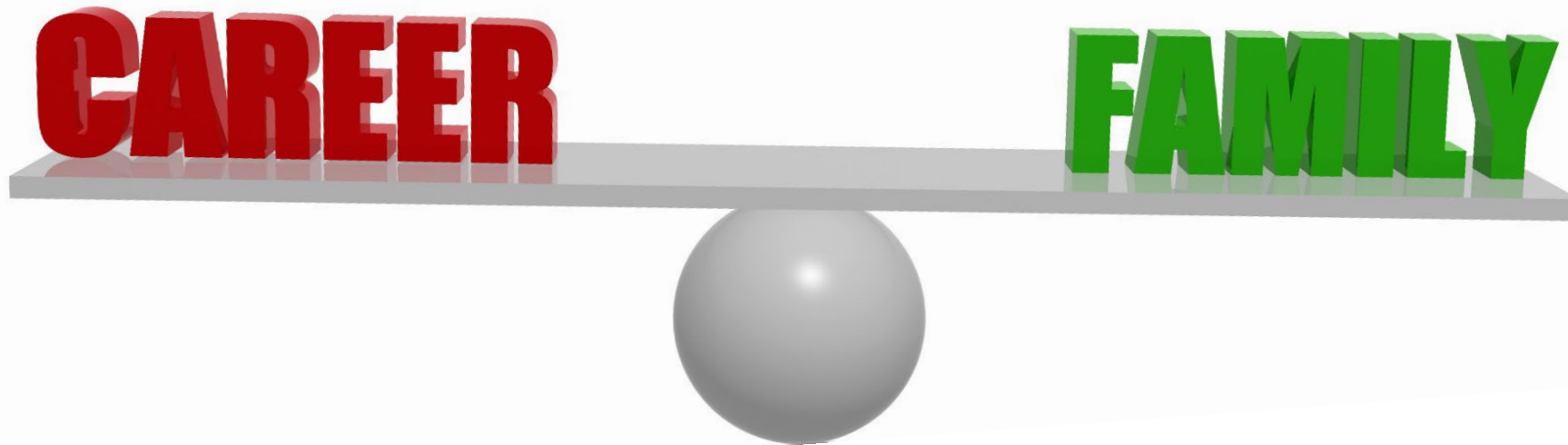
Polarities: *An Illustration*
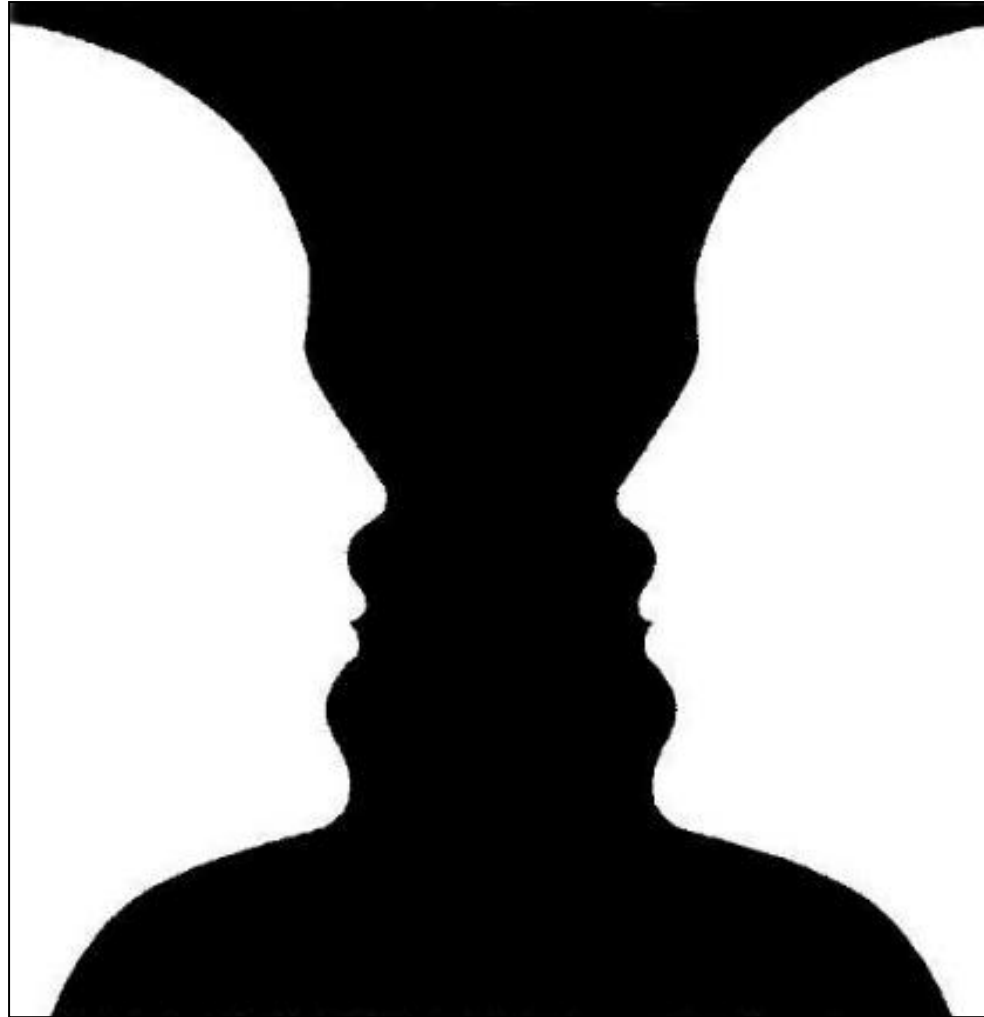
Polarities: The Dynamic

GREATER PURPOSE > **Successfully compete in a marathon**

VALUES/UPSIDES > Increased strength and conditioning

Rejuvenated body and muscle growth *< VALUES/UPSIDES*

Activity AND **Rest**
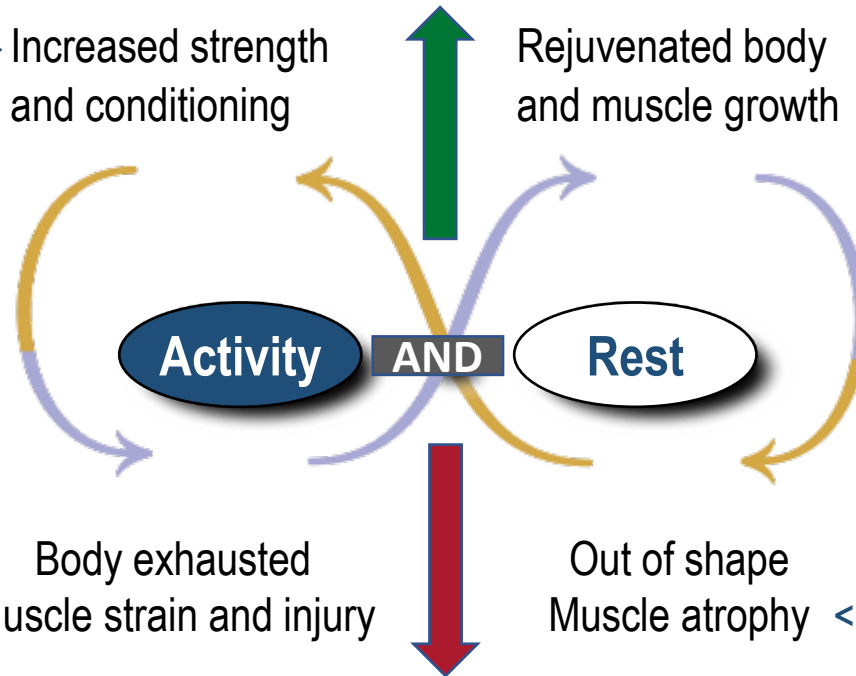
Body exhausted Muscle strain and injury

Out of shape Muscle atrophy

FEARS/DOWNSIDES >

< FEARS/DOWNSIDES

DEEPER FEAR > **Out of the running**

Polarities Use "AND" rather than "VS"

ACTIVITY **AND** REST

Poles are always *positive or neutral*.

OTHER EXAMPLES
Structure **AND** Flexibility
Work life **AND** Family life
Strategic view **AND** Tactical view

Polarities: Identifying the Other Pole

- Cost AND _____

- Provide direction AND _____

- Planning AND _____

- Confidence AND _____

- Freedom AND _____

- Develop our organization AND _____

Polarities: Examples in Acquisitions

Strategy	• Short term AND Long Term • Continuity AND Change
Innovation	• Continuous Improvement AND Breakthrough Innovation • Efficiency AND Effectiveness
Risk	• Risk mitigation AND Opportunity Creation
Stakeholder Management	• Taking care of the organization AND Taking care of the customer • Getting the job done AND Building relationships
Commercial/contract	• Prescribed AND Adaptive • Trust AND Compliance
Leadership	• Technical skills AND Relationships skills • Providing direction AND Inviting participation
Coordination	• Centralized AND Decentralized
Requirements	• Reducing cost AND Increasing quality
Delivery	• Planning AND Implementation

Polarities: Examples in Leadership

- Support AND Challenge

- Confidence AND Humility

- Providing direction AND Inviting participation

- Inquiry AND Advocacy

- Technical leadership AND Adaptive leadership

- Strategic view AND Tactical view

- Develop your people AND Develop your organization

Mapping a Polarity

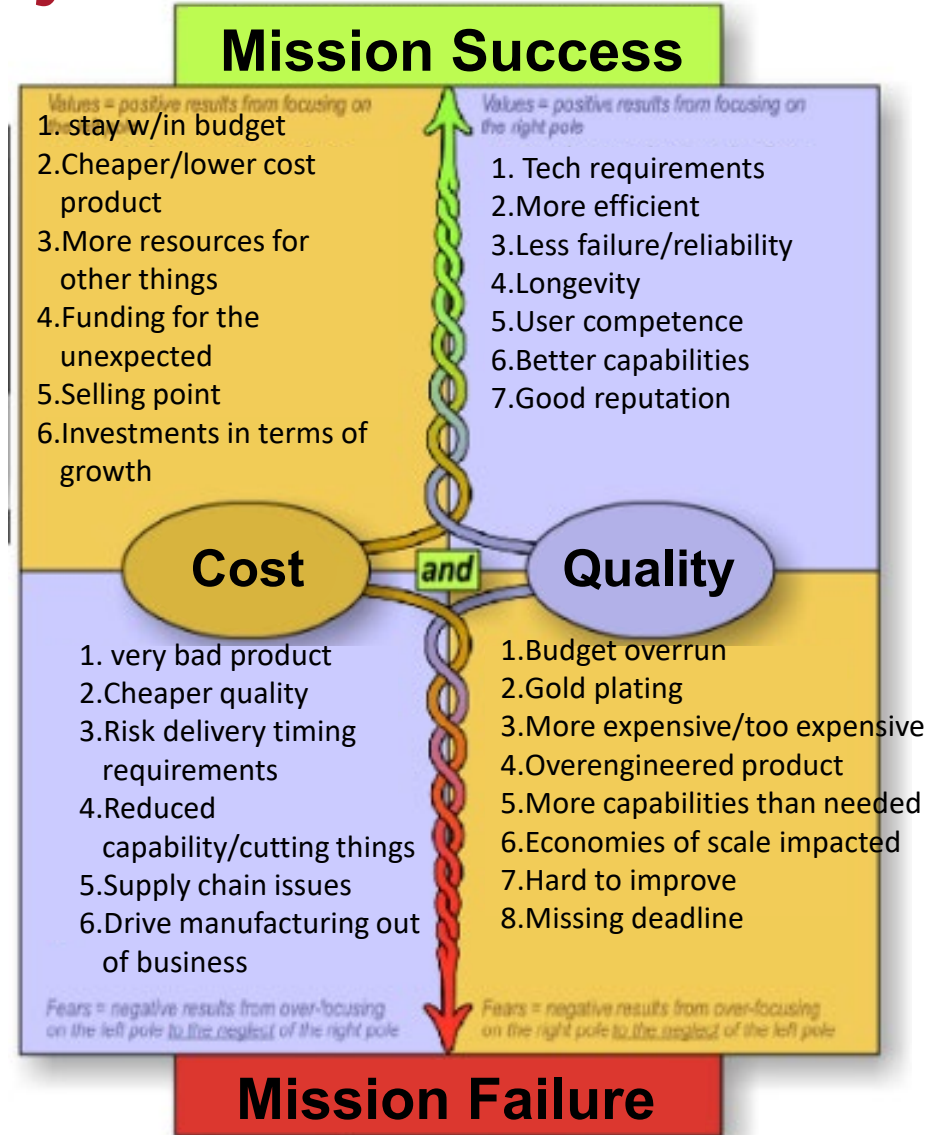Action Steps

1.Item 1

Action Steps

1.Item 1

Early Warnings

1.Item 1

Early Warnings

1.Item 1

Mission Success

Values = positive results from focusing on

1. stay w/in budget
2. Cheaper/lower cost product
3. More resources for other things
4. Funding for the unexpected
5. Selling point
6. Investments in terms of growth

Values = positive results from focusing on the right pole

1. Tech requirements
2. More efficient
3. Less failure/reliability
4. Longevity
5. User competence
6. Better capabilities
7. Good reputation

Cost and **Quality**

1. very bad product
2. Cheaper quality
3. Risk delivery timing requirements
4. Reduced capability/cutting things
5. Supply chain issues
6. Drive manufacturing out of business

1. Budget overrun
2. Gold plating
3. More expensive/too expensive
4. Overengineered product
5. More capabilities than needed
6. Economies of scale impacted
7. Hard to improve
8. Missing deadline

Fears = negative results from over-focusing on the left pole *to the neglect* of the right pole

Fears = negative results from over-focusing on the right pole *to the neglect* of the left pole

Mission Failure

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Assessing a Polarity

Almost always

Often

Sometimes

Seldom

Almost never

Almost never

Seldom

Sometimes

Often

Almost always

Greater Purpose Statement (GPS)* - why balance the polarity?

Values = positive results from focusing on the left pole

Values = positive results from focusing on the right pole

and

Fears = negative results from over-focusing on the left pole *to the neglect* of the right pole

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Deeper Fear from lack of balance

Almost always

Often

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Assessing a Polarity

Almost always

Often

Sometimes
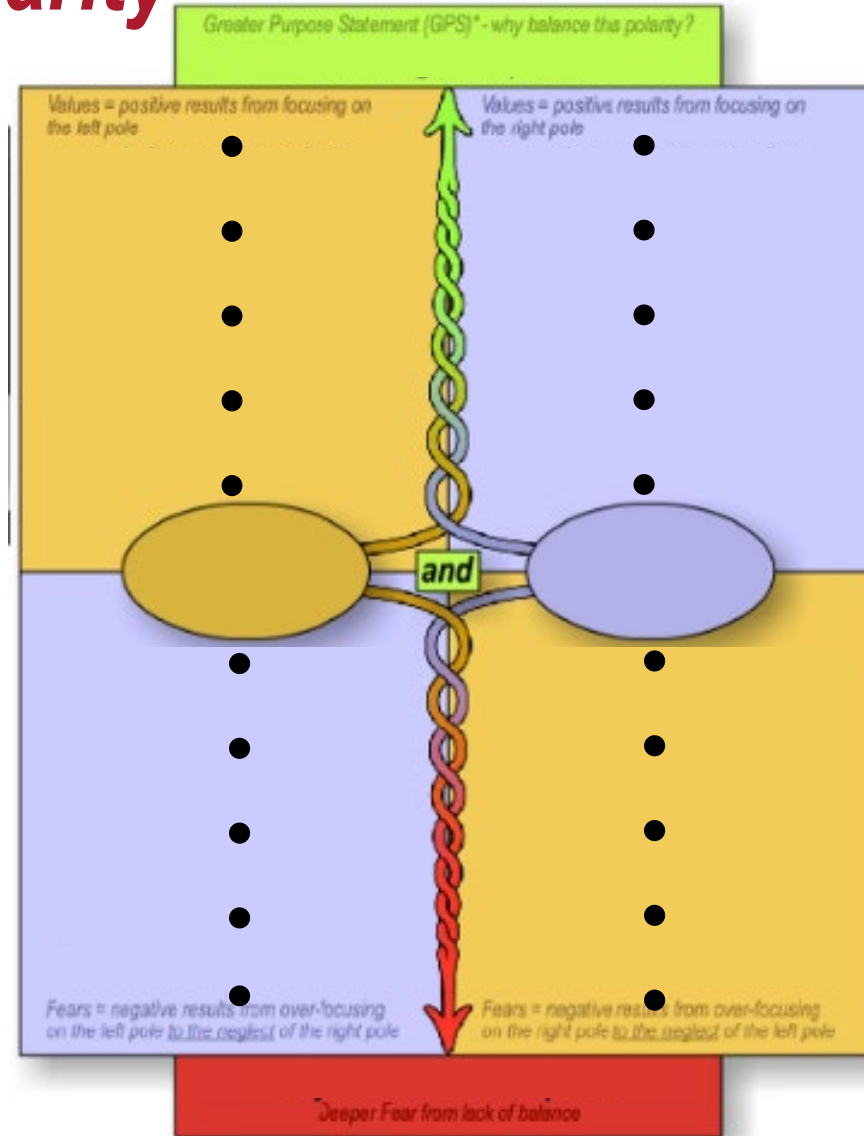
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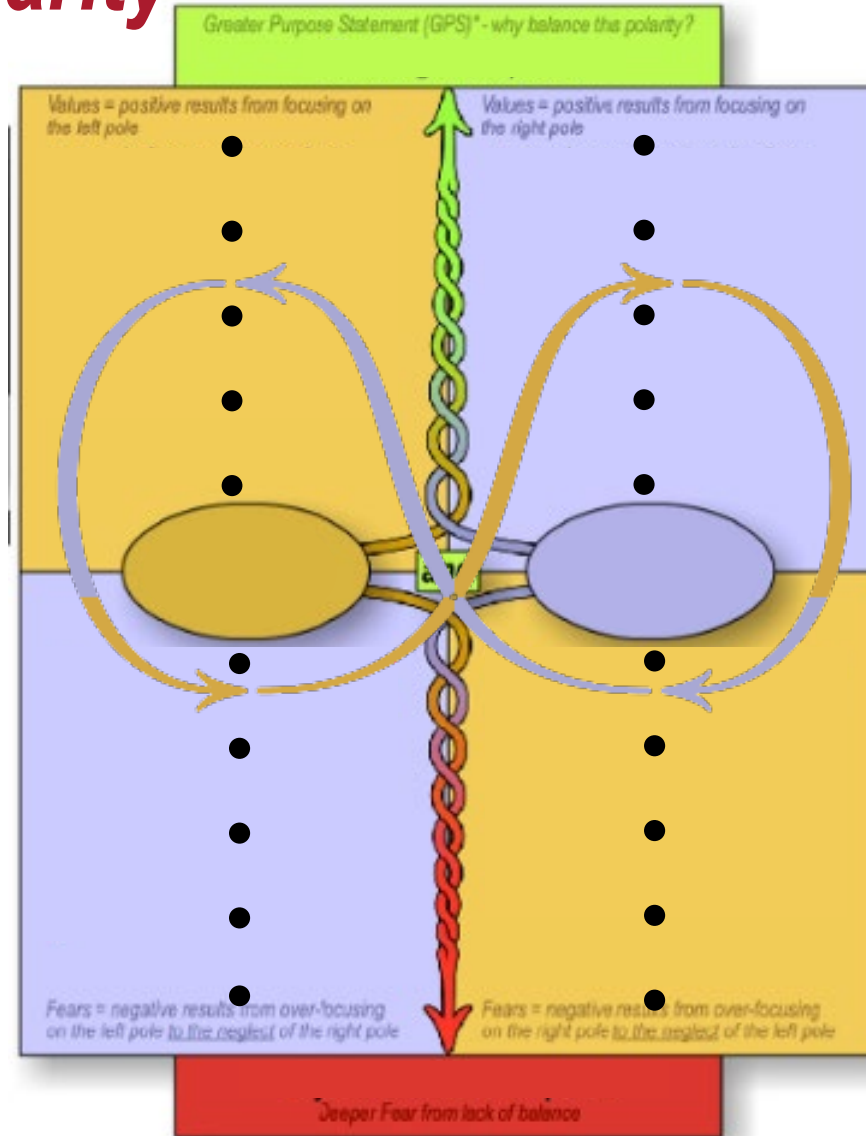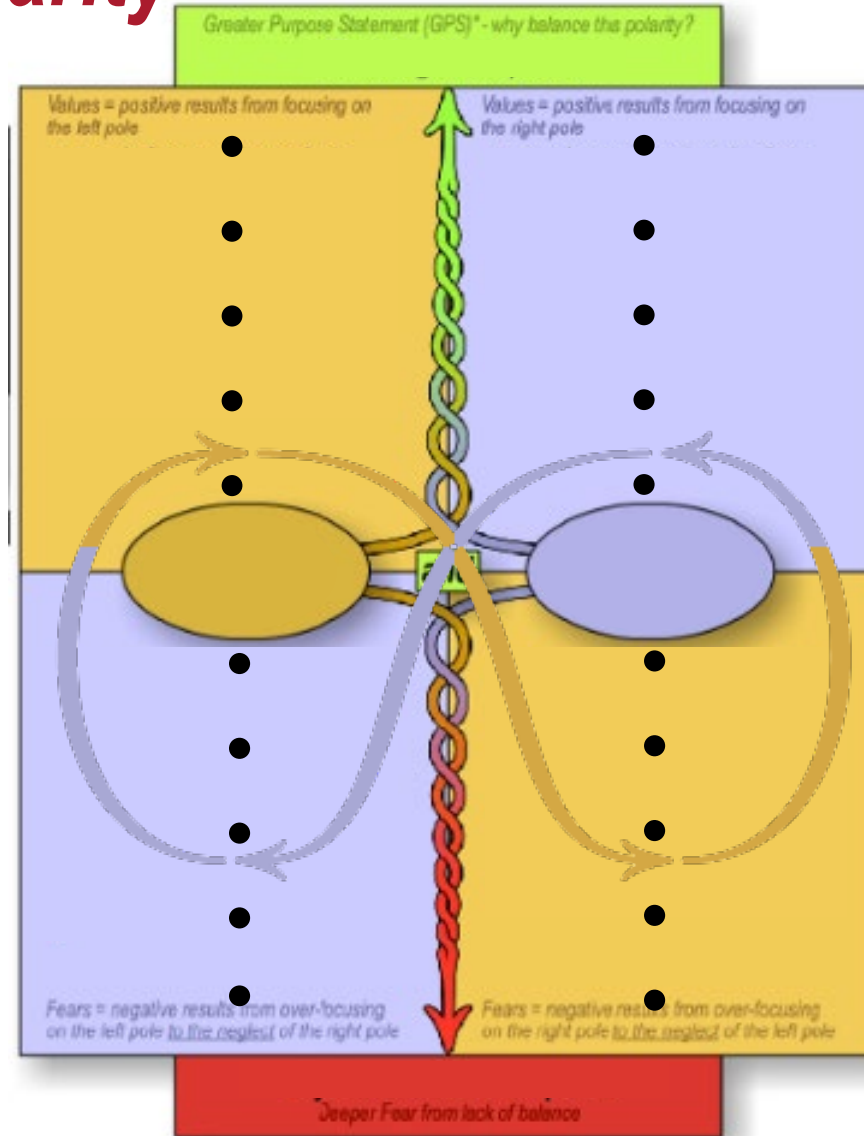Almost never

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Often

Almost always

Applying Polarities

- Individual
- Team/family
- Organization
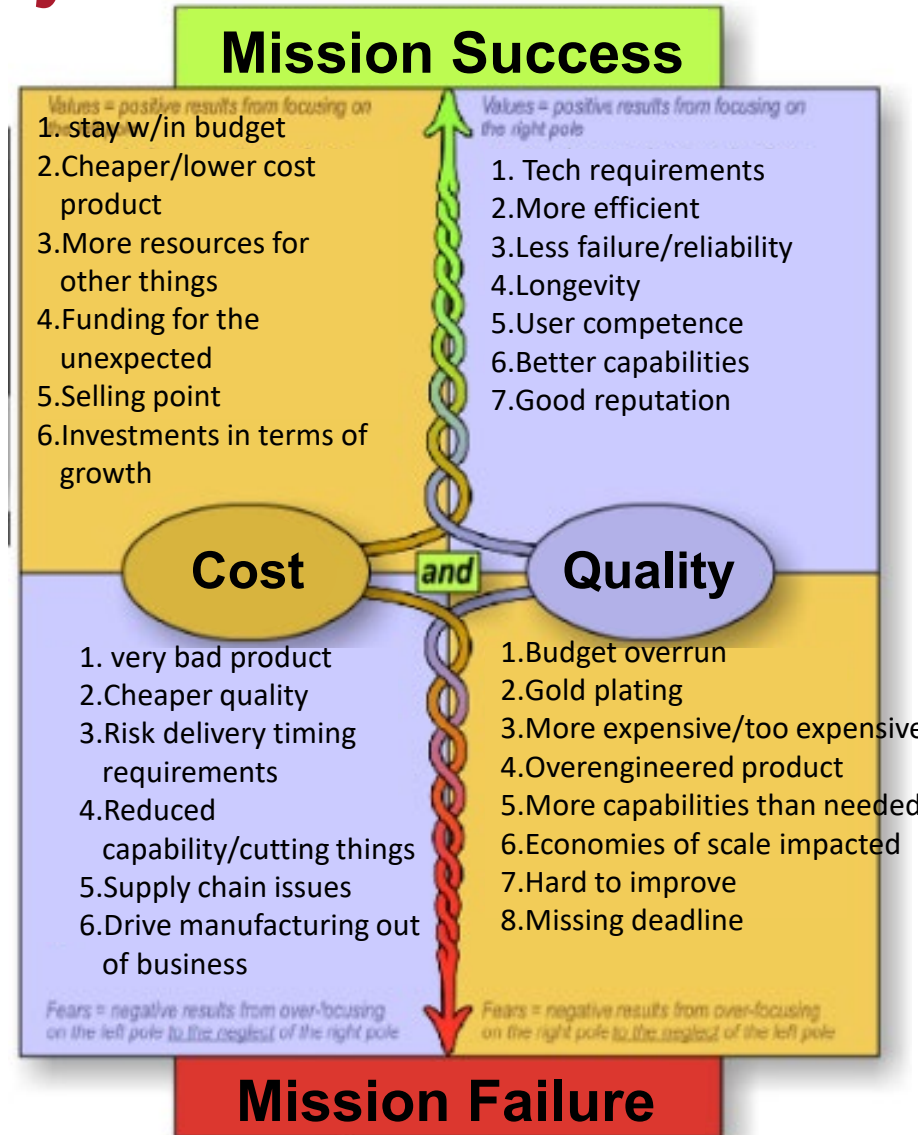- Stakeholder
- Community
- Society

Mapping a Polarity

Action Steps

1. budgetary reviews/meetings
2. Get competitive bids
3. Enforce standards for cost
4. Clearly define requirements
5. Ask the customer/tap supplier knowledge
6. Identify cost drivers
7. Appropriate contracting
8. Build a schedule
9. Value mapping
10. Optimize product processes
11. Identify income area

Early Warnings

1. Lots of spar fixes
2. Customer complaints/quality
3. Action requests/serious fault notifications
4. Suppliers dropping out b/c we're asking them to work for less
5. Supplemental contracts to make up for deficiencies for personnel as well as material items/labor hours

Mission Success

Values = positive results from focusing on the right pole

Cost and **Quality**

1. stay w/in budget
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Mission Failure

Action Steps

1. FMEA
2. More and better testing
3. Define longevity
4. Clearly define requirements with objectives and thresholds
5. Track and monitor key performance parameters SPC
6. The right people in the right positions/training
7. Monitor customer satisfaction

Early Warnings

1. PM monitor DoD AQ milestones
2. Percent $/percent project
3. Monitor metrics
4. Cost going up
5. Customer complaints/cost
6. Performance exceeds requirements paying more than needed
7. Monitor schedule

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Leveraging a Polarity: Thriving Workplace
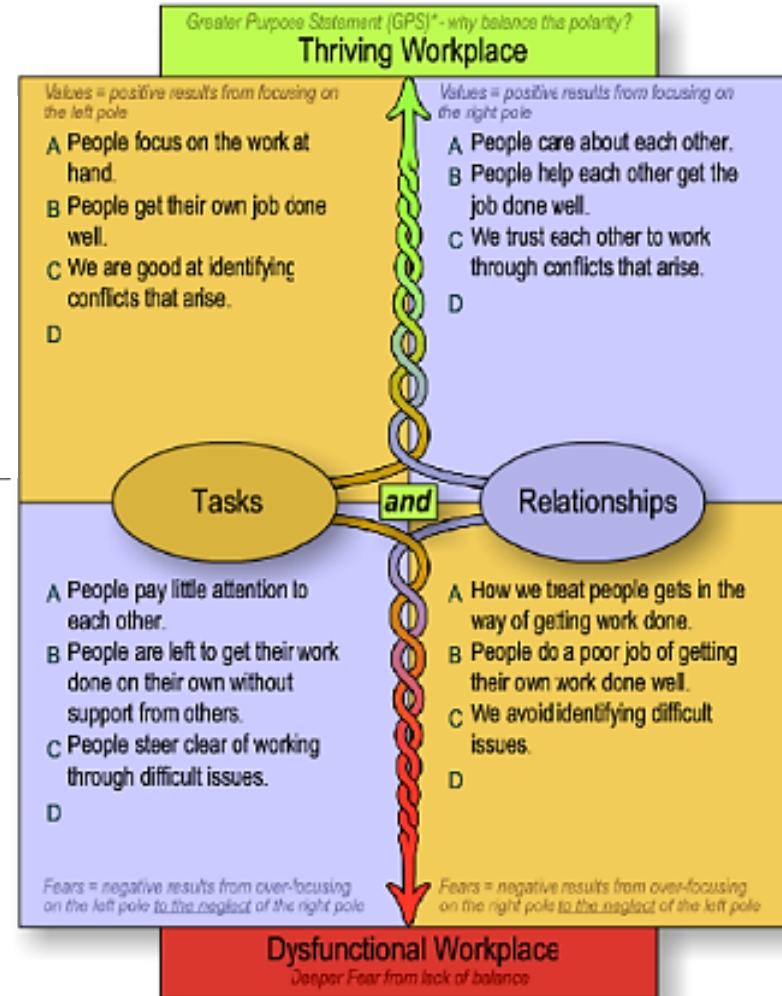
Action Steps

How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this left pole? What? Who? By When? Measures?

1. Establish clear tasks, quality standards and deadlines for completion.
2. Meet weekly with team members to be sure everyone understands what they are expected to do, when and how.
3. Reward employees for quality performance delivered in a timely manner.
4. Measure how well employees

Early Warnings

Measurable indicators (things you can count) that will let you know you are getting the downside of this left pole.

1. People resist supporting one another.
2. People won't ask coworkers for help when they need it.
3. People say they are not interested in participating in team building or company social events.
4.

Action Steps

How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this right pole? What? Who? By When? Measures?

1. Sponsor events for people to get to know one another.
2. Provide team building events twice a year.
3. Measure how well employees "build and maintain healthy work relationships" on performance reviews.
4. Reward employees for developing and maintaining healthy working relationships.
5.

Early Warnings

Measurable indicators (things you can count) that will let you know you are getting the downside of this right pole.

1. Employees say they don't know what they are expected to do.
2. Performance numbers start to decline.
3. When asked, employees cannot articulate how well they are performing against goals and objectives.
4.

Greater Purpose Statement (GPS) - why balance this polarity?*

Thriving Workplace

Values = positive results from focusing on the left pole

A. People focus on the work at hand.
B. People get their own job done well.
C. We are good at identifying conflicts that arise.
D.

Values = positive results from focusing on the right pole

A. People care about each other.
B. People help each other get the job done well.
C. We trust each other to work through conflicts that arise.
D.

Tasks **and** Relationships

A. People pay little attention to each other.
B. People are left to get their work done on their own without support from others.
C. People steer clear of working through difficult issues.
D.

A. How we treat people gets in the way of getting work done.
B. People do a poor job of getting their own work done well.
C. We avoid identifying difficult issues.
D.

Fears = negative results from over-focusing on the left pole to the neglect of the right pole

Fears = negative results from over-focusing on the right pole to the neglect of the left pole

Dysfunctional Workplace

Deeper Fear from lack of balance

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Leveraging a polarity: Information Advantage

1. Marketing (understand imperative to share)
2. Training (how/why to share)
3. Integrate security solutions into sharing activities
4. Implement Intel Community Information Security marking (IC ISM) standards
5. Implement good governance and oversight
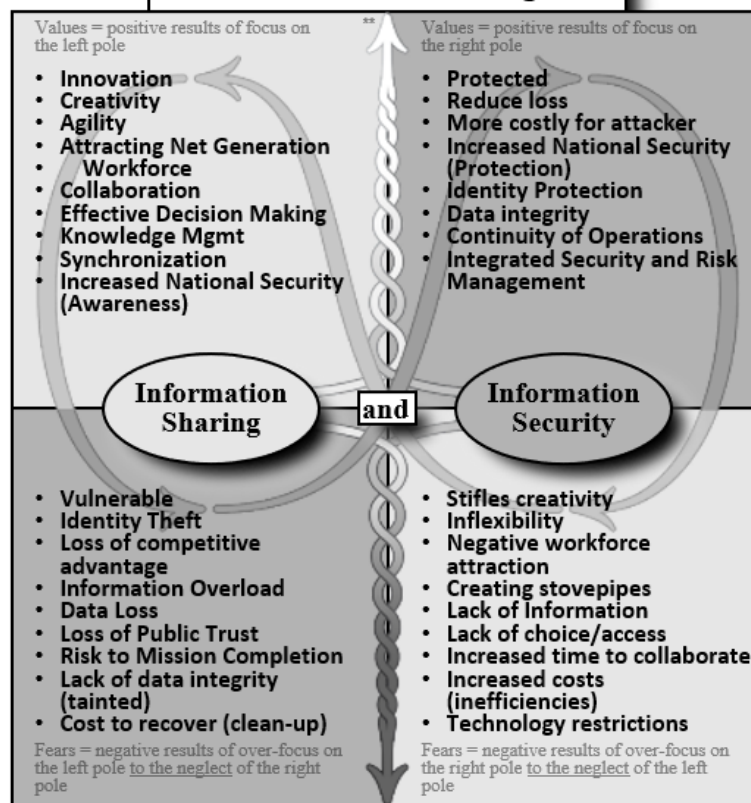6. Implement ABAC

1. Marketing (understanding the value of security)
2. Training (practicing good security hygiene)
3. Providing good security tools
4. Implement good governance and oversight
5. Develop better metrics to measure security vulnerabilities
6. Implement ABAC

Greater Purpose Statement (GPS) - why leverage this polarity?

Information Advantage

Values = positive results of focus on the left pole

- **Innovation**
- **Creativity**
- **Agility**
- **Attracting Net Generation Workforce**
- **Collaboration**
- **Effective Decision Making**
- **Knowledge Mgmt**
- **Synchronization**
- **Increased National Security (Awareness)**

Values = positive results of focus on the right pole

- **Protected**
- **Reduce loss**
- **More costly for attacker**
- **Increased National Security (Protection)**
- **Identity Protection**
- **Data integrity**
- **Continuity of Operations**
- **Integrated Security and Risk Management**

Information Sharing   **and**   *Information Security*

1. Loss of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) up
2. Successful Intrusions/Data exfiltrations up

- **Vulnerable**
- **Identity Theft**
- **Loss of competitive advantage**
- **Information Overload**
- **Data Loss**
- **Loss of Public Trust**
- **Risk to Mission Completion**
- **Lack of data integrity (tainted)**
- **Cost to recover (clean-up)**

- **Stifles creativity**
- **Inflexibility**
- **Negative workforce attraction**
- **Creating stovepipes**
- **Lack of Information**
- **Lack of choice/access**
- **Increased time to collaborate**
- **Increased costs (inefficiencies)**
- **Technology restrictions**

Fears = negative results of over-focus on the left pole to the neglect of the right pole

Fears = negative results of over-focus on the right pole to the neglect of the left pole

1. Information in newly fielded systems not visible/accessible outside of the enclave
2. Time to get required information up
3. Access to information denied

Irrelevance and Insecurity

Deeper Fear from lack of leverage

Polarity
Leadership Center / ** Thanks to De Wit & Meyer BV / *** Thanks to Todd Johnson, Rivertown Consultants

This work done in collaboration with Frew & Associates, Department of Defense Chief Information Officers and Department of the Navy

Identifying Polarities: 4 Lenses

1. **Is the difficulty ongoing, like breathing?**
   - yes = probably a polarity to leverage
   - no = probably a problem to solve

2. **Are there two alternatives that are interdependent, meaning you can only focus on one pole for so long before you are required to focus on the other pole, like inhaling and exhaling?**
   - yes = probably a polarity to leverage
   - no = probably a problem to solve

3. **Is it necessary, over time, for you to have both identified upsides?**
   - yes = probably a polarity to leverage
   - no = probably a problem to solve

4. **Will focusing on one upside to the neglect of the other eventually undermine your efforts to move toward your higher purpose?**
   - yes = probably a polarity to leverage
   - no = probably a problem to solve

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Quiz: Problem or Polarity?

1. Where should the team go for lunch today? Diane likes Tai. Michael really wants Italian.

2. How do we work with our supplier to get what we need on this job and keep relations intact for the next one?

3. Which of these designs will give us the greatest reliability based on the specs provided?

4. My husband said he's not comfortable with my working late so many days a week.

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Polarities in Real Life

Breakout conversation:

In your small group, identify **one or more polarities** you need to manage in your work or elsewhere in your life.

Make notes of the following:

1. The **poles** of each polarity

2. The **greater purpose** of each polarity (*Why manage this polarity?*)

3. The **deeper fear** (*What will happen if you don't manage this polarity well?*)

Please note your room # and appoint a spokesperson for when we reconvene.

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One Last Polarity

Either/or   **AND**   Both/and

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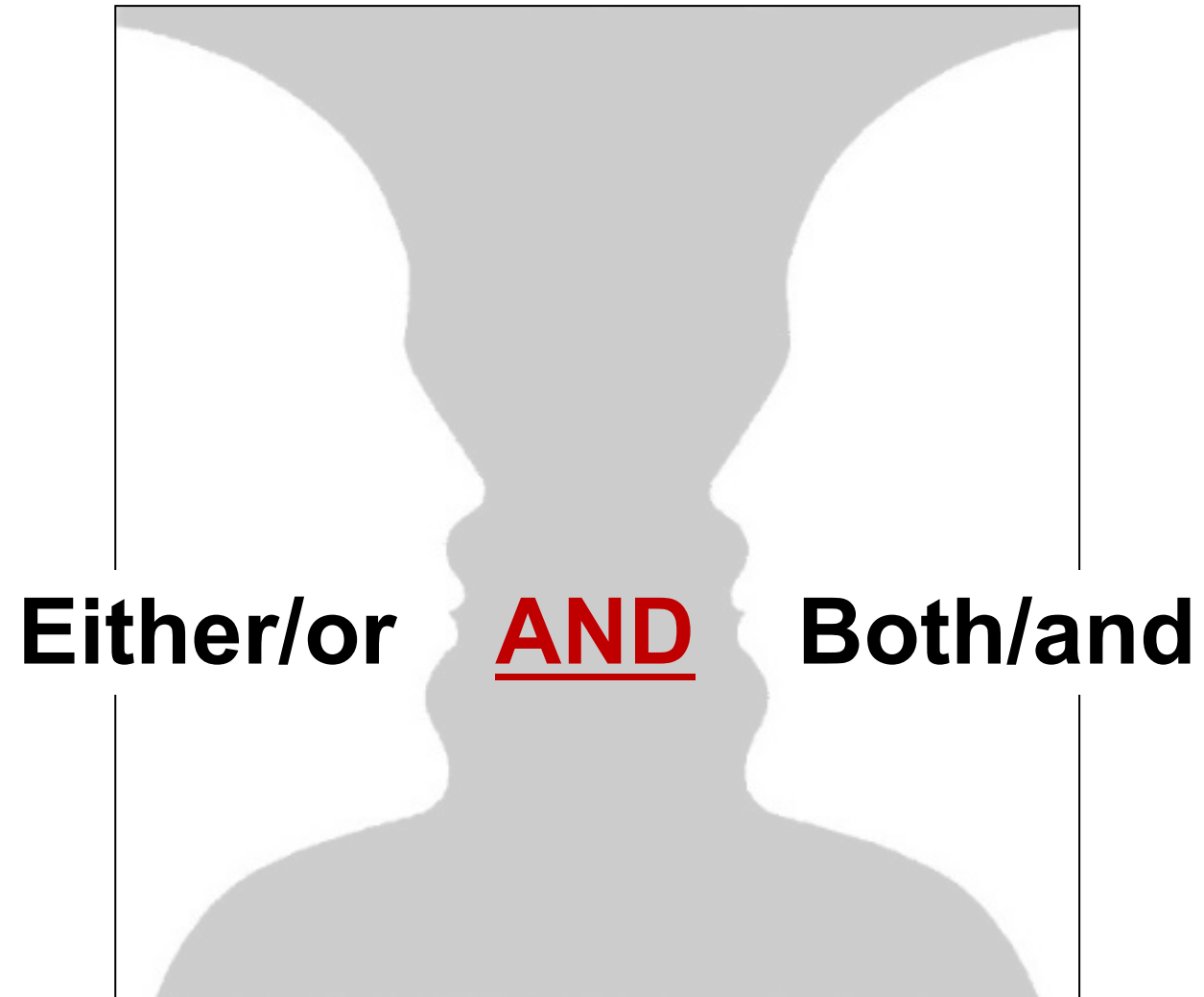
Recap

1. Polarities are interdependent pairs of ideas or values that need each other over time for success

2. They are everywhere and ongoing

3. All polarities have the same dependable dynamic

4. Map polarities to understand and leverage them

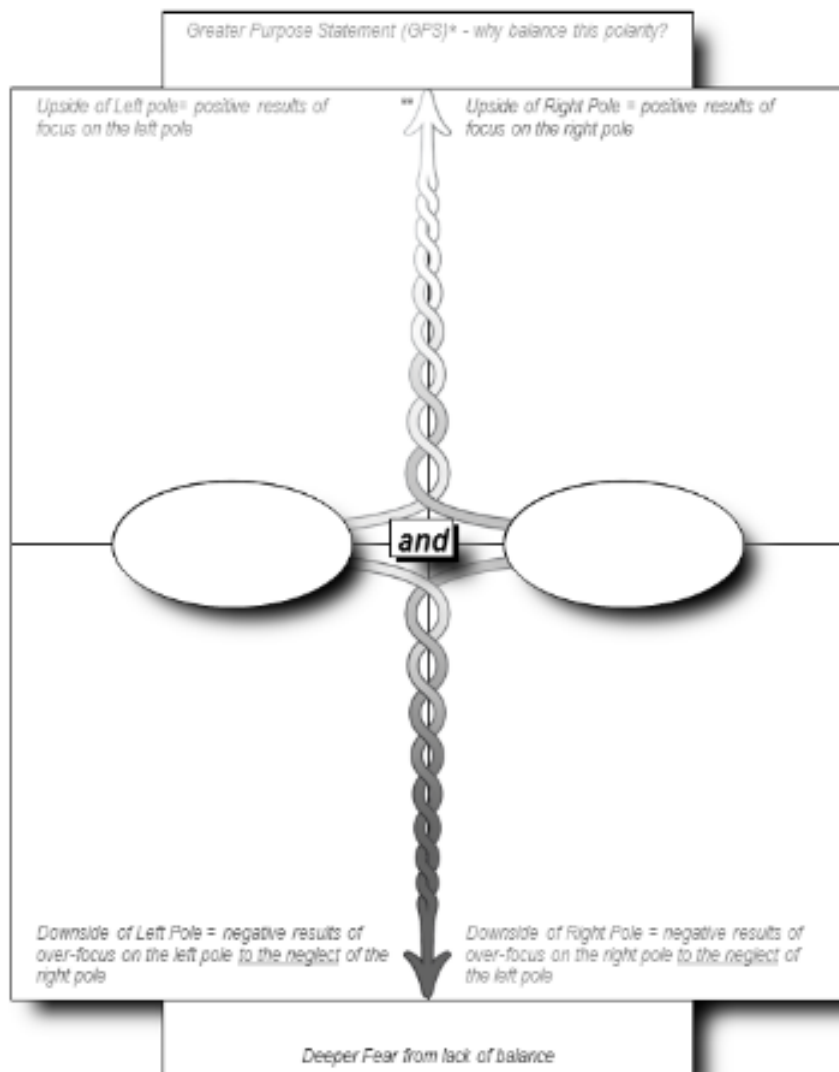5. Use action steps and early warnings to create a mini strategic plan to realize our greater purpose

Resources

Action Steps

How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this left pole? What? Who? By When? Measures?

Action Steps

How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this right pole? What? Who? By When? Measures?

Greater Purpose Statement (GPS)* - why balance this polarity?

Upside of Left pole= positive results of focus on the left pole

Upside of Right Pole = positive results of focus on the right pole

and

Early Warnings*

Measurable indicators (things you can count) that will let you know that you are getting into the downside of this left pole.

Early Warnings

Measurable indicators (things you can count) that will let you know that you are getting into the downside of this right pole.

Downside of Left Pole = negative results of over-focus on the left pole to the neglect of the right pole

Downside of Right Pole = negative results of over-focus on the right pole to the neglect of the left pole

Deeper Fear from lack of balance

Polarity Map™ © 1992, 2008 Polarity Management Associates, LLC / * Thanks to John Scherer, The Scherer Leadership Center / ** Thanks to David S. Meyer SV / *** Thanks to Todd Johnson, Rivertown Consultants

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Problem or Polarity? Some contrasts

Problem to Solve (either/or)	Polarity to Manage (both/and)
They are finite. There is and end point. They are solvable.	They are ongoing. There is no end point. They are not solvable. They must be managed together.
*In*dependent Alternatives	*Inter*dependent Alternatives
They can stand alone. There is no need to include an alternative for the solution to work.	Neither can stand alone. The alternatives need each other to optimize the situation over time.
Often contain mutually *exclusive* opposites: •Should we promote Bill? •What should we include in our customer survey? •When was the war of 1812? •Should we remove one level of management?	Always contain mutually *inclusive* opposites: •Individual and Team •Cost and Quality •Competition and Collaboration •Work and Home

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Key Points About Polarities

1. Both poles are necessary.

2. They are interdependent opposites that need each other over time for sustainable success

3. If you over focus on one pole to the neglect of the other, you will anticipate or experience the downside of that pole. The reverse is also true.

4. To get "relief" from the downside of either pole, you must focus on the upside of the opposite pole.

5. The oscillation is ongoing…the natural tension between poles is unavoidable, unsolvable, indestructible and can be engaged to reach a goal. It's the same for all polarities.

Resources

Polarity Partnerships Website
http://www.polaritypartnerships.com

Polarity Thinking Video with Cliff Kayser
https://youtu.be/IZxvEwWcd5I

Books
Polarity Management: Identifying and Managing Unsolvable Problems by Barry Johnson Ph.D.

Riding the Whirlwind: Connecting People and Organizations in a Culture of Innovation by Fons Trompenaars