

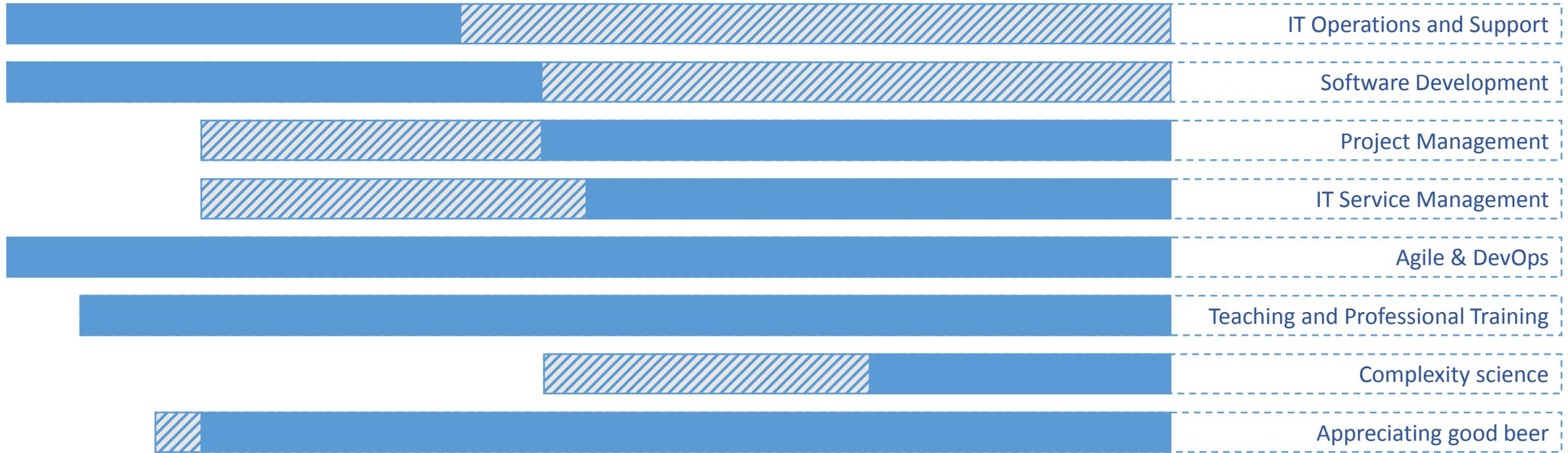
# Cynefin and sense-making in the digital world



KAIMAR KARU

MindBridge

- 1) Transformations, implementations, and big-bang changes
- 2) The much-coveted Digital Transformation
- 3) Why is it all so difficult?
- 4) Complexity, sense-making, and decision-making
- 5) The Cynefin framework
- 6) Continuous incremental improvement



ORACLE



EPICOR



itSMF



MINDBRIDGE  
IDEAS OVER OBSTACLES



@kaimarkaru

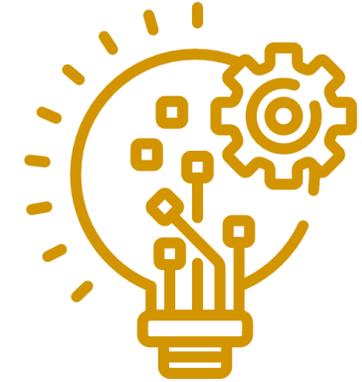
CHANGE IS  
CONSTANT



INCREASING  
BUSINESS VALUE



TACKLING  
TECHNICAL DEBT



ENABLING  
INNOVATION

But often, the ‘why’ and ‘how exactly’ of change initiatives is unclear.

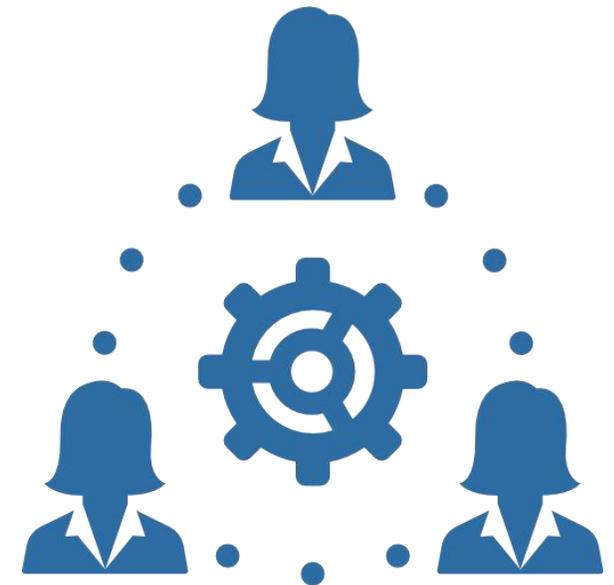
With the best explanation being „but everyone else ...“.

## DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Figure out how to leverage technology to help the organization succeed.

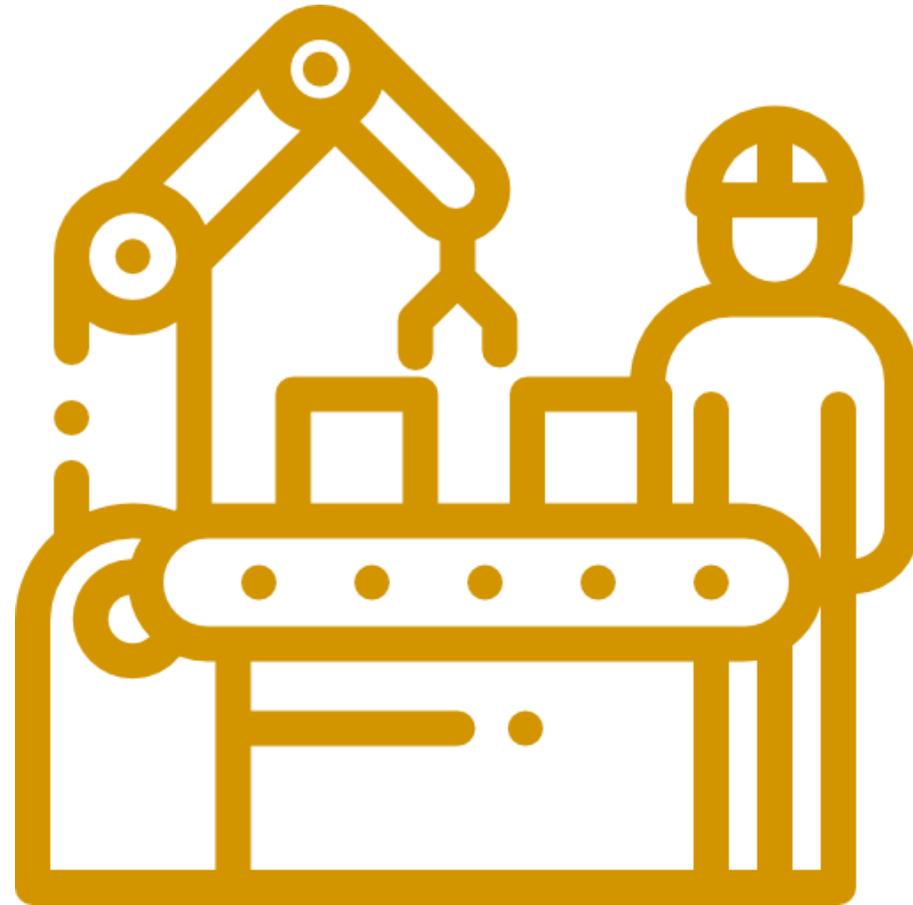
And pay attention to the following:

- » Adopt a **service mind-set**
- » Focus on **customer objectives** to co-create customer value
- » Increase **resilience** to be able to learn from experiments
- » Reposition **leaders as enablers**, not order-givers
- » **Challenge** the status quo in the organization
- » **Streamline** processes, procedures, and the use of data

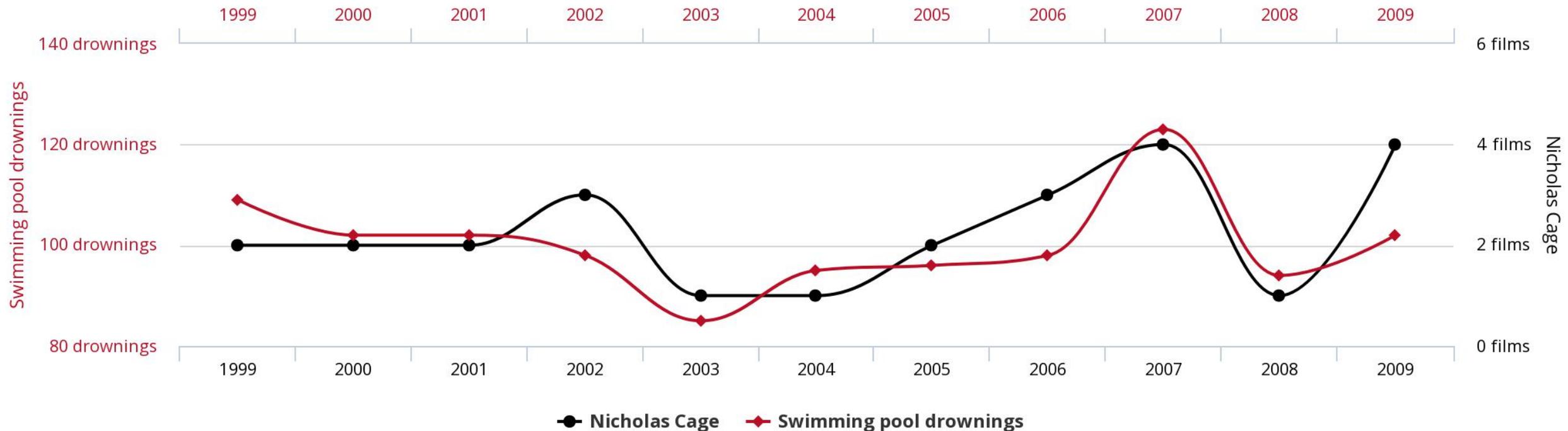


Apply methods and tools most suitable in the given context

CHALLENGES



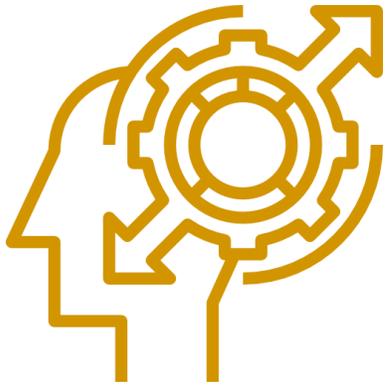
**Number of people who drowned by falling into a pool**  
correlates with  
**Films Nicolas Cage appeared in**



tylervigen.com

[www.tylervigen.com/spurious-correlations](http://www.tylervigen.com/spurious-correlations)

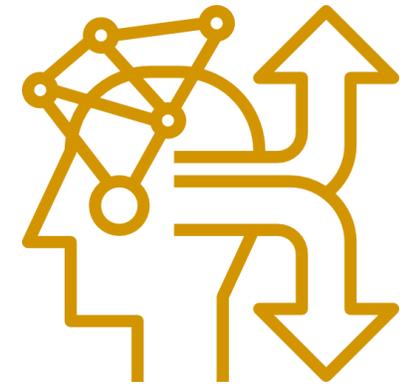
# UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT



ORDERED



CHAOTIC



COMPLEX

„A system is a network governed by constraints that create coherence.“

*Cognitive Edge*

A complex system is a **system composed of interconnected parts** that as a whole exhibit one or more properties not obvious from the properties of the individual parts.

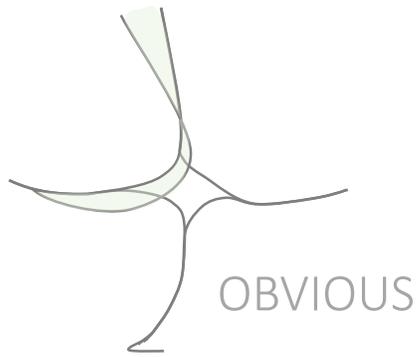
- » Patterns repeat by accident
- » The system is dispositional, not causal
- » The system lightly constrains the agents
- » The agents modify the system with their interactions
- » Coherency appears in retrospect but not in advance
- » Actions will always have unintended consequences
- » Engineering the future state is not possible
- » Hindsight does not lead to foresight

How can we make sense  
of the world so we can  
act in it?

David Snowden, 'Multi-ontology sense making; a new simplicity in decision making', 2005

# *CYNEFIN* TO THE RESCUE





ONE RIGHT ANSWER EXISTS



Best practice



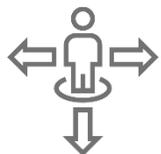
Make use of procedures



Fixed constraints

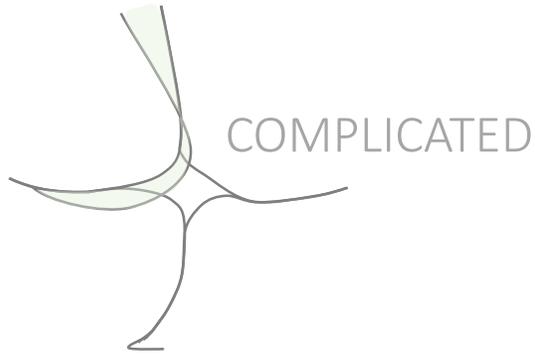


Perceivable and predictable cause-and-effect relationships



Respond with a known solution

COORDINATION



POTENTIALLY, MORE THAN ONE  
RIGHT ANSWER TO CHOOSE FROM

COOPERATION



Good practice



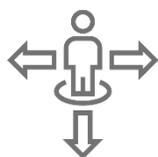
Make use of expert judgement



Governing constraints



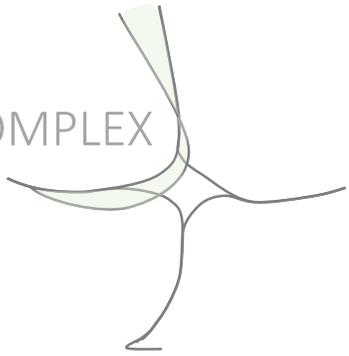
Cause-and-effect relationships knowable but not obvious



Respond with a chosen solution (plan)

Based on materials from Cognitive Edge

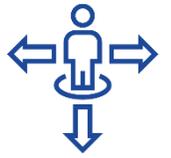
COMPLEX



PROBE



SENSE



RESPOND

THERE ARE NO RIGHT ANSWERS BUT  
MULTIPLE HYPOTHESES CAN BE  
CREATED

COLLABORATION



Exaptive practice



Make use of experimentation



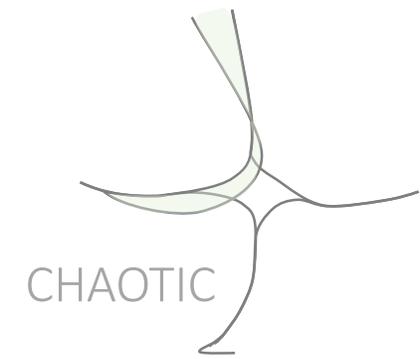
Enabling constraints



Cause-and-effect relationships known only in retrospect



Respond with actions to move to the complicated domain



ACTING FAST IS MORE IMPORTANT  
THAN LOOKING FOR THE RIGHT  
ANSWER

COMPLIANCE



Novel practice



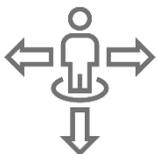
Focus on stabilization



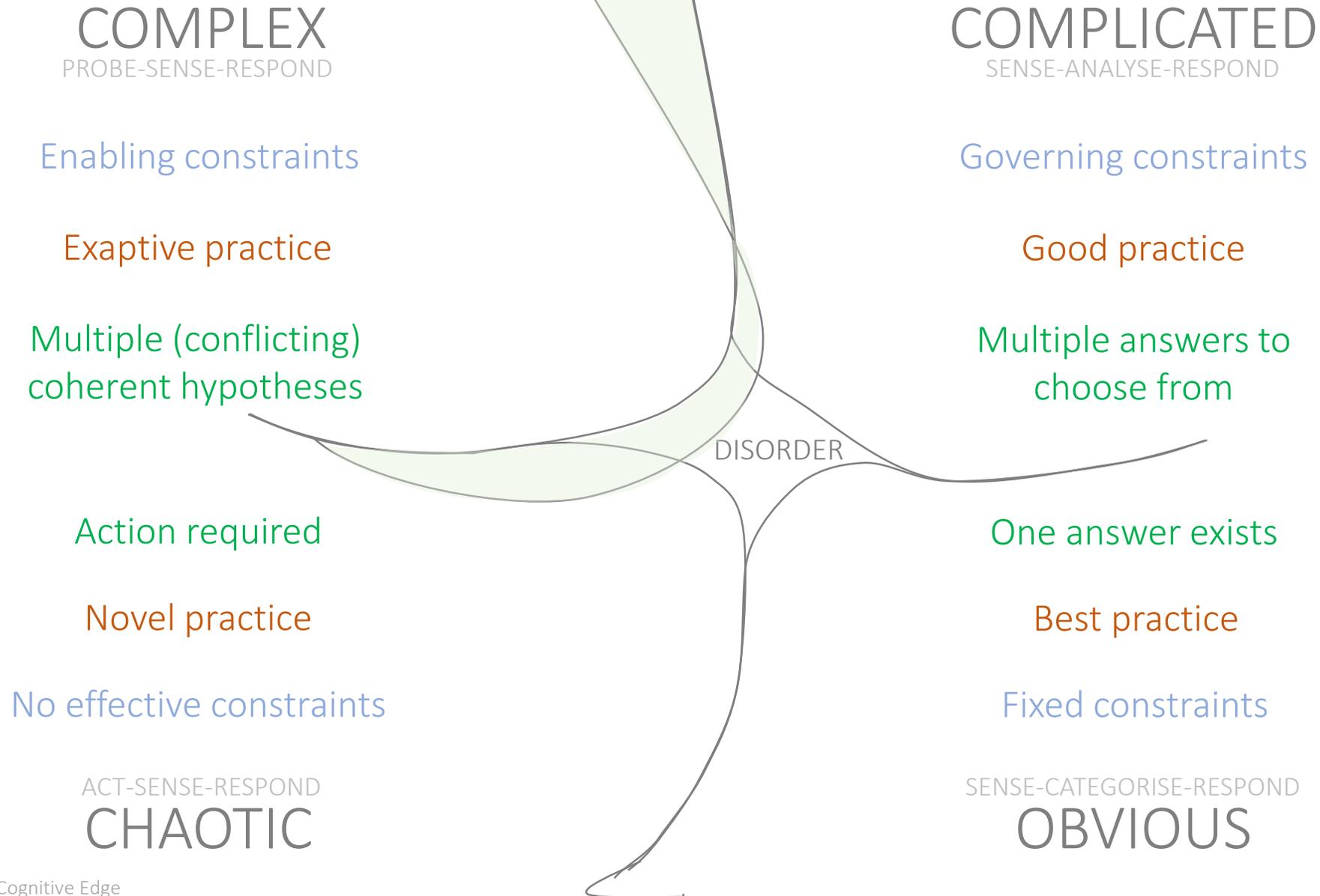
No effective constraints

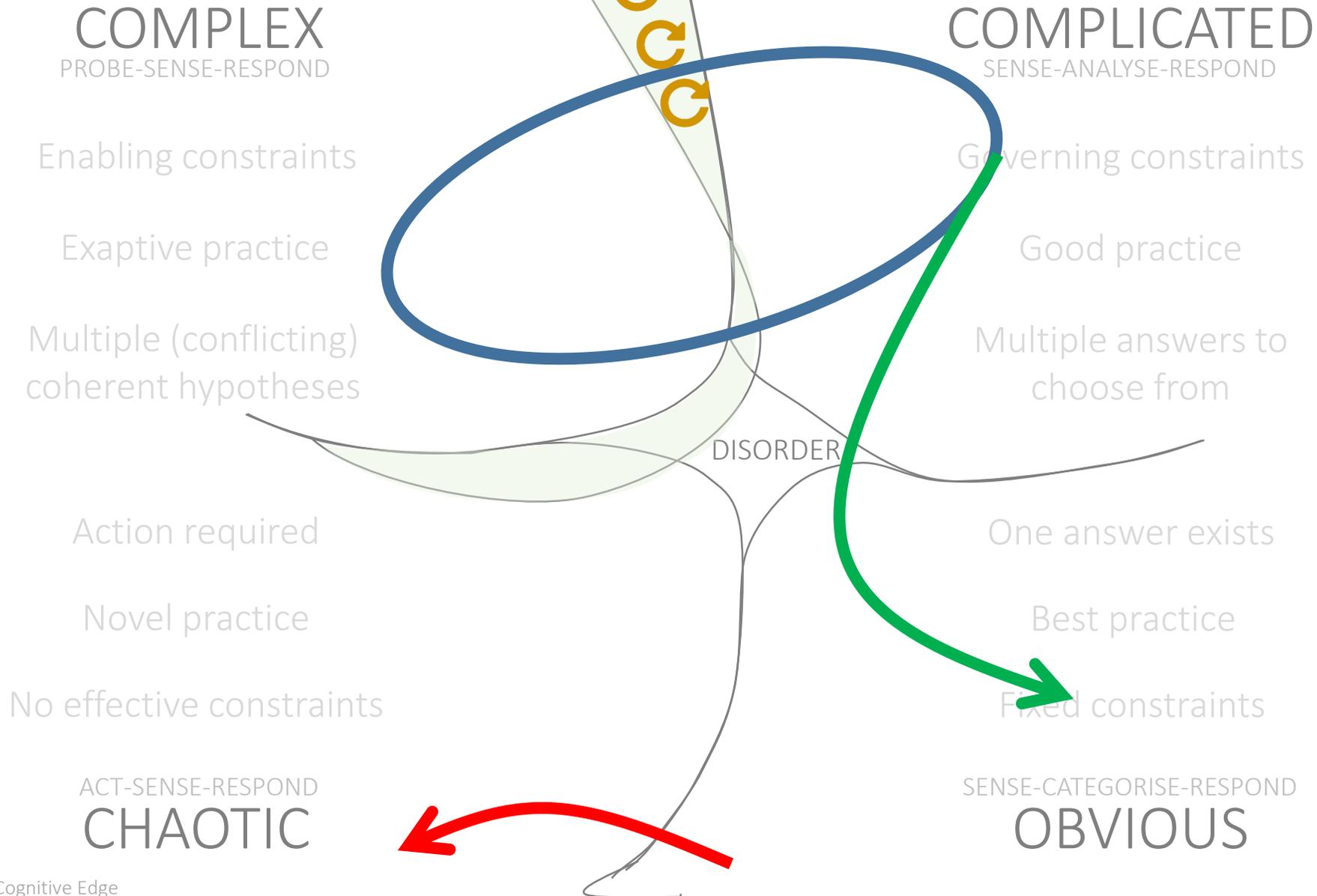


Cause-and-effect relationships not perceivable



Respond with action to move to another domain





# EXAMPLES

(TO ILLUSTRATE, NOT TO CATEGORIZE OR DEFINE)

COMPLEX

- » Brainstorming and trialing
- » Swarming

COMPLICATED

- » 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> level support (SMEs)  
(short to medium resolution time)

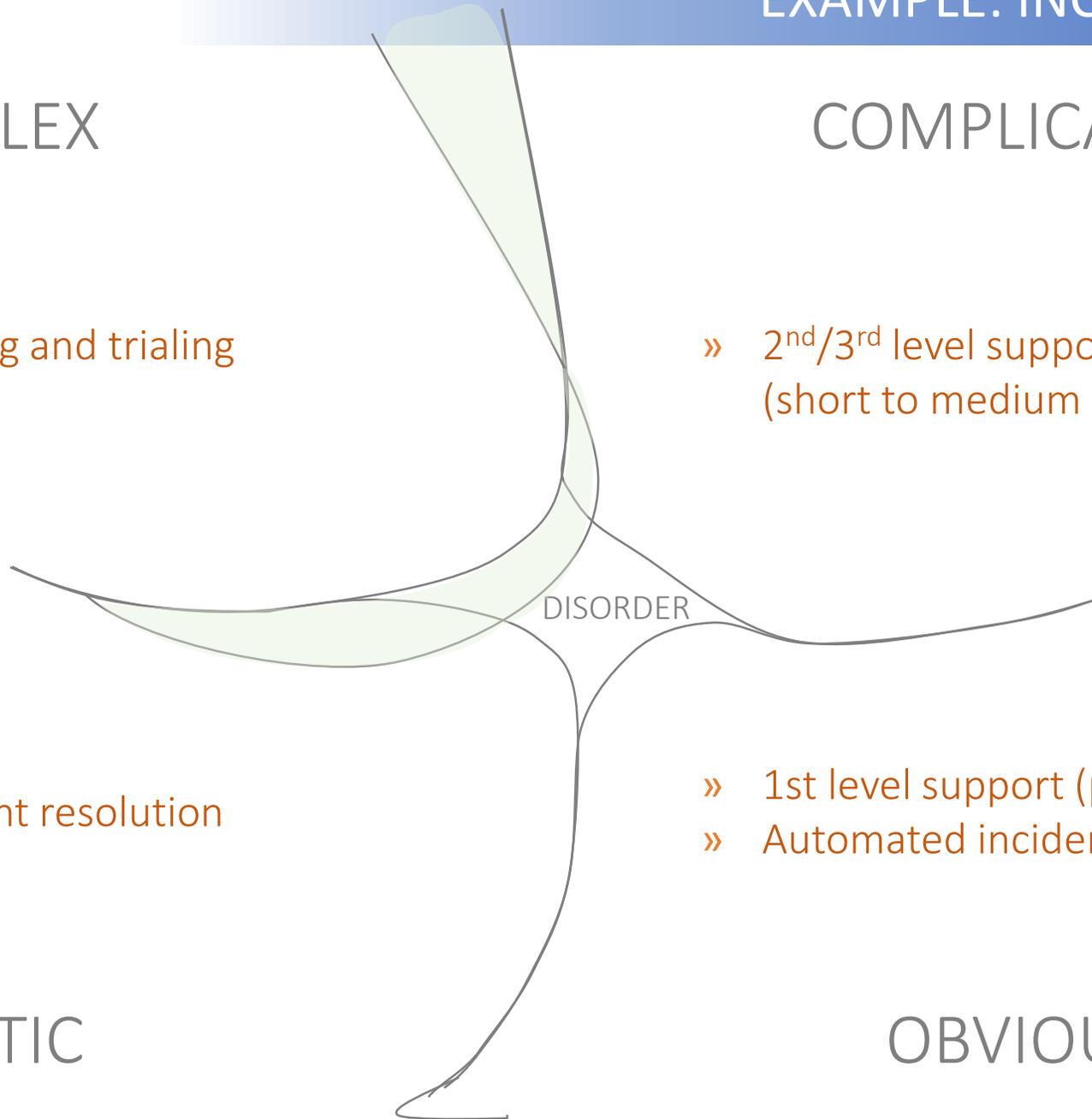
DISORDER

- » Major incident resolution

- » 1st level support (playbooks)
- » Automated incident resolution

CHAOTIC

OBVIOUS



## COMPLEX

- » Projects with high level of uncertainty, requiring experiments  
e.g. product R&D or innovation

## COMPLICATED

- » Projects with knowable risks, requiring specific expertise  
e.g. implementing an ERP solution

DISORDER

- » Projects in crisis or with unknown scope / business rationale

- » Routine, low-risk projects with clear estimates  
e.g. building a new simple web site

## CHAOTIC

## OBVIOUS

COMPLEX

*No-one can figure out what to do  
(and evidence supports conflicting hypotheses)*

COMPLICATED

*Someone can figure out what to do  
(and not all have to agree, choose an option)*

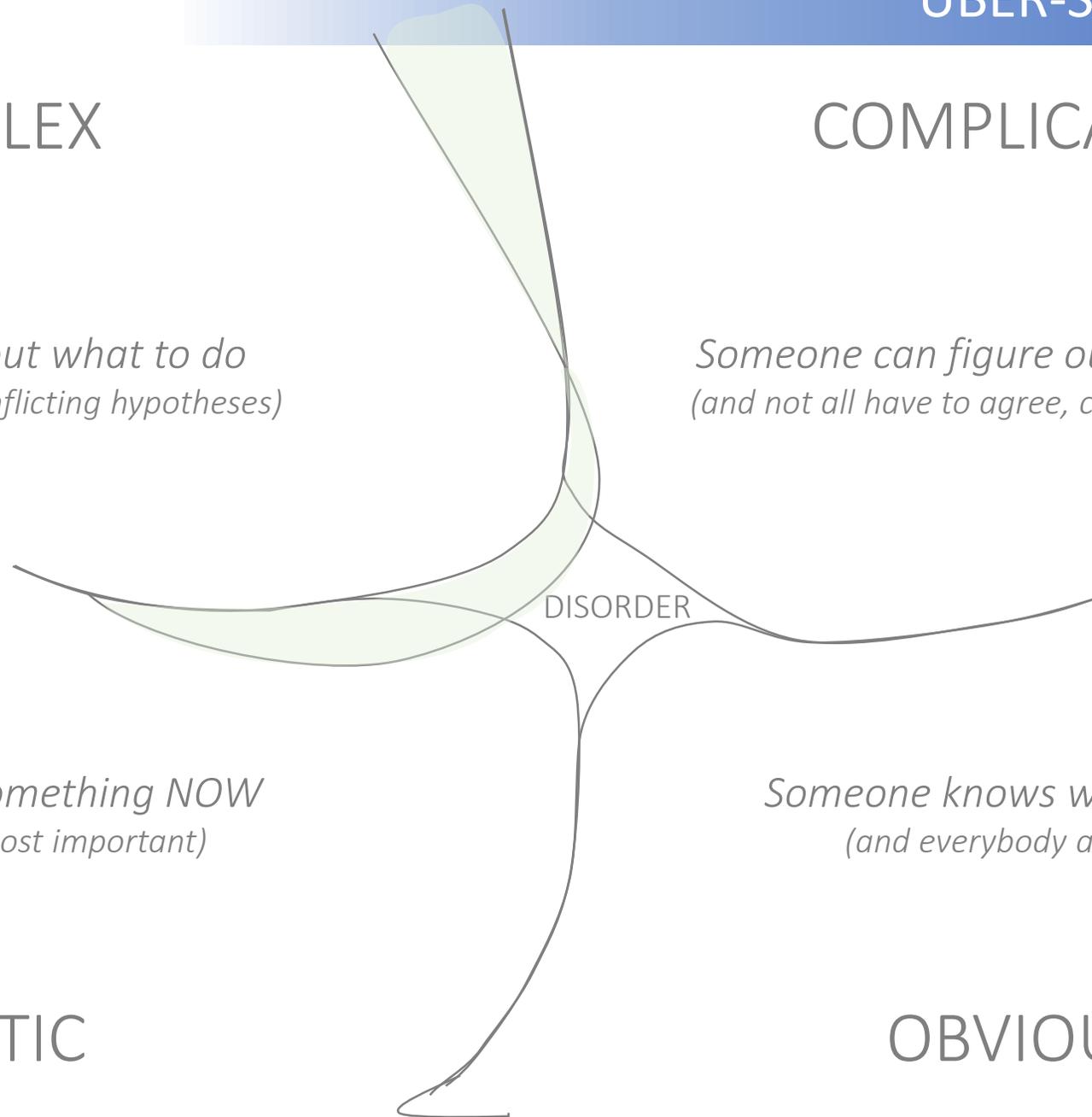
DISORDER

*Someone must do something NOW  
(and stabilization is most important)*

*Someone knows what to do  
(and everybody agrees)*

CHAOTIC

OBVIOUS



- » Avoid conflict by knowing where you are
- » Understand the (un)certainty levels
- » Avoid the illusions of causality and predictability
- » Differentiate between predictability and dispositionality
- » Avoid estimations becoming promises
- » Separate between 'knowable' and 'knowable in hindsight'
- » Choose the most suitable tools and methods

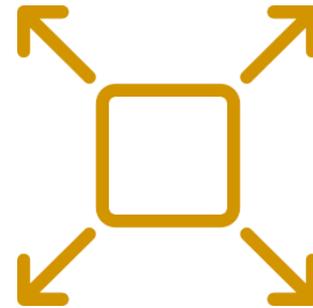
CONTINUOUS  
INCREMENTAL  
IMPROVEMENT



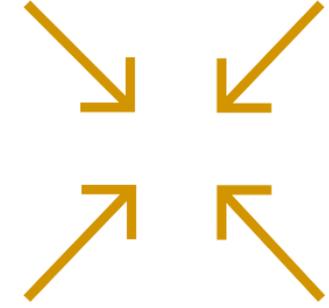
SAFE-TO-FAIL



PARALLEL



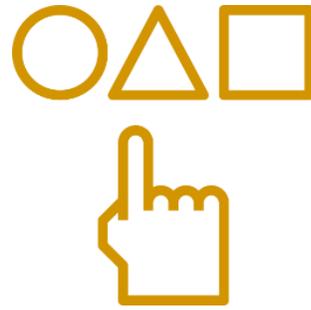
AMPLIFYING  
ACTIONS



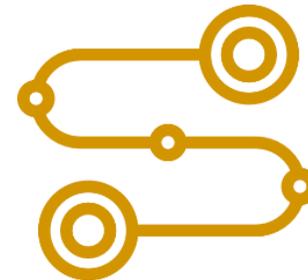
DAMPENING  
ACTIONS



COHERENT



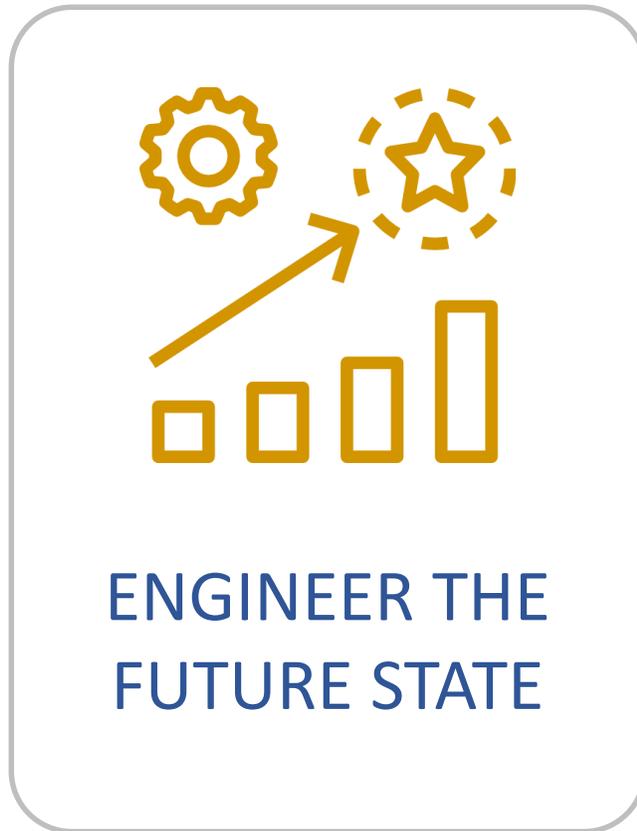
CONFLICTING



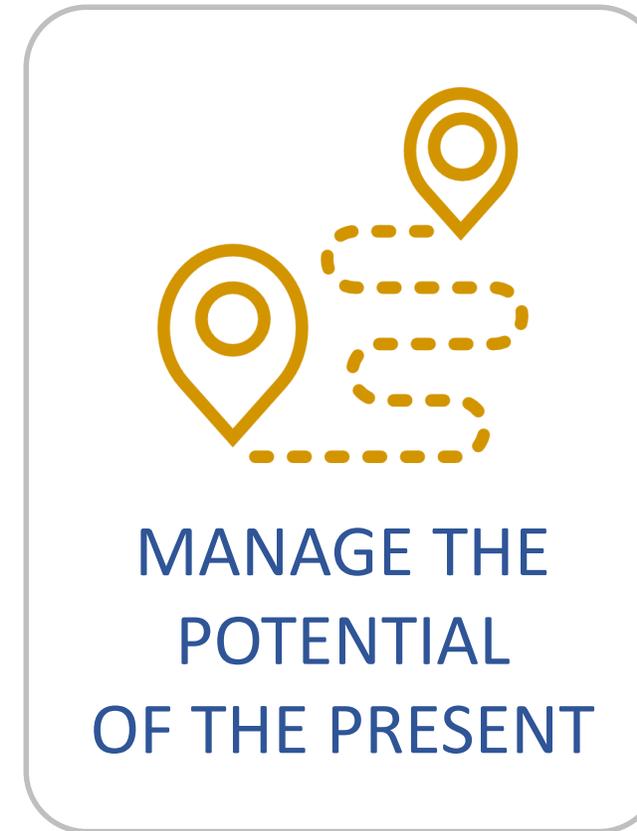
OBLIQUE



NAIVE



VS.



Look not for the shiny end goal, but for the **adjacent possible**.

# Get in touch



@kaimarkaru



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