

Thriving through complexity

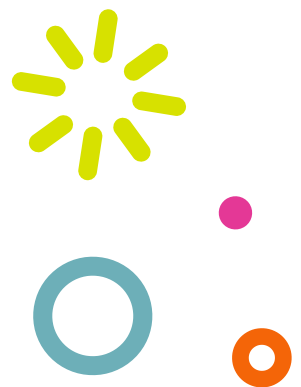
Future of Work, Toronto

APRIL 2026





Complexity, performance, your CEO and you



Lining up the what and the how


Lining up the what and the how






It's my job to define the strategic direction. And, specifically in today's environment, that's really complex. How we've done it in the past is not how we're doing it going forward. It all needs to be about adaptability.

CEO research participant



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Lining up the what and the how



what must
get done

Lining up the what and the how



Lining up the what and the how



Lining up the what and the how



Lining up the what and the how





The change beneath the change

The nature of the problems CEOs need to solve is new

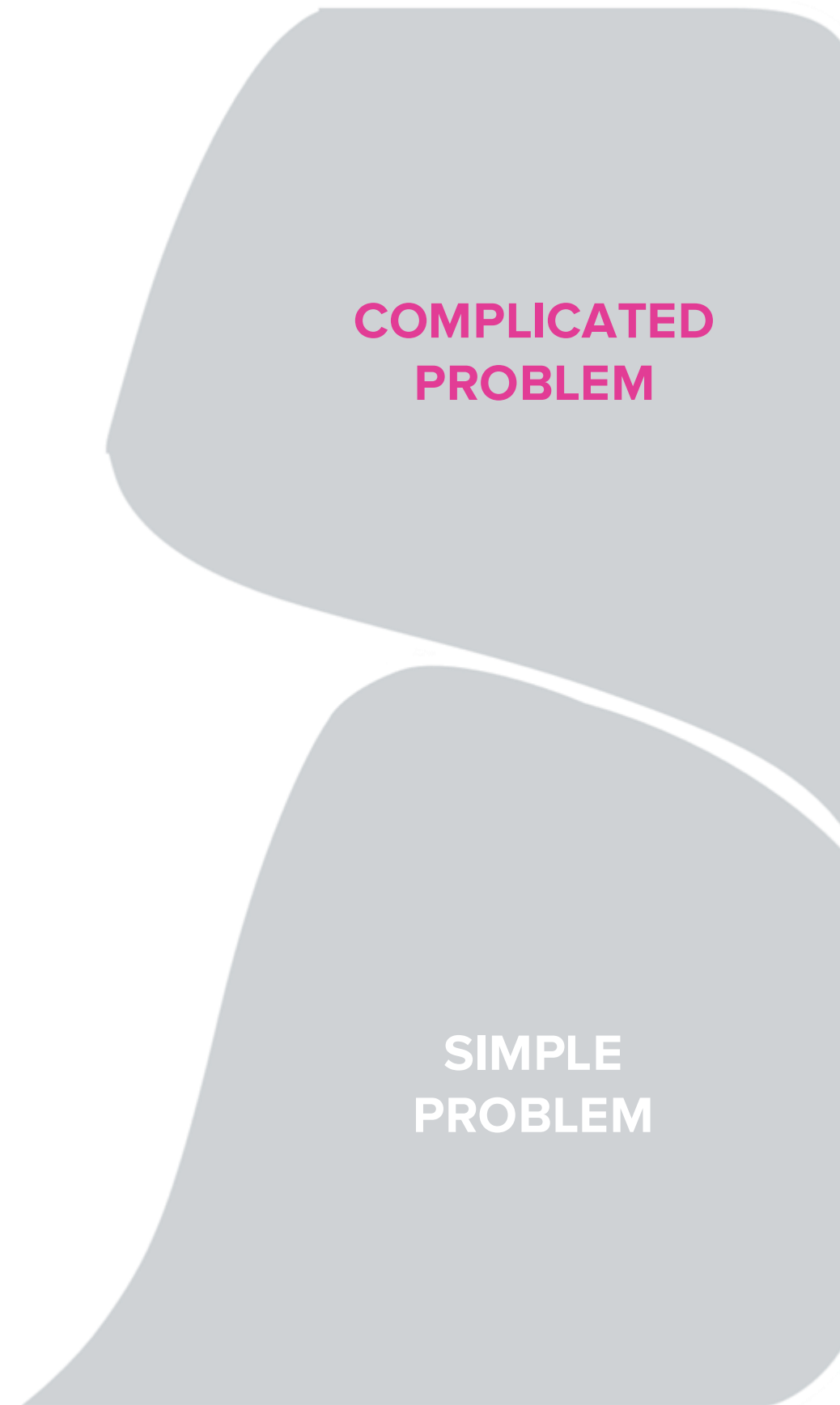


**UNPREDICTABLE
WORLD**

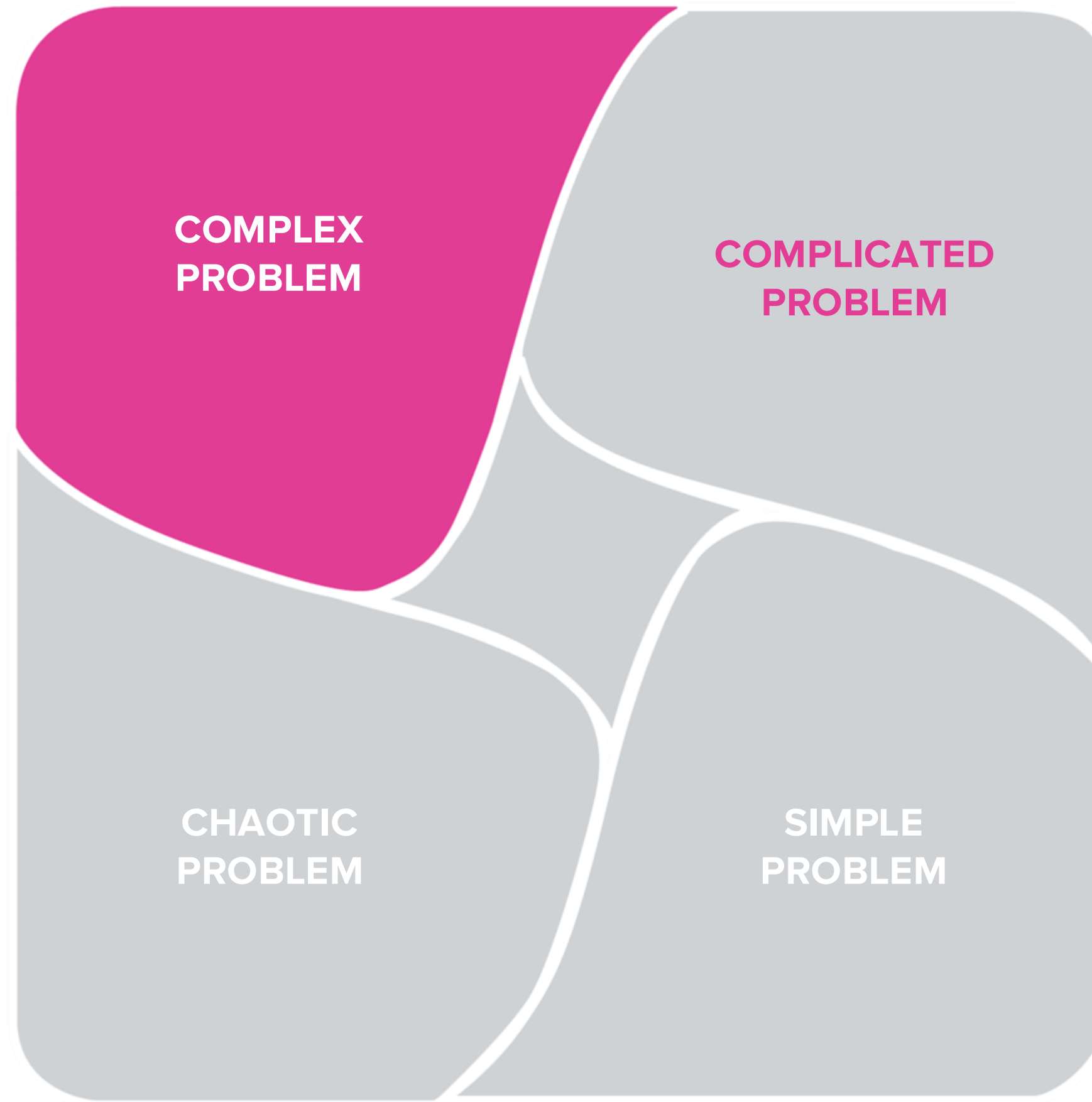


**PREDICTABLE
WORLD**

**UNPREDICTABLE
WORLD**



**PREDICTABLE
WORLD**





For every complex problem, there is a solution that is concise, clear, simple, and **wrong**.

H.L. Mencken



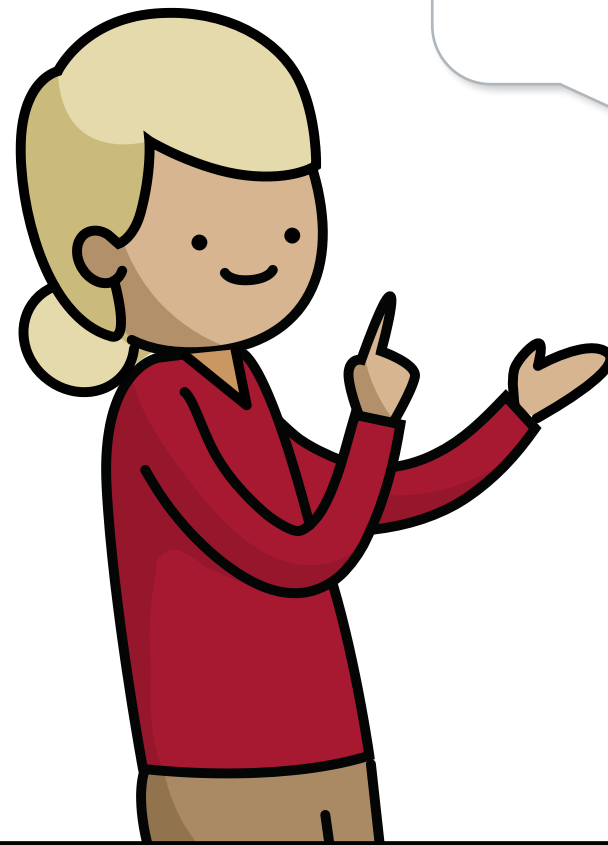
I'm exhausted from screaming into the void. This used to be such an amazing place to work. I just have to stop caring – it's gotten unhealthy for me.

An empathetic research participant

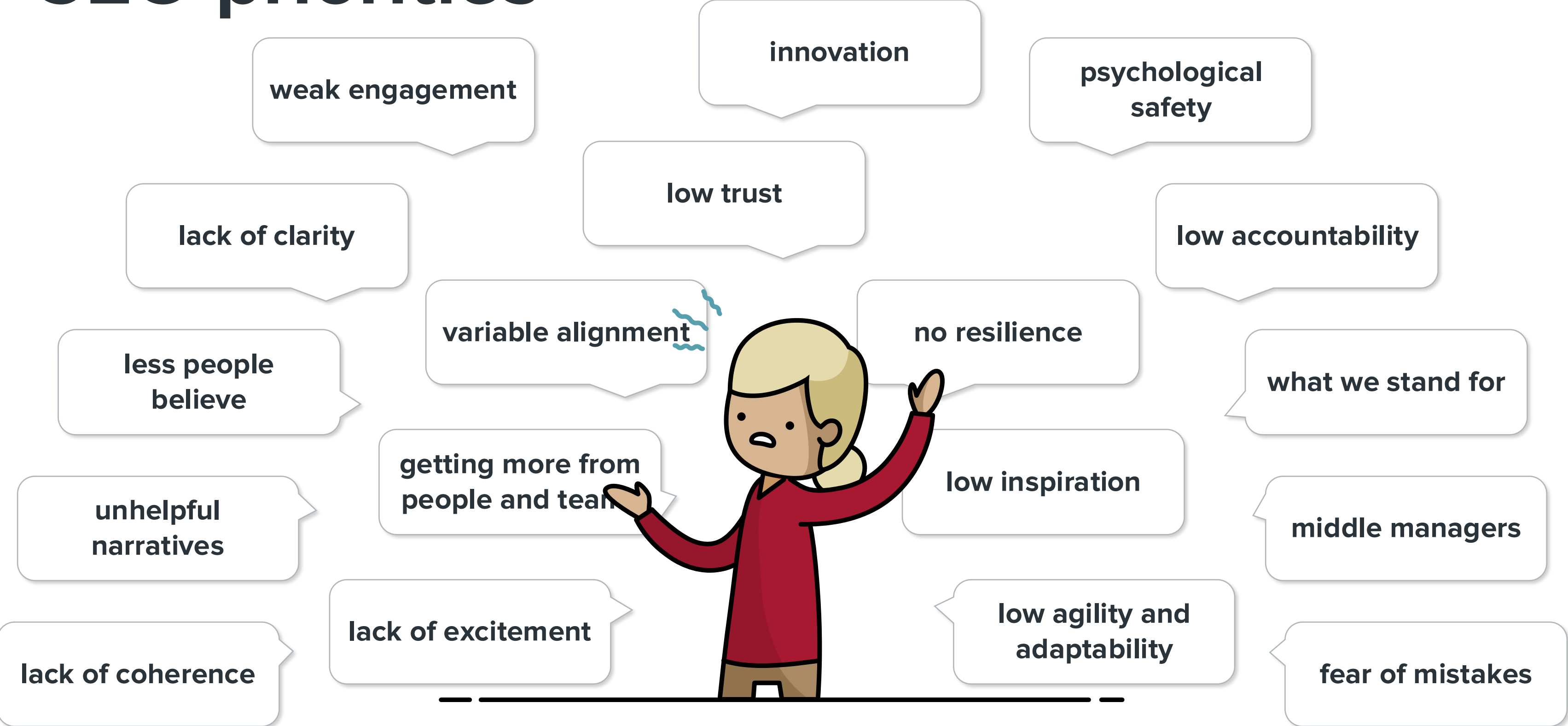
CEO priorities

**Set the strategy
and vision**

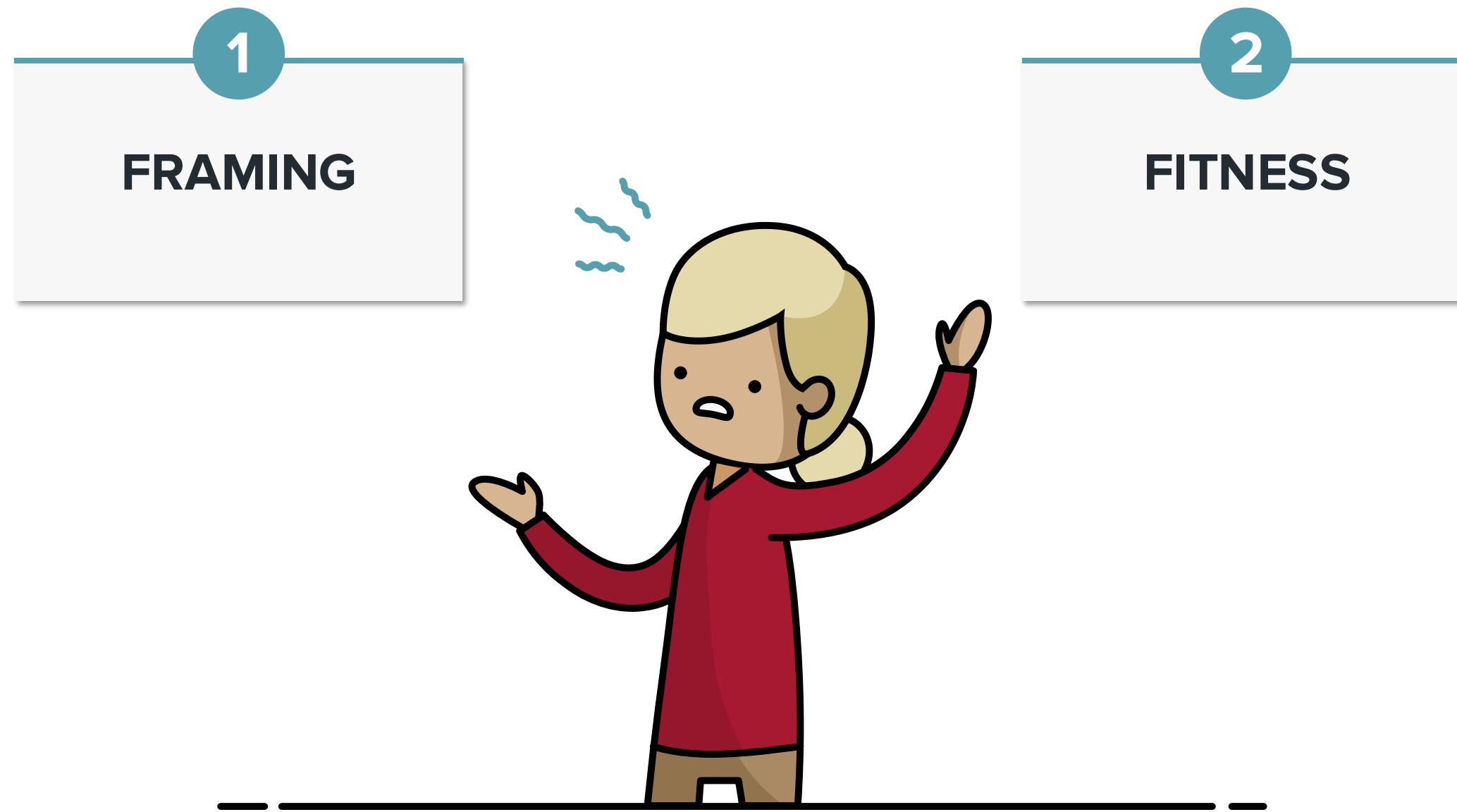
**Set leaders up to
realize the vision**



CEO priorities

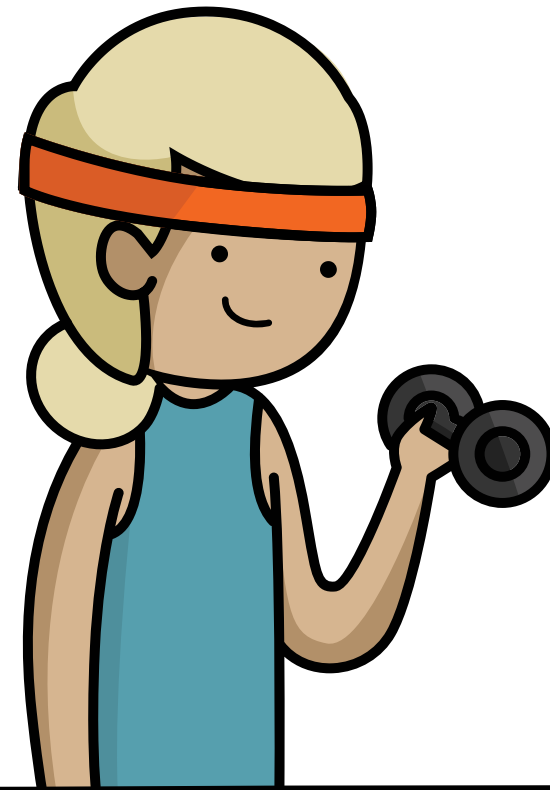


When strong leadership becomes a liability



Some tips for coaching your CEO

Let's build that complexity fitness!



The answer muscle

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→ Activates the team

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Shuts down sense-
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→ False certainty

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THE MUSCLE THAT COMPLEXITY REQUIRES

Be amazing at asking
the best questions
and cultivating the
safety for anyone to
respond



The most effective leaders are no longer the ones with the best answers, but the ones who host the best conversations

Jennifer Garvey Berger

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TIPS FOR COACHING YOUR CEO

Expose the impact of their authority

Appreciative inquiry

Balance **answers** with **questions**

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Ability to standardize
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→ Efficiency and
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The organization becomes efficient at executing the wrong things while losing the ability to adapt

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Be amazing at creating the conditions for safe-to-fail experiments and knowing when to sit in the messiness

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TIPS FOR COACHING YOUR CEO

Expose where there might be some allergies to failure

Explore the personal need for control

Balance **control** with **influence**

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→ Reduces diversity
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Using vulnerability as your superpower that unlocks all the potential hidden in your people

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TIPS FOR COACHING YOUR CEO

Certainty is an emotion



Your sense of being right about something, the sparkling clarity of certainty, is not a thought process, not a reasoning process, but an emotion that has nothing to do with whether you are right or not.

Jennifer Garvey Berger

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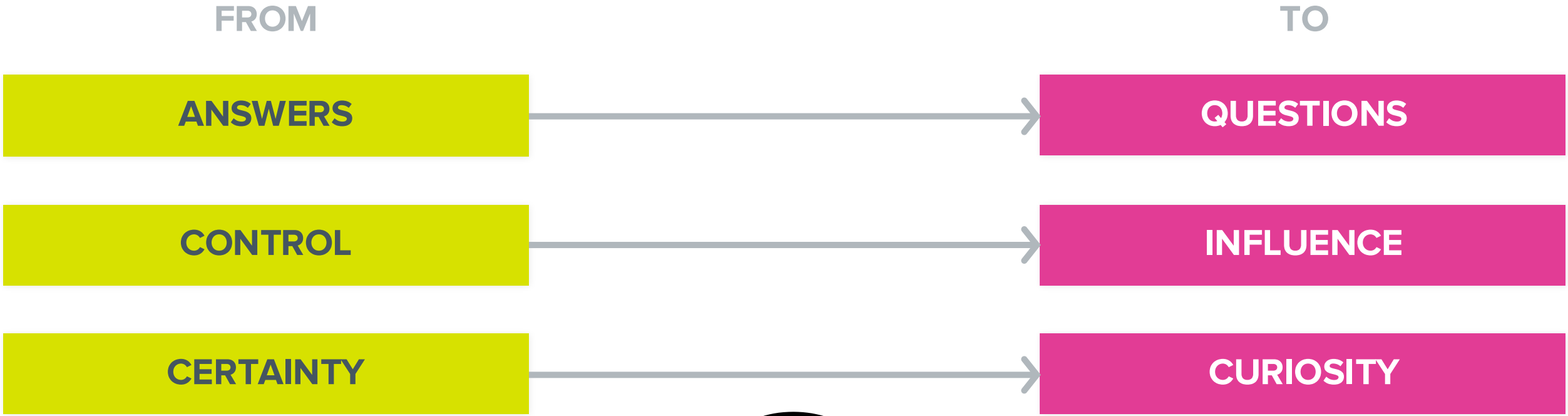
TIPS FOR COACHING YOUR CEO

Certainty is an emotion

Appreciate that moving towards vulnerability can be hard

Balance **certainty** with **curiosity**

Let's build that complexity fitness!



Getting the conversation started

1

We're not realizing our potential – we have a performance gap

2

Performance comes from aligning the what and the how

3

The how (aka how work gets done or culture) is a complex problem

4

We need to build our complexity fitness... I can help with that



The effectiveness of a leader cannot exceed the level of consciousness from which they operate.

— Bob Anderson, *Mastering Leadership*

habanero