

Cultivating Inclusivity: Empowering the Next Generation of Nonprofit Leaders

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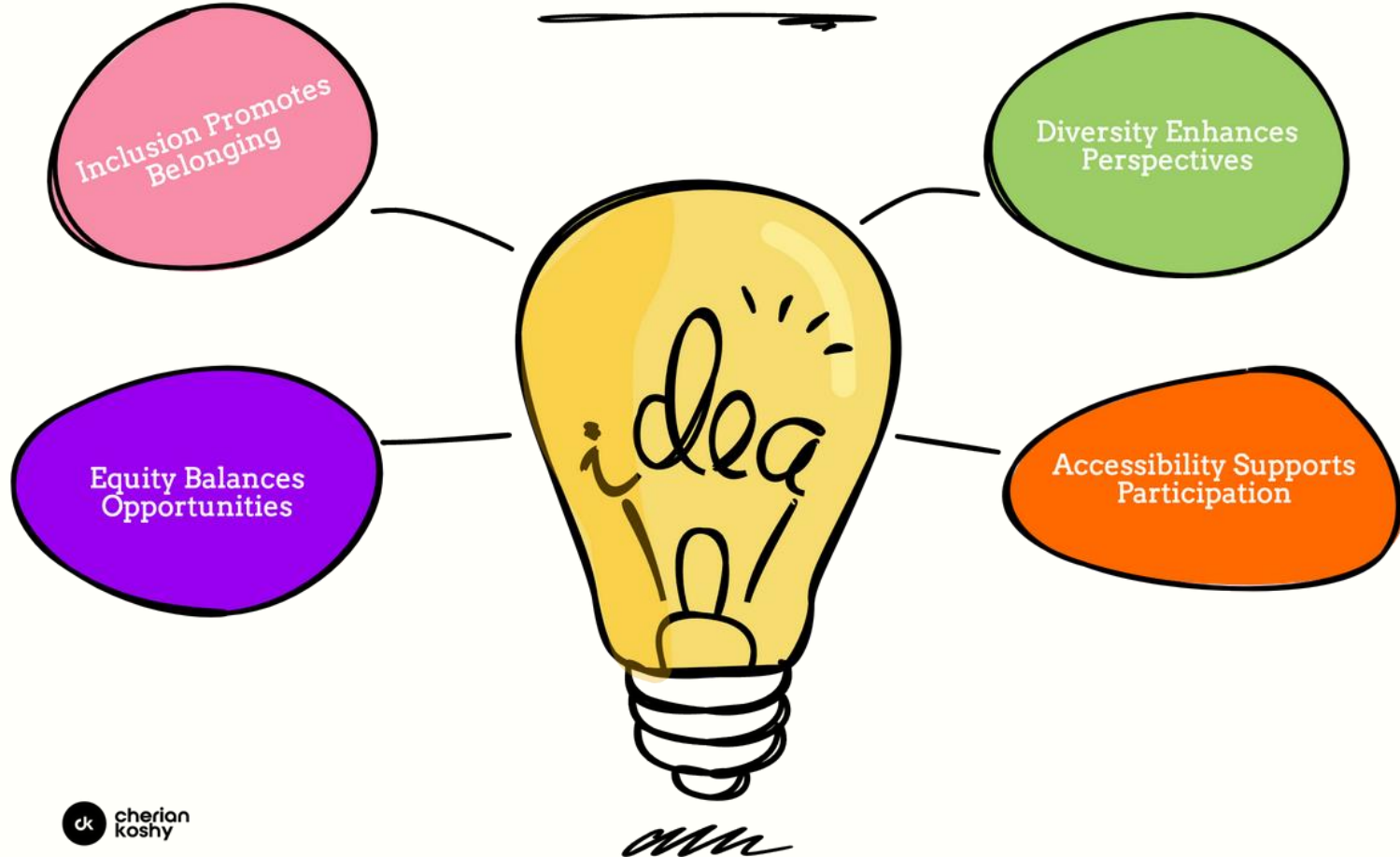
Kindsight



The *first* and *only*
Empress of China
(624–705)

IDEA Framework Essentials

IDEA enhances organizational culture and performance.



While many organizations express strong commitment to IDEA, we often see a lack of accountability and concrete actions. This gap between intention and action undermines our efforts to create truly inclusive environments.

Despite 66% of companies *investing* in programs to identify high-potential employees, only 24% of senior executives consider these programs *successful*

Fernández-Aráoz et al., 2017

Many companies have diversity initiatives
but fail to hold leaders *accountable*, resulting
in stagnant diversity metrics

Bourke & Titus, 2019

Low engagement and high turnover are *extremely costly*, especially if the people leaving are high potentials in whom much has already been invested

Fernández-Aráoz et al., 2017

Board members already understand that a homogeneous board can result in nearsightedness and group-think. Most nonprofit boards are not making meaningful headway towards achieving diversity.

Bridgespan, 2016



- 53% of board members are white
- 6% of board members are gay, lesbian, or bisexual
- 1% of board members are transgender
- 73% of board members are aged 35-64
- 5% of board members have disabilities

<https://www.boardeffect.com/blog/nonprofit-diversity-equity-inclusion/>

HOW BOARDS RECRUIT AND NOMINATE NEW MEMBERS



Base=staff; N=643

An uncomfortable truth that many nonprofit executives articulated was that many board members approach their work with outdated conceptions of the organization, the industry, and their role. This concept was expressed not just by executives, but also by volunteers, many of whom appreciated that they did not have the right skills, training, or experience necessary to lead in a 21st-century association.

Those same volunteers were often instrumental in helping shift practices to increase the likelihood of getting qualified, capable board members willing to commit time and effort to lead the association.

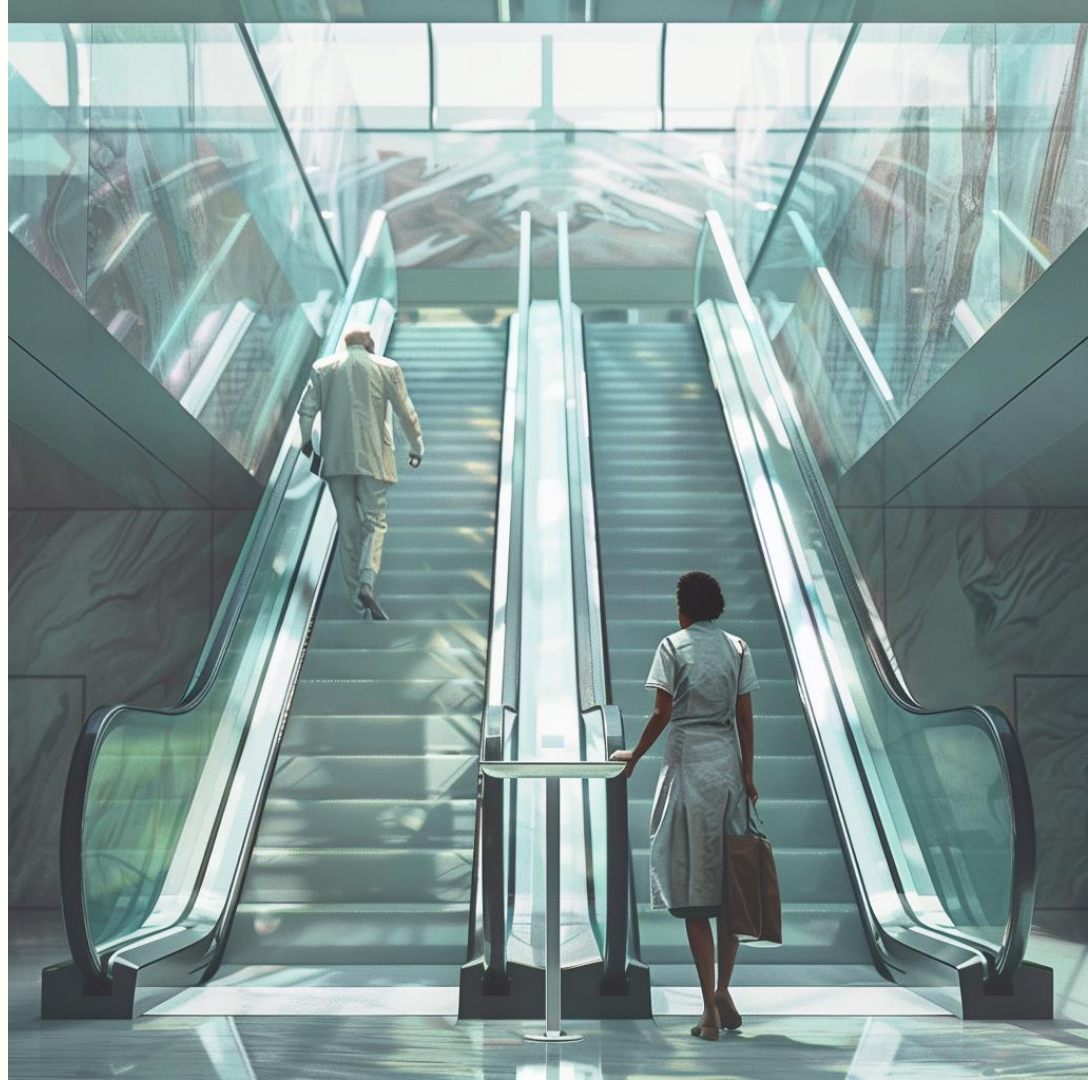
ASAE Foundation, 2019

Research suggests that when you are strongly attached to your workplace, you are more likely to interpret incivility as general disrespect rather than gender-based discrimination. This 'not here' bias blinds employees to subtle forms of discrimination

Gloor et al., 2024

- Women constitute a substantial majority of the nonprofit workforce, making up approximately 73-75% of employees in the sector
- Only about 45% of leadership roles in nonprofits are occupied by women

Alcaraz-Minnick, Katya, "The Nonprofit Gender Leadership Gap: Data-Driven Systemic and Inclusive Solutions" (2020). Master's Projects and Capstones. 1004.
<https://repository.usfca.edu/capstone/1004>





IDEA Implementation Hurdles



Resource Constraints

Limited funds and personnel obstruct the progress of IDEA.

Rigid Organizational Structures

Existing cultures and systems show resistance to inclusive change.

Diverse Stakeholder Expectations



Achieving inclusivity while satisfying all stakeholders is complex.

Inclusive Leadership Deficit

Non-diverse leadership fails to leverage varied perspectives.

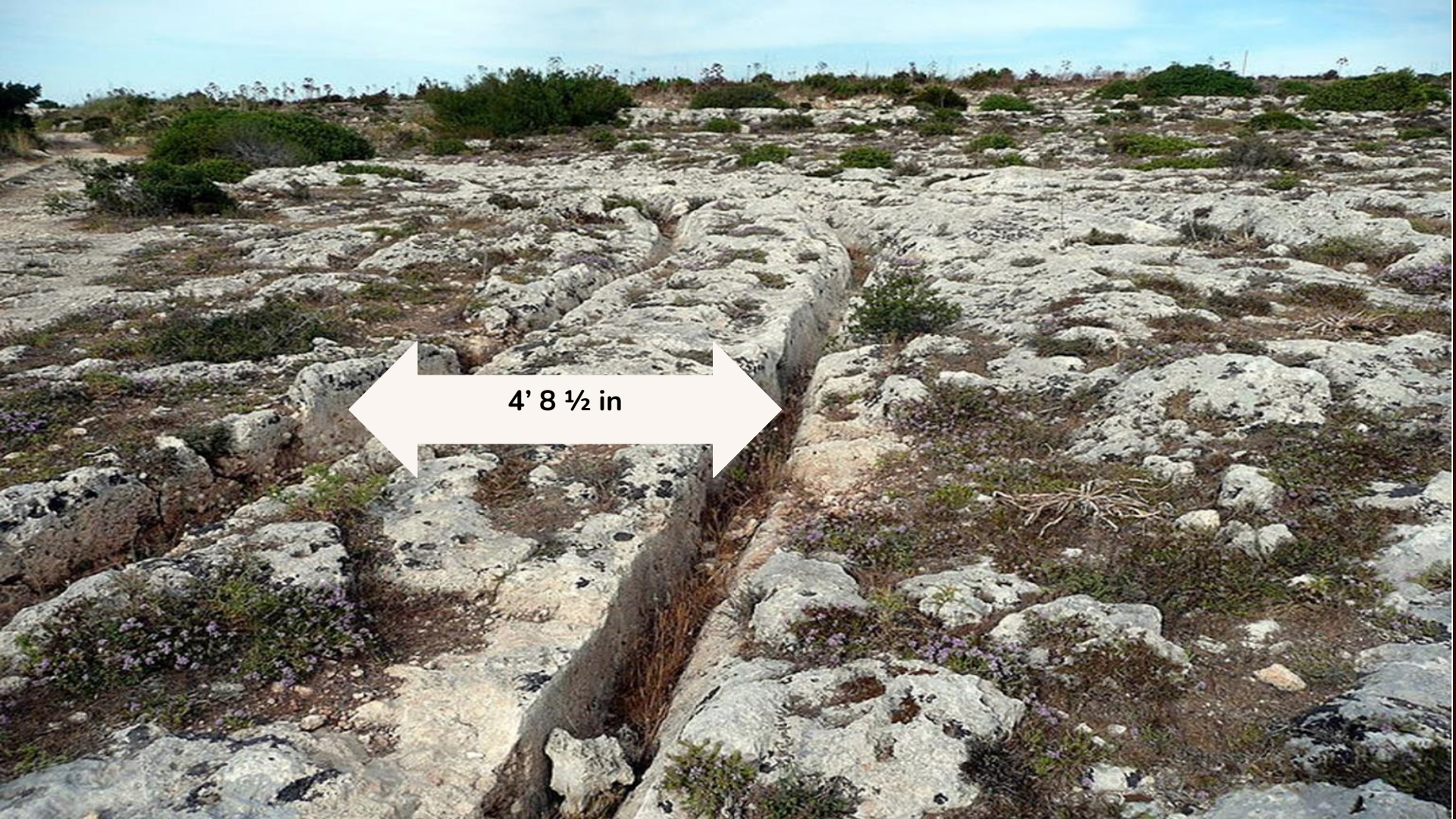






4' 8 ½ in





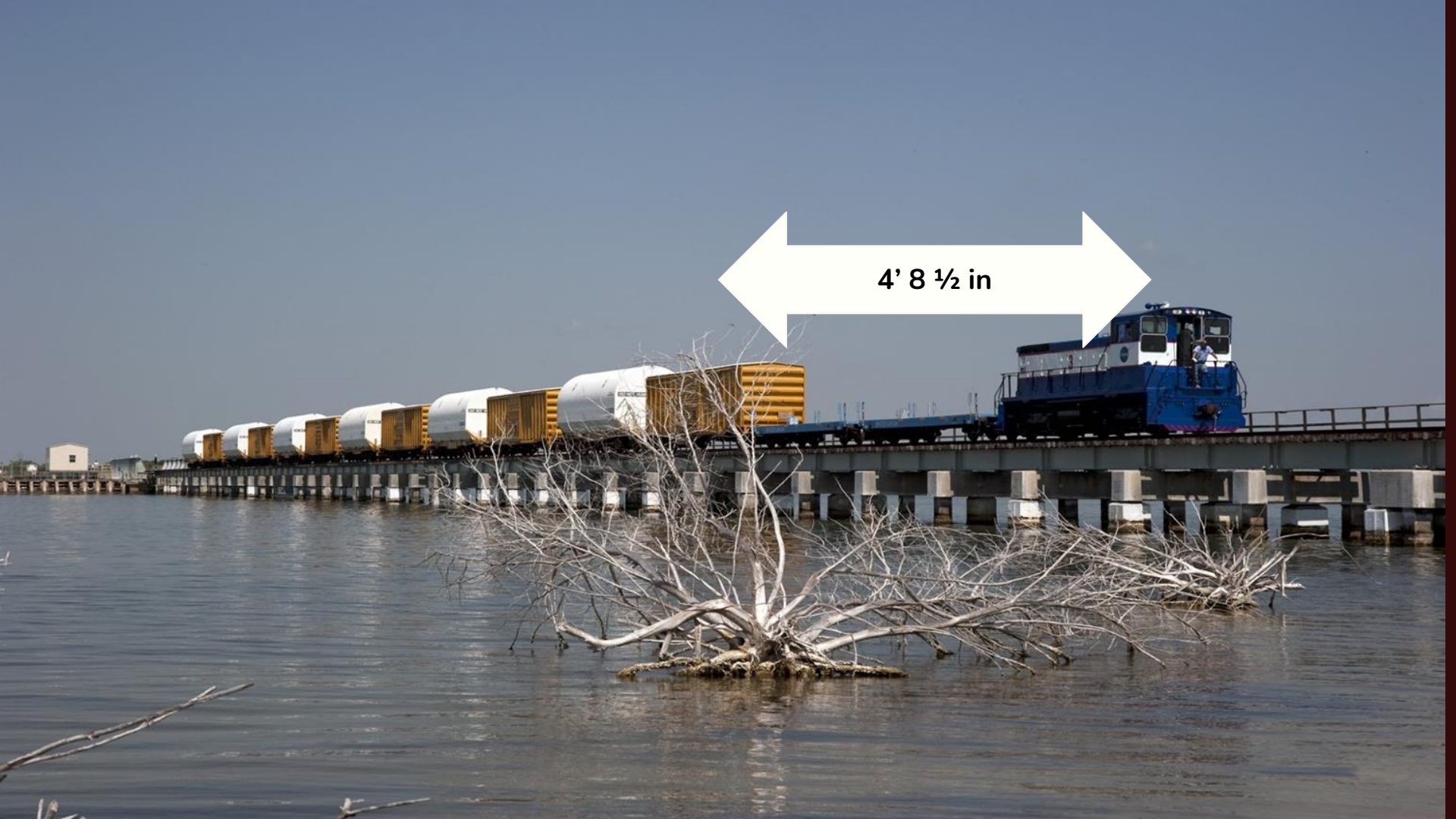
4' 8 1/2 in





4' 8 1/2 in

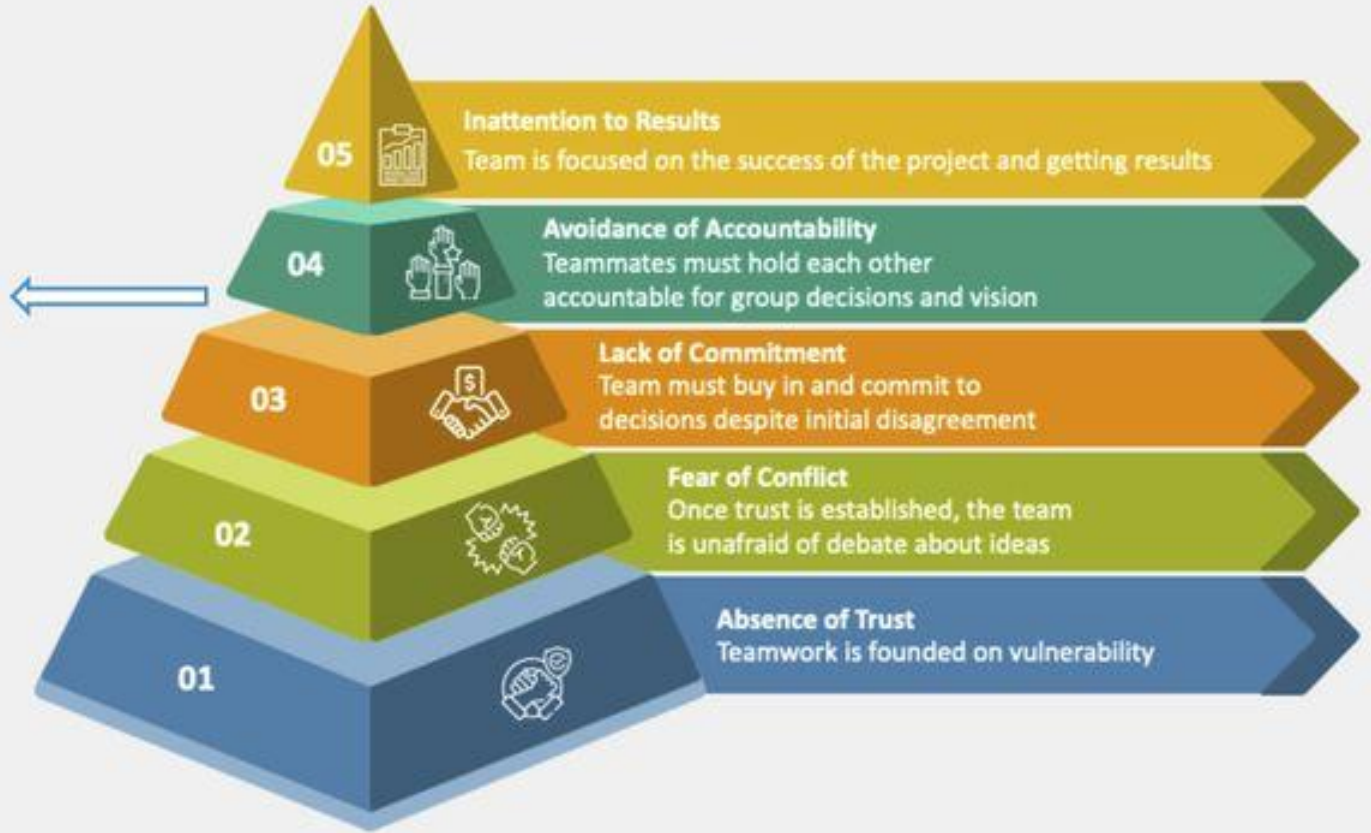




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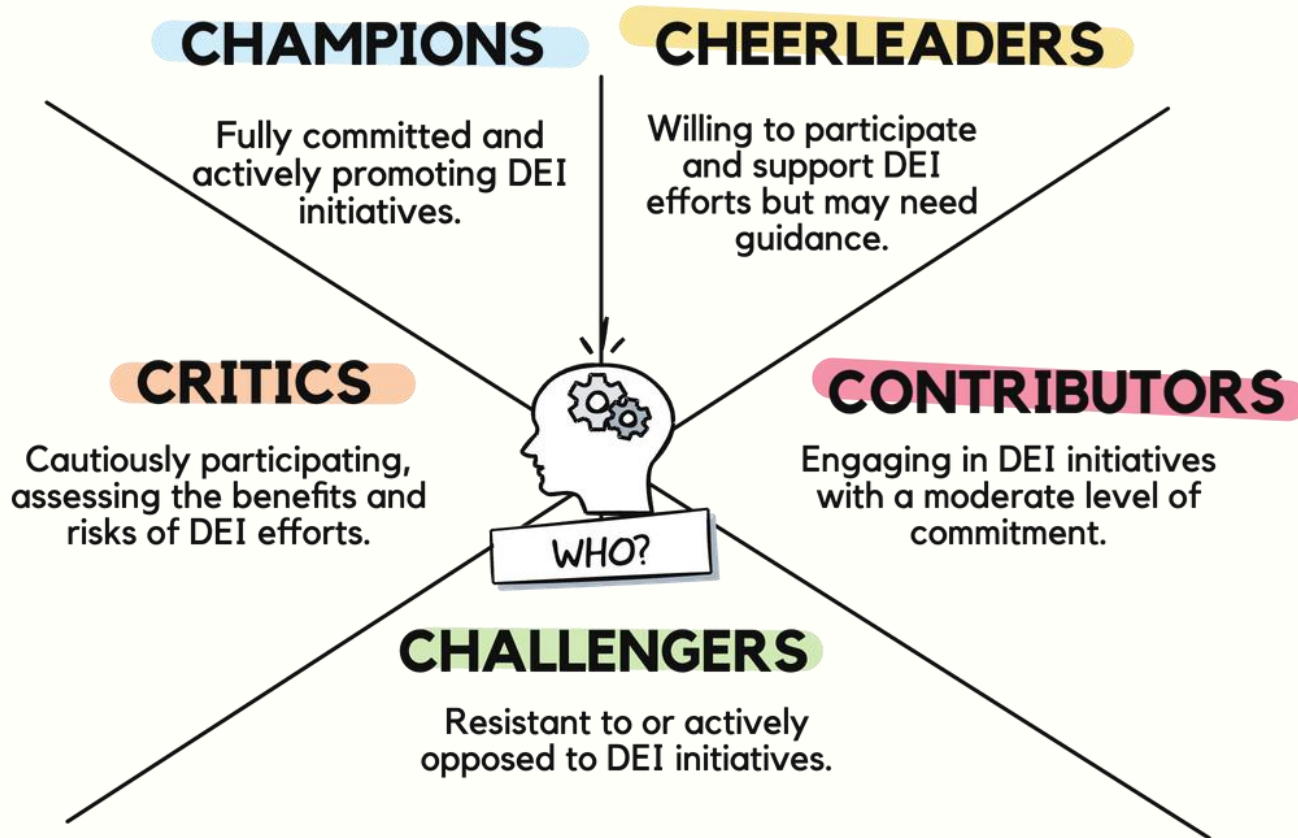
Misunderstanding of Difference

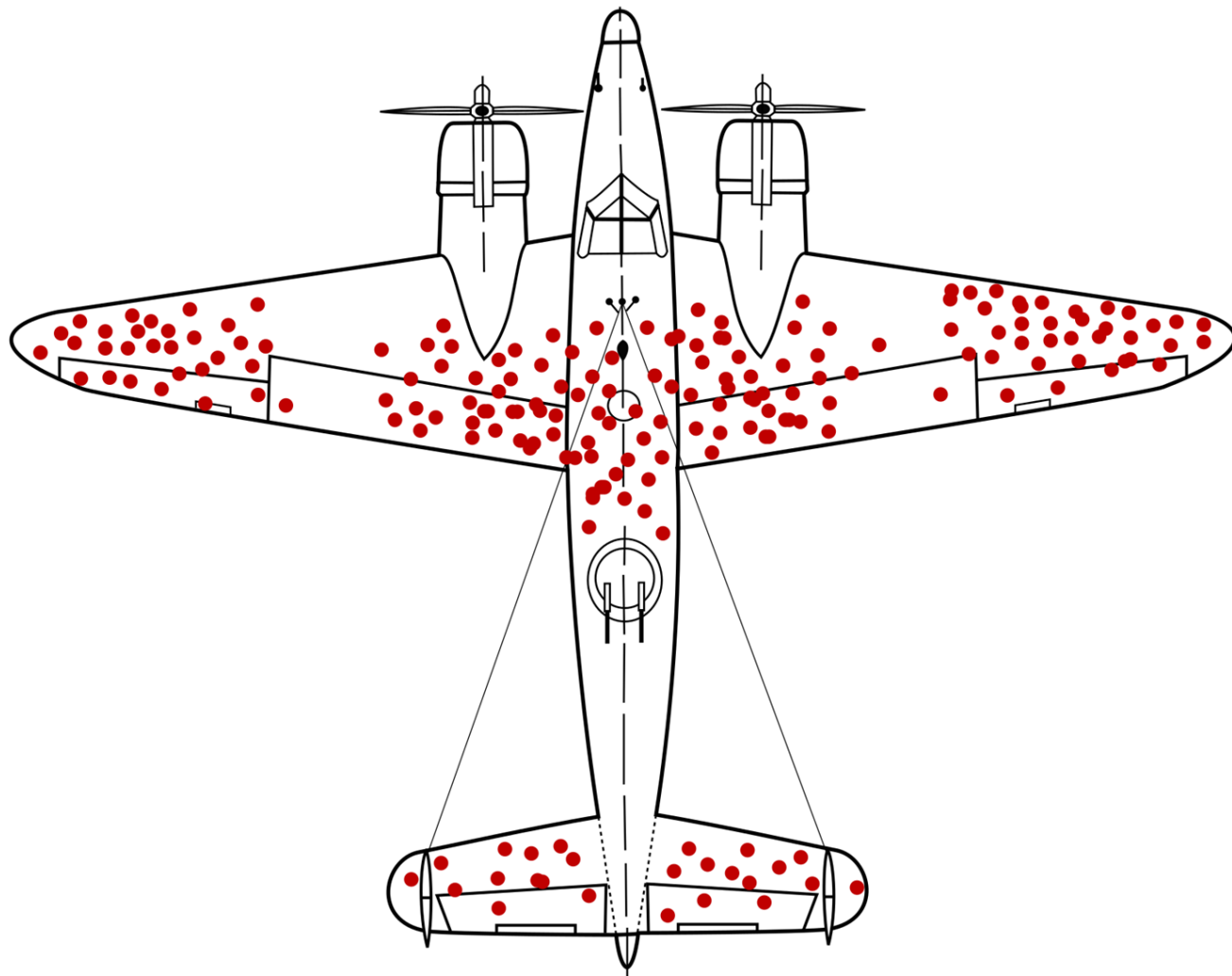
Teammates understand that differences add value, manage them proactively by talking rather than avoiding, and don't blame differences when collaboration goes poorly



Implementation isn't just about
rules and roles; it's about managing
minds and *motivations* within the
organizational whole.

EMPOWERMENT SPECTRUM

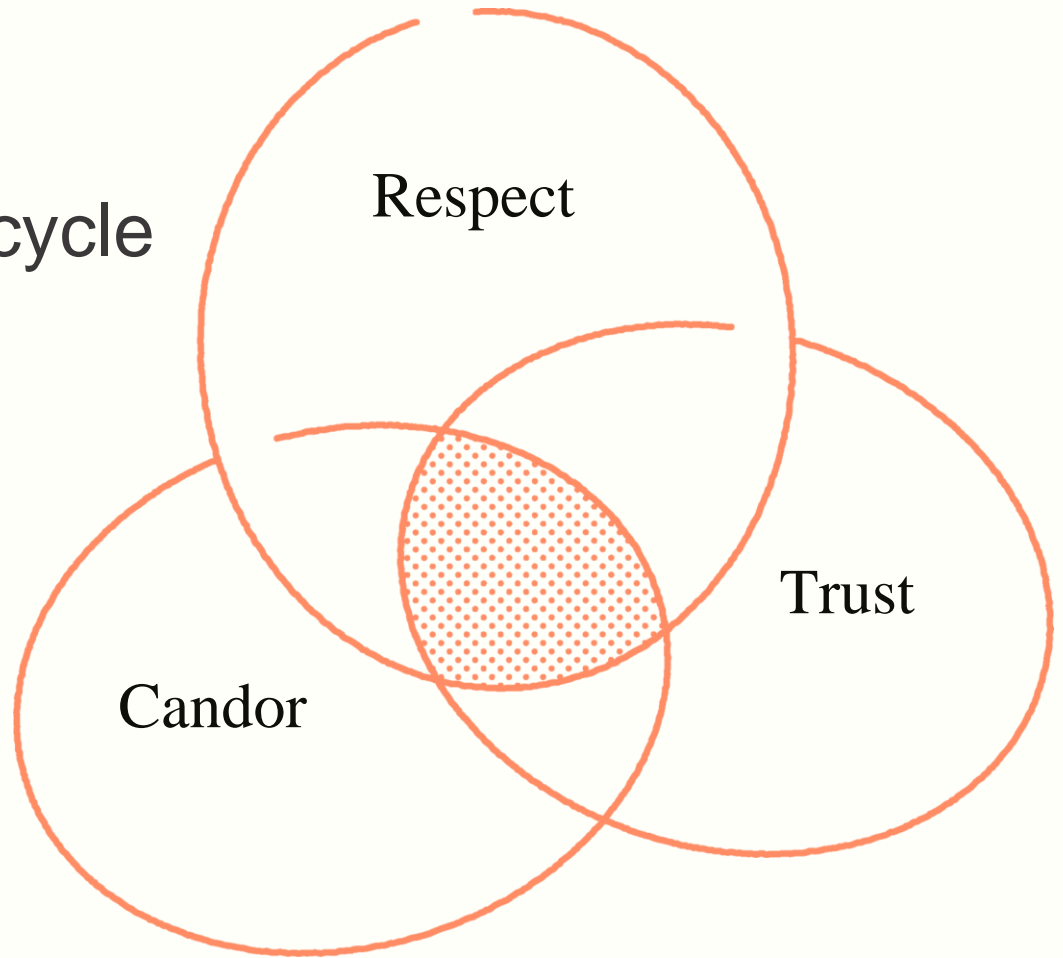




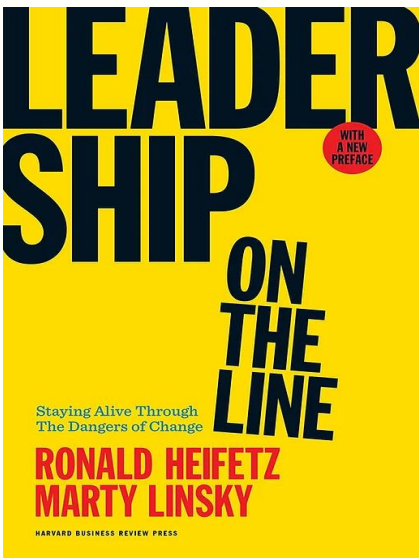
“They seem to get into a virtuous cycle in which one good quality builds on another. Team members develop mutual respect; because they respect one another, they develop trust; because they trust one another, they share difficult information; because they all have the same, reasonably complete information, they can challenge one another’s conclusions coherently; because a spirited give-and-take becomes the norm, they learn to adjust their own interpretations in response to intelligent questions.”

Jeffrey Sonnenfeld, What Makes Boards Great
Harvard Business Review, September 2002

The virtuous board cycle

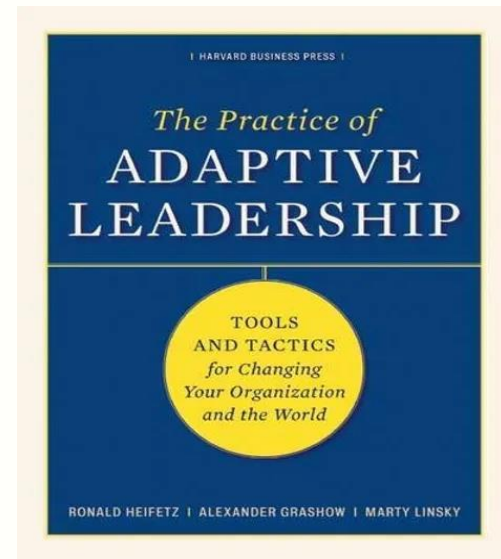






Adaptive leadership empowers individuals and organizations to adapt to changing environments and effectively respond to complex problems.

But simply being able to “adapt” isn't enough: organizations wishing to employ an adaptive leadership model *must adhere to a set of specific characteristics to facilitate a desired outcome.*



Tactical Challenges		Adaptive Challenges
Easy to identify		Difficult to identify/easy to deny
Quick and easy solutions		Requires change in values, beliefs, roles, relationships, and approaches
Solved by expert or authority		People with the problem do the work of solving it
Change in one or few places inside organizational boundaries		Changes require in multiple places across organizational boundaries
Implemented quickly		“Solutions” are experiments, take a long time to implement

The background image is a landscape photograph taken during the "golden hour" of sunset or sunrise. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and soft blue, with the sun low on the horizon creating a bright glow and lens flare. In the foreground, there's a dirt road or path that curves through a field of tall, dry grass. To the right, a steep, grassy hillside rises. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

The most common leadership failure stems from trying to apply technical solutions to adaptive challenges.

Ronald A. Heifetz

“Guptarancy”

Pittsburgh Steelers head coach Mike Tomlin

A photograph of Pittsburgh Steelers head coach Mike Tomlin. He is wearing a black and yellow Steelers jacket with the NFL logo on the sleeve, and sunglasses. He is looking towards the right. In the background, another person wearing a yellow and white jacket and a dark cap with the NFL logo is visible. The text "What is the 'Rooney Rule?'" is overlaid in large white font.

What is the "Rooney Rule?"

Adopted in 2003, the Rooney Rule is an NFL policy requiring every team with a head coaching vacancy to interview at least one or more diverse candidates. In 2009, the Rooney Rule was expanded to include general manager jobs and equivalent front office positions.

Did It Work?

NFL Head Coaches (2003)



NFL Head Coaches (2020)



The Rooney Rule is named after the late former Pittsburgh Steelers owner and chairman of the league's diversity committee, Dan Rooney.



Sources: National Football League; Wikimedia Commons



Rene
Descartes
1596-1650

Cogito ergo sum



Thought
Action

Intention

Sum ergo cognito



Action

Intention

Belief

C
R
E
A
T
E

Framework

Clear Goals



Clear Goals

- Define specific, measurable, near-term goals for IDEA initiatives.
- Establish clear goals and metrics to track progress. These should be specific, actionable, and tied to the organization's overall strategic objectives.
- Outcomes and outputs need to be visible. Specificity increases clarity and commitment, making it easier to measure and achieve progress (Locke & Latham).

Reflective Leadership



Hold leaders responsible for IDEA outcomes.

- Incorporate IDEA goals into leadership performance reviews. Leaders should be evaluated and rewarded based on their progress toward these goals.
- Encourage leaders to reflect on their biases and incorporate IDEA goals into their development. Reflective practices ensure leaders continuously learn and improve.
- Self-reflection helps leaders align their actions with organizational goals, enhancing their effectiveness and fostering a culture of continuous improvement ([Gardner et al., 2005](#)).

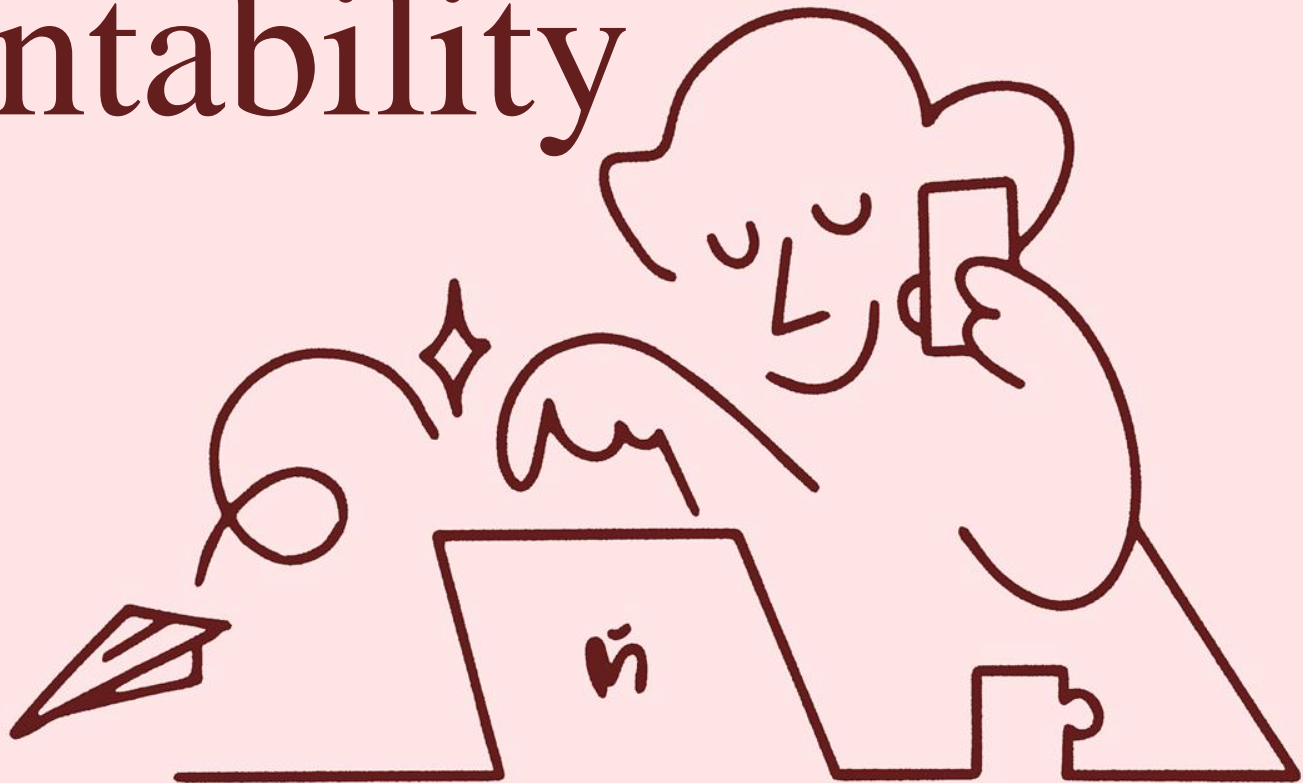
Engaging Feedback



Create a feedback loop for continuous improvement.

- Establish mechanisms for regular feedback from staff and stakeholders. Use this feedback to refine and improve IDEA outcomes.
- Next gen leaders thrive on continuous feedback that helps them grow and adapt in real time.
- Continuous feedback helps maintain engagement and adaptability, fostering a culture of improvement ([Kluger & DeNisi, 1996](#)).

Actionable Accountability



DEI Initiatives Are Futile Without *Accountability*

Dr. Evelyn Carter

Step 1: Educate —
Before telling
people what to do,
you have to tell
them why.

Step 2: Listen —
Invite feedback,
really listen to it,
and iterate.

Step 3: Recognize —
Celebrate your wins.
But nudge those who
need it.

Actionable Accountability

- Next gen leaders expect clear accountability structures to ensure everyone contributes effectively.
- Clear accountability ensures that all members understand their roles and are held responsible for their actions, which enhances commitment and performance ([Lerner & Tetlock, 1999](#)).

Transparent Reporting



Regularly report progress to all stakeholders

- Transparency is crucial for accountability. Regularly publish reports on IDEA progress *and* challenges to keep all stakeholders informed and engaged.
- Ensure all stakeholders are aware of IDEA progress through regular, transparent reporting. Next gen leaders value frequent updates that keep them informed and involved in the progress.
- Transparency builds trust and promotes continuous improvement by making progress visible and understandable ([Rawlins, 2008](#)).

Equitable Practice



Empowerment is formative

- Develop staff and board practices that demonstrate diversity, equity, and inclusion. Staffing and board should model the values they expect the organization to uphold.
- Next gen leaders seek diverse and equitable board practices that reflect the values of inclusion and representation.
- Visible inclusive leadership sets a precedent for organizational culture, promoting inclusive practices throughout the organization ([Nishii & Mayer, 2009](#)).

champion

champion (n.)

champion (v.)

champion:
to be it, you have
to do it

Thank *you!*

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