



INTRODUCING

Patrycja Slawuta

SelfHackathon and Unlab

SESSION 2: DANGEROUS
DISCUSSIONS



Dangerous Discussions

How to upgrade the Family Operating System

Patrycja Slawuta, MA, PhD(c) Psych

FBA Insights| October 2025

agenda

1. **WHO** are we?
2. **WHY** are (dangerous) discussions important?
3. **WHAT** does research & practice say?
4. **HOW** do we upgrade the Family Operating System?

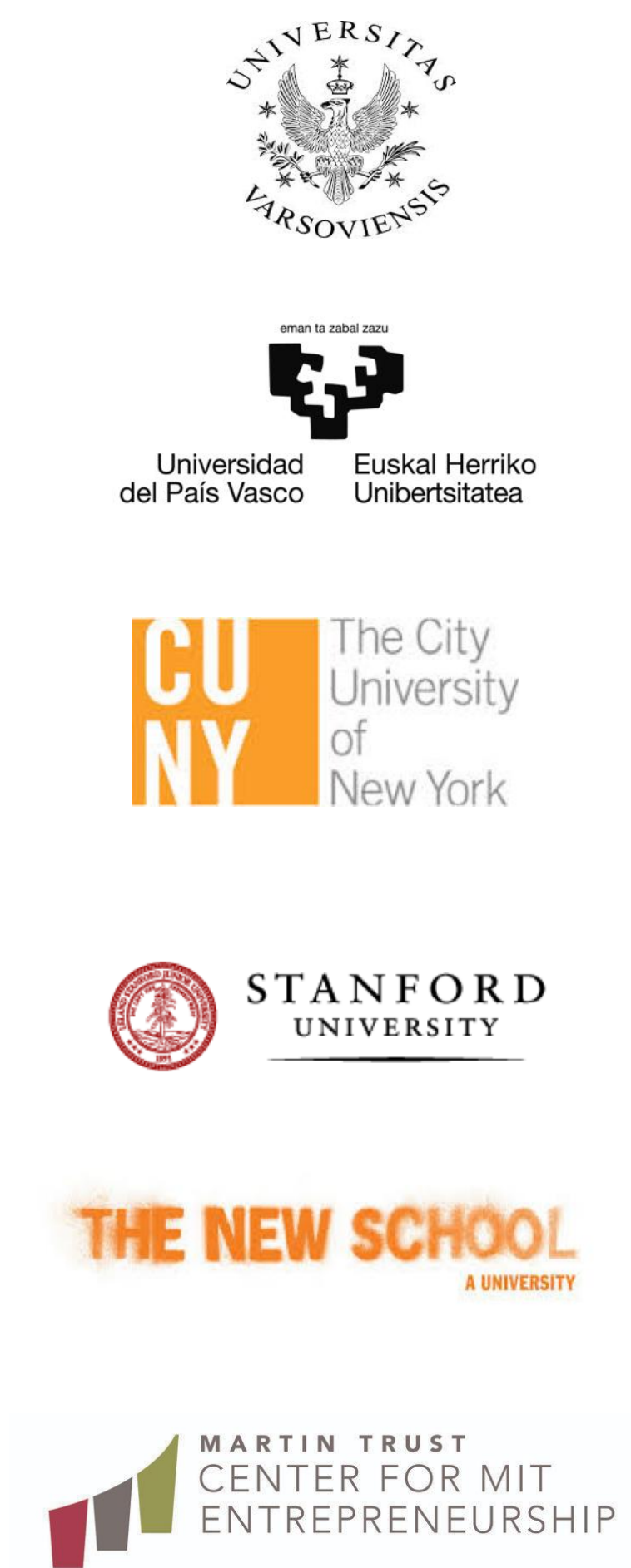


House Rules

- 
- 1 - Four walls policy
 - 2 - Open mind & heart
 - 3 - Discuss & lean in
 - 4 - focus on & be YOU

Patrycja Slawuta

Psychologist



Behavioral Scientist



Mindhacker



Chief Learning Officer / Chief Mindhacker

Core:

Questions



Conversations



Relationships



Upgrading F:OS =
software that underlies
behaviours & dynamics

Learning Family

Jay Hughes + Matt Wesley

resilient
capacity to adapt
success = flourishing
play infinite (vs finite) game

future-proofing families

Research

A study of 100 international families that have successfully transition a family enterprise of over \$100 million over 100 years or more have a consistent thread:

all of these families decided, quite consciously, in the 2nd or 3rd generation, to move from focusing on building a great business and instead focus on **building a great family**

G1 galvanises the business
G2 & G3 activate the family

by:

- communication
- collaboration
- co-creating legacy

why?

A photograph of two children standing inside large, wireframe globes. The children are silhouetted against a bright sunset sky. The sun is positioned between the two globes, creating a strong backlight effect. The globes are made of a complex network of thin metal rods. The children are facing each other, with their hands near the globes. The background shows a horizon line over a body of water or a flat landscape.

*It's not just that we have difficult conversations in our most important relationships.
It's that those conversations are the relationships...*

from book: Difficult Conversations

Upgrading the F:OS



head / software

heart/ electricity

body / hardware

spirit / legacy

hello you

What made you smile today?

What do you hope to get out of this session?

What's a conversation you'd like to have (but are hesitant to)?

* bonus for brave ones

Framework:

Mind = most most untapped natural resource in the world

Quality of relationships = quality of our lives

Practice = perfect

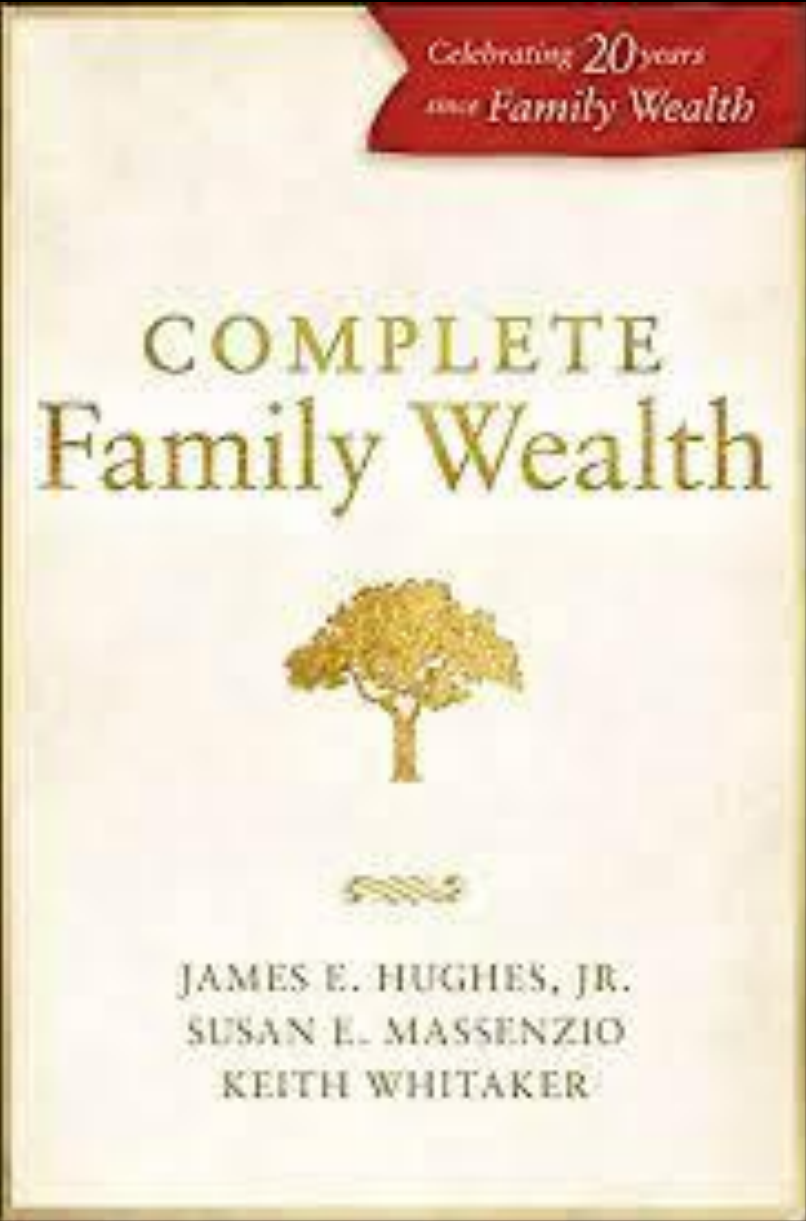
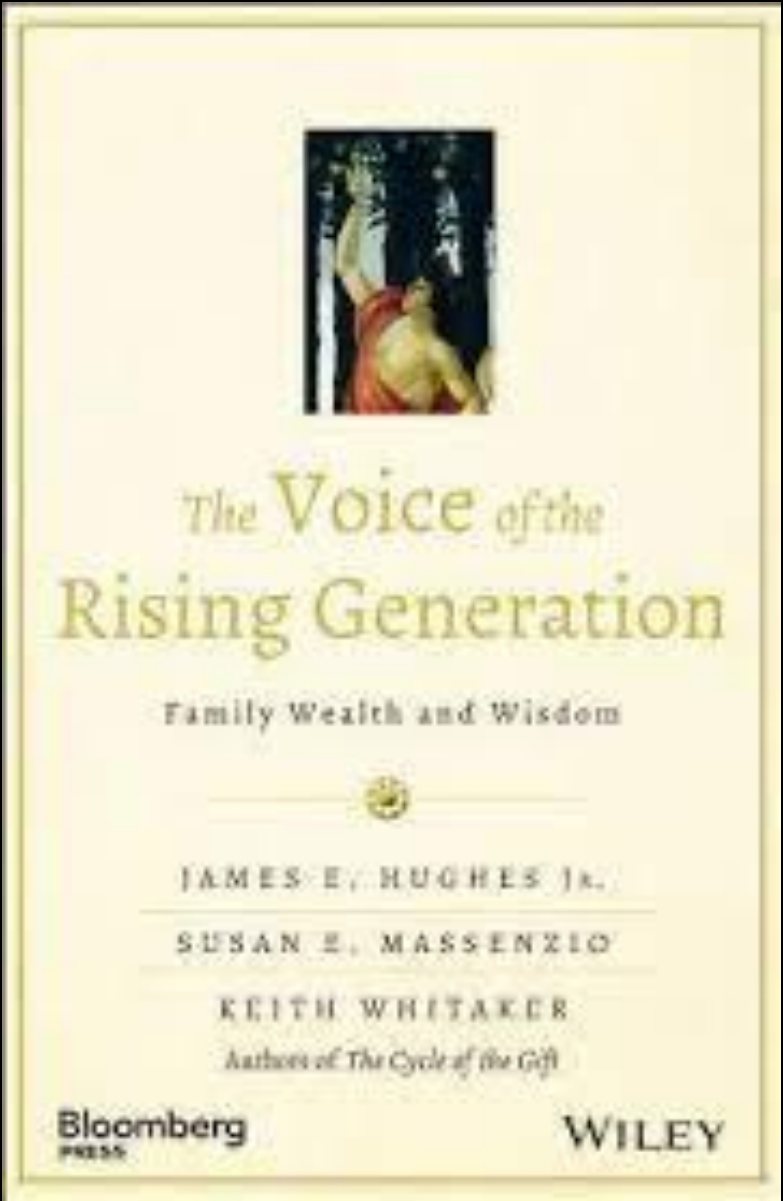
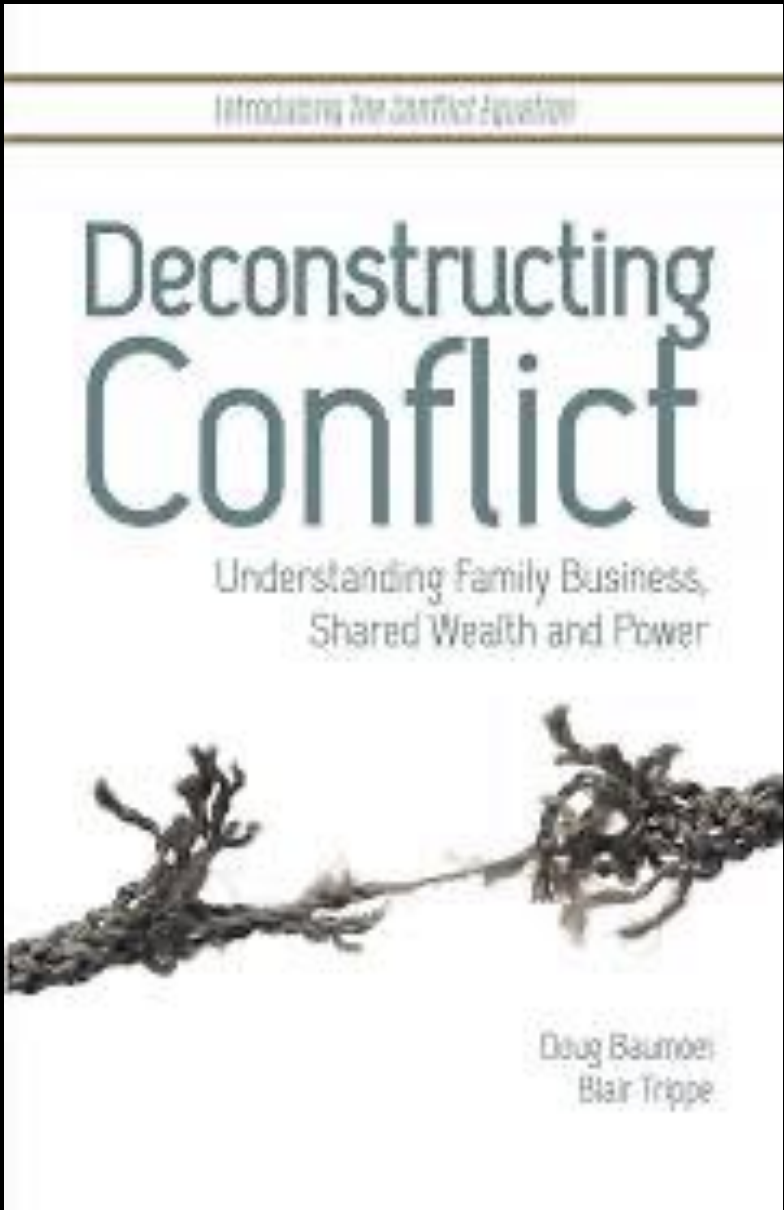
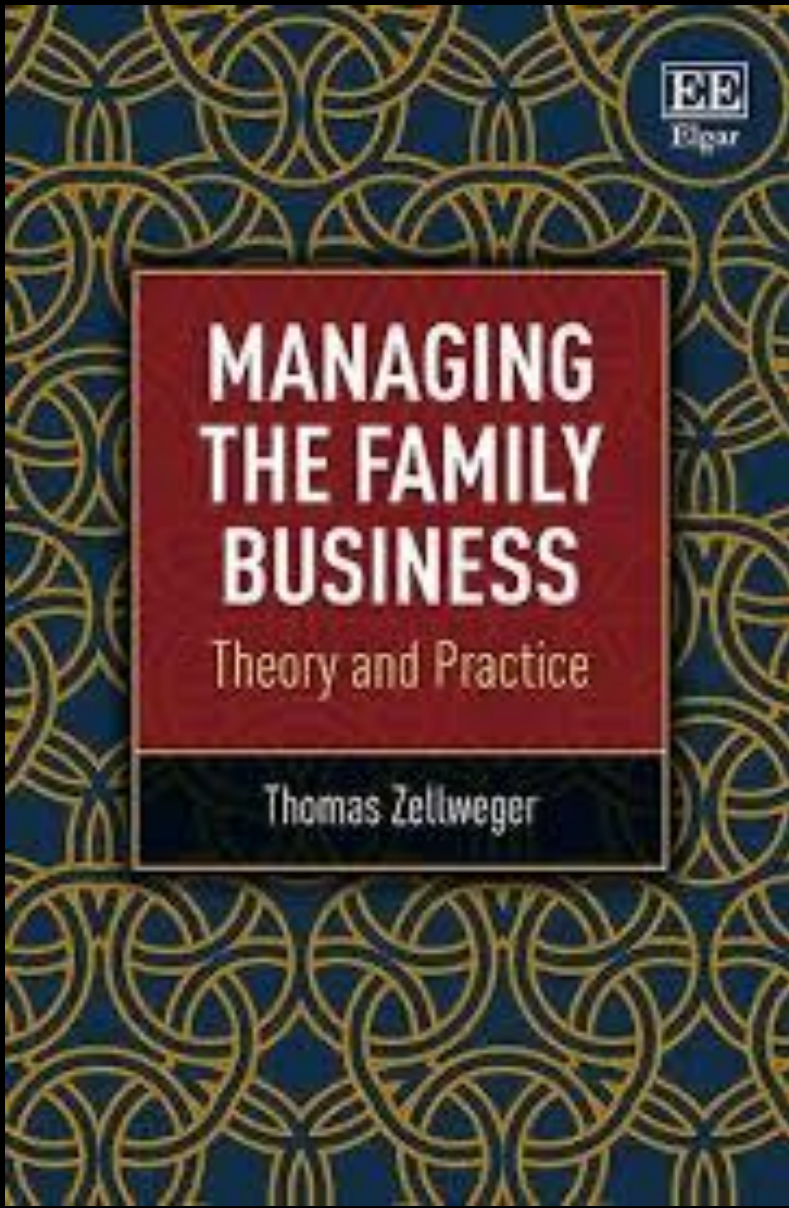
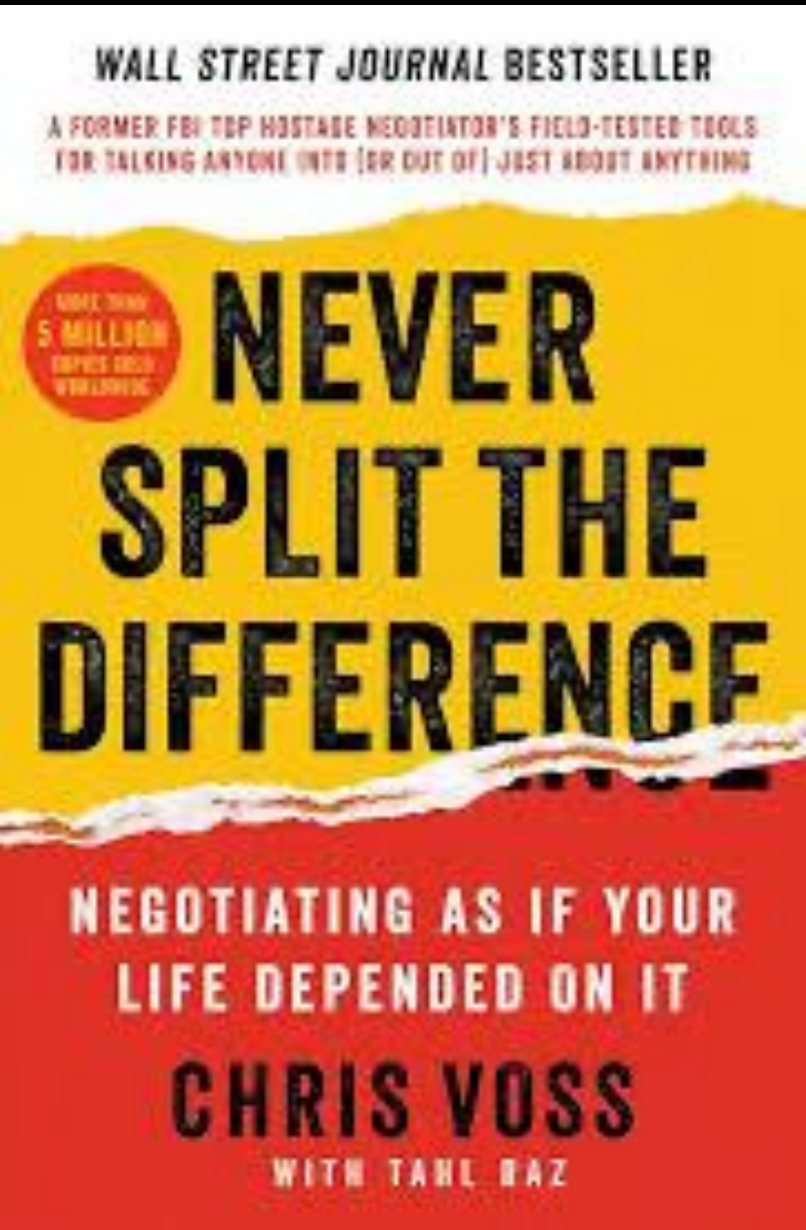
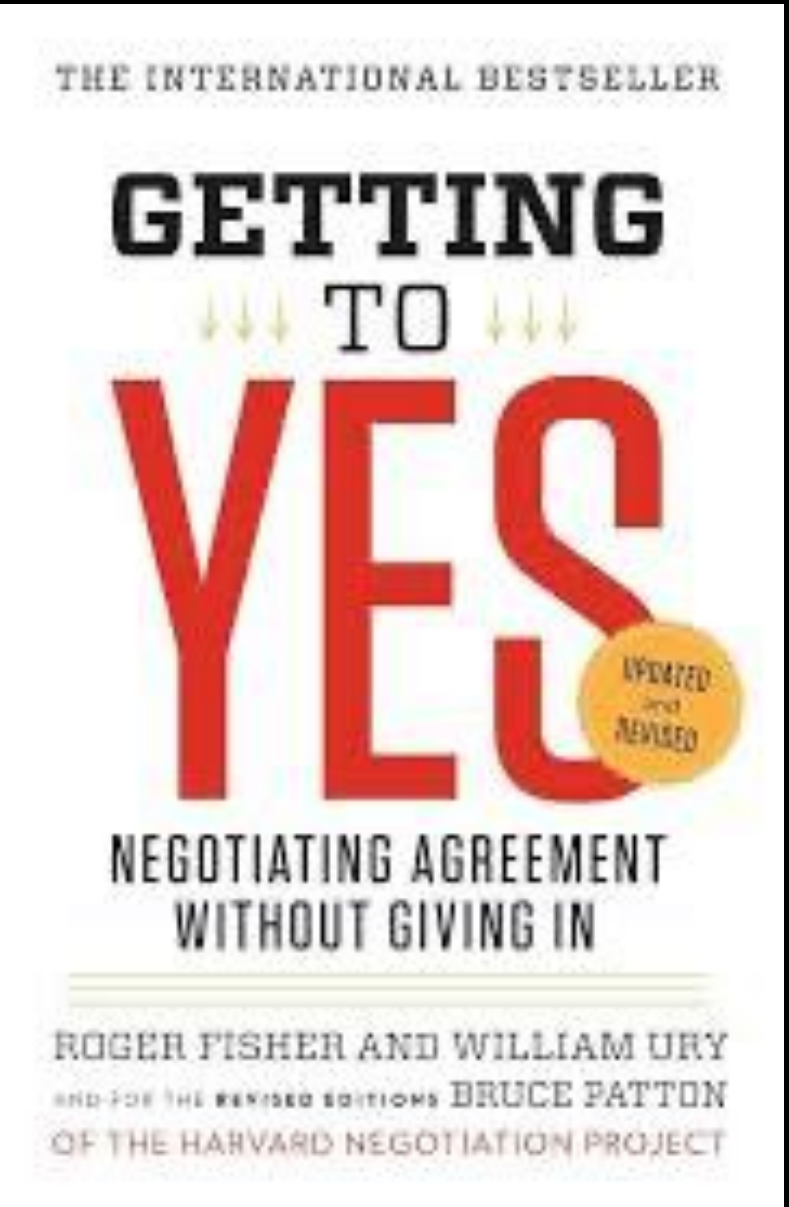
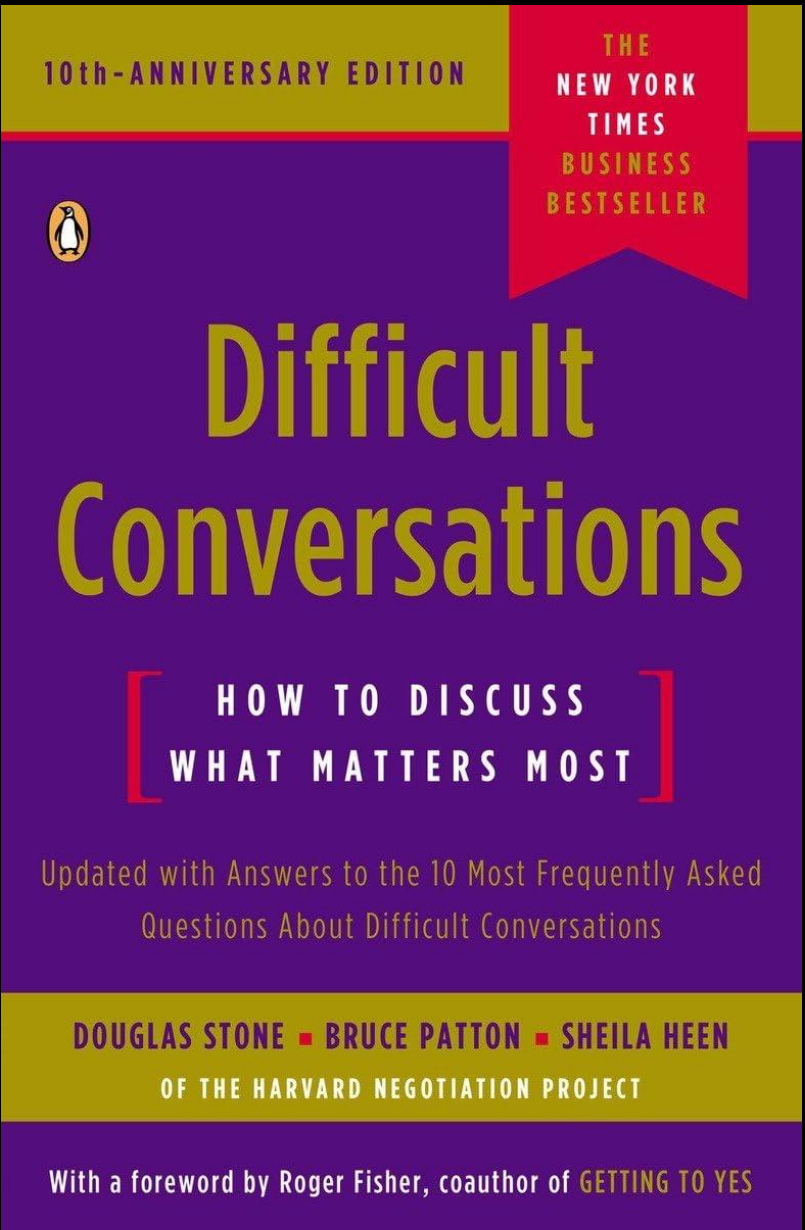
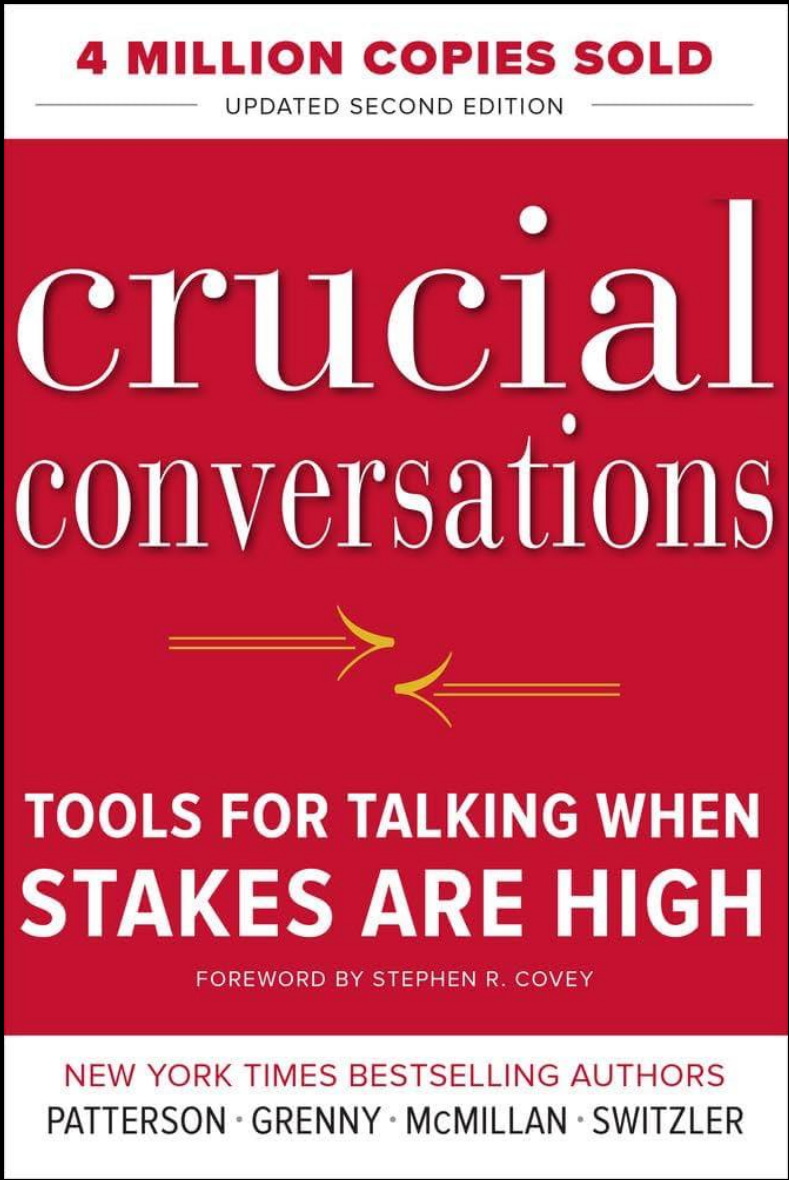
take home message:

crucial conversations = unlock (hidden) dimensions

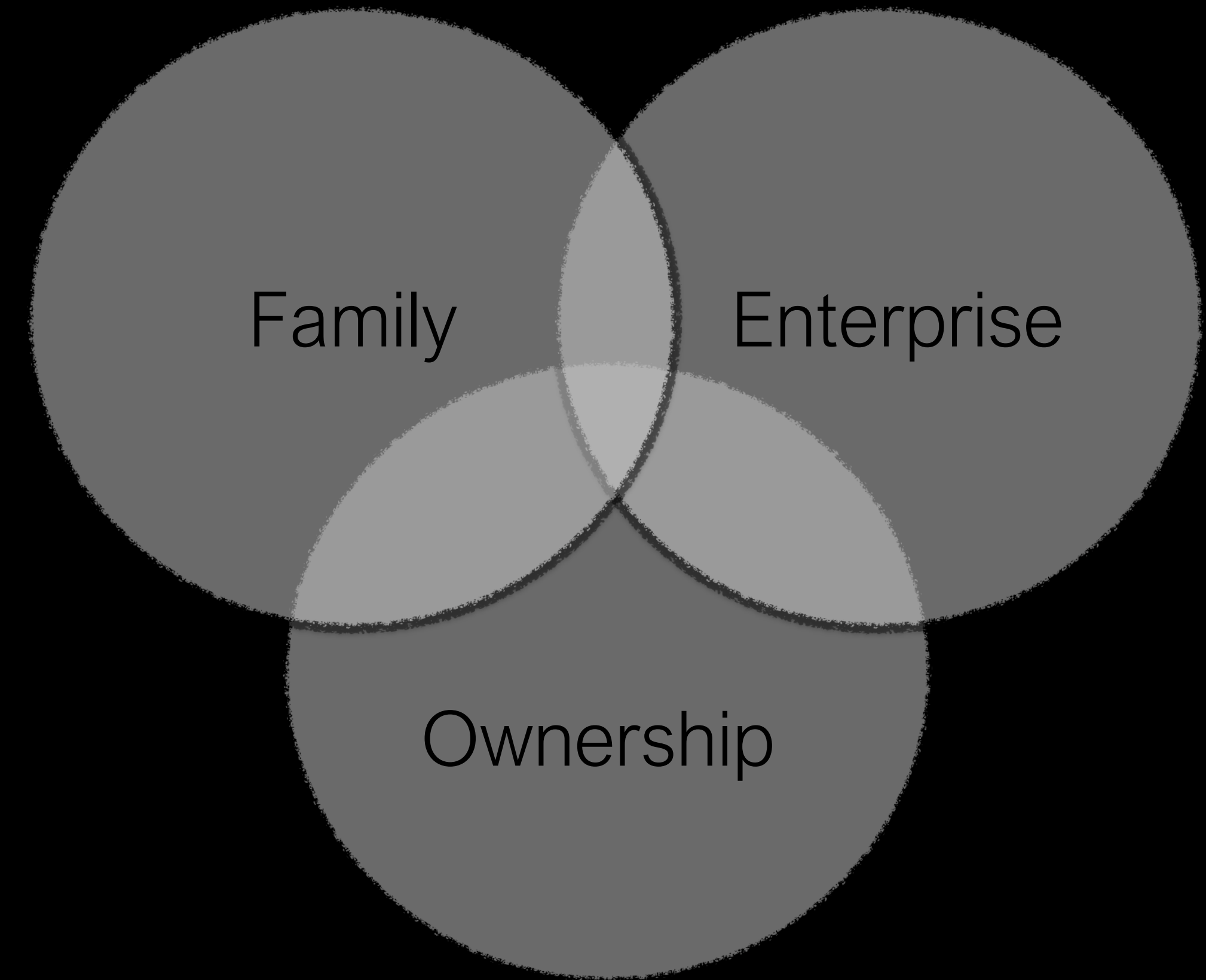
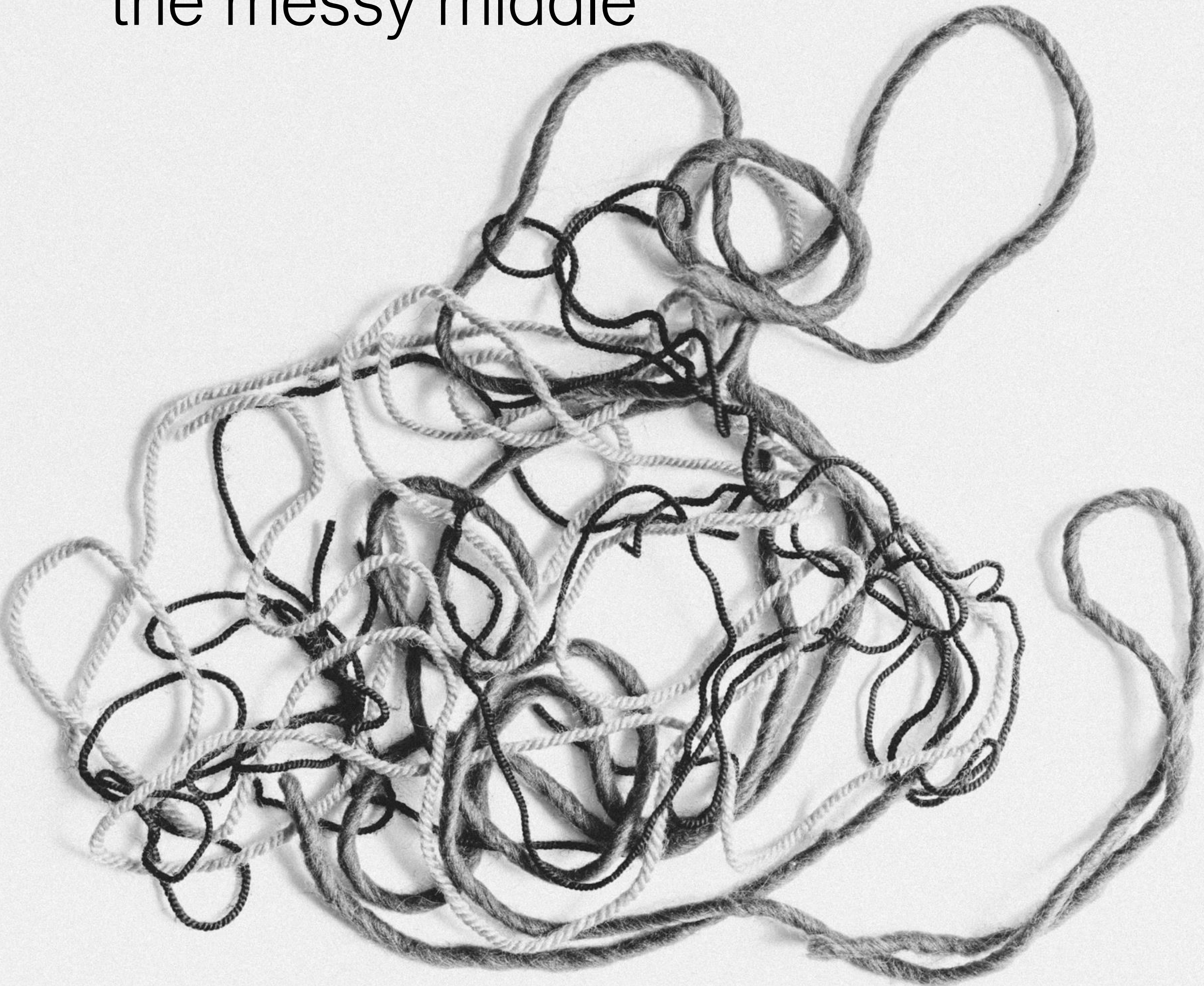
quality of questions = quality of conversations

conflict = catalyst for change

resources:



the messy middle



different: goals + objectives + concerns

“good fences make for good neighbours”

balcony perspective

re-write and re-write patterns

“move slow and fix things “

Head: the software

Assumptions

Expectations

Labels



know less, understand more

Whats' truer than the truth? The story

assumptions to agreements

3 existential commitments:

Continuity + evolution

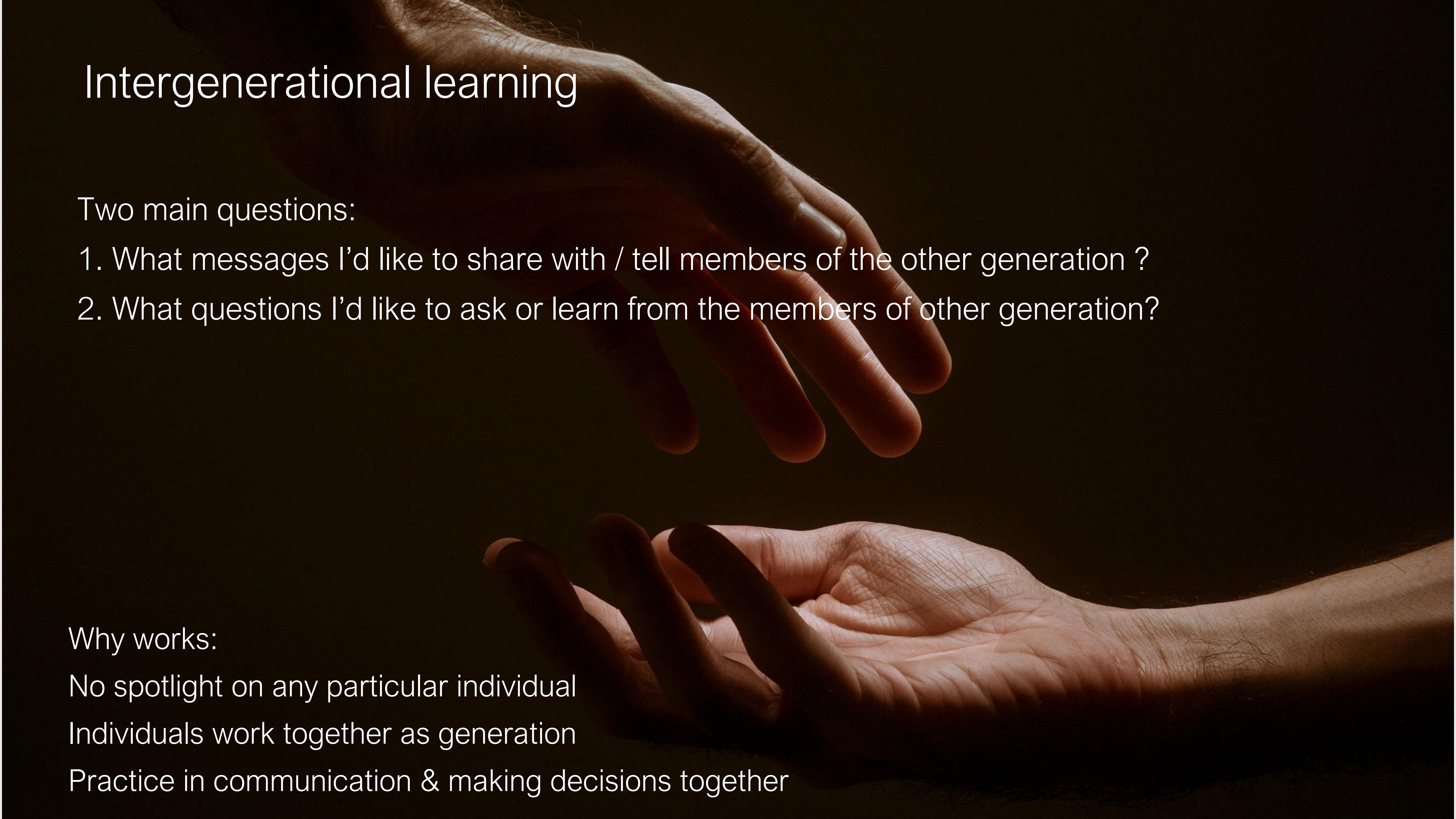
Compassion + care

Truth + candor

appreciation + apology + care



Intergenerational learning

A close-up photograph of two hands, one from an older person and one from a younger person, reaching towards each other. The hands are positioned as if about to clasp or are in the process of learning from each other. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows, emphasizing the textures of the skin and the gesture of reaching.

Two main questions:

1. What messages I'd like to share with / tell members of the other generation ?
2. What questions I'd like to ask or learn from the members of other generation?

Why works:

No spotlight on any particular individual

Individuals work together as generation

Practice in communication & making decisions together

heart: emotions

family as emotional regulation system



the edge of danger

Silence
Secrecy
Shame

Scars
Sparks
Sensitivity

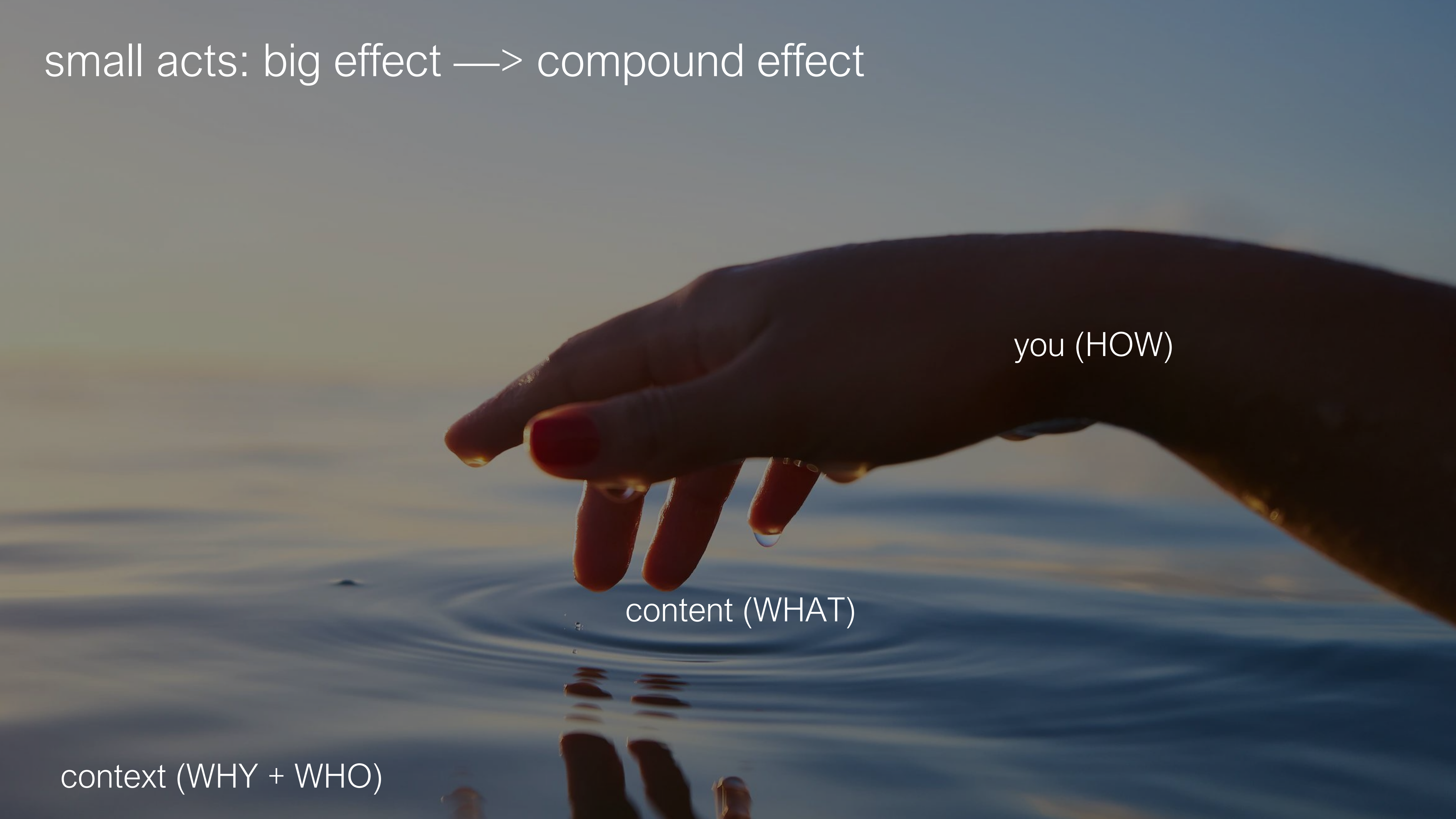
power to / from
wealth + worth + money
love + belonging
aging + mortality
trust + boundaries
legacy + succession
roles + responsibilities
(mental) health + addiction
other...

small acts: big effect —> compound effect

you (HOW)

content (WHAT)

context (WHY + WHO)



self-regulate

brain =
velcro -
teflon +



3 :1 ratio

It takes two to create a pattern
and one to break it

circuit
breaker

first 3 min of a conflict determine
how it's going to go 96% of the time

neurogenesis

Listen for:

Fears
Hopes
Concerns
Confusions
= What's important

Ask:

What was it like?
How do you see yourself in the midst of this?
What made you reach this conclusion?
What does it mean / say about you?
Tell me more...

Body: family factor

= is your family bond strong enough to leverage compromise, forgiveness and commitment to change?

Shared Vision

How important is “being family”
wanting to stay “together” (vs apart)

Trust

Understand each other and the system
Predictability

Shared history

Rich history together, memories, learnings, rituals

Infinite games

A black and white photograph of two young girls sitting on a beach, laughing heartily with their hands covering their mouths. They are wearing casual summer clothing. The background shows a sandy beach with some driftwood and a dark, silhouetted shoreline in the distance.

Who want to be in the future —> what we do
Play with boundaries —> explore possibilities
How do you want to relationship to be in the future?

family of blood —> family of affinity

social contagion of good vibes
sing, dance, laugh & hug
breathe & move
give thanks
say sorry

Intergenerational learning

The myth of prepping next generation



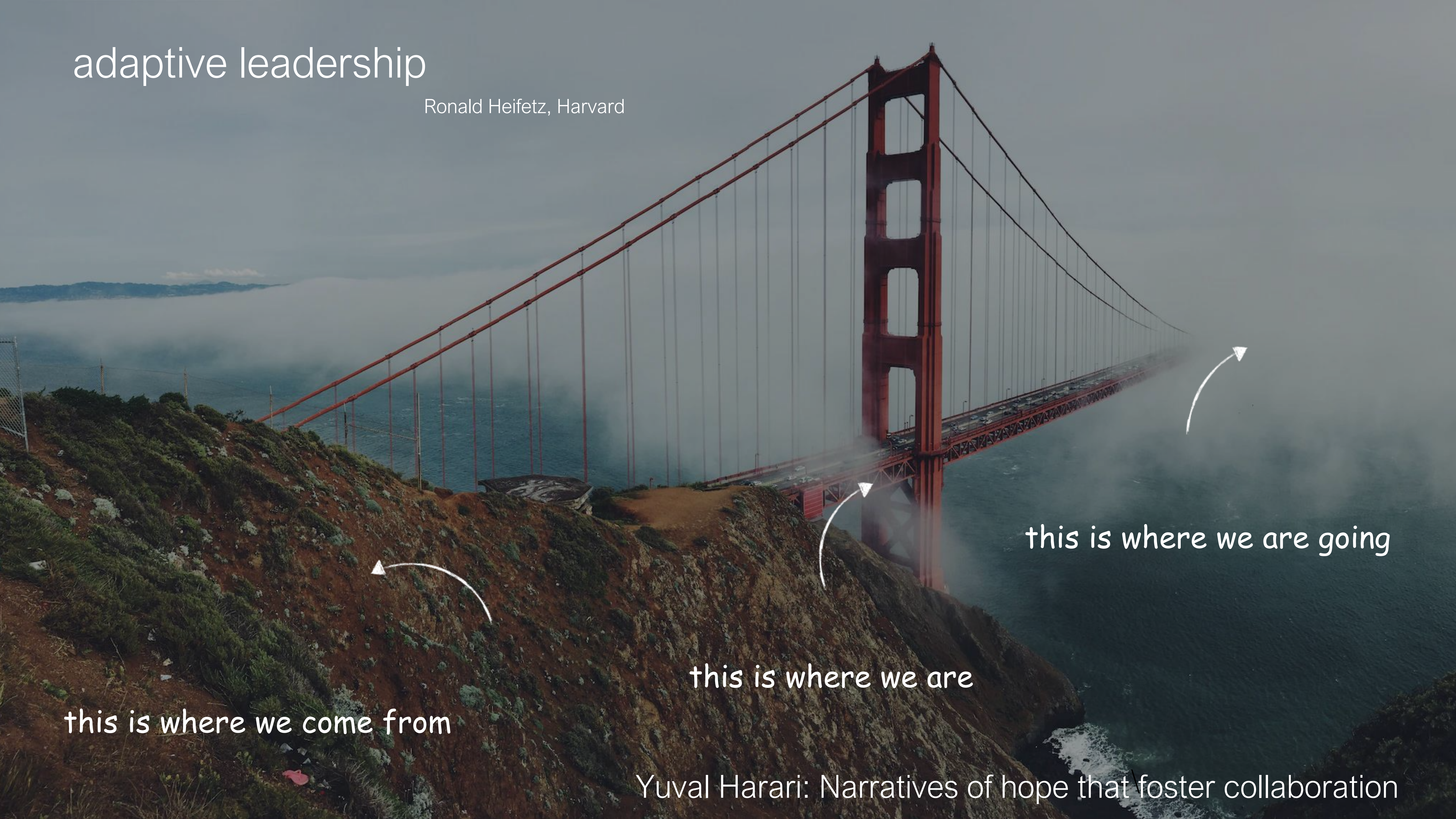
Source: The 4-L framework of family business leadership; Moores & Barrett

Spirit: legacy

Voice of the ones not anymore + not yet in the room

adaptive leadership

Ronald Heifetz, Harvard



this is where we come from

this is where we are

this is where we are going

Yuval Harari: Narratives of hope that foster collaboration

Ask better & beautiful questions

*What crossroads are you at?

*What talent are you not using?

What are you most excited about?

When was the last time you felt seen?

Whats your favourite childhood memory ?

What do you want to be known/ remembered for?

*Whats something that others misunderstand about you?

What do you say to yourself to give yourself permission to try something new ?

Thank you

“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that is has taken place”

George Bernard Shaw

patrycja@unlab.com.au