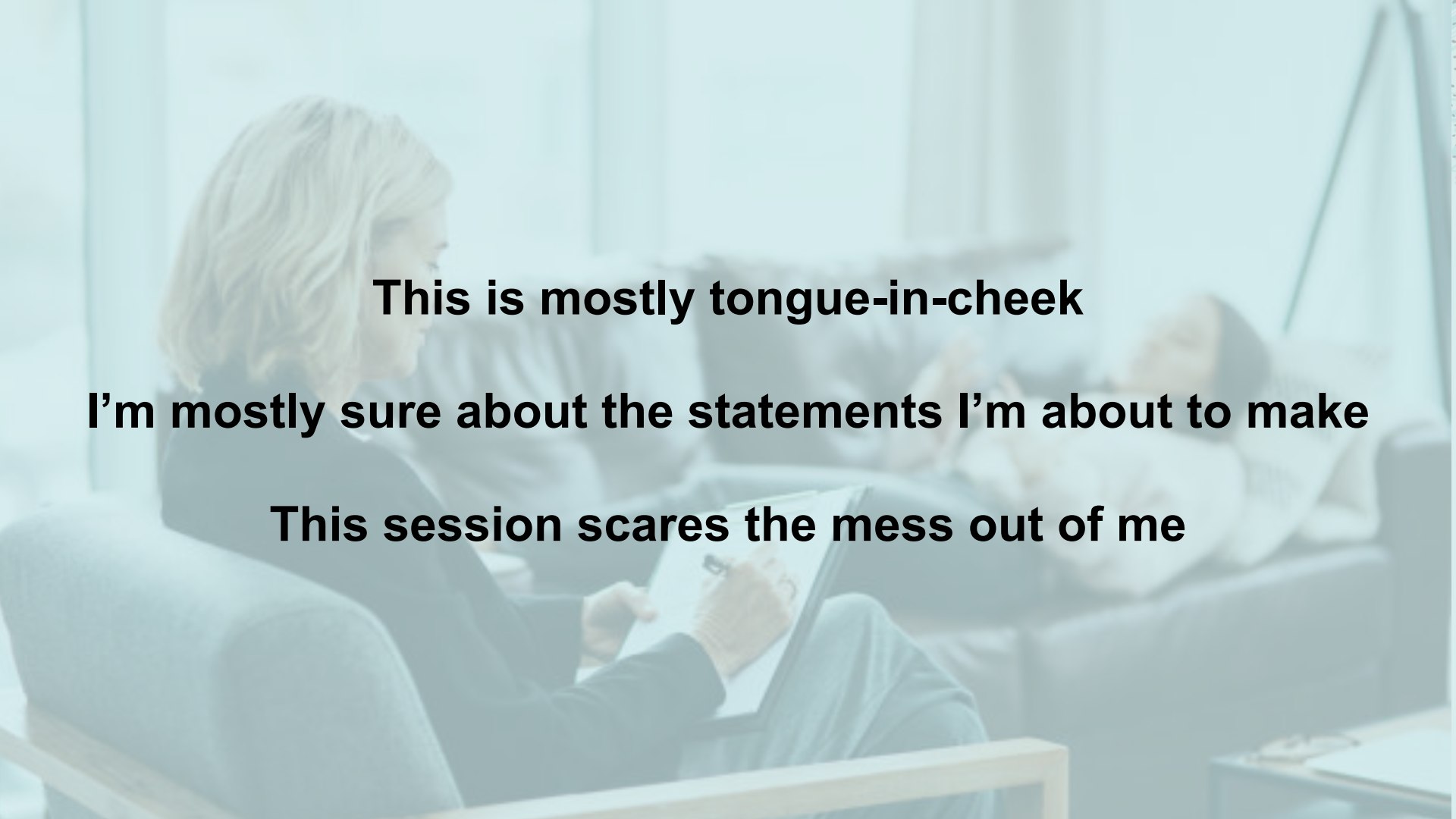
Chris Murman

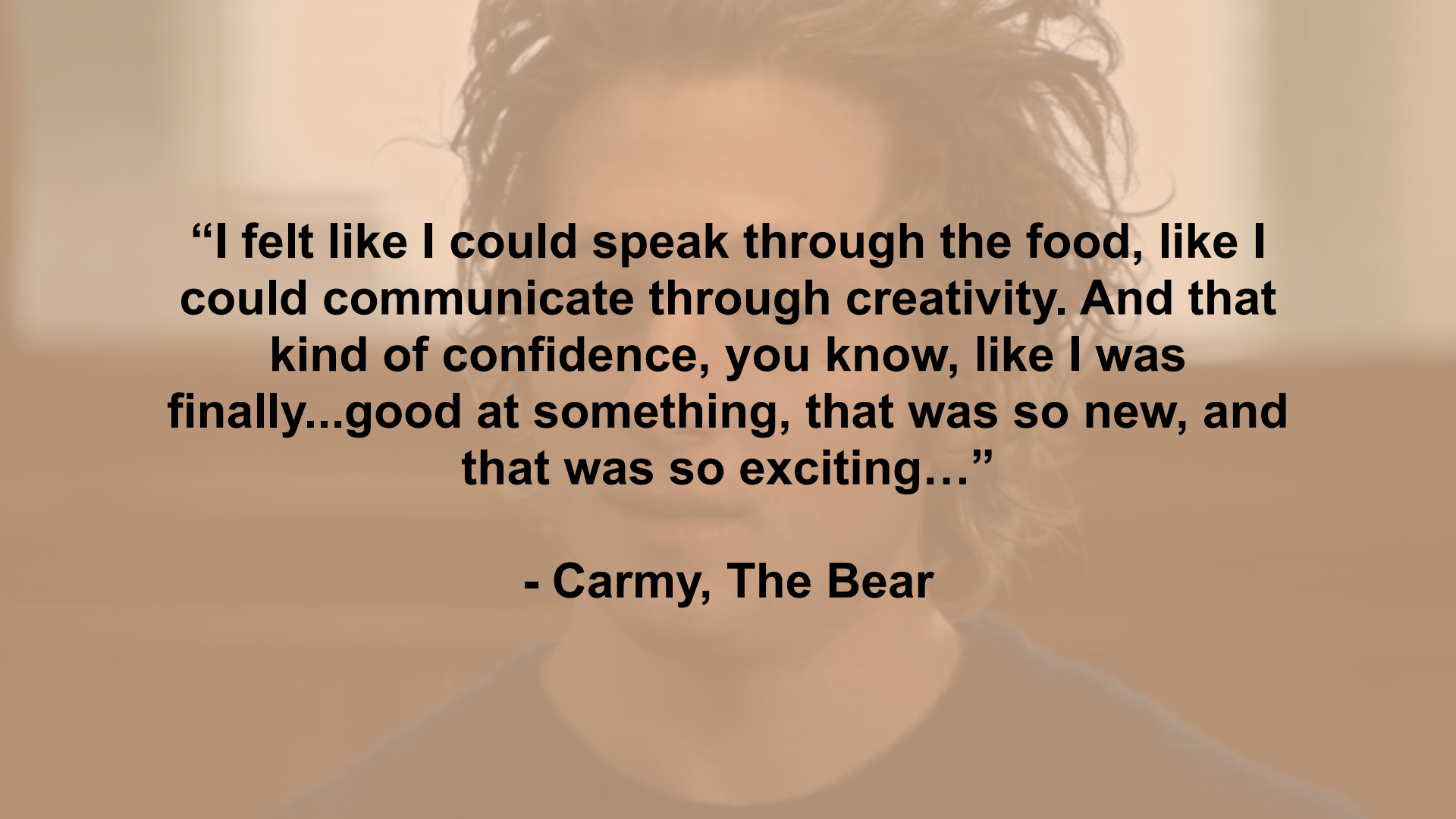
Agile Coaches: Are We Sure We're Helping?



This is mostly tongue-in-cheek

I’m mostly sure about the statements I’m about to make

This session scares the mess out of me


“I felt like I could speak through the food, like I could communicate through creativity. And that kind of confidence, you know, like I was finally...good at something, that was so new, and that was so exciting…”
- Carmy, The Bear

What are some challenges facing agile coaches today?

- Coaching fatigue…you heard me.
- All the certs and certifying bodies.
- The discourse has become…tense…around the topic.
- Do we even know what coaching is? (Agile/professional)
- Everyone is a coach these days (and that's not necessarily a bad thing).
- What's the most ethical way to help teams be their best?
- The rates, oh boy do people not want to pay the rates now.
- People want different things from coaching.
- What is my true ROI?
- We can sometimes get really full of ourselves.

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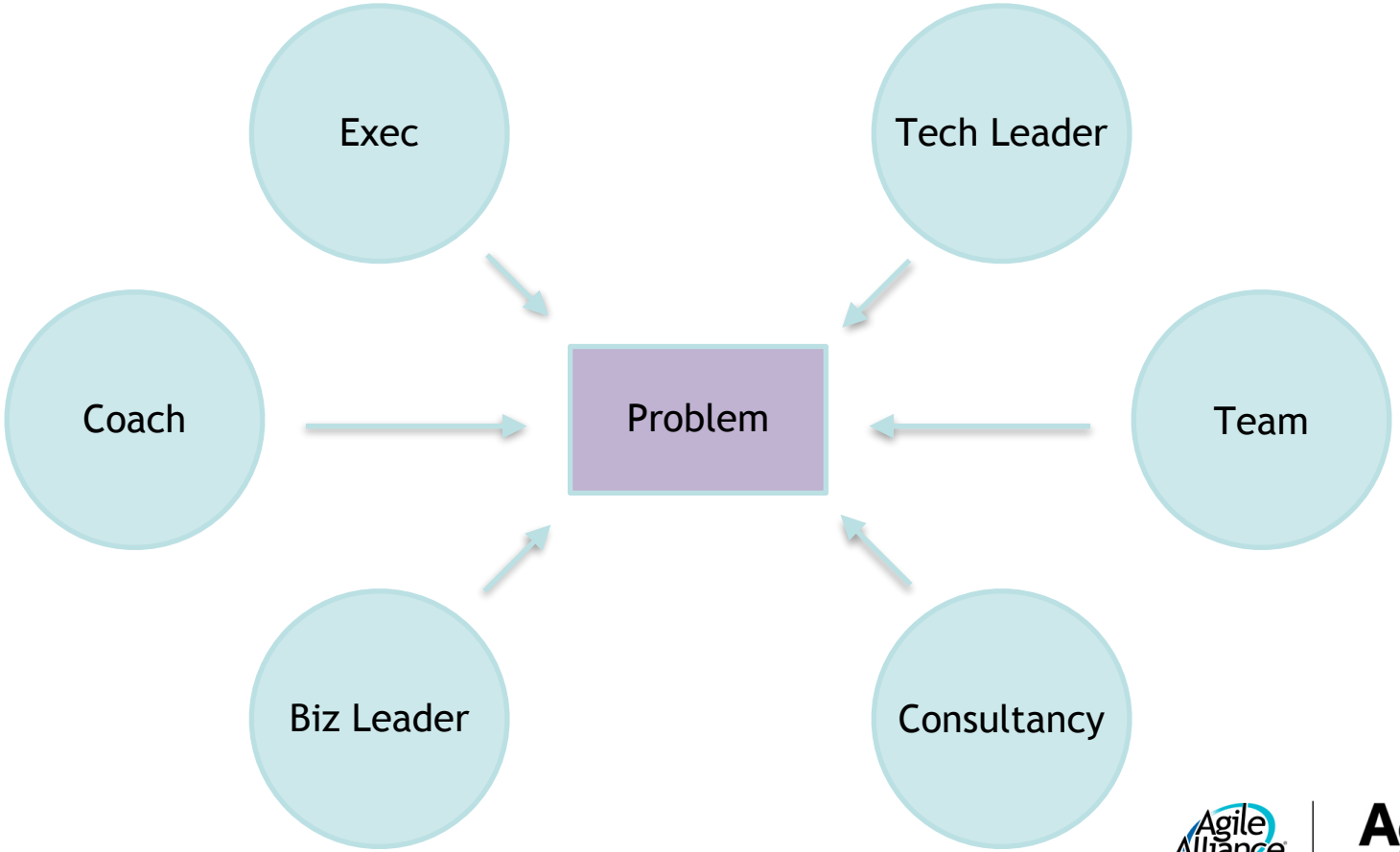
- **People want different things from coaching.**
- **What is my true ROI?**
- **We can sometimes get really full of ourselves.**

Problem: A Fortune 100 company has an area of their business that hadn’t delivered to production in nearly two years.

Executives bring in a consultancy to do some training and workshops.



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Executive — “Maria”

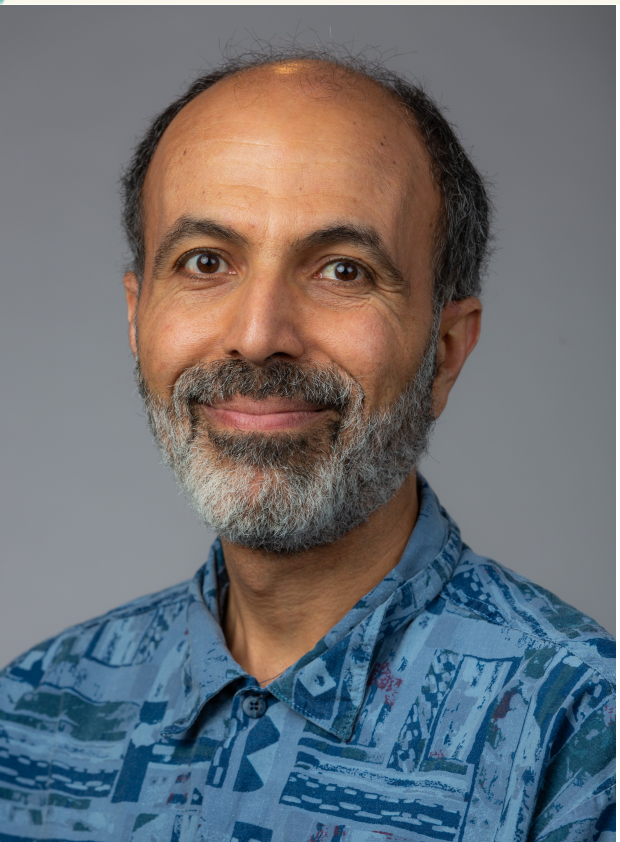
What does she think the problem is?

The organization can’t seem to deliver work to production consistently and the C-suite is getting nervous about my performance.

What do they think she wants?

She has no idea. In the end, she’s trying to keep her job.

Business Leadership — “Mohammed”



What does he think the problem is?

My lines of business are in line with my OKRs so far, but this won’t keep up if we don’t find a way to deliver more consistently.

What do they think he wants?

Get teams to commit to scope and dates and never be wrong…or else.

Technology Leadership — “Nushi”

What does he think the problem is?

I try to keep up with the ever changing needs of the business, but we are rarely seen as successful. So I could use a dose of “better, faster, and cheaper.”

What do they think he wants?

Use the training to blame business for his delivery issues. Often.

Consultancy Leader — “Jose”

What does he think the problem is?

If you pay us for my coaches, we can fix every problem you have.

What do they think he wants?

More money, more SOWs!!!!

(I’m sorta kidding)

Team

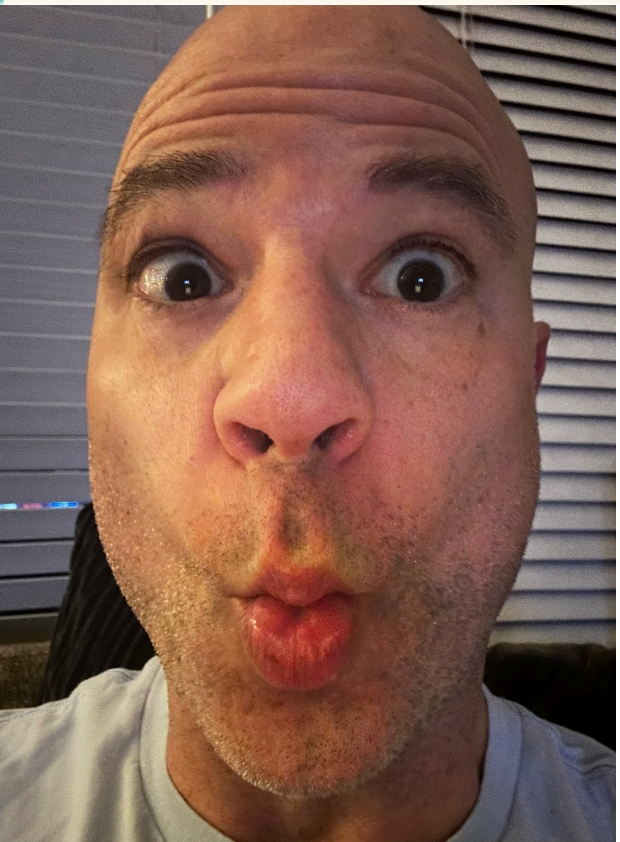
What do they think the problem is?

Everyone who is changing their minds about what we work on and how we work on it every day.

What do they think they want?

To continue being lazy.

Agile Coach — “Chris”



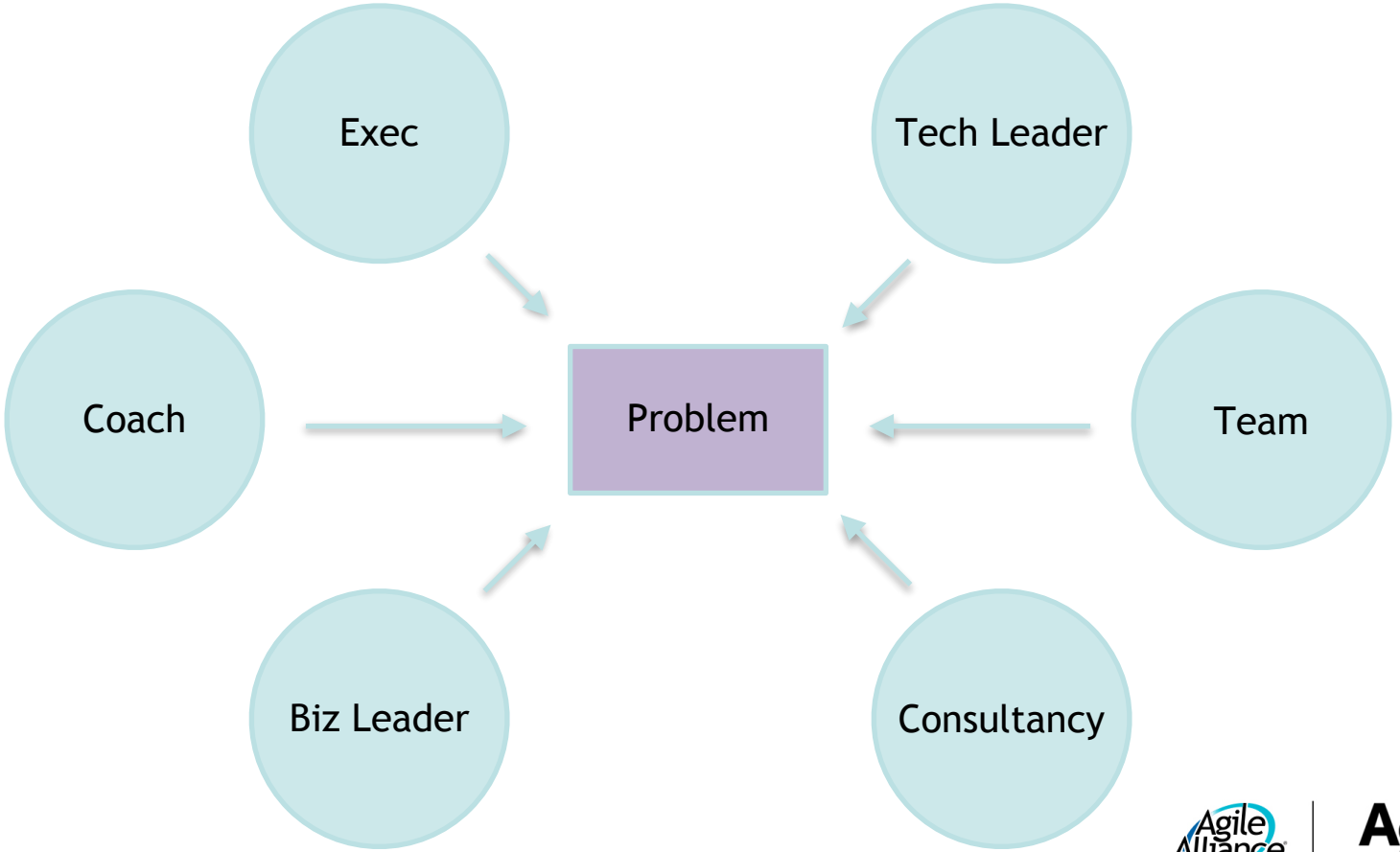
What does he think the problem is?

- There are tons of them, and he wants to help. Just takes patience, transparency and time to figure it out.

What do they think he wants?

- Tell us every rule we are breaking every second of every damn day. Then blame us when it doesn’t work out.

Did you see what I did there?



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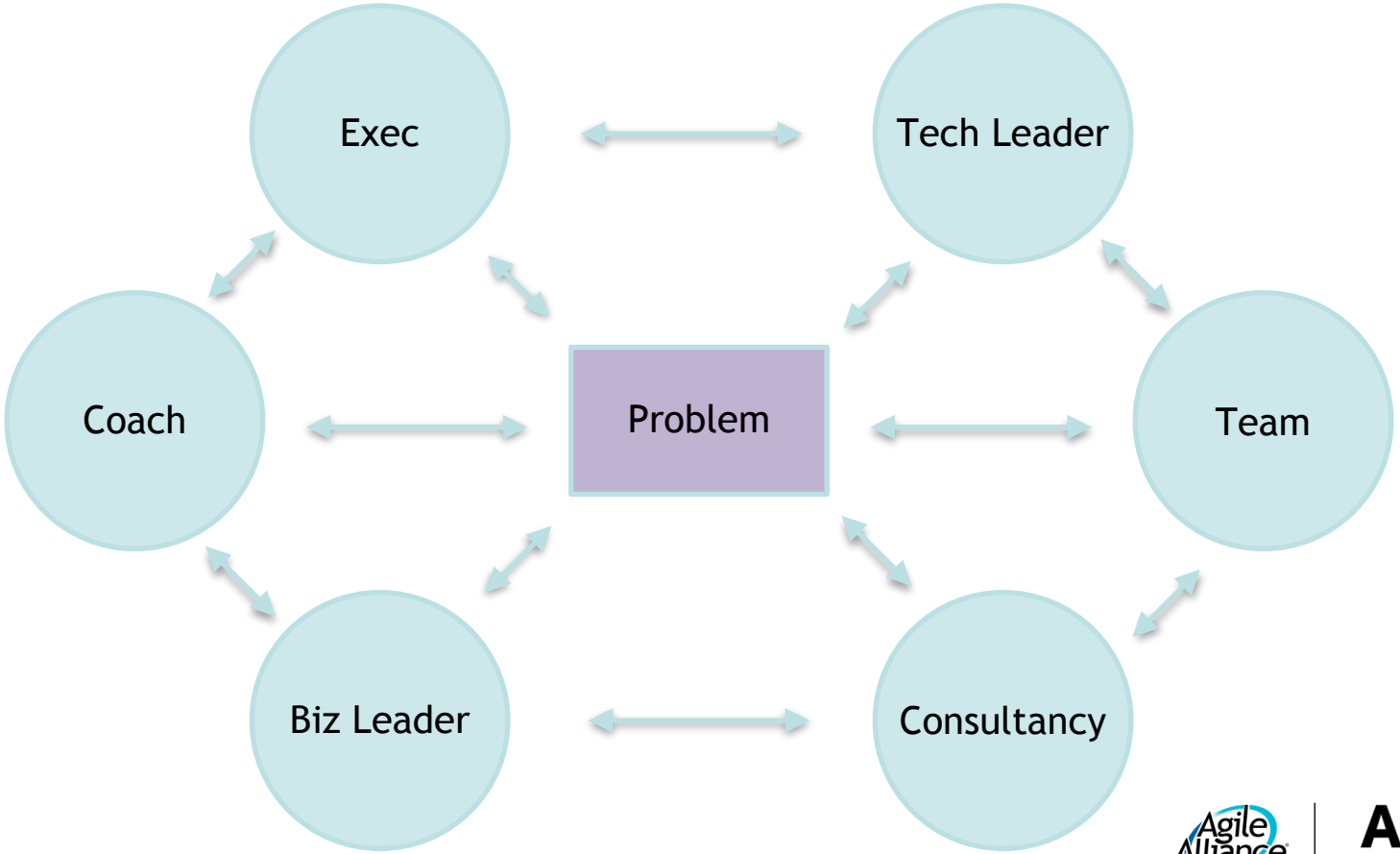

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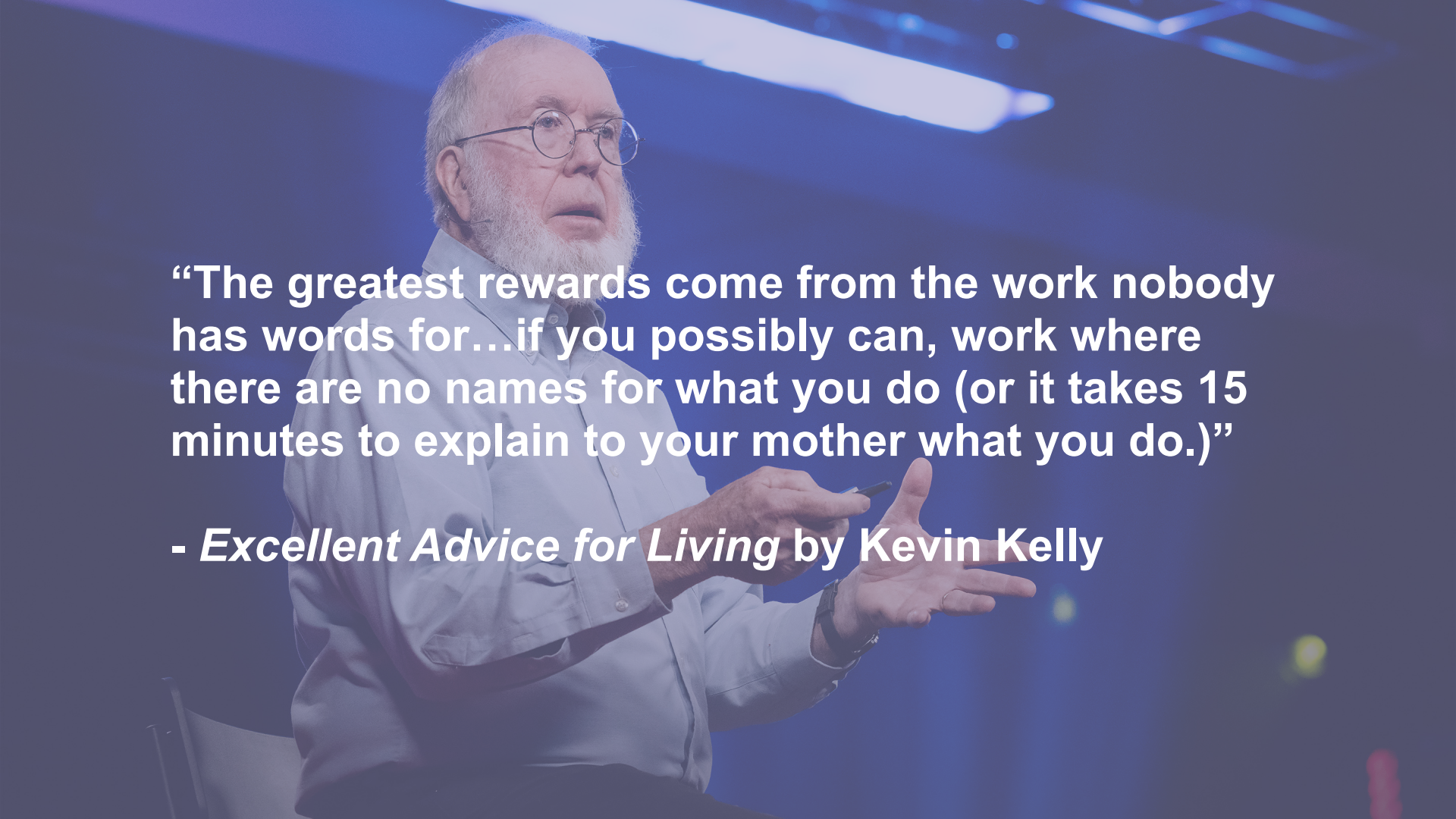
Is there congruence with these desires?

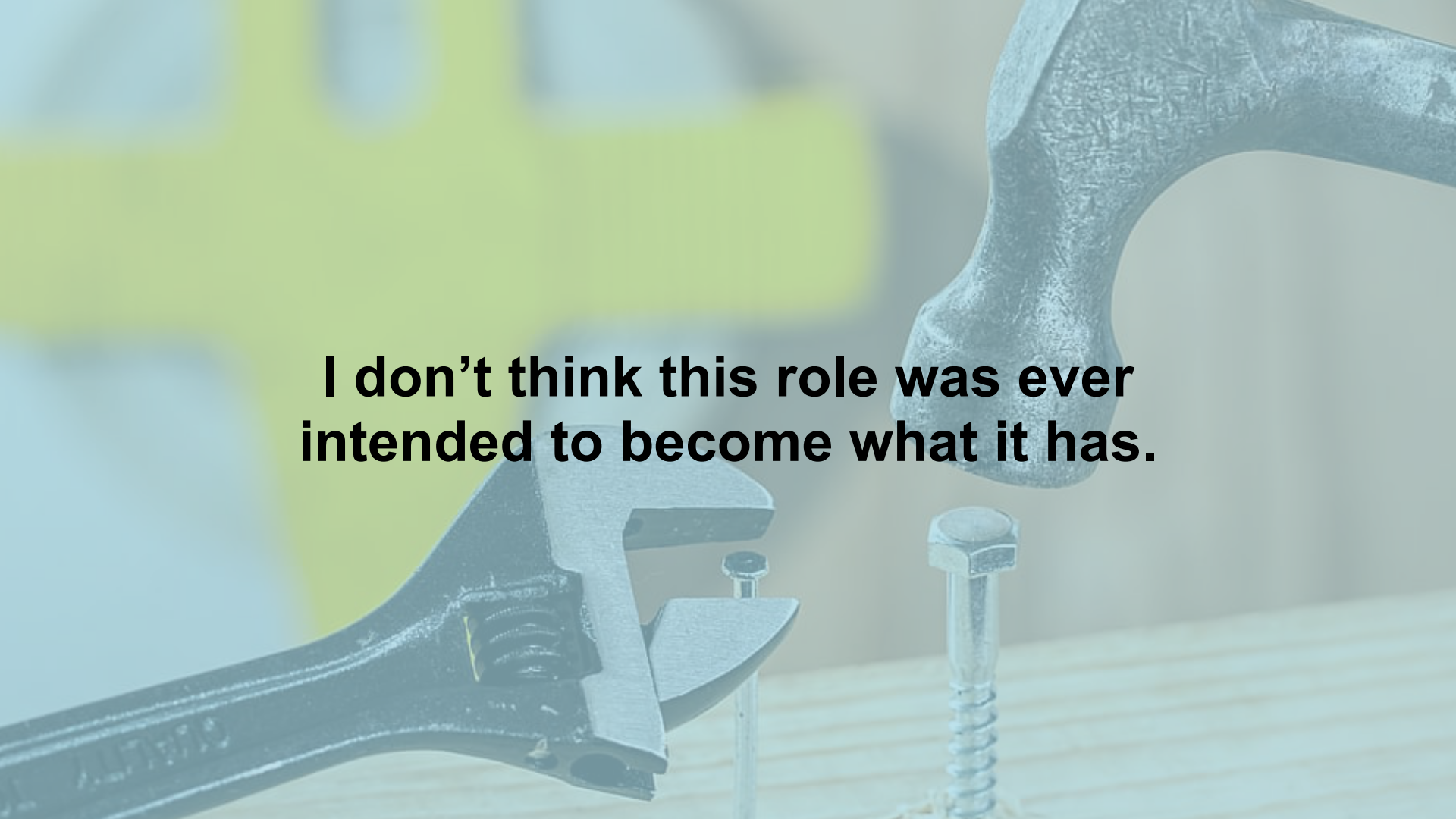
- To improve on what/how we deliver work and also be seen as improving.
- Find a hockey-stick like effect in all our pertinent metrics.
- Get the organization to properly prioritize and stick with it for a bit.
- Successfully identify problems with the client and actually resolve them.
- Get a consistent message from leaders and be trusted to deliver.
- Everyone shake their heads the same direction and works together on accomplishing what we agreed to do.

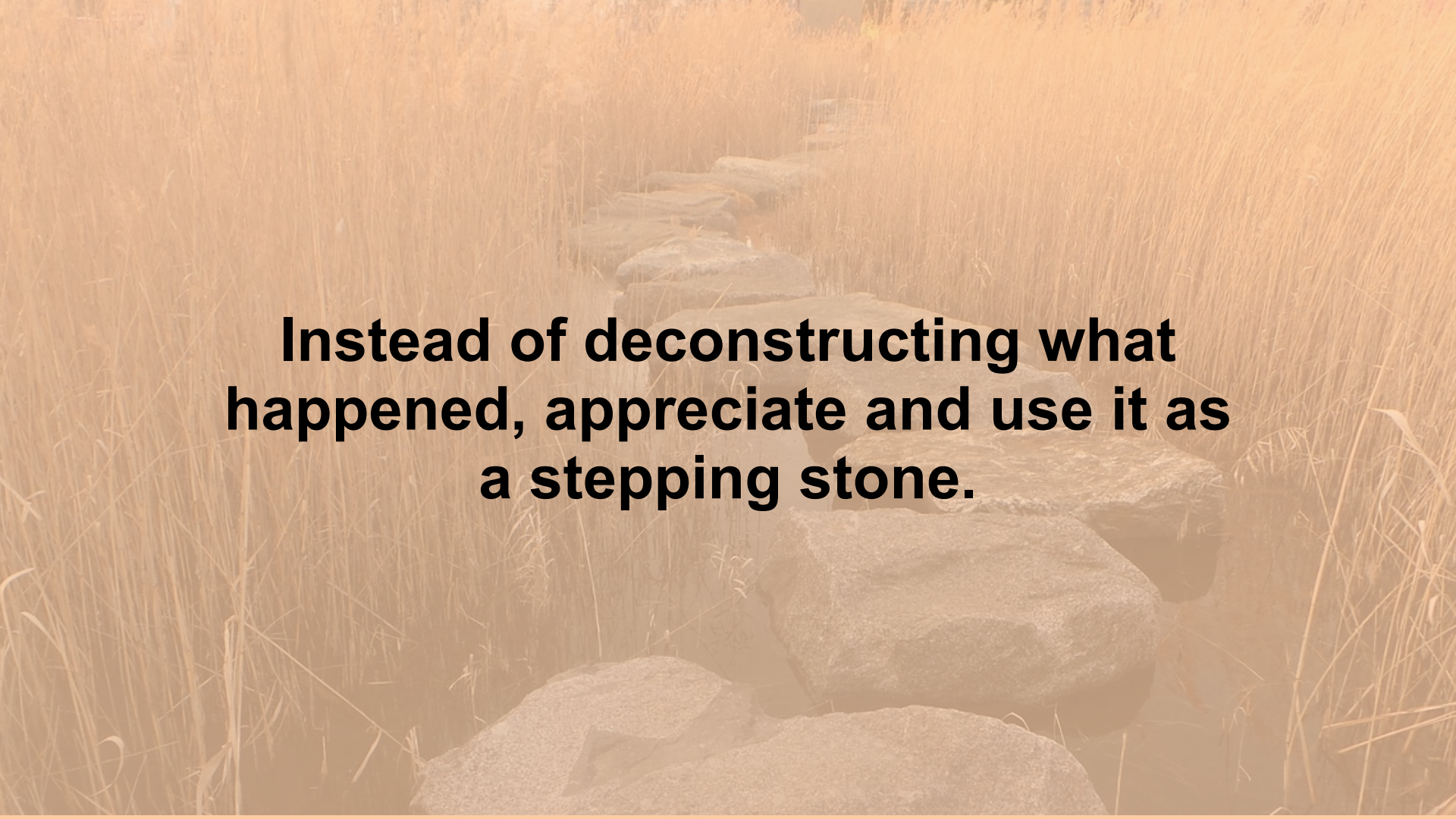
What is the ROI of that kind of work?


“The greatest rewards come from the work nobody has words for…if you possibly can, work where there are no names for what you do (or it takes 15 minutes to explain to your mother what you do.)”
- *Excellent Advice for Living* by Kevin Kelly

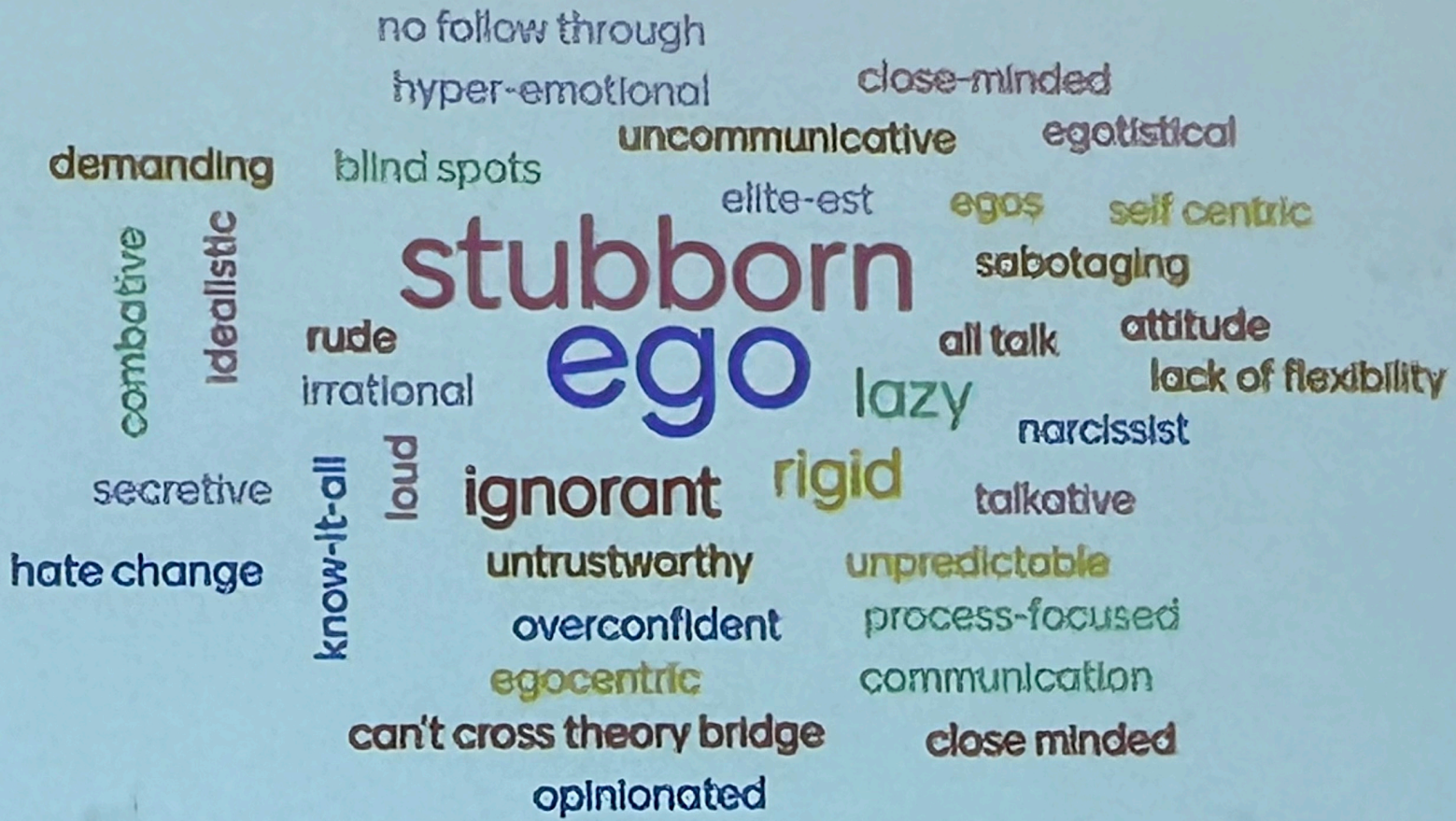
What did choosing this profession give you?

What I’ve been taught in my life has never been as important as how I was taught.


I don’t think this role was ever
intended to become what it has.


Instead of deconstructing what
happened, appreciate and use it as
a stepping stone.

Don’t focus on saying the smart thing.


no follow through
hyper-emotional
close-minded
uncommunicative
egotistical
demanding
blind spots
elite-est
egos
self centric
stubborn
sabotaging
combative
idealistic
rude
ego
all talk
attitude
irrational
lazy
lack of flexibility
narcissist
secretive
know-it-all
loud
ignorant
rigid
talkative
hate change
untrustworthy
unpredictable
overconfident
process-focused
egocentric
communication
can't cross theory bridge
close minded
opinionated

The experience of working with you
is what matters in the end.

Thank You!

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