



LOGOS
DYNAMICS

WHEN THE PROBLEM
IS THE PROBLEM

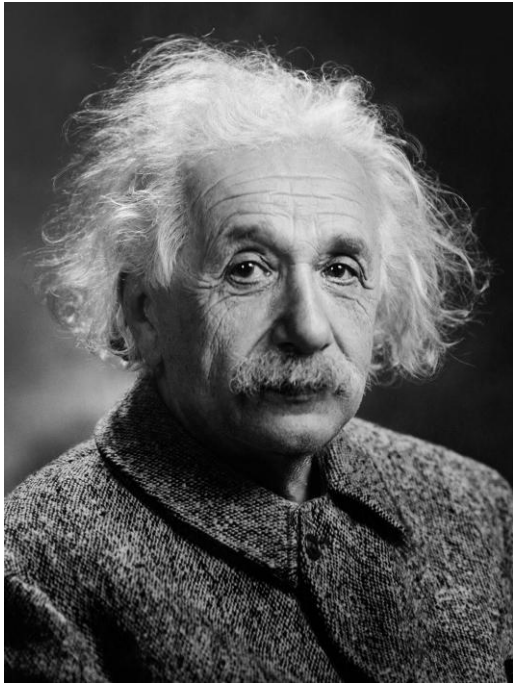
Emmanuel C. S. Santos,
Ph.D.
Medici di Makati College
e.santos@medicicollege.edu.ph

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How a typical action learning cycle starts

- **Driving question:** *“Find a perennial problem in your organisational or community setting and collaboratively work with other stakeholders at finding ways to address it.”*
- We often jump from **problem identification** to **problem-solving** mode or **“solutioning”** too soon **without critically reflecting** on the problem frame itself.
- The first (and later) stages of action learning, should involve iterations of critical reflection on **the way we think about the problem**

Method to his genius



Albert
Einstein

*"We cannot solve our problems
with the same thinking we used
when we created them.*

*If I had an hour to solve a
problem, I'd spend 55 minutes
thinking about the problem and
five minutes thinking about
solutions."*

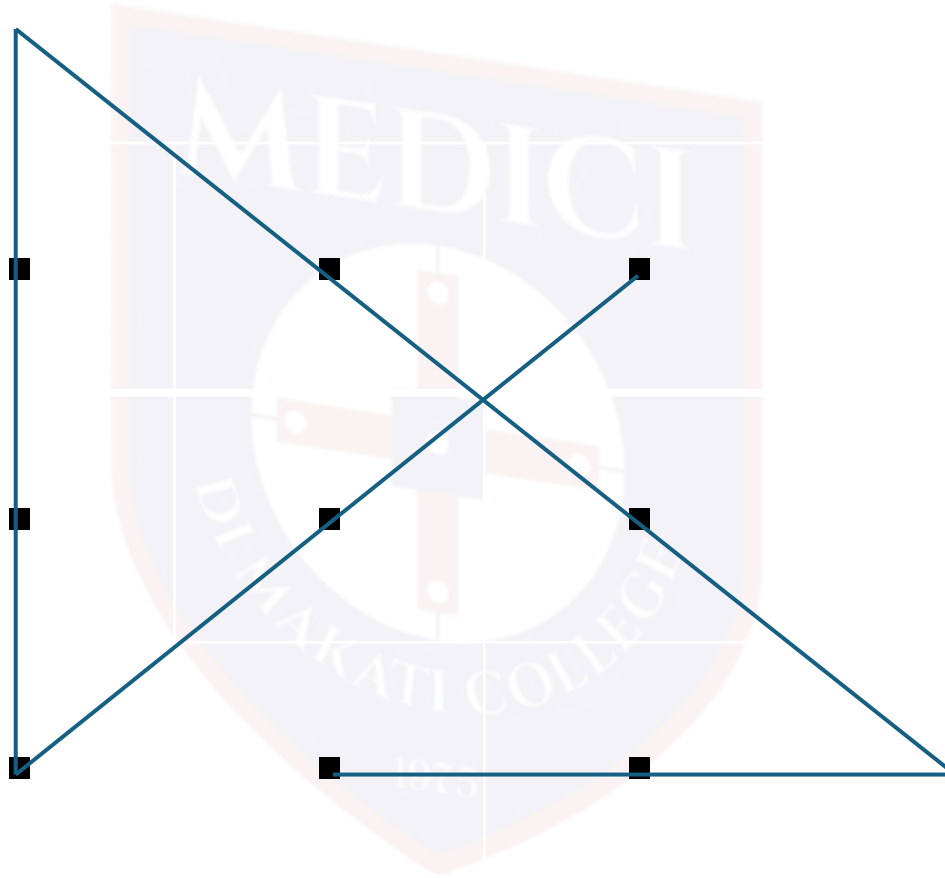
Every problem has an inherent logic (a *logos*)

- Deeply ingrained
 - Often unconscious
 - Historically embedded
 - Cultural paradigms for interpreting reality
 - Inherited from our forebears
-
- Unpacking this logos is often the key to solving the problem

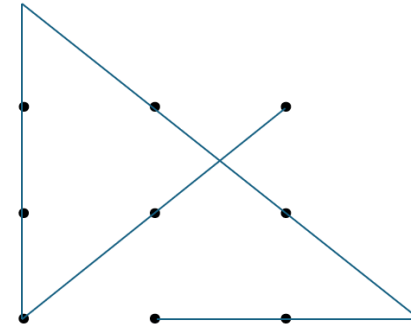
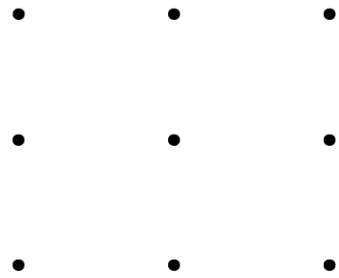
Connect these 9 dots without
lifting your pen from the
paper, using four straight
lines.



The solution



What was the inherent logic of the problem?



- *You need to remain in the box*
- *The layout of the dots suggested it*
- *No rule, but it feels like cheating to go outside the square*
- Who told you that?
- Was there a rule that said you needed to stay in the square?
- The nature of the puzzle suggests you need an “out of the box” solution

Thinking “outside the box”

- **Alba and Weisberg (1981)** simply telling participants to go outside the imaginary square does not raise success rates; **only about 20% to 25% solve it** even with the hint.
- Without a **concrete method**, the brain defaults to energy-saving habits and **established neural pathways**.
- The phrase creates a **self-limiting mind trap**. It falsely assumes a rigid boundary exists and focuses attention on the “box” rather than the actual work

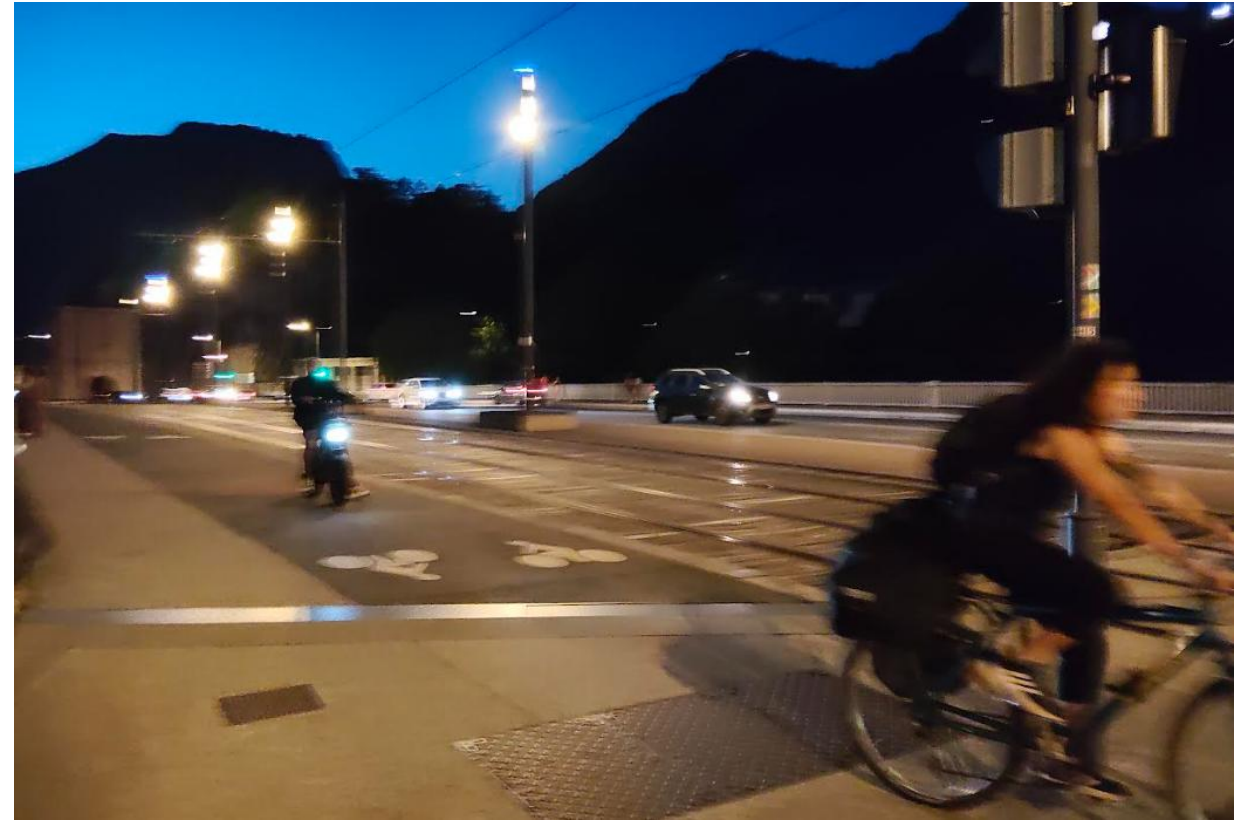
The case of “bus lanes”



“Roads are built for cars”



Valence, France



Grenoble, France

“Basic training”



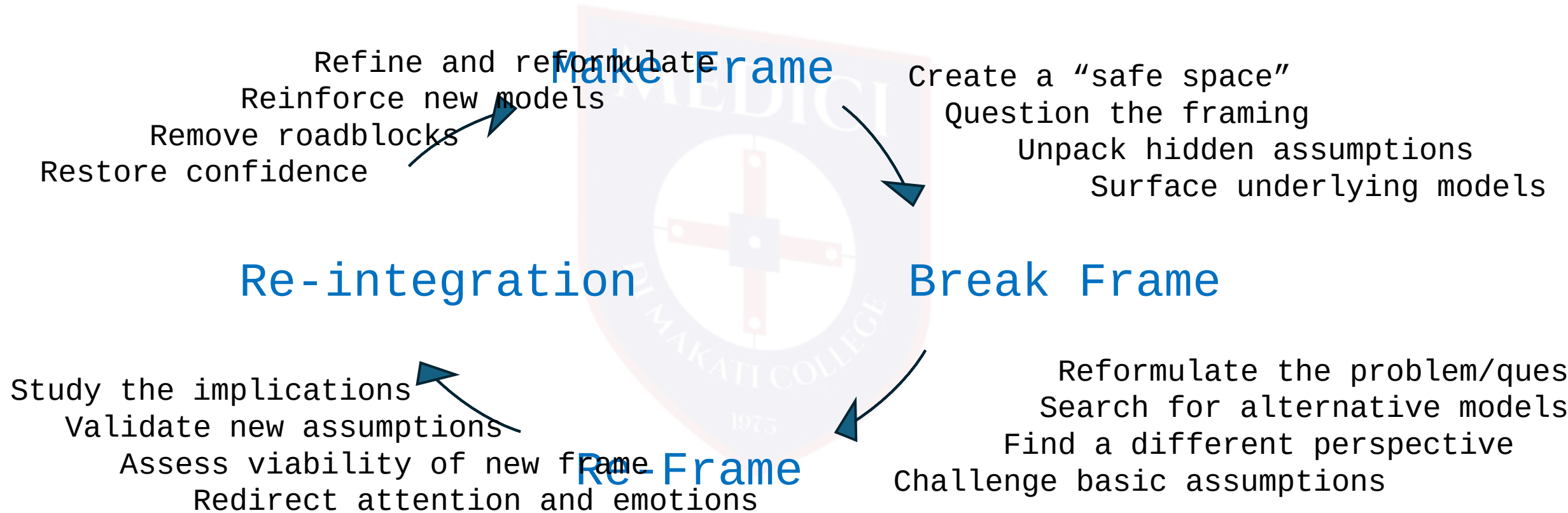
Connecting to Systems Theory

- **The Architecture of Mental Models:** In systems thinking (specifically Peter Senge's Fifth Discipline), inherent logics represent the foundational "mental models" layer. They dictate how the system is designed, who holds power, and how resources are allocated.
- **Reinforcing Feedback Loops:** Inherent logics create self-reinforcing loops. A historical logic of "siloes departmental excellence" creates rigid boundaries. These boundaries prevent cross-functional collaboration, which in turn reinforces the belief that departments must protect their own interests.
- **The Root of Systemic Leverage Points:** the most powerful leverage point for changing a system is **changing its mindset or paradigm**. To fix a broken system, you cannot just change the rules; you must

Connecting to Action Learning

- **Shifting from Tactical to Double-Loop Learning:** Single-loop learning asks, "Are we doing the thing right?" (governed by inherent logic). Action learning forces double-loop learning, which asks, "Are we doing the right thing?" This second loop directly questions the validity of the inherent logic guiding the behavior. We can reformulate the logic using Patton's GUIDE Principles.
- **The Power of Insightful Questioning:** Action learning relies heavily on asking fresh, powerful questions rather than relying on existing expertise. Because inherited logics present themselves as unquestionable truths ("This is just how it's done"), the questioning framework of action learning strips away these assumptions. To solve "wicked problems" we must frame "wicked questions"
- **Safe-to-Fail Experiments:** Inherent logics often breed risk aversion. Action learning encourages small, iterative actions. When these actions yield successful results that contradict the old way of thinking, the inherent logic begins to lose its grip, replaced by

Framework of logos dynamics



Uncovering Inherent Logics

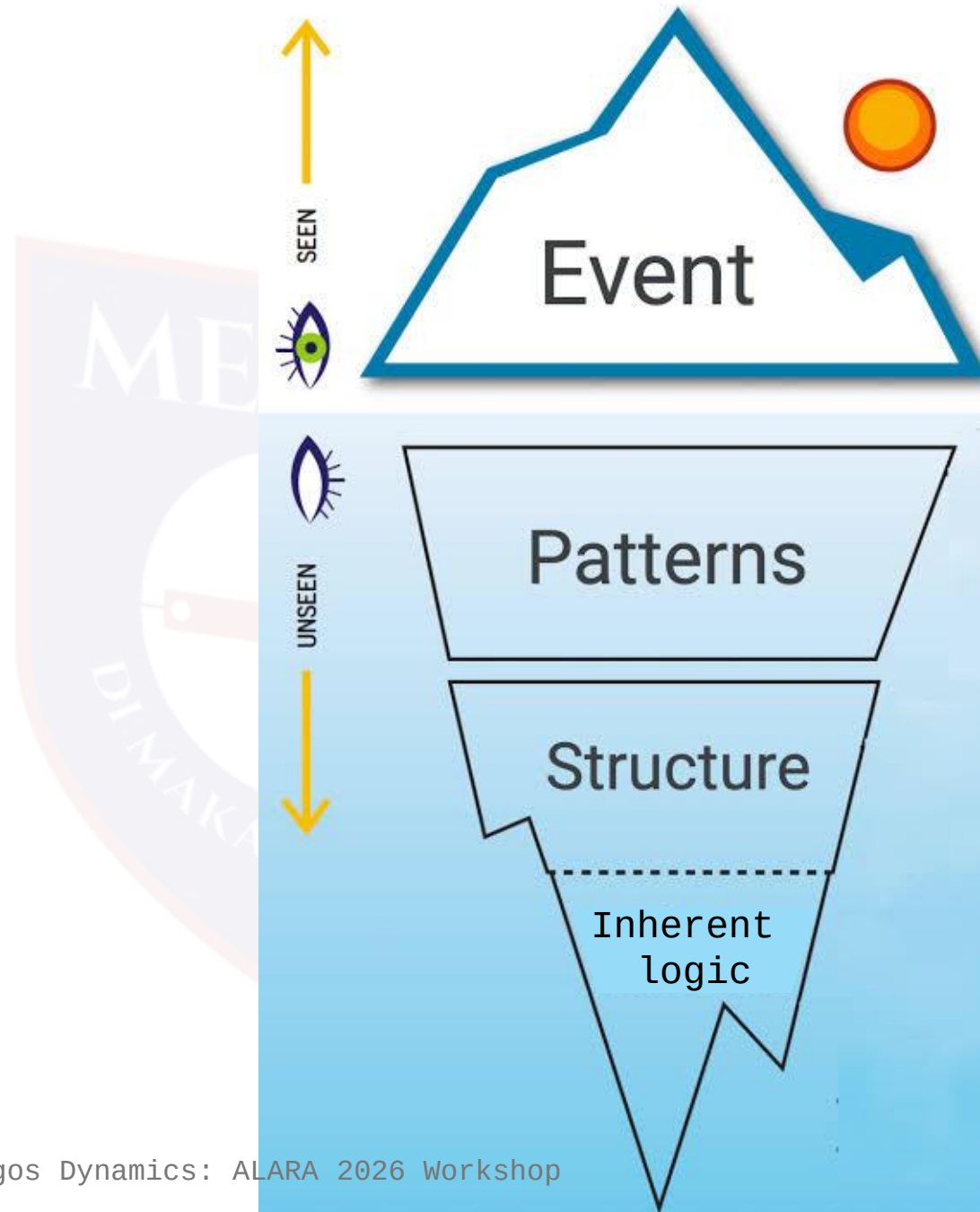
- At the start of an action learning cycle, treat your **current reality** as a **design challenge**, a **complex system**, and a **physics problem** simultaneously.
- By combining **systems theory** (finding connections), **design thinking** (unearthing human emotions), and **first principles analysis** (stripping down to fundamental truths), you can **expose hidden assumptions** before acting.
- We are moving away from pre-ordinate design and linear machine assumptions – which treats organizations like predictable machines – to **developmental evaluation** entering the world of **complexity**.

Phase 1.

Setup & Context Selection (8 Minutes)

- **Goal:** Align the group and choose a specific, systemic bottleneck to dissect.
- **Sector Deep Dive.** Each table selects one concrete, frustrating bottleneck relevant to their track.
 - *Health Example:* Patient discharge delays because of administrative backlogs.
 - *Education Example:* High student drop-out rates in online courses.
 - *Community Example:* Low turnout at local neighborhood council meetings.
 - *Workplace Relations Example:* Interdepartmental friction between sales and engineering.

Phase 2:
Map the
Invisible
Web
(Systems
Theory – 12
Minutes)



Phase 3. Challenge Human Truths (Design Thinking – 18 Minutes)

Goal: Expose the emotional friction and cultural taboos that protect the inherited logic.

- **Step 1 (6 mins): The Empathy Mirror.** Teams sketch a quick Empathy Map (Says, Does, Thinks, Feels) for the primary stakeholder experiencing the bottleneck (e.g., the patient, the teacher, the citizen, the employee).
- **Step 2 (6 mins): Hunting the Red Flags.** Participants list the common phrases, excuses, or cultural taboos used to justify the current mess. Look for defensive phrases like:
 - *"We tried that years ago."*
 - *"That's just compliance/corporate policy."*
 - *"It's too risky to change."*
- **Step 3 (6 mins): The Logic Gap.** Identify where human behavior clashes with the system. If employees are using a hidden workaround, the inherited logic is likely valuing *control* over *user experience*.

Truths (First Principles – 15

Goal: Demolish industry "best practices" and rebuild the solution from physical, legal, or financial facts.

- **Step 1 (5 mins): Deconstruct the Dogma.** Write down the current, standard way the sector solves this problem (the legacy approach).
- **Step 2 (5 mins): Isolate the Raw Facts.** Strip away all human opinion, tradition, and policy. What is objectively, undeniably true about the situation?
 - *Example (Workplace):* Fact 1: Team A has information. Fact 2: Team B needs that information to work. Fact 3: Both teams have laptops and internet. (The legacy rule "They must file a ticket" is *not* a fundamental fact).
- **Step 3 (5 mins): The Reconstruction.** Ask: *"If our organization was founded today, with today's technology and zero history, how would we connect these raw facts?"*

Phase 5: Action Learning Launch (12 Minutes)

Goal: Translate the surfaced inherited logic into experimental questions for the action learning cycle.

- **Step 1 (5 mins): The Reframe.** Teams look at their deepest inherited logic from Phase 2 and turn it into a disruptive Action Learning question.
 - *Old Logic:* "We must centralize decisions to avoid risk."
 - *Action Learning Question:* "How might we safely decentralize this specific approval to speed up delivery by 50%?"
- **Steps 2 and 3 (7 mins): Commit to Act (and Observe).** Each participant writes down one micro-experiment and data-gathering step they will take to test this new question.

Your reflections are highly appreciated.

What did I find relevant and useful?

In what way can it be applied in my setting?

What are the key takeaways for me?



Emmanuel C. S. Santos,
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