



The Acceleration Trap

Dr Jochen Menges, University of Cambridge

Companies can burn out, too

It's not just individuals...



Inside the Acceleration Trap

“It was relatively easy in the long early period of expansion by acquisition to integrate new companies into our company. But over time, the downsides outweigh the upsides... Companies lose energy – and create higher cost – through lack of cohesion. You know the story. We’ve lived it.”

Jürgen Dormann, CEO ABB



Some data

- Employees not in accelerated companies
- Employees in accelerated companies

60% **2%**

“We lack sufficient resources to get the work done.”

80% **4%**

“I work under constantly elevated time pressure.”

75% **1%**

“My company’s priorities frequently change.”

“I regularly get a chance to regenerate.” **14%** **94%**

Patterns of Acceleration

Overloading

Multiloading

Perpetual loading



Overloading

Too much to do



Multitasking

Too many different things to do



Perpetual loading

No end in sight

Breaking Free

Stop the action

Be clear about strategy

Run A-B-C analysis

Use inverse suggestion schemes

Use simplification surveys

Declare the turmoil over

Stop the action

Get rid of unnecessary work



Run A-B-C analysis

Force employees to prioritise projects



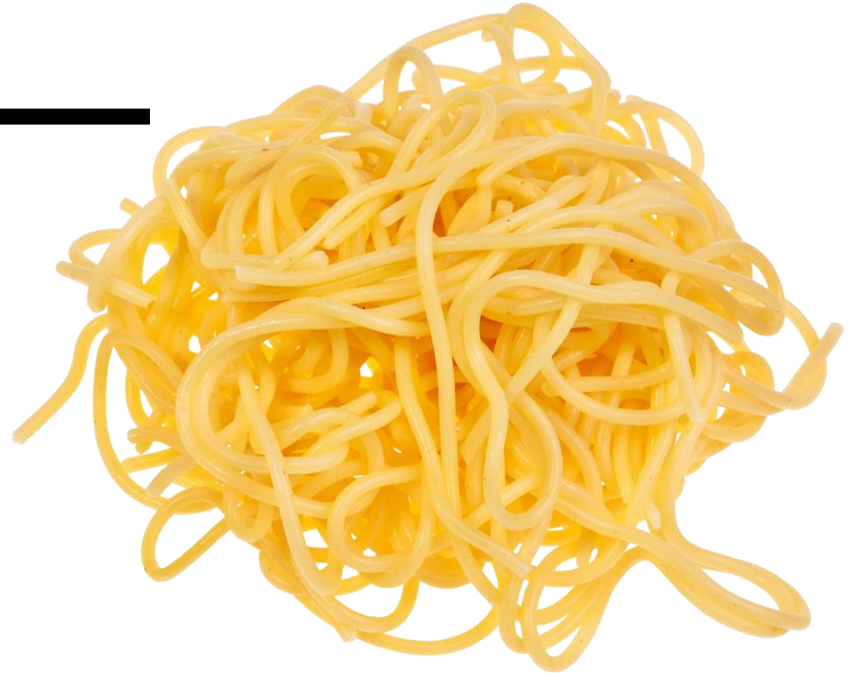
Use inverse suggestion schemes

Ask employees about activities that could be stopped



Use simplification surveys

Ask employees how to simplify products and processes



A close-up of a silver, mesh-covered microphone is centered in the foreground. The background is a large, out-of-focus crowd of people, with various colors of clothing visible, suggesting a public event or conference.

Be clear about strategy

Decide what's important

Declare the turmoil over

Avoid constant change



Preventing Future Entrapment

Institute “spring cleaning”

Cap annual goals

Filter new projects

Bury projects



Institute spring cleaning

Check activities on regular basis



Cap annual goals

Reduce to 3 must-win battles

Filter new projects

Adapt project management system





Bury projects

It's okay to stop a project

Changing the Acceleration Culture

Focus

Take time-outs

Slow down to speed up

Use feedback systems

Model Behaviour

Celebrate

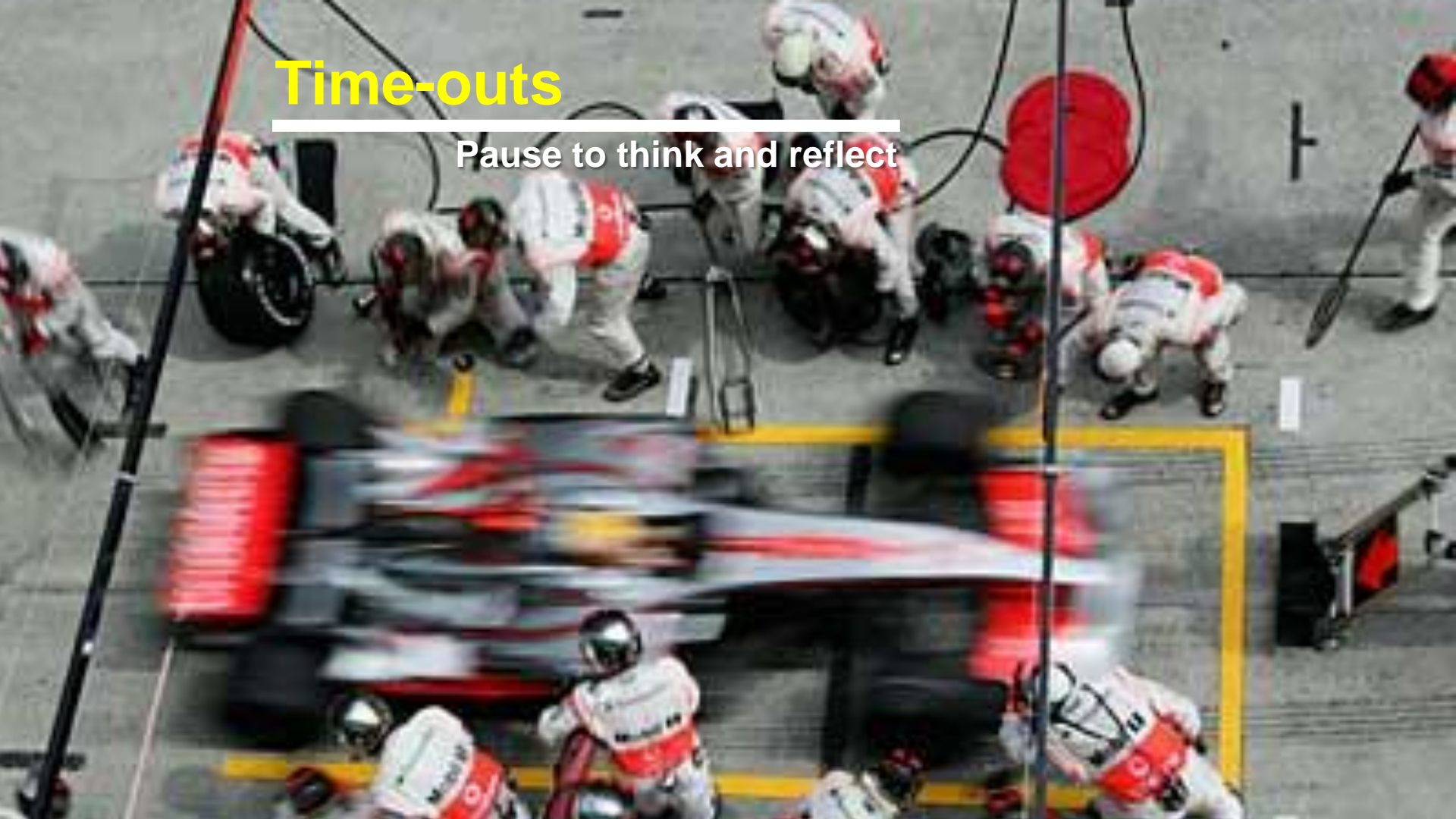
A photograph of a yellow soccer goal on a grassy field. In the foreground, a yellow soccer ball sits on the grass. The background is dark and out of focus, showing some foliage. The word 'Focus' is written in yellow text on the left side of the image.

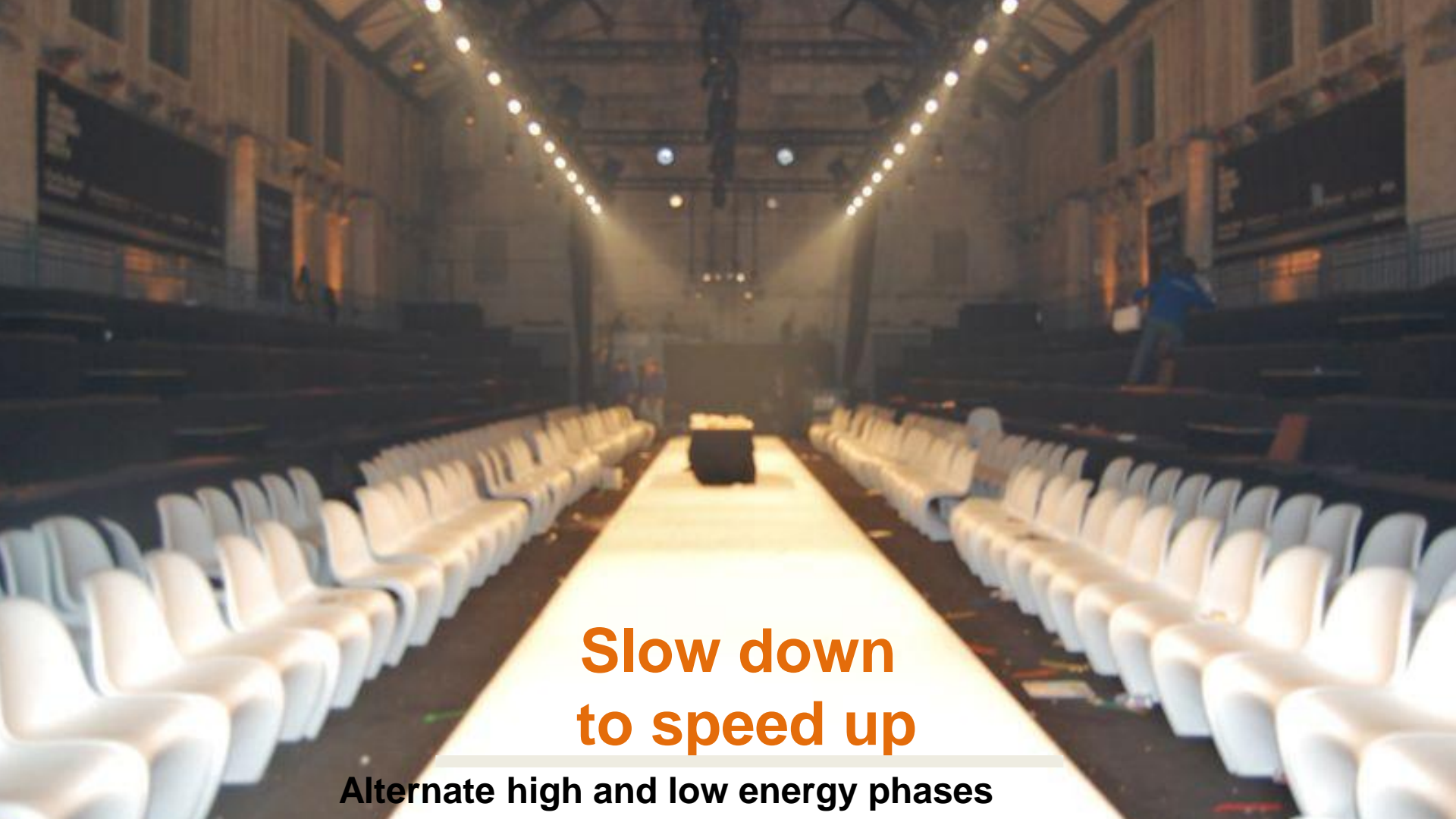
Focus

Do one thing at a time

Time-outs

Pause to think and reflect





**Slow down
to speed up**

Alternate high and low energy phases



Use feedback systems

Encourage learning

Model behaviour

Combine work and regeneration





Celebrate

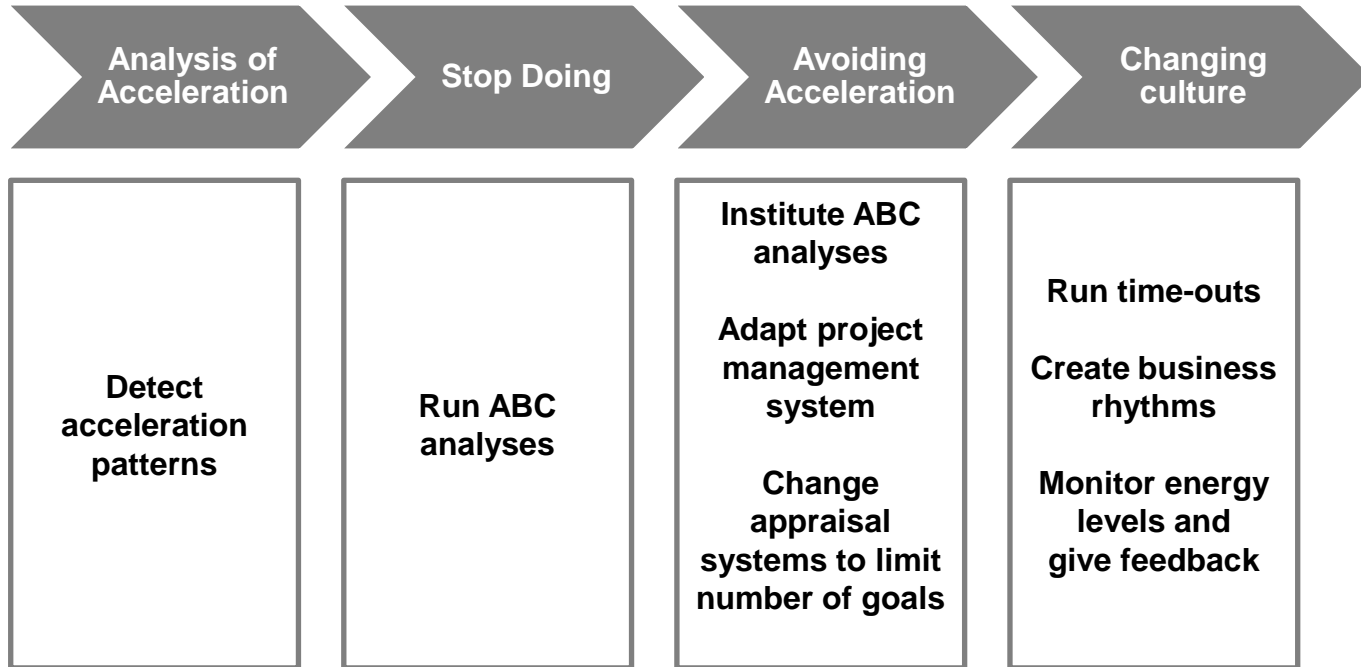
Indulge in successes

How to get started?

Process model

Process model

An idea for what you could do



More

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*More to
read...*



Harvard Business Review
April 2010, pp. 80-86
Reprint R1004G
(www.hbr.org)

*More to
watch...*



TEDx talk, March 2014
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7G6L4dEpiTM>

Conclusion

“Your first and foremost job as a leader is to take charge of your own energy and then help to orchestrate the energy of those around you.”



Peter F. Drucker

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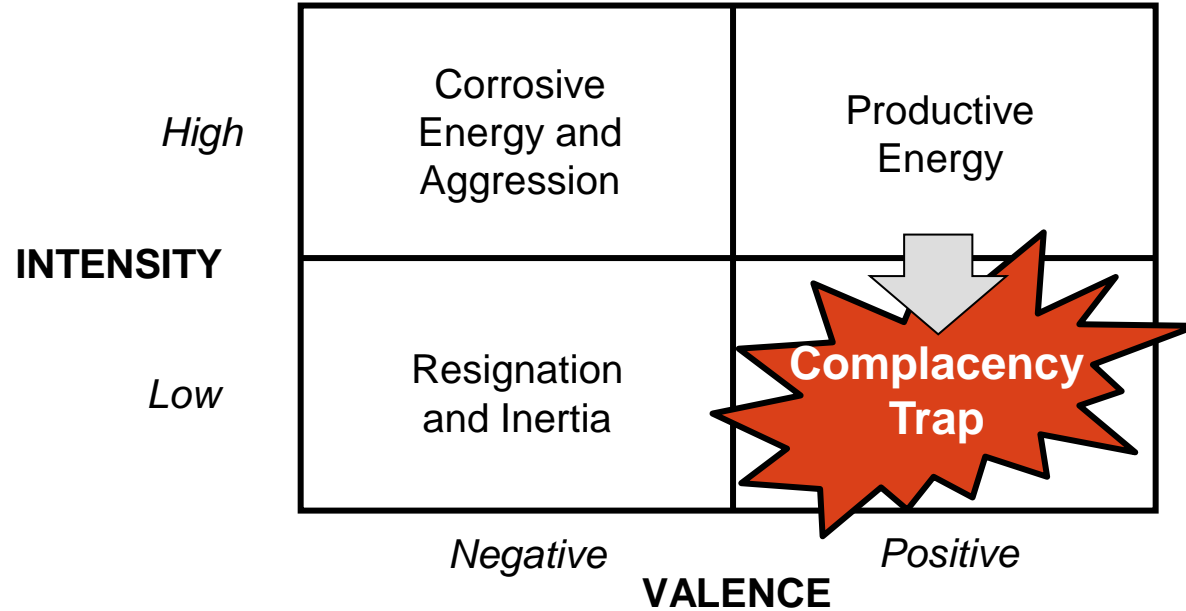
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BACK UP

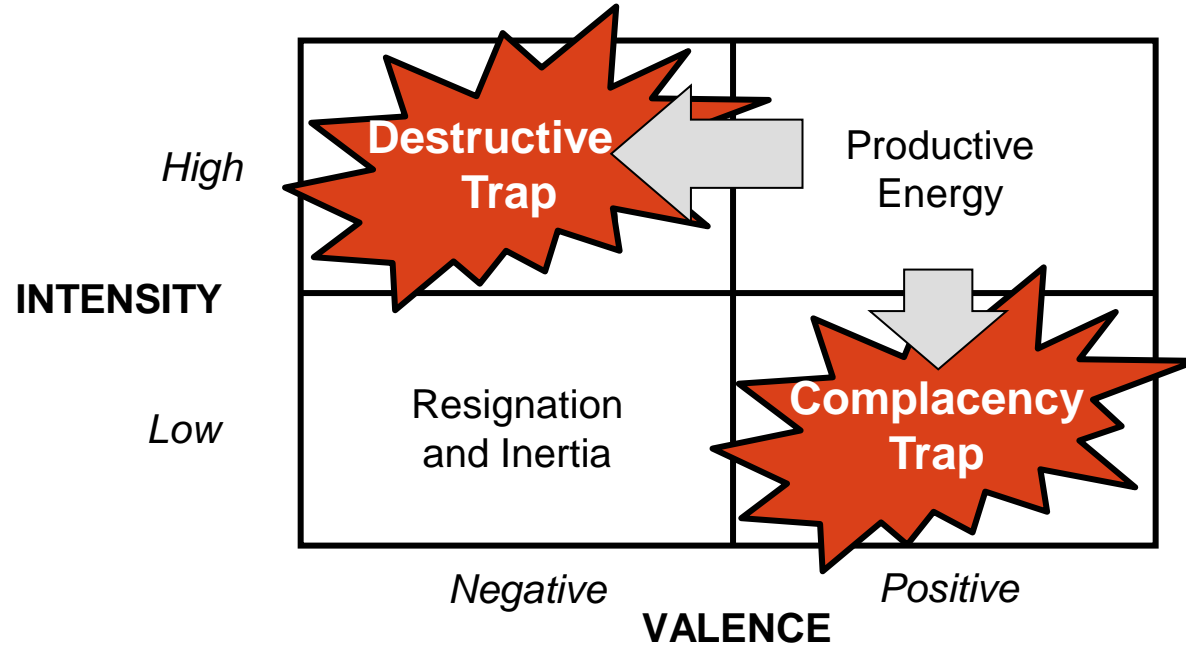
Energy in teams and organizations

INTENSITY	<i>High</i>	Corrosive Energy and Aggression	Productive Energy
	<i>Low</i>	Resignation and Inertia	Comfort
		<i>Negative</i>	<i>Positive</i>
		EMOTIONS	

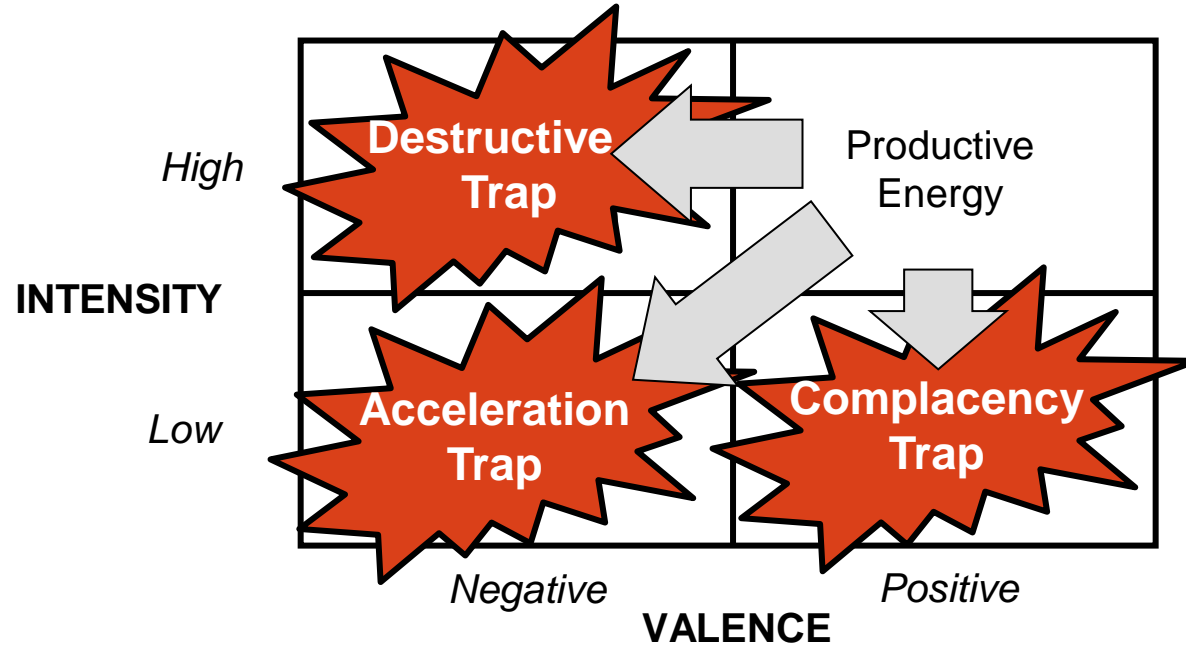
Energy traps



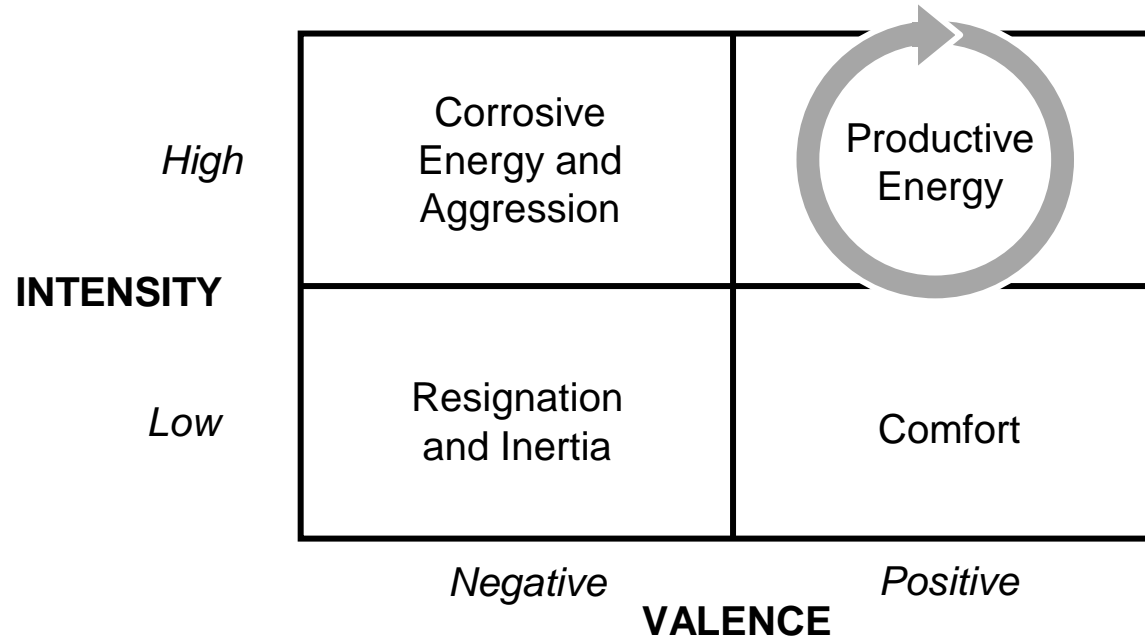
Energy traps



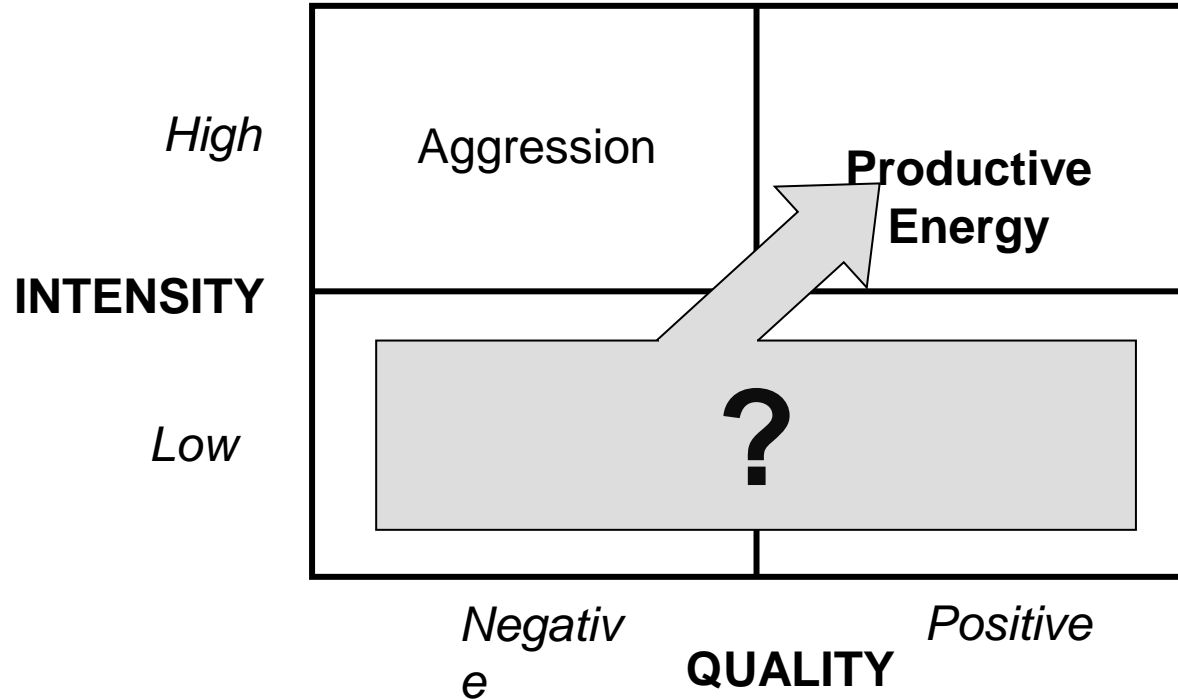
Energy traps



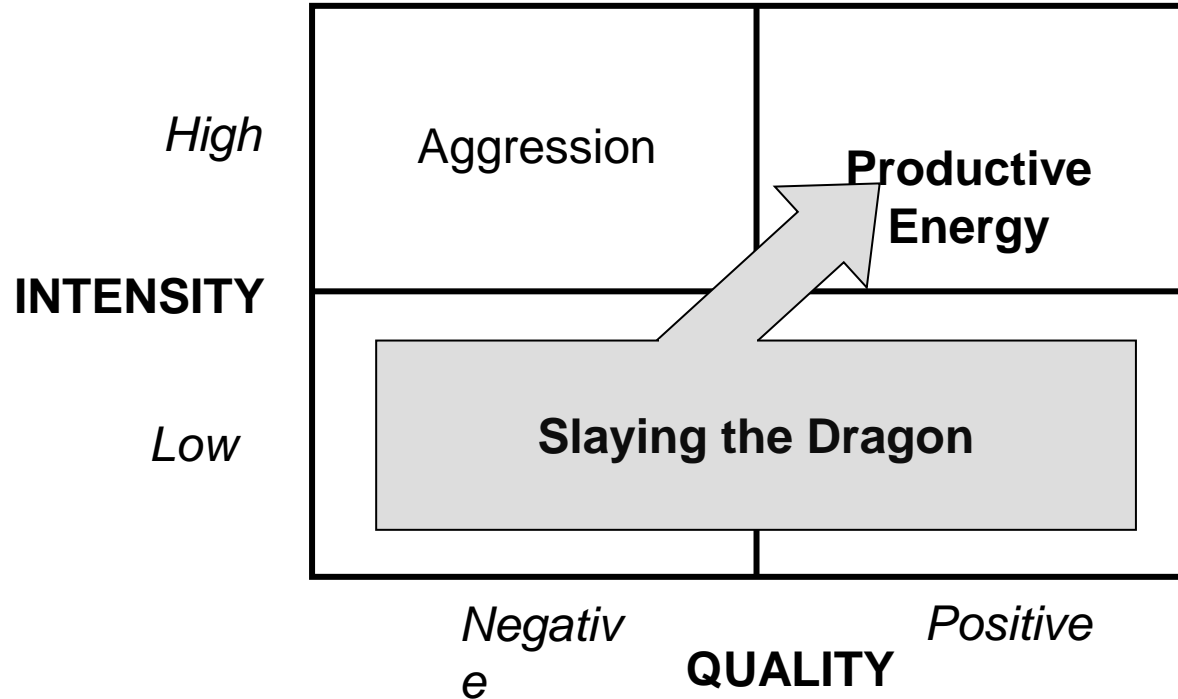
Energy in teams and organizations

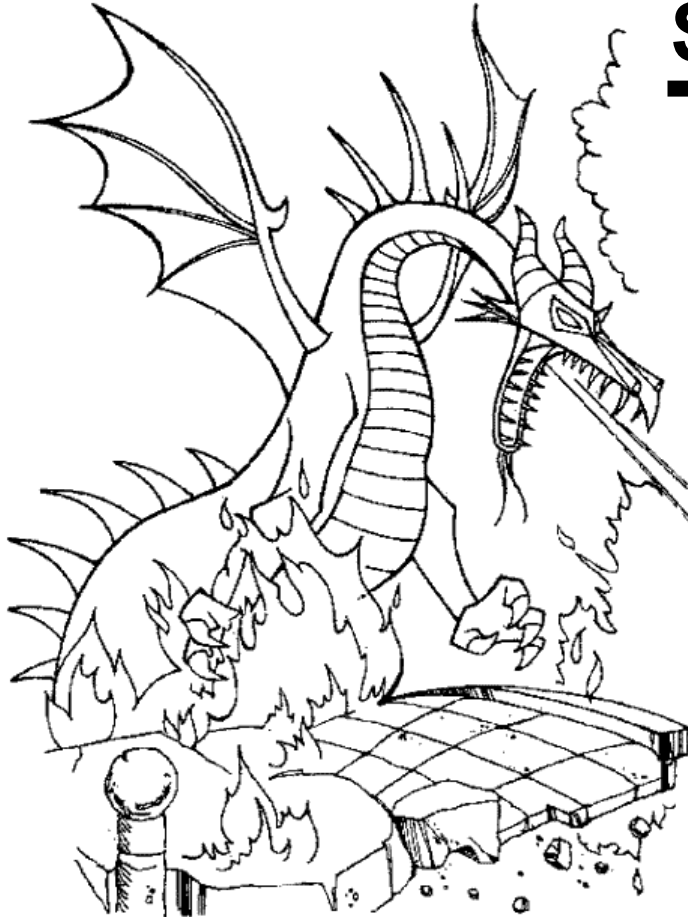


Revitalizing leadership



Revitalizing leadership





Slaying the dragon

Focusing on a threat

**Definition and interpretation of
a threat**

**Realistic communication of
the threat**

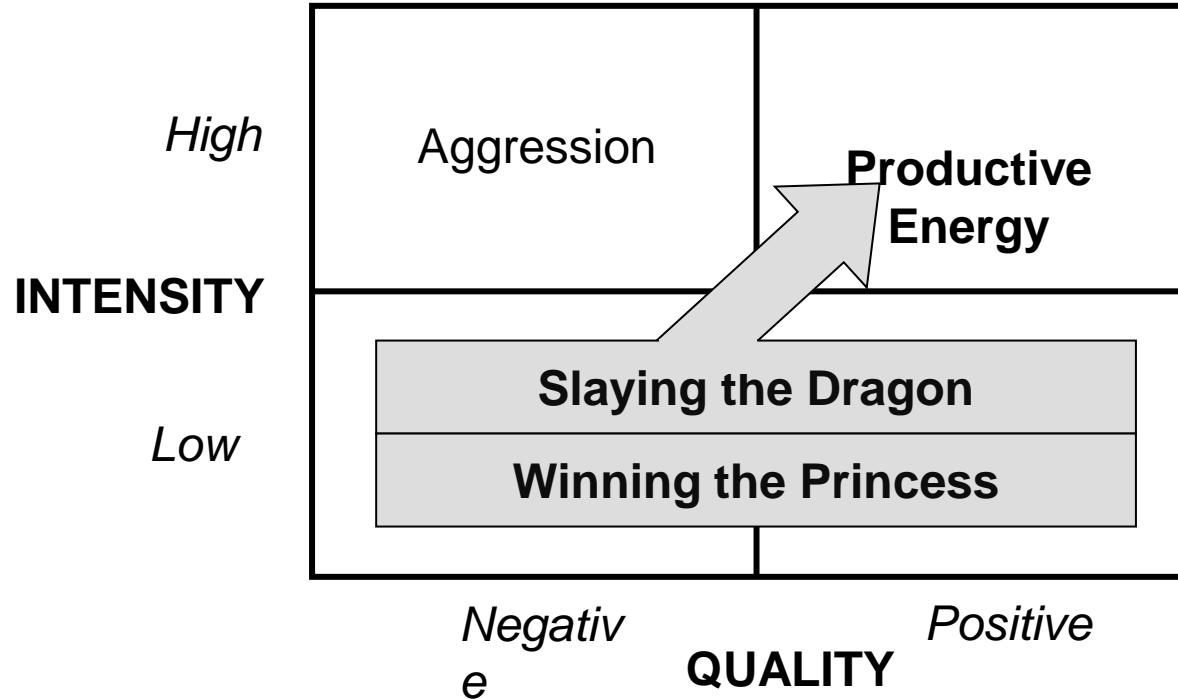
**Strengthening the trust in
collective competence**

Slaying the dragon

Focusing on a threat



Revitalizing leadership



Winning the princess

Leading with a vision

**Development,
delimitation, and
definition of the vision**

**Inspiring
communication of the
opportunities**

**Strengthening trust in
collective competence**

Source: Bruch & Ghoshal (2003)

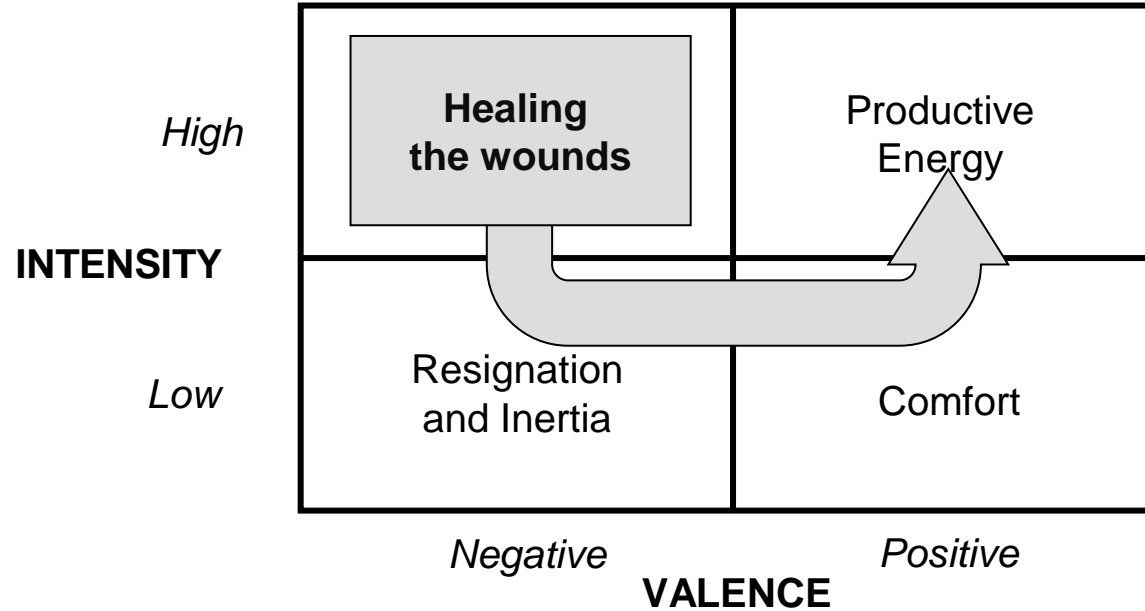




Winning the princess

Leading with a vision

Energy in teams and organizations



Healing the wounds



- Listening to all parties
- Finding outlets for negative emotions
- Using toxic handlers
- Identifying overarching goals
- Emphasizing common identity
- Highlighting interdependencies
- Tipping the emotional balance
- Addressing concerns immediately

Energy in teams and organizations

