An aerial photograph of a dense forest covered in a thick layer of snow. The trees are mostly evergreens, their branches heavily laden with white snow. The ground is a uniform white, creating a high-contrast scene. The perspective is from directly above, looking down on the forest canopy.

# The Paradox of Minnesota Nice

Uncovering the oversized influence of  
*Janteloven* in our nonprofits





Kia Moua



Brigid Riley



Patrice Bailey



Sherry P. Johnson

# About Us

Nonprofit and government  
experience from multiple,  
intersectional perspectives.

Networks of  
Trust and  
Empathy

A Culture That  
Values Individual  
Difference

**Janteloven**

What we sacrifice for Minnesota Nice

Good  
Organizational  
Governance

# Janteloven



### Networks of Trust and Empathy

- ...think you know more than we do
- ...think anyone cares about you
- ...think you are more important than we are

### A Culture That Values Individual Difference

- ...think you are smarter than we are
- ...convince yourself that you are better than we are
- ...think you are as good as we are... or good at anything, really

**In Minnesota,  
you're not to...**

### Good Organizational Governance

- ...think you can teach us anything
- ...laugh at us
- ...think you are anything special

# Janteloven

It's time to critique...

Because there's a lot about Minnesota Nice that no longer serves us.

*Minnesota Nice aims to create an inclusive basis for consensus, but its habits can result in an exclusive social order.*





# Networks of Trust and Empathy

The first thing we give up when we  
overemphasize Minnesota Nice

# Seeing Networks



# Networks of Trust & Empathy... Second Rule Shift

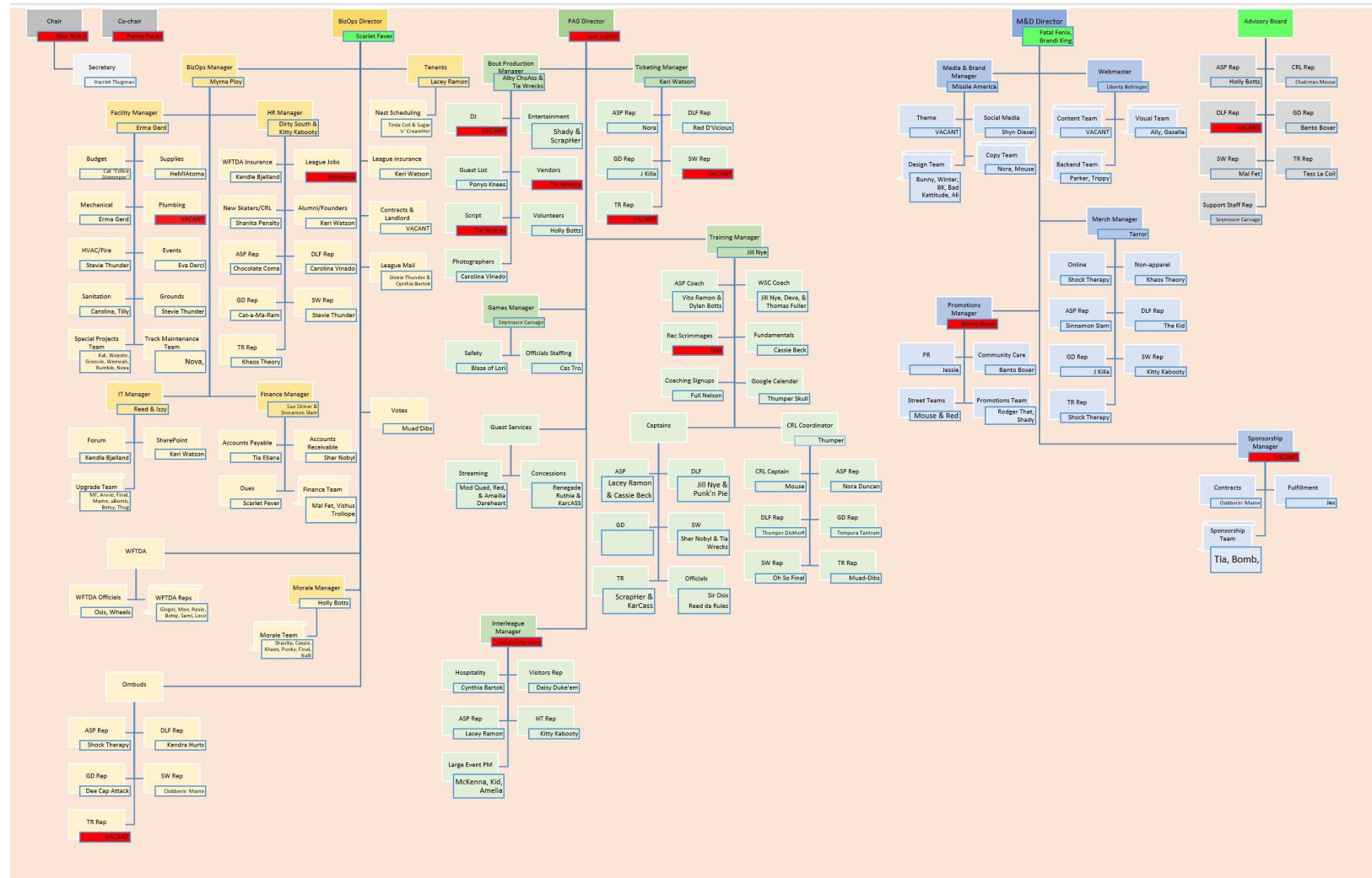
You're not to think anyone cares about you.



Networks of care & trust are key to resilient organizations



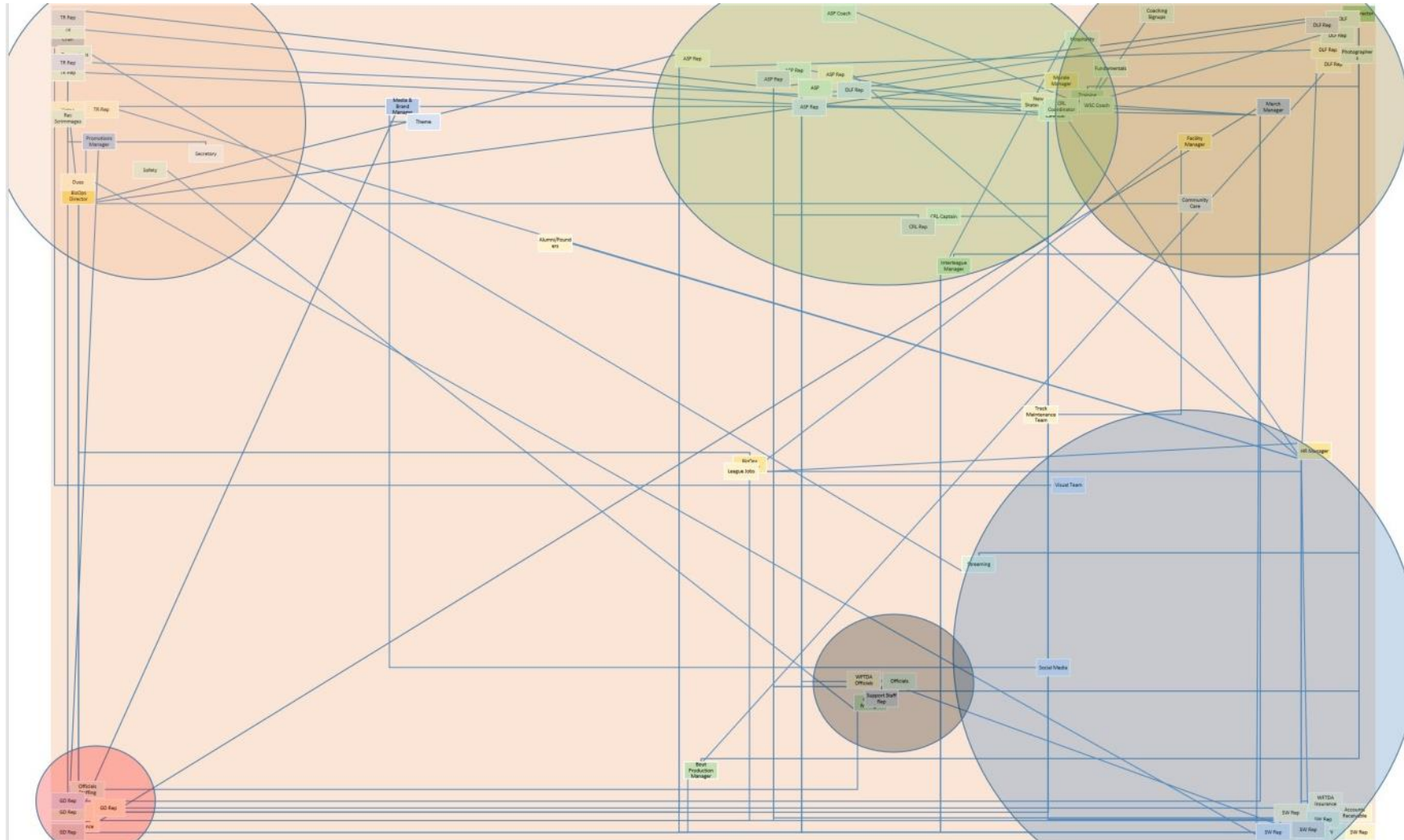
# Two Views of a Human System...



The linear model of “how things get done.”



# Two Views of a Human System...



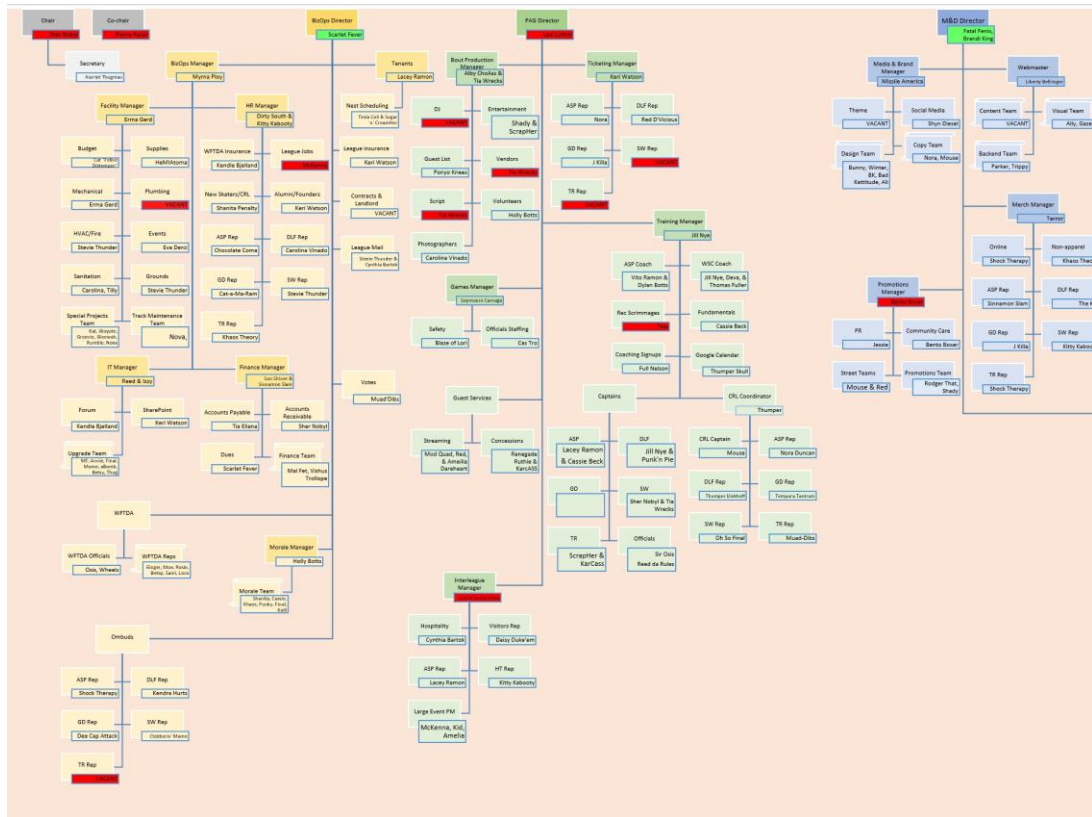
The network or *self-organizing* model of “how things get done.”



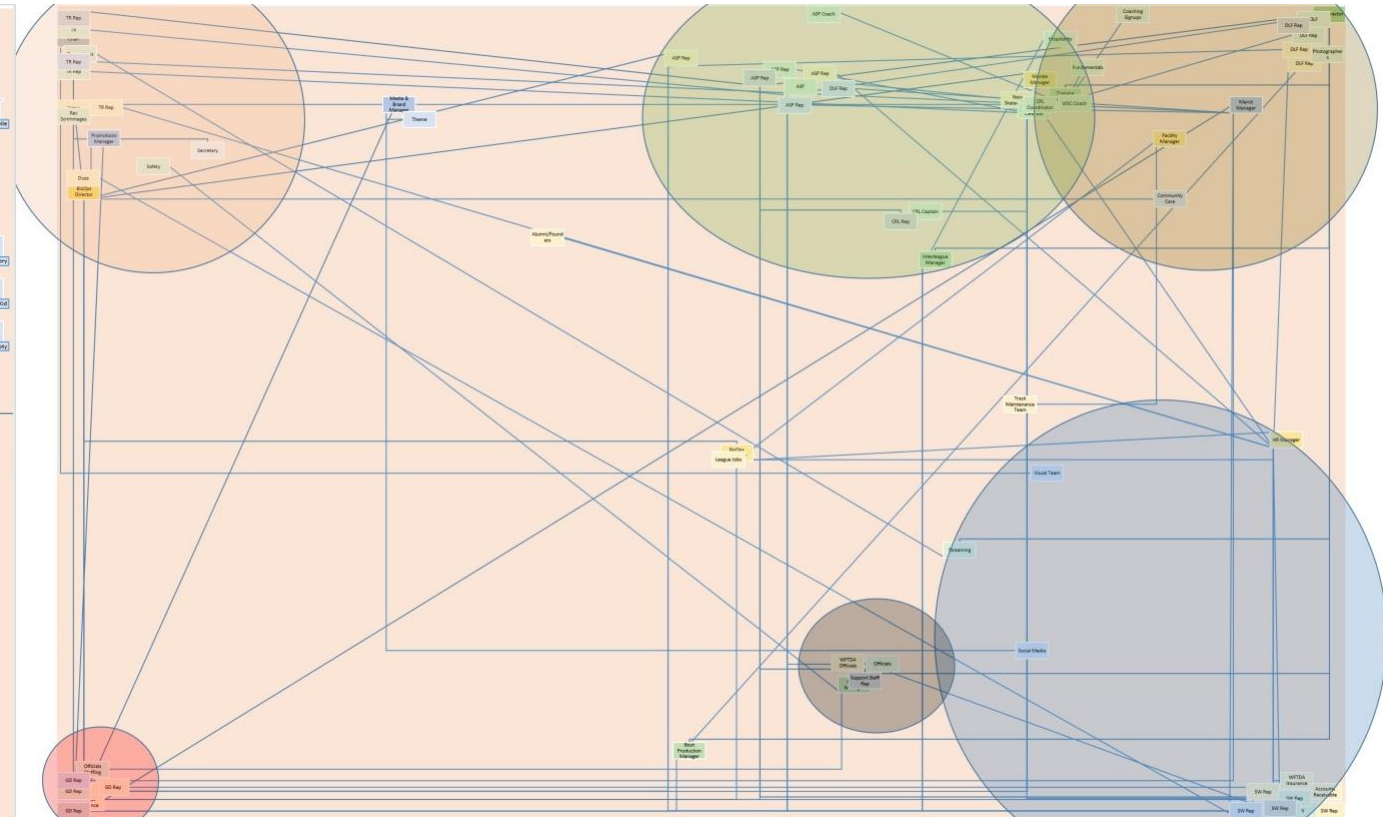
# Two Views of a Human System...

A view from a volunteer organization

The linear model of “how things get done.”



The network model of “how things get done.”



# How caring and resilient is your network?



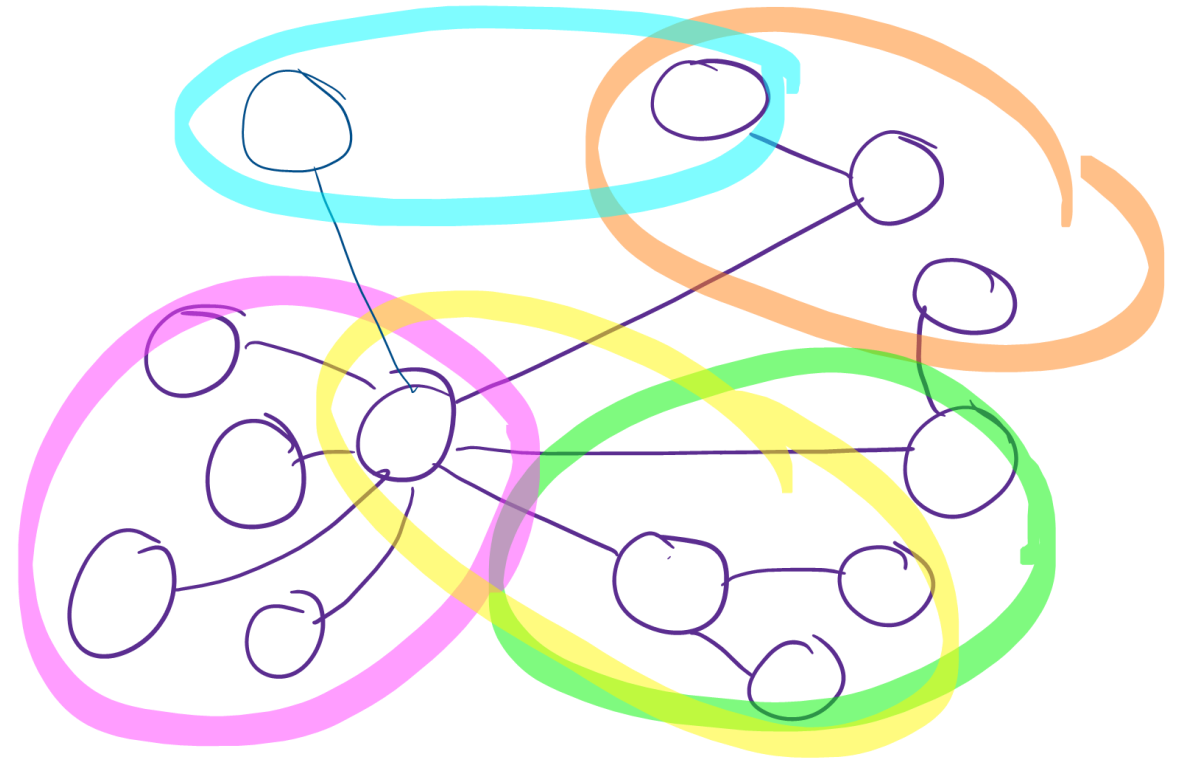
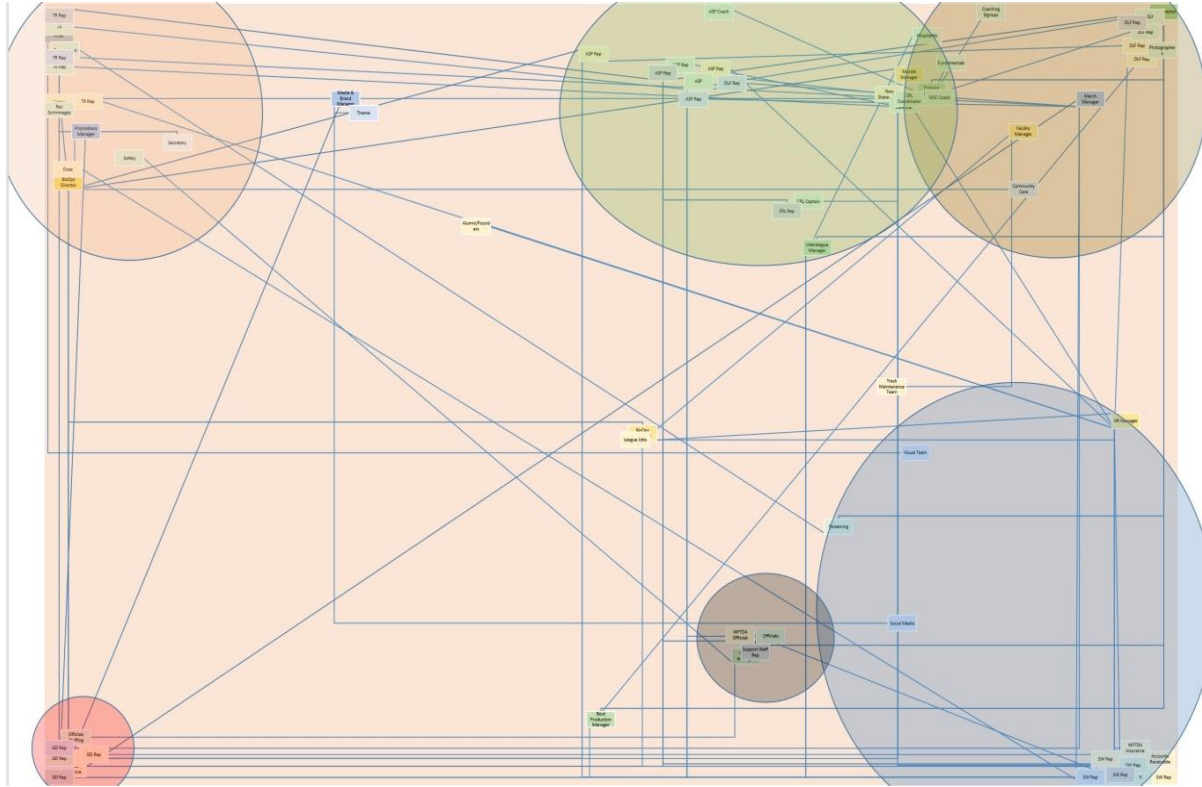
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# Seeing Networks





# Networks of Trust & Empathy... First Rule Shift

You're not to think you know more than we do.



Different perspectives are necessary to inform the best strategy.



# Networks of Trust & Empathy... Third Rule Shift

You're not to think you are more important than we are.



Sometimes it's important to prioritize individuals—especially outliers--when making decisions.



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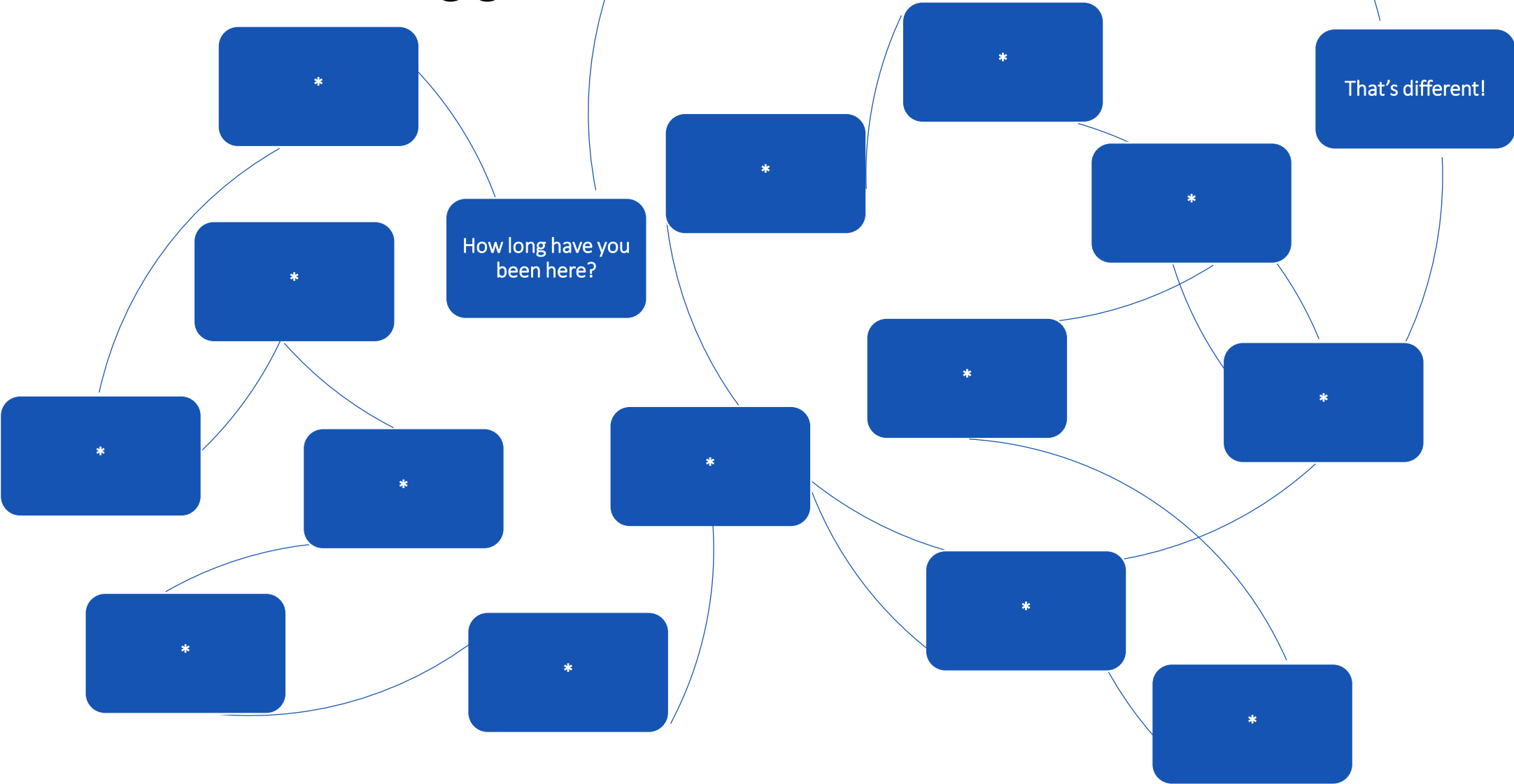


# A Culture That Values Individual Difference

The second thing we give up when we  
overemphasize Minnesota Nice



# Minnesota Microaggressions



# Minnesota Microaggressions



# A Culture That Values Individual Difference... First Rule Shift

You're not to think you are smarter than we are.



Every person has experiential smarts that the group needs; minimizing and microaggressions are costly.





# Productivity, hiring, & retention

# Minnesota Nice Communication Habits



# Importance of Personal Stories: Numbers don't tell the whole story!





# A Culture That Values Individual Difference... Second Rule Shift

You're not to convince yourself that you are better than we are, or good at anything.



Outliers are likely to be more innovative than those from the dominant culture.



# A Culture That Values Individual Difference... Third Rule Shift

You're not to think you are as good as we are.



Most everyone acts out of good intent, but goodness is also about impact—on the group and on its individuals.







# Good Organizational Governance

The third thing we give up when we  
overemphasize Minnesota Nice



# Good Organizational Governance... First Rule Shift

You're not to think you can teach us anything.



Authentic, open engagement leads to stronger decisions with more acceptance, usefulness, buy-in, and practical use.



# Ladder of Involvement



Full responsibility	Full responsibility for planning and action
Decision making authority	
Implementation responsibility	
Input toward decisions	Providing input
Input toward implementation	
Education	Receiving Information and Services
Persuasion	
Information	

Institute of Cultural Affairs Canada

# Good Organizational Governance... Second Rule Shift

You're not to laugh at us.



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Groups can only grow when they open themselves to substantive dissent, playful experimentation, and possible failure.



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# No single approach suits all challenges...

EXHIBIT D

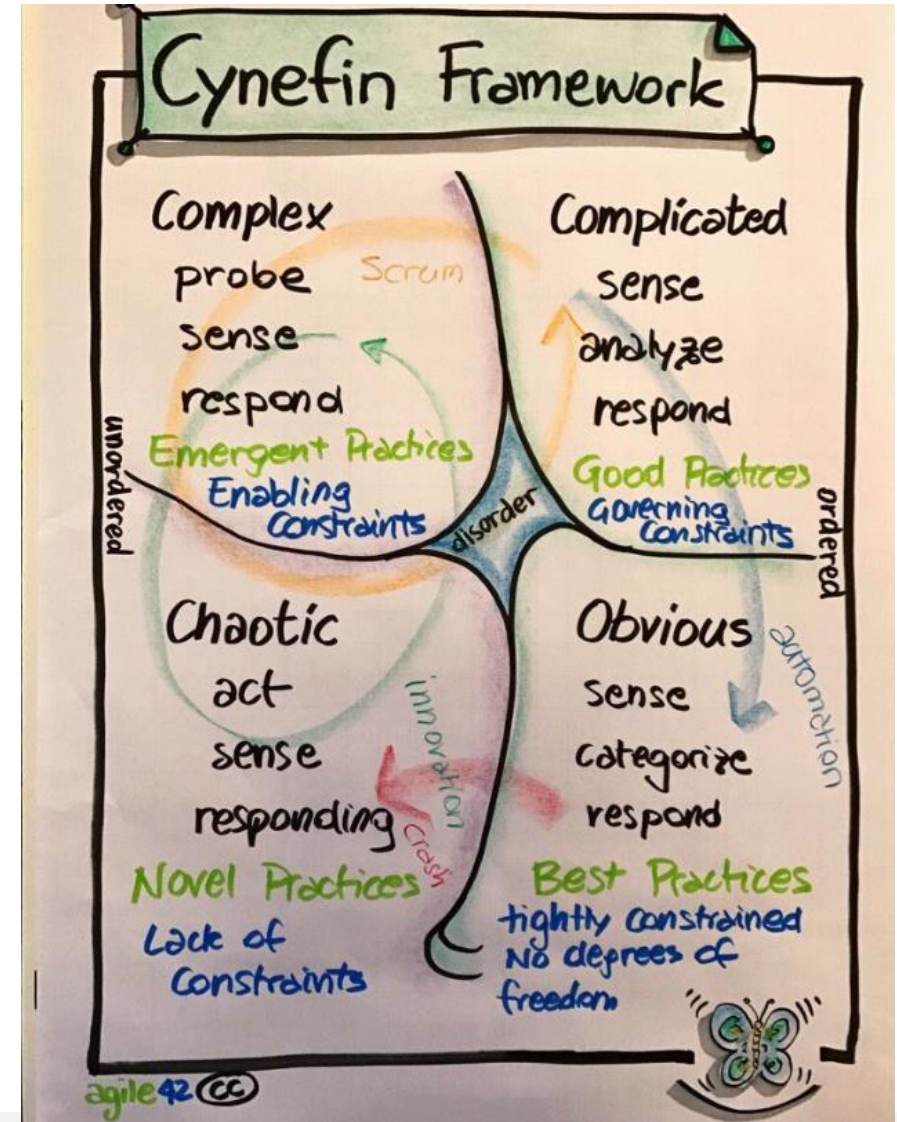
## Logic Model Template

Assumptions: *Optional*

Goal(s): *Optional*

INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS*	SHORT TERM OUTCOMES	MEDIUM TERM OUTCOMES	LONG TERM OUTCOMES
In order to accomplish our goals will need the following resources	Accomplishing the following activities will result in the following measurable deliverables	Accomplishing these activities will result in the following evidence of progress	We expect the following measurable changes during the first contract year	We expect the following measurable changes within the next one to three years	We expect the following impacts/trends within the next three to seven years or more

\*Be sure to indicate how each of these will be measured.



Try it!

# Good Organizational Governance... Third Rule Shift

You're not to think you are anything special.



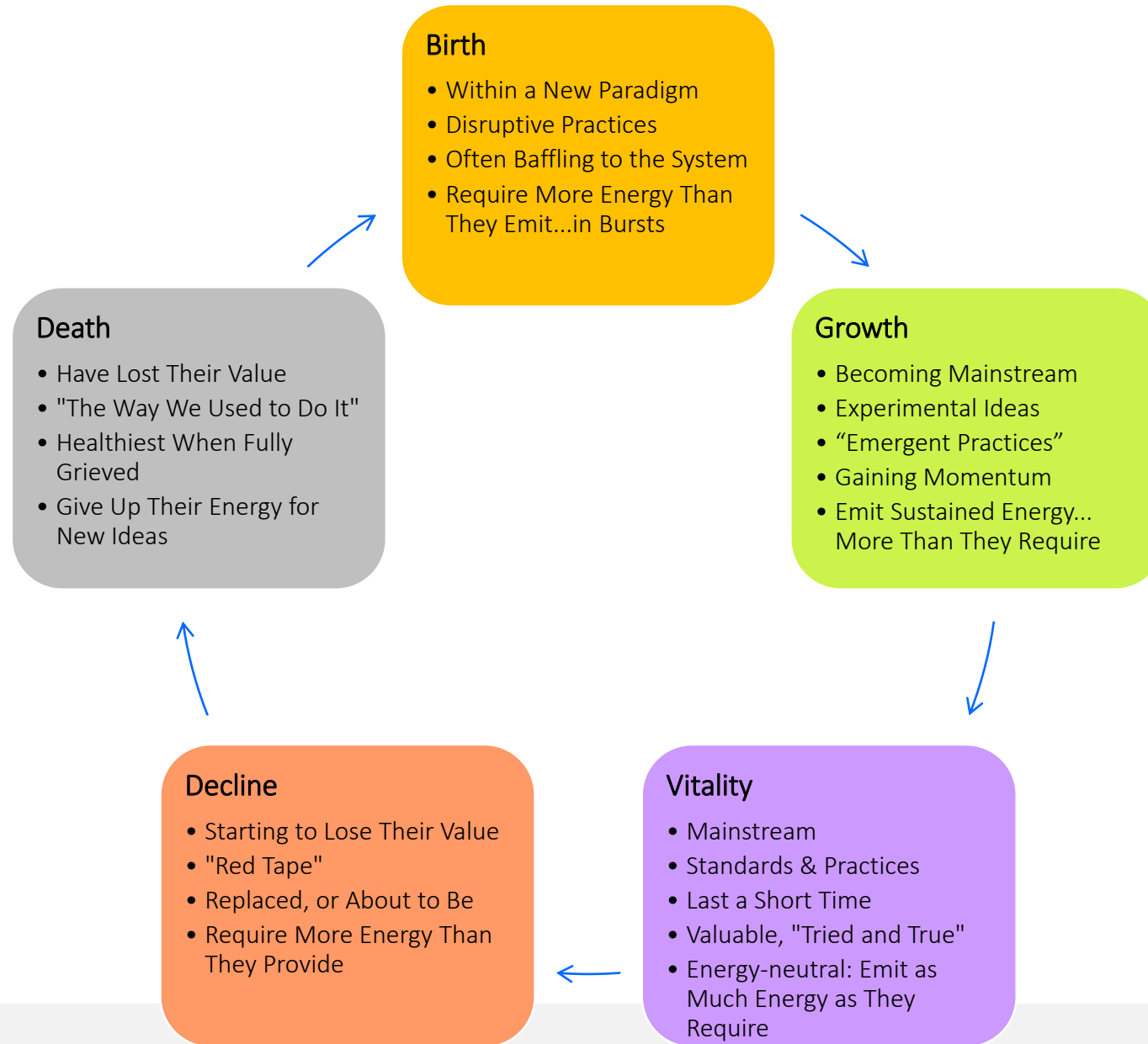
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Outliers play an important role in rejuvenating the system.

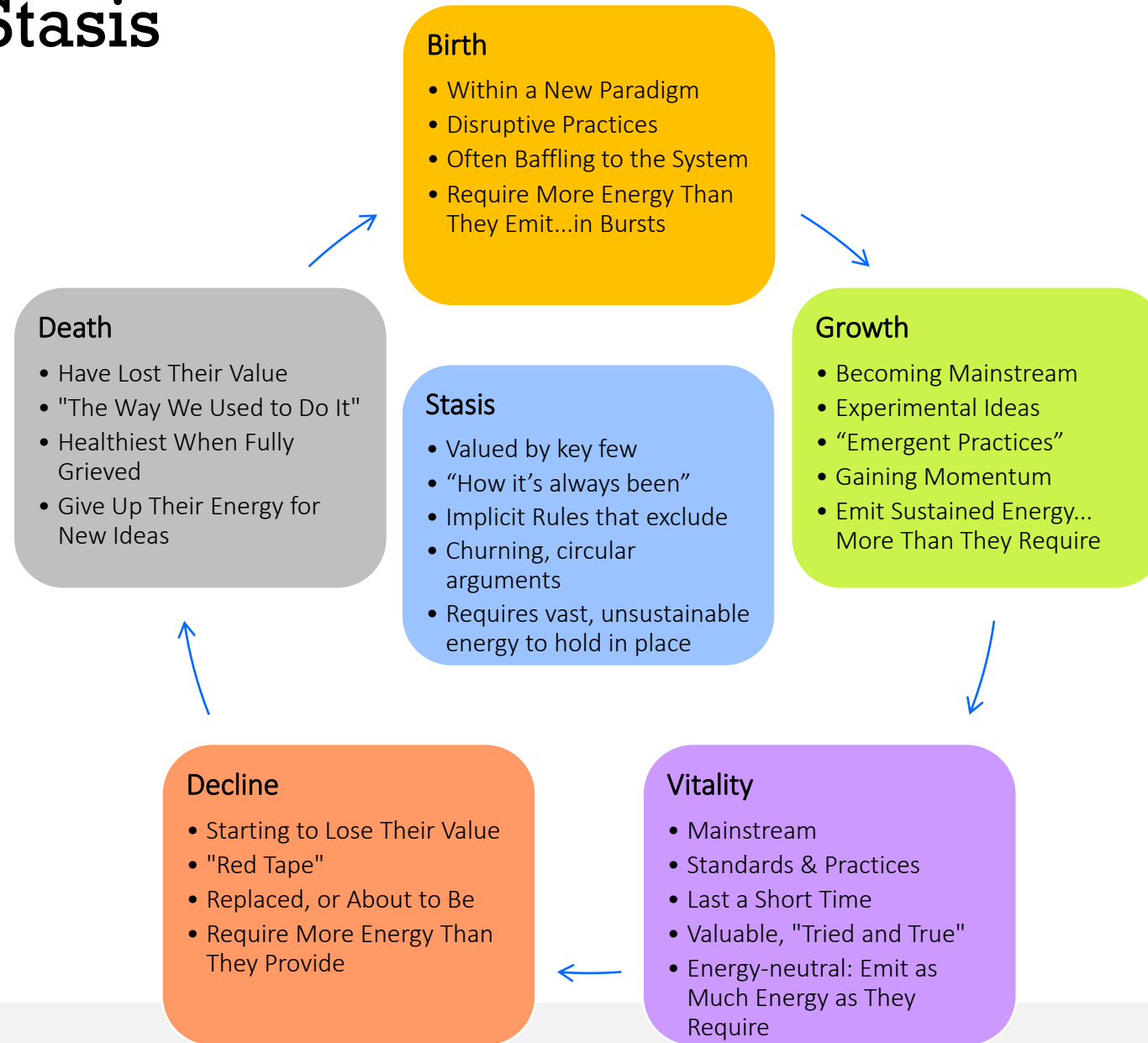




# Lifecycles



# The Role of Stasis





**From Minnesota Nice...**

**To Minnesota Now.**

Networks of  
Trust and  
Communication

A Culture That  
Values Individual  
Difference

Good  
Organizational  
Governance







Some resources for you...

- Bibliography
- Janteloven and their counter-narratives
- Experiment planning sheet
- Lifecycles worksheet





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# Thank You