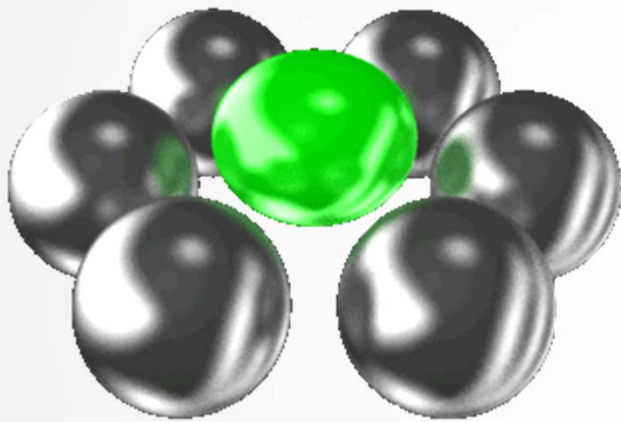


# **CREATING RESILIENT SYSTEMS OF CARE**



Sandra L. Bloom, M.D.

# TO BUILD RESILIENT SYSTEMS OF CARE



We have to know what we are up against

We have to know what we are dealing with

We need to know how things change

We have to know how to get around obstacles to change

We need to know how to create the context for that change to emerge

**WHAT WE ARE UP AGAINST**



**HUMANITY'S TRAUMATIC PAST**

# WHAT ARE WE UP AGAINST? OUR OWN BIOLOGY, OUR OWN PSYCHOLOGY, OUR OWN SOCIOLOGY





*Human history becomes more and more a  
race between education and catastrophe.*

H. G. Wells

*Outline of History, 1920*



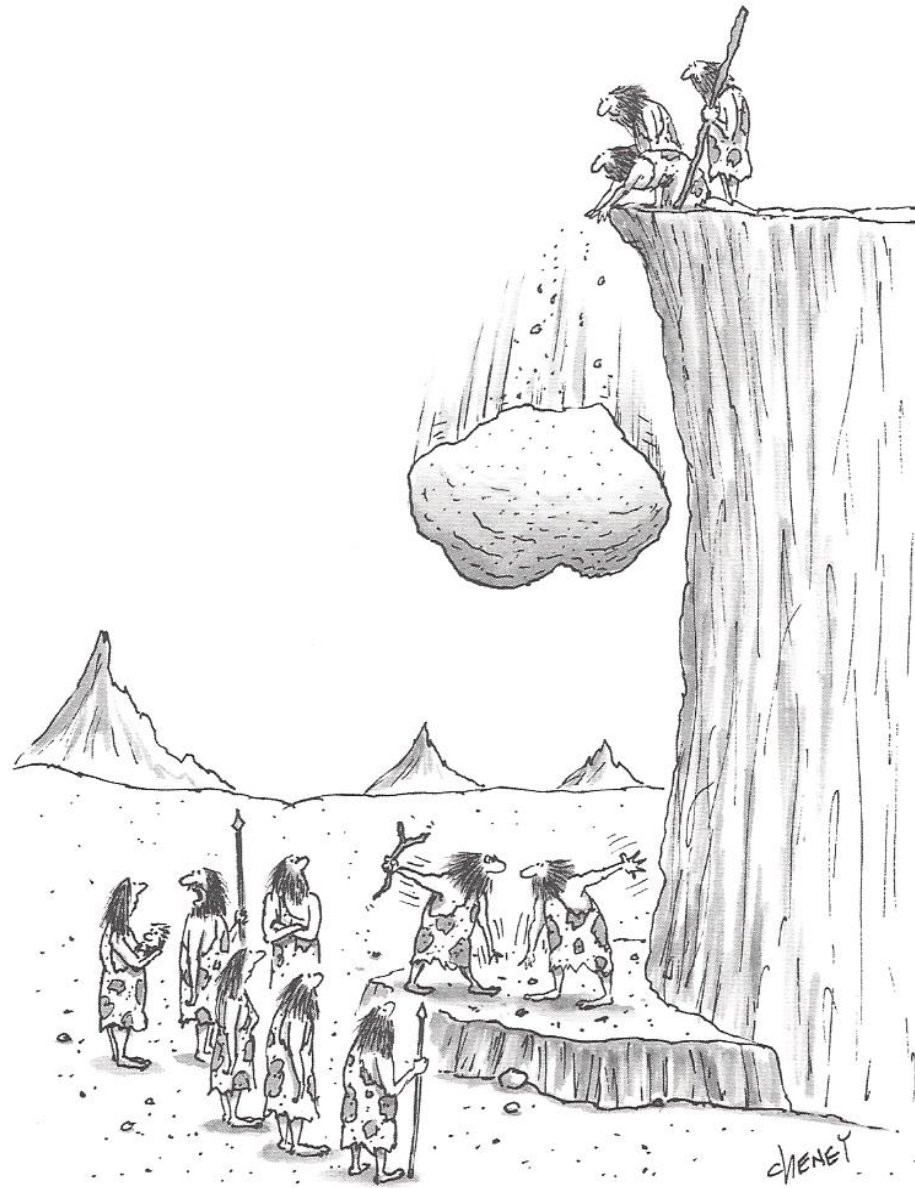


**Are we driving ourselves toward national/global traumatic second order change?**

## **The 10 Best Post-Apocalyptic Movies Of 2013**

K. Clark    Posted May 9, 2013





*"You're going to hate how it ends."*



# FUTURE

Can we consciously evolve  
quickly enough to avoid  
extinction?



# KEY TO THE DILEMMA



**IT'S VERY HARD TO CHANGE EFFECTS  
WITHOUT KNOWING CAUSES**



# WHAT ARE WE DEALING WITH?

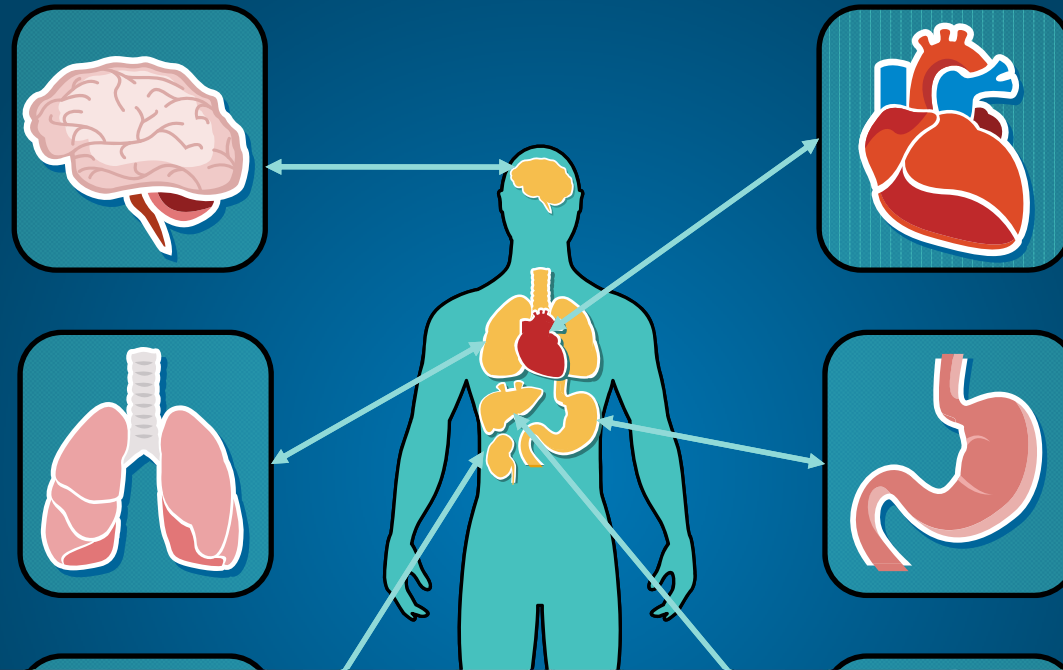
SYSTEMS

ALWAYS

WARNING

Living systems theory is a general theory about the existence of all living systems, their structure, interaction, behavior and development.

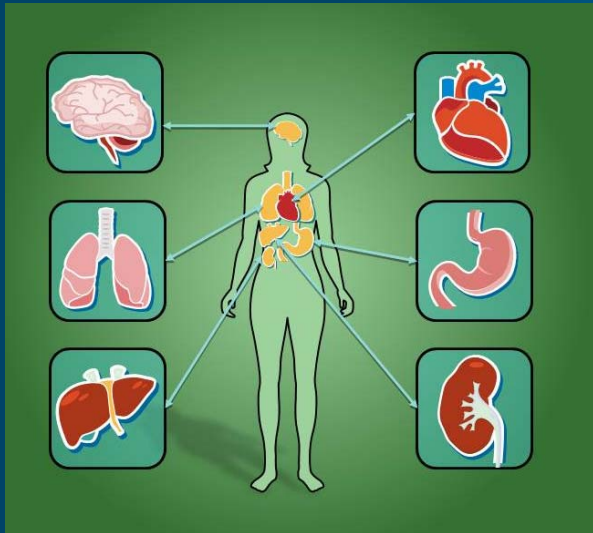
# WHAT IS A SYSTEM?



A system is a set of interconnected elements that are *interdependent* so that changes in some element or their relations produce changes in other parts of the system.



# WHAT IS A SYSTEM?



The entire system exhibits properties and behaviors that are different from those of the parts.

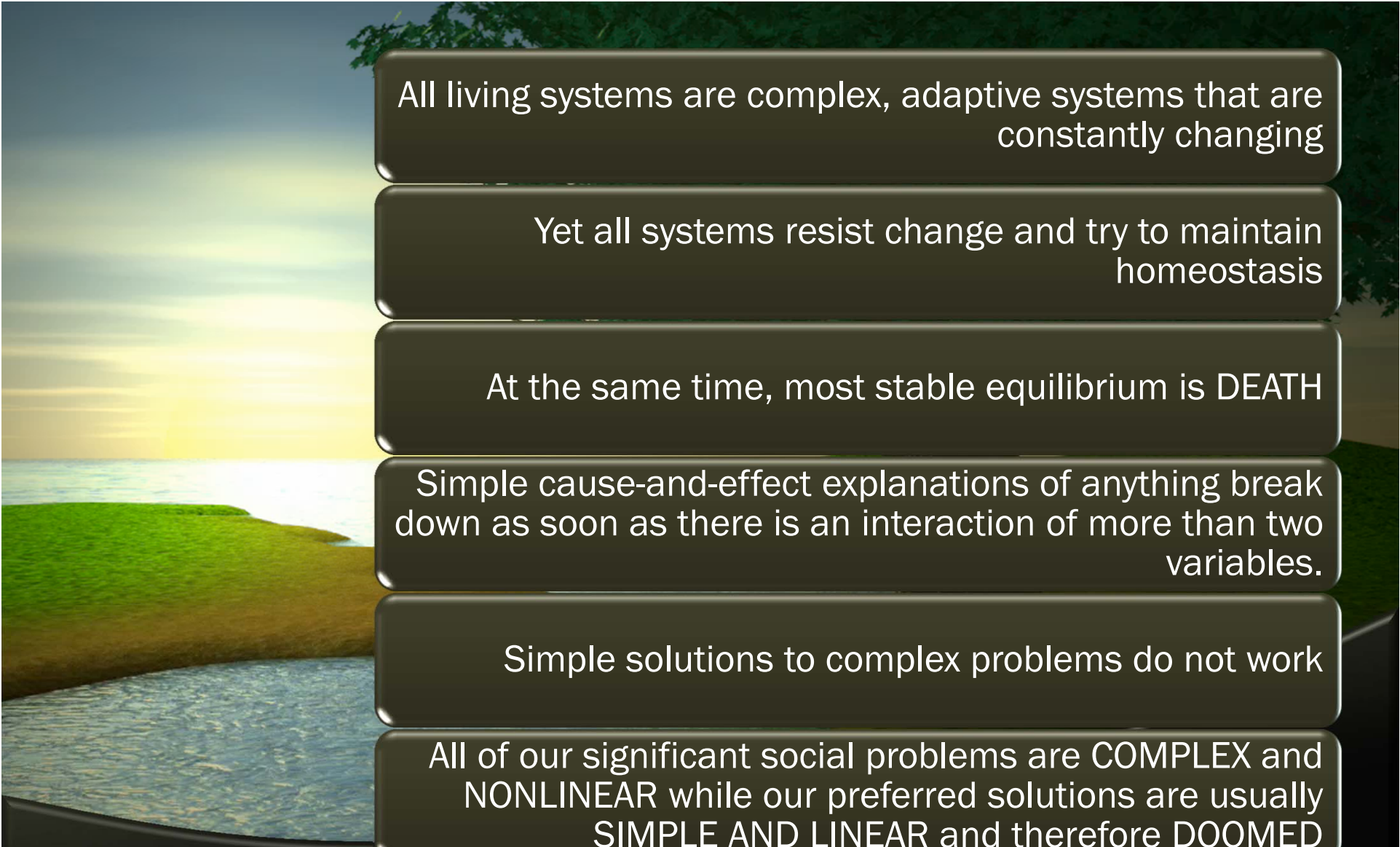
The system-as-a-whole *emerges* from the sum of the individual parts

The function of the whole cannot be completely understood by reducing it to its parts

The science of  
change in complex  
adaptive systems



**COMPLEXITY THEORY**



All living systems are complex, adaptive systems that are constantly changing

Yet all systems resist change and try to maintain homeostasis

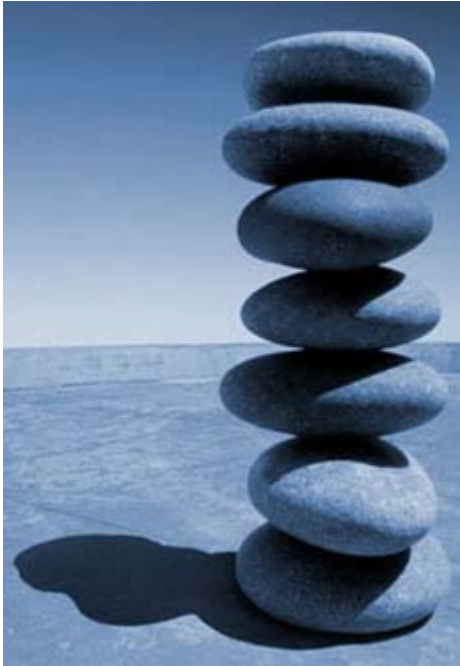
At the same time, most stable equilibrium is DEATH

Simple cause-and-effect explanations of anything break down as soon as there is an interaction of more than two variables.

Simple solutions to complex problems do not work

All of our significant social problems are COMPLEX and NONLINEAR while our preferred solutions are usually SIMPLE AND LINEAR and therefore DOOMED

# THE PARADOXES OF LIVING SYSTEMS



*Living, complex,  
adaptive systems are  
vulnerable to stress,  
particularly chronic  
and repetitive stress.*

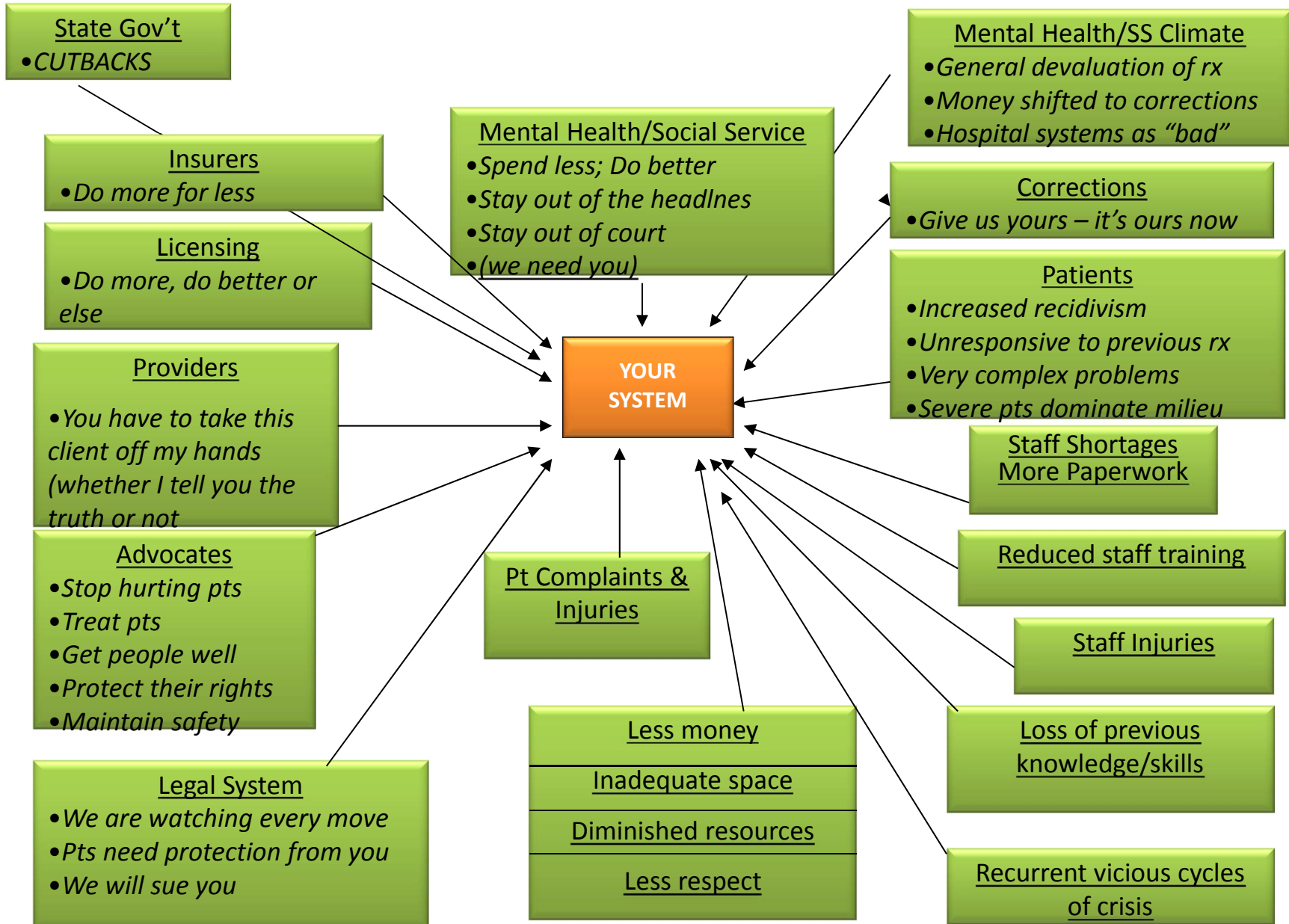
***Living, complex,  
adaptive systems can  
be traumatized and  
the result of  
traumatic experience  
can be devastating***



# WORKPLACE STRESS



# SYSTEMS UNDER SIEGE



# **ORGANIZATIONAL HYPERAROUSAL**



**WHEN EVERYTHING IS A CRISIS**



## **ORGANIZATIONAL HYPERAROUSAL**

**CHRONIC CRISIS = LOSS OF BASIC SAFETY & TRUST**

**EMOTIONAL DYSREGULATION**

**POOR COMMUNICATION: UNDISCUSSABLES**

**POISONED GRAPEVINE; INCREASED CONFLICTS**

**IMPERMEABLE BOUNDARIES; INFORMATION SILOS**

**MEMORY LOSS; MINDLESS REPETITION**

**LOSS OF PARTICIPATION**

**LEARNED HELPLESSNESS**

**HOSTILE WORKPLACE**





# PARALLEL PROCESS

*When two or more systems – whether these consist of individuals, groups, or organizations – have significant relationships with one another, they tend to develop similar thoughts, feelings and behavior.*

*K. K. Smith, V.M. Simmons, and T.B. Thames,  
The journal of applied behavioral science, 1989. 25(1): p. 11-29.*

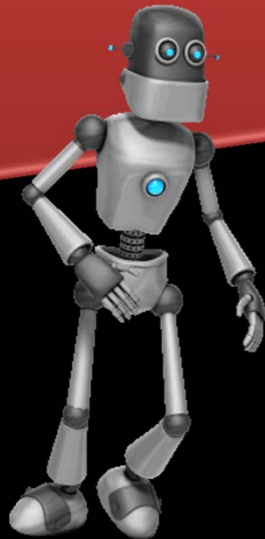
**As a result, our systems frequently recapitulate the very experiences that have proven to be so toxic for the people we are supposed to help and thus reduce the possibility of recovery or prevention.**



# HOW DOES CHANGE OCCUR?

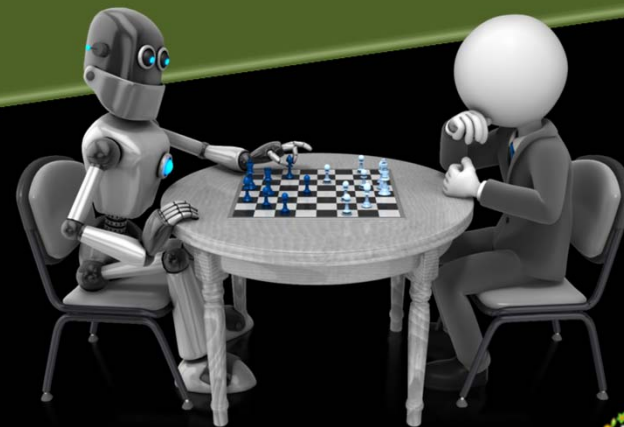
## FIRST ORDER CHANGE

- Doing more or less of something we are already doing



## SECOND ORDER CHANGE

- Deciding or being forced to do something entirely differently than we have done it in the past





Adjustments within the existing structure

Doing more or less of something

Reversible

Restoration of balance (homeostasis)

Non-transformational

New learning is not required

Old story can still be told

# FIRST ORDER CHANGE

# SECOND-ORDER CHANGE

Turbulent and chaotic

Sudden unpredictable

New way of seeing things

Shifting gears

Irreversible

Often begins through the informal system

Requires new learning

New story is told

Transformation to something quite different





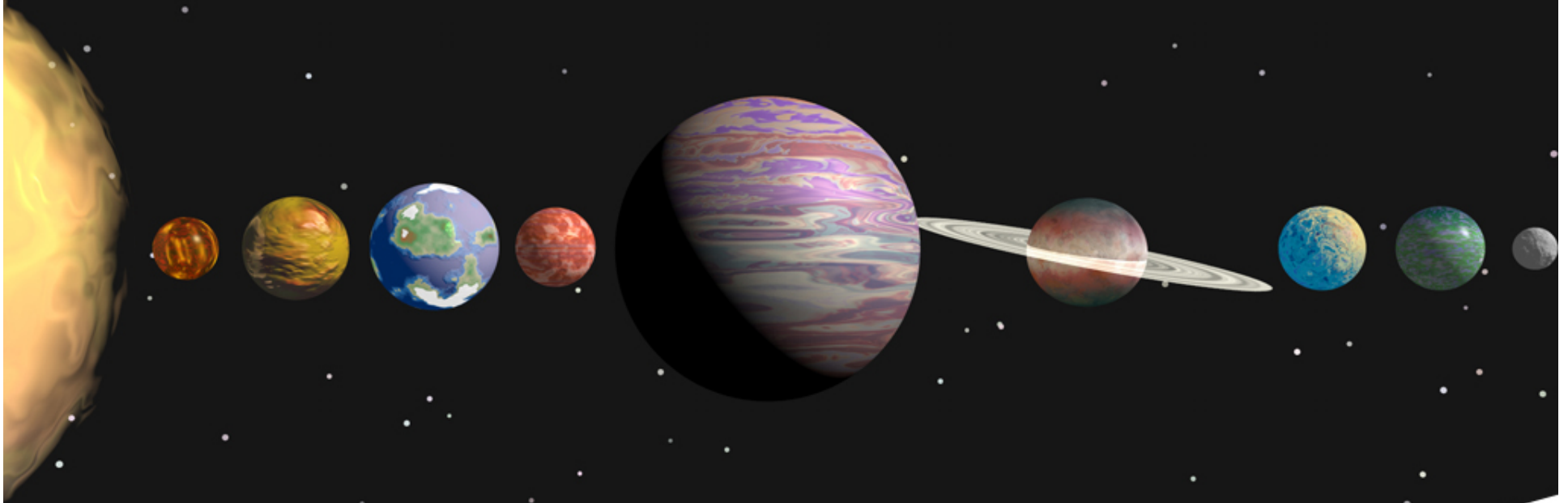
**YOU CANNOT MAKE TRANSFORMATION HAPPEN**



**BUT YOU CAN REMOVE OBSTACLES AND CREATE THE  
CONTEXT FOR TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE TO OCCUR**

# ATTRACTORS

Think of them as magnets that draw a complex adaptive system in a particular direction.



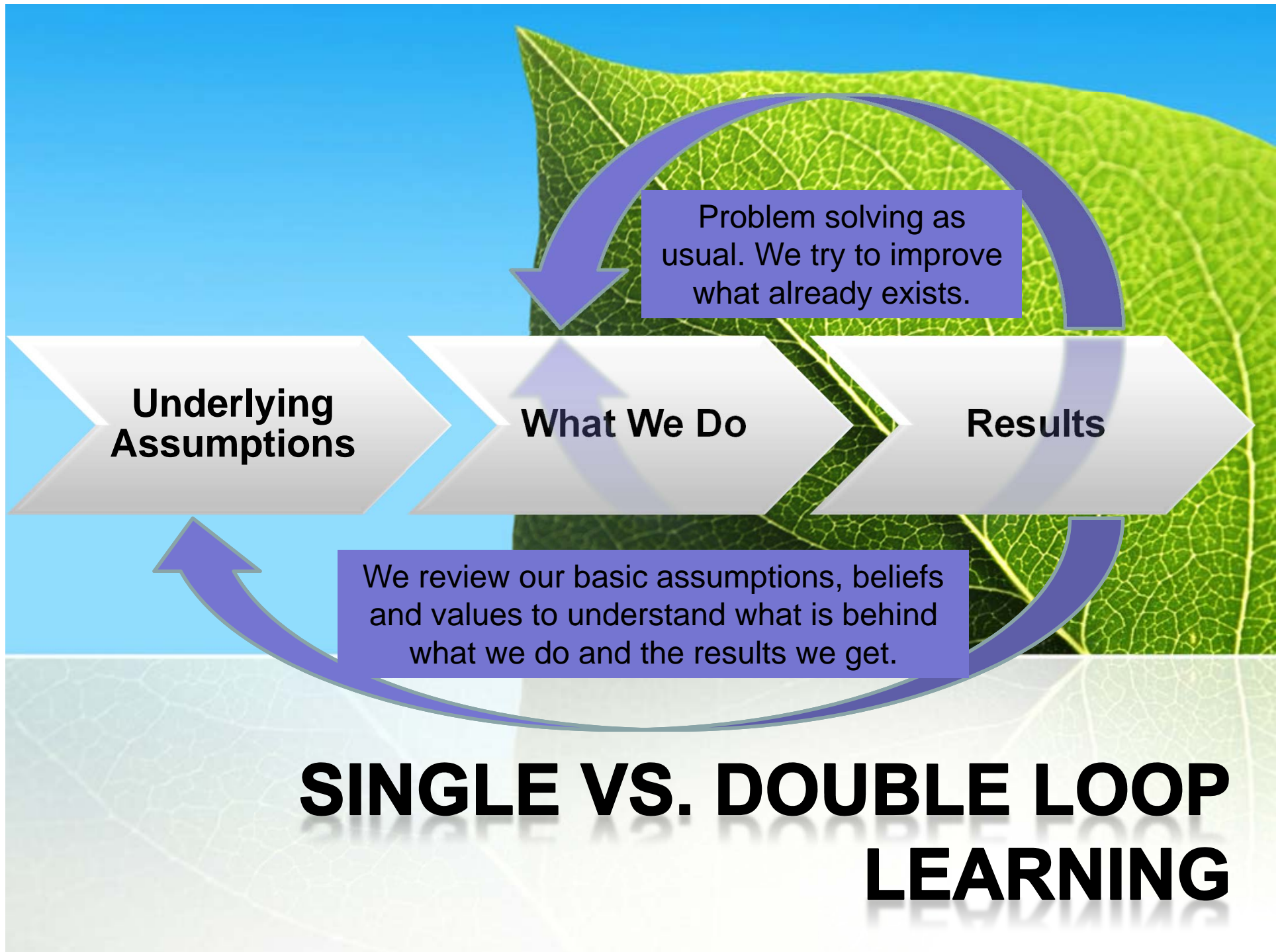


Define the movement that is permitted in the system

System may be temporarily perturbed

Settles back into the prescribed behavior through first-order, single-loop, “equilibrium-seeking processes”

# ATTRACTORS





# TURBULENCE

But if turbulence increases and  
FIRST ORDER ADJUSTMENTS fail to  
work, the system does not restabilize

Is now on “the edge of chaos”





# FAR-FROM-EQUILIBRIUM CONDITIONS

Components of a system are far from a condition where they are locked into place and stable


But their level of excitation is not so extreme that the system dissolves entirely.

Edge of chaos is precondition for creativity, innovation and transformation to take place

## EDGE OF CHAOS



# FAR-FROM-EQUILIBRIUM CONDITIONS

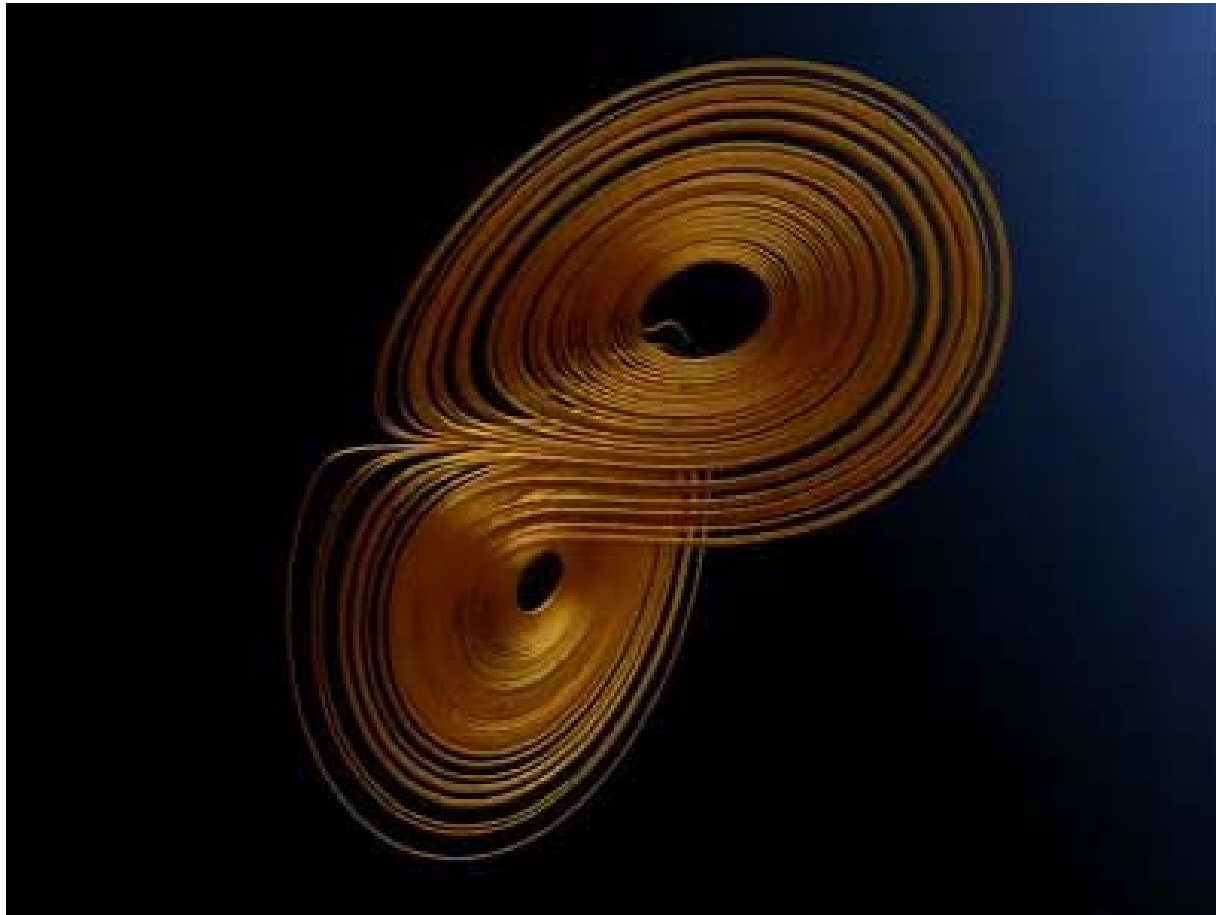


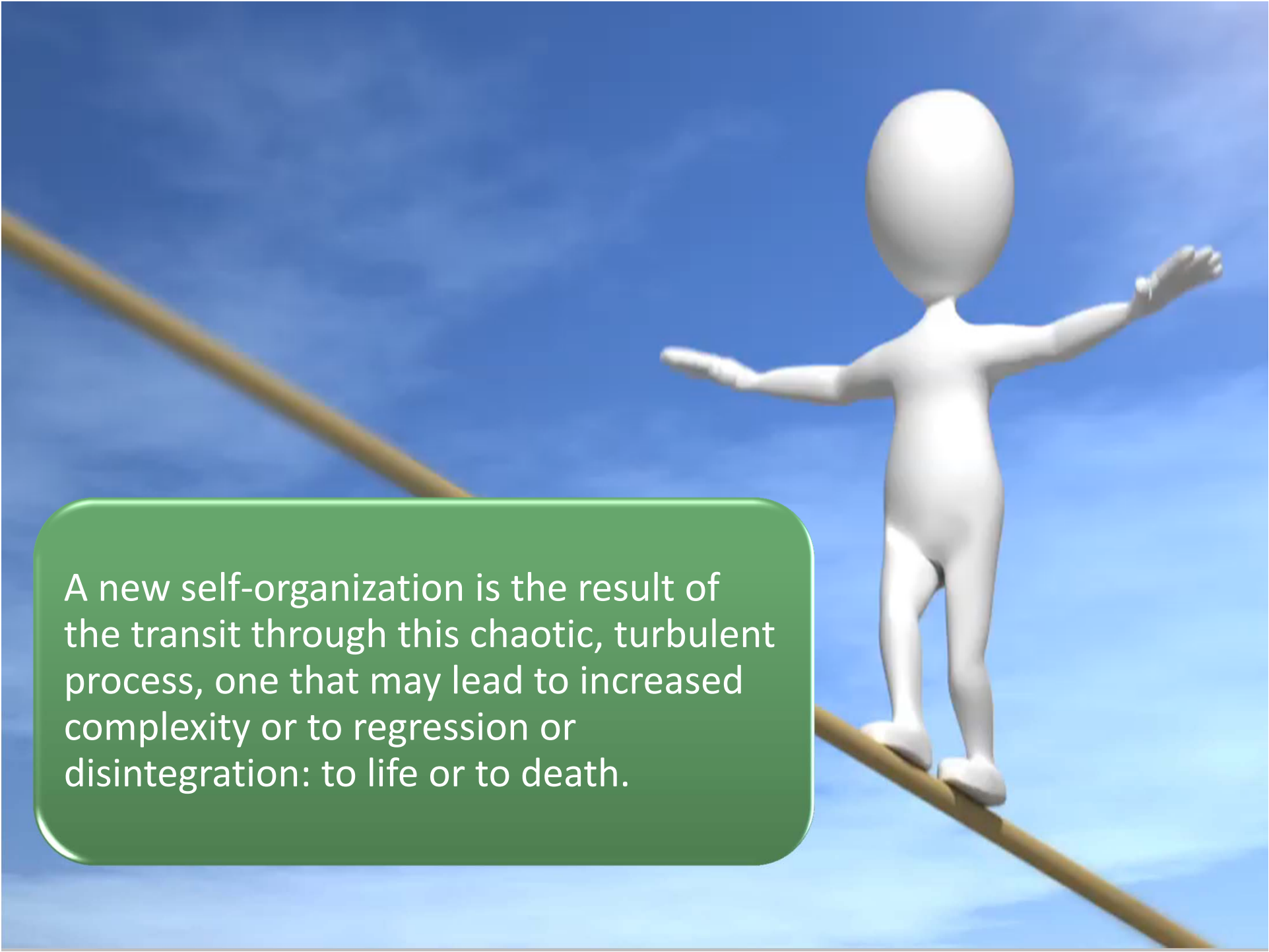
Associated with great  
anxiety

Unpredictable outcomes

At far-from-equilibrium  
conditions, transformation  
can occur - change needs  
to be released

# **“STRANGE” ATTRACTORS**

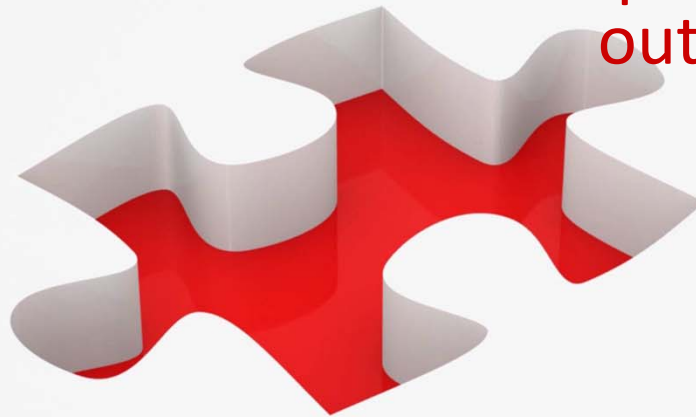


A 3D rendered white figure is shown from behind, balancing on a thin, brown tightrope. The figure's arms are extended horizontally to the sides for balance. The background is a bright blue sky with soft, white clouds. A second, parallel tightrope is visible in the upper left corner, receding into the distance.

A new self-organization is the result of the transit through this chaotic, turbulent process, one that may lead to increased complexity or to regression or disintegration: to life or to death.

# SELF-ORGANIZATION

Process by which a structure or pattern emerges in an open system without specification from the outside environment.





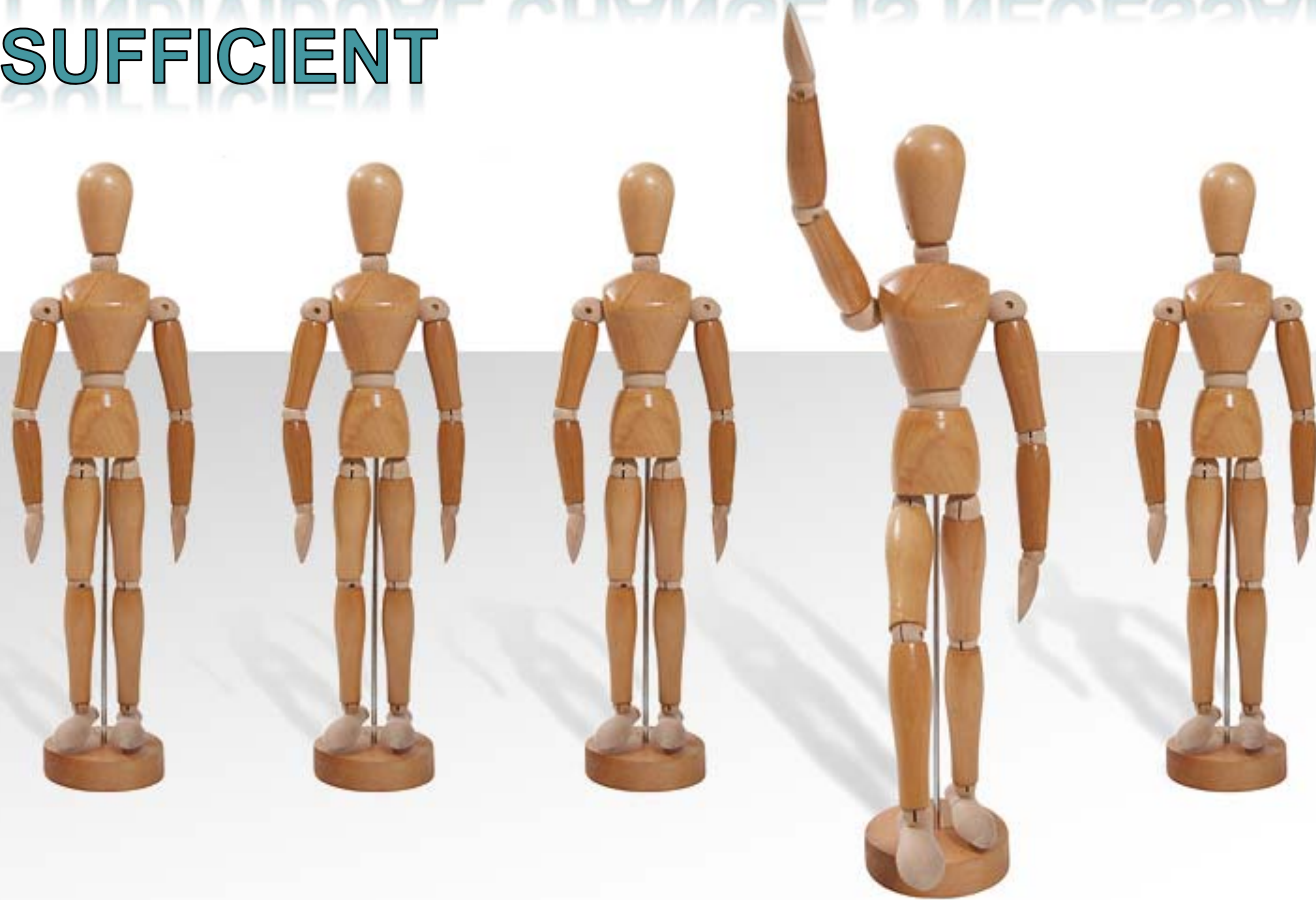
# EMERGENCE

A photograph of a person's hands cupped together, holding a small green seedling with three leaves and a mound of dark brown soil. The background is dark, and the lighting highlights the hands and the plant. The word "EMERGENCE" is overlaid in large white capital letters at the top.

**EMERGENCE IS THE OUTCOME OF SELF-ORGANIZATION –  
A NEW STATE OR CONDITION**

# WHAT ACES IS TELLING US:

AIMING AT INDIVIDUAL CHANGE IS NECESSARY  
BUT *NOT* SUFFICIENT



**OUR SYSTEMS OF CARE NEED  
SECOND ORDER,  
TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE**







# OBSTACLES TO TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE





# OBSTACLES TO CHANGE

Lack of knowledge

Perverse incentives

Little double loop learning

History of entrenched bureaucracy

Limited resources

Inadequate, ill-informed leadership

Lack of participatory processes

Insufficient time for collaboration

Demoralized workforce

# PERHAPS THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE TO CHANGE



When *Change* shows  
up:

- Something old STOPS
- Something new BEGINS



**Resistance to change  
is based in fear of  
loss**

**ALL CHANGE MEANS LOSS**



# CURRENT ATTRACTORS

**MONEY**

**POWER**

**FAME**

**FEAR**



**WHAT WE ARE UP AGAINST**

**HUMANITY'S TRAUMATIC PAST  
AND THE POWERFUL**

**TENDENCY TO REPEAT THE**

**PAST**





**TRAUMA SHATTERS THE SENSE THAT WE CAN UNDERSTAND,  
MANAGE, AND FIND MEANING IN OUR WORLD**

The background of the slide is a composite image. The top half features a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. Green leaves on thin branches frame the top left and right corners. The bottom half shows a lush green field with several white daisies in the foreground. The title text is centered over the sky portion of the image.

# **CREATING THE CONTEXT FOR TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE**



# WHAT SCIENCE TELLS US ABOUT...

The physical self

The developing self

The emotional self

The social self

The moral self

And how traumatic experience changes things

# CHANGING PARADIGMS

An interconnected world

- COMPLEXITY

That is alive

- ALIVE AT EVERY LEVEL NEW LIFE EMERGES FROM SIMPLER ELEMENTS
- THROUGH SELF-ORGANIZING CHANGE

Life = self-organizing change

- NONLINEAR
- TRANSFORMATIVE



# CHANGING PARADIGMS

## Sensitive dependence on initial conditions

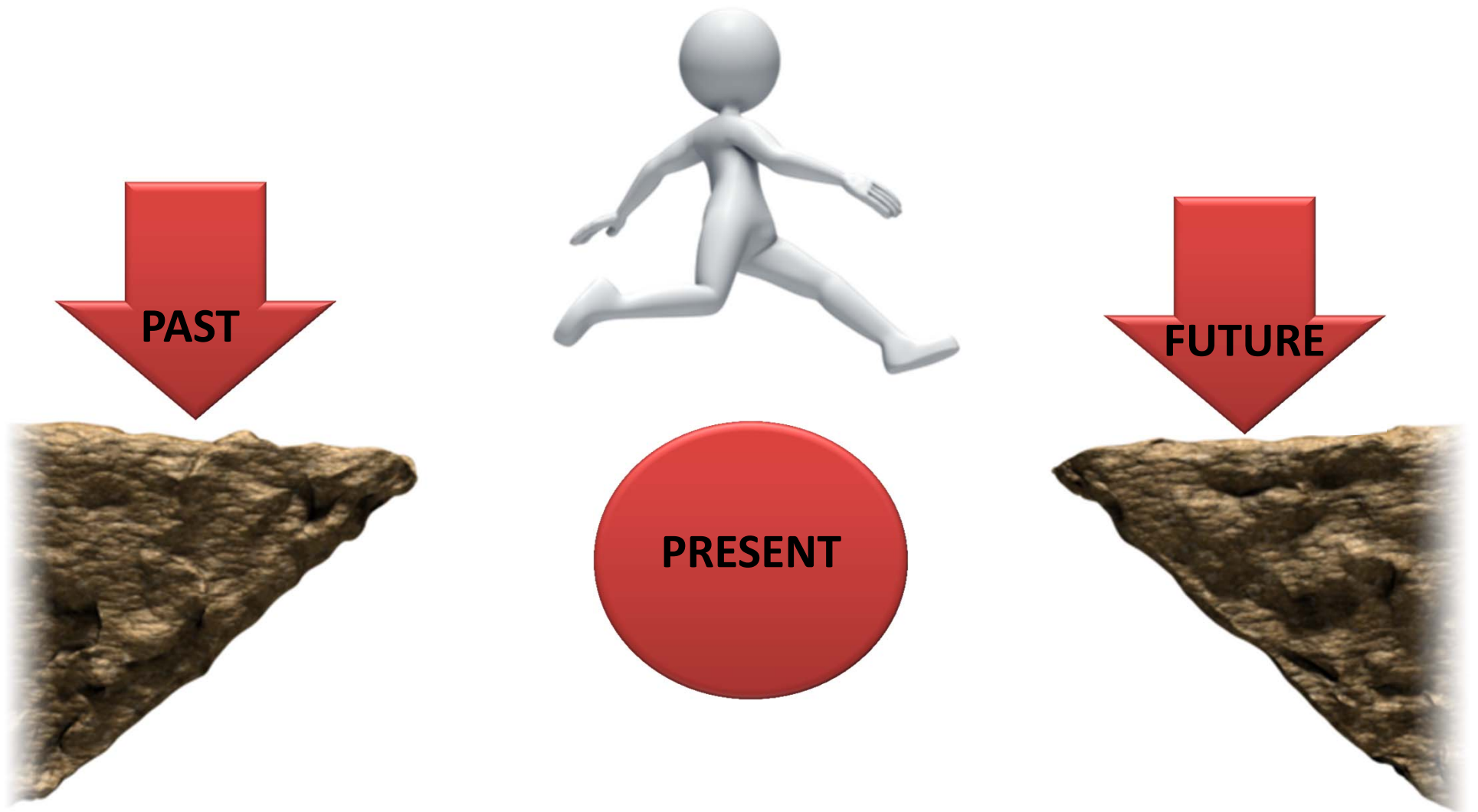
- CHILDHOOD and ADVERSITY
- History can influence the future course of a system's evolution, but not determine it.

## An almost infinite number of possibilities unfold within every moment

- NEUROPLASTICITY IS REAL
- HUMAN INTENTION CAN CHANGE THE BRAIN AND CHANGE FUTURE



# BRIDGING PARADIGMS



# FOR INDIVIDUAL OR SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION WE NEED :



- LOVE
- SAFETY
- TRUST
- HEALING
- HEALTH
- FREEDOM
- PARTICIPATION
- CONNECTION
- FULFILLMENT
- MEANING

**NEW & “STRANGE  
ATTRACTORS”**

# EMERGENCE



***CREATING A CONTEXT FOR EMERGENT,  
TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE***



# **ACES DEMONSTRATE THAT CONTEXT MATTERS**

Physical context

Developmental context

Multigenerational context

Emotional context

Social context

Economic and political context

Philosophical/religious/spiritual context

Creative, transformative context





#### SHARED KNOWLEDGE:

- Adversity, Toxic Stress, Trauma & Attachment

#### SHARED VALUES:

- Commitments to Nonviolence, Emotional Intelligence, Social Learning, Open Communication, Social Responsibility, Democracy, Growth & Change

#### SHARED LANGUAGE:

- S.E.L.F. = Safety, Emotions, Loss and Future

#### SHARED PRACTICE:

- Sanctuary Toolkit

#### SHARED MISSION:

- Parallel Process of Recovery

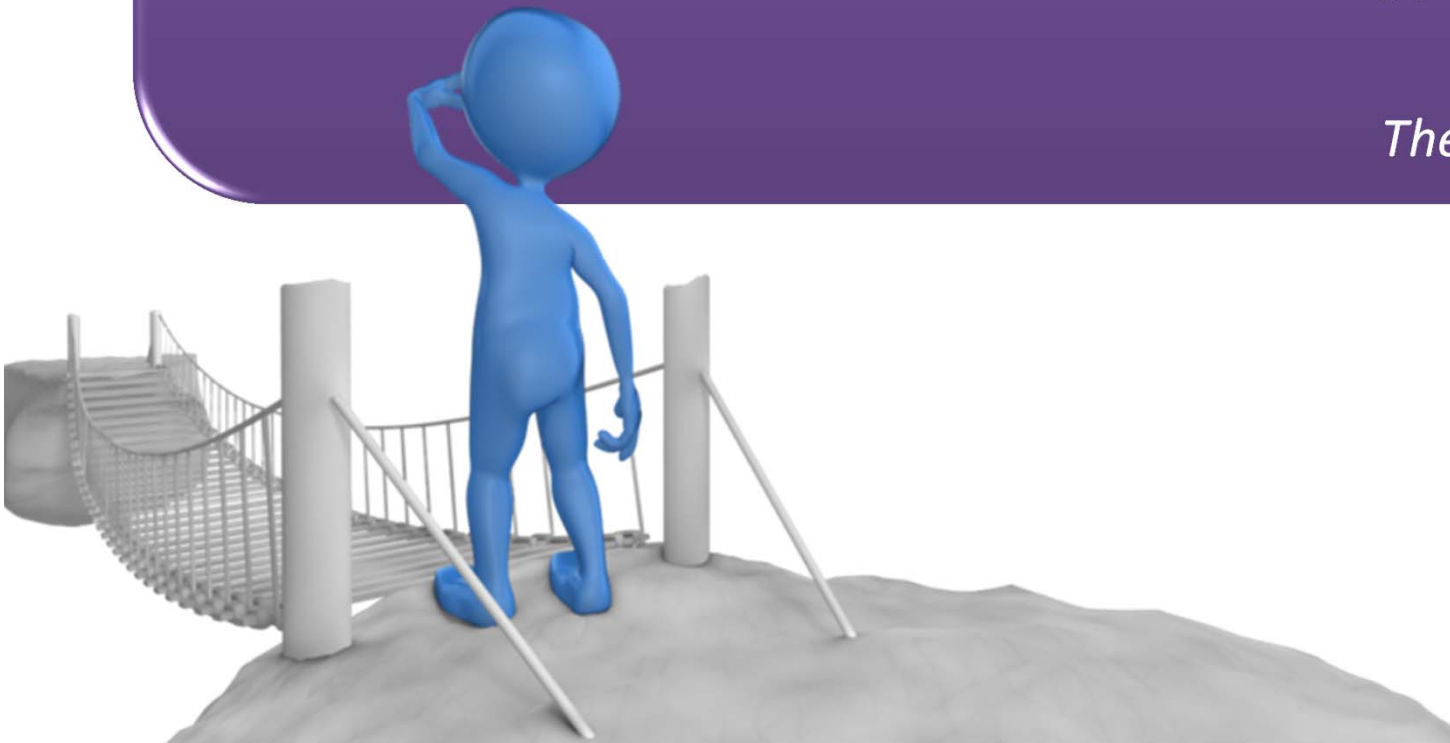
## SANCTUARY AS A LIVING SYSTEM

FAR-FROM-EQUILIBRIUM CONDITIONS



*The truth is that we are in a time of transition, an in-between period when the old is dying and the new has yet to be born. The values, assumptions, and structures that have governed us for so long have come to their logical end, and we now find ourselves at a dead end.*

Jim Wallis  
*The Soul of Politics*



*Every transformation ... has rested on a new metaphysical and ideological base; or rather, upon deeper stirrings and intuitions whose rationalized expression takes the form of a new picture of the cosmos and the nature of man.*

Louis Mumford

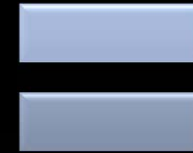
American historian, sociologist, and philosopher



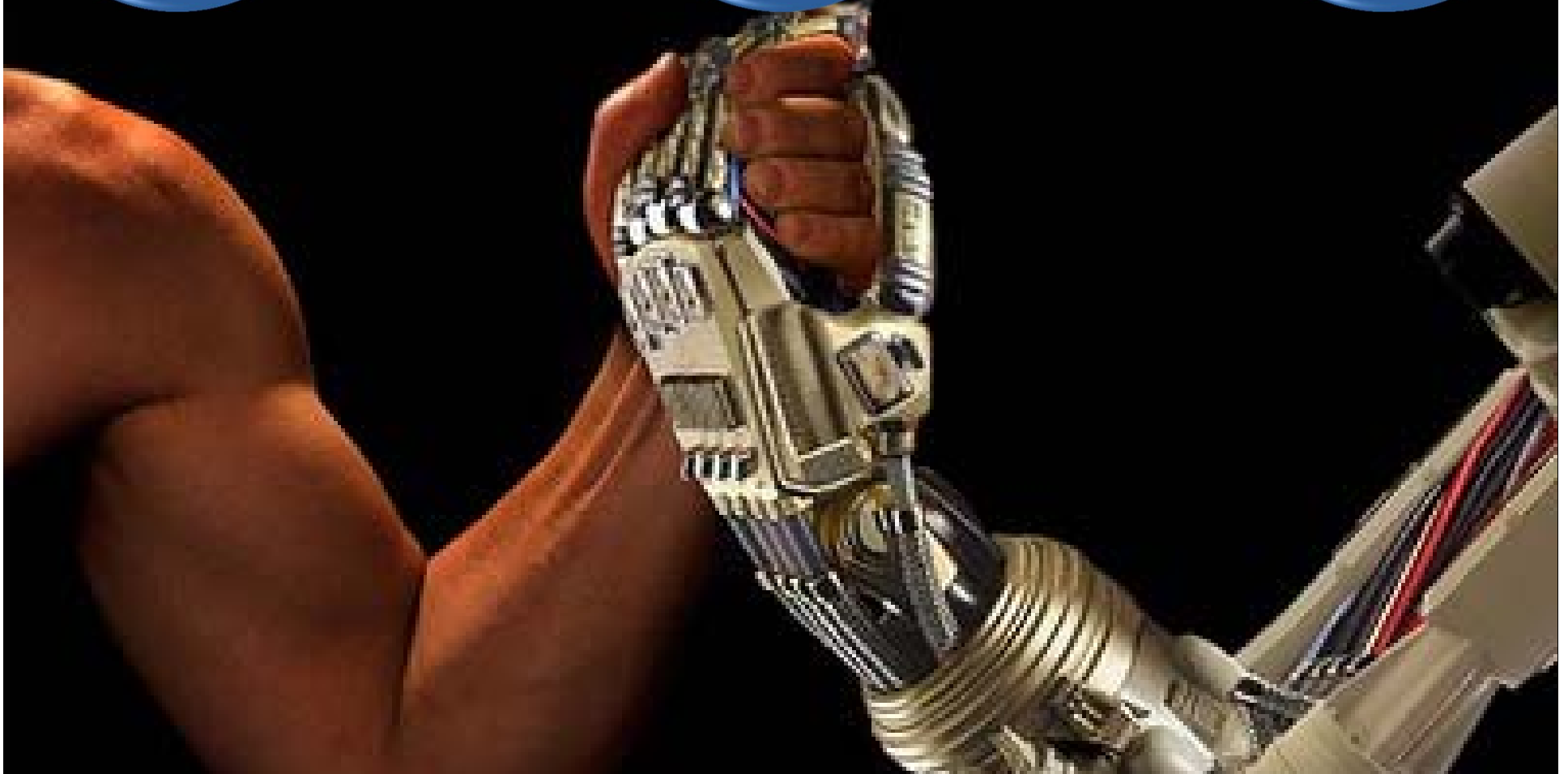
HUMAN  
INTELLIGENCE



TECHNOLOGY

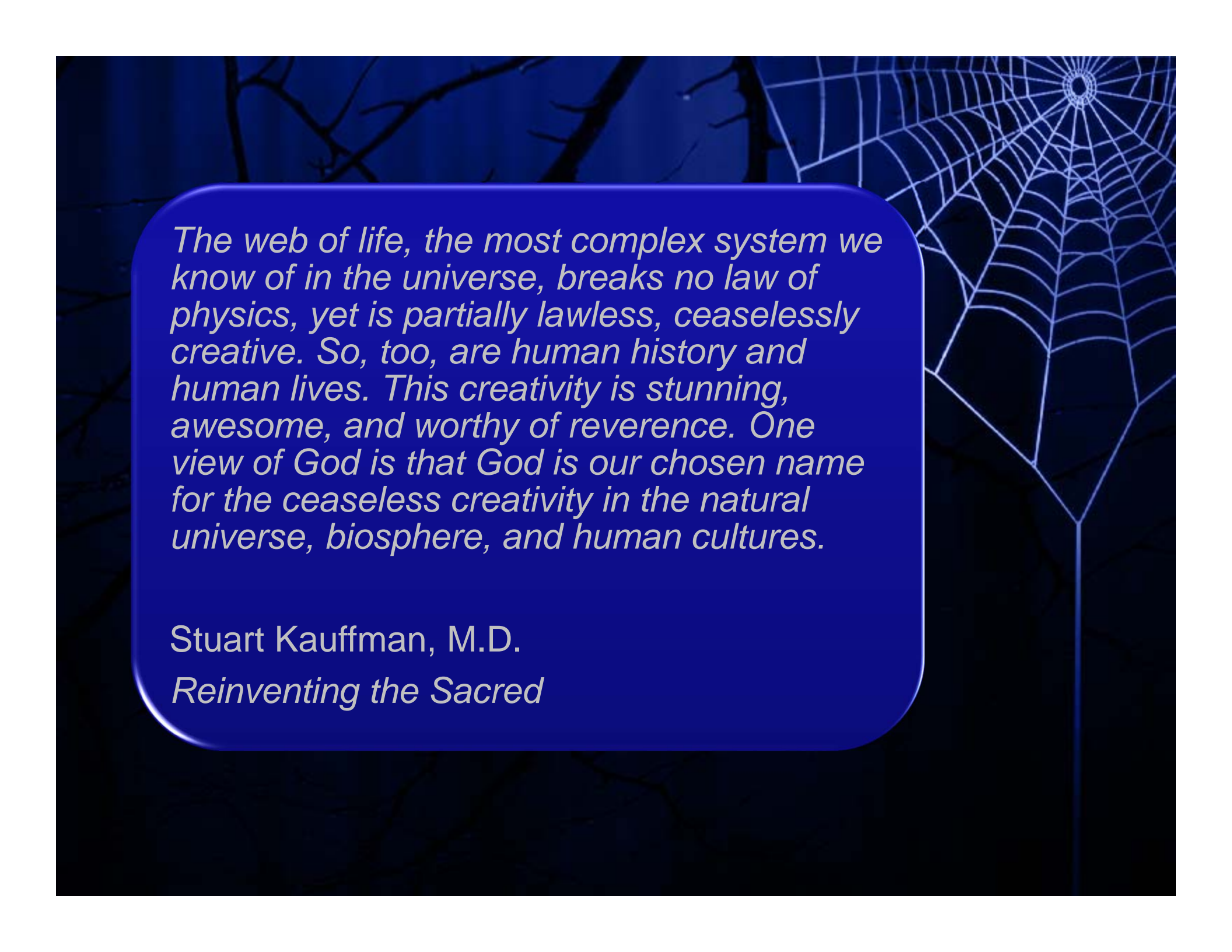


HEAVEN OR  
HELL?



WE  
(THE COLLECTIVE “WE”)  
WILL DETERMINE  
WHAT DOOR WE PICK:  
IT’S A CHOICE

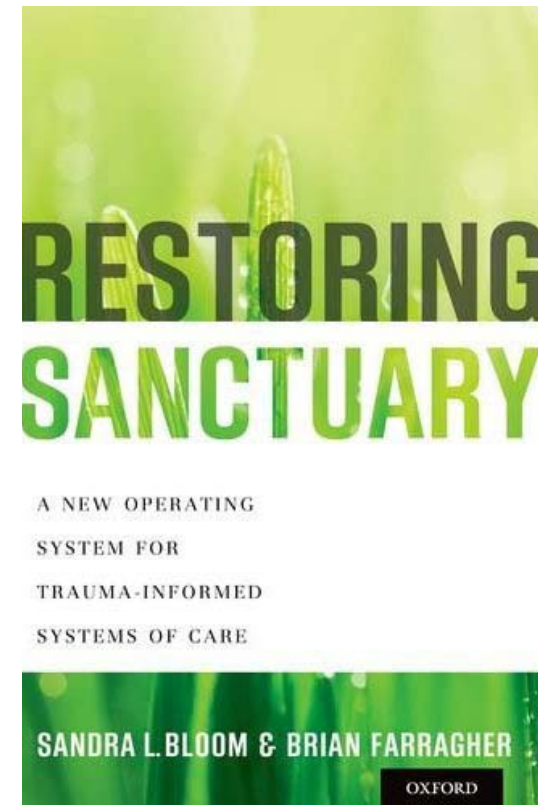
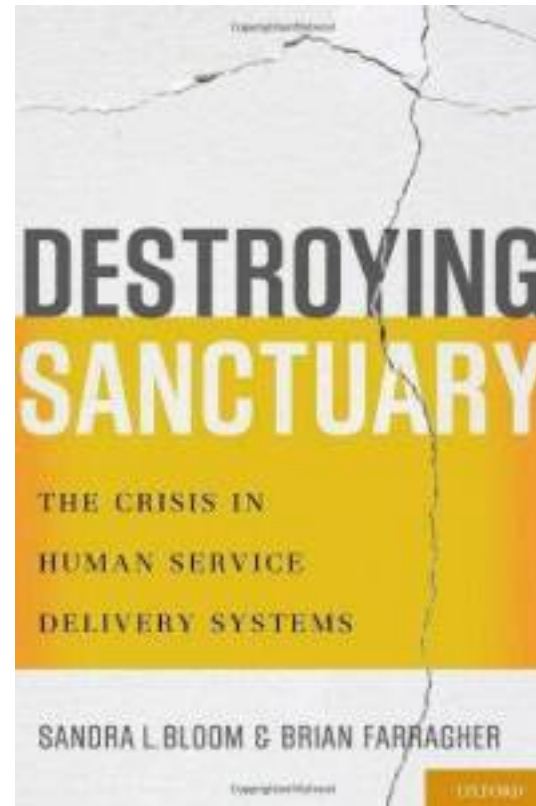
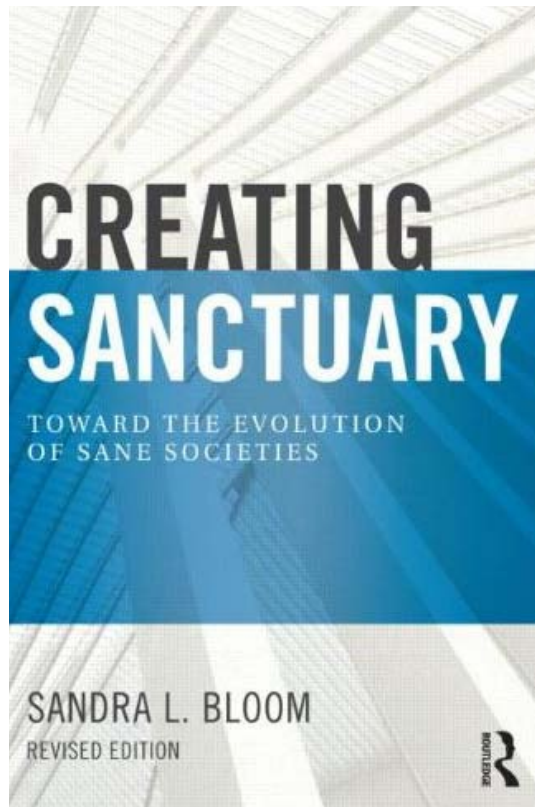





*The web of life, the most complex system we know of in the universe, breaks no law of physics, yet is partially lawless, ceaselessly creative. So, too, are human history and human lives. This creativity is stunning, awesome, and worthy of reverence. One view of God is that God is our chosen name for the ceaseless creativity in the natural universe, biosphere, and human cultures.*

Stuart Kauffman, M.D.  
*Reinventing the Sacred*







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