



Systems Thinking (Peter Senge)

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Senge, P. M. (2006). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. New York, NY: Doubleday

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Introductions

- Name
- Role/Title
- Department
- What do you expect to learn today (3 words max)



Workshop Outline

- Systems Thinking
- Shared Vision
- Mental Models



Systems Thinking

- The whole is greater than the sum of its parts
- Connected to the world
- Awareness of how our activities and actions create problems/solutions



Activity



Shared Vision

- Many visions are extrinsic- that is they focus on achieving something relative to an outsider, such as a competitor.
 - But reliance on a vision that is solely predicated on defeating an adversary can weaken an organization long term.
- A shared vision is the first step in allowing people who mistrusted each other to begin to work together.



Shared Vision

When you are immersed in a vision, you know what needs to be done. But you often don't know how to do it. Everything is an experiment, but there is no ambiguity at all. It's perfectly clear why you are doing it.



Shared Vision-Guidelines

- Shared visions emerge from personal visions.
- If people don't have their own vision, all they can do is “sign up” for someone else's.
- When more people come to share a common vision, the vision becomes more alive, more real in the sense that people can truly imagine achieving it.



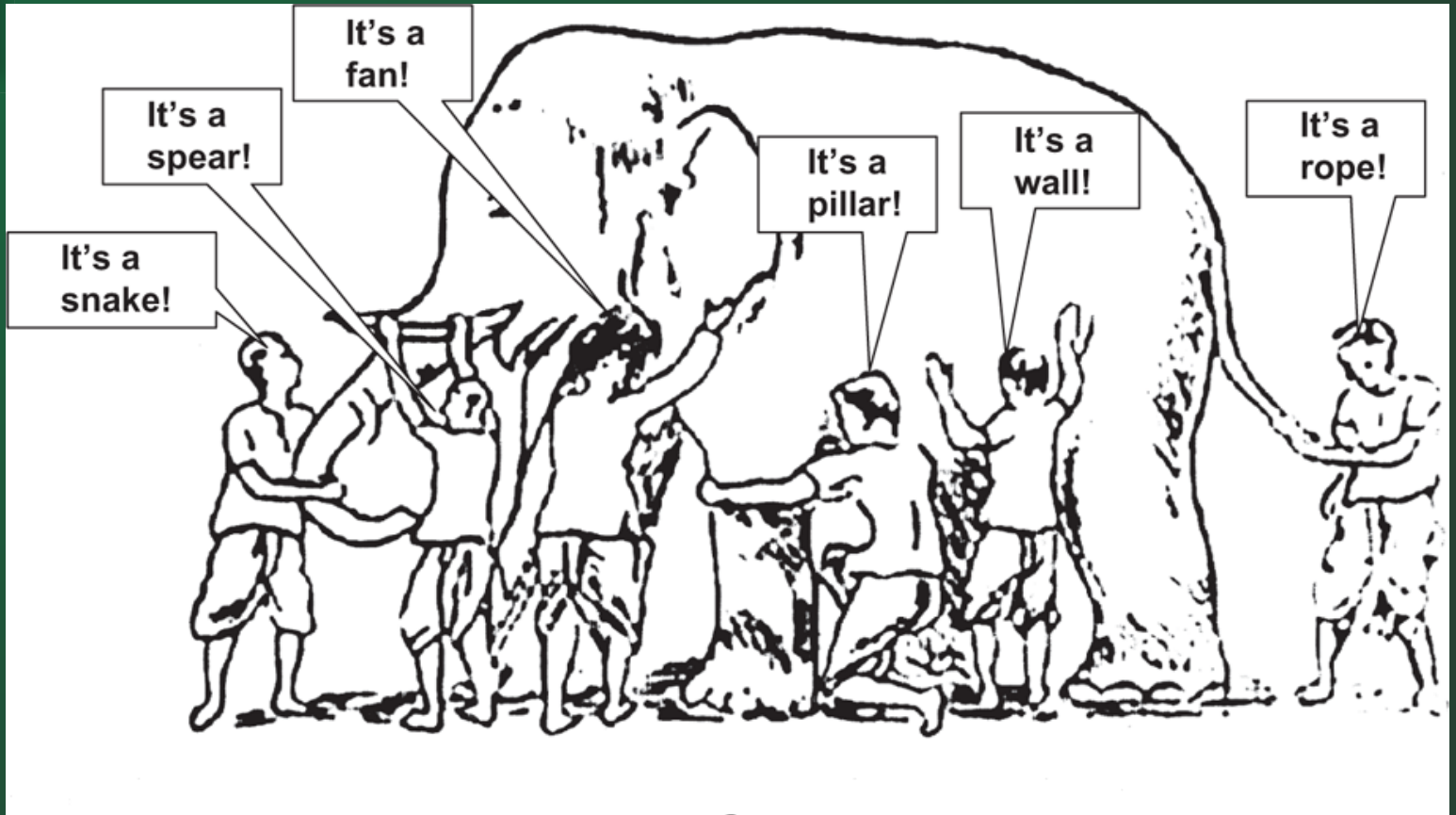
Building a Shared Vision

Building a “Shared Vision” involves three components: vision, purpose, and core values

- 1. **Vision**- the picture of the future we seek to create.
- 2. **Purpose** “Why do we exist?”
- 3. **Core Values**- “How do we want to act, consistent with our mission, along the path toward achieving our vision.



Shared Vision





Mental Models

- Deeply engrained assumptions
- Generalizations
- Developed through experiences, education, and socialization

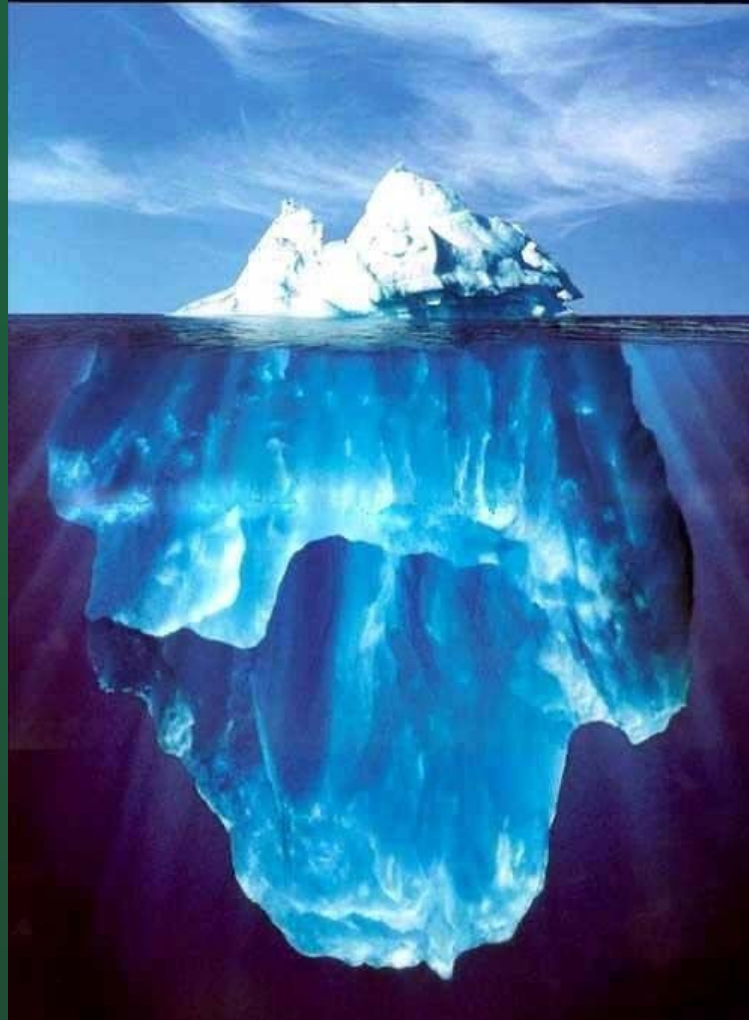


Mental Models



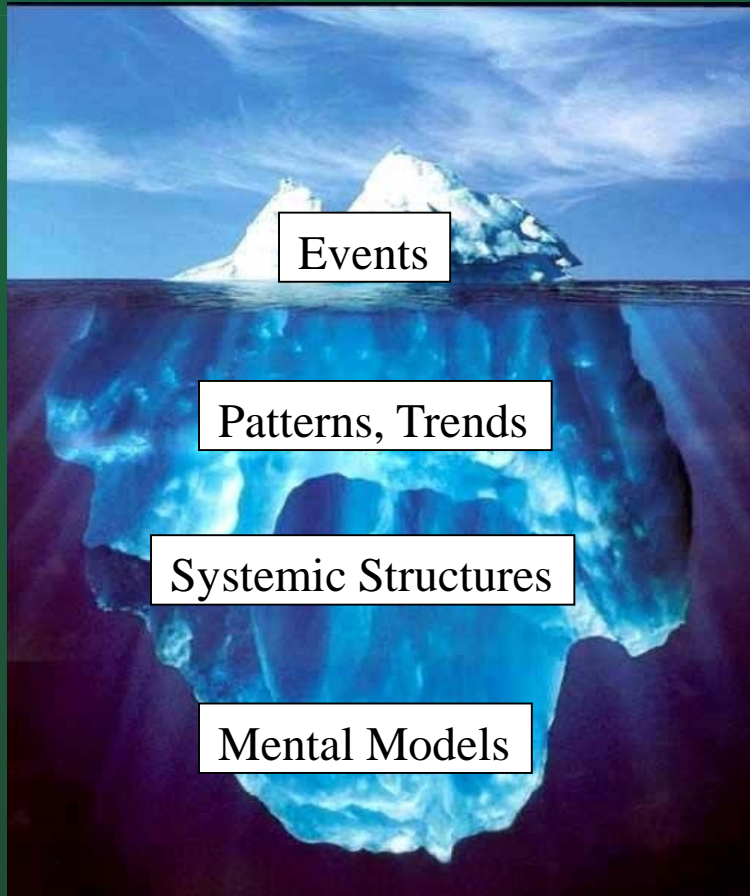


Mental Models





Mental Models



What just happened?

What's been happening?

Have we been here or some place similar before?

What are the forces at play contributing to these patterns?

What about our thinking allows this situation to persist?



Scenario #1

Susan is the office socialite. She enjoys having conversations around the office and likes to get to know everybody.

You are busy preparing for an important project that is due to be completed by the end of the day. Right when you feel you are on track to complete the final details in time, you see Susan approaching your office.

What are the first thoughts that will run in your head?



Scenario #2

Tim is “go-getter”. He is very passionate about his work and very direct in his responses.

Same scenario: You are busy preparing for an important project that is due to be completed by the end of the day. Right when you feel you are on track to complete the final details in time, you get an email from Tim.

What are the first thoughts that will run in your head?



Scenario #3

A student would like to file a complaint and makes an appointment to see you in the office. Before the appointment, you do a little research and find out the following:

The student has a 2.2 GPA

The student is on Financial Aid

The student is someone that “everybody knows”

What Mental Models may have already developed prior to meeting with the student?



Ladder of Inference

I do something based on my beliefs.



I develop beliefs based on the assumptions I make.



I add my own meaning. (cultural & personal)



I notice certain information & experiences.



Information & experiences around me

R

My beliefs affect what I choose to notice in the future.



Systems Thinking in Schools, Waters Foundation
Adapted from *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*
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