

OD Principles



H O L I S T I C & I N T E G R A T E D

Organization Development (OD), the field is the most relevant in current times especially when the whole world is talking about **interconnected and sustainable development**.

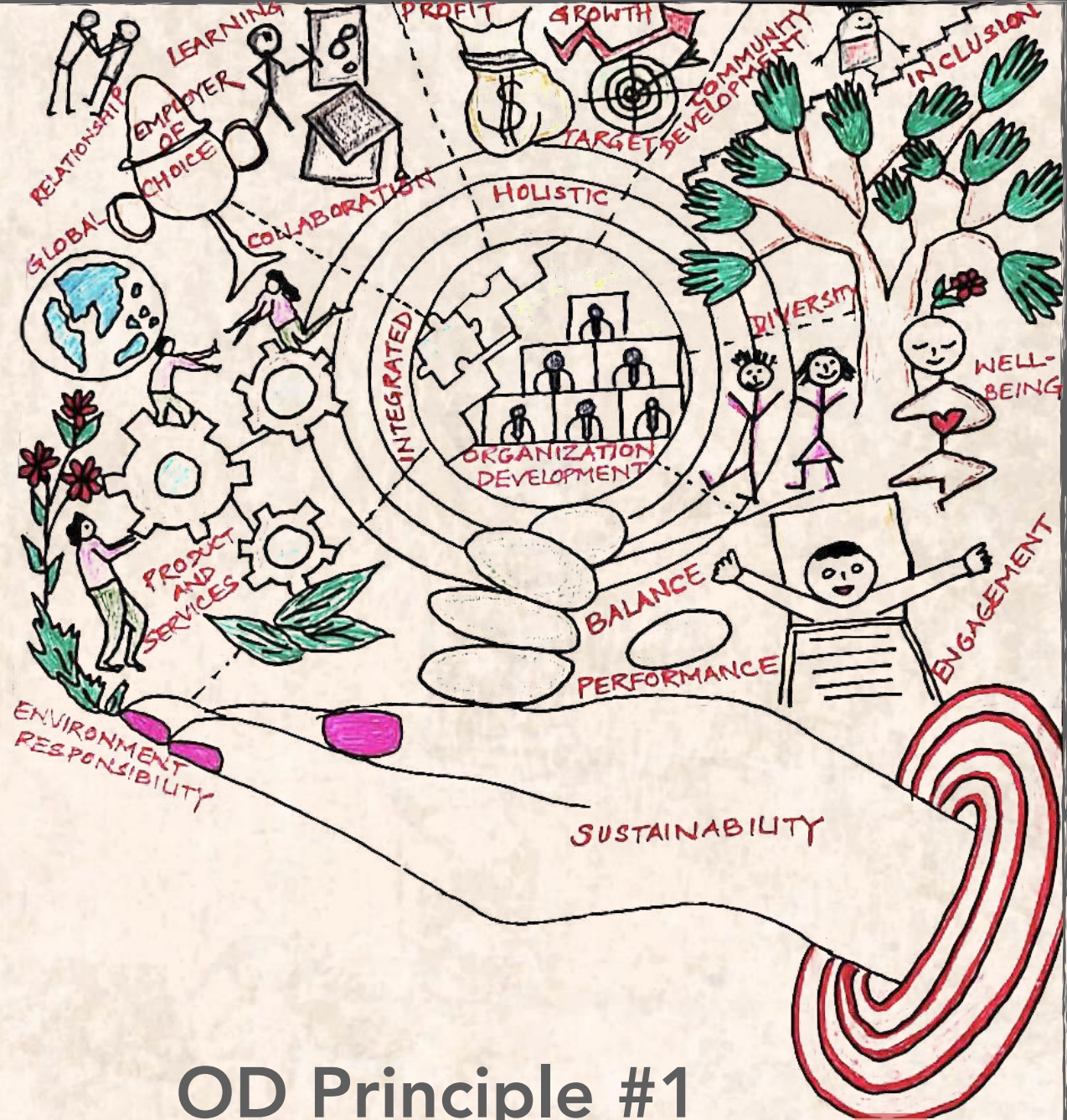
Consider this case:

One of the reputed chemical organisations hired a consultant to double its sales in 3 years. The consultant did a great work of building the team capability, improving the process and sales tracking. The team responded well and started bringing in more orders.

But this situation brought consequential issues. The manufacturing wasn't ready to scale its capacity. The vendors weren't ready for the surge in demand. There were delays in meeting customer commitments and it eroded the brand value. The manufacturing department leaders reacted by increasing the workload and compromising the environment standards. The decrease in employee morale resulted in manpower issues and the neighbourhood got impacted by the environment hazard due to the improper waste disposal. What might have turned this aspiration into a catastrophe?

Principle #1

Holistic and Integrated



Live
in connection

OD Principle #1

Holistic and Integrated

OD is an **organization wide**, integrated and **holistic change** effort (the whole system gets impacted).

Because a **small change impacts the overall system**, OD focuses on the total system- human, social, technological, structural aspects of the organization.



OD Principle #1

H U M A N I S T I C

Our experiences in a dynamic environment frame our **emotions and thoughts**. As humans we keep fulfilling our internal unmet needs through our actions in the **quest of attaining full potential**.

A top leader of a legacy corporation once mentioned in a meeting "People won't do anything unless they are told to do. They do not take initiatives. Hence I use a strong stick and carrot approach, this is the only way work gets done."

Belief- People need to be driven so I drive them. I drive them so they don't drive themselves.

This org was struggling to catch up with the young competitors and losing out on market share.

OD Principle #2

Humanistic





OD Principle #2

Humanistic

OD promotes a **humanistic orientation** and works on the belief that people are inherently good, they have the capacity to change and develop.

Hence OD as a field believes in **empowering people for effective functioning** of an organization.

C O - C R E A T I O N

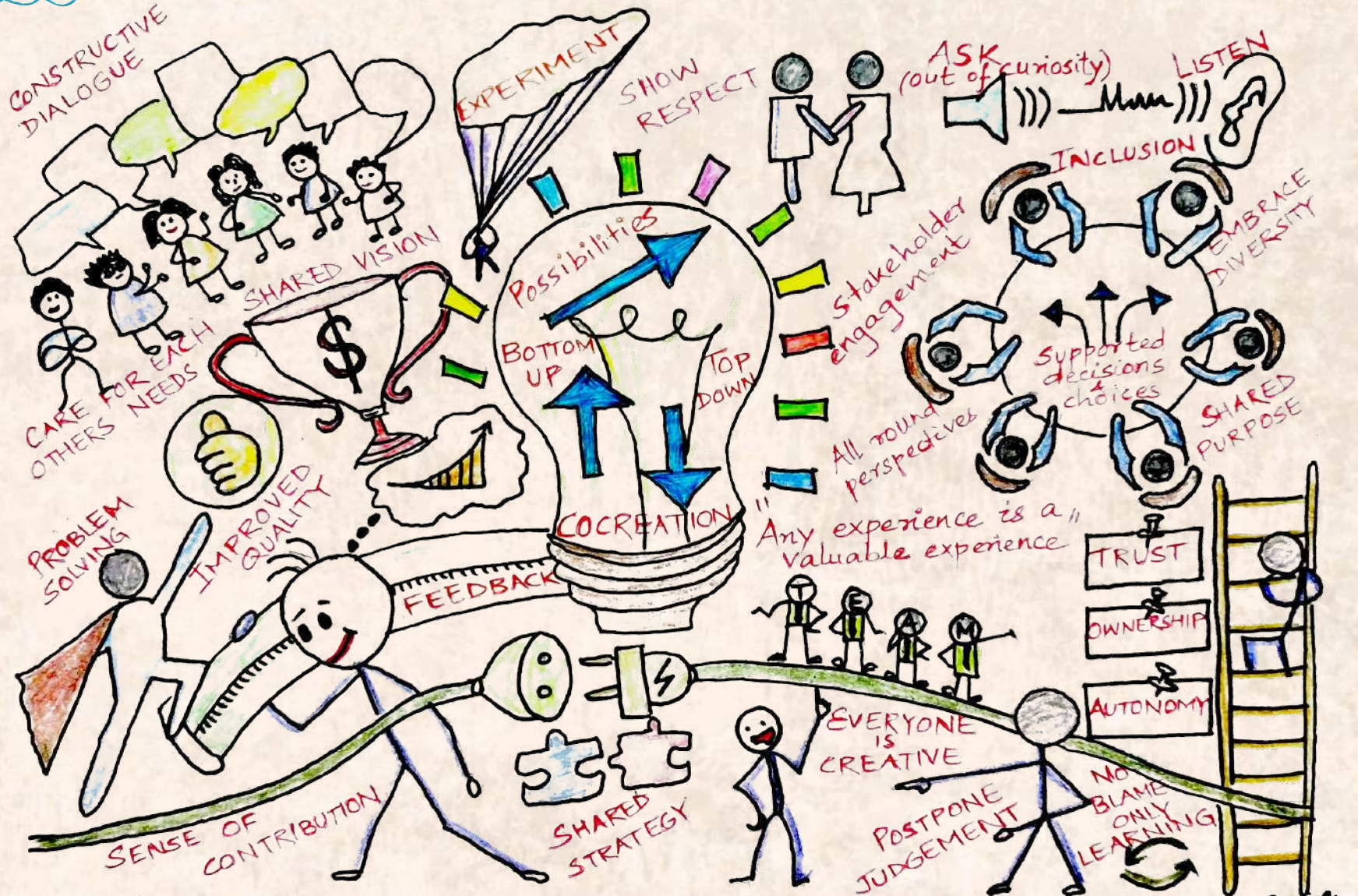
Have you wondered why majority of change projects fail? Challenge lies in **implementation & Institutionalization** of a change. If people don't have the buy in and question the worthiness, the change hasn't been able to win their hearts to win their commitment. Winning hearts require **involvement, active engagement and ownership**.

A tech giant org, 6 years ago got a new CEO who decided to bring a change by listening to the employees. They launched 40 apps in 60 days for employees. Over 6 months, the employee app usage went down. It was revealed through a survey that while all this was created for employees, they never wanted it. They didn't feel they were a part of the change. Is there a difference between creating for people and co-creating with people?

Co-creation stands at the core of a learning organization and enables a change process. In a dynamic and uncertain world, facts keep changing and new truths evolve. New meaning of things has to be constructed with all the stakeholders with varied expertise, experience and energy so that everyone can contribute and take care of each other's needs.

OD Principle #3

Co-creation





Co-creation

(Top down and bottom up)

OD follows the **democratic principle** which promotes the **decision making and direction setting** as a co created process involving the OD consultant and the client system. It follows the **top down approach** of co creation and participation where the organizational leaders and the members are involved in managing change.

C O L L A B O R A T I V E L E A R N I N G

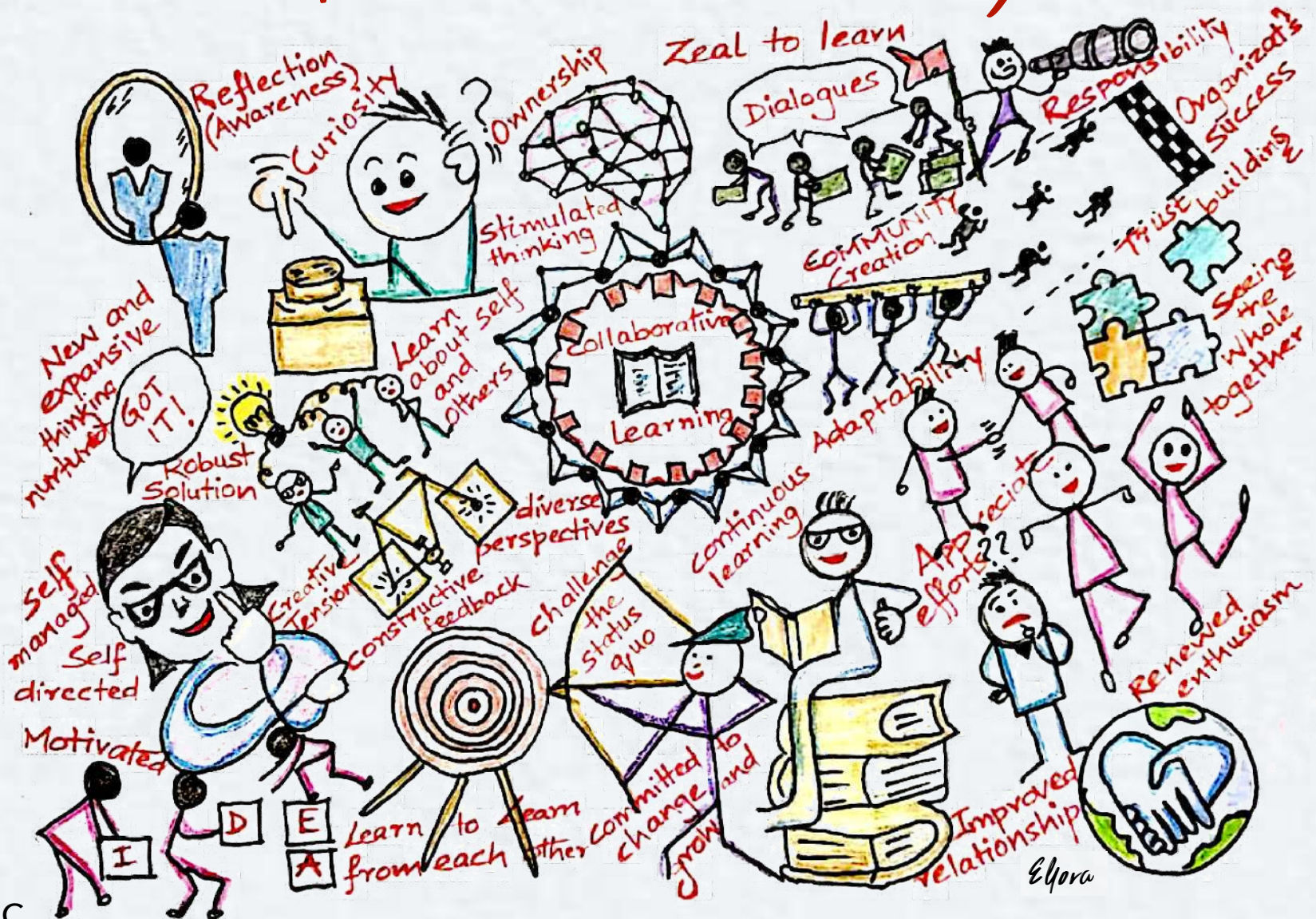
Continuous improvement initiatives are being rolled out all over but the success rate remains dubious. The basic truth around is that continuous improvement requires a **commitment to learning** and the most effective learning comes from collaborative learning.

Consider this case-

A start-up saw tremendous growth in its early years. The key to their success was the culture of learning and collaboration. People learned from each other about technology, processes and clients. This gave them a level of agility that is rarely available to a large organization which also became their competitive advantage.

After 5 years of double digit growth, the start-up hired a consultant to develop a PMS in their 150 people organization. The new PMS induced internal competition. People shared less with each other and focused more on their personal growth and performance. The new PMS took away the collaborative learning spirit of the organization. An example of a developmental initiative that went anti-development.

Collaborative Learning





Collaborative Learning

The collaborative learning approach of OD promotes the **learning of both the consultant and the client** system during the change process. Participation & involvement of members at all levels during the change process enhances their **learning**, opens them up to **new experiences**, reduces resistance and increases **ownership and commitment** to change as people realize the benefits of change.

C O L L E C T I V E W I S D O M

With time humans **internalize the wisdom** which comes naturally in the process of transcending the obstacles and understanding the complexity of life. Imagine if organizations could **harness the collective wisdom** of groups giving rise to **wise perspectives, plans and actions**.

After hiring two Big-5 consulting firms & spending millions of dollars to improve the traditional ways of working, a legacy Indian giant was stuck in the same problem of internal bureaucracy leading to delay in customer deliverables. The consultants thought that they had a solution to the clients problem - a situation that was created internally over decades.

An OD consultant who was approached humbly admitted "I don't have a solution but we can together find one". A Large Scale Interactive process was facilitated with 300 employees across levels under one roof -from operators to MD. They together came up with one simple solution of no internal emails for the first two hours of the day.

A simple initiative that encouraged them to talk to each other and get things done faster than emails!

Principle #5

Collective wisdom





Collective wisdom

OD recognizes the **collective wisdom** of the group and works on the principle that people who have a problem also have the solution to overcome the problem- the problem and the solution both lies in the system. It believes that **knowledge is distributed** among many people and **involving their inputs** in the change process is crucial for its success.

C A P A B I L I T Y B U I L D I N G

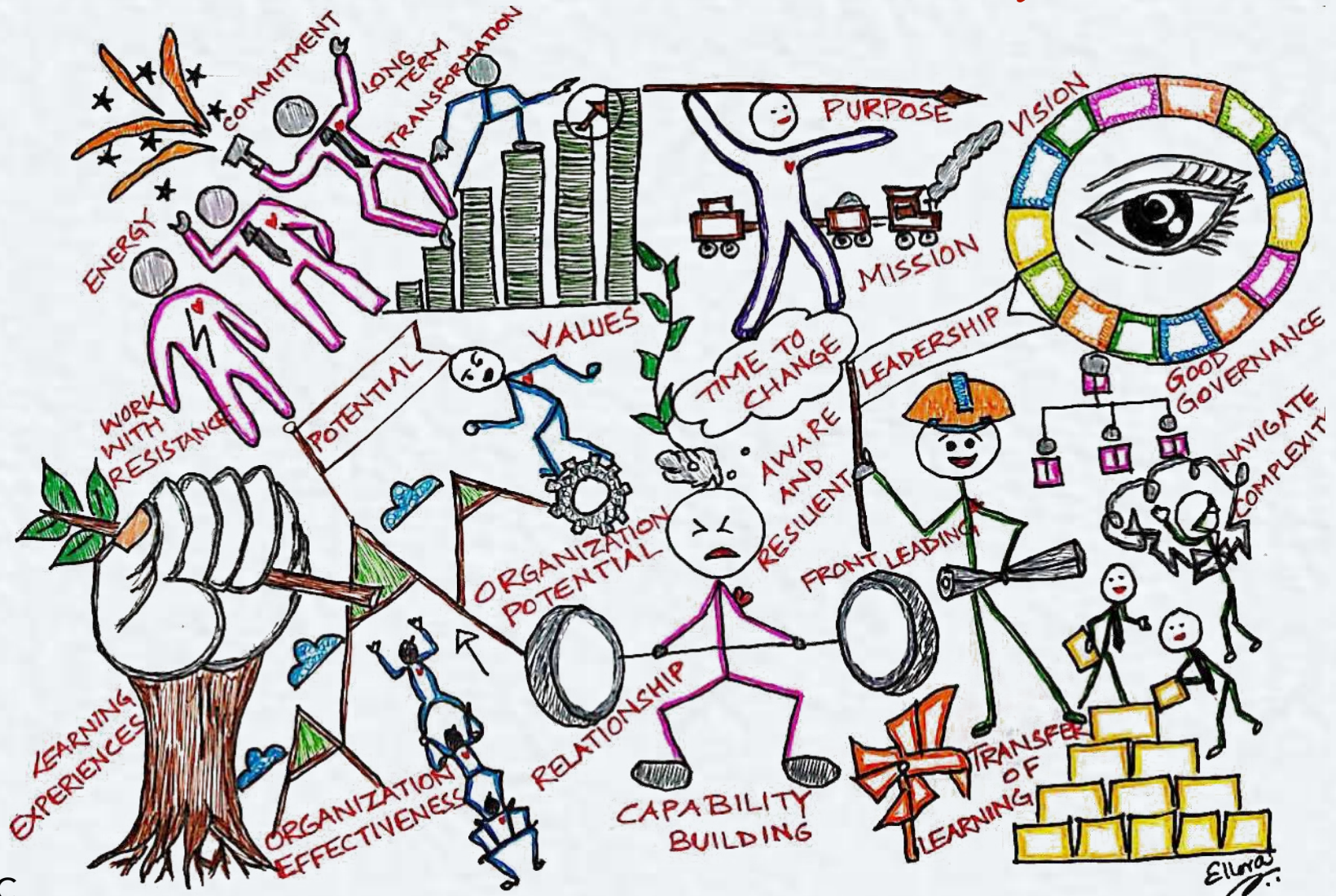
Organization, like a living being, passes through the different terrains of its life in the form of various obstacles. The **collective skills & ability building** of an organization is very much like the muscle building of a body, which marks its readiness to fight the **volatility, complexity, uncertainty & ambiguity** of the external world. The capability building principle of OD prepares the organization to **function at its optimum potential**.

The growth curve of a growing organization had flattened. They hired an internal OD consultant who implemented some very effective change initiatives. The organization picked up & were able to fulfil the goals they were aspiring for.

Couple of years later the consultant changed his job. The organization again hit the plateau. The employees fondly remembered this consultant on how he helped in the turnaround.

The question is did the consultant truly do any good to the org? He may have helped the org grow but not develop. True development happens with involvement in the process & transfer of learning. The consultant like a magician took away his secrets.

Capability building



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Capability building

OD focuses on the **developmental view** and believes in **capability building** of the system so that the system is able to **take care of itself** in the long run.

Transfer of learning is one of the important aspects of any OD intervention.

C L I E N T C E N T E R E D

The human systems are capable of **self-initiated change & development** when provided with appropriate processes & supportive conditions. The role of the OD practitioner is to drop being an 'expert' on the content (what to do) and **take the client through a process** (how to do) which may require confronting the client system for building awareness.

A consultant who was consulting a service org used to penalize the participants when they arrived late at the Values workshop. Being punctual was one of the personal values of the consultant & she felt offended if she had to wait for the late comers. She ensured the inclusion of punctuality as one of the client's values & ensured that the same was linked to rewards.

The culture of the org thrived on adding a little extra into every client experience & warmly apologizing for being late in the next meeting. With punctuality as one of their new values, the service org started having hurried conversations with the client. The focus on task replaced the focus on relationship.

The personal value of punctuality of the consultant did not do any good to the client.

Client Centered



ElMora



Client Centered

OD believes that change efforts should be client centered not practitioner centered. The role of OD consultant is to use the **behaviour science knowledge and skills** of how social systems function to **support, educate, facilitate, and guide** the client system in its work. The OD consultant does not enforce an unwanted change agenda on the client system and doesn't furnish "expert" answers to the client's issues.

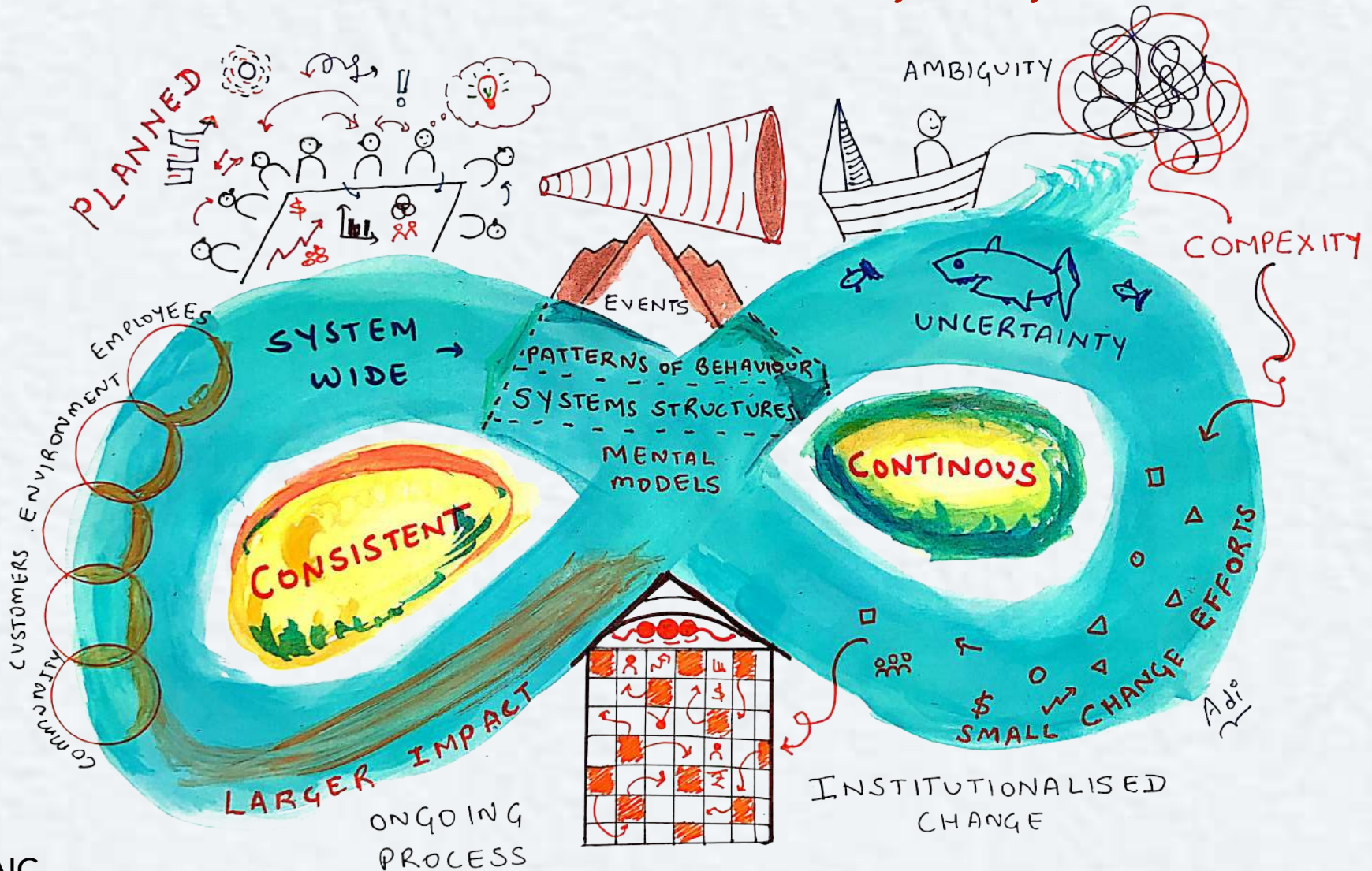
SYSTEMIC, PLANNED AND ONGOING PROCESSES

A 300-people engineering company gathered its 20 **'key leaders'** chosen by the CEO for a strategic offsite every year. There they discussed major **strategic changes and initiatives**. The leaders were then expected to **communicate and implement** the strategic changes **across the organisation**. Year after year, they experienced that the commitment towards the change efforts fizzled out within 2-3 months of the offsite. The leaders shied away from talking about it during their quarterly meetings. The next offsite with the key leaders would begin with "what went wrong?" and yet, produce the same results. Sounds familiar?

OD is not a one-time or once-in-a-year activity. It is not for the important few. It isn't about making major changes either.

Transformation and growth require **small, consistent, systemic change efforts** to be institutionalised in the bigger system. OD's Action Research philosophy is about learning from the **uncertainties and complexities** of a dynamic environment and continuously implementing those learnings.

Systemic, Planned and Ongoing process





Systemic. Planned and Ongoing process

OD views organization improvement as an **ongoing process** and recognizes that we require ability to **quickly respond** to the dynamic environment. OD believes **small but consistent effort** is essential in strengthening and building the capability in the system to **fight uncertainties, ambiguities and complexities** arising as a result of changing times and situations outside the organization. OD interventions focus on **institutionalization of change efforts** successfully and any kind of OD initiation is not complete if its not successfully institutionalised in the **bigger system**.

VALUE BASED ETHICAL PRACTICE

Values are the foundation of OD practice as they determine the degree to which OD practitioners are aligned with the **purpose and values** of client organizations and how they work with clients. OD practitioner's values shape individual purpose and meaning, personal conduct, and means of working with clients. Values can come into conflict giving rise to ethical dilemmas.

Consider a couple of cases:

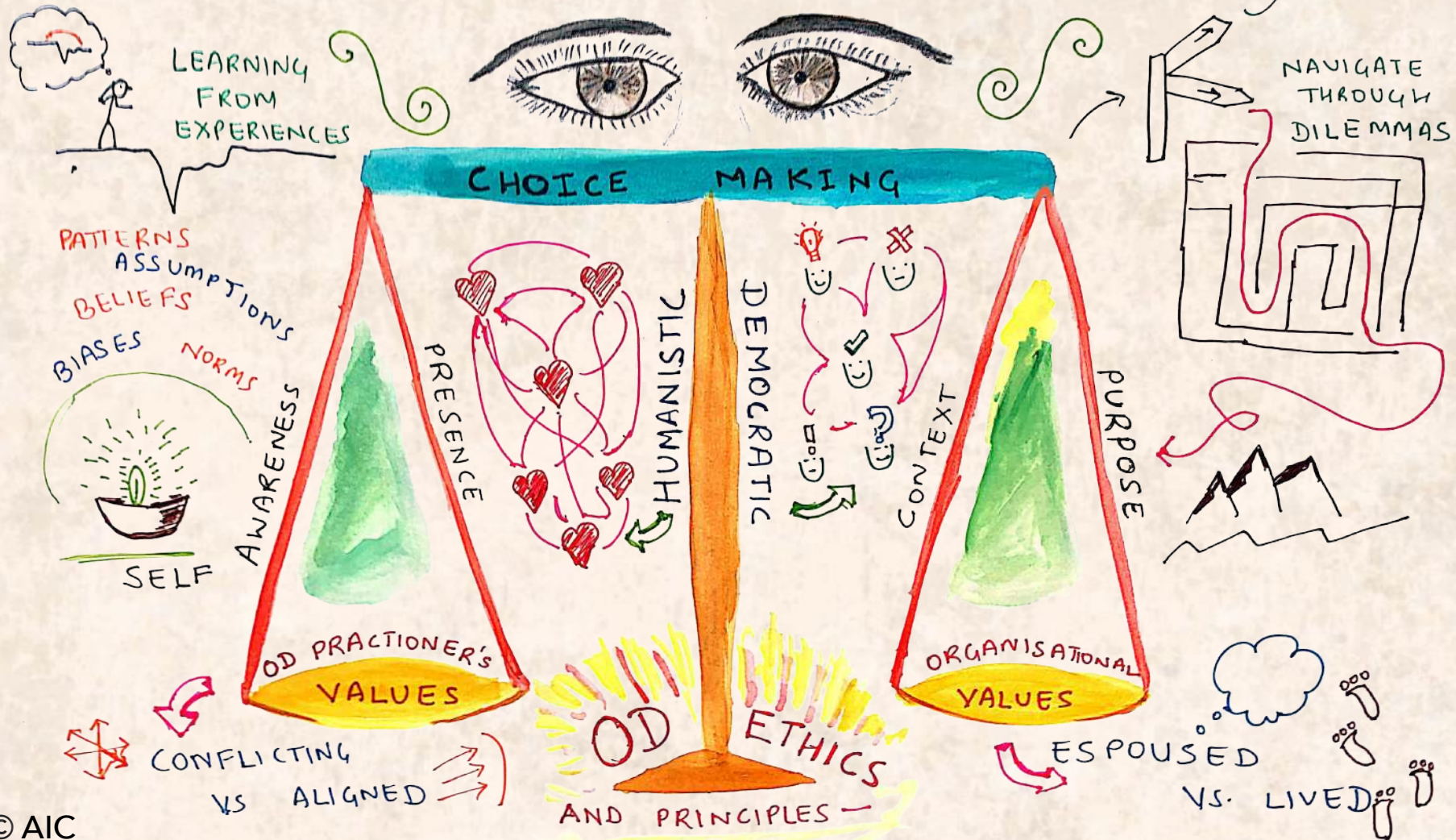
1. An OD practitioner was pushed by the CEO to share the findings and other such data of a survey in person before presenting it to the leadership team. The CEO wanted to be sure of any communication that goes to the leadership team and wanted to "tweak" it as per his understanding of what is right for him.

What would be the **most ethical thing to do**?

What is at stake for both, the OD practitioner and the CEO?

2. As OD practitioner, some information has been received from that system that would help the primary client, but if it is used, the promises of confidentiality given to the others in the client system gets violated. What should be the response and how can values guide the action?

Value Based Ethical Practice





Value Based Ethical Practice

OD as a field is guided by laid down **values and ethics** which set a direction for the OD practices in the line of its **humanistic and democratic principles**. This becomes a great responsibility to shoulder during the engagement in client system and requires a great level of **awareness and presence** to spot, make a choice and navigate through the dilemmas using the **valued based ethical framework**. Since there are no right-or-wrong choices, the ability of OD practitioners to know what to do depends on how well they **learn from experience and build a knowledge base** and decision-making competence through continued reflection and personal conclusion.

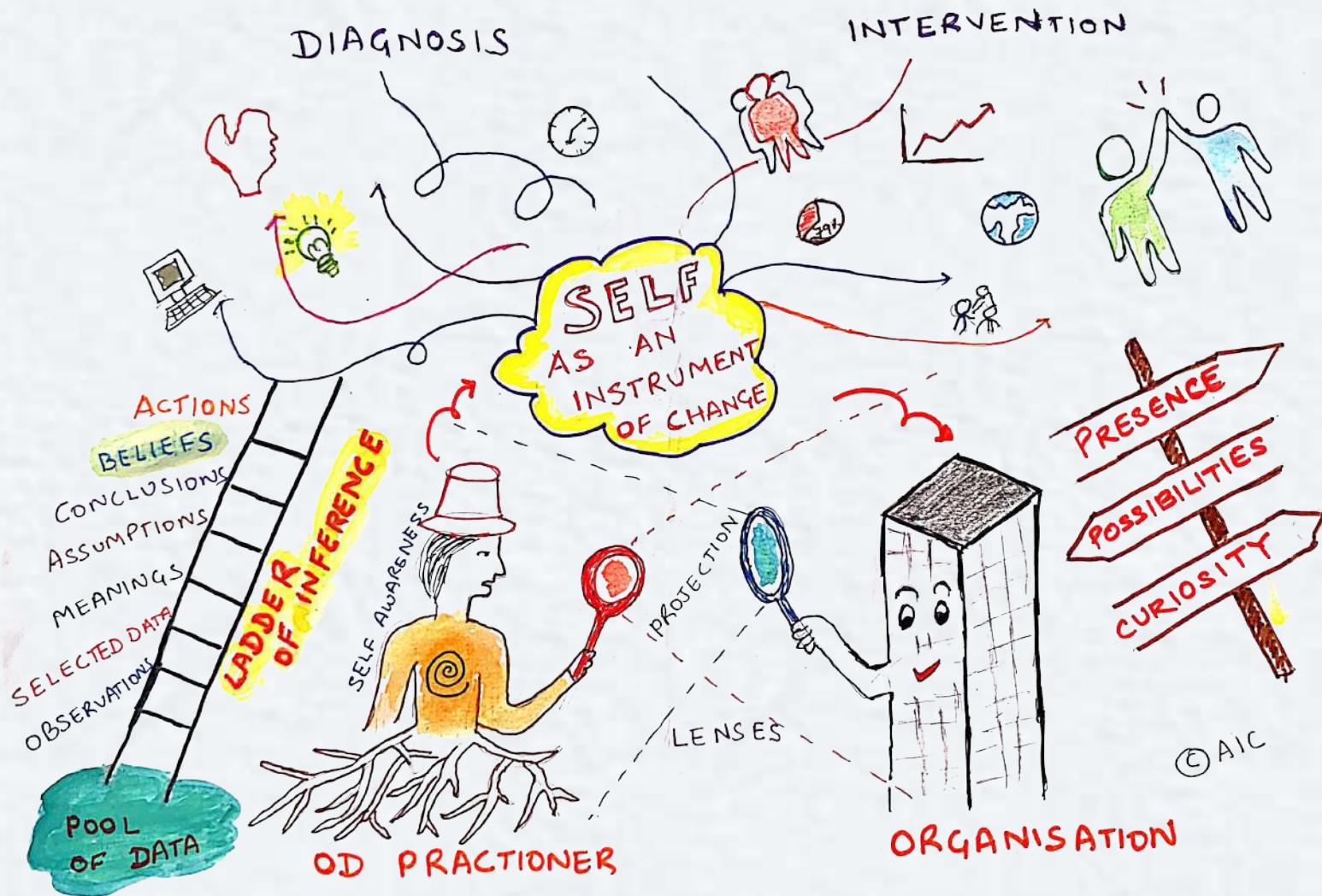
'SELF' AS AN INSTRUMENT OF CHANGE

Use of 'self' in OD is essential to make & give a 'presence' to the client system which is otherwise missing. Presence is use of self with intent, **a part of the personal style** of the OD practitioner which is much needed for a **holistic & deliberate engagement** with the client system. It is only through awareness of internal experiences & paying attention to the reaction and response of others, the OD practitioner can **expand on the presence** to be an effective change agent & have an impact on the system. **Self-awareness** minimizes the fixed patterns that might get in the way of effectiveness.

Consider the case:

An OD practitioner being hired becomes a helper in the process to the client system. This helper role is an important vehicle to deliver genuine services as well as to satisfy own needs of 'being significant' & 'worthy' or as an object to be valued and appreciated by clients. While these motivations are a part of we humans but a lack of awareness may take us overboard with unrealistic and unnecessary help which doesn't do any good to the system but makes it look that they are not up to the mark.

'Self' as an Instrument of Change





'Self' as an Instrument of Change

OD is an **'inside out'** discipline which utilizes **behaviour science knowledge** to focus first on understanding **'self'** and then help the client system.

The field requires the OD practitioner to first get in touch with his/her own **deeper layers of beliefs, values, assumptions** which is mostly unconscious and hidden and then help the client system uncover theirs.

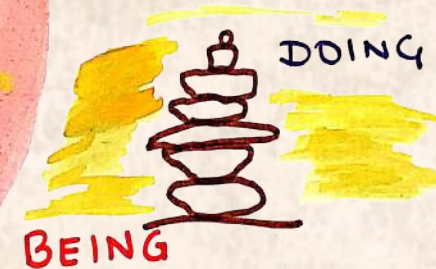
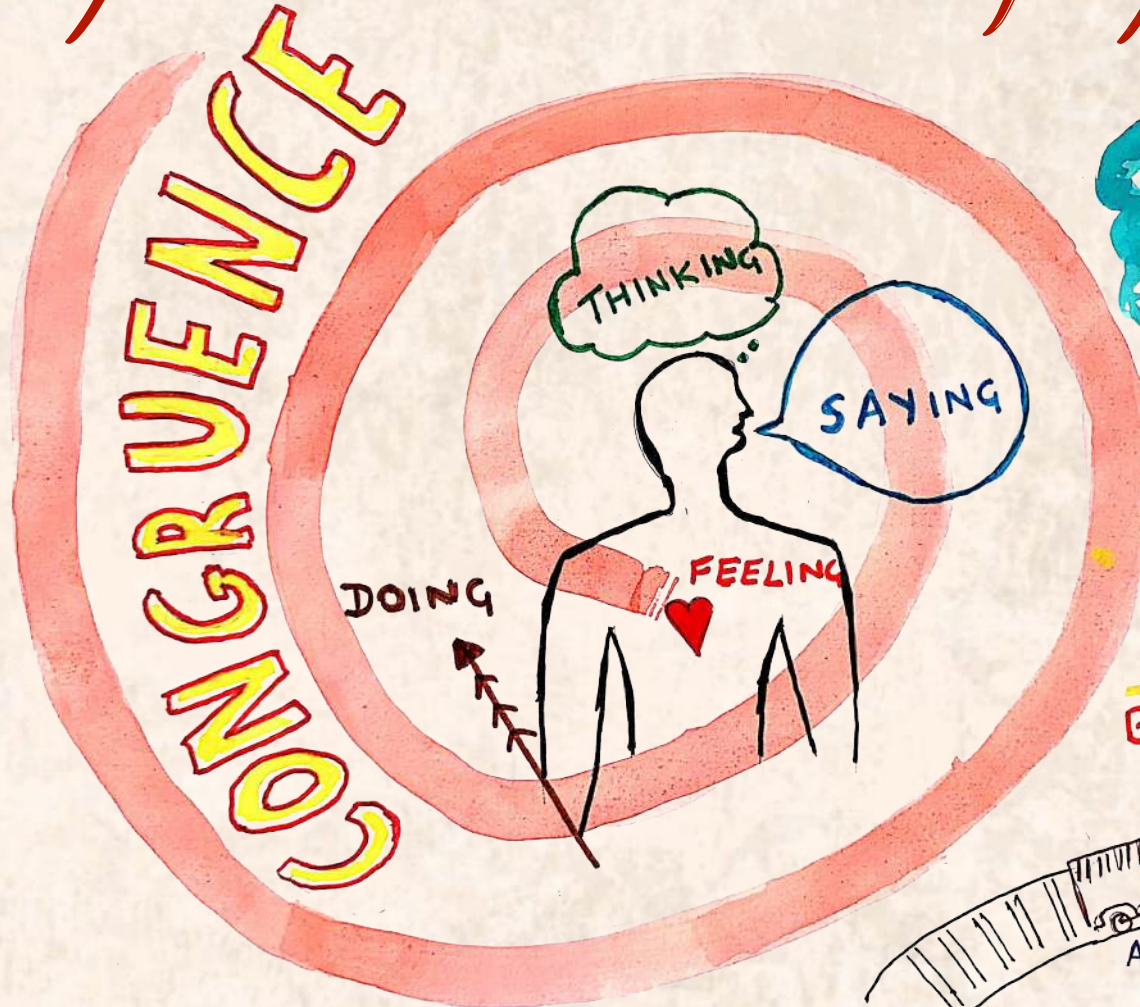
CONGRUENCE BETWEEN SAYING AND DOING

This is the 11th and the final one in our series of Organisation Development Principles. This is our original work including the art work and the case studies. Thank you for reading, supporting and sharing it in your network. You can download this document for your future reference.

Couple of years ago, I was interviewing a CEO as a part of a diagnostic to develop his first line leaders. I inquired about what would be one key change that he would like to see in his leadership team members? And the CEO said, "My team is not solution oriented. They don't take decisions to resolve issues. They just come to me with problems. At the end of the intervention, I want them to come to me with three solutions along with every problem they bring. And then I'll tell them which one to go for."

Can you see the paradox here? Do you think that the CEO was congruent in his saying and doing? What would really happen if a consultant designs an intervention to meet this objective?

Congruence between Saying and Doing





Congruence between Saying and Doing

OD strives to work towards bringing **congruence** in the life of **individuals, groups and organizations**. When there is incongruence between what we say and what we do (in our being and doing) is when dysfunctionalities arise due to lack of proper fitment. OD interventions bring in **clarity** of the organization's vision, mission, values, purpose, the culture, **empowers** the system and its problem solving ability, **builds muscle** of the overall organization to **overcome uncertainties** during turbulent and unpredictable times resulting into a **readiness towards enhancing organizational effectiveness**.