

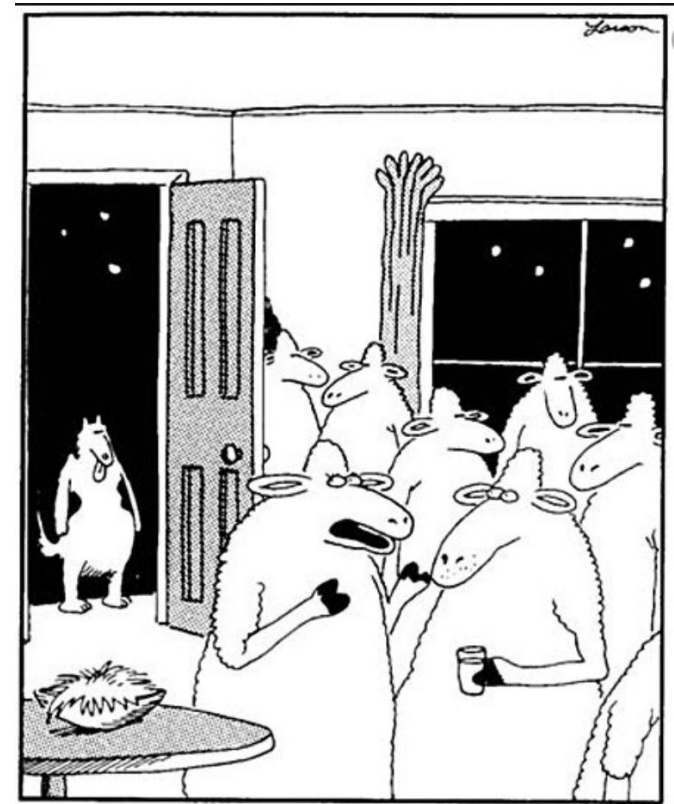
# A Few Lessons from Command

Stump

Apr 2021

# Overview – 10 Topics

- The Inversion of the Pyramid
- Collins' Bus
- EQ >> IQ
- Situational OODA Mods
- Sys 1 vs Sys 2 Thinking (Kahneman)
- On communication
- A few notes on leadership in general
- 2 Good Razors = A "clean" cut
- A suggested template to honor those that leave your organization
- An approach to reading more / better + some specific recommendations
- Take questions / comments

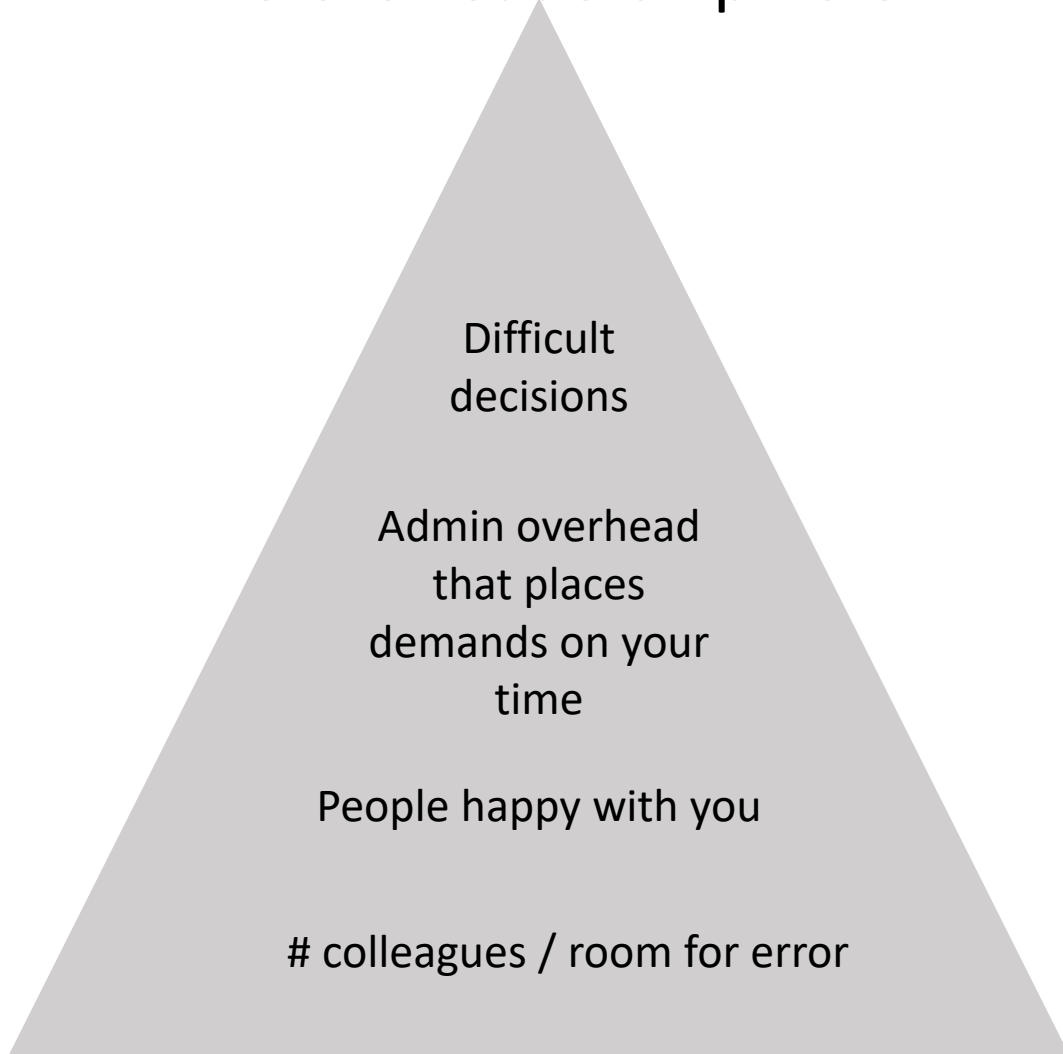


# Disclaimer

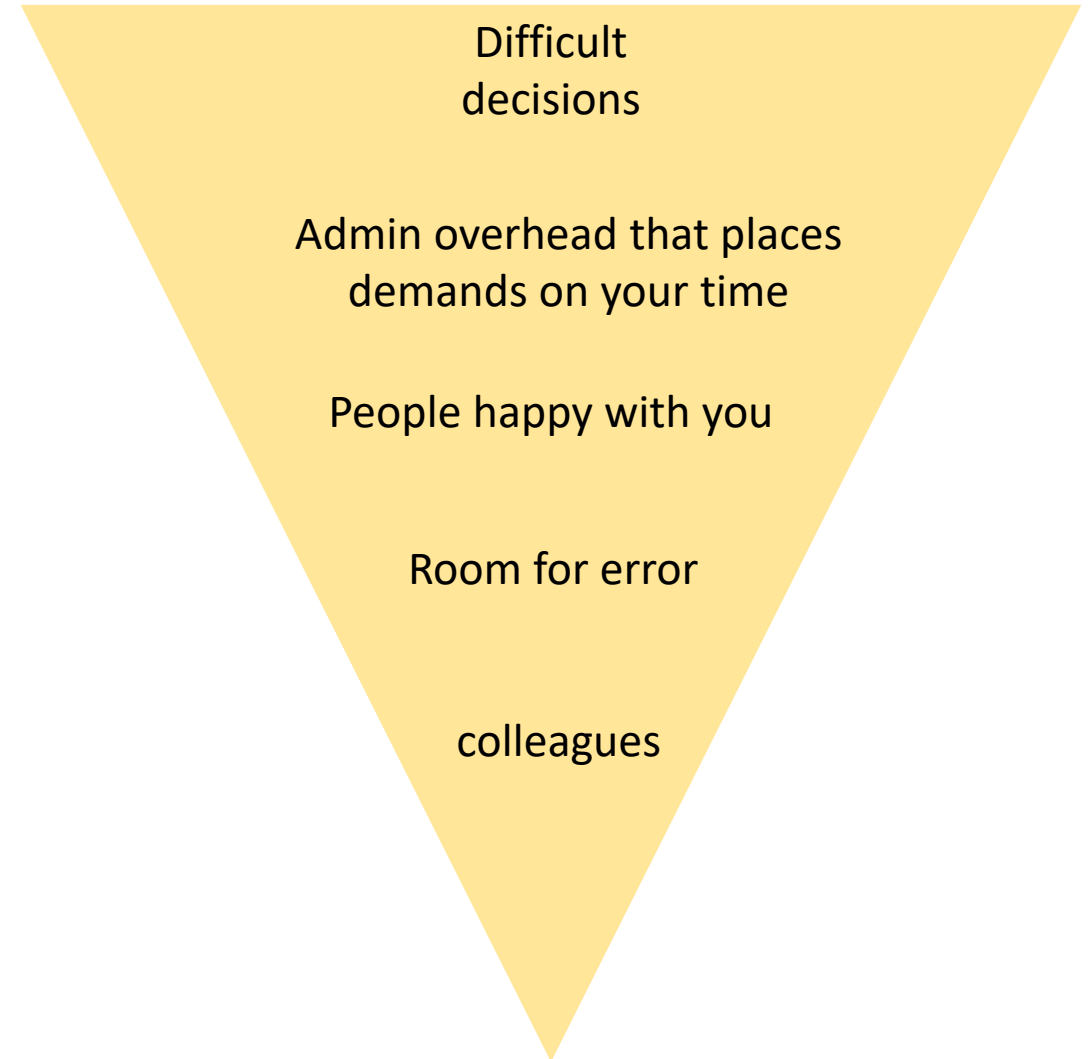
- This will not be a revelation ... there is no “key to the city”
- Some ideas / mental models / visuals taken from noted authors
  - .... Tried to use these vs. words when and where possible
- I am full-time w/TR deputies ..... That brings a certain perspective
  - TR Commanders with senior-time staff will need to recognize when / how that makes a significant difference

# Pyramid Inversion

## Before Leadership Role



## Leadership Role



# .... Jim Collins was right

## - The Bus Analogy and 3 keys

- 1) Right on .... Wrong off
- 2) Right seats (think ... “fit”)
- 3) Destination

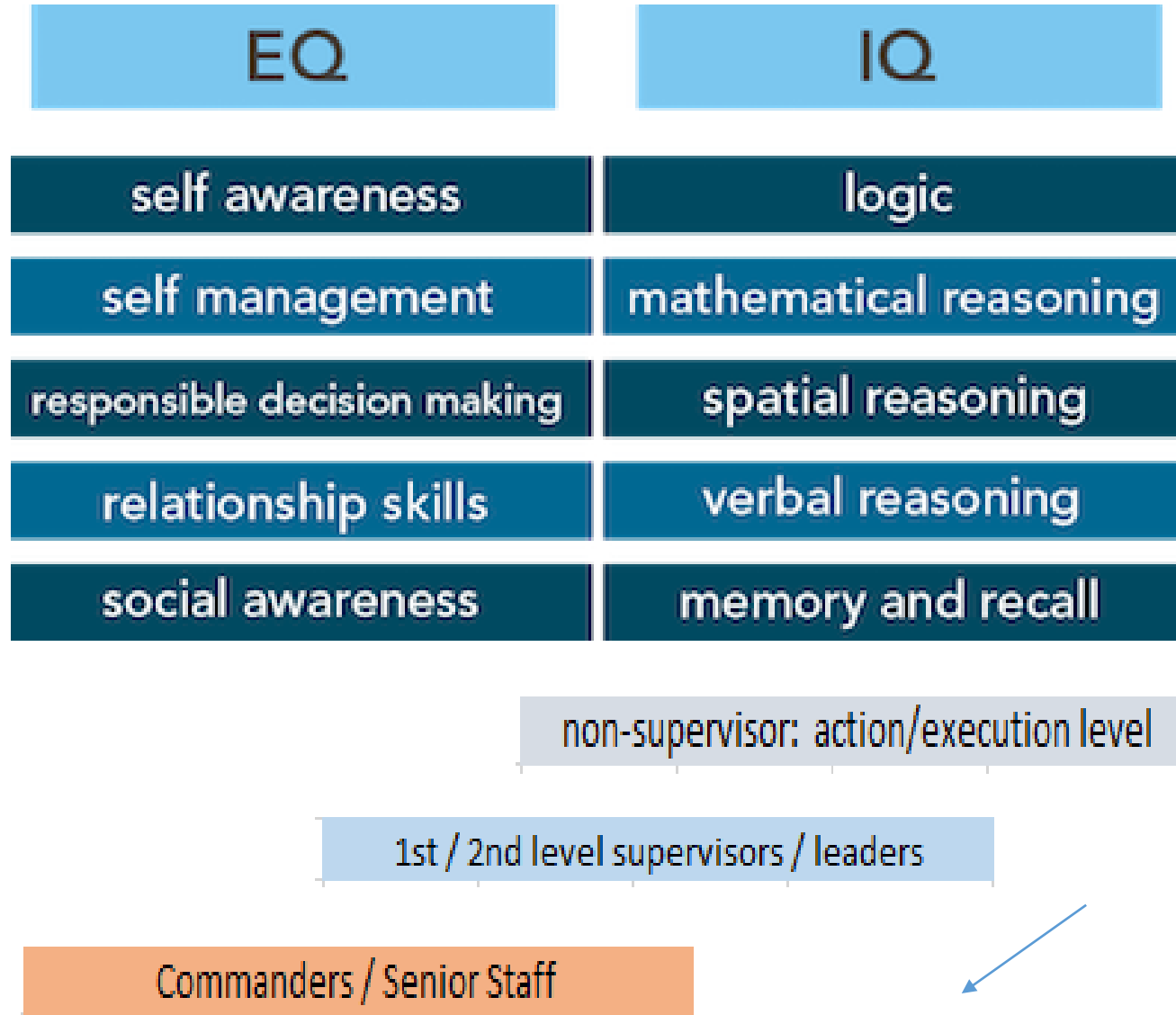
## - Some things to think about

- People vs. destination priority 1
- Lesson: no strategy or vision until you figure out the personnel piece
- On vs. Off >>>> correct seating
- Destination may change ... won't matter if right people + right seats



He also found that the “superstar” CEO is a myth

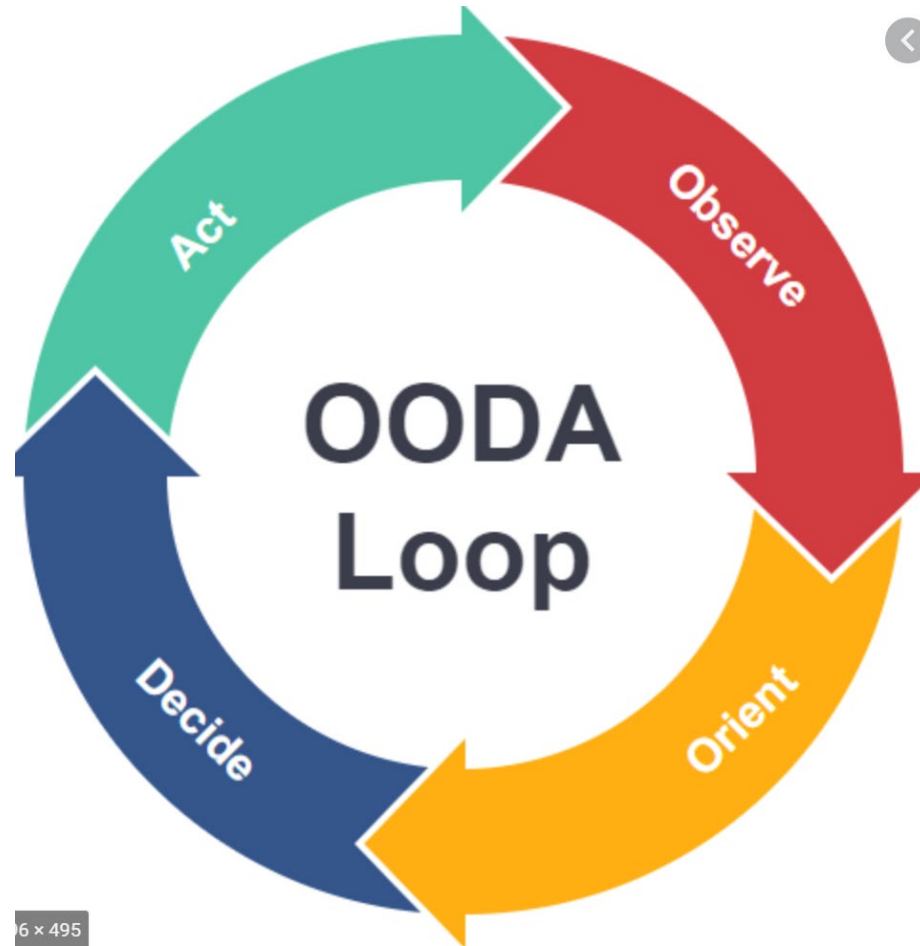
EQ >>>> IQ



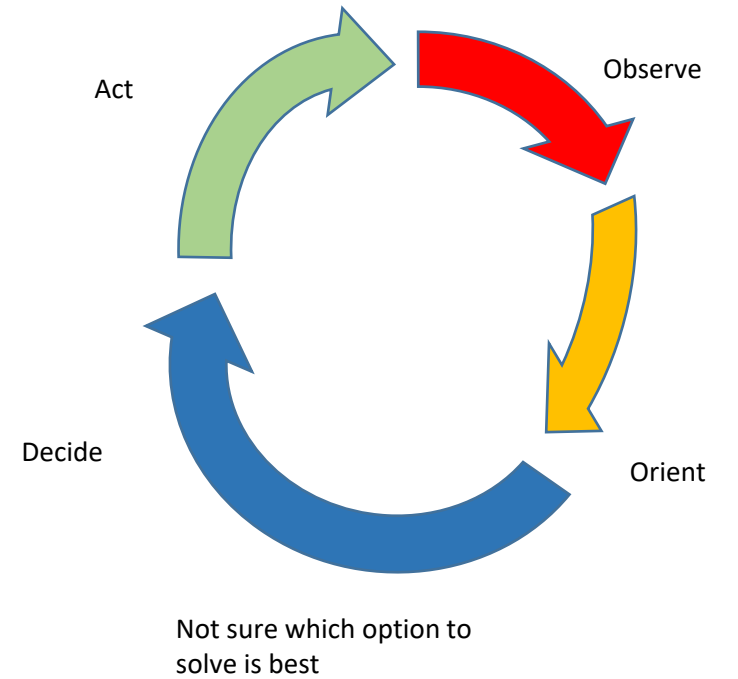
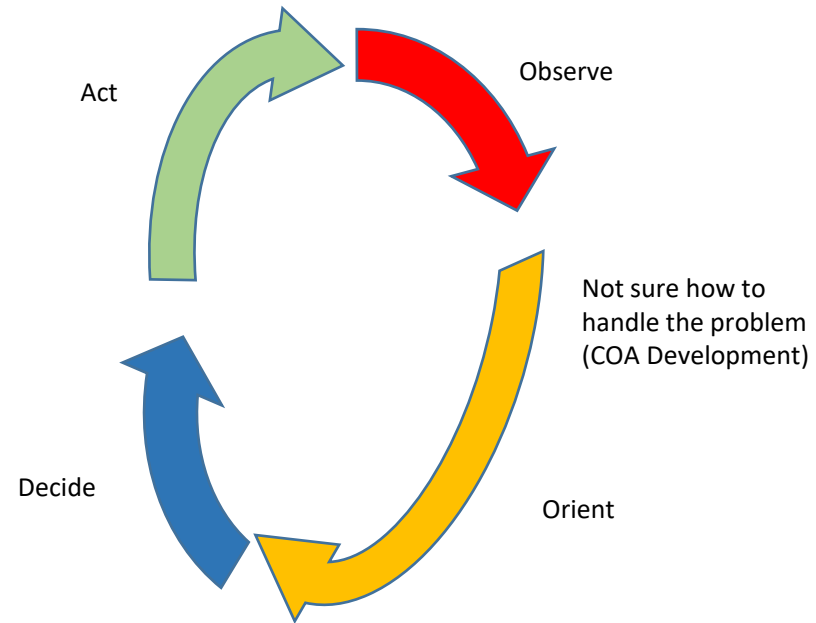
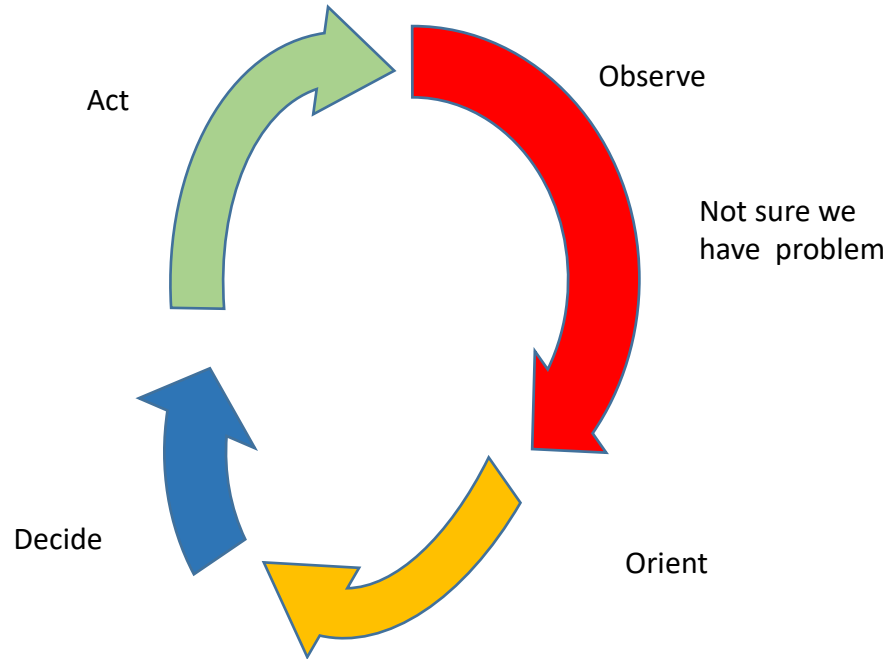
In assessing this “jump” ....  
Realize past performance is not  
indicative of future results .....  
Need to “forecast”

# ... Some thoughts on Decision Frameworks

- Important for CCs to know where they are joining in on this continuous loop
- Could be during any one of the four
- Were the previous phases appropriately sized?

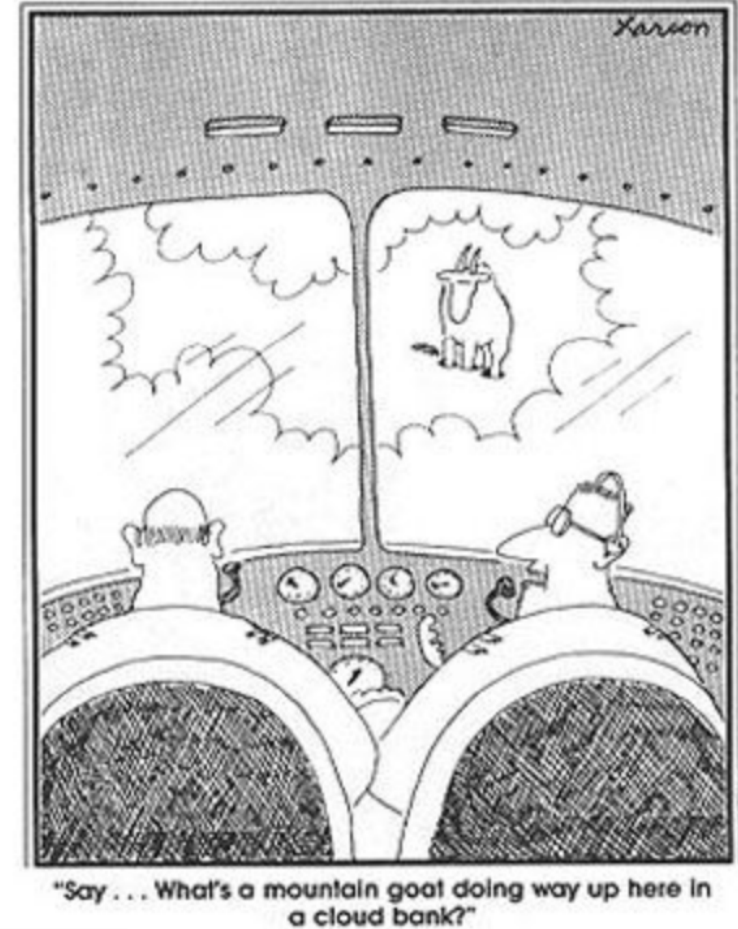


# ... 3 scenarios



# .... Thinking about how we think

- Kahneman's 2 systems:
  - Sys 1
    - Fast
    - Unconscious / automatic / requires no effort or control
    - Constant assessment / constant updates
    - 98% of our thinking
  - Sys 2
    - Slow
    - Conscious / deliberate / controlled, rational thinking
    - Seeks new and/or missing information
    - The other 2%
- 1 protects 2 from overload (35k / day)
- System 1 generates heuristics ..... Practical vs rational or logical



# Thinking about thinking

- Sys 1 vs. 2
  - Solve this one as quickly as you can...
  - A bat and a ball together cost \$1.10. The bat costs \$1 more than the ball. How much does the ball cost?
  - Did you say ten cents?
  - It's 5 cents .....  $\$1.05 + .05 = \$1.10$
- The reactionary e-mail vs wait problem is sys 1 to sys 2 transformation
- Sometimes the absolute best thing to do right now is “nothing”

## .... On communication

- Add “I was wrong” and “I’m not sure” to your vocabulary and know when to use them
- It is difficult to overestimate how much/frequently what you say will be misinterpreted or overanalyzed. Be careful.
- Some (not all) of the time when people come to you to complain, they just want somebody to listen.
- Tenor is difficult via e-mail. Beware.
- Swift to hear / slow to speak / slow to wrath
- When to call vs. e-mail

# When to call vs e-mail

- Difficult / lengthy to explain and/or subtle
  - Call
- Anticipate significant back and forth / interaction
  - Call
- Need / want a written record
  - Email
- Visual aids necessary
  - Usually email
- Worried about tenor
  - Call (maybe even in person)
- Need to negotiate
  - Call
- Screwed something up
  - Almost always call
- Want to enable third party follow-on and/or follow-up
  - Usually email

## .... On leadership (in general)

- There is no one “leadership philosophy” ... stop searching for it (or don’t start).
- Being a good follower is just as important as being a good leader.
- If you spend all your time on taskers, you’ll not have time to think strategy and plan.
  - If you can get the “admin” right ..... the rest will follow.
  - Need good CSS staff
  - Need a great exec (definitely  $\geq$  group level)
  - Need a good deputy and/or unit cc’s and DOs ( $\geq$  group level)
- It’s ok to disagree with your boss .... And to voice it ..... but once he/she makes a decision, it is “our” decision.
- Don’t underestimate the importance of a great senior NCO .... Ideally a Chief ..... but it doesn’t have to be

## .... On leadership (in general)

- Pareto sometimes requires top-down limitation (..... the boss said “no”)
- Just because someone does something differently than you doesn’t mean it’s not a good way to do it
  - This will save you time
  - This will empower your subordinates
  - They will see how you do it and it will ripple down
- They probably won’t talk to you. If they do, it will be filtered. If you can find someone who will..... with no filter .....close the door and clear your calendar.
- No “philosophy” ..... But if you insist on traits:
  - Humility
  - Authenticity

# A Commander needs a couple of good Razors



## Occam's

- 14<sup>th</sup> century theologian / philosopher
- He embraced / did not invent
- Also known as law of parsimony
- Scientific and philosophical rule that entities should not be multiplied unnecessarily
- Simply put: given an array of explanations, the odds are the simplest is correct

- Zebras vs. Horses

CC Application: 1) don't look for complex / elegant solutions; 2) good for quick decisions without empirical evidence

# A Commander needs a couple of good Razors



Hanlon 's

- Credited to Rober J Hanlon of Scranton, PA
- Comes from a book he wrote on Murphy's Law
- May have taken it from a Napoleon quote
- Do not assume malice for an event which is more than likely just incompetence

CC Application: 1) Helpful with unit drama; 2)  
mod: perceived laziness may be lack of direction

# Manpower / Hiring / Personnel

- Get / stay familiar with key documents and their components
  - UMD / UMPR / Alpha Roster / PAS vs. RIC vs. SMO / MILPIDS / etc
- Need to know the system(s)
  - Classification / USAJOBS / Hiring documents / AGRs / RMVS / etc
- The Wing's Power BI page can help:
  - Personnel Master
  - Vacancies and Overages
  - Education and Promotion
- Three Names: Pete Speen / Steve Bell / Camlon Rooke
  - This is what we have now .... This is what I want it to look like
  - Step back and watch ..... if they say "no" it likely can't be done (legally)
- On hiring (see previous on "why") .....how?
  - The "system" may work better than you think (USAJOBS)
  - Legwork always required (interviews / resume analysis / etc)
  - Always call next to last boss or known "source of truth" (call >> interview)
  - "Known" not necessarily better than "Unknown"
  - Have had great success with: retired SNCO to CIV, AFSC change for good reason
  - Have had horrible scenarios with: dead wood offload

# On speeches for going aways / retirements / things you officiate / etc:

- Generic
  - Written notes helpful to most (I usually use them... briefing guide analogy)
  - Keep it as short as you can
  - Make it funny
  - Tell a story (or two)
  - Always brag on the person retiring / leaving /etc

# On speeches for going aways / retirements / things you officiate / etc:

- Specific
  - Opening Comment or quote that is applicable (keep a library of good ones)
  - Thanks for the opportunity (“humbled” . .... “known XXX for YYY”.... Served together since ZZZ).
  - Recognition for ceremony admin (or retiree may want to do this)
  - Senior leader recognition (I’m a fan of blanket vs. by-name)
  - Family:
    - Spouse
    - Kids
    - In-laws, brothers / sisters / etc.
  - Preamble for the guest of honor --- this is your summary paragraph and needs to be well-worded .... Usually general and closes with a lead to specifics

# Some suggestions on speeches for going aways / retirements / things you officiate / etc:

- Specifics (cont)
  - Chronology (OPRs or PRDA ..... )
  - A few stories or some good humor
    - Meet with the guest of honor 1-2 days before (plan for 1 hour)
      - Take good / detailed notes
      - May need 2<sup>nd</sup> / 3<sup>rd</sup> source
      - Goal is some big takeaways that the OPRs / EPRs won't reveal
      - Write more than you think you should and analyze later
  - Use two sources above for bulk of speech
    - Some quotes from performance but not too many (catch the highlights or truly superior accomplishments)
    - Lose style points if you're rifling through the EPRs on stage
    - Gain style points if you memorize some of it ... especially where / when / what
    - Think about what sticks out to you if you know him/her well
    - This should be authentic vs. fabricated

# Some suggestions on speeches for going away / retirements / things you officiate / etc:

- Career summary plus what the individual has meant to the organization
- Close with a good quote if you have one ..... (use your library)
  - Service / Memories / People / Grateful / Always
- Keep all speeches on file
  - Can use quotes again (depending on audience)
  - Good for outline / flow
  - Ask for copies of others'
  - Once you've written a few it gets easier and you can use "components" as applicable

# I'd like to read XXXX but I don't have time

- You have more time than you think
  - Assume 20 minute commute each way
  - $20 \times 2 \times 20 = 800$  minutes / month (13 hours)
  - You can read ... “listen to” a large book in 13 hours
- Audible Premium plus = \$14.95 / month
- 1 credit (free book) per month (it works out almost perfectly for a normal commute)
- Of well over 100 books I've looked for, they've only not had 2
- The Strategy
  - Listen back and forth to work
  - For any “gems” ... but the print or electronic version .... Then read it again

# 6 Books you should read before Thanksgiving

- “Team of Rivals” – Doris Kearns Goodwin
  - Unbelievably well researched
  - A true study in leadership during conflict
  - Historical manual on assembling “the right team”
- “Never Split the Difference” – Chris Voss
  - Best negotiating book I’ve ever read .... Hands down
  - Full of “actionable advice”
  - Riveting anecdotes that drive home his points
- “Range” – David Epstein
  - Broad knowledge vs specialization
  - Drives home the importance of “perspective” and varied talents on a team
  - Will likely change what you are looking for in those that are leading your organization at the mid-levels

# 6 Books you should read before Thanksgiving

- “Thinking Fast and Slow” – Daniel Kahneman
  - Behavioral and decision psychology reference source
  - Will show you your cognitive biases (that you don’t know about)
  - Provides insight for “intuition” vs. “analysis”
- HBRs 10 must reads “On Leadership” – various authors
  - Not really a book .... A compilation (10 papers)
  - Perspectives from some giants in the field (Drucker, Goldman, Collins, etc)
  - Gamechanger .... The different authors’ papers keeps it from bogging down like most leadership book .... You will end up with a printed/electronic copy
- “Super Forecasting” – Philip Tetlock
  - It’s not about the weather .... And it’s about more than forecasting
  - Good primer on data use and empirical analysis
  - Will help you to sniff out others errors (or intentional misuse of data)

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