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The play workshop: Building psychological safety at work

Jeff Harry
Rediscover Your Play

We all want to belong



What we will cover today

Defining
play & why
it's
important

N.I.C.E. vs.
K.I.N.D.
workplaces

What does
equity in
action look
like?

Traits of a
healthy
balance
team



What is psychological safety?

**A place where employees feel seen,
heard, appreciated, & valued**

Play Experiment #1A

**When have you felt seen, heard,
appreciated, & valued at work?**

Play Experiment #1B

**When have you not felt seen, heard,
appreciated, & valued?**

What is an example of a psychologically unsafe workplace?



isa watson ✓
@isadwatson · [Follow](#)



The new guy at Twitter dissolved all ERGs. No more Twitter Women or Blackbirds. This is so unbelievably wild to watch.

6:30 AM · Nov 4, 2022



27.3K



Reply



Copy link

What is an example of a psychologically unsafe workplace?



What is an example of a psychologically unsafe workplace?



INSIDER

Newsletters

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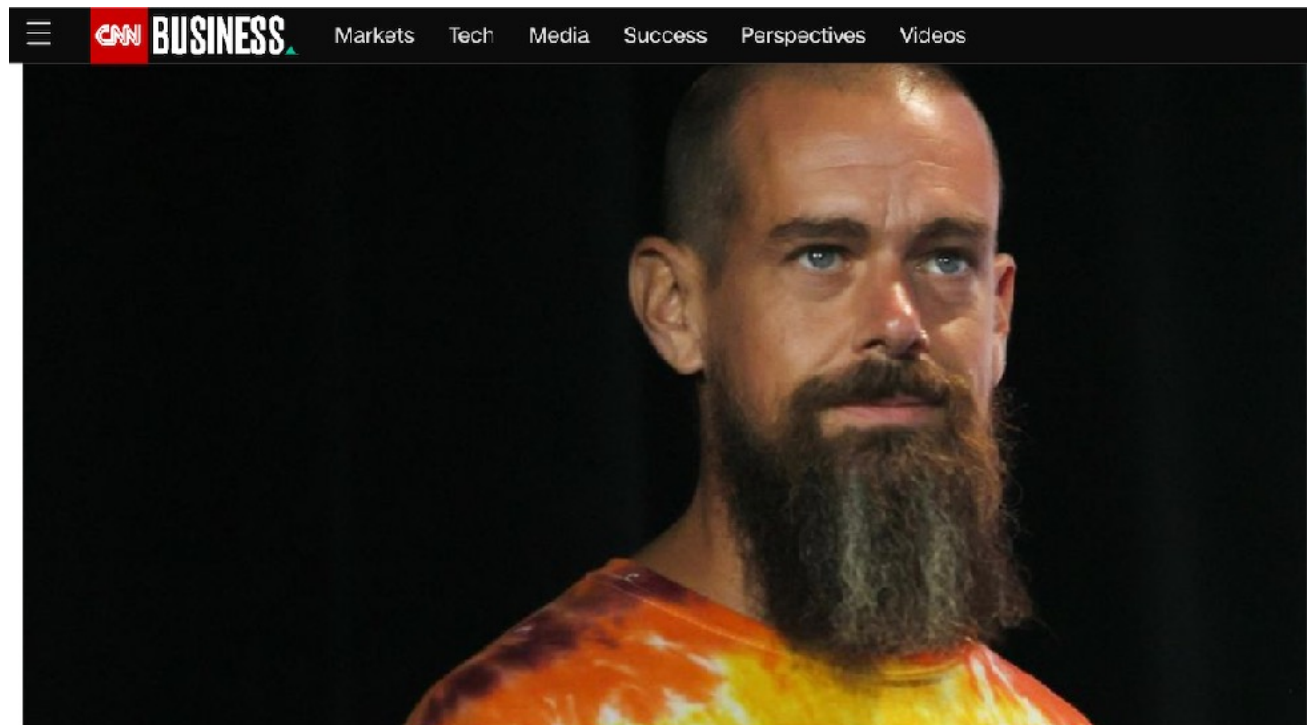
Subscribe

Twitter employees around the world received blunt termination notices that differed on details, leaving workers 'in limbo'

Grace Kay and Kali Hays Nov 4, 2022, 12:45 PM

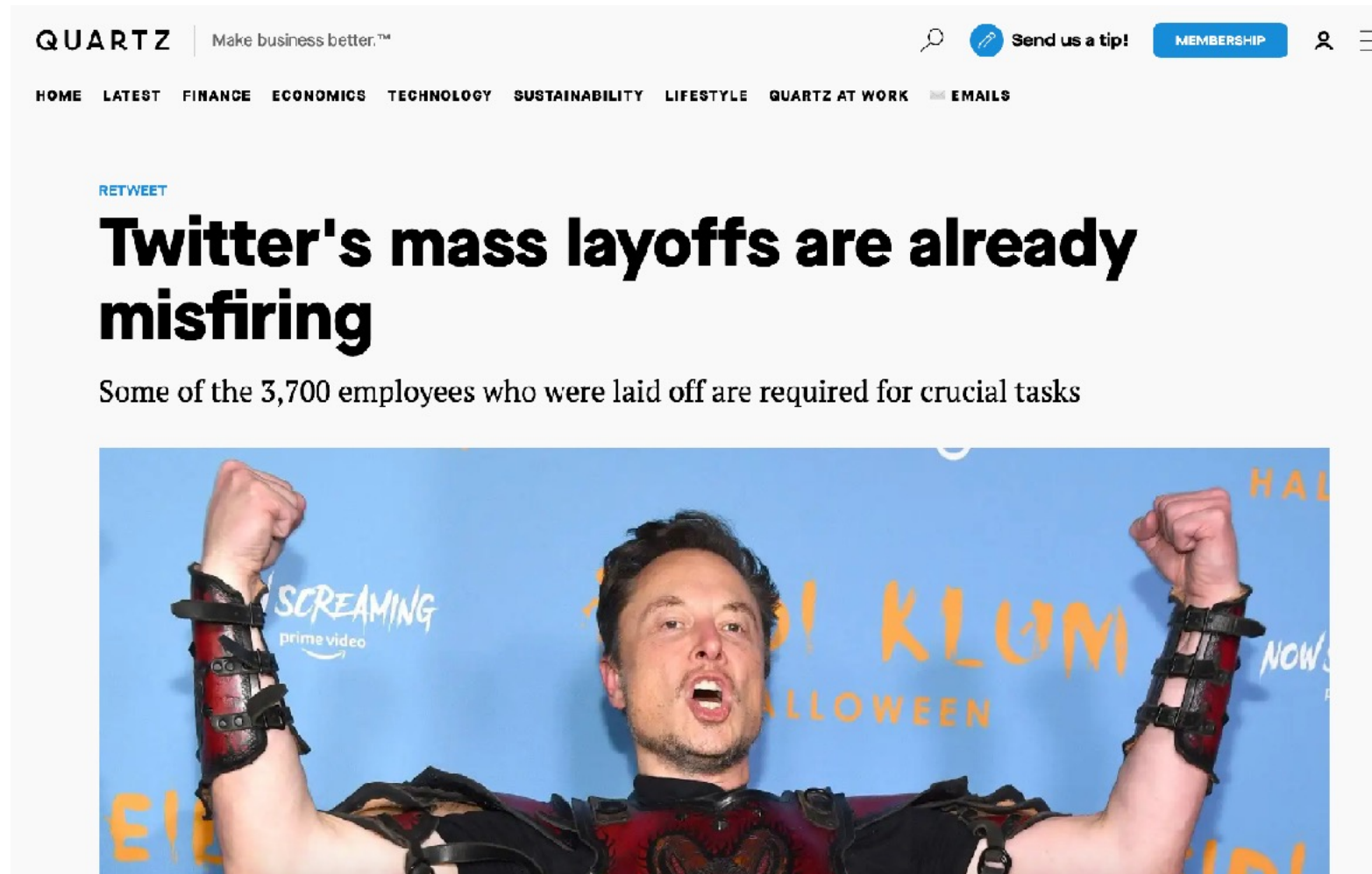


Staff do not feel seen



**Twitter founder Jack Dorsey apologizes
after Elon Musk lays off staff**

Not feeling seen



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Not feeling seen

Elon Musk backpedals after mocking disabled Twitter worker in tweet 'storm'

Haraldur Thorleifsson was locked out of his computer, but after nine days of no answer from the company, decided to tweet the CEO



📷 Elon Musk got into a Twitter feud with employee Haraldur Thorleifsson over the latter's employment status at the company. Photograph: Stephen Lovekin/BEI/Rex/Shutterstock

Play Experiment #1B

**When have you not felt seen, heard,
appreciated, & valued?**

Who am I?



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Built the largest Lego-inspired STEM organization in the US

- Play (no business plan)
- Intuition (picked fun people)
- Prioritized people over profit
- Followed our curiosity
- Focused on inspiring staff

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FEELING SEEN

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*Play is any joyful act that has
no specific purpose or result...*

*where you are fully immersed
in the moment.*



*Play is the opposite of
perfection.*

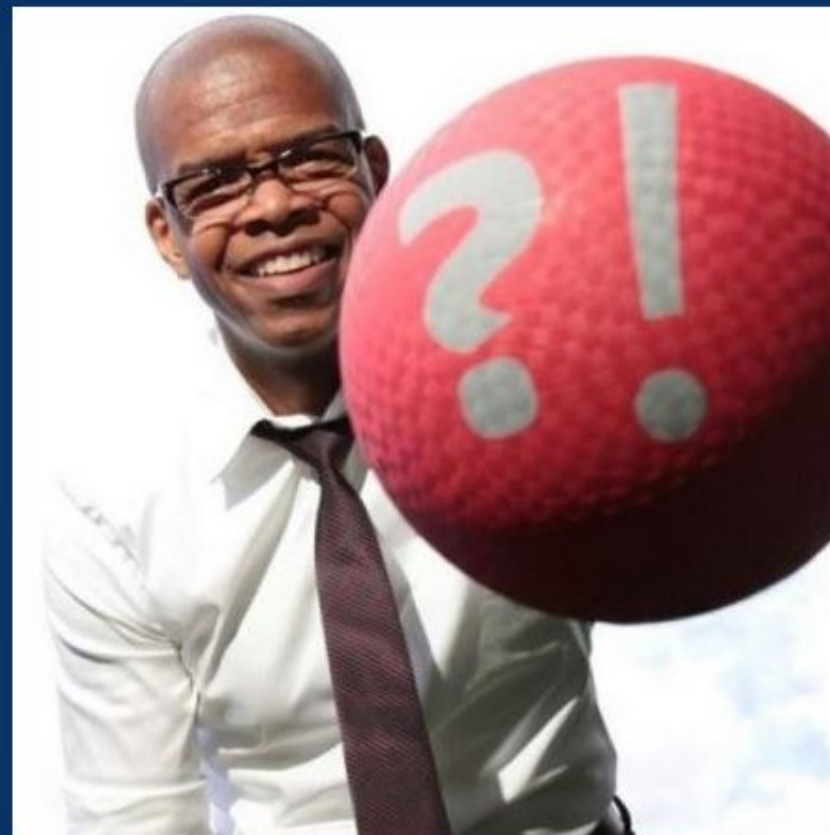
*Play is rooted in curiosity,
experimentation, and a sense
of wonder.*

Play Experiment #2

**How can you remove PERFECTION
from your workplace and replace it
with experimentation and play?**

'You'll find the future
where ever people are
having the most fun.'

-Kevin Carroll





Percent of time Google employees can spend
working on ideas and projects that interest them



Percent of Google's products that originated
from the 20% time





Google AdSense



Gmail



Google Maps



Google News

Play Experiment #3

**What is your staff's
zone of genius/flow?**

**What is the work your staff does where
they forget about time?**

**What is the work they'd do even if
they weren't get paid for it?**

Play Experiment #4A

Explore your why

**How many people's lives
have you impacted in
positive way this year?**

(Directly & indirectly)

Play Experiment #4B

Explore your why

**Think of your most memorable
and meaningful moment where
you impacted someone in a
positive way.**

(Felt the most connected to your field of talent acquisition.)



D O S E

<p>DOPAMINE THE REWARD CHEMICAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completing a task• Doing self-care activities• Eating food• Celebrating little wins 	<p>OXYTOCIN THE LOVE HORMONE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Playing with a dog• Playing with a baby• Holding hand• Hugging your family• Give compliment 	<p>SEROTONIN THE MOOD STABILIZER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meditating• Running• Sun exposure• Walk in nature• Swimming• Cycling 	<p>ENDORPHIN THE PAIN KILLER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Laughter exercise• Essential oils• Watch a comedy• Dark chocolate• Exercising 
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FEELING HEARD

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What happens when a workplace lacks belonging



What happens when a workplace lacks belonging



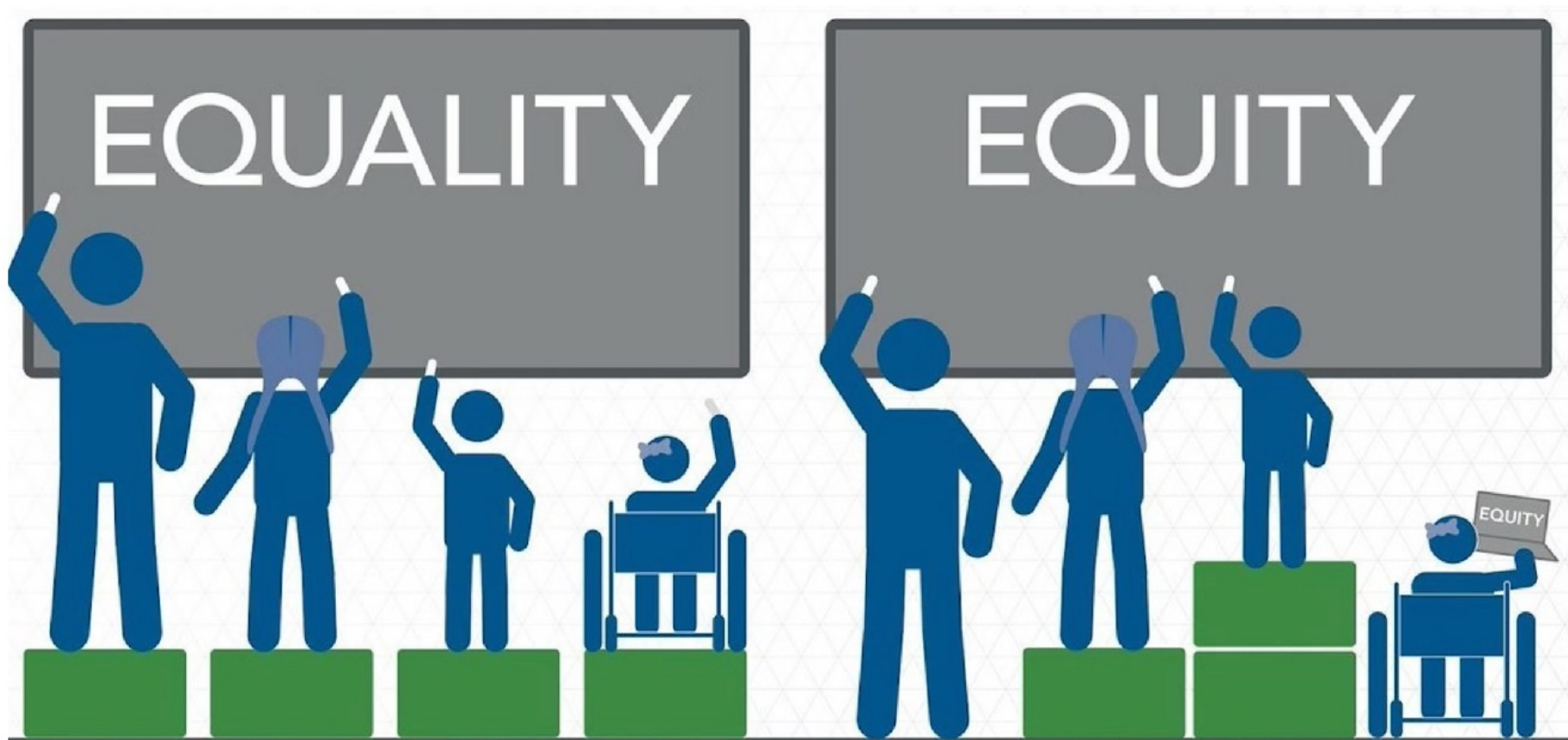
Why are belonging & equity so important?

**Cultivate the greatest ideas
& foster the best talent**

How are belonging & equity connected?

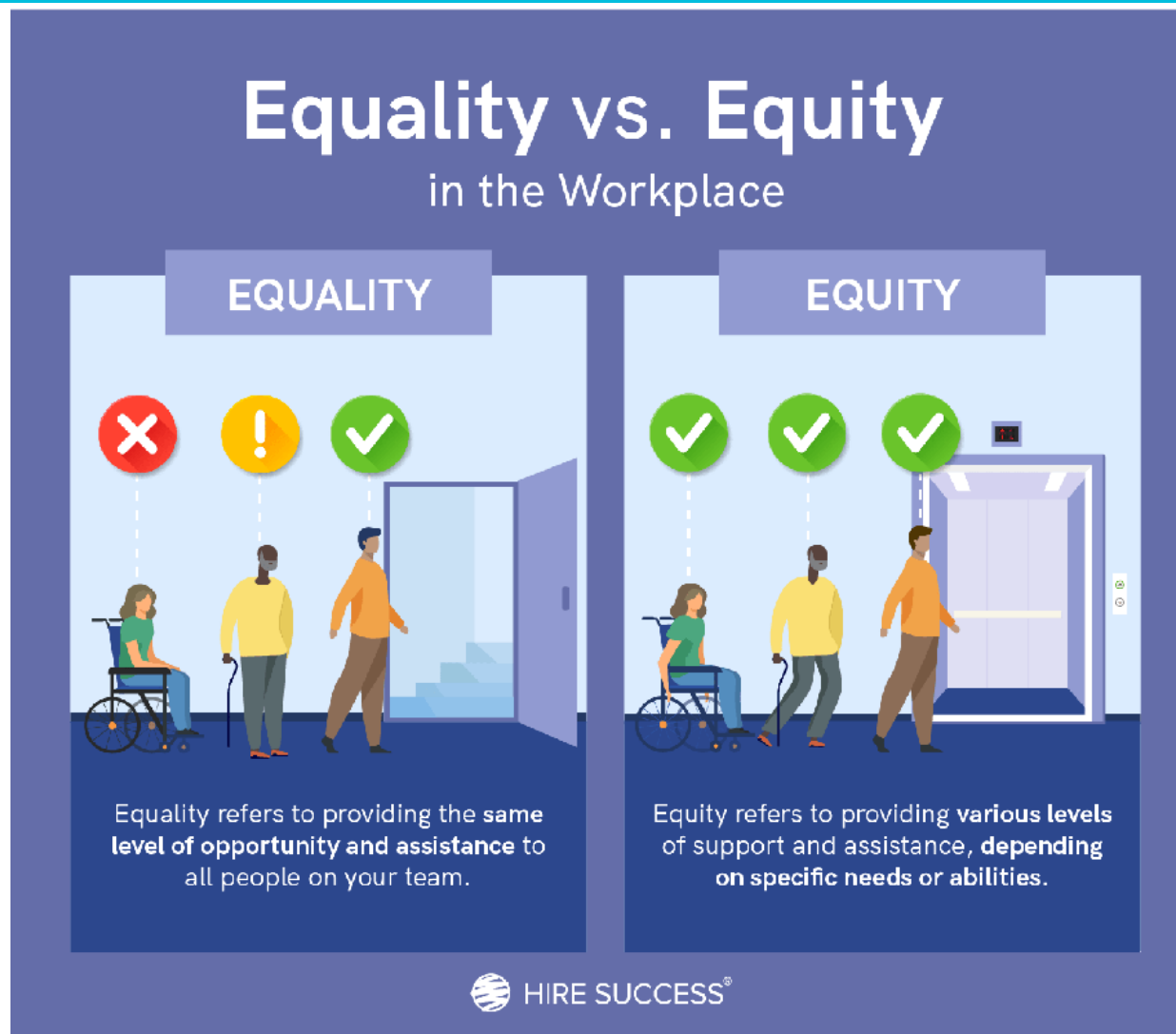
**Equity is the action
that creates real belonging.**

Defining equity



Source: "Equity at Work," flexibility.com, Elena Simpkins, 2020

Defining equity



Source: "Increasing Diversity, Equity & Inclusion in the Workplace," Hire Success, 2023

How does your team show up for each other?

Stop being **N.I.C.E.**

Nothing

Important

Can

Emerge

Nice



- Polite with everyone. Others feel good about them.
- Niceness is passive. Nice on face but different on our back.
- Afraid to speak up in unpleasant situations.
- Niceness can be a lethal coz of competition of showing off.

Kind



- Genuinely cares about people. Doesn't show off.
- Kindness is an attitude. Person wishes to be kind or not.
- Always puts forth their views & takes a stand.
- Act of kindness produces oxytocin & it helps in decreasing blood pressure.

Why is kindness a better choice?



Makes you feel good



Helps to deal with anxiety



It is contagious



Helps form new bonds



Reduces stress

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The Pleasant Mind

How does your team show up for each other?

Start being **K.I.N.D.**

Key

Important

Necessary

Deliberate

Nice



- Polite with everyone. Others feel good about them.
- Niceness is passive. Nice on face but different on our back.
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Helps form new bonds



Reduces stress

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The Pleasant Mind

Play Experiment #5

**Cancel N.I.C.E.
(nothing important can emerge)
meetings**

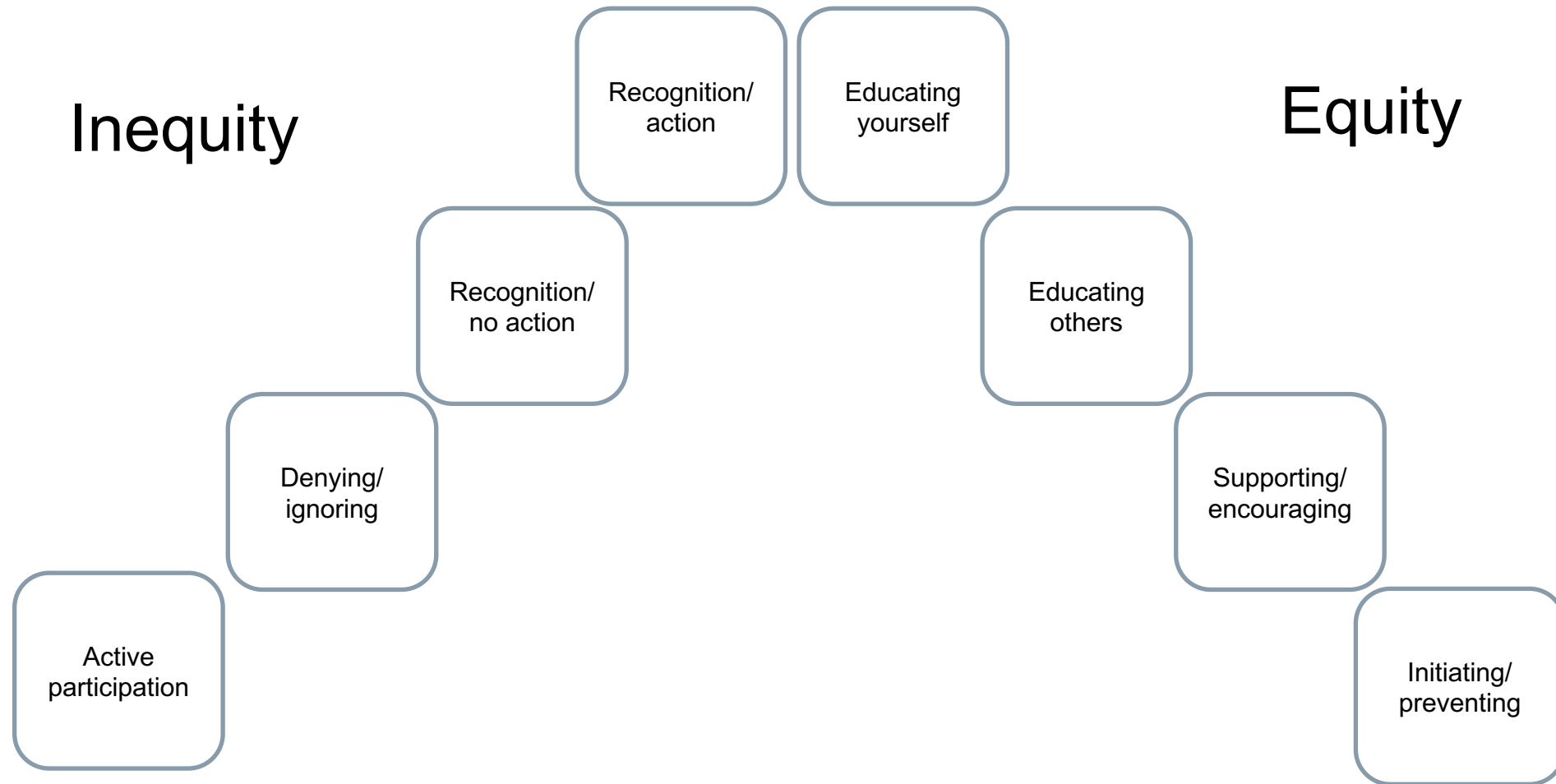
What is a culture of equity?

A culture of equity is made when:

- You identify the problem
- You take responsibility for addressing it

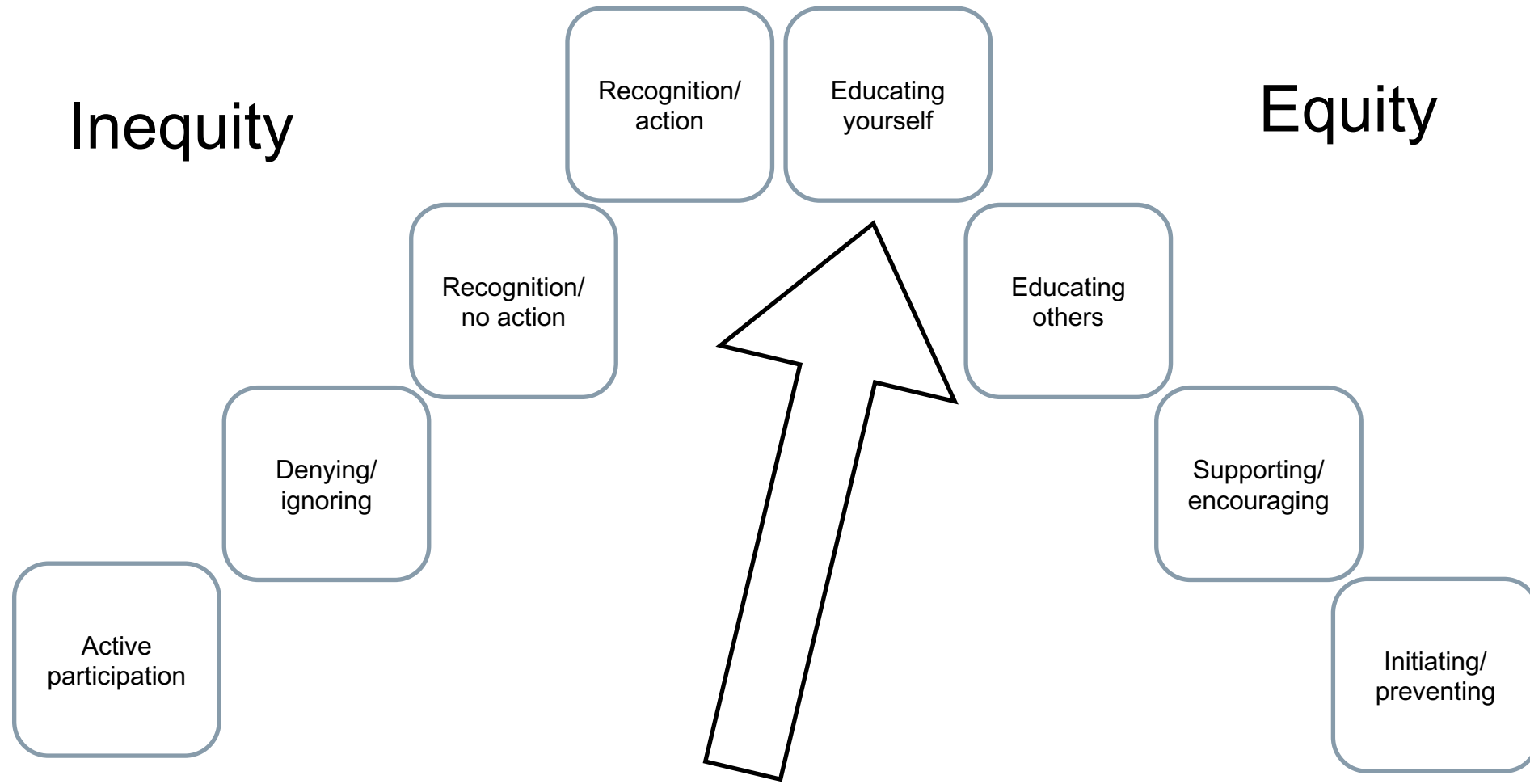


Where does your team stand when it comes to equity?



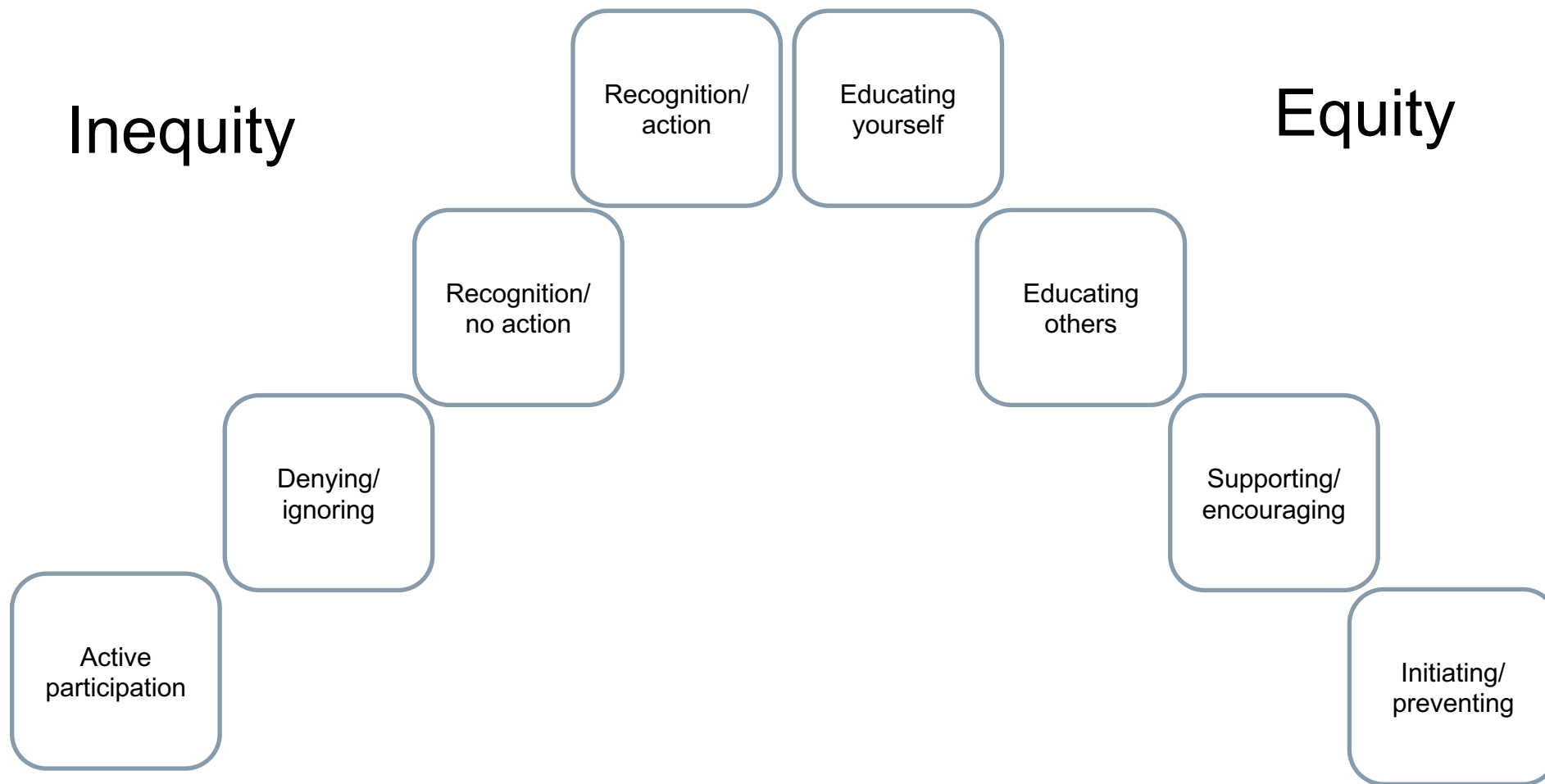
Source: M. Adams, L. Bell, P. Griffin, Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice, 1997

Where does your team stand when it comes to equity?



Source: M. Adams, L. Bell, P. Griffin, Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice, 1997

Play Experiment #6



Source: M. Adams, L. Bell, P. Griffin, Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice, 1997

A.I. analyzing a meeting to create equity



Source: Harkness.ai whitepaper

A.I. analyzing a meeting to create equity



Source: Harkness.ai whitepaper

A.I. analyzing a meeting to create equity

A.I. analysis results:

- CEO spoke the majority of the time, and specifically to the men.
- Women were twice as likely to be interrupted as men.
- The one woman of color in the room was not acknowledged.



Source: Harkness.ai whitepaper

A.I. analyzing a meeting to create equity

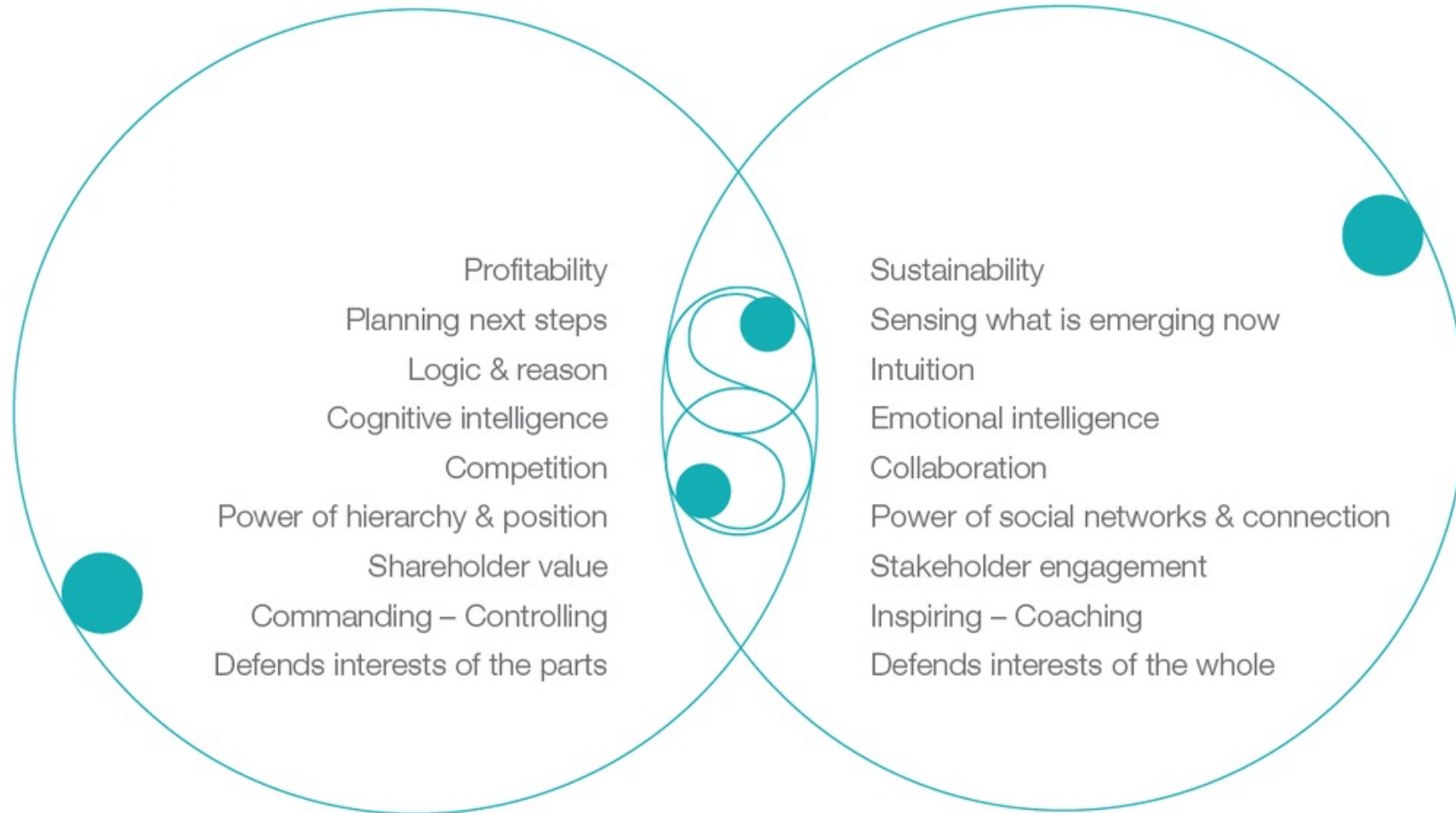
Results:

- **120% increase in ideas shared (20 to 44)**
- **100% decrease in interruptions**
- **50% increase in meeting satisfaction**
- **85% decrease in CEO speaking**
- **600% increase in women's voices being included**
- **1,600% increase in contribution from the woman of color**

Source: Harkness.ai whitepaper

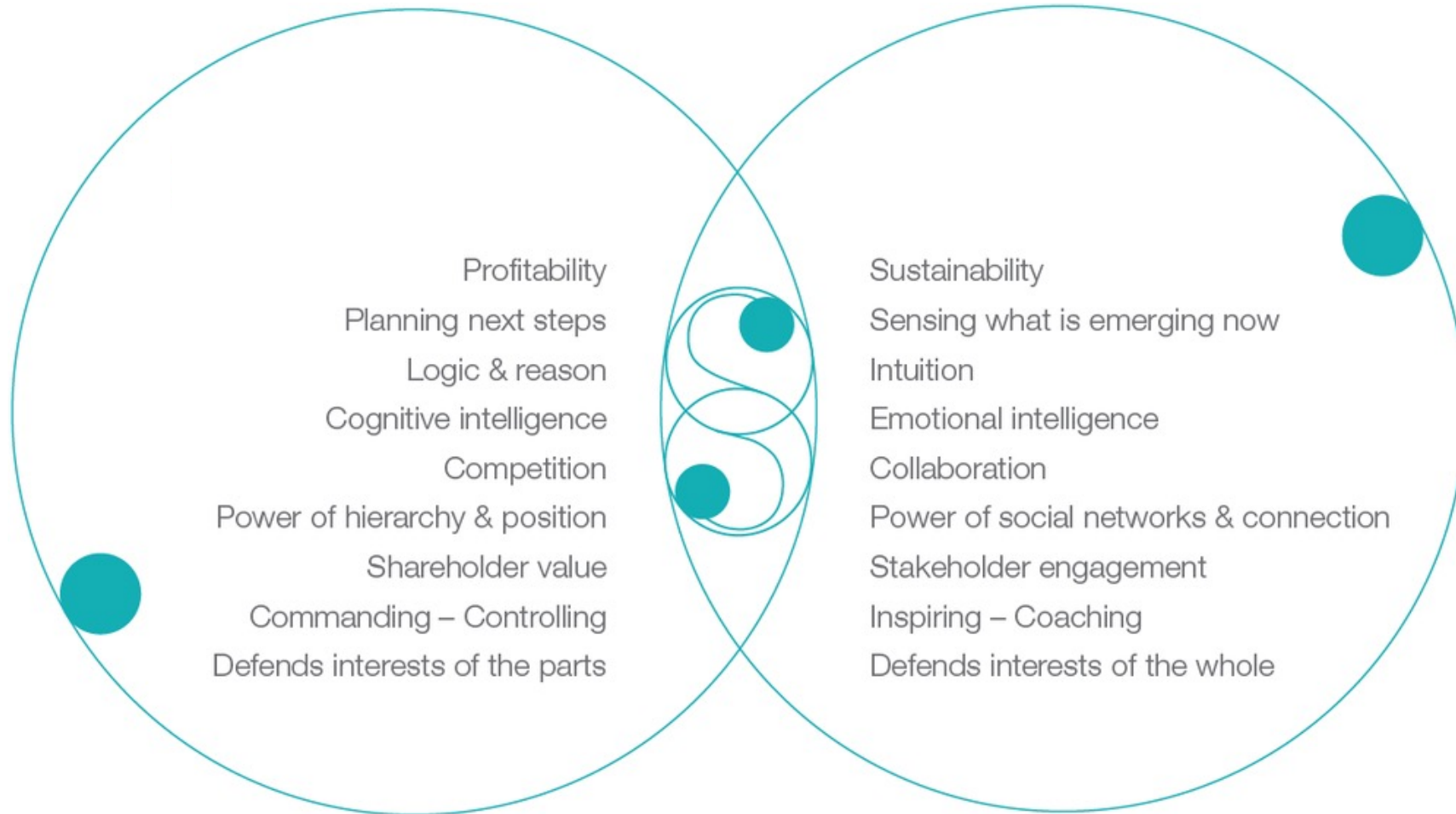
Play Experiment #7

What traits does your team currently have?



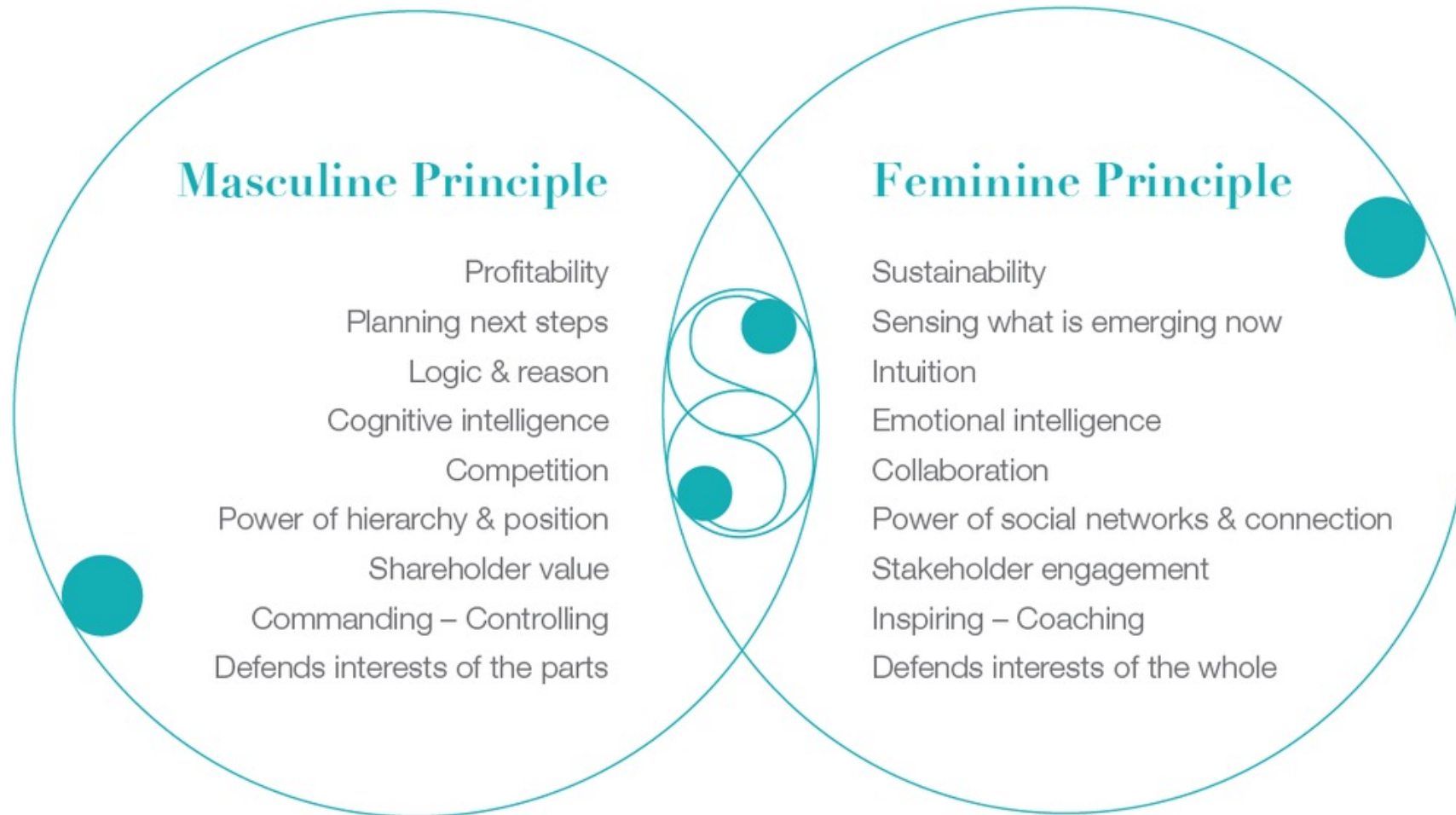
Play Experiment #7

What traits are missing from your team?



Play Experiment #7

Traits teams need for success



What happens when real belonging & equity in action exist?



What happens when real belonging & equity in action exist?



Play Experiment #8

Who is silent during meetings? Do you know why?



Feeling seen/heard play experiments

- **When have you felt seen, heard, appreciated, and valued?**
- **How can you remove PERFECTION from your workplace?**
- **What is your staff's zone of genius?**
- **Explore your why: most memorable moment at your job**

Equity & belonging play experiments

- **Cancel N.I.C.E. meetings**
- **Where does your team stand when it comes to equity?**
- **What traits does your team currently have, and what's missing?**
- **Who is silent at your meetings and why?**

**What actions are you willing
to take to ensure your staff
feel seen, heard, appreciated,
& valued?**



Let's help build psychological safety at
your work through play



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