



The Anti-Fragile Leader

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Most Difficult Part of Headship

2020

Personal health and well being

Divided, difficult community

Unknowns/constant change

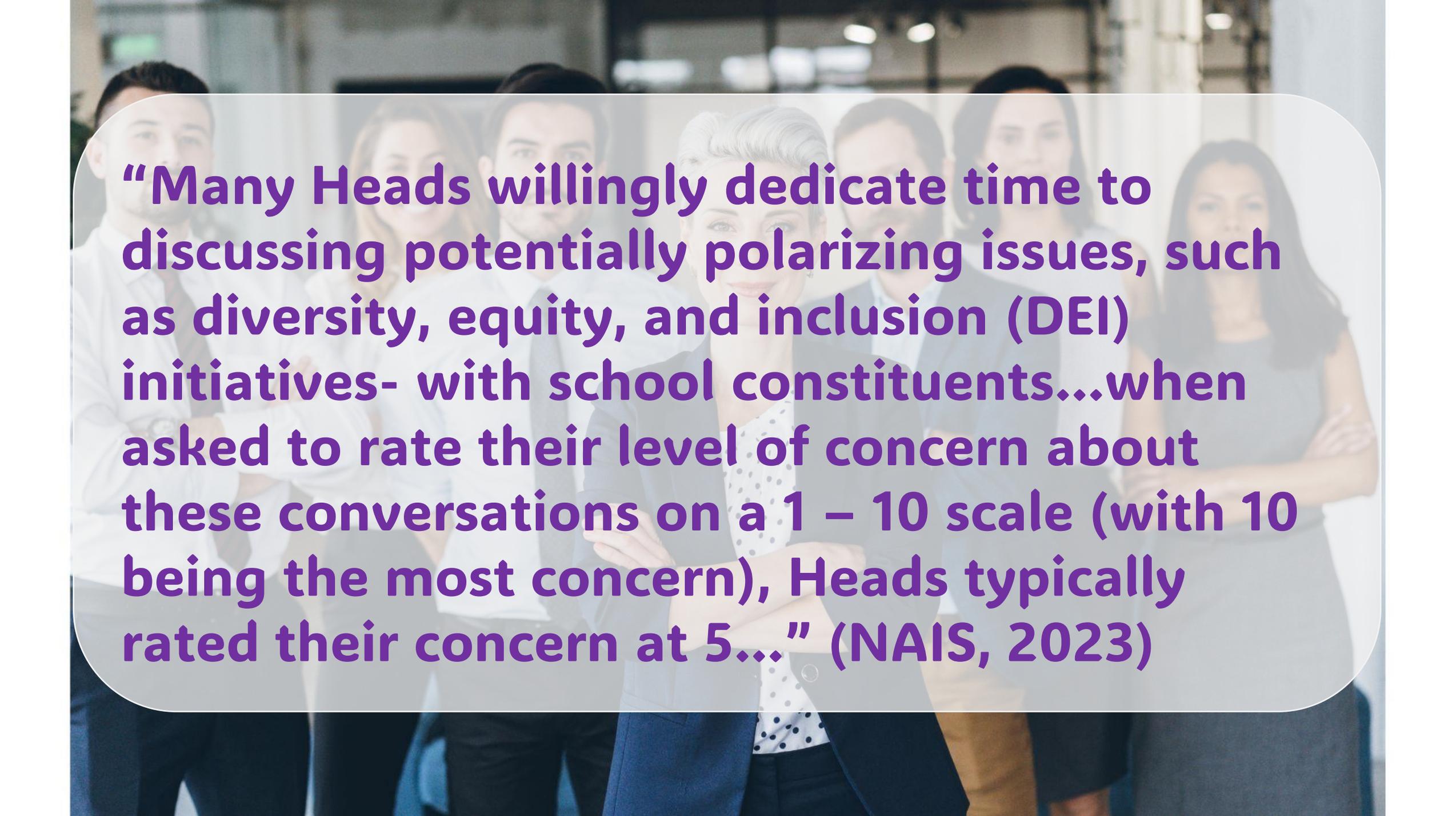
2022

Staff/faculty management (including staff shortages)

Navigating a changing COVID landscape

Political polarization/pushback





“Many Heads willingly dedicate time to discussing potentially polarizing issues, such as diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives- with school constituents...when asked to rate their level of concern about these conversations on a 1 – 10 scale (with 10 being the most concern), Heads typically rated their concern at 5...” (NAIS, 2023)

**YOU AND YOUR INSTITUTION
WILL HAVE ENCOUNTER
MOMENTS WHERE...**



You Can Respond With...

Fragility

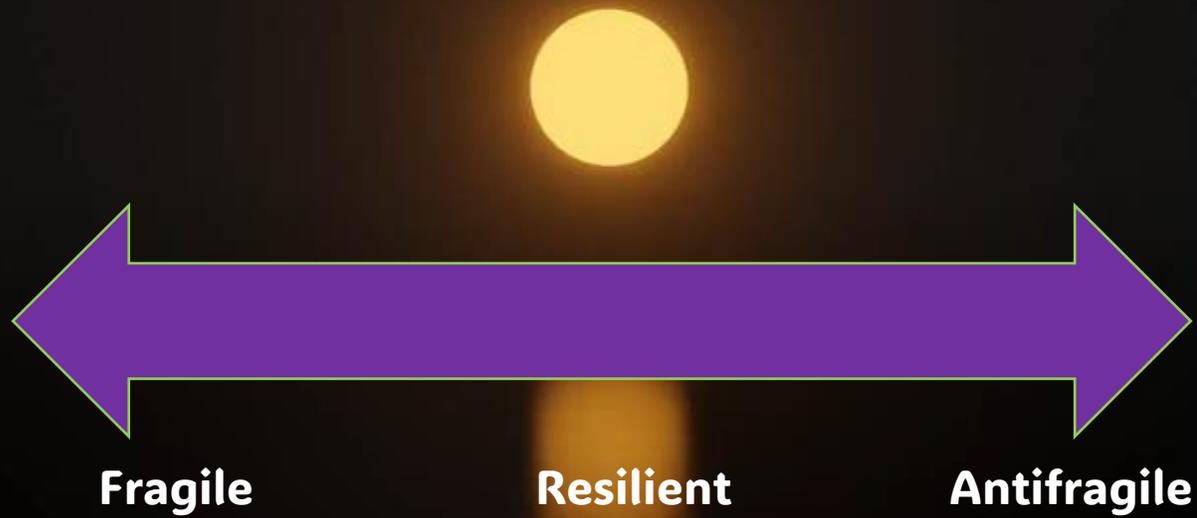
Resilience

**Anti-
Fragility**



A close-up photograph of a lit candle. The candle is yellow and has a bright, orange flame. The background is dark, and there are several other blurred flames, suggesting a larger arrangement of candles. A semi-transparent white banner with rounded ends is positioned horizontally across the middle of the image, containing the text "Think of a Candle" in a purple font.

Think of a Candle



Fragile means...

**We are not able to withstand
the challenges or crises that we
are faced with**



We Experience Overwhelm

“...an extreme level of stress and emotional and or cognitive intensity to the point of feeling unable to function...”-Brene Brown



FRAGILITY IS POSSIBLE WHEN...

The way we expect people to behave in community is not the reality

Our intensions are mischaracterized

Lack of support from people we expect to “have our backs”

The cumulative effects of being unjustly treated

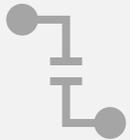
We are faced with high levels of uncertainty

We don't have the resources or expertise to navigate a challenge





Don't have the skills to have difficult conversations



Move into "solution mode" without assessing the root cause of an issue



Do not have or adhere to a clear mission, vision, and purpose for the work of DEIB

**Fragility
also occurs
when we...**



Conflict And Challenge Are Inevitable



How are you feeling?

Livid	Panicked	Frustrated	Shocked	Stunned	Energised	Thrilled	Ecstatic	Euphoric	Exhilarated
Enraged	Terrified	Peeved	Worried	Annoyed	Positive	Connected	Joyful	Enthusiastic	Elated
Irate	Frightened	Angry	Nervous	Concerned	Glad	Inspired	Happy	Motivated	Excited
Furious	Anxious	Agitated	Unsure	Excluded	Amused	Focused	Cheerful	Proud	Surprised
Disgusted	Scared	Troubled	Restless	Uneasy	Satisfied	Pleased	Hopeful	Optimistic	Lively
Apprehensive	Ashamed	Guilty	Deflated	Complacent	Easy-going	Safe	Chilled	Respected	Blessed
Sullen	Glum	Disheartened	Discouraged	Bored	Relaxed	Secure	Content	Thankful	Fulfilled
Exhausted	Fatigued	Sad	Miserable	Pessimistic	Thoughtful	Composed	Calm	Grateful	Tranquil
Alienated	Depressed	Disappointed	Tired	Confused	Mellow	Peaceful	Balanced	At Ease	Collected
Despair	Inconsolable	Anguished	Hopeless	Lonely	Listless	Sleepy	Restful	Comfy	Serene





DEFENSIVENESS
ANXIETY
ANGER
GUILT
HELPLESSNESS
BLAME
EMBARRASSMENT
HURT
FEAR
INVALIDATION



Resilience means

We can cope with the challenges and adversity
we are presented with
(We Can Bounce Back)



Resilience

Stressor



Coping Skills

CONFLICT AND CHALLENGE



Resilience is possible when...

Practicing mindfulness, meditation, and/or prayer

Reframe your thoughts

Exercise and movement

Self reflection and journaling

Relationships and support networks

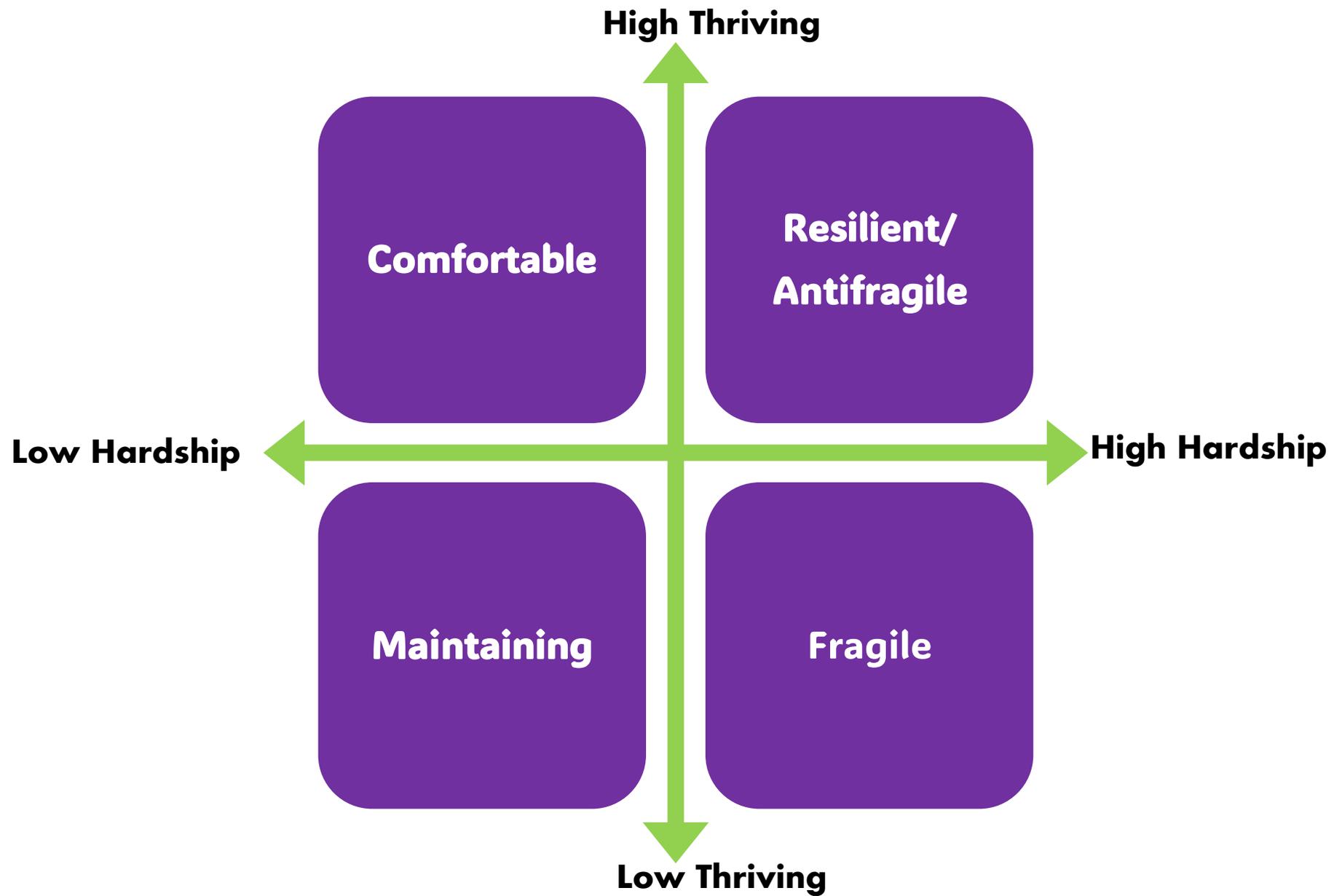
Scenario planning (if this happens, then....)



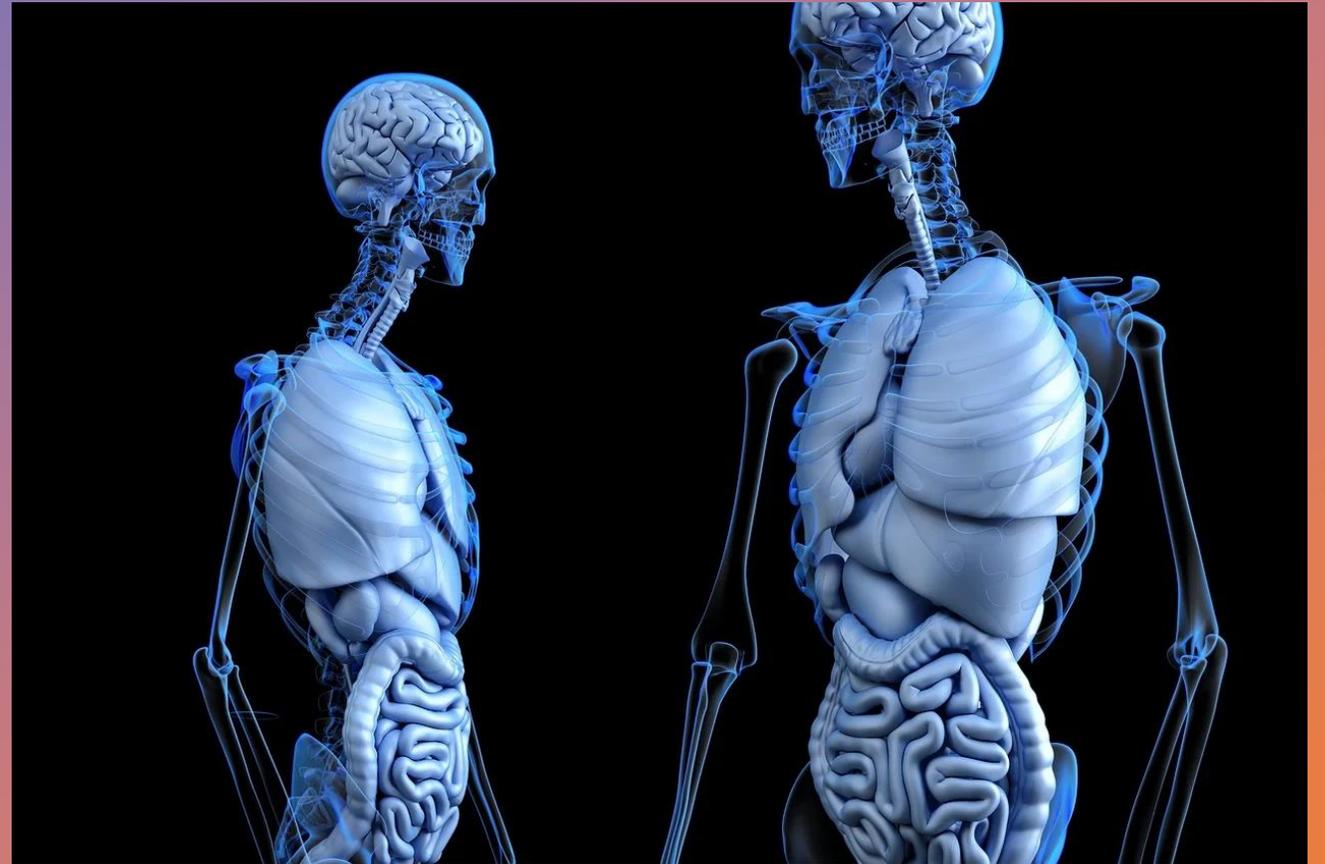
Antifragility means...

You don't only bounce back after a crisis or a set back,
but come back stronger





The Human Body is Built to Be Antifragile

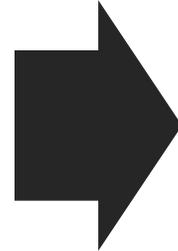


**Redundancy is an
Essential Characteristic
of Anti-Fragility**



FLOW OF PRESENTATION

Organizational



Personal

Part 1

Part 2



CASE STUDY

In the tight-knit community of the school, where diversity and inclusivity had always been celebrated, the global happenings didn't go unnoticed. The intensifying conflict between Israel and Palestine was making headlines daily, and the echoes of the turmoil were felt even in the school's harmonious environment. Parents and guardians, who found themselves besieged by the devastating news, looked towards institutions for solidarity and support.

Several calls and emails began to trickle into the school office. The parents, a mixed cohort representing various perspectives and stakeholder groups, were united by a single query: "Why has the school not made a statement on the conflict?"

- **Defining the tension**: What are the possible areas of institutional tension? Why does it matter?
- **Creating redundant structures**: What steps would you take to address the situation?
- **Post situation**: What would you do after a decision has been reached?

CASE STUDY

The mood in the school staff room was down. Teachers and other staff members quietly talked among themselves, sharing stories of frustration and disappointment. There was a growing feeling that the school administration's efforts to improve Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) were just for show and didn't really change anything.

After many quiet conversations, a group of teachers decided to take their concerns to the school administration.

When they spoke to the administration, they explained that many staff members felt ignored and undervalued in the school's DEIB initiatives. They talked about DEIB workshops that didn't lead to real change, decisions being made without diverse input, and an overall school culture that didn't match up with the administration's public commitments to diversity and inclusion.

- **Defining the tension**: What are the possible areas of institutional tension? Why does it matter?
- **Creating redundant structures**: What steps would you to address the situation?
- **Post situation**: What would you do after a decision has been reached?

**FROM THESE CASE STUDIES AND
DISCUSSIONS WHAT ARE ESSENTIAL
ELEMENTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL
RESILIENCE AND ANTI-FRAGILITY?**

What are important characteristics of an anti-fragile organization?

18 responses

- Growth Mindset
- Creating consistent/redundant structures, open to continual growth and learning
- Mission orientation
- They aren't afraid fail and learn from their failures.
- normalizing difficult conversations
- Growth mindset, willing to experience tension, learning from mistakes
- Lean into discomfort
- Building skills
- Lean into doscomfort



What are important characteristics of an anti-fragile organization?

18 responses

- Naming the inherent complexity in our humanity
- Redundancy of safe spaces to process hard conversations at all levels — adults, students, parents, board, community partners
- Being transparent even through hardship
- Conflict resolutuin
- Regularity and Scaffolding for difficult conversations
- Celebrating and honoring successes and growth
- Adaptability
- Celebrate successes at each step
- Pausing, listening, staying grounded

What are important characteristics of an anti-fragile organization?

8 responses

Transparency

Authentic, redundant frameworks, stand in truth, test and retest.

Partnerships

Redundancy in structure; being proactive; always in alignment with values of the school

Proactive, collaborative, transparency, redundancy of structure.

Proactive
Grounded in values
Partnering and communicating with all stakeholders

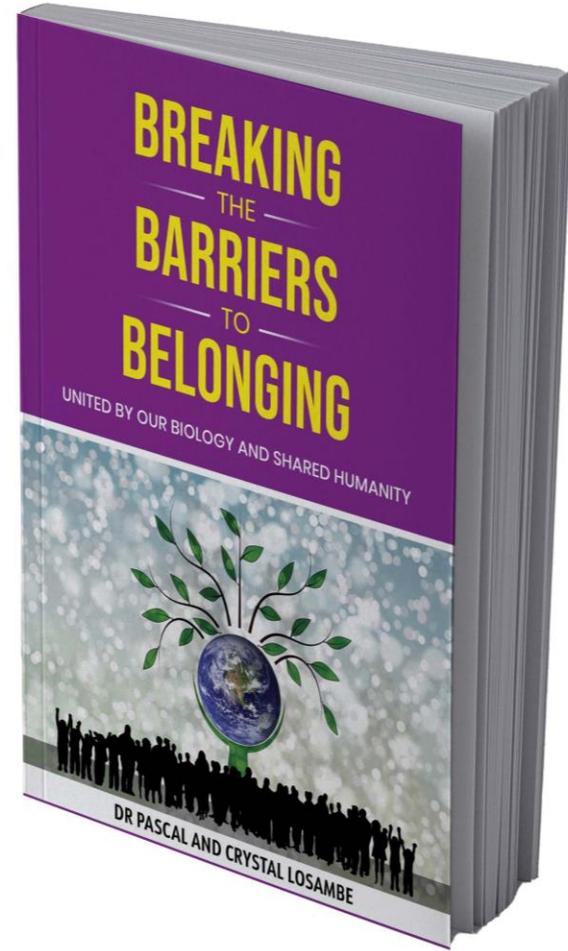
structural elements are engineered to strengthen under tension, and the organization as a whole relies on no single part

Openness
Redundancy
Coming from values



THANK YOU!







**“The Synergistic Power of Diversity Can
Inspire a Sense of Purpose and Ingenuity”**

TEXT “UNITY” TO:

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To Get Your Copy of the Book

Email: Synergyconsultingco2@gmail.com

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