

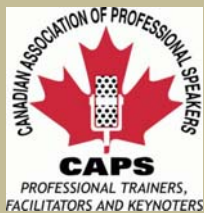
# Managing Stubborn Farmers & their Unsolvable Problems

Identifying Polarities  
Agriwebinar Jan 2009  
[www.elainefroese.com](http://www.elainefroese.com)



# Elaine Froese

YOUR FARM › YOUR FAMILY › YOUR CHOICE



## Who are the stubborn farmers?

- Not willing to talk about plans or issues
- Not willing to transfer mgt or ownership
- Convinced that it's either their way or no way
- Stuck in “either or thinking”
- Workaholics who disdain planning...no time



# Why are they stubborn?

- Don't understand that they have options
- Lack trust with the rest of the farm team
- Low emotional intelligence. Avoid conflict and they don't value relationship.
- Don't see benefits of communication and seeing other's perspectives



# What keeps them stuck?

- Their brain filters keep certain thinking patterns alive, they lack another's perspective
- They learned to live with uncertainty and enjoy staying in the Neutral Zone
- They don't have a process of regular business communication to make changes
- Lots of activity with not priority time for plans



# The Neutral ZONE William Bridges

- What needs to end ?

Neutral zone... high anxiety

- What do you need to begin ?

# What are polarties?

- Sets of opposites which do not function well inedependently.
- Two sides of an unresolvable problem...you need both sides or poles.
- There are upsides (positive things) and downsides (negative things) to each pole

Barry Johnson

[www.polaritymanagement.com](http://www.polaritymanagement.com)

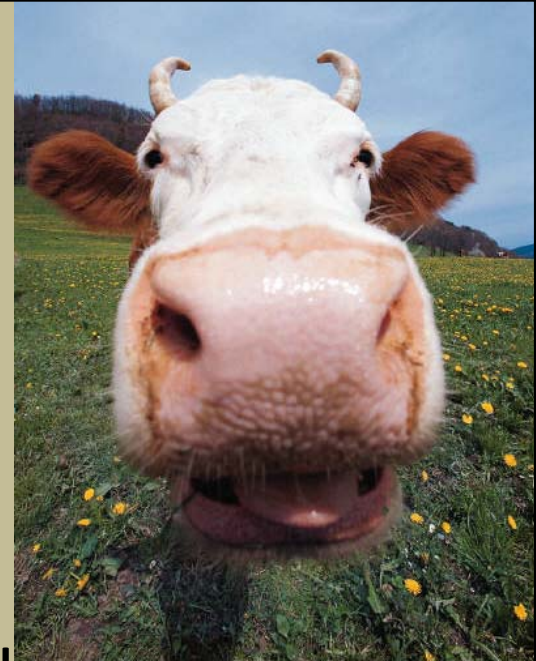


- “Research clearly shows that those organizations which manage polarities well significantly out-perform those that do not.”
- Recognize the pole...simplify the complexity without being simplistic. Polarities have 2 or more right answers that are interdependent. It is this AND that. One side is not enough, we need both sides to understand the issues.

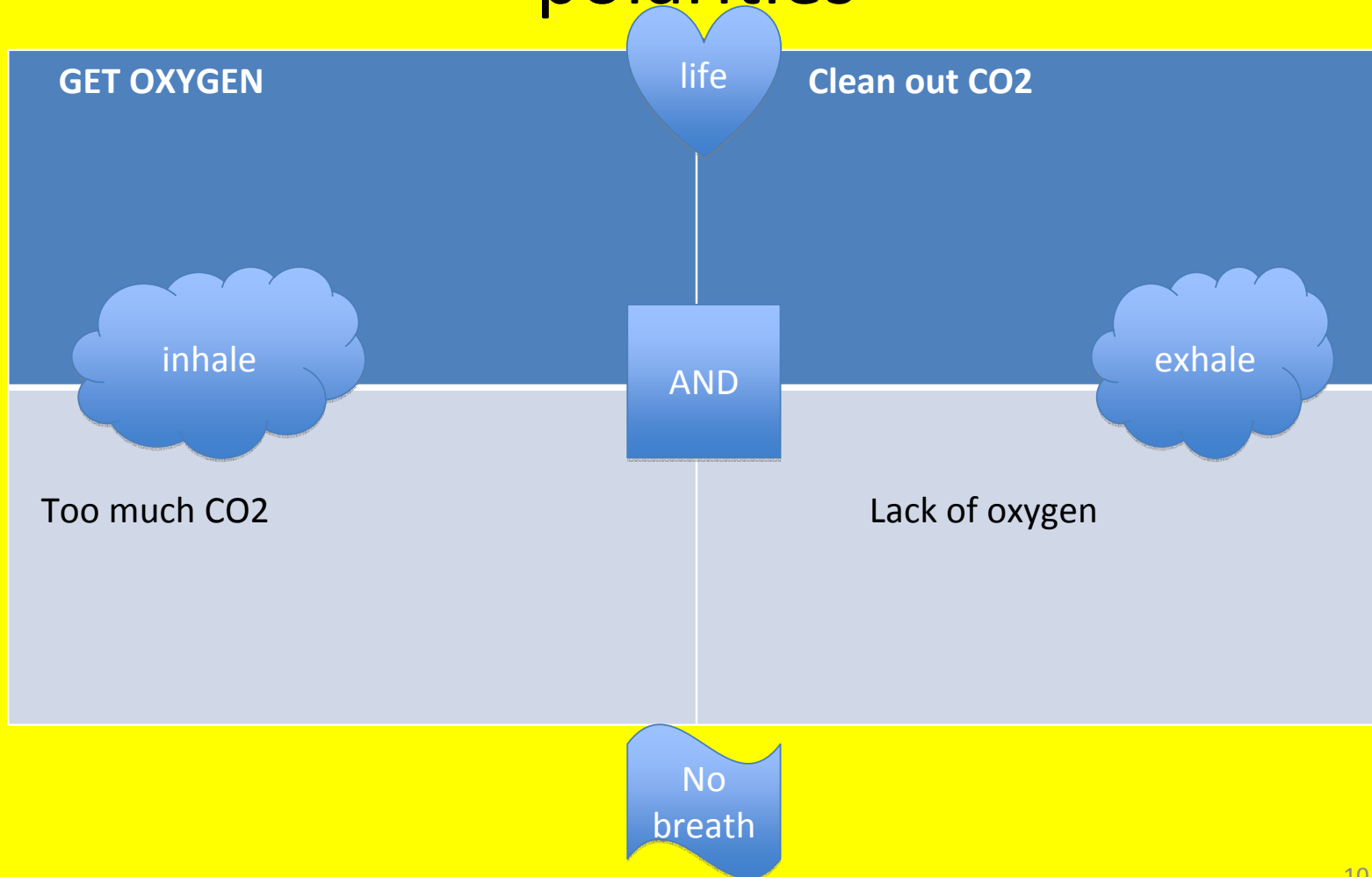


## It's a polarity if:

- The difficulty is ongoing
- There are 2 alternatives that are interdependent (inhale, exhale)
- It is necessary ,overtime to have both upsides
- Focusing on one upside to the neglect of the other will eventually undermine your efforts to achieve the higher purpose



# Breathing as a metaphor for all polarities



## Basic elements of polarity map

- Name the poles
- Fill out the upside and downside of each pole
- Name the higher purpose and fear... and what is at stake.
- Mark the dominate pole
- What role are you currently playing, advocating for change(advocate,crusader) or defending the status quo (defender,tradition bearer)?

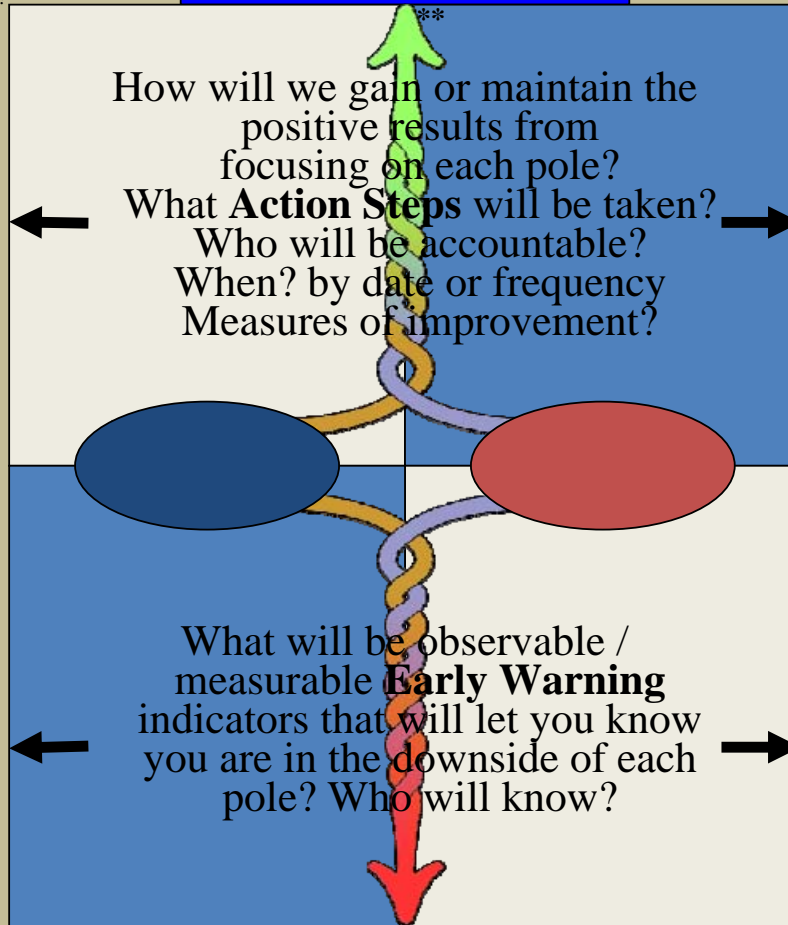
# Basic Action Steps to Manage a Polarity Well Over Time

## Action Steps

*How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this left pole? What? Who? By When? Measures?*

1.

**GPS Greater Purpose Statement:** \*



## Action Steps

*How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this right pole? What? Who? By When? Measures?*

1.

## Early Warnings\*\*\*

*Measurable indicators (something you can count) that you are getting the downsides of this left pole. Who will know?*

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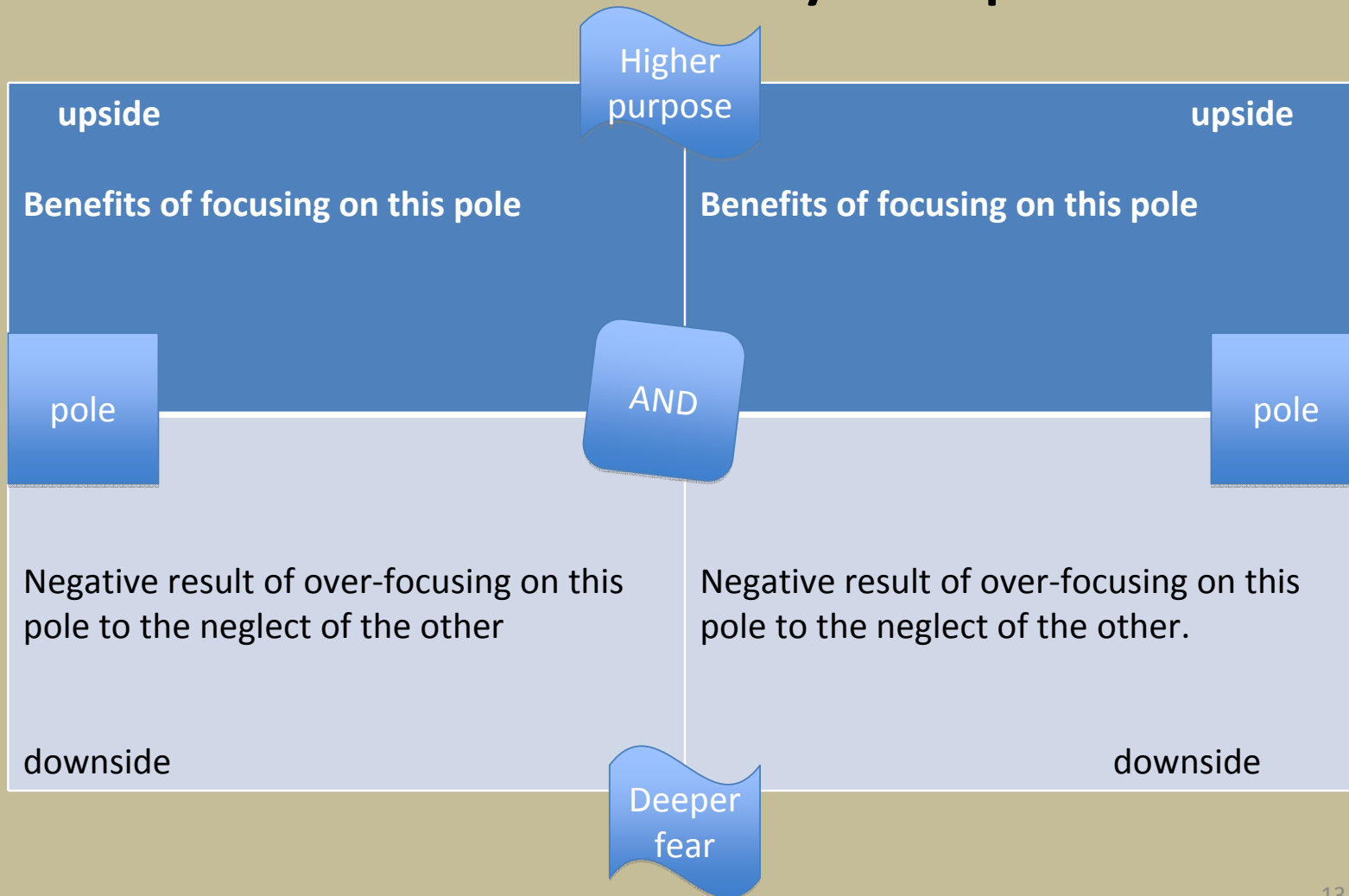
**Deeper Fear from Lack of Balance?**

\* Thanks to John Scherer, Center for Work and the Human Spirit

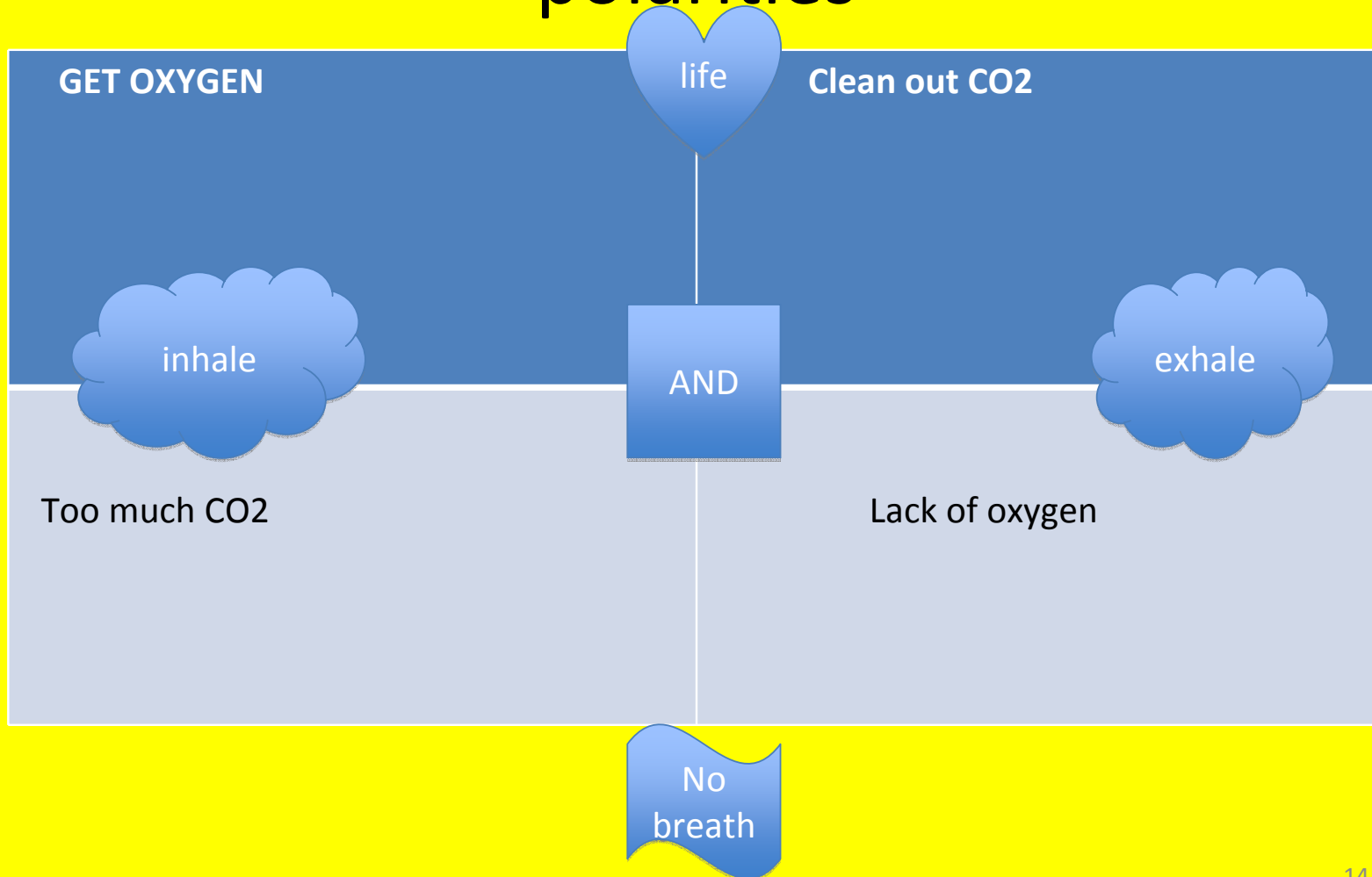
\*\* Thanks to The Strategy Academy, Rotterdam, The Netherlands

\*\*\* Thanks to Todd Johnson, Rivertown Consultants

# Basic Polarity Map



# Breathing as a metaphor for all polarities



## Think about the “AND”

- “It is easier to expand your view than to get your opposition to expand theirs.” B.Johnson
- “You can only fix you ! What changes in your perspective are necessary to create safe dialogue about the poles? It’s not either/or , it’s AND !!” Elaine Froese



# Perspectives

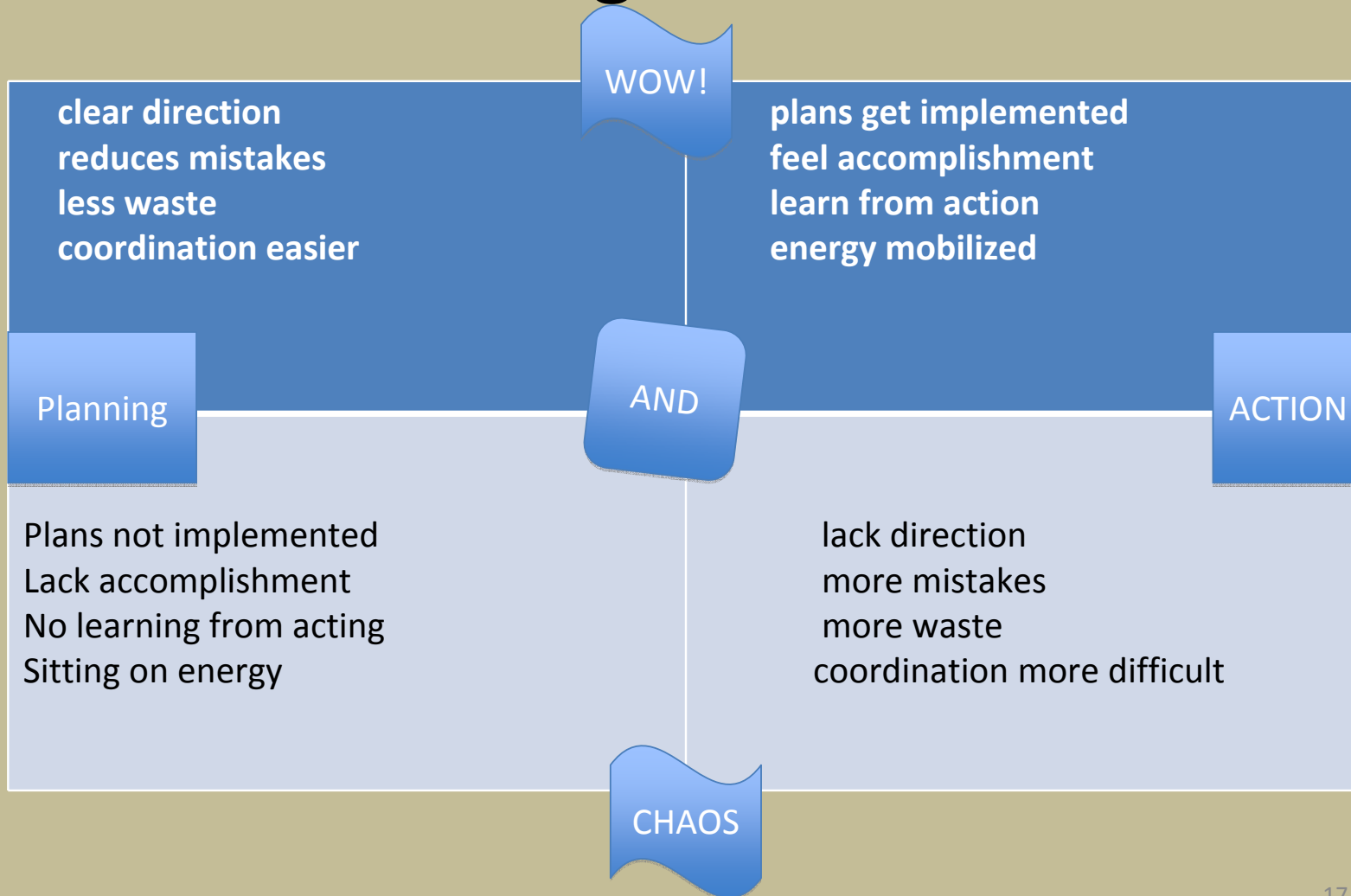
## Different values and fears

Your value	My value
My fear	Your fear

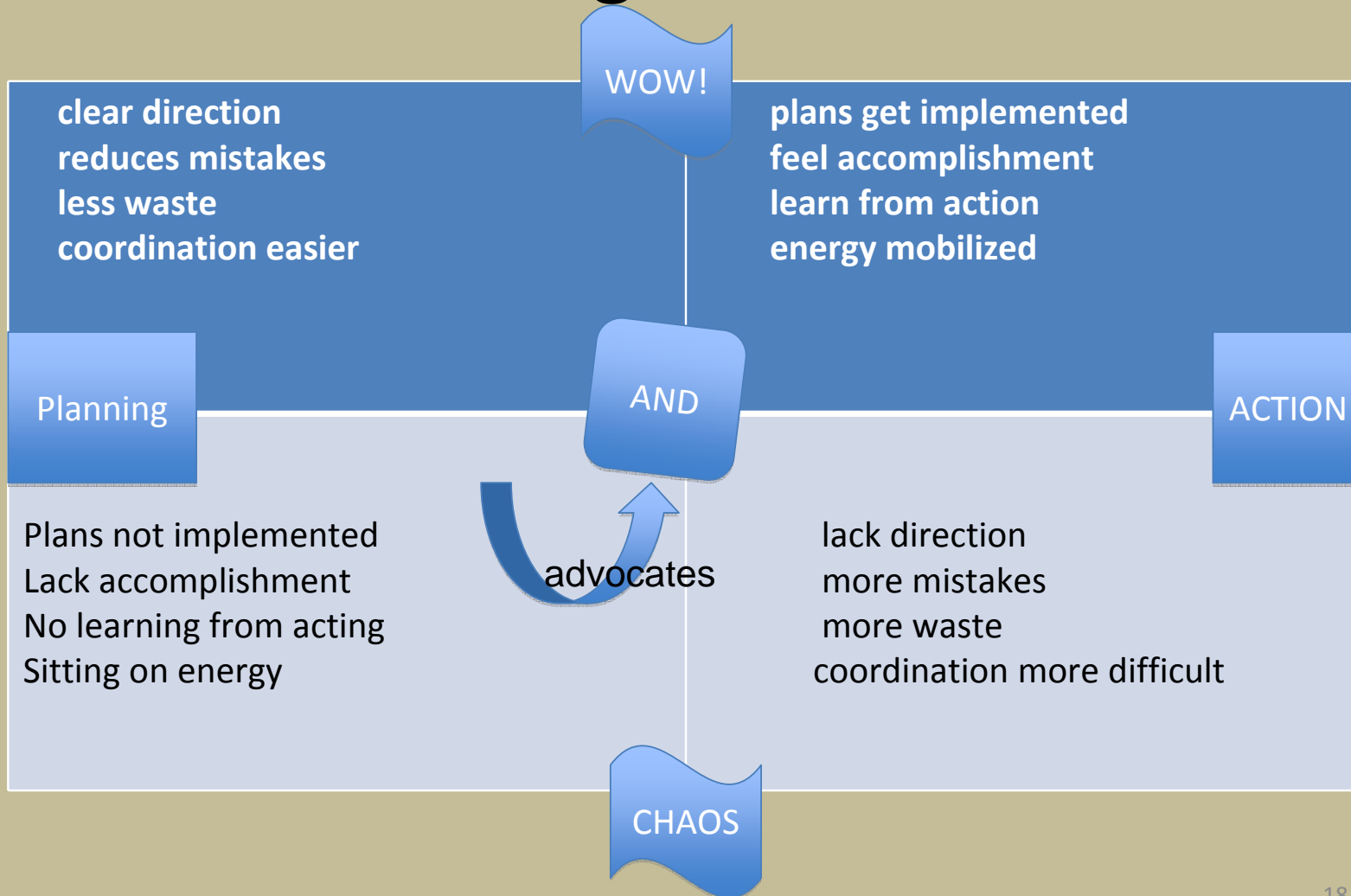
Your value... planning	My value ...action
My fear ...work doesn't get done	Your fear...miss market opportunities,



# Planning and Action



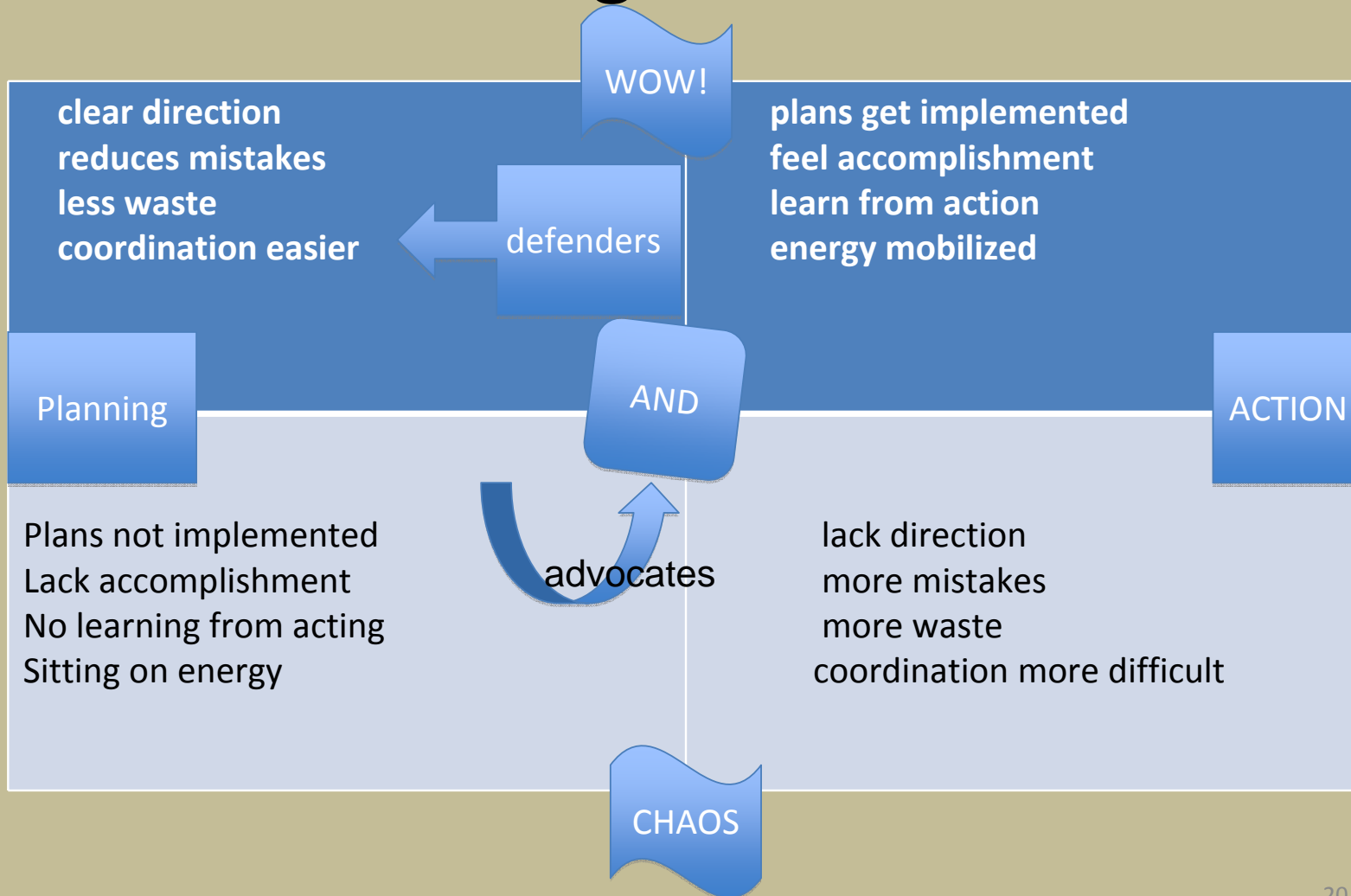
# Planning and Action



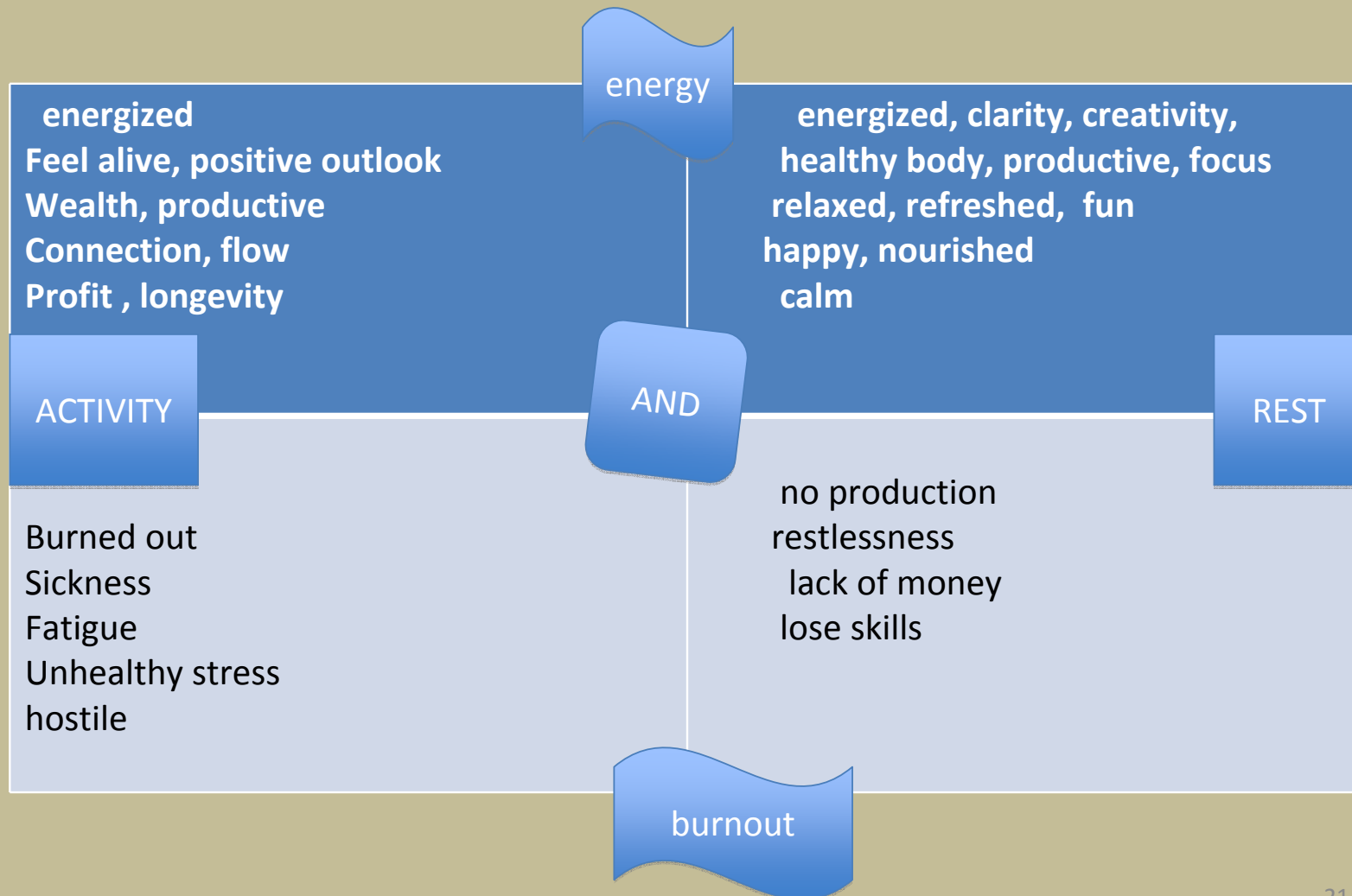
## Advocates move, defenders preserve upsides

- Advocates can identify the downsides of the present pole and provide energy to move to the upside of the other pole.
- Stubborn farmers are usually advocating more action and less planning!
- Defenders see what needs to be preserved and the downside of the opposite pole, which are the downsides they want to avoid.  
Younger farmers defend planning upsides!

# Planning and Action



# ACTIVITY AND REST



# Stubborn dads...let go !



## Stubborn dads...let go

- Action: Regular business meetings to outline jobs, performance appraisals. Advisors come.
- Timelines for letting go, with accountability.

Early warning signs:

- Very angry son, lots of blow ups
- Dad is making all decisions, son is almost 40
- “I don’t have time to teach you how to farm.”



# Action steps for Stubborn Farmers

- Identify issues, key players. Are poles interdependent? Need both upsides.
- Being stuck on one pole will not get you to your higher purpose
- Build the polarity map together. Masking tape the floor and walk the map .
- Understand this is not a solvable problem, it is a polarity to be managed. See the interdependence and flow of the infinity loop.





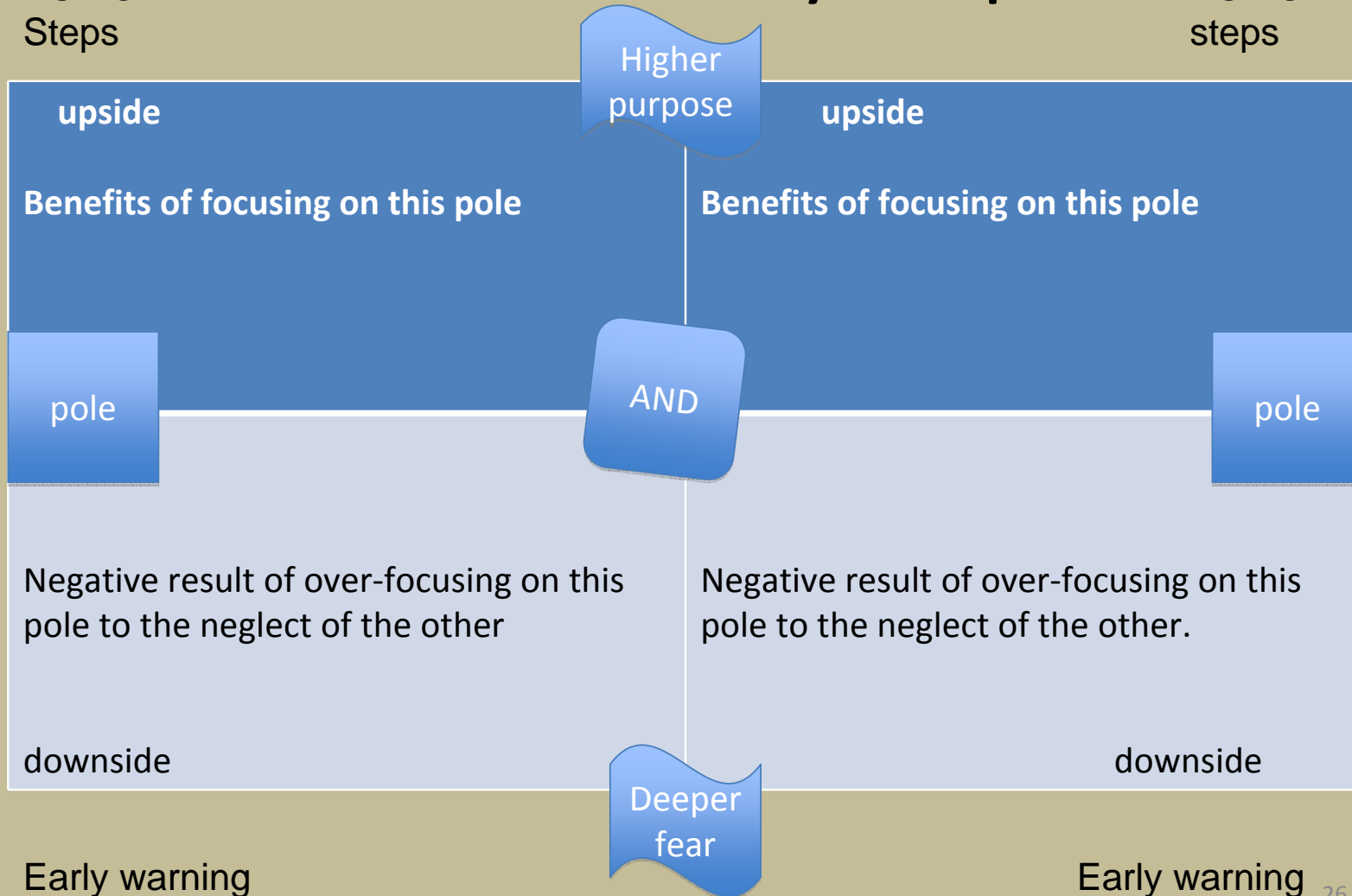
## More action steps...

- Create action plans for both poles, clearly assigned with timelines
- Identify early warning sides...moving to the downsides. Who sees it? How is it measured?
- Who reports to whom what they see happening?
- Monitor. Use the map in business meetings to see how issues are being managed.

# Basic Polarity Map

ACTION  
Steps

ACTION  
steps



Early warning  
signs

Early warning  
signs

# Skills you need to manage well

- Knowing when you have a polarity to manage rather than a problem to solve.
- Knowing there is an upside and downside to each pole
- Sensitivity to the downsides when experienced
- A willingness to shift poles
- Knowing how to talk and mediate between opposites



# Basic Action Steps to Manage a Polarity Well Over Time

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## Action Steps

*How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on this right pole? What? Who? By When? Measures?*

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How will we gain or maintain the positive results from focusing on each pole?  
 What **Action Steps** will be taken?  
 Who will be accountable?  
 When? by date or frequency  
 Measures of improvement?

## Early Warnings\*\*\*

*Measurable indicators (something you can count) that you are getting the downsides of this left pole. Who will know?*

## Early Warnings

*Measurable indicators (something you can count) that you are getting the downsides of this right pole. Who will know?*

What will be observable / measurable **Early Warning** indicators that will let you know you are in the downside of each pole? Who will know?

**Deeper Fear from Lack of Balance?**

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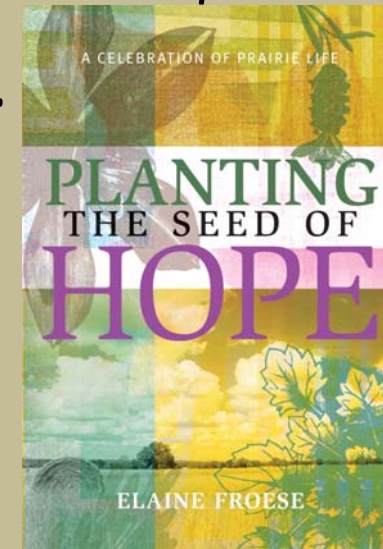
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# HELP!

- “Polarity Management” by Barry Johnson
- [www.polaritymanagement.com](http://www.polaritymanagement.com) Online course
- [www.resolutionskills.ca](http://www.resolutionskills.ca) Wpg.MB course \$330
- [www.cafanet.com](http://www.cafanet.com) Canadian Assoc.

Farm Advisors

- [www.elainefroese.com](http://www.elainefroese.com)  
Coaching, speaking, book



# Polarity samples to ponder

- Leadership: mgt. of tasks and leading people
- Justice/Mercy    Fairness/equal .. farm gifting?
- Task/Relationship
- Accuracy/completion (do it right/get it done!)
- Individual/Team
- Cost/Quality
- Work/Home



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