



City Council Retreat, May 2, 2025

Jeff Swanson, Facilitator

City Council Retreat Format

- **Part 1: Culture (9:00 – 10:20)**

(Break 10:20 – 10:30)

- **Part 2: Parameters (10:30 – 12:00)**

(Grab lunch 12:00)

- **Part 3: Strategies (12:00 – 2:00)**

****Facilitation note:** as a full group and in small group work, let's make sure everyone has an opportunity to speak before taking a second opportunity.



Part 1: Culture

“Your organization’s culture: It’s either an asset or a liability. At this very moment, your culture is helping business performance. Or hurting it.”

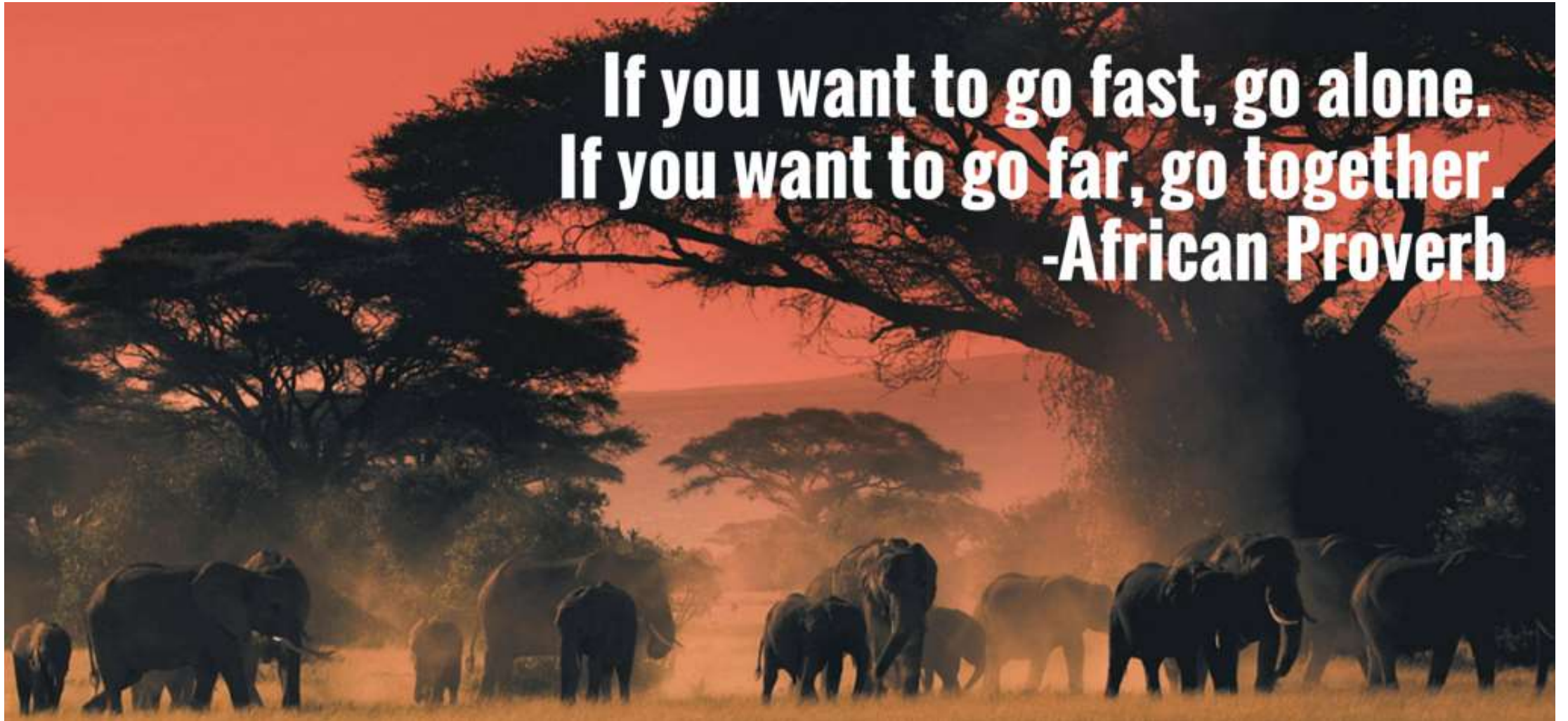
- Tanya Mann

“The difference between how a person treats the powerless versus the powerful is as good a measure of human character as I know.”

- Robert Sutton

****Goal: conceive, build, maintain, repair, and restore an environment where all can show up as their highest and best selves and do their best work as our baseline standard practice****

**If you want to go fast, go alone.
If you want to go far, go together.
-African Proverb**



“TRUST IS THE COIN
OF THE REALM”

But what is trust? And what do we do when
trust requires repair? ...

BOUNDARIES
RELIABILITY
ACCOUNTABILITY
VAULT
INTEGRITY
NONJUDGMENT
GENEROSITY

REFLECTION

3 MIN – ON YOUR OWN

What does this bring up for you?

What aspects of The Anatomy of Trust resonated with you most?

What practices do you have to help repair trust in relationships?

High-Performing Teams

Skills of Team Members

- Role ownership
- Ability to build relationships
- Impactful interaction
- Able to coach team members to successful outcomes
- Ability to build capacity in the team
- Ability to adjust to and lead the team through change

Environmental Conditions

- Clear purpose: vision and mission
- Alignment
- Role clarity
- Culture
 - Trusting
 - Collaborative and supportive: success of the team over individual attainment of need
 - Respectful and dignified

EVALUATE:

(1) Does the individual have the motivation, knowledge, skills, and abilities to be successful?

(2) Given the environment, could anyone with the motivation, knowledge, skills, and abilities be successful?

The No Asshole Rule

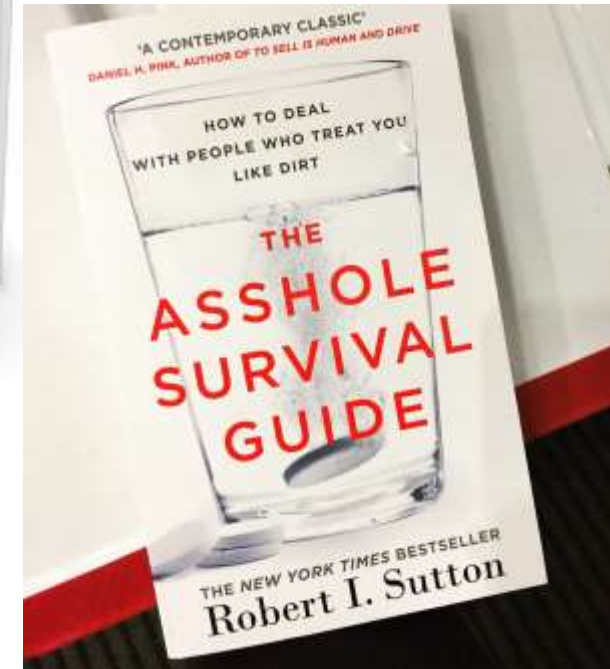
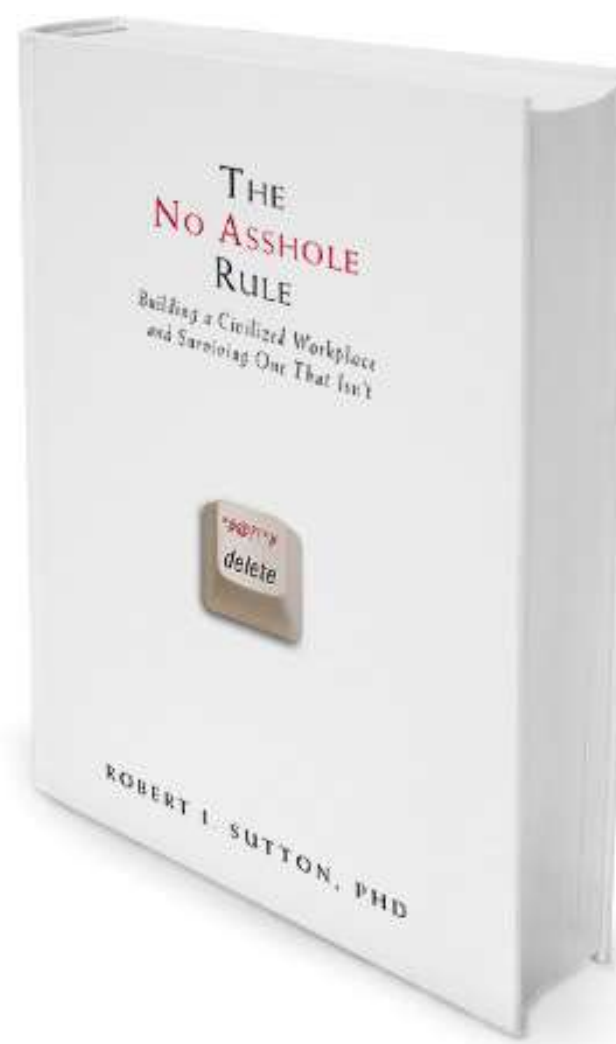
Robert Sutton, Ph.D

Asshole, *n.*

Bullies, Creeps, Jerks, Tyrants, Tormentors, Despots, Backstabbers, Egomaniacs, Boardholes, Doucheboards, Passholes, Bossholes, Darth Vader, The Sea Witch, A\$\$hole Factory, grinf****r, “the idea man”, not a mentor but a “torr-mentor”, ...

Temporary versus Certified Assholes: not our proudest moment vs. a pattern of behavior

****All of us are assholes some of the time. Some of us are assholes all of the time.****



Concept: TCA

“Total Cost of Assholes”

The organizational impact, in terms of both retention and recruitment, lost clients, and excess organizational calories being expended on the wrong things



Sutton's Dirty Dozen

Common Everyday Actions That Assholes Use:

1. Personal insults
2. Invading one's "personal territory"
3. Uninvited physical contact
4. Threats and intimidation, both verbal and nonverbal
5. "Sarcastic jokes" and "teasing" used as insult delivery systems
6. Withering e-mail flames
7. Status slaps intended to humiliate their victims
8. Public shaming or "status degradation" rituals
9. Rude interruptions
10. Two-faced attacks
11. Dirty looks
12. Treating people as if they are invisible

Testing for Assholes

Test One: After talking to the alleged asshole, does the "target" feel oppressed, humiliated, de-energized, or belittled by the person? In particular, does the target feel worse about him or herself?

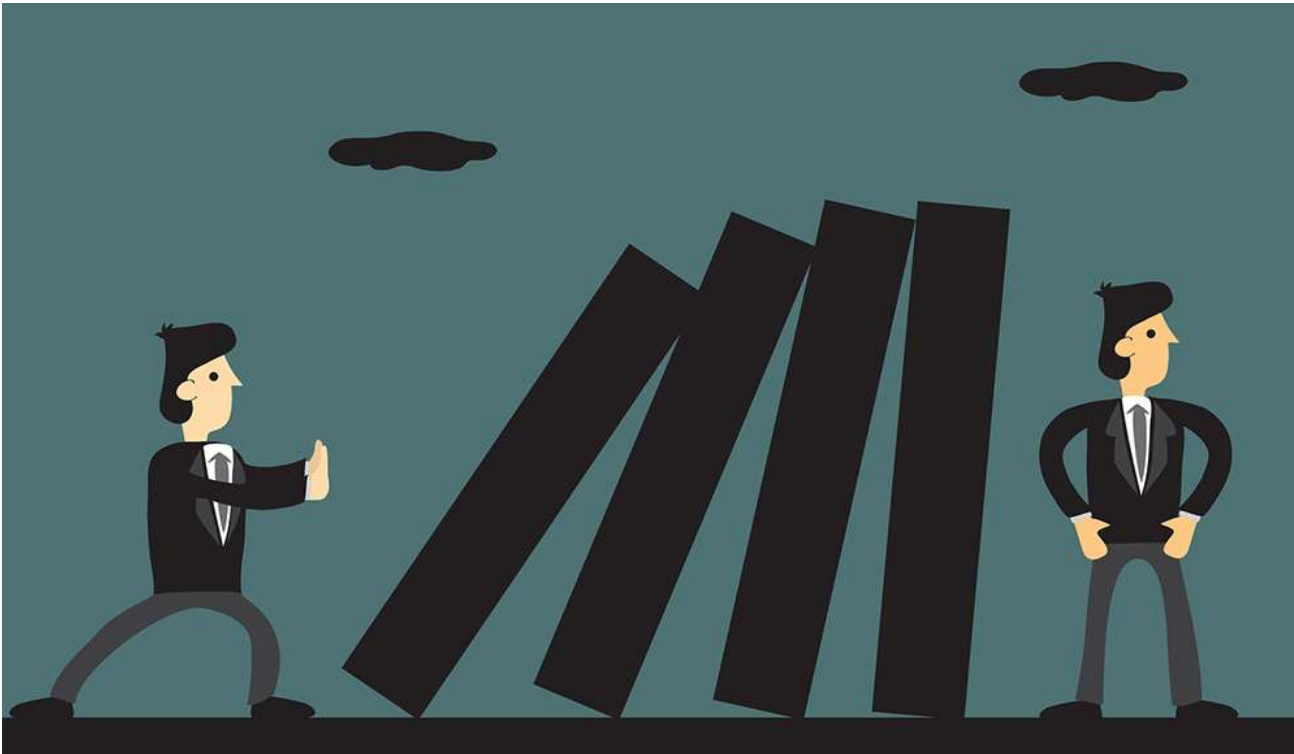
Test Two: Does the alleged asshole aim his or her venom at people who are *less powerful* rather than at those people who are more powerful?



John R. Bolton, the controversial US ambassador to the United Nations, meets the test if the testimony to the US Congress is correct. President George W. Bush made the controversial decision to appoint Bolton when he was on the verge of failing to be confirmed by Congress. Bolton's reputation for dishing out psychological abuse to colleagues fueled the media frenzy surrounding his appointment. Melody Townsel, for example, testified that she experienced Bolton's nastiness when she worked as a contractor for the US Agency for International Development in Moscow in 1994. Townsel reported that Bolton turned mean after she complained about the incompetence of a client that Bolton (a lawyer) represented.

In Townsel's 2005 letter to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, she claimed that "Mr. Bolton proceeded to chase me through the halls of a Russian hotel – throwing things at me, shoving threatening letters under my door, and generally, behaving like a madman" and the "for nearly two weeks, while I awaited fresh direction...John Bolton hounded me in such an appalling way that I eventually retreated to my hotel room and stayed there. Mr. Bolton, of course, then routinely visited me there to pound on the door and shout threats." Townsel added, "He made unconscionable comments about my weight, my wardrobe, and with a couple of team leaders, my sexuality."

In other testimony to the committee, former Bolton subordinate Carl Ford Jr. (a fellow Republican) described him as a **“kiss-up, kick-down sort of guy.”** In my opinion, if these reports are true, they indicate that Bolton qualifies as a certified asshole because his abuse is part of a persistent pattern, not just something out of character that happened once or twice because he was having a bad day.



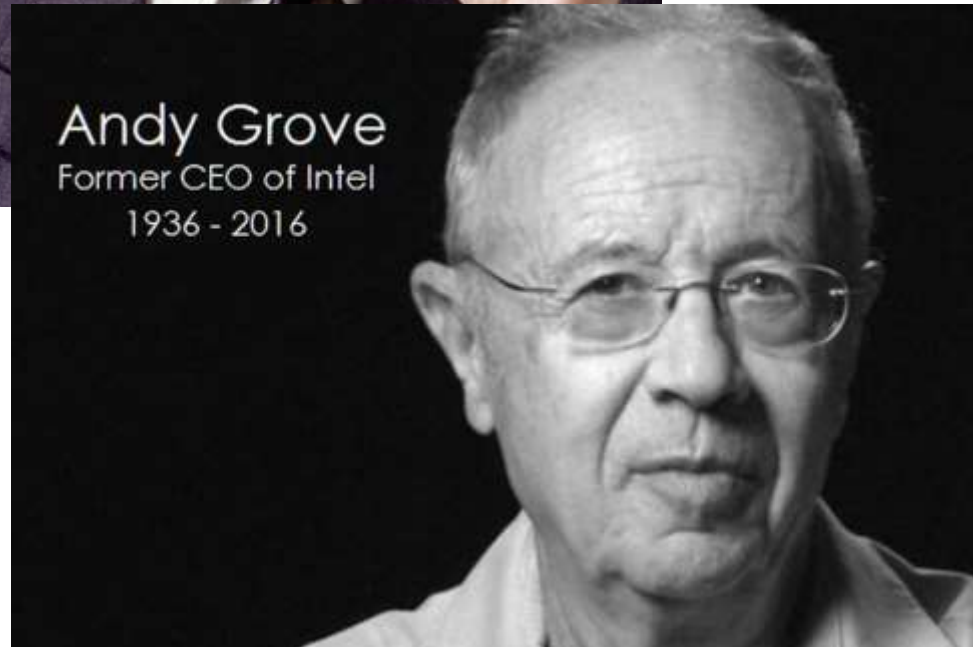
I am not alone in this view. The *Village Voice* published an article titled “Wanted: Complete Asshole for UN Ambassador,” which concluded that “John Bolton has left a trail of alienated colleagues and ridiculed ideas.”



The right kind of friction can help any organization. To take a famous example, Intel cofounder and retired CEO Andy Grove can be a strong-willed and argumentative person. But Grove is renowned for sticking to the facts and for inviting anyone – from brand-new Intel engineers to Stanford students whom he teaches about business strategy to senior Intel executives – to challenge his ideas. For Grove, the focus has always been on finding the truth, not on putting people down.

Not only do I despise spineless and obsequious wimps, but there is good evidence that they damage organizations. A series of controlled experiments and field studies in organizations shows that when teams engage in conflict over ideas in an atmosphere of mutual respect, they develop better ideas and perform better. That is why Intel teaches employees how to fight, requiring all new hires to take classes in “constructive confrontation.”

These same studies show, however, that when team members engage in personal conflict – when they fight out of spite and anger – their creativity, performance, and job satisfaction plummet. In other words, when people act like a bunch of assholes, the whole group suffers.



Andy Grove
Former CEO of Intel
1936 - 2016

Local Government Environment



Group Discussion



Groups

- (1) Mayor Rossman, Councilmember Brazen, Aimee Kellerman, Ryan Osada
- (2) Deputy Mayor Reeves, Councilmember Nunn, Chief Sass, Ryan Wagner
- (3) Councilmember Luis, Councilmember Johnston, Jeff Swanson, Steve Wilcox

Discussion Prompts

10-minute group discussion, 5-minute report

- What helps you be an effective, successful part of the Medina team?
- How can you be better supported?

Local Government is a Team Sport

Three Agreements...

No surprises

Praise in public, chide in private

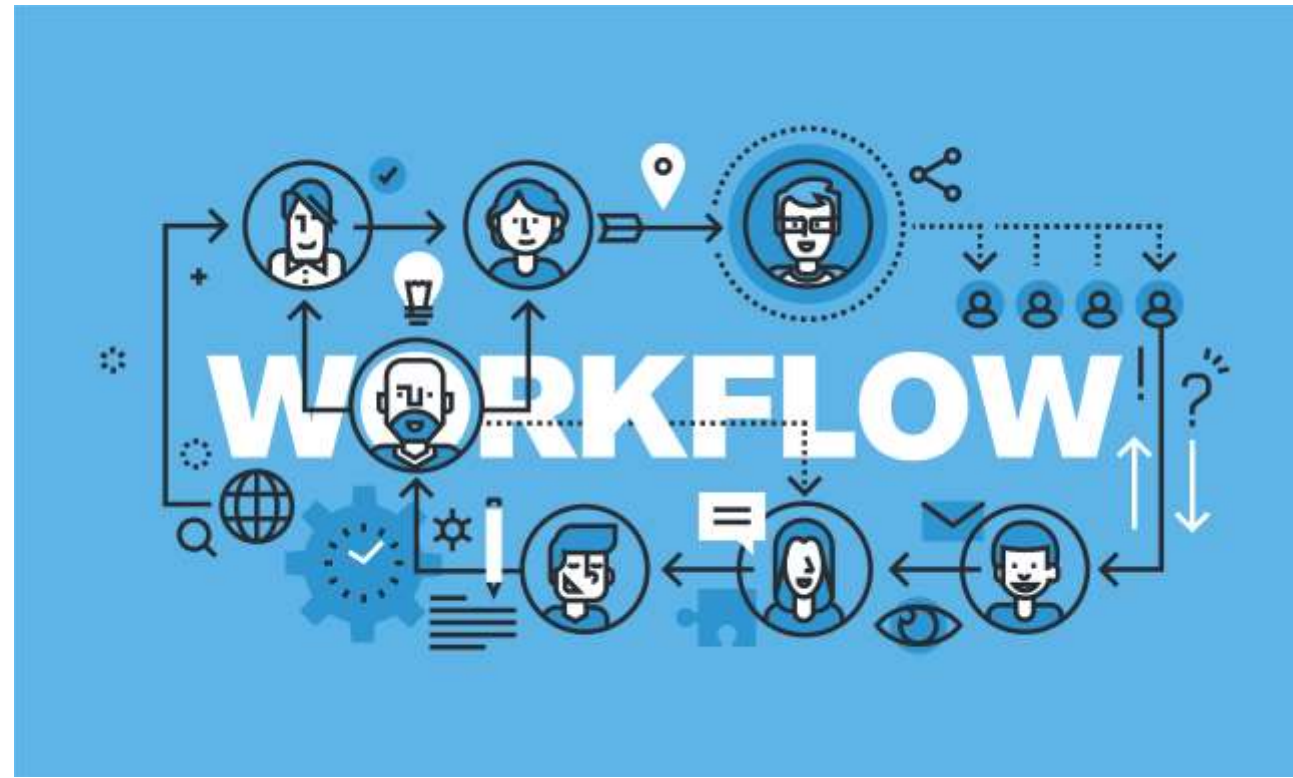
If one knows, all know

What additional agreements would be helpful for you?



Council Workflow Proposition –

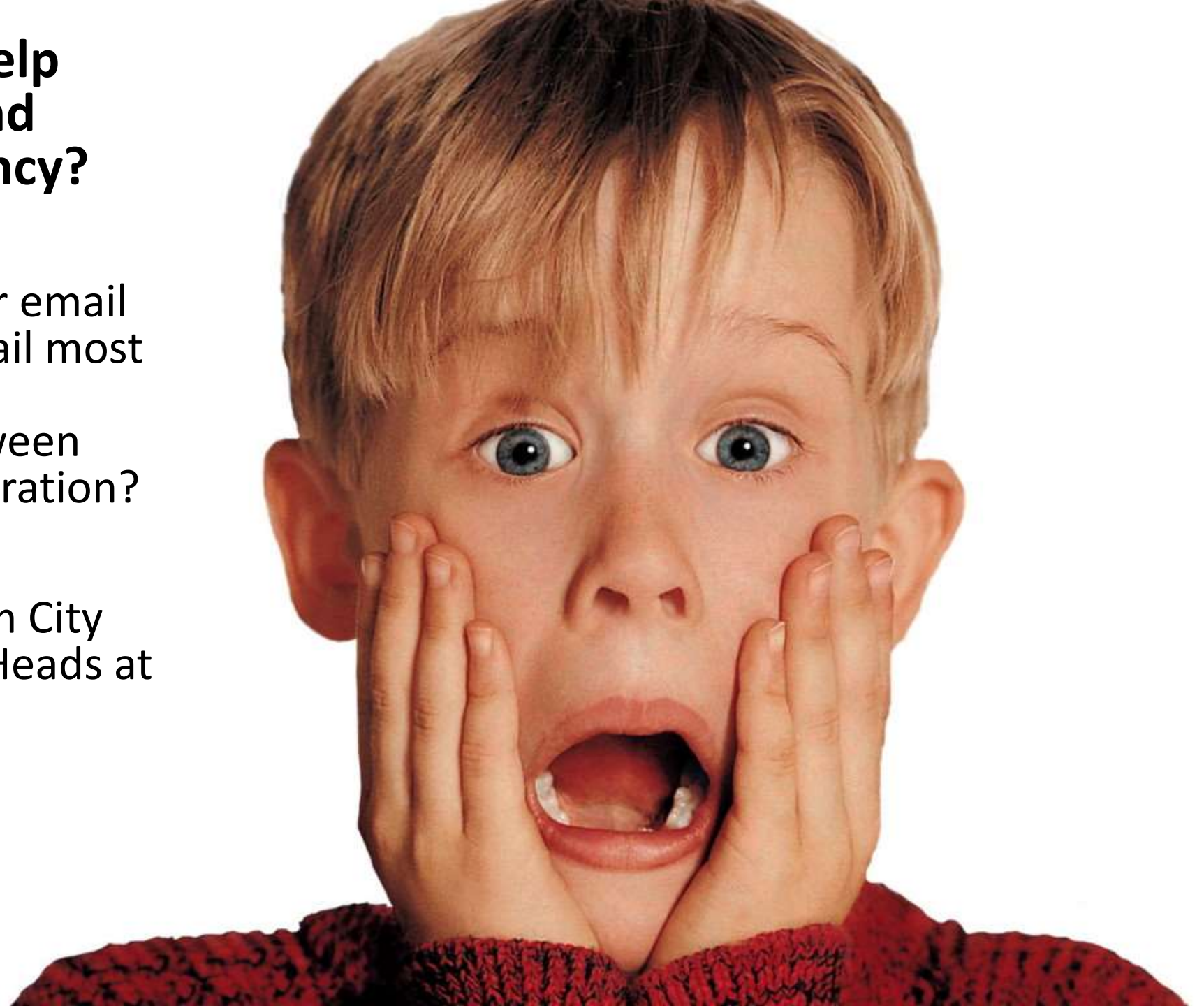
- Three Touch Rule
 - Touch 1: Heads-up
 - Touch 2: Workshop
 - Touch 3: Action
- Timeline of Workflow
 - Monday before Council meeting: Three Briefings
 - Wednesday before Council meeting: Staff Submit Finalized Packet Info
 - Thursday before Council meeting: Packet Published



****Proposed: implementation for May 27th meeting (briefings on May 19th)****

What else would help reduce surprises and increase transparency?

- Weekly City Manager email update → Is City email most effective means of communication between Council and administration?
- Monthly reports from City Manager and Dept. Heads at regular meeting
- And ...



Part 1: Culture → Wrap Up

Goal:

Conceive, build, maintain, repair, and restore an environment where all can show up as their highest and best selves and do their best work as our baseline standard practice

Take a break! (10:20 – 10:30)