

# Leading Remotely: Leveraging Strengths and Setting Boundaries

JerLene Mosley  
[jerlene\\_mosley@gallup.com](mailto:jerlene_mosley@gallup.com)



**Donald O. Clifton,**  
Father of Strengths  
Psychology  
and Inventor of  
CliftonStrengths

“What will happen  
when we think about what is right  
with people rather than fixating  
on what is wrong with them?”

# Gallup Global Leadership Poll

- ▶ What leader has had the most positive influence on your daily life?
- ▶ What three words best describe what **this person has contributed to your life?**

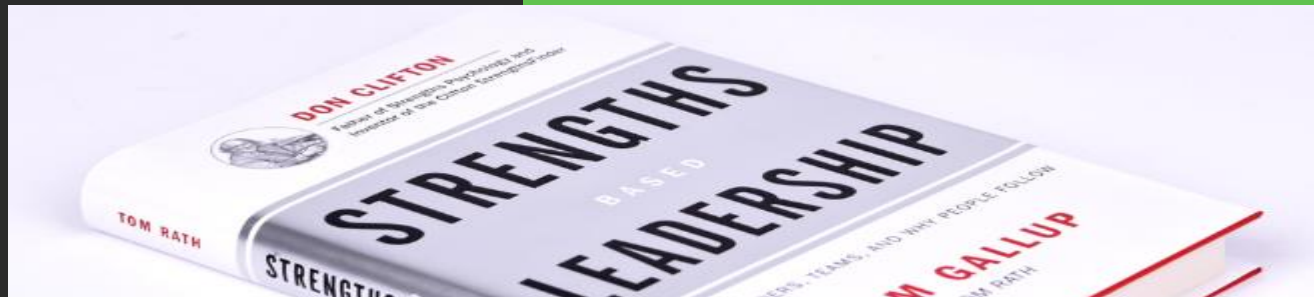
1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

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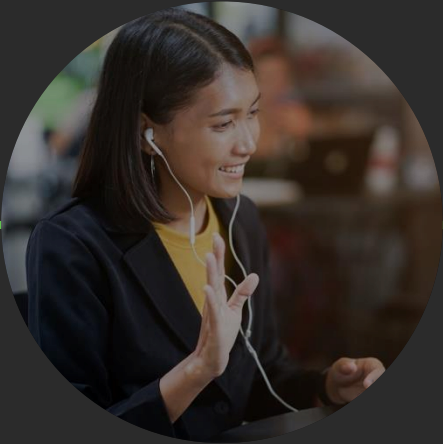
ACROSS MORE THAN  
30,000 responses,  
**4 words**  
sorted the most  
by a significant margin.



# The Results: What Do Followers Need?

01

TRUST



02

STABILITY



03

COMPASSION



04

HOPE



Great leaders start with understanding their *followers*.  
They look up from their work and outward to their employees.

YOUR INVESTMENT IN YOUR FOLLOWERS  
IS THE KEY TO YOUR  
EFFECTIVENESS AS A LEADER.

# How Do These Needs Manifest in a Crisis?

## EXAMPLE: COVID-19

- ① **My supervisor keeps me informed about what is going on.**
- ② **My organization cares about my wellbeing.**
- ③ **I feel well-prepared to do my job.**
- ④ **My leadership has a clear plan of action.**

**TRUST**

**COMPASSION**

**STABILITY**

**HOPE**

# 30%

## RATIONAL

SLOW  
INTENTIONAL CHOICE  
EFFORTFUL  
CONSCIOUS

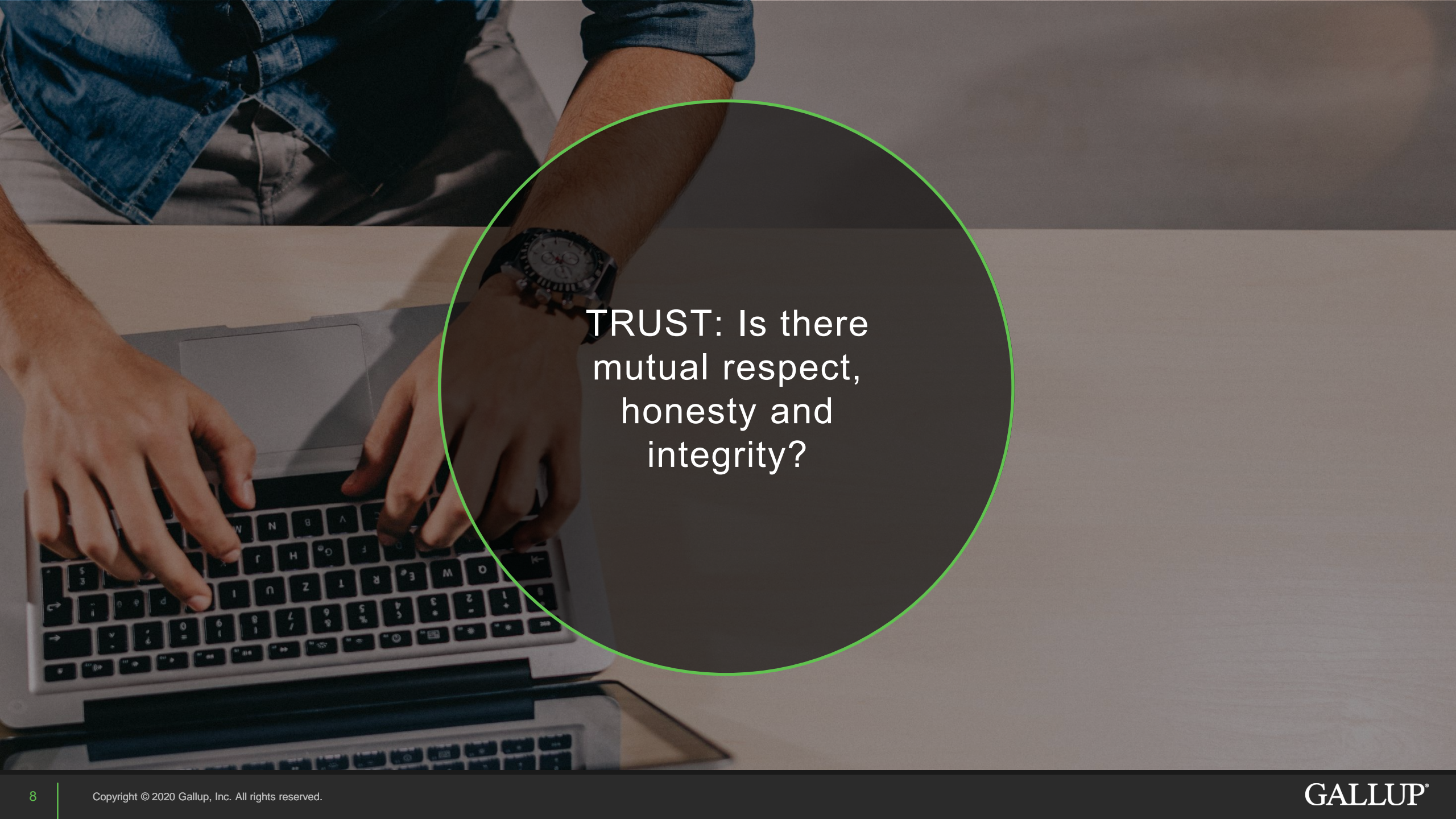
It's all about the  
70% — we are,  
by nature,  
*emotional*  
beings.

# 70%

## EMOTIONAL

FAST  
INTUITIVE/AUTOMATIC  
EFFORTLESS  
SUBCONSCIOUS



A photograph of a person's hands typing on a laptop keyboard. The person is wearing a blue denim shirt and a black watch with a white face. A large, semi-transparent green circle is overlaid on the image, containing the text. The background is a light-colored surface.

TRUST: Is there  
mutual respect,  
honesty and  
integrity?



# Trust

When people spoke about leaders building trust, they commonly used three words:

- ① HONESTY
- ② INTEGRITY
- ③ RESPECT

- **High-performing teams rarely discuss trust.**  
They don't need to — they live it every day.  
Low-performing teams frequently talk about trust.
- **Leaders build trust mostly through their actions**  
— by doing what is right, with heart.
- Leaders also build trust when **they're candid about difficult news** and their own flaws.

# How Do You Choose to Trust Someone?

## 1 Lead at Your Level

Leaders often lead at a level or two below where they should.

- Avoid holding on to things that others should be trusted to do.

## 2 Focused, Frequent and Transparent Conversations

- Don't depreciate the power of brief and informal conversations.
- Cultivate shared accountability through dialogue.
- Make your team members your business partners.



HOW CAN I, AS A LEADER,  
GET MY PEOPLE TO TRUST ME?

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As a leader, when you choose to trust,  
you open things up for you to be trusted.

A woman with dark hair tied back is sitting at a dark wooden desk in a dimly lit room. She is looking out a window to her left, where a potted plant is visible. On the desk, there is a laptop and a cup of tea. A large green circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing text.

COMPASSION:  
Am I cared  
about,  
appreciated and  
understood?

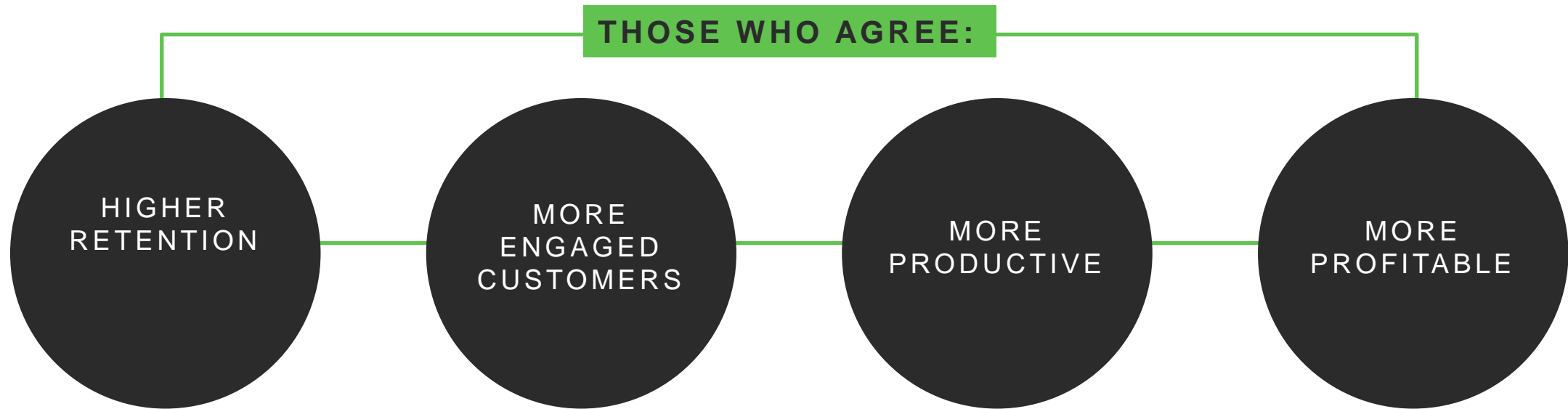
A woman with dark hair, wearing a grey blazer over a white top, is sitting at a desk. She is smiling and looking down at a laptop. On the desk, there is a laptop, a pair of glasses, a pen, and a white coffee cup. The background is slightly blurred, showing an office setting.

TO SHOW COMPASSION,  
You must first give it to yourself



# Compassion Drives Business Outcomes

“My supervisor or someone at work seems to *care about me* as a person.”



# Why Is Showing Compassion So Important *Now*?

People are  
experiencing **grief**:

DENIAL

ANGER

BARGAINING

SADNESS

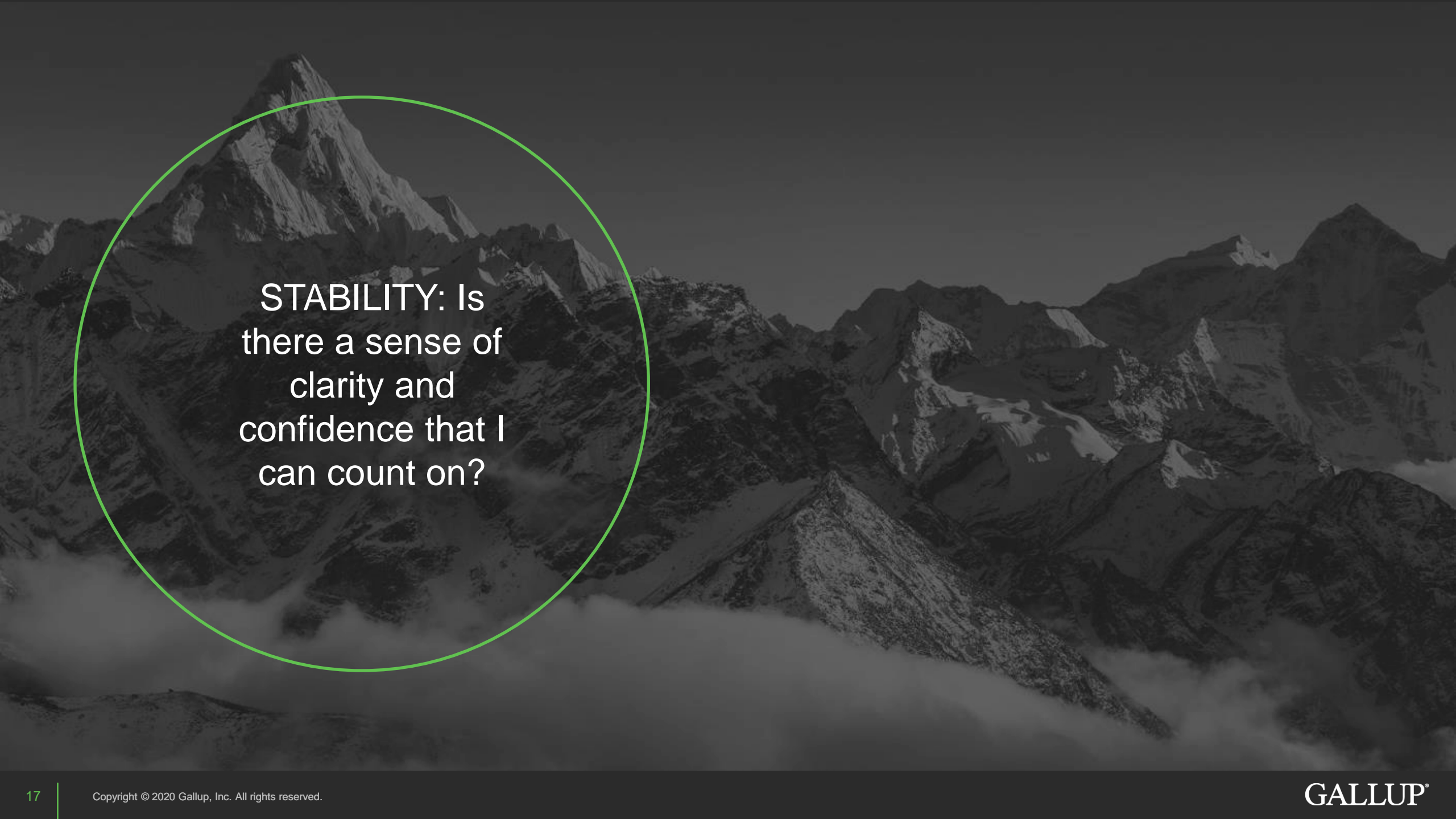
ACCEPTANCE

Source: *On Death and Dying*, Kübler-Ross, E. 1969

# What Can Your Organization Do To Show Compassion?

## NOTICE—FEEL—RESPOND

- ▶ Role Model—people are watching and taking their cues from you
- ▶ Endorse compassionate acts that are self-organized
- ▶ Respond in a coordinated way



STABILITY: Is  
there a sense of  
clarity and  
confidence that I  
can count on?



STABILITY

# Amidst a Storm

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## A PREREQUISITE OF STABILITY?

The importance of maintaining calm ...  
**especially when others are not calm.**

# Focus on Managing Your *Own* Negative Emotions

What **anchors** make you feel stable?

What am  
I feeling?

Why am I  
feeling this?

What is  
true?

What is  
important?

What do  
I do next?

To establish stability, get a clear understanding of the *big picture*, harmonize your *values* with those of your organization and leverage both *your strengths* and the *strengths of others* to move forward on the mission.



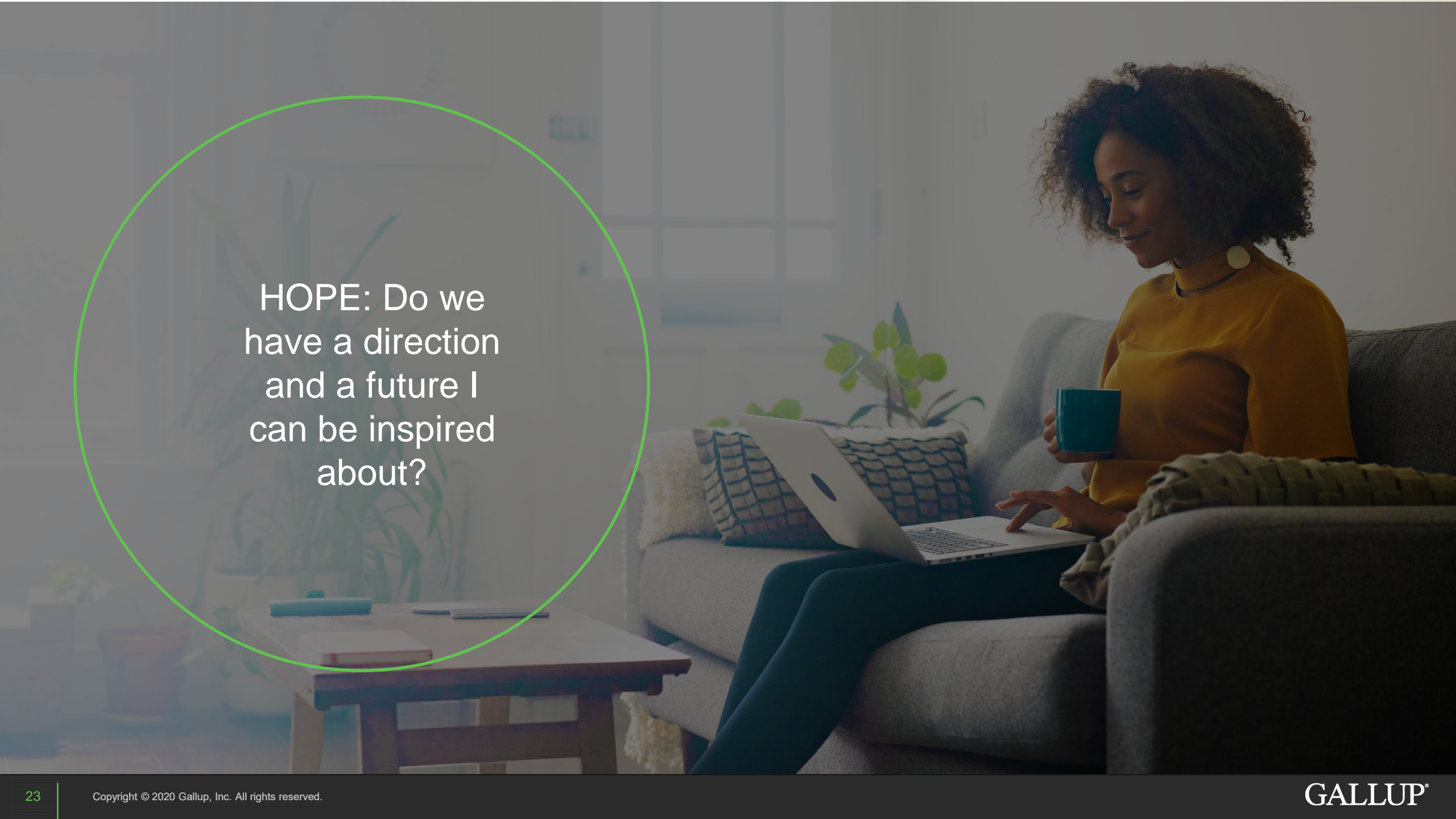
TO GIVE STABILITY,  
Maintain Poise

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A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a white button-down shirt, is seated at a dark wooden desk. She is looking out of a window to her left, where a potted plant is visible. On the desk in front of her is a laptop and a cup of coffee. The scene is dimly lit, suggesting an evening or early morning setting.

Great leaders *calmly* balance  
**candor and hope**  
in the midst of the storm.

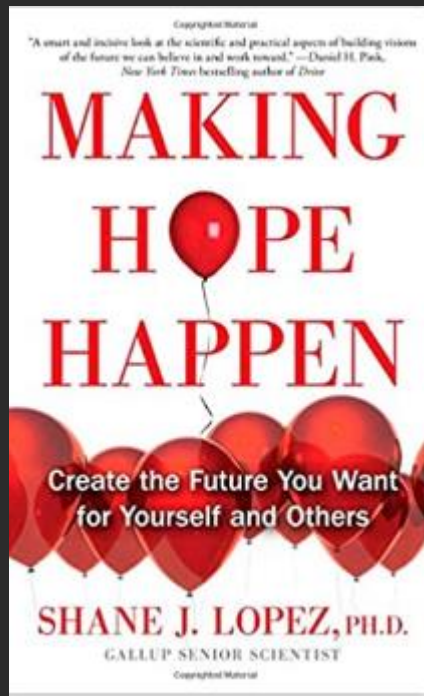




HOPE: Do we  
have a direction  
and a future I  
can be inspired  
about?

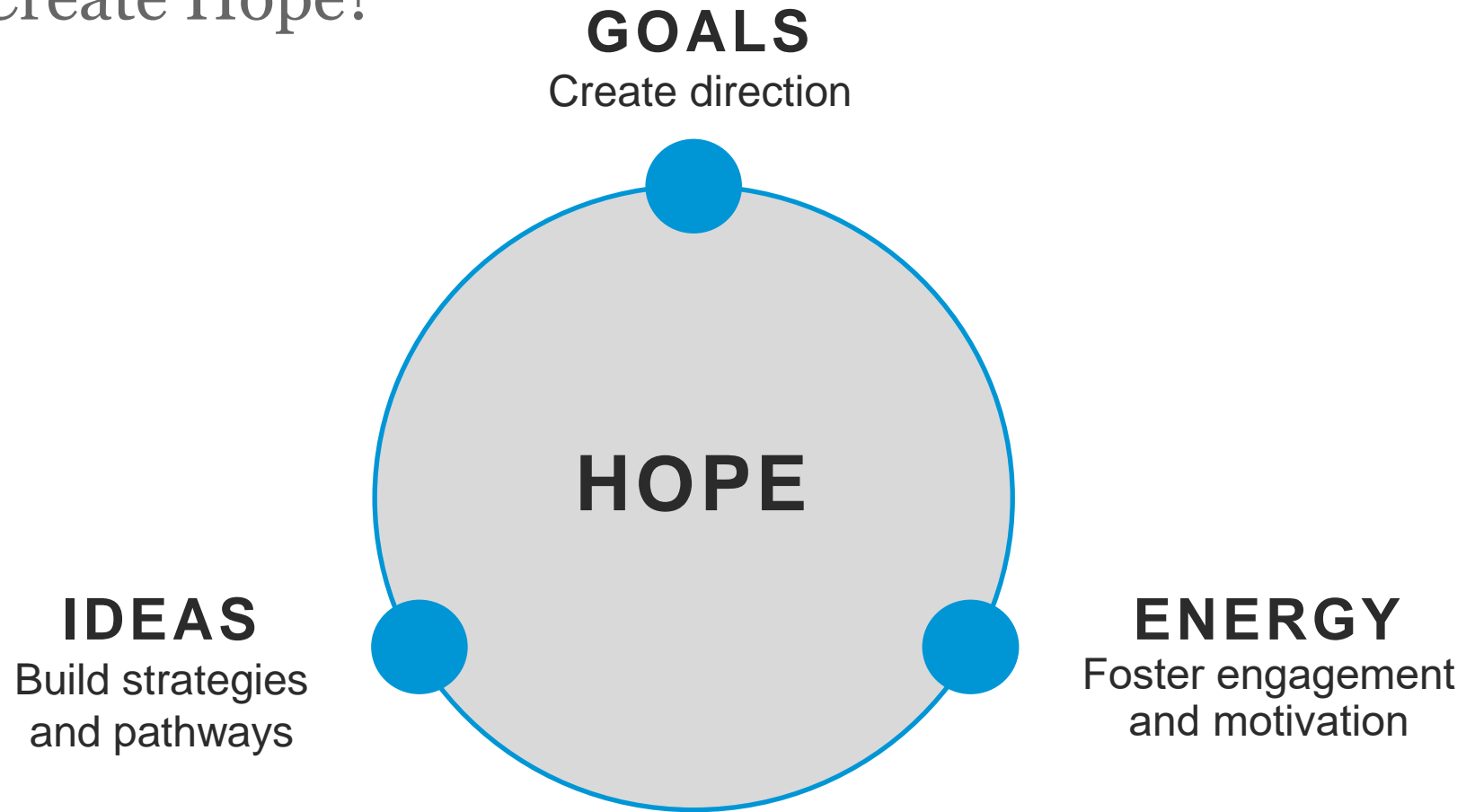


Hope is the belief that the future will be better than the present, along with the belief that you have the power to make it so.



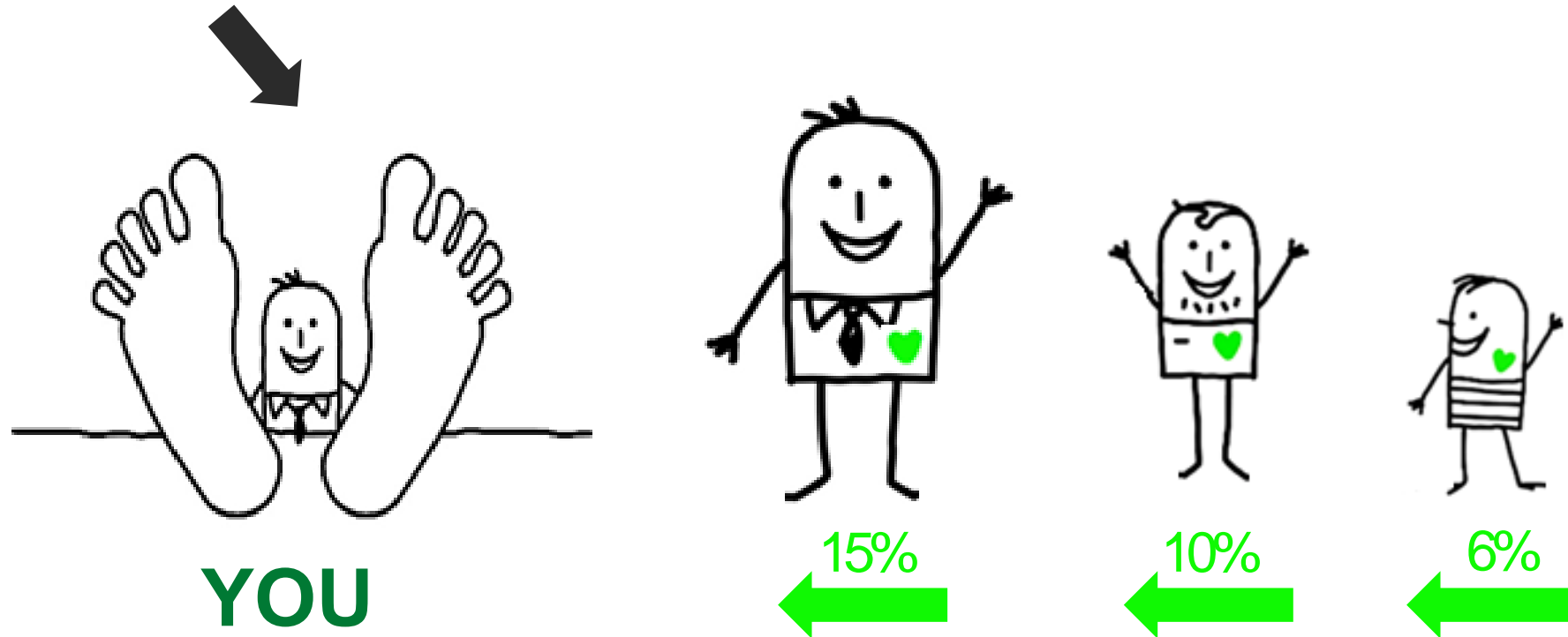
Dr. Shane Lopez  
Author of *Making Hope Happen*

# How Do *We* Create Hope?



Hope happens when you have *ideas* and *energy* to achieve future *goals*.

# The Power of Social Networks: Emotional Contagion



Source: 30+ years longitudinal study of over 12,000 people. Fowler & Christakis, The dynamic spread of happiness in a large social network, 2008; BMJ, 337, a 2338+

# What Can You Do?

**TRUST**...speak the **truth** and explain how the decision was made

**STABILITY**...absorb the emotional reactions with **calm**

**COMPASSION**...acknowledge the negative **emotional** impact

**HOPE**...**elevate** to how this will help the organization in the future



## QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

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