

# 10 reasons your culture is failing and new insights on how to fix it

By gapingvoid & brian solis



This ebook is designed to share insights, provoke new thinking, and start a conversation around culture in your organization.

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**gapingvoid**<sup>®</sup>  
The Culture Design Group

You are not alone, and we can help you fix the root causes of your culture challenge.

Because we didn't learn organizational culture design 101 in school, most leaders are super uncomfortable with the entire idea. Common thinking is that it feels too soft and unmeasurable.

Culture is a problem that has historically had few available solutions.

That is why we created Culture Science™, a precise methodology that measures your current culture, and then creates bespoke tools for you to create a movement that will grab your people by their hearts and minds and align to the greatest aspirations of your business.

**Don't feel bad,  
you know the  
stat: 70% of  
employees are  
disengaged.  
That's because  
90% of  
companies  
have ill defined  
cultures.**

We turn your culture change into a movement utilizing methods that are proven and built on Lean Six Sigma methodology and born out of design thinking, neuroscience, social physics and social learning. We connect your culture to your brand and make all your stakeholders more emotionally connected to your organization.

We've dedicated a small group of our culture analysts who will perform a 4 point diagnostic and give you a baseline report on where your culture is now, and where we think you need to be.

If you are serious about fixing your organization's culture, just [email us here](#) and we'll start diagnosing your issues.

**Culture change  
isn't simply  
a business  
initiative, it's a  
social initiative.**

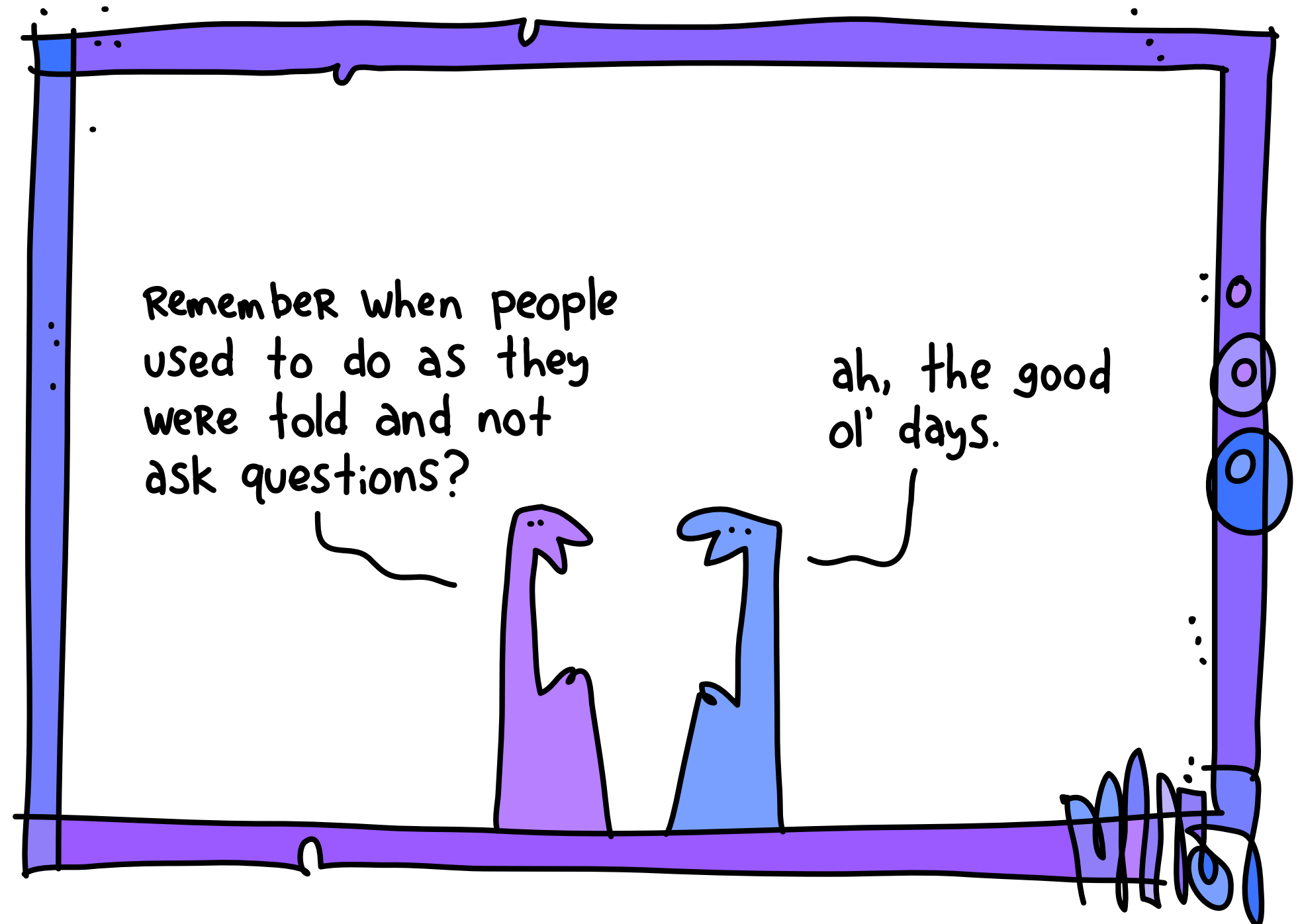
# 1. The employee playbook was written before the internet was born.

Every day, employees follow processes and rules that were designed for a time when the world worked differently.

Many cultures are risk-averse. Those who wish to change are challenged, undermined or under-appreciated by those who want to hold onto the past.

But the world has changed. Whether you like it or not.

To thrive in a new economy, companies must create safe and empowered environments for employees to learn, contribute and take risks. Those who ask “why” are the ones who push your company forward. **Listen to them.**



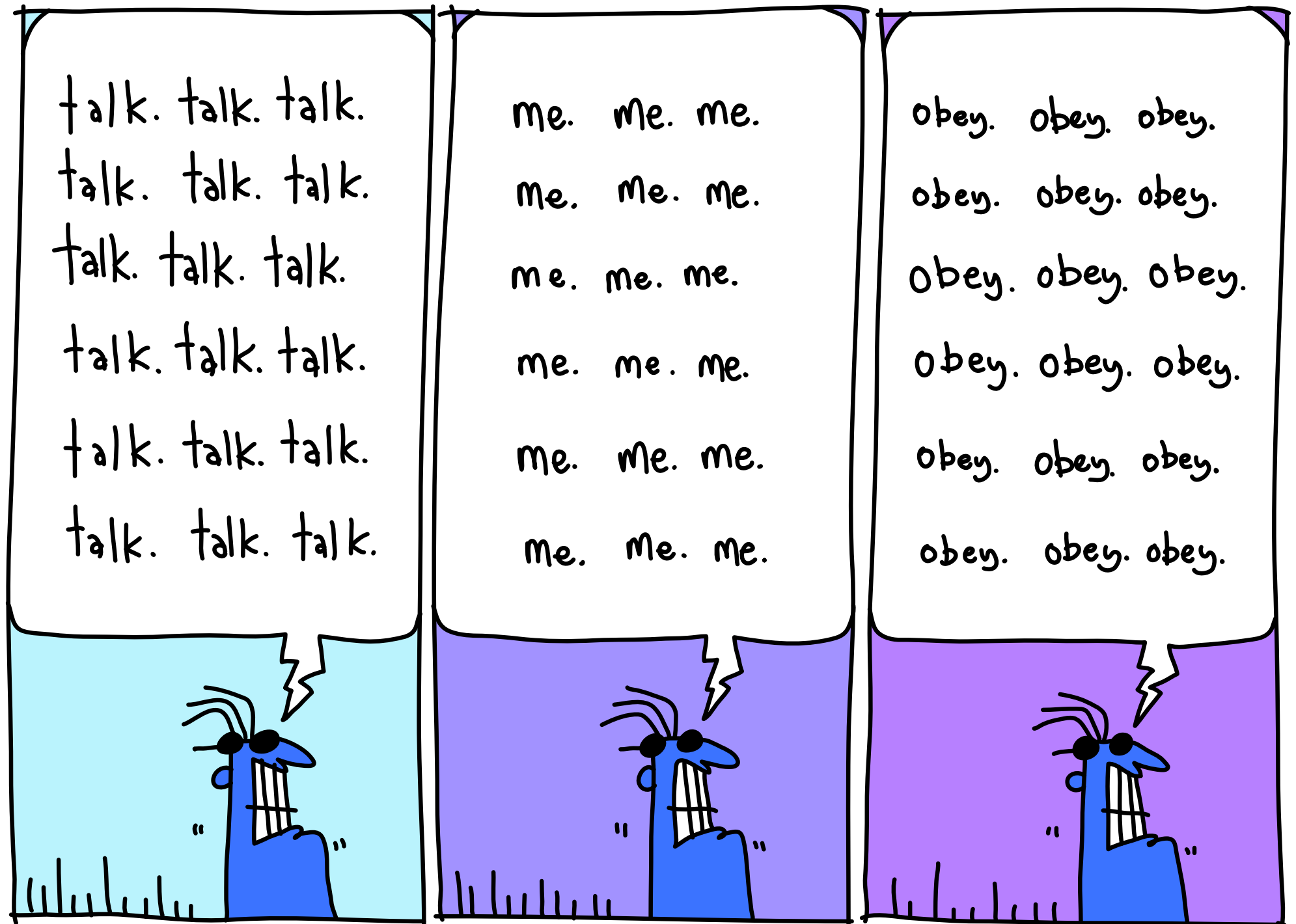
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## 2. Employee engagement is a monologue instead of a dialogue.

Leaders must listen to employees. They must want to hear employees' challenges, ideas, ambitions. That's dialogue. Most companies engage in monologue.

Even though management talks of culture and employee-centricity, real "centricity" is focused on building employee experiences and relationships....not just stakeholder and shareholder value.

Employee engagement should not be cost a center or a survey. It's an investment.



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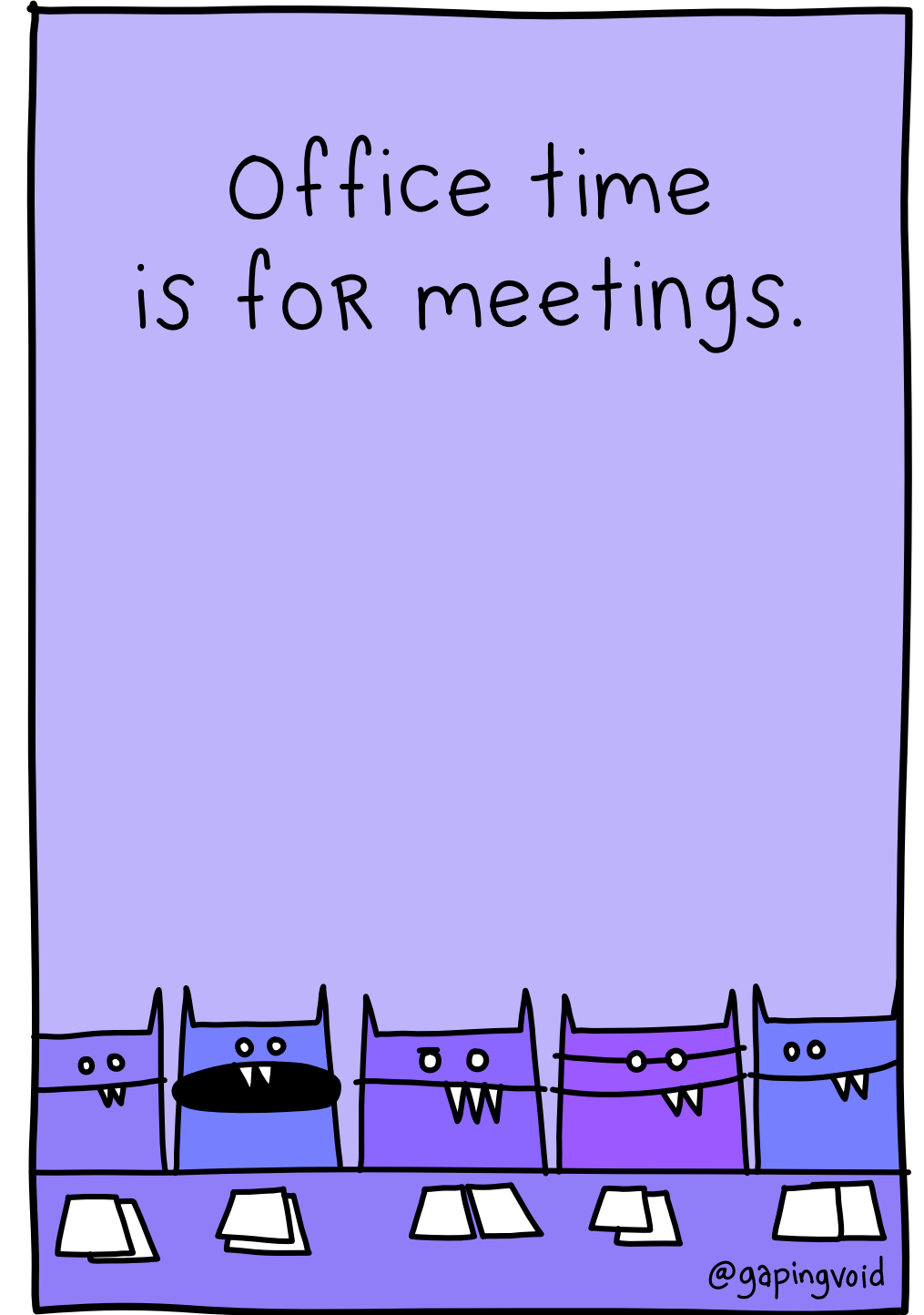
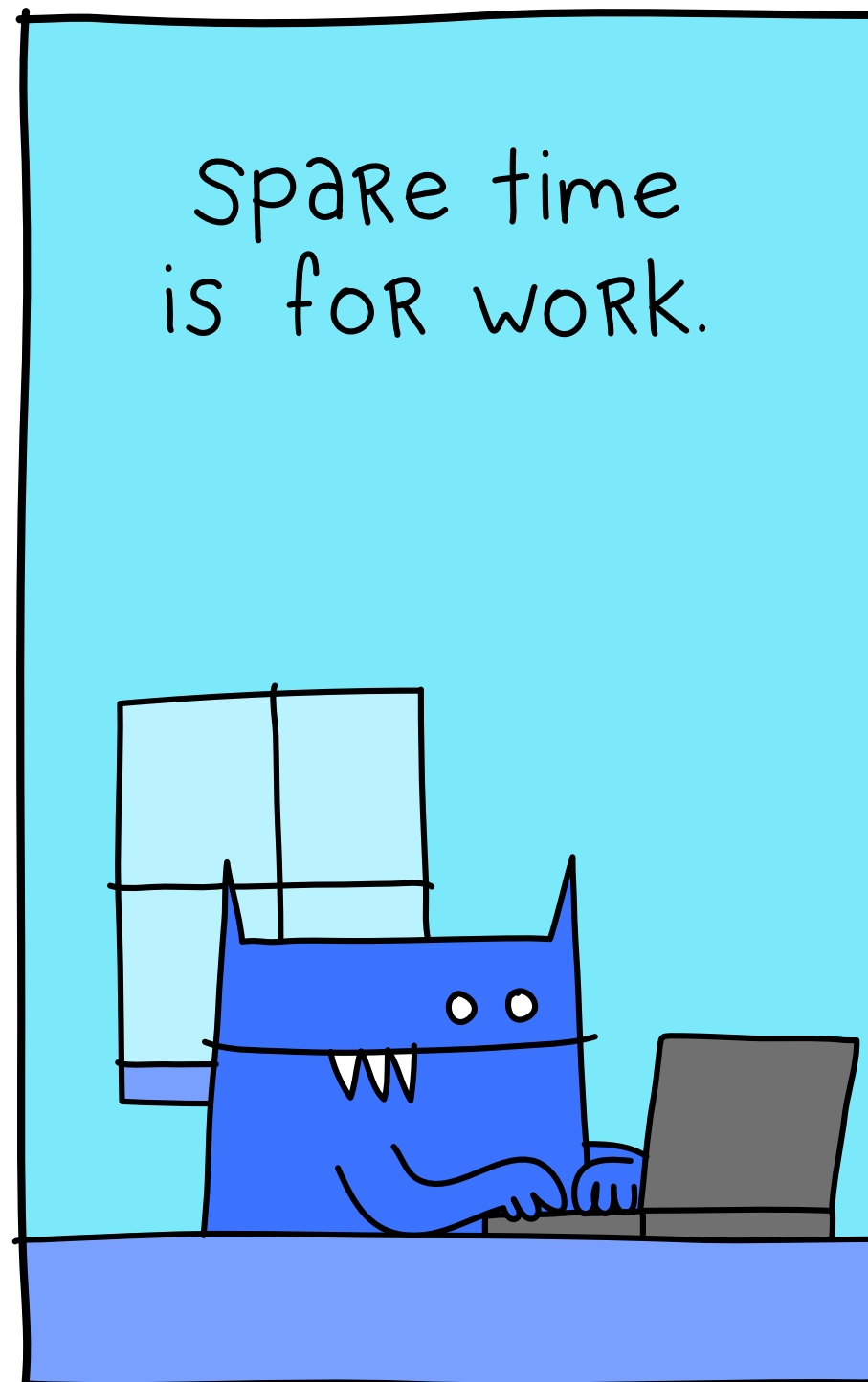
### 3. Company communication is stifling creativity and collaboration.

“I tried to change our culture but then I got stuck in meetings all day and my inbox is overflowing.”

One significant sign of a culture that fears taking the risks needed to compete is a day filled with meetings.

Meetings make people feel important.  
Meetings make people feel safe.  
Meetings reduce the accountability in real decision-making.

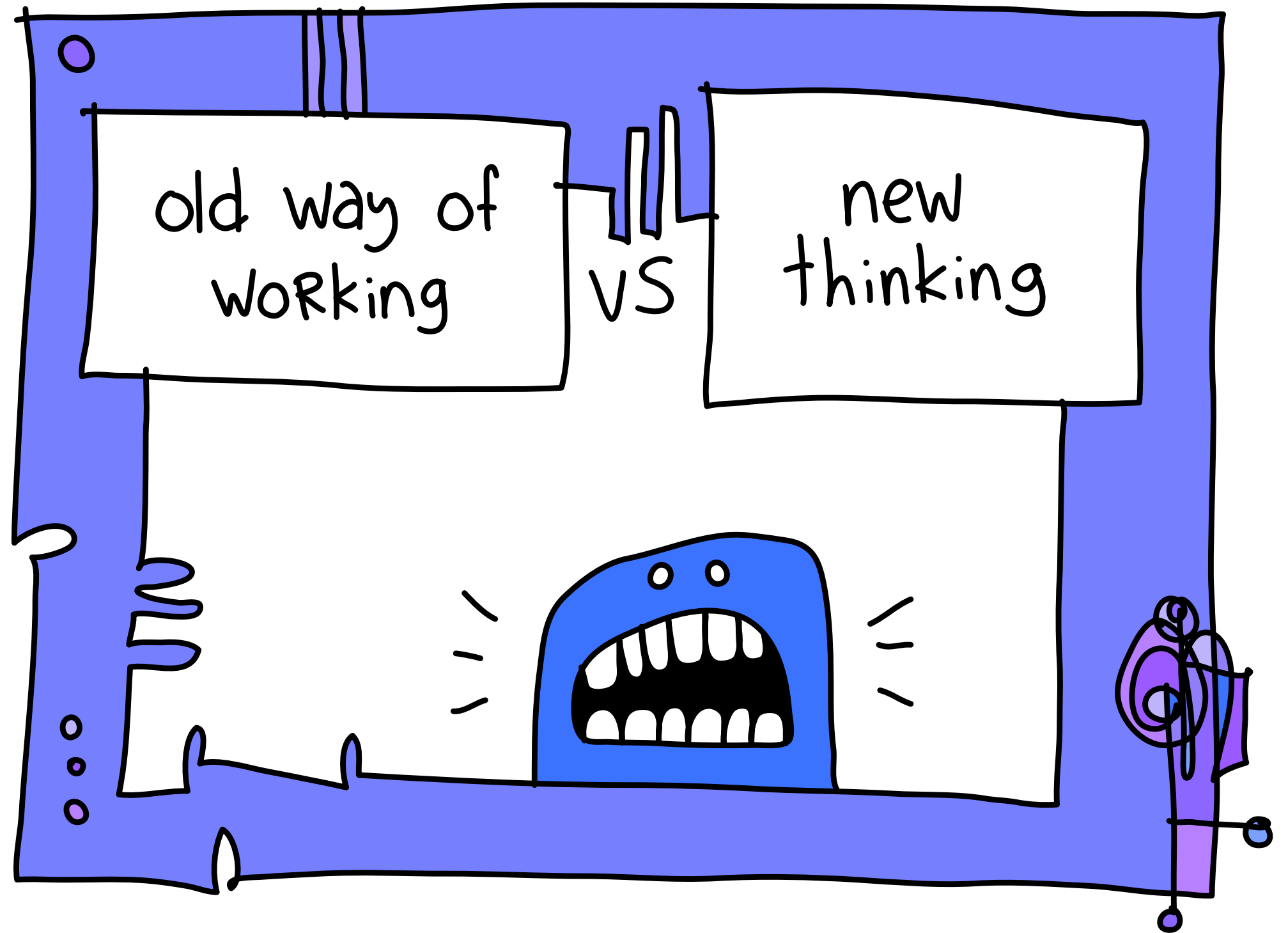
It seems like the only time we can get actual work done is after hours.



## 4. IT isn't created for the people using it.

Companies build their orgs around the vendors and technology they're already familiar with ("process and technology first") rather than learning about how their people connect, communicate and learn in their real lives. This has to change.

It takes empathy to see and do things differently...to make work human-centered.

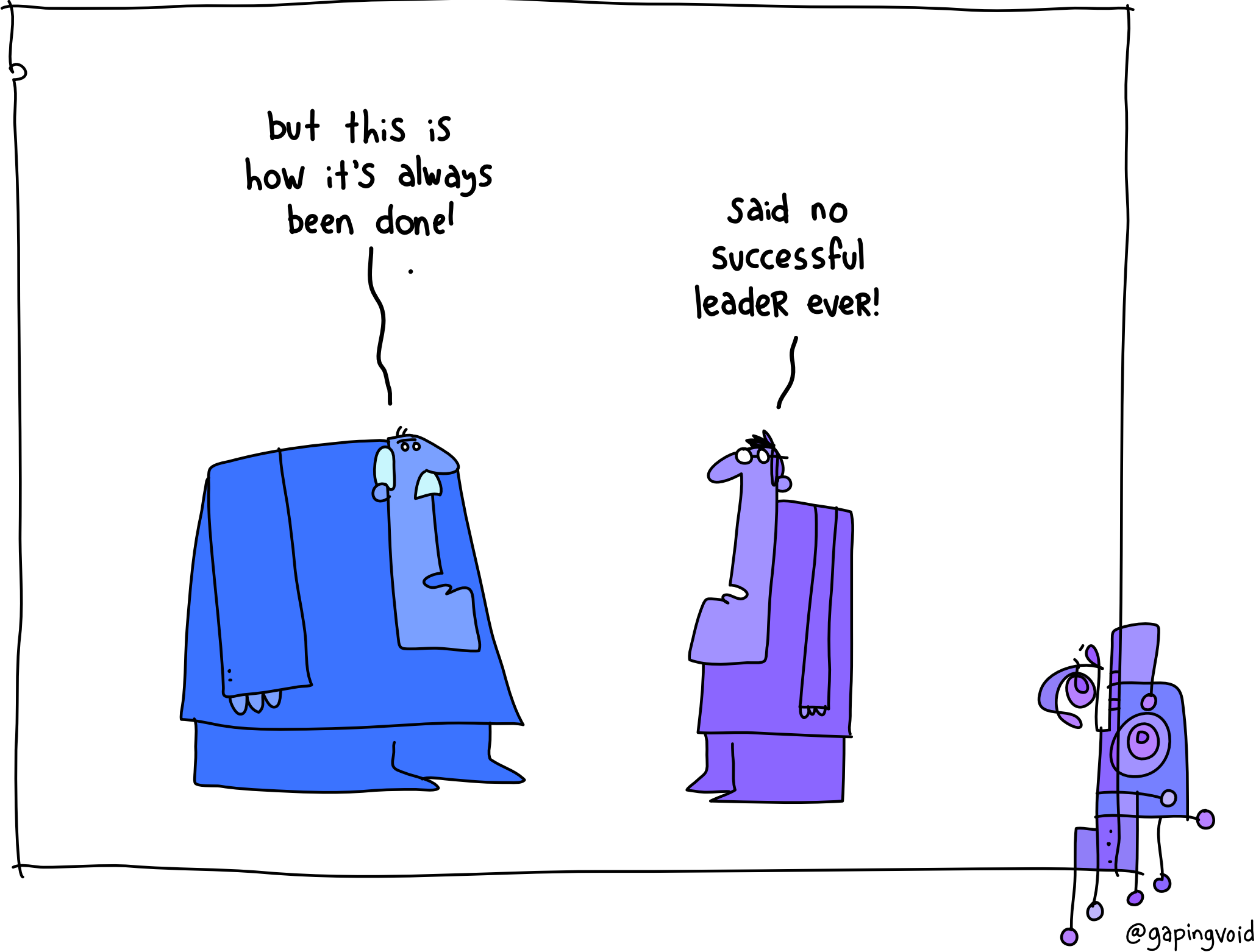


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# 5. There is no employee experience, only employer experience.

To compete in an era of digital Darwinism, management needs to embrace reverse mentoring to introduce empathy into rigid and risk-averse cultures.

The companies that invest in human understanding and design will win.





## 6. Extrinsic rewards.

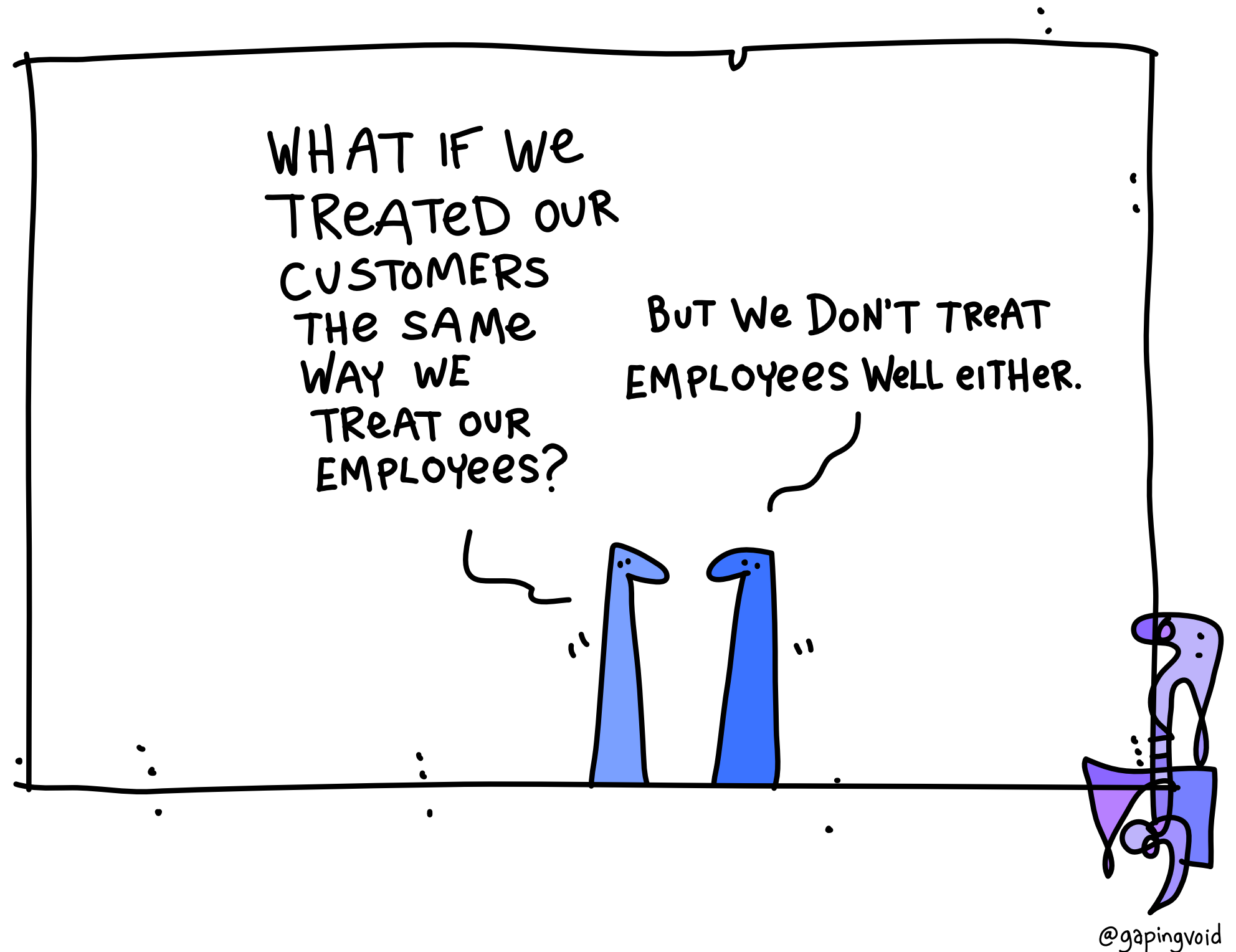
Policies and reward mechanisms deployed are dated, practically inhuman and mostly irrelevant. Change starts when you look at everything through an employee-, or human-, centric lens.

Where's HR in all of this? It's supposed to be "human resources." These days, HR may as well stand for Human Restrictions.



# 7. Leaders haven't connected the dots between employee happiness and customer satisfaction.

Look at any company with a great culture and you'll see that employee engagement is driven by an honest-to-goodness intention to foster relationships and experiences with each other, and with customers. Imagine that!

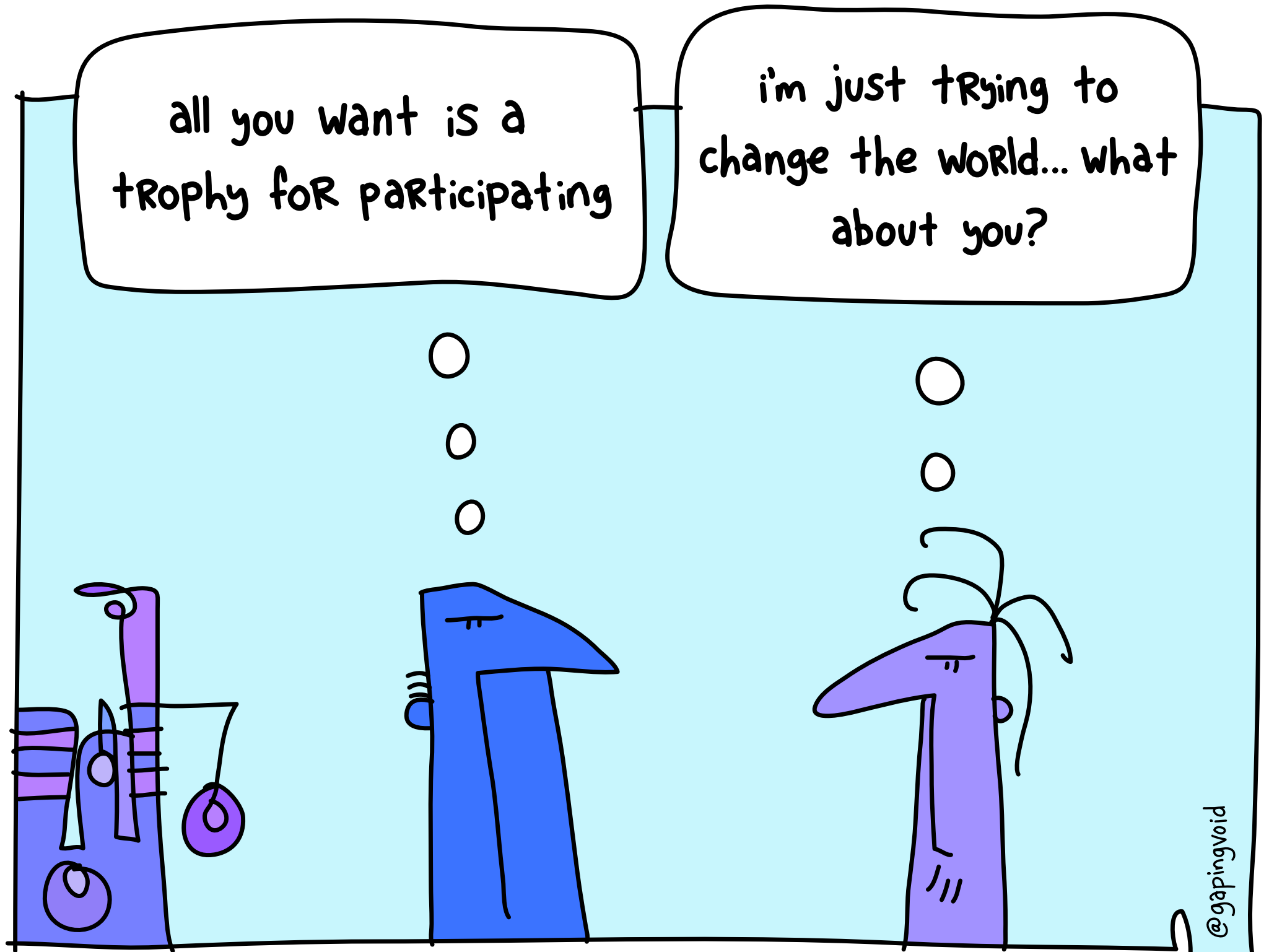


## 8. “Millennials!”

Ask managers and HR what their biggest challenge is and often you’ll hear, “Millennials!” So, the ENTIRE Millennial workforce is viewed as problematic simply because they were raised differently and the whole “command and control” workplace feels alien to them?

Every generation is different. Every generation complains about the generation before and after them. This gets us nowhere.

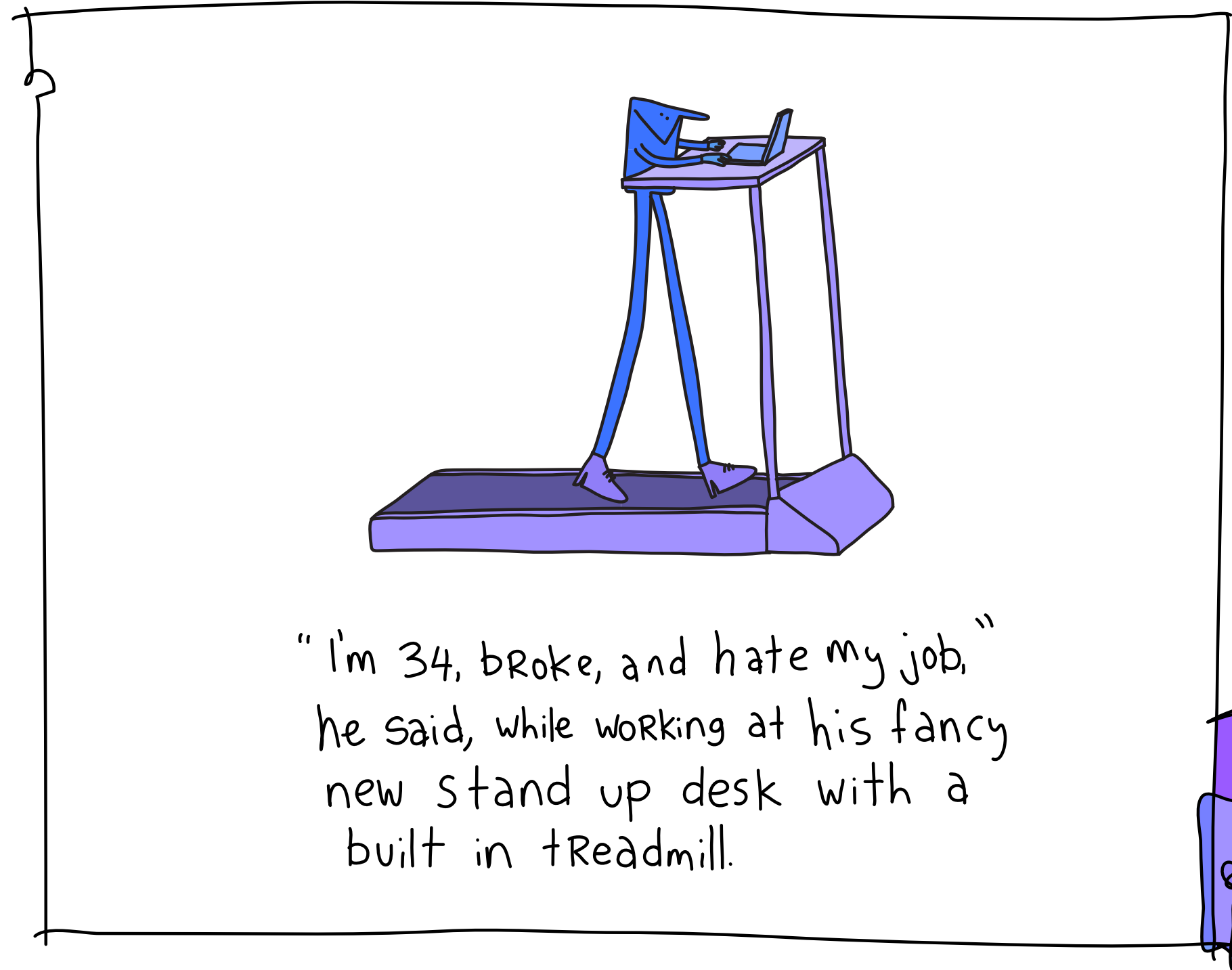
Let’s focus on change for all the right reasons...starting with achieving success by enabling employee and customer aspirations.



## 9. Companies try to create a “hip” culture by investing in open space, cool desks, lockers and food programs.

External motivators are temporary. Playing ping pong at work does not get you out of bed in the morning.

You cannot “hipster” your way to engagement, happiness and innovation. You have to nurture, practice and reward work in new ways to unlock new sentiments, experiences and possibilities.

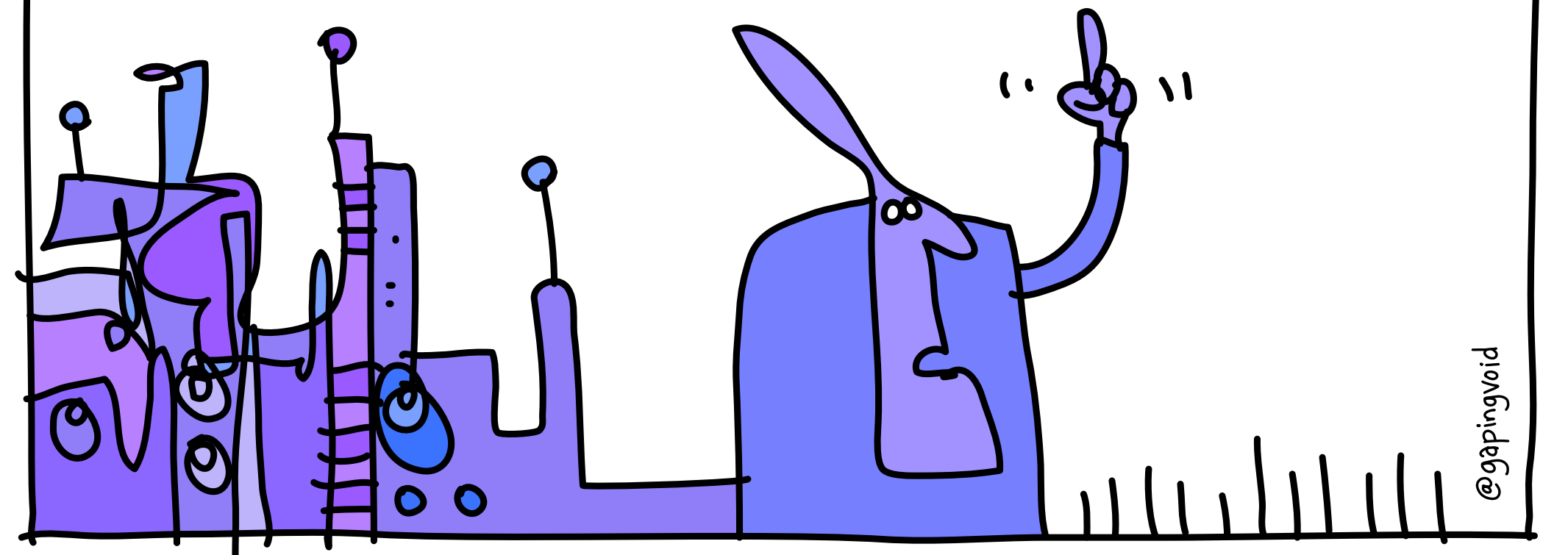


# 10. Leading isn't the opposite of control or power.

Truth be told, there's very little leadership these days.

As a result, day to day work is dictated, not inspired. Employee engagement and satisfaction is assumed and not cultivated.

managers manage from the top.  
leaders lead from the middle.



# About Gapingvoid

**Gapingvoid** is a Miami-based consultancy that helps companies increase employee engagement and connect people more deeply to mission, values and purpose. Since 2007, gapingvoid has designed, articulated and sped the adoption of organizational culture for many of the most forward-thinking companies, worldwide. The concept is simple: inspiring alignment and engagement in employees will improve creativity, agility, productivity and innovative outcomes, which impact bottom line results. Our world is full of change projects that no one pays attention to. Gapingvoid uses a unique combination of human-designed leadership tools that connect people emotionally to your organization's most important outcomes.

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# About Brian Solis

**Brian Solis** is a principal analyst at Altimeter, a Prophet company. He is also an award-winning author, prominent blogger/writer, and keynote speaker. A digital analyst, anthropologist, and futurist, Solis has studied and influenced the effects of emerging technology on business, marketing, and culture. His research and his books help leaders better understand the relationship between the evolution of technology and its impact on business and society and also the role we each play in it. Solis also helps leading brands, celebrities, and startups develop new digital transformation, culture 2.0, and innovation strategies and that enable businesses to adapt to new connected markets from the inside out.

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