Avoid common organizational pitfalls
while
building your effective coaching community

Ari Tikka and Gene Gendel
LeSS conference 2018

About the Speakers:

https://gosei.fi/

http://www.keystepstosuccess.com

Ari Tikka of GOSEI has an MSc in structural mechanics. From 1990 to 1996 he developed embedded real-time systems for Metso and Nokia. Around 1997 he became a full-time organizational therapist, co-leading a three-year cultural change program and delivering a 10-day training program for 150 program managers. He has deep experience in organizational behavior and group dynamics. Since 2006 he has contributed to Agile adoptions for Nokia Networks and since 2008 for medical, financial, game and car sectors. He is experienced in applying LeSS wisdom to non-standard situations. For the last couple of years he has worked with European car and transport industry.

Gene Gendel of KSTS Consulting is Agile Coach, Trainer and Organizational Design Agent. He holds Certified Enterprise Coach (CEC) credential from Scrum Alliance, as well as a few other elevated professional credentials. Gene's focus is on helping organizations and teams with improving system design and organizational structure and overall efficiency. Gene engages at all organizational levels: senior leadership, mid-level management, teams and individuals. To be effective as a coach, Gene uses various coaching tools and techniques, based on circumstances, while also leveraging elements of training and mentoring, to supplement his coaching.

Centralized vs. Decentralized Coaching

by Gene Gendel

Thanks to the Contributors

Rowan Bunning

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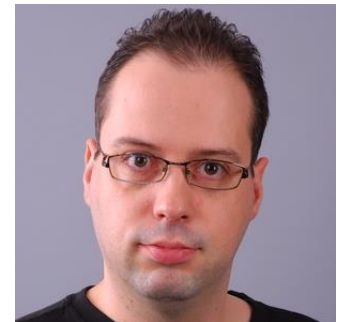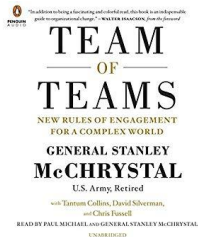Michael Mai

Robin Dymond

Viktor Grgic

Bas Vodde

"The Old Rules No Longer Apply"

Stanley A. McChrystal

Commander of the International Security Assistance Force

TEAM
OF
TEAMS
NEW RULES OF ENGAGEMENT
FOR A COMPLEX WORLD
GENERAL STANLEY
McCHRYSTAL
U.S. Army, Retired

"The old rules no longer apply...

When General Stanley McChrystal took command of the Joint Special Operations Task Force in 2004, he quickly realized that conventional military tactics were failing. Al Qaeda in Iraq was a decentralized network that could move quickly, strike ruthlessly, then seemingly vanish into the local population. The allied forces had a huge advantage in numbers, equipment, and training—but none of that seemed to matter....

A new approach for a new world...

McChrystal and his colleagues discarded a century of conventional wisdom and remade the Task Force, in the midst of a grueling war, into something new: a network that combined extremely transparent communication with decentralized decision-making authority. The walls between silos were torn down. Leaders looked at the best practices of the smallest units and found ways to extend them to thousands of people on three continents, using technology to establish a oneness that would have been impossible even a decade earlier. The Task Force became a "team of teams" - faster, flatter, more flexible - and beat back Al Qaeda."

Original source: Amazon summary of the book "Team of Teams", by General Stanley McChrystal (Author), Tantum Collins (Author), David Silverman (Author), Chris Fussell (Author)
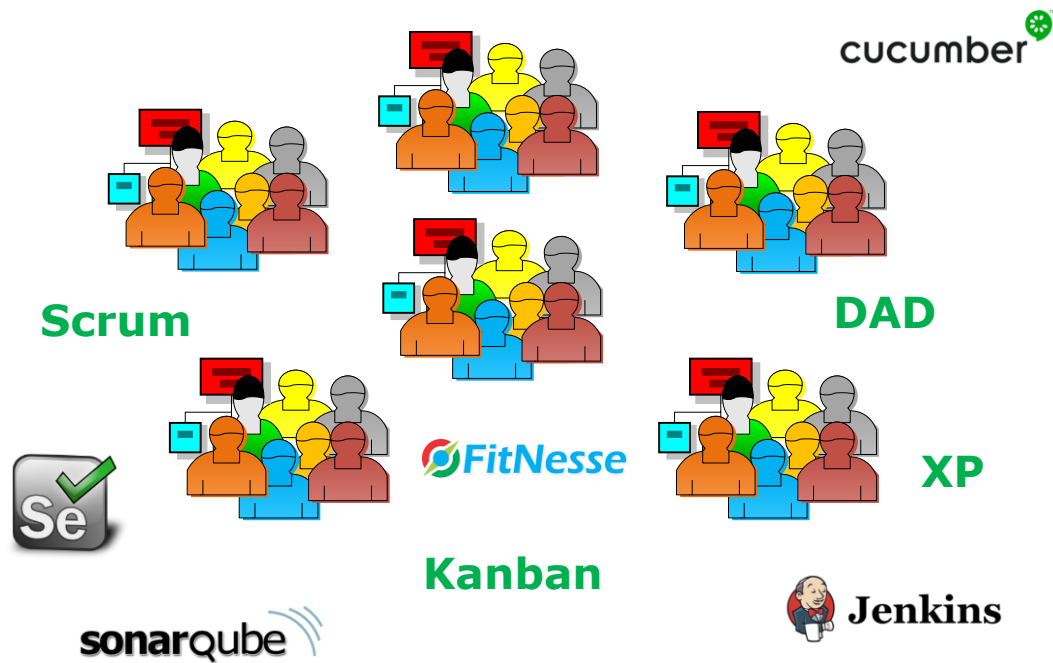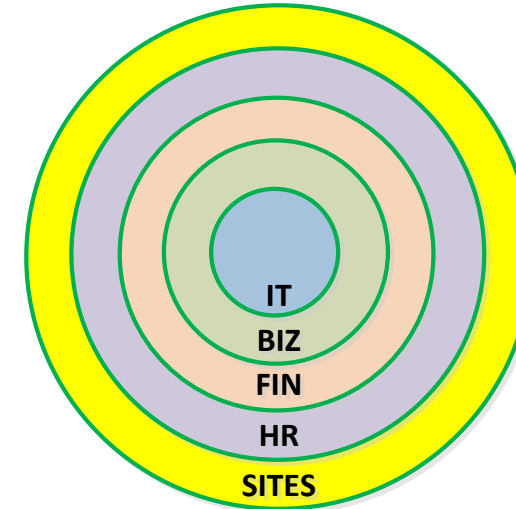
Coaching: Focus vs. Position

Definition of <u>Focus</u>

Team

"Coaches are primarily focused on tools, frameworks and dynamics of few teams, with less emphasis on organizational transformation."

Organization/Enterprise

"Coaches - are more focused on organizational dynamics and more abstracted elements of transformation, with emphasis on senior leadership, upper management, organizational policies (e.g. HR), and multiple organizational domains."

Scrum

cucumber

DAD

FitNesse

XP

Kanban

sonarqube

Jenkins

IT
BIZ
FIN
HR
SITES

Organizational "sushi roll"

don't make it huge!!!

Team Coaching != Decentralized Coaching

Enterprise Coaching != Centralized Coaching

Coaching: Focus vs. Position

Definition of <u>Position</u>

Centralized

"Distinct organizational unit (e.g. Agile Center of Excellence or Agile Global Centre) that drives agile transformation across an entire organization, by introducing best practices, tools, techniques, standards, benchmarks and scorecards, against which everyone else is measured. Such organizational unit is loosely coupled with any specific product, service or line of business. It is primarily supported (and sponsored) by an organizational structure that has been selected and 'put in charge' by more senior leadership. With this selection, other organizational structures (e.g. operations or product groups) usually remain less vested in the effort, and even if follow along, do so with noticeable complacency."
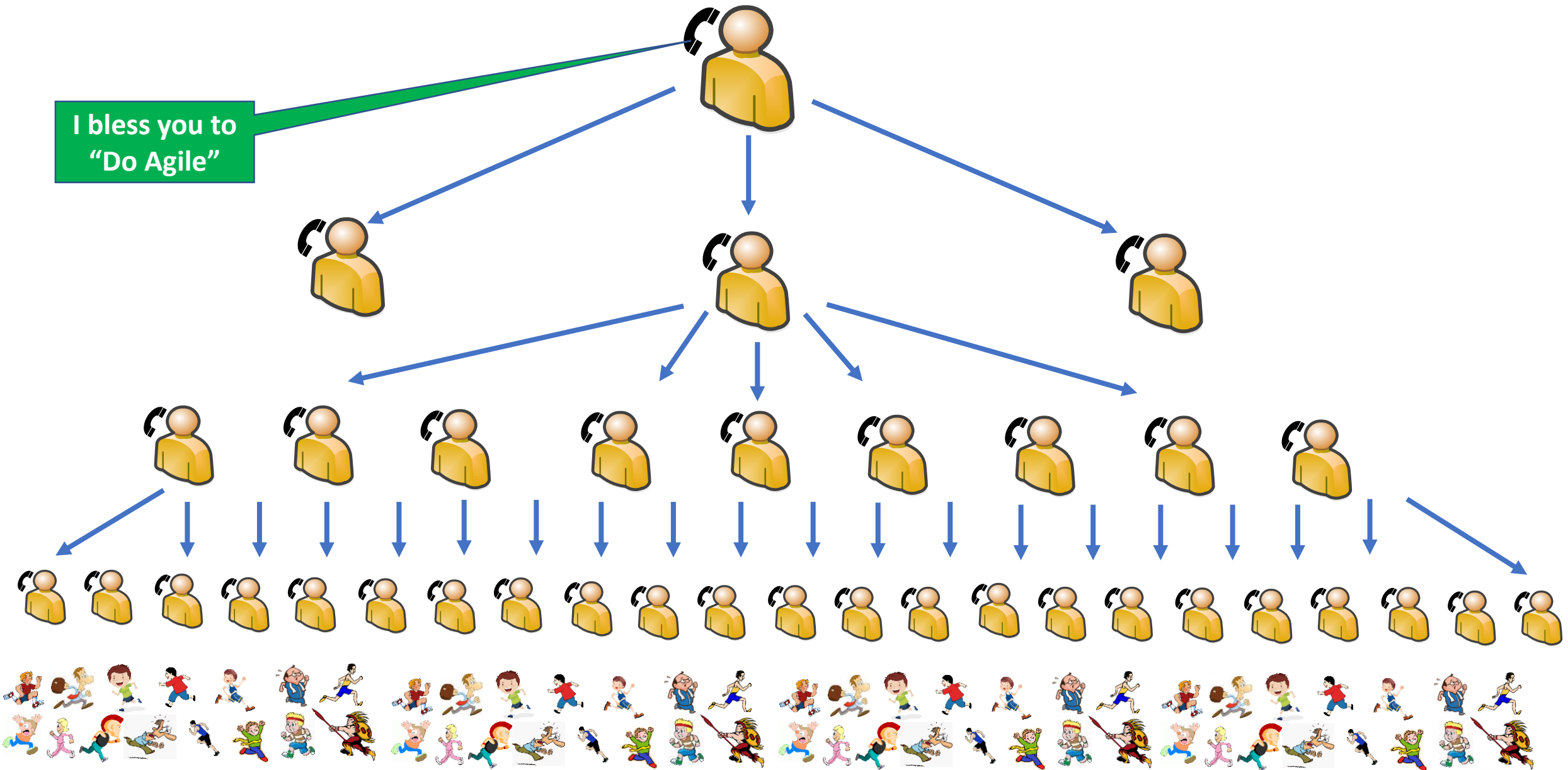
Decentralized

"Not rigidly structured team of like-minded coaches that align themselves with a clearly defined product, service or line of business. Transformational focus here is much narrower, and requires much more genuine support/vesting (with sponsorship!) from multiple organizational verticals involved (e.g. business, operations, IT, HR, finance, etc.). In order for decentralized coaching to have a meaningful organizational impact, an organization must be of manageable size (no Big Bangs), as it is defined by an organizational sushi roll that contains elements/instances of multiple organizational structures involved."

Source: https://www.infoq.com/articles/centralized-decentralized-coaching

Centralized Coaching (closer look)

> Sr. Management:
>> "Blessing and in spirit". No GEMBA. Delegation of responsibilities.
>> Lack of understanding of deep systemic implications

> **45.3734999% Agile by EoY** ☹ → scorecards, individual performance, bonuses
> KPIs/Agile Maturity Metrics (AMM)/Maturity Levels → System Gaming
> Internal competition between departments: "*I got more 'teams' using JIRA, than you*"
> "Best Practices" and rented "scripts" (no ownership): BoKs, playbooks, tons of wiki
> Local Optimization by coaches: generating lots of *muda* (waste)

> Erosion of Coaching Quality
>> Execution of Larman's Law #4
>> Invasion by Coaches "Centaurs"

> Organizational Resistance → "***Fallen men (coaches) are left behind***"

Centralized Coaching (closer look)

I bless you to "Do Agile"

Centralized Coaching (closer look)

Chasing numbers becomes **Internal Competition**

Note: for alternative ways to measure your gradual improvement of agility, over time, in a non-competitive way, please visit this page.
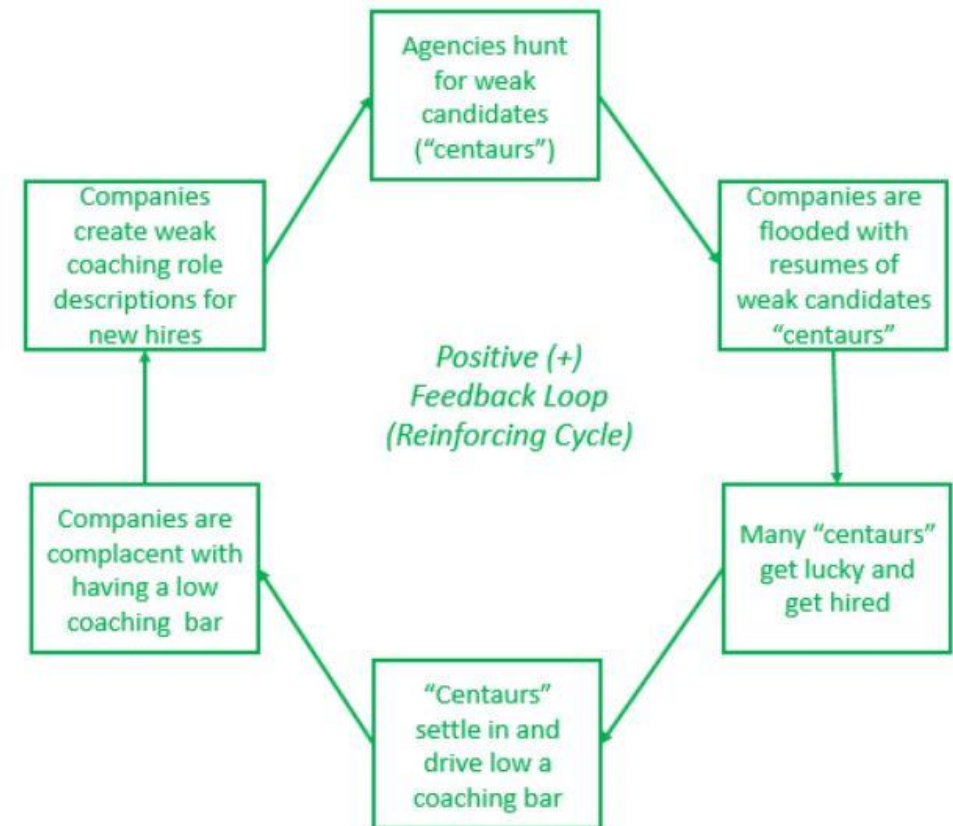
Centralized Coaching (closer look)

Larman's Laws of Organizational Behavior

After decades of observation and organizational consulting, here are *Larman's Laws of Organizational Behavior*. These are observations rather than laws to follow ;)

1. Organizations are implicitly optimized to avoid changing the status quo middle- and first-level manager and "specialist" positions & power structures.

2. As a corollary to (1), any change initiative will be reduced to redefining or overloading the new terminology to mean basically the same as status quo.

3. As a corollary to (1), any change initiative will be derided as "purist", "theoretical", "revolutionary", "religion", and "needing pragmatic customization for local concerns" — which deflects from addressing weaknesses and manager/specialist status quo.

4. As a corollary to (1), if after *changing the change* some managers and single-specialists are still displaced, they become "coaches/trainers" for the change, frequently reinforcing (2) and (3).

5. Culture follows structure.

"Coaches – Centaurs"

Agencies hunt for weak candidates ("centaurs")

Companies are flooded with resumes of weak candidates "centaurs"

Many "centaurs" get lucky and get hired

Positive (+) Feedback Loop (Reinforcing Cycle)

"Centaurs" settle in and drive low a coaching bar

Companies are complacent with having a low coaching bar

Companies create weak coaching role descriptions for new hires

Centralized Coaching (closer look)

Reports & Statistics

Status meetings, Presentation Slides

"Answering Services"

Maturity Metrics

Scorecards

Documentation

Wiki…wiki….wiki…wiki…wiki…

"Ivory Power-Tower"

$$V\left(\begin{array}{l}\text{Wikis, BoKs, AMMs,}\\\text{KPIs, Tool customization,}\\\text{Process standardization,}\\\text{"Best Practices",}\\\text{EOY \# agile teams}\end{array}\right) = \frac{1}{\begin{array}{c}\text{Ability to coach}\\\text{Willingness to Challenge \& Change}\\\text{Capability to Inspect \& Adapt}\end{array}}$$

Centralized Coaching (closer look)

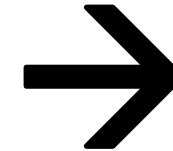Source: https://www.amazon.com/Ebros-Gift-Military-Carrying-Figurine/dp/B075CV5933

Coaches – beware!!!
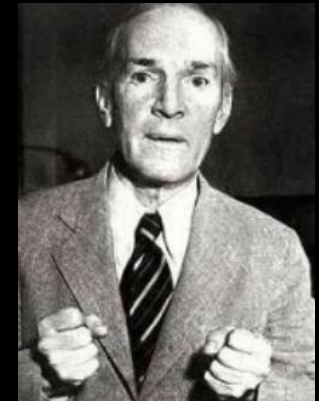Being placed inside an organizational structure that does not give a

about agility, sees no value in your function, and probably fears it… is NOT safe….

"It is difficult to get a man to understand something, when his salary depends on his not understanding it."

-Upton Sinclair
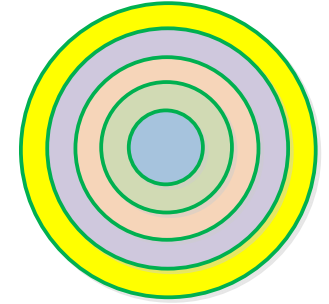
Centralized Coaching (closer look)

Preaching about avoidance of saturated fats and having healthy diet?

HERE????? ....

What are your chances?

Decentralized Coaching (closer look)

➤ Dedication and alignment with teams, customers & products, senior leadership

➤ Based on conscious decisions and full dedication by senior leadership

➤ Authenticity of original transformation goals – preserved!!!

➤ Fewer but more experienced coaches involved. No 'wholesale' approaches.

➤ **Deep & narrow** involvement (as opposed to broad & sallow)

➤ Short feedback loops; frequent inspection and adaptation

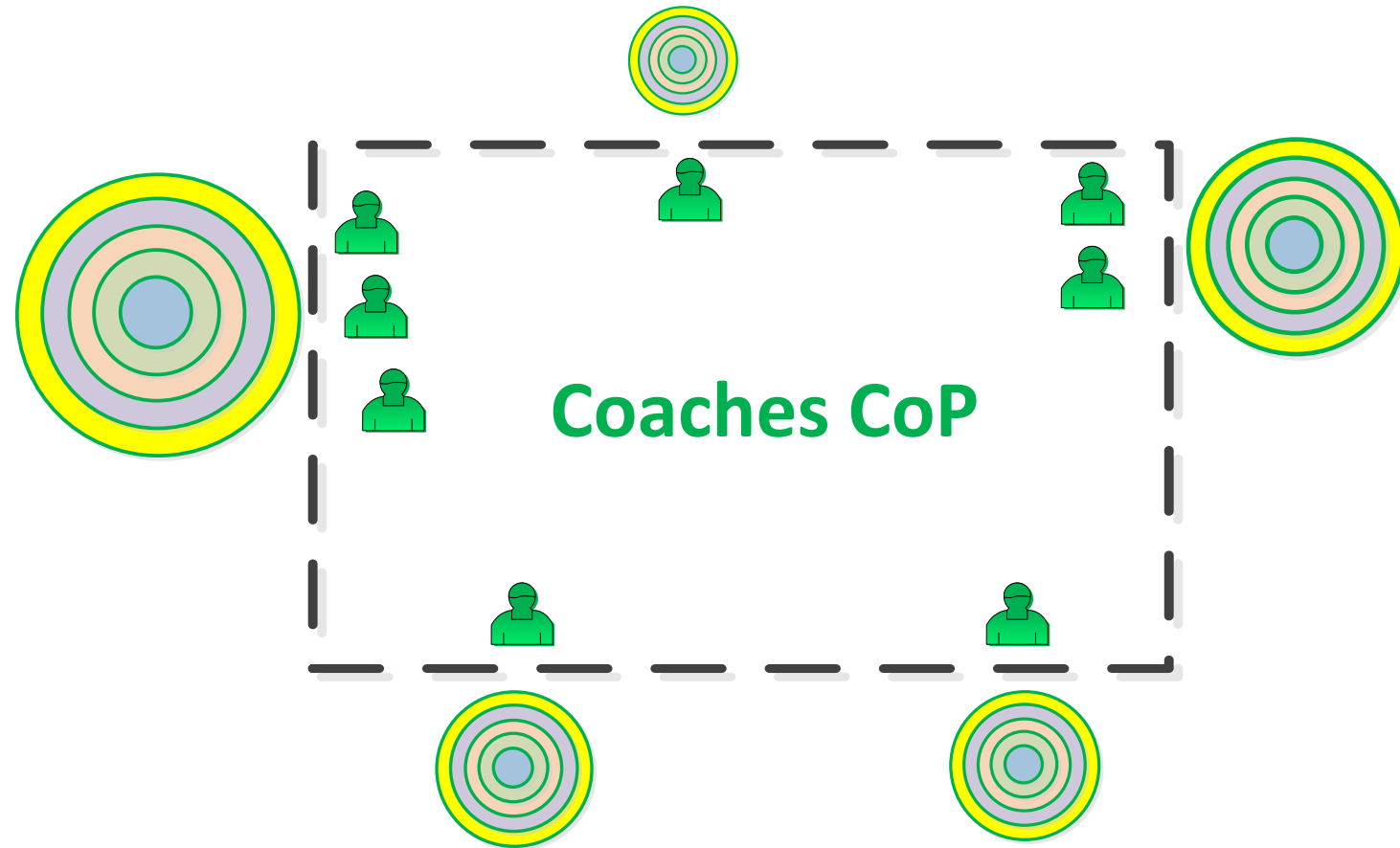➤ **Safety to experiment** (try & avoid)

Decentralized Coaching (closer look)

How to avoid False Dichotomy???:
"Because of decentralized coaching approach, there will be no adequate shared learning across the whole organization"
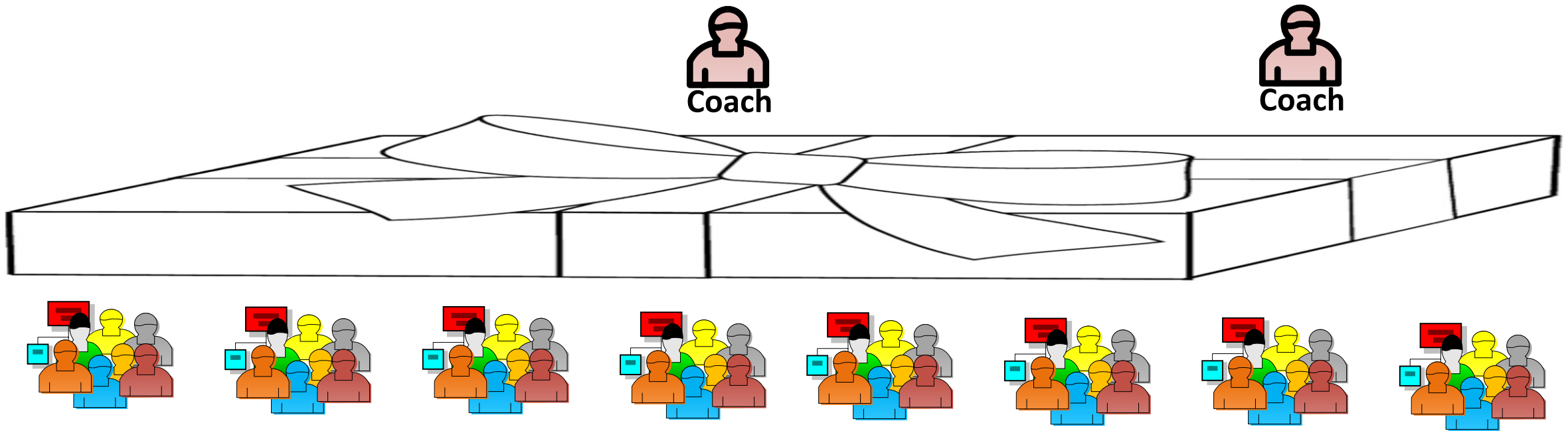
➢ Self-organized/self-governed coaching Communities of Practice
➢ Complimentary focus (team-, enterprise-)
➢ Complimentary skillset (technical-, career- process-)
➢ Aligned on widely defined products (not individual applications or components)
➢ Staying around long enough for continuous support and lasting impact
➢ Able to influence business, technology, and the rest of organizational 'onion'
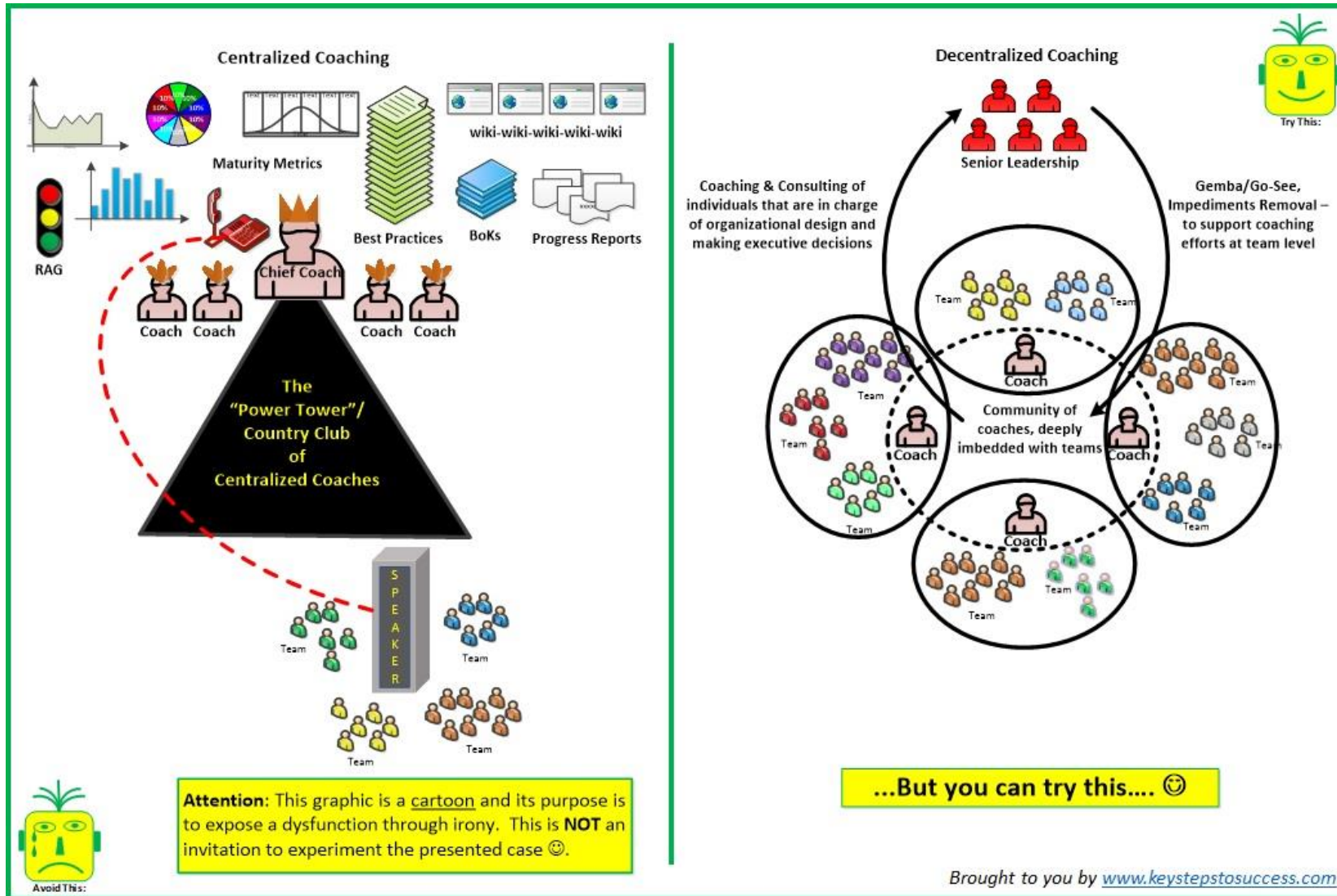➢ Safe, non-hierarchical environment

Coaches CoP

Decentralized Coaching (closer look)

Start with the question: "How do you define your product?"

Coach

Coach

Number of teams and coaches depends on many factors. There is no 'best practice' or 'one glove fits all' approach. For example, one coach can focus on technical excellence, whereas another - on processes, team/organizational design, execution, etc.

Centralized vs. Decentralized

Quotes of Wisdom (from the contributors)

From Viktor Grgic of Odd-e:

> Organizational tree of agile coaches who commonly force upon others their "services" is quite serious dysfunction. If organization is very much into this, one might choose to limit scope of adoption, show real result while others are extremely busy with programs, etc. In other words, there is not much that can be done when KPIs for agile transformation are set at the very high level of organization and everyone is busy complying with them.

From Bas Vodde, of Odd-e and the co-founder of Large Scale Scrum framework:

> If you have a centralized team that can *truly* go to products and coach them, they're very valuable as they see a lot of cross-product dynamics. If they can't do that, then a decentralized group is a better chance of getting at least some value out of the coaching.

https://www.infoq.com/articles/centralized-decentralized-coaching

From Rowan Bunning, of Scrum WithStyle:

> If the goal is for Agile thinking and practices to be disseminated throughout an organisation in a way that everyone feels that they "own" their ways of working, then coaches should be co-located and deeply embedded with teams and business units they support. Furthermore, if a message from coaches to developers is to move from single function groups to cross-functional teams, then having coaches centralised into a single-function group may seem hypocritical. It may also be perceived as a pursuit of control over how Agile coaching services are procured and disseminated - potentially to the benefit of those in a centralised group.

From Greg Hutchings, of Amelior Services:

> I would discourage those who think that the best use of agile coaching and training budgets would be to create an agile center with people primarily aligned with and focused on belonging to and spending time with a separate, specialist group, as this is just about the exact opposite of go-see, working at gemba, and inspecting and adapting with people in the main value creation part of the organisation.

Q & A