



Courageous Collaboration

Presentation to IPASA Annual Philanthropy Symposium 2023

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Picture: Patrick Latimer

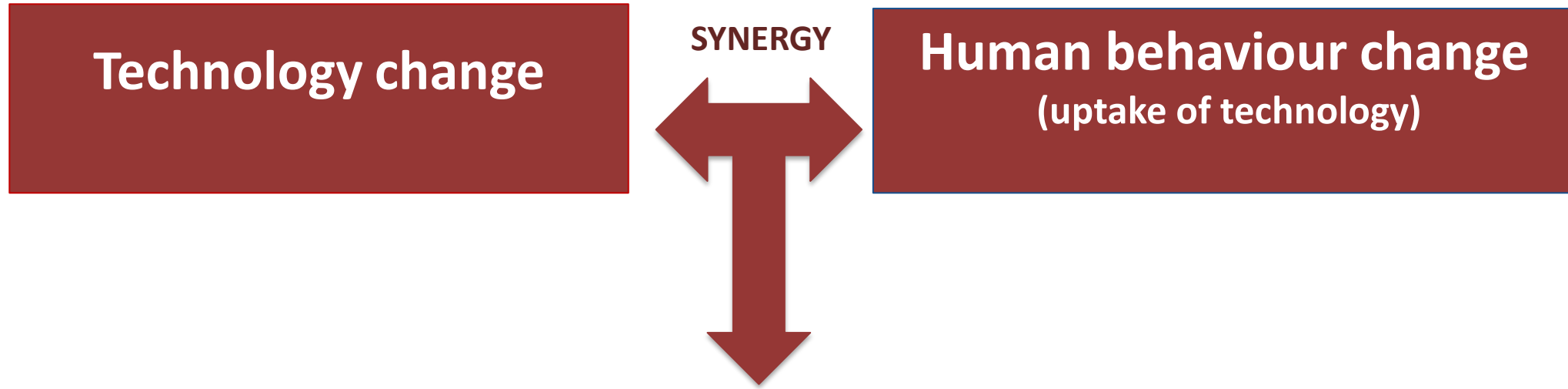
Why do we need courageous collaboration?



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graph TD; A[Why do we need courageous collaboration?] --> B[What are we scared of?]; B --> C[Where to start?];
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What are we scared of?

Where to start?



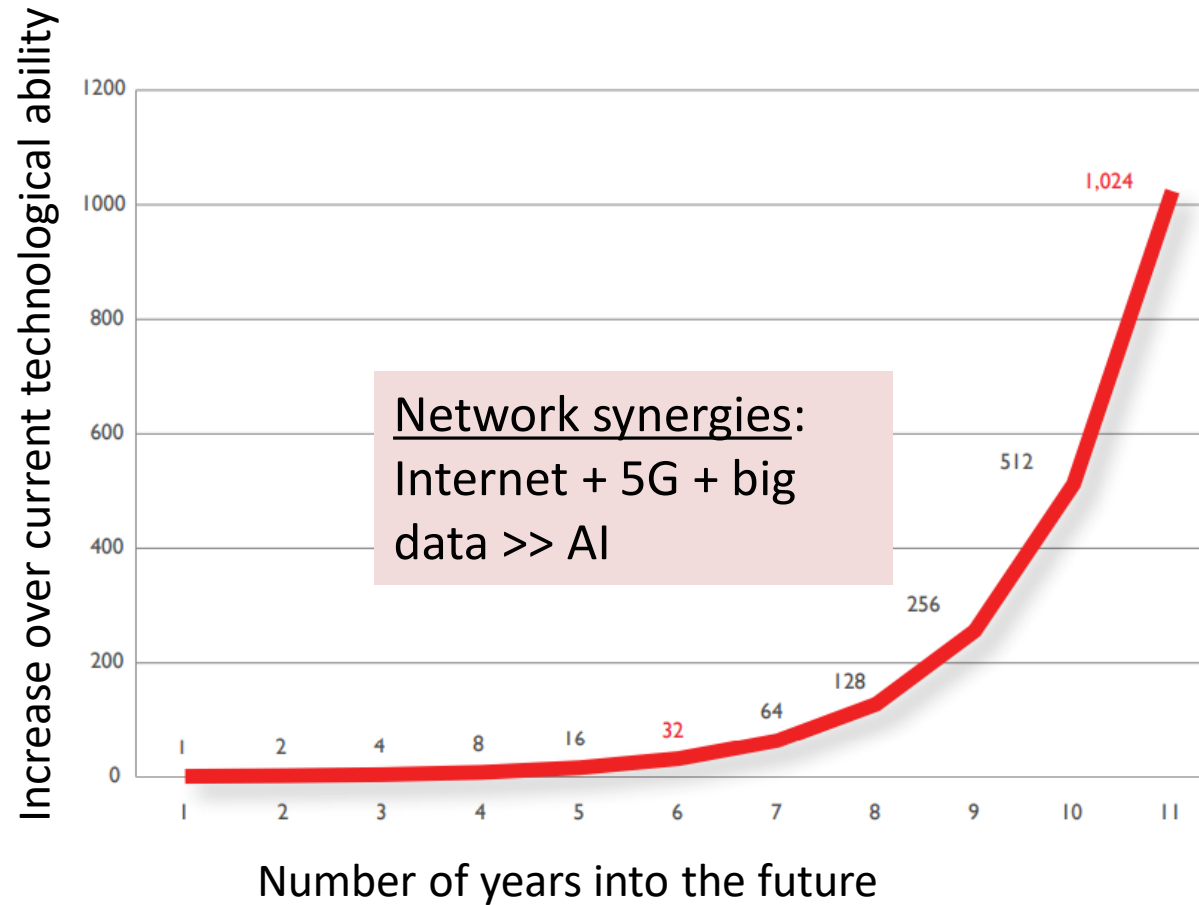
“Human and material resources are endowed with new and greater wealth producing capacity”

Drucker P (2006). Classical Drucker. Harvard University Press

Today, acceleration of innovation is largely due to network-based synergy

Human Intuitive Perspective of Technological Advancement in Ten Years

A Thousand Times More Advanced



Law of Accelerating Returns.

<https://theemergingfuture.com/speed-technological-advancement.htm>

<https://www.kurzweilai.net/the-law-of-accelerating-returns>

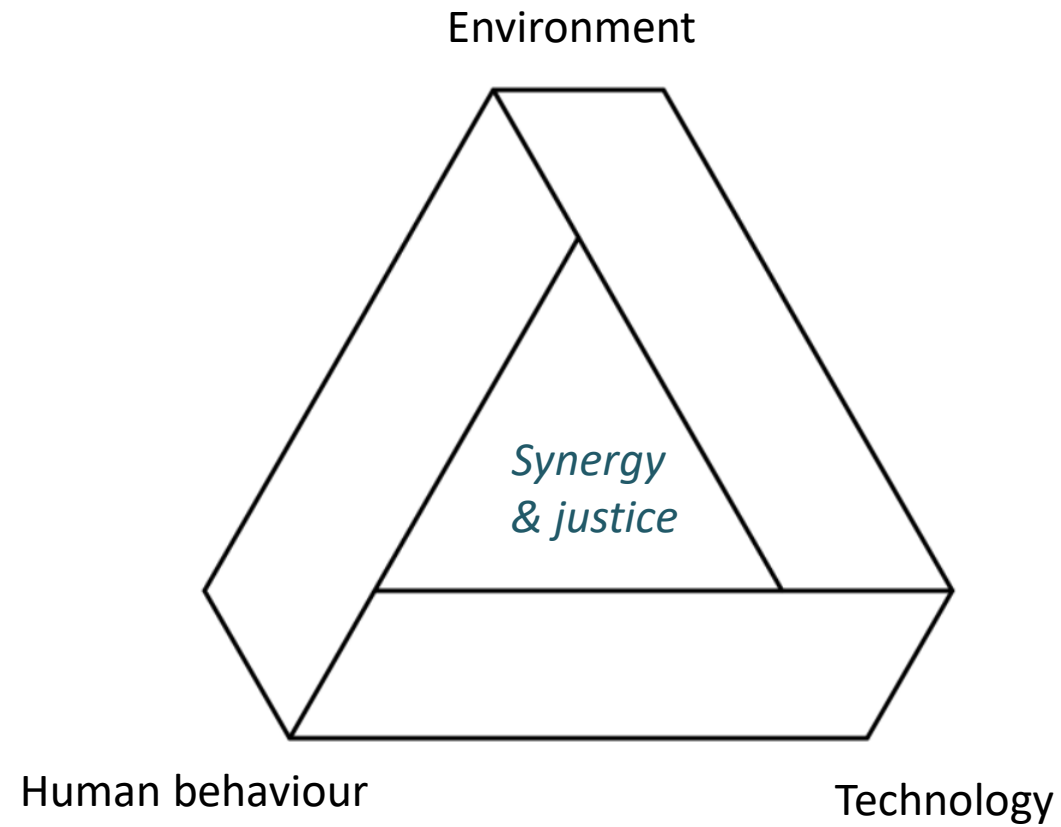
We are drowning in information, while starving for wisdom.
The world henceforth will be run by synthesizers, people
able to put together the right information at the right time,
think critically about it, and make important choices wisely.
- EO Wilson (1998). *Consilience: The Unity of Knowledge*.



“The knowledge worker as
synergiser”

What we mean by public innovation

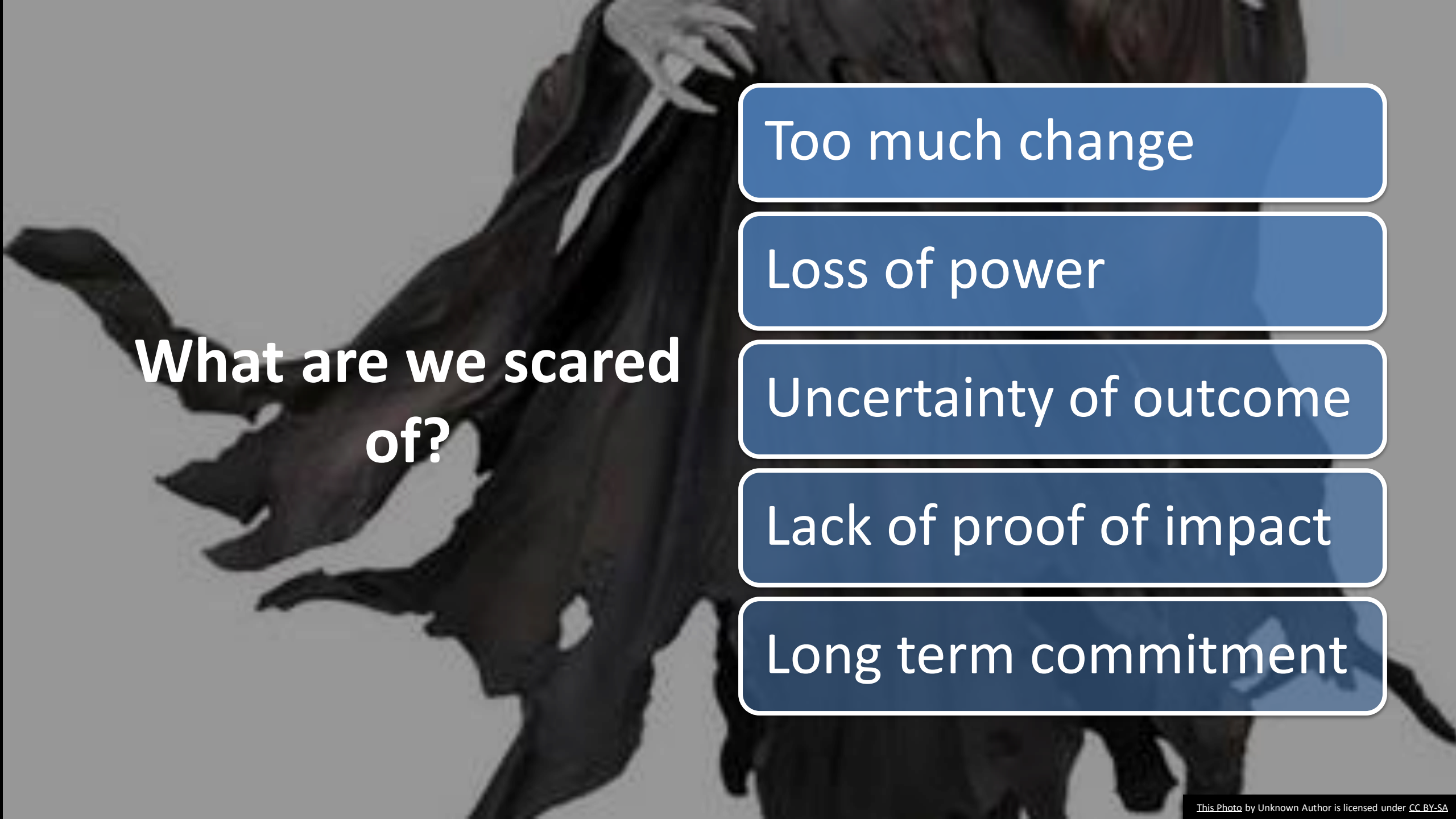
Systematically working to make the world a better place, recognising the value of nature and of every person



SYNERGY

through which

human and material resources are endowed with new and greater
value for all people and for our environment



**What are we scared
of?**

Too much change

Loss of power

Uncertainty of outcome

Lack of proof of impact

Long term commitment

Too much change

JOINT VENTURES THAT MAY....

- **Challenge our** (donor, board, staff team) **worldviews.**
- **Upset the apple-cart** – try to change social and wealth dynamics too radically.
- **Cut too close to the bone** – show that the negative impact of our businesses are far bigger than our giving e.g. social and environmental consequences of mining, excessive alcohol supply, manufacture of clothing, communications technology and other products.
- **Annoy government or shareholders**

JOINT VENTURES THAT MAY...

- **Pool funding** so that it is difficult to exert direct control over implementation.
- **Take away some of the power of individual Boards** and vest it in joint venture Boards.
- **Promote the logo of the joint venture**, not individual funders.

Uncertainty of outcome

TRYING TO INFLUENCE SYSTEMS OR BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE WHEN...

- **You only have control over <10% of the factors.**
- **Much of the evidence comes from small scale projects, often linearly designed.**
- **It's not clear what mix of factors will bring about change.**

Lack of proof of impact

TRYING TO PROVE IMPACT WHEN...

- **Together, you've moved the system closer to the tipping point, but you're not quite at it.**
- **It's impossible to attribute the change to your combined efforts.**
- **Proving impact would have cost too much of the available budget.**

Long-term commitment

COMMITTING TO INVESTING IN STRATEGIES THAT...

- **Don't fit neatly into your 3-year funding cycle or CEO's tenure.**
- **Aim to bring about intergenerational change.**
- **Tackle some of the toughest fundamental problems**
e.g. gender-based violence, heavy drinking, food security etc.

Where to start?

With a common mindset.

Think dynamics, not statics

Think exponential, not just linear

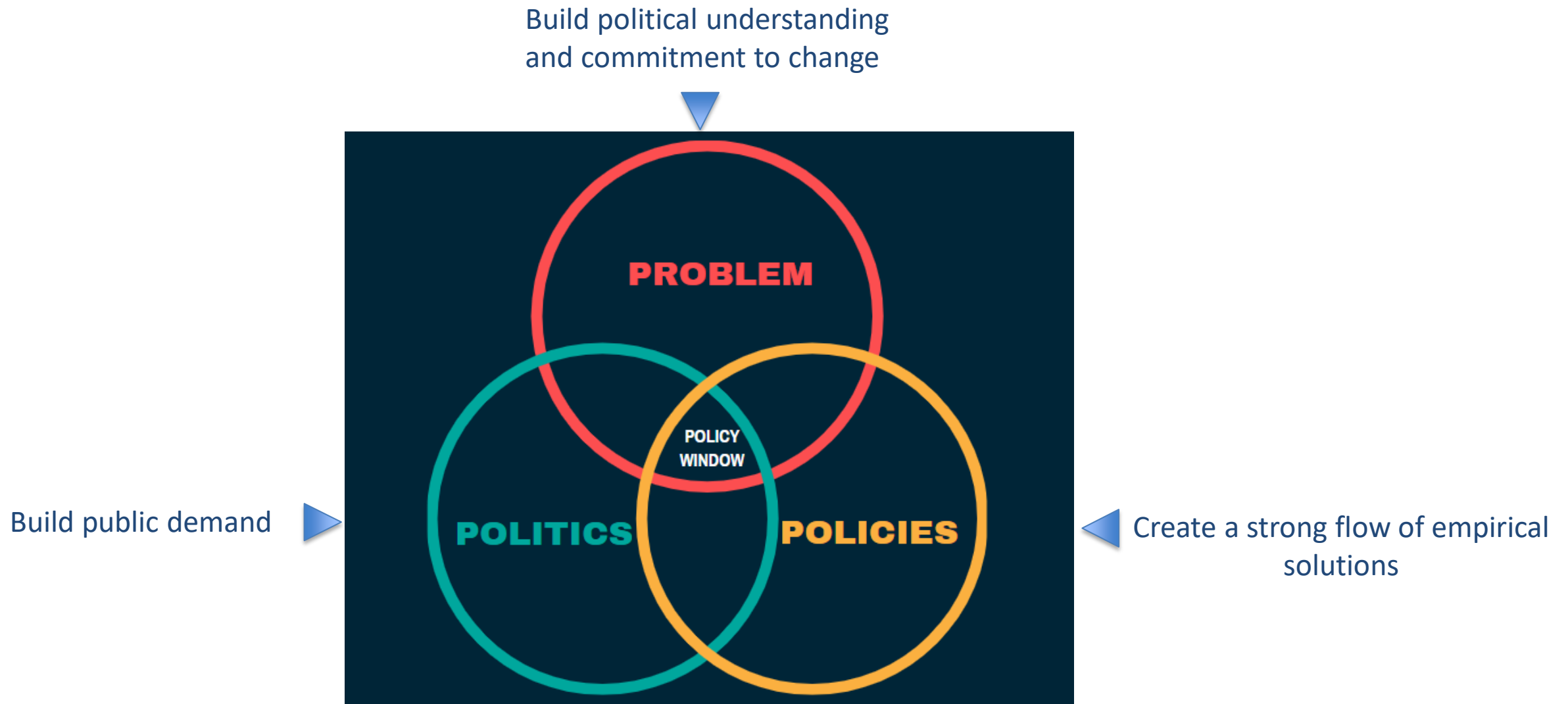
Don't run from risk; factor it in

Aim for the tipping points

Define the zone of possibility of change



Think dynamics, not statics

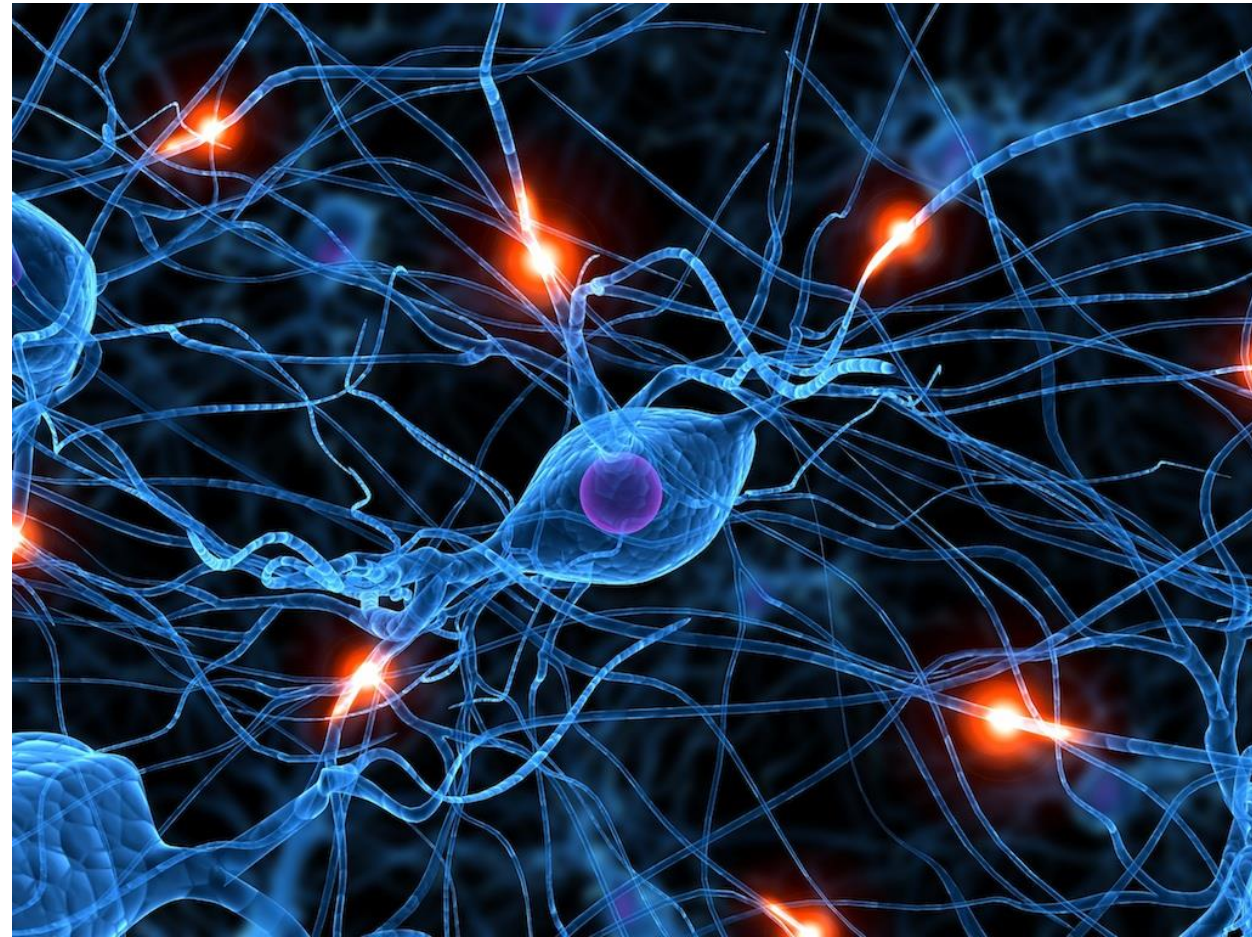


Think exponential, not just linear

Vascular networks scale sub-linearly



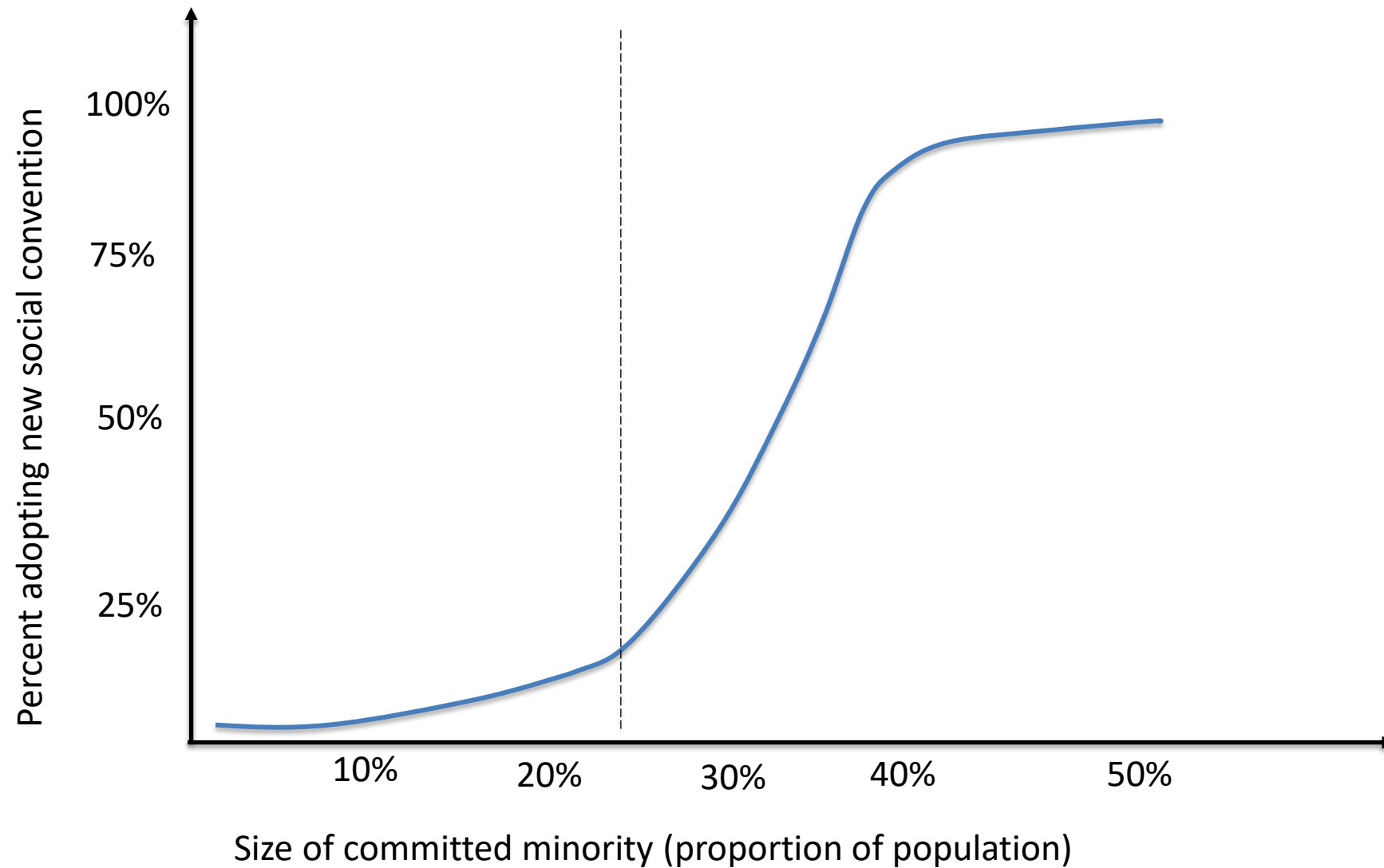
Neural networks scale superlinearly



Don't run from risk; factor it in.

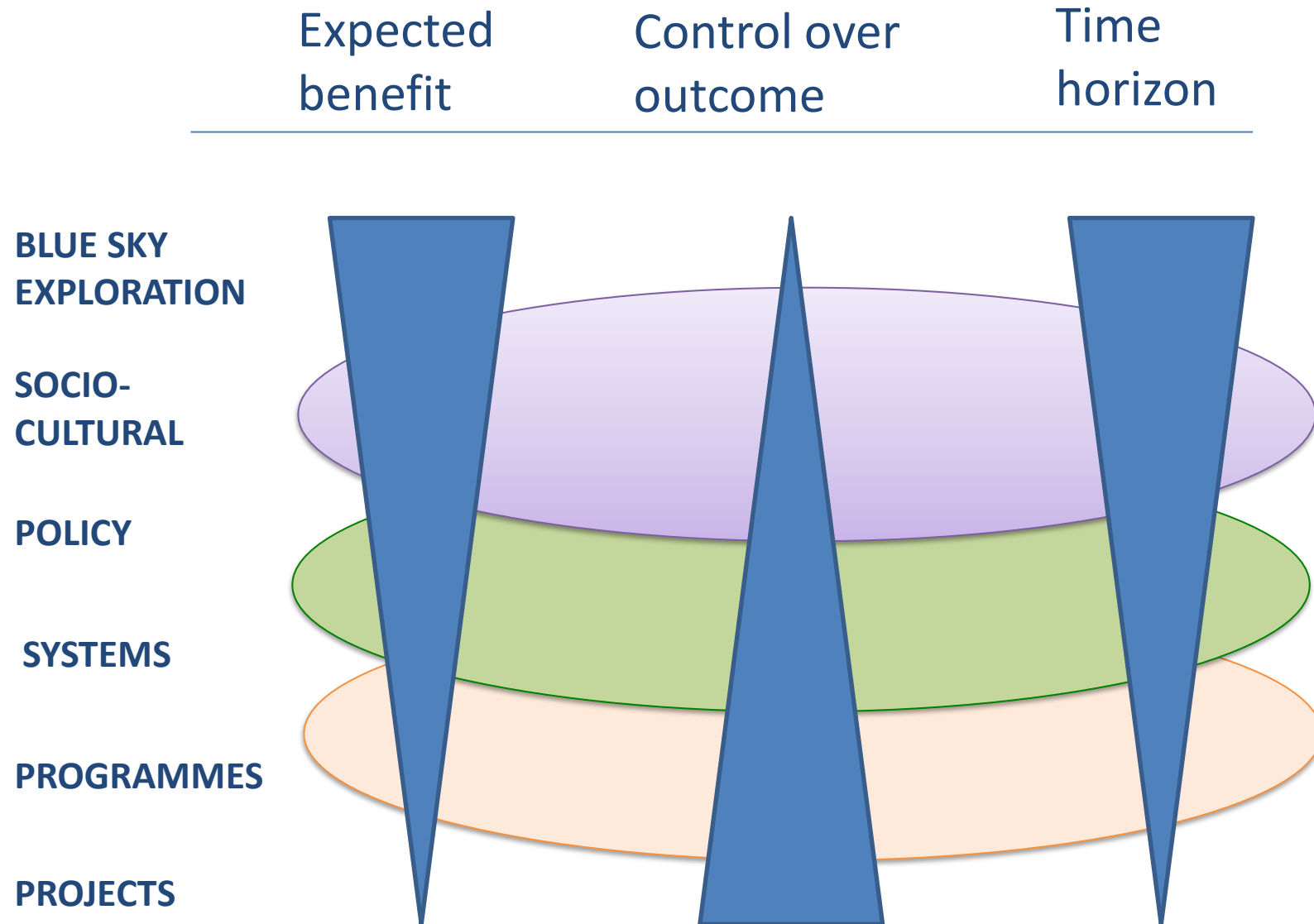
Expected benefit = *probability of success x potential impact if you are successful*

Aim for the tipping points



Source: Centola, D Becker J & Brackbill D, Baronchelli A (2018). Experimental evidence for tipping points in social convention. *Science*. 360. 1116-1119. [10.1126/science.aas8827](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.aas8827).

Define the zone of possibility



**Does your zone of comfort
coincide with the
zone of possibility?**

The greater our ambition,
the longer it will take
and the less likely we will
achieve it.

Will you be joining the
expedition?

