Managing the Hard Stuff:

How to stay sane and calm while leading institutional change.
:

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Association of American Colleges and Universities

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A bit about me . . .

My approach to managing change:

- What makes people excited and fulfilled (and how can I promote that)?
- What makes people stressed and worried (and how can I reduce that)?

Institutional change is rewarding

I knew this was an important initiative, but I never guessed that I would enjoy it this much. The conversations were so *interesting.* Thank you so much for inviting me!

Just so you know, it turns out that two other people are birders, so we now do this bi-weekly lunch walk with our binoculars: me, an artist, and a chemical engineer—who knew! There's a hawk nesting on the library, so if you ever want to come see, you are welcome!

Morgan, academic advisor

Institutional change is taxing

Life’s most wrenching choices are not between right and wrong but between competing demands on our time, our resources, our love and loyalty

Terryl L. Givens

Kairos

A Greek term in rhetoric referring to the proper time for something, understanding the window of opportunity

Honest conversation, Part I

What if this initiative doesn't work?

- Are you going to be okay with that?
- For context, a great batting average is .30

How are we defining failure/success?

- An initiative that alienates or exhausts your faculty and staff is (almost always) a failure, no matter what it looks like on paper.

Honest conversation, Part II

What if this initiative only partly works?

- An initiative that engages your faculty and staff and reminds them why they love their jobs is (almost always) success, no matter what it looks like on paper.

- Assess your assessment initiative (model the process)
  - Collect data
  - Measure outcomes
  - Publish an action plan

Honest conversation, Part III

Culture eats strategy for breakfast

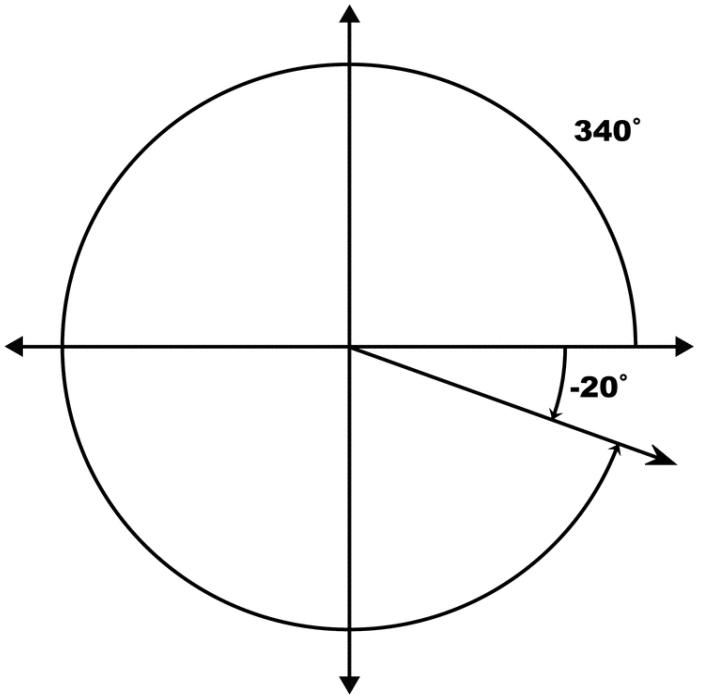
How do you detach?

When I am doing _____ and / or _____ I forget all about work.

Starting assumptions

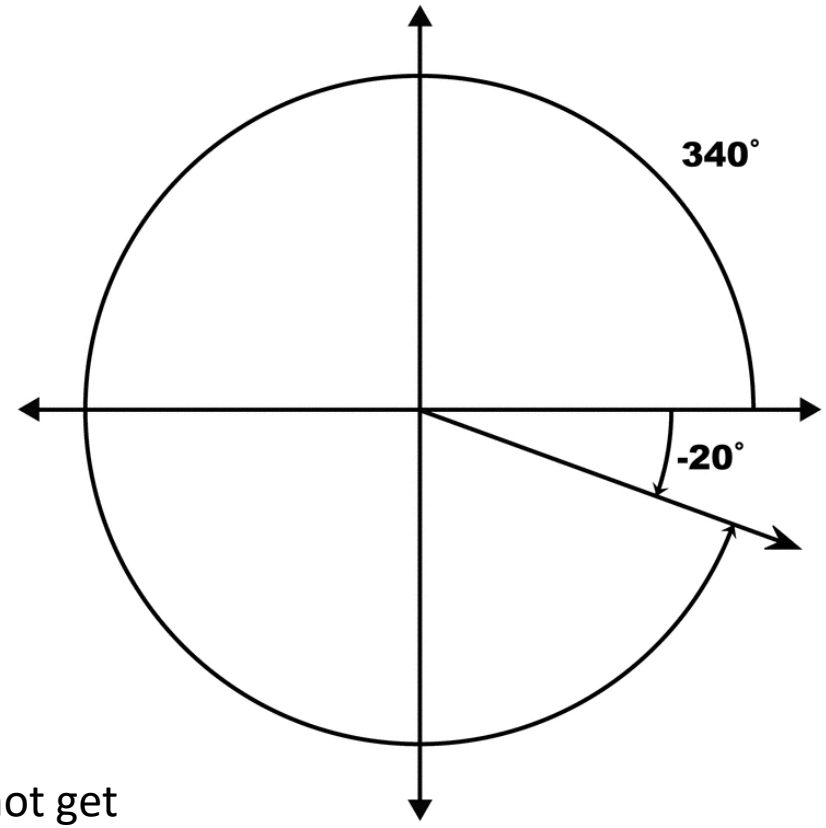
- Everyone means well and is doing the best they can
- Everyone deserves empathy and curiosity

Next assumption



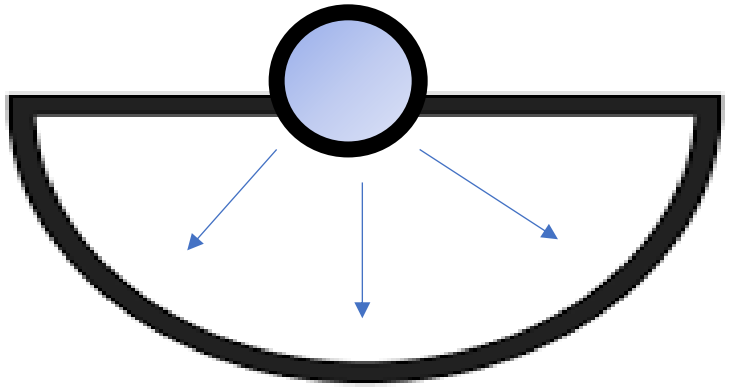
- Everyone deserves your empathy and curiosity . . . but not your time
- Make a plan for how you will handle these folks

Next, next assumption



- You will be told you did not communicate enough, did not get buy in, were not sufficiently transparent

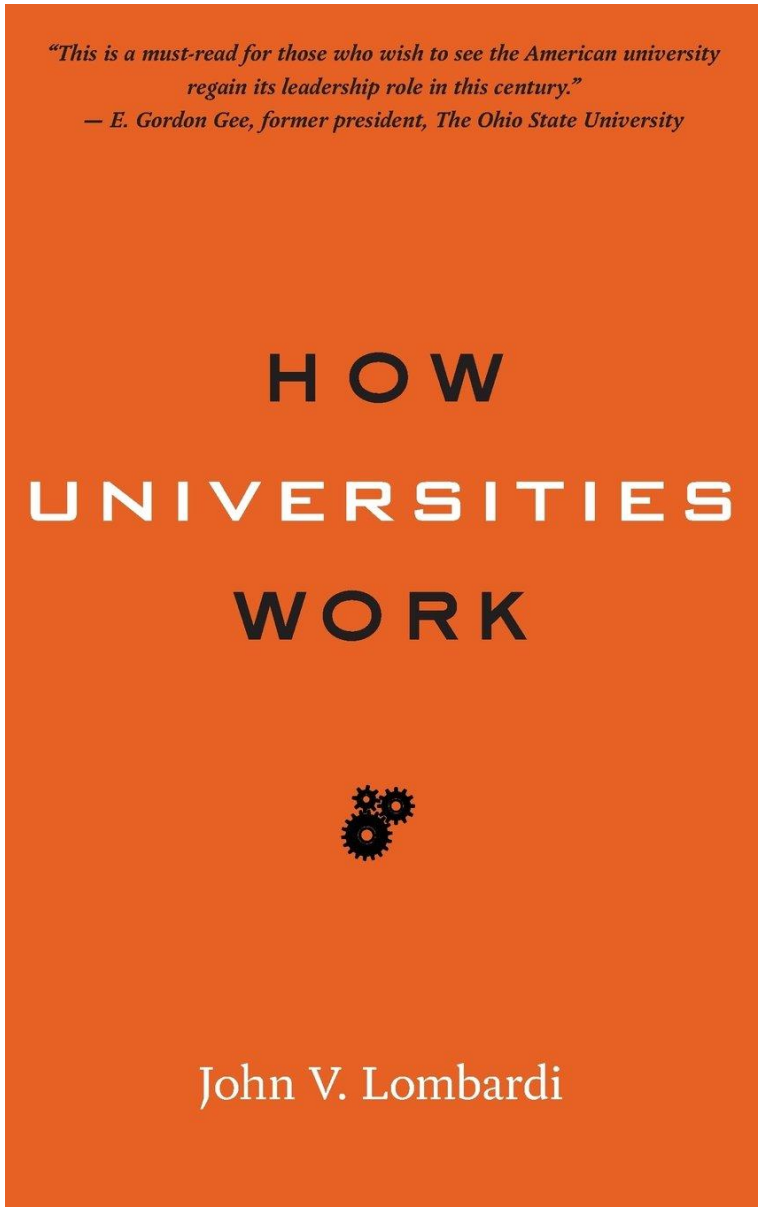
Know the people around and/or below you



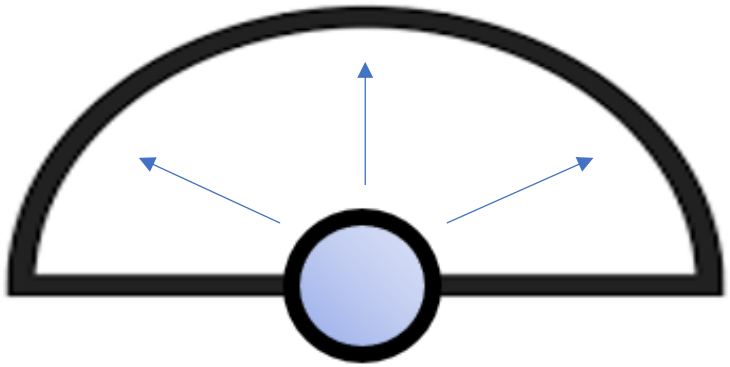
- Curiosity: What are their unique interests?
- Empathy: What are their unique pressures?

Understand faculty

Understand staff



Know the people around and/or above you



- Curiosity: What are their unique interests?
- Empathy: What are their unique pressures?

Managing Up

Starting Assumptions:

- Those above me have to make harder decisions than I do
- On a given day, they are busier and more tired than I am
- They see a bigger picture than I do

Managing Up

In practice . . .

- The “no surprises” rule
- Honest, clear, concise communication
- Pair problems with solutions
- Read the academic news

C^3

Campus cultural capital