

Thriving Amid Constant Disruption: Cultivating Adaptability in an Ever-Changing World

CSSEA Annual Conference - 2023

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YAHOO!

BORDERS

Sears

TOYS R US





"We are going to experience more change in the next 10 years than we have in the last 100."

Ross Thornley, Founder, AQai

Changes In The Next Five Years



Organizational

1. Increased focus on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion
2. Work Life Integration
3. Flatter organizational structure
4. Work Flexibility
5. Focus on Employee Experience

Technological

1. Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML):
2. 5G and Beyond:
3. Extended Reality (XR)
4. Robotics and Automation
5. Quantum Computing

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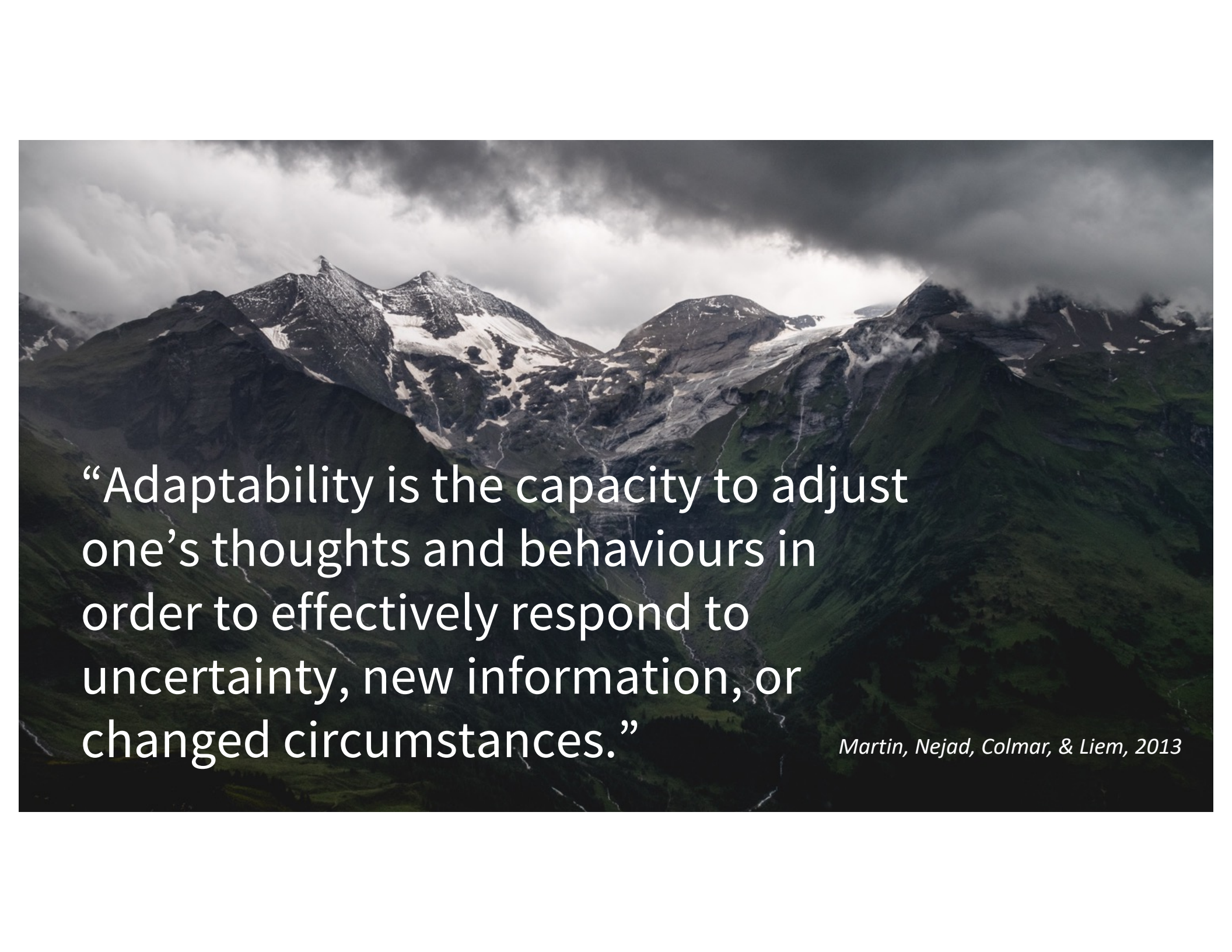
- Using data on occupational tasks in both the US and Europe, we find that roughly two-thirds of current jobs are exposed to some degree of AI automation, and that generative AI could substitute up to one-fourth of current work. Extrapolating our estimates globally suggests that generative AI could expose the equivalent of 300million full-time jobs to automation.

The Potentially Large Effects of Artificial Intelligence On Economic Growth –
Briggs/Kodnani, March, 2023

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A dramatic mountain landscape with dark, stormy clouds and snow-dusted peaks. The foreground shows a deep valley with a river and green slopes. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

“Adaptability is the capacity to adjust one’s thoughts and behaviours in order to effectively respond to uncertainty, new information, or changed circumstances.”

Martin, Nejad, Colmar, & Liem, 2013

What do you think of when you hear the word 'Adaptability'?



How and Why Do People Adapt?

- We tend to think of others and ourselves as ‘adaptable’, or not.
- Individual adaptability is influenced by:
 - Traits (Grit, Resilience)
 - Preferences (Liking/Not liking new experiences)
 - Environment (whether we are supported, or not)
- Our adaptability is fluid, not fixed, and changes based on situation, context, life stages etc.



Reactive and Proactive Adaptability


Reactive Adaptability

- Responds to changes after they happen
- Often requires quick action to mitigate negative effects
- Can result in a "firefighting" mentality
- Limited ability/interest in anticipating future changes
- May result in missed opportunities

Proactive Adaptability

- Actively looks for and anticipates changes - prepares in advance
- Enables proactive decision-making and planning
- Can result in a competitive advantage
- Increases resilience and ability to handle unexpected changes
- May result in new opportunities and innovations





The most important factor in survival is neither intelligence nor strength but adaptability.

Charles Darwin

Three Types of Adaptation

- Optimization – From A to A+
 - What should/could we do better?
- Transformation – From A to B
 - What should/could we do differently?
- Transition – From A to 7
 - What should/could we change into?



Should or Could?

THE FIRE MATRIX[®]



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What Will Drive The Need for Adaptation?

- What do you consider to be the biggest challenges facing your organization in the next 2-3 years?
- What will you need to do differently in order to thrive?

Will you need to:

- Optimize
- Transform
- Transition



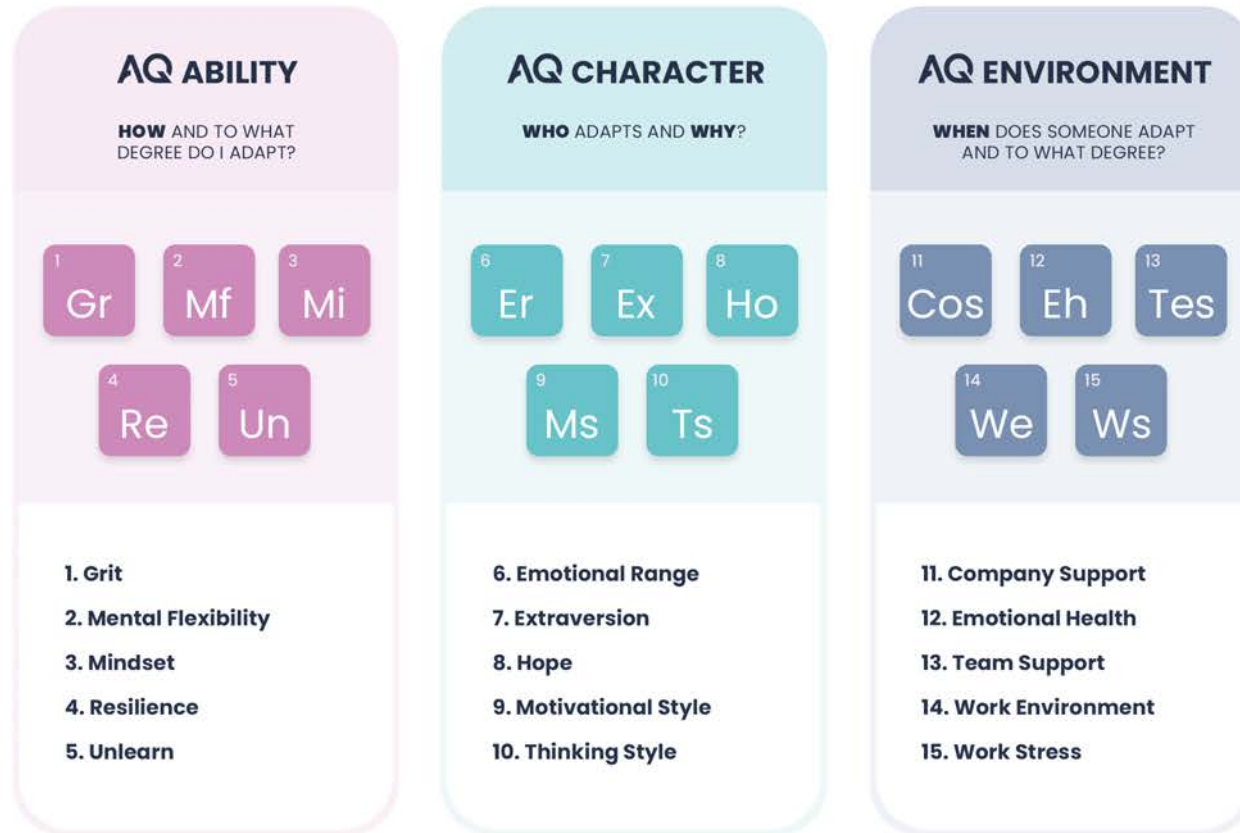


Change is inevitable.
Growth is optional.

John C. Maxwell

quote fancy

How We Can Understand Adaptability



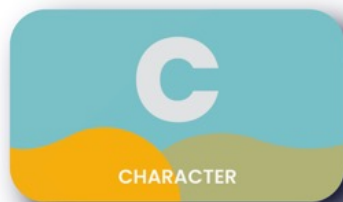
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Understanding Adaptability



Can Be Understood and *Developed*

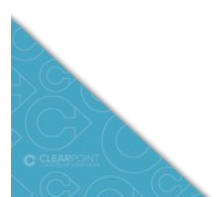


Can Be Understood and *Leveraged*



Can be Understood and *Affected*

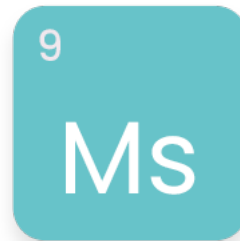
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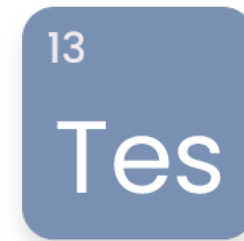
Exploring AQ Subscales



Unlearning is the ability to 'let go of' and rethink the status quo, reassess skills, or adjust old methodologies that are no longer relevant.



Motivation Style specifically refers to how employees motivate themselves and work towards important goals. Within AQ, Motivation Style reflects the difference between “playing to protect” and “playing to win.”



Team Support refers to the team environment in which employees feel they can share new knowledge, are supported through challenges, and feel they can openly discuss their opinion.





Unlearning is the ability to 'let go of' and rethink the status quo, reassess skills, or adjust old methodologies that are no longer relevant.

Unlearn



Note: this bellcurve is not the actual distribution but intended to provide a simple illustration

62

75

LOW UNLEARNING

“It worked before, so it will work again”

During change, one might:

- Prefer to stick with known solutions
- Protect current processes and solutions
- Feel exhausted if problems seem unsolvable
- Gain confidence from currently held knowledge
- Be described as ‘stubborn’ in your point of view
- Be more prone to ‘expert bias’

MEDIUM UNLEARNING

“Let’s discuss what might work now”

During change, one might:

- Be able to explore new solutions to problems
- Able to discuss opposing or alternate perspectives
- Capable of letting go of past patterns and behaviours
- Feel levels of uncertainty during the process of ‘letting go’
- Need more time and evidence to stop
- Comfortable in changing course

HIGH UNLEARNING

“We must change the way we do it, right now”

During change, one might:

- Find it easy to absorb new information
- Able to delete redundant data from your brain
- ‘See both sides’ - Embrace and champion multiple perspectives
- Know past success does not guarantee future success
- Able to ‘let-go’ of existing processes easily and experience more ‘breakthroughs’
- Can break habits more easily and champion course changes





How Would You Rate Your Level of Unlearning?

The skill to unlearn and intentionality 'let go of' previous knowledge. To reassess based on new and old data.

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What is one **challenge** you are facing in which you **feel** 'stuck'?

What could you do to make room for new learning and success in your area of challenge.



Motivation Style specifically refers to how employees motivate themselves and work towards important goals. Within AQ, Motivation Style reflects the difference between “playing to protect” and “playing to win.”



PLAY TO PROTECT

“We can’t lose what we have, it is too important”

During change, one might:

- Need a ‘burning platform’ in order to adapt (fear of failure)
- Ensure your duties are fulfilled
- Work carefully and assess the right solutions
- Be cautious and reliable in approach
- Focus on avoiding negative outcomes
- Adapt in an organized, tentative and sometimes slower way

CONTEXTUAL

“It’s all about ‘balance’ we need to find a way to win, without risking losing”

During change, one might:

- Can feel conflicted about which course to take
- Seek to strike a balance between ‘core’ and ‘new’
- Feel like driving with one foot on the accelerator and one on the break at the same time
- Can take longer to make decisions when the reason to change is unclear
- When communication and plans are clear you can leap into action

PLAY TO WIN

“The biggest risk is not going big enough”

During change, one might:

- Need a burning ambition to adapt (Novelty & risk)
- Want to maximise gains
- Take bigger chances to accomplish your aims
- Energized by inspirational stories
- Focus on achieving positive outcomes
- Drive bold and higher risk actions





Would You Say Your Motivation Style Is More...

Motivation Style specifically refers to how employees motivate themselves and work towards important goals. Within AQ, Motivation Style reflects the difference between “playing to protect” and “playing to win.”

Think about your organization. **In what ways** is the organization 'Playing To Protect' or 'Playing To Win'

In what ways is the current approach **helping or hindering** the organization?



Team Support refers to the team environment in which employees feel they can share new knowledge, are supported through challenges, and feel they can openly discuss their opinion.



LOW TEAM SUPPORT

“Best keep your head down around here”

During change, one might:

- Feel your team is competitive, with one way of doing things
- See sharing new ideas as risky
- Be less likely to ask peers for help
- Believe past mistakes are held against you
- Avoid bringing up problems and challenges
- Feel members are rejected for being different

MEDIUM TEAM SUPPORT

“I enjoy sharing with a few close-knit colleagues”

During change, one might:

- Share challenges and problems with a couple of close colleagues
- Avoid showing and expressing your true self
- Be open, but with some caution
- Promote lower risk options
- At times, feel safe to experiment
- Be okay with asking for help

HIGH TEAM SUPPORT

“I can be my whole -self without fear”

During change, one might:

- Be highly experimental as mistakes are not held against you
- Feel very comfortable in asking for help
- Take greater risks
- Share very openly different views and ideas
- Bring up tough issues without judgement
- Experience radical team transparency and candor




How would YOU score Team Support for YOU?

Team Support refers to the team environment in which employees feel they can share new knowledge, are supported through challenges, and feel they can openly discuss their opinion.

Team support is a key component of psychological safety. Consider your team at work.

1. On a **scale of 1-5, how freely** do you feel you **can share** new knowledge, ideas, and opinions (positive or constructive) at **work**?
 - If you **scored 3 or below, what** do you believe **limits** your sense of **team support**?
 - If you **scored above 3, what** do you believe **bolsters** your sense of **team support**?
2. If others in your organization were to do the same exercise, **which parts/groups do you think might score this differently and why?**





There can be no life without change,
and to be afraid of what is different
or unfamiliar is to be afraid of life.

Theodore Roosevelt

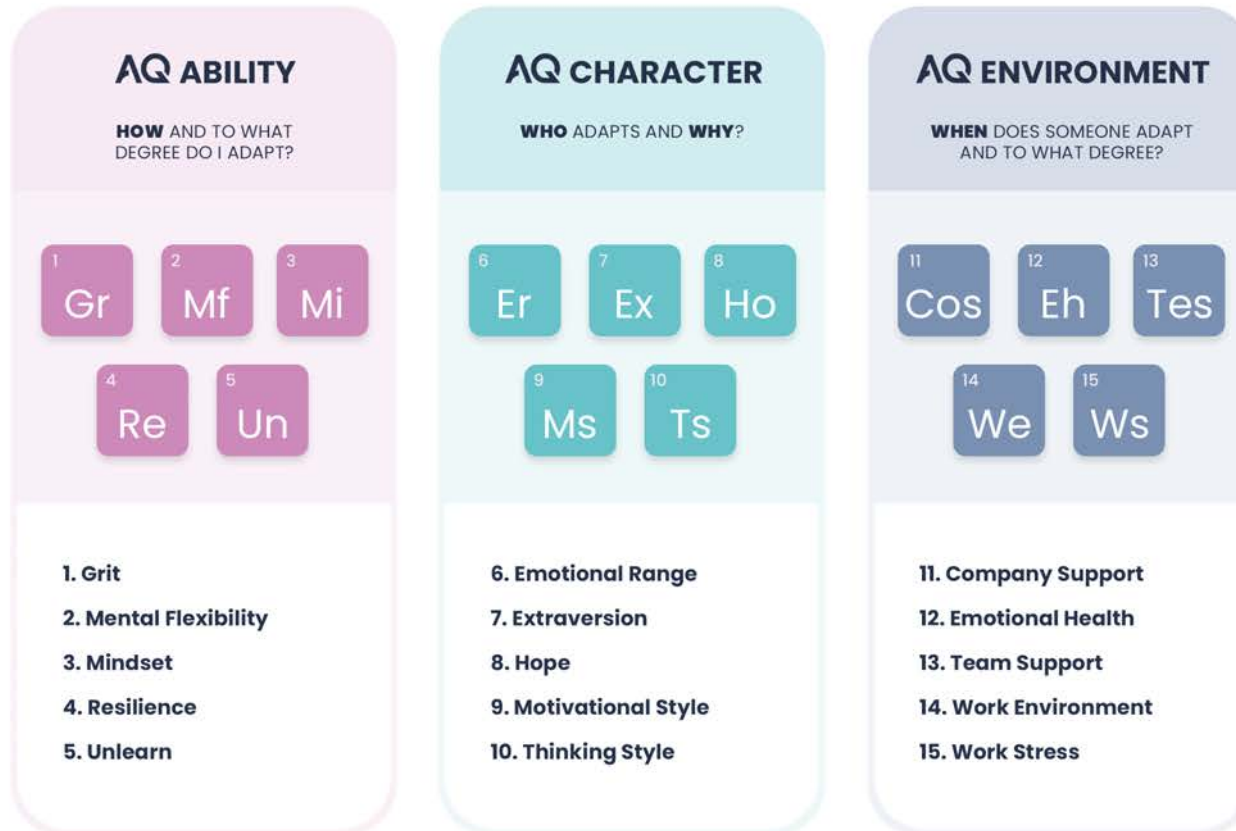
“ quote fancy

4 Things You Can Do Today

1. Understand your own approach to adaptability
2. Educate your team/department on the psychology of change
3. Understand the bigger picture
4. Engage your stakeholders

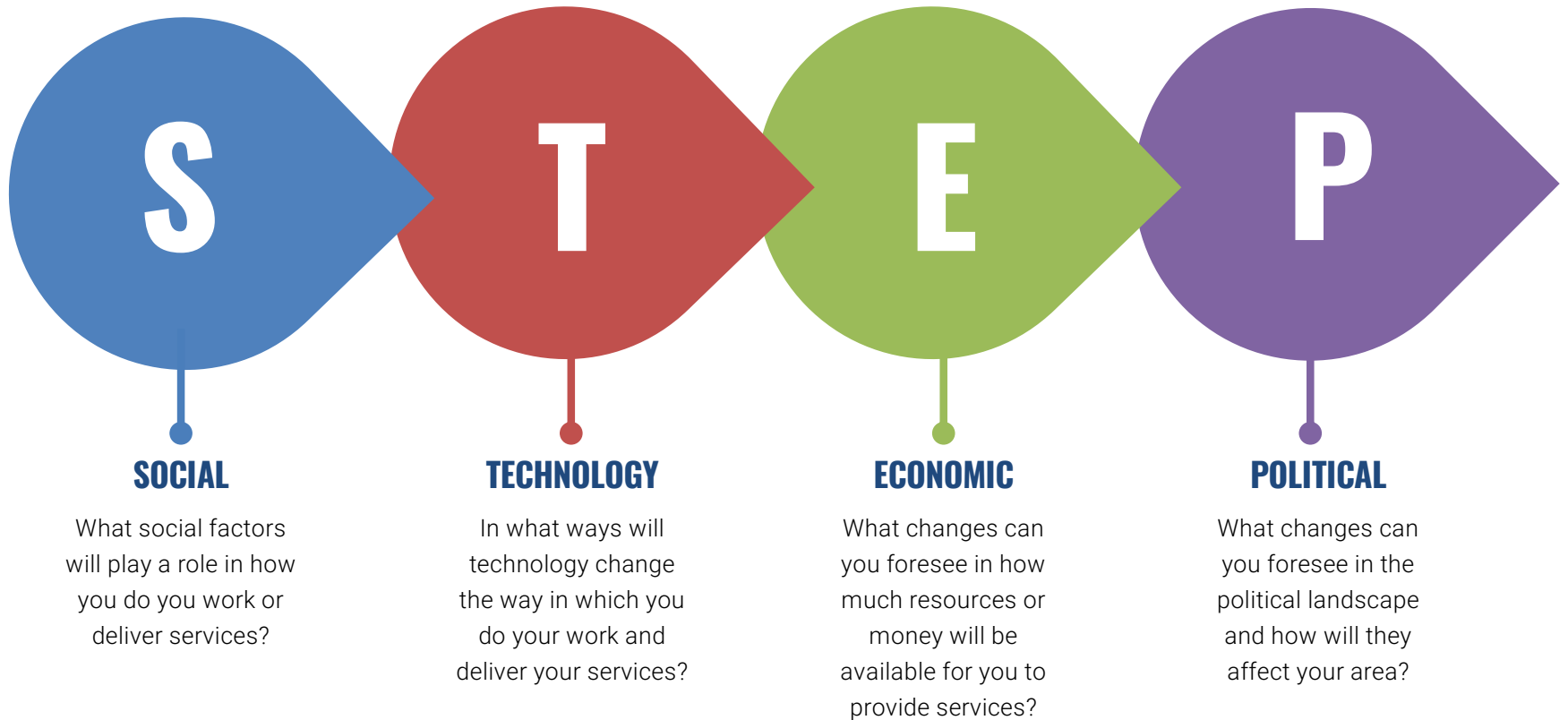






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"Engaging [relevant parties] is not just about getting their buy-in, but about involving them in the change process and leveraging their expertise to drive results."

Marshall Goldsmith, leadership coach and author

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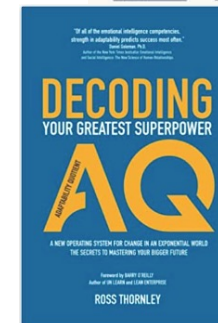
Additional Resources

Free Resources Available:

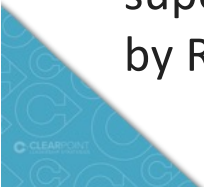
- CSSEA MyLeadership Hub Adaptability Course – Free Access
- The Leader's Ultimate Guide to Successful Transformation, by Ross Thornley – Ebook
- The Adaptiotic Table – Handout/resource
- Slides from this session
- Other worksheets

Further Reading Recommendation (From Amazon):

- **DECODING AQ: Adaptability Quotient - Your greatest superpower. A new OS for change in an exponential world,** by Ross Thornley



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