



# The Culture Engine™

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We all aspire to create great schools. **But often we come up short.**

**After years of experiencing our own failures and successes, and studying those of others, we have come to believe that creating great schools depends less on tools and techniques, and more on working together effectively to solve difficult problems.**

How well we work together is governed by the agreements we make and the quality of the relationships we form as a result of how we manage those agreements. **All too often, however, we manage agreements poorly. We break our agreements, and when we do, we fail to confront and renegotiate them quickly and effectively.**

*“The simple mechanism of agreement is the key to positive culture change.”*

When these things happen, the trust we share in ourselves and in our colleagues erodes, and we unintentionally reinforce a culture that reduces our ability to solve the problems we face every day.

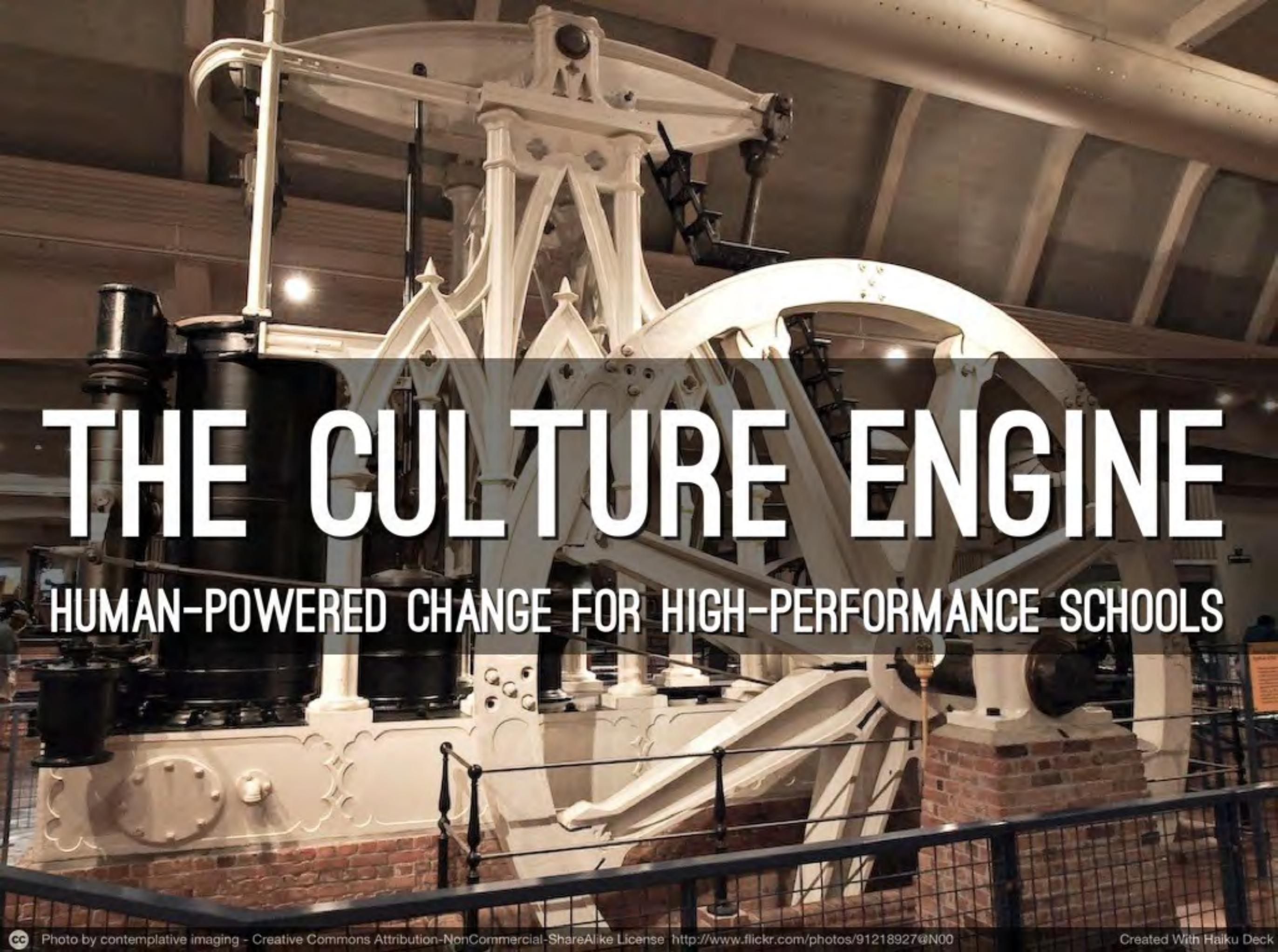
The most successful schools that we have seen—those that achieve the highest performance and whose teachers and students take the greatest joy in that achievement—exhibit a unique discipline in the way they work together. We see this discipline as the agreements they make and the high-quality school culture that results from making and managing agreements well.

*“Where there’s a will, there’s a way.  
Great schools have great ways of doing things.”*

Agreements, well made and well managed, are the engine of culture change. **The culture engine, when properly maintained and fueled, creates an environment that amplifies the power of the tools and techniques we use and supports the extraordinary collaboration that is required to achieve extraordinary results.**

By mastering agreements, we realize the full potential of ourselves, our students, and our parents **to solve the wonderful and terrible problems we encounter when we aspire to create great schools.**

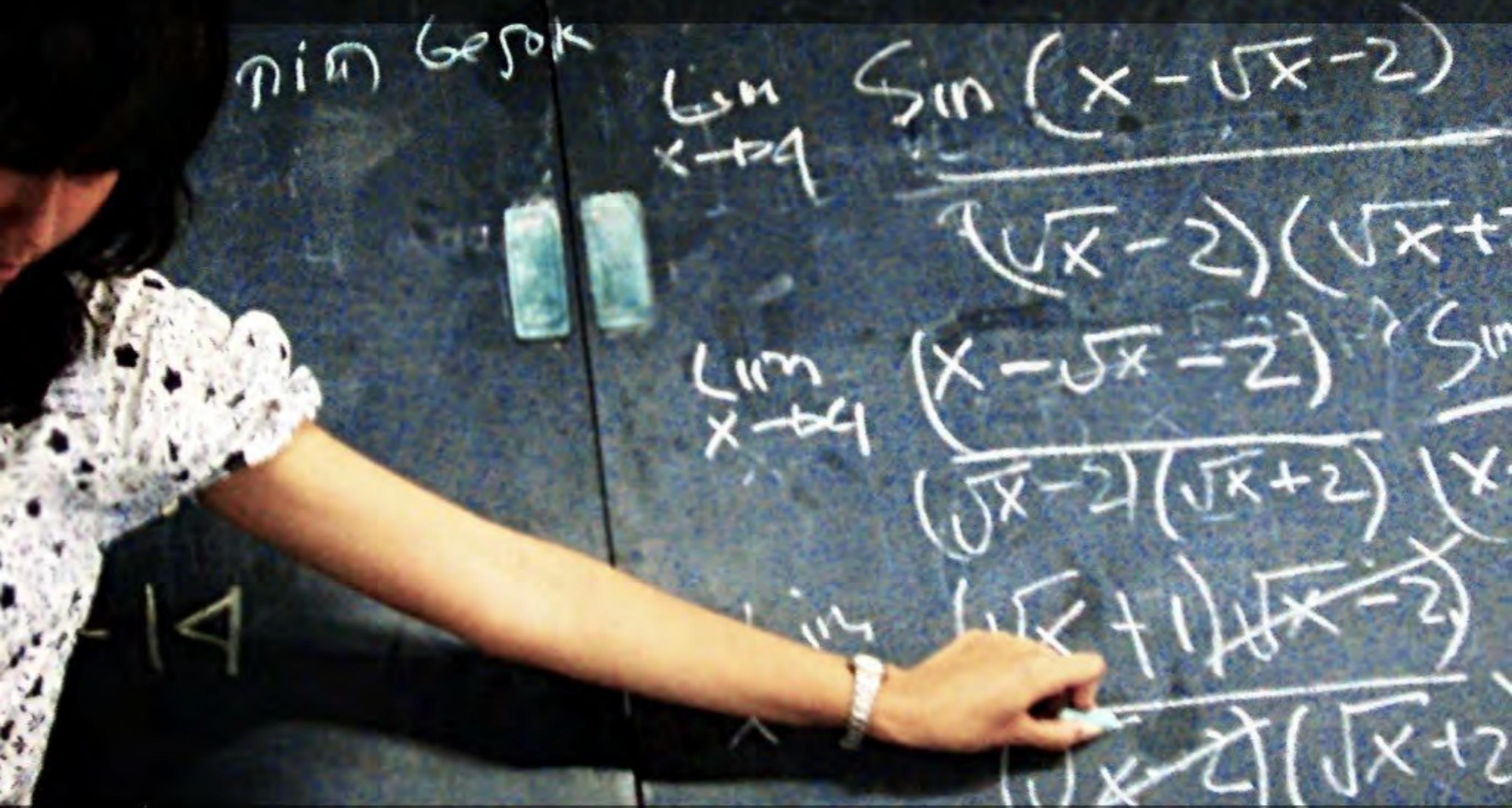
*“The Culture Engine supports people in creating schools that are great places in which to work and to learn.”*



# THE CULTURE ENGINE

HUMAN-POWERED CHANGE FOR HIGH-PERFORMANCE SCHOOLS

# PERFORMANCE = PROBLEM-SOLVING



## HIGH-PERFORMING SCHOOLS SOLVE HARDER PROBLEMS FASTER

# WE'RE ALL GOOD EDUCATORS



# WE ALL WORK HARD TO SOLVE PROBLEMS

**BUT MANY PROBLEMS PERSIST**

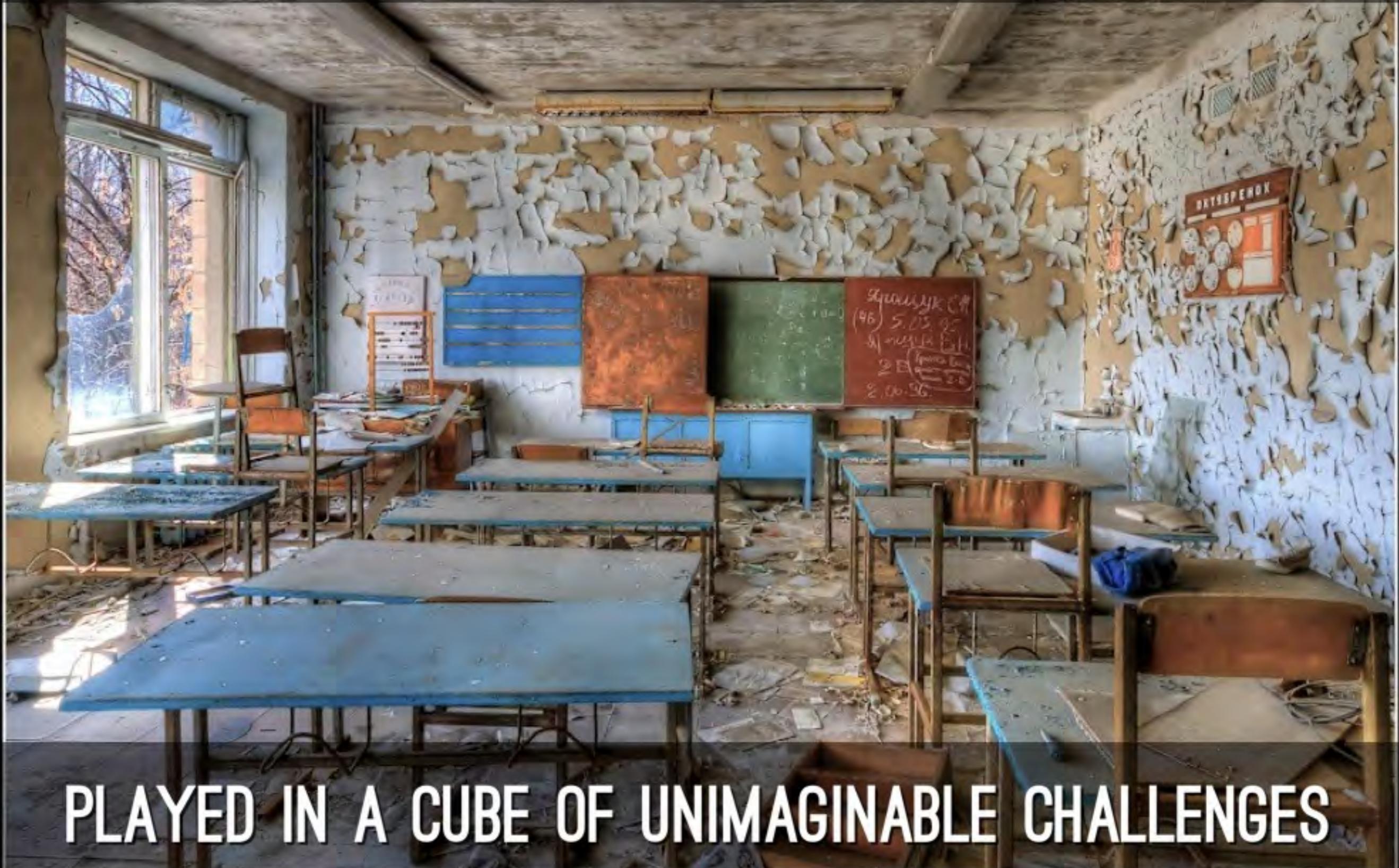
**AND NO MATTER HOW HARD WE TRY, WE DON'T SOLVE THEM**

# WHY?



**BECAUSE FOUR INVISIBLE IMPEDIMENTS KEEP US FROM FINDING SOLUTIONS**

# TEACHING IS AN INDIVIDUAL SPORT



# PLAYED IN A CUBE OF UNIMAGINABLE CHALLENGES

**BUT SCHOOLING IS A TEAM SPORT**



**TO WIN, WE MUST ALL PLAY TOGETHER WELL**

# OFTEN WE ARE BLOCKED



# BY FOUR INVISIBLE IMPEDIMENTS

# #1 SAFETY



HOW LIKELY AM I TO PARTICIPATE IN SOLVING A PROBLEM IF I DON'T FEEL SAFE?

# #2 RESPECT



HOW LIKELY AM I TO PARTICIPATE IN SOLVING A PROBLEM IF YOU THINK I'M AN IDIOT?

# #3 OWNERSHIP



HOW LIKELY AM I TO PARTICIPATE IN SOLVING A PROBLEM IF I THINK IT'S YOUR FAULT?

# #4 INTENTION



HOW LIKELY AM I TO PARTICIPATE IN SOLVING A PROBLEM IF I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU WANT?

# TRUST



**WE BUILD TRUST BY KEEPING AGREEMENTS**

# CONFRONT



**BUT WE FAIL TO CONFRONT BROKEN AGREEMENTS**

# HOW TO CONFRONT



**CHECK SAFETY, CHECK RESPECT, CHECK OWNERSHIP, CHECK INTENTION**

# THEN



# BRING YOUR WHOLE SELF

# THERE IS NO TRICK



# TRICKS ARE MANIPULATIVE

# RELAX, IT'S SIMPLE



## ALL PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES ARE AGREEMENTS

# BUT IT'S NOT EASY



## HAVE COMPASSION FOR YOURSELF AND OTHERS

# THE ENGINE OF CULTURE CHANGE

A large, ornate, white-painted industrial steam engine is displayed in a museum setting. The engine features a prominent flywheel on the right side, connected to a complex system of white-painted metal beams and supports. To the left, there is a large, dark, cylindrical boiler or condenser. The engine is mounted on a brick base. The background shows a museum interior with other exhibits and a staircase.

MAKING, KEEPING, CONFRONTING, AND RENEGOTIATING AGREEMENTS

# IT ONLY TAKES ONE



# A SINGLE PERSON CAN BEGIN TO CHANGE A CULTURE

# SO WHAT DO I DO NEXT?



CONFRONT A BROKEN AGREEMENT AND TELL US HOW IT WENT

# WE'LL SUPPORT YOU



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