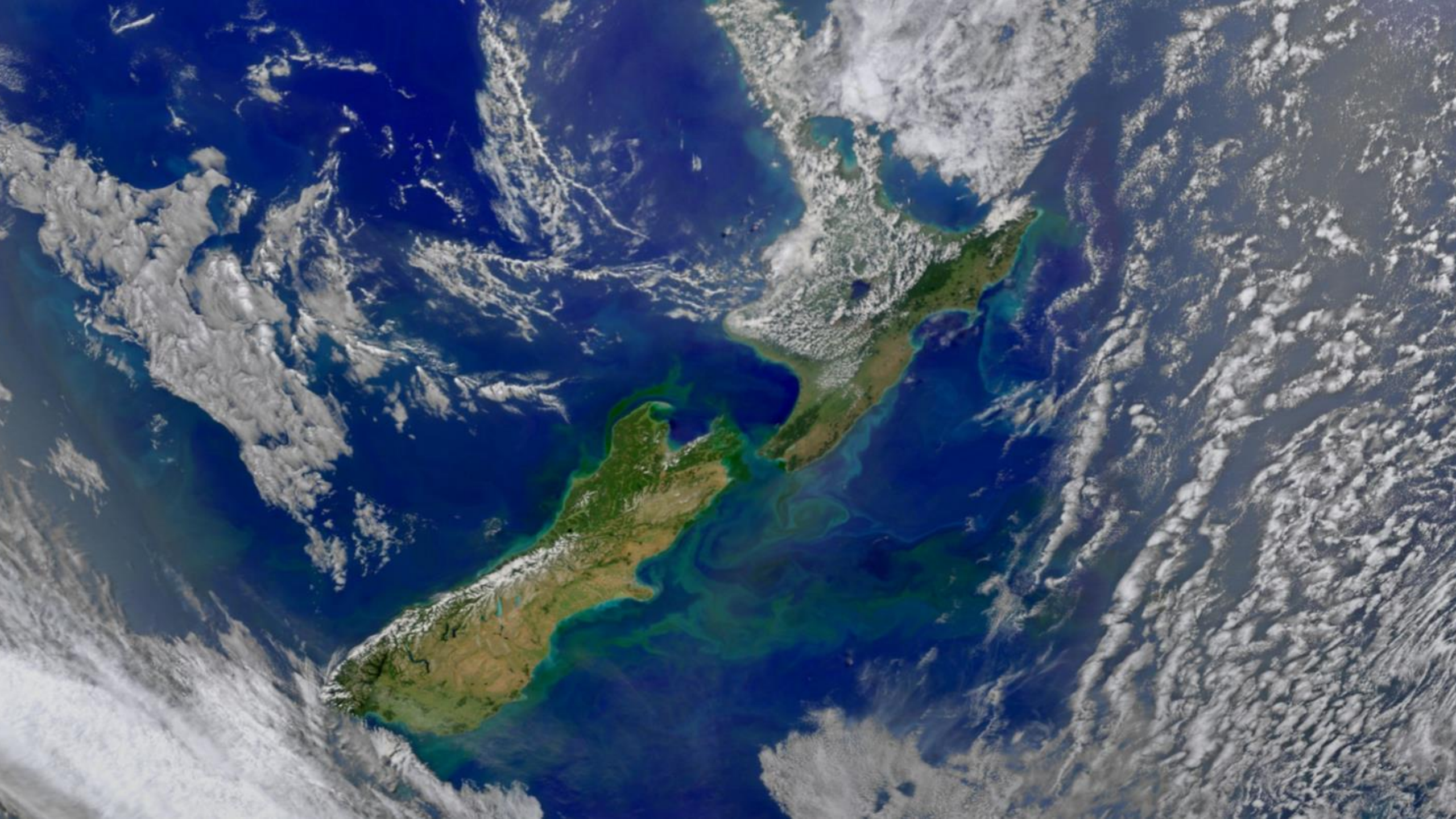


Unboxing the core like our lives depend on it – because they do.

E. Jane Davidson, Ph.D.

Keynote address

AES conference, Sydney, Australia, September 18, 2019



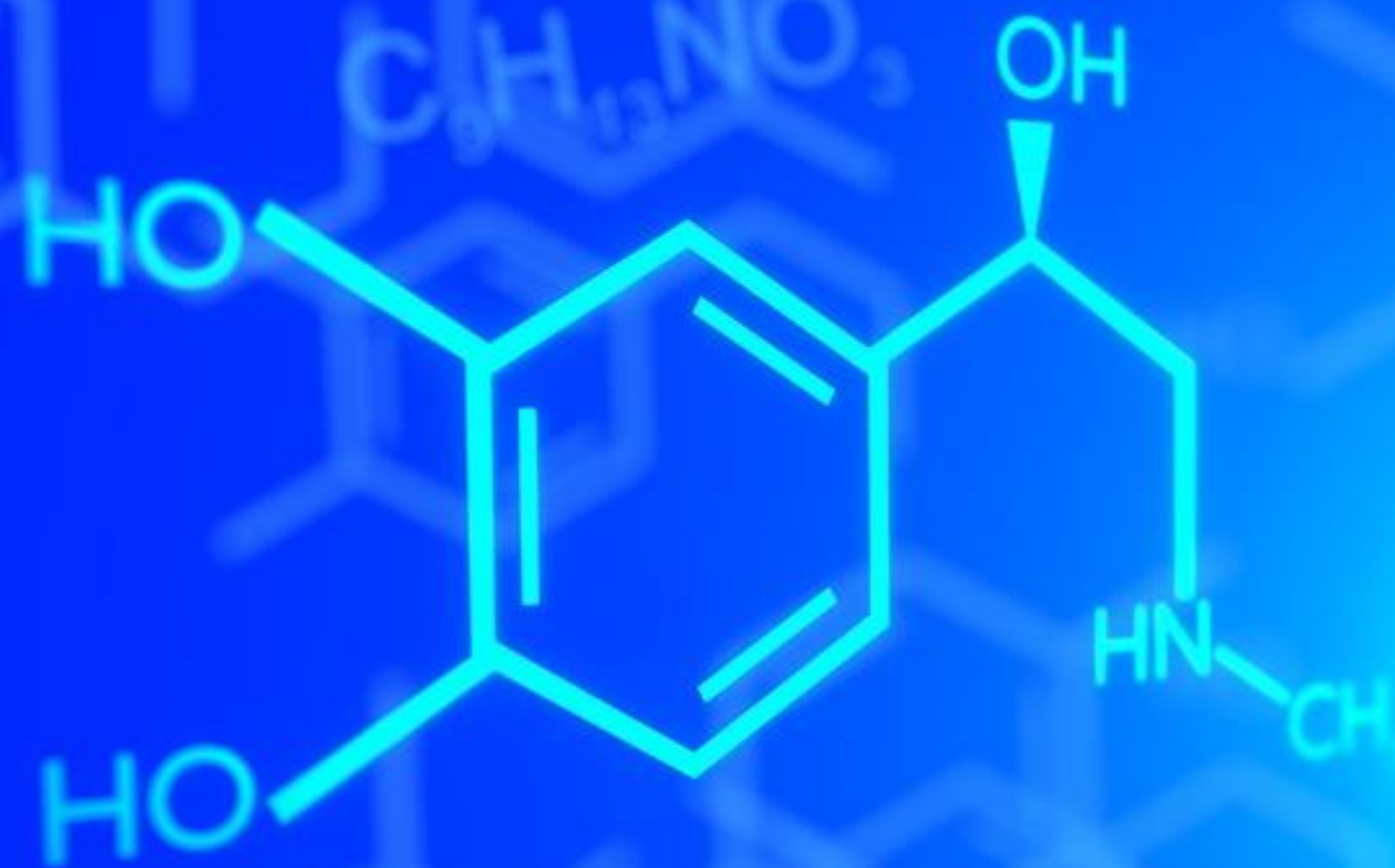


Milky Way

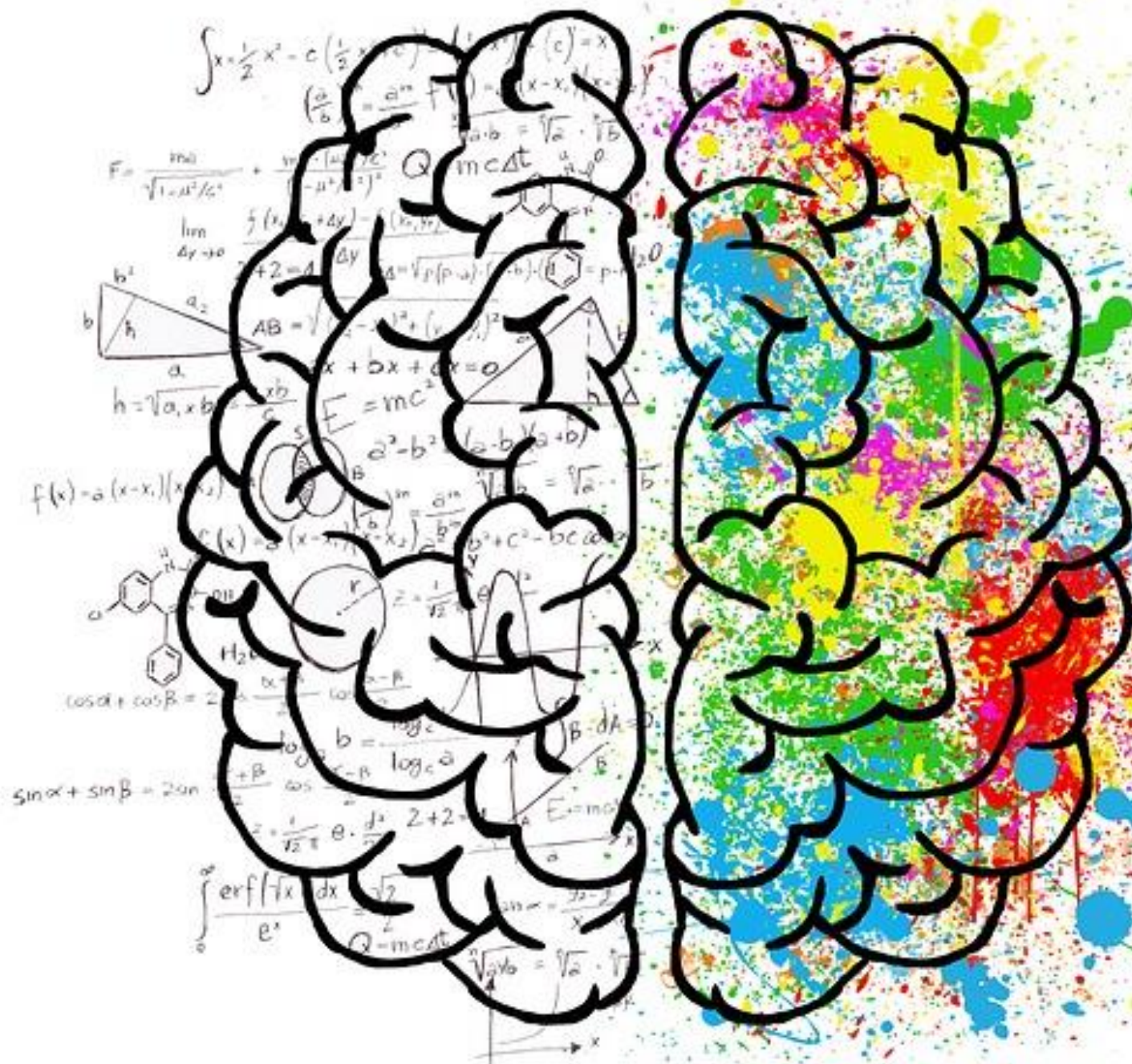
Stars and bands of heated dust swirl around the galactic core in this image from NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope



Plan B: Astrophysicist



LOGIC



CREATIVITY



Organizational Change

**Change
levers**



**Systems, Policies,
Programs, & Measures**

**Change
levers**

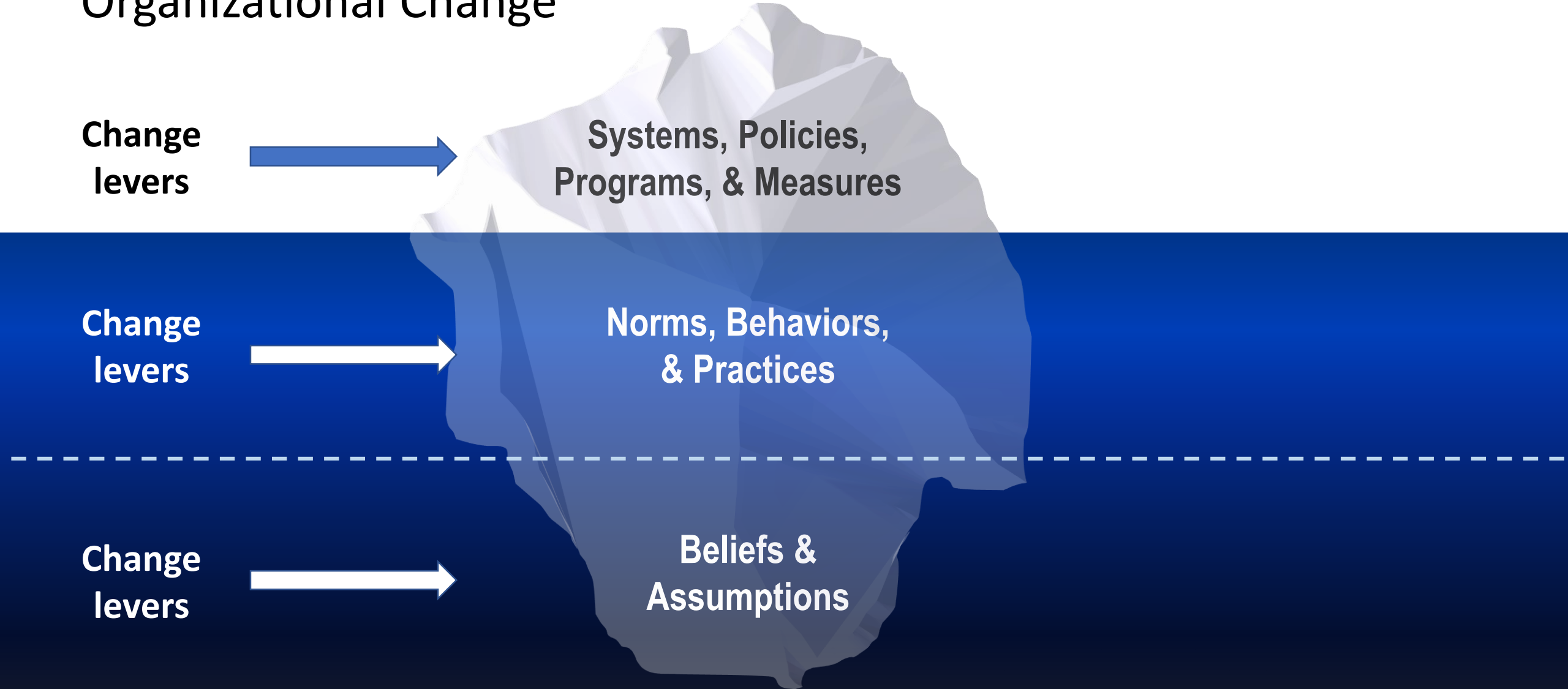


**Norms, Behaviors,
& Practices**

**Change
levers**



**Beliefs &
Assumptions**



Organizational Change

Evaluation!

Change
levers



Systems, Policies,
Programs, & Measures



Change
levers



Norms, Behaviors,
& Practices



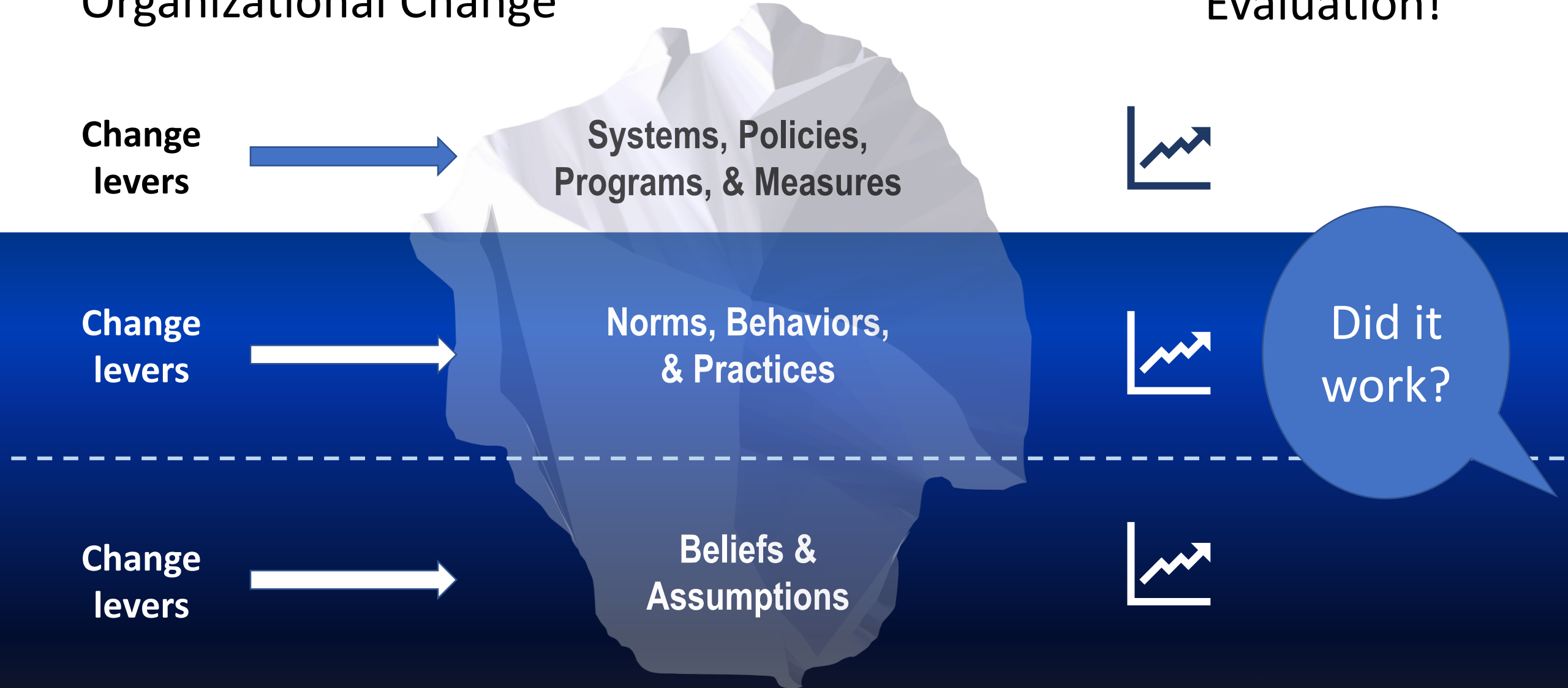
Change
levers



Beliefs &
Assumptions



Did it
work?





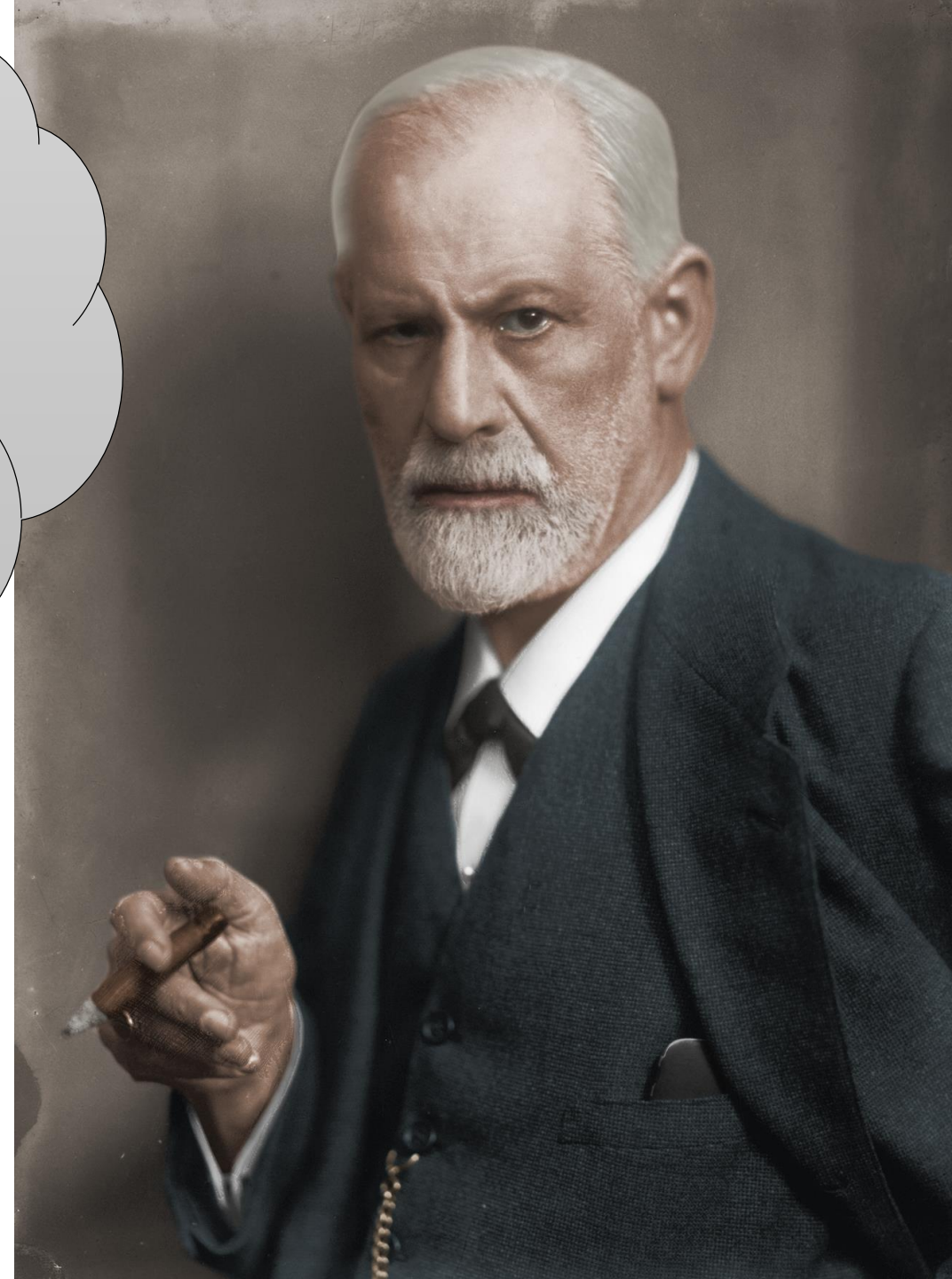
Science and
the social sciences
have been boxes
of methodological
treasure for
evaluation ...

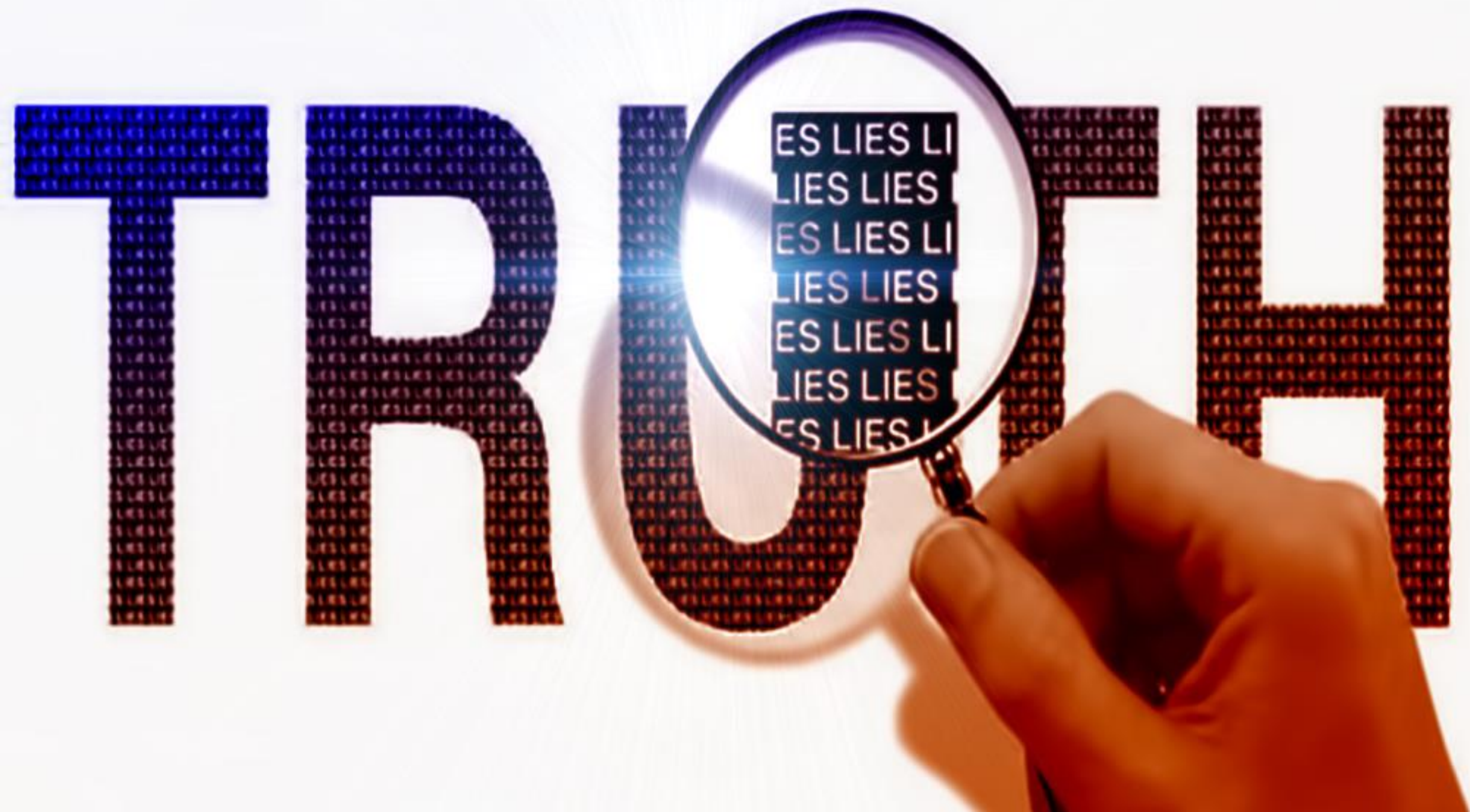






****sigh* ☹
I wish I were
scientific
and sexy -
like Physics!***

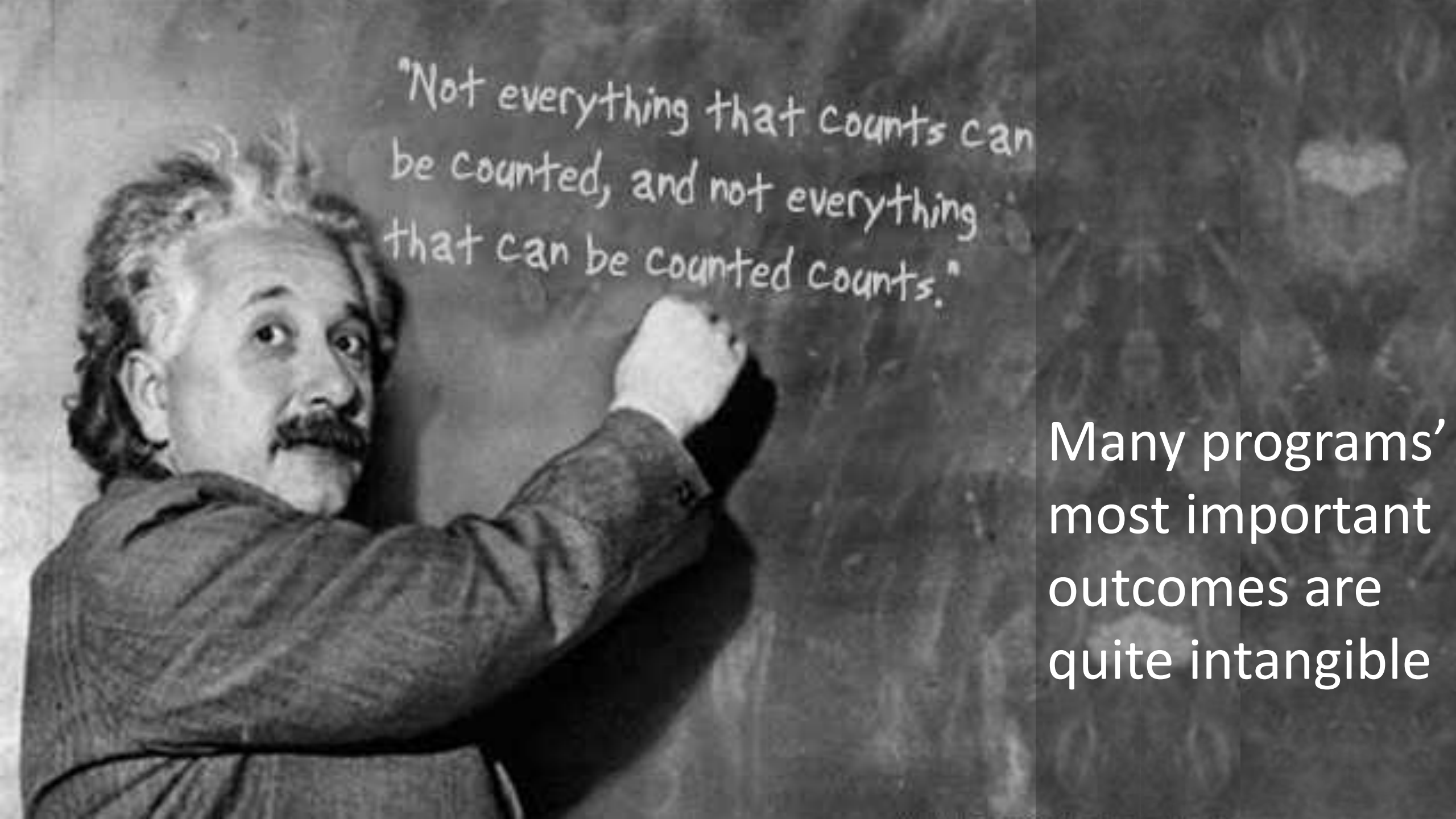






This “objectivity”
in tools and methods
is often just thinly
disguised Eurocentric
assumptions and biases,
glossed over with a
reassuring-looking
“scientific” veneer.



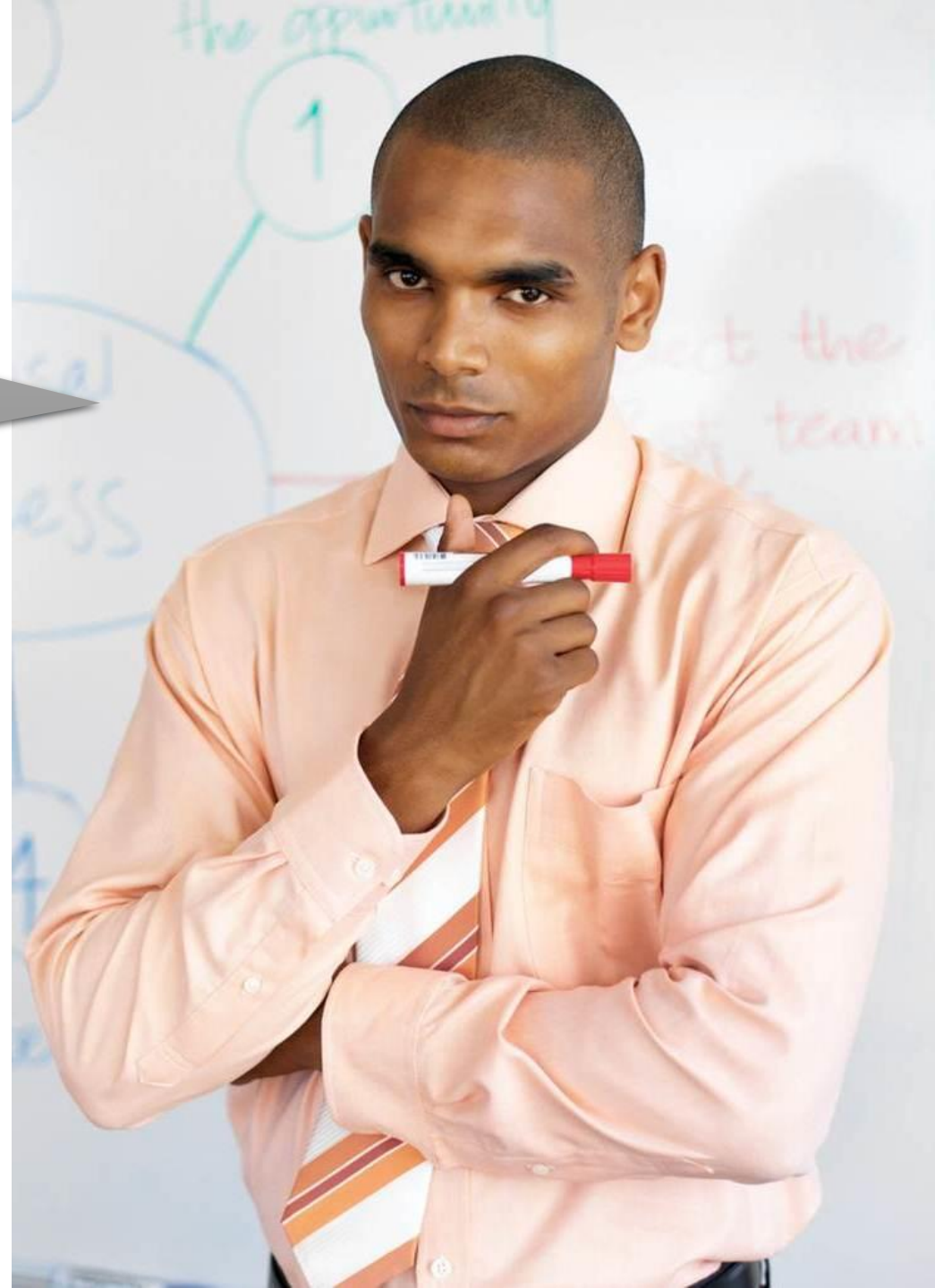
A black and white photograph of Albert Einstein, with his characteristic wild hair and mustache, wearing a dark jacket. He is standing in front of a chalkboard, looking back over his shoulder at the camera while his right arm is raised, holding a piece of chalk. On the chalkboard, he has written a quote in cursive script.

"Not everything that counts can
be counted, and not everything
that can be counted counts."

Many programs'
most important
outcomes are
quite intangible

How well does this
correlate with
validated scales?

Many popular methods for
establishing validity are geared to
perpetuate the weaknesses of the
instruments we are trying to replace.



e-VALU-ation





“The systematic determination of merit, worth, or significance”

evaluation is
about providing
well-reasoned and
well-evidenced
answers to
evaluative
questions



Not only: *What were the results?*

But also: *How good, valuable,
and important were they?*



QUALITY



Values

What's in our core?



What's So?

non-evaluative
(or implicitly
evaluative)
facts

+

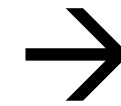
(qualitative,
quantitative, &
mixed method
evidence)



definitions of
“quality,”
“value,” &
importance


(also facts,
based on
evidence)

So What?



actually
evaluative
conclusions

(saying
something
explicit about
quality, value,
& importance)



Where do the
definitions of quality,
value, and importance
come from?

Community local knowledge,
expertise, & insight
Aspirations, hopes, dreams
Strengths & needs assessment
Success cases & hot spots
Relevant research
Relevant standards

Example: Community-based schools constructed by Save the Children in Woliso, Ethiopia

KEQ 1. Core programming implemented & current status

What schools were constructed in the Woliso impact area from 2002-2010, how relevant were they to the needs of children and their families? How well have they lasted? How well are they functioning now?

Sources of evidence

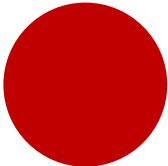

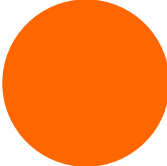
- Save the Children records
- Current & former SC staff
- Visit to school, observation, photographic evidence
- Interviews with principal, teachers, PTA members, parents, former students

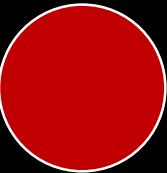



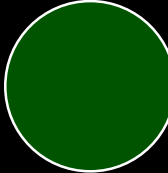


Save the Children










Core programming	Number of		Situation			What is the current state of installations/ equipment and # of population covered
	Units	Population covered	Initial	Exit	Now	
X School buildings constructed	2	236 initially, now 826	Dire 	Good 	Problematic 	2 blocks constructed in 2003; 3 more were later built by the community. SC buildings were wood and mud constructions, and walls have been damaged by termites. Expansion and contraction of mud have caused cracks. Currently too few buildings for the size of the school roll; class size has gone from 40-50 initially to 80+ now.

 Dire	 Problematic	 OK	 Good	 Excellent
<p>There is no school in the kebele; the nearest school is a significant distance. As a result, parents are reluctant to send their young children, especially girls, because they are susceptible to abduction, rape and various kinds of harassments. As a result, most students do not attend school until they are older, and many students never attend school at all.</p>	<p>A school has been constructed, but the materials/design are not durable. As a result, it is dilapidated, with urgent maintenance issues, many of which are safety hazards. Some buildings may be completely beyond repair or at the end of their lives. These schools are uncondusive for teaching and learning. The school has latrines, but they may be in a state of disrepair, unusable, and/or the water supply is no longer functional.</p>	<p>Schools are constructed, with reasonable quality materials, but there may be several maintenance issues that need attention, but none that are serios safety issues for children. Re: location, the school(s) may be far from home for students in some villages. As a result, several students drop out or do not attend school.</p>	<p>There are one or two schools in the kebele located at a reasonable distance from most villages but may be more than 30 minutes' walk for a 7-year-old from some locations. Construction is reasonably durable, but needs a few minor repairs, and is barely large enough to serve the child population of the kebele (class sizes are big). The school has water and segregated latrines, making it a conducive environment for girls as</p>	<p>There are one or two schools in the kebele located at a reasonable distance from all the villages, less than 30 minutes' walk for a 7-year-old. Construction is durable, in good repair, and is large enough to serve the child population of the kebele. The school has water and segregated latrines, making it a conducive environment for girls as well as boys. Dropout rates are very low.</p>



Rating	Description: "Gender Justice & Social Inclusion"
	<p>‘Gender & Socially Transformative’: A situation or environment where critical examination of norms, stereotypes, and judgements associated with masculinity/femininity and other characteristics of marginalised/privileged groups is proactively fostered and is now deeply embedded in the system and culture.</p> <p>The evidence shows deep, permanent change in the norms, cultural values, and power structures that previously created social exclusion or marginalisation, gender and other inequalities, and injustices and allowed them to persist.</p> <p>As a result, the distribution of resources, benefits, status, and rights is very even; the dignity of all people is fostered and those who were previously marginalised are much more able to thrive in this setting.</p>
	<p>‘Gender & Socially Responsive & Inclusive’</p>
	<p>‘Gender & Socially Accommodating’</p>
	<p>‘Gender-Blind & Socially Tolerant’</p>
	<p>‘Exploitative’: A situation or set of practices that reinforces, aggravates, or takes advantage of inequalities and stereotypes in ways that exploit those who have historically been marginalised or excluded and/or that exacerbates inequalities in access to power and resources.</p>

Why make the evaluative piece so explicit and transparent?

User-friendly, meaningful evaluation

- Facilitates genuine engagement & empowerment
- Synthesizes evidence into succinct evaluative conclusions

What gets measured gets focused on

- Make the important measurable, not the measurable important!
- Supports design, management, & success as well as learning



But more importantly, the “values” piece is the key to informing systems change for social justice

 Anonymous

23 

Can we truly know some systems? Some systems are massively distributed over time and space it may be impossible to understand. How do we approach these?

Systems, Policies,
Programs,
& Measures

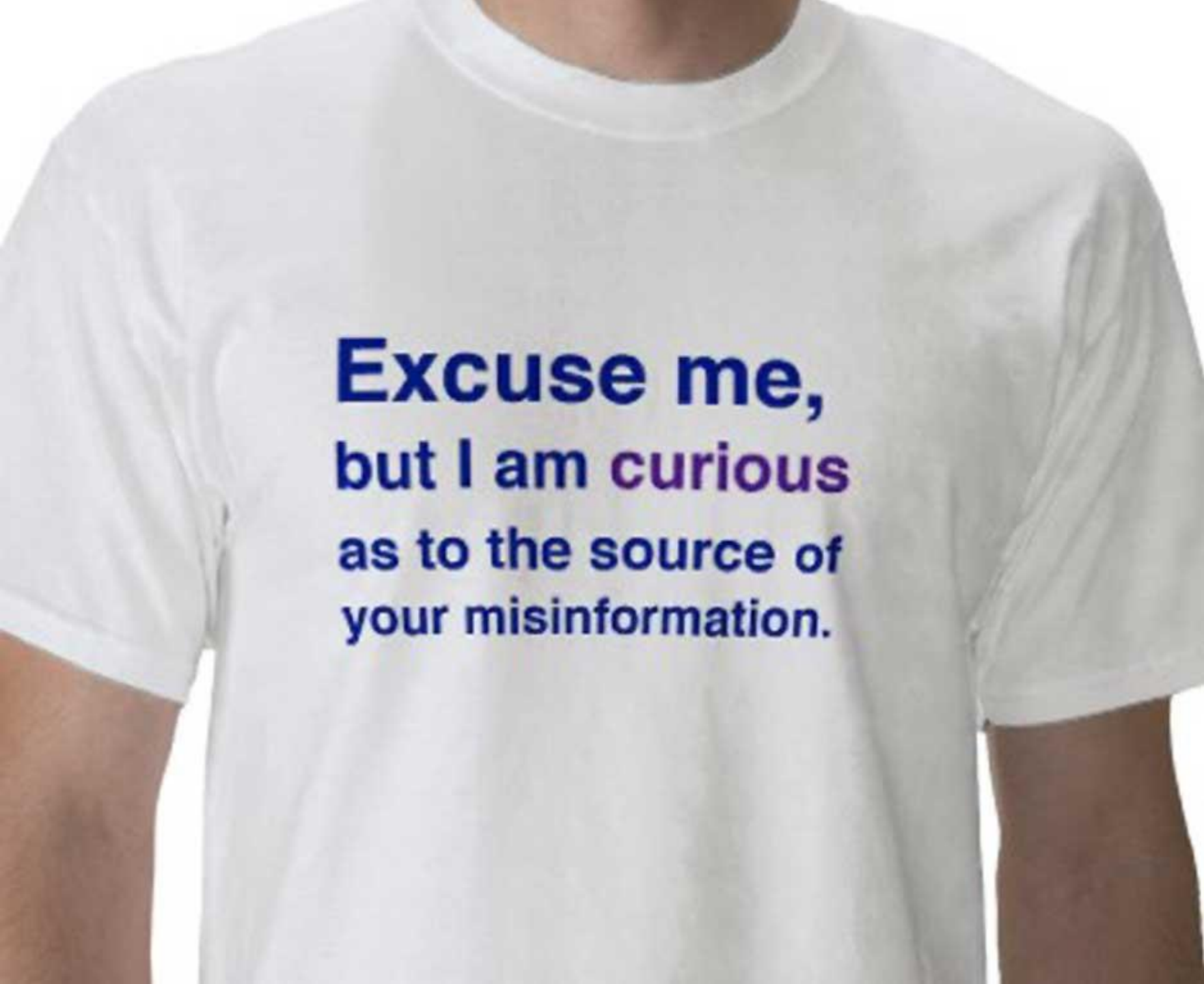
 Anonymous

18 

If we overlay our own values onto those who commission our services, is there a risk we will deal ourselves out of the policy evaluation space?

Norms, Behaviors,
& Practices

Beliefs &
Assumptions

A person is wearing a white t-shirt with a printed message in blue and purple text. The message is a well-known internet meme. The text is centered on the chest area of the shirt.

**Excuse me,
but I am curious
as to the source of
your misinformation.**

The critical
importance
of unboxing
the core in
2019



Programs,
policies, and
systems are
only as good as
how well they
work for the
people who
have historically
experienced
the most
marginalization

Whose values?