

“

Impossible

So Smart

Not Good Enough

Be Extraordinary

Doing It Wrong

Be Thin

Not Too Thin

Be Healthy

Be Thin

Have Money

Can't Ask For Money

Crass

Be A Boss

Can't Be Mean

Have to Lead

Can't Squash Ideas

Love Being A Mother

Don't Talk About Kids

Be A Career Woman

Look Out For Other People

Men's Bad Behavior

Accused of Complaining

Pretty for Men

Not So Pretty

Threaten Other Women

Sisterhood

Always Stand Out

Always Be Grateful

System is Rigged

Acknowledge That

Always Be Grateful

Never Get Old

Never Be Rude

Never Show Off

Never Be Selfish

Never Fall Down

Never Fail

Never Show Fear

Never Get Out of Line

Too Hard!

Too Contradictory

No Medal

No Thank You

Doing Everything Wrong

Everything Is Your Fault

Tie Herself Into Knots

“

“If I don’t Do it...
No One Else Will”

“I Have to Work Twice As Hard”

“Somebody Will Notice”

“I Shouldn’t Have to Ask”

“I Have to be 100% Ready”

“I Can’t Say No”

“I Can Handle It”

“It’s Easier If I Do It Myself”

Success?

How Did We Get Here?



They just said things.



Be nice.
Be helpful.
Don't be bossy.
Keep the peace.



Two rulebooks.
Two knots.



**Strengths became
obligations.**



Caring —————→ **Responsible for everyone**

Helpful —————→ **Never saying no**

Humble —————→ **Waiting to be recognized**

Dependable —————→ **Doing it myself**

Independent —————→ **Needing no one**

Driven —————→ **Nothing gets in my way**



We learned the rules.



**And then we
passed them on.**



Nobody has to tell us **anymore.**

SOME OF US HEAR

“You should probably know the answer to that.” “Don't ask — everyone else probably knows.”

SOME OF US HEAR

“Don't let them see you struggle.” “Nobody will do it as well as you.” “Do not lose.”

SAME JOB

Keep us safe by keeping us inside the rules.



Where did you learn it?

● Family

- School or early career
- A specific workplace or leader
- No idea — but it's there



Where did you learn it?

- ☐ Family
- ☒ **School or early career**
- ☐ A specific workplace or leader
- ☐ No idea — but it's there



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Twenty years ago.



I.
Have.
Arrived.



Killing it.
Killing myself.



Everything came **through me.**

- I took work back — faster, better
- Every time: work done, deadline met, answer right
- And a team with one less chance to become capable
- Sharp with mistakes. Impatient. Deciding without them.



I would have agreed.
Conceptually.



It cost them, **too.**

IMPATIENCE

They had to work around it.

QUESTIONS

They weighed the risk of bringing one to me.

DECISIONS

They executed what they never helped shape.

GROWTH

They developed under a leader who kept taking the work back.



Good results. Good leadership?

- Everything through me = important
- Everybody needing me = valuable
- Handling the workload = capable
- And it was working. I had receipts.



The awards ceremony.



Raisinets.



I brought it through the door.

- They didn't create the belief
- They rewarded it. They benefited from it.
- Working harder = more valuable
- Being needed = mattering
- “Great. We'll take as much as you'd like to give.”



I wasn't failing at success.

I was succeeding at a definition

I never chose.

-

What am I calling success?
What am I willing to trade for it?



**Somewhere along the way,
I learned that to be
successful,
I have to...**



think

vs.

believe



I THINK

I BELIEVE

"I should work hard."



"My value comes from how hard I work."

"I like helping people."



"If I don't help everyone, I'm selfish."

"I want to do excellent work."



"If I make a mistake, people will discover I'm not as capable as they think I am."

"I want to win."



"Nothing and no one gets to stand between me and the list."



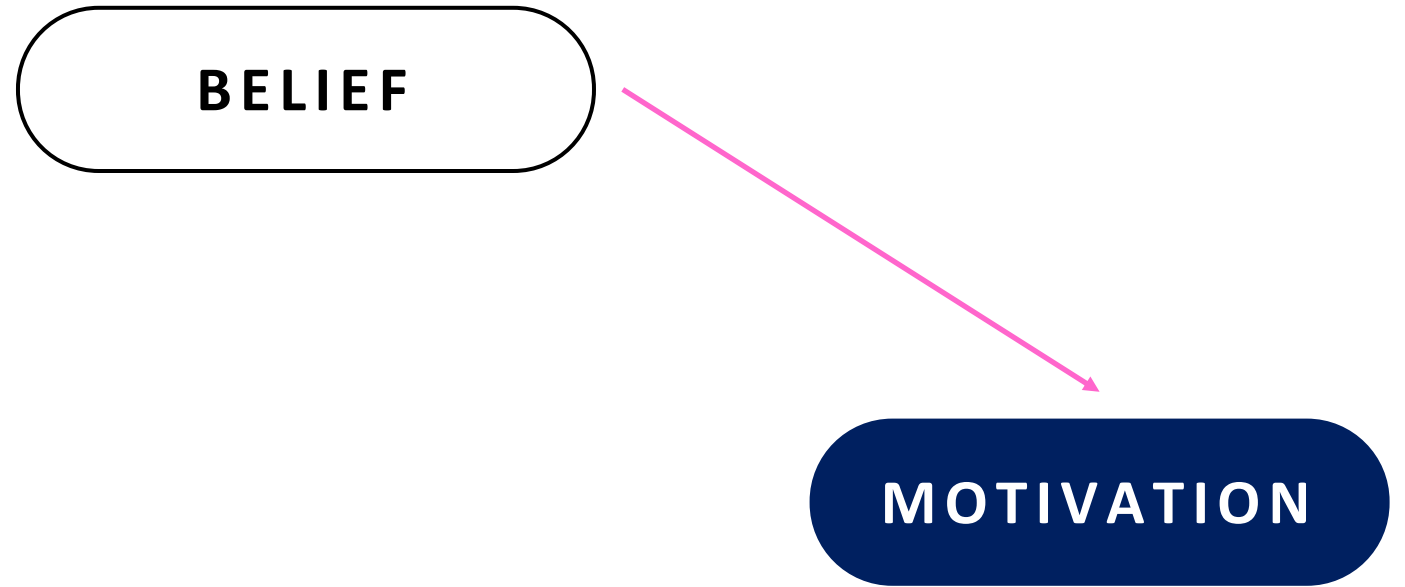
**What if the behavior you're trying to
change
is protecting what made you
successful?**

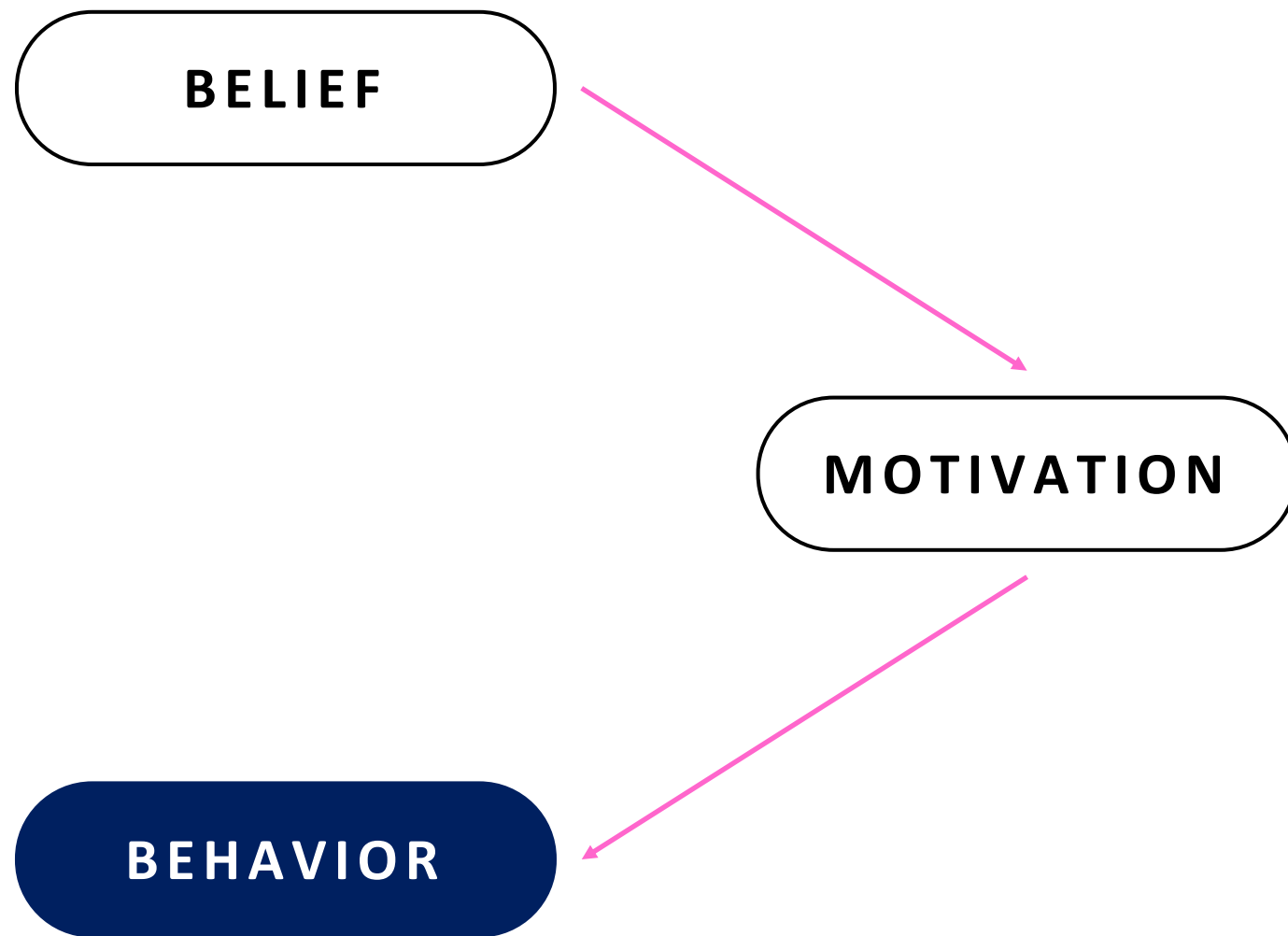


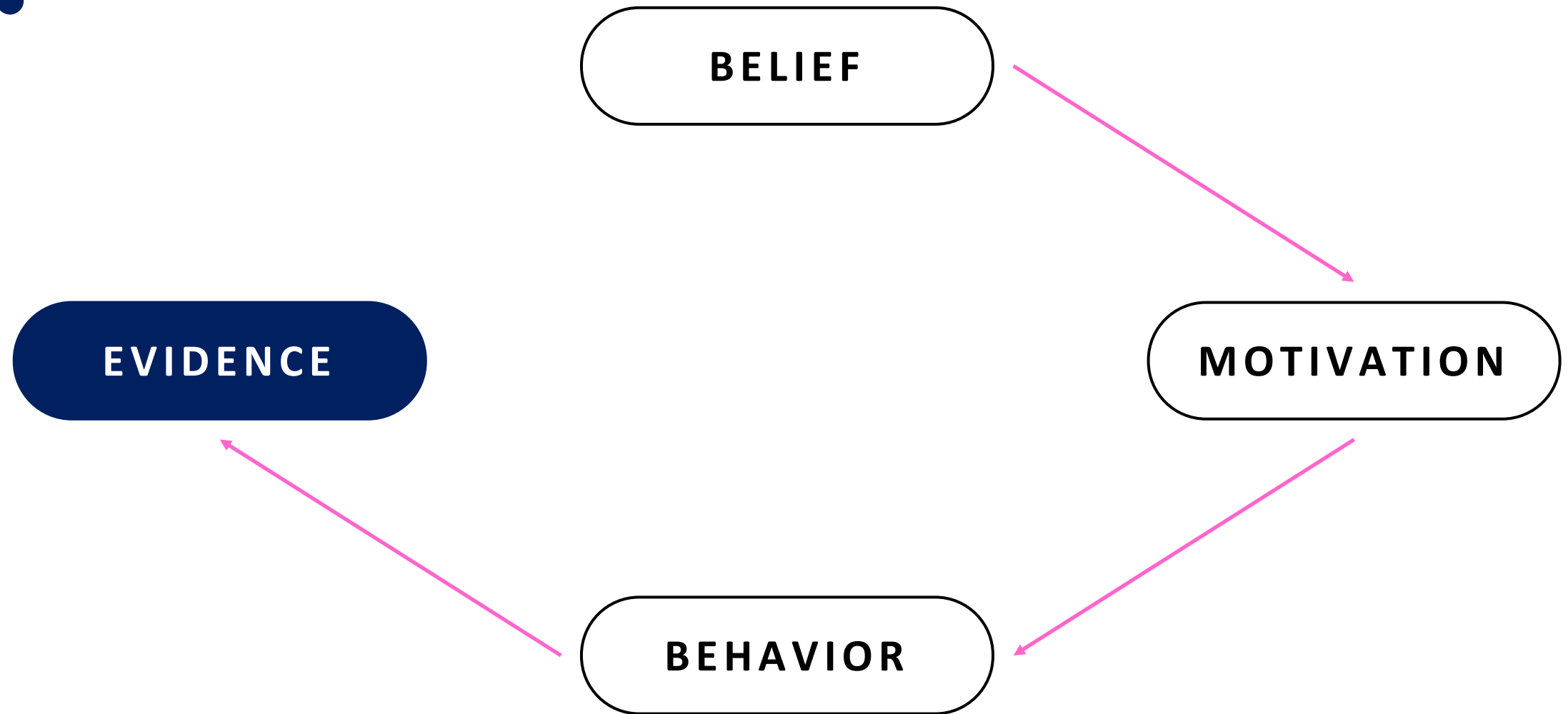
IF I DON'T DO IT,
NOBODY ELSE WILL.

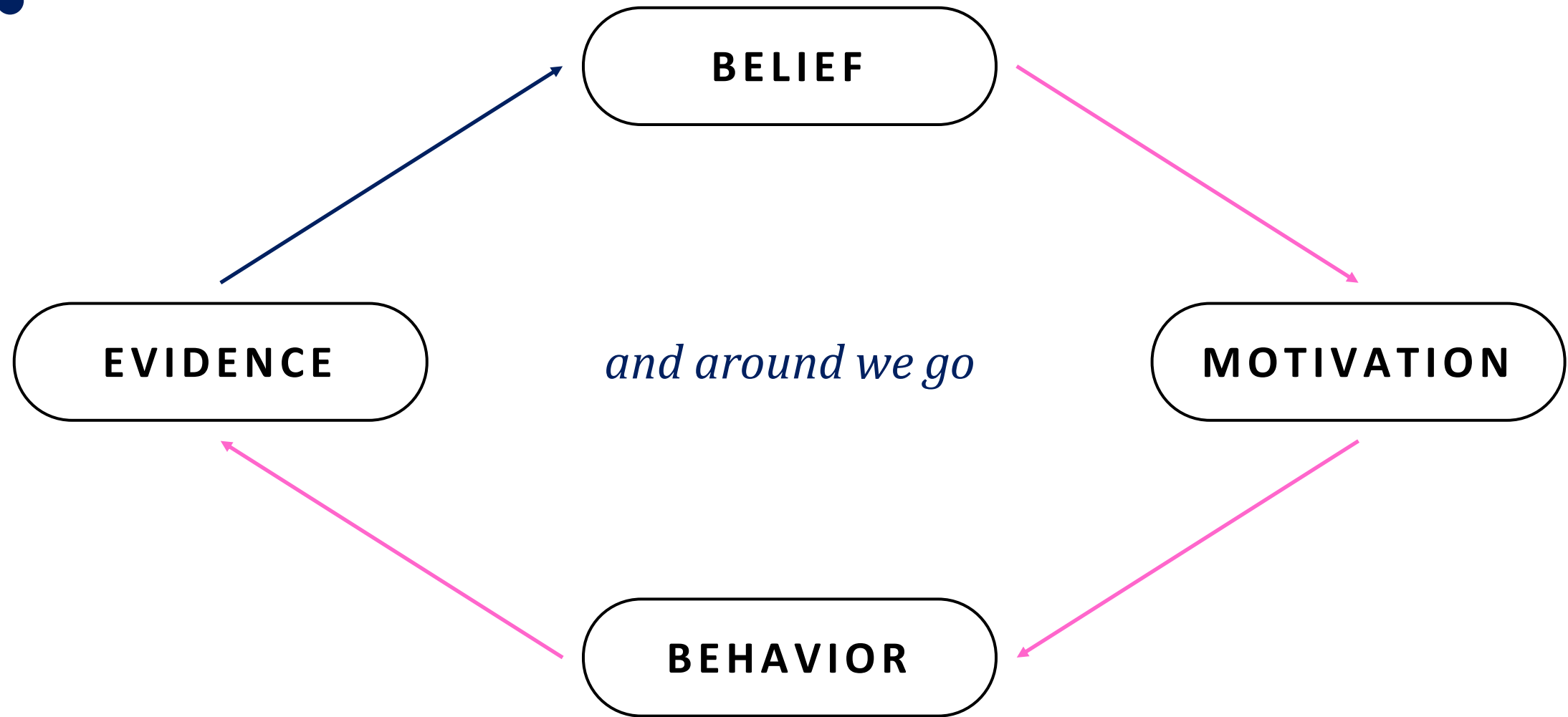


BELIEF











We know.

**“DELEGATE
MORE.”**

...but I believe I'm
the one who gets
things done.

**“ADVOCATE FOR
YOURSELF.”**

...but real
excellence
shouldn't need to
announce itself.

**“SET
BOUNDARIES.”**

...but being
needed means I'm
valuable.

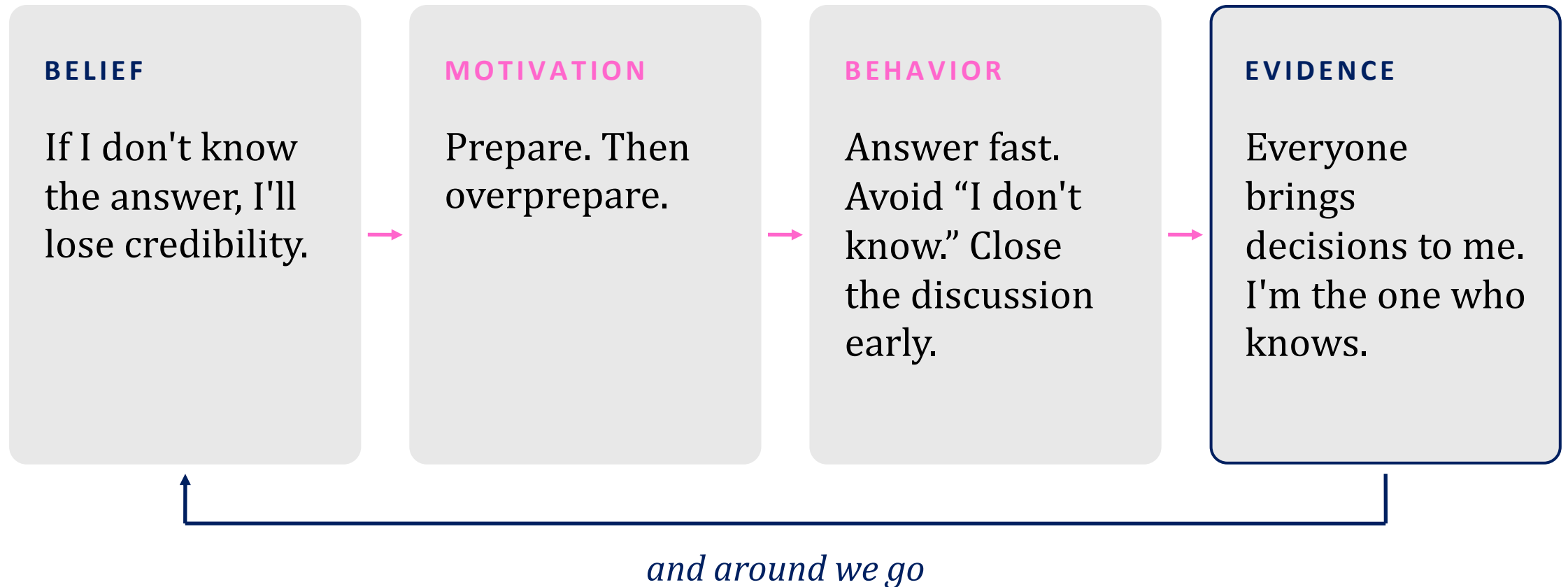
**“HAVE THE HARD
CONVERSATION.”**

...but good leaders
make people feel
supported.



IF I DON'T KNOW THE ANSWER,
I'LL LOSE CREDIBILITY.

● SAME LOOP



●
**I become the answer instead of
developing people who can find one.**

- The team becomes quieter
- Decisions concentrate around me
- The bigger the job, the less sustainable it gets
- Not a lack of capability — a model built on proving I belong



What would I have to believe
for what I'm currently doing
to make perfect sense?



Does this work?
Do I need this?



“Successful.”



According to
whom?



Comparison is the thief of clarity.

- Using your life to measure mine hands you the authority
- Everybody gets a vote: boss, parents, industry
- Even strangers end up on the committee

-

Achievement has a scorecard.
Success needs a definition.



If nobody could see your title, salary,
house, LinkedIn profile, résumé, or
job —
and you couldn't compare yourself to
another human being —
how would you know you were
successful?



Whose definition of success
are you using?



**Here's the rest
of my story.**



**Do exceptional work.
Work harder than
everyone.
Be prepared.
Be undeniable.**

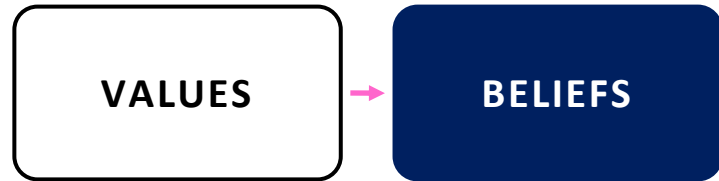
I was let go.



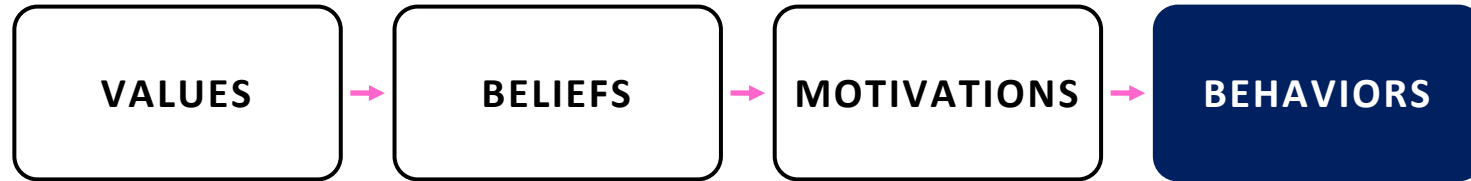
**Knowing
isn't doing.**



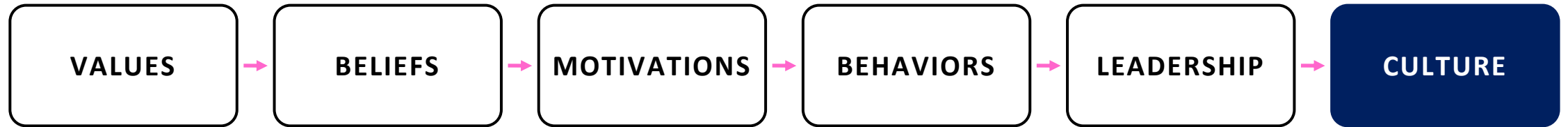
VALUES

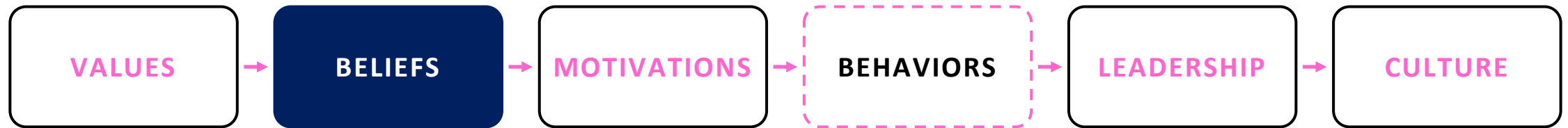












where the work is

where most training goes



IF I BELIEVE

**Mistakes expose
incompetence.**



PEOPLE ADJUST

Double-check what's
already checked. Wait
for more certainty.
Soften bad news.
Bring problems late.

IF I BELIEVE

**Mistakes expose
incompetence.**



PEOPLE ADJUST

Double-check what's
already checked. Wait
for more certainty.
Soften bad news.
Bring problems late.



THEN I SAY

*“Why doesn't
anyone take
ownership around
here?”*



IF I BELIEVE

**Being needed
makes me
valuable.**



PEOPLE ADJUST

Route every decision
through me. Wait for
approvals. Wait for my
fifteen minutes.



IF I BELIEVE

**Being needed
makes me
valuable.**



PEOPLE ADJUST

Route every decision
through me. Wait for
approvals. Wait for my
fifteen minutes.



THEN I SAY

*“My team isn't
proactive.”*



IF I BELIEVE

**Good leaders
keep people
happy.**



PEOPLE ADJUST

Strong performers
watch
underperformance go
unmanaged.
Resentment grows
under the harmony.

IF I BELIEVE

**Good leaders
keep people
happy.**



PEOPLE ADJUST

Strong performers
watch
underperformance go
unmanaged.
Resentment grows
under the harmony.



THEN I SAY

*“Why are my best
people leaving?”*



IF I BELIEVE

**My value comes
from always
delivering.**



PEOPLE ADJUST

Absorb the extra
hours. Work around
broken processes.
Stop saying the
workload is
unreasonable.



IF I BELIEVE

**My value comes
from always
delivering.**



PEOPLE ADJUST

Absorb the extra
hours. Work around
broken processes.
Stop saying the
workload is
unreasonable.



THEN I SAY

*“We have a
capacity
problem.”*



Not yet.



“Yeah, but...”



What am I believing
that makes my current behavior
make perfect sense?



**I'm coming
back.**



Notice
yourself.



Now What Do I Do?

