We Are Failing Our Leaders

with Kai Johnson, Founder of Act Normal

ACT NORMAL

5 Years
Leader

5 Years
India & Nepal
Country Director

2 Years
Founder

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Terminology: Leader

Mentor

Instructor

Field Staff

Leader

Guide

Field
Director

Field Educator

Outdoor
Educator

International
Program
Leader

International
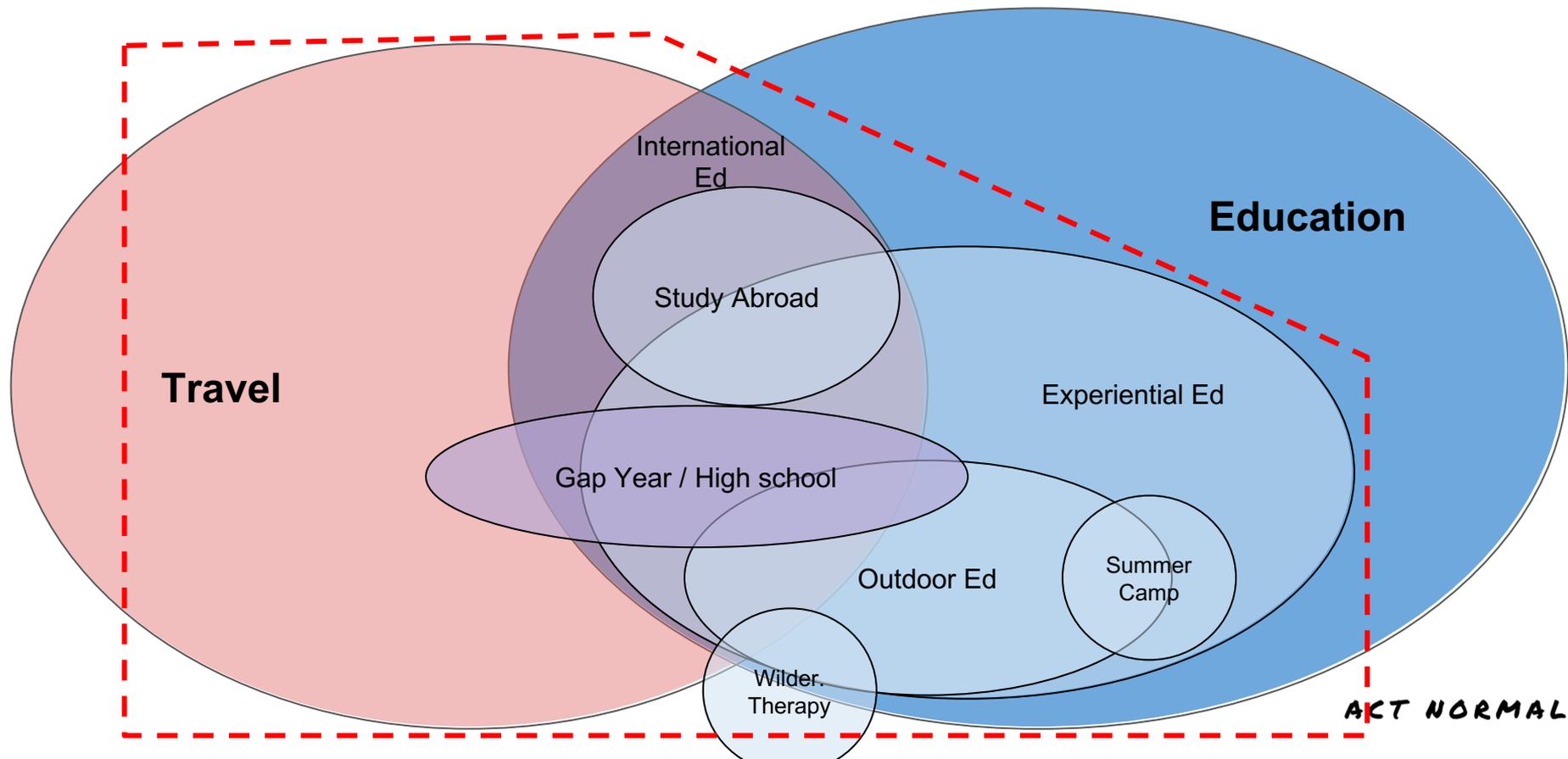Program
Leader

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On-Program

Post-Program
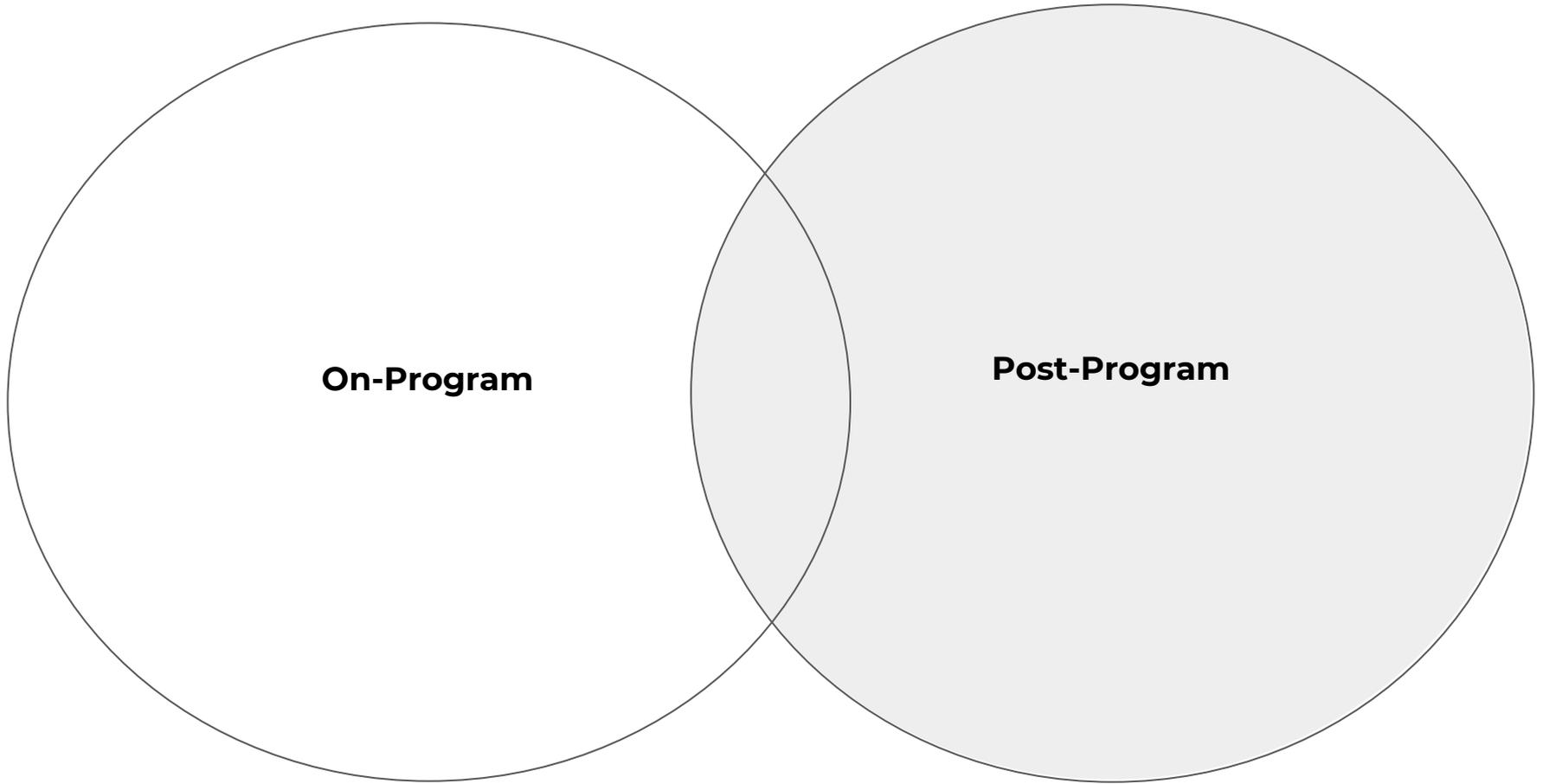
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Terminology: The Leader Industry

Industry Snapshot: Foundations

1. Leaders are the backbone of the industry
2. Good leaders are amazing human beings
    a. (with incredible skill sets)
3. We are failing our leaders

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Industry Snapshot: How We Fail Our Leaders

Drugs

Withdrawal

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Drugs: Leader Joys

Outer

Inner

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Withdrawal: Post-program

The Big 3
1. Knowledge
2. Community
3. Stability

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Big 3: Knowledge

Lack of Knowledge

1. Industry
   a. What IS the industry?
   b. What companies exist?
   c. What segments exist within the industry?
2. Opportunities
   a. What jobs exist?
   b. How do I find jobs?
   c. How do I develop a career?
   d. Is this sutainable?
3. Skills
   a. What skills do I have as a leader?
   b. Are these skills valuable?
   c. How do I communicate these skills on paper and verbally?

Challenges to Obtain Knowledge

1. Knowledge is siloed
   a. Individual, Company, Industry
2. Knowledge is largely word of mouth
   a. There is no one place that houses this knowledge
3. Instability = Lack of time and energy

Outcome = Confusion, anxiety, low self worth, professional black hole *ACT NORMAL*

Big 3: Community

Community?
1. Constantly creating and leaving
2. Non-existent?
3. Fractured / spread over the world
4. Don't fit into "normal"

Understanding Gap
1. It's likely your community HAS NO IDEA:
    a. What you do for work
    b. What you just experienced
    c. What you are going through currently
2. Even with community, still lonely

Relationships
1. Long distance
2. Constantly moving
3. Exhausted
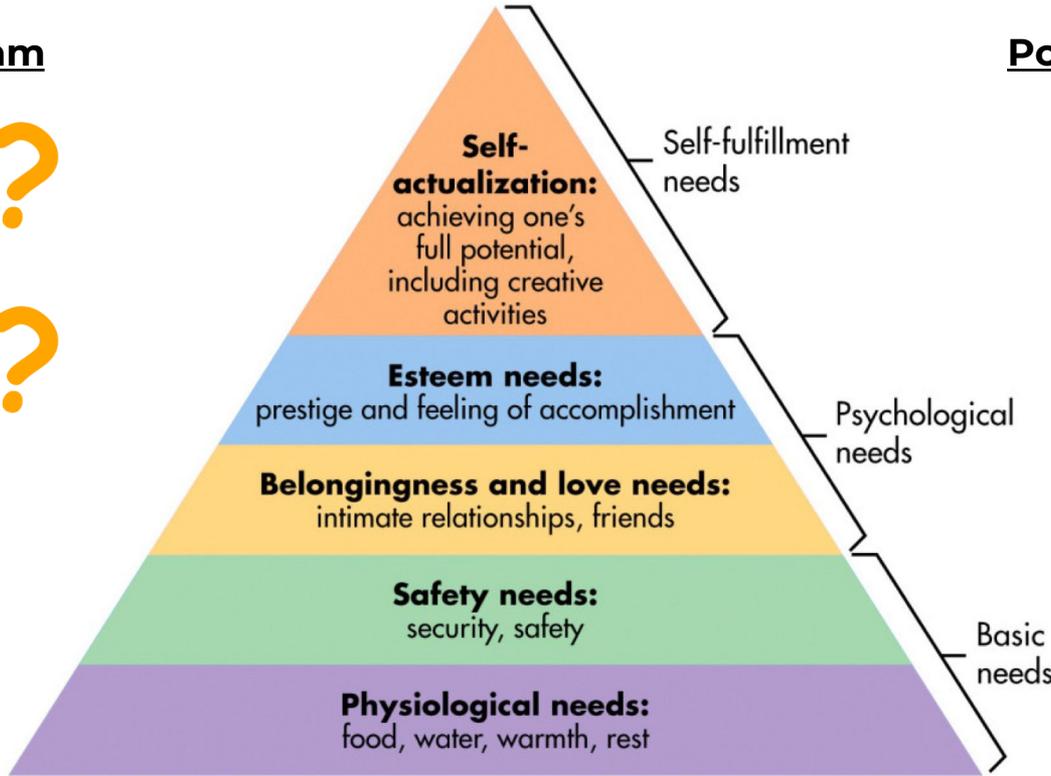4. Timezones, Technology
5. Understanding Gap

Outcome = Isolated, Lonely, Misunderstood

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Big 3: Stability

Outcome = No time, no energy, no resources

On Program

Post-Program

Self-fulfillment needs

Self-actualization: achieving one's full potential, including creative activities

Psychological needs

Esteem needs: prestige and feeling of accomplishment

Belongingness and love needs: intimate relationships, friends

Safety needs: security, safety

Basic needs

Physiological needs: food, water, warmth, rest

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Big 3: Loop

Lack of Community
= Isolated, Lonely,
Misunderstood

Lack of Knowledge
= Confusion, anxiety,
low self worth,
professional black
hole

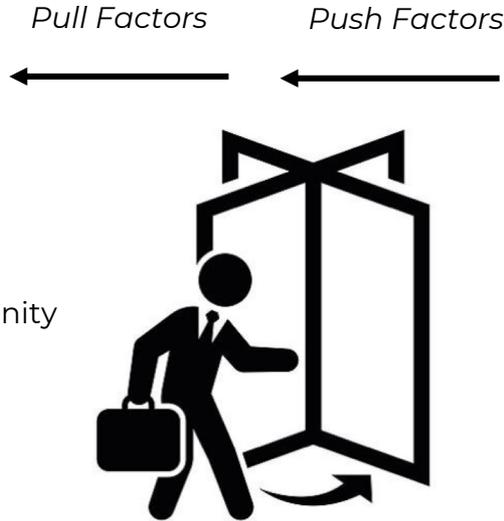**Rampant
Instability =** No
time, no energy, no
resources

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Outcome: The Revolving Door

Leading

Pull Factors   *Push Factors*   **New Job**

DRUGS!

- Giving Soul
- Deeply rewarding
- Getting paid
- Comforting (known)
- Reconnecting w/ community
- Program support bubble

Withdrawal Challenges

- Lack of knowledge
  - Lack of resources
- Lack of Community
  - Very little support
  - No mentorship
- Instability
  - Lack of finances
- Withdrawal
  - Lack of excitement and satisfaction

On-Program Challenges

Push Factors   *Pull Factors*

- Exhaustion
- Burn out
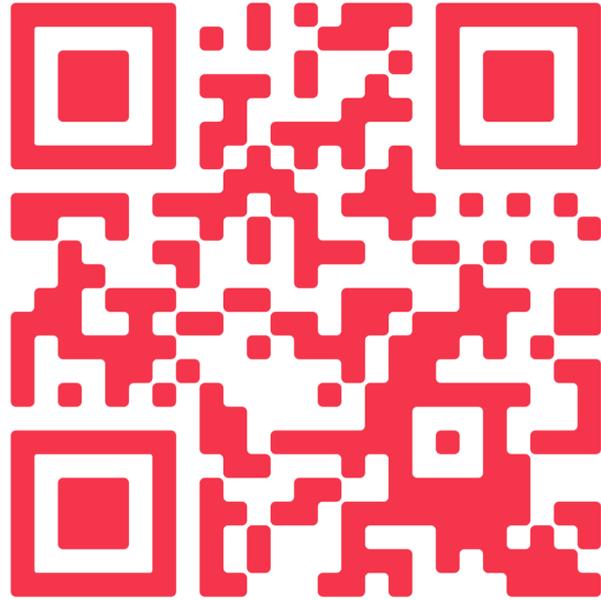- Financial requirements
- Health factors

Desires

- Increased stability
  - Geographic
  - Financial
- Community
- Relationships
- Career Advancement

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Outcome: Who cares?

1. Leaders are the backbone of the industry
    a. Revolving door = damaged backbone, impacts program quality, hazard
2. Good leaders are amazing human beings (with incredible skill sets)
    a. Career Paralysis = We are wasting the skills and talents of incredible people
3. We are failing our leaders
    a. Withdrawal = We are not adequately supporting leaders in the post-program phase

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Solutions: What can we do?

1. We need to talk about this
2. We need data
3. Start with the Big 3
   a. Stock take, brainstorm, cross-pollinate
   b. Individual, Company, Industry
4. Industry-wide problem = Industry-wide solution
   a. Union?

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