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WI SHRM
2013 WISCONSIN STATE CONFERENCE • LA CROSSE
NAVIGATING THE HR WATERS!
OCTOBER 9-11, 2013
Develop Your Strategic Thinking Mindset – Or Else!!
Strengthening HR's Value by Developing Your Strategic Thinking Mindset
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With Jeff Russell
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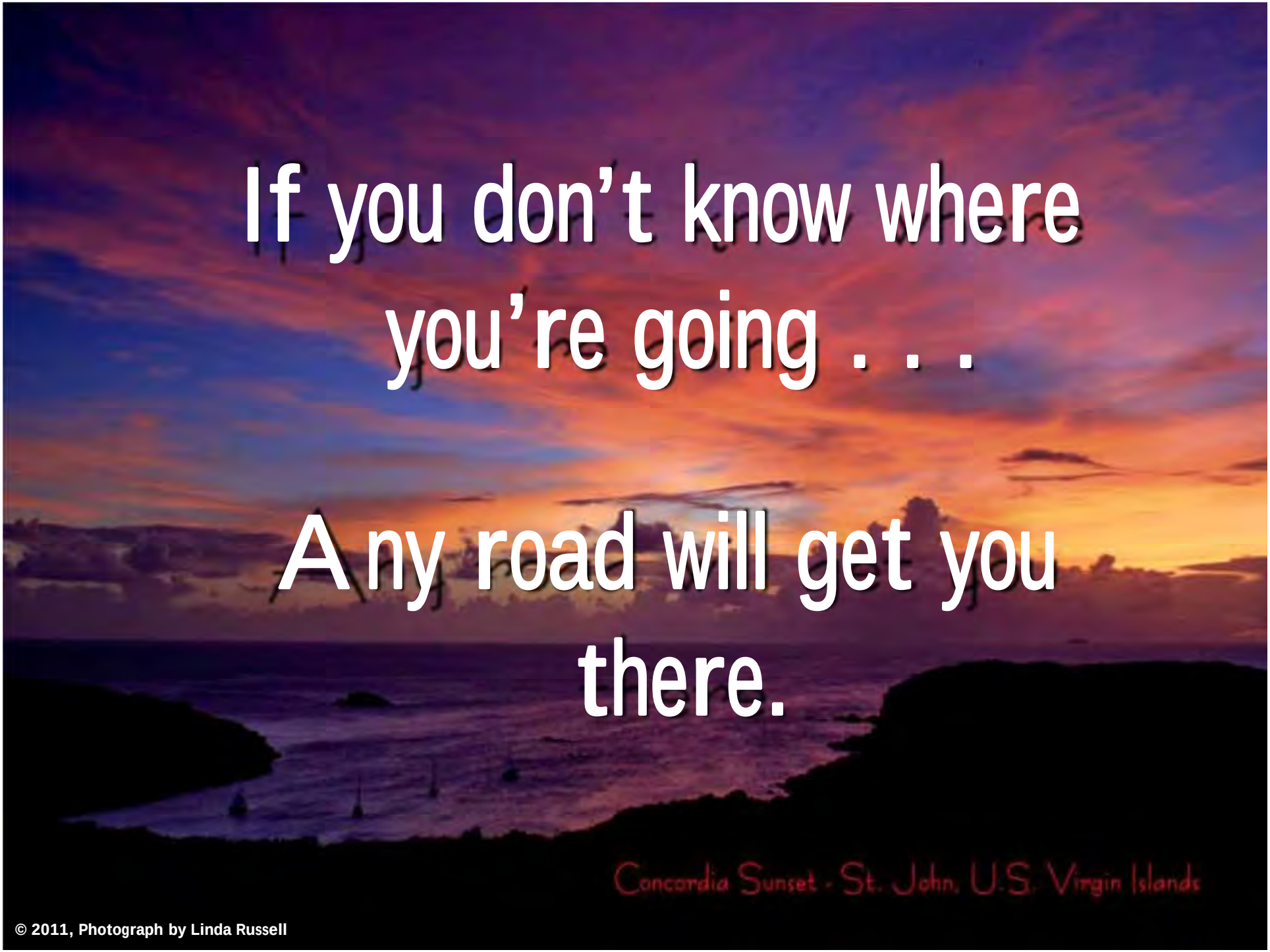

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Insanity . . .

Repeatedly doing the same things in the same way and expecting *different* results.

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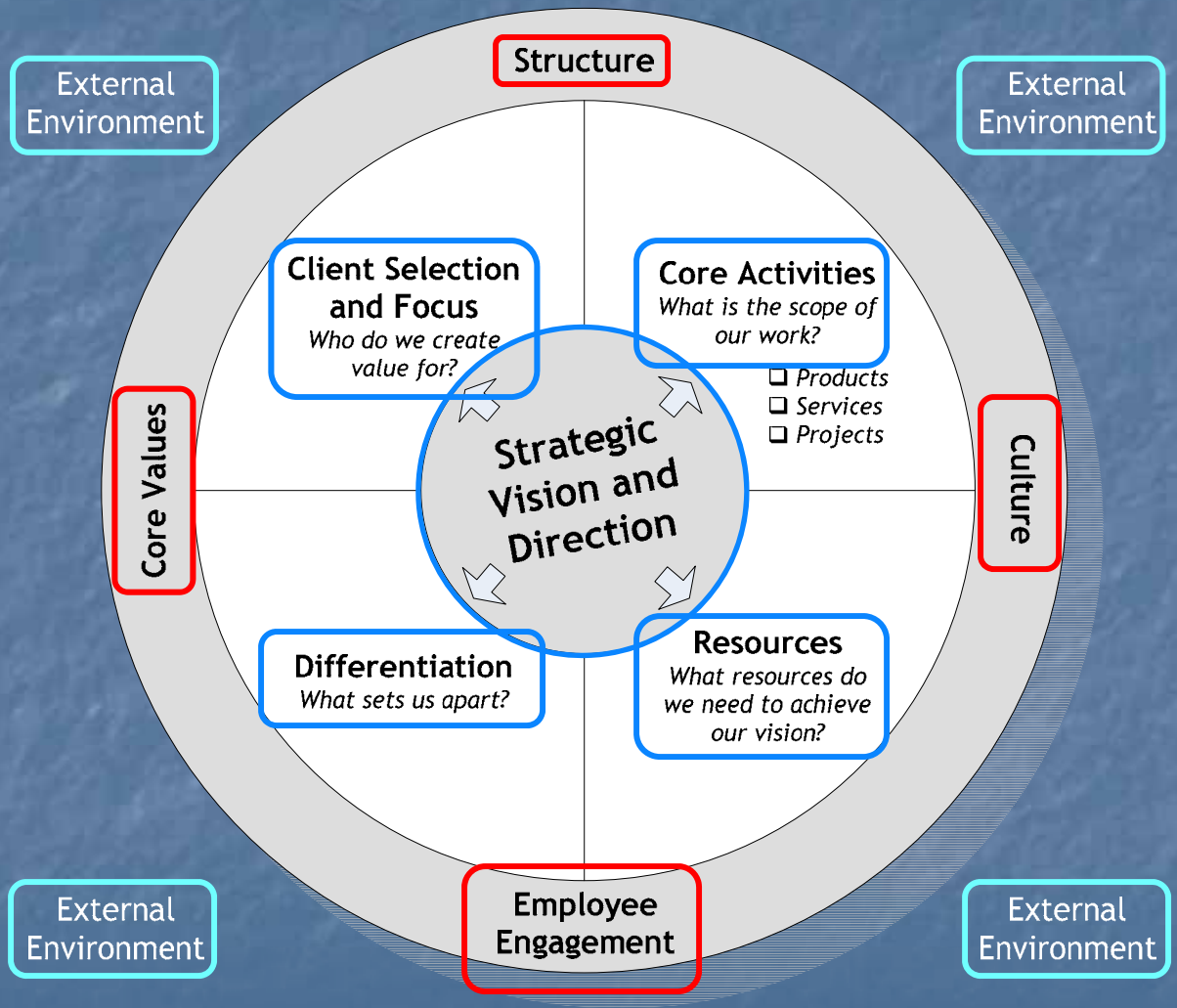
A Strategic Thinking/Planning Framework



Adapted from the work of M. Liteman, S. Campbell and J. Liteman

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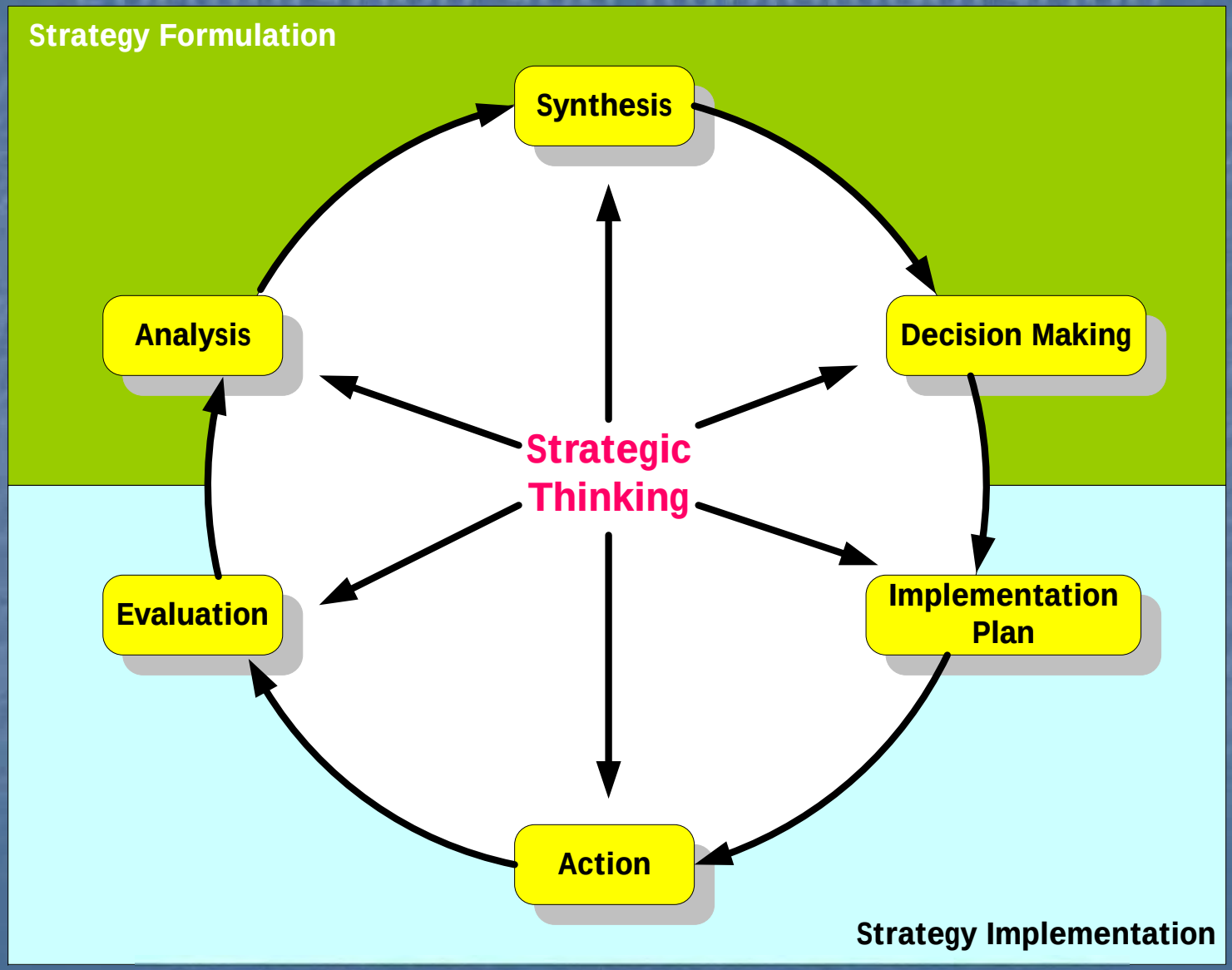
Strategic Thinking and Strategy Formulation and Implementation



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Strategic Thinking for HR Is . . .

A way of examining and understanding your organization's circumstances within a larger context which, in turn, enables you to identify, understand, and proactively engage current and emerging issues that are likely to have a significant impact on an organization's success.

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Strategic Thinking's Context

- **The purpose or aim of the organization – *What are we here to accomplish or create in the world?* For HR: Do I understand the business?**
- **The purpose, role, and value of the person's work contribution - *How do I personally contribute to the organization's larger purpose? What am I here to accomplish or create?* For HR: *What is HR's value? [What is my value?]***
- **The core guiding values described in the strategic plan - *What core values should guide every decision and action I make in my work?* For HR: *How will these values influence my decisions?***

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Strategic Thinking's Context

- **The current and future needs of his/her customers -** ***What do my customers/clients expect of me today? How are my customers' needs changing and why?*** **For HR:** ***How are my customers' needs changing?***
- **What is occurring in the organization's environment -** ***What forces and trends within and outside of the company are likely to affect my or the company's future effectiveness and success?*** **For HR:** ***What HR/business trends reflect my potential future?***

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Strategic Thinking

Strategic thinking involves . . .

1. Holding an image of the vision or ideal future in one's mind.
2. Drawing upon and being shaped by the organization's core values.
3. Being awake and aware – continuously scanning the environment — looking for opportunities and threats.

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Strategic Thinking

4. Seeing the patterns and relationships in events and circumstances.
5. Recognizing the interconnections and interdependencies before making decisions and taking action.
6. Making decisions and taking actions for the long-term that are shaped by the vision, core values, awareness of the environment, and awareness of the interdependencies.

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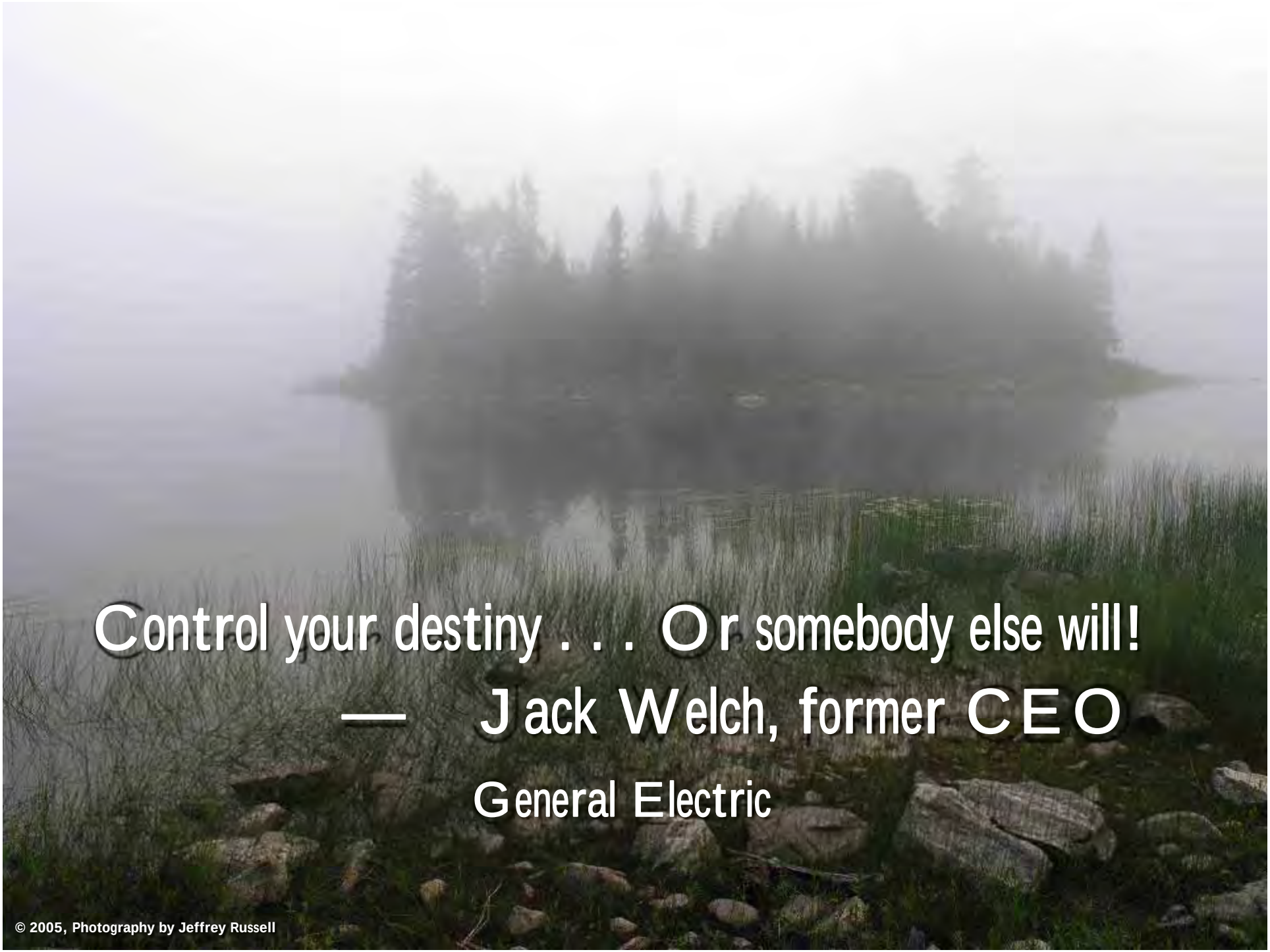
Control your destiny . . . Or somebody else will!
— Jack Welch, former CEO
General Electric
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HR Thinking/Planning/Action Levels . . .

Level	*Desired Result*	*Style of Action*	*Underlying Value/Key Question*	Current % of Time	Desired % of Time
Strategic	Helping the organization achieve an ideal future. Optimizing desired long-term outcomes given internal resources and environmental constraints.	Future-minded, long-term focus. Exploring alternative HR possibilities and pathways to achieve success and tackle critical issues.	*Controlled* instability toward a larger purpose. Leveraging opportunities. *What's next for HR?*		
Interactive	Exceeding expectations. Going above and beyond. Anticipating HR needs and problems.	Proactive. Getting out in front of things. Never being surprised.	Continuous learning and quality improvement. *What am I learning today that should change my HR practice tomorrow?*		
Operational	Maintaining the status quo. Ensuring consistency. Controlling/guaranteeing results. Developing good HR systems that translate strategic plans into action.	Short-term focus. Fixes problems. Maintains smooth operation. Strives for operational excellence.	Stability and Control. *How do I keep things going along as smoothly as possible?*		
Tactical	Meeting expectations. Solving daily HR problems. Responding immediately to emerging issues.	Reactive. Short-term focus. Getting results today.	Surviving! Making it through another day! *What must I do right now to solve today's problems?*		
				100%	100%

Developing Others' Strategic Mindset

1. Expect HR staffers to be strategic thinkers – make it part of their hiring, orientation, and development.
2. Build strategic thinking into every HR job description.
3. Integrate the vision and core values into HR planning and goal setting processes.
4. Invite HR staffers to share/discuss what they are learning from customers and what they see happening around them that might have a bearing on the organization's future success and HR's role.
5. Debrief HR challenges, problems, and crisis from a strategic perspective — pursue strategic insight and learning.

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Developing Others' Strategic Mindset

6. Define the HR "ends" not the "means" to get there – and invite them to help build the right pathway.
7. Take time to listen and acknowledge their creative ideas.
8. Give people the freedom to make decisions (autonomy) — but also provide them context and a framework within which to operate (core values).
9. Encourage people to challenge current HR practices (do this only if you really mean it!).
10. Share HR success stories - where HR was the hero!

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Developing Others' Strategic Mindset

11. Invest in building a strong community
12. Walk the talk – model great strategic thinking in how you approach your own decision making, problem solving, crisis management, etc.
13. Take time, as an HR team, for a strategic thinking "retreat" where you escape from the tactical and operational levels if even for a half-day!

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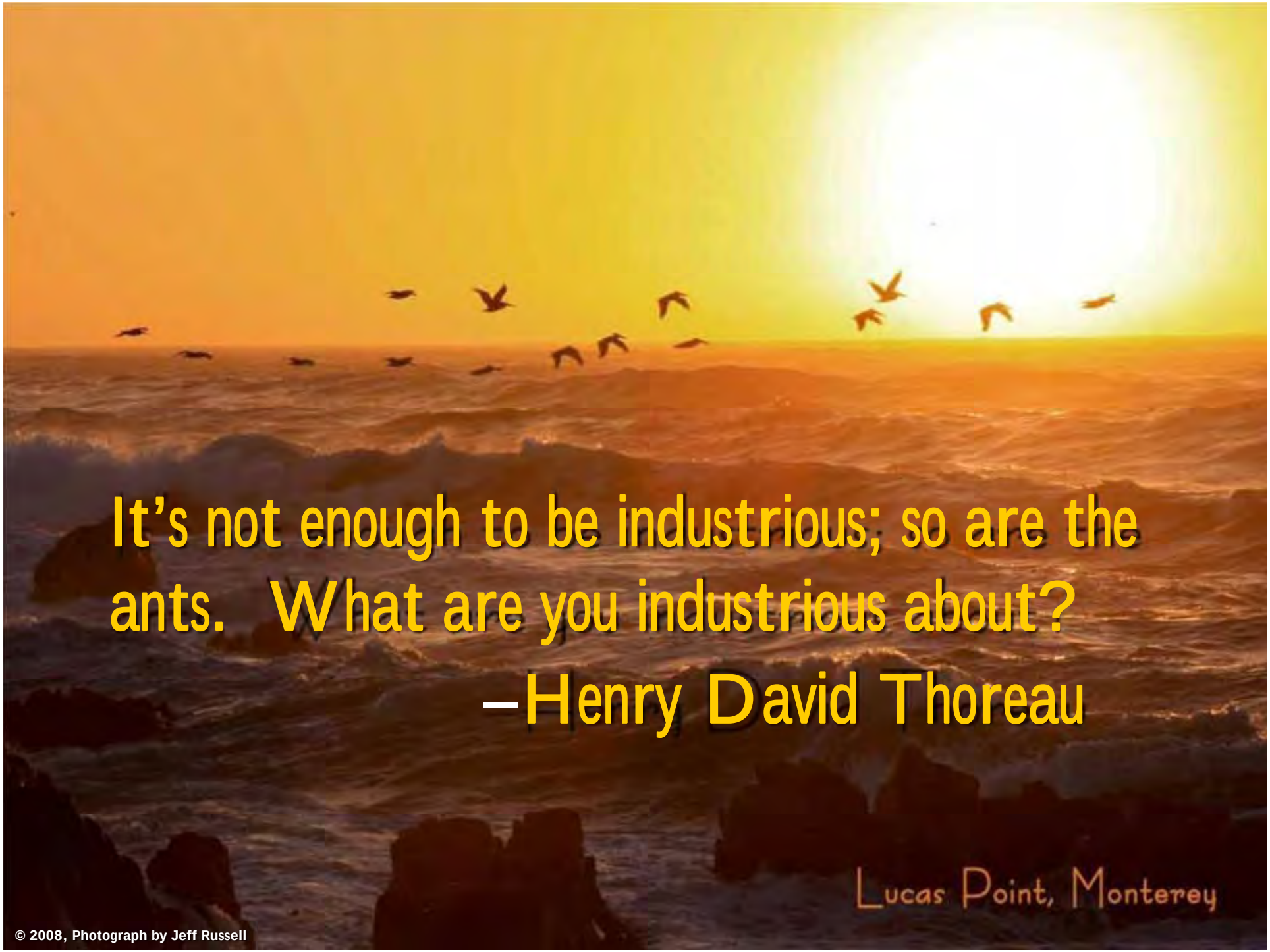

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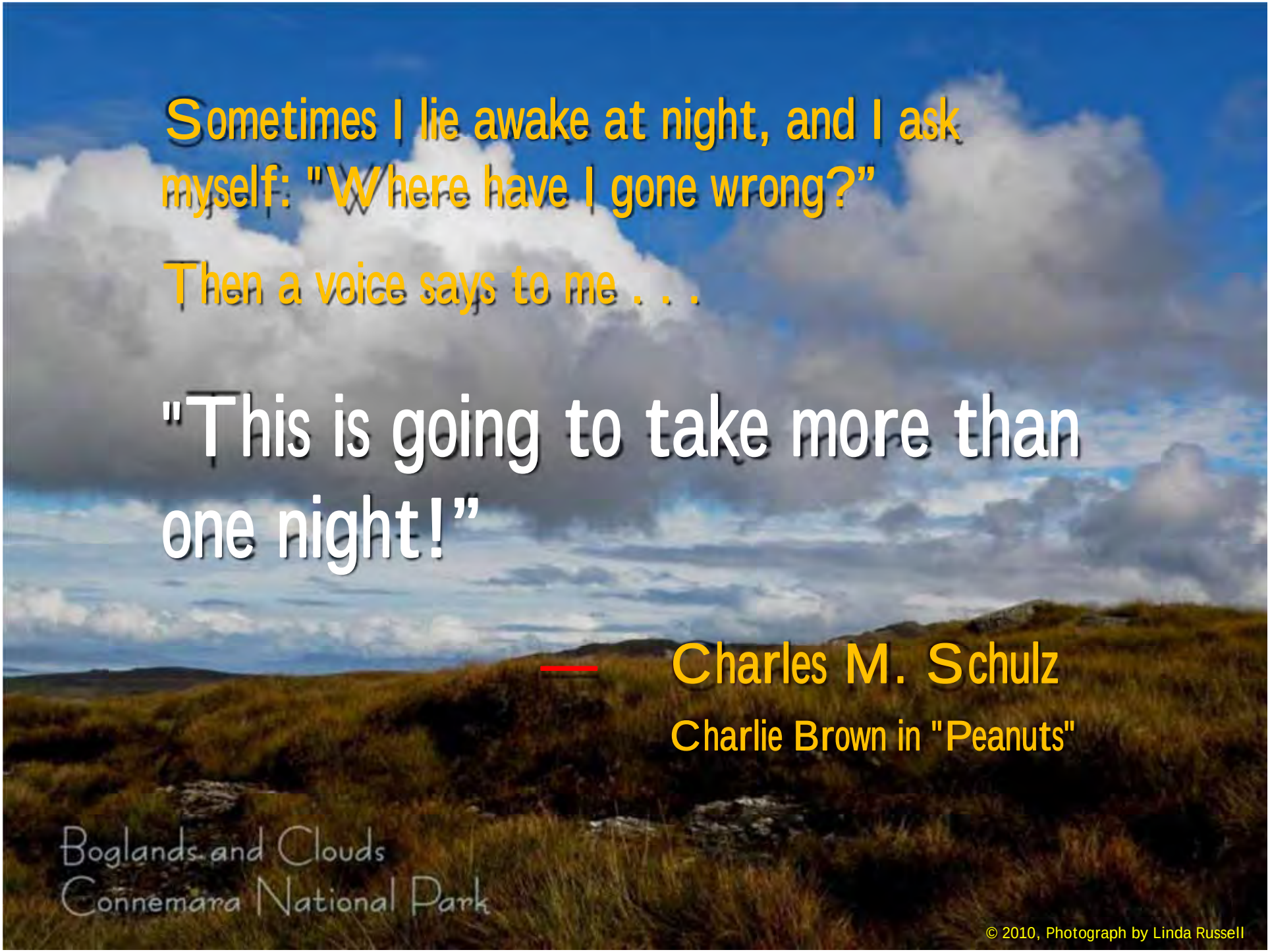
Sometimes I lie awake at night, and I ask myself: "Where have I gone wrong?"
Then a voice says to me . . .
"This is going to take more than one night!"
— Charles M. Schulz
Charlie Brown in "Peanuts"
Boglands and Clouds
Connemara National Park
© 2010, Photograph by Linda Russell

Thanks for Your Participation!

Best of luck integrating insights from this session into your HR strategies!

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