Advice from PhD to Early Career

Arun Kumar



UC San Diego
JACOBS SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Computer Science and Engineering

SIGMOD New Researcher Symposium June 12, 2018

~~Advice from PhD to Early Career~~

4 things I wish someone had told me bluntly before I started junior proffing!

Arun Kumar

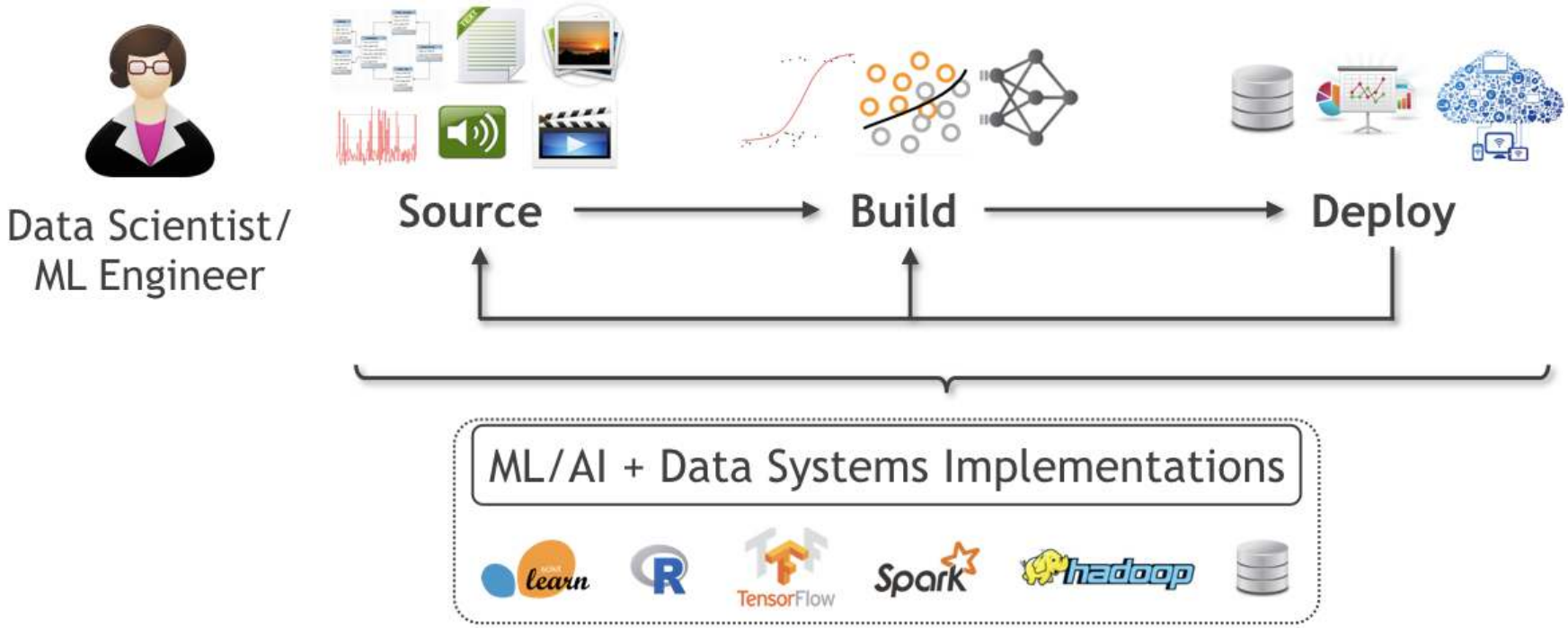


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My Research

Abstractions, systems, and techniques to make the lifecycle of ML-based data analytics *easier*, *faster/cheaper*, *and scalable*

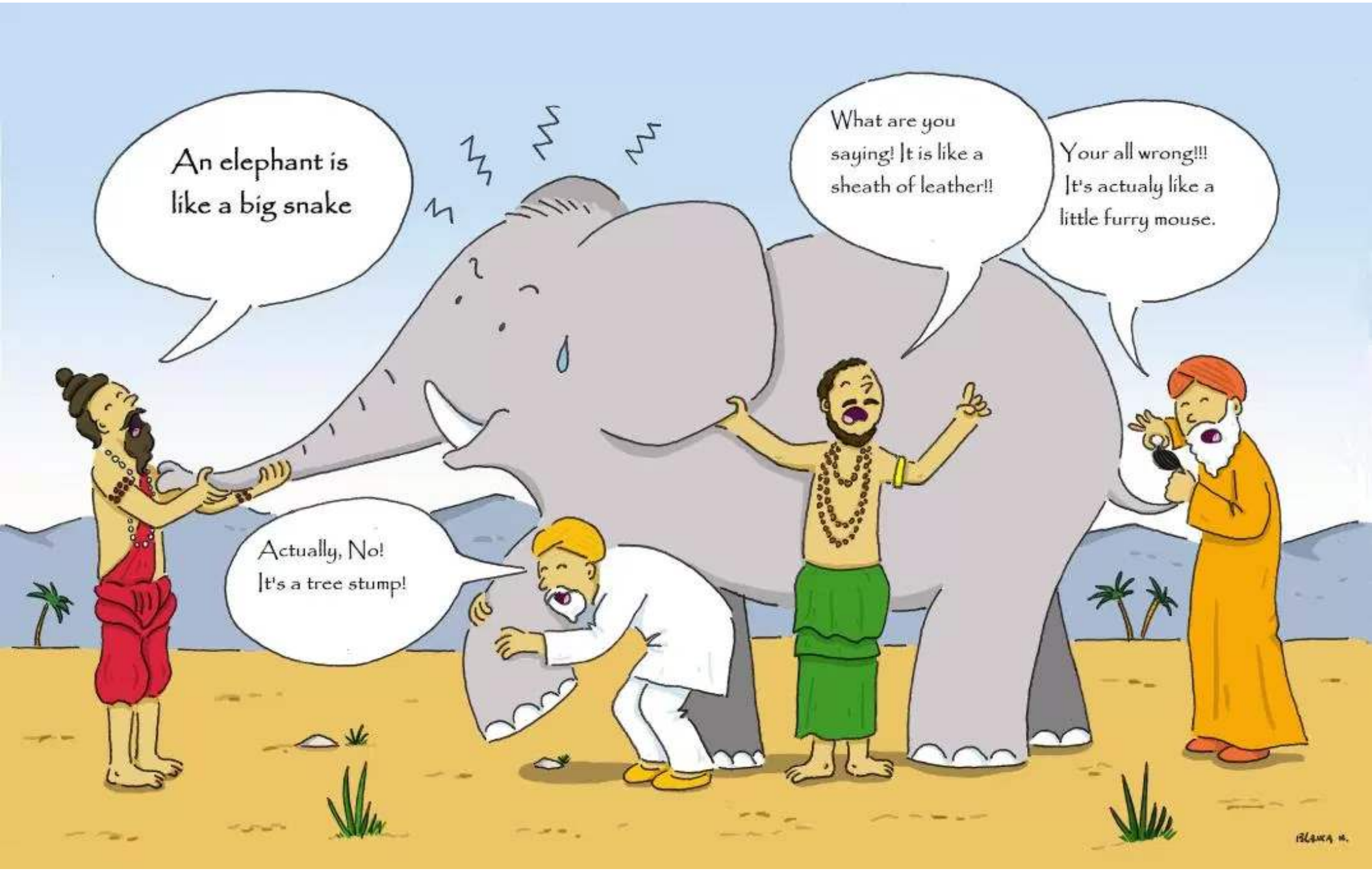


https://adalabucsd.github.io

These are the 4 things:

1. How to wage DB research cultural warfare
2. How to suck at proposal writing
3. How to squander time
4. How to become a sorry wreck of a junior prof

The Blind Men and the Elephant



The 4 “Canonical” Cultures of DB

The DB community is NOT a monoculture!

Culture	Main Progress Metrics	Nearest Neighbors in CS
Formalist	Non-trivial theorems	STOC, LICS, COLT, NIPS?
Systemist	System time/space/etc.	SOSP, NSDI, ASPLOS, ISCA
Heuristicist	Accuracy	KDD, WWW, SIGIR, NIPS?
Humanist	Human time/effort	CHI, UIST, VIS, PLDI

From an article on my research blog. 2018.

http://thedatadossier.blogspot.com/2018/04/the-culture-wars-of-data-management.html

The Tribal Culture Wars of DB

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The Tribal Culture Wars of DB

Formalists **Humanists** **Heuristicists** **Systemists**

As seen by "extremists" among:

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Heuristicists

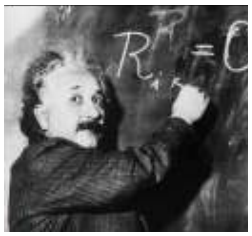
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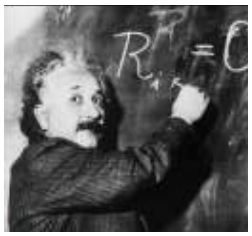
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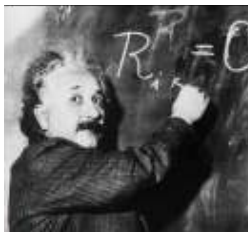
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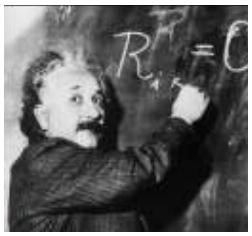
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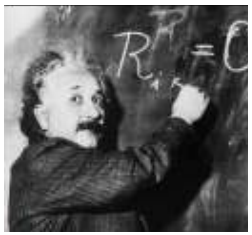
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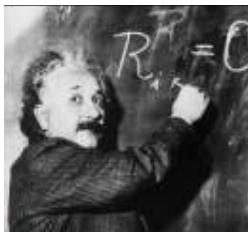
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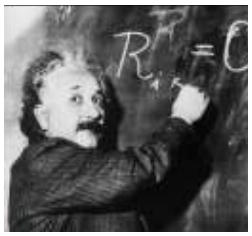
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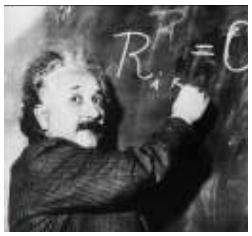
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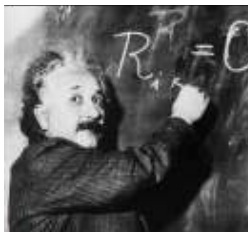
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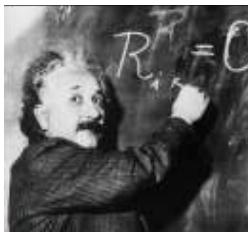


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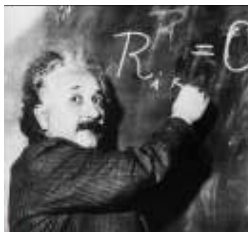
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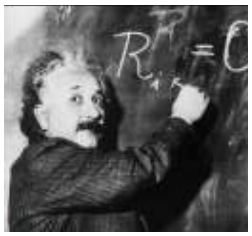



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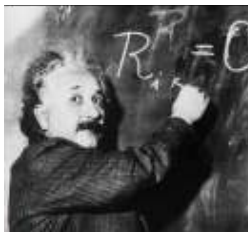
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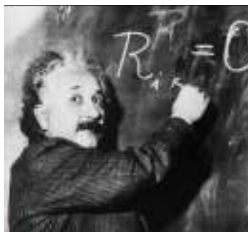
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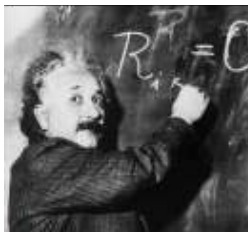
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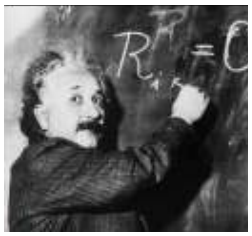
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SIGMOD/VLDB's out-of-control culture wars are toxic and emotionally abusive of students and new researchers. This madness has to stop!

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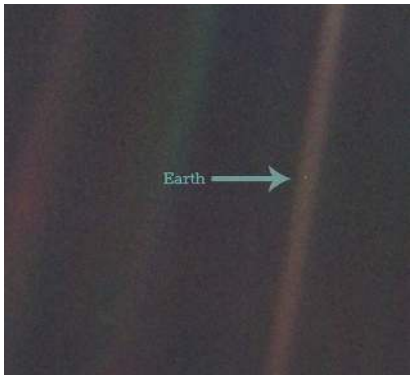
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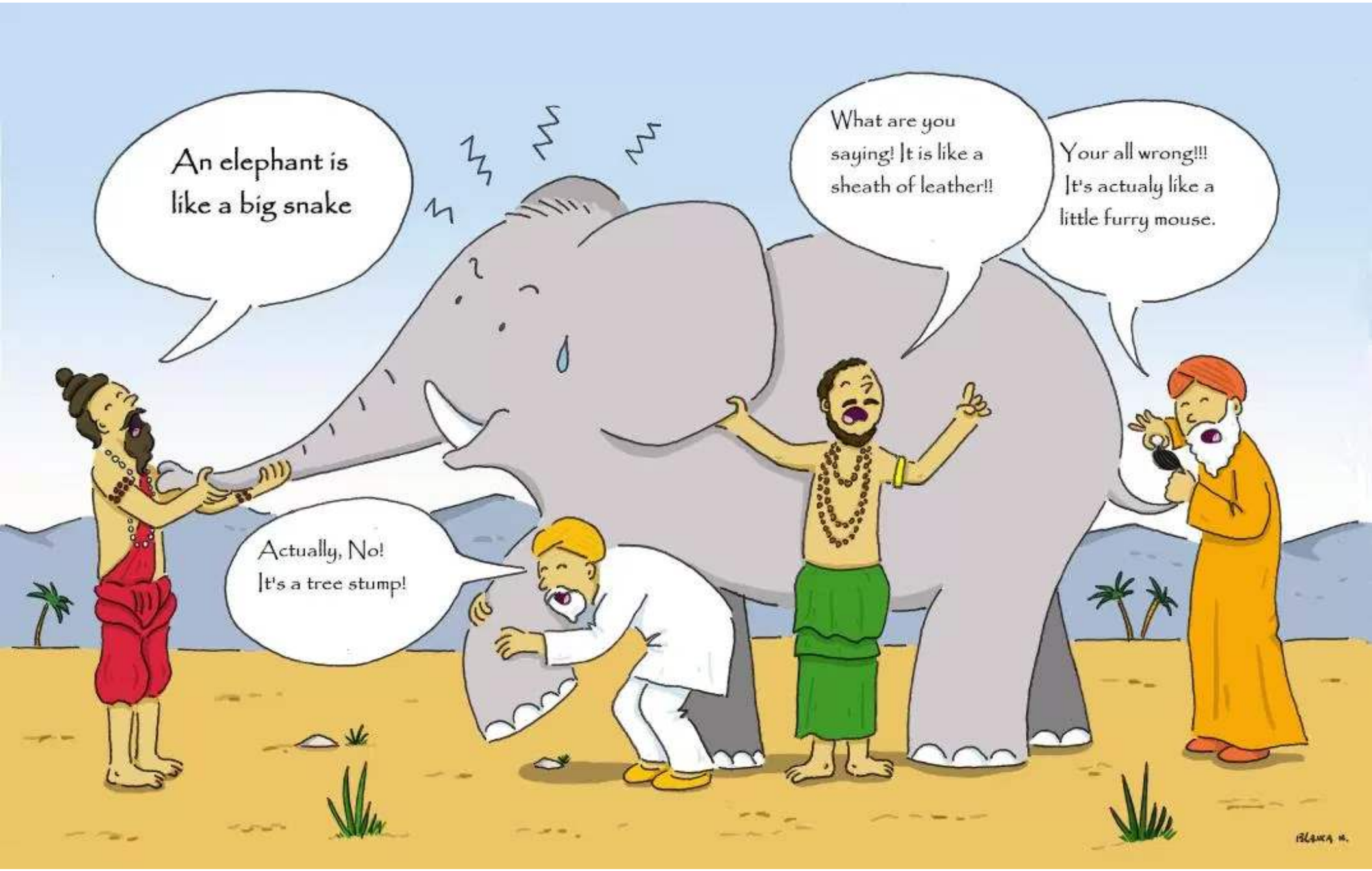




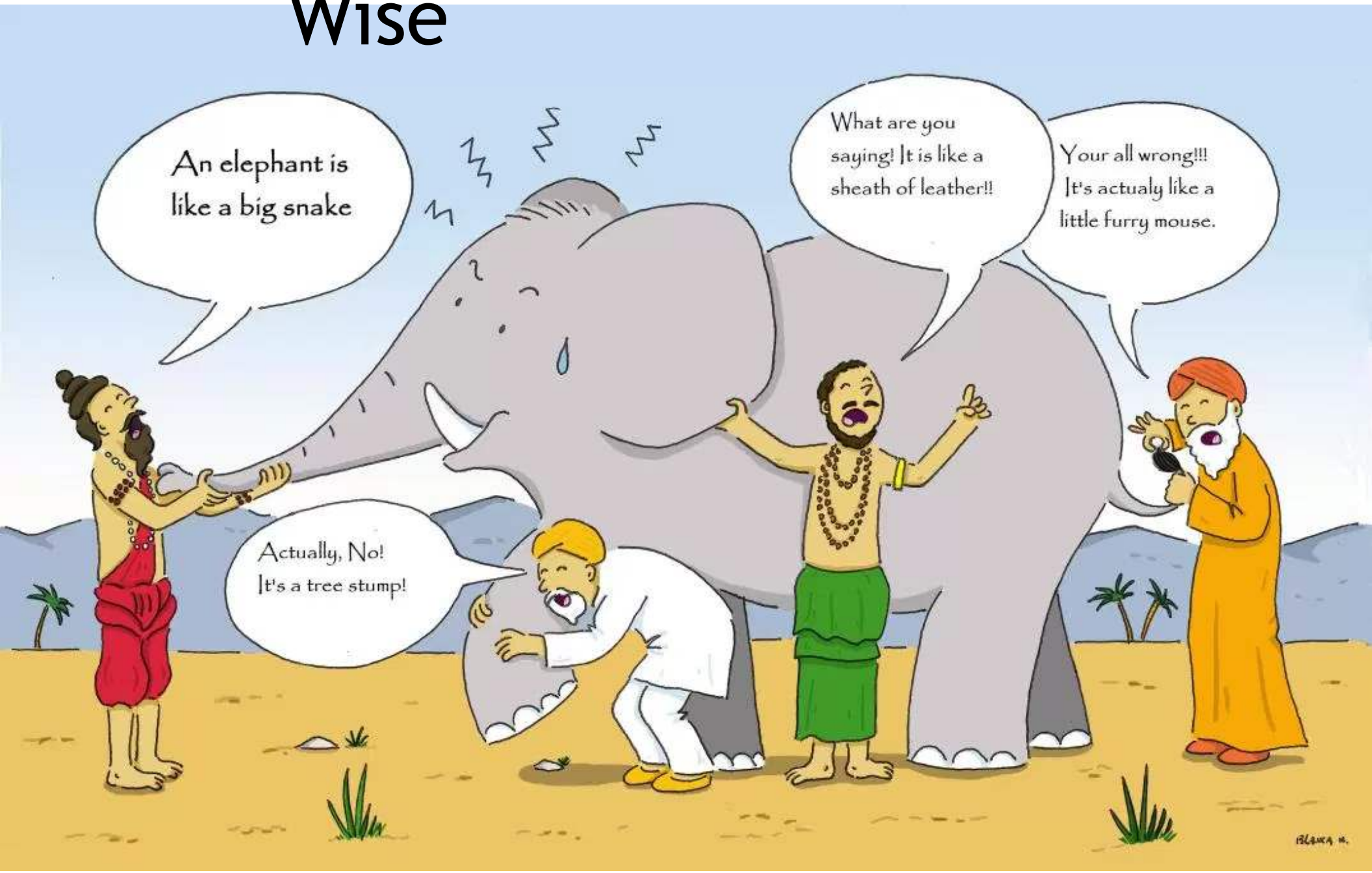
Pale Blue Dot

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wupToqz1e2g&t=11s

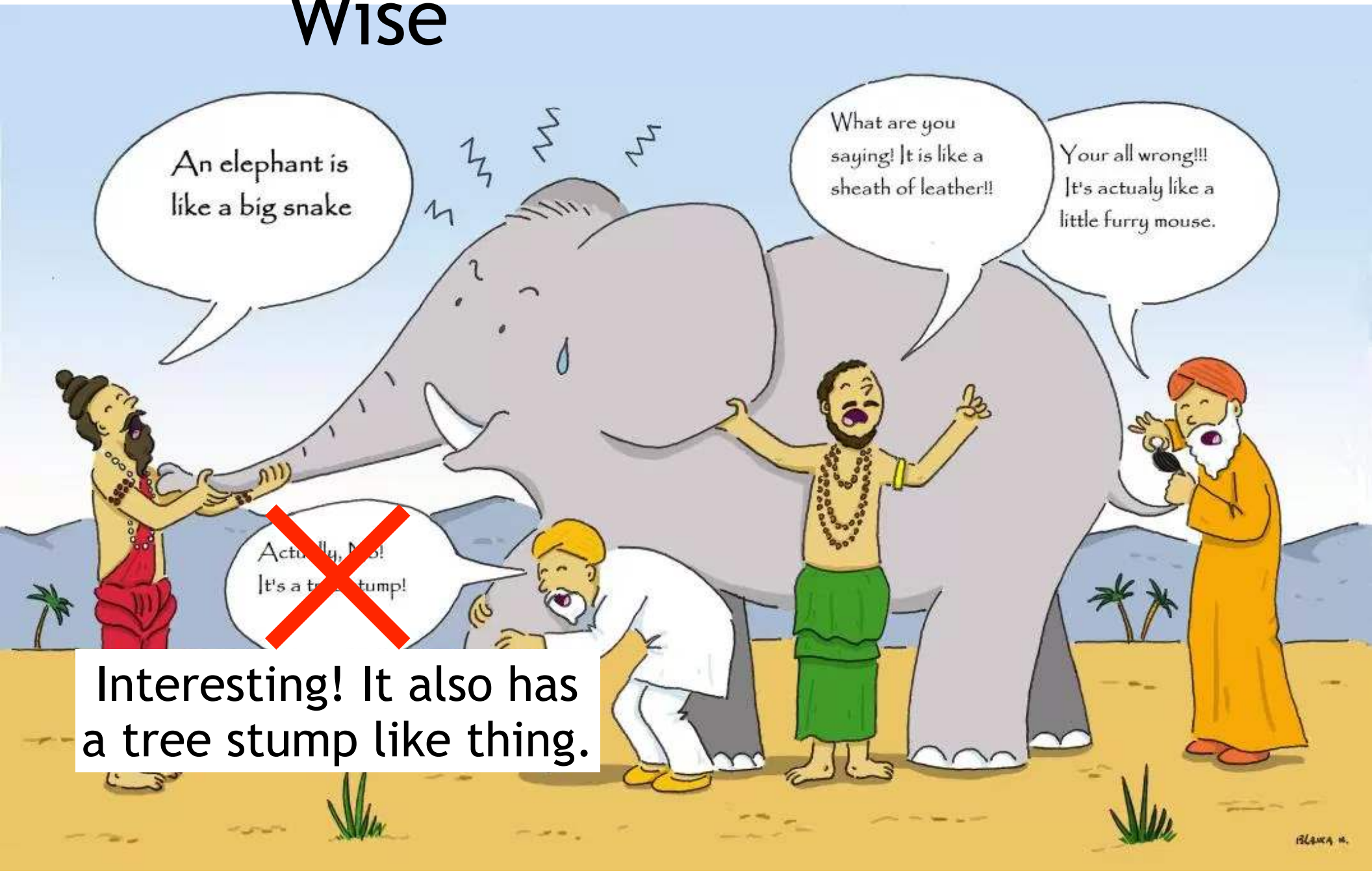
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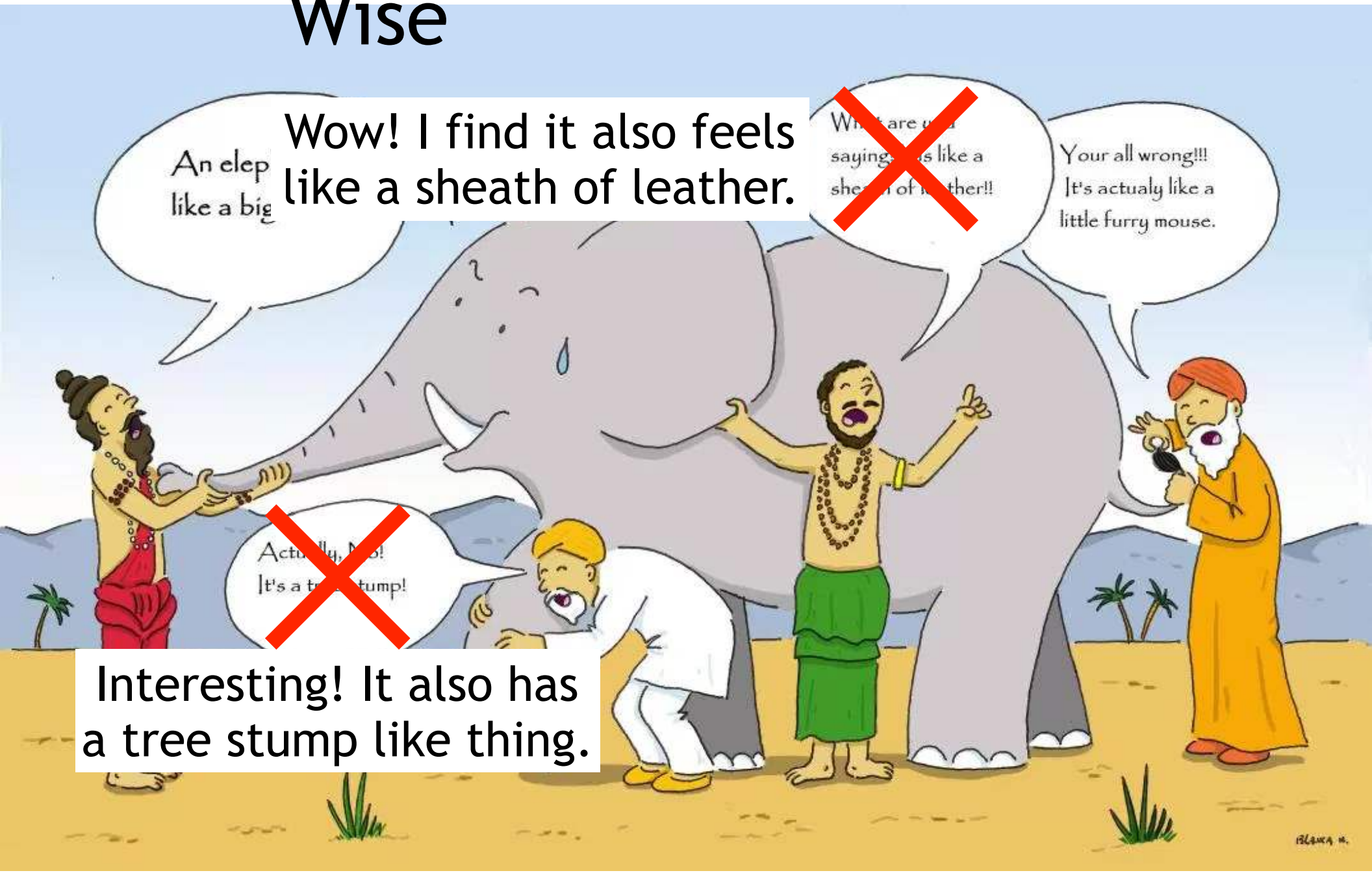
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Industry: Propose stuff not on company’s critical path

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Industry is more competitive and narrow

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only most visible and impactful (likely)

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4. How ^not to become a sorry wreck of a junior prof

Ramp up comfortably; 1 great student > 3 mediocre ones

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Grieve, step away, analyze, tally lessons, let go, move on

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~~Work every waking hour of every day and burn out~~

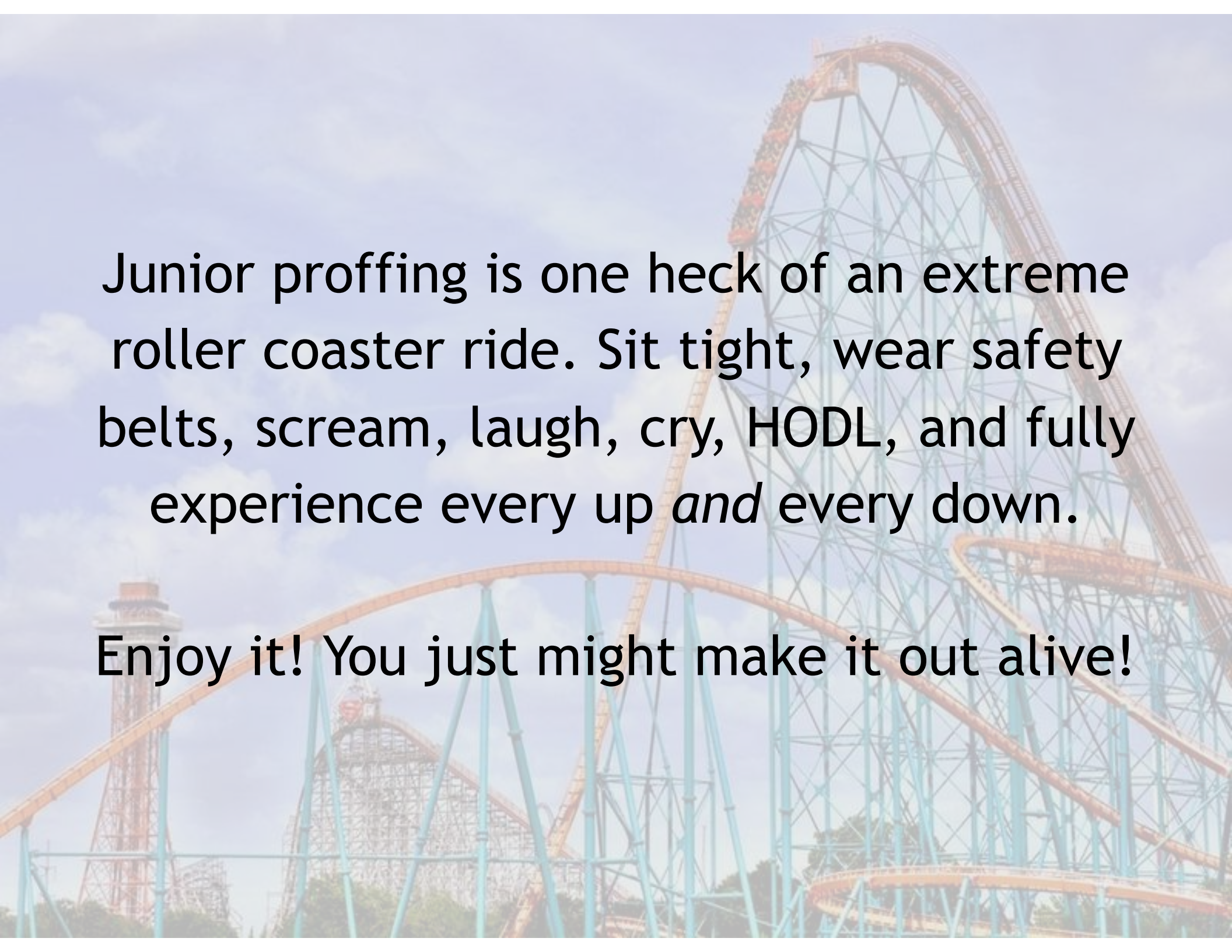
Meditate, exercise, read, hang out, de-stress, have fun!

~~Ignore~~ personal interests, SO/spouse, family, friends, physical health, and mental health

Take setbacks to the head ~~heart; wallow in regret, anger, envy~~

Grieve, step away, analyze, tally lessons, let go, move on

Cultivate gratitude, equanimity, empathetic joy ("mudita")



Junior proffing is one heck of an extreme roller coaster ride. Sit tight, wear safety belts, scream, laugh, cry, HODL, and fully experience every up *and* every down.

Enjoy it! You just might make it out alive!

Thank You!

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