

# What's Going Right?

## Finding Firewise Successes and Making More of Them

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Backyards & Beyond – November 14, 2013

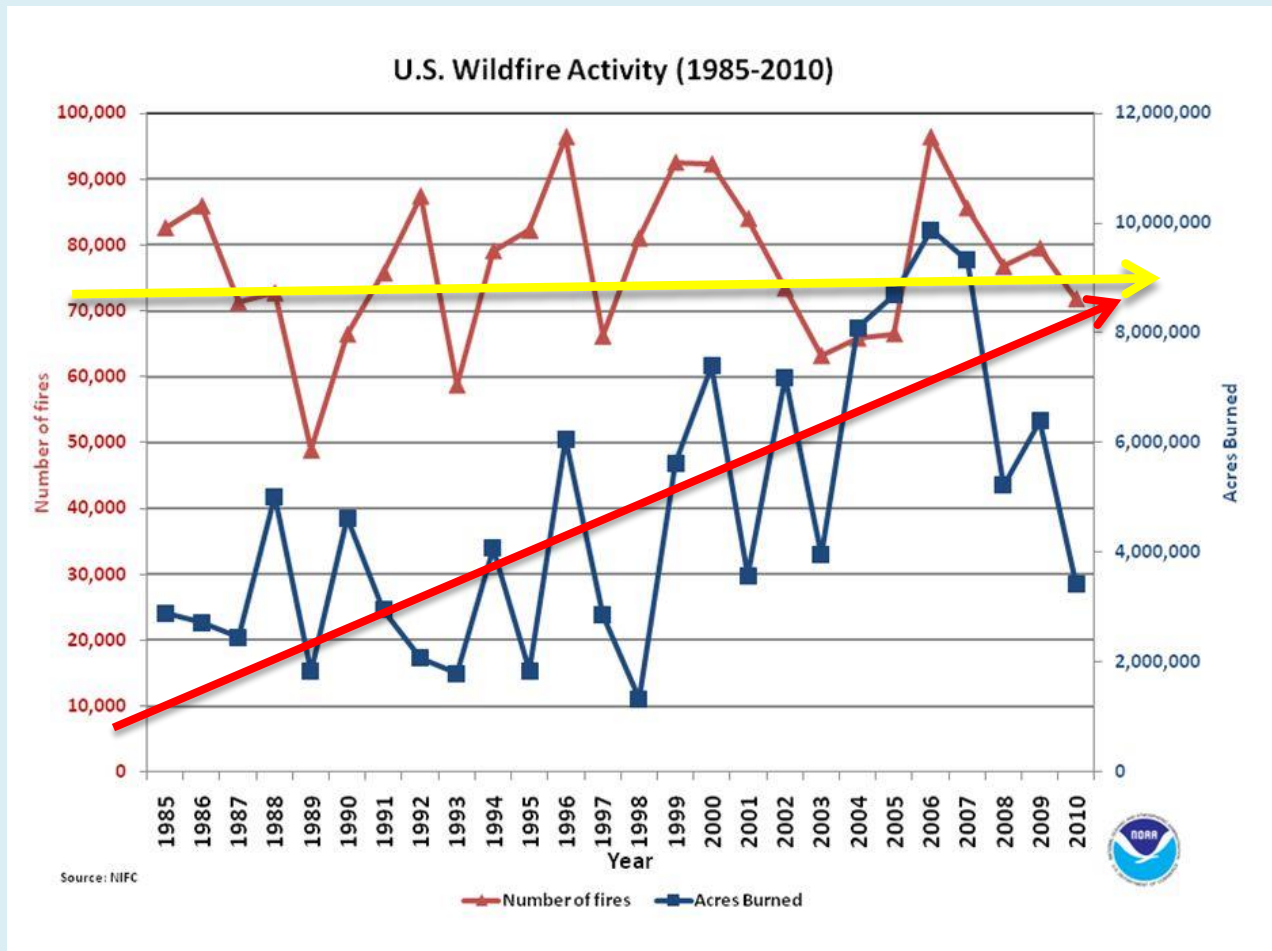
We've got a wicked problem on our hands!



# What's a Wicked Problem?

- Difficult to clearly define
- Multi-causal
- Incomplete, contradictory and changing requirements
- Socially complex – no clear solution
- Solving one aspect may reveal or create other problems
- Isn't the responsibility of any one entity

# Fire Activity since 1985



# A Wicked Problem...Getting More Wicked

- 70,000 communities at risk
- 65,000 human-caused wildfires in 2011
- 5-8°F predicted summer increase



# A Wicked Problem: Socially Complex



- \$2 billion dollars spent annually
- Threats to public health, safety, and property
- Threats to community assets and amenities
- Overburdened local & state governments
- Challenged ecosystems

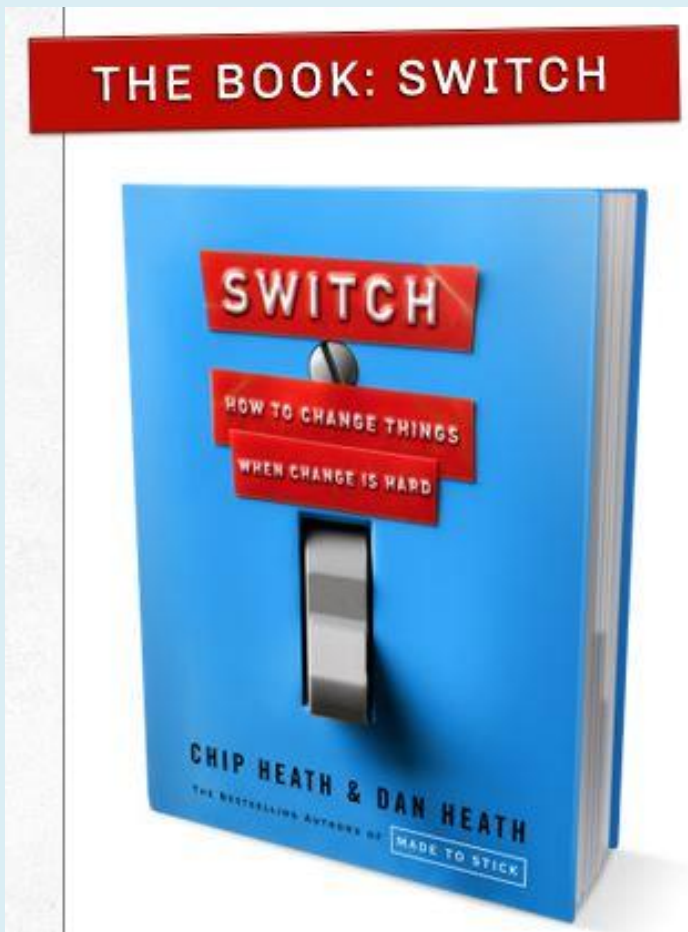


# How do you solve a wicked problem?

- Try collaborative strategies first
- Avoid a narrow approach
- Innovative and flexible approaches needed
- Work across organizational boundaries
- Effectively engage stakeholders
- **Achieve sustainable behavior change**

Excerpted from “Tackling wicked problems : A public policy perspective” – Australian Public Service Commission, Commonwealth of Australia, 2007

# How do we get behaviors to change?



- [www.heathbrothers.com](http://www.heathbrothers.com)
- Free resources and free 1<sup>st</sup> chapter
- Research includes:
  - The Power of Positive Deviance (Pascale, Sternin and Sternin)
  - The Happiness Hypothesis (Haidt)



# Accentuate the...negative?

ANGRY

CONFIDENT

EMOTIONAL

ANNOYED

CONFUSED

ENVIOUS

APPALLED

CROSS

EXCITED

APPREHENSIVE

DELIGHTED

FRIGHTENED

ASHAMED

DEPRESSED

FURIOUS

BETRAYED

DISAPPOINTED

GREAT

BEWILDERED

ECSTATIC

HAPPY

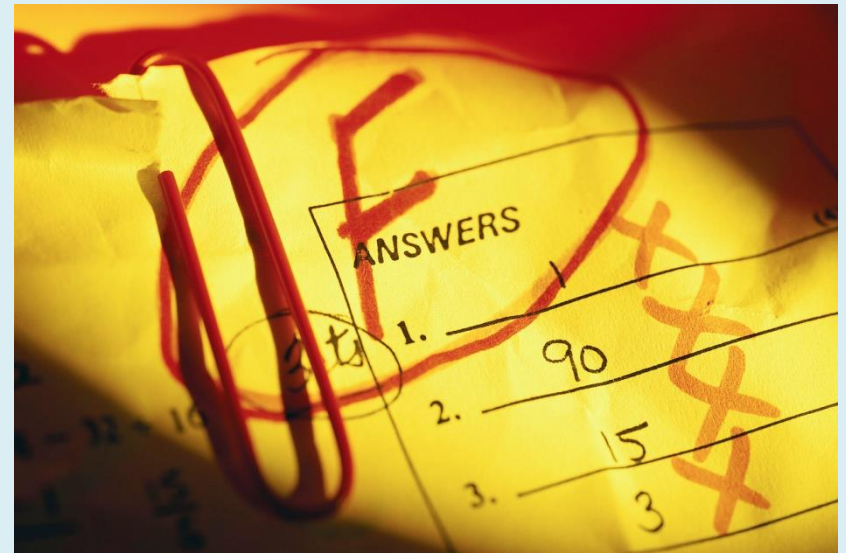
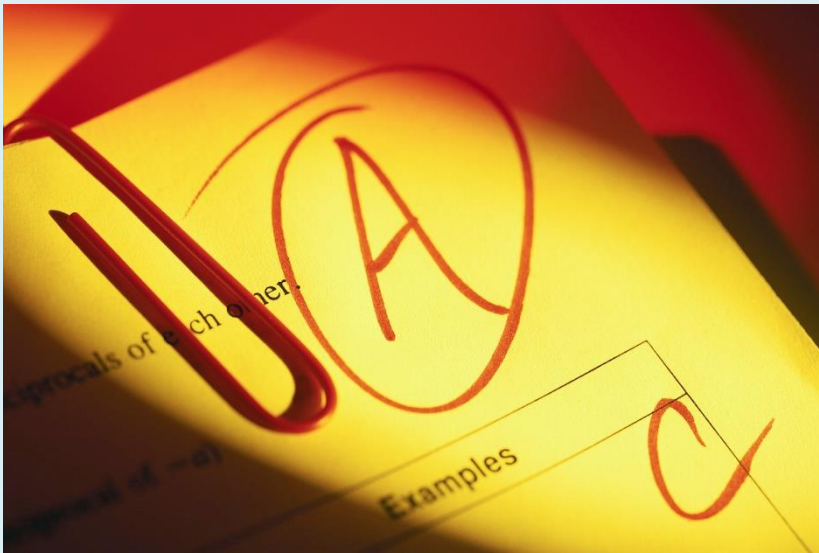
CHEATED

EMBARRASSED

HORRIFIED

*From Switch: How to Change When Change is Hard, Chip and Dan Heath, 2010.*

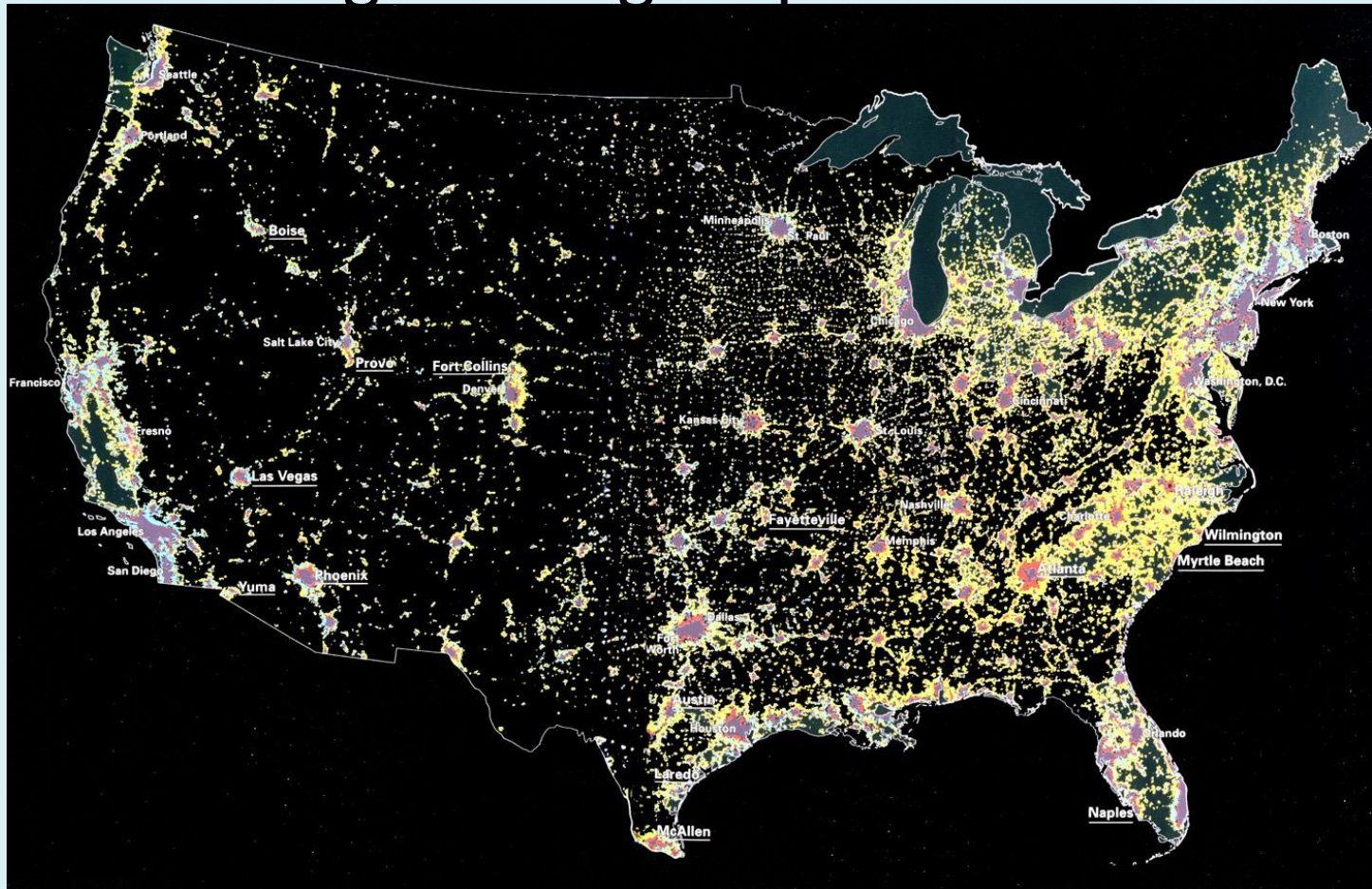
# Your child has just brought home a report card



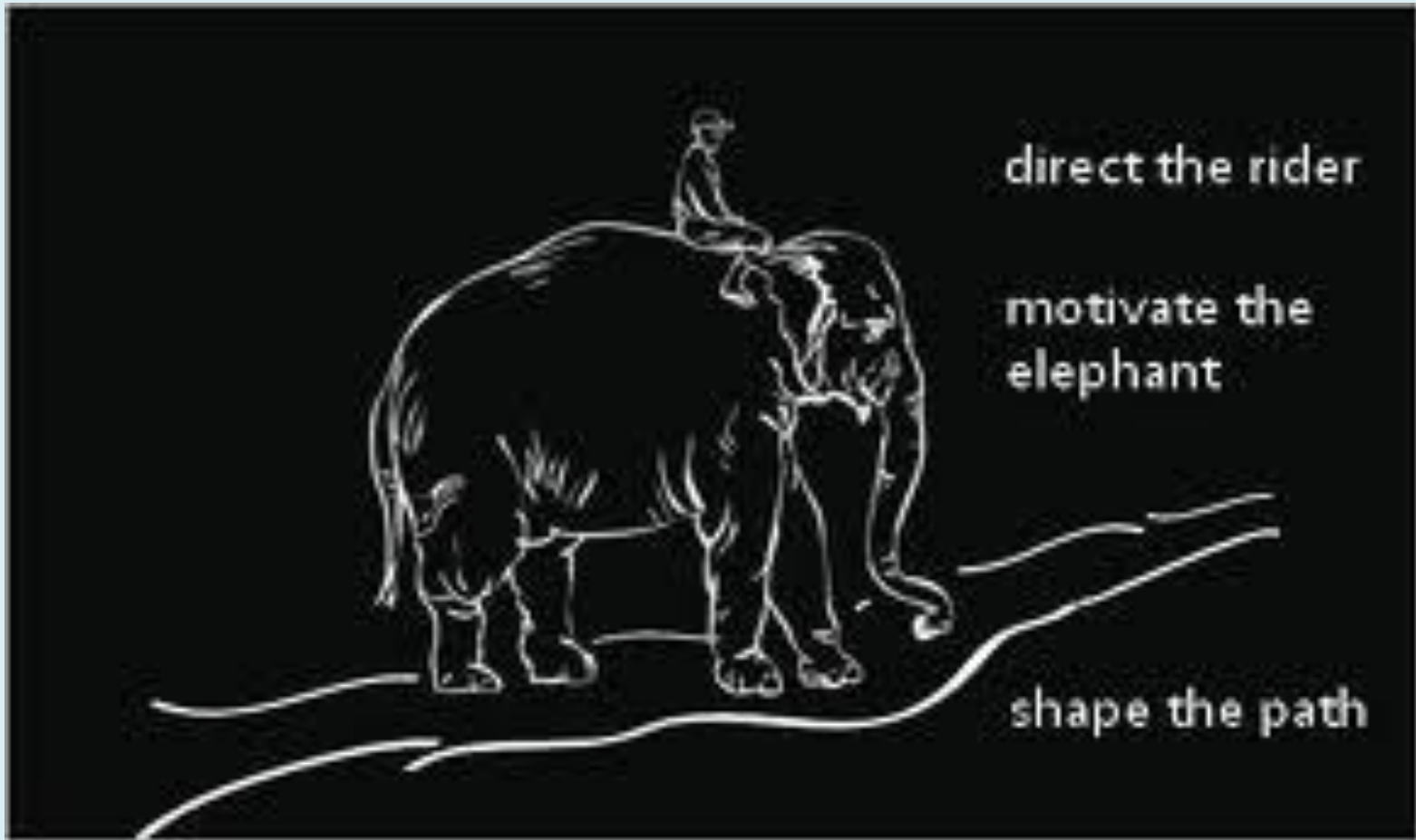
What grade are you going to focus on?

# What's Going Right?

- The Positive Deviance Approach
  - Or...cloning the bright spots!



# The Rider, the Elephant and the Path



Jonathan Haidt, *The Happiness Hypothesis*

# The Rational Rider

- The Rider holds the reins and leads, but...
- The Elephant is VERY strong and can wear out the Rider
- The Rider is our willpower and rational mind
- Rider's strengths are long-term thinking and planning
- But the Rider is also prone to overthinking and "spinning his wheels"

# The Emotional Elephant

- Our instinctive side
- Looking for the quick payoff
- Enormous energy and drive
- Gets things done
- Can become spooked or demoralized easily

# How does Firewise work in this context?



# Steps to Firewise Communities/USA Recognition

- STEP 1:  
Complete a  
wildfire risk  
assessment
  - State forestry  
staff assist  
communities





# COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

- Results in a document to help residents:
  - Understand how ignitions are likely to occur---and homes are likely to be lost---during a wildfire within the community
  - See the community's common strengths and vulnerabilities with respect to wildfire risk

# Point out Challenges AND Opportunities

- Make note of---and photograph---those things that individual homeowners and the community are doing right.



# Firewise Communities/USA Steps



- STEP 2: Form a Firewise Board or Committee
  - Includes residents and fire professionals
  - Creates an action plan

# Firewise Communities/USA Steps



- STEP 3: Sponsor an event
  - Called ‘Firewise Day’, it informs other residents and involves community action

# Firewise Communities/USA Steps

- STEP 4: Invest a minimum of \$2/capita
  - Volunteer time
  - Grants
  - In-kind services



# Firewise Communities/USA Steps



## FIREWISE COMMUNITIES/USA APPLICATION

Complete this form and submit it to your Firewise State Liaison no later than December 31. The Firewise State Liaison must receive copies of the assessment, the community plan and event documentation in order for Firewise processing to occur. Firewise Communities/USA participants are given credit for work completed during the calendar year. If your state has no Firewise State Liaison, contact [firewise@nfpa.org](mailto:firewise@nfpa.org) for mailing instructions.

The community of \_\_\_\_\_, in \_\_\_\_\_ County in the state of \_\_\_\_\_, hereby applies to be officially recognized and designated as a qualified participant in the Firewise Communities/USA recognition program for the year \_\_\_\_\_. Members of the community have adopted the following Firewise Communities/USA recognition program standards:

### FORMED A FIREWISE BOARD

List Board members and fire agency representative(s), date board was established, meeting dates, and the address, phone number and e-mail of Board President.

Date Established: \_\_\_\_\_

Board Members  
\_\_\_\_\_

Board President: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Dates  
\_\_\_\_\_

### INVESTED AT LEAST \$2/CAPITA IN FIREWISE PROJECTS

Total Firewise expenditures, including equipment and volunteer hours .....\$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of residents in community .....

### COMPLETED A COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Date of assessment: \_\_\_\_\_

Name and agency/company conducting assessment \_\_\_\_\_

*Provided a hard copy of assessment to state Firewise representative.*

### CREATED A PLAN

Date plan completed \_\_\_\_\_

*Provided a hard copy of the plan to state Firewise representative.*

### HELD A FIREWISE DAY

Date of Firewise Day: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe the activity including date, time, number of people attending and location: \_\_\_\_\_

*Provided hard copies of any publicity, programs, news coverage and/or other supporting information to the state Firewise representative.*

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

- STEP 5: Submit a simple application form

– Available at

[www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org)

# Importance of Renewal

- Steps 3-5: Firewise Day, \$2/capita investment, and report (renewal form) must be repeated annually
  - Sustained community action needed to improve fire safety
  - Vegetation grows back – emphasis on maintenance
  - “One-shot” recognition has little to no long-term impact on a community’s ignition resistance

# Firewise Welcome Package

- Recognition signs, plaque
- Story on the Firewise website
- Media Kit
- Quarterly “How To” Newsletter
- Firewise plant lists
- “Fire Break” monthly news alert



Hill Country near Austin, Texas

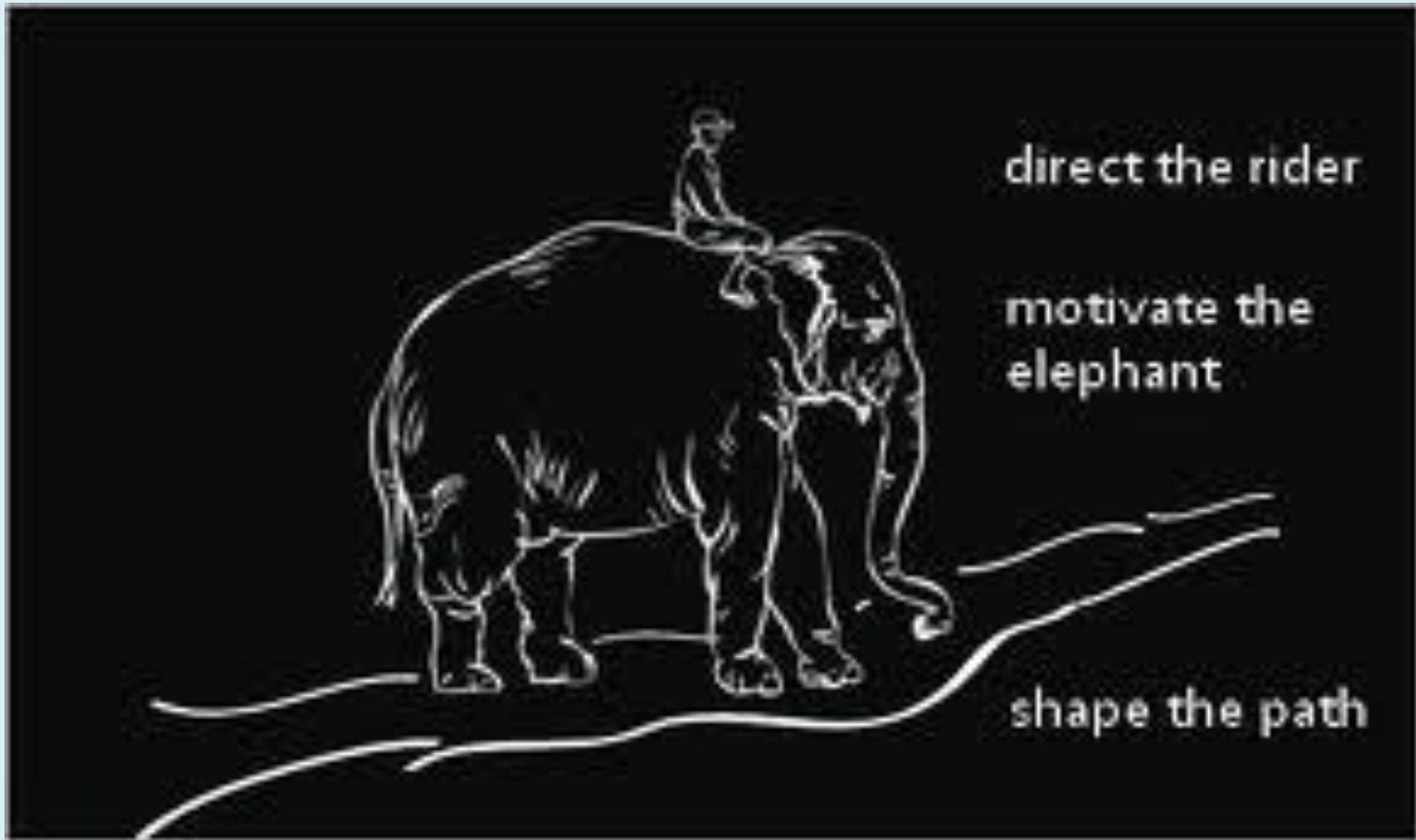


# The Big Idea

- Firewise concepts become ingrained and “normal” because we do them every day
- Firewise concepts can be supported by regulation and codes, but must be embraced by residents
- Participation is **VOLUNTARY**

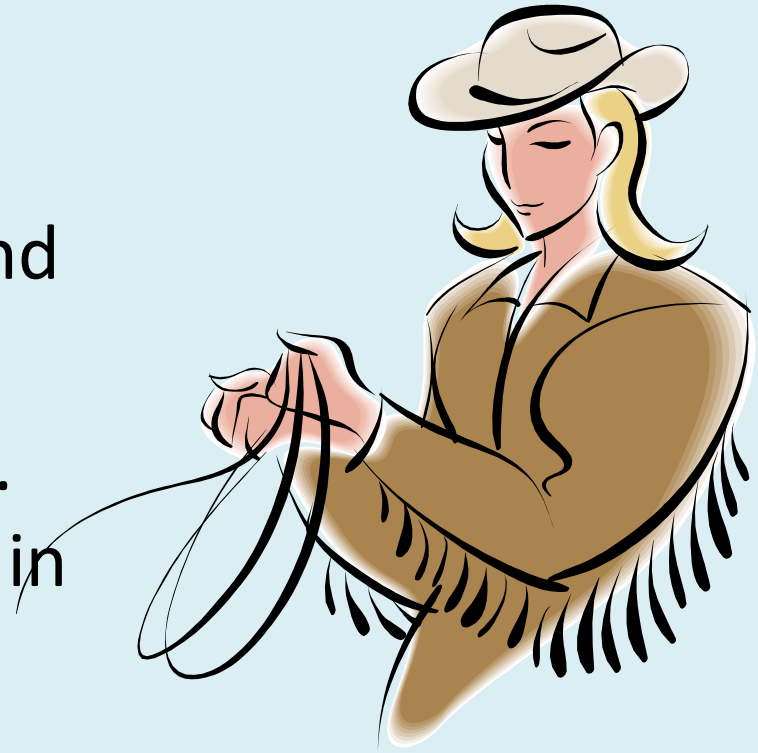


# How do we help?



# Direct the Rider

- FOLLOW THE BRIGHT SPOTS.  
Investigate what's working and clone it.
- SCRIPT THE CRITICAL MOVES.  
Don't think big picture, think in terms of specific behaviors.
- POINT TO THE DESTINATION.  
Change is easier when you know where you're going and why it's worth it.



*From Switch: How to Change When Change is Hard, Chip and Dan Heath, 2010.*

# Finding the bright spots after a fire

- Two studies of California wildfire survival.  
Qualifier: Homes did *not* have flammable roofs
  - Belair-Brentwood Fire (1961) - 95% home survival with 30-60 feet of modified landscape
  - Painted Cave Fire (1990) - 86% home survival with at least 30 feet of modified landscape



Home survival – Bastrop, TX 2011

Studies reinforced by later post-fire reviews (Jack Cohen, Alex Maranghides, Steve Quarles)

# How can we find Firewise bright spots?

- The community assessment process lets us point to good behaviors
- Arkansas “Firewise Home of the Month”
- Success stories page on [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org)
- Other ideas?



# Scripting the critical moves

- Start with the home and work your way out
- It's the little things that can ignite your home
- The Firewise Communities/USA Recognition program provides a simple process to follow



# Point to the destination



What does a fire adapted community look like?

Fire is a natural part of our environment. As we choose to live in areas where wildfires occur, we must adapt the way we design, build and live within these areas to prepare our communities for wildfire. A fire adapted community understands its risks and takes actions

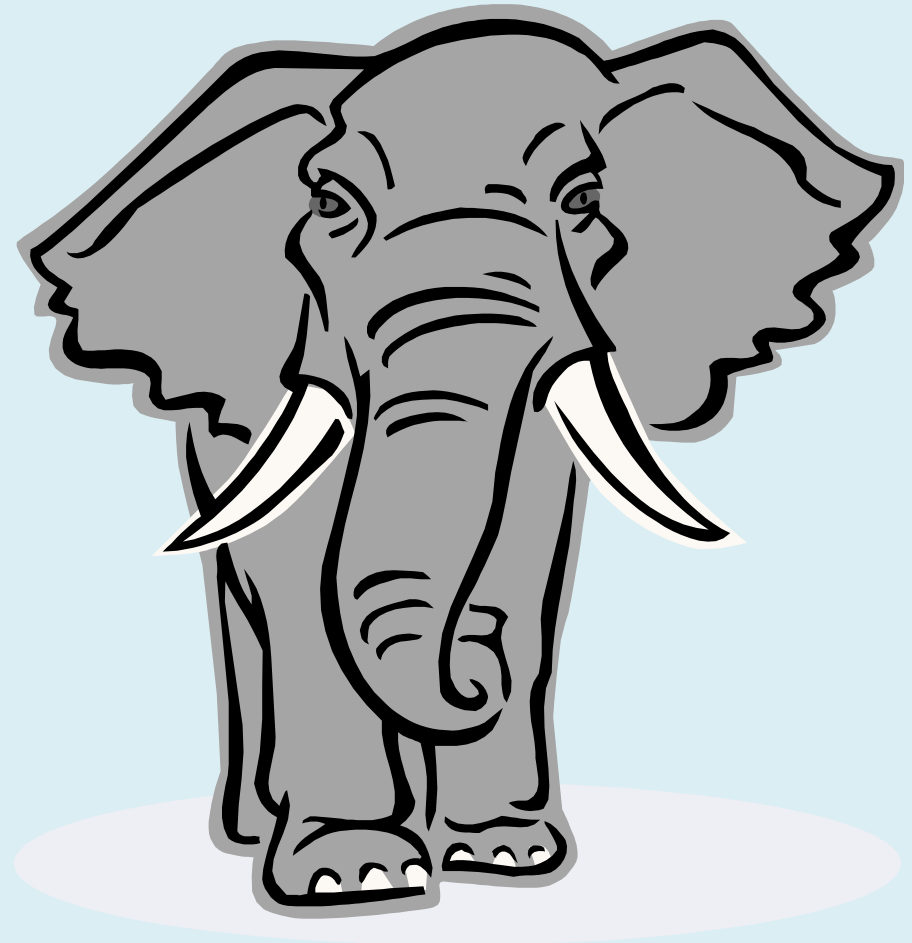
that minimize harm to residents, homes, businesses, parks, and other community assets. These collective actions empower all community members to be safer in their environment. To learn more about making your community fire adapted, visit [www.fireadapted.org](http://www.fireadapted.org).



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# Motivate the Elephant

- **FIND THE FEELING.**  
Knowing something isn't enough to cause change. Make people feel something.
- **SHRINK THE CHANGE.**  
Break down the change until it no longer spooks the Elephant.
- **GROW YOUR PEOPLE.**  
Cultivate a sense of identity and instill the growth mindset.



*From Switch: How to Change When Change is Hard, Chip and Dan Heath, 2010.*



# Find the Feeling

- In the case of Firewise, finding HOPEFUL feelings is important!
- “So you’re telling me there is something I can do to keep my home from burning down...”



# Shrink the Change



- Start with your house and work your way out
- Little things make a big difference
- Firewise event only needs to happen once a year

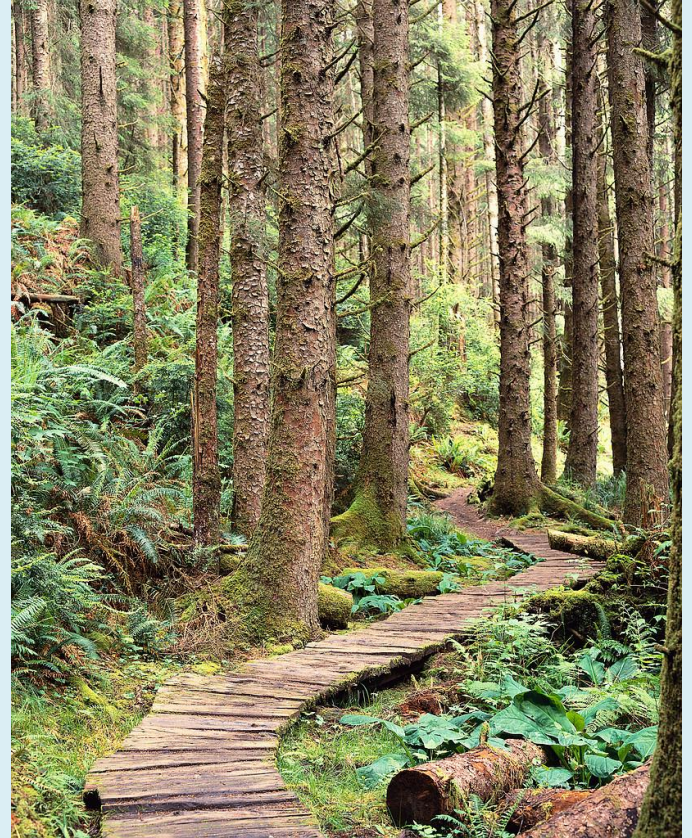
# Grow Your People

- Make events fun
- Build community
- Firewise recognition helps people “see themselves” as Firewise
- Help people act their way into a new way of thinking



# Shaping the Path

- **TWEAK THE ENVIRONMENT.** When the situation changes, the behavior changes. So change the situation.
- **BUILD HABITS.** When behavior is habitual, it's "free" —it doesn't tax the Rider.
- **RALLY THE HERD.** Behavior is contagious. Help it spread.



*From Switch: How to Change When Change is Hard, Chip and Dan Heath, 2010.*

# Tweak the environment

- Discover and remove barriers to behavior changes
- Make volunteering easy
- Make the process easy (Firewise online renewal improvements)



# Build Habits

- Annual Firewise event (for Firewise recognition)
- Chipper Day
- Debris pick-up on a regular schedule



# Rally the herd

- Firewise behavior is designed to be contagious
- Cultivate a “me-too” attitude
- Create new social norms
- Use and share success stories and “saves”



# More about rallying the herd: motivating volunteers





# The Volunteer Basis of Firewise

Fire burns  
homes on  
private land

Resident  
action can  
save homes

Nobody can  
force  
residents to  
act

We rely on  
persuasion  
for  
voluntary  
action

# Survey says:

## Firewise Communities

37% live in a  
recognized  
community

47% active in  
committees,  
work days

## Volunteers

36% active  
as volunteers

## Involvement

42% very or  
extremely  
involved

30%  
somewhat  
involved

# Survey says:

- The things that people enjoyed most about Firewise:

74%

- Improving Firefighter Safety/Fire Response

67%

- Working with Fire/Forestry Professionals

54%

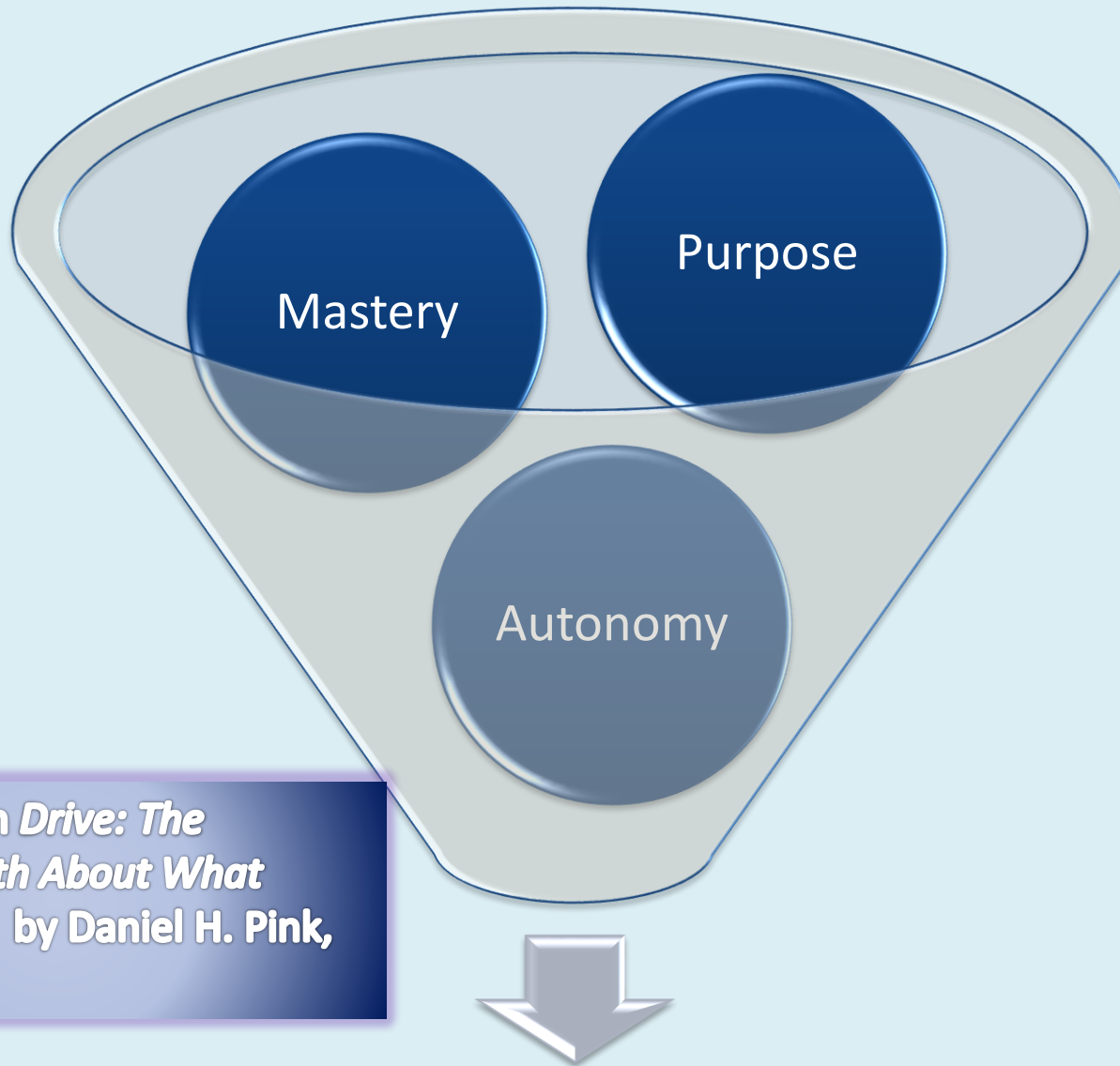
- Feeling Better/Safer When the Work Gets Done

49%

- Getting a Sense of Accomplishment

36%

- Convincing my Neighbors to Get Involved
- Getting Firewise Recognition Status



**Concepts from *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us*, by Daniel H. Pink, 2009**

# Motivation 2.0

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## Autonomy

- The desire to direct our own lives

## Mastery

- The urge to get better at something that matters

## Purpose

- The yearning to do what we do in the service of something larger than ourselves

# Helping keep folks motivated

## Autonomy

- Don't tell them how to do it
- Make it easy for people to become involved

## Mastery

- Provide learning opportunities
- Help them set goals (think bite-sized successes)

## Purpose

- Thank and acknowledge
- Keep them connected to the big picture

# Fun with Firewise



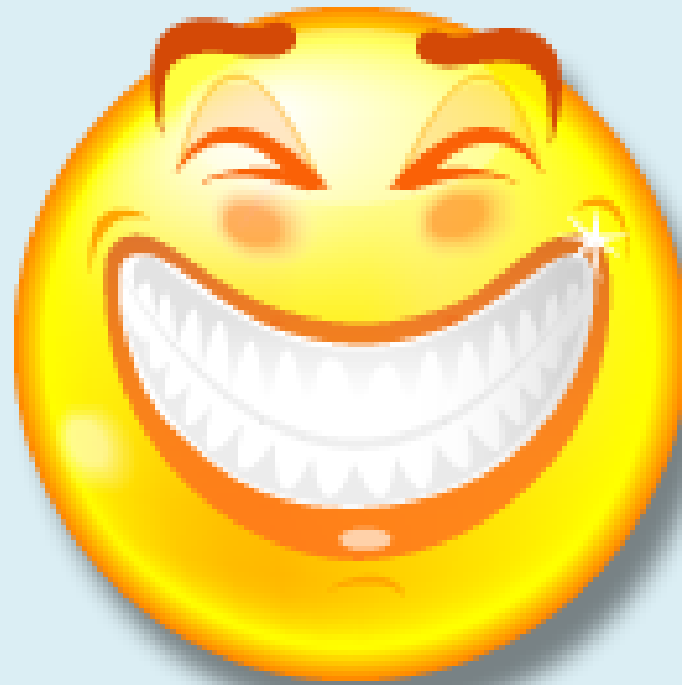
# Firewise Communities Is a Catalyst for Change



- Community action is the cornerstone of the program's success
  - Working together, communities can---and do--- affect their vulnerability to wildfire
  - Over time, change occurs and adequate wildfire preparedness becomes the norm
  - It's contagious!



Thank you for listening



# On Leadership ~ Lao Tzu

Learn from the people.  
Plan with the people.  
Begin with what they have;  
build on what they know.  
Of the best leaders,  
when the task is accomplished,  
the people all remark  
*“We have done it ourselves!”*