



DISCOVERING CULTURE THROUGH ARTIFACTS

Mike McGarr
[@SonOfGarr](#)

A QUICK TEST

WHAT IS THE CULTURE
OF YOUR COMPANY?

So? Was that hard or easy?



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CULTURE DETERMINES AND LIMITS STRATEGY.

— Edgar Schein, Organizational culture and leadership



UNDERSTANDING CULTURE



problem



founder

<https://flic.kr/p/52i2G4>

A photograph of several LEGO minifigures and dice on a game board. In the foreground, a minifigure with a skull face and red eyes holds a staff with a red gem. To its right, another minifigure with a skull headpiece holds a staff with a white skull. A third minifigure with a skull face and red eyes is on the right. In the background, a minifigure with long brown hair and another with red hair are visible. Two blue 12-sided dice are scattered on the board. The word "people" is overlaid in white text.

people

A glowing green die is shown against a black background. The die is slightly out of focus, with a soft green glow emanating from it. The word "success" is written in a white, sans-serif font across the center of the die. The die's faces show numbers: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. The number 1 is on the top face, 2 is on the front face, 3 is on the right face, 4 is on the bottom face, 5 is on the left face, and 6 is on the back face.

success

<https://flic.kr/p/3pEW1G>

shared learning



beliefs

<https://flic.kr/p/5ZNnnv>



~~beliefs~~ values

<https://flic.kr/p/5ZNnnv>

BEHAVIOR

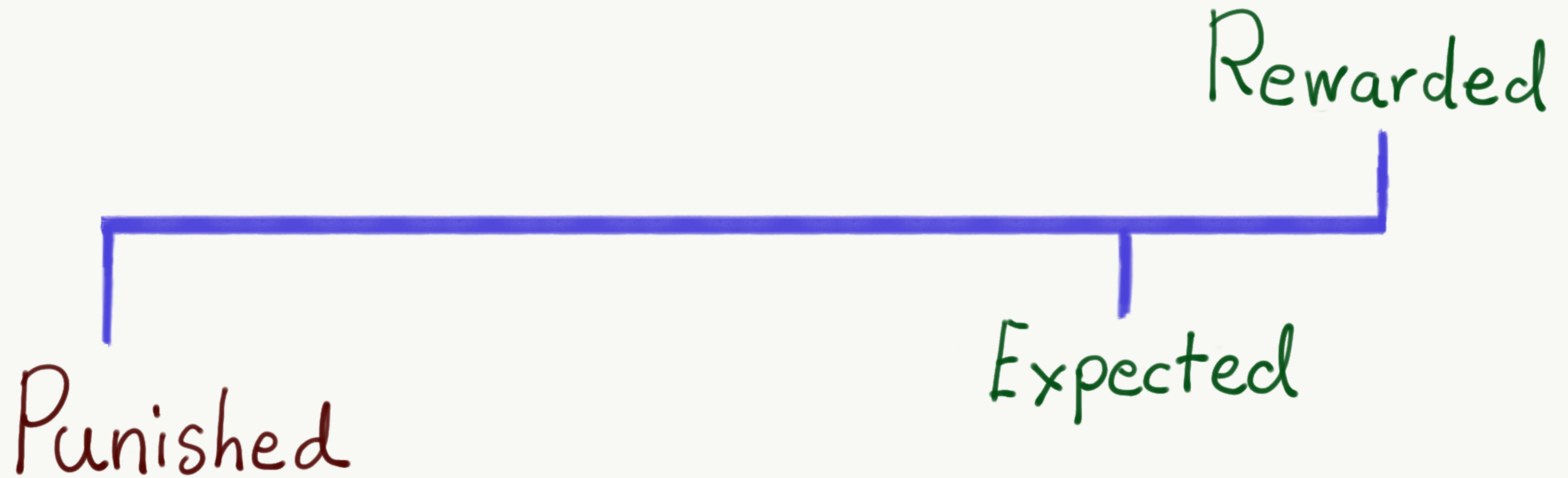
behaviors **are derived from** values

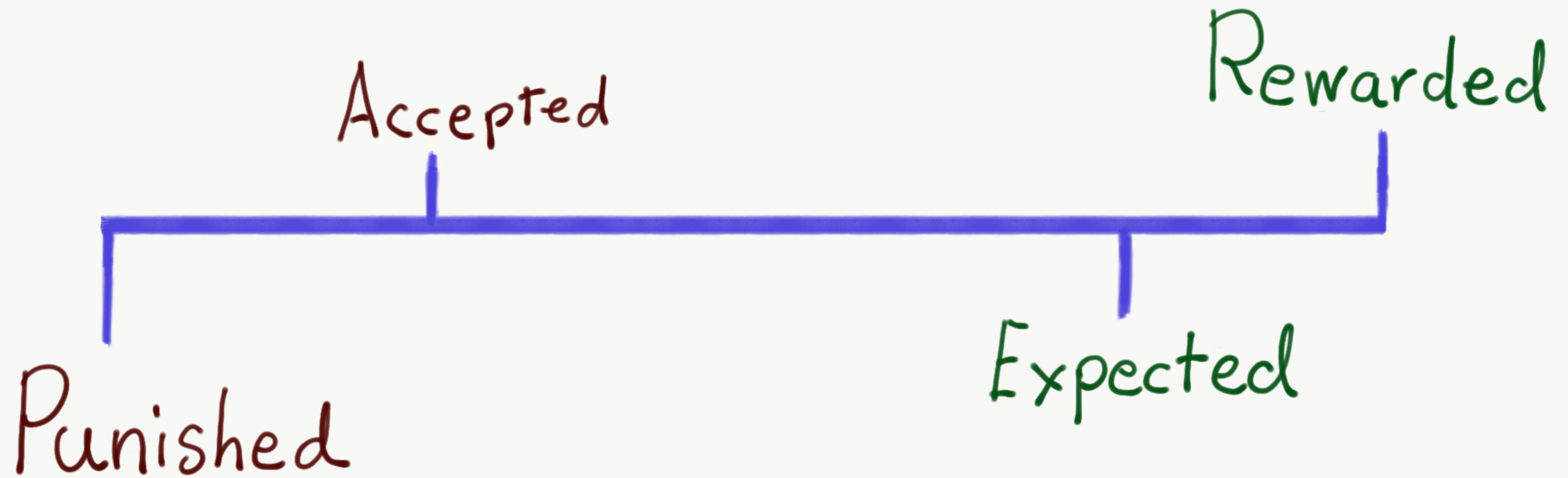


Expected

Rewarded

Expected





BEHAVIORS

VALUES

PEOPLE

PROCESS

TOOLS

A man with glasses, wearing a light-colored shirt, a patterned tie, and a dark vest, stands in an office setting. He is holding a white mug with the "INTECH" logo. The background shows office cubicles and a window with blinds. The text "paper to software" is overlaid in the center.

paper to software

- People have Values

- People have Values
- Values dictate Behaviors

- People have Values
- Values dictate Behaviors
- Organizations are founded by People

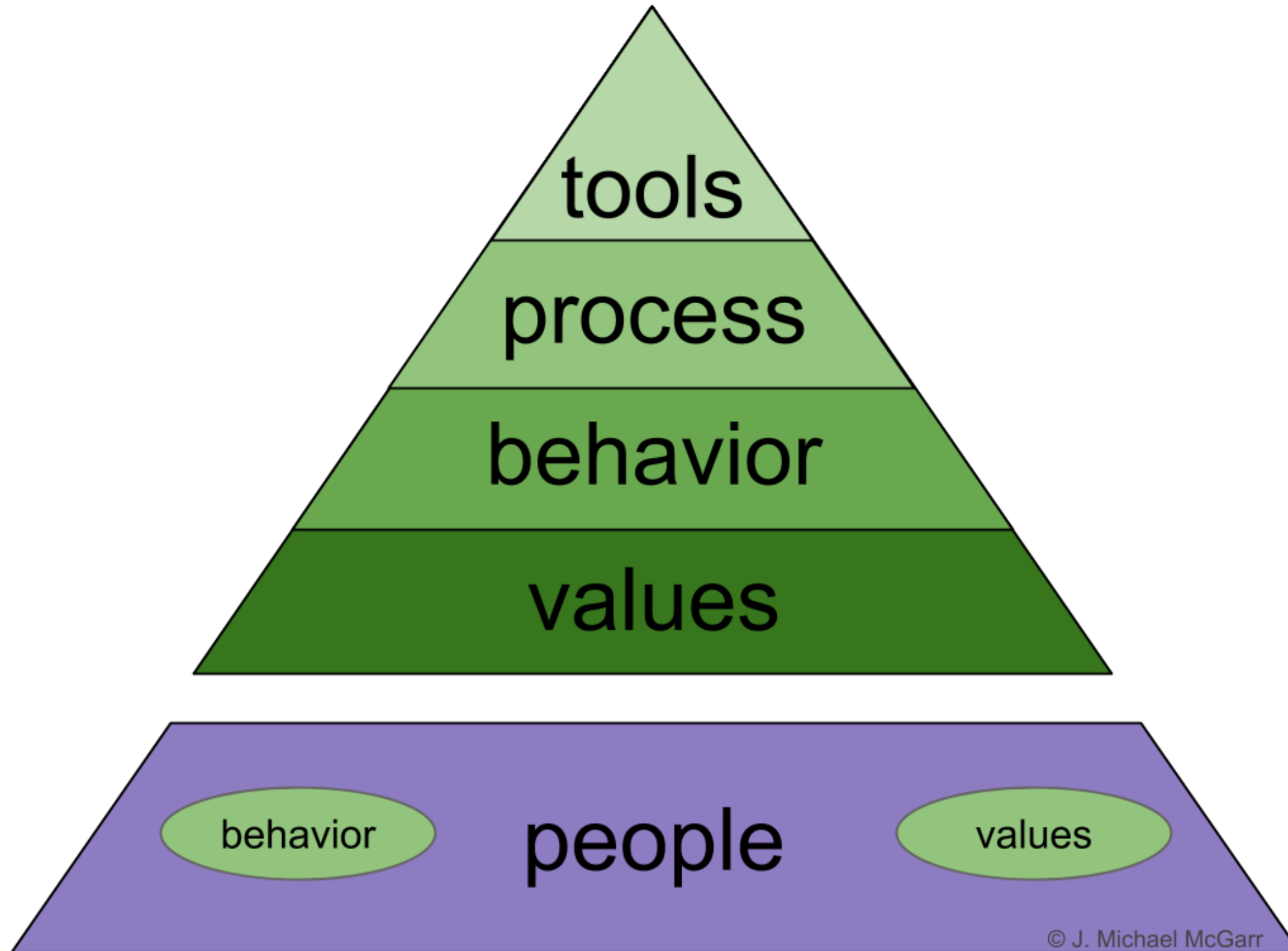
- People have Values
- Values dictate Behaviors
- Organizations are founded by People
- Organizations hire People

- People have Values
- Values dictate Behaviors
- Organizations are founded by People
- Organizations hire People
- Organizations develop Values

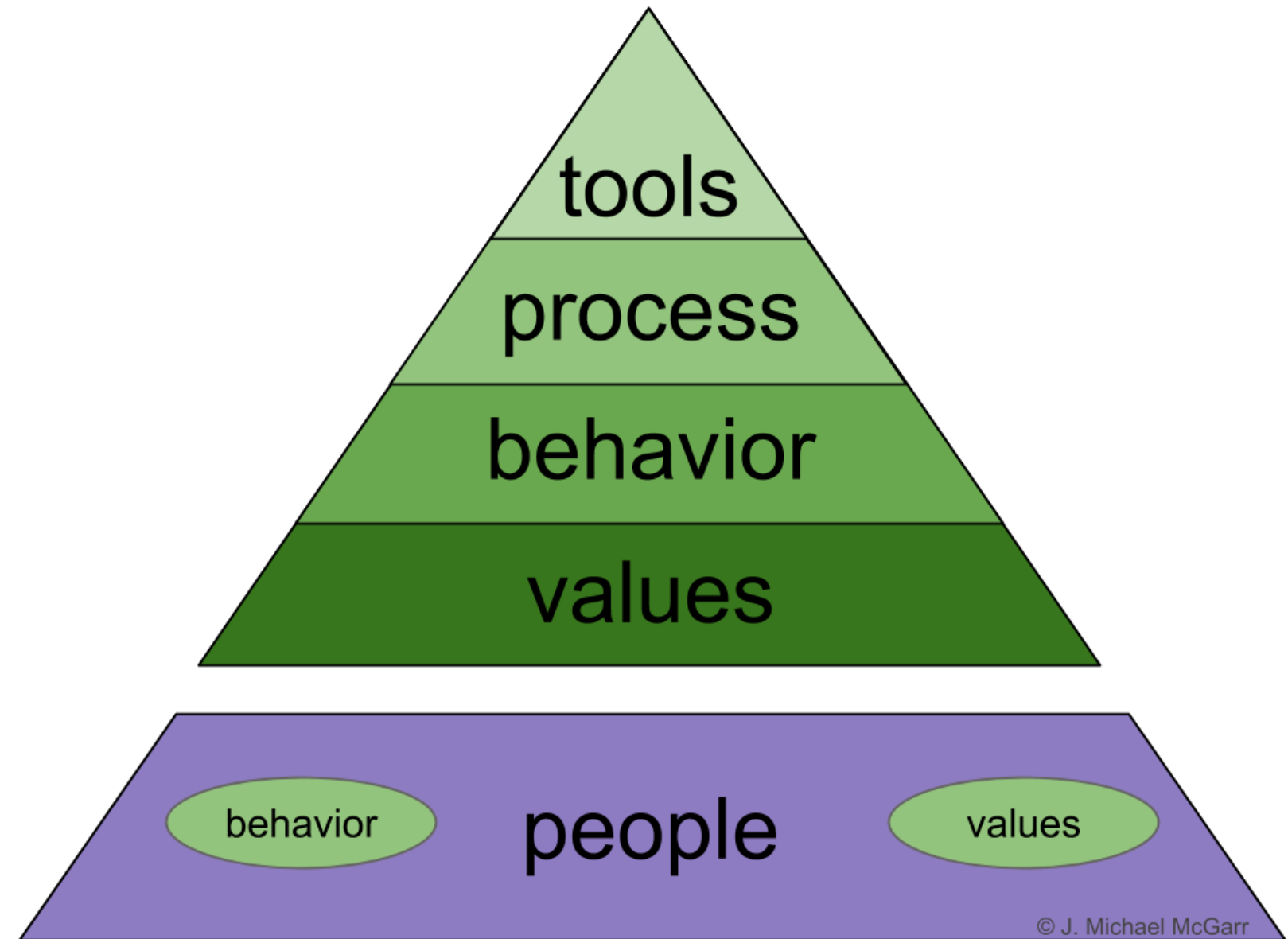
- People have Values
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- People have Values
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- Organizations reward/punish Behavior
- Organizations lean on Processes
- Processes are simplified by Tools

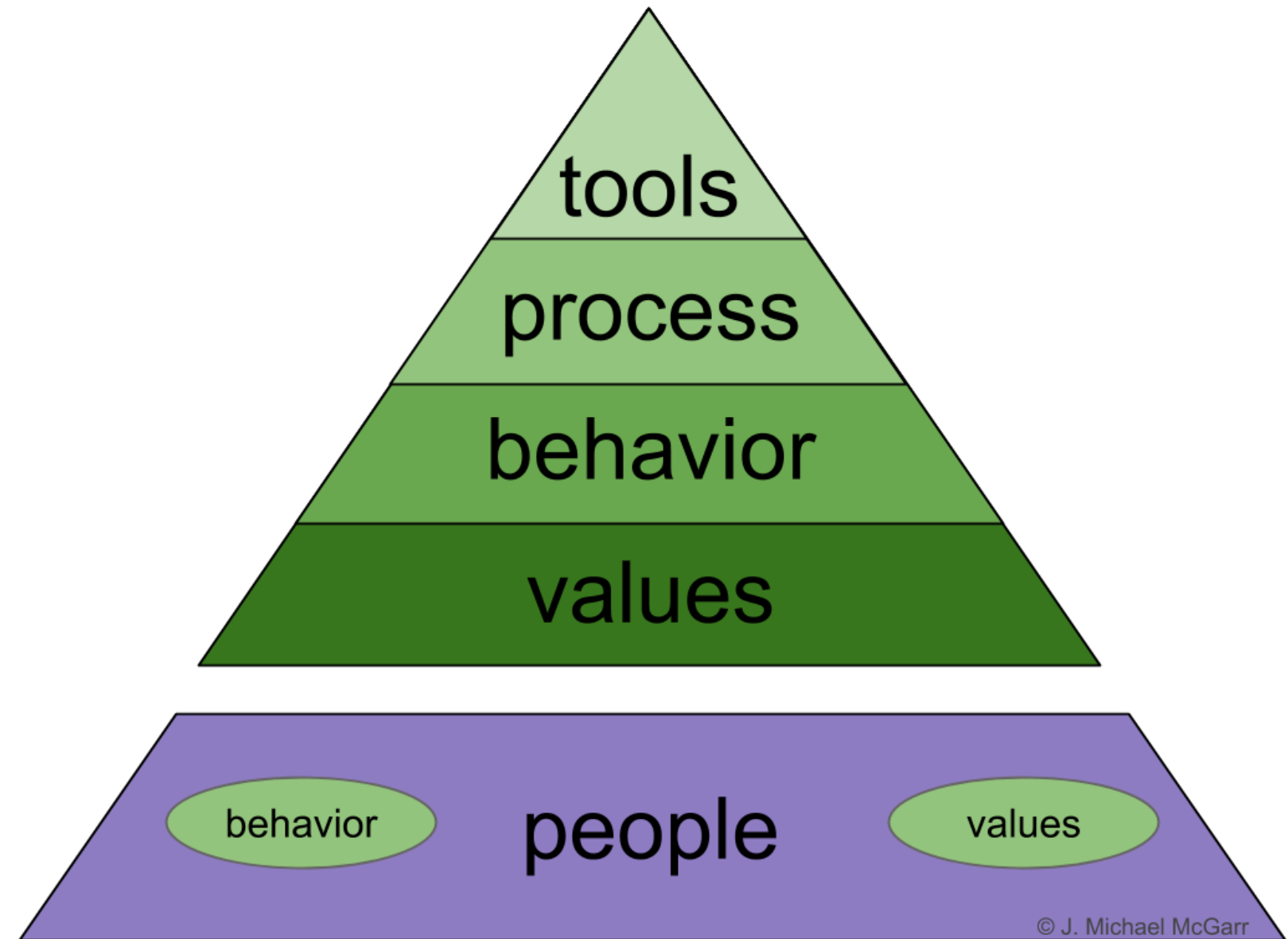


HOW'D YOU DO?



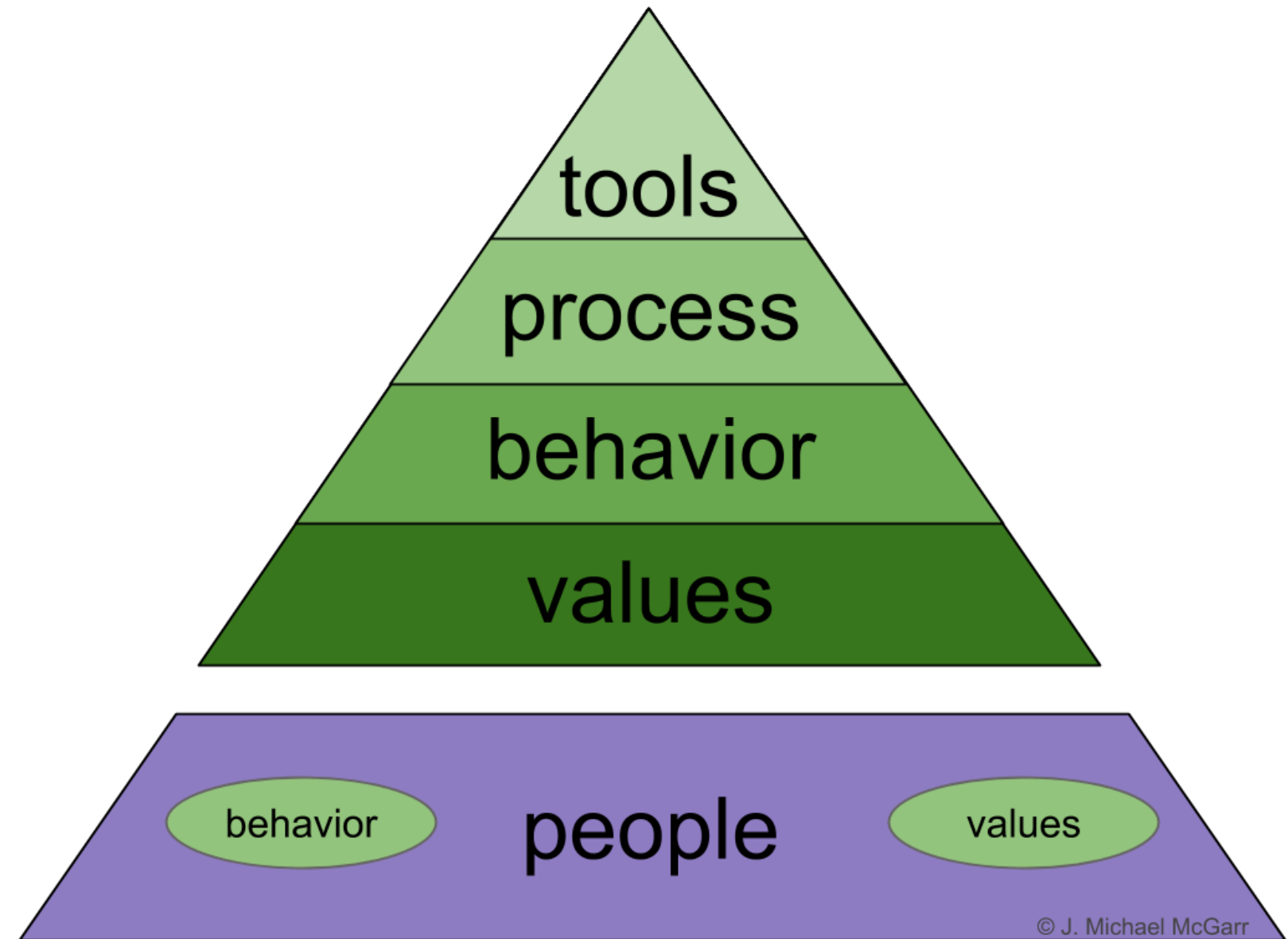
HOW'D YOU DO?

- Organization's **values**?



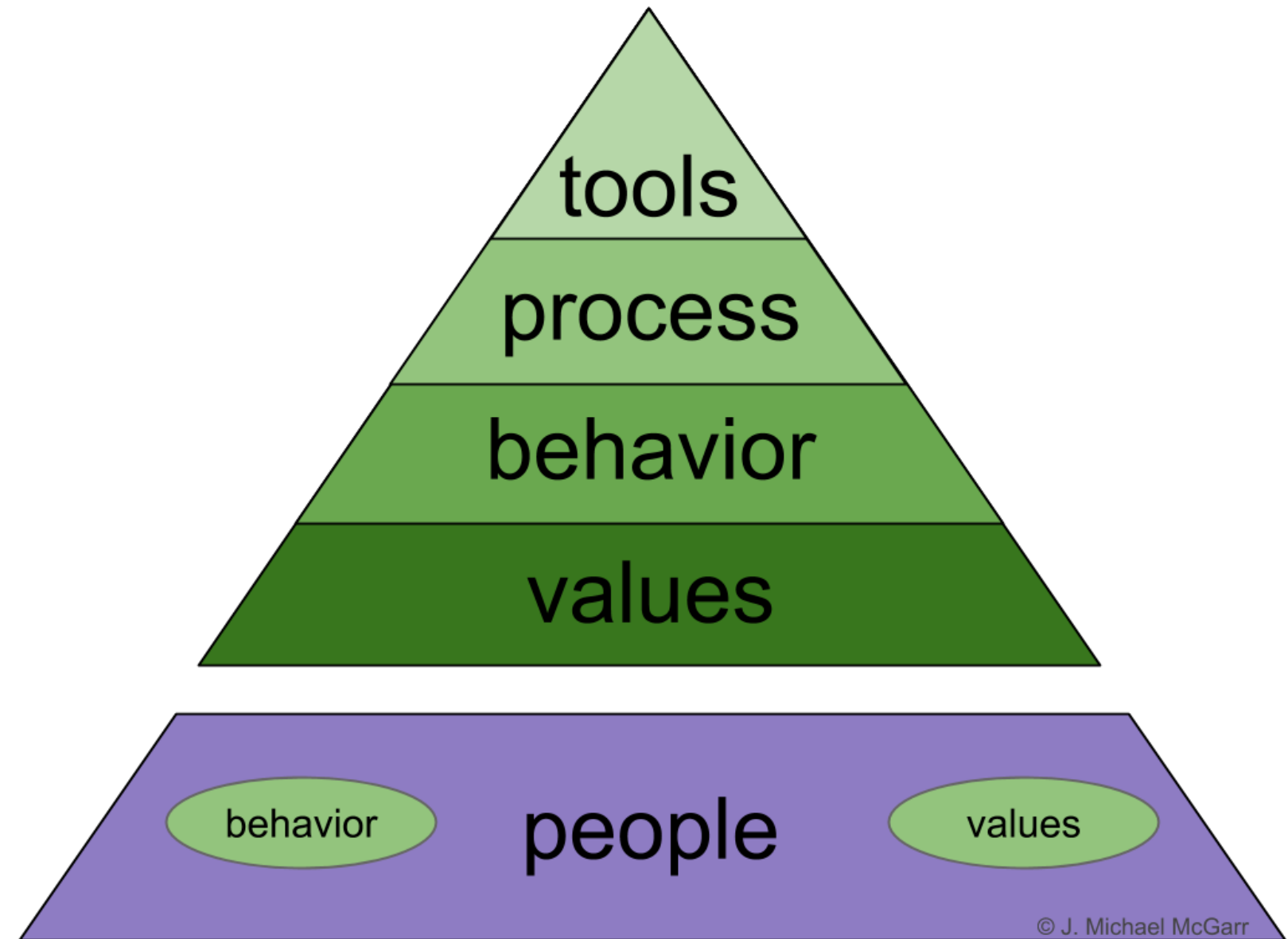
HOW'D YOU DO?

- Organization's **values**?
- Rewarded **behaviors**?



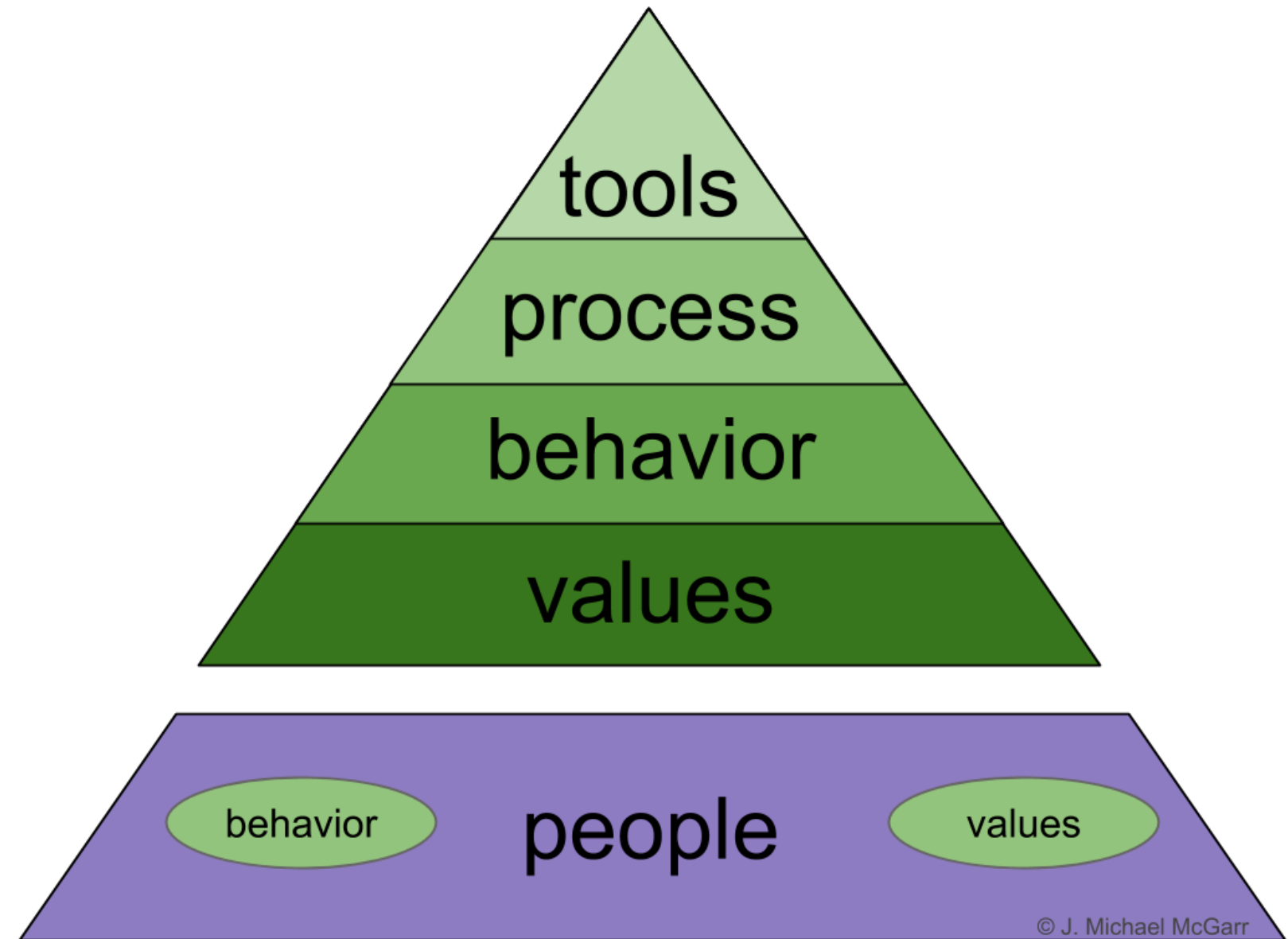
HOW'D YOU DO?

- Organization's values?
- Rewarded behaviors?
- Expected behaviors?



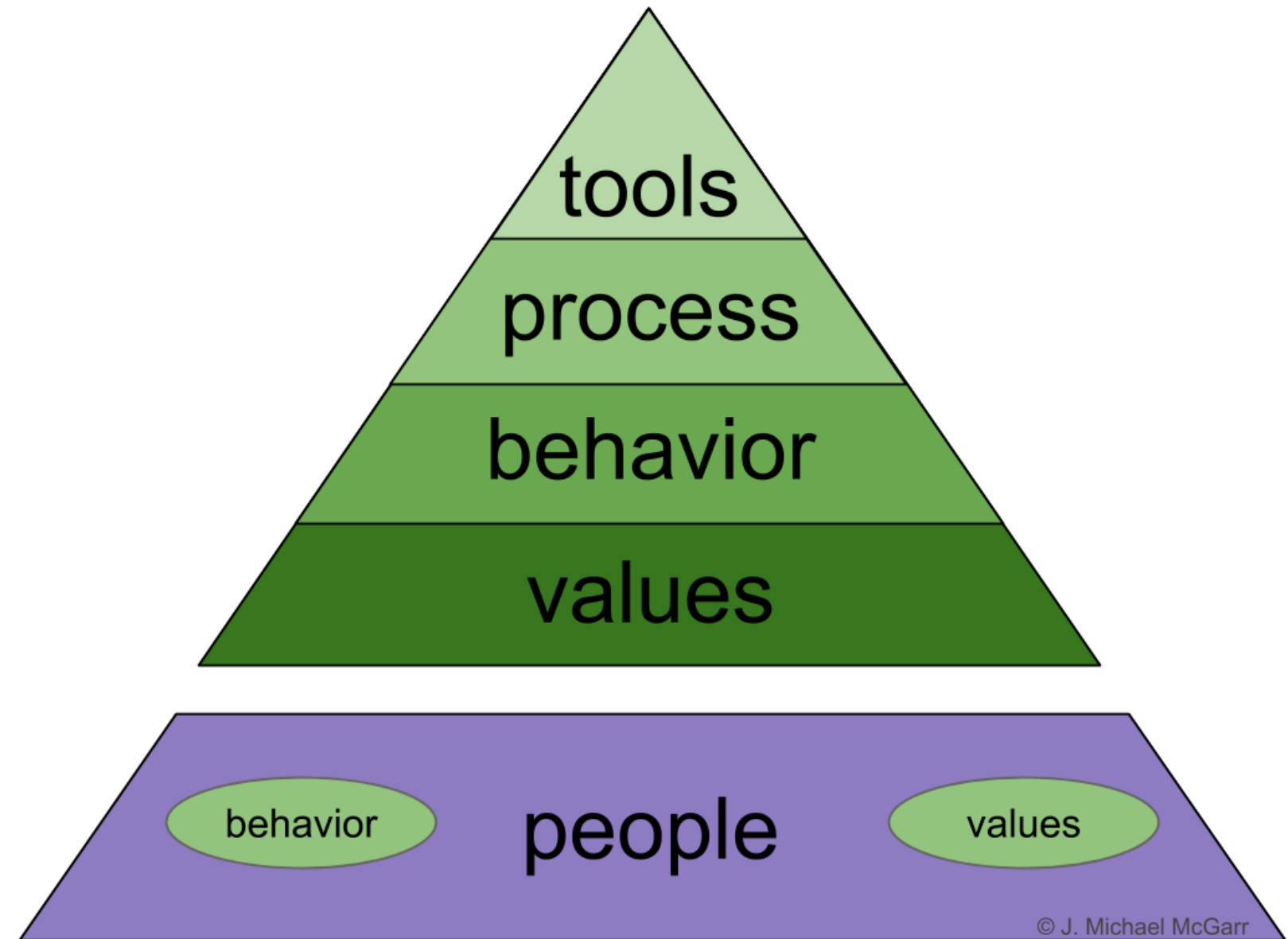
HOW'D YOU DO?

- Organization's **values**?
- Rewarded **behaviors**?
- Expected **behaviors**?
- Accepted **behaviors**?



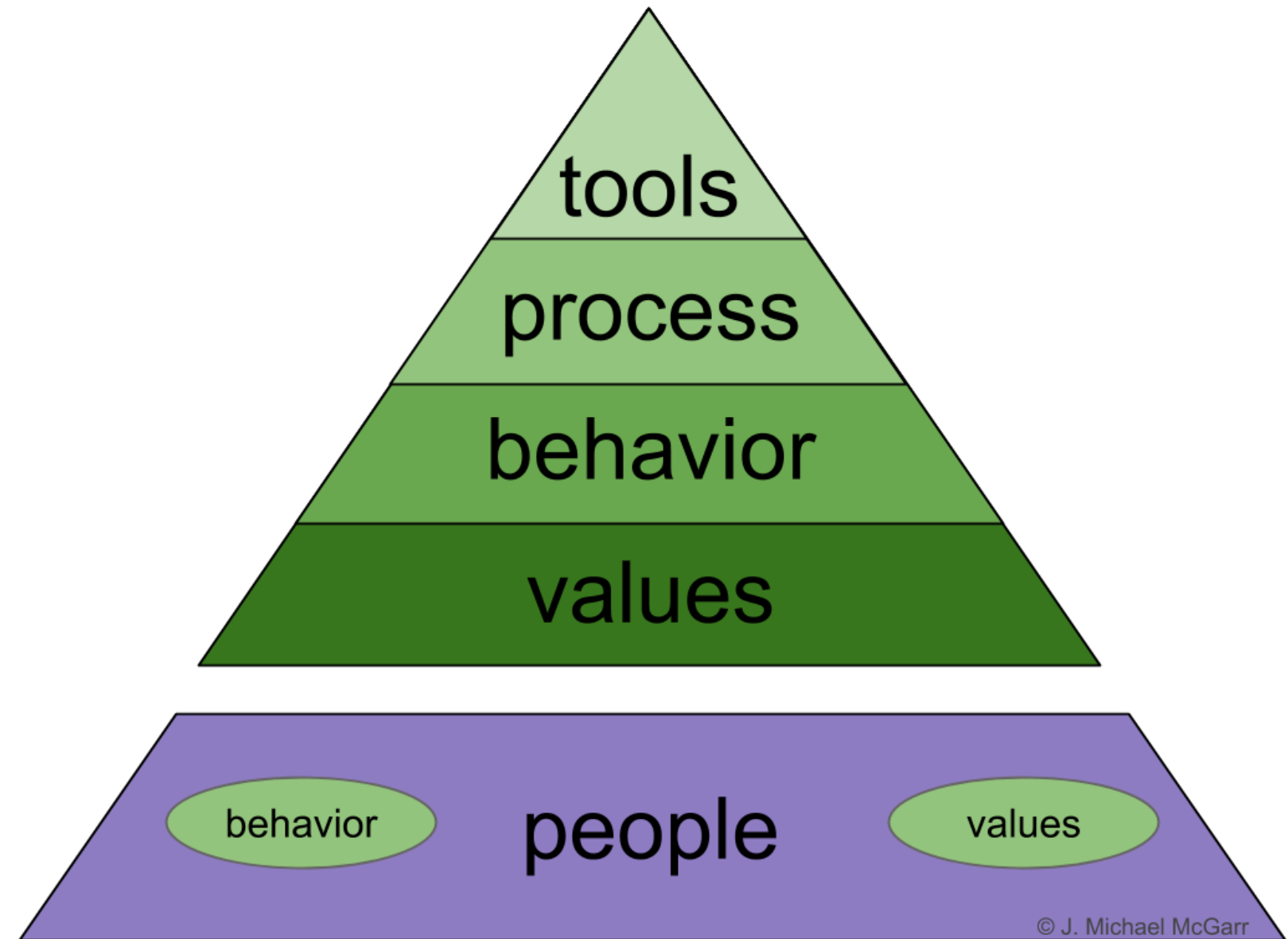
HOW'D YOU DO?

- **Organization's values?**
- **Rewarded behaviors?**
- **Expected behaviors?**
- **Accepted behaviors?**
- **Punishable behaviors?**



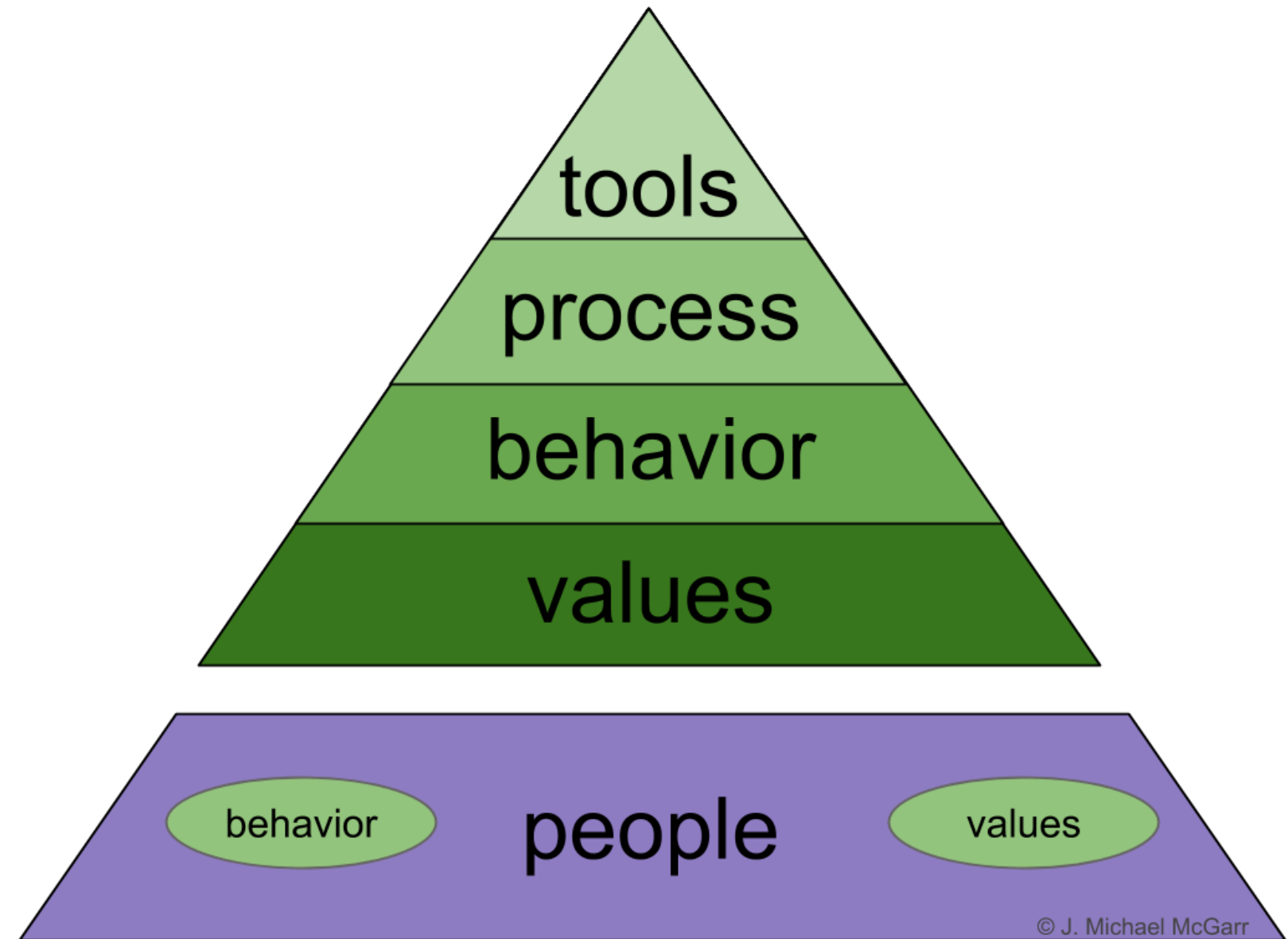
HOW'D YOU DO?

- Organization's values?
- Rewarded behaviors?
- Expected behaviors?
- Accepted behaviors?
- Punishable behaviors?
- Important processes?



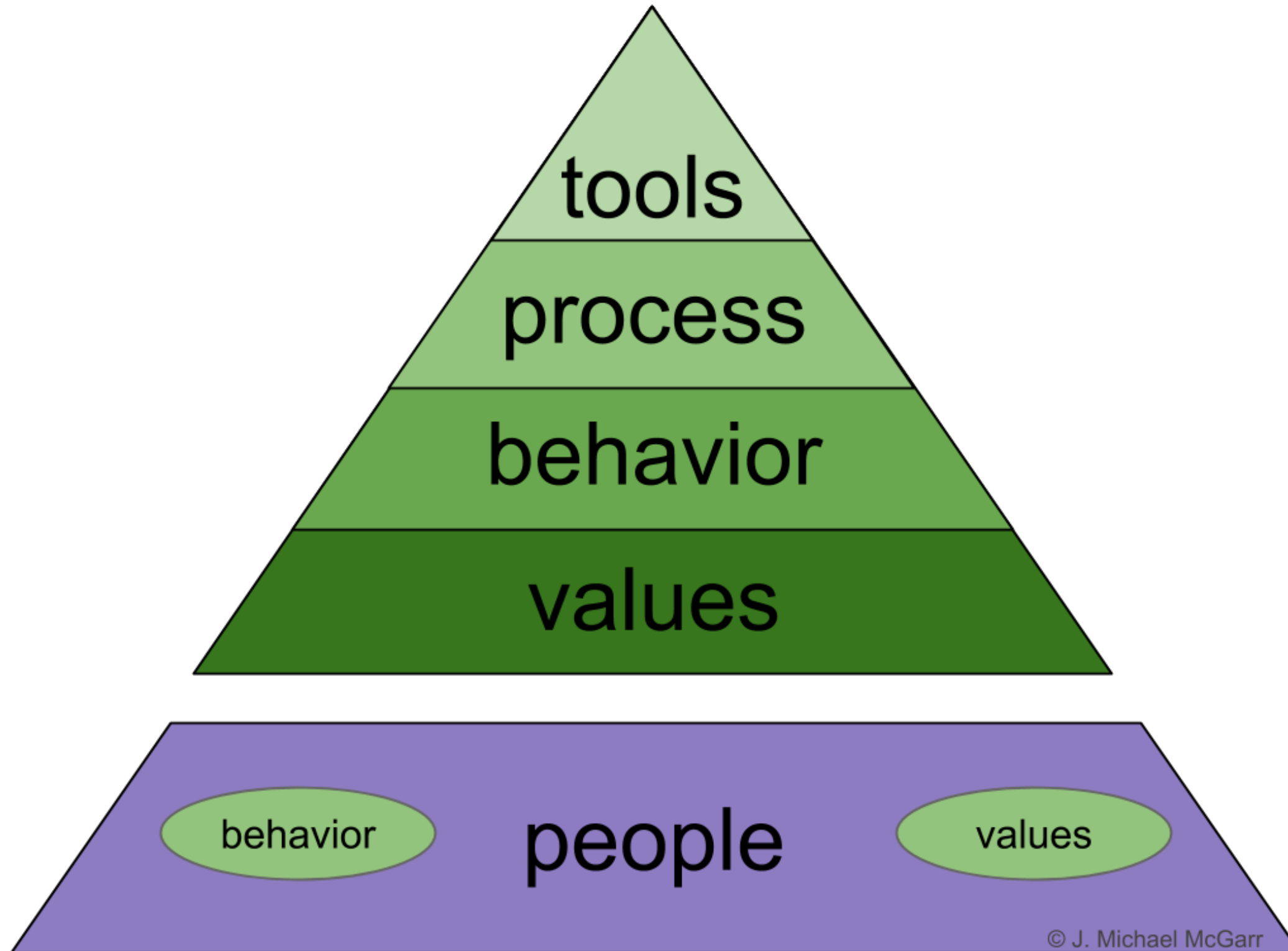
HOW'D YOU DO?

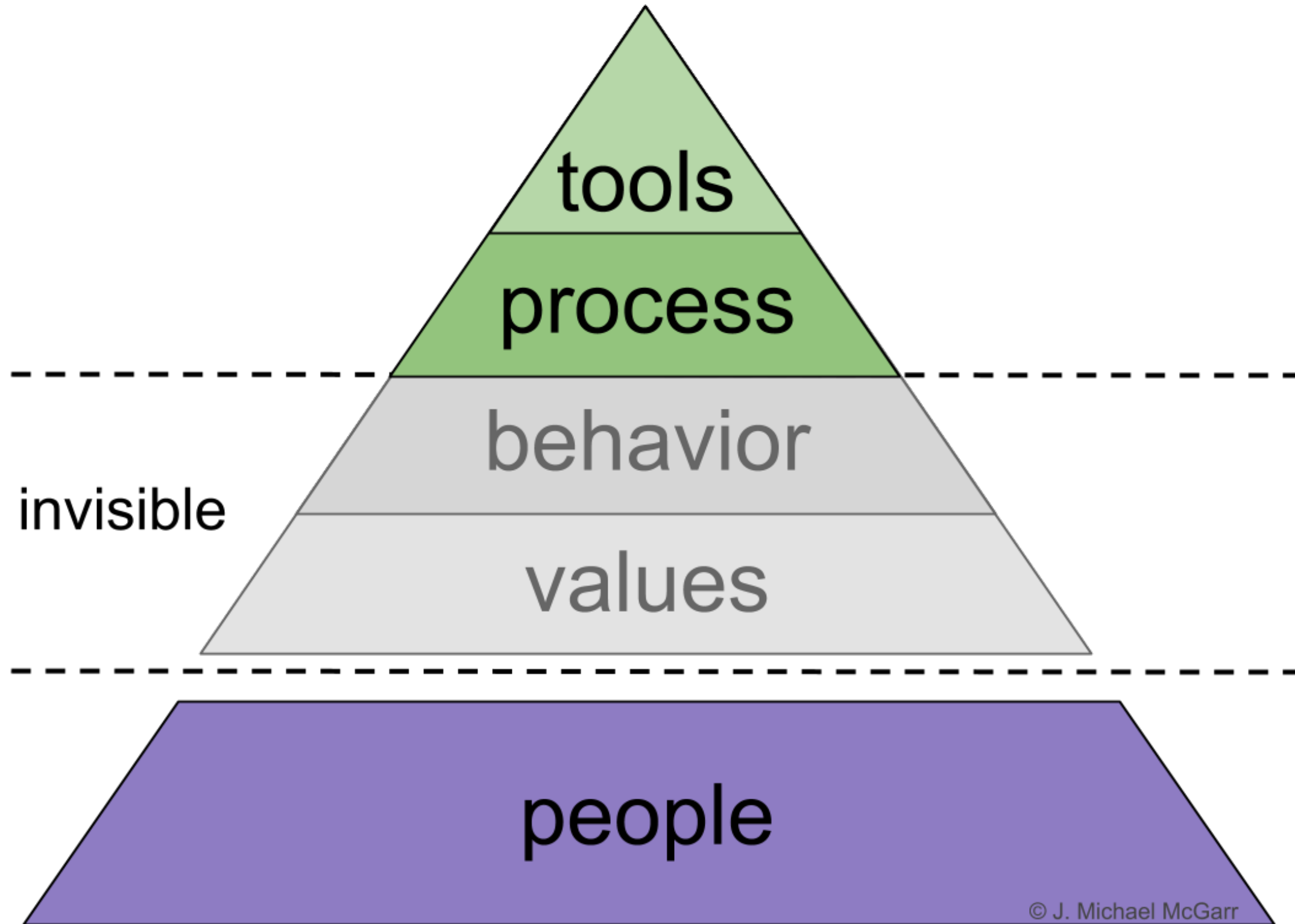
- Organization's values?
- Rewarded behaviors?
- Expected behaviors?
- Accepted behaviors?
- Punishable behaviors?
- Important processes?
- Critical tools?



HOW DID YOU LEARN YOUR
ORGANIZATION'S CULTURE?

DISCOVERING CULTURE







Artifacts

<https://flic.kr/p/9NH4vH>

artifacts are tangible
representations of a culture

artifacts are hints



statements
environment
structure
managers
tools



statements
environment
structure
managers
tools

freedom and responsibility

NETFLIX

have backbone; disagree and commit

amazon

The Amazon logo, featuring the word "amazon" in a bold, dark grey sans-serif font. Below the letters "a" and "m", there is a thick, orange curved arrow that starts under the "a", goes down and then curves upwards to point towards the "n".

representative or aspirational?

behavioral heuristics



statements
environment
structure
managers
tools

A wide-angle, low-angle shot of a large, empty office space. The room is filled with rows of cubicles, each with a desk and a partition. The ceiling is high and features a grid of fluorescent light fixtures. Large windows are visible in the background, letting in natural light. The overall atmosphere is quiet and somewhat desolate.

office



GitLab

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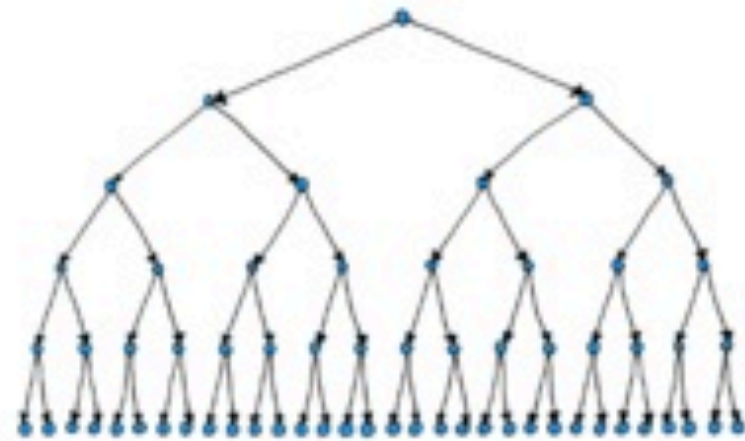


business model



statements
environment
structure
managers
tools

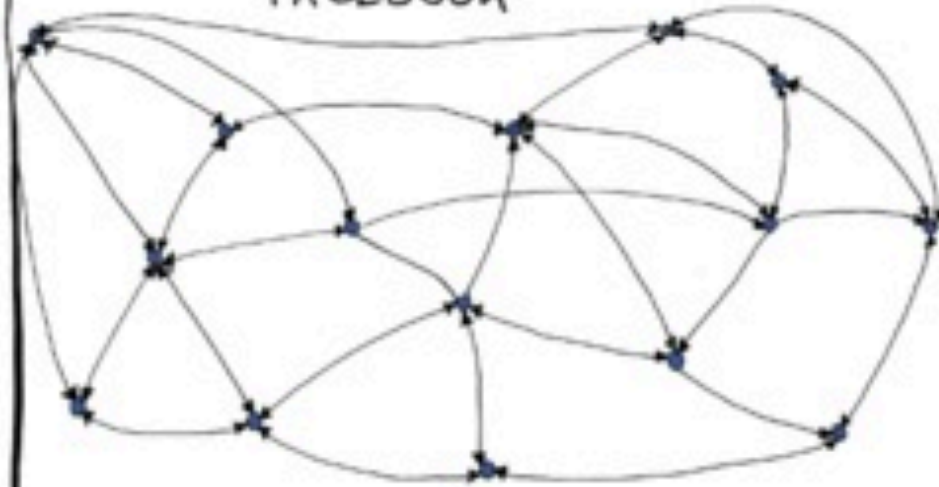
AMAZON



GOOGLE



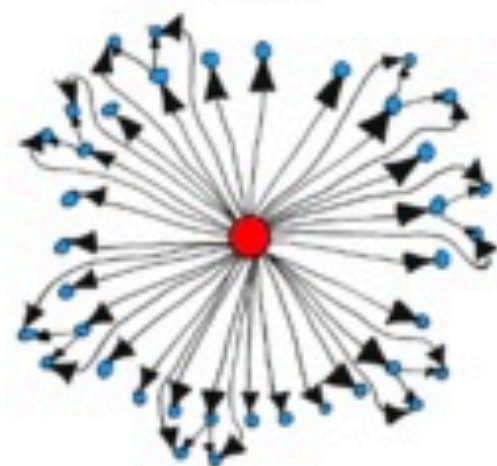
FACEBOOK



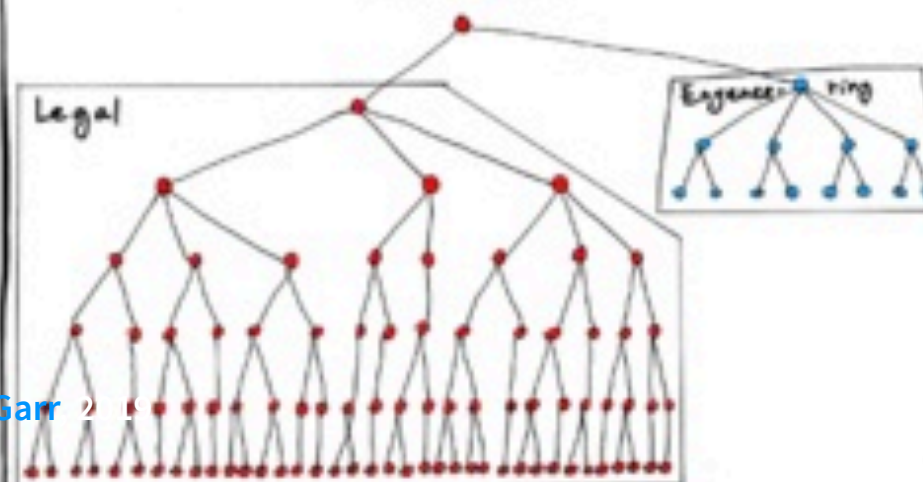
MICROSOFT



APPLE



ORACLE



- **How** decisions are made?

- **How** decisions are made?
- **Who** has the authority to make decisions?

- **How** decisions are made?
- **Who** has the authority to make decisions?
- **Which** departments have influence?

- **How decisions are made?**
- **Who has the authority to make decisions?**
- **Which departments have influence?**
- **How is information communicated?**



sub-cultures



statements
environment
structure
managers
tools

people with power

PEOPLE MANAGERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR...

PEOPLE MANAGERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR...

- **Modeling behavior**

PEOPLE MANAGERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR...

- **Modeling behavior**
- **Hiring**

PEOPLE MANAGERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR...

- **Modeling behavior**
- **Hiring**
- **Rewarding**

PEOPLE MANAGERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR...

- **Modeling behavior**
- **Hiring**
- **Rewarding**
- **Firing**

PEOPLE MANAGERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR...

- **Modeling behavior**
- **Hiring**
- **Rewarding**
- **Firing**
- **Retention**

A bonsai tree with dense green foliage and a thick, gnarled trunk sits in a dark brown rectangular pot. The pot features Japanese calligraphy in gold. The background is a textured, grey wall. The text is overlaid on the image.

THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE TO THE CULTURE ARE THOSE WHO LEAVE

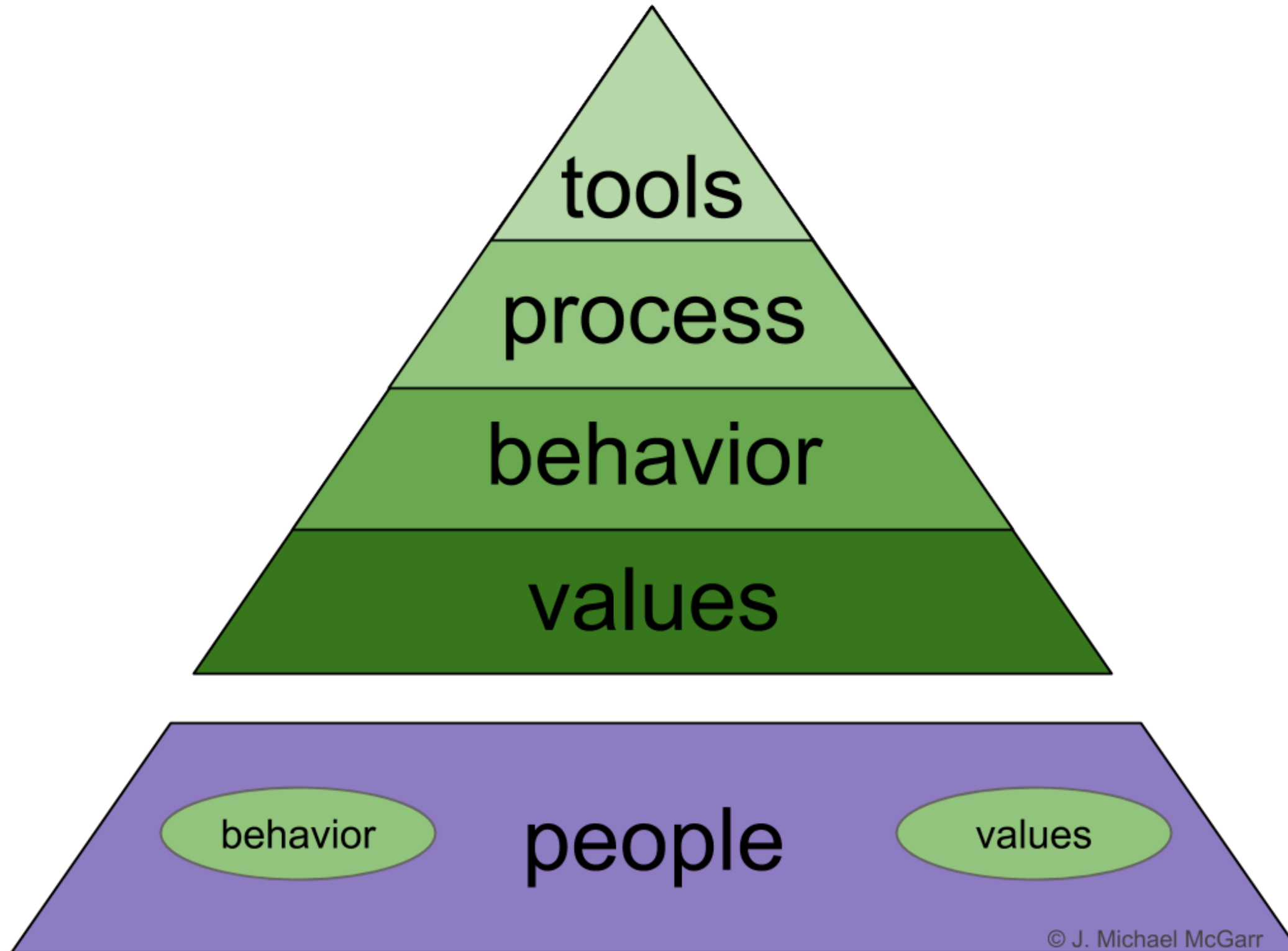
— Andy Dunn, [Creating culture: An imperfect recipe](#)

history

bias



statements
environment
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managers
tools





git

PERFORCE



@SonOfGarr

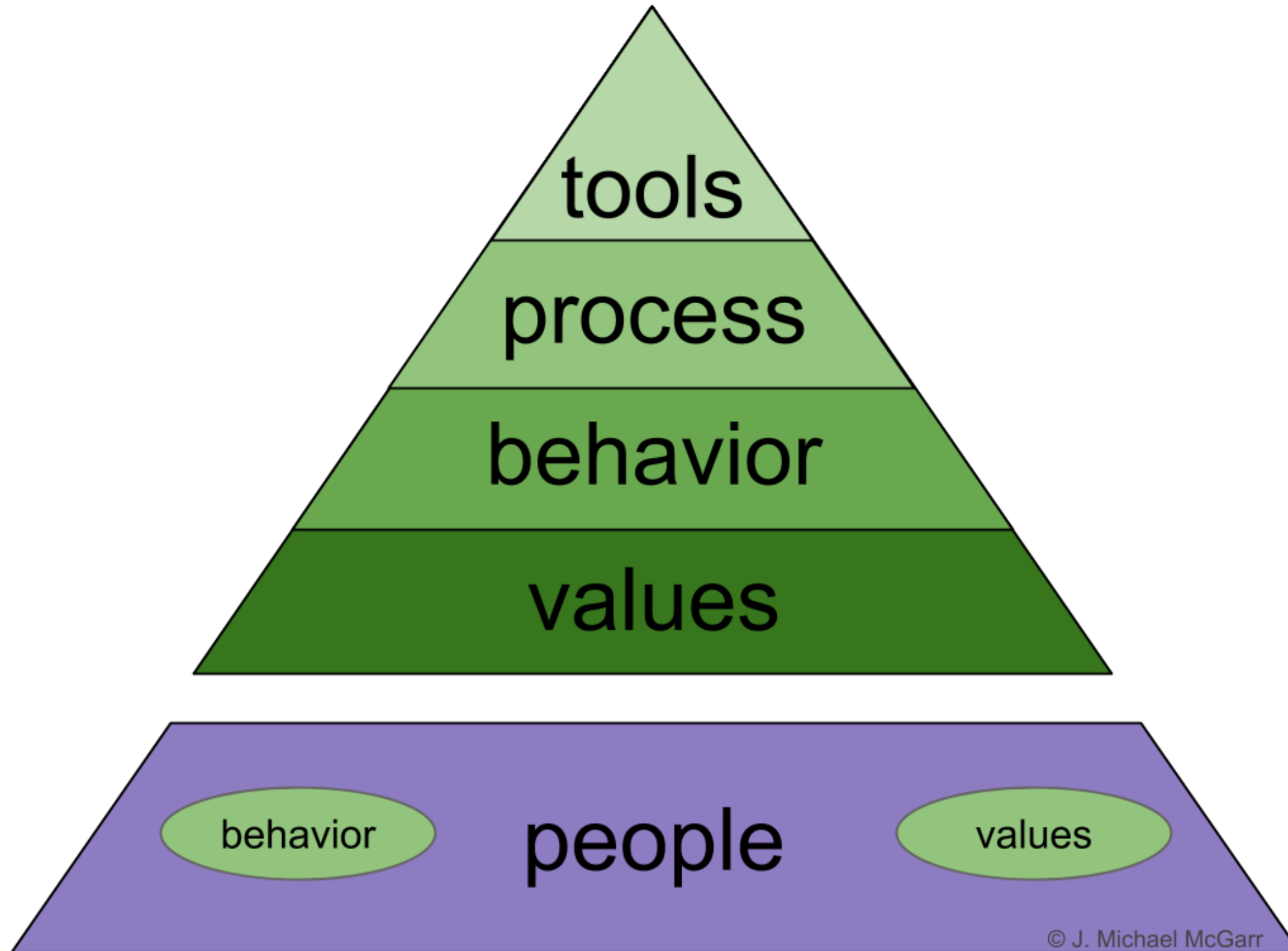


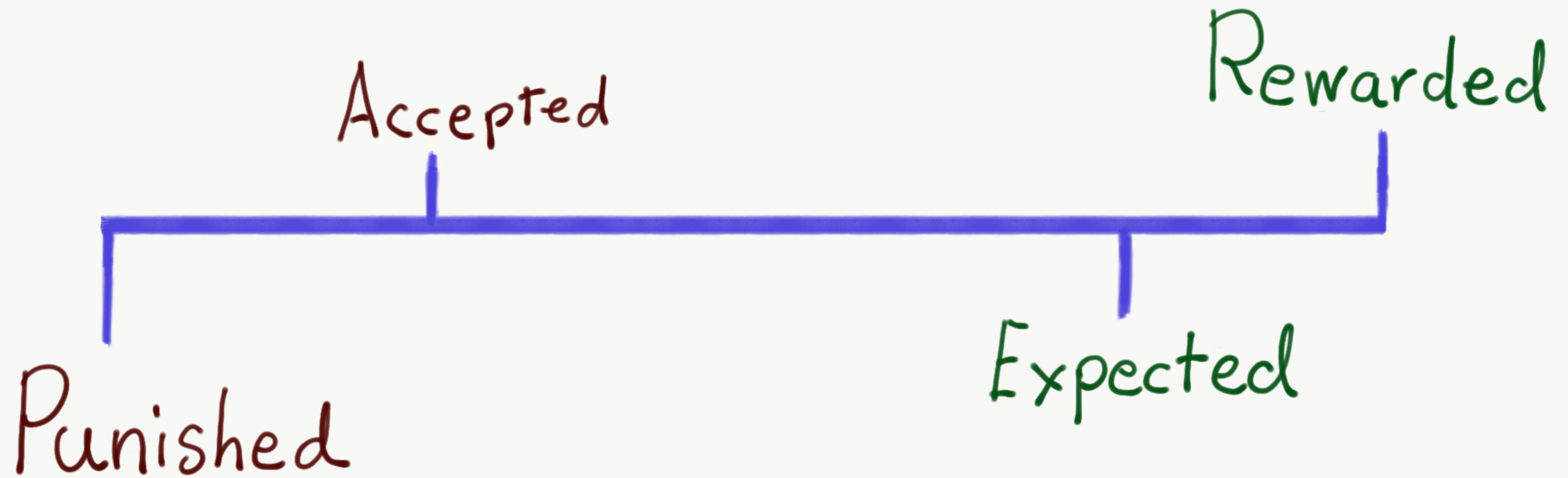
Java™

communities



KEY TAKEAWAYS





ARTIFACTS

statements
environment
structure
managers
tools



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