

The Heart of Danger

Maggie Brooke grew up on a small Native American reservation which nearly everyone older than twelve drank alcohol.

soberly by either of them, and no one went away then a decade later.

I knew how a good deal of my family's fortunes had

was a steady stream of visitors to her home.

One evening she told her visitor that she was

the house, and she inspired him to try to get something out of

second dependency among her people.

started to wonder what could be possible.

any time there's never a day around

these things.

meeting lodge, headed to the center and went over to the side.

We looked through a window into

it had a heart in it, with

was a very young woman who was called Bobbie.

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And she said, 'I thought I told you weeks ago, I've been holding A A

anonymous) meetings. So I asked her back, 'What do

(Alcoholics A

are holding meetings? I went over there tonight with

you mean you

We watched

the children and I was there with the women

one there in that circle of chairs, in a line

that got quiet—I wasn't alone, she said. I was there with the

ents and ancestors; and one day, that's the first time

has never have us. Every week I set up those chairs neatly

a circle and for two hours we just sat there in a circle

No one came to those meetings for a long time, and even after

three years, there were only a few people in the room. But I

my began to turn around. Five years later, the room was filled with people. The company

alcoholics turning around. People began picking themselves up

and then challenged their friends, families, and

and renew their lives. In leading these

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could talk to them as well as they could talk to their neighbors, friends, and family. Eventually, they succeeded and survived. But for a long time, they could not know. They could have lost everything.

Leadership Is Dangerous

In the early 1990s, Yitzhak Rabin, then prime minister of Israel, had the toughest job in the world. He was managing a majority of the Israeli people who were slowly but surely moving away from him. He was also deeply disturbed by the right wing, particularly the religious right, by its success in getting the community to wrestle with the difficult and painful trade-offs between long-term peace and territory. The right wing refused to face the reality that they would have to give up land they considered sacred for peace. So they made Rabin himself

Benjamin Netanyahu, a retreat, unwilling to pass the Israeli death marked a high point in the willingness of the Israeli people

who could be seen

every week or

sing their praises

people do not

cure, some Native Americans might place all their hopes on a new casino or look for a technical explanation for their pains (a genetic

sm). And most every Israeli would prefer a change in the magnitude of their ancient homeland. In

the Native American community, the Israeli face the challenge of adapting to a tough reality—requires giving up an important value of leadership, becomes dangerous. When

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pre-disposition to alcohol

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people—people must f

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The Perils of Adaptive Change

problems for which they already knew the people have problems for which they do in and procedures. We call these

steadily operating

ing attitudes, values, and behaviors—people

avoid the full consequences. They can postpone the rescue.

by rise, by fall, sometimes to the rescue.

path, a question of as that we have. What's really at stake, and what's expendable?

problems for which they already knew the people have problems for which they do in and procedures. We call these

continuities only

fact, have the necessary know-how

are not amenable to authoritative expertise

express. Messages from the system

answers flowing in. We call these adaptive challenges because

the organization as a community. Wilson (1981)

cannot make the adaptive leap necessary to arrive in the new environment. The sustainability of change depends on having the peo-

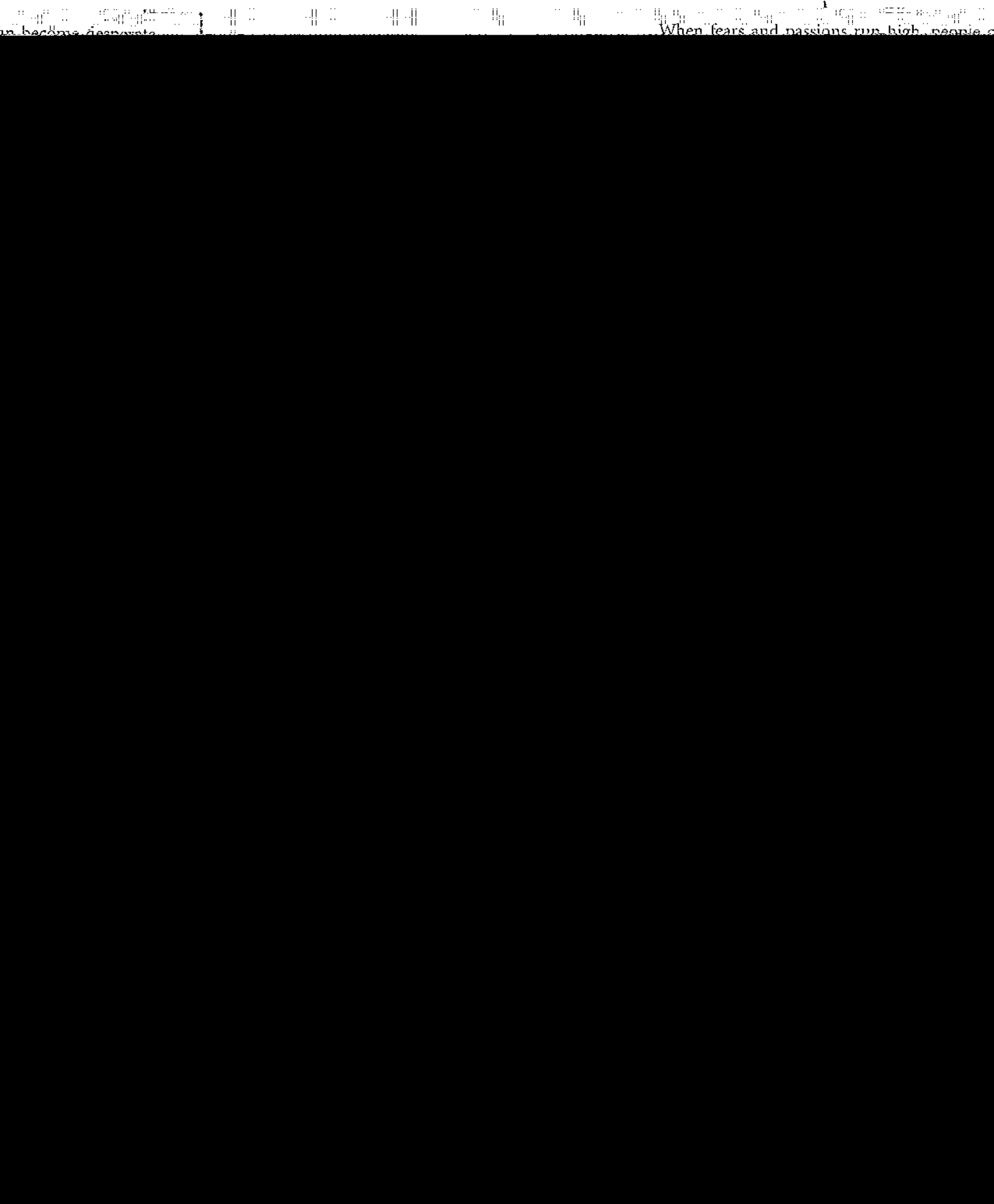
ble to see the proper challenge in the first place.

People cannot see at the beginning of the adaptive process that

the new situation will be any better than the current condition.

what they do see clearly is the potential for loss. People frequently

place the burden on some-



will have to sustain losses; rather, they want to know how you're going to protect them from the pains of change. And of course you want to fulfill their needs and expectations, not bear the brunt of

justing their unrealistic expectations, rather than try to satisfy them.

has if the situation were addressed primarily to a technical remedy.

Ve have to counteract the exaggerated dependency and promote

their respect for the process. This takes on an extremely high level of presence.

communication, but it's not like working

in a technical environment. This was the case with the

in January 2000, he had a major loss of

trations, with thousands of the townspeople

slowly turn out of office, his popularity

in a year. With the

the overall

lost any connection with the people.

On February 2, he had been a hero, a

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to be washed away

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lated 16 percent of

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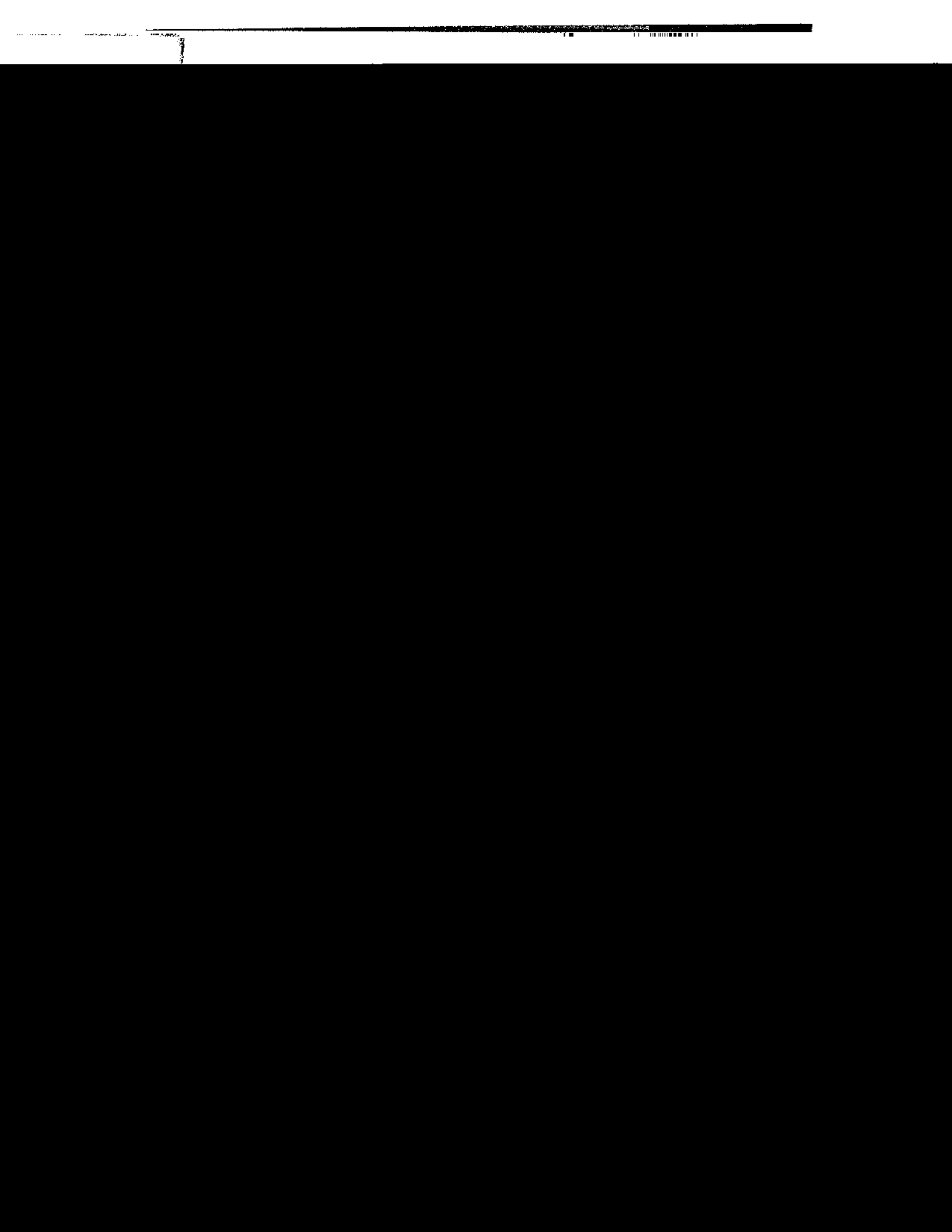
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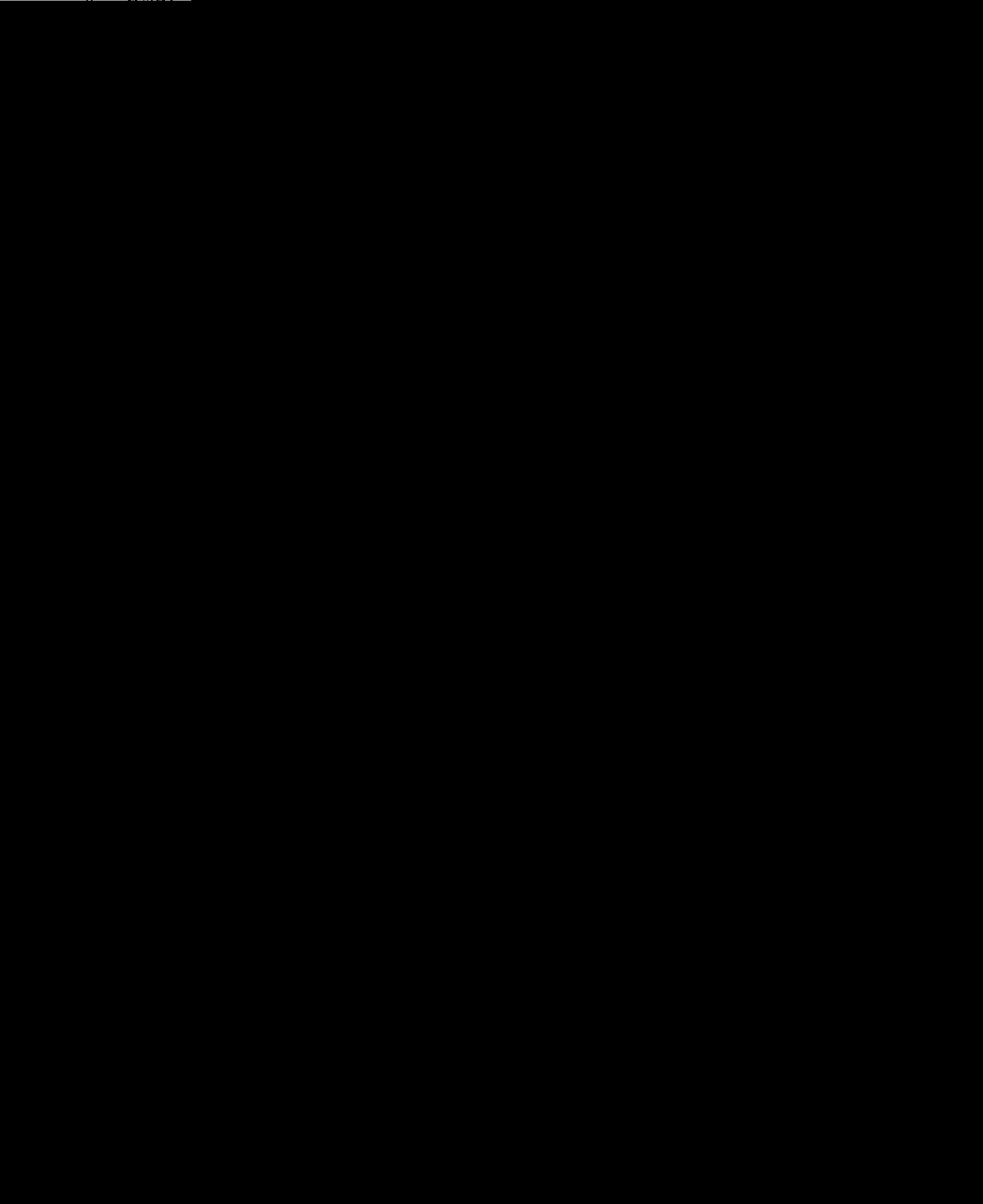
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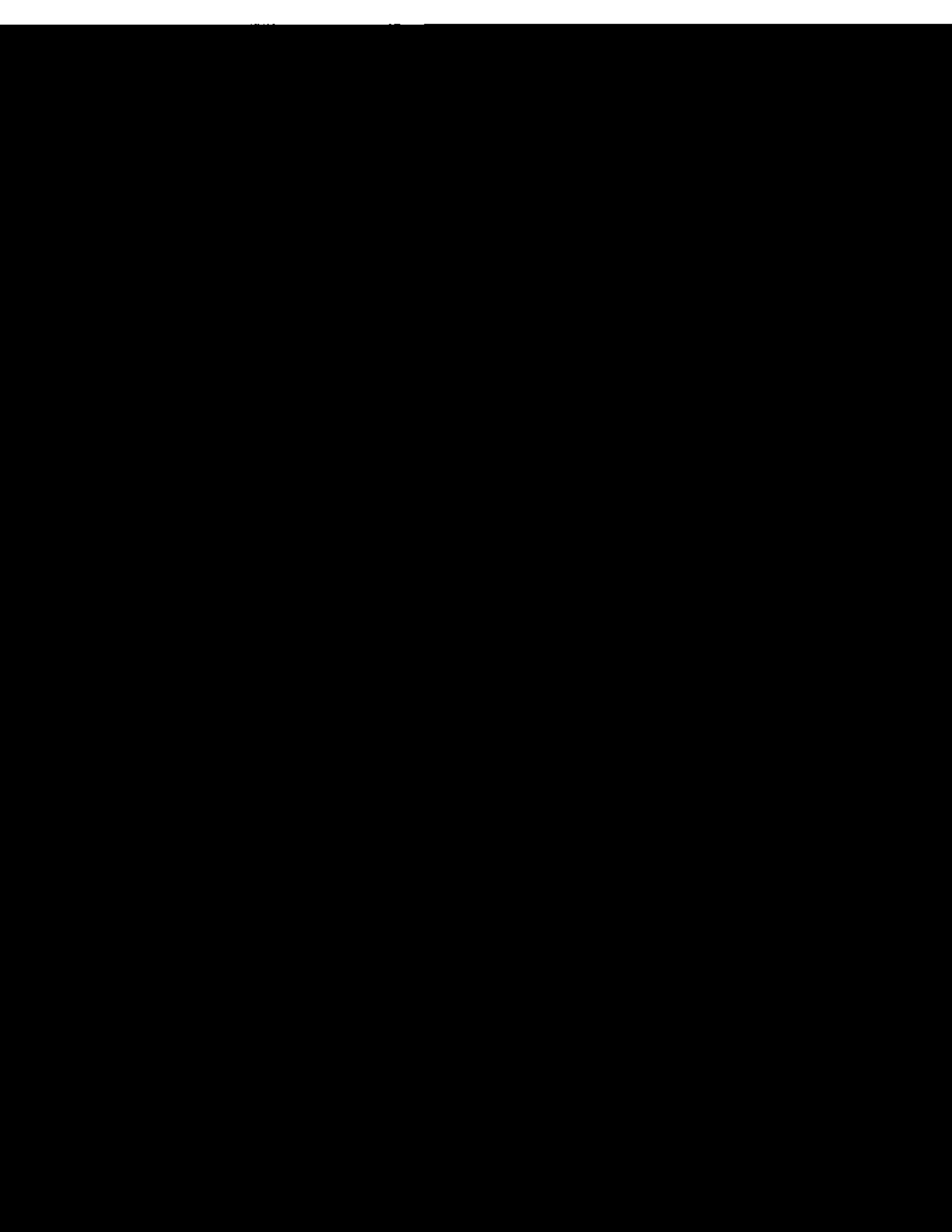
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As he soon discovered, the problem, like many tough problems contained both technical and adaptive elements. After his effort to

was managers' understanding of technical leader of IBM that

IBM attorneys sent Sun Microsystems a letter demanding that Sun

stop displaying IBM data on its Web site. That error, of course,

IBM's work product was reviewed with IBM's existing legal

At the same time, as Grossman pushed IBM managers to deal

the business in the district would continue to grab from

IBM's uncovered values and the time that were uncertain

and systems that in the Internet age. These beliefs about how the

business will work kept IBM from dealing with the variety of

the new market challenge. The Internet provided an entirely new

channel for promoting products and a vehicle for a raft of problems

that were not only new but also different from anything IBM had

encountered before. The Internet was a new and different

arena for competition, and it was a place where IBM's

every assumption about its business was as if IBM were

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beginning with a clean slate. The Internet was a new and

penetration and new behavior patterns designed to make IBM a more

relevant force in the Internet world.

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the display space auction would have closed and the opportunity would have been missed.

to act outside the narrow confines of your job description when

progress requires it. Get close to the heart of leadership, and to its

in breaking the boundaries of your authority. It's a dangerous, low-visibility

for those organizations to consistently. It's a dangerous, low-visibility

spect, it might even be recognized as crucial for success. Along the

by the pain of discarding the old. In any case, you will face resistance and possible

sanction for breaking the rules. You will be characterized as being out of place, out of

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disloyalty to the sources of the values that kept the relationship together. For example, acknowledging the damage from abusive

parents earlier in life also means experiencing disloyalty to them. It's

hard to sift through and salvage what's valuable from those primary

relationships and leave the chaff behind. Even though that process

fully will be experienced somewhat as a disloyalty to those relations

ships, however, change challenges a person's sense of continuity

of a woman's experience and competence in raising with

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But perhaps the deepest influence is that habits, values, and attitudes come from somewhere, and to abandon them means to be

disloyal to their origin indeed, our deeply held values serve as a keystone in the structure of our identities. Loyalty is a double-edged sword. On one hand, it represents loving attachments to

family, team, community, and staying in the same place. On the other hand, it

can also represent a non-attachment to a place, a time, a person, or a situation. Loyalty is not a static concept. It is a dynamic force that can be used to either bind or liberate. It is a double-edged sword that can be used to either protect or destroy.

It is a force that can be used to either bind or liberate. It is a double-edged sword that can be used to either protect or destroy. It is a force that can be used to either bind or liberate.

Witness the turmoil of teenagers trying to grow up and decide what to take from home and what to leave behind.

Witness the U.S. civil rights movement in the 1960s was that progress required the abandonment of values that had been handed down to them by their loving parents and grandparents.

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Some of our most deeply held values and ideas come from

love—a relative, a favored teacher, or a mentor. As dis

like we are. It's interesting

two friends were to sit

encouraged by two others. I'm not sure I can

or never answer to anybody. With father's reflection, an

lucky to have some help. She might see a

ways to change

in authority relationships; also, there may be a host of

challenge authorities respectfully and pursue a

Our former student Sylvia now understands his disloyalty issue

very well. She was part of the group of people who

DS was. Whether disease. The ads

from people who believe that they

produce a firestorm of protest

values of the protesters were the values

that has been canceled down

brought up to believe in responsible sex, in the sanctity of sexual

relationships, in people honoring each other by their faculty. And

she knew that handing out condoms was at a way a

campaign, the protesters forced her to experience her own disloy

to her old values. Upon seeing the television ads, Sylvia

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as she clarified her

She had made some decisions about which

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values were more important to her, but getting to the other side of feeling disloyal to her loved ones was a painful process as she moved toward a more deliberate integration of herself.

The dangers of exercising leadership derive from the nature of the problems for which leadership is necessary. Adaptive change stimulates

uncertainty and even

and feeling incoherence. It has a way to ask: No wonder people

is designed to get you to back away. The vari

do not lose. Recognizing these dangers, then, becomes of paramount importance.