



Developing a

Paradox

Mindset



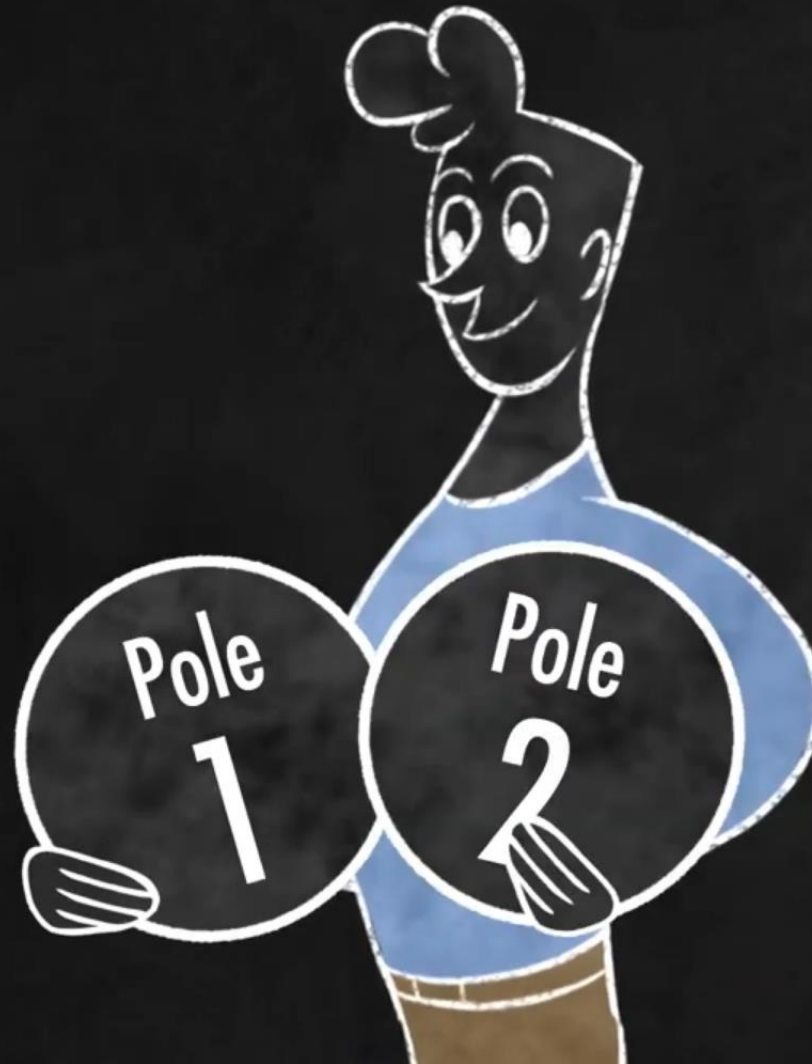


A paradox captures two realities that seem like they cannot coexist at the same time. We call the ends of the paradox the poles, and we wrestle with the pressure to push towards both at the same time.

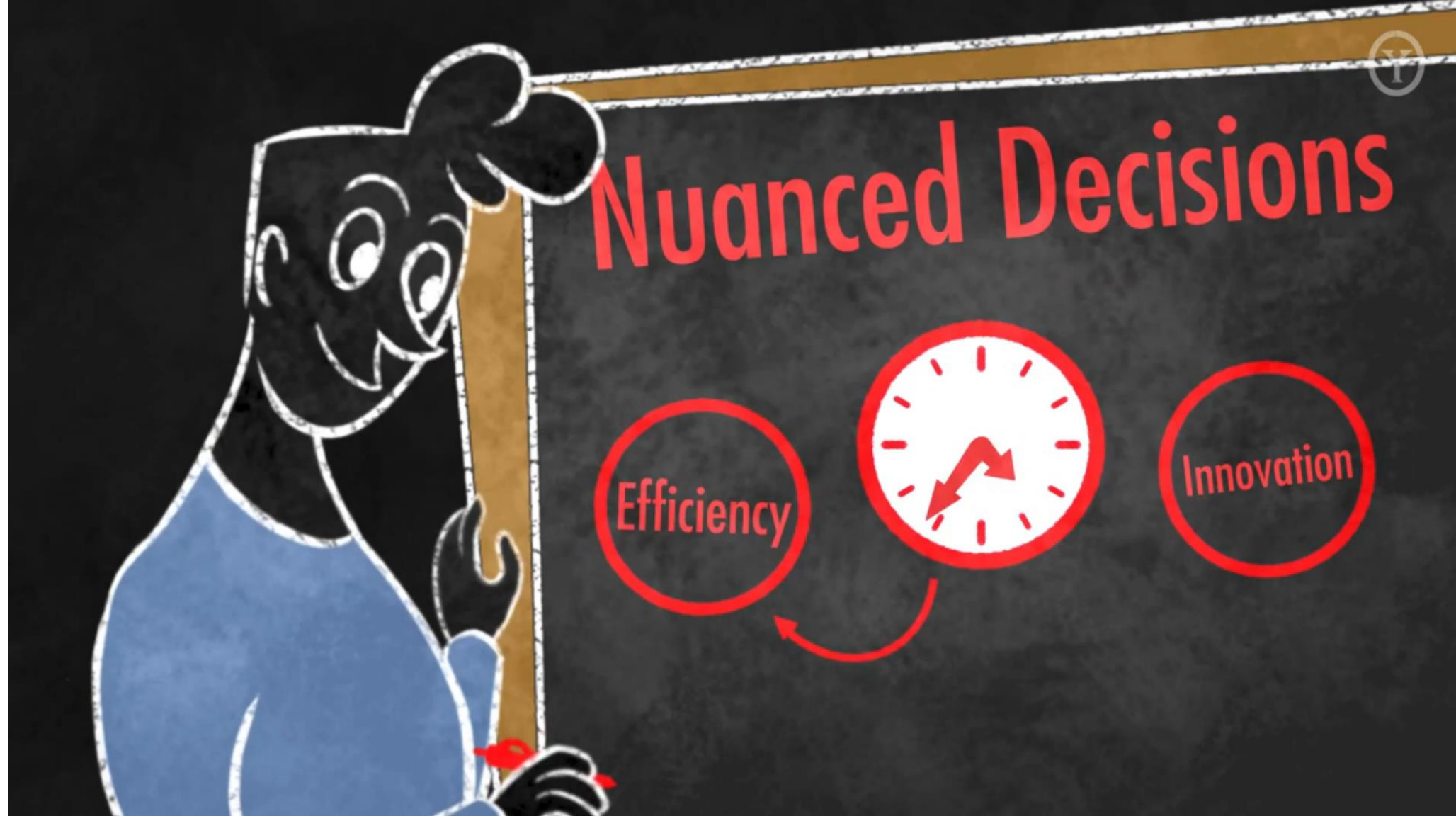
Paradoxes



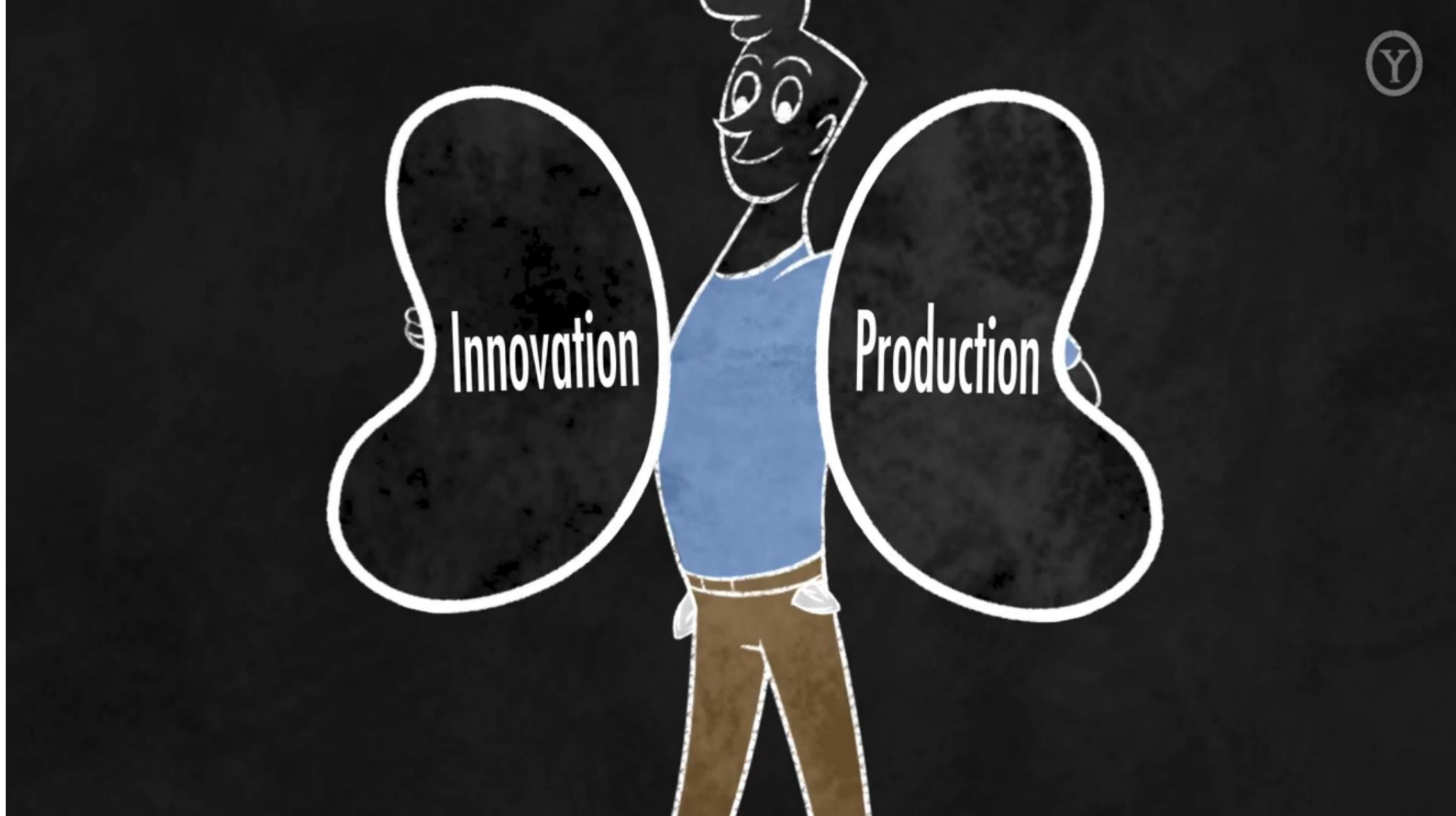
Leaders constantly face paradoxes in business. Should they embrace change or stability within the company? Should they customize products and services to local environment, or create standardized global products and services? Should they invest in R&D and innovation, or in improving operational efficiency? Should they obey current regulations or challenge them?



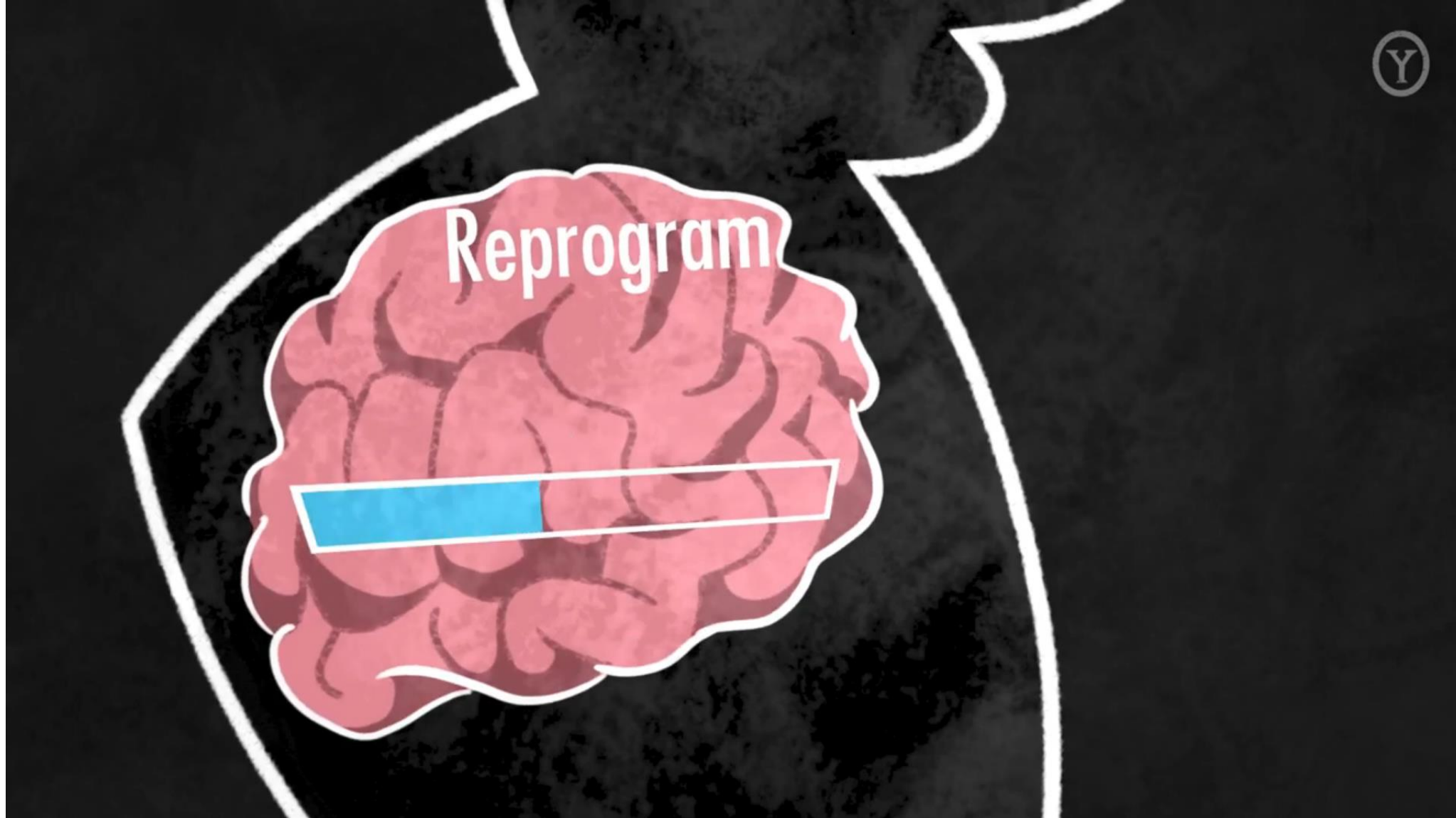
Pursuing any one of these paradox poles could lead us to sacrifice the other. **A paradox mindset pushes us to shift from an either-or mentality to a both-and mentality.** Rather than accepting the apparent trade offs between the different poles of the paradox, **we challenge them and seek to embrace them.**



We develop nuanced decisions to understand when to embrace one or the other pole. E.g.: rather than always emphasizing innovation over production, or production over innovation, we may allow our innovation to suffer when we need to generate more cash or allow our production to suffer when we sense that the market may be shifting.



Thus, rather than emphasizing which pole to embrace overall, we learn to embrace both poles simultaneously and occasionally **allow our organizations to drift slightly towards one side or the other.**



Great strategists learn how to embrace the both ends of business. They look carefully for the embedded paradoxes that they might be ignoring. They seek to find these paradoxes, clearly define the opposing poles and then **reprogram their brains to capture the benefits of both ends of the paradox at the same time.**