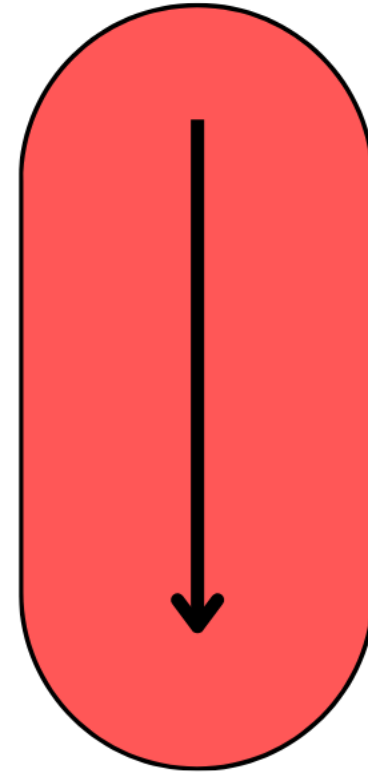




The Future of Games Communities

(and how we
avoid it)



Kelsey Gamble @kindofsquishy | GCAP 2023



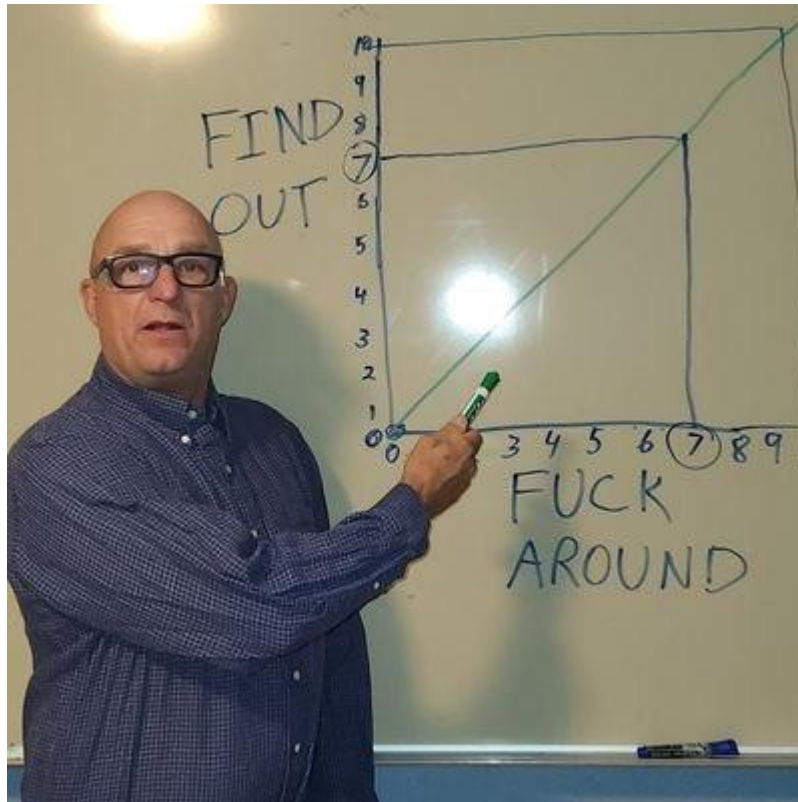
I'm Kelsey.

I have been a Community Manager for 12 years, but I've just left the field (for good?) and now work as a Publishing Producer.

This talk will get into why.



Peering into the Future.... Of This Talk



1 Setting the scene

2 Some community theory

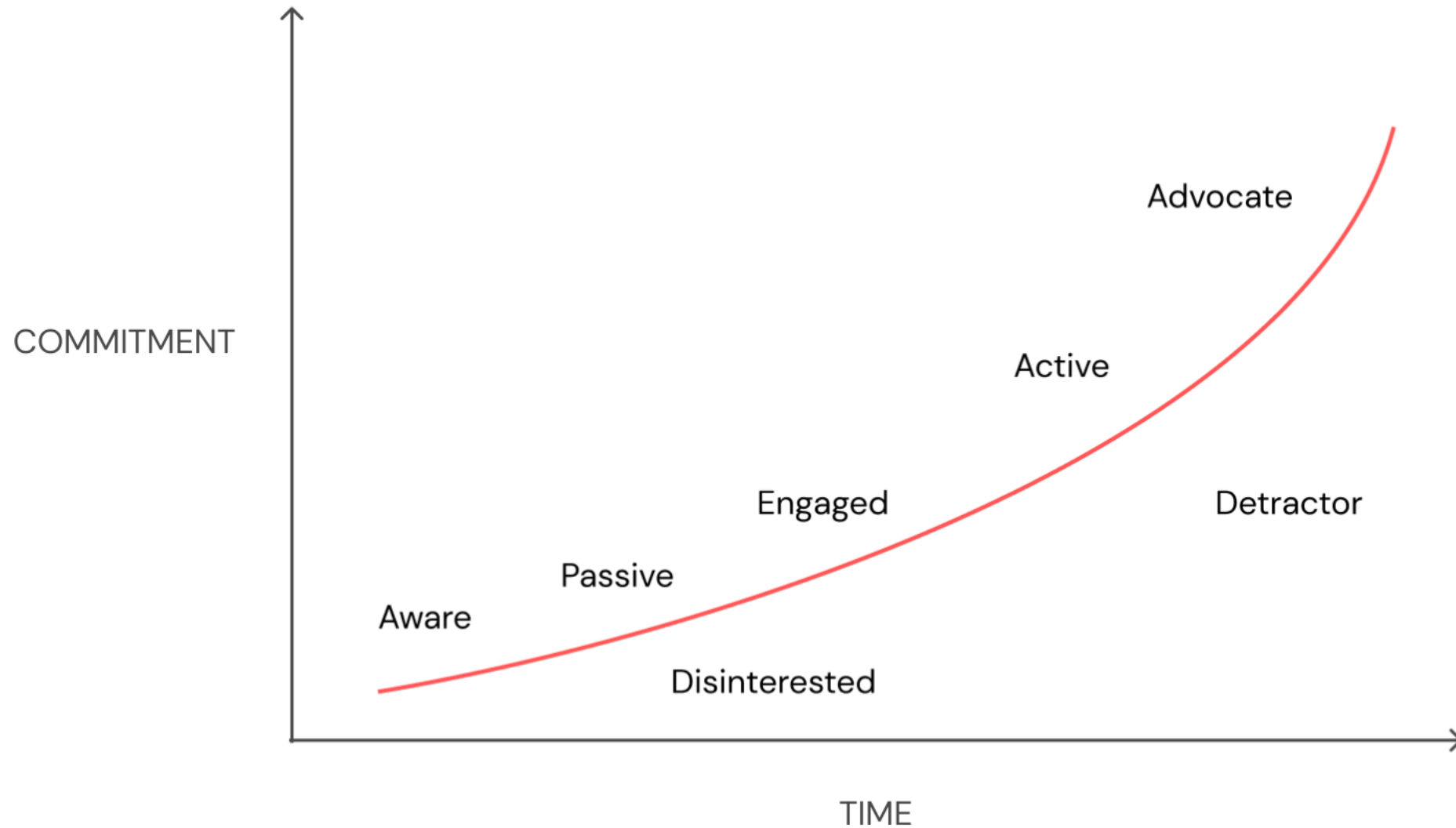
3 Ants???

4 Some things we can do about the impending sense of doom we are all feeling at this stage (sorry)

**Spoiler alert: this
talk isn't about a
positive future.**

**Maybe we can
make one though?**

Community Management's Answer to the Marketing Funnel: **The Commitment Curve**



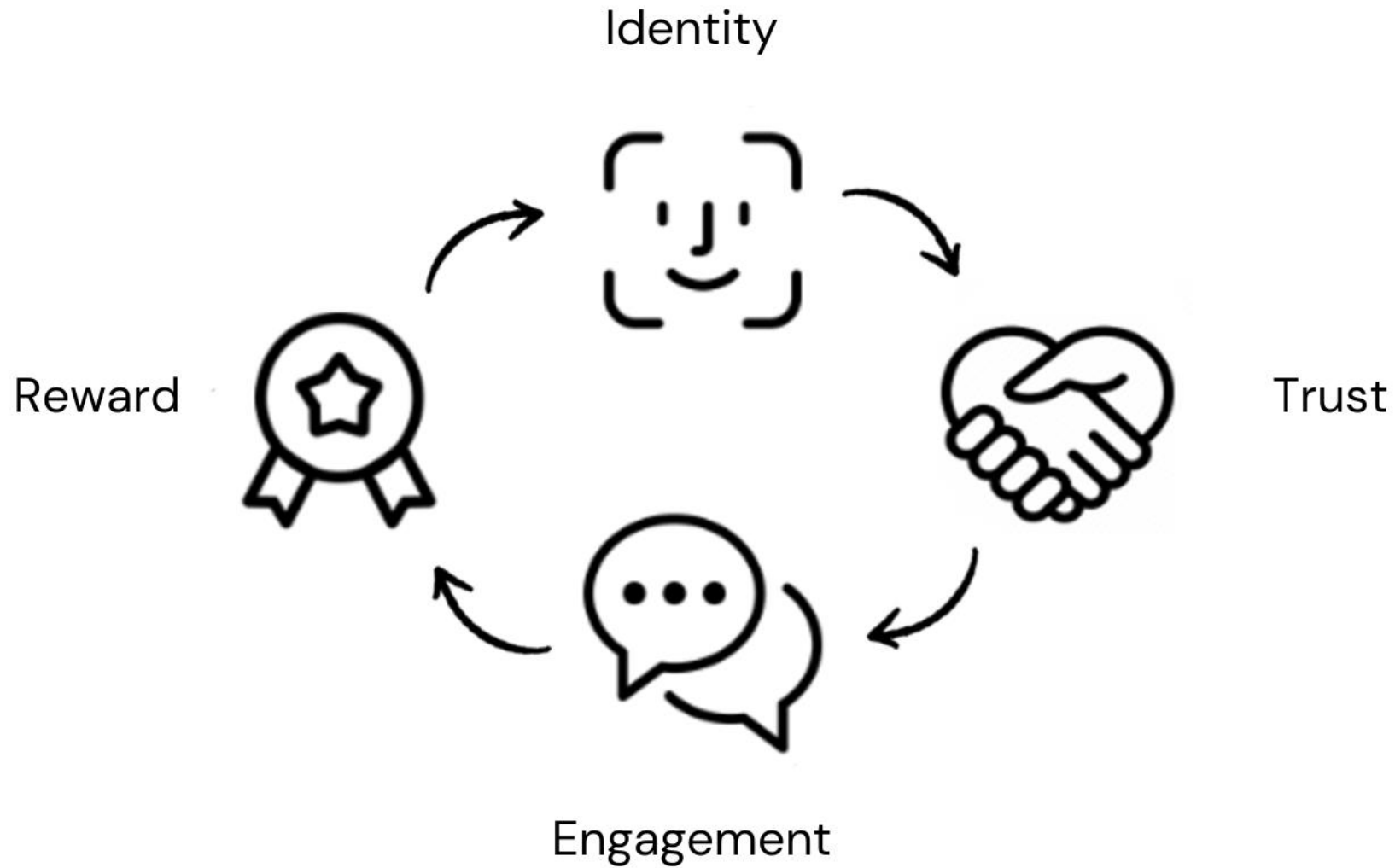


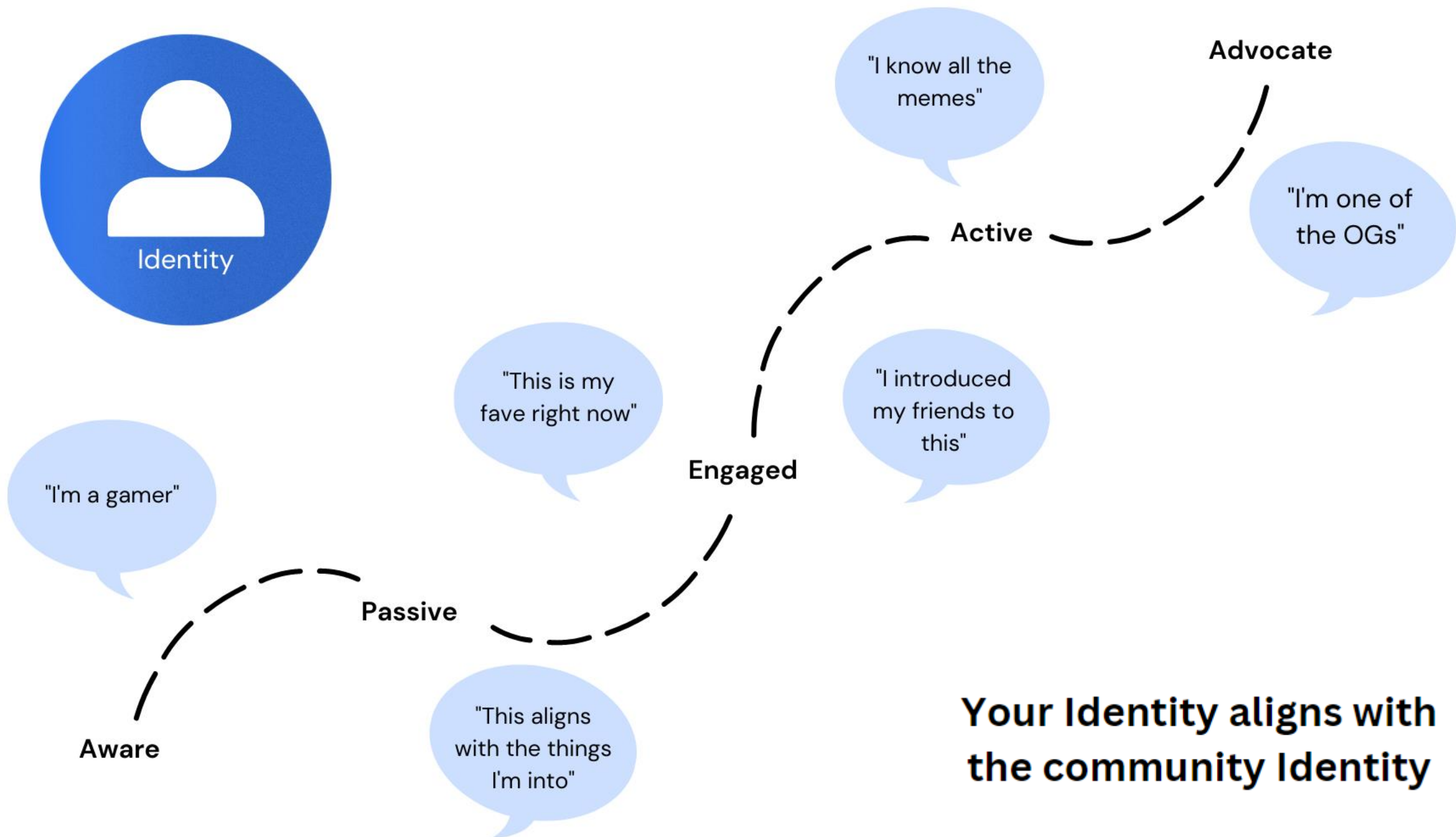
Detractors

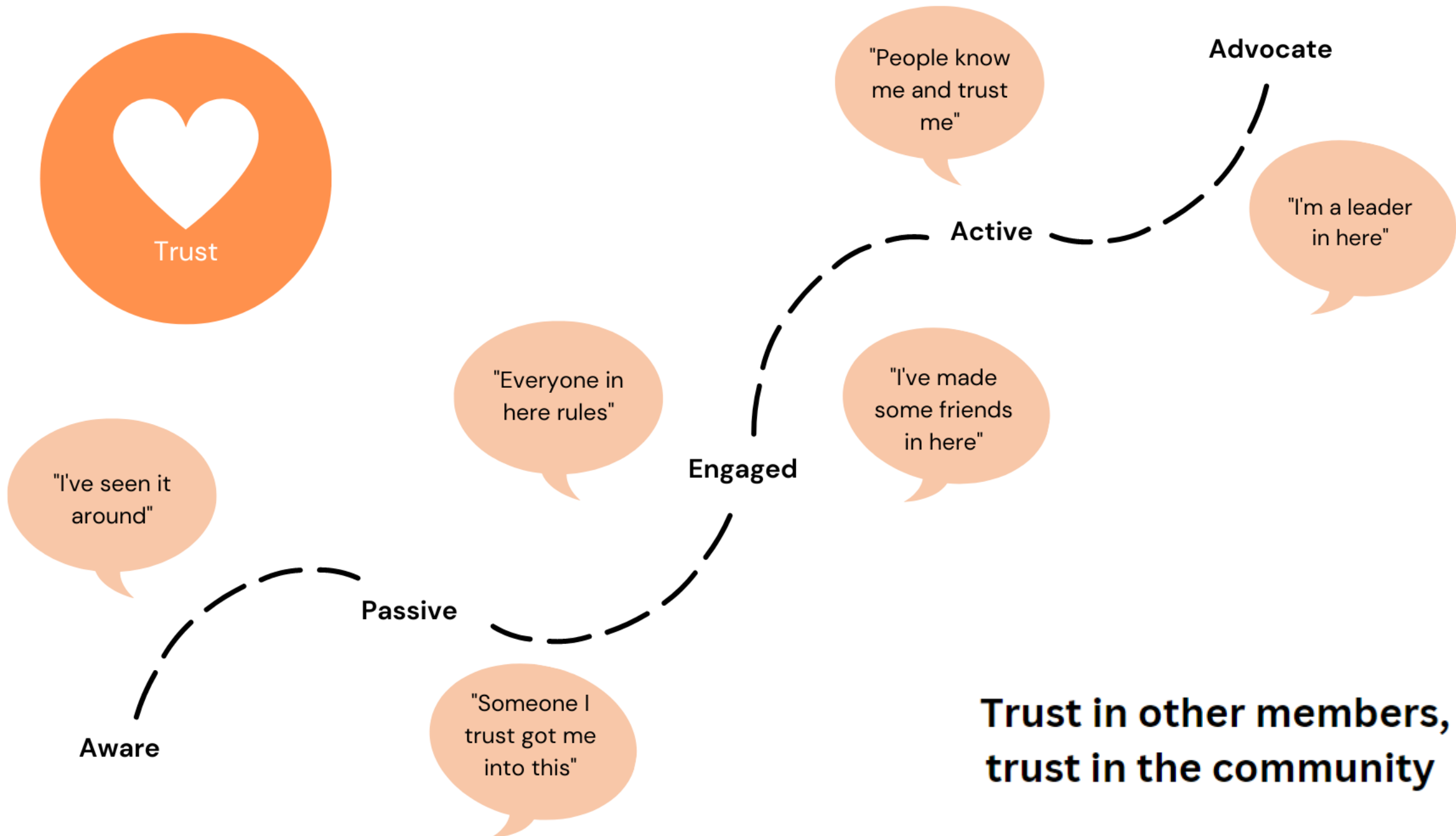
Advocates



The Engagement Cycle









"I wishlisted/
installed the
game"

Aware

Passive

"I'm mostly a
lurker"

"I'm regularly
engaging"

Engaged

"I'm a shitposter/
cosplayer/etc and
people like it"

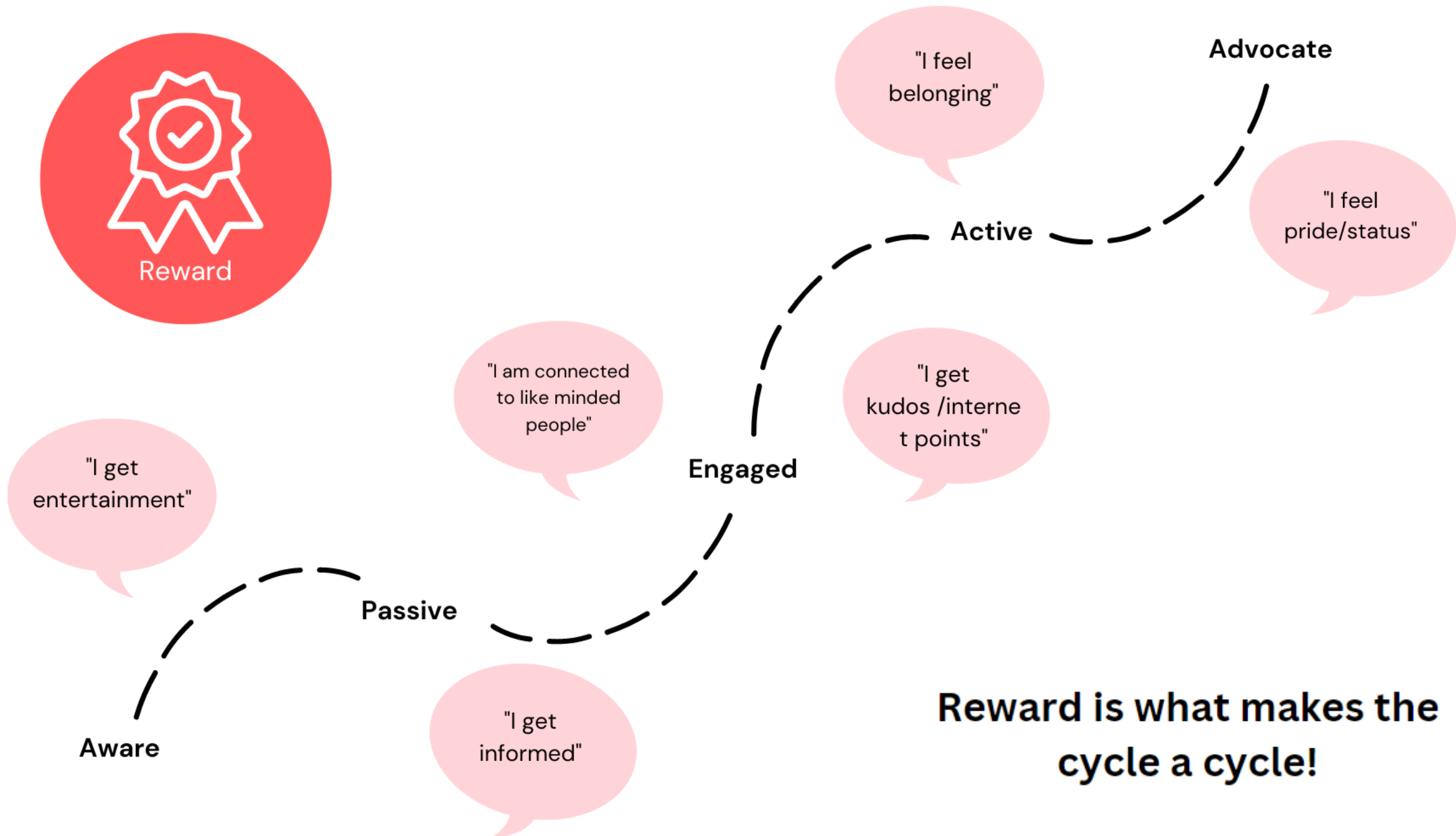
Active

"I've made
some memes
lol"

Advocate

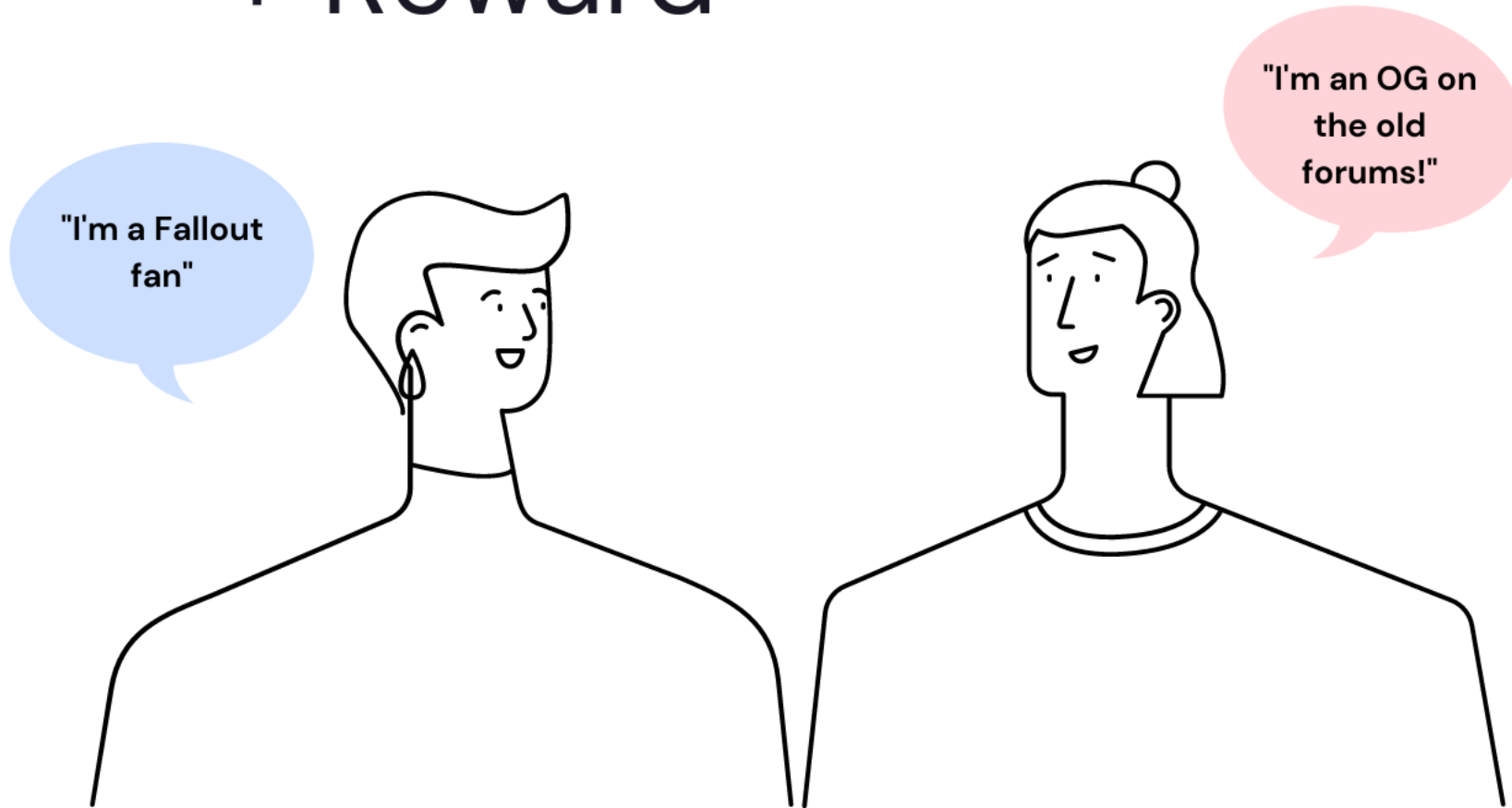
"I'm a big part
of building this
community"

**Engagement and
participation moves a
community forward**



Games have always had built-in Identity + Reward

Even from pre-digital times, the very existence of games have been a mechanism of exploring both concepts.

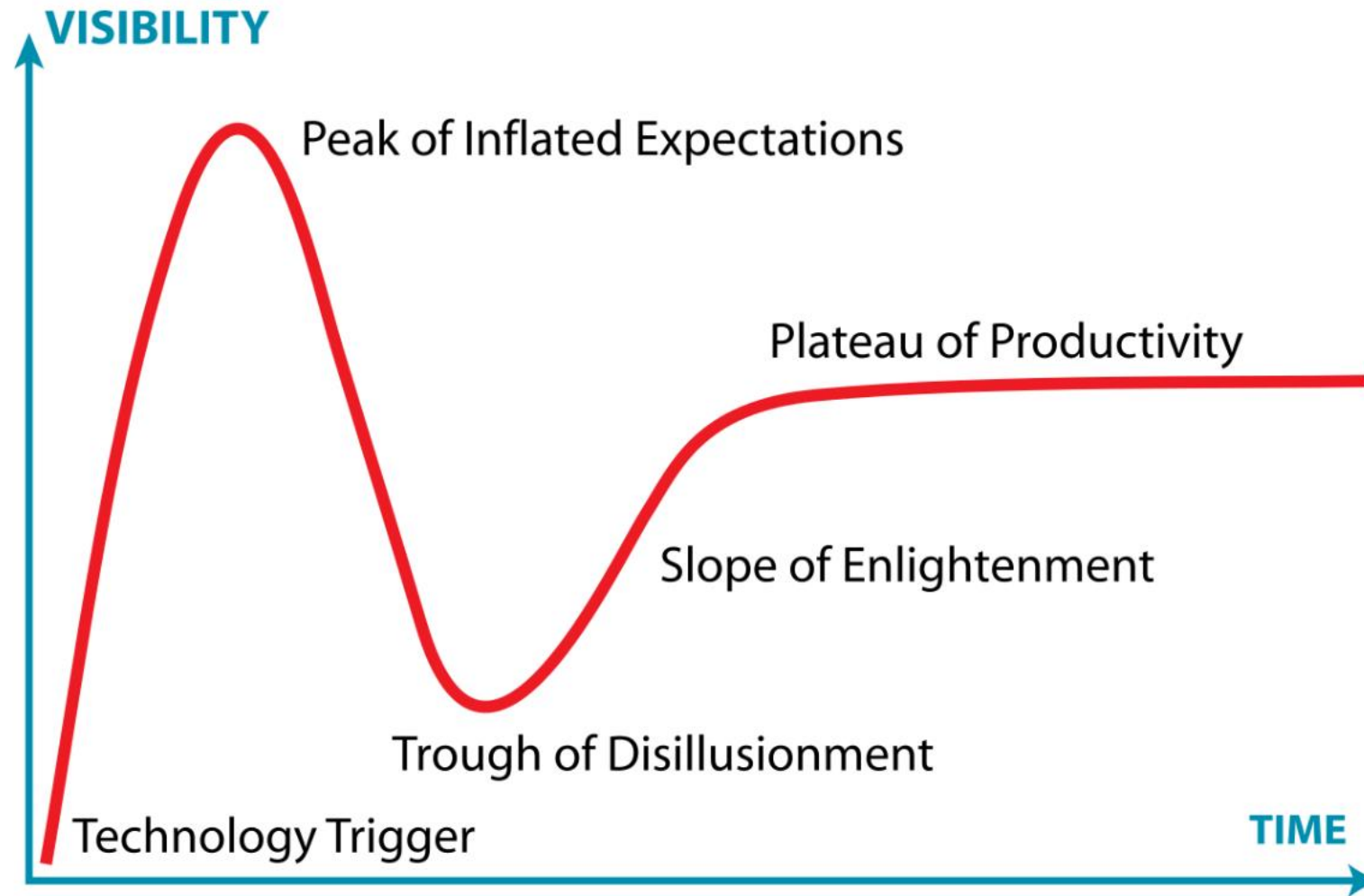


OK, but what is wrong
with that?

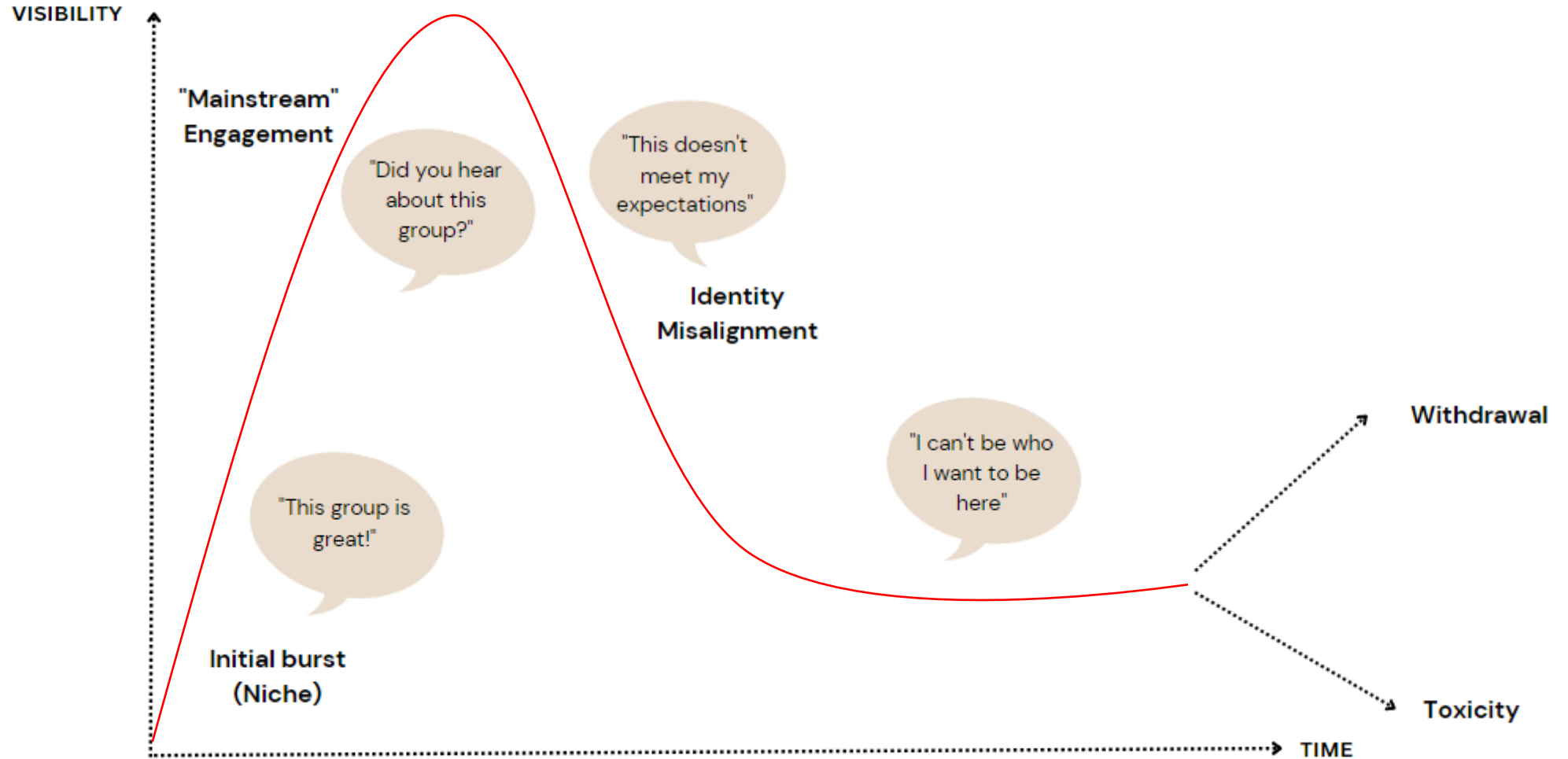


The real problem:
Identity
Misalignment

The Gartner Hype Cycle



The Identity Misalignment Cycle



Identity driven communities explored through the lens of ... ants?



A group where we all pretend to be ants in an ant colony

Private group · 1.8M members



Monica Morales ▶ A group where we all pretend to be ants in an ant colony

12 Apr at 16:56 • 📷

Guyz I just found this on ground while doing my daily duties ! Help me L I F T so we can take it to T H E Q U E E N ! ! ! !



[View previous comments](#)

52 of 21,208



Aleksandar Stanojković 🖐 B I T E

Like · Reply · 15m



Ella Moonlily Kruger 🖐 D I G

Like · Reply · 15m



Joel Gary Neville 🖐 B I T E

Like · Reply · 14m



Jaysa Kameron Malate 🖐 B I T E

Like · Reply · 14m



Devon Bontempo 🖐 B I T E

Like · Reply · 14m



Nicole Orr 🖐 L I F T

Like · Reply · 14m



Donzen Yong 🖐 Lift

Like · Reply · 14m



Helen Hankey 🖐 D I G

It's impossible to fulfil everyone's Identity needs when you reach critical mass



Xiola Bishop

July 29, 2020 · 🌐

I gotta ask, why does everyone on here dumb down the ant? Ants are very intelligent creatures. I really feel like they would have more of a dialect then just screaming "help, take to queen" or asking if everything is a friend.

Either way, I definitely enjoy it here. Just curious. Haha.



30

...



Chris Scott

August 17, 2020 · 🌐

I have noticed some posts lately in relation to diet & sexuality. Can we keep these posts out of the colony please? This is not the forum for it. I don't care what any ants choose to do outside this group & I'm accepting of everyone, but I joined this group to get away from all that b.s. & politics.



Jaded Evermore

Ahem, excuse me my Liege, if I may. The old language is difficult for the visually impaired who use read text to talk. The new age language helps so they may also communicate with the colony. #aalm

Like Reply Share 2y



Aiden Stepp

Ray Gabrielle N O

Like Reply Share 2y

...

Toxicity easily overwhelms as non-toxic contributors withdraw, splinter groups inevitably form



Kevin Crowe

December 14, 2019 · 🌐

Francisco Miguel and Ashlee Baker are now under ThANTos' protection. Anyone who publicly denounces the dead queen will be spared and join us. No ant stands a chance against ThANTos. To those who are still loyal to the dead queen, your days are numbered. ThANTos has alerted his family, his friends and the families of his friends, who have been starving in this harsh winter, of a giant feast. The colony will be obliterated in mere moments. A colony of only 3,000, will be merely a snack for ThANTos himself. Million Ants will be the feast. Do not be foolish, you do not stand a chance.



Aiden Stepp

Brandon Clemmons CONFEDERANT



Like Reply Share 2y



FIRE CLAN 🍷 Ant Colony

Private group · 227 members

Join group

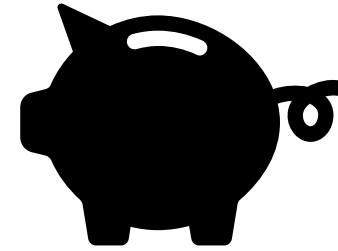
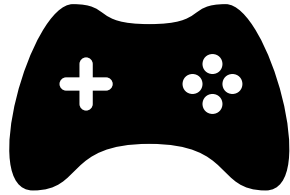


Aiden Stepp

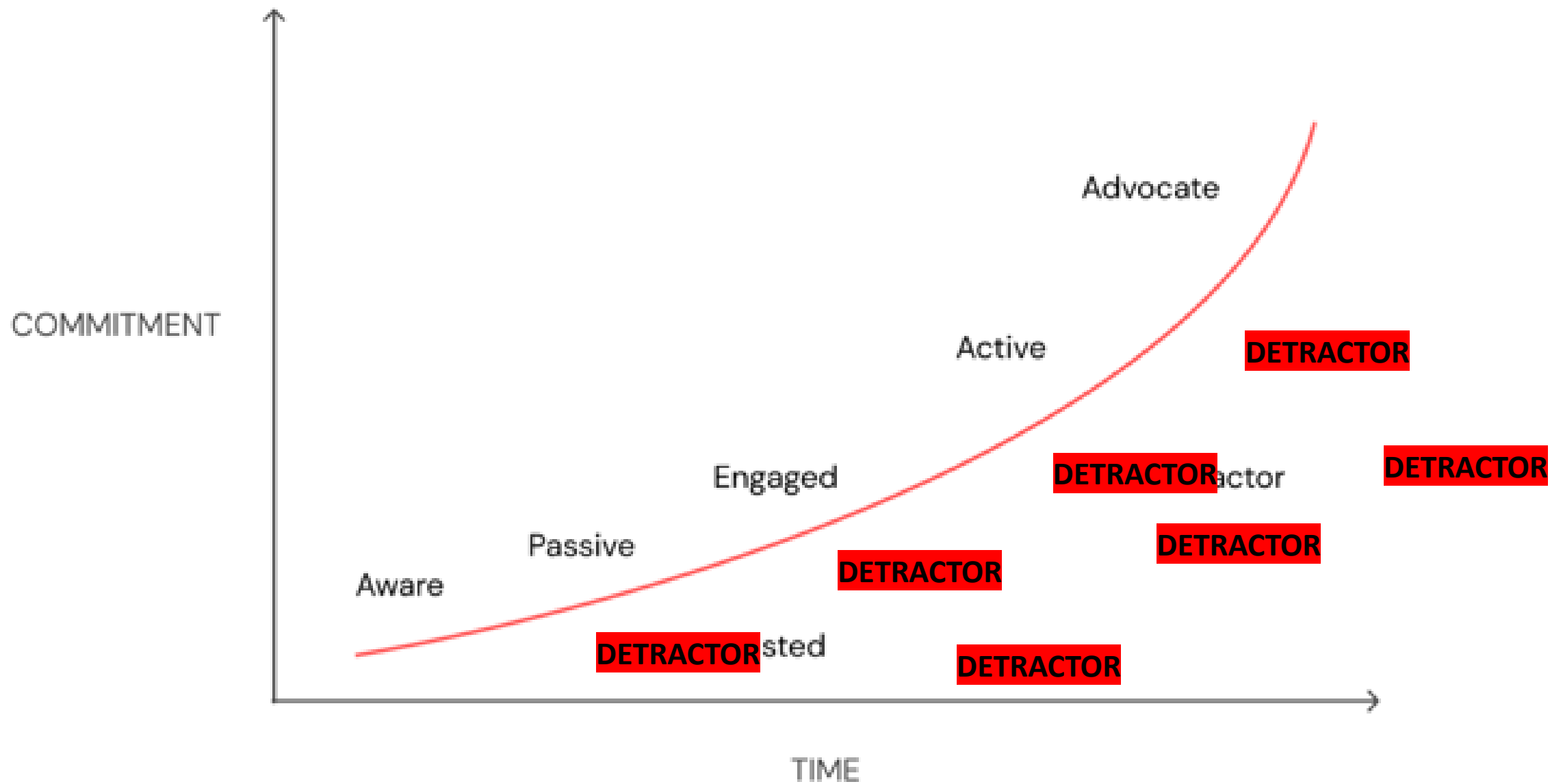
May 25, 2020 · 🌐

The other groups ban on traditional ant language has proved old queen is false queen. Her people are no longer loyal. Her ANTmins cant stop us all. *avenged sevenfold song 'This means war plays in background'*

**Web3 is not the
problem. It is a
symptom of the
problem.**



**Extrinsic Reward drives engagement for all
players, regardless of their Identity Affiliation**



Some home truths.



Our communities are built on Fandom with no other purpose for gathering



Engagement is utilised as a value extraction tool, and we build KPIs on it



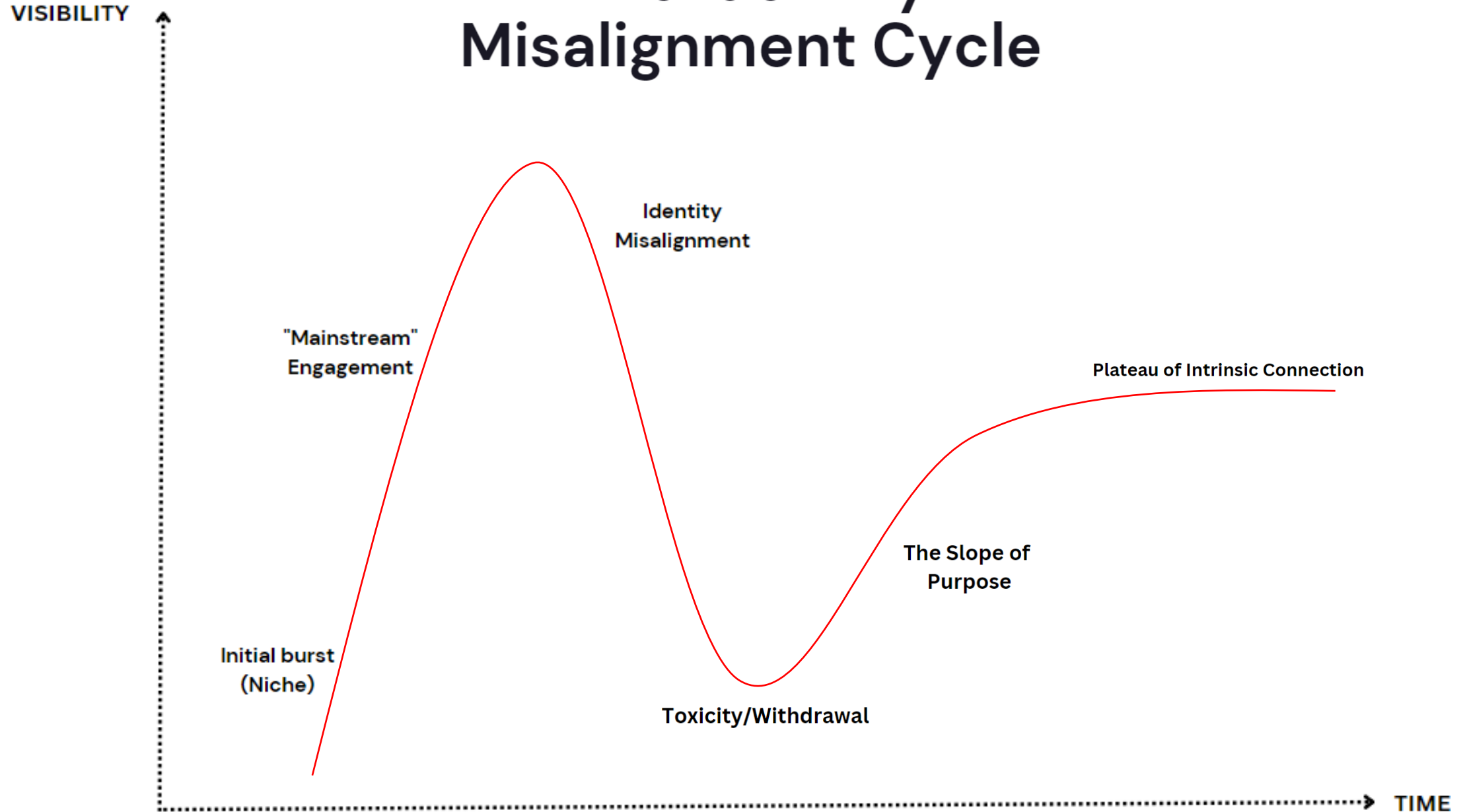
Extrinsic motivation is supercharging this cycle



Trust does not make us money, so we don't build for it.
The commodification of our communities is **damaging us.**



The Identity Misalignment Cycle



Purpose Led Communities: The Way Forward



Snake Identification Australia

Purpose: Identify the Snakes.

Identity



Approved IDer

Non Approved IDer



Trust

A system where it was clear who was speaking with authority – scientific facts, not opinions

A system where you can be guaranteed an Approved IDer has expertise



Engagement

Internal network of approved IDers – big herpetology nerd group chat

A place to learn and appreciate cool snakes

Reward



Easy to understand hierarchy system, you could over time earn status of Approved IDer

You guessed the snake identification correctly! GENIUS

**How do you create
communities that are
purpose-led?**

A message for the bosses.

Thank you.

(If you want to talk community building, the dystopian hell we have created, or all things snake identification, please hit me up on Twitter @kindofsquishy!)