

# CAREER LESSONS FROM PLANNING SURVIVORS

APA WA Annual Conference

Vancouver, WA

October 12, 2022

# Format

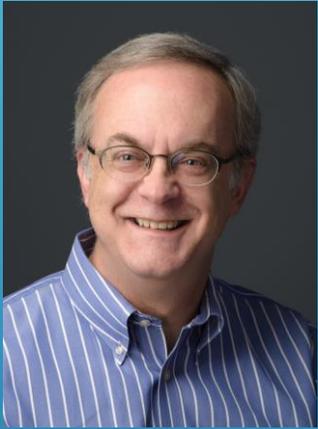
- Series of Pre-Arranged Questions
- Take-Aways from Each Panelist
- General Q&A



# Introduction of Presenters

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# Presenters



**Steve Butler**

Planning & Policy  
Manager  
MRSC



**Mary Lynne  
Evans**

formerly Planning  
Manager,  
*Sno. Co. &  
Shoreline*



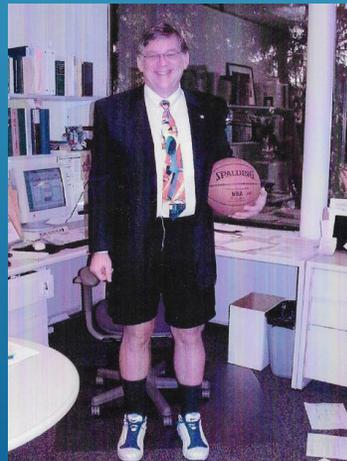
**Allan Giffen**

formerly Planning  
Director  
*Everett*



**Mark Kulaas**

formerly  
Land Services  
Director  
*Douglas Co.*

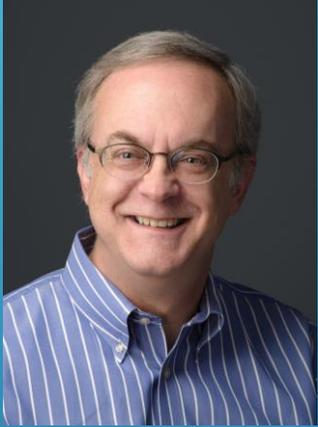


**Jack Pace**

formerly Comm.  
Dev. Director  
*Tukwila*



# Presenters



**Steve Butler**

Planning & Policy  
Manager  
MRSC



**Mary Lynne  
Evans**

Retired



**Allan Giffen**

Retired



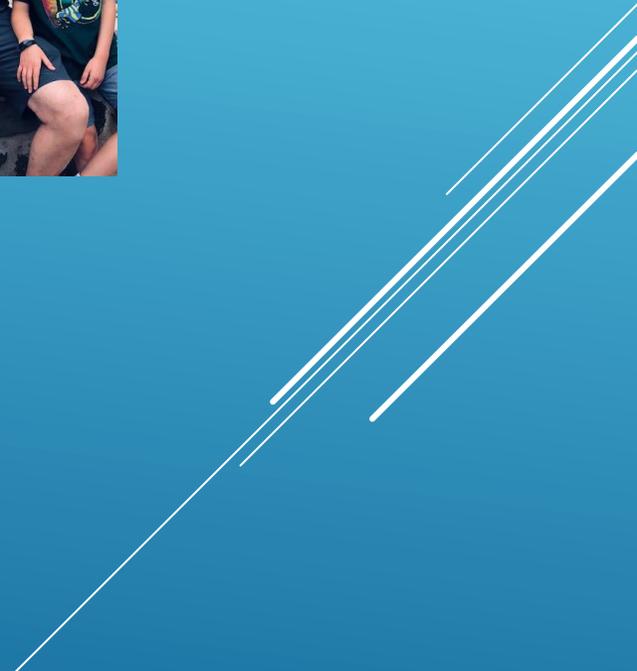
**Mark Kulaas**

Retired



**Jack Pace**

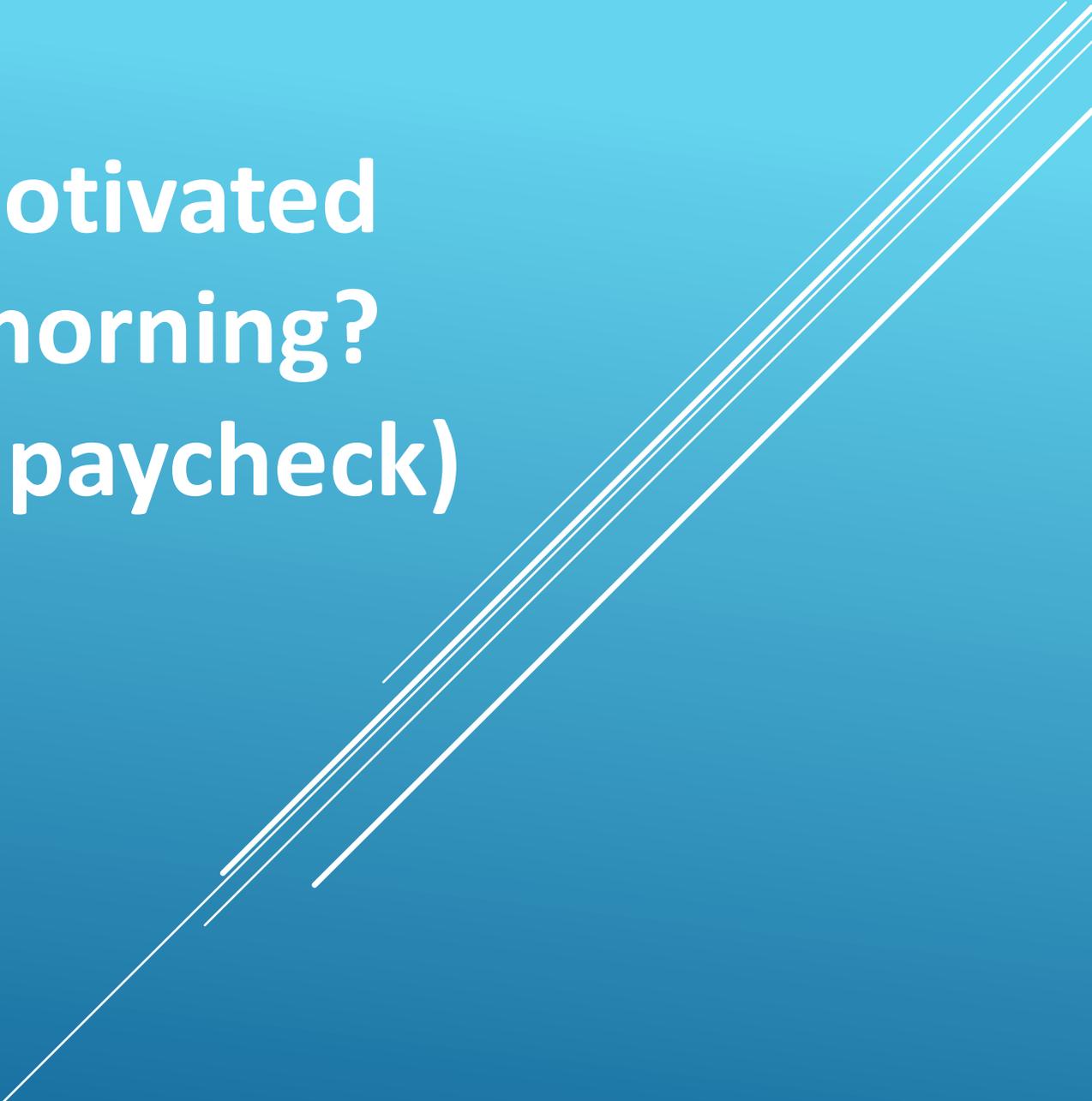
Retired



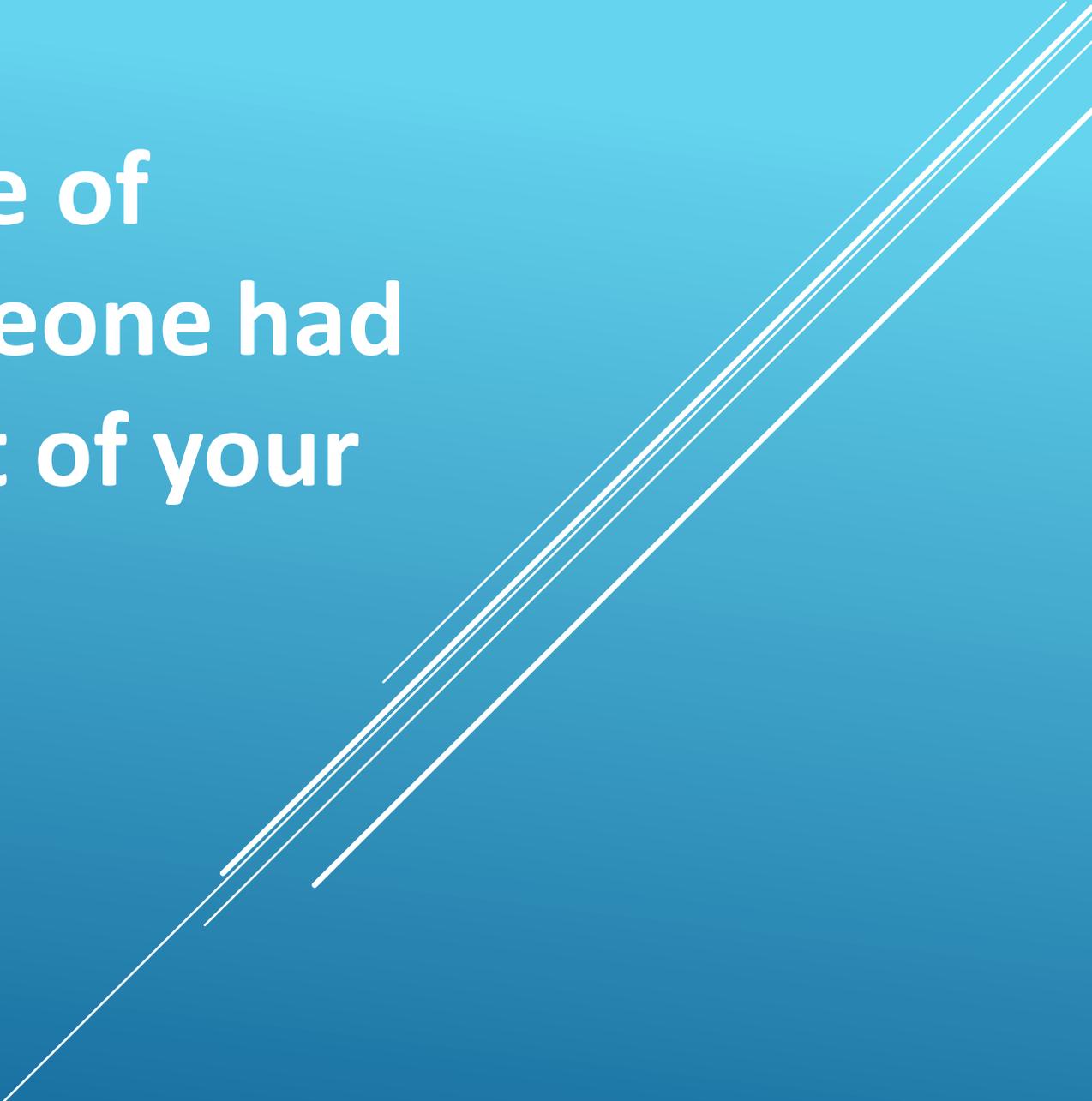
**How long were you a planning  
director or manager?**

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**As a planner, what motivated  
you to get up every morning?  
(Other than a steady paycheck)**

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**What is the one piece of advice you wish someone had given you at the start of your planning career?**

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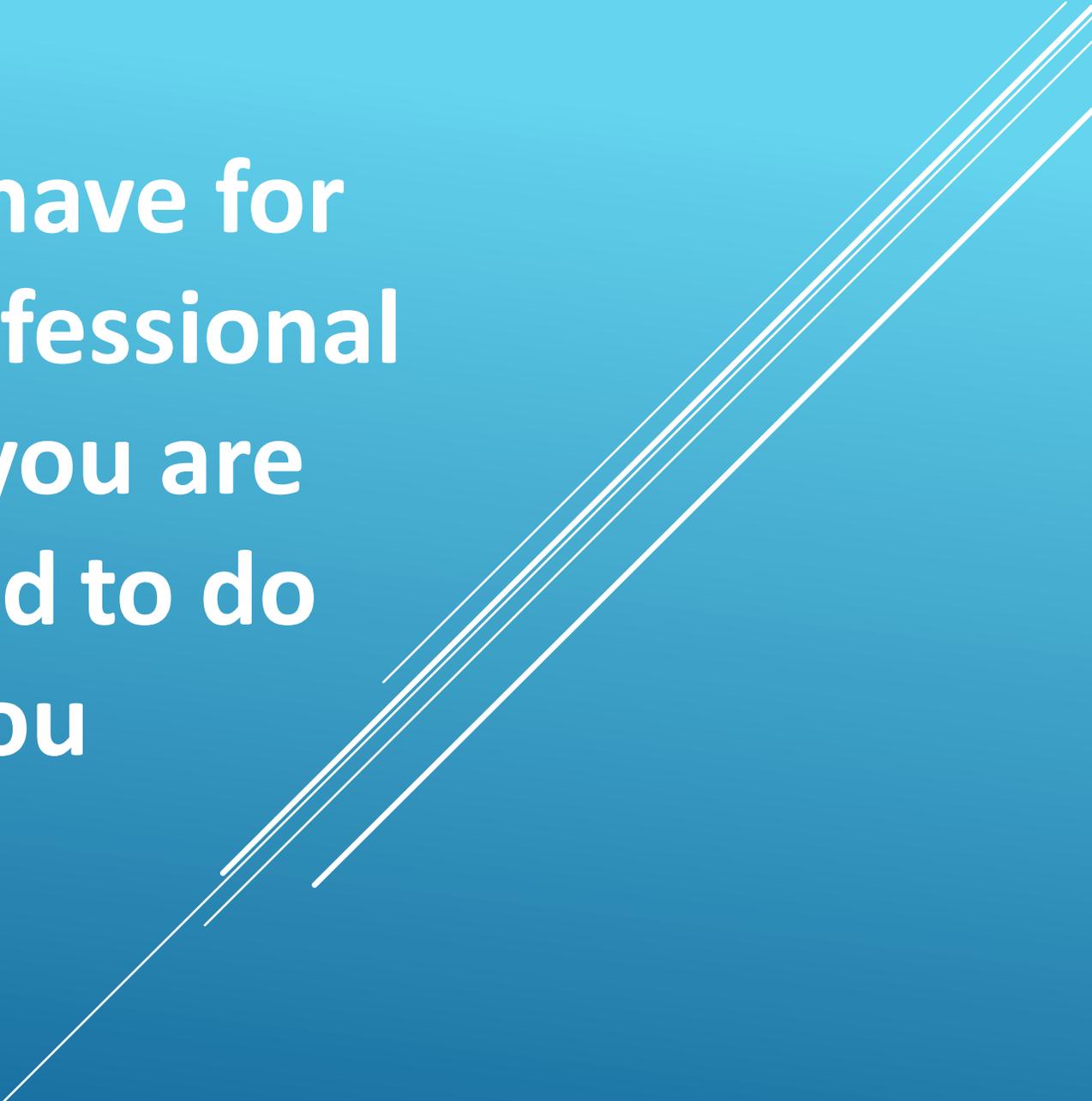
# How to effectively deal with “difficult customers?”

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**How did you deal with the  
politics?**

The image features a solid blue background with a gradient from light to dark. In the bottom right corner, there are several white, parallel diagonal lines of varying lengths and positions, creating a sense of motion or a graphic element.

**What advice do you have for maintaining your professional integrity, esp. when you are expected or pressured to do something at work you know is not right?**

The image features a solid blue background. On the right side, there are several white, parallel diagonal lines that sweep upwards from the bottom towards the top right corner, creating a sense of movement and modern design.

**What is your advice for getting work done with inadequate resources?**

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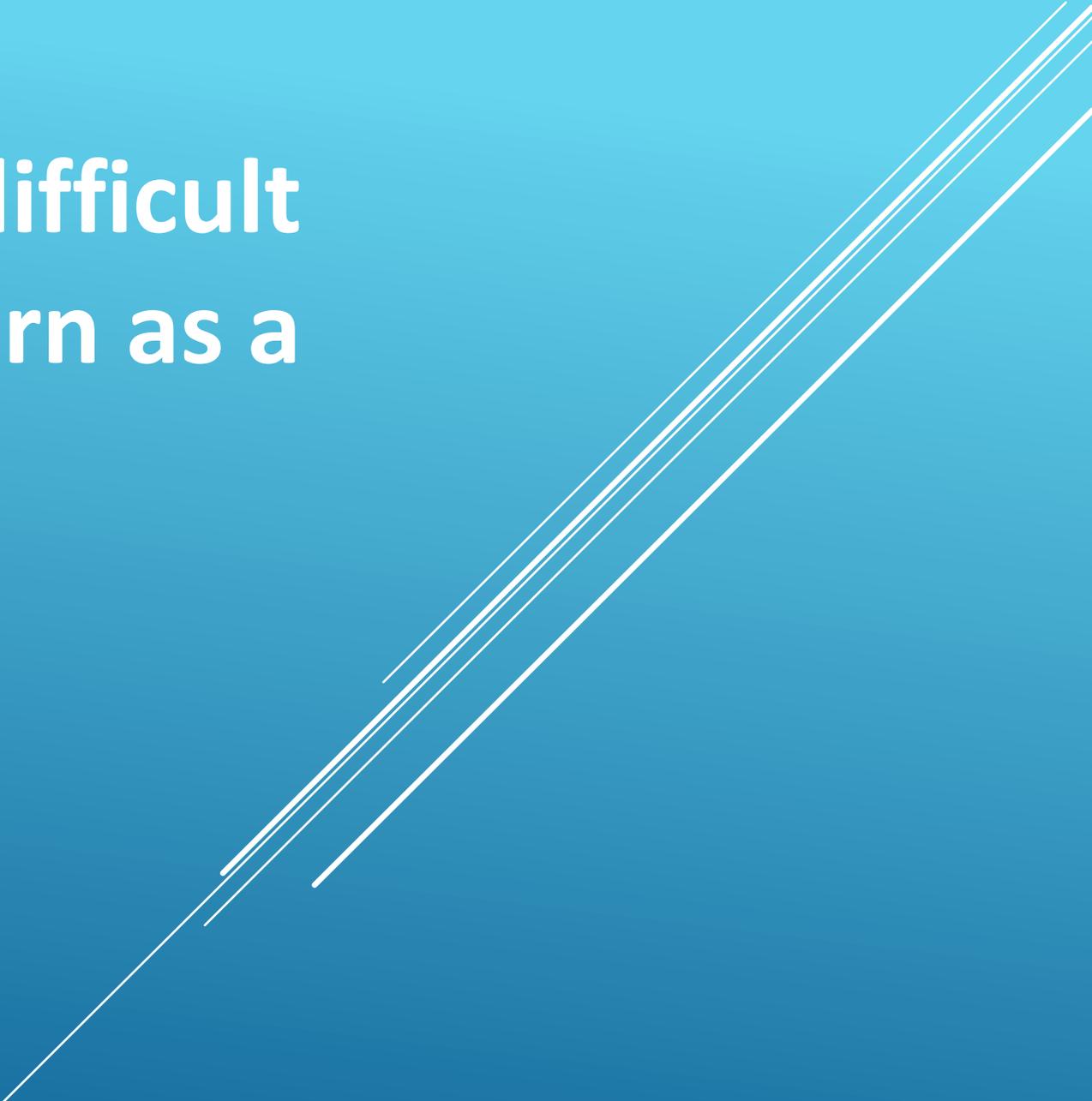
**What are some effective ways  
to build morale in a planning  
department?**

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**What is the most important  
responsibility of a director?**

The image features a solid blue background. In the upper left quadrant, the text 'What is the most important responsibility of a director?' is written in a bold, white, sans-serif font. In the lower right quadrant, there are several thin, white, parallel lines that originate from the bottom left and extend towards the top right, creating a sense of movement or a graphic element.

**What was the most difficult  
lesson you had to learn as a  
director?**

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**Any advice on how to maintain a healthy work/life balance?**

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**What was (and perhaps still is)  
your favorite way to relieve  
job stress?**

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**Any advice about planning for retirement?**

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# Take-Aways from some “Planning Survivors”



# Steve Butler's Take-Aways

Put yourself “in the other person’s shoes” to better understand their viewpoints

Be respectful of everyone, regardless of their position or “rank”

Important to be internally motivated

Long-range planning is important, but implementation is even more so!

Recognize it is the private sector that will be implementing most of your community’s future land use plan

# Mark Kulaas' Take-Aways

You are not your job.

Your family (and pets) love you. What else matters?

Maintain legitimacy.

Follow the AICP Golden Rule: Serve the Public Interest.

Someone somewhere needs your talents.

# Jack Pace's Take-Aways

Be and stay curious – You can't be certain of what the future will be

If you have always done it that way, it is probably **WRONG**

Whatever made you successful in the past won't in the future  
(Lew Platt, HP)

Change is natural and to be expected; continuity is unnatural and to be suspected

# Mary Lynne Evan's Take-Aways

Idea might be good, timing not quite right.

Sense of humor essential.

Profession is noble, but not ultimate....

Look for common denominator in problem: there is always one.

Try not to cross burning bridges.

# Allan Giffen's Take-Aways

Find mentors - ask questions

Positive attitude is important

Never stop learning

Don't take yourself too seriously

Expect things to change

# Questions from the Audience

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**THANK YOU!**

The background is a blue gradient. In the bottom right corner, there are several white lines of varying lengths and thicknesses, all angled upwards from left to right, creating a sense of motion or a modern design element.