

## Worship of the Written Word

### Looks like:

- **If it's not in a memo, it doesn't exist.** Written communication is overvalued above all other forms of communication that organizations rely on for their functioning.
- The organization does not take into account or value **other ways** in which information gets shared, potentially losing out on valuable information or skewing its meaning along the way.
- Those with strong documentation and writing skills are more highly valued, even in organizations where the ability to relate to others (via methods other than the written word) is key to the mission.
- The organization undervalues or dismisses the **emotion, tone and relational impact** of communication since much of this is lost or de-emphasized in written communication
- There exists a culture of low trust and micromanagement (e.g., using unreasonable demands of documentation as **a way to surveil** an employee)
- The multitude of ways individuals integrate and process information (i.e., not just reading) are **dismissed or ignored**
- Often based on an erroneous belief that **institutional memory** is largely communicated in writing.

### Antidotal Questions:

- Are the documents in our organization **relevant and meaningful** to the people they are meant to guide and support?
- Are key written documents **reviewed and updated** as our organization and community evolves?
- Does our organization solely rely on policies and procedures when trying to resolve conflicts or problems?
- What other reflexes can we develop when faced with challenging problems, uneven expectations, and miscommunication?
- Are **people given the time to read important documents**, and also to engage with and ask questions about them?