

Fold

The man stood facing the long wall of the impressively large rectangular room. The room was empty with white walls and ceiling, and a dull grey floor. Although having no discernible light source it was adequately bright and shadowless, as if the walls and ceiling were glowing softly and evenly. If you listened carefully you could perhaps hear a faint humming sound, like a distant tumble-dryer, but other than that the only sound was of the man's breathing.

He walked towards the left-hand corner and placed his left palm against the wall's surface and began to stroke it, feeling its smoothness. It was a very smooth wall. The man spent some time examining it, working his way across its length from top to bottom. Then, about halfway across, he discovered something. A line in the wall running from floor to ceiling - like a crease? He tried to scratch at it with his fingernails but nothing happened. He pressed it. Still nothing. He stood back and stared at it. It was only just visible.

He thought for a little while and stroked his chin, where several days worth of stubble had formed, and slowly and steadily blew air from his nostrils after a deep inhale. His eyes flicked from the corner to his left to the corner to his right and back to the crease. A look of determination appeared on his brow and he strode purposefully to the left corner, placed his hands on the wall, leaned into it and pushed.

Nothing happened but he kept pushing, his face reddened with the strain, small sounds of effort escaped his clenched teeth, he pushed harder. Still nothing. As he was about to give up a second set of hands appeared against the wall, the man turned his head, following the arms from hands to elbow to shoulder, where he met a face staring back at him. This second man nodded his head in the direction of the wall as if to say 'come on, keep pushing'. So he did. The two men pushed, both grunting and sweating and blowing. Slowly half of the wall began to move, pivoting at the crease. The men kept pushing, with heads down between outstretched arms, watching as more and more dull grey floor was revealed beneath their feet, until they could push no more. They stopped, straightened up and turned around. There was a corner where the crease had been. The room was now V-shaped.

As they surveyed this new-shaped room the first man noticed, in the freshly revealed stretch of wall, the outline of a door. He looked at the second man, who was still recovering from all of that effort, and indicated with a nod 'let's open that'. The second man shrugged 'if we must'. They went over to the door and gave it a gentle push. It swung open with little resistance. The two men looked at each other, looked through the door, and back at each other again. The first man raised his eyebrows, 'after you?' he seemed to imply. The second man walked through the door closely followed by the first.

The two men stood facing the long wall of a rectangular room half the size of the one they had just left. The room was identical in style right down to the white walls and ceiling, a dull grey floor and a faint humming sound, like a distant tumble-dryer.

In the left-hand corner two other men were pushing against the wall with all their strength but having no effect. The first man looked at the second and inclined his head towards the third and fourth - 'shall we help them out?' The second man nodded once and started to walk towards the other men, the first man followed. They reached the wall next to the other two men, placed their palms against the wall and began to push. The third and fourth men turned to look at the first and second. First and second stared back and then nodded their heads in the direction of the wall as if to say 'come on, keep pushing'. So they did. The four men pushed, all grunting and sweating and blowing. Slowly half of the wall began to move, pivoting at a crease in its middle. The men kept pushing, with heads down between outstretched arms, watching as more and more dull grey floor was revealed beneath their feet, until they could push no more. They stopped, straightened up and turned around. There was a corner where the crease had been. The room was now V-shaped.

As they surveyed this new-shaped room the third and fourth men noticed, in the freshly revealed stretch of wall, the outline of a door. They looked at the first and second men, who were still recovering from all of that effort, and indicated with a nod 'let's open that'. The first and second men shrugged 'if we must'. They went over to the door and gave it a gentle push. It swung open with little resistance. The four men looked at each other, looked through the door, and back at each other again. The third and fourth men raised their eyebrows, 'after you?' they seemed to imply. The first and second men walked through the door closely followed by the third and fourth.

The four men stood facing the long wall of a rectangular room half the size of the one they had just left. The room was identical in style right down to the white walls and ceiling, a dull grey floor and a faint humming sound, like a distant tumble-dryer.

In the left-hand corner four other men were pushing against the wall with all their strength but having no effect. The first and second men looked at the third and fourth and inclined their heads towards the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth - 'shall we help them out?' The third and fourth men nodded once and started to walk towards the other men, the first and second men followed. They reached the wall next to the other four men, placed their palms against the wall and began to push. The fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth men turned to look at the first, second, third and fourth. First, second, third and fourth stared back and then nodded their heads in the direction of the wall as if to say 'come on, keep pushing'. So they did. The eight men pushed, all grunting and sweating and blowing. Slowly half of the wall began to move, pivoting at a crease in its middle. The men kept pushing, with heads down between outstretched arms, watching as more and more dull grey floor was revealed beneath their feet, until they could push no more. They stopped, straightened up and turned around. There was a corner where the crease had been. The room was now V-shaped.

As they surveyed this new-shaped room the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth men noticed, in the freshly revealed stretch of wall, the outline of a door. They looked at the first, second, third and fourth men, who were still recovering from all of that effort, and indicated with a nod 'let's open that'. The first, second, third and fourth men shrugged 'if we must'. They went over to the door and gave it a gentle push. It swung open with little resistance. The eight men looked at each other, looked through the door, and back at each other again. The fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth men raised their eyebrows, 'after you?' they seemed to imply. The first, second, third and fourth men walked through the door closely followed by the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth.

The eight men stood facing the long wall of a rectangular room half the size of the one they had just left. The room was identical in style right down to the white walls and ceiling, a dull grey floor and a faint humming sound, like a distant tumble-dryer.

In the left-hand corner eight other men were pushing against the wall with all their strength but having no effect. The first, second, third and fourth men looked at the fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth and inclined their heads towards the ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth - 'shall we help them out?' The fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth nodded once and started to walk towards the other men, the first, second, third and fourth men followed. They reached the wall next to the other eight men, placed their palms against the wall and began to push. The ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth men turned to look at the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth. First, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth stared back and then nodded their heads in the direction of the wall as if to say 'come on, keep pushing'. So they did. The sixteen men pushed, all grunting and sweating and blowing. Slowly half of the wall began to move, pivoting at a crease in its middle. The men kept pushing, with heads down between outstretched arms, watching as more and more dull grey floor was revealed beneath their feet, until they could push no more. They stopped, straightened up and turned around. There was a corner where the crease had been. The room was now V-shaped.

As they surveyed this new-shaped room the ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth men noticed, in the freshly revealed stretch of wall, the outline of a door. They looked at the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth men, who were still recovering from all of that effort, and indicated with a nod 'let's open that'. The first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth men shrugged 'if we must'. They went over to the door and gave it a gentle push. It swung open with little resistance. The sixteen men looked at each other, looked through the door, and back at each other again. The ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth men raised their eyebrows, 'after you?' they seemed to imply. The first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth men walked through the door closely followed by the ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth.

The sixteen men stood facing the long wall of a rectangular room half the size of the one they had just left. The room was identical in style right down to the white walls and ceiling, a dull grey floor and a faint humming sound, like a distant tumble-dryer.

In the left-hand corner sixteen other men were pushing against the wall with all their strength but having no effect. The first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth men looked at the ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth and inclined their heads towards the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth, twenty-first, twenty-second, twenty-third, twenty-fourth, twenty-fifth, twenty-sixth, twenty-seventh, twenty-eighth, twenty-ninth, thirtieth, thirty-first and thirty-second - 'shall we help them out?' The ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth nodded once and started to walk towards the other men, the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth men followed. They reached the wall next to the other sixteen men, placed their palms against the wall and began to push. The seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth, twenty-first, twenty-second, twenty-third, twenty-fourth, twenty-fifth, twenty-sixth, twenty-seventh, twenty-eighth, twenty-ninth, thirtieth, thirty-first and thirty-second men turned to look at the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth. First, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth stared back and then nodded their heads in the direction of the wall as if to say 'come on, keep pushing'. So they did. The thirty-two men pushed, all grunting and sweating and blowing. Slowly half of the wall began to move, pivoting at a crease in its middle. The men kept pushing, with heads down between outstretched arms, watching as more and more dull grey floor was revealed beneath their feet, until they could push no more. They stopped, straightened up and turned around. There was a corner where the crease had been. The room was now V-shaped.

As they surveyed this new-shaped room the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth, twenty-first, twenty-second, twenty-third, twenty-fourth, twenty-fifth, twenty-sixth, twenty-seventh, twenty-eighth, twenty-ninth, thirtieth, thirty-first and thirty-second men noticed, in the freshly revealed stretch of wall, the outline of a door. They looked at the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth men, who were still recovering from all of that effort, and indicated with a nod 'let's open that'. The first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth men shrugged an 'if we must'. They went over to the door and gave it a gentle push. It swung open with little resistance. The thirty-two men looked at each other, looked through the door, and back at each other again. The seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth, twenty-first, twenty-second, twenty-third, twenty-fourth, twenty-fifth, twenty-sixth, twenty-seventh, twenty-eighth, twenty-ninth, thirtieth, thirty-first and thirty-second men raised their eyebrows, 'after you?' they seemed to imply. The first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth men walked through the door closely followed by the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth, twenty-first, twenty-second, twenty-third, twenty-fourth, twenty-fifth, twenty-sixth, twenty-seventh, twenty-eighth, twenty-ninth, thirtieth and thirty-first. The thirty-second didn't quite fit.