



Giving Effective Feedback

tips for new technical leaders

course takeaways

- your **social style** and **potential blind spots** in your ability to lead effectively
- key **characteristics** and a **simple formula** for giving **effective feedback**
- **conversation templates** to facilitate **career discussions** with software engineers
- tips for facilitating **straightforward, productive, and enjoyable one-on-ones**

what are social styles?

- observable behaviors
 - what “is” vs why, cause, or motivation of those behaviors
- based on outsiders’ impressions (not self impressions)
- can help describe how you are perceived by others

how do social styles manifest?

- how you relate to others
- how you lead
- how you use your time
- how you make decisions

why is it valuable to understand social styles?

- helps you predict behavior
- allows you to **personalize** your leadership approach
- provides insight into how other people operate

let's figure out
your social style.



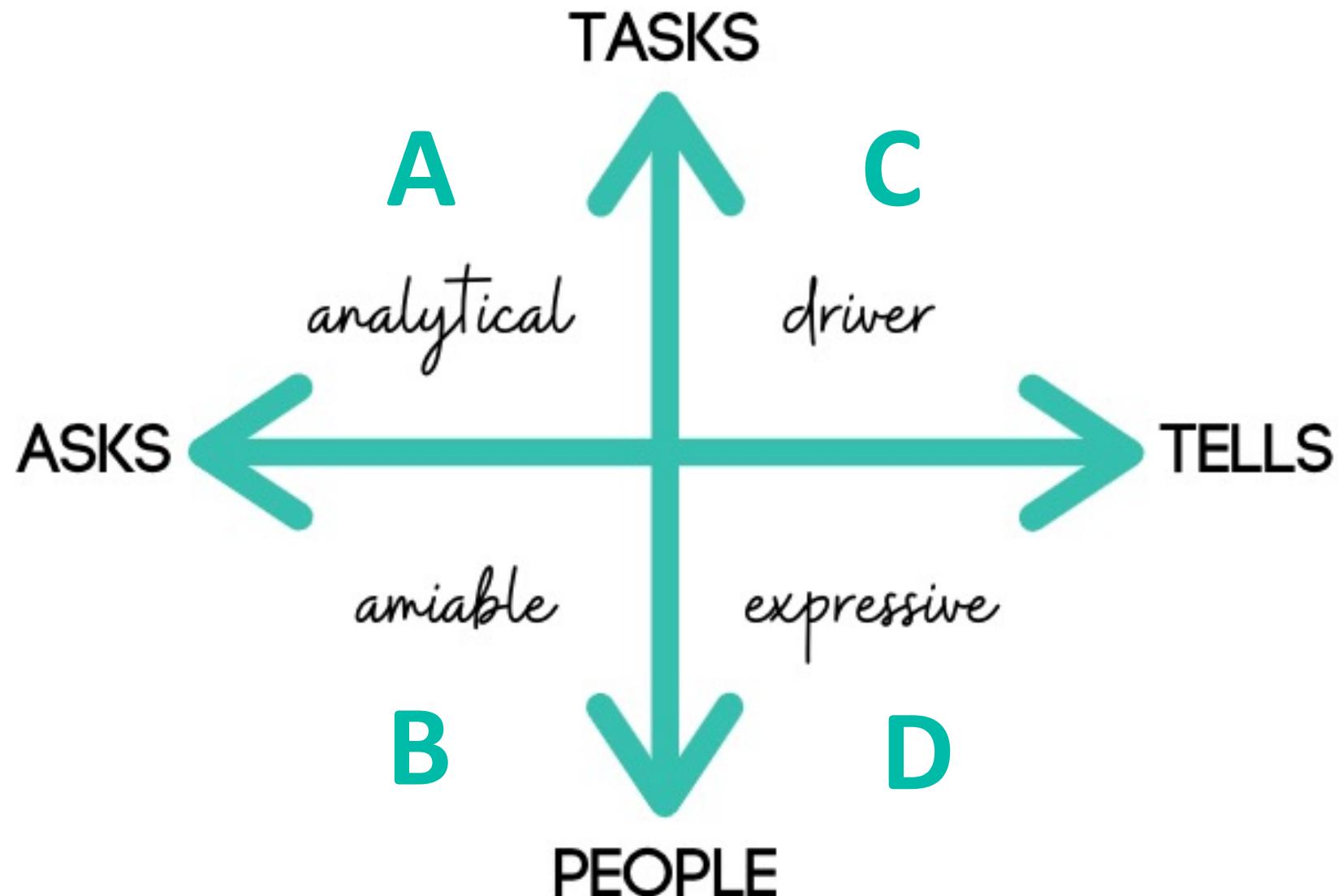
activity:
handout pages 1 - 3

A analytical

B amiable

C driver

D expressive



Based on David Merrill and Roger Reid's *Social Styles*

at a very high
level

analytical

serious and more
exacting

driver

strong willed and more
emotionally controlled

amiable

easy going and
supportive

expressive

outgoing and
energizing

driver C

AT BEST:

honest
strong willed
independent
practical
efficient
determined

AT WORST:

harsh
controlling
abrasive
pushy
power seeking



A analytical

AT BEST:

efficient
focused
realistic
independent
determined

AT WORST:

critical
indecisive
hard to please
unemotional

driver C

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B amiable

AT BEST:

loyal
supportive
respectful
dependable
perceptive

AT WORST:

needy
unsure
dependent
easily manipulated

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AT BEST:

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AT WORST:

needy
unsure
dependent
easily manipulated

expressive D

AT BEST:

ambitious
energizing
inspiring
enthusiastic
visionary
fun loving
influential
friendly

AT WORST:

overbearing
unrealistic
attacking
egotistical
undisciplined
manipulative

what they talk
about

analytical

I think...

driver

I will....

amiable

I feel...

expressive

I want.....

communication style

analytical

Quieter
Voice does not vary much
Indirect assertion
Specific and concise
Clear and logical

driver

Louder
Uses voice to emphasize points
Talks fast
States and commands
Direct and to the point
Can be outspoken
Formal

amiable

Quieter
Voice does not vary
much
Dreamy thoughts
May seem vague
Informal

expressive

Louder
Uses voice to emphasize points
Animated and excited
Informal

body language

analytical

Leans back
Limited or no facial
expressions
Limited eye contact
Limited gestures

driver

Leans forward
Limited or no facial
expressions
Intense eye contact
Deliberate movements

amiable

Leans back
Some facial
expressions
Good eye contact
Regular gestures

expressive

Leans forward
Controlled facial
expression
Good eye contact
Lots of gestures

work preference

analytical

Thorough
Attention to detail
Step by step procedures
Concentrates on one
thing at a time

driver

Works in priority order
Multitasks
Intense and driven
Generates ideas

amiable

Easy going and cooperative
Always willing to be of service
Goes with the flow
No strong sense of urgency

expressive

Unstructured
Prefers freedom
Lots of people interaction

what they
struggle with

analytical

Taking risks
Making decisions

driver

Emotions, needs, and
interests of others
Listening

amiable

Giving feedback
Conflict
Creating new products/vision

expressive

Time management
Follow through

strengths →
potential weakness

analytical

Prudent → indecisive
Task-oriented →
impersonal
Systematic →
bureaucratic

driver

Independent → poor
collaborator
Results oriented →
impersonal
Candid → abrasive

amiable

Supportive → permissive
People oriented →
inattentive to task
Diplomatic → conflict avoider

expressive

Articulate → poor listener
Fast-paced → impatient
Visionary → impractical

leading social styles

analytical

don't expect to see emotions
avoid chaos
provide tasks with details, alternatives, and precedent
keep meetings short

driver

work fast towards goals
keep meetings short
provide challenges
expect competition
be precise
provide material/details to decide on

amiable

provide routines and structure
avoid risks and ambiguous situations
avoid necessity to make urgent decisions

expressive

avoid skeptical statements
avoid tasks with too much detail and implementation (hinders creativity)
expect/provide distractions

motivating social styles

analytical

be thorough and well-prepared
ask questions and be specific

driver

get to the point
talk about results and clear options

amiable

listen intently
soften your language and assume they will likely take things personally

expressive

show how interested you are in their ideas
embrace their enthusiasm

when should you adapt your social style?

when something important is at stake

when the other person is under stress

when establishing a new relationship

ways to adapt your style

analytical

be cautious of your tendency to focus on perfection.

demonstrate supportive skills like listening, offering positive reinforcement, and developing relationships

driver

be cautious of your tendency to control others and the situation.

demonstrate supportive skills and action like listening and questioning

amiable

be cautious of your tendency to resist new or ambiguous situations.

demonstrate directive skills such as negotiation and assertiveness

expressive

be cautious of your tendency to require approval from others.

demonstrate directive skills such as assertiveness, focus, and attention to detail

who do you find difficult to work with?

make effort to be

to support their

for decisions, give them

analytical	amiable	driver	expressive
ACCURATE	COOPERATIVE	EFFICIENT	INTERESTING
PRINCIPLES & THINKING	RELATIONSHIPS & FEELINGS	DECISIONS & ACTIONS	VISION & INTUITION
EVIDENCE & FACTS	ASSURANCE & SUPPORT	OPTIONS & CONTROL	TESTIMONY & INCENTIVE



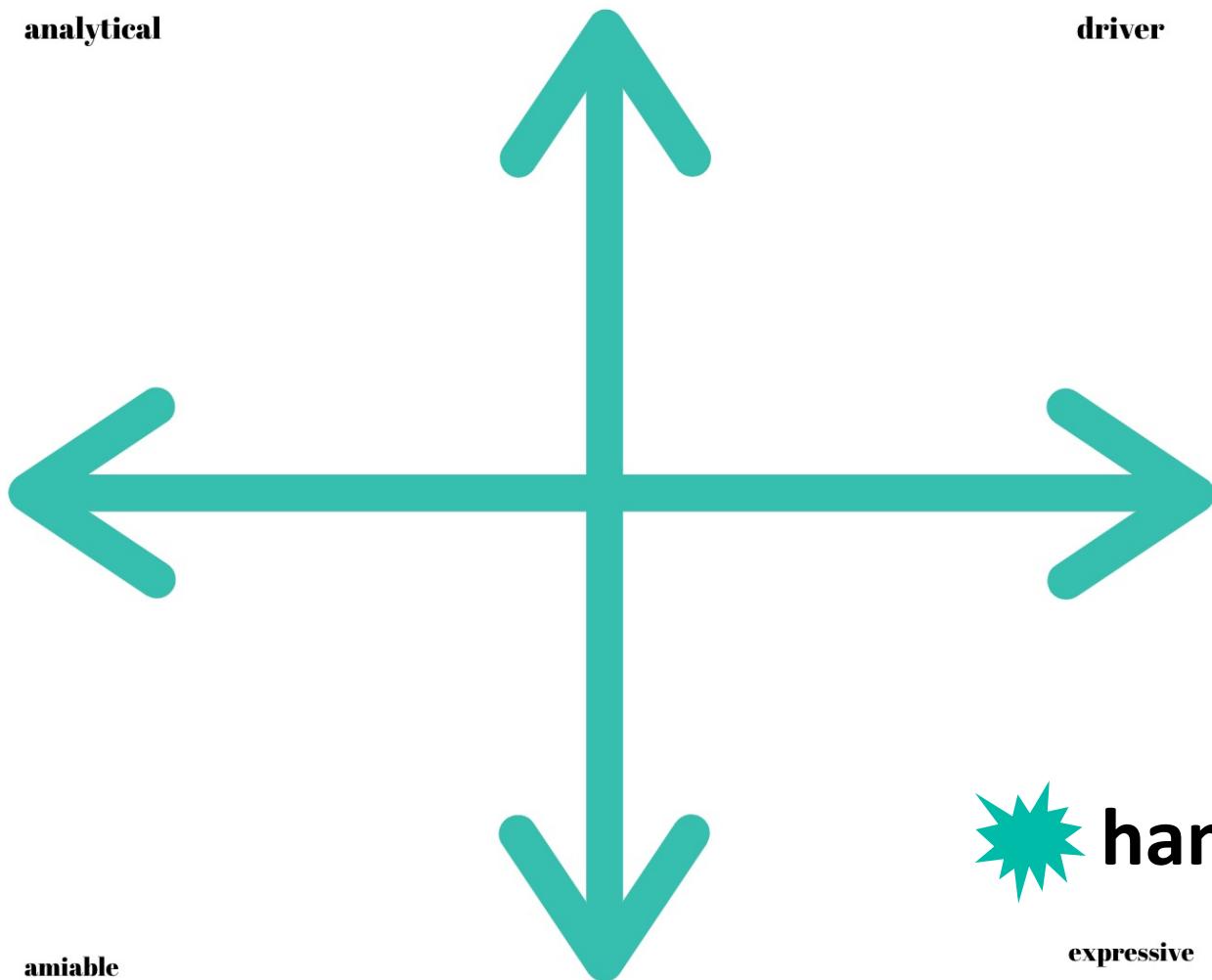
your style

their style



	Driver	Expressive	Amiable	Analytical
Driver	Maintain peer status, share the responsibilities of leadership	Shift your focus to a more general outlook, be less formal	Slow your pace and focus more on the relationships	Focus on some detail in relation to the goals
Expressive	Shift focus more toward the goal, less generalities. Be a little less casual	Listen more, take notes, don't try to outtalk each other	Slow your pace and focus more on the relationship	Focus on some detail in relation to the goals
Amiable	Shift Focus more toward the goal, less generalities	Pick up the pace, focus less on the relationship	Focus more on the issues at hand and less on popularity and networking	Focus less on the relationship and more on details
Analytical	Pick up the pace and focus less on details and more on the goal	Focus a little less on detail. Be a little more causal	Focus a little more on the relationship. Be more casual	Try to look at ideas more objectively. You both need to be right.

chart your team



handout page 4

expressive

balancing
your
leadership
style

results

relationships



are you more...

results-oriented:

- focuses on efficiency & deadlines
- task-oriented
- logical & organized
- takes charge

relationship-oriented:

- focuses on people
- supportive & encouraging
- good listener
- concerned & caring
- develops others

balance your style

results-oriented:

- learn to listen patiently
- provide frequent feedback
- get to know people

relationship-oriented:

- conduct difficult conversations
- provide clear expectations and deadlines

balance your style

results-oriented:

“I appreciate when
you...”

relationship-oriented:

“my expectations of you
are...”

course takeaways

- your social style and potential blind spots in your ability to lead effectively
- key characteristics and a simple formula for giving effective feedback
- conversation templates to facilitate career discussions with software engineers
- tips for facilitating straightforward, productive, and enjoyable one-on-ones



why is giving feedback so
difficult?

what if they get **defensive**?

start to yell?

burst into tears?

refuse to listen?

can't find a way to fix the issue?

am I being **too nice**?

am I being **too harsh**?



survival >

reason and
emotional control

we (as leaders) don't set clear expectations.

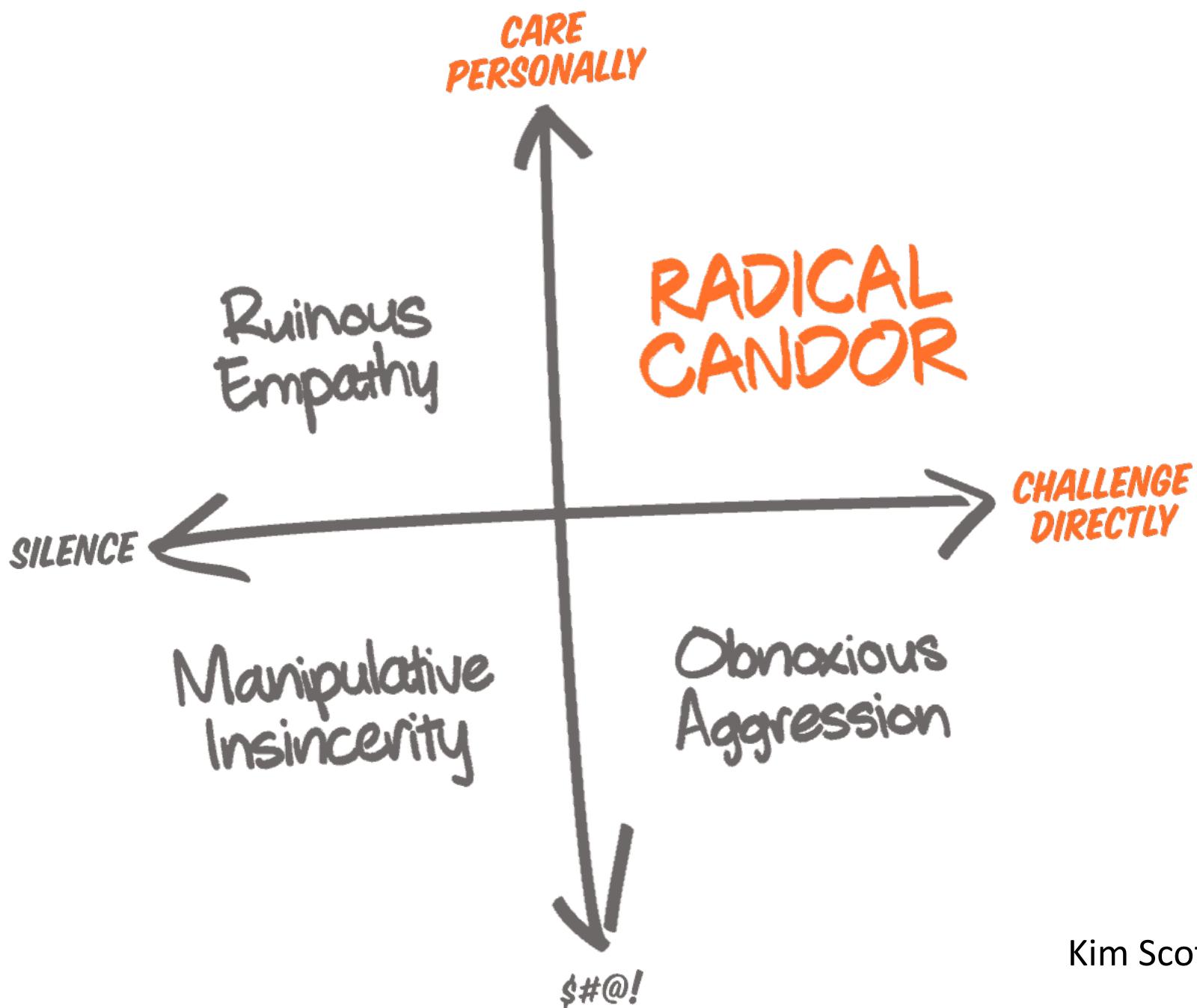
we don't adapt our social style.

radical candor



care personally
challenge directly

Kim Scott, Radical Candor



Kim Scott, Radical Candor

describe an experience when you didn't give feedback, **but wish you did.**

describe an experience when you received feedback that **you appreciated** and that was delivered in a **helpful and caring way.**



**feedback activity:
handout page 5**

characteristics of effective
feedback

what is the person doing well?

what does the person need to work to improve?



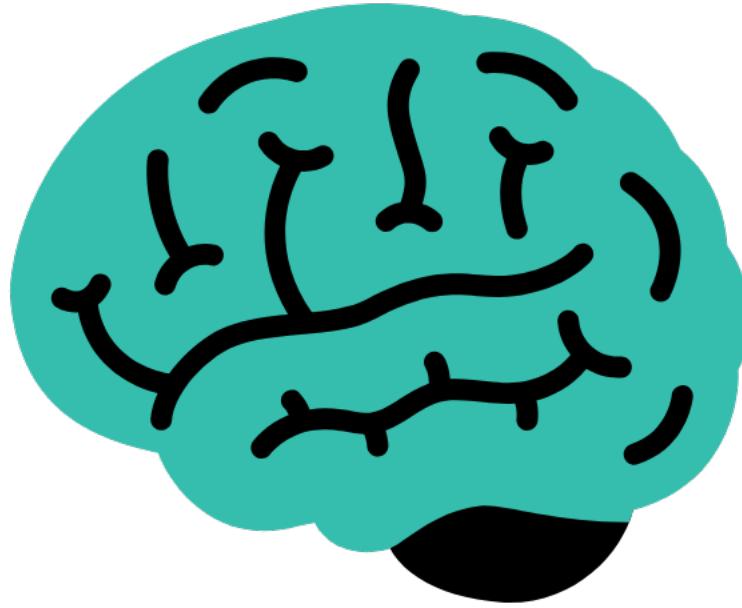
framed in context



timely



actionable

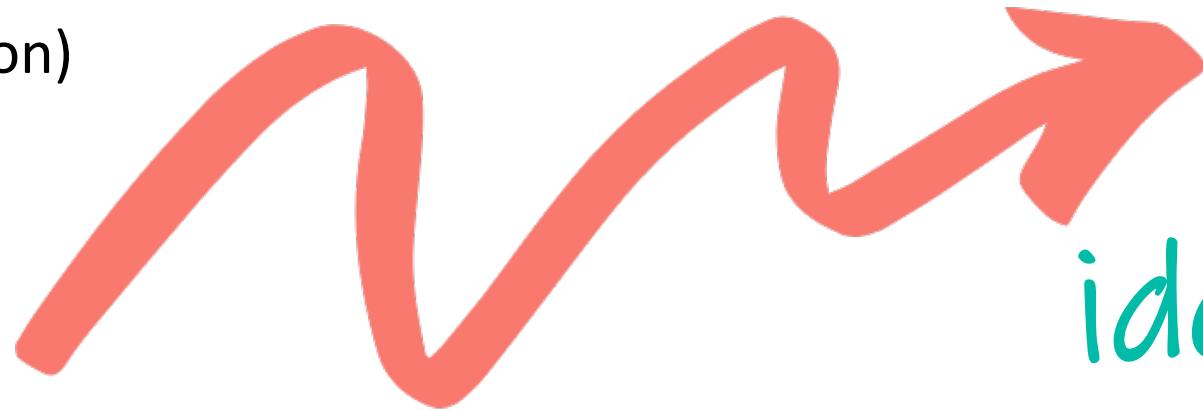


intentional

behavior

(your observation)

next steps



outcome

of the behavior

ideal outcome

examples of feedback

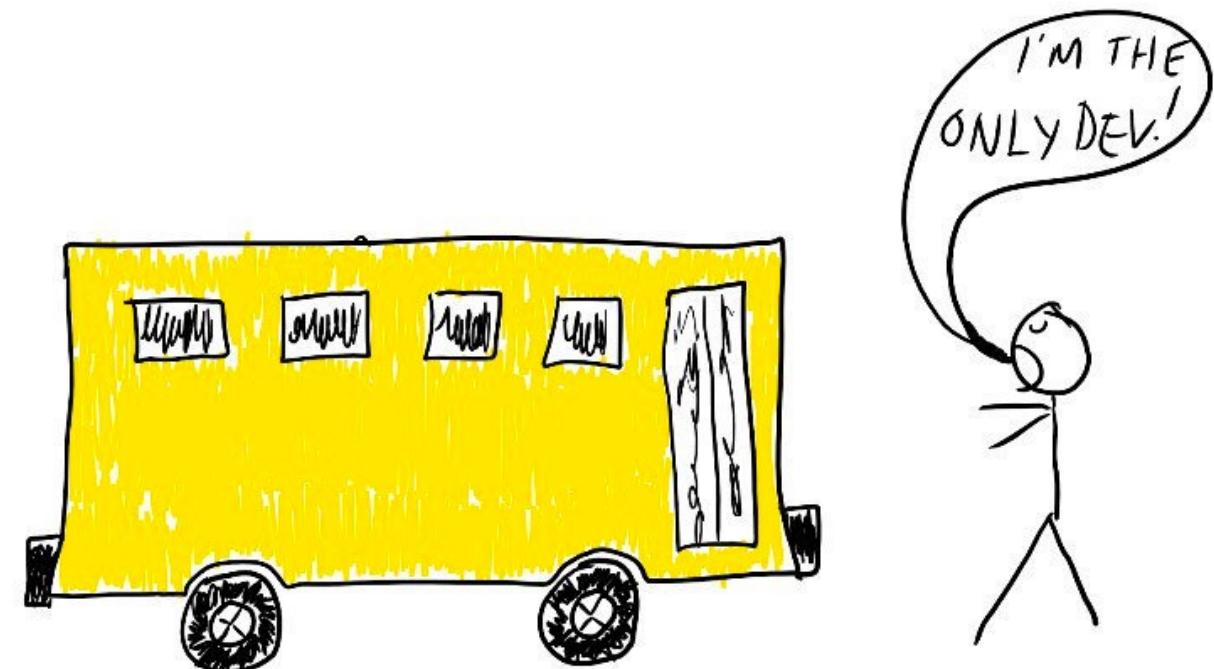
rules over one piece of the application

only person who knows the ins/outs of every class, method, pattern of that area of the codebase

constantly tweaking / not letting others in

gasp merges own PRs because no one else can review

Gerald: the domain hoarder



Gerald, I've noticed that you only seem to be picking up work related to the consumer event service.

} behavior

this has prevented the rest of the team from understanding that area of the codebase

} outcome

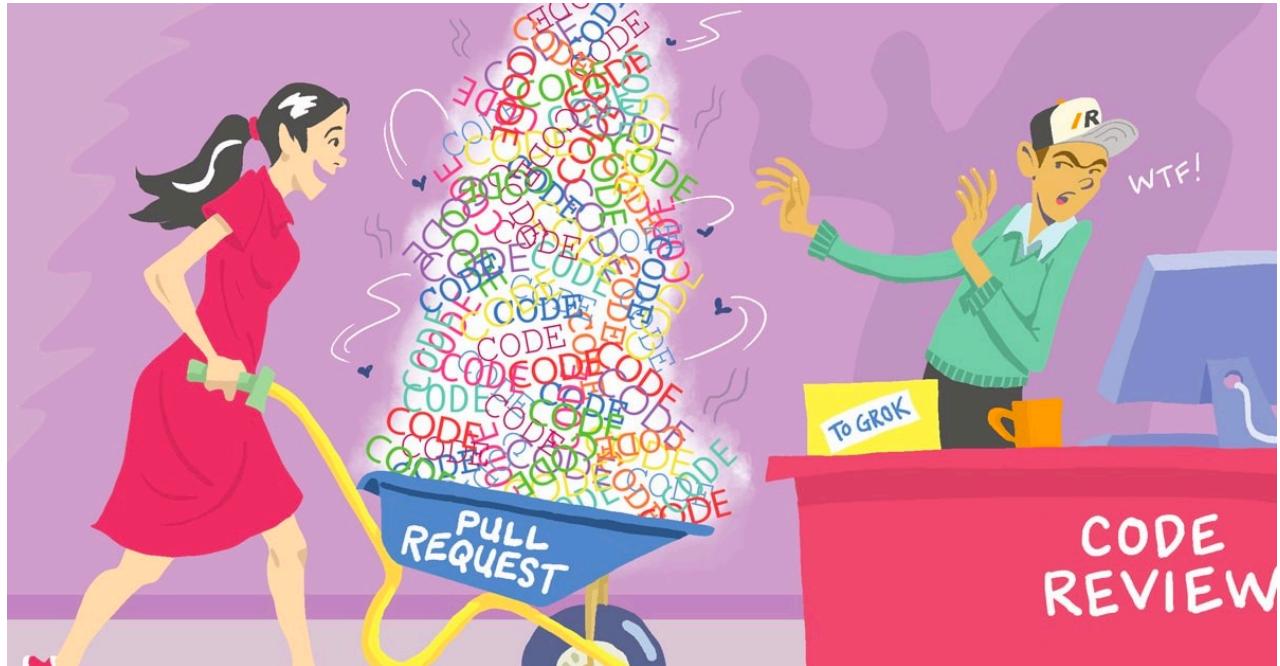
next sprint, please pick up a feature outside of this service

} next steps

this will remove future bottlenecks in development/support of the application because it will enable the rest of the team to learn more about the service and allow you to expand your understanding of the rest of the application

} ideal outcome

Donna: the giant pull request



person who goes quiet and
(all at once) presents a
giant PR

might be afraid of others
seeing WIP

lower quality review
(rushed/overwhelmed)

less collaborative

Donna, I've noticed that you haven't shared an update on this feature in over a week

} behavior

this has prevented the rest of the team from understanding your progress

} outcome

please share daily updates on your progress for this feature starting at standup tomorrow

} next steps

this will promote better collaboration across the team and allow other team members to assist you with blockers as soon as they come up. Daily progress updates can also help us understand and fix potential issues with requirements

} ideal outcome

Ralph, the (crutch) PR reviewer

person who is too prescriptive in PR reviews

becomes a harmful crutch for junior developers and blocks them from growing confidence / thinking independently



Ralph, I noticed that you submitted comments on Nellie's last pull request that included fixes without including any reasoning for those suggestions

this prevented Nellie from learning the fundamental concepts that she needs to understand this technique

please try to ask more questions in code reviews, as opposed to just providing the answers

this will promote a learning culture that will empower team members to continue enhancing their technical skills and confidence

} behavior

} outcome

} next steps

} ideal outcome

Sasmita, tardy team member

consistently late for team meetings without notice

requires others to catch her up after discussions because she misses key details



practice using the feedback formula

behavior

outcome

next steps

ideal outcome

Sasmita, I noticed that you arrived late to standups the past 4 days

} behavior

this causes a distraction to the team as they are required to repeat their updates once you join

} outcome

please try to join meetings on time in the future, or let the team know if you will be late

} next steps

this will promote better communication and expectations across the team

} ideal outcome

catering *feedback* to different social styles

situation: Taylor has a habit of checking in her code and moving on to the next task without paying attention to the required upstream and downstream steps needed to bring the task “over the line”

analytical: Taylor, I noticed that you completed your piece of XX feature on Monday afternoon but I did not see any interaction before you moved on to pick up XX story. This caused a delay in delivering the feature because it was left open for 4 days, and we didn't have time to react to the feedback they provided on the form styling.

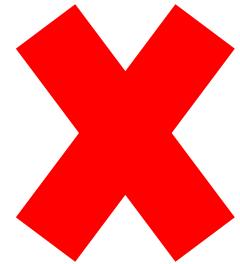
Based on past projects with this client, it has worked well to update the Jira story and then post an update in the team channel to provide visibility to all impacted team members. This will help everyone stay on the same page so that we can meet our deadlines.

catering *feedback* to different social styles

situation: Taylor has a habit of checking in her code and moving on to the next task without paying attention to the required upstream and downstream steps needed to bring the task “over the line”

amiable: Taylor, I noticed that you completed your piece of this feature but didn't follow up with Greg to make sure he had what he needed to complete his UAT testing before you moved on to pick up XX story. This caused the collective team to be late delivering the feature to our customer which was greatly needed for their annual marketing campaign.

In the future, please communicate broadly – especially with the person who has work that falls sequentially after yours. This will help ensure that features aren't stuck idle so that we can continue being great partners to this client.



you *vs* the team member



us *vs* the problem

feedback is:

- a tool for *communication*
- an *observation* with context
- concise
- *focused* (avoid piling on)

feedback is not:

- a weapon
- an accusation

don't jump to conclusions.

yesterday you arrived an hour late.

yesterday you arrived an hour late.

you can't be trusted.

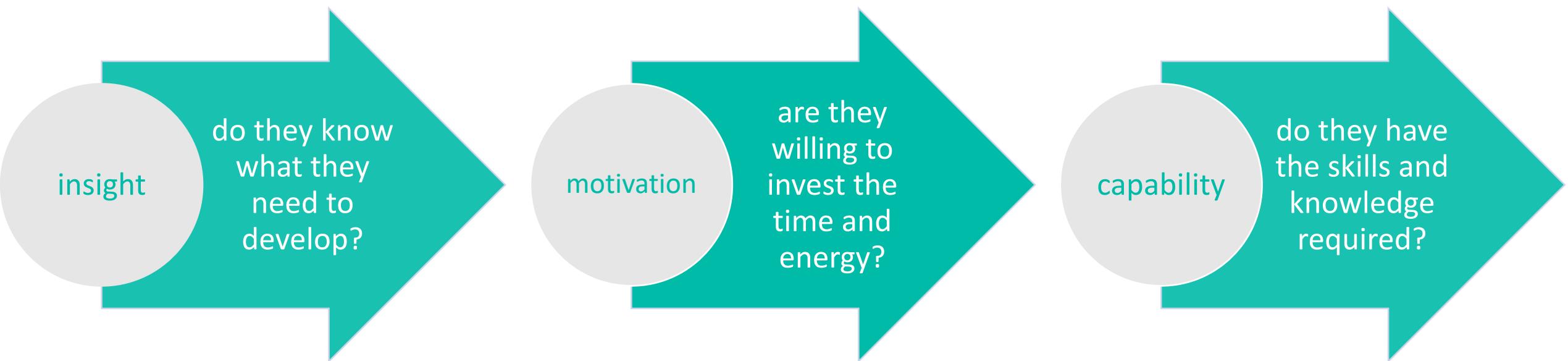
yesterday you arrived an hour late. ← fact

you can't be trusted. ← conclusion

a few more tips (when possible)

- try removing yourself from the equation:
 - ~~you offended me when you used those words~~
 - use of words like X can be offensive to some
- focus on the product, not the person
 - ~~you wrote low quality code~~
 - this code could be more performant with use of XYZ

help them navigate the development pipeline

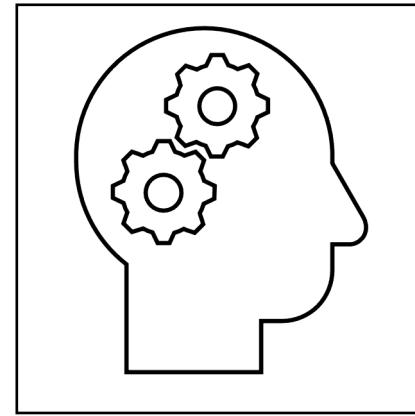
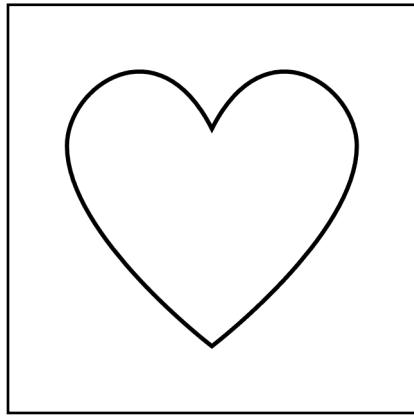


great feedback starts with trust.

why is trust good overall?

- increases commitment to *team goals*
- *communication* improves
- ideas flow freely
- people are more comfortable with change and willing to *work through ambiguity*
- unable to *inspire & influence* without trust
- teams become better aligned around *shared mission* and common goals

how to *build trust*?



affective trust

“trust from the heart”

sense of rapport, empathy, emotional closeness
based on feelings generated by **interactions**

cognitive trust

“trust from the head”

confidence in the person’s competence, skills, and
reliability based on **evidence**

affective trust examples

- trust *them first*
- empower them with *challenging* projects
- be approachable & show empathy
- support them even *when they make mistakes*
- create open lines of *communication*
- communicate the *intent* behind your actions
- connect with people off-task by seeking to understand their *backgrounds, interest, and aspirations*
- put time and effort into offering social events *outside of work*

cognitive trust examples

- acknowledge areas in which you are not an expert or when you mess up
- assume positive intent
- do what you say you will do
- be transparent, solicit feedback, and act on it

recognition

Good
Job :)

associate names with
accomplishments



A close-up photograph of a large pile of green tomatoes. They are densely packed, filling the frame. One single, ripe red tomato stands out prominently in the center, slightly above the middle. The green tomatoes have small stems and some minor blemishes.

not all
recognition
looks the same

course takeaways

- your social style and potential blind spots in your ability to lead effectively
- key characteristics and a simple formula for giving effective feedback
- **conversation templates** to facilitate **career discussions** with software engineers
- tips for facilitating **straightforward, productive, and enjoyable one-on-ones**

career conversations

- quarterly statuses *dedicated* to career goals
- discuss expectations of next role
- map each expectation to tactical goals
- partner with Lead/Principal/Staff Engineers to conduct technical reviews early to give them tactical things to work towards
- don't forget about soft skills / behaviors!

discussing performance
and progress on goals &
competencies

establishing quarterly
goals

establishing quarterly
goals – start **high level**

connecting individual goals to company goals

here's the project I need you to lead
the final solution needs to do X, Y, and Z
I need it done by the end of the quarter

connecting individual goals to company goals

one of the company's goals this year is to focus on expanding our strategic marketing to diversify our client base.

in order to do this, we need to develop new marketing materials to use as we expand our online presence.

I need you to lead this project.

the materials need to be ready by the end of the quarter because we're planning a big marketing campaign to launch in June.

questions to help team member define goals

- where are you being under-leveraged?
- where would you like to develop?
- if you were having the best workday ever in your ideal role, what would that schedule look like?
- what types of activities at work make time fly? What do you find rewarding?
- where have you been most successful in the past? What do those experiences have in common?

I am a commitment to

- being a great Mentor to team members
- my clients, my team
- quality software
- innovative ideas

how will you do that this quarter?

I am a commitment to quality software

- I write excellent documentation
- I improve test coverage

how will you know when it's done?

I am a commitment to quality software

- I write excellent documentation
 - examples of processes or components that could use some documentation love
- I improve test coverage
 - 90% for X codebase by Q2

how will you do that this quarter?

I am a commitment to innovative ideas

- I research new technologies, frameworks, and alternatives to ensure we are delivering new features and functionalities to our customers
- I educate myself on new trends and releases

how will you know when it's done?

I am a commitment to innovative ideas

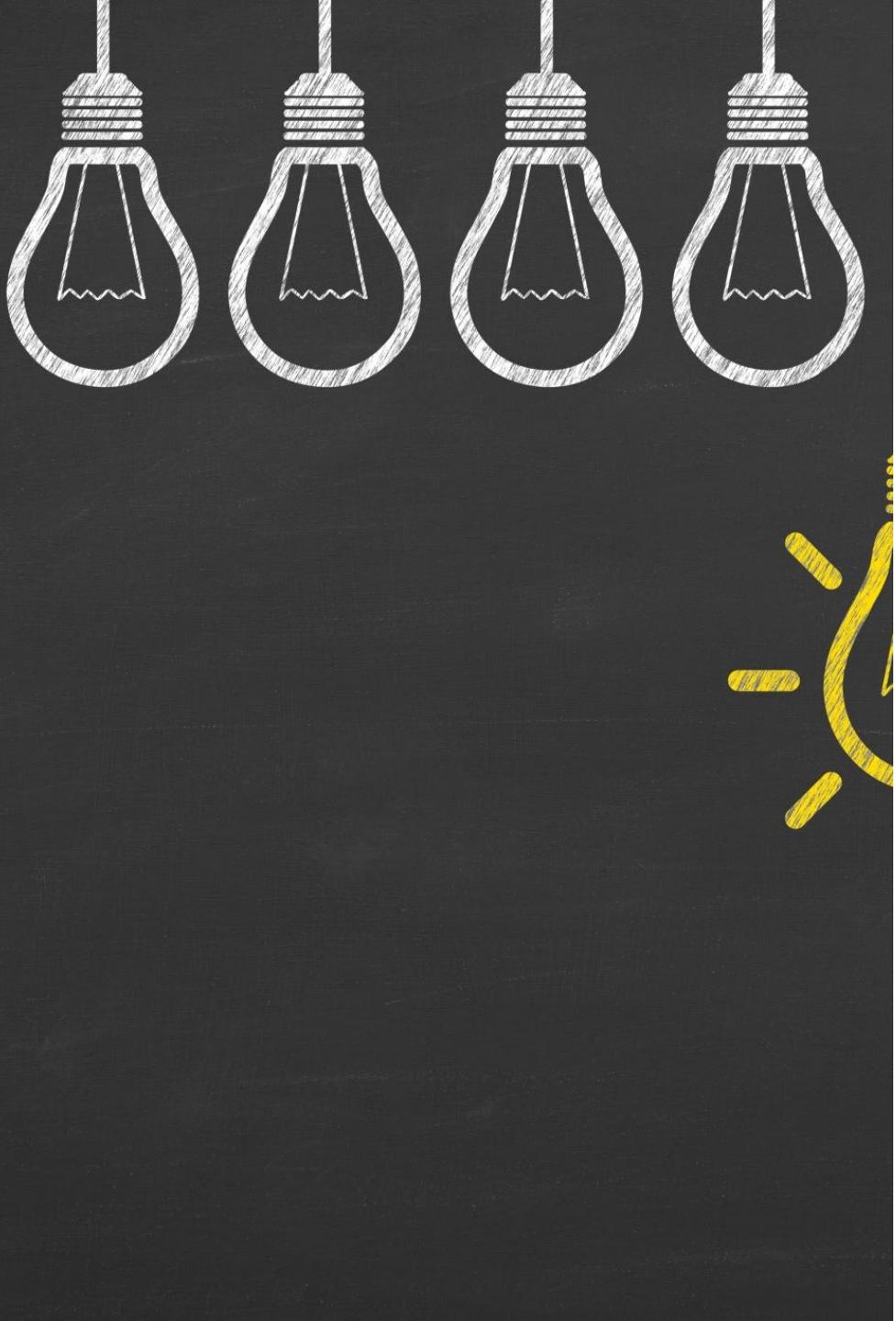
- I research new technologies, frameworks, and alternatives to ensure we are delivering new features and functionalities to our customers
 - XX codebase needs XX latest patch or upgrade
 - Jira introduced XX new reporting tool – integrate and offer these to client X
- I educate myself on new trends and releases
 - AWS released a new code pipeline tool that would be useful for our teams – I will take an online course to learn how to use it and integrate it into our development pipeline

categories of goals

- **productivity** – improve one's ability to consistently work to certain standards/deadlines – **how much do you get done?**
- **efficiency** – **speed, accuracy, and consistency** with which one can produce results to a high standard
- **education** – investing in one's understanding of **emerging technologies, skills, frameworks** to stay at the strategic edge of industry
- **personal development** – essential for one's ability to achieve other goals – **communication, leadership, conflict management, strategic thinking**

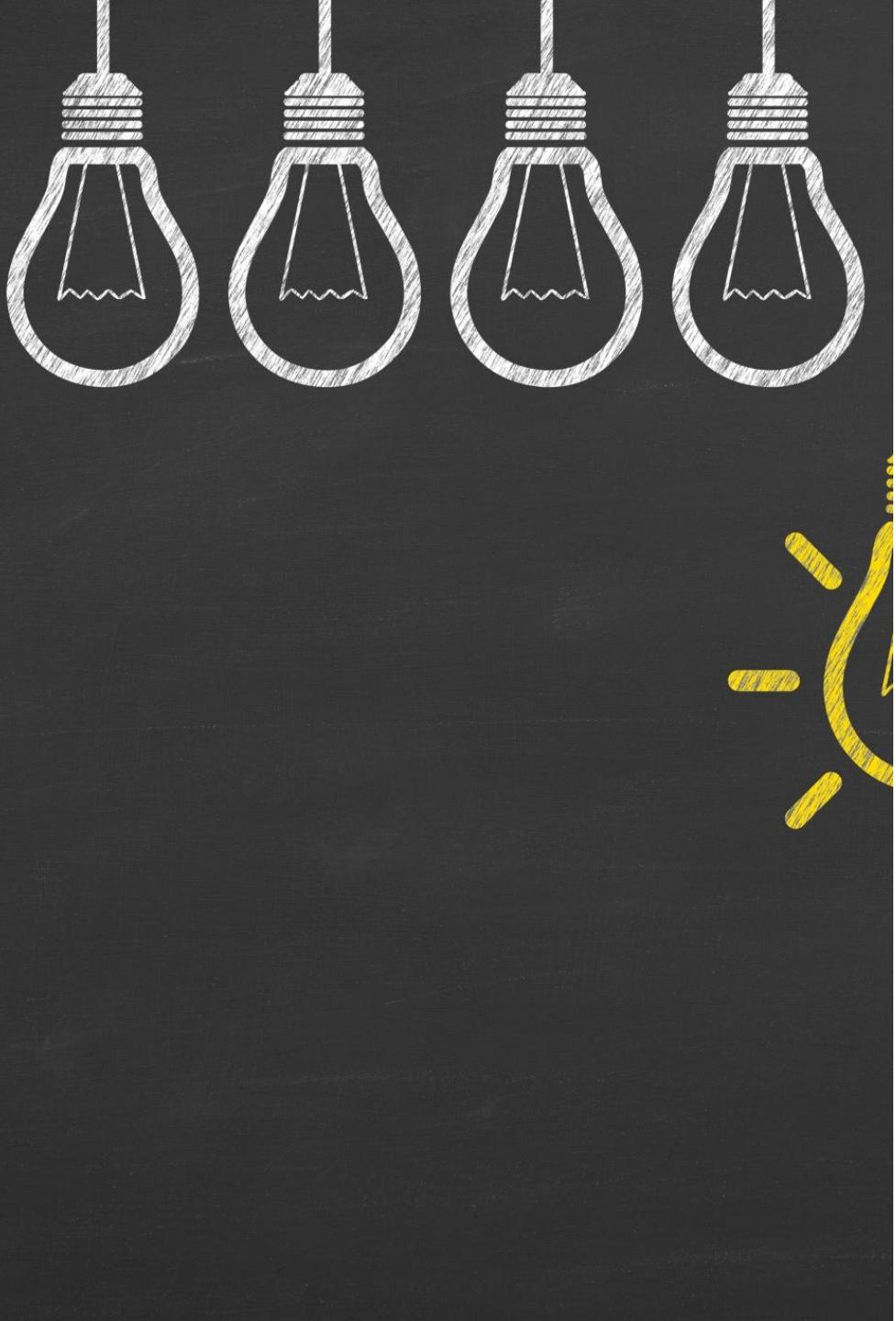
great goals

- ✓ measurable
- ✓ binary – either it is or it isn't completed
- ✓ specific
- ✓ challenging, but reachable within a time frame
- ✓ actionable
- ✓ animated – can you visualize this goal?



technical

- become an expert in a domain/technology/language
- work on a system that has X scale (millions of requests per second, etc)
- introduce new processes that save the dev team time
- complete work that saves an organization X amount of money or X amount of time
- be an incident leader for an incident and run the postmortem
- contribute to an open source project
- implement observability features (metrics, logging)
- understand how complex systems fail (and how to make them not fail)
- understand underlying infrastructure that your code is running on



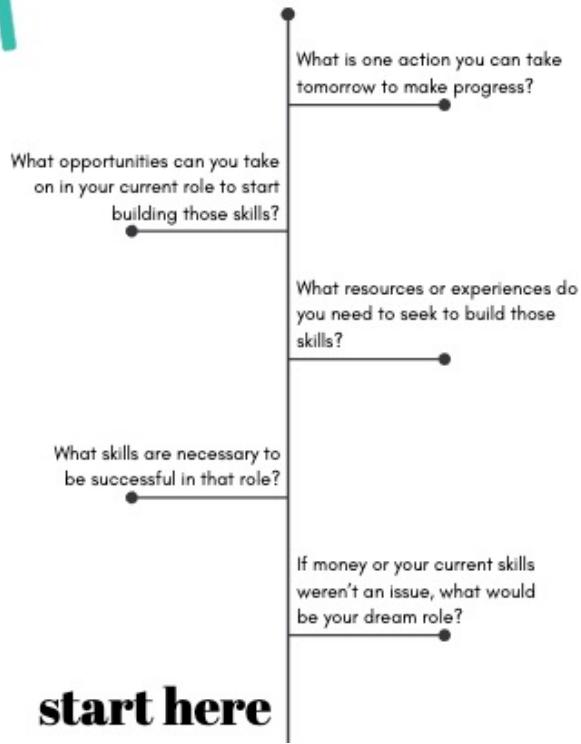
people / leadership

- establish an onboarding program for our team
- mentor another team member
- help someone get a job/opportunity that they wouldn't have had otherwise
- build a more inclusive team
- build a community that matters to people
- lead team through challenging discussion

tools for career conversations



GOAL SETTING



QUARTERLY CAREER STATUS TEMPLATE

GOALS:

goal 1:

upcoming opportunities to work towards goal:

- o 1:
- o 2:
- o 3:

(repeat for 3-4 goals each quarter, mapping each goal to specific opportunities that Engineer can take on)

PROJECTS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

project 1:

key partners that I worked with:

what we delivered:

what I contributed:

what I found most challenging:

SKILLS MATRIX:

SKILL	CURRENT SCORE	DESIRED SCORE	IDEAS TO IMPROVE THIS QUARTER
HTML/CSS	5	5	N/A
REACTJS	3	5	ATTEND FRONT END MASTERS TRAINING
TYPESCRIPT	4	5	TEACH A GROUP OF NEW DEVELOPERS
POSTGRES	3	3	N/A

0: No experience or knowledge
1: Little experience or knowledge
2: Reasonable experience or knowledge
3: Considerable experience or knowledge
4: Expert experience or knowledge - I could teach this!



available on
pages 7 & 8

course takeaways

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1:1s

why do we have 1:1s?

- take pulse on the person/team to uncover potential issues
- foster trust
- gain alignment
- give feedback
- discuss career direction
- provide context
- understand what an employee is thinking and feeling
- strengthen personal connection – what is going on in their lives?

stop talking

LISTEN



great listeners:

- focus their attention on the other person *without distraction* (phones, laptops, etc)
- ask *follow up questions*
- paraphrase and clarify
- observes *person's energy, mood, tone of voice*
 - high or low energy?
 - body language, gestures
 - what isn't being said?

1:1s:



regularly scheduled (minimum every other week for 30 minutes)



rarely missed



focused on the team member

preparation is required:



revisit notes from last 1:1 (both personal & work-related topics)



review status updates beforehand (standups, Jira, etc)

ask questions that enable
people to reach a new
perspective on the problem and
reach a solution on their own

coaching

problem solving

here's what I would do

problem solving

~~here's what I would do~~

start with *active listening*

"what I hear you saying is..."

problem solving

~~here's what I would do~~

start with *active listening*

"what I hear you saying is..."

ask probing questions

ask probing questions using the **GROW** model

GOAL

CURRENT REALITY

OPTIONS

WAY FORWARD

goal

- can you give me an example?
- what is the real challenge here for you?
- what do you want?
- what result are you trying to achieve?
- why are you hoping to achieve this goal?
- what would be the benefits if you achieve this?

current reality

- what is happening now, and what is the effect/result of this?
- have you already taken steps towards resolving this? how would you describe what you did?
- what progress have you made so far?

options

- what are your options?
- what could be your first step?
- what would happen if you did nothing?
- what would you gain/lose by doing/saying that?
- do you know anyone who has encountered a similar situation?
- if anything was possible, what would you do?

way forward

- how are you going to go about this?
- what roadblocks do you expect?
- what resources can help you?
- what is one small step you can take to start?
- what support do you need to start?
- how will you know if you have been successful?
- what are three actions you can take that would make sense this week?

don't forget to hold them
accountable by following up on
their commitments

go-to 1:1 questions

“what is on your mind?”

“say more”

“what’s currently harder
than it should be?”

“how can I help?”

how are you doing?

- how's your project going?
- are you enjoying the work?
- are you frustrated with anything or anyone?

share feedback

- let's talk about a scenario that I observed where you did well or need improvement
- I wanted to share some feedback with you on an observation I made

org

- can I address any rumors you are hearing?
- let's talk about the wider organization to ensure you understand where we are headed

team

- let's talk about the team's upcoming priorities
- do you have any suggestions or ideas for how we could work better as a team?

1:1s are used to build and foster a relationship

share more than just your professional self and encourage them to do the same.

course recap

- your *social style* and potential blind spots in your ability to lead effectively
- behavior, outcome, next steps, ideal outcome *formula* for giving effective feedback
- *conversation templates* to facilitate career discussions with software engineers
- tips for facilitating straightforward, productive, and *enjoyable one-on-ones*



giving effective feedback
thank you!