Misc

Women drift towards management?

- Women in technical roles with drift towards management
  - Because they have good communication and organizations skills?
  - It's fine if they do, but it should be *conscious* decision, they should be fully aware of all their options
- Do we encourage that at bw?
  - We encouraged that in the past because advancement = management. Less true now?

Cancel culture vs. helpful feedback

- Cancel culture is a form of public shaming. It creates feelings of fear and guilty that aren't helping
- Calling out bad behaviours is important, but *frame it as a learning opportunity*
  - Be open to feedback, even if it's negative. If you don't agree with it, ask others for their opinion
  - Allow other people to make mistakes and learn.

Should you assume positive intentions?

- Most people are good. Most microaggressions come from a place of ignorance.
- You shouldn't let good intentions excuse your ignorance.
  - Marginalized people are already burdened, don't make them put in the effort to educate yourself; do it yourself
- When "good people" are always undermining you, it's a form of gaslighting that can make you second-guess yourself

Allyship = educate yourself

- "Using your black colleague as tech support instead of googling it yourself"
- It's not the job of the marginalized group to educated you
  - They already have enough to deal with, without piling on extra work

Self-care

Self care comes first

- If you don't take care of yourself
  - you won't be able to take care of others
  - You won't be able to do your job

Respect your personal seasons

- You aren't meant to be in full bloom all the time
- You have seasons
  - Winter: time to rest, recharge and reflect
  - Spring: time to grow, learn, plan, start new things
  - Summer: lots of energy, time to shine, interact
  - Autumn: tie up loose ends, nurture what you've built, gather support for winter
- Learn to predict and recognize your seasons
  - At the scale of a day, week, month or year: do you have patterns?
  - Where possible, work with the energy of your current season. Arrange your work based on when your seasons will occur

Focus

- Avoid feeling like you've been busy all day and accomplished nothing
- Reduce time confetti and attention residue: stay focused on one thing for long periods, without checking your notifications or getting distracted
- Focus on the most meaningful work
- Use "focus sprints"
  - Set a clear intention, goal or outcome that you will focus on
  - Set a timer (20-90 minutes)
  - Batch up tasks that require similar energy (coding/social/admin)

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Self-care rituals

- Mindfulness: meditation, yoga, walking, gratitude
- Nutrition
- Movement, exercise: pay attention to your body
- Social connection
- Sleep: build a pre-bed ritual (bath, read, meditate)

Problems that affect women in the workplace

Sexual harassment in tech

- 75% of victims of sexual harassment don't report it
- 70% who do report it face retaliation
- Out of women in tech:
  - 30% have feared for their safety at work
  - 60% report unwanted sexual advances
  - 40% didn't report because they thought it harm their career, 30% because they wanted to forget it had happened
  - 60% who did report were unsatisfied with the outcome
- Women in tech
  - 85% have been told their too aggressive; had demeaning comments; had someone address comments to a male colleague
  - 47% have been asked to do housework
  - 66% felt excluded from social networking opportunities
- 20% of black women have turned down a higher-paying job because the environment was too racist or sexist

Gender discrimination in tech

- Women in tech
    - 85% have been told their too aggressive; had demeaning comments; had someone address comments to a male colleague
    - 47% have been asked to do 'housework' (coffee, meeting minutes)
    - 66% felt excluded from social networking opportunities
- 20% of black women have turned down a higher-paying job because the environment was too racist or sexist

Gender bias

- Men & women both have these gender biases against women. It's not men looking down on women; it's everyone looking down on women
    - Similarly, for racial bias, black people show bias against black people
- 6 types of bias
    - **Unconscious bias**: we use mental shortcuts that simplify the world around us. Sometimes this means relying on stereotypes. These snap judgements help us make decisions quickly, but can be harmful
    - **Performance bias**: under-estimating women's performance, over-estimating mens
    - **Attribution bias**: Give women less credit for their accomplishments, and more blame for their mistakes
    - **Likeability bias**: women face social penalties when they assert themselves, but men don't
    - **Maternal bias**: assuming mothers are less committed to their career and less competent, given fewer opportunities and higher standards. Maternal bias starts as soon as a woman gets engaged
    - **Affinity bias**: we gravitate towards people who are similar to us, and dislike people who are different to them

Career advancement

Advancing your career

1) **High performance**
   - Matters less than you think

2) **Personal brand**
   - What comes to people's mind when they think about you. What do they go to you for?
   - How do you see yourself? How do you want to be seen? Ask others how they see you
   - Think about: skills, interests and values. Be authentic, but bold

3) **Influential people**
   - Who makes the decisions that affect your career advancement? Your manager, their peers and manager.
   - Get to know them and make sure they get to know you, but be conscious about what you share with them. Make sure they see your successes

3 Keys To Career Success

Performance 10%

Image 30%

Exposure 60%
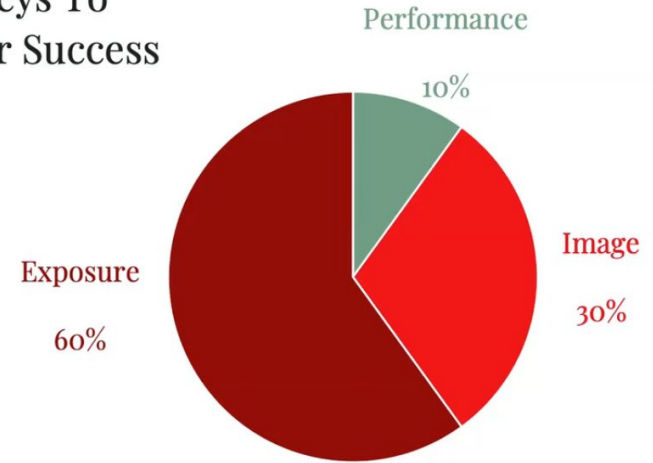
4) **Understand the company culture**

   - What does the company value, and do these align with your values?
   - What are the norms? How do people communicate and use language?
   - How are decisions made?

Building & Fostering diversity

Diversity is a virtuous cycle

- Diversity attracts diversity
    - Being the only woman in a room is a lot harder than being one of two
- If you want to build and retain diverse talent, you need to have and retain diverse talent
    - Goes back to having role-models

4 steps to diversity

1. Communicate your values
   - As an organization, make a commitment to diversity. Embed diversity into your values and commit to developing a welcoming, inclusive culture.

2. Make the recruiting process inclusive
   - Diverse interview panel. If a candidate looked up their panel on linkedin, would they feel like an outsider?
   - Have the diverse panel review the job adverts
   - Relax specific criteria (e.g. 'CompSci degree from a top university') -- these narrow the pool
   - If the team or panel isn't diverse, be vocal about your commitment to diversity at the interview

3. Hire & promote with diversity in mind
   - Look for culture add, not culture fit
   - Diverse background are good, they provide diverse skill sets and approaches

4. Create an inclusive environment and celebrate diversity
   -

Don't suppress the diversity you have

- Mistake: hire a diverse set of people and expect them to do things the same as they've always been done
- Example: female leaders acquiring masculine traits because that's what (male) leadership looks like
    - Leading with authority, confidence, decisiveness; rather than empathy, listening and collaboration
- Example: female workers dressing/appearing less feminine.
    - The speaker told a story about how she was made fun of for wearing pink
    - Seems shallow, but encouraging people to be *authentic* is essential for them feeling a sense of *belonging*

Middle managers matter

- Culture happens at 2 levels: the macro (organization) and micro (team)
  - Managers need to be responsible for their team's culture
- Often there's a pattern of D&I buy-in from the board, but middle managers shrug and don't know what to do about it
  - Changing a whole company's culture is a huge task, beyond any person to achieve
  - But if everyone takes responsibility for changing their team's culture, the whole organization will shift
  - Managers hold a lot of the power: hiring, promotions, setting out processes

Slow down

- Hiring & moving quickly means you'll do things like you've always done
- To make a change, you have to intentional. That means slowing down, reflecting, and sometimes not doing the easiest thing (like not just hiring sussex uni grads)

Why diversity matters

Diverse backgrounds bring diverse skills

- People who change careers into tech have a wealth of experience in all kinds of areas
  - Different ways of thinking, approaching problems, knowledge about a diverse set of things
  - The puppeteer brings a fresh new perspective to the writer's group; they think about things more physically, they understand body language expertly
- The traditional background isn't less value -- but it is over-represented.
  - People with traditional backgrounds can feed threatened when hiring/promotion requirements change to not require that. They shouldn't -- their skills and experience are just as valuable as they were
  - How many people who have university-level computer science do you need on a team. Having one is great, having 5 doesn't add much more value than having 1
  - This isn't to say we should hire *less* people with the traditional background, just that we should hire more of people without it -- there's a shortage of people with technical skills and capacity for an extra 3 million technical roles in the UK

Diversity is good for business

Access broader talent pools

Widen perspectives to sharpen innovation

Strengthen our capabilities with a wider set of skills

Increase understanding of the customer

Role models matter

If you can't see anyone like you succeeding, it's hard to believe that you can succeed

Is diversity good for men?

Men need gender equality, too

- Traditional leadership styles (competitive, aggressive, strong) is masculine, but it's going out of fashion. Workplaces these day value "transformational" leadership, which features mostly feminine traits (collaboration, empathy, emotional intelligence)
- Men are less likely to be seen as having these traits, and if they do show them, they can be penalized and seen as less competent
- Stigma around sharing their problems and feelings leads to higher feelings of loneliness in men, and greater rates of mental health problems
- Pressure to succeed at work and be a breadwinner is higher for men. They spend more time working and have worse work-life balance

Do women-boosting initiatives hurt men?

- There is a perception that they do. In surveys, men cited it as their top barrier for career advancement
- This researcher agrees, traditional D&I initiatives that focus on training/hiring/promoting women disproportionately do leave men behind
- Men have good reason to support gender equality (see other slide)
- Focus on D&I initiatives that work for *everyone*, not that work for *women* (see other slide)

Celebrating femine traits

These "feminine" traits bring value to the workplace

- Collaboration (not competition)
- Empathy (not aggression)
- Emotional intelligence
- Creativity

Diversity Beyond gender

Intersectionality

- **Intersectionality** is about how different aspects of identity intersect, and how this can create new problems and challenges
  - Kimberle Crenshaw faced hiring discrimination as a black woman, even though the company did hire women (white women) and black people (black men)

- Resources
  - Kimberle Crenshaw's ted talk: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AaJ62KTYQz0
  - Audre Lorde 'The master's tools...' https://collectiveliberation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Lorde_The_Masters_Tools.pdf
  - Audre Lorde The uses of anger: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0BzIEsERsL1jKb3oyWDZTOE5lejg/view

Types of privilege

- The diagram in the talk also included attractiveness and class as categories. What other categories are missing?

- I noticed most of the categories where I am on the outside are ones we pay at lot of attention to understand and fix. The areas where I'm privileged are much more overlooked and ignored

WHEEL OF POWER/PRIVILEGE
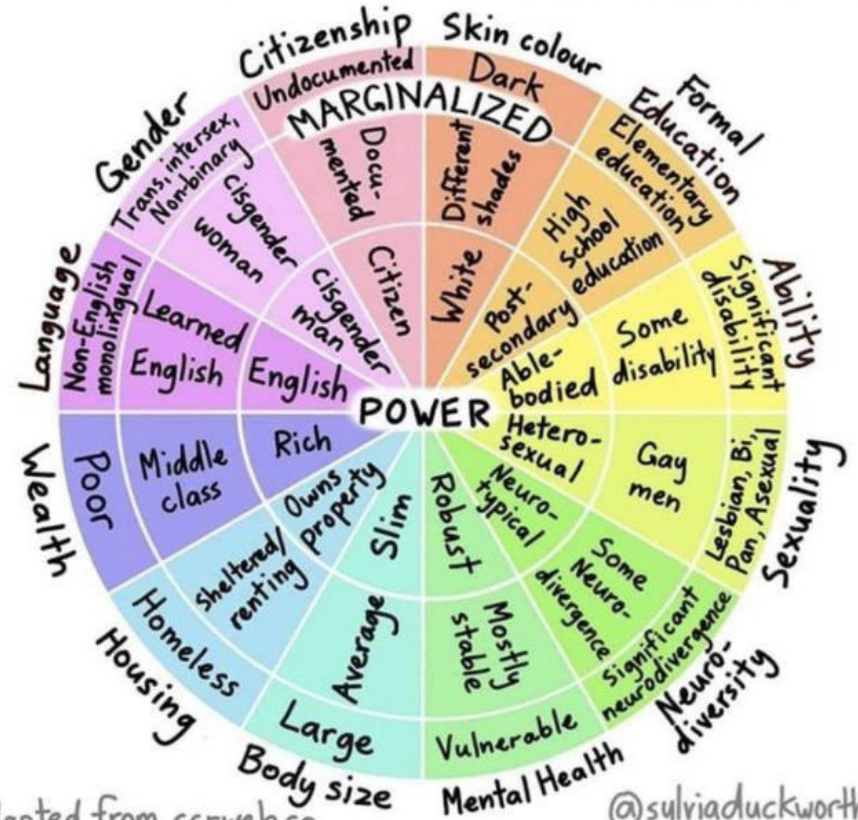
Adapted from ccrweb.ca

@sylviaduckworth

Don't ask: does this increase equity for women
Ask: does it increase equity for *everyone*

- If you "start with gender", you'll probably only build systems that support white, cis ecnomically privledged women
- Design for the margins, and you'll end up with something better for everyone
  - Speaker gave the example of designing for a disabled black woman
  - Accessibility is good for everyone. Subtitles were developed for deaf people, but benefit hard-of-hearing, people in noisy places, people who speak a different language. Return-to-work programs are great for mothers, but also good for people recovering from illness, people who want to take a gap year, etc. https://99percentinvisible.org/episode/curb-cuts/

Gender imbalance is a *symptom*

- Gender gets a lot of attention
  - It's highly visible, easy to measure
  - It's clear what equality means: 50/50 gender split
  - There's no 'good reason' why tech should have less women than men (it was an even split until the 80s)
  - Women *aren't* a minority, so it's something a lot of people care about personally
- Lack of gender diversity is a wider lack of diversity
  - Stereotypical tech worker isn't just male, it's much more specific: nerdy genuis white guy
  - The route into tech is very narrow. It supports those who get a STEM degree at a good university, which leaves *a lot* of candidates out
    - People who didn't know what they wanted to do until later in life (degrees subjects are mostly chosen at 16-18, and teenagers don't have a good understanding of what working in tech is like)
    - People who weren't in a position (mentally, financially, physically) to complete a degree at the 'right' time.

Making actual change

We're talking about diversity
Committing to diversity
But the dial isn't moving
Why?

- It's not enough to just care, you need to act

Facts v. aspirations

- "Is this design inclusive?"
  - Answer with facts, the same way you would with "has this passed QA?". Not 'probably', not 'I'm sure someone made sure of that'
  - Test solutions with diverse data sets, gather data for underrepresented groups

Next steps for brandwatch?

- We have an inclusive, welcoming environment
- We have a strong commitment to diversity from leadership down
- We have flexible working policies to support people with diverse needs
- We have dedicated resources to improving diversity?
- *Are we moving the needle? Are we dreaming big enough?*

Steps to action

- Accountability for outcomes
- Structural design, rather than isolated initiatives
- Everyone needs to be responsible for changing their team
- A process of constant improvement
- Understand why you haven't acted before
- Question everything: *why can't we do it differently?*
- Empathy is exhausting -- take a rest, don't quit
- Adjust every choice by 1% toward equity

Imposter syndrome

"You're not technical enough"

- That's terrible feedback: vague and hurtful
  - An attack on you as a person: *You are* vs. *you do*
- Ask for more specifics: what specifically do they think you should improve on
  - They may give specific, actionable feedback. Great!
  - They may realize they don't know exactly what they mean, and reflect on their unconscious bias
- Don't let other people's opinions define you
  - You don't have to agree with their opinions
  - Their opinions may be wrong

Embrace your knowledge gaps

- It's OK not to know something
- No one is born knowing anything; we all learn it at some point in our life
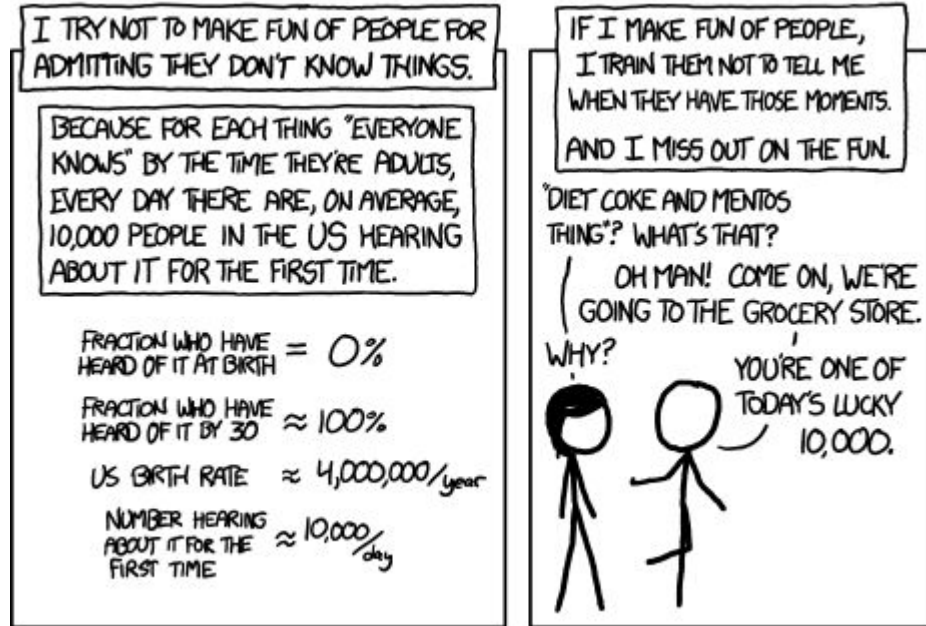
Confidence

- There's no correlation between competence and confidence
- Confidence helps you be seen as credible and boosts your career

Collect evidence of your greatness

- Every time someone compliments you (slack, email, in person), write it down or screenshot it, and save it somewhere
- Take ~15 minutes to list out all the reasons you're amazing
  - work achievements, education and qualification, family and personal achievements, character strengths, skills

Be vulnerable

- Be a role model of vulnerability; help others with imposter syndrome
  - Creates psychological safety
  - Shows it's ok to fail, to say "I don't know" or "I was wrong"
  - Shows others they don't need to be perfect or know everything
- Being openly vulnerable can reduce stress
  - Be open about your limitations, and you don't have to worry about being finding them out
  - In CBT, patients are encourage to test a theory, e.g. if you think you have to know everything to succeed, try admitting you don't know something and see what happens
- Some talks said "be confident, don't show self-doubt". How do you resolve the tension between that and "be vulnerable"

Living with imposter syndrome

- **Acknowledge it. Accept it.**
- Your manager should make your imposter syndrome feel better, not worse.
  - If they make you feel worse about it, *they are a bad manager*
- Don't overestimate how much other people know
  - When you look through slack, it's easy to assume that *everyone* knows *everything* that's being said except from you, rather than seeing them as a group of specialized individuals: the k8s expert doesn't know much about solr, the solr expert doesn't know much about hbase
- Don't let imposter syndrome distract you from getting your job done
  - If you're worried about it, set that worry aside and schedule time to think about it and address it later
- Adopt a growth mindset: I can't do this *yet*
- Draw on your supporters: people who will advocate for you and boost you up
  - Be this for other people, too, and for yourself
- Get feedback: in the absence of feedback, you fill in the gaps and make assumptions about how others see you

Combatting imposter syndrome in your organization

- Train managers. They are the top tool in combating it
    - Giving timely, honest feedback is hugely important
- Increase diversity. Not seeing yourself physically represented in your peers exacerbates imposter syndrome
- Foster psychology safety, and environment where it's ok to be vulnerable and fail

Widening the talent pool

Why don't girls go into tech?

- The percent of women in tech isn't increasing. It's decreasing
  - Until the 80s (when video games are put on the boys isle of a toy shop), tech had equal gender
  - We can't blame the past, lack of women in tech is a modern problem that's actively ongoing
- STEM disengagement in girls starts at age 6, and dramatically increases at 12
  - Gender socialization
  - Lack of role models
  - Less likely to believe they can attain success
- Children, parents & teachers don't understand what skills the tech industry values
  - They ranked "good with computers" as the most essential skill. The bottom 3 were creativity, communication and writing -- *these 'least required' skills are in high demand*
  - Education emphasizes the coding aspect of tech and leaves out the rest

Proving it can be done

- Babbel's "Neo" program received 50/50 male/female applicants for technical roles
  - Hosted meetups for self-taught devs to cast a wide net
- A 6 month training program (paid with employee benefits)
  - Aimed at beginners looking to break in: fresh grads, self-taught coders, bootcamp graduates
  - After 2 months, neos work on a real project with real business value
  - The training program is closely aligned with the main business: technology, projects, processes. They tried not doing this, but the trainees felt siloed and the transition to real work was jarring
- Requires
  - Buy in from leadership
  - Resource capacity to train new developers
  - Mentorship capacity

School outreach

- IT's her future is an outreach program for primary school kids (all gender) and secondary school (girls)
  - A week-long program that takes kids through a range of tech opportunity: building a laptop, coding a website, storyboarding
  - Pairs the kids with a long term mentor
  - Many girls said they were interested in a career in tech after the week. *All* girls reported increases in confidence

Breaking in from diverse backgrounds

- It's hard for self-motivated, self-taught coders to get into the industry
- Computer science at university is a narrow path that captures a narrow group of candidates
- Bootcamps are good for getting started, but are only available to people with time and money to spare
  - That's privilege
- Unpaid or underpaid internships are a scam

Returning to work after maternity

- Technology is such a fast-changing sector, it can be hard to get back into it after a few years away
  - Interviewers are more critical of mothers returning from maternity leave than of less experienced people who would require equivalent training
- Return-to-work systems benefit everyone
  - It's a "curb cut", something put in place to help one group (wheelchair users) but ends up benefiting everyone (cyclists, people with prams)
  - Normalizing sabbaticals benefits would be useful for paternity leave, adults who want to take a gap year, etc

Cast a wider net

- Career changers
  - Diverse background, diverse skills
  - Self-taught coders who want to change careers are highly motivated, highly curious, open to learning
- Post-maternity leave
  - Experienced workers who just need a little help to get back up to date
- Bootcamps & coding meetups
  - These groups are full of diverse people looking to get their foot in the door

Recognizing the value of "juniors"

- Should we get rid of the word "junior"
- To recruit devs from more diverse backgrounds, we need destigmatize being a beginner
  - There's a perception that juniors don't contribute much and can be a risk
  - Senior/Junior = "those who contribute" v "those who are learning"
- Juniors can contribute from early on in their career
  - Fresh ideas, curiosity
  - Experience they can bring from other areas

Mentorship

Mentorship

1. Match the mentor and mentee as close as possible
2. The mentee should have a goal they are working towards
3. In each meeting, identify actions to achieve this goal
4. Keep track of the agreed action in a shared google doc
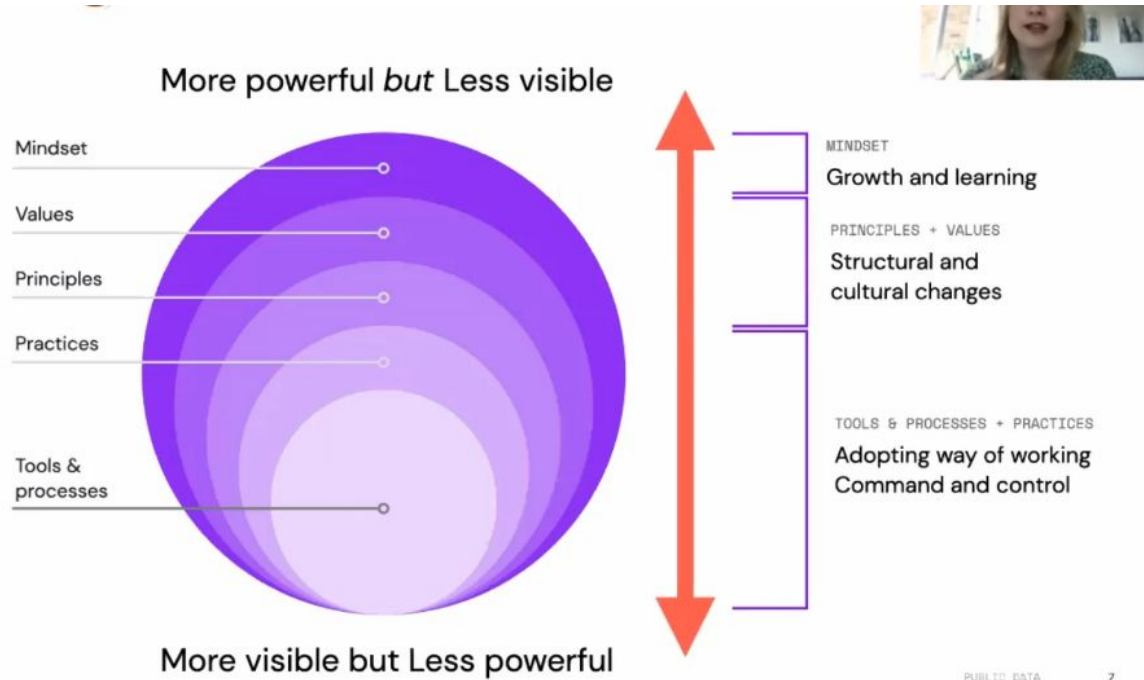
Mentorship is essential

- *So many* talks cited mentorship as one of the key things we can do to take employees to the next level (interested newbie -> developer -> senior)

Being Agile

Agile is a mindset

- 1 mindset -> 4 values -> 12 principles -> many practices
- To be agile, cultivate the *agile* mindset, don't just copy the practices
  - You can copy all the practices without being agile
  - Example: using trello to plan a holiday in extreme, concrete detail *is not agile*

- https://www.notion.so/Being-v-Doing-Agile-An-Exploratory-Introduction-c94407fd74b347d5836859429b8c56b9
- https://www.agilealliance.org/agile101/12-principles-behind-the-agile-manifesto/

The agile onion

Data privacy

Publishing data & getting statistical insights while protecting user privacy

Approach 1: de-identification

- Why not just strip out identifiers?
- It's not always good enough. With enough data, you can re-identify users
- Example:
  - Netflix released a data set of de-identified user data to encourage work on recommendation algorithms (no usernames or personal details attached but anonymous user ids)
  - Individuals could be identified by cross-referencing these rating against IMDB's public rating database

Approach 2: K-Anonymity

- Release aggregated data using ranges, rather than specific data, e.g. 40-50 years old, instead of 43 years old
- Configure the ranges such that each individual is indistinguishable from K other individuals. If k=50, it's very hard to identify individuals
- Problems
  - If data includes sensitive data, it doesn't matter that's you're not individual identifiable. Being identifiable as one of 50 with a medical condition is still bad
  - Attackers can inject fake data. If the other 49 in your group are fake, you're identifiable
  - If data is republished with slight differences (adjusted ranges, people added to the data set), you can use the difference to identify people
- Good for many things, not perfect

Approach 3: Differential privacy

- Add random elements, so that your data set is probabilistic rather than absolute values
- Example: asking people if they use drugs
  - Ask them to flip a coin (but not record the result). If they get heads, answer 'yes', if they get tails, answer truthfully
  - You know 50% of people answered yes because of the coin, and can subtract that from the data set. But you don't know exactly who. For any given individual, they have have answered yes because of the coin flip
- Individuals can't be identified, but the statistical insights are the same
- Balance between the amount of privacy v. the amount of noise in the data
- Simple concept, difficult in practice
- Used in: US 2020 census, google maps "how many people are here right now" feature
- Available as an open source library from google

Organizational culture
& Remote work

Culture v culture artifacts

- We think culture is stuff like the office: the foosball table, the open-plan environment
- Those are just *artifacts* of culture, symptoms of it
- Culture is really:
  - Practices: day-to-day, how things get done, how decisions get made, how people interact
  - Beliefs: what meaning we give things, what we value
  - These reinforce each other: practices come from beliefs, and reinforce beliefs

Sustaining culture

- Call it out
  - When you see something that supports our culture in action, remind people that this is good
  - When someone goes against the culture, remind them that's not valued
- Welcome changes
  - Embrace new practices that reinforce our culture
  - Adapt to new circumstances
- Develop the narrative
  - Telling stories of the organization's past
  - Notice our cultural strengths