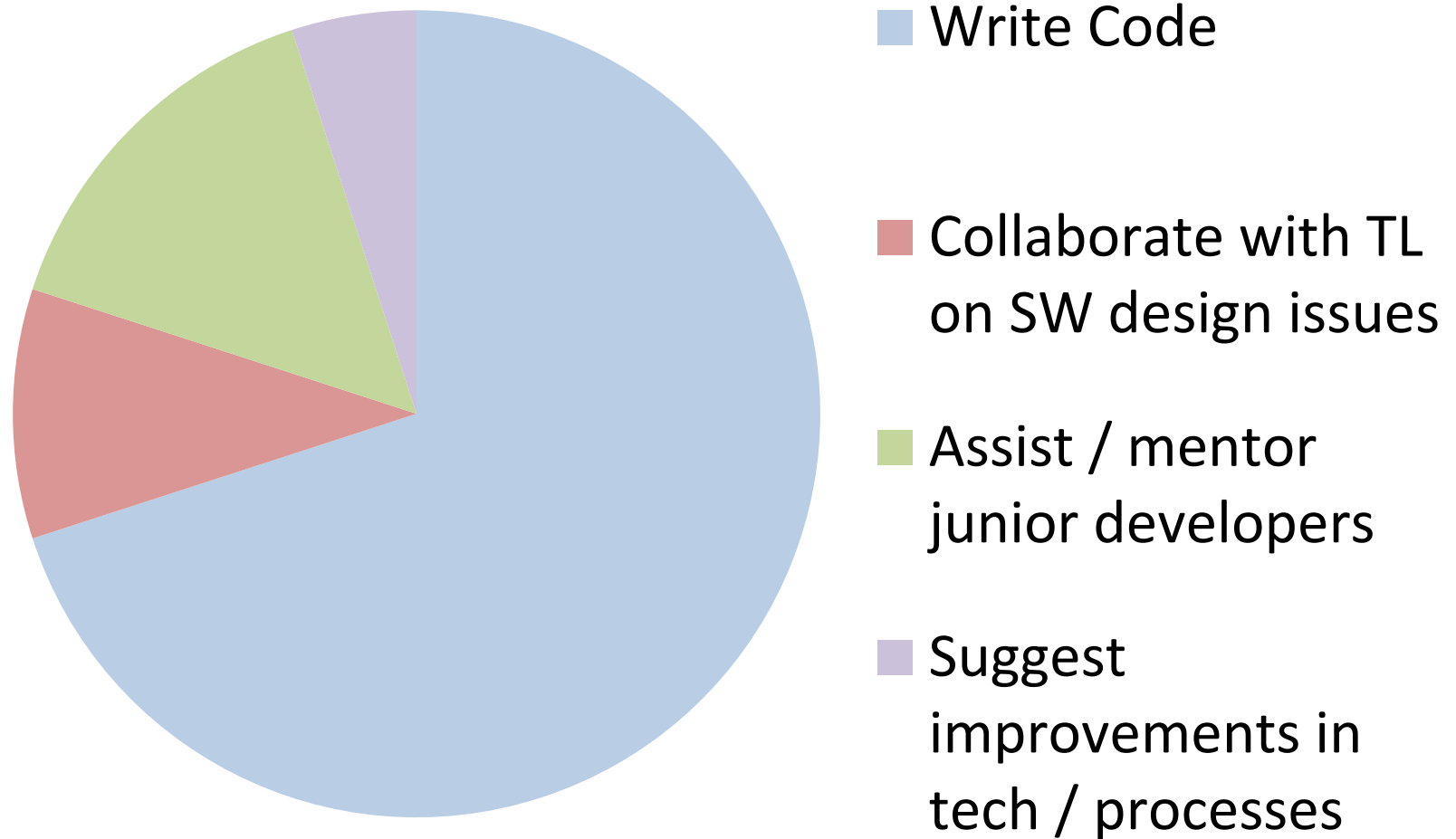Patrick Schwisow

php[tek] 2013

May 16, 2013

How did I get into this mess?

- Hired as a mid-level developer for a team that works on a home-grown eCommerce CMS in July 2009
- Promoted to "Senior" in Spring 2011
- Team leader left the company in October 2011
- Asked to "cover day-to-day duties"
- "Temporary situation" has continued 1 ½ years

What my job description says I do

- Write Code
- Collaborate with TL on SW design issues
- Assist / mentor junior developers
- Suggest improvements in tech / processes

What I actually do

- Answer all the Q's
- Triage all the problems
- Run all the projects
- Talk with all the users
- Design all the things
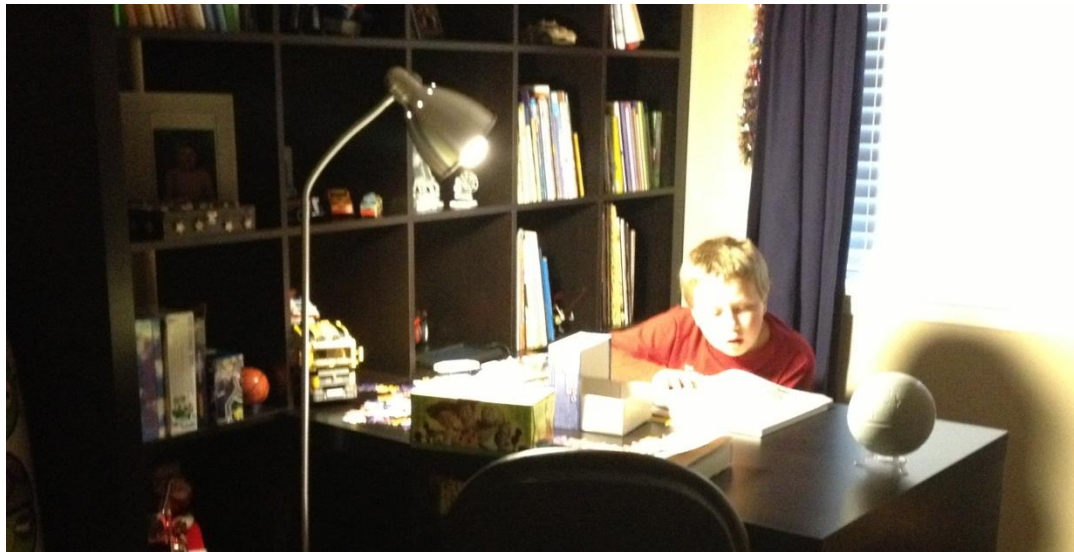- Review all the code
- Write code (?)

do ALL the things?

You can't do it all!

- Time is finite
- Don't try to be Superman
- Something's gotta give
- Remember your priorities (work-life balance)
- Talk with your boss

It builds character!

"I wish I could spend more time romping though our codebase… I just have to remind myself that everyone has different ways they contribute to the team and someone has to keep the wheels from flying off."

—Chris Cornutt (@enygma)

It builds character!

- Even if you didn't ask for this, make the most of the experience
- Test drive the management chair
- See the SDLC from a different perspective
- Decide where you want your career to go

Lessons Learned: Project Management

- Maximize "multi-threading"
- Minimize dependencies
- Your priorities !=
  other people's priorities
- Failure is an option, but fail fast!
- Set up milestones, check progress frequently
- Miscellaneous bugs and tasks are an on-going project that will never end

Lessons Learned: Project Estimation

- Estimation is **HARD**
- You *will* underestimate time and complexity
- The fewer details you have worked out, the more you will underestimate
- "Dev hours" != "real time to completion"
- Include time for code review / testing
- Estimate based on "average dev", not you!
- Re-evaluate and revise estimates

Lessons Learned: Communication

- Communication == distraction. Manage it!
- Tell devs, "It's OK to say 'no' or 'talk to TL'."
- Don't get behind
- Be proactive
- Sometimes you need to "sell it"
  - Sell your ideas
 - Show the value of your team's accomplishments

More Lessons Learned

- TL had *you* to rely on. Who is your 2nd in command?
- Find or make "lieutenants"
- Keeping in touch with the code will be work
- Make time for something "tech-y" outside work
  - User Groups
  - Open Source Contribution
  - Reading / Writing / Editing

Where do we go from here? (short term)

- Move up (to management)
- Move back (to development)
- The decision is not always yours, but push for what you want
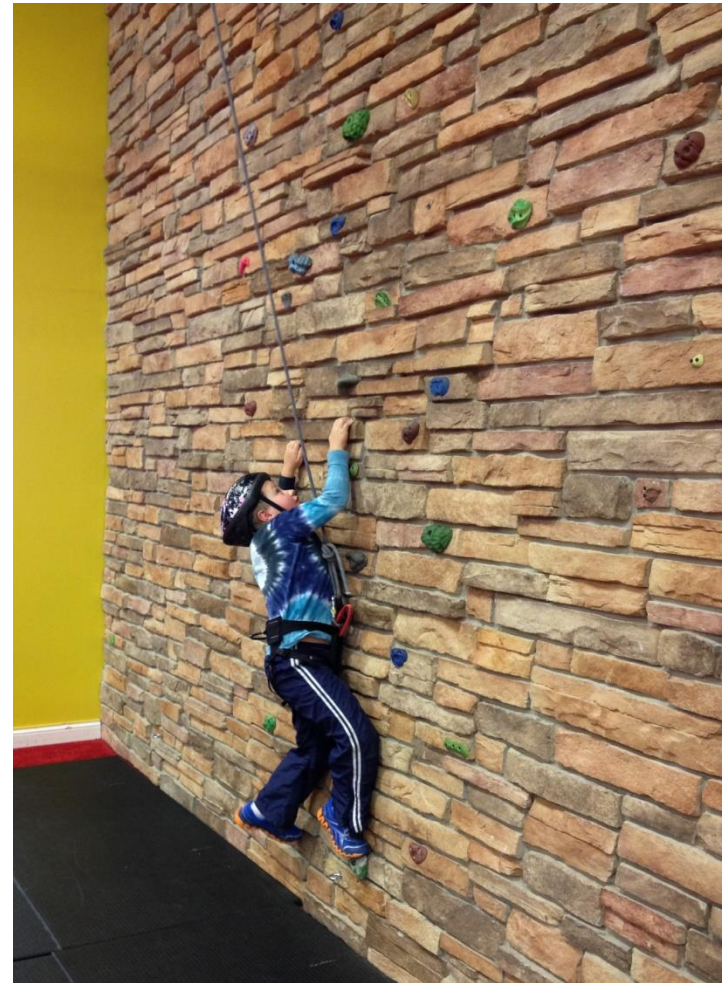
Going back

- No shame in going back
- Don't take it personally
- Watch your ego / attitude
- Support your new boss / show your value
- Figure out what your new "normal" is
- Plan / prepare for your next step

Where do we go from here?
(long term)

- Everyone wants different things
- Career Tracks:
  - Management
  - Technical
  - Project Management
  - Evangelist / Sales Engineer
  - ???

"Journey's End"

- Promoted to Team Leader in April 2013
- Continuing to grow as a leader, architect, and project manger
- Taking on new responsibilities:
  - Recruiting / Hiring
  - Performance Reviews
- Working to stay current
- Planning for the next step

Credits

- Chris Cornutt: "Lead Scrumveloper" (posted on the now defunct *Accidental Scrummaster* Blog)

- Brian L. Moon: [Being a Better Manager: Communication](#)

- The developers and management at OpticsPlanet

- Lindsay, Jack, Henry, and Charlie

Who am I?
Feedback / Contact / Slides

- Team Leader, Oibas / CMS Development, at OpticsPlanet, Inc.

- Zend Certified Engineer – PHP 5 & ZF

- Founder / Organizer of Lake / Kenosha PHP

- Joind.in: https://joind.in/8161

- Email: patrick.schwisow@gmail.com

- Twitter: @PSchwisow

- Slides: https://github.com/PSchwisow/Miscellaneous/