



**Using Your Existing Skills,  
Knowledge And Experience To  
“Make It” In The Tech World.**

**Liz Hardy**

**17/05/2024**

# SETTING EXPECTATIONS

## AUDIENCE?

- New To Tech?
- Transferring Into Tech?
- In Tech Yet Not Progressing/Fulfilled?
- Keen To Help Others?

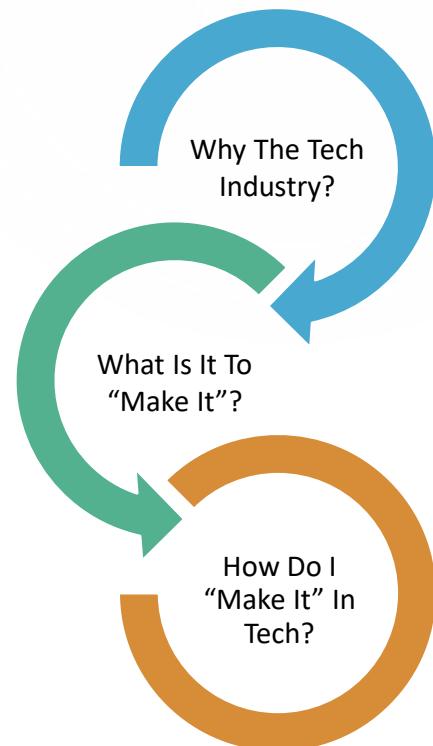
### In Scope?

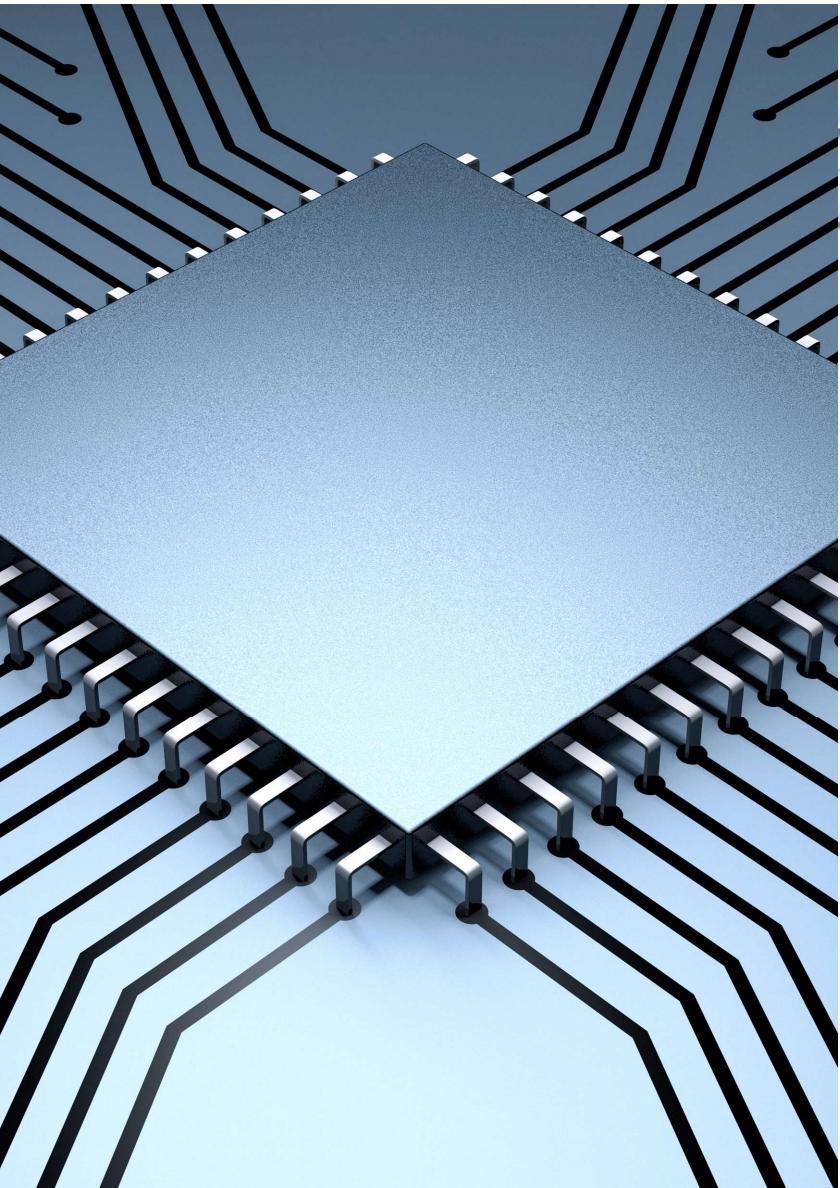
- My Journey In Tech – What Can This Teach Others?
- What Skills Were Useful In My Journey?
- Examples

### Out Of Scope?

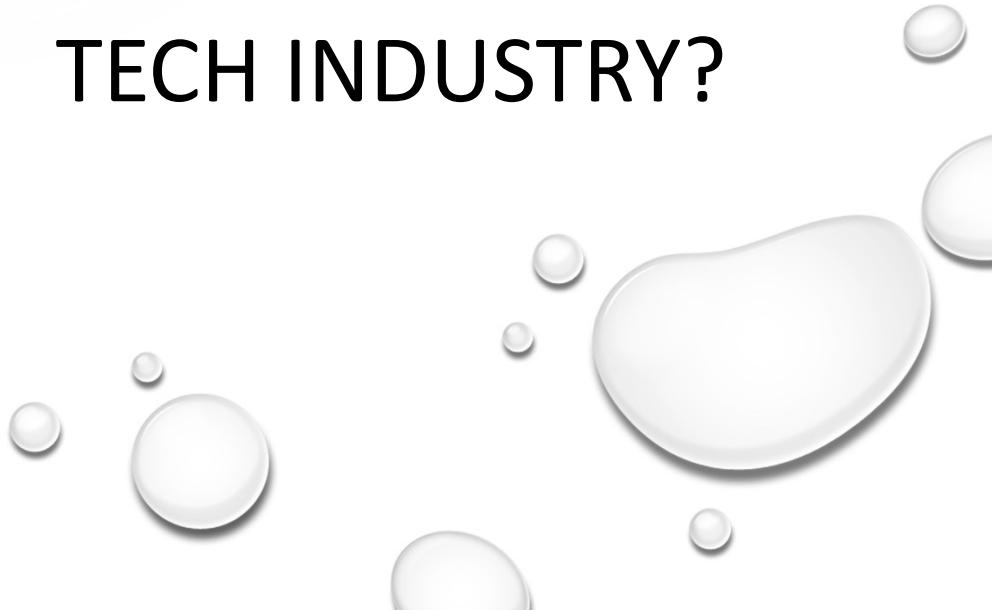
- Can't Cover Everything - Mostly High Level
- No Silver Bullet

# INITIAL THOUGHTS





WHY THE  
TECH INDUSTRY?



# BIO

## LIZ HARDY

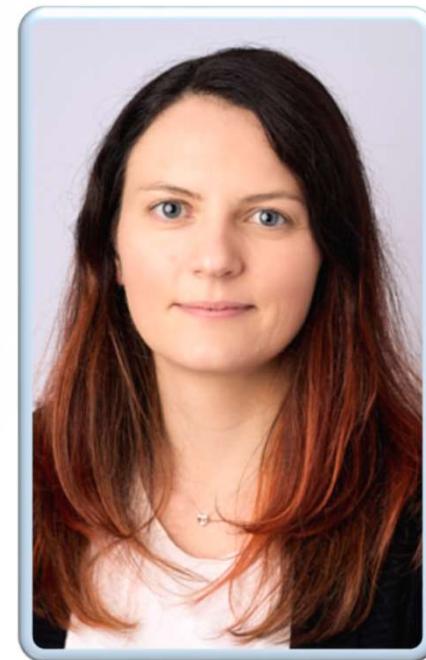
(She/Her)

Data Platform Engineer - Data Masterminds

Over 10 Years Working In The Tech Industry

Previous Roles Included:

- Data Analyst
- Database Administrator (DBA)
- DBA Team Lead
- Data Platform Engineer



Contact Me:

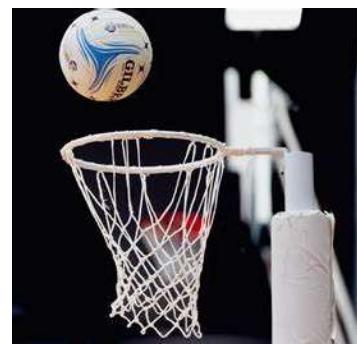


# ABOUT ME

Netball



© Mikey Bronowski



© World Netball

Gigs



Pottery



Cats



DEFINING WHAT  
IS IT TO  
“MAKE IT”?

# DEFINING “MAKING IT” IN TECH



DEFINED BY YOU



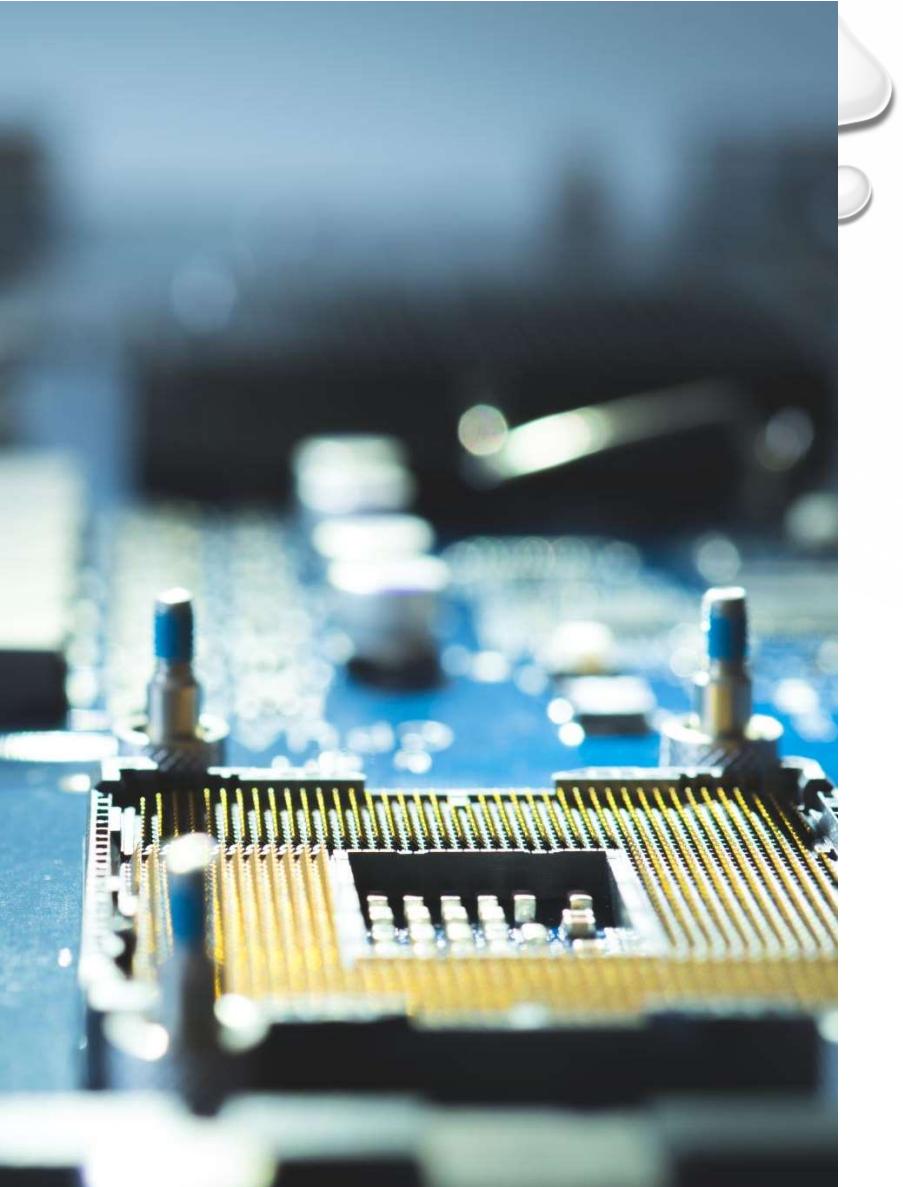
YOUR GOALS



WHEN WILL YOU BE  
HAPPY?



WHAT WILL BE YOUR  
LONG-TERM  
ACHIEVEMENTS?



**HOW DO I  
“MAKE IT” IN TECH?**

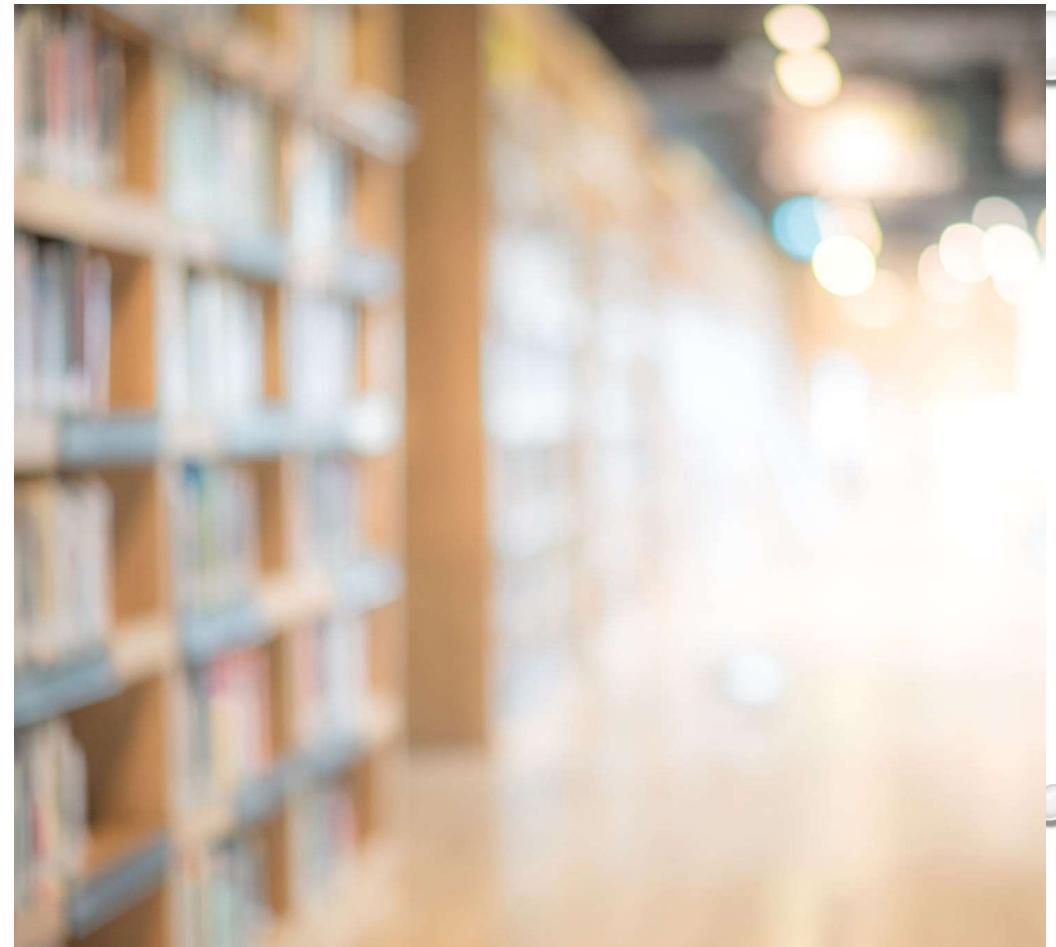


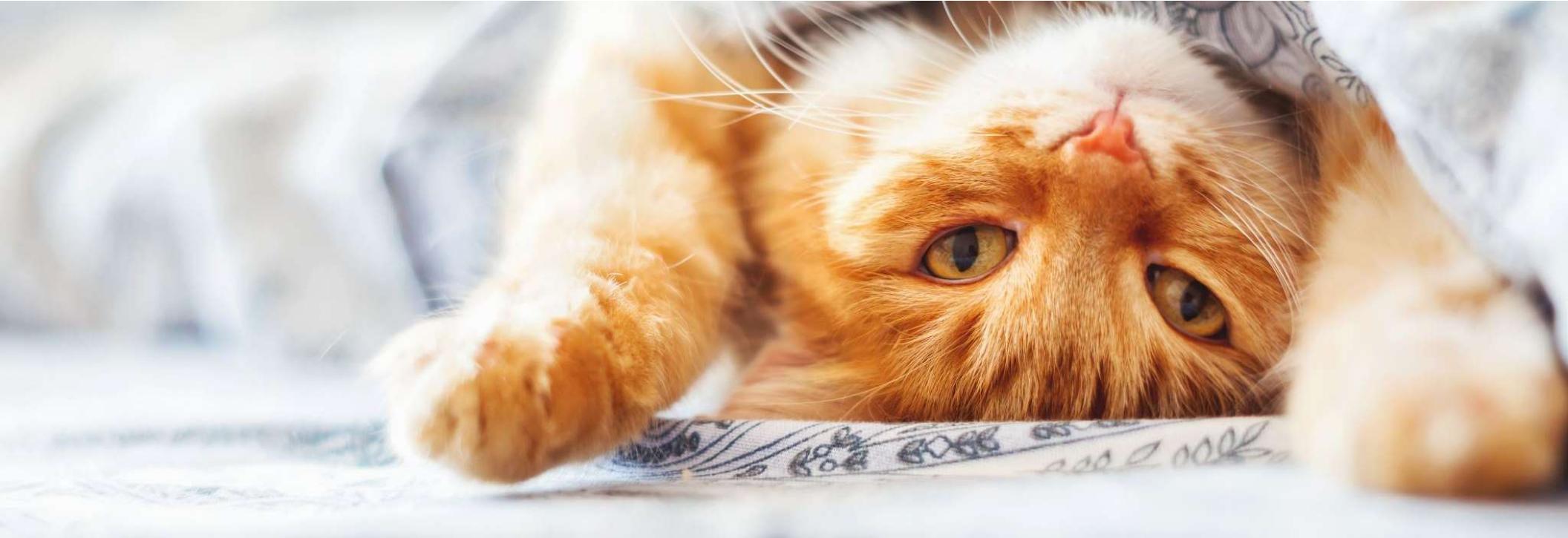


“TECHNICAL SKILLS ARE  
THE MOST IMPORTANT SKILLS  
TO SUCCEED IN TECH”

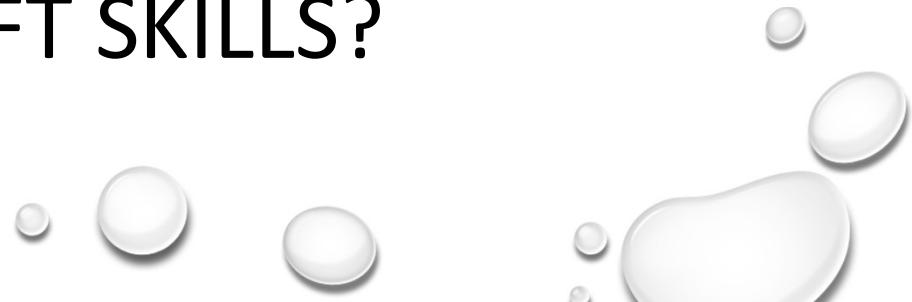
**WHAT DO YOU THINK?**

**IN MY OPINION,  
THESE CAN ALWAYS  
BE LEARNED**





WHAT ABOUT SOFT SKILLS?





ALSO KNOWN AS:  
**“POWER SKILLS”**

Image source - FreePik - generated by AI

# WHICH SOFT SKILLS ARE IMPORTANT?



Ready To Learn



Communication/People Skills



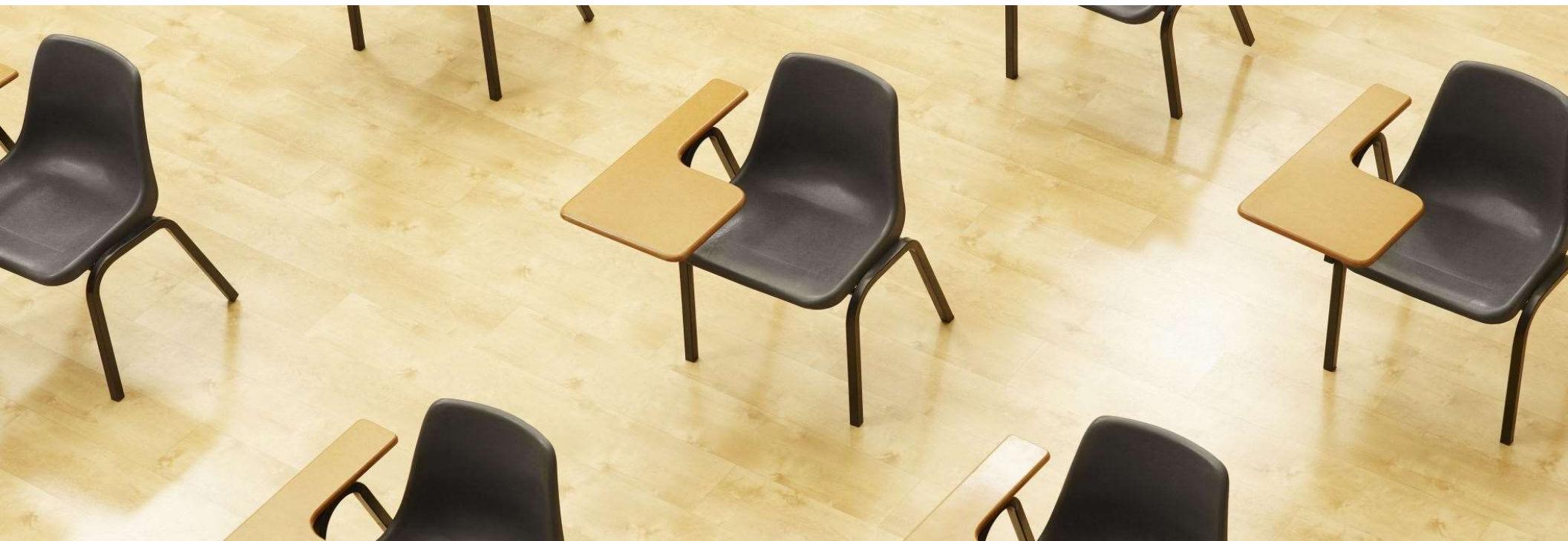
Adaptability



Problem Solving



Mentoring



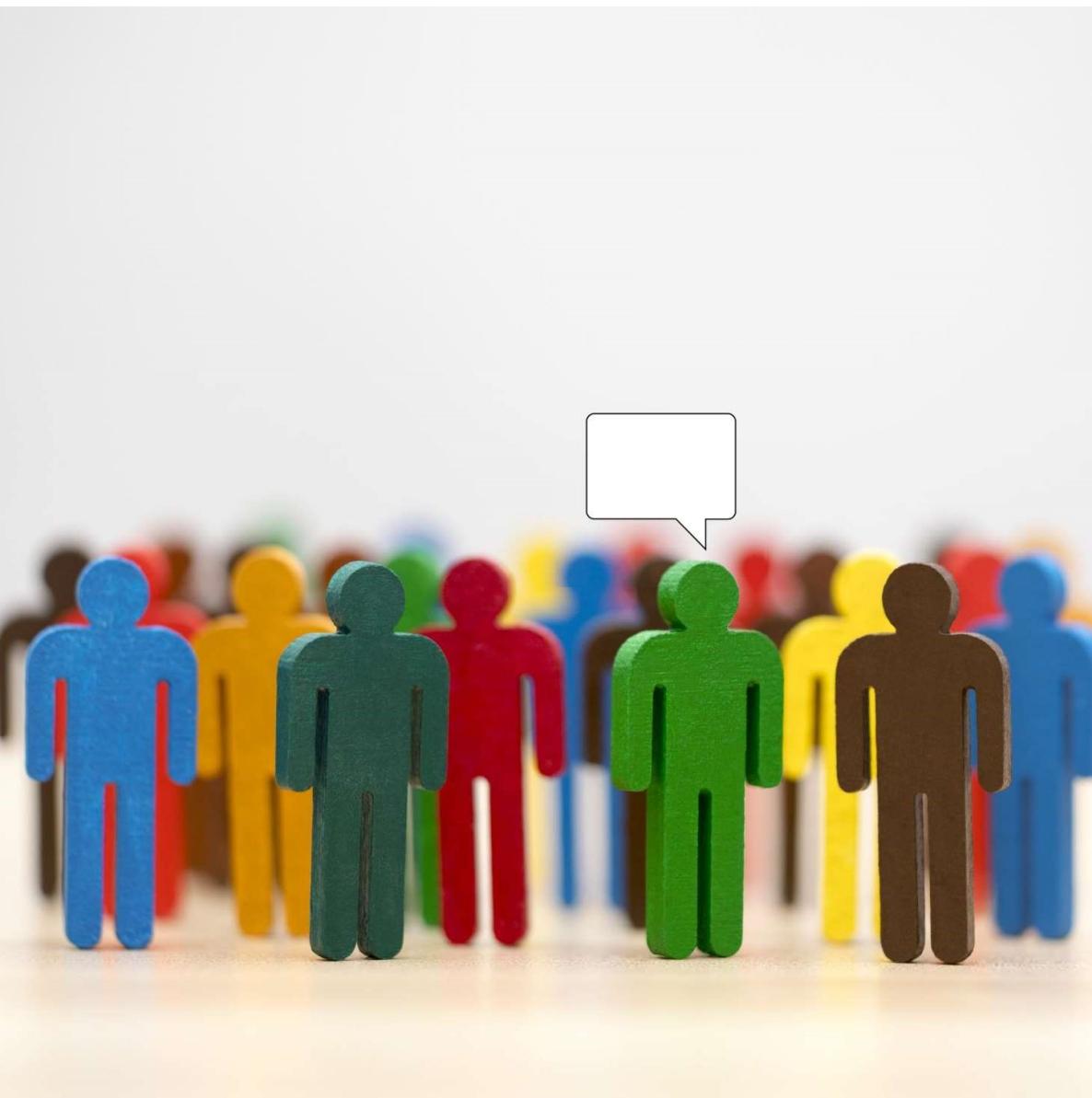
READY TO LEARN



# REAL LIFE EXAMPLE

READY TO LEARN





# COMMUNICATION & PEOPLE SKILLS

Speaking / Listening / Presenting

Communicate At All Levels

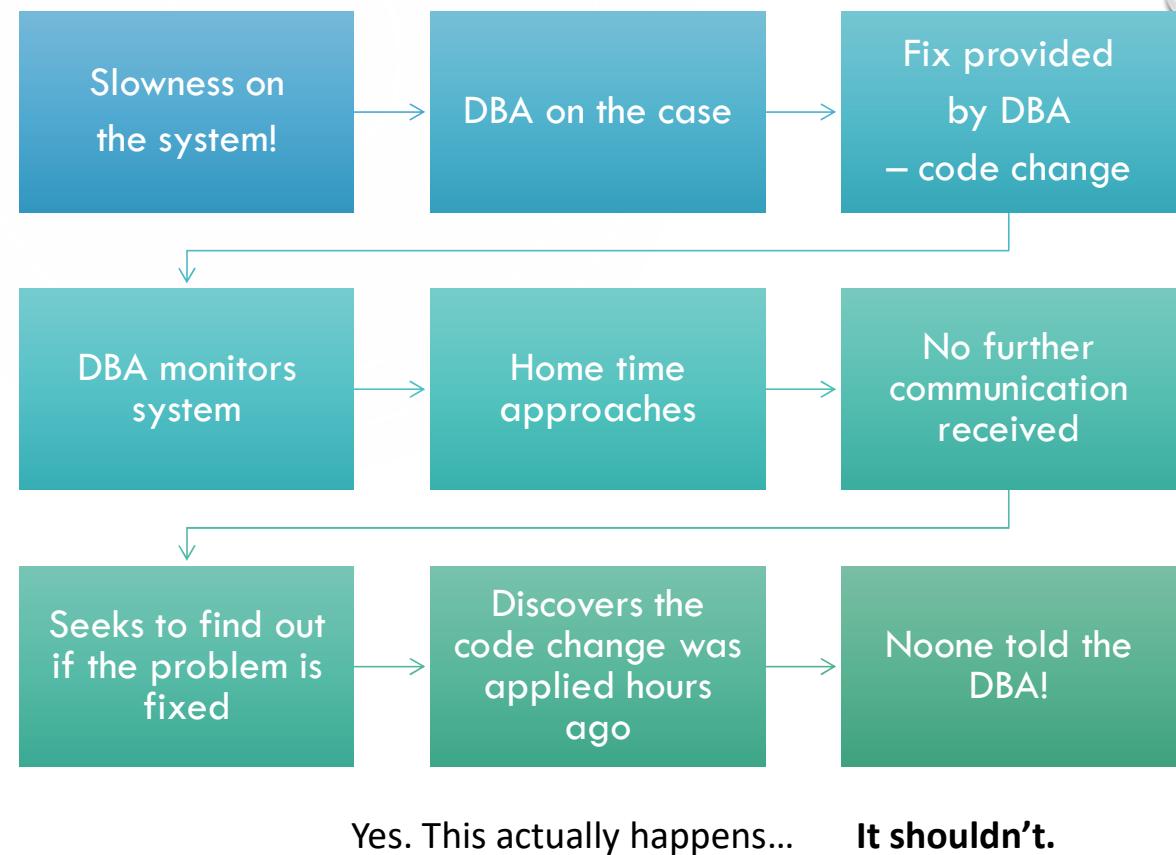
Translating Technical Terms

Collaborate Effectively

Achieving Common Goals

# REAL LIFE EXAMPLE

LACK OF COMMUNICATION/  
PEOPLE SKILLS



Yes. This actually happens...

**It shouldn't.**



# ADAPTABILITY



# EXAMPLE OF ADAPTABILITY

Multiple Clients/  
Customers  
To Support

Different  
SLAs

Logging On  
To Different  
Systems

Accessing Using  
Different VPNs /  
Credentials

Different OS/  
Languages Used

Multiple Projects  
& Priorities

Lots Of Context  
Switching



PROBLEM  
SOLVING

# EXAMPLE OF PROBLEM SOLVING





# MENTORING

**MENTEE**

Working Together

Share The Knowledge

Identify Knowledge Gaps

Skills Matrix

Action Plan

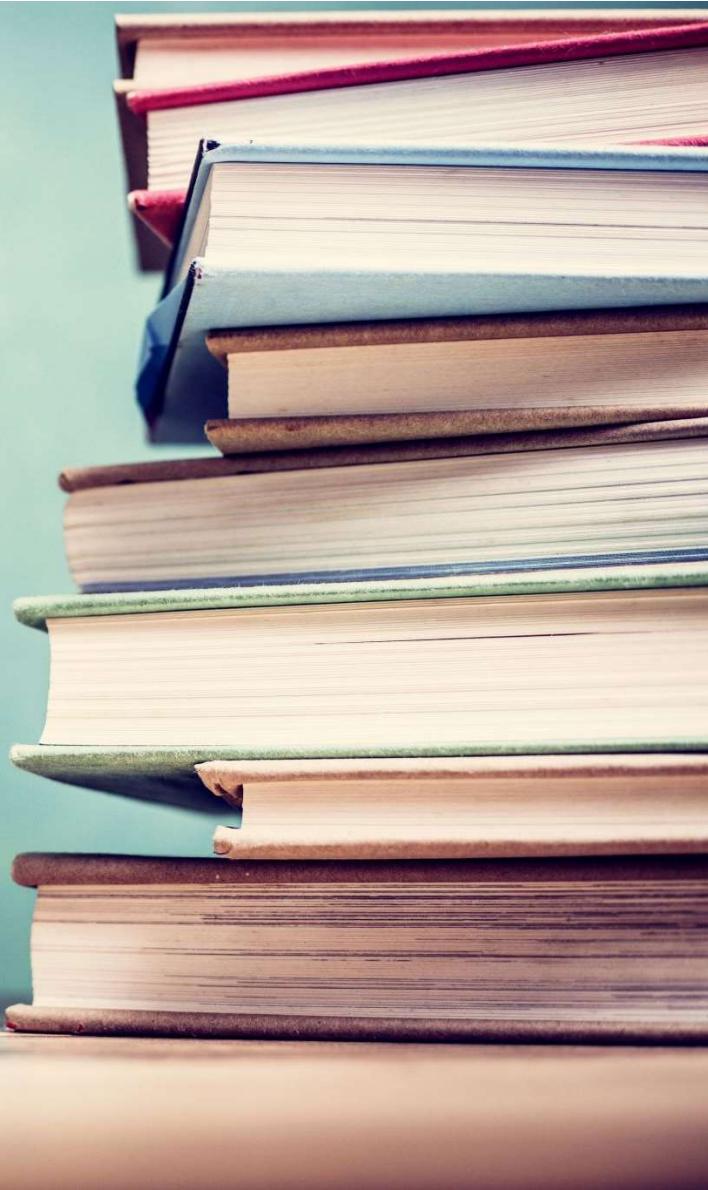
Regular Catch Ups/Feedback

Mentor/Mentee at any point

# QUESTIONS?

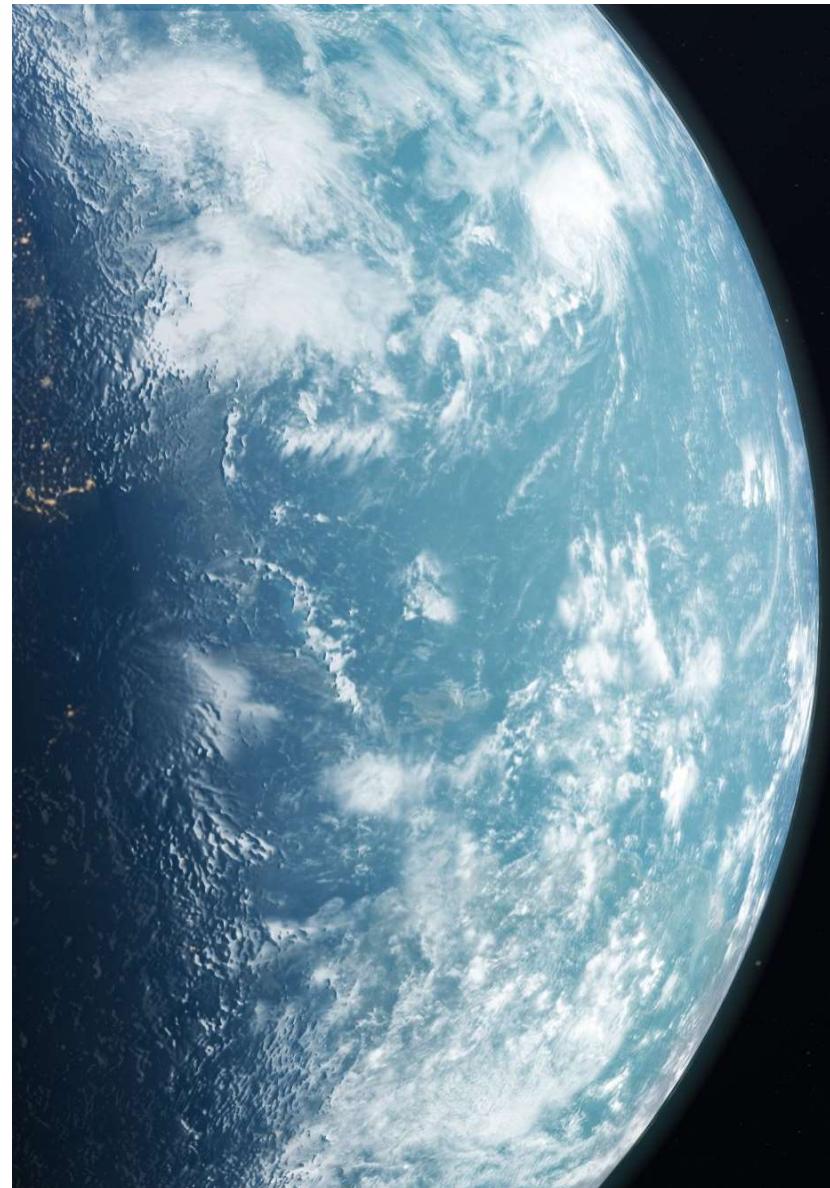
WHAT ELSE DO YOU  
HAVE TO OFFER?

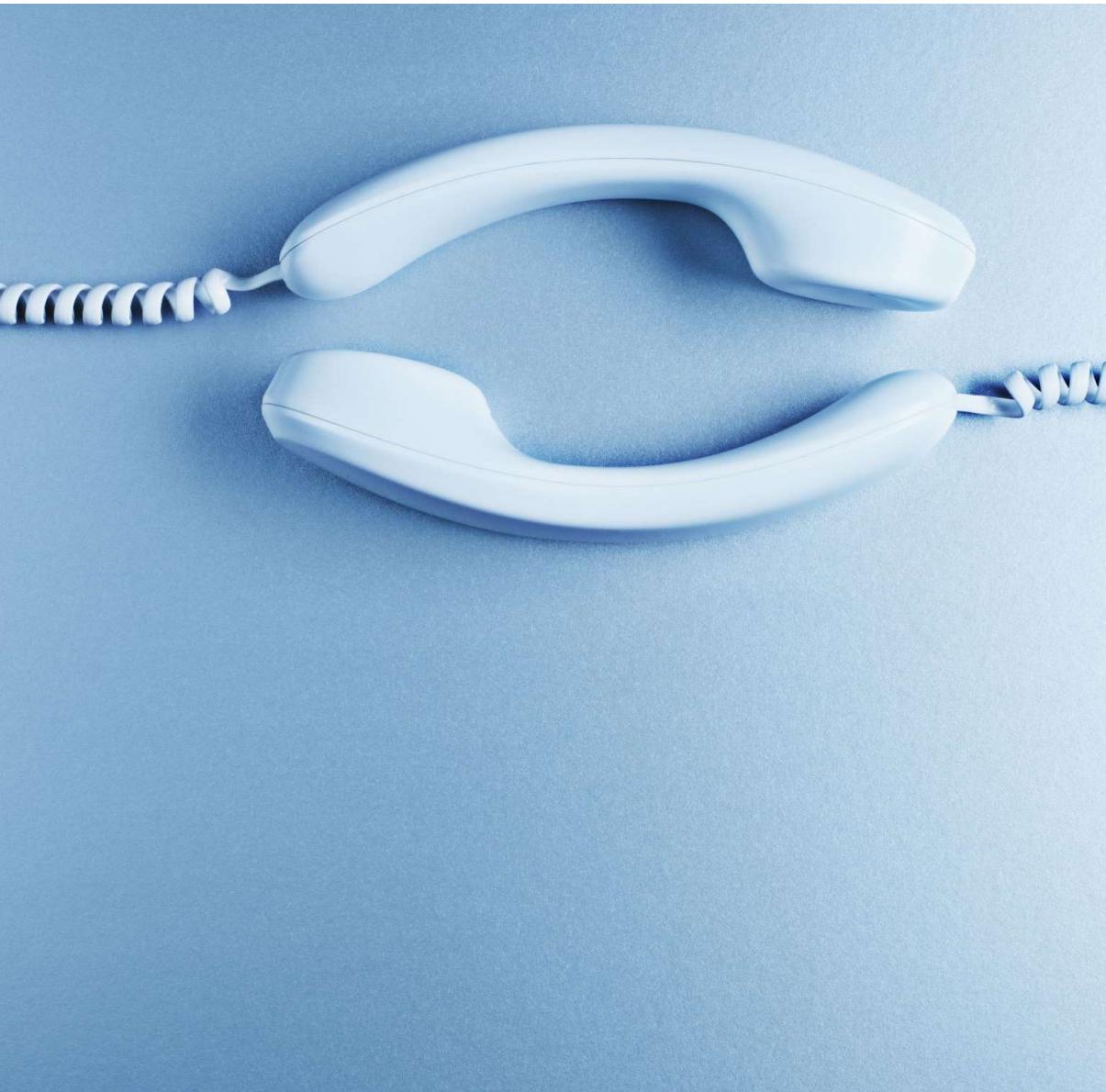




YOUR  
KNOWLEDGE &  
EXPERIENCE

INSIGHTS FROM  
MY JOURNEY  
IN TECH...





# ACTIVE LISTENING

Being Present

Business Knowledge

# ASK QUESTIONS

Feed Your Curiosity

“You Don’t Know What You Don’t Know”

Prompts Others To Rethink

Prevents Assumed Knowledge



# STATING THE OBVIOUS

We All Think Differently!

“Common Sense Really Isn’t That Common!”



©The Simpsons When your new employee suggests business hammocks.  
: r/TheSimpsons (reddit.com)

# BE HONEST

“You Can’t Know Everything”

What do you  
already know?



What is  
missing?



Use this as your  
starting point to  
fill in gaps in  
knowledge



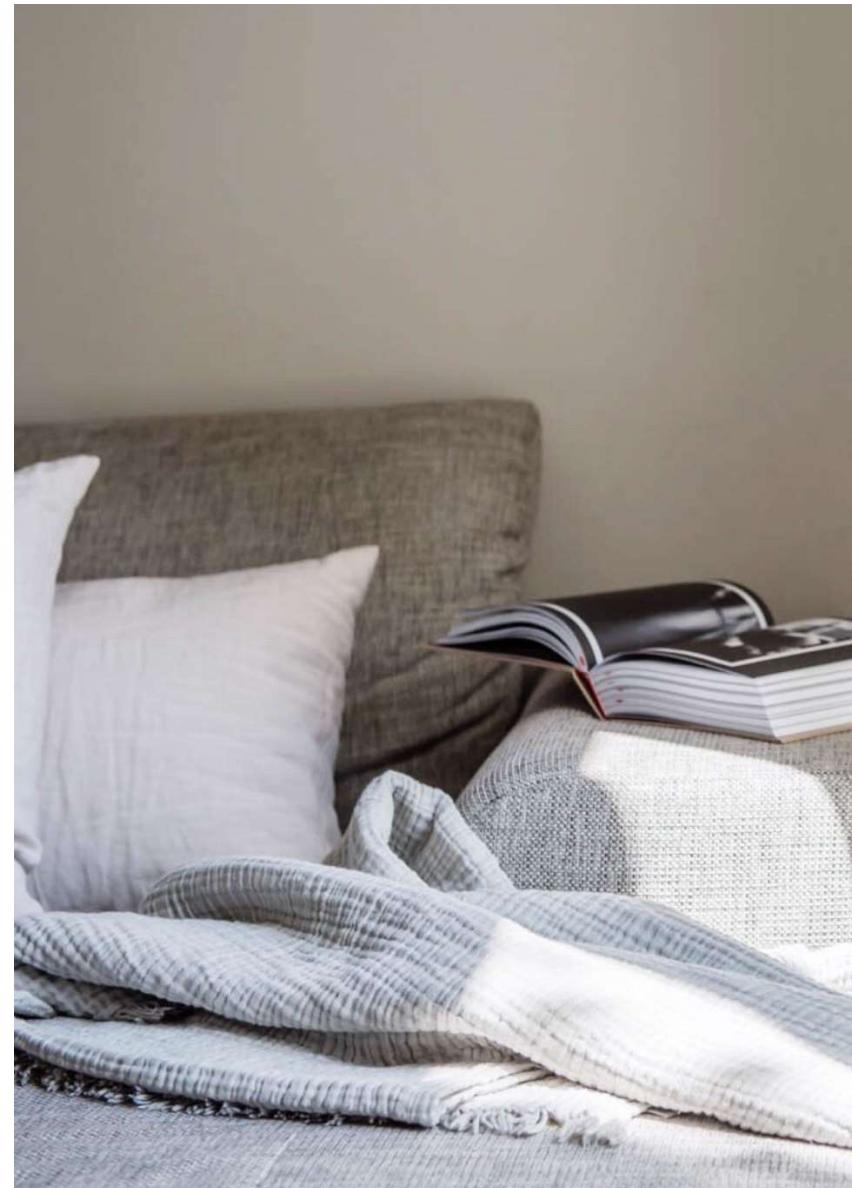
# LEARN FROM FAILURES

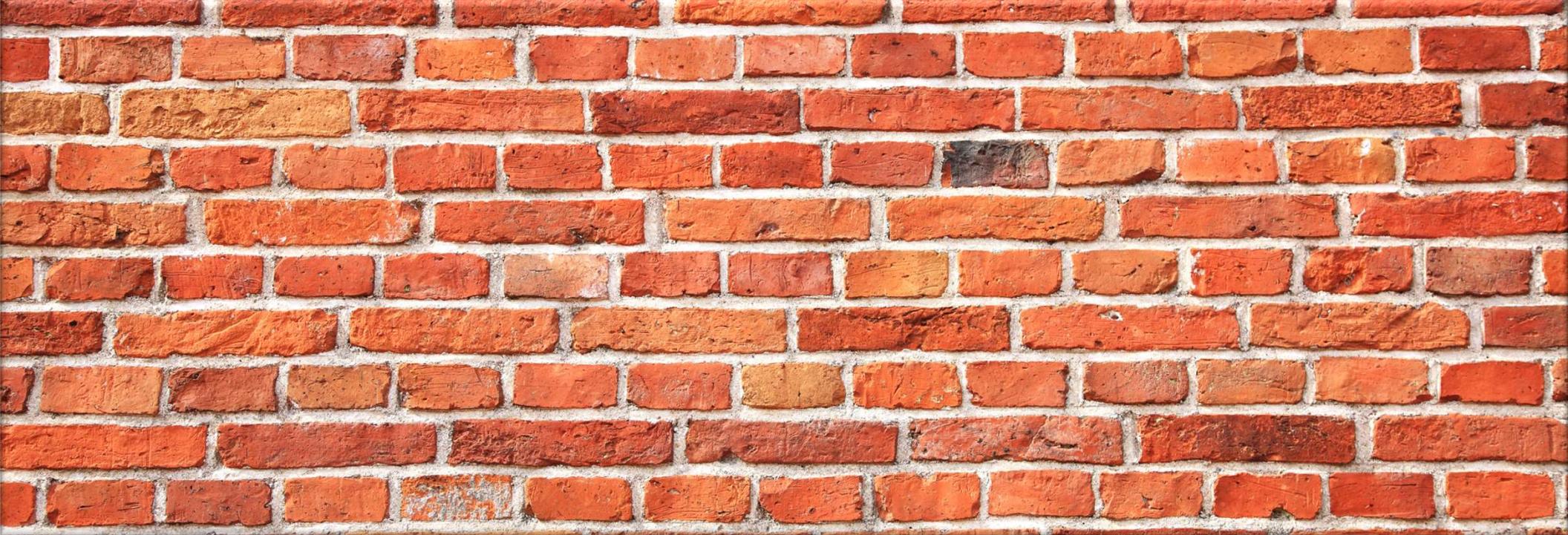
Turning Negative Into A Positive

Things Will Improve

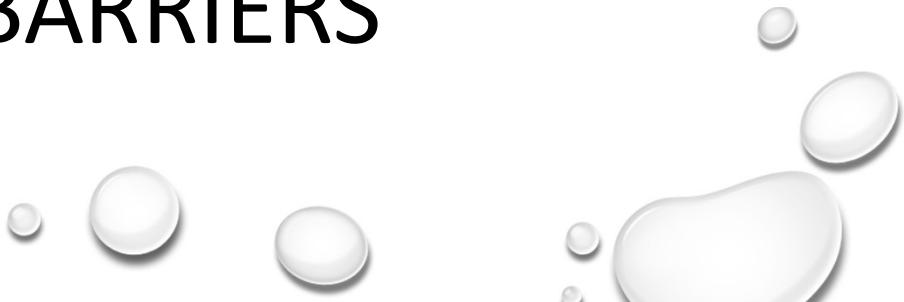
# “OUT OF COMFORT ZONE”

Learn To Push Yourself

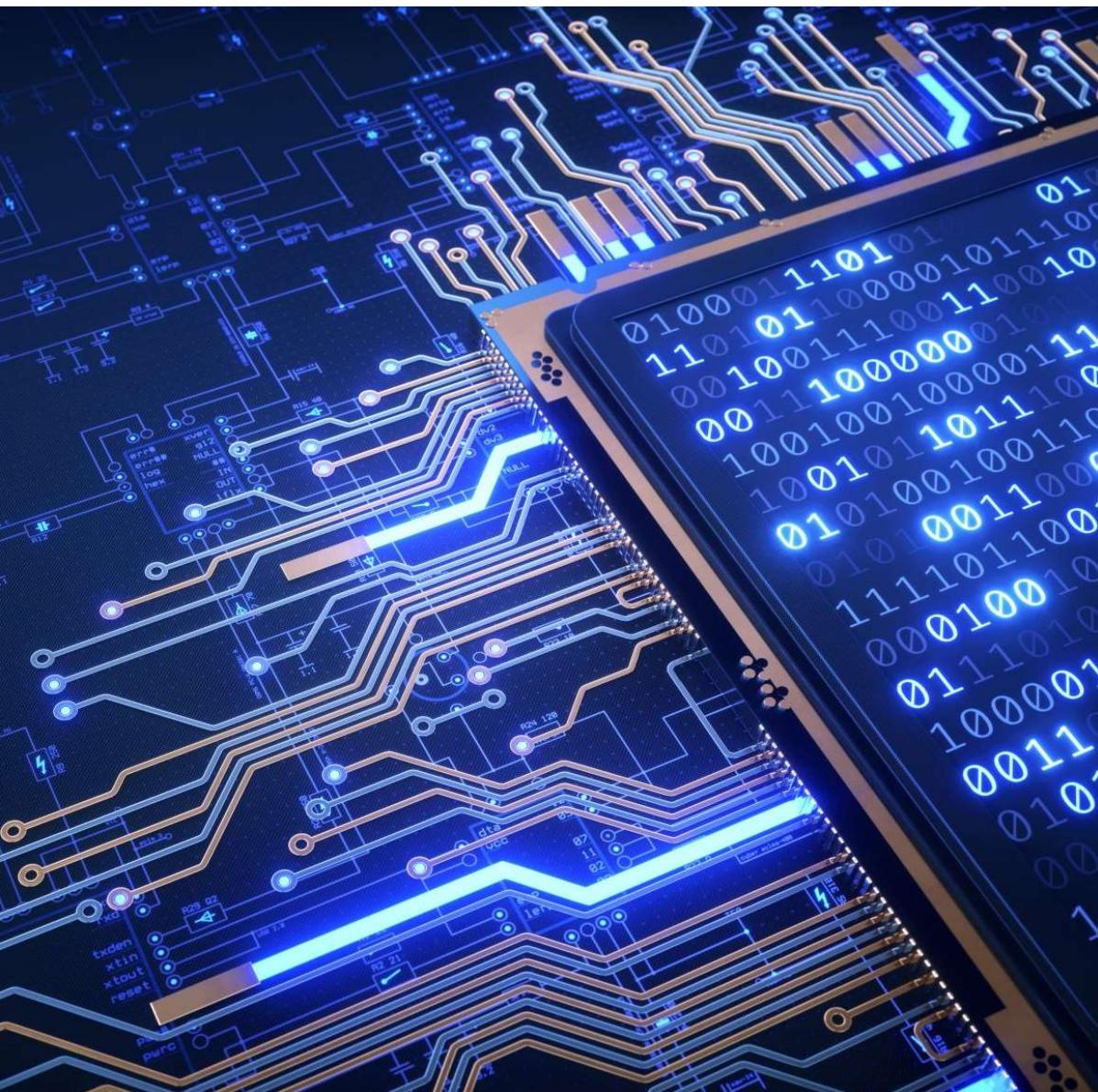




# OVERCOMING BARRIERS



# QUESTIONS?



WHAT  
ABOUT  
TECHNICAL  
SKILLS?

“HARD SKILLS”

# HOW CAN I LEARN THE TECHNICAL SKILLS?



Online Learning  
Resources



Certifications/  
Training Courses



Mentor



Attend/Volunteer  
at Conferences

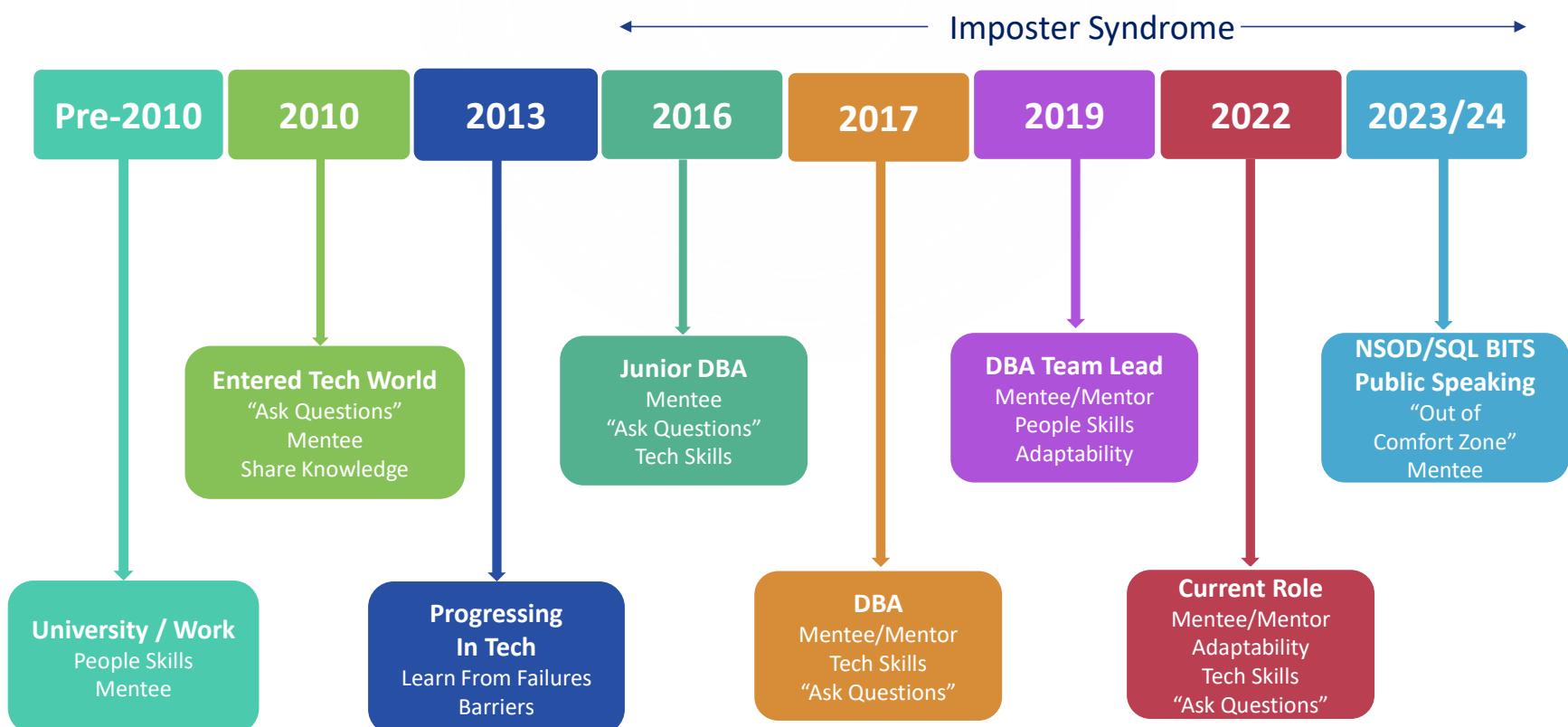


Get Involved in  
Tech Community

The background of the image is a dense, abstract pattern of numerous small, semi-transparent colored circles. The colors transition from warm tones like red, orange, and yellow on the left, through pink, purple, and blue in the center, to cool tones like green, blue, and yellow on the right. The circles overlap and vary in size, creating a sense of depth and movement.

**MY OWN STORY**

# MY TIMELINE



# HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE THIS?



Why would someone hire  
me?



I don't know anything!

# IMPOSTER SYNDROME

Negative Self-talk/Lack Of Confidence

It's Completely Normal

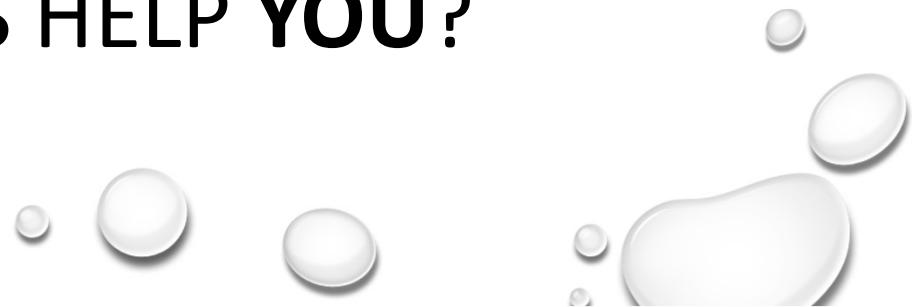
Be Honest

You Don't Know What You Don't Know

By Teaching Others, You Can Overcome It



**HOW CAN ALL THIS HELP YOU?**



# NEW TO TECH



Research  
Potential  
Companies



Find That  
First Job



“Readiness To  
Learn”



Buddy Up/  
Mentoring



Not Working?



Join The Tech  
Community

# TRANSFERRING TO TECH



Find A  
Company/Role



Draw On  
Pre-Existing Skills



Active Listening



Business  
Knowledge



Find A Mentor

# NOT PROGRESSING



Self Reflection /  
Feedback



Gaps In  
Knowledge



Work On Soft  
Skills



Network At Events



Teaching What  
You Know



Become A Mentor  
For Someone

# WANTING TO HELP OTHERS



Teach What  
You Know  
(Tech & Non-tech)



Find  
A Mentee



Be Present At  
Events/User  
Groups



Assist &  
Encourage  
Others



Start  
Speaking At  
Events

# HOW CAN I BECOME A MENTOR?

Look out for mentees in your own team

Reach out to the Tech Community e.g. SQL Community

User Groups / Conferences/ Meetups  
(ideally in person)

Help set up a local Group

Get Involved!

## RECAP

No Silver Bullet

Giving the Tools  
or “know-how”  
to progress

# TAKEAWAYS

Important Soft Skills



READY TO LEARN



ADAPTABILITY



PEOPLE SKILLS



PROBLEM  
SOLVING



MENTORING



# TAKEAWAYS

Knowledge & Experience

- Active Listening
- Ask Questions
- Stating The Obvious
- Be Honest
- Learn From Failures
- Get “Out Of Your Comfort Zone”
- Overcoming Barriers

These helped me to progress in my journey.

**Try Using These Too!**



## GAPS IN TECH SKILLS

- Reach Out / Ask For Help
- Collaborate with Colleagues
- Network!
- Find A Mentor
- Become A Mentor



## YOUR TIME FOR ACTION

So, what next?

Here are a few ideas...

# EMBRACE YOUR OWN “SOFT SKILLS”

## 1. Research Soft Skills

Try Out Some Of These Links To Improve On These Skills:

[A Better Name For Soft Skills: Power Skills | Unboxed Training & Technology \(Unboxedtechnology.Com\)](#)

[Why “Power Skills” Is The New Term For Soft Skills In The Hybrid Work World - Thomson Reuters Institute](#)

[10 Valuable Soft Skills That You Need To Succeed In Your Career | Indeed.Com UK](#)

[How To Improve Soft Skills In The Workplace | Indeed.Com UK](#)

Try Out Some Free Soft Skill Courses

- Open University [Soft Skills Training - Openlearn - Open University](#)
- Coursera [Best Soft Skills Courses & Certifications \[2023\] | Coursera Online Learning](#)

## 2. Further Actions

Self Reflection – Identify Strengths / Weaknesses – Create An Action Plan

## 3. Further Reading/Listening

Podcasts – “Think Fast Talk Smart: Communication Techniques” – Stanford GSP

Book (& Audiobook) – Think Faster, Talk Smarter – Matt Abrahams

# UPCOMING EVENTS

Check Meetup <https://www.meetup.com/>

Check Here For Events - <https://callfordataspeakers.com/list>

(Provides A list of events under call for speakers To See What Events Are Already Scheduled)

<https://sqlwatch.io/community-events/>

Microsoft Events - <https://eventlist.azurewebsites.net/index.php>

**Data Saturdays** (e.g. Rhineland/Oslo/Gothenburg)

**Data Scotland, 2024**

**SQL Konferenz, 2024**

**dataMinds Connect, 2024**

**Microsoft Data User Groups**

Accessible Via Meetup (Across The UK, Europe, USA)

**SQL Bits** Annually

OR even try speaking! **New Stars Of Data** Ongoing → where I started...

**Full Of Training / Networking Opportunities!**



# GET INVOLVED!

**Find Your Local Microsoft User Groups:**

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/sql-server/community?activetab=pivot:sqlservertab>



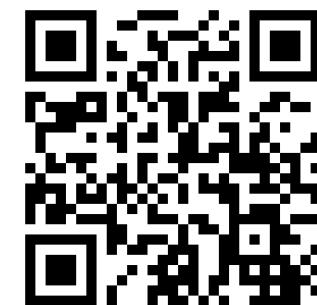
**Leeds User Group** Join us for In-Person and Hybrid Events



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/dataleads/>

**Web**

<http://www.meetup.com/dataleads/>



# Thank You!



<https://evals.datagrillen.com/evals.aspx>

Contact me:

 /in/lizhardyuk