

Programmers are not projects

lessons learned from managing humans

Erin White @erinrwhite
#c4l15 PDX

Didn't Sybil just talk about this?

Yes and no.

Being in the air vs. taking off (30,000 ft vs 1,000 ft)

Newbie managers

Agenda

1. “Soft” skills are hard
2. Be a human
3. Others are humans too

1. “Soft” skills are hard

- **Hard skills**

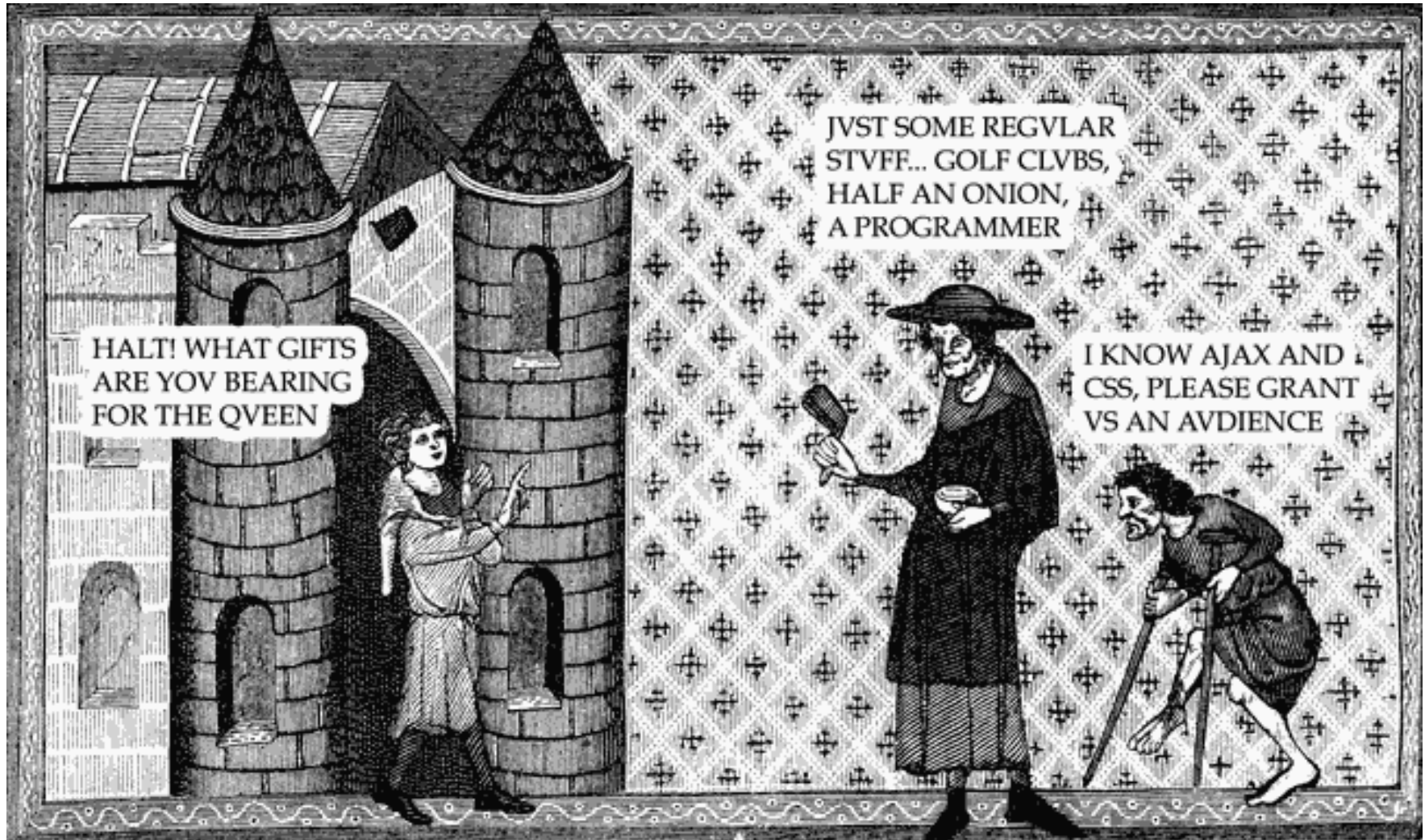
- Rule-based
- Quantifiable
- Consistent
- Factual-ish
- Some feeling that you have mastery of one thing in your life
- For once

- **Soft skills**

- People-based
- Intangible
- Contextual, societal, social, personal
- Change-y
- *Incredibly difficult and terrifying*

ps - It should be okay for everybody to talk about this.

My story



Married To The Sea.com

<http://www.marriedtothesea.com/043009>

Managing in libraryland

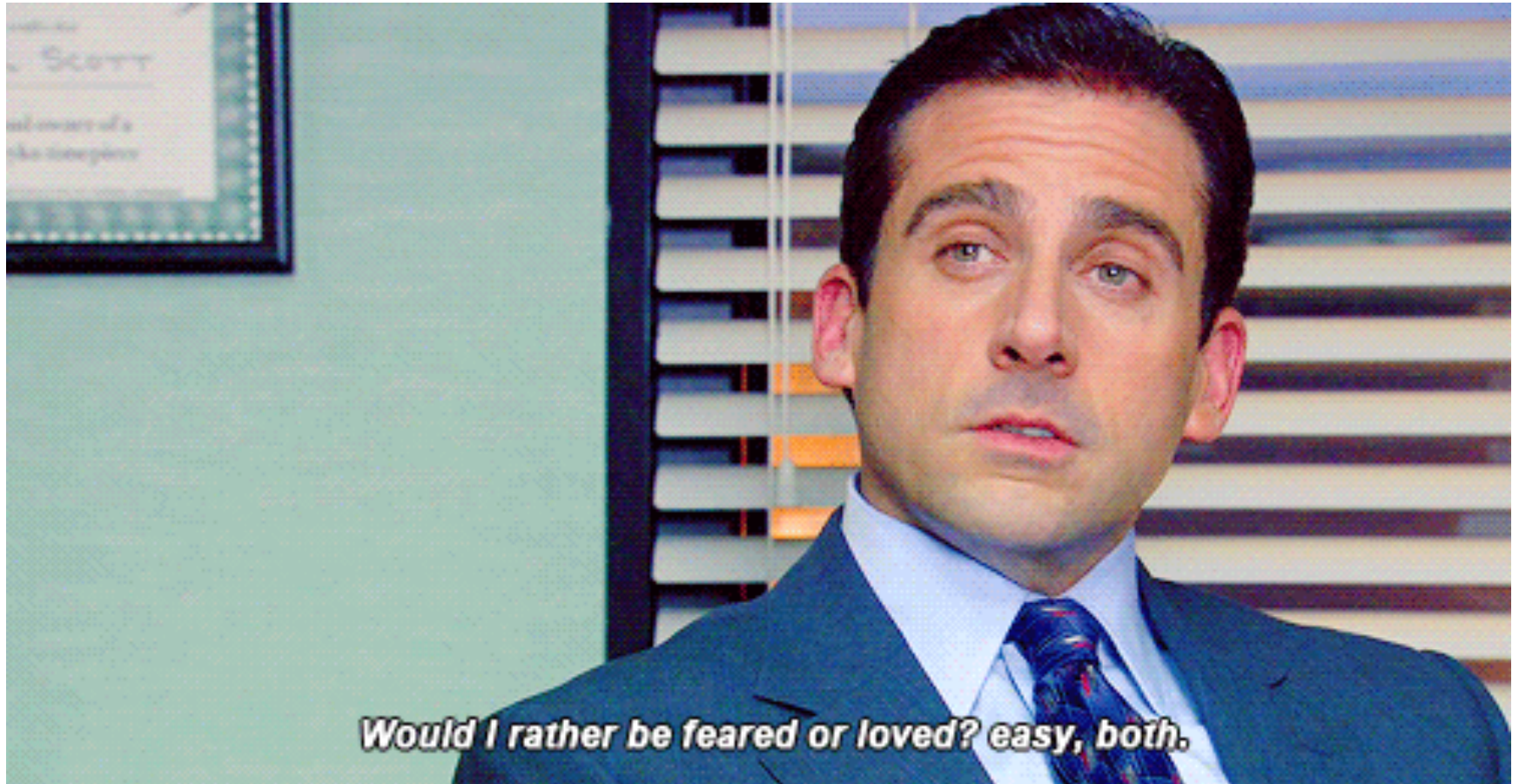
- Getting Management Experience™

Newbie managers +
little \$ for training

=

lots of room for growth, i.e. messing up

(2) Being a human



<https://www.tumblr.com/search/my-Office-gif>

ass+u+me



<http://todaymade.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Bill-Lumbergh-Gary-Cole-Office-Space.jpg>

ass+u+me

Curious, mission-driven tinkerers

Your work, lol

- No roadblocking
- Cross-train, document, delegate
- Prioritize
- Be interruptable
- Let go

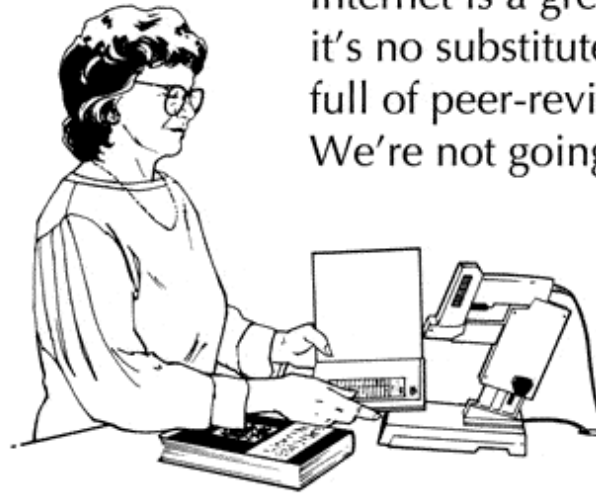
Staying current-ish

- Knowing the stack = asking good questions + making good decisions
- Small, non-urgent things
- Good test of documentation

Communication

- Most failures come from a failure of communication
- Transparency without being a jerk
- My bad: acknowledge, fix, move on

Don't get me wrong, I think the Internet is a great resource. But it's no substitute for a library full of peer-reviewed research. We're not going anywhere.



Mindfulness



Balance




Married To The Sea.com

<http://www.marriedtothesea.com/090914>

(3) Other people are humans too

Recruiting and hiring

- What's attractive? Mission-driven work + modern tech stack
- Competitive salary, if possible
- Other incentives:
 - Non-pay bennies
 - Only a 40-hour workweek! 
 - Telecommuting
 - Travel/development
 - 10-20% time projects
 - Learning on the job

Keeping people around

The talk.

- How do you want to grow?
- What are you excited about?
- What do you want to learn?
- What do you need?
- What do you want your career to look like?

Work ≠ billable hours

- travel to/from another library
- talking in a hallway about a project
- attending another department's presentation
- attending a library event
- going out to coffee with your coworker
- reading articles about libraries or technology
- experimenting with new code frameworks
- brainstorming ideas while staring off into space or walking around the block
- etc etc etc

The mix of projects

- **Core projects**

- Mission critical
- Core services
- Uptime is important
- Maintenance/existing tech

- **Satellite projects**

- Projects that excite
- Not mission critical
- New technologies

Messing up :D

Fundamental attribution error:

people's tendency to place an undue emphasis on internal characteristics to explain someone else's behavior in a given situation, rather than considering external factors

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fundamental_attribution_error

Communication...more of it

- Give enough information to let people succeed:
 - Rationale - present the problem
 - Motivations and political considerations
 - Constraints
 - Other resources
 - Be open to other solutions
- Take advantage of one-on-ones
- Find the best way to stay in touch

Closing thoughts

- It's okay to be introspective
- Assume you will suck at it
- Communicate
- Be open
- Don't take it personal

Bye!

- Team culture at angellist
- How etsy increased diversity
- UX leadership, part 1
- If you want to be in management, don't expect to be liked
- From operator to guide
- How to interview sysadmins
- Blameless postmortems and just culture at Etsy
- Why do you want to lead people?
- How to make the leap from engineer to manager
- Harvard business review: Manage your boss
- MVC: Command management vs service management
- Book: UX Management
- Book: Leading Snowflakes (thanks Francis Kayiwa!)