

# DEBUGGING TECHNICAL LEADERSHIP

An Engineer's Guide to Managing More Than Code

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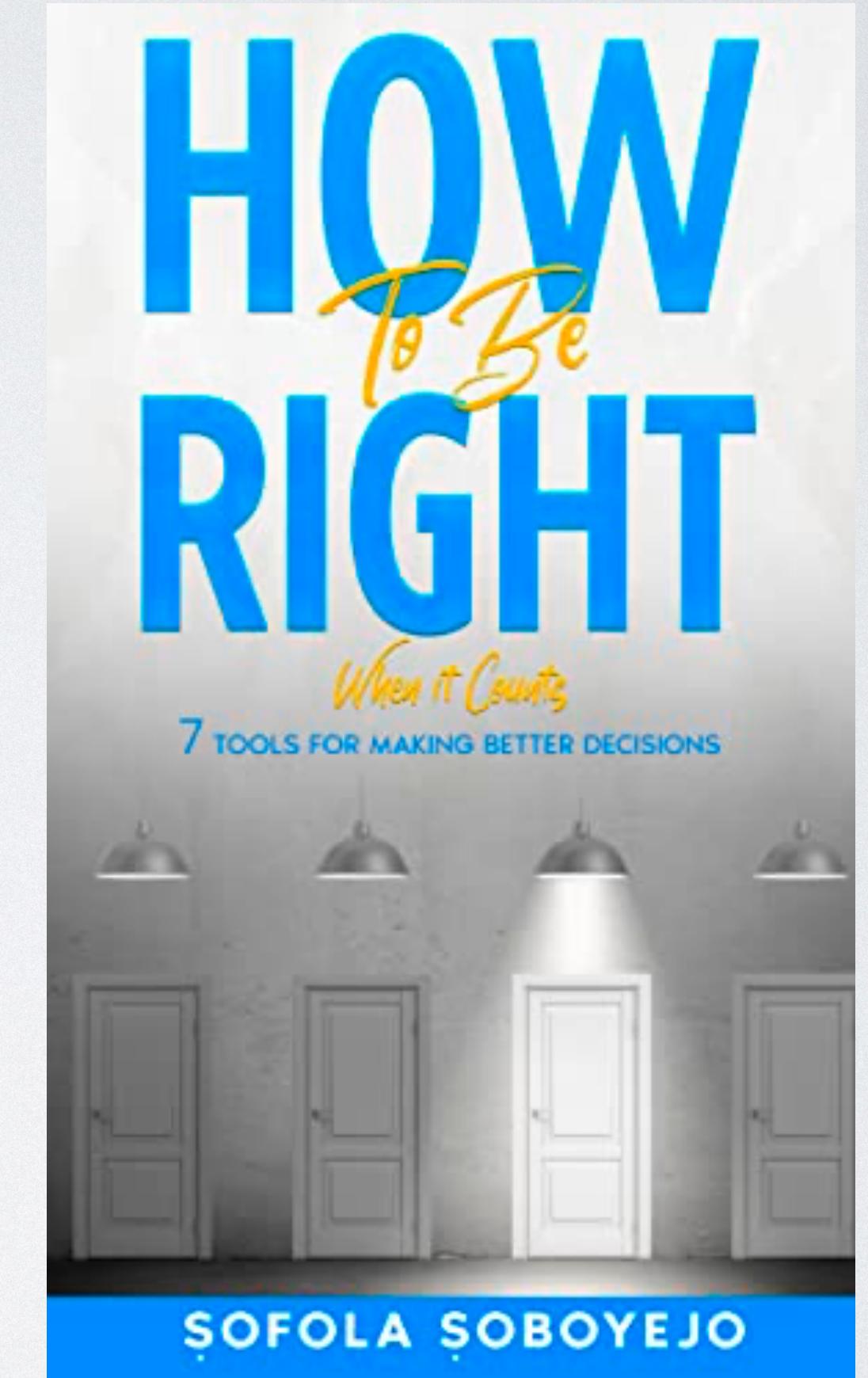
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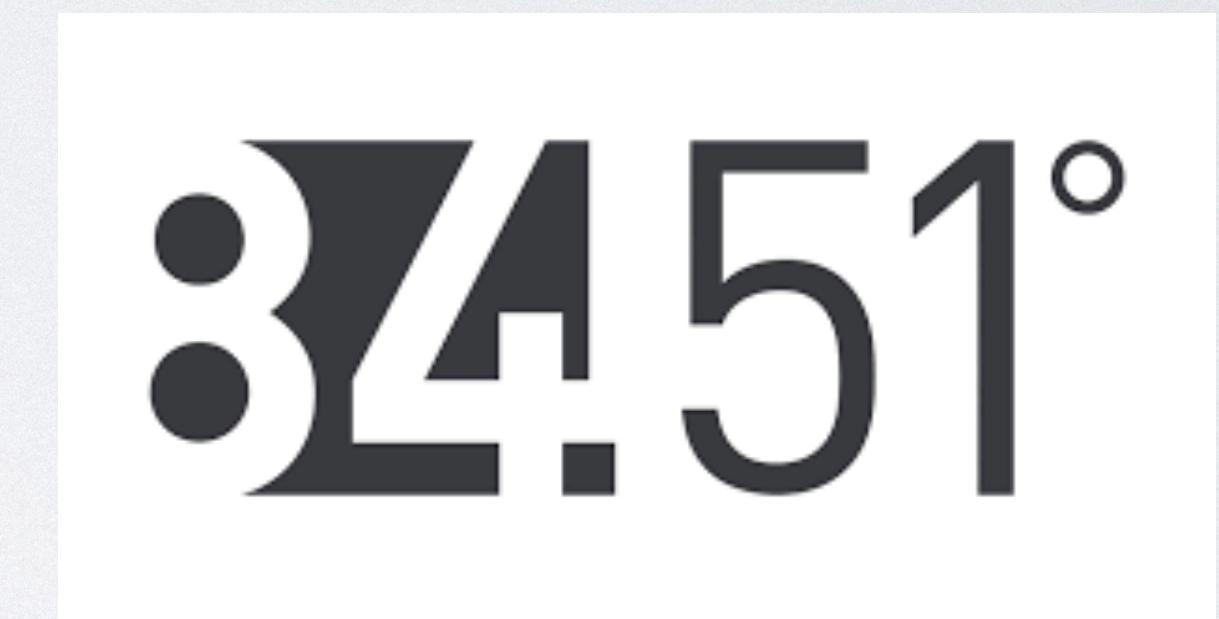
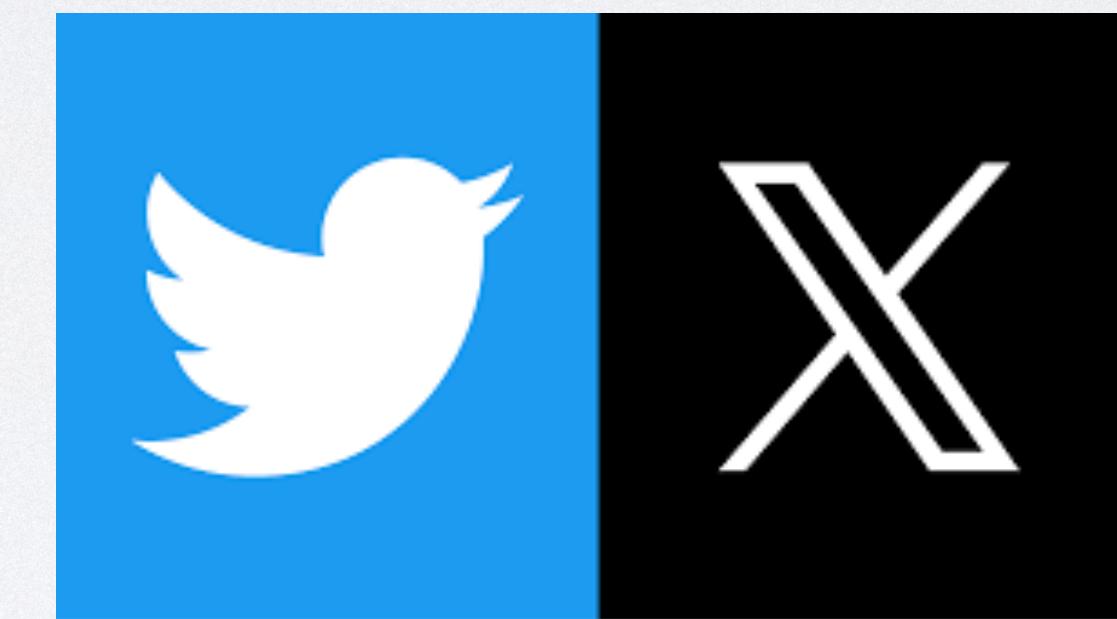
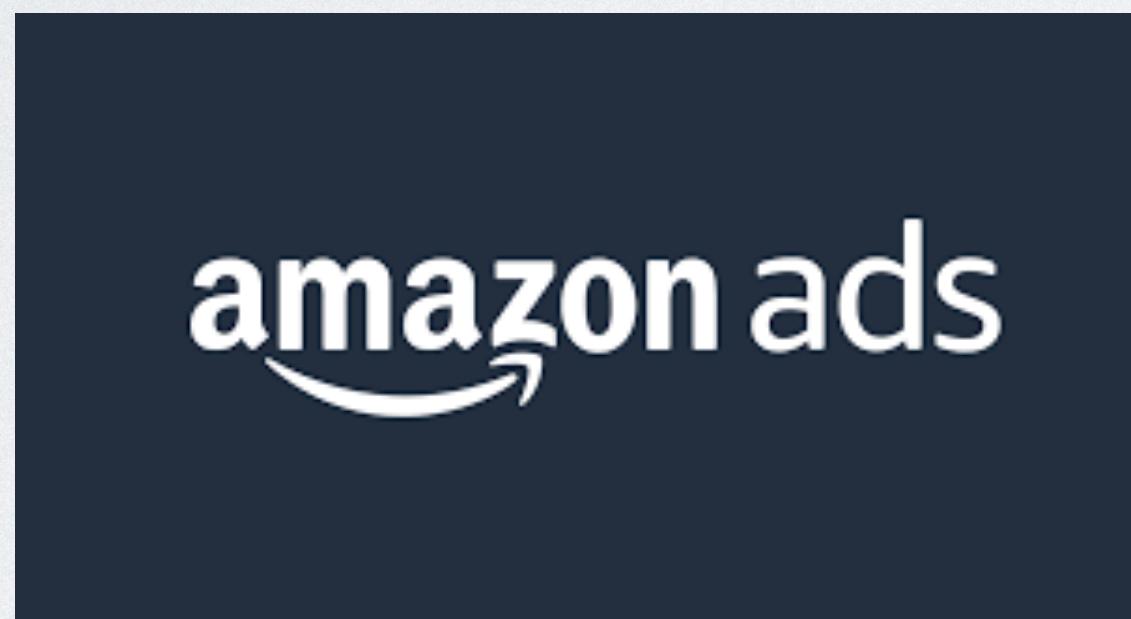


# INTRO

- VP Engineering for Data at 84.5 /
- Industry Experience in Banking, Retail, Marketing, Advertising and Social Media
- Author of “How to be Right, When it Counts”



# MY BACKGROUND



- 18+ Years in Tech
- 10+ Years in Technical Leadership

# DEBUGGING



```
    resp_iter = self.stub.GetPredictKeyRange(self.context)
    statuses = {}
    async for data in resp_iter:
        status = Status(
            status_id=data.id, name=data.name,
            )
        statuses[status.name] = status
    return statuses
```

Photo by Stanislav Kondratiev: <https://www.pexels.com/photo/screen-with-code-10816120/>

Identifying and removing errors from computer hardware or software

# BUGS IN THE SYSTEM

- Bad role models
- Confusing Management with Leadership
- Tech Track Glass Ceiling
- Lack of a Blueprint

# LOSING TECHNICAL SKILLS

## BUG OR FEATURE

- It depends
- Maintaining Curiosity Logs
- Embrace a Problem Solving Lens

# SETTING BREAKPOINTS

- Why is Technical Leadership important
- What is the key role of a Technical Leader
- How can you be a great Technical Leader

# START

HOW GREAT LEADERS INSPIRE  
EVERYONE TO TAKE ACTION

# WITH

SIMON SINEK

New York Times bestselling author of *Leaders Eat Last* and *Together Is Better*

# WHY

# WHY DO WE NEED TECHNICAL LEADERS?

- How you get things done matters for business competitive advantage
- Required if you dare to be cheaper, faster, better and safer
- Business goals remain dreams and visions
- Software still eats the world and AI is prepped to gobble it up



SO WHAT ABOUT YOU



“Becoming a technical leader is not something that happens to you, but something that you do ” - Vít Kotáčka

# SO WHY MIGHT YOU CONSIDER IT?

- You are listening to this talk today
- Impact beyond the four walls of the office
- Opportunity to be a force multiplier
- You might never know if you don't try it

A close-up, low-angle shot of a person's hands working on a construction site. They are using a trowel to spread and smooth a layer of dark, textured concrete or mortar on a light-colored wooden form. The person is wearing a black long-sleeved shirt, dark shorts, and teal-colored athletic shoes. A teal wristwatch is visible on their left wrist. The background is blurred, showing more of the construction environment.

# THE BASICS

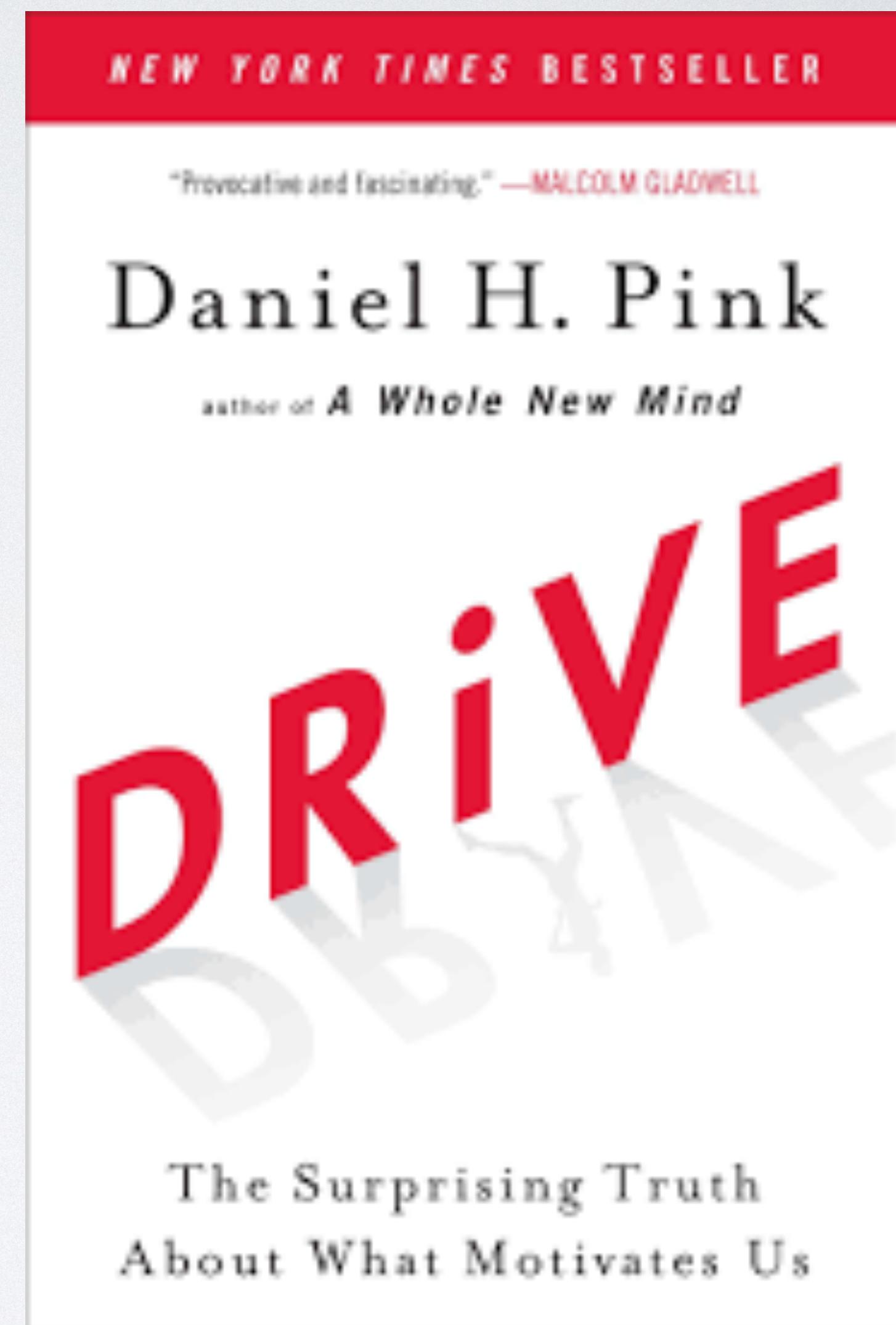
# WHAT GOOD LEADERS DO

- Motivate
- Organize
- Innovate



# THE ART OF MOTIVATION

- Autonomy, Mastery & Purpose
- Goal: Keep people Happy and Productive



# ORGANIZATION

- Aligning the people and the work
- Ensuring people are seating on the right seat on the bus
- Drive home your team charter

# ORGANIZATION

- Never confuse activity with productivity
- Output focused vs Outcome Focused
- Be weary of being a feature factory

“One of the things that limits our learning is our belief that we already know something ” - David Marquet

# INNOVATION

- Taps from old ideas from other contexts
- Not interested in re-doing what has been done well by others
- Comfortable perfecting ideas than proposing them
- Uses tools and processes to measure quality as you solve

# PLAYING BY NEW RULES

- **Old Rule:** Your value is tied directly to how much you are able to contribute
- **New Rule:** Your value goes beyond how much you are able to contribute technically
- **New Measure of Success:** What you and your team get done and how your people feel along the way

# STAYING GROUNDED

Beyond understanding the technical work and you need to develop empathy for your customers



RAISING THE BAR

# FROM GOOD TO GREAT

- Nurture the culture
- Think Long Term: Strategy
- Sharpen the Axe: Effectiveness

A close-up photograph of a small, healthy plant with several green leaves and a single yellow variegated leaf, growing out of a mound of dark brown soil. The background is blurred, showing more of the same soil.

# NURTURING CULTURE

People Like Us Do This

“Culture eats strategy for breakfast” - Peter Drucker

# CULTURE: STARTING WITH THE PEOPLE

- If you are the leader, the people are your work
- You need to care about the people you lead to succeed

# MOTIVATING ++: HIGH INVITATION HIGH CHALLENGE

- Working with talented people
- Set the bar at every step : Hiring, Onboarding, Upskilling and Promo
- Culture Improver's > Culture Fit

# SUBROUTINES: CODIFYING CULTURE

- Shared Language
- Shared North Star
- Shared Stories and Myths

# SUBROUTINES: CODIFYING CULTURE

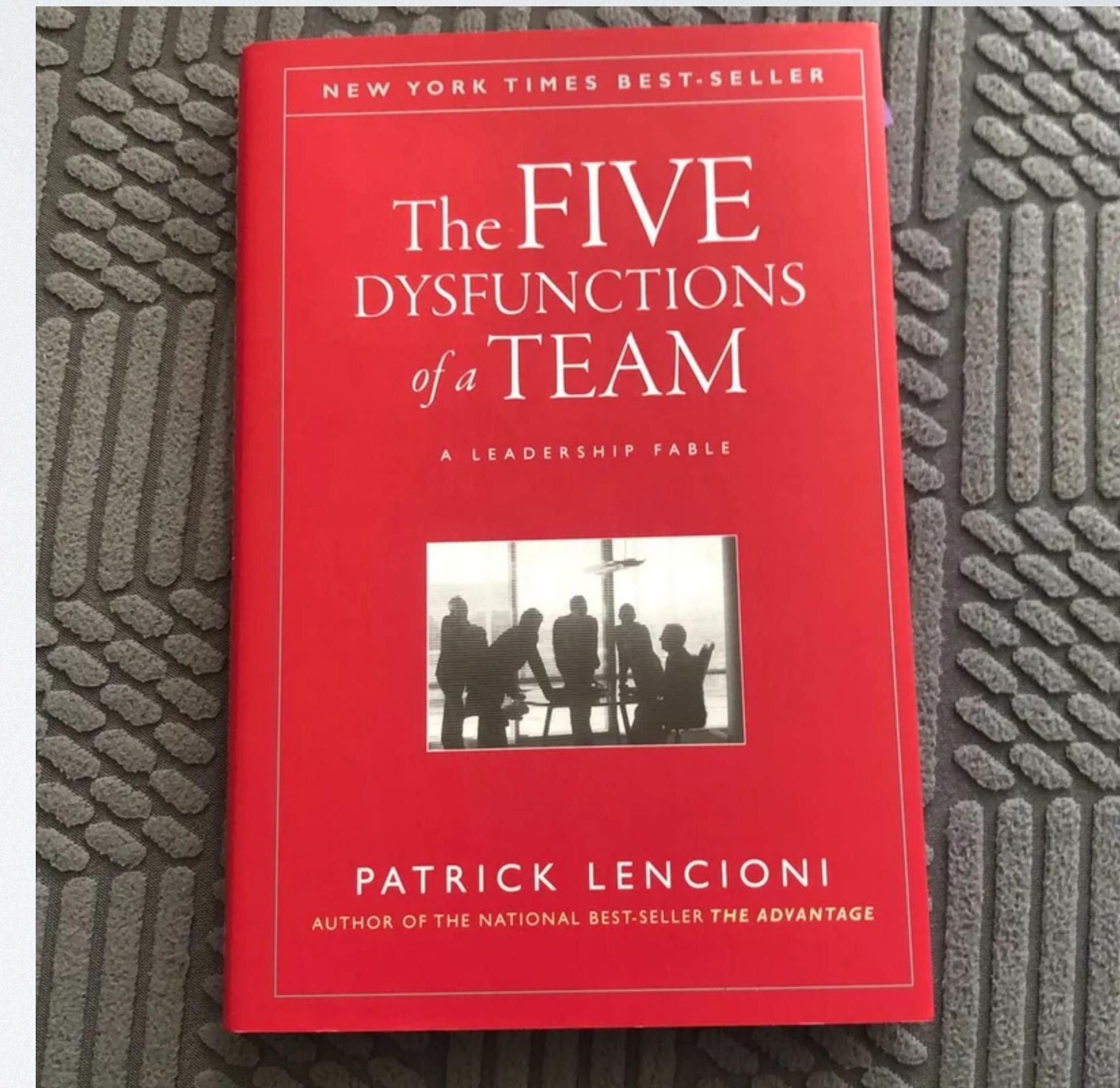
- Shared Rituals (Our how and ways of working)
- Shared Heroes (Who gets rewarded and Celebrated)
- Shared Values and Beliefs (What we stand for)

# SUBROUTINES: CODIFYING CULTURE

- Define Values: Write down example(s) of a person in your space who exhibits a behavior that you wish would be a universal behavior
- Name the person and behavior
- Design recognition and rewards around these behaviors

# FIXING DYSFUNCTION

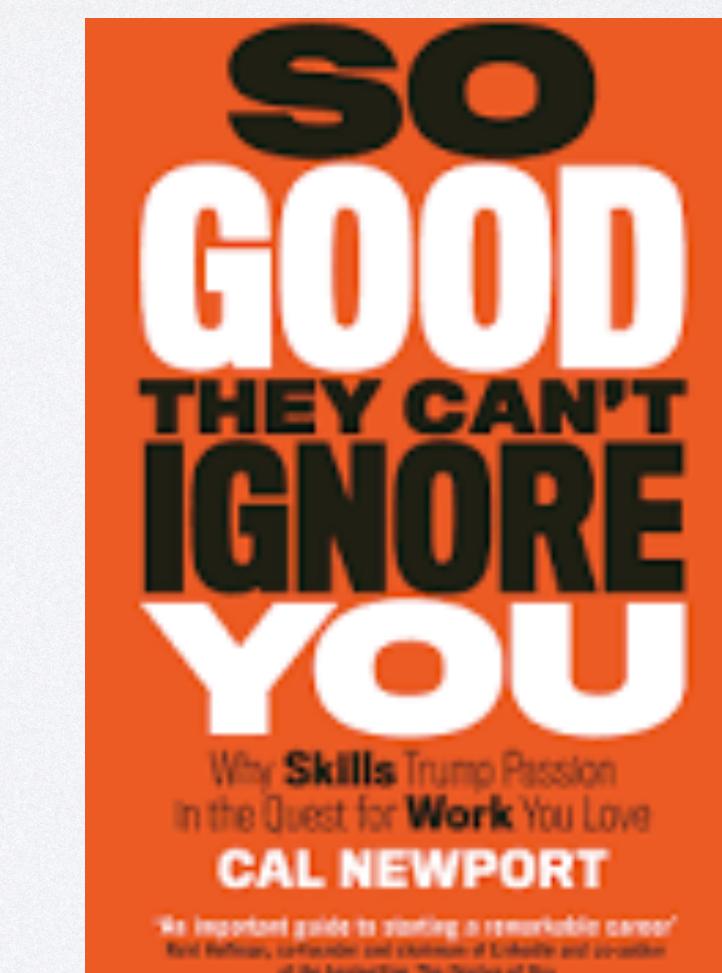
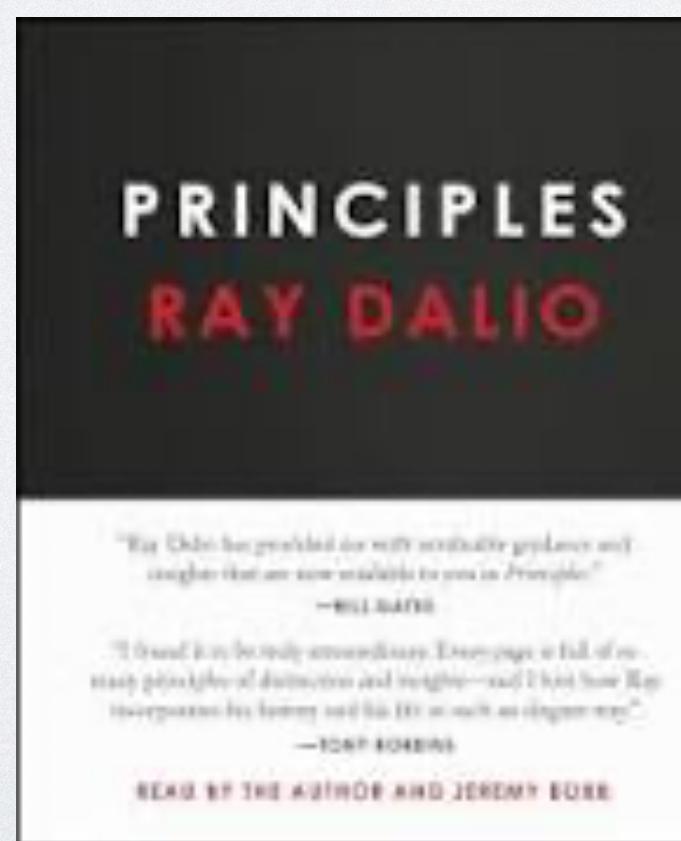
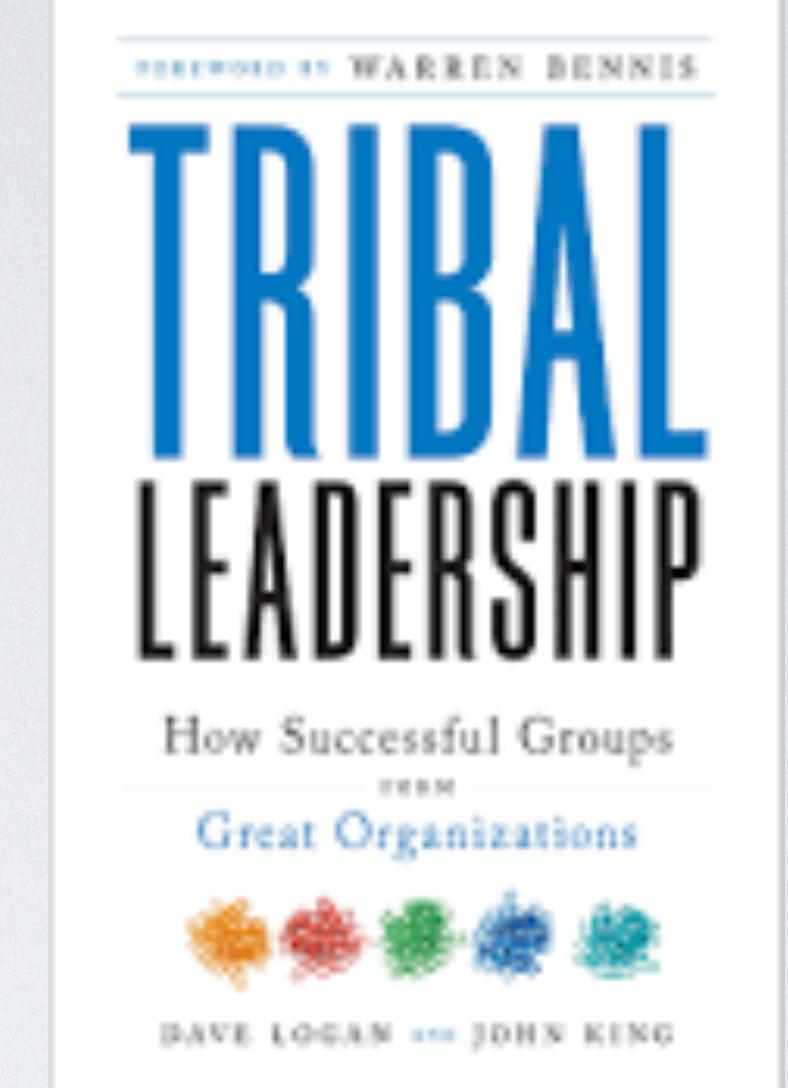
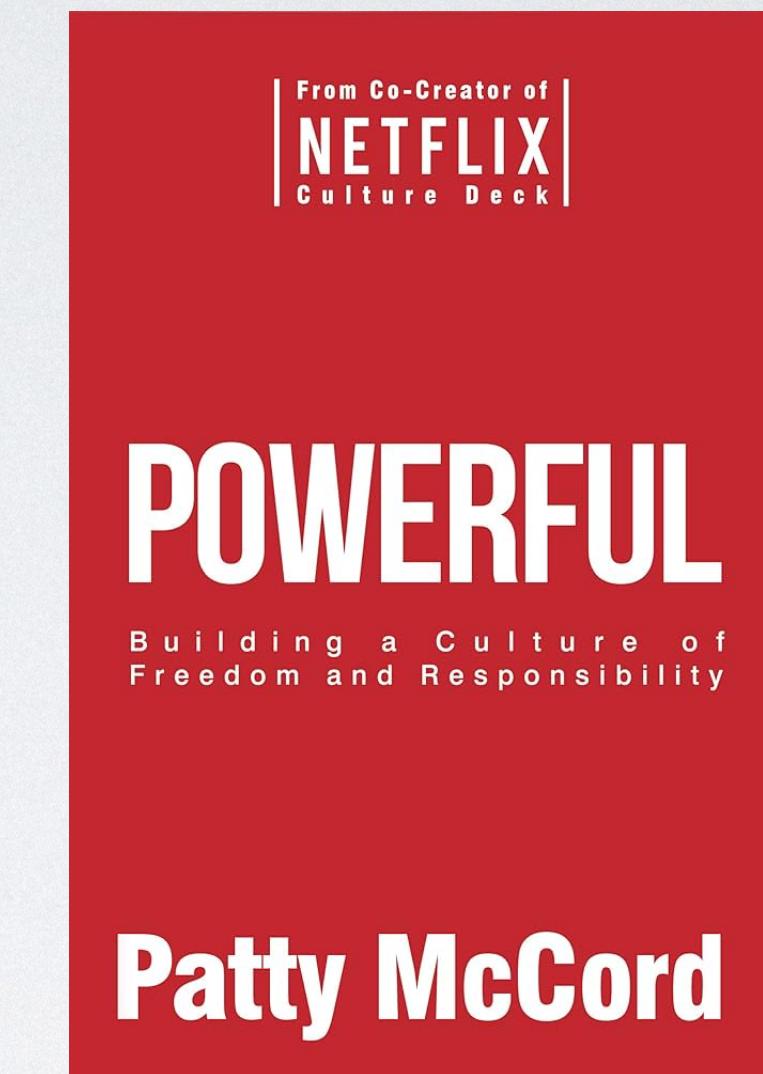
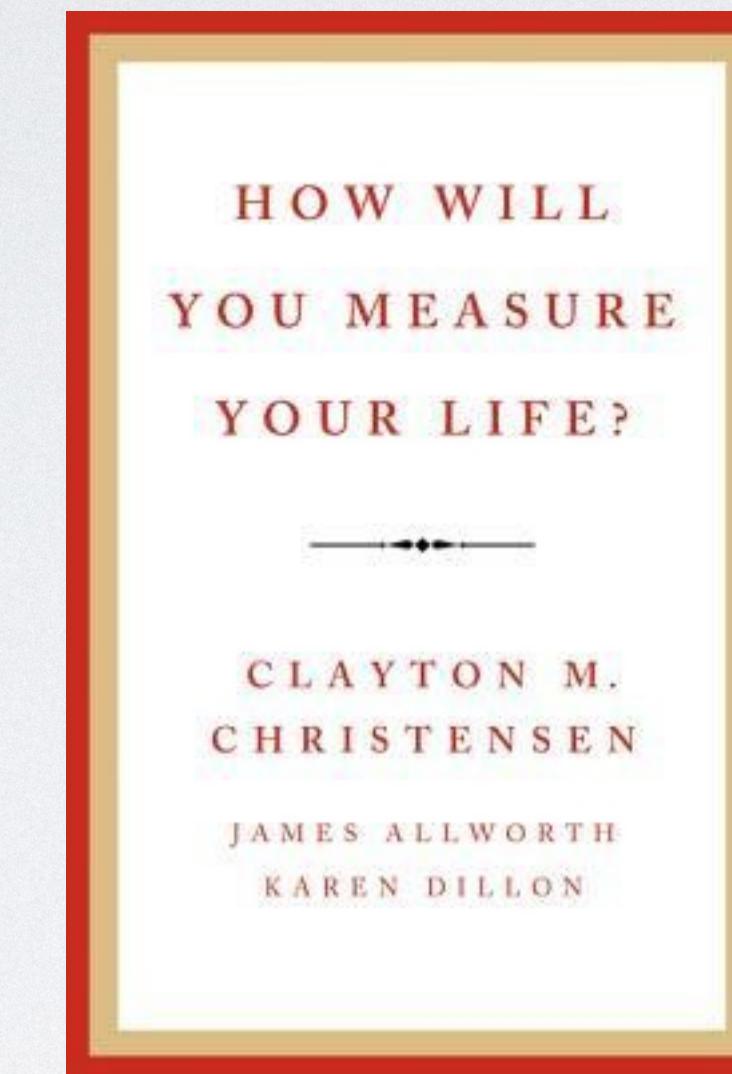
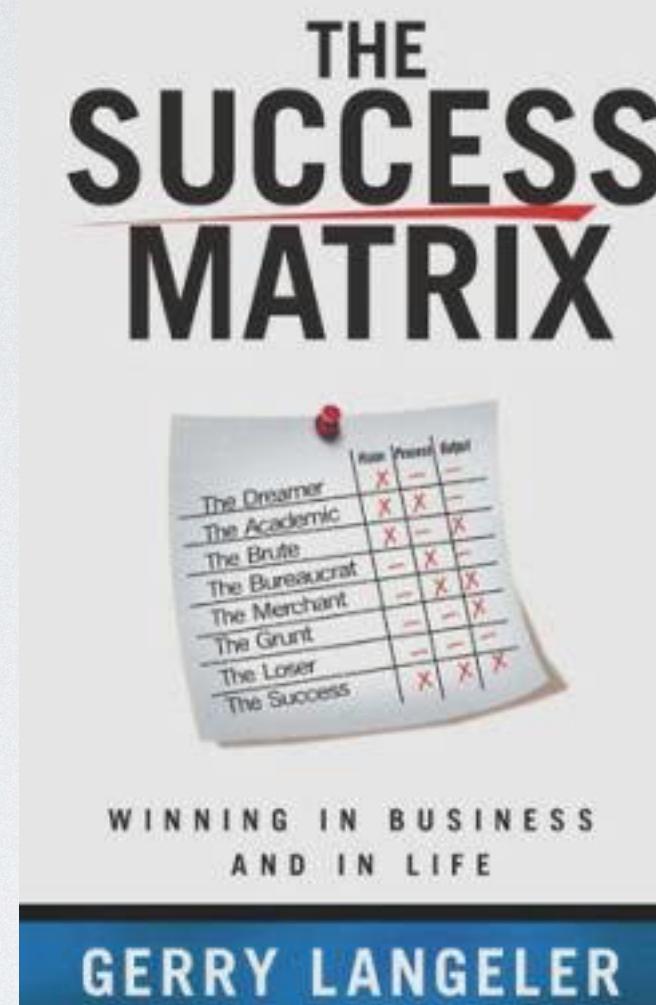
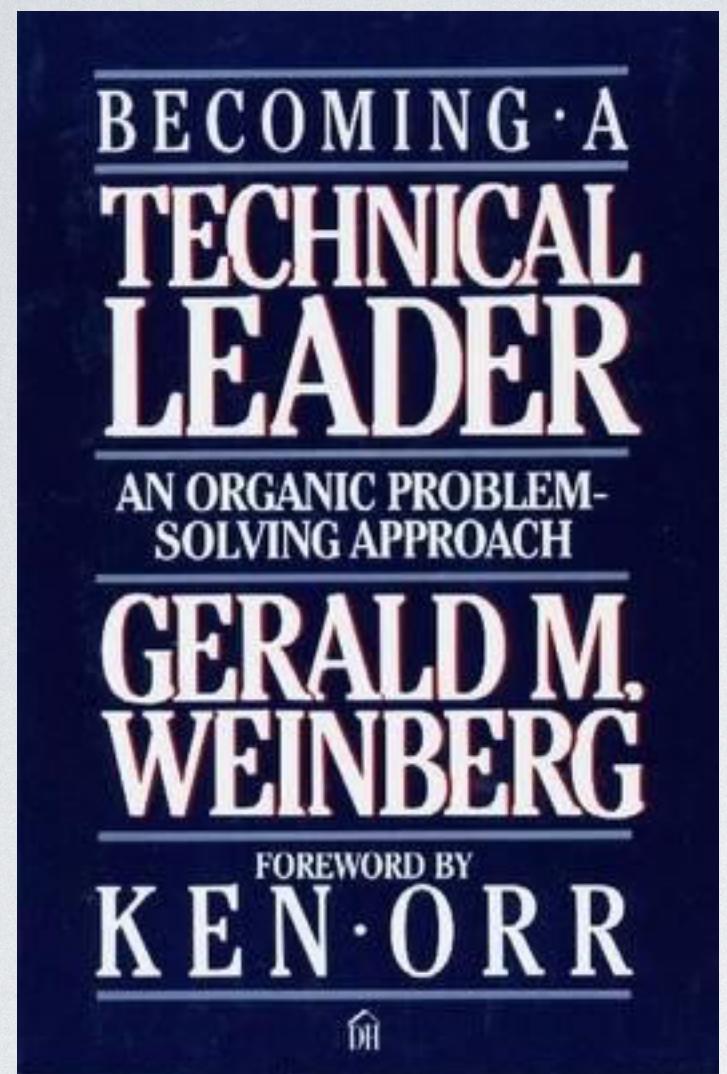
- Build Trust
- Engage in Constructive Conflict
- Ensure Commitment
- Ensure Accountability
- Focus on Results





Best Team to be on, Best Team to Work With

# EXTRA MILE



# STRATEGY: GAME PLANNING FOR VICTORY



The Art of Action and Execution

“Leaders must get across the **Why** as well as the **What**.  
Their people need more than milestones for motivation. They are thirsting for **meaning**, to  
**understand** how their goals relate to the mission.” -  
John Doerr

# LEAN AND MEAN

- Emphasize performance across the whole (value stream) and not only the parts
- Building in feedback loops
- Continuous learning

# STAYING GROUNDED

Design with the expectation of Failure

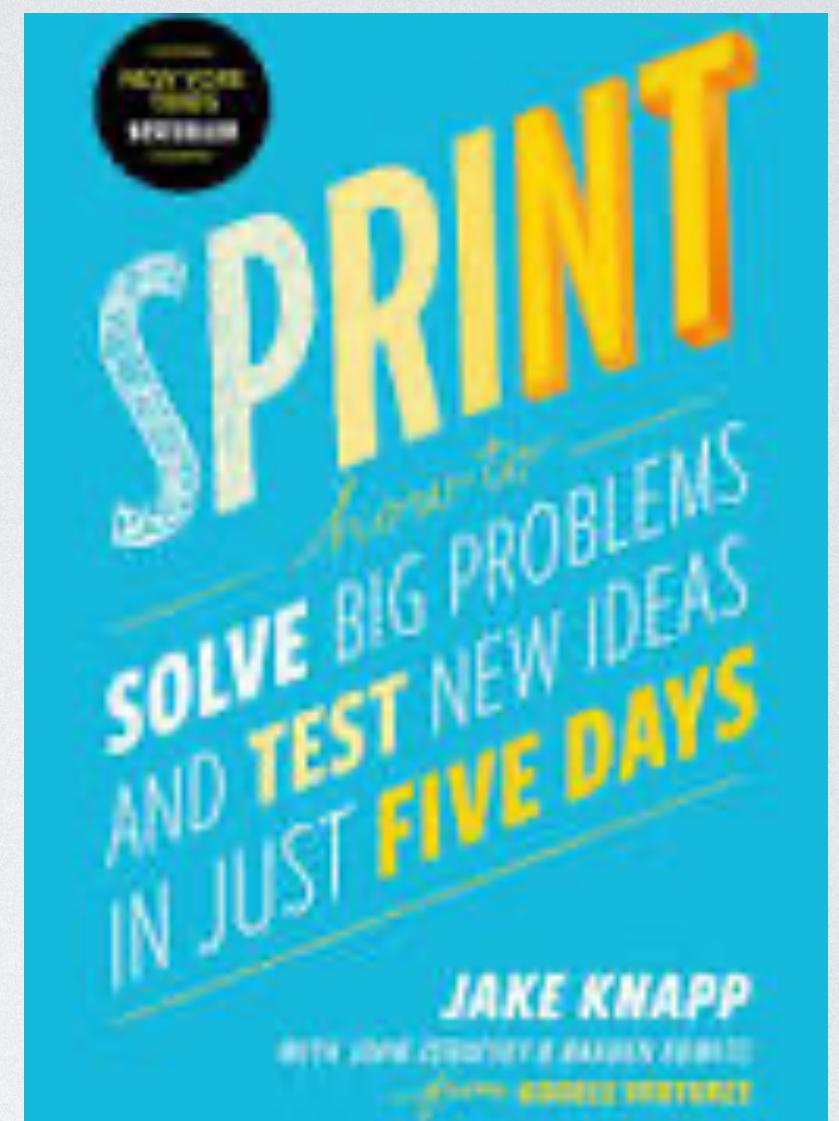
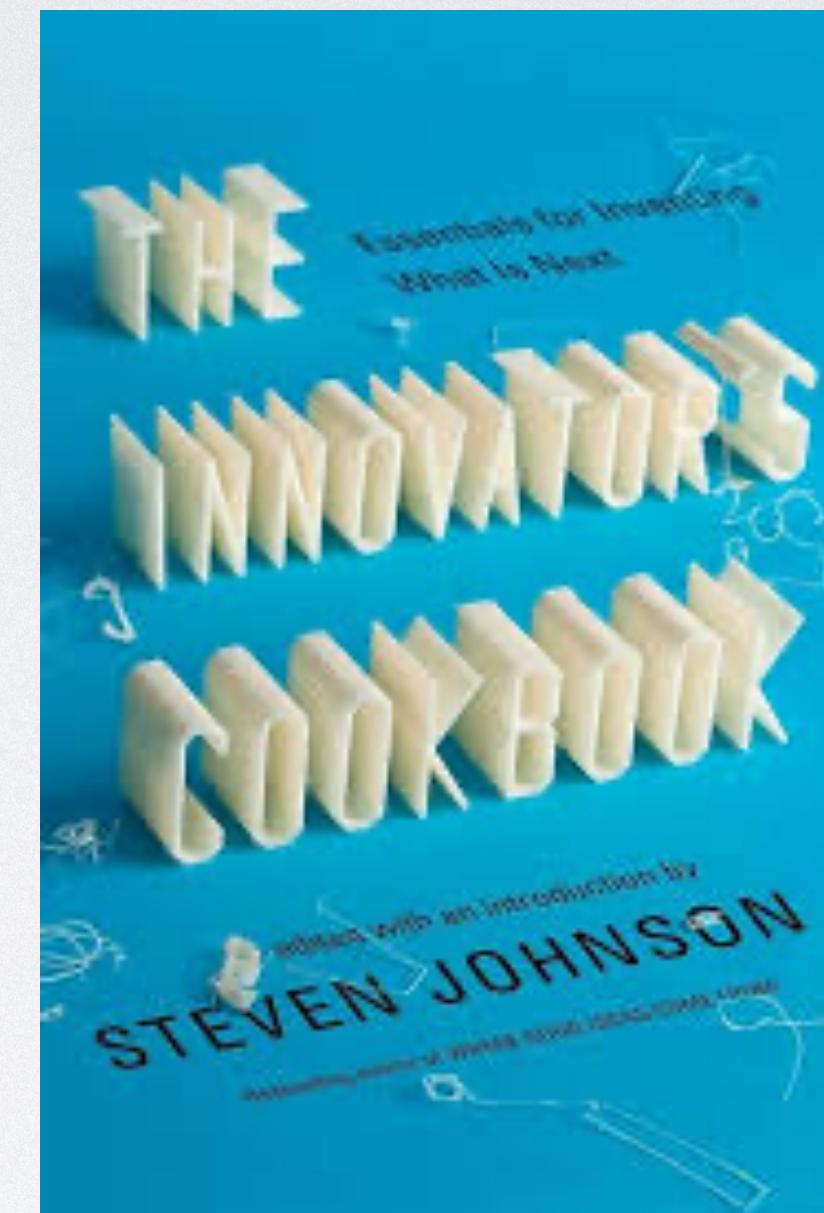
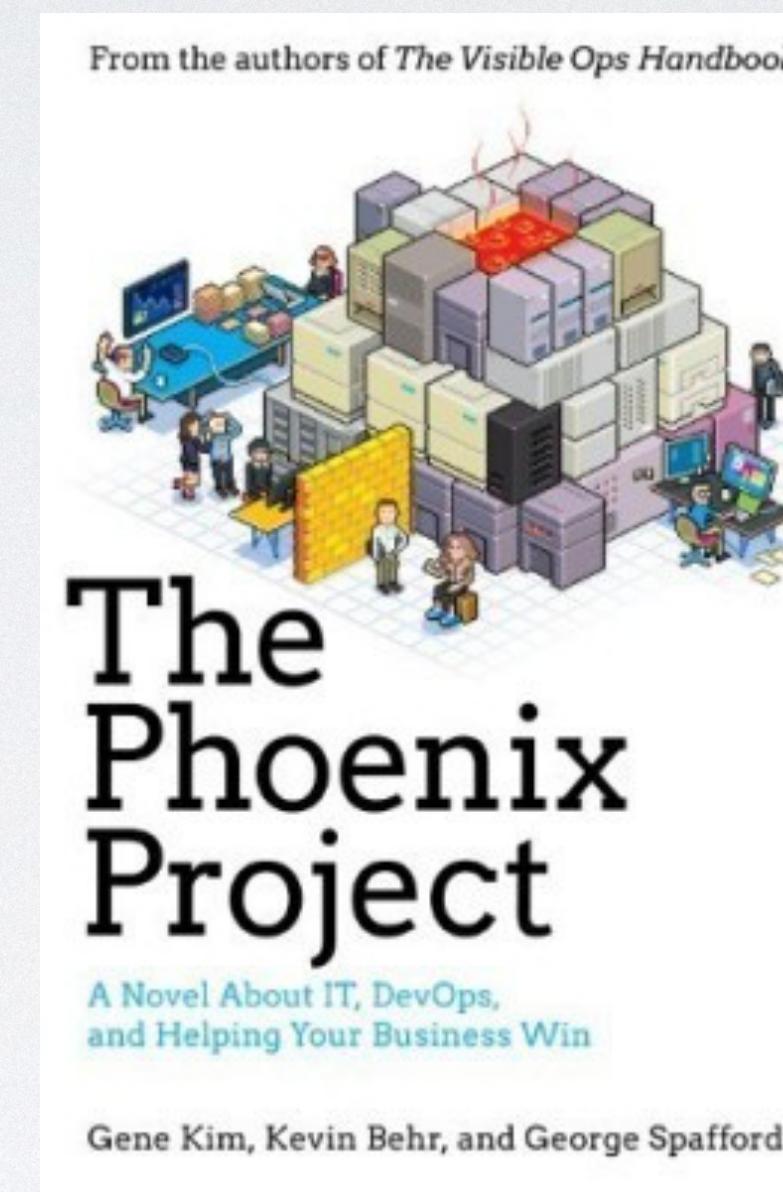
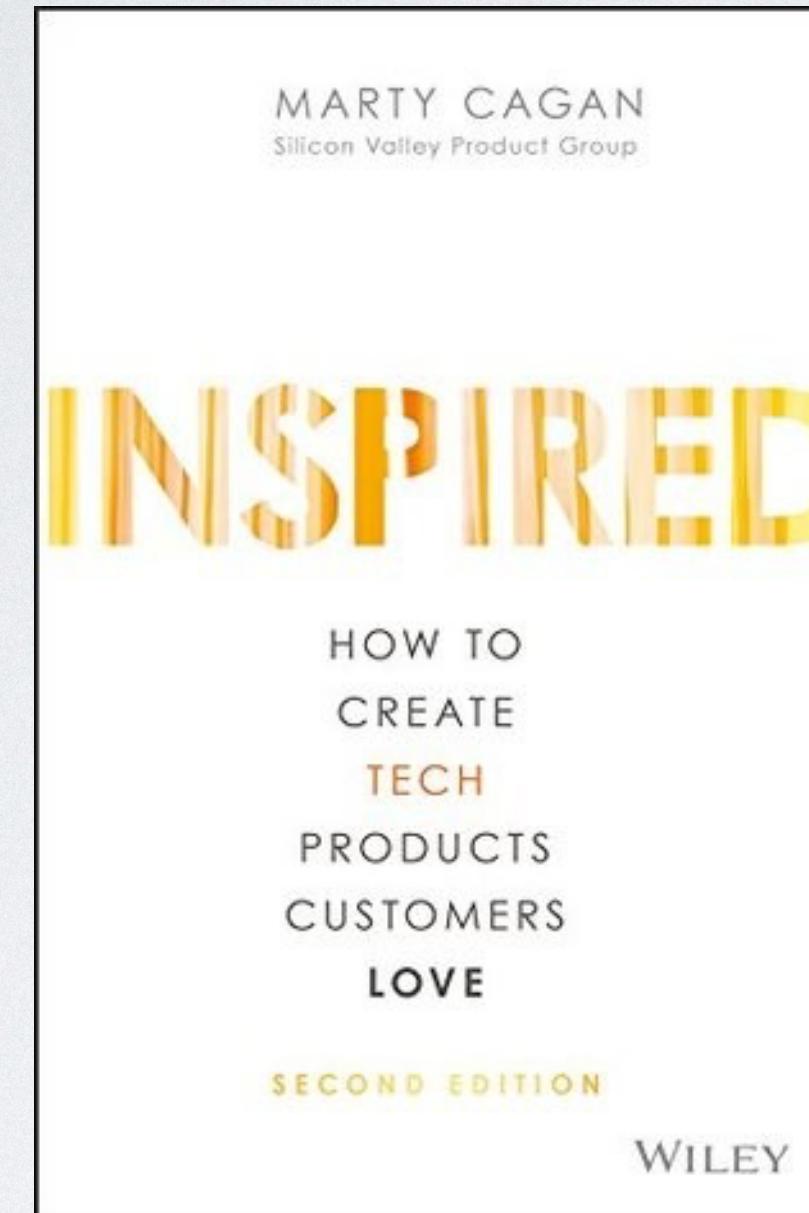
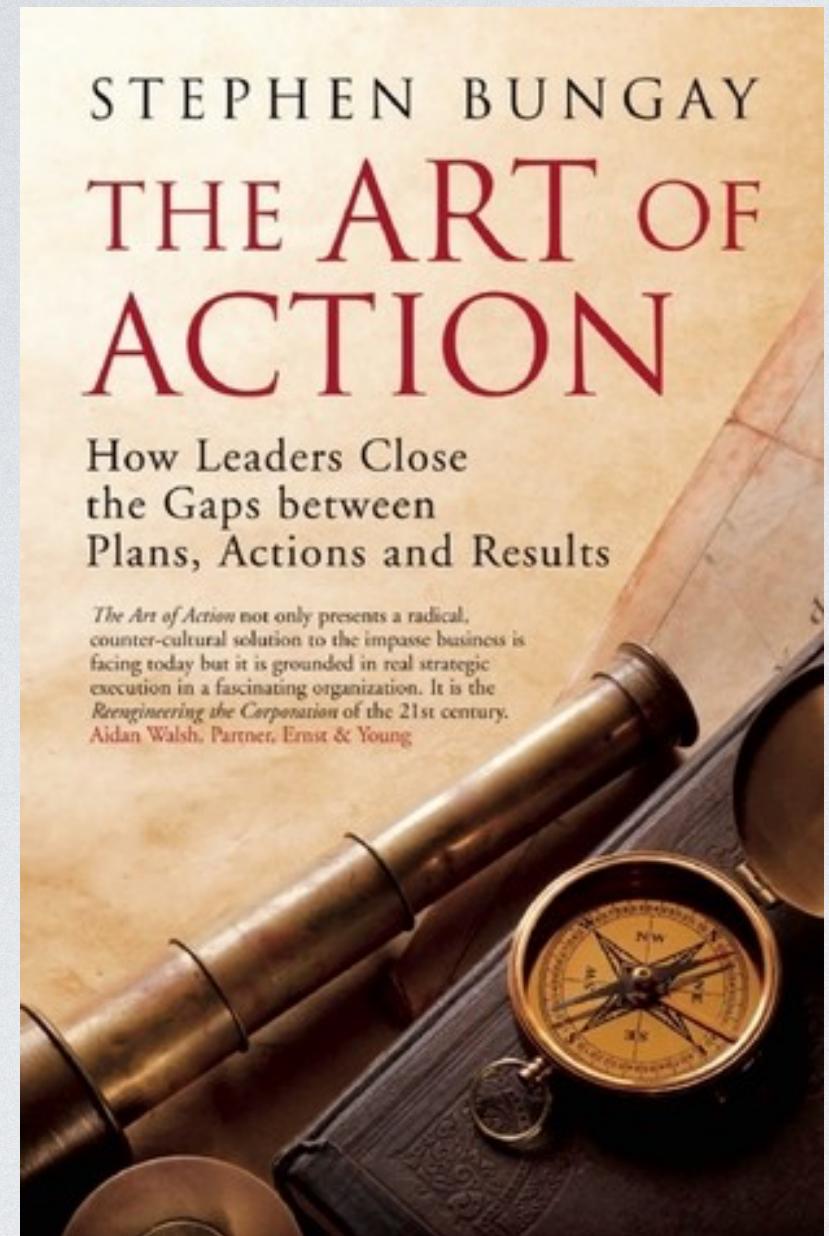
# FAILURE TO LAUNCH OR EXECUTE

- Knowledge Gap (What should be known - What is actually known)
- Alignment Gap (Plans - Actions actually taken)
- Effects Gap ( Actions - Expected outcomes)

# FIXING EXECUTION

- Stress **intent** and **outcomes** over **actions**
- Focus more defining and communicating intent and objectives over detailed strategies
- Leave it to the team to decide on actions to take while aligning actions with intent
- Team should have autonomy to adjust and adapt actions to changing circumstances while still guided by overall intent

# EXTRA MILE





# SHARPENING THE AXE

Mastering the Art of being Effective

“Give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four **sharpening** the axe.” - Abraham Lincoln

# EFFECTIVENESS VS EFFICIENCY

- Effectiveness - Doing the right things
- Efficiency - Doing things right

# EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

- Managing yourself to better lead
- Understand what you and your team bring to the table
- Strengths and alignment of talent to opportunities
- Understand the domain and the business

# EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

- Align your best people to opportunities not problems
- Tell your time where to go, don't wonder where it went
- Build on your strength and that of your team
- Focus on few but effective decisions

# POWER OF FOCUS

“Until my one thing is done everything else is a distraction” - Gary Keller

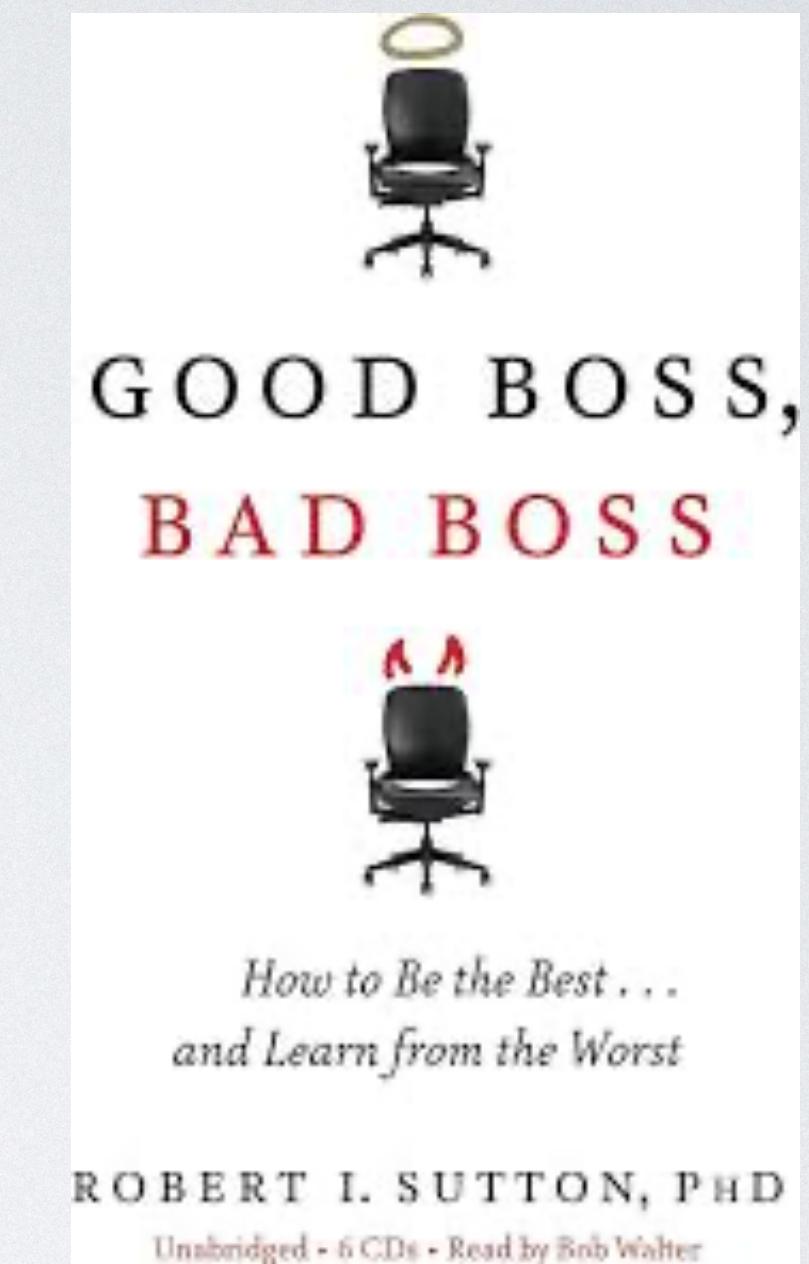
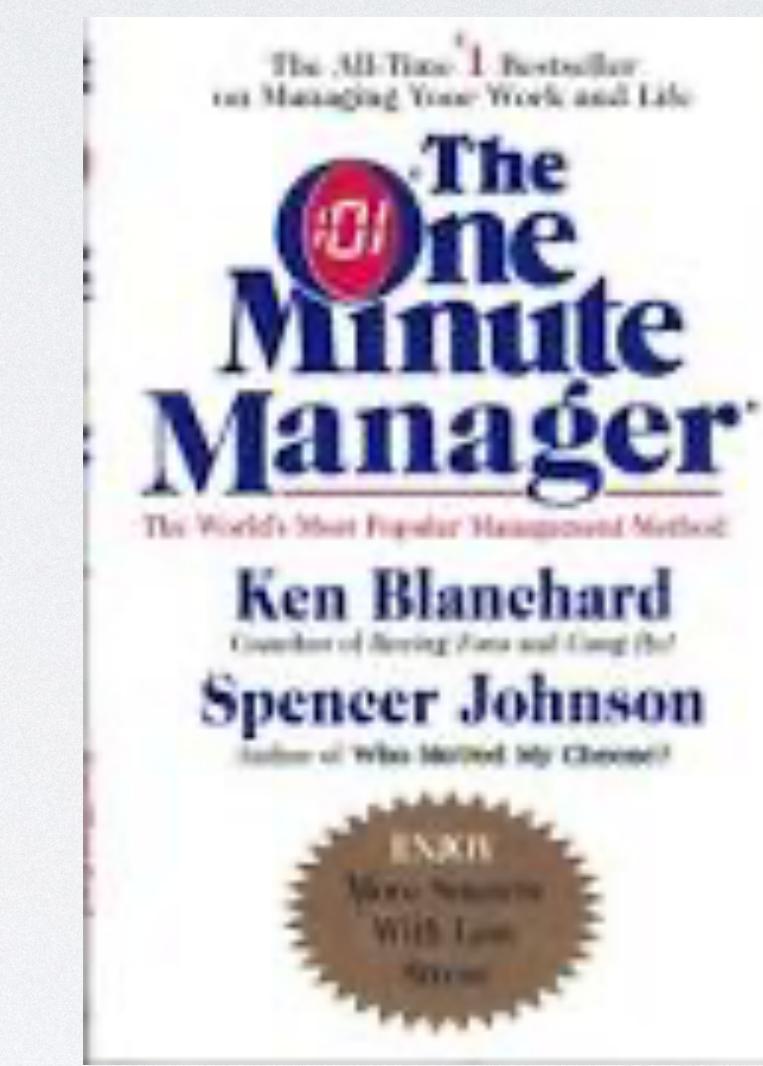
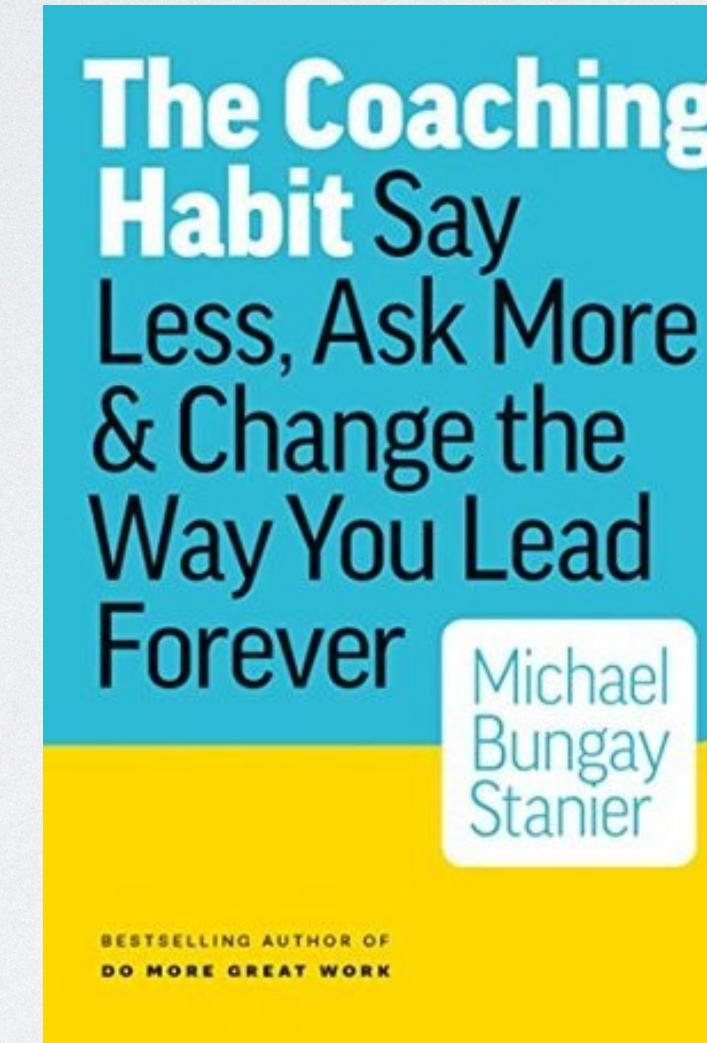
# THE FOCUSING QUESTION

What is the one thing I can do so that by doing it everything else will be easier or unnecessary?

# DEFINING PRIORITY

- What is required of me or my team (charter)?
- What gives the highest return?
- What gives the highest reward?

# EXTRA MILE



# RESETTING BREAKPOINTS

- Why is Technical Leadership are important
- What is the key role of a Technical Leader
- How can you be a great Technical Leader

THANK YOU

QUESTIONS?

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