Talking with Tech Leads

Gotopia (Nov 2020)

@patkua

Questions?

http://sli.do

#GOTO-TWTL

Patrick Kua
~20 years experience

Agile Software Development

Organisational Change

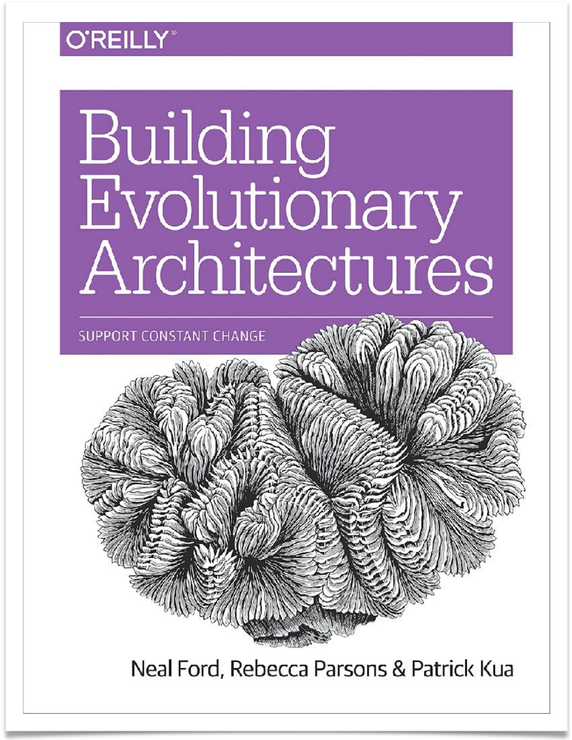
Systems Thinking

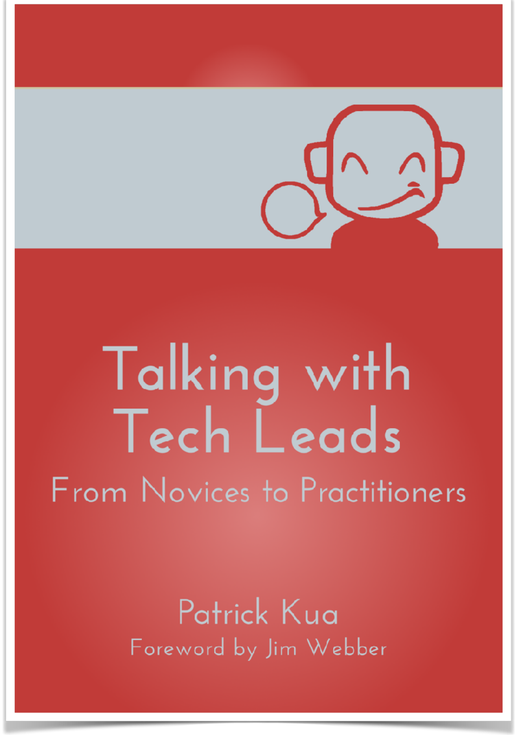
Technical Leadership Development

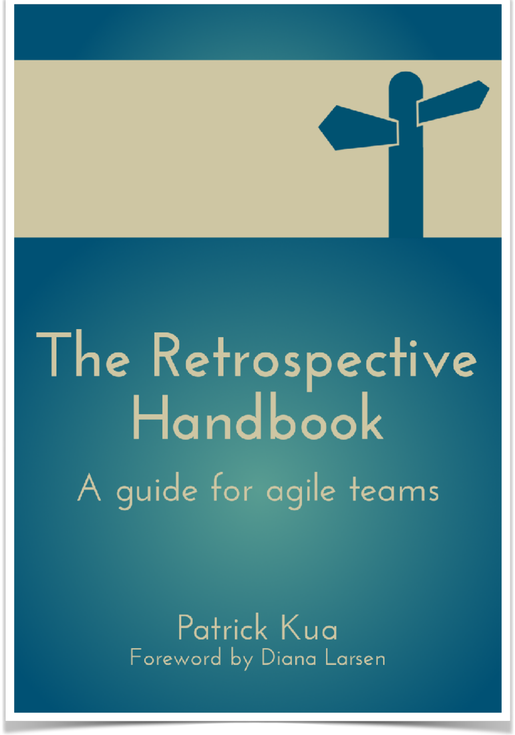
#Architect #Developer #Coach #Leader #CTO
#Life-long learner #Author #Speaker

@patkua

Q&A sli.do #GOTO-TWTL







thekua.io/evolarch thekua.io/twtl thekua.io/retrobook

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Level Up

A curated newsletter for leaders in tech

http://levelup.patkua.com

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"Shortcut to Tech Leadership"

Guided, half-day online workshop

http://patkua.com/tlworkshop

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TechLead ACADEMY

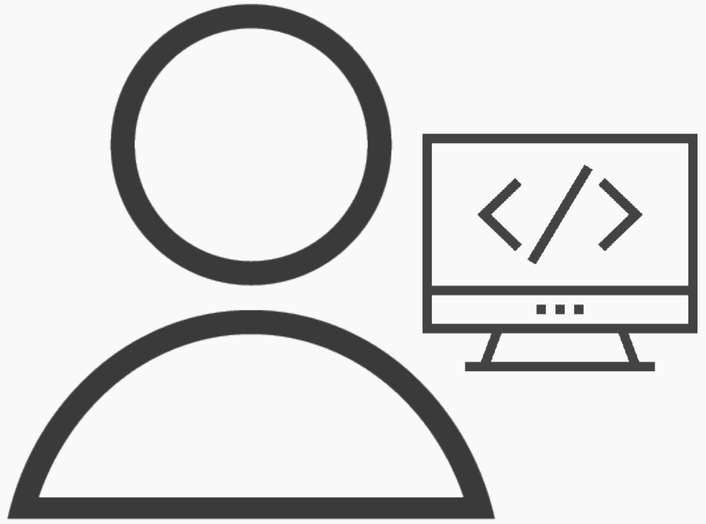
Lessons Learned

Archetypical Story

Surprises & Struggles

A Great Tech Lead

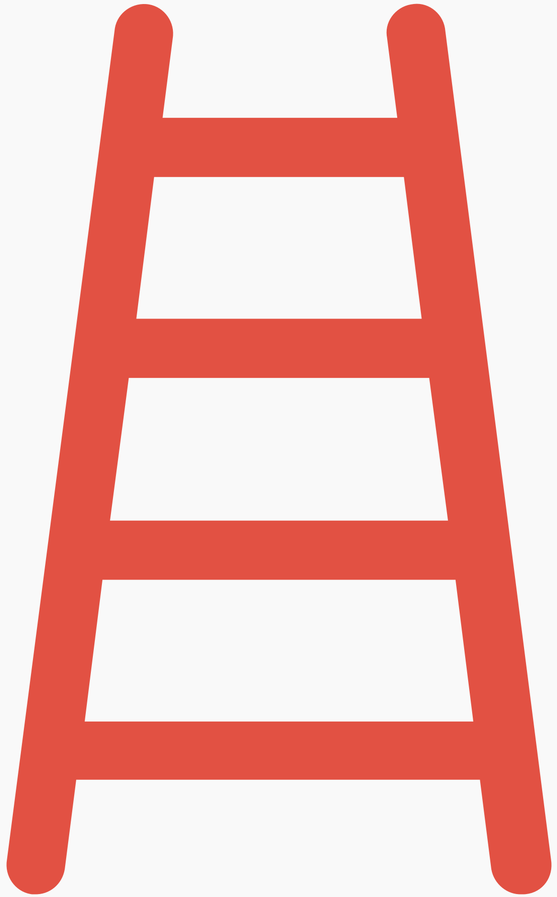
What is a Tech Lead?

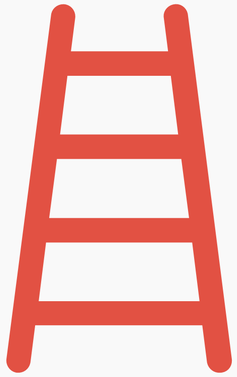


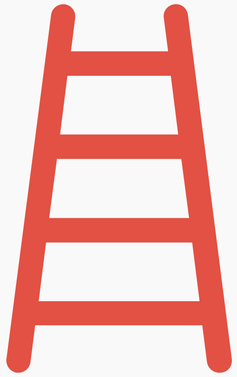
1. Want to be “Promoted”
2. “Ready” for promotion

Lesson #1

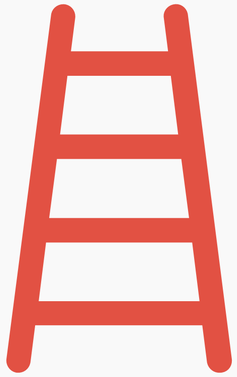
The Tech Lead is **not** a promotion. It's a **role change**







Role	Behaviour	Impact
Position	x	x
Position	x	x
Position	x	x
Position	x	x



Tech Lead

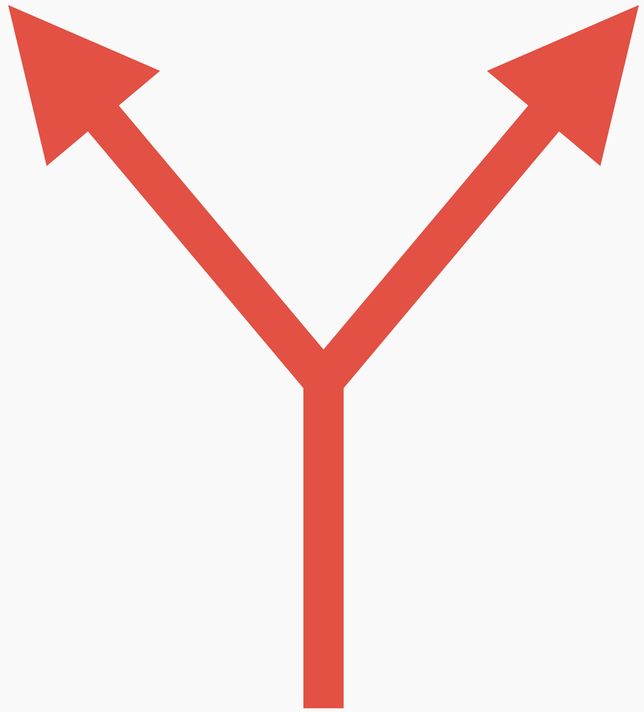
Senior
Software Engineer

Software Engineer

Junior
Software Engineer

Individual Contributor

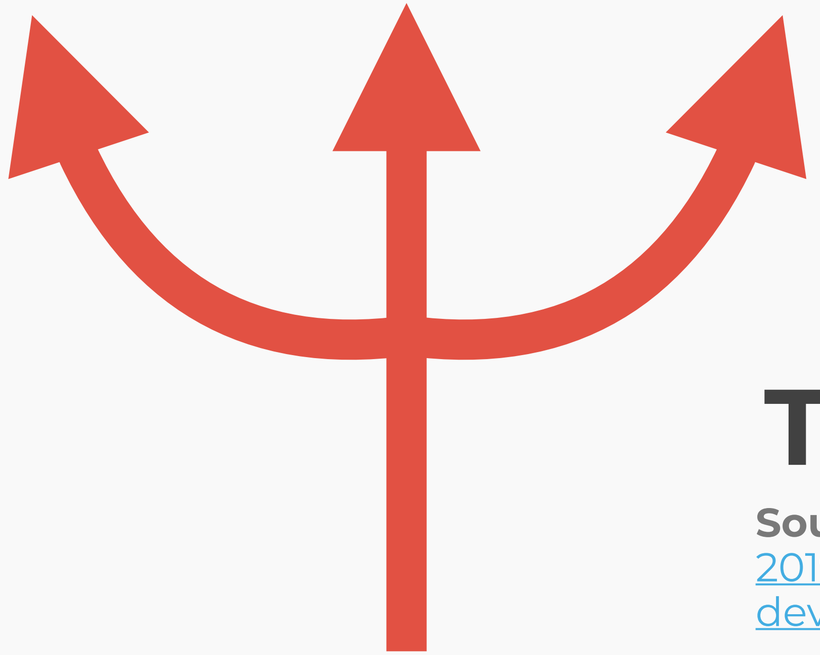
Management



Technical Leader

Individual Contributor

Management



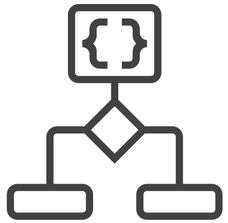
Trident Model

Source: https://www.thekua.com/atwork/2019/02/the-trident-model-of-career-development/

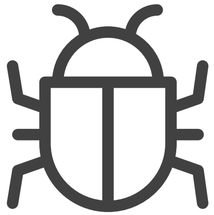
Individual Contributor

70-80% time spent

“Executing, doing”



Designing



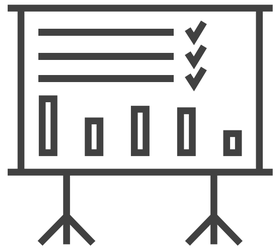
Testing

Coding

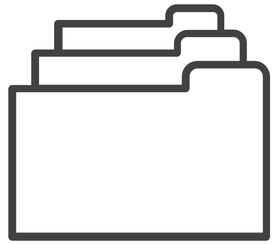
Management

70-80% time spent

“Managing the system”



Planning



Organising

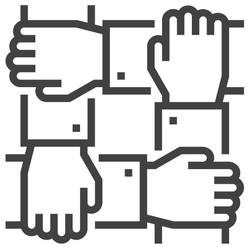
Supporting

Budgeting

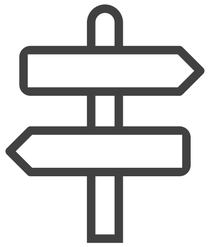
Technical Leader

70-80% time spent

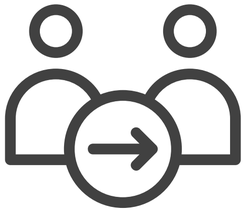
"Leading Technical Topics & Teams"



Aligning Team

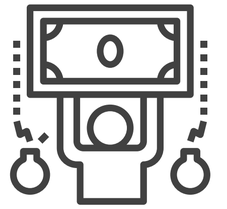


Technical Vision



Growing Technical Knowledge

Technical Risk Management



Tech Debt Management

What got you here, won't get you there

ⓘ **Top Tip!**

Archetypical Story

Lessons Learned

Surprises & Struggles

What is a Tech Lead?

A Great Tech Lead

Archetypical Story

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Surprises & Struggles

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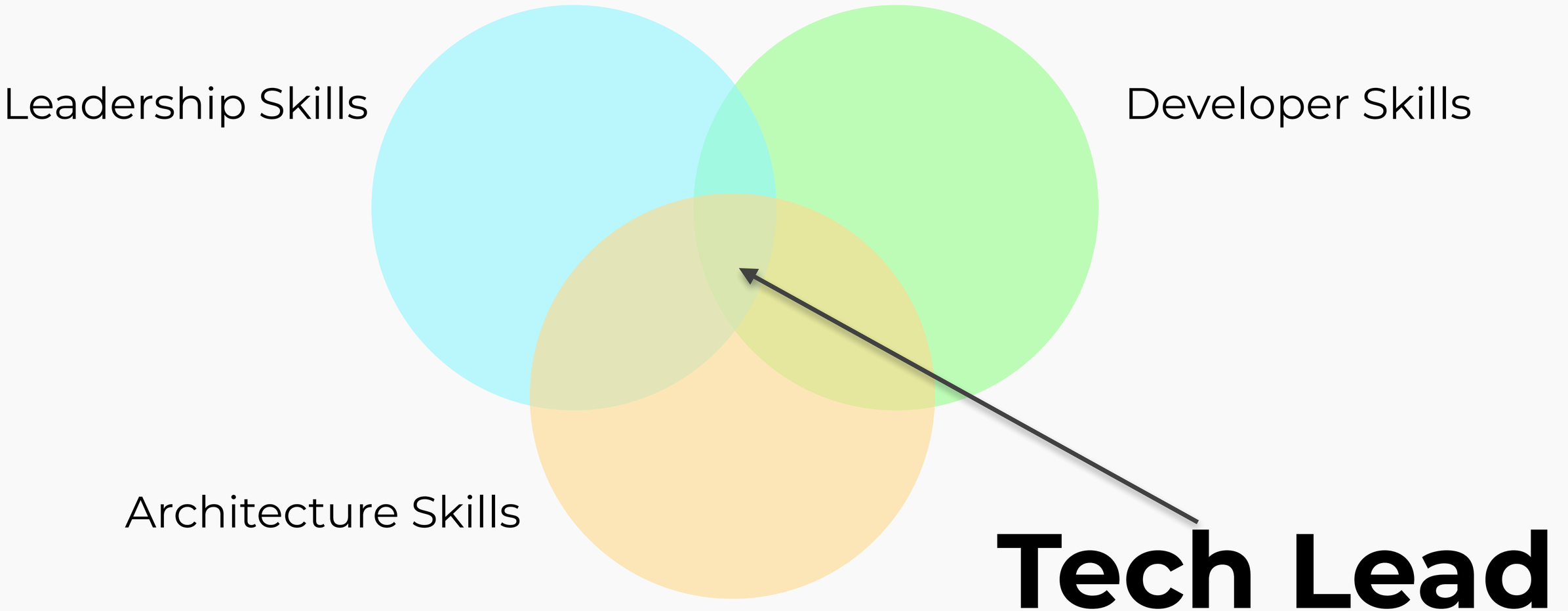
What is a Tech Lead?

What is a Tech Lead?

@patkua's Definition

"A Tech Lead is a software engineer, ***responsible*** *for* ***leading*** *a development team, and responsible for the quality of its* ***technical deliverables****"*

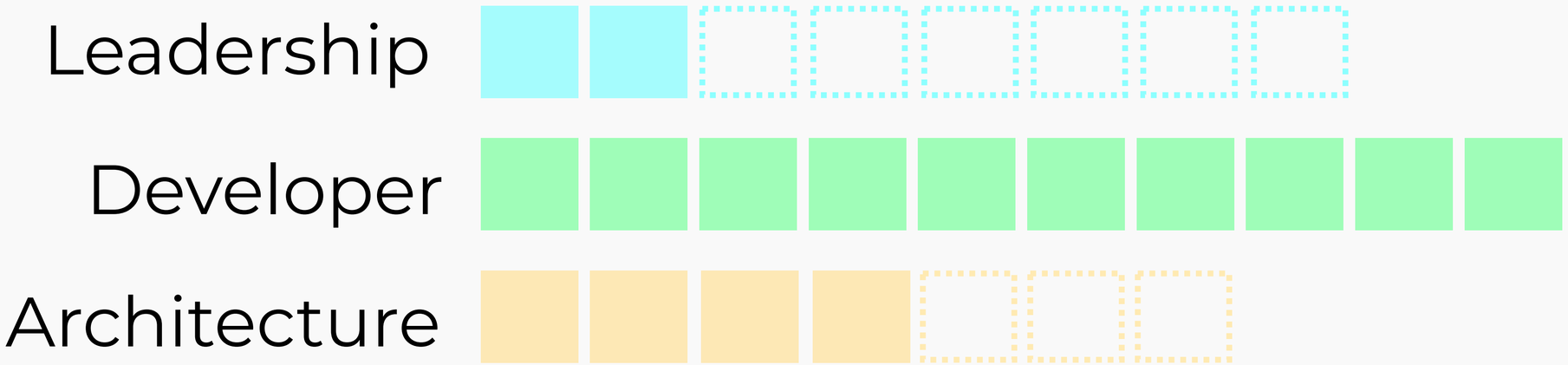
Source: https://www.thekua.com/atwork/2014/11/the-definition-of-a-tech-lead/



Source: https://www.thekua.com/atwork/2015/06/tech-lead-circles-of-responsibility/

Lesson #2

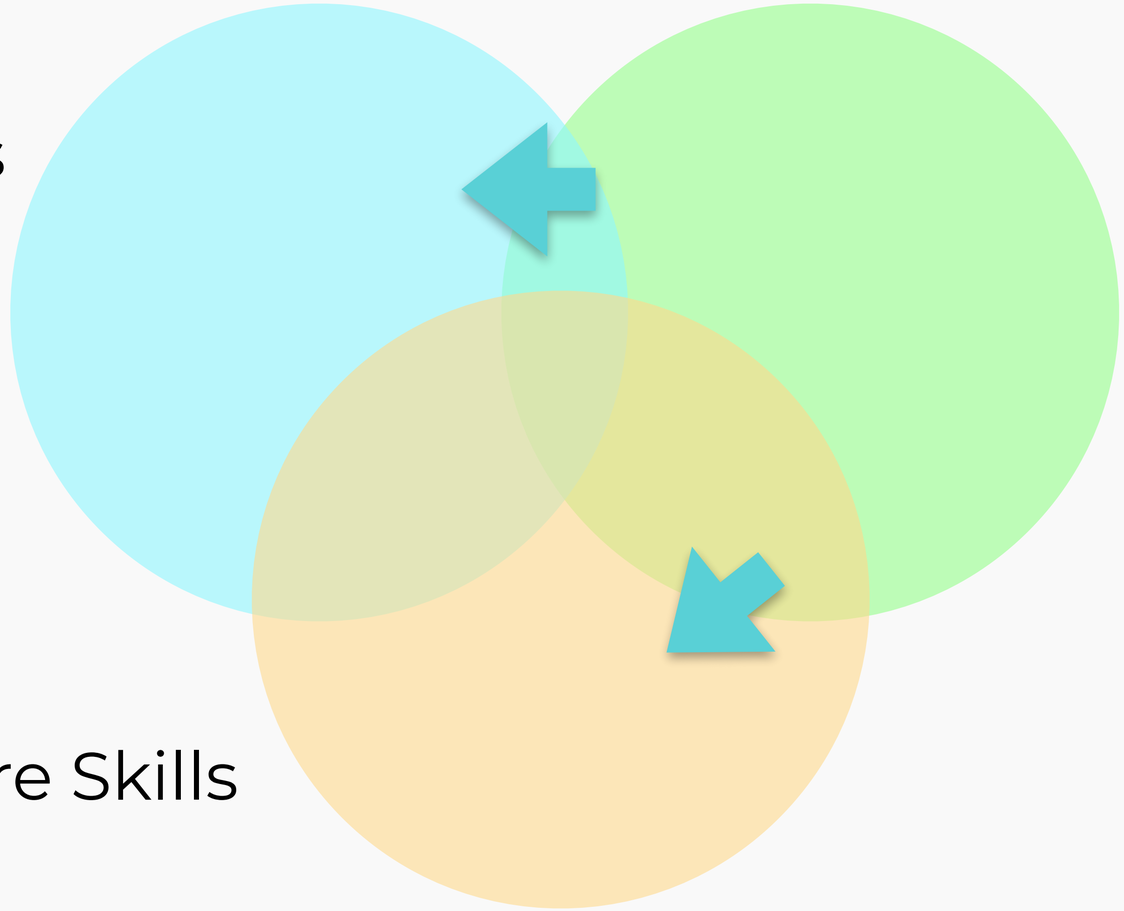
The Tech Lead role **requires** effective leadership skills


Leadership
Developer
Architecture

TECH LEAD

Leadership Skills

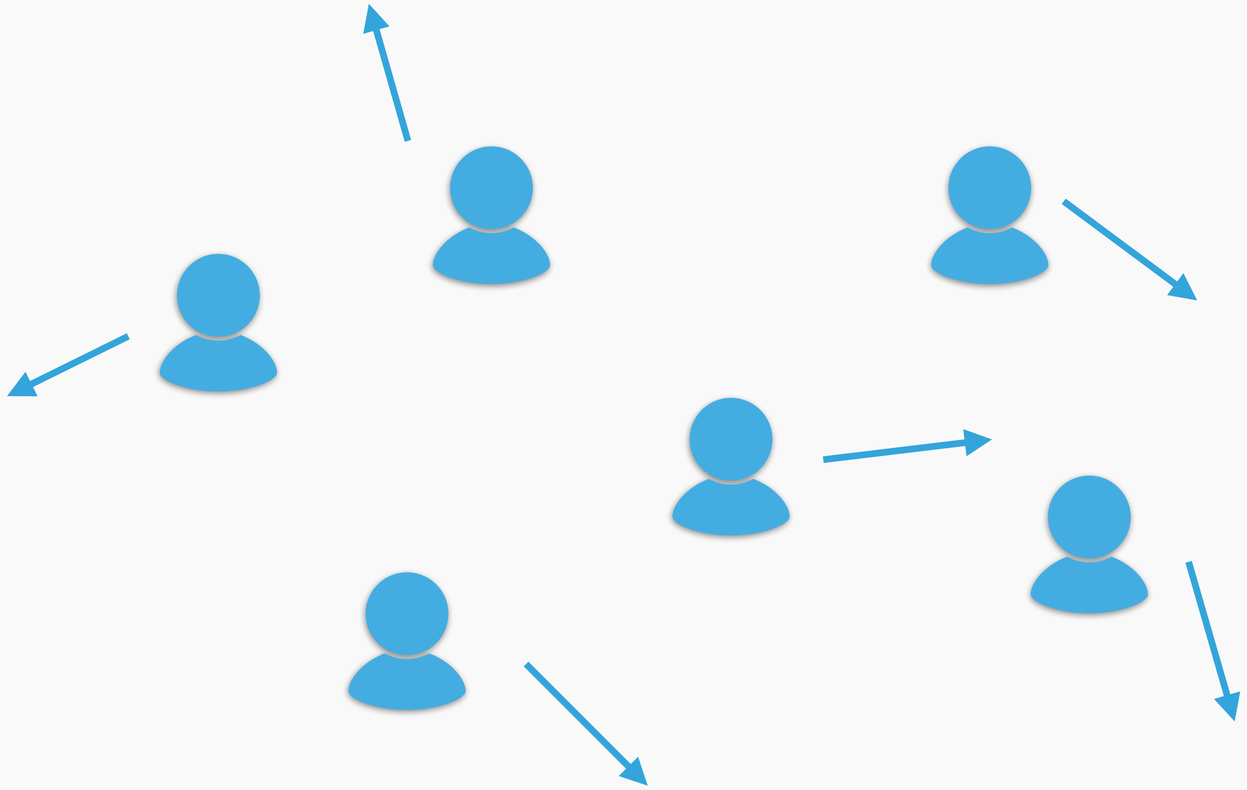
Developer Skills



Architecture Skills

Source: https://www.thekua.com/atwork/2015/06/tech-lead-circles-of-responsibility/

What does leadership look like?



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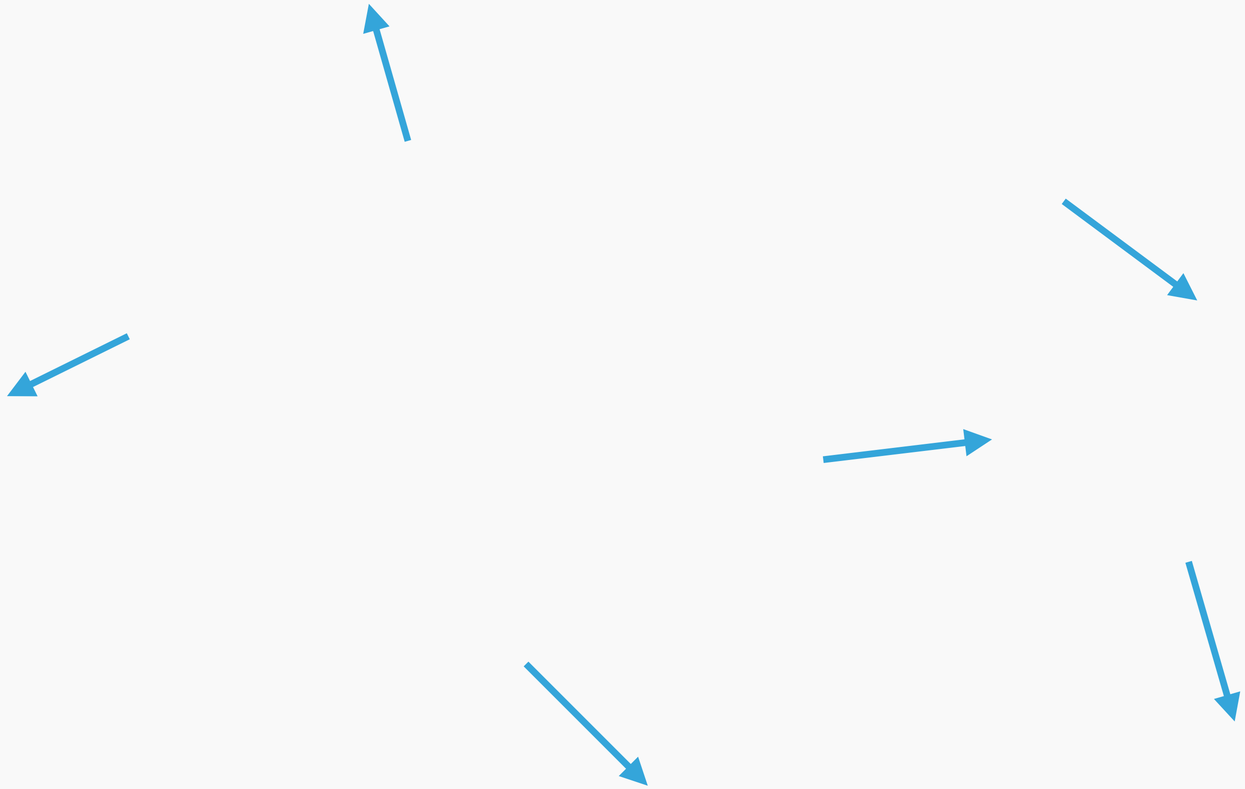

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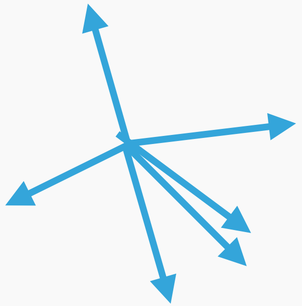
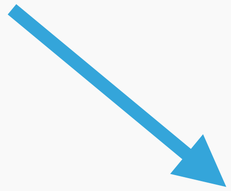


What does ineffective leadership look like?



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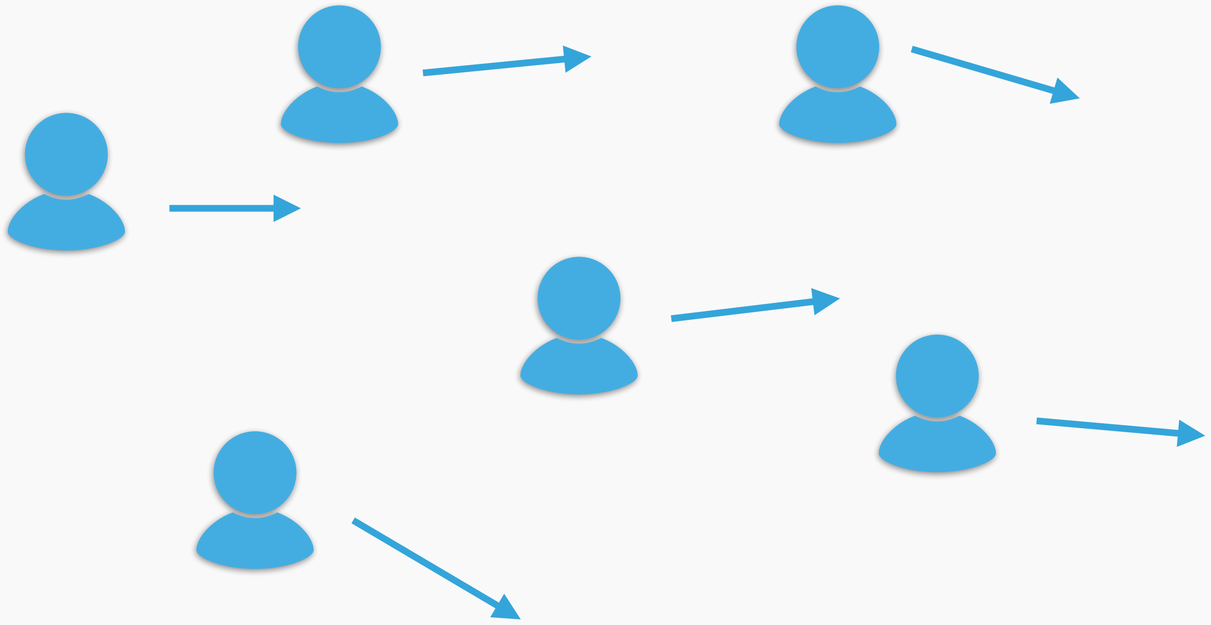

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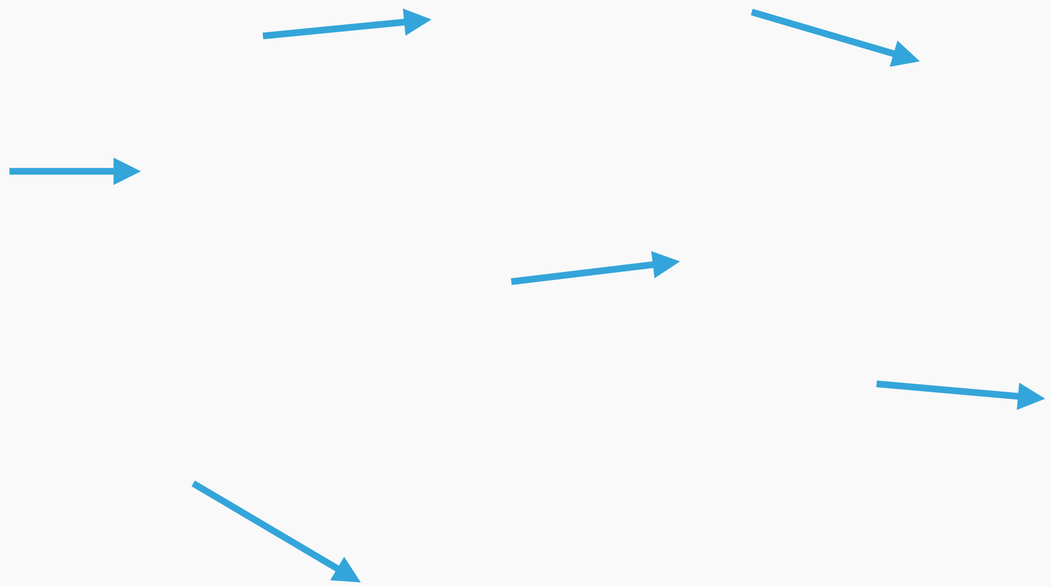

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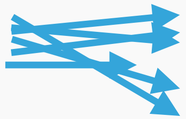


What does ineffective leadership look like?

My Tech Lead Test

Does the codebase look like it was written by a **single person**?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Amount of Coding

At least **30%** of the time with the team

Source: Geek's Guide to Leading Teams

How to shift?

1. Awareness
2. Training
3. Coaching
4. Practice

Leadership Skills to Invest In

Empathy

Self-Awareness

Motivation

Conflict Resolution

Communication

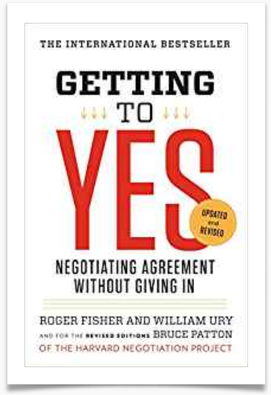
Coaching

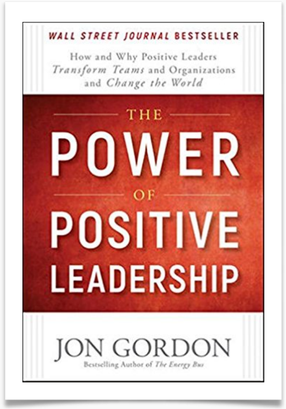
Feedback

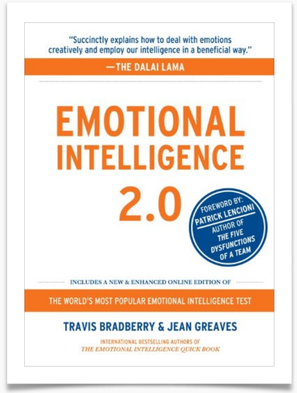
Influencing

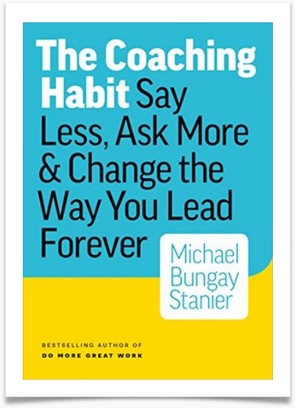
Delegation

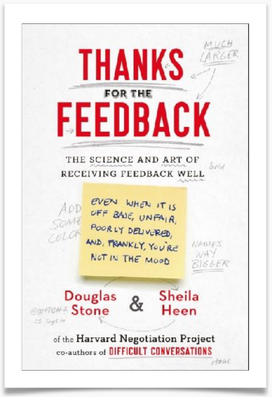
Leadership Skills to Invest In

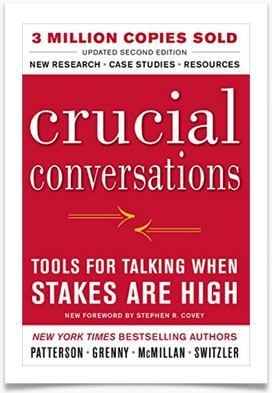


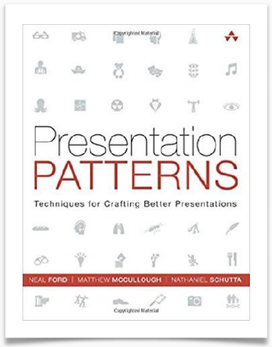


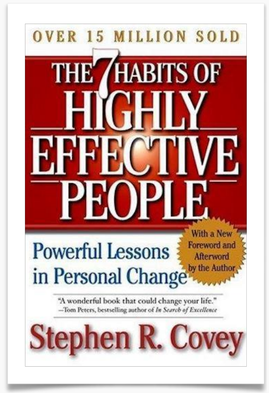


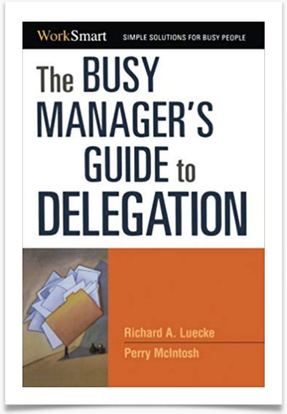


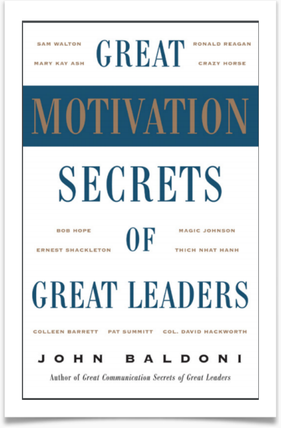


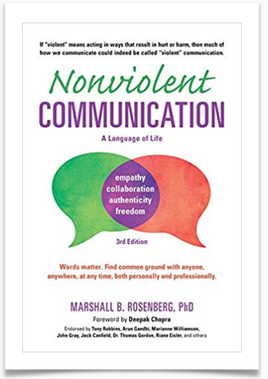


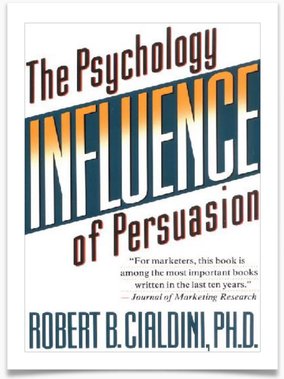












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Q&A sli.do #GOTO-TWTL

TECH LEAD

Leadership Skills to Invest In

“Reading is still the main way that I both learn new things and test my understanding.”

Leadership Skills to Invest In

"Reading is still the main way that I both learn new things and test my understanding."

- Bill Gates (2016)

Source: https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/04/fashion/bill-gates-gates-notes-books.html

Lesson #3

Benefit from **many resources** on leadership. Be sure to **practice**

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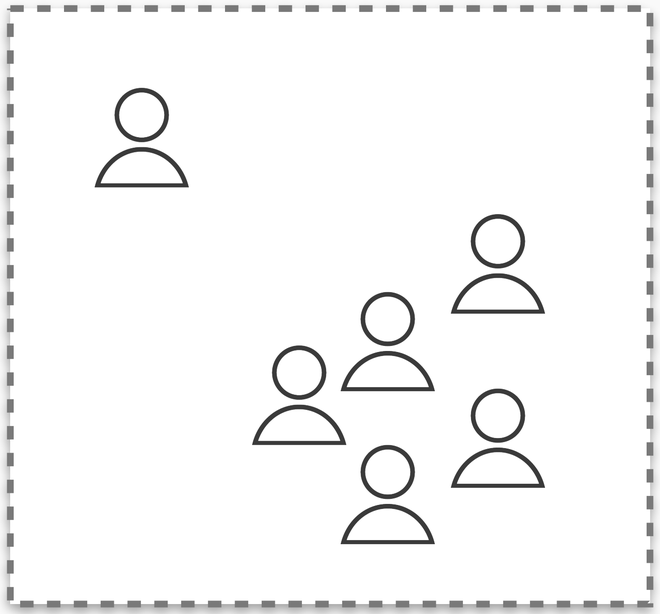

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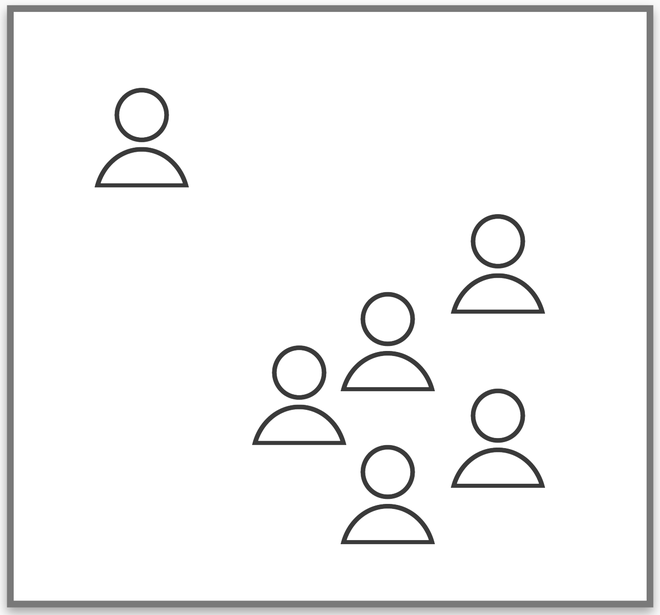
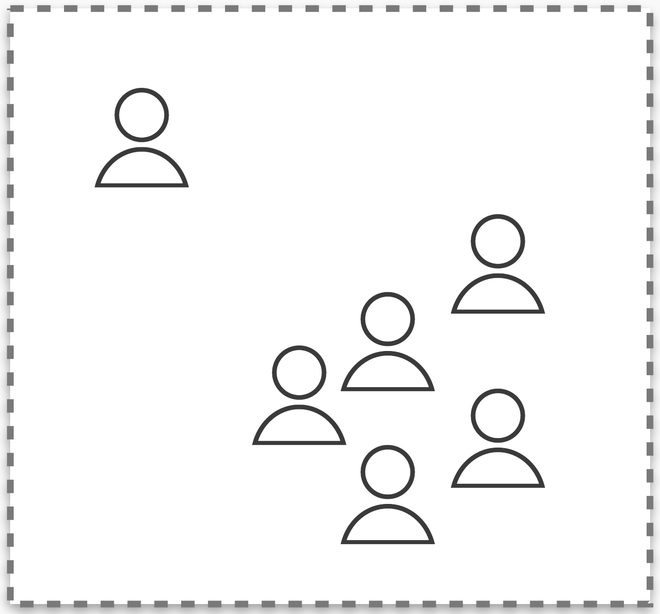
Feeling Alone



— “Outsider”
— Different role
— Shield/Filter

Feeling Alone



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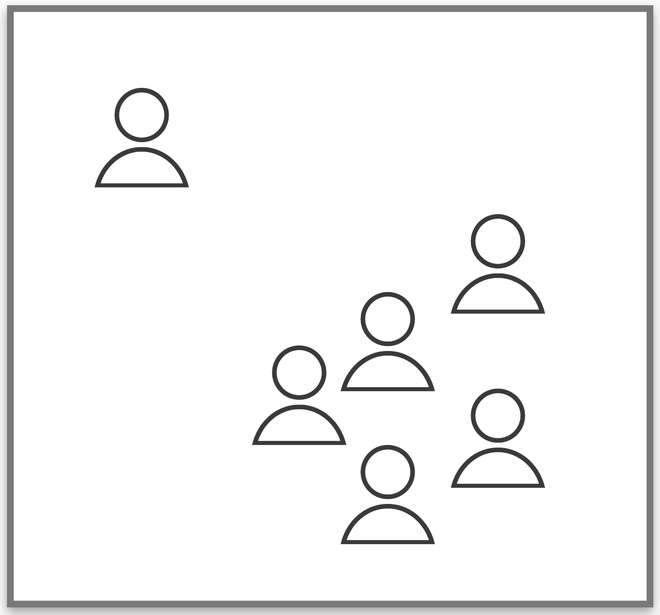
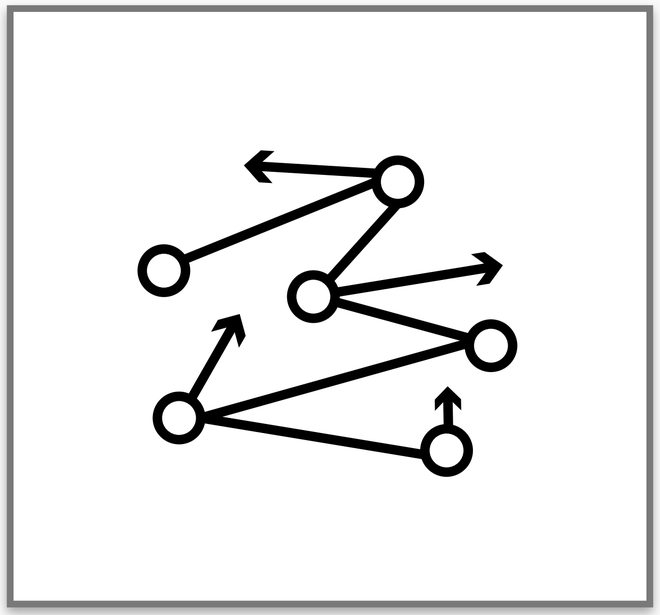
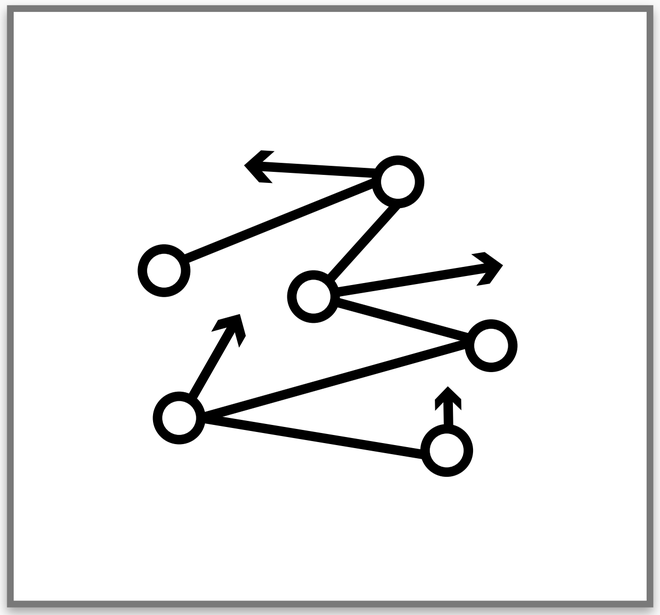


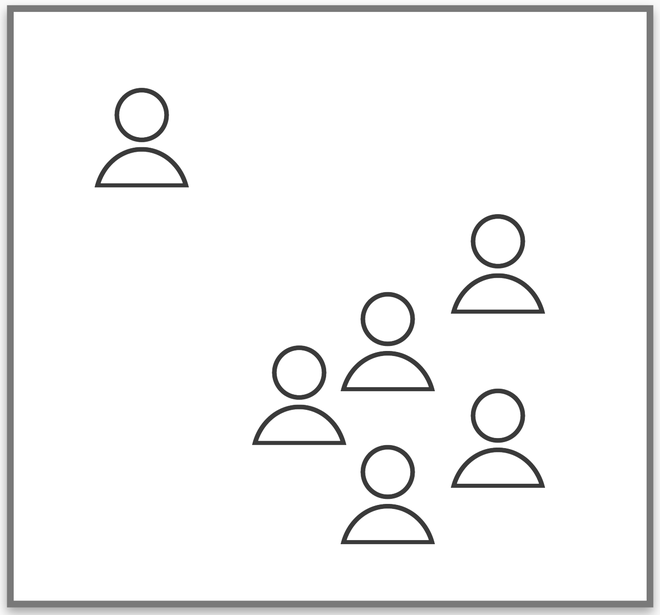


Uncertainty

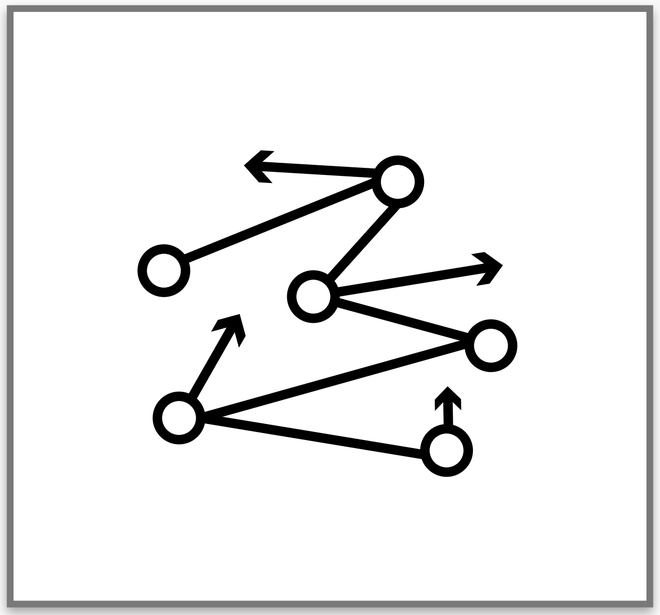


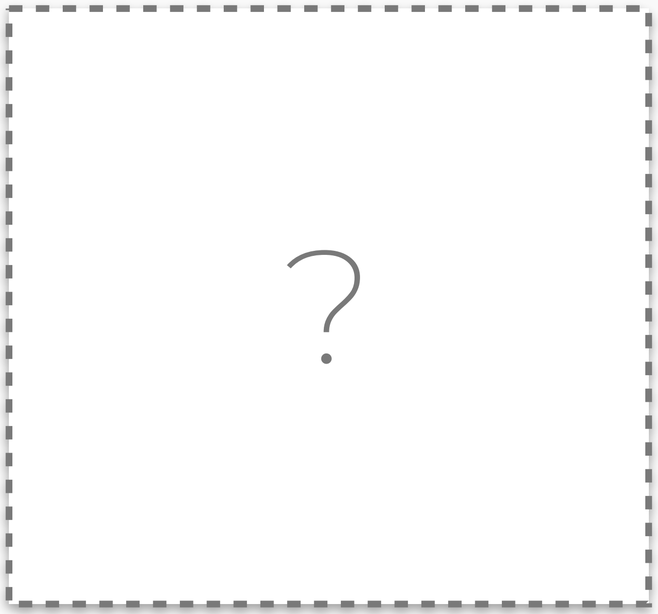
— No right answer
— Binary habit
— Imperfect information

Feeling Alone

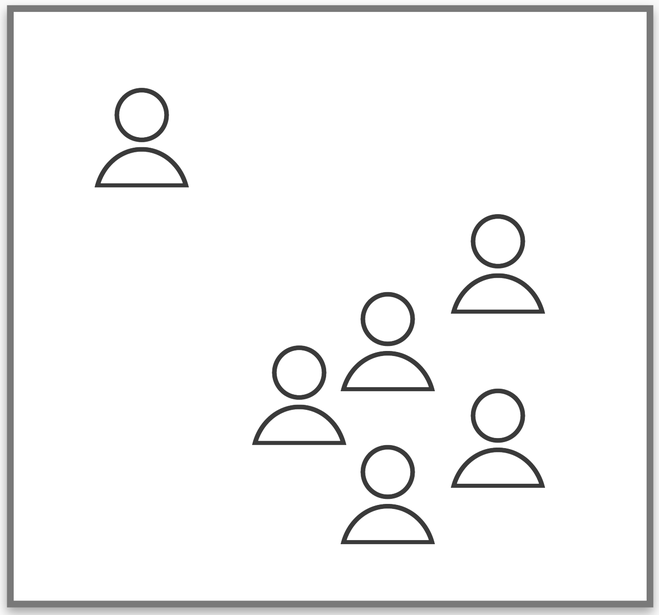


Uncertainty





Feeling Alone



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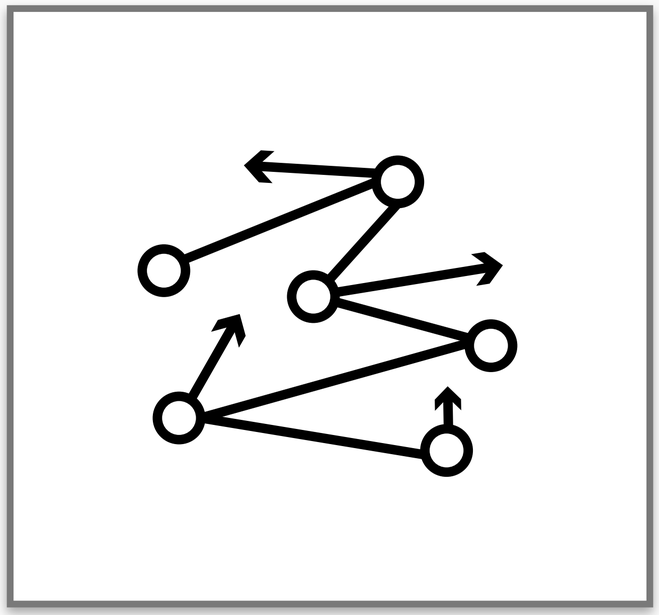
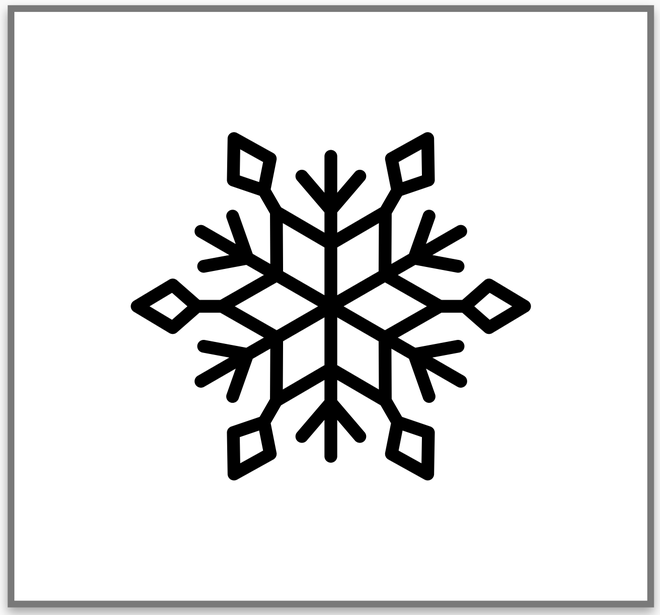
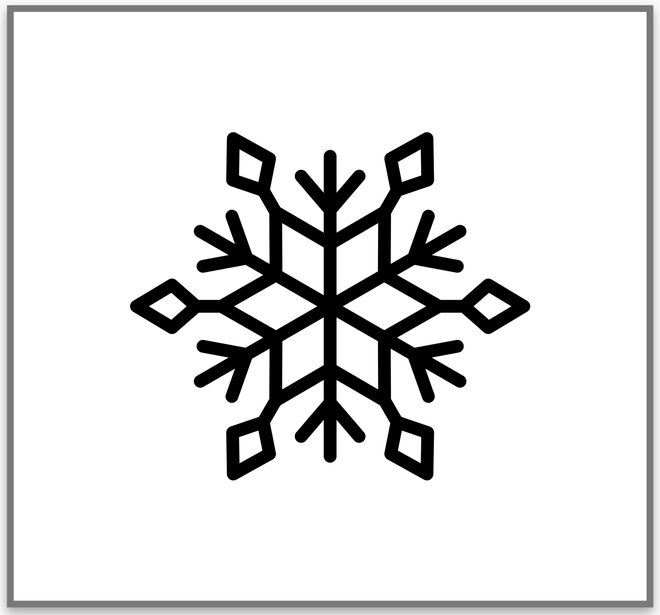


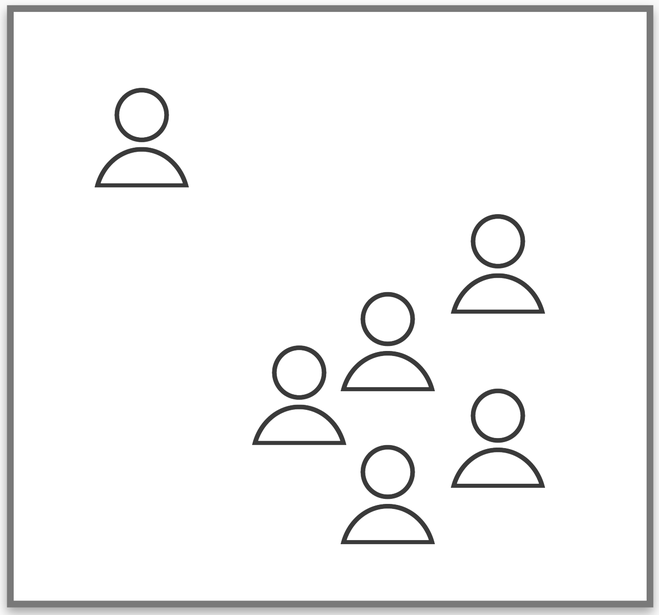


People are puzzling



— Unique
— Different Strengths
— Archetypes, ~~stereotypes~~

Feeling Alone



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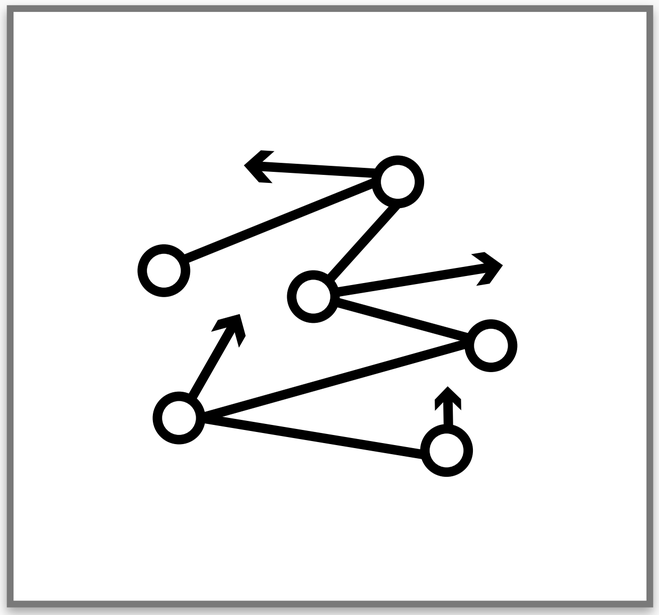
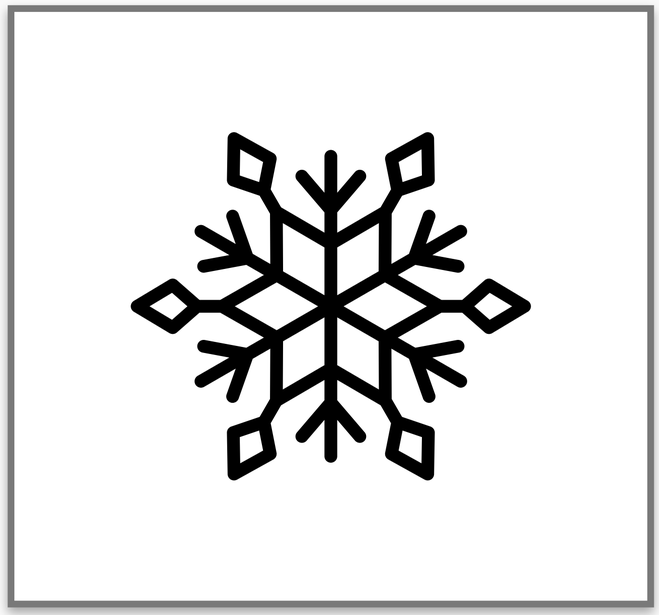


People are puzzling



Lesson #4

Take comfort that **others** have been on the **same** Tech Lead journey

Build a support structure

ⓘ **Top Tip!**

Archetypical Story

Lessons Learned

Surprises & Struggles

What is a Tech Lead?

A Great Tech Lead

Archetypical Story

Lessons Learned

Surprises & Struggles

What is a Tech Lead?

A Great Tech Lead

A Great Tech Lead

Develop Others

Develop Others

Tell or Delegate

Situational Leadership Model

Tell Sell Participate Delegate

Situational Leadership Model

Skill

Motivation

Urgency

Situational Leadership Model

Skill

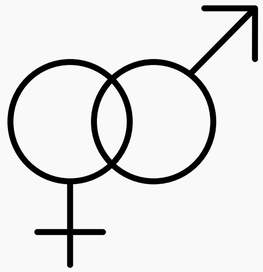
Motivation

Urgency

Tap into Diverse Approaches

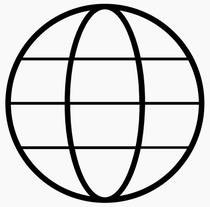
BCG Research (2017)

Positive correlation with innovation revenue



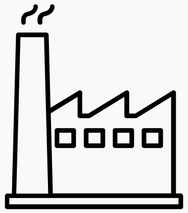
Gender

Age

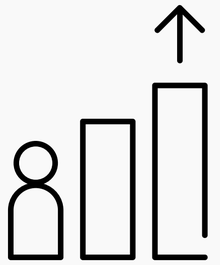


Country of Origin

Academic Background



Industry

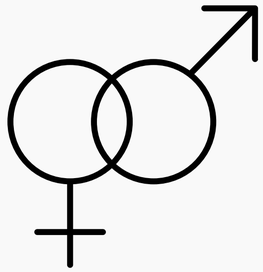


Career Path

Source: The Mix That Matters: Innovation Through Diversity (2017)

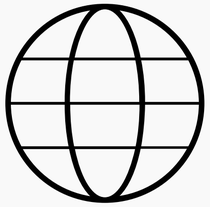
BCG Research (2017)

Positive correlation with innovation revenue



Gender

Age



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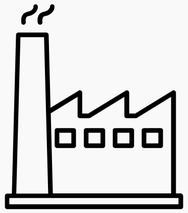
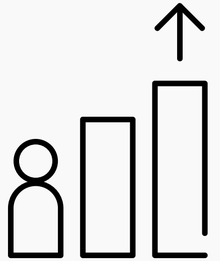


Industry



Career Path

Source: The Mix That Matters: Innovation Through Diversity (2017)

“***Nobody*** *is perfect*

Source: Meredith Belbin

Source: Meredith Belbin

@patkua

Q&A sli.do #GOTO-TWTL

Lesson #5

Move from **Maker to Multiplier** mode

Lessons Learned

Archetypical Story

Surprises & Struggles

A Great Tech Lead

What is a Tech Lead?

KEYS TO GROWTH

@patkua

Q&A sli.do #GOTO-TWTL

Tech Lead is a **role change**

Move from **Maker** to **Multiplier**

Others have been on this journey

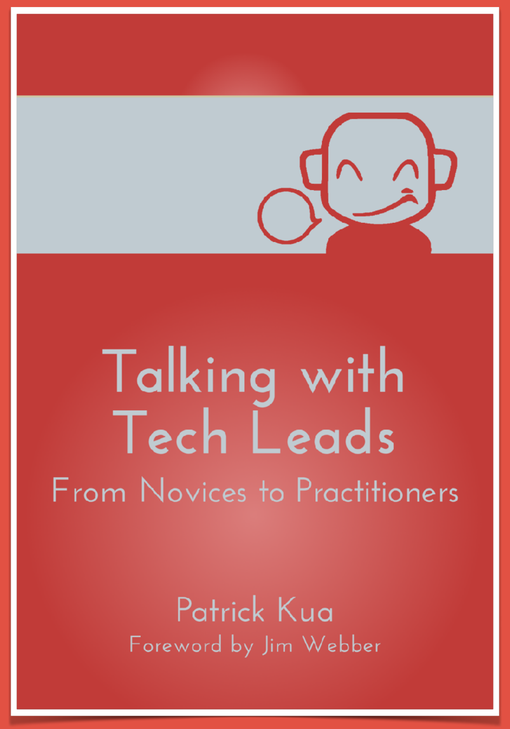
It **requires** leadership skills

There are many **resources** available

Questions?

http://sli.do

#GOTO-TWTL



@patkua