

# Good mentors make good managers; a journey from IC to management

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Continually learning



An open book with a white bookmark, symbolizing a career path. The text "Unstructured Career" is overlaid on the left side of the image. The book is open, showing pages with some text in Cyrillic. The bookmark is a simple white cord tied in a knot. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white surface.

# Unstructured Career



10 years of experience vs  
1 year of experience,  
ten times

A hand is visible at the bottom, holding a lit sparkler. The sparkler is emitting a shower of bright, golden sparks that are falling and dispersing against a dark, deep blue background. The sparks are out of focus, creating a bokeh effect. The overall mood is celebratory and dynamic.

Becoming deliberate

# New role, new purpose

- Interviewing for a senior full stack developer role with a new company
- Asking about how I could make an impact
- Discussing career progression opportunities





Finding a mentor

# Getting feedback

Getting up to speed with docker, Buildkite

My input in communication is helping clarify discussions

Slow starting careful but sometimes optimistic with estimations

Ask more questions - don't try to solve everything myself

Asking for help helps build the culture of asking for help



# Working out loud

- Solving problems myself was usually easy, but sometimes I needed to ask for help
- I wasn't sharing the work I was doing
- People couldn't learn from my experience
- I was encouraging others to work in the dark too

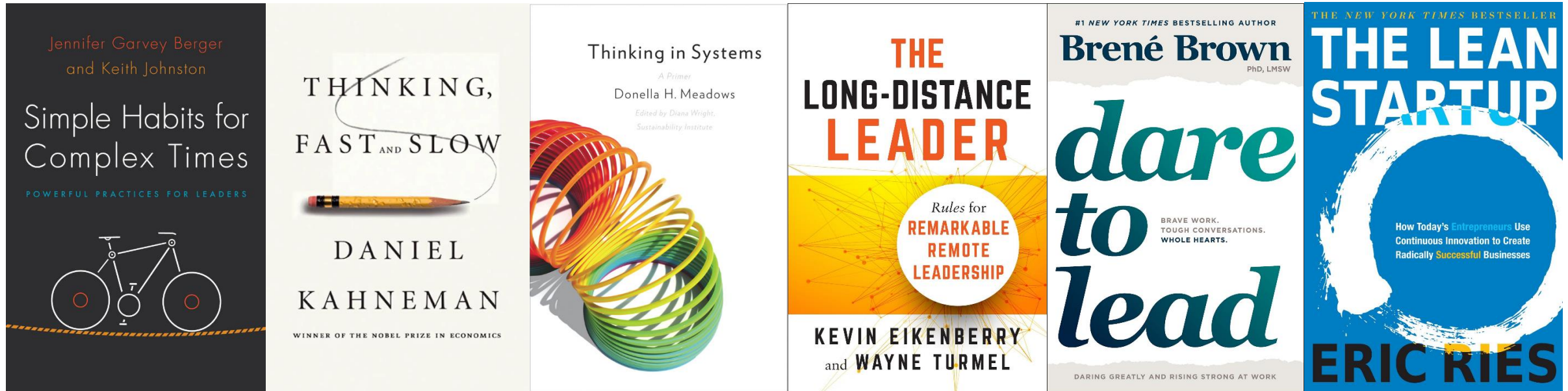
# Preparing for the next step

- Working toward becoming a lead engineer
- New sets of skills, not only code
- Developing plans for delivery
- Working with people
- A skill gap analysis for myself

# New areas of knowledge

- System thinking
- Stakeholders
- Strategy and reporting
- Technical advisory

# Recommended reading



- Simple Habits for Complex Times
- Thinking in Systems
- Thinking, Fast and Slow

- The Long-Distance Leader
- Dare to Lead
- The Lean Startup

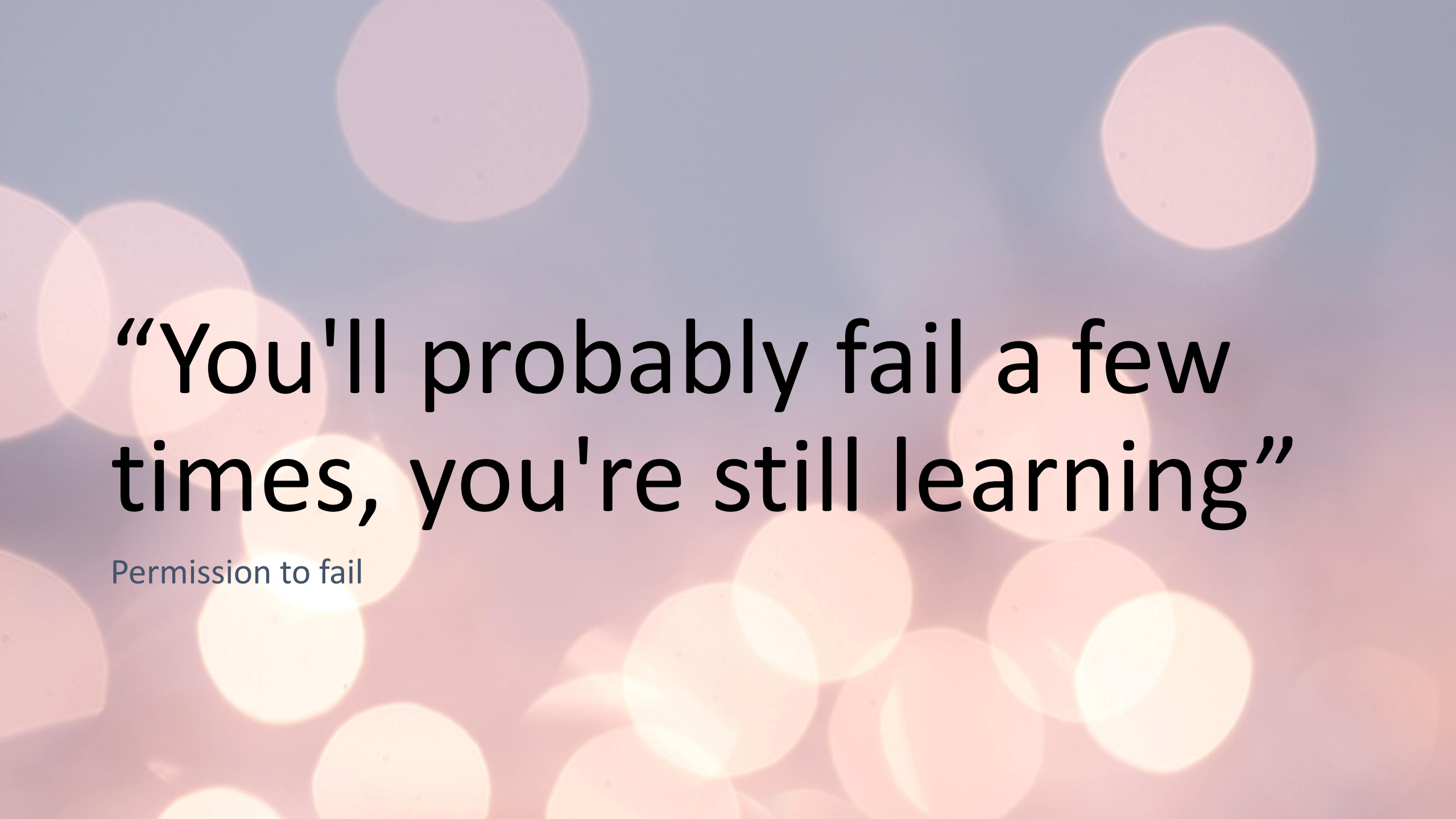
The background of the image is a vast, misty mountain range. The hills are layered, creating a sense of depth. The colors are muted, consisting of various shades of blue, grey, and white, which contribute to a serene and atmospheric feel. The text "Taking the lead" is centered in the lower half of the image, written in a clean, white, sans-serif font. The overall composition is minimalist and evocative, suggesting themes of leadership, vision, and overcoming challenges in a complex environment.

Taking the lead



# Leading the team

- Building a new, integrated product
- Working with Product Owner to plan features and delivery
- Implementing agile engineering process
- Meeting 1:1 with the engineers in the team
- Continuing to work with mentor to identify areas to learn and improve

The background of the slide features a bokeh effect with out-of-focus circles in shades of pink, orange, and light blue. The circles vary in size and opacity, creating a soft, dreamy atmosphere.

“You'll probably fail a few  
times, you're still learning”

Permission to fail

# New responsibilities

- Responsible for technical dependencies and features on the product roadmap
- Communicating with stakeholders
- Writing planning and reporting documents
- Monitoring code quality and delivery metrics

# Repeating the same lessons

- Encouraging engineers to 'work out loud'
- Describing how we can build a supportive team by openly sharing when we need help
- Creating a safe environment for sharing ideas
- Involving the team more in planning and estimation activities

A silhouette of a person's upper body and arms, holding onto a pull-up bar. The person is positioned centrally, with their arms extended upwards. The background is a gradient of colors, transitioning from a deep blue at the top to a vibrant red at the bottom, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The text "A new chapter" is overlaid on the left side of the image, in a white, sans-serif font.

A new chapter



# What changed

- Supporting several teams means stepping away from the code
- Mentoring the engineers, repeating some of the lessons I had to learn
- Creating a safe environment to foster team culture and growth

# The challenges

The background is a solid teal color. It is covered with numerous small, rectangular pieces of confetti in various colors including red, orange, yellow, pink, blue, and white. The confetti appears to be falling from the top of the frame, creating a sense of motion and celebration.

# The people challenges



# Conclusion

# Good mentors make good managers;

a journey from IC to management

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Notes at [brd.mn/articles/mentors](https://brd.mn/articles/mentors)