

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

Philip Boardman Engineering Manager, Redbubble

Continually learning

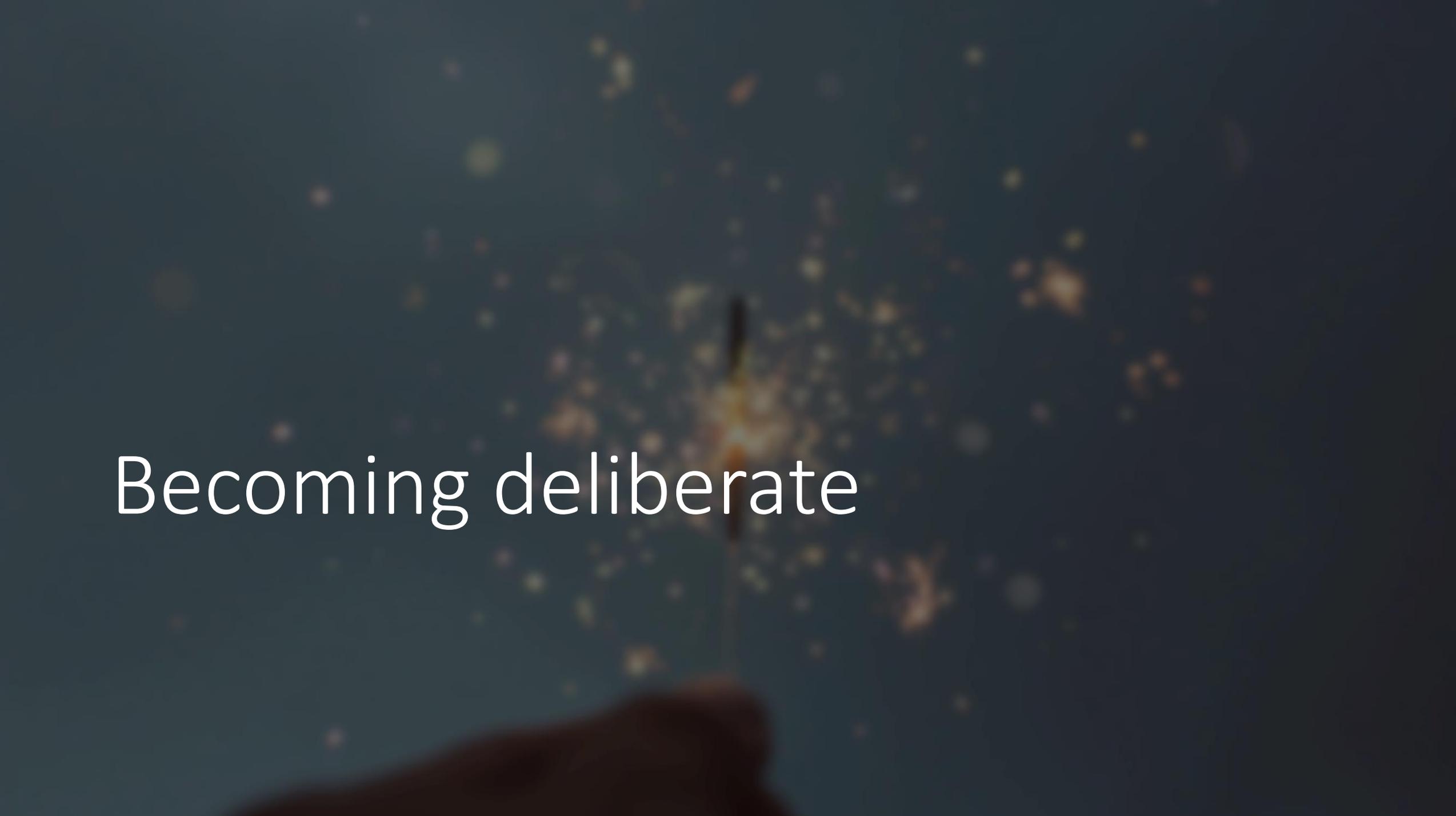


Unstructured Career





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



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

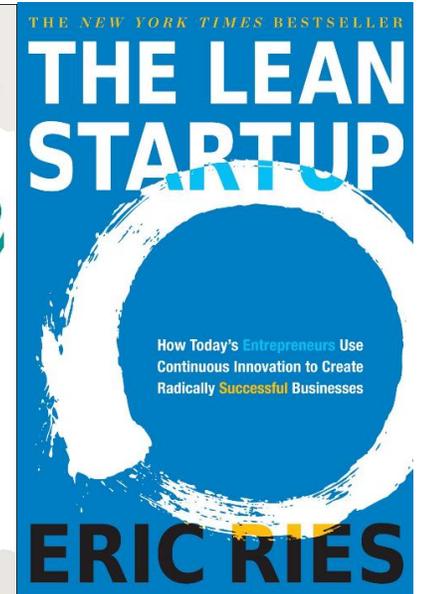
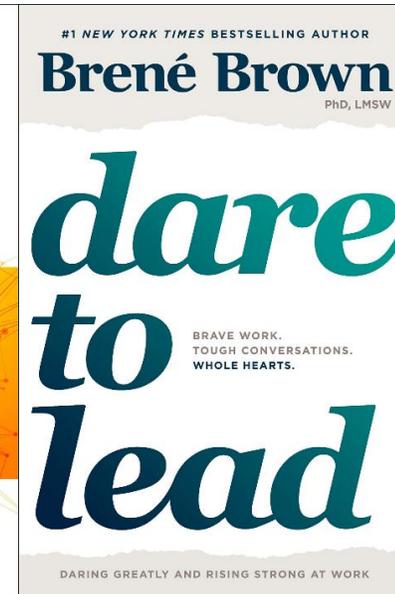
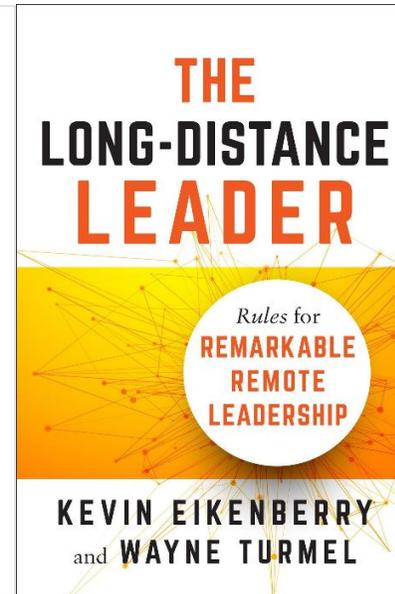
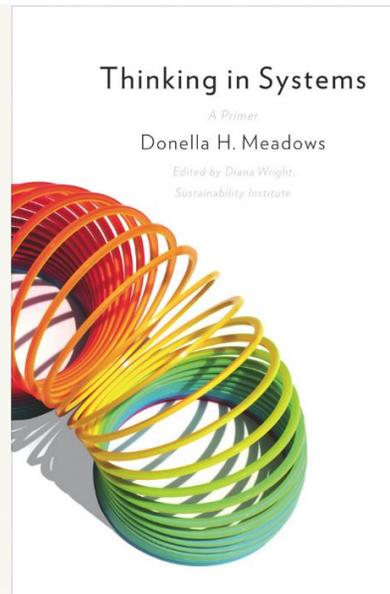
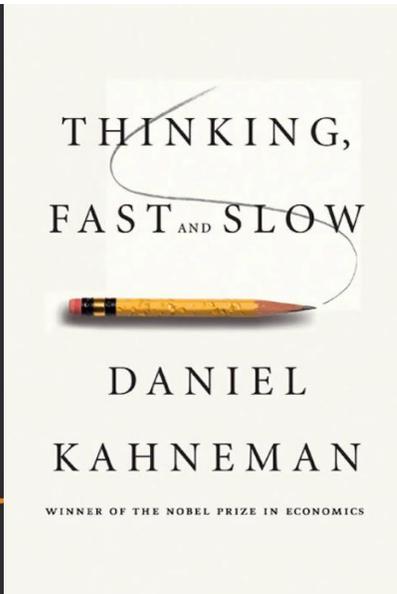
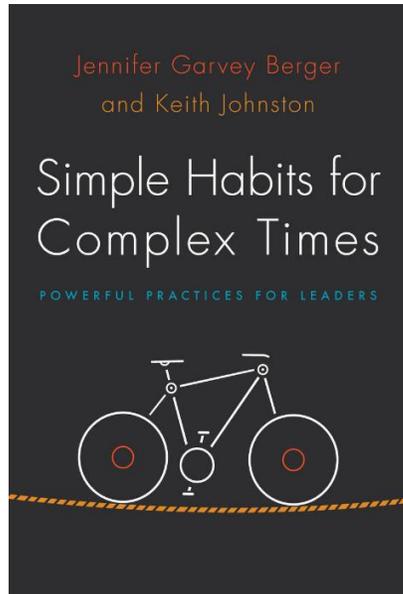
Preparing for the next step

- 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

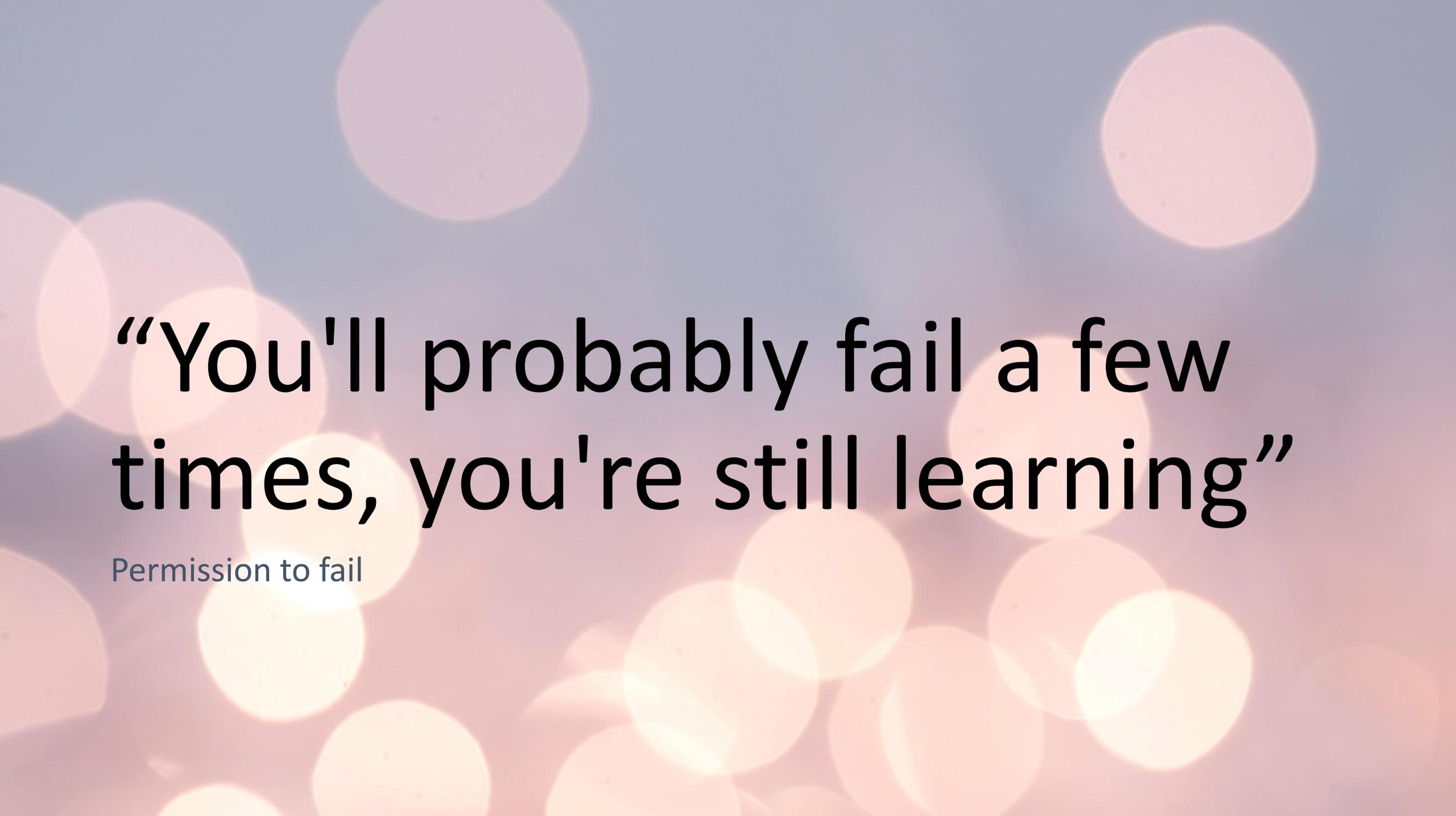
- The Long-Distance Leader
- Dare to Lead
- The Lean Startup



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



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

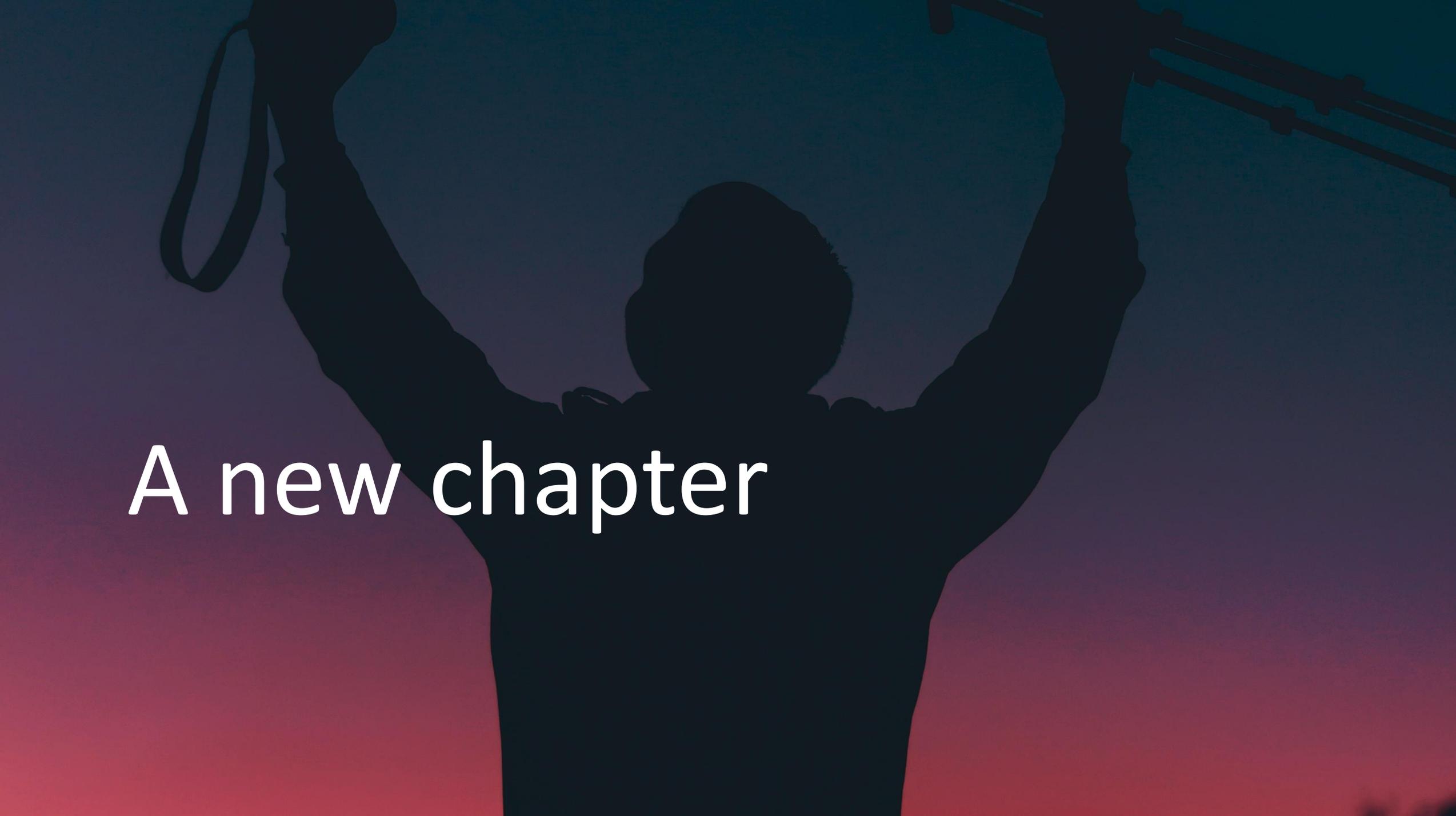
Permission to fail

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 climbing a rope against a sunset background. The person is seen from behind, with their arms raised and hands gripping the rope. The background is a gradient of colors, transitioning from a deep red at the bottom to a dark blue at the top. The text "A new chapter" is overlaid in white, sans-serif font on the left side of the image.

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



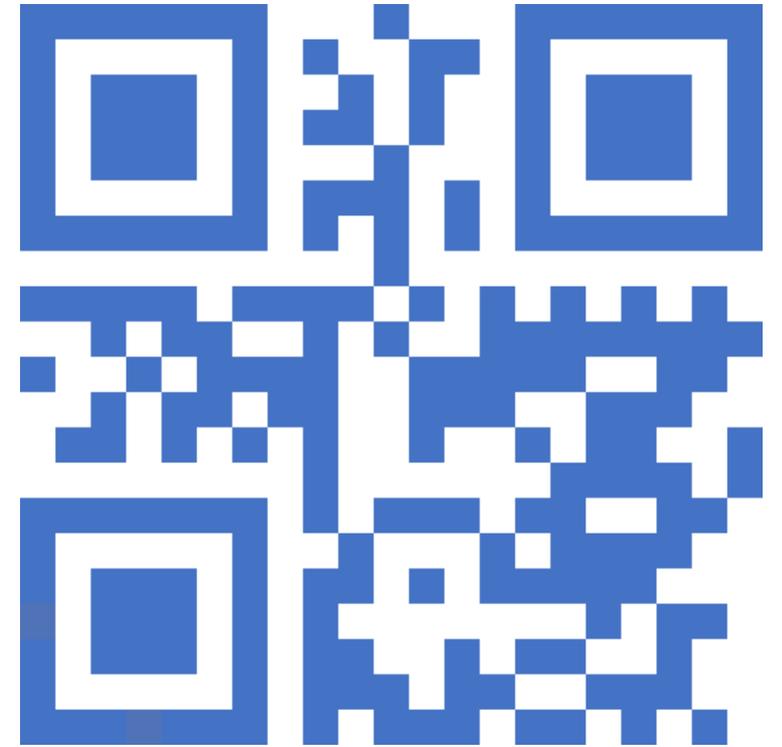
The people challenges

Conclusion

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Philip Boardman – brd.mn

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Notes at brd.mn/articles/mentors