



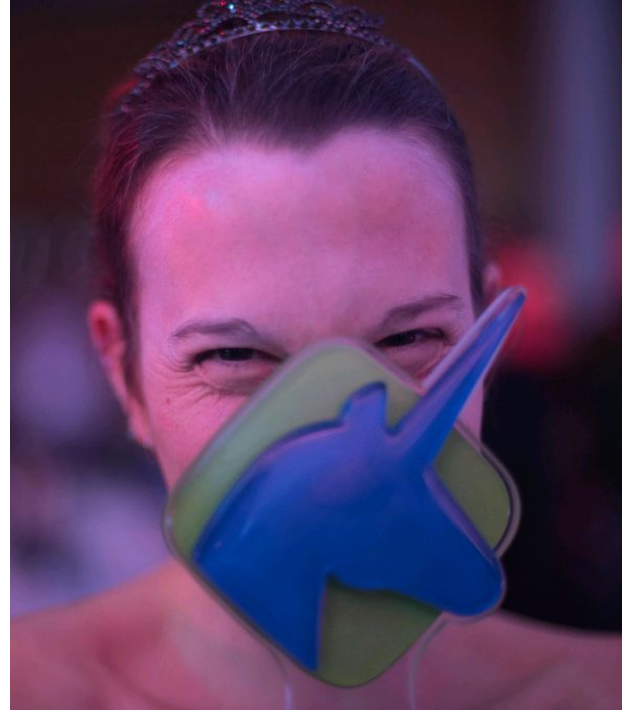
DIGITALE LÖSUNGEN
agil • nachhaltig • sicher

Leadership observable
workings for ourselves

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HUSTEF
HUNGARIAN SOFTWARE TESTING FORUM



Alex vagyok!

- Managing director of BREDEX GmbH, Germany
- (We write software that makes customers happy)
- (We have a Hungarian KFT as well)
- I'm a quality advocate
- I love minimalist approaches
- I'm an athlete, a musician, an auntie, a linguist, an explorer

Chapters

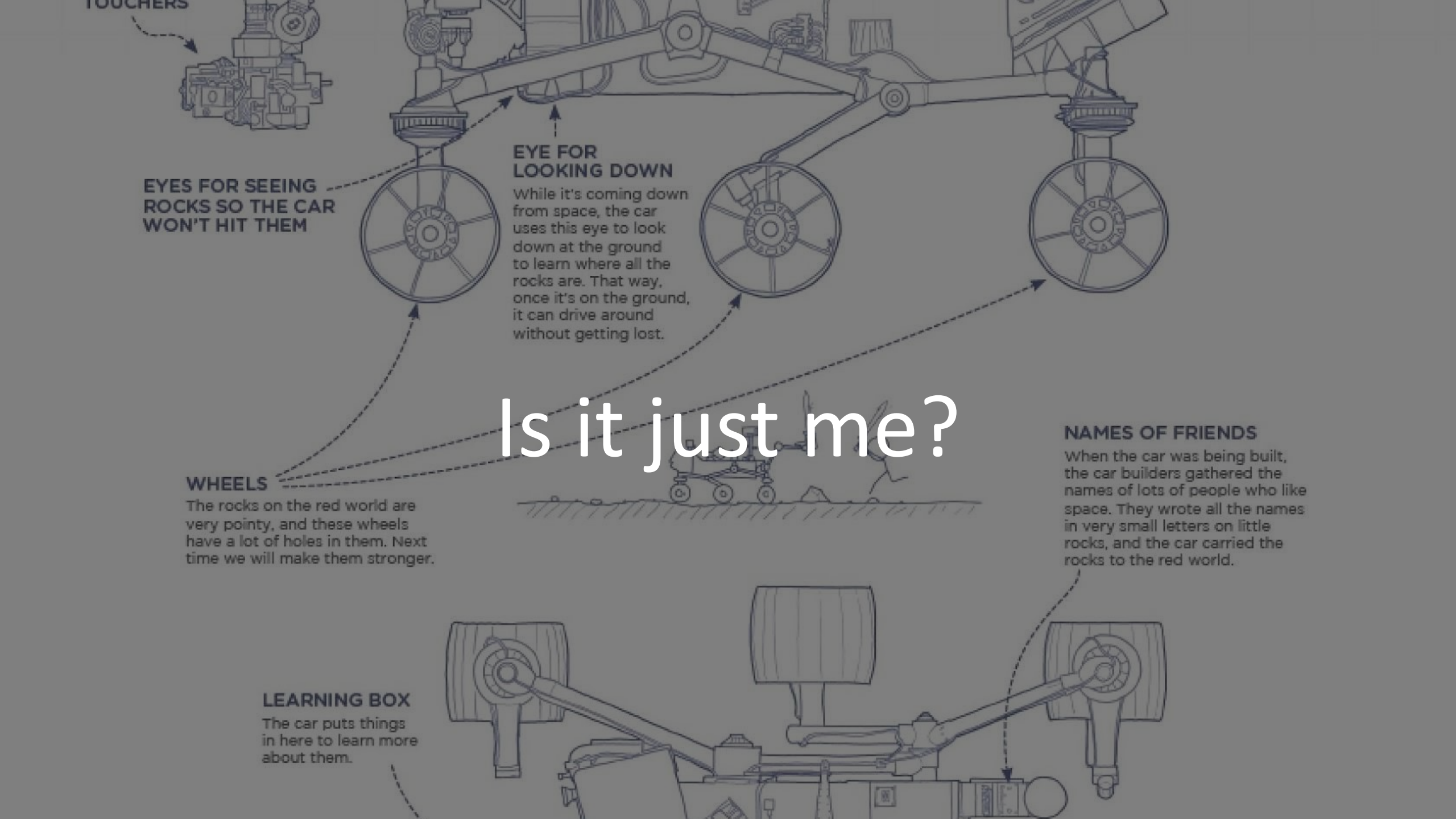
- Why testers are good at escape rooms
- Curiosity
- Intuition and experience
- Microheuristics
- A new buzzword
- Examples
- Takeaways



Escape rooms = tester training



Curious, observant
people



TOUCHERS

EYES FOR SEEING ROCKS SO THE CAR WON'T HIT THEM

EYE FOR LOOKING DOWN

While it's coming down from space, the car uses this eye to look down at the ground to learn where all the rocks are. That way, once it's on the ground, it can drive around without getting lost.

WHEELS

The rocks on the red world are very pointy, and these wheels have a lot of holes in them. Next time we will make them stronger.

Is it just me?


NAMES OF FRIENDS

When the car was being built, the car builders gathered the names of lots of people who like space. They wrote all the names in very small letters on little rocks, and the car carried the rocks to the red world.

LEARNING BOX

The car puts things in here to learn more about them.

intuition and experience



Intuition and experience =
another name for heuristics

A hand giving a thumbs up gesture in a lush green indoor garden setting. The background is filled with various tropical plants, including large variegated leaves and ferns. The lighting is soft and natural, creating a vibrant and healthy atmosphere.

Heuristics

- Rules of thumb that help us to make quick decisions
- Imperfect decision-making tools
- Based on experience
- “A heuristic ... is any approach to problem solving that employs a pragmatic method that is not fully optimized, perfected, or rationalized, but is nevertheless "good enough"" (Wikipedia)

What are my heuristics?

What is going on in my brain?

Do others think similarly?

I suspect we have shared models

Narration as a tool to find them
out



Microheuristics

A quick way to determine “what’s my next action” while testing.

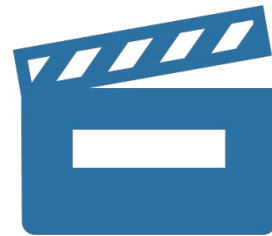
A microheuristic is our brain applying what we’ve just learned to decide on the next step or experiment. The result of a microheuristic being applied will usually prompt an immediate action.

Such actions are rooted in snap judgements that we make explicit and strategic by describing them.

Microheuristics



How are we using what we've just learned to decide on the next step or experiment?



A quick way to determine "what's my next action" while testing



Microheuristics will usually prompt immediate actions

Example 1: Poke it till it pops

If something seems problematic / acts oddly, interact with it directly and indirectly to evaluate it more closely, in different situations. The interaction can be editing, searching for, redoing steps... Keep poking until something comes out, or you're satisfied it won't.



I observe

A field with interesting behaviour

I think

There may be more interesting behaviour here

My next step

Interact with the field by editing it, searching for data I've entered into it, viewing the same field in a different view / client / browser

Example 2: A rose by any other name



How elements are named can lead us to assumptions about error likelihood.

If the “same” thing is named differently: was that a rushed team, different developers, lack of domain understanding, no time for testing?


Explore any differences/interplay between the functions with different names for the same thing. Explore other shared functions in these areas too

I observe	The naming of items is not consistent across the application (yes/no vs. ok/cancel, edit vs. alter)
I think	Are there really differences? What else has been done differently in these two areas?
My next step	Explore the function itself that is differently named. Explore other functions that are shared across the two areas



Nirvana reached

I am one with the
universe

A photograph of a kayaker in a red kayak navigating turbulent white-water rapids. The water is churning and white with foam, and the surrounding rocks are dark and jagged. The kayaker is positioned in the lower center of the frame, moving towards the right. The overall scene is dynamic and captures the intensity of whitewater kayaking.

*Me just going with
the flow*

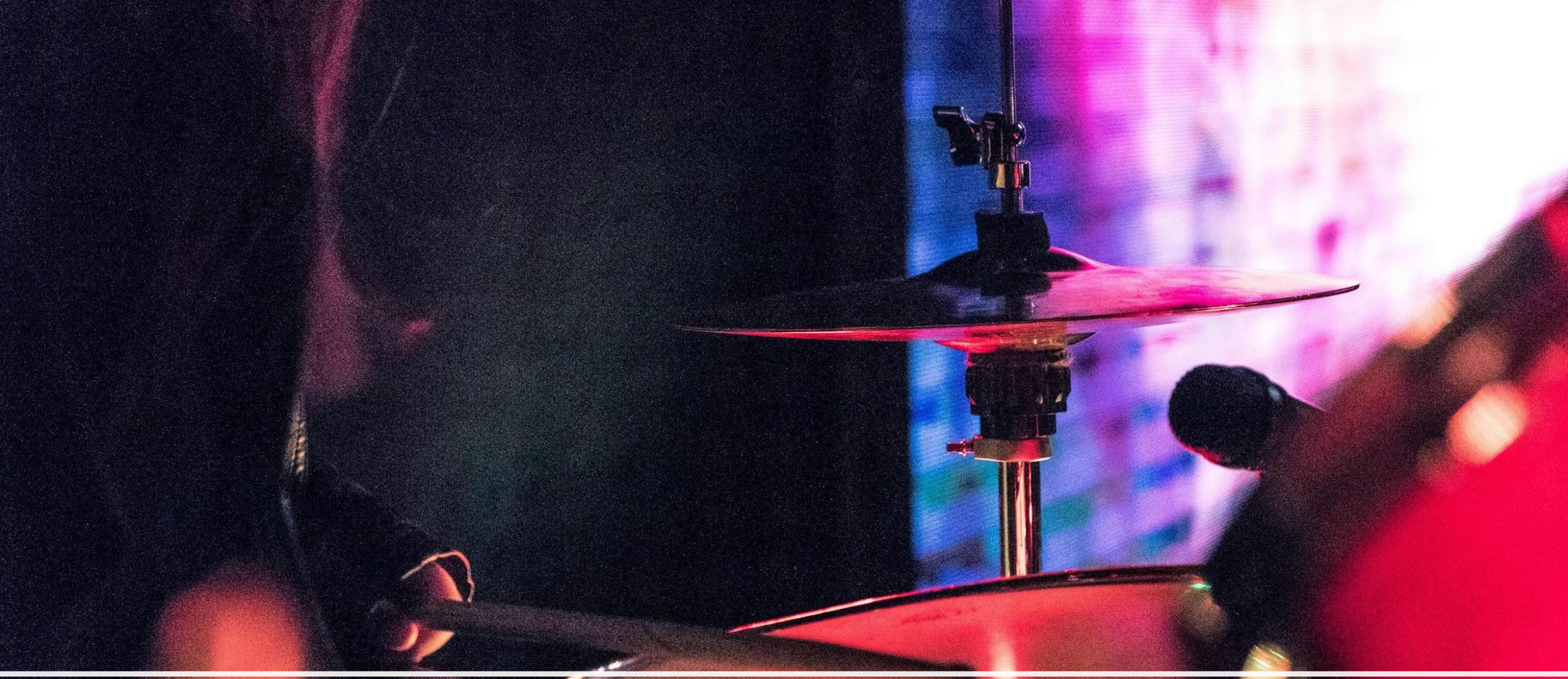
The flow:

- January 2020
- (Yes, 2 months before Covid)
- New role: Managing Director



(The task feeling too big and not even knowing the questions to ask is
a) a sign of growth b) a sign you're a leader and c) terrifying)





New buzzword incoming

“Observability is the process through which one develops the ability to ask meaningful questions, get useful answers, and act effectively on what you learn”

<https://hazelweakly.me/blog/redefining-observability/>





Auto-observability

Treating **yourself as a system** to be observed and analysed, and providing yourself with the means to ask new meaningful questions so that you can become **explainable** and **understandable** to yourself and others

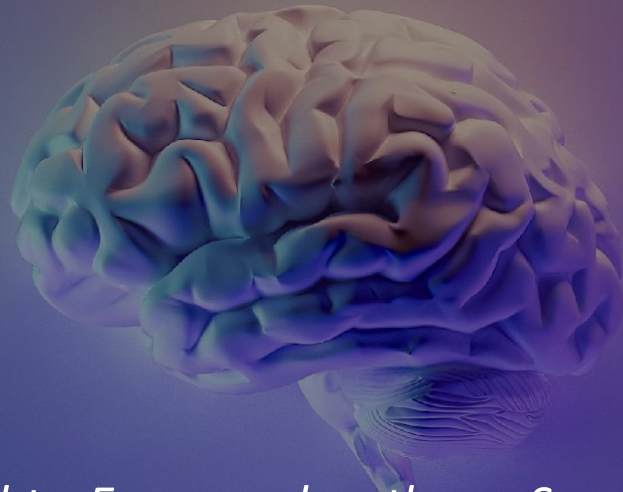


**"It's me, hi. I'm the
problem, it's me."**

As leaders, we become
the system

Narrating what we are doing is like
adding log statements / traces /
events to our brain

(Thanks to Elizabeth Zagroba for coining
"leadership observability")



First Thoughts are the everyday thoughts. Everyone has those. Second Thoughts are the thoughts you think about the way you think. People who enjoy thinking have those. Third Thoughts are thoughts that watch the world and think all by themselves. They're rare, and often troublesome. Listening to them is part of witchcraft.

Terry Pratchett, A Hat Full of Sky

A large crowd of stylized human figures in various shades of brown and black, set against a dark background. In the center of the crowd, one figure is highlighted in a light grey color and has its arms raised in a 'V' shape, signifying leadership or a standout individual.

Leadership heuristics!

I have the
first buds

And weakly held strong opinions
(WHSOs)



What activities am I doing?

WHAT
Am I DOING

working on strategic topics
- how (OUR → goal, outcome, next step)
- in bursts / in between → hark-ass
- plan + explore

1st thoughts + 2nd thoughts
protect others

crisis - carry on.

Staying sane

Networking
outside of co
→ @sanib
→ input
→ fresh perspectives
trust
EPT input

Making decisions

• which options
- + and -
- effects
- who tell
• what happens if
• what is smaller
• can we wait + learn
• which info can
• which assumptions

- Making decisions
- Deciding how (with whom) to make decisions
- Deciding whether to make a decision (now / ever)
- Figuring out who to talk to in what order
- Wondering when to track and when to step back
- Prioritising for myself
- Prioritising for the company
- Disappointing people
- Being authentic in different roles
- Managing conflict
- Dealing with unknown circumstances
- Dealing with crisis
- Staying sane

Managing time + tasks

• Multiple prios
• WIP high
• minimal
• next step only
• smallest step

getting on with it

putting on work clothes

dealing w. disappointment
(2 things were @ selective)

conflict

- w. customer
→ visible micro

motivation
- kosten
- initiative
- einsetzbarkeit

activity "accepting"

activity "decision"

THINGS TO ACCEPT
- SEESAW
- ACTIVITIES + PROCESSES

Plan — Explore

Direct — Let others

Transparency — Protection

Authenticity — Protection

Dealing w. uncertain situations / equate
- aim
- risks
- benefits

learning (doing stuff / can do yet)

being proactive in communication

deciding whether to create or deconstruct (country, MA)

Crises

- Solve first then retro

Problem solving (decision making)

• What do I know
• What do I not know
• What can I find out (Non when (int/cont))
• What can I deal w. not knowing

WIAD
conclude - set out is clear - end road.

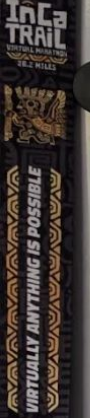
Truths you won't like...

What is one next step?

ever done sth like it before?
who ask?
what read?

Come to the dark side, we have cookies

my filter
discuss
listen
feedback taken



Do I decide?

After months of training myself to be comfortable making decisions, I need to sometimes take a step back and let others decide lest I become a dictator



This happens	We need a decision
I reflect	What happens if I don't decide (now)? Who else has an opinion?
I act	I try to shut up for a while. Sometimes.

WHSO : You will need to (learn to) make multiple decisions per hour, quickly.

What do I decide?

Making hard decisions is one of the biggest parts of the job.



This happens

We need a decision, none of the options seem nice

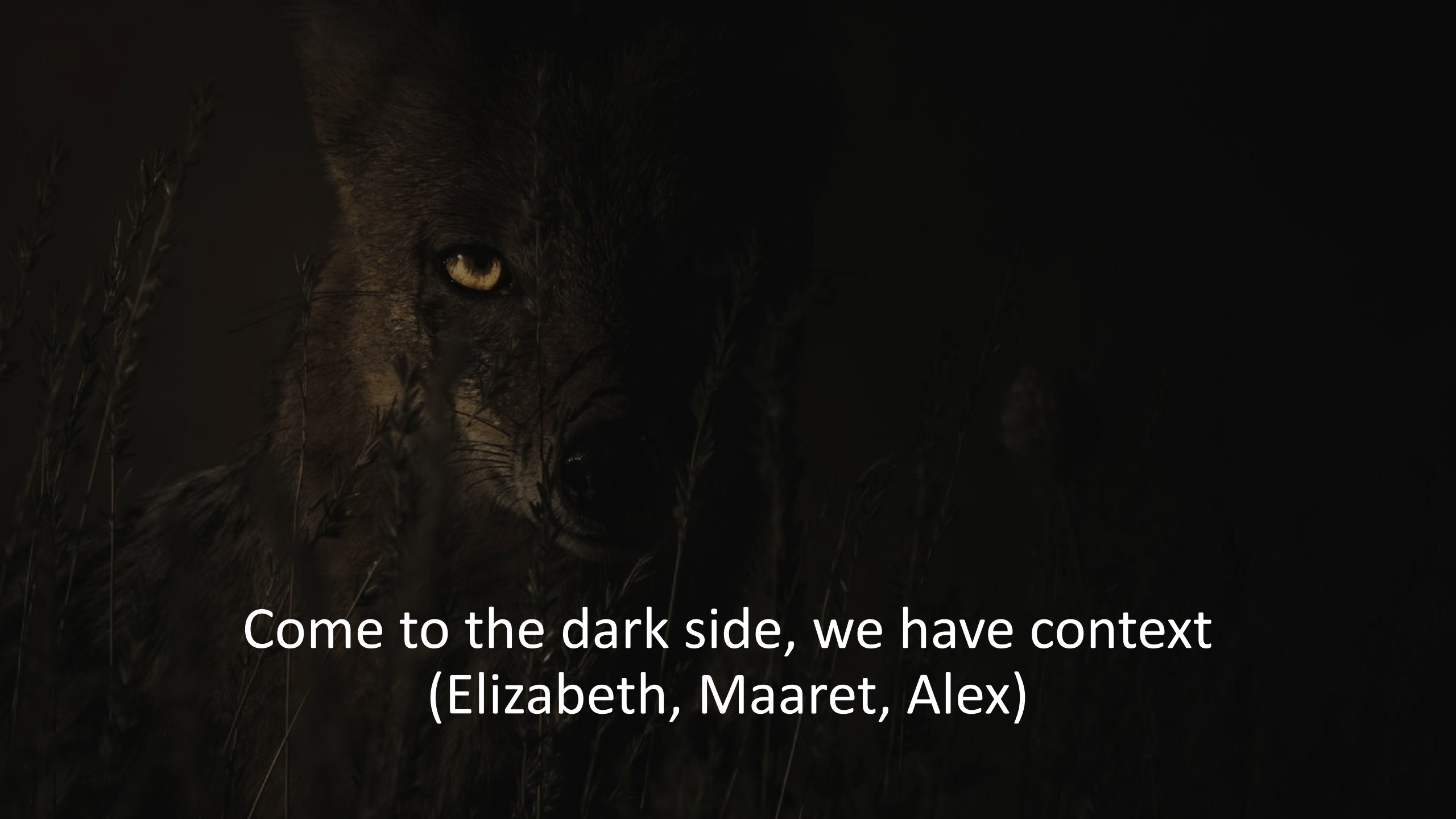
I reflect

What are *all* the options?
What assumptions am I making?
Are there opportunities here?
Can the decision be smaller?
Can I get help?
What principles am I working on?

I act

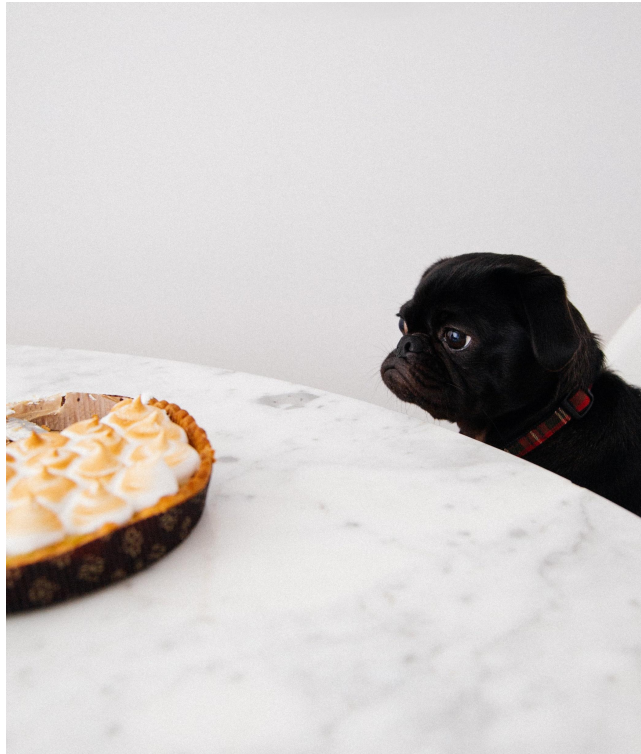
Make a decision

WHSO: You will have to make decisions you don't feel qualified to make

A dark, close-up photograph of a wolf's face, with its yellow eyes glowing in the darkness. The wolf is looking directly at the camera, and its fur is dark and textured. The background is black, making the wolf's face the central focus.

Come to the dark side, we have context
(Elizabeth, Maaret, Alex)

How do I disappoint you?



Your decisions won't make everyone happy and you will have to get used to disappointing people

This happens

We need to communicate to people who are going to be disappointed

I reflect

Can I make them not disappointed?
If not, I need to show acceptance and understanding of their emotion
It won't be a fun conversation

I act

I do the conversation, speaking openly about the fact I know I'm disappointing them.

WHSO: You might be able to separate your role from your person, but the other person might not

WHSO: Explaining reasons is not an invitation to discussion

WHSO: Get very good at honestly apologising for the effects of your actions

How do I stay sane?

There are usually too many hard things going on. You're still learning. You also need to not fall apart and look after yourself.



This happens

I get overwhelmed

I reflect

Who can help me?
Could anyone else be doing a better job right now?
What is the worst thing that could happen?

I act

Call therapist/coach/Elizabeth/Maaret/Sophie/best friends. Go home.

WHSO: I cannot be so authentic as to fall completely apart on a hard day

How closely do I lead?

Sometimes you need to give trust, sometimes you need to lead closely.



This happens

I reflect

I act

I have literally no idea.
Currently collecting
examples of how to fail at
this ;)

WHSO: This is really hard

Some other WHSOs



On prioritising

You will have multiple meetings at once

Weekend / lunchtime / “but I had a thing“ work will happen sometimes

Work in progress *changes*. You will have strategic and operative priorities

You will get better at half-assing stuff



On communication

Who to tell what when is one of the hardest things, which is why it often goes wrong

A conflict means clearing my calendar to talk to all the people separately and together



On context

Context switching is an unfortunately useful skill

Multitasking (on small things) becomes a must, but is also exhausting

It also applies to levels – from hard numbers in a project to summer party





Go forth and auto-observe

- Whether you're new or a pro
- Narrate
- Label / categorise
- Pair
- Talk about your work
- Network
- Keep your growth mindset
- Pattern match
- Give yourself the grace to be wrong

A close-up photograph of a green leaf with several water droplets on its surface. A small caterpillar with yellow and black stripes is visible on the leaf. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green.

Be the change you
want to see in the
world

- If it feels hard, it's because it probably is
- This kind of thing won't feel quite this hard again
- The more hard things you do, the more resilience you'll have
- We can support ourselves and others by talking about the hard things