

**stripe**

LeadDev West Coast 2023

# How to lose battles, but win the war

Scott Triglia  
@scott\_triglia



Photo by Andrea Piacquadio on [Pexels](#)



Photo by [Alberto Frías](#) on [Unsplash](#)

# The signs got less subtle

**Option 1)** buckle down, make it work, force it through

**Option 2)** step back, stop work, reassess path forward





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**...but it didn't end there**



PHASE 1   PHASE 2   PHASE 3

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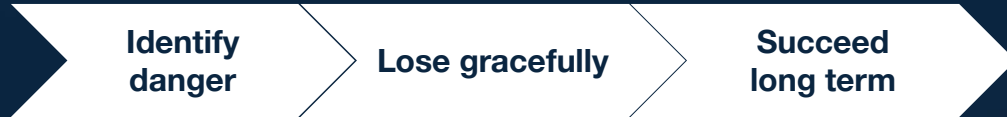
Profit



# Advice for my past self

Identify danger  
signs

Find the right time to  
recover, and win long  
term



Know how to  
gracefully  
lose battles





# Identifying the danger signs

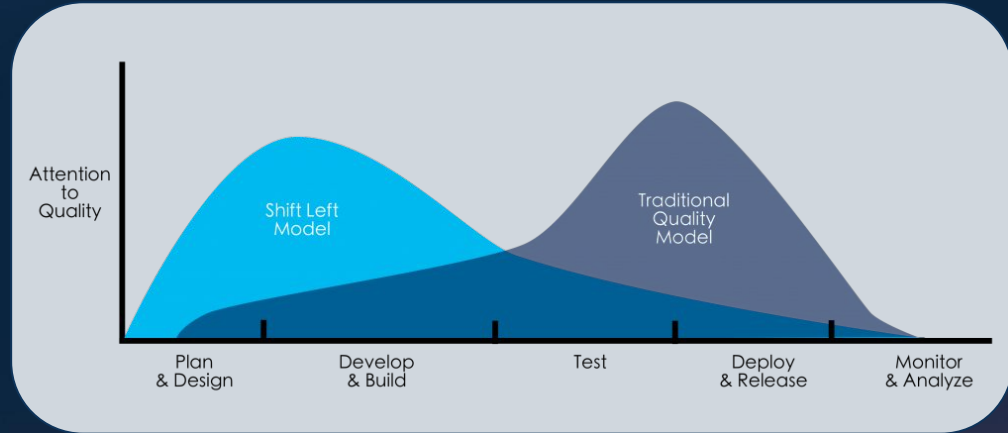
# Notice earlier -> react while it's easy

## Why shifting left is so important for software developers



**Jemiah Sius** (he/him)

Director of Developer Relations, New  
[@heyjemiah](https://twitter.com/heyjemiah)



<https://devopedia.org/shift-left>

# Guardrail metrics

Prevent worst outcomes

Raise awareness



Speaker

**Doing the right thing, better:  
How to lead with efficiency  
in mind**

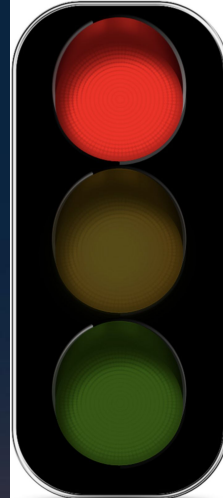
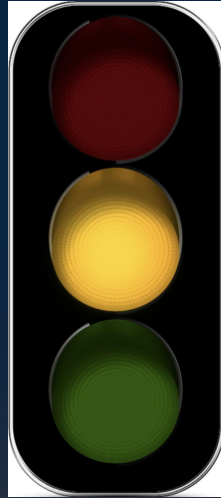
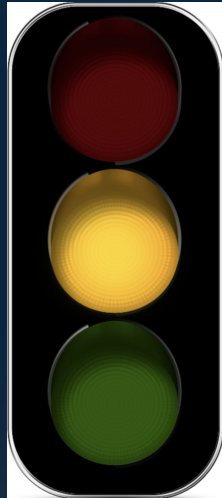
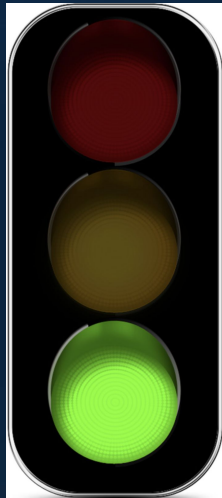
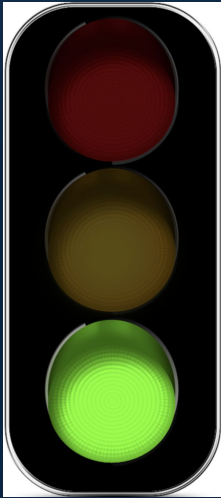
**Lena Reinhard**  
Leadership coach & consultant

The image is a collage. On the left, there's a photograph of a rugged coastline with blue waves crashing against a rocky shore. On the right, there's a photograph of a paved road stretching into the distance under a cloudy sky. In the bottom right corner, there's a photograph of the Golden Gate Bridge at night, illuminated with lights. Overlaid on these images is a white card with a pink header and footer. The card contains the text: 'Speaker', 'Doing the right thing, better: How to lead with efficiency in mind', and 'Lena Reinhard Leadership coach & consultant'.

should sm



# Project status should smoothly degrade





# Gracefully losing the battle

# Know when to fold 'em

Know your **path to green**

**Don't linger** in limbo, be honest when you should quit



# Communicate thoughtfully, with nuance

Be authentic and clear about the root causes – teams and your leaders credit clear talk that matches reality.

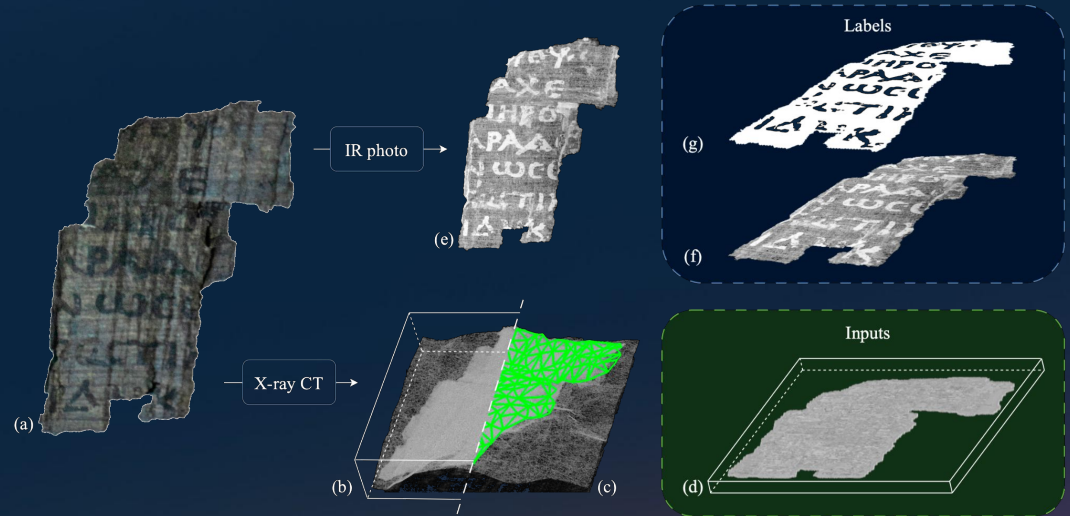
Failures are never binary – find places where your project partially succeeded and celebrate + solidify those



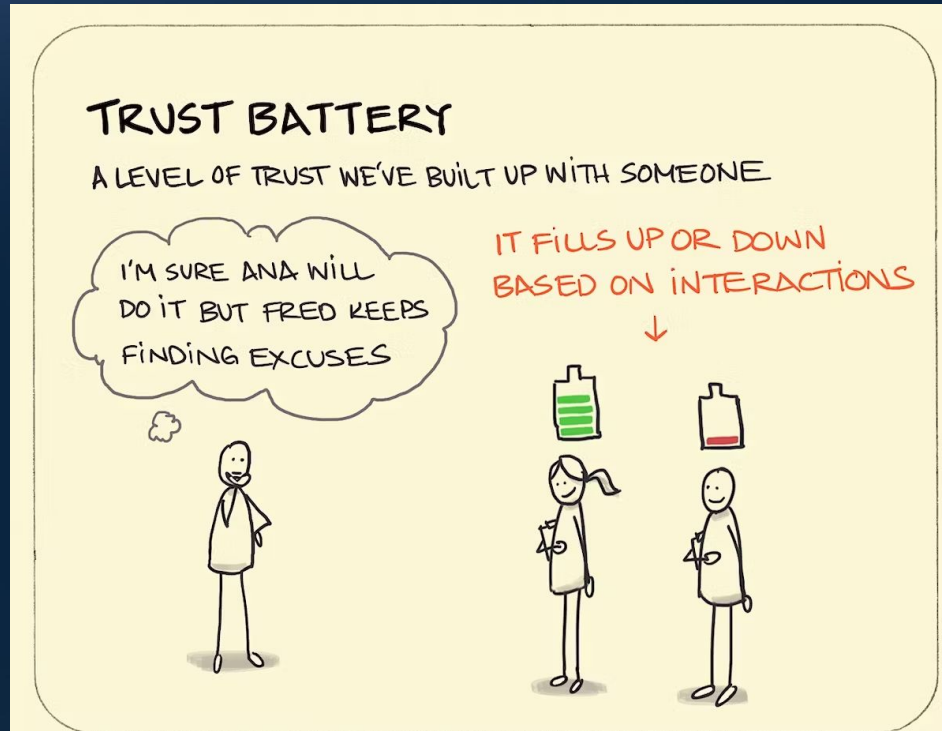
# Preserve technical value for the future

What technical systems  
or valuable knowledge  
did you discover?

Where else is it relevant?



# Preserve social/organizational value for the future



# We haven't won yet, but...

Our failure is understood  
and communicated clearly

We have built, not burned,  
trust

Successes are documented  
and celebrated

we become **more**  
credible in and  
outside the team

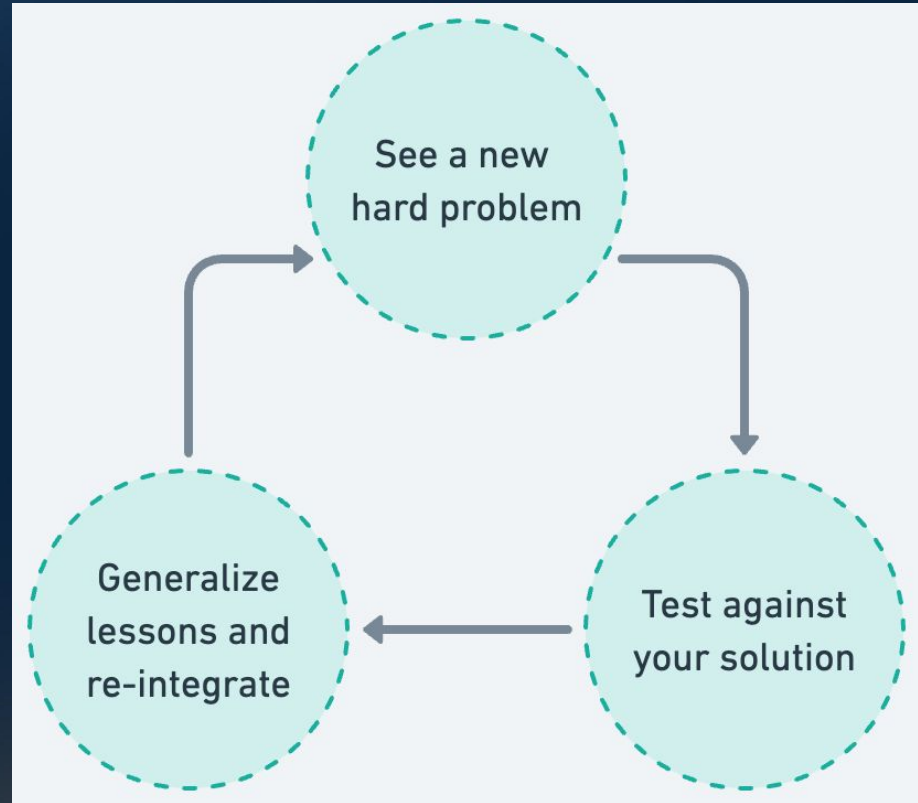
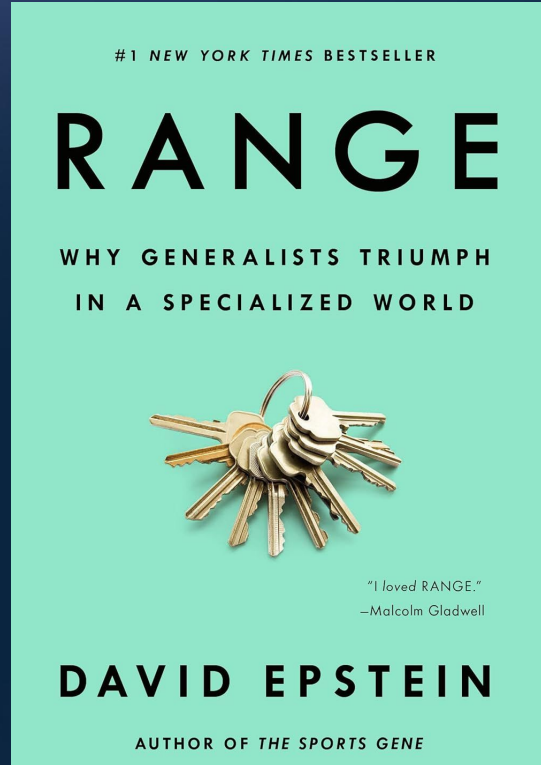


# Succeeding in the long term

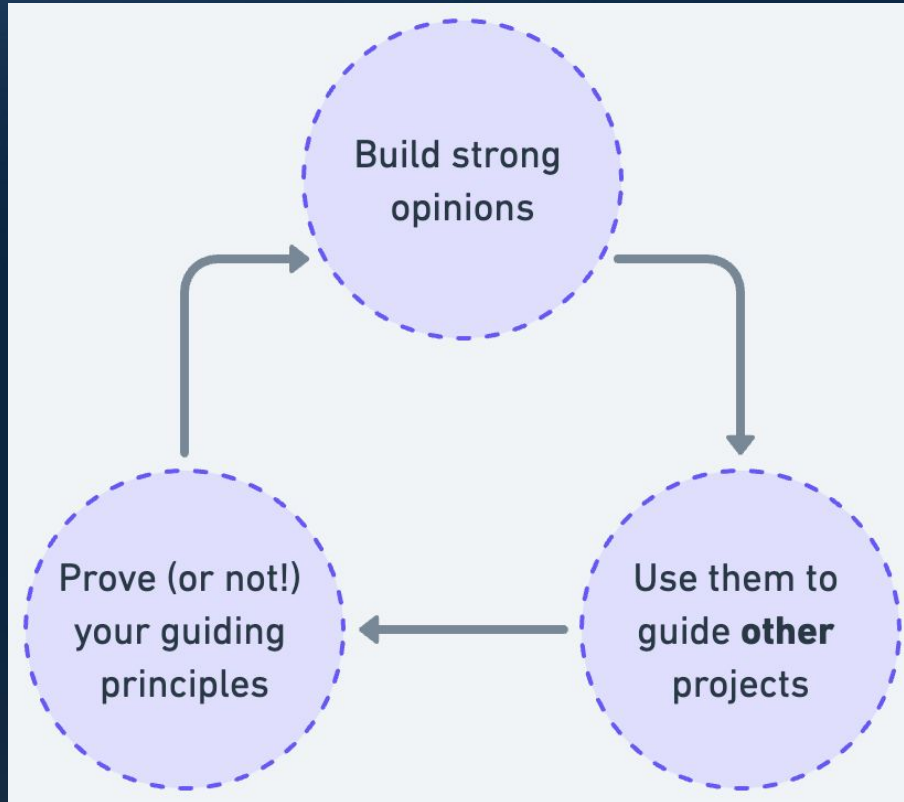


Photo by [Aron Visuals](#) on [Unsplash](#)

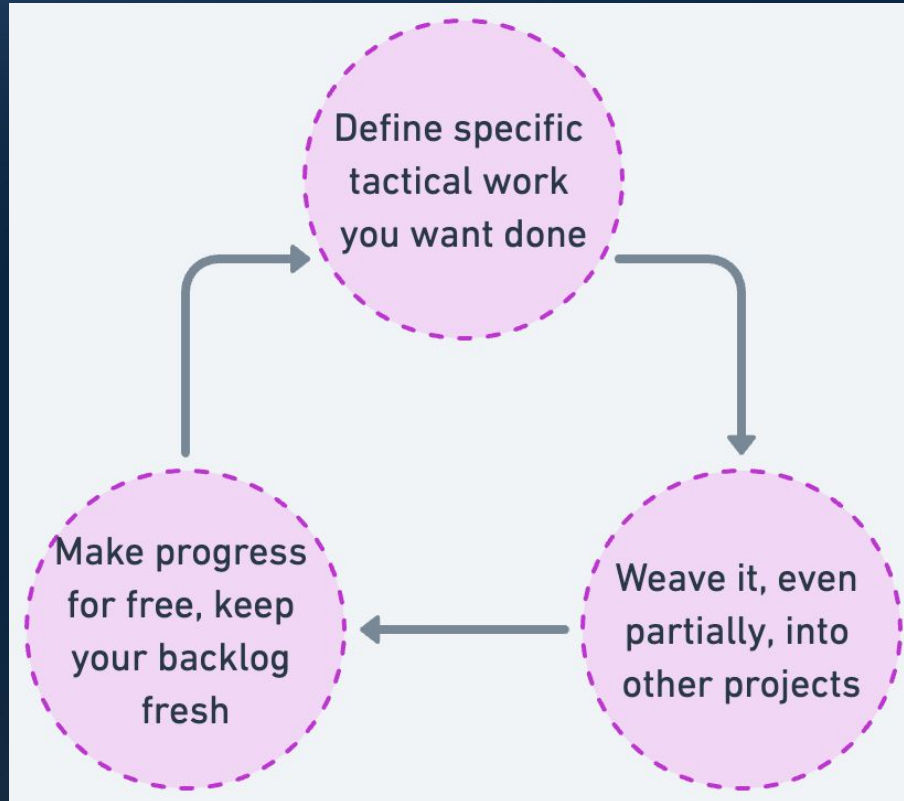
# Find more examples



# Build guiding principles (zoom out)



# Prove out tactics (zoom in)





Build the “perfect storm”, *in your favor*



**Your mindset matters**

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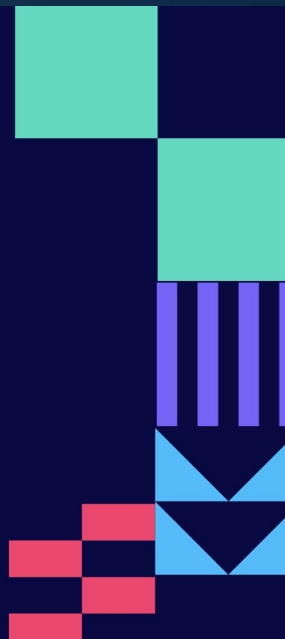
TALK

# Leading in the post-boom environment

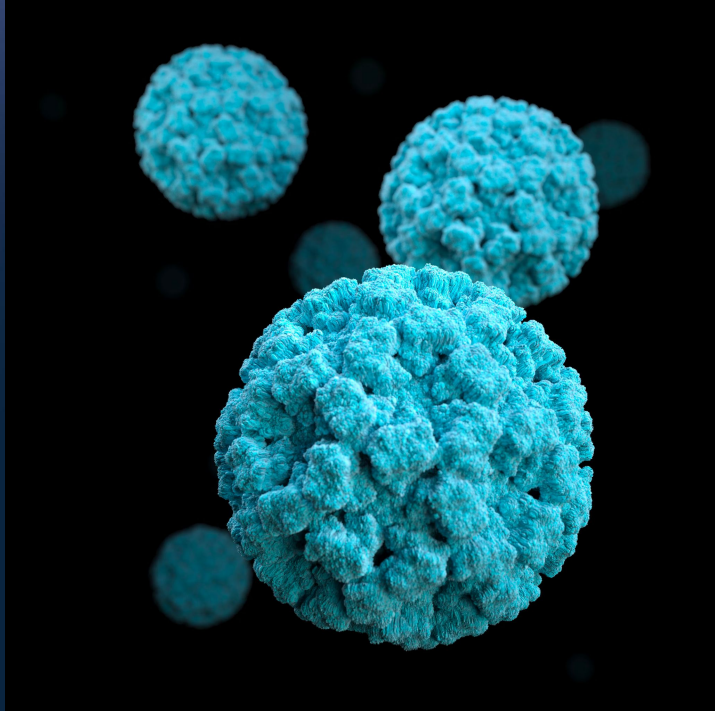


Tara Ellis (she/her)

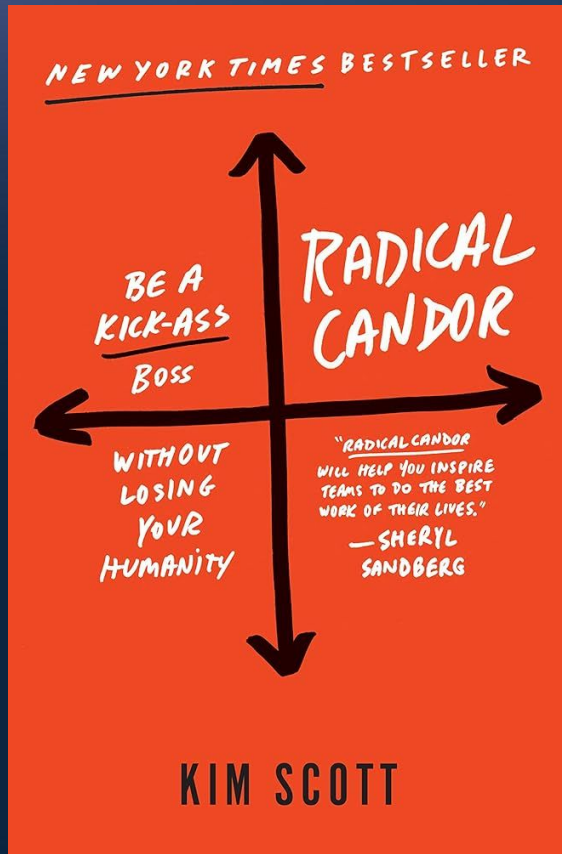
Senior Engineering Leader, Netflix



Failures happen, but **we choose** how to deal



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Watch for signs of failure

Celebrate **honest** assessments



**Find the upsides in  
failure**



A good idea,  
tended  
properly, **will**  
**grow on its**  
**own**

<https://www.microdrips.com/>

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