



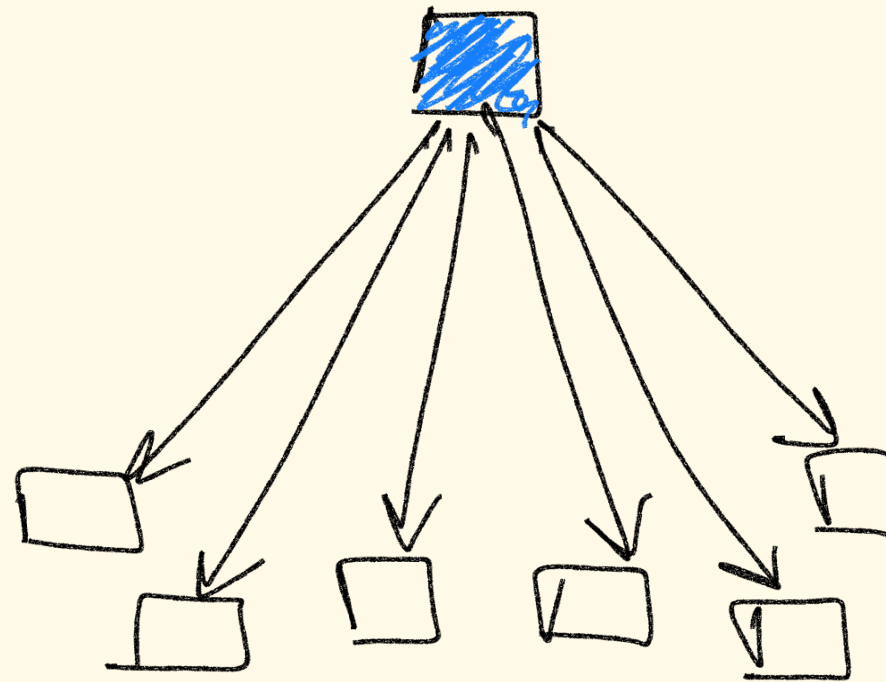
# Levelling up: transitioning successfully into a manager of managers role

**Gisela Rossi**

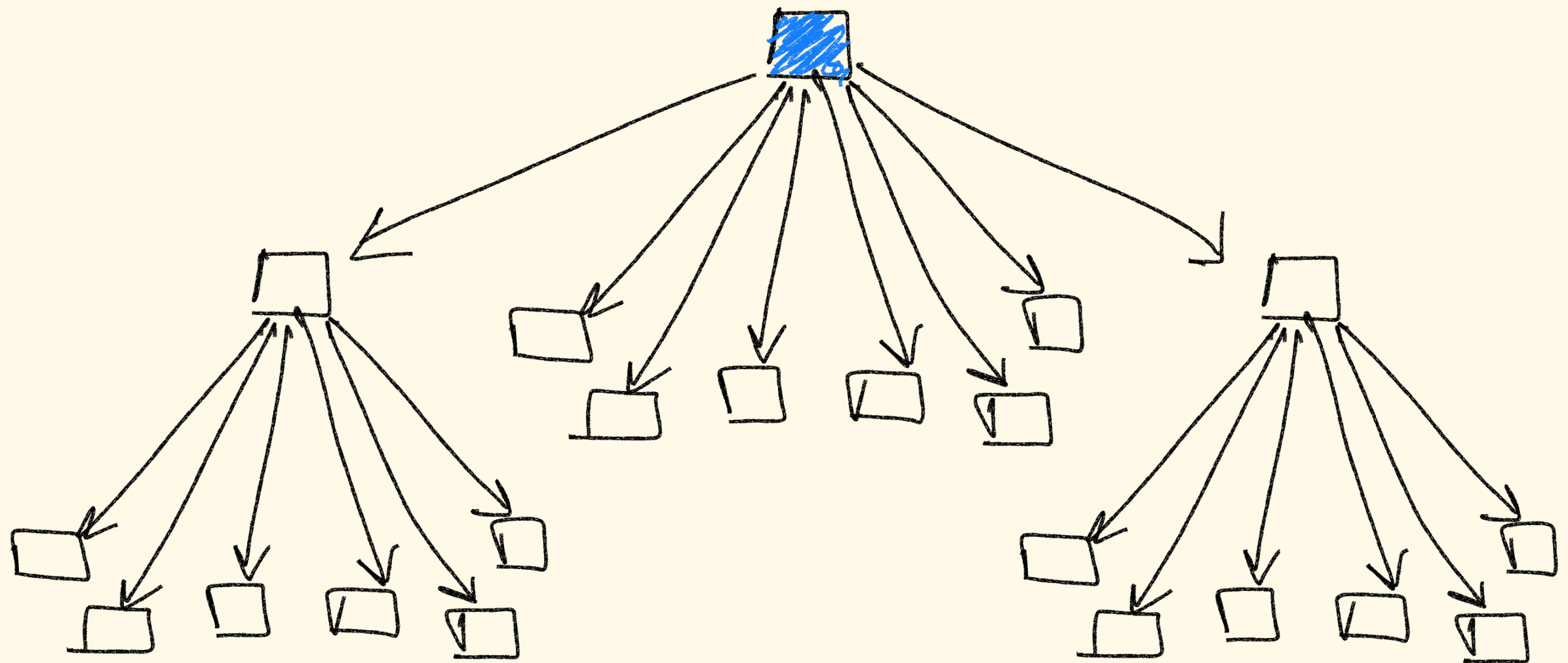
Director of Engineering, Trustpilot

Image credit: unsplash@kanhaiyasharma

in: /giselarossi

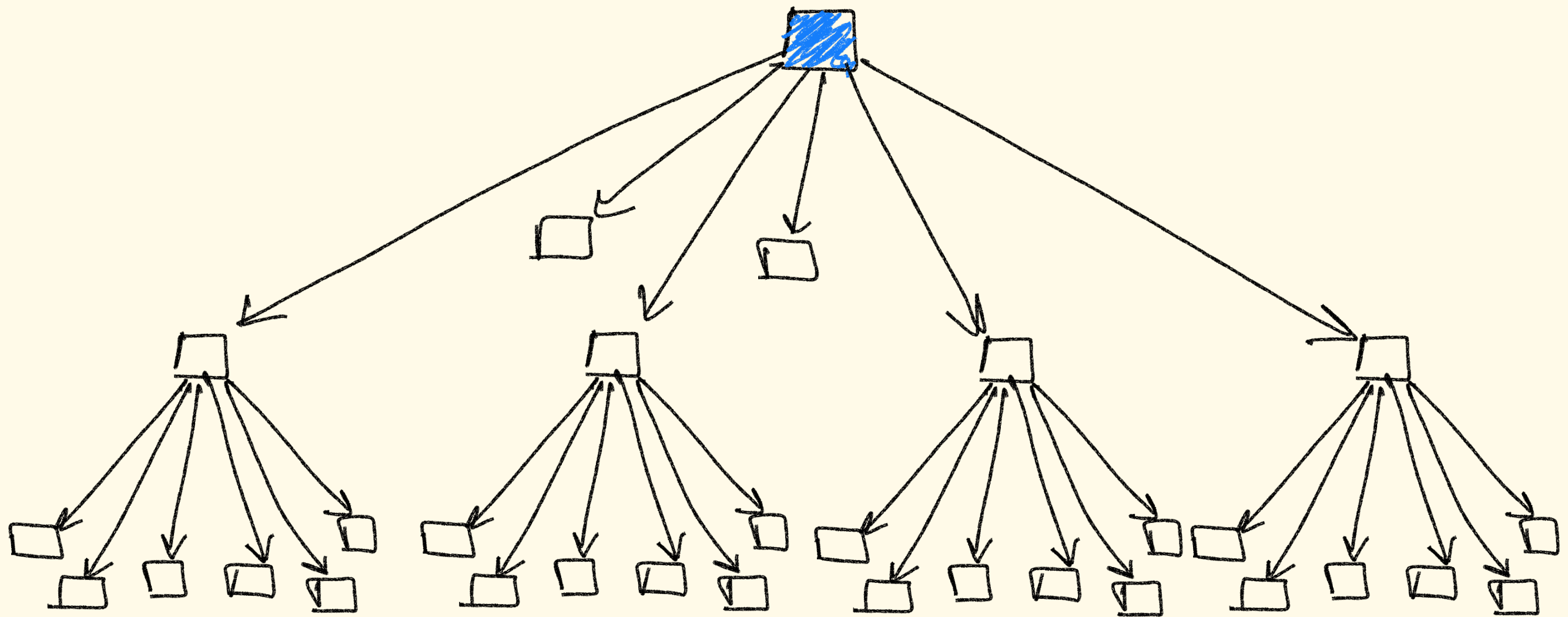


Q4 2023  
Engineering Manager



Q1 2024

Sr. Engineering Manager



Q4 2024

Director of Engineering



If I'm an EM, how can  
I prepare for this?

# Similarities with the EM role

a.k.a skills to master while you're an EM



# Similarities with the EM role

a.k.a skills to master while you're an EM



**Supporting people to  
grow**



# Similarities with the EM role

a.k.a skills to master while you're an EM



**Supporting people to  
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**Creating conditions  
to thrive**



# Similarities with the EM role

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**Supporting people to  
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**Creating conditions  
to thrive**



**Adapting to  
organisational change**



# Similarities with the EM role

a.k.a skills to master while you're an EM



**Supporting people to grow**



**Creating conditions to thrive**



**Adapting to organisational change**



**Efficient execution**

You got there. You're a  
manager of managers

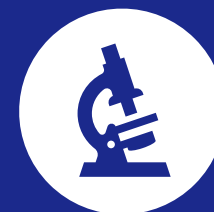


# Two types of changes ahead

*There will be visible things  
that change straight away*



*There will be certain  
subtle silent shifts*

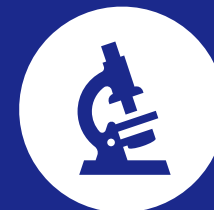


# Two types of changes ahead

*There will be visible things  
that change straight away*



*There will be certain  
subtle silent shifts*



3 silent shifts

# 3 silent shifts



*Informational  
Shift*

# 3 silent shifts



*Informational  
Shift*



*Temporal  
shift*

# 3 silent shifts



*Informational  
Shift*



*Temporal  
shift*



*Relational  
shift*

# The 3 Ps



*Perception*



*Patience*



*Presence*



# The 3 Ps



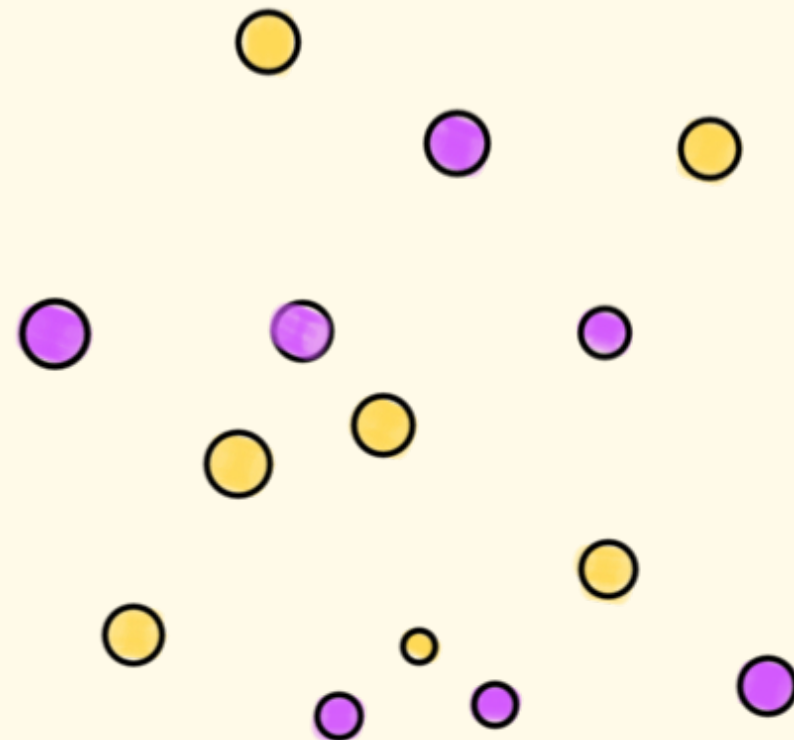
*Perception*



# Why Perception?



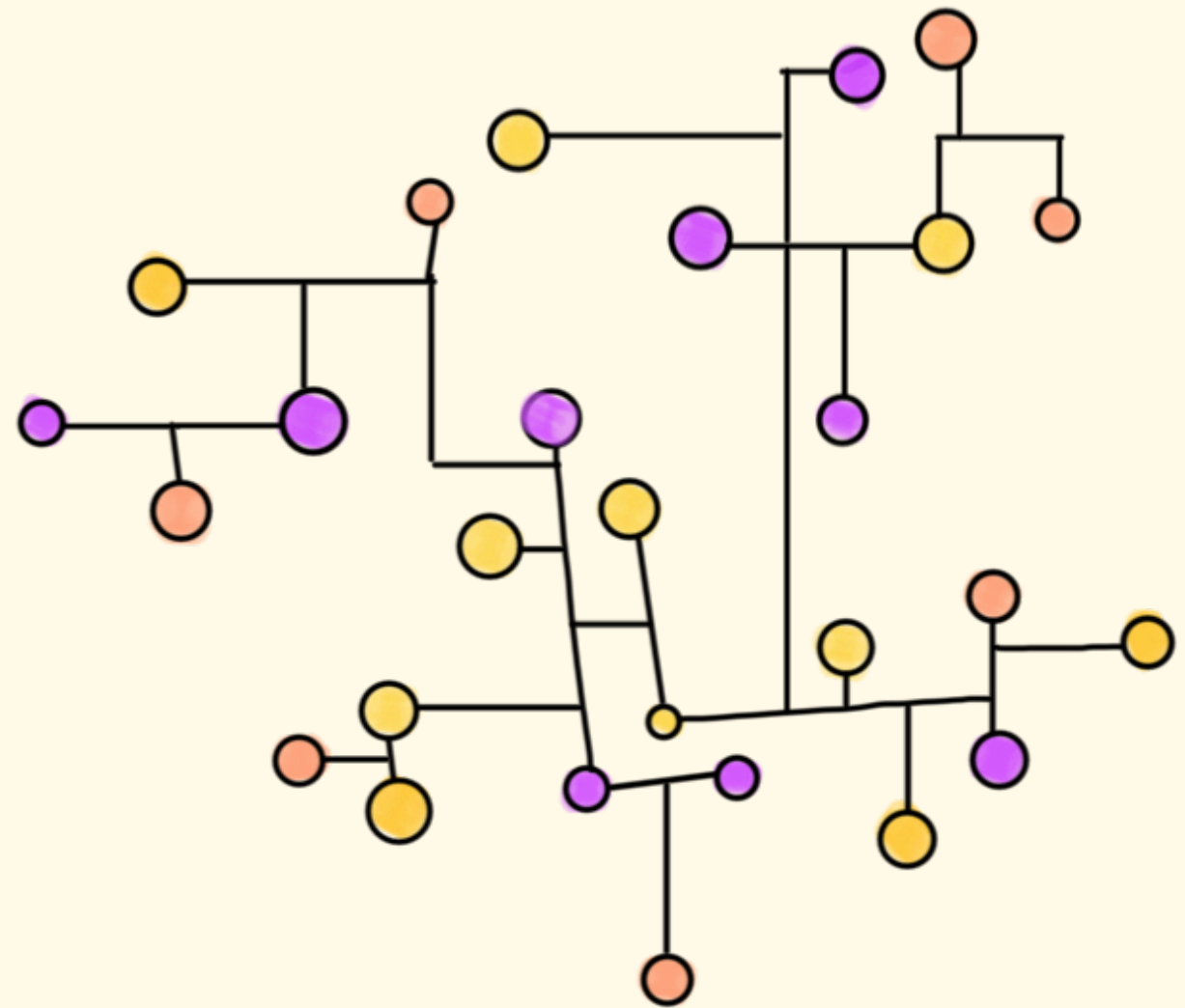
*Perception*  
—  
*For the  
informational  
shift*



# Why Perception?



*Perception*  
—  
*For the  
informational  
shift*



# Why Perception?



*Perception*  
—  
*For the  
informational  
shift*



**Gisela Rossi** 7:57 PM

We need to pause this migration. We need to pause it *now*.

*\*this is a dramatisation*



# Why Perception?



*Perception*



*For the  
informational  
shift*



# Why Perception?



*Perception*  
—  
*For the  
informational  
shift*



# Why Perception?



*Perception*



*For the  
informational  
shift*





# Why Perception?



*Perception*  
—  
*For the  
informational  
shift*



# Why Perception?

→ No one is going to brief you



*Perception*

—

*For the  
informational  
shift*

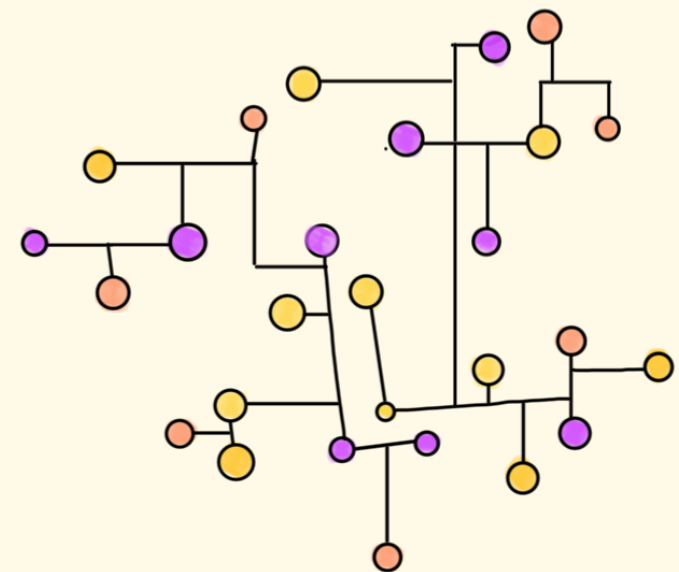


*Perception*  
—  
*For the  
informational  
shift*

# Why Perception?

→ No one is going to brief you

→ The power to see the dots and connect the seemingly unconnected



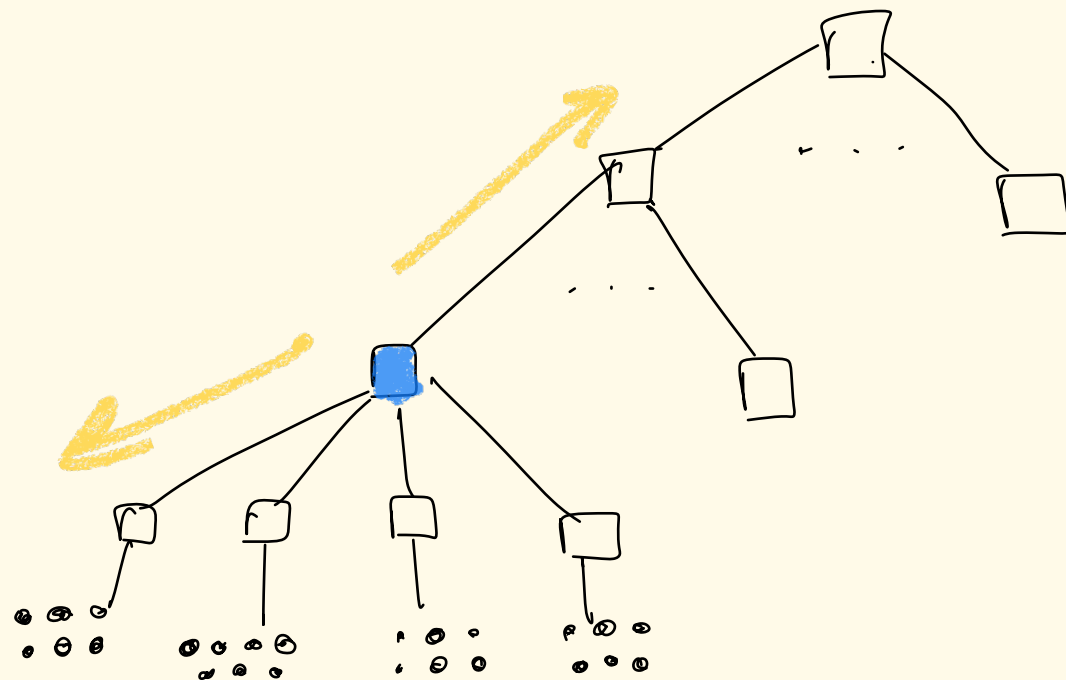
You see enough of the  
detail, and see enough  
of the systems, to notice  
what others can't.



*Perception*  
—  
*For the  
informational  
shift*

# Why Perception?

- Decisions will happen without you
- Learn to shape upstream as well as downstream





*Perception*  
—  
*For the  
informational  
shift*

# What Perception looks like?

→ Up: Parse and summarise for VPs + Execs



*Perception*  
—  
*For the  
informational  
shift*

# What Perception looks like?

→ Up: Parse and summarise for VPs + Execs

→ Down & Across:

→ scan for pain points and opportunities.

→ spot patterns.

→ jump to action



# The 3 Ps



*Patience*



# Why Patience?

→ Time horizons — Wins take longer to show



*Patience*

—

*For the  
temporal shift*



*Patience*

—

*For the  
temporal shift*

# Why Patience?

→ Time horizons — Wins take longer to show

→ Nature of problems — complexity++, dependencies++, messiness++, urgency++



*Patience*

—

*For the  
temporal shift*

# Why Patience?

- Time horizons — Wins take longer to show
- Nature of problems — complexity++, dependencies++, messiness++, urgency++
- Resolution looks different

You often end up with  
outcomes no one is very  
happy with, but  
everyone can tolerate.



*Patience*

—

*For the  
temporal shift*

# What Patience looks like?

- Longer time horizons
  - “what can I fix ~~this week~~ *for next year*”
  - trust the work



*Patience*

—

*For the  
temporal shift*

# What Patience looks like?

- Longer time horizons
- More issues & escalations
  - prioritise, adapt



*Patience*

—

*For the  
temporal shift*

# What Patience looks like?

- Longer time horizons
- More issues & escalations
- Resolutions
  - grow your tolerance to imperfect compromises
  - accept you can't fix everything



# The 3 Ps



*Presence*

# Why Presence?

→ How you show up on the organisation is now more important than before



*Presence*

—

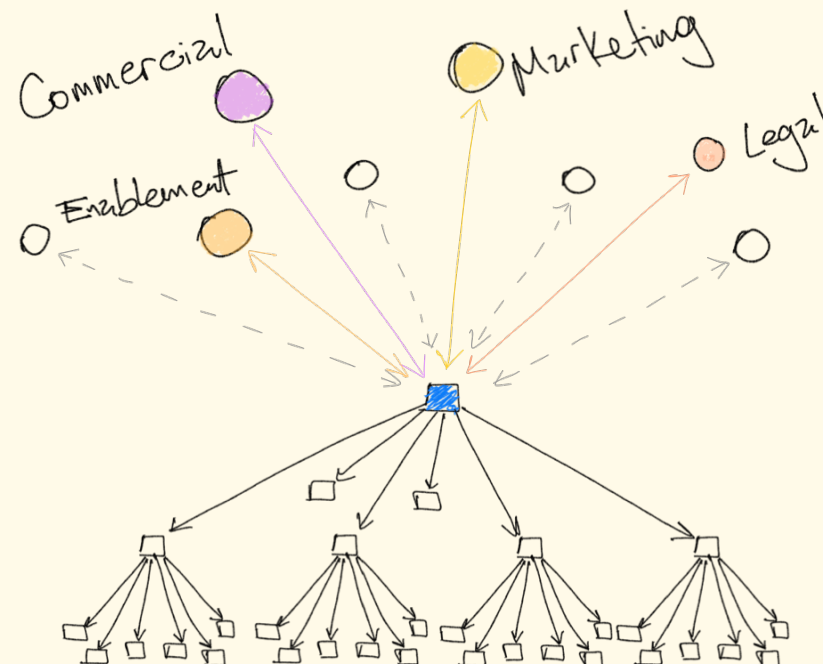
*For the  
relational shift*



*Presence*  
—  
*For the  
relational shift*

# Why Presence?

- How you show up on the organisation is now more important than before
- You're an ambassador, for your teams and the whole of Engineering



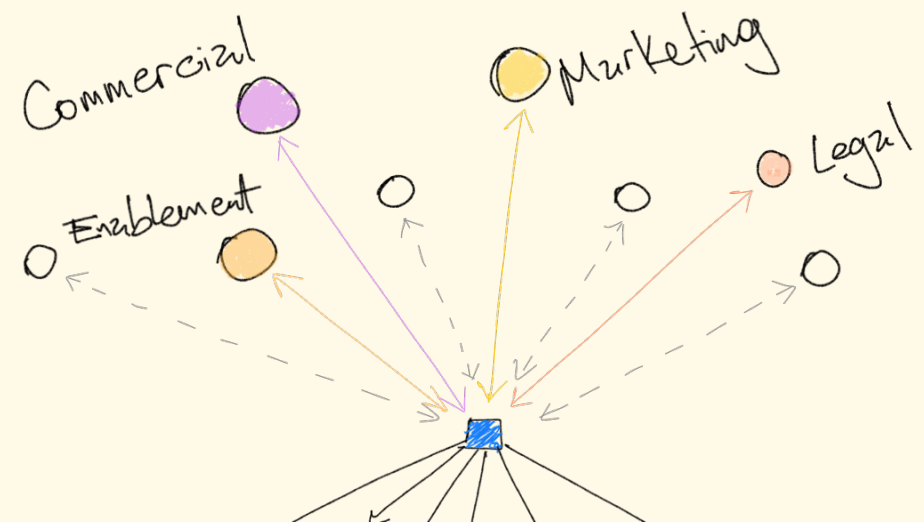


*Presence*

—  
*For the  
relational shift*

# What Presence looks like?

- Be an ambassador
  - learn to negotiate — progress is usually built on compromises
  - build cross-org relationships early
  - understand what drives people
  - advocate for your teams





*Presence*

—  
*For the  
relational shift*

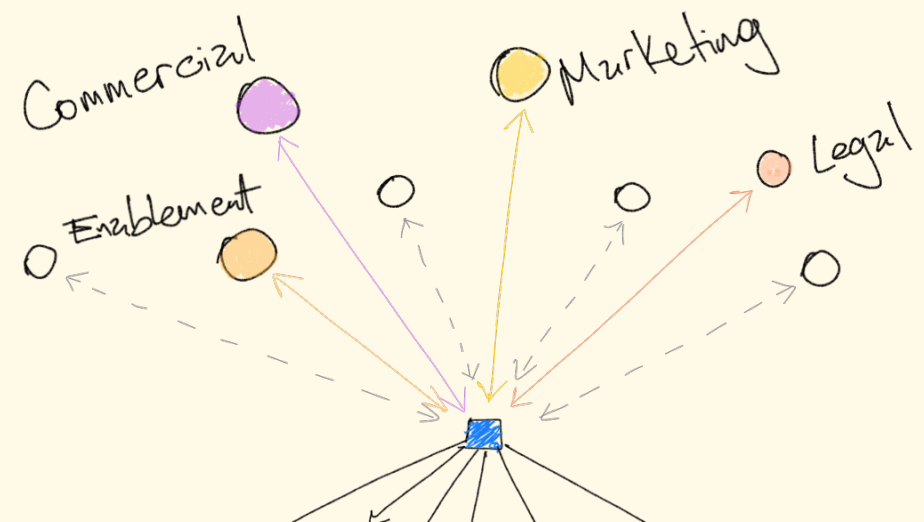
# What Presence looks like?

→ Be an ambassador — negotiate, build relationships

→ Be a translator:

→ translate between the language of your teams and the outside

→ help people understand, bring relevant context, try to speak their language



Sometimes you won't be  
in the room, but your  
thinking will be.  
That is presence too.

# The 3 Ps



*Perception*



*Patience*



*Presence*





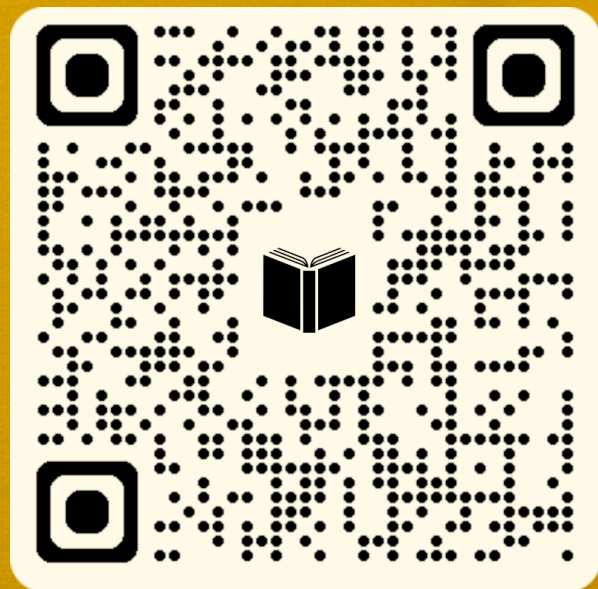


Growth and comfort  
never coexist.



Ginni Rometty,  
IBM's Ex-CEO

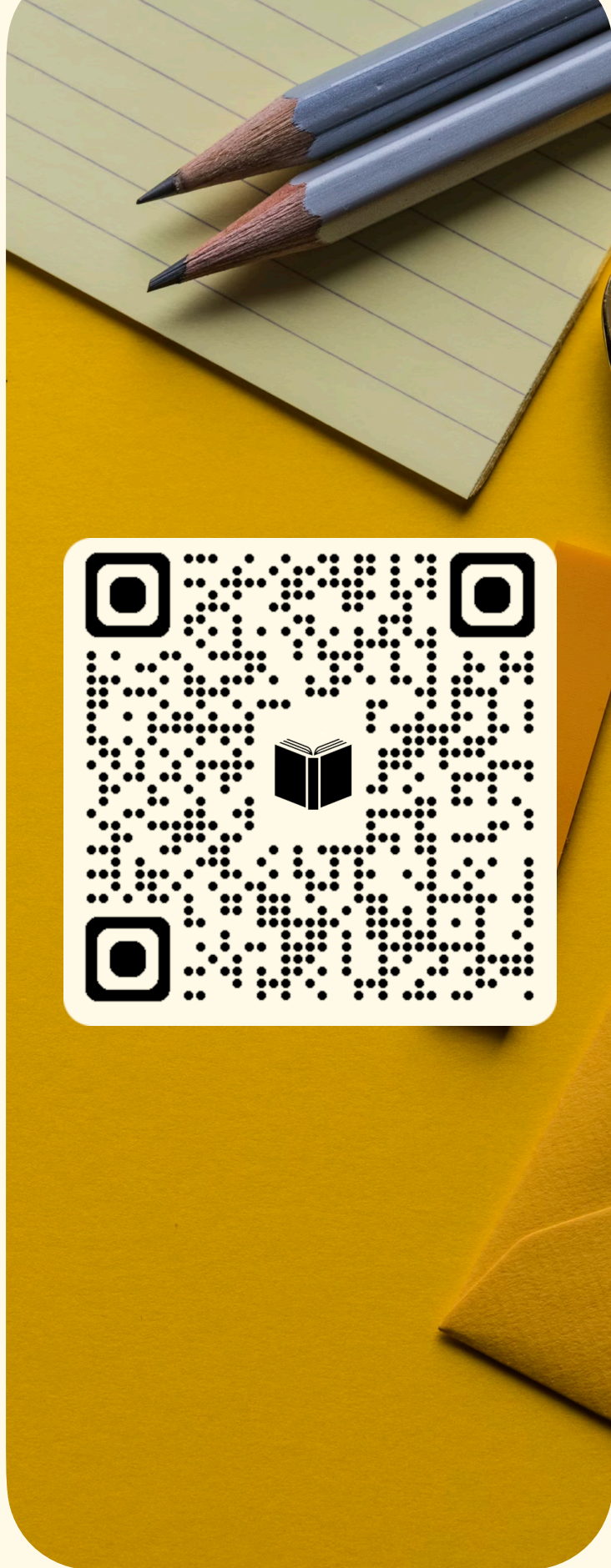
These are skills.  
Grow them with intention,  
focus, and practice.



# Material to help you on the road:

## **Find here:**

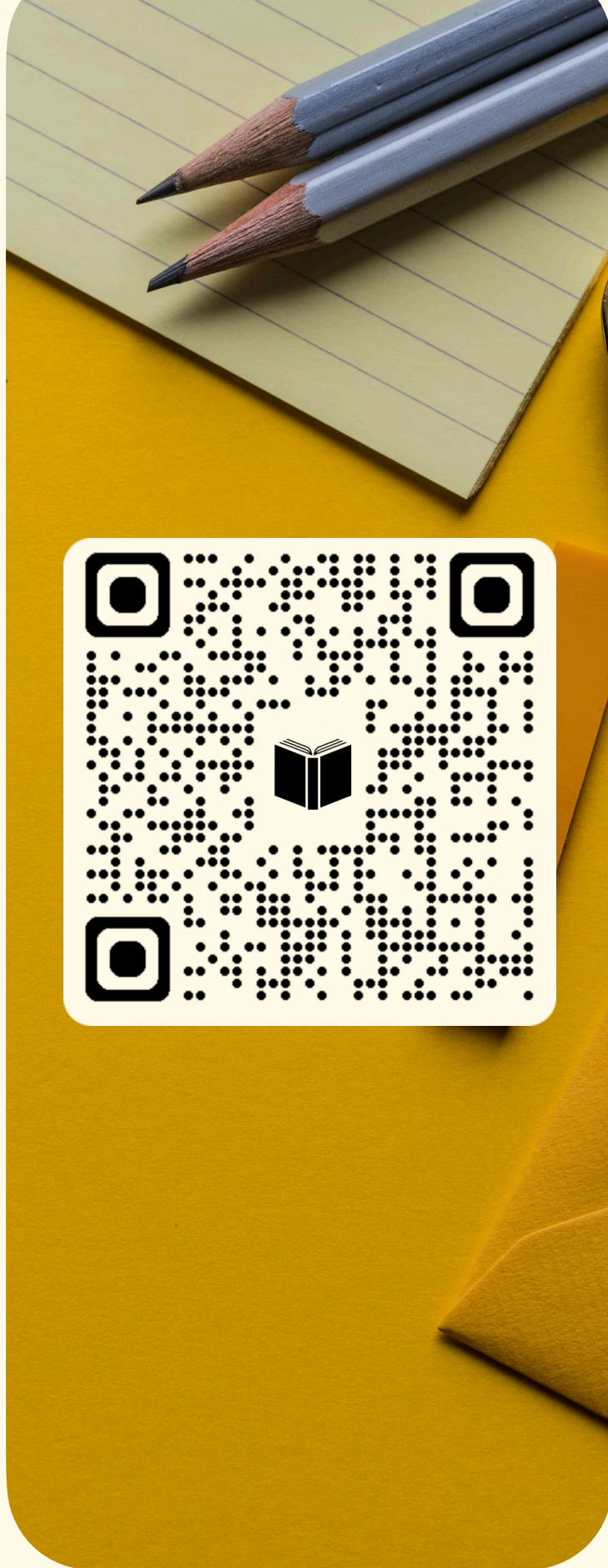
- Talks
- Books
- Articles
- Templates



It does gets messier.  
It does gets slower.

But also more  
impactful—and  
more exciting.





Thank you!