



Three Illusions in Software Delivery

Joel Tosi

https://signalsandlevers.com/ProductTank_DSM

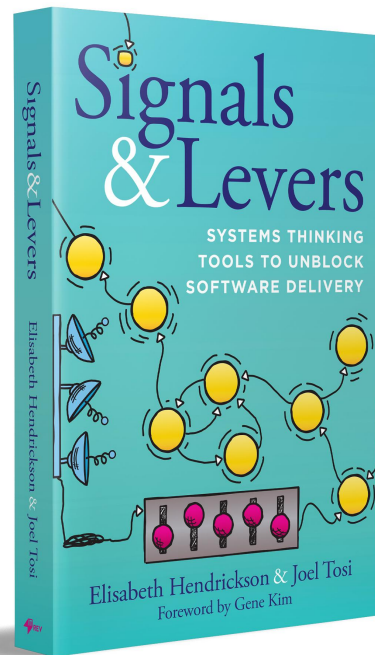
About Us



Joel Tosi



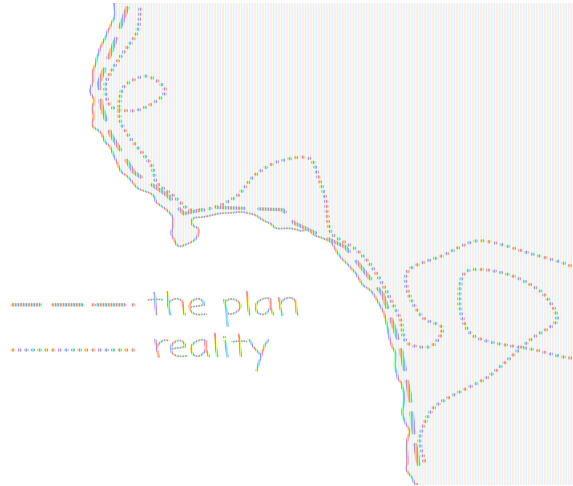
Elisabeth Hendrickson



Illusions...

...of Predictability

Why Are Estimates So Hard?



How long would it take to hike
the coast from San Francisco
to Newport Beach, California?

“It is in the doing of the
work that we discover the
work that we must do.

Doing exposes reality.”

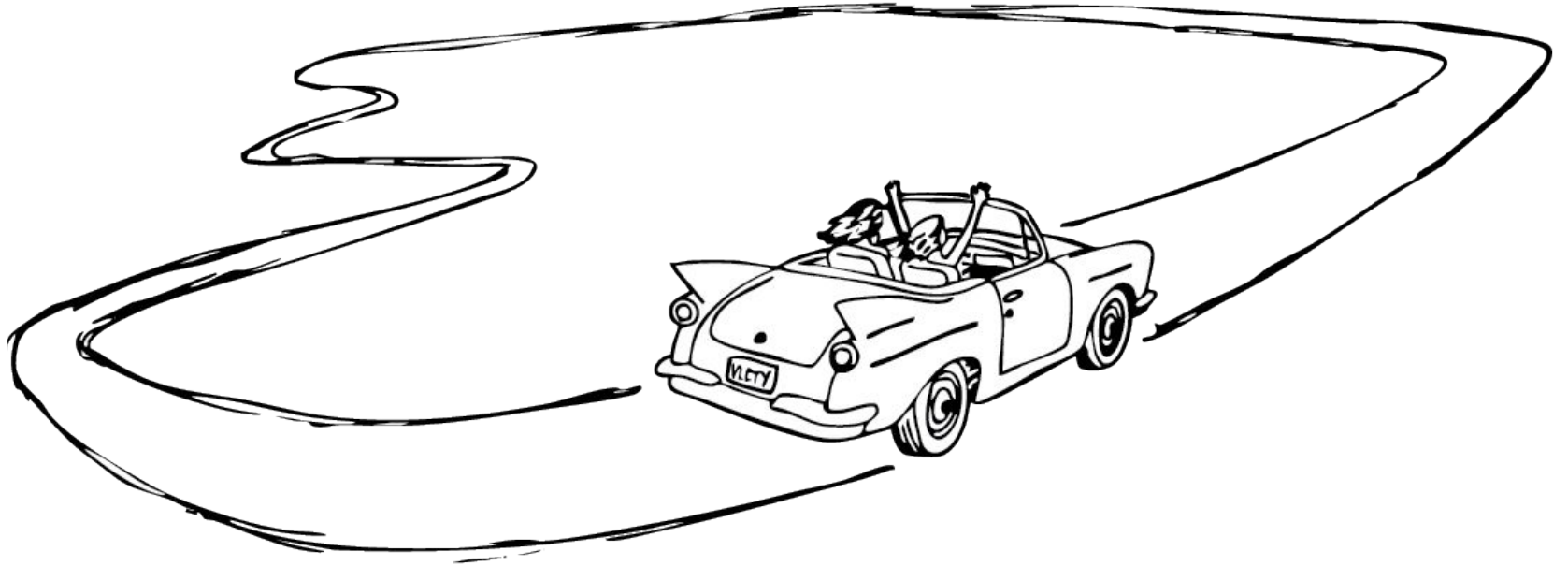
– *Woody Zuill*



...of Progress

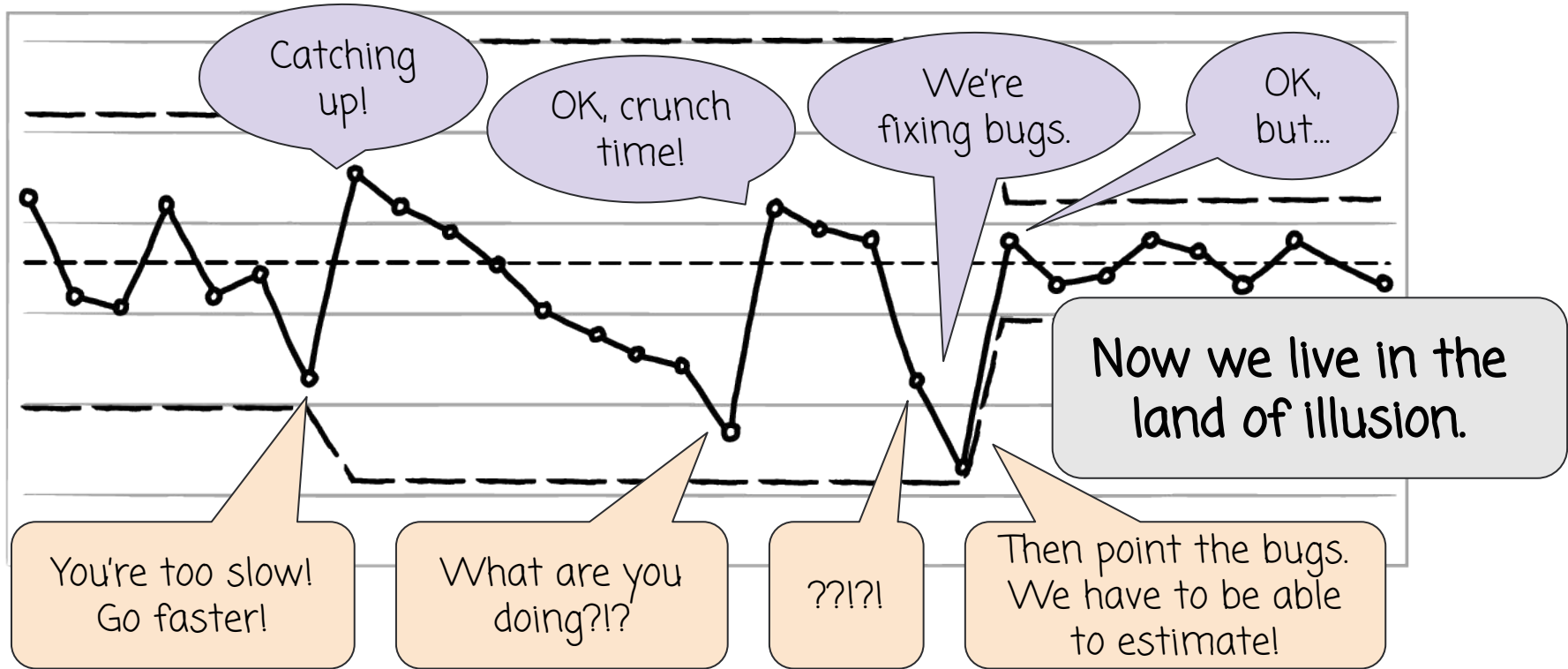


Don't Confuse Activity for Progress



...of Control

Project Pressures



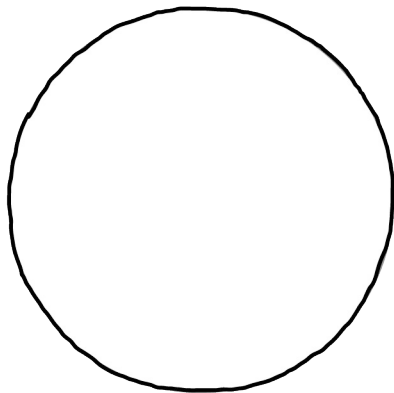
It may look like a crisis,
but it's only the end of an illusion.

Jerry Weinberg, Secrets of Consulting

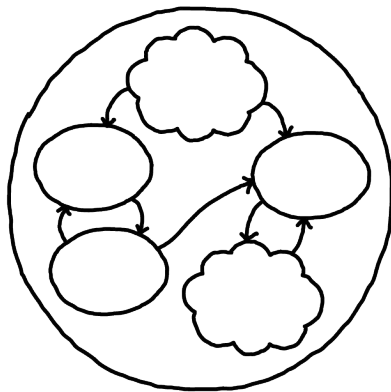
Without Systems Thinking, Best Intentions Lead To Illusions

About Systems...

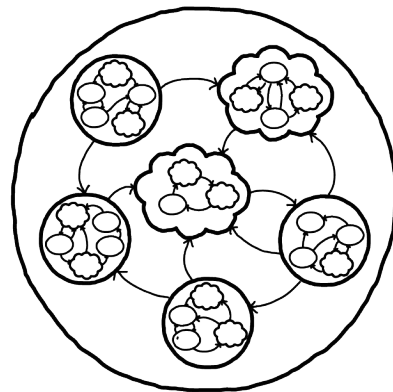
A **system** is a set of interrelated parts that does something. It has these properties:



the whole is
indivisible



parts are
interdependent



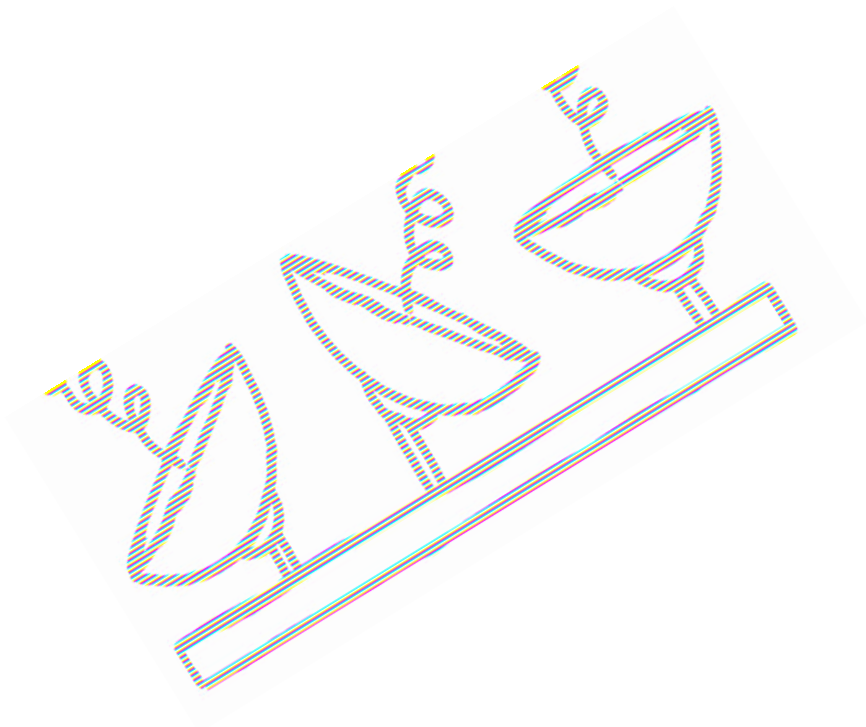
systems are
fractal

Signals

A **signal** is an observable characteristic or attribute of the system that tells you something about the way the system works.

Signals can be quantitative (lead time, cycle time, velocity, defect counts) or qualitative (quality, morale).

You are surrounded by signals.



Common Signals from Illusions

'It's done but...'

Activity Focus

Powerpoint 'Demos'

Shipping vs Impacting

'Estimate Better'

Read The Docs

Tampering

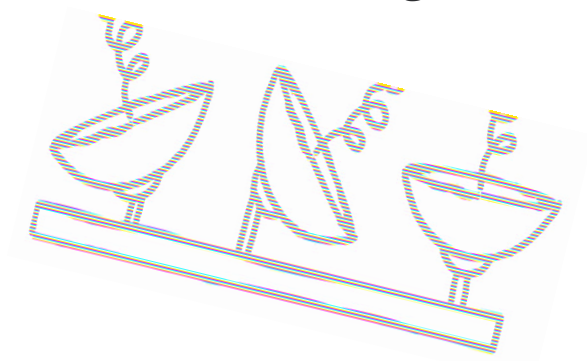
Re-defining

Meetings!

Review Boards

Freezes

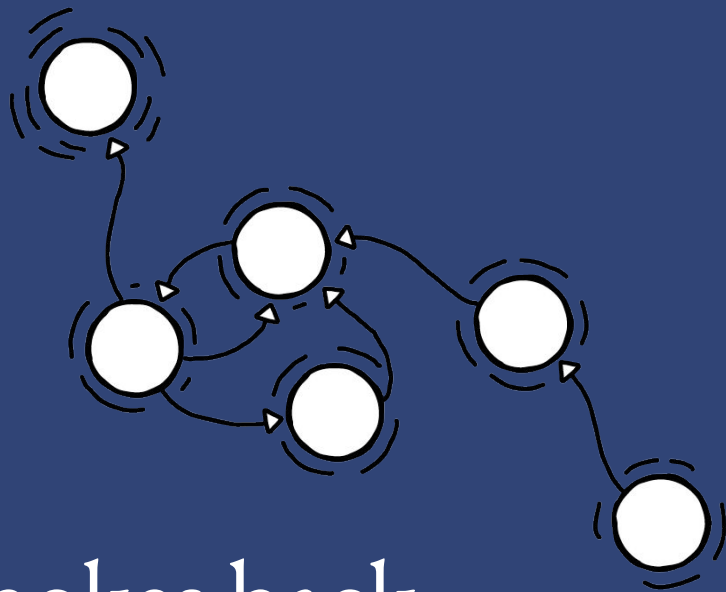
Best Practices



The Rule of Systems

You poke the system...

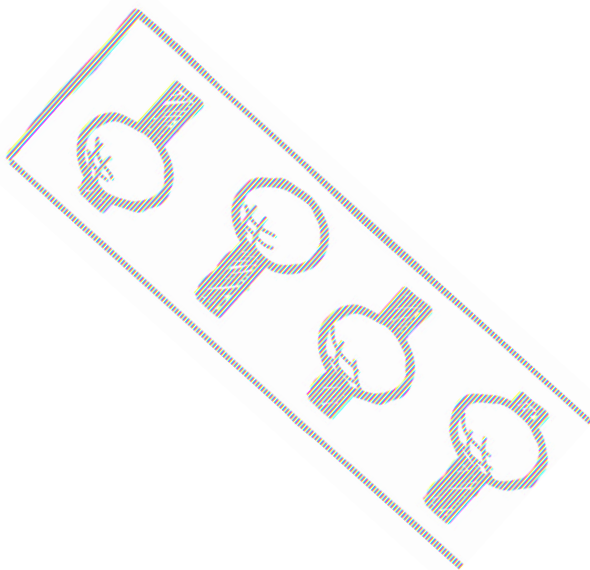
...and the system pokes back.



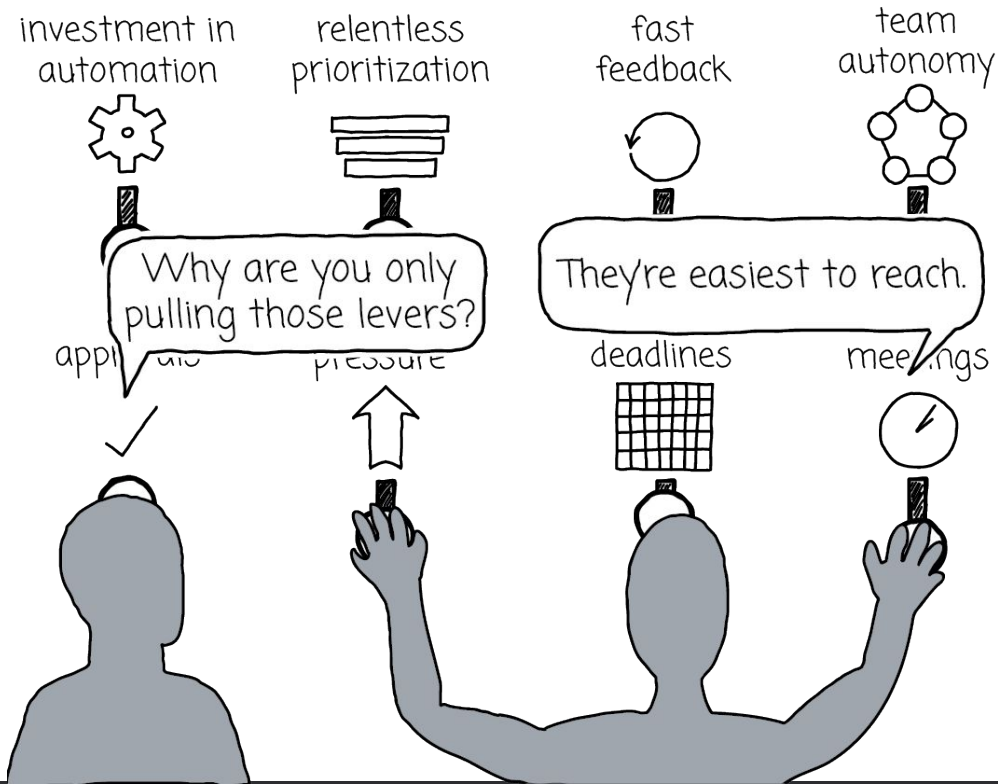
Levers

A **lever** is a choice that causes a shift in the system.

If you do something and the system does not appear to change at all, either you're not looking at the right signals, or the choice you made wasn't actually a lever.



Why Best Intentions Backfire

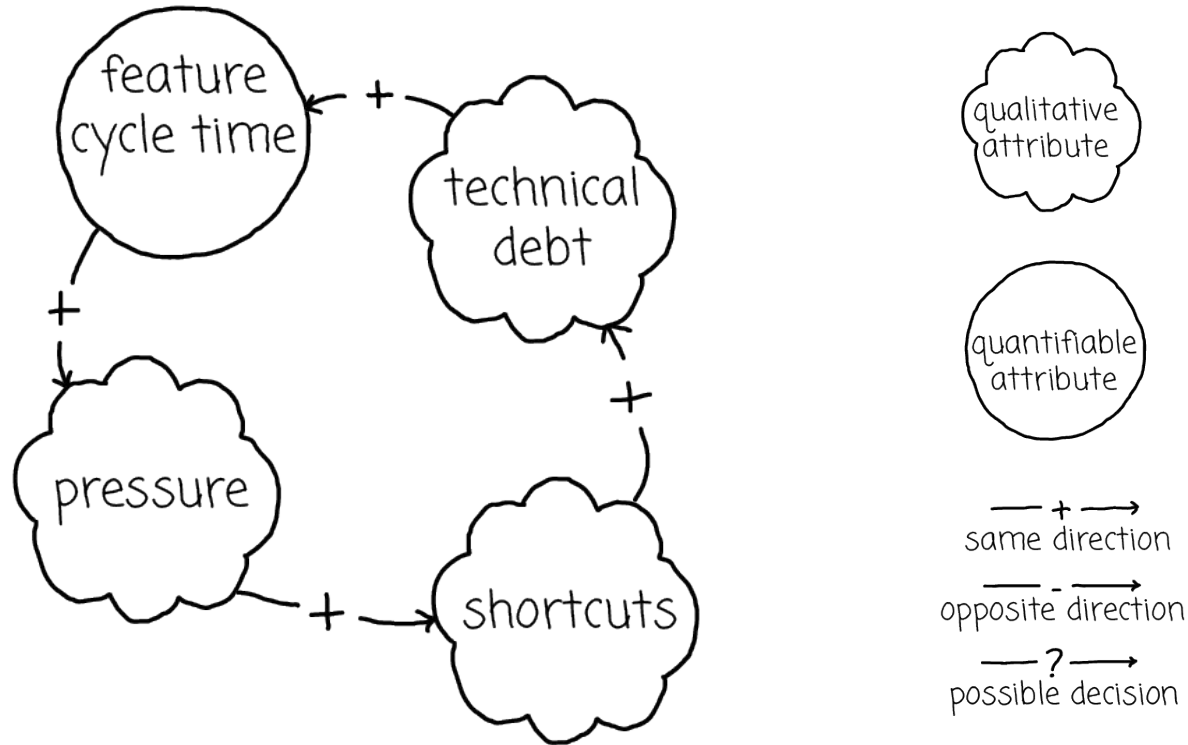


Many of the levers that look like they'll control outcomes just shift risk around
...or, worse, hide it.

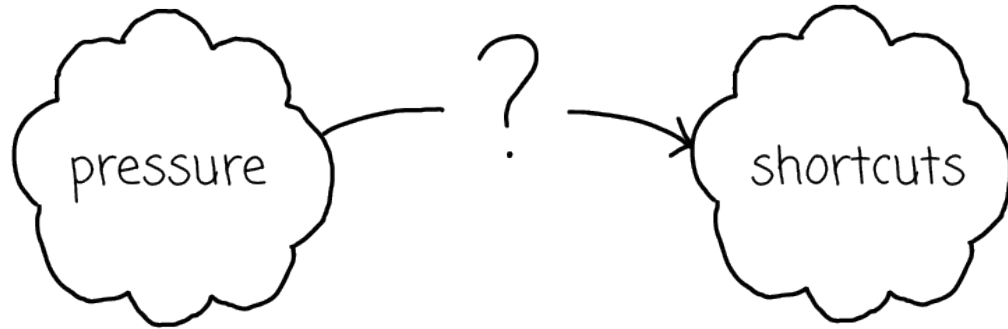
How to Intervene

See The System

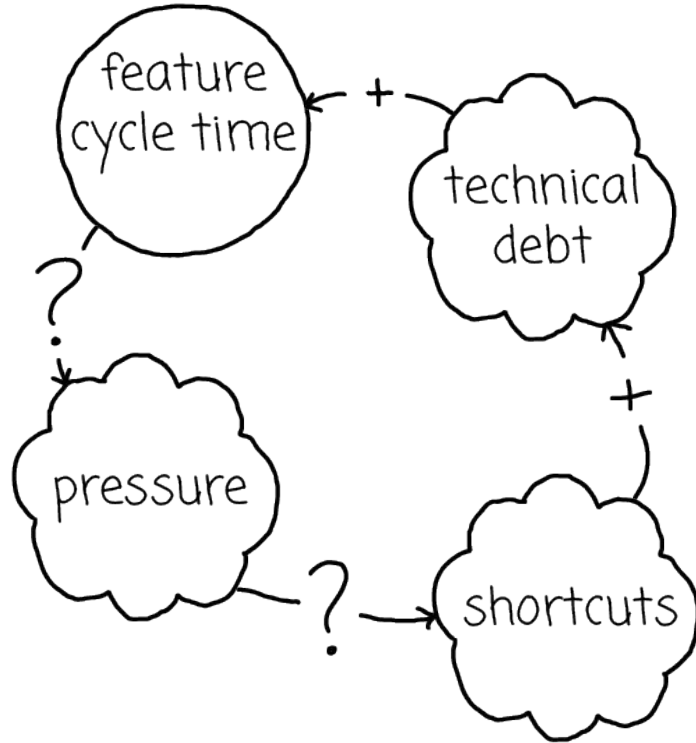
Seeing Systemic Influences with Causal Models



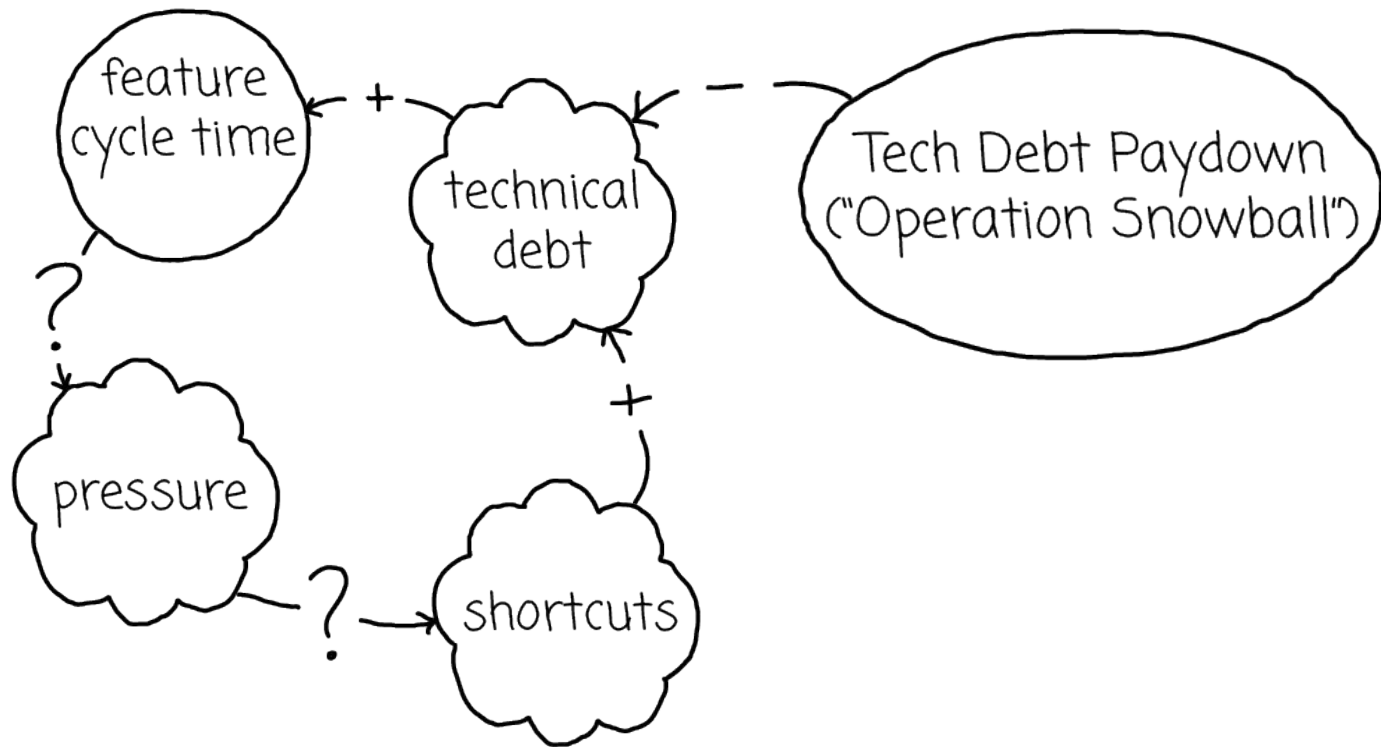
Lever 1: Identify Where You Have a Choice...



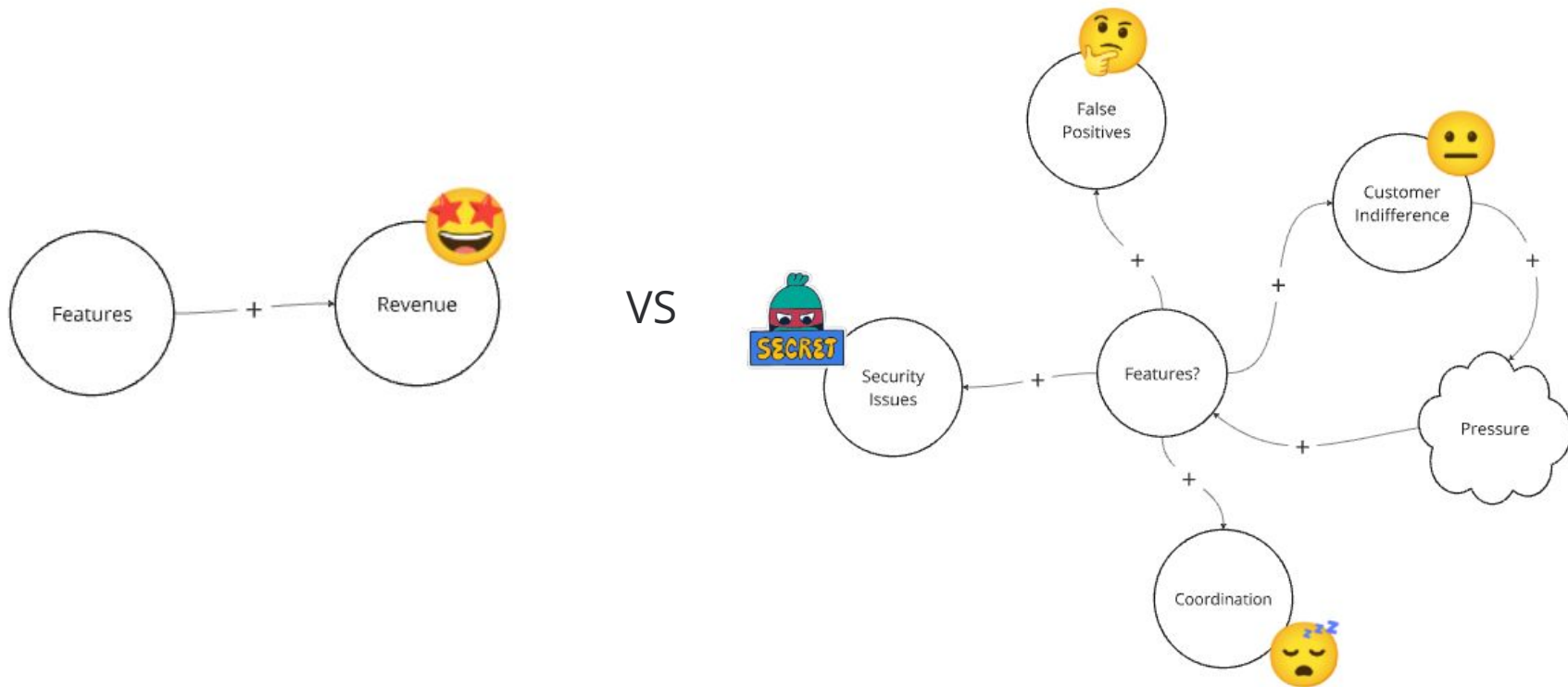
...Then Make Different Choices



Lever 2: Add a Counterbalancing Influence



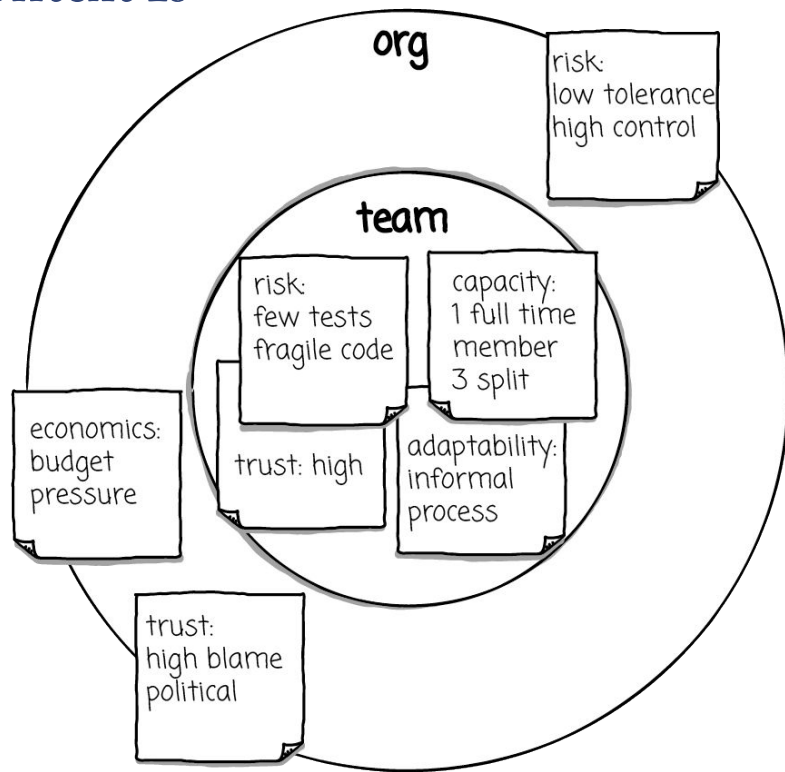
What Happens When You Ship Faster Than You Learn?



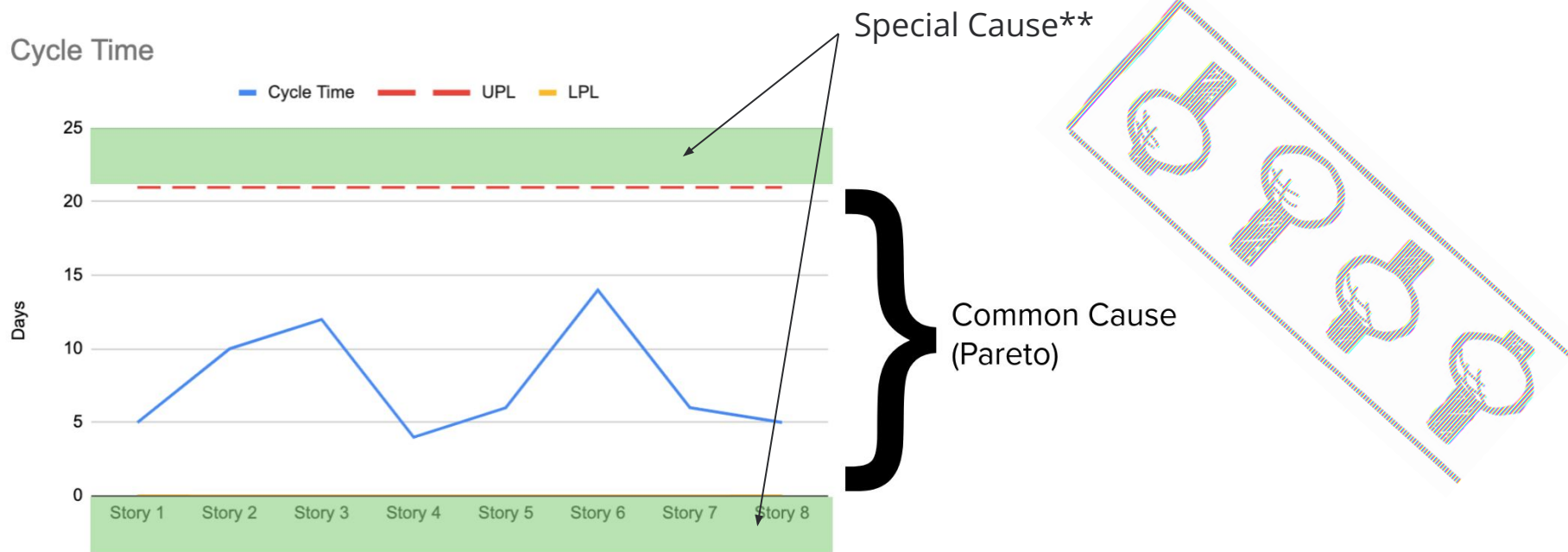
Understand Context and Variability

Your Problems Are Not Unique, Your Context Is

- Capacity
- Risk
- Execution
- Adaptability
- Trust
- Economics

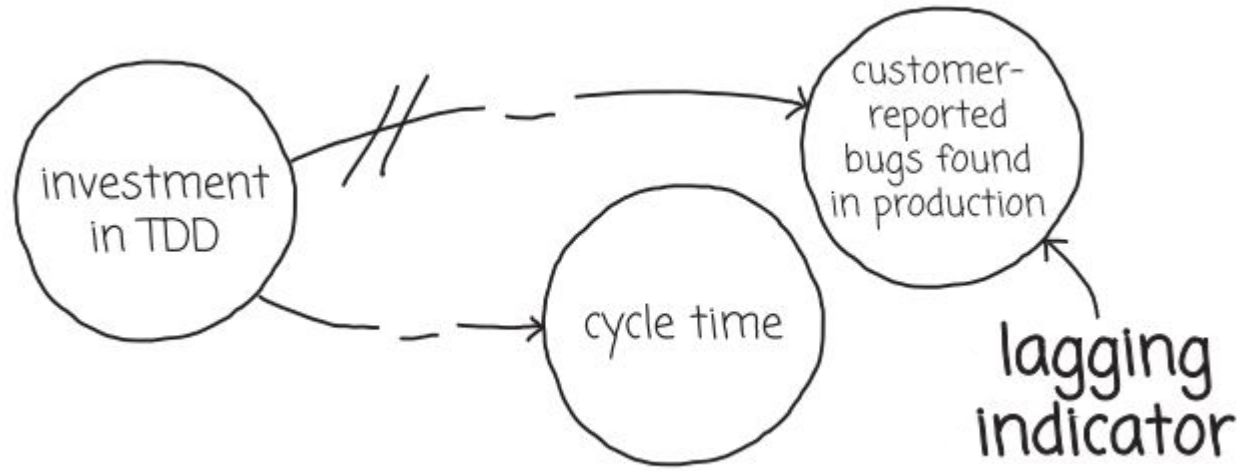


How Does Variability Affect Your Decision-Making?

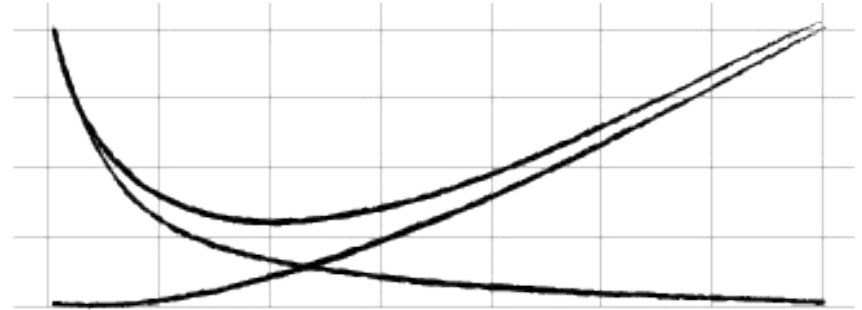
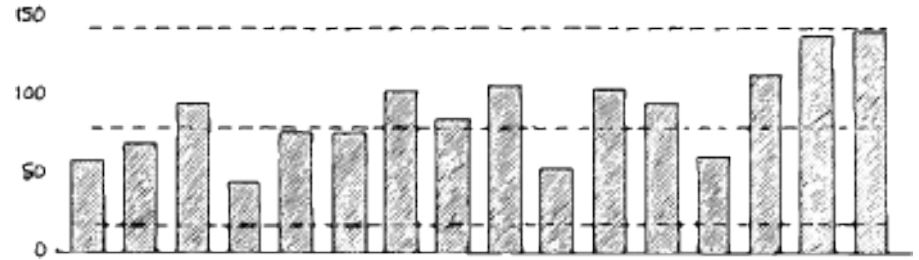
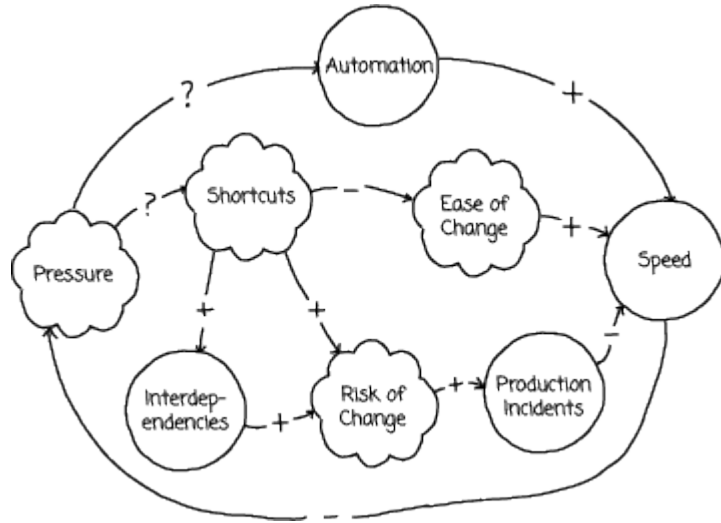


Learn Quicker

Use Causal Models To Find Signal Earlier



Use Systems Thinking Collectively



Act where the pain is caused...

...not where it is observed.

What Questions Do You Have?

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Thank You!

hello@signalsandlevers.com

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