

Rethinking How Organizations Change

Joel Tosi

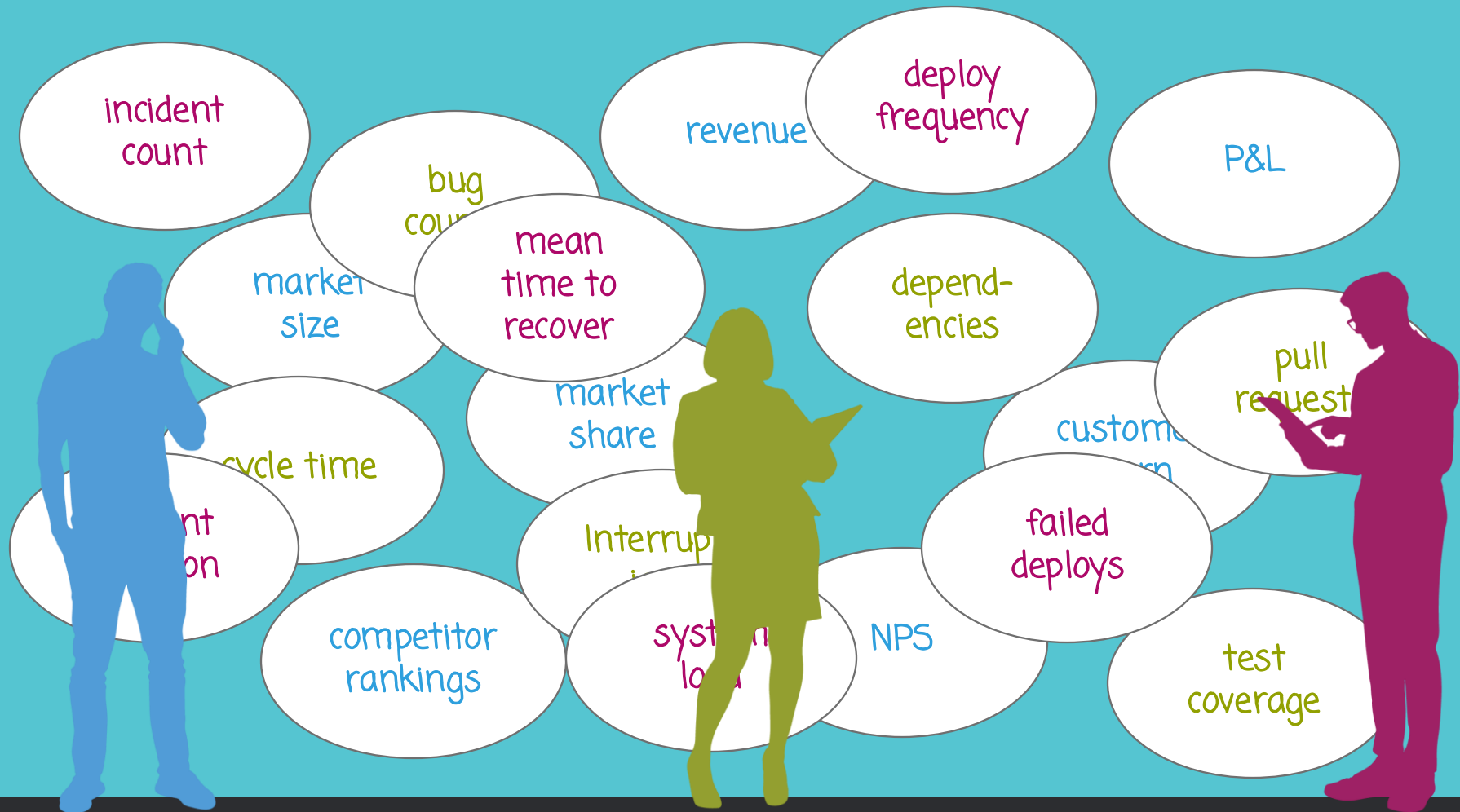


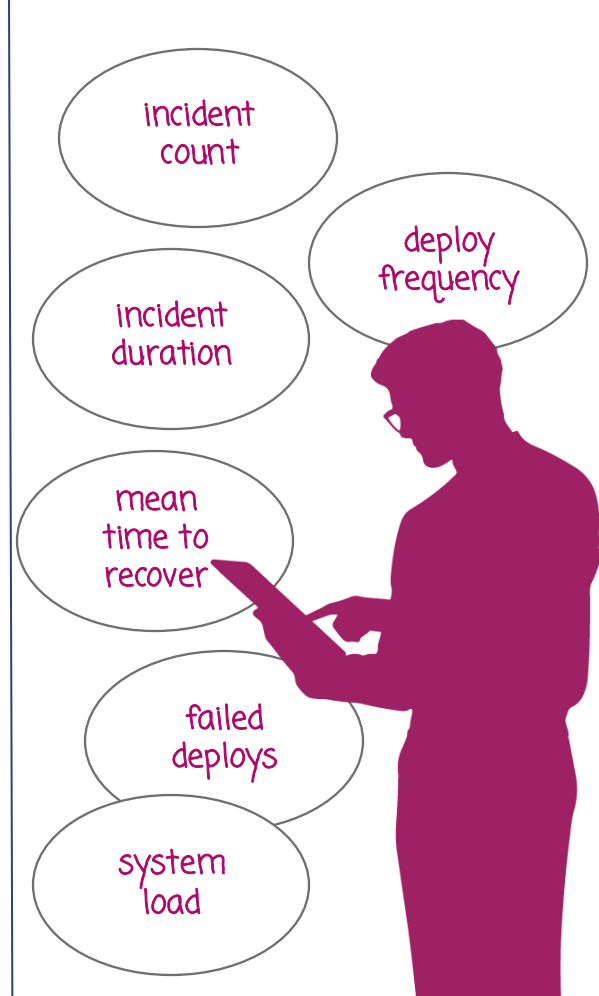
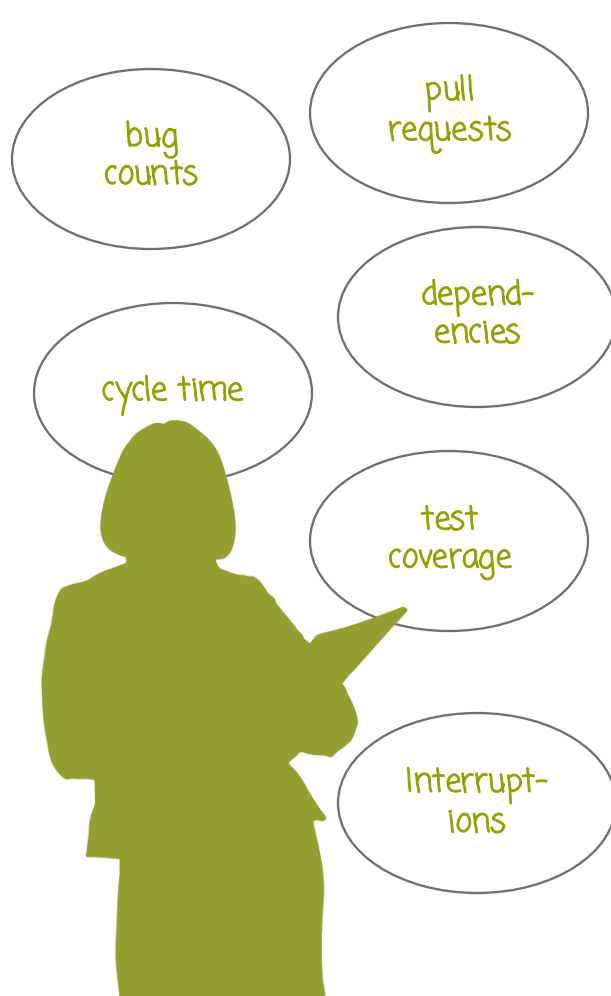
Elisabeth
Hendrickson

**“We are
AWESOME at
change.”**

No One. Ever.

seeing

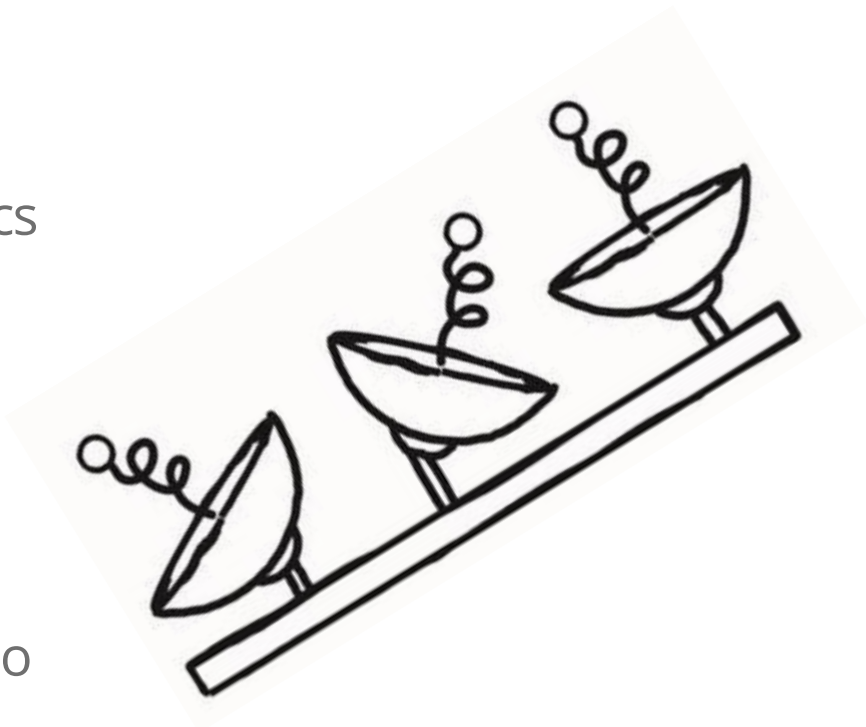




Signals

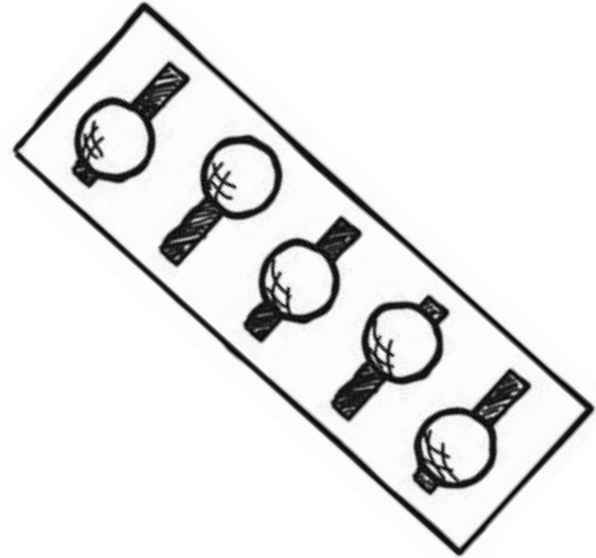
Signals are observable characteristics or attributes of the system that tell you something about the way the system works.

Noise is irrelevant, misleading, or distracting data with no correlation to outcomes.



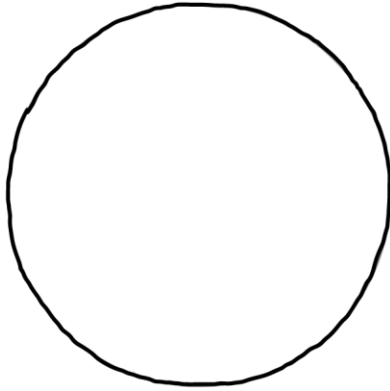
Levers

Levers are choices or decisions you can make to cause a shift in the system.

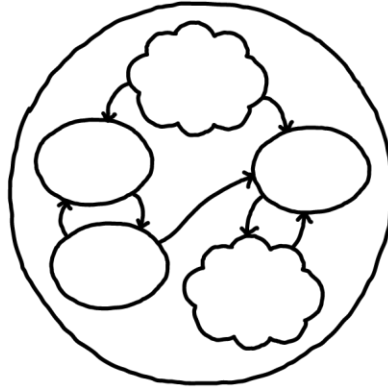


About Systems...

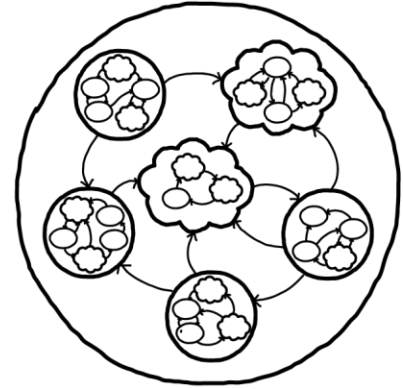
A **system** is a set of interrelated parts that does something. It has these properties:



the whole is
indivisible

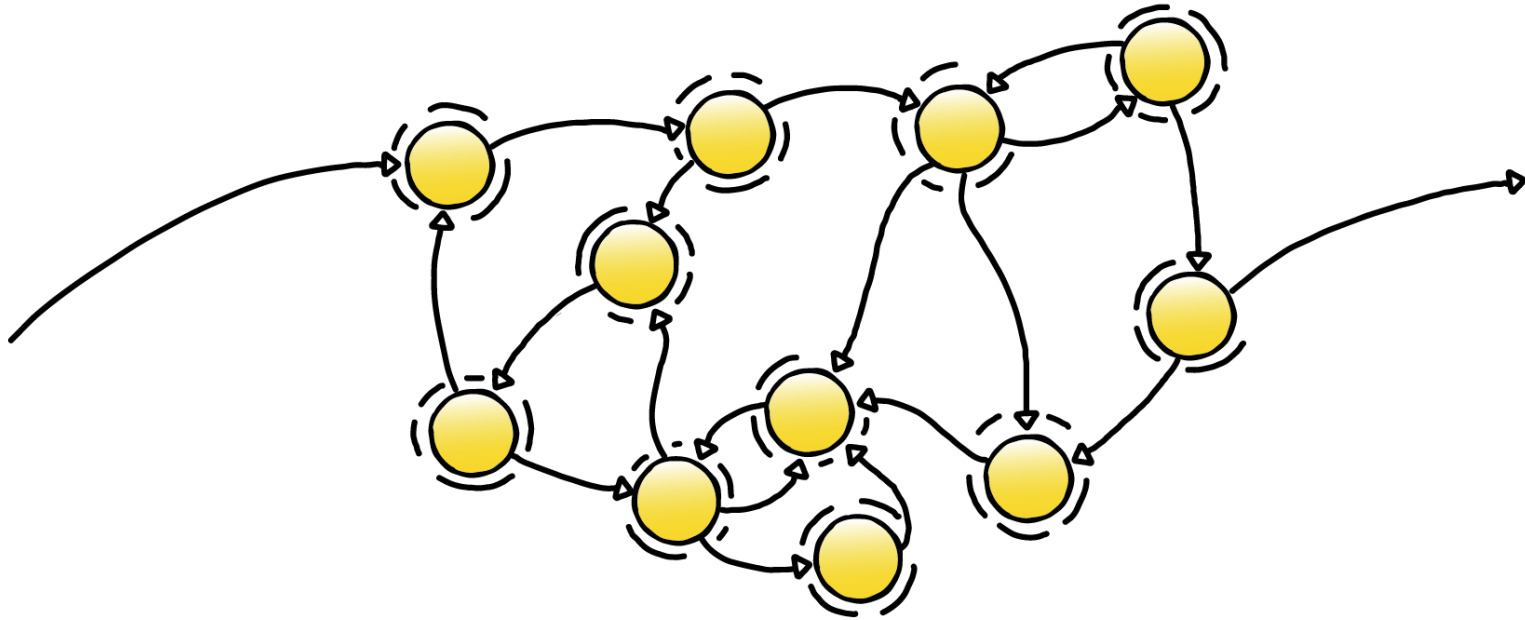


parts are
interdependent



systems are
fractal

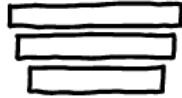
Software Delivery is an Adaptive Sociotechnical System



investment in
automation



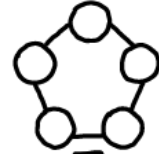
relentless
prioritization



fast
feedback



team
autonomy



Why are you only
pulling those levers?

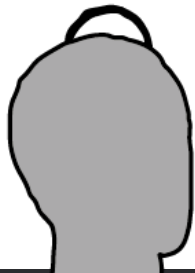
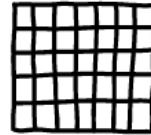
applaud

pressure

They're easiest to reach.

deadlines

meetings

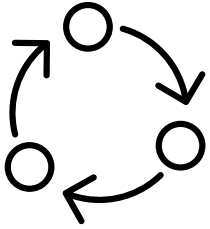


rethink change

two types of levers

Policy Culture

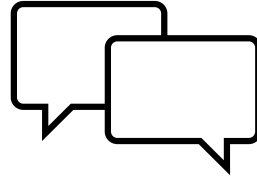
Signals of Culture



rituals



stories



language



humor

**feed what you
want to grow**



Flying Buttresses

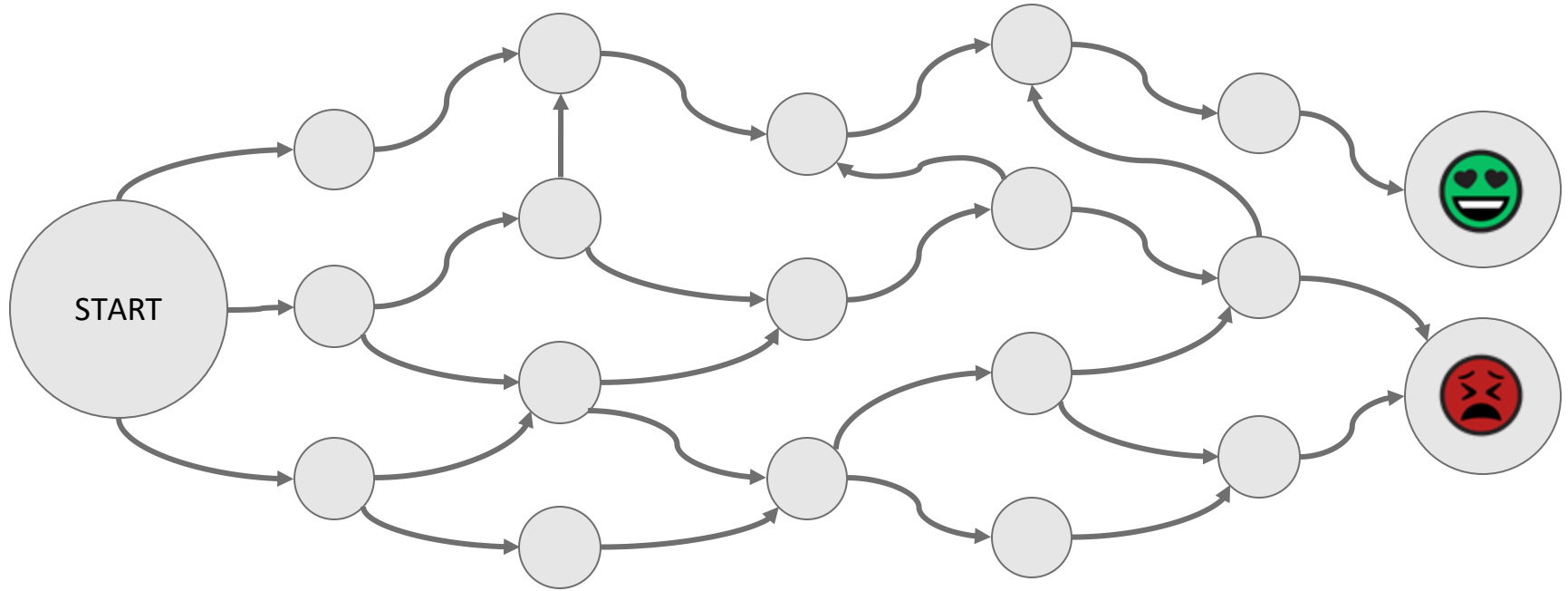


A **flying buttress** is a process or policy designed to shore up another process or policy that can't hold on its own. Examples:

- Pre- pre- meetings
- A formal expediting process to bypass process overhead
- Overstandardization

context

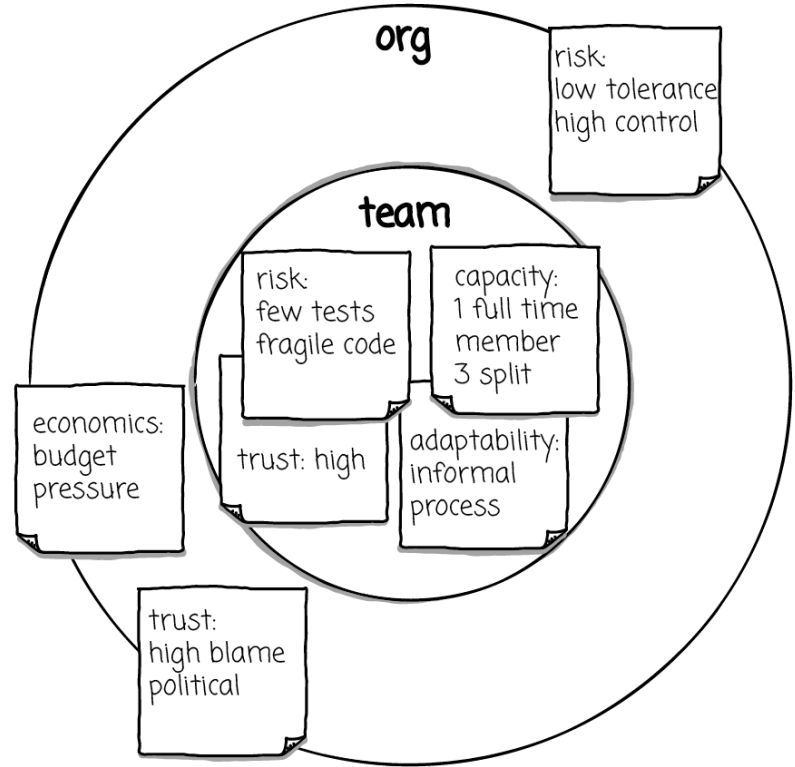
Context is the cumulative effect of previous decisions



Describe Your Context in Concrete Terms

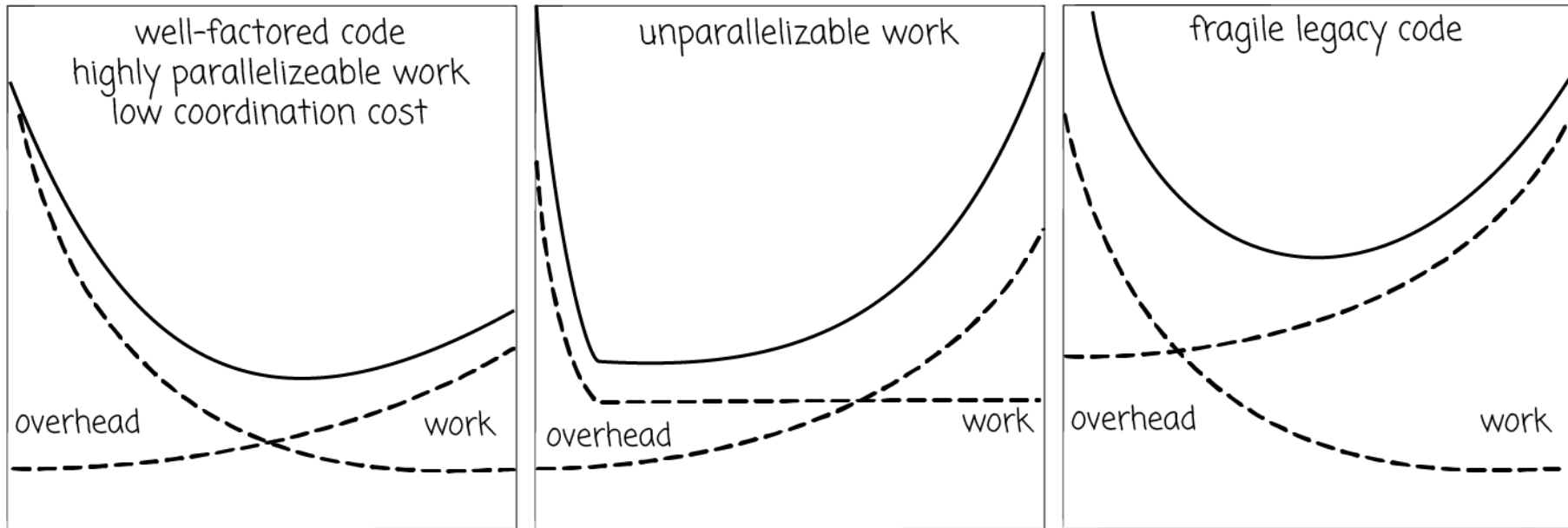
Dimensions of context:

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



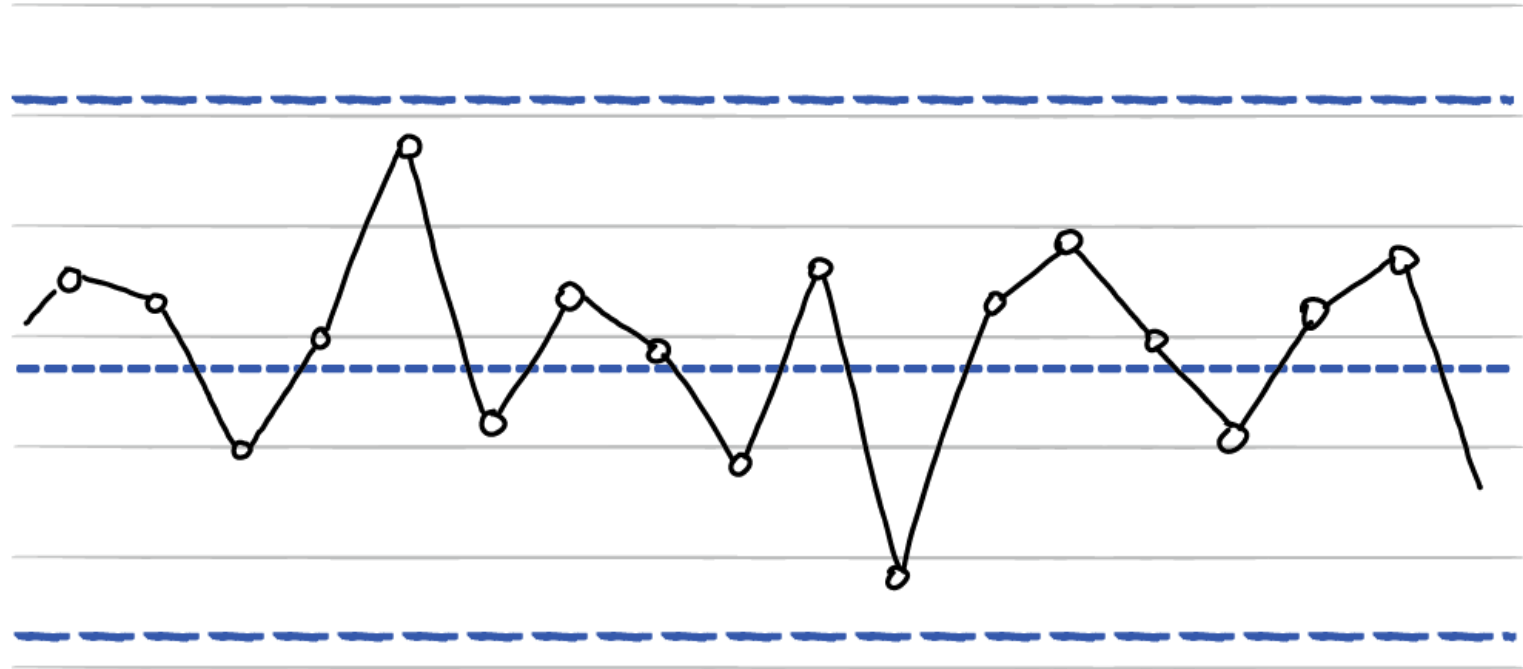
Your Problems Are Not Unique, Your Context Is

Variations on the Mythical Man Month curve depending on context:

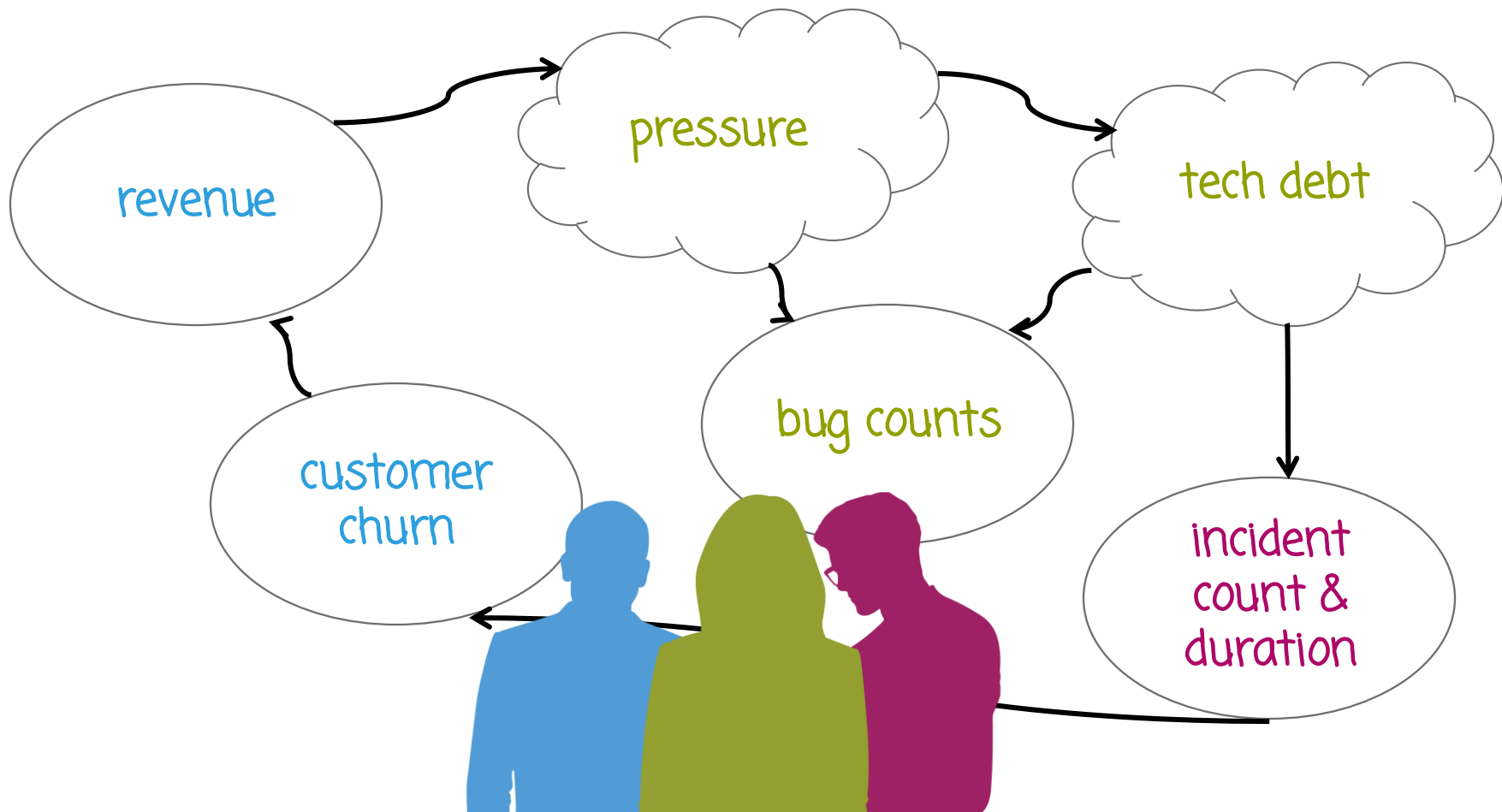


avoid
tampering

Overreacting

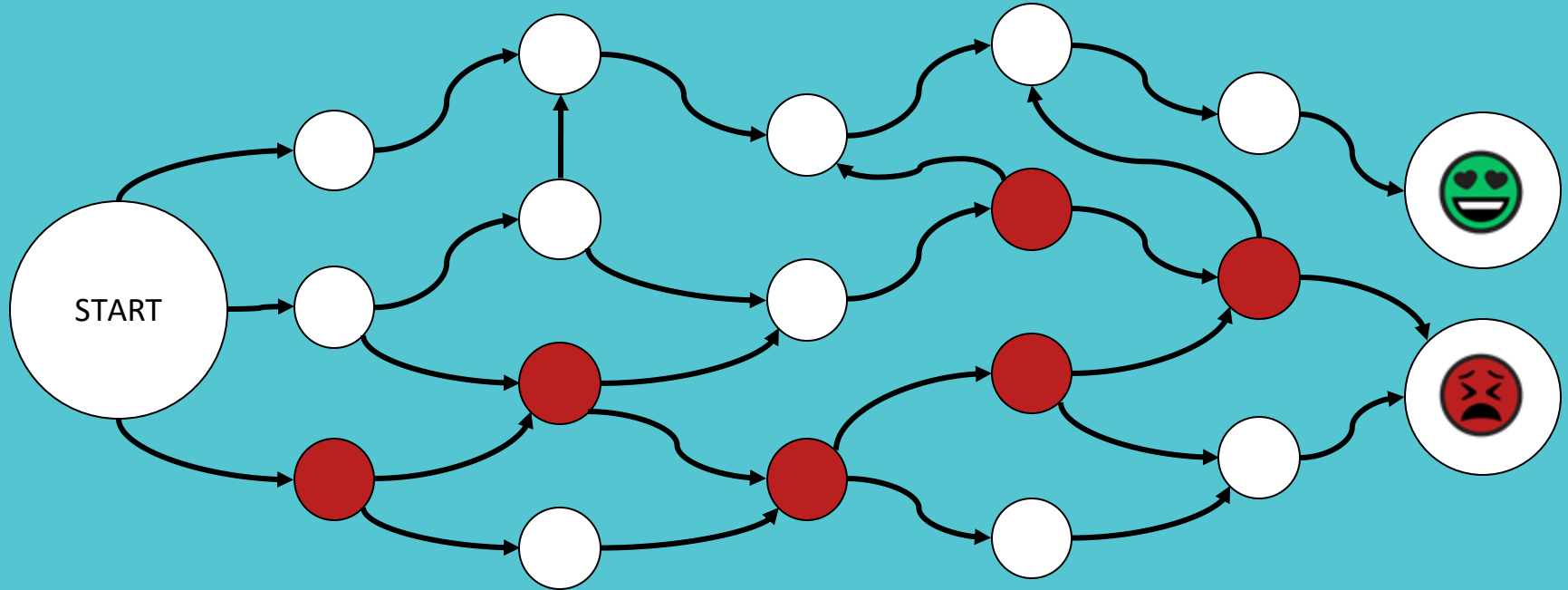


land the
plane



Act Where Pain is Caused

Not Where It Is Observed



your context is
constantly changing

Right +  = Wrong

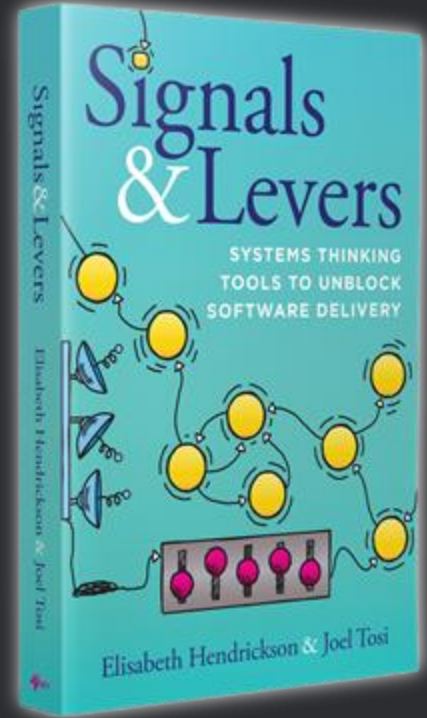
Wrong +  = Right

your challenge
this week

Thank you!

Rethinking How Organizations Change

slides +
resources



*coming Sept 2026
from IT Revolution*