The Making of a Decision



Andrea Magnorsky



goto;

Copenhagen - September 2026



MODEL BRIDGE

SOFTWARE & SYSTEMS

Consulting | Fractional Architecture | Trainning

About Andrea

Software Architect, Programmer* and Creator of Bytesize Architecture Sessions

- Programming professionally since 2001
- Co-founded PC & Console Games Company in Ireland
- Worked at startup and multinationals
- Contractor and Consulting since 2018
  - E-Commerce
  - Broadcasting media
  - Finance
- Moved to NZ in 2024

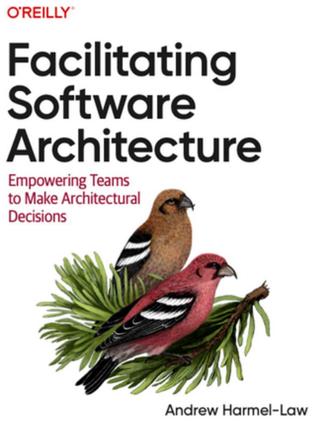
Programmer vs Developer https://einarwh.wordpress.com/2021/02/11/programmer-vs-developer/

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How many times have significant decisions happened exactly like you expected?

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Architectural Decisions



Facilitating Software Architecture
Andrew Harmel-Law

"... That's a lot of decisions, all piled up, one on top of the other, each an ossified record of the power structures and feedback loops (or lack of them) that got it there."

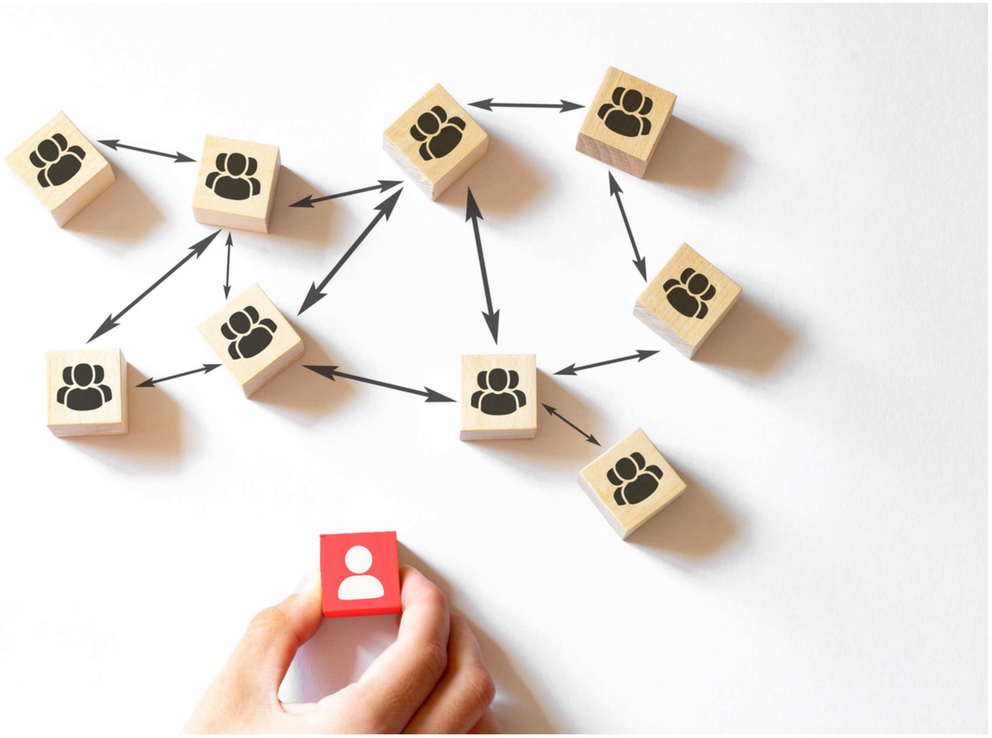
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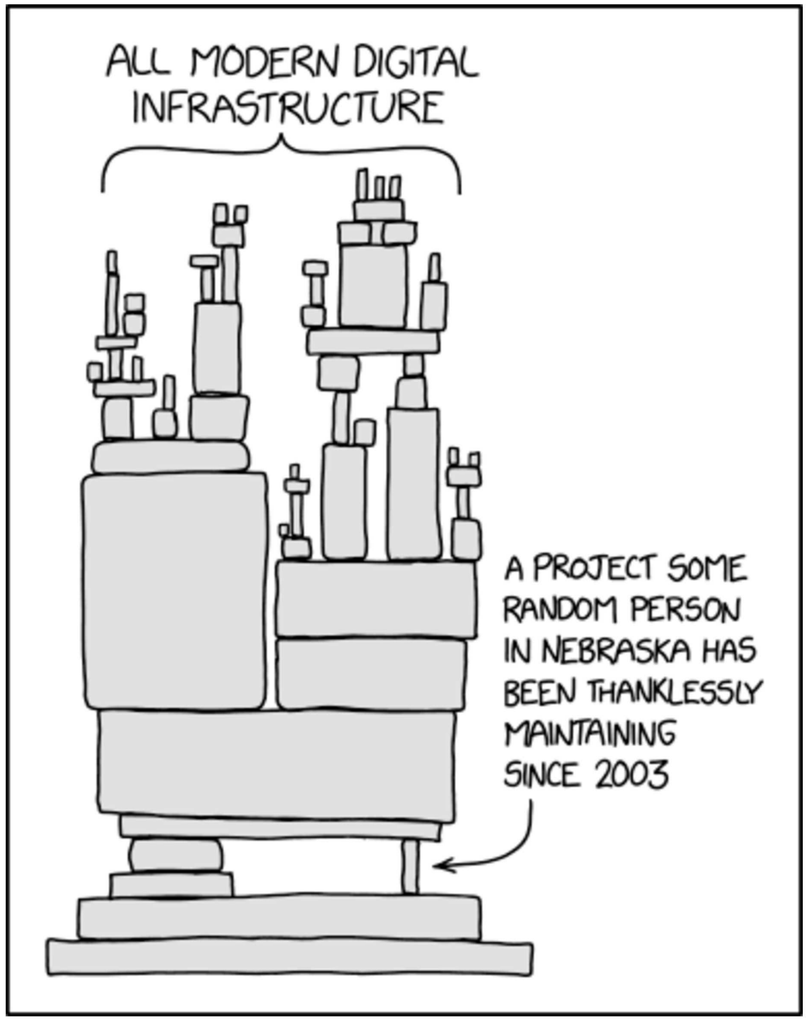
Example Scenarios

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Growth into new territories via **acquisitions** that need to be integrated by <a very near date>



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https://xkcd.com/2347/

Replacement of a business critical third party

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Build fast (and when you break things you are on-call) [oh BTW your performance review depends on this]

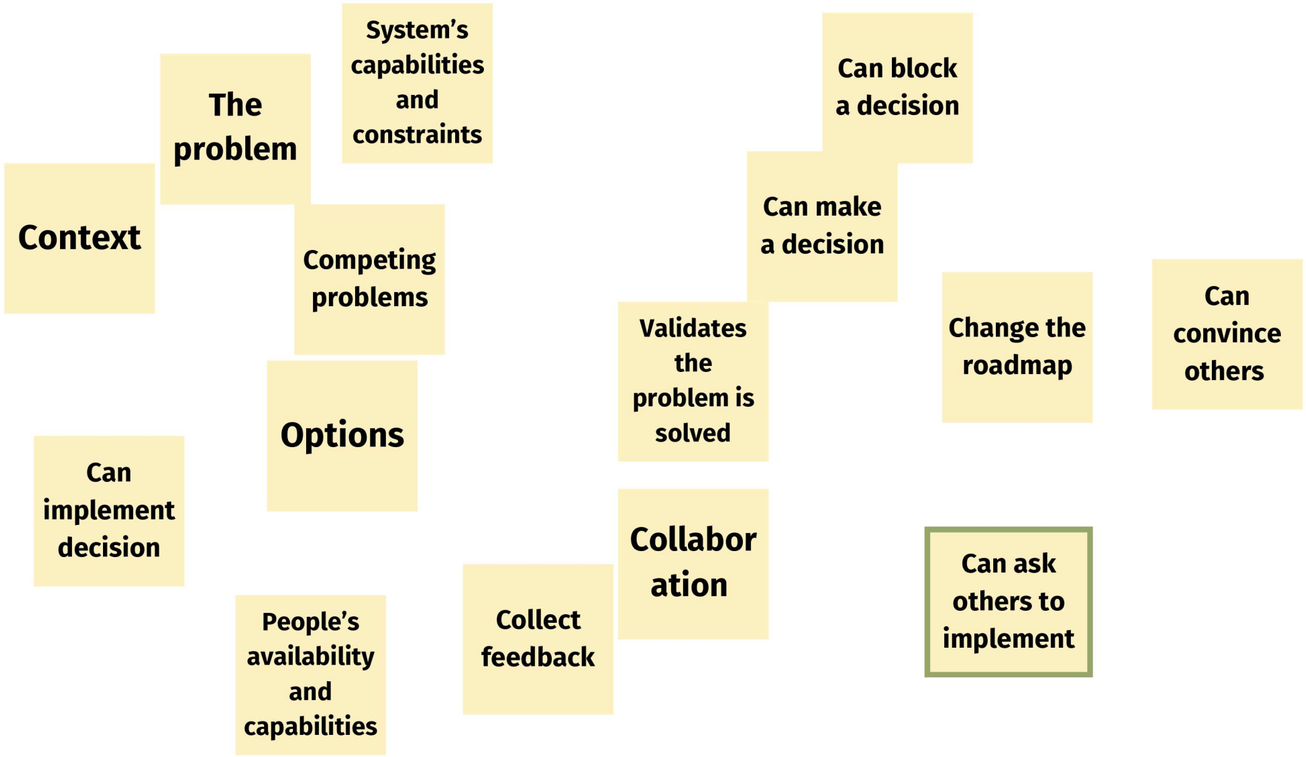
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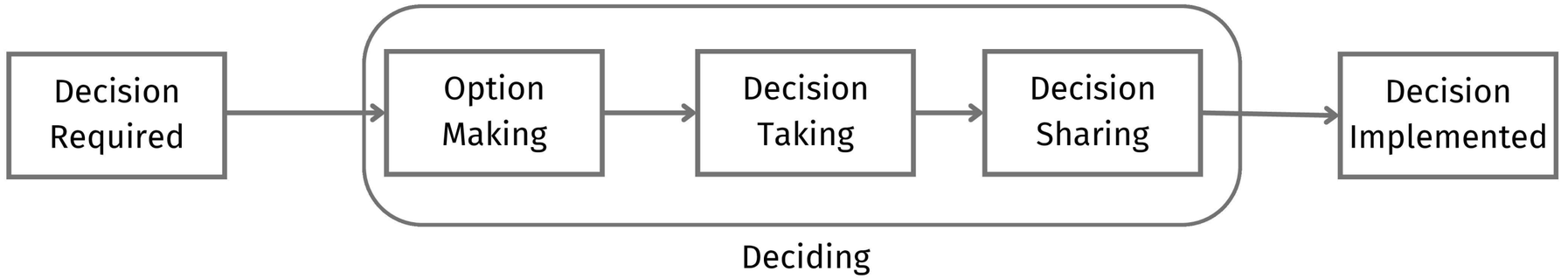


Anatomy of a Decision

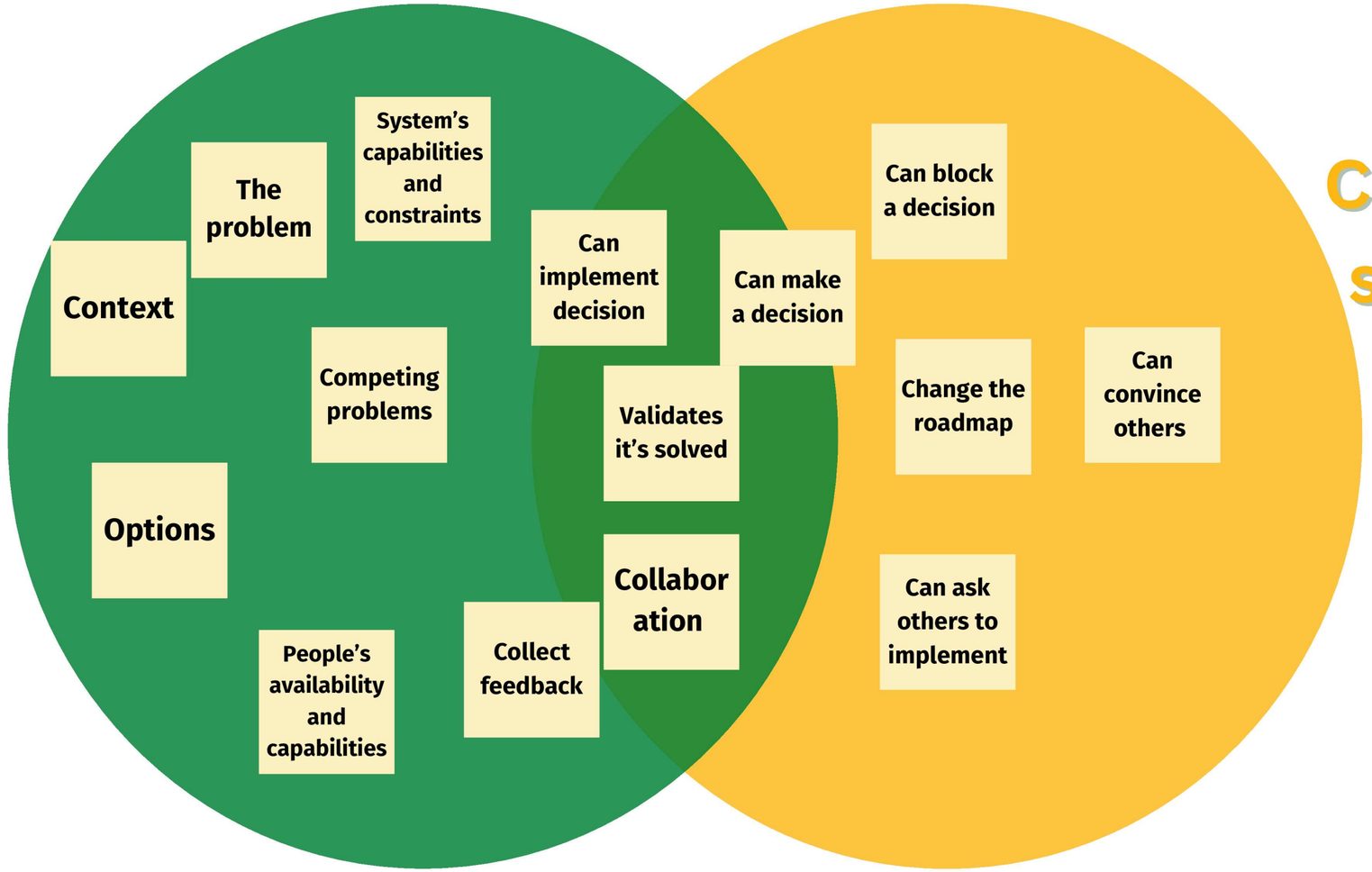
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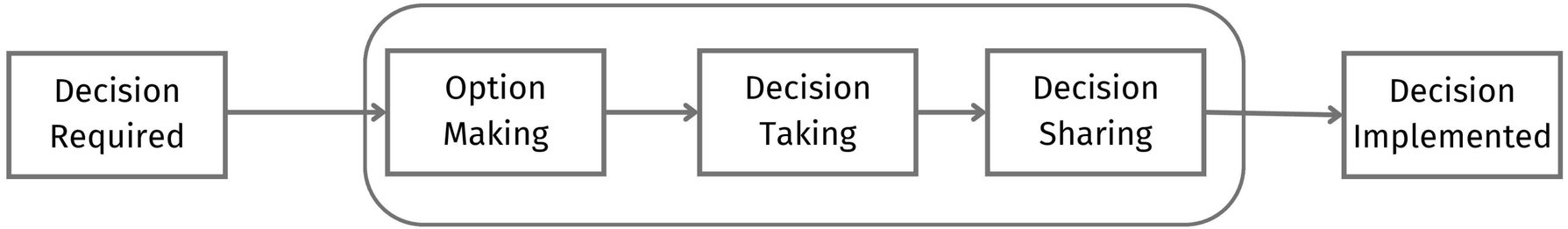
“Ingredients” of a decision



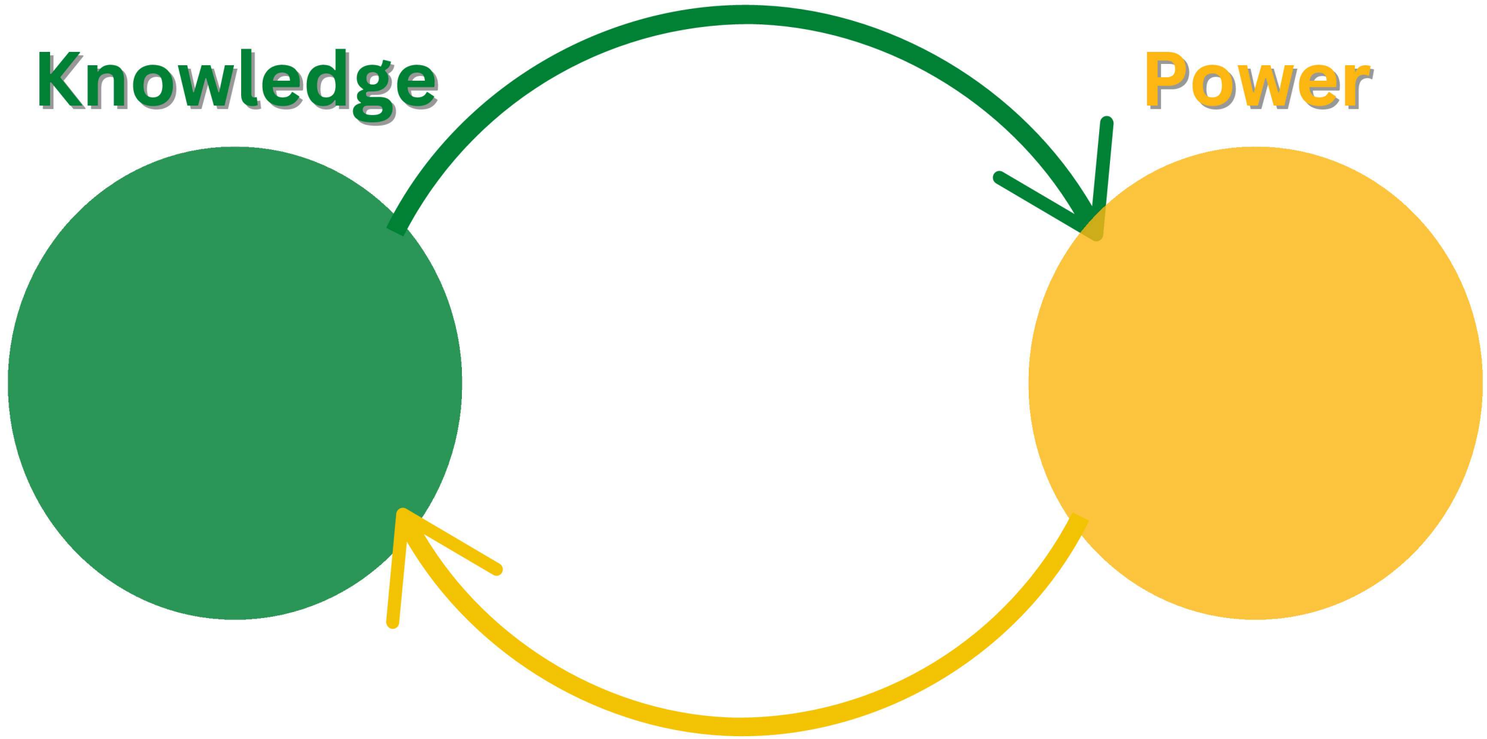


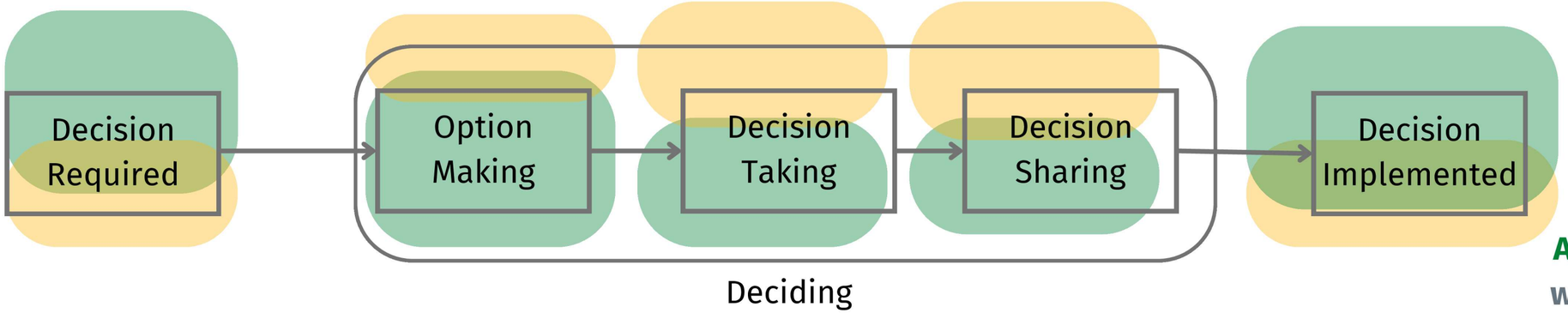
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Power

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Power-With



Mary Parker Follett
(1868-1933)

"Power might be defined as simply the ability to make things happen, to be a **causal** agent, to initiate change."

Highly recommended



Dynamic Administration: The Collected Papers of Mary Parker Follett

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Power-Over

“Power is the ability to make others do as you would have them do.”

Source: https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminist-power/

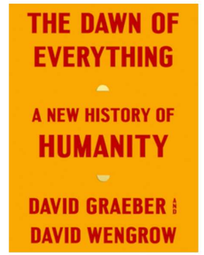
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Sources Of Power

Authority

Charisma

Access to Knowledge



The Dawn of Everything
D. Graeber and D. Wengrow



Charisma in Everyday Life: Conceptualization and Validation of the General Charisma Inventory

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Laws Of Power

Dynamic

Like water

Power begets more power



Related read

Pedagogy of the Oppressed
Paulo Freire

Source: How to understand power - Eirc Liu

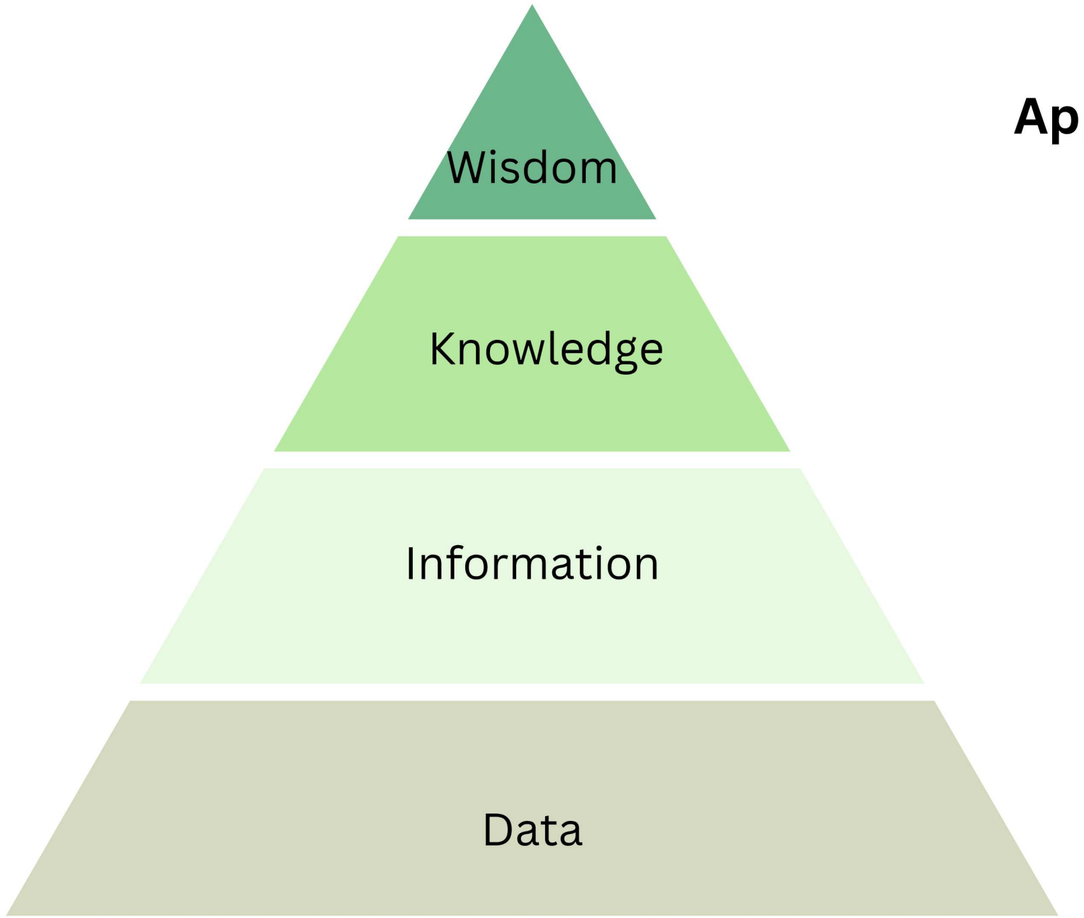
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Knowledge

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DIKW Pyramid



Application of Knowledge over time

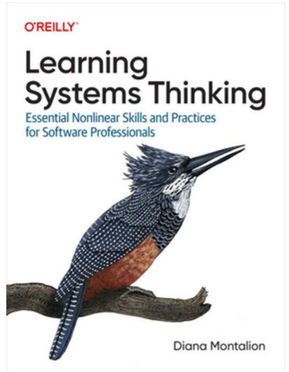
Information with experience

Data with Context

Facts

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Wisdom



Learning Systems Thinking
Diana Montalion

"Our ability to discover true leverage points in the systems we inhabit and push them in a valuable direction."

Diana Montalion

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“Knowledge workers are workers whose main capital is knowledge. These are workers whose job is to ‘think for a living’”

Source: Thinking For A Living: How to Get Better Performance and Results From Knowledge Workers. Davenport, Thomas H. (2005).

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Knowledge Stock & Flow



...each pile represents a person's knowledge and the lines represent sharing

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“Knowledge transfer among employees is thought to be a **crucial determinant** of an organisation’s capacity to utilise new knowledge and **innovate**.”

Liao et al., 2007

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Thus, again, the program text and its documentation has proved insufficient as a carrier of some of the most important design ideas.

•••

The conclusion seems inescapable that at least with certain kinds of large programs, the continued adaptation, modification, and correction of errors in them, is essentially dependent on a certain kind of knowledge possessed by a group of programmers who are closely and continuously connected with them.

Programming as Theory Building(1985) - Peter Naur

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What now?

Understanding generates options

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Decision Clarity and Transparency



Decision process
review & update



Architecture
Decision Records

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Decision review



Audience: Technical leadership (CTO, CPO, tech leads, HoE)

Questions

Think about the last month and how decisions were made

- Which roles can currently make which decisions? 5min on their own
- how have we made decisions over the last month? 5 min on their own
- 4Ls(Learned, Lacked, Loath, Love) Retro about the last month of decisions.

And then

- What do you need from a technical decision
- What do others (not your role) need from a technical decision

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Tools



Larger Groups or Organisations



Small Groups



Personal

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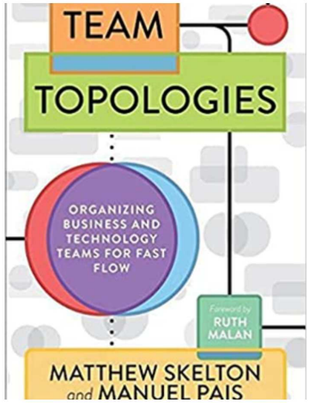
Larger Groups

Architecture Advice Process



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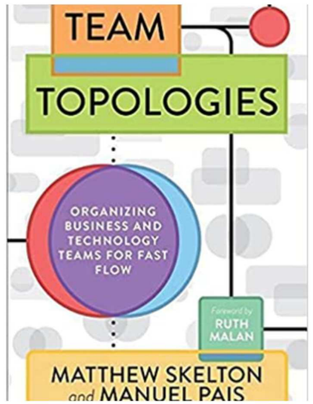
Team Topologies



Team Topologies
Matthew Skelton and Manuel Pais



Team Topologies



Team Topologies
Matthew Skelton and Manuel Pais

A model for describing the organisation of teams.

- Four forms of teams
- Three modes of team interactions

Healthy interactions that provide a steady flow of valuable software.

https://teamtopologies.com/

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Architecture Advice Process

Anyone can make a decision but before they do so they **must**:

- Seek advice from all affected parties **and**
- from people with expertise on the matter



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Architecture Decision Records



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Andrew Harmel-Law

Record significant architectural decisions in a format that is concise and based on an standardised template.

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ADR Template

ADR00X [Problem this addressed - solved by]

Date: e.g., Dec 22, 2025

Status: One of [DRAFT] / [PROPOSED] / [ACCEPTED] / [ADOPTED] / [SUPERSEDED] / [EXPIRED]

Author: [Author name]

Decision[A summary, a few lines.]

Context

[The context of your decision - the surrounding environment in which it was taken (including any constraints), the relevant steps which took you to this point, and the forces which made it necessary.]

Options Considered

Option 1 : [Option one liner]

[brief summary]

Consequences

Adopted because: [A benefit]

Adopted despite: [A drawback]

...

Option 2(SELECTED): [Selected option]

same format as Option 1

Option N: [OPTION]

same format as Option 1

Advice

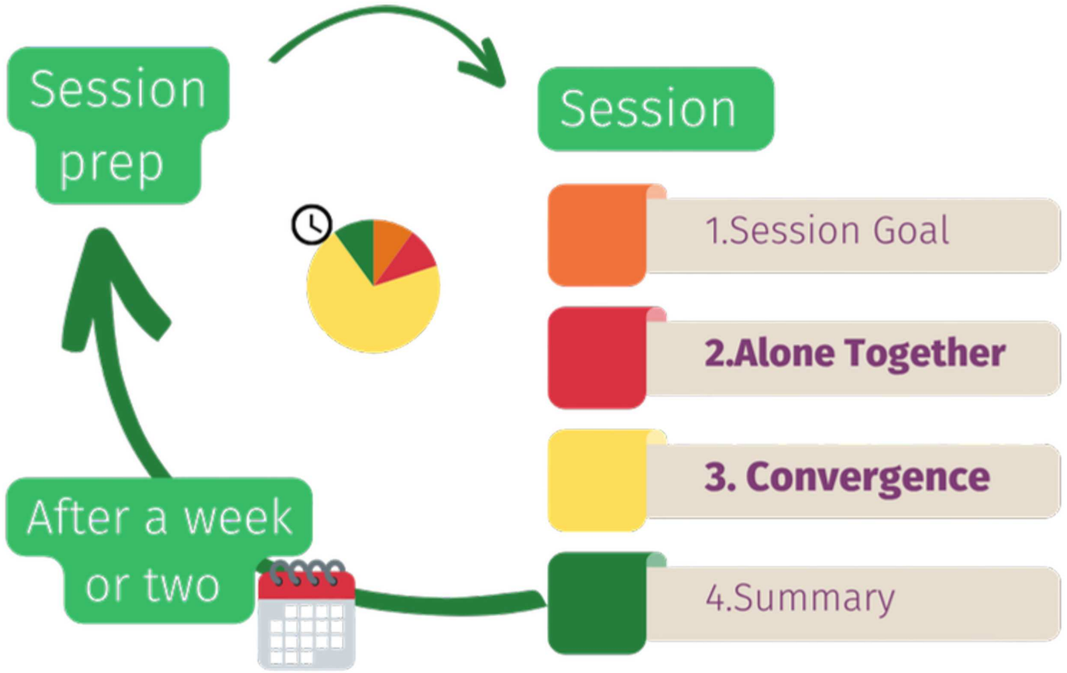
[Advice offered] - [Name, Role, Date]

Supporting Material

[Description] [LINK]

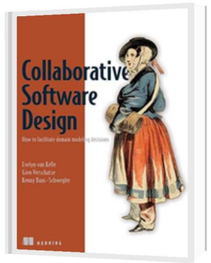
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Small Groups



Bytesize Architecture Sessions

https://bytesizearchitecturesessions.com/



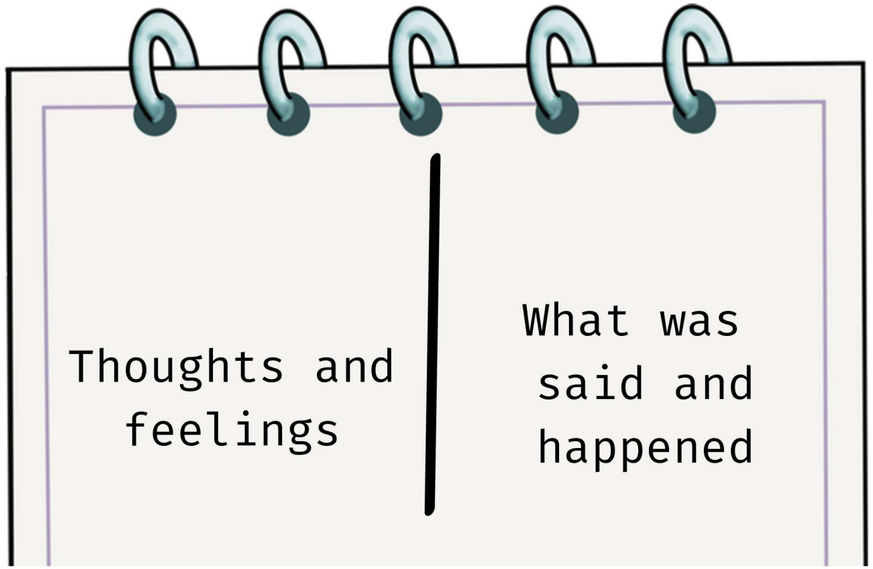
Collaborative Software Desing
E. Kelle, G. Verschatse and K. Baas-Schwegler

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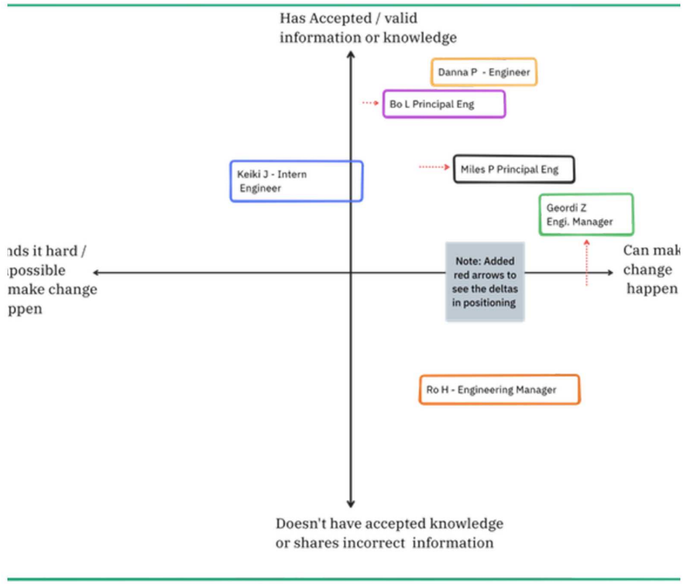


Personal tools

Left-hand column



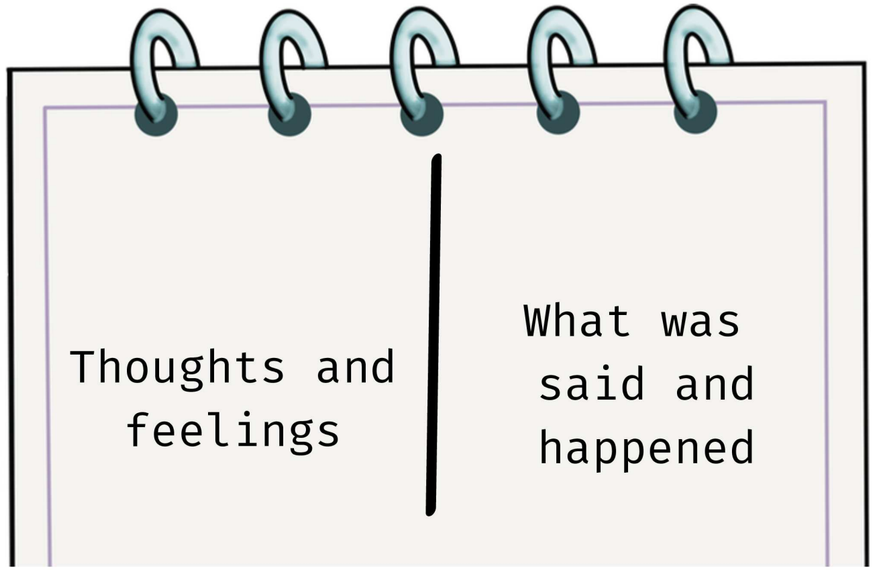
Decision KP Map



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Left-hand Column

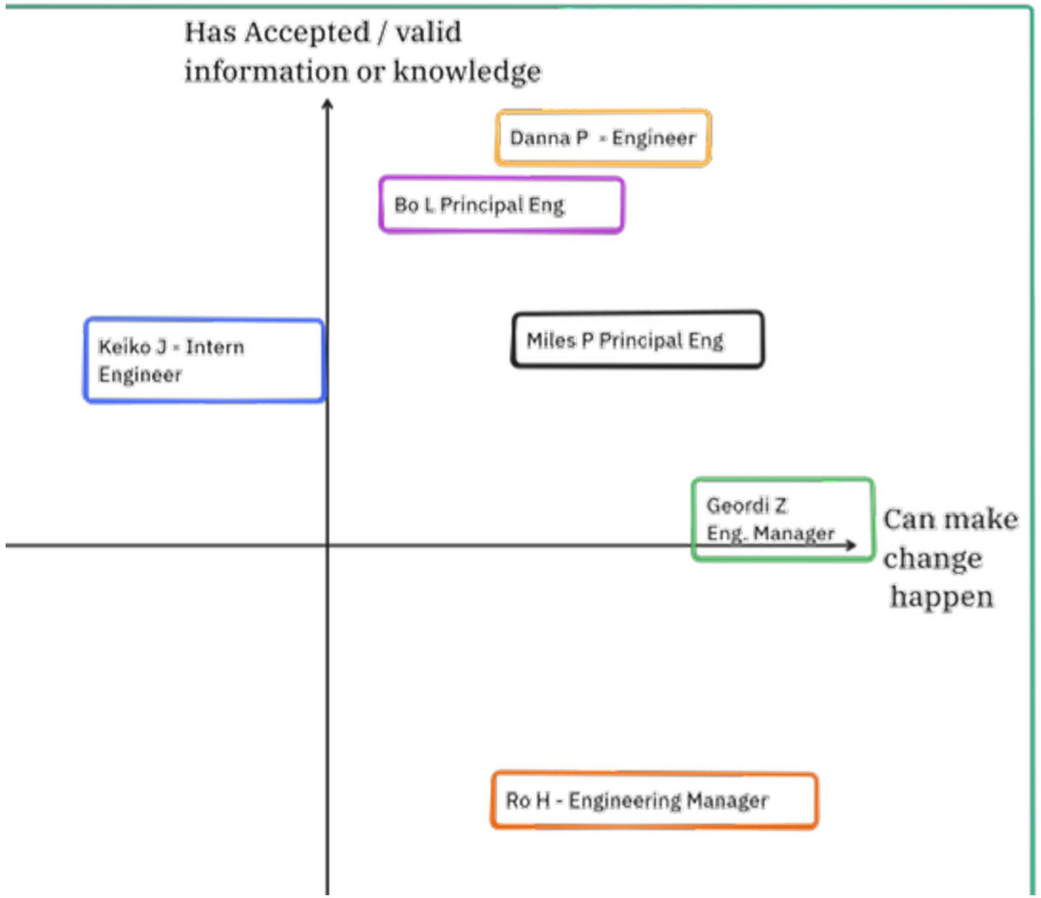


https://psdchallenge.psd.gov.sg/ideas/work-better/communicate-better-with-the-left-hand-column-technique

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Decision KP Map



Key People

Knowledge and Power

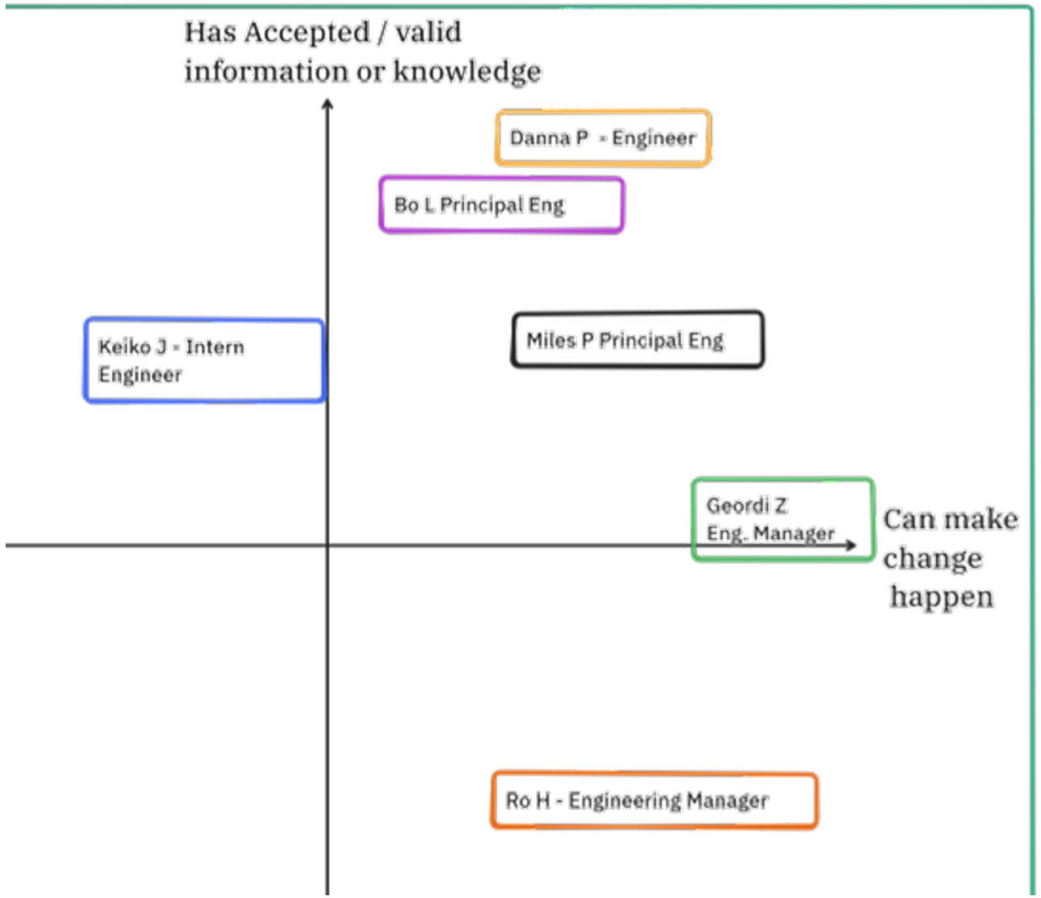
Within the context of a specific decision

https://www.roundcrisis.com/2026/02/04/making-of-a-decision-5/

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Decision KP Map



Accepted / Valid Knowledge (or not)

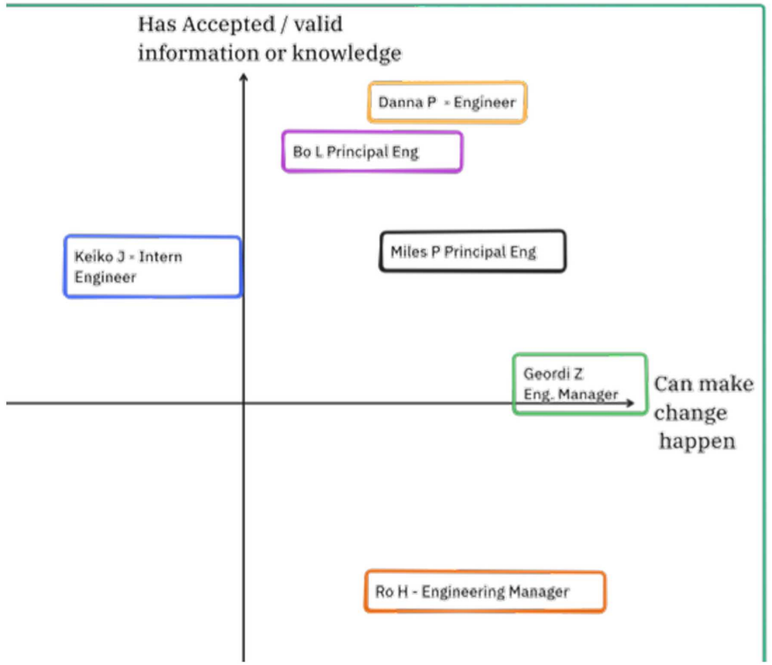
Can make change happen (or not)

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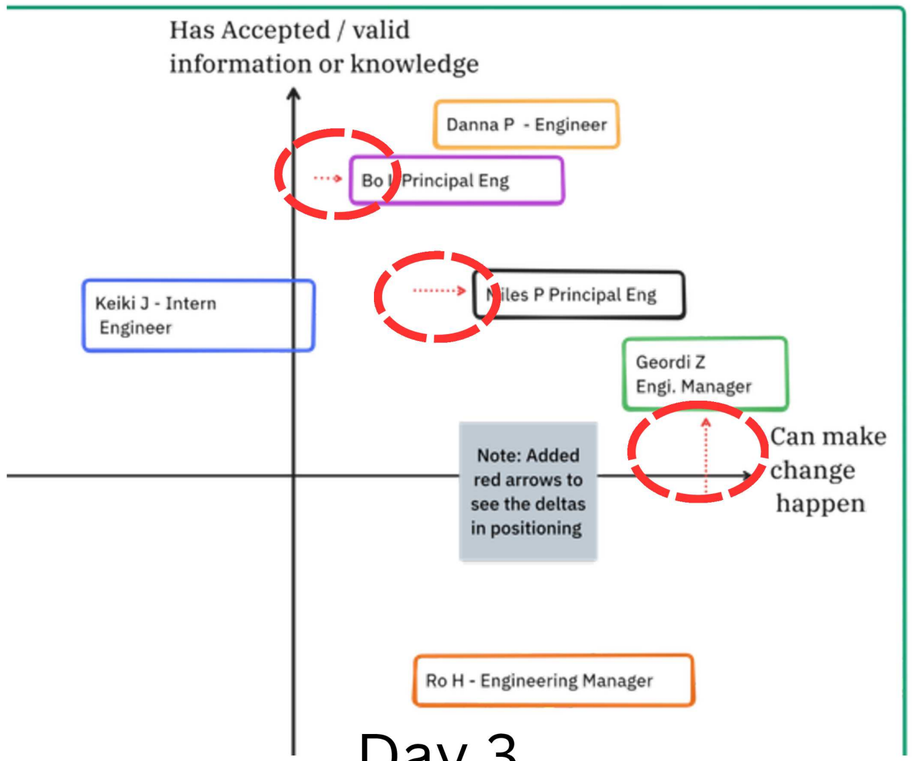
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Example: Production deployment strategy decision



Day 1



Day 3

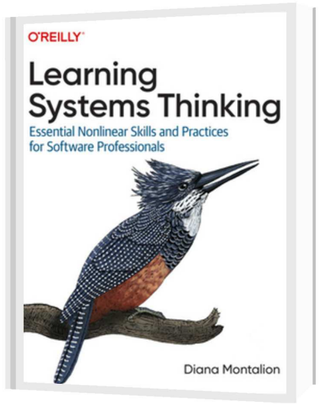
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Day N

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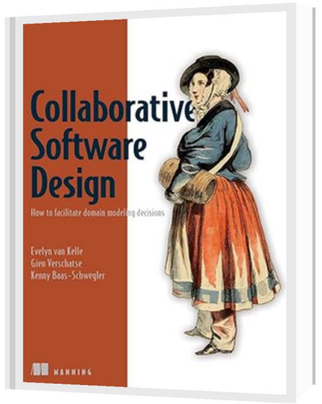
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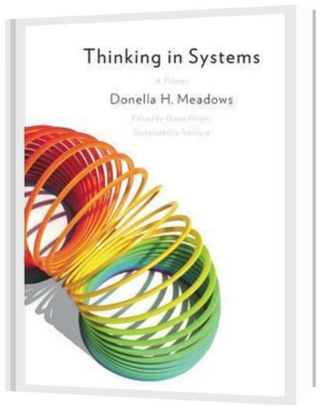
Making of a Decision Bookshelf

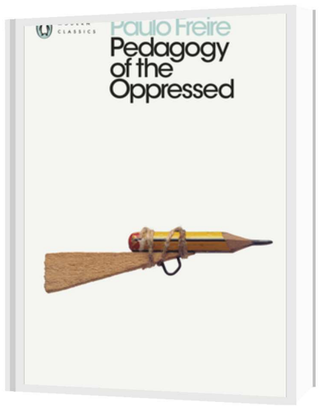


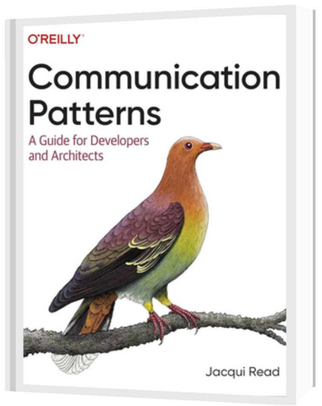


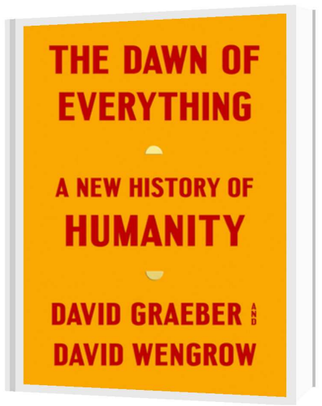




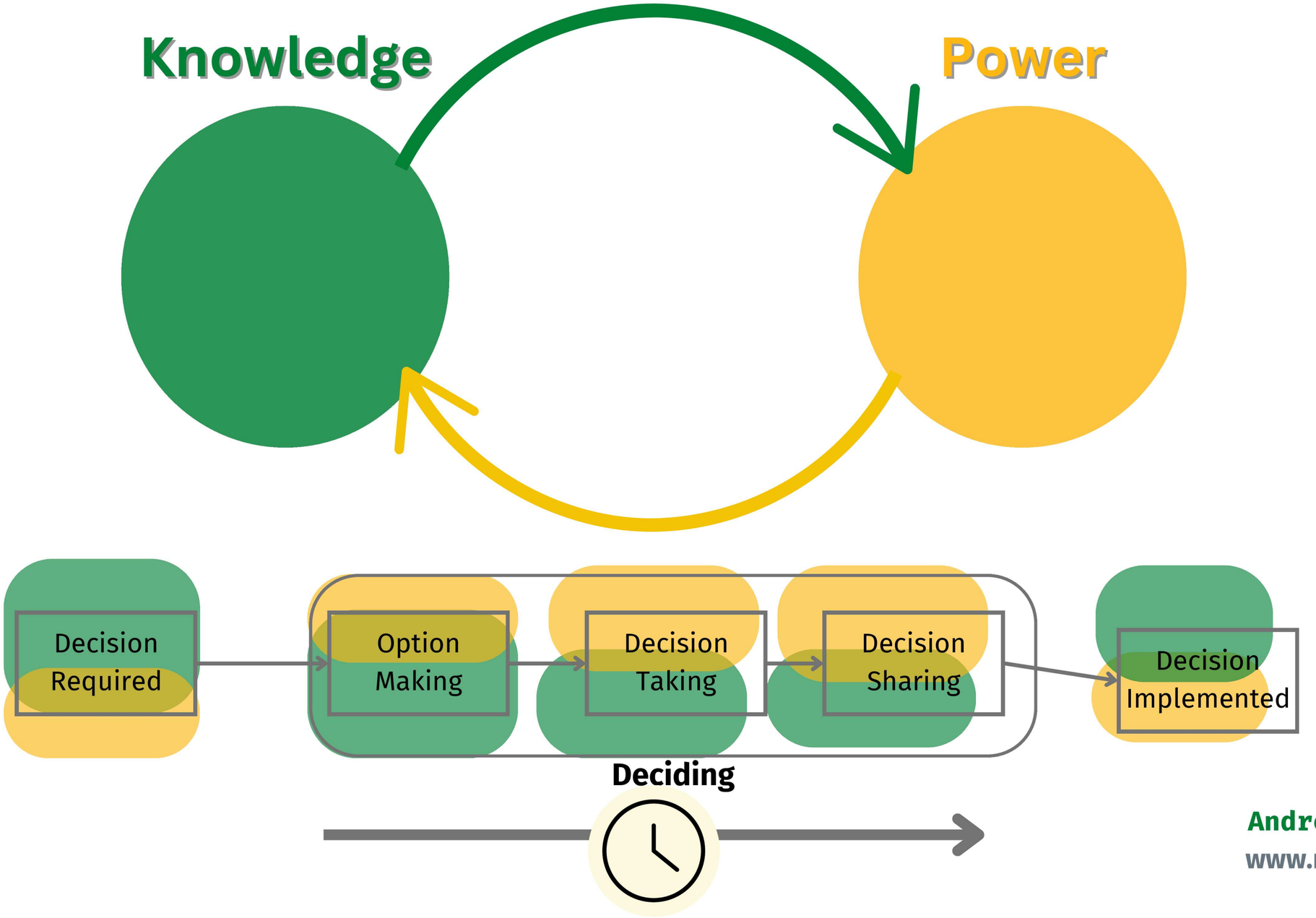








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Thank You!

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