

Levelling up: transitioning successfully into a manager of managers role

Gisela Rossi

Director of Engineering, Trustpilot

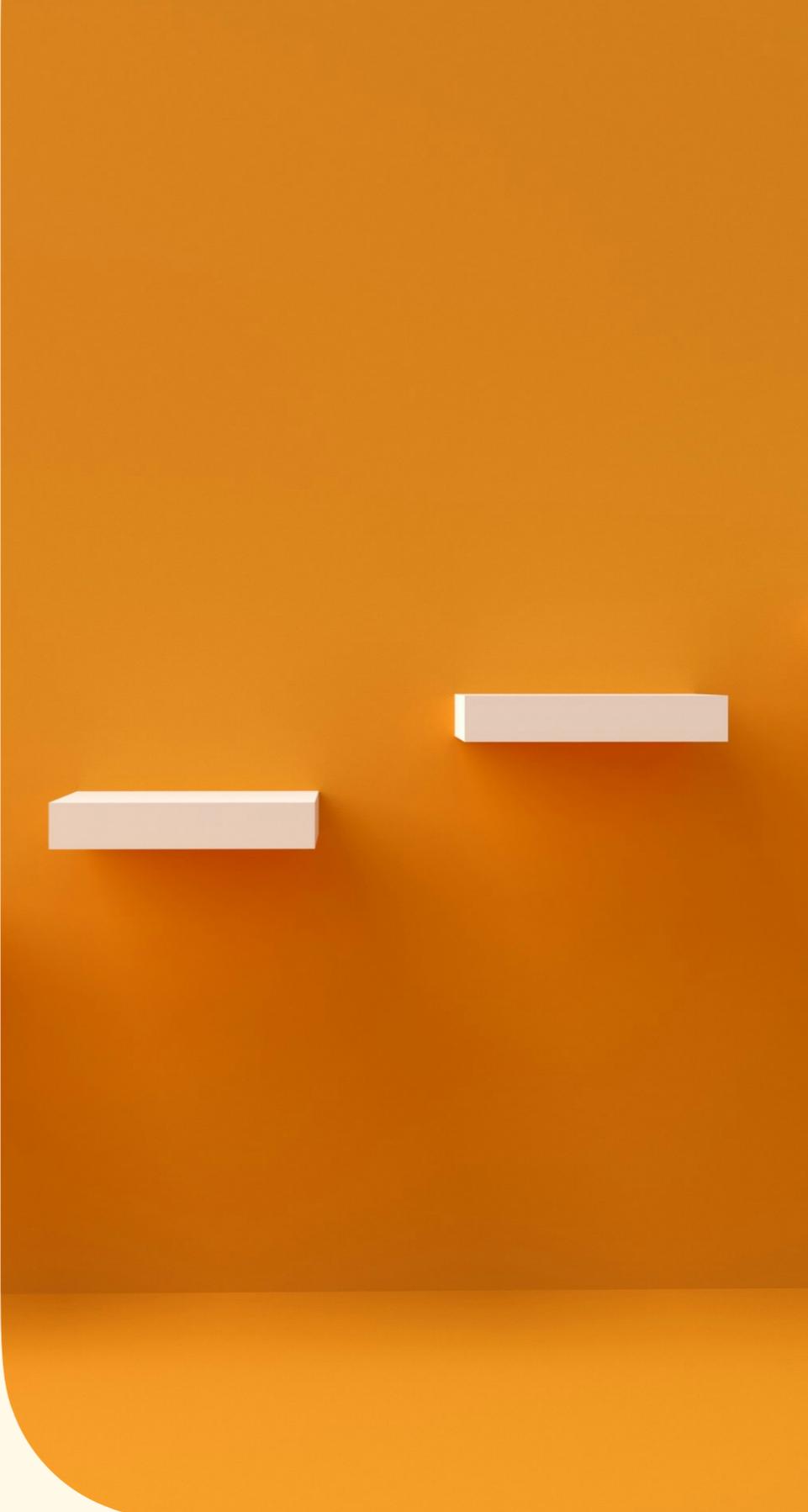
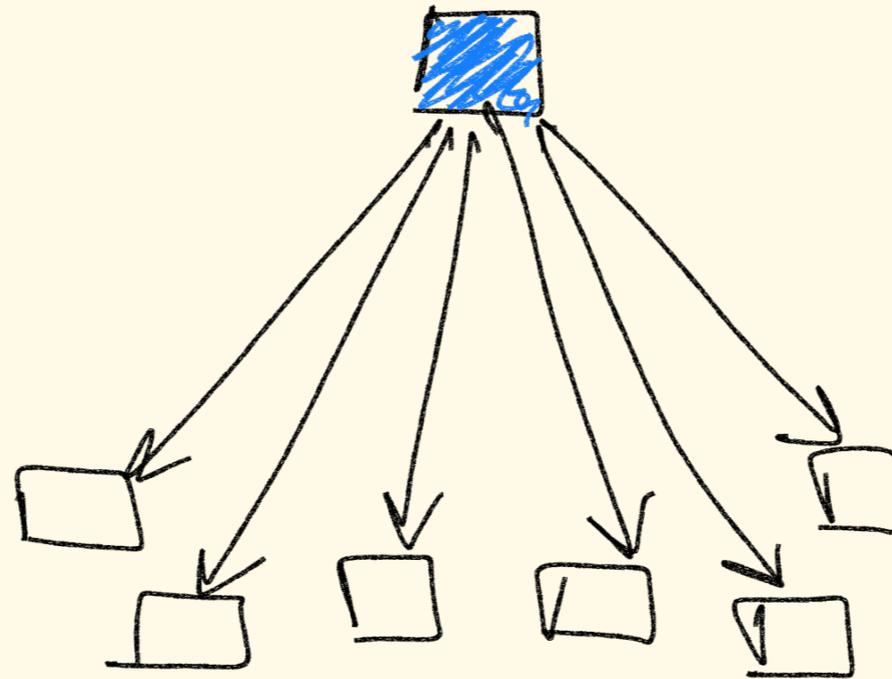
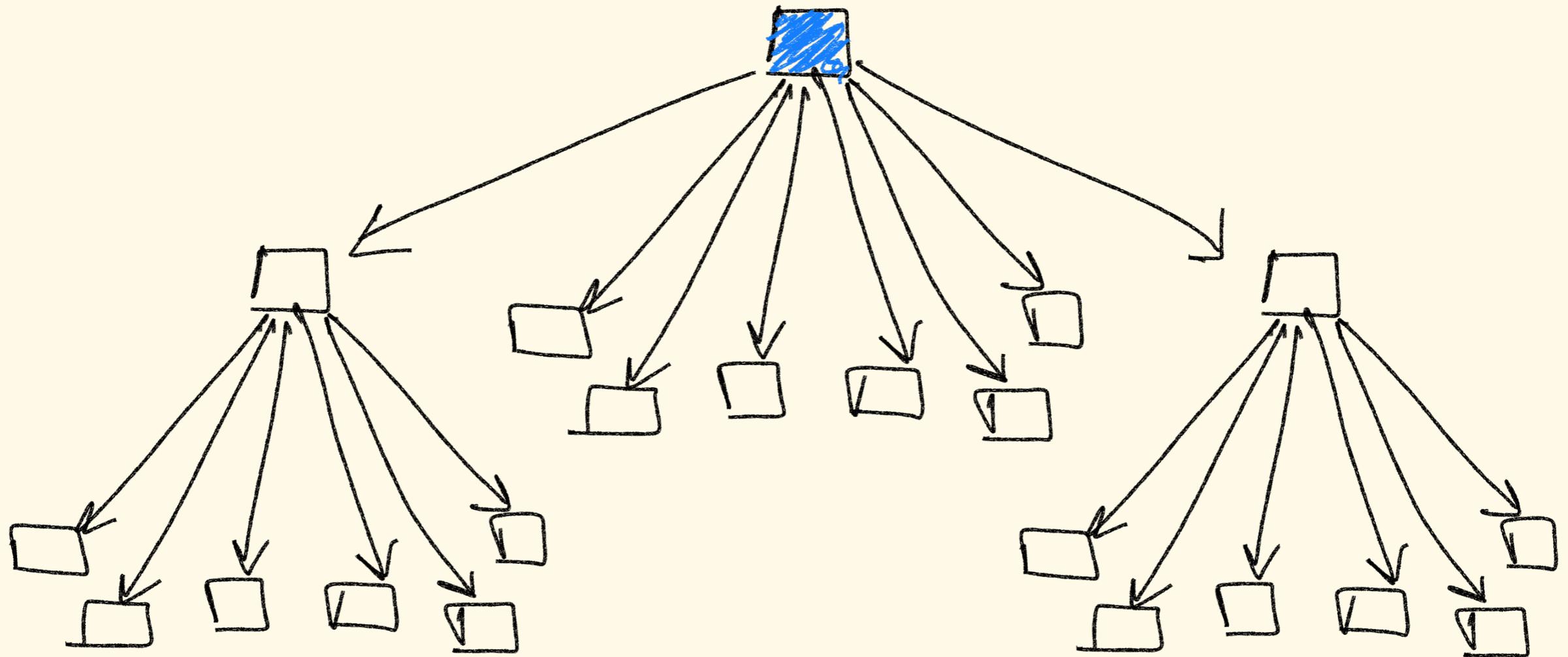


Image credit: unsplash@kanhaiyasharma

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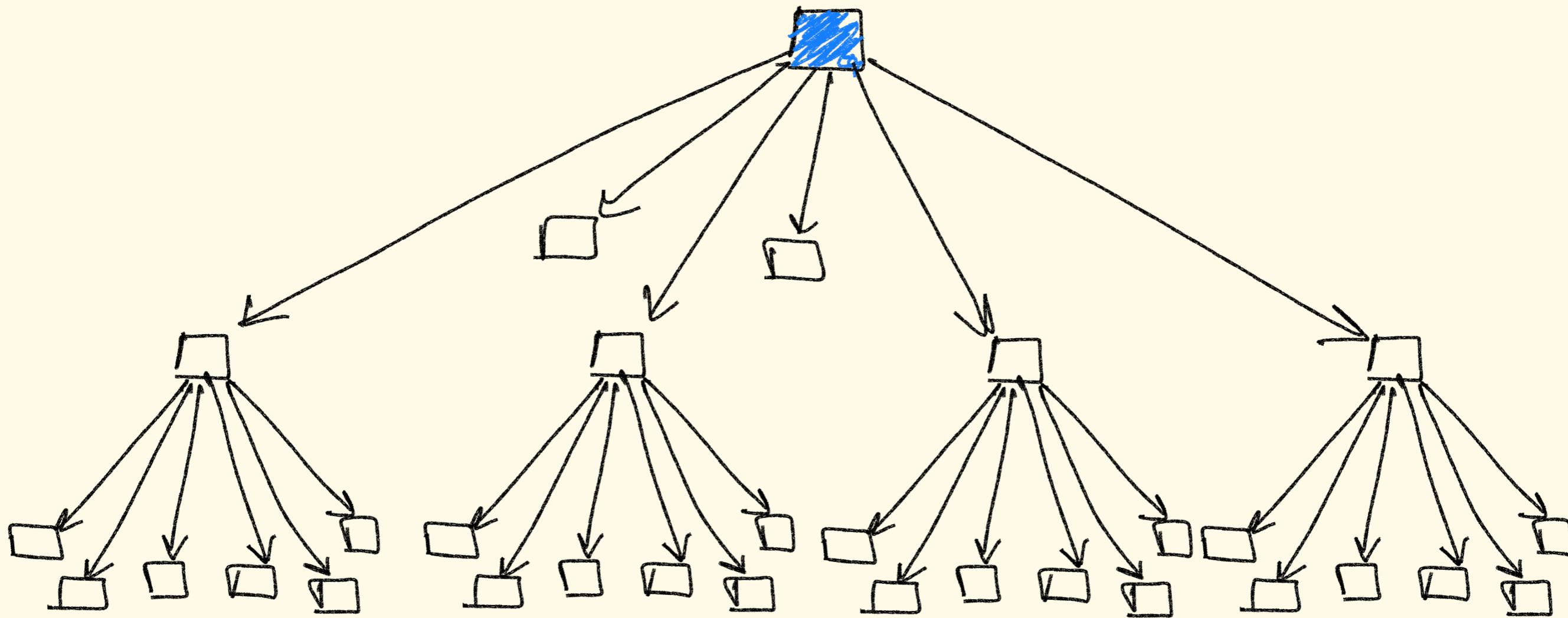


Q4 2023
Engineering Manager



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 grow



Creating conditions to thrive



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



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



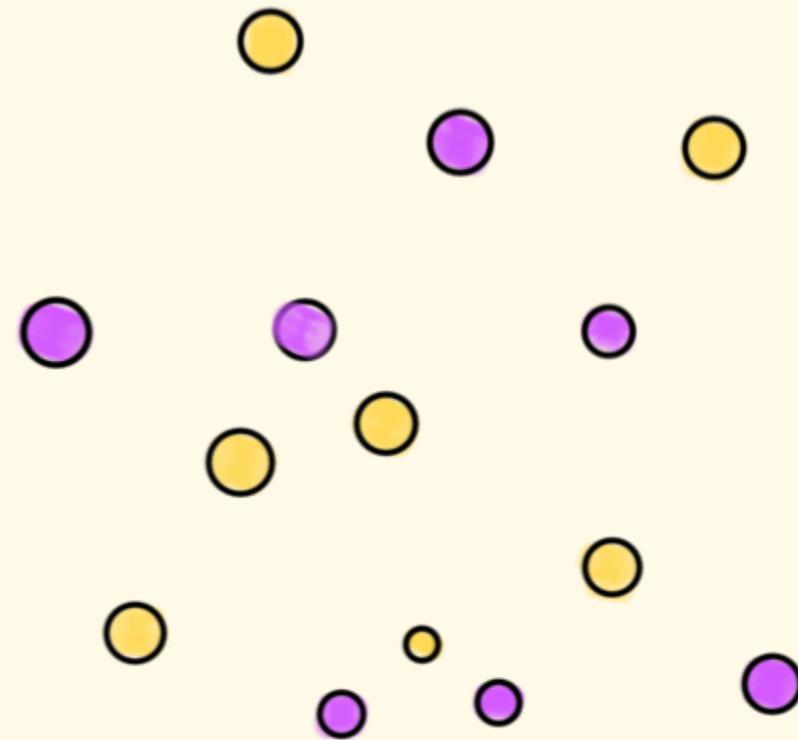
Perception



Why Perception?



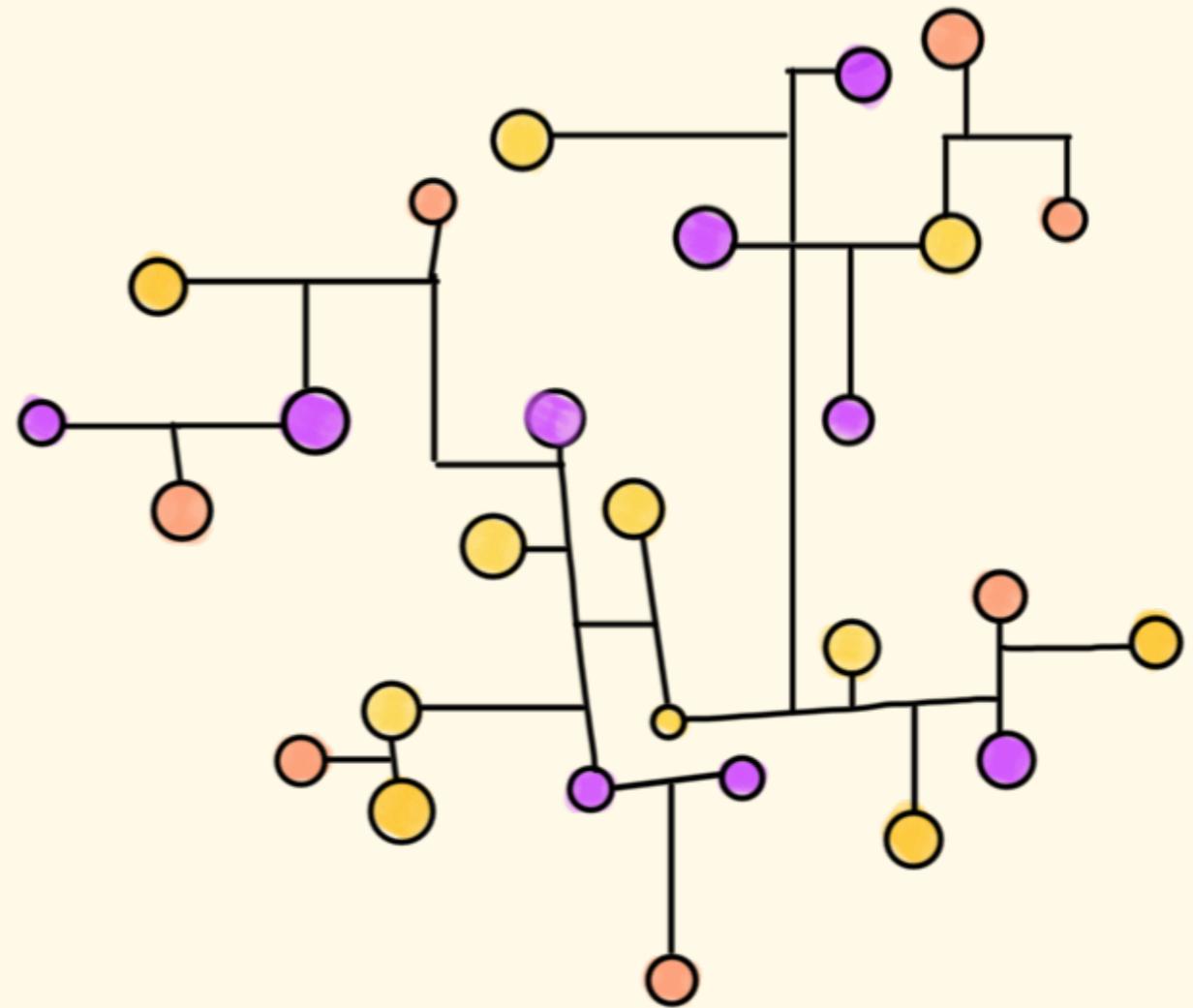
Perception
—
*For the
informational
shift*



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*

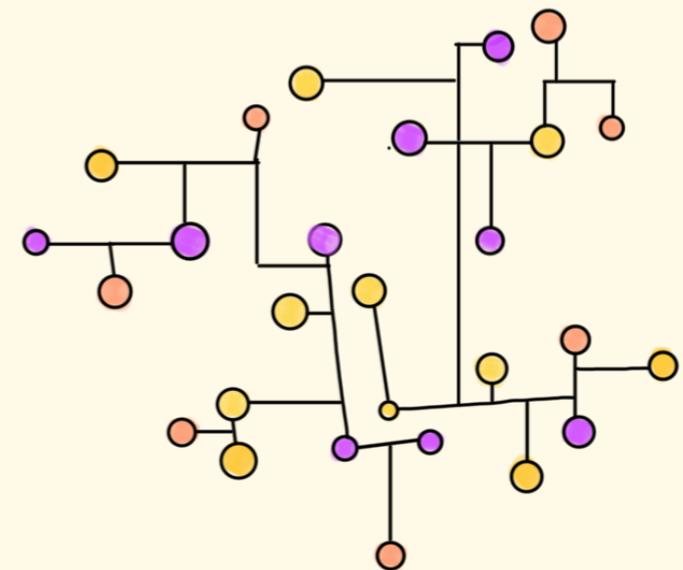


Perception
—
*For the
informational
shift*

Why Perception?

→ No one is going to brief you

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



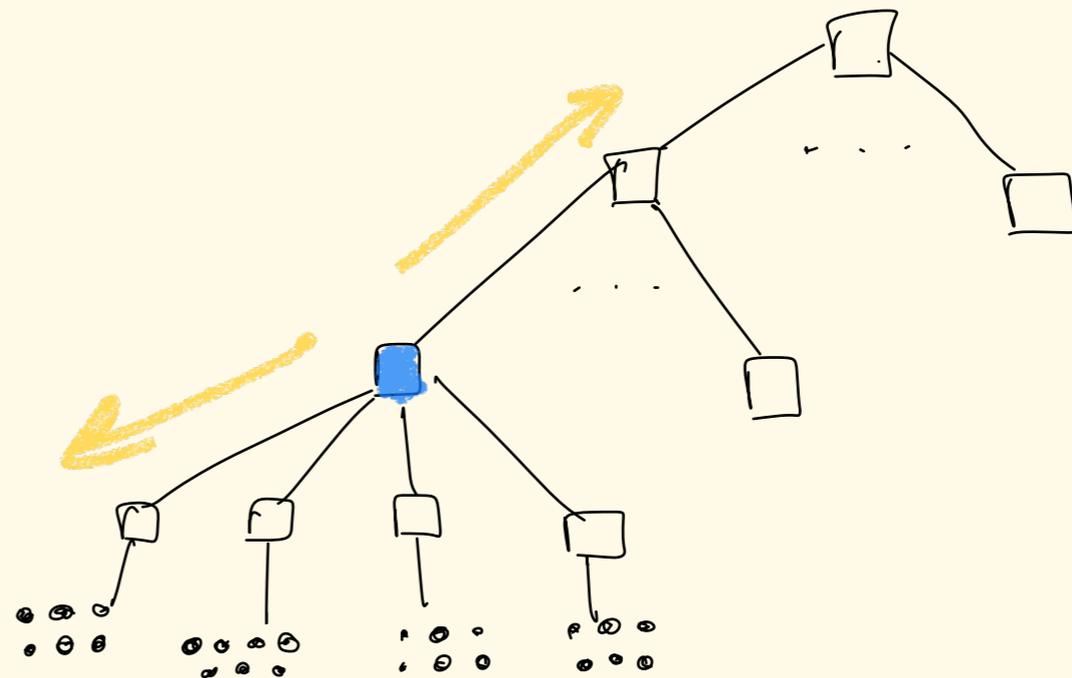
You see enough of the
detail, and see enough
of the systems, to notice
what others can't.

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*



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*

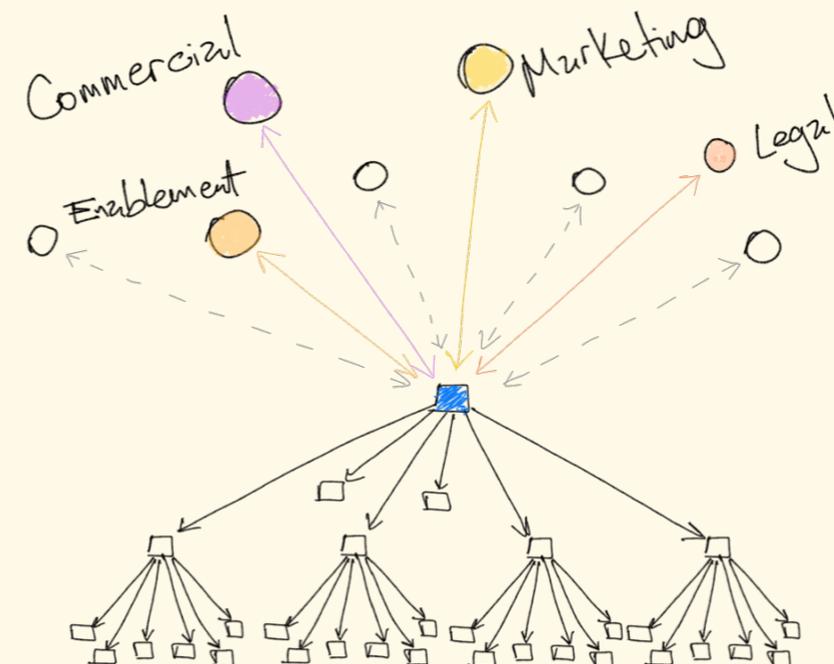


Presence
—
*For the
relational shift*

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



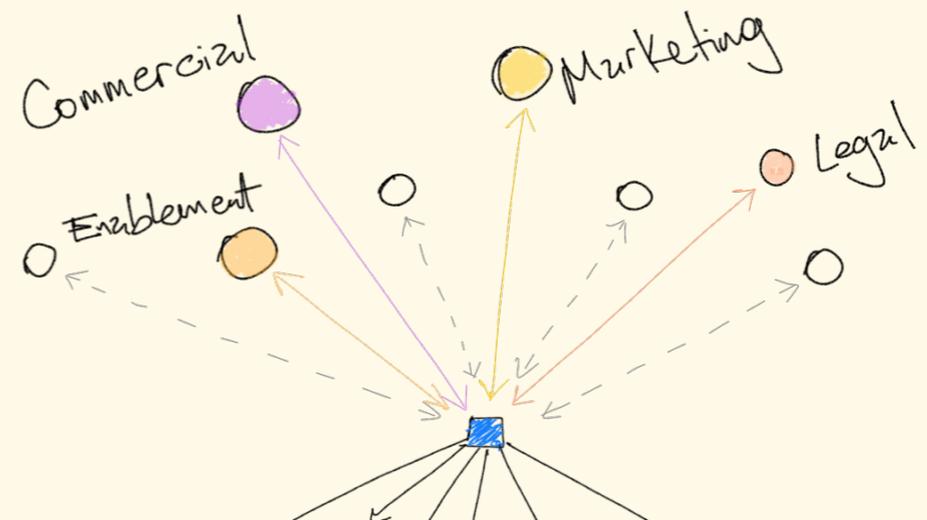


Presence

—
*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*

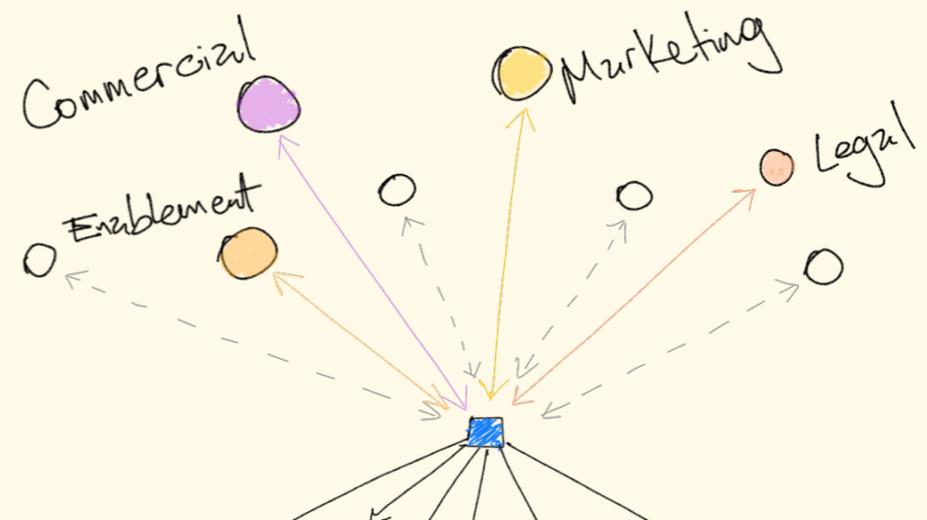
What Presence looks like?

→ 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



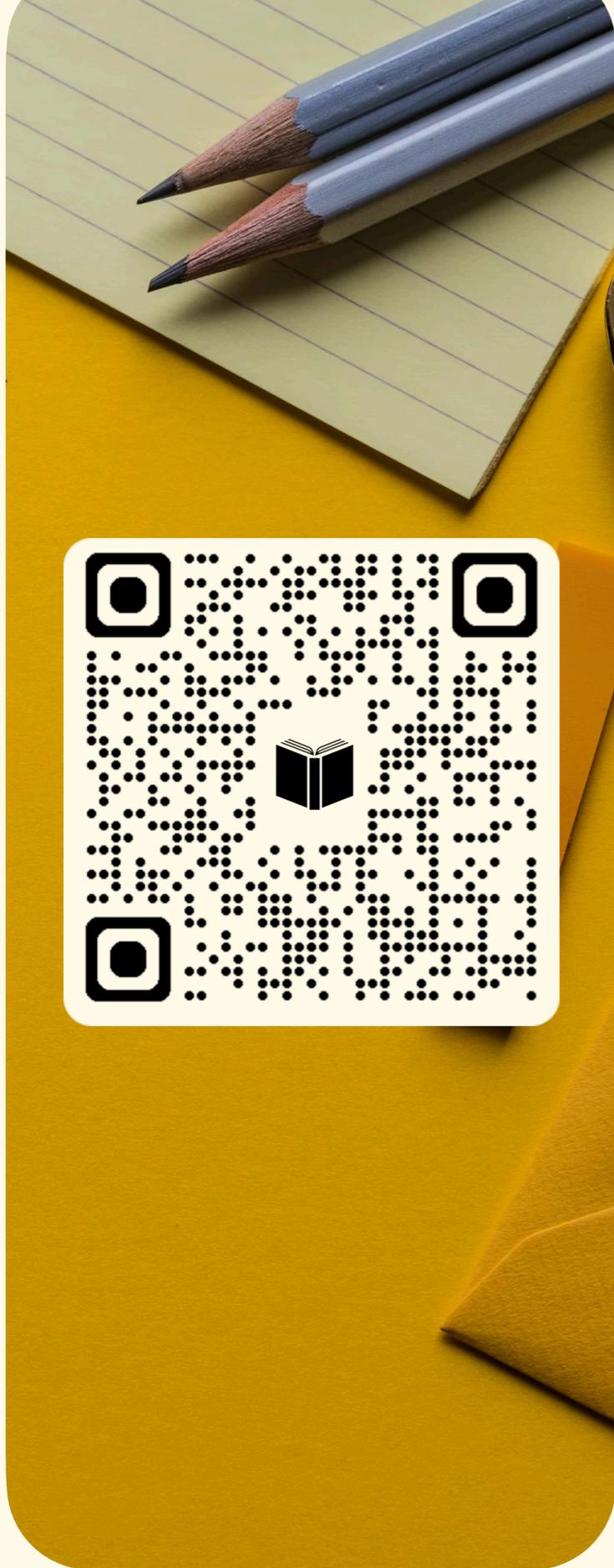
Growth and comfort
never coexist.



Ginni Rometty,
IBM's Ex-CEO

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

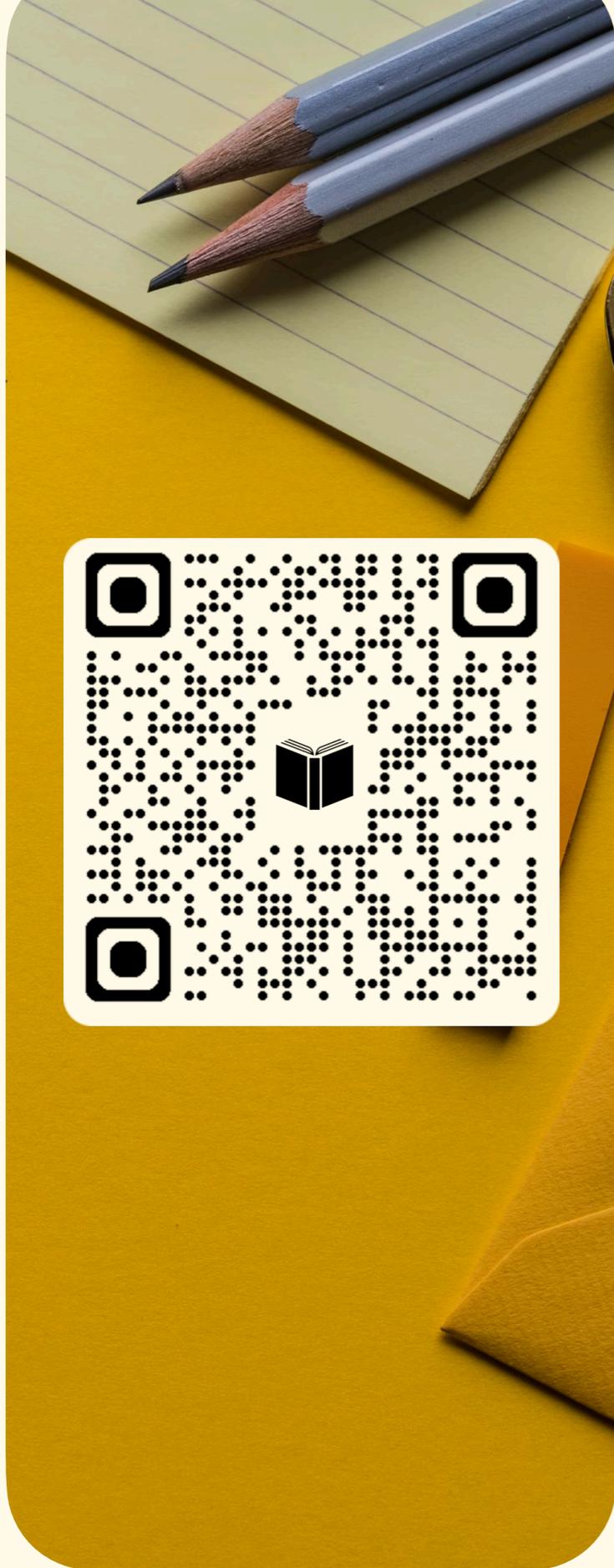




Material to help you on the road:

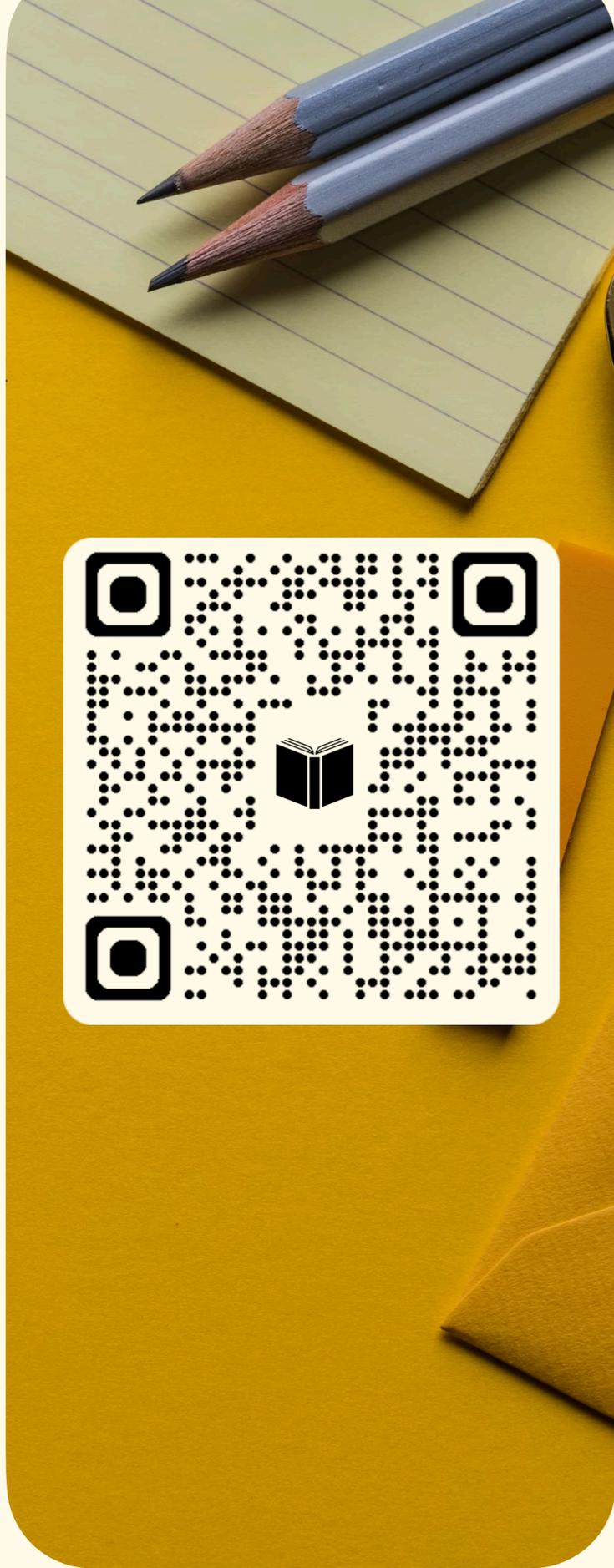
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It does gets messier.
It does gets slower.

But also more
impactful — and
more exciting.



Thank you!