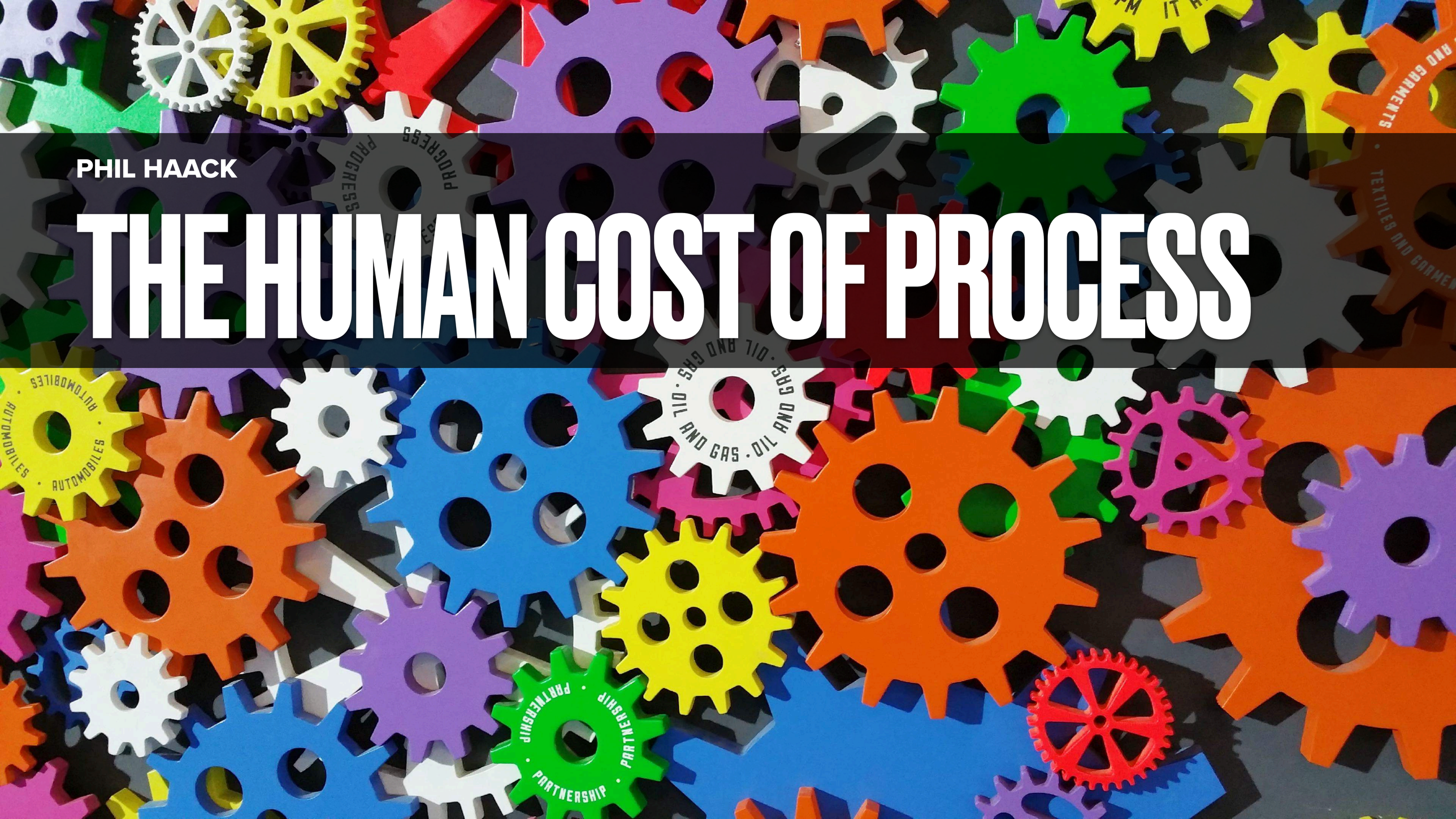
PHIL HAACK
THE HUMAN COST OF PROCESS

WHAT IS A PROCESS EVEN?

A PROCESS IS A SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES
THAT PRODUCES AN OUTPUT

Step 1: Build a Product

Step 2: ???

Step 3: PROFIT!

SOME PROCESSES ARE INDIVIDUAL

Source: The IT Crowd - Comedy Central

SOME PROCESSES INVOLVE LOTS OF PEOPLE AND TIME

Photo: Bo-Taoshi by Dozo Domo CC BY-SA 2.0

A SYSTEM IS A COLLECTION OF PROCESSES THAT ACCOMPLISHES A MAJOR GOAL

WHY DO WE CREATE PROCESSES?

WE CREATE PROCESSES TO MAKE THE SYSTEM BETTER

POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF A PROCESS

Processes save time

Processes reduce errors

Processes make it easy to hand off work to others

Processes scale

THE COSTS OF A PROCESS

Reduce individual freedom and decision making

Reduces autonomy over work

Reduces scalability

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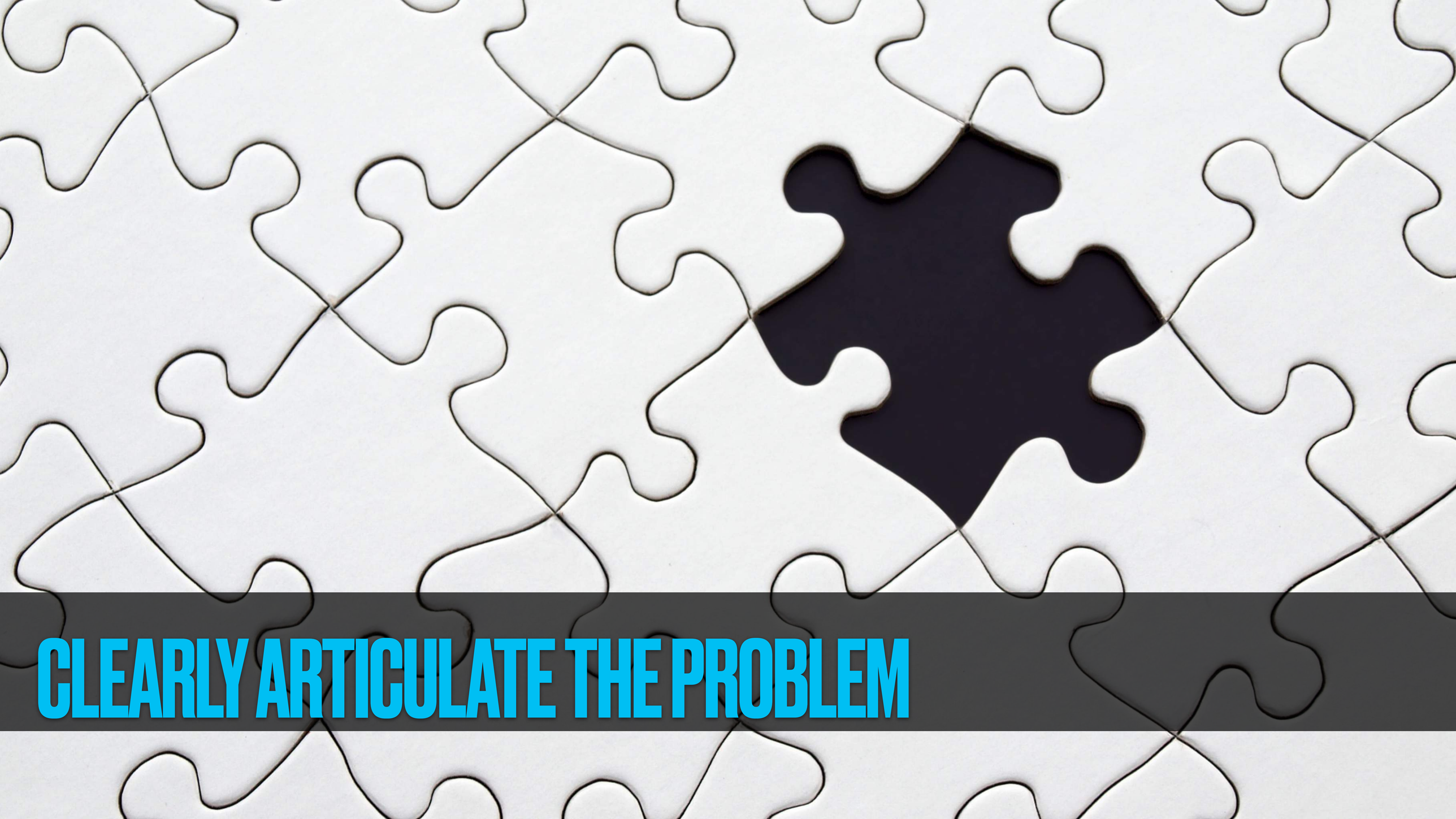
“IN GENERAL, FREEDOM AND RAPID RECOVERY IS BETTER THAN TRYING TO PREVENT ERROR. JUST BECAUSE A FEW PEOPLE ABUSE FREEDOM DOESN’T MEAN THAT OUR EMPLOYEES ARE NOT WORTHY OF GREAT TRUST.”

HOW DO WE DESIGN A PROCESS?


CLEARLY ARTICULATE THE PROBLEM

THINK HARD ABOUT THE REAL PURPOSE OF A PROCESS

“DO NOT FALL FOR THE ILLUSION THAT BY PREVENTING ERRORS YOU WON’T HAVE ERRORS TO FIX. THE TRUTH IS THE COST OF PREVENTING ERRORS IS OFTEN GREATER THAN THE COST OF FIXING ERRORS LATER.”

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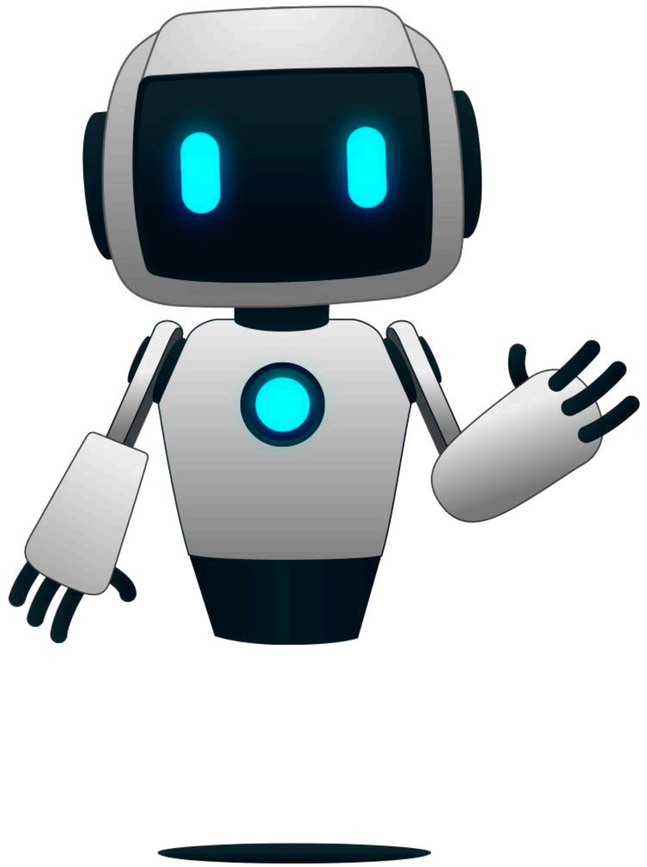
OPEN IT UP FOR DISCUSSION

Photo: WOC in Tech CC BY 2.0

BE CLEAR ABOUT THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS

LEAD WITH EMPATHY

AUTOMATE ALL THE THINGS!



CONSIDER THE WHOLE SYSTEM

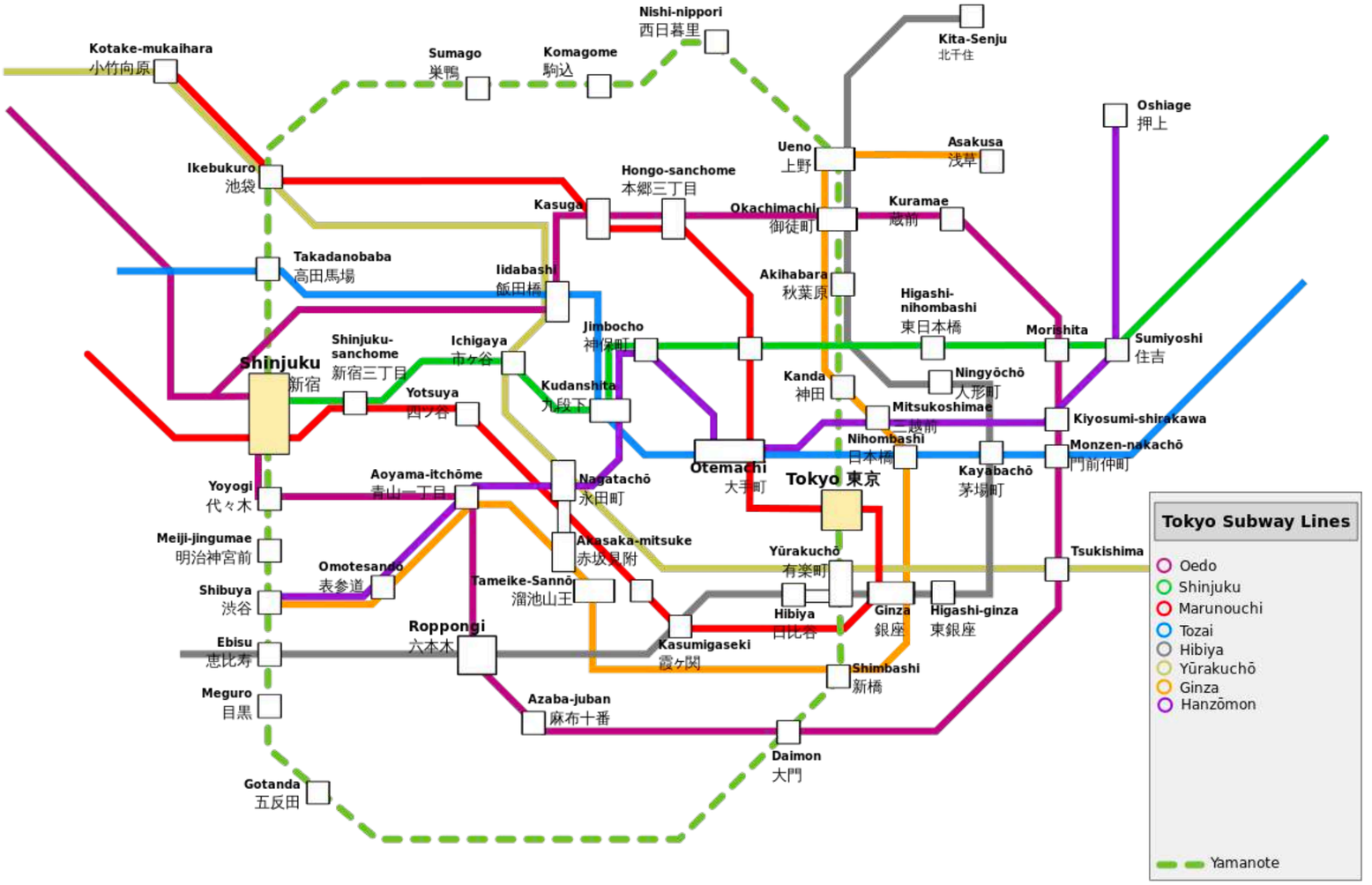
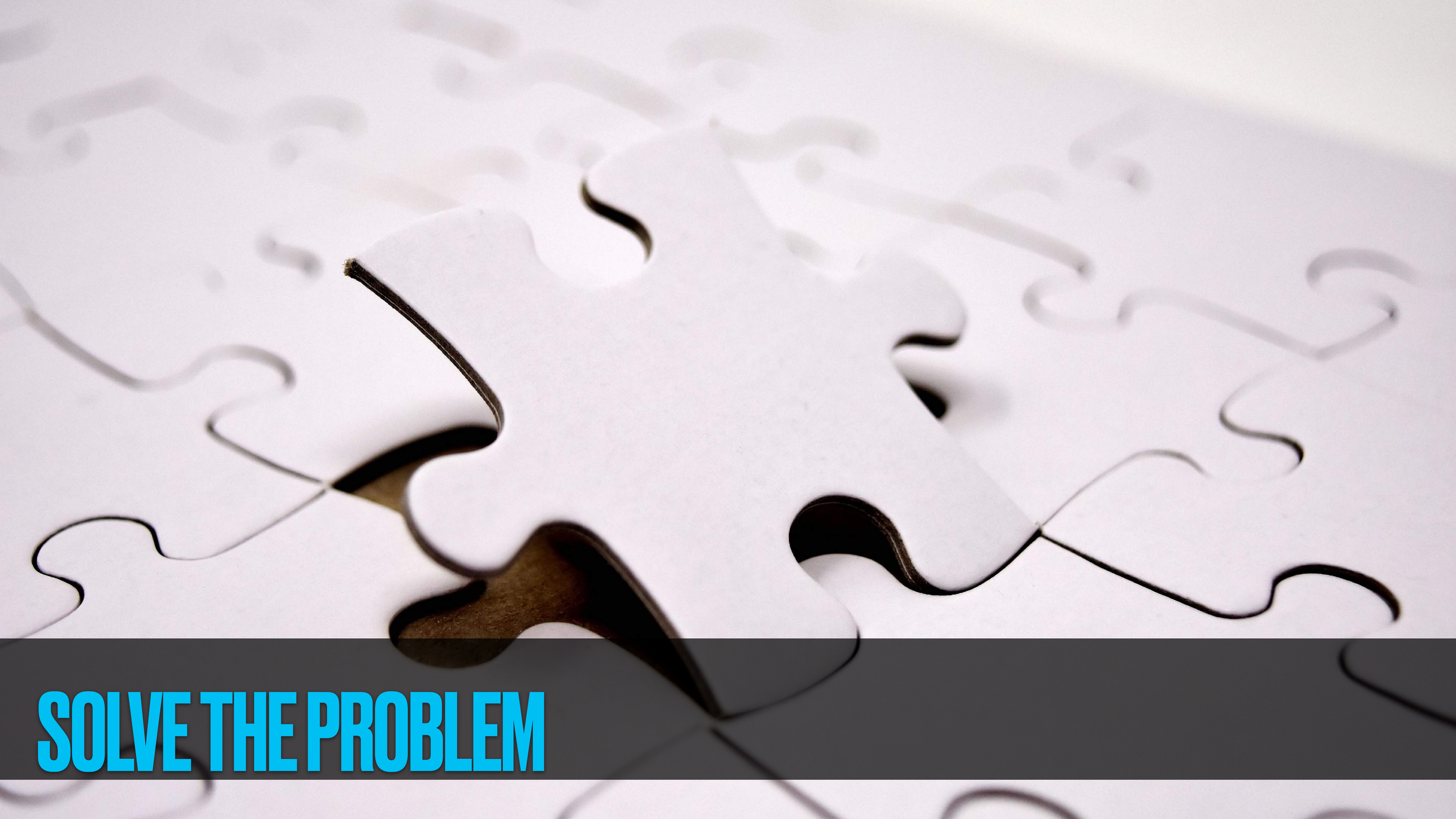


Image by Comicinker - CC BY-SA 3.0


SOLVE THE PROBLEM

HOW DO WE KNOW IF THE PROCESS WILL MEET OUR GOALS?

WE WON'T.

Photo by Ryan Adams CC BY 2.0

HOW DO WE INTRODUCE A PROCESS?

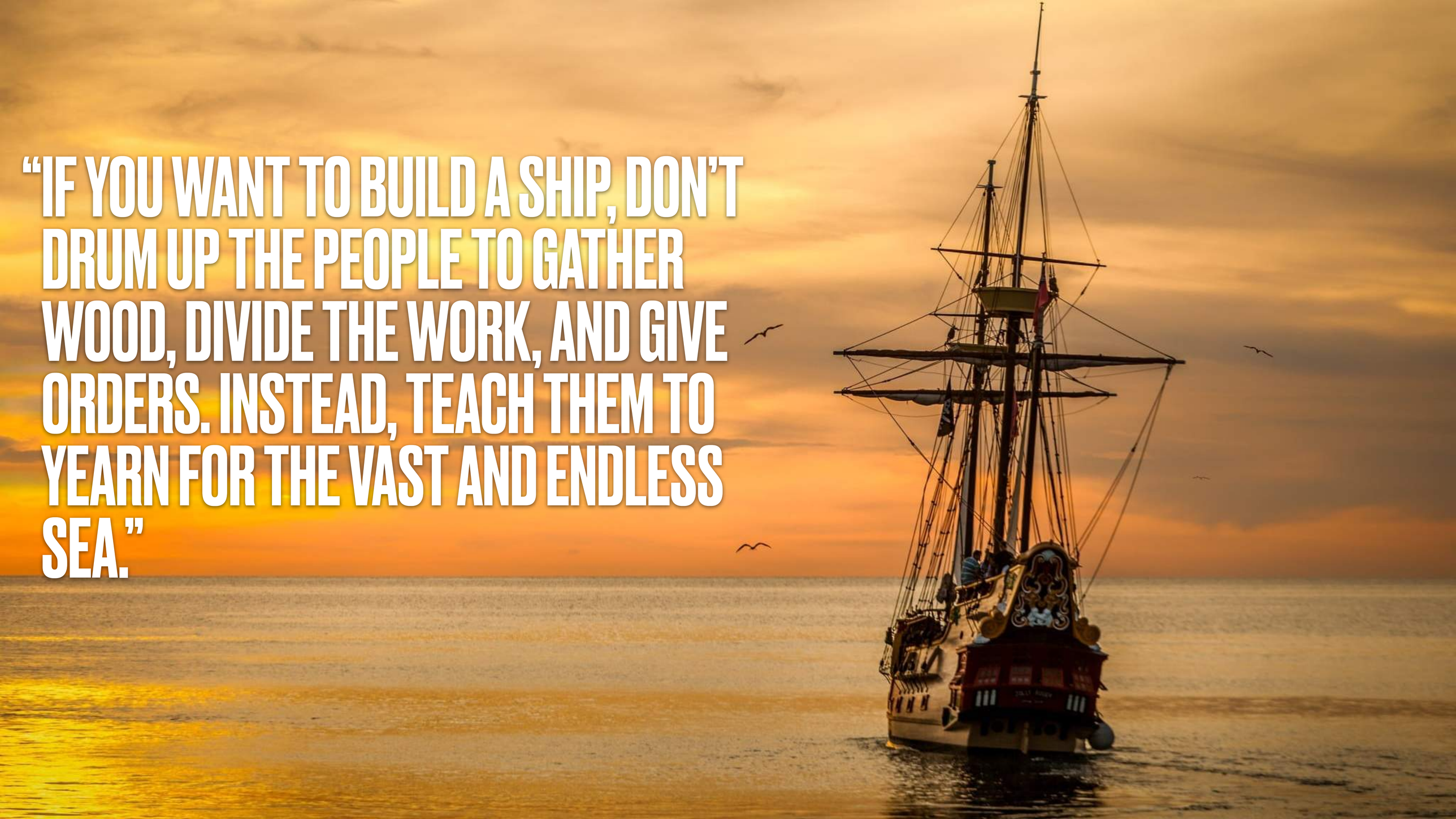
STEP 0: BUILD TRUST

BUILD ALIGNMENT

OWN THE DECISION

HOW DO WE MAINTAIN A PROCESS?

PROCESSES EXPERIENCE BITROT


“IF YOU WANT TO BUILD A SHIP, DON’T DRUM UP THE PEOPLE TO GATHER WOOD, DIVIDE THE WORK, AND GIVE ORDERS. INSTEAD, TEACH THEM TO YEARN FOR THE VAST AND ENDLESS SEA.”