



# Changing Old Habits:

## Meetup's Path to SRE

Rich Hsieh, Core Engineering Manager, Meetup

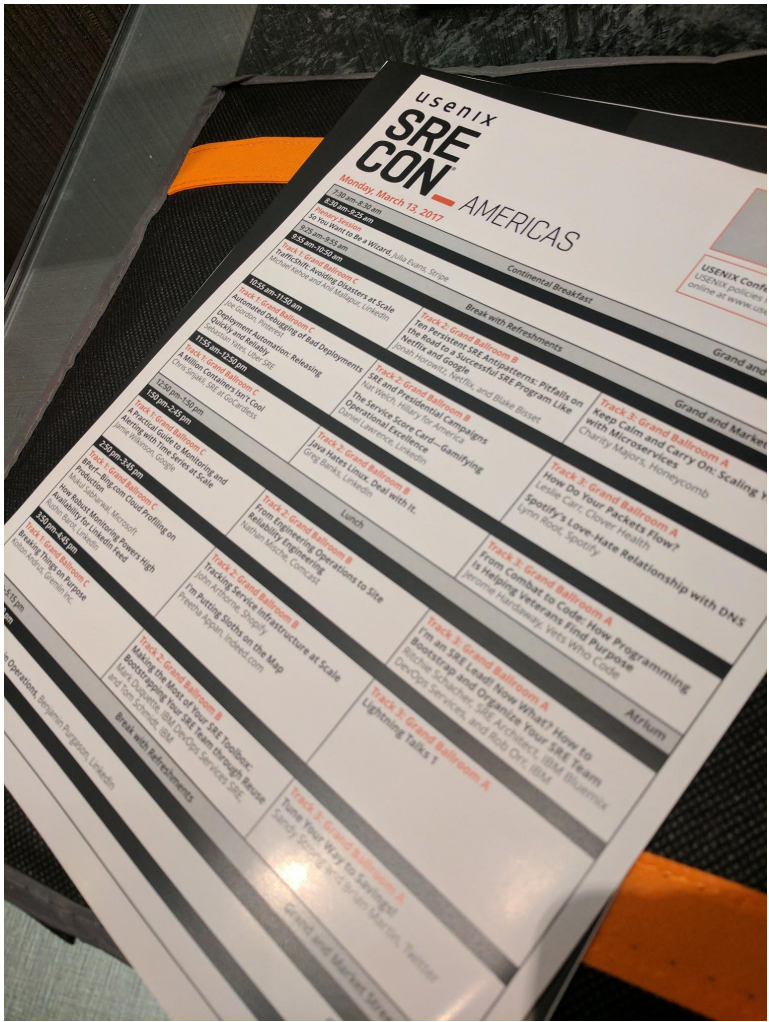
**SRECon17 Americas**

March 14, 2017

# About Me

- Core Engineering Manager
- Been at Meetup since 2007
- Organizer of the Dashing Whippets Running Team

The Meetup logo is rendered in a vibrant red, cursive script. The letters are thick and fluid, with a slight shadow effect that gives it a three-dimensional appearance. The 'M' is particularly prominent, with a large, rounded top.The logo for the Dashing Whippets Running Team. It features the word "DASHING" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. To the right of "DASHING" is a black silhouette of a dog in a full running stride, facing right. Below "DASHING" and the dog silhouette, the word "WHIPPETS" is written in a larger, bold, black, sans-serif font.





# A Quick Poll

# SRE Best Practices

**Monitoring**

**Defect Escalation**

**Playbooks**

**Alerting**

**Automation**

**Postmortems**

**SLOs**

**Error Budget**

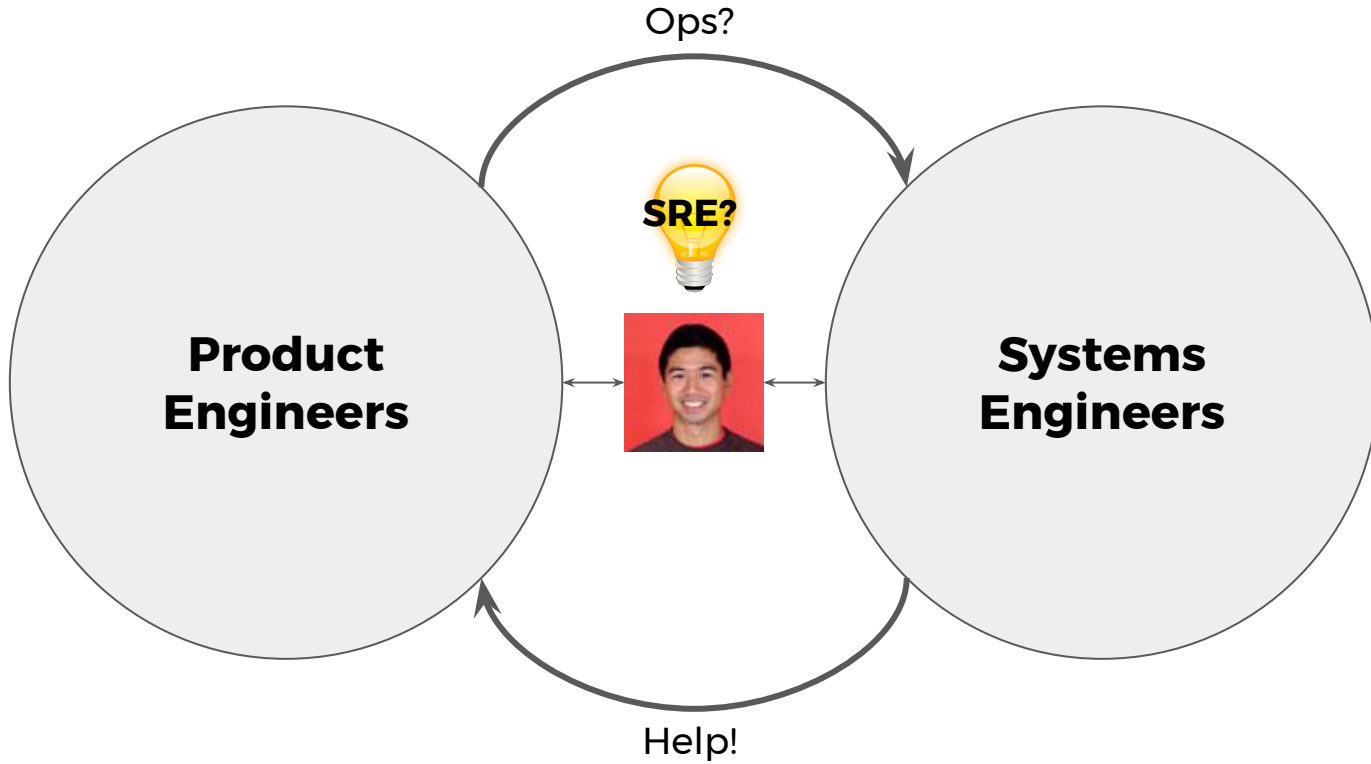
**SLAs**



# Outline

- I. **Getting Buy-in for an SRE Team**
- II. **Changing Old Habits to Implement SRE Best Practices**

# State of Meetup 2015

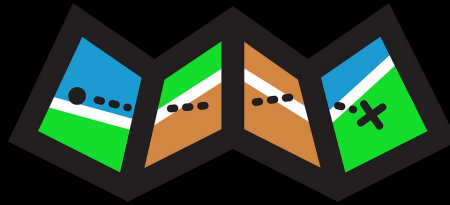




# Part I: Getting Buy-In



**Job Description**



**Six-Month Roadmap**



**Exit Strategy**



# Getting Buy-in #1: Job Description



- What exactly would I be doing?
- How does this role fit within Meetup?
- Are my expectations aligned with others?

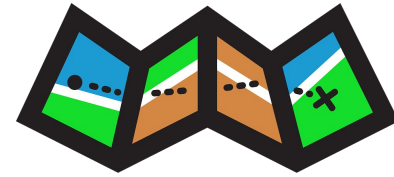
## Site Reliability Engineer

This role will:

- Introduce SRE best practices into our culture
  - Empower engineers across our organization to perform blameless postmortems, service roasts, playbooks and more
- Help improve the throughput and maximize the impact of projects
  - Reduce downtime on our platform and increase our ability to react to both emergency and long-standing issues
- Act as a Core Engineering resource for the Systems Engineering team
  - Assist and relay improvements and issues to the broader Engineering team

The Site Reliability Engineering Team is responsible for ensuring that Meetup provides a reliable service to over 20 million Meetup members. As an SRE on this team, you will work closely with engineers across all disciplines to debug and fix issues and emergencies -- both large and small

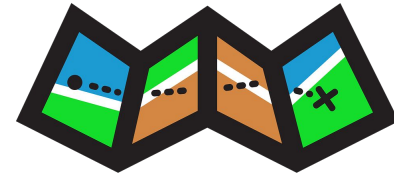
# Getting Buy-in #2: Roadmap



<b>July 2016</b>	Start doing SRE-ish Things
<b>August 2016</b>	Create SRE Best Practices @ Meetup
<b>September 2016</b>	Work with a Product Team
<b>October 2016</b>	Making Product Better through SRE Development
<b>November 2016</b>	Reflection of Last 4 Months
<b>December 2016</b>	What is the future of SRE at Meetup?

Each month: **Theme**, **Focus**, and **Expected Output**

# Getting Buy-in #2: Roadmap



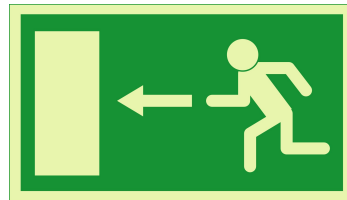
## July 2016

Theme: Start doing SRE-ish Things

<b>Focus</b>	Create process to address on-call issues through Product Health
<b>Expected Output</b>	Eliminate 1+ repeating on-call issues working w/responsible teams

<b>Focus</b>	Start 1:1 conversations with stakeholders to raise awareness
<b>Expected Output</b>	Create future action items based on 1:1 conversations

# Getting Buy-in #3: Exit Strategy



November 2016

Theme: Reflection of Last 4 Months

<b>Focus</b>	Determine if this SRE team is sustainable
<b>Expected Output</b>	Leave or continue with SRE

- Make sure SRE best practices are instilled in other teams
- “End well” -- no hard feelings



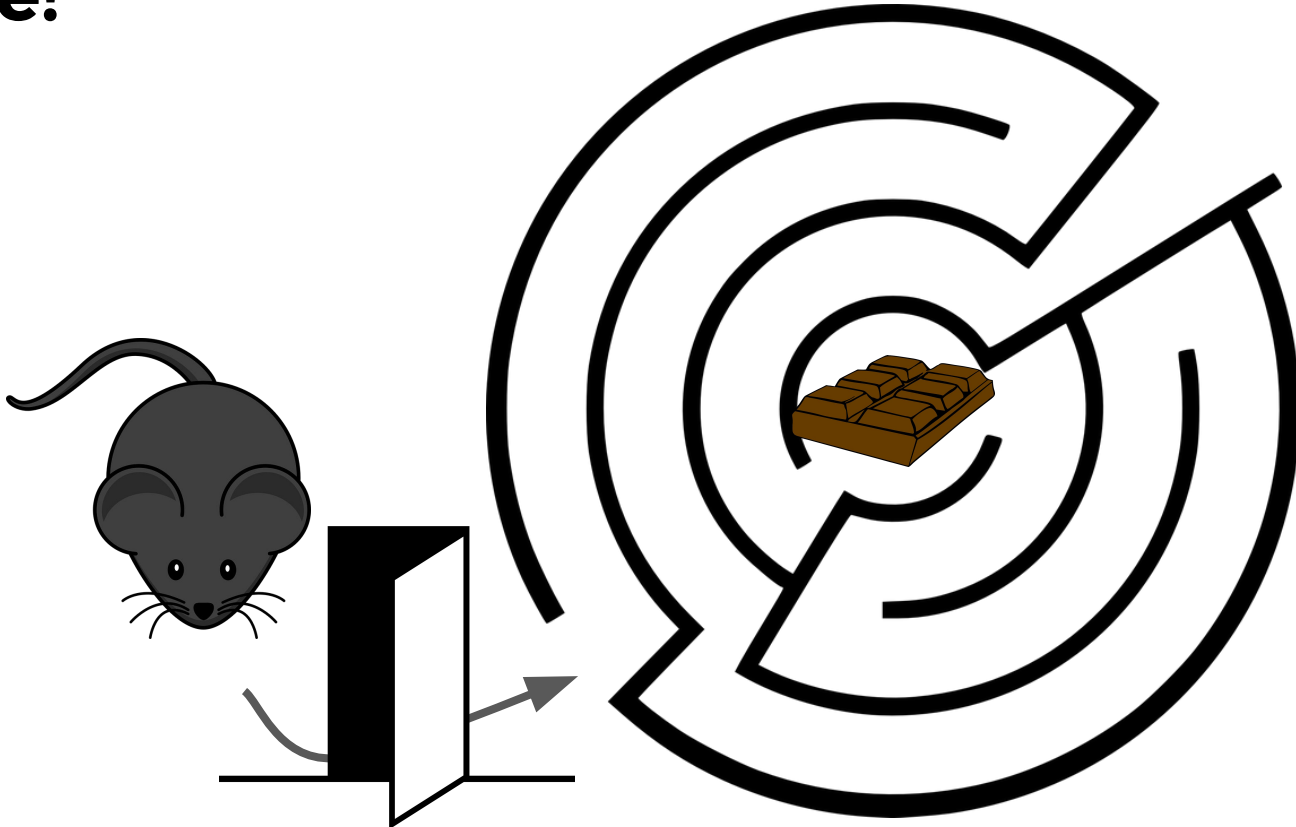


# Part II: Changing Old Habits

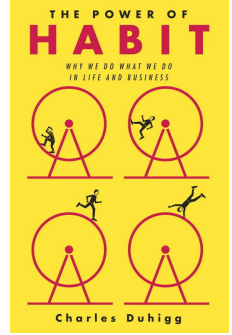
**“a settled or regular tendency or practice,  
especially one that is hard to give up.”**

**-- Oxford Dictionary**

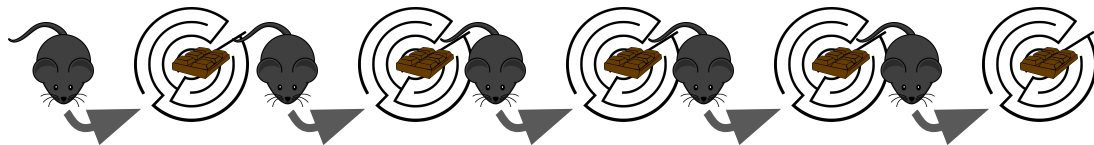
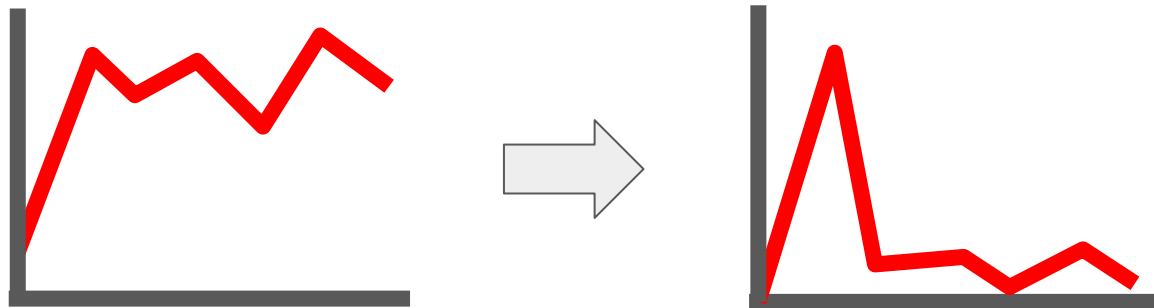
# Science!



**\*Click!\***

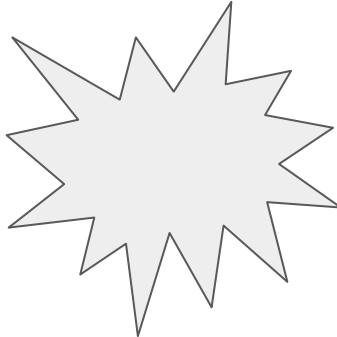


# Science!

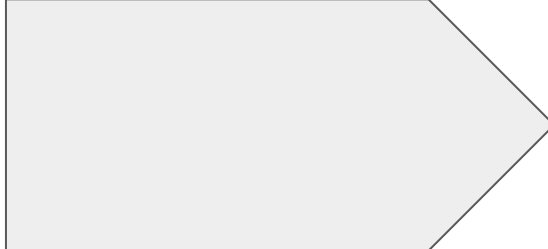




# The Habit Loop



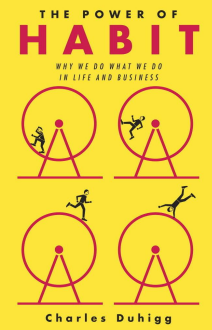
**CUE**



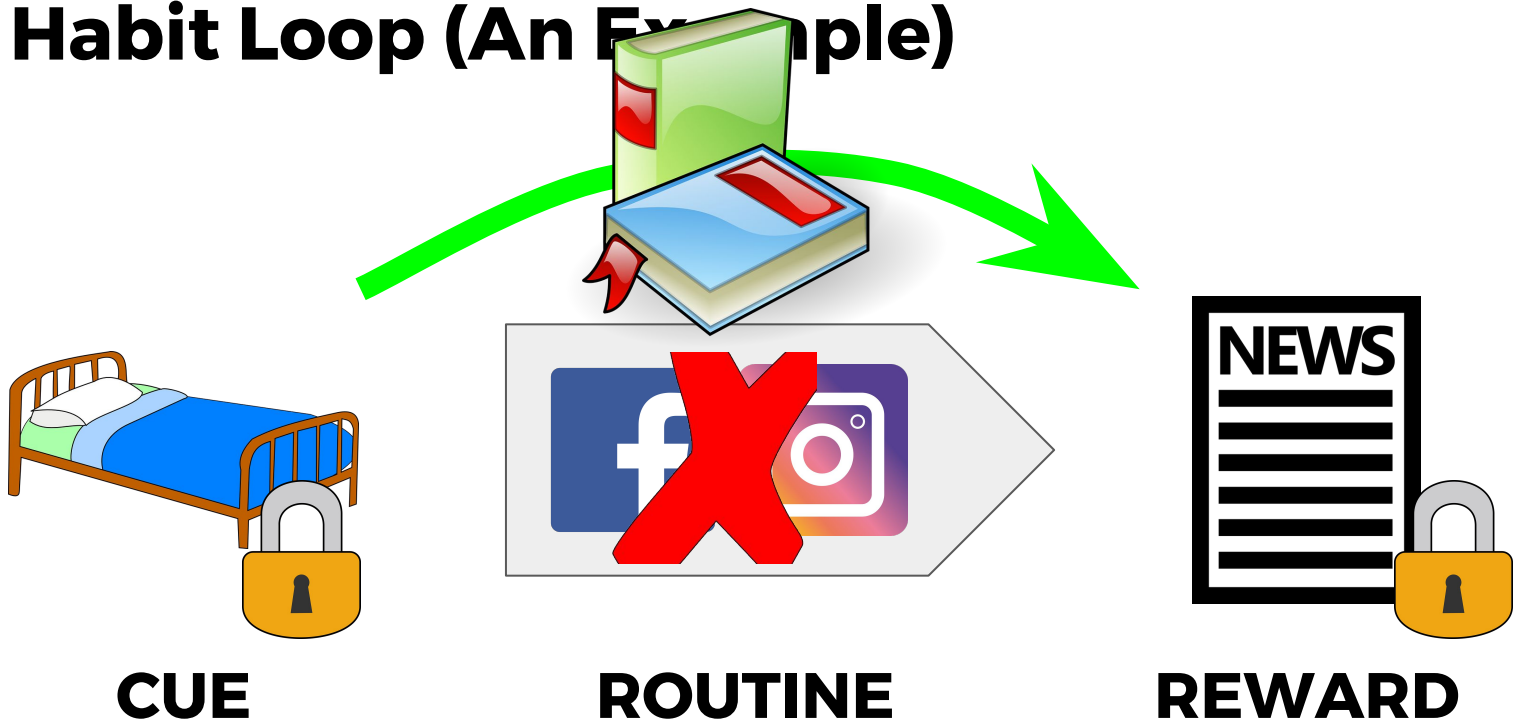
**ROUTINE**



**REWARD**



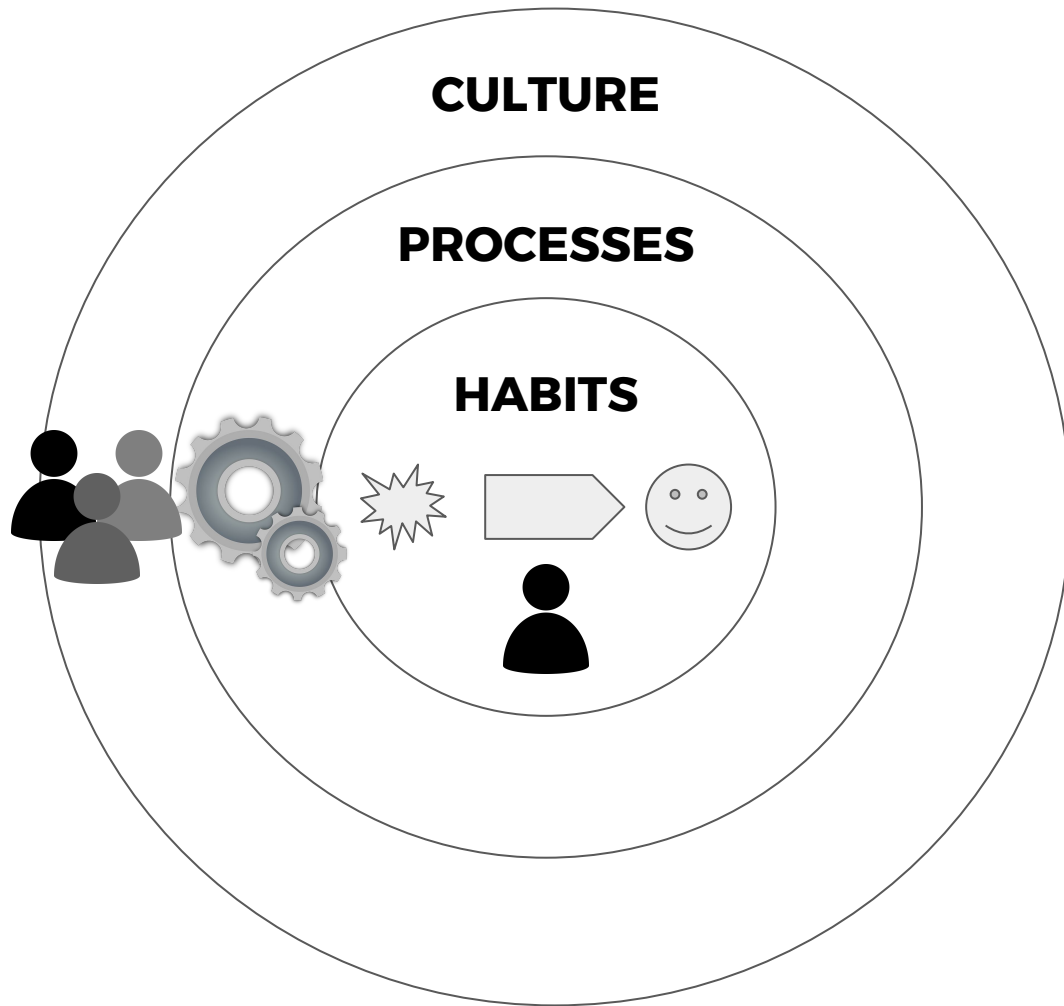
# The Habit Loop (An Example)



**CUE**

**ROUTINE**

**REWARD**



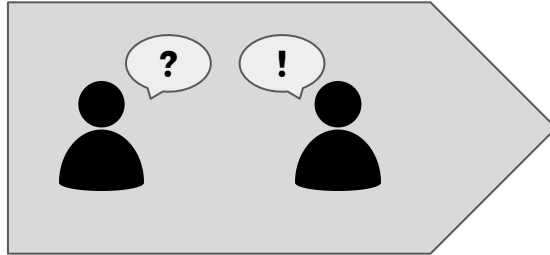
A group of hikers is shown on a rocky trail during sunset. The scene is bathed in a warm, golden light. One hiker in the center has their right arm raised in a gesture of triumph or encouragement. The hikers are dressed in outdoor gear like hats, backpacks, and shorts. The background features rugged, rocky terrain under a clear sky.

**To implement new processes,  
first focus on changing individual  
habits.**

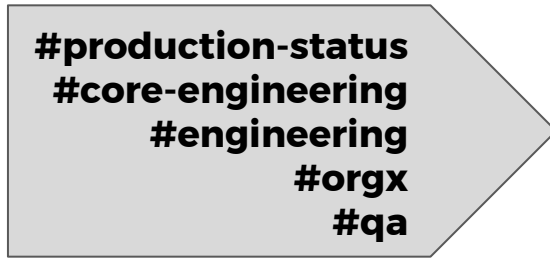
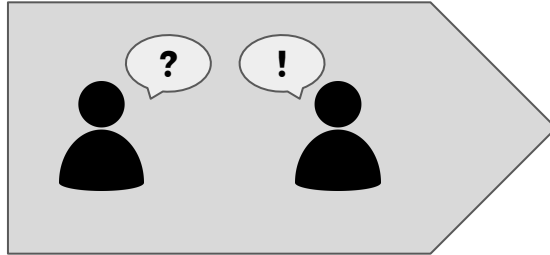
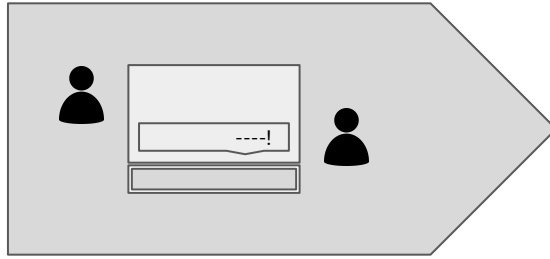
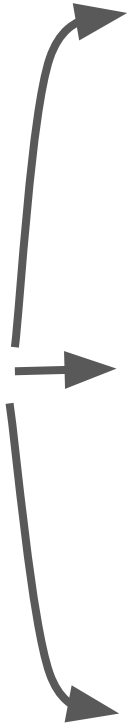
# Habit #1



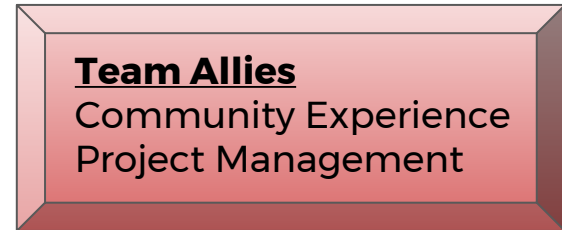
# Habit #1



# Habit #1: Old



**and more...**

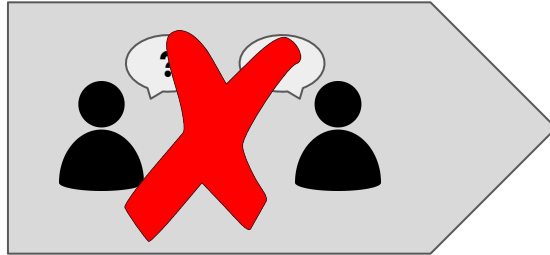
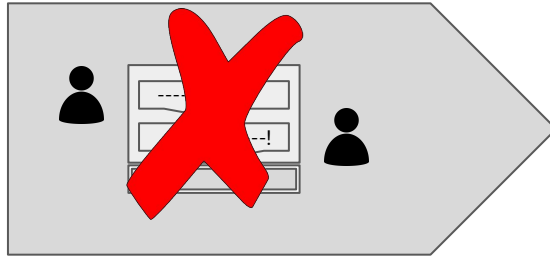
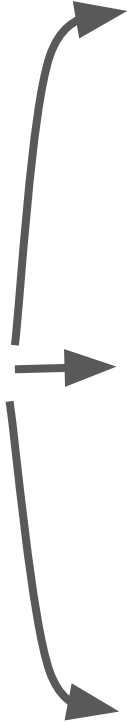


A group of hikers is shown on a rocky trail during sunset. The scene is bathed in a warm, golden light. One hiker in the center has their hand raised. The text 'Avoid using backchannels when communicating breakage.' is overlaid in white, bold font across the middle of the image.

**Avoid using backchannels when communicating breakage.**



# Habit #1: New!



#production-status  
#core-engineering  
#engineering + @oncall!  
#orgx  
#qa

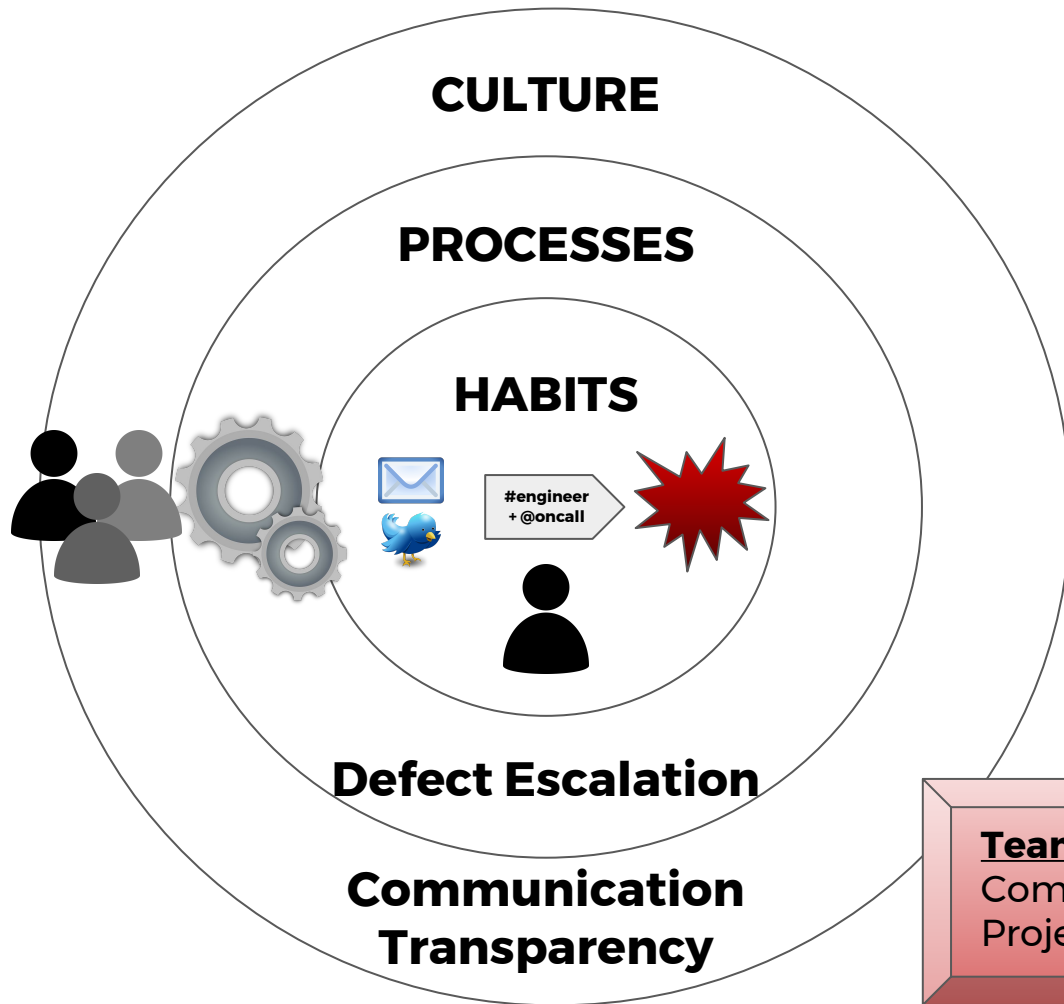


# Habit #1: New!



**#engineering  
+ @oncall**

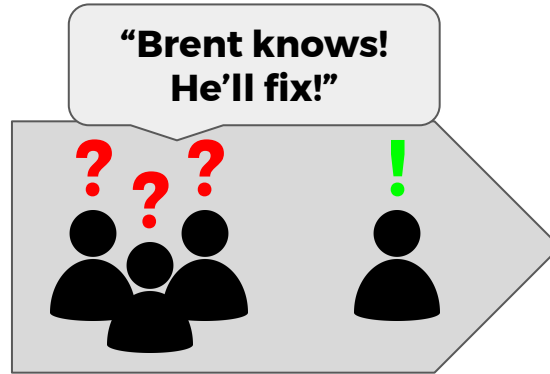
**Yes,  
critical!**



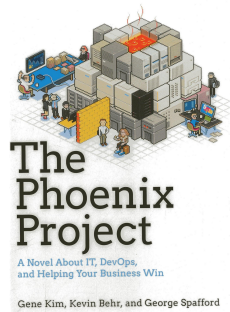
# Habit #2



# Habit #2: Old



From the authors of *The Visible Ops Handbook*



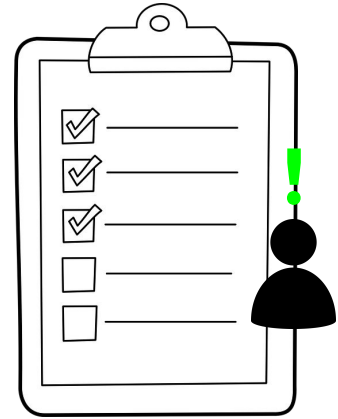
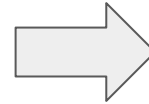
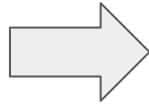
A group of hikers is shown in a desert landscape, likely on a mountain trail. The scene is bathed in a warm, yellow-orange light, suggesting either sunrise or sunset. The hikers are dressed in outdoor gear, including hats, backpacks, and sturdy clothing. One hiker in the center is waving their hand. The overall mood is one of teamwork and shared experience in a challenging environment.

**Stop relying on a single engineer  
to fix an incident.**

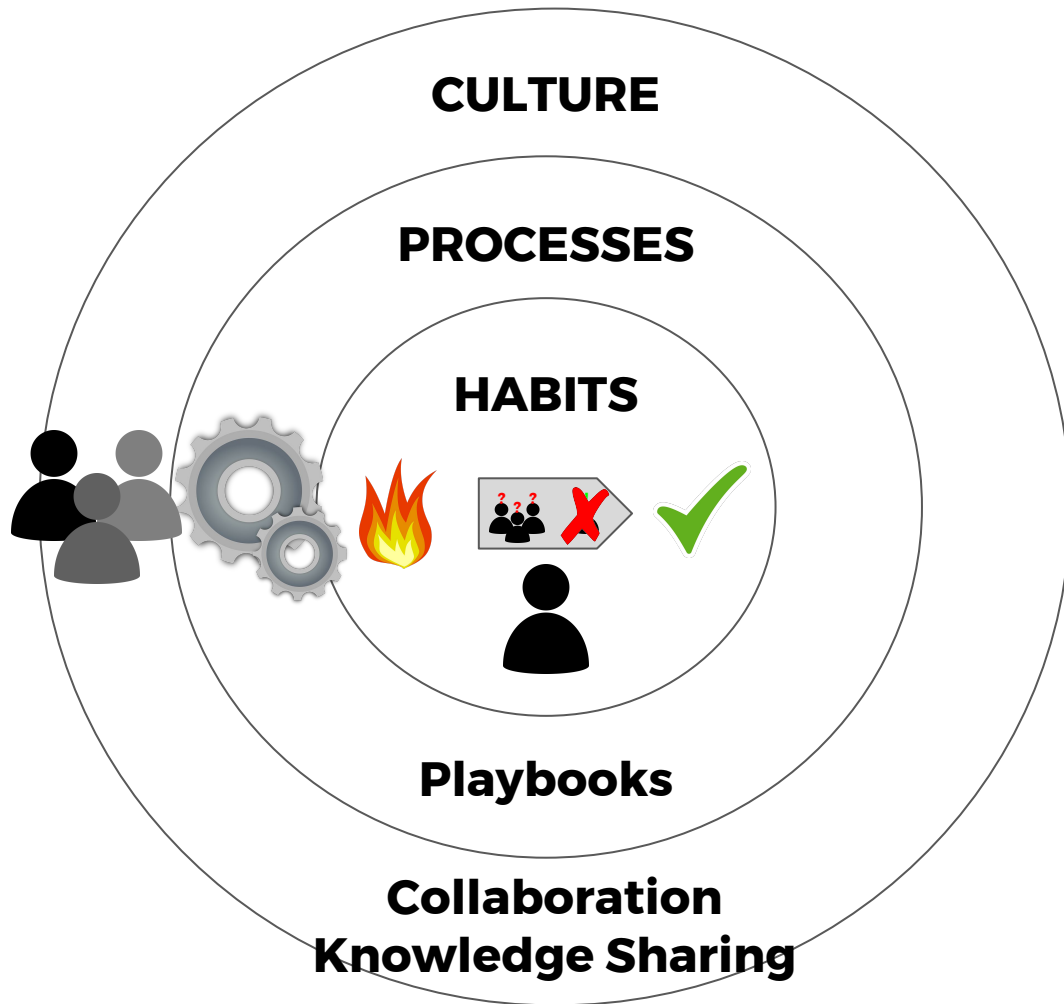
# Habit #2: New!



# It's Time for a Playbook



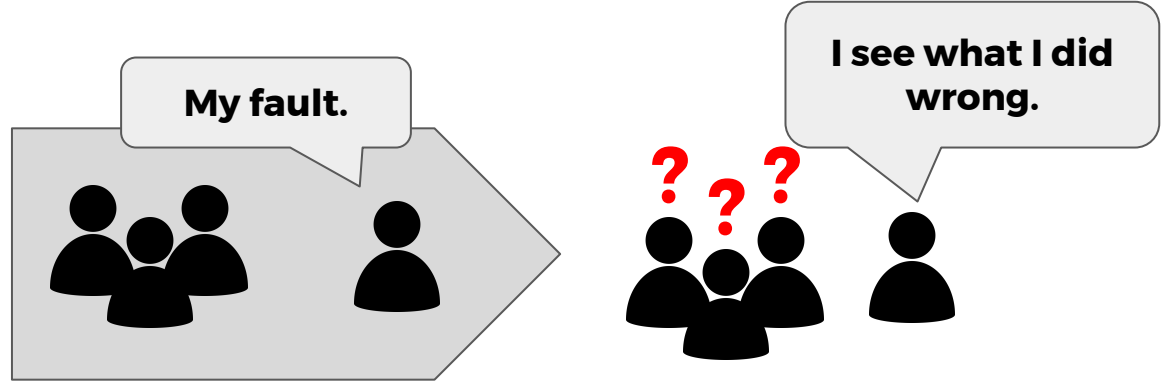




# Habit #3



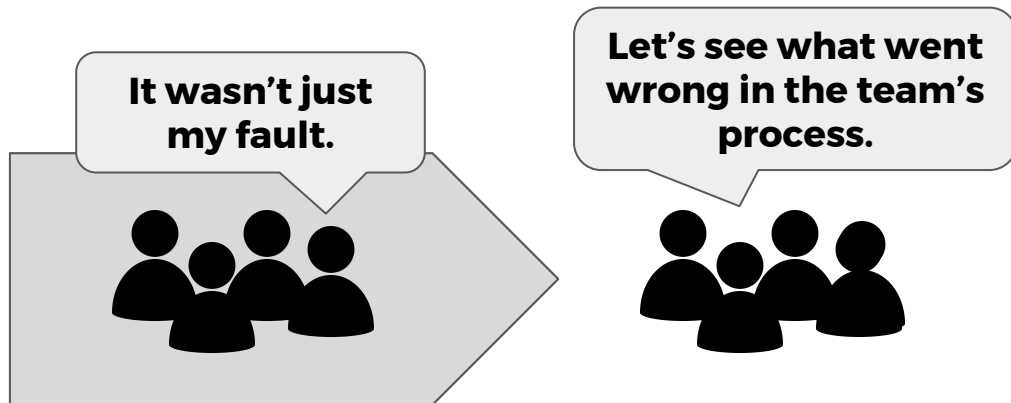
# Habit #3: Old



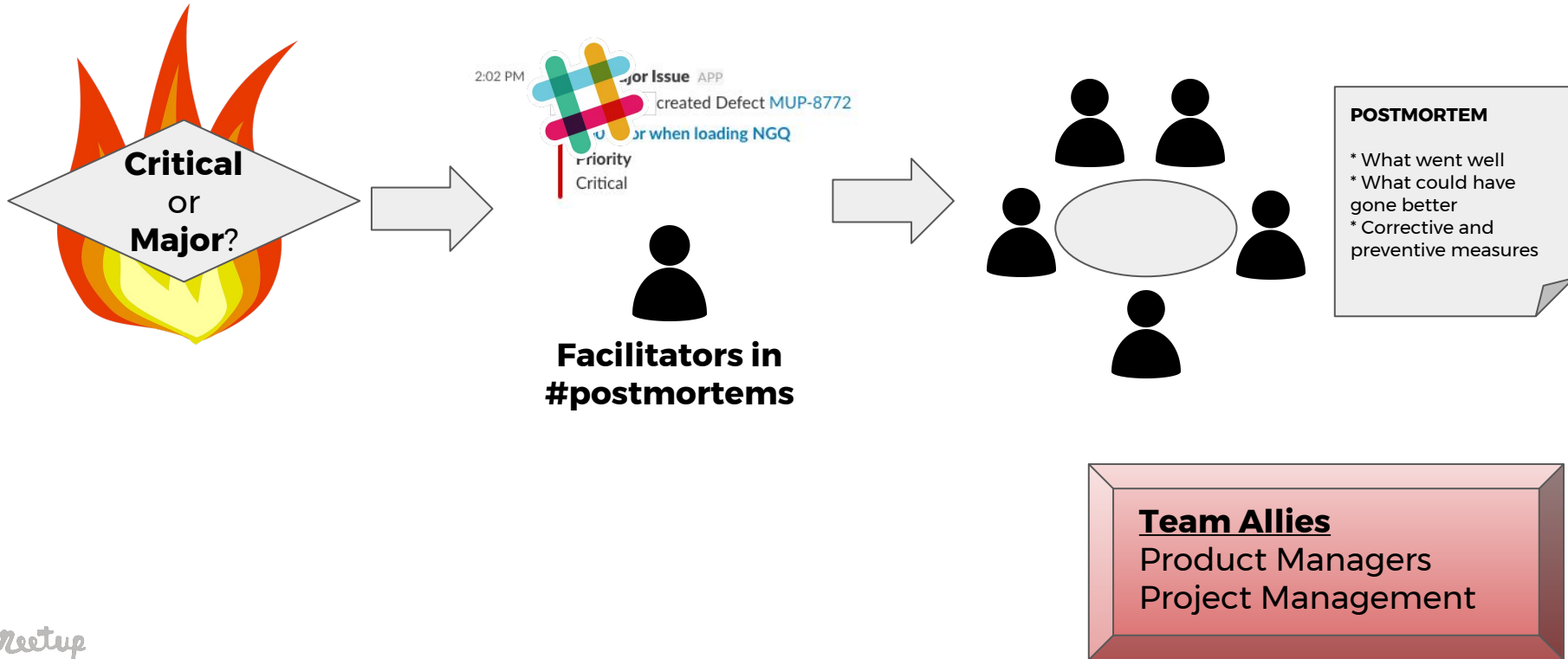
A group of hikers is shown on a rocky trail during sunset. The scene is bathed in a warm, golden light. The hikers are dressed in outdoor gear, including hats, backpacks, and shorts. One hiker in the center has their right arm raised. The background features rugged, rocky terrain under a clear sky. The overall mood is one of adventure and teamwork.

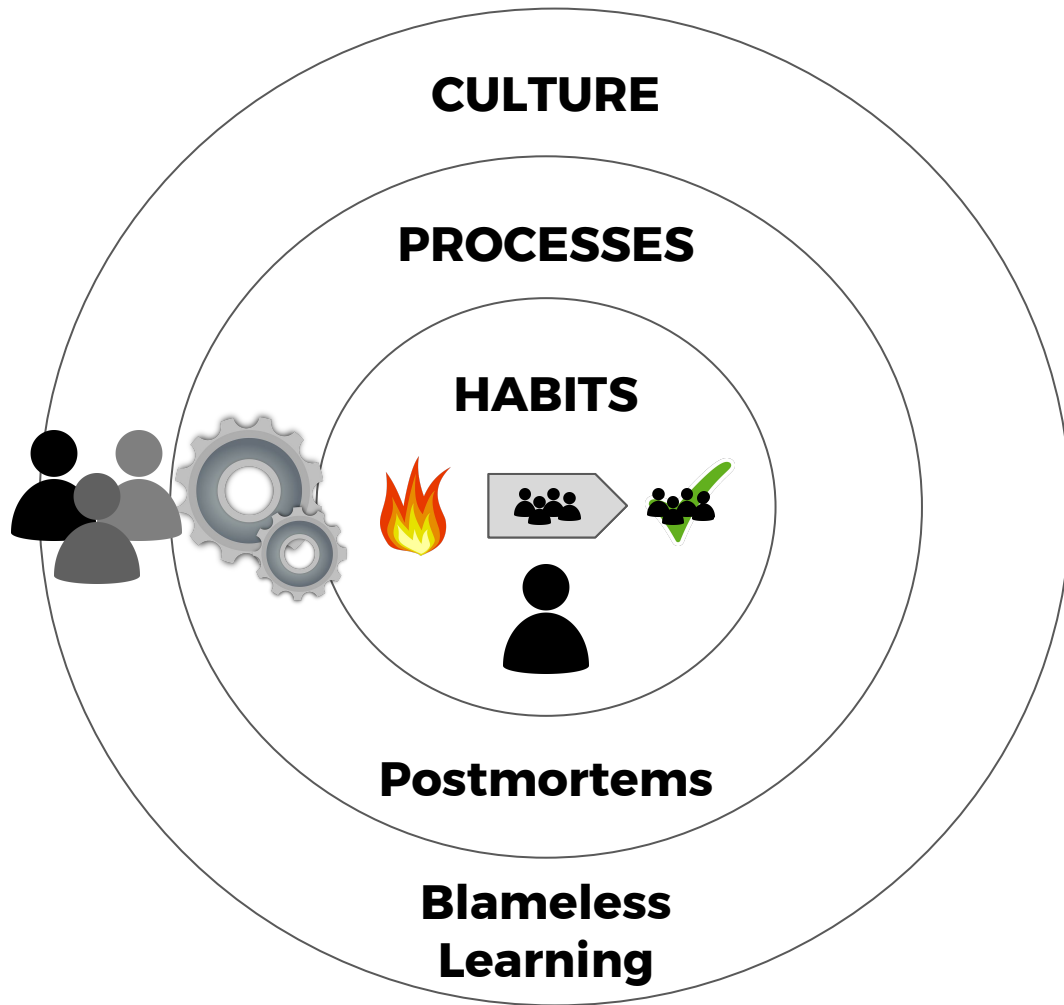
**Don't just take full personal responsibility.**

# Habit #3: New!



# First Step Toward Postmortems





# The Habit Loop





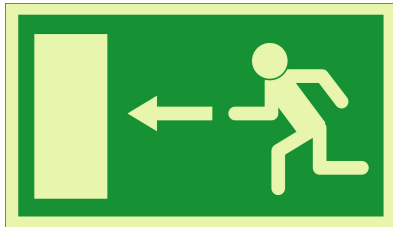
# In Review: Getting Buy-in for SRE



1. **Job Description**  
Align Expectations

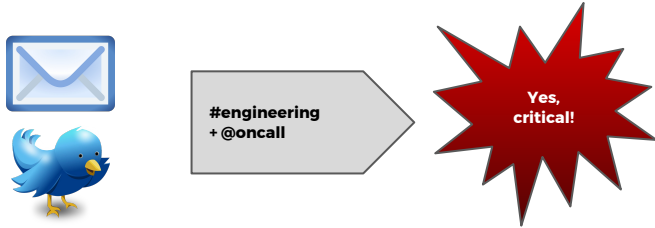


2. **Roadmap**  
Demonstrate Impact

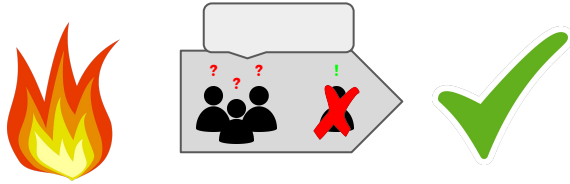


3. **Exit Strategy**  
Is it the right time?

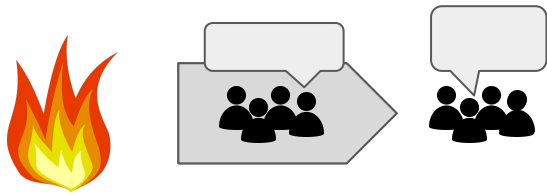
# In Review: Change Old Habits



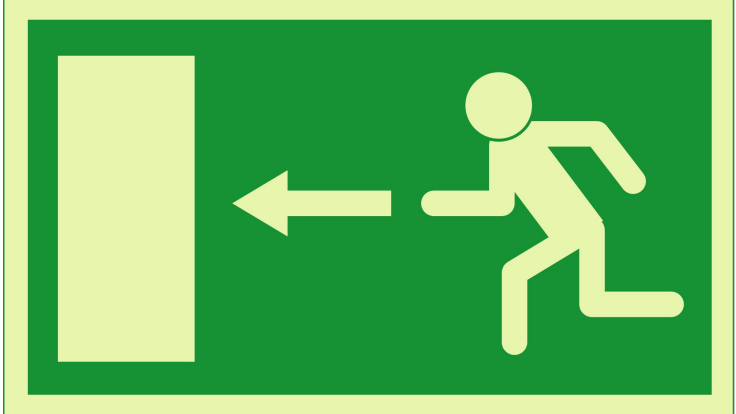
1. **Avoid Backchannels** → Incident Escalation



2. **Stop Relying on “Brent”** → Playbooks



3. **Don't Take All Responsibility** → Postmortems



# A Final Thought





# What habit are you going to change?



**Thanks!**  
**Meetup is hiring!**  
**[rich@meetup.com](mailto:rich@meetup.com)**

