

It's always time for tea

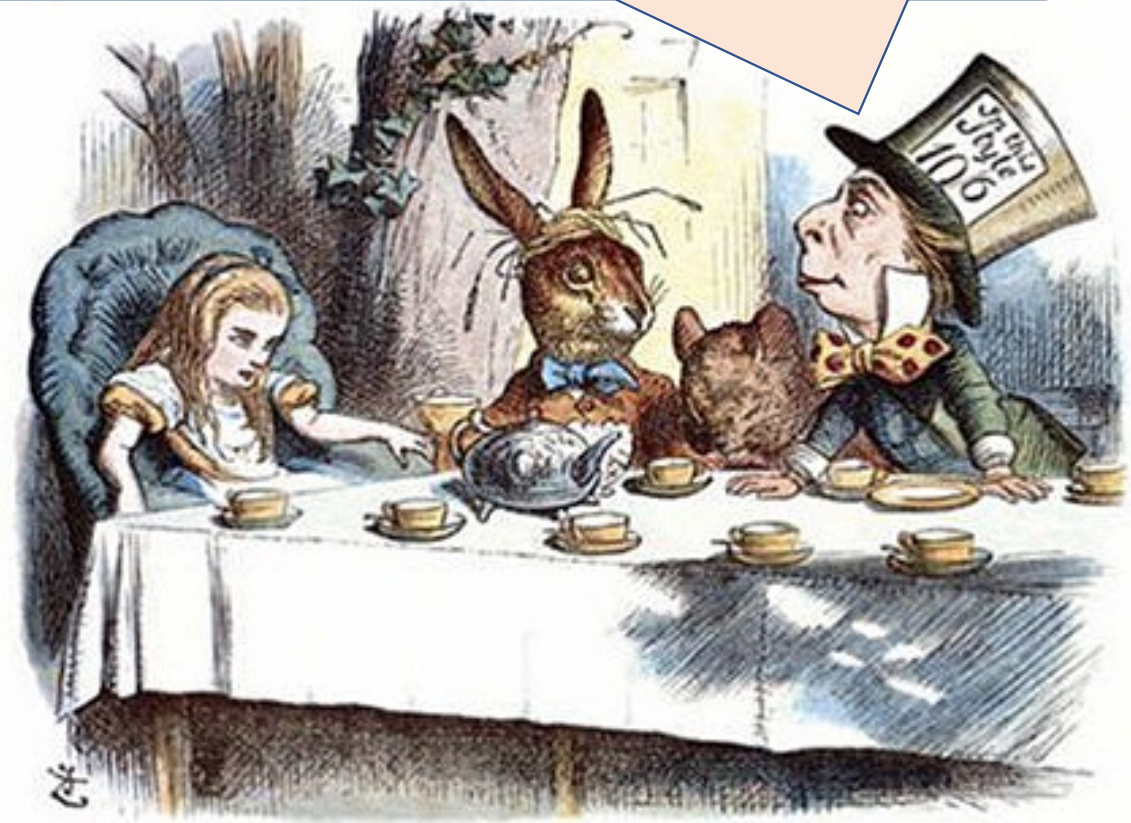
Lessons for Alice the software developer

Allan Kelly

Ordev

November 2022

'Yes, that's it,' said the Hatter with a sigh: 'it's always tea-time, and we've no time to wash the things between whiles.'



Spoiler alert

It's always time for tea

Is the natural state of the world

Lesson 1: Time



Remember “project work” when you were at school, college, university

When did you do the work?



**The time to repair the roof is
when the sun is shining**

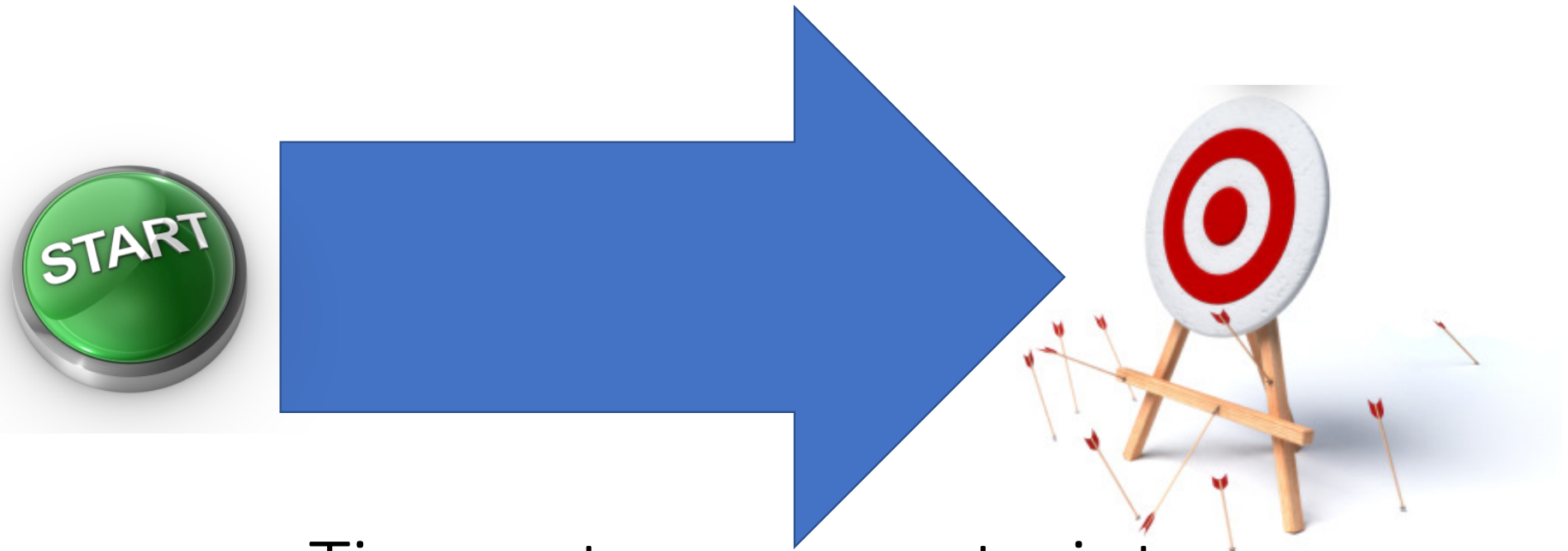
John F Kennedy, January 1962



Start sooner?



More time causes work to expand



Time acts as a constraint
More time, more work, later feedback

Humans are good at working to deadlines

But, human's can't estimate time

Vierodt's Law: short durations of time tend to be overestimated, long durations tend to be underestimated

Hofstadter's Law: It always takes longer than you expect, even when you take into account Hofstadter's Law

And lots of research by psychologists

Deadlines over estimates

Engineer solution within constraint

Work backwards

Engineer within constraints

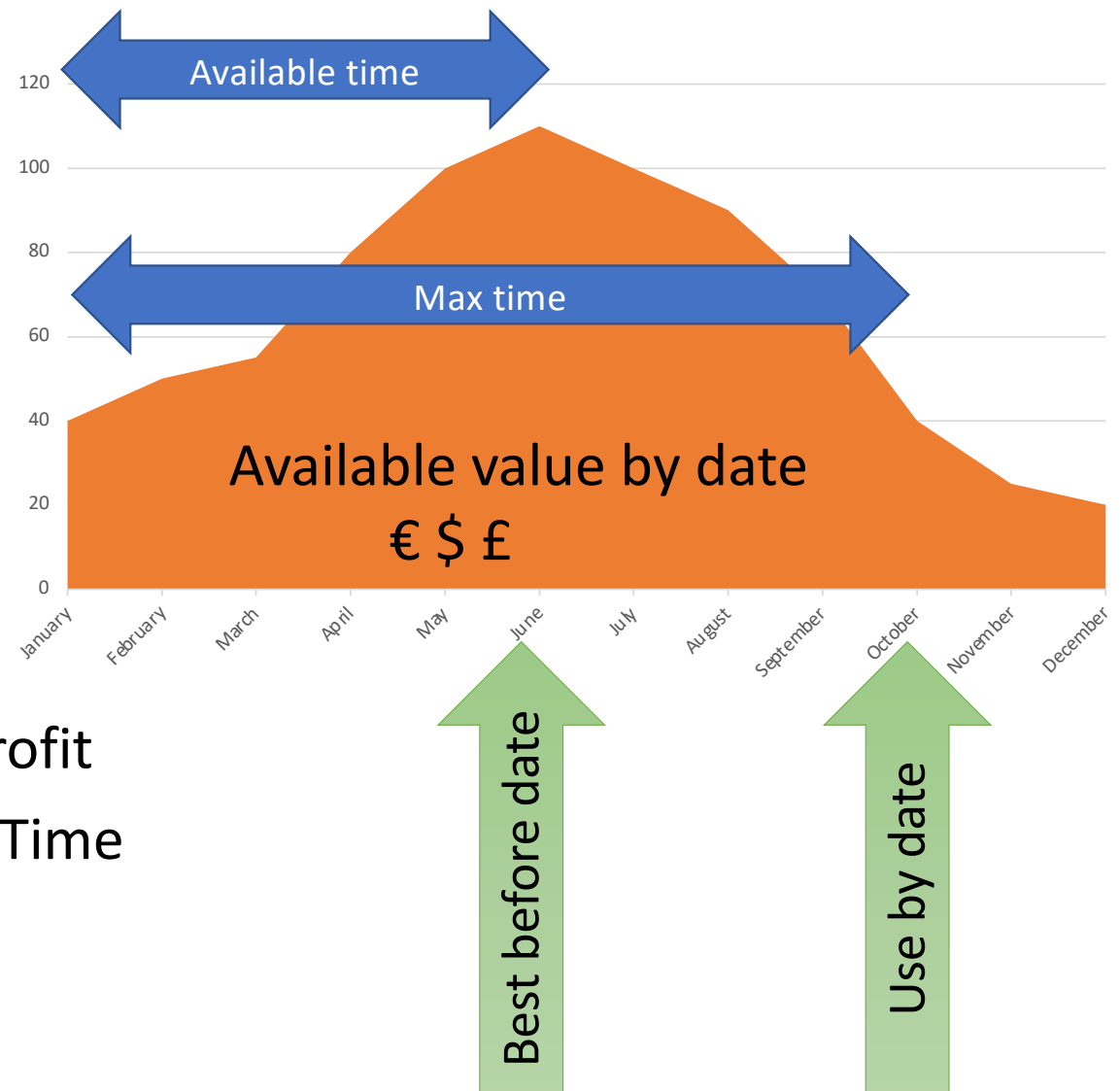
Cost = Time * fx(people)

Profit = Revenue – Cost

Cost = Revenue – Profit

Time * fx(people) = Revenue – Profit

fx(people) = (Revenue – Profit) / Time

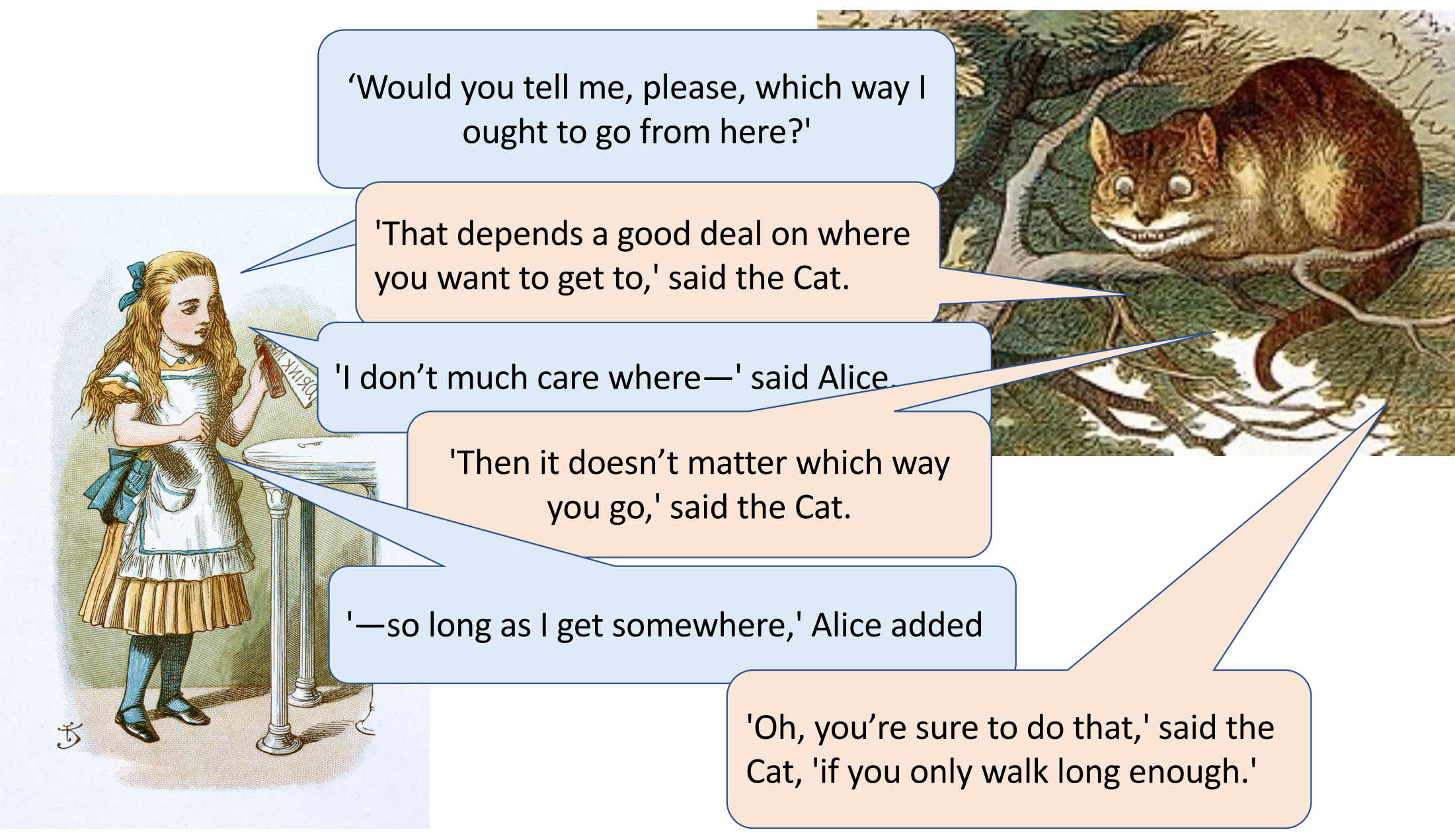


It's always time for tea

The question is:

What tea will you get?

Lesson 2: Work

An illustration from 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland' showing Alice, a young girl with long blonde hair and a blue bow, standing next to a small white table. She is holding a bottle labeled 'DRINK ME'. To her right, a large, grinning Cheshire Cat is perched on a tree branch. The scene is set in a forest with trees and foliage. The illustration is in a classic, detailed style with soft colors.

'Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?'

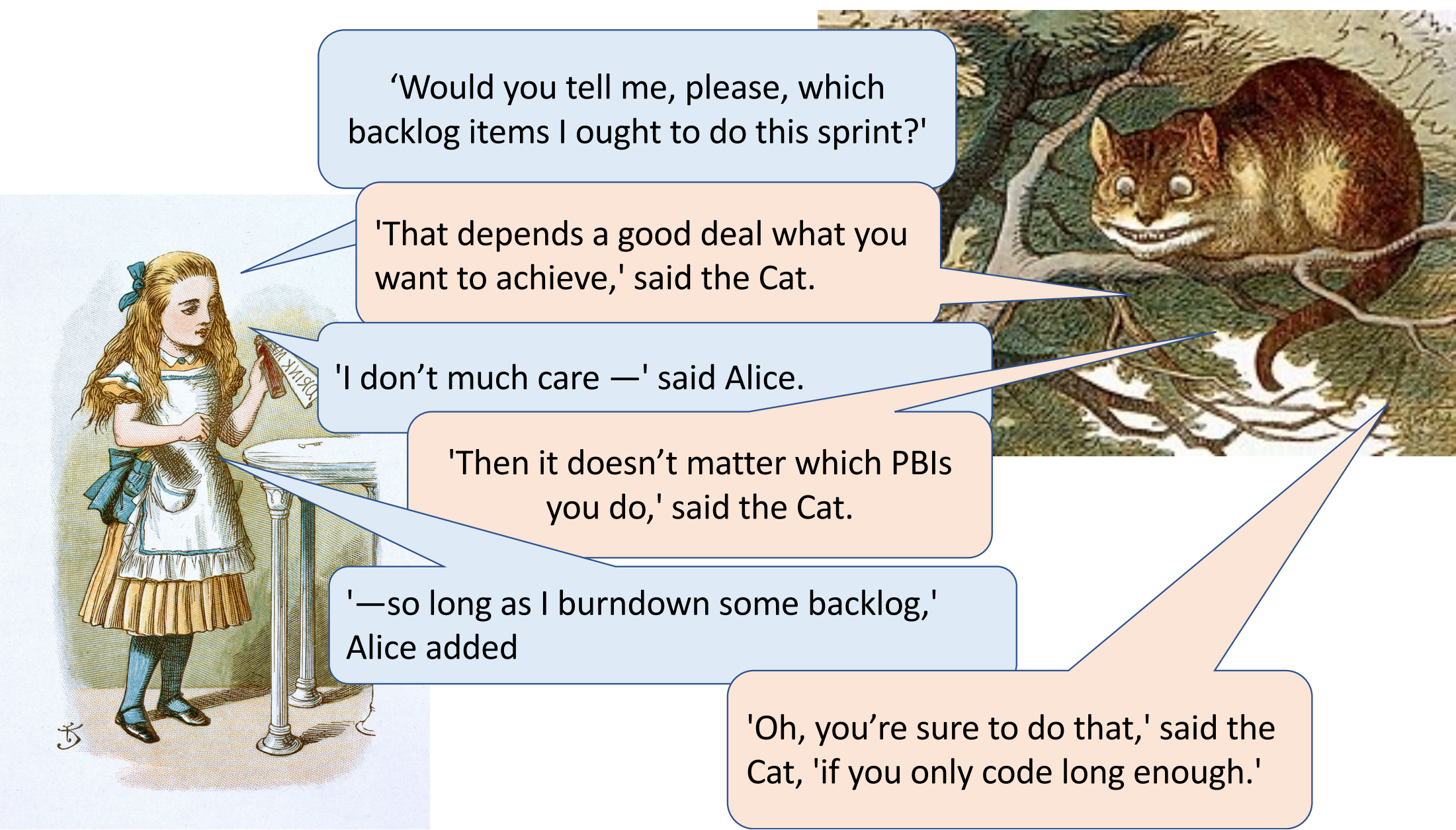
'That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,' said the Cat.

'I don't much care where—' said Alice.

'Then it doesn't matter which way you go,' said the Cat.

'—so long as I get somewhere,' Alice added

'Oh, you're sure to do that,' said the Cat, 'if you only walk long enough.'

An illustration of Alice and the Cheshire Cat. Alice, on the left, is a young girl with long blonde hair tied with a blue bow, wearing a white dress with a blue collar and a yellow skirt. She is holding a small bottle. The Cheshire Cat, on the right, is a brown and orange cat with a wide, toothy grin, sitting on a tree branch. The background shows a forest scene with trees and a path.

'Would you tell me, please, which backlog items I ought to do this sprint?'

'That depends a good deal what you want to achieve,' said the Cat.

'I don't much care —' said Alice.

'Then it doesn't matter which PBIs you do,' said the Cat.

'—so long as I burndown some backlog,' Alice added

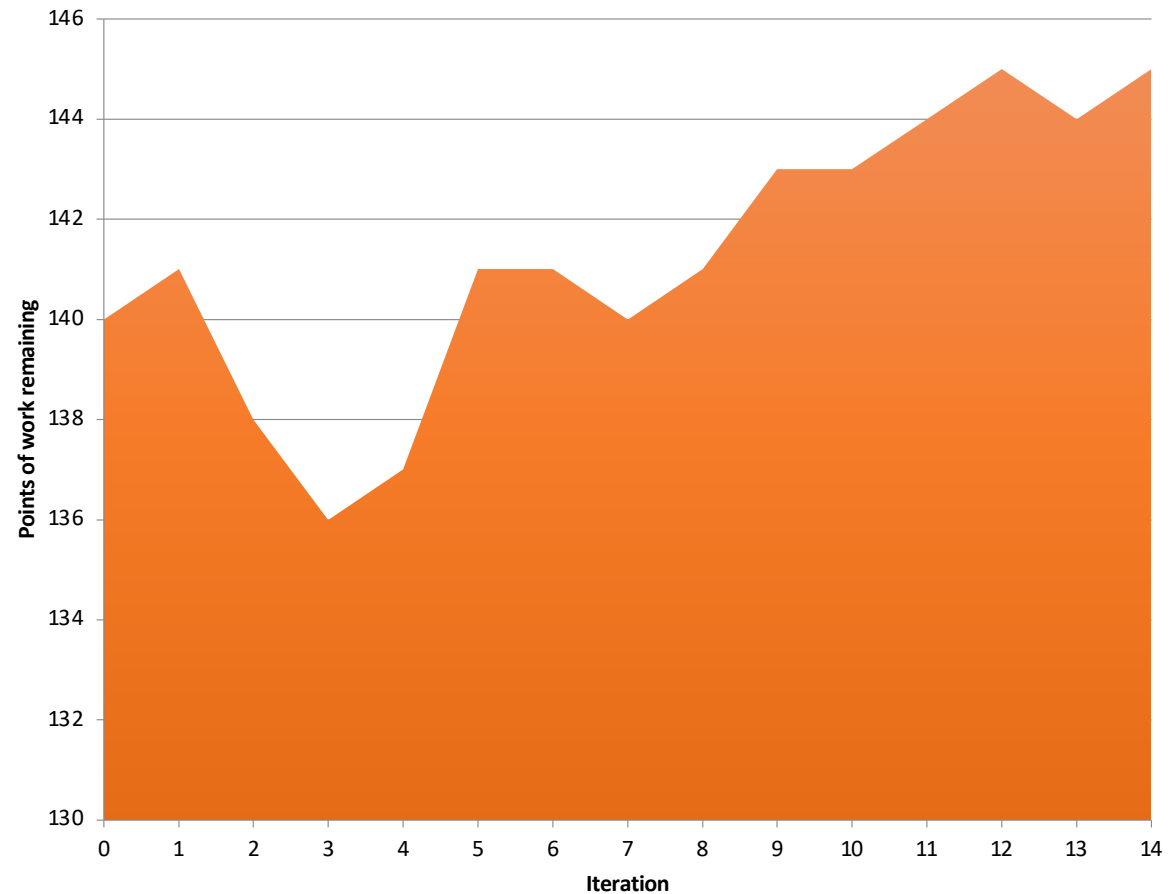
'Oh, you're sure to do that,' said the Cat, 'if you only code long enough.'

Alice is busy doing stuff

Backlogs promised to answer
“what shall we do now”

Backlogs have become the
problem

Backlogs don't scale





The Backlog - can't see the wood for the tree

What Porpoise?

Mock Turtle said: 'no wise fish would go anywhere without a porpoise.'

'why, if a fish came to ME, and told me he was going a journey, I should say "With what porpoise?"'

'Don't you mean "**purpose**"?' said Alice.



Lesson 2: Work needs a Higher Purpose

Goal

Vision

Mission

Objective

True North

BHAG (Big hairy audacious goal)

MTP (Massively transformative purpose)



Where would you rather work?

A



B

TESLA

“Our goal is to deliver world-class customer experiences at every touchpoint and do so on a foundation of trust and transparency.”

“Our goal is... to accelerate the advent of sustainable transport by bringing compelling mass market electric cars to market as soon as possible.”

How is the world a better place by your company being here?

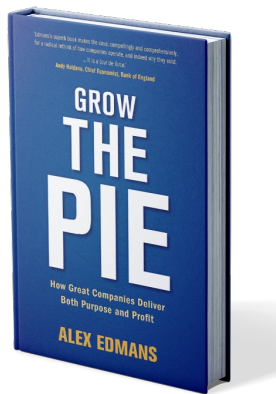
The most **successful companies** don't **target profit** directly, but are driven by purpose

When all members ... **work together, bound by a common purpose** and focused on the long term, they create shared value in a way that enlarges the slices of everyone

Surprisingly, **this approach typically ends up more profitable** than if profits were the end goal

Profits are often the by-product

Alex Edmans, *Grow the Pie*, 2020



Higher purpose is NOT a plan

Purpose over plans

Plans are dangerous

Stockdale paradox

“You must maintain unwavering faith that you can and will prevail in the end, regardless of the difficulties, AND at the same time have the discipline to confront the most brutal facts of your current reality, whatever they might be.”

A plan would be misleading
No plan could survive in PoW camp
Plan failure would be demoralising



Admiral James Stockdale,
1923-2005

Prisoner of War
1965-1973

Dark side of planning

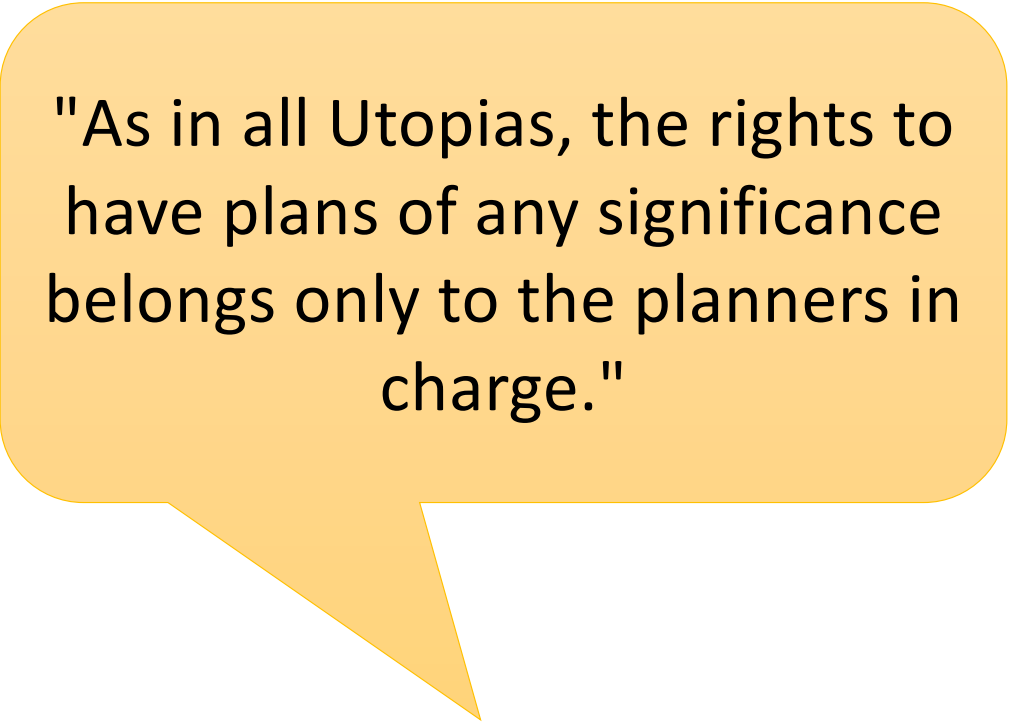
Planning is dis-empowering

Plans are controlling

Plans are demotivating

Plans create goal displacement

Plan reporting hides problems



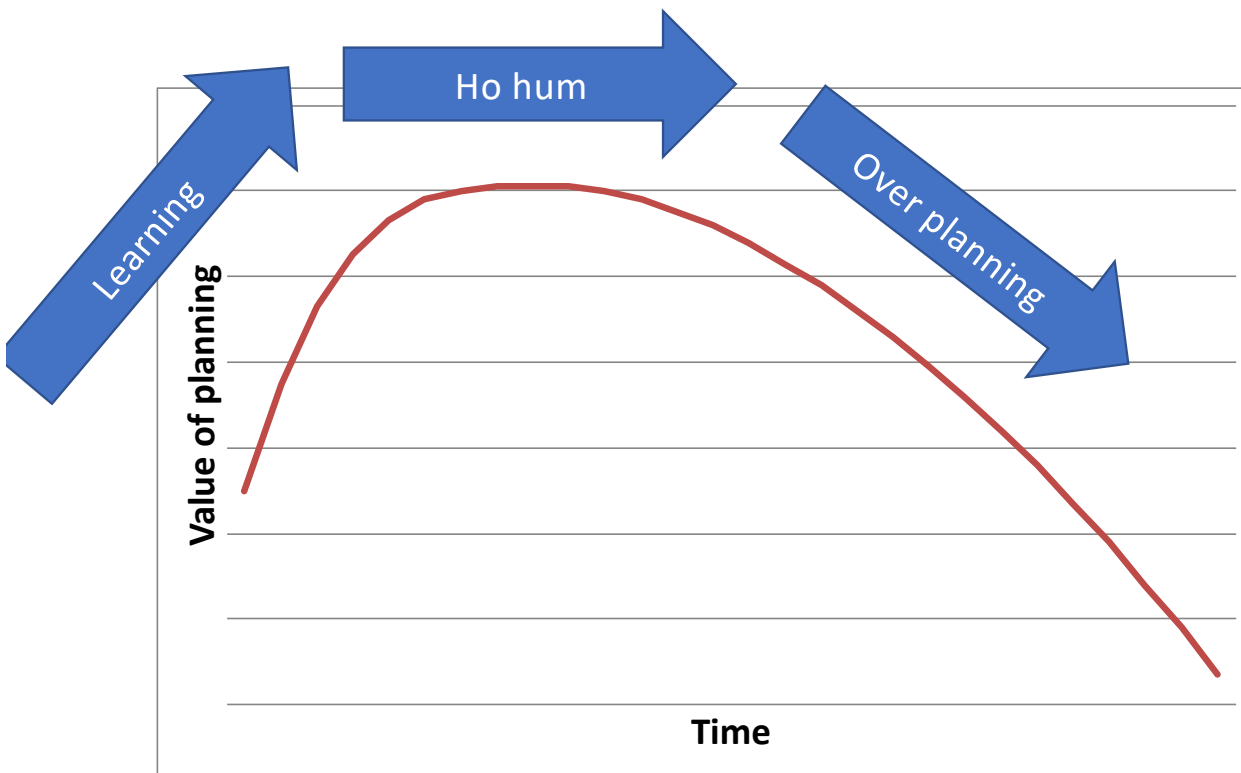
"As in all Utopias, the rights to have plans of any significance belongs only to the planners in charge."

Jane Jacobs, 1916-2006,
writer & activist



But not planning is crazy?

Planning has value – planning is learning



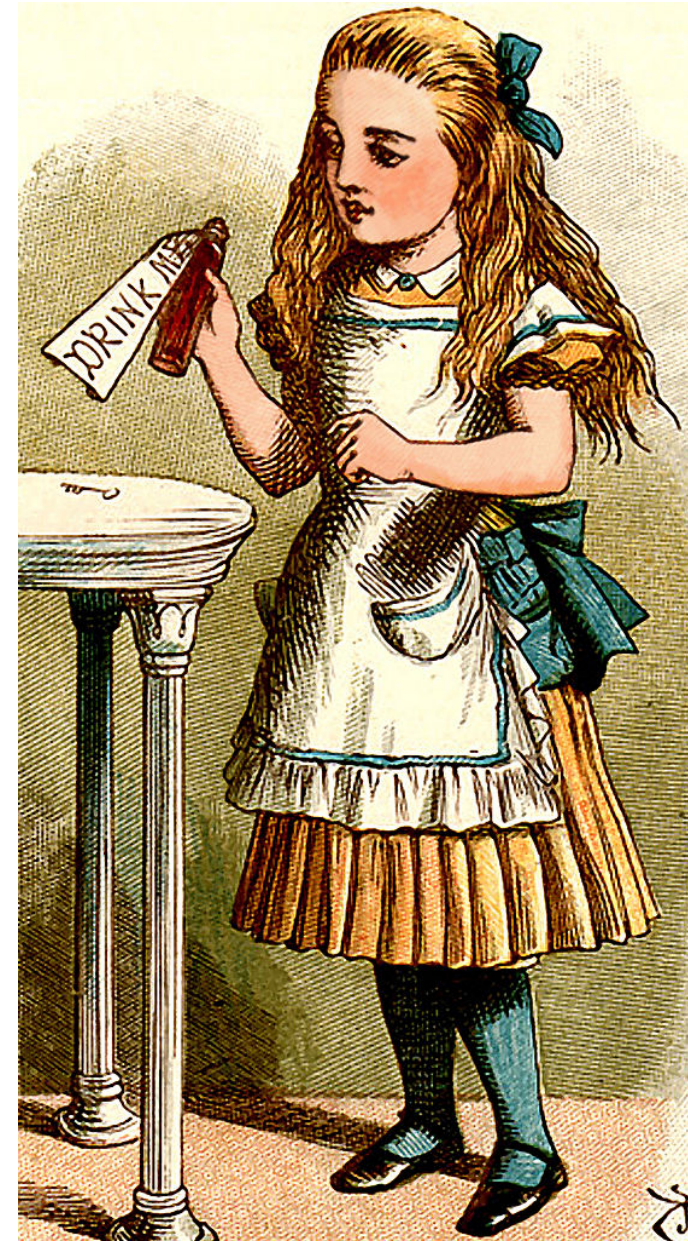
Planning has rapidly diminishing returns

Lesson 3: Drink Me

Small over big

Kelly's Law of projects:

“Inside every large project is a small project struggling to get out”



Your work...

Big & rational

Plan it

Understand
everything

Estimate it

Schedule it

Execute it

Risk manage it



...your choice

Small & ambitious

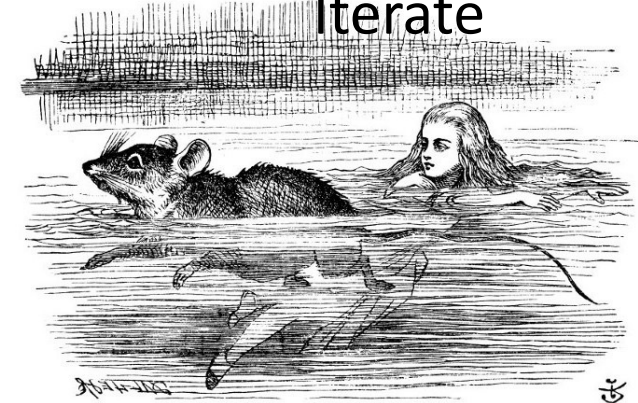
Clear purpose

Work in the small

Work with deadlines

Review regularly

Iterate



Choose your method

Traditional (heavyweight)

Plan driven methods

Trust in method

V-Model

SSADM

ISO-9000

ISO-12207 (MML)

Method-1

RUP/OUP



Lightweight methods

Feedback driven

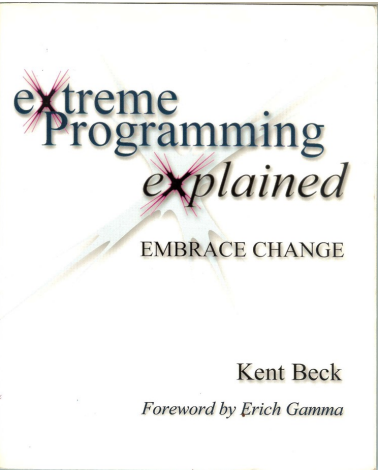
Trust in people

Scrum

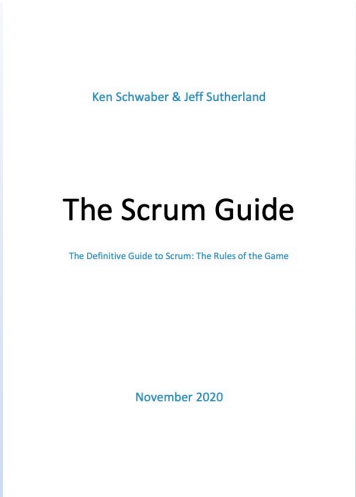
XP

Crystal

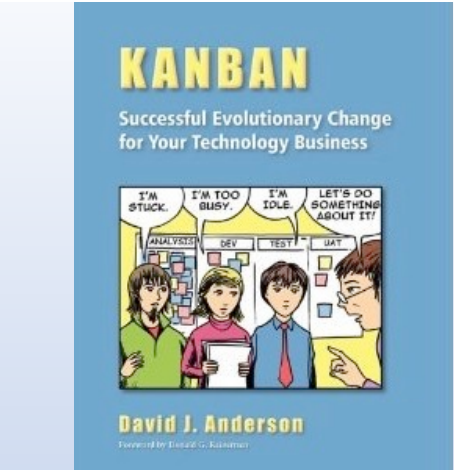
Kanban



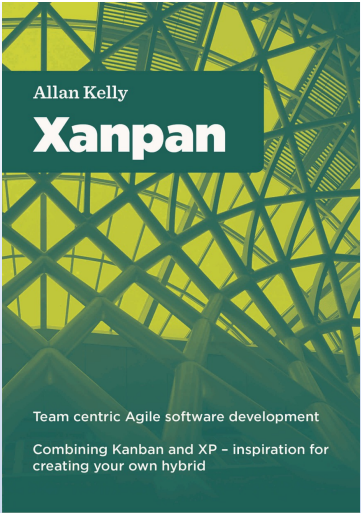
XP Explained
190 pages



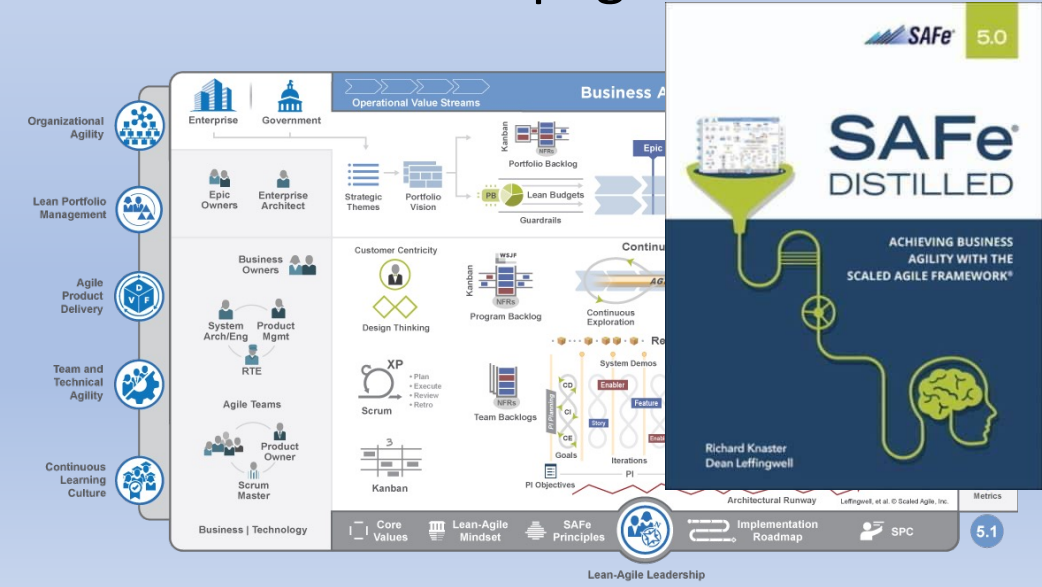
Scrum Guide
14 pages



Kanban
256 pages

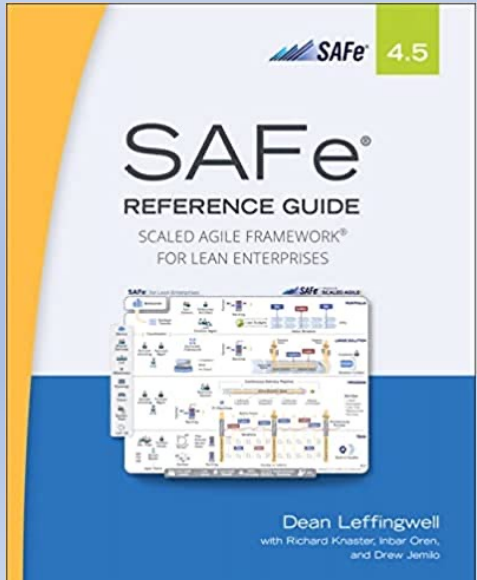


Xanpan
204 pages



SAFe 5.0 Distilled
320 pages

*SAFe 4.5
Reference Guide*
816 pages



Lesson 4: Simplify

'Rule Forty-two. ALL PERSONS MORE THAN A MILE HIGH TO LEAVE THE COURT.'

'I'M not a mile high,' said Alice.

'You are,' said the King.

'Nearly two miles high,' added the Queen.

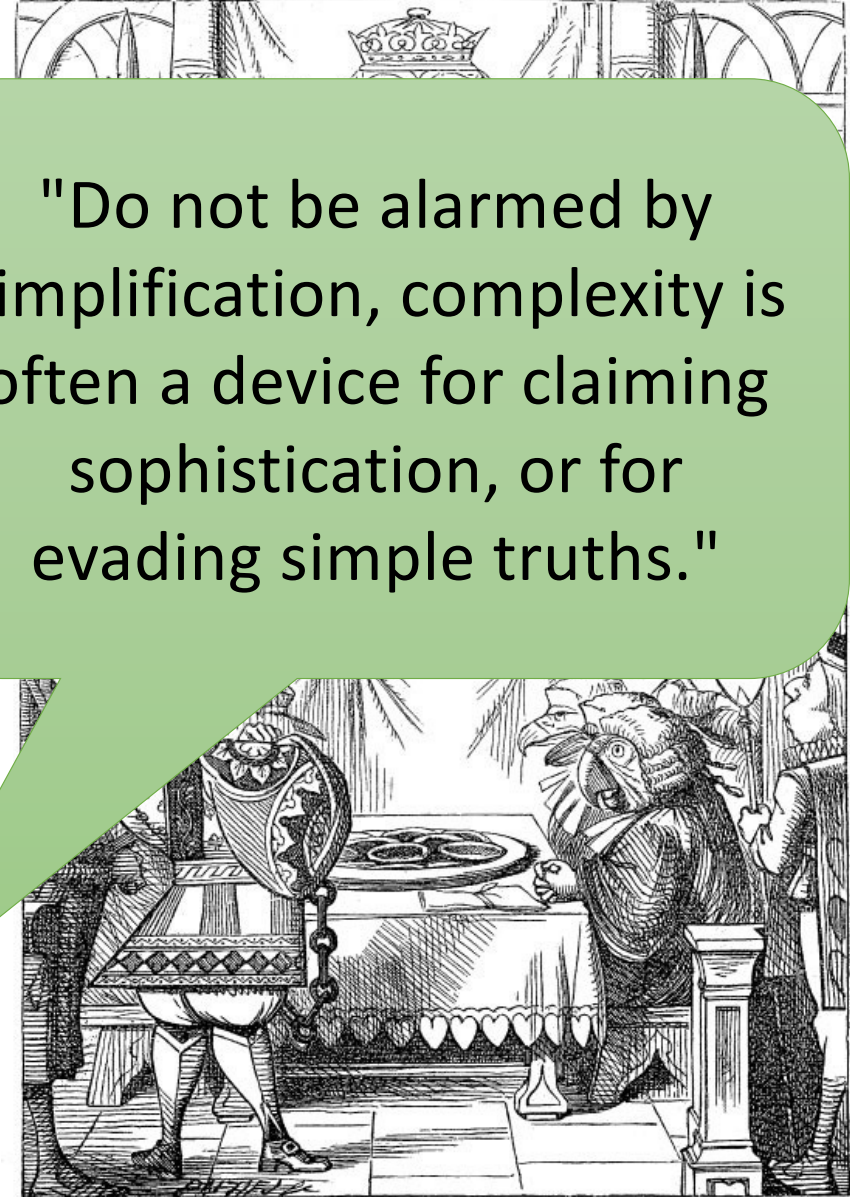
'Well, I shan't go, ...,' said Alice: 'besides, that's not a regular rule: you invented it just now.'

'It's the oldest rule in the book,' said the King.

'Then it ought to be Number One,' said Alice.

John Kenneth Galbraith
1908 – 2006

"Do not be alarmed by simplification, complexity is often a device for claiming sophistication, or for evading simple truths."



It's always time for tea

Deadlines over estimates

Purpose over plans

Small over big

Simplicity over complexity

allan@allankelly.net

Please connect: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/allankellynet/>

Slides & book draw

<https://www.allankelly.net/oredev/>

