

# I have a question



Leading with Uncertainty,  
Doubt, and Embarrassment

**YOW!** Tech Leaders  
Summit



  @SimonAubury

Yow Tech



# What's your leadership style?

Leadership  
**expectations ...**

confident

courageous

influential

**AM I A BAD LEADER IF I'M NOT?**



# Hello!

**I am Simon Aubury**

Data stuff @ Simple Machines



Deutsche Bank



Commonwealth Bank

Simple  
Machines



/thoughtworks

A young boy with light brown hair, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and a maroon vest, is sitting on a wooden slatted bench outdoors. He is covering his face with both hands, palms facing outwards, in a gesture of embarrassment or shame. The background is a blurred street scene with buildings and trees.

## Moments of **embarrassment**

keep coding

avoid politics

networks





## Balcony vs **Dance floor**

Photo by [Ardian Lumi](#) on [Unsplash](#)

## Where does your time go



Situational leadership ...

**effort applied in one area  
forgoes attention in another**

Image by [Rujhan Basir](#) from [Pixabay](#)

## CHARITY.WTF

### HELICOPTER MANAGEMENT AND OTHER MISTAKES

You are a freshly minted manager. You come full of rage and frustration at the poor management you've endured and witnessed in tech, and you are god damn determined not to repeat all of those mistakes.

You are tired of reporting to a manager who isn't transparent with you, who hoards critical information and isn't forthcoming about changes that impact you. You are tired of not being listened to or treated like a cog, so you swear to *really listen* and take your reports seriously.

You have seen sooooo many managers who failed to develop their people or sponsor them for growth opportunities, who blamed their team and hung them out to dry instead of having their back behind closed doors. Managers who didn't seem to care about you as people, or who never made it feel safe to say, "I need a mental health day". Managers who dangled the promise of a promotion, but even though you are doing the work, the recognition never comes.

[Helicopter management - and other mistakes](#)

## Rookie mistakes



### The traps

- Only focusing down
- Over-managing
- Lopsided view
- Political naivety





How much  
**ambiguity?**

## Acceptable ambiguity



The best leaders I've had ... let me **find my way** ...

but made it clear what the **goals & constraints** are.

Image by [shotarrow sakamoto](#) from [Pixabay](#)

You must understand  
& communicate  
**"the why"**

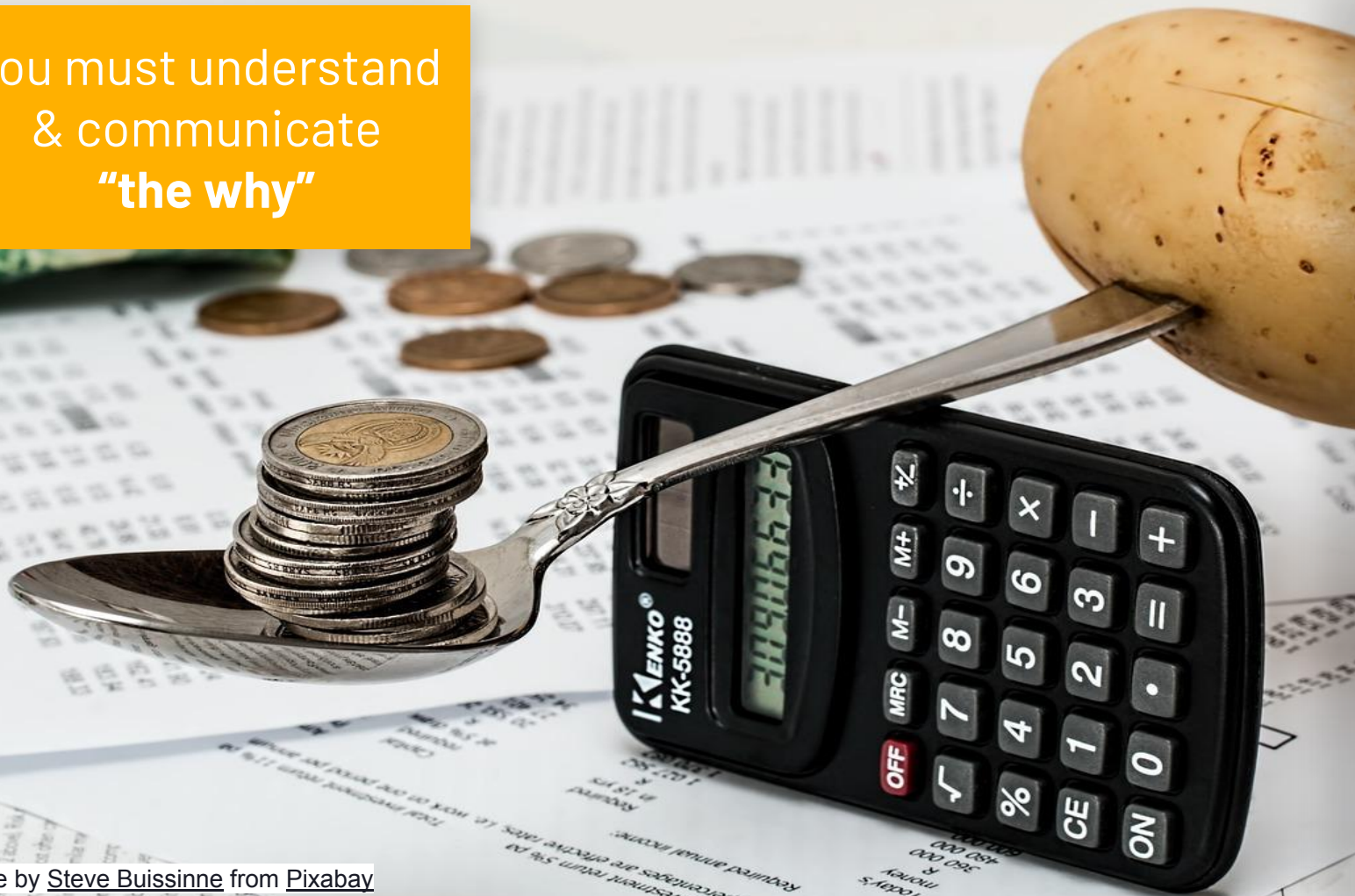


Image by [Steve Buissonne](#) from [Pixabay](#)

## Making money



Number of  
people  
searching

x

Searches  
per person

x

Dollar  
made per  
search

=

Revenue

How does your business function

- Don't think about this as abstract
- Break it down

Benn Stancil -

[Money, Python, and the Holy Grail: Designing Operational Models](#)



lead effectively  
**amidst ambiguity**



# Style influences



## Organisation

An organisation needs to be **time tolerant** for discovery & collective decisioning making

## Team maturity

What a **newly formed** team needs is radically different to an **established** team

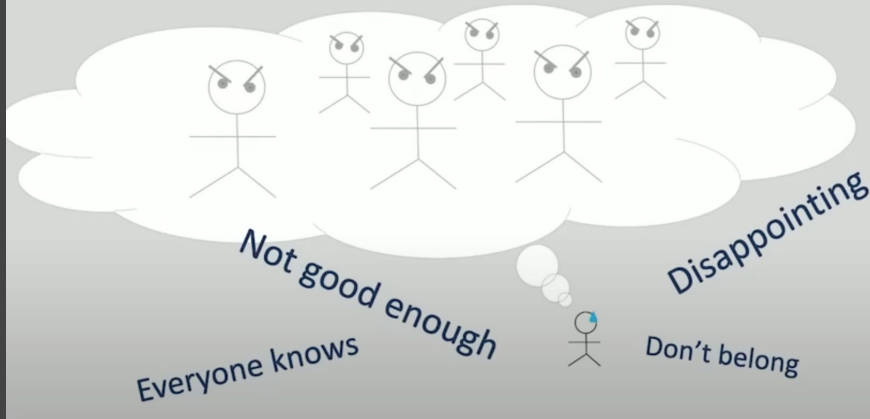
## Seniority mix

Situational leadership - modulate the time taken for **hand-on vs watching & learning**

## Insecurities around leadership



### Insecurities around leadership



### Feeling insecure:

- Does not in any way indicate a lack of talent

### But ...

- Learning to manage insecurities is essential



Decisiveness  
with humility

Leadership is  
caring.

The one who  
cares the most.

Moments of  
~~embarrassment~~  
**REALISATION !**





Leadership  
strategy  
**consequences**

democratic  
approach

trade-offs

shadow  
hierarchy



Demonstrate  
**The culture you  
expect**



**So ... what's your  
leadership style?**

***IT'S COMPLICATED***

# Uncertainty, doubt & embarrassment



## Uncertainty 🙄

Is fine to acknowledge ..  
**but you must know the foundations**

## Dance or direct 🕺

You need to do both ..  
**but be deliberate with your focus and attention**

## Connected 🧭

The the true direction ...  
**and share with your team too**

## (In)-security 🤔

Feeling insecure is acceptable  
**but learning to manage insecurities is essential**

## Demonstrate 💖

The culture you expect & embrace emotional disclosure  
**but be open to feedback**

## Ambiguity 🙄

Let me find my way ...  
**with clear goals & constraints**



One last thing  
**breath**





# Thanks!

DO YOU **x** have a question ???



@SimonAubury

# CREDITS



Special thanks to all the people who made and released these awesome resources for free:

- Presentation template by [SlidesCarnival](#)
- Photographs by [Unsplash](#) and [Pixabay](#)