

# Leading Without Managing

Becoming an SRE Technical Leader

Todd Palino, LinkedIn Site Reliability

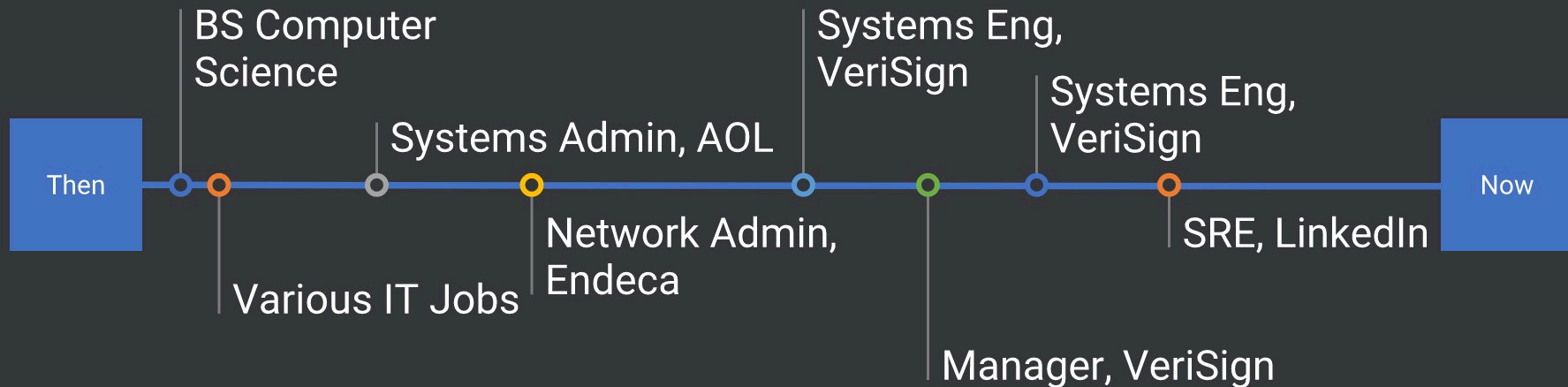




## Who Is This Guy?

- LinkedIn Site Reliability Engineering
- Senior Staff Engineer
- Co-Author, [Kafka: The Definitive Guide](#)
- Registered Locksmith

# How Did I Get Here?





# Finding Your Happy Place

# Measuring Engineers



# Title Progression

## Junior SRE

- Task Driven
- Learning to Code
- Being Mentored

## SRE

- Project Driven
- Developing Tools/Automation
- Sharing Knowledge

## Senior SRE

- Stack Expert
- Design & Collaboration
- Tests and Docs are Standard
- Mentoring Others

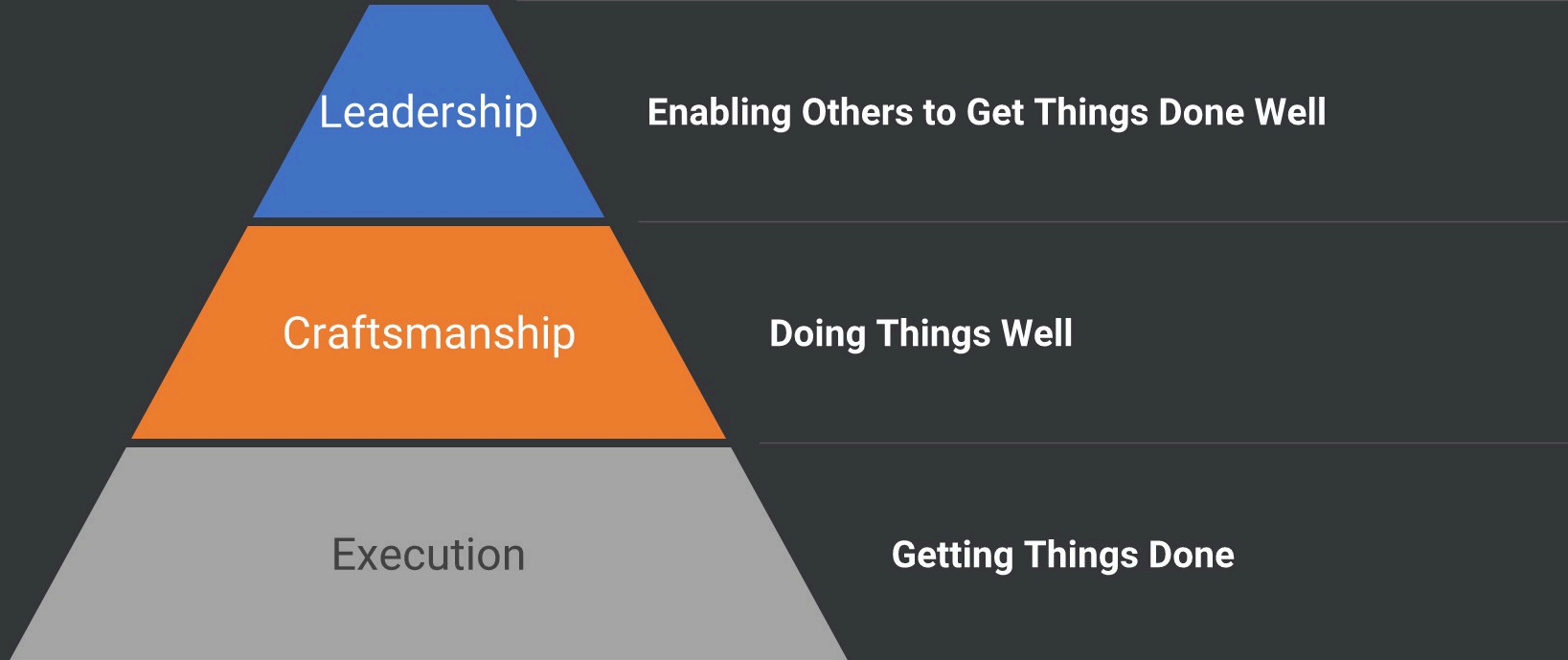
## Staff SRE

- Domain Expert
- Up-Leveling Team's Craftsmanship and Execution
- Focusing on Cross-Team Work
- Coming Up With What Needs To Be Done

## Senior Staff SRE

- Technical Leader Within SRE
- Focusing on SRE-wide Efforts
- Driving Projects With Company-Wide Impact

# Engineering Yardsticks



A close-up, first-person perspective shot of a hand reaching out to hold another person's hand. The person whose hand is being held has long, dark, curly hair and is wearing a blue top. They are standing in a vineyard with rows of grapevines and a wooden fence in the background. The scene is brightly lit by sunlight, creating strong shadows and highlights. The overall mood is one of guidance and support.

Leadership



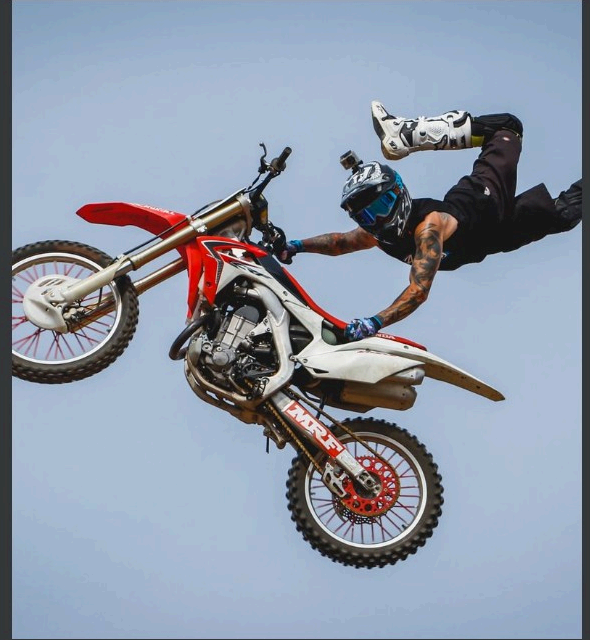
# Why Lead?



People Don't Scale



Increase Your Impact



Self-Interest

# Project Work

## Engagement

Coordinating multiple teams

## Impact

Change your organization

## Inception

Who came up with the idea

## Process

Not all projects are technical

# How About Examples?



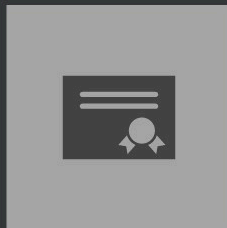
## SRE[In]Con

Internal SRE Conference



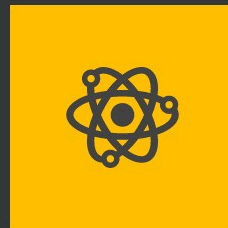
## Site Reliability TLG

Review and offer feedback  
on upcoming projects



## Promotion Committee

Review and decide on  
technical promotions



## Horizontal Initiatives

Large, cross-organizational  
technical projects

# Mentoring



Teaching Others



Learning From Others

# Looking to the Outside

- Toastmasters
- Meetups
- Ignite/Lightning Talks
- Conference Talks
- Industry Steering
- Blog Posts
- Articles
- Short-Form Publishing
- Books

# Diversity, Inclusion, and Ethics

- Retrospectives for Humans (a Crash Course)

Courtney Eckhardt, Track 1, Today at 2:00pm

- Ethics in SRE

Laura Nolan and Theo Schlossnagle, Closing Plenary

- That's it?

# How to Identify Meaningful Work

- Be the someone in “Someone should...”

# Tips and Traps

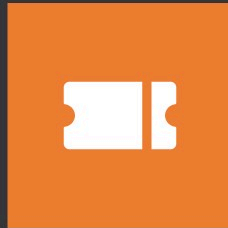




# Keep A Paper Trail



Document your projects

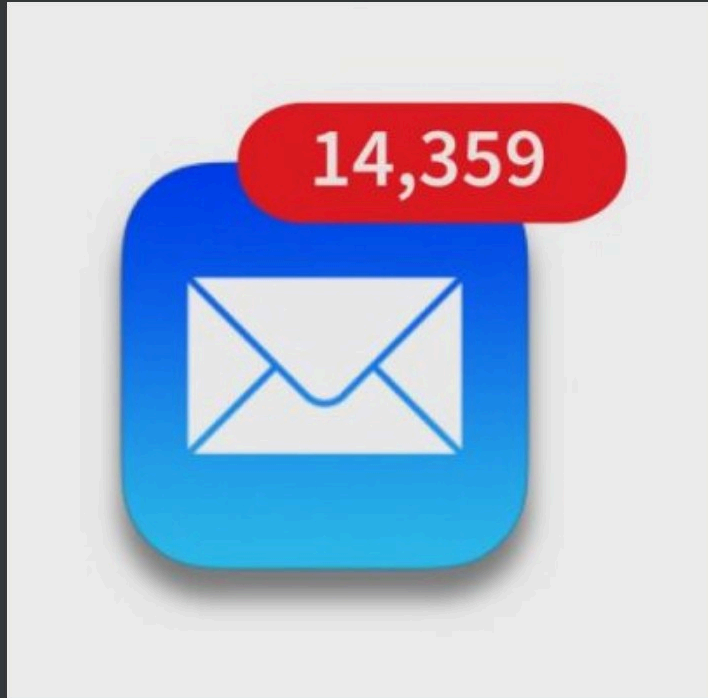


Track work in tickets



Keep a list of your  
accomplishments

# Stay Organized

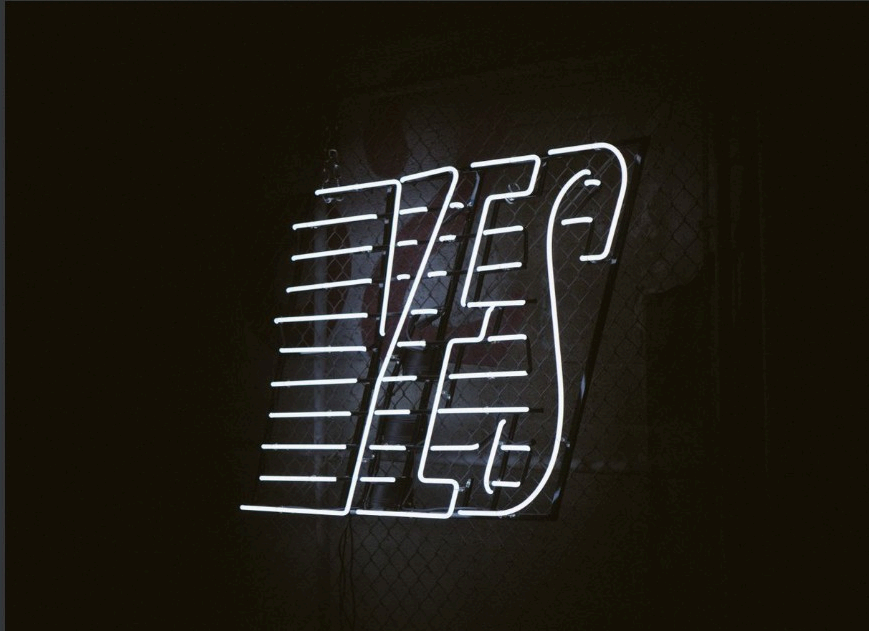


- Getting Things Done
- Kanban
- Bullet Journal
- Sprints / Pomodoro

# Step Outside Your Comfort Zone



# Do More

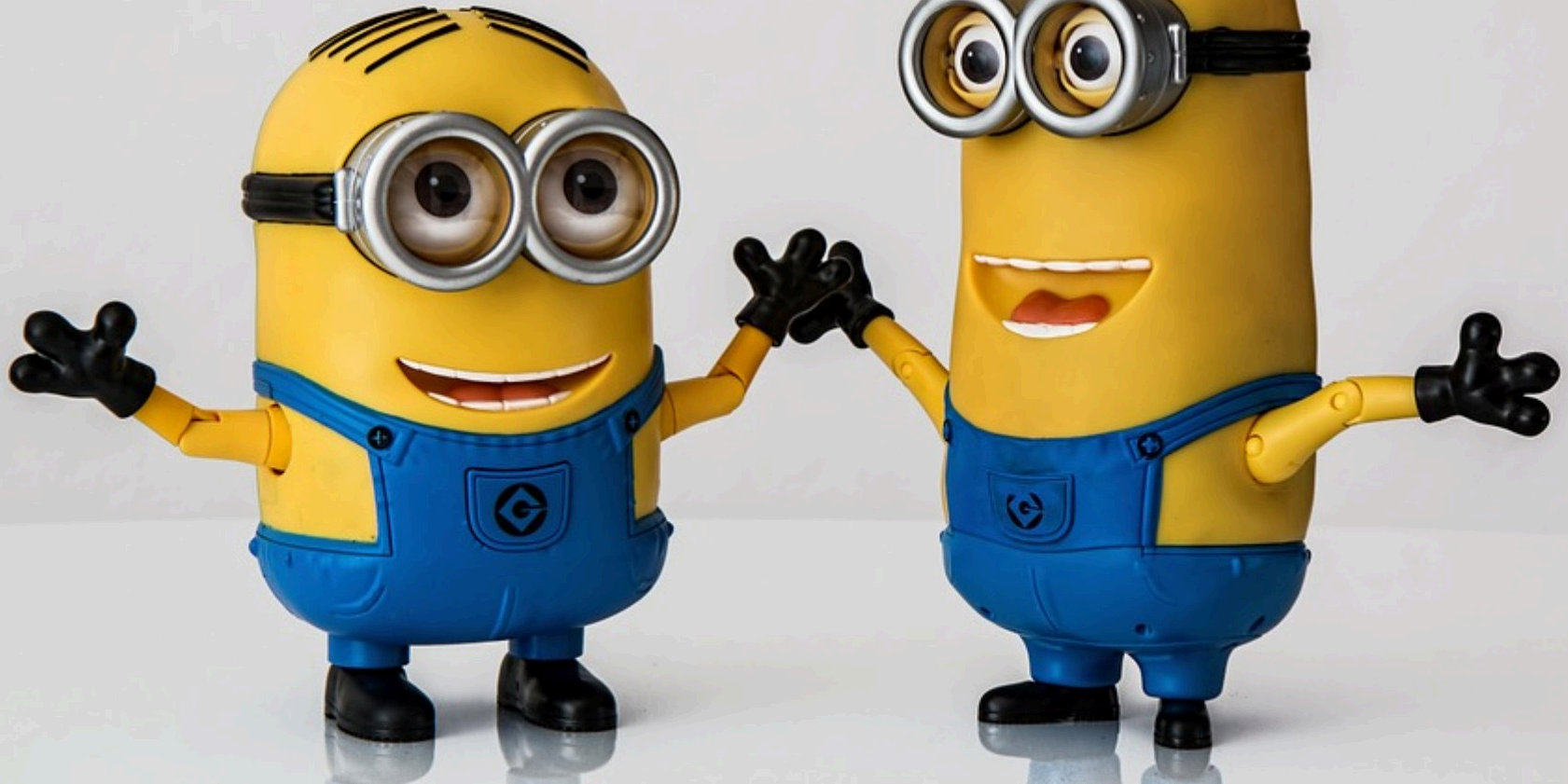


Always Say Yes



Learn When To Say No

Be Different



What's Next?



# For Engineers

- Develop a ten year plan
- Talk to your manager
- Find a mentor
- Get started on the tips and traps

# For Managers

- Find out what your engineers want
- Champion their projects



# For Technical Leaders

- Take on a mentee (or two)
- Share the spotlight

