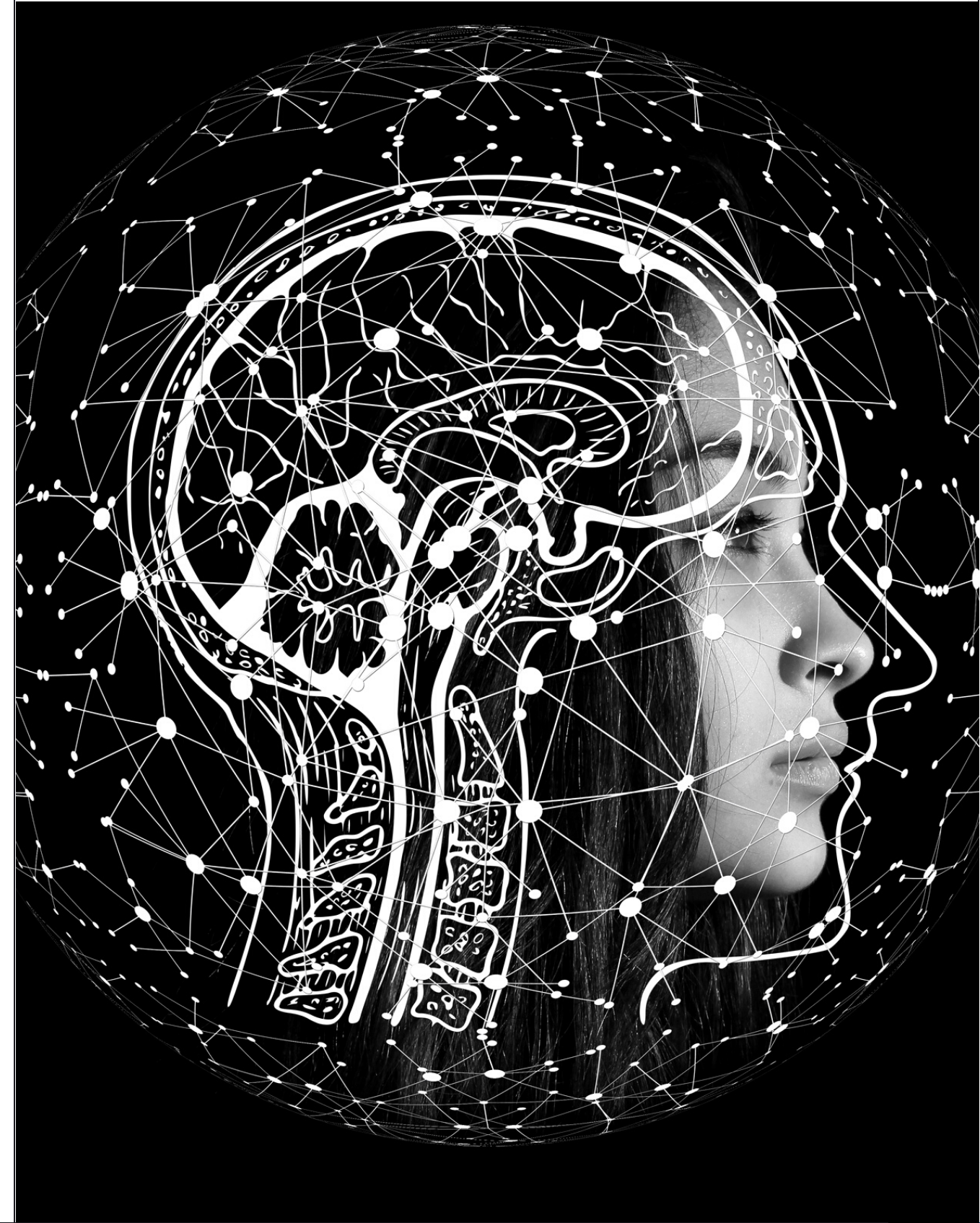


01

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF

# Critical Thinking

In Project Management?



Paulius Petravičius

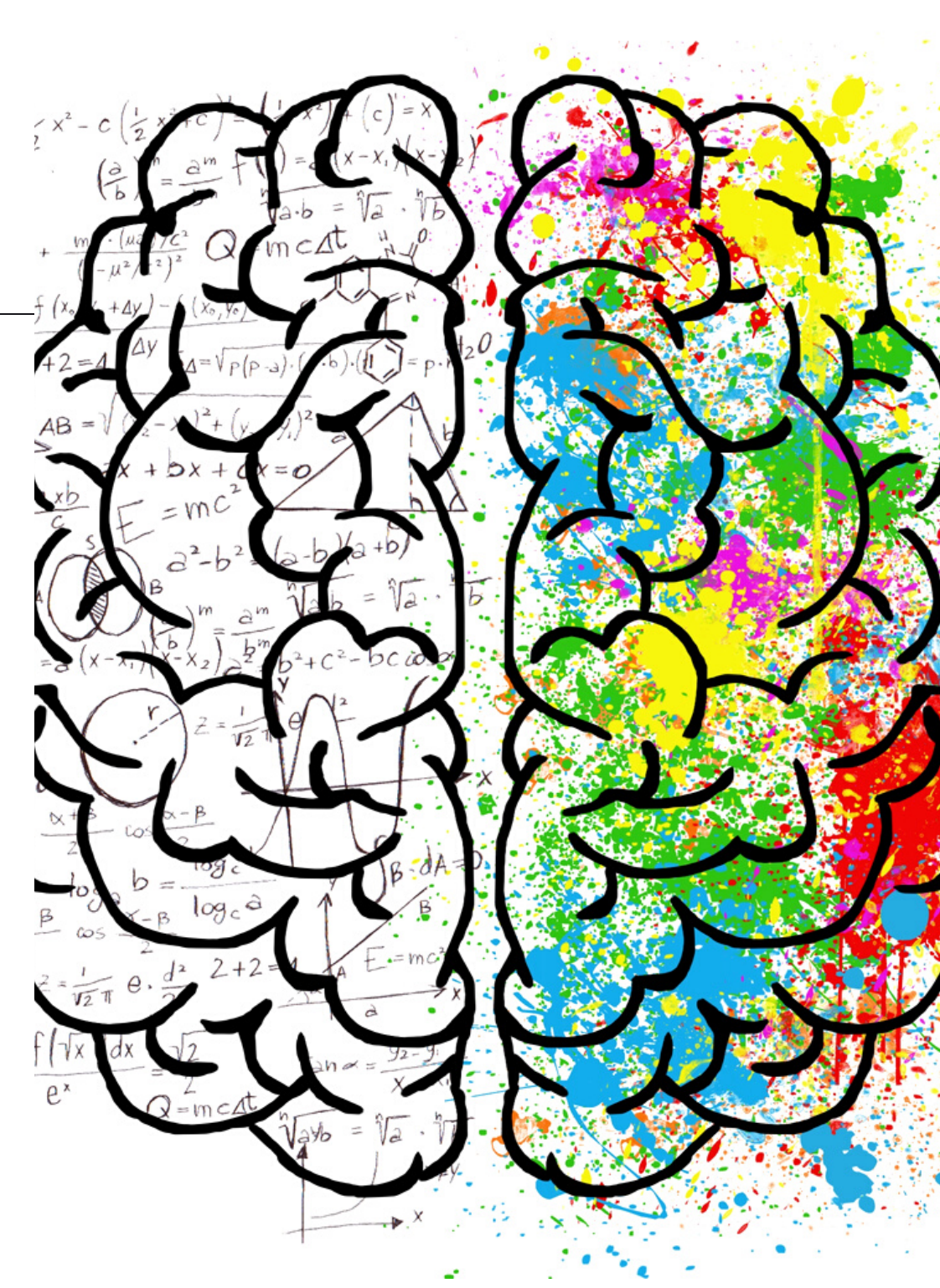
 Insights Spotter



# Today's Session

## CRITICAL THINKING TOPICS

- INTRODUCTION
- THE ROLE OF CRITICAL THINKING
- WHAT IS CRITICAL THINKING?
- YOU HAVE TWO BRAINS!
- WHY DO WE NEED CRITICAL THINKING IN PM?
- TOP QUALITIES OF CRITICAL THINKERS
- COGNITIVE BIAS IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT
- CRITICAL THINKING HACKS
- THE APPROACH IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT



# ABOUT ME

## **Barclays – London**

1-2 Years Business Analysis

3-4 Years Change Manager (Team of 9)

## **Aviva Investors – London**

3 Years Project Manager

## **Luminor – Lithuania**

1 Year Senior Project Manager (Team of 5)



# THE ROLE OF CRITICAL THINKING IN PM?

## The Answer



Critical thinking allows separating facts and real options from speculations, opinions and wishful thinking when making decisions in project management.

Critical thinking recognises biases in you and other stakeholders, enabling rational reasoning to achieve optimal project outcomes.



# WHAT IS CRITICAL THINKING?

Communication

Analysis

Decision-Making

Understand  
Biases

Critical thinking is finding and understanding facts to make a decision. The goal is to be as rational as possible, critically evaluate situations and information to stay sound and find the best options.

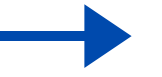


# Main Goals

- Learning Decision Making (Personal Experience)
- Not just about the theory, but experience practice
- Look for challenging opportunities and grey areas to practice decision making.
- Keep self-awareness
- Awareness about the key stakeholders like team or managers
- Keep calm and going



# YOU HAVE TWO BRAINS!



## Fast Brain (Dominant)

- Emotional & Largely Unconscious mind
- Drives 95 per cent of behaviour.
- Mental shortcuts,
- Thoughtless, energy-efficient routines
- Saves strength for the difficult questions.



## Slow Brain

- Conscious & Logical mind,
- Painfully Slow,
- Time-consuming processes.
- Resource intensive
- Clever
- Decisions

Extra Tasks, Decisions, Stress, Lack of Sleep, Hunger

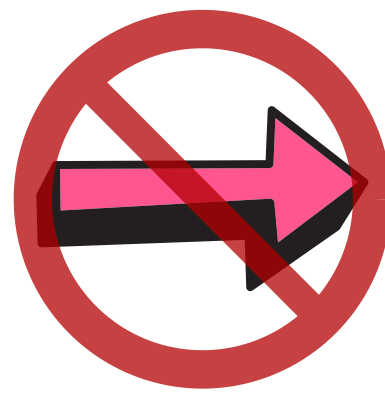


# Horse & Rider

- Horse: Provides energy and a kick to start doing something
- Rider: Controls the energy to go the right direction



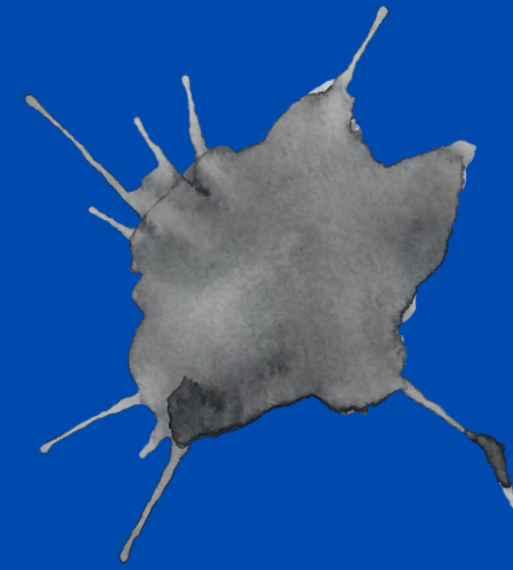




- Self-Direction
- Self-Discipline
- Self-Monitoring
- Self-Correction



Experience



# How Do You Learn Critical Thinking



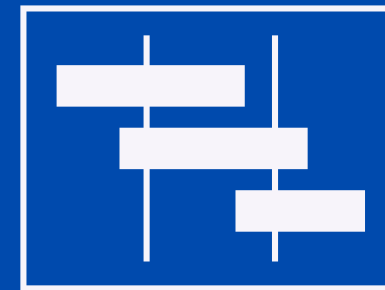
# WHY DO PMs NEED **CRITICAL** **THINKING** SKILLS?



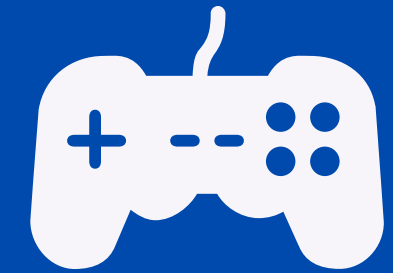
Assumptions



Opinions



Planning



Monitoring & Control

# TOP Qualities

## Curiosity

Seeking for a bigger picture or perspective

## Truth-Seekers

Accepting that you might be wrong and seek best result for a project

## Being Tolerant

Accepting other's views and perspectives



# Challenges to Apply Critical Thinking

## Time Constraints

Not enough time or too many decisions to have space for clear thoughts.

## Unrealistic Expectations

Stakeholders experience in the past vs today and unrealistic results.

## Asking Right Questions

Sometimes you are not asking the right questions as you think you know the answer.



# Convincing Someone

## Discussion

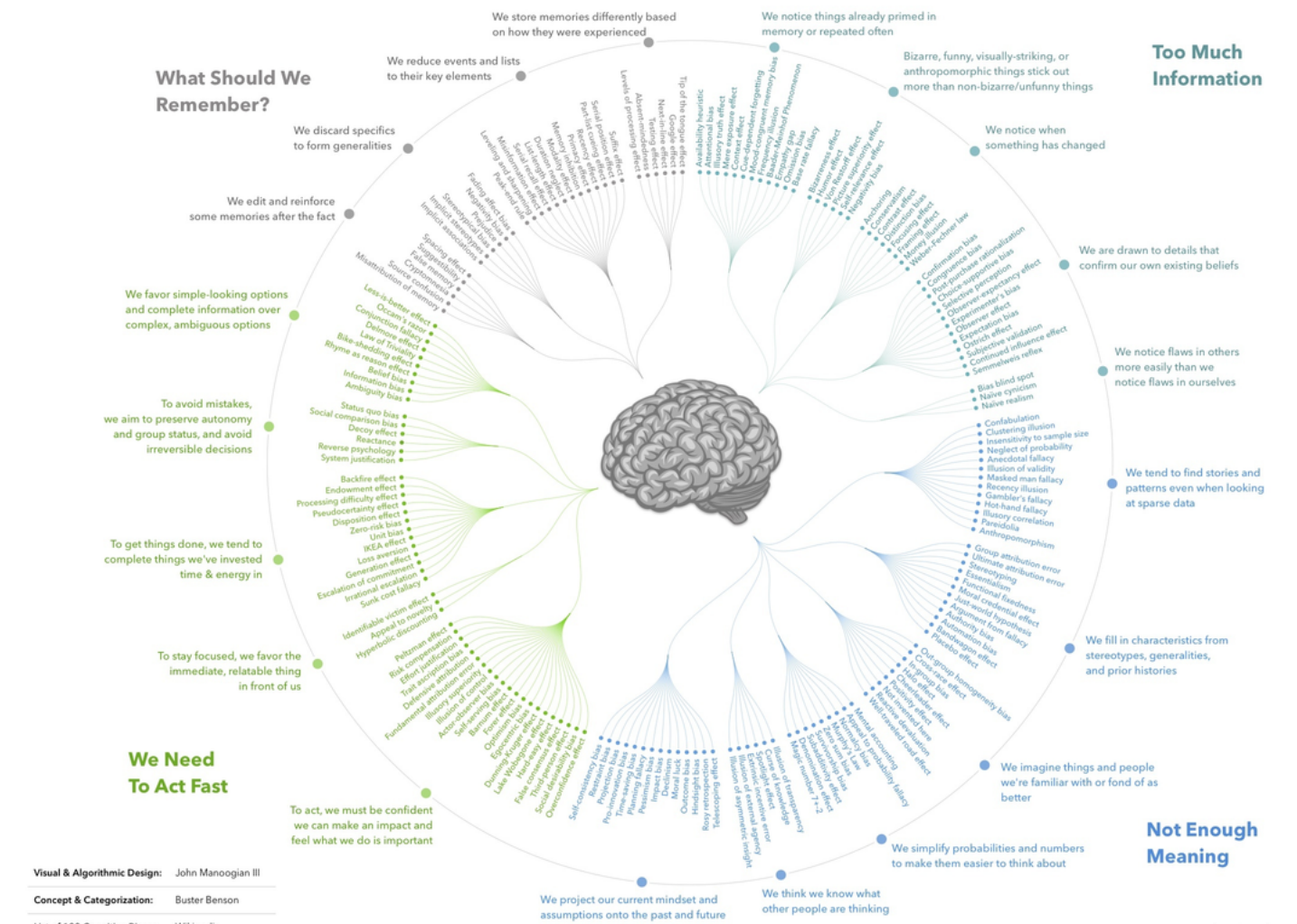
When was the last time you tried to convince or influence someone? What happened?



# Number of Known Cognitive Biases

188+

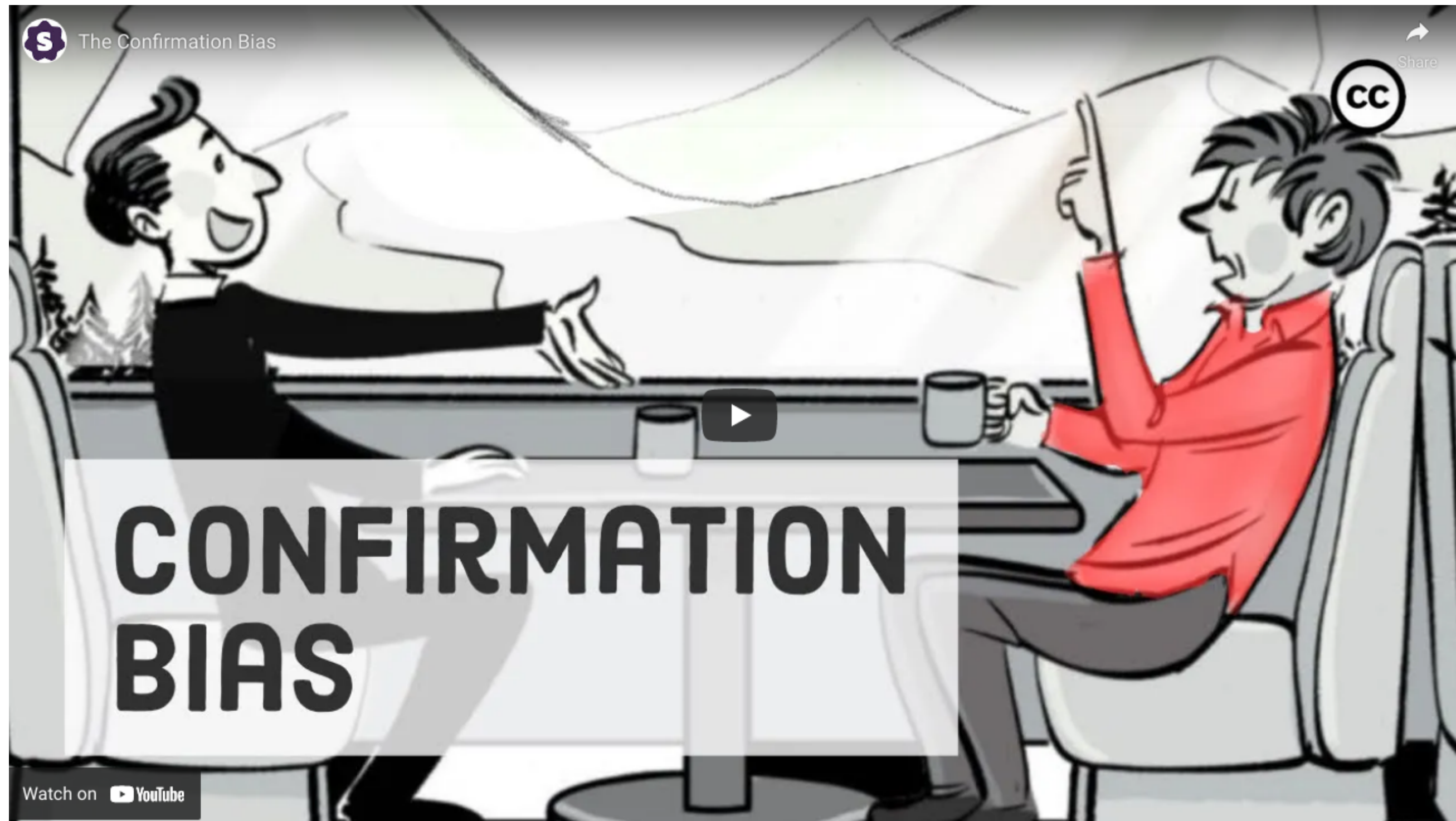
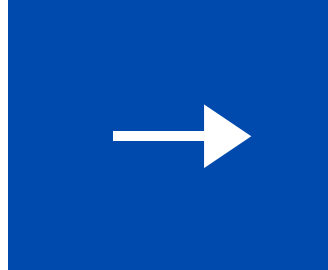
## COGNITIVE BIAS CODEX



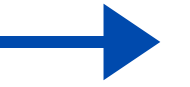
<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/all-188-cognitive-biases.html>



# Confirmation Bias



# Top 10 PM Biases<sup>1</sup>



PLANNING  
FALLACY

The overestimation of benefits and underestimation of risks, costs and duration of a project



CONFIRMATION  
BIAS

Looking for only the evidence that supports your beliefs



DÉFORMATION  
PROFESSIONNELLE

“To the man or woman with a hammer, every problem is a nail.”



ANCHORS IMPACT

Anchors are elements that give you a starting point

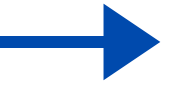


AVAILABILITY BIAS

Clinch to the readily available information



# Top 10 PM Biases ②



INFORMATION BIAS

More information is equal to better decisions  
80/20 rule



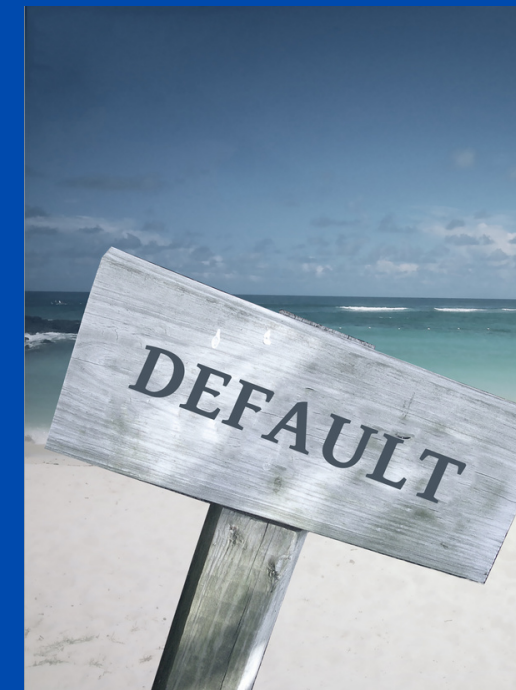
DECISION FATIGUE

A limited number of quality decisions over the day.  
Barack Obama and food example



EFFORT JUSTIFICATION

Increasing the value of your results depending on the amount of effort you put in



DEFAULT EFFECT

No change, and preference to status quo.  
Including PMs

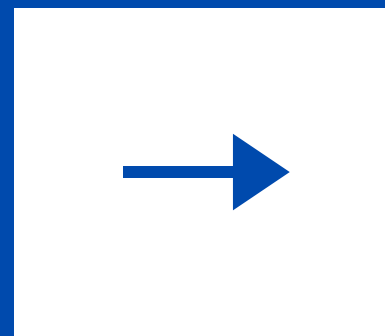


ACTION BIAS

A tendency to act instead of doing nothing.



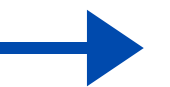
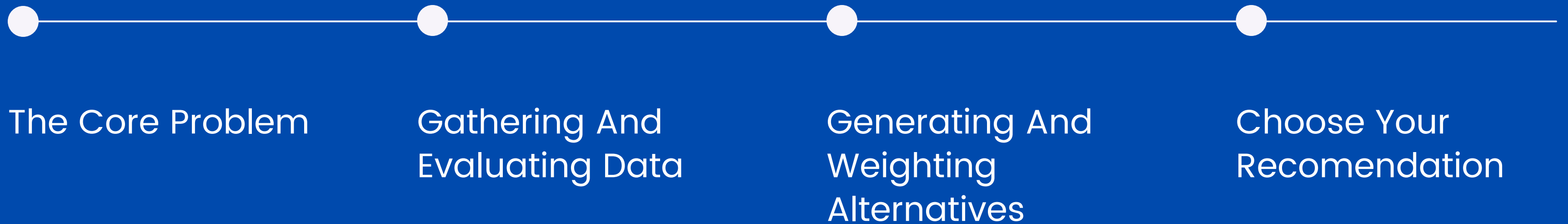
**BONUS:  
PROCRASTINATION  
IMPACT YOUR CRITICAL  
THINKING**



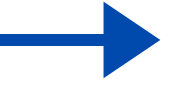
# Critical Thinking Hacks

- 1 Avoid Assumptions
- 2 Risk & Issues
- 3 Five Whys
- 4 Pareto Principle 80/20 rule
- 5 Conducting a pre-mortem
- 6 Playing the devil's advocate & Listen
- 7 Prioritise Your Critical Thinking
- 8 Slow Down Your Thinking

# THE APPROACH IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT?



# Stakeholder Biases?



## CURRENT VIEW OF THE WORLD

Understand their position, their understanding of the project and situation; Identify potential biases



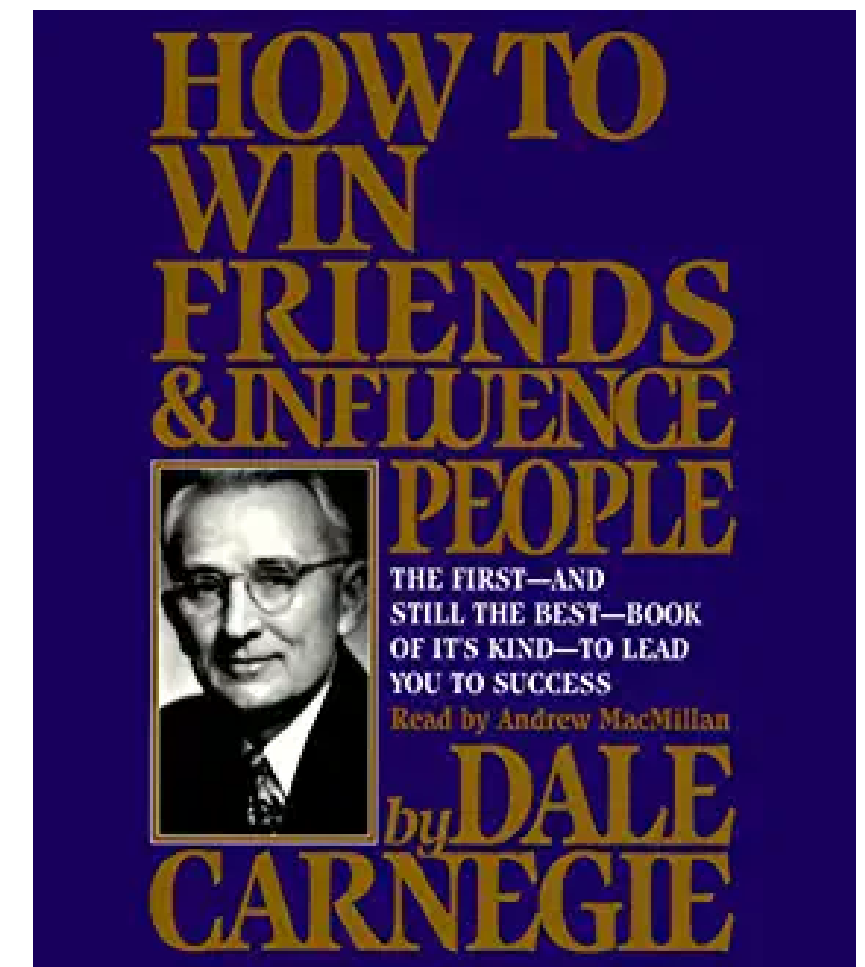
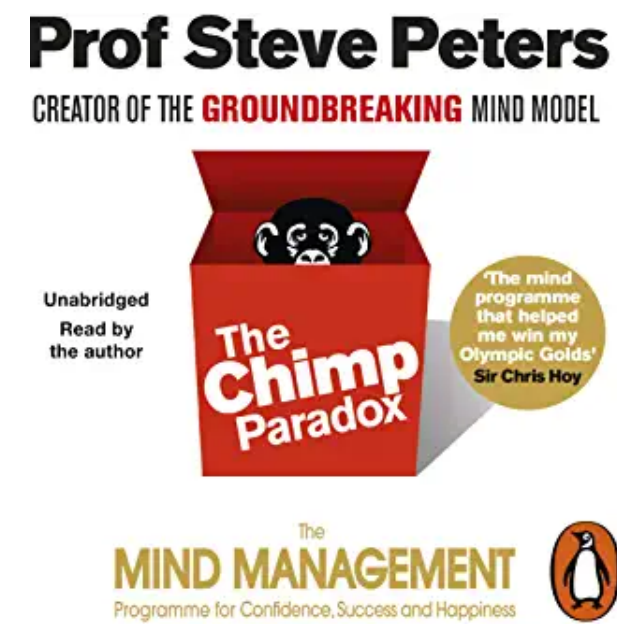
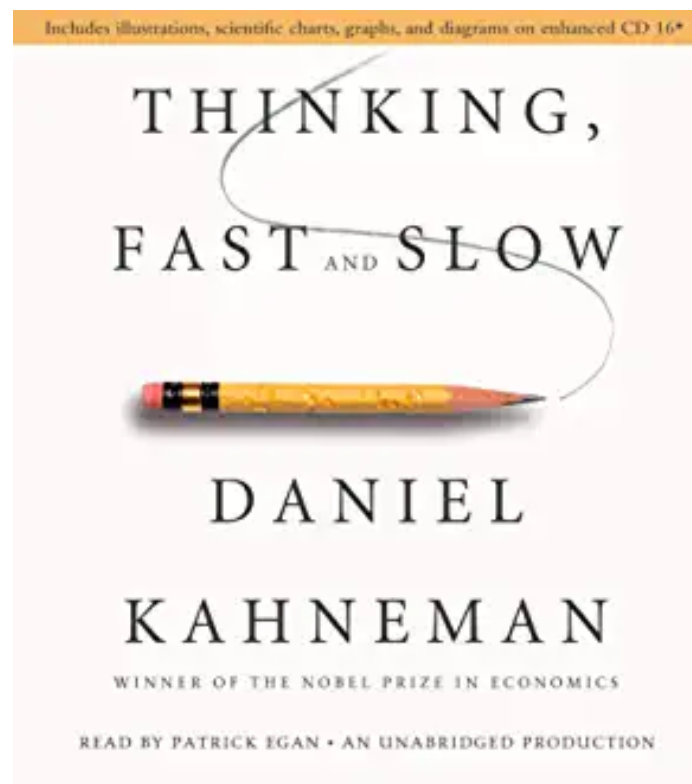
## PRIORITISATION QUESTIONS

Understand the importance, timing, etc.

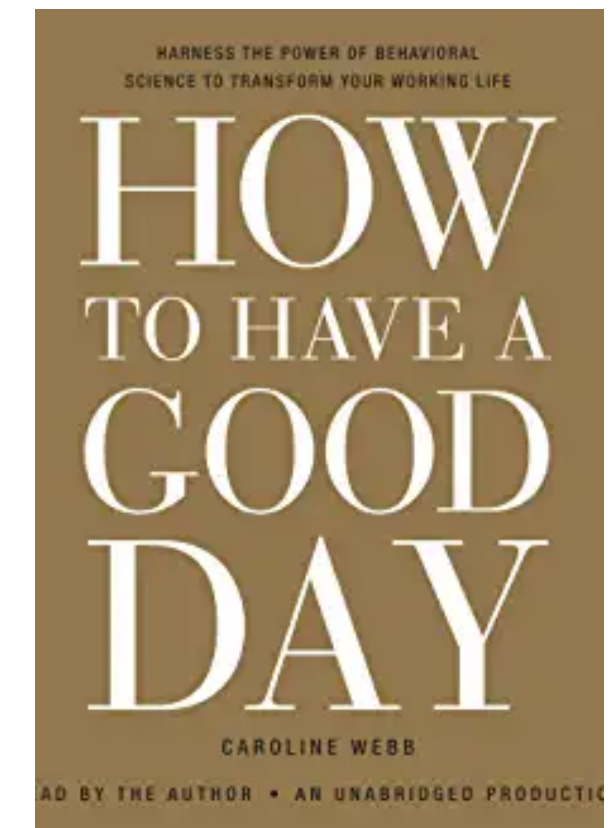
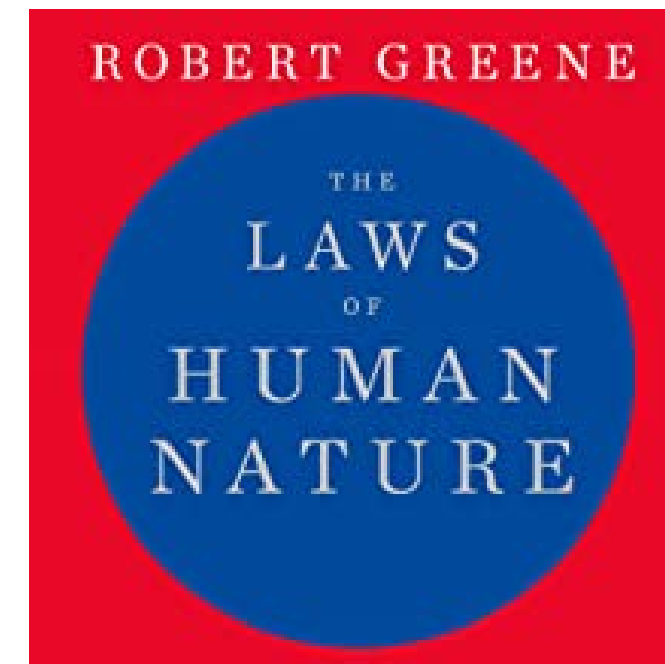
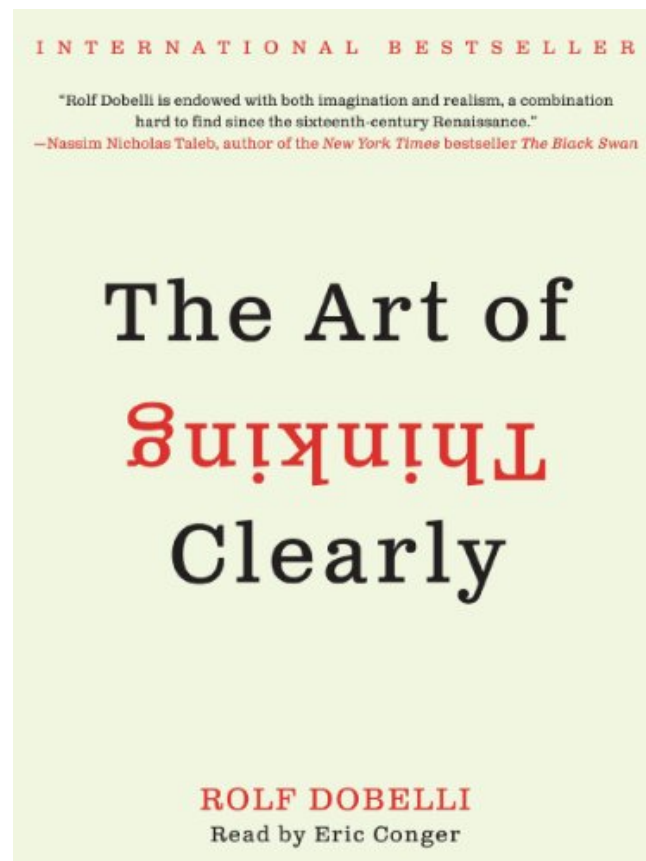


## THE TEAM OR I NEED TO BE INVOLVED?

Clarify the reason for this Scope



# Great Books To Continue Learning



Paulius Petravičius

**Thank you!**

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