



Unconventional Paths in Tech

Leveraging Your Strengths for
Career Acceleration

Mitra Raman, Fractional CTO
@ramannoodlez

Hi, I'm Mitra.

Mom x 1.5

**Career engineering leader
turned Fractional CTO**

Seattle-ite



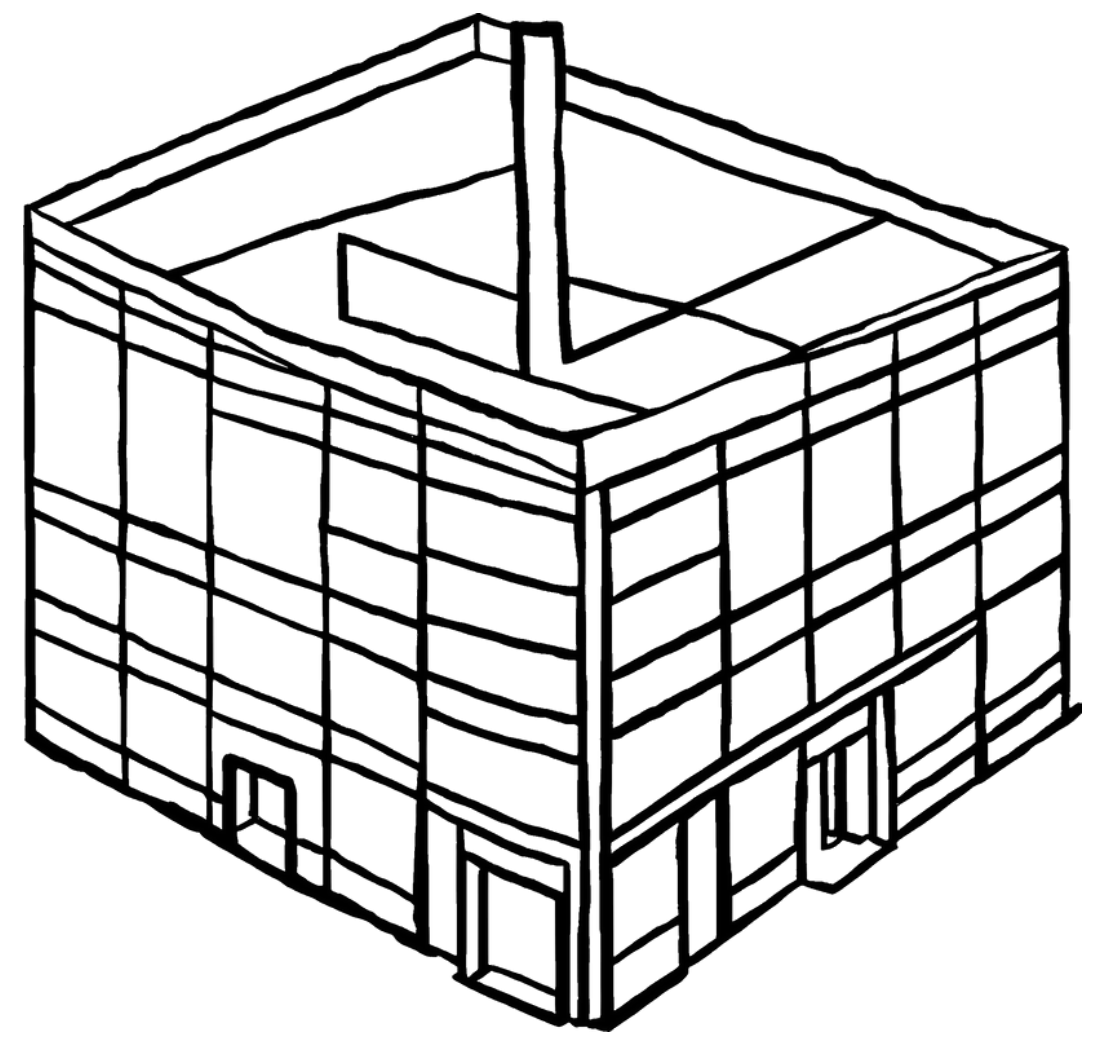
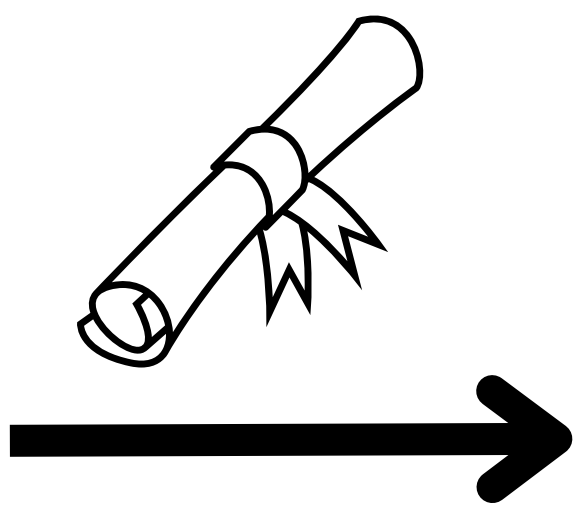
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**HAVE YOU MADE A
CAREER SHIFT THAT
FELT LIKE A TOTAL
GAMBLE?**

My Unconventional Path in Tech



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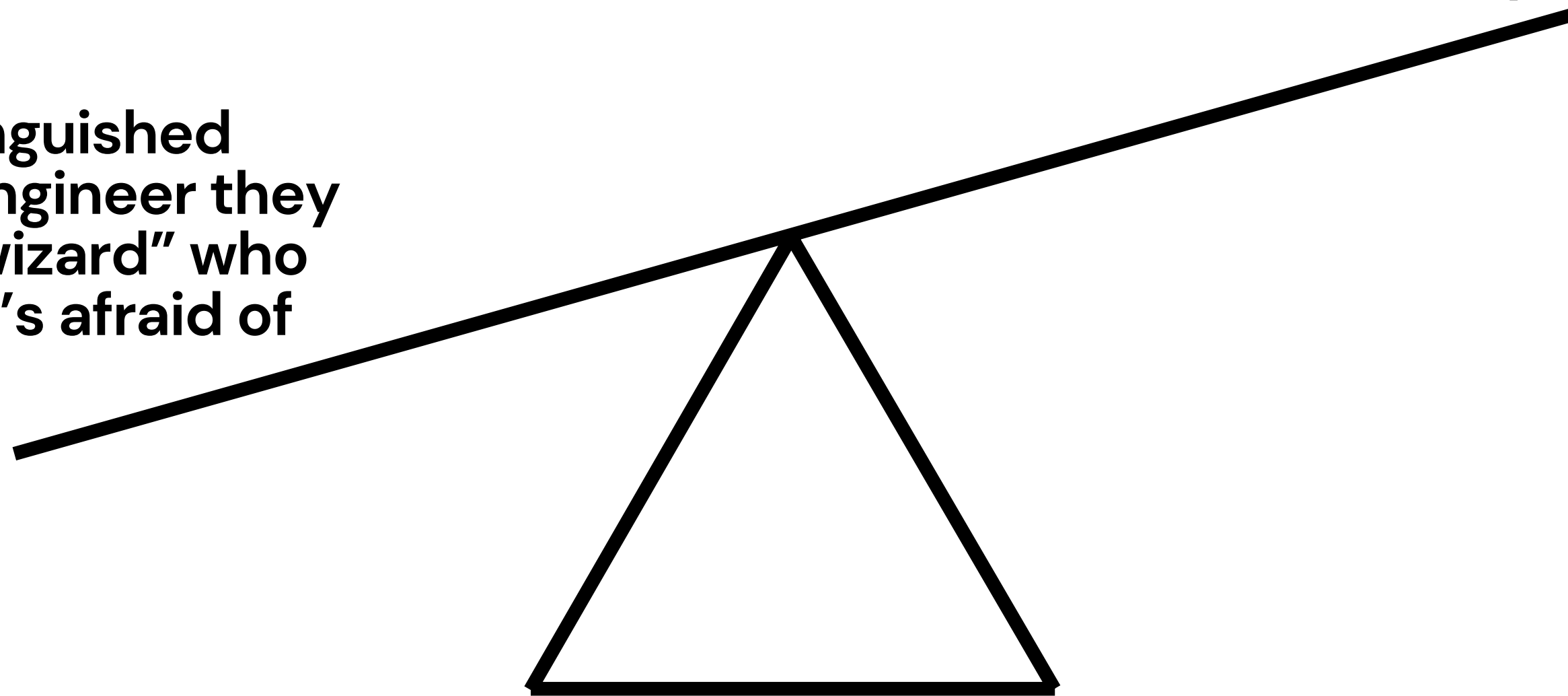
Software Engineer



Engineering
Manager

Seasoned technology leader who can “lead” and knows enough but doesn’t code (a lot)

A distinguished principal engineer they call “the wizard” who everyone’s afraid of





The Engineer's Career Crossroads ✨

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Learn software engineering basics as a new grad



Grow into a good (or great) software engineer, team player and mentor



Go down the super specialized engineer path



Become a manager of a small engineering team

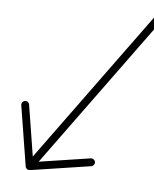
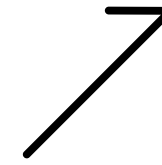
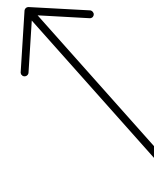


Deliver successful features, learn how to manage and promote engineers



Grow your team size and product scope gradually

The Traditional Path





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We're sticking a lot of square pegs into round holes

People Management

Stakeholder Management

Weekly Updates & Upward Management

Less Coding, More Reviews

OKRs & Goal Setting

Promotions & Career Ladders

Roadmap Planning



**Let's start a
company, it can't
be that hard!**

- Famous last words of every founder, ever.

Building a D2C Perishables Company 101

Branding & design

Solo founder

Marketing

Packing orders

Customer service
emails

Early product
development

Financial planning

Raising money



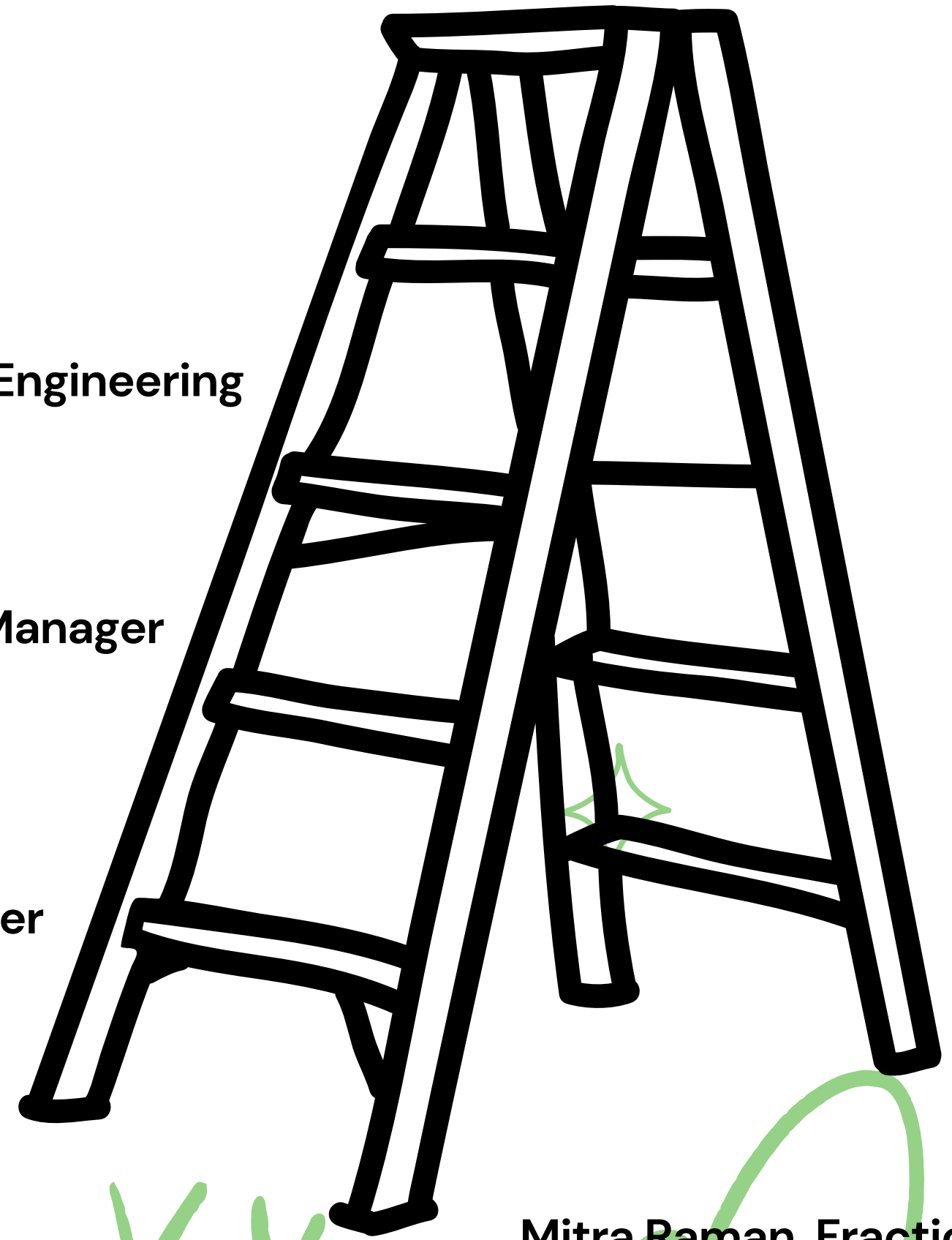
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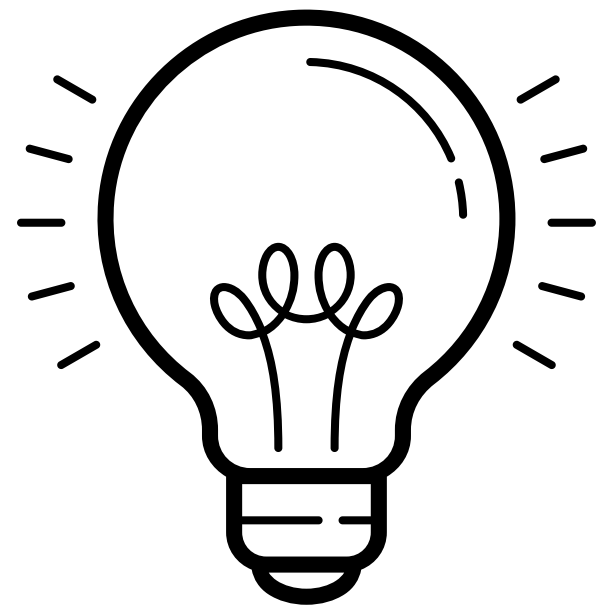
Director of Engineering

Senior Engineering Manager

Engineering Manager



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We're following career ladders as the proven path to success, but we should be creating our own **career graphs.**



Let's create a career graph

Take a moment to
**reflect on your
career journey:**



01

Write down each role that you've had in your career and the core responsibilities as "nodes"



02

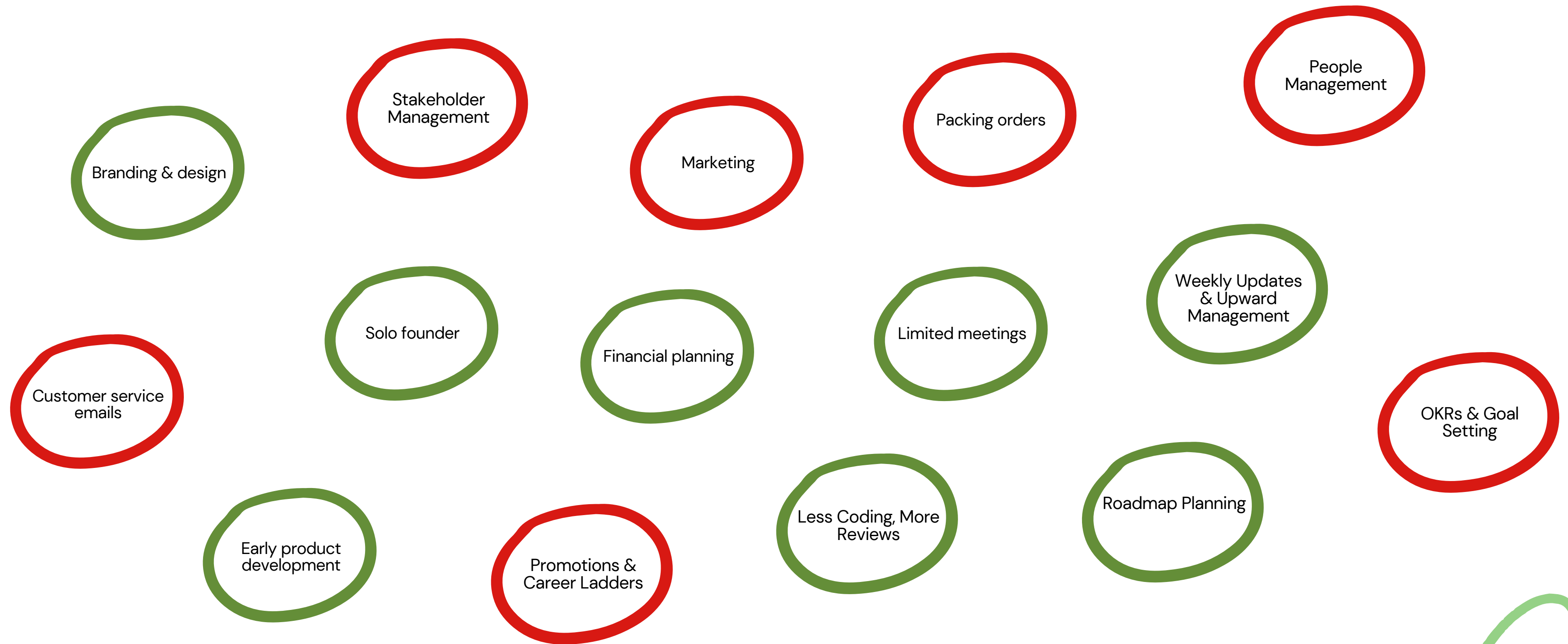
Mark each node as red or green -- don't spend too much time on this!



03

Find commonalities between the things you love and hate

Mitra's Career Graph



Mitra's Career Graph

Working on early-stage products and business development

Cross-discipline involvement, not limited to tech

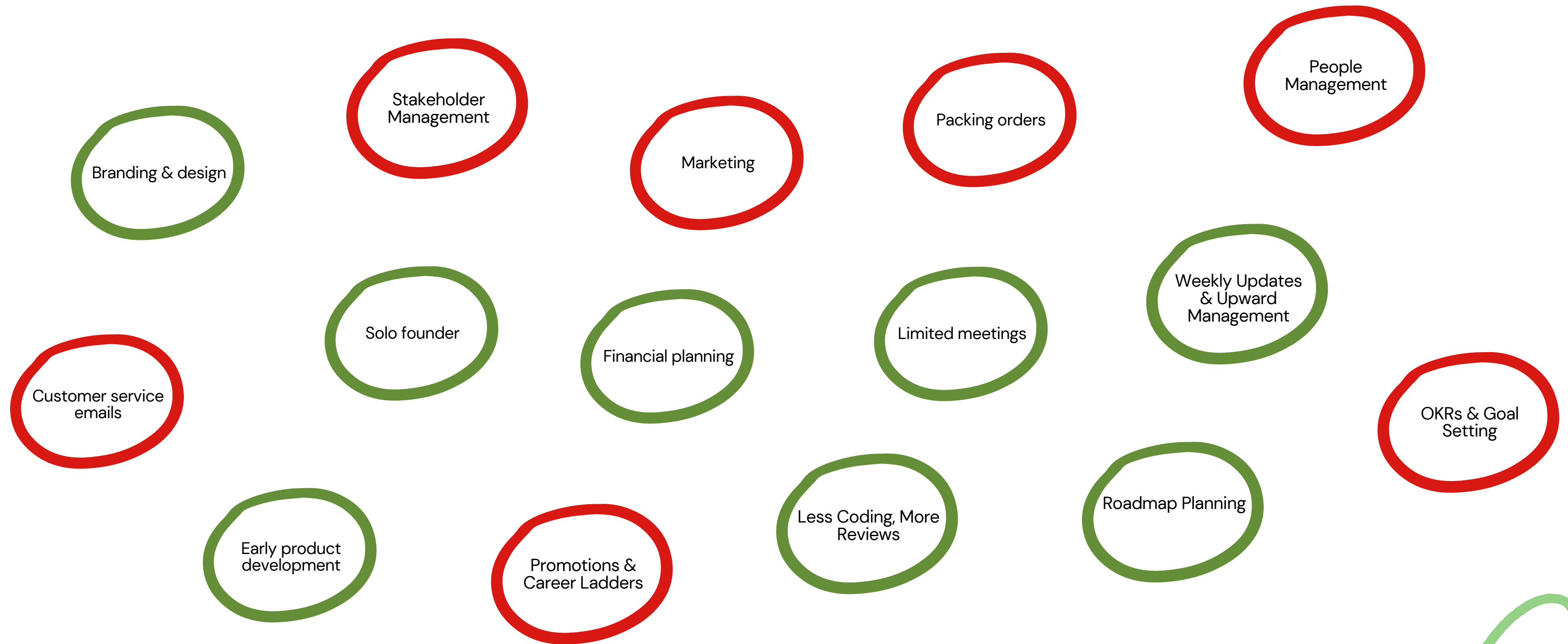
Planning and executing quickly

Managing people and career progression

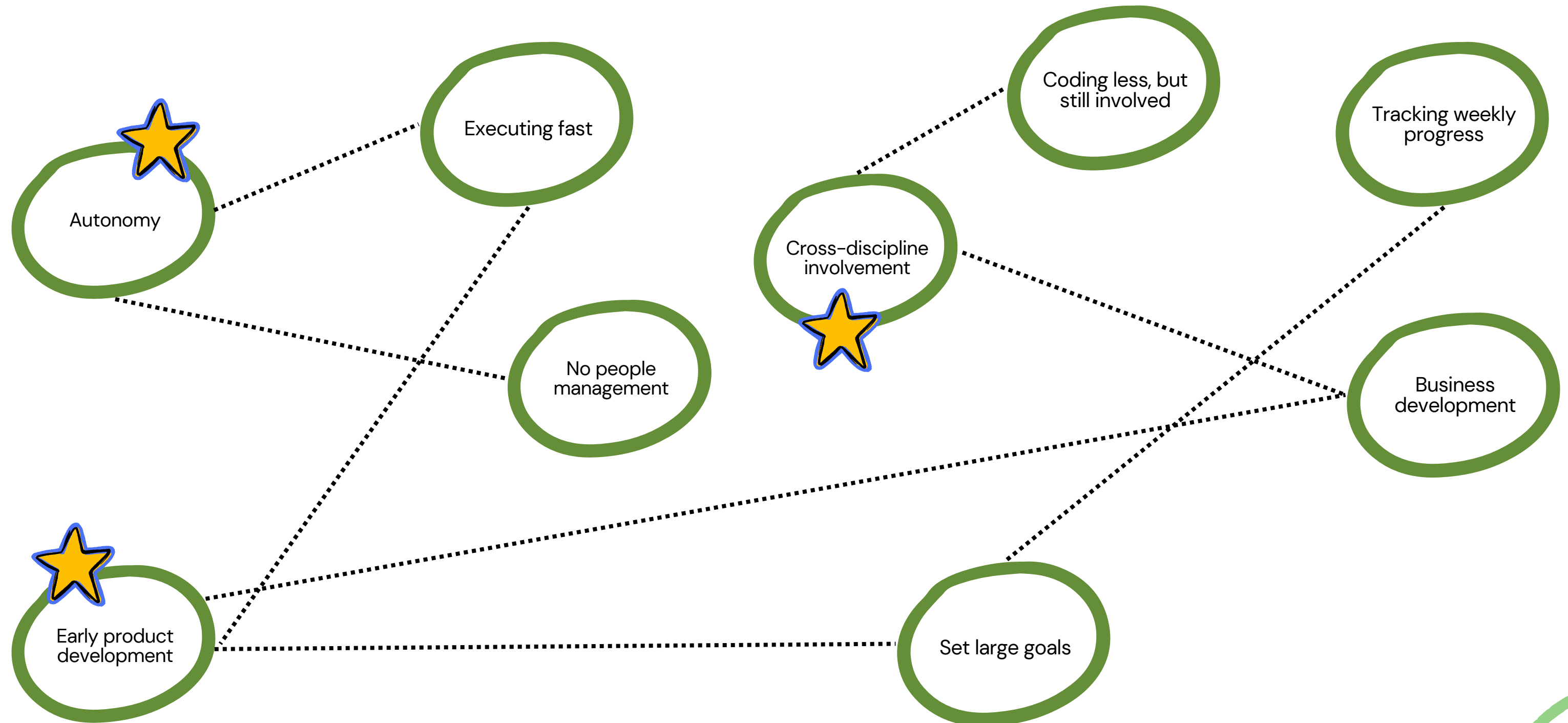
Tracking arbitrary goal progression

Meetings for the sake of it

Mitra's Career Graph



Mitra's Career Graph





What my career graph told me:

Fractional CTO

01.

Cross-Discipline Work.

Influence business decisions not just in the engineering domain, and still be involved in technical work.

02.

Autonomy.

Lead teams or be a sole leader in an organization, with no active people or stakeholder management.

03.

Early Ideation & Building.

Ideate, experiment and execute quickly on both products and businesses at an early stage.



What do I do as a Fractional CTO

01.

Cross-Discipline Work.

Influence business decisions not just in the engineering domain, and still be involved in technical work.

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03.

Early Ideation & Building.

Ideate, experiment and execute quickly on both products and businesses at an early stage.

**Tough situations
create beautiful
opportunities.**

**Developer
Advocacy**

**Tech
Sustainability**

**Dev
Community**

**Fractional
Leadership**





Create your career graph

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Mark each node as red or green -- don't spend too much time on this!



03

Find commonalities between the things you love and hate



✧

Find Your Unconventional Path

Thank you!

✧

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