

“Automate  
All the Testing”

“100% Automation”

“Full Automation  
Coverage”

“Automation First”

# Emotional Check-in

Do you feel:

Excited?

Worried?

Sceptical?

Something else?

Take a moment to really think about your gut reaction...



# Responses from across the Testing Community

There are so many different emotions,  
both positive and challenging.



# Why Automation Is Holding Back Continuous Quality Finding Balance in Modern Testing

Speaker: Philippa Jennings





# Continuous Quality is the discipline of:

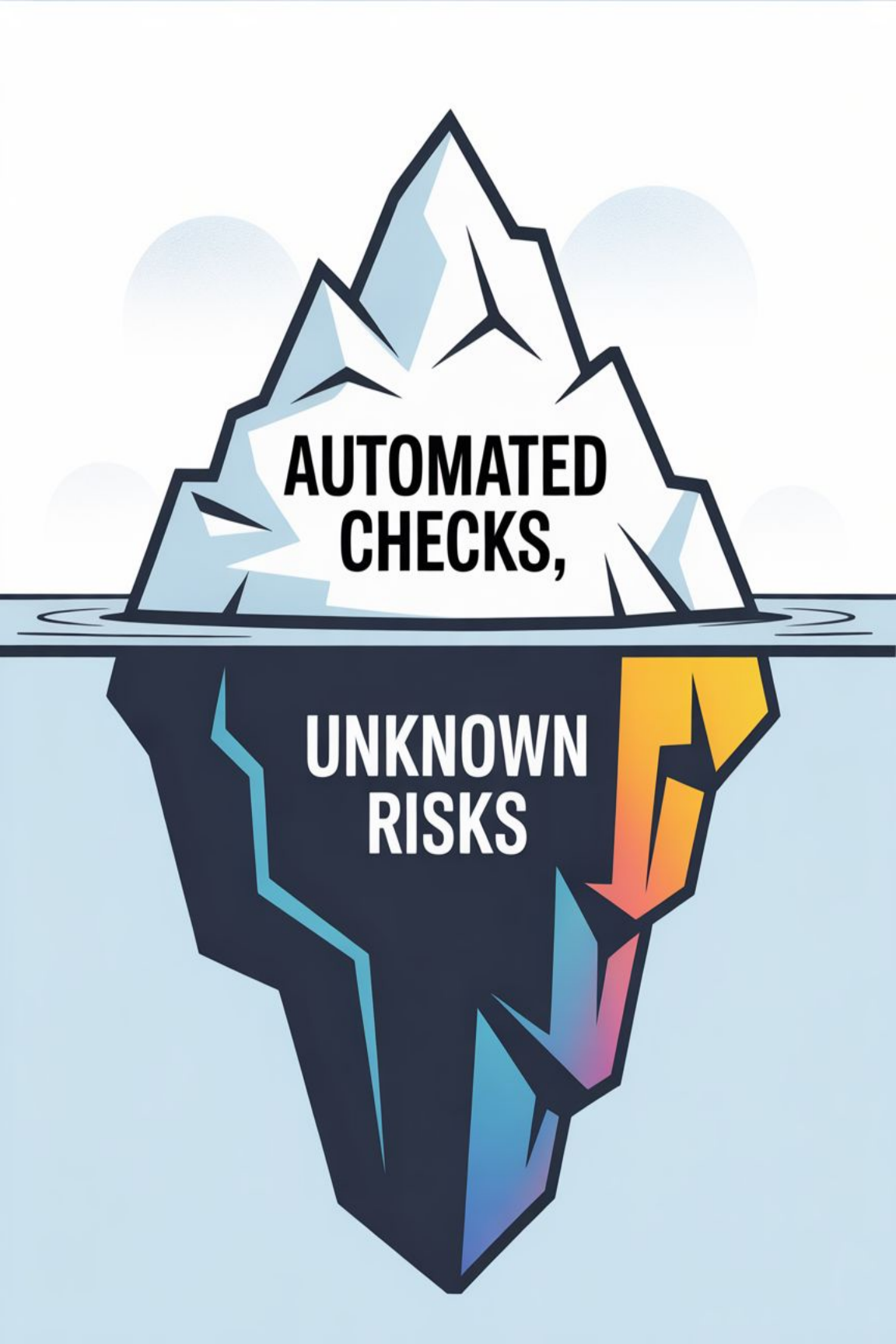
Continuously learning what matters

Preventing what hurts

Proving what works

For real users in real contexts.

It's about OUTCOMES, not test counts



# Why Automation Alone Creates Risk

# Why Does Balance Matter?

The shift we need isn't from '100% automation' to 'zero automation'

The real shift is from **Automation First** to **Quality First**.

Balance is the key.

Automation is an **enabler**, not the **goal**.



# If Automation is NOT our Goal, What Is?

## Continuous

Balancing automation with human exploration so we reduce real-world risks, not just pass builds.

## Quality

**Automation**

Secures what we know

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**Human**

Discovers what we don't  
**Exploration**

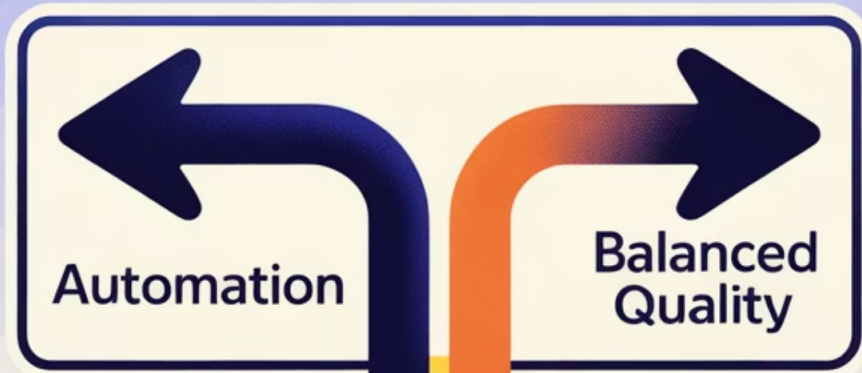
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**Real-world**

**Confidence**

# From Automation-First to Quality-First

The Tools That Help Us Find  
Balance



# Dan Ashby's Information Model



This model helps us to guide teams to:

- Automate what should be automated
- and
- Investigate what must be explored

# Dan Ashby's Information Model



Courtesy of Dan Ashby

## Known Explicit

What we know - Perfect for automated checks.

## Tacit/Implicit

Knowledge that's understood but not explicitly documented.

## Unknowns

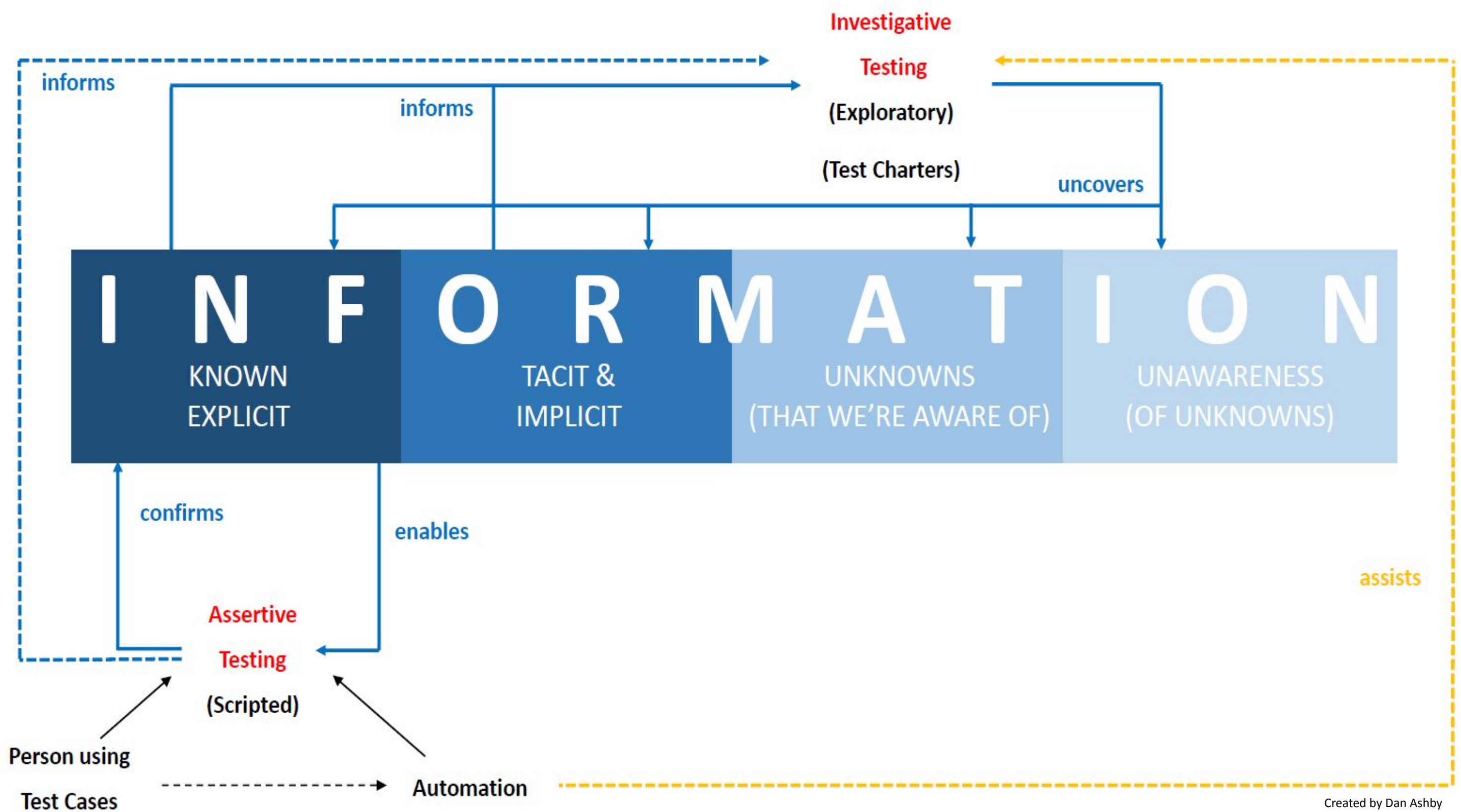
Things we know we don't know. Requires investigation.

## Unawareness

Things we don't know we don't know. The biggest risks lie here.

This model describes the different types of information

teams deal with when building software.



Created by Dan Ashby

# What to Automate vs What to Investigate

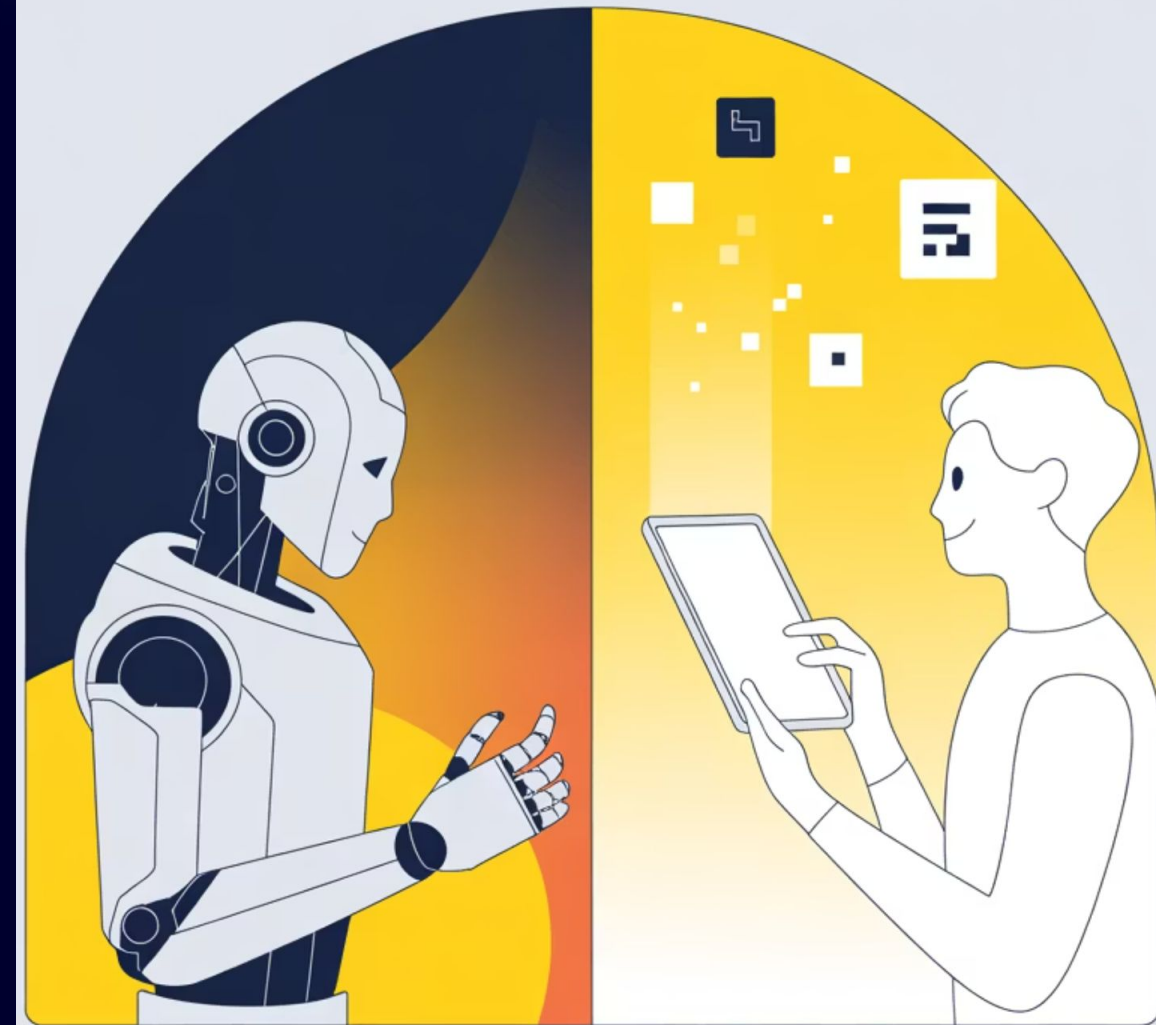
## Automate

- Known workflows
- Regression checks
- Pipeline validations
- Repeatable tasks
- Performance baselines

## Investigate

- Edge Cases
- User contexts
- Accessibility
- Integration points
- The Unknowns

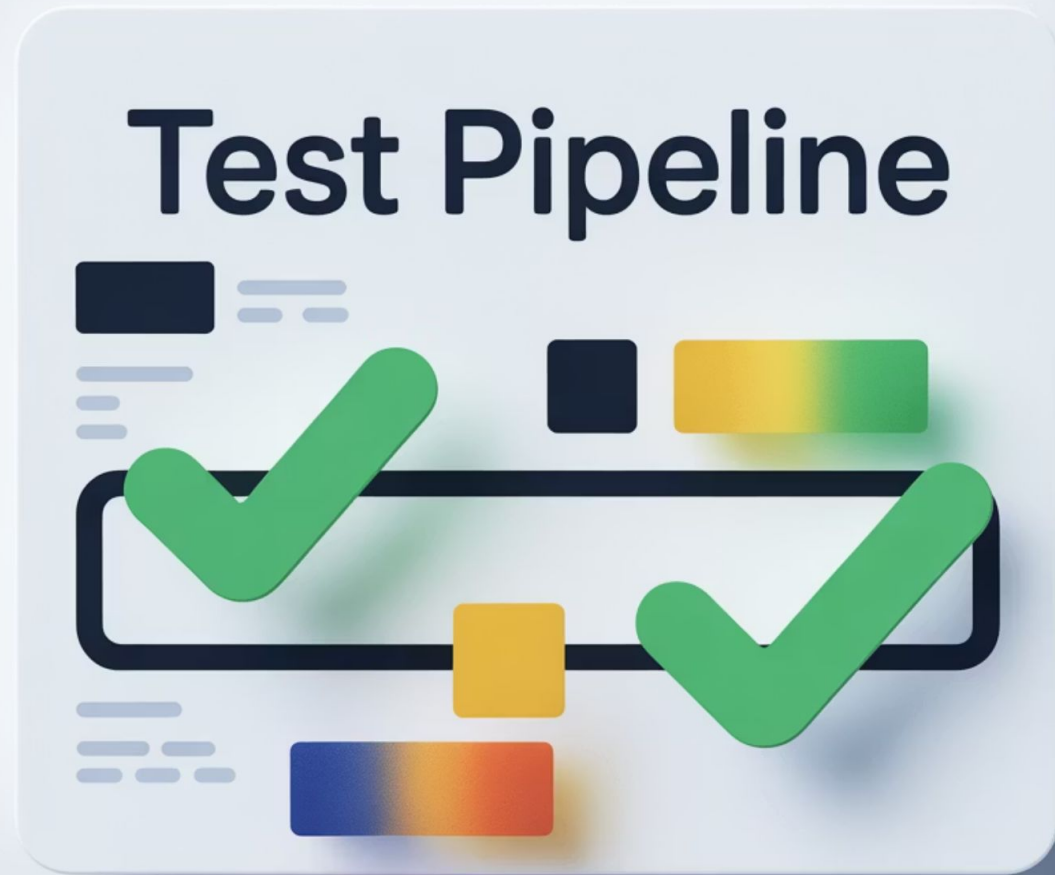
Balance isn't about replacing one with the other – it's about using both deliberately.



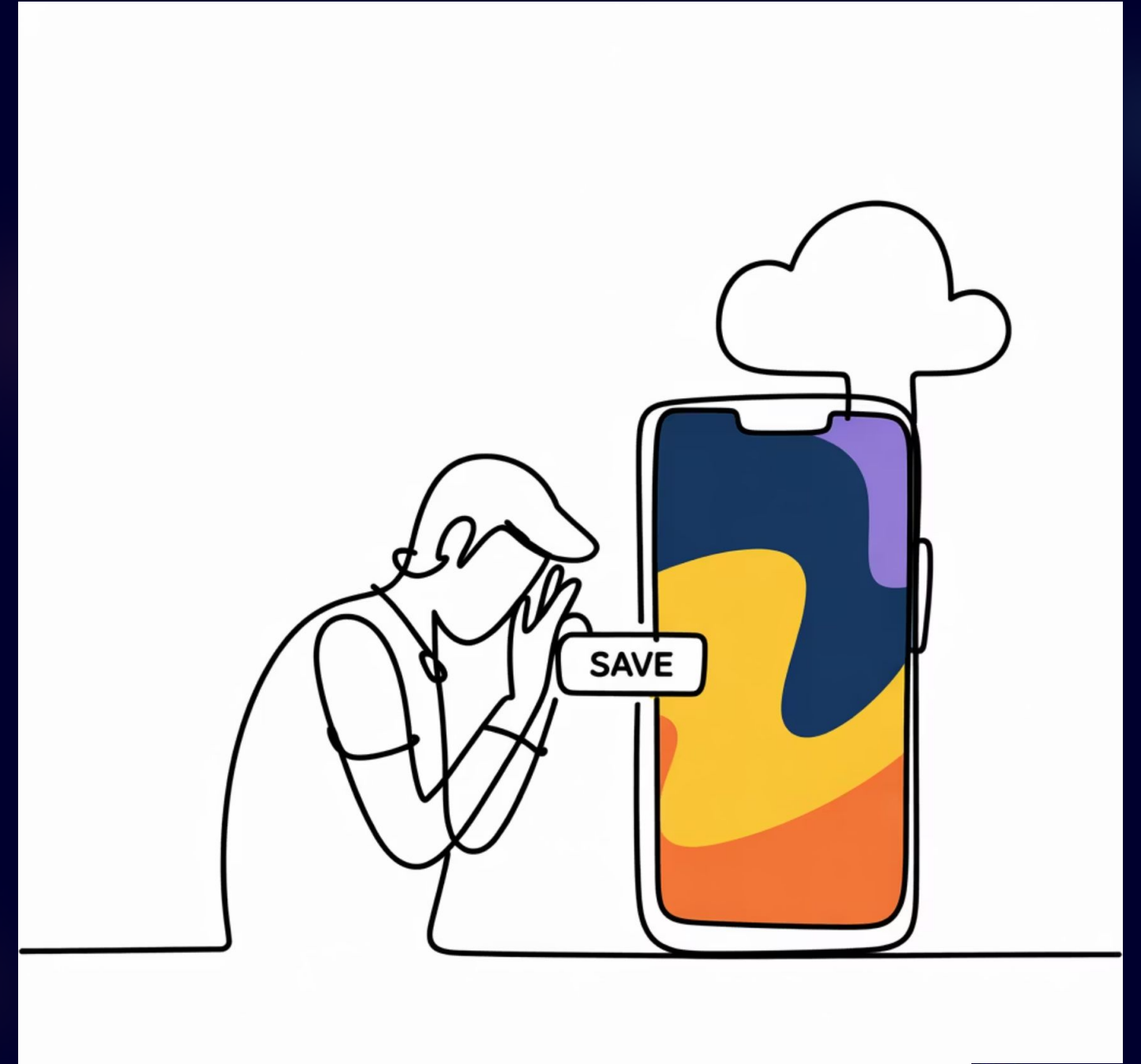
# Example Story: Known vs

## Unknown

What Automation Showed:



What Users Experienced:





# Why We Need Better

# Questions

How do we know we're being effective, not just chase metrics?

# The 6Qs of Quality

Questions that ground us in outcomes, not outputs.

# The Six Questions

Ask questions throughout:  
From ideation through into production

## Why?

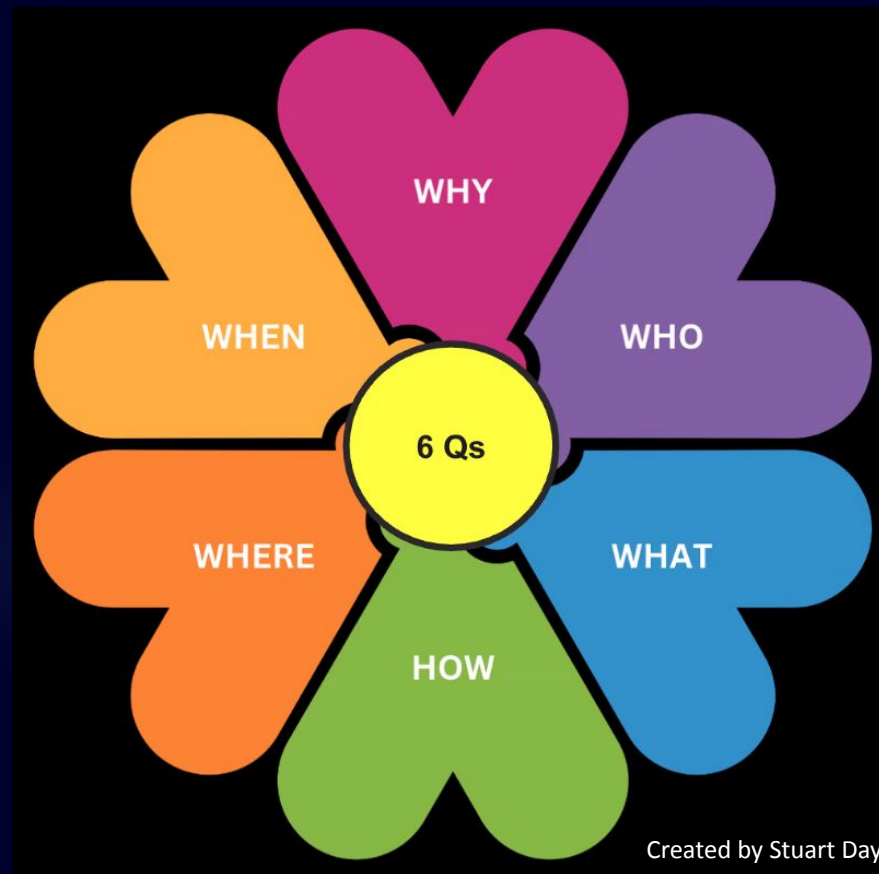
Why are we building this? What problem are we solving? Why does it matter? For who?

## When?

When do we need it, and is that a want or a need? When does it deliver value?

## Where?

Where will it be used? Where will this be tested? Which environments, devices, contexts?



## How

How will we build and test it? What approaches and tools?

## Who?

Who benefits from this? Who defines quality here, and who is impacted?

## What?

What exactly are we building? What are the known risks?

# The 6Qs and Information Model

## Together



### Information Model

Helps us see where automation fits versus where human investigation is vital.

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### The 6Qs

Give us the language to challenge assumptions and keep outcomes front and centre.

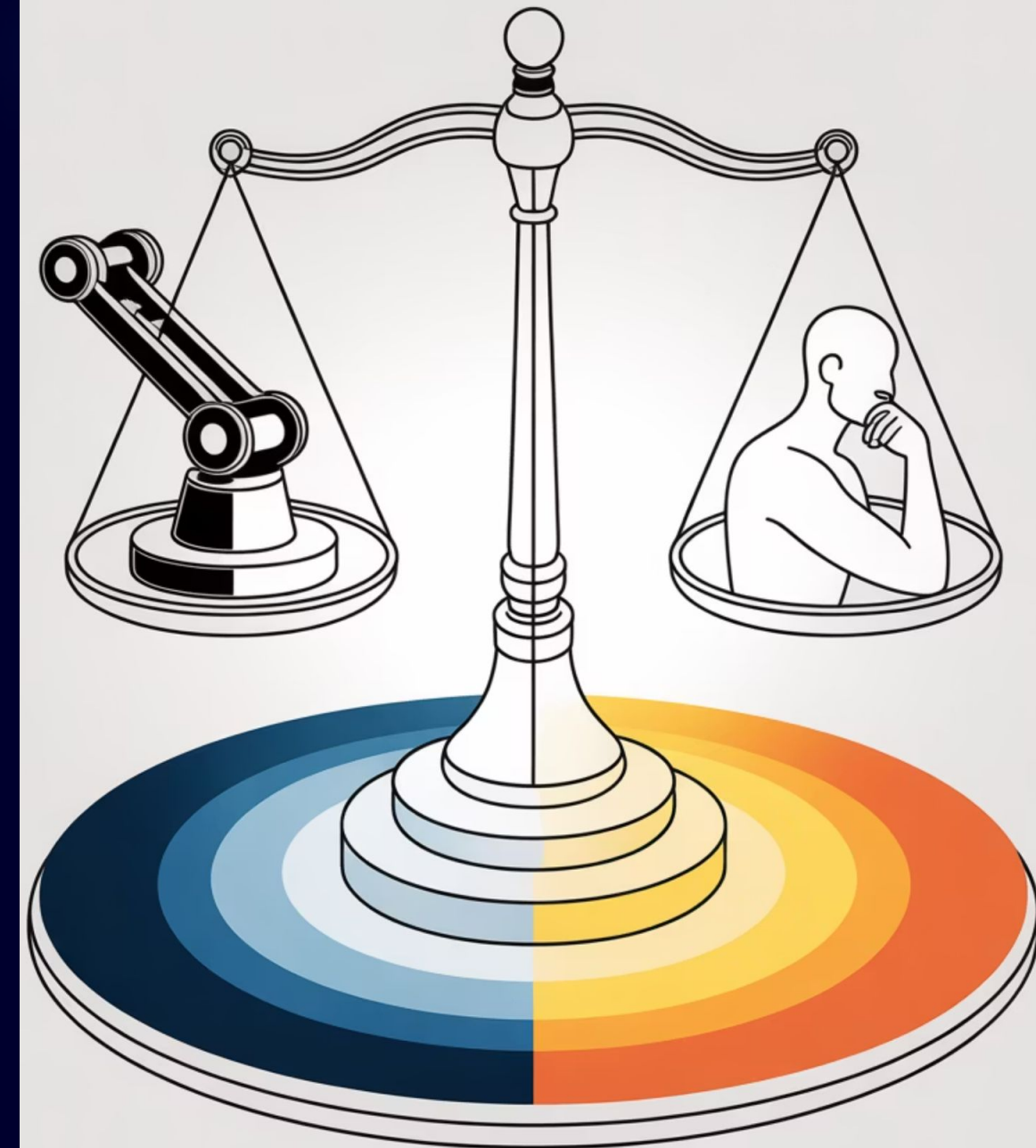
Together, they create balance:

Automation for confidence, human skills for exploration.

*Together, they give teams a practical framework for **Continuous Quality***

# Key Takeaways

- **Embed Continuous Quality practices**  
prioritise outcomes over outputs.
- **Shift your language**  
From outputs to outcomes.
- **Challenge automation requests**  
with the 6 Qs.
- **Remember the goal**  
Automation is an Enabler, not the Goal. Quality is the Goal!





# Practical Next Steps

You may well be thinking – So where do I start?

## Start With Questions

Use the 6 Q's in your next project from the start of the SDLC.

## Map Your Knowledge

As a Team, plot your knowns vs unknowns.

## Challenge Automation Requests

Always ask, "What quality insight are we chasing?"

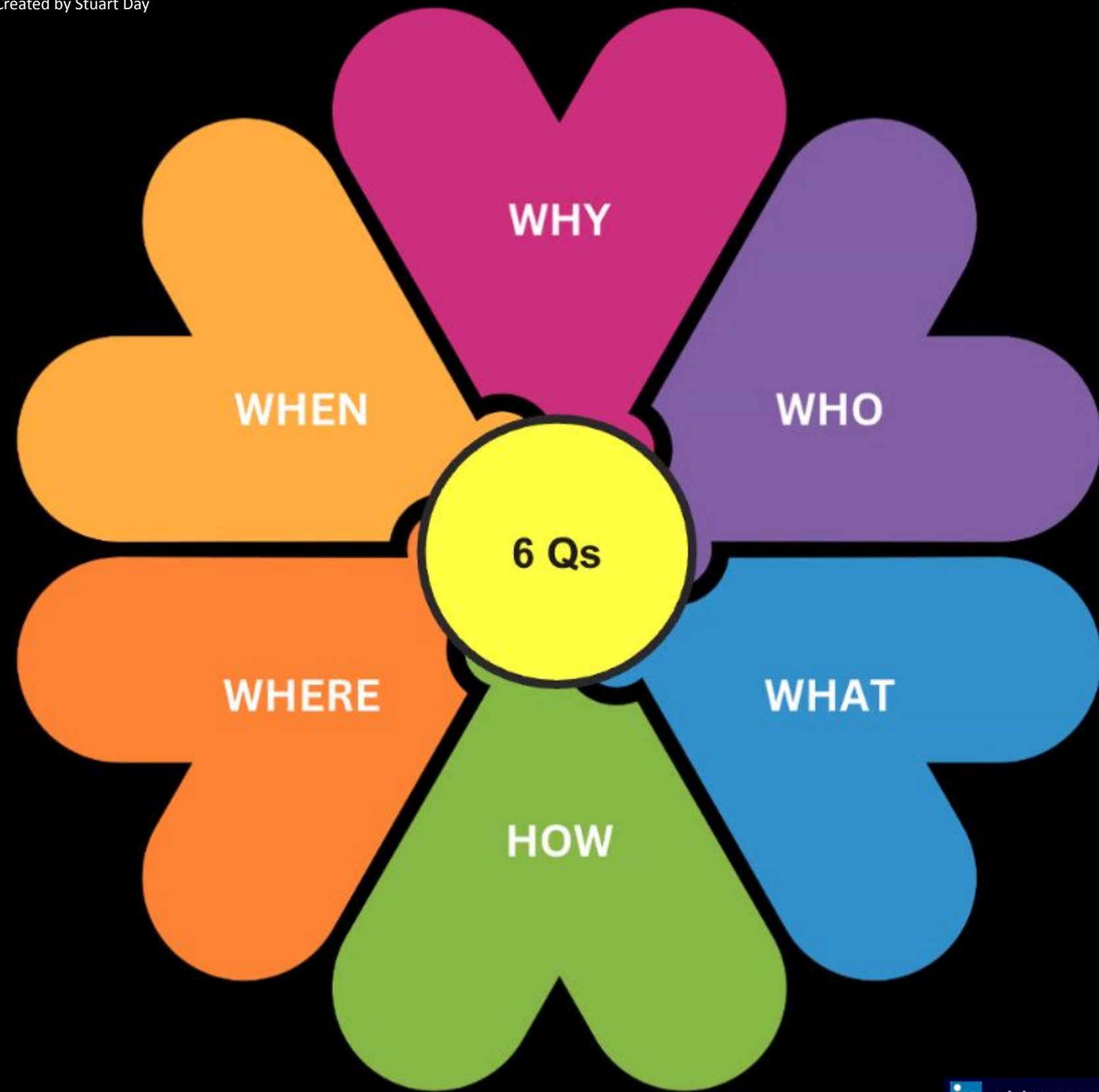
## Measure What Matters

User satisfaction, defect impact, business value.

If you only do one thing tomorrow

Start with asking the 6 Qs!

Small changes in thinking lead to big changes in results.



# Thank You for Listening!

## Resources

Dan Ashby's Information Model

Stuart Day's 6Qs of Continuous Quality