What Should I Do Now?

(managing yourself on a technical project)

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(Thanks to **Liza Ivinski** for her detailed example of a test manager at work.)

https://bit.ly/2ABLwjt

Liza's Story

1. Test manager Liza, was surprised by a large unexpected change in her product that she was asked to test. Her project was not yet staffed.
2. She refused to "just test it" because that would be bad testing.
3. She first called her husband who helped her calm down and become positive.
4. She met with her project lead to discuss expectations and the need to get testers.
5. She emailed the developer to get details on the changes. The reply was less informative than she hoped.

Liza's Story, cont.

6. Liza conferred with a local expert in this product about risk.
7. She attended meeting hosted by Project Lead along with testers and BA to discuss the test strategy.
8. She wrote 17 exploratory testing charters to help testers focus during the upcoming testing.
9. She developed test data for the upcoming testing.
10. She performed survey testing as part of #8 and #9 as well as to evaluate testability.
11. She reported a severe bug.

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deftones
SATURDAY NIGHT WRIST
AVERY

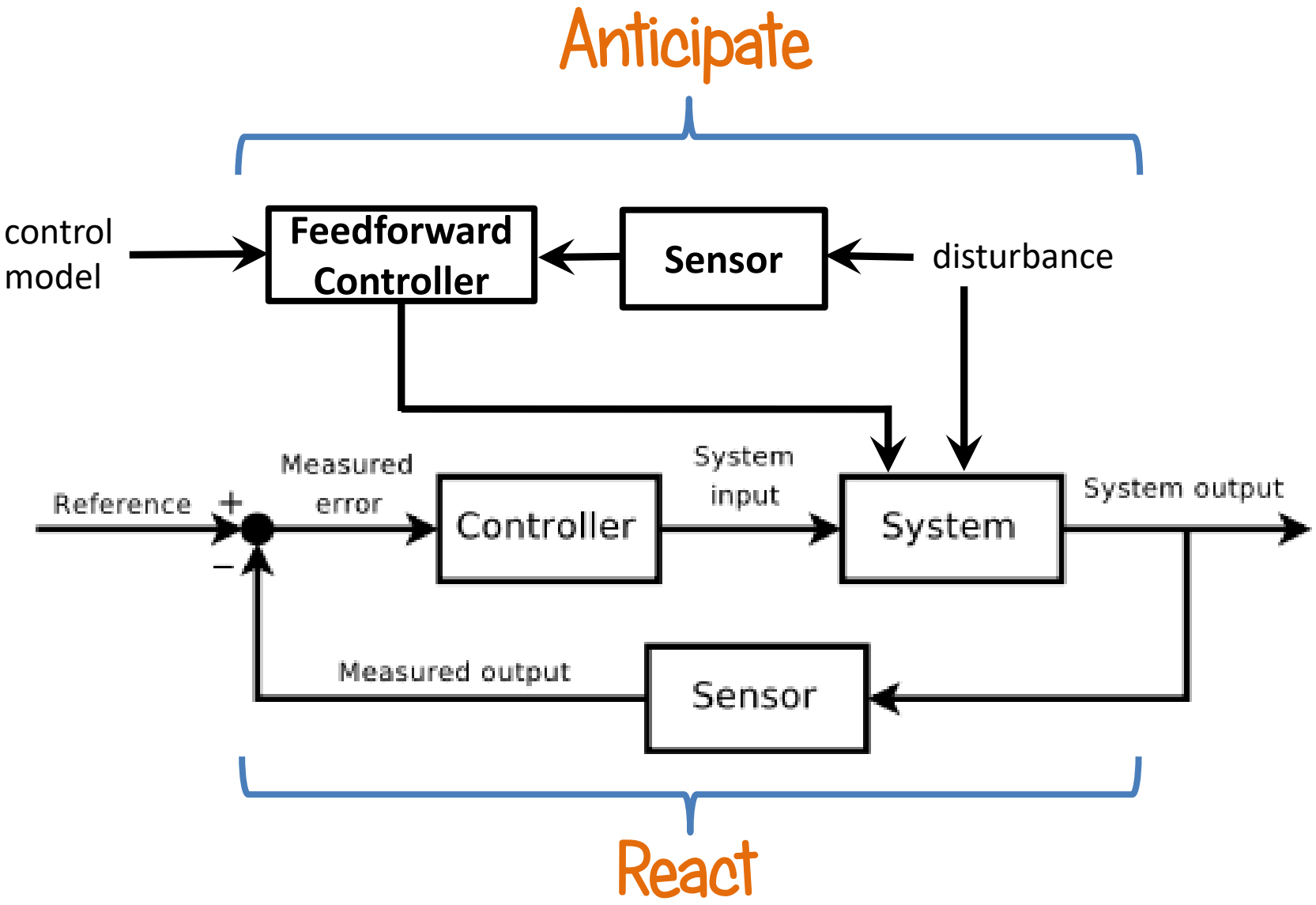
The first challenge in deciding what to do now is overcoming this thought:

"There is one specific correct thing I should do now."

Stop that!

There are a lot of things you can do, and any of them might be good or bad or somewhere in between. You can't know the exact best move.

Solution, Part 1: Be a Cybernetic Loop

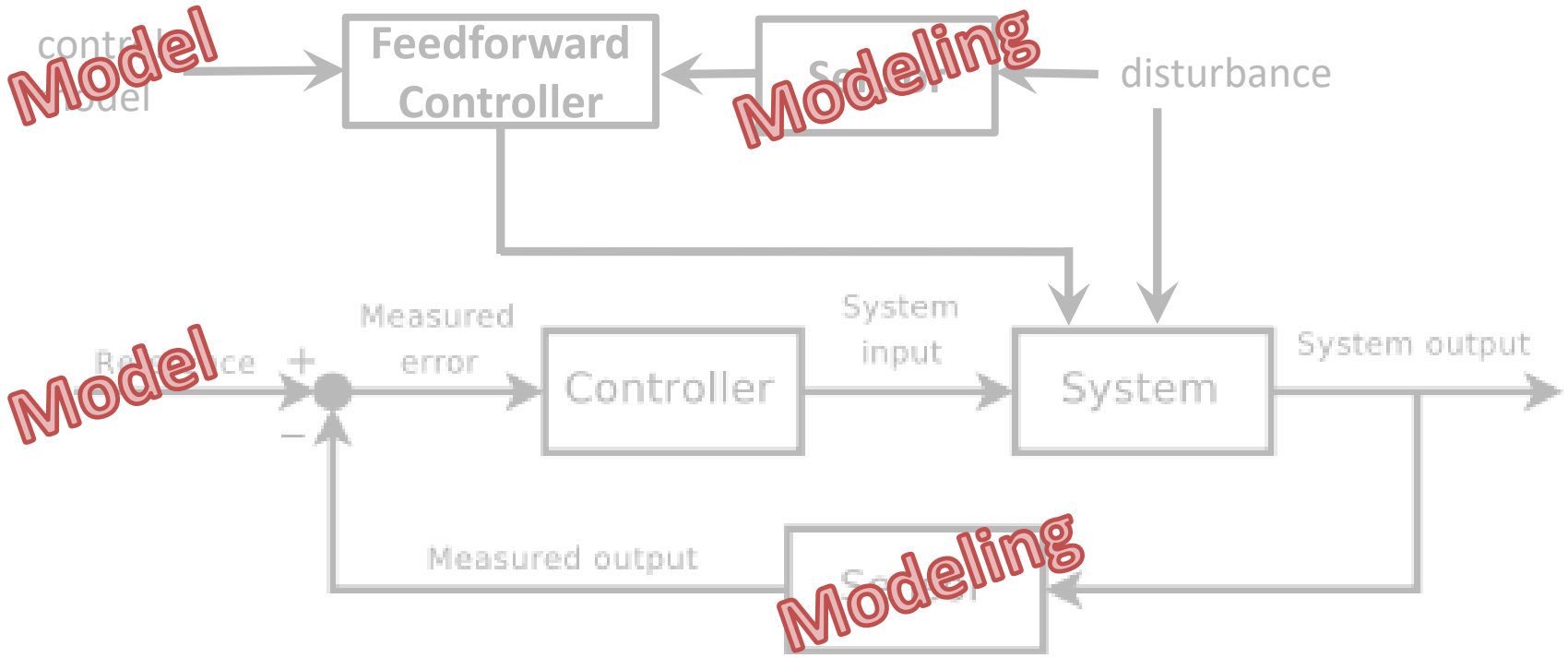


How do we reason about the world? Models.

A model is something that represents something else.
The kind I'm talking about now are
mental representations.

**(I can't show you
a picture
of a mental model)**

Solution, Part 2: Model Your World



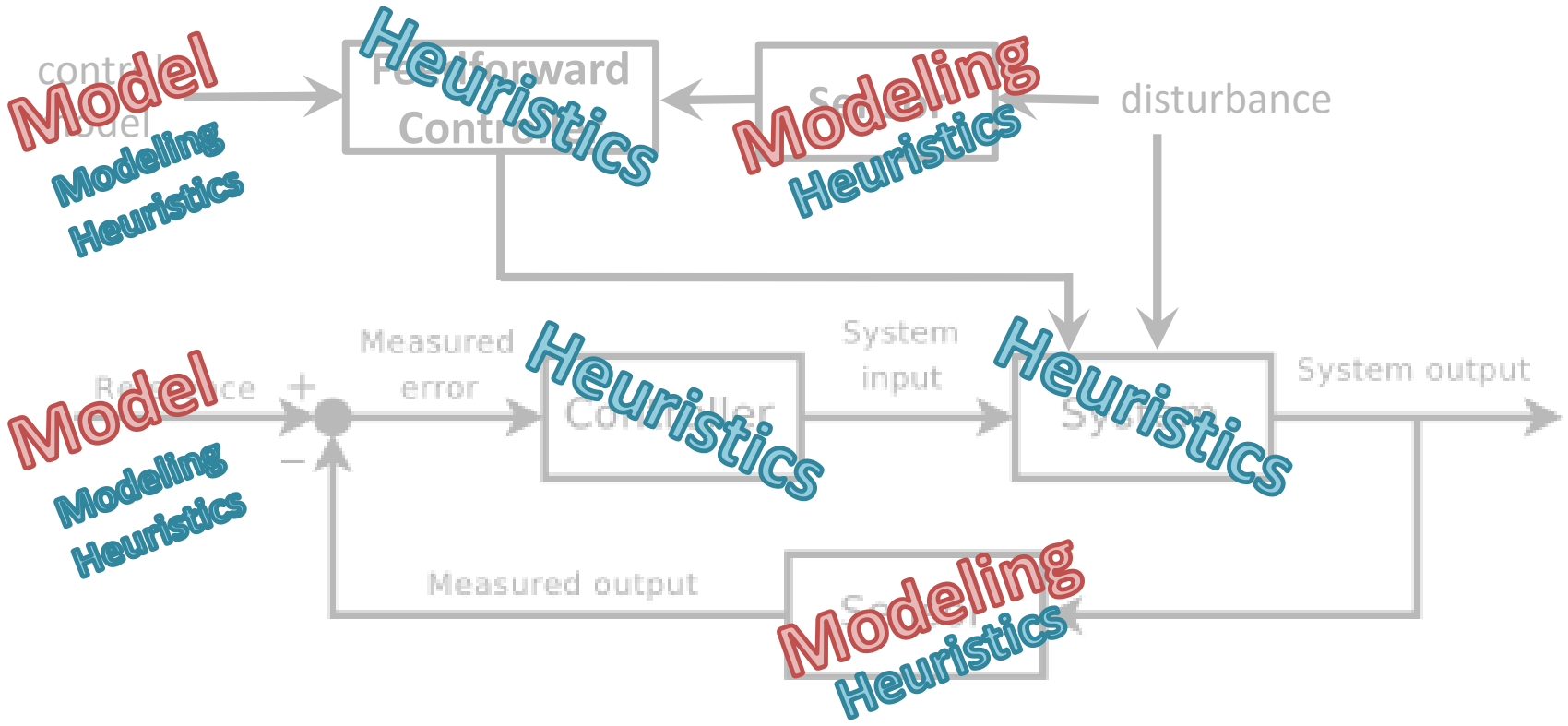
Solution, Part 3: **Apply Heuristics**

A heuristic is a **fallible method** of **solving a problem**.

We live in a sea of heuristics. We constantly apply them.
Our bodies are constructed from them.

- **Eyes** are heuristics for seeing.
- A **street map** is a heuristic for finding our way.
- A **chainsaw** is a heuristic for cutting trees.
- **"Be honest"** is a heuristic for acquiring trust.
- **"Tell excellent lies"** is also a heuristic for acquiring trust.

Solution, Part 3: **Apply Heuristics**



So, what should I do now…

…to be a good member of the team?

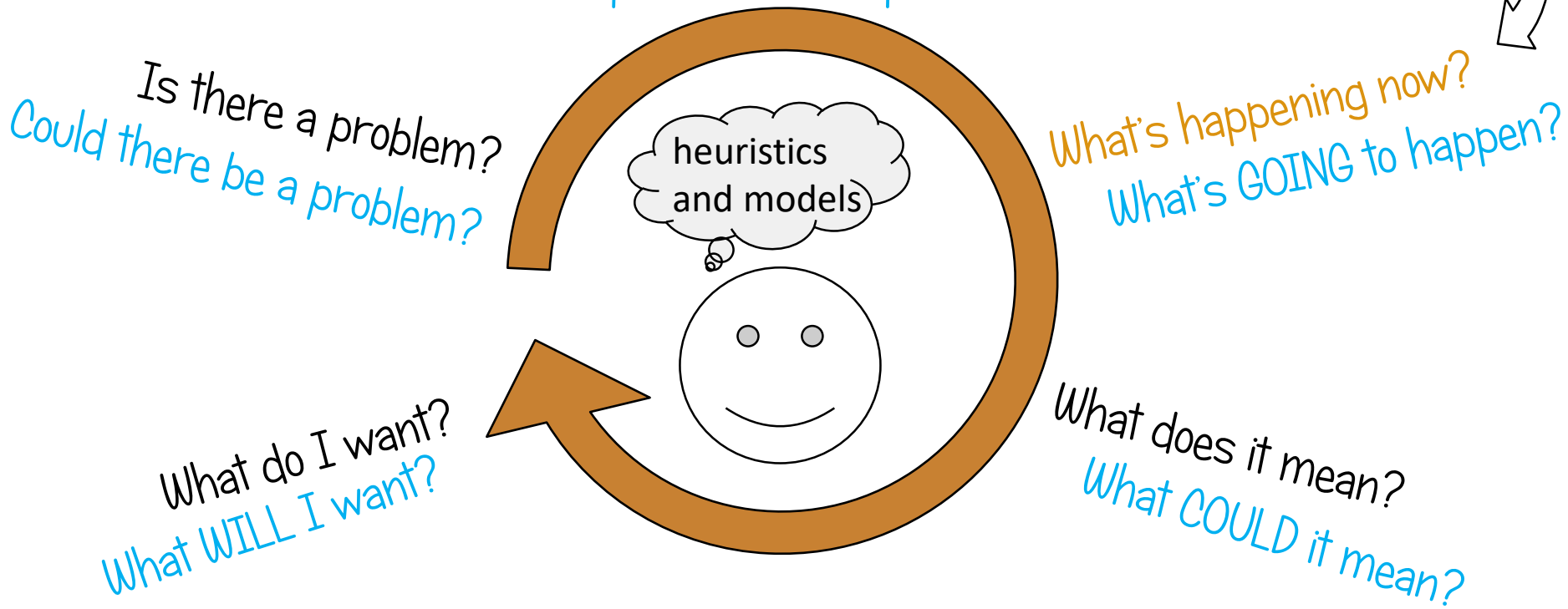
…to be a good tester?

…to test the right thing?

Starting Heuristic:

What's Happening Now?

If so, I will do something now
to make it better!
Or to prevent future problems



Is there a problem?
Could there be a problem?

What's happening now?
What's GOING to happen?

What do I want?
What WILL I want?

What does it mean?
What COULD it mean?

Selection Heuristic:
A Hierarchy of Needs

1. **Self-care:** Am I okay? (No? Then take care of myself)
2. **Commitment:** Do I know why I'm here and what my role is? (No? Negotiate mission)
3. **Urgent assistance:** Does someone need my help, urgently? (Yes? Then help them)
4. **Unblocking:** Is someone blocked until I finish something? (Yes? Then finish it)
5. **Specific promise:** Have I said I would do a specific thing? (Yes? Do that thing)
6. **General duty:** What does my role require me to do? (In general, do that)
7. **Preparation:** Am I unready or inefficient? (Yes? Improve the process or get organized)
8. **Self-improvement:** Do I need a new or better skill? (Each week, work on at least one)

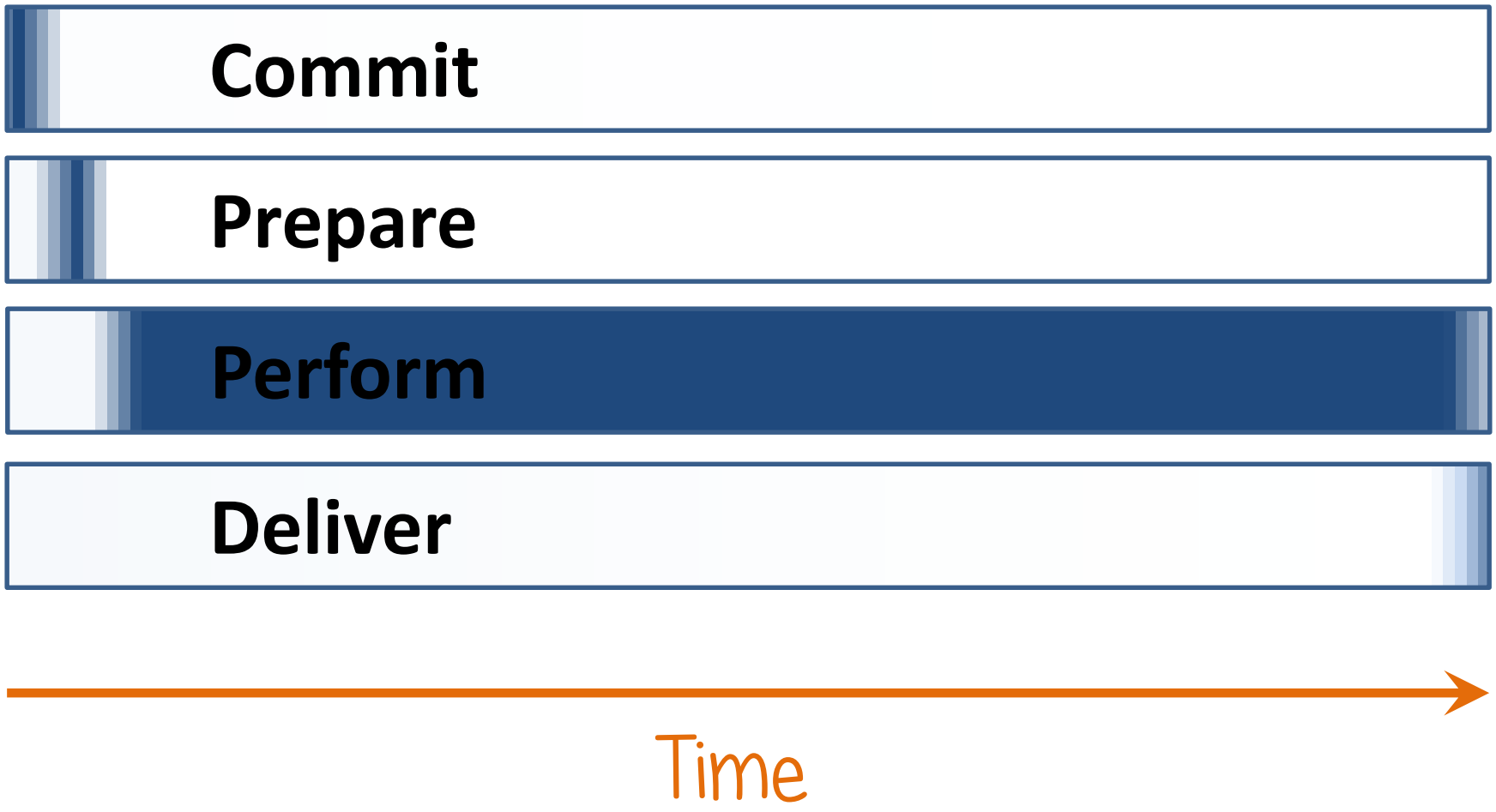
Consider this for situations happening now and looking ahead to what will happen.

Process Analysis Heuristic:
Four General Threads

Commit	Solves the problem of setting expectations accepting the problem, and making time to solve it.
Prepare	Solves the problem of sloppy, slow, inefficient work.
Perform	Produces the solution to the original problem.
Deliver	Puts the solution into practice in a way that satisfies the client.

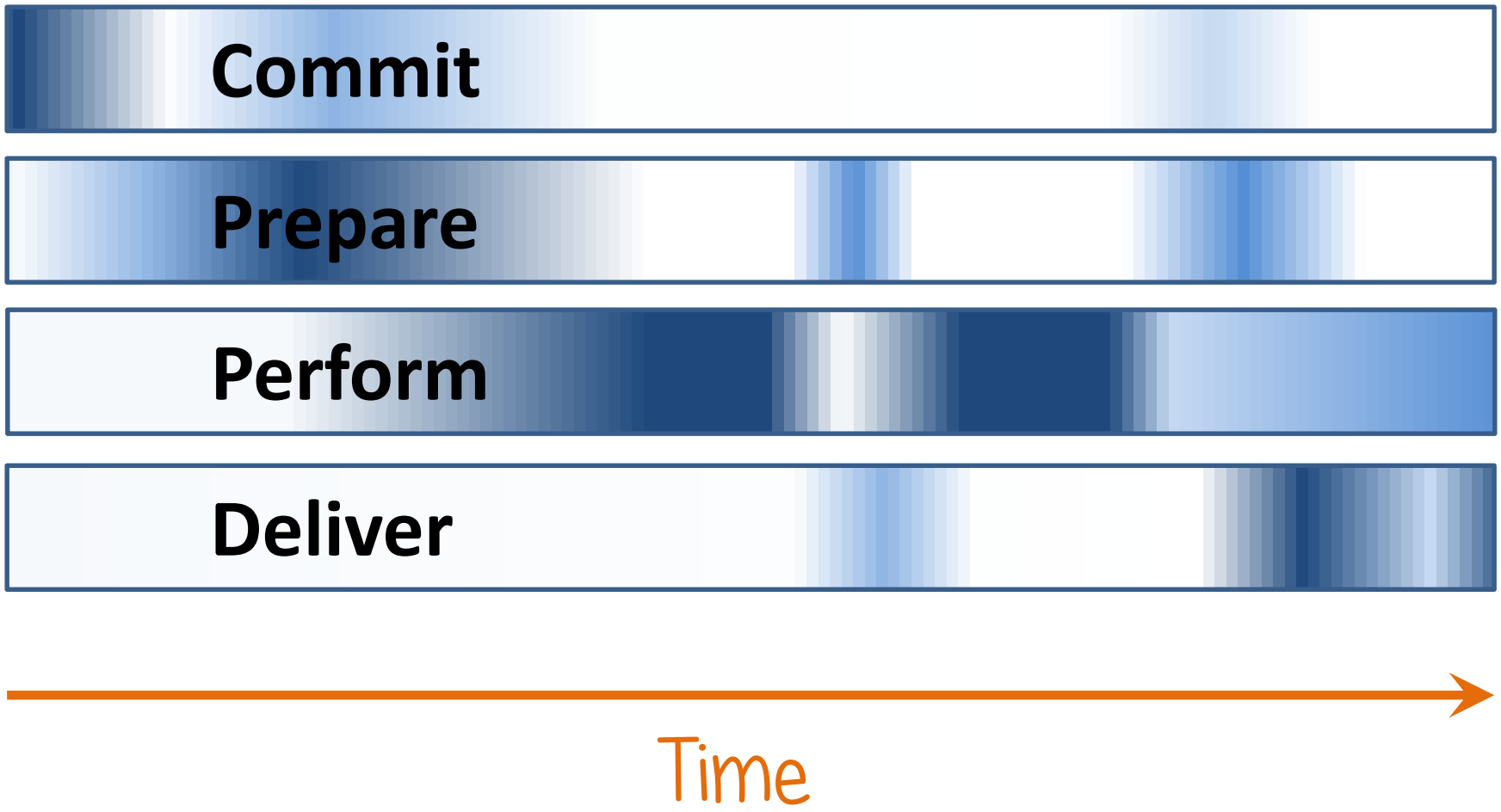
Time

Task Performance Fantasy

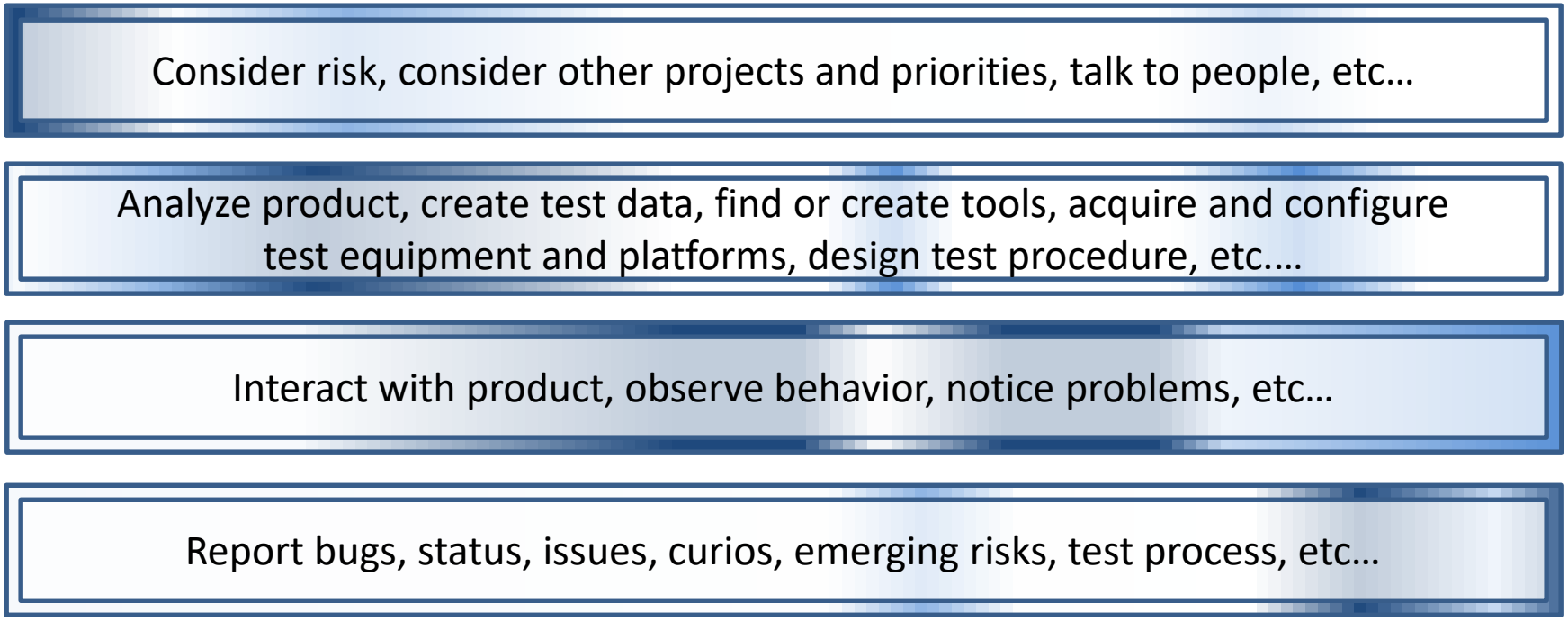


It’s really more like this...

Selection Heuristic: What is lacking right now?



How this helps answer: "what should I do as a tester?"



Liza's Story

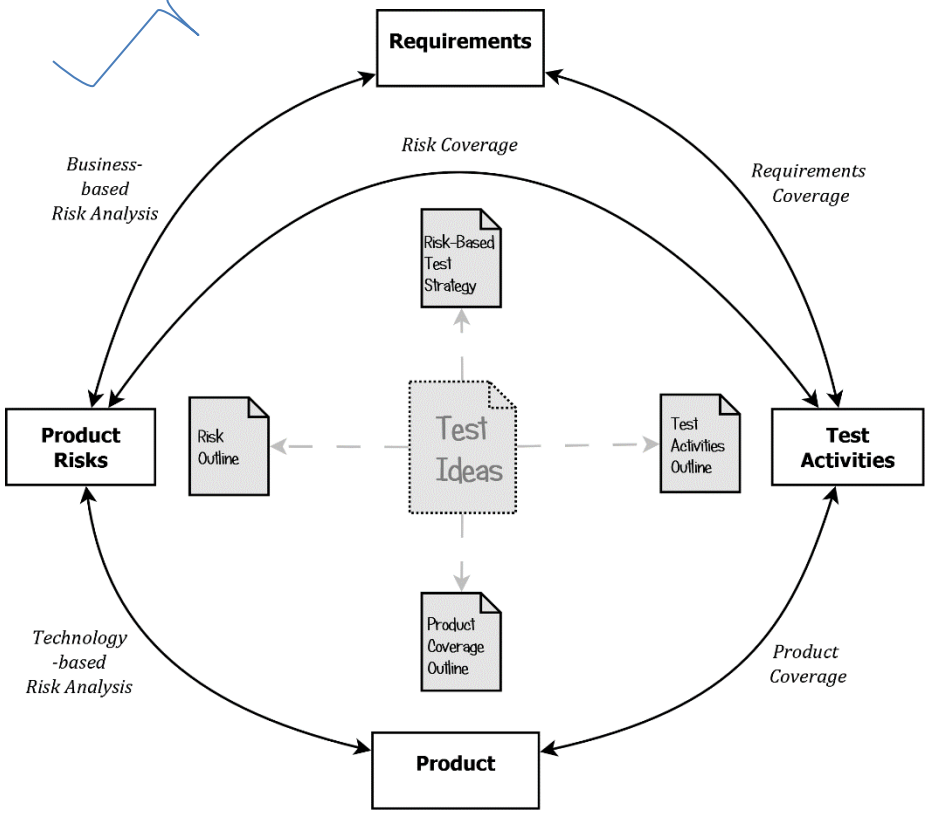
1. Test manager Liza, was surprised by a large unexpected change in her product that she was asked to test. Her project was not yet staffed. (commit)
2. She refused to "just test it" because that would be bad testing. (commit)
3. She first called her husband who helped her calm down and become positive. (prepare) (SELF-CARE)
4. She met with her project lead to discuss expectations and the need to get testers. (commit) (SELF-CARE, COMMITMENT, PREPARATION)
5. She emailed the developer to get details on the changes. The reply was less informative than she hoped. (prepare) (GENERAL DUTY, PREPARATION)

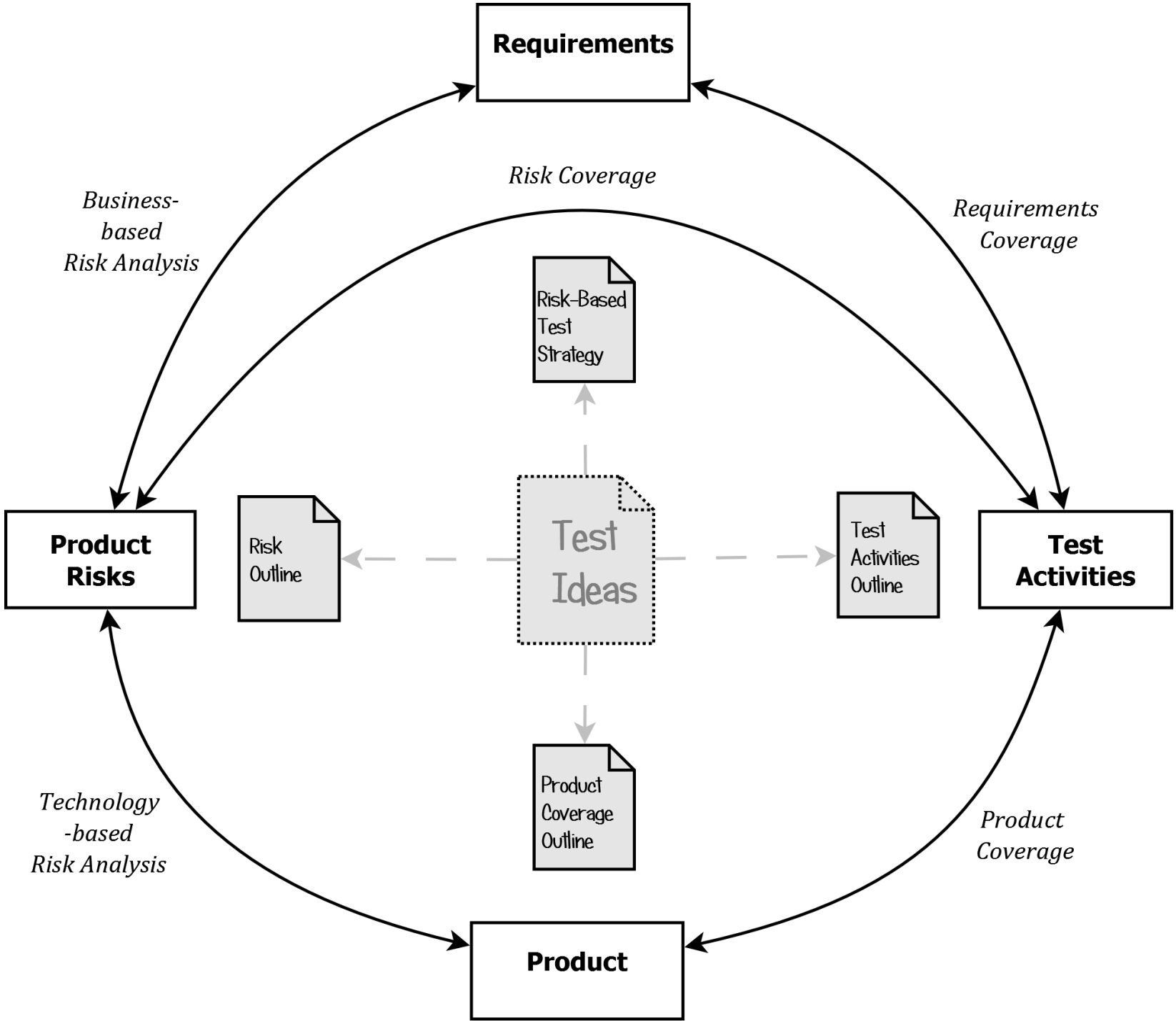
Liza's Story, cont.

6. Liza conferred with a local expert in this product about risk. (prepare) (GENERAL DUTY, PREPARATION)
7. She attended meeting hosted by Project Lead along with testers and BA to discuss the test strategy. (commit, prepare) (COMMITMENT, PREPARATION, GENERAL DUTY, SPECIFIC PROMISE, URGENT ASSISTANCE)
8. She wrote 17 exploratory testing charters to help testers focus during the upcoming testing. (prepare) (PREPARATION, GENERAL DUTY)
9. She developed test data for the upcoming testing. (prepare) (PREPARATION, GENERAL DUTY)
10. She performed survey testing as part of #8 and #9 as well as to evaluate testability. (prepare, perform) (GENERAL DUTY, PREPARATION, SELF-IMPROVEMENT)
11. She reported a severe bug. (deliver) (GENERAL DUTY, UNBLOCKING)

Liza is working from a model of testing effectiveness…

- How does she decide what to do?
  - **Gather knowledge about the product.**
  - **Study potential risks and focus on risk areas.**
  - **Record and organize test ideas.**
  - Evaluate and create testability.
  - Apply useful tools.
  - Do informal testing and be reluctant to formalize it.
  - Report bugs.




Requirements
Risk Coverage
Business-based Risk Analysis
Requirements Coverage
Risk-Based Test Strategy
Product Risks
Risk Outline
Test Ideas
Test Activities Outline
Test Activities
Product Coverage Outline
Technology-based Risk Analysis
Product Coverage
Product

Selection heuristic for what to test:

Component Risk Analysis with Guidewords

Consider four kinds of risk factors:

- Project-Based
- Technology-Based
- Requirements-Based
- Operational

1. List every risk factor that applies to a component.
2. Discuss the cumulative impact of those factors.
3. Divide components into: HIGHER, NORMAL, LOWER risk

See http://www.satisfice.com/rst-appendices.pdf

Remember, in the Social World of Teams and Roles…

It is not enough to be good and wise in your choices. You must also have a…

Compelling Story

This stock photo undermines his point!

Or is he making a deeper comment about how fake news can be compelling?

These thought bubbles are also fake!