LEVERAGING HYBRID ONE-ON-ONES FOR BETTER CONNECTIONS

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ALEXANDRA SUNDERLAND
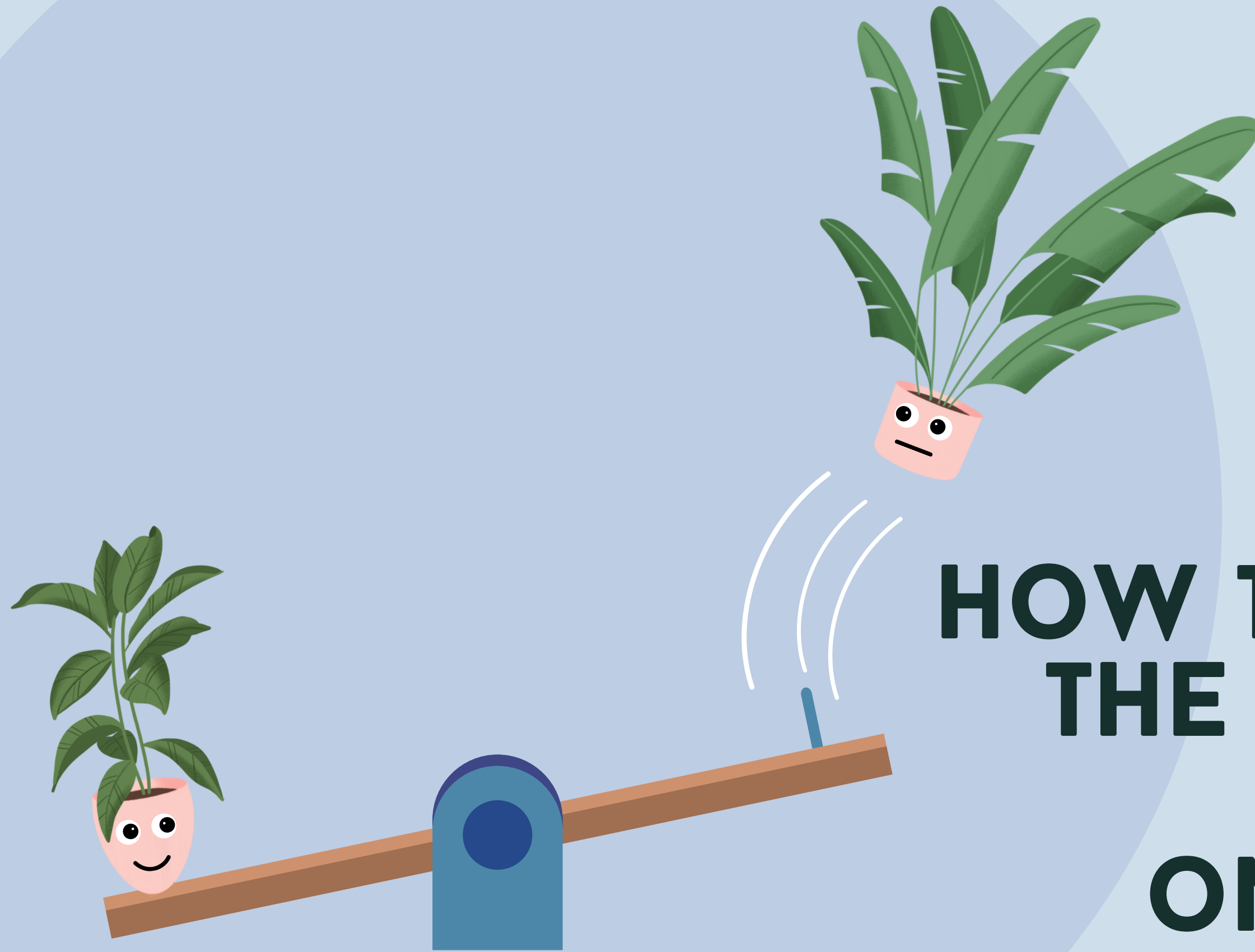## 10+ YEARS REMOTE/HYBRID

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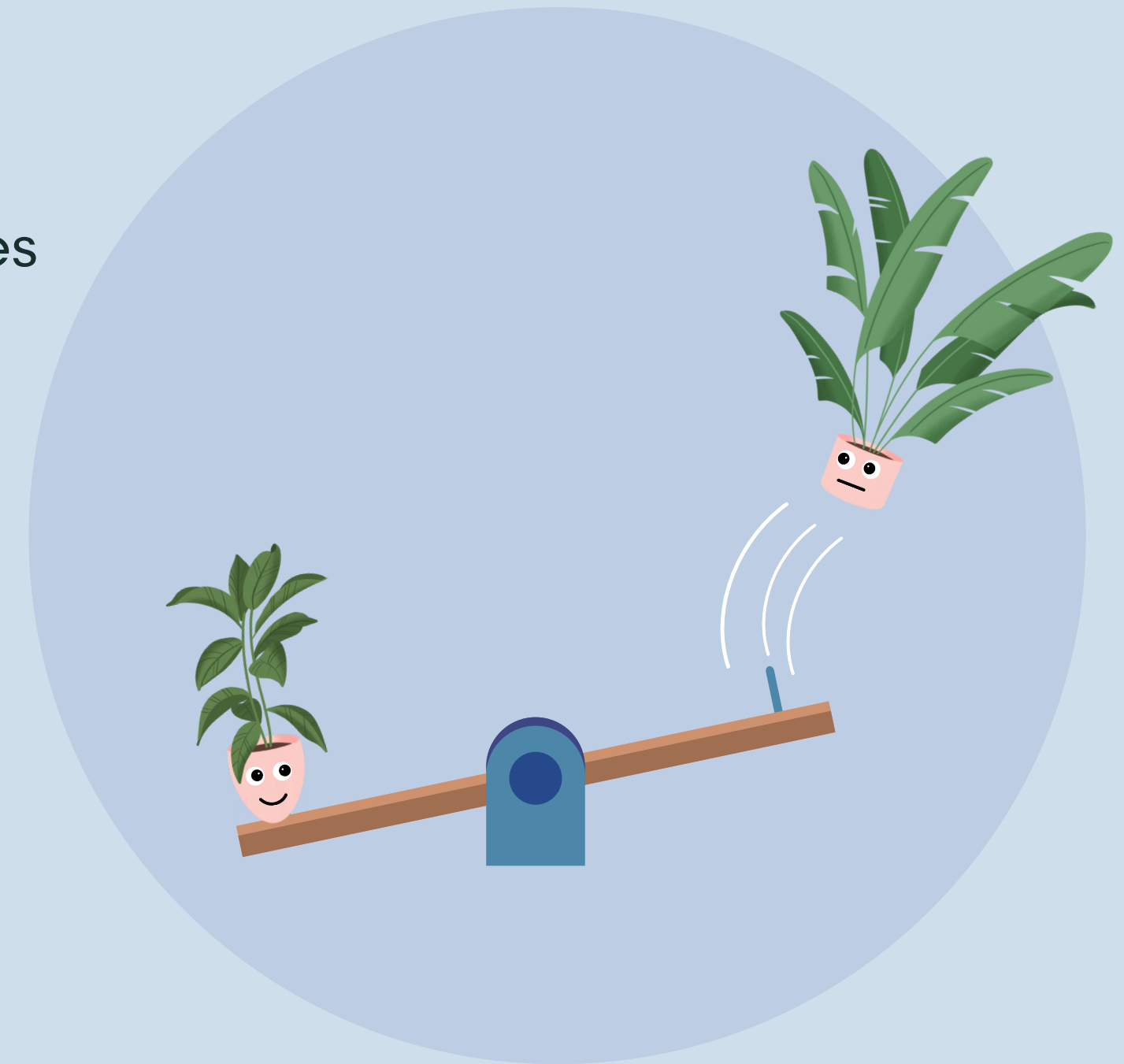www.alexandras.dev

WHY I CARE ABOUT
ONE-ON-ONES

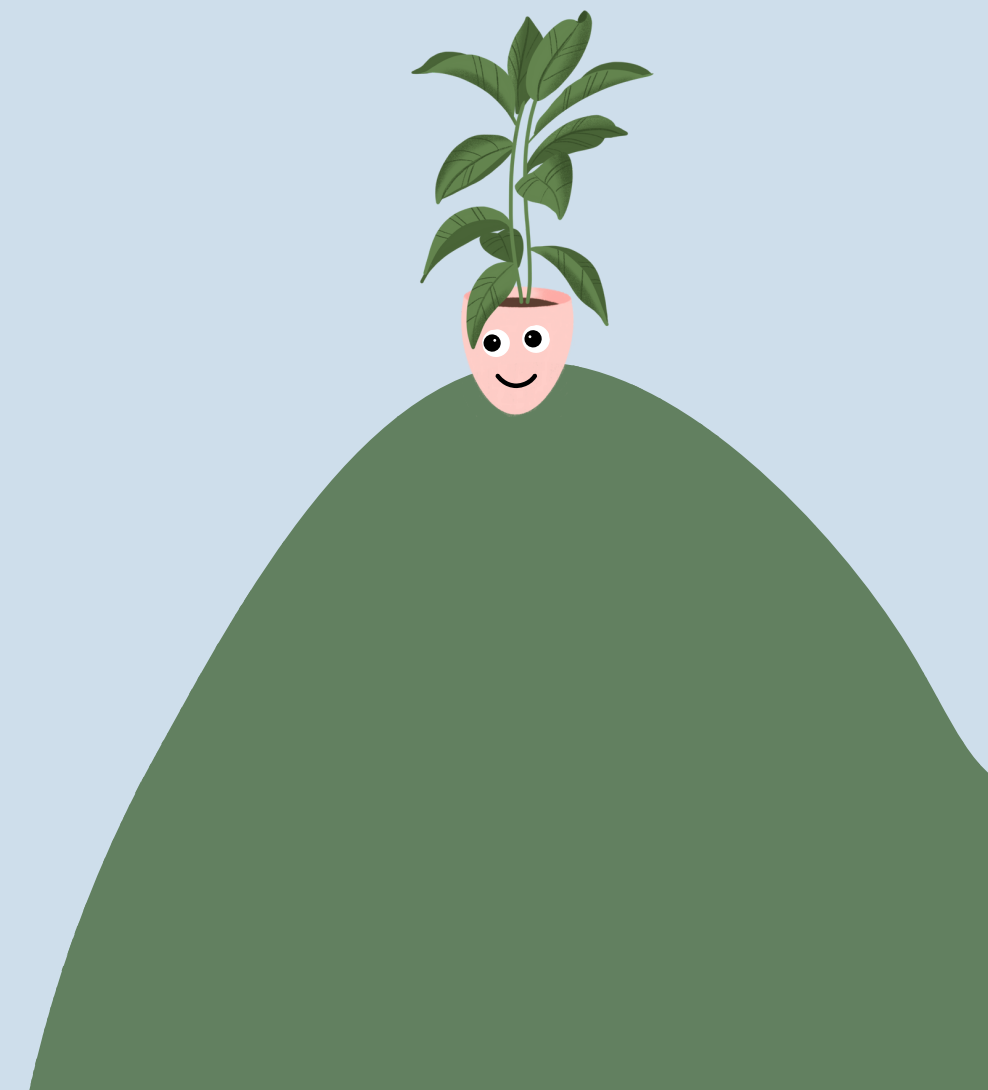# HOW TO LEVERAGE THE BENEFITS OF HYBRID ONE-ON-ONES

WHAT WILL BE COVERED

- Taking advantage of unique aspects of remote/hybrid one-on-ones
- The purpose of one-on-ones
- How to have great one-on-ones
- Types of one-on-ones & troubleshooting common issues

...and more!

ONE-ON-ONES ARE ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT IN HYBRID WORK

WHY <u>REMOTE</u> ONE-ON-ONES ARE GREAT

- Feeling of comfort in your own environment
- Privacy from coworkers
- Lack of eye contact can make it easier to talk
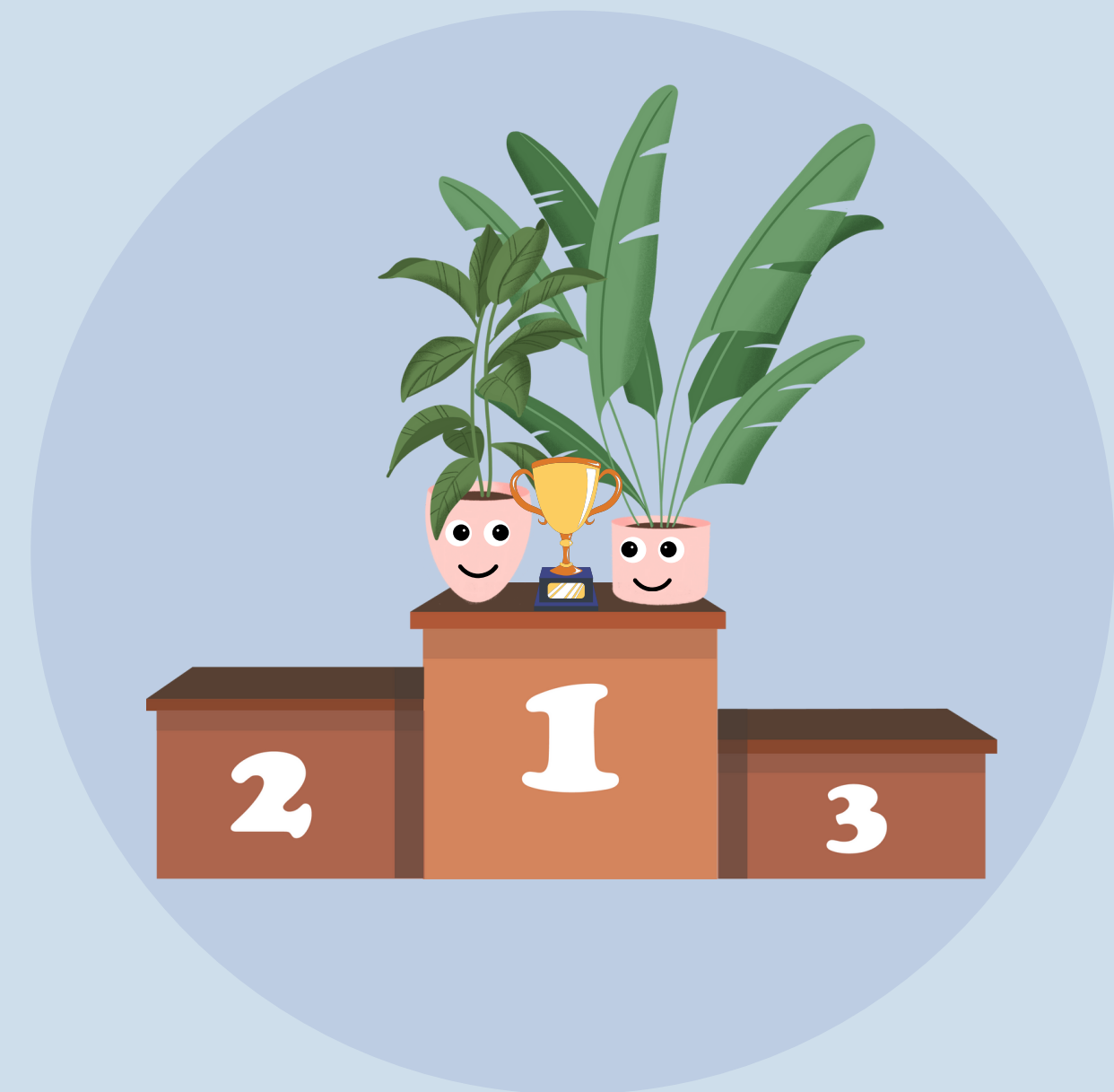- Easy to keep time without physically glancing at a clock

WHAT MAKES FOR A GREAT ONE-ON-ONE?

# WHAT MAKES FOR A GREAT ONE-ON-ONE?

Purpose of one-on-ones

- Build trust, leading to better work outcomes
- Create alignment on goals and vision
- Give and receive feedback to help each other grow
- Provide a reliable space to discuss anything:
  - Ideas
  - Blockers
  - Questions

WHAT MAKES FOR A GREAT ONE-ON-ONE?

Signs of great one-on-ones

- Both people come prepared with topics
- Focus is on the conversations, not distractions
- Deep conversations are held, and opinions are shared
- There's time for both social and work-related talk
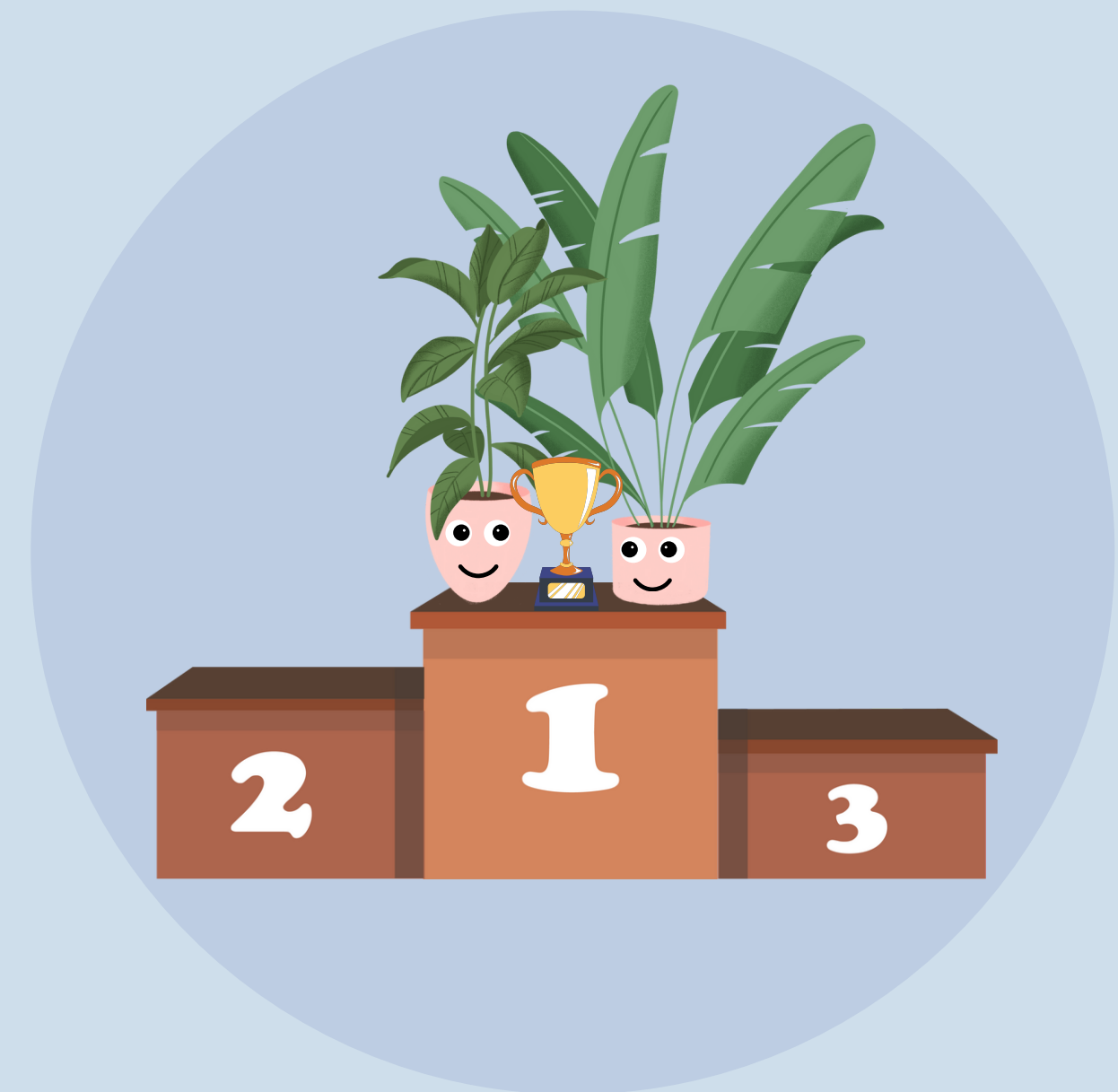
HOW TO STRUCTURE A HYBRID ONE-ON-ONE

HOW TO STRUCTURE A HYBRID ONE-ON-ONE

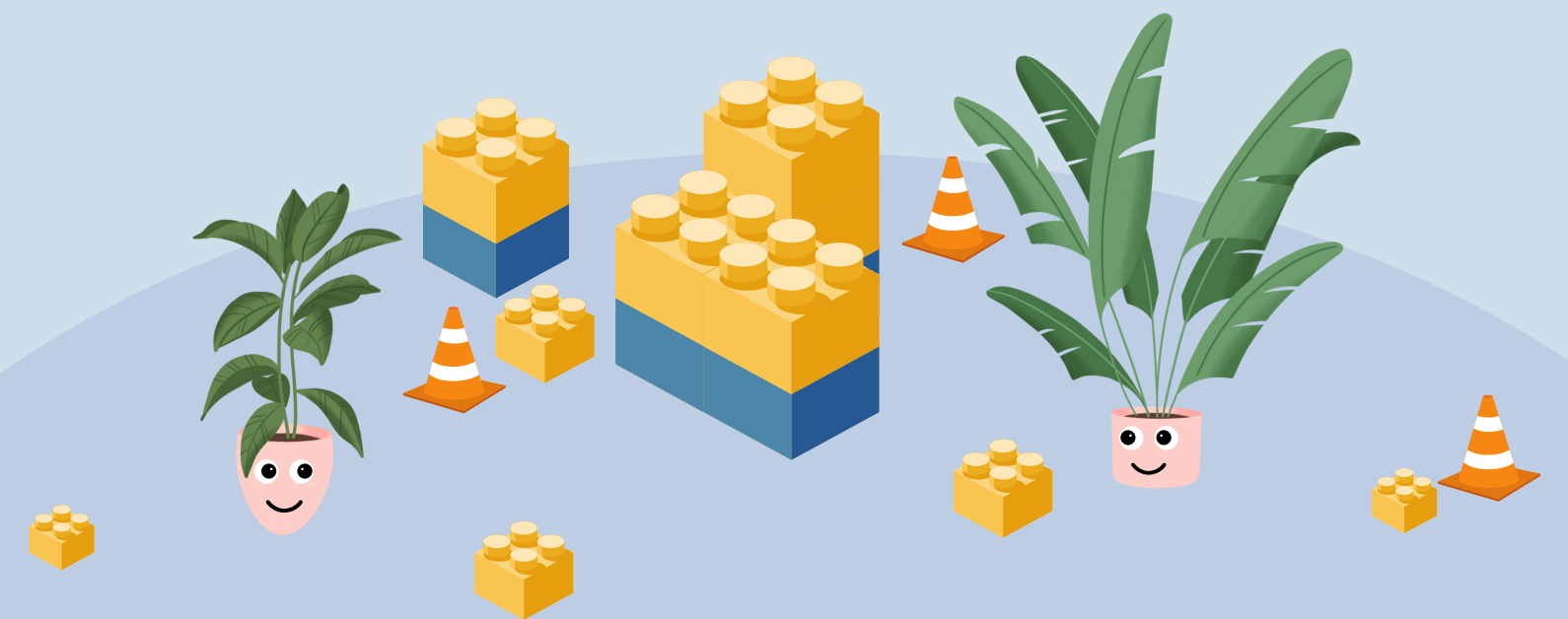## Components

- Timing
- Location
- Topics

HOW TO STRUCTURE A HYBRID ONE-ON-ONE
TIMING

Time of day

- Be aware of time zones
- Manager vs Maker schedule
- Avoid Mondays/Fridays because of holidays

Length/Frequency
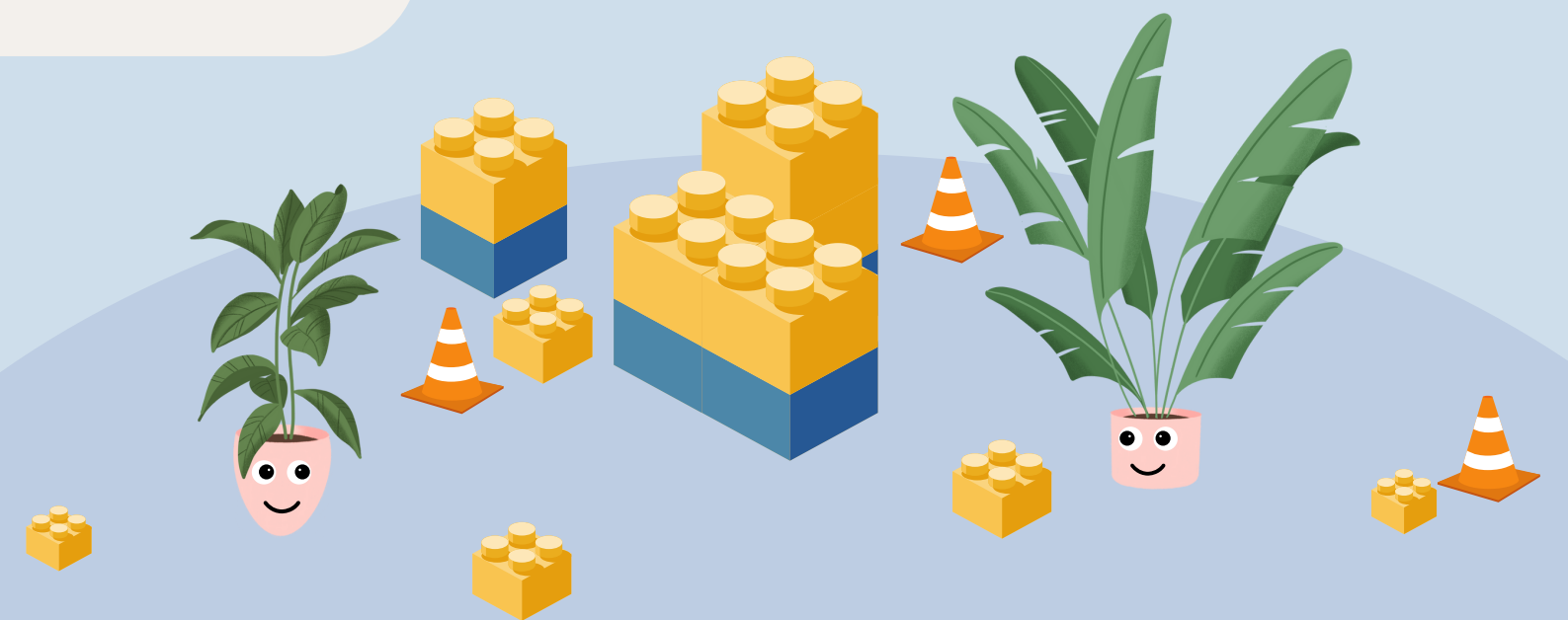
- 30-60min
- At least biweekly, preferably weekly

HOW TO STRUCTURE A HYBRID ONE-ON-ONE
TIMING

SHOULD YOU GROUP ALL ONE-ON-ONES BACK-TO-BACK?

It depends on team size.

Suggestion: Max 2 back-to-back, experiment with formats.

HOW TO STRUCTURE A HYBRID ONE-ON-ONE
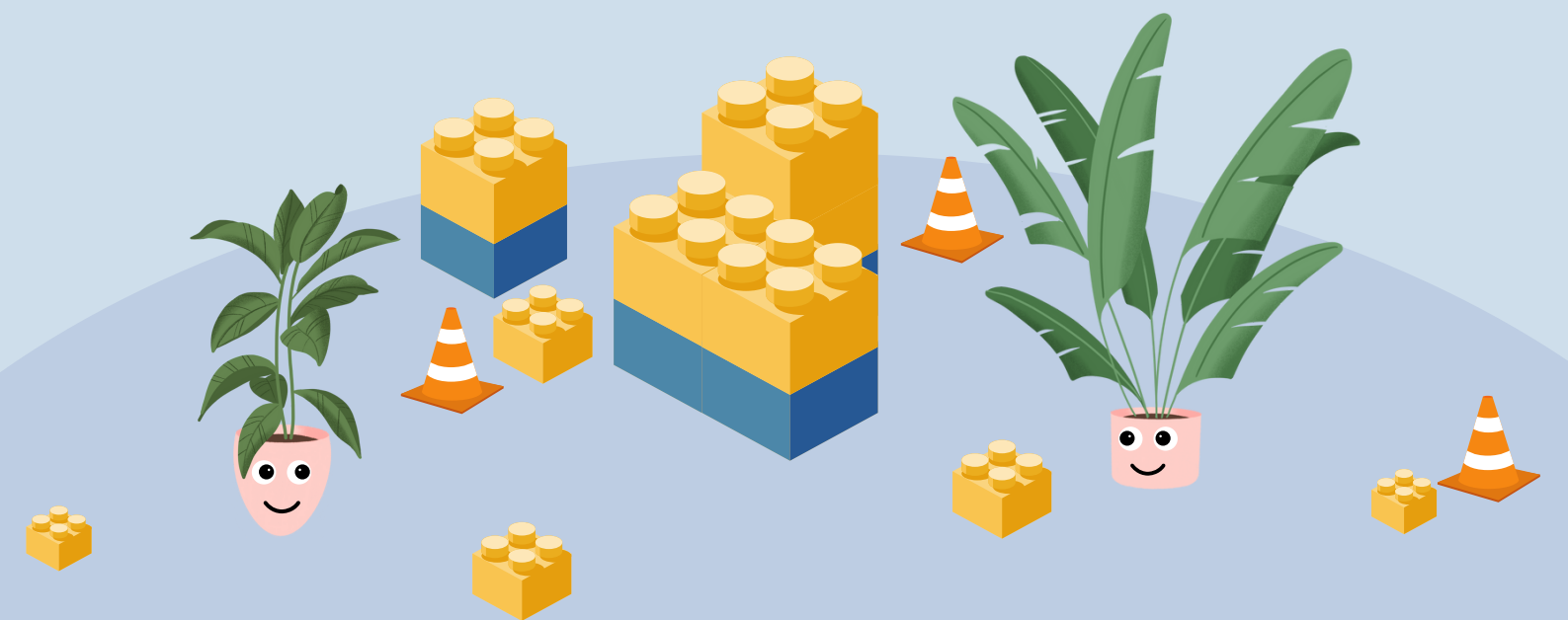# LOCATION

Virtual options

- Video call
- Voice call / phone call

In-person options

- Meeting room
- Location outside the office
- On a walk

HYBRID: BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Suggestion: Mix it up and alternate between virtual and in-person one-on-ones for each person if possible.

HOW TO STRUCTURE A HYBRID ONE-ON-ONE
TOPICS

Specific to Hybrid work

- Feelings about how connected they are with the team
- Feedback on how to better collaborate between remote and in-office people
- Any information they feel they might have missed out on
- Feedback on how to improve asynchronous communication
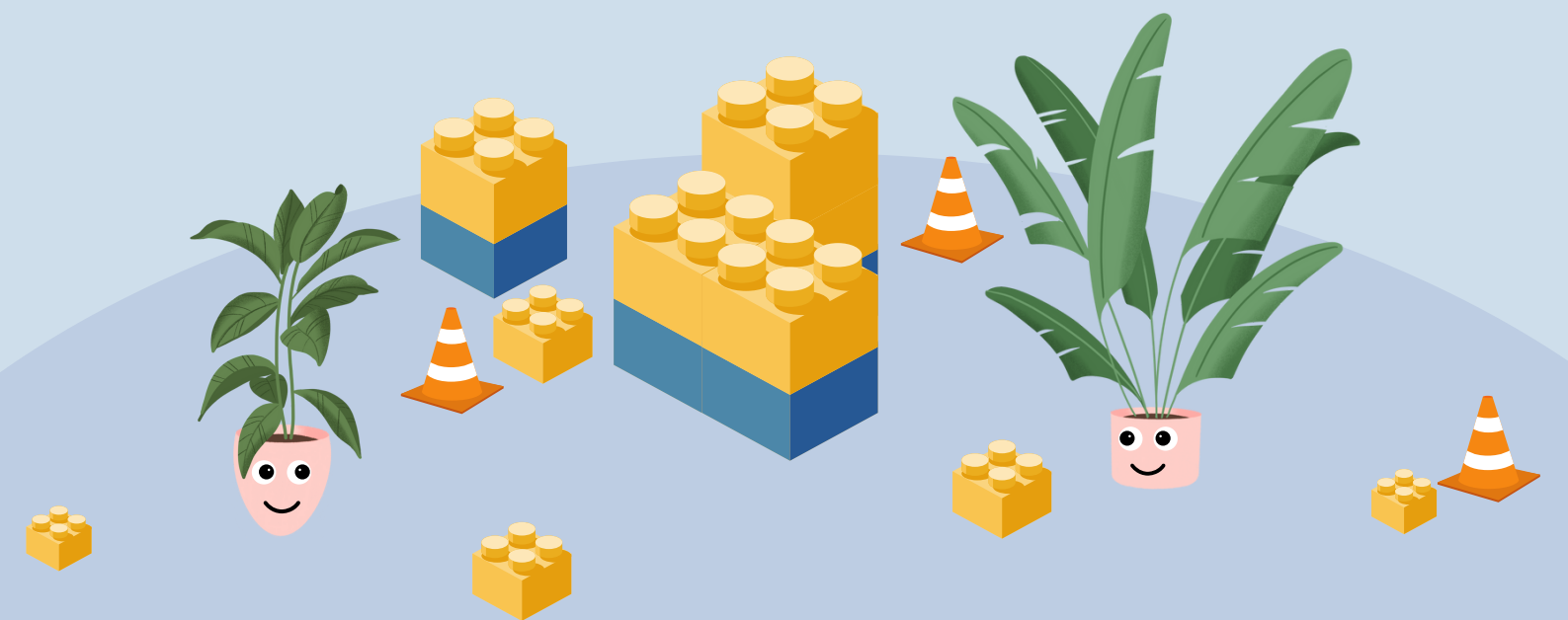
HOW TO STRUCTURE A HYBRID ONE-ON-ONE
TOPICS

General Topics

- Career progression (Growth, Feedback, Coaching)
- Ideas for improving the team, upcoming projects, etc
- Talking about recent company/department announcements
- **TIP:** Ask open ended questions soliciting their opinions on work-related topics!

THE IMPORTANCE OF A SHARED MEETING AGENDA

- More preparation leads to deeper discussions
- Allows time to think of responses before meeting
- Shows to the other person that you value their time
- Allows for "Batched Communication"

THE IMPORTANCE OF A SHARED MEETING AGENDA

Characteristics of a great agenda

- Collaboratively set by both parties
- Headings that guide thinking without being too prescriptive
- Topics ordered by importance
- A possible-to-do-asynchronously section

THE IMPORTANCE OF A SHARED MEETING AGENDA

Characteristics of great meeting notes

- Collaboratively written by both parties
- Captures key points, not entire conversations
- Clearly marked and assigned actionable takeaways
- Clearly marked decisions

BUT ISN'T IT AWKWARD TO TAKE NOTES DURING A ONE-ON-ONE?

When in person, yes!!

Suggestion: Write actionable items immediately, and remaining notes after the fact.

TYPES OF ONE-ON-ONES YOU MIGHT HAVE

1. FIRST ONE-ON-ONE

FIRST ONE-ON-ONE

What these are

- Getting to know each other
- Setting expectations for working together
- Setting the tone for how one-on-ones will be run
- Answering questions and providing context

NEW HIRE, OR JUST NEW TO THE TEAM?

Whether the person is new to the company or just new to the team, these first one-on-ones are important to structure well.

NEW

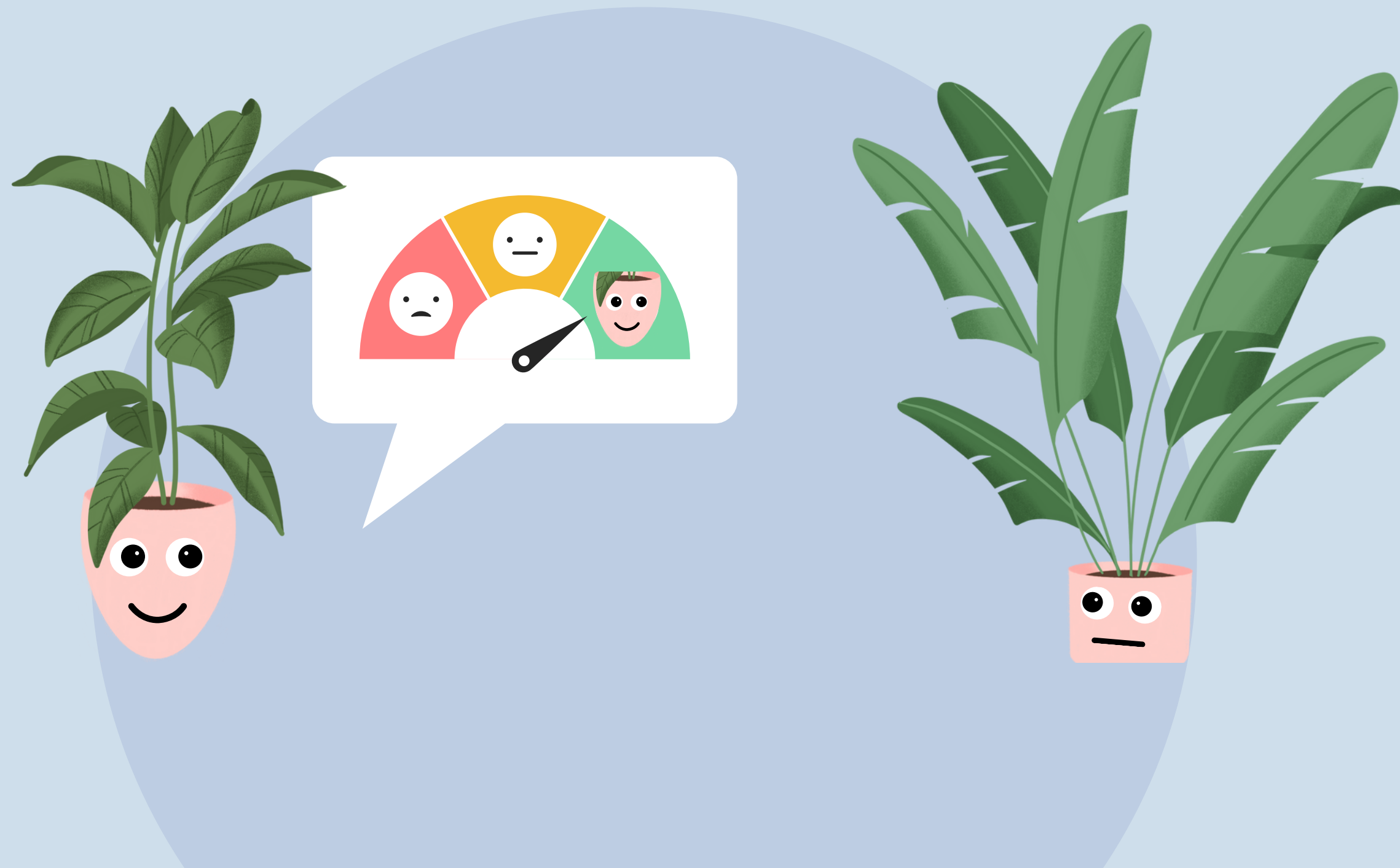# FIRST ONE-ON-ONE

Topics to cover

- Hobbies and life outside of work
- Make sure expectations on both sides match
- How they like to receive feedback/praise
- Preferred method of communication
- Preferred balance of remote/office work
- How can you be the best manager possible for them?

For more ideas, check out:

**https://larahogan.me/blog/first-one-on-one-questions/**

NEW

FEEDBACK ONE-ON-ONE

What these are

- Going over 360 Feedback results
- Sharing constructive feedback
- Giving specific and helpful praise
- Gathering feedback about something specific

AN ENTIRE ONE-ON-ONE FOR FEEDBACK?

Sometimes, yes! But nearly every one-on-one should have some form of constructive or positive feedback.
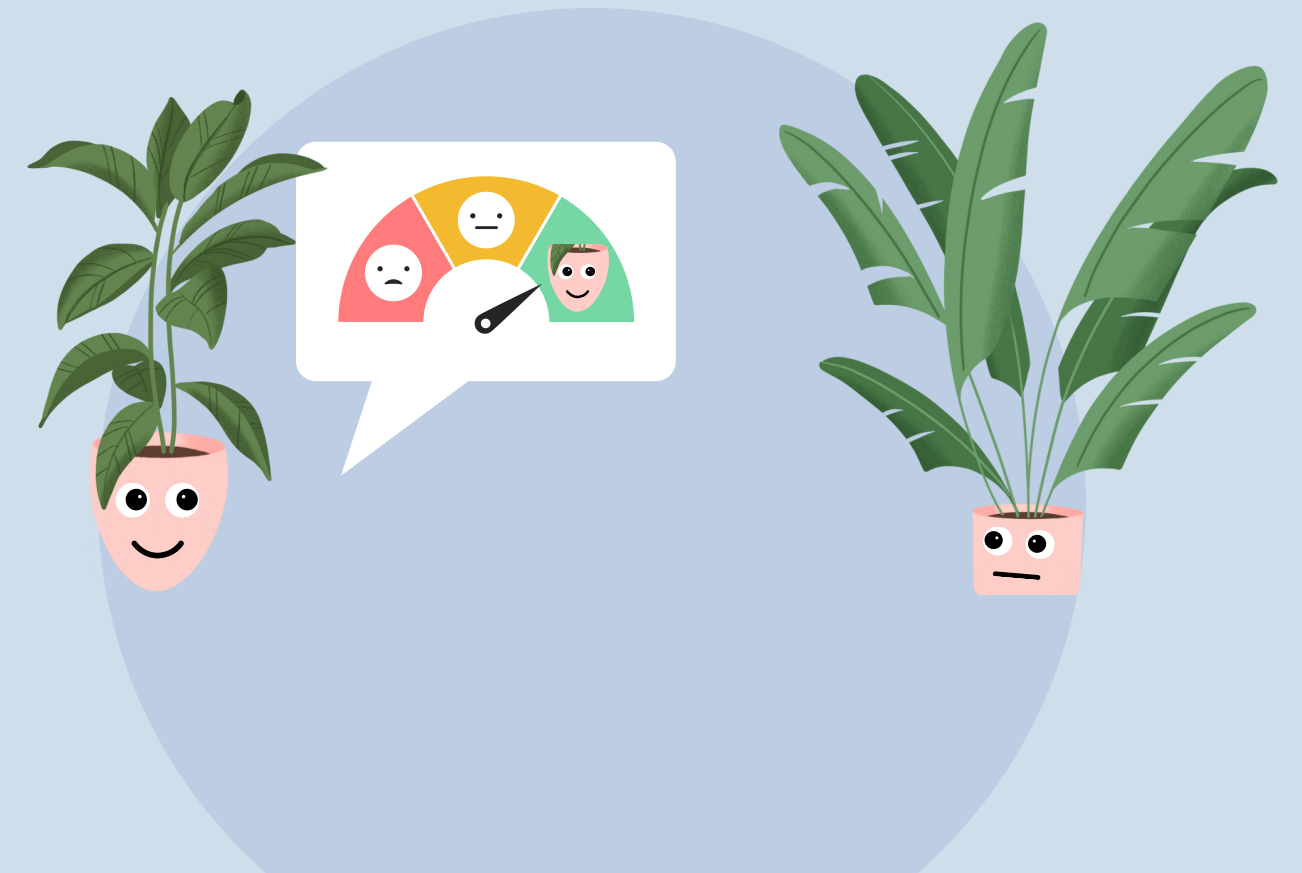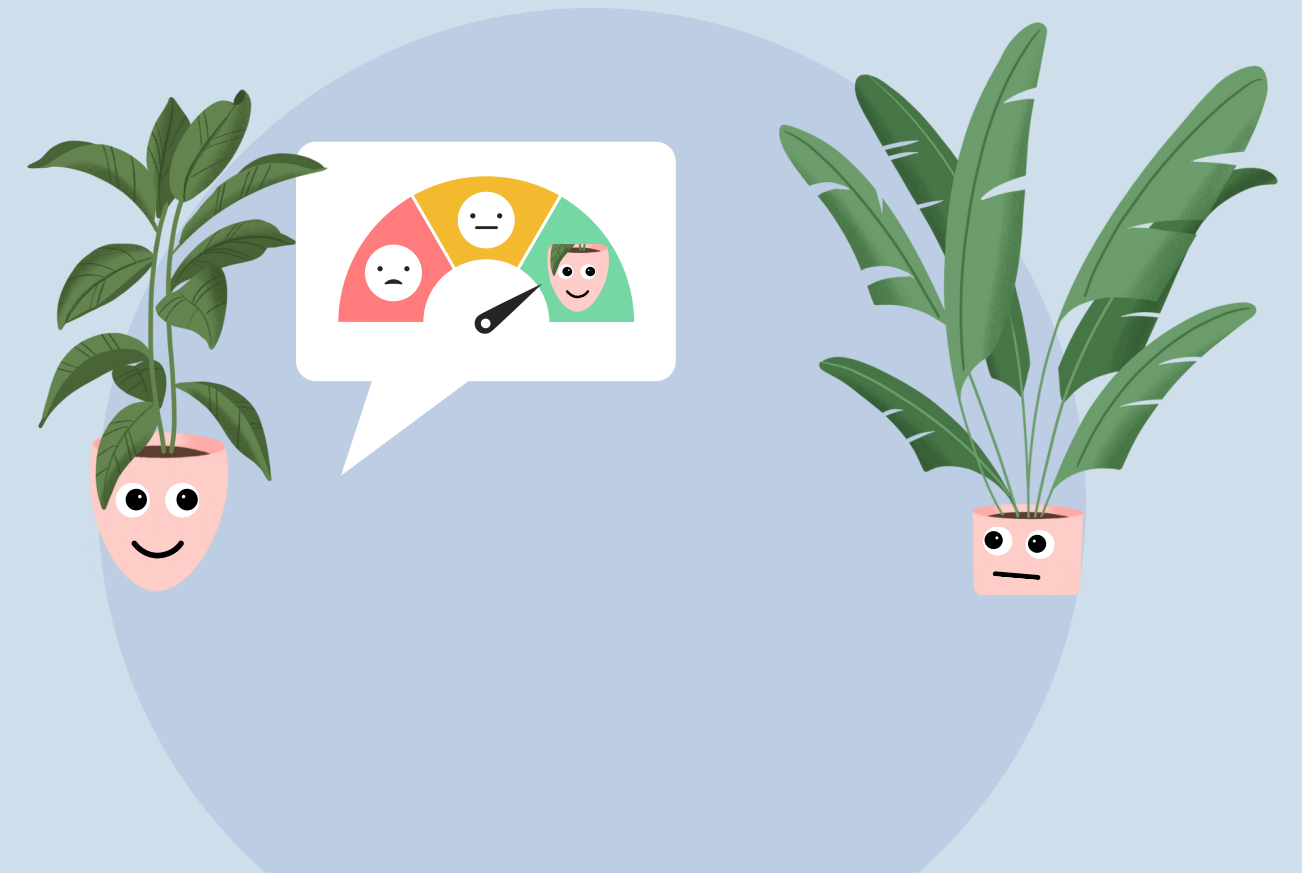
FEEDBACK ONE-ON-ONE

What's special about them in Hybrid work

- Constructive feedback might hit differently if you haven't built up enough trust yet
- If you work mostly in the office, feedback for office vs remote workers might be skewed and unfair

LEVELLING THE FIELD IN HYBRID

Add **"What have you done in the last week that I don't know about?"** as a recurring topic to agendas.
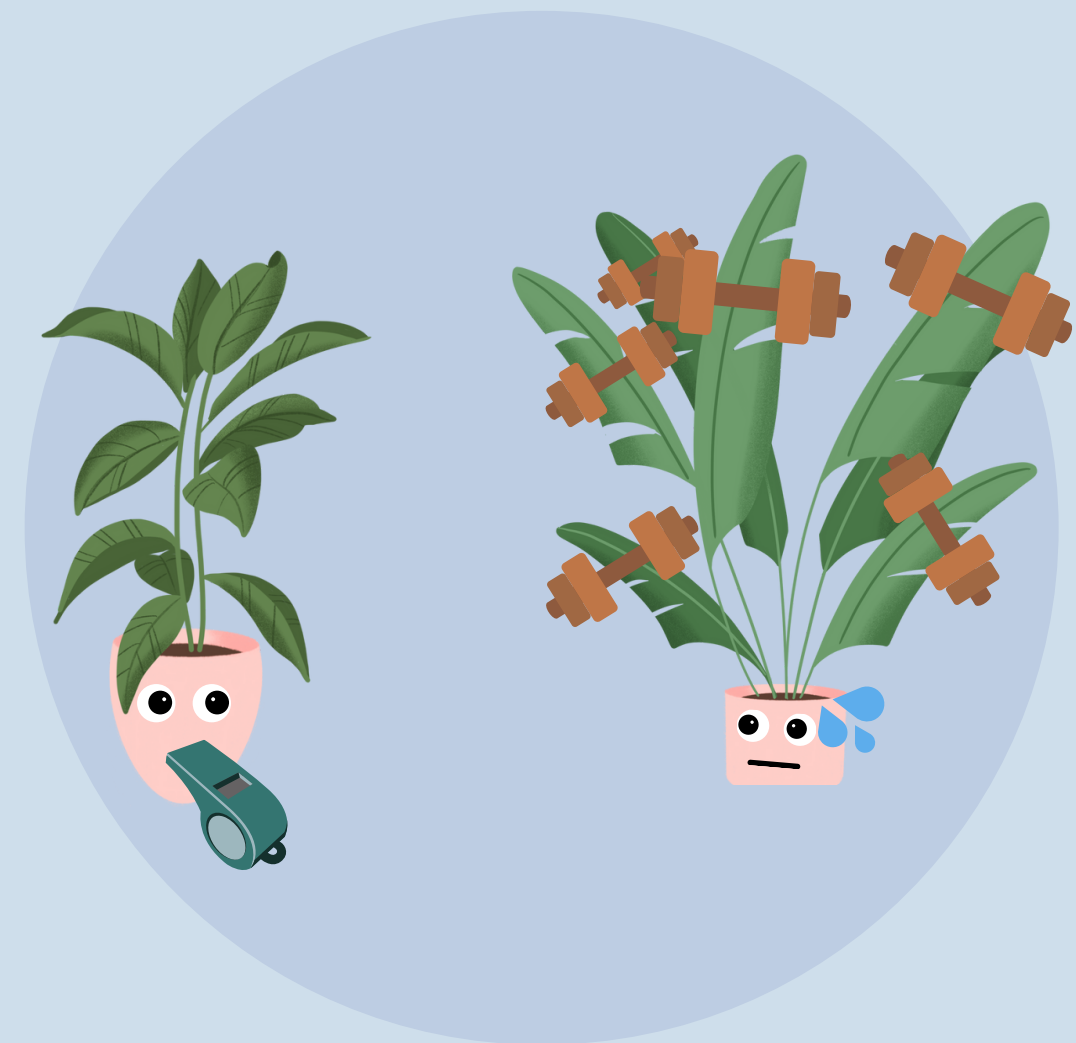
3. COACHING ONE-ON-ONE

COACHING ONE-ON-ONE

What this is

- Helping someone to develop a new set of skills
- Asking questions about how it's going, giving guidance

WHY IN A ONE-ON-ONE?

Effective coaching requires regular check-in points, which one-on-ones provide the opportunity for.

5. PEER ONE-ON-ONE
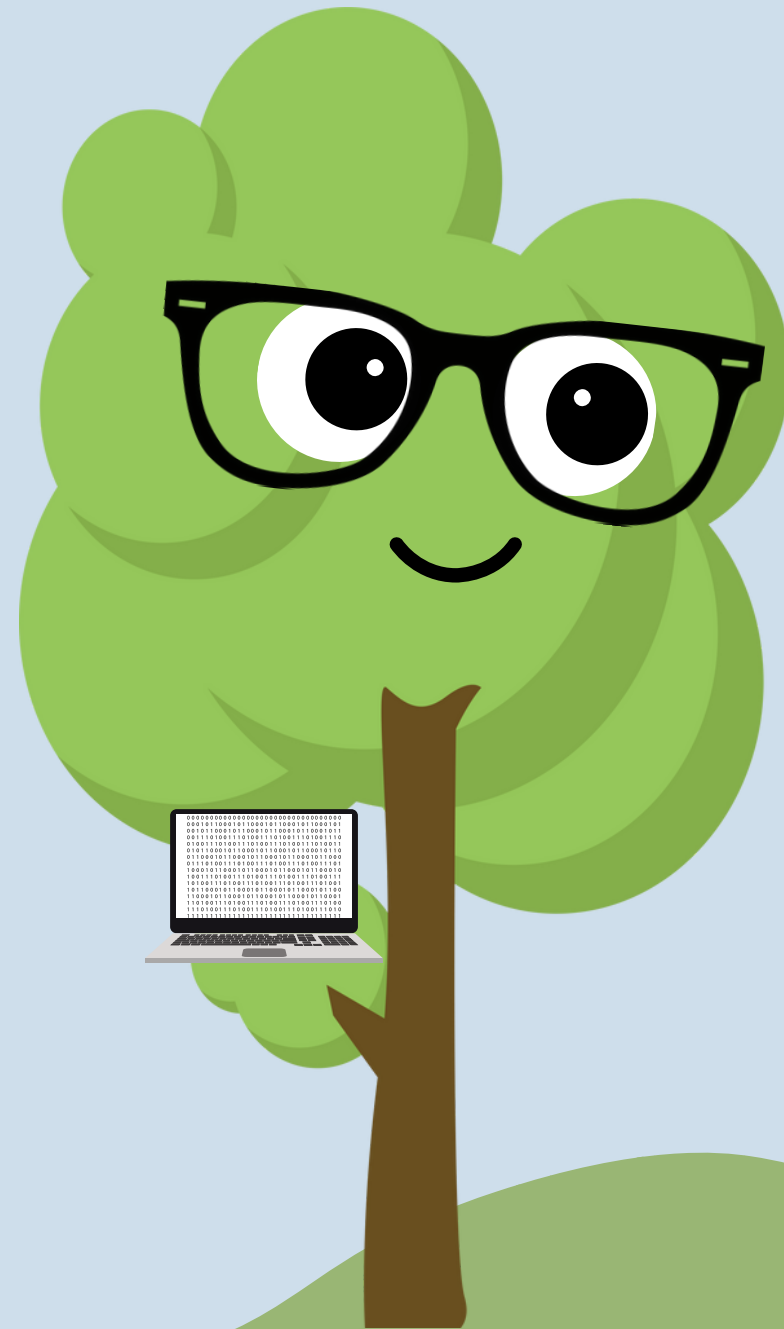
PEER ONE-ON-ONE

What to cover

- How your teams can work better together
- Current priorities
- Opportunities for collaboration

YOUR PEERS ARE YOUR TEAM

As a manager, your peers are your immediate team. Regular check-ins helps maintain that relationship.

6. MANAGER ONE-ON-ONE

TROUBLESHOOTING COMMON ONE-ON-ONE ISSUES
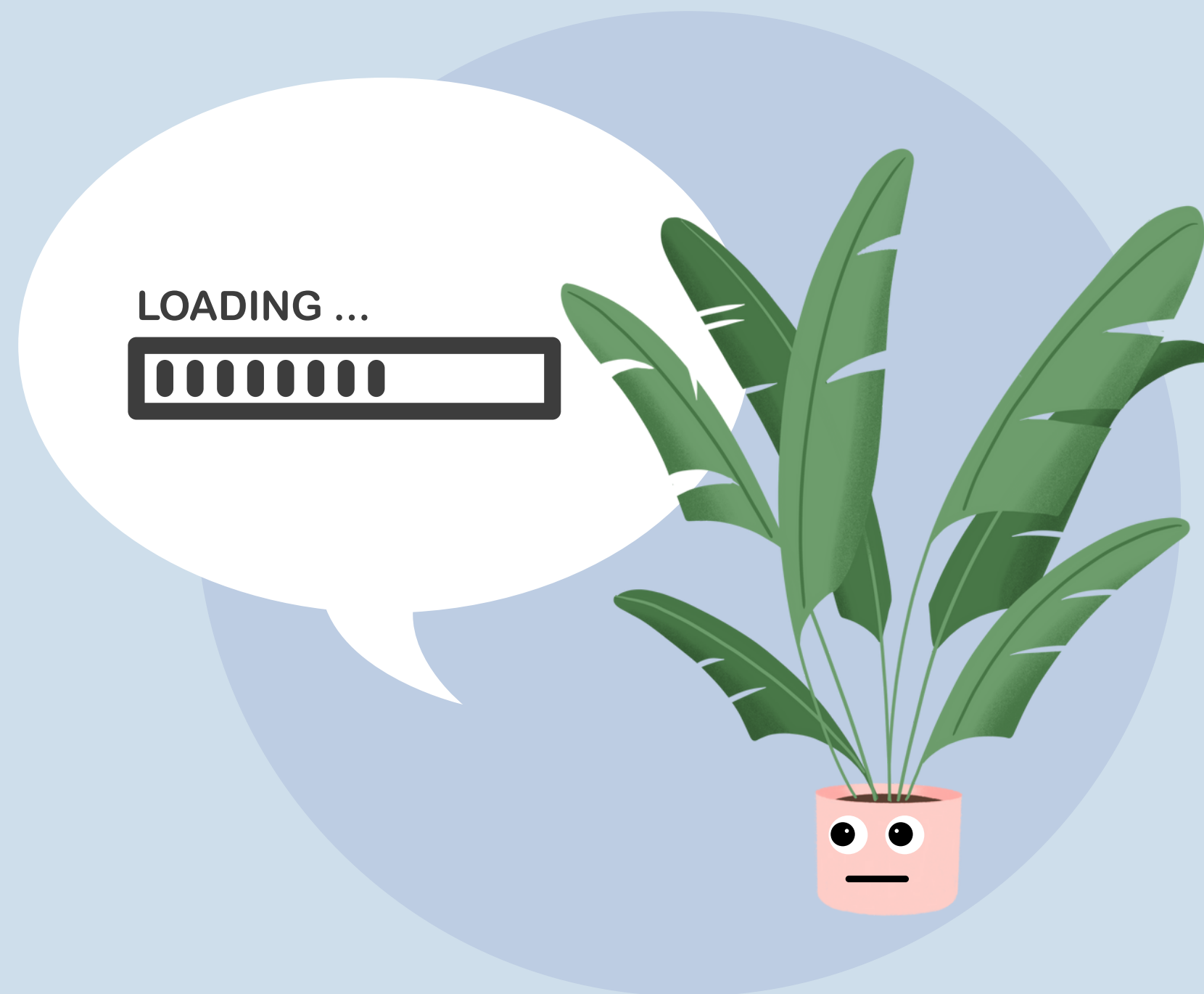
1. RESISTANCE TO ONE-ON-ONES

RESISTANCE TO ONE-ON-ONES

How to fix it

- Make sure they understand the purpose of one-on-ones
- Start with bi-weekly, not weekly
- Set most of the topics in the first few agendas
- Ask a lot of questions, write many notes
- Demonstrate that information learned in the one-on-one was beneficial (to them, the team, the company)
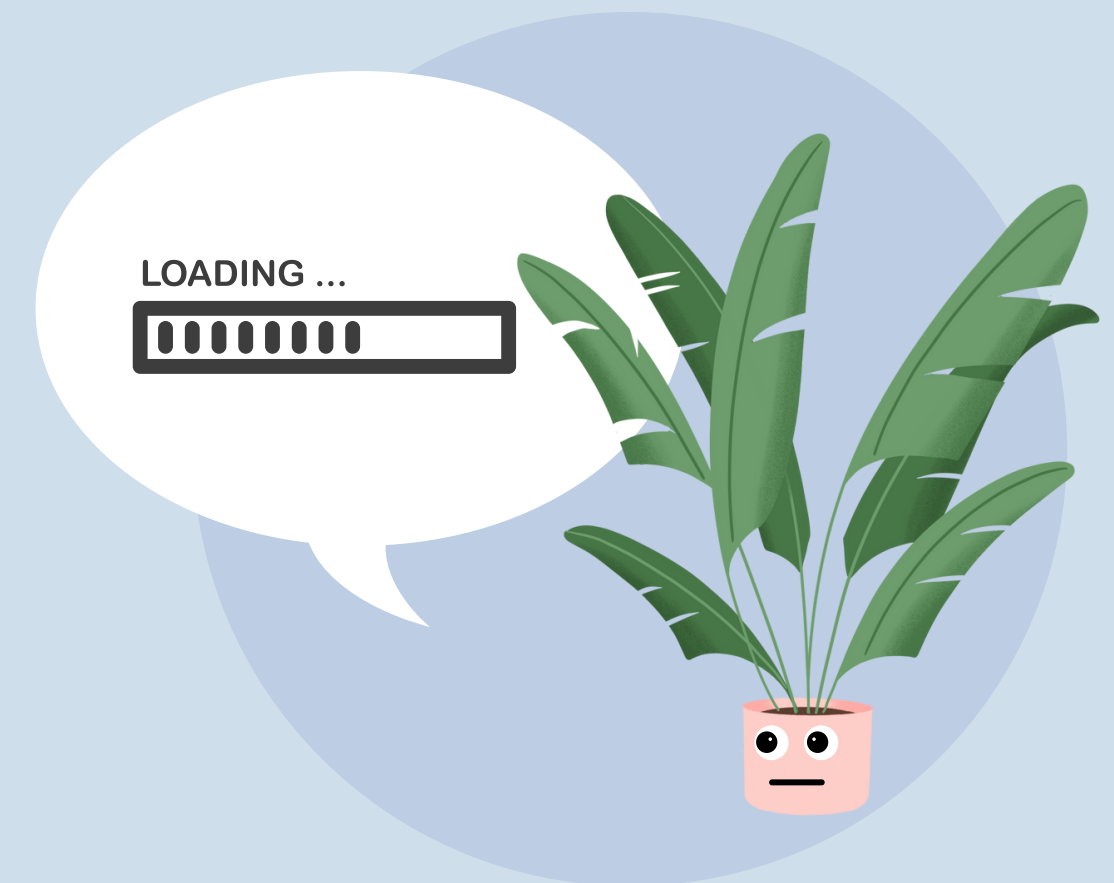
NOTHING TO TALK ABOUT

Bought into the idea, but nothing to say

How to fix it

- Ask open-ended questions soliciting their opinion
- Add recurring topics to the agenda that will spark inspiration throughout the week
- Create an actionable purpose, like working towards a career goal (coaching one-on-on)

LOADING ...

3. EMOTIONAL OVERLOAD

EMOTIONAL OVERLOAD

What it is

- Bad news being shared in one-on-ones, problems that you can't (and shouldn't try to) solve
- Sometimes, emotional whiplash caused by going from a bad-news one-on-one to a happy-news one

This is more difficult in a hybrid workplace

4. "PEOPLE IN SENIOR POSITIONS DON'T NEED ONE-ON-ONES"

"PEOPLE IN SENIOR POSITIONS DON'T NEED ONE-ON-ONES"

IS THIS TRUE?

Not really.

Less day-to-day job support.

More context + alignment support and talking through challenges.

5. DIFFERENCES IN CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS

DIFFERENCES IN CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS

What is this?

- Mismatches on views around effective communication
- Differing opinions on decision making
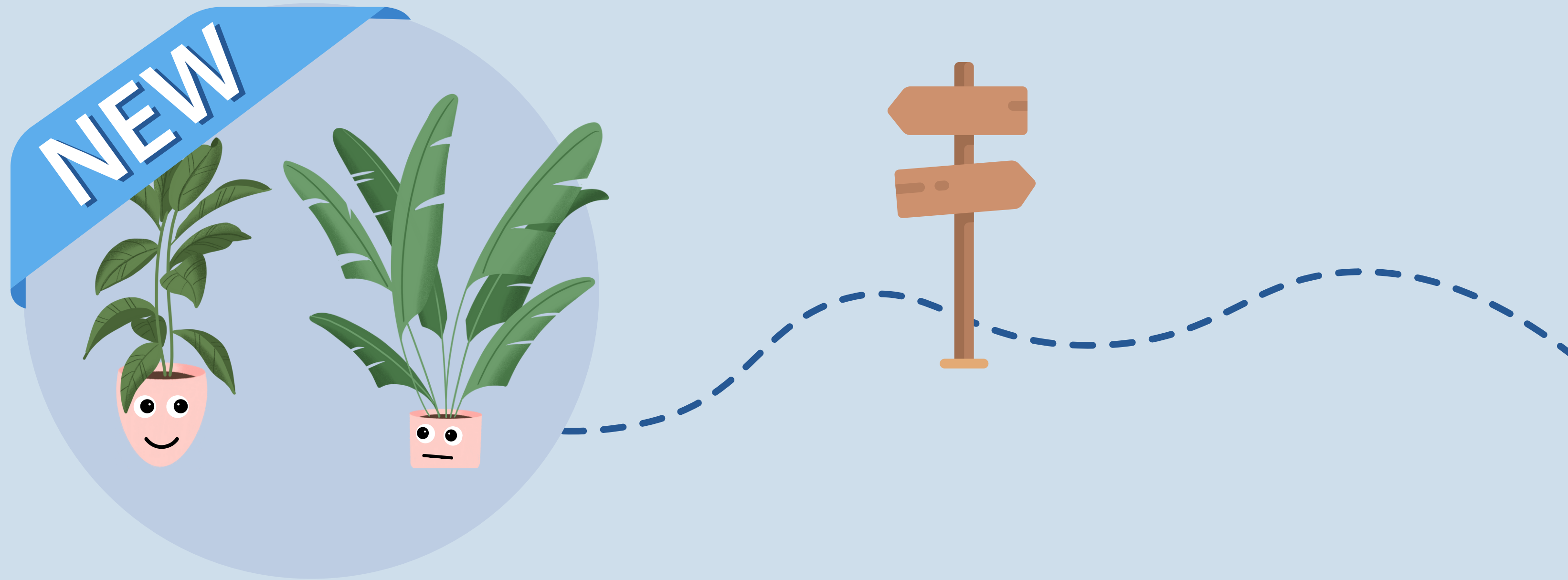- Differences in what a leadership role entails

How to fix it

- Create a team culture to default to

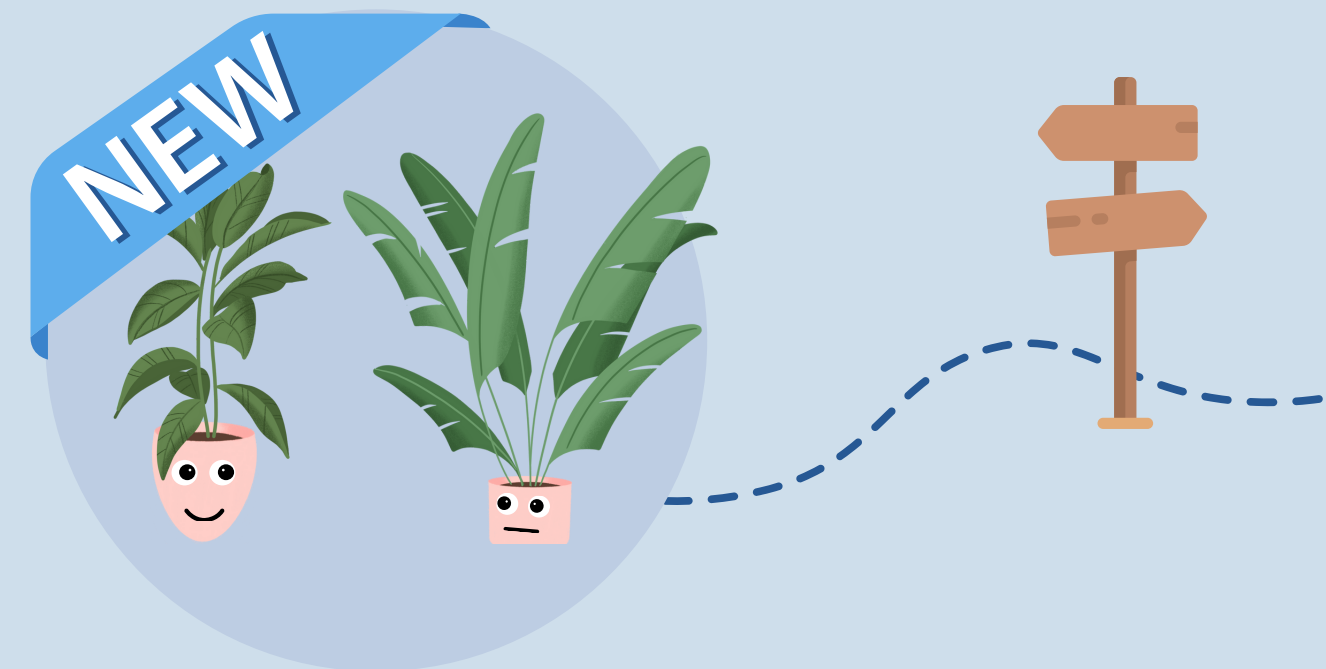Further reading: **"The Culture Map"** by Erin Meyer

HOW TO GET STARTED

NEW

HOW TO GET STARTED
OR HOW TO REWIND AND RESTART EFFECTIVELY

- Communicate the purpose of one-on-ones
- Understand what you want to get out of these meetings
- Schedule them!
- Put effort into adding 2-3 topics per agenda to start off
- Ask for feedback about how they could be more useful

HOW TO KNOW IF THE ONE-ON-ONES ARE USEFUL

HOW TO KNOW IF THE ONE-ON-ONES ARE USEFUL

Main question to ask your team

- Do you enjoy your one-on-ones, or dread the interruption?
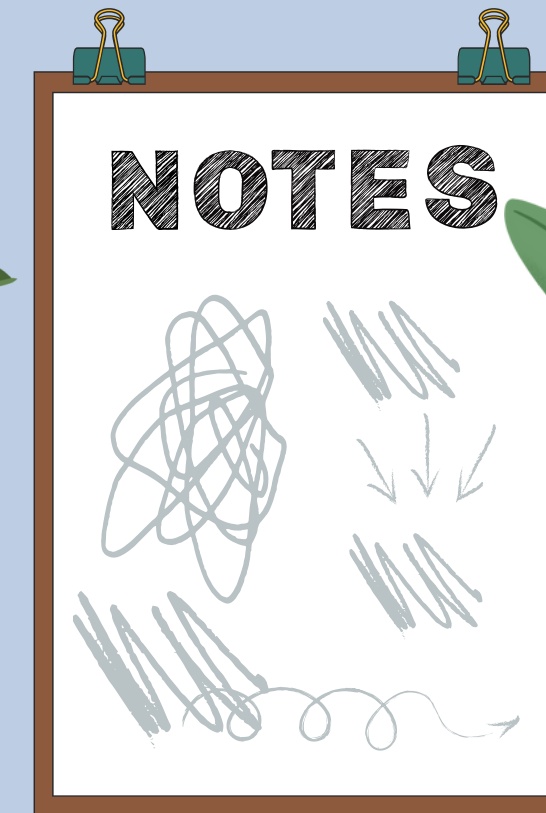
TO RECAP

Having effective hybrid one-on-ones

- Understand their purpose and value
- Communicate the purpose to your team
- Have them often, cancel seldom
- Contribute to a shared agenda
- Ask many questions, solicit opinions
- Use them as time for feedback and coaching

and most importantly:

ITERATE AS NEEDED, AND PERSONALIZE THEM

NOTES

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RESOURCES

- **The Making of a Manager** — Julie Zhou
- **Resilient Management** — Lara Hogan
- **Effective Remote Work** — James Stanier

THANK YOU!

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