
Testing Is a People Business

Why Quality Fails Without Human Connection

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Podcast Testing Unleashed
<https://tul.fm>

- 25+ years Software Testing
- Software Quality Coaching & Mentoring
- German Prize for Software Quality 2025
- Active Member of ISTQB

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“

In 25 years

the tools changed ten times.

The people stayed.

01 OF FOUR



Test Case Titans

- Execute what's defined
- Reliable, thorough, process-driven
- Strong as long as someone says what to do

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02

OF FOUR



Automation Avengers

- Build pipelines, automate everything
- Fast, technical, scalable
- Strong as long as the system stays stable

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03

OF FOUR



Quality Wizards

- See the whole picture
- Think along everywhere
- The Swiss army knife for quality

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Some Thoughts about AI....

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1

*AI democratizes software
development*

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2

*Without Process to
Outcome*

3

*Every innovation
inevitably brings about
its opposite*

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4

*We're just throwing the
next thing at the problem*

04 OF FOUR



Trust Builders

- Build trust between people and systems
- Translate, moderate, enable decisions
- Become irreplaceable in the AI era

The next step.

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AI makes the technical craft cheap.

What remains is what AI cannot do.

Focus on the
human part.

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SECTION



1

Knowing the Why

Testers know test cases. Trust Builders know the people.

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Testers

know test cases.

Quality Wizards

know the app.

Trust Builders

know the people who'll use it.

Questions to ask

- ❓ *What problem are we actually solving here?*
- ❓ *When makes this user happy/frustrated?*
- ❓ *What would happen if we didn't build this at all?*
- ❓ *Who of us last spoke to a real user?*
- ❓ *Which assumption about the user would cost us most if it's wrong?*

Ideas what you can do

- 1 Bring a “why” question into every refinement
- 2 Sit in on one real user interview per quarter
- 3 Read support tickets, not just spec documents
- 4 Derive your test strategy from usage, not features

SECTION



2

Make Decisions

Testers report risks. Trust Builders help decide them.

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Testers

report risks.

Quality Wizards

assess risks.

Trust Builders

help others decide risks.

Questions to ask

- ❓ *What decision do we actually need to make here and who makes it?*
- ❓ *Which three tests give us the most clarity?*
- ❓ *Does the deciding person have the info they need or just the info we like to give?*
- ❓ *What is really really REALLY important to test?*

Ideas what you can do

- 1 Translate coverage into decision language: not “78 percent” but “here we know, here we don't.”
- 2 Pre-release: deliver a risk picture, not a test report. Five bullets, likelihood, impact, recommendation.
- 3 Name “don't test” as a legitimate option when it really is.
- 4 Retro question: Which decision was right? Which wasn't?

SECTION



3

Me, Myself & I

You can't build trust if you don't trust yourself.

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- *You can't build trust, if you don't trust yourself*
- *Build Self-awareness*
- *Personal Development*
- *Less mimimi*

Questions to ask

- ❓ *When do I get defensive? What triggers it?*
- ❓ *Which of my “strong opinions” are old beliefs?*
- ❓ *Whose feedback do I systematically avoid?*
- ❓ *Where do I use my ego as a quality argument?*
- ❓ *What don't I say because I'm afraid of the reaction?*

Ideas what you can do

- 1 Three notes a week: When was I emotional? What was the trigger?
- 2 Write down your five most important values. When deciding, check: am I about to violate one?
- 3 Once a quarter, ask a colleague: “What about my work bugs you?” — and don't argue back.
- 4 Less complaining: wait 24 hours, then ask, propose, or accept.
- 5 Two hours a week at your own learning edge.

SECTION



4

...and the Others

Quality doesn't live in the code. It lives around it.

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Quality doesn't live in the code.

It's a team sport

Questions to ask

- ❓ *Who actually decides here not officially, really?*
- ❓ *Who wasn't heard just now?*
- ❓ *What info do I have that someone urgently needs?*
- ❓ *Where am I creating pressure instead of clarity?*
- ❓ *When did I last tell someone explicitly what they did well?*

Ideas what you can do

- 1 Stakeholder map every quarter: Who decides, who influences, who gets bypassed?
- 2 10% of your time in informal conversations, build relationship.
- 3 Bad news never in the open meeting first. Always warn 1-on-1.
- 4 Learn the four languages: Dev, PO, Business, Ops.
- 5 Address conflicts while they're small. They never resolve themselves.

SECTION



5

Be Proud and Have Fun!

Seriousness is the death of quality.

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*We testers have the coolest job.
A dance between the end of the
world and a release party. Between
chaos and confetti.*

