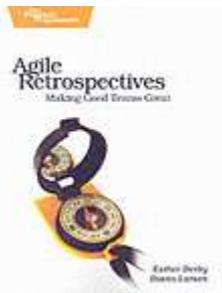
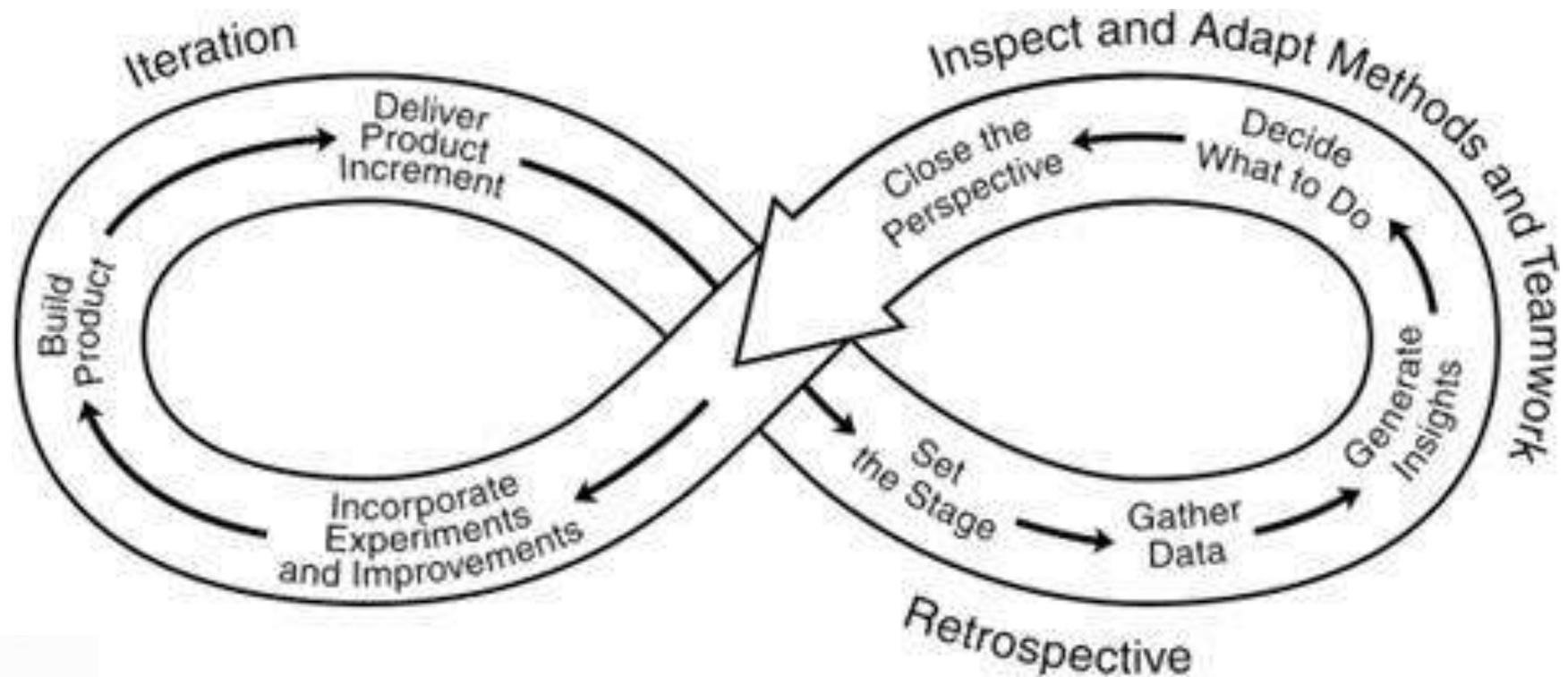


Holding a Successful RETROSPECTIVE

At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behavior accordingly.”

Agile Manifesto principle

Why Retrospect



Credit: Agile Retrospectives – Making good teams Great by Esther Derby & Diana Larsen

<http://pragprog.com/book/dlret/agile-retrospectives>

Why Retrospect

Learning

Reflection is a key step in learning from experience

Ownership

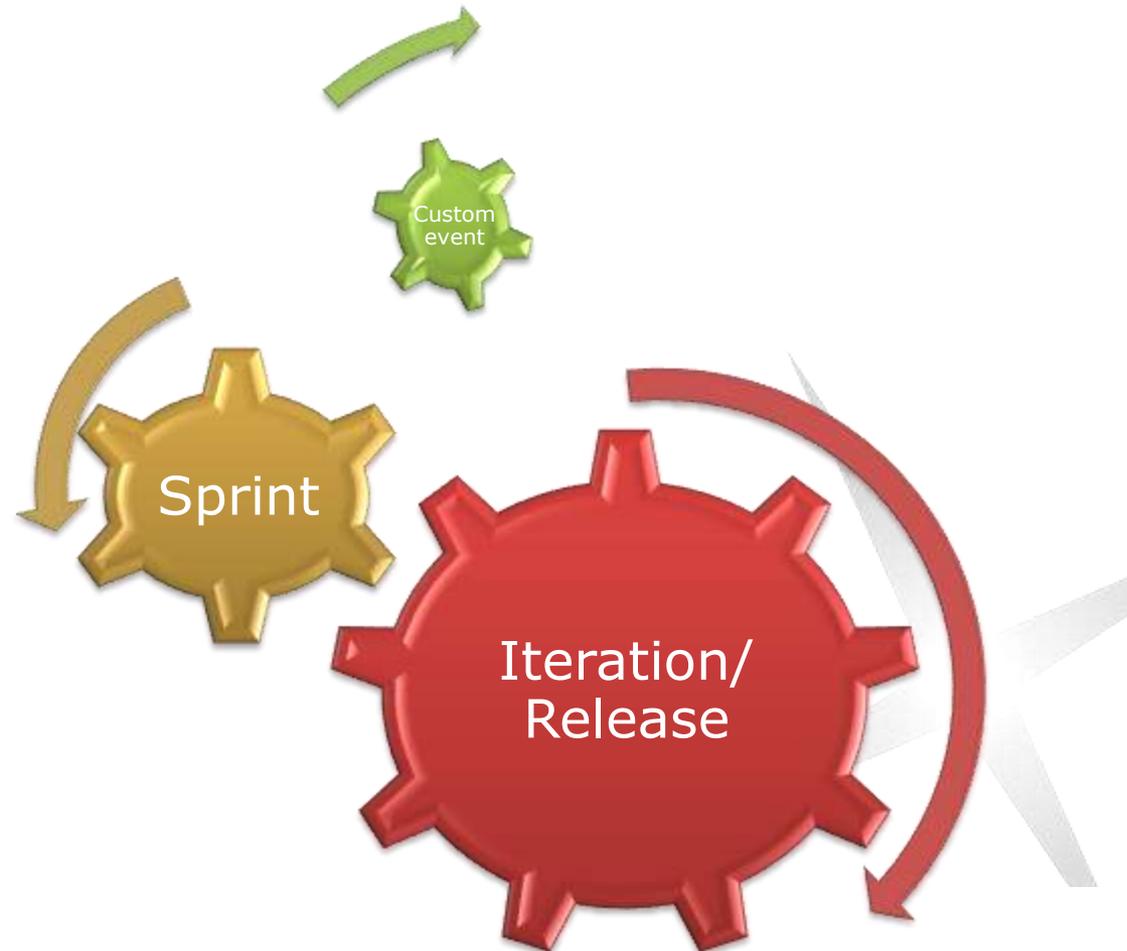
Gives a team a way to adapt process to their context

Communication

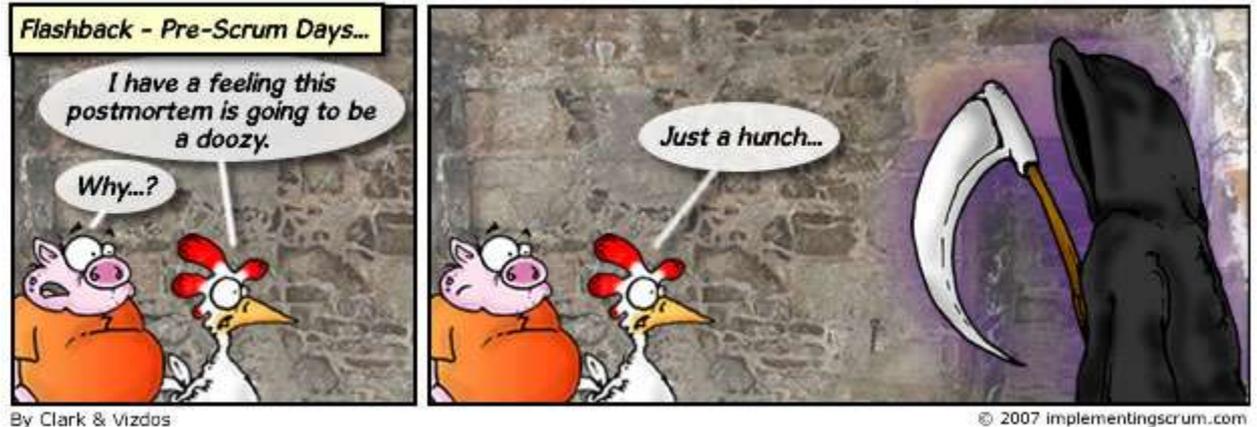
Each member of the project team has different experience and when we share these perspectives we understand each other better

Retrospective Cycle

- Often -
 - remember what happened
 - Small direction changes
 - Tight Feedback loop



What its NOT



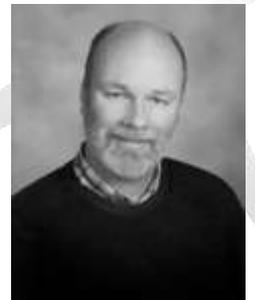
- Focus on **system/process** **RATHER** than **individuals**
- "A **bad system** will **DEFEAT** a good person every time." Deming
 - Although **SOME** problems are really **PEOPLE** problems, a retrospective is **NOT** the place to solve them!

Retrospectives Prime Directive

Kerth's Prime Directive:

"Regardless of what we discover, we must understand and truly believe that everyone did the best job he or she could, given what was known at the time, his or her skills and abilities, the resources available, and the situation at hand."

<http://www.retrospectives.com/pages/retroPrimeDirective.html>

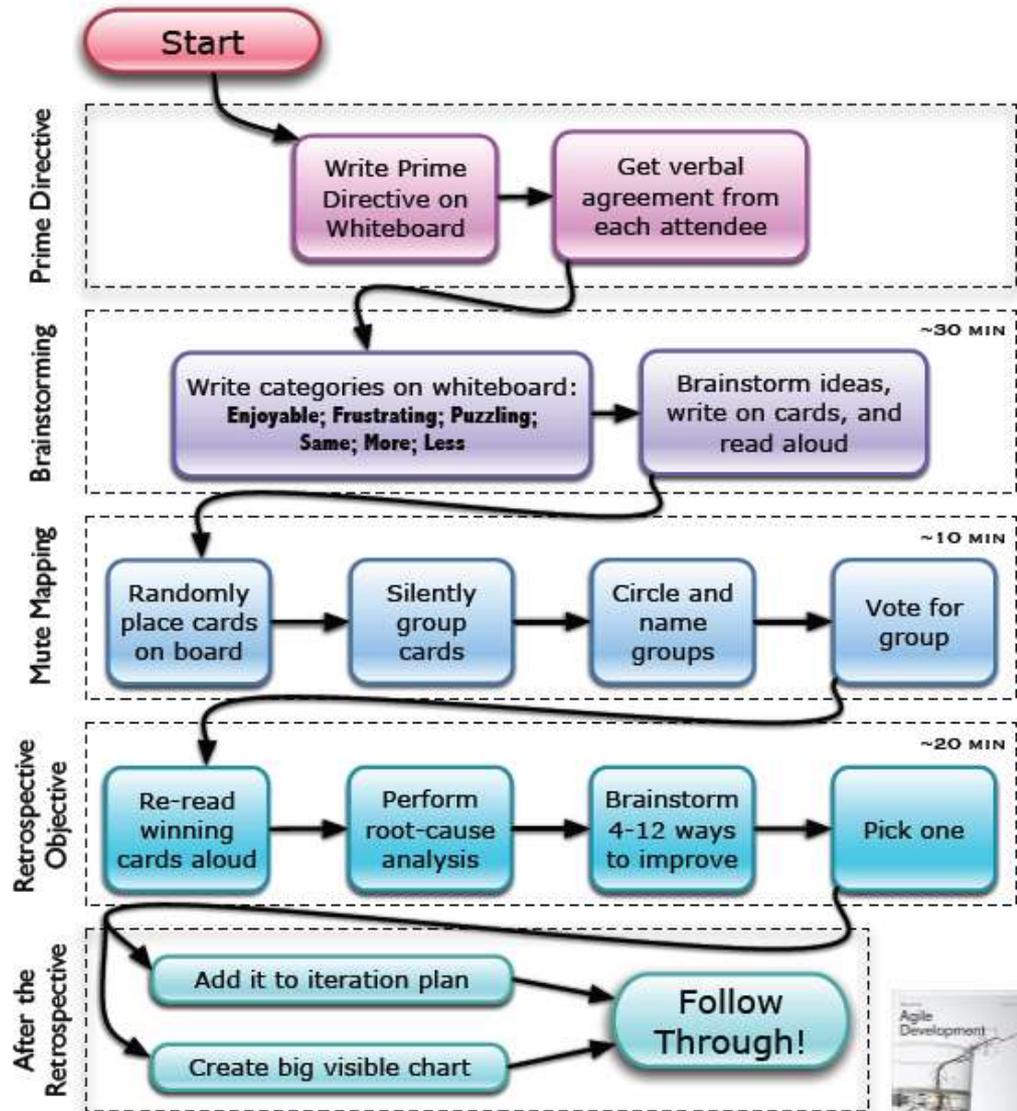


Negating the Negative

A message wrapped in a complaint may be worth listening to, but the negative packaging can harm the learning



A Retrospective Format



AGENDA

Setting the stage

Gather Data

Generate Insights

Decide What to Do

Close The Retrospective

introduc-
ing
activities

AGENDA

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FOCUS ON / FOCUS OFF

Inquiry rather than Advocacy

Dialogue rather than Debate

Conversation rather than Argument

Understanding rather than Defending

Positive/Appreciative Goal

- ***Set the Stage:***
State an affirmative goal for the session. Choose among goals like:
- During this retrospective, we'll find ways to amplify our strengths in process and teamwork.
- In this session, we'll discover where we added the most value during our last iteration and plan for increasing the value we add during the next iteration.
- The goal for today's retrospective is building on our best uses of engineering practices and methods.
- We're going to seek out our highest quality working relationships and find ways to expand on the

Engage Everyone

- If applicable - Determine Safety
- Determine interest - ESVP
- Engagement Circle
 - One new thing about himself/the team/the last iteration that wasn't mentioned/known before



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Timeline

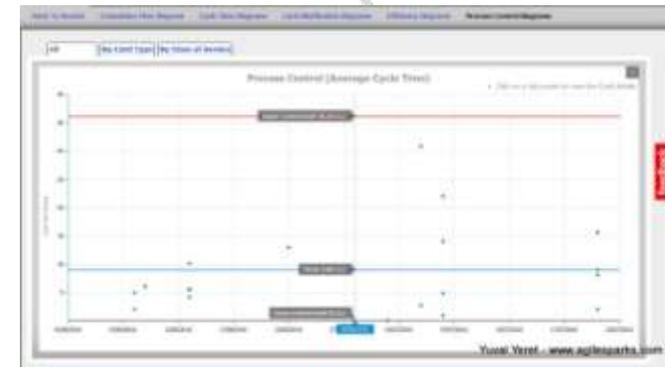
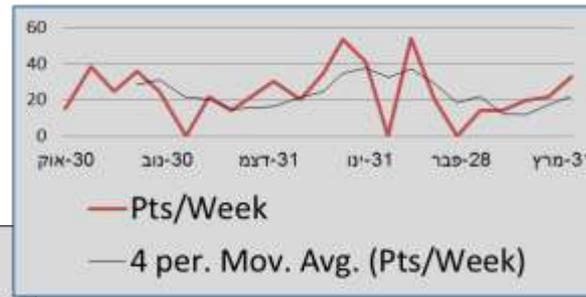
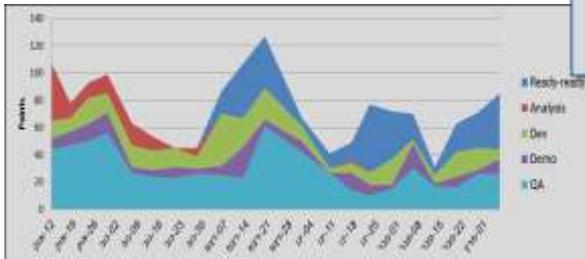
+/ Δ

Review

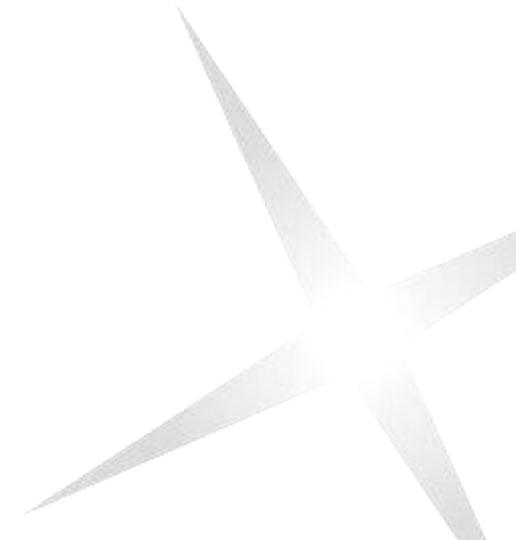
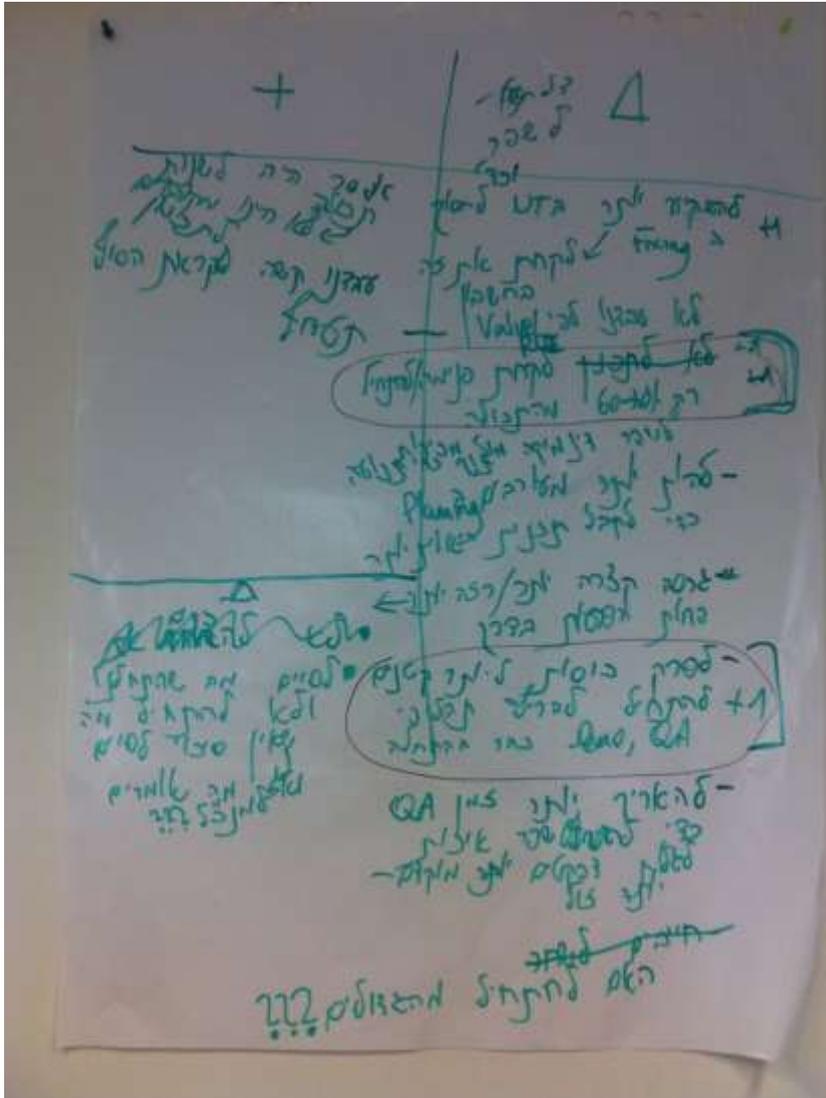


Review Available Data

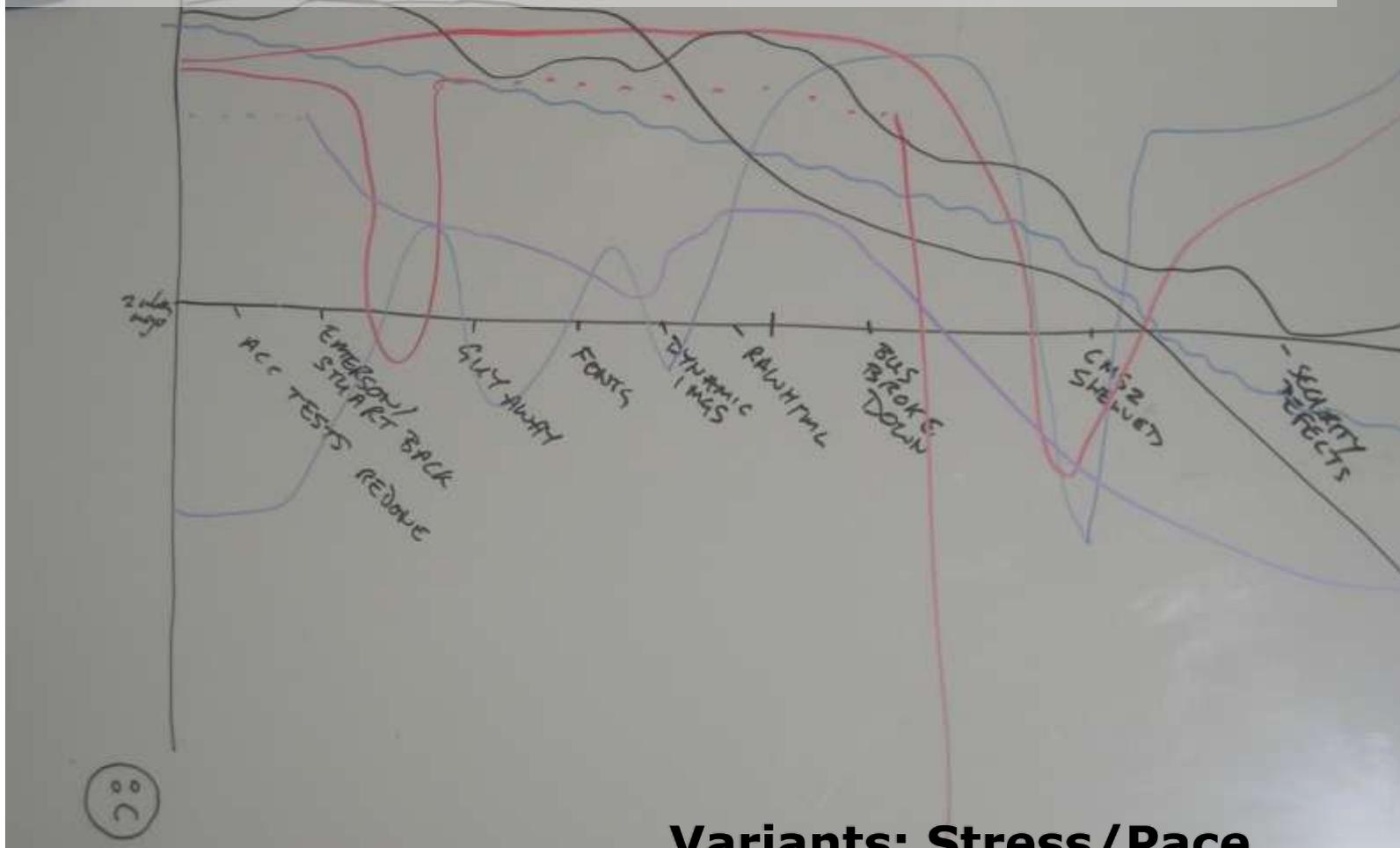
- Velocity Trend (Control Chart)
- Cycle Times Control Chart
- Cumulative Flow Diagram
- Bonus points for: Time-lapse of Kanban Board...
- Blocked Items History



For Short Retros use Plus/Delta



Energy Seismograph



**Variants: Stress/Pace,
Burndown**

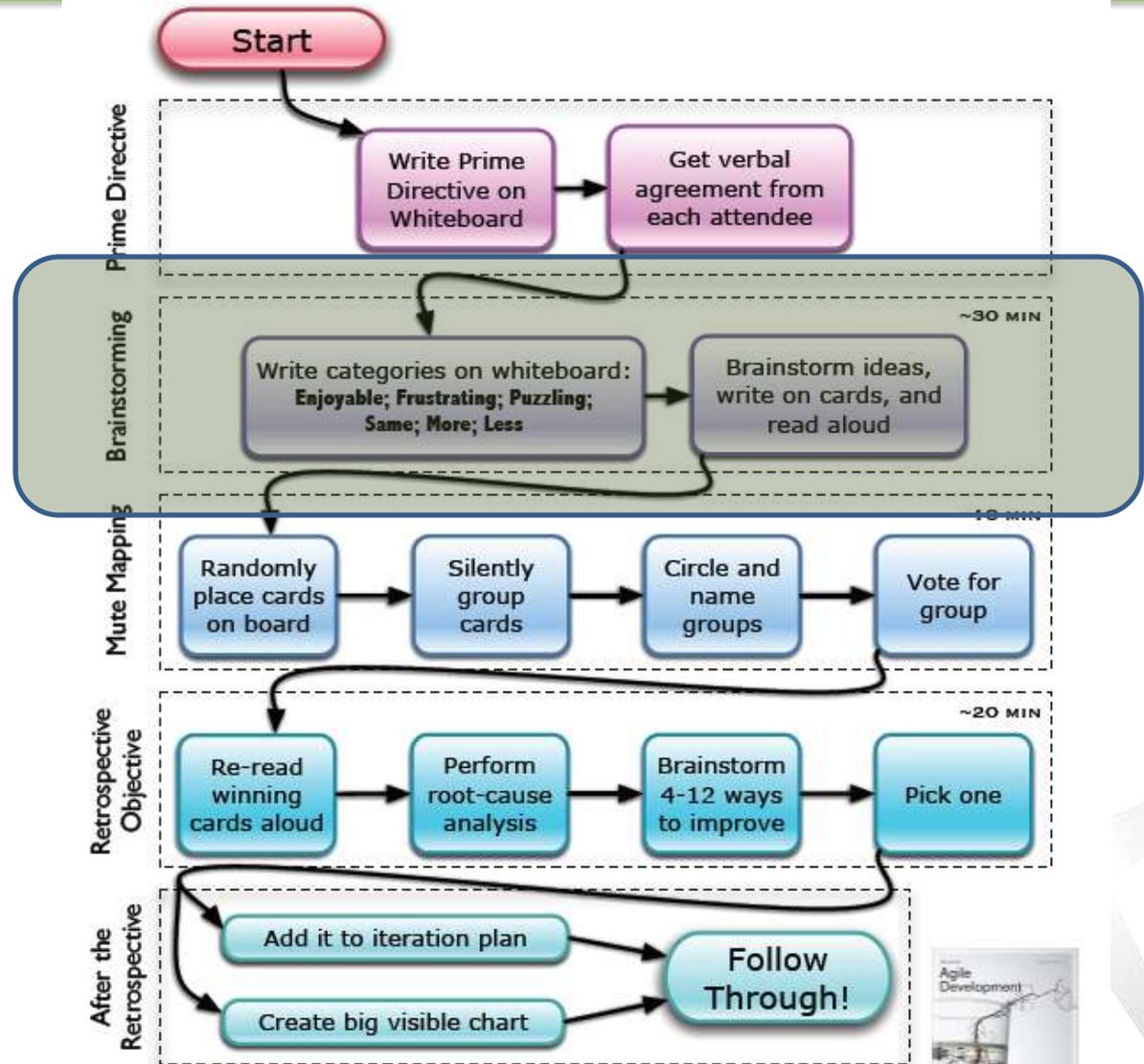
Idea and photo credit:
<http://www.scrummaster.com.au/Article.mvc/Detail/8>

Timeline+ Silent Brainstorming



Source: Unknown

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doane paper®
www.doanepaper.com

Brainstorming+
Silent Grouping

Fishbone

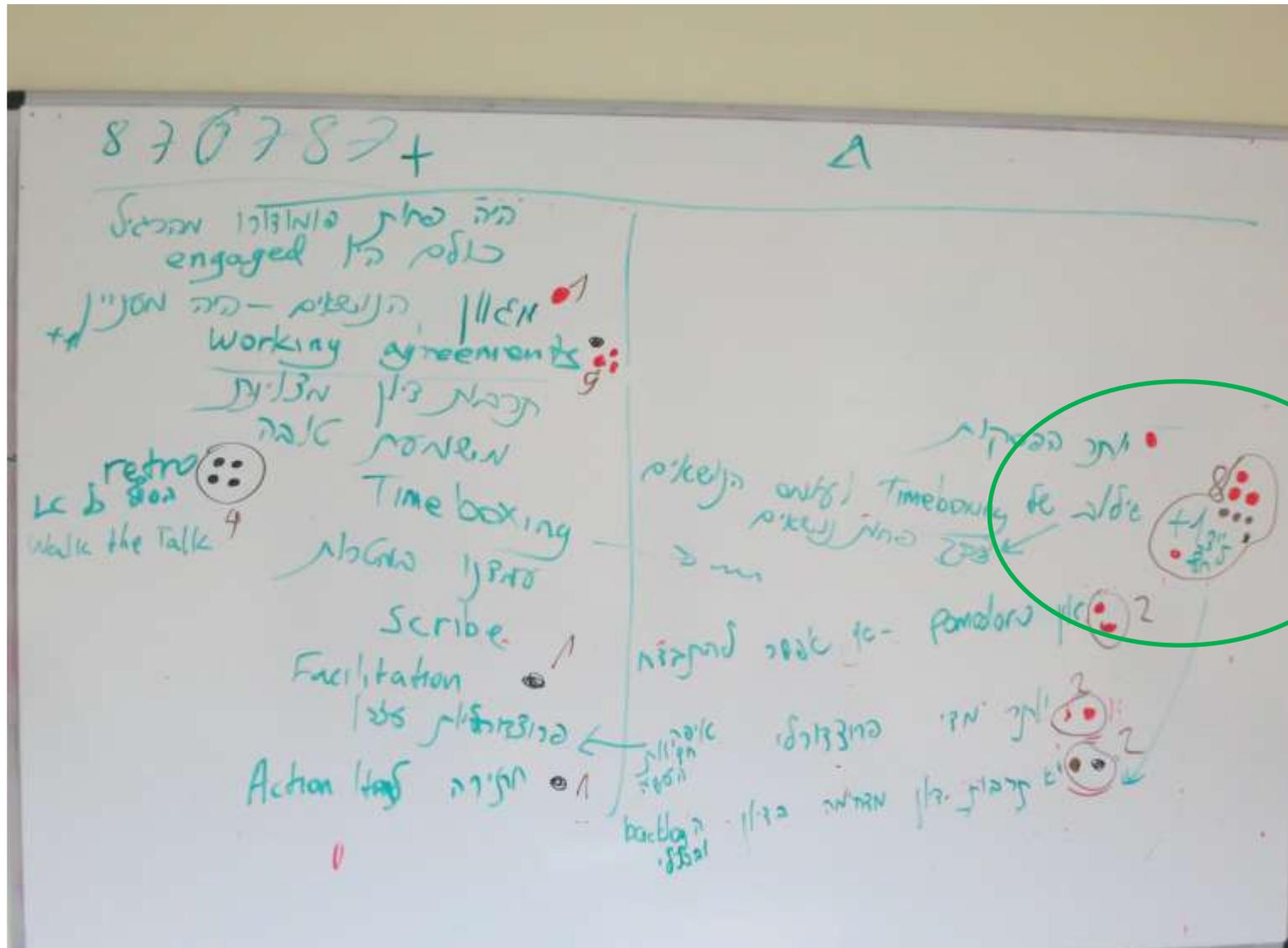
5 Whys



Brainstorm + Silent Grouping



Dot Voting - Prioritize to Focus



5 Whys

Customers wait too long on the phone at the end of the month.

WHY?

The last week of the month is the busiest for sales.

WHY?

The company offers more incentives to customers late in the month.

WHY?

Sales are usually behind the goal late in the month.

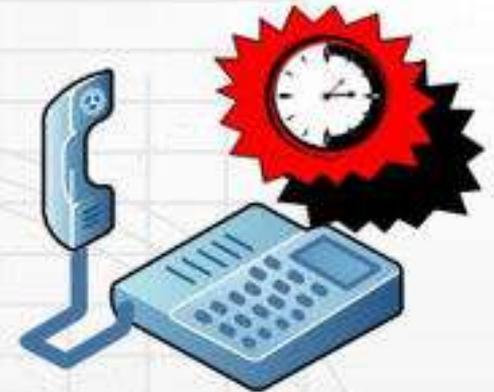
WHY?

Customers have learned that if they wait, they will get incentives.

WHY?

Root Cause

Sales targets are done on a monthly basis, letting a big deficit form.



Action: Make weekly sales goals instead of monthly targets to prevent getting so far behind.

Appreciative Futurespective

- Imagine we could **time travel** to the **end of the next release**. When we arrive there and converse with our future selves, we hear that it was the **most productive, most satisfying effort** we've ever worked on. **What do you see and hear in that future time?**
- Wait 2 or 3 minutes for team members to connect with this vision. Then ask: "What **changes** did we **implement now** that resulted in such productive and satisfying work in the future?"
- Write down all the answers / Silent Brainstorming
- [Silent] Grouping

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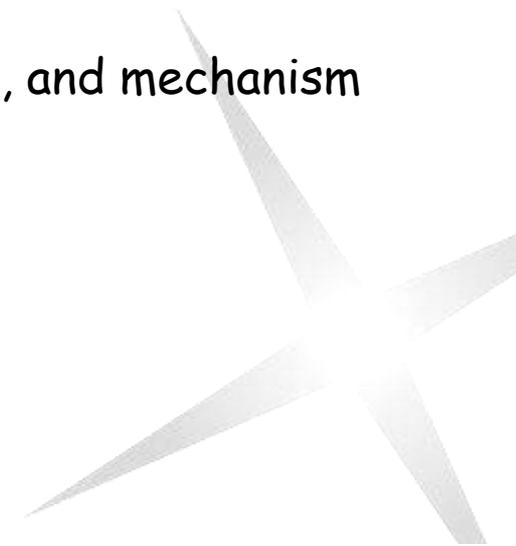
SMART Goals



Retrospective Planning Game

Retrospective Planning Game

- “Which ideas and actions build on our successes, meet the situational (or customer) needs, and tap our greatest energy? Create a list of potential action steps.
- Create backlog - Goals/User Stories
- Groom the backlog so each goal is SMART, or as User Story is INVEST...
- Prioritize based on
 - “What are we best positioned to try next?”
 - “What do we *really* want to try (or sustain)?”
- Estimate highest priority US (in SPI!)
- Decide on budget/capacity to allocate to improvements, and mechanism to sync to the Release backlog
- Each committed change should have a volunteer owner



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Appreciations

Retrospective Anti-Patterns/Smells

- Hijack
- Facilitator too engaged in content
- Replaces ad-hoc problem solving



Anti-pattern - Wait for the retrospective

- **Retrospective replaces ad hoc problem solving**
- You need a problem solved. The retrospective is a place to identify and solve problems.
- **Antipattern solution:** Wait until the retrospective to raise the problem and get it solved.
- **Consequences:** Problem resolution is deferred. The retrospective gets swamped with problems. Not enough time in the retrospective to solve all problems, let alone to explore what is not yet known.
- **Refactored solution:** If you get aware of a problem, raise and solve it outside the retrospective. Enter the retrospective with an open mind to what new things you might discover and want to tackle.

Anti-pattern - Back to the Future

- Retrospectives are about looking back - they even have it in their name. And I remember a lot of problems I had.
- **Antipattern solution:** Focus on talking about what happened. Focus especially on what went wrong.
- **Consequences:** The retrospective becomes a depressive, energy draining meeting no one enjoys.
- **Refactored solution:** Yes, look at the past - to share stories, to further understanding, and to paint a picture of a brighter future. Focus on what you have learned, on what you want to do differently (or the same!) in the future. Try an [Appreciative Retrospective](#).
- **Result:** A forward looking team with the energy to make a difference.

Anti-pattern - retrospective as reporting/complaining to management

- **Retrospectives as reporting to management**
- A problem is perceived to be only solvable with management involvement/approval.
- **Antipattern solution:** Create actions that need management involvement or approval.
- **Consequences:** Problem resolution is dependent on management taking action. If management has different priorities, nothing happens. Retrospectives degenerate into complain sessions, where you don't even expect to be able to make a difference.
- **Refactored solution:** For every problem, come up with at least one action that doesn't need management involvement or approval, and will improve the situation at least a bit.
- **Result:** Continuous improvement, however small. Team members get a better feel for the power they actually have. Managers see team members take initiative. They might even get interested in getting involved in the ongoing change.

Facilitating a retrospective

- Preparing
- Leading the session
- Closure & Follow-up



Preparing

- **Schedule/Length** - [Rachel Davies](#) suggests 30 minutes for each week (1:30 hours for 3w sprint, whole day for iteration)
 - Face to Face >= Video Conf >= Telephone
- **Location** - Offsite for iteration, Good meeting room for sprint
 - White boards (More than one / Flip chart)
 - Supplies (Markers, Sharpies, Stickies, Dots)
- **Decide** which exercises (various alternatives for each stage - mix it up from time to time)
- **Prepare** the room

Leading the retrospective

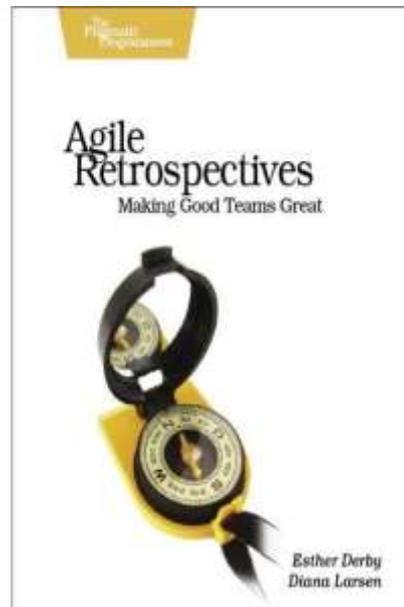
- Facilitator *vs* team member role
- Handle different personalities
 - Quiet
 - Overbearing
 - Passive Aggressive
- Handle different cultures
- Attitude



Bibliography

Ester Derby, Diana Larsen

Agile Retrospectives: making good teams great

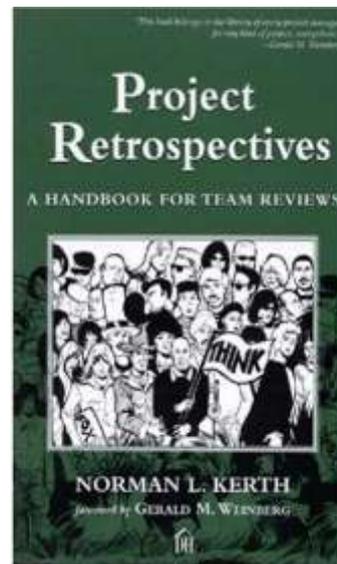


<http://pragprog.com/book/dlret/agile-retrospectives>

Bibliography

Norman Kerth

Project Retrospectives: A handbook for
team reviews



Tips

- Split into small groups to narrow down actions (helps with large teams or with quiet members)
- Use a space without a table
- Write the output on a flip chart and stick it up in the workspace where all can see
- Location, location, location - find a good spaces and mix it up so not always in same place
- Food (especially nice food like cakes & biscuits) is an excellent way to make the session more appealing and is a great leveller.
- Use a facilitator from outside the team (e.g. another team's scrum master)
- Swap the facilitation role within the team: don't let it fall to the same person (coach, scrum master) each time
- Plan your retrospectives - don't just turn up and run it the same way each time.
- Throw away everything from the retrospective *except* the retrospective actions. Focus on outcomes, not problems.

More References/Credits

- [Appreciative Retrospectives - http://www.ayeconference.com/appreciativeretrospective/](http://www.ayeconference.com/appreciativeretrospective/)
- <http://retrospectivewiki.org>
- <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/retrospectives>
- <http://www.clearlearning.ca/pdf/ADA.pdf>
- <http://www.diigo.com/user/yveret/retrospectives>
- <http://jamesshore.com/Agile-Book/retrospectives.html>
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