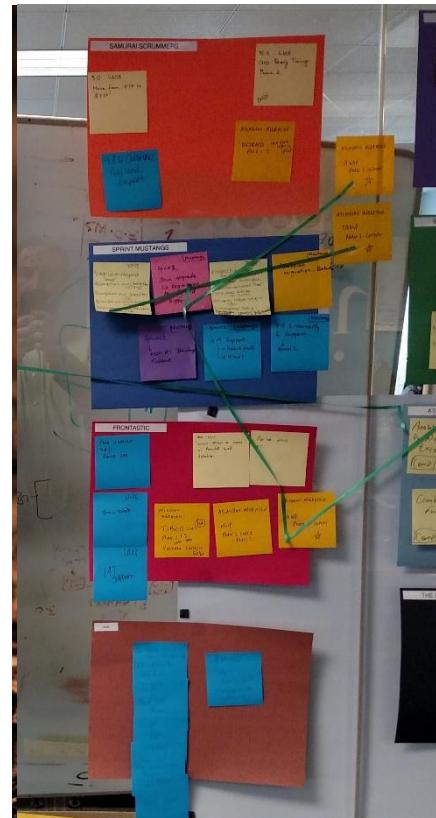


Reenergize Your Retrospectives!

Mark Cruth



Let's get to know each other!

- Grab a few m&m's from the dish at your table
- For each color of m&m in your hand, answer the corresponding questions at your table:
 - Red: what do you love to do when it gets warm outside
 - Green: what are you passionate about
 - Yellow: title of the last book you read
 - Orange: favorite place to travel
 - Brown: name one life goal
 - Blue: What do you hope to learn during this workshop?
- You Have 8 minutes...Go!



Game Inspiration



Mark Cruth

- Active Agilist since 2009
- Founder of Teal Mavericks, LLC
- Practitioner at 8fold
- Agile Coach at Quicken Loans

m&m Icebreaker

- Red: Mow the lawn
- Green: Finding joy in work
- Yellow: To Sell is Human by Dan Pink
- Orange: Anywhere warm with a beach
- Brown: Build a house
- Blue: New inspiration to help my retros!



8foldPros

Quicken Loans®

Why are we here?

We want to *Spice Up* our Retrospectives



How are we going to do it?

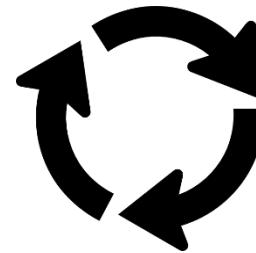
Learn

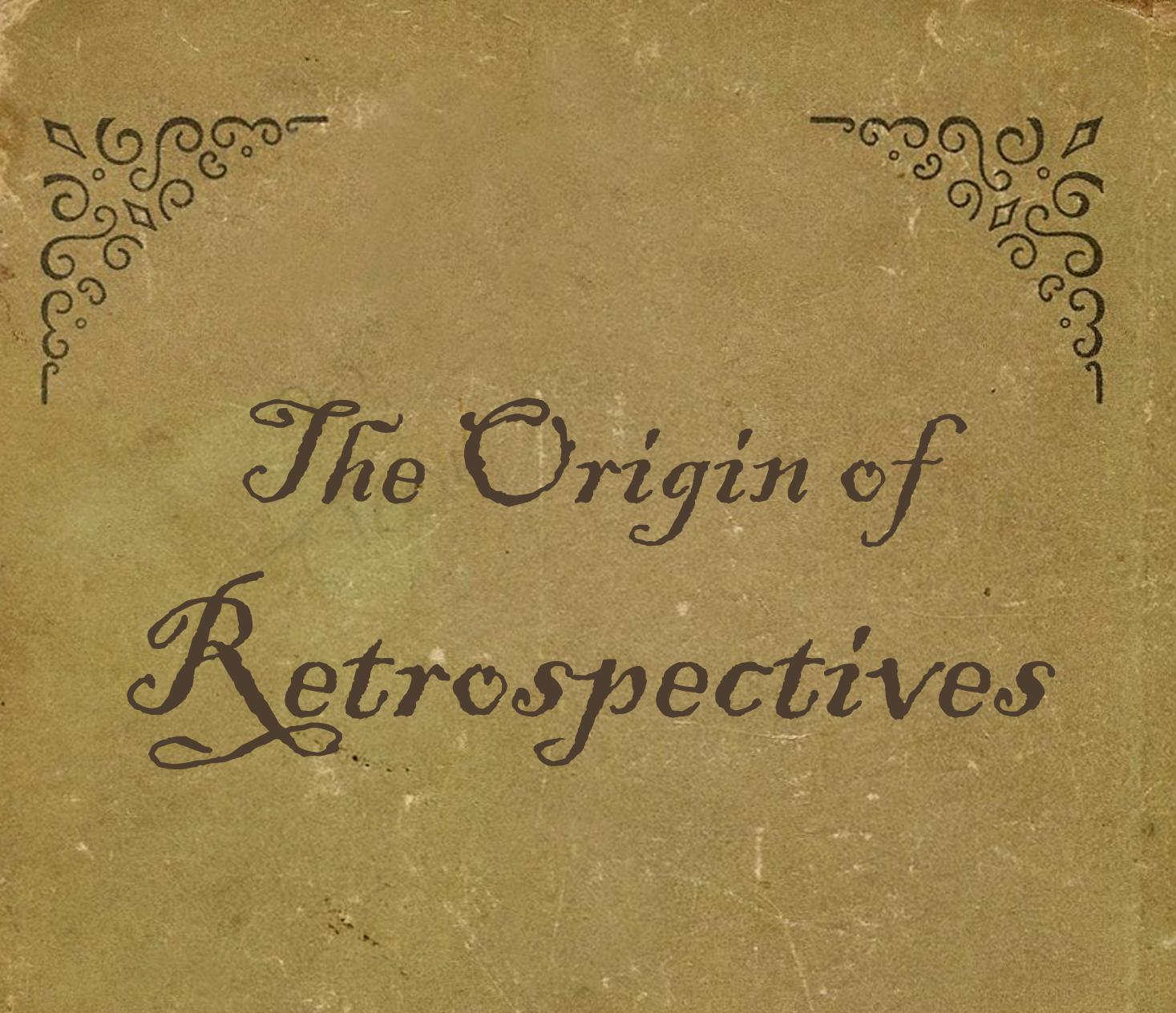


Do



Adapt





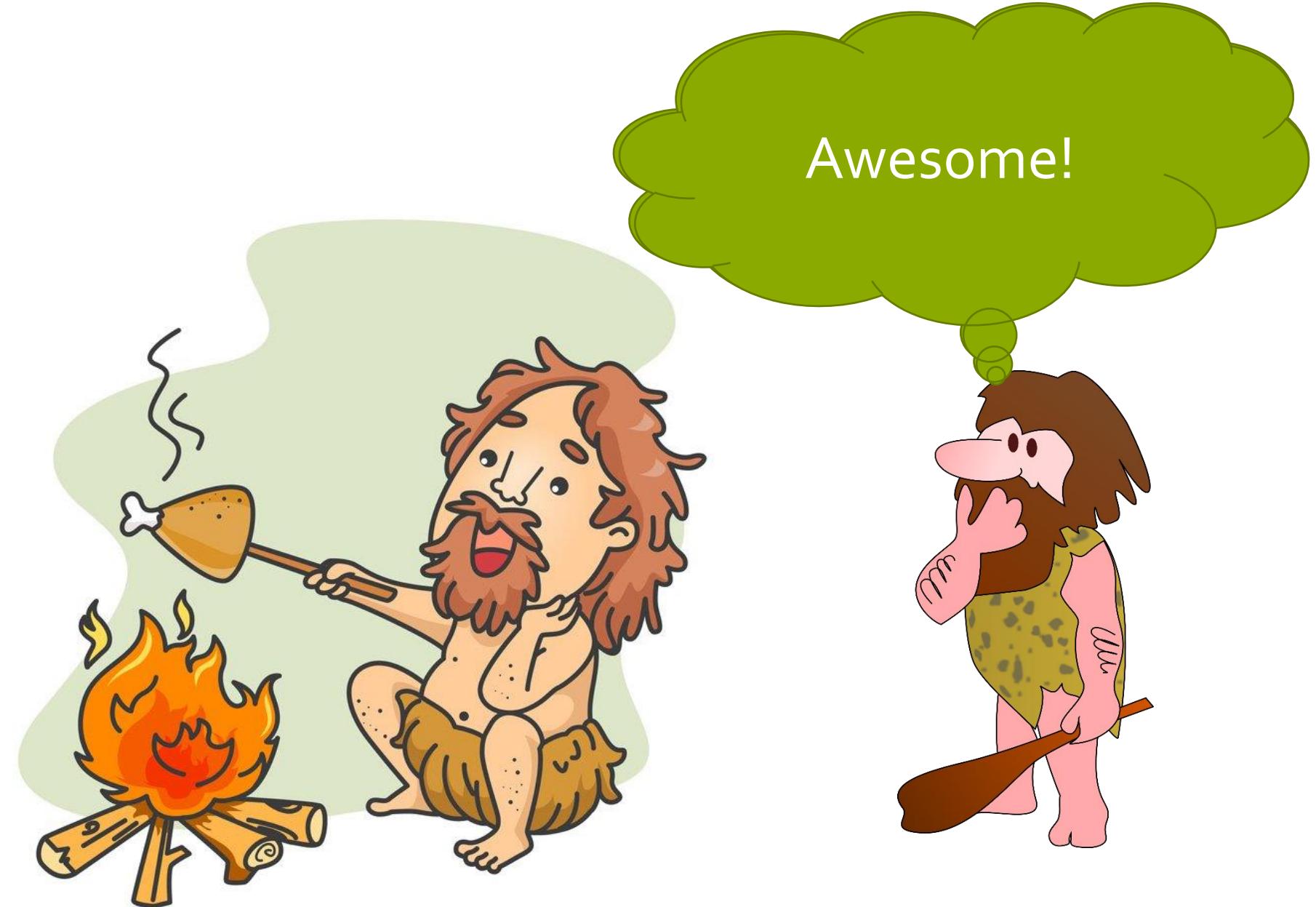
The Origin of Retrospectives



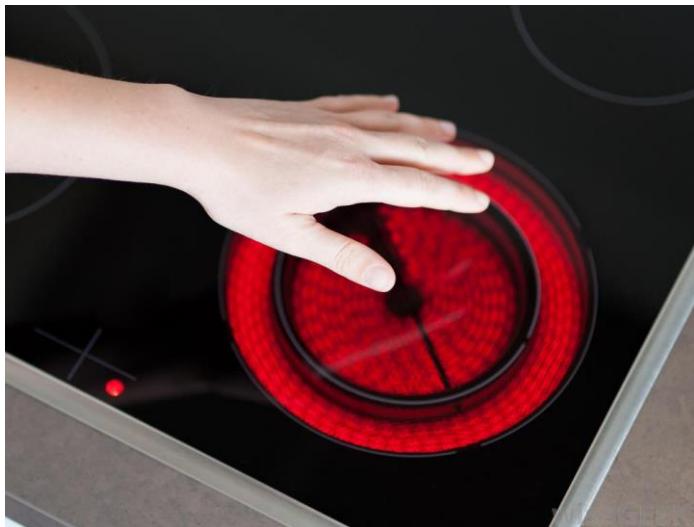
In the Beginning...

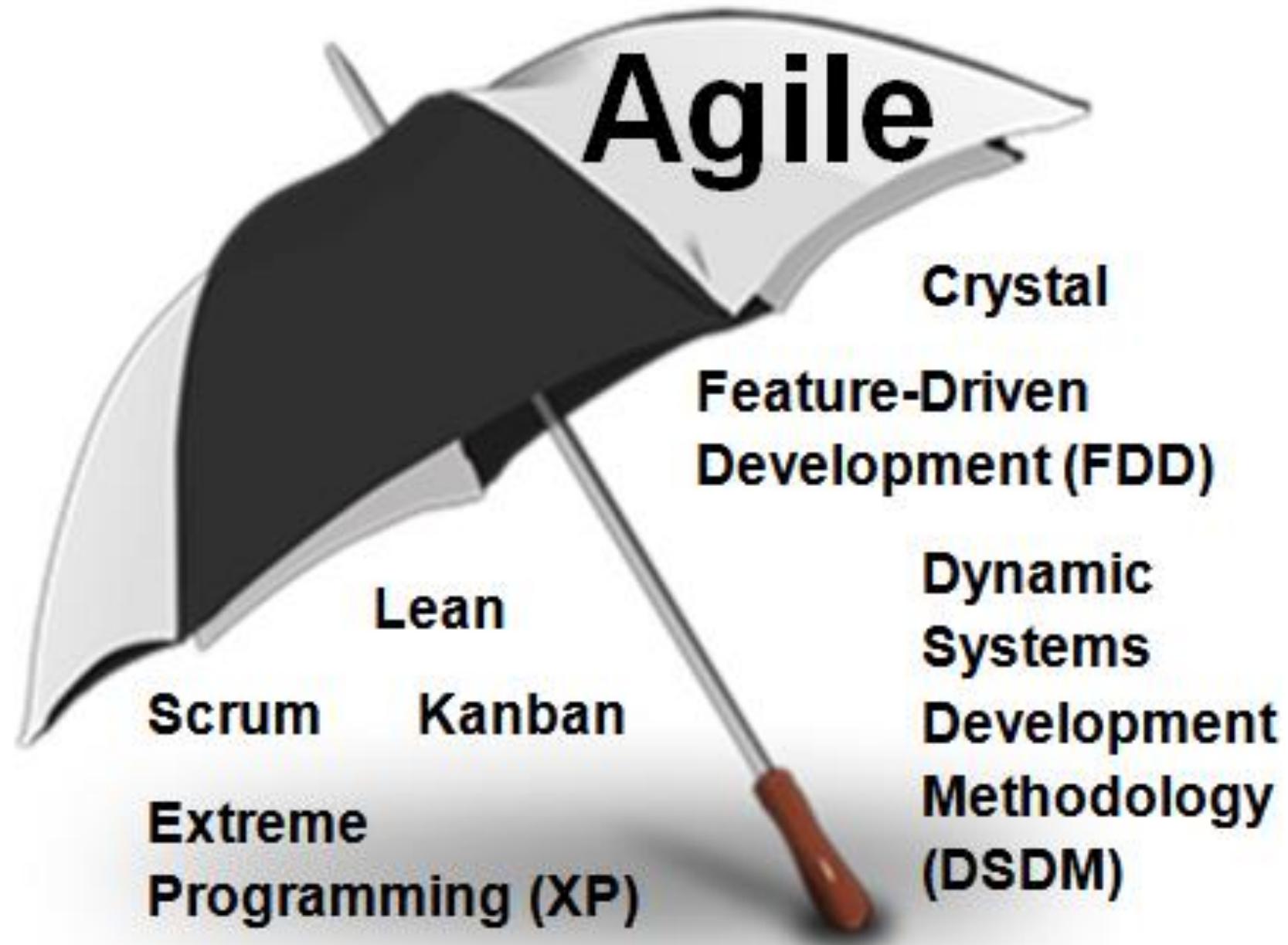
I could really use
some heat...
I wonder...





As kids, we held retrospectives all the time!





Agile

Crystal

Feature-Driven
Development (FDD)

Dynamic
Systems
Development
Methodology
(DSDM)

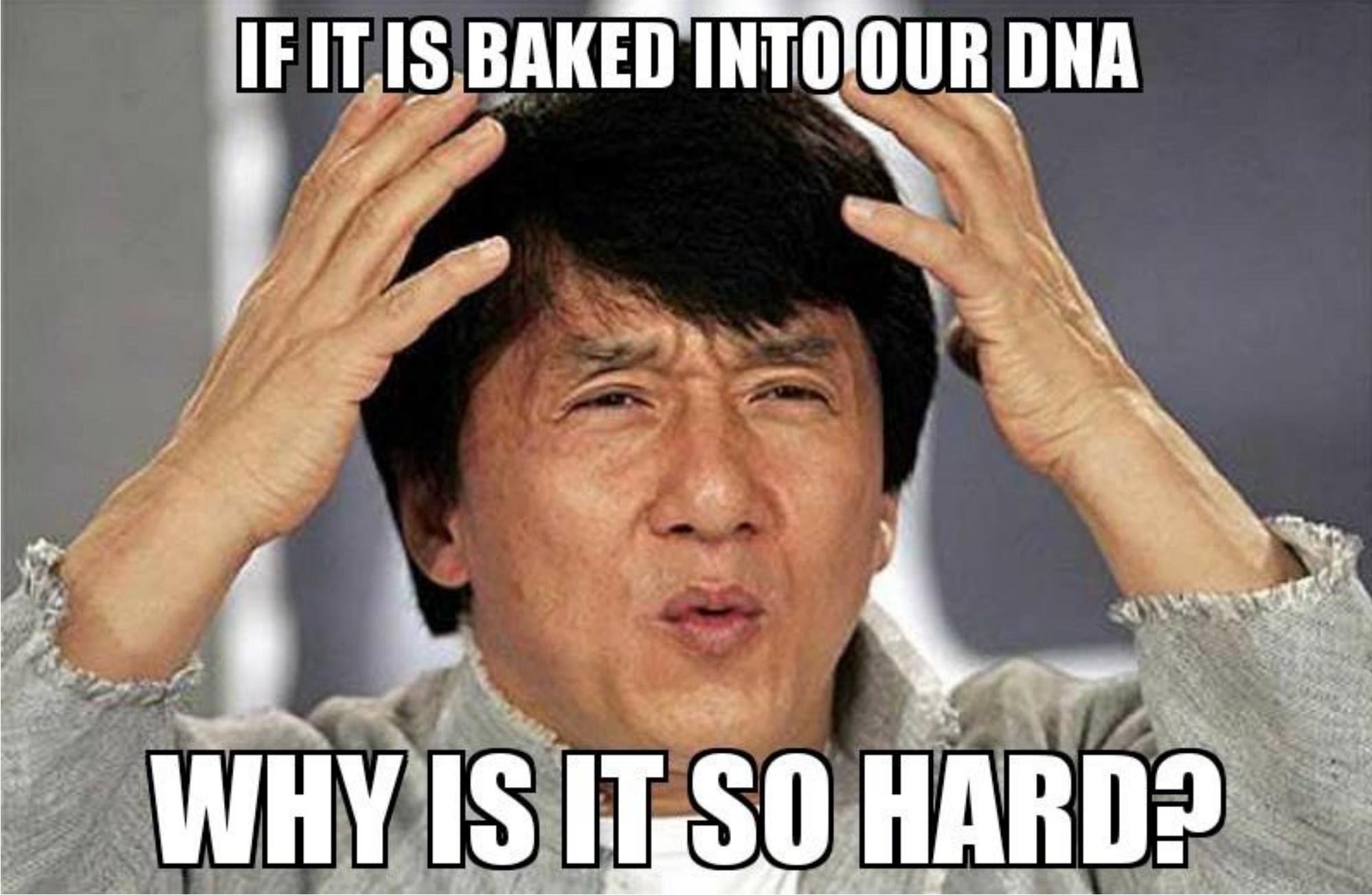
Lean

Scrum Kanban

Extreme
Programming (XP)

The Purpose of Retrospectives....

Inspect and Adapt
with the Intention to
Continuously Improve
[insert important thing here]

A photograph of Jackie Chan from a movie, looking upwards with a shocked expression. He has both hands on his head, fingers pointing upwards. He is wearing a light-colored, textured jacket.

IF IT IS BAKED INTO OUR DNA

WHY IS IT SO HARD?

Leading Causes of Low Energy Retrospectives

Structure



Variety



Structure of an Energized Retrospective

Set the Stage

Icebreaker



Follow Up



The Main Act

Gather Data



Generate Insights



The Final Curtain

Identify Actions



Take Ownership



Inspired by Esther Derby and Diana Larsen's book Agile Retrospectives

Set the Stage

Start with an Icebreaker!



Why should you have an Icebreaker?



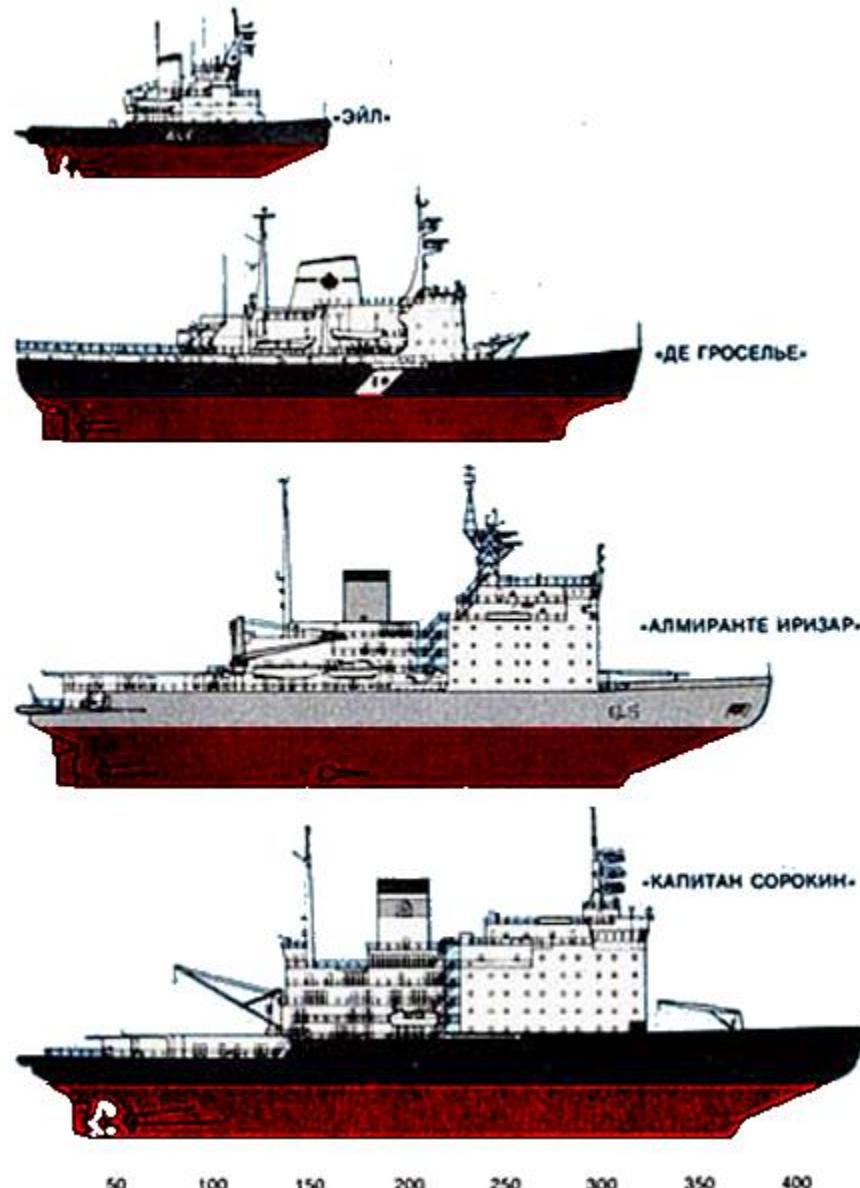
Why should you have an Icebreaker?



Why should you have an Icebreaker?



Types of Icebreakers



50 100 150 200 250 300 350 400

Icebreaker: M&M Challenge

Overview

- Everyone grabs a handful of m&m's from the dish at their table
- For each color of m&m in your hand, answer a corresponding question (determined by facilitator)

Value

- Get to know different things about your teammates
- You get to eat some candy ☺



Time Needed

5-10 minutes

[Game Inspiration](#)

Icebreaker: Box-O-Questions

Overview

- Download a large list of icebreaker questions and number each
- Place of corresponding set of numbers in a box
- Pass the box around the room and have each person pull a number and then answer the associated question

Value

- Learn new facts from each team member
- Forces people to think of a unique answer (no piggybacking)
- Easily repeatable without having to answer the same question



Time Needed
5-10 minutes

[List of 143 Icebreaker Questions](#)

Learn → DO

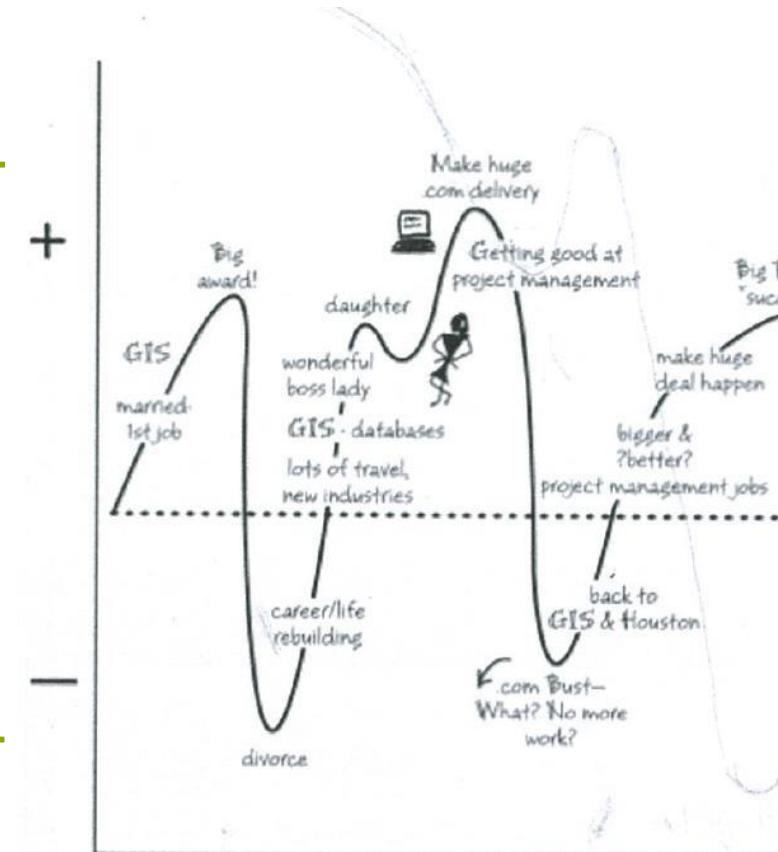
Icebreaker: Journey Lines

Overview

- Have people pair in groups of two
- Each participant will take 5 minutes to draw their journey line (life experiences, highs, lows, milestones)
- Each pair will walk each other through their journey line (3-5 minutes per person)

Value

- Experience shapes us – learn what shaped your teammate
- Find commonalities / build empathy
- Experience vulnerability



Time Needed
10-15 minutes

[Game Inspiration](#)

Icebreaker: Moving Motivators (M3.0)

Overview

- Distribute the motivator cards to each team member
- Give everyone 5 minutes to order the card by importance
- Everyone shares their order of motivators
- Look at how the environment changes your motivators by having people move those motivators up that are present at work and down for those not present and then share
- Can provide good lead-in for bigger discussions on motivation

Value

- Understand what motivates your team!
- Teammates can find commonality with each other

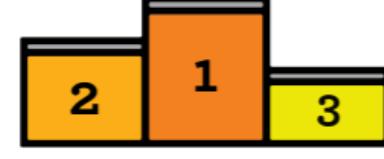
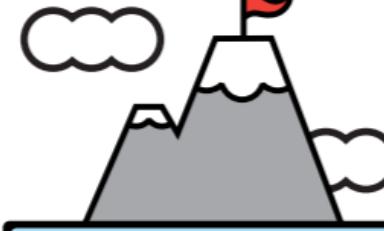
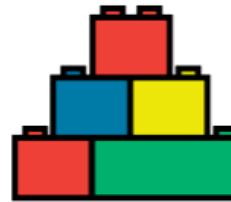
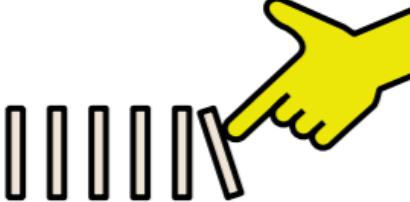


Time Needed
10-15 Minutes
[Game Inspiration](#)

Moving Motivators

MANAGEMENT 3.0

CHANGE AND INNOVATION PRACTICES

FREEDOM	STATUS	GOAL	ACCEPTANCE	CURIOSITY
				
I am independent of others with my own work and responsibilities	My position is good, and recognized by the people who work with me	My purpose in life is reflected in the work that I do	The people around me approve of what I do and who I am	I have plenty of things to investigate and to think about
HONOR	MASTERY	ORDER	POWER	RELATEDNESS
				
I feel proud that my personal values are reflected in how I work	My work challenges my competence but it is still within my abilities	There are enough rules and policies for a stable environment	There's enough room for me to influence what happens around me	I have good social contacts with the people in and around my work

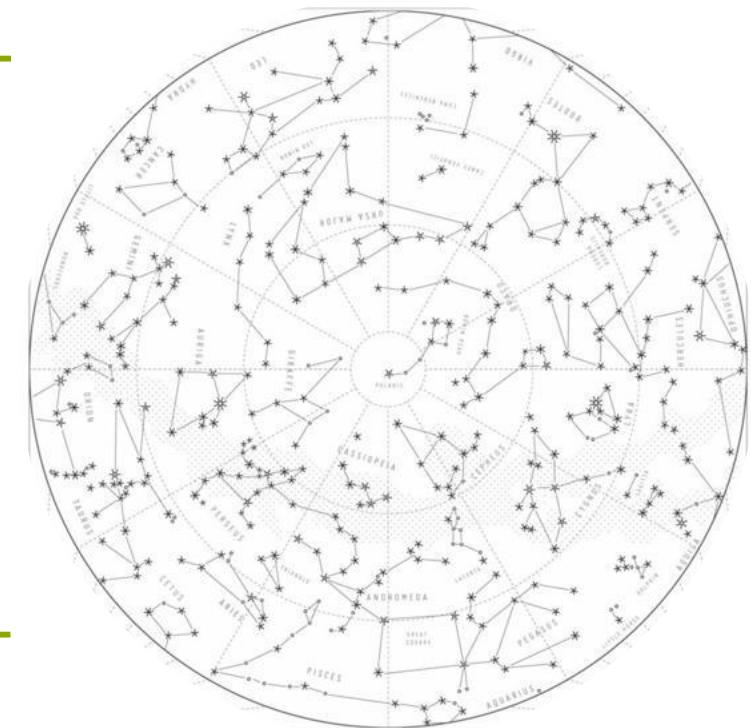
Icebreaker: Constellations

Overview

- Have everyone form a circle in the room (you need space ☺)
- Make a statement (ex. I'm a great cook) and tell people towards the center of the circle if the statement is true to them and further from the circle if the statement is not true
- Continue making statements and observe how the room moves

Value

- See what people value / hold true compared to others
- Find commonalities and difference that individuals can reflect on



Time Needed

5-10 minutes

[Game Inspiration](#)

Always Follow Up!



What happens without Follow Up?

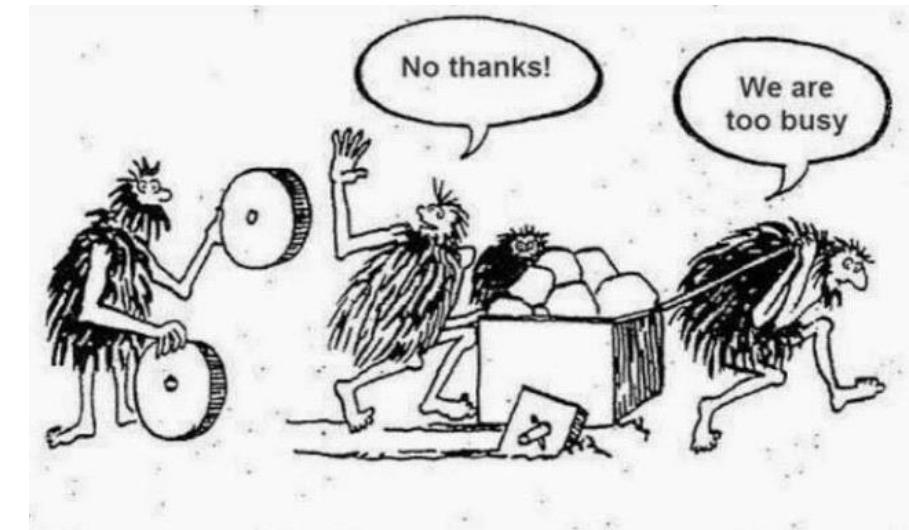
Disengagement



No Real Discussion



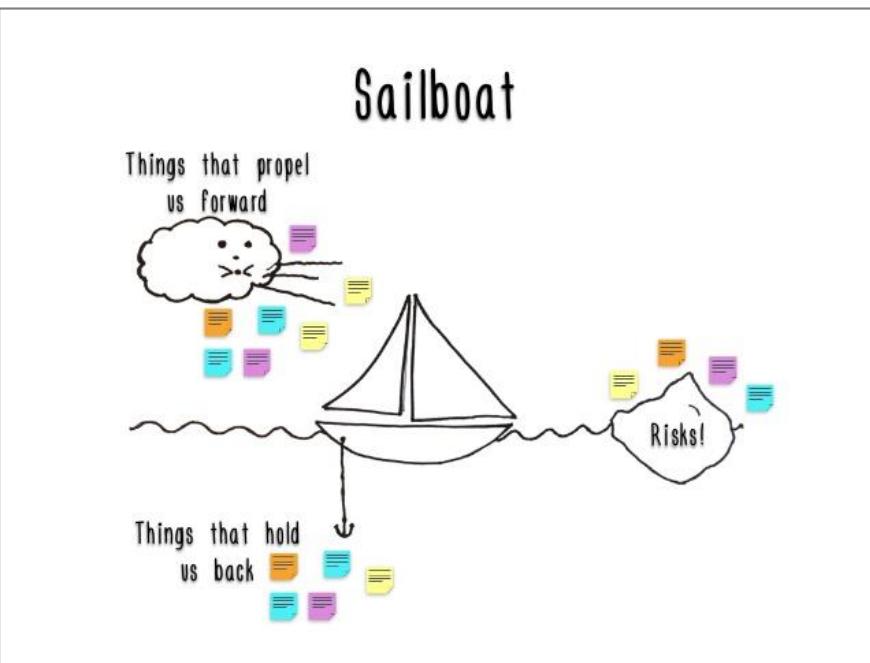
Continuous Improvement Dies



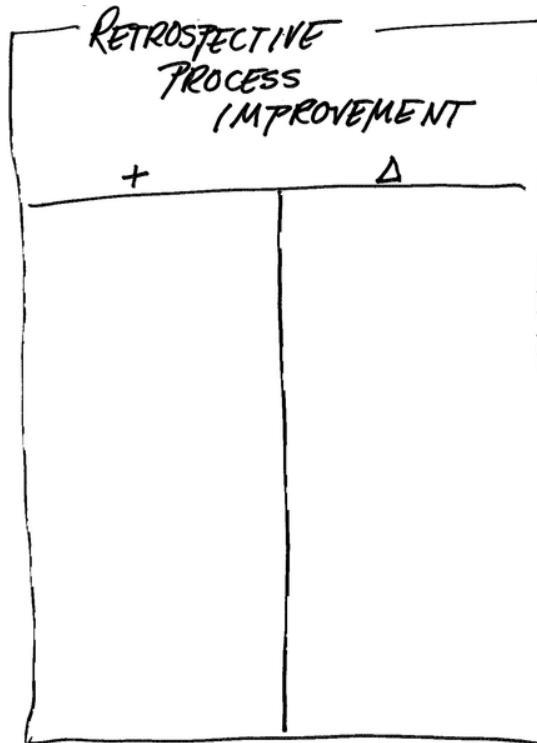


The Main Act

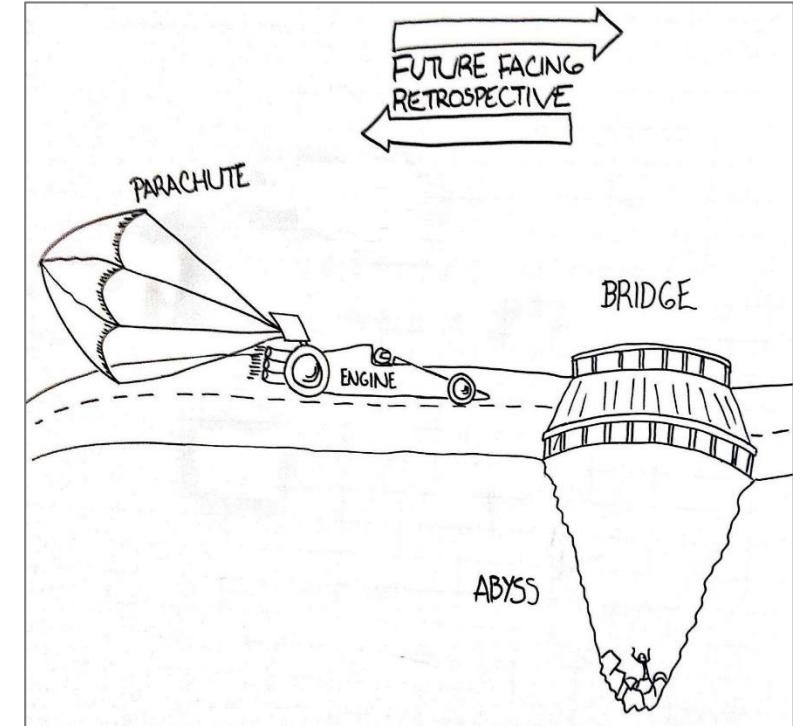
Tried and True



Inspect & Adapt



Continuously Improve





Types of Retrospectives



Retro: Lean Coffee

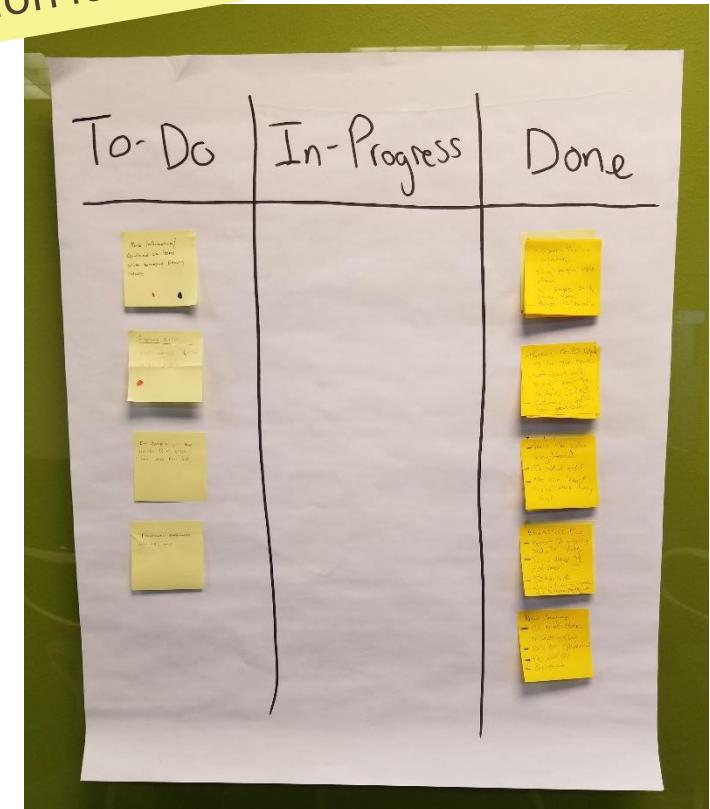
Tip: They don't always need an action item from a discussion

Overview

- Ask the team to take 5 minutes to write down things they would like to discuss with the team during retro (one per sticky note)
- Review all the sticky notes and group similar topics
- Have the team vote (I usually give everyone 3 votes) on the topics to create a prioritized backlog (highest votes on top)
- Start discussing! 5 minutes with 3 minute extension option

Value

- Topics that multiple people care about are talking about first
- Limiting the conversation prevent one topic from ruling the all



Time Needed
15 Minutes Min

[Game Inspiration](#)

Retro: Timeline

Overview

- Draw the sprint timeline on a board and pass out sticky notes
- Have people pair together and identify positive and negative aspects of the sprint and place them on the timeline (high positive points on top, negative points on bottom)
- Walk through the timeline and point out trends / major impacts and talk about what we could try differently next sprint

Value

- You learn about high and low points others experienced that you may not have been aware off
- Team looks back at the entire sprint and not just the latest info



Time Needed
25-40 Minutes
[Game Inspiration](#)

Retro: Deep Tissue Massage

Tip: Use this as a call to action for topics that seem to get discussed in retros frequently!

Overview

- Take 2 topics and divide the team in two (one topic per team)
- Each team will spend the next 20 minutes focused on resolving their issue by answering a series of questions
 - Why is this a problem?
 - How would our lives be different if this problem didn't exist?
 - What needs to change?
 - How do we change it?
- Teams present to each other and final next steps are decided



Value

- Focus in on recurring issues and bring them to a resolution
- Allows team to move past issue if they decide not to take action

Time Needed
25-40 Minutes
[Game Inspiration](#)

Retro: Unstructured Focus

Overview

- Pick a topic to discuss
- Start the conversation with “How is <insert topic> impacting us?”
- See where the conversation goes 😊
- To be successful with an unstructured conversation the facilitator needs to be prepared with a set of Powerful Questions to ask to keep the conversation moving
- Be sure to seek opportunities for action from the team

Value

- Helps reduce formality / feels more like a normal conversation
- Can lead to some of most powerful retro for the team

Tip: Bring a list of Powerful Questions with you to have ready



Time Needed
10+ Minutes Min

[List of Powerful Questions](#)

Powerful Questions

What does success look like?

How do we want it to be?

What led up to it?

What do we want to explore?

What opportunity is here?

*If we could do it over again,
what would we do?*

What do you think that means?

What else?

What have we tried so far?

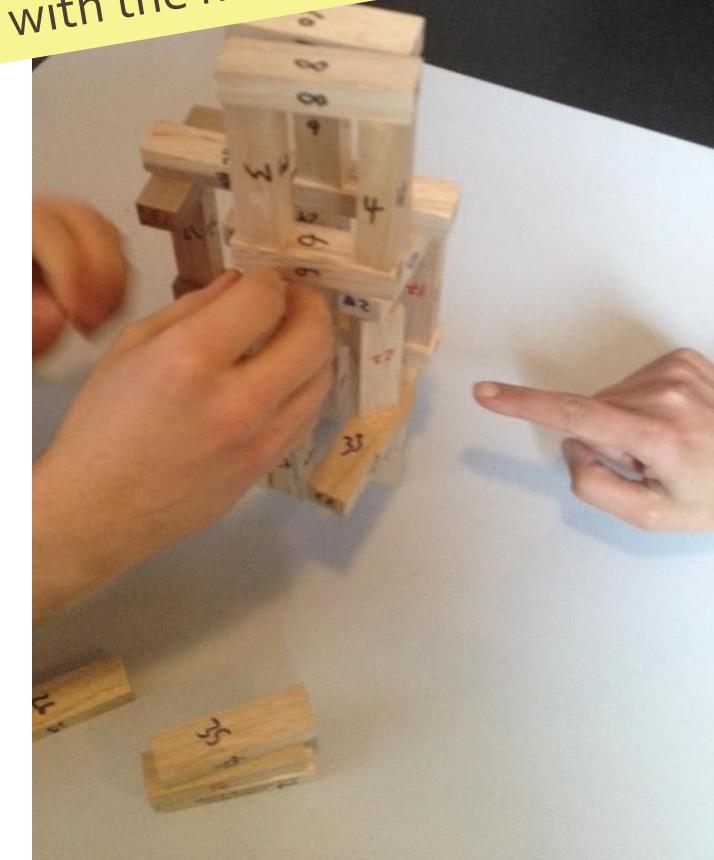
Learn → DO

Retro: Agile Testing Jenga

Tip: Label every side of the Jenga brick with the number ☺

Overview

- Divide into teams of 5-9 (each team has a bag of Jenga blocks)
- Have each team pick a QA lead and provide the lead a list of numbers (corresponding to Jenga blocks)
- Instruct the team to build a Jenga tower at least 4 blocks tall (vertically placed) using all blocks
- Have QA remove the blocks with corresponding numbers on the sheet and see if structure remains
- Run variations of when QA interacts in software development



Value

- Easily makes visible the value of testing early and often
- Use with teams struggling with development / QA integration

Time Needed

20-30 Minutes

[Game Inspiration](#)

Retro: Building Better Products

Tip: Have someone other than your PO play the PO role in the game

Overview

- Divide into teams of 3-4 (each team has a bag of Legos)
- Identify one person to be the overall Product Owner
- Conduct three build rounds:
 - Round 1: Teams build what they think the Product Owner wants (no Q&A)
 - Round 2: Team can ask the Product Owner Yes/No questions only
 - Round 3: Team can ask any question to the Product Owner
- After each round have the Product Owner accept/reject

Value

- Understand the value of communication and asking thoughtful questions in order to build a good product
- Understand how communication can break down



Time Needed
20-30 Minutes

[Game Inspiration](#)

Retro: Marshmallow Challenge

Tip: Show the associated TED Talk video during the debrief session

Overview

- Divide into teams of 3-5 (each team at a separate table)
- Teams will compete to build the tallest tower that can hold a marshmallow on top using the following material:
 - 20 sticks of spaghetti
 - 1 yard of tape
 - 1 yard of string
- Give teams 15 minutes to complete the task then debrief

Value

- Helps teams to approach a problem from an experimentation mindset (even if they are familiar with the subject area)
- Reveals the power of collaboration / self-organization



Time Needed
20-30 Minutes
[Game Inspiration](#)

Retro: Penny Game

Tip: Add more rounds by having progressively smaller batch sizes

Overview

- Divide into equal sized teams (number of people doesn't matter)
- The exercise will measure how long it takes to have everyone but one person flip over 10 pennies (the last person is time keeper)
- Team members must flip the pennies with their left hand
- Measure the timing for the first and last penny to be flipped at each table during two rounds:
 - Round 1: Each person must flip all 10 pennies before passing to the next person
 - Round 2: Once a penny is flip it can be passed to the next person (no waiting)

Value

- Demonstrates the impact of small batch sizes on the flow of work
- Supports the idea of having a team goal to focus on



Time Needed
5-10 Minutes
[Game Inspiration](#)

Retro: Kanban Pizza

Tip: Add a new topping in Round 3 that introduces a new step

Overview

- Can be done with a single or multiple teams (equal sized teams ideal)
- Team(s) will be responsible for producing as many slices of pizza as possible using printer paper, post-its, and red markers
- There will be three rounds of roughly 5-7 minutes (don't reveal time):
 - Round 1: Allow the team to make the pizza however they want
 - Round 2: Have team apply Kanban concepts (Visualize Work and WIP Limits)
 - Round 3: Have team improve their process based on Round 2 learnings
- Pizza slices must bake for 30 seconds (3 at a time) to be delivered

Value

- Demonstrates the power of visualizing work and WIP limits
- Reveals problems with taking on too much work



Time Needed
20-30 Minutes
[Game Inspiration](#)

A red curtain with white text in the center.

The Final Curtain

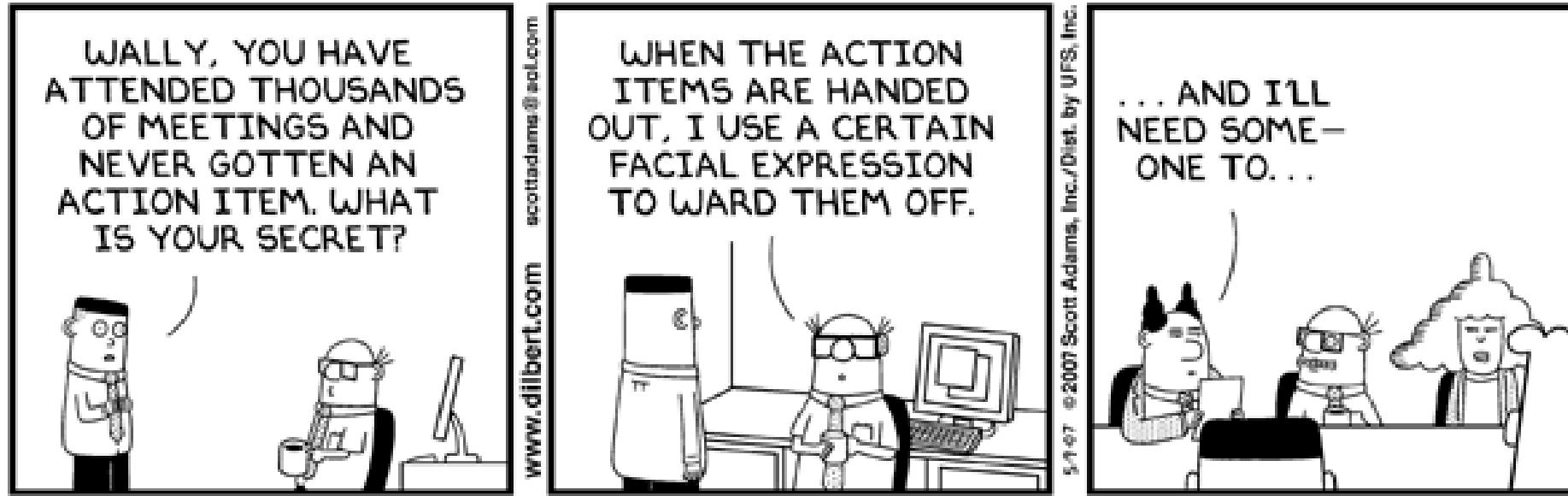
Identify Action Items

What are the
takeaways?

What decisions
have we made?



Take Ownership



© Scott Adams, Inc./Dist. by UFS, Inc.

Take Ownership

Do not hand out action items! Ownership must be taken not given

Establish a timeline for progress so the team feels the change



Structure of an Energized Retrospective

Set the Stage

Icebreaker



Follow Up



The Main Act

Gather Data



Generate Insights



The Final Curtain

Identify Actions



Take Ownership



Inspired by Esther Derby and Diana Larsen's book Agile Retrospectives

Do → ADAPT

DIY Retrospective

DIY Retrospective

- At your table, identify a problem/opportunity that one of your teams is having (pick one for the table)
- Construct a facilitation guide for a retrospective that would help bring the problem / opportunity to light
- Be creative! Do you want to run an experiment? Ask 5-Whys? Play with Legos?
- Each table will share the outcome of their brainstorm to give us all new ideas!



Time: 15 Minutes!

Retrospectives with Distributed Teams

- Many teams today have members who are remote / distributed
- As a facilitator, your goal is to ensure all team members feel included in a retrospective
- There are a number of great resources you can leverage for distributed teams, including:



Final Retrospective Facilitation Tips/Tricks



- Use a timer for activities – people value their time!
- If you're facilitating and want to contribute to the conversation, make sure you tell people that you're taking your “facilitator hat off” – it's a mental shift that YOU need to be aware of
- Bring candy or beverages from time to time – helps make it more conversational / less formal
- Read the room (especially the body language) and be willing to interject if needed
- Best Websites for Retrospective Ideas:
 - <http://tastycupcakes.org/>
 - <http://www.funretrospectives.com/>

Final Retro: Bubble Up!

Overview

- Aggregate answers to a question by having each team member identify their “top 3” answers for a question
- Have each team member aggregate their “top 3” with another team member to generate a new “top 3”
- Continue to combine “top 3” lists (pair become a quad, etc.) until there is only 1 “top 3” list to aggregates all answers

Value

Tip: Build a bracket on a whiteboard to show how ideas aggregate to the Final Top 3



Time Needed
20-30 Minutes

Thank You!



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@TealMavericks