

# The Scrum Master PLAYBOOK

BY SJOERD NIJLAND + EVELIEN ACUN-ROOS

**CREATIVITY IS NOT SOME POSSESSION OF SOME SPECIAL TALENT.**

**IT'S ABOUT THE WILLINGNESS TO **PLAY**.**

**- JOHN CLEESE**

## The Scrum Master Playbook

Most books are for reading, but this book is for playing.

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# The Scrum Master Playbook

We created this Playbook to make work more enjoyable and teams more effective. By mastering the Scrum Master Playbook, you'll unlock the true potential of yourself and your team. The impossible becomes possible.

Escape those mind-numbing conclaves and death-by-powerpoint by facilitating plays. Playing is serious business, and we can trust the neuroscience on this.

Did you know that playing:

- relieves stress,
- improves brain function,
- boosts energy,
- stimulates creativity,
- deepens connections with others,
- builds trust,
- channels conflict positively and constructively,
- heals emotional wounds,
- and increases happiness!

We are confident that our plays will have the same outcomes for you!

We've also observed many *toxic* games being played at work. Here are some examples:

- A game of hide-and-seek with the Product Owner;
- A game of whack-a-mole, except the moles are your coworkers and the mallets are your boss's mood swings;
- A game of chess, except the pawns are expendable and the king is a complete idiot;
- A game of dodgeball, except the balls are your stakeholders' unreasonable demands and you can't get out of the way;
- A game of musical chairs, except there's only one chair and everyone is fighting for it;
- A game of tag, except you're always "it".

However, the plays in this Playbook will help you foster a creative, collaborative, and psychologically safe environment. This Playbook is packed with ridiculous tricks and absurd strategies to make your Scrum a wild success. Just remember to keep a straight face when your stakeholders ask you what the heck you're up to.

- SJOERD + EVELIEN



A central title area featuring a white circle with a black outline. Inside the circle, the text "Part One:" is written in a small, black, sans-serif font above the word "Playfulness". The word "Playfulness" is written in a large, bold, black, hand-drawn style font. The background around the circle is filled with various abstract, organic shapes in shades of orange, purple, and blue, along with some geometric patterns like a sun-like shape with rays and a gear-like shape.

# Part One: Playfulness

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# \* Evelien Acun-Roos \*

## Join the Dance!

When Sjoerd asked me to team up with him, I did not have to think twice. I have already walked the "Road 2 Mastery", a learning journey for Scrum Masters, amazed by its content, creativity, and material. It is my honor to contribute. Over the past years, I learned so much about facilitating, training, and playing. This as an excellent opportunity to learn.

I have been teaching and training for a long time. I have also been a dance teacher for over 20 years now, so I'm experienced in conveying the message (or dance steps). The kids in our class start dancing at the age of three, and my oldest student is going on 30. I know how to set up and run a class successfully. We start with a warming-up, and then we do some exercises and improvise to get more Agile, so that we can dance more fluently. After that, we practice the now familiar dances and add new moves.

**Learning how to dance is a playful incremental process.** With younger kids, we play musical games (teaching them some basic principles, terms, or each other's names). The older ones perform more demanding challenges, such as choreography or improvising a dance when the music stops.

I instruct new dance moves in steps. First, I show the move. Then, I explain it. Now we move together slowly, step by step. And we speed it up! Until they can do it by themselves before we...

**Repeat!**

In my professional training, I am doing it the other way around! We first experience and try the structure with limited instruction; after that, we take a step back to reflect before repeating the steps. Both approaches work.



That's what we do with this Playbook. We share different approaches with you. We're providing ways to play. There's no one-size-fits-all, not in dancing or in professional training.

**Create your own dance** and valuable events, with this great Playbook for inspiration.

This collection is for those who love to teach, train, lead, coach and facilitate. It is based upon many ways, structures, principles, and experiences we have collected over the years that have worked well for us. It is crafted using the knowledge and experience of Scrum Masters from all over the world! We are continuously improving. So, if you have any feedback or additions, join the dance. Inspect and adapt.

**- EVELIEN**

# \* Sjoerd Nijland \*

# Playfulness

Most books are for reading, but this book is for playing. Playing together promotes transparency and bridges learning gaps. Apply this Playbook, and your events will never be the same. But why play? Playing is serious business, and we can trust the neuroscience on this. Playing relieves stress, improves brain function, boosts energy and creativity, increases and improves connections with others, and heals emotional wounds. Playfulness is a state of mind where we experience being absorbed in the moment, a collective flow during which we are focused, curious, spontaneous, engaged, and open to learning.

As in sports, coaches and trainers use a Playbook. This Playbook provides a collection of short activities for Scrum Teams called plays. It contains instructions and templates for Scrum Masters on how to play them. These plays can be applied in both virtual (distributed) and co-located settings.

I encourage you to use this Playbook and create your own. [Make it yours.](#)

By mastering this Playbook, you'll unlock the true potential of yourself and your team. The impossible becomes possible. It empowers you and your team. Your events will be truly eventful. I created this Playbook to make work more enjoyable and meaningful. I am confident that it will have the same outcome for you!

The plays increase effectiveness according to learning principles derived from neuroscience. I won't bore you with too much theory as this book is all about playing. But we'll leave breadcrumbs so you can find your way down these rabbit holes.

The plays in this book are in alphabetical order. So feel free to skip the intro and jump right into the action somewhere in the middle. I am not sensitive to the complexity and context of your work environment, so figuring out if and when to apply which play is entirely up to you. You can find a helpful 'playguide' in the back. We will share some secret tricks-of-the-trade, so you can design your training and effectively facilitate your events using these plays.

- SJOERD

# 6 inspiring quotes from sports coaches

"I'M NOT COACHING TO KEEP MY JOB, I AM COACHING WHAT I BELIEVE." - JILL ELLIS

"AVERAGE PLAYERS WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE. GOOD PLAYERS WANT TO BE COACHED.  
GREAT PLAYERS WANT TO BE TOLD THE TRUTH." - DOC RIVERS

"I ALWAYS DELEGATE. IF SOMEONE IS VERY GOOD AT SOMETHING, WHATEVER IT IS, HE WILL BE IN CHARGE." - JOHAN CRUIJFF

"IT'S WHAT YOU LEARN AFTER YOU KNOW IT ALL THAT COUNTS THE MOST." - PATT SUMMITT

"PLAY THE RIGHT WAY" MEANS PLAY UNSELFISHLY, RESPECT EACH OTHER'S ACHIEVEMENTS, PLAY HARD, FULFILL YOUR ROLE." - GREGG POPOVICH

"I HAVE JUST THREE THINGS TO TEACH: SIMPLICITY, PATIENCE, COMPASSION.  
THESE THREE ARE THE GREATEST TREASURES. SIMPLE IN ACTIONS AND THOUGHTS, YOU  
RETURN TO THE SOURCE OF BEING. PATIENT WITH BOTH FRIENDS AND ENEMIES, YOU ACCORD  
WITH THE WAY THINGS ARE. COMPASSIONATE TOWARD YOURSELF, YOU RECONCILE ALL  
BEINGS IN THE WORLD." - PHIL JACKSON

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# Are you ready to play?

If you believe playing is just for children, you wouldn't have picked up this book. 'Play' is serious business. For me, work and play are inseparable. It takes work to enable creative play.

Scrum is a game, or so the cover of the Scrum Guide tells us. We practice and play Scrum. Moreover, it is a team game, which is mastered together. A game has rules that guide the interactions. No rules, no game. A game offers a goal and constraints. It leaves it up to the players to figure out how to succeed.

We're in the business of changing the game. We are uncovering better ways.

**WHEREVER YOU CAN FIND A WAY OF DOING THINGS THAT IS BETTER THAN WHAT HAS BEEN DONE BEFORE, YOU ARE BEING CREATIVE.**

**- JOHN CLEENE**

We regret to say we have come across so-called "Agile-in-name-only" companies that downright discourage any form of free, open, creative play. These companies were all about predictable delivery and productivity: *more, better, faster*. Naturally, they accomplished the opposite. Agility requires an unhealthy dose of creativity to find simple, adaptive ways to engage complex challenges.

One must **slow down, stop worrying, and mess things up** to enter that creative, playful state of mind.

When playing, we get to be curious, focused, and absorbed: We can explore without experiencing any anxiety about wasting time. When we play, we learn. Yet most of the time at work, we are not playful at all. Being (or appearing) busy seems to be priority number one in the workspace. At work, we are slightly impatient: a perpetuated state of ever more work to be done, in which not being a busybee is considered a crime. Overbooked agendas, back-2-backs, swamped inboxes, beasts of backlogs... Is that effective time management?

Specialists can delude themselves into thinking that complex problems require complex approaches. They lack playtime, encouraging us to imagine painfully simple ways. They may presume that intricate designs and methods make them look smart. Creativity involves imagining **stupidly simple things that work**. After all, simplicity is the art of maximizing the work NOT done.

Fortunately, play has only a limited number of prerequisites. All you need is space, time, courage, and humor. Consider yourself invited.



HOW MANY AGILE COACHES DOES IT TAKE  
TO CHANGE A LIGHTBULB?

WELL, "IT DEPENDS..."



# Don't Panic!

A warning to all managers! Applying this Playbook will make your *subordinates* question your paradigm, spend time doing absurd things, and undermine rigid protocols. They'll take control over the way of working, gain confidence, and have fun. If you think playtime is unproductive and you worry impatiently when people finally "get back to work", then this book is not for you. Or, perhaps, all the more reason it is.

Those outcomes may be precisely what you are looking for. In that case, you might be slightly worried about how to introduce these plays to your corporate environment. What if people resist?

Well good! We all have a mind of our own, wired with natural resistors.

- "Why?!"
- "Why now?"
- "What will happen?"
- "What will be expected of me?"
- "Can I live up to these new expectations?"
- "What about the rest of the work?"
- "What if I do something wrong?"
- "Will it all be worth it?"
- "Is this what I want?"
- "Can I trust you?"

At the same time, *human beings are naturally playful and adaptive*. We are all capable of dealing with complex challenges and changing our ways. It's our nature. We may raise children, fill in tax forms, process trauma, and maintain relationships.

What it boils down to is: Do we feel safe enough to build deeper, stronger connections? Are we open to new ways, and do we have the courage to go on these short adventures?

When individuals don't feel like collaborating or don't want to join in, that's okay. They have the right to PASS. We will not force anyone to play, but we can encourage them. The right people always show up. Embrace a little resistance and encourage imperfection.

Take your time. Slow it down. Have fun. Help each other along the way. The more relaxed you are, the more relaxed they are.

When we relax and create space, we create room to maneuver creatively. When the play becomes rigid, it's often because people hang on too tightly to expectations that are set. *So, listen, laugh, and say yes!*

In the upcoming chapters, we'll bore you with some theories. It's the theory we've learned through lots of practice. It's simple enough and easy to remember. So don't worry about the theory, we already did that. We designed the plays so you can put them into practice.

# 4S

In general, the most effective plays are the ones that are:



## SHORT:

Estimates for sustained attention for adults are roughly twenty minutes. Naturally, it depends on the type of engagement. For a boring lecture, it may be thirty seconds at most. That's why, as a general rule of thumb, we aim to keep the play short, preferably **between five and ten minutes**, and max thirty minutes. We'll apply brief mind and body breaks between activities. This allows participants to disengage, process, and refresh.



## SIMPLE:

Exploring complex concepts doesn't require complex learning activities. Creative play emerges from what gets eliminated. We'll simplify the instructions, limit rules to what benefits the play and allow room for self-organization during the play **The more rules, the less people will think for themselves**. Aim for the activity to be simple, almost self-explanatory. The more rules, the less people will think for themselves. Aim for the activity to be simple, almost self-explanatory. If you can explain the activity to a five-year-old, you're good to go.



## SMALL:

Serve slices, not whole cucumbers. Slice the material into bite-sized chunks. Small groups are better than big ones. With larger groups, participants will be less open and less attentive. So keep the group small. Many plays require players to form pairs (2), triads (3), or quads (4).



## SHARED:

Shared learning creates transparency. We're playing to get on the same page, not create more knowledge gaps. Participants share: so that they learn from each other.

We also share the material. It's easy to reuse and repurpose so that we can all **find better ways**.

# 4C

You can apply this Playbook to coach, facilitate events, and accommodate learning, training, and knowledge sharing. A single play can work fine, but its effectiveness increases when combined with other plays.

To do so, follow four these four C's from "Training from the BACK of the Room" (TBR) by Sharon Bowman:



## C1 - CONNECTIONS:

What do participants already know about the topic?

Participants first connect their experiences and knowledge to the matter at play. They will share why and how the subject is meaningful to them. This creates a coathanger to hang learnings on to.



## C2 - CONCEPTS:

What do participants need to know about the topic?

Participants associate, contextualize, and conceptualize when they immerse themselves in the matter. The *least* effective way is for learners to merely listen to a lecture. Learners need to be engaging the material directly. They talk, (re)search, map, draw, write, apply, choose, correct, imagine, list, plan, solve, etc.



## C3 - CONCRETE PRACTICE:

So, how would the new learnings, concepts, and narratives play out in the field? Can participants do it, play it, train it? How will the group or individual members learn to apply and practice what they've (un)learned?

Participants will share the experience.



## C4 - CONCLUSIONS:

Participants reflect on the experience and capture learnings. They exchange their reflections with the group.

What makes sense and what does not? What's the first step?  
**Inspect and adapt!**

# Stances

Becoming a better Scrum Master doesn't result from blindly following the rules in a book. The instructions in this Playbook are guidelines. There isn't a best way to perform them. Lots of variations are possible. We encourage you to be creative. You can adapt them to your context. Prepare what you think most benefits their game.

The number one mistake facilitators and trainers make is that they are doing most of the talking and drawing most of the attention. Instead, they should provide space for participants to engage actively. What players say and do is far more important than what the facilitator says and does. The facilitator must step aside for the players to step in.

## #1 FACILITATOR AS GUIDE

How can you re-format the event to remove yourself from being the medium? First, the facilitator assumes the stance of a guide. A guide supports a party along a (learning) journey. Stepping aside is difficult when all those eyes expect you to lead them. The key is to prepare material in advance, enabling the players to engage autonomously. **Show up, let go.** Sometimes, the hardest thing is to do nothing. The guide observes and reflects without passing judgment. Guide by asking questions over providing answers.

## #2 PARTICIPANT AS PLAYER

Excellence is achieved through a routine of playing. For an *attendee* to become a *participant*, they need to become open, curious, and engaged. They should be prepared and activated to start **learning by doing**.

## #3 FACILITATOR AS PLAYER

When part of the team structure, the facilitator can sometimes play along.

When doing so, keep in mind to give participants **space and opportunity**. Remain aware that when you are engaged, others may become disengaged. Players may follow your lead rather than take it. That is not ideal. So when you step in, ensure players aren't stepping back.

## #4 PARTICIPANT AS TRAINER

This is a magical stance. Players take turns instructing (teaching back) other players. They,

- Share what they are going to do;
- Figure out how it's done;
- Show how it's done;
- Do it together;
- Capture the (learning) experience.



# Standing on the Shoulders...

Although most plays are new, We humbly and respectfully build on the works of others who have done likewise. We aim to diligently attribute anyone who deserves credit or reference and refer to those sources of inspiration from which this Playbook emerged. Please reach out with suggestions and comments on where this list of attributions can and should be improved.

- *The Scrum Guide* by Jeff Sutherland and Ken Schwaber;
- *Training from the BACK of the Room!* by Sharon L. Bowman
- *Using Brain Science to Make Training Stick* by Sharon L. Bowman;
- *Visual Thinking Routines* from Harvard Graduate School of Education's Project Zero;
- *Liberating Structures* by Keith McCandless and Henri Lipmanowicz;
- *Scrum Patterns* by Jeff Sutherland, James Coplien et al;
- *Agile Coaching* by Lyssa Adkins;
- *Gamestorming* by Dave Gray, Sunny Brown, and James Mancanufo;
- *Creative Management* by John Cleese;
- *The Way of the Lazy Dungeon Master* by Sly Flourish;
- *The Theory and Practice of Change Management* by John Hayes;
- *Neuro-Linguistic Programming* by Richard Bandler, John Grinder et al;
- *Service Design Doing* by Marc Stickdorn, Markus Hormess, Adam Lawrence, Jakob Schneider.

We encourage you to build on and contribute to this Playbook,  
to share in the quest to find new and better ways and plays.



# Playing... not Yawning!

When we play, we'll do less of this:

- listening,
- reading,
- watching,
- yawning



And more of this:

- |                 |                 |               |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| • adapting      | • cooking       | • encouraging | • negotiating   |
| • applying      | • correcting    | • estimating  | • ordering      |
| • appreciating  | • crafting      | • explaining  | • pitching      |
| • asking        | • creating      | • exploring   | • planning      |
| • beginning     | • daring        | • imagining   | • playing       |
| • brainstorming | • deciding      | • improvising | • preparing     |
| • brainwriting  | • deep-diving   | • inspecting  | • presenting    |
| • celebrating   | • delivering    | • interacting | • questioning   |
| • challenging   | • demonstrating | • inventing   | • querying      |
| • choosing      | • describing    | • joking      | • recording     |
| • cleaning      | • designing     | • listing     | • referring     |
| • coaching      | • discussing    | • making      | • refining      |
| • concluding    | • drawing       | • mapping     | • reflecting    |
| • connecting    | • dreaming      | • meditating  | • researching   |
| • completing    | • editing       | • moving      | • retrospecting |
|                 |                 |               | • role-playing  |
|                 |                 |               | • sharing       |
|                 |                 |               | • simplifying   |
|                 |                 |               | • sizing        |
|                 |                 |               | • slicing       |
|                 |                 |               | • solving       |
|                 |                 |               | • stretching    |
|                 |                 |               | • talking       |
|                 |                 |               | • teaching      |
|                 |                 |               | • training      |
|                 |                 |               | • updating      |
|                 |                 |               | • verifying     |
|                 |                 |               | • visualizing   |
|                 |                 |               | • voting        |
|                 |                 |               | • writing       |



# Multi-Sensational

This page, so dense with text, must hurt your eyes. It's just to prove a point. **We need space and variety.** We gain new knowledge through our senses of hearing, touch, sight, taste, and smell. Our senses work together. Together they make a great team to capture our experiences. Information from different sensory modalities can be combined into a single multisensory event called *multisensory integration*.

Many of the plays in this Playbook enable 'multisensory' learning. People learn better when their senses are engaged concurrently. It keeps participants more engaged. Pre-attentive processing is the subconscious accumulation of information from the environment. If both auditory and visual stimuli are processed together, it gives a person the advantage of greater comprehension. When the brain receives information through one sense, it prepares the others. For example, reading the color *yellow* also alerts your visual system. Although multisensory integration is affected by what a person pays attention to, the brain directs attention towards stimuli that best fit their goals. Consequently, these stimuli will be processed faster and boost attentive processing. **That makes sense, right?**

Applying "taste" (gustatory) and "smell" (olfactory) might not be the first thing a facilitator, teacher, or trainer thinks about when accommodating learning. Through neuroscience (and our own subjective experience), we learned that smell and taste could instantly trigger vivid (visual and emotional) memories. The olfactory signals promptly get to the limbic system. This means that what you smell sends a quick and strong signal to the part of the brain that processes emotion, behavior, and long-term memory. The same goes for taste, which, in a way, gets converted and processed like smell. Professional facilitators and trainers know that the secret is not just to focus on what content to serve but what *food and drinks*.

What do most meeting rooms smell like? Ugh, that damp, stale air, with the lingering smell of sweat and coffee breath. It gets even worse past lunch. Absolutely not ideal. **Fresh air may be even more important than fresh content.** Give the room a chance to breathe before you invite participants to it.

Kinetics is what we touch, feel and move. It plays an essential role within our multi-sensational brain team. Touching something and feeling it tells our brain it's real. It truly makes us present. We may listen to a lecture and be shown slides with diagrams and pictures, but participants likely *feel* their butts growing numb and their legs becoming restless. The emotions we feel are naturally associated with memories of being in a location where something positive or negative happened. You can't ensure all attendees feel positive or engage themselves. Yet, you can provide the means and opportunities to play. It's about **inviting movement**. Movement stimulates blood circulation and gets more oxygen flowing to the brain. This increases attention and retention.

Facilitating a multisensory experience in favor of just another PowerPoint lecture may surprise participants. Because the experience is new, they are more alert. They are more likely to remember the experience when the format differs from what they experienced before. It can provoke some resistance too, so ask yourself what's more important to you: their individual comfort or their collective engagement?

# Positive Play

As a Scrum Master, it is one of your accountabilities to encourage positivity. You foster an environment where people share a purpose and a sense of belonging, where they apply and advance their knowledge and craft. Our brains produce primary chemicals giving us positive feelings. The brain stimulates and rewards us in many ways. It's these brain chemicals that make a play so rewarding.

## SEROTONIN

Serotonin plays a role in pride, loyalty, and social status. It's a good feeling when you accomplish something and receive recognition from others. It affirms we are valued. Serotonin makes us want to grow our influence and popularity. It also makes us dependent on others. You don't get to enjoy serotonin without **recognition from your peers**.

A major pitfall of Scrum Masters is focusing on what isn't going well rather than recognizing and encouraging what is. It's a far more effective strategy to acknowledge and appraise what you do like.

## OXYTOCIN

Oxytocin makes us better problem solvers and collaborators. Unlike dopamine, which gratifies us instantly, oxytocin gives us lasting feelings of calm and safety. Not only that, it boosts our immune system. Positive social interactions release oxytocin. It helps us open up to each other, even more so when we share something. It focuses our attention while actively listening to someone or being listened to by someone. **It anchors trust. It provides a feeling of belonging.** We feel heard, seen, and respected. We get it from a pat on the back and a hug.

## ENDORPHIN

Endorphins are generally released in response to pain. They reward us when we push ourselves beyond our comfort zones. The high you enjoy from endorphin is relaxing. Working your body can help you relax and sleep better. You can encourage teams to take risks, set daunting goals, and work through tough problems. That said, sustainability is key. Endorphins also stimulate recovery. Offices are designed to make us comfortable. So plays should be staged in such a way that they stimulate movement. **Let your people work for it.** Send them on quests through the office and the area outside. Sure, it asks for some grunts and sighs, but you can be sure endorphins will kick in.

## DOPAMINE

This chemical motivates you toward something desirable. Dopamine is released when you sense something rewarding ahead. Dopamine is all about intrinsic motivation. **Your brain will not reward you for doing something merely because you are told to.** To facilitate positive play, you have to discover what motivates the players. What outcome will genuinely be desirable to them?

# 5 Guidelines for Staging Events

Facilitating events is like sailing. The ocean can be very eventful. The sea may be calm at times, but it is never still. Those of the sea are intimate with its moods. And moods can suddenly change. During events, we may find ourselves in all sorts of conditions: drifting off-course, socked-in-with-fog, in stormy moods, etc.

At sea, you cannot force your way. Try, and it will turn against you. "Show up, let go." – Sailors learn this naturally, honed by humility and perseverance. We're called to accept what is, make do with what we have, and let go of our former expectations.

The sea is far more than its waves, and we are more than the waves of our moods. We don't always have to be comfortable; the most rewarding voyages involve challenges and hardships.

How will you guide a group through a storm? And what to do when they lack wind?

Facilitating plays is more than simply following the instructions and steps outlined in this Playbook. For example, it involves knowing when and how to select effective plays for various circumstances. Not all interactions will be fruitful. When the purpose is not clear or aligned, the play may go out of bounds, and players disengage.

So, aside from following the instructions for the play, how can you prepare, position, guide, and coach it well?

Let's start with preparation.

Keep in mind that the preparation for the play generally requires more effort than guiding the play itself.

## 1. SPECIFIC OUTCOMES

Begin by specifying precisely what you would like the participants to achieve. What are their needs?

Complete this prompt: "**By the end of the event...**"

Which play to prepare depends on the needs of those you are facilitating. Is it decision-making, aligning to a common purpose, advancing self-management, generating ideas, simplifying, instructing, reflecting, or coaching?

How will the event be relevant for the players? What's in it for them? What are the expectations of each individual player you intend to invite? What if they do not attend?

## 2. EFFECTIVE STRUCTURE

An event is generally composed of a series of (connected) plays. The way you structure your plays is key.

Follow the 4-C's as a guideline:

1. Connect players to the material and each other;
2. Explore concepts and ideas;
3. Experience it together through concrete practice;
4. Reflect to draw conclusions based on the shared experience.

What can participants expect? They will be doing more than passively listening to you. How will the plays activate them? Are they ready for that? What will your stance be? Will you be in the front of the room, in the back, or will you play along?

### **3. CLEAR EXPECTATIONS**

Participants need to know they will be actively engaged. They need to be present and attentive. No multitasking. You can support them with this by providing short mind and body breaks.

Participants are expected to embrace a diversity of personalities and ideas. They will step out of their comfort zones but enjoy the right to pass.

They can expect a bit of chaos.

Welcome participants, state the desired outcomes, outline the structure, and set expectations.

Open each play by stating its purpose and structure.

### **4. PERSONAL INVITATION**

Just sending out a calendar invite doesn't quite cut it. Consider personally inviting participants. This way, you can address doubts and concerns and validate your own assumptions about their expectations.

Aside from time, duration and location, the invitation should clearly state the shared ambition. It's not about what you want to achieve. It's about what participants want to achieve.

What should they know before the event?

How can they prepare? What can they bring?

### **5. STAGING THE ROOM**

Turn that dull meeting room into a collaborative workspace. Events are supposed to be eventful. Is there enough space, light, plants, and fresh air? You don't want everyone seated around a table. So throw those tables and chairs aside. Invite movement. Use walls, doors, floors and windows.



# Additional Guidelines for Virtual Events

Regrettably, it goes *with* saying that you should see and hear each other well during virtual events. The plays are designed to facilitate interactions and offer opportunities to make connections. Body language and eye contact make a difference; it promotes empathy, interaction, presence, and attention.

## 1. THE CONNECTION

Participants should enjoy a stable internet connection. A single bad connection may ruin your virtual event. Virtual events can be demanding on the connection as conferencing apps and digital whiteboards consume a lot of bandwidth and CPU.

You may encourage participants to close any other non-essential applications and tabs. This benefits the connection but also helps to keep players focused.

## 2. THE ROOM

Recommend participants to join from a room or space they are comfortable in. The plays can invite movements such as drawing and stretching.

Ideally, you don't want participants to be distracted by their (non-attending) colleagues, children, or pets.

Maybe you are using a virtual whiteboard, but participants also need the ability to write and draw things privately. Participants must accommodate their materials, like markers, notes, and print-outs.

Ideally, their rooms have natural light, fresh air, and a cool temperature. You want your players fresh, energized, and hydrated.

## 3. CAMERA ON!

In physical rooms, participants don't hide behind black curtains. Virtually we don't like participants hiding behind black screens. The Camera On guideline helps to keep players present and attentive.

When participants need to turn the camera off, they can let the group know they are stepping away.

Ideally, participants have a camera and connection that renders a high-quality stream. The position of the camera (facing the camera) makes a big difference. We want to look at eyes and faces, not ears and shadows.

The background in the room should not be distracting. Sometimes participants want to use background filters or blur. These are generally even more distracting. This also renders their video flat. It blurs out any notes they may show each other. Consider discouraging the use of those filters. That does mean participants should be in a location they are comfortable with.

## 4. CLEAR VOICES

A professional microphone/headset with clear sound and volume makes a big difference. Bad audio can diminish a powerful message. The volume, intonation, timbre, and bass you use are part of the message. You don't want your participant's voices and communication to fall flat. In virtual facilitation, it's even more important to clearly distinguish voices as they all come from the same direction. Consider using background-noise filtering that doesn't flatten your voice. This way, you can also stay off mute.

# Embracing Truth

## NOT EVERYTHING WILL BE FUN.

Although we all like to enjoy our work, sometimes we just have to do mundane stuff and work on chores. At times you settle for an approach you don't fully support. We all cherry-pick and procrastinate. We simply do. It's okay. In the office, it's hard to admit you don't feel like it or loathe the thought of working on something. But openness promotes trust, and it can improve your situation.

## NOT EVERYONE CARES AS MUCH AS YOU (THINK OR WANT)

Scrum Master, you are likely the biggest Scrum geek in the team or organization. Don't expect everyone to be as passionate and enthusiastic about the framework. Introverted, cave-dwelling specialists don't turn into highly interactive social collaborators overnight. They won't care about the rules of the game and these plays as much as you do. It can be disheartening with all this time and energy you've put in, but it might not be that big a deal to others. Although some of the most pertinent resistors to creative play may grow to become enthusiastic ambassadors for it, not everyone will have the spirit for it.

## PLAYERS LOVE BREAKING THE GAME. YOU SHOULD TOO.

While theoretically, it would be better to never break away from the game's rules, some extraordinary events simply call for exceptional measures. The field is rarely in perfect condition. Although we are expected to know the rules and stick to them, we are also expected to be able to break them at times. Master the rules up to a point where breaking them benefits the play. Great stuff can happen when players break away from the play. If you want team members to defy the odds and exceed expectations, they get to break the rules from time to time.

## THERE WILL BE DRAMA.

Sometimes employees forget that they can greatly influence the atmosphere. People may bicker, sigh, grunt, and argue. It means they are courageous enough to openly speak their mind and share their feelings. This, however, is only fruitful when done respectfully. Remember, storm clouds always pass.

## WE CAN'T ALL SHINE ALL THE TIME.

We want to see others do awesome things. You may want your players to feel like heroes. Everything you bring to the table is to empower the players so they can do heroic shit. Hell yeah! But we can't all shine all the time.





A central white circle is surrounded by various abstract organic shapes in shades of orange, purple, and blue. These include stylized leaves, a sun-like gear, and wavy lines. Below the circle, there are horizontal brown stripes and a dark blue teardrop shape.

## Part Two: Let's Play!

eeee

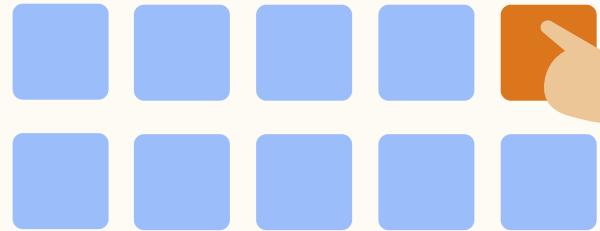
# The Plays

- |                                                                                                               |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                            |                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  1. 10 benefits              |  14. Crazy Containers    |  27. Lovely Leaves      |  40. Story Dice        |
|  2. 1-2-4-all                |  15. Data Hunt           |  28. Mad Tea Party      |  41. Surf Boards       |
|  3. Autonomy Matrix          |  16. Explain It Like I'm |  29. Magic Wand         |  42. Tacos             |
|  4. Banana Boats             |  17. Evil Genie          |  30. Magic Hat          |  43. Terrible Trolls   |
|  5. Before the End           |  18. Fill in the Blanks  |  31. Meet the Monks     |  44. Tiny Monsters     |
|  6. Blue Pill Red Pill       |  19. Fishbowl            |  32. Missing Poster     |  45. Under the Rug     |
|  7. Burning Question         |  20. Glow and Grow       |  33. Money on the Honey |  46. Untold Stories    |
|  8. Campfire Stories         |  21. Holy Grail          |  34. Muddied Sign       |  47. Volcanic Activity |
|  9. Chatstorm                |  22. How I Like To...    |  35. Pirate Hat         |  48. Warping           |
|  10. Check for Understanding |  23. Impact Craters      |  36. Point of View Gun  |  49. What the Duck?!   |
|  11. Circle of View        |  24. In a Nutshell     |  37. Postcards        |  50. Which Way?      |
|  12. Clean Setup           |  25. Learning Bridge   |  38. Powerful Prompts |                                                                                                           |
|  13. Compass               |  26. Lenses            |  39. Radar            |                                                                                                           |

## Extended Plays

- |                                                                                                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  X01. Frog Sashimi   |
|  X02. Peel the Fruit |
|  X03. Ghost Trapper  |

# 10 Benefits



# #01 | 10 Benefits

## PURPOSE

Connect the players to the topic or concept by picking, choosing, and listing benefits.

This play can be an opener for a meeting, event, or training.

The act of **picking and choosing** aids the learning process. Rather than simply telling the participants the benefits of what they are about to do, they choose and list what motivates them. This triggers them into an active stance. They have to make decisions. To decide what benefits are relevant to them, they must first truly register the content and rank its importance. The players also complement the list. Are there any other benefits? This triggers them into an open, creative stance.

## HOW TO PLAY

As a facilitator, you prepare a list of 10 benefits or outcomes regarding the topic you want to cover.

Each benefit has to be short and concisely stated.

Ask yourself, what do you want to achieve? What's in it for them?

Consider these examples of benefits we are aiming for with this Playbook:

- Players engage for the sheer fun of it;
- Players share a sense of accomplishment;
- Players actively engage rather than passively observe;
- Players are energized by the way the material is introduced;
- Players' retentions increases and they remember more;
- Focus shifts from the facilitator to the players;
- Players get more control;
- Players are empowered to be creative;
- Psychological safety increases;
- Players learn from and support each other.

Make the list of benefits available to the participants. Either highly visible and easily readable on a board, screen or hand-outs. Consider a bold title like "*Why are we here*" or "*Our shared ambitions*".

## STANCE

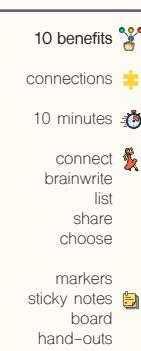
As a facilitator, you may play along.

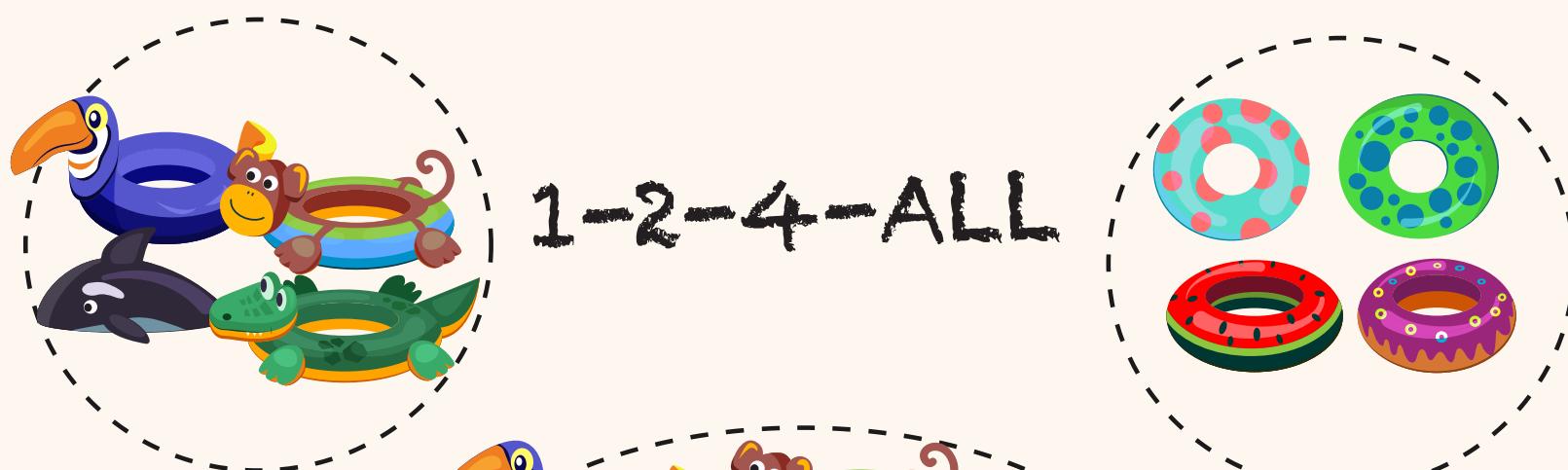
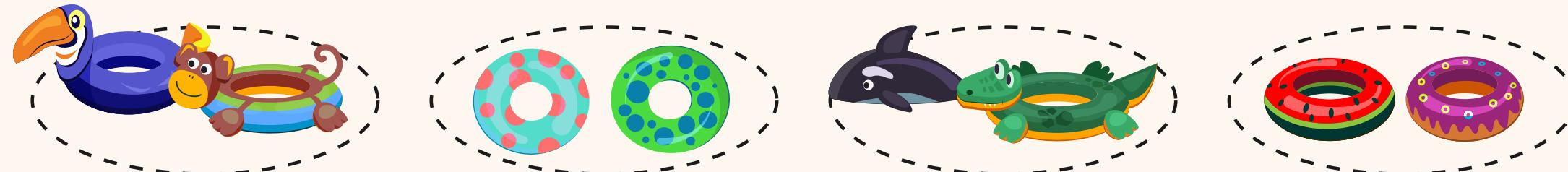
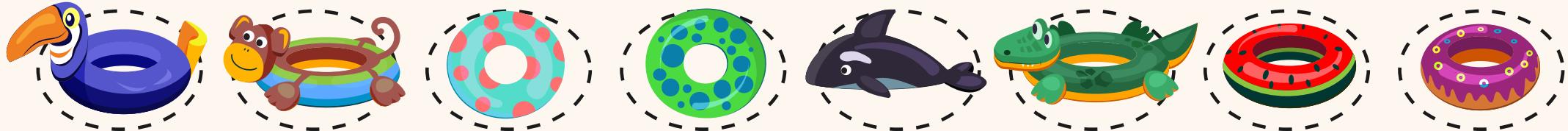
## 5 MINUTES

**Step 1:** Invite the players to read the list of benefits and pick three that appeal to them the most. Once they have done so, ask them to think of two additional benefits not listed on the board. What else do they want to achieve? What else is in it for them?

## 5 MINUTES

**Step 2:** Form triads or quads and invite the players to share their benefits.





1-2-4-ALL



## #02 | 1-2-4-All

**PURPOSE**

Engage everyone simultaneously in generating questions, ideas, and suggestions.

This liberating play should be part of every Scrum Master's Playbook. It instantly engages and **empowers everyone**. It encourages and facilitates self-management. Everyone can equally pitch in. Players bring their ideas and filter them quickly. It can quickly grow consensus and shared understanding.

**HOW TO PLAY**

As a facilitator, you prepare a question for all participants to answer regarding a concept, direction, or challenge.

For example,

- "What opportunities do you see for making progress on this challenge?"
- "How would you handle this situation?"
- "What ideas or actions do you recommend?"
- "What's the simplest way to achieve the most valuable outcome?"

**STANCE**

As a facilitator, consider playing along when there is an uneven number of players.

**1 MINUTE**

**Step 1:** Silent reflection. Individually think about how to answer the question.

**2 MINUTES**

**Step 2:** Pair up. Briefly share and build on your thoughts/ideas. Write down keywords on sticky notes.

**4 MINUTES**

**Step 3:** Merge pairs to form quads. Share and develop ideas from your pair (notice similarities and differences). Write down additional keywords for ideas on sticky notes.

**5 MINUTES**

**Step 4:** Ask, "*What is one idea that stood out in your conversation?*"

Each group shares one important idea with all.

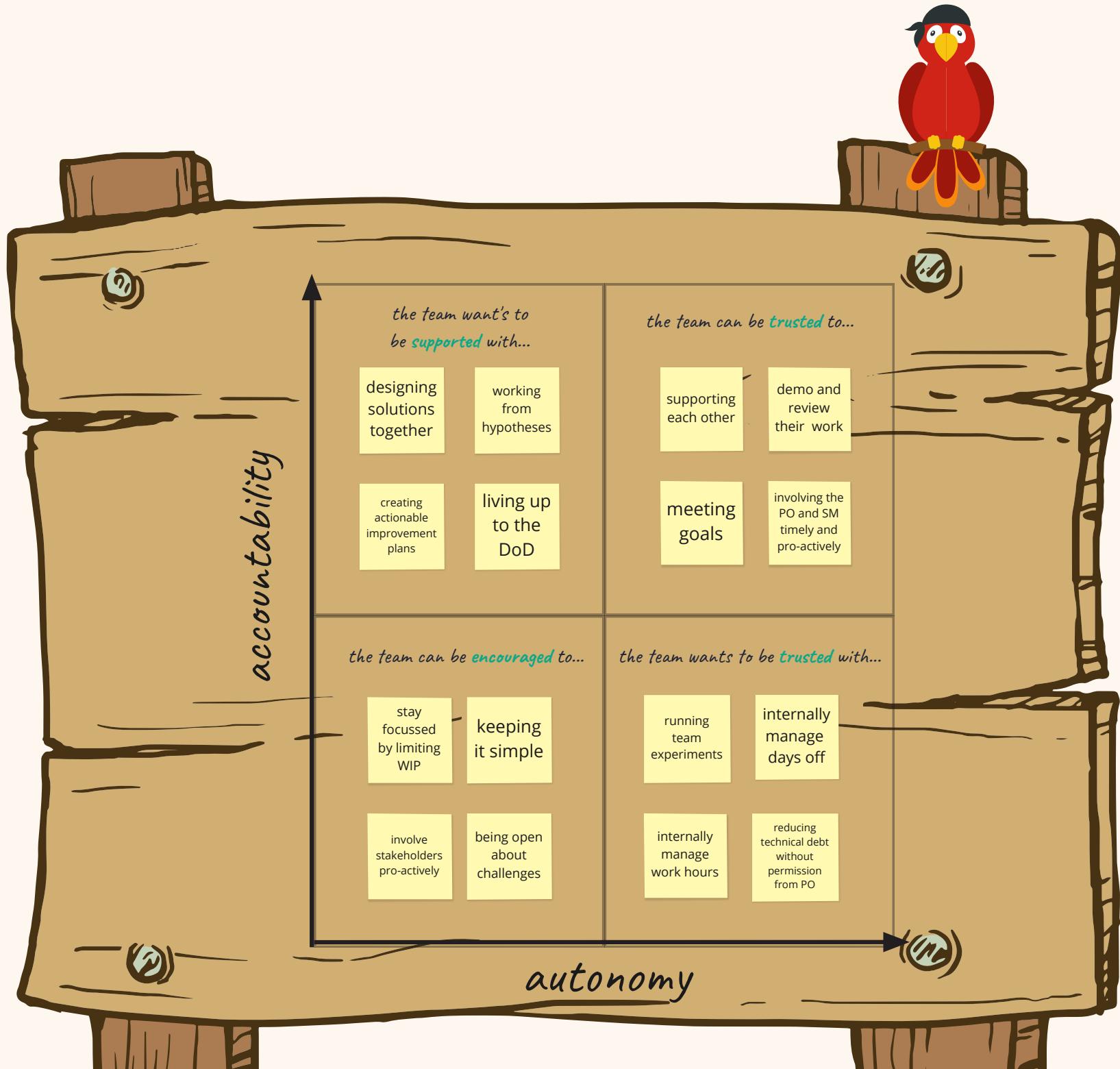
**5 MINUTES**

**Optional:** Consolidate all sticky notes with ideas together into a master list visible to all.

Combine similar items and remove duplicates. Allow for clarifying questions to promote transparency.

Decide with the group how they will follow up on the input.





# #03 | Autonomy Matrix

## PURPOSE

Coordinate the advancement of team self-management.

Self-management doesn't happen overnight. The Autonomy Matrix aligns (and balances) team accountability and autonomy. It attunes team members and leadership outside of the team. In Scrum, leadership is no longer accountable for how well a team is being managed, but for how well the team is able to manage itself. A **trusting relationship** between the team and external leadership is vital.

## HOW TO PLAY

At the core of the matrix are four empowering questions: two for the team and two for its external leadership.

That means that external leaders need to be present for this play. The Scrum Master and Product Owner are part of the team. Ideally, the Autonomy Matrix is revisited regularly, for example, once per quarter.

### STANCE

The facilitator plays along if part of the team or when recognized as an external leader.

### 2 MINUTES

**Step 1:** Ask the participants to individually list answers to the (first) empowering question relevant to them.

- Team members: "What do you want the team to be trusted with?"
- External Leadership: "What can you trust the team to do well?"

The answers should be specific and refer to concrete practice. For example, "communicate better" may be too generic. Consider asking a follow-up question for generic answers: "What observation would confirm that?"

### 3 MINUTES

**Step 2:** Invite team members and external leadership to consolidate their suggestions:

- Remove duplicates and group similar suggestions together.
- Narrow the list down to four suggestions.
- Stick the list on the applicable quadrant on the Autonomy Matrix.

Team members briefly present their suggestions to external leadership and visa-versa.

### 5 MINUTES

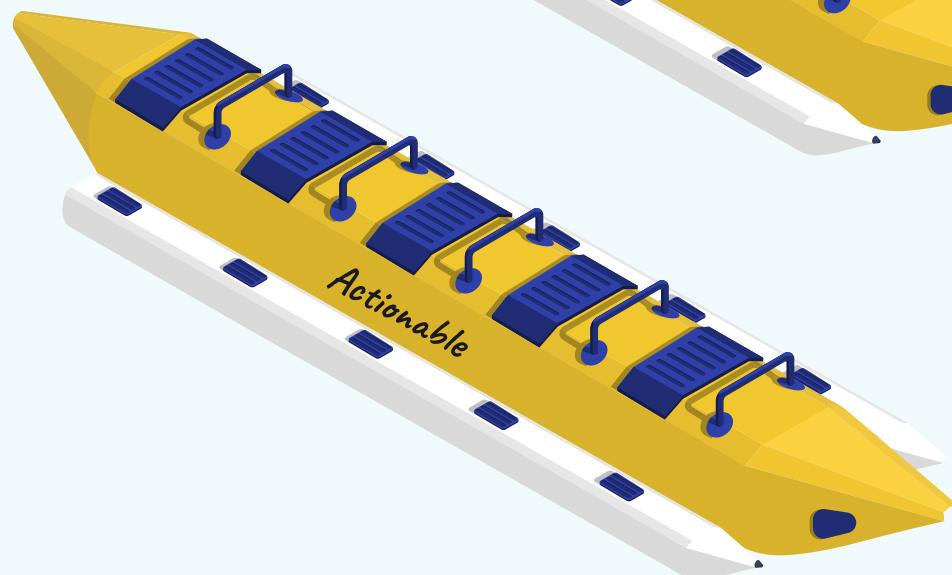
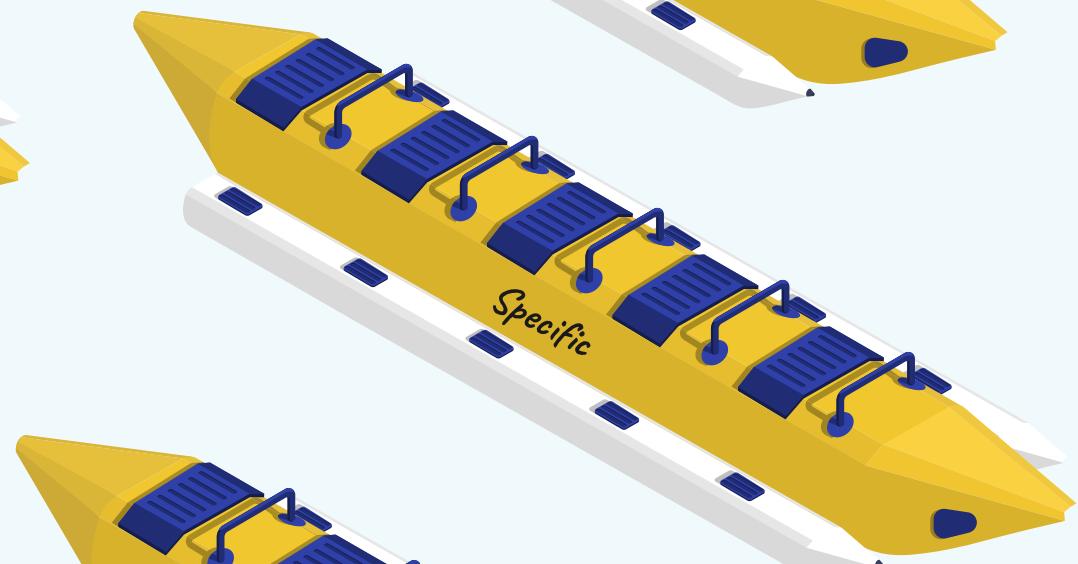
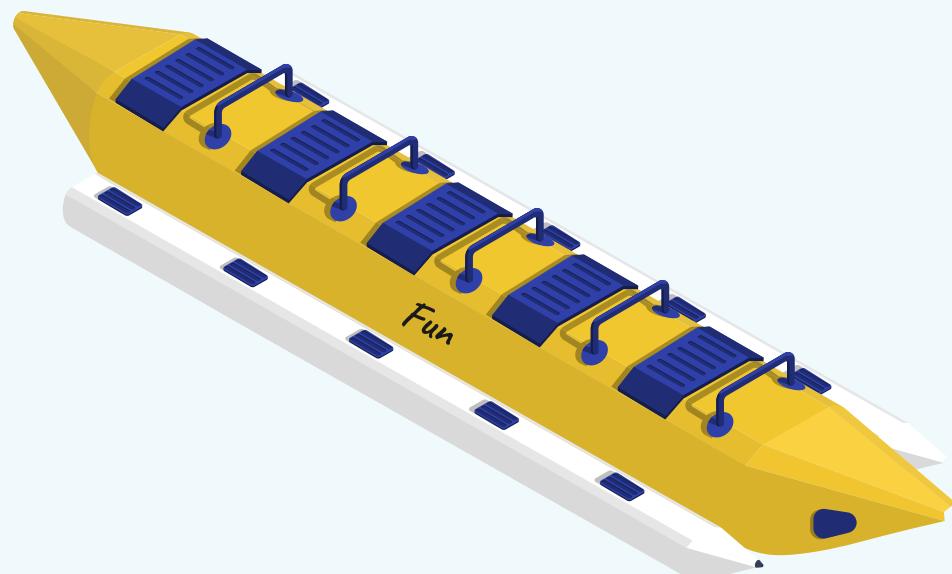
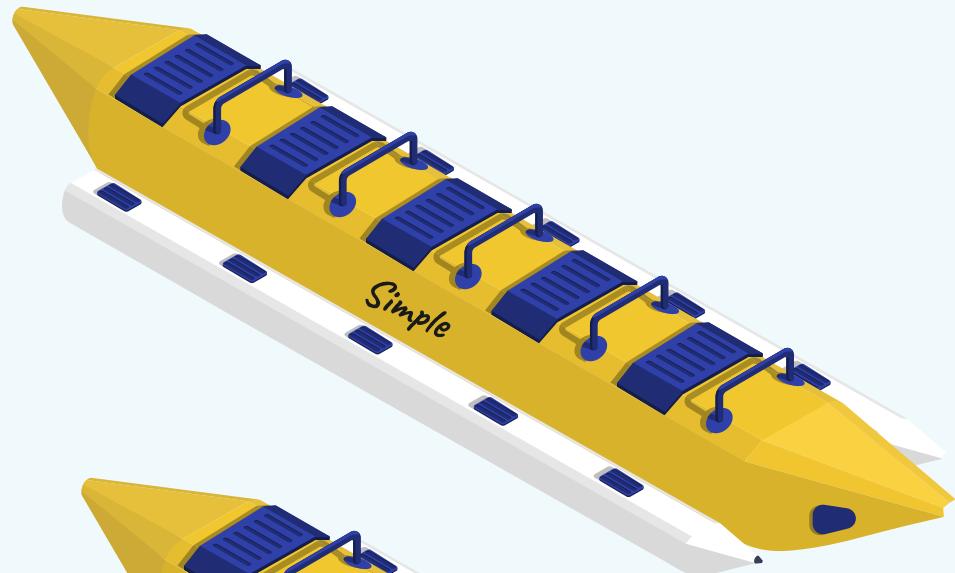
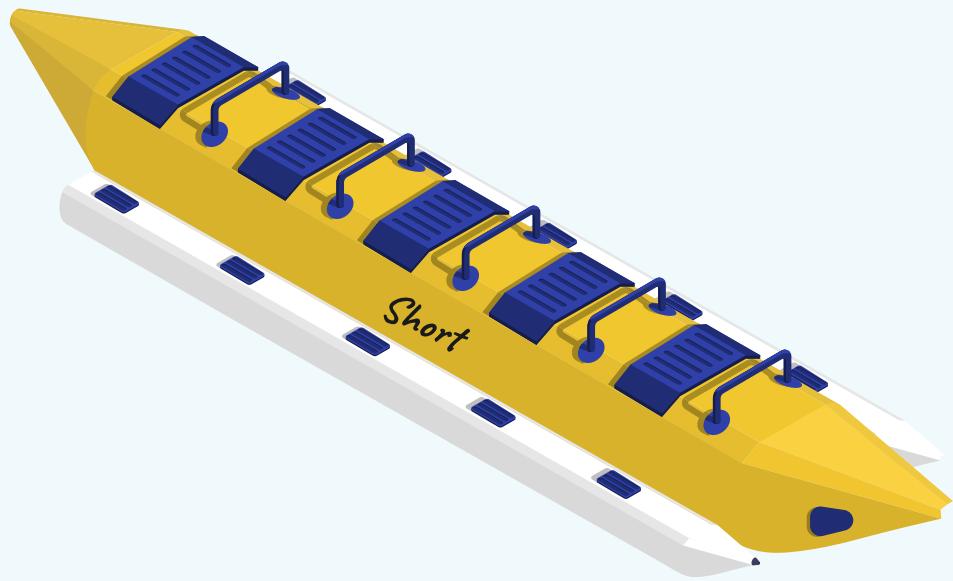
**Step 3:** Participants individually answer the (second) empowering question.

1. Team members: "What do you want your team to be supported with?"
2. External Leadership: "What can the team be encouraged to do themselves?"

### 5 MINUTES

**Step 4:** Once again, consolidate the suggestions, stick the list on the matrix, and present the suggestions to each other. Decide with the group how they will follow up on the input.





# #04 | Banana Boats

## PURPOSE

Generate, structure and select fun(ny) ideas/answers in a short amount of time.

Brainstorming can be a crazy ride sometimes. When generating ideas, some will stick, but some will fall off the boat and not make it, which is part of the fun. This play is designed to connect players to a concept. Each group will be assigned five 'Banana Boats' labeled with a specific topic or question. The group brainstorms ideas on sticky notes around that topic. Some will stick to the boat, some not. We aim to generate lots of fun and creative ideas and for players to open up and have fun.

## HOW TO PLAY

Prepare five topics around a single concept you want to cover. Draw, print five large Banana Boats that can each fit five sticky notes. Distribute the Banana Boats throughout the room, so players must move through the room to switch between them. You can use walls, windows, doors, floors, and tables.

A concept can be "Facilitation: how to make events..."

The five banana boats can be labeled: Safe, Worthwhile, Accessible, Productive, and Energizing.

## STANCE

The facilitator observes and guides the play but does not play along. It can get a little crazy.

5 MINUTES

**Step 1:** Give everyone a Banana. Break the group into at least two pairs or triads. Assign each group its first Banana Boat. Ask the players to brainstorm ideas for each of the five boats. They get one minute per Banana Boat. Keep track with an audible timer. Each boat may only contain a maximum of five ideas. Players may take down ideas by others and drop them on the floor. Time is short! Tell players that they may expect a bit of chaos.

5 MINUTES

**Step 2:** The pairs/triads review the Banana Boats and drops any sticky notes that do not meet these conditions:

Simple, Short, Specific, Actionable, Fun.

5 MINUTES

**Step 3:** The players return to their first Banana Boat and complete them with new or changed ideas that meet these conditions. They get one minute per Banana Boat. Remember to keep track with an audible timer. Can they make it stick?

5 MINUTES

**Step 4:** All together, review the results. Did they succeed in collecting 25 ideas that stick? It's okay if many ideas don't make it. What is important is that the players became creative and had fun. Decide with the group how they want to follow up on the input.



# Before the end ...

I will...

We will...

wreck a time-timer

write something...

Catch 'em all!

share something...

brianstorm something...

learn something...

agree on something...

appraise someone...

decide something...

refine something...

train something...

perform a Haka!

I will sit on  
the Iron Throne

# #05 | Before the End

## PURPOSE

Capture and align expectations for what's ahead. Define outcomes together.

What would participants expect to achieve an event, meeting, training, or Sprint?

Participants complete the prompt: "Before the end of [this event]..."

These are ideally written on a chalkboard or whiteboard. Jokes and puns are allowed!

This play stimulates accountability and self-management. It's not about what you want them to achieve; it is about what they want. What are their expectations and needs? Everyone chalks and talks.

## HOW TO PLAY

"Before the End" can be very effective as an opener for an event or training. We're applying the technique **Chalk and Talk**.

As participants enter the room, they are asked to write their expectations for the event on a chalkboard.

Consider using colorful chalk to make the messages stand out more clearly.

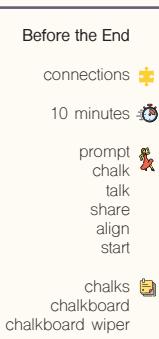
Write the prompt down in bold letters on the chalkboard: "Before the end of [this event]..."

Consider continuing this with "I will..." or "we will..."

**STANCE** As a facilitator, you may write down your expectation. It's best to do this after the other participants have shared their expectations.

**5 MINUTES** Ask the players to write their expectations on the board (ideally as they enter the room).

**5 MINUTES** Review the expectations together. Ask the participants if they have any doubts or concerns about these expectations.





# #06 | Blue Pill Red Pill

## PURPOSE

Participants choose between two juxtaposed options giving them control over the way they want to learn.

The choice is theirs. Players make up their own minds about two contrasting statements or options. Will they take the red or blue pill? Both statements may be factual, and both options may be valuable. Why did they pick one over the other? Making decisions is an active learning activity. It gives participants control, and it encourages individual thinking.

## HOW TO PLAY

Prepare two (or more) statements or options. For example:

-  You'll brainstorm five facts you already know about [this concept].
-  The trainer will tell you five facts about [this concept].

You can openly present the blue and red options. It can also be fun to let participants choose blindly between blue or red without knowing what the choice will be. Consider using note capsules. These are small pills with a tiny note inside. You can also extend it with more colors/options.

## STANCE

As a facilitator, you simply offer choice. You do not decide on the player's behalf nor judge their choice.

## 3 MINUTES

Invite players to pick a red or blue pill (other colors if you use more options).

You may break the group into triads or quads as long as each group contains players who made different choices.

Invite them to share their thoughts about the choice and encourage an open discussion.

Be clear that it is neither right nor wrong nor better or worse.

Follow up on the choice. In this example, those with the blue pill will write down five facts, whereas the trainer will share five facts with those who picked the red pill.

Blue Pill / Red Pill

concepts 

concrete practice 

3 minutes 

choose 

reflect 

discuss 

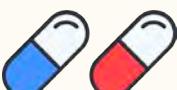
empower 

pens 

markers 

note capsules 

sticky notes 





# #07 | Burning Question

## PURPOSE

Players quickly answer questions and explain concepts.

It can be difficult to explain something complicated simply and quickly.

During an event you may want a player to share what's burning on their mind, but you don't want to invite a ramble or a filibuster.

In that case, simply offer them a match. They may answer the question for as long as the match burns.

It can also be applied to briefly summarize what has happened and what has been learned.

## HOW TO PLAY

1 MINUTE

For this play, you'll need a matchbox and a small bowl of water.

Ideally, play this outside. Make sure there is no fire alarm or sprinkler system in the room.

1. Offer the match and matchbox.
2. Ask the (burning) question.
3. Invite the player to light the match and hold it in their hand.
4. Tell them to be careful not to burn their fingers.
5. They may answer the question for as long as they can keep the match burning.
6. Offer a bowl with water within which they can drop the match when ready.

### Burning Question

connections 

concepts 

conclusions 

1 minute 

answer  light a match 

matchbox 

bowl with water 





# #08 | Campfire Stories

## PURPOSE

Increase psychological safety. Get to know each other a little bit better. Warming up for creative play.

This play contains a set of questions that trigger personal stories and anecdotes. These questions are not related to work. Players get to know each other a little bit better. This will make them feel more comfortable with each other. It warms them up (breaks the ice) for creative play encouraging openness.

## HOW TO PLAY

Write down the following questions on writable tape:

- If a movie were made about your life, which actor/actress would play you?
- If you could instantly become an expert in something (not work-related), what would it be?
- What childish things do you still do as an adult?
- What's the most amazing place you visited?
- What is something you can do better than anyone else you personally know?
- What is your favorite movie, and what movie do you pretend is your favorite to sound cultured?
- What is the scariest thing you have ever done for fun?
- You have to wear a T-Shirt with one statement on it for one year. What would it read?
- What has changed about you in the last few years?
- What's something you did (not work-related) that you are proud of?
- What music (artist or song) really gets you?
- Aside from the cold. What still gives you goosebumps?

Place each question on a BIG marshmallow. Tape it so that the entire question can be read by turning the marshmallow. Pin each marshmallow to the end of a skewer. Position seats in a circle. Place something in the center that resembles a campfire. If at all possible, perform this play outside around an actual campfire. Keep a water bucket ready for safety. Place the skewers around the campfire.

**STANCE** As a facilitator, you play along.

**5 MINUTES** Optional: Consider letting the group start the fire. This also provides a free ten-minute warm-up.

**20 MINUTES** You lead by picking the first marshmallow and answering its question. Emphasize that it's perfectly fine to say "pass" if they are not comfortable with the question or when you don't have an answer for it. When someone passes, ask the group if anyone else wants to answer the question. Those who passed can jump in and answer another question at any time. Go round so everyone had the chance to respond. Once a question is answered, the tape may be removed, and the marshmallow may be eaten.

Campfire Stories

connections

25 minutes

share  
connecttalk  
pickmake a fire  
warm up  
eattape   
skewers  
marshmallows  
wood  
firefighter  
water bucket



# #09 | Chatstorm

## PURPOSE

Engage everyone simultaneously in generating questions, ideas, and suggestions.

A Chatstorm is a quick way for players to silently submit their responses simultaneously. It prevents players from influencing each other.

## HOW TO PLAY

### STANCE

It is generally better not to play along and just collect ideas from the group. The players may be inclined to attribute more weight to your answers than other players. This way, you do not cast a shadow on their input with your own answers.

### 2 MINUTES

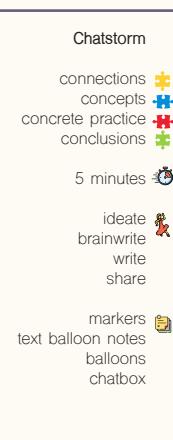
**Step 1:** Inform the players that you will ask them a question or prompt and that you would like them to silently write down the answer on a text balloon note (or an actual balloon). They only get two minutes to think about their answer and write it down. For virtual plays, they can use the chat box of the videoconferencing app. Make sure to tell them not to submit or share the answer until they receive verbal instruction to do so. Now share the prompt. "3-2-1-Go!".

### 3 MINUTES

**Step 2:** When the two minutes are up, count down from three to one once more. The players may now share/submit their notes.

Invite the players to read out the entire collection of notes. Thank them for their input.

Share with the group how you/they will follow up on the input.





# #10 | Check for Understanding

## PURPOSE

Verify if participants understood the instruction, suggestion, expectation, or direction well.

The more instructions, suggestions, or directions there are for a play or concept, the more likely some players will misunderstand them.

How can you quickly tell if the message came across as intended? Did they really understand your instruction for the play?

Did they really understand the Product Goal as explained by a Product Owner?

**The effectiveness of your communication is revealed by the response you get.**

To check for understanding, you'll share a series of thumbs up/thumbs down statements.

## HOW TO PLAY

Prepare a series of control statements that players can answer through a thumbs-up or thumbs-down. It can be right/wrong, true/false, correct/incorrect, or yes/no type statements. Alternative to thumbs up or down, consider standing up or down. This increases movement and benefits the circulation of oxygen to the brain.

## STANCE

As a facilitator, you provide the control statements and share the correct response once the players have shown their thumbs.

## 1 MINUTE

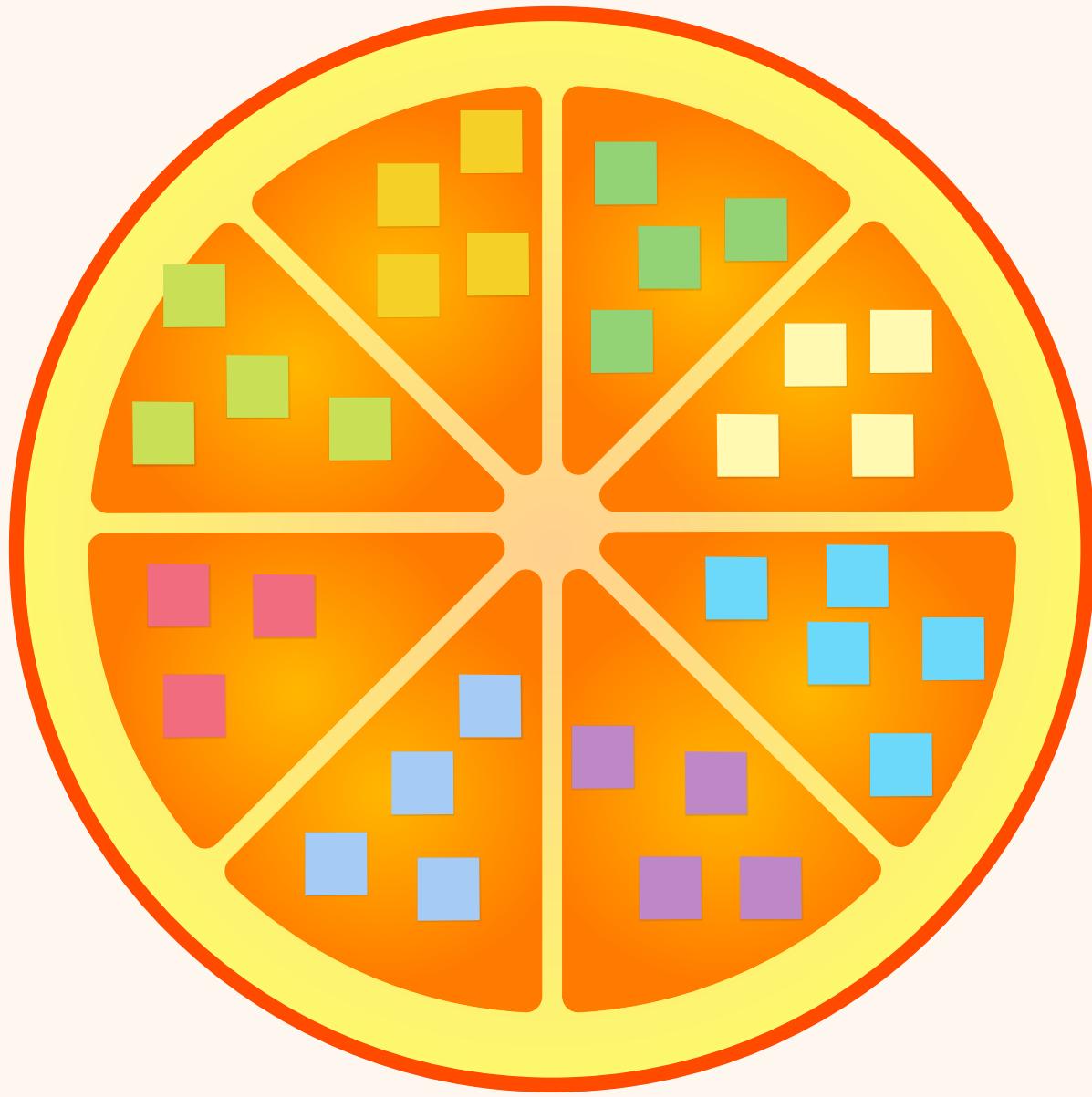
**Step 1:** Provide the statements one by one. Count down 3-2-1 so that everyone gives their thumb simultaneously. Observe if there are hesitant players who delay their response to follow the group. It's okay if players are wrong or if they delay. This is a self-correcting process. Always verbally share the correct statement when the control statement you provided was false after the show of thumbs.

## 2 MINUTES

**Step 2:** Conclude by asking if there are any open questions.

Check for Understanding	
concepts	
concrete practice	
conclusions	
3 minutes	
check	
verify	
clarify	
align	
thumbs up/down	
stand up/sit down	
none	





# #11 | Circle of View

## PURPOSE

Explore all perspectives openly when facing complexity.

"What you see and what you hear depends a great deal on where you are standing." – CS Lewis

This play creates an opportunity for all players to explore how different viewpoints shape what people see and think. It is a powerful play to **explore perspectives openly**. Circle of View allows players to consider perspectives otherwise unexplored, creating a broader awareness.

The Circle of View consists of three quick steps: Identify, Explore, Reflect.

## HOW TO PLAY

Introduce a complex topic or situation (with unknowns and uncertainties) that impacts multiple people.

Invite the group to gather around in a circle. The circle's center should hold a large round (writable) canvas. It should be large enough so all players can write on it simultaneously. The canvas may be placed on a table or on the floor. Provide each player with a marker and large sticky notes. Use different colors for markers and sticky notes.

**STANCE** This play requires some guidance and coordination. It is generally best to focus on guiding the play rather than playing along.

**5 MINUTES** **Step 1 | Identify:** Begin by asking the players: "Who might have a view on this topic/situation?". Write (or draw) them on sticky notes. Follow this up by asking, "What (or who) might provide another point of view?" Write (or draw) them down on sticky notes. Distribute these around the circle and create a pie slice for each. Allow room for one more slice labeled "other viewpoints".

**10 MINUTES** **Step 2 | Explore:** Depending on the number of viewpoints (slices), some players may have more than one slice, or slices may have more than one player. Ask the players to write down or draw the answers on the canvas:

- "Why might this person be affected or care about the topic?"

For the player with "other viewpoints", ask:

- "How might people in different contexts (time and place) think differently about it?"

Continue asking:

- "What questions, feelings, and emotions might this person have regarding the topic/situation?"
- "How would you describe the topic/situation from this person's perspective?"

**5 MINUTES** **Step 3 | Reflect:** Invite players to slowly walk around the circle registering what is shared in each slice/viewpoint. As they go around, ask them: "Did anyone reveal anything unexpected?"



Circle of View
connections
concepts
concrete practice
20 minutes
identify
empathize
imagine
brainwrite
write
draw
reflect
markers
sticky notes
writable canvas
tape



For this **Playbook** to be really useful for you, it will be.... **like what?**

FULL OF  
ADVENTURES

A PLAYGROUND

PRACTICAL

EASY TO  
FACILITATE

LIBERATING  
EMPOWERING

APPLICABLE TO  
MY CONTEXT

For this **Playbook** to be like that, you'll need to be...

ADVENTEROUS

PLAYFUL

HANDS-ON

OPEN TO  
JUST TRY IT

COURAGEOUS

A LEADER

CREATIVE

For **you** to be like that, what **support** do you need?

OPPORTUNITIES  
TO EXPERIMENT

SAFETY TO TRY  
AND LEARN

A COMPANION

BUDGET FOR MATERIALS

ACCESS TO COLLABORATIVE LOCATIONS

EXAMPLES

FEEDBACK AND  
CONFIRMATION

SPACE AND TIME

# #12 | Clean Setup

## PURPOSE

Involve everyone to align agendas and expectations for a meeting, event, practice, product, or training.

Clean Setup contains three steps where all players align expectations. They will share what will make it worthwhile and valuable for them, what they are expected to do and be like, and how they like to be supported and facilitated. This is an excellent way to make events and products worthwhile and meaningful. It increases transparency and encourages self-management.

## HOW TO PLAY

Prepare a canvas or board with three rows where each has enough space for a prompt and sticky notes.

Provide each player with a marker and sticky notes. For each step, players use a different color sticky note.

### STANCE

As a facilitator, you too may play along and share your expectations.

### 5 MINUTES

**Step 1:** Begin by asking the players to individually complete the prompt using their sticky notes:

- "For [this event] to be worthwhile and useful for you, it will be like..."

Write down the prompt in the first row. Collect sticky notes and place them in the first row.

Group same or similar sticky notes. Run through the input. Which stands out?

Ask clarifying questions.

### 5 MINUTES

**Step 2:** Invite the players to pick any sticky notes and complete this prompt using a different color sticky note.

- "For [this event] to be like [sticky note], you'll need to be..."

Write down the prompt in the second row. Collect sticky notes and place them in the second row.

Group same or similar sticky notes. Run through the input. Which stands out?

Ask clarifying questions.

### 5 MINUTES

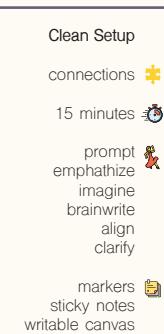
**Step 3:** Invite the players to pick any sticky notes and complete this prompt using a different color sticky note.

- "For you to be like [sticky note], what support do you need?"

Write down the question in the third row. Collect sticky notes and place them in the third row.

Group same or similar sticky notes. Run through the input. Which stands out?

Ask clarifying questions.





Worries

W

Needs

N

E

Excited

S  
Stance



# #13 | Compass

## PURPOSE

A team aligns with a common ambition. Identify opportunities, concerns, needs, and how to move forward.

In complex environments, a (road)map is not enough. **The map is not the terrain!** Every self-managing team could use a Compass to guide them. The compass aids the team in collectively getting its bearing straight. Assess where you are and what steps you should be taking. What's great about the Compass is that the whole team is involved in the direction a team takes. The team members exchange perspectives openly and respectfully, focusing on the goal they ultimately aim to achieve.

## HOW TO PLAY

Draw (or print) a large Compass. It should be large enough for all players to visualize their responses on and around it.

### STANCE

As a facilitator, you may play along if you are a team member.

### 2 MINUTES

Share the ambition or goal for the team to orient itself towards. This may be a Product Goal or Sprint Goal for example. Place the goal at the center of the Compass. Ask the group to individually brainwrite answers to the following questions on sticky notes. They may share multiple thoughts and ideas. Instruct them to write only *one* thought or idea reply per sticky note.

**E = Excited:** "What excites you about this ambition and direction? What's good about it?"

### 2 MINUTES

Players may place sticky notes on and around the *east* side of the Compass.

**W = Worrisome:** "What do you find worrisome about this idea or proposition? Are there any downsides?"

### 2 MINUTES

Players may place sticky notes on and around the *west* side of the Compass.

**N = Needs:** "What else do you need to achieve this ambition? What would help you?"

### 2 MINUTES

Players may place sticky notes on and around the *north* side of the Compass.

**S = Stance moving forward:** "Given what is shared and shown on the compass, what is your current stance on how to move ahead?"

### 2 MINUTES

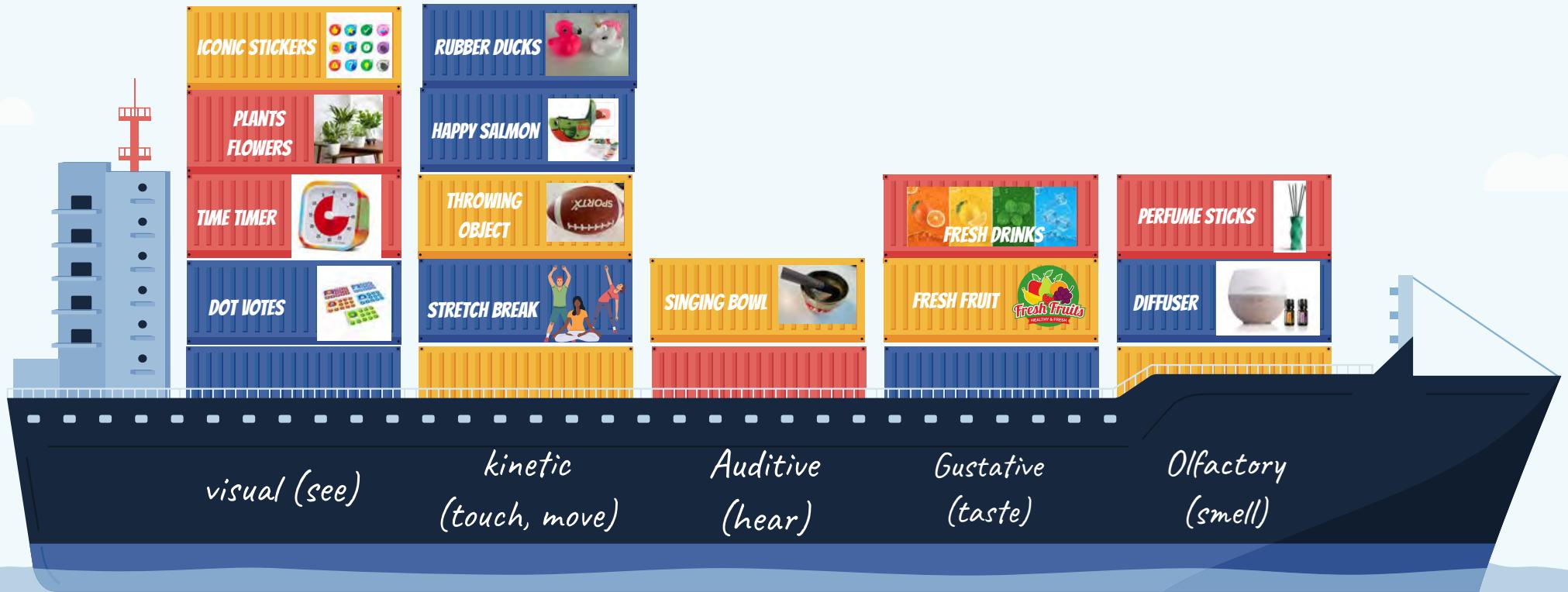
How do you suggest moving forward? What are the first next steps?"

Players may place sticky notes on and around the *south* side of the Compass.

The compass may reveal different stances and suggestions for moving forward.

Consider following up with "Dot Voting" or a "1-2-4-All".





# #14 | Crazy Containers

## PURPOSE

Explore concepts, tools, and techniques can be used in multiple ways in context to a specific challenge.

Players match, sort, and stack *containers* on their corresponding decks. Once they have done so, they continue stacking by adding new ideas to containers. There doesn't have to be a one-and-only way of matching the containers to a deck. This play invites players to go beyond the options shared by the facilitator. It encourages players to find additional ways. **How high can your players stack 'm?**  
Crazy ideas are welcome!

## HOW TO PLAY

Stage the play by introducing a challenge and five decks (categories) that can each contain a number of concepts, tools, and techniques. Also prepare a collection of possible containers containing answers that the players can map to the five decks. Provide only a few containers and allow players to add more themselves. Consider splitting the group in two when there are six or more players. Each group will require its own canvas, decks, and containers. If possible, for a more kinetic play, use actual tiny containers that can contain notes and can be stacked.

- **Example Challenge:** "Brain Science teaches us that the better we use all our senses, the more engaged we are and the better we learn.  
So, how can we facilitate sensational events?"
- **Decks (categories):** Visual, Kinetic, Auditive, Gustative, Olfactory
- **Containers (answers):** Time Timer, Throwing Object, Rubber Ducks, Fresh Fruit, Dot Votes, Stretch Breaks, Diffuser

## STANCE

As a facilitator, you provide input for players to start. So, ideally, you do not play along. This gives the players more space. If you do come up with valuable ideas during the play, save them until the end.

### 5 MINUTES

**Step 1:** Introduce the challenge, decks, and containers to the group. Invite them to take turns, place a container on a deck and ask them to share their motivation about putting it there. Ideally, there is no right or wrong placement. Some containers may go on multiple decks. If the time runs out without all the containers being assigned, invite all members to pick any container and place it on a deck of their choice without discussing it.

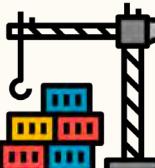
### 5 MINUTES

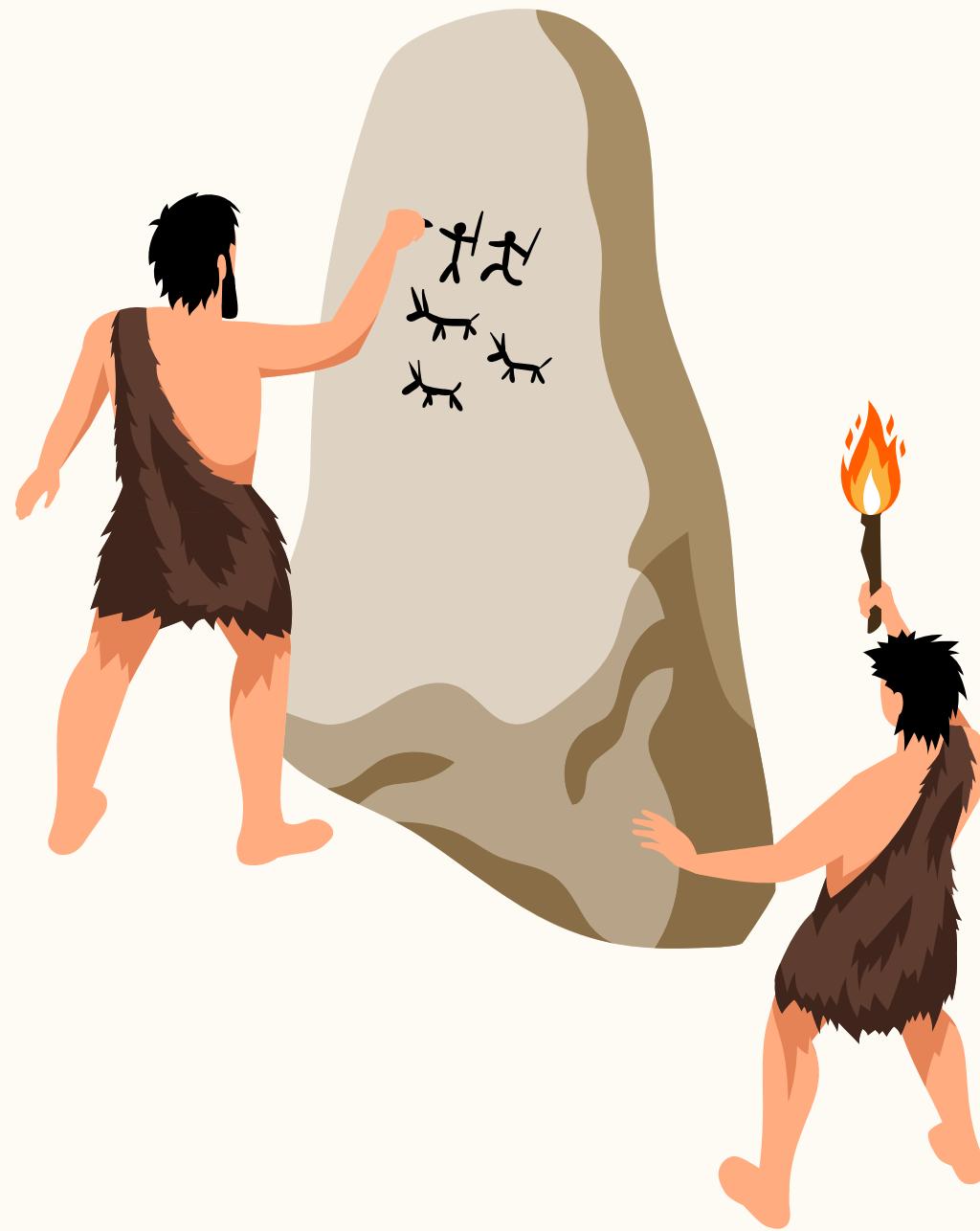
**Step 2:** Once the containers are placed on the decks, invite players to create new containers with additional ideas and put them on top of a deck of their choosing. Crazy ideas are welcome. They may stack 'm as high as they can for as long as time allows.

### 5 MINUTES

**Step 3:** Together review the containerships. In case you split the group, review both containerships together.

Crazy Containers
concepts
concrete practice
15 minutes
match
sort
map
stack
ideate
brainwrite
markers
sticky notes
board/canvas
tiny containers





# #15 | Data Hunt

Data Hunt
concepts
concrete practice
15 minutes
query browse orient read select curate visualize teach-back
markers sticky notes board/canvas source-material tape

## PURPOSE

Engage everyone in the subject matter and learn more about a subject collectively.  
Everyone quickly brings data and facts to the table.

How can you engage your participants in the subject matter? Rather than lecturing content, provide them with source material. Challenge them to look information up, and teach each other what they found on their hunt.  
It's a way to quickly bring data and facts to the table.

## HOW TO PLAY

There are several ways to facilitate the Data Hunt:

- **Scatter and merge:** Players are given *different* challenges and source material to hunt and a shared space where they drop their findings. Individuals then take turns teaching back their findings to the other players.
- **Group hunt:** Players are each given a *shared* challenge and source material to hunt and a shared space where they drop their findings. Individuals collaborate to structure, consolidate, visualize, and make sense of the shared findings.
- **Individual hunt:** Players are each given a shared challenge and source material to hunt, with their own *private* space where they drop their findings. They individually structure, consolidate and visualize the findings before presenting them to their group. It will be interesting to see what each player hunted and how he or she visualized it. (Consider forming pairs/triads/quads)
- **Answer hunt:** The facilitator asks a question, sets a timer, and provides the source material where players can find the answer to the question. The group may only share and discuss their answers once the timer has run out.

An examples of a Data Hunt challenge:

- "What are the characteristics of a Scrum Team?" Source Material: The Scrum Guide.
- For some challenges, players may hunt source material that is not provided by you. For example:
- "Find meaningful facts and data about what happened last Sprint."
  - "What additional data and evidence can you find relevant to this Product Backlog Item."

## STANCE

As a facilitator, you stage the hunt, but ideally, only the players are hunting. The durations for this play may vary.

## 2 MINUTES

**Step 1:** Instruct the players on what to hunt for, provide them with the source material, and share where they should collect their findings.

## 5 MINUTES

**Step 2:** Players may now structure and visualize what they retrieved from their hunt. How they do this depends on the type of hunt.

## 8 MINUTES

**Step 3:** Players now either teach back what they collected on their hunt to receive feedback from each other and the facilitator.





# #16 | Explain It Like I'm... (ELI)

## PURPOSE

Challenge players to simply explain complex concepts.

It can be very difficult to explain something simply. Just because something is complex doesn't mean we shouldn't bother explaining it in simple ways. Transparency is lost when stakeholders and Scrum Team members are not explaining complexities to each other because "they just won't get it". How might you explain a complex concept to a five or eighty-five-year-old? **Simplicity is key to transparency.** Will players accept the challenge to explain a concept simply in a short amount of time?

## HOW TO PLAY

Introduce the complex concept to the group. Alternatively, consider letting players choose from various concepts.

Divide the group into pairs. In each pair, one person will roleplay a five or eighty-five-year-old. The other person will try and explain a complex concept. Players must volunteer their roles as they enjoy the right to pass. You may need to switch individuals or form a triad.

## STANCE

As a facilitator, you may play along. To break the ice, you may role-play first as an example to the group.

1 MINUTE

**Step 1:** Provide some tips and tricks to the players. As a role-player, they may try to:

1. Ask clarifying questions;
2. Purposefully misinterpret the explanation;
3. Purposefully disagree with what is said;
4. Ask to explain what some words mean;
5. Ask for an example.

An explainer may try:

6. Using a metaphor a five or eighty-five-year-old may understand;
7. Share practical examples;
8. Using your body and objects to demonstrate something;
9. Repeat what you said, but in even shorter and simpler terms.

6 MINUTES

**Step 2:** Start the role-play.

3 MINUTES

**Step 3:** Invite players to switch partners, but stick to their roles. Try it again, but this time you only have half the time. Reflect with the group on what important information may be lost when simplifying the complex concept.



Explain It Like I'm

concepts

concrete practice

conclusions

10 minutes

roleplay

body language

teach-back

none



# #17 | Evil Genie

## PURPOSE

Assess the congruity of ideas and intentions.

Evil Genie is a fun way to safely and creatively critique and challenge ideas and intentions. It demonstrates how even the best ideas and intentions can be twisted and lead to bad outcomes. An evil genie is a spirit who grants the wishes of others in such a way that the wish turns out bad. This play encourages its players to think about all sorts of ways their ambitions can falter. It also invites them to consider how their aspirations impact the wider environment. Will their ambitions really make everything better?

## HOW TO PLAY

To make it safe to play Evil Genie, players should be okay with their ideas being put to the test. They essentially invite scrutiny. It takes courage. Any input should be about the merit of the ambition, not the character of whom that ambition belongs to.

Ad hominem feedback and attacks are absolutely out of the question. This play is not suitable for all cultures.

Players should already enjoy a high level of psychological safety. Pay attention during the play if people are genuinely having fun, but ensure they are not laughing at the expense of someone; if that happens, intervene.

**STANCE** As a facilitator, you can play along. To lead by example, it may be good to first put your own idea in front of the Evil Genies.

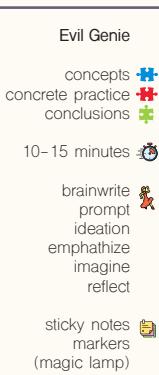
**3 MINUTES** **Step 1:** Introduce an idea, intention, or ambition. For example, you can state this as a wish using the prompt "I wish...".

Give everyone three minutes of silent thinking and writing to come up with (funny) ways their wish can lead to unintended and inappropriate outcomes. They don't have to be serious or realistic. **Wicked ideas can lead to brilliant insights.**

**3 MINUTES** **Step 2:** Divide the group into pairs and triads where the Evil Ideas can be shared. Each individual picks one unintended outcome they like best. They may pick the worst or the funniest.

**3 MINUTES** **Step 3** Merge two groups (or three with uneven groups). The group exchanges their selected outcomes. Divide the input among the participants in the group. Each individual must then build on the Evil Ideas to determine what else it may lead to. "And... to be *really* evil..."

**3 MINUTES** **Step 4:** Place all the Evil Ideas on a board, visible to all, and allow everyone to see and read them. Share the key takeaways.



detailed  
instructions

complex

visible

improvements

value

efficacy

incomplete

guide

lightweight

adaptive

**SCRUM IS A**

**FRAMEWORK**

**THAT HELPS PEOPLE, TEAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS GENERATE**

**THROUGH**

**SOLUTIONS FOR**

**PROBLEMS.**

**THE SCRUM FRAMEWORK IS PURPOSEFULLY**

**RATHER THAN PROVIDE PEOPLE WITH**

**THE RULES OF SCRUM**

**THEIR RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERACTIONS**

**SCRUM MAKES**

**THE RELATIVE**

**OF CURRENT MANAGEMENT,**

**ENVIRONMENT, AND WORK TECHNIQUES, SO THAT**

**CAN BE MADE.**

# #18 | Fill in the ...

## PURPOSE

Develop a shared understanding of a concept by filling in blanked words and discussing their meaning.

You may offer instructions, stories, and documentation for your peers to read, but will they really comprehend it? Written forms of communication can be tricky as it often leads to misunderstanding. Have recipients really diligently read it? Does the received understand it the way the sender intended? Just because you shared it doesn't mean you effectively communicated it. In this play, the group reads together and fills in (intentional) blanks. Missing words trigger the cognitive mapping and construction abilities of our brains. The reader imagines what word or image is missing. Doing this together creates transparency: a shared understanding.

## HOW TO PLAY

There are many ways this play can increase transparency. For example:

- Understanding the Scrum Guide together;
- Understanding the Product Goal and Sprint Goal better;
- Understanding and refining Product Backlog items together;
- Understanding and refactoring code together;
- Understanding and optimizing documentation and instruction;
- Studying a concept together;

## STANCE

As a facilitator, you prepare the play, but don't play along.

Prepare the text. It should be short (ideally, no more than 350 characters). Leave some essential words blank. Remove only a few words, and avoid rendering the text incomprehensible. You may consider sharing all the missing words in a randomized list for participants to choose from. The first blank should be easy to guess. You can present this text on a board for all to read or provide handouts.

1 MINUTES

**Step 1:** Introduce the text to the players. Allow for one minute of silent reading.

8 MINUTES

**Step 2:** Invite the players to take turns beginning with the first blank. Ask players to raise a hand if they are bold enough to go first. Once they fill in the blank, they briefly share what that word and sentence mean. Invite others to share if they have a different understanding or perspective. Players should self-correct. As a facilitator, do not join in. Once cleared up, they may pass it on to the next player. Players may pass. As a facilitator, make sure you do not correct the blanks. Leave this until the end.

6 MINUTES

**Step 3:** Once all the blanks are filled in, provide the group with the complete text without any blanks. Ask them to verify their answers to correct incorrect words and discuss what is learned by correcting the text. As a facilitator, you may now join in and share your thoughts.

## Fill in the Blanks

concepts

concrete practice

conclusions

15 minutes

read

teach-back

align

self-correct

match

sticky notes

markers

hand-outs

(chalk)board

chalk



# #19 | Fishbowl

## PURPOSE

Engage larger groups while retaining the effectiveness of a collaborative smaller group.

The purpose of a Fishbowl is to engage larger groups and increase transparency when making sense of complex challenges.

The Fishbowl represents a small circle of people surrounded by an outside circle of people. In a Fishbowl, a subset of people with direct experience can engage constructively, spark creativity, and facilitate the adoption of new practices among members of a larger community. Those outside the circle may only silently listen and observe. This makes it easier for people in the inside circle to collaborate, be as technical as they need, draw conclusions and make decisions. The outside group can see and hear what's going on. This reduces the need for additional indirect communication, such as e-mail. Fishbowl is an excellent play for Sprint Reviews and Product Backlog refinement.

## HOW TO PLAY

### STANCE

As a facilitator, you do not play along, but you facilitate the play.

For safety in the Fishbowl, consider the following guidelines:

- For the inner group, pick only people with direct personal experience in relation to the matter.
- The Fishbowl is ideally between 3-7 but should be no larger than 9.
- Encourage the fish in the Fishbowl to share concrete, very descriptive examples in favor of just rendering opinions.
- Advise the fish to imagine being in a car or a bar, sharing stories, and having a conversation.
- Participants should avoid speeching and rambling.
- The fish may not talk to the outer circle.
- Avoid a Fishbowl within the Fishbowl; encourage everyone in the Fishbowl to engage.
- Encourage the fish in the Fishbowl to be creative and playful by using body language and visualization techniques.

### 10 MINUTES

**Step 1:** Invite the fish into the Fishbowl. The rest will listen, observe and take notes. Ideally, the fish are seated together so they are not distracted by the observers outside the Fishbowl. Explain the Fishbowl, the guidelines, and the topic or challenge.

### 5 MINUTES

**Step 2:** After 10 minutes, collect the questions from outside the Fishbowl. Pass these to those inside the Fishbowl. The fish may choose which questions to answer.

### 5 MINUTES

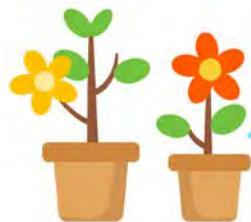
**Step 3:** Invite the fish to wrap it up by collecting the key take aways and the first next steps.

Fishbowl
concepts
concrete practice
20 minutes
discuss
ideate
visualize
sticky notes
markers
whiteboard





I like [...] because [...]



[...] worked well because [...]

Because [person] did this, I can [...]



A suggestion I have is [...]

In addition to [...] try [...]

[...] would make it even better!

# #20 | Glow and Grow

## PURPOSE

Share positive and constructive feedback effectively.

Positive feedback helps us grow. Giving effective feedback is a competence. Sometimes individuals may find it difficult and uncomfortable. In this play we prompt players for **positive and constructive feedback**. Sprint Reviews and Sprint Retrospectives provide opportunities to Glow and Grow.

## HOW TO PLAY

**STANCE** As a facilitator, you can play along. It may be good to start and lead by giving examples.

**4 MINUTES** Invite players to reflect on whatever the subject of the feedback is. They may choose any of the following prompts and complete it.

- I like [...] because [...]
- [...] worked well because [...]
- Because [...] did this, I can [...]
- A suggestion I have is [...]
- In addition to [...] try [...]
- [...] would make it even better!
- Have you thought about [...]
- How about doing [...] as well?
- Thank you, because [...]

**1 MINUTE** Collect and visualize the feedback for all to see.  
Thank each other for openness and courage in providing feedback.  
Follow up this play by determining the next steps.  
Which feedback will bear fruit?

Glow and Grow  
conclusions 🧩  
5 minutes 🕒  
reflect  
brainwrite  
prompt  
feedback  
sticky notes 📝  
markers  
(white)board





# #21 | Holy Grail

## PURPOSE

Capture input from all participants and together consolidate options into a single list.

The Holy Grail is a "1-2-4-All" variant using cups to filter and consolidate options from a group. The group is asked input for a topic. Each participant receives a cup to which they can add notes. The individuals pair up and consolidate what's inside their cups into a single cup: the Holy Grail. They remove duplicates and **select the best ideas**.

## HOW TO PLAY

The Holy Grail can be played when the group needs to quickly share, consolidate, and list their ideas. For example, you can play Holy Grail to draft a "Definition of Done". To prepare this play, you'll need cups for every participant and small notes with markers.

### STANCE

As a facilitator, consider playing when there are an uneven number of players.

### 2 MINUTES

**Step 1:** Introduce the question or prompt to the group. For example, "For a Product Backlog item to be considered as Done, it will...". Invite participants to think and write down their answers on separate notes and place them inside their cups.

### 3 MINUTES

**Step 2:** Pair up. Review each other's cups and consolidate them into a single cup. Remove duplicates and combine similar suggestions. Select what you both agree is needed.

### 4 MINUTES

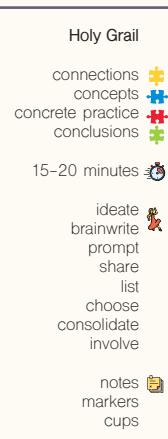
**Step 3:** Merge pairs to form quads. Once again, review both cups and consolidate them into a single one. Select what the whole quad agrees is needed.

### 6 MINUTES

**Step 4:** Now, collect all remaining cups and consolidate them into a single Holy Grail. Select what the entire group agrees is needed.

### 5 MINUTES

**Optional:** share insights from the conversation and review all the options that didn't make it.



# how I like to work

- I like to work **together** directly with others; when I need space I **withdraw**.
- I like to work **virtually**, I can do this effectively.
- I like to determine when and how I work, I do this responsibly.
- I love **Miro** for virtual collaboration and visualization. It empowers me.
- I **don't like e-mail**. When I must, I am short and to the point.
- I prefer video calls. My camera will be on.
- I am an eager learner and **explorer**. I love to learn from others. I love to share.
- I am a dad and husband, and family comes first.
- There will be unpredictability in my schedule.
- I aim to work relaxed and **mindful**. If I experience stress I will withdraw, meditate and recharge.
- I don't like one-sided presentations. I like **co-activity**.
- I control my agenda. I don't do back-to-backs.
- I like listening to **music** when working.
- I am generally open and agreeable. I aim to be truthful, and respectful.
- People over systems. Relationships over principles.
- I value and enjoy **diversity**.
- I don't like being managed and I don't like to manage others.
- I love visualization and memes.
- I welcome positive and constructive communication.

# #22 | How I Like To...

## PURPOSE

A powerful prompt to empower, harmonize and improve conditions to increase happiness.

This play provides an opportunity for team members to express the way they like things to be. This helps to foster an environment where individuals **enjoy working together**. The Sprint Retrospective offers a perfect opportunity for this play. This play reveals opportunities to take ownership of how we work and support each other in this. Even small things can make our daily work better. This begins by expressing how you like to work with those you work with. We can support each other as professionals in making our workdays more enjoyable.

## HOW TO PLAY

Consider providing participants with one of the following prompts:

- How I like to work professionally;
- How I like to collaborate professionally;
- How I like to meet professionally;
- How I like to plan professionally;
- How I like to learn professionally;
- How I like to socialize professionally;
- How I like to focus professionally;
- How I like to Scrum professionally;
- How I like to design/develop/test professionally;
- How I like to receive feedback professionally.

**STANCE** Pick a prompt or create one yourself and try it. You can lead the way by sharing how you'd like to work together as professionals. Other participants could use that as a template.

**3 MINUTES** Step 1: Invite individuals to complete the prompt through silent thinking and writing.

**4 MINUTES** Step 2: Form pairs and invite participants to briefly share how they like to work in less than two minutes each.

**4 MINUTES** Step 3: Now you can merge two pairs. This time, one will communicate the preferences of the other in under one minute each. For example: "Jimmy likes to...".

**4 MINUTES** Step 4: All together, each person shares what they have learned about how *others* like to work, including what they have in common.



THIS IS YOUR FAULT!

That will NEVER work here!

# #23 | Impact Craters

## PURPOSE

Develop strategies where *positive* intentions lead to behavior resulting in *positive* and *congruent* outcomes.

What we say and how we behave impacts those around us. It can leave lasting craters behind. We intend to make a meaningful impact with our behavior, yet not everything we say or do lands well. With this play, you can facilitate an open and respectful discussion on workplace behavior.

## HOW TO PLAY

To make this play safe, be clear that this play is about *what* we say or do; it's not about *who* is doing or saying it. The purpose of this play is NOT to call out *individuals* for their behavior. For this play, invite participants to assume there is always a positive intention, even if someone's behavior had a negative impact. Laughter often erupts during this play, yet be aware that this is not at the expense of an individual.

### Terminology:

- **Meteor:** Positive intention.
- **Impact:** Behavior. What someone says or does.
- **Crater:** Intended and unintended outcomes.

### Example:

- **Meteor:** Prevent a false notion or idea from causing harm.
- **Impact:** Ad hominem attack: "You're an idiot"
- **Crater:** Loss in safety, respect, and trust. Defensiveness.

### STANCE

As a facilitator, you can play along.

**+ MINUTES**

**Step 1:** Invite players to write down behaviors (impacts) that they believe are damaging trust (one impact per sticky note). Collect all the sticky notes. Put the sticky notes on the bottom side of a large board for all to see. Remove duplicates and group similar impacts.

**+ MINUTES**

**Step 2:** An impact is short and abrupt, but it makes craters. Pair up and assign each pair an impactful behavior from the board.

Invite each pair to write down intended and unintended outcomes (craters) that may result from those impactful behaviors. They may place them on the board around their corresponding impacts. When done, draw they may draw a circle around all their sticky notes representing the crater caused by the impact.

**+ MINUTES**

**Step 3:** Harmful outcomes may have emerged from good intentions. Merge pairs. Invite each quad to think of positive intentions (meteors) that may cause those damaging and impactful behaviors and outcomes of their impact craters. Place these on top of the impact craters.

**+ MINUTES**

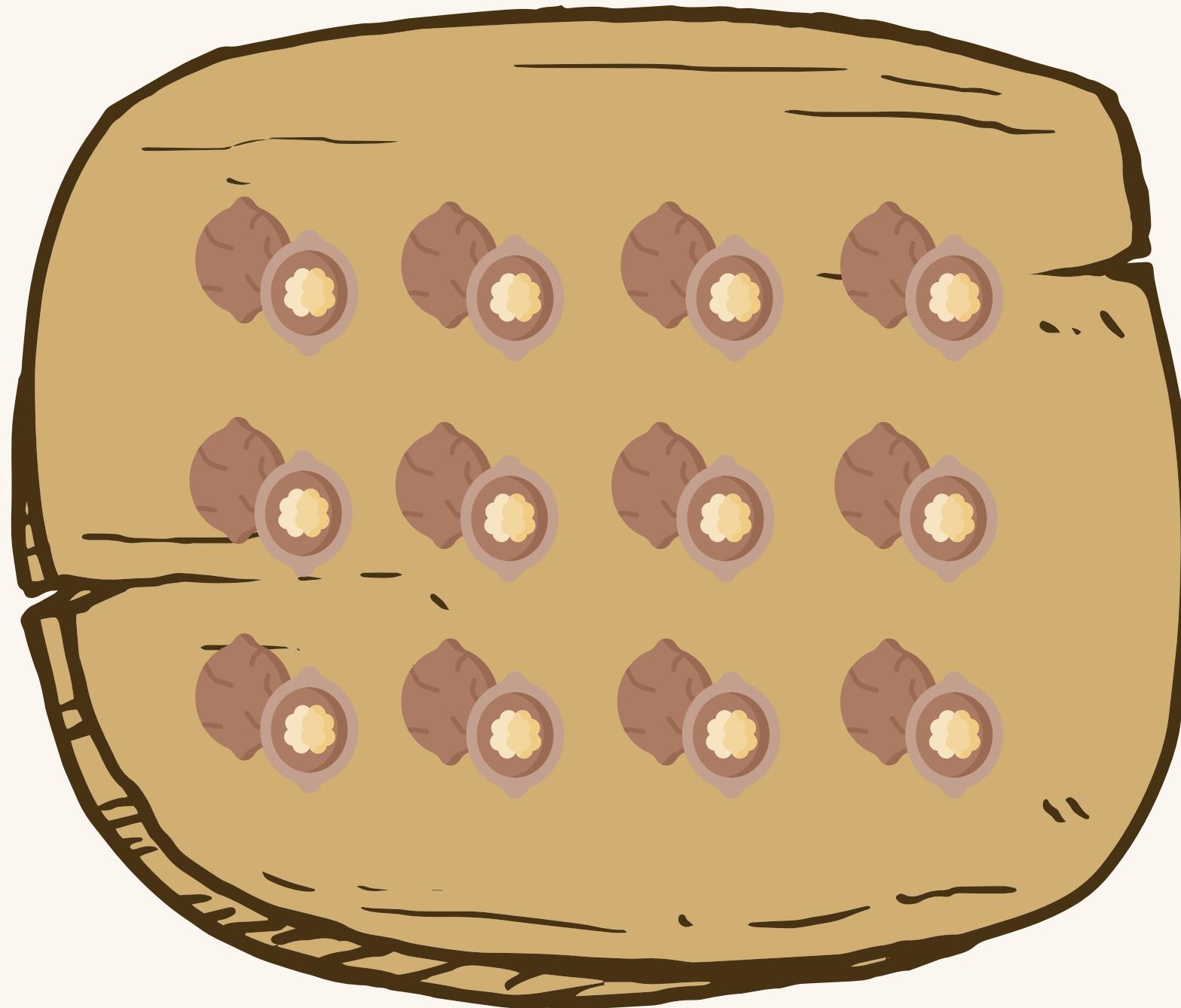
**Step 4:** Ask the quads what alternative behavior (impacts) might lead to positive outcomes (craters).

**+ MINUTES**

**Step 5:** Each triad/quad briefly shares its insights with the other ones.

Impact Craters
concrete practice
20 minutes
ideate
brainwrite
emphathize
draw
share
list
teach-back
notes
markers
board or canvas





# #24 | In a Nutshell

## PURPOSE

Participants quickly share their understanding of a concept.

"In a Nutshell" is a quick play to discover what players already know about a concept. It checks for understanding and helps to develop a shared understanding. Participants write down a concept summary in their own words on a small note. They place it inside a nutshell and exchange it. Because there is limited space and time to write, the answers reveal what is on top of their minds.

## HOW TO PLAY

### STANCE

As a facilitator, you can play along. All you need to do is crack open and hollow out some nuts. You can mark corresponding nutshells halves or tape them together. Provide the players a question or prompt. For example:

- "What, to you, is Scrum in a nutshell?"
- "What value will be delivered by the end of the Sprint in a nutshell?"
- "In a nutshell, by the end of this event..."
- "What is achieved with this Product Backlog item in a nutshell?"
- "What does the increment do in a nutshell?"
- "In a nutshell, Stakeholders will be satisfied when we..."
- "What does "Done" mean to you in a nutshell?"

### 1 MINUTE

**Step 1:** Invite players to write down how they would describe a concept in their own words on a tiny note. They then place that note in their nutshell and exchange it with other players.

### 4 MINUTES

**Step 2:** In turn, each player reads out the note of the nutshell they received and who they received it from. That's it. Isn't it nuts what you can capture in a nutshell?

In a Nutshell

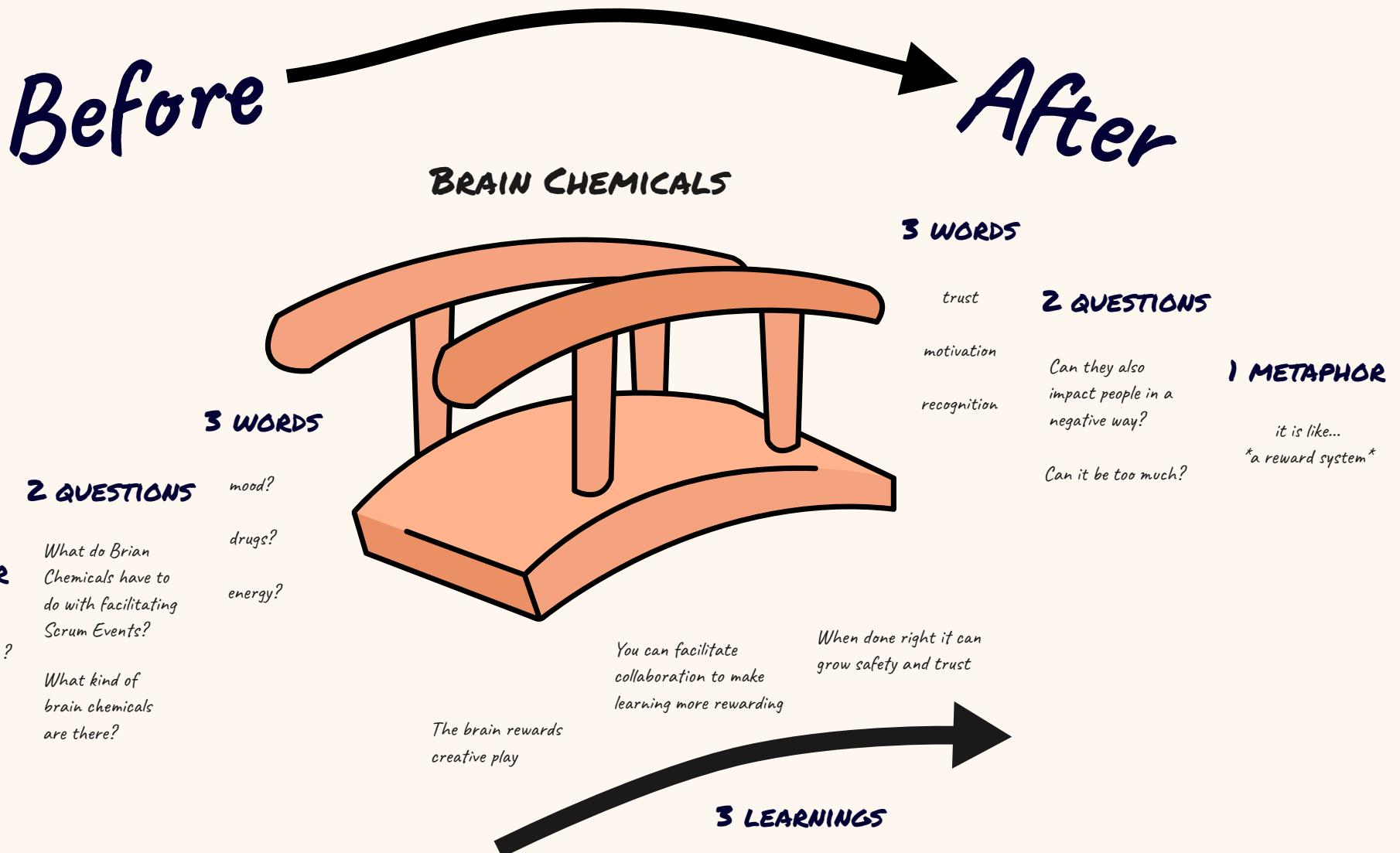
connections  conclusions 

5 minutes 

brainwrite  
teach-back  
self-correct  
involve  
align

small notes  markers  
(hollow) nutshells





# #25 | Learning Bridge

## PURPOSE

Compare what participants understand before and after a play. It provides an understanding of how conceptions can change through play. It validates learning.

For this play, participants require some prior knowledge about a specific topic. This play wraps itself around another play or event.

Players write down a few words, thoughts, questions, and a metaphor about the topic. Next, players engage in a play or event.

Once over, the players again write down a few learnings, words, thoughts, questions, and a metaphor. Then, players will bridge their initial and new understanding, explaining if, how, and why their understanding shifted. **Crossing bridges brings you to better places.**

## HOW TO PLAY

### STANCE

5 MINUTES

**Before:** Invite players to individually write down the following about the topic at play:

- 3 Words/Ideas
- 2 Questions
- 1 Metaphor or Simile: "Is it like [...] ?"

? MINUTES

Introduce material, a play or a lecture that engages the players and covers the topic in more detail.

Consider playing: "Data Hunt", "Fishbowl", "Fill in the Blanks" for example.

5 MINUTES

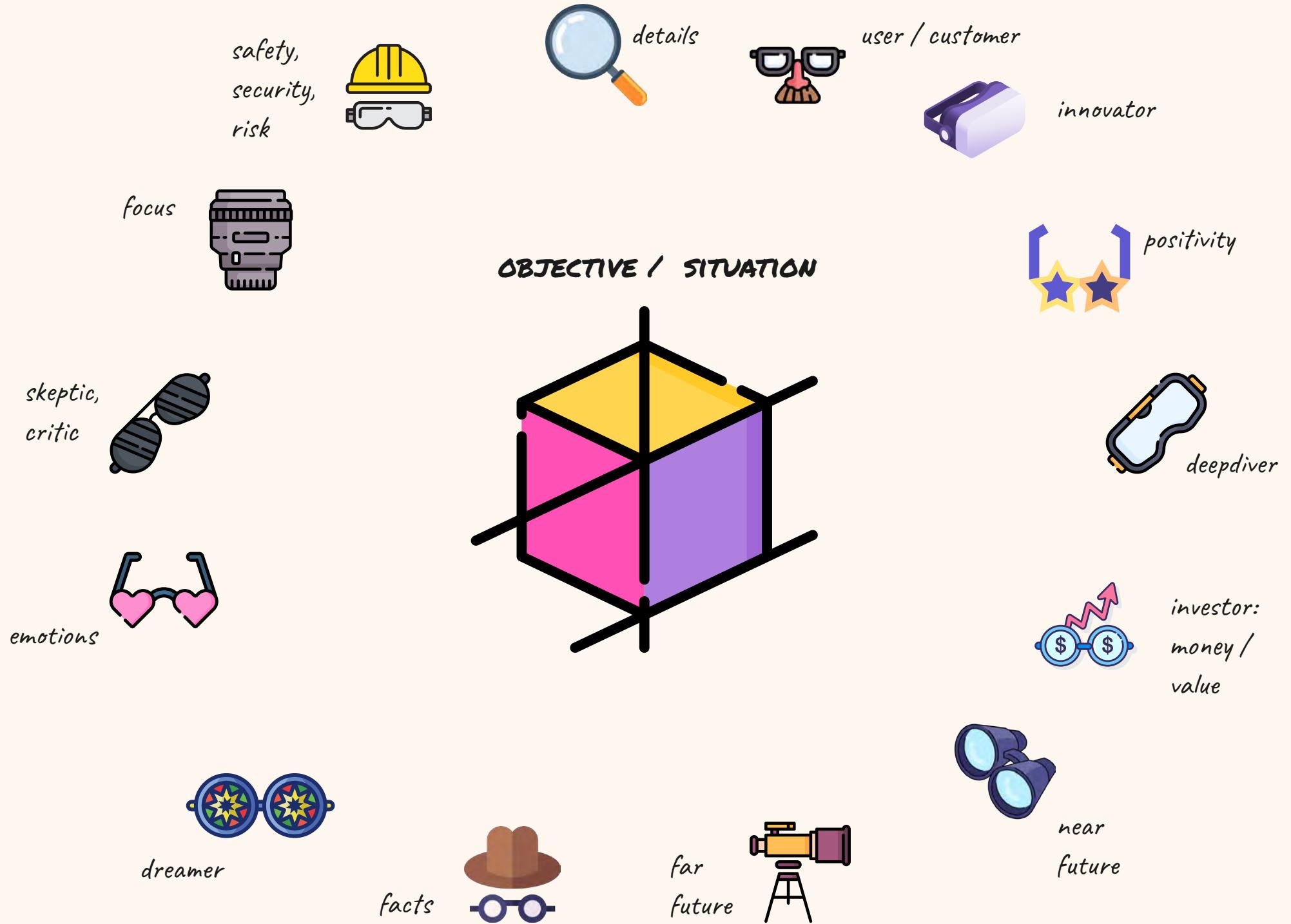
**After:** Once again, invite players to individually write down the following about the same topic that was just covered:

- 3 Learnings
- 3 Words/Ideas
- 2 Questions
- 1 Metaphor or Simile

? MINUTES

**Optional:** Invite participants to explain if, why, and how their responses changed.





# #26 | Lenses

## PURPOSE

Exchanging conventional and unconventional perspectives to gain a broader awareness of a complex situation.

Some corporate cultures encourage a narrow way of addressing challenges. For example, they may promote short-term thinking focusing only on added value for specific stakeholders at the cost of others. Lenses invites players to look at a situation in ways other than what is conventional to them. This can be useful to **assess the congruity of a direction** or proposal and to detect risk and opportunity.

## HOW TO PLAY

Prepare a diverse set of funny (sun)glasses with a sticky note representing its perspective. Consider these perspectives:

- details
- user / customer
- innovator
- positivity
- aesthetics
- emotions
- skeptic, critic
- safety, security, risk
- simplicity
- sustainability
- investor: money / value
- near future
- far future
- facts
- dreamer
- openness
- focus
- courage
- commitment
- respect

## STANCE

As a facilitator, you can play along.

First, Introduce a complex situation or objective to the players. In Scrum, this could be a Product Goal, Sprint Goal, or Product Backlog item.

## 2 MINUTES

**Step 1:** Players take turns picking a lens/glasses from which they want to reflect on the situation. Alternatively, you may distribute various glasses randomly. Allow for questions and explain what the lenses mean. You can provide a prompt:

*"When looking at [the situation] through the lens of [emotions]..."*

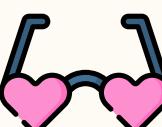
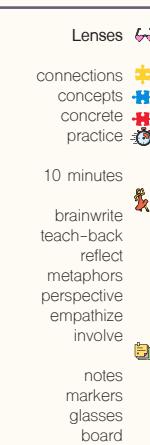
- What comes to mind?
- What do you see?
- What can you tell?
- How does that feel?
- What does that sound like to you?

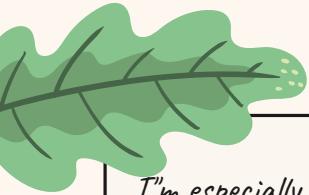
## 3 MINUTES

**Step 2:** Players individually write down on sticky notes takeaways from looking at the situation through their lens. Stick these on the board.

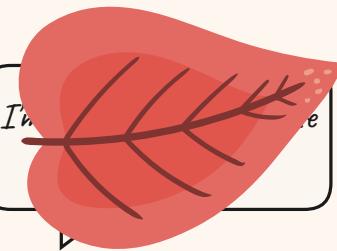
## 5 MINUTES

**Step 3:** All together, review the insights. **What hidden insights have now been revealed?**





I'm especially good at...



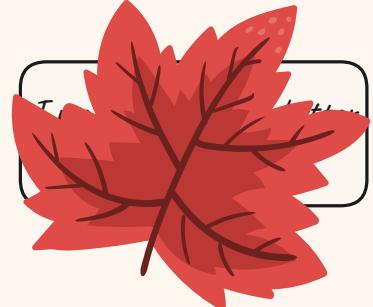
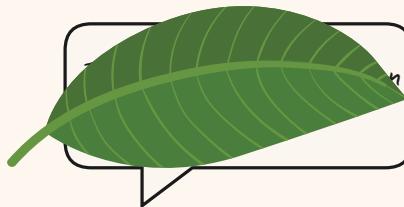
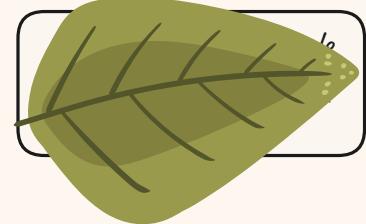
I'm most creative when I...



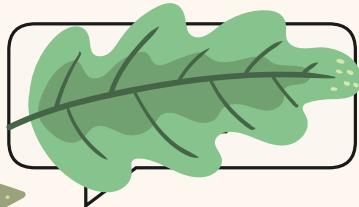
People can trust me because I...



One of the best things about me is...



Deep down I feel my calling is to...

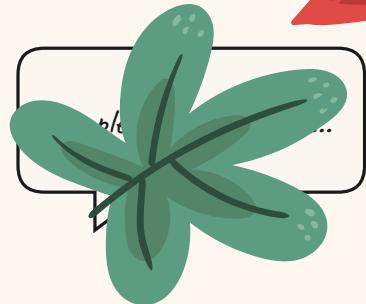


I'm happier at my work when I can do...



What would make me really proud is...

What I like people to really understand about me is...



# #27 | Lovely Leaves

Lovely Leaves

connections  
concrete practice

15 minutes

prompt  
write  
reflect  
empathize  
empower  
teach-backnotes  
markers  
large leaves

## PURPOSE

Reveal and share personal strengths and personal ambitions.

What brings out the best in the individuals on a team? Lovely Leaves are meaningful prompts that reveal individual strengths, positivity, and ambitions beyond work. Completing these prompts may reveal opportunities to foster a better environment and grow trust.

## HOW TO PLAY

To prepare the play, the facilitator writes the meaningful prompts on notes on a table (or floor) and covers each with a large leaf. The meaningful prompts are:

- I'm especially good at...
- I'm a good friend because I...
- People can trust me because I...
- One of the best things about me is...
- I like being with people most when I
- I am fun to be with when I...
- I make the world a better place by...
- Deep down I feel my calling is to...
- I'm happier at my work when I can do...
- What would make me really proud is...
- What I like people to really understand about me is...
- I like myself most when I...
- What I love doing the most is...
- People like it when I...
- What I can do better than anyone else I know is...

## STANCE

As a facilitator, you can play along. It is a good idea to go first and break the ice.

## 1 MINUTE

**Step 1:** Make it safe to play by explaining:

- Not everyone will be as open and ready to complete these prompts;
- These prompts can be challenging to complete;
- It's perfectly okay to pause and pass;
- There is no need to share anything you are uncomfortable with;
- The aim is to openly and authentically share our strengths and positive sides.

## 3 MINUTES

**Step 2:** Invite players to remove a leaf and read the prompt. Once they have done so, they may find a partner to pair with. Players may reveal their prompt to their partner. Instruct them to give each other some space and time to reflect on the prompt individually. If a player is uncomfortable with their prompt, they may also go for their partner's prompt (or swap them). Passing is also okay. Once a player is ready, they may complete the prompt by writing it down and sharing it with their partner.

## 9 MINUTES

**Step 3:** All together, each player shares how their partner completed the prompt. For example: "One of the best things about is that she..."

## 2 MINUTES

**Optional:** once all the prompts are shared, ask the group if they have any follow-up suggestions.





# #28 | Mad Tea Party

## PURPOSE

Participants share what they are skilled, excited, or crazy about in their work.

What's your cup of tea? We're all passionate about something in our work. Let's share it! Players talk about their passions during a "Mad Tea Party" and share knowledge. This play facilitates knowledge exchange and reveals people's motivations, talents, and traits.

## HOW TO PLAY

### STANCE

As a facilitator, you prepare a teacup for each player. Ideally, make a mad mix of different types of teacups. Don't forget to bring your cup, because you may play along. Consider splitting the group into cohorts of four to eight players, with groups larger than eight.

### 2 MINUTES

**Step 1:** You can start this party by asking the players: "**What's your cup of tea?**" You can clarify this question by asking each player to write down on a sticky note something specific they are either proficient, skilled, excited, passionate, or knowledgeable about in their work. Once they have written it down, they may fold their notes and put them inside an empty teacup.

### 3 MINUTES

**Step 2:** Let's add some sugar (questions) to the tea. Ask the players to pick a random cup (as long as it is not theirs). Invite the players to read the subject on the note. They may then write down one question about the topic on a separate sticky note. Now they may fold both notes and place them together in the cup. You may repeat this round if you have additional time to spare.

### 15 MINUTES

**Step 3:** With groups larger than 5, divide into triads or quads. Take turns revealing what's inside each cup. The person to whom the cup originally belonged briefly motivates their topic and answers the questions.

*"Take some more tea," the March Hare said to Alice very earnestly.*

*"I've had nothing yet," Alice replied in an offended tone, "so I can't take more."*

*"You mean you can't take less," said the Hatter: "it's very easy to take more than nothing."*

*"Alice, are you familiar with this special kind of TDD?" the March Hare continues.*

*"Tea Dee Dee? Now you completely lost me..." Alice sighs.*

*"Do you Cl Alice?" asked the Hatter.*

*"Don't you mean 'see me'!?" Alice replies, "Yes of course I do see you."*

*"Well, how about CD?" the Hatter continues.*

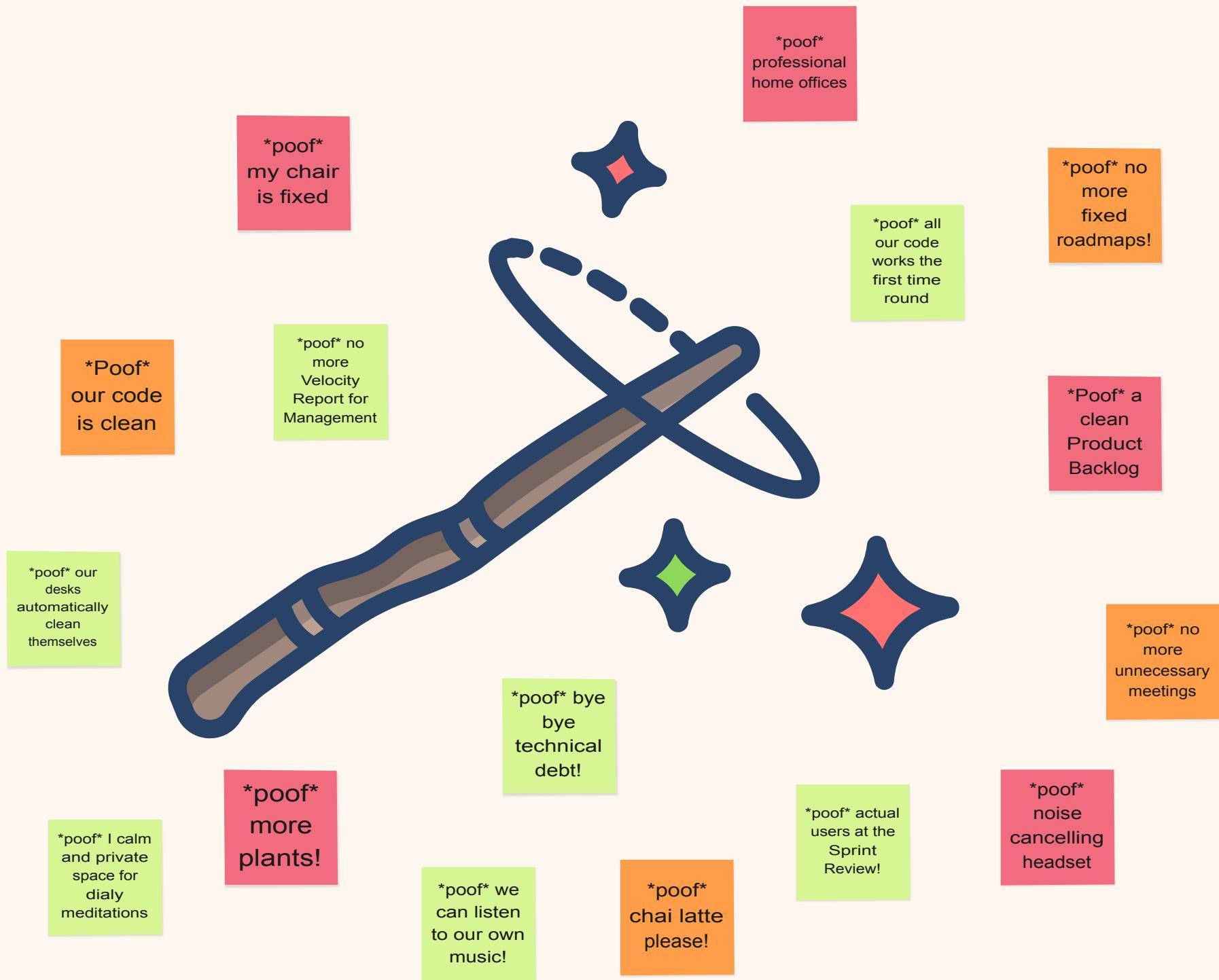
*"No, who is this Dee!?" Alice frowns.*



Attribution: Inspired by Alice's Adventures in Wonderland.

There is also a Liberating Structure in development using the same title. This play is imagined independently from it.





# #29 | Magic Wand

## PURPOSE

Discover opportunities to improve the work environment.

If players could wave a magic wand and change anything they want about their work environment, what would it be?

Magic Wand is a simple, empowering play. Participants wield a Magic Wand with which they can change their work environment.

They may **reveal empowering, game-changing opportunities**. The Scrum Team can then work their magic by supporting each other.

The Scrum Master can wield the Magic Wand to help cause the removal of impediments. The Magic Wand has proven to cause Scrum Team members to be happier and more effective in their jobs.

## HOW TO PLAY

Bring a Magic Wand, a notebook (or sticky notes), and your optimism!

### STANCE

As a facilitator, you too may wield the Magic Wand, so play along.

**5 MINUTES**

**Step 1:** Consider introducing the play like this:

"**INSPECTUM ADAPTRONUS!** I want to invite you to wield this Magic Wand. With this Magic Wand, you can change anything you want to improve your work environment. You may NOT change people and their personalities. Your spells may be silly, serious, fun, absurd, unrealistic, cheeky, and rebellious, but keep 'm respectful. You may walk around the office as long as you make it back in ten minutes with a list of all the improvements (spells) you magically wish would come true. Each of you may make your own list of magic spells."

**5 MINUTES**

**Step 2:** Once everyone returns, you can consolidate the spells. Remove duplicates and combine similar spells. Players may not believe everything on this list to be possible, but they'll soon discover more is possible than not. Share this quote with the players:

"Those who don't believe in magic will never find it" - Ronald Dahl

**5 MINUTES**

**Step 3:** Let's work our magic. Distribute the various spells (suggested improvements) between the players. Verify if the players understand the spells and allow room for clarifying questions. Swap spells between players if needed. Once all spells are distributed, pair up.

In pairs, the players brainwrite as many magical solutions as they can to make those spells (improvements) possible. These ideas may also be silly, serious, fun, absurd, unrealistic, cheeky, and rebellious as long as they remain respectful. Share these prompts:

- "A first step can be to ... "
- "What's already possible is ... "
- "What could make a positive difference is ... "
- "We can experiment by ... "
- "If we could remove one impediment, it would be ... "
- "Alternatively, what is possible is ... "

**5 MINUTES**

**Step 4:** Conclude the play by consolidating and committing to some of these magical solutions. Consider following up with Dot-Voting or Holy Grail. Many solutions won't make it; what matters most is that the players became open, had fun, and found some meaningful starting points to improve their work environment. As a Scrum Master, you'll work your magic by causing the removal of impediments.





It would be a real game changer if I can turn my PowerPoint training/lecture about Scrum into a format where attendees become active participants

What's useful about TBR is that it engages learners actively

What surprised me about TBR was the 6 Trumps

I can also apply the 6 trumps in our onboarding process!

What's really important about TBR is that: the participants do more than the trainer/facilitator

Participants doing more than the facilitator is also important for Scrum Events!

# #30 | Magic Hat

## PURPOSE

Capture and record learnings and imagine applying them in a different context.

This is a conclusions activity to perform after a play, event, training, presentation, or lecture. What surprised the participants? What rabbits were pulled out of the hat during the previous activity or play? Participants abstract important, surprising patterns, ideas, and concepts (rabbits) from a topic (hat). What happens when they pull these rabbits out and apply them elsewhere? This play promotes **Portable Knowledge**; the ability to transfer and apply the newly gained knowledge in a different context.

## HOW TO PLAY

What did players learn that may be useful elsewhere? Creativity involves introducing and adapting existing patterns to new realms. Prepare a large magician's hat. Put a big sticky note on it with the name of the topic that was previously addressed.

### STANCE

As a facilitator, you may consider playing along; however, give your players as much creative space as possible. So keep your thoughts and ideas to yourself and save them until the end.

### 2 MINUTES

**Step 1:** Invite players to individually brainwrite surprising (and important) patterns, ideas, and concepts (rabbits) from the topic (hat) that was previously addressed. Each answer represents a single rabbit. Players may put their rabbits into the hat.

Consider providing them with these prompts:

- "What was useful to learn about [the hat] is ... "
- "What surprised me about [the hat] is ... "
- "An idea I have about [the hat] is ... "
- "What's really important about [the hat] is ... "

### 5 MINUTES

**Step 2:** We want learnings to not only stick, but we want them to travel. Stir/mix the rabbits inside the hat and pull one out. Read it out to the group. Allow for clarifying questions so that all players understand the rabbit. Ask the players where this rabbit could be applied other than the topic on the hat. Consider these prompts:

- "[the rabbit] is also useful with ... "
- "[the rabbit] would also be a game changer for ... "
- "I can also apply [the rabbit] for... "

**Alternatively:** Each participant pulls a rabbit out of the hat and completes a prompt individually before sharing it with the whole group.  
**Optionally:** repeat the last step for as long as you'd like the play to continue.





*"Believe someone  
who lets you  
believe in yourself."*

# #31 | Meet the Monks

## PURPOSE

Sharing motivational quotes encourages a positive, can-do mindset. Individuals tune in to a collective ambition. It promotes courage and commitment.

Meet your inner monks. Wisdom is not just a mental process but a demonstration of true human experience. Your team may have a difficult objective: a steep mountain to climb. The best mountains are the ones with a monk living on them. Your team members already learned a lot on the way, and now it's time for them to meet their inner monks. During Meet the Monks each player shares an encouraging quote or statement relevant to their shared challenge.

## HOW TO PLAY

There is more to "Meet the Monks" than meets the eye. It tunes players into a shared objective setting a collective ambition. It contributes to establishing a sense of urgency towards it. All players are involved in communicating the vision. It empowers them to act on it and to encourage each other toward it. Those are all prerequisites for self-managing teams to lead change.

Provide each player with a thick sheet of paper (or a cardboard) and a bold marker. Clearly state the shared challenge the team previously committed to. This could be the Product Goal or Sprint Goal, but it can also involve dealing with a problematic impediment.

## STANCE

As a facilitator, you may play along.

## 3 MINUTES

**Step 1:** Invite all players to look up an encouraging quote or dream up their own statement. The quote or statement must be relevant to their shared ambition. The quotes don't have to be all that wise or serious; they may also be cheeky and funny. They can boldly write down their quote on their sheet.

## 7 MINUTES

**Step 2:** All players read out their statement or quote to the group. They share why they think it is relevant to their challenge and how it is meaningful to them personally.

Meet the Monks

connections

10 minutes

empower

encourage

quote hunt

imagine

bold writing

teach-back

paper sheets/

cartboards /

textbubbles

markers



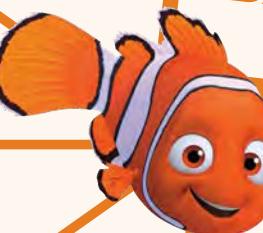
*the Product Owner*

*15 minutes  
timebox*

*Sprint Goal*

*Sprint Backlog*

## DAILY SCRUM



*the Scrum Master*

*Openness*

*Focus*

*A Developer*

**REWARD:  
1.000 SP**

# #32 | Missing Poster

Missing Poster

concepts

15 minutes

brainwrite

ideate

prompt

contextualize

discuss

teach-back

A2 posters

markers

sticky notes

## PURPOSE

Learn on the value of something by imagining it goes missing.

Have you seen these fish? Often we only truly register the value of something the moment it goes missing. Participants imagine what might happen if something (or someone) is left out.

## HOW TO PLAY

What really grinds my gears is when someone stresses something is "important" without defining what makes it so important to them. For example, a Scrum Master may instruct their team by telling them it's important to have a Definition of Done. When a trainer is preaching "importance", the learners are not thinking for themselves. Learners rarely respond well to a sermon about why something is "important" or not. Who is it significant for? It may be necessary to you, but is it to them? Instead, invite players to explore what may happen if important elements are NOT there. This play offers opportunities for players to share their thoughts about why and how something is (or isn't) meaningful to them. Let's hear how they personally benefit from it and what doubts they have concerning it. That's why we encourage players to keep asking: "So What? **What happens without it?** What's it to you?"

## STANCE

Missing Poster is a versatile play that can be applied to many concepts and practices. To play it, you need a central concept or practice. For example, a Scrum Event, the Definition of Done, the Product Backlog, or the Product. Players imagine things that could go missing or be left out. For each, they share potential outcomes.

As a facilitator, you may play along. Consider limiting your own input to one or two missing items and outcomes.

## 2 MINUTES

**Step 1:** Break the group into triads or quads and provide them a poster with the name of the central concept or practice written in its center. Invite each breakout to brainwrite between two and eight things that might go missing from it. Then they may brainwrite and discuss potential outcomes (either positive, negative, or neutral) for each missing item. Context matters. Players will learn about both upsides and downsides.

## 8 MINUTES

**Step 2:** Each break-out agrees on its takeaways using the prompts:

- "What really stood out to us is..."
- "What is really important to us is..."

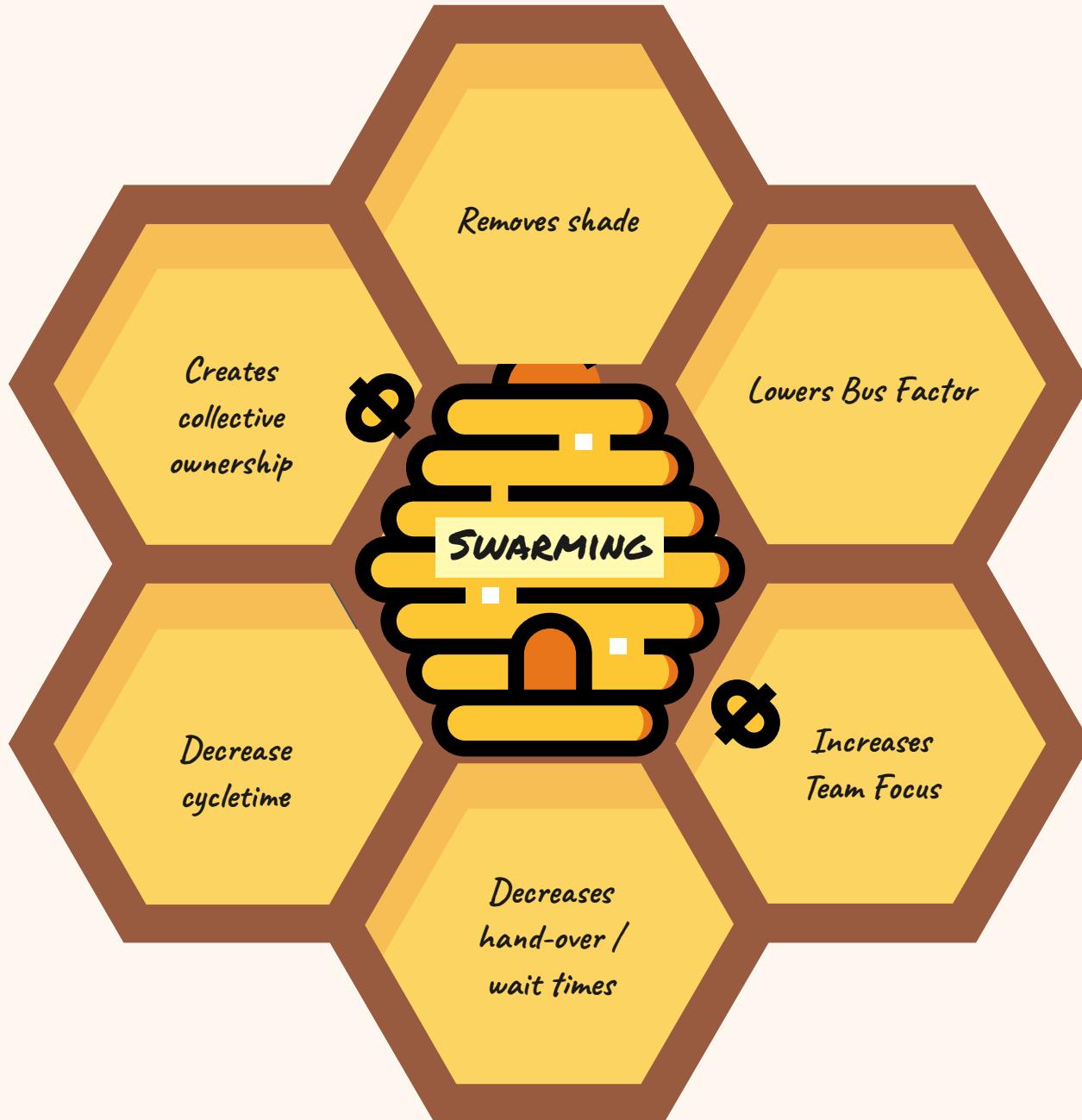
## 5 MINUTES

**Step 3:** Each break-out shares its takeaways with the whole group.

## 5 MINUTES

**Optional:** Consider concluding the play by asking "So, now what?!" inviting the players to agree on at least one next step.





# #33 | Money on the Honey

## PURPOSE

Capture valuable learnings (honey) and literally make 'em stick.

Participants capture learnings by writing down keywords on sticky notes. They then distribute these notes by sticking them in highly visible places throughout their office. This invites movement but also aids memory. **It literally makes learnings stick.** It can also spark spontaneous conversations allowing knowledge to travel through the office and raising awareness.

## HOW TO PLAY

Apply this play as a conclusions activity, for example, at the end of another play, training, lecture, presentation, or event.

### STANCE

As a facilitator you do not play along.

**3 MINUTES**

**Step 1:** Invite participants to complete the following prompts:

- "What I need to remember is..."
- "The most valuable learnings are..."

**2 MINUTES**

**Step 2:** Next, invite each player to summarize their valuable learnings (money) in *one to three* words per sticky note (honey).

**2 MINUTES**

**Step 3:** Players may then leave the room and distribute their honey (sticky notes) on highly visible and frequently looked at objects around the office. These sticky notes may provoke discussions that may help to create transparency on what the team is doing and learning. This way, knowledge can travel in surprising ways. For example, they could stick it on a:

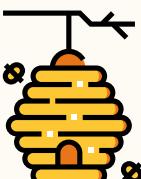
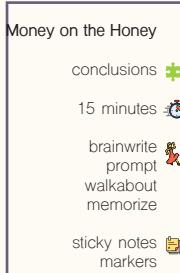
- |                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• coffee machine</li> <li>• mug</li> <li>• monitor</li> <li>• laptop</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clock</li> <li>• plant</li> <li>• window/wall/door</li> <li>• co-worker (with their approval)</li> </ul> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**2 MINUTES**

**Optional:** Participants may return to the room after a break. Can they remember what valuable learnings they stuck on which objects?

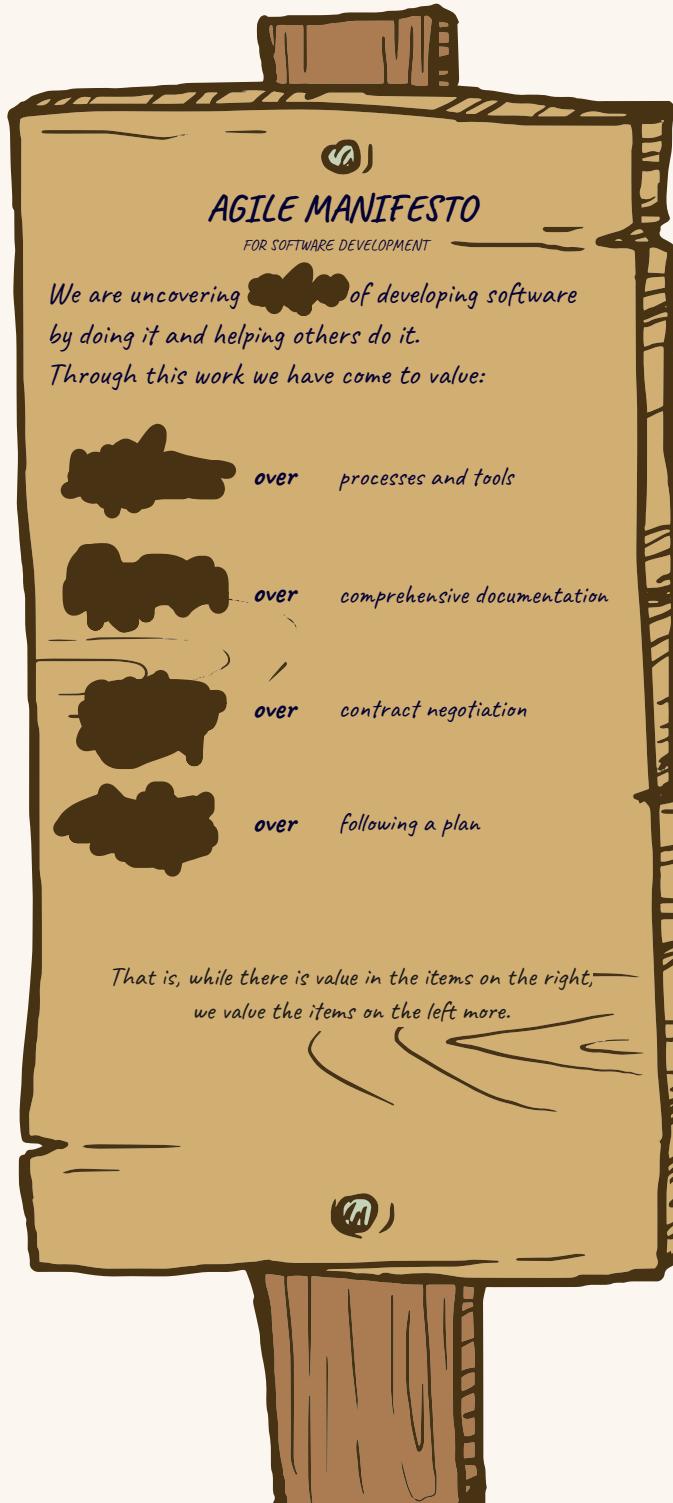
"Well," said Pooh, "what I like best," and then he had to stop and think. Because although "Eating Honey" was a very good thing to do, there was a moment just before you began to eat it, which was better than when you were, but he didn't know what it was called.

- A. A. Milne, Winnie-the-Pooh





Uh Oh!  
Someone muddied the sign.  
Let's clear it!



# #34 | Muddied Sign

## PURPOSE

Clear up understandings and come to a shared understanding of a concept.

You may have presented your audience with a slide or diagram, but have they really understood it?

"Muddied Sign" is a variant to "Fill in the Blanks". Players come to a shared understanding by clearing up what the facilitator obscured.

The objective is for players to fill in the blanks and teach it back in their own words. This play turns passive observers into active participants.

## HOW TO PLAY

Prepare this play by obscuring (muddy) specific elements from either a diagram, slide, model, chart, or document.

Consider sticking this on an actual (wooden) sign, using tape, stickers, or markers to cover the specific elements.

### STANCE

As a facilitator, you don't play along, as you already know what's meant by what's muddled.

1 MINUTES

**Step 1:** Invite players to take turns to clear up a muddied element from the sign.

The player guesses what is hidden, and then they may clear it.

1 MINUTES

**Step 2:** Once the player clears a specific element, ask the player to share what it means to them in their own words.

2 MINUTES

**Step 3:** Extend the invitation to the whole group: "What else might this mean?"

Continue to the next muddled element and repeat.



Muddied Sign

concepts

15-20 minutes

self-correct  
teach-back

tape   
stickers   
markers   
sign



# #35 | Pirate Hat

## PURPOSE

Uncovering restricting and disempowering rules, tools, policies, requirements, and processes.

Let's uncover things that make Developers go "Aaaaaaaargh!"

Let's imagine we're pirates for one play. The team crew can blow up anything that gets in the way between them and their treasures. What will they target, and why?

## HOW TO PLAY

You can't write "Scrum" without "rum". As a Scrum Master, you want to know what is blocking or slowing your team down. All you need to bring is a Pirate Hat! Wearing a Pirate Hat already signals your team that things may get a little disruptive. That's precisely what we're after!

Explain to players that you're after eliminating blockers with the crew. But you need targets. Explain that you can't make guarantees. You can't blow 'm all up, but breaking the status quo requires courage and disruption.

**STANCE** As a facilitator, you start the play by sharing one rule, tool, policy, requirement, or process you would like to blow up and why.

**10 MINUTES** **Step 1:** Invite players to take turns wearing the Pirate Hat and become a Pirate for one minute. They may pass, or simply holding it in their hands will do too. The pirate answers the question (within one minute):

- "If you could target, break, remove, ignore or work around any rule, tool, policy, requirement, or process, what would they be?"

To keep it *respectful*, they may not target people. Write their suggestions down on a **Pirate Backlog** visible to all.

**3 MINUTES** **Step 2:** Invite players to dot-vote on the suggestions on the Pirate Backlog. Each player receives *three* dots representing **cannonballs**. They may fire their cannonballs on impediments on the Pirate Backlog. Which ones will they target?

**6 MINUTES** **Step 3:** Pick three items that got hit by most cannonballs. Divide the group into three break-outs, and assign each group one of the three items. Ask them if they can design a small-controlled-experiment for that item.

**6 MINUTES** **Step 4:** Finally, each break-out shares its experiment with the crew in under two minutes.

Experiments might not prove feasible or congruent. Hey, they are experiments, and this is just creative play. In my own experience, more is possible than impossible. The crew's creativity might surprise you. The Pirate Hat can be truly liberating.

"Alrright, now back to Scrrrum, you Scum!"

Pirate Hat

concrete practice

30 minutes

adapt

brainwrite

empower

dare

imagine

role play

list

vote

encourage

improvise

involve

joke

disrupt

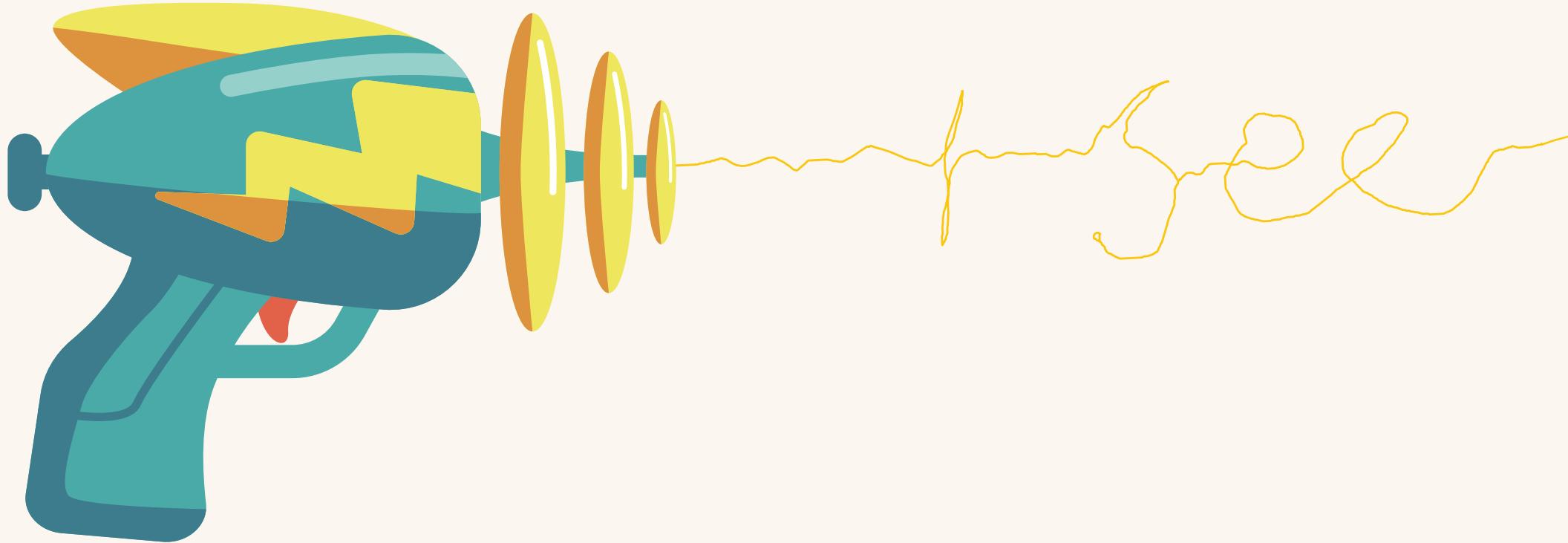
experiment

markers

whiteboard

pirate hat





# #36 | Point of View Gun

## PURPOSE

Challenge participants to truly view something from the perspective of another.

How can we shoot our ideas and not miss? Are players truly open to ideas of others? We all have a different internal representation of the world. So, how well can players empathize and understand something from the perspective of the other?

Shooting the Point-of-View Gun is a *steelman* technique to practice communicating more effectively. The point is to view something from the other person's perspective, assuming their intentions to be positive. The goal is not to weaken but **strengthen *their* argument**.

It can be attempted as a means to resolve conflict, but only if the individuals are committed to resolving the dispute and are open to play.

## HOW TO PLAY

There are guidelines for using the Point-of-View Gun effectively:

- Respecting the other's worldview;
- Speak with truth, meaning, and heart, with a positive intention;
- Belief to be possible what the other believes to be possible;
- Seek to understand, not persuade. The intention is not to win the argument or prove someone wrong.

### STANCE

As a facilitator, you only mediate. This play is difficult. Here are the steps to guide you through it.

**2 MINUTES**

**Step 1:** One player shares their thoughts and feelings about a certain situation. The player (zapper) may then zap someone in the group using a Point-of-View Gun toy (or simply their imagination).

**4 MINUTES**

**Step 2:** The zapped individual will now try to verbalize how the zapper is feeling and thinking about the situation while keeping the guidelines in mind using these steps. Encourage players to make eye contact:

- "How is the other person feeling according to you?"
- "What's the good intention behind the other's argument?"
- "What feelings and intentions do you share?"
- "Can you strengthen the position/argument of the other?"

**4 MINUTES**

**Step 3:** The zapper will briefly reflect on what the zapped person shared:

- "What did you like, and what rang true?"
- "What do you agree on?"

Thank each other for the courage and openness. The Point-of-View Gun may now exchange hands. The outcome of this activity may still be that there is respectful disagreement. We can be thankful to each other for enriching us with another perspective.



Point of View Gun

concrete practice

30 minutes

empathize

reflect

teach-back

perspective

sci-fi toy gun



Write about your experience!



what was the  
weather like?

Writing Prompts:

What I experienced was ...

What was meaningful to me was ...

What was unexpected to me was ...

I am proud I ...

What excited me was ...

What drained my energy was ...

I really appreciated [person] did ...

I really want to remember ...

I'm glad to leave ... behind

If I could go back in time I would do ... differently

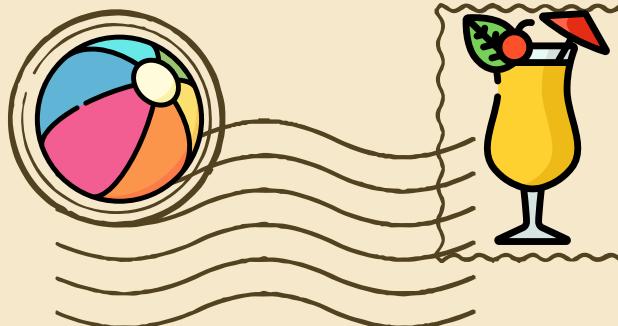
If I had a Magic Wand I would ...

One small change that would make my work more enjoyable is ...

What I really like to happen next is ...

I'm concerned about ...

I still have a question about ...



Addressed to?

yourself, past-self, future-self

your team, team member

leadership, stakeholders, users

# #37 | Postcards

## PURPOSE

Participants reflect and write a postcard about what was meaningful about their experience.

Postcards is a wonderful conclusion play to wrap up activities, trainings, or Sprints. **What's worth writing home about?**  
Players summarize their learning experiences on a Postcard. This is a good way to validate the learning experience.

## HOW TO PLAY

### STANCE

To prepare the play, you'll need a set of markers and postcards. These can also be metaphorical photos. You can make it even richer with stickers. As a facilitator, you should also write a postcard if you were also part of the activity.

### 1 MINUTE

**Step 1:** Invite players to pick a postcard and capture their experience on it. They may choose to whom they address the postcard.

Although sharing the postcard is encouraged, they do not have to share their postcard. They may keep it to themselves.

You can give examples such as:

- themselves (current, past, or future self)
- team members
- stakeholders
- family

### 7 MINUTES

**Step 2:** The players are free to write what they want, but consider showing the players prompts to help them write their postcards.

These prompts are entirely optional:

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What I experienced was ...</li> <li>• What was meaningful to me was ...</li> <li>• What was unexpected to me was ...</li> <li>• I am proud I ...</li> <li>• What excited me was ...</li> <li>• What drained my energy was ...</li> <li>• I really appreciated ... did ...</li> <li>• I really want to remember...</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm glad to leave ... behind</li> <li>• If I could go back in time, I would do ... differently</li> <li>• If I had a Magic Wand, I would ...</li> <li>• One small change that would make my work more enjoyable is ...</li> <li>• What I really like to happen next is ...</li> <li>• I'm concerned about ...</li> <li>• I still have a question about ...</li> </ul> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

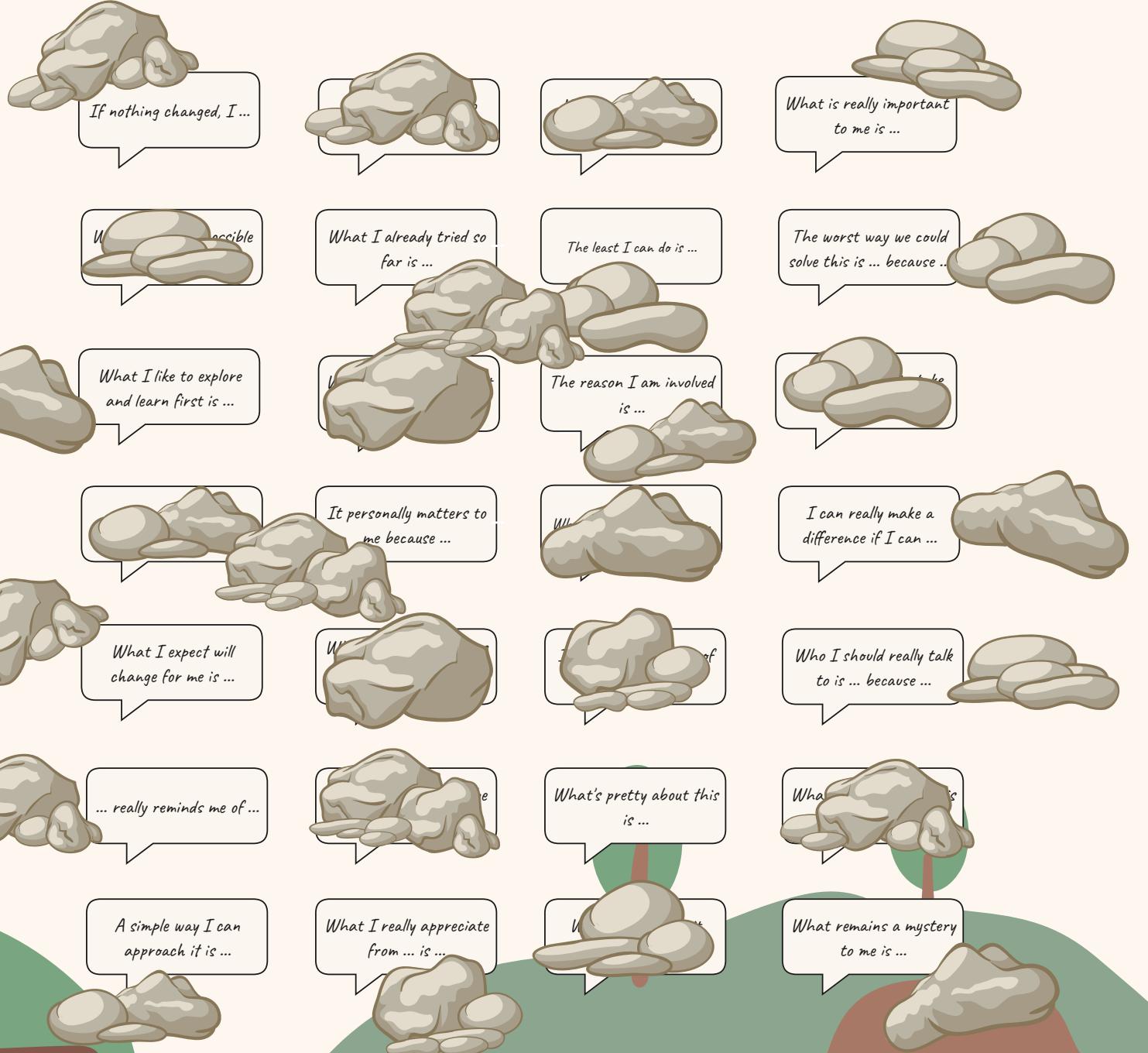
### 2 MINUTES

**Step 3:** Thank everyone. Invite players to share their postcards on the table for others to read or to keep them to themselves.

Postcards
conclusions
10 minutes
empathize
reflect
teach-back
perspective
brainwrite
prompt
metaphors
postcards
markers
stickers



**How to deal with those  
bricks on the road?**



# #38 | Powerful Prompts

## PURPOSE

Participants complete prompts to capture insights and open their minds to new perspectives and strategies.

Consider using Powerful Prompts for a challenge you are facing together. Completing the prompts will create more situational awareness by making players mindfully aware of what this challenge provokes for each player. It really promotes openness. These prompts aid players who may struggle to express themselves timely and effectively. Some Powerful Prompts set the players up to respond to the challenge creatively and constructively. This play **empowers everyone to explore challenges and opportunities.**

## HOW TO PLAY

These prompts are useful in complex situations and challenges. We find them particularly helpful in refinement and Sprint Planning. To facilitate this play, consider preparing the prompts by taping them on physical objects such as Happy Stones, marshmallows, or leaves. This way, the prompts can be revealed to players as they pick them up. Provide players with markers and notes.

## STANCE

As a facilitator, you play along. You may create your own Powerful Prompts. Powerful Prompts are open-ended statements with no hidden agenda. These prompts help the receiver of the prompt by creating greater clarity and revealing new opportunities and possibilities:

- If nothing changed, I ...
- What I would like to happen next is ...
- When this is overcome, I ...
- What is really important to me is ...
- What is already possible for me is ...
- What I have already tried so far is ...
- The least I can do is ...
- The worst way I could solve this is ...
- What is not clear to me is ... because ...
- What I like to explore and learn first is ...
- What I do not want to happen is ...
- The reason I am involved is ...
- What is really at stake for me is ...
- My own intentions are ...
- It personally matters to me because ...
- What I would like to do is ...
- I can really make a difference if I can ...
- What sounds realistic to me is ...
- What I expect will change for me is ...
- What I expect from my team is ...
- What would drain my energy is ...
- I would like to do less of ... and more of ...
- Who I should really talk to is ... because ...
- What I really would like to hold on to is ...
- What's stopping me from ... is ...
- I am concerned about ... because I ...
- ... really reminds me of ...
- I will be able to be my best when I ...
- What's funny to me is ...
- What's sad to me is ...
- What's already going well is ...
- What remains a mystery to me is ...
- What's new to me is ...
- What's pretty about this is ...
- What's ugly about this is ...
- I'm not sure about ...
- What would really make it clear to me is ...
- What frustrates me is ...
- What sounds impossible to me is ...
- What would make it possible is ...
- A simple way I can approach it is ...
- What I really appreciate from ... is ...

## 10 MINUTES

Invite all players to randomly pick a prompt. Invite players to pick a prompt. They may swap. They may write down the prompt and complete it. If time allows, they may pick another one or swap. When the timebox runs out, allow players who are still writing a moment to complete their sentences. Players may share their answers. You may start by sharing yours.

## Powerful Prompts

connections

concrete practice

10 minutes

brainwrite

prompt

perspective

coach

encourage

empower

empathize

involve

imagine

reflect

happy stones

tape

markers

printouts

notes





# #39 | Radar

## PURPOSE

Quickly assess, score and visualize telemetry as a team.

Radar is a visualization technique to quickly collect how team members rate certain areas of importance. A Radar can provide timely insights by scoring parameters relevant to the team. The parameters may be anything the team believes are critical to have on their Radar, such as their confidence towards achieving the Sprint Goal, sustainability, morale, and quality.

A Radar should be updated frequently for it to be relevant and transparent.

## HOW TO PLAY

The Radar is a large circle with five to eight equal segments (slices). Each line represents one indicator that can be scored from zero (inside) to five (outside). You can print the Radar on a large canvas or draw it on a large board. It should be highly visible. A Radar can prove vital as it can enable timely decision-making. The dashboard shouldn't just be a damage report. Ideally, it visualizes how things are going, what is happening, and what is coming your way. A Radar is by and for the crew (team).

### STANCE

As a facilitator, you may provide your input for the Radar in the case you are also a crewmember.

If the team has not yet determined its areas of importance, they may agree on five to eight areas.

If the Radar is already in play, the crew may drop, change or add areas at any time.

### 2 MINUTES

**Step 1:** Each crewmember scores each indicator on the Radar between zero (lowest) and five (highest). Consider using (removable) dots or tokens. Crewmembers may also add sticky notes with relevant information on the Radar.

### 8 MINUTES

**Step 2:** Each crewmember may share (under one minute) their takeaways and personal follow-ups based on what the Radar reveals.

The crew can motivate their scoring by looking at the Radar as a whole. I highly recommend you encourage the crew to also share what is going well and why.

Update the Radar frequently, ideally at regular intervals. The crew should routinely inspect if the Radar is relevant and actual.



*What if....*



The Scrum Master    The Product Owner    A Developer    The Line manager    The Organization    The client



embraces    denies    stimulates    sets up    lacks    loves



the Scrum Framework    traditional planning and reporting    the Scrum Values    empiricism    deadlines    carrots and sticks

*alternatives:*

The CEO    A highly intelligent A.I.    An Auditor    Ken & Jeff    A new team member    A key stakeholder

ignores    forgets    inspects    enforces    abuses    disrespects

Feelings    Sustainable Pace    Our Codebase    The Product Vision    The Product Increment    Transparency

+

*During...*



The Sprint Planning    The Daily Scrum    Refinement    Development    The Sprint Retrospective    The Sprint Review

A Code Review    A secret meeting    a company party    a public launch event    Karaoke night    the weekend

# #40 | Story Dice

## PURPOSE

Create your own Scrum scenarios.

Involve your whole team (and stakeholders) to creatively imagine scenarios by creating and rolling "Story Dice" to generate random prompts. Some scenarios may be funny and cheeky. It's also a fun way to explore various Scrum concepts like its accountabilities, events, and artifacts.

## HOW TO PLAY

You can play Story Dice with (D6 or D12) dice. You can also be creative and use different types of dice (for example, color-coded dice). Here is a standard set of options to generate prompts:



### Subjects:

1. Scrum Master
2. Product Owner
3. Developers
4. Line Manager
5. Organization
6. Client



### Verbs:

1. Embraces
2. Denies
3. Stimulates
4. Sets up
5. Lacks
6. Loves



### Objects:

1. Scrum Framework
2. Plans and Reports
3. The Scrum Values
4. Empiricism
5. Deadlines
6. Carrots and Sticks



### Events:

1. Sprint Planning
2. Daily Scrum
3. Refinement
4. Development
5. Sprint Retrospective
6. Sprint Review



### Possible combinations:



### Alternative Subjects:

1. Scrum Master
2. Product Owner
3. Developers
4. Line Manager
5. Organization
6. Client

### Alternative Verbs:

1. Ignores
2. Forgets
3. Teaches
4. Enforces
5. Abuses
6. Disrespects

### Alternative Objects:

1. Feelings
2. Sustainable pace
3. Product Backlog
4. Product Vision
5. Product Increment
6. Transparency

### Alternative Events:

1. Code Review
2. Secret Meeting
3. Company Party
4. Public Launch Event
5. Karaoke Night
6. Weekend

## STANCE

As a facilitator, you can join in on the fun!

## 15 MINUTES

In triads or quads, roll the dice to create prompts. Players imagine scenarios based on these prompts. Some prompts will be unrealistic, but they will be fun to imagine scenarios for. Part of what makes this play so engaging is that it combines funny scenarios with serious ones. This way, the group really opens up.



### Story Dice

concepts

concrete practice

15 minutes

roll dice

roleplay

imagine

prompt

joke

improvise

contextualize

dice

notes

markers



# #41 | Surf Boards

## PURPOSE

Empowers participants to self-manage events.

It takes a bit of practice to master the art of riding waves smoothly, and so it is with facilitating events. Surf Boards is a way to liberate and empower Scrum Team members struggling with a specific Scrum Event. Surf Board's purpose is to encourage members to try better ways by taking control over their events: to make it all worthwhile for themselves. What would make it enjoyable and meaningful to them?

## HOW TO PLAY

Decide which event you would like your team members to self-manage. The Daily Scrum is a good starting point for Surf Boards.

### STANCE

As a facilitator, you may play along, but it is best to save your input until everyone else had the opportunity to reveal their own preferences. Explain that the goal is to develop new ways to run the event by tapping into the team's collective creativity.

### 7 MINUTES

**Step 1:** Introduce the purpose and rules of the specific Scrum Event (as per the Scrum Guide). Invite players to pair up and together draw an ideal agenda with activities, plays, and topics that would make the event meaningful and worthwhile for them. Each pair receives a small wooden surf board on which they can create their own agenda with intended outcomes for a specific event. They visualize this on their own Surf Board. They may creatively use materials such as sticky notes and markers. Encourage them to add one conventional and one UNconventional idea for their agenda.

### 8 MINUTES

Next, each pair introduces their Surf Board to the group in give or take two minutes.

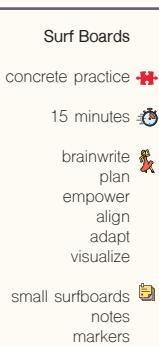
The objective is to be open to trying various ways, no matter how impractical they may sound at first. As with surfing, it's exciting to try (crazy) new ideas and techniques. Finding a balance may be tricky. You master surfing by surfing, not by talking about surfing. Try it, experience it, and reflect on it. The team decides; there are many ways to agree on what to do with all the suggested ideas.

Allow your participants to find their own way to facilitate the event. Consider these follow-ups:

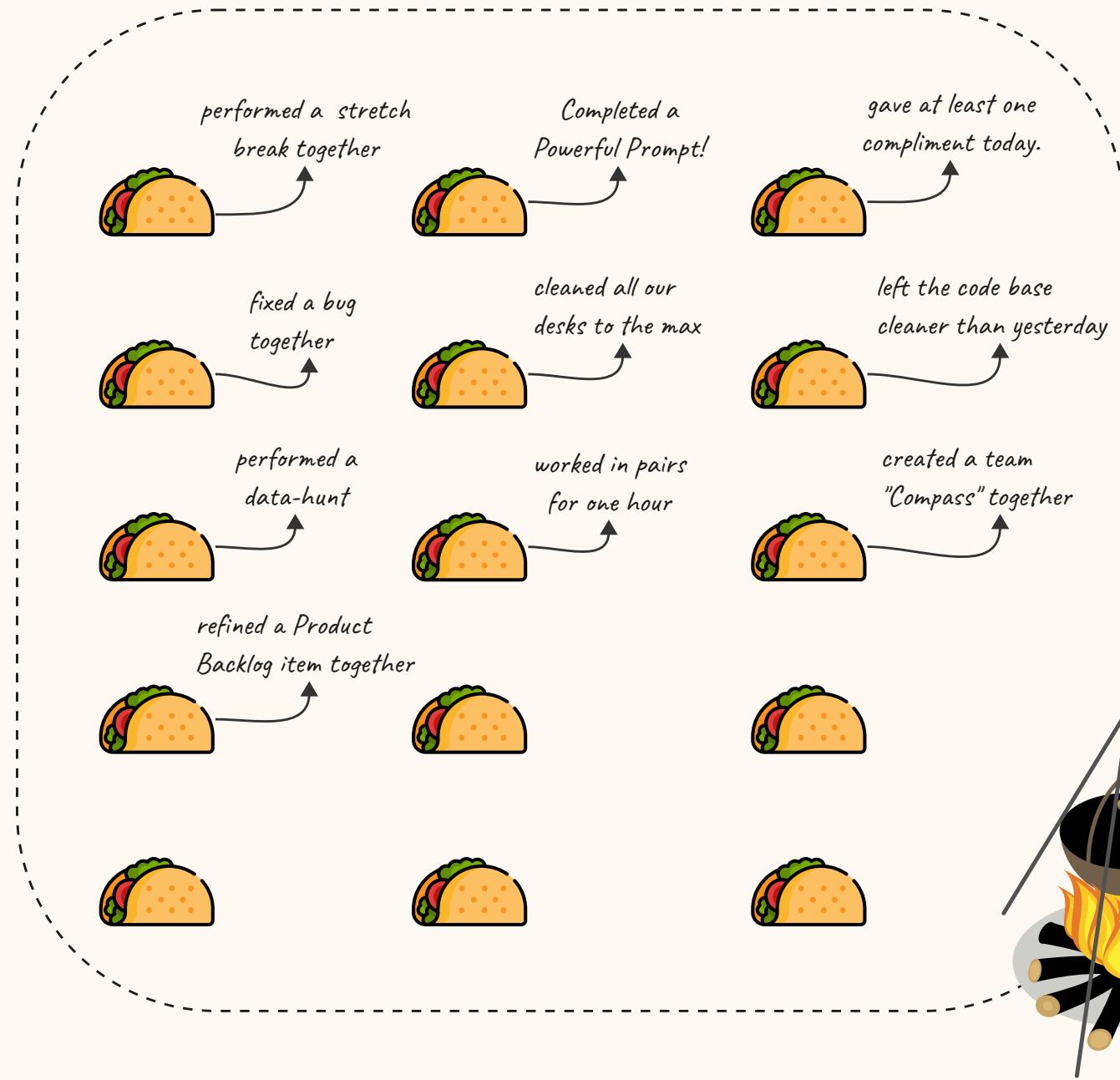
- Alternate the Surf Board agendas (and facilitator) and reflect on the outcomes together. What did you like? What worked? What didn't?
- Inspect together if the purpose and rules of the event are still met.
- Co-create a shared Surf Board that is inspected and adapted over time.

You'll learn that individuals have different expectations and motivations for various events.

Surf Boards create transparency amongst members on what's really needed to make events worthwhile for them.



# Taco Score Chart



15 tacos:  
**MEXICAN  
LUNCH**



# #42 | Tacos

## PURPOSE

Small achievements boost trust and confidence.

Tacos unlocks the power of small wins. Tacos is an abbreviation for **Tiny Accomplishments**. Tacos are micro-adventures that raise spirit and confidence and provide a positive feedback loop, building trust. Confidence boosts commitment, which results in even more accomplishments.

## HOW TO PLAY

Tacos are about developing belief and confidence in being a team. Tacos must be simple to achieve in a short amount of time, encouraging everyone to participate in achieving it. We prefer applying tiny over big team agreements. Overly ambitious team agreements result in team members losing confidence in the collective ability to live up to its standard, thereby losing trust and confidence in the team. Small steps lead to big changes.

What's awesome about Tacos is that they are often played spontaneously. It just takes a minute to set a Taco challenge and complete it. It encourages short positive social interactions. Its gratification is almost instant. Examples of Tacos:

- Let's make at least one compliment during an activity.
- Let's leave the room in a better condition than when you entered.
- Let's clean all our desks to the max.
- Let's successfully resolve a team vote.
- Let's perform a stretch break.
- Let's fix this bug together.

I'm sure you can think of more. Often, the best ones are imagined on the spot. It's just three steps to play:

1. Set a micro-challenge (anyone from the team can do this);
2. Perform the micro-challenge together (there is always a right to pass);
3. Positively appraise and thank each other – you just earned yourselves a Taco.

To facilitate, you'll need to keep a Taco Score Board. You can apply your own imagination to what that might look like. How many Tacos will it take to earn a special team lunch?

It's really about building up team confidence. Some micro-adventures are supposed to be silly; they are good tests to see if your peers are willing and able to put their egos aside for the team. Never enforce Tacos. Invite the team to play, but it's their call. We experienced teams who embraced Tacos and teams who didn't. Its practice may die out over a short time or a long time. Get Crunchin'!

Tacos
concrete practice 
1–5 minutes 
empower apprise encourage challenge achieve build trust
scoreboard 





# TERRIBLE TROLLS

# #43 | Terrible Trolls

## PURPOSE

Identify what might disrupt a product and team from delivering value and develop a counter-strategy.

Terrible Trolls is a play where participants imagine (and name) monsters that trample through and disrupt something. What if, for example, a Terrible Troll stamps through your Workflow, Product Backlog, or Codebase? Terrible Trolls can effectively develop Collective Ownership over the product, quality, and workflow.

## HOW TO PLAY

Prepare a large board or canvas and hand out sticky notes and markers to all players.

### STANCE

As a facilitator, it is better to remain in the background. This way, your players will be more creative and engaged.

1 MINUTE

**Step 1:** Introduce the Terrible Trolls to the players. For example:

- "Oh no! We've disturbed a Terrible Troll from its slumber! It's in a terrible mood and will disrupt anything in its path!"

Divide the group into triads or quads.

1 MINUTE

**Step 2:** Invite each triad/quad to come up with one specific target for the Troll, for example:

- workflow
- product
- quality
- codebase
- communication
- artifact (Product Backlog / Sprint Backlog / Product Increment)

3 MINUTES

**Step 3:** Each triad/quad will imagine and agree on a terrible name for their Terrible Troll. Invite them to draw the Terrible Troll.

5 MINUTES

**Step 4:** Each triad/quad brainwrites ways their Terrible Troll can do damage to its target. Select three to five.

5 MINUTES

**Step 5:** In only one minute per triad/quad, each introduces its Terrible Troll to the group.

5 MINUTES

**Step 6:** Each triad/quad is now assigned a Terrible Troll from another group. They may now brainwrite various counter-strategies to defeat or prevent this Terrible Troll from doing harm. Narrow it down to one to three counter-strategies.

5 MINUTES

**Step 7:** Each triad/quad has one minute to teach back their strategy to defeating the Terrible Troll to the whole group. Invite the group to consider applying a strategy in the next Sprint, targeting a specific Terrible Troll.



Terrible Trolls

concrete practice

25 minutes

brainwrite  
empower  
imagine  
adapt  
role play  
improvise  
involve  
joke  
disrupt  
experiment

whiteboard   
markers  
sticky notes

# Tiny Monsters!





# #44 | Tiny Monsters



## PURPOSE

Identify and visualize fears, challenges, and impediments.



Tiny Monsters is a funny play that helps teams identify and face challenges using humor. It puts a (funny) face and name to our demons, so we can call out and **face those fears**. You can create Tiny Monsters for numerous things, such as your insecurities, fears, challenges, goals, bugs, myths, anti-patterns, technical debt, backlog items, and impediments. Use your imagination.

## HOW TO PLAY

Prepare a collection of tiny monster elements from which Tiny Monsters can be compiled. Alternatively, invite participants to draw their own Tiny Monster Elements using basic shapes such as odd-shaped circles, ovals, squiggly lines, zigzag lines, boxes, curves, etc.

Prepare three canvases per player on which they can compile or draw their Tiny Monsters.

### STANCE

As a facilitator, you may play along and create your own Tiny Monsters.

### 2 MINUTES

**Step 1:** Invite individuals to write down three fears, insecurities, anxieties, and uncertainties on their minds. These may be about themselves, the team, the product, the goal, or the broader organization.

### 8 MINUTES

**Step 2:** Use the Tiny Monster Elements and canvases to create *up to* three Tiny Monsters and name them.

### 5 MINUTES

**Step 3:** In triads or quads, in just one minute each, introduce your Tiny Monsters to each other.



Consider making it an objective to defeat one of those Tiny Monsters so that you may add them to your Defeated Tiny Monster Collection.



*Attribution:* This play is an adaptation of Tiny Demons/Drawing Monsters by Lyse Edwards, which draws on work by Lynda Barry. Coincidentally, there is also a Liberating Structure in development using the same title. This play emerged independently from it.



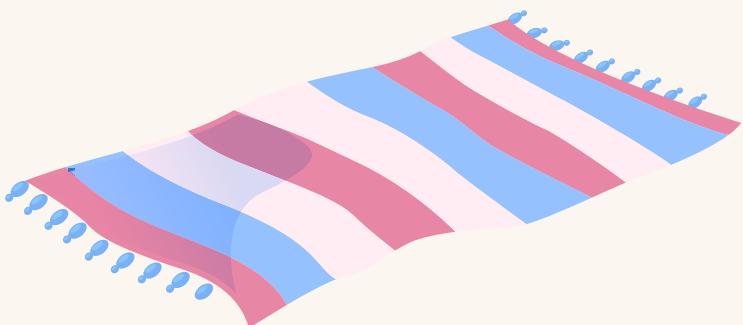
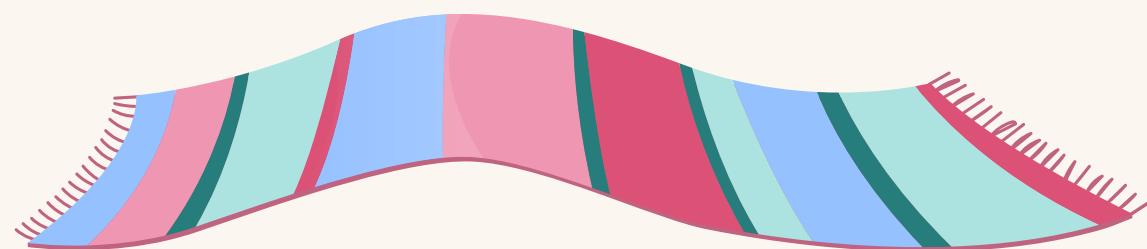
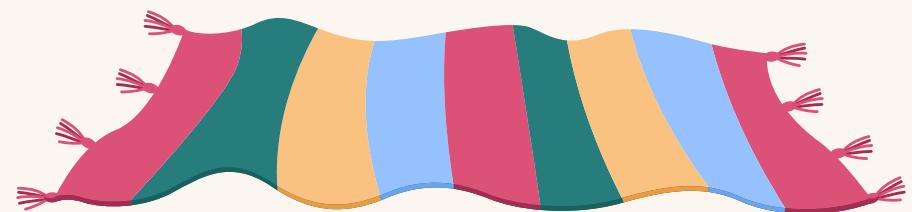
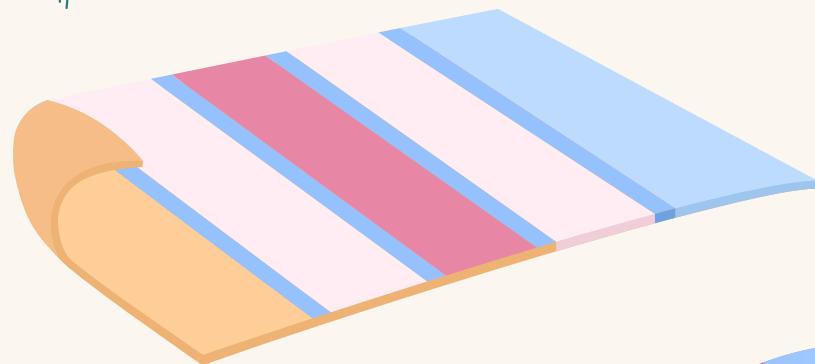
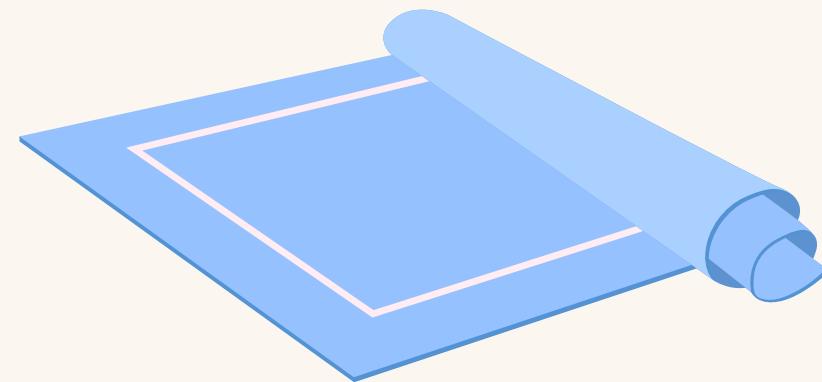
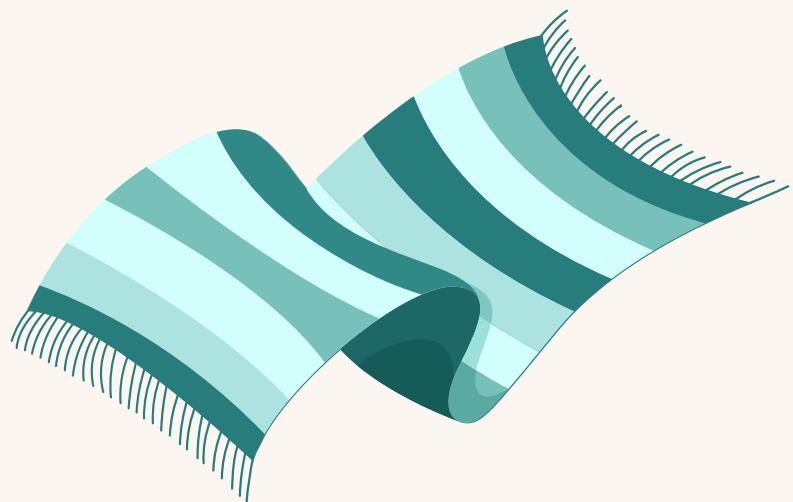
### Tiny Monsters

concrete practice

15 minutes

brainwrite  
draw  
imagine  
identify  
visualize  
role play  
improvise  
joke

whiteboard   
canvases  
color markers  
monster snippets



# #45 | Under the Rug

## PURPOSE

Reveal what the organization might be obscuring.

What's your organization sweeping under the rug? Scrum is all about exposing the relative efficacy of current management, environment, and work techniques so that improvements can be made. As a Scrum Master it's your aim to promote transparency and **eliminate obscurity**. Under the Rug encourages players to be open about hidden challenges.

## HOW TO PLAY

To prepare for this play, acquire some mini-rug coasters (or consider cutting mini-rugs from a larger one). Provide each player with a mini-rug, sticky notes and a marker. Make sure all sticky notes are of the same color. This play is to be performed openly. Although this play can be performed by collecting input anonymously, in our experience, players often infer or assume who wrote what, even when the input is provided through a digital anonymous survey.

### STANCE

As a facilitator, you may play along as long as you keep your answers to yourself until all other players have written down their own answers.

**2 MINUTES**

**Step 1:** Select and write down three of the following questions on a board:

- What are things we don't like doing that we still do because it has always been done that way?
- What's limiting or preventing us from finding better ways?
- What is giving us speed now but will end up slowing us down?
- What's really bugging users that we are not addressing?
- What did I do that I am not proud of?
- What problems might go away if users had a better understanding of the possibilities?
- What is really not adding any value yet slowing us down?

**5 MINUTES**

**Step 2:** Invite participants to answer the three questions on sticky notes (one per question). They keep the answers to themselves and place the sticky notes underneath their rugs. Explain the answers will be revealed openly to the group. To keep it safe, they should not share anything they are uncomfortable sharing. That means some challenges will remain obscured (for now).

**7 MINUTES**

**Step 3:** Collect the notes from all the rugs. Shuffle and consolidate them on a table or board for all to see. Reflect on them together.

**1 MINUTES**

**Step 4:** Thank each other for the courage and openness. This play is merely aimed at revealing challenges and providing the opportunity to address them. So it is generally a good idea to ask the players what a good first step might be now this has been revealed to them.

Under the Rug
connections
concrete practice
15 minutes
brainwrite consolidate reveal reflect
(white)board markers sticky notes mini-rugs





# #46 | Untold Stories

## PURPOSE

Reveal multiple layers of depth and meaning through provocative prompts.

Have you ever wondered what the *real* story behind the story is? What's not being said may be more important than what is. The purpose of Untold Stories is to prompt otherwise untold and unexplored perspectives. Untold Stories broadens the narrative so that the players can see the bigger picture. It's **provocative, uncomfortable, and invites candor**.

## HOW TO PLAY

Untold Stories often prove effective during Product Backlog refinement, but there may be other situations you may evoke Untold Stories. To prepare, consider using large Speech Bubble notes. Write down the main topic (or keywords) on one of the Speech Bubble notes. This could be a team objective, challenge, User Story, Product Backlog item, impediment, bug, etc. Invite a prominent stakeholder (this could also be a team member) to share their story related to the topic at play.

### STANCE

As a facilitator, you do not play along. It's a tricky play using provocative prompts. Players may be uneasy and find it challenging, so it requires guidance.

**3 MINUTES**

**Step 1:** Invite the stakeholder to tell (not read) their story providing context concerning the topic at play.

**2 MINUTES**

**Step 2:** Form triads or quads. Provide each with a single different prompt. Each prompt starts with "According to me..."

- "What or who is missing from the story is..."
- "What's really important here that was not told is..."
- "What the storyteller might have kept from me is..."
- "The way this story impacts me personally is..."
- "What I find uncomfortable about the story is..."
- "What might really be behind the story is..."
- "What's still not clear about this story is..."
- "What really needs to be revealed is..."
- "There may be a hidden value behind the story such as..."
- "What's good but not mentioned in the story is..."

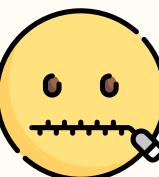
**7 MINUTES**

**Step 3:** Allow one minute of quiet writing so each player can complete the prompt on a sticky note. Encourage candor. Players may make wild assumptions. Then they may consolidate their answers on one large Speech Bubble note which will be shared with the storyteller.

**8 MINUTES**

**Step 4:** Each triad/quad takes turns revealing their prompt and Speech Bubble to the storyteller. Invite the storyteller to comment on what is revealed. The storyteller may (in)validate assumptions. Will the storyteller now tell the Untold Story?

Stop or continue for as many rounds as is appropriate for your context.





During the Daily Scrum, Mike, a developer, shares a new architectural decision the team has to comply with. Another Developer, Pat, shares she will not comply with the architectural decision. She says: "Whoever decided this has no idea what they are doing". This upsets Mike, who worked on the new guideline with Ron, the System Architect outside the team.

# #47 | Volcanic Activity

## PURPOSE

Practice how living the Scrum Values breaks negativity cycles and builds trust.

Holy smokes! What to do when **the situation is ready to erupt?** If there is an issue with trust, egos clash, sending a shockwave of negativity through the team and broader organization. Volcanic Activity starts by looking at the situation through the lenses of Scrum Values. As mushy-wushy as those values may sound, living them will lead to better outcomes. To illustrate this, participants analyze escalating scenarios. What would make it even worse? How would living the values help defuse the situation?

## HOW TO PLAY

To prep this play, you will need handouts with Volcanic Scenarios, markers and sticky notes for all players, and a whiteboard visible to all. Draw a volcano in the middle of the board. The left side of the volcano should be boldly titled: "Erupt" and the right side "Defuse".

### STANCE

As a facilitator, you do not play along as it might disrupt the players' creativity.

**4 MINUTES**

**Step 1:** Introduce a Volcanic scenario to the group. Split the group. One side will escalate (erupt) things by NOT living the values. The other will suggest ways to defuse the situation by living the Scrum Values. They share their suggestions on the corresponding side of the volcano.

**3 MINUTES**

**Step 2:** Invite each side to teach back their strategy to the other side (two minutes per side).

**3 MINUTES**

**Step 3:** It really gets hot when we work from actual experiences shared by the players. What Volcanic Scenarios did they come across?

What happened, and how did it pan out? Divide the following questions amongst the players:

- When were the Scrum Team and its stakeholders not open about the work and the challenges?
- When did you not feel safe to be open?
- When did the Scrum Team not support each other?
- When was the Scrum Team not focused?
- When was a Scrum Team member not respected?
- When did you not feel respected?
- When did the Scrum Team lack the courage to do the right thing?

**5 MINUTES**

**Step 4:** Invite players to pair up and share their experiences with a partner.

They may reflect on how living the Scrum Values would have resulted in better outcomes.

**5 MINUTES**

**Optional:** Ask the players to defuse a situation they are currently experiencing. You can consider playing Volcanic Activity again using that current situation. The discussions may get a bit heated, but keep your heads cool.

### Volcanic Activity

connections   
concrete practice   
conclusions 

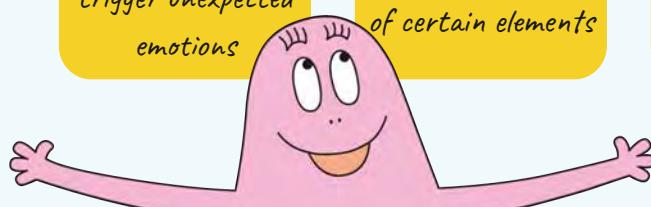
15–20 minutes 

role play  
brainwrite  
encourage  
provoke  
improvise  
strategize  
teach-back

(white)board   
markers  
sticky notes  
hand-outs



HOW WOULD LIFE BE DIFFERENT IF	PERSPECTIVE / SIZE	CONTEXT / ENVIRONMENT	STORY / METAPHOR / ANALOGY /	SURREAL / BIZARRE	ALTERNATIVE USE / MEANING
people could only get from place to place by ...?	Make it bigger. Much Bigger	Put it in completely different settings	Introduce it to a deeply emotional setting	Do something naughty with it	Change the context in which it is applied/used
you were a ... instead of a human?	Make it smaller. Much Smaller	Put it somewhere inappropriate	Make people feel weird emotions when using it	Replace it with something completely different	Imagine something different that does the same thing.
there was only half the gravity?	Take it out of perspective so the understanding of it changes	Change a law of nature. What happens to it?	It is like... something totally different	Attribute strange, silly, inappropriate things to it	Imagine different meanings
humans shrunk half in size	Change its position. The sillier the better	Put it in a fictional setting	Randomly put it in a well known story.	Change the world so it becomes more (or less) valuable	Take it apart and make something else from its parts
the day was in reverse order	Change its shape	Imagine it was sent to the past or future	Imagine it lives an entire life from birth to death	Which band might use it as its stage decor?	What minor change would make a big difference
money didn't matter	Change the size of certain elements	Change its application: use it for something completely different	Make it feel (different) things.	Give it senses: touch, hear, see, talk, taste, smell	What intentional things could happen with/to it?
people would trigger unexpected emotions	Change the shape of certain elements	Make it useless	Make it do something horrible/evil	What if it becomes a religious artifact	What if completely unintended people would try/use/apply it?



# #48 | Warping

## PURPOSE

Have fun imagining how something would be totally different by changing things.

Warping is a creative play where participants can bend (warp) the laws of nature and the rules of life to **create UNreality**. With warping, anything goes. We can make jokes. Jokes don't even have to be respectful. Let's go crazy this time. There are no expectations besides having fun and being silly. We can relax. We can be UNproductive. It takes a bit of time before our mind changes from a closed to an open, playful state.

## HOW TO PLAY

All that really is required is the intention to play and have fun. Consider bringing some shape-shifting toys or fidgets. You may wear a silly hat or shirt, and bring anything unusual to convey that this is *playtime*.

### STANCE

As a facilitator, you can play along but be aware your input might disrupt the players' creative flow. Introduce the following rules:

- We don't need to get anything done. This is playtime.
- Stupid is good. Taboo is good. "No" is bad. Try: "Yes, and..."
- There are bad ideas; let's have fun with them. No matter how bad it is, it can be made even worse. Try it.

### 2 MINUTES

**Step 1:** Invite players to write down a subject to warp. It might be the Product they are working on, but it could be anything entirely random. It doesn't have to be work-related. Quickly dot-vote a subject and run with it. If the vote ends in a tie, wear it.

### 8 MINUTES

**Step 2:** Start warping! Pick a prompt and run with it. Not all prompts work, so choose one that can be applied to the chosen subject. Give people time and space. Invite the group to form pairs, triads, or quads naturally. Capture ideas by drawing, recording, and writing them. Players can expand on ideas from others. Go break some limits!

### ~ MINUTES

In our experience, it generally gets better the longer you play and the more you push your boundaries. But even 10 minutes can be a fun icebreaker or warm-up for an event. You can run multiple rounds and pick different prompts and subjects. Each 20 minutes, go for a short stretch or mind break. There must be a maximum timebox.

Warping

connections 🧩

7 minutes ⏳

prompt 🎭

brainwrite

warp

draw

dare

imagine

role play

dot-vote

improvise

joke

disrupt

contextualize

hypothesize

(white)board 📄

markers

sticky notes

fidgets



# What the duck?!

Question



RANI

...



BHUVAN

GERHARD

IGNACIO

BISHWA

VAISHALI

STUART

THOMAS

SYLWIA

DANNY

IDRIS

DEMERSON



# #49 | What the Duck?!

## PURPOSE

A fun way to validate learning through a quiz where players earn something tangible.

Place a rubber duck in the middle of a table. Ask a question about the topic, training or event that occurred previous to this play. Whoever grabs the duck and answers the question correctly keeps the duck as a tangible reminder.

## HOW TO PLAY

Yes, now you finally have [an excuse to bring Rubber Duckies to your office](#). Prepare a set of questions designed to recap some of the concepts covered. Write these questions down on tape and stick them on a Rubber Duck. The questions may be easy to answer. You may throw in some questions about random duck, flamingo, turtle and frog facts. Put the Rubber Ducks in a box.

## STANCE

As a facilitator, you already know the answers so you don't play along.

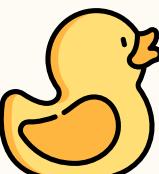
1. Invite players to gather around a table. Instruct players to sit on their hands until the countdown.
2. Pick a Rubber Duck with a question on it from the box.
3. Read the question and place the duck in the middle of the table. Everyone must be able to equally reach for and grab the duck.
4. Count down "3-2-1". Now players may try and grab the duck.
5. Who ever grabs the duck may answer the question. If the answer is correct, they may keep the duck. If not, the group may try again! Someone who earned two ducks may not play again.

Isn't this quacking great?! Go for as many rounds as the time allows or the Rubber Ducks run out.

Here are some random questions/assignments you can throw in the mix:

- Ducks can't get cold feet, true or false? (true)
- Name three things you liked doing during this event
- Why are flamingos pink? (because of the food they eat)
- Duck quacks don't echo, true or false? (false)
- What is a group of flamingos called? (a flamboyance)
- Ducks can see in color, true or false? (true)
- How many people could be killed from one gram of the toxin produced by the skin of the golden poison dart frog?  
(the person closest to the actual number (100.000) wins the frog.)
- Most frogs shed their skin once a week. True or false? (true)
- Do Flamingos dance? (they synchronize dances and even sing!)
- Is Frog Sashimi a real dish? (Yes, it is in Japan, but not very popular)

Consider merging this play with "Tacos", where the team earns Rubber Ducks instead of "Taco points".





# #50 | Which Way?

## PURPOSE

Explore various strategies (ways) of reaching a destination.

This play is a variant of "Red Pill, Blue Pill". Once again, the choice is theirs. Players make up their own minds about various possible ways to approach an objective. All ways will reach a destination. What sets them apart? It can be a wonderful follow-up to Compass. It encourages individual decisions while aligning them with the group. It gives participants control in moving forward.

## HOW TO PLAY

Imagine different directions and strategies a team might take. In this example, we will use twelve archetypes preferring different directions. Consider drawing a pie (or wheel) on the floor or a board with twelve slices, one for each archetype. How would reaching a shared goal be possible in any of these ways?

- **Innocent:** The right/safe way.
- **Sage:** The smart way.
- **Explorer:** Find/clear a better way.
- **Outlaw:** Not that way.
- **Magician:** The impossible way.
- **Hero:** To greatness (the hard way that improves and rewards us).
- **Lover:** The elegant way.
- **Jester:** The fun way.
- **Everyman:** The common way.
- **Caregiver:** The careful, supported way.
- **Ruler:** Everyone goes my way.
- **Artist:** Imagine a way.

## STANCE

As a facilitator, you simply offer choice. You do not decide on the player's behalf nor judge their choice. You may take a stance and choose a way.

## 5 MINUTES

Invite players to pick any twelve ways to imagine what that way might look like. What might they encounter if they approach it that way? How would they approach it? Some players may choose the same way. They may form a small group and collaborate. Alliances are possible. For example, the explorers can ally with the jesters.

## 5 MINUTES

Invite each group or individual to teach back their approach to the whole group in one minute. Can the group imagine an approach all the chosen archetypes are happy with?

Which Way
concepts
concrete practice
15 minutes
choose teach-back discuss empower align plan strategize
pens markers archetype wheel



Extended Plays

# Extended Plays



Remember the plays in this Playbook abide by four rules? They have to be short, simple, small and shared. [Let's break these rules!](#)

Extended Plays are longer collaborative workshops for Scrum Teams. They often last half a day to a day, challenge the status quo, and lead to breakthroughs. They promote collective (team) ownership. They are like mini-hackathons.

The Extended Plays are designed to provoke change. Scrum's pillars of empiricism (transparency, inspection, and adaptation) come to life as you play. After all, inspection without transparency is misleading, and without adaptation, the play is pointless.

Remember to introduce frequent mind and body breaks when facilitating Extended Plays. When you are collaborating in a shared space, participants (and you) will enjoy fresh air and drinks. It can be tricky to keep players focused and engaged over an extended period of time.

Sometimes a player may fall idle. That's okay. Not everyone needs to be busy and shine all the time. Their attention may also dwindle when the other team members are engaged. That, too, is okay, as long as they understand they are still on the field and part of the game. When this happens, it may be tempting for that player to move away and become unavailable. People like to be (appear?) busy, after all. It's okay for players to disengage temporarily as long as they are alert and available when the ball heads their way.

Ready? Catch!



# Frog Sashimi



## 1. Dissect!

- Observe and discuss the frog as a whole.
- Dissect 'the frog' into various parts, pieces or components.
- Look beyond the obvious features. Dig little bit deeper.
- Invite the group to share different perspectives on the various parts.



## 2. Inspect!

- Be hands on!
- What is the purpose of each of these parts?
- What value do they add?
- What if you were to leave them out?
- What do participants like and don't like?
- What's pretty / ugly?
- What is understood and what is not understood?



## 3. Unravel!

- What are the relationships and dependencies between the parts?
- What elements of the system, interaction, and environment affect the parts?
- What conditions may change that can impact the part?
- Do we detect any anomalies?
- What is still unknown about the parts?



## 4. Sashimi time!

- What's needed to turn it into something more desirable?
- What are the first next steps?
- What can we change right here, right now?
- What's needed to resolve the undesirable parts?



# Xo1 | Frog Sashimi

## PURPOSE

Carefully dissect something, no matter how big or small, and turn it into something more desirable.

How's that for a yummy title! Frog Sashimi is a four-step workshop where the Scrum Team swarms a complex problem together. The Scrum Team develops a shared understanding and collective team ownership of something complex. The aim is to inspect it together so the whole team can learn from it. It's cross-functional and promotes the integration of skills. It improves the team's ability to address root causes, not just the symptoms.

## HOW TO PLAY

The Frog is a versatile chap. It represents a complex challenge, one that has been ignored for too long due to a lack of ownership.

The Frog may not be all that fun to work on, but postponing it will make it even worse. For example:

- The Frog as a problem: Frequent glitches and performance instabilities caused by routine product data updates.
- The Frog as (part of) a system: Understanding the complexity behind the Webshop Checkout.
- The Frog as a bug: The user experiences errors with unknown causes.
- The Frog as an emergent situation: The impact of new government policy on privacy.
- The Frog as legacy or technical debt: "We didn't create that (or maybe we did, but won't account for it), yet it is causing many problems".

Frog Sashimi is at least a half-day workshop depending on the nature of the Frog. Specialists may not like it when domains outside their area of competence are being addressed. Players should be encouraged to stay with the Frog, as unpleasant as it may be. As a facilitator, it will be challenging to keep the team focussed and stick to the instructed activities.

Essential to Frog Sashimi is that the team looks at and inspects the various parts in practice, not in theory. They aren't just *discussing* the Frog; they must be *interacting* with it. It's hands-on! In software, the whole team will run through parts of the systematic design, the user interface, the code base, the database, APIs, server configurations, version control, etc.

When facilitating Frog Sashimi, you can encourage simplicity. The aim is to reduce complexity, not to add to it. It doesn't make sense to apply Frog Sashimi when the situation and system are already well understood, and it is already clear what needs to be adapted. Nor is it sensible to play Frog Sashimi for every bug or problem.

"If it's your job to eat a frog, it's best to do it first thing in the morning. If it's your job to eat two frogs, it's best to eat the biggest one first."  
- Mark Twain.

*Attribution: Based on: "Parts Purposes Complexities"; a visual thinking routine developed by Project Zero, a research center at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.*

Frog Sashimi
half-day / day
connections
concepts
concrete practice
conclusions
swarm
observe
dissect
dig deep
inspect
invite
analyze
map
draw
data-hunt
resolve
eliminate
simplify
detect
whiteboard
markers
sticky notes
flipover
beamer
canvas
haribo frogs



Peel the  
Fruit!



# Xo2 | Peel the Fruit

## PURPOSE

What complexity is hidden underneath the surface? Peel away layers of a product or system and slice it up.

Peel the Fruit is a vegetarian variant to Frog Sashimi. It is different in that it is not centered around a problem or something undesirable. Instead, it is to learn why it is valuable. There may not be an intention or need to improve, only to develop a shared understanding. You may [learn some juicy facts](#).

## HOW TO PLAY

It is not uncommon for leaders to make decisions about systems they barely understand. We frequently encounter situations where decisionmakers only know about a system through second or third-tier artifacts such as documentation or presentations.

The Fruit can be various things. It can be a product, app, (legacy) system, process, or platform. You might want to peel those with Scrum Team and key stakeholders alike before making rash decisions such as either acquiring, replacing, or discontinuing it.

Peel the Fruit is a series of questions encouraging players to explore what's underneath the skin of a product or system to arrive at core understandings. While exploring, players draw a picture of the system based on first-hand observations. It invites exploration of a topic before drawing conclusions. This play is particularly fruitful in situations where key decision-makers poorly understand the system.

A Sprint Review may provide an opportunity to Peel the Fruit with Stakeholders. This allows stakeholders to see what's under the hood (under the skin). Developers may try a dry run first, without Stakeholders, if that makes them more comfortable. When doing a dry run, avoid the actual play turning into a presentation. It must be a hands-on collaboration.

Peel the Fruit may be a half-day workshop depending on the size and complexity of the Fruit and the available expertise. For larger groups, consider peeling the fruit within a Fishbowl (#19).

Peel the Fruit
half-day
connections
concepts
concrete practice
conclusions
swarm
observe
dissect
inspect
analyze
map
draw
data-hunt
whiteboard
markers
sticky notes
flipover
beamer
canvas
fruit





## **Under the Skin!**

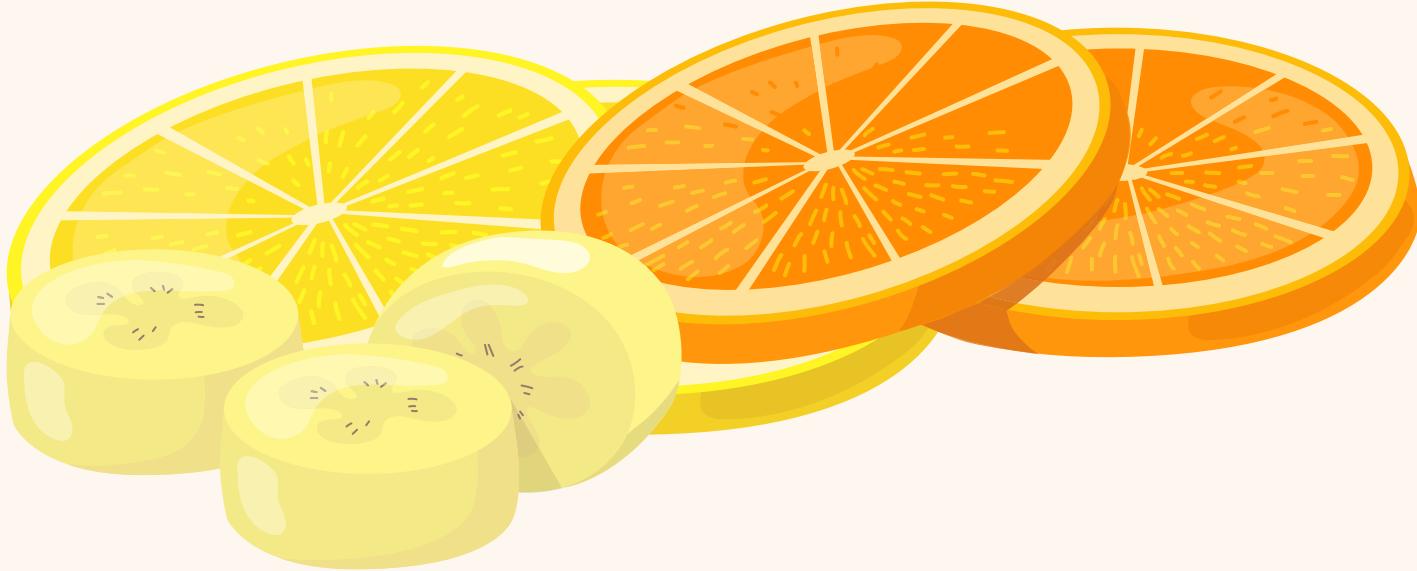
1. Silently and individually write down questions or mysteries related to the complexity of the concept being explored.
2. Write down what you are basing those ideas on.
3. In pairs or triads discuss your assumptions.
4. How can you confirm or prove those?



## Parts

Inspect and Draw as a group:

1. What are its (functional) components and parts?
2. What dependencies exist between the parts that you know of?



## Slices

Inspect and Draw as a group:

1. What (architectural) layers are the parts made out of?
2. How are these layers connected/communicating?



## Juice

Inspect and visualize as a group:

1. What makes the concept so 'juicy'?
2. What's valuable?
3. What's good?
4. How do you know?



Who ya gonna call?!

# Ghost Trapper!

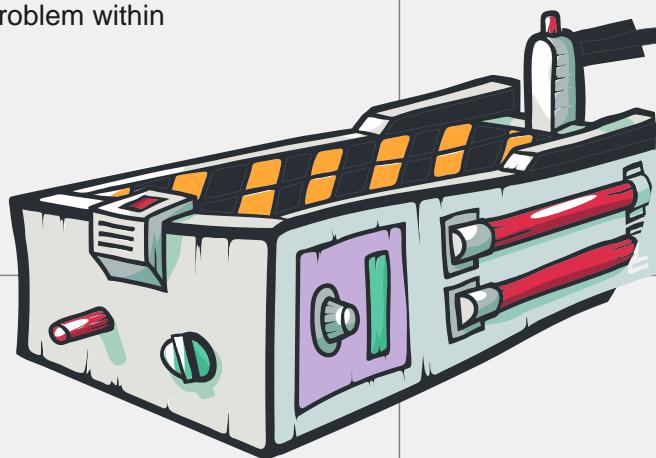


## 1. Find!

Find an example of a harmful problem within the system.

## 2. Capture!

Capture it by developing a shared understanding of it through exchanging perspectives. Visualize it on a board.  
Inspect closely and notice details.



## 4. Wonder!

What new insights were revealed?  
What new ideas and questions do you have?  
Are there ways to make it harmless or less harmful?



## 3. Explain!

After you have visually and mentally captured it, write a paragraph (or show and tell another colleague) how it is complex.  
Can you explain it to an 85 or 5 year old?



# Xo3 | Ghost Trapper

## PURPOSE

Capture complexity together. Find it, understand it, visualize it, explain it, and wonder.

Found something strange? Who ya gonna call? Let's deal with those strange phenomena haunting your product or system. Technical Debt is hard to manage. If only we had something like a Ghost Busters contraption to suck in and capture those malicious spirits.

## HOW TO PLAY

Ghost Trapper involves four steps by a team of (ideally) cross-functional specialists: find, capture, explain, and wonder. If your Scrum Team is haunted by Technical Debt and when they frequently encounter malicious, obscure code or unexpected functional behavior (Ghosts), it's time to go bust them.

The team hunts for these Ghosts together. This creates a shared sense of accountability. Everyone on the team learns from engaging with these strange entities. It can really be fun to name and draw various Ghosts. This also makes them more visible to others who have less visibility over where they live and how they are harmful. For example, during a Sprint Review, the Scrum Team can share what Ghosts they trapped during the Sprint.

## STANCE

One round of this play generally takes about thirty minutes. We've also seen it done in ten. But capturing a Ghost can take days, weeks, or even months. It's good to set an hour aside for Ghost trapping. The frequency may depend on how haunted your systems are. It can also be an ad-hoc activity: "I found a Ghost! let's trap it together!". This makes it more of a pattern or discipline than a play.

## 2 MINUTES

Your Developers may also enjoy keeping a gallery of its most notorious Ghosts. The funniest Ghost we ever encountered was a server randomly rebooting unexpectedly at fairly regular intervals during weekends. We didn't learn anything from running diagnostics. It turned out the cleaning staff regularly unplugged the server in the server room in exchange for a vacuum cleaner (and re-plugging it afterward). It took us two months to capture it.

## 3 MINUTES

So, when there is something strange in your neighborhood system, go bust 'm!

## 5 MINUTES



*Attribution: Based on: "Slow Complexity Capture" a visual thinking routine developed by Project Zero, a research center at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.*

Ghost Trapper
half-day
connections
concepts
concrete practice
conclusions
swarm
observe
hunt
inspect
analyze
map
draw
role play
plan
whiteboard
markers
sticky notes
flipover
beamer
canvas
ghost trapper



The background features a variety of abstract, hand-drawn style illustrations in warm colors like orange, purple, and yellow. These include a sun-like shape with rays, a gear, wavy lines, dots, and various organic shapes.

## Part Three: The Play Guide

eeee

# The Play Guide

When and how to facilitate these plays, is up to you. Who understands the complexity and context of your work better than yourself? That said, we are familiar with facilitating these plays in the context of Scrum and you might not. Therefore, we created a Play Guide as an appendix to the Playbook with practical context.

We experienced that a shared understanding of the purpose of a play is more important than following precise instructions. We often adapted the steps on the fly. There were happy accidents when players misunderstood the instructions, resulting in an equally effective variant of the play. As for time management, we didn't have an exact plan for how long each play should last. We constantly adjust things such as duration as each group has its own pace (and ways).

We are occasionally asked what to do when people resist. That's a fair question. It serves as a reminder that there is no good reason to inflict play on anyone. No one should be forced to play just because you think it will benefit him or her. You facilitate plays to create opportunities for them to work through something when traditional ways fail. Playing can be uncomfortable because no one, not even the facilitator, can know or control everything that will happen. That means playing may require some encouragement. It's a bit like trying new food. You won't know what it'll taste like unless you try it!

Ultimately, the people who join the play are the right people to play with.

## The Play Guide

# During the Sprint...

During a Sprint, ideas turn into value. The Sprint provides a continuous opportunity to learn. Collaboration, self-management, "Done" increments, and valuable outcomes are what makes Sprints worthwhile.

But the *playing field* is rarely in perfect condition. Are people working on different projects at the same time? That might endanger the Scrum Value of *Focus*. Do you have people that go all the way for their own specialism? There is a difference between stopping at "I am done" and "We are done". The latter mindset makes for great team members (or bed partners in that respect).

Fostering a collaborative, safe environment with your team doesn't happen overnight. You are not a feature factory or a fast-food chain pounding to get your work off your plate. You create value every Sprint, which emerges from the work you deliver, and wouldn't it be great for you to enjoy that? Scrum is a dance between value creators and value consumers. But is it possible to bake a cake and eat it too? As value creators, you should reap the benefits from what you sowed!

You can initiate a play anytime during a Sprint. Playtime isn't restricted to Scrum Events. That said, playing shouldn't get in the way of the Sprint Goal. Introducing a play during a Sprint should provide Focus to an otherwise distracted, disrupted, impeded, or scattered team. Play shouldn't disrupt a focused one.

During a Sprint, a team member may have a **Burning Question (#07)**, which only takes a minute. They may initiate ad-hoc **Chatstorms (#09)** or require a **Check for Understanding (#10)**. When they detect **Volcanic Activity (#47)**, a team may quickly gather around for a **Circle of View (#11)** to defuse it. They may go on a quick **Data Hunt (#15)** when hungry for evidence. You may ask **Powerful Questions (#38)**, wear a **Pirate Hat (#35)**, or pull out a **Magic Wand (#29)** to coach a team through an impediment. As the team courageously works through tough problems, defeating **Tiny Monsters (#44)**, **Terrible Trolls (#43)**, and **Trapping Ghosts (X03)**, they may regularly update their **Radar (#39)** and check their **Compass (#13)** and earn some **Tacos (#42)** while doing all that.

## The Play Guide

# Sprint Planning

Let's plan the Sprint. Please indicate your availability in this Excel sheet and map the Story Points to our Velocity and capacity. Our Sprint Goal will be to finish Product Backlog Items 1, 2, and 4 which are already refined. That's it, right? NOT!

If that resembles your Sprint Planning, turn the ship around at once! The Sprint Planning's purpose is to create a forecast for the Sprint. What **Holy Grail (#21)** will they be in search of? The Sprint Goal is a focused, valuable, sacrosanct outcome, not a summary of Product Backlog items. What makes the Sprint worthwhile? How will we know we have achieved our Sprint Goal? Can we draw a **Circle of View (#11)** around our Sprint Goal? Can we **Check For Understanding (#10)**? As an ultimate test, can you explain the Sprint Goal to an 85-year-old, **ELI (#16)**? Can we already imagine what, ideally, will happen **Before the End (#05)**? What might we imagine the Sprint Review to be like doing a **1-2-4-All (#02)**? Perhaps you can write down 10 benefits **(#01)** for this Sprint.

Once that flag is staked, the team can plan its way toward it. **Which Way (#50)** to go? They can orient themselves using a **Compass (#13)**. When are we going to do what, and how? How will we work together? The goal and plan for it are made visible on the Sprint Backlog. Developers may refine Product Backlog items into smaller valuable units that can be done within a day. Those User Stories are wonderful, but what are the **Untold Stories (#46)**? They may gather more information by going on a **Data Hunt (#15)**. How and when will they pair up or swarm?

The team can summon an **Evil Genie (#17)** to discover how their awesome intentions can be twisted in dark ways. They may draw which **Tiny Monsters (#44)** they aim to defeat. We're sure they can also cook up some **Tacos (#42)** to munch through.

## Daily Scrum

It's 9am, time for the Daily Scrum Standup. It's 9.06, and now that everyone is here (save Brent, who had to work on something urgent), you huddle around a JIRA Screen. Your team members already know the drill. They'll drone up monotonously what ticketnumbers they have worked on yesterday, which ones they are going to work on today, and what they have run into so far. It's a ceremonious routine that repeats itself like a broken record. The Daily Ritual often exceeds 15 minutes, but at least the Product Owner appears pleased with the status report. Mission accomplished, right?! **NOPE!**

Liberate your team from that mind-numbing, soul-sucking conclave! The purpose of the Daily Scrum is not getting everyone to stand up, nor is it to find out what everybody has been up to in their silos. It is to inspect the progress toward the Sprint Goal. The what? The Sprint Goal...

Say you are in a Scrum Team and you have a Sprint Goal to increase the accessibility of your monthly newsletter for your readers. The most important questions to answer during the Daily Scrum are:

- Are we going to achieve the Sprint Goal or not?
- Did we learn anything new that is relevant?
- Should we adapt the Sprint Backlog?
- What's slowing us down?
- What's blocking our way?

We want our events to be eventful, remember? There are many ways Developers can turn their Daily Scrum into 15 minutes that are well worth everyone's time. It's *their* event; let them have it *their way!* Invite them to create their own **Daily Surf Boards (#41)**. Perhaps they will try various formats like a **1-2-4-All (#03)**, they might huddle for a **Circle of View (#11)**, and if everything is surfing smoothly, why not throw a **Mad Tea Party (#28)**? To keep it short, In a Nutshell (**#24**), what would they like to achieve **Before the End (#05)** of the day? Do they have any **Burning Questions (#7)**? To keep their progress towards the Sprint Goal visible to the rest of the team and key stakeholders they can check (and update) their **Compass (#13)** and **Radar (#39)**.

# Sprint Review

The Sprint Review is the moment we've all been waiting for! We will show what we have done through this extensive PowerPoint summarizing our Sprint in bullet points. It's mostly an internal presentation, and many key stakeholders decline because they will just receive the slide deck and meeting notes by e-mail. This saves everyone a lot of time because everyone is so busy. That's a call for celebration, right? On a scale from maybe to absolutely, I would say—**absolutely NOT!**

If your key stakeholders don't find it worth their time to show up, perhaps their needs should not have been addressed that Sprint to begin with. Moreover, they will miss a vital opportunity to influence the team to improve and be involved in what to do next. This is when they can influence the Product Backlog. The Scrum Team isn't the only one taking the stand. Changes in market, competition, law, or regulations, new insights from sales and customer service... let's hear it from stakeholders!

The Sprint Review can be a real game changer. It's to take another step ahead of the competition. Serve what's cooked, don't dump it. Are you a fast-food chain or a Michelin-star restaurant? What are you serving? What's the response?

Some Scrum Teams lack stakeholder attendance, while others struggle with way too many. My favorite setups for larger Sprint Reviews are to break the participants into **Fishbowls (#19)**, **Banana Boats (#04)**, and **Circles of View (#11)**. Take turns interacting with the **Holy Grail (#21)**. **1-2-4-All (#02)** and **Glows and Grows (#20)** are quick ways to capture positive and constructive feedback from everyone.

What are the **10 Benefits (#01)** of the Sprint? The Scrum Team may proudly share what **Terrible Trolls (#43)** and **Tiny Monsters (#44)** they encountered and what's inside their **Ghost Trapper (X03)**. What rabbits can they pull out their **Magic Hat (#30)** so that all the new learnings can travel? And can **Money on the Honey (#33)** really help make value stick? Looking ahead, what's in the **Spotlight (b70)** for the next Sprint?

## Sprint Retrospective

Great, now that Sprint Review is over, let's get this Sprint over and done with. Let's share our feelings and write sticky notes about everything that sucks! Now we'll make a plan on how we can do MORE, BETTER, FASTER! This is the moment we can finally have mushy-wushy conversations where the Scrum Master tells us about all the ways in which we are incompetent. "Yeah, Jim, what a great idea to dig even deeper into our own disciplines. And I like your suggestion, Kate, to further reduce the need for any real human interaction, so we can all keep doing our own things more efficiently." That sounds like an excellent way to end the Sprint, right?!

NO WAY! Saying yes to that would surely crush my spirit.

The Sprint Retrospective is an opportunity to reflect on people, processes, and tools. But let's do that in a respectful and encouraging manner. Don't you feel good when you accomplish something and receive recognition from your peers? It anchors trust. It provides a feeling of belonging. It affirms we are valued. We don't do this just because the Scrum Guide says we must. It does offer everyone an opportunity to make our collaboration more meaningful, enjoyable, and valuable, at a sustainable pace.

If you struggle with participation and engagement in creative problem-solving, it might be that your peers are entrenched in their silos. They may gruntingly tolerate direction from the loudest, most influential person. Breaking the structure of your Sprint Retrospective with surprising plays may just liberate your peers, making them all equal creators of their own destinies.

It's only an event if we can enjoy ourselves. What sets the event apart from "Sigh, here we go, again..." to "Yay, here we go!"? Let's ride **Banana Boats (#04)** and go **Warping (#48)** reality! Surprise them with **What the Duck?! (#49)**. You can be **Pirates (#35)** or **Wizards (#29)** for a day. You can learn more about each other's passions with a **Mad Tea Party (#28)**. It may be time to be sweeping the dust from **Under the Rug (#45)**. How can we better equip ourselves against those **Terrible Trolls (#43)** and **Tiny Monsters (#44)**? Let's draw a **Learning Bridge (#25)** from the last Retro to this one.

It's your wonderland. Make it wonderful.

# Index of Plays

- |                             |                         |                        |                       |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. 10 benefits              | 14. Crazy Containers    | 27. Lovely Leaves      | 40. Story Dice        |
| 2. 1-2-4-all                | 15. Data Hunt           | 28. Mad Tea Party      | 41. Surf Boards       |
| 3. Autonomy Matrix          | 16. Explain It Like I'm | 29. Magic Wand         | 42. Tacos             |
| 4. Banana Boats             | 17. Evil Genie          | 30. Magic Hat          | 43. Terrible Trolls   |
| 5. Before the End           | 18. Fill in the Blanks  | 31. Meet the Monks     | 44. Tiny Monsters     |
| 6. Blue Pill Red Pill       | 19. Fishbowl            | 32. Missing Poster     | 45. Under the Rug     |
| 7. Burning Question         | 20. Glow and Grow       | 33. Money on the Honey | 46. Untold Stories    |
| 8. Campfire Stories         | 21. Holy Grail          | 34. Muddied Sign       | 47. Volcanic Activity |
| 9. Chatstorm                | 22. How I Like To...    | 35. Pirate Hat         | 48. Warping           |
| 10. Check for Understanding | 23. Impact Craters      | 36. Point of View Gun  | 49. What the Duck?!   |
| 11. Circle of View          | 24. In a Nutshell       | 37. Postcards          | 50. Which Way?        |
| 12. Clean Setup             | 25. Learning Bridge     | 38. Powerful Prompts   |                       |
| 13. Compass                 | 26. Lenses              | 39. Radar              |                       |

## Extended Plays

- X01. Frog Sashimi
- X02. Peel the Fruit
- X03. Ghost Trapper

# The Scrum Master PLAYBOOK

BY SJOERD NIJLAND + EVELIEN ROOS



"The Scrum Master Playbook is a little gem of a book! Written in a fun, playful style (with lots of whimsical graphics), it engages you, the reader, from the first moment you open its pages. It demonstrates how to bring the elements of play, fun, curiosity, and learner engagement into your own Scrum teams and training programs. The authors invite you to "play" with dozens of practical, simple, interactive strategies that you can immediately use to engage your learners."

The authors also remind us that "*human beings are naturally playful*" and suggest that we "*slow down, stop worrying, and mess things up.*" Chock-full of "*stupidly simple things that work,*" the authors have collected short, delightful activities that will engage any group of learners. Truthfully, this little jewel of a book is a must-have for anyone who instructs others and whose job is to help others learn.

**SHARON L BOWMAN**, author of "Training from the BACK of the Room" and "Using Brain Science to Make Training Stick".