



Retrospectives: Yesterday's News Or Tomorrow's Headlines!

*The measure of success is not whether
you have a tough problem to deal with,
but whether it is the same problem you had last year
– John Foster Dulles*

Robbie Mac Iver, Principal Consultant



Signs Your Retrospectives Are Just...



**Yesterday's
News?**

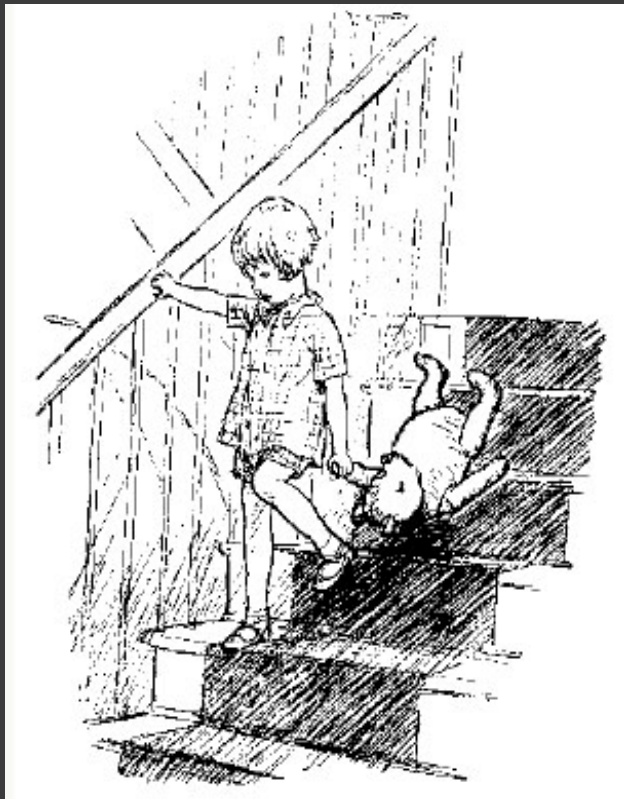
- “It’s a group hug!”
- “It’s ALWAYS been like that!”
- No one’s talking...
- Talking but not capturing ideas
- Someone calls it “Lessons Learned”
- Everyone HATES going to the retrospective!
- ***Team NOT Improving!***

Objectives for Today



- ◎ Provide Tools You Can Start Using Now
- ◎ Define a Framework and a Process
- ◎ Identify Keys to Success

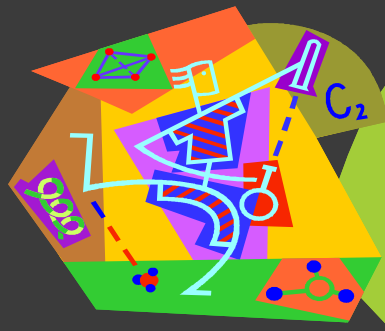
Reflecting to Improve



Here is Edward Bear, coming downstairs now, bump, bump, bump, bump, on the back of his head, behind Christopher Robin. It is, as far as he knows, the only way of coming downstairs, but sometimes he feels that there is another way, if only he could stop bumping for a moment and think of it.

-- A. A. Milne Winnie the Pooh

Create a Learning Organization



Experiment

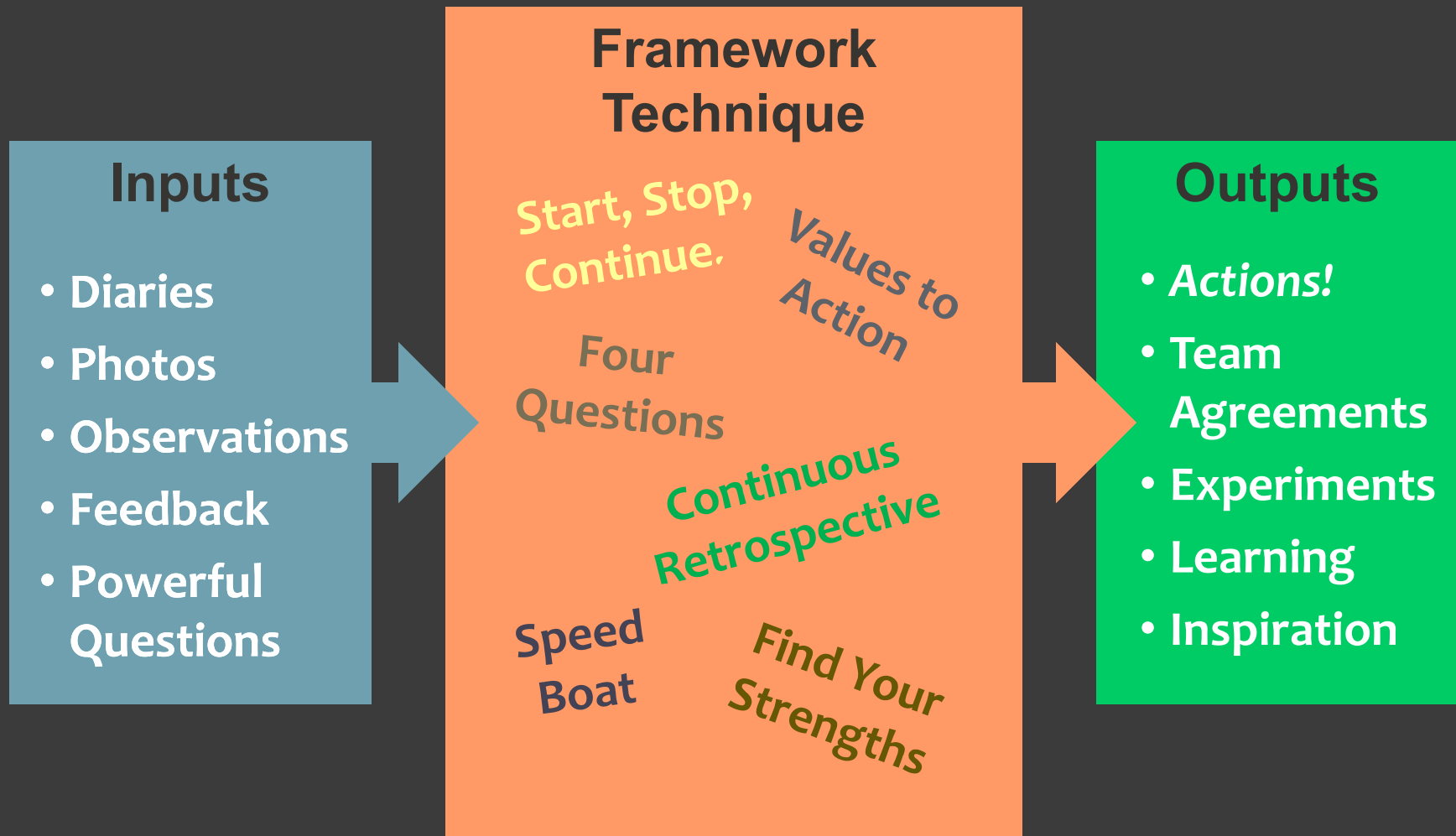


Adapt



Reflect

A Retrospective Framework



Have a PLAN for Your Retrospective!

Framing the Conversation



- ◎ Identify Team Situation
- ◎ Determine How to Present it to the Team
- ◎ Prepare to Guide the Conversation
- ◎ Facilitate an Outcome

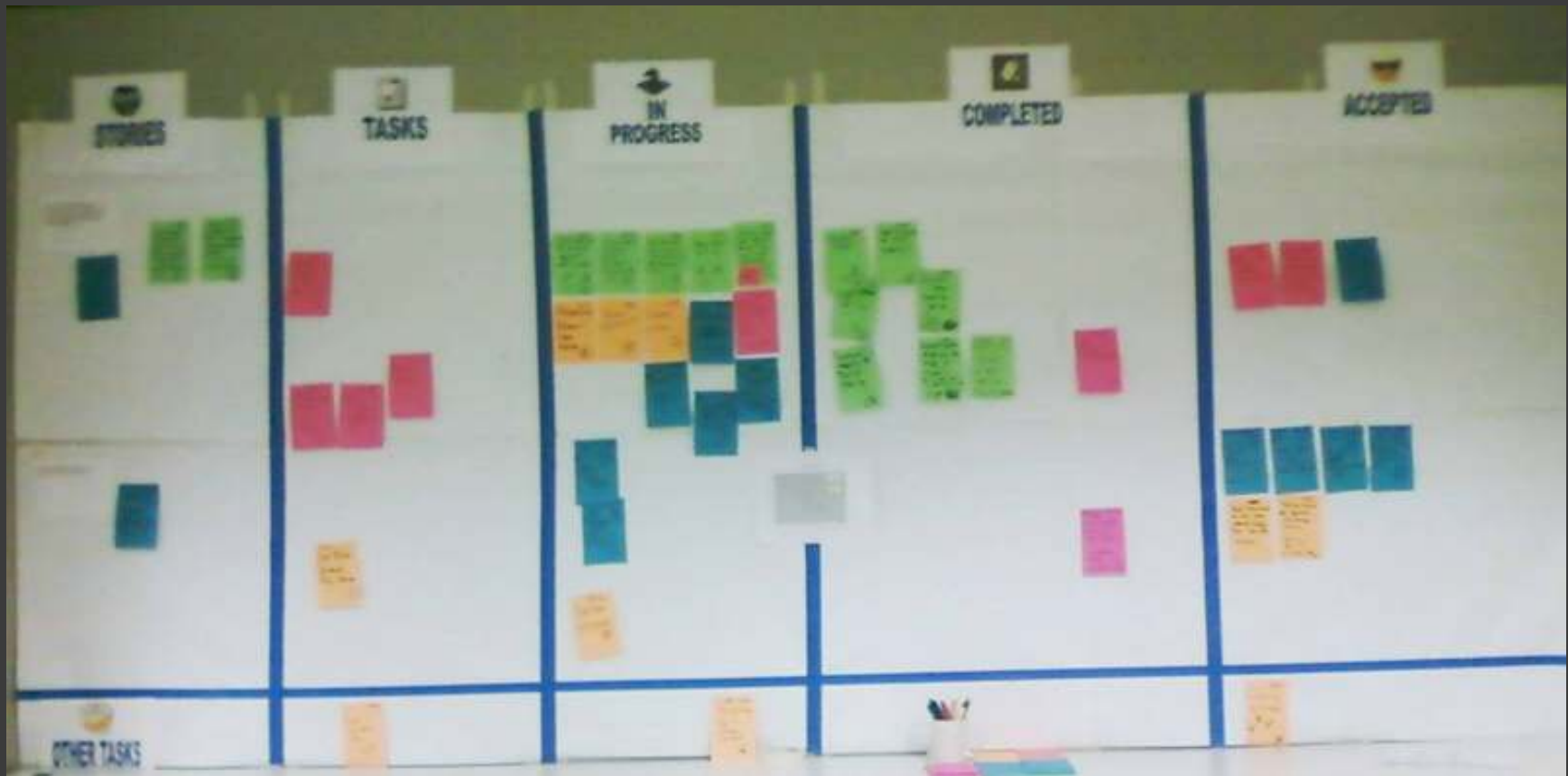
Scrum Board – Sprint 1 - Day 6



Scrum Board – Sprint 1 - Day 7



Scrum Board – Sprint 1 - Day 8



Scrum Board – Sprint 1 - Day 9



Scrum Board – Sprint 1 - Day 10



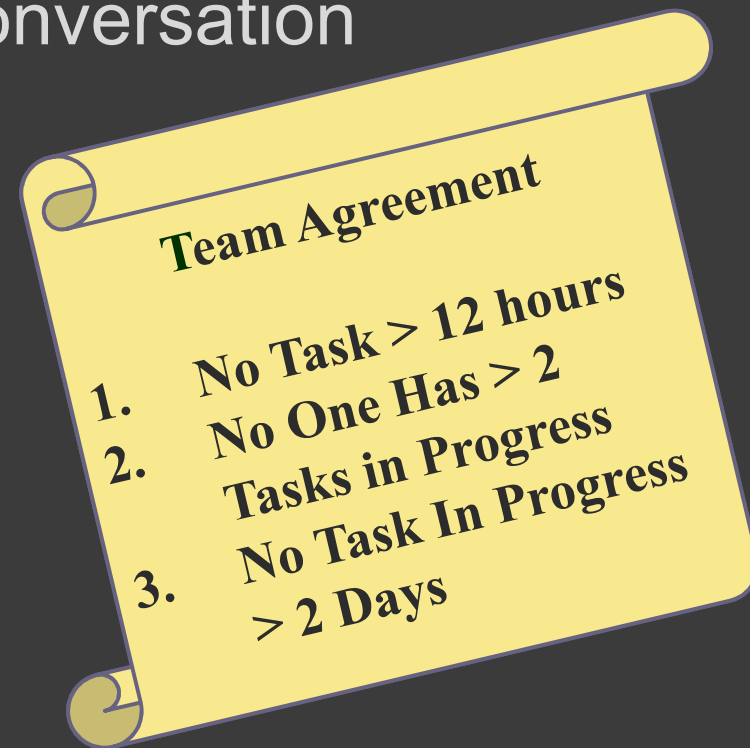
Framing the Conversation

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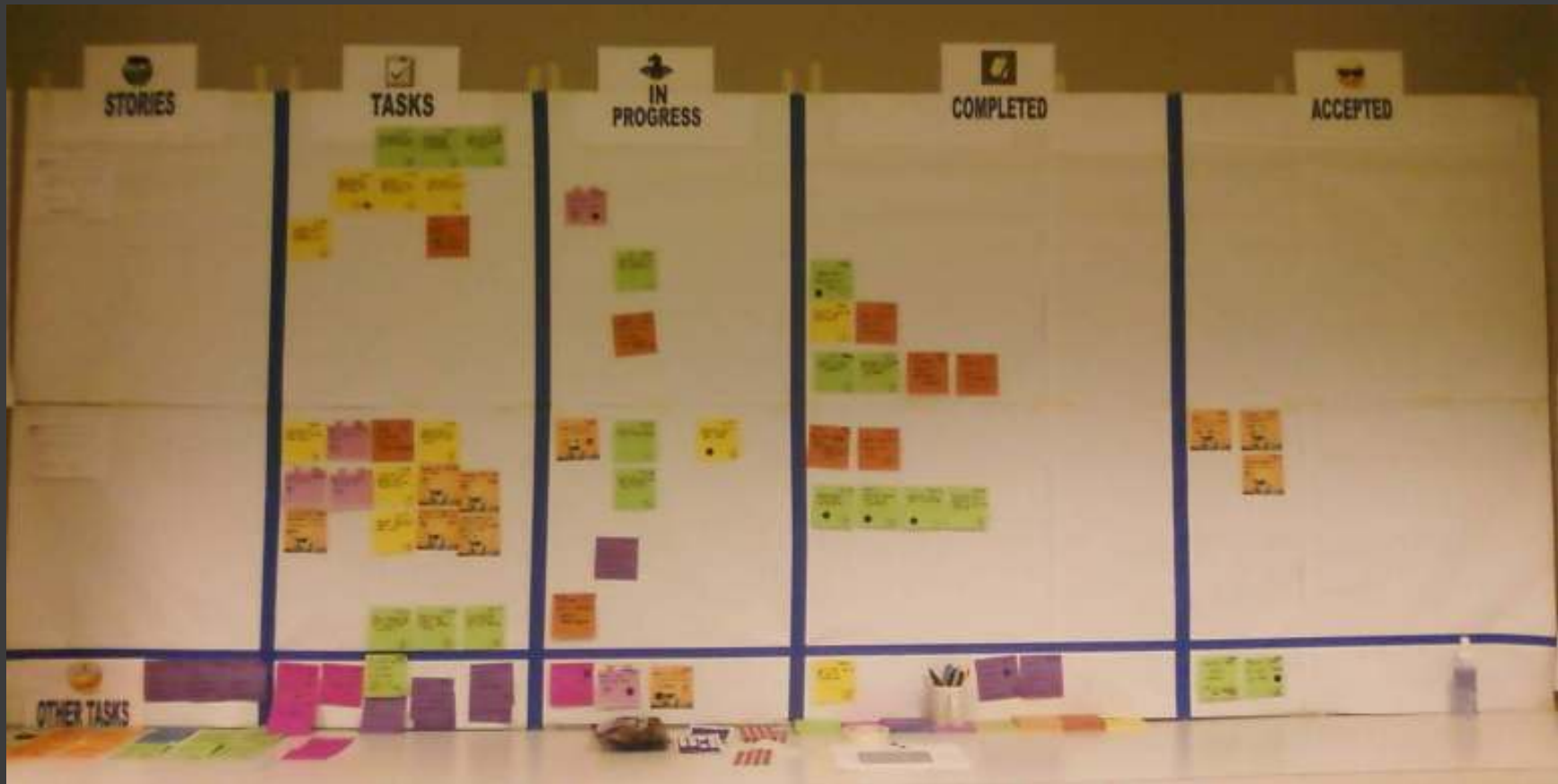
Scrum Board – Sprint 2 - Day 2



Scrum Board – Sprint 2 - Day 3



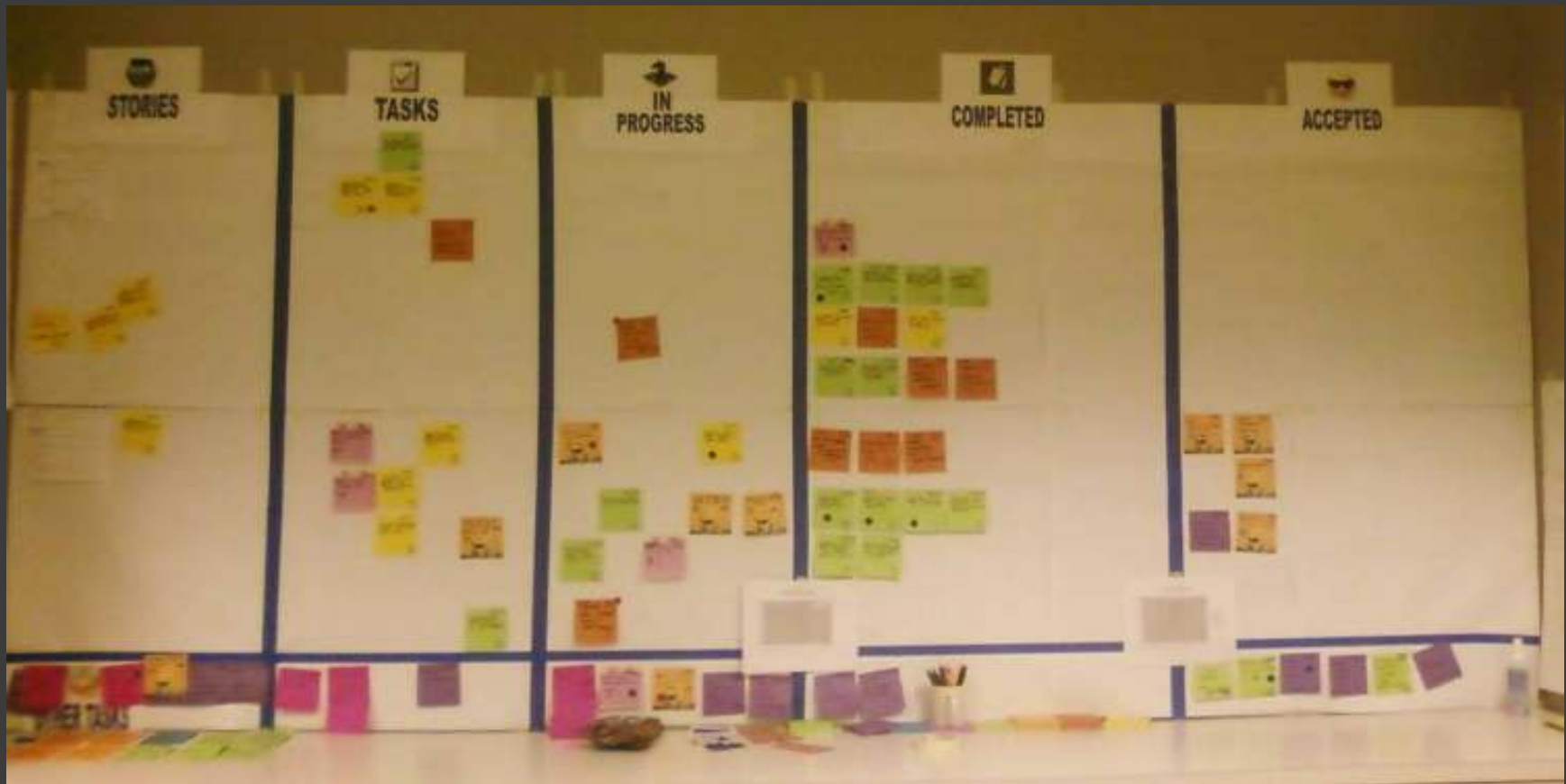
Scrum Board – Sprint 2 - Day 4



Scrum Board – Sprint 2 - Day 5



Scrum Board – Sprint 2 - Day 6



Scrum Board – Sprint 2 - Day 7



Scrum Board – Sprint 2 - Day 8



Scrum Board – Sprint 2 - Day 9



Tomorrow's Headline



**Scrum Team Learns to
Manage Work In Progress**

Keys to Meaningful Retrospectives

- Have a (Flexible) Plan



It Takes Planning and Preparation

Inputs

- Diaries
- **Photos**
- Observations
- Feedback
- Powerful Questions

- ◎ Visuals are Powerful
- ◎ RESPECT Team's Privacy

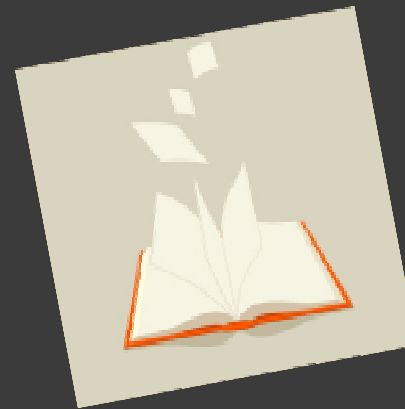


It Takes Planning and Preparation

Inputs

- **Diaries**
- **Photos**
- **Observations**
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- **Powerful Questions**

- ⦿ Plans for the Sprint
- ⦿ Planning Meeting
- ⦿ Daily Standups
- ⦿ Review/Demo
- ⦿ Team Interactions

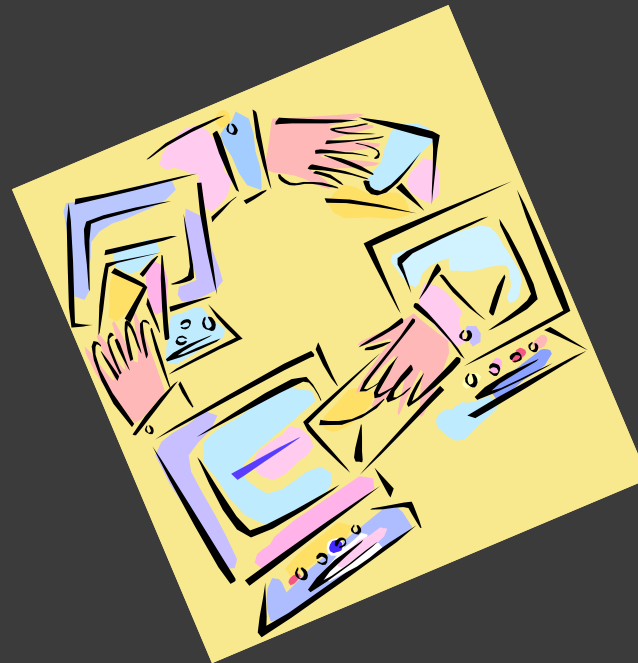


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- Diaries
- Photos
- **Observations**
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- ◎ Co-located Team Members Communicate by e-Mail

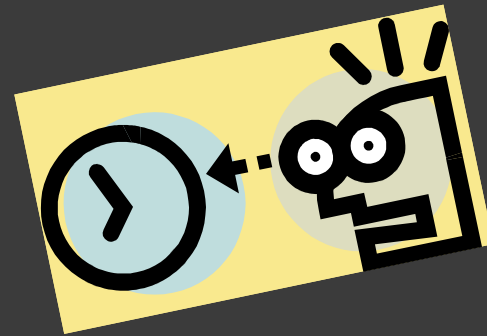


It Takes Planning and Preparation

Inputs

- Diaries
- Photos
- Observations
- **Feedback**
- Powerful Questions

- ◎ “I saw Wendy was on-line at 11pm last Sunday and pulled her into chat...”



- ◎ “She told me the sprint ends Tuesday and she is really stressed getting everything done in time.”

It Takes Planning and Preparation

Inputs

- Diaries
- Photos
- Observations
- Feedback
- **Powerful Questions**

- ⦿ Did you meet the sprint goal?
- ⦿ Was the product owner available?
- ⦿ How do you feel about this past sprint?
- ⦿ What do you know now that you wish you had known in the planning meeting?

It Takes Planning and Preparation

Inputs

- **Diaries**
- **Photos**
- **Observations**
- **Feedback**
- **Powerful Questions**

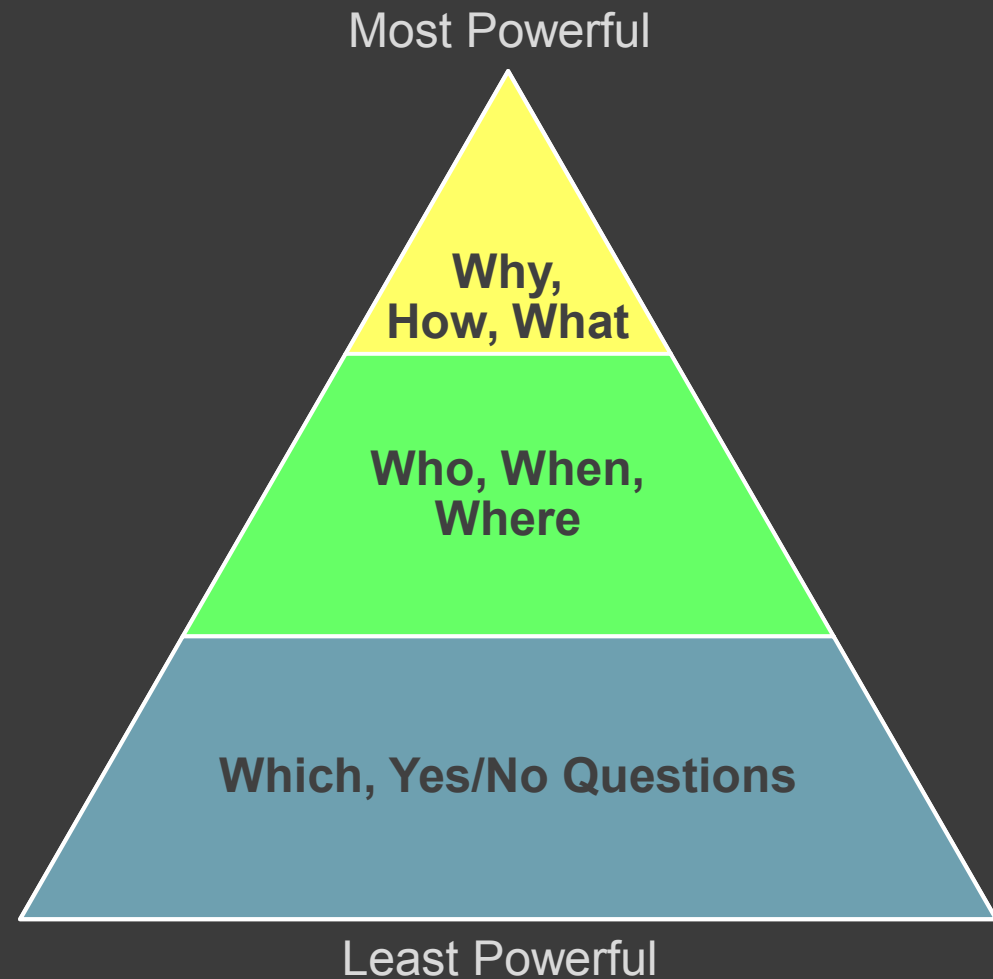
- Generate curiosity
- Stimulate reflective conversation
- Are thought-provoking
- Surface/question assumptions
- Invite creativity
- Generate energy for taking action
- Evoke more questions

Characteristics of Powerful Questions

It Takes Planning and Preparation

Inputs

- Diaries
- Photos
- Observations
- Feedback
- **Powerful Questions**



Source: [The Art of Powerful Questions](#) – Vogt, Brown, Issacs

www.theworldcafe.com/pdfs/aopq.pdf

Guide the Conversation



- Situation
- Possible Questions
- Anticipated Responses
- Follow-Up Questions
- Alternative Outcomes

Sample Situations

- ⦿ Team Member(s) Miss Meetings
- ⦿ Stories Accepted, But Not “Done”
- ⦿ Dominant Voice Makes “Team” Decisions

What Questions Would You Ask?

Keys to Meaningful Retrospectives

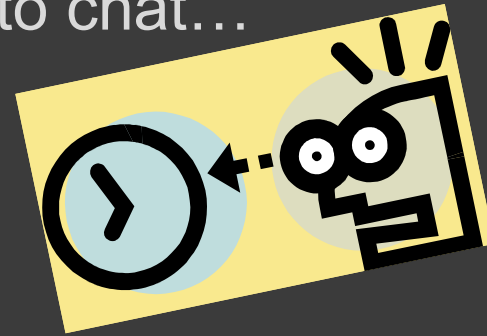
- Have a (Flexible) Plan
- Leverage All Available Inputs



Individual or Team Issues?



- “I saw Wendy was on-line at 11pm last Sunday and pulled her into chat...”



- “She told me the sprint ends Tuesday and she is really stressed getting everything done in time.”

Individual or Team Issues?



George...

- Frequently does work not on the sprint backlog
- Reviews every line of code checked-in -- makes changes without telling anyone
- Works mostly behind closed doors
- Often misses team meetings
- Takes days to respond to questions from other team members

Coaching Opportunities



Individual Coaching

Growing Better Agile Team Members



Whole Team Coaching

Growing Better Agile Teams, Team Practices, Team Learning

Retrospectives are Whole Team Coaching Opportunities

Keys to Meaningful Retrospectives

- Have a (Flexible) Plan
- Leverage All Available Inputs
- Coach Whole Team



Avoid Falling Into a Rut



Alternate Framework Techniques

Framework Technique

**Start, Stop,
Continue.**

**Values to
Action**

**Four
Questions**

**Continuous
Retrospective**

**Speed
Boat**

**Find Your
Strengths**

A Good Place to Start

- ⦿ What Should We Start Doing...
 - Things that help us
- ⦿ What Should We Stop Doing...
 - Things that hurt us
- ⦿ What should We Continue Doing...
 - Things that are working



Four Questions



What Shouldn't We Forget?



What Should We Do Differently?



What Did We Learn?







What Still Puzzles Us?

Source: Linda Rising – www.lindarising.com

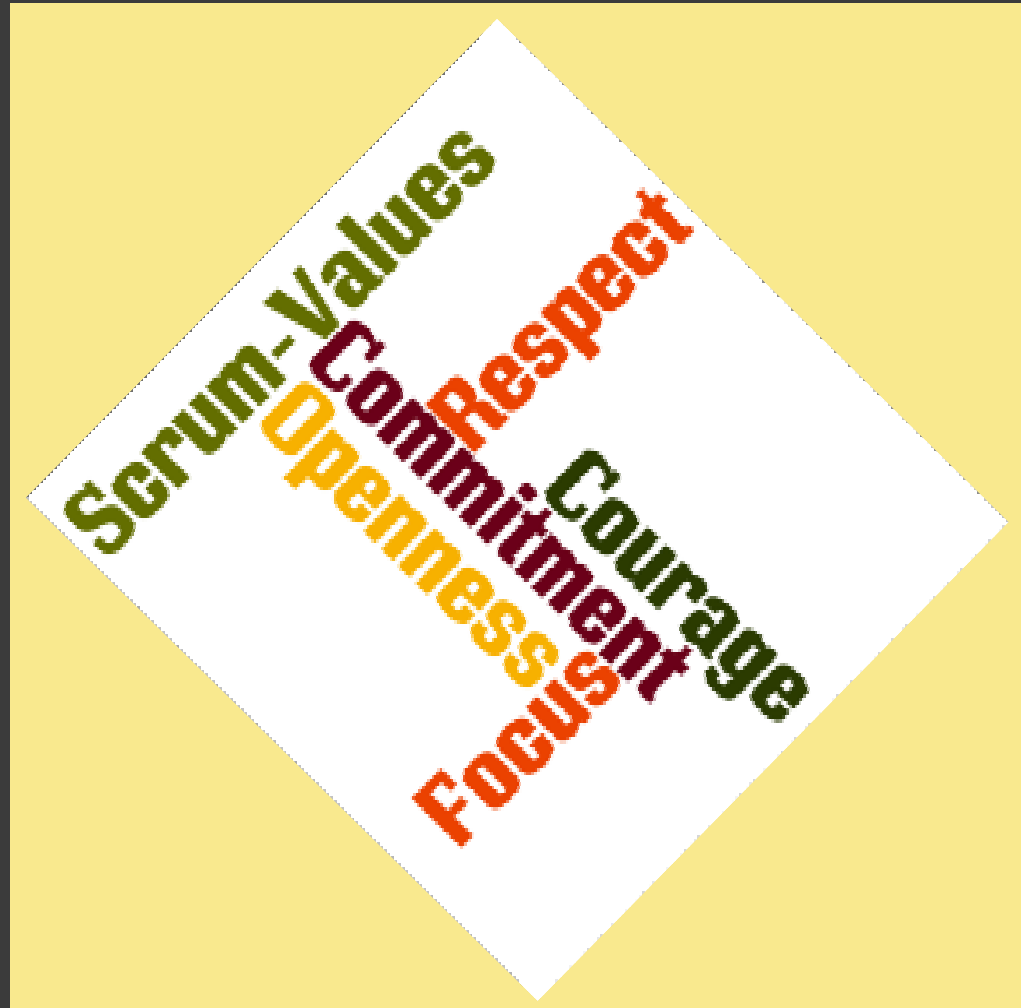
Choose an Experiment for Each Iteration

Continuous Retrospective

- ◉ What Makes Me Happy?
- ◉ What Makes Me Sad?
- ◉ What Ideas Have I Had?
- ◉ Who Should I Thank?
- ◉ **Supplements or replaces diary**

Values to Action



Values to Action

- ⦿ Pick a Value
- ⦿ How does your team exhibit this?
- ⦿ How could your team exhibit more of this?



Courage ▪ Respect ▪ Commitment ▪ Openness ▪ Focus

We Believe in <Value>, Therefore We...

One Team's View

RESPECT

We believe respect encourages participation and collaboration; therefore we honor everyone's ideas, work, and effort.

FOCUS

We as a team should continuously focus on our iteration tasks, without distraction. Everyone focuses on providing the team with resources and addressing any issues and road blocks promptly as they occur.

COURAGE

We will be rigorously honest, regardless of perceived consequences, in providing feedback to others, accounting for task commitments, and identifying issues or concerns as they are encountered.

OPENNESS

As a team, we welcome feedback from others and are willing to revise, add, or drop tasks consistent with iteration goals.

COMMITMENT

As a team, we are committed to successfully complete work which has been agreed upon and move tasks to completion only when all details associated with the task are finished and the team accepts the deliverables.

One Team's View

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COMMITMENT

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Find Your Strengths

A Good Team Member Does Whatever it Takes to Help the Team

A Good Team Member Deliberately Volunteers His Strengths to the Team Most of the Time

Source: Marcus Buckingham - [Go Put Your Strengths to Work](#)

Which of These Do You Want?

Do You Know...



What Percentage of the Time,
Do Most People Spend
Using Their Strengths?

17%

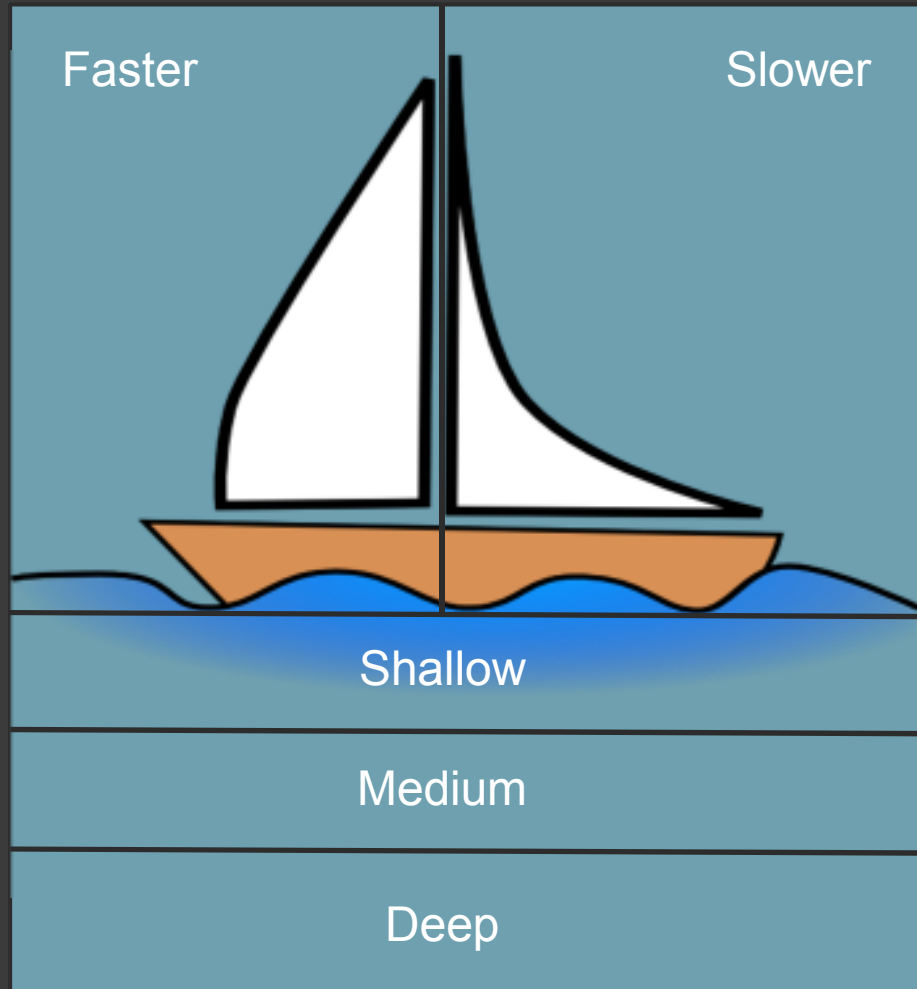
Source: Marcus Buckingham - [Go Put Your Strengths to Work](#)

How Can We Change This?

Speed Boat

Winds:
What is making the
boat move faster?

Anchors:
What is holding the
boat back?



Source: 

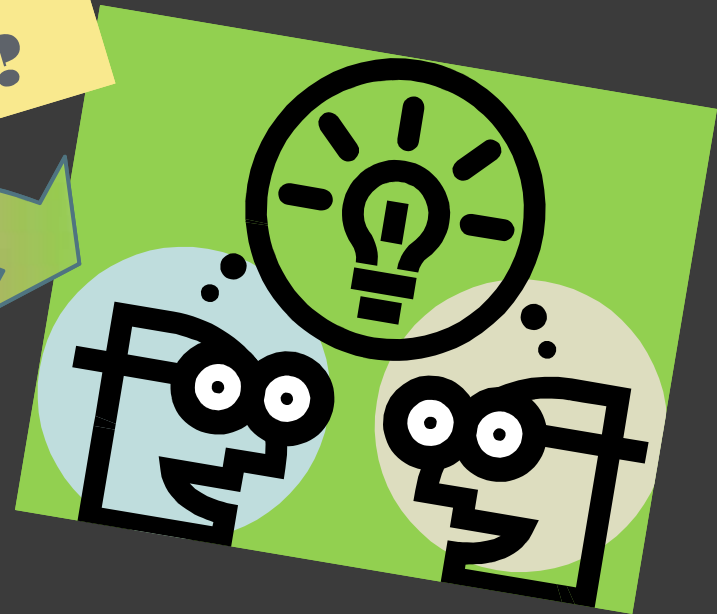
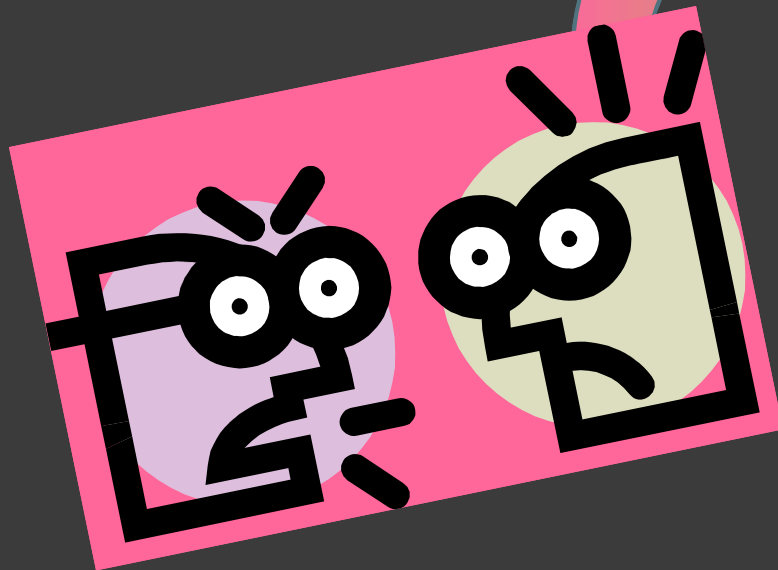
Keys to Meaningful Retrospectives

- Have a (Flexible) Plan
- Leverage All Available Inputs
- Coach Whole Team
- Vary Techniques



Do Emotions Play a Part?

**How Can We
Ensure This?**



Open, Honest, Candid Conversations

Facilitate to Control Emotions

- Leading by Example
- Creating Safe Environment
- Listening – Actively
- Observing – Team Behaviors
- Empathizing – Feelings Are OK
- Encouraging Shared Responsibility
- Asking Open Ended (Powerful) Questions



Reference: <http://www.iaf-world.org>

Controlling Emotions Starts With YOU!

Retrospective Spirit – A Prime Directive



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

-- Norman Kerth, Project Retrospectives

Keys to Meaningful Retrospectives

- Have a (Flexible) Plan
- Leverage All Available Inputs
- Coach Whole Team
- Vary Techniques
- Discuss Events Not People



**TOMORROW'S
HEADLINES!**

Retrospectives Are Actionable



- Prioritize Improvement Ideas
- Select 2-3 Ideas
- Define Action Items
- Assess in Next Retrospective

Keys to Meaningful Retrospectives

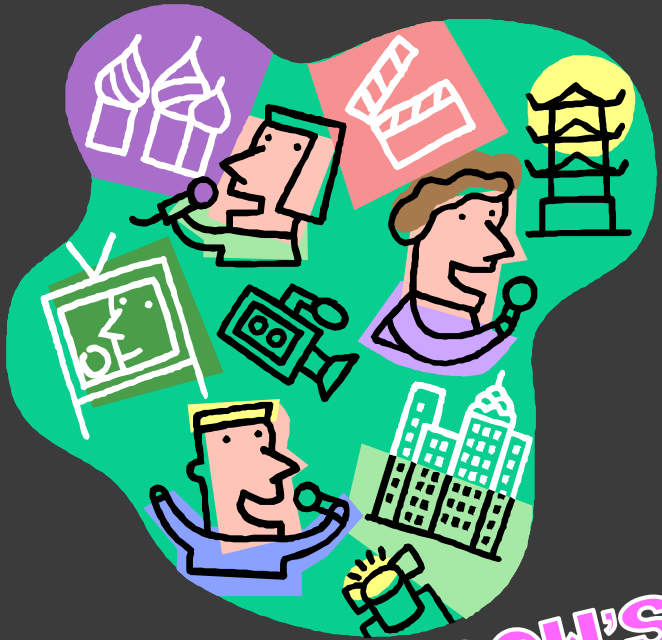
- Have a (Flexible) Plan
- Leverage All Available Inputs
- Coach Whole Team
- Vary Techniques
- Discuss Events Not People
- Take Action



Have Fun!

**TOMORROW'S
HEADLINES!**

What is YOUR Next Step?




**TOMORROW'S
HEADLINES!**


*What One Thing Will
You Do Differently in
Your Next
Retrospective?*


Write It Down Right Now!

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- Agile Leadership ▪ Agile Training ▪ Agile Transition
▪ Coaching ▪ Mentoring
- 10+ Years Agile Techniques ▪ 10+ Years Project Leadership
▪ 20+ Years Information Technology



- Past President/Advisor National Board of Directors
- Founder Houston Chapter



- Stage Producer – Agile 2010, Agile 2011
- Presenter – Agile 2010
- Stage Producer – Agile Executive Forum 2011

