FunRetrospectives

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ACTIVITIES AND IDEAS FOR MAKING AGILE RETROSPECTIVES MORE ENGAGING

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FunRetrospectives

Activities and ideas for making agile retrospectives more engaging

Taina Caetano and Paulo Caroli

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Introduction

A team is a group of people focused on a common goal, in which each individual adjusts his/her actions, habits, and work preferences in order to achieve the group's common goal. The team effectiveness depends on the members' ability to work together. It is directly related to the group's ability to make the best use of the individuals' skills.

However, a group of people does not turn into a team overnight. It takes time to create bonds between colleagues, and this time can be shortened with the appropriate setting. As the team progresses after its formation, team members may face moments in which they will want to reflect and analyze the past, or imagine and prepare for the future. These moments may be recurring, and keeping the enthusiasm is a key to maintain the team effective. Over time, the group will tune up its ability to work together. Group's disagreements will be discussed. Individual capabilities will rise up. The group will continuously seek the best balance for everyone's contribution toward a common goal.

On this book, we provide you a tool set of activities to transform a group of people into an effective team. Keeping the participants amused and providing a setting where they can reflect, discuss and have fun is fundamental to continuously improve. The catalog presented here is composed by a set of activities, each one appropriate for different contexts and teams. There are **Energizers**, activities to start off any meeting and getting people to know more about each other. You will also find activities for defining ground rules and getting a team started, which we call **Team Building Activities**. On other contexts, maybe when running a **Retrospective** or a **Futurespective**, you will want to measure the participants' engagement and understand more about their feelings, for which case **Check-in** activities are suitable.

To the extent you want to be a part of engaging people deeply and fully with fun and effective activities, you will yourself be invited into a journey of reflection and self-discovery. Keeping this in mind, let's go deeply into some of the activities and ideas for applying high engagement to retrospectives and similar meeting settings.

Planning

Here are some factors you should look at when planning on which activities to use:

- Moment – Where are you in the timeline? Are you in the very beginning of a team? Are you trying to learn with the past? Are you preparing for an upcoming release?
- Purpose – What are you looking for? Are you seeking focused action items? Do you need to increase the team morale? A time for acknowledgement? You want to get a measurement of the team happiness?
- Participants – Who should attend to the meeting? How many people? What are their roles? What is their level of engagement? How comfortable are they with each other?

Based on those factors, you need to choose what activity (or sequence of activities) is more appropriate to run.

Agenda Structure

This book gives you a toolset with many ideas and activities. Those activities can be used individually in different contexts. In many instances, however, we use them in the context of a team meeting. For example, the recurring SCRUM[1] retrospective is a meeting in which a sequence of activities is applied.

Be it a Scrum retrospective meeting, a meeting about project risks or even a project kick-off meeting, we use and strongly suggest the following agenda structure. This agenda outlines the steps that you will be taking to achieve your goal.

Setting the Context

Setting the context at the beginning of any meeting is the first step you can take to ensure that the meeting is effective. Participants need to understand what is the focus of the meeting.

You either start the meeting with a well-defined context and share it with the team, or you define it real time with the participants (*"So, what is the context for this retrospective?"*).

Below are some sample contexts:

> "This retrospective is a bi-weekly recurring Scrum retrospective for the ABC team. We are on the Sprint 12 out of 30."

> "In 14 days, our artifact should reach the main production stage."

> "Feature XYZ exploded in production, bringing the servers down for 2 hours until sys-admin could bring the older version back up."

> "This team will work together in a new project starting today."

> "We have worked together in the past year. We will be working together for another year to come."

> "This diverse group of people has participated on the BIZANK event. Most likely another group of people from our company will participate on similar future events. What should we share with them?"

> "We delivered the planned features on schedule. Let's discuss what were the factors that helped us to be successful."

By setting the context, you are not only aligning the participants toward a common goal. You are also narrowing down the discussion for the steps that will follow.

[1] SCHWABER, Ken; BEEDLE, Mike. Agile Software Development with Scrum. Pear-son, 2001.

Prime Directive

In Project Retrospectives[2], Kerth introduced the Prime Directive, a statement that intended to help to set the stage for the retrospective. The Prime Directive states:

> "Regardless of what we discover, we 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."

The Prime Directive is a statement that helps to drive people into a collaborative mindset. It's a belief that the team must hold during the activities to follow. Kerth's prime directive is appropriate for retrospectives, but it can be changed as needed to fit other kinds of activities. We suggest the following directive for meetings in which you will run **building team activities**:

> "Cooperation is the act of working with others and acting together to accomplish a job. Team is a partnership of unique people who bring out the very best in each other, and who know that even though they are wonderful as individuals, they are even better together. Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success."

The following directive is suggested for **futurespectives**:

> "Hope and confidence come from proper involvement and a willingness to predict the unpredictable. We will fully engage in this opportunity to unite around an inclusive vision, and join hands in constructing a shared future."

Besides reading the directive out loud for the team before the activities start, it is recommended to leave it visible while the meeting happens. You can always reference it to remember the participants that, for this meeting, the team should put their judgments aside.

Energizer

The Energizer is an optional activity that can be run to warm up the team and promote group interaction. It is a good meeting starter for any team meeting. It is extra valuable for early stages of team building.

You should select an icebreaker activity to match the needs of your team meeting. When building teams, we recommend activities that focus on sharing information, such as names and hobbies. Icebreakers can also be used as energizers, before any meeting, so that participants get their moods up and feel more engaged.

This kind of activity helps to create a friendly environment and make people more comfortable to participate in the activities that will follow.

[2] KERTH, Norman. Project Retrospectives: A Handbook for Team Reviews. Dorset House, 2001.

Check-in

Check-in activities gather information such as how the participants feel toward the meeting, how they felt regarding the given context. It is a good next step after setting the context and reading the prime directive, especially as it narrows down the themes that will be discussed after.

Another benefit of doing a check-in is that it helps people to put aside their concerns and then focus on the meeting at hand. Depending on the activity, it also works for helping participants to put aside their judgments – at least for the duration of the meeting.

These are usually short activities. Think of them as a quick bite to open everyone's appetite for the main course. It gives the participants a feeling for the next activity, while giving you feedback about participants' engagement.

Main Course

The main course is the core of the a meeting seeking continuous improvement. It is composed of one or more activities, and it is also the moment for the team to discuss their notes. These activities are used to gather data, bring up feelings, talk about the positive stuff, acknowledge people, and seek improvements. They drive the team to reflect about the given context, reinforce a shared vision and generate insights.

Teams that have retrospective as a recurring meeting will typically look for main course alternatives. By varying the activity, the team can look at different angles and perspectives, therefore generating new insights.

The main course is the moment for team members to feel heard. Despite of every single note being discussed in details, all of them are visible to the whole team. Each and every individual note is acknowledged.

Choose your main course wisely, having the moment, participants and purpose in mind. This is the main activity of your meeting, and most likely the information gathered and discussed will set the tone for continuous improvement.

Filtering

Filtering activities are about finding the endpoint through prioritization, voting, and comparison, but are also about finding and creating the commitment and alignment that lead to the next step. A good filtering depends on how well the main course activity is explored. An unsatisfying set of notes will result on unsatisfying filtering. Although filtering activities often foster the final conversation, and define the final goal, they can't do it on their own. If you are having trouble with filtering, the root of your problem lies elsewhere; consider rethinking the check-in and the main course activities.

On this book you will find activities to define your filtering criteria. For example, the team may group notes based on similarity and then discuss the identified clusters. Other possibility is to vote, and then focus on top-voted topics.

Check-out

A Check-out activity happens right before participants departure from the meeting. It typically gathers information about the meeting itself: how valuable it was, how much was learned, how worthy was being at the meeting, and any specific feedbacks.

The Check-out activity result might contain a valuable feedback about the meeting structure and contents. Consider it when planning the next meeting.

These are very short activities. Think of them as an effective hotel check-out, where the guest (participant) leaves the hotel fast, with the feeling of being heard and giving valuable feedback to the hotel.

Next Steps

The meeting is almost over. The team had a great discussion and generated many insights. Perhaps activities results might have listed a few actionable items.

Next steps are the last step in our meeting agenda. There is no formula or specific activities for it. We recommend that the whole group talk openly about what is next for them. What will they do with the findings from the meeting?

A few examples are: include new items to the team backlog of work, email the meeting notes to the team and the overall organization, schedule (or remind everyone about it) for the next meeting.

Activities Catalog (sample subset)

This is a short sample subset from all activities listed at the Fun Retrospective eBook.

Please go to http://www.leanpub.com/funretrospectives for the latest and most complete version of the eBook.

To the extent you want to be a part of engaging people deeply and fully with fun and effective activities, you will be invited to a journey of reflection and self-discovery. Keeping this in mind, let's go deeply into some of the activities and ideas for applying high engagement to typical retrospectives and similar meeting settings.

Energizers

Energizers are optional activities that take place to warm up the team and promote group interaction. It is a good starter for any team meeting. It is extra valuable for early stages of team building.

Forming Triangles

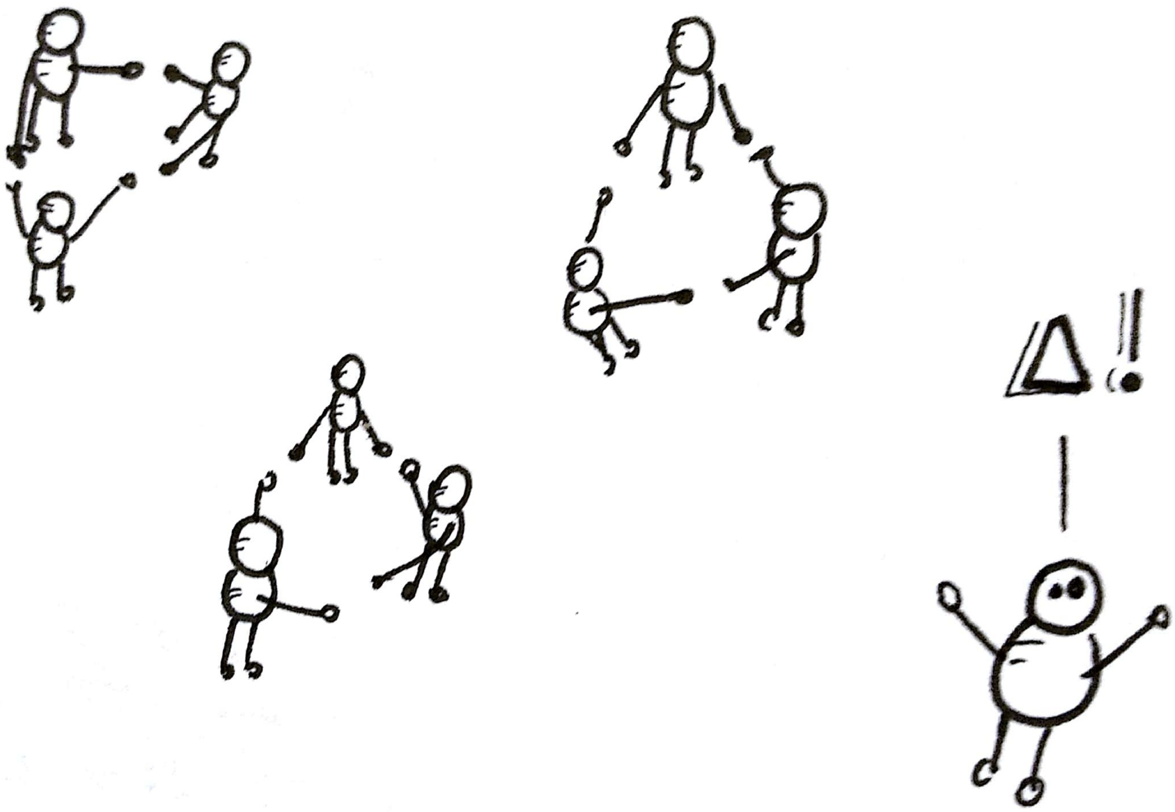
This activity is a great energizer with a valuable message, being very useful for starting a conversation about self-organizing teams.

Running the activity

This activity is divided in two parts.

First part

1. Ask the members of the group to walk individually in a random direction.
2. After some time, say the magic word "triangle": each group member will have to find other 2 people and form an equilateral triangle (each person is a triangle vertex, and should point each arm towards the other two people representing the other triangle vertices; each person is a triangle vertex on one triangle only).
3. Track the time of how long it took the group to form the triangles.



Forming Triangles

Second part

1. Select one person to be the fugleman of the group triangle.
2. Ask the members of the group to walk in a random direction.
3. After some time, say the magic word “triangle”: the group triangle fugleman has to form equilateral triangles with all group members (including himself in one of the triangles).
4. Track the time of how long it took the group to form the triangles.

The first part shows a self-organizing group; the second run shows a group guided by one organizer (the group triangle fugleman).

Typically, the self-organizing triangle formation runs faster than its counterpart, and the team feels more engaged on the activity.

This activity was engaged from Heitor Roriz[3], a friend and scrum coach and trainer. Kudos to him for applying a fun activity for fostering the conversation about an essential concept of successful agile teams: self-organization.

[3] https://twitter.com/hroriz

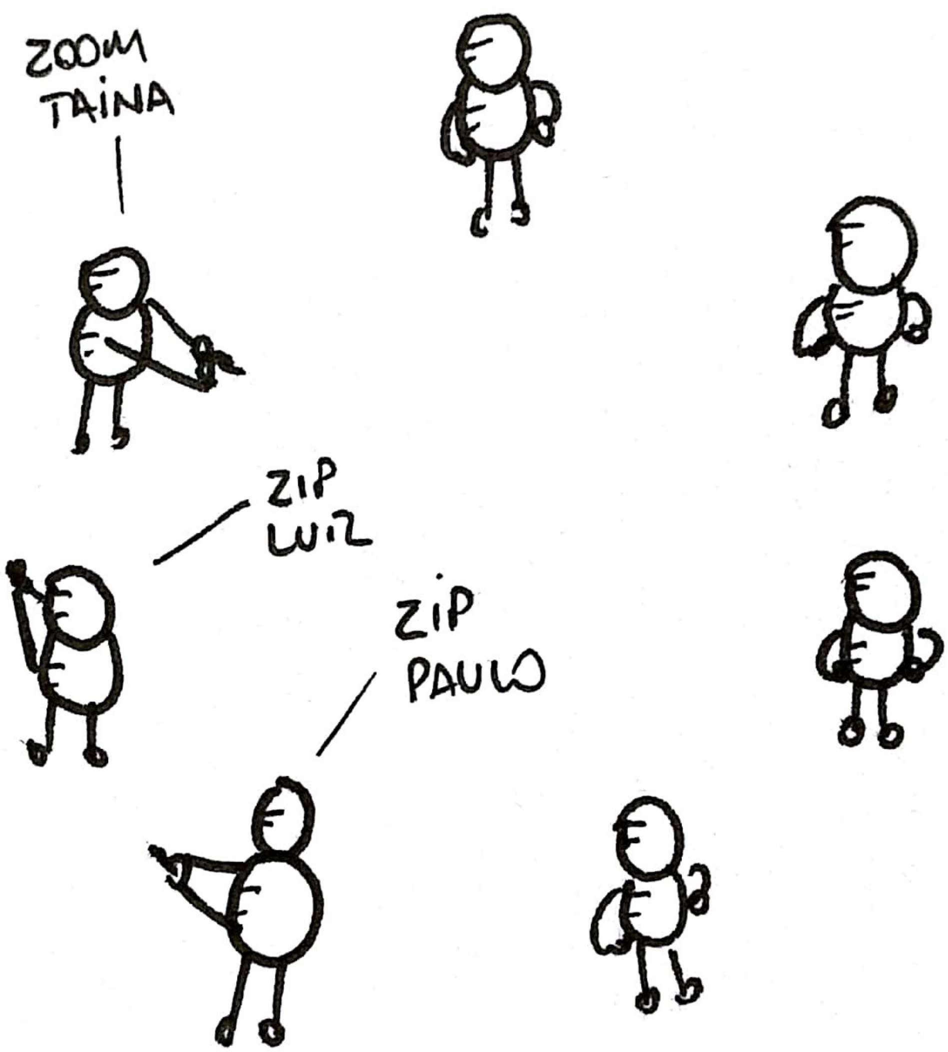
Zip Zap Zoom

This is a good meeting starter, especially for new teams. It brings energy to the room and the activity dynamics helps the participants to remember each other's names.

Running the activity

1. Ask the team to form a circle, and each participant to close his/her hands while pointing index fingers.
2. Explain the rules to the participants:
    - Each participant should, in his/her turn, make a verbal command, pointing to a receiver. The verbal command should be one of the following:
    - Zip: Point to the person exactly at your side, keeping the previous direction.
    - Zap: Point to the person exactly at your side, changing the previous direction.
    - Zoom: Point to anyone in the circle, saying his/her name. The receiver should decide the direction for the next movement in his/her turn.
3. Ask a participant to make the first movement, saying one of the verbal commands and choosing the initial direction (clockwise or counterclockwise).

When a participant executes a wrong command (either a command that doesn't exist, or pointing to the wrong direction in a zip/zap command), he/she should be removed from the circle.



Zip Zap Zoom

This activity is not only a good energizer but also pushes the participants to focus, and helps them to remember each other's names.

Check-in

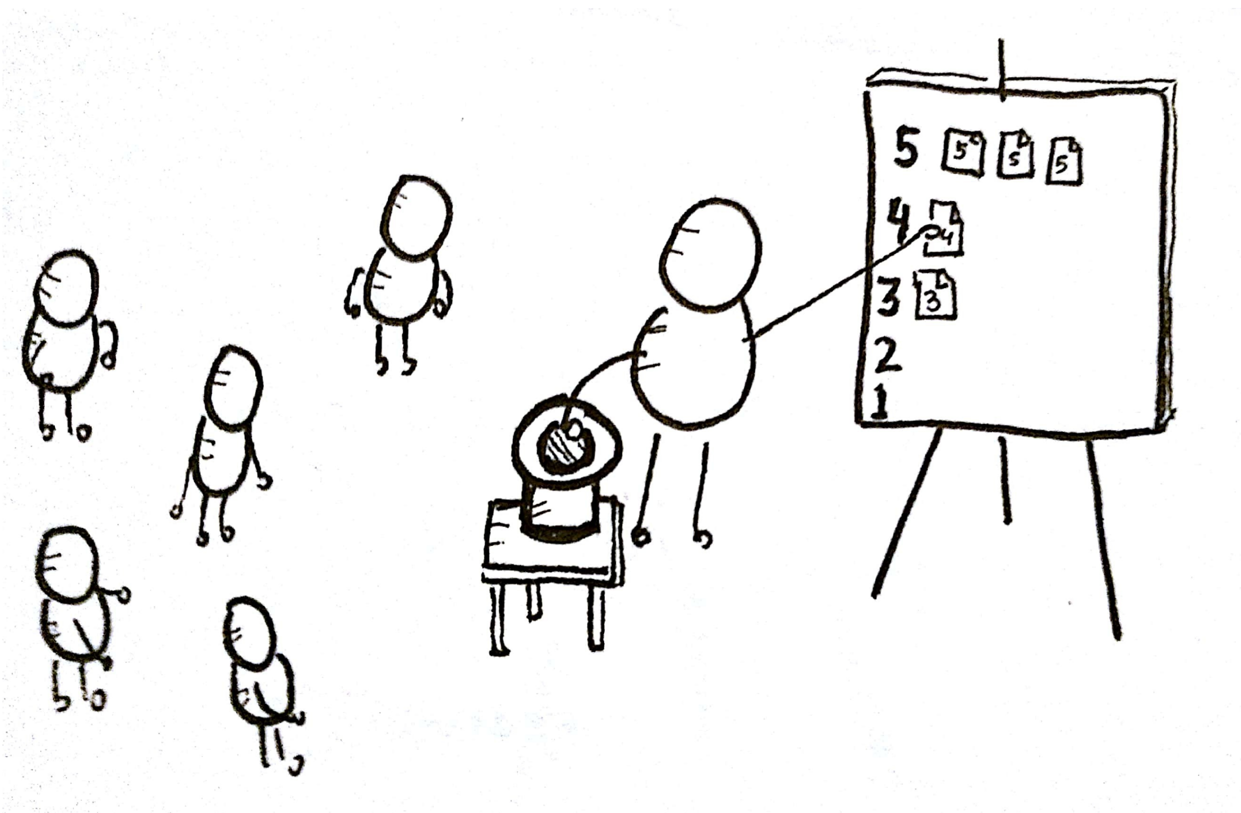
Check-in activities gather information such as how the participants feel towards the meeting and how they felt regarding the given context. It is a good next step after setting the context and reading the prime directive, especially as it narrows down the themes that will be discussed later.

Safety Check

This is a fast and effective way to measure the group participation on the retrospective activities to follow.

Running the activity

1. Ask participants to choose a number between 1 and 5 that indicates how safe they feel within the group, and write it in a post-it (the numbers should be taken anonymously, so everyone should use the same post-it and pen color). Below you can see the meaning for each number:
    - 5: No problem, I'll talk about anything;
    - 4: I'll talk about almost anything; a few things might be hard;
    - 3: I'll talk about some things, but others will be hard to say;
    - 2: I'm not going to say much; I'll let others bring up issues;
    - 1: I'll smile, claim everything is great and agree with the managers.
2. The facilitator collects the post-it from each participant (use a hat or some container to keep the activity anonymously).
3. Make visible to the whole group the safety check result.
4. Acknowledge the results and decide what's next.



Safety Check

What to do with the results?

Here is what can be said when:

- the safety is high: *"It seems like many folks in the room are up for talking about many topics, therefore it is very worthy moving to the next activity, which should trigger many conversations."*
- the safety is medium: *"As visible on the safety check results, some folks are not willing to talk about all topics. Let's have this in mind and I (as a facilitator) will not ask everyone's opinion, given that some folks are not comfortable to talk about everything."*
- the safety is low: *"As visible in the safety check results, the group safety seems low. For this reason, let's use the remaining time and run an activity which might help us increase the group safety level."*

Creating safety is a good follow-up activity when the safety is low or medium.

Happiness Radar

This activity is very useful for opening a retrospective, narrowing down its context. It establishes a sequence for the retrospective, so participants first hear about people's feelings (on happiness) before going into a data gathering activity.

Running the activity

1. Decide and draw the target areas for collecting feedback on happiness (as table column titles). One suggestion is to have columns for people, technology and processes.
   "For the given context, I would like to know your feelings for each of these areas."
2. Draw the happy/ok/sad faces (as table row titles).
3. Ask the team to place their marks on the canvas:
   "So, for each of the areas, please let us know how you felt in average. For example, if you were always sad regarding technology, please make one mark on the technology/sad cell."
4. Optionally, decide upon post-it color (for targeted areas) to use it as a color code for the activity that will come next.

Happiness Radar

Note that the target areas selected (column titles) should be very specific for the retrospective context, and will influence the activities (and conversation) to follow.

Building Teams

A group of people does not turn into a team overnight. Building teams activities helps new teams to emerge and work together.

Defining the Team Vision Statement

The team vision statement provides an overall statement summarizing, at the highest level, the unique position that the team intends to fill in the organization.

Running the activity

1. Write the team vision statement template on the whiteboard (or a common canvas):
    - For (target organization)
    - Who (statement of the need or opportunity)
    - The (team name, identify) is a (team classification, category)
    - That (team singularity, compelling reason for the team existence)
    - Unlike (current alternative without the team)
    - Our team (statement of primary differentiation)
2. Divide the participants into smaller groups (two or three people recommended).
3. Distribute the blank post-its for the product vision template amongst the smaller groups.
4. Ask the smaller groups to fill in the blanks on post-its and place them on the whiteboard (or canvas).
5. Collect the results for all groups. This should form a single sentence (this sentence will be very disjoint and cumbersome).
6. Rewrite the whole sentence.

Team Vision Statement

While running this activity, the team vision statement template provides a short motivating set of words, summarizing and encapsulating the principle elements of the team's vision and identity. After being created, the team vision statement communicates the intent and the importance of the team to the overall organization and concerned people.

Below, there is a sample statement created from this activity:

FOR the ABC Brazil people
WHO want to have an exciting account to work on
THE Core Team
IS A group of people committed to the account
THAT strategically influences ABC business
UNLIKE a group that would only follow directions to get work done
OUR TEAM proactively addresses upcoming difficulties and works together to empower the account

Role Expectations Matrix

This is a team-forming activity that aims to map out the expectations among team members. It helps them to better define their roles and avoid future conflicts due to hidden or unknown expectations.

Running the activity

1. Create a list of all the team members' roles.
2. Using the list, create a matrix with the list of roles along both horizontal and vertical axes. Label the vertical axis as "from" and the horizontal axis as "to".
3. Ask team members to write down (on separate post-its) their expectations to each one of the roles. These notes should go on the cells on a horizontal line for the team member role.
4. Discuss among the group the whole matrix. It is recommended to select one "from" role (a matrix vertical line) and then each person reads his/her expectation notes for that role. Repeat for all roles.

Role Expectations Matrix

The goal in completing the matrix is to find the most complete picture of team members' expectations on each other. This activity is inspired on the give-and-take matrix from the 'Gamestorming' book by Dave Gray, Sunni Brown and James Macanufo[4].

[4] http://www.gogamestorm.com/

Retrospectives: Looking Back

Teams that have retrospective as a recurring meeting will typically look for main course alternatives. By varying the activity, the team can look at different angles and perspectives, therefore generating new insights.

WWW: Worked well, kinda Worked, didn't Work

The WWW is a great data gathering activity for retrospectives, guiding the discussion to team practices.

Running the activity

1. Split the canvas into 3 areas:
    - Worked well – things that worked really well;
    - kinda Worked – things that kind of worked, but you rather tweak them a little bit;
    - didn't Work – things that did not work.
2. Ask the participants for their notes.
3. Group the notes by affinity and discuss.

WWW

We learned this activity from my friend and co-worker Rafael Ferreira[5], on a project postmortem retrospective.

Open the Box

This activity fosters innovation and challenges the current activities performed by the team.

Running the activity

1. Start by reading the following quote:
   "The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking." — Albert Einstein.
2. Bring the participants attention to the box metaphor (if possible, bring a box with you).
   "Inside this box there are all activities performed by the team. Please open the box…"
3. Split the whiteboard or canvas in 3 areas. Draw the open box in the center.

[5]http://twitter.com/techzin

4. Explain each of the areas:

   - Which activities should be removed from the box?
   - Which activities should be added?
   - Which ones we have to recycle?

Open the Box

We created this activity inspired by Silvio Meira's talk[6] (in Portuguese) on innovation.

360 Degrees Appreciation

The 360 Degrees Appreciation is a retrospective activity to foster open appreciation feedback within a team. It is especially useful to increase team moral and improve people relationship.

[6] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9q4vKRG5-0Q

360 degress appreciation

Running the activity

1. Give paper and pen to each participant.
2. Ask everyone to write down what he/she appreciates to each other participant (recommended time: 2 minutes per participant).
3. Ask the group to form a circle.
4. Ask one participant to sit in the center of this circle.
5. Everyone in the circle should read the appreciation feedback to the participant in the center (complete the 360 degrees).
6. Change the participant in the center until everyone has received feedback.

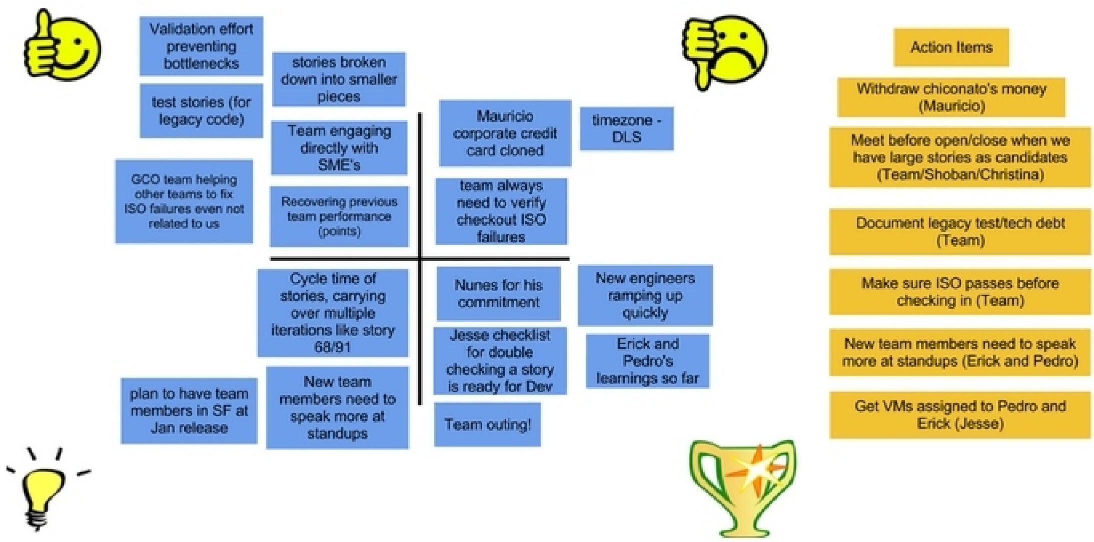
Typically, the 360 Degrees Appreciation activity motivates constant feedback, strengthens relationship and trust. Often, the responses and results are quite enthusiastic, and the team moral gets a boost. This activity is based on the 360 degree feedback.

Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down, New Ideas and Acknowledgement

This activity is great for bringing up new ideas and for acknowledging people and their efforts.

Running the activity

1. Split your canvas into 4 areas.
2. Explain each of the areas:
    - Thumbs Up: things you like;
    - Thumbs Down: things you dislike;
    - New Ideas: new things to try;
    - Acknowledgement: appreciations/thank-yous.
3. Ask the participants to share their notes.



Thumbs Up, Thumbs Down, Ideas and Recognition

This activity was loosely based on the Learning Matrix[7].

DAKI - Drop, Add, Keep, Improve

DAKI is a great data gathering to foster the thinking around practices and the value the team gets from them. It helps team members to understand each other's perceived value on such practices.

Running the activity

1. Divide the canvas in four quadrants: Drop, Add, Keep, Improve.
2. Ask the participants for their notes.
3. Group the notes and discuss.

DAKI

[7] http://cargocultism.wordpress.com/2010/10/08/learning-matrix/

Futurespectives: Looking Ahead

Futurespectives are activities to prepare the team for the future, inspiring the participants to look ahead and share a collective vision.

Defining and Finding the Path to Nirvana

This is a great team building activity that focus on creating a common goal alignment and visualizing smaller steps toward a big achievement.

Running the activity

This activity is divided in two parts.

Defining Nirvana

1. Write the word Nirvana on the top right corner of the canvas.
2. Break the team into smaller groups of 3 or 4 people each.
3. Ask each group to write a short sentence to describe the nirvana.
4. Each group presents its short sentence describing the nirvana.
5. Create one common sentence to define nirvana.

Defining Nirvana

Path to Nirvana

1. Write the word Nirvana on the top right corner of the canvas, with the definition of it.

2. Draw a timeline on the canvas, having the word today on the leftmost side.
3. Write down major events or time periods on the timeline (e.g., Christmas holidays, Summer school vacation, July, month one, month six…).
4. Ask the participants to add notes for smaller steps toward the path to Nirvana.
5. Discuss with the group about the path to nirvana, with action items (use a different post-it color).

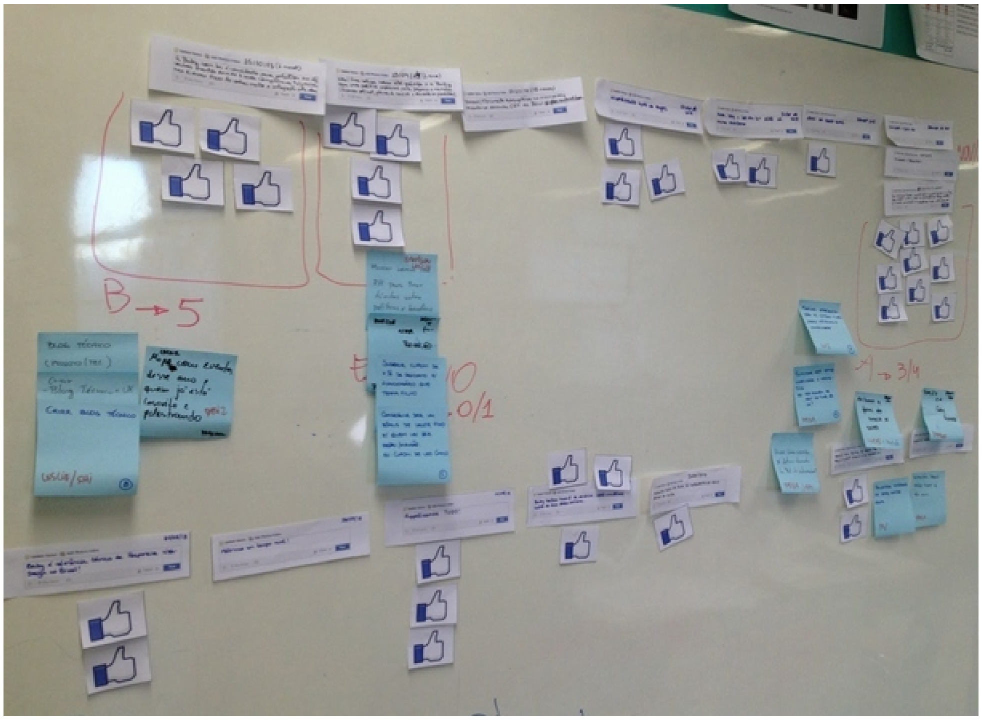
Path to Nirvana

Future Facebook Posts

This is a great activity to get the team members focused on where they want to go rather than the common "what-if thoughts" that fill up the brains of engineers when thinking about the future.

Running the activity

1. Start by introducing the activity:
   "Please, assume everyone on the team would be posting at Facebook, and imagine you will travel in time and will be able to look at our team timeline (with all posts)."
2. Ask participants to write down future Facebook posts (individually):
   "Please, write down (individually) your Facebook posts in the future. These posts should have a short text and a date on the future (e.g., the release date)."
3. Place the posts visible on a timeline.
4. Ask participants to add up to 5 "Likes" to all the posts.
5. Discuss with the group and use action items.



Future Facebook Posts

An analog activity can be done using the Twitter[8] analogy: what short sentences (less than 140 characters) would the team post in the future?

Speed Car - Abyss

This is a forward thinking exercise, with an eye on the past. It is a mix of retrospective and futurespective, which uncovers risks.

Running the activity

1. Draw the picture below in a common canvas.
2. Ask the participants to share their notes for each of the retrospective areas:
   "Let's start by looking back. Please, write notes and place them on the following two areas on the left side of the drawing: Engine and Parachute."

   - Looking Back – Engine: What have been pushing us forward? Making us move fast?
   - Looking Back – Parachute: What have been slowing us down?
3. Ask the participants to share their notes, thinking about the future.
   "Now, let's look ahead, at the near future. Please, write notes and place them on the following two areas on the right side of the drawing: Abyss and Bridge."

[8] http://www.twitter.com

- Looking Ahead – Abyss: What are the dangers ahead? What could take us down the road?
- Looking Ahead – Bridge: What could we build to overcome such challenges? What shall we do to overcome the abyss?

4. Group notes and discuss.

Speed Car - Abyss

An analog exercise can be done by modifying the Hot-air Balloon activity and the Anchors and Engine activity (using thunderstorms as an analogy for the troubles ahead).

Filtering

When a lot of data is generated by any activity, it is important to have well-defined criteria to decide what will be discussed. Given the meeting's limited time, it is possible that topics will be left out of the discussion.

Plus Minus Voting

This is a great activity for time management and prioritization. It is typically used for focusing the conversation on fewer items with highest interest by the group.

Running the activity

1. Instruct the participant on the voting rules:
    - Each participant is entitled to 3 +s and 3 -s votes (each vote will be represented by a + or − mark on the post-it).
    - Participants can place more than one vote on a card.
    - (+) represents your agreement with a note, and you want to talk about it.
    - (−) represents your disagreement with a note, and you want to talk about it *"Please, vote on the items that you want to discuss about. The items with most votes will be picked up first."*
2. Go vote!
3. Engage on a group conversation following the group's interest rank (notes with most marks first).

Plus Minus Voting

This is a variation of the Dot Voting activity which allows participants to be clearer about agreements and disagreements.

Fishbowl Conversation

The Fishbowl activity is great for keeping a focused conversation, while having a large group of people. At any time, only a few people have a conversation (the fish in the fishbowl). The remaining people are listeners (the ones watching the fishbowl). The caveat is that the listeners can join the discussion at any moment.

Running the activity

1. Place 5 chairs in an open area facing each other. The chairs shall be in the middle of the room, or around a round table.
2. Instruct the participants on the fishbowl rules:
   "Four people should sit on the chairs. They will start the conversation.
   One chair is to be kept empty all the time. It is available for whoever wants to join the conversation. When someone sits on the empty chair, someone else (typically the one either

sitting longer or less involved in the current conversation) has to leave, vacating one chair. The other participants who are not sitting on the fishbowl chairs cannot get involved in the conversation. They are listeners. If they are to speak, they first have to sit on the empty chair."

3. Select a topic for the fishbowl conversation and get started.
4. Switch topics whenever appropriate. It can be time-boxed or changed whenever it runs out of conversation.

people at the fishbowl (one chair is always empty)

We have seen this activity being used on conferences and large group conversations. I find it especially useful for very large groups conversations, with pre-selected topics.

Check-out

A Check-out activity happens right before participants departure from the meeting. It typically gathers information about the meeting itself: how valuable it was, how much was learned, how worthy was being at the meeting, and any specific feedbacks.

Who-What-When Steps To Action

The Who-What-When Steps To Action activity helps defining commitments and follow-up actions on meetings. Many meetings end with an unclear “next steps” or “action items” discussion. This activity avoids creating a list of tasks that are often handed out to possibly unwilling participants with no particular deadline attached.

Running the activity

1. Create a table structure that outlines WHO / WHAT / WHEN as column titles.
2. Ask the participants to select (from previous activity) or write down a concrete step they can commit to. These should be either (1) steps that they are required to follow, or (2) steps they feel really strong about.
3. Each selected concrete steps will form a row on the Who-What-When table. Ask the participants to:
    - Place the post-it with the step under the WHAT column;
    - Write their names on the WHO column;
    - Define WHEN the item will be done.

Who – What – When as table columns

By focusing the discussion on a Who/What/When format, you can connect people with clear actions they have defined and have committed to. It enables participants to be clear about their commitments and accountabilities, making visible to the whole group WHO is going to do WHAT by WHEN.

This activity is inspired in the Who/What/When Matrix game on the Gamer Storming book.

Closing Thoughts

TEST

We don't have time to do everything, so we make choices. The activities in this book get you there fast and effectively. And in a fun way! By following many of these activities and ideas, the group will know the higher the quality of their contributions, the better what's on the horizon. You'll have a good sense that the activities you use are successful when the group realizes insights they didn't have before.

The activities on this book allow groups to sort their ideas into relevant actions and pick the ones that they think will have the highest immediate impact. Over time, your team will get so used to such activities that it will be following a continuous improvement culture. The high frequencies of fun activities motivate and foster teamwork. Action items become proactive instead of reactive. Highly motivated, the team performs even better and gracefully attacks impediments while they are still small.

Retrospectives are a wide area with ample literature about it, many options and techniques. While this book provided you a versatile tool set with many ideas, we recommend you keep learning and continuously improve, the same way we want our teams to!

Distributed Retrospectives

We donâ€™t like remote meetings. There is immesurable value to human connection, therefore we prefer face to face interactions over remote ones. However, more and more we see a large amount of people using some sort of remote retrospective tool, given teams are getting more distributed by the day.

Many are the reasons to use an online retrospective board: Staying close to your kids, avoiding traffic jam, working from the beach, using a device reader, dealing with work visa issue, working from a distant country, etc.

Therefore we invested time and effort on the FunRetrospective online board.

As we started using the online board, we realized that it was also useful when everyone is in the same room. This is the reason it is named a “online retrospective board” instead of a “distributed” or “remote” retrospective board. People can be all in the same place and still use it, the FunRetrospectives online board.

Here is a sample situation. The safety check is an anonymous activity to verify how safe people feel for participating in the retrospective. Typically we would ask everyone to use the same post-it color and same pen color to write a number from 1 (not safe at all) to 5 (super safe to talk about anything) in the post-it. We would collect it (using a bag or a hat) and the place on the board.

The online board is faster and safer (no one can recognize a hand writing)!

So, we started using the online FunRetrospectives board even when we are running local retrospectives.

Having said that, please keep it light and fun. Even if your team is distributed, plan it accordingly and have a fun retrospective.

Be a Retrospectives Facilitator

At first, we thought that just sharing activities with the community would be enough. As time went by, we realized that the personal interaction between facilitators, along with their sharing of experiences and ideas, is so valuable, and yet so challenging to happen.

As such, we connected with more facilitators and communities, and together we started organizing events and training material to share with everyone.

Check it out!

- www.caroli.org/funretrospectives-community
- www.caroli.org/en/training/funretrospectives/