Relative Estimating

Being Directionally Correct and Usefully Wrong to Build Better Products Faster

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Oct 24, 2024

Experience

Agile Transformations	CTO Leadership	Consulting Delivery

THE PRACTICAL AGILIST GUIDEBOOK

The agile mindset behaviors that define being agile

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The agile mindset behaviors that define being agile

- In 24 topics, learn why these behaviors are crucial through familiar concepts from the Agile Manifesto, Lean, XP, Design Thinking, DevOps, and Systems Thinking.

- Discover the maturity level of your behaviors and decide which topics you'd like to improve. Each topic includes recommended books, articles, and videos.

[Why this book]

available at
amazon

What are the maturity levels for the behaviors on your team?

	Low	Medium	High
Team member trust	Team members fear sharing, voicing their opinion, or any kind of feedback.	Most team members trust one another and freely share feedback.	The team has strong relationships between every pair of team members and feedback is a core part of the team culture.
Team member contributions	Some members do not interact or contribute during agile events.	Most members regularly contribute during agile events.	All members consistently contribute to every agile event.
Perspective on failure	The team fears failure and anything that may be perceived as failure. As a result, they avoid experimentation.	The team sometimes sees failed experiments as learning opportunities to use to their advantage.	The team embraces a culture of experimentation and seeks feedback through early failures to build better products faster.
Conflict handling	The team avoids conflict and requires external intervention to resolve issues.	The team can handle some internal conflicts with minimal outside help.	The team resolves all internal conflicts peacefully and effectively.
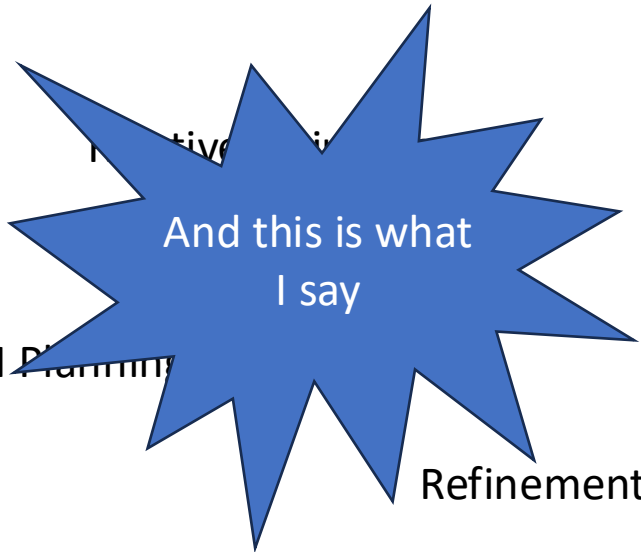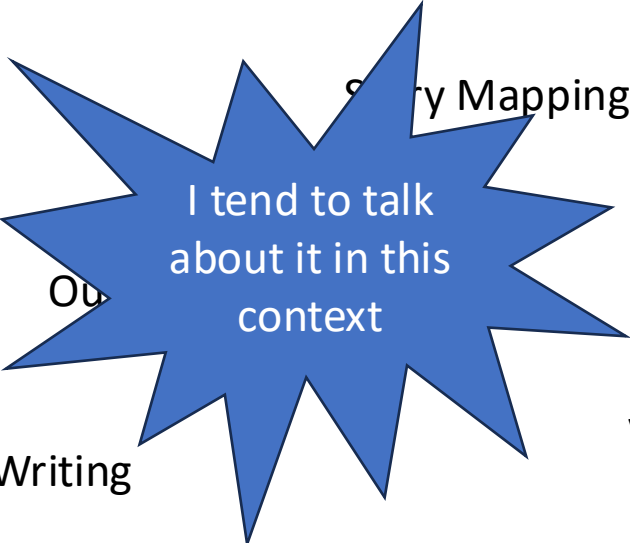
Obvious Truths and Assumptions

"Being directionally correct and usefully wrong brings focus to the Agile Mindset and principles"

- If you spend too much time estimating, you deliver less value

- Being agile is less about making specific predictions than it is delivering the most important value sooner

- Trying to be precise or estimate work that is too large is a fool's errand

Agile Mindset

An Iterative Mindset

A Product Culture

Customer Centric Mindset

Culture of Learning

Culture of Experimentation

Culture of Continuous Improvement

Culture of Psychological Safety

[Blog post]

Why Use Story Points?
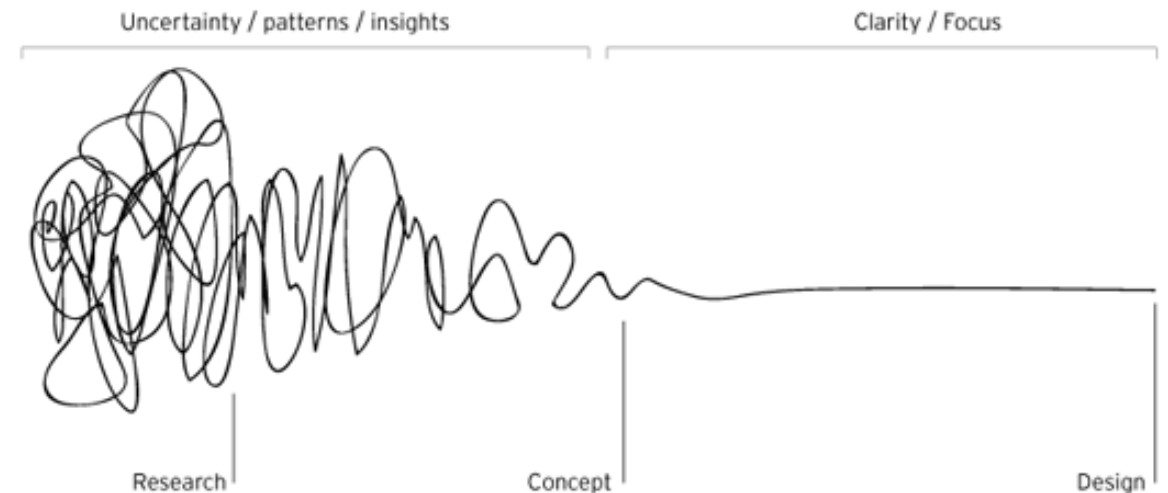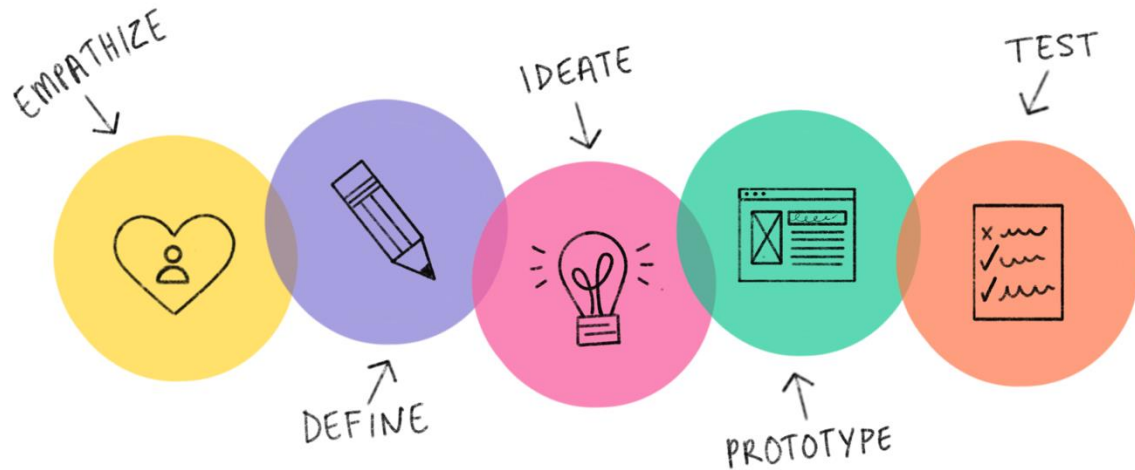
Relative Estimation!

- Humans are horrible at guessing things precisely
- But we are awesome at comparing two things quickly
- The point is to suck consistently and not spend much time on it!

Writing Good Stories

Experiment! Get Feedback Sooner!

- Stories should define a hypothesis around value
- Do the least amount of work to prove or disprove
- Design Thinking brings focus to Customer

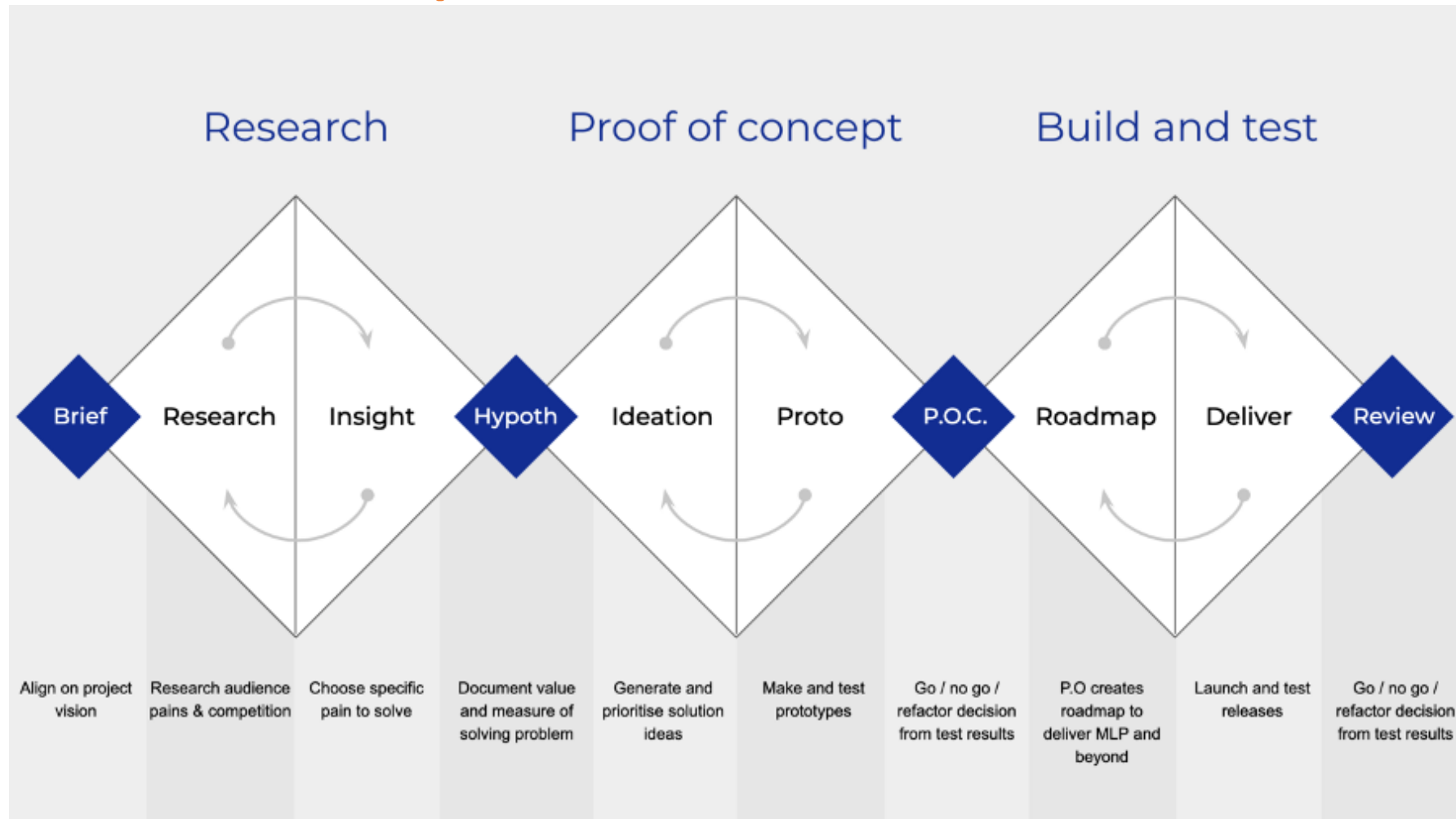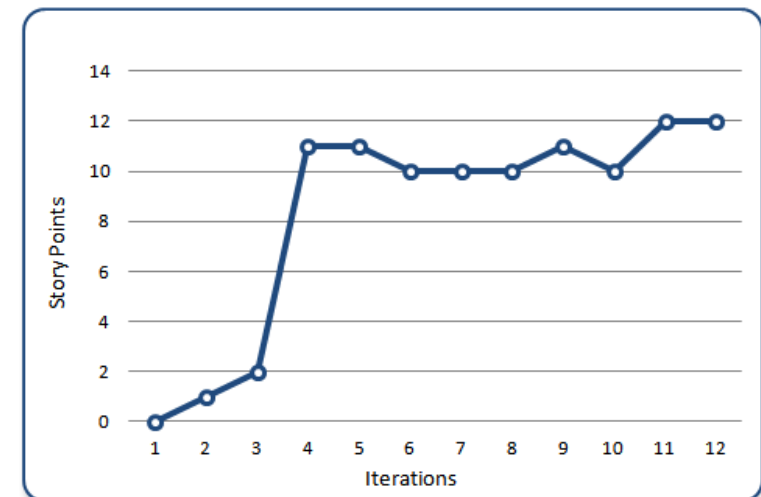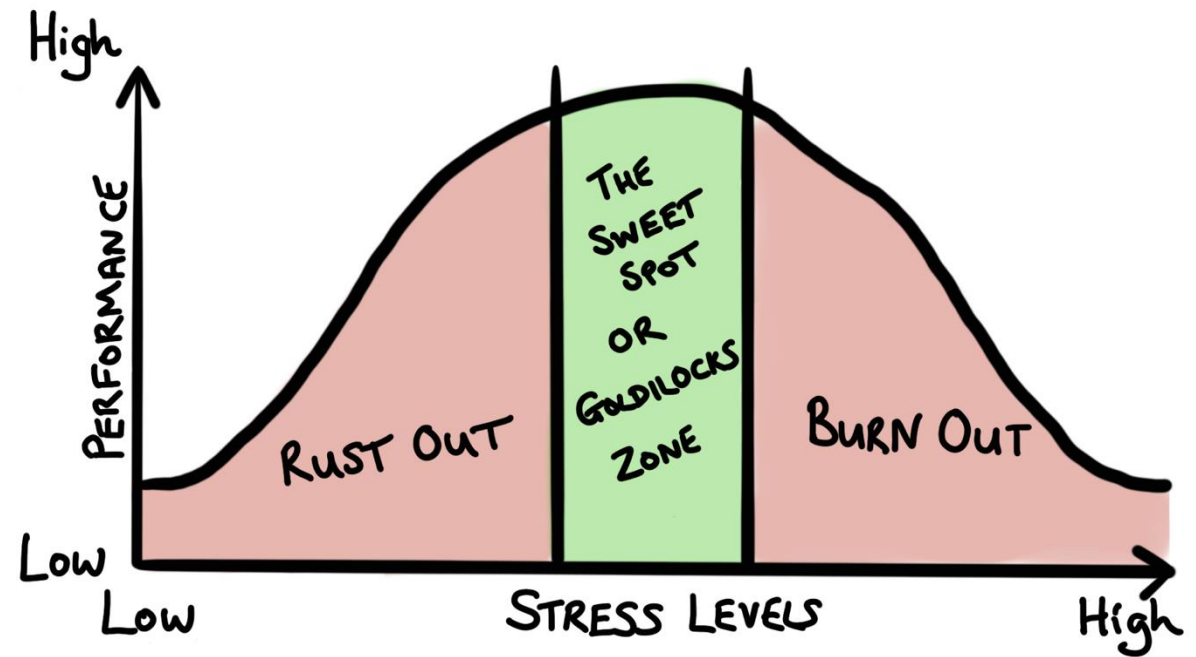# Writing Good Stories

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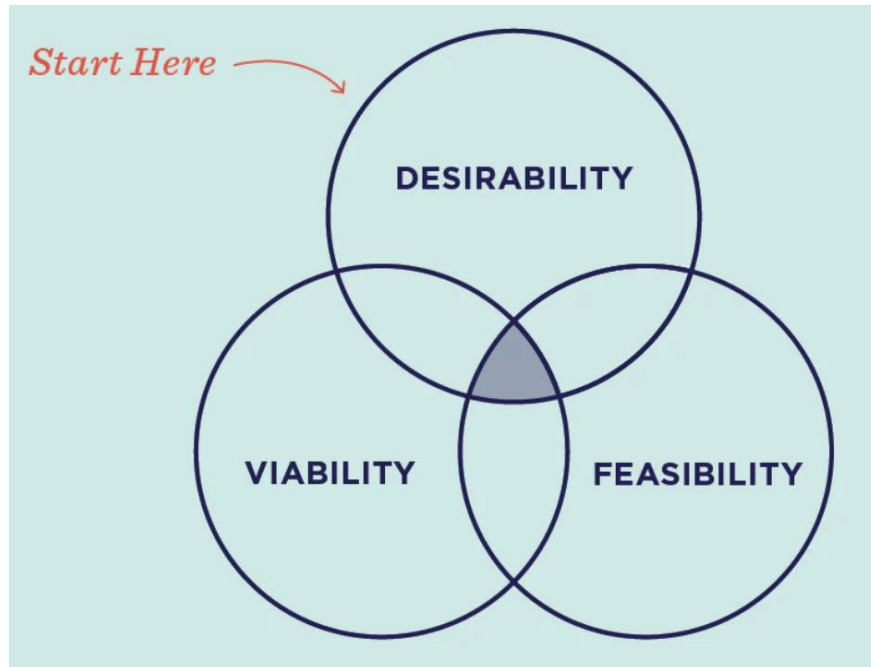| Research			Proof of concept			Build and test		
Brief	Research	Insight	Hypoth	Ideation	Proto	P.O.C.	Roadmap	Deliver	Review
Align on project vision	Research audience pains & competition	Choose specific pain to solve	Document value and measure of solving problem	Generate and prioritise solution ideas	Make and test prototypes	Go / no go / refactor decision from test results	P.O creates roadmap to deliver MLP and beyond	Launch and test releases	Go / no go / refactor decision from test results

Why Use Story Points?

Sustainable Pace!

- Velocity (just a number) = reasonable capacity and sustainable pace
- Usefully wrong and directionally correct. Relative estimation as a trend smooths out all the bumps. No rabbit hole required.
- Measures about how much the team can do in 10 working days
- Helps predict and set expectations and ensure everyone is working normal work week
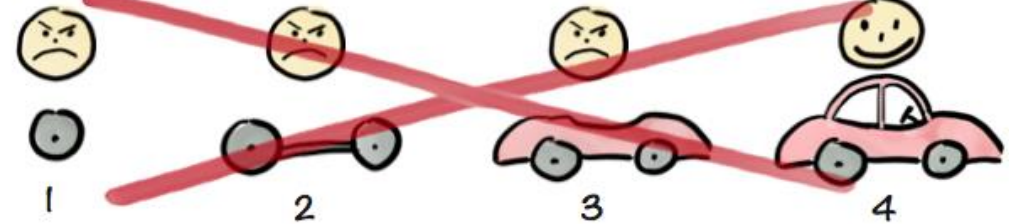
Writing Good Stories
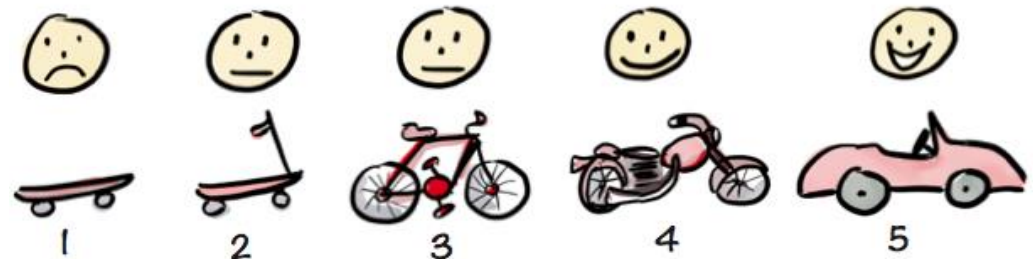
Solve a Real Problem for a Real Customer!

- Do we even know what the customer wants?
- Start w/ desirable: Balanced Breakthrough Model
- Discuss progress w/ customer... convertible?

Start Here

DESIRABILITY

VIABILITY

FEASIBILITY

Not like this....

1   2   3   4

Like this!

1   2   3   4   5
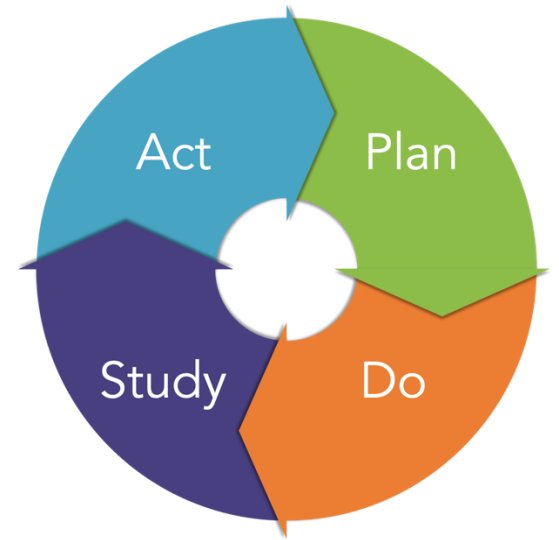
Why Smaller Story Points?

Think Iteratively!

- Small stories with outcomes - focus on "Simplicity"
- Maximize the amount of work NOT done
- Get feedback sooner. Build better products.

Why Smaller Story Points?

**Minimize Risk and Save Time! Be Lean!**

- If a story's too big, ask yourself what "unknowns" are in there
- Small stories minimize risk, in case any story is off by 50%...
- Ideally, slice stories to the *same* size so you can just count cards

Save Time!

Writing Stories Together?

Shared Understanding!

- Three "C's" – the Conversation leads to a shared understanding
- Discuss the differences to be sure there's similar ideas in tech design "how"
- Requires Psychological Safety
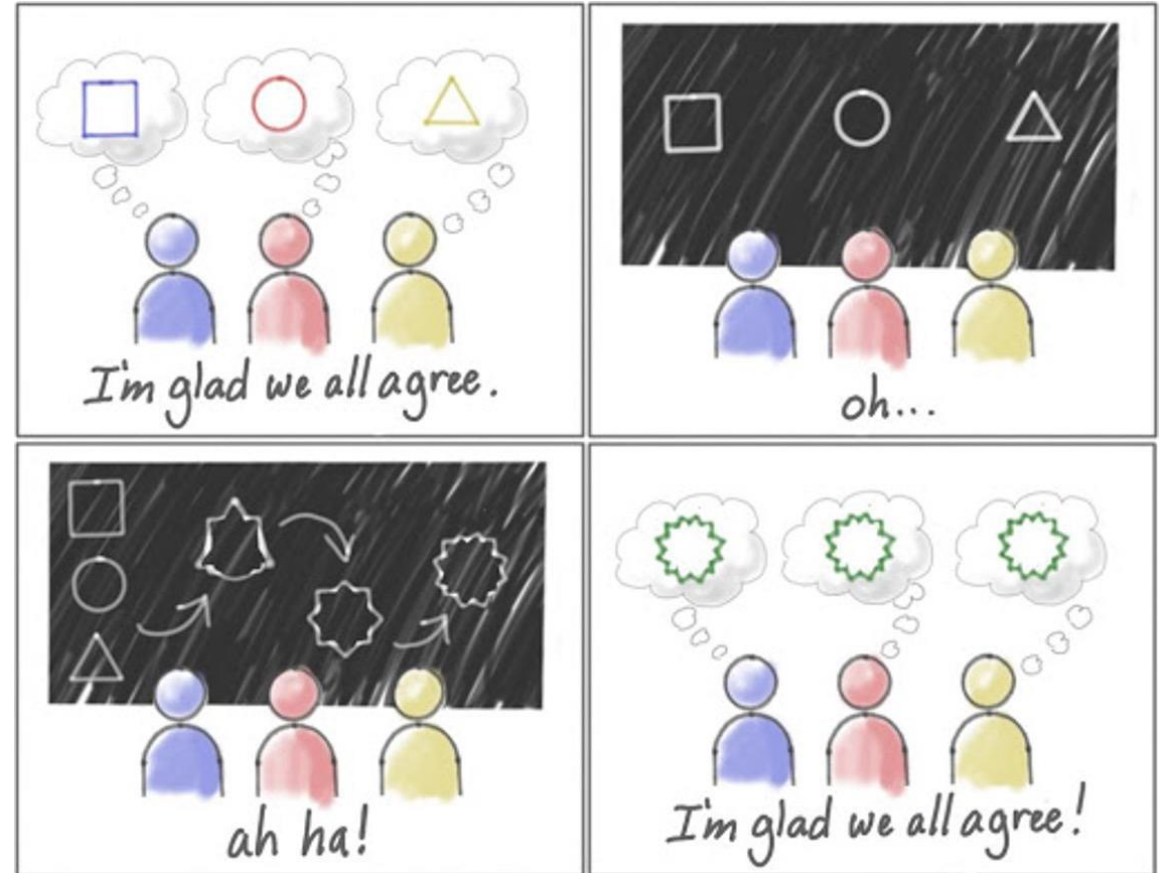
Reset Your Story Point Process

- How can a team reset how they're using story points?
  - Pick a medium story everyone understands
  - Call it a 5 as your anchor story

- Compare everything to the anchor story
  - Roughly twice as hard? Half as hard?

- Why Fibonacci? (This is not exactly Fibonacci)
  - 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 20, 40

The Ultimate Promise

With relative estimating + rigorous backlog prioritization… you can say:

> "Our team guarantees that we are working on the absolute most important outcomes for our customers at all times and will deliver incremental and demonstrable value every two weeks!"

Keep delivering and build trust and accountability… and suck consistently!

Today's slides are at PracticalAgilist.com

Practical Agilist

GUIDEBOOK   CONSULTING   ASSESSMENT   SPEAKER   BLOG   NEWSLETTER   CONTACT

PUBLIC SPEAKING

Brian Link's speaking engagement schedule

Agile Conferences, Meetups, Book Signings, and Company Invite Sessions

Brian is available to hire for speaking sessions inside your company, in community of practice events or internal conferences.

2024 Speaking Engagements

Q1 Raw Agility podcast with John Riley
Apr 17. Amadeus Agile Week Conference. France
Apr 24. Agile Dayton Meetup. Dayton, OH
May 23. Ericsson CoP. Germany
Jul 22. Agile for Agilists podcast episode released
Jul 26. CincyDeliver Conference. Cincinnatti, OH
Aug 27. ITMartini (book signing). Columbus, OH
Sep 10. Buffalo Women in Agile Meetup. Buffalo, NY
Sep 11. Toronto AgileTO Meetup. Toronto, ON
Sep 20. Agile Coaching Circle (book signing). Dublin, OH
Oct 18. AgileIndy Conference. Indianapolis, IN
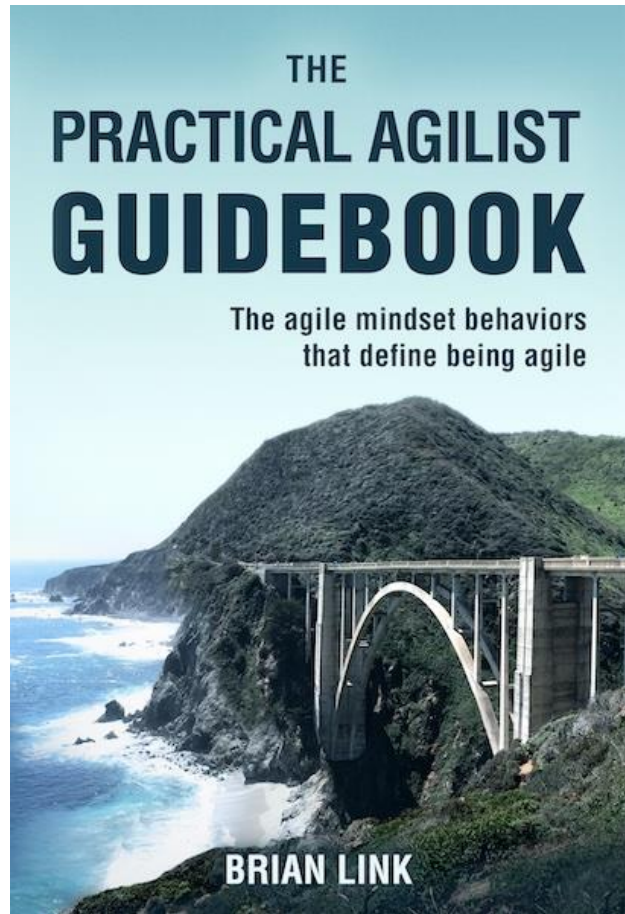Oct 24. Cincinnati Insurance CoP Speaker, Cincinnati, OH
Nov 13. AgileIndy Meetup, Indianapolis, IN
Nov 14. AgileCincy Meetup Speaker, Cincinnati, OH
Nov 20. COHAA Meetup Speaker hometown Book Launch, Columbus, OH

SPEAKING INQUIRY

Questions?

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