

# I NEED ~3 VOLUNTEERS

- Must be willing to share personal things about yourself
  - You get to choose what those things are
  - No public speaking required (but would love it if a volunteer wanted to)
  - Free autographed book for participating
  - Will take 10 minutes during the start of this session
- COME DOWN TO THE FRONT TABLES FOR INSTRUCTIONS



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## Diamond



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## Gold



## Silver



## Coffee Break





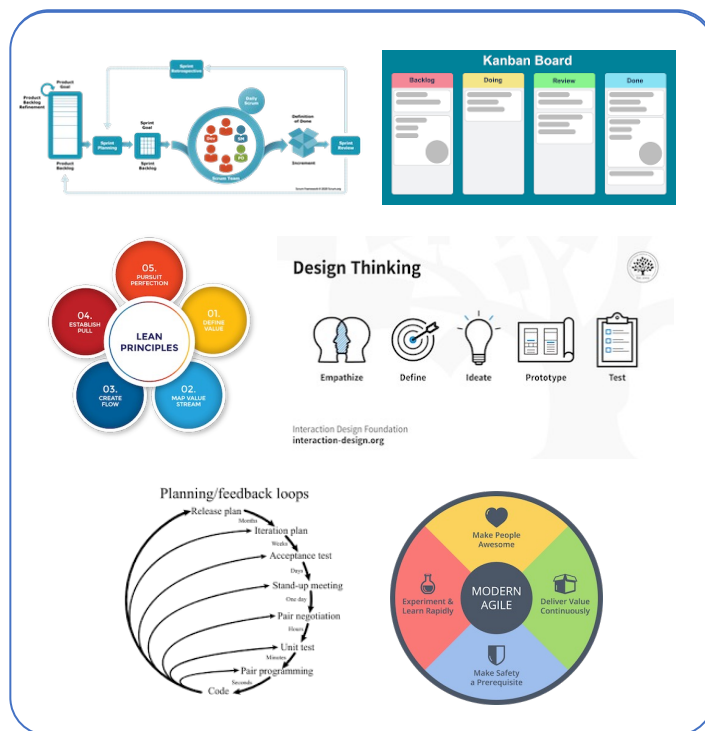
# The Leadership and Trust Playbook

## Two Engaging Exercises for Agile Teams and Leaders

Brian Link  
CincyDeliver  
Aug 1, 2025

# Brian Link. Enterprise Agile Coach.

## Ways of Working and Thinking



## Me!

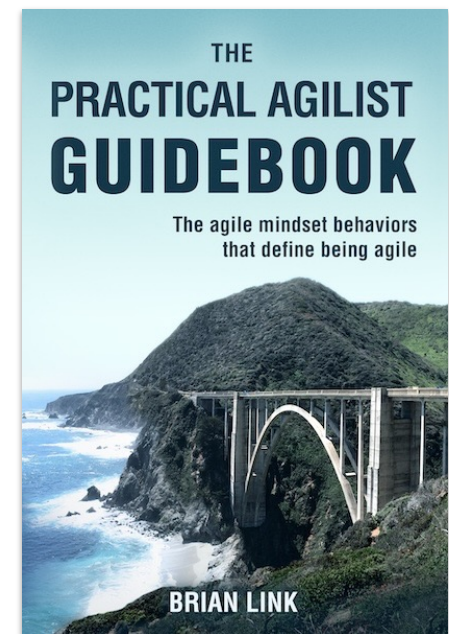


Buffalo. Boston. Columbus.

MA, MI, WA, TX, CA, WA, NC, OH, CA,  
PA, CA, NY, OH



## I Wrote a Book!



Trust and Safety  
with Leaders  
(How Do You Lead?)

Trust and Safety  
in Teams  
(Lifeline Exercise)

What is Psychological Safety?



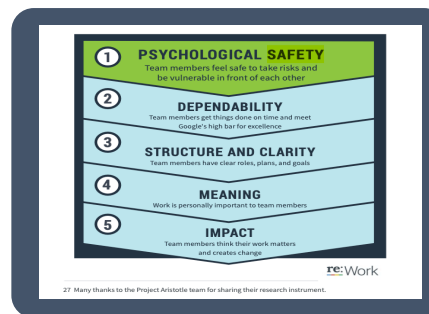
# What is Psychological Safety?

“

Psychological Safety is a belief that **one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up** with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes, and that **the team is safe** for interpersonal risk-taking.

Amy Edmondson

”



the  
**fearless**  
organization

Creating **Psychological Safety** in the  
Workplace for Learning,  
Innovation, and Growth

Amy C. Edmondson  
HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL

What Does A Leader Do To Build Trust?



Exercise:

How Do You Lead?

# How Do You Lead?

## Role Playing Exercise

1. A Manager
2. A Direct Report
3. An Observer

## The Scenario

1. Direct Report comes to the manager with a real world problem or situation (make one up). An issue on the team? A production bug? A jerk causing problems?
2. The Manager responds as they think they normally would if this were real. Act normal. Have a conversation, however you might if this happened.
3. Observer writes down what the manager says, one idea or sentence on each line, as close as possible

### Observer's Log of Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

#### INSTRUCTIONS

Whoever is Problem Owner first will rotate to be Observer next (using their own copy of this document template) Problem Owner -> Observer -> Manager -> Problem Owner

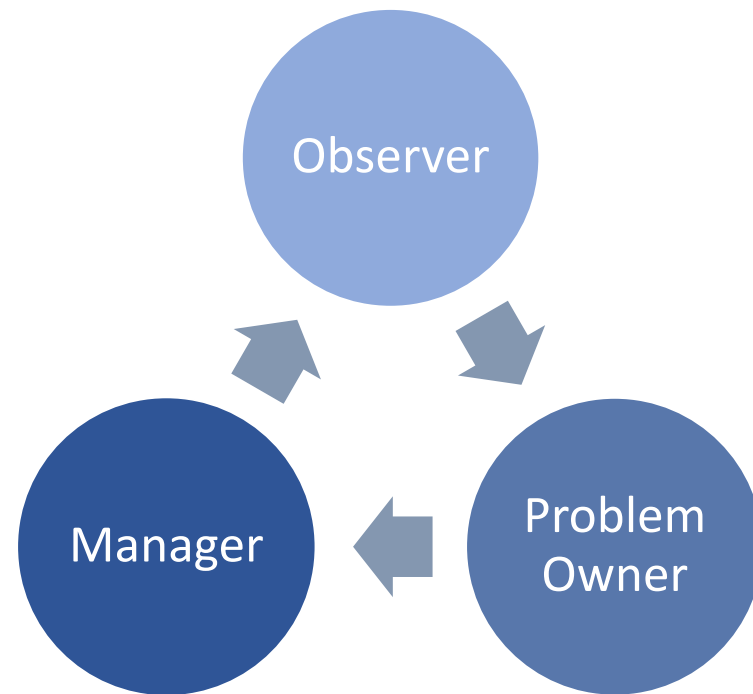
Each round is 5 mins in length (3 rounds)

When you're done with the exercise, be sure to email this doc (or hand it) to the person you were observing so they can do the next step of the activity

	Record the first 10-15 things the Manager says. <b>One thought per line.</b> Capture them as close to verbatim as possible.	Code
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
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7		
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12		
13		
14		
15		

# The Activity (for us today)

- We need clusters of 3 people. Team up at your table. Or bunch up.
- At least one group of 3 per table participating so we can all experience the exercise
- Pick roles. If you're a manager of people, you will get most out of being the Manager in the exercise
- Observer grab an Observer sheet on the table and a pen. Write down every word the Manager says if you can!





Let's Do It

Role Play Countdown

05:00

3:05PM?

# Time's Up. You Did It!

Observers:

- Give the Observation Log you completed to the Manager you observed

Manager / Coach:

- Read what you said

Now what?

We're going to go over what you said and categorize each thought

Observer's Log of Manager: \_\_\_\_\_

## INSTRUCTIONS

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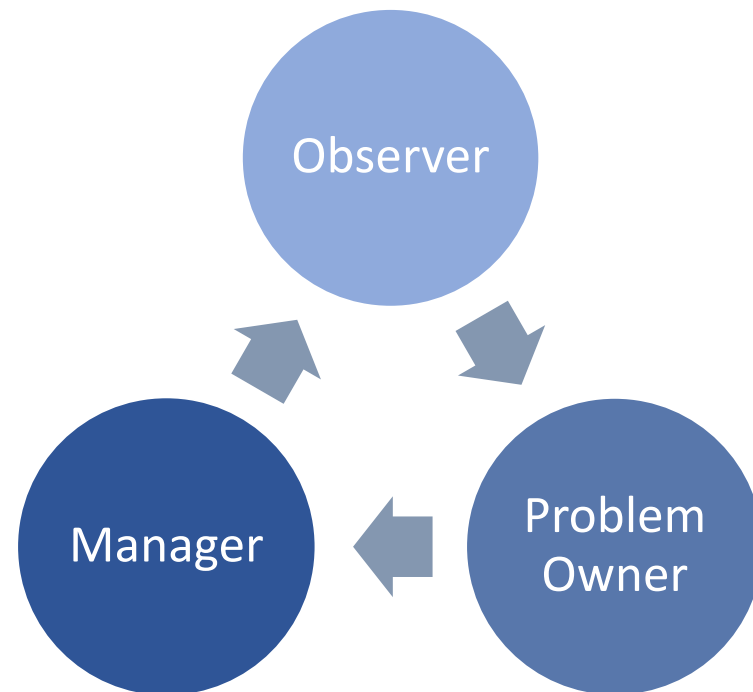
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15		

# The Activity (if you facilitate it yourself later)

- Each round will last for 5 minutes
- At the end of the five minutes, switch roles and continue
  - There is no discussion, and no debrief between rounds
- Based on "Leader's Actions Speak but Their Talk Matters" articles and workshops by David Verble
  - [lean.org/about-lei/faculty/david-verble](http://lean.org/about-lei/faculty/david-verble)







# Coding

- If the item is a “Tell” masquerading as a “Question”
  - Add the coding “TS”
  - So it would be “QTS”
- If the “Question” is a “Leading Question”
  - Add the coding “L”
  - So it would be “QL”
- If it is an Open-Ended question
  - Add the code “O”
  - So it would be “QO”
- If it is a Close-Ended question
  - Add the code “C”
  - So it would be “QC”
- For both Open & Closed Questions...
  - If the Question is based on what you think, want to suggest, or assume about the situation
    - Add “MT” to the coding
    - As in: My Thinking
  - If the Question is based on what the other person knows, thinks, or feels
    - Add “HT”
    - As in: His/Her/Their Thinking



# Coding Summary

Code	Description
TS	Tell
QTS	Tell masquerading as a question
QL	Leading question
QOMT	Open-ended question, reflecting my thinking
QCMT	Close-ended question, reflecting my thinking
QOHT	Open-ended question, reflecting the other person's thinking
QCHT	Close-ended question, reflecting the other person's thinking

A scenic view of a coastline with mountains and the ocean. The word "Considerations" is overlaid on the image.

# Considerations

- Are most of your items Asking or Telling?
- Were your questions Open, Closed, or Leading?
- Were your question based on what you were thinking, or what you wanted to learn about the other person knows and was thinking?
- Did you mostly use questions to confirm things you already knew (or thought), or did you learn and explore about things you did not know?

Is one approach better than another?

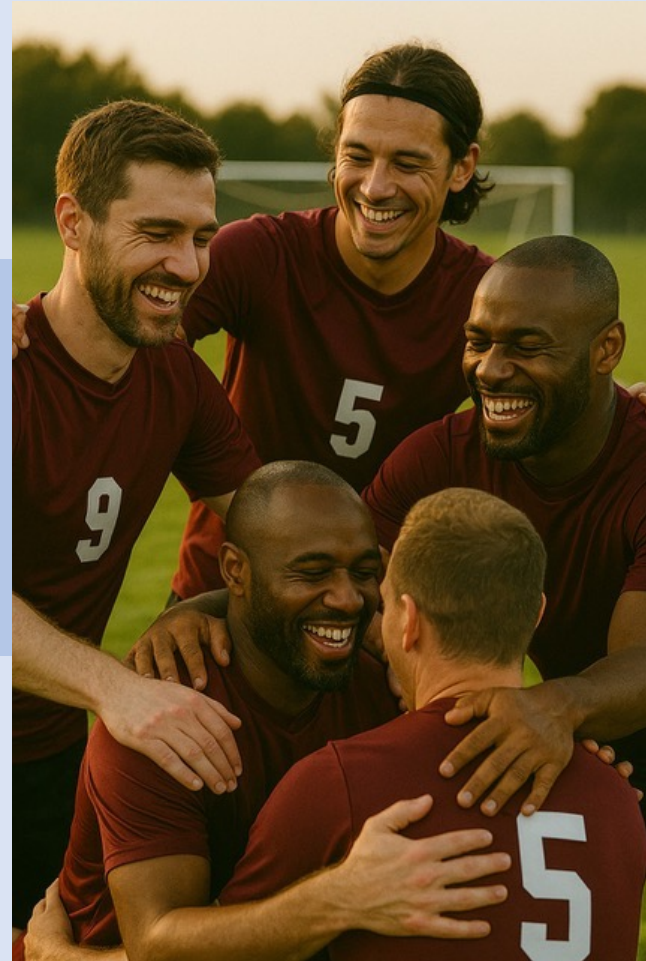
- Why or why not?

Is there anything you might want to change or be more deliberate in similar situations going forward?

Exercise:

## Lifeline Sharing

# How Do You Build Trust In A Team?



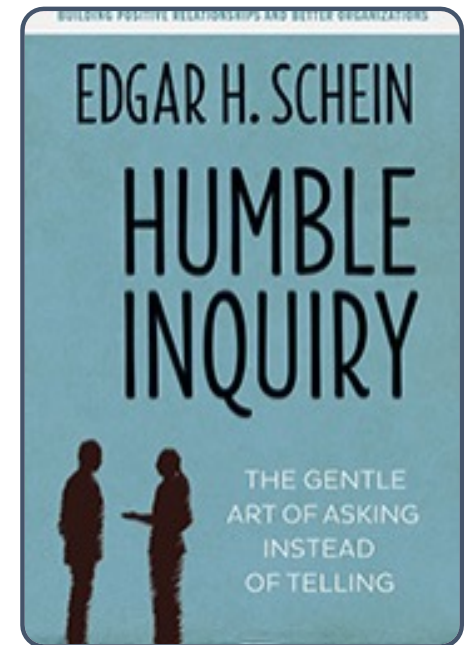
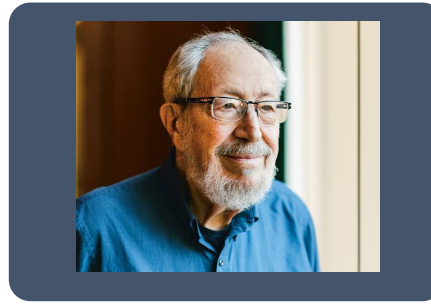
# How Do People Build Trust?

“

Humble Inquiry is the fine art of drawing someone out, of asking questions to which you do not already know the answer, of building a relationship based on curiosity and interest in the other person.

Edgar Schein

”

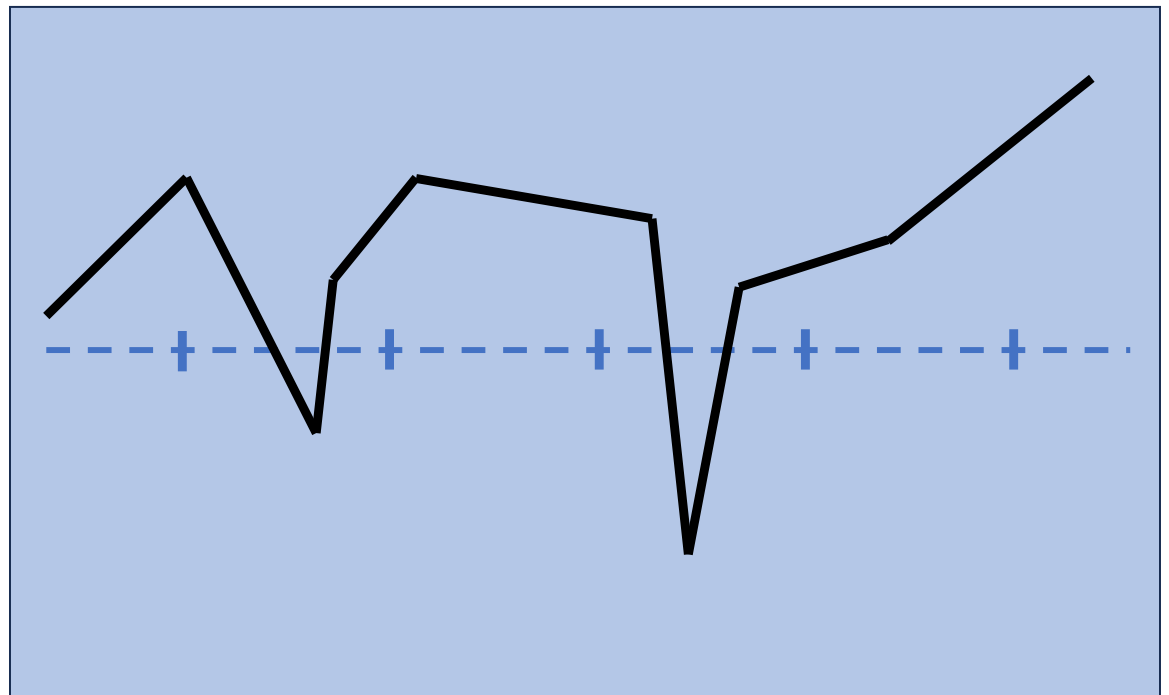




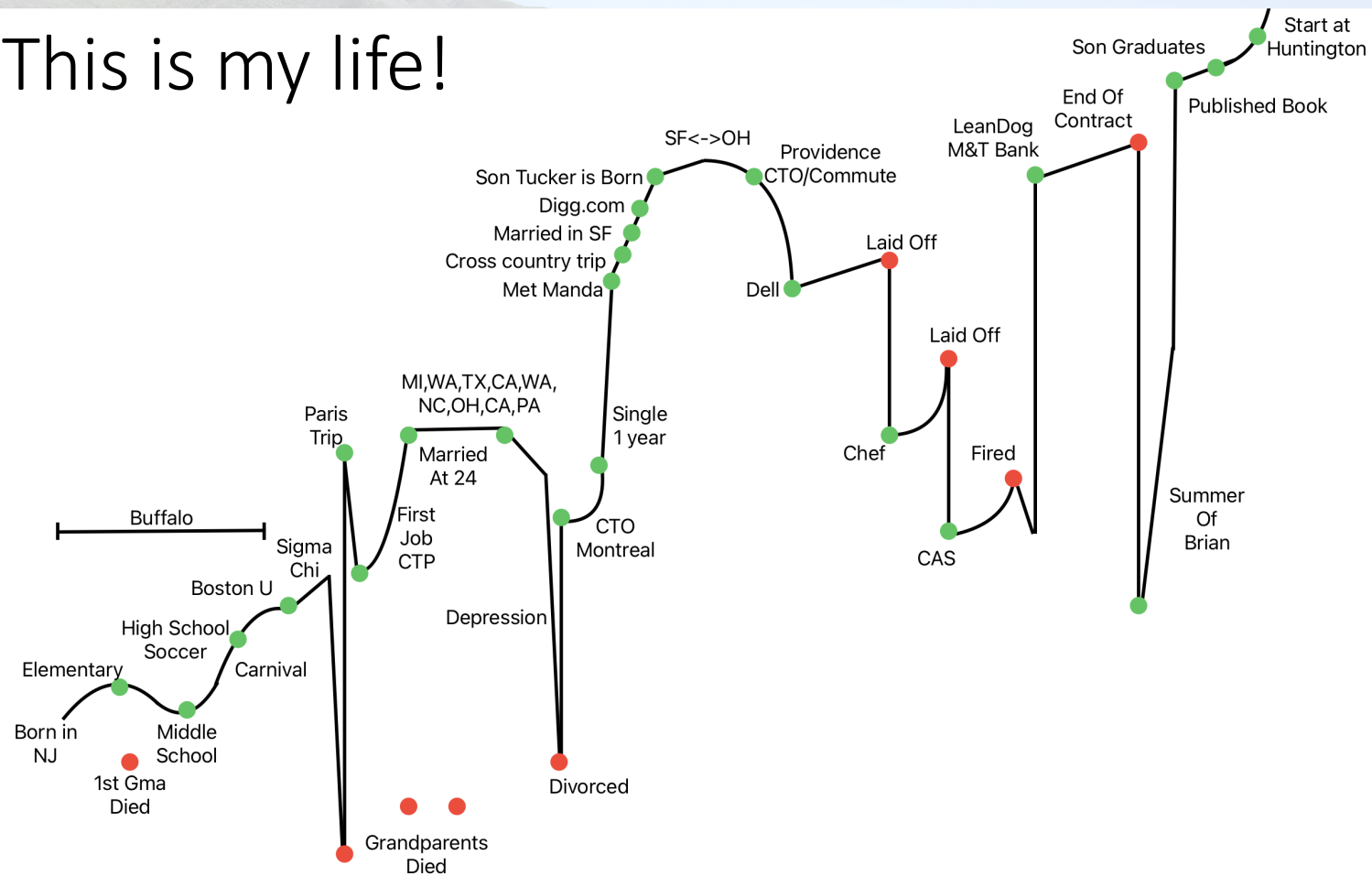
# The Lifeline Exercise

## Instructions

- Get a large piece of paper
- Position it lengthwise
- Draw a horizontal line in middle
- Left edge: day you were born
- Right edge: today
- Think of life events to share
- Only what you're willing to
- Positive ones relative above line
- Negative ones relative below line
- Align to timeline of your life



# This is my life!



3:30PM?



# Encourage Questions

- Make time for everyone to share
- Could be during a retro
- If the team can't spend 2+ hours on this activity, consider spending 15 minutes a day hearing one person at a time, or in batches
- Now you know so much about your team!
- It's easier to ask questions
- More questions build trust, empathy, and familiarity
- And most importantly, more able and free to talk about work issues!



Today's slides are at [PracticalAgilist.com](https://PracticalAgilist.com)

*Practical Agilist*

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## 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. Cincinnati, 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

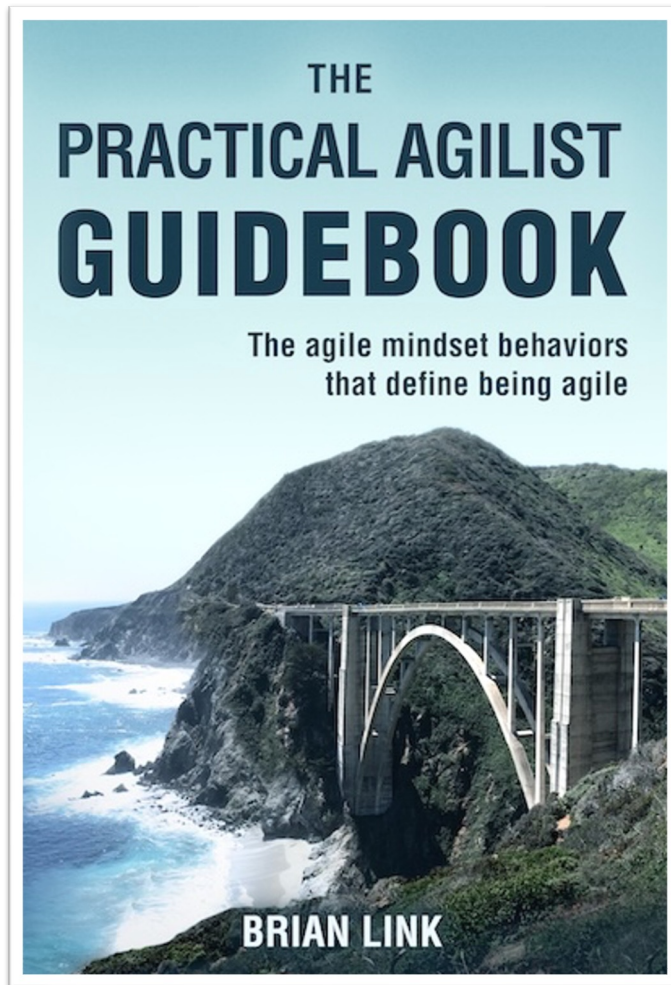
[Oct 24. Cincinnati Insurance CoP Speaker, Cincinnati, OH](#)

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](#)



## 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.

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

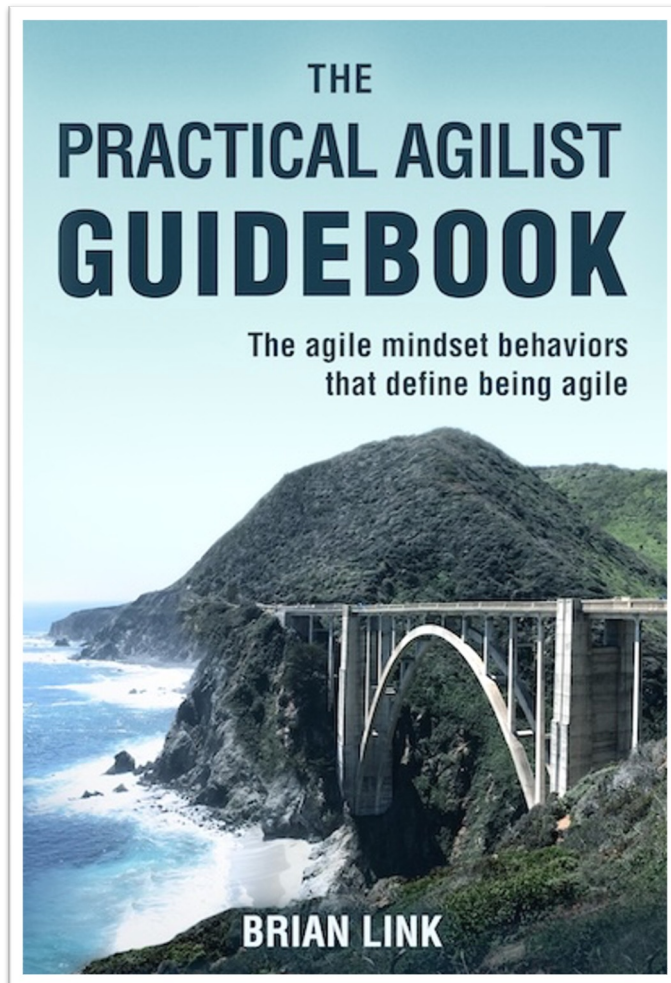
	Low	Medium	High
<b>Team member trust</b>	Team members fear sharing, voicing their opinion, or any kind of feedback.	Most team members trust one another and freely share feedback.	The team has strong relationships between every pair of team members and feedback is a core part of the team culture.
<b>Team member contributions</b>	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.
<b>Perspective on failure</b>	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.
<b>Conflict handling</b>	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.

[Why this book](#)

available at  
**amazon**







## The agile mindset behaviors that define being agile

- Launched here at CincyDelivery last year!
- Since sold hundreds of copies around the world in 10 countries
- Has landed me consulting engagements
- But not enough to be independent in these times, ha
- Free autographs!

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

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Thanks! Questions?

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<https://www.practicalagilist.com#guidebook>

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