Being Agile: Having the Mind-Set That Delivers

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Why this talk: 3 Agile pains

1. Most implementations aren’t great, but the practitioners can’t explain why
2. Leaders don’t realize the magnitude & complexity of the change
   - Unintended casualties
   - Lose staff’s trust
   - Do shoddy work
3. Wanting/rejecting Agile without quite understanding it
   - For/against Agile for the wrong reasons
   - Process and practices alone are not too appealing
   - People don’t know how to succeed
What’s in it for you

- Understand the values, beliefs, and principles of Agile thinking (we will define the mind-set).
- Learn how to choose Agile-minded methods, process, and practices for your needs and context.
- Support mindful implementation and the necessary culture change.
Mind-set drives what you do

Your mind-set is how you think about acting in a given situation.
In a given situation, before you ever plan, commit, design, implement, improve, or otherwise do any work, be explicit and deliberate about your mind-set in order to increase your effectiveness.
Think about a recent project you were involved in over a few months. (It might be your current project.)

Did it feel like:

(A) real Agile?
(M) mechanical, going-through-the-motions Agile?
(W) Waterfall?

Remember your letter.
Let’s see who we have here

Put up a hand to indicate your letter:

A

W

M
Values

Reflect on the people who led/managed the project and the team. *(You might be one of them.)* Consider:

- How they made project/product/people decisions
- What worried them
- What they took a stand for

Write down, in a few words:

*What mattered the most to them?*
Beliefs

Belief = a conviction, something you hold to be true but haven’t proven, and perhaps can’t prove rigorously.

**Agile example:**
“The longer you wait to ship, the likelier it is that the requirements have become stale.”

**Waterfall example:**
“What the customer wants now will remain valuable and mostly unchanged when the team is done.”
Beliefs

Reflecting on the same people as before.

Write down one thing that they \textit{believed} about people, the work, or the customer.
## Principles – examples

Principles: Standards that guide your choices, decisions, and actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>V:</th>
<th>B:</th>
<th>P:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agile</strong></td>
<td>Adaptation</td>
<td>Short feedback loops enable emergence and adaptation.</td>
<td>Plan and execute in short time-boxes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Waterfall</strong></td>
<td>Getting it right the first time.</td>
<td>We can put together a useful plan for that.</td>
<td>Plan everything before you start implementing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What principles drive Agile work?
Meta-principles

Feedback

Improvement

Learning
The Agile principles regarding work

- Cadence
- Quality
- Reliability

Time-Box

- Defer
- Simplicity
- Experiment

- Shippable
- Outcome
- Effective
- Results

Cost of change
The Agile principles regarding people

- Servant leadership
- Communication
- Self-organization
- Collaboration
- Consensus
- Personal safety
- Transparency
- Respect
- Focus
- Sustainable pace

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Want Agile? Be mindful of:

- Your, and other people’s, values and beliefs
- Suitability of the V & B to the situation
  - the work
  - its objectives
  - the team and the customer
- Buy-in to the mind-set
  - Buy-in to processes or practices alone is not useful
- The danger of mix-and-match and “best practices”
- Customize and adapt based on the principles
A useful model for looking at change

- Identity
- Role
- Values
- Beliefs
- Capability
- Behavior

Mind-Set
- Values
- Beliefs
- Principles
- Processes, Methods, Practices, Artifacts
How to transform effectively?

- Start with an accepted framework only if you also embrace its values and principles
- “One principle at a time” doesn’t work
- Getting better at all of them does
- Leadership, support, and patience for the change curve (expect tribulations)
- Want to know how well you’re doing? Look for principled behavior, not process compliance or velocity
Quick and easy help for you

“Something Happened on the Way to Agile”

- How to foster product owner accountability
- Ways to balance commitments with support activities
- How to integrate code reviews effectively
- How much unit test coverage is enough (or too much)
- 8 tips for effective retrospectives
- What do managers do in Agile?
- 14 other popular issues

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