



The Retrospective Handbook

A guide for agile teams

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Foreword by Diana Larsen

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Introduction

With more organisations choosing agile methodologies to deliver software, more teams are picking up the practice of agile retrospectives. You may be working on one of these teams already and regularly use agile retrospectives to seek continuous improvement; if not, your team may find the agile retrospective practice beneficial to your work.

The Retrospective Handbook is intended as an aid to running more effective retrospectives and to complement existing books on retrospectives. It is important to use a good variety of activities to make an engaging retrospective, but this handbook intentionally focuses less on listing activities in favour of addressing the practical challenges you are likely to encounter when running retrospectives.

The contents of this book reflect advice I have been asked for time and again by people interested in the retrospective practice. Some questions came from newcomers to the agile retrospective practice, who had problems making retrospectives useful, while other questions came from retrospective facilitators keen to hear alternative approaches to common problems. *The Retrospective Handbook* also contains advice on working with seasoned agile teams, and explores ways of changing the retrospective practice to be even more engaging and insightful.

Some of the questions I answer in this book include:

- What is the Retrospective Prime Directive and why

should I care?

- How can I improve how I facilitate retrospectives?
- How important is an independent facilitator?
- How do I run a distributed retrospective effectively?
- What different types of retrospectives do people run?
- What can I do to keep retrospectives fresh?
- How do we make sure that we get results from the retrospective?

The answers to these questions and many more are drawn not only from my own experience with the retrospective practice, helping clients and teams overcome frustrations and puzzles they faced, but also from numerous other retrospective facilitators who have passed on their insights and wisdom. I hope *The Retrospective Handbook* helps you to increase the effectiveness of your retrospectives and enables your team to go from strength to strength for years to come.