Stop Complaining and Start Learning!

retrospectives that drive real change
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Retrium CEO & Co-Founder

David is the CEO & Co-Founder at Retrium, a platform for fun and engaging retrospectives!

David has over 13 years of experience working as a software developer, agile coach, and entrepreneur.

In addition to his Master's Degree in Technology Management from The University of Pennsylvania and The Wharton School of Business, he has Computer Science and Economics degrees from The University of Maryland.

He is the father of 4 little ones and is married to his college sweetheart!
Imagine you could only use 1 agile technique.

Which one would it be?

1. Daily standup
2. Sprint planning and reviews
3. Prioritized backlogs
4. Retrospectives
5. Cross functional teams
6. Other
Retrospectives* are the catalyst of true agility

* Well, good ones at least.
retrospective noun
ret·ro·spec·tive | \'re-trə-'spek-tiv \n
An opportunity for your team to reflect on what has occurred and to construct ways to become better going forward.
Retrospectives are successful when ...
There is discussion
We find a solution
Actionable Team Learning
Who says we should retrospect, anyway?
"At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behavior accordingly."
At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behavior accordingly.

Follow through!
At regular intervals, the team reflects on how to become more effective, then tunes and adjusts its behavior accordingly.

Follow through!
The Vicious Cycle of Retrospective Disillusionment
RETROSPECTIVE
TRIANGLE OF SUCCESS

People

Process

Follow Through
RETRIEVING
TRIANGLE OF SUCCESS

People

Process

Follow Through
Rule #1

Retrospectives are for the team
Not your boss.
Not your stakeholders.
Not your agile coach.

The Team!
“The Sprint Retrospective is an opportunity for the **Scrum Team** to inspect itself and create a plan for improvements to be enacted during the next Sprint.”

The Scrum Guide
Scrum Master
Product Owner
Development Team
Don't want to invite the **PO**?  
Your team has some **BO**.

https://www.flickr.com/photos/aturkus/4342379566
Rule #2

Ignore Rule #1
Your boss?
Your stakeholders?
Your agile coach?

Maybe ... it's up to The Team!
Use your 🧠
Rule #3

Use a facilitator
Low participation?

Try a new activity
Take a break
Shift to breakout groups
Multiple topics are being discussed at once?

Create a parking lot
Name the different topics
"Can you link your idea to the main topic?"
Someone dominates the conversation?

Don't give more attention to the person! Instead, invite others. "What else?"

Use ELMO cards
Who facilitates?

Doesn't have to be your Scrum Master or Agile Coach!
Changing who facilitates has three advantages*
First, it keeps things fresh.
https://www.flickr.com/photos/enerva/8650101800

VS.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:SampleBurndownChart.png
Second, it increases your bus factor.
The **bus factor** is the total number of people who would have to be hit by a bus in order to leave your project for dead.
Third, it gives everyone a chance to participate.

(See Rule #4)
Rule #4

Facilitate or Participate. Choose one.
Rule #5

If one person is remote
Everyone is remote.
“If Dante rewrote The Inferno, I’m pretty sure the first circle would be conference calls.”

Umair Haque
So, don't rely on conference calls alone
Lots of tooling options exist

General collaboration
Online whiteboards
High flexibility

Specific to retrospectives
Pick a retro technique
Low flexibility

Google docs
Trello
retrium
Confluence
GroupMap
Realtime Board
IdeaBoardz
To recap...

Rule 1. Retrospectives are for the team
Rule 2. Ignore Rule 1
Rule 3. Use a facilitator
Rule 4. Facilitate or Participate. Choose One
Rule 5. If one person is remote, everyone is remote.
RETRIEVE
TRIANGLE OF SUCCESS

People

Process

Follow Through
Rule #1

Use facilitation techniques!
Let's run a real retro on ...
The best part of this conference is...
A better way :)
Rule #2

Zoom in on the dog nose
You can do it 🌟
@SNCKPCK

zoom in on the dog nose

8:09 AM - 25 Feb 2017

25,856 Retweets 49,057 Likes
you are beautiful
Use Team Radar to "zoom in on the dog nose"
Rule #3

Don't forget to facilitate open discussion
Silence is your friend
Create invitations.
Don't force anything.
If your name is Mike or Kim stand up
Now dance!
Joe, I haven't heard from you in a while ...

😊
Instead...
Who else has an idea?
Any comments from someone who hasn't spoken in a while?
Are there any other perspectives on this?
Ask Powerful Questions!
Powerful questions...

1. Are truly open
2. Are not asked with a "correct" answer in mind
3. Invite introspection
4. Reveal additional solutions
5. Almost always lead to greater creativity and insight
6. Send people into a realm of discovery

To recap...

**Rule 1.** Use facilitation techniques!
**Rule 2.** Zoom in on the dog nose
**Rule 3.** Don't forget to facilitate open discussion
RETROSPECTIVE
TRIANGLE OF SUCCESS

People

Process

Follow Through
Rule #1

Follow the energy
EV(action item) is a function of...

impact
effort
odds you will actually do it!
Action
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Impact</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
Rule #2

Focus on one thing at a time
Rule #3

Be SMART
Specific
Measurable
Achievable
Relevant
Time-bound
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Action Item</th>
<th>SMART Action Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiment with Continuous Integration</td>
<td><strong>In order to</strong> release our product on a more frequent basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>We will</strong> setup a <strong>continuous integration server</strong>.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Before</strong> the end of the next sprint.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>We will know that we were successful</strong> when commits to the code are automatically pushed to the continuous integration server.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bring food to our next Sprint Planning meeting</td>
<td><strong>In order to</strong> increase engagement in our Sprint Planning meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Tanya will</strong> bring a dozen doughnuts to our next Sprint Planning Meeting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rule #4

Small wins are better than no wins at all
15% Solutions

“What is your 15 percent?
Where do you have discretion and freedom to act?
What can you do without more resources or authority?”
Rule #5

Use the Modified Vegas Rule
What happens in 

**VEGAS**

Doesn't always stay in Vegas!
# The Retrospective Radiator

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learnings</th>
<th>Talk to Us If...</th>
<th>Hypotheses &amp; Experiments</th>
<th>Action Items</th>
<th>Impediments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicate with the PO throughout sprint</td>
<td>You want to learn how we reduced bugs by 25% in the last month</td>
<td></td>
<td>In the next sprint, we will get feedback from our PO at least twice a day</td>
<td>Unable to purchase tooling we need</td>
</tr>
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<td>Pair programming increases code quality</td>
<td>You want to help facilitating your retrospectives</td>
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<td>Management increases WIP at the last moment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using facilitation software for our retrospectives helps!</td>
<td>You want to hear about our 20% time initiative</td>
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</tbody>
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*Retrium*
To recap...

**Rule 1.** Follow the energy
**Rule 2.** Focus on one thing at a time
**Rule 3.** Be SMART
**Rule 4.** Small wins are better than no wins at all
**Rule 5.** Use the modified Vegas rule
The Virtuous Cycle of Retrospective Success
Welcome to the Retrospectives Academy

All the knowledge and best practices you need to become a retrospectives expert.

New? Start Here

https://academy.retrium.com
thank you for your time!