



THE ART OF BLAMELESS RETROSPECTIVES

Subheading goes here

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AGENDA

What are we talking about?

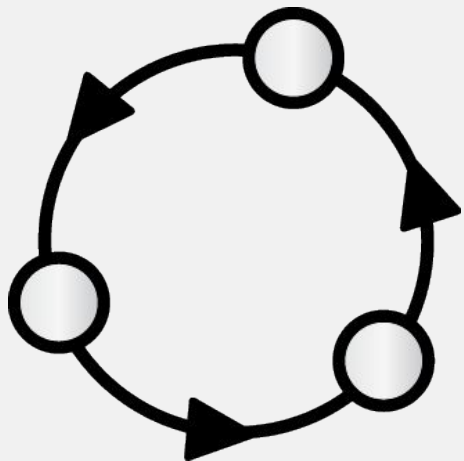
- **What are retrospectives?** But more importantly, can I stop going?
- **What do we mean when we say blameless?** #buzzword
- **How can we achieve something better?** the mythical state of cats shooting laser beams while riding unicorns
- **The only way to get better is to practice** OMG, are we going to have to talk to our neighbors in this session?!

WHAT IS A RETROSPECTIVE ANYWAY?

*“Here is Edward Bear coming downstairs now, bump, bump, bump, on the back of his head, behind Christopher Robin. It is, as far as he knows, the only way of coming downstairs, but sometimes he feels that there really is another way... **if only he could stop bumping for a moment and think of it!**”*

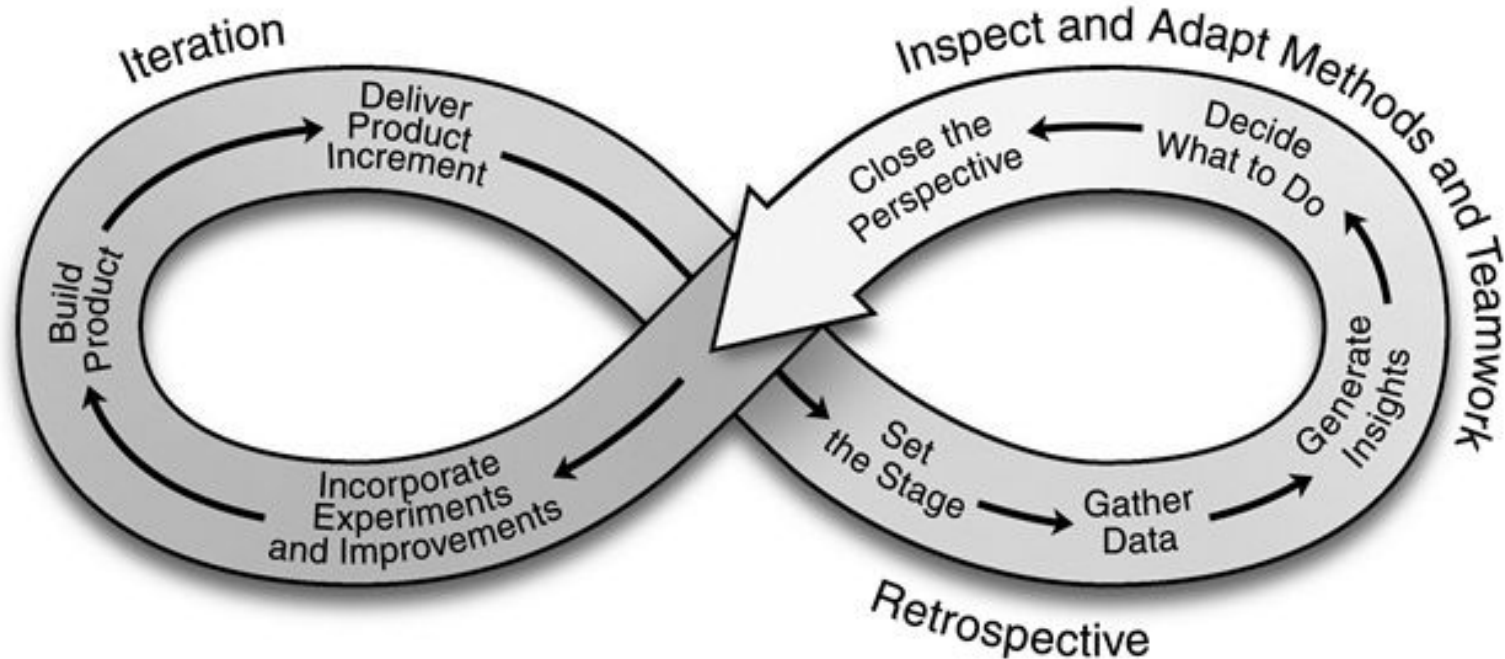
- A. A. Milne

RETROSPECTIVES



*A practice used by their teams to **reflect** on their way of working, and **continuously become better** in what they do. They are meant to help teams **keep improving**.*

EFFECTIVE RETROSPECTIVES



Agile Retrospectives: Making Good Teams Great by Esther Derby & Diana Larsen | <https://pragprog.com/book/dlret/agile-retrospectives>

THREE TIPS TO MAKE RETROS BETTER

Applies to any methodology...



Shorten the time between each one



Focus discussions on what you are able to change



Always end on the high notes

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY BLAMELESS?



*“Regardless of what we discover, we understand and truly believe that **everyone did the best job they could**, given what they knew at the time, their skills and abilities, the resources available, and the situation at hand. “*

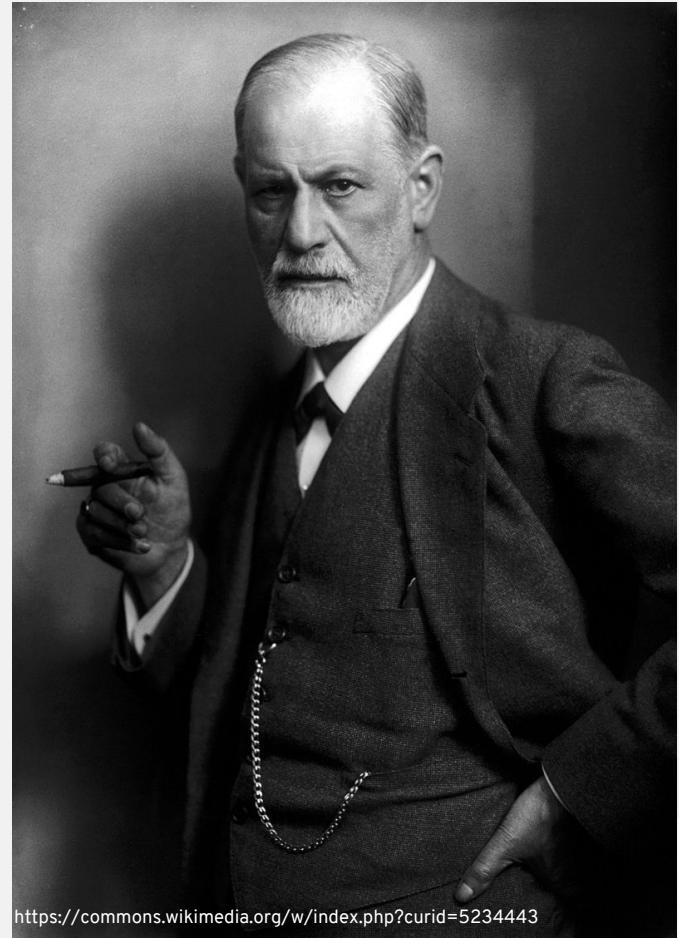
–The Retrospective Prime Directive

<http://www.retrospectives.com/pages/retroPrimeDirective.html>

**BLAME DISTRACTS US
FROM REAL PROBLEMS.**

WARNING!

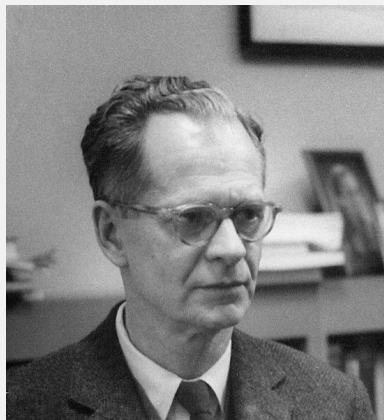
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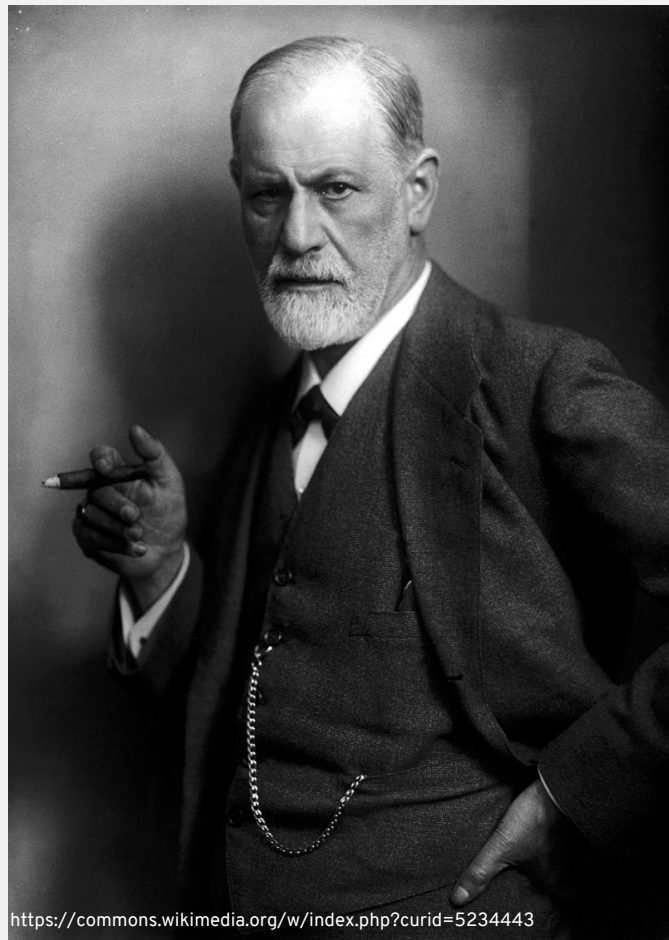
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←OR THIS GUY

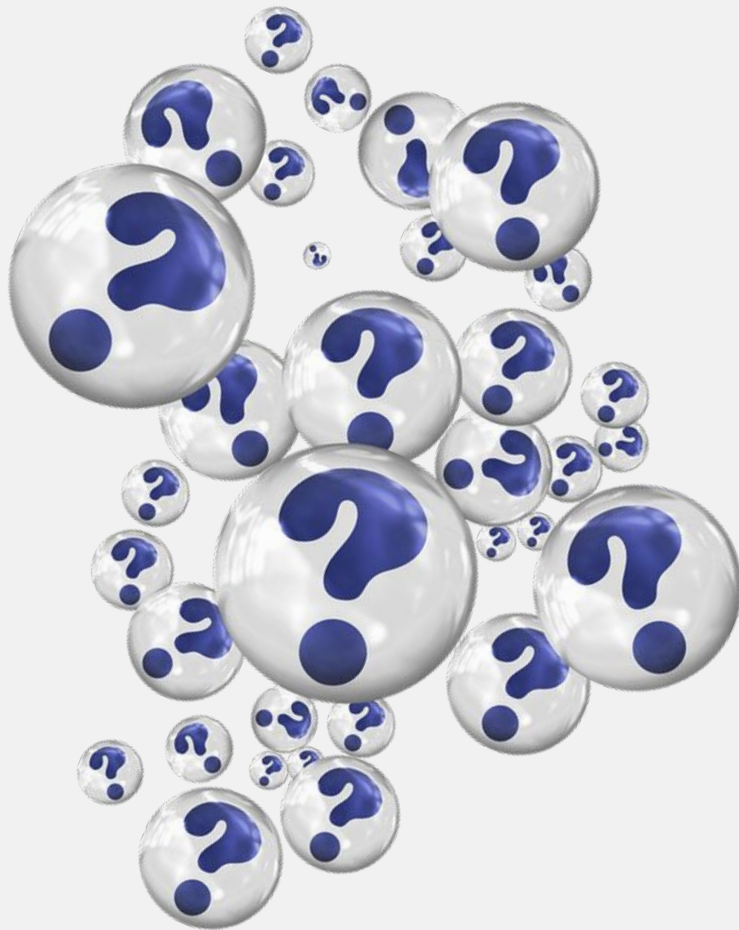


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WHY DO WE BLAME?

We are human afterall...

- Wanting to feel better about the situation
- Didn't like the other person
- Didn't want to deal with the consequences
- It was easier than the alternative



Attribution Theory

A theory that supposes that one attempts to understand the behavior of others by attributing feelings, beliefs, and intentions to them. -Wikipedia

*“When we say, “This man is easily pleased,” it implies that **we first assess the objective situation** as not especially pleasing, even though it is so satisfying to him.” Likewise...*

“he takes it too hard,”

“he keeps up his chin,”

“he doesn’t know when he is well off,”

*All require a **judgment** about the objective state of affairs.” -Heider, 1958*

NAIVE REALISM (PSYCHOLOGY)

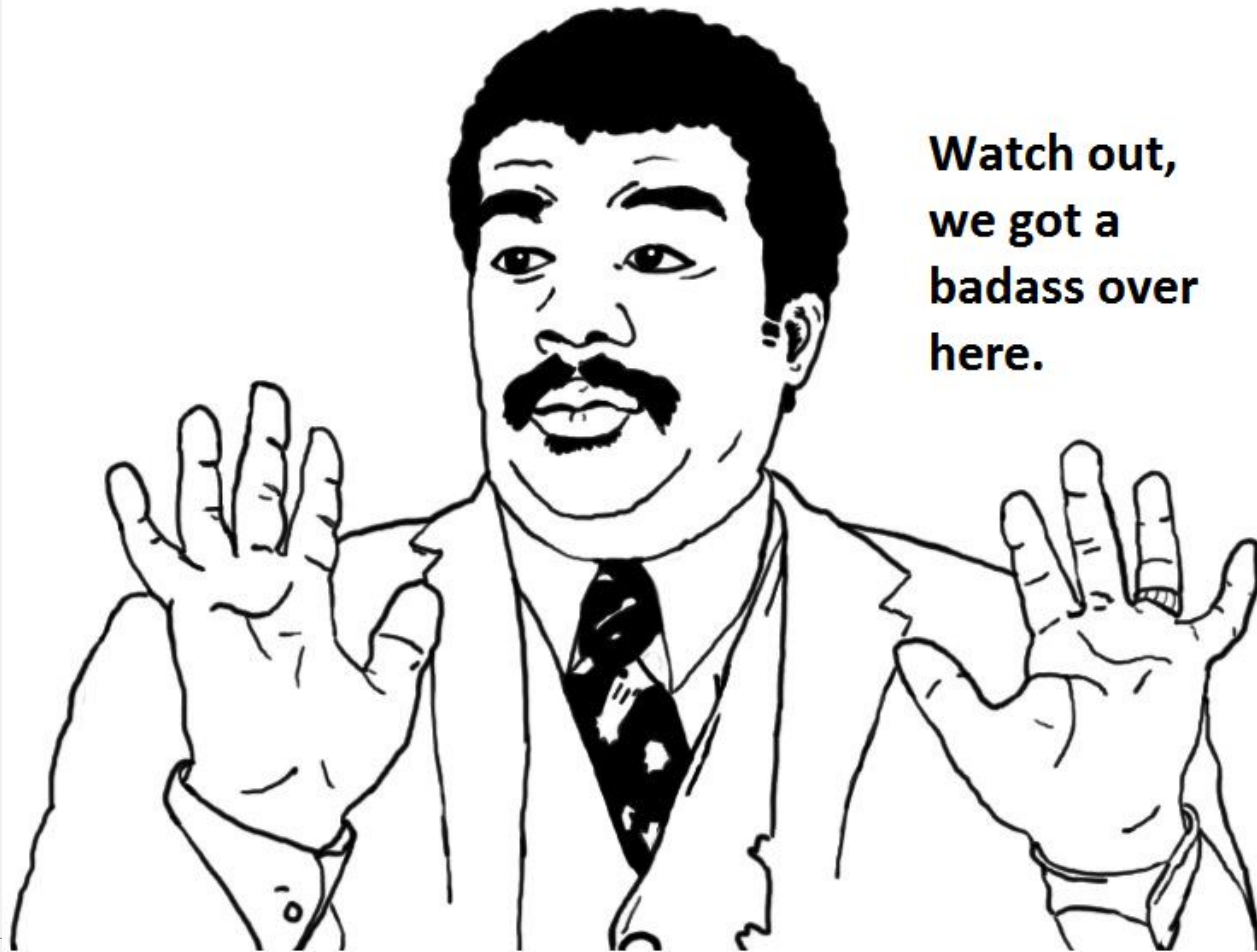
Main assumptions...

From wikipedia:

- You see the world objectively and without bias.
- You expect that others will come to the same conclusions, so long as they are exposed to the same information and interpret it in a rational manner.
- You assume that others who do not share the same views must be ignorant, irrational, or biased.

**OK THAT SUCKS.
WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?**






**Watch out,
we got a
badass over
here.**

BEAT THE BLAME GAME

These are the tips that helped me.

- Acknowledge what you are feeling, thinking
- Gather insights into what the other person is feeling, thinking
- Do you need to adjust your perception?



 Duane Storey | <https://www.flickr.com/photos/duanestorey/365004518>

HOW TO GIVE FEEDBACK

Creating a positive environment is crucial. It's important to make sure delivery of your messages comes across in the right way.

Event: Engineer just completed an important feature.

- Active destructive - provides a very negative environment
 - “Are you sure it actually works?”
- Passive destructive - provides a negative environment
 - “Jim also just completed his task.”
- Passive constructive - provides a neutral environment
 - “Great!”
- Active constructive - provides a positive environment
 - “You did an amazing job! Did you like working on the feature?”

PRACTICE

MANAGER

Your manager Arun keeps coming to retrospectives and loudly disagreeing that his team had anything to do with any of the problems that the project is experiencing. You know that the team is indeed part of the problem, and it is mostly because your team's architect Lucy decided to use COBOL instead of Python to code a major interface. When asked what the team could have done differently, what do you say?



© Scott Adams | <http://blog.dilbert.com/>

A: Arun- we really need to talk later. I have some information to share about how we architected the system. *significant look at Lucy*

B: We either need to reconsider our use of COBOL, or get some training. We are not all as skilled in the language and it is causing some delay.

C: @#)\$)*!@# Lucy, why are you making us use COBOL?!

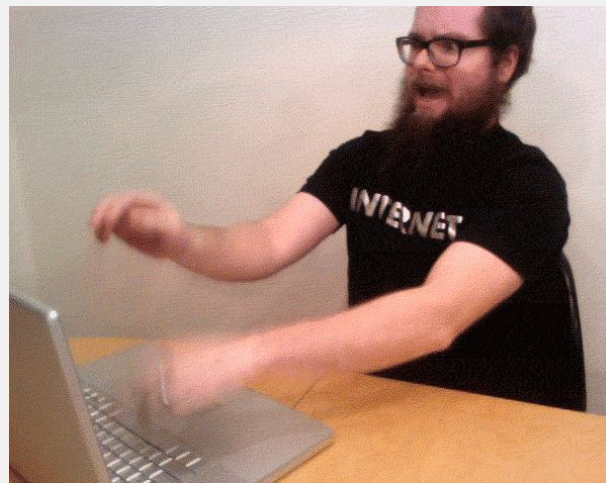
COWORKER

Your coworker Jimmy, whom you've been collaborating with, has been unresponsive for the past 2 weeks. You are waiting on his part of the code in order to move forward. Alas! The team fails to meet its deadline at the last moment, the release is slipped a week and management is mad because there were no signs of delay previously. What do you say in retrospective when the team talks about what they could have done differently?

A: I probably should have just coded Jimmy's part since he wasn't around to code his.

B: We could have identified that the feature wouldn't be done by the deadline and talked to the management team about slipping it into the next.

C: If only Jimmy hadn't been off playing the new Zelda game instead of coding, we might have gotten the release out the door.



<http://www.toothpastefordinner.com/>

AUDITOR

You were approving an expense report, and you noticed some odd activity in the system. Your coworkers Janice and Ed had been submitting expense reports to each other for approval for small amounts. It doesn't seem like a big deal to you, but it is a protocol breach according to company rules. The CEO announces the annual audit, and you are approached for an interview with the Audit firm. They know about the transactions and are asking questions. What do you say?



A: I don't know anything about that.

B: I did notice some odd transactions in the expense system, but I haven't had a chance to follow up to see if they are valid.

C: JANICE AND ED ARE STEALING MONEY!

CEO

You have had a major outage that caused email to be inaccessible to everyone in the company. You know that your coworker Tony was in the server room with a cup of coffee and accidentally tripped and spilled it all over the most critical server. You are also worried because you know Tony has 3 kids at home with triplets on the way and he needs this job. What do you tell Jim when he come storming into your office demanding to know what is going on?

A: Jim- it was Tony! He was in the server room again with a cup of coffee and broke the server!

B: It was all my fault! I accidentally spilled a cup of coffee on the server and it blew up.

C: The team has been lax in our adherence to the policy of no food in the server room. We had a mishap that caused one of our main servers to be disrupted.





“There's no such thing as bad weather, only unsuitable clothing.”

-Alfred Wainwright



THANK YOU



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