
Collaboration Is The Better Way

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@Lauri_Apple & @er1p

introduction




@Lauri_Apple
(she/her)

introduction



@er1p
(he/him)

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- intro
 - communicating in tech
 - communication magic
 - empathy as a skill
 - shared goals
 - inclusion - collaboration across cultures
 - q & a
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- A stack of several books is visible in the background on the right side of the slide. The books are stacked vertically, with their spines facing left. The colors of the spines are muted, including shades of grey, blue, and green. The books are slightly out of focus, serving as a decorative background element.

—
“the practice
of an art
requires
discipline”

— Erich Fromm,
The Art of Loving

discipline - not rigid, but an expression of one's own will
concentration - requires reflection, listening to others
patience

just going to work, having meetings, working
on teams, doesn't make us disciplined or
collaborative.

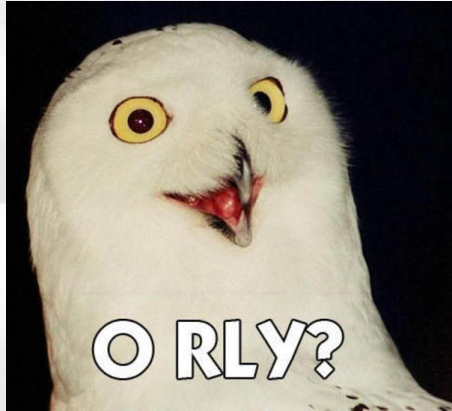
hierarchies don't make us collaborative either,
they inspire rebelliousness.

common problems in tech projects

- missed deadlines
- low productivity (“we need more time”)
- poor quality (rush to finish)
- high turnover (people keep leaving)
- difficulty recruiting (can’t find good people)

“it’s always like this,
all projects are like
this, it’s the cost of
doing (tech)
business”

collaboration gets things done



of course EVERYTHING on the previous
slide is TRUE

BUT that doesn't get things done

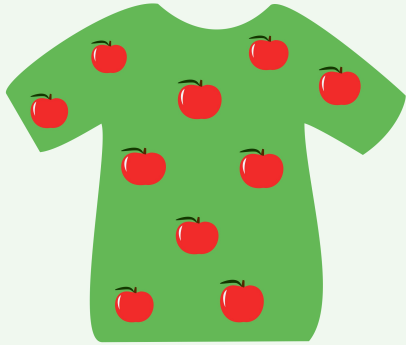
COLLABORATION does

communicating

-
- GitHub issues
 - PRs/code
 - Slack
 - Meetings
 - Meetups
 - Google docs
 - Social media
 - 1:1's
 - Mailing lists (not so much anymore)
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Which channels are
the most challenging
to you?

10 principles for collaboration



- self-aware = resilience
- self-disciplined = high-performance
- head over heart = waste reduction
- mindful empathy = retention
- keep learning = growth mindset
- use different modes = flexibility
- focus on activities = results-orientation
- values and ethics drive = integrity
- “client defines success” = profitability, customer focus
- cultural competency = diversity and inclusion

why be intentional?

reduce or eliminate:

- conflicts, drama
- waste, delays
- confusion
- misalignment
- protects collaboration
- builds trust
- reduces cognitive load
- drives experimentation



when we are not being intentional, we...

- make assumptions, jump to conclusions
- don't ask for what we need
- become frustrated, ruminate
lose opportunities
- rely on mind-reading powers we don't have.



communicating better with text

exercise — create 2 scripts we can use to help us diffuse our triggers and communicate with empathy

example — “Thank you for trying to understand my point. However, I think where we’re still misaligned. Is ... what do you think?”

example — “Thank you for your enthusiasm! I’ve noted your concerns and believe we might handle this concern/situation by [alternative idea]...”

communication magic



the more communication, the better...

- increased communication **frequency**
 - increased communication **freshness**
 - **archival** history (for those jumping in)
 - **wide sharing**
 - across time zones
 - across geographies
 - across organizations
 - ...and more...
-



empathy as a skill

empathy

[**em**-puh-thee]

[Synonyms](#)

[Examples](#)

[Word Origin](#)

[See more synonyms for *empathy* on Thesaurus.com](#)

noun

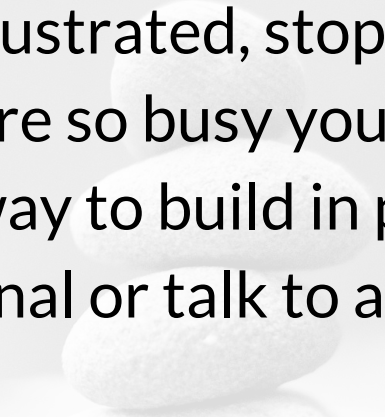
1. the psychological identification with or vicarious experiencing of the feelings, thoughts, or attitudes of another.
2. the imaginative ascribing to an object, as a natural object or work of art, feelings or attitudes present in oneself:

By means of empathy, a great painting becomes a mirror of the self.

empathy audit

-
- on a scale of 1 to 5 (low to high), how would you rate your empathy?
 - when you aren't communicating "empathetically enough," what does that feel like in your body/mind?
 - when you are communicating empathetically, how does that feel?
 - do you reflect on your communication to improve collaboration?
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empathy exercises

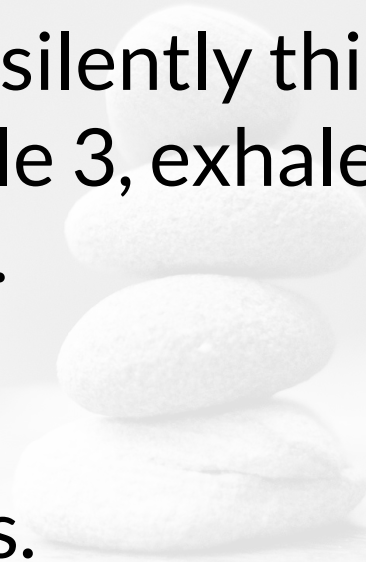
- when you are frustrated, stop.
 - but what if you're so busy you can't stop?
 - can you find a way to build in pauses?
 - example — journal or talk to a peer about your stress.
- 

**exercise -
meditation
minute**

count your breaths.

as you inhale, silently think 1,
exhale 2, inhale 3, exhale 4 ... all
the way to 10.

repeat 3 times.



personal README

My answers to first 1:1 questions

What makes you grumpy?

- If I feel like I don't have challenges to work on - when I'm challenged, I'm happy! One other thing is folks doubling down to defend mistakes (all humans make mistakes, we just need to learn from them). Environments where we're not learning from our mistakes make me grumpy.

How will I know when you're grumpy?

- I will probably tell you if something is up!

How can I help you when you're grumpy?

- Talking about something interesting (like you!) will usually pull me out of it.

How do you like feedback - slack, email, in person, etc?

(Katie Womersley, Buffer): <https://github.com/KatieLo/README>

shared goals

teams != me + me + me + me

five dysfunctions of a team (Lencioni)

- absence of trust
- inattention to results
- avoidance of responsibility
- lack of commitment
- fear of conflict

put the US in trust

—

**teams gotta have
goals...**



...but what goals?



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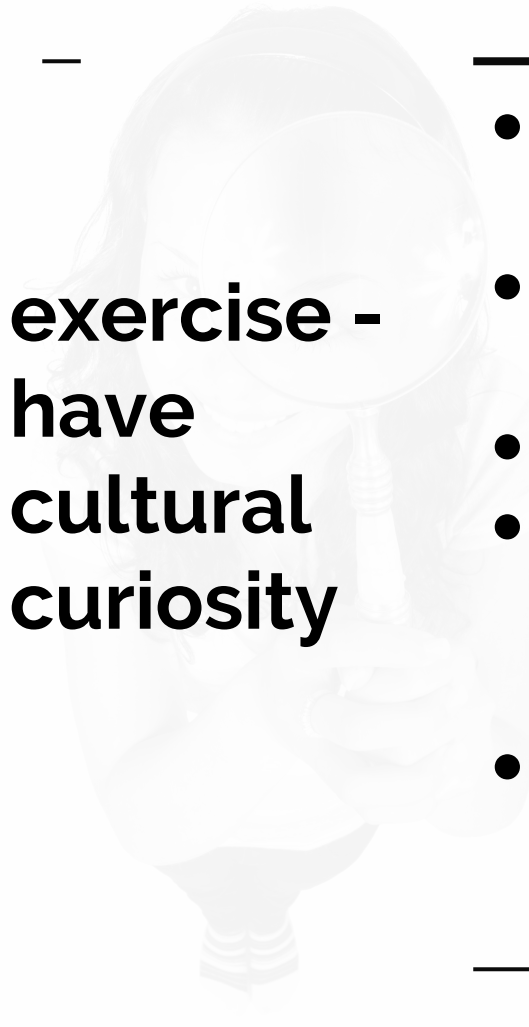
iterate them...



getting to goals

- customer focus
 - user experience as an equalizer
 - brainstorming
 - the group agrees, not top-down
 - task breakdown & tracking
 - agile, sprints, epics, epochs
 - revisit assumptions
 - ...and adjust
-

inclusion



exercise - have cultural curiosity

-
- what's one thing you can do to increase your awareness?
 - do you ask people about their backgrounds and lives?
 - do you approach people as a mentor?
 - do you consider people's mood, circumstances, stress levels, working conditions?
 - RIGHT NOW - ask your neighbor to tell you TWO cultural things about them that are not obvious.
-





inclusion

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- diverse backgrounds, diverse approaches
 - diverse experiences
 - everyone has a different lived experience
 - more perspectives improve the results
 - ALWAYS improve the results
 - breaking down the rockstar mentality
 - consider the view as the “rockstar”
 - consider views from the rest of the team
 - “ancillary” items are critical
 - docs, design, user experience
 - not enough hours in the day => burn out
-



resources

- Artwork
 - large stock photos & backgrounds all from pexels.com (royalty free)
 - Manager README
 - Katie Womersley, Buffer <https://github.com/KatieLo/README>
 - Maintainer README
 - https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Fd-rkENsKyxOvIU00IUIHnsJnS5_B7krEE1GVdAwwnl/edit#
 - Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License: Lara Hogan
 - 10 principles for collaboration
 - Intentional Relationship Model Clearinghouse
<http://irm.ahslabs.uic.edu/what-is-the-irm/>
 - Brainstorming for goals, projects, designs
 - Brainstorming - 8 Rules, Interaction Design Foundation
<https://public-media.interaction-design.org/pdf/Brainstorm.pdf>
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thank you
