Supplementary resource for the book *The Human Side of Agile*. More at www.TheHumanSideOfAgile.com

Mindful Continuous Improvement

Unlike a regular retrospective that focus on teamwork and process, this one encourages team members to reflect on and rekindle their passion for their work. It can be done anytime; you might choose to do it every 3-4 months in place of one of the regular retrospectives.

The more safe and open team members feel, the more effective this activity will be; hence, managers are asked not to participate. They may, however, help implement certain conclusions and action items.

Process

1. Participants take 2 minutes to reflect on their total experience at work, considering elements such as activities, physical environment, organizational framework, relationships, and personal fulfillment. Then they answer the following question privately: "**How do I enjoy my work, on a scale of 0−5?**"

    5 = "This is the best thing I could do now!"

    4 = "I enjoy my work here."

    3 = "I sometimes enjoy my work, yet at other times it doesn't move me."

    2 = "I have bad days here, but otherwise my work here doesn't move me."

    1 = "My experience here is unpleasant most days."

    0 = "I just suffer here."

2. Participants now take 3 minutes to ponder the question "What would move my enjoyment up one level?" They then write 3 ideas (either problems to solve or changes to effect), anonymously, each on a sticky note. When done, they put the three notes up on the wall.

3. All participants go up to the wall and cluster the notes *in silence*.

4. Groups of 3 to 5 people discuss certain topics for 15−20 minutes (in parallel) − *all from the point of view of making work more enjoyable*. They choose the topics in one of the following ways:

    *   Open-space style: Individuals sign up to lead a topic's discussion and subsequent report-out.

    *   Dot voting: Everyone gets 3 or 4 votes to assign to the topics they find most valuable. Groups naturally form around the top-voted topics.

5. Each group reports on its deliberations and suggestions to the entire forum, which may now try to achieve consensus on specific proposals.

6. If there's enough time and interest, participants repeat steps 4 and 5 with the remaining topics.