POPCORN FLOW

CONTINUOUS EVOLUTION THROUGH ULTRA-RAPID EXPERIMENTATION

written, illustrated and performed by

Claudio Perrone

Agile Sensei

FELLOW Lean Systems Society

agilesensei.com

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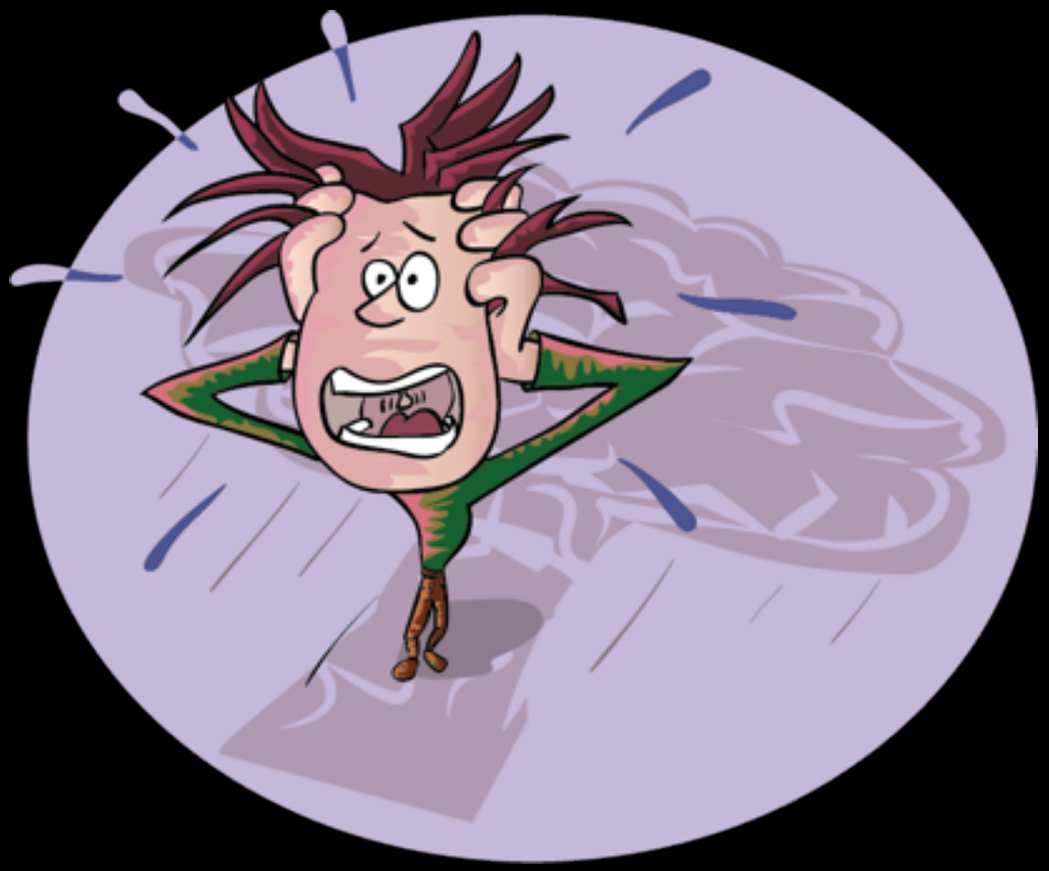
"HOUSTON, WE HAVE A PROBLEM"

If the rate of change on the outside exceeds the rate of change on the inside...
...the end is near.

-- Jack Welch, former CEO at GE



SADLY, COMPANIES OFTEN GO THROUGH MANY REORGANIZATIONS, BUT DON'T CHANGE VERY MUCH

~~Organization chart~~

Blame flow

Victims

God

Rule makers

Controllers

Enforcers

Losers

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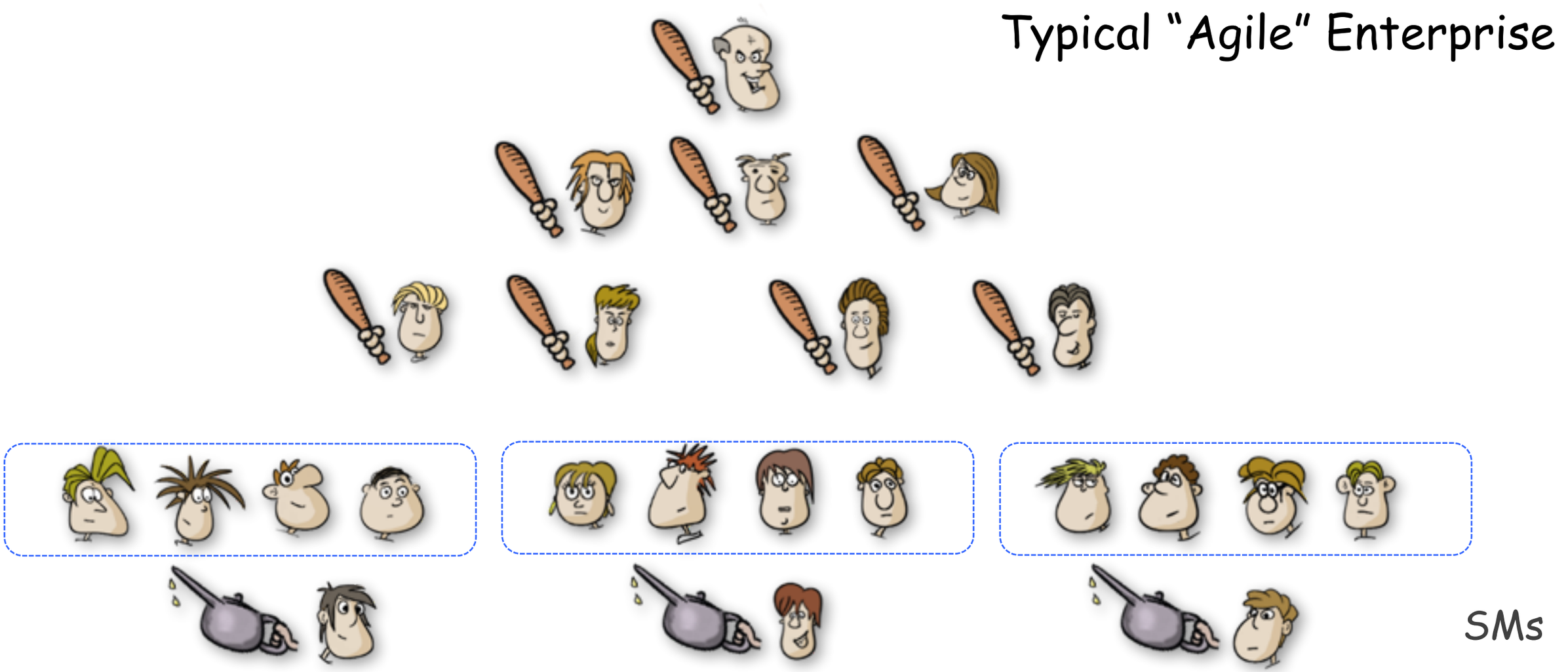
ORGANIZATIONS CAN'T BE AGILE IF ONLY THE DEVELOPMENT TEAMS ARE DOING AGILE

Typical "Agile" Enterprise



SMs

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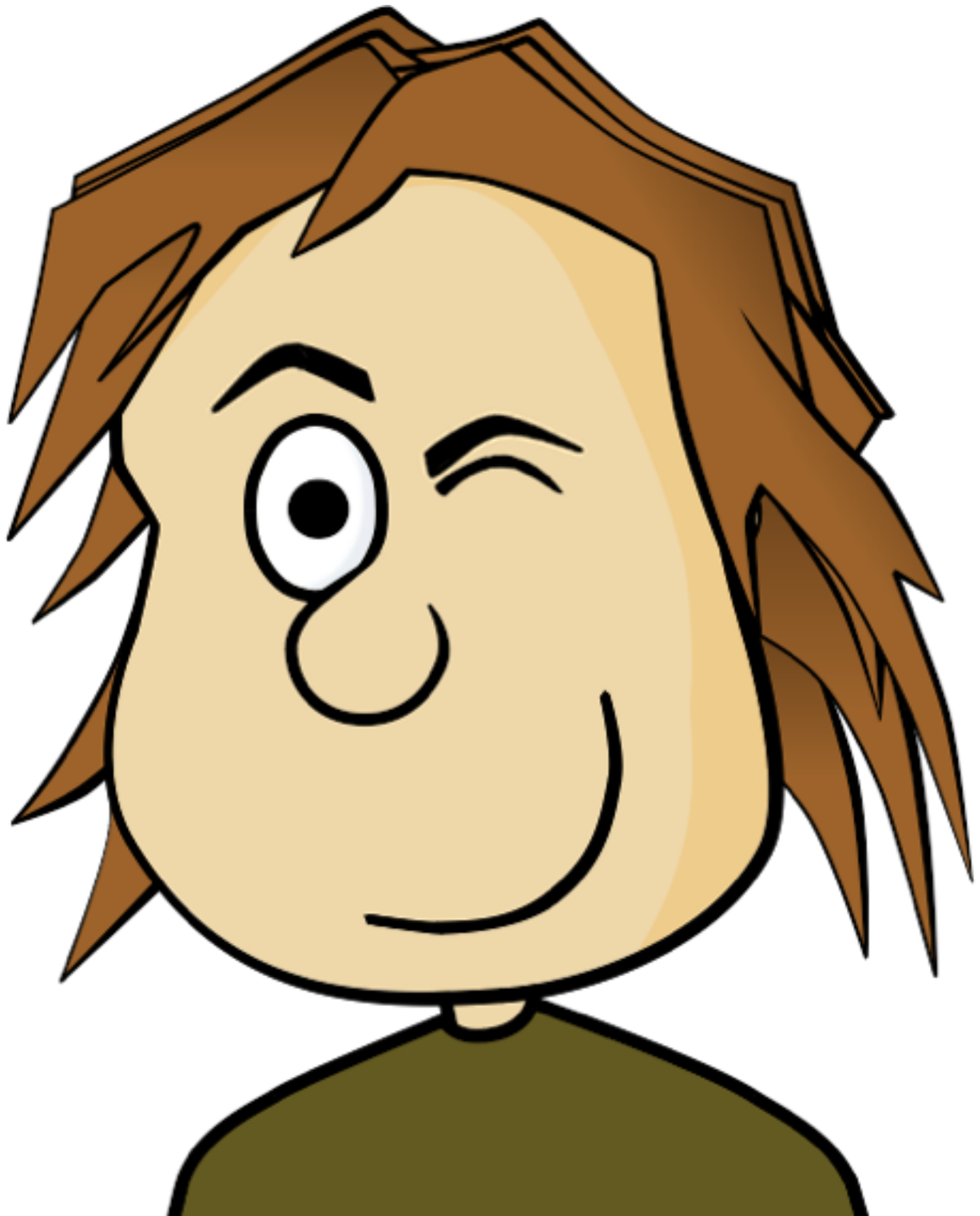
... BESIDES, AGILE IS ABOUT RAPID EVOLUTION,
NOT MINDLESS CONFORMANCE TO "SCRUM CEREMONIES"



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MEANWHILE, TECHNOLOGY & SOCIETY EVOLVE FASTER THAN MOST COMPANIES' ABILITY TO ADAPT

new knowledge discoveries

legal or regulatory change

new technology developments

new trends

global competition

increasing business & consumer sophistication

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IT MAKES ME WONDER...

HOW CAN ORGANIZATIONS

BUILD FAST LEARN FASTER AND THRIVE

IN THE CURRENT MARKETPLACE?

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WE WANT TO IMPROVE BUT...

Improvement without change is impossible.

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MOST OF US THINK ABOUT CHANGE AS BIG, SLOW AND SCARY

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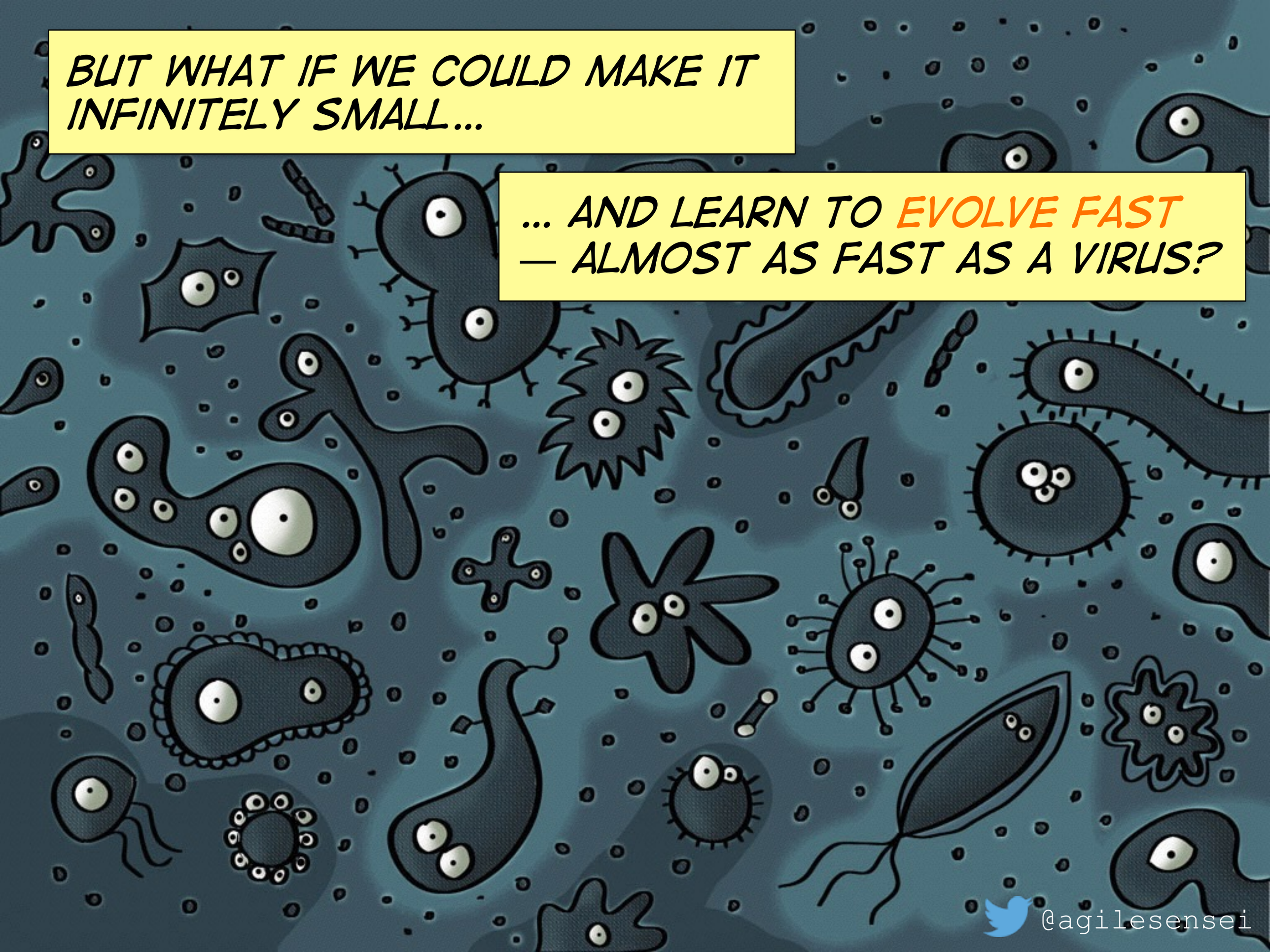
BUT WHAT IF WE COULD MAKE IT INFINITELY SMALL...
... AND LEARN TO EVOLVE FAST — ALMOST AS FAST AS A VIRUS?
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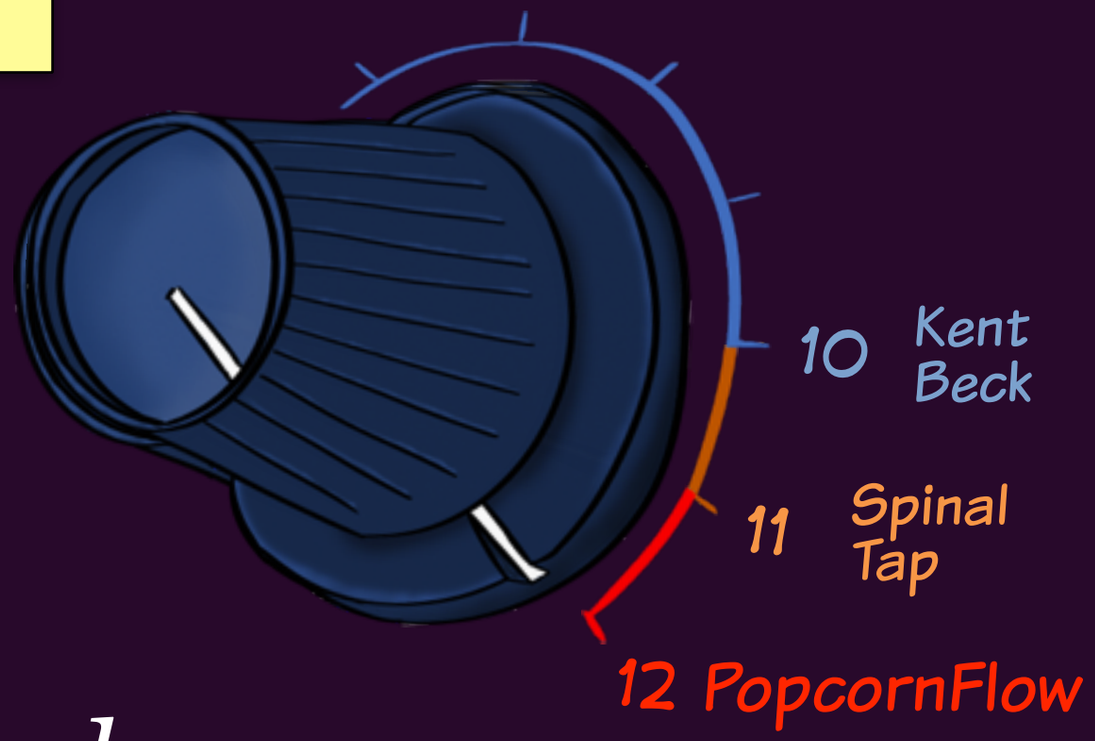
HERE IS A "MAD" THOUGHT...



> *If change is hard, make it continuous.*

-- 1st PopcornFlow Principle
(aka "the virus" principle)

TRYING TO REWIRE THE HUMAN BRAIN IS DIFFICULT, HOWEVER.

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A BETTER OPTION IS TO ACT ON THE SYSTEM
– I.E. THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH DECISIONS ARE MADE.

...BUT HOW?

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ARCHITECTING (FAST) CHANGE

with *PopcornFlow*

A WHILE AGO, I WORKED WITH A TEAM WHO HAD NOT DEPLOYED SOFTWARE IN MONTHS

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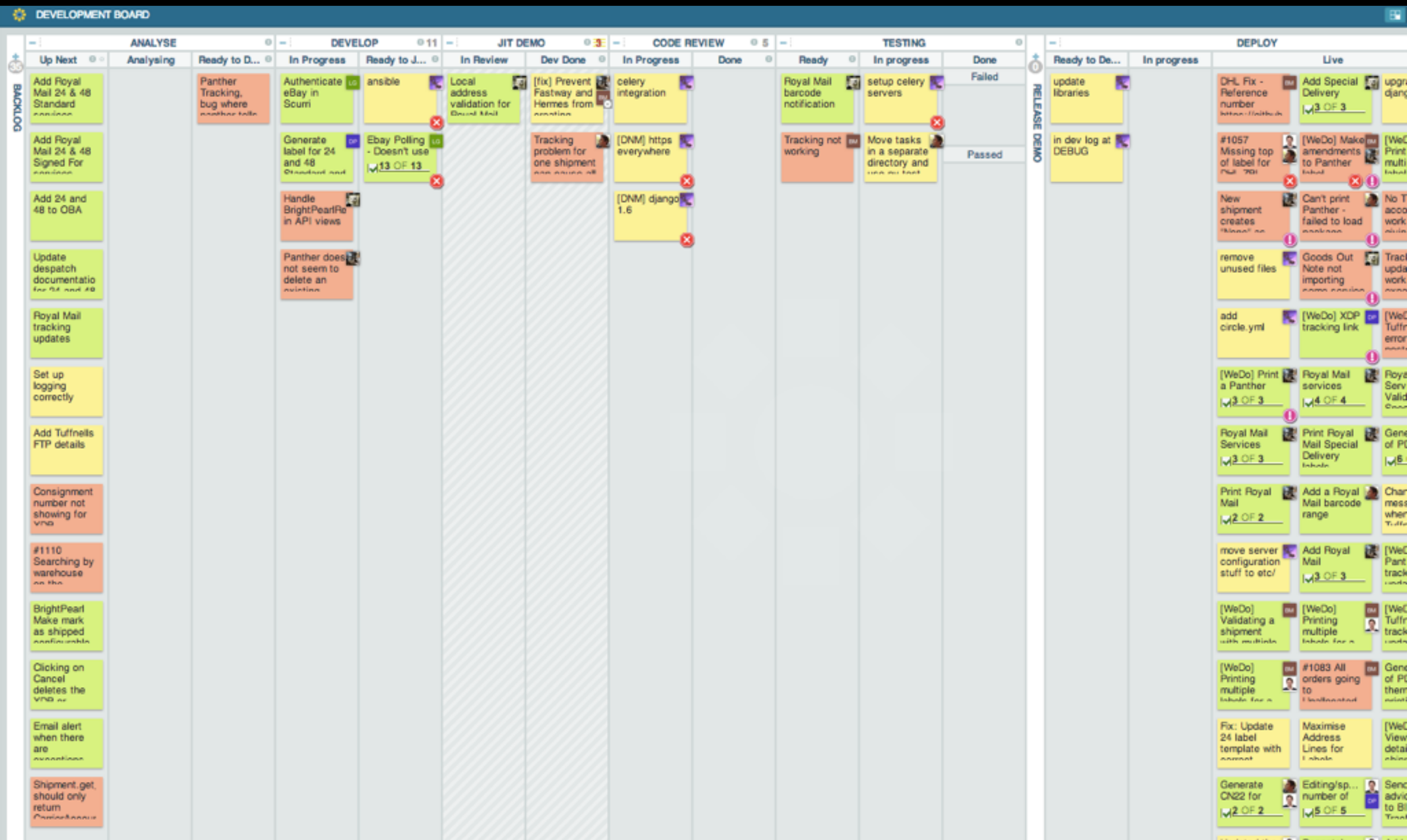
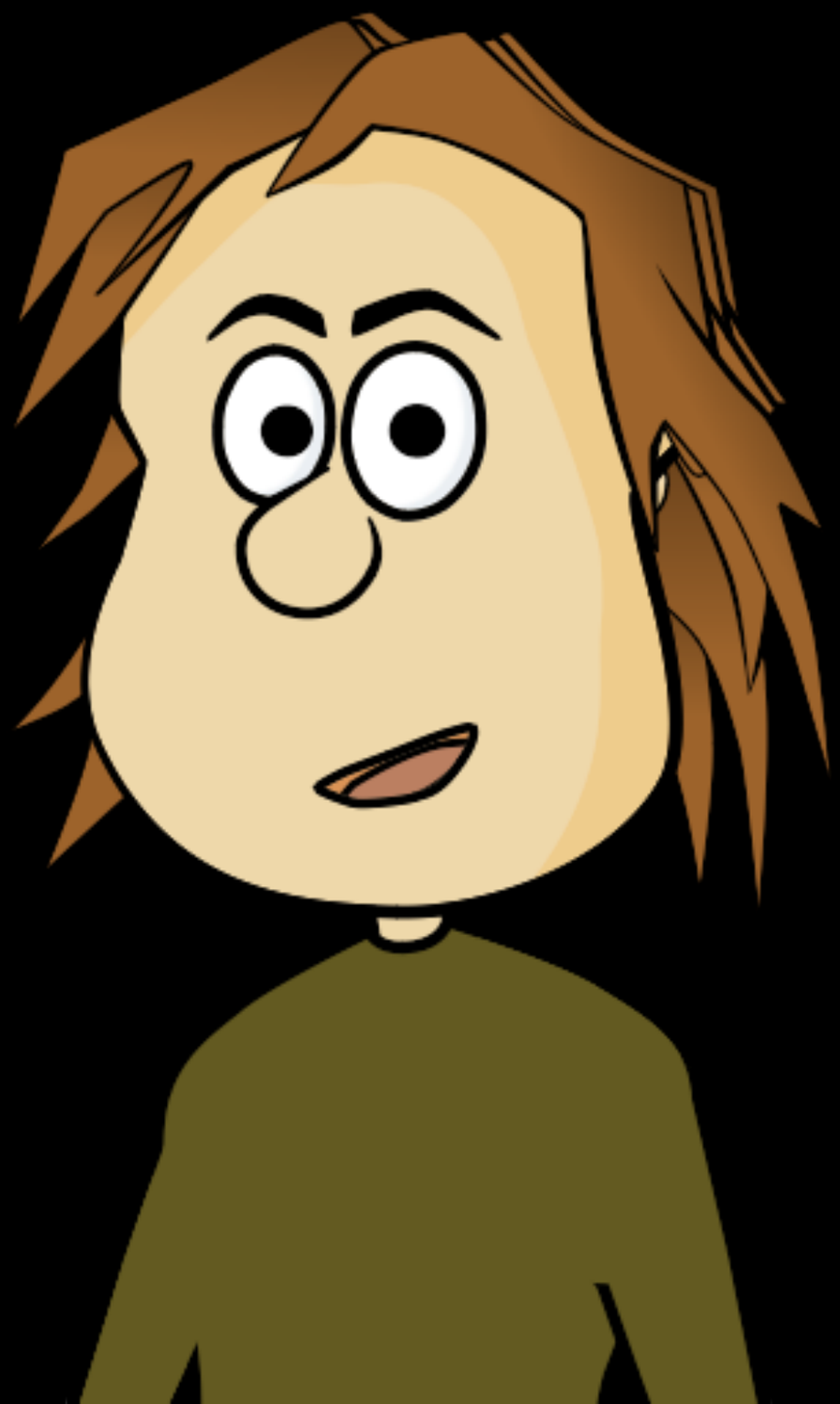
WITH THE MOTTO "HARD ON SYSTEMS, SOFT ON PEOPLE", WE WORKED TOGETHER AND EVOLVED USING THE KANBAN METHOD



THE KANBAN BOARD CAPTURED OUR VALUE STREAM...



... BUT THAT'S ONLY THE OUTCOME OF OUR THINKING

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YOU SEE...

It's not what you do but rather what you learn by doing it that matters.

-- Claudio Perrone

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THE REAL "SECRET" WAS OUR RAPID STREAM OF TRACEABLE CHANGE EXPERIMENTS...

Problems & observations

Options

Possible experiments

Committed

Ongoing

Review

Next

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... A POWERFUL LEARNING STREAM THAT I CALL "POPCORN FLOW"

Problems & observations

Options

Possible experiments

Committed

Ongoing

Review

Next

PopcornFlow

http://popcornflow.com/resources

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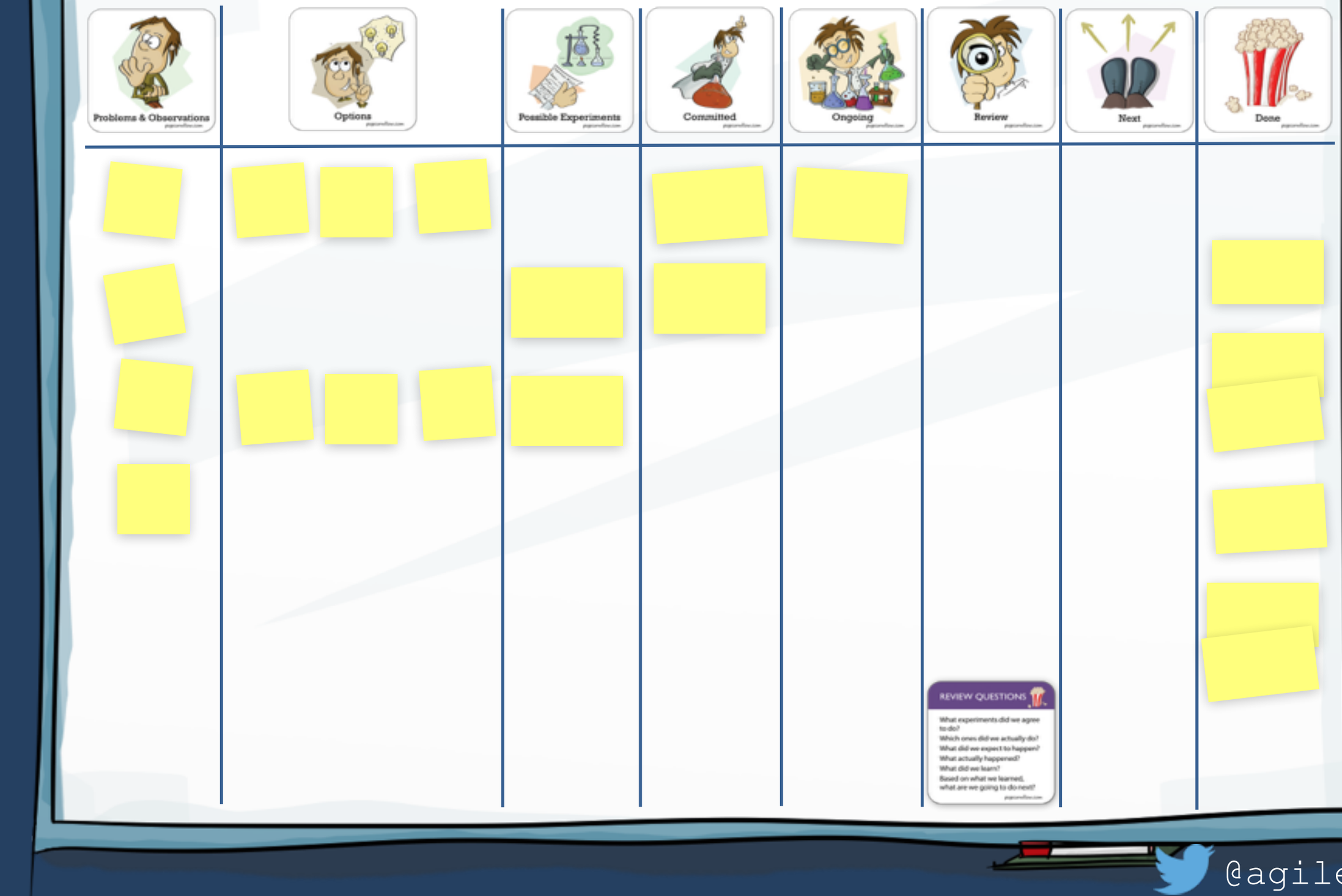
Claudio Perrone
PopcornFlow.com

SO, WE CAPTURED OUR LEARNING JOURNEY ON A PARALLEL "POPCORNFLOW BOARD"



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IT STARTS WITH PROBLEMS & OBSERVATIONS

The quality of our code sucks.

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INERTIA IS OUR ENEMY...

Google define:inertia

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inertia

/ɪˈnəːʃə/

noun

1. a tendency to do nothing or to remain unchanged.
   "the bureaucratic inertia of the various tiers of government"
   synonyms: inactivity, inaction, inactiveness, inertness, passivity, apathy, accidie, malaise, stagnation, dullness, enervation, sluggishness, lethargy, languor, languidness, listlessness, torpor, torpidity, idleness, indolence, laziness, sloth, slothfulness; More

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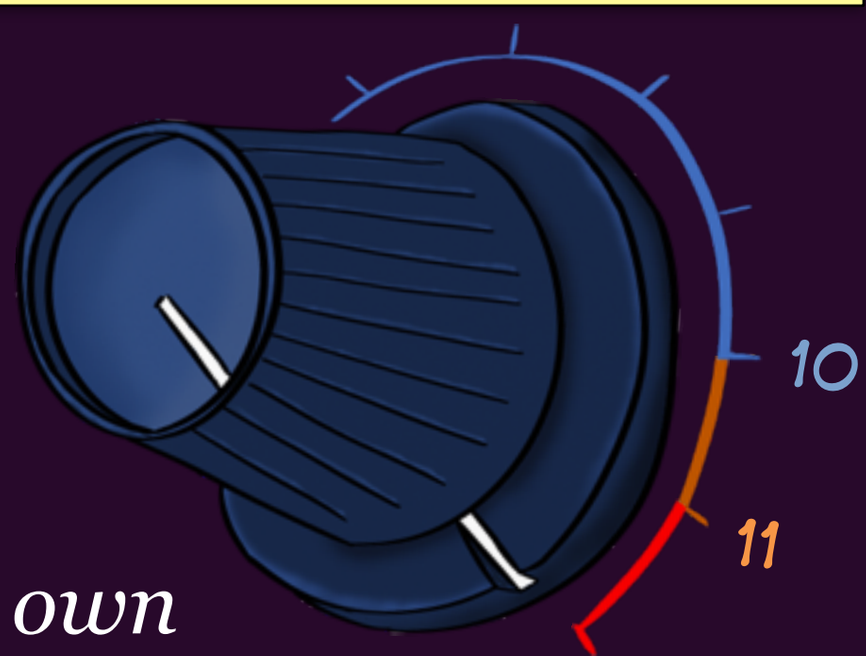
… SO, I'M HAPPY TO MAKE PROGRESS EVEN WITH IMPERFECT INFORMATION. AS A CONSEQUENCE…



Everybody is entitled to their own opinion, but…
A shared opinion is a fact.

-- 2nd PopcornFlow Principle
(aka "the kaizen urgency" principle)

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...I USE SHARED OBSERVATIONS TO CREATE/ELICIT OPTIONS ("RULE OF THREE").

The quality of our code sucks.

Test-driven development

Code review

Pair Programming

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PROMISING OPTIONS LEAD TO A BACKLOG OF POSSIBLE EXPERIMENTS.

Test-driven development

Code review

Pair Programming

Action: Let's pair program for 3 days

Action: Research good books on TDD

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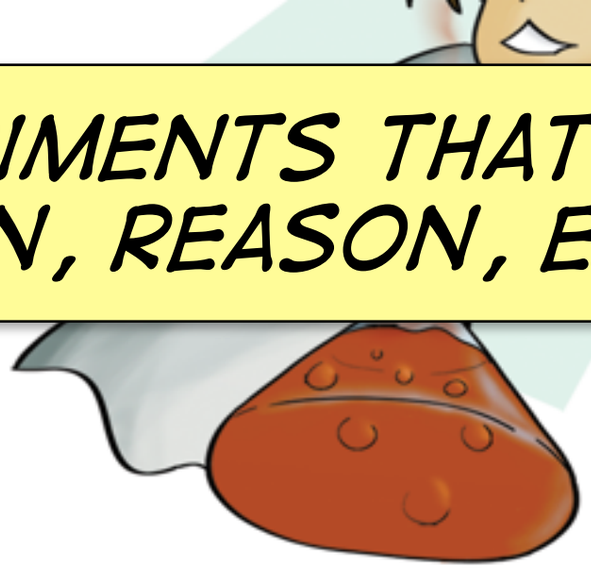
EXPERIMENTS THAT WE COMMIT TO PURSUE HAVE AN ACTION, REASON, EXPECTATION AND REVIEW DATE.



Committed

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Ongoing

popcornflow.com

Action: Let's pair program
Reason: Code quality sucks
Expectations:
- Perception is that code is better
- We'll like it & want to keep doing it

Duration: 3 days
Review Date: dd/mm/yy

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Experiment: "Fix as you go": If found small bugs (less than 20mins), just branch and fix them. Do a pull request and mark the id on the card.
Reason: too much bureaucracy for small bugs.
Exp
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Experiment: Pair on JIT analysis
Reason: We are moving towards JIT analysis to reduce sprint planning and moving to continuous flow.
Expectation:
- DoD created
- Team agrees that ana

Experiment: Do an Analytics meet-up to show how analytics work in <new kanban tool>
Reason: <product owner> needs some form of predictability.
Expectation:
- Po/Team are aware of what's possible now with the current level of analytics
- We have better understanding of if, how, when we can improve forecasting with minimum amount of estimation.

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AT EACH RETROSPECTIVE, WE ASK EXACTLY THESE QUESTIONS:

Ongoing

popcornflow.com

Review

popcornflow.com

Next

Done

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Action: Let's pair program
Reason: Code quality sucks
Expectations:
- Perception is that code is better
- We'll like it & want to keep doing it

Duration: 3 days
Review Date: dd/mm/yy

REVIEW QUESTIONS

What experiments did we agree to do?

Which ones did we actually do?

What did we expect to happen?

What actually happened?

What did we learn?

Based on what we learned, what are we going to do next?

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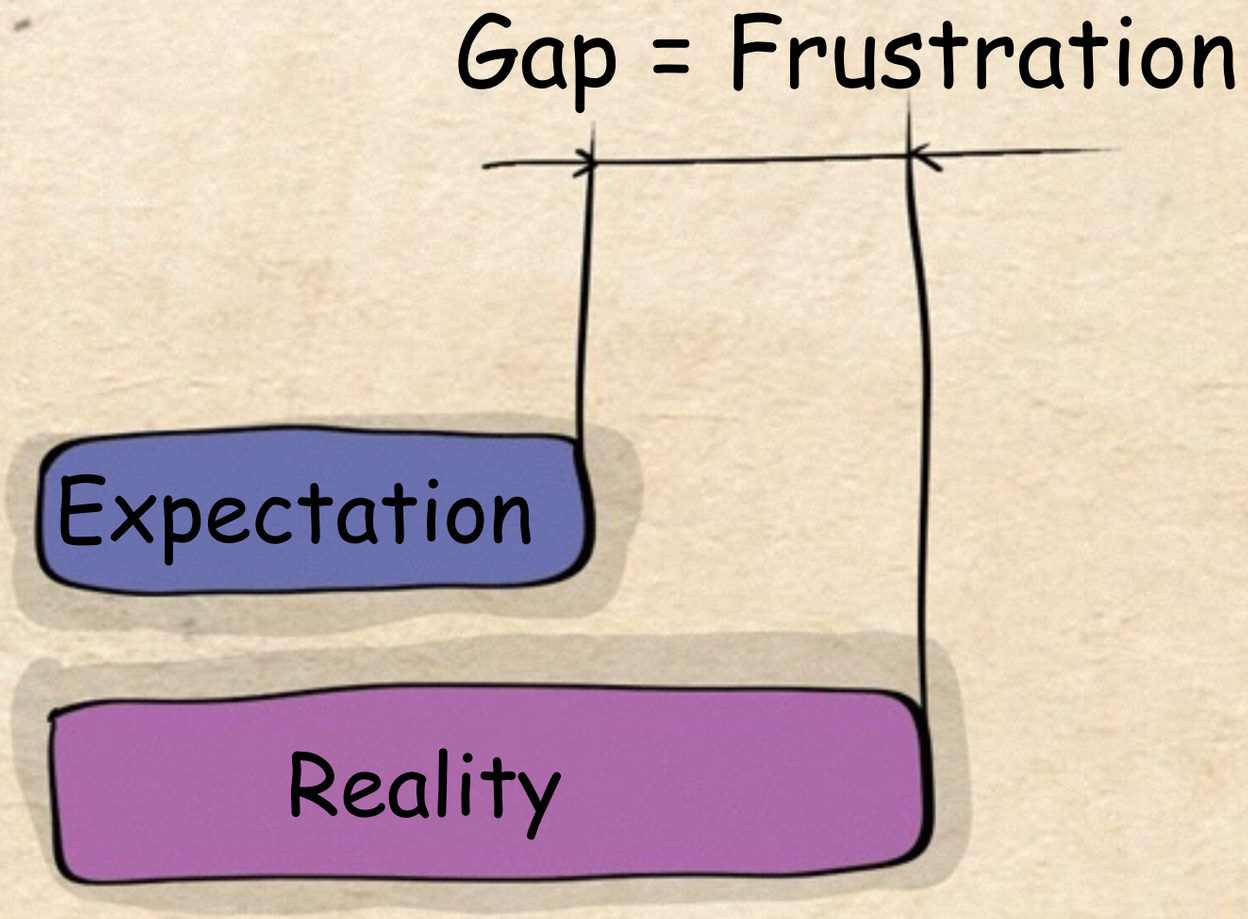
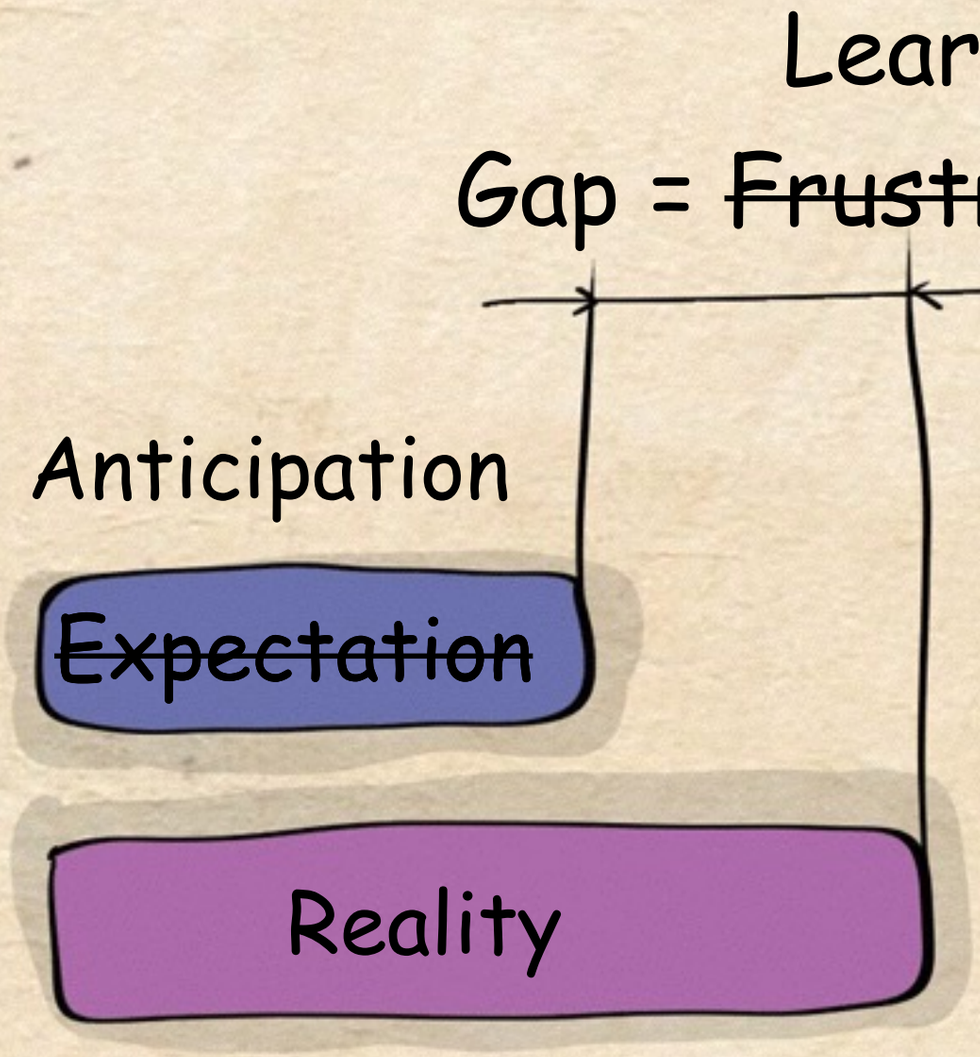
SOME PEOPLE FEAR "FAILURE"...



... BUT WE ONLY REALLY "FAIL" WHEN WE LIMIT OUR OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN



CAN YOU REALLY PRETEND THAT YOU'LL NEVER FALL?

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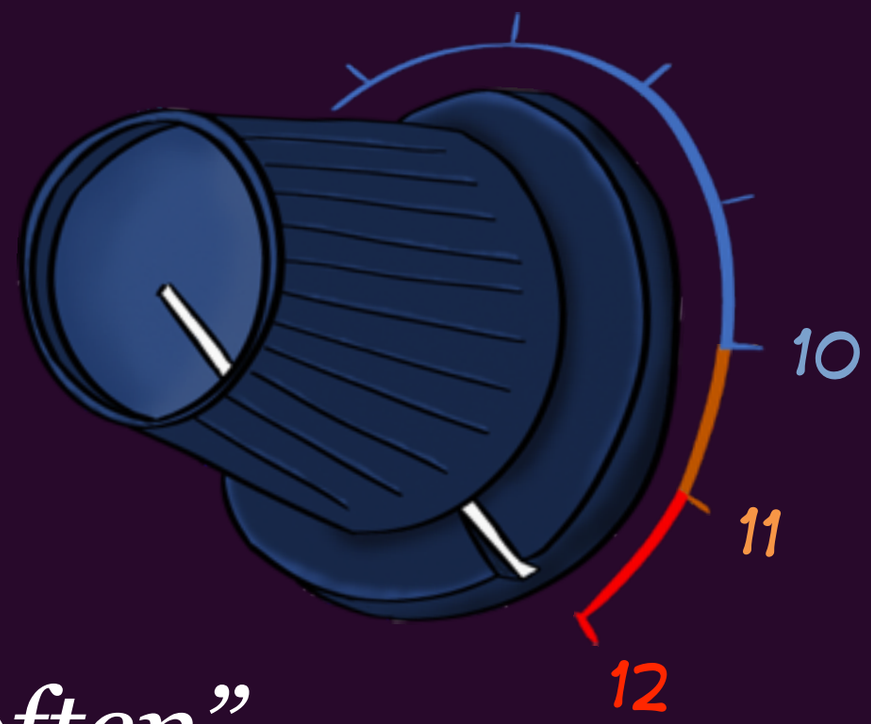
YOU SEE...



“It’s not “fail fast, fail often”...

It’s “learn fast, learn often”.

-- 3rd Popcorn Flow Principle
(aka “the skateboarder” principle)

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RIGHT FROM THE BEGINNING, I KNEW THIS WAS DIFFERENT.

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... BECAUSE THE TEAM COULD EASILY HANDLE 5-10 CHANGE EXPERIMENTS EACH WEEK...

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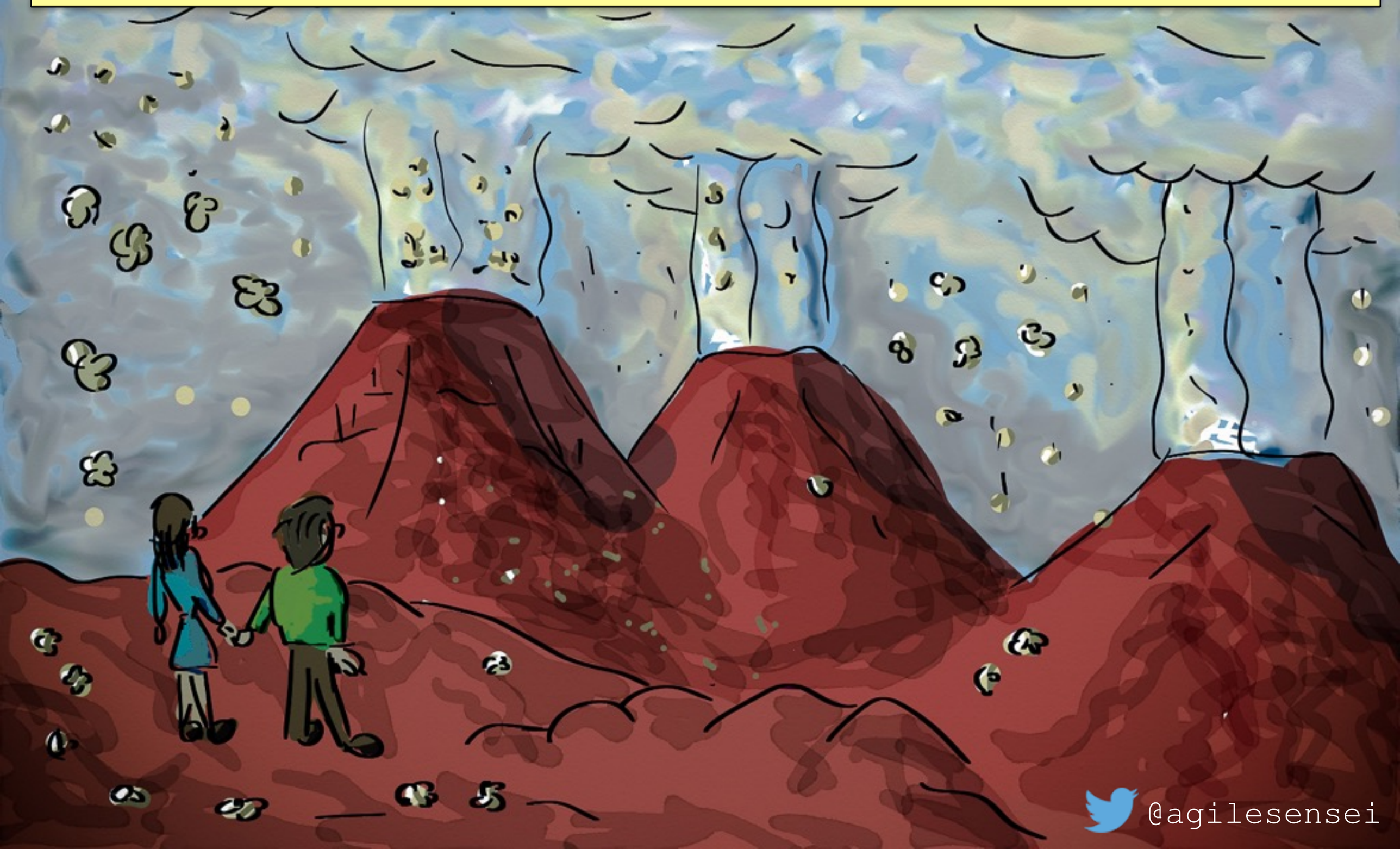
... RAPIDLY ENABLING IT TO DELIVER MULTIPLE TIMES A DAY

...AND THEN IT SPREAD.
POPCORNFLOW BOARDS STARTED TO APPEAR IN OTHER PARTS OF THE ORGANIZATION.



IMAGINE A CONTINUOUS FLOW OF EXPERIMENTS TO ACCELERATE THE RATE OF CHANGE IN EVERY CORNER OF YOUR ORGANIZATION...

... HOW FAR WOULD YOU GO?

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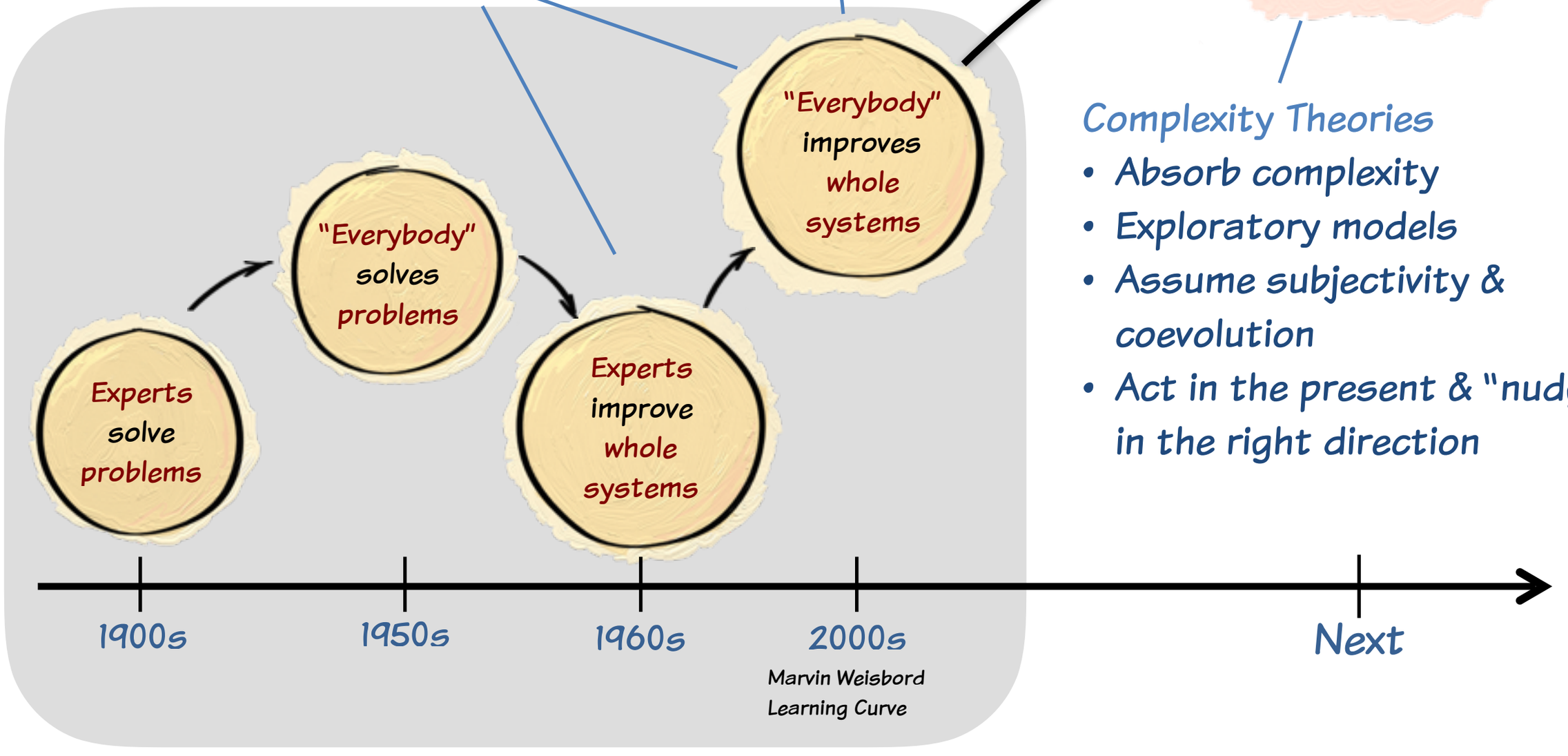
I BELIEVE WE ARE ON THE VERGE OF A NEW REVOLUTION

Systems Theories

- Understand & reduce complexity
- Investigator/observer's hat
- Define an "ideal state", then close the gap (e.g. transition "programs")

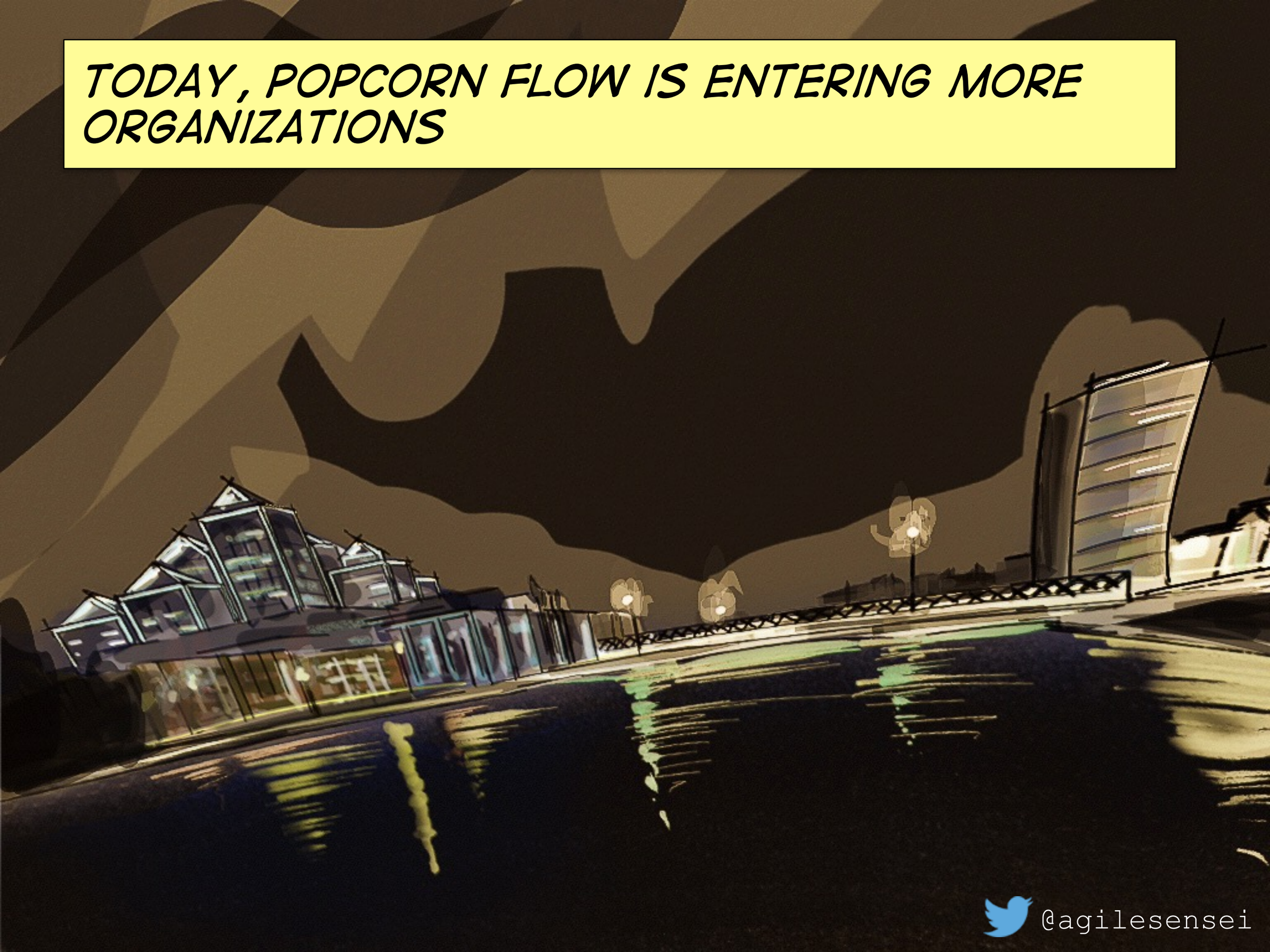
"Management is everyone's job"



Complexity Theories

- Absorb complexity
- Exploratory models
- Assume subjectivity & coevolution
- Act in the present & "nudge" in the right direction

TODAY, POPCORN FLOW IS ENTERING MORE ORGANIZATIONS



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IT WAS DESIGNED TO QUICKLY INTRODUCE, SUSTAIN & ACCELERATE CHANGE...

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… BUT THEN, I WONDERED: WHAT JOBS ARE OTHER PEOPLE 'HIRING' POPCORNFLOW FOR?

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AFTER ALL…

People encounter situations that drive the need to accomplish a job.

They "hire" a product or service to get the job done.

Prof Clayton Christensen

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SOME TEAMS 'HIRE' POPCORNFLOW TO CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE THE WAY THEY WORK (EITHER JIT OR THROUGH WEEKLY RETROSPECTIVES)

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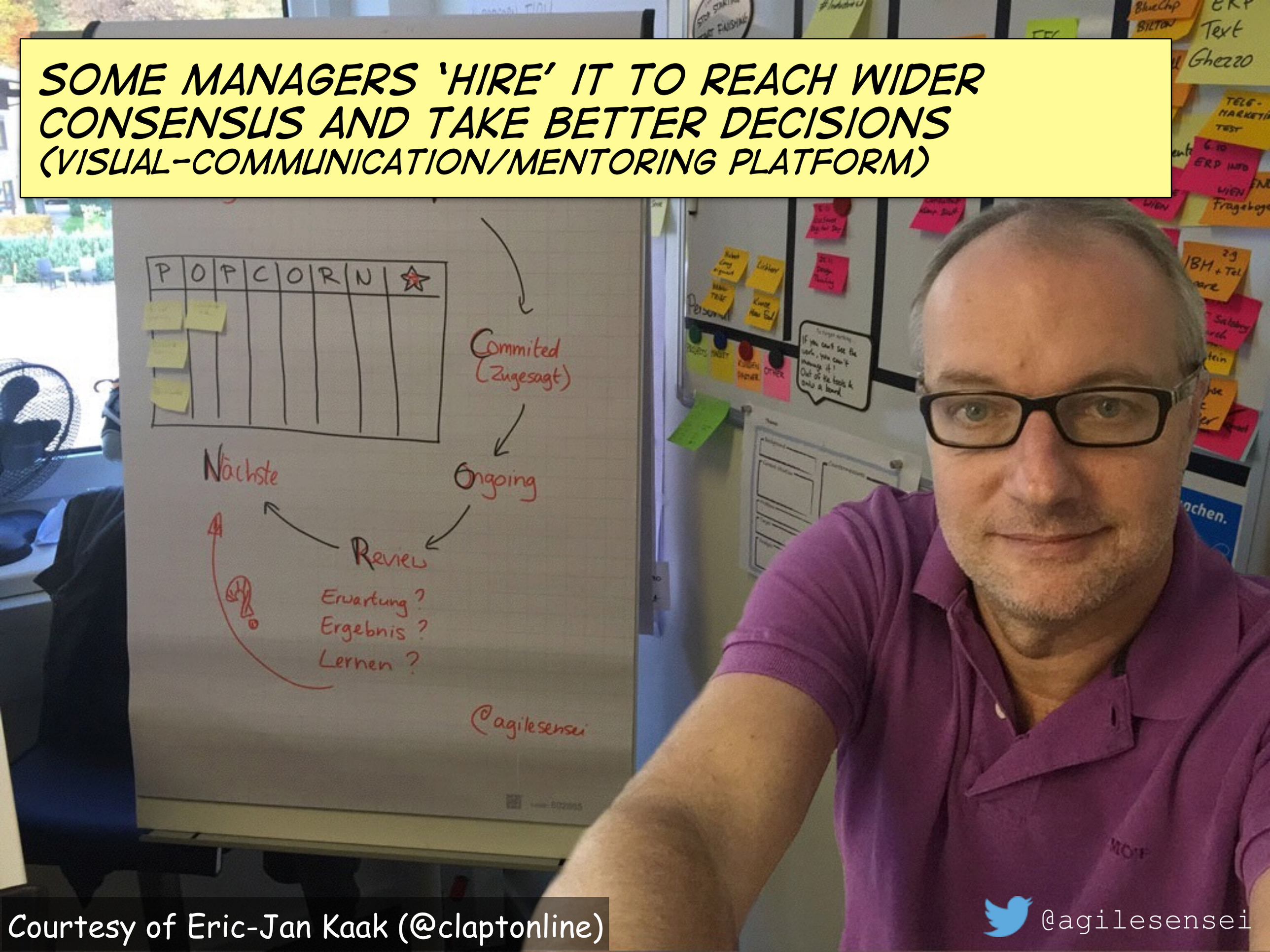
SOME MANAGERS 'HIRE' IT TO REACH WIDER CONSENSUS AND TAKE BETTER DECISIONS
(VISUAL-COMMUNICATION/MENTORING PLATFORM)



Courtesy of Eric-Jan Kaak (@claptonline)

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CORPORATE BOARDROOMS USE IT FOR STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING
(REAL OPTIONS AND RISK-HEDGING STRATEGIES)

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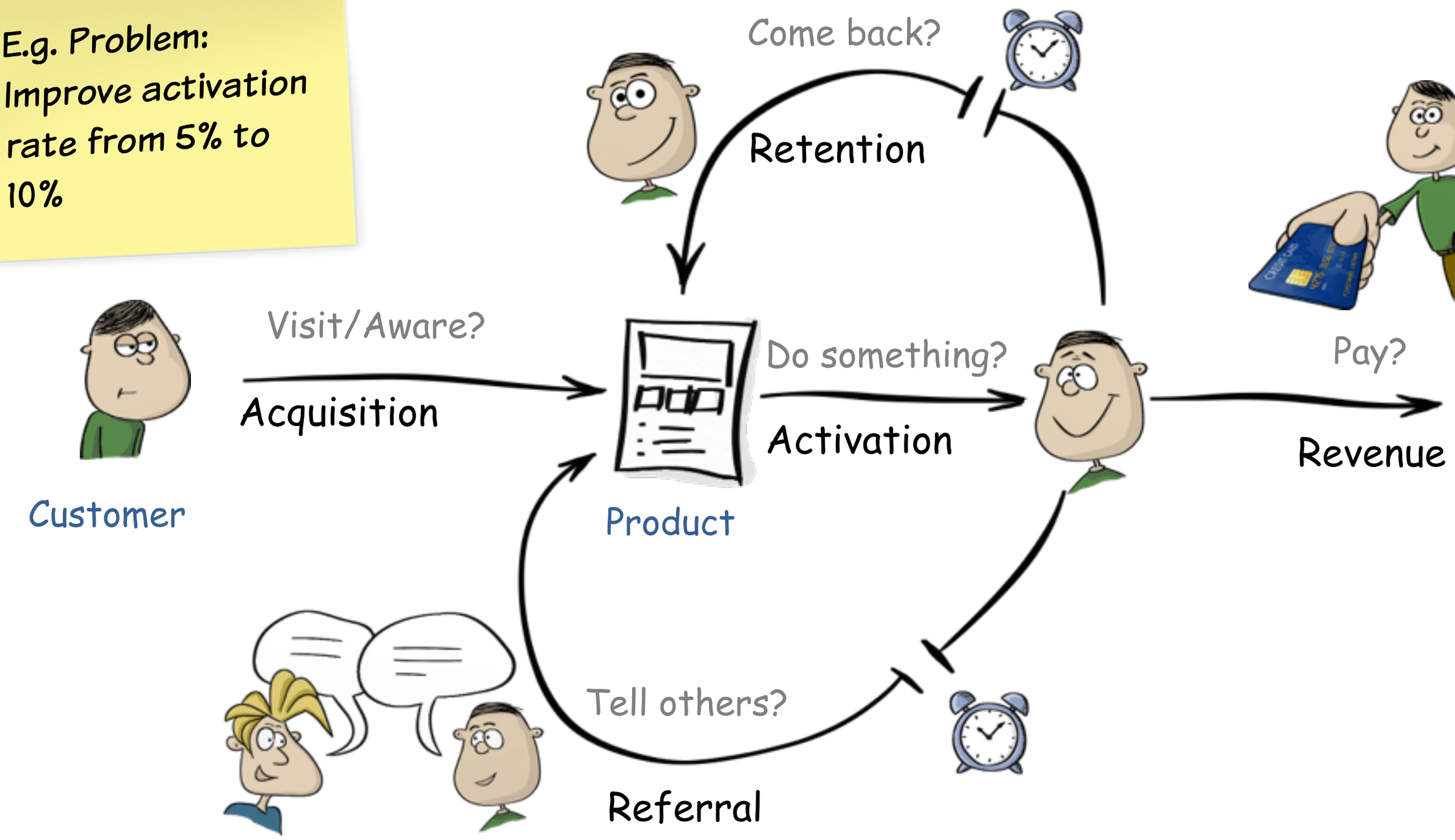
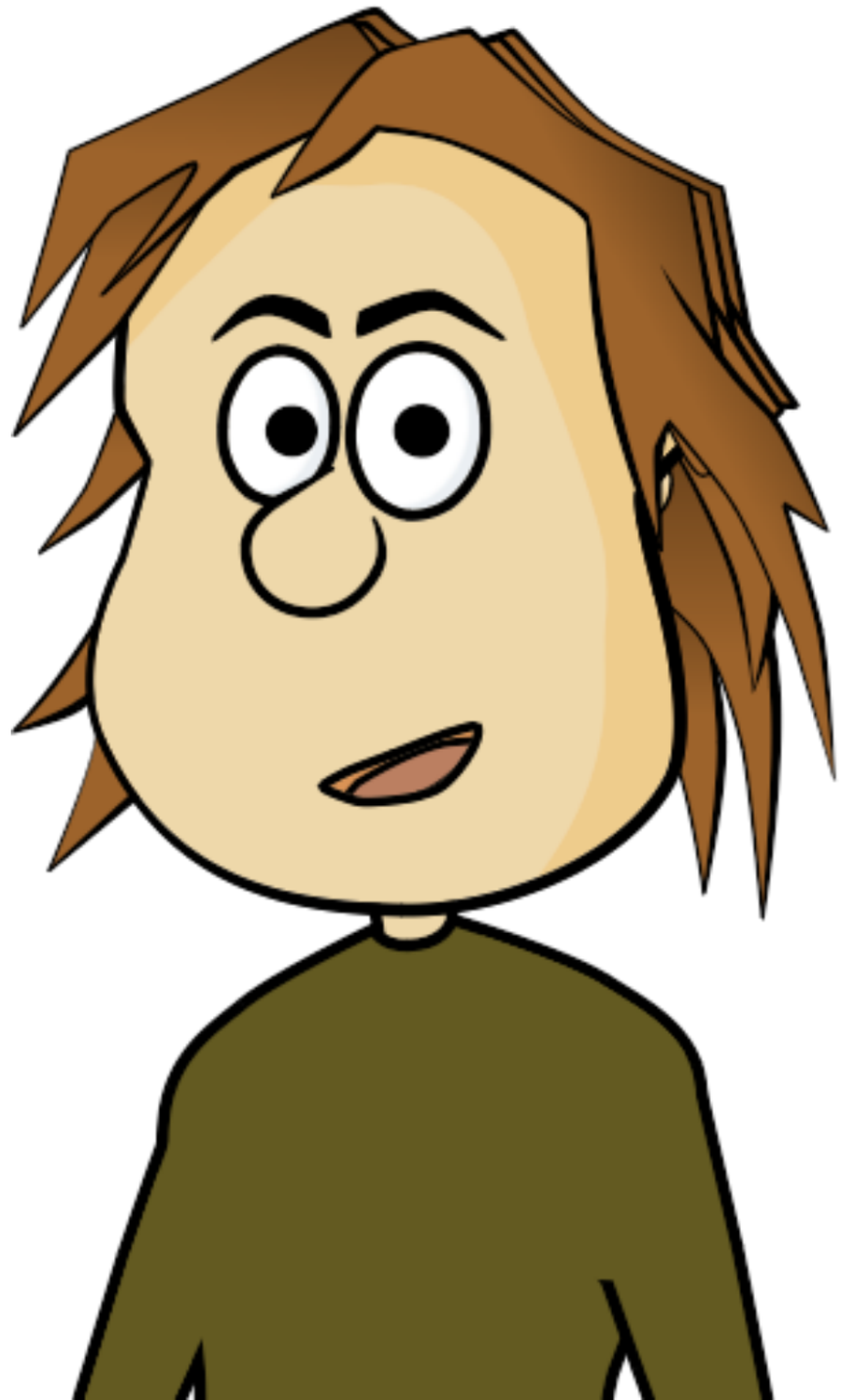
OTHERS USE IT TO REACH PRODUCT/MARKET FIT AND OUTLEARN THE COMPETITION

E.g. Problem:
Improve activation rate from 5% to 10%



POPCORNFLOW IS TOUCHING LIVES EVEN OUTSIDE THE BUSINESS WORLD...



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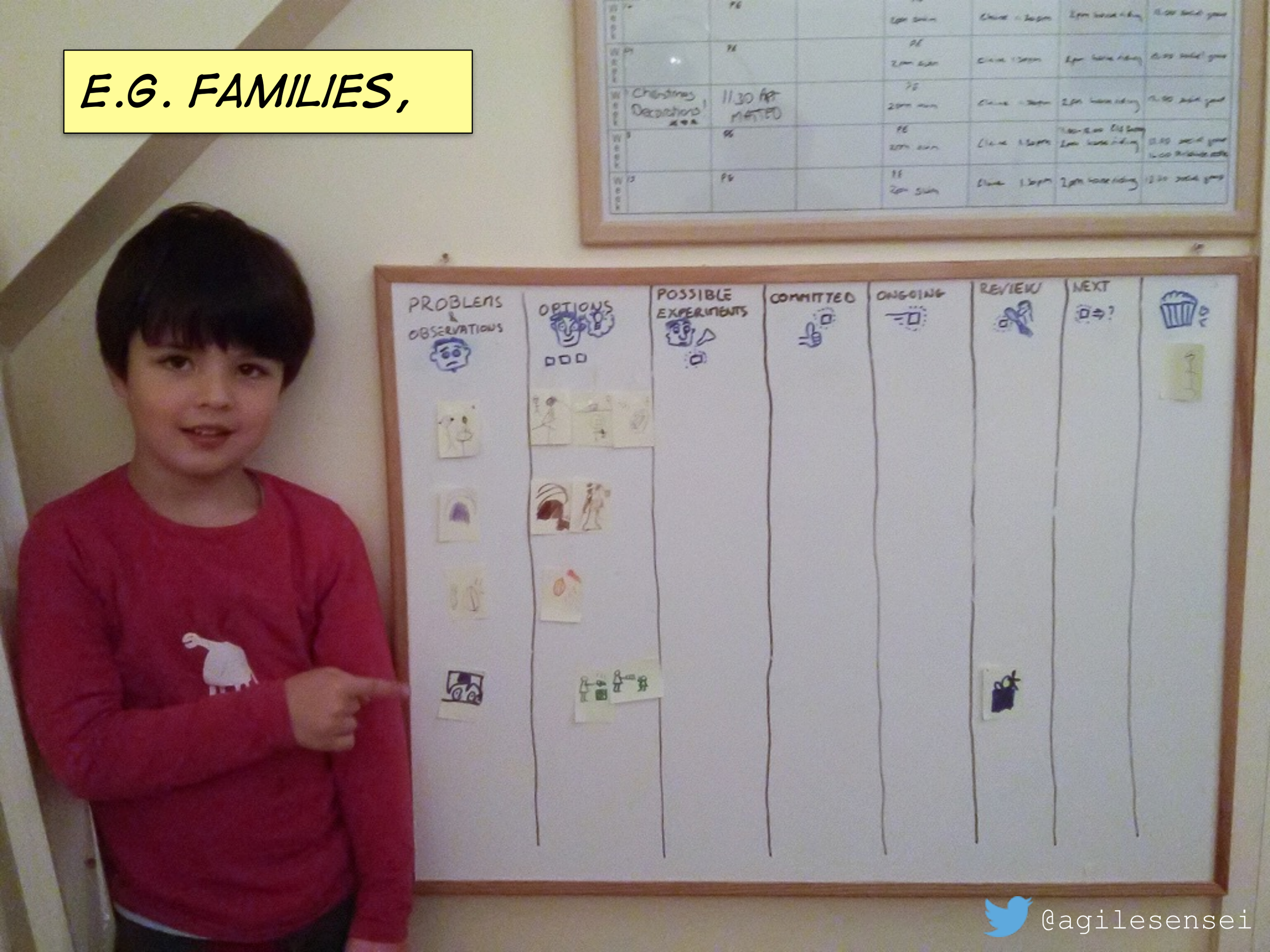
E.G. FAMILIES,



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... AND SCHOOLS.

PopcornFlow
Problems & Observations
Options
Possible experiments
Commited
Ongoing
Review
Next
Done!
PopcornFlow
Problems & Observations
Options
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Review
Next
Done!
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POPCORNFLOW IS EVEN PART OF A PROPOSAL TO FOSTER INNOVATION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

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POPCORN FLOW IS ALSO GETTING TRACTION AT PERSONAL LEVEL

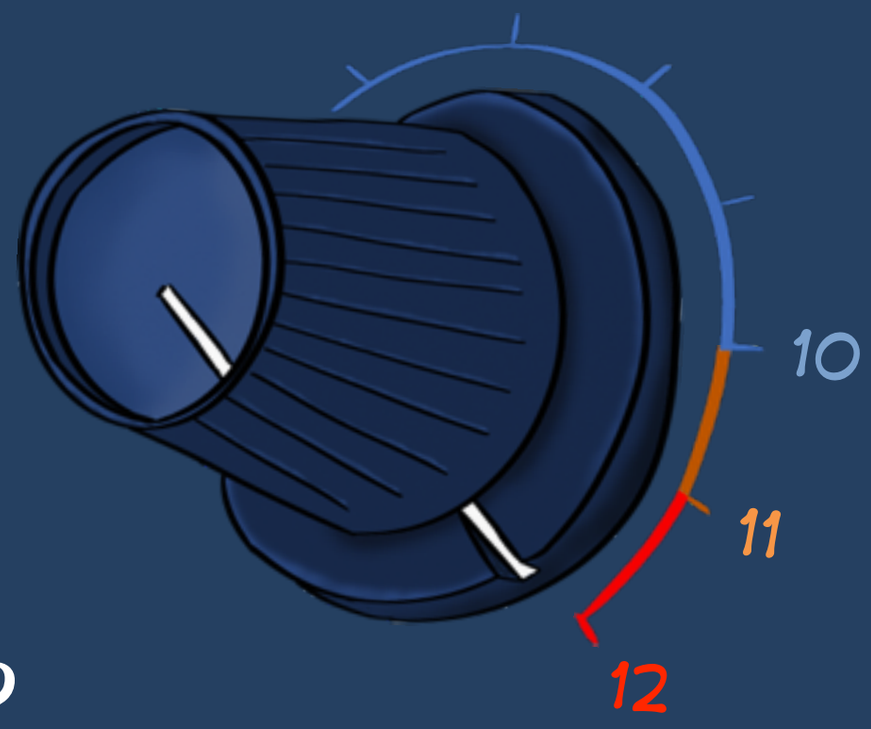
Francesco Attanasio
@LeanScrumMaster

Following

This week I burned 3400 calories and ran 44Km + 2fitness sessions. Personal #PopcornFlow success story /cc @agilesensei

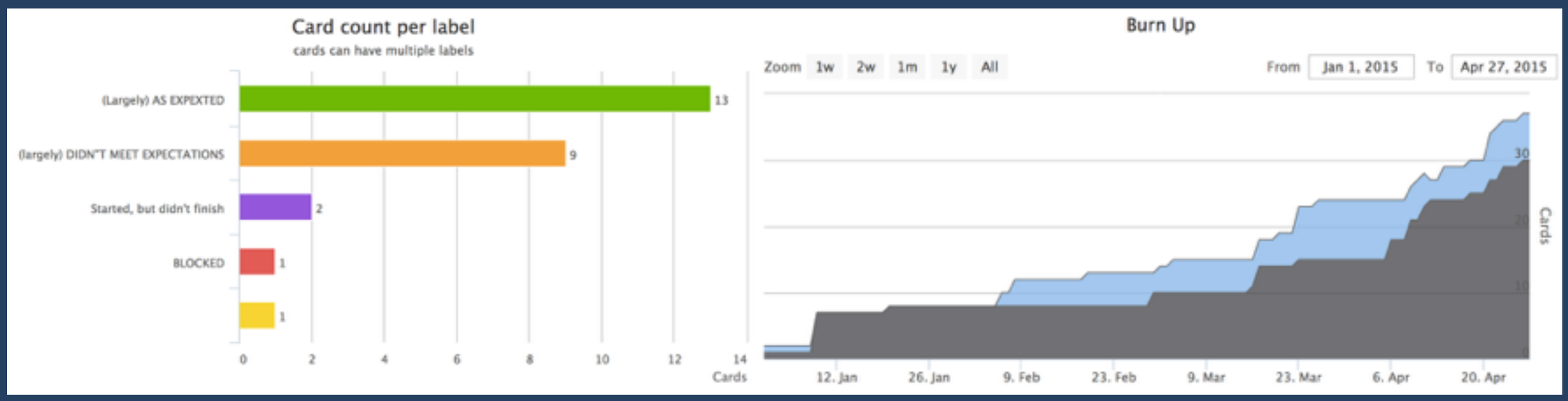
Castel San Giorgio, Campania

CONTINUOUS EVOLUTION IS A WAY OF LIFE.



Every single week,
I'm 5 experiments older.
Can I evolve even faster?
Can you?

-- Claudio Perrone



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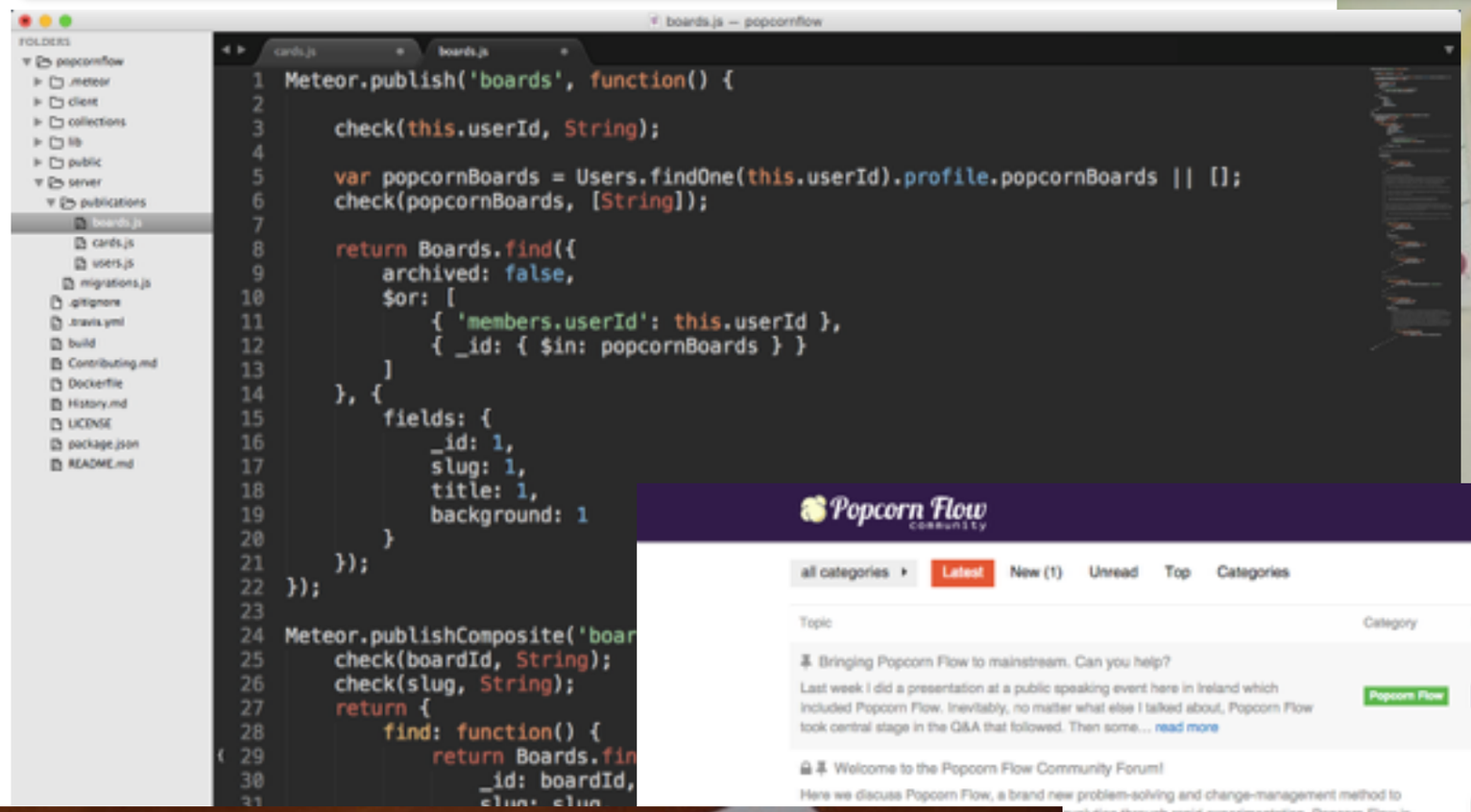
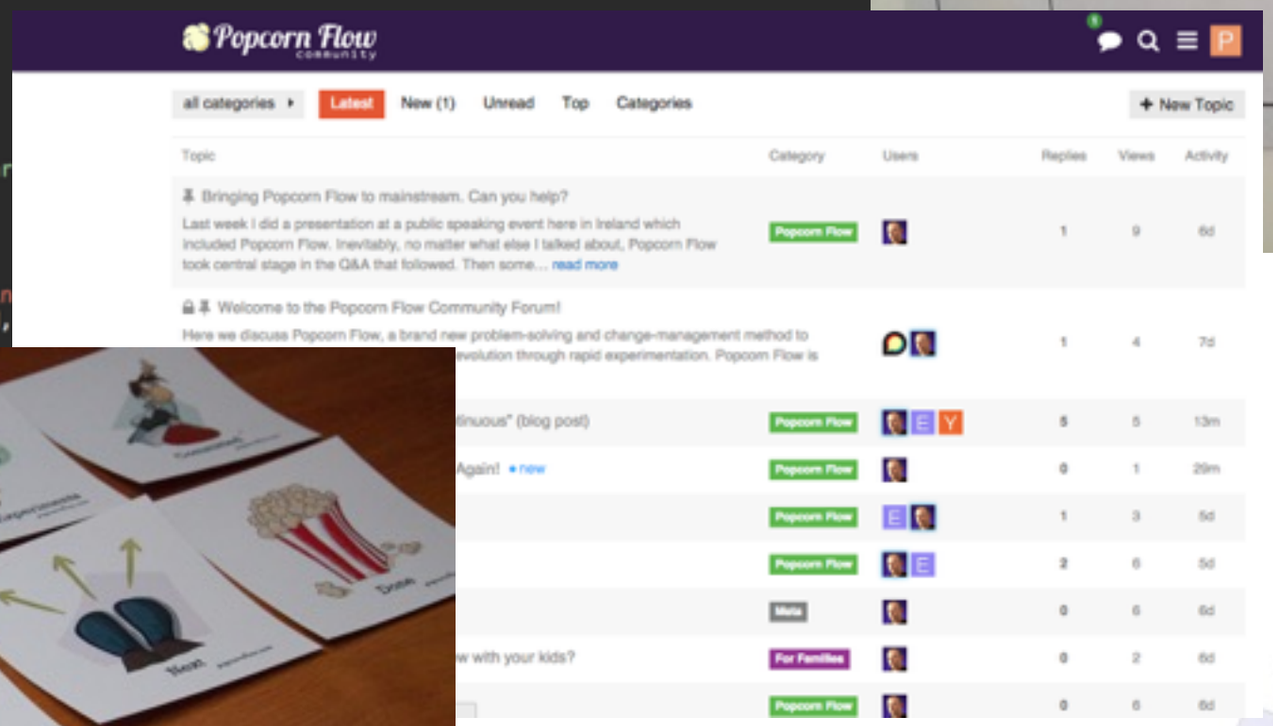
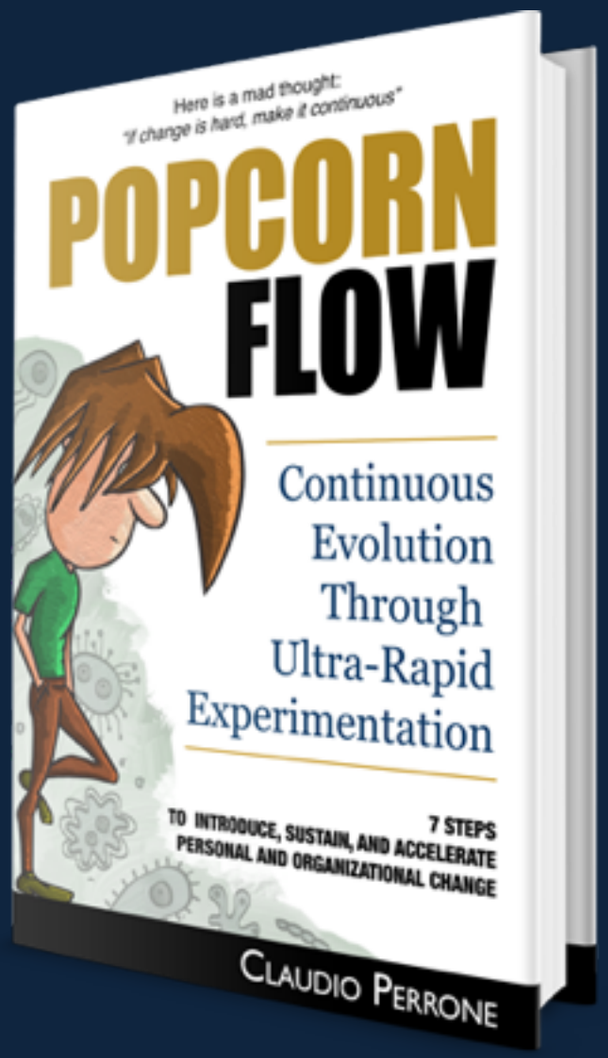
MANY PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES ARE UNDER ACTIVE DEVELOPMENT...





... INCLUDING AN UPCOMING BOOK.



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http://popcornflow.com/book

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FINAL THOUGHTS

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It's not what you do but rather what you learn by doing it that matters.

But then...

It's not what you learn, but rather what you do with what you learn that matters.

-- Claudio Perrone

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NEXT IS NOW

Claudio Perrone

Agile Sensei

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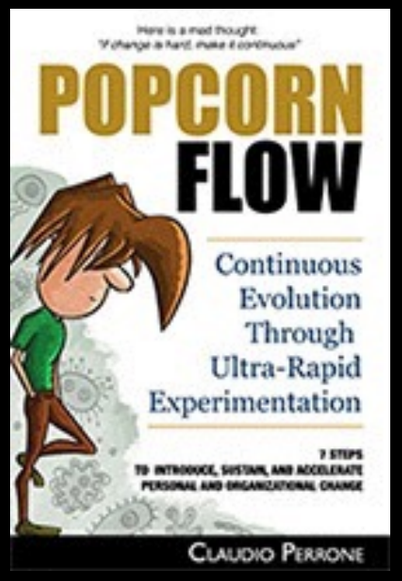

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ONE MORE THING...

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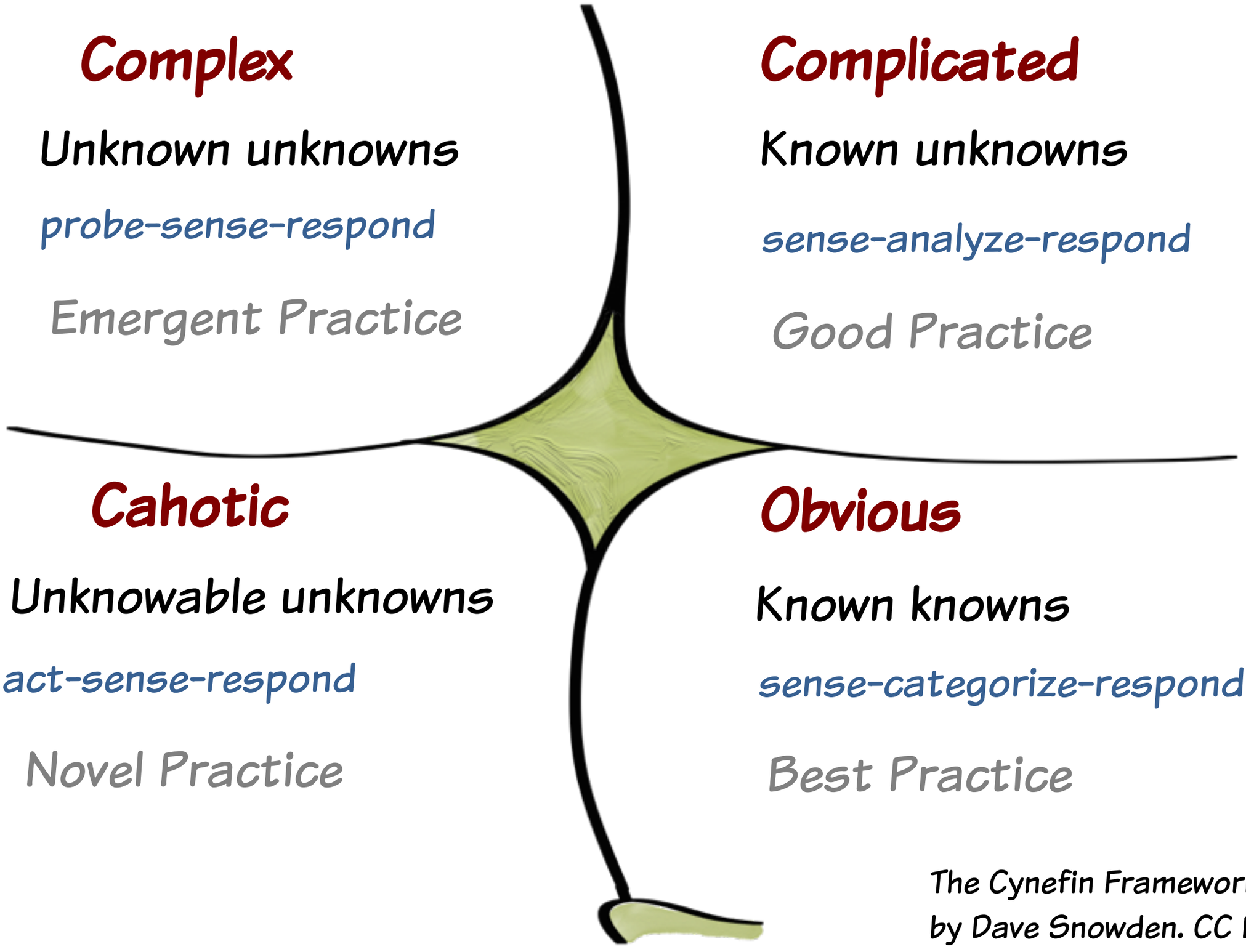
THERE ARE NO "SILVER BULLETS"



The Cynefin Framework
by Dave Snowden. CC BY-SA 3.0