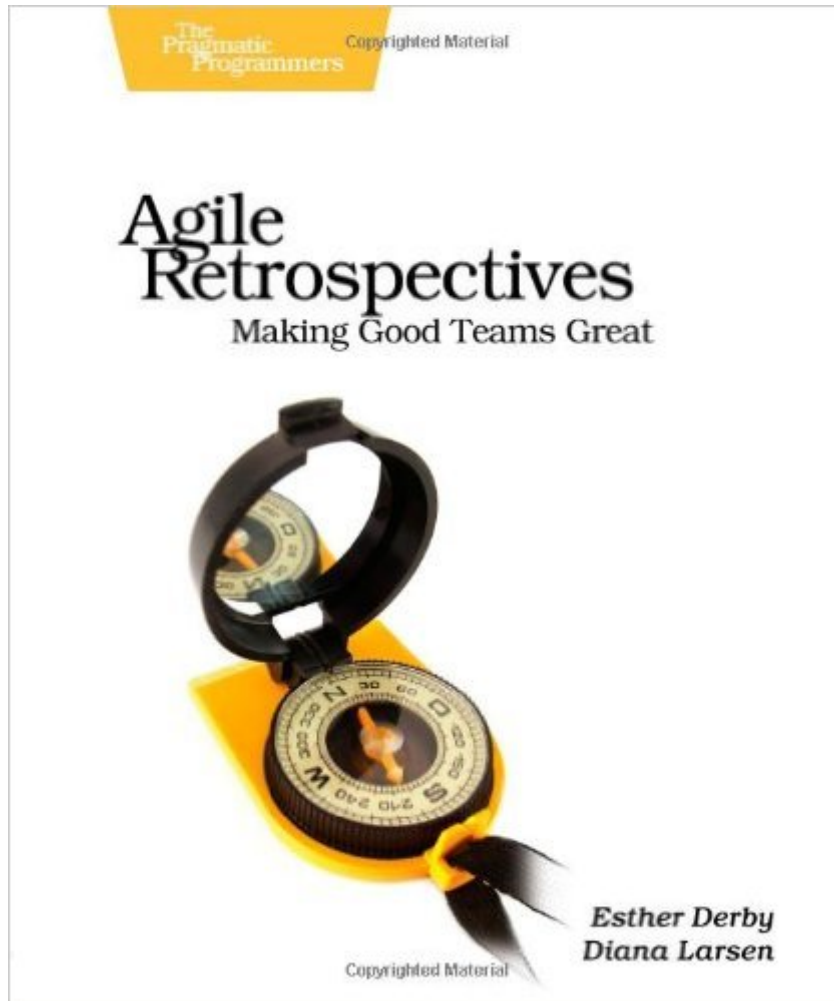


The book was found

# Agile Retrospectives: Making Good Teams Great



## Synopsis

See how to mine the experience of your software development team continually throughout the life of the project. The tools and recipes in this book will help you uncover and solve hidden (and not-so-hidden) problems with your technology, your methodology, and those difficult "people" issues on your team. Project retrospectives help teams examine what went right and what went wrong on a project. But traditionally, retrospectives (also known as "post-mortems") are only helpful at the end of the project--too late to help. You need agile retrospectives that are iterative and incremental. You need to accurately find and fix problems to help the team today. Now, Derby and Larsen show you the tools, tricks, and tips you need to fix the problems you face on a software development project on an on-going basis. You'll see how to architect retrospectives in general, how to design them specifically for your team and organization, how to run them effectively, how to make the needed changes, and how to scale these techniques up. You'll learn how to deal with problems, and implement solutions effectively throughout the project--not just at the end. With regular tune-ups, your team will hum like a precise, world-class orchestra.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

My agile team has used retrospectives for years and thought we were pretty good at them. The activities and ideas in this well-written, well-organized book take our retrospectives to a whole new level. Now if we can't remember what we did in the previous two weeks (it's surprising how poor our

memories can be!), or are stumped for ideas on how to address a prickly issue, we can just turn to the book for a way to jump-start a beneficial change. I had no idea there were so many different approaches to getting value via retrospectives. The activities are all simple, and illustrated with many figures and examples. Even if you're not very experienced at leading these types of meetings, the book will give you confidence. The authors also explain when and why to do different types of retrospectives. For example, I hadn't thought of having project retrospectives for our agile team, since we already have iteration retrospectives, but now I can see how they can be managed for good effect. Most importantly, the book explains how to use the information and ideas produced in a retrospective to effect real change. It's easy to get complacent and not strive to do better, and this book will help your team be proactive. The book's organization makes it a good reference guide too. Anytime your team is in a rut or having a problem, you could pick an activity out of this book to kick start things. I love user-friendly books such as this one.

After the first 100 pages, I was ready to give this book a single star. Then it made its way back by producing some stimulus in the center of the book, basically talking about some techniques for eliciting and then analyzing feedback (made it back to a 4, 5 is ludicrous just from the content perspective, this thing is thin in every sense of the word). But then, it fell back to a 3 because ultimately the many examples are laid out as if they were patterns, but there is little to no structure. Finally, the conclusion section goes back to some of the silliness of the beginning. What I am referring to as silliness is the constant enveloping of process suggestions with new agey psychobabble. I found that 80% of the time, this additional stuff was noise. Ultimately, I was left convinced (as probably all who have done iterative could easily be) that retrospectives are a good thing, but a strong conviction that they could be done better than what is being espoused here. There are a few good ideas, and the overall presentation is good. That's all.

Diana and Esther tell us how to make good teams great. It's not hype; their advice works! From the first few pages we know the authors are speaking from their vast experience, sharing knowledge on how to install iterative retrospectives in a team's process. Their book is written in an easy-to-read manner and leaves nothing out: it includes examples from real retrospectives, a theory of iterative retrospective design as well as a number of carefully designed exercises. I'm not surprised that the authors could make clear such a difficult topic, blending insight from a number of fields and writing specifically for software teams. For more than a decade, Esther and Diana have been teaching the techniques and helping leading edge companies from all over the world implement

retrospectives. This is a must read book for anyone serious about making the Agile approach work, and then work better and better. Why? Because an Agile approach deployed right out of the book or course is likely to be a poor fit for your specific environment. Agile needs to be fine-tuned for your teams strengths, skills, challenges and goals. The iterative retrospective is the widely proven technique to make these crucial adjustments. There is no better book on the topic.

I have yet to regret a purchase from the Pragmatic Bookshelf. The books are clear and concise with pretty easy to implement action plans, and this one is no exception. If you are like me, you have found that traditional "lessons learned" meetings after projects were held rarely, and a rarer number of these actually generated anything of any impact on future work. In some of my readings about Agile Software Development, I read that Agile Teams have retrospectives regularly with each iteration. I thought this was interesting, but didn't really know what to do. Enter this book. The authors do a great job of outlining how the process should work and why each of the phases of are important. They give good coverage of \* Setting the Stage\* Gathering Information\* Generating Insights\* Deciding What to Do\* Closing the Retrospective. Not only do they explain the general process, but they give a fairly extensive list of activities to use for each phase with suggestions about which ones work in different situations. After reading this book, I was able to immediately turn around and facilitate a retrospective for my team's latest project release. This book is about all that you could ask for. The material is rich, but the amount of material is fairly short and quick to read. It is very focused and clear on how to take action. I would recommend investing in this book to anyone who wants to do a better job of \*truly\* learning from past project experience.

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