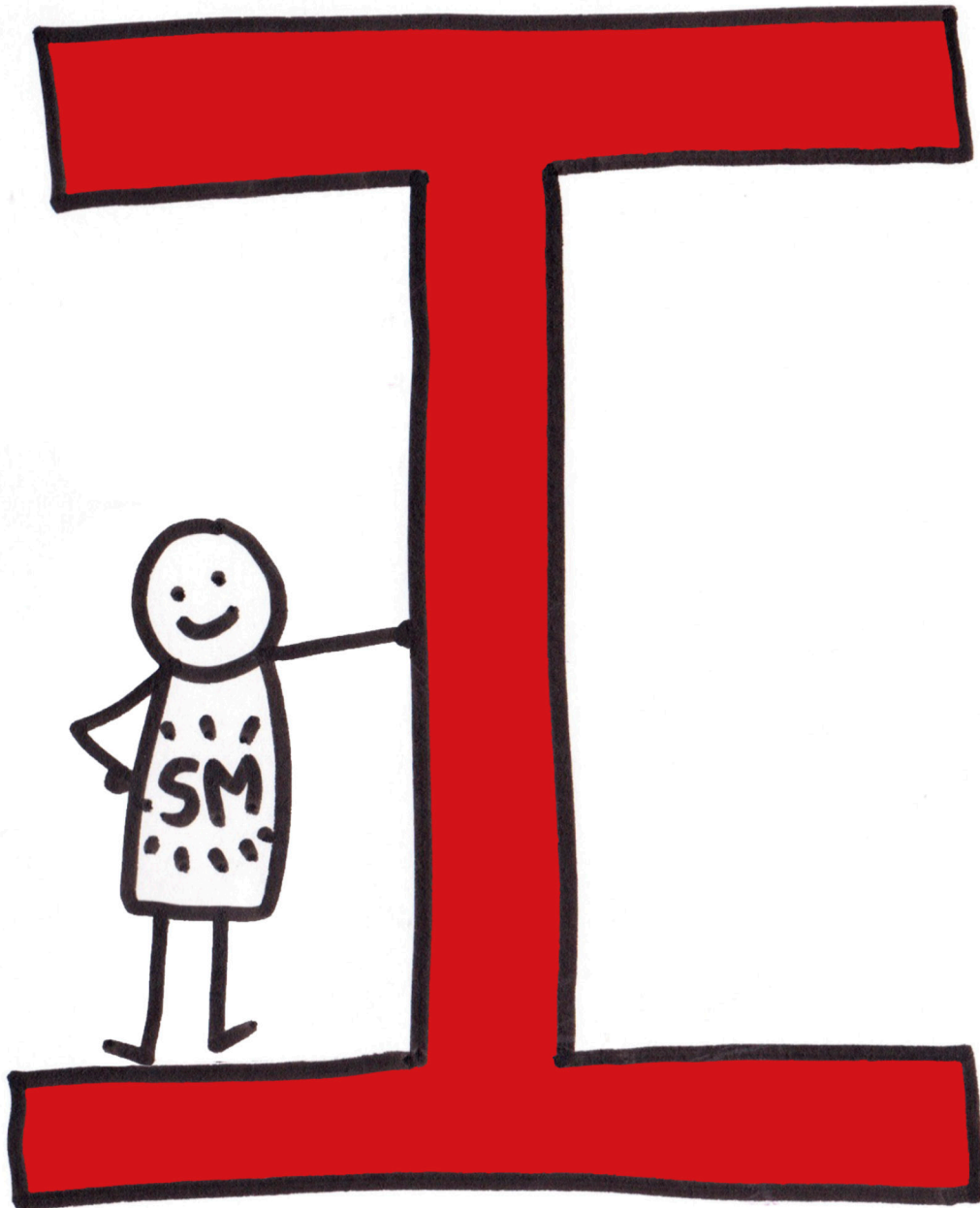


SCRUM MASTER

15 Weeks of Accelerated Learning



WORKBOOK

By Samantha Laing & Karen Greaves



Scrum Master Workbook Part 1

15 weeks of accelerated learning

Karen Greaves and Samantha Laing

This book is for sale at <http://leanpub.com/ScrumMasterWorkbook1>

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Contents

About the Authors	i
Introduction	ii
How To Use This Book	iii
Week 1: What Should Scrum Masters Do?	1
Week 2: Impediments	4
Week 3: Meetings	10
Week 4: Proactive vs Reactive	15
Week 5: Retrospective	19
Want More?	22
Appendix	23
Growing Agile Online Courses	24
Growing Agile Books	25
About Growing Agile	29

About the Authors



Sam Laing (left) and Karen Greaves (right)

We have worked in software our whole lives. With Type A personalities and a strong work ethic, we have both done our share of overtime on death march projects. Eventually we knew we had to find another way. Agile brought us together when we worked at a company trying to do Scrum for the first time.

In 2012, we took the plunge and started our own business, Growing Agile. Since then we have been doing the work that we are passionate about: introducing people to agile and helping teams improve. Best of all we have a positive impact on other people's lives.

In the 15 years we've been doing agile, one thing has become clear: The Scrum Master role is one of the most misunderstood and badly implemented parts of Scrum. We've made it our personal mission to help change that. A great Scrum Master can make the difference between an okay team and an awesome team, and we think everyone in this role should be creating awesome teams! Enjoy!

Introduction

Welcome to our Scrum Master Workbook! We hope it will be your companion on your journey as a Scrum Master for the next 15 weeks.

The book is a hands on learning experience that will cover a range of topics we feel Scrum Masters need to master. We know that being a Scrum Master is not an easy job, and we are passionate about helping people on this journey. Through being Scrum Masters ourselves for many years, and coaching many people on the journey, we have a collection of lessons and skills we believe it is vital for Scrum Masters to learn.

Our hope is that this book will be like having us as be your personal coach on your journey and fast track your learning by guiding you through these lessons each week. Just like each team is different, each Scrum Master's journey is different, so what is most important about this book is that you try things out with your own team and in your environment. Some things we suggest might work great for you, others might be a complete disaster, that's okay. That's how you will learn.

This book is for anyone who is looking to improve as a Scrum Master or agile coach. Because the book is filled with exercises for you to do, it will make most sense if you have a team (or more than one) that you can try things out on.

The book is written so that it's applicable if you are a brand new Scrum Master or someone with 5 years experience looking to revitalise your team. We will cover a lot of the basics, but as experienced coaches we know that often going back to basics is exactly what experts need.

Good luck on your journey, feel free to send us a tweet or email to let us know how it's going.

Twitter: [@GrowingAgile](https://twitter.com/GrowingAgile)¹

Email: sam@growingagile.co.za² or karen@growingagile.co.za³

¹<https://twitter.com/GrowingAgile>

²<mailto:sam@growingagile.co.za>

³<mailto:karen@growingagile.co.za>

How To Use This Book

The first thing we'd like you to do is to print this book. Yes we mean on paper! We live in a digital world and yet we find that tactile tangible things are sometimes so much simpler and better. Don't get us wrong, we aren't technophobes. We love our fitbits, smart phones and apple tv, but for some things paper just works better. We hope having this on your desk will serve as a great reminder to continue your learning. We've left plenty of space for you to write in the book. This means it will be easy to reflect on what you've learned over several weeks. The book is intended to be printed in colour on A4 paper, but feel free to try something different if that works better for you.

Next we recommend setting aside an hour a week in your calendar for the next 15 weeks. Go put it in your calendar now. Pick a time you aren't generally distracted and when you will be able to focus and learn. You might even want to book a meeting room for yourself to get away from the interruptions that might happen at your desk.

Each chapter is focused on a topic, and the intention is for you to focus on that topic for a week. If an hour once a week is more than you can commit to, feel free to go at your own pace. You can take a break at anytime (for example if you go on holiday), then pickup on the next chapter when you return. You can also skip around to chapters that are more relevant if you prefer.

Each chapter/week is colour coded and structured as follows:

- An introduction to the topic
- One or two blog posts related to the topic
- An exercise for you to do
- A journal page for you to take notes for the week
- Some weeks also include cards you can cut out to use for the exercises

We know that everyone learns differently, so we have provided a variety of materials related to each topic. Feel free to use only what makes sense to you, and what you have the time for. Don't worry if you can't do every exercise, rather focus on what you can learn on the topic.

We've learned through our other books that although there is a wealth of information and great ideas on the internet about agile, just providing links can be frustrating because links change and content gets deleted all the time. For this book we've decided to provide the text of the blog posts in a downloadable PDF. This means that you never need to visit a broken link and wonder what the article said. We've also kept the reading short, so it's no more than five pages for any one chapter. Feel free to print the Reading PDF out, or to read the short articles on your computer or device.

Download the Reading PDF here: www.growingagile.co.za/SMWorkbook/ReadingPDF⁴

We recommend reading the introduction and blog posts and before doing the exercise. Some of the exercises will require you to schedule time with your team or other people to complete them.

⁴<http://www.growingagile.co.za/SMWorkbook/ReadingPDF>

One of the best ways to learn as a Scrum Master is to keep notes on how things are going, what you do, and what you notice. Often it takes some time for the impact of our actions to be visible, so being able to reflect over a longer period is a valuable learning tool. For this reason, we've included a journal page each week for you to fill in. We'll prompt you with some things to think about for the journal each week, but feel free to capture whatever you think might be important to look back on.

When you start we recommend filling in your journal daily. Sometimes by the end of the week it is difficult to remember what we did earlier in the week. A great tip is to put a reminder in your calendar for 15 minutes each day to fill in your journal. Once you do this for a few weeks, it will become an easy habit to continue.

As agile coaches our favourite meeting is the retrospective. Reflecting on how things have gone in the past is the best way to set ourselves up for success in the future. It's also a great way to amplify your learning. Because of this, we've structured every fifth week to be a retrospective. This is a personal retrospective to do by yourself. The chapters for those weeks will be a little different because they don't include any reading. They are all colour coded in yellow.

Week 1: What Should Scrum Masters Do?

“Transforming a team, let alone an entire organisation, from the principles of command and control to those based on servant-leadership, from plans based on prediction to plans based on empirical, evolutionary data requires both patience and tenacity.”

Geoff Watts

Date: _____

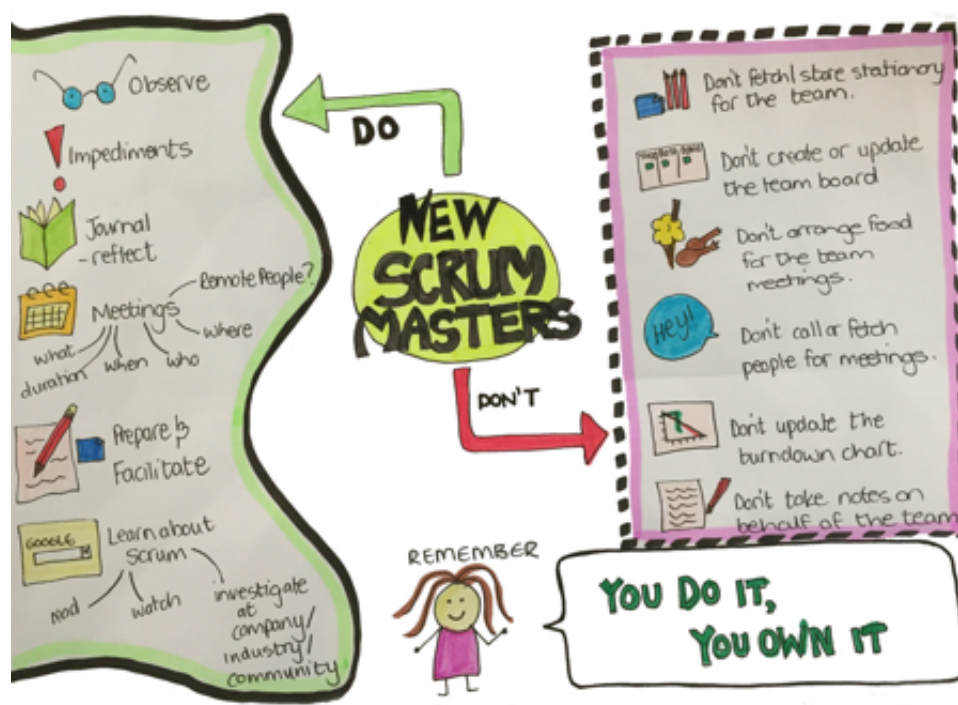
What Should Scrum Masters Do?

The role of Scrum Master is misunderstood world wide. Many people believe that the Scrum Master is just a new name for a project manager, which is not the case. This can lead to misconceptions and uncertainty about what a Scrum Master should be doing.

In our experience, even if you've been a Scrum Master for more than a year, explaining what you do all day is tricky. If you are a new Scrum Master, the role can be overwhelming. You might feel you need to do many of things that you really shouldn't be doing, because they make the team dependent on you, like updating the team's task board!

Part of the problem is that the Scrum Master role is a completely new role to many of us, so comparisons to other roles are often not useful. The best analogy is to think of the Scrum Master as a team coach, helping the team get better. Much of what a team coach does is proactive, rather than reactive, to prevent problems before they occur.

This unfortunately means no one can tell you what you need to do. You need to look for opportunities within your own team and environment. The image below can help you focus on the right things and avoid doing things the team should learn to do for themselves.



That is only part of the picture. As new Scrum Masters 50% of your time should be spent learning, reading and sharing what you have learned. I know that sounds daunting ... 4 hours EVERY DAY! But learning can be fun especially if you have other people doing it with you and you apply everything you learn.



Reading

For this week’s reading take a look at this list of [42 things a Scrum Master should be doing](#)⁵. A copy of this article is included in [Reading PDF](#)⁶. For additional reading we recommend the book ScrumMastery by Geoff Watts.



Exercise

If you haven’t already – please read [How To Use This Book](#) before continuing. This week we would like you to start using the Journal page in this book. Note down what you do everyday for this week. This could be a simple list or a more detailed paragraph. We’ll be asking you do this each week for the next few weeks, in preparation for an exercise in week 4. If you think you might forget to do this, then schedule a recurring meeting for 15 minutes before you leave the office, or the first 15 minutes when you get in. This way you will have set aside time to fill in your journal notes!



Journal

Write some notes here on what you’ve done each day this week.

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⁵<http://scrummasterchecklist.org/>
⁶<http://www.growingagile.co.za/SMWorkbook/ReadingPDF>

Week 2: Impediments

“No problem is insurmountable. With a little courage, teamwork and determination, a person can overcome anything.”

B. Dodge

Date: _____

Impediments

Impediments. Those nasty things that stop you from getting stuff done. Nope. Impediments don't just stop you from getting stuff done. Impediments are **ANYTHING** that prevent you from going as **FAST** as possible.

Think about that carefully for a moment. That might be faster than you have even gone before. Some impediments are “just the way things work around here”.

The question “Do you have any impediments?” during a daily scrum or standup rarely solicits any answers. Usually only blockers (things preventing work) get mentioned. Instead, listen to people's language in the daily scrum. Any hint of uncertainty means there is potentially an impediment that can be resolved.

We have created a list of “impediment words”. Listen for these words in your next daily scrum and see how many potential impediments you can spot. Ask clarifying questions to uncover whether it is a problem, or if someone is just using uncertain language out of habit. Start to notice how often you and those around you use uncertain language.

There is a cutout of these words for you later in the chapter.

Not every impediment needs solving right now. The big hairy ones will most likely take months or even years to fully solve. Your aim is to make them less painful for your team. Chip away at them one small step at a time. The best way to do this is to source multiple ideas from the team. Many heads thinking of potential solutions is always better than one. You could also seek help from outside the team, perhaps other teams have already faced and conquered a particular impediment.

The problem solving tree is a great technique to help identify potential solutions for impediments. We have included this technique in this week's reading.



Reading

For this week's reading take a look at two blog posts from our blog: [What Should a New Scrummaster Be Doing?](#)⁷ and [The Problem Solving Tree](#)⁸.

A copy of these articles is included in [Reading PDF](#)⁹.

⁷<http://www.growingagile.co.za/2014/08/what-should-a-new-scrummaster-be-doing/>

⁸<http://www.growingagile.co.za/2012/01/the-problem-solving-tree-a-free-exercise/>

⁹<http://www.growingagile.co.za/SMWorkbook/ReadingPDF>



Exercise

Pick one of the impediments you listed that you would like to resolve. Use the rest of this page to draw a problem solving tree for that impediment. Try to think of lots of small things you can do to make the impediment have less impact, if it is difficult to solve completely. Now get out there and try some of the things you've identified.



For Your Toolbox

Cut this out and add it to your toolbox to use with your team.

guess
waiting
wish
hopefully
try
not available
busy still
expected
thought

Week 3: Meetings

“If we can just turn everything we know about meetings upside down – replace agendas and decorum with passion and conflict – we can transform drudgery into meaningful competitive advantage”

Patrick Lencioni

Date: _____

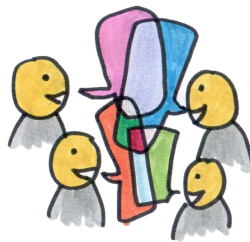
Meetings

Time is money. We all know it. And yet the vast majority of organisations suffer from time waste when people sit in a meeting and don't actually get any value. That is time from each of their days that they have lost. Eliminating this waste or even minimising it could save some companies millions.

As a bonus – not wasting your time waiting for meetings to start or being bored during them, will leave you and your team much happier!

Meetings are necessary. Face to face communication is proven to be vastly more effective than any other form of communication. We need to understand how to make meetings more productive.

Luckily – with just a few tips – you can do this as a Scrum Master. What you will notice is that if you implement these tips, other people will start changing their behaviour too.



TIPS

- Always prepare for a meeting.
- Always have a purpose for the meeting and an intended outcome.
- If attendees need to bring or prepare something, tell them in advance.
- Always start meetings on time and close the door.
- Latecomers are welcome, but must open the door. Don't catch them up on what has been discussed, they will learn to be on time if they don't want to miss anything.
- Always end meetings on time. If the desired outcome has not been achieved then have a discussion as to when to address this before the end of the meeting
- Plan meetings to end at 5 minutes to the hour (e.g. 9:55am) to allow participants time to get to their next meeting on time.
- Ensure that you facilitate the meeting and keep it on topic.
- Don't multitask in meetings by checking your phone, tablet or laptop. Pay attention to the person talking, and take notes on paper. Taking notes on a laptop can make people think you are checking email, even if you aren't.
- If the desired outcome is achieved before the end of the meeting, end the meeting early.

The above tips allow people to have FOCUS. They demands RESPECT and require COMMITMENT, COURAGE and OPENNESS. Do these sound familiar?



Reading

For this week's reading take a look at this blog post on [Meeting Addiction](#)¹⁰.

A copy of this article is included in [Reading PDF](#)¹¹.

¹⁰<http://www.growingagile.co.za/2013/10/meetingism-addiction-to-meetings/>

¹¹<http://www.growingagile.co.za/SMWorkbook/ReadingPDF>



Exercise

The best way to improve your meetings is to reflect on what happened in the meeting as soon as possible afterwards. Think about things that worked well and why that was, as well as things that went badly and try to understand why and what you could do instead.

For this week schedule 10 min in your calendar after every meeting to reflect. Answer the following questions for each meeting.

1) Was the meeting valuable? Why or why not?

- .
- .
- .
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- .

2) Did you pay attention all the time? Why or why not?

- .
- .
- .
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- .

3) Did everyone else pay attention all the time? Why or why not?

- .
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- .
- .
- .

4) Which parts felt great? Why?

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- .
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- .

5) Which parts felt awkward or odd? Why?

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- .
- .
- .

6) What one thing can you change to make the meeting more valuable?

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- .
- .
- .
- .

Week 4: Proactive vs Reactive

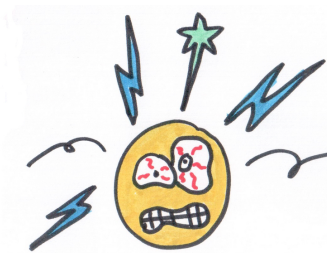
“Being proactive rather than reactive means to control a situation rather than letting it control you.”

Kelly Burstow

Date: _____

Proactive vs Reactive

Think about your average day at the office. How would you rate it on a scale of 1 to 10, when 1 is calm and peaceful and 10 is hectic and crazy? If you are running around everyday doing what we call “the headless chicken dance” then you are likely mostly being reactive. This means you tackle problems as they arise, and they usually arise a lot. As explained in the first week, part of the challenge of being a ScrumMaster is that your job should be proactive, rather than reactive. Instead of constantly putting out fires, you should instead be preventing them from ever becoming fires. The hardest part of being proactive, is that it is not obvious what you need to do, and if you are doing it well, almost no one notices because everything just runs smoothly. If your environment is in a constant state of crisis, you need to consciously create space and time to be proactive. Continuing to be reactive only perpetuates the crisis state.



Let's look at a story. Kate is a Scrum Master and her team is working well together. Kate feels she is proactive a lot of the time, but the times she feels crazy are just before a release. It seems she needs to be in 10 different places at once for the 2 weeks before a release. Some of the things happening during those two weeks are: Her PO needs all the critical bugs fixed Her team is working on bugs but as individuals so they can cover more ground Every release to the testing environment seems to bring new critical bugs The closer they get to release date the more stressed everyone gets The team works overtime to fix more bugs.

Kate has noticed when she (and her team) are reactive and listed her observations. Now she can start working on these proactively. Perhaps she can investigate Agile Testing in order to prevent bugs. Perhaps her team can try releasing to production more frequently so that smaller pieces of work go in. Maybe the team can try fixing bugs as soon as they are found rather than leaving them to the end of the release.

As you can see by the story above being proactive means slowing down and observing the chaos in order to make some some changes.



Reading

For this week's reading take a look at these three blog posts: [Being Proactive vs Reactive](#)¹², [Customer Service](#)¹³ and [Proactive Reactive](#)¹⁴.

A copy of these articles is included in [Reading PDF](#)¹⁵.

¹²<http://www.growingagile.co.za/2015/01/being-proactive-vs-reactive/>

¹³<http://www.growingagile.co.za/2015/01/proactive-vs-reactive-customer-service/>

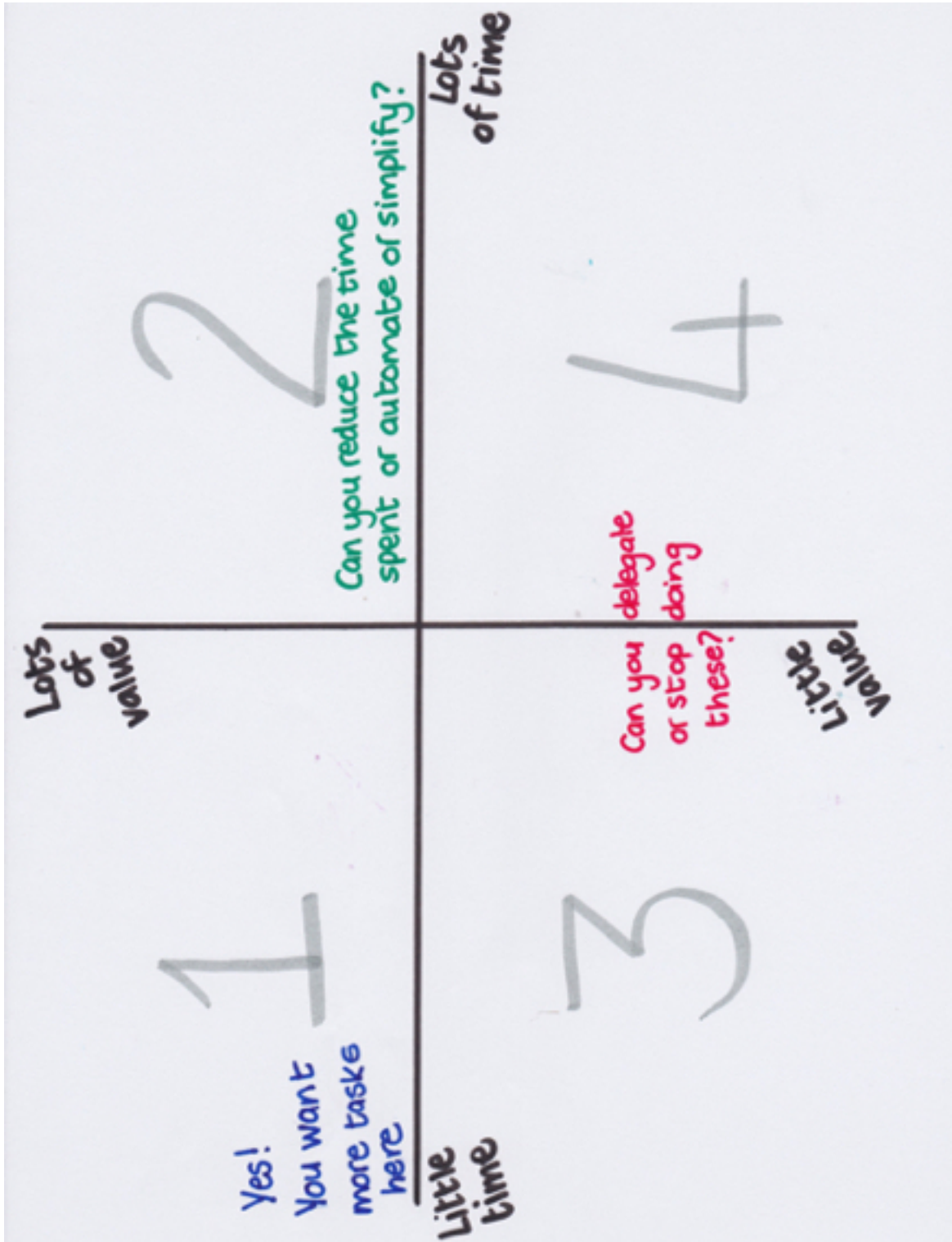
¹⁴<http://proactivechange.com/mindset/proactive-reactive.htm>

¹⁵<http://www.growingagile.co.za/SMWorkbook/ReadingPDF>



For Your Toolbox

Cut this out and add it to your toolbox to use with your team.



Week 5: Retrospective

“Those who don’t learn from the past are
doomed to repeat it.”

George Santayana

Date: _____

Want More?

If you have enjoyed the last few weeks of guided Scrum Master learning and want more, why not get the full book?

The full workbook includes 15 weeks of accelerated learning!

You can find it here: www.leanpub.com/ScrumMasterWorkbook1¹⁶

¹⁶www.leanpub.com/ScrumMasterWorkbook1

Appendix

Growing Agile Online Courses

We offer several online courses aimed at Scrum Masters, Product Owners and Agile Teams.

If you are ready to get a taste of what our online courses are about sign up for our *FREE* five week [Scrum Master](#)¹⁷ or [Product Owner](#)¹⁸ email course.

Our online courses are a little different to regular online video courses. We've applied the principles of Training From The Back of The Room to our online materials. That means each course comes with a workbook and exercises for you to do, as well as video's to watch and techniques that you can use with your teams. Each activity is intended to deepen your knowledge of an area, so we suggest doing the course over a few weeks and taking the time to do all the exercises.

Take a look at our offerings here <http://www.growingagile.co.za/online-courses/>¹⁹.

¹⁷<http://www.growingagile.co.za/new-sm-email-course/>

¹⁸<http://www.growingagile.co.za/new-po-email-course/>

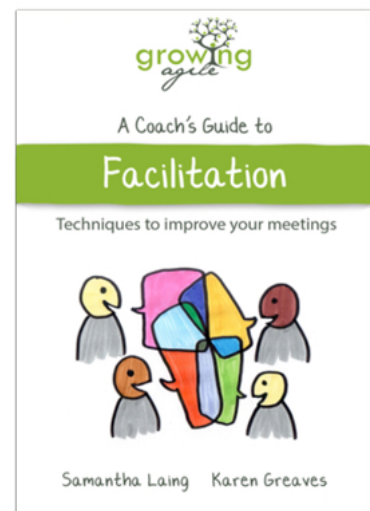
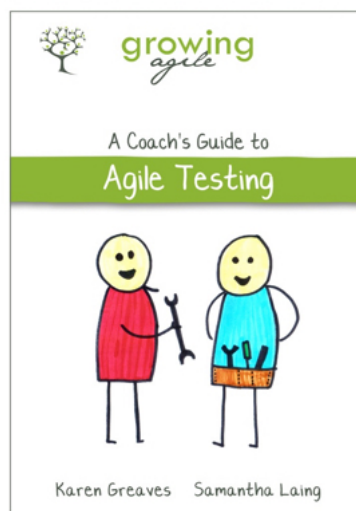
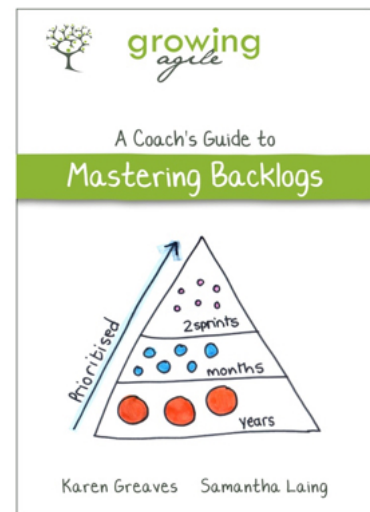
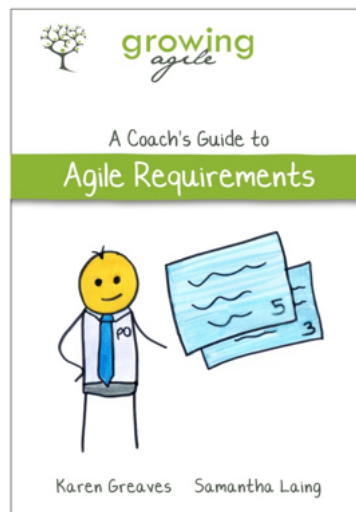
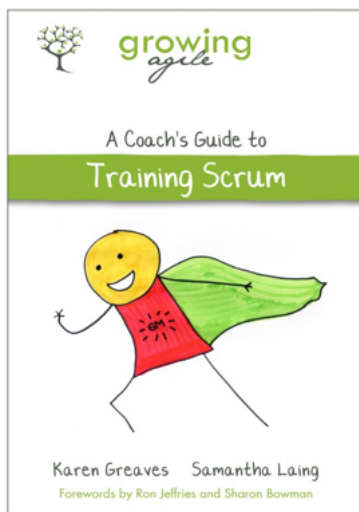
¹⁹<http://www.growingagile.co.za/online-courses/>

Growing Agile Books

The Growing Agile Coach's Guide Series

This series provides a collection of training and workshop plans for a variety of agile topics. The series is aimed at agile coaches, trainers and ScrumMasters who often find themselves needing to help teams understand agile concepts. Each book in the series provides the plans, slides, workbooks and activity instructions to run a number of workshops on each topic. The interactive workshops are all created using techniques from Training from the Back of the Room, to ensure participants are engaged and remember their learnings after the workshop.

The series is available in a [bundle on Leanpub²⁰](#), or you can purchase the books individually.



²⁰<https://leanpub.com/b/coachsguide>

Growing Agile: A Coach's Guide to Training Scrum

We have been training teams in Scrum for about three years. During this time we have spent many hours preparing training plans and creating workbooks, flipcharts and slides. This book will help you plan and deliver interactive, fun Scrum training for anything from a short workshop on a particular topic to a full two-day course.

Growing Agile: A Coach's Guide to Training Scrum is available on [Leanpub²¹](#).

A Coach's Guide to Agile Requirements

Our requirement workshops are aimed at different stakeholders ranging from business, to Product Owners and teams. This book is a collection of some of those workshop and can be used to help improve the way you think about and communicate agile requirements.

Growing Agile: A Coach's Guide to Agile Requirements is available on [Leanpub²²](#).

Growing Agile: A Coach's Guide to Mastering Backlogs

Often Product Owners can't see the forest for the trees and there are so many items in their backlog and not enough hours in the day to groom it. We run short workshops where we work with the Product Owner's actual backlog. The workshop is a working session, and an hour later the Product Owners emerge with an improved backlog.

Growing Agile: A Coach's Guide to Mastering Backlogs is available on [Leanpub²³](#).

Growing Agile: A Coach's Guide to Release Planning

We often hear people say "We're agile, we don't need a plan"! or even worse "We can't plan". This is just not true. We run Release Planning workshops with many organisations. This book is a collection of our workshops that will help you run similar workshops to create agile release plans. We include teaching points on a range of techniques like Story Mapping and release burnups to help you explain to other's how to use these methods effectively.

Growing Agile: A Coach's Guide to Release Planning is available on [Leanpub²⁴](#).

A Coach's Guide to Agile Testing

If a team believes they are agile, but nothing has changed about the way they test, then there is still much to learn. We teach 5 key principles that explain why agile testing is fundamentally different to traditional testing. This books includes a collection of workshops to help teams grasp these principles and adopt an agile testing mindset. It's not just for testers. A key part of agile

²¹<https://leanpub.com/TrainingScrum>

²²<https://leanpub.com/AgileRequirements>

²³<https://leanpub.com/MasteringBacklogs>

²⁴<https://leanpub.com/ReleasePlanning>

testing is that the whole team is involved, so we always run these workshops with everyone in the team.

Growing Agile: A Coach's Guide to Agile Testing is available on [Leanpub](#)²⁵.

Growing Agile: A Coach's Guide to Facilitation

It's taken us several years to master the skill of facilitation, and it continues to amaze us how few people learn the skill, or even understand what it means. People spend much of their lives in meetings, and yet so many meetings lack facilitation. We hope the collection of tips and techniques in this book will inspire you to grow your own facilitation skills and improve the meetings in your organisation.

Growing Agile: A Coach's Guide to Facilitation is available on [Leanpub](#)²⁶.

Other books by Growing Agile



Flow

Do you have a never-ending to do list and not enough hours in the day? Imagine getting everything on your to do list done without stress or worrying. Imagine being twice as productive in half the time.

We have over 30 proven tips and techniques to help you achieve a state of flow, where time stands still and productivity soars. With these tips you will deliver value to your customers sooner in practical and simple ways. You will also be happier and less stressed.

Flow is available on [Leanpub](#)²⁷.

²⁵<https://leanpub.com/AgileTesting>

²⁶<https://leanpub.com/Facilitation>

²⁷<https://leanpub.com/helpworktoflow>

Collaboration Games

Add an element of fun to your meetings or workshops using these 12 short games that teach principles of collaboration.

Collaboration Games is available on [Leanpub](#)²⁸.

Who is Agile in South Africa

This book is based on the original Who Is Agile book, only this is a regional version for South Africa. It's a collection of interviews with passionate South African agilists.

Who is Agile in South Africa is available on [Leanpub](#)²⁹.

²⁸<https://leanpub.com/CollaborationGamesToolbox>

²⁹<https://leanpub.com/WhoisagileSouthAfrica>

About Growing Agile



At Growing Agile we help companies build great teams that create exceptional products. We are agile coaches passionate about helping you get the results you are looking for.

We are based in Cape Town, South Africa, but work with clients from all over the world. We provide remote sessions for individuals or groups, as well as online courses for Scrum Masters, Product Owners and Teams. Find out more about us at www.growingagile.co.za. Our personal goal is to help influence a million people on their path to becoming agile coaches. Our books and videos are ways we can spread that influence further than what we can in person. We are also exploring new ways to do this. One of our latest projects is www.AgilePath.me. A community resource of links, courses, books, and ideas to help you find your own learning path as an agile coach. If you would like to stay in touch and hear about our new ventures, please sign up to our [monthly newsletter](#)³⁰.

³⁰<http://eepurl.com/xVP6D>