

## Retrospectives

<b>EBG Retro</b>	<a href="#">“Team Retrospectives—For Better Iteration Assessment”</a>
<b>Readings</b>	<p><a href="#">“What’s Going Right Around Here? Using AI to Improve Your Agile Requirements Process”</a></p> <p><a href="#">“Retrospective: Harvesting the Wisdom of Teams”</a></p> <p><a href="#">Concise intro on retrospectives</a></p>
<b>Retro Training</b>	<a href="#">Project Retrospectives and Team Reviews</a>
<b>What is a retrospective?</b>	<p>A ritual in which the project community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● reviews the iteration/release/project story</li> <li>● harvests the collective wisdom of the team</li> <li>● tells the truth without blame or judgment</li> <li>● identifies what to appreciate and improve</li> <li>● understands and forgives its failings, and relishes in its successes.</li> </ul> <p>The insights gained from retrospectives are the basis for starting again.</p>
<b>Value Proposition</b>	Retrospectives: <i>your team’s best (and least expensive way) to learn.</i>
<b>You Have to Slow Down to Speed Up</b>	<p>Adults are pragmatic learners -- we learn best in supportive environments with our own experiences (e.g. act → reflect → integrate).</p> <p>It is much easier to identify another’s foolishness than to recognize one’s own. This is the <i>Law of Wisdom Acquisition</i>. Humans need rituals to do this.</p> <p>Retrospectives are not the classic “lessons learned”. They focus on the big picture learning, address the “tough stuff” that really make projects successful, and generate actions for change.</p>
<b>Five Key Questions (adapted from Norm Kerth*)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What did we do well, that we might forget to do next time, if we don’t discuss it?</li> <li>2. What did we learn?</li> <li>3. What should we do differently next time?</li> <li>4. What still puzzles us?</li> <li>5. What needs more discussion?</li> </ol>
<b>Kerth’s Prime Directive</b>	“Regardless of what we discover, we understand and truly believe that everyone did the best job they could, given what they knew at the time, their skills and abilities, the resources available, and the situation at hand.”
<b>Websites</b>	<p><a href="http://www.retrospectives.com/index.html">http://www.retrospectives.com/index.html</a> (Norm Kerth’s original site)</p> <p><a href="http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/retrospectives/">http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/retrospectives/</a> (Retrospective Facilitators Discussion List)</p> <p><a href="http://www.retrospectivefacilitatorgathering.org">http://www.retrospectivefacilitatorgathering.org</a> / (scenes from some of the annual gatherings).</p> <p><a href="http://agileretrospectivewiki.org/index.php?title=Main_Page">http://agileretrospectivewiki.org/index.php?title=Main_Page</a> agile retrospectives wiki</p>
<b>When do</b>	<b>Interim Retrospectives</b> provide the greatest payback. Types:

## Retros?

- “Heartbeat”: time-based, e.g. weekly, bi-weekly, monthly iterations
- “Work Chunk”: milestone-based
- “Custom”: (surprise) event based, e.g. new technology, merger, disaster

**End-of-project retrospectives** are for the entire project.

## Structure for a Retrospective

**Readying:** collect data, establish tone, begin to create safety

**Past:** recreate the story, review significant events, answer the five questions

**Present:** assess our progress, review project data, reflect on facts and feelings

**Future:** correct issues, improve process and products, sustain good practices, recommend changes and improvements, shift the culture

**Retrospect:** reflect on how the retrospective process worked, identify process adjustments

## Books

Derby, Esther, and Diana Larsen. *Agile Retrospective: Making Good Teams Great*. 2006. Pragmatic Bookshelf.

Kerth, Norman. *Project Retrospectives: A Handbook for Team Reviews*. 2001. Dorset House Publishing Company.

## Articles and Papers

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Collier, Bonnie, Tom Demarco, and Peter Fearly, “A Defined Process for Project Postmortem Review, Bonnie Collier, Tom Demarco, and, IEEE Software, July 1996, pp 65-71.

Congdon, Gloria H. “Techniques and Recommendations For Implementing Valuable Postmortems in Software Development Projects”, Masters Thesis, 72 pages and Appendices, University of Minnesota, May 1999.

Desouza, Kevin, Torgeir Dingsoyr and Yukiki Awaza, “Experiences with Conducting Project Postmortems: Reports vs. Stories and Practitioner Perspective”, Proceeding of the 38<sup>th</sup> Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences, Jan. 2005.

Glass, Robert, “Project Retrospectives and Why They Never Happen”, IEEE Software, September/October 2002, pp. 111-112.

Gottesdiener, Ellen, “[Team Retrospectives-for Better Iteration Assessment](#)”, [The Rational Edge](#), April, 2003.

Kerth, Norman, “The Ritual of Retrospectives, Norman L. Kerth, Software Testing and Quality Engineering (now Better Software), September/October 2000.

Larsen, Diana, “Embracing Change: A Retrospective”, Cutter IT Journal, Vol. 16, No 2, 2003.

McGregor, Jena, “Gospels of Failure”, Fast Company, Issue 91, February 2005, p. 62.

<http://pf.fastcompany.com/magazine/91/gospels.html>, (A review of the three high profile post mortem reports: NASA’s Challenger, NY Time’s Jayson Blair, and the 9/11 Commission Report).

Raelin, Joseph A., “Public Reflection as the Basis of Learning”, Management Learning, Vol. 32(1), 2001, pp 11-30.

Rising, Linda and Esther Derby, “Singing the Songs of Project Experiences: Patterns and Retrospectives”, Linda Rising and Esther Derby, Cutter IT Journal, Vol. 16, No 9, September 2003.

Rizzuto, Janis, “Happy Endings”, Projects@Work, November/December 2002, pp 29-30.