It's Their Choice!
10 Ways to Encourage Autonomy
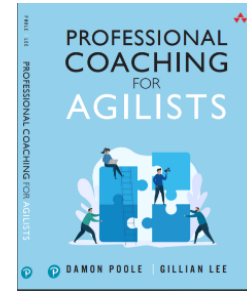
Gillian Lee

Independent Agile Coach
Agile Coach Workshops

PROFESSIONAL COACHING FOR AGILISTS

Director, Coach, Scrum Master,
Developer, Imagineer

MIT, Scrum Alliance, ICAgile

Co-founder Agile Toronto

Damon Poole

Indie Game Dev

Facilitivity — Independent Agile Coach / Agile Coach Workshops

ELIASSEN GROUP Agile Consulting Services — Chief Agilist / Enterprise Transformation / Built Agile Delivery team

AccuRev Acquired by **Borland** (A Micro Focus Company) — Founder, CEO, CTO

AGILE New England — Past President

ICP-ATF CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL

ICP-ACC CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL

ACC Associate Certified Coach International Coaching Federation

PROFESSIONAL COACHING FOR AGILISTS — DAMON POOLE | GILLIAN LEE

Fidelity

Capital One

PERFORCE

EMC²

Ford
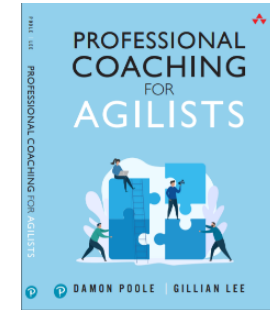
Autonomy

Daniel Pink, "Drive", Ch 4 - Autonomy

"Our basic need is to be curious and *self-directed*"

Agile Manifesto

"Build projects around motivated individuals, give them the *environment and support* they need, and *trust* them to get the job done."

"The best architectures, requirements, and designs *emerge from self-organizing teams*"
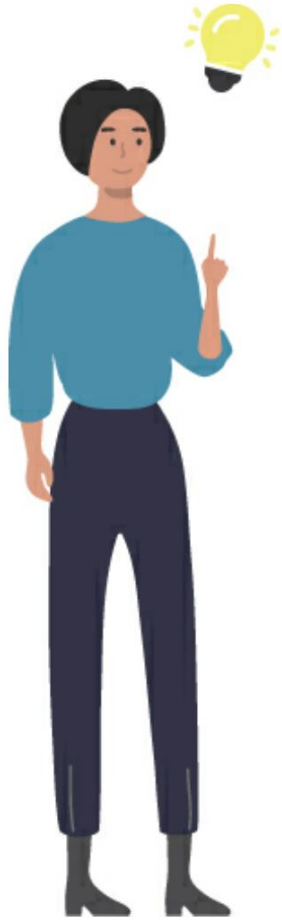
International Coaching Federation (ICF)

"Coach partners with the client by *supporting the client to choose what happens* in this session"

"Acknowledges that clients are *responsible for their own choices*"

Meet Eric

DEMO
Coaching

☹ Instead of …

🙂 Try …

- **Choosing or Changing the Topic** - determining what we feel is most important to discuss
- **Bias and Preference** - trying to lead others toward a particular solution because it is what we would do

- **Problem Solving** - using our problem solving skills instead of theirs, e.g., "What are the pros and cons?"

- **Session Purpose -** encouraging others to choose their topic by asking or by facilitating activities like lean coffee
- **Neutrality -** refraining from thinking of a solution or sharing an opinion

- **Coaching Questions -** asking questions like "How would you usually make a decision like this?"

"Stomping" on Choice

Gillian: Hi there, I'm Gillian. I'm the Scrum Master for the Unicorn team. I hear you're our new Agile Coach. Welcome!

Damon: Nice to meet you. What's going on for you and the team?

Gillian: So much is going on .

To start, our product owner isn't always showing up at standups and sprint reviews, so others are skipping scrum events too. The team also keeps getting stuck on dependencies so it takes multiple sprints to get anything done. Not to mention technical debt is out of control

Damon: Hmm, seems like the product owner may be a lot of the issue here

Gillian: Could be, we often run out of well-defined stories for us to work on

Damon: As I'm hearing this I'm thinking you need to consider the Kanban Method. Let me give you some examples of how it will help.

Gillian: I'm not sure we need to switch from Kanban to Scrum. They haven't even had Scrum Training.

Damon: Ok let's take a look at the pros and cons of Scrum and Kanban

Gillian: Actually, I'd prefer to create a list of pain points and then see what approach helps most

Damon: I'm sure kanban method will address most of your pain points.

Encouraging Choice

Gillian: Hi there, I'm Gillian. I'm the Scrum Master for the Unicorn team. I hear you're our new Agile Coach. Welcome!

Damon: Nice to meet you. What's going on for you and the team?

Gillian: So much is going on .

To start, our product owner isn't always showing up at standups and sprint reviews, so others are skipping scrum events too. The team also keeps getting stuck on dependencies so it takes multiple sprints to get anything done. Not to mention technical debt is out of control

Damon: You mentioned the product owner, dependencies, and technical debt. What would you like to focus on?

Gillian: Although all these topics are important, as I talk to you I am realizing that we need to start with some basic Agile training.

Damon: Ok, anything holding you back there?

Gillian: They're already doing parts of Scrum so I'm torn between continuing with Scrum or introducing something new.

Damon: how would you usually make such a decision?

Gillian: create a list of pain points and then see what approach helps most

Preparing for Flashcard Coaching

- Think of an issue, challenge, or problem that you have right now

- Can be from work or personal life

- This is real
  - Something you have not yet figured out
  - Don't make something up, this isn't role playing
  - Don't "test" the coach, just be yourself

- Safe for work

- Examples
  - What should I buy my significant other for their birthday?
  - Next steps in my career
  - Should I continue renting or purchase a property?
  - How can I get people to participate more in my meetings?

Stuck

Activity
Flashcard Coaching

10 min

Hello. What's new with you?

Rapport Building

2

Who or what else could you leverage here?

Exploring

14

If somebody came to you with this same situation what would you say to them?

Exploring

17

30

Flashcard Coaching – Debriefing

1. In a pair, discuss your takeaways and choose 1 to share out   **5 min**

2. Each pair shares their one take-away with the table   **10 min**

3. As an individual, consider what you'll do as a result of the activity   **2 min**

To Encourage Autonomy

🙁 Instead of …

- **Ignoring Options -** ignoring options others are considering

- **Unsolicited Advice -** giving unasked for advice

🙂 Try this…

- **Highlighting -** including options that others mention when considering options
- **Permission -** asking and receiving permission to share advice or expertise

Preparing for Sharing Advice

- Think of an issue, challenge, or problem that you have right now

- Can be from work or personal life

- This is real
  - Something you have not yet figured out
  - Don't make something up, this isn't role playing
  - Don't "test" the coach, just be yourself

- Safe for work

- Examples
  - What should I buy my significant other for their birthday?
  - Next steps in my career
  - Should I continue renting or purchase a property?
  - How can I get people to participate more in my meetings?

STUCK

Activity
Sharing Advice With a Coaching Mindset

Instructions for Sharing Advice Activity

5 min

- Fill out sections 1, 2, 3 of your handout

- For section 2, "What are you trying to figure out," it should be:
    - Real for you right now
    - Something you've not yet figured out
    - Related to Agile, or work, or something outside of work

Instructions for Sharing Advice Activity

- Visit other people's sheets

- If you have advice for someone else:
  - Add new pieces of advice in section 4
  - Add check marks on items in section 3 or 4 that you would also suggest

- Repeat with another person's sheet

5min

Instructions for Sharing Advice Activity

5 min

- Return to your own sheet

- Remember what you were trying to figure out

- Look at what you were considering, and the check marks

- Look at the additional advice you got

- Now think it over and put what you are leaning toward in section 5

Instructions for Sharing Advice Activity

5 min

- Visit other people's sheets
- Look at their thought process from what they were trying out all the way to what they are now leaning toward

Sharing Advice with a Coaching Mindset – Debriefing

1) In a pair, discuss your takeaways and choose 1 to share out

5 min
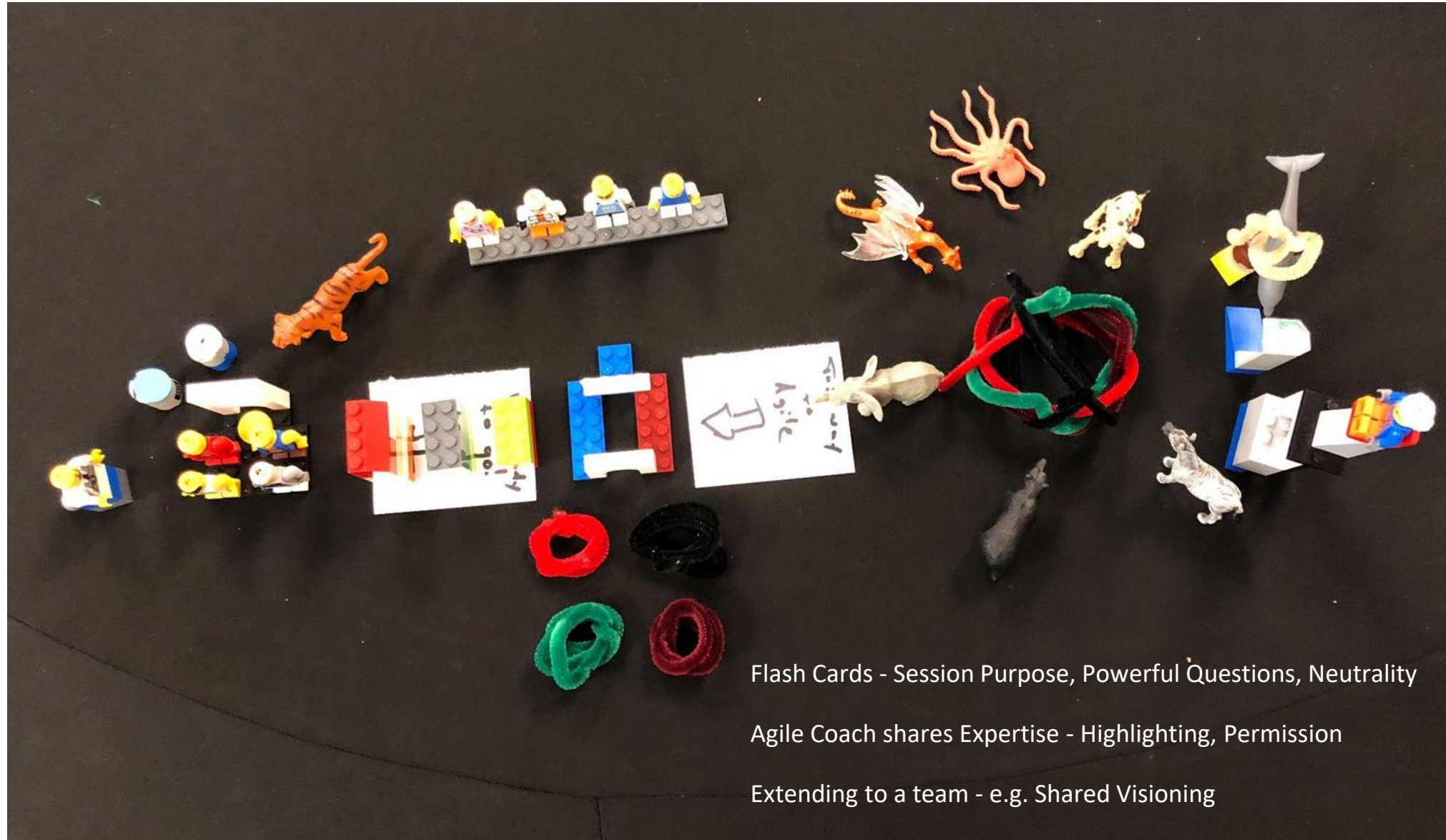
2) Each pair shares their one take-away with the table

10 min

3) As an individual, consider what you'll do as a result of the activity

2 min

Shared Visioning

Flash Cards - Session Purpose, Powerful Questions, Neutrality

Agile Coach shares Expertise - Highlighting, Permission

Extending to a team - e.g. Shared Visioning

To Encourage Autonomy

🙁 Instead of …

🙂 Try this…

- **Continuing / Stopping -** deciding when to continue or stop exploring, e.g., "What else?" or "Tell me more."

- **Progress Checks -** giving choice about further exploration to those doing the exploring. e.g., "How do you feel about where we are?"

Activity
Shared Visioning

Shared Visioning - Instructions

1. Split into groups, no more than 5 per group
2. As an individual, craft a vision of a team health check using any combination of:
   - Words and/or drawing on paper
   - Pipe cleaners
   - Legos

   5 min

3. Each person will take 1-2 minutes to explain their health check
4. As a group, craft a shared vision of a health check that you all agree on

   15 min

5. Periodically check progress toward agreement using fist-of-five, aiming for all 4s and 5s.

Shared Visioning – Debriefing

1. In a pair, discuss your takeaways and choose 1 to share out

   5 min

2. Each pair shares their one take-away with the table

   10 min

3. As an individual, consider what you'll do as a result of the activity

   2 min

A Few More Ways To Encourage Autonomy

☹ Instead of …

🙂 Try this…

- **Paraphrasing -** expressing what others said with different words or metaphors can lead to unintentional misinterpretation or perceived judgements

- **Interrupting Thoughts -** stopping others' thought process

- **Assigning Accountability -** asking something like "how about I check in with you in a couple of weeks?"

- **Reiterating -** using others' words, word for word, either in whole or in part

- **Noticing Attention -** supporting others in finishing their internal thought process by waiting for them to finish speaking **and** for their attention to return to you

- **Inviting Accountability -** inviting others to explore how they want to keep themselves accountable

How do the exercises link to encouraging choice?

Stomping on Choice	Encouraging Choice	Flash Card	Sharing Expertise	Shared vision
Choosing/Changing Topic	Session Purpose	X	X	
Bias/Preference	Neutrality	X	X	X
Using your problem solving skills	Powerful Questions	X	X	X
Ignoring Options	Highlighting		X	X
Unsolicited Advice	Permission	X	X	
Continuing/Stopping	Progress Checks	X		X
Assigning Accountability	Inviting Accountability	X		
Paraphrasing	Reiterating			
Interrupting Thinking	Noticing When Attention Comes Back			

In Summary...It's Your Choice!

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Agile Coaching

Sharing Expertise: https://app.mural.co/template/7c2a3a1f-4476-48c6-85e8-f3bfc57fe175/640eaba4-c8b4-4ded-8546-c27bf88b7f9d
Shared Visioning: https://app.mural.co/template/0c164805-7936-45d5-98e4-118fb4f0136c/3b0570a0-fb38-4fe5-a614-f23c3b76699a