



TDD, The Mob & The Introvert

A DISCUSSION OF THE GROUP DYNAMICS OF TDD PROGRAMMING MOBS WITH INTROVERTS

Mob Programming

- ▶ One of the central disciplines of TDD and Extreme Programming
- ▶ Brings the knowledge and expertise of the group to the task
- ▶ Encourages brainstorming refinements
- ▶ Provides fast feedback and ensures standards are met
- ▶ Allows continuous learning
- ▶ BUT some find it less natural and more of a challenge to work within a group than others – particularly those that tend towards an introvert nature

What is an introvert?

- ▶ Q: How much does the average introvert weigh?
A: Not enough to break the ice.
- ▶ Q: What is a group of introverts called?
A: An oxymoron.
- ▶ Q: How do you spot an introvert in a crowd?
A: You don't



Introversion is a personality type

- ▶ Introversion is a basic personality style characterized by a preference for the inner life of the mind over the outer world of other people.
- ▶ Introversion is at the opposite end of the scale to extroversion – most people will fit somewhere on the scale between the two. Many people will share traits with both.
- ▶ Introverts tend to turn to their own minds to recharge, while extroverts seek out other people for their energy needs.
- ▶ Introversion is not shyness. Those who are shy typically want to engage with others but are fearful of doing so. They are highly self-conscious and easily inhibited by others. Many introverts, on the other hand, socialize easily; they just strongly prefer to do so in very small groups or, sometimes, not at all.

Sometimes, the
only way



I can recharge



is by doing nothing at all.



Traits of an introvert

- ▶ Need time to themselves
- ▶ Socializing/interacting with others is draining
- ▶ Enjoy working alone
- ▶ Don't like to be the centre of attention
- ▶ Prefer a close circle of friends
- ▶ Think before talking
- ▶ Find it difficult to concisely express thoughts
- ▶ Prefer writing over talking
- ▶ Can become absorbed in thoughts and ideas



Introverts & Mobs

- ▶ Working in groups can be very draining
- ▶ Can take time to become comfortable with new people or situations
- ▶ Navigating puts them in the spotlight where they would naturally prefer not to be
- ▶ Typically not the best at thinking on their feet and like to think before speaking
- ▶ Tend to express themselves less forcefully
- ▶ May appear to be less engaged but in reality are engaged but just thinking or reasoning out ideas



How can we best accommodate introverts in the mob?

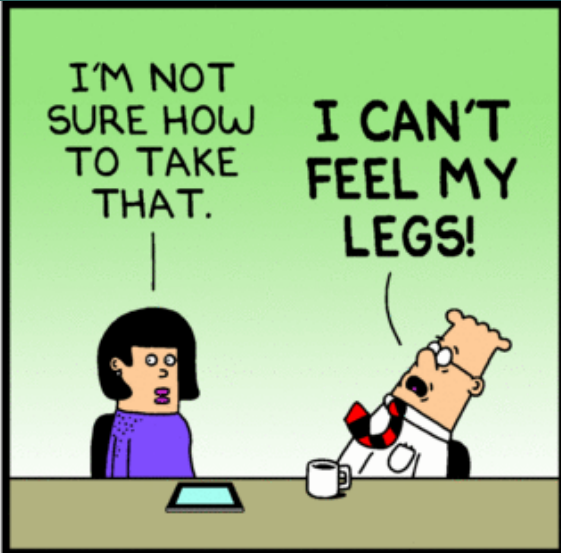
- ▶ Becoming familiar with how they think and express themselves and allow them the space to do so
- ▶ Take regular breaks – don't skip them
- ▶ Don't interrupt or talk over them (or anyone)
- ▶ When they are navigating, don't go over their heads and tell the driver what to do directly
- ▶ Adhere to psychological safety: “a shared expectation held by members of a team that teammates will not embarrass, reject, or punish them for sharing ideas, taking risks, or soliciting feedback”



Dilbert.com DilbertCartoonist@gmail.com



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Conclusions

- ▶ Introversions is a personality trait – it can't be wished away by trying harder to be more extrovert.
- ▶ There is an onus on both the introvert to be stretched and move outside of their comfort zone AND on the mob to accommodate all participants
- ▶ Introverts are very able to be productive members of the mob. A little understanding and accommodation from the mob will help them with this greatly.

Questions?



Thanks for listening!

Alan Alford

alan.alford@fdbhealth.co.uk

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