



BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND AGILE MANAGEMENT

AUDIO TRANSCRIPT

Speaker 1 (00:00):

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Chris Murman (00:20):

Welcome to another edition of Agile Amped. I am your host, Chris Murman, and we're podcasting on Thursday at Agile 2019, in Washington DC. Final day, so we're going to end on a final full day, I guess, there's stuff tomorrow, but usually people fly home in the morning. So I am joined by Chris Phillipson. Chris, welcome, thanks for coming.

Chris Phillipson (00:43):

Thanks for having me, appreciate it.

Chris Murman (00:44):

Yeah. As a fellow Chris, you clearly were named because you're the talented and best looking in your family. So it's good that we have that in common.

Chris Phillipson (00:53):

It's good that I'm an only child then too.

Chris Murman (00:55):

Oh, even better, even better. Wow. So they said, "Look, this is the best we can do, let's give him the best name and then we'll move on."

Chris Phillipson (01:04):

"We'll just end it here."

Chris Murman (01:05):

Yeah, yeah, exactly, exactly. Did you grow up with 7,000 Chris's in school and such?

Chris Phillipson (01:11):

My best friend growing up was Chris, now I'm Christian and he was a Christopher, but everyone called us Chris squared and I hated that. So it just went last name at that point, I was Phil, he was Cole. That's how they told us apart, yeah.

Chris Murman (01:27):

They didn't even use your ... they shortened your last name. Wow. Yeah. I've been called Murman since forever.

Chris Phillipson (01:34):

So the names lend themselves to that.

Chris Murman (01:36):

Yeah. Yeah. I get that. So Phil, Chris, okay now I have it in my head, stop calling him Phil. So Chris, what do you want the audience to know about you?

Chris Phillipson (01:47):

Sure. So I am an agile coach, a scrum master, titles don't really matter, I call myself an agilist. I just like thinking this way, I like helping people think this way. I work for a consulting company, Insight. The part of Insight I work for is called Digital Innovation, so we have a whole agile wing and a software development wing, big partners with Microsoft, that sort of stuff. A lot of stuff we do, as the agile group, we go into clients, we work with them on transformations, we work with them on adoptions, really mindset



changes. We partner with scrum.org, very closely. We have several PSTs, professional scrum trainers on staff. So that's who we align with as far as a framework goes, but obviously you go to a client and we will do whatever's best for the client and help them deliver the way they want to deliver and change those mindsets. Our goal is to go to a client, change those mindsets, make things happen and then we'll pull back once their agile community at the client is up, sustained and fulfilled and we will move out.

Chris Murman (02:51):

Yeah. So you're dealing with with internal work, so your own team, as well as working with client teams as well?

Chris Phillipson (03:00):

Sure. So we do get a lot of work in house and then, we have an agile advisory services group at our ... I'm in the Columbus office, from Columbus, Ohio. Every office has their own agile advisory service group, so we have our own work there. I focus a lot of time on the client, helping them do what they need to do and I work at an enterprise level, so I have an area set of teams and then I work with a lot of leaders, helping leaders get their backlog put through and work together better, I guess you could say.

Chris Murman (03:33):

Okay. So you spoke yesterday, the title of your session was a playbook for an agile manager. I can imagine with a title like that, there was a lot of interest in putting those two words, agile and manager together, right?

Chris Phillipson (03:50):

Yeah. Yeah. And actually I chose playbook as the mental model that gives you that because when people are managers and they come from traditional organizations, they know their traditional terms. So playbook, good traditional term, it's a bit eye-catching.

Chris Murman (04:05):

I will say that the word playbook is a trigger for me right now, because where I'm at right now I'm

having to generate a lot of playbooks kind of a thing. So you took three words that almost seemed to butt heads-

Chris Phillipson (04:22):

They shouldn't be in a sentence together, right?

Chris Murman (04:25):

Yeah. Playbook, manager, agile, what? That would have been a better, that would have been just as like ... if you'd have just been playbook, agile, manager, what, I would have shown up in a heartbeat.

Chris Phillipson (04:37):

I'll remember that for next time.

Chris Murman (04:38):

Yeah, yeah, yeah, exactly. So what first drew you to the topic of management in an agile environment?

Chris Phillipson (04:48):

That's a great question. So I have been a manager in an agile environment, I've been a manager in a traditional environment. I grew up like most people in a very traditional company, it was a fortune 15 massive company. Thousands of people in IT, very top down hierarchical, the culture was very negative. A lot of cursing, a lot of yelling, a lot of blaming, grenade chucking, if you will, it was not passive aggressive, it was aggressive, aggressive. But that's where I started, so I thought that's how work was. And I grew into a leader, I was handpicked and groomed to become a supervisor, then a manager and I was a manager for three or four years in this company. And I just thought, "It's got to be better than this. It has to be." So I left, went into consulting, a group called Cardinal Solutions Group, that became Insight this past year.

Chris Phillipson (05:46):

Broke into agile. My heart opened up, I knew this was the way to work, but things like, changing that mindset doesn't happen overnight. So it took a couple years. I was a scrum master, I took all the scrum training, got my certifications and then



I hired in to a client, another fortune 50 client, in management, it was an agile organization, but a totally different type of culture. And it was very passive aggressive there, a lot of politics and they started moving toward a prescribed agile framework. It was a hybrid of lean and waterfall and scrum. I know. And as a manager there, I lost a lot of my influence and I really became a technical product manager, if you will. And I didn't have time for my people anymore and all the things that you love about management, the people, I was taken away basically.

Chris Phillipson (06:37):

So I said, "Yeah, no, thanks. Let's go back into consulting and really dive into the coaching world and helping leaders be better, helping managers understand their fit in an agile organization." So that is what drew me to the topic because I was that, I learned that, it took years to get to where I thought people should be. And now I want to share that information and empower those leaders with the right way to do things and find their fit.

Chris Murman (07:03):

Yeah. So you didn't say any words to give this away, but as I hear you describing your journey as a manager, it sounded like you hated your work. You didn't like it, there was a lot of pain involved, you started with pain. So this subject, this topic, this title, was born out of a lot of wounds and hurts. So as you stepped away from that, I don't know if I'm making that up.

Chris Phillipson (07:30):

You were you were right on, I hadn't thought of it that way. So you are opening my eyes right now, Chris. This is awesome.

Chris Murman (07:36):

Well, thank you. So how long did it take you to, and I only say this because I've talked to folks, one of my favorite conversations I've had with Lisa Adkins was how she started out as a project manager and she was not happy with herself when she realized the things that she was doing

to be successful as a project manager or a manager in general. So what did you do or how long did it take to get out of that rut that you were in.

Chris Phillipson (08:05):

It's hard because that's your life, that's your job and your career at that time. So in the original company, I knew I was unhappy, but I didn't know what else was out there. So it took a leap of faith to quit that because you're on the path there, you care about things like status and title and I had it in the future, director and vice president, it was there, the corner office and the window and the money and the bonuses and the status was all there, but I was so unhappy that I had to figure out something and make a change. And that's when I took that leap of faith and went in consulting. The second time around where I was a leader in an agile organization, I still was unhappy, but I thought, "This is what you need to do. You need to break that jail that your mind is in."

Chris Phillipson (08:51):

And for me, the trigger was literally an individual performance review, where I had been rewarded for things the previous year, I had moved into a different organization, all the politics were different, very passive aggressive, I didn't have the same backing that I would have had before. And I had a performance review that was all wrong and it was truly a trigger. And I just said, "This can't happen anymore." And that's when I woke up, got woke and I realized that I wasn't able to focus on the things I truly loved about being a leader. So it took years to get there. Her story sounds familiar, different role, but very familiar. I wasn't happy with the things I was doing, I didn't get to spend time with my people.

Chris Phillipson (09:41):

Hiring was taken out of my hands, so I couldn't bring the right people in that aligned with the cultural values that I wanted for my group and everything was, I don't know, dictated to me, it



was all prescribed. So that's when you break out of it and you're like, "I have to get out of this politics and all the baggage that's happening here and go and be happy." And that's when went back into consulting. And the nice thing about getting into this consulting role was they've given me a lot of liberty with the background I have and the knowledge I have, to carve a niche out. So obviously you go to a client, you start working with a client and I made my way through this client. I've actually been with the same client for three years, but I've had so many different experiences and I've been able to impact so many different people, that it's kept it very fresh and interesting. And I feel very rewarded because of the opportunities and the empowerment that I've been afforded.

Chris Murman (10:35):

That's really cool. So you said that the review was wrong. What was wrong about that individual performance review?

Chris Phillipson (10:42):

So I mean, to get into some of the details, there's an engagement survey that those employees take and there were negative scores that I had from a group that I inherited. So I took over a job, they took the survey in my first month and it was all really reflective of the predecessor, but I got saddled with that. I like to empower people with knowledge, I like to give people the opportunity to do their job, amazing that, right?

Chris Murman (11:11):

Sure.

Chris Phillipson (11:12):

And because I wasn't dictating the work and micro-managing like they wanted their managers to do, I got called out for not knowing exactly what was going on in my group, which was not true, it just didn't feel right. So it was things like that that led to a bad rating and a bad bonus and I thought, "I'm doing all the things I did last year, in a different management role." I was roundly rewarded for those things. We built an amazing

group. In that role, our quality was terrible. I think we were averaging eight and a half defects per thousand hours of coding, some weird metric that they were using at the time. And by the end of the year, we were less than a half of a defect for that same type of work. We brought in a lot of technical practices that helped our agile teams. It was great, it was total empowerment and it was an environment where people wanted to come and work. And then I did the same thing in a different role, it was as an app dev management role, different group, different politics and it didn't work for them.

Chris Murman (12:15):

That tells me, I mean, that says probably a ton more things, but excuse me, the two things that stood out just there, is that A, there's a lot of legacy crap built up. Even if you've been in the same area for years and years, there's legacy stuff that was before you came in, this is never anyone's first job. I mean, we do get some people, I haven't been with college grads in a long time, but I know they're still entering this business. But for the most part, you're bringing in some baggage from another company, from another way of ... you talked about that first company, you didn't know any better, so you brought in some baggage. Everybody's bringing in baggage or that area had some baggage before you took over and we're saddled with that as a leader. The other thing is just that, that it's just pure luck.

Chris Murman (13:17):

You and I were talking before, that sometimes as a coach, you can say the same things, do the same things, we know we're being consistent in our practices and consistent is relative because every client and every situation is unique, but we can stay consistent, but because of the environment that we're set up in, it's so random about how successful that we are seen and our careers based off of people thinking that we're successful and oftentimes it's just dumb luck. You know what I mean?



Chris Phillipson (13:51):

So sometimes influence is luck, sometimes it's personality match and what you have to offer doesn't work, for some it's style, makes a big difference, so your style might not work. My style was not working in that group and unfortunately it led to a real consequence, consequence for them because I said, "Yeah, no, thanks. We'll see you later. No, thank you." And then there's been an exodus from there, so I know that the culture has really gone downhill. And when we even talked to people that come from there, the baggage they bring in, in the interview, is so evident and you have to decide if those people are going to be able to break out of that mindset that they had there and that baggage, or if they're going to be stuck in that forever.

Chris Murman (14:37):

Yeah, it's so funny, I used to work for a consulting firm, that if they knew they were going to have a challenge with a client, they'd send a consultant in and they'd be the hard ass about it. They'd come in and thunder away and you've got problems, challenges, whatever kind of a thing and then you make the client angry, you get them out of there and you bring someone else in and they go, "Oh yeah, you're right. He was harsh, but he did have some good points."

Chris Phillipson (15:12):

"Now that I think about it, I didn't want to like him, but he was right, but you're saying this and I like you more so I'll do it."

Chris Murman (15:19):

"He had some points, so maybe we can try some of them." Kind of a thing. It's the dirty secret of consulting, that sometimes you swap out just to reinforce the same message, just with a different voice. And it's not cool because if you have multiple coaches in an organization, I know some orgs that they just keep going from coach, to coach, to coach, until they get the answer they want, because we're not going to say the exact same thing, the exact same way. So, "Well, I like how they said it, so I like them better."

Chris Phillipson (15:50):

Yeah. And that's not fair to us. So I'm currently in, my client now is an organization where my company has, I don't know, six to eight coaches and that stuff does happen. A colleague of mine will say a message over and over with leaders and they won't hear it, they don't want to hear it. Then I'll come in or another colleague comes in and all of a sudden they like it or like you say, they'll go around the carousel because they know us all and they'll get the answer they want. And they say, "Well, he said this, so I'm going to do it this way." And it's a little contradictory sometimes, you don't know what you're talking about.

Chris Murman (16:23):

And there's probably ways around it, we could probably reinforce the, "Hey look, you need to stick to ... this is your coach of record." So to speak. But that seems really rigid and that's a slippery slope to go down as an industry and I don't know that I really sign up for that. I mean, I'm helping, I'm not the only one, but I'm helping lead a group of coaches at a client right now and I really struggle with that every day. So at your current client, are you leading this, are you all just an equal collective?

Chris Phillipson (16:58):

We try and be democratic about it. Some of us are a little more senior than others, so in that case, people come to me or come to one or two others. But I think the way we handle it is we stay very tight as a group, it's not us versus the client because we are all in it together and our goal is to build a great agile community and have that sustained by the employees at the end of the day. The way we handle it as a group of coaches is we stay very tight, so we use Microsoft Teams, it's a chat channel and we always are on there, we're running ideas by each other. I think our goal is to truly be on the same page and have a message that is similar for the overall mindset and the overall changes we'd like the client to make.



Chris Phillipson (17:48):

And we also have, we call them strategic alignment meetings, but once a month, we get everyone from Insight, at our client together, so that we can go over those higher level messages to make sure everyone is on the same page. And we're very supportive, so there's no reason for one of our coaches or one of our scrum masters to have a different message. Because if they have a different idea, we listen to it and we're all very supportive of each other, so it's like a family that way. That's how we handle it, we don't have a top leader.

Chris Phillipson (18:21):

I know we were talking earlier about how do you coach coaches, how do you manage coaches? In our case, it's a collective group and we empower each other and we support each other, so that we know it's the best thing for all of us to be on the same page. If we're fighting each other, then it's just bad for all of us because right now, our livelihoods depend on it. We're at this client, we need to keep this engagement going, we want them to be successful and that makes us look good too. So that's why we're all in it together and we all share that message and we make sure that we align to that several different ways.

Chris Murman (18:56):

Yeah. You mentioned that on your team, you may be more senior than others or whatever, so maybe it's less management and just more mentoring each other. And mentoring does not mean that a first time, a brand new coach can't mentor someone else because we all have a perspective, we all have a take that can ... So maybe it's about less coaching each other because we think that coaching, if we say, "I'm coaching." That's elevating my words more than ... But you and I both know that coaching is really, I mean, there's so many aspects of it. So maybe it's mentoring each other through different areas of expertise or experience, whether it's framework or with a particular industry.

Chris Phillipson (19:42):

What do you do in this situation with this type of person, resisters and things like that. Again, we really support each other and I think what we have is that the keyword, the buzzword is psychological safety. We have proven to each other that you can ask me a question, I can ask you a question, I need help and we can go to anybody and we're able to ... no question is bad, there's no situation that's a negative. You're in trouble, you need help, or you want to run some ideas past somebody, we are all there for each other and we've proven that to each other. So the trust is built and that safety is there so that there's never any consequences for anything and that's within this coaching group. So that's one really important aspect to how we support each other, is to have that trust and safety and comfort with each other.

Chris Murman (20:34):

Yeah. The other half of that is, the half that you just mentioned is, "I could use some help or I have a question." Which A, takes tremendous humility, and we don't ask enough questions in this industry anymore. We're too busy with having answers, that we should be focused on questions and questioning ourselves and our approach kind of a thing. The other half is, I see something that someone else has done and I feel like I would be doing them a disservice if I didn't say something. So it's the other F word, which is feedback. So what's your take on as your collective group feedback because that's actively, you have to take something to someone else and that they may not necessarily see. You know what I mean?

Chris Phillipson (21:25):

Sure. So we've actually talked about this and come to an agreement on how we will handle feedback with each other. And the way we do it is we ask to give feedback. So Chris, if I see something that you did with a team or I was in a meeting and you said something that I didn't quite understand or agree with, later on I'll ask, "Chris, can I give you some feedback of



something I saw? Will you accept that?" And if you say, no, you may be in the wrong frame of mind to accept that, but most of the time people say yes. But if you give the invitation of feedback, then that means you are accepting of whatever I have to tell you. And again, with the psychological safety, we know that whatever we have to tell each other, should be constructive and helpful, to make you better. So that's how we handle it, we ask that invitation.

Chris Murman (22:13):

You know what's interesting? It could also be communication style, I don't have a good track record of starting with the sentence, can I give you good feedback or can I give you some feedback? I always try to, "Hey, can I ask you about a situation or, hey, we were on this call yesterday, can I ask some questions about it?" And usually I've found that that sets them at a bit better because my experiences is ... so you talked about your previous wounds, I'll share you some of mine. So back when I was a project manager at a digital studio, when a boss would say, "Can I give you some feedback?" I always knew it was going to be bad.

Chris Murman (23:00):

We did not have an environment where we gave positive in the moment feedback, or, "Hey, can I give you some feedback? You did awesome there." It never, ever, ever, ever happens that way. And so when you start the sentence that way, I just naturally trigger, it's like when you said the word playbook early. It's a trigger of like, "I'm about to get yelled at, or am I going to get let go from this client? Am I getting let go period?" That's that ugh feeling. But that's my personal journey, maybe not everybody has that.

Chris Phillipson (23:32):

So you definitely did not have psychological safety at the digital studio.

Chris Murman (23:35):

No. Well what's funny is, in that sense I didn't with maybe my boss, but if it was a peer sitting

down to give me safety, I never worried about it. I'm like, "Oh yeah, cool." So it probably helps that none of you are bosses or managers or whatever.

Chris Phillipson (23:52):

Right. And then to add on to what you're saying, there is positive feedback that comes the same way, but we still are in a habit, we forced ourselves to be in a habit of asking the invitation. But I've done that plenty of times, "Chris, can I give you some feedback? You're doing great on this podcast as a host and asking really good questions. Thank you."

Chris Murman (24:13):

Kissing up to me is not going to make your editing process go any better. I can't guarantee this is going to sound good or that your ratings are going to be well, just kidding. Thank you for that. But it's just part of this journey of, we all have something. I think we're playing with this idea of, we've all got things that can be said, or not said, that put us in a negative stance, a lean back stance. And in our industry, we can't lean back, we have to be always moving forward, pressing in, being curious. And if you are on your heels, you're not going to be curious. You know what I mean?

Chris Phillipson (24:56):

Yeah. So where I see this going is, as coaches, we have to be forward, like you're saying, we have to see what's next, we have to help people with the next step or see strategically the big picture and see the future. As we were talking, I was thinking about something else, familiar with liberating structures?

Chris Murman (25:18):

Yeah.

Chris Phillipson (25:19):

So the proper way to initiate a liberating structure with a group, is to give a very formal invitation, including the directions. And I've seen a lot of "coaches" try and use liberating



structures, but aren't clear on the instructions in that invitation. And that is almost as important to a true liberating structure as the structure itself and the conversation that ensues. So that is an example of how a coach needs to be, to be successful in our industry. I think everything, even feedback, a structure, a brainstorming session, a training session, even a hard conversation with a leader, I think we have to be forward and very formal with, "This is what's going to happen." We have to radiate our intent.

Chris Phillipson (26:07):

So, "I intend to have a discussion with you about some things I've seen in your leadership style and how that's impacting your team members. I intend to give you ... can I give you some feedback? Will you accept some feedback that I have for you?" So I intend to give you feedback without saying the word I intend, but you're radiating your intent. So as a coach, you are being forward and transparent with what you intend to do, so that people can set their expectations for that moment and be ready for that conversation. I think that's something that we can be very successful with as coaches, the more you radiate that intent.

Chris Murman (26:43):

Yeah. I'm having a mini explosion in my mind right now, because as experienced as we get, or as we get more experienced in doing this, sometimes the previous podcasts that I just recorded, they were talking about how they had success in teams and then they got complacent. I don't want to say lazy, but complacent and stopped leaning in, in particular areas. And so maybe the more experience we get, the less formalized we remember that we're supposed to be in. So what you're talking about is that intent based coaching of, "I'm intending to get this out of the situation and so I'm going to facilitate a conversation where we talk about this feature or we go through this particular retrospective item, or we're going to problem solve on this. My hopeful outcome is X, Y, Z, or whatever."

Chris Phillipson (27:41):

You're also giving focus when you do that, so that you can have a focused, efficient conversation and you're not going off on tangents and topics. That's why I like that. And actually, so this whole idea, and I didn't realize our conversation was going to go down this hole, but this whole idea, this radiate intent, that's newer to me, it's something I've done maybe on and off, or you forget about some of the formality, but as we're coaches, we tell people they should be constantly learning and have that growth mindset. I had a colleague who brought radiate intent idea to me about a month ago and I realized how important and powerful that could be.

Chris Phillipson (28:16):

So now I've been talking about it and I've been doing it, I've been trying to practice it. And it was about the same time that I was in a training with a professional scrum trainer about liberating structures and he was radiating that intent with that invitation and the structure and it all made sense to me and it all made my job as a coach at my client, that much easier because all those conversations could be much more focused than they were before.

Chris Murman (28:37):

Well, remember when we were just, I was going to say lowly, joking, but I don't want any scrum master to feel like that's a lowly position. It's a very, very important position. But we were a single scrum master on a single team, did you have that experience?

Chris Phillipson (28:51):

Oh absolutely.

Chris Murman (28:52):

Yeah. When I was a single scrum master on a single team, I was intent based with my work. I would say, "Let's have stand up. We're going to spend the next 15 minutes going through what we're planning on doing today. How are we going to move our work from here to here? How are we going to get done on things? Hey, this is a retrospective." And because we were newer, we had to give that intent because-



Chris Phillipson (29:14):

You're using the framework as your structure and your intent.

Chris Murman (29:16):

Yeah. And that's the beauty about ... as much as I love to trash frameworks these days, because they're all great, then they all suck. Just like every agile tool is great and then they all suck. But when we use the intent of the framework, it's easy to lean on, on that as our-

Chris Phillipson (29:35):

Sure, that's your crutch.

Chris Murman (29:36):

As our structure. But when you get more free flowing and you get more holistic, you mentioned working at like the enterprise level, you move up and up and up, you have to get more strategic. There's not a framework for that. There's not a this for that, there's not that for that, there's nothing in that. You're on your own, flying blind and you don't have to go, "Well, I haven't thought about the intent." Well, if you haven't thought about the intent before you walk into that meeting, that workshop or whatever, you are hosed. You are absolutely hosed and you will not succeed.

Chris Phillipson (30:10):

You can't wing it. You cannot wing it at the executive level.

Chris Murman (30:13):

No. Or even at the portfolio level or the program level. You can't really wing anything. We were talking about some improv stuff that we've seen, people think that improv is just people standing up and talking and yada, yada. There's no such thing. In fact, the more unrehearsed and the more free flowing it seems, the more practice they've actually had.

Chris Phillipson (30:45):

There is a structure behind it.

Chris Murman (30:47):

Yeah. The more coaches feel like they just stand up in front of teams and just have fun. And I like to pride myself that when I do training classes, that people enjoy themselves because I think training is really, really boring and so I'm like, "If they're going to pay to be in the room with me, we might as well have fun. I'm going to have fun, so I hope you do too." But people think that, "Man, you just let it fly up there. You're not even reading slides." I'm like, "Well, because I know what the slides say, I've practiced. I know this stuff, I've run through this." I've really had to work on seemingly like I don't know what I'm doing, I'm just up here having fun.

Chris Murman (31:26):

Man, I'm really glad we stumbled on this topic because I mean, I hope you all in the audience are learning something because I know I have. We need to get back to what is my intent of this one session, this one call, this one workshop, this one whatever. So you mentioned radiating it, we can radiate it by stating intent, but there's probably other ways to radiate that intent without having to go, "I'm going to tell you this and you need to know this." There's probably lots of radiators, right?

Chris Phillipson (31:58):

Sure. I mean, there's written radiators, come to my space and you'll see I've organized my day and who I'm talking to. And you come, we know we're going to talk about X topic, so that's almost set ahead of time. And you also radiate intent with your past actions. So you come to me, you know that I'm going to be prepared for whatever we're going to talk about now. Even though I prepared differently for this conversation, like you said, this has gone in a direction that's been awesome. And it's made me realize and bring out some things that I've been doing recently, that have been very successful and hopefully other people can get those ideas too and share that. Like you said, there's past actions, you know what to expect from me, consistency is radiating intent, that sort of stuff.



Chris Phillipson ([32:52](#)):

I was in a great session earlier this week about how you stay present and have a presence and stay grounded. And one of the exercises was work at the table and talk to people, "How have you been more present this year? How have you been able to improve that?" And one of the things that I've done, was something I used to do, and I got away from last year and I didn't have a great year last year in terms of where I felt I was personally in my career and part of it was, I just wasn't organized enough. So I realized that how I've had a better year this year was I came in January and I was very clear about basically radiating my intent, without realizing it, for the day. I come in, I make a list, I always kept a list of the big things I need to do, but every single day I have a list.

Chris Phillipson ([33:38](#)):

I prioritize that, I am the product owner of my own day and I'll write all the things down that I want to do and if I don't get to everything, well, that was my sprint one day and what goals did I meet and how was I going to work toward those goals. And it's not that formal obviously, it's a sticky note that I write some stuff down, but it's really worked and I have been very, very productive this year as compared to the last one or two years and happier. I'm much happier because I've gotten further along with my client, with my own personal work, even family stuff, because I've been able to radiate intent to myself and then stick to that daily plan for those goals. Sounds so nerdy and dorky when I put it that way, but it's been so helpful and it's the same idea.

Chris Murman ([34:25](#)):

Yeah. It's funny you say grounded because I've spent a lot of the last year focusing on grounding myself more and you have to figure out what you're going to ground yourself in first. But once you figure out what that is, then you have to take intentional steps towards acknowledging, you have to know where you are in order to grant yourself permission to be there, because you

have to give yourself permission to be wherever you are, but you can't do that until you know yourself. I had a new coach start on my team this year and we got on the topic of how we show up for our client every day. He wasn't quite sure what I meant by that and I said, "How you're radiating as a person, how you're feeling that day, maybe you slept bad the night before, maybe your allergies are bothering you or something's weighing on your mind. Well, that can affect how you show up for your teams, your client, your whatever, every day, whoever you have to show up for you, it affects."

Chris Murman ([35:30](#)):

So I encouraged him, he always had a notebook with him wherever he'd go. I encouraged him to start his day, the first five minutes of your day and just say, "Write down how are you showing up today." It doesn't matter what it is, you don't have to say, "I'm awesome today." Because if you say you're awesome and you're not, then you're fooling yourself. But if you can be honest with yourself and saying, "Man, well physically I'm okay, mentally, I've got this on my mind and in my heart, this is weighing in on me." If you know that, then you're able to acknowledge it before you ever get on any call, before you ever step in front of anybody. You don't have to tell them that you're showing up that way, but you can be more aware of your mindset behind any coaching you do because it's going to affect it.

Chris Phillipson ([36:19](#)):

So what you said just popped in my mind, it's self awareness. You're coaching him in self awareness and that allows him to be grounded and truthful with himself on how is he going to be that day. So if he's self aware that he's grumpy or didn't sleep well or feels good, any of that can change once you're self aware and you can put yourself back in the mindset of, "I need to go and be a coach today and here's the things I need to talk about." So sure, I'm grumpy, maybe I'll take 10 extra minutes, maybe I'll have an extra cup of coffee, something, but you've taught him self awareness and he can now be a better person that day. That's awesome.



Chris Murman (37:01):

And using your tool of radiating, like him writing it down is radiating that information. There's not necessarily intent based upon it, but he can weave it into his intent. So maybe taking your idea of you're product owner of your day, take how you show up, your present state, combine it with your there and say, "All right, now I can prioritize my backlog of ... I need to meditate for 10 minutes before I get on this call or I need to go for a walk at lunchtime today. Or man, I need to eat a salad for lunch because I ate like craft the night before." Or whatever. For the record, it's Thursday here at Agile 2019, a lot of us need to be eating salads today. You know what I mean? We just need to be doing that.

Chris Murman (37:47):

Wow, we've been going on a while. I feel like this is a topic that we need to talk about again sometime Chris. We intended to talk about your session about how to be an agile manager, but what we really did was discover how are we managing ourselves in this world and how do we help each other in the coaching space, in the agile space, show up better for our teams and our people and our clients. And man, this has been a great talk.

Chris Phillipson (38:17):

I agree. This was a lot of fun.

Chris Murman (38:20):

Yeah. Let's record another podcast and we can talk about your session again next time.

Chris Phillipson (38:24):

All right man, that sounds great.

Chris Murman (38:27):

So this has been another episode of Agile Amped. I'd like to thank Chris Phillipson or Phillip, for showing up for us with some amazing content and ideas. He's challenged me to think a lot. I will say, if you enjoyed this podcast, please share this with someone else, subscribe, share it on your social media platforms. I guarantee this

is a topic that someone you know needs to hear. So please do so and reach out to the dual Chris ... what did you call it, Chris squared?

Chris Phillipson (39:01):

Chris squared, yeah.

Chris Murman (39:02):

All right. So reach out to Chris squared and we will be happy to talk to you on that. So I am Chris Murman and we are signing off.

Speaker 1 (39:11):

Thanks for listening to Agile Amped. Find more inspiring conversations at agileamped.com, iTunes and your favorite podcast app. If you have an idea for a topic or feedback on an episode, reach out to us on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, or send an email to Agile Amped at accenture.com.

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