



DIRTY TRUTH OF SCALING

AUDIO TRANSCRIPT

Speaker 1 (00:00):

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Leslie Morse (00:20):

Hello and welcome to another episode of the Agile Amped podcast series. I'm your host Leslie Morse and today we're podcasting in support of the 2019 Southern Fried Agile Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina. I'm pleased to be joined by Dave West for this conversation. He is the product owner and CEO at Scrum.org. He engages with partners in the community to drive Scrum.org strategy and the overall market position of Scrum.

Leslie Morse (00:43):

Ultimately, Dave's leading the definition of the future of what Scrum is and is building an organization to support that vision. He cares very deeply about the teams and their ability to deliver value and seek some focusing and amplifying the ability for people to deliver value just a little bit better in today's complex world. Dave, thanks so much for being here.

Dave West (01:02):

Well, thanks for inviting me. And thanks for that opening, I felt incredibly important and valuable.

Leslie Morse (01:07):

Well, you are. And I'm so excited for the session this afternoon. You're going to dig into the dirty

truths of scaling and I think it's such a tricky topic in our community, I think, as we often get wrapped up in the framework wars. And when people start talking about scaling and what's the right way to do it and the wrong way to do it and it really, I think detracts from the value that we're all seeking to create and really outcome based change within our own organizations and with the clients we support.

Dave West (01:37):

Yeah. I think that's how you said a lot of things that. And one thing one, I think all the frameworks are awesome. I don't have anything personally against any of them. I think certain ideas that they embody, apply very particular in certain situations and sometimes we sort of gloss over that. But ultimately, I think all of them come from a place of good intent.

Leslie Morse (02:00):

Yes.

Dave West (02:01):

And then that's super important. Because what I hate about, I hate these sort of wars where, "Oh no, LeSS is better than SAFe. SAFe is better than Nexus. Nexus is better than," no, it doesn't matter. I honestly don't think, I think all of them have incredibly interesting ideas and they're delivered by very passionate people who do definitely want to make a difference.

Dave West (02:21):



I just want to put that out there because I think it's too easy for us to sort of throw grenades. It's always easy to find problems. It's kind of harder to find solutions. And let's ultimately work together to do that. I want to put that out there because that's super important.

Leslie Morse (02:37):

It is. And I said it because I wanted you to respond because I thought I might get a response from you on that one, so I had to have it out there.

Dave West (02:46):

And this is what my natural sort of a desire now to drive into the industry is to come from a place of respect and kindness. I think we need to sort of drop the sort of how being smarter than each other. I think ultimately, then it's very, very ironic that many of the characteristics that the Agile community froze itself and sort of inside the community. Symbols are sort of characteristics of the industrial age of I'm being the smartest because I'm protecting my position that is ultimately that determines my wealth.

Dave West (03:23):

When actually it's the opposite you need to work with others and solve incredibly interesting problems together. And I think that if we can break down these barriers and we did it at Scrum.org bringing in the Kanban community or trying to building a bridge at least with professionals from Kanban. And we did that with a Lean UX community, which the UX design community that were a little bit anti Scrum and Agile and then continue to have their questions around it. And we're trying to build these bridges because I think it's so much more important to solve these complex problems to work together in my option.

Leslie Morse (03:56):

Absolutely, absolutely. There's so many things I want to kind of pull on there, but I know your talk is more than that. You're not talking about those kind of bridges necessarily with these dirty truths of scaling and what does that mean to you, what are those dirty truth?

Dave West (04:18):

Ultimately, that at the end of the day it's about people, at the end of the day it's about alignment, at the end of the day it's about incentives, at the end of the day it's about budgets and how things are funded, the access to capital. And at the end of the day it's about I want to say learning and those sorts of things. What I'm going to be talking about today is Southern Fried Agile, which is a fabulous conference.

Leslie Morse (04:47):

Yeah. 1250 people this year. It's amazing.

Dave West (04:49):

I know. And 1250 people that aren't separately running around, but it sort of hug each other and high five each other and it's an incredibly passionate community here. And I just want to shout out to the organizers of Southern Fried Agile because they are so awesome and much respect for them for building this community.

Dave West (05:08):

But what I'm going to be talking today about really is really emphasizing those ideas and putting them into context. I'm trying to provide very practical ways that you can when talk about people. What does that really, really mean? How do we become people centric? I was recently at a conference in Austin and what struck me the head of Detroit Energy, the CEO of Detroit Energy was talking and he told a story of inheriting an organization that was fundamentally broken.

Dave West (05:37):

And they served three and a half million people or something like that. And they're a multi billion dollar organization, obviously they're the energy in the whole sort of Michigan Detroit area. And he was telling how broken it was and how he fixed it by enabling people to actually take control of their destiny. We heard this morning at the keynote here at Southern Fried Agile David Marque, Turn the Ship Around.



Dave West (06:04):

He wrote that fabulous book about how he basically drove that down into the people in his organization, which was happened to be a nuclear submarine like pretty, pretty close together organization. We've [inaudible 00:06:17].

Leslie Morse (06:17):

Talk about co location.

Dave West (06:17):

Yeah, right. Co located and they had rockets and nuclear bombs and stuff, which is kind of high, high risk high. And he pushed down responsibility to teams. I'm going to be talking a little about that. I'm going to be talking about measurement, how you measure this to make it more successful. I'm going to be talking about really the framework for scaling agile and that those things are so much more important than the frameworks for scaling agile.

Dave West (06:44):

Those things are important. Don't get me wrong. You still need them. You need things like PI planning, which is a fantastic idea from SAFe. You need those align feature teams and the role of product ownership, et cetera, which you can get from last year. The use of things like next integration team in Nexus. All these ideas are awesome, but that the environment they live in is what I'm going to be talking about today.

Leslie Morse (07:06):

And I think one of those that I'm sort of curious about today I want to pull on the metrics thread because I think often when people talk about scaling it's, "Oh, and we've got 55 teams and 7,000 people and this and that and the other." But that's almost a byproduct of scaling in my mind. That obviously that just happens, but that's not how we need to measure the effect of scaling. And how are you really relating that to business outcomes?

Dave West (07:36):

I think that it's funny that we, and maybe this is just, maybe this is actually a product with industrial age as well, and really thought about it before. But we always start with changing process. We have some macro reason to become Agile, maybe it's to compete in additional space more effectively or whatever. And an organization then goes, "Yeah, we're going to do it. We're going to change the organization. We do squads, tribes, scales, blah, blah, blah. We're going to take SAFe. We're going to do really good Scrum training. Are we going to do all those things?"

Dave West (08:07):

And oh, hang on a minute. Why are we doing this again? Oh, we've got that high level thing, but then well, how does this all work? How do we measure it? And we do it in a waterfall fashion, it's hilarious. When really what we should do is we should start with why? We should build metrics around we've been experimented with a thing called EBM, which defines four sets of metrics. One around ultimately-

Leslie Morse (08:33):

Can you define EBM for us?

Dave West (08:36):

Evidence based management.

Leslie Morse (08:36):

Okay. Thank you. Because it can mean lots of different things.

Dave West (08:37):

Oh, I know. Acronyms are not [inaudible 00:08:37].

Leslie Morse (08:37):

Yes.

Dave West (08:42):

Sorry, I apologize. We do become acronym center. When I was an analyst I used to spend



my entire life talking acronyms and got paid lots of money for it, fabulous that was. But anyway, EBM ultimately has these four sort of categories of questions that you ask, which you then build metrics from. One is around current value sort of and that could be Promoter Score. It could be EPS, employee promoter score. It could be revenue, it could be profitability, whatever that is, which is one thing.

Dave West (09:12):

Time to market another very important how fast from idea to implementation, et cetera. Cycle time, that sort of macro cycle time that you can think about. The other thing is what is the actual opportunity out there in terms of opportunity that you can deliver against. And then the other one really which is sort of more around sort of quality and those sorts of things and innovation really.

Dave West (09:44):

The other metric really is around how much innovation are you delivering as opposed to how much quality you fixing and sort of that balance sort of model damaged technical debt. Are you driving down as opposed to how much value you're adding. We asked those questions and you incrementally build a dashboard, which then ultimately you start improving. And yes, it might not be deterministic and one thing doesn't necessarily do well, but you try things, you test things you build continuously against that.

Dave West (10:12):

Instead of stepping back and saying, "Oh, we're going to be Agile. We're going to do all this training, et cetera." You say, "No, this is what we're trying to achieve. Let's build an organization that helps us improve these things."

Leslie Morse (10:22):

It's truly outcome-based design.

Dave West (10:24):

Exactly. And we spend too much time focusing inward. We spend too much time. And that again is an industrial sort of paradigm because what

we always assumed was that... A couple of smart guys and actually just guys really have to be totally sexist back in the day would design this thing and then everybody else would implement it. And variation and variability was nothing we'd just get no, variability is everywhere in the system now.

Dave West (10:52):

Variation is our opportunity. We need to build not only do we need to build cross functional teams, but we need to build cross functional teams that are diverse that can take advantage of this variability. That can see things that we haven't seen. We need to empower teams to do that, but we need to do that in a controlled way. And that's why you need those metrics in place.

Leslie Morse (11:13):

And listening to you describe this it's almost a sense of when we really talk about scaling and scaling well. Scaling resiliency and that is so important because it's uncertainty is and that is just the world we all exist in. It's uncertainty of how the market's going to change, how regulations are going to change around us.

Leslie Morse (11:40):

And tomorrow this company that is three sectors over is now my direct competitor because they're innovating so rapidly. And if we take the promise of what Agile truly is it's about all of that environment describing to build resiliency at scale, so we can function where uncertainty is.

Dave West (12:00):

Exactly. Adaptability, agility, resilience, responsiveness, those sort of words are exactly what we're trying to do. What's interesting though, we're doing it for a reason. One thing that we've seen over and over again as well in most organizations is there's a lack of purpose.

Leslie Morse (12:17):

Dan pink has told us this for what feels like a decade now that we've been talking about it.



Dave West (12:21):

[inaudible 00:12:21]. Well, it's actually probably longer than a decade. And we've learnt it over and over again, but people still have a hard time thinking about it. Because purpose isn't just some mission statement that's very like, we'll be-

Leslie Morse (12:33):

It's not corporate propaganda on the wall.

Dave West (12:34):

It's not corporate propaganda. Purpose is actually actionable, but purpose is a direct connection to a customer, to a person, to a change.

Leslie Morse (12:44):

It's visceral. It's an essence.

Dave West (12:45):

It's an emotive type thing. And you need to be able to connect your purpose clearly to those people. And whether it's in the case of whole foods to deliver healthy products to change the eating habits of America, which was ultimately their purpose or whether it's the container store, which is I think their purpose is to inspire my children to buy more and more boxes and fill them with Lego and other amazing chotchies.

Dave West (13:13):

I'm like, "Why do we need any more boxes?" Whatever those things are, whatever that purpose is it needs to then drive that then drives into the teams, and then allow when you're responsive and you have purpose. And then of course you have to have data as well or information you have to have access, which I would call alignment and the light. Then you can do amazing things. It's funny scale is really interesting. I've had the fortunate experience of visiting lots and lots of organizations. The nature of my job is I get to potter around the world, occasionally saying one or two smart things often not.

Dave West (13:50):

But more importantly, I get to see and talk to thousands of people. And what I've seen over and over again, is purpose is more important than size over and over again. Let's look up SpaceX, they've done amazing things. And they have relatively small groups of people working together to deliver those things. Tesla have transformed the car manufacturing industry without they have got obviously a lot of people, but they took them awhile to get there. They've done some amazing, you don't need to scale. You need purpose, you need resilience as you call it or responsiveness or agility. And if you have access to do it then you can do amazing things.

Leslie Morse (14:37):

Yeah. How does that shift the way we all work with each other? If instead we're talking about scaling, Agile we're actually talking about scaling purpose.

Dave West (14:46):

It's crucial.

Leslie Morse (14:47):

Yeah. That's really, I don't want to it sounds like almost marginalizing it by putting how do we do more with less or more with the same of what we have now. But it really is I think unlocking that boundless

potential of us as humans so that we can scale purpose. And that means we have to scale consciousness and our ability to think and comprehend and go beyond, I think the ethnocentrism of my ways right in your way is wrong, but that greater consciousness of us as humans is really a calling that we have to do this work well.

Dave West (15:25):

Whoa, that's incredibly deep.

Leslie Morse (15:29):

We're gong to go there.



Dave West (15:29):

If we were in Massachusetts now I would be passing a large bomb to you, but we're not in Massachusetts that means isn't happening here. But gosh, the art of the possible, right? That's at the heart of it. And obviously I worked for Ken Schwaber the co-creator of Scrum and he tells me this story of he was working in this large organization. I'm not going to say, well, actually, I probably can Wang because I'm not sure they're still in existence. And he was working in this environment that was completely you couldn't do anything. And he got given this project and everybody was like, "[inaudible 00:16:07] never going to work it."

Dave West (16:08):

And he met this old guy and this is back in the '80s, late '70s. And this old guy said, "Let's just do this." And Ken's like, "What?" And he goes, "Let's not tell him, let's just do it." Ken goes, "No, but they want us to do this". And he goes, "Yeah, but that's not right, let's just do this." And they did something, they built this software system that managed all of their products and it turned this and got loads of data. And they took it to the management like, "Whoa, that's not what we told you to do. Whoa, how did you do that?"

Dave West (16:39):

The point is you can do and that was part of Ken's journey towards Agile where he's like you know or you can do stuff if you try, you can do things. And how many times do you walk in organizations and everybody doesn't look like they are able to do it. They don't feel, they're asking for sort of like, they're asking for the ability to do stuff. They're asking for sort of you actually can go and do that.

Dave West (17:05):

Honestly we can, but if we're aligned properly, and if we know what our purpose is, and if we've got the control and the authority to do it then we can do some amazing things. I love teams that try different things. I actually liked failure. I think failure is good because it's not failure as long as you learn something.

Leslie Morse (17:24):

Yup, absolutely. Because it's the evidence you tried something and you took a risk. And that's the only way we create new things is by trying something we've never done before.

Dave West (17:35):

Exactly. But that's very counter to the culture and the community that the entire our education system are in. You know what's really annoys time we've got a slight tangent here. Annoys me about the American education system and we see this because of the assessment model that we have at Scrum.org. I see this a lot. In England a pass is 40%. The reason why I'll be like, "Whoa, hang on a minute." And 50%-

Leslie Morse (18:03):

Yeah. I'm having a little reaction to that as an American. I'm like really 40.

Dave West (18:05):

[crosstalk 00:18:05] were in America, they're like, "No, 80, 90, 100% that's the only way." But the problem then is you have to build an education system and a series of tests that don't push. They have to be right in the middle because the people in America are not smarter than people in the United Kingdom or Germany or whatever, but the reason why that tests stretch them and they try things and they throw, and because they get a significant 40. 40 is just a pass. You want to do 50 really to do well.

Dave West (18:36):

50, 60% then that shows you, but it's about pushing the boundaries as opposed to conforming and hitting exactly that mark. And the reason why I bring that up is, I think as illustrative of this fact that there's this perfect sort of model and you have to be 100%, you have to be top peak. The whole idea of class lists with a number, I was third in my class. How does that mean?

Dave West (19:03):

In my opinion, third in your class means you were third person in when they rang the bell. But no, you've got these orders in these structures



and you've got to be number one and risk is and keep your head down and do the thing and follow the plan and oh, it drives me mad.

Leslie Morse (19:19):

I've never really thought about it this way, but it does actually promote a fixed mindset versus a growth oriented mindset.

Dave West (19:24):

Totally.

Leslie Morse (19:25):

Because that the testing it's like there is only one right answer. When in the real world, there are 50 right answers for any given thing or more.

Dave West (19:36):

Yeah, loads.

Leslie Morse (19:37):

50 is just an arbitrary number and anything truly could be done to accomplish that purpose.

Dave West (19:44):

Exactly. And our job as Agile practitioners, as leaders, as people, I'd say creators or people that help creators is to either build an environment for the high risk people to succeed, that's what scaling is. Is to build an environment where those people are in an environment, which is both psychologically safe, where there's a clear purpose, where they have the tools.

Dave West (20:08):

And that's not there are lots of challenges. Most large organizations have masses of technical debt. Masses of legacy systems which were right and have been slowly evolved until their wrong. And they've got a lot of challenges, but I know that the only way that it's going to be solved is by really smart people working together with a clear sense of purpose and the tools and the freedom to change those things.

Leslie Morse (20:40):

And I think freedom is the most important part of that.

Dave West (20:43):

Yeah.

Leslie Morse (20:44):

And talk to me some about this idea of scaling freedom within the construct. I'm not going to talk about society. That would be an interesting discussion, but really within sort of our corporate structures that idea of scaling freedom in ways so that all of this can become true.

Dave West (21:04):

I think ultimately it's about leadership. I think it's about leadership and trust. I think most of our systems are built about not trusting people to do the right thing. That doesn't mean that you can't. A fundamental thing is if you're starting to trust people, if they will get things wrong that means you have to have the ability to roll back things.

Dave West (21:29):

You have to build a relationship with your client in such a way that they don't expect perfection they expect progress. They expect value those sort of things or if perfection is part of your value proposition, then you have to build an environment that allows things to happen before it gets to that point.

Dave West (21:48):

If you're putting a probe on Mars, you kind of have to be pretty much perfect. Unfortunately, NASA was too perfect and that rover was meant to last like a couple of months and lasted like 12 years. And now everybody else is applauding that I'm saying, "I think they probably spent too much money."

Leslie Morse (22:06):

And maybe it was over engineered.

Dave West (22:08):

Maybe is a little over engineered. But I obviously, I respect those dudes they are rocket scientists after all. You have to build an environment that allows failure to happen and these, I know of [inaudible 00:22:21] he's



listening to this podcast. You've heard this a thousand times before, but what are you doing about it? This is a question to the listeners. What are you doing? How are you demonstrating that failure mode? How are you being vulnerable and saying, "Yeah, no, I don't know how many." How many times does somebody come and ask you a question that you don't know, but you give an answer to. I'm definitely guilty of that.

Leslie Morse ([22:44](#)):
Oh yeah.

Dave West ([22:45](#)):
I remember, I was an analyst and I was at Agile Chicago, 2009. And I was young, carefree before kids that is actually the code word for. But anyways, I was sitting and I was in a panel with other analysts. And this guy said to me and he goes, "Dave, what do you think?" He didn't sound at all like this, but, "Dave, what do you think of the Lean Startup and the relationship of Agile?" I had never heard of the Lean Startup. Never.

Leslie Morse ([23:18](#)):
This is going to be a good story.

Dave West ([23:19](#)):
Never heard of it. Now, I apologize Eric Ries, Steve Blank you are rock stars. I love your work. Now, I have subsequently heard of it. I know lots more about it and I've met both Steve and Eric. I had no idea at the time. Did that stop me from answering the question? Of course, it didn't. I went on and when in doubt say more, I said a lot. And I knew I really what I should, well, now I know. Maybe I knew then, but I should have just said, "I don't know. What do you think it means?"

Dave West ([23:53](#)):
That's what I should have said because the audience would have got a lot more value out of that interaction. I'd have learned something and maybe I'm the gentleman that asked the question would have said a few things that

would have kicked off some interesting counterpoints for me. Instead of that, I waffled on and the audience got this sort of rambling story around the culture of startups and what Agile was and why it's important to, it was rubbish.

Dave West ([24:20](#)):
But I couldn't admit it because I was an analyst. My job was all about telling the truth. But ultimately, my job... And this is the other thing the truth isn't knowledge, the truth is questions or the lack of knowledge. It's learning. Well, that sounded deep, didn't it? Anyway, that's sounded because I'm bold, I am a bit little bolder. And Yoshi Yoda was also bold. I think there's a bold thing going here, but the Mahatma Gandhi. [foreign language 00:24:52].

Dave West ([24:53](#)):
Sorry. No, you're totally dug it. But the point is that I don't know everything, but I need to admit when I don't. I need to be insecure. I need to be vulnerable. I need to say, "I don't know." And that's so true in working in a team delivering value. That's so true talking to customers. That's so true talking to other stakeholders, investors, et cetera.

Dave West ([25:19](#)):
And then it gives you the opportunity. If you just take a moment to say, "No, I don't know everything." It gives you the opportunity to ask questions. Instead of saying, "Oh, blah, blah, blah." You say, "I actually don't know. What do you think it is? What's your perspective." And then from that great things can happen.

Leslie Morse ([25:39](#)):
Yeah. That is so real for me right now on my own leadership journey because people will ask me something and I'll be like, "I don't really know, but I've got lots of ideas about what it might be." But the moment you say that you anchor the other person's thinking. And actually having that discipline to be like, "I just don't. I don't know."



Dave West (25:58):
What do you think?

Leslie Morse (25:59):
And then just be quiet. Yeah. And what do you think? And then maybe they'll anchor me on something that I've never even thought of and that's the whole point. It's the Simon Sinek talk about like leaders not talking like the greatest power of leadership is being quiet.

Dave West (26:15):
But it's really hard.

Leslie Morse (26:17):
It is so hard.

Dave West (26:18):
Because we got here and obviously I'm pretending I'm a leader now. But we got here by not being quiet. We got here because we were the guy that put his hand up and said, "Oh, I'll do that. I think this, don't worry."

Leslie Morse (26:33):
Because we promote people through expertise.

Dave West (26:36):
Exactly.

Leslie Morse (26:36):
And acknowledgement and reward and all of that.

Dave West (26:38):
And also you have to see them. And those people have to have a... It's really, really bizarre. How do you promote people? Do you promote quiet people? Do you ever-

Leslie Morse (26:47):
Why do you even need to promote people in the first place? Aren't we all just people.

Dave West (26:51):
Well, that's a whole nother thing. One thing I'll be talking about in the talk is this idea of decoupling

work management. Do I say product management, product value? The things we just talked about from skill and mastery. This was sort of like the Spotify model and the implications of the Spotify model rather than the actual model. The idea that you can be "promoted" and I'm using inverted commas, obviously you can't see that.

Dave West (27:18):
"Promoted" as an expert, somebody that knows lots of things by the amount of people that you help to get better at their craft. You can deliver value in a, you don't need this sort of become a manager, blah, blah, blah, that sort of hierarchical sort of a world and you get a lot flatter structure. It works incredibly well. Yes, it's a matrix. Yes, you have two leaders, et cetera. Ultimately their responsibility is to deliver value to do that effectively requires you to build skills, those skills to become pie-shaped, T-shaped, whatever.

Dave West (27:55):
Those skills need to have clear ownership and any type of community to help you develop those skills. And I think we've sort of forgotten that as well. We've sort of this specialization of labor there's hire somebody for those skills and then don't let them get any better. You care about your people by giving them pizza once a month and getting some random [inaudible 00:28:14].

Leslie Morse (28:14):
And there's a ping pong table in the break room.

Dave West (28:14):
And there's a ping pong table. The better investment isn't the ping pong table. The better investment is to build an organization that helps people get better at their craft, whatever their chosen craft is. And that's super, super, super important as well and that's something I'll be talking about. But do you need to be promoted? No, but you do need to know that you've got a career and that you can put food on the table for



your family and you can build support them. And you need to know that there's a future.

Dave West (28:46):

One of the biggest challenges often in Agile adoptions, particularly very aggressive ones. And I'm sort of pointing out some of the more aggressive styles of adoption is that one of the first things they say is we don't need managers anymore. No, no, no, no, that's rubbish we need you though. We really need you. We might not call it managing or whatever. It doesn't really matter what we call it. What we care about is you and this is how your career will progress. This is how you develop and these are the things that we think are important now, and we'll help you do those things.

Leslie Morse (29:19):

Yeah. Listening to you talk about that actually makes me think more about the earlier chat around purpose and makes me really start questioning almost the purpose of agility. If you think to the very first line of the agile manifesto it's we're uncovering better ways of delivering software by doing it ourselves and helping others do it too.

Dave West (29:40):

Yes.

Leslie Morse (29:42):

But if you think about the undertone of everything we've been saying here, really Agile in the work we do is the vehicle for uncovering new ways of making better humanity through doing it ourselves and helping others do it too. And I think if we keep our blinders on as Agile lists and say that what we're doing is helping people with Agile, but actually tap into that larger transcendent purpose of Agile just simply is like the best vehicle for us to latch ourselves to for making the world a better place, so much more can become possible.

Leslie Morse (30:23):

And I know you had mentioned to me as we were prepping today, you've been to the Conscious Capitalism Conference. And I think the adjacencies that are emerging for us in the Agile space we are agile lists and we dabble then a little bit in what does organizational development mean? And what does talent development mean and what does product management really? But those are really just adjacent professions to our profession as Agile list.

Leslie Morse (30:51):

And what I believe the future is the convergence of all of these adjacencies into a way that's all working towards that transcendent purpose of making the world a better place and increasing our consciousness as a society. And I'm really just kind of curious when you think about the future of Agile and everything that's possible, and if we tap into that what could we do together?

Dave West (31:17):

I think you're exactly right. I think that the adjacencies. What's interesting is that agility has taught us some very, very simple things. It's taught us the empower purpose, it's taught us empiricism, taking that purpose and breaking it down into smaller little chunks and trying to deliver against that and measuring and continuously inspecting, adapting along the way, transparency, et cetera. Empiricism has taught us about self-organization and the power of teams.

Dave West (31:46):

It's taught us about this idea of continuous improvement. It's taught us about the power of the client. It's taught us about the power of discipline, getting to done, getting stuff out, not mucking about. It's taught us the power of the values. Psychological safety, which has manifesting things like trust, respect, et cetera. And it's taught us that the importance of helping other people.



Those ideas sort of transcend any they have fundamental ideas, some would argue that's maybe that coaching ideas. I don't really know what they are. Are they management, the future of management? I don't know and I don't really care. We have to probably give it a name and a pigeonhole at some point, but I actually don't know what that is.

Dave West (32:30):

What I do know is how that affects product management and product and business. And then product has an adjacent thing called business. There's a strong relationship there. What I find is there's a very strong relationship with finance now, how do you fund? One of the biggest problems that we have in society today is the way in which things are funded. And then it sort of goes all the way round into HR, into legal, into digital legal or huge implications.

Dave West (33:01):

Have you changed the way in which you engage with your suppliers through where does the relationship about IP and ownership? Where does that reside anymore? There's all sorts of it's a merit. I agree that the biggest power is bringing all of these ideas across this and that's a bit new agey. It's a bit Hare Krishna and all that. But ultimately, I think what was interesting about the Conscious Capitalism Conferences is one that everybody's sort of it was a 250 CEOs that believe that capitalism can be used for a force for good.

Dave West (33:36):

And that ultimately we should start expecting governments to solve the world's problems. We just need to get off our and start doing it. And we do that by building environments that has a triple bottom line where one is economic, because we have to build sustainable businesses that generate profits that people want to invest in and people want to work for et cetera.

Dave West (33:54):

Second one is about social social impact. We need to think about our impact of our

organization in terms of the employees that building diverse and fair and respectful working environments that bring people out of poverty, et cetera. And also our customers making sure that we can help them make the right choices, et cetera, without being sort of George Orwell control freaks, et cetera, et cetera.

Dave West (34:21):

And the third one is environmental, ultimately and environmental in not just the environment, but everything about the environment. The places that we reside, obviously carbon is obviously a key part of that, but it isn't the only part how we contribute to the physical environment around us. Desire putting a shop there mean that the roads are a disaster. Thinking being more conscious about these decisions on the triple bottom line.

Dave West (34:50):

Anyway, the interesting and I didn't mean to go all Conscious Capitalism on it though, it blew my mind legitimate on listening. I recommend going to consciouscapitalism.org and just reading some of the stuff, reading some of the examples, reading some of the. [inaudible 00:35:07] the largest drink manufacturer in Costa Rica and Central America was talking about how they've become [inaudible 00:35:12] like a carbon neutral, it's just amazing stories.

Dave West (35:16):

What was really cool about it though? One, they all knew Scrum or many of them knew Scrums, I felt pretty cool with that. But the other thing that was really cool was that when you listen to their stories about how they're exerting change because this conference was predominantly about healing organization and there was lots of examples. What I've found over and over again is they were the same stories that we kind of tell, but from a different way.

Dave West (35:41):

They were talking about purpose. They were talking about teams. There was a chat for Mars who was taught Mars, Mars not the planet,



obviously that would be weird. The confectionary private company that I thought was really like closed and quiet and nobody ever heard what happened in Mars. It was like it's like fight club or whatever happens in fight club stays in fight club that's [inaudible 00:36:03]. And I thought that was Mars.

Dave West (36:04):

This dude came from, he's an amazing guy, super smart, smarter than I would ever be, is an economist. And he came and he talked about how that Mars they were using a different scorecard to drive product changes and market changes. It was really, really super, super interesting. What was interesting though, as I was trying to say before I got sidetracked by Mars was as everybody does I hear Ilan has the same problem. Was the this idea that it's about teams, it's about purpose. It's about measurement.

Dave West (36:36):

And Mars did a really good job because their Mars of building this scorecard that gave the right metrics to drive the right thinking, which then drove the right behavior. Awesome. And all of it very similar to our stuff. You could have relabeled the Conscious Capitalism healing CEO summit as an Agile leadership summit. I actually think the agenda would have been exactly the same.

Leslie Morse (37:05):

It's the same way when you read Brené Brown stuff. And you're like, "Oh, well, she just talking about Agile. She just doesn't know she's talking about Agile stuff."

Dave West (37:13):

And that's great in a way.

Leslie Morse (37:15):

It is. That's so cool.

Dave West (37:16):

I bought it and it looks I'm thinking to myself,

"Why don't we, how do we build better bridges between these because we're the software guys?" And they're like, "Oh yeah, Scrum. We use that in our software group." I'm like, "Yeah, well, you could." But anyway, I think what you said, what started this whole thread was ultimately at the heart of everything we're doing is trying to untapped the potential of humanity to deliver amazing value and solve problems really.

And I think that's super exciting and I think we need to step back from the, "Oh, should we be doing user stories? Should we be doing this?" And those things are important and decisions have to be made, but we spend an inordinate amount of time talking about those things when really what we should be thinking about is who's the customer, what value are they getting out of it? How do we measure that? How do we connect better with them?

Dave West (38:11):

I was in Brazil recently and I know time's pressing, so I just want tell this one story. I was in Brazil, I was in San Palo, which is Brazil's awesome. It's a little scary, but it's awesome. It's kind of like scary awesome. It's like I guess many of my dates when I was younger that was scary awesome all at the same time. But the thing about Brazil and what's happening there is really what they're doing is they're really changing the way in which, they've got a great opportunity because of all these new organizations and they've got a lot young people.

Dave West (38:50):

I went to a lot of organizations during Scrum. And I went over and over again into these and they had their Scrum boards up and they were doing them. Some of them using Kanban on top of that, which is great, but I never saw one customer there. I was like, "Why haven't you got your personas? Well, who's your customer?" And that struck me from all the conversations some of these organizations are doing amazing things are delivering fantastic value. But at the heart of that there was missing. There was this customer element was missing.



Dave West (39:21):

They're like, "Well, the customer, we have a product owner that's who we talk to." I'm like, "Forget that." Product owners is great. They make decisions on value in the order of value, but let's actually all of us care about the customer. One thing for the listeners I recommend is if you go back to your teams, go back to your organizations and try to look for pictures of your customer on the wall and put them next to your Scrum board or your Kanban board or whatever you're using or your big massive TV with Jira on it or whatever. And put a picture of your customer and say what you're trying to do, because that creates two things.

Dave West (39:57):

One, it creates a conversation because not everybody on the team may understand who the customer is. And as soon as you write it down, when somebody comes into your team they go, "Oh, I didn't know you were serving that. Interestingly, have you seen Bob over there, they're doing something similar doing do, do, do." And suddenly they're like, "I didn't know about that." And even the best PI planning process, even with the best you're going to have these situations. And then you get the opportunity to do something amazing because you're both doing something for this customer.

Dave West (40:27):

The customer is king, get the outcomes that you seek a king, get them on the board, make them transparent. Define that purpose in very tangible ways very emotional ways and then amazing things are going to happen.

Yeah, absolutely. All that everything you just said. I think that it sounds like a perfect place for us to kind of end Dave, because we could probably go on for another three hours.

Dave West (40:54):

I know and it'd be like dropping to sleep.

Leslie Morse (40:54):

Yes. But I couldn't imagine a better way to kind

of wrap things up then that calling and that true invitation like bring it back to the customer, bring it back to purpose and through that is how amazing things happen.

Dave West (41:08):

Totally true. Totally true. And if they don't at least you know who you've let down.

Leslie Morse (41:13):

Yeah. Valid point, very valid point. Dave, thanks so much for sitting down for this conversation today. It's truly delightful.

Dave West (41:20):

Well, thank you for inviting me.

Leslie Morse (41:22):

You are welcome.

Dave West (41:22):

I always like speaking, which is a bit embarrassing admission. But I think and this podcast series is awesome, thank you for inviting me.

Leslie Morse (41:33):

Yeah. You're welcome. Thanks for being here. And thank you for listening to this episode of Agile Amped. We hope you've learned something new and invite you to tell a friend or a coworker about the podcast. And if you're interested in checking out additional inspiring and engaging conversations, you can go check out agileamped.com.

Speaker 1 (41:48):

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