
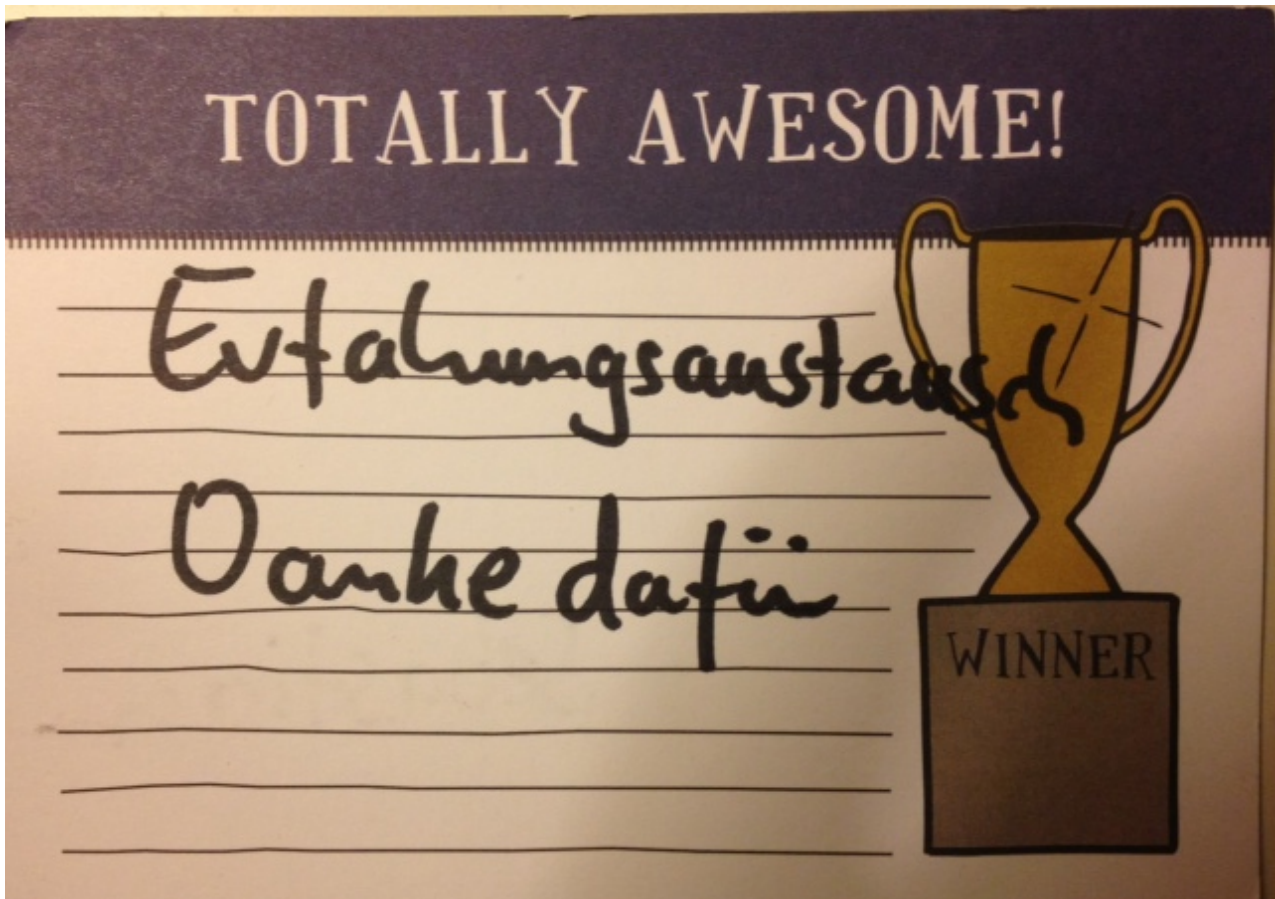


Let the team draw it ... and open new perspectives to discover, interpret and see each other

 ontheagilepath.net/2015/10/let-the-team-draw-it-and-open-new-perspectives-to-discover-interpret-and-see-each-other.html

By Sebastian Radics



Recently I had the opportunity to join a session about painting exercises that one can embed in e.g. retrospectives to open another channel for discussions. Thanks to [Lisbeth Ott](#) for arranging a great learning experience.

Double Doodle

A simple exercise, just as a warm up and to get relaxed. Take a sheet of paper (e.g. A4 format) and two pens – one in each hand – and start drawing simple figures (like circles, squares, triangles,...) in a mirrored format using both hands simultaneously.

In our session we had to draw circles or better a kind of a spiral from outside to the middle.

Advanced mode ... start writing your name with both hands in parallel. It's challenging to use both hands at the same time.

It's a simple exercise just to relax, it activates both sides of our brain and can be a short sidestep when we are stressed and need a break or short switch.

Thinking circles

Provide a simple form as an orientation, e.g. a double circle like shown on the left side. Ask the group to draw as many combinations that have to include the form in whatever way. Use a given time frame e.g. 5-10 minutes.

It's amazing how many new combinations and ideas one will find short after starting the exercise.

This exercise shows that there is often more than one possibility. Use it, when you got stuck with a problem and need to find new approaches or just to empty your mind and relax.

I (we) paint what you (don't) see

In a group or as a pair. One gets an original drawing (e.g. a postcard) ... the describer, the rest gets a sheet of paper and pens. The describer has to describe the drawing (without showing it). The group has to paint the drawing just by the given explanation (every one individually).

The describer should not see the drawings done by his peers and stops describing when he thinks all details were provided.

Just compare the original drawing with the ones created from the group and shortly discuss differences and how the describer and the group perceived it.

Best suited for showing that not everyone shares the same picture just by having a description. In addition one can reflect what way of describing things will help the group to understand it – the more details in the beginning the more the group can get stuck when later on the outer format is being described.

Variation 1 – Sentence and picture alternating

In a group – start with a sentence, the next in the group has to paint a picture expressing the sentence, followed by the next writing the sentence out of the picture and so on.

When done in the group – compare the original sentence with the resulting sentence.

Variation 2 – The fast change

Again in a group – one is drawing the initial picture, the next one has a short look on it and redraws the picture,... compare the the final picture with the initial picture.

Personas or a Team Alias

Build a ring and everyone draws her right neighbor. Open the solution space by drawing real portraits, animals, symbols, cartoons or whatever makes sense. Maybe connected with a direction like ... What I appreciate...

It's just a fun exercise and when we did it, it's a great opportunity to discover new perspectives of everyone in your team.

Team analysis

A more advanced mode – let everyone draw a picture of the team – guided by the questions:

- What makes the team strong? ... or
- What removes the teams energy? ... or
- How are we working together in the team? ... or
- Draw your department?

As a variation (and an even more advanced mode):

- Everyone shows and explain her picture
- Everyone interprets her neighbors picture
- The group is talking and interpreting the pictures

And the expert mode – let the group draw the picture together.

This exercise opens the perspective how everyone sees the team. It's just easier to express feelings and to talk about a topic when one is using a picture than just to talk about emotions and a feeling. To listen to one another is enabled when talking in a language of pictures.

Create trust

In a group or pairs using one pen (or pens) and a whiteboard or flipchart – ask the group to draw a house, a person and one name or sentence with discussions among each other, just in silence.

Followed by a discussion using these guiding questions:

- Who was leading?
- How did the group communicate?
- Did everyone have enough space?
- What about the groups collaboration?
- How does the result look/feel like?
- Is it a common result?
- Were there any surprises?

It can show a picture of the current teamwork and maybe opens a better understanding of current team dynamics. It's just a metaphor of your current team work.

Meeting Feedback

Let all meeting participants draw the feedback for a longer meeting. It's just a variation of the boring flashlight format at the end of a meeting.

I hope you have fun using these small drawing exercises with your team ... maybe in your next retrospective (just like I did it immediately after my learning session)? If so – please share your experiences by your comment 😊