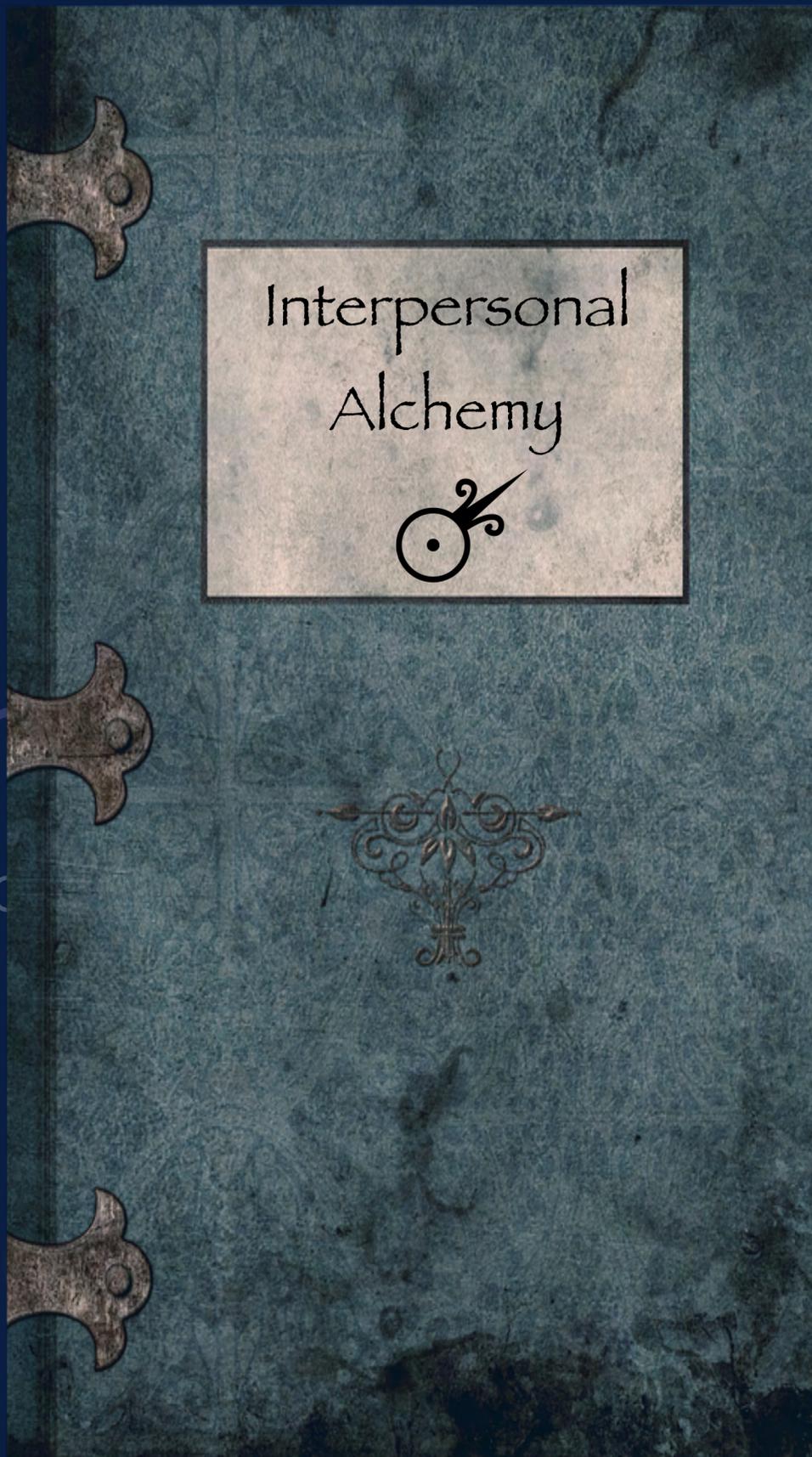


▲ ATlassian  
**team**'22

# Interpersonal Alchemy

The magic behind high performance



Mark Cruth  
Director / Sr Solutions Architect, Atlassian



Interpersonal  
Alchemy



# Experiment!

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**5 min**

In order to **unleash full team potential**, trust needs to be high, which is only possible when know each other more deeply.

**ACTION:** Pair up with someone and answer the following four question (switch after 2.5 minutes)

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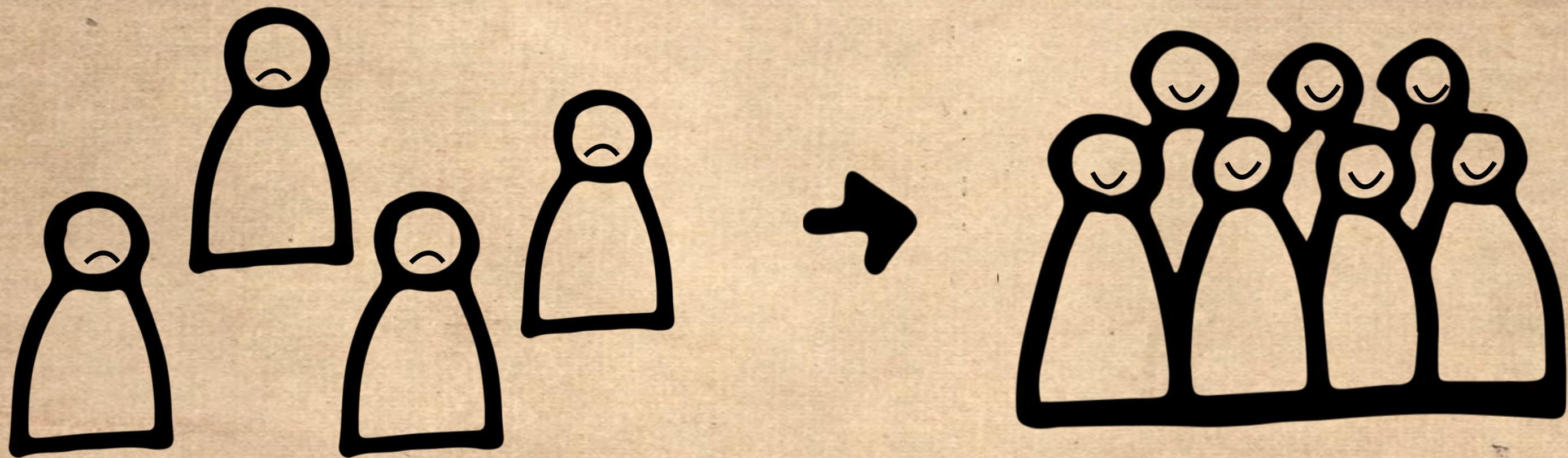
- 1: What's something you're interested in that most people haven't heard of?**
- 2: What's your favorite book/movie and why did it speak to you so much?**
- 3: If you could live at any time in history, when would it be?**
- 4: How long would you survive a Zombie Apocalypse?**

# Alchemy



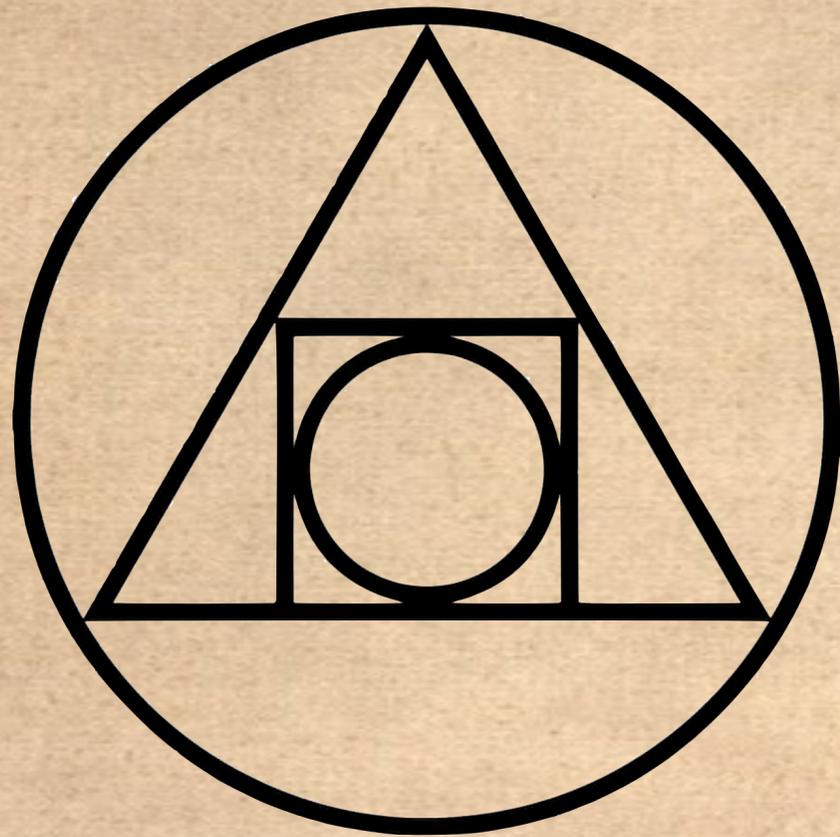
# Interpersonal Alchemy

---



# How to use this book

Seek Knowledge



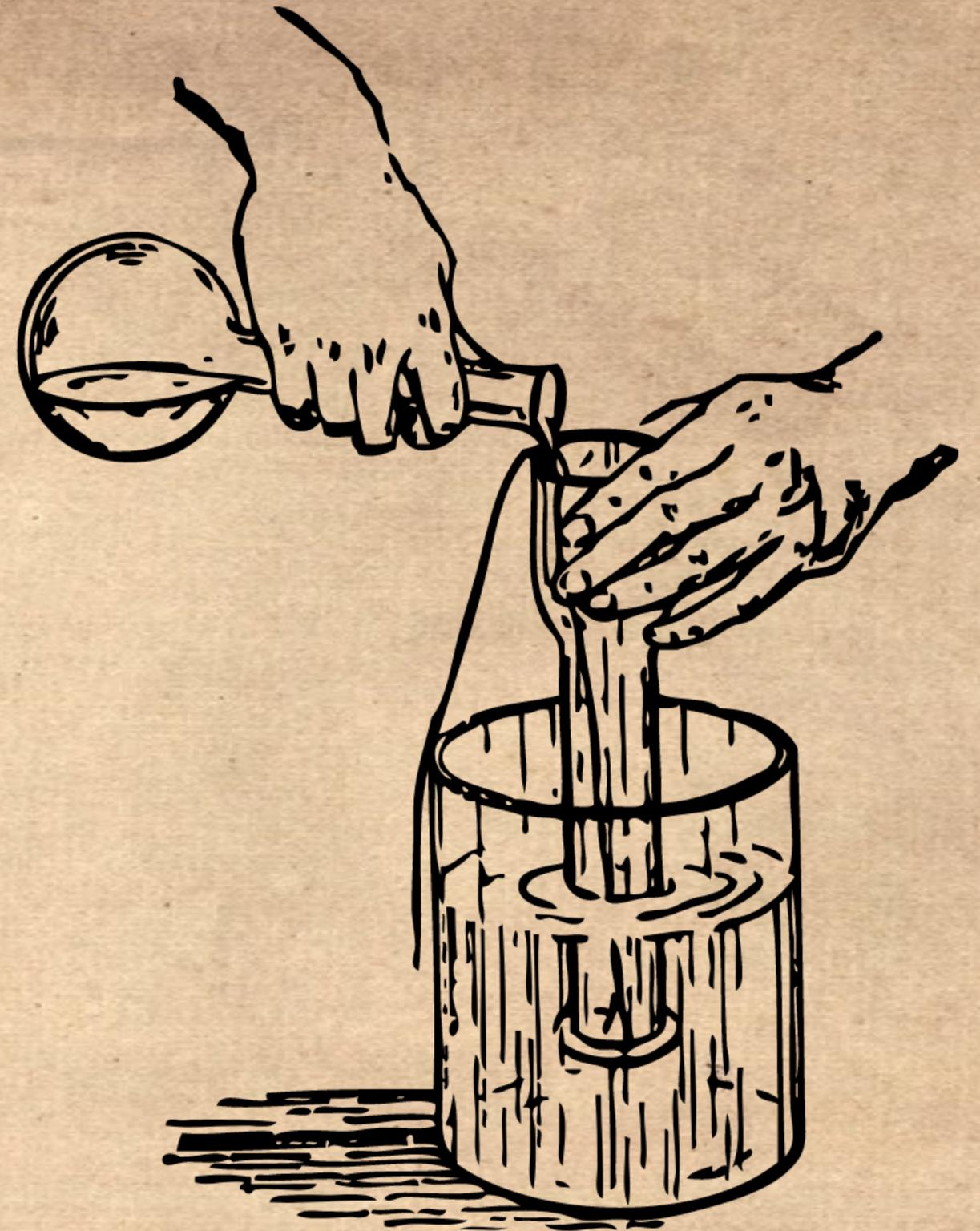
Experiment Relentlessly



# The Scientific Method

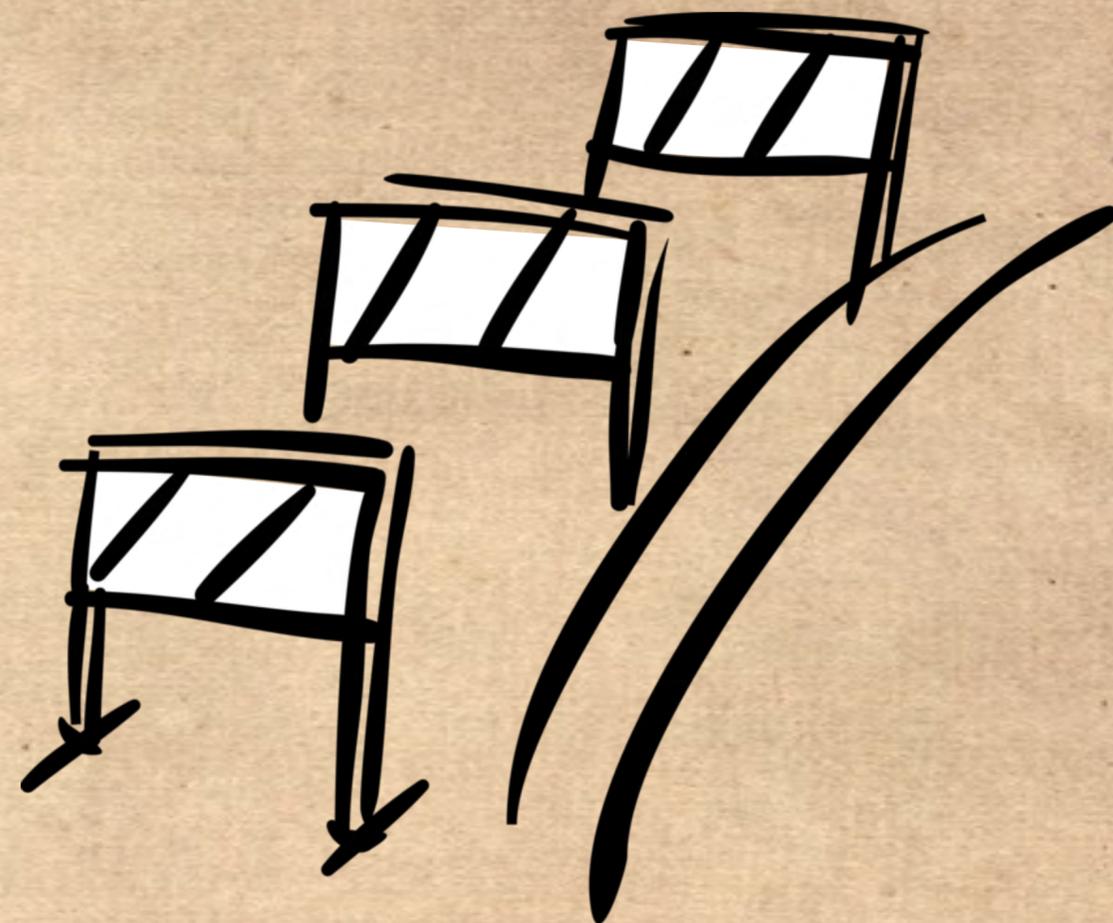
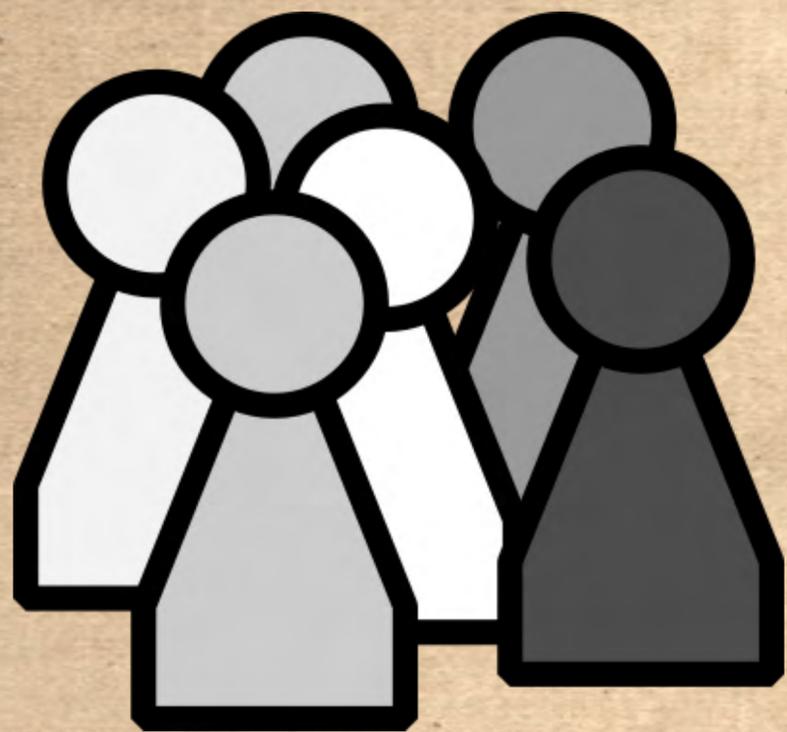
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- Step 1.** Ask a question
- Step 2.** Conduct research
- Step 3.** Construct a hypothesis
- Step 4.** Experiment!
- Step 5.** Analyze the data
- Step 6.** Communicate the results



**Step 1:** Ask a question

# Lots of questions...



Step 1

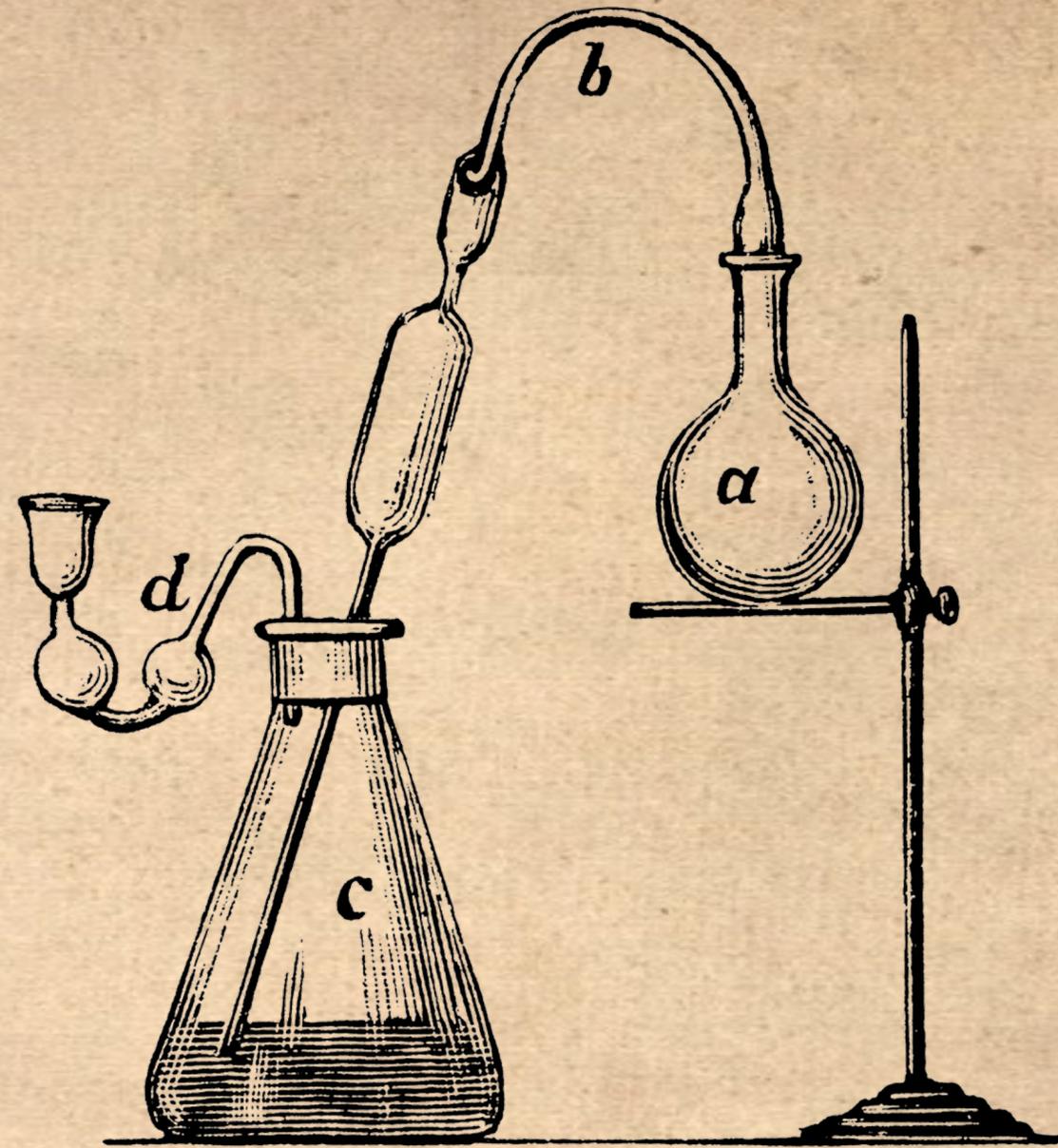
**Why do some teams perform  
better than others?**

---

**Step 1**

**Step 2:** Conduct research

Examples of  
**High Performing  
TEAMS**



Step 2

# The U.S. Army and Navy Seals



## Elements

- Extreme transparency creates a shared consciousness
- Decentralized decision making empowers execution
- Resolute belief in team mission
- Make decisions with incomplete information

**Step 2**

# Rugby Teams - All Blacks

## Elements

- Trust people to rise to the challenge
- No one person is bigger than the organization / team
- We need to have the right skills and know how to apply them



**Step 2**

# The Ford Focus



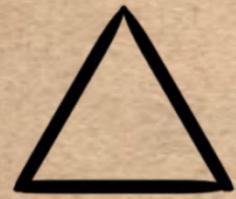
## Elements

- Cross-functional teams vs siloed departments
- Create directed autonomy by giving guidance and letting teams execute
- Psychological safety is critical to avoid the mistakes of the past

**Step 2**

# Team Alchemical Elements

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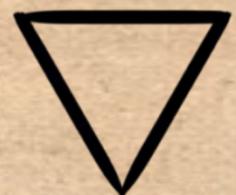
Purpose creates Autonomy



Decentralized Decision Making fuels Empowerment



High Trust with Psychological Safety accelerates Cohesion



Embracing Uncertainty sustains Growth

Step 2

# Google Agrees...

**1 Psychological Safety**  
Team members feel safe to take risks and be vulnerable in front of each other.

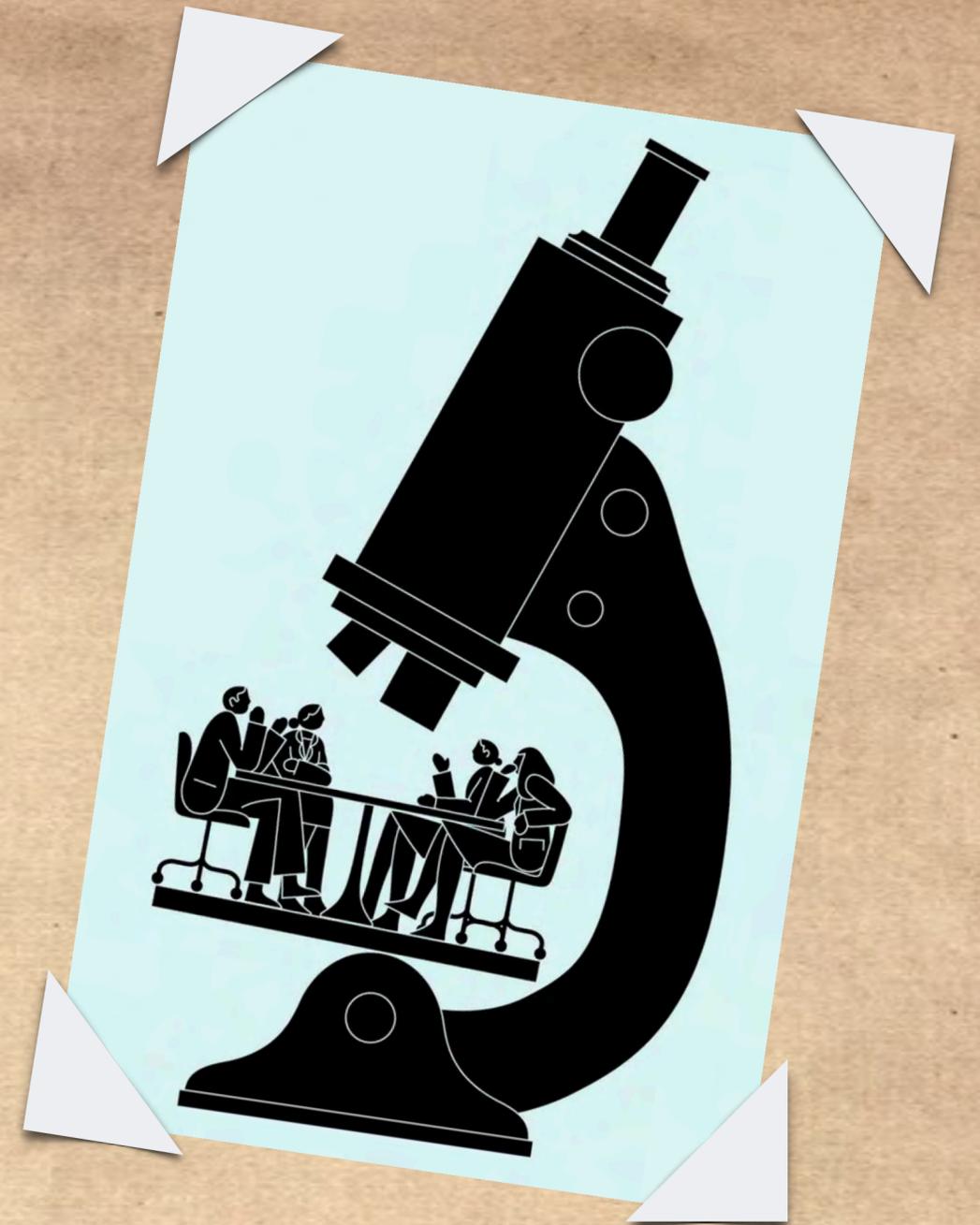
**2 Dependability**  
Team members get things done on time and meet Google's high bar for excellence.

**3 Structure & Clarity**  
Team members have clear roles, plans, and goals.

**4 Meaning**  
Work is personally important to team members.

**5 Impact**  
Team members think their work matters and creates change.

re:Work



Google - Project Aristotle (2012)

**Step 2**

# ...and so does Atlassian!



## What actually drives team health?

While the internet has been losing its collective mind over remote vs. in-office, a host of other factors – such as team dynamics, support structures, rituals, and processes – appear to be quietly making the real difference between healthy and unhealthy teams. Here are some common threads we found among the healthiest teams, listed to the right.

And while members of even the healthiest teams are susceptible to burnout, our findings (strongly) suggest that flexible practices and a supportive environment can offset the impact of challenging personal circumstances. This is particularly important for teams that include parents of young children or other caregivers. 45 percent of participants with high care responsibilities report experiencing burnout.

- \* A shared understanding of the team's goals and each person's role in pursuing them
- \* Adaptive planning practices that allow for adjusting the plan when the situation calls for it
- \* A culture that celebrates achievement (but doesn't punish failure)
- \* Regular opportunities to reflect in a blame-free environment
- \* Timely, constructive feedback that flows both ways between managers and their direct reports

Atlassian - The State of Teams (2021)



Step 2

**Step 3:** Construct a hypothesis

# A good hypothesis statement

## Good hypothesis statements...

- Are a statement (not a question)
- Empirically testable and falsifiable
- Specific and precise
- Plausible in nature

**Simple Hypothesis Structure**

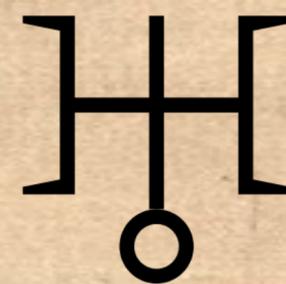
**We believe...**

**Will result in...**

**Step 3**

# My hypothesis...

**We believe** embedding practices into a team that clarify purpose, decentralizes decision making, builds psychological safety and trust, and normalizes uncertainty **will result in** a teams full potential being unleashed.



Step 3

**Step 4: Experiment!**

# Experimenting with Teams



☾ **Create a Team Vision**

⚔ **Delegation Poker**

**Team Health Monitor**

⊗ **Ritual Reset**

♁ **Team Improv**



**Step 4**

# Create a Team Vision

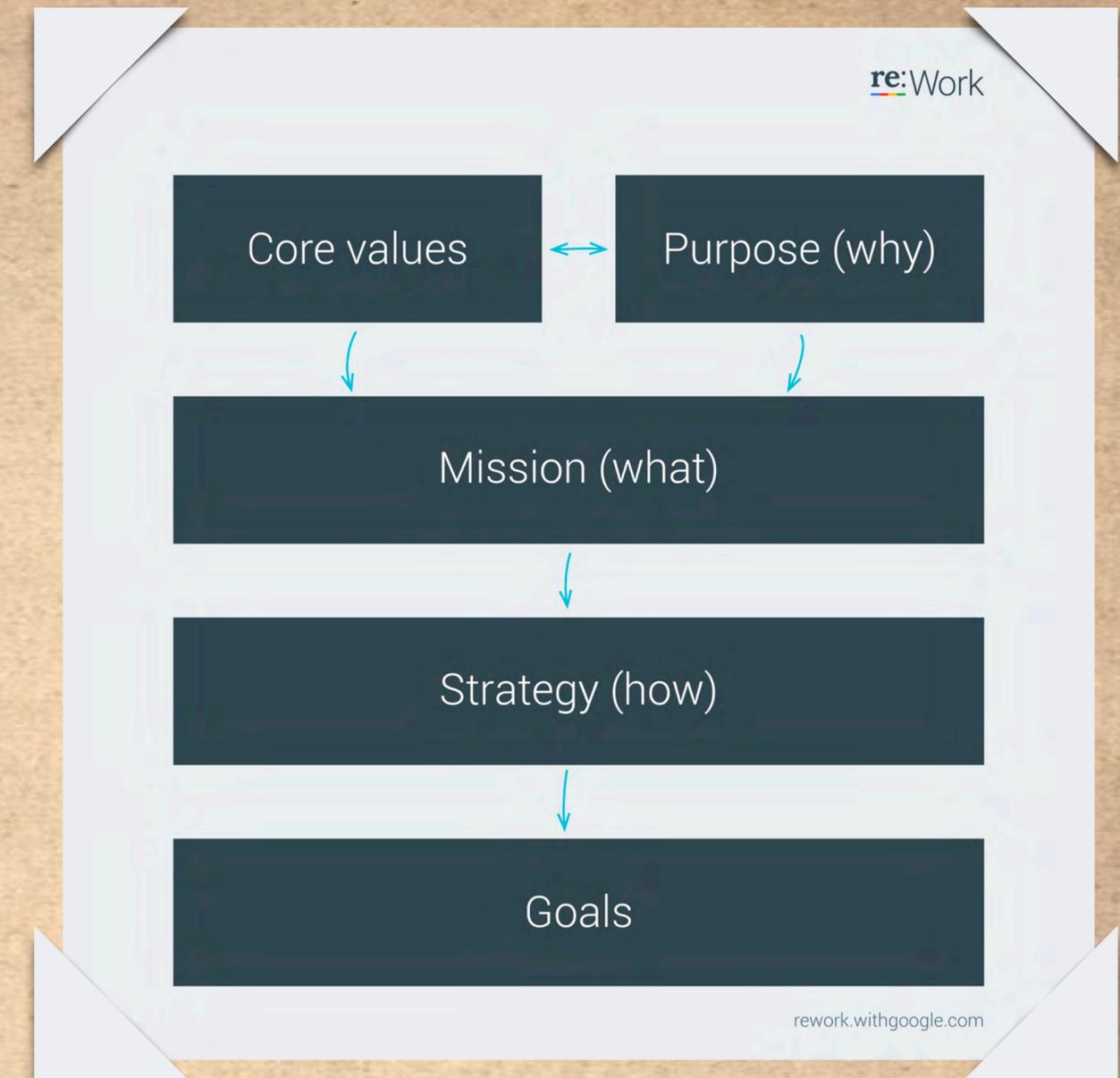
Click the symbol  
to learn more

## Ingredients

- Identifying values, purpose, mission, strategy, and goals help to identify the vision for the team
- Teams tend to “think” they know what they are doing, but find that there is not a shared understanding
- Team vision statements can be as simple or complex as a team wants it to be

## Results

- Unites teams together around a common understanding of who they are and what they do



**Step 4**

# Delegation Poker

 Click the symbol  
to learn more

## Ingredients

- Great way to spell out who makes what type of decisions (decentralization)
- Makes the “who” in decision making explicit and whether others need to be consulted in the decision making process

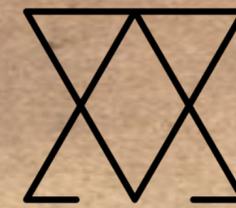
## Results

- Avoids the need for management to make decisions as decision ownership is clear to all parties



**Step 4**

# Team Health Monitor



Click the symbol  
to learn more

## Ingredients

- Allows the team to take an honest look at how they perform as a team
- Similar to a retrospective, but focuses more on the current state of the team
- Should be conducted on a regular basis

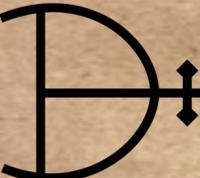
## Results

- Identifies team strengths that can be leveraged and weaknesses the team can work on

ATTRIBUTES	CHECKPOINTS				
	1	2	3	4	5
 Balanced team	●	●	●	▲	●
 Team cohesiveness	▲	▲	●	▲	●
 Shared understanding	■	▲	●	●	●
 Value and metrics	▲	▲	▲	●	●
 Decision making	■	●	●	●	●
 One-pager	▲	▲	■	●	●
 Managed dependencies	■	▲	■	▲	▲
 Velocity	■	■	▲	▲	●

**Step 4**

# Ritual Reset

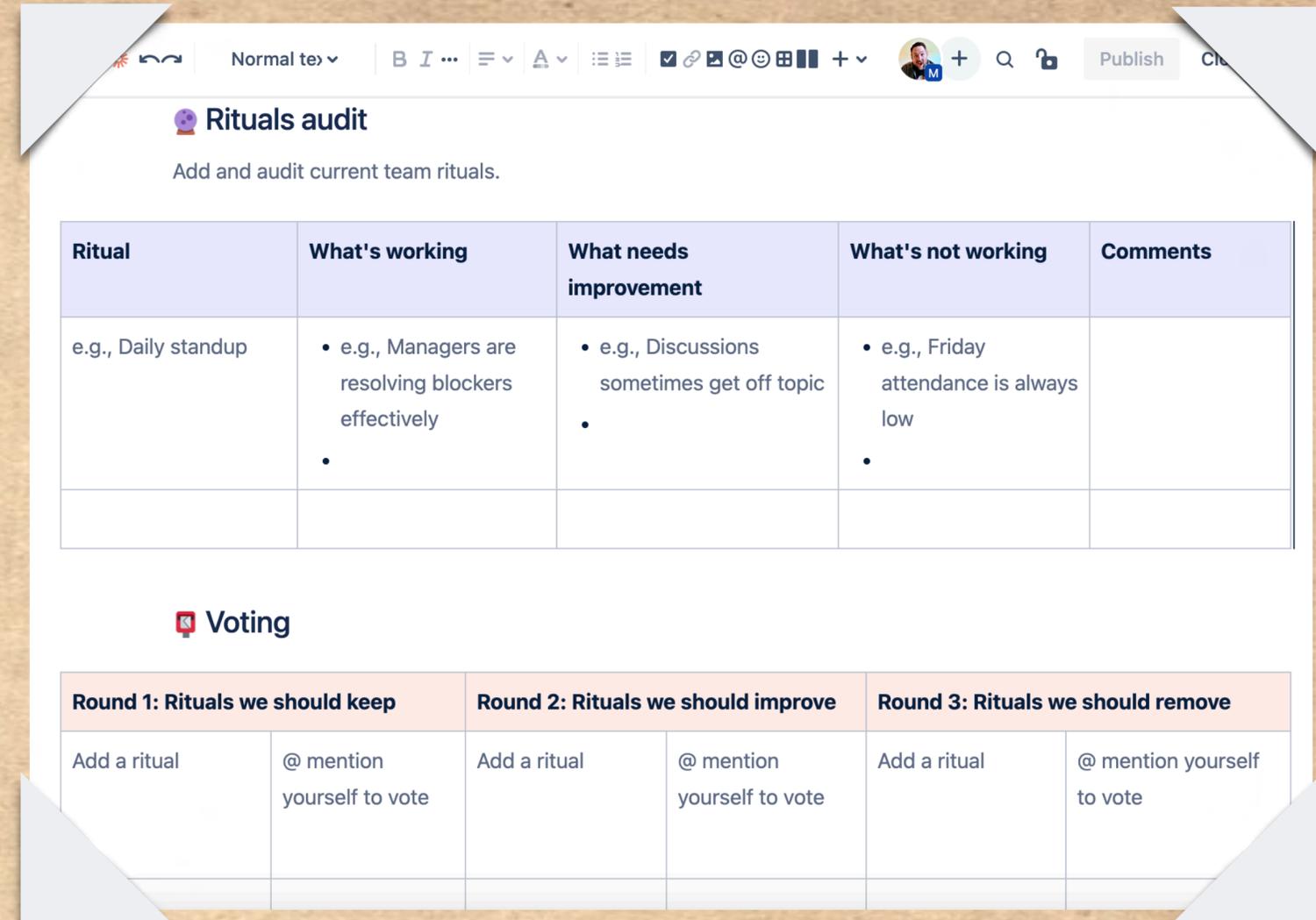
 Click the symbol to learn more

## Ingredients

- Many times teams feel like they waste all their time in meetings without getting any work done
- Teams should take inventory of their calendar
- Reviewing team “rituals” and determining which ones to keep, change, remove drives ownership

## Results

- Teams eliminate waste in their schedule and ensures that the time they spend in meetings is valuable



**Rituals audit**  
Add and audit current team rituals.

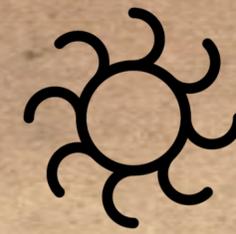
Ritual	What's working	What needs improvement	What's not working	Comments
e.g., Daily standup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• e.g., Managers are resolving blockers effectively</li><li>•</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• e.g., Discussions sometimes get off topic</li><li>•</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• e.g., Friday attendance is always low</li><li>•</li></ul>	

**Voting**

Round 1: Rituals we should keep		Round 2: Rituals we should improve		Round 3: Rituals we should remove	
Add a ritual	@ mention yourself to vote	Add a ritual	@ mention yourself to vote	Add a ritual	@ mention yourself to vote

**Step 4**

# Team Improv



Click the symbol  
to learn more

## Ingredients

- The only thing needed is a room (or zoom) and an openness to have fun
- Starts with a prompt but no one session looks the same (the result of each activity is different)
- Built on the rule of “yes, and...”

## Results

- Enhances a teams creativity, empathy and ability to adapt to unpredictable situations



**Step 4**

# Experiment!

---



**5 min**

An important element of any high performing team is the ability to **actively listen** and respond to unexpected information.

**ACTION:** Pair up with someone and follow the steps below (5 min total!)

---

- 1: The first person will state a sentence**
- 2: The second person will continue the conversation by stating a sentence that must start with the **LAST WORD** of the previous sentence**
- 3: Repeat going back and forth for the duration of the exercise**

**Step 4**

## Build strong teams with Plays

Plays are **free** workshop resources for addressing common team challenges and starting important conversations.

Explore Plays

# MANAGEMENT 3.0

CHANGE AND INNOVATION PRACTICES



# Let's make work better.

re:Work is a collection of practices, research, and ideas from Google and others to help you put people first.

Learn more about re:Work with Google.

**Step 5:** Analyze the data

+

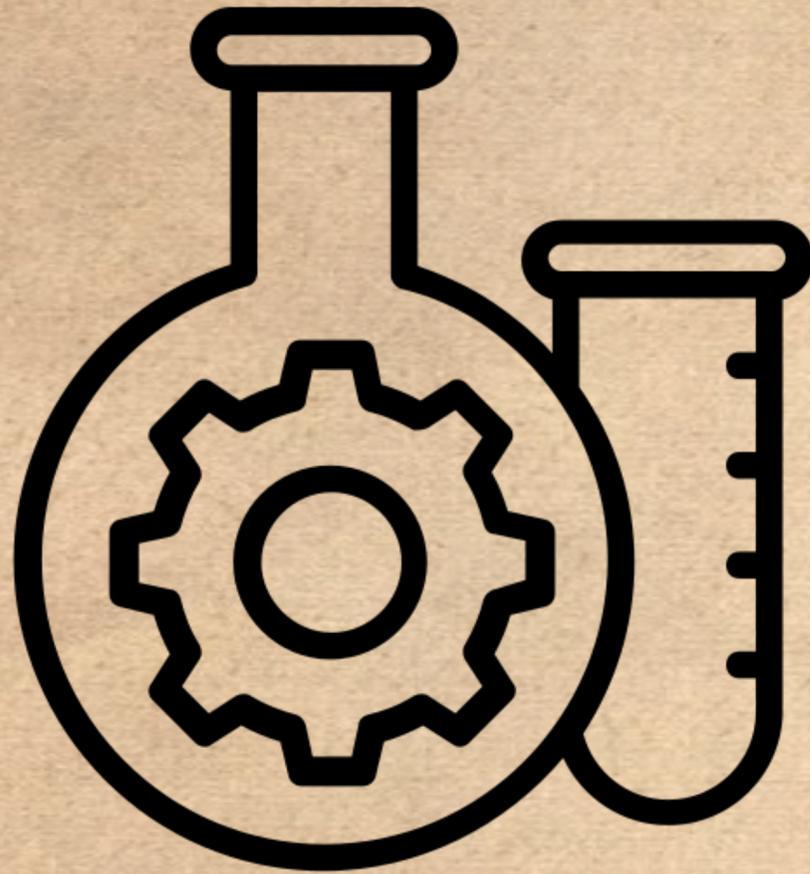
**Step 6:** Communicate the results



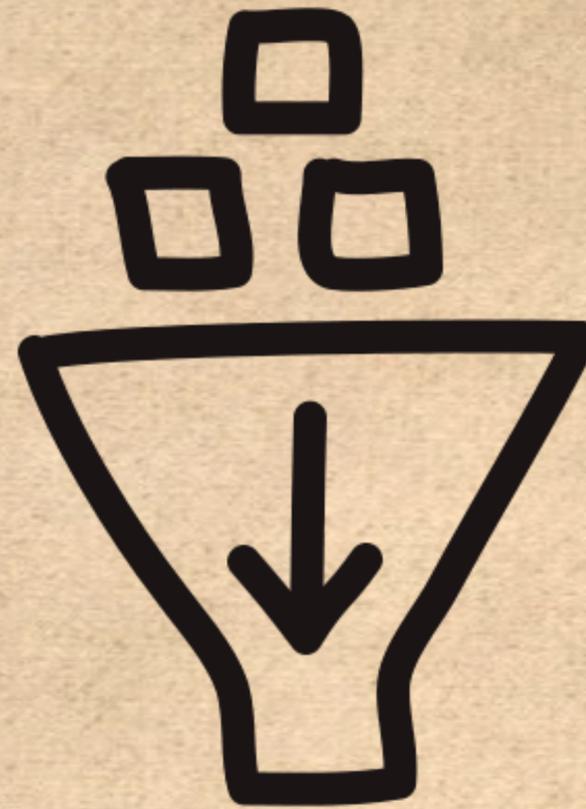


# Call to Action!

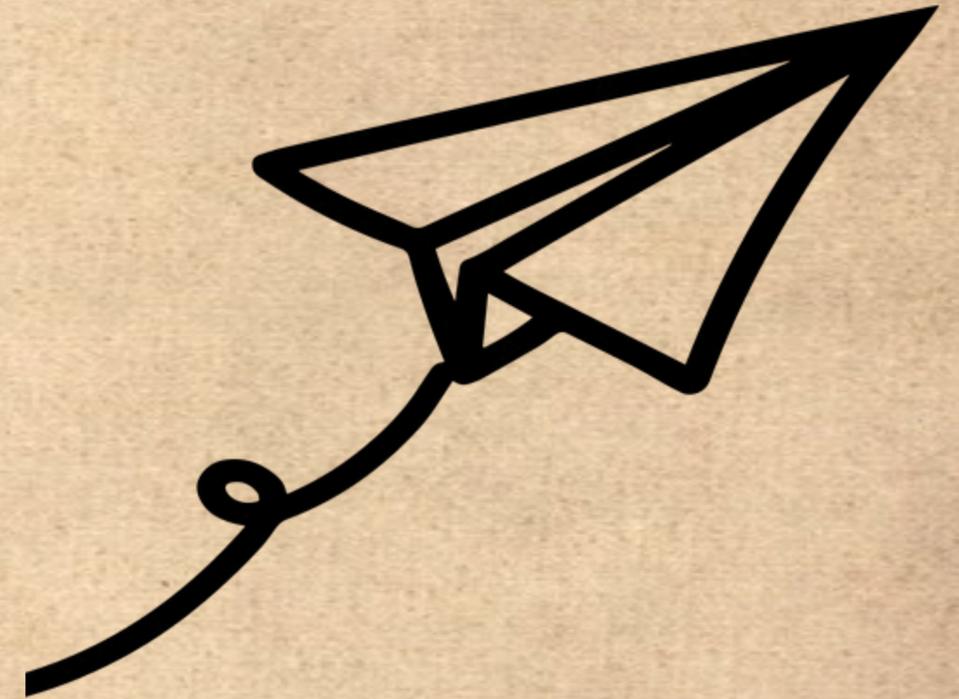
#InterpersonalAlchemy



**Experiment**



**Analyze the Data**



**Share!**



My Hero!



# Need a Doctor?

Issues with your internal ways of working?  
Need help finding ways to use Atlassian practices  
and tooling to **unleash the potential** of your teams?

What are you waiting for! Send us a note at [teamplaybook@atlassian.com](mailto:teamplaybook@atlassian.com)

[atlassian.com](https://atlassian.com)



▲ ATlassian  
**team**<sup>'22</sup>



Thank you!

