33 Antipatterns of How Leaders Abuse Lean-Agile Meetings by Dark Psychology for Personal Gain

Tra·di·tion·al • Meet·ings (*trə-dĭsh'ə-nəl • mē'tĭngz'*). When two or more management or technical people gather together to plan, provide status, govern, make decisions, solve problems, or work as a team to design and develop a new product or service. The traditional example is a staff meeting to communicate policies to one's subordinates and gather the status of their activities and accomplishments. Another traditional example is a business or project planning meeting, where goals and objectives are identified, strategies and tactical plans are formed, and implementation steps are identified in the form of integrated master schedules (IMSs). Yet, another common traditional example is an architectural design meeting, where blueprints and floorplans are created, reviewed, or approved, as well as communicated to developers, subcontractors, or suppliers. Other examples of traditional meetings include governance boards to oversee the progress of projects, conduct risk management, perform change management, and gather performance reports. From these statements and definitions, one may gather that traditional meetings are strictly business, are administrative or technical in nature, and are objective decision-making activities to ensure business and project operations move forward and are successful. The challenge with traditional meetings is that they are often bloated and ineffective; result in plans, projects, and initiatives with enormously large and unmanageable scope; and are based on the theory that rational business and project planning and management principles, practices, frameworks, methods, tools, and metrics are helpful at ensuring successful outcomes. There are generally too many people in attendance, they are unnecessarily frequent and long, and they devolve into competitions for power, status, and abusive behavior, and lead to extremely high project failure rates.

Ag·ile • Meet·ings (*ăj'əl • mē'tĭngz'*). Concisely timeboxed ceremonies of a method or framework used to promote the values, principles, and practices of lean-agile thinking. Some of these principles and practices include limiting work-in-process (WIP), small batch sizes, single tasking, one piece workflow, simplicity, experimentation, rapid feedback, and continuous improvement. Inherent in the lean-agile paradigm is the notion that requirements for innovatively new products and services exist as hidden, tacit, intangible, and often inexpressible market, customer, or end-user needs. Therefore, the magnitude, size, complexity, length, cost, and risk of a new project should be kept as small as possible at its inception when uncertainty is highest. Instead of hiring hundreds, thousands, or even tens of thousands of people for a new enterprise initiative, small exploratory teams of innovators should be created to form and conduct a series of small business experiments to gradually tease out market, customer, or end user needs. As such, only a small handful of ceremonies or meetings are needed by lean-agile teams, such as a one-week design sprint, or a small series of short, regular, and concisely timeboxed meetings. These include sprint planning, daily standups, demos, retrospectives, and backlog refinement sessions. Team sizes are also very small, typically in the seven-to-nine-person range, although teams as small as two people and no larger than three or four people are often very effective at conducting successful business experiments when designing innovatively new products and services. Each lean-agile ceremony or meeting is only a few minutes in length, they have concise goals and objectives, and precisely scripted activities and events. Unfortunately, traditional enterprises repurpose and hijack lean-agile ceremonies to implement over scoped integrated master schedules (IMSs).

A·bu·sive • Ag·ile • Meet·ings (*ə-byōō'sĭv • ăj'əl • mē'tĭngz'*). A lean-agile meeting highjacked by a leader who uses dark psychology to manipulate subordinates for personal power, status, and self-aggrandizement. Scrum, Extreme Programming (XP), DevOps, Lean Startup, Design Sprints, Startup Way, Lean UX, SAFe, S@S, and business experiments were created in the Western hemisphere. They exemplify practices such as limiting work-in-process (WIP), small batch sizes, single tasking, one piece workflow, simplicity, experimentation, rapid feedback, and continuous improvement. Amazon, Google, Microsoft, Facebook, etc. use variants of these techniques to distribute innovatively new products and services to billions of global end-users in fractions of a second. The Western hemisphere is also infamous for another unique attribute, "fierce individualism," which is exemplified by narcissism, selfishness, egotism, egocentrism, narcissism, selfishness, self-concern, self-absorption, self-obsession, self-centeredness, and other self-seeking and serving behavior. People in the Western hemisphere are an "army of one" and there is no concern for a team, group, collective, or society-at-large. Collectivist norms are more popular in Far Eastern cultures such as India, China, and Japan, where saying the word "I" is prohibited. Western society systematically institutionalizes the ideology of fierce Western individualism. School assignments are graded individually, and group work is punished. Rewards are given individually, even when a team or group contributed to the outcome. So, it was only a matter of time before lean-agile transformation leaders who are Type As, alpha males or females, or extroverts applied dark psychology to parasitically highjack lean-agile methods and frameworks to psychologically coerce, harass, and manipulate their subordinates for personal gain.

Dark psychology is the emerging recognition that people manipulate, persuade, and coerce others to fuel their insatiable egos. Therefore, dark psychology may be regarded as the art and science of controlling people's minds by carefully manipulating them. Dark psychology is a triad of narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy. Narcissists have an excessively unhealthy interest in themselves and don't recognize the existence of other people. Narcissists are cognitively blind to people responsible for helping them (i.e., parents, family, academic instructors, trainers, coaches, mentors, subordinates, or teammates). Machiavellianism is a person who uses unscrupulous means to quickly gain power and control by callously, suddenly, or gradually manipulating one's subordinates through cunning, deception, dishonesty, and immorality. Psychopaths are unusually egotistical, antisocial, angry, violent, irresponsible, callous, lack empathy or remorse, and often exhibit argumentative behavior (which is often associated with a neurological, chemical, hormonal, or emotional disorder). So, what does dark psychology have to do with lean-agile thinking practices such as structured frameworks, timeboxed ceremonies, teamwork, cooperation, collaboration, limited work-in-process (WIP), small batch sizes, single tasking, one piece workflow, simplicity, business experiments, rapid feedback, continuous improvement, etc.? Well, the answer to that is obvious, because psychopaths simply cannot follow a prescribed set of rules that disempower them from serving their greatest market, customer, and end-user (i.e., their own insatiable egos). They'll break the rules, cannot comprehend or are cognitively blind structured frameworks, and customize them for their own benefit or highlight themselves or accomplishments. They create bottomless backlogs, multitask, use divide-and-conquer principles to parallelize work, create unnecessarily complex solutions, and continuous improvement is often ignored. Worst of all, they'll attack or abuse their competitors as often as possible. Let's examine common antipatterns of how lean-agile leaders abuse lean-agile ceremonies.

- **Power Hungry**
- **Manipulative**
- **Ruthless**
- **Exploitive**
- **Dishonest**
- **Immoral**
- **Criminal**

Machia-vellian

- **Self-Admiration**
- **Superiority**
- **Entitlement**
- **Controlling**
- **Lacks Empathy**
- **Insecure**
- **Individualistic**

Narcissist

- **Angry**
- **Argumentative**
- **Violent**
- **Callous**
- **Cynical**
- **Nihilistic**
- **Lacks Remorse**

Psychopathy

Lean-Agile Meeting Antipatterns (or Dark Psychology)

1. **A·gen·da·less** (*ə-jĕn′də′lĭs*) Plan, goals, purpose, program, schedule, activities; <u>Meeting held by leaders just because they have the power to do so without a goal, purpose, objectives, or schedule of activities or any clear value adding purpose</u>

   ✓ Lack of purpose.
   ✓ Lack of goals or objectives.
   ✓ Lack of clear agenda or activities.

   A common antipattern of poor lean-agile leaders is to schedule agendaless meetings. That is, lean-agile meetings without a clear, concise, and measurable purpose, goal, objective, or set of activities. Basic Scrum ceremonies or meetings have very specific purposes (i.e., sprint planning, daily standups, reviews, retrospective, refinement, etc.). Of course, the goal of sprint planning is to identify a few measurable, value-adding sprint goals and activities that can be achieved by a small Scrum team in an iteration, sprint, or timebox. Therefore, sprint planning should not be used for any purpose other than to identify goals and activities. The same is true for all other Scrum meetings. Lean-agile reference models like the Scaled Agile Framework (SAFe) also have a few salient ceremonies or meetings such as lean-agile solution or product planning, program increment (PI) planning, scrum of scrums (SoS), system demos, inspect and adapt (I&A), etc. For instance, the purpose of lean-agile solution or product planning is to identify a set of goals, epics, capabilities, features, backlogs, roadmaps, and even near-term architectural runways for a 90-day PI, set of PIs, or quarters. Therefore, lean-agile solution or product management should not be used for any other purpose. Other than recurring lean-agile meetings such as those found in SAFe or Scrum, all other meetings should also have a clear purpose, goal, objective, agenda, or set of activities. Meetings should not be scheduled or held for the sake of meeting. Sometimes meetings have intangible objectives like teambuilding, collaboration, pair or mob programming, conflict resolution, impediment removal, architecture, design, testing, brainstorming, or establishing trust, morale, or rapport. However, lean-agile meetings should be sparse, short, sharply timeboxed, infrequent, and have a measurable purpose, goal, objective, agenda, set of activities, and most importantly of all, outcomes. Like goals and objectives, lean-agile meetings should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). Oftentimes, poor lean-agile leaders schedule a standing meeting with a standard purpose, goal, objective, agenda, and set of activities, and then repurpose the standing meeting for an entirely different reason. Sometimes, repurposing a meeting for emergency reasons is unavoidable, but this should not be a recurring practice. If a meeting requires a unique purpose, then the better approach is to cancel the standing meeting and schedule a new meeting with enough advanced notice so that participants have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and come prepared to offer value adding contributions.

2. **All•Day•Mar·a·thons** (*ôl • dā • măr′ə-thŏnz′*) Prolonged event, endurance contest, cross country race, lasting an entire day, multiple day or weeklong event; <u>Meetings or all-day sessions scheduled by leaders to ensure everyone is fully utilized</u>

   ✓ Meeting with a long duration.
   ✓ Exceeds 2, 4, 6, or 8 hours in length.
   ✓ May extend to weeks, months, or years.

   An all-too common antipattern of poor lean-agile leaders is to schedule all-day marathon meetings. That is, lean-agile meetings that last four, six, eight, or even more hours in a single day. Most lean-agile methods and frameworks like Scrum or SAFe have ceremonies or meetings with very short timeboxes (i.e., 15-30-or-60-minutes). In the early days, Scrum sprints or iterations lasted 30 days or more, and in one case some industries even scheduled 90-to-180-day sprints or iterations. In these cases of abnormally long sprints or iterations, a sprint planning meeting could take 4-6-or-8-hours or more. However, with two-week sprints or iterations being the norm, sprint backlog grooming, refinement, or advanced preparation, and a sprint planning meeting can now be done in 30-to-60-minutes tops. A daily standup or scrum of scrums (SoS) meeting can be done in 15-20-or-30-minutes in the worst case, and sometimes less. Sprint backlog grooming, refinement, or advanced preparation can be done in 30-to-60-minutes, and sprint reviews and demos can be done quickly too (especially if they're focused on demonstrating the accomplishment of a few salient sprint goals or objectives vs. a person-by-person status or review). Of course, a sprint retrospective should not take hours either and can be done anonymously in a few minutes using the latest brainstorming or collaborative tools. Even SAFe ceremonies can be done almost as quickly as Scrum ceremonies or meetings, with the exception of program increment (PI), quarterly, or 90-day planning. But even this can be done quickly and efficiently if the scale, scope, and magnitude of the team-of-teams (i.e., agile release train or ART) is kept to a manageable size, lean-agile solution or product backlog management or grooming is properly formed, and the teams have groomed their backlogs in advance, typically in the form of story mapping. The purpose, goal, and objective of a lean-agile meeting is to focus on a few salient goals and objectives, limit the batch sizes or work in process (WIP), and deliver valuable products and services in the shortest possible lead and cycle time (typically in minutes, hours, and days). Therefore, there is no need for elongated or extended sprint or PI planning meetings. An all-too common antipattern of poor lean-agile leaders is to schedule all-day working sessions to ensure everyone is present, contributing, is fully utilized, and charging to the project appropriately. This is micromanagement and is completely unnecessary as Scrum and SAFe ceremonies properly executed are more than sufficient to ensure everyone is adding value, which can be accomplished by short pair or mob programming sessions.

3. **Car·bon•Cop·y** (*kär′bən • kŏp′ē*) Copy, replica, likeness, redundant, duplicate, facsimile; <u>Meetings which leader duplicates to fill up available calendar space, look like they're adding more value than they actually are, and achieve maximum redundancy</u>

   ✓ Duplicate or redundant meetings.
   ✓ Indistinguishable meeting variation types.
   ✓ Full-utilization or micromanagement meetings.

   Another common antipattern of poor lean-agile leaders is to schedule carbon copy meetings. That is, create subtle variations

of lean-agile ceremonies and meetings across a workweek, iteration, sprint, 90-day period, or business quarter. These often come in the form of lean coffees, communities of practice (CoP), brown bags, guest lectures, orientations, tutorials, training, happy hours, and other collaborative sessions. Now, in all practical reality, most of these types of meetings do have some value adding capabilities, but the trick is not to go overboard and simply schedule duplicate meetings just because you can. It's okay to have a lean coffee, CoP, brown bag, guest lecture, or even happy hour once every couple of weeks, once a month, or even on a quarterly basis. Scheduling multiple lean coffees, CoPs, brown bags, or guest lectures per week is a too much. Oftentimes, lean-agile leaders get a little bit too excited, go overboard, and want to overcommunicate. However, the trick is to keep the number, volume, and frequency of these value-adding interactions, meetings, and ceremonies to a bare minimum. Perhaps, there's a unique, one-of-kind opportunity for a guest lecture, brownbag, or other tutorial or training event that's unavoidable. But don't make this a regular occurrence. Definitely don't have a redundant CoP, brown bag, or guest lecture for every specialized group, but rather share a bi-weekly or monthly timeslot with multiple special interest groups. That is, only focus on a few, salient, high-priority, and value adding events where people can get just-in-time information. Many private industry specialty groups, consortiums, and even vendors have webinars on a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly basis. Build in enough time for your team to attend some of these private industry events, especially if they are relevant to the task at hand. Ask your staff to identify these private industry offerings, advertise them within your enterprise, and enable your staff to take advantage of these just-in-time training and informational webinars. Don't go overboard and schedule multiple speakers or topical areas per event such as lean coffees. Rather than have 15, five-minute topics, how about one or two value adding 15-minute topics. Be sure to share the tools and practices offered by the presenter, otherwise the purpose or value of the forum is negated. For instance, if a presenter is going to describe a unique tool or practice like road mapping, assessments, planning templates, metrics, or automation suites, then ensure that the artifact is stored in public repository where participants can download, copy, use, and exploit them. Sometimes a topic is unclear or takes time to absorb, so it's okay to repeat it.

4. **Con·trar·i·an** (*kən-trâr'ē-ən*) Negate, resist, oppose, dissent, disagree, contradict; Meeting in which leader first solicits ideas from subordinates and then contradicts everyone to humiliate their opposition and gain power and status with little effort

- ✓ Gaslighting.
- ✓ Bait-and-switch.
- ✓ Judo or boomerang.

A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders is to solicit input in public and then contradict it. That is, pretend to be humble, open, and collaborative by first soliciting inputs from subordinates and then directly contradict it with force to humiliate the contributor and further establish a footing on the power and status hierarchy. This is a subtle form of dark psychology, because the lean-agile leader may behave somewhat normally in private conversations, personal interactions, and routine team meetings, but then suddenly take a hostile posture in a public forum. In other words, lean-agile leader will deceive their subordinates into a false sense of security by acting normally during routine Scrum ceremonies or meetings, but immediately take an offensive, hostile, or domineering position in public. This is especially true in public settings such as a scrum of scrums (SoS) where a unique advantage is gained in a larger group or even a smaller weekly status meeting with superiors in order to gain immediate power and status. This is an especially subtle technique, because the lean-agile leader looks like they're open to new ideas or are willing to speak last, when they really are unprepared or have nothing to say. So, by allowing subordinates to speak first, especially those who are creative, opinionated, or naïve, they now have a platform from which to launch an attack. If a subordinate has a particular problem they are encountering and a suggestion for improving the outcome, the lean-agile narcissist will immediately identify an opposite scenario to attack the suggestion and convince the subordinate and their leadership team that the subordinate is wrong. This a form of gaslighting because it undermines the credibility of subordinates, causes them to question their judgement, and may even confuse and disorient the subordinate into second guessing themselves. In private of course, the lean-agile leader may not immediately employ this aggressive technique so they may gather valuable business intelligence from their subordinates, simply assess their teammate's abilities, and build up their own low self-esteem even if they don't agree with subordinates in private. So, in a sense, the lean-agile narcissist may be a silent aggressor who is only willing to attack and disagree with subordinates publicly and may not agree with them even in private (but merely pretends to do so). Middle managers may not even allow subordinates to have a voice and may rarely solicit input from the team in lieu of micromanaging, gathering business intelligence, or handing down centralized autocratic decisions. Occasionally a middle manager will feign humility, ask for input, and then contradict the conclusions or suggestions.

5. **Dai·ly • Du·els** (*dā'lē • doo'əlz*) Fight, combat, battle, contest, clash, contention; Meeting in which leaders seek immediate daily conflict and disagreement because they are angry at the world or have some other hormonal or chemical imbalance

- ✓ Hostile work environment.
- ✓ Aggressive leaders/teammates.
- ✓ A form of decision-making submission.

An all-too common antipattern of lean-agile leaders is to engage in daily duels with their subordinates. That is, treat each Scrum or SAFe ceremony as a battle to be won or lost for personal aggrandizement or gain and to ensure his or her competitors or subordinates lose. In other words, there has to be a daily winner, and certainly a daily loser to each lean-agile ceremony or meeting. Where is teamwork, cooperation, collaboration, and safety in this personal narcissistic paradigm? Sometimes, it's just a matter of being selfish, childish, and immature, which is the norm for most human beings. Other times, it is simply competition between teammates, an insubordinate team member, or a misguided lean-agile leader (i.e., one that feels a Scrum or SAFe ceremony is to be won or lost, and certainly by an enemy, competitor, or weak prey). Another common source of perceived hostility is that the lean-agile leader is simply a Type A personality, extrovert, or some other alpha male or female syndrome. Perhaps the lean-agile leader was a high performer in K-12, college, and graduate school? Maybe the lean-agile leader was an athlete in school and is wired for competition? Maybe, their metabolism is in overdrive, they're neurotic, or

have some other obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). More often than not, there is a deeper source of this hostility in that the lean-agile leader is psychologically imbalanced, pathological, or suffers from some other physical or chemical disorder. In any case, Scrum or SAFe ceremonies or meetings tend to be daily boxing, wrestling, or mixed-martial-arts cage matches. The imbalanced lean-agile leader will come into the meeting in a foul mood, refuse to say good morning, and simply start attacking his or her subordinates, giving orders or tasking, or even start a fight by immediately disagreeing with a subordinate's or teammate's statements. It's unclear whether hostile lean-agile leaders mean to attack their subordinates, harass them into leaving, or simply transfer their personal or professional frustrations to their teammates? Their subordinates have to have strong emotional intelligence (or acquire it fast), social or people skills, and be prepared to disarm a hostile lean-agile leader quickly. In the worst case, subordinates may have to excuse themselves from the Scrum or SAFe ceremony immediately if it's clear the lean-agile leader refuses to cease and desist from hostilities. This puts lean-agile teammates on the defensive, new or dissenting ideas can't be presented, and real continuous or process improvement cannot occur under these circumstances. Perhaps this is why lean-agile leaders exhibit hostility (i.e., to prevent their subordinates from having a voice in decisions).

6. **Dom·i·na·tion** (*dŏm'ə-nā'shən*) Rule, control, command, dictate, tyrannize, manipulate; Meeting in which leaders dominate the timebox for their own selfish aggrandizement to keep other people and subordinates from gaining power and status

   ✓ Proactive or assertive.
   ✓ Non-stop communications.
   ✓ Centralized decision making.

A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders is to control a Scrum or SAFe meeting from start to finish with thoughts, activities, and actions. Don't mistake this with facilitation, but rather one-way communication. Perhaps the leader wants to boast or brag about their own recent accomplishments. Or maybe the leader discovers a new technique by gathering business intelligence from another subordinate and wishes to standardize the technique. Maybe their own leadership core passes down an order, directive, or initiative in command-and-control style, and they simply have no choice but to do likewise. Lean-agile leaders want to be customer centric, they want to get ahead, and they want to succeed as well. So, if their customers or leaders direct them to lead their subordinates over a cliff, then they have no choice but to follow orders. The art and science of lean-agile leaders is to engage in participative planning, codevelop or codesign strategic and tactical goals, and more importantly to decentralize decision making and solicit bottom-up solutions to these goals and objectives. The lean-agile leader is not just a mouthpiece and voice of top-down, hierarchical, and command-and-control decision-making. This is especially true when organizations insist upon creating, promulgating, and executing lean-agile hybrids like mixing and matching integrated master schedules (IMSs) with adaptive planning techniques like Scrum or SAFe. No self-respecting lean-agile leader would agree to mix IMSs with Scrum or SAFe but will simply direct their subordinates to do so if that's what their superiors tell them to do. Oftentimes, enterprises have deeply held traditional policies, guidelines, practices, tools, cultures, and belief systems spanning decades. In these cases, enterprises may hire lean-agile coaches merely to promulgate these decades old traditional thinking practices without question. That is, modern organizations are undergoing lean-agile transformations in droves, decision makers hire lean-agile coaches in droves to help them along, and then middle managers repurpose lean-agile transformation coaches to promulgate traditional thinking principles, practices, and tools instead of replacing them. Lean-agile transformation leaders oftentimes have Type A personalities and will simply start pushing down traditional practices upon their subordinates without thinking in order to get ahead and survive the turmoil. So, they'll schedule an administrative meeting and then start giving orders without taking a breath. Where's the lean-agile thinking in pushing down traditional practices and failing to solicit solutions from lean-agile coaches who know better than to hybridize IMSs, Scrum, and SAFe?

7. **Fre·quent** (*frē'kwənt*) Often, routine, annoying, hourly, weekly, everyday; Meeting held by leaders at unusually frequent intervals in order to gain business intelligence from subordinates in real-time because they are obsessive compulsive

   ✓ Recurring meetings held once per week.
   ✓ Recurring meetings held multiple times per week.
   ✓ Recurring meetings held multiple times in a single day.

A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders who want unnecessarily frequent input from their subordinates. That is, leaders with an obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), want to micromanage teams, or need to harvest frequent business intelligence for personal gain. It's no secret that a key mantra of lean-agile thinking is to add business value. Therefore, middle managers often torment lean-agile leaders to constantly justify their often high personal price tags by creating business value at frequent intervals. In other words, executives and directors may charter an enterprise lean-agile initiative to keep up with competitors, because it sounds chic, or they really believe in the power of lean-agile thinking, the latter of which is quite rare. However, middle managers don't really care about lean-agile thinking, they are often deeply vested in traditional thinking, and they'll torment the executive's (external) lean-agile transformation coaches to create frequent business value (in a hurry). Needless to say, that lean-agile transformation coaches typically have Type A personalities and are very assertive, competitive, and are probably overachievers exactly because they have an innate obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). Therefore, lean-agile transformation coaches intuitively, instinctively, and quickly schedule frequent, recurring meetings multiple times per week with their subordinates and then begin flogging them to create business value so they can justify their own price tags to skeptical traditional middle managers. Of course, this can be annoying since enterprise transformation takes time and lasting behavioral change isn't going to occur in seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, or even months. Lasting change takes years! This isn't to say that lean-agile methods and frameworks like Scrum and SAFe do not have immediate payback. Scrum projects can do in their first 90 days what traditional principles, practices, and tools cannot do in decades. The same is true for SAFe as change comes last not first in SAFe. Enterprise change is a gradual progression of Shu (crawl), Ha (walk), and Ri (run), and SAFe is designed to unstick or get traditional organizations unstuck in one, two, or three business quarters. Properly implemented, like Scrum, SAFe's lean and agile teams can do in 90 days what traditional teams cannot do in years

and decades. Scrum and SAFe are like training wheels that allow beginners to achieve amazing results in short order. However, the Ri (running) phase may take a little time, so meeting with lean-agile coaches multiple times per week is like watching paint dry, a glacier move, or a galaxy fly away at the edge of the universe (it just might not happen on your watch).

8. **Good·Old·Boys** ($good • \bar{o}ld • boiz$) Sexist, fascist, racist, chauvinist, xenophobic, ethnocentric; Meeting held by leaders to establish and promulgate a male dominated management regime typically based on the organization's prevailing ethnic group

   ✓ White collar clique, clan, or gang.
   ✓ Small decision-making group of similar ethnicity.
   ✓ Decision making group of similar ethnicity and gender.

   A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders who shun the inputs of subordinates who are unlike themselves. That is, lean-agile leaders form tightly knit ethnic, gender, and cultural decision-making groups and force unlike subordinates off of the team. There are an infinite variety of theories that examine why people are attracted to people who look like themselves (i.e., "positive assortative attraction"). In general, people are generally attracted to people who look like themselves. Much of this takes place at the subconscious, subliminal, or olfactory level. Humans naturally gravitate to those who look and sound like themselves and are repulsed by those that don't. And there are a variety of factors that are not related to image, such as race, nationality, color, education, religion, experience, place of origin, school, education, and of course, gender. Some nationalities are far more homogenous or heterogeneous than others, but in the end, people will search until they find someone who is a carbon copy of themselves. Take for instance, General Motors, because for decades its executive staff was composed of white protestant males over six feet tall who went to the University of Michigan, dressed the same, drove the same cars, had similar spouses, and lived on the same block. There is natural psychological, subliminal, and subconscious safety in grouping with people who are as much like us as possible. Since executives, directors, and lean-agile transformation coaches are often white alpha males, the core transformation team consists of white alpha males and all others beware. The converse is also true, as more white females are rising through the managerial and executive ranks, so many all-white middle management female cliques, clans, and gangs are also quickly forming in the average enterprise. And, of course, this goes for any ethnic group as well, as many Indians are rising to power in Western firms where information technology abounds, and form tightly knit ethnic clans as well. Oftentimes, these traditional and non-traditional good old boys' clans will form implicit and explicit decision-making groups, form recurring meetings where they can form a powerful coalition or collective, and intimidate, harass, and silence subordinates who are not part of the ethnic clique, clan, or gang. It's a mistake not to recognize the power of middle management ethnic groups, assume you are an equal decision-making partner, or assert yourself too strongly in the presence of an implicit or explicit ethnic coalition. Good old boys' groups sometimes pervade the immediate group and are pervasive throughout the corporate culture. Lean-agile leaders often draw people into these clans in order to intimidate them.

9. **I·de·a·Pi·ra·cy** ($\bar{i}\text{-}d\bar{e}'\partial • p\bar{i}'r\partial\text{-}s\bar{e}$) Rob, take, steal, swipe, pilfer, purloin; Meeting held by leaders for the expressed purpose of stealing their competitor's or subordinate's intellectual capital, ideas, and property for self aggrandizement and personal gain

   ✓ Corporate espionage.
   ✓ Intellectual property theft.
   ✓ Pilfering competitor processes.

   A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders who schedule meetings to pilfer process artifacts. That is, scheduling a lean-agile meeting with the expressed purpose of gathering a competitor's processes, practices, tools, metrics, and other ideas. The rate of change in today's global marketplace is exponential, new information evolves and emerges at an alarming rate, and it's simply impossible to keep up with the rate of innovation. The pressures to perform at a high level, successfully compete with one's peers, or simply keep up are rather imposing. Furthermore, there's always been the notion of free riders (i.e., obtaining something with little effort or cost). So, it's just too easy for today's deceptive lean-agile consultants to pilfer the intellectual property of their clients, competitors, peers, teammates, and subordinates. If you're particularly good or adept at hoarding an enterprise's intellectual property, processes, tools, and other corporate secrets, they you probably already have more data and information at your disposal than the average bear. Why work so hard, when you can simply sit back and accumulate the hard work of other people? A lean-agile leader may actually feign humility, allow others to speak first, or simply allow people to take the initiative to solve a problem, create a process or tool, or design a new innovation to address a problem at hand. Furthermore, the lean-agile leader may already have an arsenal or quiver of stolen corporate secrets to address the problem. It's a win-win scenario, because a subordinate may come up with a better solution for a gap in their knowledge base, or they may have a better idea than what their subordinate devises. Therefore, a lean-agile leader loses nothing while a subordinate spends hundreds of hours devising a solution, when they can simply accept that solution or pop one out of their tool bag at the last minute to thwart the effort of their subordinate. All the while, lean-agile leaders can surf from meeting to meeting, hold private meetings to seek additional intellectual capital, and spot and exploit a better tool than they already have to close a knowledge gap. Idea piracy is a skill, narcissistic lean-agile leaders are experts at sitting back, allowing peers, competitors, and subordinates to labor away at devising new and inferior solutions, and can spot a valuable tool in a heartbeat. The average consultant simply can't spot the value of an innovative process as quickly as a narcissistic leader who is adept at spotting valuable intellectual property, identifying gaps in their toolbox, and gathering new innovations quickly. Simple solutions are dismissed, while more complex, elegant, and sophisticated solutions are the goal, prize, or object of desire.

10. **I·de·a·Po·lice** ($\bar{i}\text{-}d\bar{e}'\partial • p\partial\text{-}l\bar{e}s'$) Monitor, control, enforce, guard, protect, prevent; Meeting in which leaders intentionally or unintentionally reject the ideas and contributions of subordinates and competitors for self aggrandizement and personal gain

    ✓ Cognitive blindness.
    ✓ Not invented here syndrome.
    ✓ Ardent protectors of the status quo.

A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders who exploit meetings to reject the ideas of peers, competitors, and subordinates. This goes hand-in-hand with "positive assortative mating" (i.e., people are attracted to those who look like themselves as well as share ideas). Conversely, ideas from people who do not look like themselves are rejected (especially outsiders). Enterprise cultures typically amalgamate around a common set of ethnic characteristics like race, religion, color, creed, gender, education, regional origin, language, accent, etc. Therefore, the ideas of that enterprise are limited to their culture. Enter an outsider who has been surfing from one enterprise to another and comes with a new bag of tricks. Any idea, like the outsider themselves, is foreign to the culture and is instantly rejected without consideration. People are cognitively blind to anyone who doesn't look and sound exactly like themselves or doesn't belong to the ethnic group with the most power and status. Lean-agile leaders often look and sound like the prevailing ethnic group are appointed as team leads while subordinates do not, therefore any idea they may have may be instantly rejected (good, bad, or indifferent). In this case, the lean-agile leaders implicitly and explicitly serve as the idea police and flag offenders (outsiders, subordinates, peers, etc.) with violations of the core ethnic group's prevailing norms, values, and practices (even if they are outdated, obsolete, or dysfunctional). To add insult to injury, the values, principles, and practices of the prevailing ethnic group are taken as gospel and any violator of the central belief system is viewed as heresy or simply ridiculed. Once again, while people tend to favor people who look and behave exactly like themselves, they may still be cognitively blind to the ideas of their ethnic and gender clones if they do not belong to the prevailing ethnic group. This isn't to say lean-agile leaders don't have some implicit wisdom themselves that doesn't come from outsiders. That is, lean-agile leaders implicitly understand the power of the prevailing values, principles, and practices and also understand that any foreign ideas will be instantly rejected. It's a double bonus if an innovation comes from the prevailing ethnic group or a member of a group to whom they believe has more power and status than themselves or a like-minded ethnic or gender clone. Competitiveness also enters into the equation, so the validity or invalidity of ideas is also based on whether they come from competitors. Even when competitors appeal to referent power (i.e., and ideas from a prevailing ethnic group), their ideas may simply not exist since subordinates often have little power and status as outsiders.

11. **In·cog·ni·to • Mode** (*ĭn′kŏg-nē′tō • mōd*) Mask, hide, cloak, conceal, disguise, camouflage; Meeting in which leaders eavesdrop on informal conversations to silently gather personal information for self aggrandizement and personal gain

   ✓ Gathering gossip.
   ✓ Eavesdropping on conversations.
   ✓ Quickly repeating personal information.

A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders who spy on their peers, competitors, and subordinates. This comes in a variety of deceptive practices. A subtle one is dialing into the phone line of a meeting early, but not dialing into the web meeting, appearing as though you are late. People will naturally start to socialize while they wait for a lean-agile leader to come to the meeting. All the while, the leader is listening to the conversation to gather competitive intelligence. Perhaps personal information will be exchanged, ideas and brainstorming will occur, gossip will be generated, or someone may even demean or deride the leader themselves. This all takes place in a few seconds or minutes, so the value of coming into a meeting one or two minutes late is worth its weight in gold. So much for Robert's rules of order, meeting etiquette, teaming agreements, and plain ethics and honesty. This extends well beyond simple online meetings and leaders who are experts at gathering competitive intelligence using incognito mode will simply hang out near an open door, eavesdrop on a conversation, or listen to people in a nearby cubicle, office, hallway, lobby, or kitchen. It's one thing or matter to listen to a public conversation by accident, but it's quite another to intentionally spy or listen to a private or personal conversation to which you are not privy or intended. Online meetings make this much worse when the phone line is separated from the meeting invite itself. That is, people can dial into a meeting privately without being recorded as in attendance. Lean-agile leaders often spy on the meetings of their competitors to gather business intelligence, new skills, quickly comprehend best practices, or simply gather dirt on their subordinates. Incognito mode is spreading so rapidly that it is moving beyond the arsenal of expert spies, eavesdroppers, and other dishonest and unethical people to the general population at large. People can quickly gather information from visual or auditory information on your computer screen, smart phone, or even background noise in your own home (like a child, pet, spouse, construction worker, delivery person, etc.). And lean-agile leaders will repeat what they heard in a heartbeat and use it against their peers, competitors, and subordinates if they can. Gossip has also been a prevailing method uniquely used by humans for hundreds of thousands if not millions of years. People will repeat gossip as though it were fact and won't even bother to create a personal relationship or schedule a business meeting for collaboration. Lean-agile meetings have rules which should be followed at all times because lean-agile leaders can be anything but professional.

12. **In·ter·rup·tions** (*ĭn′tə-rŭp′shənz*) Disrupt, intrude, suspend, break, stop, cutoff, delay; Meeting in which leader interrupts for personal and professional reasons to attend to their cellphone, doorbell, email, door bells, pet, friends, or family members

   ✓ To halt, delay, or disrupt.
   ✓ Frequent stoppages in activity.
   ✓ Distracted by ancillary obligations.

A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders who are simply selfish, egotistical, and narcissistic. They'll interrupt a meeting at any time for any reason, be it personal, professional, or otherwise. During online meetings, lean-agile leaders will put their smartphone volumes on maximum and set them next to their laptop's microphone. So, any personal text, call, or ringtone immediately, abruptly, and disruptively interrupts a meeting. Lean-agile leaders will say, "Please wait a minute, I have to take this call!" It could be a package they've been waiting for, or some other courier service. It might be the pizza delivery guy. It could even be a home repair person, garbage man, or appliance delivery person. Maybe, it's even their third cousin from Timbuktu who they haven't spoken to in a few years. Really, is your third cousin from Timbuktu more important than a lean, agile, Scrum, or SAFe meeting or ceremony? They'll even have a ring video doorbell wired to their smartphone and insist upon greeting anyone who comes to their front door personally, because they're obviously more important than a lean-agile

ceremony. It's not uncommon for cats to walk across a laptop, dogs to start barking, or a spouse to barge into a home office and have a casual conversation about dinner in the middle of a lean-agile ceremony or meeting. Working from home means working from home, not making personal business a priority over a timeboxed lean-agile ceremony or meeting. It's not uncommon for lean-agile transformation coaches to put their clients on hold during a major customer engagement meeting as part of a multi-million-dollar digital transformation initiative. Lean-agile leaders will even interrupt scheduled ceremonies or meetings to make a cup of coffee or tea, eat their food loudly during the meeting, or even multitask. They might be cleaning a room, doing Spring cleaning, reorganizing a desk or bookshelf, or even remodeling basement during a lean-agile ceremony or meeting. Home repair people are not very punctual, so lean-agile leaders will even be distracted checking their phones, email, front doors, or looking out their windows for the entire duration of a lean-agile ceremony waiting for the repairman to arrive. If you know anything about home repair people, they're also very talkative, so answering a door, generally means a 15-minute conversation about the scope of the day's home repair when they arrive. In-person meetings can be just as disruptive as people are texting on their laptops, surfing the web, checking their smartphones, or abruptly leave to catch the early train. Lean-agile leaders will even interrupt meetings to ask their subordinates for advice or bring them into a client meeting.

13. **Late • Ar·ri·val** (*lāt • ə-rī′vəl*) Tardy, behind, delayed, overdue, unreliable, unpunctual; <u>Meeting in which leader consistently arrives late because they are selfish, arrogant, conceited, inconsiderate, or wish to harass the other meeting attendants</u>

- ✓ Poor time management.
- ✓ Inability to keep commitments.
- ✓ Routine non-punctual behavior.

Another common antipattern of lean-agile leaders who simply do not believe it is important to be punctual or honor a timebox. A timebox is a concise, precise, and exact period of time in which a lean-agile ceremony or meeting must occur. It generally refers to a maximum vs. minimum period of time, but the activity must be conducted. If the activity can't be conducted or a higher-priority activity must occur, then the scheduled ceremony or meeting should be canceled, delayed, or rescheduled. For instance, there are 15-minute daily standups. This generally means the meeting should be no more than 15 minutes but may be less. There could be a one-hour sprint planning meeting, a 30-minute sprint demo, or a 15-minute sprint retrospective. Lean-agile ceremonies are forcing functions for communication, collaboration, teamwork, and other vital forms of information exchange. Therefore, regularly scheduled lean-agile ceremonies should be recurring or standing, should not be cancelled or delayed on a casual basis, and certainly not skipped. It's important for all participants to attend a regularly schedule lean-agile ceremony or meeting on-time. In fact, people should arrive at least two to three minutes early if its on online meeting and five to ten minutes early if it's a face-to-face meeting. This way, the Scrummaster or other lean-agile facilitator can manage the timebox. It's not atypical for extremely narcissistic lean-agile leaders to stroll into ceremonies 10, 20, or even 30 minutes late. This is clearly not the hallmark of a worthy lean-agile leader, it is a signal from the lean-agile leader that they simply do not care and may even be a form of harassment. Lean-agile consultants with good time management skills are punished for being punctual, rearranging their personal lives to be on time, or simply being good lean-agile citizens. Why is it that lean-agile leaders should not be exemplary lean-agile citizens and arrive a little early for lean-agile meetings rather than late or not at all? In today's lean-agile world with so many time-boxed ceremonies and meetings, especially online meetings, there's almost no excuse to be late for a meeting, because attending a meeting is usually one-click away. That is, email notifications will pop up 15 minutes in advance and say, "Click here to attend!" The most common reasons lean-agile leaders are late for timeboxed ceremonies or meetings is because their laptop isn't turned on, they're at a personal (unannounced) appointment, they're doing housework or other routine chores, they're involved in another personal or professional meeting or conversation, or they simply forgot. Of course, the most common reason for tardiness is to harass subordinates or demean them.

14. **Late • Can·cel·la·tion** (*lāt • kăn′sə-lā′shən*) Call off, annul, nullify, terminate, invalidate; <u>Meeting in which leader intentionally or unintentionally cancels at the last minute after everyone has reworked their personal and professional schedules to attend</u>

- ✓ Lack of advanced notice.
- ✓ Self-centered, self-absorbed.
- ✓ Inconsideration towards others.

A very common antipattern of lean-agile leaders who simply do not believe it is important to be punctual or honor a ceremony or meeting. This simply means that the leader cancels a lean-agile ceremony a few minutes before it is to occur, just after it occurs, or interrupts it to cancel it in progress (oftentimes for personal reasons). It's important to note that many lean-agile ceremonies or meetings are recurring, standing, or mandatory meetings or forcing functions for communication, collaboration, and teamwork. Well-schooled, by-the-book, and disciplined lean-agile consultants will move heaven and earth to attend, facilitate, and execute one of these ceremonies or meetings (i.e., sprint planning, standup, demo, retro, refinement, etc.). What this means is that disciplined lean-agile consultants will move around their personal schedules to attend these ceremonies or meetings. They'll go to bed early, get up early, beat traffic, reschedule medical appointments, or other personal events. They may even reschedule personal vacations or leave to attend lean-agile ceremonies or meetings, especially in the case of multi-day or weeklong events like SAFe program increment (PI), quarterly, or 90-day planning, or a weeklong Design Sprint. The best lean-agile consultants may even schedule them early in the day if people need to leave early, or later in the day if people need to arrive late or live in an earlier time zone. Therefore, if the professional lean-agile consultant, facilitator, or SAFe coach is going to schedule a ceremony or meeting when it's convenient for people, keep the timeboxes slim, and even move around their personal lives, then the meeting attendees should do likewise. Lean-agile ceremonies or meetings are the lifeblood of methods and frameworks like Scrum and SAFe, so the best consultants, coaches, leaders, and facilitators will not cancel them, and certainly not cancel them five minutes before they are to occur or five minutes after. And they won't leave mid-ceremony for a personal, non-vital reason. When lean-agile leaders cancel a ceremony or meeting a few minutes before or after it starts, they are signaling to its participants that they are selfish, narcissistic, and care nothing at all about anyone

other than themselves. If the attendees cancelled a medical appointment to attend, then lean-agile leaders should honor the meeting participants and attend the ceremonies or meetings as well. Canceling a meeting extremely early in the morning or late in the day is the worst form of harassment, because it is simply a form of dark psychological harassment or narcissism. It is most often done as a form of harassment by a passive-aggressive lean-agile leader or a form of crass negligence.

15. **Late • Meet·ings** (*lāt • mē′tǐngz*) Late morning, afternoon, late afternoon, evening, night, weekend; [Meeting in which leader schedules as late in the day as possible because they have something more important to do except meet with their team](#)

   ✓ Late-morning or early afternoon.
   ✓ Late-day events and meetings.
   ✓ Evening or even nighttime.

An insidious antipattern of lean-agile leaders who simply don't understand lean-agile values, principles, or practices, nor human physiology. If a lean-agile transformation is important to a leader, then the ceremony or meeting should be bright and early, such as 9:00 or 10:00 am, but not much later. Most important lean-agile ceremonies, meetings, or even business matters should be conducted before 12:00 pm (noon). Most lean-agile leaders, executives, and other business managers understand this. The most important meeting should have the highest priority of the day. Many teams start even earlier than 9:00 am, and its not unusual for lean-agile teams to start a day at 5:00 or 6:00 am and have most important business-making decisions if not the work itself done by 9:00 or 10:00 am (and certainly by noon). Only the stragglers start their day at 10:30 pm, noon, afternoon, or even late in the day. Yes, there are executives who have their first strategic business meeting at 5:00, 6:00, or even 7:00 pm. Some people are simply night-owls and prefer to conduct business between 8:00 pm and 5:00 am. Maybe that's when their families are asleep, the household chores are done, or any personal business or matters are complete. This is simply a non-starter! Furthermore, traditional leaders will hold their most important administrative meetings before noon and schedule lean-agile transformation meetings at 4:00 pm, on a Friday, or even a weekend. That is, most of their week is for more important traditional administrative meetings and personal business, while late in the day or late in the week is for stretch goals, nice-to-haves, luxuries, and other non-essential ceremonies or meetings like lean-agile change or transformation. Oftentimes, lean-agile leaders are simply procrastinators, and conduct their most important business late in the day, late in the week, or more insidiously, on weekends. From a physiological perspective, people have higher levels of blood sugar, energy, and adrenaline early in the morning, rather than later. For middle aged lean-agile consultants, blood sugar is lowest after 12:00 pm, and certainly at 4:00 or 5:00 pm. Cognitive abilities are depressed in the later stages of the day, and extremely poor business decisions are made during these latter time frames. Bad multimillion or multibillion dollar decisions generally occur during afternoon meetings. Behavior also changes, as people are generally happier and exhibit better social and interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence in the morning, and are rather rude, impatient, and inconsiderate later in the day. To rephrase W. Edwards Deming, "if you don't meet in the morning, don't meet at all!"

16. **Late • Week** (*lāt • wēk*) Friday, last minute, end of week, last business day, last responsible time; [Meeting in which leader schedules as late in the week as possible because they have something more important to do except meet with their team](#)

   ✓ Inconvenient business activities.
   ✓ Inessential enterprise initiatives.
   ✓ Low-priority business meetings.

A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders who simply don't value lean-agile values, principles, or practices. That is, many executives, directors, leaders, and other managers will put off lean-agile transformation pre-planning, planning, ceremonies, or meetings until the end of the week. A common time is 4:00, 5:00, or even 6:00 pm on a Friday. What this says is the lean-agile thinking values, principles, and practices are simply unimportant (or lean-agile transformation consultants are not a very high priority). Some customers may have a variety of initiatives, transformation teams, ceremonies, and meetings, and they'll have the most important ones early in the week, while saving the least important ones for late in the week. Many times, high-priority (traditional) business initiatives occur Monday through Thursday, and they simply do not have time for lean-agile transformation before Friday. Or they may feel that lean-agile transformation is a luxury or stretch goal or objective and want to focus their attention on the matter at hand when the normal business of the workweek has run its course. Think about this statement for a second—If the normal course of business does not include lean-agile transformation, then the firm isn't a lean-agile thinking firm, nor are they prepared to devote the necessary energy or resources to organization change. This should be an immediate warning sign to the lean-agile leader or transformation consultant. If your client will only meet with you on Friday at 4:00 or 5:00 pm, then keep looking, because that will be a non-starter from beginning to end, they'll prioritize traditional initiatives throughout your engagement, and deprioritize lean-agile transformation as well. This is a signal to you that lean-agile transformation is simply not important to them, nor are you. Some lean-agile consultants will take this as a special challenge to get their foot in the door, hold a few late-week or weekend meetings, and then move the meetings forward in the week as the value and priority of the lean-agile transformation begins to take effect. However, this is a very unlikely scenario and once a client pigeonholes or slots lean-agile transformation ceremonies and meeting late in the week, they'll simply keep them in that timeslot until it is no longer a priority, they stop attending the late-week meetings, and the lean-agile consultants will eventually tire and go away. Oftentimes, lean-agile consultants will not even be told that transformation ceremonies or meetings are to be held on Fridays in advance, so they must proactively ask when key business decisions are to be made. A late week lean-agile transformation meeting is an early warning sign or indicator that transformation and you are unimportant.

17. **Mi·cro • Man·age·ment** (*mī′krō • măn′ǐj-mənt*) Controlling, overbearing, authoritarian, dictatorial, domineering, oppressive; [Meeting in which leader uses to control and direct every possible detail and dictate detailed tasks to staff like automatons](#)

   ✓ Authoritarian behavior.
   ✓ Disempowering behavior.

✓ Inability to delegate decisions.

A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders who assert ironclad control over every detail or aspect of a team or solution. That is, lean-agile leaders who refuse to delegate or share decision making with their subordinates or teams with respect to management, administrative, and technical matters. Sometimes it is simply a matter of control by neurotic lean-agile leaders and managers who wish to feel like they are in-charge, know-everything, or feel the art of leadership is to think for, and control other people. At other times, it is overconfidence by lean-agile leaders; a sense that they have more knowledge, wisdom, or experience than other people; and it is their responsibility or manifest destiny to make all decisions, design a solution, and simply tell other people what to do all of the time. Many times, it's simply distrust of subordinates, junior people, people new to the domain or organization, and outsiders. Most of the time, lean agile transformation leaders are extroverts, have Type A personalities, are alpha males or females, and wish to direct people with lesser abilities. If the lean-agile leader is particularly effective at convincing people he or she knows everything and is worthy of making all decisions, and gaslights his or her subordinates into believing they are incapable, then autocratic behavior becomes disempowering. That is, people will psychologically check-out of a situation, allow the autocrat to make all decisions, and sit idle doing nothing until they are told what to do. Unfortunately, lean-agile ceremonies or meetings are the perfect conduit or tool to enable micromanagers. It's ironic that lean-agile values, principles, and practices actually promulgate the opposite behavior for exactly that reason. Instead, lean-agile thinking promotes decentralized decision making, empowerment, bottoms up decision making, and the values, principles, frameworks, methods, practices, tools, and techniques to do so. However, lean-agile practices are simply too easy to manipulate, because they are ignored, not followed, abused, or used as a conduit for overbearing lean-agile transformation leaders. Afterall, to be a lean-agile transformation leader is to tell other people how to dress, act, look, behave, think, and do every day, right? Too often, lean-agile frameworks like Scrum or SAFe promote such behaviors with roles like Release Train Engineer, Product Owner (CEO), or ScrumMASTER. It gets worse when it comes to lean-agile transformation leaders who immediately create an additional layer of frequent inessential micromanagement meetings to gather intel on subordinates, pad resumes, direct their activities, assert their knowledge, harass competitors, and use people as secretaries.

18. **Mul·ti·task·ing** (*mŭl′tē-tăs′kĭng*) Parallel, alongside, overlapping, simultaneous, concurrent, contemporaneous; Meeting in which leader is performing or participating multiple unrelated personal and professional tasks, meetings, and activities

✓ Performing more than one task at a time.
✓ Inability to focus on a single activity from start to finish.
✓ Desire to parallelize activities into highly individualized tasks.

A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders who do not understand lean-agile thinking, principles, and practices. Lean-agile thinking involves simplifying the scope of a product or project, devising a minimum viable product (MVP), and teasing out market, customer, and end-user needs. This involves slowing down the pace of work, building in excess capacity for creativity, single tasking, teamwork, and simplicity. This is known as reducing batch sizes, limiting work in process (WIP), one piece workflow, etc. The practical side of this involves small business experiments, simple models or mockups, and microservices, web apps, or mobile apps. Most of these activities happen in a rinse-and-repeat cycle over and over again, as a team or group working in unison. This team cooperatively, collaboratively, and collectively brainstorms; solves problems, creates solutions, and delivers; measures market, customer, and end user feedback; and retrospects and repeats this cycle many times. The traditional leader instead wishes to document or predict volumes of over scoped product specifications chock full of unneeded requirements, programs these into integrated master schedules (IMSs), and then assign work packages or tasks to people to work in parallel (individually). This is clearly the ultimate form of multitasking or traditional thinking. Even the best lean-agile leaders are traditional thinkers at the very core of their DNA. A closely related form of multitasking is simply an overbearing lean-agile transformation leader, product owner, scrummaster, or team leader who develops a large product backlog—adding more to it every day—and then assigning new tasks to his or her teammates at every sprint planning, daily standup, sprint demo, retro, or backlog refinement meeting. Worse yet, they'll simply schedule out of scope meetings to dole out more work, email it to you, call you on your smartphone on evenings and weekends, or Skype or text out of scope work while you're already working hard. Multitasking is closely related to neuroticism, hormonal imbalance, or simply the overactive imagination of a personality on overdrive. If they feel entitled to promulgate their traditional multitasking brain, they'll simply wake up each day and add dozens of new user stories and tasks to your bottomless product backlog. Of course, this is the antithesis of lean-agile leadership, thinking, values, principles, practices, methods, frameworks, and tools. Most lean-agile methods and frameworks contain guardrails to prevent multitasking behavior such as limiting WIP, creating MVPs, or small batch sizes, however, multitasking lean-agile maniacs abound and are immune to such values, principles, and practices.

19. **Nev·er·end·ing** (*nĕv′ər-ĕn′dĭng*) Ceaseless, perpetual, everlasting, unremitting, continuous, infinite; Meeting in which leader continues without a short duration or timebox until all possible topics, ideas, activities, and contributions are exhausted

✓ Over scoped meetings.
✓ Perpetual or long lasting meeting.
✓ Unusually long-winded lean-agile leader.

A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders who cannot end a meeting on time. Most lean-agile leaders can't grasp the idea of timeboxed ceremonies and meetings. They believe a lean-agile ceremony or meeting is permission, a platform, and a mandate to meet as long as needed to satisfy their personal agenda or traditional management philosophy. Timeboxed ceremonies or meetings go hand-in-hand with lean-agile thinking principles and practices such as limiting work-in-process (WIP), small batch sizes, single tasking, one piece workflow, simplicity, experimentation, rapid feedback, and continuous improvement. It's ironic that most lean-agile leaders neither grasp the principles and practices of lean-agile thinking nor timeboxed ceremonies and practices. Traditional thinking is a naturally occurring human behavior (i.e., infinite complexity,

large batches, unlimited WIP, long wait and cycle times, unmanageable scope and risk, integrated master schedules, etc.). Traditional leaders believe the art and science of reducing risk means forming bottomless backlogs and adding to them every day to mitigate risk, when lean-agile math reveals the opposite. That is, bottomless backlogs increase risk, lead, cycle, and wait times; reduce quality and customer satisfaction; and increase cost and project failure. Lean-agile leaders intuitively and instinctually form and manage ever expanding bottomless backlogs, so lean-agile ceremonies expand accordingly to address the unstoppable expansion of their elastic backlogs. Information technology doesn't help, because it's too easy to add more and more backlog items to spreadsheets, word processing documents, emails, virtual note taking systems, lean-agile lifecycle management systems, and virtual online brainstorming tools. Mural and Miro allow one to magnify and reduce the size of your backlog accordingly. That is, in a physical room or building, one is constrained by the size of wall or whiteboard space. However, in an IT tool like Microsoft Project, Mural, Miro, or some other ALM tool there is no limit. One can simply reduce the size of objects and add more at will. With the virtual elasticity of modern lean-agile IT tools, then the meetings themselves need to expand to address the size of the bottomless backlogs. In fact, even more WIP can be added during the meeting and the meeting expanded to address it. Why end the meeting at all? To heck with timeboxing? What fool invented that? Cyril Northcote Parkinson said, "work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion," so the corollary is "the amount of meeting time expands to fill the amount of virtual (infinite) random access memory available in a lean-agile ALM tool."

20. **No • Show** ($n\bar{o} \bullet sh\bar{o}$) Awol, absent, away, gone, missing, unavailable; Meeting in which leaders do not attend, are absent, or simply do not appear without notification because they are selfish, they think they are too important, or they simply don't care

   ✓ Failing to attend a schedule event.
   ✓ Guest of honor or leader who is absent.
   ✓ Missing meetings out of sheer negligence.

A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders who miss meetings out of sheer negligence. The infamous quality guru, W. Edwards Deming, is quoted as saying, "Come yourself, or send no one!" What he meant by that is that executives, directors, and other leaders should attend lean-agile ceremonies or meetings, or quite frankly the events shouldn't be held at all. The success of a lean-agile transformation necessitates the involvement of the leaders, not for micromanagement purposes, but show interest, be a role model, and lend credence to the change initiative. This is true of all lean-agile ceremonies, whether it is an annual strategic planning event, quarterly planning event, bi-weekly ceremony or meeting, or other key transformation ceremony or decision-making meeting. It seems obvious that a CEO, executive, or director should show up for an annual strategic planning event, but you'd be surprised how many do not. It's unclear if they do not believe in the value of strategic planning or in the case of junior executives and directors, they just do not want to assume responsibilities for actually doing work. Perhaps they are simply too busy with critical business meetings vital to their success like mergers and acquisitions, financial planning meeting, or simply globetrotting around the world visiting international sites to monitor organizational performance. These are certainly more profitable, rewarding, or fun than sitting through a multiday strategic planning meeting, getting key performance indicators (KPIs) or objectives and key results (OKRs) assigned to them, or worse yet being responsible for performing the activities to hit KPI and OKR targets. Oftentimes, executives have no direct staff, so anyone that attends an annual strategic planning meeting is their administrative assistant to have responsibility for satisfying KPIs and OKRs directly assigned to them. In the case of annual or quarterly lean-agile planning meetings, it's important for leaders to attend in order to communicate enterprise objectives, visions, and expectations, lend credence and support for the solution or product management approach, participate in these events directly, rub elbows with the troops, and validate, score, approve the outcomes of these events. It's not unusual for an executive to cancel out all together or show up for 15 minutes before jet setting to their next appointment. This isn't what Deming meant by "Come yourself or send no one!" He didn't mean skip it, and he certainly didn't mean make a cameo for 15 minutes! When a lean-agile leader skips any lean-agile ceremony or event at any level, it simply signals that they do not care about the transformation initiative (if executives can spell L-E-A-N at all).

21. **Non • stop** ($n\breve{o}n'st\breve{o}p'$) Contiguous, unbroken, uninterrupted, incessant, inexhaustible, unceasing; Meetings in which leader fills every minute of a day's calendar with back-to-back meetings without a break to achieve full utilization and cost efficiency

   ✓ Back-to-back meetings.
   ✓ Contiguous, overlapping meetings.
   ✓ Full utilization, maximum capacity management.

A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders who fill daily calendars with too many meetings. They fill up every minute of your calendar from dusk until dawn with (overlapping) meetings without a minute to spare. In some cases, lean-agile leaders will schedule a single all-day working session to ensure full-utilization of their staff. All of this is utter nonsense, if it wasn't the standard, norm, or best practice of lean-agile leaders. It's not uncommon for traditional executives, directors, leaders, and managers to schedule 15 one-or-two-hour standing meetings per week. There were limits to these because one may have to switch conference rooms, drive to conference rooms between buildings, or there were constraints on commuting to work or leaving early to meet personal or family obligations. Therefore, 15 was about the right number of meetings per week (averaging three daily two-hour meetings per 5-day business week). Of course, this was far too excessive and certainly insufficient for an over scoped traditional project with a 5-10-or-15 year 25-thousand-line integrated master schedule (IMS). That's even more lines of IMS than software source code in many respects (i.e., the IMS was bigger than the final software solution)! Today, of course, with online Skype meetings, its not necessary to leave the comfort of one's home, endure a grueling multi-hour commute in bad weather conditions, or even shuffle the children back and forth to school anymore. Even doctors do online visits now (as long as you can get your video camera centered on the affected area for the doctor to take a look)! In today's Skype world people can now fill your Outlook calendar with 4, 5, 6, or more non-stop (planning) meetings every day! That's one heck of a lot of planning and micromanagement! And there's certainly no lean-agile thinking in that! When exactly are the worker bees supposed to work, especially since lean-agile ceremonies and meetings require full worker

bee attendance and participation in all-day planning meetings? In today's online lean-agile world, we can now fill the schedules of worker bees with 30 to 40 Scrum or SAFe meetings per week. Don't forget the army of lean-agile transformation middle managers who want to count your story points multiple times per day, pad their resumes with your statistics, and gaslight you so you don't get uppity and replace them. Worse yet, is the middle managers are so selfish, they take all of the prime calendar spots for story point micromanagement meetings and leave productive meetings for the edges of the day (or all night and weekends)! And worker bees are guilty of insubordination for skipping middle management meetings to work!

22. **Out·dat·ed** (*out-dā′tĭd*) Expired, obsolete, out-of-date, unnecessary, cancelled, overtaken-by-events; Meeting in which leaders refuse to remove when it is no longer needed and leave on their schedule for emergency purposes or to fill their calendar

   ✓ Unnecessary meeting.
   ✓ Meeting no longer needed or obsolete.
   ✓ Dead transformation initiative or schedule facade.

   A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders who schedule meetings they don't intend to honor. An outdated meeting is a standing or recurring meeting placed on a calendar to address a critical business need, serve as a decision making or governance forum, or transformation planning. Typically, the edges of a calendar are slated for new lean-agile transformation initiatives. Although early morning is optimal, many times late afternoon is selected since no sane person would schedule a meeting when they want to be fighting a two-or-three-hour commute home. Offering these times is only a token, low-cost, or experimental move, because executives direct managers to oversee or govern lean-agile transformation initiatives, they can feign compliance, and then simply stop attending these events when executives follow the next shiny object (which generally happens in 90 day intervals). Lean-agile transformation consultants beware, because most enterprises will give you about 90 days to make a difference before they lose interest (if even that long)! In the high-stakes corporate world, it's not unusual for a shiny new lean-agile transformation initiative to last as little as two weeks, before the next executive decision means you've been axed! So, scheduling a meeting on the edges of their calendar is only a token move, low risk, experimental, and can easily be dishonored when convenient. Worse yet, is they'll leave these orphaned outdated meetings on their calendar to look busy early in the morning or late in the afternoon, just in-case someone peruses their calendar to see if they're earning their keep. The calendars of enterprise executives, directors, and managers are chock full of orphaned, outdated meetings they never attend at all. Oftentimes, lean-agile consultants naively show up week after week only to suffer complete radio silence from executives, directors, and managers. Lean-agile consultants will fly to their customer's site, rearrange their schedules, or drive hours through heavy traffic in bad weather to honor these standing meetings only to find the customer calls in from home, doesn't show up at all, cancels them 5 minutes before they are to start, or calls 15 minutes later to say they are not coming (if at all). The best thing is for lean-agile consultants to simple delete these meetings from their calendars and free up the time for fruitful lean-agile ceremonies, interested customers, productive time for worker bees, or extra time to relax after a hard day's work. Of course, lean-agile consultants leave them there to break the glass in case of emergency (if the executive decides to show up), or so they're own calendars are chock full of important looking meetings with executive attendees.

23. **Psy·cho·ther·a·py** (*sī′kō-thĕr′ə-pē*) Counseling, guidance, direction, sounding board, personal advice, consultation; Meeting in which leaders exploit their subordinates for personal coaching, mentoring, counseling, psychiatric, or psychological services

   ✓ Form of psychiatry.
   ✓ Mental or behavioral counseling.
   ✓ Personal coaching/self-esteem building.

   A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders whose meetings turn into counseling sessions. Lean-agile leaders often have a mental, psychological, behavioral, physical, or personal disorder or problem. Lean-agile leaders are narcissistic, self-serving, mean, and hostile. Offense is their best defense and they'll come out of the gate swinging away and they won't stop from the beginning of a relationship until the very end. They're strategy is to keep their subordinates on the defensive, suffocate them, confuse them into believing they're inferior, and even force them to resign to eliminate the competition. Lean-agile leaders, in the West where fierce individualism is worshipped—a form of cultural idolatry—are rewarded for feats of individualism from the time a child is born until they matriculate into adulthood and are shaped into an army of one. So, why would they need a team, a collaborative of subordinates, or competition to their solo army. They literally believe they can single handedly transform a multimillion-person enterprise by the sheer force of their personality, willpower, and intelligence. This, of course, is referred to as gaslighting. It's common for lean-agile leaders to insult someone upon first introduction, first meeting, or first online meeting, and every encounter thereafter. They simply believe it's the ultimate form of leadership (i.e., to harass one's teammates, subordinates, and competitors into submission). Like a predator in the wild, they'll often target the old, weak, frail, and other people at the margins of society early, first, and often. It's not uncommon for them to even physically attack, assault, or insult a teammate upon initial contact. Oftentimes, the victims of these needless but all too common attacks are forced to go on the defensive, talk their superiors off a ledge, and begin psychoanalyzing, counseling, and offering them psychotherapy. Leaders often have a pretty big chip on their shoulder, so their subordinates often have a chance to use lean-agile coaching techniques to talk them off a ledge, calm them down, and restore some level semblance to the team's daily lives. That is, these leaders feel like they were somehow unable to achieve their lifelong ambitions, haven't been given a chance, or are simply disrespected. They get close to the top of the food chain but hit a glass ceiling and take it out on subordinates. Standup meetings turn into psychotherapy sessions and are pretty effective at calming lean-agile leaders down, reassuring them they are indeed very well respected, and that they are worthy of being leaders. The worst lean-agile leaders tend to be chemically imbalanced (i.e., lifelong or middle-aged hormonal intensity or even a bi-polar disorder mistaken for leadership skills).

24. **Schiz·o·phren·ic** (*skĭt′sə-frĕn′ĭk*) Dementia, delirium, insanity, psychosis, paranoia, pathological; Meeting in which leaders need to be talked off a ledge everyday because they believe managers, colleagues, and subordinates are out to get them

✓ Mental break with reality.
✓ Delusional or paranoid behavior.
✓ Multiple personality disorder/possessed.

A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders whose meetings turn into hostage negotiations. They come shrieking into lean-agile ceremonies and meetings screaming like demon-possessed banshees. They are schizophrenic, paranoid, and sure everyone is out to get them (including their parents, siblings, spouses, bosses, teammates, clients, and society at large). No one respects them, people accuse them climbing to the top of the ladder by immoral means, and every word, sentence, phrase, facial expression, sigh, or noise is a personal attack. Nobody believes they deserve to have the leadership position they've acquired. Everybody wants their job or wants someone else to have it. Their supervisors are out to get them, their subordinates are one step away from having their job, and their supervisors want to promote their subordinates over them. They're angry, can't say good morning, and pout for the first five or ten minutes of every meeting, holding their breath, and turning blue like a two-year-old child. They take exception to all inputs, conversation, cooperation, and collaboration. They immediately bat away every word, every phrase, and every attempt at achieving the goal of a lean-agile meeting. They immediately disagree with the basic values, principles, and practices of lean-agile thinking frameworks, methods, and tools. They completely forget about servant leadership, emotional intelligence, social skills, limiting work-in-process (WIP), small batch sizes, single tasking, one piece workflow, and simplicity. Everything is wrong and they'll fight to the death. They won't allow anyone to change the subject, continue a meeting, or pursue the meeting's goals until their subordinates are willing to duel with them to the death. They simply wakeup everyday angry, looking for a fight, seeking a victim, and arguing and fighting to the point of complete dysfunction. They see ghosts, people passing by their windows, or people watching their houses. They own shotguns, keep them loaded, and stand at the doors or windows of their homes ready to kill any intruder during the middle of the day. They have a difficult time concentrating, because they need to stare out of the window to see which international assassin has been assigned to kill them. Once again, standup meetings turn into hour long psychotherapy sessions and are pretty effective at preventing schizophrenic lean-agile leaders from going postal, killing everyone, and committing suicide in the process. These leaders are also chemically imbalanced (i.e., lifelong or middle-aged hormonal intensity or even a bi-polar disorder mistaken for leadership skills). Ironically, they believe they are model lean-agile citizens.

25. **Scrap·ing** (*skrā'pĭng*) Spying, espionage, gathering, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance; Meeting in which leaders schedule unusually frequent intervals to interrogate subordinates for facts, figures, and statistics to pad their resumes

✓ Industrial espionage.
✓ Intellectual property theft.
✓ Theft of copyrights and patents.

A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders who use meetings to steal intellectual property. These lean-agile leaders are less interested in helping a client transform than they are in collecting priceless artifacts. They are a bit subtle and are lone wolves, solo operators, and don't like working with other people. They are not interested in communication, cooperation, collaboration, and teamwork, which is a red flag. They are solo intellectual property thieves, and the first order of business is to eliminate the competition. They do not want to be part of a team who might spot their intentions. They're seductive, endear themselves to clients, and quickly form trusting bonds. Then they'll go into stealth mode, listening, staying eerily quiet, and looking around for something to steal. They'll claim to have a variety of transformation tools and playbooks in their back pocket, but no one will ever see any of them (when in fact they actually do because they've been quietly assembling their rare art collection from clients, conferences, and competitors). They'll push their teammates to the forefront to smoke out any valuable intellectual property. Perhaps their teammates will bring some of their own tools forward or solicit management artifacts from their client for assessment, evaluation, and analysis. If they are forced to own up to some tasking too, they're initial efforts may seem childish (i.e., no more sophisticated than that of a four-year-old). They may even feign incompetence with the basic use of word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, personal computer, texting, teleconferencing, and email tools (when in fact they are hidden experts). The goal of this paleolithic behavior is to provoke their teammates or clients to pony up their own intellectual property assets (all the while quietly collecting them). They attend as many enterprise meetings, communities of practice, lean coffees, brown bags, and other executive briefings as possible to look for more booty, ill-gotten gain, and pirate treasure or loot. They'll even reach out beyond their immediate tasking to domain or subject matter experts to ask for help to see if they can't dig a little deeper for specialty assets they may not already have in their personal art collection. They'll even volunteer for enterprise initiatives and produce substandard results in the hope that someone will throw a lifeline, feel sorry for them, and cough up a priceless gem. They're experts at spotting rare earth minerals that the average bear may ignore. They understand that even a rough lump of coal can be polished into a diamond with a little extra elbow grease. They are experts at seeing diamonds in the rough, where others only seek gems. Their goal is to fill their pockets quickly, because time is short.

26. **Shell • Game** (*shĕl • gām*) Tease, puzzle, confound, confuse, deception, smoke-n-mirrors; Meeting in which leaders move around your calendar multiple times a day without warning to exhibit how important and power they are vs. their subordinates

✓ Deception and disorientation.
✓ Ducking and moving to confuse people.
✓ Constantly changing the rules of engagement.

A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders who use meetings to manipulate their subordinates. Concise meetings are the lifeblood of modern lean-agile thinking, principles, and practices. They require discipline, precision timing, punctuality and time management. They exemplify lean-agile thinking practices like limiting work-in-process (WIP), small batch sizes, single tasking, one piece workflow, simplicity, experimentation, rapid feedback, and continuous improvement. Calendars, schedules, and time management are powerful tools for success. However, lean-agile leaders often lack these basic skills due to

psychological, behavioral, or chemical (hormonal) imbalances. They lack the basic mental tools to schedule a meeting, arrive on time, adhere to an agenda, produce a minimum viable product (MVP), and close the meeting with split second timing. Their goal is to unnerve, destabilize, and dismantle their competition. They'll take charge of the team, even if it means crying foul. That is, they'll claim to deserve the leadership position and may even demand a pay raise on the spot. Then, they'll make the schedule, determine the cadence, and create the lean-agile framework, methodology, ceremonies, or meetings themselves. The easiest way to destabilize the competition is to immediately violate the timebox by two or three times. That is, a 15-minute meeting becomes a 45-minute meeting, a 60-minute meeting becomes a two-hour meeting, and five ceremonies become ten. It's basically a form of dark psychology or psychological hazing to destabilize the emotional reality of their competition. Once they've dazed and bewildered the competition with full or overutilization, then they'll stop coming to their own ceremonies or meetings. That is, the ceremonies or meetings virtually disappear before your eyes. They'll simply pull the rug out from under your feet. Subordinates end up doing the work, which is what the anti-leader wanted. Their job is to do the creative thinking for about 10 or 20 minutes a day, construct bottomless backlogs, and then dole out the tasks to their disoriented subordinates claiming to use divide-and-conquer principles from the Agile Manifesto? To ensure their traditional framework isn't decoded by their subordinates, they'll start moving the ceremonies around minutes before they are to begin. A 9:00 am meeting is moved until 1:00 pm, then 2:30 pm, then 4:30 pm, and then cancelled. It may never occur at all. Meetings may even move backwards and forwards multiple times per day and the only way to thwart this shell game is to decline the meeting. That is, if the lean-agile leader cannot meet the originally scheduled time, just refuse to participate in their gaslighting (Texas two-step dance).

27. **Show • Boat·ing** (*shō • bōt'tǐng*) Crow, brag, boast, vaunt, flaunt, show off; [Meeting in which leaders excessively boast about their own accomplishments for their own personal advancement, aggrandizement, and gain in an over-the-top mannerism](#)

   ✓ Bragging or boasting.
   ✓ Self-confidence, over-confidence.
   ✓ Making yourself look better and others badly.

A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders who use meetings to project power and status. This is a common behavior of lean-agile leaders, because they typically are Type A personalities, alpha males or females, extroverts, or passive-aggressive (which are all forms of neuroticism or hormonal imbalances). It may even be a sign of manic depression, bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), or some other closely interrelated form of hormonally induced mania. They may drive luxury cars, wear expensive clothes, boast about exclusive education or credentials, or even the high-rise luxury penthouse in which they reside. They use lean-agile governance ceremonies or social events to feign servant leadership skills and sucker subordinates into believing they matter, when in fact the ceremony or meeting is for them to boast about themselves, how smart they are, where they live, their exotic vacations and automobiles, and other extraordinary achievements. Lean-agile leaders use dark psychology to gaslight subordinates into believing they are inferior, allow themselves to be micromanaged, and work as slave labor to further the career of the lean-agile leader. They may even live on a luxury yacht, attend meetings from the deck of their boat, and boast about the beautiful day on the ocean, while their subordinates are working long hours with dense clients who refuse to apply lean-agile thinking principles, practices, and tools. The conversation of these meetings might start with, "What's kind of luxury car do you drive?," "How big is your mcmansion?," "What is the ranking of your university?," "How many people have you managed?," "How much money do you have?," "What is the pedigree of your dog?," "How large is your yacht?," "What is the highest mountain you've climbed?" The questions are expertly designed to highlight the unique accomplishments of the lean-agile leader, and they're never intended to involve their subordinates, build camaraderie, trust, and teamwork, nor a sense of oneness, unity, or belonging. In fact, this boastful behavior has the exact opposite effect. People stop coming to these brag sessions. The meeting may start with 30 people, then 20, 15, 10, and finally two or three people. Not only do subordinates stop attending the brag sessions of lean-agile transformation leaders, but they suddenly start disappearing from the team altogether. Maybe their tasks have been suddenly terminated. Maybe they're just fed up with being ignored and humiliated. Or maybe they're simply too smart to attend these nonsensical meetings, which turn into Alfred Hitchcock whodunnit mystery movies, where all of the movie's cast suddenly starts disappearing one at a time.

28. **Sni·per • Du·ty** (*snī'pər • do͞o'tē*) Hitman, ambush, sicarii, assassin, marksman, sharpshooter; [Meeting in which leaders immediately pounce upon, attack, demean, and humiliate anyone who is an immediate threat to their power and status](#)

   ✓ Sudden ambush or bushwhack.
   ✓ Expertly attack a superior position.
   ✓ Quickly undermine subordinates publicly.

A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders who use meetings to suddenly ambush a subordinate. These are typically higher-level meetings with executives, clients, or middle managers, governance boards, or other ceremonies or meetings where lean-agile transformation progress is reported. In routine lean-agile ceremonies such as (Scrum) sprint planning, daily standup meetings, demos, retros, and refinement, neurotic leaders may actually feign the act of being human. This is simply another form of dark psychology or manipulation to maintain the air of control, authority, and subservience. That is, they actually feign emotional intelligence, social skills, and politeness long enough to get what they want (done). However, when it comes to attending a lean-agile ceremony with the next higher echelon of management reporting, their true Jekyll-and-Hyde personality reveals its ugly claws longer than Freddy Kruger's razor-sharp fingernails (and they'll instantly rip you to shreds). Their goal is individual recognition, so they're cognitively blind to anything the team has done or accomplished and simply cannot remember anything done in a collaborative, cooperative, or group manner. It's not so much that they can't remember what the group has done, but it's dangerous to mention any progress that has been made, because then someone other than themselves can claim credit for the group's business value. Therefore, they're always working on secret projects while their subordinates are doing their delegated work, so they can claim these individual victories, oftentimes pulling them out of left field completely. They may even have nothing to report if they'd prefer to keep their secret projects hidden from their

immediate supervisors and save these solo accomplishments for a higher-level executive in order to get promoted over their supervisors. They'll often feign lean-agile facilitation skills and ask their subordinates to speak first. Then, they'll immediate pounce on their subordinates without letting them complete their sentences, contradicting every word, in order to look like they have a better solution and humiliate their teammates. It's a great way not to have to do your homework and be prepared, hide your secret projects for executives, and springboard off of your competitor's better ideas. That is, gaslight them, contradict them, and immediately take a contrary position. Higher level executives, directors, and middle managers will even ask their subordinates for suggestions, stop them mid-sentence, and propose their own better solution on the spot. The goal is for lean-agile leaders to maintain the upper hand, ignore their subordinates, feign humility, and use gaslighting to humiliate others.

29. **Hor·mo·nal·ly • Super·charged** (*hôr'mōn'ə-lē • soo'pər-chärjd'*) Adrenaline, epinephrine, testosterone, progesterone; Meeting in which leaders use natural occurring neurotransmitters to aggressively attack subordinates to maintain power and status

   ✓ Chemically imbalanced.
   ✓ Endocrine system disruption.
   ✓ Hypothalamus, metabolism disorder.

A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders who are aggressive towards subordinates. Lean-agile leaders exhibit higher levels of aggression, assertiveness, and hostility due to increased power and status. A simple change in role from worker bee to team lead will cause this psychological or behavioral switch to flip. One minute they're your best friend, while the next minute they're "the boss," exhibiting textbook tyranny, command and control behavior, and micromanagement. "Power corrupts, but absolute power corrupts absolutely," and the higher one rises in the ranks, the more tyrannical behavior is exhibited. When a new lean-agile leader is hired, they may behave normally to adapt to a new situation, but the switch will flip, they'll gain a foothold, their confidence will improve, and they'll display the tyrannical behavior that comes with power. Some lean-agile roles are predisposed to tyrannical behavior. Scrummasters often do, but SAFe Release Train Engineers (RTEs) are particularly vulnerable to tyrannical behavior since so much power is concentrated on one person. RTEs roles violate 5,000-year-old span-of-control principles. SAFe recommends RTEs should supervise no more than 125 people, but some RTEs oversee up to 500 people for half the pay of an engineer, developer, or programmer. However, the tyranny from naturally occurring chemical imbalances is a different animal. Some people are born with neurological disorders causing chemical imbalances that are often well-managed, hidden, and hushed until they matriculate into adulthood and are exposed to the workforce (i.e., genetically occurring neuroticism). Other people have psychological, psychiatric, and other mental disorders caused by abusive relationships stemming from childhood, marriage, or even workforce violence (i.e., behaviorally driven neuroticism). And, yet others are driven by changing levels of naturally occurring hormones from the hypothalamus region of the brain and endocrine system. Changes may occur because of matriculation through one's life cycle or could even be triggered by disease or chemical abuse (i.e., narcotic induced schizophrenia and neuroticism like Steve Jobs). People who are chemically imbalanced are generally hostile, angry, aggressive, assertive, overbearing, insufferable, abusive, manic depressive, etc. Hormonally imbalanced lean-agile leaders are the worst, turn ceremonies and meetings into shouting matches, and constantly threaten everyone with immediate termination (and will follow through if necessary). It's common for people to request job transfers, find other positions or resign, or even suffer stress heart attacks and immunodeficiencies.

30. **Time·zone • Tyr·an·ny** (*tīm-zōn • tĭr'ə-nē*) Area, region, location, division, boundary, territory; Meeting in which leaders hold at an inconvenient time to demean, harass, and humiliate subordinates in order to maintain their power, status, and control

   ✓ Use of time zones to gain upper hand.
   ✓ Ethnocentric management philosophies.
   ✓ Inconsiderate and self-serving behaviors.

A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders who schedule inconvenient meetings across time zones. As global competition increases, more and more firms are forced to organize their enterprises, business units, initiatives, programs, projects, and teams across domestic and international time zones. It's not unusual for a single small lean-agile team to be in two or three different time zones, which may even span international boundaries and continents. A logical management approach may be to organize teams or groups of teams by time zone (i.e., keep the team within a single time zone if possible). This may certainly be the case for internationally distributed teams or groups of teams. However, more and more businesses grapple with the practical reality of regionally and internationally distributed teams. A lean-agile leader may be in one time zone, a technical architect or designer in another time zone, one or more developers or engineers in yet a third time zone, and testers and quality assurance in a fourth. In this scenario, applying lean-agile principles, practices, methods, and frameworks is quite a challenge. Product managers may have to prepare product backlogs in one time zone, a leader or facilitator may have to coordinate or facilitate the ceremonies or meetings from another time zone, and developers and testers may be spread across two or three different ones. In the case of multiple teams or teams-of-teams, i.e., a SAFe Agile Release Train (ART) or project, a single facilitator may have some local teams and others distributed to varying degrees. Worse yet, an overarching lean-agile transformation leader may be on an island resort, high-rise penthouse suite of a major metropolitan area, or even some wilderness area like Alaska, Canada, etc. With all of these time zone differences to grapple with, which one is the dominant work schedule? Oftentimes, the overarching lean-agile transformation leader's time zone becomes the dominant one, if not the SAFe RTE. If the RTE is in the Western U.S., then meetings can begin at 9:00 am PT, while it's 12:00 pm in New York, 5:00 pm in London, 12:00 am in India, 3:00 am in China, and 4:00 am in Japan. Of course, all of this time zone madness lends itself to time zone trickery, lean-agile transformation leaders select meeting times convenient for them and inconvenient for their subordinates as a form of narcissism or even power, status, domination, and even harassment. It's not uncommon for lean-agile leaders to force subordinates to get up unusually early or stay late, both of which play into their hands for complete psychological domination. It's common for lean-agile leaders to push meetings to a day's boundary and fail to show up.

31. **Time·box • Tyr·an·ny** (*tīm-bŏks • tĭr'ə-nē*) Term, space, period, duration, interval, schedule; <u>Meeting in which leaders routinely or intentionally extend beyond its scheduled time because they lack time management skills or wish to harass subordinates</u>

- ✓ Purposely violating timeboxes.
- ✓ Inability to grasp lean-agile thinking.
- ✓ Feigning ability to manage timeboxes.

A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders who cannot end a meeting on time. A critical lean-agile principle is the notion of timeboxed intervals (i.e., product deliveries, quarterly releases, two-week iterations, two-day planning, one-hour ceremony or meeting, or 15-minute daily standup, etc.). Timeboxed thinking predates the advent of the term "lean thinking" when it was believed the key to Japan's success in the 1970s and 1980s was time-based competition. Eventually, management scientists dug a little deeper into the heart of time-based competition to see how Japan was able to shorten its lead and cycle times to less than half of that of the Western hemisphere while simultaneously reducing costs and increasing quality. Western scientists discovered the Toyota Production System (TPS) and dubbed this as "lean thinking." The key to short manufacturing lead and cycle times was of course small batch sizes, limiting work in process (WIP), and applying pull vs. push-based Kanban workflow systems with one-piece workflow (single tasking). Not to be outdone, Western scientists, managers, and practitioners further reduced lead and cycle times decimating those of Japan with even newer techniques for knowledge intensive industries in which Western firms thrived. Rather than produce an automobile in four years—12 years faster than a European firm—Western firms could now produce value adding products and services in 90, 30, 14, or even one-day intervals (i.e., competing on Internet time). Today, Western firms can release entirely new products and services to billions of end-users in fractions of a second (thousands of times a day). Just think of Amazon Web Services (AWS), Google, Facebook, Microsoft, etc. The total market capitalization of just one of these firms is greater than some top 10 industrialized nations as a result of competing on Internet time! As such, it's imperative to satisfy strict time constraints, whether it is a quarterly release or planning event, two-week iteration or planning event, or deploying thousands of microservices, web, or mobile apps to billions of global end-users thousands of times per day. There is simply no excuse for a Western lean-agile leader to violate a timebox, so why do they? Why do 15-minute daily standup meetings take 90 minutes? Why do 60-minute sprint planning meetings take 4 hours? Why do 2-day quarterly planning meetings take a week or two? It's just far too common for even the best lean-agile leaders to schedule a 30-minute meeting that lasts 90 minutes or more! Lean-agile leaders will resort to scheduling a 15-to-30-minute meeting to lure unsuspecting engineers into a 6-hour daily standup which is quite common!

32. **Un·sched·uled** (*ŭn-skĕj'ool d'*) Abrupt, sudden, impromptu, spontaneous, unexpected, serendipitous; <u>Meeting in which leaders schedule without any advanced warning, notice, or planning to project power and status or harass subordinates</u>

- ✓ Unplanned meetings or ceremonies.
- ✓ Meetings held without advanced notification.
- ✓ Leaders with poor time management or work habits.

A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders who schedule unplanned meetings. Lean-agile thinking is a rationalistic decision-making or problem-solving paradigm. In that regard, it is well-planned, orchestrated, and timed. Little is left to the imagination, values, principles, frameworks, methods, practices, tools, and metrics are preplanned, as well as their ceremonies and meetings (down to the minute). In the case of traditional thinking, a product or service's scope is planned out over a period of years and decades. In the case of lean-agile thinking, scope is gradually teased out or emerges in a carefully orchestrated and well-timed sequence of increments, iterations, and well-planned business experiments. Very little is unplanned or unscheduled either traditional or lean-agile thinking paradigms. Let's take Scrum for example, where Sprint planning takes place on the first day of an iteration, daily standup meetings take place at the same time, well, every day, demos and retrospectives take place on the last day of a sprint, and refinement meetings take place between planning and demos. This cadence or sequence of meetings can be scheduled or planned for weeks, months, and even years. There is nothing creative, arbitrary, nor ad hoc about the occurrence of these events. Where exactly does a sudden, unscheduled meeting take place in this paradigm? However, lean-agile leaders, precisely because they have too much power, status, and authority, reserve the right to schedule a meeting five minutes before it is to occur (right in the middle of a scheduled ceremony or meeting). Many email scheduling calendars have the ability to identify meeting conflicts. They'll simply tell the meeting planner on the spot whether a participant is available. They'll even show a meeting planner if a participant has an open period of time. Of course, this is a double-edged sword. There is no excuse for a lean-agile leader to schedule one meeting on top of another one (without notice). They'll even interrupt a meeting by Skype and ask a subordinate to meet with them to prepare material for their bosses. That is, lean-agile leaders don't do their homework, so they'll interrupt a meeting of a subject matter expert and ask them to do their homework for them (five minutes before its due). As for jumping into unoccupied territory, people need time to think, work, and produce their own products and services, so it's simply selfish, narcissistic, and abusive to jump into another person's free time. Of course, their subordinates should know better than to leave large spans of free time on their schedule for work (and instead schedule working sessions or time blocks for themselves so it will show up as busy time).

33. **Visual • In·tim·i·da·tion** (*vĭzh'oo-əl • ĭn-tĭm'ĭ-dā'shən*) Icon, photo, video, image, visual, graphic; <u>Meeting in which leaders display a threatening static or dynamic image, portrait, or body language to project power and status or harass subordinates</u>

- ✓ Fake Photoshopped or ethnic power images.
- ✓ Dominant poses, posture, or direct eye contact.
- ✓ Intimidating body language or facial expressions.

A common antipattern of lean-agile leaders who visually project power, status, and intimidation. Body language is an effective means to project power and status. Tall or large people will intimidate smaller subordinates. People dress in expensive clothing, shoes, or business suits. They'll even go so far as to purchase tailored or monogrammed clothing. They'll get special

haircuts, or hairstyles, and men will grow out facial hair or shave their heads as a symbol of maturity, power, wisdom, and intelligence. Posture, hand gestures, meeting table position, and facial expressions are also means to convey power, status, and control. Of course, online meetings are a downer for Type A personalities, alpha males or females, and extroverts. People are cognitively blind to their own appearance anyway, good or bad. So, if they believe they are attractive or handsome, then certainly they want to be in a face-to-face setting, and if they believe they are unattractive, they may not. So, beauty or attractiveness is a valid means upon which people gain power, status, and climb the corporate ladder or enterprise hierarchy quickly. Race, ethnicity, skin color, height, body weight, beauty, and attractiveness matter. Good looking people are believed to be intelligent and unattractive people are believed to be stupid. It's a self-fulfilling prophecy as good-looking people grow in confidence, while unattractive people become less confident over time. So, the balance of global power is at stake for the first time in human history, where the very laws of natural selection are at stake. Beauty and attraction have always been the tools of evolution in Earth's four-billion-year history. Online meetings are shifting this battle from appearance to true intelligence, skill, talent, and work ethic. The bold and beautiful have been instantly neutralized, while the less attractive who would have been instantly subtracted from the gene pool are rising to power. Lean-agile leaders continue to turn the tables in their favor. They do this by having professional photographers take pictures of them in their best office regalia, hairdos, makeup, light, and facial expression (often baring their teeth). This is a great way to show your skin color if it's aligned with the xenophobic norms of your organization. That is, if the executives are white, blonde haired, and blue eyed, lean-agile leaders want to look similar. Lean-agile leaders insist upon live video where they can gawk at attractive subordinates face-to-face, make eye direct contact, and even project intimidating facial expressions, body language, and power poses as a form of intimidation and harassment. They'll even employ intimidating video backgrounds and give competitors the finger quickly to harass them!

Lean-Agile Meeting Antipatterns (or Dark Psychology) Summary

So, what exactly have we learned on this short treatise on how leaders apply values, principles, and practices of dark psychology to highjack lean-agile ceremonies and meetings for personal gain, power, status, and self-aggrandizement? Well, first we've learned that business and technical meetings are an ancient ritual or practice spanning hundreds of thousands of years. The earliest human groups routinely gathered for a variety of purposes including hunting rituals, celebrating together as a tribe, weddings, funerals, forming war parties, and planning the next location of the tribal village when environmental conditions changed. Forming religious rites and rules; governing tribal matters; interpreting the weather, seasons, and other messages from the spirits and gods; selecting appropriate courses of action; hunting, gathering, and farming; gossiping, gathering, and disseminating intelligence; and even huddling together in small family groups for pleasure to secure the gene pool were also important reasons to hold tribal gatherings and meetings. From there, societal meetings became increasingly important to govern tribes, villages, and even walled cities as early humans evolved from hunting and gathering to farming societies, and crystalized relationships in the form of marital, intertribal, and property ownership covenants. So, forming, monitoring, and enforcing tribal covenants (strategic and tactical plans) was an important reason to meet regularly, routinely, and on a cadence. The Romans were among the first to form a senate to help govern their nation, create and enforce laws, plan civic improvements, monitor and control societal events and ceremonies, and oversee military campaigns and achievements. By the advent of the British and U.S industrial revolution, it was necessary to hold business meetings or councils to oversee corporate planning, operation, and growth.

33 ANTIPATTERNS OF HOW LEADERS ABUSE LEAN-AGILE MEETINGS BY DARK PSYCHOLOGY FOR PERSONAL GAIN

1. **Agendaless**—Meeting held by leaders just because they have the power to do so without a goal, purpose, or objectives
2. **All Day Marathons**—Meetings or all-day working sessions scheduled by leaders to ensure everyone is fully utilized
3. **Carbon Copy**—Meetings which leader duplicates to fill up available calendar space to look like they're adding more value
4. **Contrarian**—Meeting in which leader first solicits ideas from subordinates and then contradicts everyone to humiliate them
5. **Daily Duels**—Meeting in which leaders seek immediate daily conflict and disagreement because they are angry at the world
6. **Domination**—Meeting in which leaders dominate the timebox for their own power, status, and selfish aggrandizement
7. **Frequent**—Meeting held by leaders at unusually frequent intervals in order to gain business intelligence from subordinates
8. **Good Old Boys**—Meeting held by leaders to establish and promulgate a male or female dominated management regime
9. **Idea Piracy**—Meeting held by leaders for the purpose of stealing their competitor's or subordinate's intellectual property
10. **Idea Police**—Meeting in which leaders intentionally or unintentionally reject the ideas and contributions of subordinates
11. **Incognito Mode**—Meeting in which leaders eavesdrop on informal conversations to silently gather personal information
12. **Interruptions**—Meeting in which leader interrupts for personal and professional power, status, and self-aggrandizement
13. **Late Arrival**—Meeting in which leader often arrives late because they're selfish, arrogant, conceited, and inconsiderate
14. **Late Cancellation**—Meeting in which leader intentionally or unintentionally cancels at the last minute at everyone's expense
15. **Late Meetings**—Meeting in which leader schedules late in the day because they have something more important to do
16. **Late Week**—Meeting in which leader schedules late in the week because they procrastinate, or the meeting is unimportant
17. **Micro-Management**—Meeting in which leader uses to control and direct every possible detail and dictate detailed tasks
18. **Multitasking**—Meeting in which leader is performing or participating multiple unrelated personal and professional tasks
19. **Neverending**—Meeting in which leader continues without a short duration or timebox until all possible topics are exhausted
20. **No Show**—Meeting in which leaders do not attend, are absent, or do not appear without notification out of selfishness
21. **Nonstop**—Meetings in which leader fills every minute of a day's calendar with back-to-back meetings without a break
22. **Outdated**—Meeting in which leaders refuse to remove when it is no longer needed or to use as a filler to look busy
23. **Psychotherapy**—Meeting in which leaders exploit their subordinates for personal coaching, mentoring, and counseling
24. **Schizophrenic**—Meeting in which leaders need to be talked off a ledge every day because everyone is out to get them
25. **Scraping**—Meeting in which leaders schedule unusually frequent intervals to interrogate subordinates for personal gain
26. **Shell Game**—Meeting in which leaders move around your calendar multiple times a day without warning for the fun of it
27. **Show Boating**—Meeting in which leaders excessively boast about their own accomplishments to improve their standing
28. **Sniper Duty**—Meeting in which leaders intentionally and expertly pounce upon, attack, demean, and humiliate subordinates

Meeting etiquette is not a new phenomenon and societies, groups, and enterprises have long sought to establish well-grounded rules of engagement. However, by the late 1900s it became necessary to begin tightly governing the rules of enterprise or business meetings, otherwise they simply devolved into Wild West shootouts, did not serve any useful purpose, or did not occur at all. This was especially important for national parliamentary or governing bodies to have rational proceedings. Project management, systems and software engineering, and (manufacturing) process engineering became all-the-rage from 1950 to 1970 in the Western hemisphere, and highly structured business, management, and technical meeting protocols were formed. An early example was Michael Fagan's software inspection process which was repurposed from hardware to software engineering around 1972. Some of its attributes included an extremely short timeboxed duration, specific goals and agendas, formal roles and responsibilities, a meeting facilitator, concise process criteria and steps, codified outputs, and measurable outcomes. Basically, IBM sought to manage human beings (computer programmers) much like they would manufacturing machines (lathes). These practices manifested themselves as (contract) acquisition, project management, and systems and software engineering lifecycles and a myriad of capability maturity models. By the 1990s, Western management scientists discovered Japan's Toyota Production System (TPS), coined the term "Lean Thinking," and, not to be outdone, computer programmers formed agile methods (lifecycles) on the heels of an infinite variety of crushing, overwhelming, and bureaucratic examples from the 1970s and 1980s. Perhaps, Scrum, more than most others emphasized a small number of concisely timeboxed ceremonies or meetings to cull the waste.

Agile methods and its few concisely timeboxed ceremonies replacing capability maturity models from the 1960s to 1980s were wildly successful. Computer programmers were now delivering software to millions of global end-users in 30-day cycles, while Silicon Valley firms did so in 24-hour cycles as a form of Microsoft's "daily operational builds." Silicon Valley entrepreneurs created Lean Startup, Startup Way, and (one-week) Design Sprints for any type of new product or service including manufacturing-intensive hardware industries (as everyone wanted to get in on the action). Ivy League business schools joined the fray too with "(Small) Business Experiments" to be conducted in as little as a week to replace decade long multibillion dollar R&D cycles. Computer programmers and Silicon Valley firms mastered the principles and practices of DevOps to release tens of thousands of new products and services to billions of global markets, customers, and end-users every day as a result of the smartphone revolution (iPhone in particular) and the emergence of Cloud Computing (technologies). Creating innovatively new products and services no longer required 1,000 people, a billion-dollar budget, and a decade long integrated master schedule, as small teams of innovators were applying lean-agile methods to build multibillion dollar enterprises eclipsing the GNP of some of the top-10 industrialized nations. The immense power of the Internet, smartphones, cloud computing, and simple-to-use timeboxed lean-agile ceremonies and meetings are an extremely razor-sharp double-edged sword in the hands of Western managers and their century long ideology of fierce individualism deeply baked into their DNA by its very institutions. That is, 21st century Western nations bred, educated, and rewarded an unstoppable army of narcissists ready to instantly abuse lean-agile meetings for personal gain.

This is not to suggest that humans have never abused family gatherings, tribal councils, throne rooms, early senatorial and military tribunals, industrial business meetings, or traditional project management and systems engineering governance boards. The Bible and history books are very clear on such matters and chock full of accounts of abusive practices in formal proceedings. Even Michael Fagan's (infallible) software inspection process was quickly abused for personal gain and subsequently abandoned. Humans at all levels, whether leaders, managers, or workers are uniquely endowed with the innate ability to game rules, laws, policies, procedures, and metrics for personal gain as the Western world has so painfully learned in the last few market failures. This is simply known as selfish suboptimization, and may be a powerful, subliminal, and incontrovertible law of natural selection or evolution (i.e., the notion that selfish genes or even parasites suppress the free will of their hosts to promulgate their DNA strand). Instead of focusing the energies of the team on achieving the goals and objectives of the enterprise to develop innovatively new products and services, selfish human beings have learned to highjack lean-agile meetings for personal gain. Like parasites, they'll implicitly insert or substitute their own goals and objectives (DNA) into its ceremonies and meetings, overwrite the DNA sequence of a lean-agile method or framework with their own ceremonies, and repurpose the energies of the team for selfish gain. Leaders quickly identify which subordinates have valuable skills or intellectual assets to achieve their personal means and quickly extract their DNA, while quickly sweeping away and ignoring the inputs of their competitors once they've extracted their value. With today's global virtual meetings, everyone is one-click away from getting deleted from the gene pool in fractions of a second.

Lean-agile thinking is a paradigm whereby enterprises can achieve their business goals and objectives and successfully develop innovatively new products and services in the shortest possible lead and cycle times, while simultaneously benefitting consumers. It is designed as an inclusive paradigm to leverage the creative insights of every member of the team over a long period of time, not just a single time-boxed meeting. Everyone is intended to benefit, including the enterprise, managers, innovators, and consumers. Yes, even employees matter in this paradigm, who are referred to as knowledge workers, because they are closest to the consumer and have valuable insight into markets, customers, and end-users. Unfortunately, once again, the factory workers have devolved into interchangeable cogs, while the factory managers have evolved into the irreplaceable knowledge workers once they've extracted everyone's DNA in a few short timeboxed lean-agile ceremonies. So, innovatively new products and services are now getting to the market faster than ever, but lean-agile leaders abuse lean-agile ceremonies to swat subordinates and competitors dead like flies faster than ever using Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and other online meeting tools. It's time to go back to basics with lean-agile thinking, focus on long-term enterprise sustainability and culture, the greater good of all stakeholders including front-line knowledge workers, and the benefits of long-term sustainable teamwork, collaboration, and cooperation. It's time for firms to develop a culture of sustainable long-term leadership, abandon the practice of fierce Western individualism, and quickly identify, manage, and control the damage caused by chemically, hormonally, and psychologically imbalanced people. Expert psychotherapy, hostage negotiation, and bomb diffusion skills come in handy, but the real challenge is to keep meetings short, infrequent, LEAN, goal-oriented, objective, value-adding, enjoyable, rewarding, and mutually beneficial!

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CASE STUDIES OF HOW LEADERS ABUSE LEAN-AGILE MEETINGS BY DARK PSYCHOLOGY FOR PERSONAL GAIN

- **Data Center Transformation**. *This is a case study of a small-to-medium-sized lean-agile transformation. It involved 8 to 10 teams providing systems management and administration services for a national family of public sector data centers. The data centers were extremely outdated, were soon to be replaced with modern cloud computing data centers, and the goal of the team-of-teams was to keep the lights on until the transition could be made. That is, the outdated IT data center, although it had a small user base, provided essential functions for moving data, information, and communications around a wide variety of public sector organizations. The services of a small lean-agile boutique were acquired to help the systems managers and administrators apply lean-agile ceremonies for day-to-day data center operations. It was old, outdated, and antiquated, hardware and software components failed with increasing frequency, and traditional project management and systems engineering lifecycles and approaches simply couldn't keep pace with the day-to-day churn. There were three major constituencies or stakeholder groups involved in this lean-agile transformation (i.e., the client or customer management team, the lean-agile transformation middle-management oversight team, and the hands-on lean-agile transformation team). All three constituencies used principles and practices of dark psychology from beginning to end of this lean-agile transformation with expert ease to further their own power, status, and selfish aggrandizement; refused to cooperate with one another; and thwarted each other at every turn. The first sign of trouble was the hands-on transformation team itself. One of the team members was a middle-aged narcissist who came in with a game plan to work alone as a solo artist and immediately began attacking the other teammates early and often. It was clear this team member liked to work alone, seize control of all stakeholder groups, and advise everyone on the direction of the lean-agile transformation. This may have worked, except that the team leader narcissist was a Scrum expert, had little expertise in the customer's domain, and this was a team-of-team's approach. The second sign of trouble was the customer's management team who made the lean-agile transformation their lowest priority, scheduled late week meetings they never attended, and was a bit hesitant to undergo a lean-agile transformation late in the project (i.e., transition to the cloud computing phase). The third sign of trouble was the middle management oversight team who wanted to meet with the hands-on team to micromanage them, gather daily statistics to pad their resumes, and takeover, if necessary, since their own jobs were unstable. The hands-on team used Scrum ceremonies to manage the transformation and standup meetings turned into daily hostage negotiations to talk the team leader off of a ledge. The customer's team finally took charge, made the transformation happen on short notice, and then pushed out the hands-on team to hoard daily decision making. It was successful due to its small size, leadership attention, and coaching experience of the team to maintain internal stability.*

- **Identity Management System**. *This is a case study of a medium-to-large-sized lean-agile transformation. It involved 25 to 35 teams providing systems and software development services for a global identity management system. The top layer of the system was a logistics or inventory management system for identity management products and services. The underlying fabric of the system was a highly brittle and outdated brick-n-mortar IT system foundation. The challenge was to keep up with increasing rate of IT system component entropy as well as expand the functions and services of the surface layer inventory management system. The services of multiple lean-agile coaches were retained to help expand and promulgate the ceremonies of the team-of-teams lean-agile framework chosen to develop and operate this system. The primary services provider began their lean-agile journey with team-level agile methods much earlier and then expanded into a team-of-teams approach several years before additional lean-agile coaches were hired. A single coach pretty much ran the whole show for several years, but was faced with several challenges (i.e., scaling up to include more agile teams), employing more lean-agile ceremonies new to the coach, and handing off the coaching duties to a new coach. The primary coach clearly violated the span-of-control by directly managing 20 to 30 teams but was moderately effective at doing so. This is pretty typical of team-of-teams lean-agile frameworks. That is, they show enterprises how to gently scale Scrum up to dozens of teams with a few simple ceremonies, practices, tools, and metrics, and then funnel all power, status, and control to a single decision maker. This sort of flies in the face of lean-agile principles where decision making is decentralized, and teams are empowered to make their own decisions. It also violates values, principles, and practices of teamwork, collaboration, and cooperation since the framework encourages a single individual to make all of the decisions. As the old adage goes, "power corrupts, but absolute power corrupts absolutely." In other words, this lean-agile framework inadvertently funneled all decision-making power for a team-of-teams to a single individual. Although the first external lean-agile coach hired had some experience with this framework and its tendency to funnel all power to a single individual, he clearly underestimated how severe the situation was. The lean-agile leader was hyper intelligent, multitasking, and narcissistic and didn't tolerate dissent for a microsecond. The external coach pulled out his servant leadership skills, volunteered to coach a few lower-level teams to stay out of the decision-making vortex, and use his own coaching and mentoring skills to rapidly defuse the volatile situation. He simply provided instructions on how to implement the additional lean-agile ceremonies for managing more teams and stepped out of the way. The team-of-teams successfully started applying the new ceremonies, developing new system functions, and staving off IT system entropy. The external coach showed the Scrummasters how to apply the lean-agile framework, allowed other coaches to take on more responsibility, and diffused the powder keg.*

- **Enterprise Cloud Transformation**. *This is a case study of a medium-to-large-sized lean-agile transformation. It involved 15 to 30 teams responsible for creating a public services cloud instance, migrating dozens of legacy data repositories to it, and data mining them in real-time to create an enterprise customer relationship management system. The project had been going on for years, but was simply bogged down in irreconcilable bureaucracy, litigation, and technical obfuscation. The enterprise was using system development lifecycles from the 1970s, developed multiple detailed competing integrated master schedules (IMSs) spanning years, and wanted to integrate hundreds of incompatible legacy data sources into an irreconcilable whole. They discovered large-scale lean-agile team-of-teams frameworks, the existence of commercial cloud services providers, and decided to try to save only one-third of their legacy system data repositories. A big six consultant was hired to manage the digital transformation, execute the lean-agile framework, and use it as a feature factory to burn off the work-packages of a dozen or so competing IMSs. It was easier for this client to synthesize IMSs for simulation purposes than it was to actually build a new enterprise IT system given their immense inventory of legacy systems, outdated systems life cycles, and unmanageable IT stack. The client decided to hire one more lean-agile subject matter expert (SME) to help its management team try to reconcile its IMSs with the data from its lean-agile application lifecycle management system. The SME had no idea what he was walking into as the enterprise had devolved into slum wars where roving ethnic clans stalked the halls, enterprise management and technical functions devolved into ethnic and gender clans as well, and the consultant seemed to be the obvious outsider to all stakeholder constituencies. His only challenge was to overcome his first week on the job as two competing ethnic clans banded together to have him expelled from the project immediately. Of course, getting into the customer's facilities was also a challenge as the building's security was controlled by an entirely different and hostile ethnic clan as well. The lean-agile SME was able to sidestep the onslaught of initial gangs allied against him, find a quiet place to work, and overcome the initial hostility of the building's security clan. The big six consultancy was their own ethnic clan of homogenous millennials who tried to expel the SME next, but also failed. The IMS clan was one of his primary stakeholder groups that was also difficult to penetrate, and of course, the most insidious and stealthy clan of all was the lean-agile ALM tool clan who locked him out of the ALM tool as well. All of the clans seemed to have antibodies to his presence, and it was a daily battle to provide the basic services necessary to integrate the IMS with the agile ALM tool to provide the analytics necessary to track project completion. Patience, emotional intelligence, personal experience with real-life gang warfare, and lean-agile coaching and mentoring helped him achieve some level of success. He ingratiated himself to the project director and provided critical products and services.*