

Communicating In The Dragon Zone



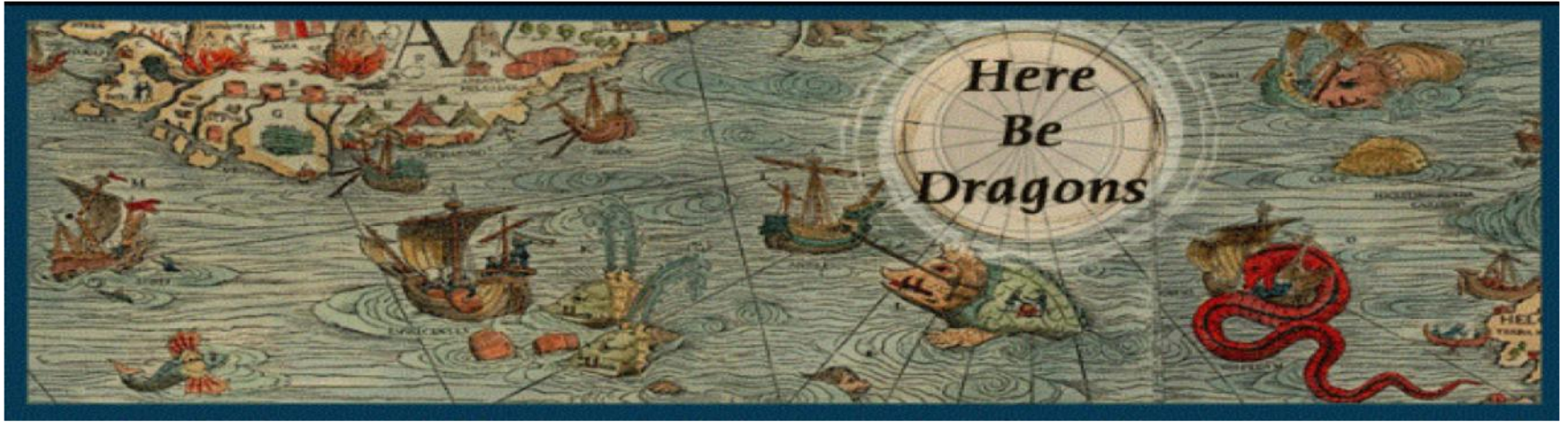
Judy Rees

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If I could show you “the nearest thing the FBI have to a Jedi mind trick” to help you navigate those unknown and scary waters, would that be of interest to you?

And get you actually using it, during the session...





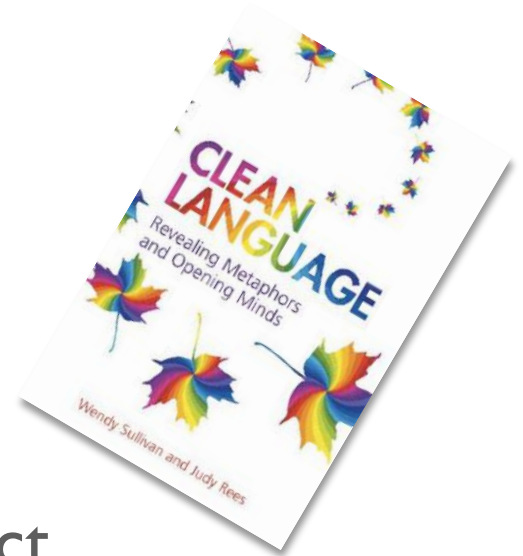
What's one specific context in your working life where it feels like "here be dragons"?

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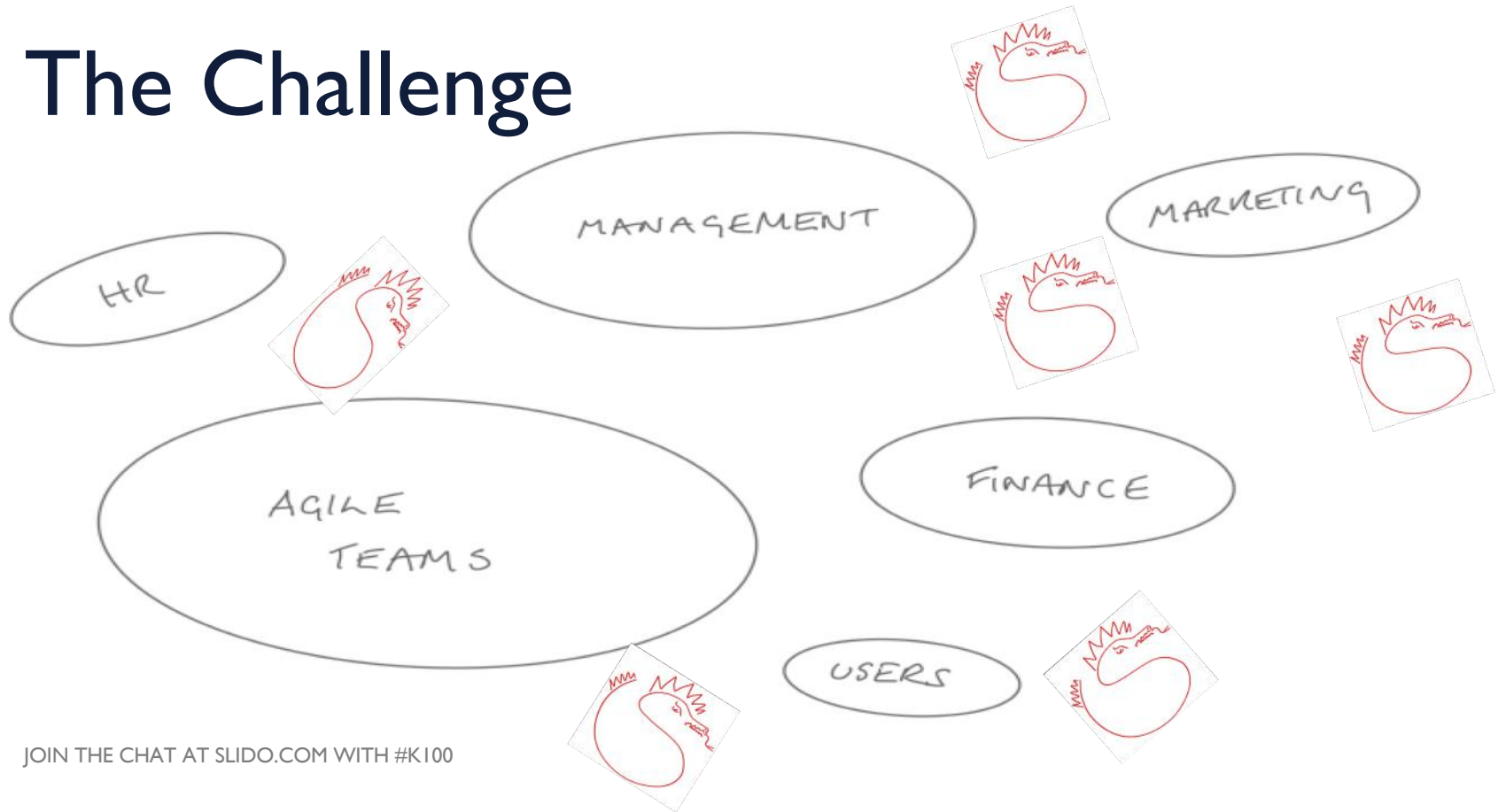


Judy Rees

- Former news journalist
- Online trainer, coach, facilitator
- Known for “Clean Language” book
- Team development, working with conflict, creative collaboration, exploring “unknown unknowns”



The Challenge



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CLEAN
LANGUAGE
ADDS MOST
VALUE HERE →

COMPLEX

PROBE
SENSE
RESPOND

COMPLICATED

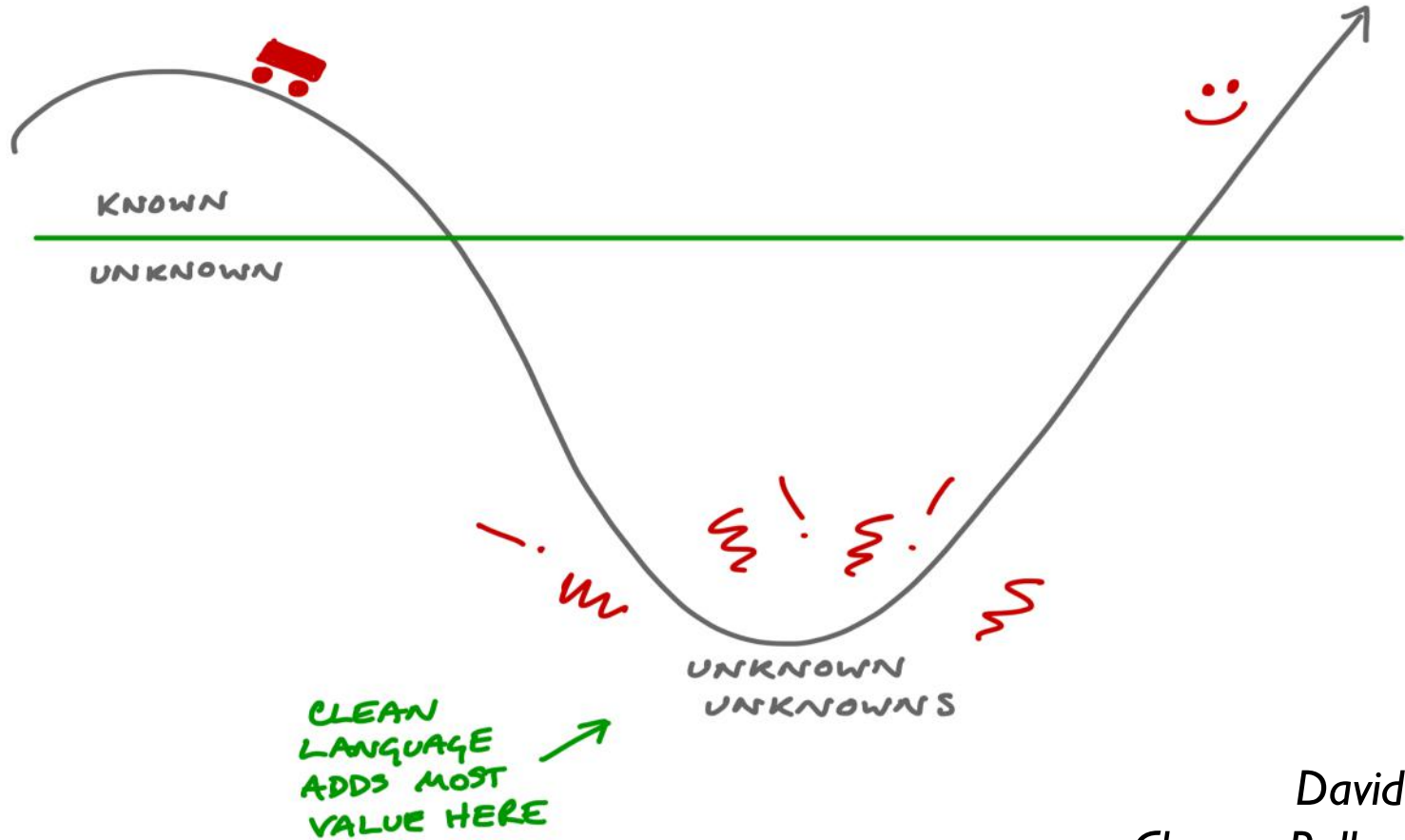
SENSE
ANAYSE
RESPOND

CHAOTIC

ACT
SENSE
RESPOND

OBVIOUS

SENSE
CATEGORISE
RESPOND



David Udall
Change Rollercoaster

Communication gaps

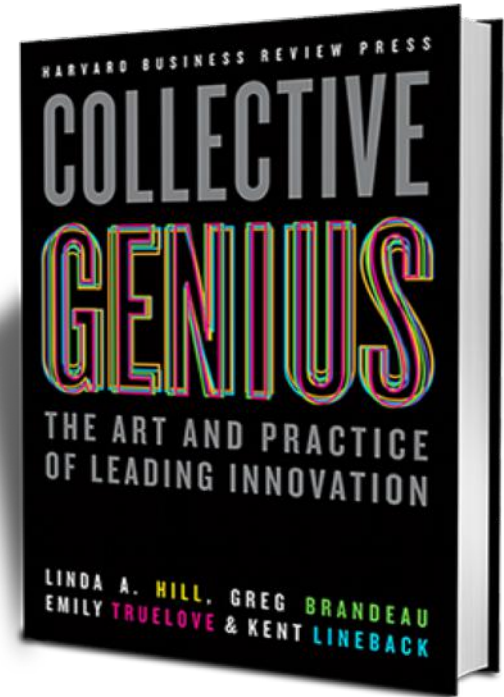
- Each handoff leaves behind approximately 50% of the knowledge we intend to transfer
- Up to 88 per cent of knowledge is lost as a process goes through five handoffs

Mary and Tom Poppendieck, *Lean Software Development*



3 core collaboration competencies

- Advocacy
- Paying attention
- Directing attention



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Paying attention

1. Person A talks about something important to them
2. Person B encourages them to keep talking, but without using any words



What did you notice when you were being listened to?

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Typical results

- Rapport
- Trust
- Shared understanding
- Psychological safety

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The father of a teenage girl used this to have “the best conversation we’d had for years”. A year later, they were still exchanging two-minute-listens on most days.



Paying attention: parrot phrasing

1. Person A talks about something important to them
2. Person B encourages them by repeating their last three words (or three key words)



What did you notice when you were being listened to, hearing your own words?

Yes, it's clunky when you do this for the first time! What else?



“Of the entirety of the FBI’s hostage negotiation skill set, mirroring is the closest one gets to a Jedi mind trick. Simple, and yet uncannily effective.”

Chris Voss, former FBI lead hostage negotiator, *Never Split The Difference*

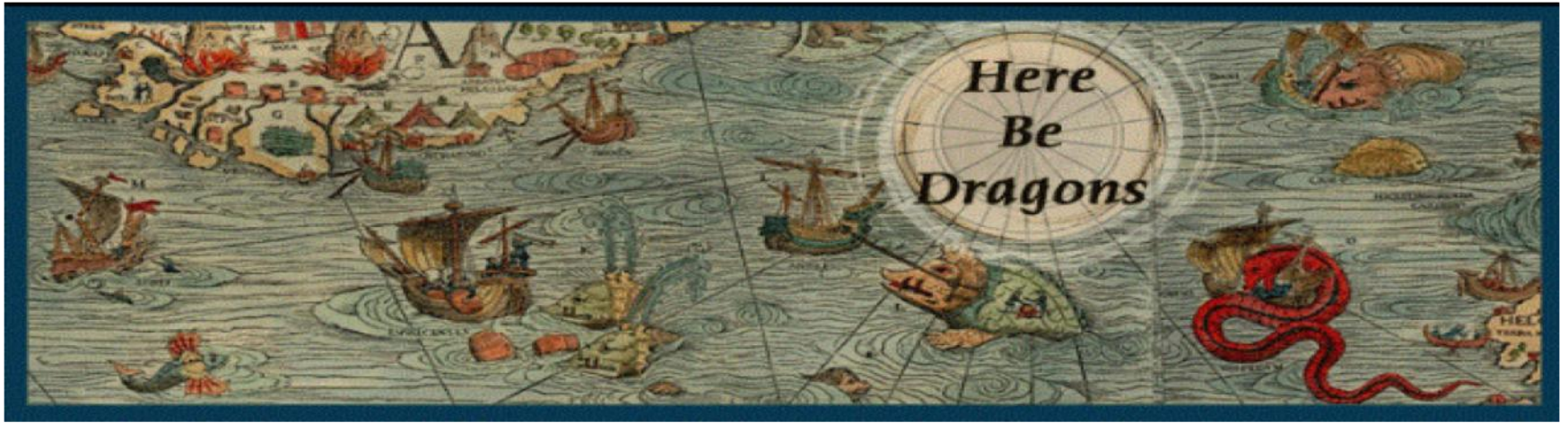


A waitress increased her tips by 70% simply by repeating the customer's order back to them in their own words, rather than saying “okay” or “coming right up”

University of Nijmegen, 2005

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How could this be useful in your “dragon zone”?

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Why this works

- People like people who are like them
- Using their words sends a powerful message of “I am like you”
- People like to feel understood
- Hearing you use the same words as they did says, “this person understands”



The Persuasion Paradox

When you try to influence by talking at someone, you will fail. The more you try to *not* influence, the more you listen and support people to do their best thinking, the more influential you will become.



Going deeper: directing attention

The 2 Lazy Jedi Questions

- What kind of X?
- Is there anything else about X?

In these questions the “X” stands for the other person’s word(s).
Use these questions in any order, as many times as you like



Typical impact on participants

- Learn about themselves and their colleagues
- Help everyone work at their best more often
- Develop skills in paying and directing attention
- Distinguish more clearly between their own 'stuff' and that of others
- Increase curiosity about diverse opinions
- Engage in more constructive 'conflict'



Demonstration

- When you are working at your best, you are like... what?
 - Starter question only
- What kind of X?
- Is there anything else about X?
 - Use these as often as you like, in any order, about anything the person said



Clean Language

- A precision enquiry methodology
- Optimised for difficult human stuff in complex situations
- Devised by David Grove (1958 – 2008)



Users

- Antarctica team
- Liverpool John Moore's University
- Paediatric consultant
- DigitalLink

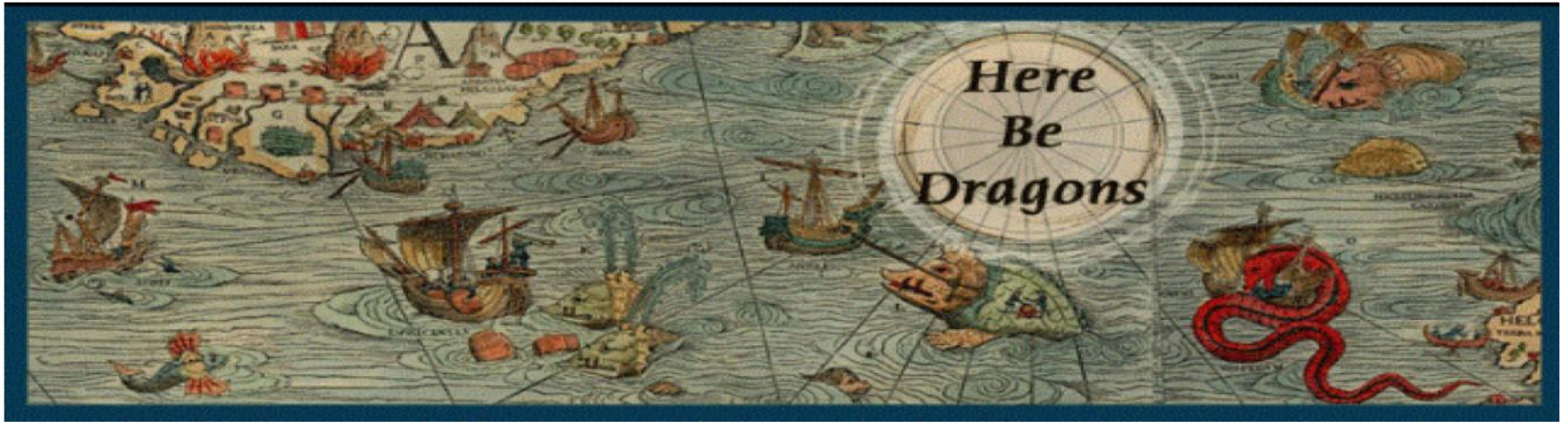
...and many others



Some use cases

- Understanding requirements
- Team development
- Idea generation
- Retrospectives
- Conflict and tension





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