

**FEEDBACK!**

**TEAM  
ENGAGEMENT**





# RETROSPECTIVES, FEEDBACK & TEAM ENGAGEMENT



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In the spring of 401 B.C.,  
Xenophon, an inspiring student of  
Socrates joined the Greek army  
as historian.

He was sent with some 10,000  
Greek soldiers, led by Cyrus to  
invade Persia.

The armies of Cyrus and Persia  
fought in the middle of Persian  
desert.

But very early in the battle, Cyrus  
was killed, putting a quick end to



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the war.

Now the Greek's position was suddenly precarious, they were far from home and surrounded by hostile Persians and Babylon armies.

They were still larger in numbers than the enemy, But were getting killed ruthlessly.

Greek army was unable to fight, some men argued and accused. Others slumped drunk to the



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ground. A few considered flight, but with their leaders dead, they felt doomed.

One night Xenophon, who had stayed mostly on the sidelines during the expedition, had a dream.

A lightning bolt from Zeus set fire to his father's house.

He woke up in a sweat. It suddenly struck him. Death was staring the Greeks in the face, yet

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they lay around moaning,  
despairing, arguing.

The problem was in their heads.  
Fighting for money rather than for  
a purpose or cause, unable to  
distinguish between friend and  
foe, they had gotten lost.

The barrier between them and  
home was not rivers or mountains  
or the Persian army but their own  
muddled state of mind.

Xenophon didn't want to die in



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this disgraceful way.

He was no military man, but he knew philosophy and the way men think.

He knew that the greek soldiers had to stop being confused mercenaries and go back to being Greeks, the polar opposite of the faithless Persians.

What they needed was clarity and direction. Xenophon decided to be Zeus's lightning bolt, waking



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the men up and illuminating their way. He called a meeting of all the surviving officers and stated that the problem is in your thinking. Fix your thinking and you will win the war.

He declared, we will declare war without parley on the Persians. We will waste no more time on argument or accusation among ourselves. Every ounce of our energy will be spent on the



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Persians. We will be as inventive and inspired as our ancestors at Marathon, who fought off a vastly larger Persian army. We will burn our wagons, live off the land, move fast.

We will not for one second lay down our arms or forget the dangers around.

It is us or them, life or death, good or evil. Let the Persians make us merciless. We must be consumed



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with one idea. Getting home  
alive.

The officers knew that Xenophon  
was right. It was now, war and  
nothing else.

Roused to action, the Greeks  
elected leaders, Xenophon  
among them, and began the  
march home.

Forced to depend on their wits,  
they quickly learned to adapt to  
the terrain, to avoid battle, to



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move at night.

They successfully eluded the Persians, beating them to a key mountain pass and moving through it before they could be caught.

Although many enemy tribes still lay between them and Greece, the dreaded Persian army was now behind them. It took several years, but almost all of them returned to Greece alive.



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# OBSERVANCE:

The problem in leading any group is that people inevitably have their own agendas.

You have to create a chain of command in which they do not work on individual agenda.

You need to tie them with a single goal and sense of participation.

The benefits they get as a team, the strengths they gain as a team



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and the influences they can make as a team should be far greater than the individual contributions.

The target of your observations should be less the complaints but the persons making them.

If you understand how your team operates, what are different personalities and how they think, interact and communicate, then you have the keys to influence



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them.

As a scrum master train yourself to read people, picking up the signals they unconsciously send about their innermost thoughts and intentions.

And from there build an understanding of your team's group thinking, very often problems are not with the process, tools, budget, communication or timeline but



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with the people in a group. All they need is clarity and direction. Your retrospectives reflects the reality of team dynamics, but it is also the perfect tool for deception.

Control how your team thinks collectively and you can improve the outcome produced by those people from mediocre to excellent. As Xenophon realized



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for his fellow men that the problem was in their heads. Fighting for money rather than for a purpose or cause, unable to distinguish between friend and foe, they had gotten lost. The barrier between them and home was not rivers or mountains or the Persian army but their own muddled state of mind. Once their thinking was fixed,



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they operated like a closed group  
and were able to beat an army 10  
times stronger than them.



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## References:

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# REETRO.IO

Every scrum master runs into the same fundamental problems.

Prepare for the retrospective meeting, ask for the feedback, track action items, engage unmotivated team members, manage unplanned activities, and avoid distractions.

The good news? Reetro solves all of them.

<https://reetro.io>