

Taking Care of our World: Promises and Actions

Care Drives our Actions

Why do we expend so much energy on our work? It's easy to lose track of what originally drew us to the things we invest energy in, when we get caught up in "todo lists" and interminable, guilt-ridden backlogs of work. We can forget that the inconvenient "tasks" that pile up are in service of important outcomes we desire for ourselves and others.

A common approach to work is to plan-execute-replan and so on. Agile software development explicitly adds short cycles, "reflection" and "learning" to this pattern, to bring more realism into the way work is done. Still, there is something missing, not explicitly called for in most Agile methods, and that is: *why* we are working!

FtSoW

Most work is wearing, otherwise we'd call it play! And when people lose track of why they are working so hard, motivation drains away and non-productive behaviours like procrastination and c-y-a can show up. So it is important to frequently and explicitly ask, at all levels of the work: "**For the Sake of What** are we doing this?" This can also be called a "relevance story" – it explains what is being taken care of, when these actions are accomplished. It ties mundane work to meaningful goals and encourages realism, passion and creativity in getting the work done.

The Anatomy of Action

There are numerous models used in the world of education and pedagogy to talk about how work gets done, and they have much in common, as can be seen below. All of them seem to assume that the actors in these cycles are motivated and engaged, but give no clue as to how this occurs.

The "Anatomy of Action" explicitly brings **Care** to the forefront in understanding our work. It also introduces important distinctions in the area of Promises – an area not well taught in our culture, and hence poorly handled.

(Note that the Learning Circle, not shown, does include Care as "Love", though it is not particularly indicated as the starting point).

The "Anatomy of Action"

