Agile Release Planning — Context and Basics

Program

- Intro

- Why Planning? — Pros & Cons

- Some Context — 6 Months

- How Much Do We Know?

- Planning Helps Us Learn

- The Context of Project Portfolio Planning

- Key Ideas

- What's changed?

- Some actions!

- Questions?

Why Planning? (Pros)

- We must.

- A failure to plan is a plan to fail.

- *"In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable."*

- Planning helps us learn.

- Planning helps us adapt later.

Why Planning? (Cons)

- No one knows the future.

- The customers don't really know what they want.

- Change will happen.

- S**ff happens.

- Is this really important? And other changes in direction.

- Estimates are crappy.

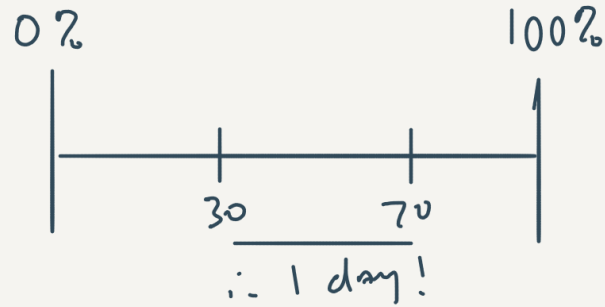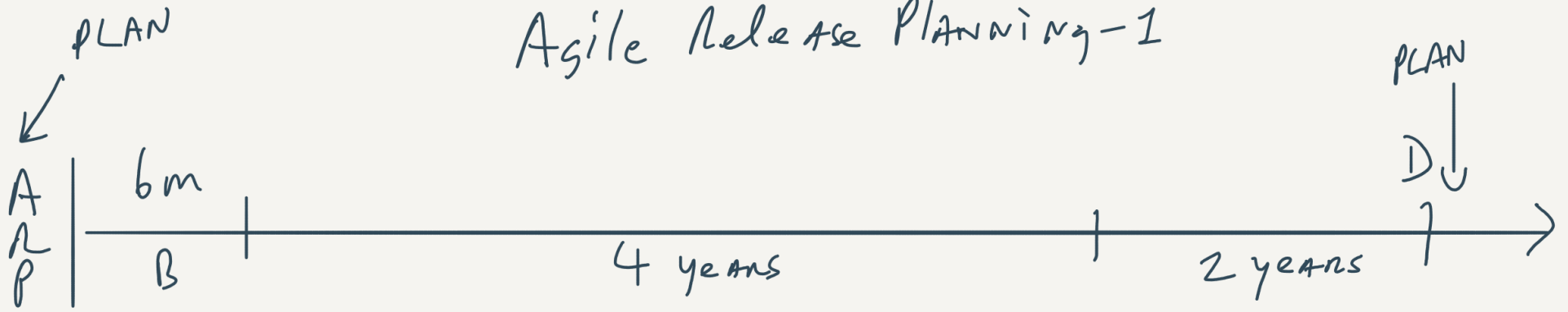- They will punish us!

Context: Small

- 6 months

- Vision can be accomplished

- Multiple releases in that time

- Why?

  - More digestible

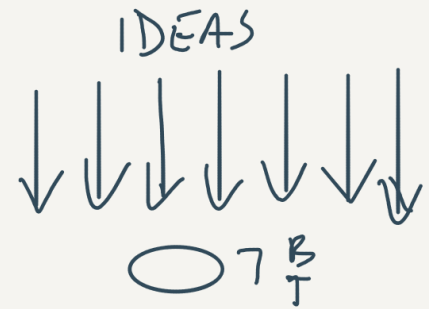 - Better learning because enough and not too much (e.g., tedious)
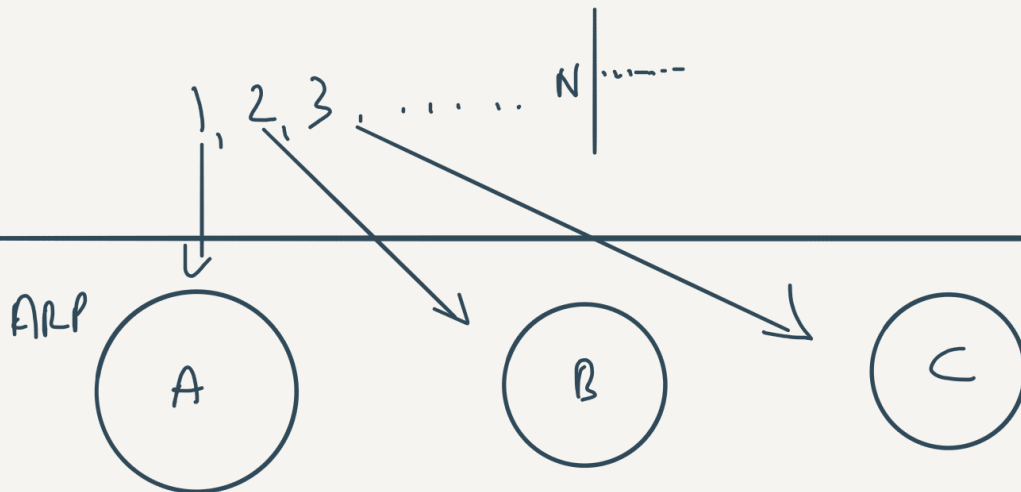
Agile Release Planning - 1

PLAN

A
R
P

6m

B

4 years

2 years

PLAN

D

0%

100%

30   70

∴ 1 day!

$$f\left(\frac{b}{c}, t, x, z\right)$$

IDEAS

Level 1

1, 2, 3, ... N

7 $\frac{B}{J}$

Level 2

ARP

A

B

C

How Much Is Known?

- Not 100%.

- Not 0%.

- My guess? 30% to 70% of "useful" knowledge about future

- So… how long to do the *initial* plan?

- We work (think/learn) only 1 day, but you need to continuously re-plan.

Context: Organization Planning

- The "upper level" folks always (?) do planning — usually of the project portfolio.

- Yes, it can be more complex…

- Usually there are many problems between what your organization should do and what it currently does.

Key Ideas — 1

- The work must be important.

- The steering committee estimates quickly.

- Usually **estimate** a scope-date-budget.

- They should try to inspire us.

- We should be able to say "not inspired."

- The team should (re)estimate.

- They should expect our estimate to be … less inaccurate.

Distraction

- *"To predict is difficult, particularly of the future."* —Yogi Berra

- *"Everybody's got a plan until they get punched in the mouth."* —Mike Tyson

- *"The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry."* —Robert Burns

- *"We're gonna treat them as if they were real people."*

- *"People are remarkably good at doing what they want to do."* —Joe Little

- *"You live, you learn. You love, you learn."* —Alanis Morissette

- *"The future ain't what it used to be."* —Yogi Berra

Key Ideas — 2

- We are all *human*.

- Their estimate is worse than ours.

- Our initial estimate is not so good either.

- We prioritize our stupidity and get smarter.

- You learn faster from action than from thinking in the clouds.
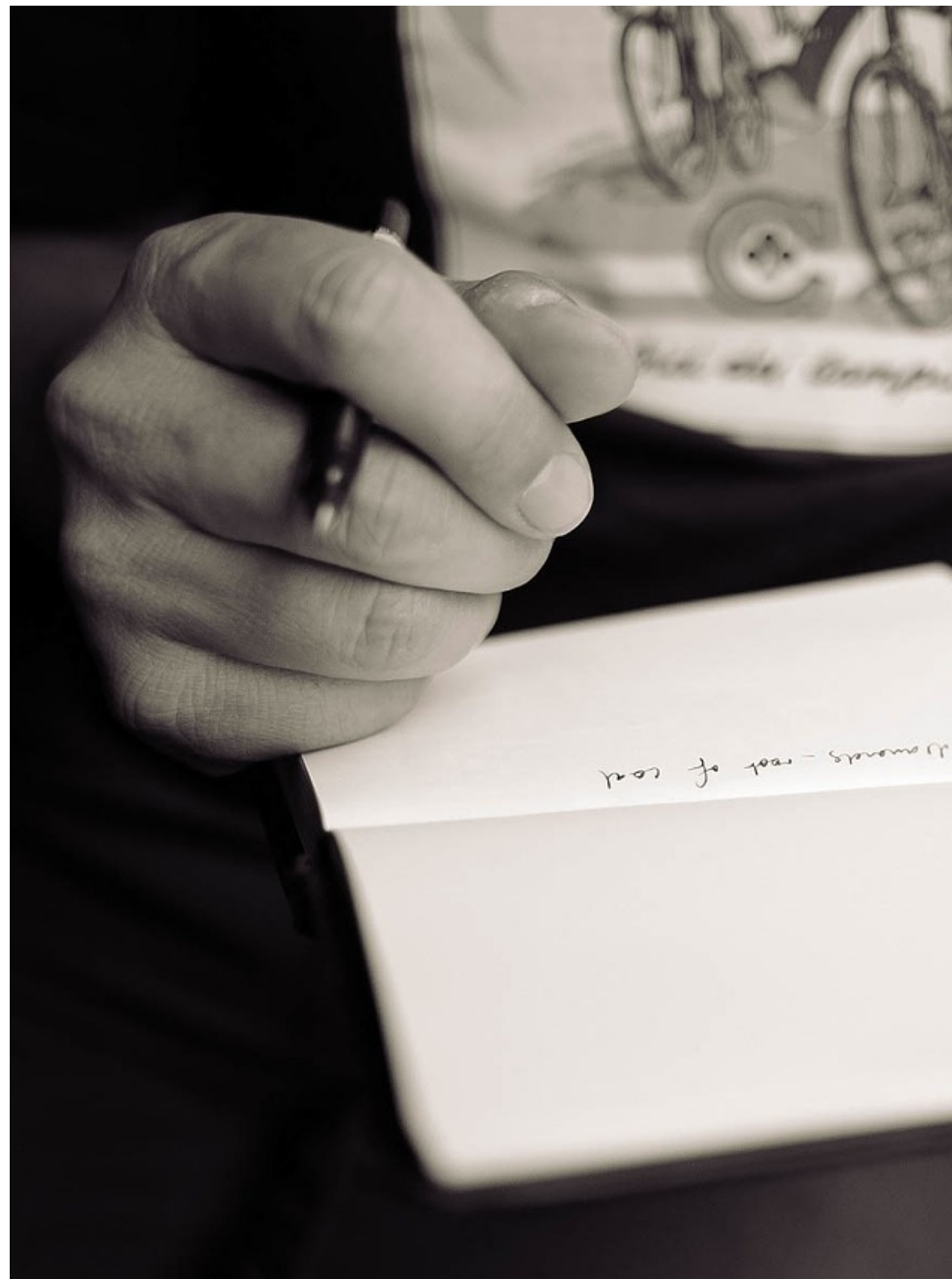
Key Ideas — 3

- We do the best we can within a time-box. Then we observe and **improve**.

- We build the plan iteratively and incrementally.

- We improve it as…

  - We get smarter

  - The customer gets smarter

  - Good change happens

  - Bad change happens

  - We improve our process

Old vs. New

- **Old:** "Stick to the dang plan! Suck it up, buttercup."

- **New:** "You folks have been getting smarter for 2 weeks. So, what have you done so far? And what's the <u>new</u> plan look like now?"

- And the new plan can be BETTER!

How Better?

- We do less stupid.

    - **Ex:** We don't build the wrong things as much.

- We improve our Velocity.

- We adapt to change better.

- We get better at mining the gold-platinum-diamonds only.

- We release earlier (maybe with less).

- We learn from feedback.

- 7 heads are better than 1!

Changes In Latitudes, Changes In Attitudes…

- Night and day difference.

- We use planning in a totally different way.

Goals for the 1 Day

- Get them all on the same page.

- The Big 3:

  1. They all see the same elephant.

  2. They all are more motivated.

  3. They all have shared most of the tacit knowledge.

5 Actions

1. Change attitudes.

2. Get more clarity on how important the next "project" is.

3. Build the team's initial plan in 1 day.

4. Give initial feedback.

5. Start iterating.

Contact Info

- Joseph Little

- www.LeanAgileTraining.com

- jhlittle@LeanAgileTraining.com

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