The Facilitation Loop = if you follow this model you will give every meeting you have the best chance of success. "Always Take The Time To Close The Loop" - I always stress this point because this is a magical transformation point, at which you can turn a bad meeting into a good one or vice versa.

Bad -> Good: No matter how badly the meeting goes if you close it with making plans for next steps and people can make suggestions for change they will feel like they have achieved something.

Good -> Bad: If you had a fantastic meeting with great ideas, but no one captured them, no one made plans on what to do with them next or you were mid thought when you were being kicked out of the room by the next attendee.

Techniques

Group Mind Mapping

The humble mind map has group facilitation superpowers, you can visually see how your ideas are connecting and inspiring others. It is grouping and theming as you go along and you have also recorded and captured the contents of your meeting!

Step One: Put the topic in the centre of the central node.(Eg: Improvements to the Scrum Gathering).

Step Two: Ask the group to brainstorm related subtopics (Eg: Parts We Enjoy). Continue until you feel you have exhausted this level.

Step Three: Now source associations of the subtopics (Eg: Meeting New People & Learning New Things).

Step Four: Action! Now let's talk about actions we can take to enhance or solve the associations (Eg: Add More Social Time).

Please Note: You don't need to be strict with the steps if your group is inspired let them follow a train of thought to actions. There are no strict rules to Mind Mapping, this is one way that works let your group or team tell you what makes sense for them.

Facilitator Tip: Pass the Pen! Get the group started but do your best to pass the pen so it is the group creating it, or better yet make sure everyone has a pen!

Other Uses: I especially love using group mind maps in backlog refinement, either with an epic or story at the centre. It helps with splitting stories and helping the whole team design a solution together.

Effort/Impact Grid

This technique that guides structured conversations around the viability of ideas comparatively to others. It helps people understand each others point of view and perhaps accept why another idea was chosen over theirs.

Step One: Draw the 2 by 2 grid (either on paper or on a remote whiteboard) and add labels (see slide 26)

Step Two: Grab an idea (or item of work) and ask the group questions around the effort involved to implement it and what impact we think it will have. Then agree where on our scale it should go. This first idea is now the anchor of what all other actions will be compared to this one.

Step Three: Grab the next idea again ask questions about the effort and impact but ensure the group references and compares this idea to the first one when deciding where to place it in the quadrants. Continue until all ideas are placed.

Facilitator Tip: You can change the labels of the quadrants to suit to goal of your meeting. For example, if you were trying to decide what bugs to target you could change it to a Frequency/Impact grid.

Other Uses: I love using this to help prioritize the backlog and in retrospectives.

Dot Voting

It is a classic, most suitable when you are trying to make a prioritised list. It helps groups make quick collaborative decisions.

Step One: Cast your votes. Every member of the group gets a certain number of votes, they cast their vote by drawing a small circle on the postit, page or somehow digitally, wherever your ideas or options are. (A lot of online collaboration tools have an inbuilt voting system).

They may put all their votes on one selection or distribute their votes.

Step Two: Put the ideas or options in the order of number of votes. Ideas with the most votes at the top. And voila! we have our prioritised list.

Facilitator Tips: Sometimes it feels like you have too many votes and sometimes not enough. A ratio that seems to work well is the number of votes participants have is 20% of the number of options they are voting on.

Other Uses: Sometimes we can hit a wall with dot voting or people try to manipulate it. Therefore I wanted to share two variations -

Secret Ballot: People can still vote, but they do it secretly and it is aggregated by the facilitator.

Fist of Five: This technique allows people to express their feeling about or for an idea or decision in a less binary way (i.e I vote for this one and not this one). I often use it when we have reached a stalemate. It provides the group with a scale of agreement.
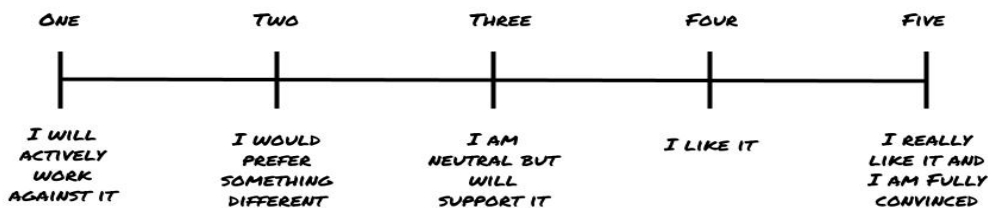
Step One: Tell the group what the scale means from 1-5

Step Two: Countdown 3-2-1 and have everyone show a number of fingers equal to where they feel they are on the scale of agreement.

Step Three: If you have anyone below a 3 ask them what their thoughts behind it are. They may reveal something that shifts the whole groups agreement. If the group is not swayed ask the original person "What would get you to a 3?"(don't expect to get everyone to a 5), we may be able to compromise or shift the plan in a way that means the group is happy to move ahead.
Facilitator Tip: Make sure you stipulate which finger they should hold up for 1 ;)

I wish you happy

One	Two	Three	Four	Five
I WILL ACTIVELY WORK AGAINST IT	I WOULD PREFER SOMETHING DIFFERENT	I AM NEUTRAL BUT WILL SUPPORT IT	I LIKE IT	I REALLY LIKE IT AND I AM FULLY CONVINCED

facilitating and please let me know how you use these techniques @Philiylander