A brief about Heart of Agile

With approximately forty Agile methods, hundreds of practices and certification courses, a simple word 'Agile' has become very complicated.

Agile movement started as a 2-pager in the form of Agile Manifesto, in 2001. It explains about four values and twelve principles. Later, more and more practices, methods and buzzwords were added, making it complicated.

Dr. Alistair Cockburn, one of the original signatories of Agile Manifesto is on a new mission to help people discover the simplicity and power of Agile with the concept of Heart of Agile.

What is the Heart of Agile?

Heart of Agile is a movement started by Dr Alistair Cockburn to simplify Agility and bring the focus back to the core. He has distilled the elements of Agile down to four imperatives - Collaborate, Deliver Reflect and Improve.

www.heartofagile.com *Image*

Heart of Agile has consolidated 400 overly complicated words to these four simple verbs through Shu-Ha-Ri-Kokoro progression.

Shu-Ha-Ri-Kokoro Progression

Shuhari is a Japanese martial art concept which describes the stages of learning to mastery. Dr Alistair Cokburn's attention has been drawn to it when rebuilding Agile from its centre.

'Shu' translates to 'follow', 'protect' or 'obey' - traditional wisdom

'Ha' translates to 'detach' or breaking the tradition
'Ri' translates to 'leave' or 'separate'

After thinking a lot about what will come after 'Ri', Alistair noticed a Japanese word 'Kokoro' meaning 'essence' or the 'heart'. It is all about mastering the basics.
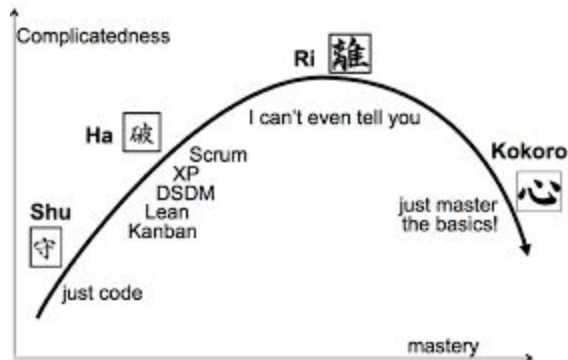
Expansion of the Heart

All the four verbs explain a lot, yet admits of a deeper and more subtle execution. The shu-ha-ri concept of skill progression is applicable to all the four quadrants.

The two-level expansion (level-1 expansion and level-2 expansion) of the Heart of Agile four quadrants is explained in his courses by Dr Alistair Cockburn. These courses are suitable for an Agile project, team and/or individual struggling to achieve Agility.

Applicability of Heart of Agile

Being Agile is the necessary part of the future as we all are living in the VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous) world. Most of the Agile frameworks are a bit complicated and focused on software development.

Heart of Agile is simpler and the four quadrants of Heart of Agile are applicable to industries beyond software like self-education, event management, design etc.

Interestingly, it can be applied to any scenario and at various levels in a team, and it does not cause a major change resulting in disruption.

The Heart of Agile concept can also work as a tool in different Agile frameworks. One can start with the four quadrants and then methods, practices and processes can be evolved.

Concluding Thoughts

- Heart of Agile is a simple to implement concept, it is designed to highlight the system complexity,
- Heart of Agile is not an expensive concept, it doesn't require major investment and budgets to begin with,
- Heart of Agile is not limited to software industry domains, it is applicable to all components of business to drive agility in its true sense,
- Heart of Agile can be implemented independently and it overlaps with other framework to make them Agile,
- Heart of Agile emphasizes on mastering the basics and getting to the core of Agility.

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References

- *Heart of Agile by Dr. Alistair Cockburn at www.heartagile.com*
- *https://alistair.cockburn.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/The-Heart-of-Agile-Technical-Report.pdf*