



Start • Stop • Continue

A 30-minute retrospective for one team of 4–8

One verb per card, behaviors never people — and no card survives without an owner and a date.

**What has been quietly not
working
on your team since the last
retro?**

The structure

- Three cards per person: START, STOP, CONTINUE. One behavior per card.
- Eight minutes silent writing. Seven minutes on the wall — reads and live clustering.
- Six minutes dot-voting, three dots each. Six minutes: owner and date, said out loud.

The card rule — say it out loud

- “Stop cc-ing the whole team” — not “stop cc-ing Dana.”
- Behaviors, never people. Every time, no exceptions.
- CONTINUE capped at three cards per person — or the wall turns to flattery.

Why the discipline is the design

- The structure is tiny; the retro's quality is all in what happens after the wall.
- Top card per pile gets an owner and a date — auditable by anyone, including next week's you.
- The wall photo is the contract. Someone owns it; the next retro starts from it.

Three ways it fails, three rescues

- Cards arrive pre-blamed (“stop being late — meaning Kai”) → rewrite live, with permission: name the behavior.
- Everything lands in CONTINUE → cap it at three; scarcity moves honesty to the hard piles.
- The vote splits into camps → silent dot-voting, then re-cluster the top five into one shortlist.

Three questions before you commit

- 1. Which pile is biggest — and what does the shape say about this team right now?**
- 2. Which card was hardest to write? Why that one?**
- 3. Read the three owner-plus-date cards aloud — do all three still feel real, right now?**

The measure

- Before the cards go out: six rows about how this team actually reviews itself.
- After the close: the same six rows about this retro.
- Watch the row about action items surviving — that is the retro's whole reason.

A retro is not a conversation.

It is a wall with owners on it.

The photo is the contract — schedule the audit.

Artifacts, not feelings

- Leave with: the wall photo, three commitments, and the next retro's opening slide.
- Between retro and retro, the three verbs show up in 1:1s and threads — uninvited. That is the goal.

Deal the cards · fill the wall · date every promise

The smallest retrospective with real discipline — thirty minutes,
three verbs, zero names.

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