creative commons

EMOTIONAL DEBT

inspired by actual events

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Being a Product Owner is like riding a bike, except the bike is on fire and you're on fire and everything is on fire and you're in hell.

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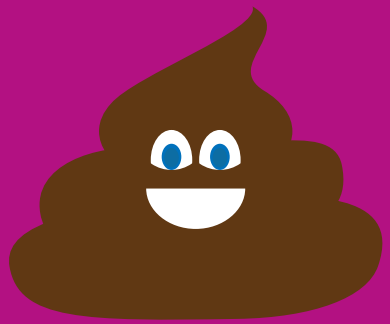
What problems may a product team encounter?
All of them! But why?



Skill and honesty shortages.
Knowing better.
Inattention to details.
Indifference.
Half-arsed commitment.

First, they tell you how exactly it cannot be done.

Then they describe in detail the pain they go through doing it.

Finally, once done, they shamelessly brag about it for hours.

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Ideas, opinions, promises and excuses are all talk. Talk is cheap. Results is what really matters.

Don't let anyone who achieved nothing dictate you how to do anything.

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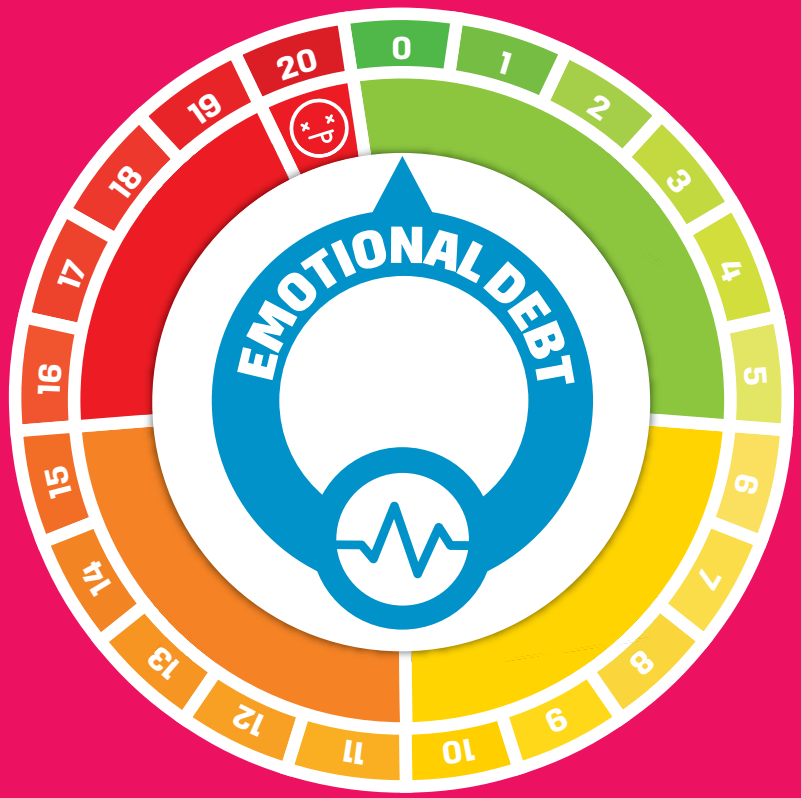
Unfinished work. More and more risk at stake. Missed deadlines. Delayed gratification.

emotional debt

a distance between one's ambition, expectations, sense of ownership and accountability, sense of duty and obligation, and the raw reality



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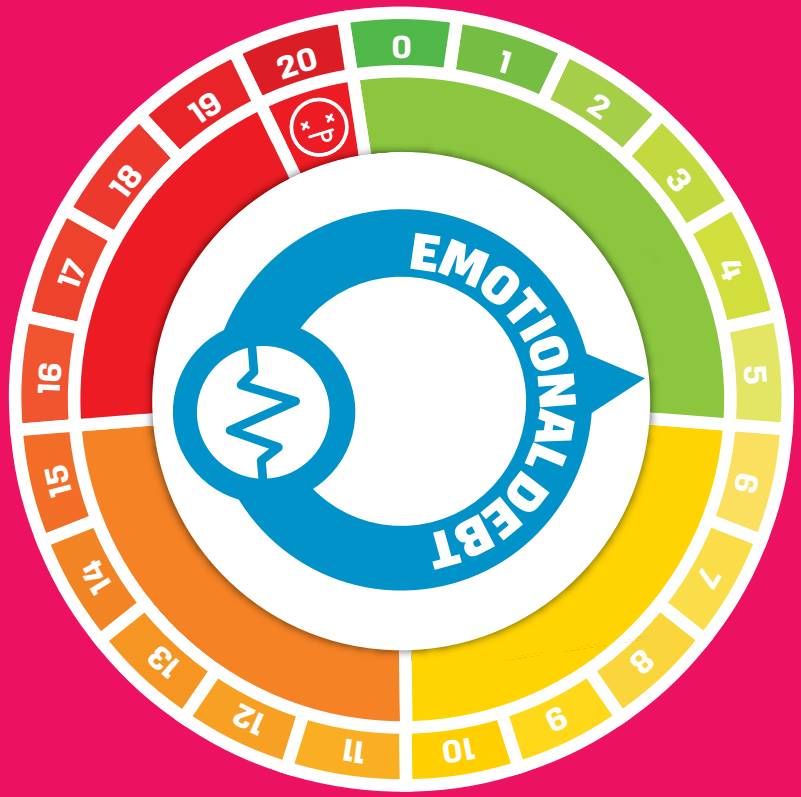
sarcasm
anxiety
stress
(passive) aggression
trouble sleeping
trouble focusing
constant fatigue
lowered self-esteem
severe procrastination



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disengagement

that moment when your once beloved product, project or team becomes nothing but a burden

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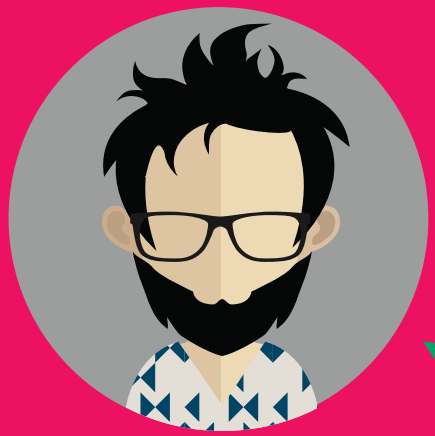
Everything in your life is your fault. No one is coming to save you. Sooner you get this the better.

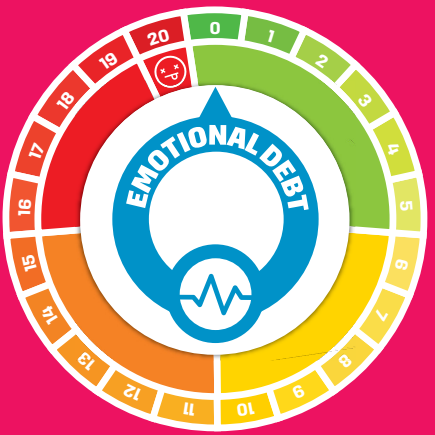
Going with lowest common denominator, giving up one's ambition and expectations is a choice for many.

Comfort destroys ambition. Perseverance is the winner's road.

What if the emotional debt was yet another type of resource, and ...



...one could decide how to best spend and regain it? Just like one does with any other kind of resource!



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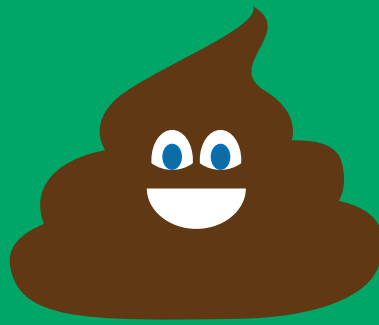
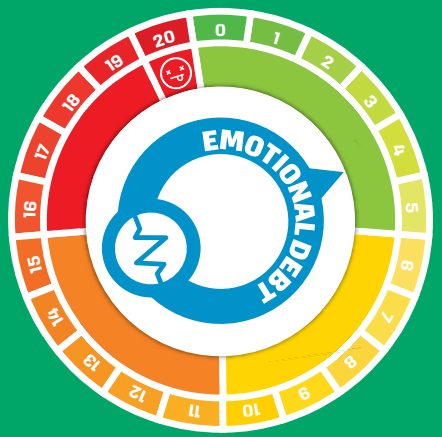
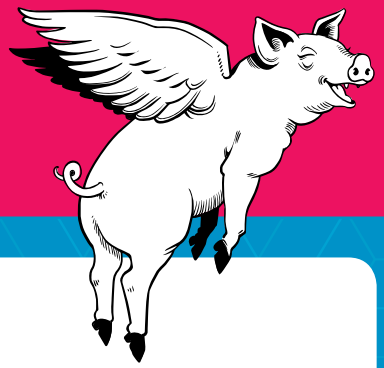
Plan for emotional debt just like you do for time and money. Limit possible loss and have a plan to bounce back. Make it explicit.





Phew! No experience can ever be devastating again!

Diversify. Have more than one thing to bet on. Plan for small increments and celebrate small successes to pay off the debt and ease delayed gratification. Unwind and chill out regularly.



Recharge

Turn off your phone, buy yourself something nice, sing and dance naked, do whatever you find relaxing.

Roll the dice:

Decrease Product Owner Stress Level by 2.

Decrease Flow by 1.

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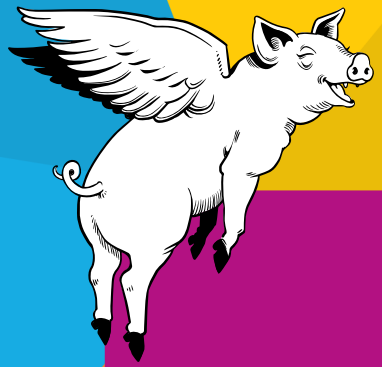
Hang out with people who challenge AND support you. Let go everyone who doesn't. Let go whiners, bystanders, and non-doers. Don't make yourself dependent and vulnerable.



Thank you!

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