

# The TameFlow Connection Newsletter

The latest news and ideas about the *TameFlow Approach*

## TameFlow Connection 21

Hello Friends of Herbie,

Here's the latest *TameFlow Connection Newsletter*! In this installment I will be offering some reflections on how to compare *Lean* with the *TameFlow Approach*; and how this can relate to the PMI's *Disciplined Agile*. Then I will offer some thoughts about how the current hype in the world of note taking, namely Roam Research, can become a really interesting tool for us who are interested in the *TameFlow Approach*.

### On Lean, TOC and TameFlow

A recurring theme I come across is how *Lean* compares to the *Theory of Constraints* - and, hence, indirectly to the *TameFlow Approach*. It is important to clarify this. Endless discussions about which is "better" lead to nowhere.

First off, it might be good to understand what the different approaches are and how they compare. For instance, Dave Nave's article ["How to Compare Six Sigma, Lean and Theory of Constraints"](#) (Quality Progress, V35N3P73-78), does a good job at that. Then we have many who have explained how the different approaches can be used together. For instance, [Velocity: Combining Lean, Six Sigma and the Theory of Constraints to Achieve Breakthrough Performance - A Business Novel](#) by Dee Jacob, Suzan Bergland and Jeff Cox explores this. Or Bob Sproull's [Epiphanized: A Novel on Unifying Theory of Constraints, Lean, and Six Sigma, Second Edition](#) or [Theory of Constraints, Lean, and Six Sigma Improvement Methodology: Making the Case for Integration](#).

Notice however how all these attempts are very operational - so they're good for *Operational Flow*!

Another aspect that needs to be highlighted more, is reflecting deeper on Goldratt's own [Standing on the Shoulders of Giants](#) paper. If we consider this in the light of the *Logical Thinking Processes*, we will develop a more powerful framing. In a recent LinkedIn thread, [Gianluca Davico](#) made this connection very clearly:

*If you read carefully "Standing on the Shoulders of the Giants," you would realize that Goldratt never says that Lean is wrong. He says that Lean is a SPECIFIC application to a specific context. What he argues is that Lean is like a TOC application with a physical control of flow. What he says is that TOC, is not an application. It is much more: it is a theory. As a Theory he has used abstract concept. [...] With TOC you can explain Lean, not vice-versa. The power of TOC is that it uses so abstract principles that you can apply it anywhere. It is a way of thinking. This is the most powerful legacy for us.*

That's the key point! It is a "way of thinking" - and the reason why TOC resonates so much with the prominence of *Patterns* and *Mental Models* of the *TameFlow Approach*. That's the kind of framing I suggest to keep in mind even when asked to compare *TameFlow* (or TOC) with other approaches: **The *TameFlow Approach* is a way of thinking that can be used to improve on any other approach.** Often I resort to the metaphor that *TameFlow* is like a great spice that you can sprinkle over any meal (i.e. other approaches) to make it even better!

## On the PMI's Disciplined Agile

Talking about other approaches, it is interesting to keep an eye on how the PMI's Disciplined Agile (DA) launch is progressing. This week [Mark Lines](#) had a [webinar](#) where he presented the DA certification programme.

With the above metaphor of *TameFlow* being a spice that can be sprinkled on top of other approaches, there are reasons to believe that we can create great synergies with DA. In a recent Twitter exchange, [Al Shalloway](#) posted this table:



## Dimensions of Agile Approaches

	Disciplined Agile	Time Flow	Kanban Method	Scrum	XP	SAFe	Scrum based Agile @ Scale
Requires time-boxing	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Uses flow	Y	Y	Y	Optional within time-box	Y	Optional within time-box	Optional within time-box
Requires <u>some</u> specific non-universal practices	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Is a framework	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Attends to where you are	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N

Considers big change up front	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Sometimes requires big change up front	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y

It is encouraging that DA and *TameFlow* are very similar in AI's analysis of the *Dimensions of Agile Approaches*: actually they're entirely compatible!

Talking to AI Shalloway, we converged on the idea that *TameFlow* could be used as a "booster" on top of DA - as if it were a SWOT, a "navy seals" like special operations that greatly improves on the broad base adoption that the PMI will create for DA.

Let me know what you think about this line of thinking.

## On Zettelkasten, Roam, the TameFlow Approach and Patterns

One of the trendiest applications that has appeared this year is [Roam Research](#). The tagline on their website reads: "A note-taking tool for networked thought." This *TameFlow Connection Newsletter* is entirely authored in Roam. There is a lot of hype around this product; but it also provides utility that other applications just don't.

So what's a good way to understand what it is about. One of the best summaries are found in this [tweet](#) by Conor White-Sullivan, who is the inventor of Roam, which he wrote in 2019 while the product was being conceived.

Conor was clearly inspired by Zettlekasten (see that tweet thread for more about that). Here is an abstract of what he states:

*Zettlekasten is like GTD for intellectual progress... GTD doesn't work for intellectual work. GTD is all about stress free productivity, it works by creating a system you can trust with commitments and deadlines, so you can let things fall out of working memory without getting dropped. You can't put a deadline on insight though. Making real progress on an intellectual problem requires drawing connections between things you hadn't connected before. Can't predict when you'll get the idea that ties everything together or realize you were asking the wrong question. If you start your search for truth with the conclusion in mind, (the way they teach you to write essays -- starting with your thesis), you won't actually discover anything new. The Zettelkasten solves this -- it creates a writing habit, and a system to organize your thoughts -- that reliably will produce good new ideas, and make your final deliverables (essays, blog posts, articles, videos, presentations) painless to produce.*

Notice how there is a parallel to be drawn here. Namely between traditional project management and knowledge-work. That's why Roam will be very valuable for anyone engaging in research, knowledge-discovery, creative work, and so on.

How is it to use Roam? It is like writing a personal Wiki, but with the added power of getting automatic "backlinks" from pages you create to the pages that reference those pages. You are building your own personal knowledge-network at the tip of your fingertips. Moreover, every page has the ability to list any "unlinked" references; that way you can make connections after the fact, when you didn't even think about those connections to begin with. This capability helps growing the connections between your thoughts; thoughts that you might have produced at different times, and in completely different contexts.

How does this relate to the *TameFlow Approach*? Simply put: Roam is probably the best tool available today to document *Patterns* and create a *Pattern Language*. The serendipitous connection between thoughts - or *Patterns* - becomes a powerful element in exploring new directions of your growing *Pattern Network*.

Bottom line: if you are interested in working with *Patterns* - and the in particular the *TameFlow Patterns* - start your own Roam instance and

document them there. Soon this will become even more interesting, as Roam Research will introduce "multiplayer" capabilities into their products. As Conor wrote in the [Roam White Paper](#):

*"The Roam vision for human knowledge is a collective, open-source intelligence, constantly rearranging, iterating and evolving in the pursuit of truth. Each of us would become a node within this collective intelligence, forging links and creating networks, sharing the very best each has to offer, improving ourselves even as we improve others, and advancing the interests of humanity as a whole."*

Do you want to be part of this? **A collaborative effort of curating a collective body of knowledge of the *TameFlow Approach***. Then start looking into Roam, and maybe we can make that sort of vision happen for the *TameFlow Patterns*, *Pattern Language* and *Pattern Network*.

If you are keen about this, please get in touch with me, so we can coordinate!

## Re-Read Saturdays

Tom Cagley has taken the last two weeks off from his *Re-Read Saturdays* because of a combination of household duties and work; but he promises he will be back again next week. In case you missed the earlier posts, you can catch up on the re-read with them here:

Week 1: [Logistics and Front Matter](#) – <https://bit.ly/2LWJ3EY>

Week 2: [Prologue](#) (The Story of Herbie) – <https://bit.ly/3h4zmTi>

Week 3: [Explicit Mental Models](#) – <https://bit.ly/2UJUZYn>

Week 4: [Flow Efficiency, Little's Law and Economic Impact](#) – <https://bit.ly/2VrIhol>

Week 5: [Flawed Mental Models](#) – <https://bit.ly/3eqj70m>

Week 6: [Where To Focus Improvement Efforts](#) – <https://bit.ly/2DTvOUN>

Week 7: [Introduction to Throughput Accounting and Culture](#) – <https://bit.ly/2DbhfLT>

Week 8: [Accounting Fiction and Show Me the Money](#) – <https://bit.ly/2XmDuWu>

Week 9: [Constraints in the Work Flow and in the Work Process](#) – <https://bit.ly/33UukoZ>

Week 10: [Understanding PEST Environments and Finding the Constraint in PEST Environments](#) - <https://bit.ly/3ga3ew9>

Week 11: [Drum-Buffer-Rope Scheduling](#) - <https://bit.ly/32I0Z3Q>

Week 12: [Portfolio Prioritization and Selection in PEST Environments](#) - <https://bit.ly/3IEa4WC>

Week 13: [Flow Efficiency, DBR, and TameFlow Kanban Boards](#) - <https://bit.ly/32rYUVf>

Week 14: [Outcomes, Values, and Efforts in PEST Environments](#) - <https://bit.ly/3jd52qw>

Week 15: [Introduction to Execution Management Signals](#) - <https://bit.ly/3mS9j4V>

## Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars for the following upcoming events

**October 20th, 2020 at 20:00 CEST** *Campfire Talks with Herbie 28.*

The guests will be [Patrick Steyaert](#) and [Arlette Vercammen](#) of Okaloa Flowlabs. We will talk about *Business Simulations* and *Experiential Learning*.

**November 4th, 2020 at 23:00 CET** I will be the guest speaker on Agile Maine's webinar "*This is an Agile Heresy Manifesto*" (mentioned above), hosted by [Miljan Bajic](#). Sign up [here](#).

**November 10th, 2020 at 13:00 CET** *Campfire Talks with Herbie 29.* The guest will be [Peter Merel](#). Of course we will talk about his *XSCALE* and see how it compare to the *TameFlow Approach*.

**November 23rd-24th, 2020** I will have a talk at the **Critical Chain Project Management Virtual Conference 2020** organized by the TOCICO. The conference will be targeted at *traditional* project managers that might only have a summary understanding of CCPM and are trying to "uncover better ways" to do their job. Of course, one such better way will be via the *TameFlow Approach*. For more information, see [here](#).

**December 3rd, 2020 at 20:00 CET** will see first ever discussion panel event on the *Campfire Talks with Herbie 30*. The panel will be moderated by our very own [Mark Jørgensen Chaudhry](#) a.k.a "Question Mark" because when he is around, no question will be left unasked! The topic will be: **Ready now for building the future-proof organization**. We will explore the future of organizations, touching on themes like: resilience, sustainability, diversity, social responsibility,

power structures, hierarchies, networks, complexity, etc. and who know how many other lines of thought will be developed. In addition to myself, the panel will include these great professionals:

- [Niels Pflaeging](#), a leadership philosopher, management exorcist, speaker, author, advisor. Founder at BetaCodex Network. Thanks to Niels: the idea of this panel was developed with his input!
- [Pamela Dukes OLY](#), an enterprise agile coach & trainer, and a Hall of Fame Olympic athlete who is focused on helping teams through servant leadership and self-reliance strategies;
- [Ritu Ward, FACHE](#), a Healthcare executive with success delivering quality, growth, and strategy while leading high performing teams;
- and last, but not least, [Nigel Thurlow](#), former Chief of Agile of Toyota and the co-creator of The Flow System.

## Best of Campfire Talks

As you probably know, the "*Campfire Talks with Herbie*" broadcasts always feature segments where I explain some aspect of the *TameFlow Approach*, typically in response to some question of my guests. As such segments contain valuable information, I thought it might be good to extract them and make them available as short videos.

Here's the first one: [Best of Campfires 1, Patterns](#) wherein I answer the questions: What are Alexandrian Patterns and how do they fit into the *TameFlow Approach*? How do they relate to Sphere of Influences and Span of Controls?

Besides, we need to thank [Mark Jørgensen Chaudhry](#) for helping out with the video editing of this one!

To make sure you don't miss any *Campfire Talks with Herbie* events, subscribe to the [Campfire Events Notification List](#), and you will receive the broadcast links ahead of the event.

That's it for this time.

Have a great week!

Steve

P.S.

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