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**“Are We Making the Best Use of Cost and
Schedule Estimating?”**

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The 12+/-2 Levels of Procrastination

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Denial, Delay, Delusion & Deflection

Estimating, like so many other skills, first begins with a desire, an intent to be competent at it. Without that, no amount of guides, tools and training will have any effect.

This presentation contains the 12+/-2 levels of procrastination. The 12+/-2 levels are not formal or based on any research but on observation. They are 12+/-2 ways of saying “No” without ever having to use the words “No”.





Please complete the survey and hand in your scores at the break. In the afternoon we will be forming a working group to find “cures” for our most common issues

Level 1: What Problem?

4

Completely unaware that there is a problem.

The downside of the painful truth is dwarfed by the upside of blissful ignorance

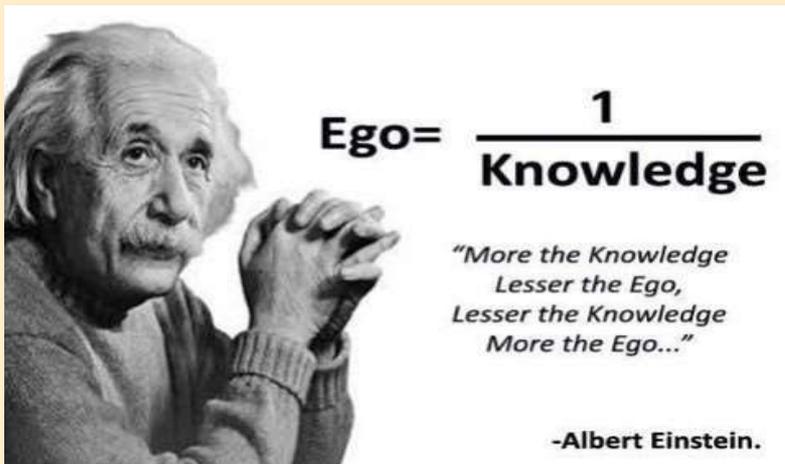


Level 2: Not My Problem!

5

They accept there is a problem, but not a problem they have. Everyone else needs to improve but me!

Note: According to research by Douglas Hubbard, 5% of people are convinced they are good at estimating even when presented with evidence to the contrary



Level 3: Not My Fault!

6

They accept they have a problem but its not their fault:

- The team: they did a bad job of the estimate
- The customer: poor requirements, scope creep, etc.
- The supplier: they are unreliable
- The business: they are not investing in estimating
- The leaders: they are not driving the right estimating behaviours.





- They accept they have a problem but they won't fix it:
- Yes, but – we are different
 - Yes, but – it's too late / too soon for us
 - Yes, but – our projects are too complex / too simple
 - Yes, but – that not how we do it here
 - Yes, but – no point because no-one else does it



They accept they have a problem and need to change but need proof before they will change

Stuck in a loop, trying to defend the obvious, to someone who should know better!

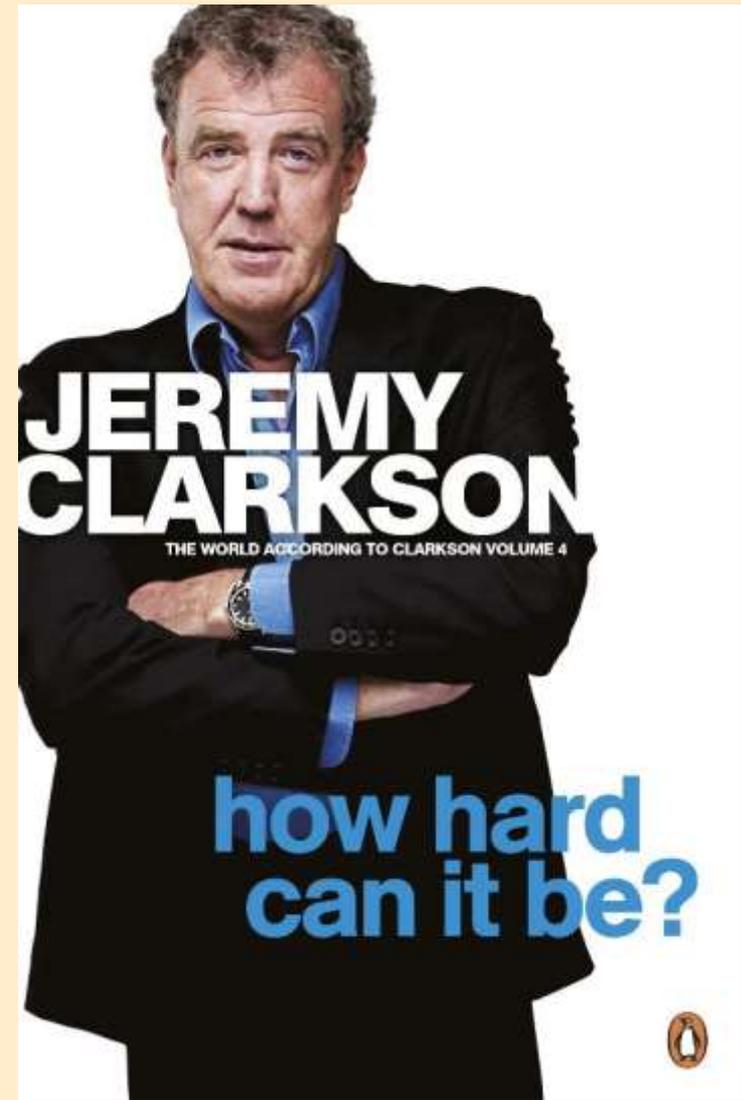
Best way to justify estimating is to not do it for a year. The chaos that follows is all the justification you will need.

Level 6: Waiting to be Told!

9

Despite having a problem with estimating and despite the evidence of the benefits, they won't do it until it is mandated and even then they want to know who mandated it.





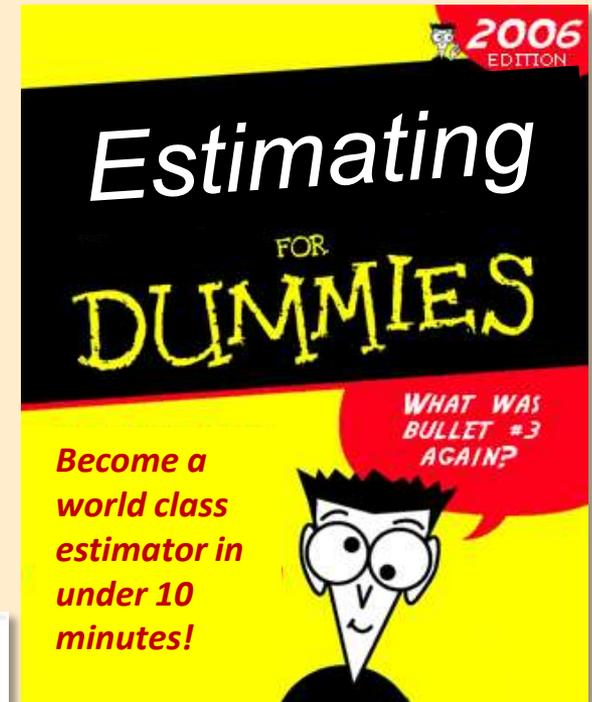
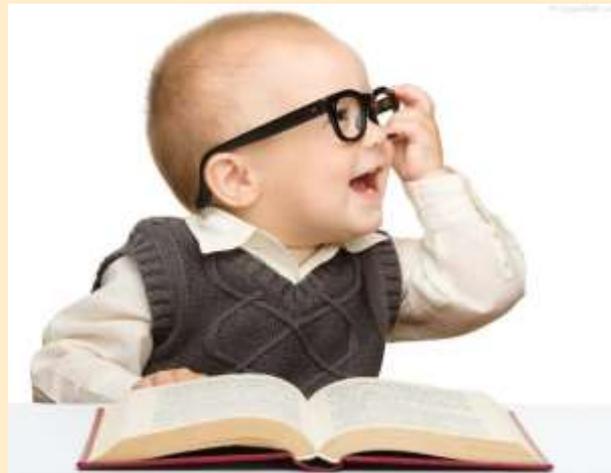
They accept they have a problem and need to change but under estimate the challenges of bring about the change.

Level 8: Minimalists.

11

They accept they need to improve but try to over simplify the fix. Estimating training in “under an hour”, estimating standards fit onto 1 side of paper. Whatever you produce, they automatically tell you to halve it! Less is more so having nothing must be the best!?

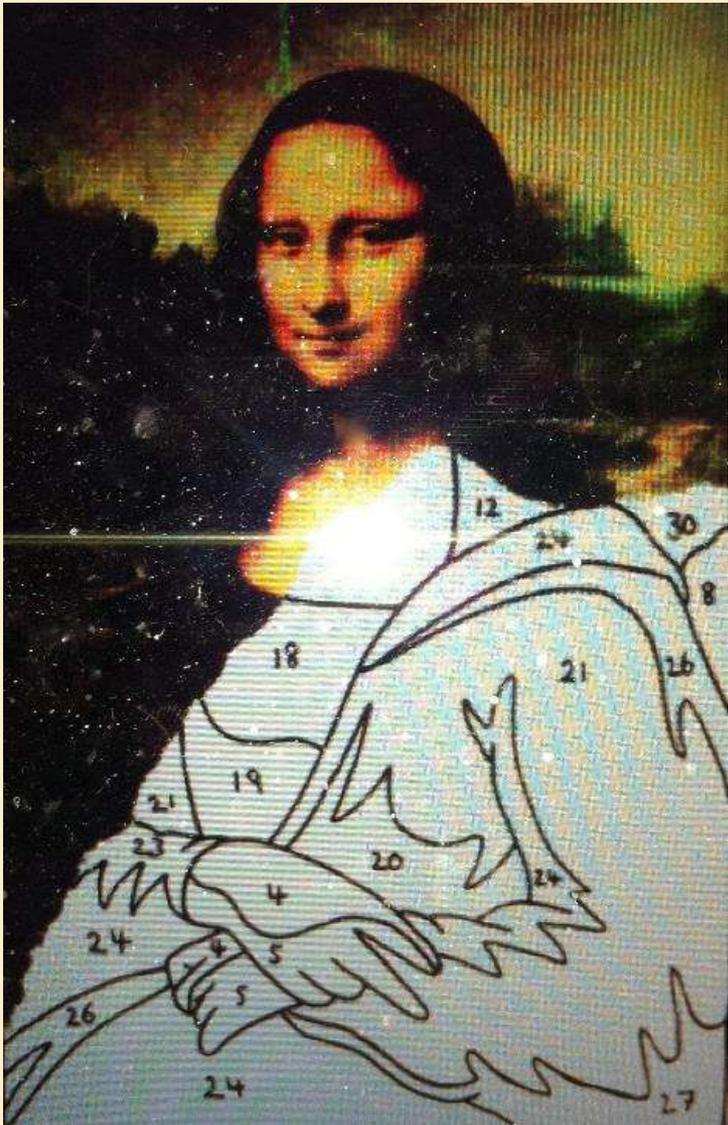
If you were having a surgical operation, would you be delighted to hear the surgeon had been trained in under 10 minutes?



They accept they need to improve but over complicate the fix. They use the word “fundamental” often i.e. “this is fundamentally wrong” or “this fundamentally won’t work”!

They would rather have nothing than something that was only 99% good enough!

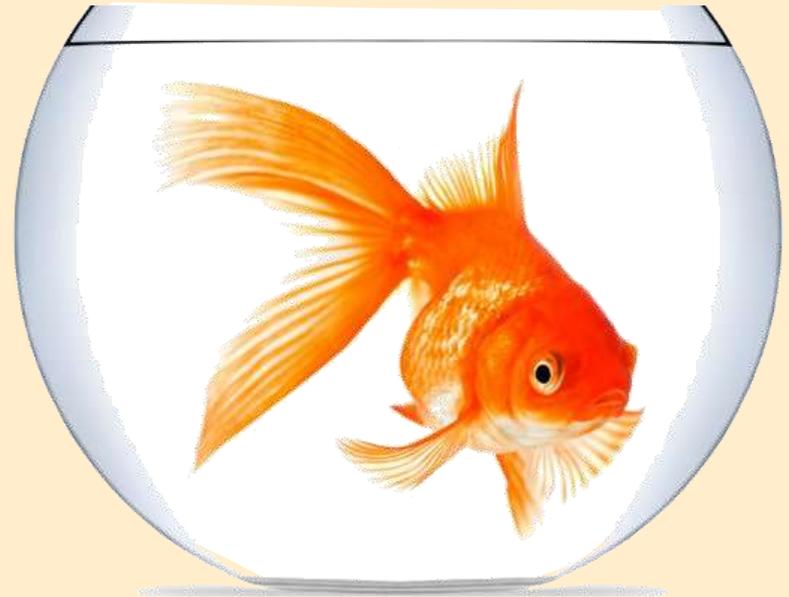




They recognise that estimating needs to be fixed but believe they can remove the human from the equation. They treat estimating like painting by numbers, just fill in the blanks and you will have a masterpiece. Anyone, regardless of their competency, will generate a high-quality masterpiece.

They accept they have a problem and that it needs to be fixed. They also accept it will need investment. However, after the initial excitement, “high energy” events, with senior guest speakers, they lose interest.

Despite everyone turning up to the initial meeting, few people turn up to the follow on meetings and events



Level 12: I want it ALL.

15

They accept they have a problem and that it's going to take effort to fix it. However, they won't launch until they have everything ready: training, templates, databases, guides, tools, etc.



Having been motivated to adopt estimating, they expect to go from zero to hero in just a couple of months. They want it all and they want it now.

Hofstadter's Law states that it always takes longer than you expect, even when you take into account Hofstadter's Law.

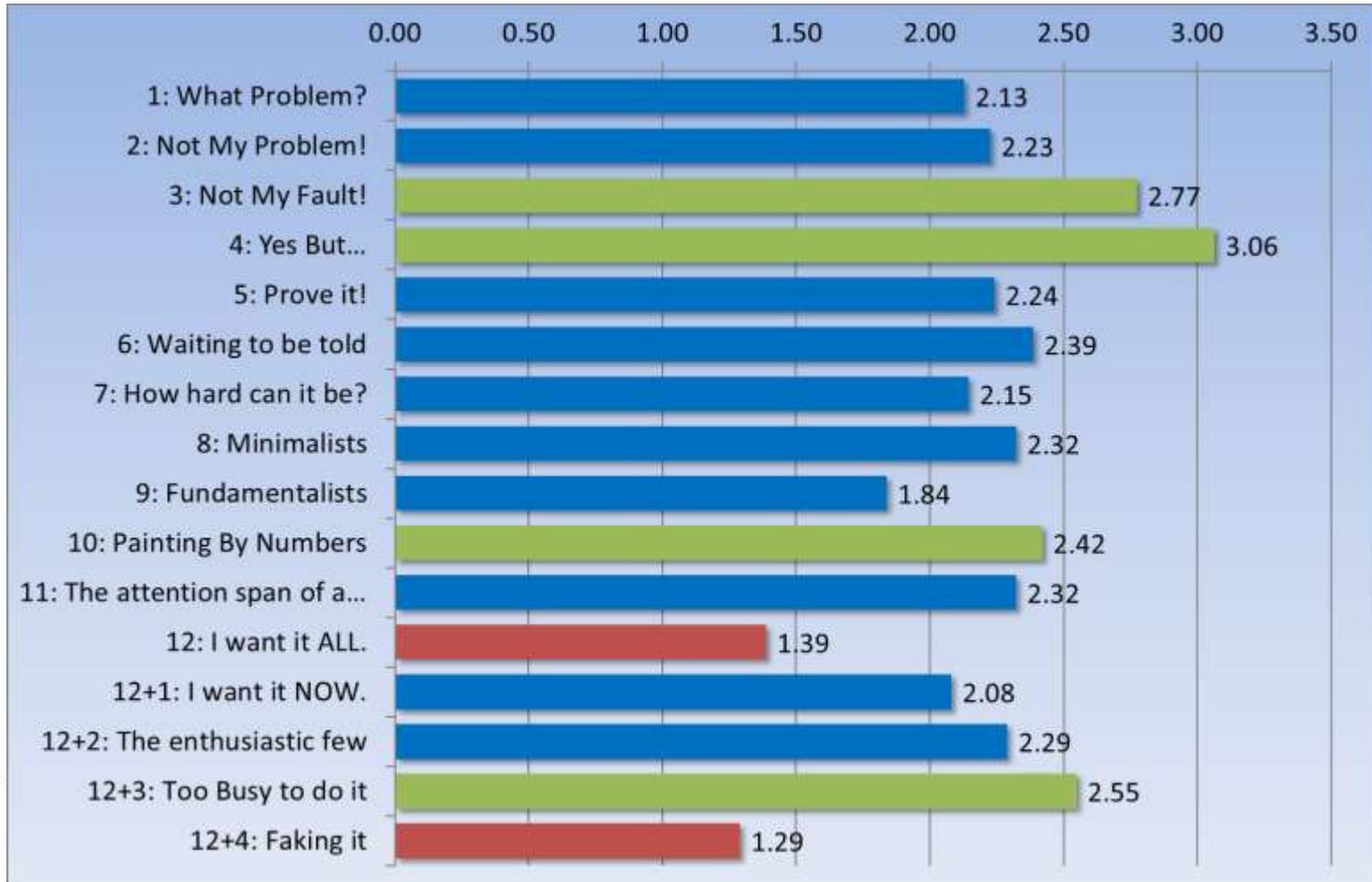




They recognise that estimation is a capability and a competency and that it also requires investment to develop and sustain the capability. However, the capability is dependent on a few enthusiastic supporters. They are the only thing that keeps the initiative alive if / when they move on the capability will go back to the beginning.



And the winner of the best procrastination is....



4. Yes But (Average score = 3.1)

- Bite sized chunks to demonstrate familiarity and benefits
- Invite demonstrate why they are different
- Wave the process in their face! Remind them of the importance of process
- Trial it for a success story
- Mandate it – big stick / non-approval to proceed
- Benefits
- Play to their ego
- Yes but what are the consequences – what if they don't
- Managing expectations



3. Not My Fault (Average score = 2.8)

- Explain consequences and opportunities
- Understand why they think its not their fault
- Find a solution – invite leaving fault behind
- Encouragement for what they did well
- Prove to them it is their fault (career limiting)
- Crisis management / review
- Company responsibility
- Name and shame in risk management process
- 5 whys to understand root cause
- Communication of process and procedures – stakeholder engagement



12+3. To busy (Average score = 2.5)

- Review milestones and Pass work to available resources
- Volunteer them for time management training
- Help with prioritisation
- Put estimation activity in schedule
- Ask how we can help
- There are 7 days in a week!
- Training
- Get them to understand the value of it compared to other things
- Simplify the process



Painting by numbers

- Let them carry on
- Introduce sensitivity analysis
- Make them aware of other methodologies
- Tailor and adapt solution for them
- Estimation is not just about numbers its about words and human element
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12+4. Faking it (Average score = 1.3)

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