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Aristotile  
e meets  
Agile

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# What would you do?

The team has missed the sprint goal again. The head of Engineering is furious, saying that if they don't start meeting commitments, "heads will roll".

They've nearly finished a long anticipated feature.

In fact, the back end is ready and they have the tests to prove it works. The UI needs tweaking. The UX lead has to sign off before it can be released, but he's away for two weeks.

The next feature has been refined and is ready to implement, but might take more than a sprint to get done.



What would you  
do?

What would generate  
the best outcomes?



What would you  
do?

What would generate  
the best outcomes?

What do the rules  
say?

What would you  
do?

## Sprint Retrospective

The purpose of the Sprint Retrospective is to plan ways to increase quality and effectiveness.

The Scrum Team inspects how the last Sprint went with regards to individuals, interactions, processes, tools, and their Definition of Done. Inspected elements often vary with the domain of work. Assumptions that led them astray are identified and their origins explored. The Scrum Team discusses what went well during the Sprint, what problems it encountered, and how those problems were (or were not) solved.

The Scrum Team identifies the most helpful changes to improve its effectiveness. The most impactful improvements are addressed as soon as possible. They may even be added to the Sprint Backlog for the next Sprint.

The Sprint Retrospective concludes the Sprint. It is timeboxed to a maximum of three hours for a one-month Sprint. For shorter Sprints, the event is usually shorter.

What would generate  
the best outcomes?

What do the rules  
say?

## Scrum Master

The Scrum Master is accountable for establishing Scrum as defined in the Scrum Guide. They do this by helping everyone understand Scrum theory and practice, both within the Scrum Team and the organization.

The Scrum Master is accountable for the Scrum Team's effectiveness. They do this by enabling the Scrum Team to improve its practices, within the Scrum framework.

Scrum Masters are true leaders who serve the Scrum Team and the larger organization.



What would you do?

What would generate the best outcomes?

What do the rules say?

What would a good scrum master do?

Look at me!

Tom Jans

Freelance Agile  
Coach

Speaker at Less  
Conference

Engineer and  
philosopher



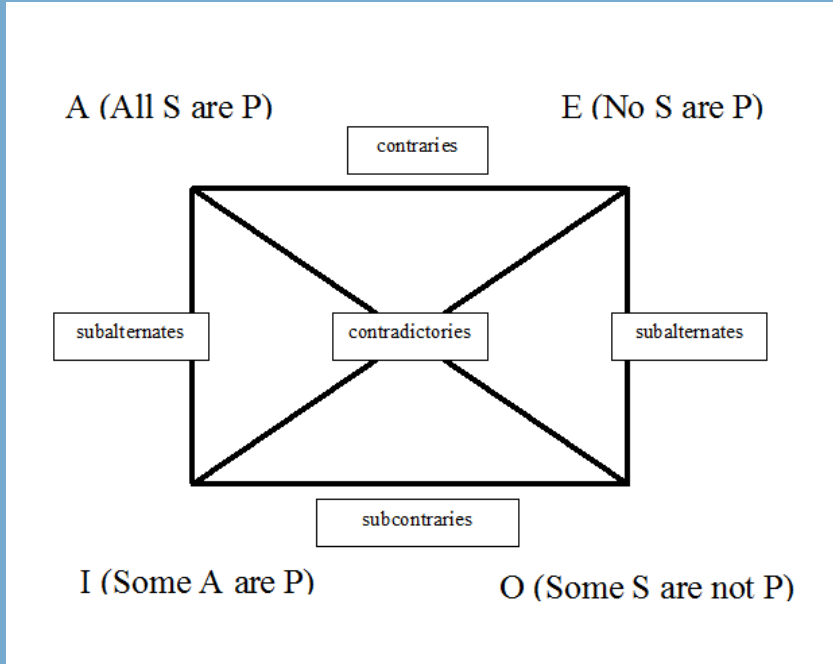


# Aristotle

- 384 – 322 BC
- Student of Plato
- Tutor to Alexander
- Founder of the Lyceum in Athens



# Logic: Syllogism



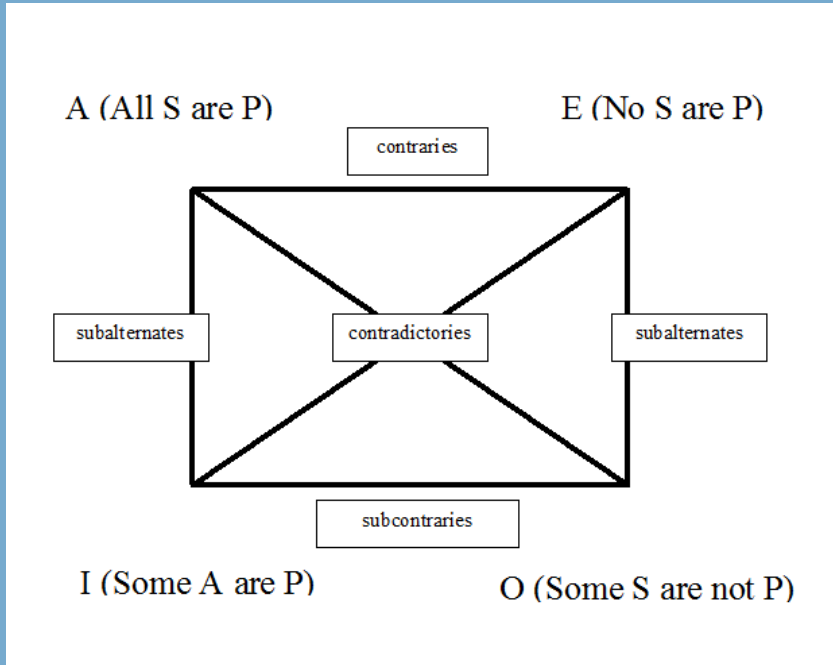
P1 *All men are mortal.*

P2 *Socrates is a man.*

C  $\Rightarrow$  *Socrates is mort*

$\Rightarrow$  *Some organisations improve*  
Tom Jans simplytom.be  
*over the long term*

# Logic: Syllogism



*All real agile teams do retrospectives.*

*This team does retrospectives.*

*=> This is a real agile team*

P1 *All men are mortal.*

P2 *Socrates is a man.*

C *=> Socrates is mortal*

*Some organisations don't do LeSS.*

*LeSS improves over the long term.*

*=> Some organisations don't*



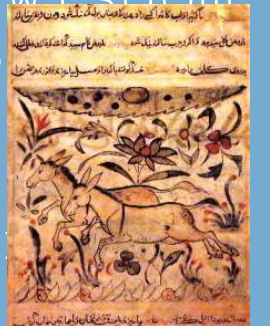
# Science

Knowledge starts with observation

From particular cases to general principles

Practical wisdom (phronesis)

Historia animalium



A good person?

An analogy: A good knife?



*fc*  
*fun*  
*her*

A good person?

An analogy: A good knife?

*A good knife is a knife that  
cuts well.*



*Cutting is what a knife is for*

- *its purpose (telos), its function*
- *sets it apart from all other*

A good person?

An analogy: A good knife?

*A good knife is a knife that  
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*Cutting is what a knife is for*

- *its purpose (telos), its function*
- *sets it apart from all other*



A good person?

Function of a person:

*procreation*



er

A good person?

Function of a person:

*procreation*



Is not what sets us apart from other animals

Being good at procreation does not make you

a good person







A very good person?

The highest good is

*"to have excellent exercise of the intellect"*

*Eudaimonia*

*good*

*spirit*

*"Flourishing"*

21/11/2025 – LeSS meetup

Tom Jans

simplytom.be



Pursuit of excellence

virtus: *“excellent qualities of men”*



Pursuit of excellence

virtus: “*excellent qualities of men*”

Intellectual virtues: thinking

- Developed by studying

“... *virtues are cultivated excellently*”

- Developed by doing



Pursuit of excellence

virtus: “*excellent qualities of men*”

Intellectual virtues: thinking  
excellently

- Developed by studying

Moral virtues: acting excellently

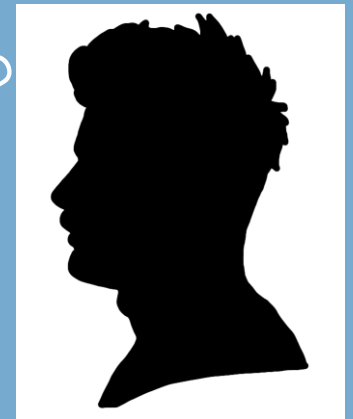
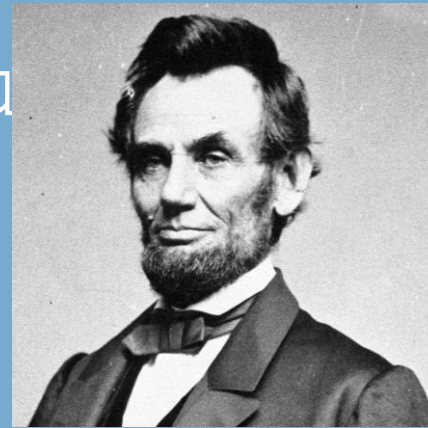
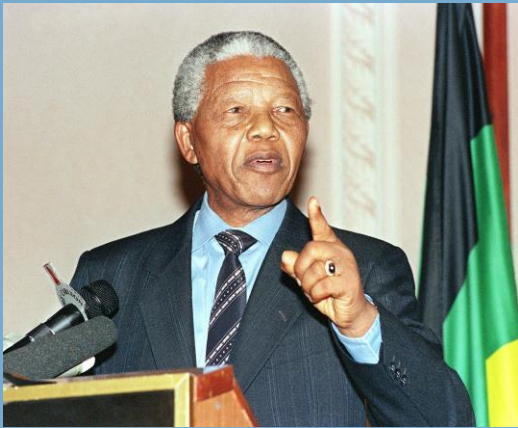
- Developed by doing



# Exemplars

Real or fictional examples of good people

What is it about them that makes them so good?









# Virtues as the golden mean

Deficiency

Virtue

Excess

Cowardice

Courage

Recklessness

Insensitivity

Temperance

S

Shyness

Modesty

Self-indulgence

Irritability

Patience

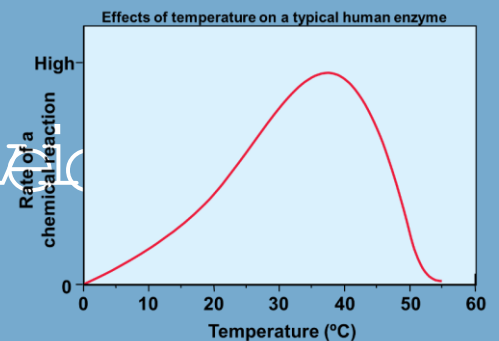
Shamelessness

...

...

...

igv



# Aristotle for better Scrum Masters



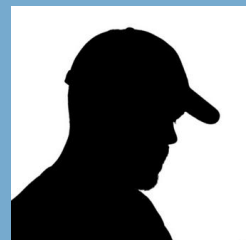
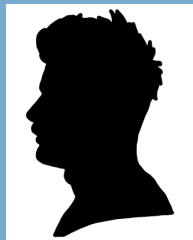
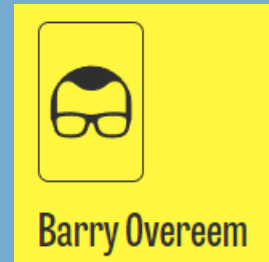
- What is the function of a Scrum Master?
- What makes them unique compared to other roles?
- Exemplars for Scrum Masters
- What qualities make them good?





# Exemplars

These are good Scrum Masters:



















# Becoming better

What should I do?

*Do what a good person would do.*

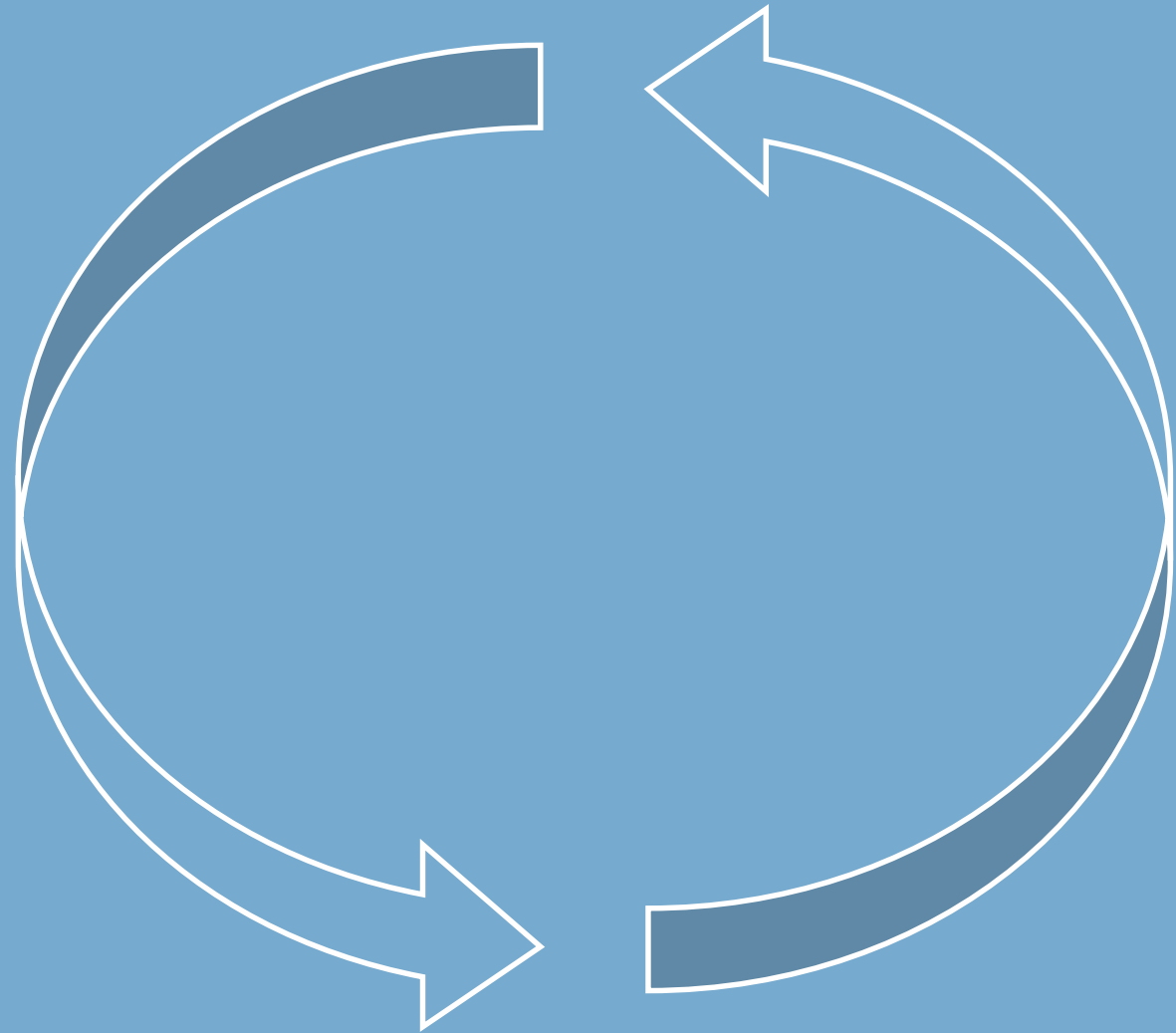
How do I know what a good person would do?

*You know if you're a good person.*

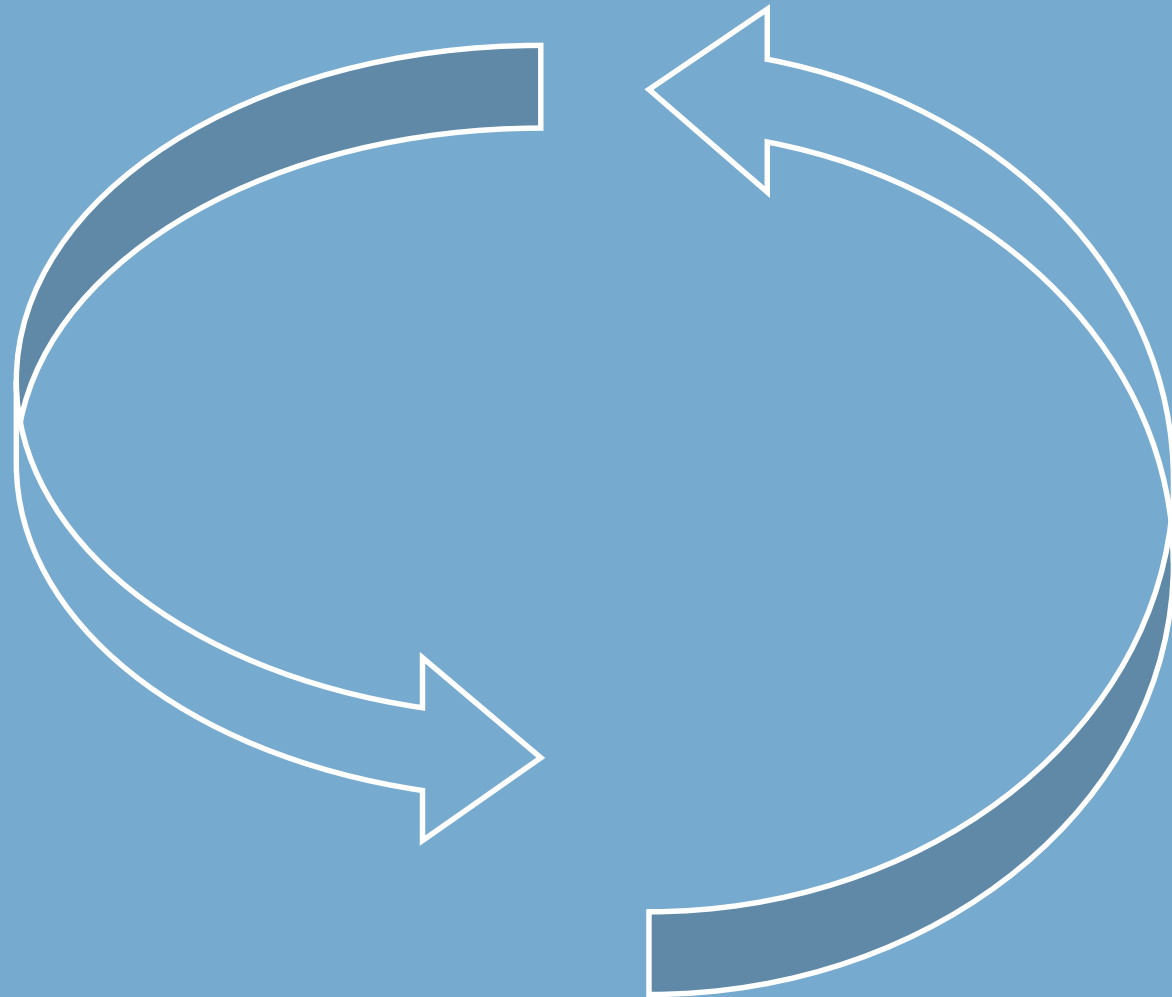
How do I become a good person?

*By doing what a good person does.*

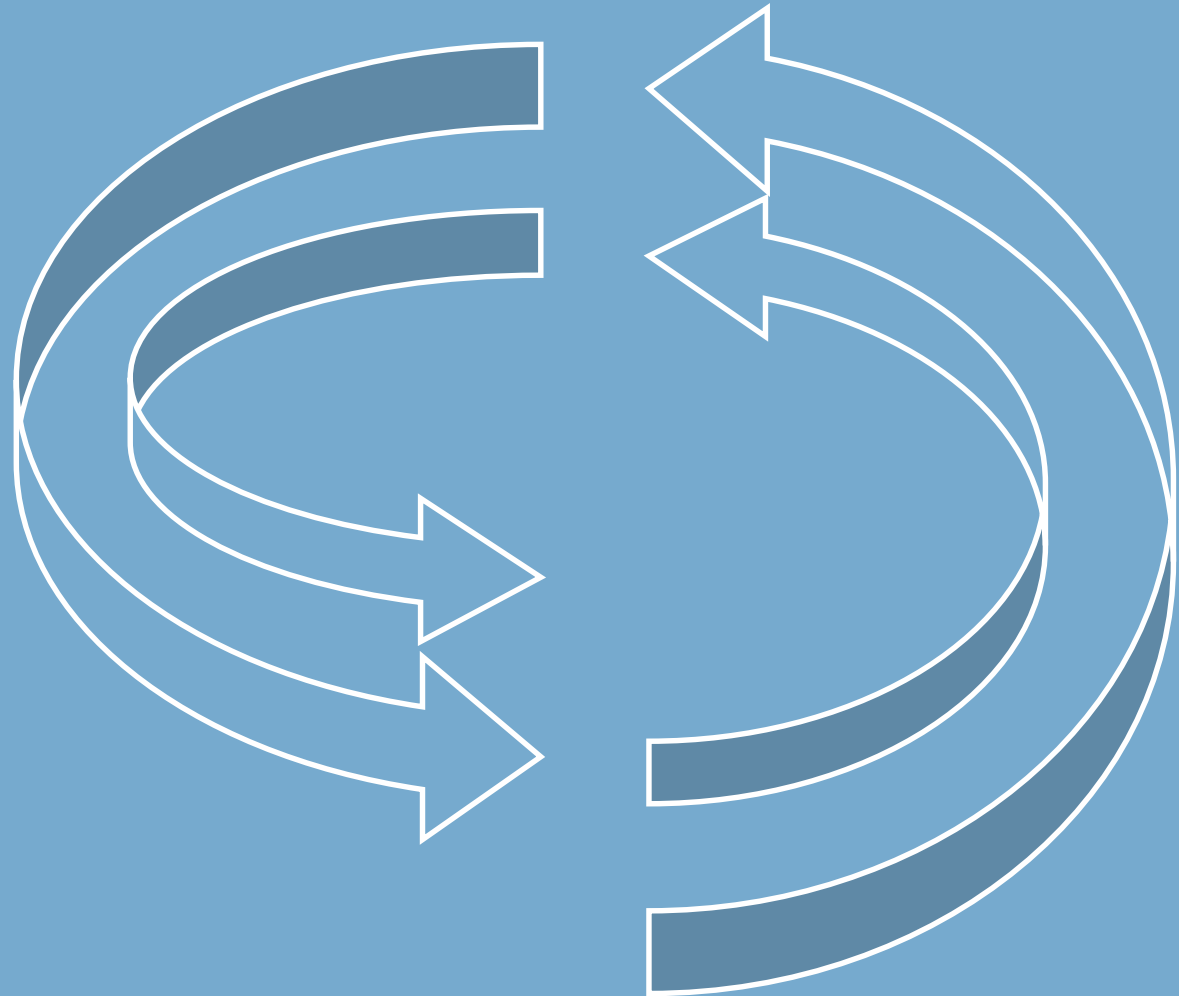
# Becoming better



# Becoming better



# Becoming better

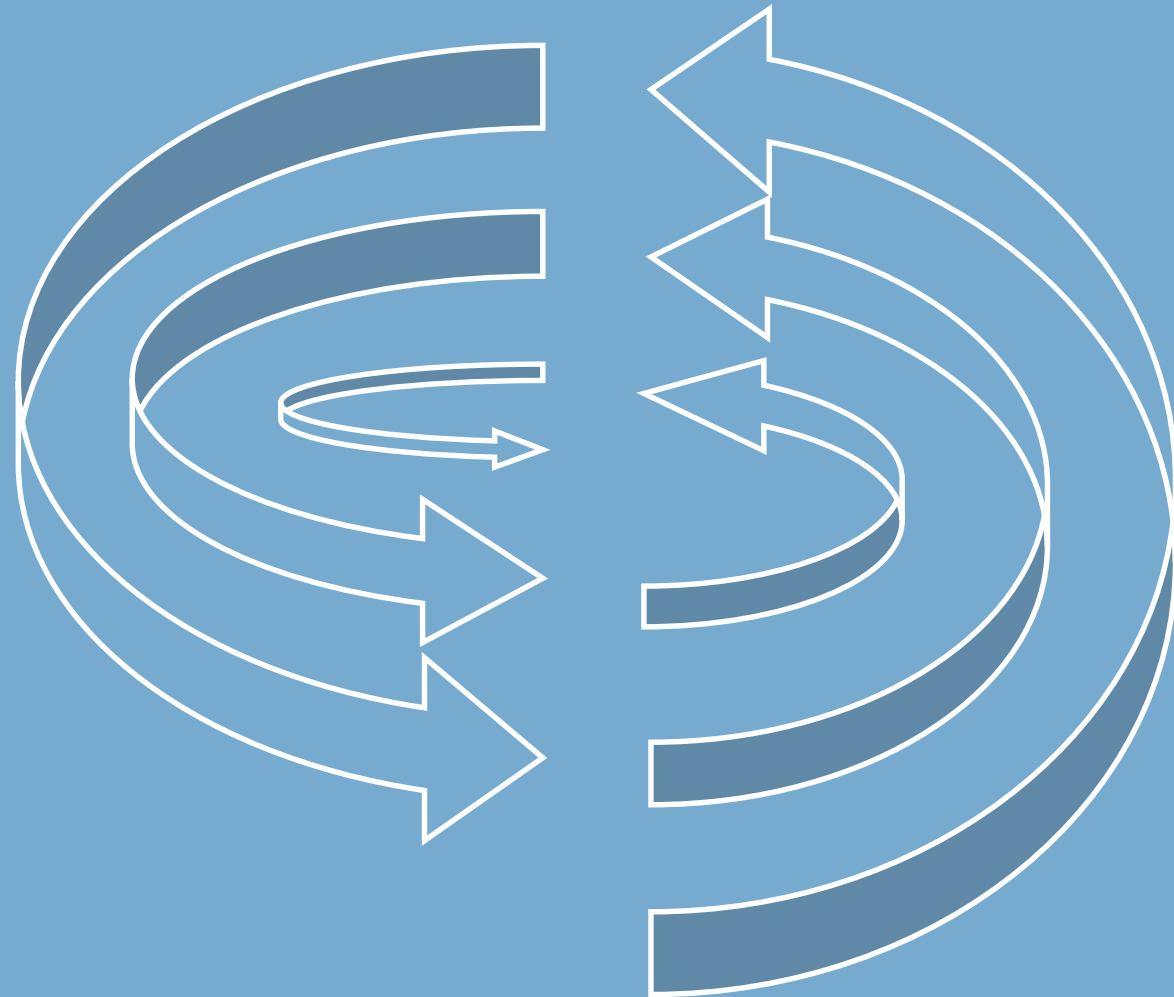


# Becoming better

Doing

Being

Knowing



#Aristotallyawesome

Thank you &  
see you around!

Please leave your  
feedback on the Miro  
board

