

# People versus Process

## Cultural Patterns of Software Organizations

Marc Evers - [marc@piecemealgrowth.nl](mailto:marc@piecemealgrowth.nl)  
Willem van den Ende – [willem@livingsoftware.nl](mailto:willem@livingsoftware.nl)

20 November 2007, XP Day, London, UK

© 2007 Living Software & Piecemeal Growth – Some Rights Reserved



Piecemeal Growth

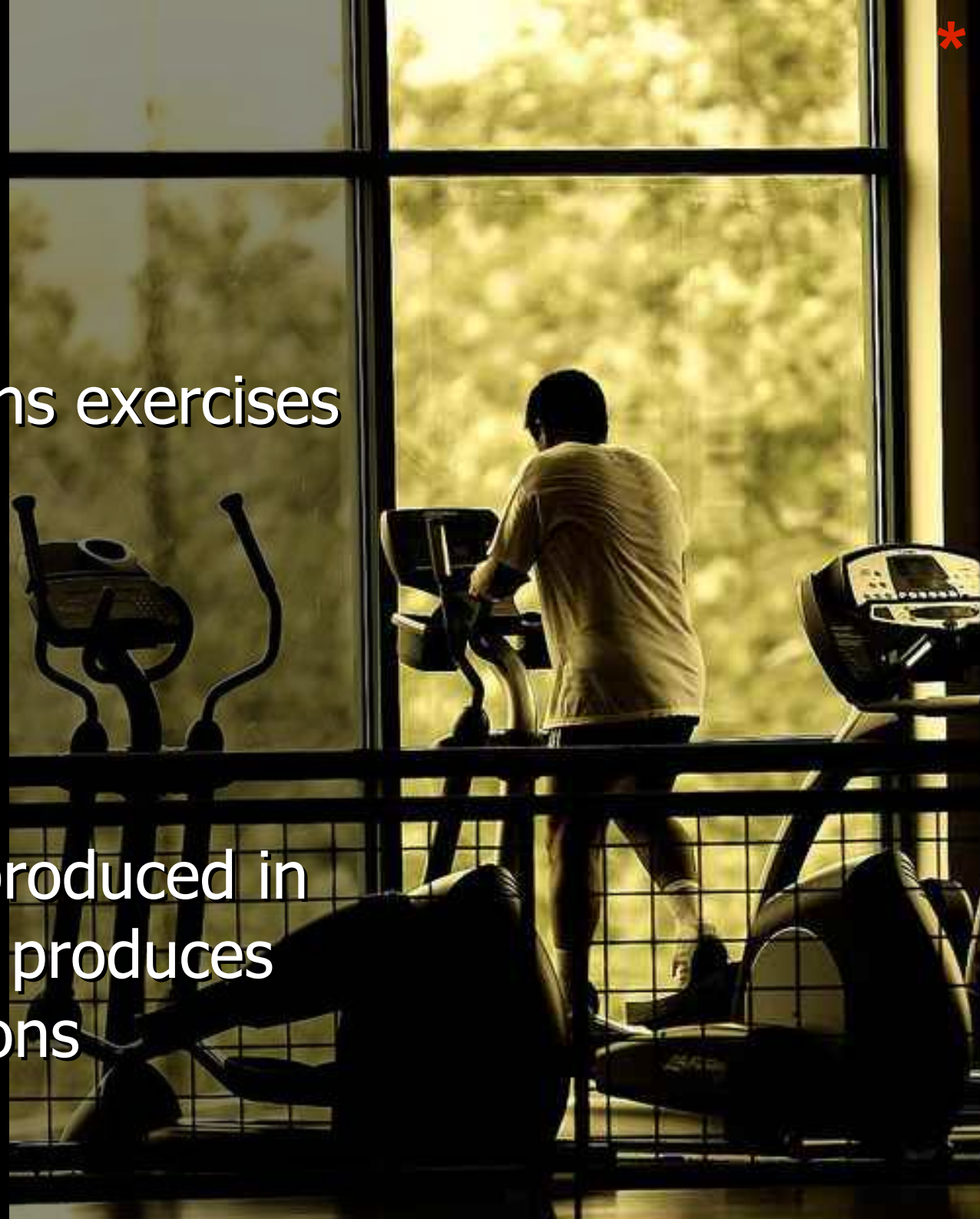


Living Software B.V.

Learning Hazard:

This session contains exercises

Session has been produced in  
a facility that also produces  
eXPeriential sessions





What we use cultural patterns for  
About Us  
Six Cultural Patterns  
with exercises  
Summary

# Who we are

- Willem van den Ende
- Puzzling on
  - Effective software development
  - Effective teams
- Independent (Living Software B.V.)
  - All-hands person
  - Software development coach
  - Trainer
  - Consultant
- Blog: [me.andering.com](http://me.andering.com)



# Who we are

- Marc Evers
- Independent
  - Software development coach
  - Trainer
  - Consultant
- Blog: [blog.piecemealgrowth.net](http://blog.piecemealgrowth.net)



# What we do

Increase business value from software development

and

helping others do it

through



Coaching & mentoring

Training

Facilitation

Organizing conferences

# Culture

- Conservative & invisible
- Governs interactions
- What is said vs. what is done
- What is valued gets measured

# Cultural patterns

- Purpose
  - Understand your context
  - Bring appropriate, effective change
- It is about fit, not about maturity

# Origins

- Jerry Weinberg - *Quality Software Management*
  - Based on Philip Crosby, *Quality is Free*
- Systems thinking & systems dynamics
- Virginia Satir





# Exercise 1 (in pairs)

Pick a project, team, client, ...

Describe culture in a few keywords

what do people say?

what do you see?



What are the strong points of the culture?

What are the weak points?



# Cultural Patterns

**Oblivious**

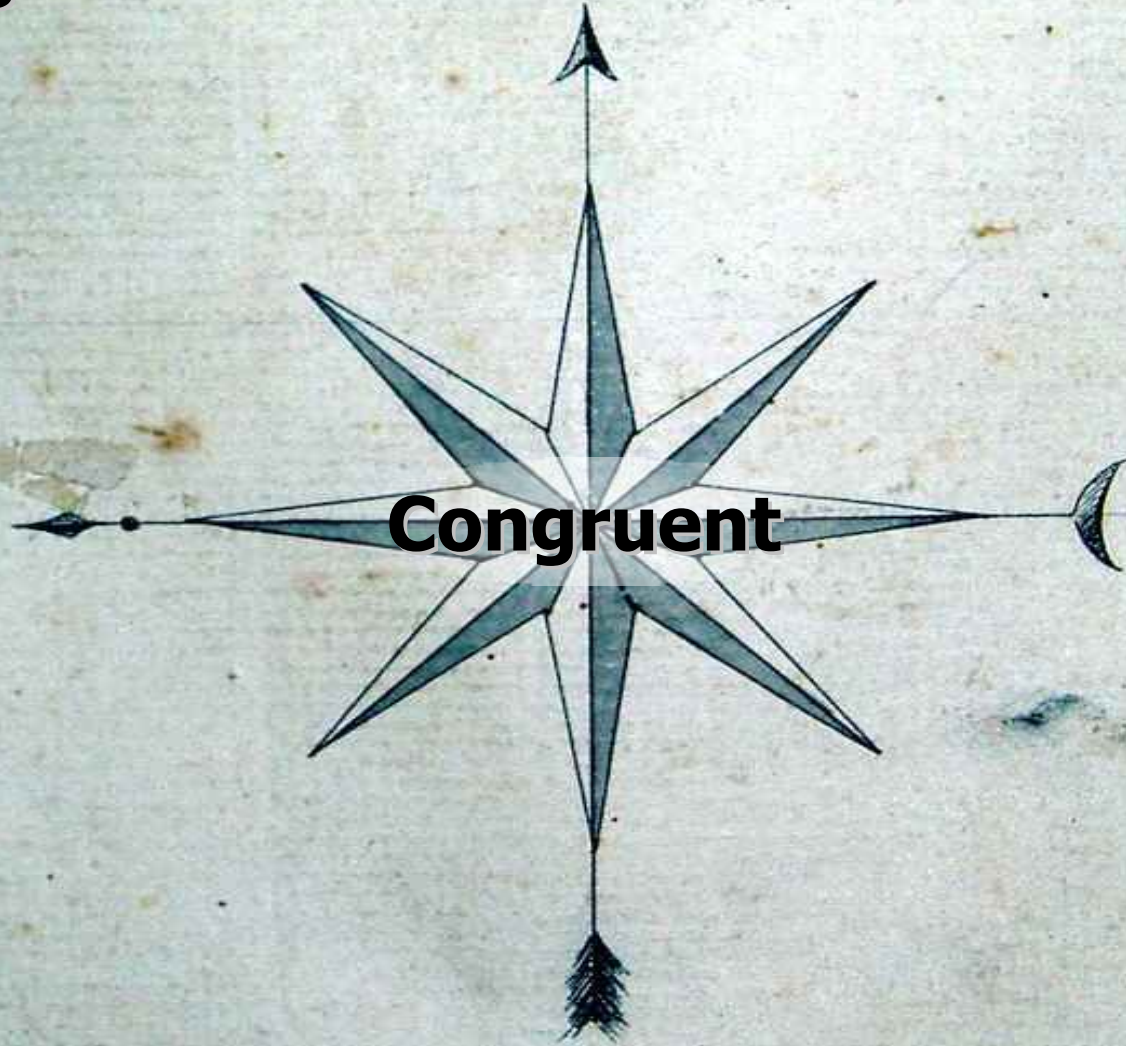
**Variable**

**Routine**

**Congruent**

**Anticipating**

**Steering**



A photograph of a brown and white duck standing on a grey ledge. Water is flowing over the ledge, creating a small waterfall. The duck is looking to the left, seemingly unaware of the water. The background shows green trees and a building.

Oblivious

we're not aware that we're developing software

A photograph of a duck standing on a concrete ledge. Water is flowing over the ledge, creating a small waterfall. The duck is looking to the left, seemingly unaware of the water. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and a building.

# Oblivious

- No separation between user and developer
- Highly adaptive, highly customer oriented



# Variable

we do whatever we feel like at the moment



# Variable

- Close cooperation between customers and developers
- Craftsmanship
- Hands off management
- Performance and quality totally dependent on individuals
- Heroism



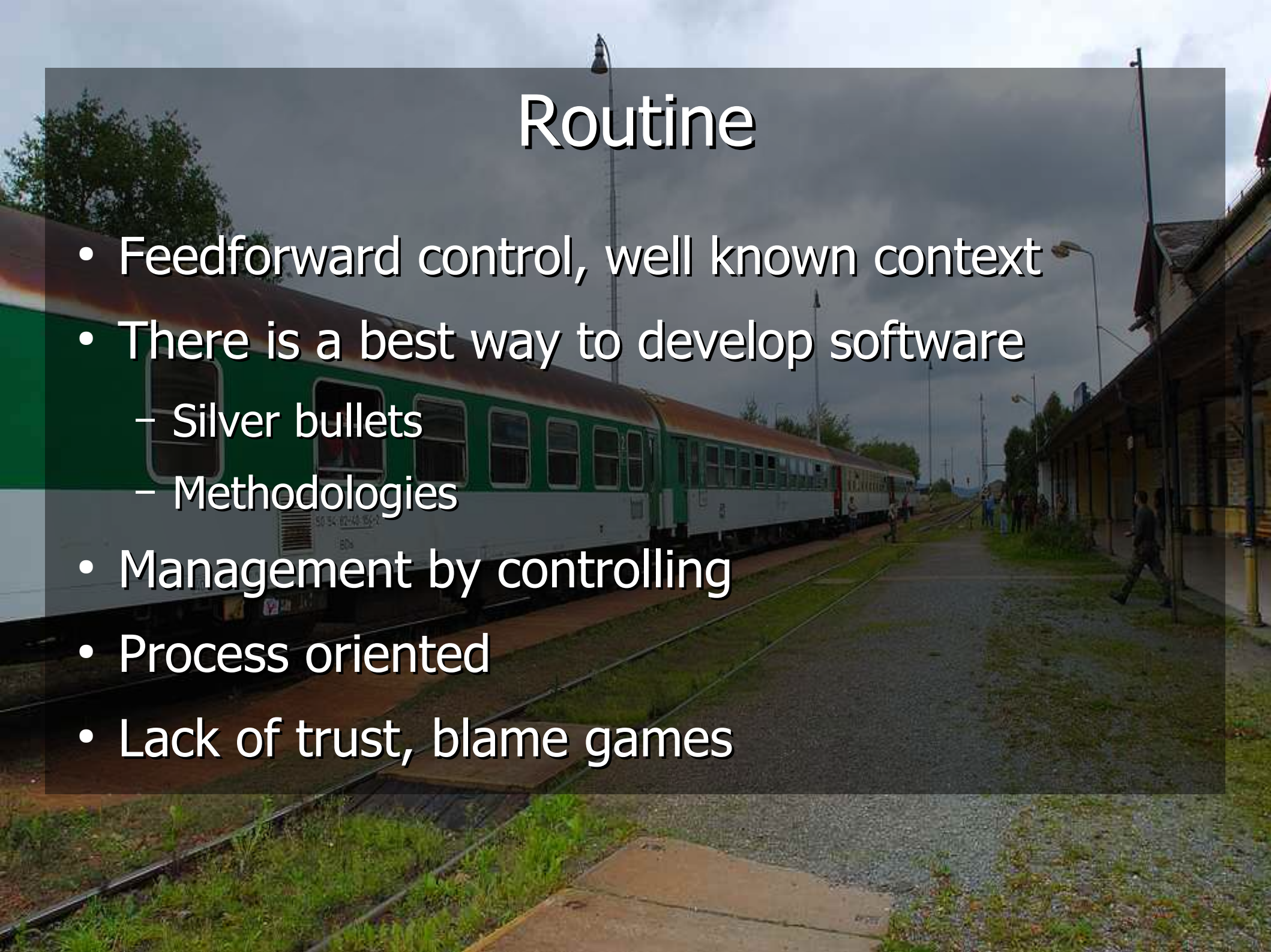
# Routine



we follow our standard procedures  
(except when we panic)

# Routine

- Feedforward control, well known context
- There is a best way to develop software
  - Silver bullets
  - Methodologies
- Management by controlling
- Process oriented
- Lack of trust, blame games



# Exercise 2 (pairs)

Classify your stories:

oblivious, variable, routine, unknown

Write down why





# Steering

we choose among our routines by the result they produce

# Steering

- Feedback control
- Results oriented
- Trust based
- Testing and feedback
- Act early, act small



# Towards Steering

Trust

Mental models

Visibility

Stability





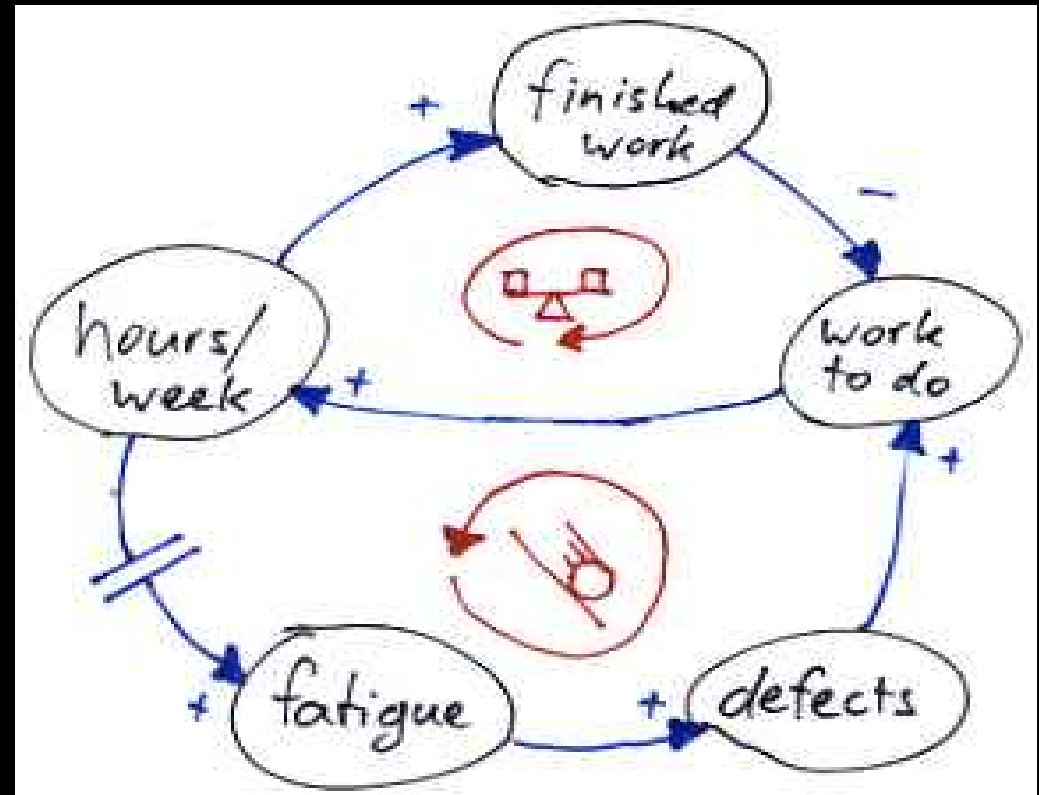
# Towards Steering

Trust

Mental models

Visibility

Stability



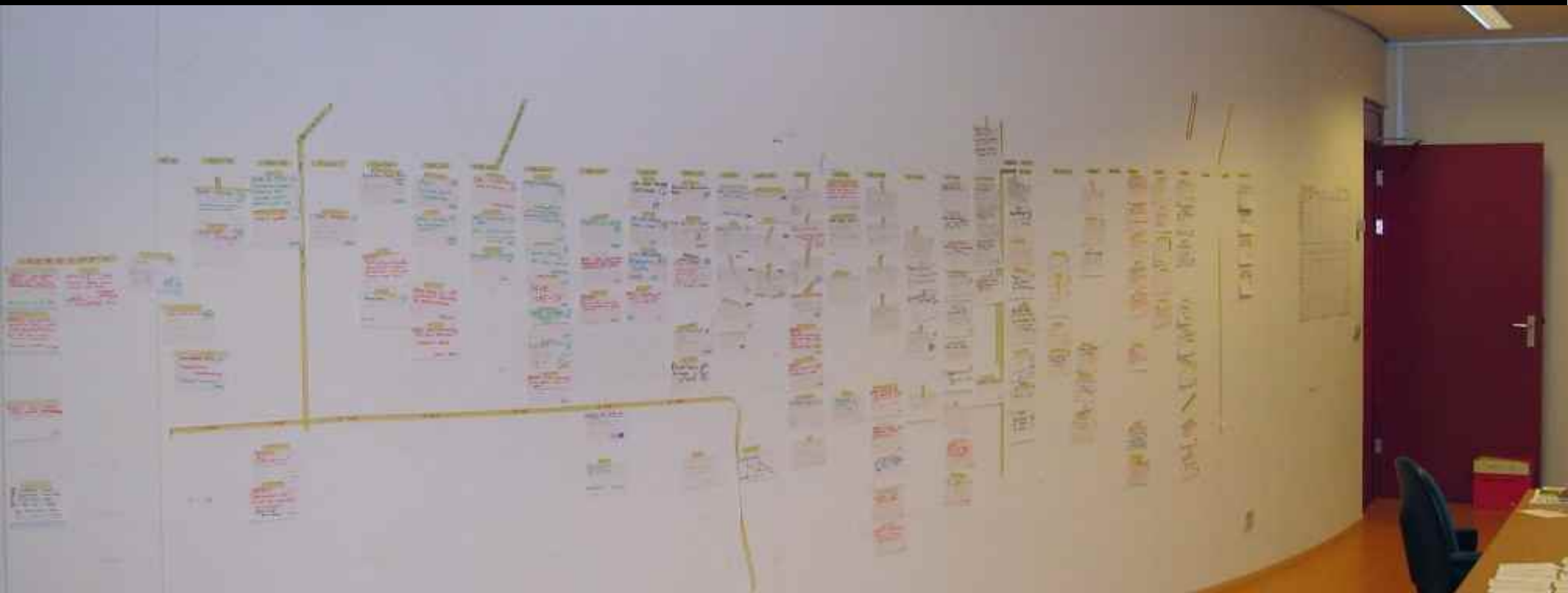
# Towards Steering

Trust

Mental models

Visibility

Stability





A black cat is sitting in a field of tall, green grass. The cat is looking directly at the camera with its mouth slightly open, showing its teeth. The background is a soft-focus field of similar grass. The word "Anticipating" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font in the upper right corner of the image.

# Anticipating

we establish routines based on our past  
experience with them

# Anticipating

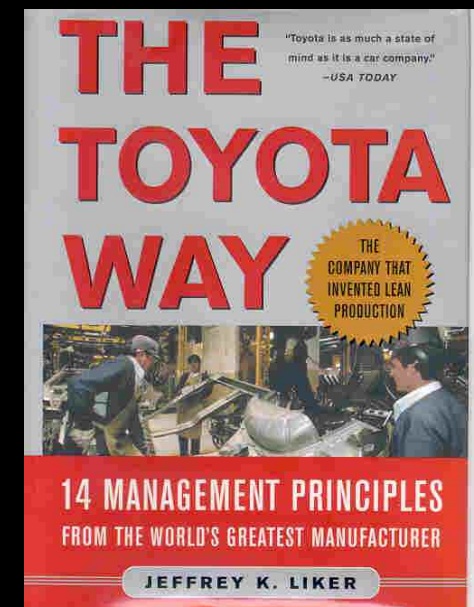
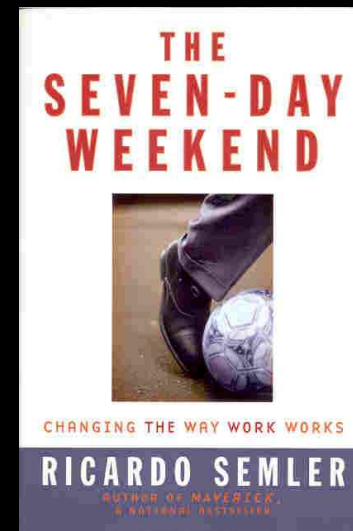
- **Consciously managing change**
  - Everyone is a change artist to some degree
- **Process oriented**
- **Always improving your processes**
  - If it ain't broke, fix it
- **Practices**
  - Retrospectives, scenario planning, risk management
- **Lean Software Development**



# Congruent

everyone is involved in improving everything all the time

culture of ongoing reflection and improvement





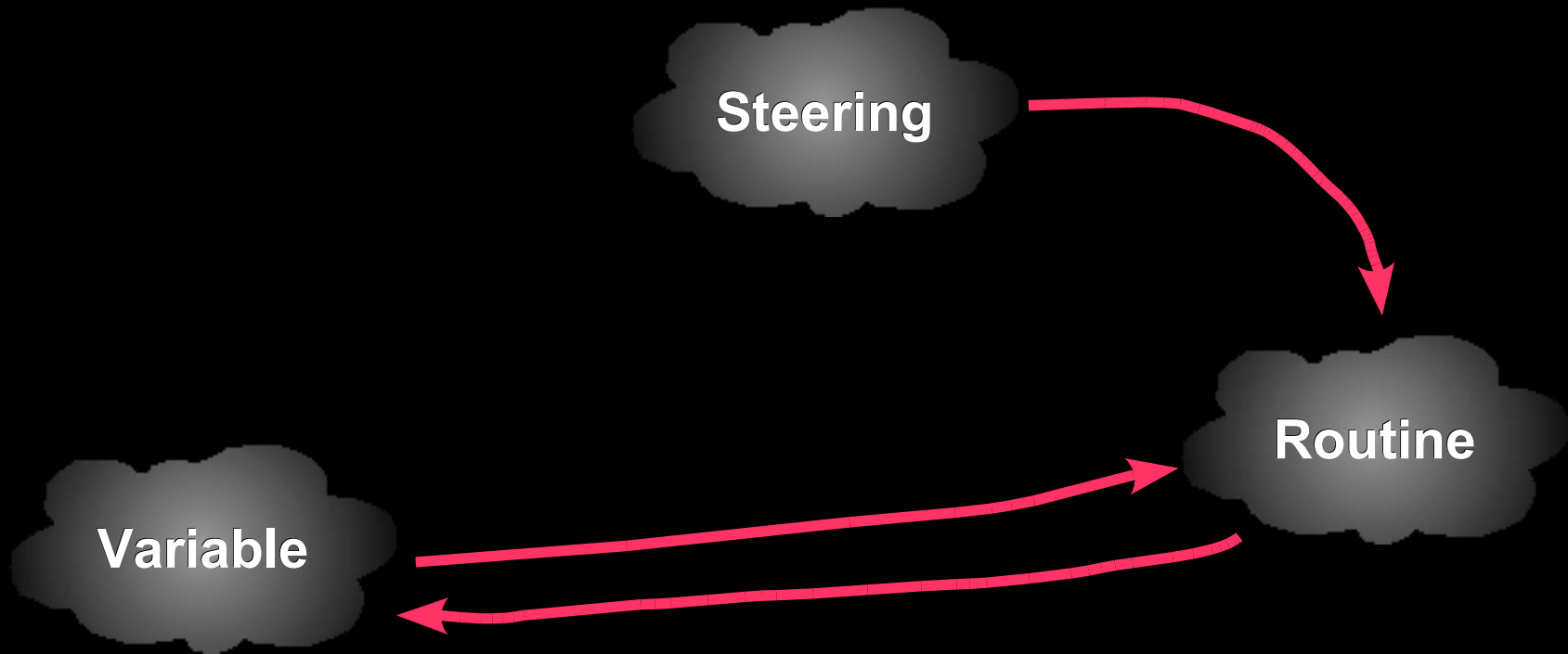
# Exercise 3 (pairs)

Classify the rest of the stories

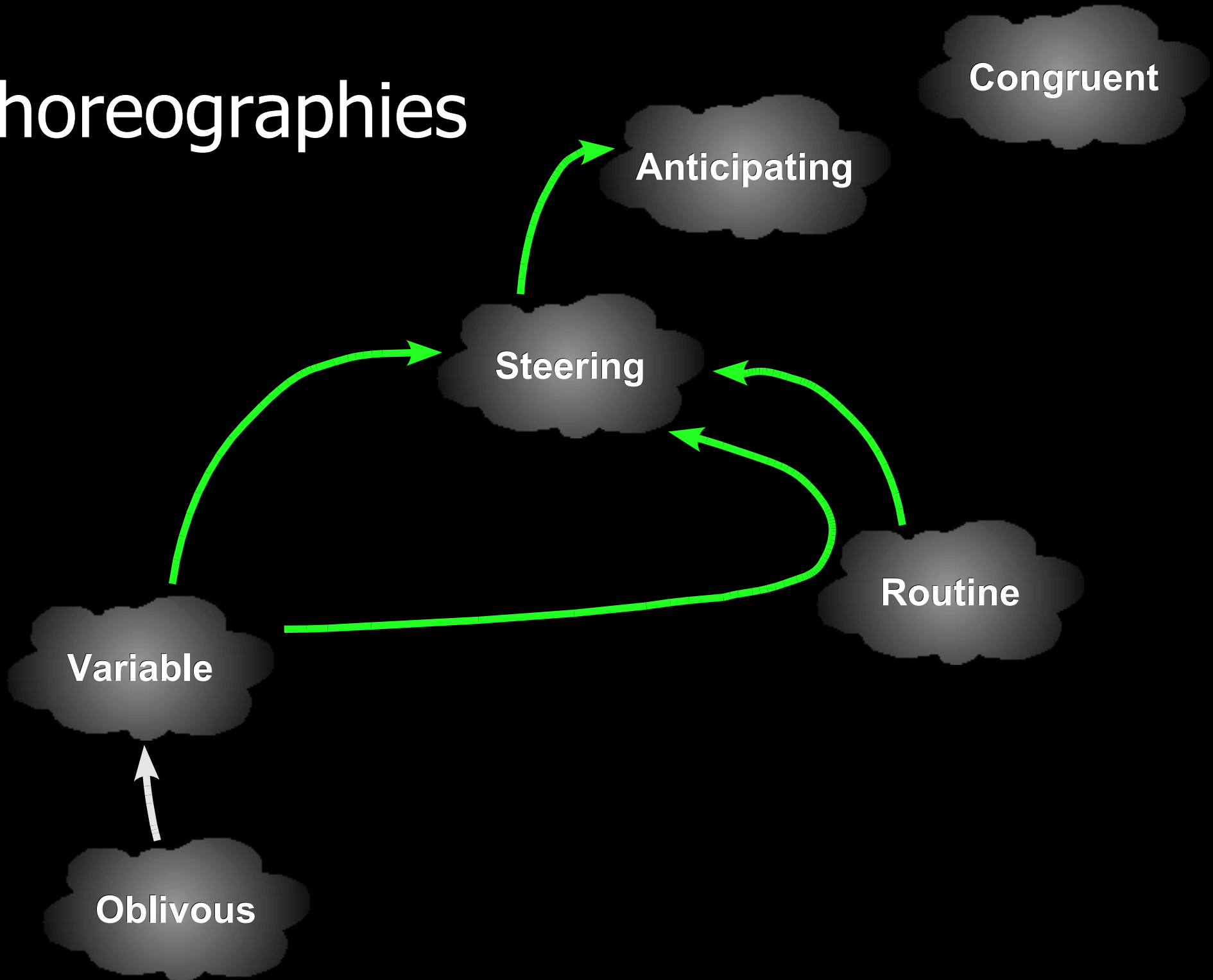
Reconsider the stories already classified



# Choreographies



# Choreographies





# Summary

- Oblivious – no more fear of computers
- Variable – value craftsmanship, foster innovation
- Routine – bring order to disorder
- Steering – make extraordinary things ordinary
- Anticipating – make things more efficient
- Congruent – make good cultural practices transferable

# Sources

- Gerald M. Weinberg, *Quality Software Management* (vol. 1-4)
- Gerald M. Weinberg, *Secrets of Consulting*
- Argyris & Schön, *Organizational Learning II*
- Peter M. Senge, *The 5<sup>th</sup> Discipline*
- Virginia Satir et. al., *The new peoplemaking*
- [www.satirworkshops.com](http://www.satirworkshops.com)

# Copyright

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Netherlands license -  
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/nl/>

a way to a healthy life © Abdullah AL-Naser (Abraaj) (CC Attribution)  
<http://flickr.com/photos/abraaj/181196330/>

compass rose © daviddb (CC Attribution-Share Alike)  
<http://flickr.com/photos/daviddb/297704282/>

Oblivious © James Craig (CC Attribution)  
[http://flickr.com/photos/peculium\\_o\\_jacoba/158710409](http://flickr.com/photos/peculium_o_jacoba/158710409)

DSCN1528.JPG © Su-Laine (CC Attribution-Share Alike)  
<http://flickr.com/photos/syeo/150916440/>

Train Ride in Czech Republic © a4gpa (CC Attribution-Share Alike)  
<http://flickr.com/photos/a4gpa/1361680149/>

Arvid drives 2 © jimmyrog (CC Attribution-Share Alike)  
<http://flickr.com/photos/jimmyroq/230062873/>

Traust © Eypór (CC Attribution)  
<http://flickr.com/photos/icelandic/1618972422/>

Approach © trekkyandy (CC Attribution-Share Alike)  
<http://flickr.com/photos/trekkyandy/1639793903/>

