

## ❁ Here goes my story ❁

After going through the confusion of getting divorced, I then again took up using my pink, green, blue and yellow coloured sticky notes. I wrote down some tasks like “file for tax 2015”, “repot plants”, “payment for school” and many more. Then I went to the kitchen and drew three columns on my fridge and named them “OPOS” (for “open positions”) “on going” and “done”. While I was placing the notes in the first two columns my new boyfriend (a scrum-master) came in and uttered: “Hey! – My girl’s doing Kanban!”

What the hell is “Kanban”?

I had been spending my spare time to get any information about “Kanban” by listening, asking, watching and reading over the following months. It was confusing: I was brought up with boxes for “to do”, “in progress”, “parking” and “done”. Also with boards and cards which always showed the current status, e.g. of the delivering process in my father’s company or for several “personal” tasks at home. Actions like “keeping the boards up-to-date”, “limiting the work in progress”, “looking for the causes of failures or so called time-robbers” and especially “talking to each other without judging or being judged” have always been just obvious.

So I finally asked my mother how she would translate the Japanese word “Kanban”. She is Japanese. And guess what: she answered immediately:

“Advertising sign! – for example: ‘Today: Buy 2 get 3’.”

Later on she mentioned that a sign with a company’s name is also called “Kanban”. So “Kanban” is a company nameplate or a billboard?!

I also asked her if she could remember the day we went to a Japanese garden during our visit to her family. Each of us was given a wooden stick which was painted. We had to hand it back when we left this garden. She nodded. So I asked her how this method of “preventing the garden from becoming overcrowded with people” was called. She looked at me in a strange way and declared that there is no name: “It’s just a logical and practical way to keep an overview.” I received a similar answer for asking about an appellation for her files, boxes and boards and/or the way she handles them.

We chattered for a while and finally she fetched her translator and we keyed in several words. (On the following pages I will go into this in more detail.)

We came to the conclusion:

Kanban is **NOT** an agile method!

By the way: The translators from Google, Systranet and others brought outcomes which were akin to my mother’s translator.

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I could have left it at that. But ...