

See pages 31-33 of:

[Agile Software Development: The Cooperative Game \(2nd Edition\).](#)

I have paraphrased Cockburn's descriptions below, and used bullet points to emphasize portion:

1. Cooperative and goal-seeking
 - a. A team of rock climbers works together to reach the top.
 - b. They will evaluate the climb based on:
 - i. Did they reach the top?
 - ii. How well did they climb together?
 - iii. How much did they enjoy themselves?
2. Load bearing
 - a. Climbers must actually support their weight on their hands and feet.
 - b. Software must run and produce reasonable responses.
 - c. While multiple solutions are possible, not just any solution will do.
3. Team
 - a. Climbing is usually done in teams
 - b. There are solo climbers, but under normal circumstances, climbers form a team for the purpose of a climb.
4. Individuals with Talent
 - a. Some climbers climb better than others.
 - b. Some people will never handle certain climbs.
5. Skill-sensitive
 - a. The rock climber must have a certain proficiency
 - b. The novice can approach only simple climbs
 - c. With practice, the climber can attack more and more difficult climbs
6. Training – Rock climbers are continually training on techniques to use
7. Tools
 - a. Tools such as chalk, checks, harnesses, ropes, and carabiners are a requirement for serious rock climbers.
 - b. It is important to reach the right tool at the right moment.
 - c. It is possible to climb very short distances with not tools.
 - d. The longer the climb, the more critical the tool selection is.
8. Resource-Limited
 - a. A climb is usually completed by nightfall or before weather changes
 - b. Climbers plan their climbs to fit their time and energy budget.
9. Plan
 - a. Whether bouldering, doing a single-rope climb, or doing a multiple-rope climb, the climbers always make a plan.
 - b. The longer the climb, the more extensive the plan must be.
 - c. The team knows the plan will be insufficient and even wrong in places
10. Improvised
 - a. Unforeseen, unforeseeable, and purely chance obstacles are certain to show up on even the most meticulously planned expeditions unless;
 - i. The climb is short

- ii. The same climb has been done multiple times before
- b. Therefore, the climbers must be prepared to change their plans—to improvise—at a moment's notice

11. Fun

- a. Climbers climb because it is fun.
- b. Climbers experience a sense of *Flow* (*csikszentmihalyi, 1991*) while climbing.
- c. Similarly developers typically enjoy their work, and part of the enjoyment is getting into the flow of designing or programming.
- d. Flow in the case of climbers is both physical and mental; flow in the case of programming is purely mental.

12. Challenging

- a. Climbers climb because it is a challenge—can they really make it to the top?
- b. Programmers often crave this challenge, too.
- c. If programmers do not find their assignment challenging:
 - i. They may quit
 - ii. They may start embellishing the system with design elements they find challenging