



# How *Safe* Is Your Team?

Creating a Culture of  
**Psychological Safety**

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Words that describe how you felt  
on the best team you have ever  
been on...

**DANCE PARTY!**

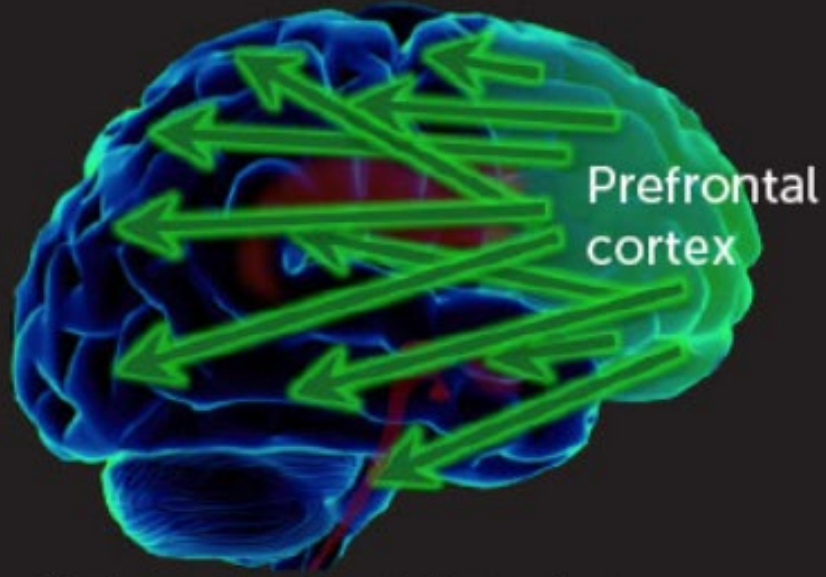


# Interpersonal Fear/Risk

- We are evolved to be social animals
- We adapted to care what people think – because it meant survival
- Our brains perceive interpersonal risk the same as physical safety risks



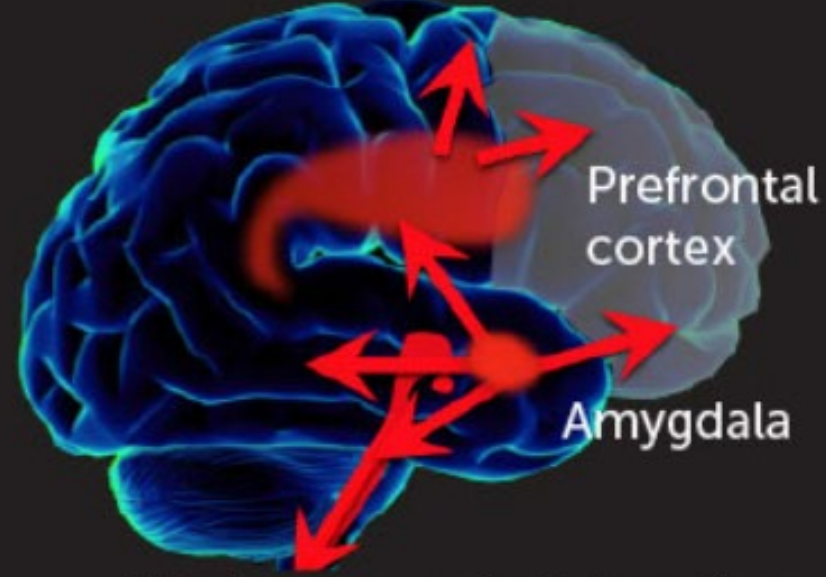
Unstressed



Prefrontal cortex

Tight control of thoughts, emotions and actions

Stressed



Prefrontal cortex

Amygdala

Weaker control of thoughts, emotions and actions

Normally, an alert person's brain has moderate amounts of chemical messengers that lead the prefrontal cortex to take charge and perform high-level thinking (left). But with stress, those chemical signals can flood the brain, activating amygdala-linked brain networks involved in sensing and responding to threats (right).

A. ARNSTEN

Source: <https://www.sciencenews.org/article/coronavirus-covid19-stress-brain>

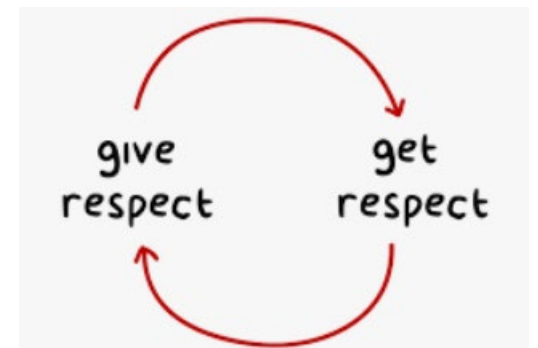


# Story Time

*A real-life story with names changed to protect the innocent... (and the guilty)*

# What is Psychological Safety?

- Psychological safety is being able to show and employ one's true self without fear of negative consequences of self-image, status or career
- It can be defined as a shared belief that the team is safe for risk taking
- In psychologically safe teams, team members feel accepted and respected



# The Background

- Amy Edmonson and Hospitals
- Google Aristotle Project
- Other research: Harvard Business Review, Forbes, Accenture, etc.





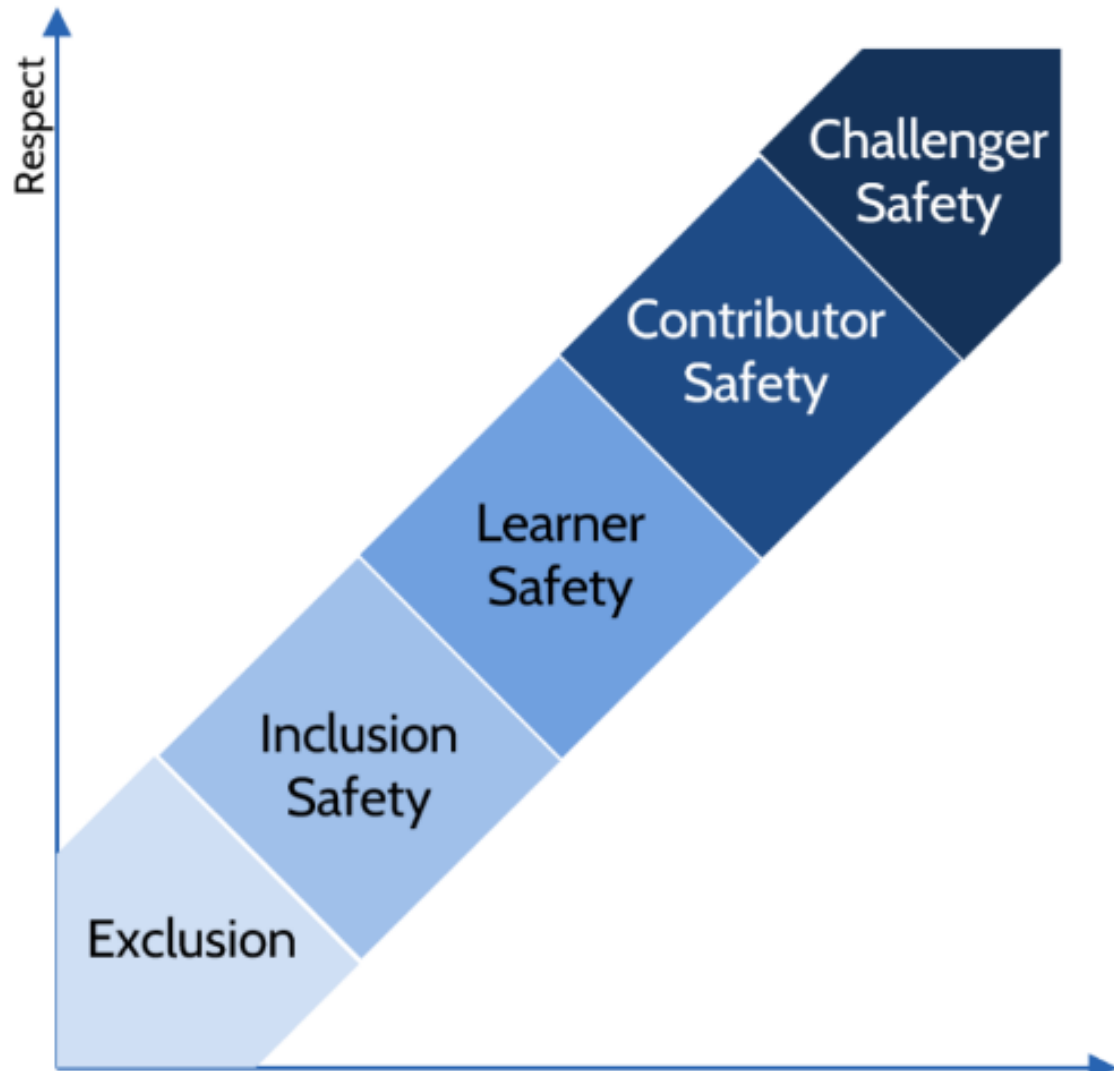


Illustration of the 4 Stages of Psychological Safety for Wind4Change.com (cc) BY-NC-SA Permission

# Soft Skills = Hard



**27%**

reduction in turnover

**76%**

more engagement

**50%**

more productivity

**74%**

less stress

**29%**

more life satisfaction

**57%**

workers more likely to collaborate

*41% decrease  
in safety  
incidents*



# Dangers of NOT having Psychological Safety



What does psychological  
safety *FEEL* like?



# Psychological Safety and Teamwork

- Team members value one another's contributions
- Members care about one another's well-being
- Each person has input into how the team carries out its work
- Considerate candor



*What is the difference between being put on a team and joining a team?*

# Speaking Up- Candor is Necessary





# Problem Solving is a Team Sport

Compete with instead of  
*against* each other

# Four Steps to Safety

- 1) Ask and Pause
- 2) Reward Risk
- 3) Role-model
- 4) Encourage On-going Learning





# Ask and Pause

- \*Make a point to actively and frequently solicit feedback from your team

- \*Pause for reflection

- \*Let all team members speak before you input ideas





The Professors Pause <sup>TM</sup>

*“Great leaders speak  
last”*

~Amy Edmonson

# Reward Risk

- \*Don't punish failure
- \*Recognize and praise team members who come up with ideas
- \*Empower your team to make decisions
- \*Delegate responsibility with progress





Amy Edmonson and Psychological Safety

# Balancing A Culture



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Being completely candid, what zone is your team in (this is anonymous)

# Role-Model

- Be open to risk
- Share your failures
- And...







*“It starts with you, the leader: Our ability to be daring leaders will never be greater than our capacity for vulnerability”*

-Berne Brown

*Vulnerability*



# WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU SAID...

*I was  
wrong....*

*Here was a  
time I failed....*

*Tell me more  
about...*

*What am I  
missing...*

*Show me what  
you are seeing...*

*What did  
you learn  
by...*



# Encourage On-Going Learning

- Promote growth opportunities
- Learn as a team
- Make learning a part of your regular check-ins
- Have leaders share their personal learning plan





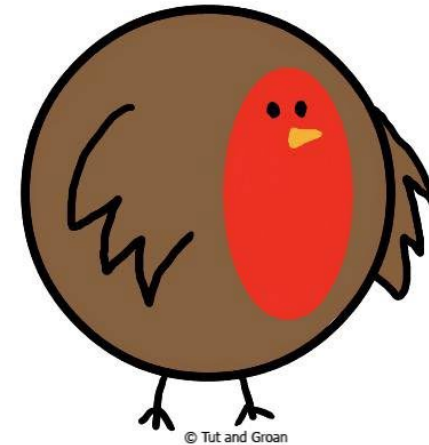
*What is the  
difference  
between trust  
and  
psychological  
safety?*

# The Marble Jar Effect

# Actionable *Ideas*

- Round Robin
- “Break the System Exercise”
- Liberating Structures
- Structured Candid Conversations

Round Robin



**Questions?/Comments/Thoughts/Ideas?**



# Would this training be beneficial for leaders at your organization?

- Molly J. Mackey
- connect with me on LinkedIn
- hand me your business card today
- 319-210-3593 cell
- [leadershipinstitute@gmail.com](mailto:leadershipinstitute@gmail.com)



Booking for 2024 and 2025, willing to travel and train virtual

Now open –waitlist and application period for Emerging and Advancing Leadership courses 2025!



The Rest of The Story....



# Partner / Group Discussion

What got you thinking this session?

What can/will you implement as soon as you get back?

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graph TD; A[Ask - Pause] --> B[On-Going Learning]; B --> C[Role Model]; C --> D[Reward Risk]; D --> A;
```

Ask -  
Pause

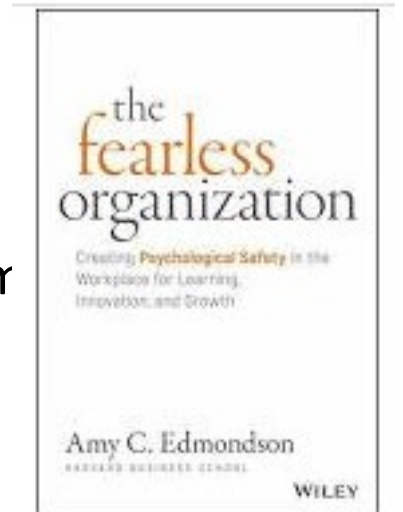
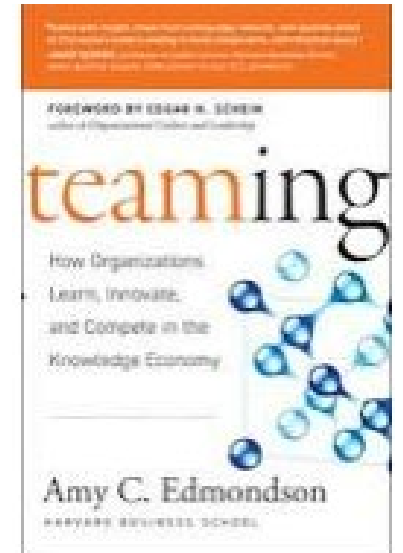
On-Going  
Learning

Reward  
Risk

Role Model

# Sources and Resources

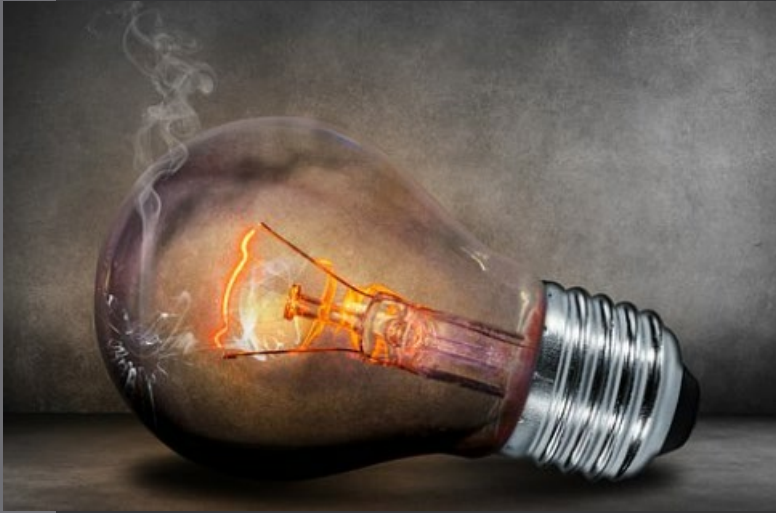
- Tim Clark – The Four Stages of Psychological Safety
  - <https://www.leaderfactor.com/4-stages-of-psychological-safety>
- Amy Edmonson -
  - Ted Talks / YouTube Videos
  - Books – Teaming, The Fearless Organization, The Right Kind of Wrong
- Google Aristotle Project
  - <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/28/magazine/what-google-learned-from-to-build-the-perfect-team.html>
- HBR Article – What is Psychological Safety
  - <https://hbr.org/2023/02/what-is-psychological-safety>



# Other Sources/ Resources

- Podcasts
  - Diary of a CEO
- Books –
  - Amanda Ripley – High Conflict
  - Dan Ariely – Misbelief
  - Adam Grant – Hidden Potential

# Break the System Exercise



Individually for the next few minutes, write down everything you can think of that would destroy psychological safety.

If you were to purposely design a workplace with no psychological safety, how would you design it?

# Break the System Exercise



With a partner discuss your list.

What do you have in common, what is different?

# Break the System Exercise



With your partner discuss is there anything that you/your organization is doing currently that resembles your original lists?

# Break the System Exercise



What can you do to correct those things you notice blocking psychological safety?



# Training Recommendations

- Train psychological safety at all levels of the organization
- Set up processes and forms to support psychological safety
- Offer continued training resources for leaders
- Role-Model this as trainers – ask for feedback and implement it



# Amy Edmonson Psychological Safety TED Talk

- 1) Frame the work as a learning problem
- 2) Model fallibility/ be humble
- 3) Model Curiosity/Ask Questions



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhoLuui9gX8>