

Five insights from Amy Edmondson to create *psychological safety*

ICYMI: Takeaways from Professor of Leadership at Harvard Business School, Amy Edmondson and her book "The Fearless Organization," at our live event, The Collaborative.

Psychological safety is a belief that the context is safe for interpersonal risks.

"It's speaking up with a mistake, an idea, a question, and yes, even a failure. To disagree with your boss and you don't think that will come back to haunt you ... this is hard. These are learning behaviors and learning is hard. Learning is uncomfortable."

- Amy Edmondson, Professor of Leadership at Harvard Business School

Why and how to create psychological safety for team performance

1. In a VUCA world, every voice matters

We live in a volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous (VUCA) world where everyone's voice is mission-critical to making good decisions under uncertainty — the essence of team effectiveness.

2. High-quality bets depends on high-quality conversations

High-quality conversations have three features. 1 - People are contributing AND listening. No one is holding back relevant ideas, questions, or concerns.

2 - Advocacy and inquiry are equally present. Ideas are shared transparently, and questions expand the group's understanding.

3 - There is a palpable sense of progress and learning. Everyone who participates believes they've gotten smarter about the issue.

3. Psychological safety is not about being nice

Psychological safety is not about being nice, being included in every decision, or a license to whine or slack off — it's a belief the context is safe to speak up. In psychologically safe teams, there is often more conflict, not less.

4. Team effectiveness happens in the learning zone

When teams are motivated and feel a sense of ownership and permission for candor, they're able to learn and avoid anxiety and apathy. The learning zone leads to team performance.

5. 3 ways leaders can foster psychological safety

1 - Frame the work. Call attention to the attributes of the work — whether it's novelty or complexity — that require all brains in the game. 2 - Invite participation by being proactive and asking good questions to broaden and deepen the discussion. 3 - Respond productively by pausing to consider what response will promote learning and be appreciative and forward-looking.

Develop leaders who build high-performing teams.

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