

# Psychological Safety

Accelerated career growth happens through discipline, reflection, assessment, critique, and constant improvement. Often, we are toughest on ourselves. Can we give to others something that we don't know, believe, or practice with ourselves?

Can we give this to our team, if we don't have a lived, known, experienced sense of practicing psychological safety with ourselves?



Reflection



Communication



Listening

## What is psychological safety?

**Psychological honesty:** Acknowledge and confront one's own biases, fears, and flaws without denial or rationalization.

**Self-Reflection:** Regularly examining your own thoughts, emotions, and behaviors to understand your true motivations and intentions.

**Acknowledging Inconvenient Truths:** Accepting difficult or unpleasant truths about yourself, rather than avoiding or distorting them to feel better.

**Integrity:** Aligning your actions with your true beliefs and values, rather than pretending to be something you're not for the sake of appearances or approval.

**Openness to Growth:** Willingness to confront personal limitations and shortcomings, and to make changes when necessary, rather than clinging to a false self-image.



Am I open, vulnerable, share fully with others?  
Can I ask questions, share opinion, share concerns without nervousness, fear of rejection or retaliation?  
Can I take risks?  
Do I believe I can fall/fail and still be loved?

## Understanding the layers to Psych Safety

- Being vulnerable with others begins with being vulnerable with ourselves. This involves permitting ourselves to be who we are, without judgment or criticism.
- Do we see and love our full selves?
- Do we have compassion for our strengths and weaknesses?
- Acknowledging and accepting who we are forms the foundation of being real, genuine, and honest with others.
- Who am I? What do I value? What matters?



### Why we don't trust/feel safe with ourselves

If we look, we can't unsee...

Not raised with compassion, acceptance, unconditional love...

Can we open in self love?

What is compassion? All compassion is self compassion. We can be compassionate for others, but it is only a surface level compassionate. We don't know and have all lived experiences.



### Why we don't trust/feel safe with others

Transactional society: So much to not trust. so much conditioning to hold the cards.

Easier to judge, be skeptical, be uncertain, doubting their interest.

Understanding others for who they are and what they value takes time

Too often, there is a give and take...



**Self-permission and acceptance are not just nice-to-haves**—they are essential for healing. They allow us to feel seen, valued and appreciated. When we feel safe to take risks, we can truly show up as ourselves in the world.

Over 20 yrs, I have had the honor to see people through many hard things. True privilege to walk beside people as they navigate crises (health crisis, say goodbye to a loved one, grieve (a marriage, parent, child), and make hard decisions (health, business, etc)

People seek me out, hoping, dreaming, and believing they can be better. They come to improve as leaders, but soon discover they become better people in every aspect of their lives.

## Key Elements to Psych Safety



**Open Communication:** Encourage open and honest communication by creating channels where team members can express their thoughts and concerns freely. Regularly check in with your team, asking for feedback and genuinely listening to their input.



**Inclusive Leadership:** Leaders play a pivotal role in establishing psychological safety. They must model vulnerability, admit when they don't have all the answers, and show that it's okay to make mistakes. By demonstrating these behaviors, leaders set the tone for the entire team.



**Respectful Interactions:** Foster a culture of respect, where differing opinions are welcomed and debated constructively. Ensure that every team member feels heard and that their contributions are valued, regardless of their role or experience level.



**Encouraging Risk-Taking:** Promote an environment where taking calculated risks is encouraged and where failure is seen as a learning opportunity rather than a setback. This mindset shift allows teams to innovate and push boundaries without fear of reprisal.



**Constructive Feedback:** Build a feedback culture that is focused on growth and improvement. Feedback should be specific, actionable, and delivered in a way that supports the individual's development while maintaining their dignity.



**Accountability and Support:** While psychological safety emphasizes openness, it also requires accountability. Teams must hold themselves and each other accountable for maintaining a respectful and supportive environment. This balance ensures that the team remains focused and aligned with its goals.

## Strategies to Build Psychological Safety



**Build internal awareness:** Leaders and team members alike should engage in regular self-reflection to become aware of their own biases, fears, and behaviors that might hinder psychological safety. Acknowledge and address these areas to create a more open and accepting environment.



**Lead by Example:** Demonstrate the behaviors you want to see in your team. Show vulnerability by sharing your own challenges and how you're working through them. This encourages others to do the same.



**Encourage Peer Support:** Create opportunities for team members to support each other. This can be through mentoring, peer reviews, or simply creating spaces for open dialogue. When team members feel supported by their peers, they are more likely to contribute fully.



**Celebrate Small Wins:** Recognize and celebrate both individual and team achievements, no matter how small. This helps to build confidence and reinforces the value of everyone's contributions.



**Address Issues Promptly:** When conflicts or issues arise, address them quickly and constructively. Avoiding or downplaying problems can erode trust and undermine psychological safety.

## Ideas into Action



### AWARENESS:

- Where do you have and not have PS? What drives these differences?
- What has been your experience of teams with and without PS?
- what was vital to forging PS? What under cut it?
- What parts of PS are most important to you?

### ACTIVATION:

- Success leaves clues: distill what works for you to have PS? What works for you to build PS?
- What do you need to do to forge PS?
- what can you give? How can you generate PS?
- what do you need? How can you make clear asks?
- Start small and build upon wins.
- Invest time daily to deepen relationships

### AGILITY BUILDING:

- Invest in building Trust in high stakes lower PS relationships.
- What is Forge Trust in less safe places?
- Map winning strategies - as if to create a set of tools or options.

### ACCOUNTABILITY:

- Seek feedback from Teammates. How comfortable does it feel to take risks?
- When was the last time we dreamed big?
- Are we taking risks and failing? (and if feedback is scares, that is feedback)
- Acknowledge and unpack past challenging experiences. Bring curiosity and a growth mindset.

### INTEGRATE/ACCELERATE:

- What are 3 things someone could do to make you feel more PS?

**Rawness in these moments - where people are wide open, their full self, deeply genuine, vulnerable and honest.**

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