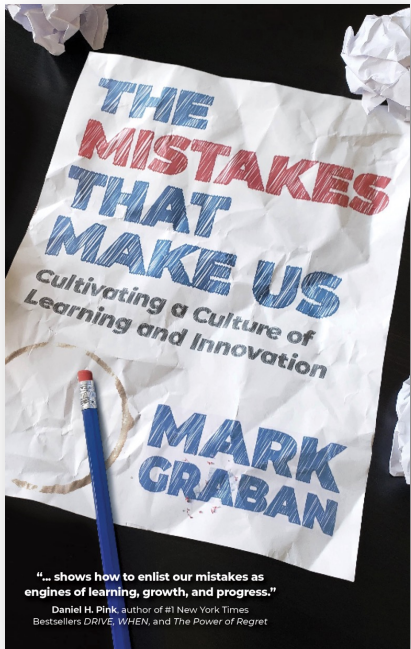


Psychological Safety

A Pre-Condition for Continuous Improvement

Slides & More: MarkGraban.com/PSMarch2024



Mark Graban

mark@markgraban.com

For Anonymous Interactive Polling:

Menti.com code 76 60 88 4

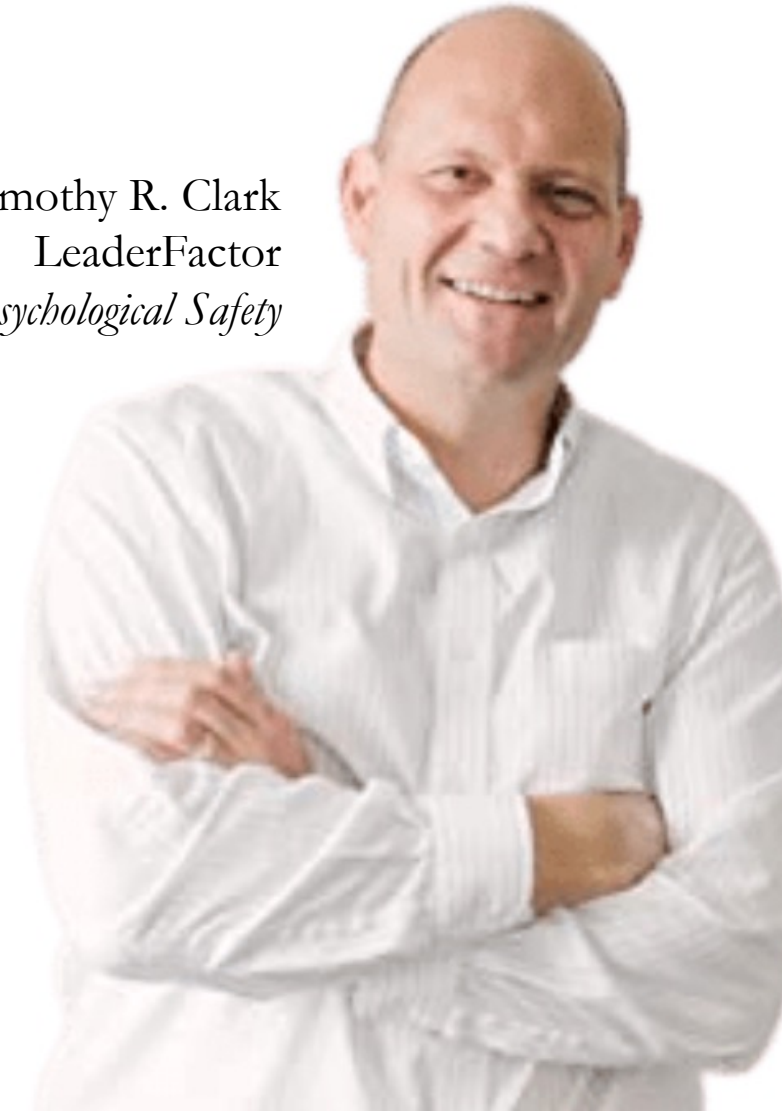
Or Scan:



What is Psychological Safety?

- “Psychological safety is a social condition in which you feel:
 1. Included
 2. Safe to learn
 3. Safe to contribute
 4. Safe to challenge the status quo
- ... all without fear of being embarrassed, marginalized, or punished in some way.”

Timothy R. Clark
LeaderFactor
The 4 Stages of Psychological Safety



Why Psychological Safety?

“YOU WILL LOSE
TOP TALENT
WITHOUT THIS”

Timothy R. Clark
LeaderFactor

The 4 Stages of Psychological Safety



Google's Project Aristotle

- What makes teams there most successful?

**PSYCHOLOGICAL
SAFETY**

Why Psychological Safety?

“The level of psychological safety on a team is the central measure of that team’s culture, health, and vitality.”

What is Psychological Safety?

- “Psychological safety is a belief that one will not be
 - punished or humiliated
- for speaking up with
 - ideas
 - questions
 - concerns or
 - mistakes.”

Amy Edmondson
Harvard Business School
The Fearless Organization



What Psychological Safety is NOT (1)

- **Niceness** – false harmony, shying away from intellectual debate
- **Coddling** – overprotecting people from anxiety, fear, stress, adversity, and trauma
- **A Shield** – from accountability when you don't perform

What Psychological Safety is NOT (2)

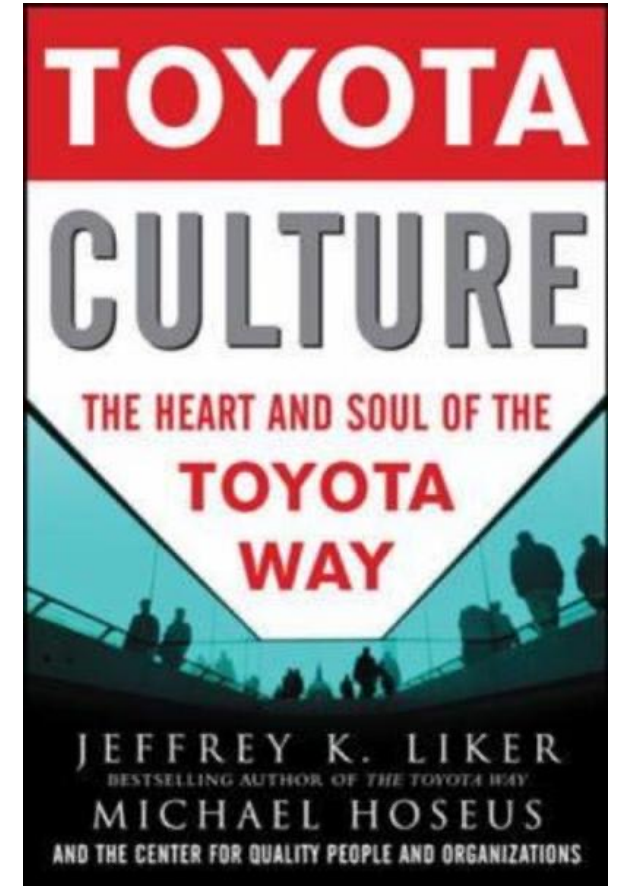
- **Consensus Decision Making** – but it DOES reduce power differentials based on title, etc.
- **Unearned Autonomy** – autonomy is earned through competence, not entitlement
- **Rhetorical Reassurances** – saying you should feel safe

What Psychological Safety is NOT (3)

- “Psychological Safety is not being nice, a license to whine, guarantee your ideas will be applauded, and freedom from conflict.”
 - Amy Edmondson (can verify quote in book)

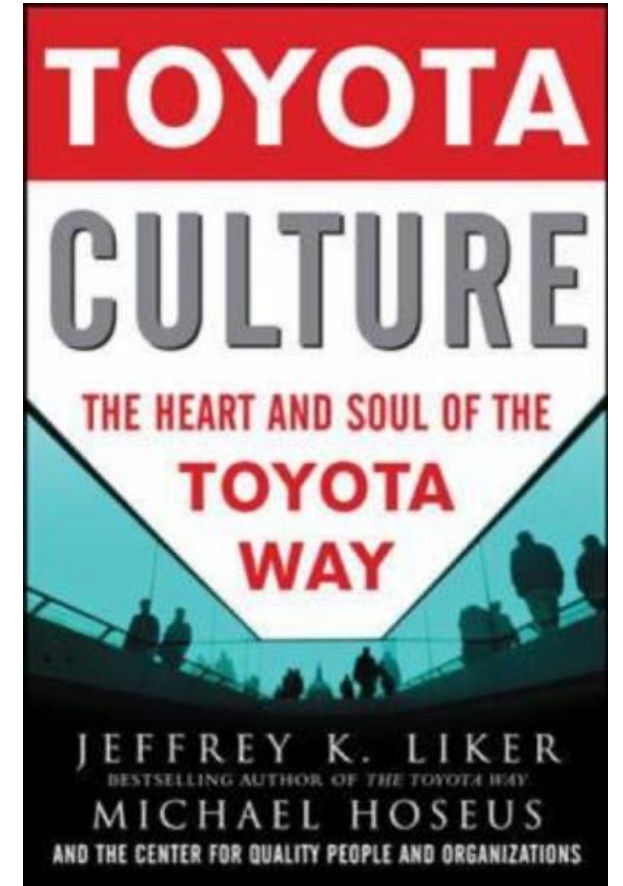
For a World-Class “Lean” Culture

“[Toyota believes] people must ... feel **psychologically** and physically safe ... they must believe that any concerns they have will be taken very seriously”



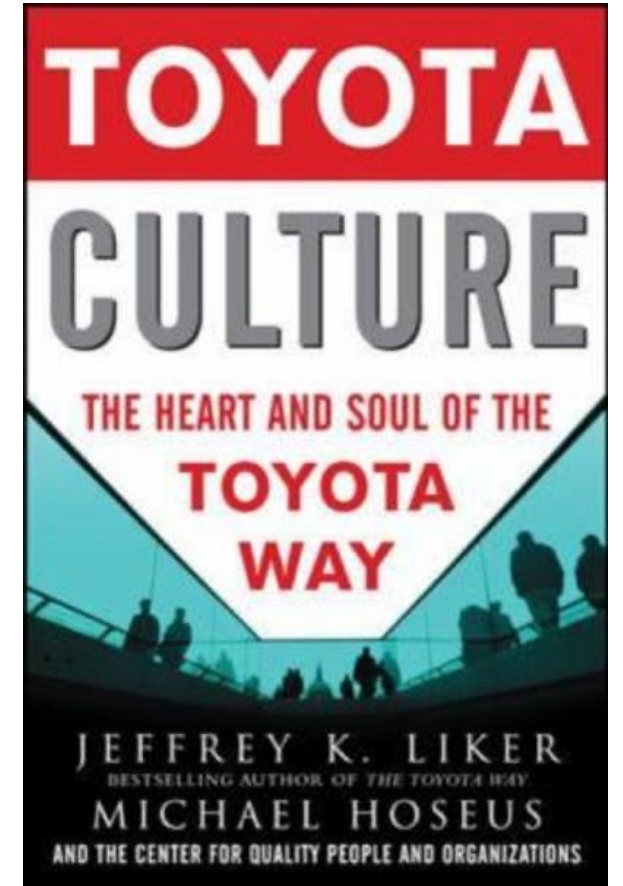
For a World-Class “Lean” Culture

“Without trust in their employers, employees are reluctant to admit to the existence of problems and learn that it is safest to hide them.”

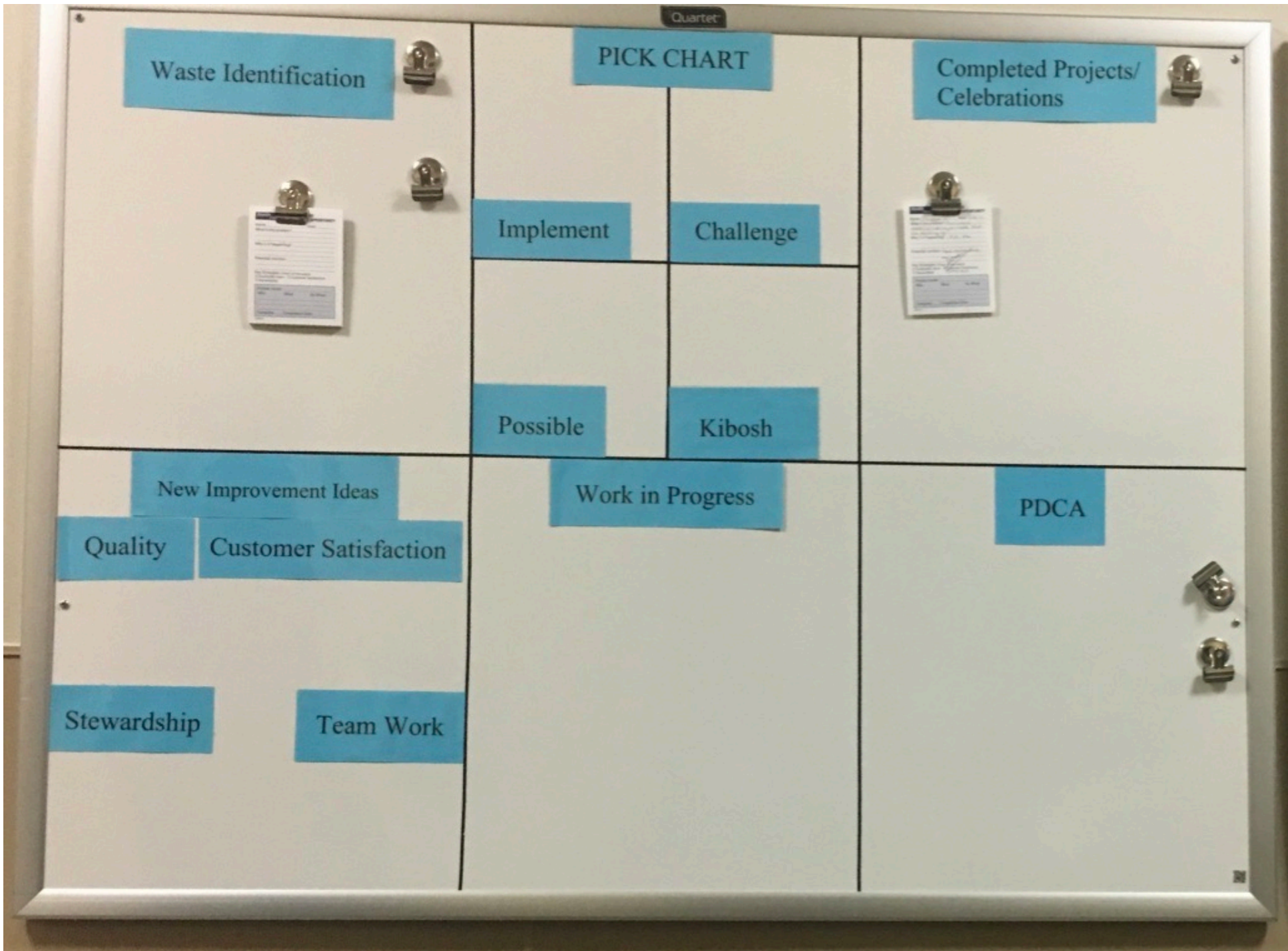


For a World-Class “Lean” Culture

“Mistakes are OK, as long as people learn from them.”







WHY
NOT?

Fear **factor**

What is Psychological Safety?

- “Psychological safety is a **belief** that one will not be punished or humiliated
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Amy Edmondson
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The Fearless Organization

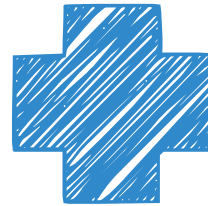


Fear factor

Futility factor

What's Required to Speak Up?

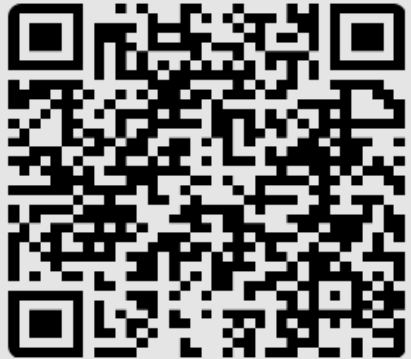
PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY



PROBLEM SOLVING

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How Do You Generally Feel at Work?

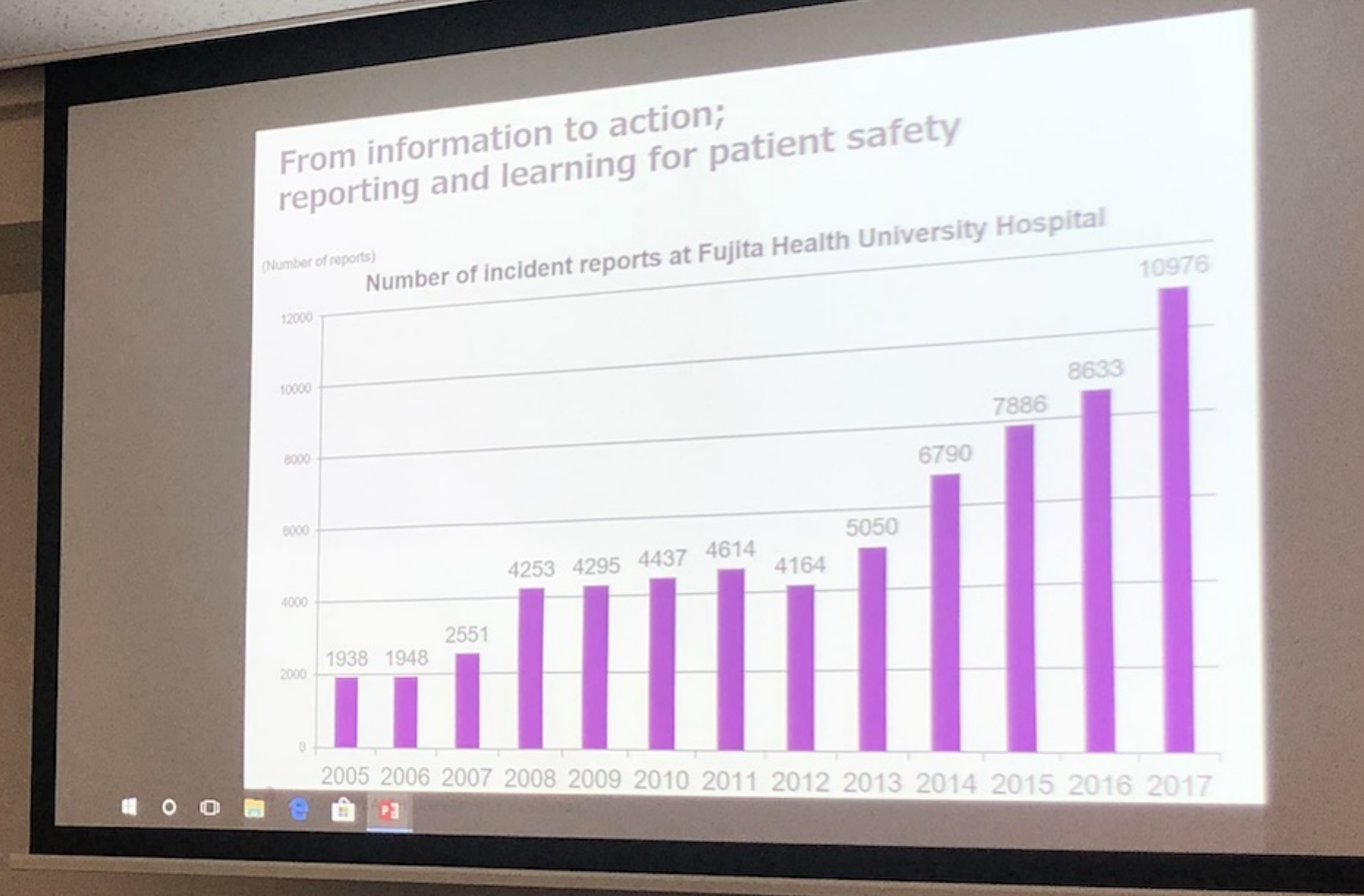


Strongly disagree

► Start Menti

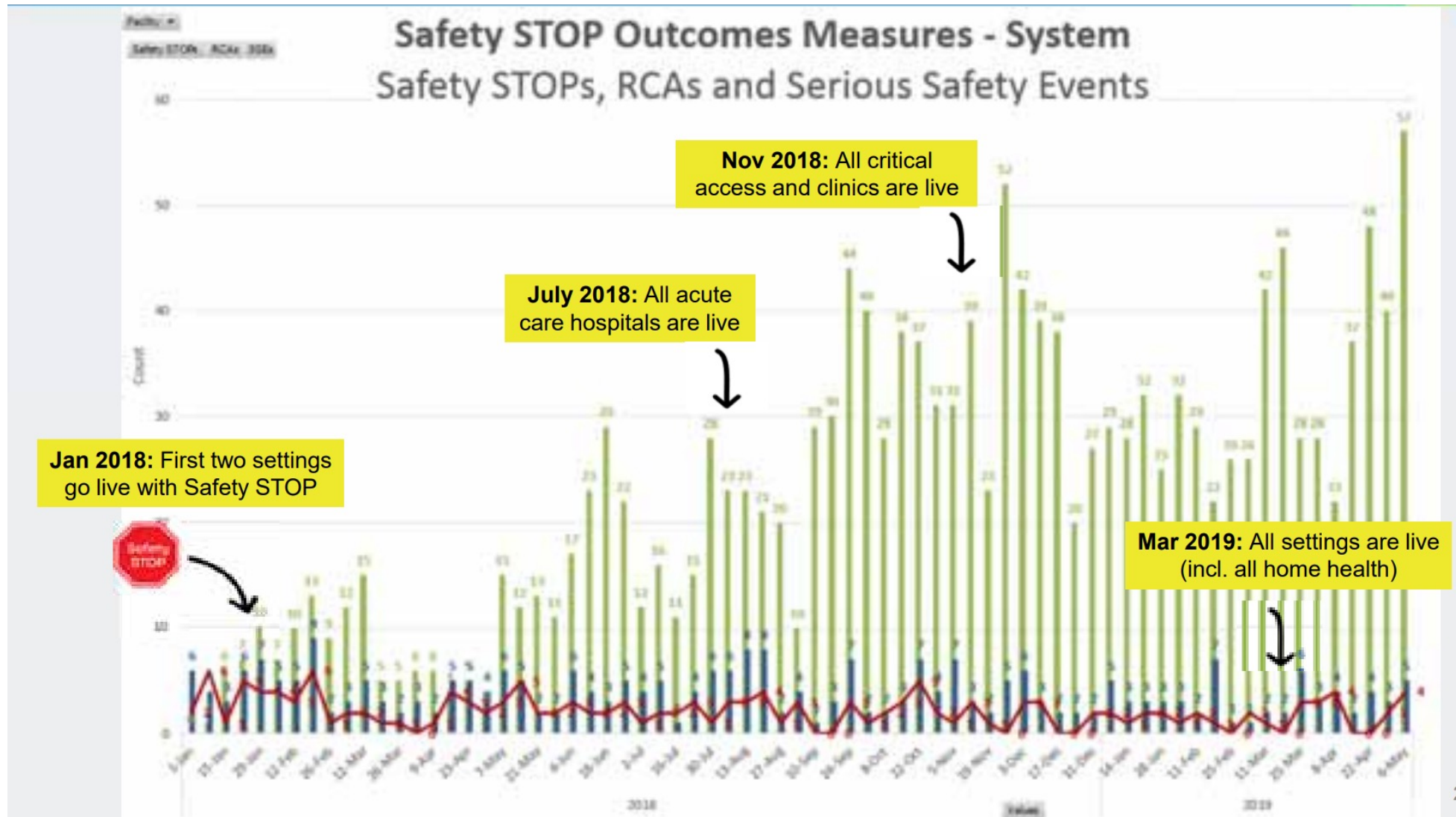
Strongly agree



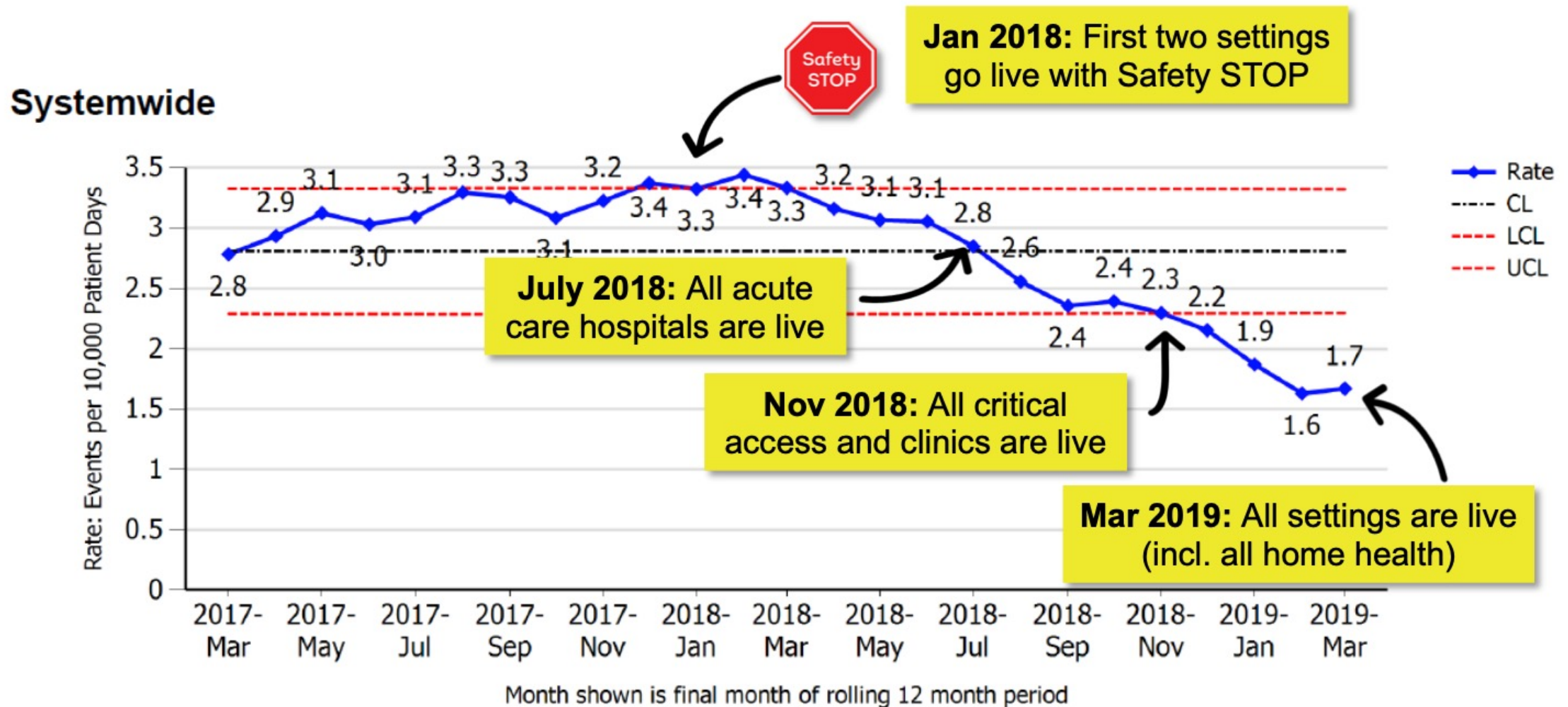


“Number of Incident Reports”

Safety Reports (U.S. Hospital)



Serious Safety Events (Same Hospital)



Toyota: “Highly Engaged People”

HOW DO WE
ENGAGE PEOPLE?

**“YOU SHOULD
SPEAK UP”**



**“IT’S YOUR
PROFESSIONAL
OBLIGATION TO
SPEAK UP”**



Speaking up isn't a matter
of *character* or *courage*...

Speaking up isn't a matter
of *character* or *courage*...

it's a function of

CULTURE

What is Psychological Safety?

“A culture of
rewarded
vulnerability”

Timothy R. Clark
LeaderFactor

The 4 Stages of Psychological Safety



What is Vulnerability?

**EXPOSURE TO
THE RISK OF
HARM OR LOSS**

FROM
FEARLESS
TO
FEARING LESS

What is Candor?

**BEING FRANK,
OPEN, AND SINCERE
IN SPEECH**

What is Psychological Safety?

“A culture of
rewarded candor”

Examples of Candor That Might Be Punished?

- Speaking up to answer that question is one!
- Is this less vulnerable?

For Anonymous Interactive Polling:

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Or Scan:



Do I Feel Psychologically Safe?



How Psychologically Safe Do I Feel?

- It's not yes/no – it's a spectrum
 - To what degree?
 - It's a feeling or a perception
 - An individual decision to speak up or not
- Psychological Safety is an **outcome** of:
 - Our interactions with others, especially leaders

Does a Team Have Psychological Safety?

EACH.

PERSON.

DECIDES.

Mark's Ladders – 2 Different Settings

Company A

 Accepting more responsibility

 Sharing something personal

 Receiving feedback

 Pointing out a mistake

 Admitting you don't know

 Making a mistake

Company B

 Expressing your emotions

 Offering a different point of view

 Challenging the way things are done

 Clarifying expectations

 Asking for help

 Admitting you don't know

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Account



Content



Design



Settings



Help &
Feedback

Choose Your Top 3 Risky / Scary Acts at Work

Cultivating Psychological Safety?

~~THIS IS A
SAFE SPACE~~

**YOU CAN'T
MANDATE
INNOVATION**

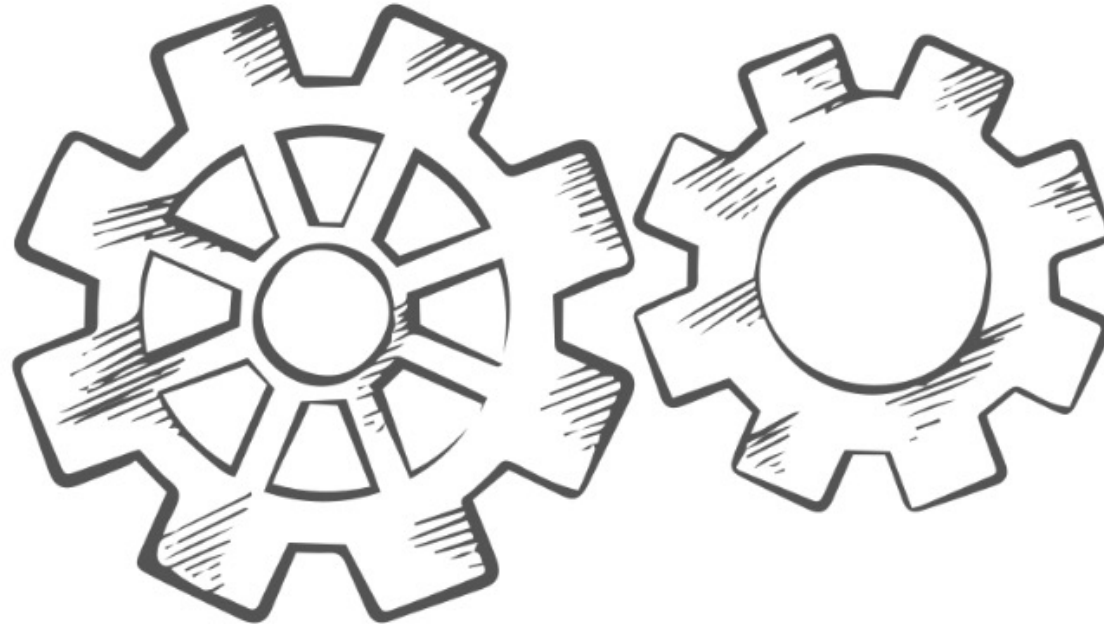
You Can Improve Psychological Safety

Encouraging

Candor

Modeling

Candor



Rewarding

Candor

“I want to hear the bad news. I want to hear it fast.”

Larry Culp, CEO of General Electric

“The moment of truth:
Do you shoot the
messenger, or do you
listen even if you are
unhappy?”

Larry Culp, CEO of General Electric

What Went Wrong

- I made mistakes
- There were times when I allowed myself to get discouraged instead of moving forward
- I didn't communicate well enough



“You can’t have a culture of continuous improvement without learning from mistakes.”

Greg Jacobson
CEO and co-founder, KaiNexus



[Stephanie Hill, MPH, MBB](#) (She/Her) • 1st

1d ...

Sr. Lean Strategist at KaiNexus -/- Owner of Light Bulb Mom...

Celebrate



4

Reply



[Stephanie Hill, MPH, MBB](#) (She/Her) • 1st

1d ...

Sr. Lean Strategist at KaiNexus -/- Owner of Light Bulb Mom...

I THOUGHT I had a pretty significant "failure" yesterday at work. And I told everyone who might want to know. Instead of pointing fingers at me, my leader, a VP, and an executive all rallied around me to help "right the ship." At no time did they imply I had done wrong. All they said was, "WE learned." In fact, all complimented me about how I handled the situation. It encouraged me to continue trusting them with my mistakes.

Celebrate

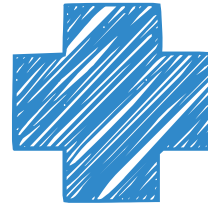


4

Reply

A Powerful Combination

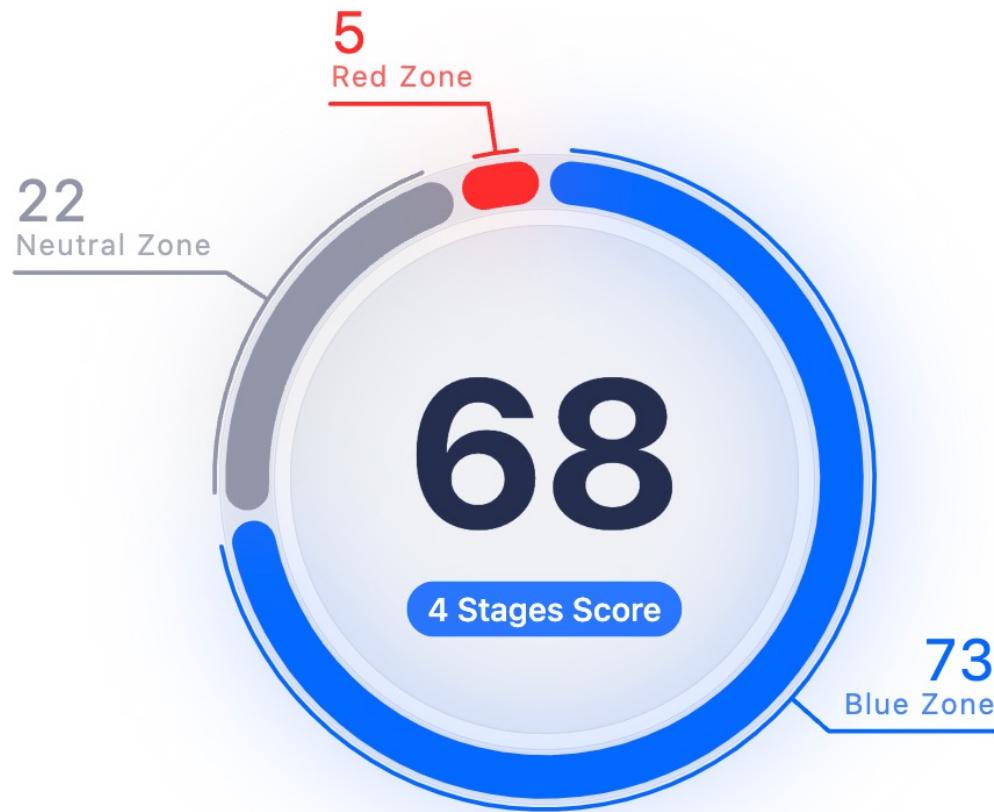
PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY



PROBLEM SOLVING

You Can Measure Psychological Safety

Possible scoring range is -100 to +100



80th percentile

Teams Progress Through 4 Stages

- 1. **Inclusion** Safety: Can I be my authentic self?
- 2. **Learner** Safety: Can I learn and grow?
- 3. **Contributor** Safety: Can I contribute and create value?
- 4. **Challenger** Safety: Can I be candid about change?

... all without fear of being embarrassed, marginalized, or punished in some way.

You Can Measure the 4 Stages

Possible scoring range is -100 to +100



74
Stage 1
Inclusion Safety

Percentile: **74th**



76
Stage 2
Learner Safety

81st



74
Stage 3
Contributor Safety

76th



52
Stage 4
Challenger Safety

77th

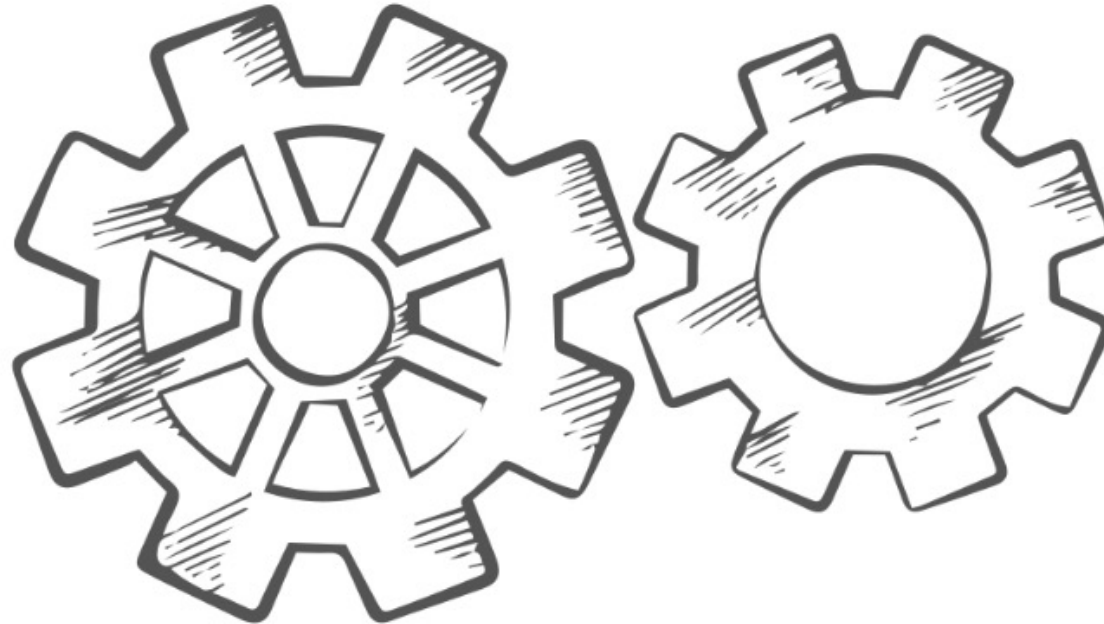
You Can Improve Psychological Safety

Encouraging

Candor

Modeling

Candor



Rewarding

Candor

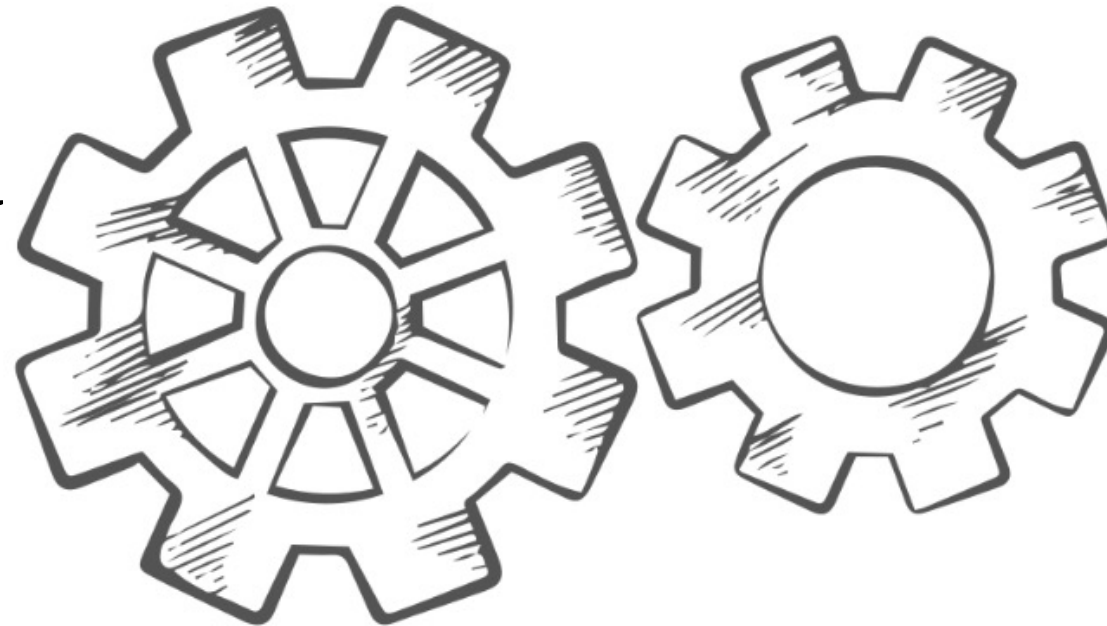
Leaders Can Destroy It

Not Encouraging

Candor

Not

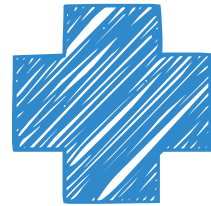
Leading by
Example



Punishing
Candor

What's Required for Improvement?

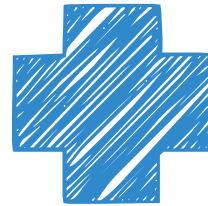
PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY



PROBLEM SOLVING

This Results In

HIGHLY ENGAGED PEOPLE



IMPROVING & INNOVATING

Q&A Time

- **Slides & More:**

<http://www.markgraban.com/PSMarch24>

- **Email:** Mark@MarkGraban.com

- **Podcast:** MistakesPodcast.com

- **Book:** MistakesBook.com



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