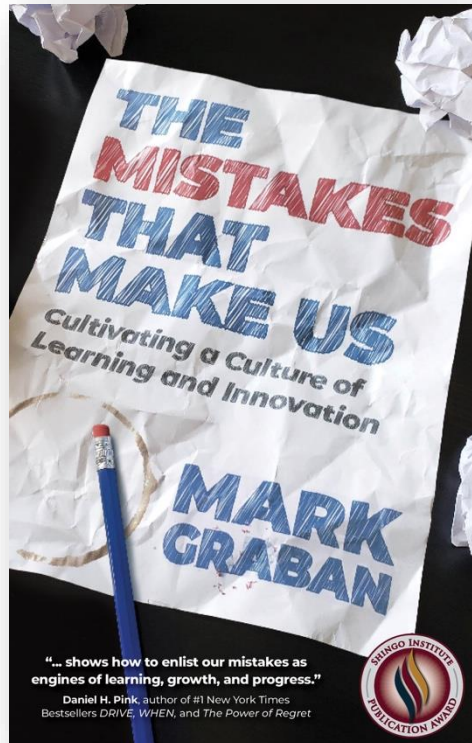


PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AS A FOUNDATION FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Slides & More: MarkGraban.com/Shingo2026



Scan For Anonymous Polling



Verbal Introductions

WHO ARE YOU?

SOMETHING UNUSUAL ABOUT
YOURSELF?

A worker in a blue uniform and cap is pulling a yellow Andon cord on an assembly line. The cord is attached to a car's body. The background shows industrial machinery and a factory setting.

Andon Cord

What would have to be true
for someone to pull this?

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 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

SAY SOMETHING



KEEP QUIET



Google's Project Aristotle

- What makes teams there most successful?

PSYCHOLOGICAL
SAFETY

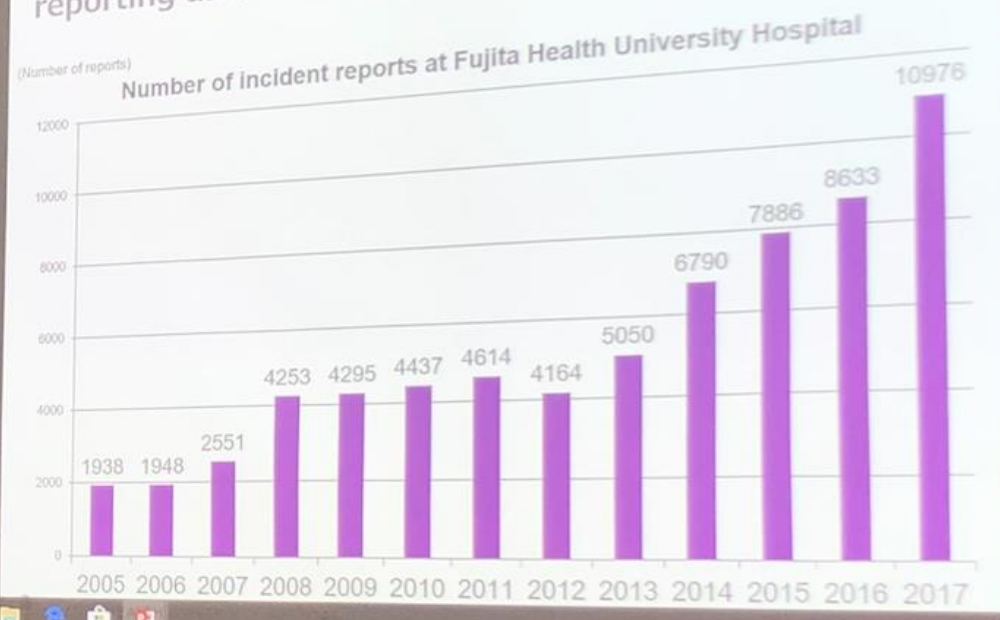
“...psychologically
safe teams made fewer
errors and spoke up
about them more
often.”

Edmondson, Amy C.. The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth . Wiley. Kindle Edition.



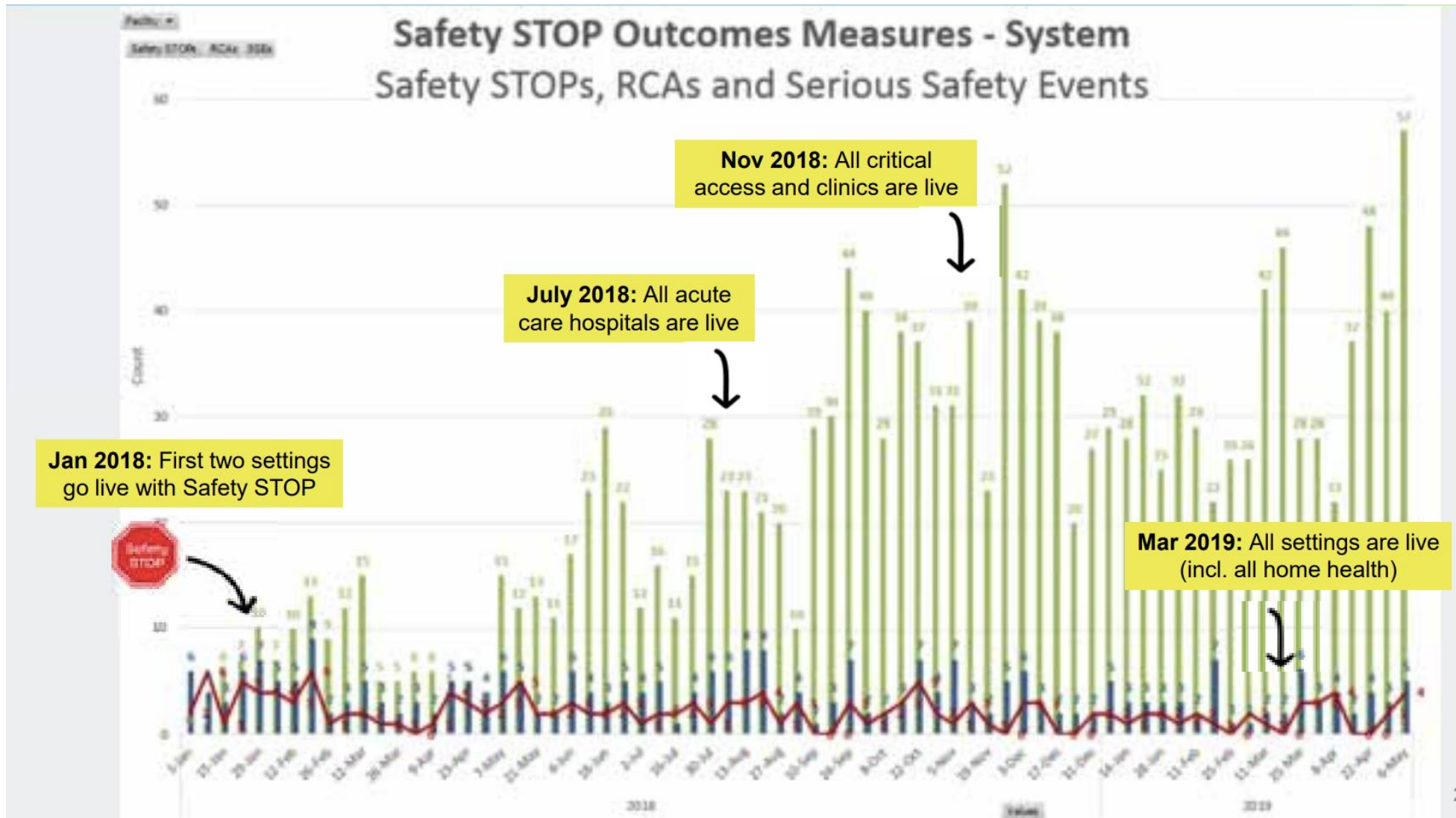


From information to action; reporting and learning for patient safety

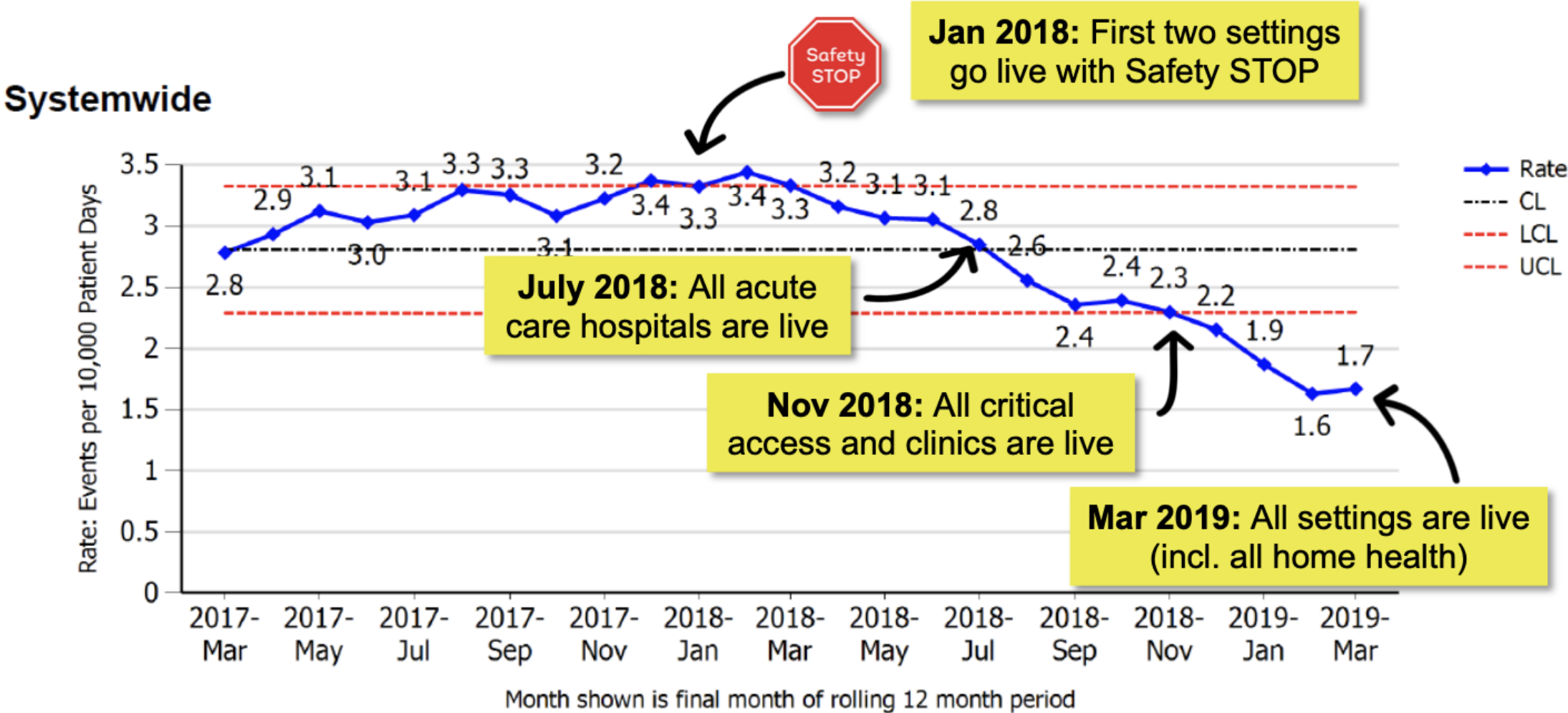


“Number of Incident Reports”

Safety Reports (U.S. Hospital)



Serious Safety Events (Same Hospital)



“A problem-solving culture is far more effective operationally than a finger-pointing culture.”

Larry Culp
CEO of GE Aerospace



Waste Identification



PICK CHART

Implement

Challenge

Possible

Kibosh

Completed Projects/
Celebrations



New Improvement Ideas

Quality

Customer Satisfaction

Work in Progress

PDCA

Stewardship

Team Work



WHY?

Fear factor

Futility factor

MISTAKES

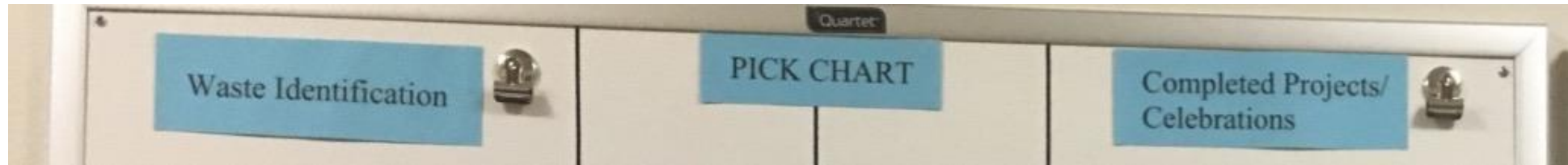
EXPECTED OUTCOME

GAP



Mistakes are actions or judgments that turn out to be misguided or wrong.

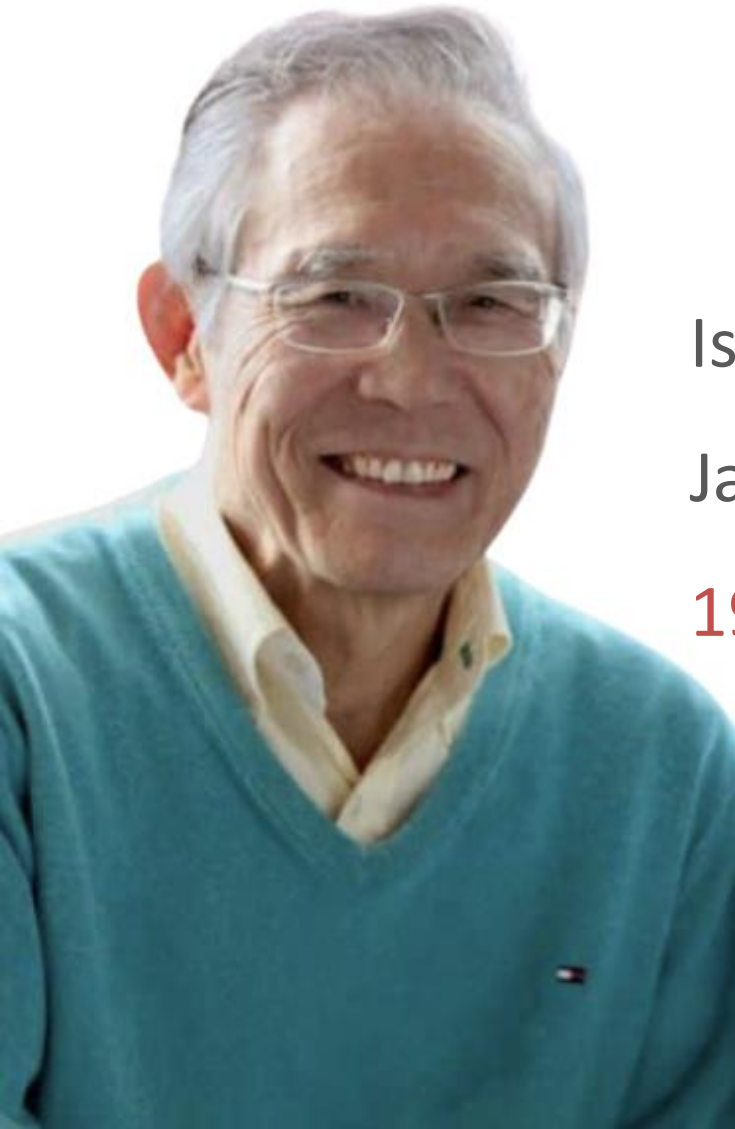
ACTUAL OUTCOME



MISTAKE:

**ASSUMING PEOPLE WILL USE A
HUDDLE BOARD**

Mistakes at Toyota



Isao Yoshino

Japan

1960s



David Meier

Kentucky

1980s

Reflecting on a Mistake

- What decision did I make?
- What did I expect to happen?
- What actually happened?
- What do I learn from the gap?
- What would I do differently?
- What would I expect to happen?



Table Discussion!

PLEASE SHARE A RECENT
MISTAKE AND WHAT YOU
LEARNED

Table Discussion Report Out!

WHO IS WILLING TO SHARE
YOUR MISTAKE WITH ALL OF
US?

Our Response to Mistakes...

PUNITIVE



NICE



KIND



What Psychological Safety is NOT

- Niceness – false harmony, shying away from intellectual debate
- A Shield – from accountability when you don't perform
- Rhetorical Reassurances

Cultivating Psychological Safety?

IT'S SAFE TO SPEAK
UP HERE



**“YOU SHOULD
SPEAK UP”**



“IT’S YOUR PROFESSIONAL
OBLIGATION TO SPEAK UP”



Speaking up isn't a matter
of *character* or
courage... it's a function
of CULTURE



What is Psychological Safety?

“A culture of
rewarded candor”

What is Candor?

BEING FRANK, OPEN, AND
SINCERE IN SPEECH

Candor Always Comes Out...

- In the meeting?
- Or in the hallway?
 - Or the text message?
 - Or the private chat Zoom message?



We Need a Culture of Candor

- What's potentially problematic about this?
- A leader who frequently says:
 - “To be candid...”
 - “Candidly...”

Can We Be Candid Experimentalists?



Is it Safe to Say?

WE COULD BE **WRONG**

LET'S **TEST** IT AND SEE...

THAT **DIDN'T** WORK AS...

You Can Improve Psychological Safety

Encouraging

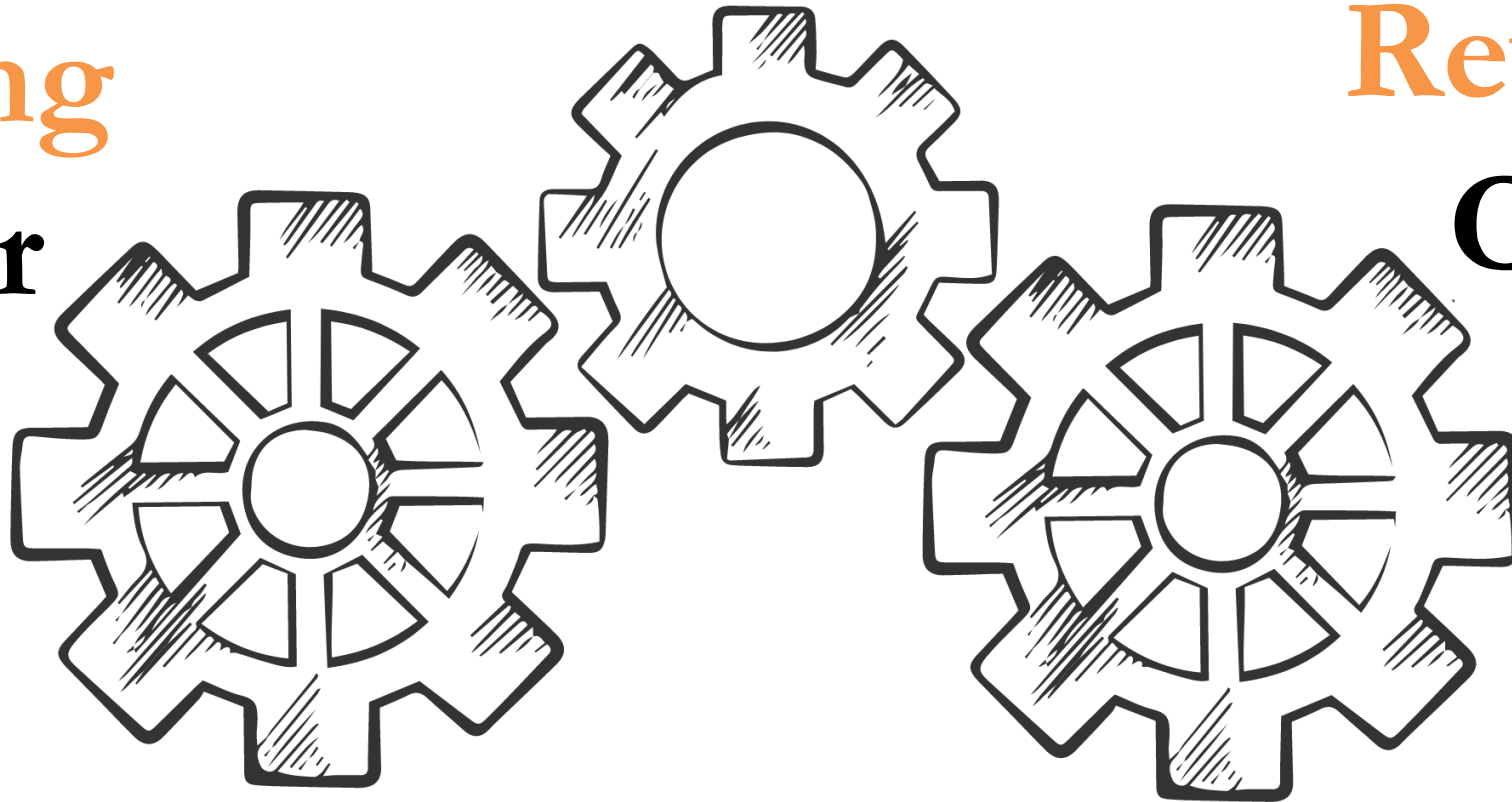
Candor

Modeling

Rewarding


Candor

Candor



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

Larry Culp, CEO of GE Aerospace

A photograph of Larry Culp, CEO of GE Aerospace, speaking at a podium during the AME Dallas 2022 International Conference. He is wearing a dark suit and a light-colored shirt. The podium features the conference logo, which includes a star and the text "AME DALLAS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2022". The background is a large screen displaying a blue and white pattern of overlapping circles. A white text box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing a quote.

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

Larry Culp, CEO of GE Aerospace



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

Greg Jacobson
CEO and co-founder, KaiNexus

What Went Wrong

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



Model

Encourage

Reward



Model

Encourage

Reward





[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

The Culture Formation Hypothesis

- The leader sets the tone
- Culture of a team reflects, more than anything, the behaviors modeled by the leader
- Teams do not outperform the leader, they reflect the leader



What We Can Do to Build Psychological Safety

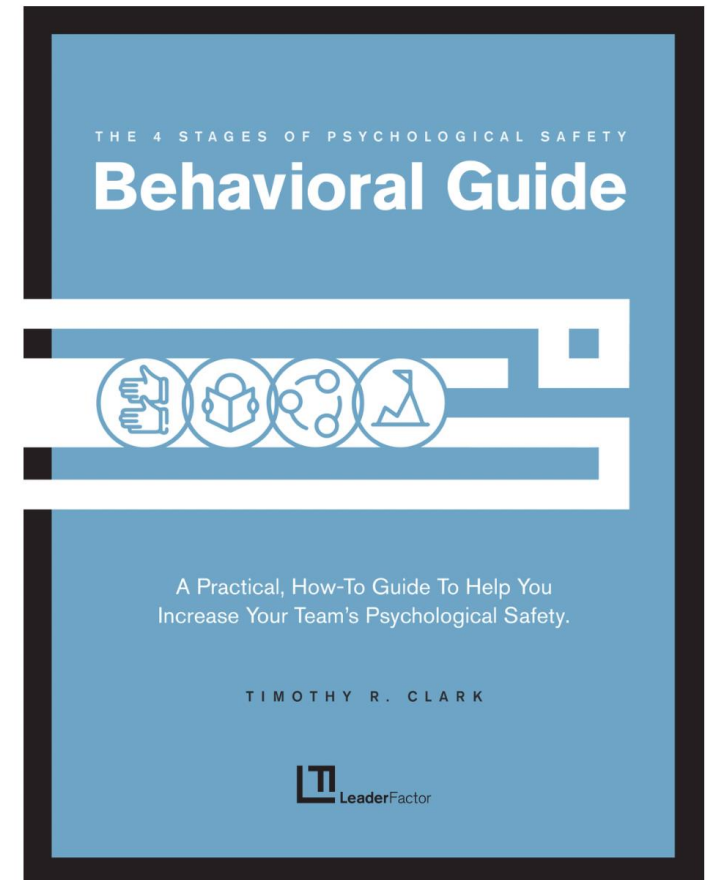
1. Frame the work as a learning problem, not an execution problem
2. Acknowledge your own fallibility
3. Model curiosity and ask lots of questions
4. Solicit input and opinions from the group
5. Share information about personal and work style preferences, and encourage others to do the same

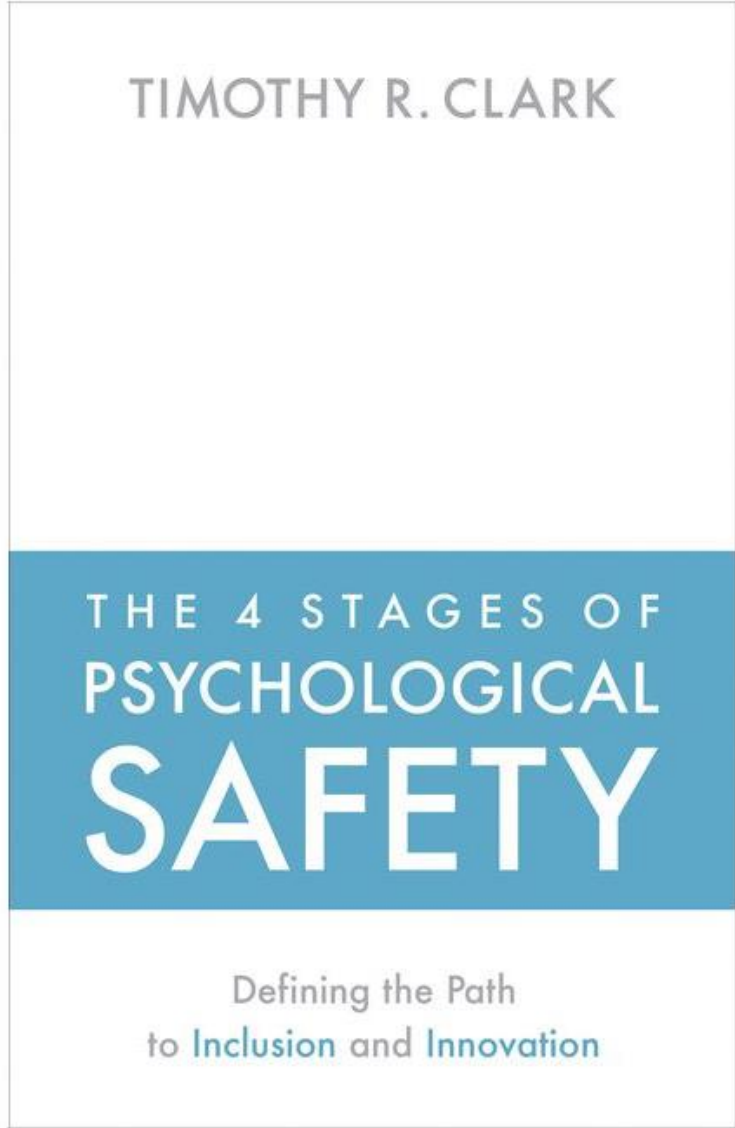


33 Starting Point Behaviors

- <https://www.leaderfactor.com/resources/the-4-stages-behavioral-guide>
- Free PDF from LeaderFactor

- I've linked to it here:
 - <http://www.markgraban.com/AME2025Resources>





4. CHALLENGER SAFETY

Can I be candid about change?



3. CONTRIBUTOR SAFETY

Can I contribute and create value



2. LEARNER SAFETY

Can I learn and grow?



1. INCLUSION SAFETY

Can I be my authentic self?

Do I Feel Psychologically Safe?



Does a Team Have Psychological Safety?

EACH.

PERSON.

DECIDES.

Mark's Ladders – 2 Different Settings

Company K

 Accepting more responsibility

 Sharing something personal

 Receiving feedback

 Pointing out a mistake

 Admitting you don't know

 Making a mistake

Company V

 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

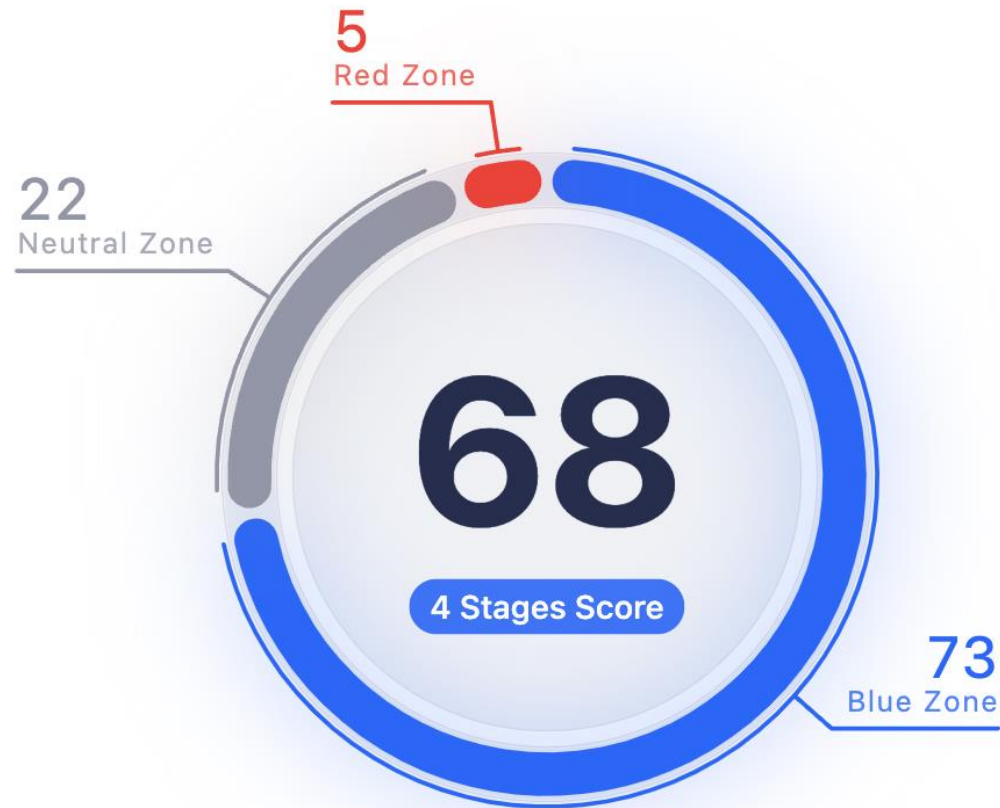
Table Discussion!

DISCUSS A SITUATION WHERE YOU
FELT

LESS SAFE OR MORE SAFE TO
SPEAK UP COMPARED TO USUAL

You Can Measure Psychological Safety

Possible scoring range is -100 to +100



80th percentile

You Can Measure It

- We can measure perception of its presence through occasional surveys
- We can act every day to build Psychological Safety



Overall 60th %-tile

You Can Measure the 4 Stages

Possible scoring range is -100 to +100



74

Stage 1
Inclusion Safety



76

Stage 2
Learner Safety



74

Stage 3
Contributor Safety



52

Stage 4
Challenger Safety

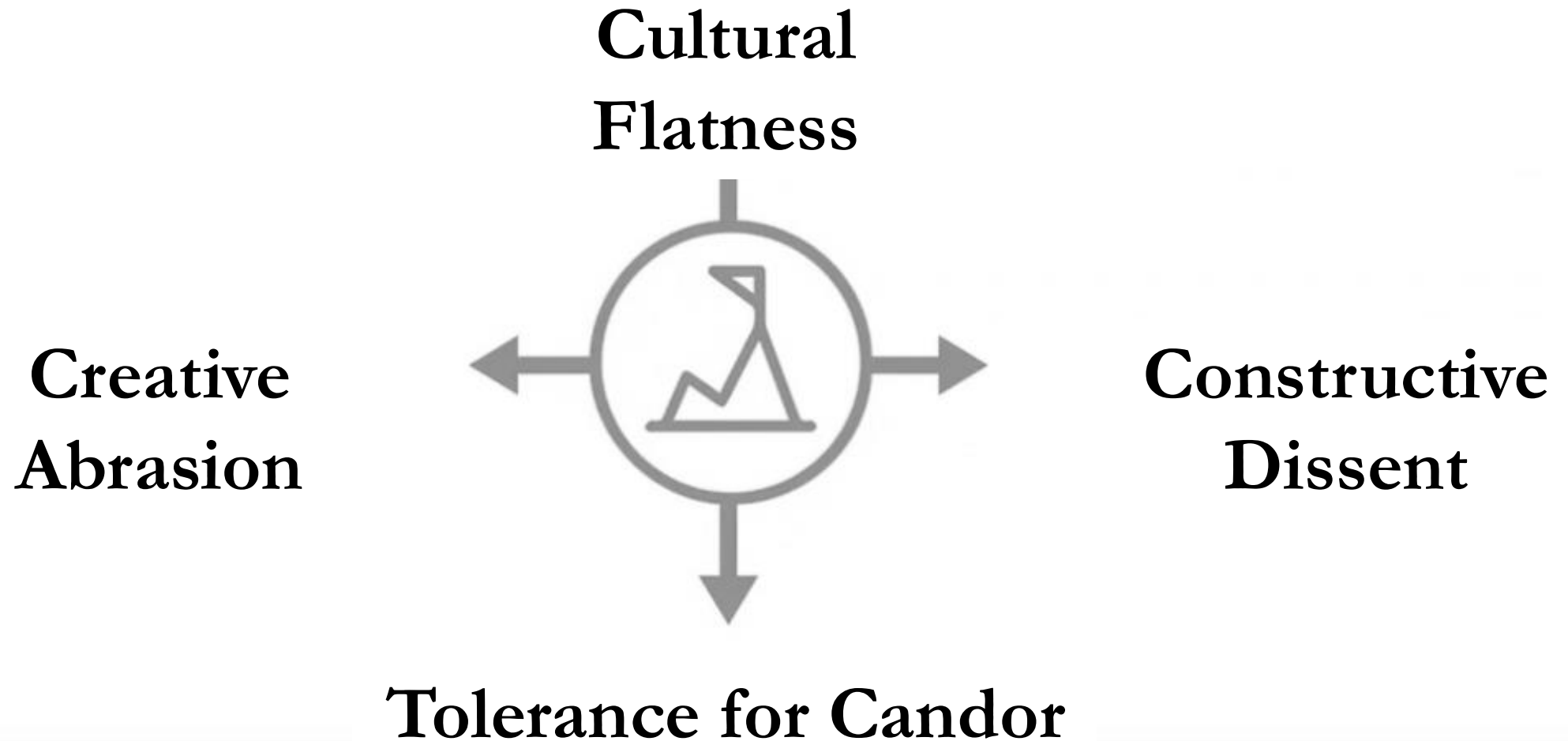
Percentile: 74th

81st

76th

77th

What Stage 4 Challenger Safety Looks Like



Stage 4: Challenger Safety

- Is it safe to challenge the status quo???

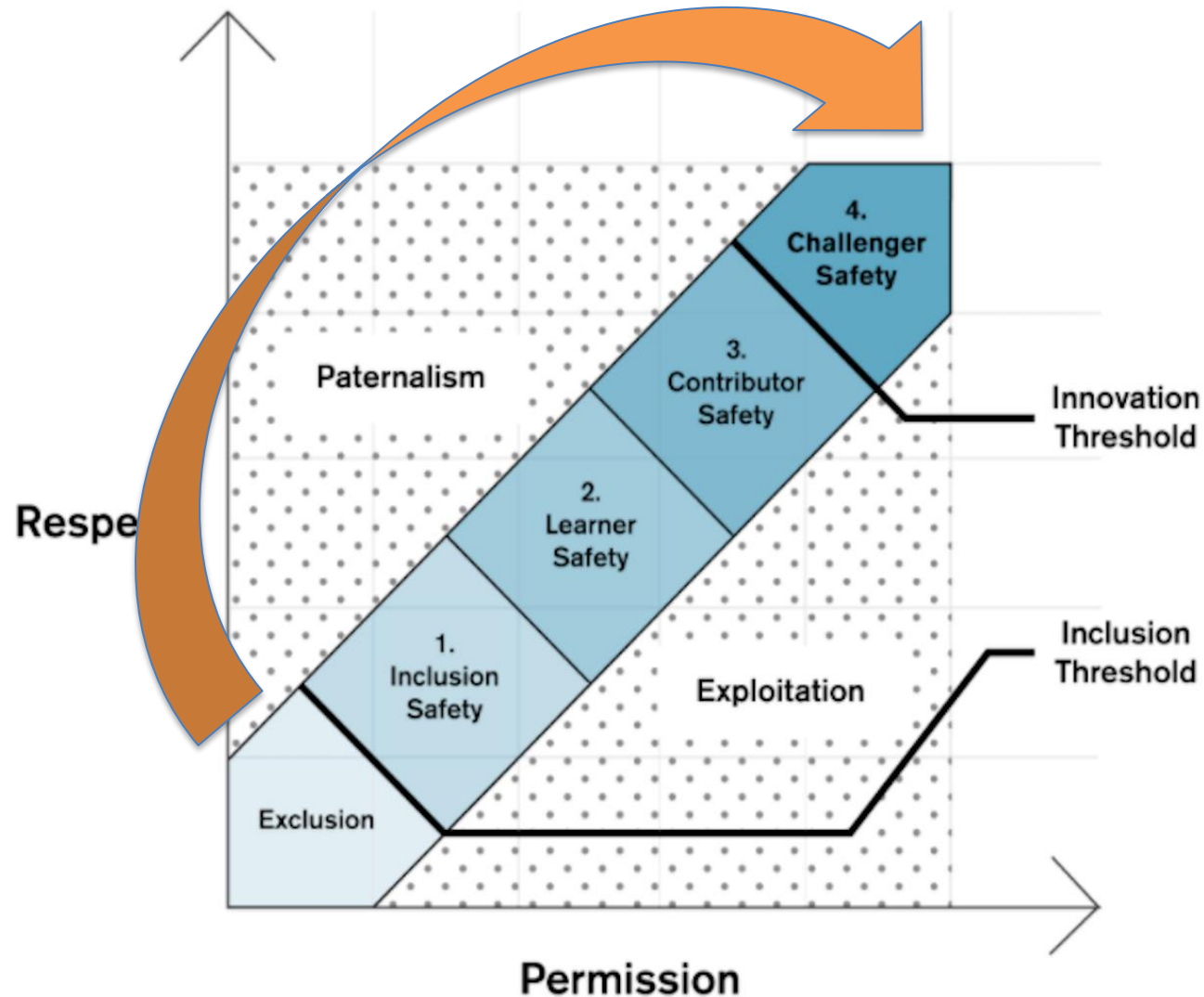
Kaizen!

- Any form of improvement or innovation

Stage 4: Challenger Safety

- “If you can bring a team to Stage 4, you’re world-class.”
- “We don’t just tolerate challenging behavior, we encourage it.”
- “It’s hard to get to this place.”

You Can't Jump Ahead to Stage 4!



**Research-
based
progression**

What's Required to Speak Up?

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY



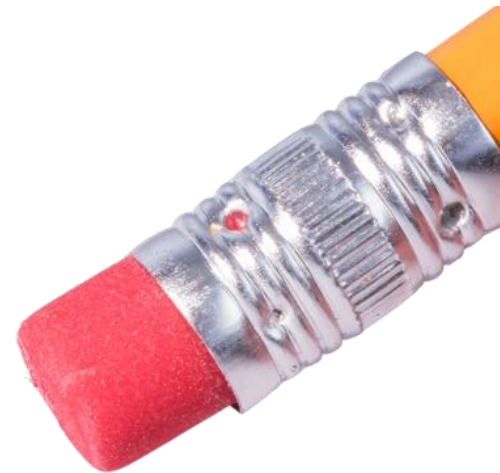
PROBLEM SOLVING

When We Only Have One...

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY



PROBLEM SOLVING



A Powerful Combination

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY



PROBLEM SOLVING

This Results In

HIGHLY ENGAGED PEOPLE



IMPROVING & INNOVATING

Toyota Production System

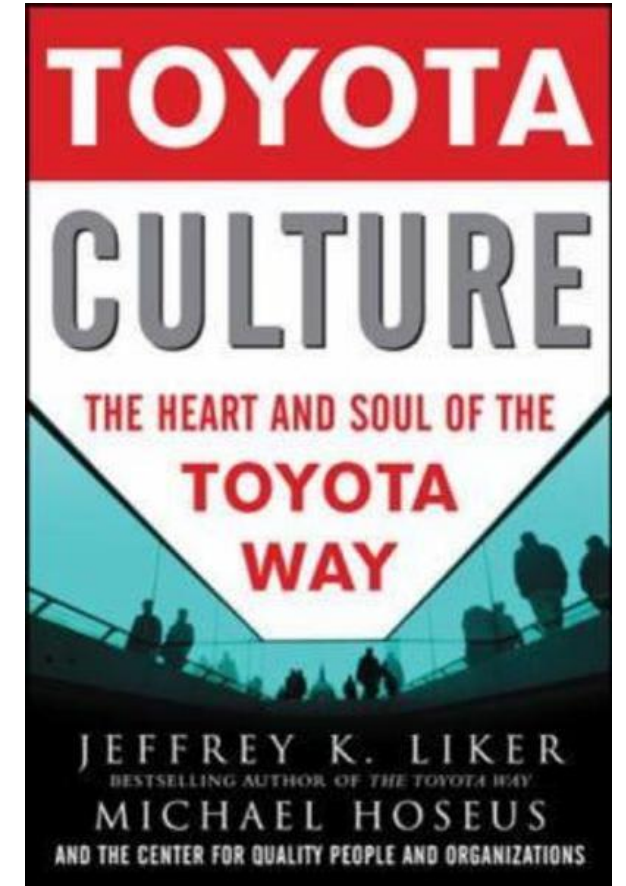


“We define TPS as an organizational culture of highly engaged people solving problems or innovating to drive performance.”

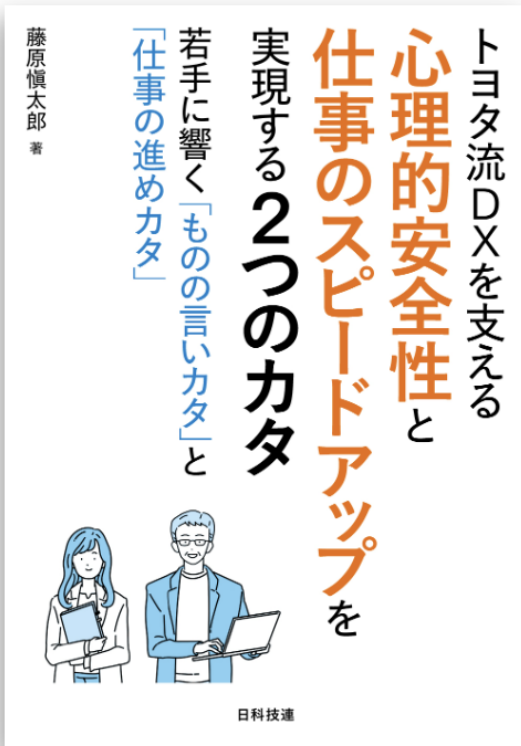
Jamie Bonini
Toyota / TSSC

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”



Two ways to achieve psychological safety and speed up work that support Toyota-style DX: "How to speak" and "How to proceed with work" that resonate with young people



Shintaro Fujiwara [Author]
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[Major Contents]

★[Read sample \(click here\)](#)

"ZENTech Morning Online" featured "Psychological safety that supports Toyota-style DX and two ways to speed up work."

The archive is available on the ZENTech YouTube channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sOnVu1sJul>

Recommended by Ryosuke Ishii, author of "How to Create Psychological Safety"!

It is extremely popular within the Toyota Group as well as in the telecommunications and power sectors!

Add to Cart >



What's Required for Tiered Huddles?



PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY



PROBLEM SOLVING

What's Required for Catch Ball?



PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY



PROBLEM SOLVING





For Daily Improvement??



PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY



PROBLEM SOLVING

REAL IMPROVEMENT,
NOT WORKAROUNDS



HOW MUCH
PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY
DO WE HAVE?

The Journey to Psychological Safety



You Can Improve Psychological Safety

Encouraging

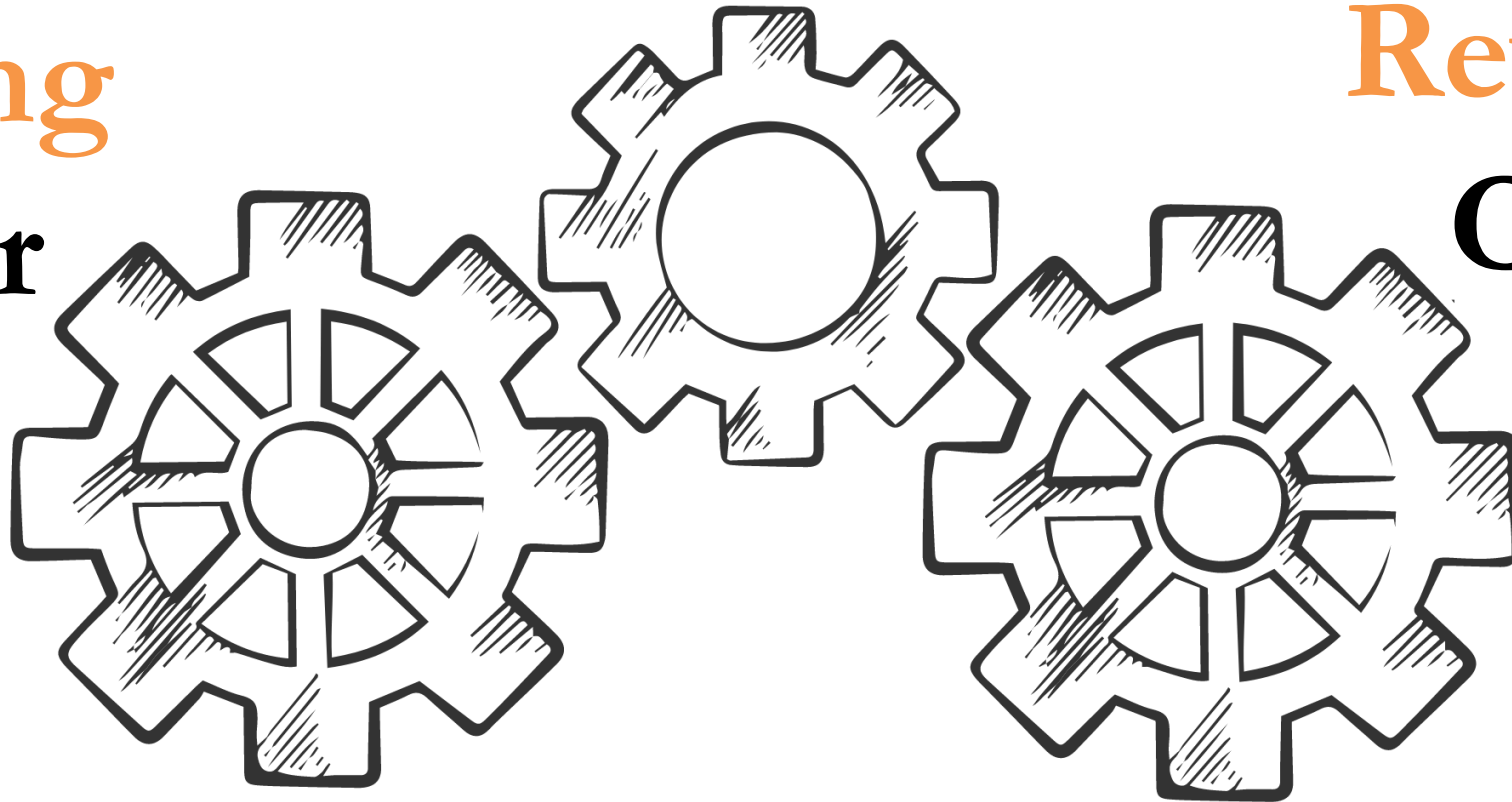
Candor

Modeling

Rewarding

Candor

Candor



What's Required for C.I.?

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY



PROBLEM SOLVING

World Class Performance

Culture of Improvement

Culture of Learning from Mistakes

Culture of Psychological Safety

Leader Behaviors

Mindsets

Q&A Time

- **Slides & More:**

<http://www.markgraban.com/Shingo2026>

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

- **Podcast:** MistakesPodcast.com

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AUDIOBOOK!

