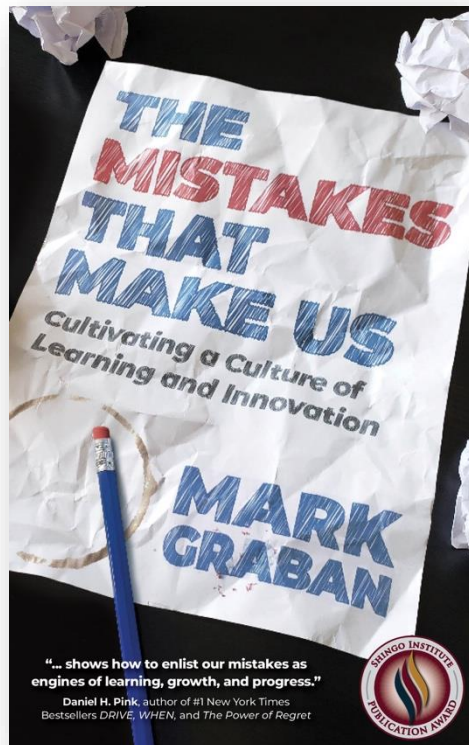


PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY AS A FOUNDATION FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Slides & More: MarkGraban.com/SA2026



Scan For Anonymous Polling



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

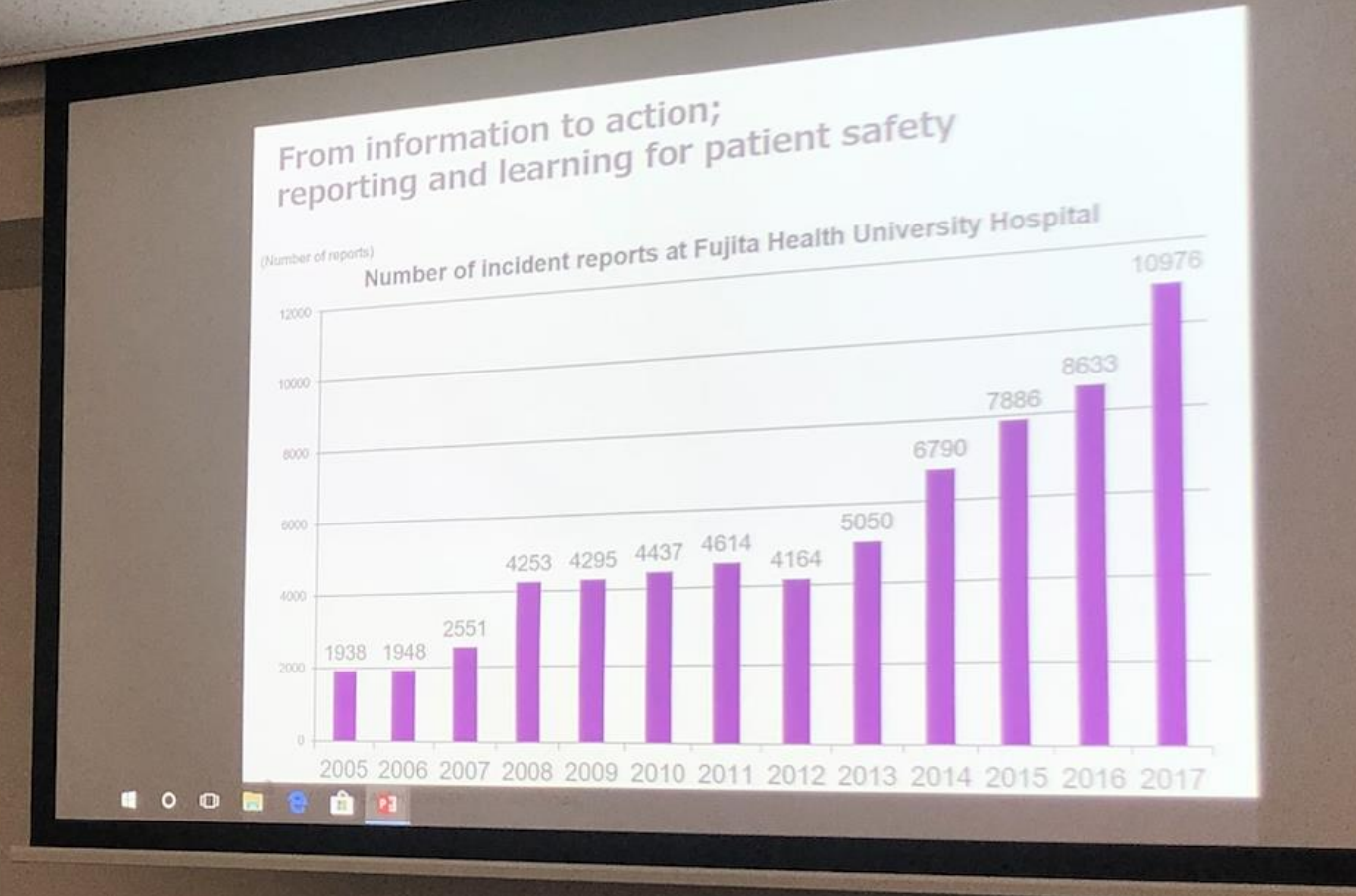
- What makes teams there most successful?

PSYCHOLOGICAL
SAFETY

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

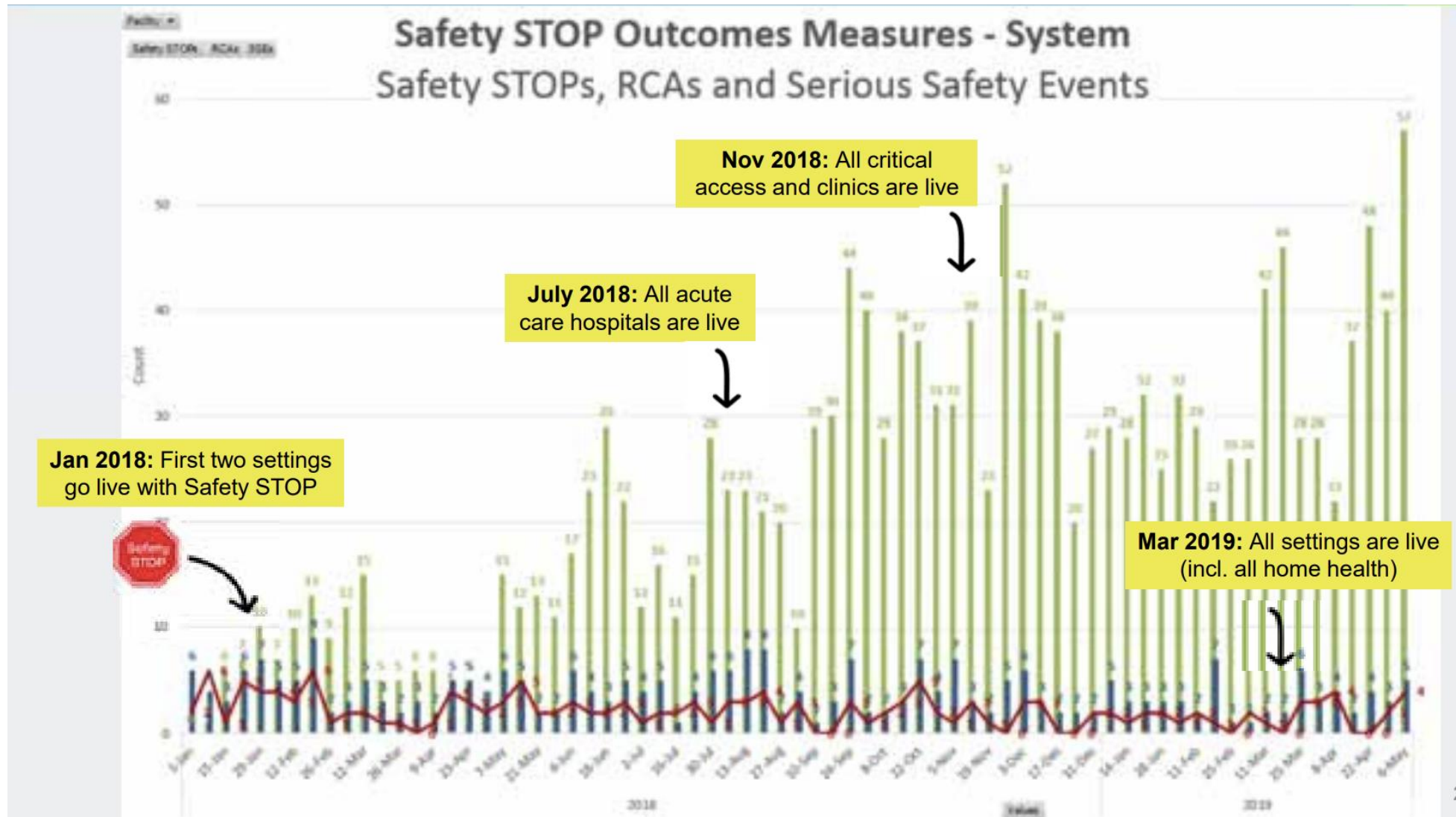
Edmondson, Amy C.. The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth . Wiley. Kindle Edition.



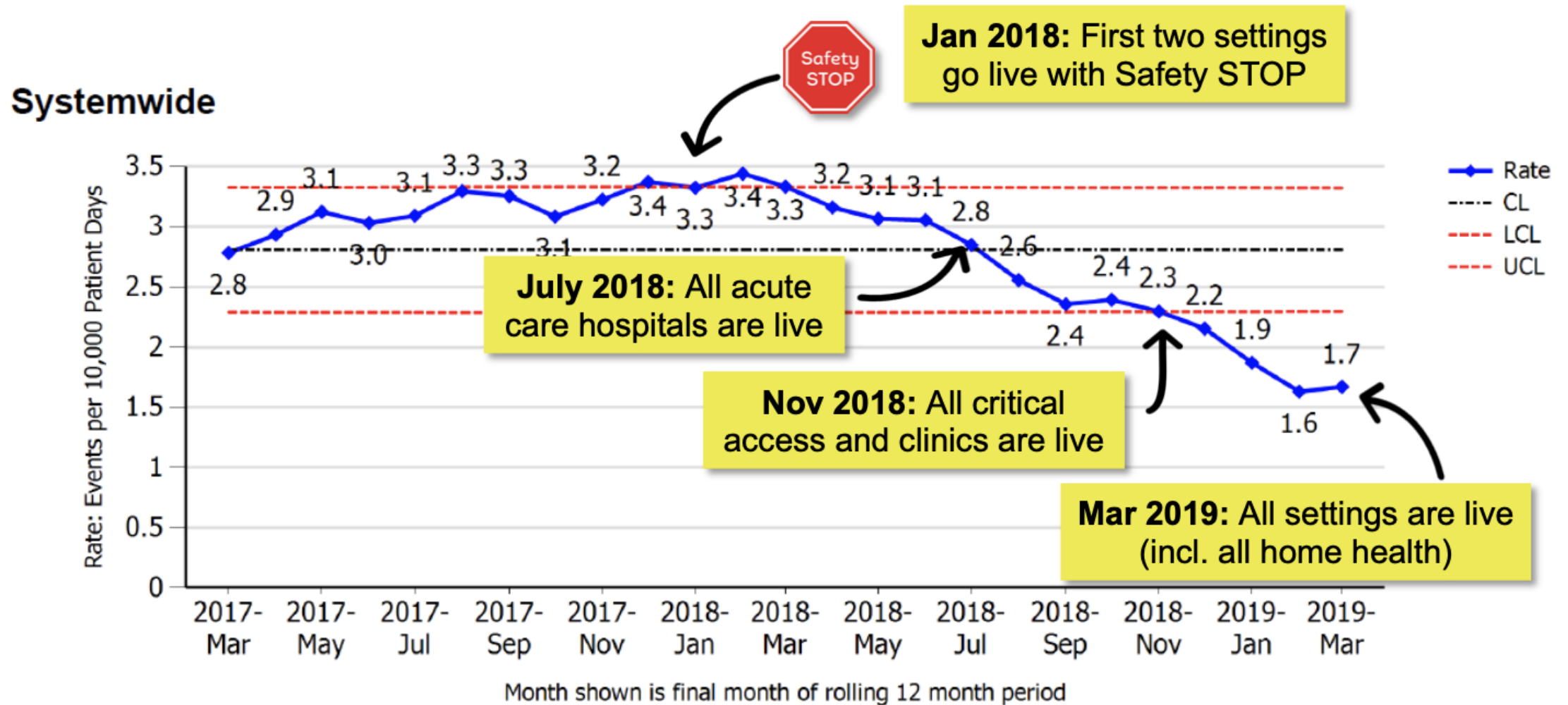


“Number of Incident Reports”

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



MISTAKES

EXPECTED OUTCOME

GAP



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

ACTUAL OUTCOME

Two Types of Mistakes

PROCESS MISTAKES

INNOVATION MISTAKES

Preventing or Mitigating?

PROCESS MISTAKES

- MISTAKE-PROOFING
 - CHECKLISTS

INNOVATION MISTAKES

- ITERATION / PDCA
- SMALL TESTS OF CHANGE

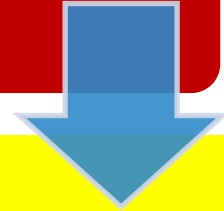
Reflecting on a Mistake

- 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?



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



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

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

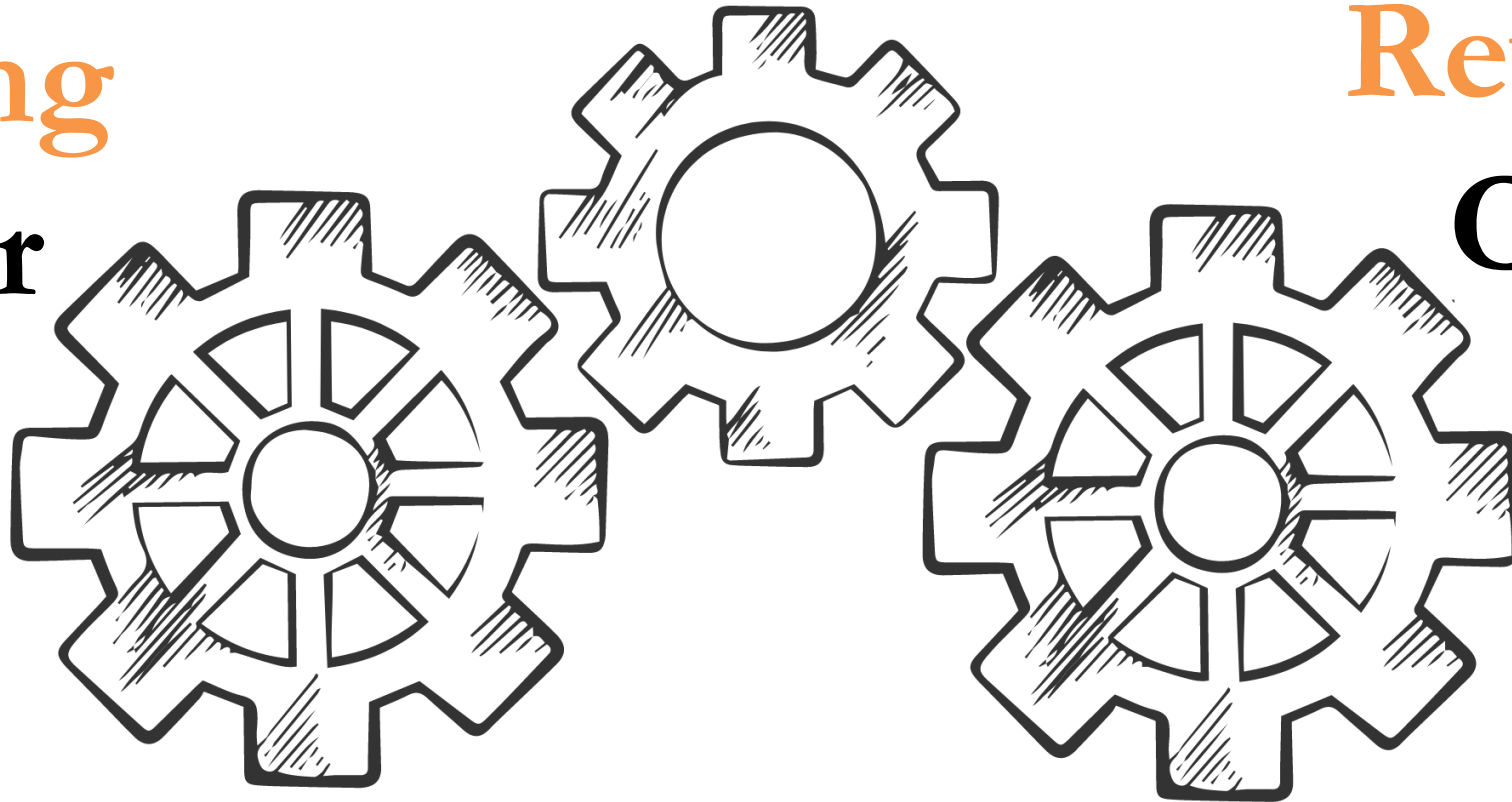
Candor

Modeling

Rewarding

Candor

Candor



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

Larry Culp, CEO of GE Aerospace

“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 discouraged 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



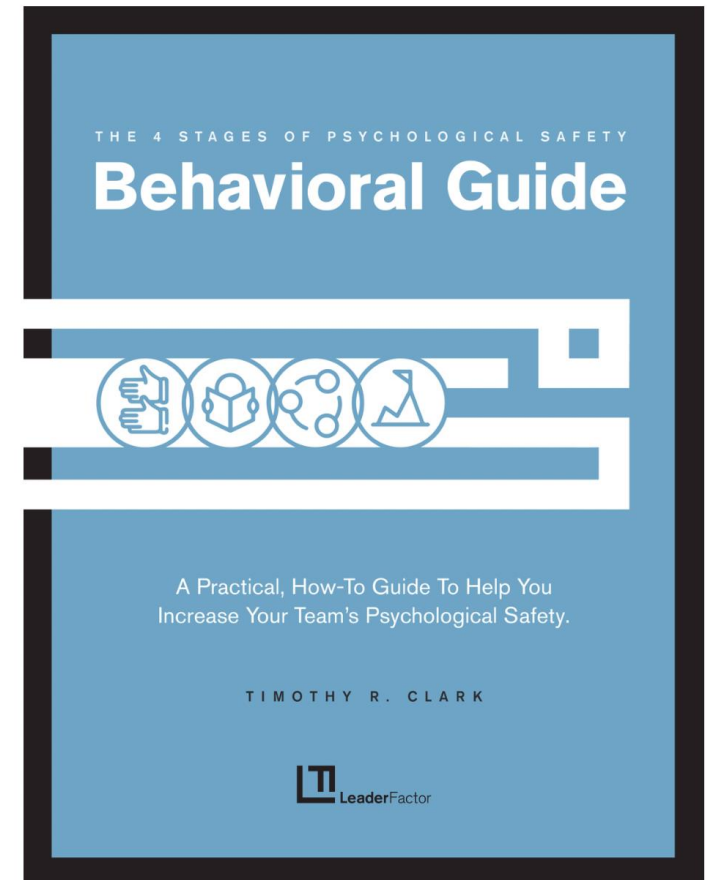
What We Can Do to Build Psychological Safety

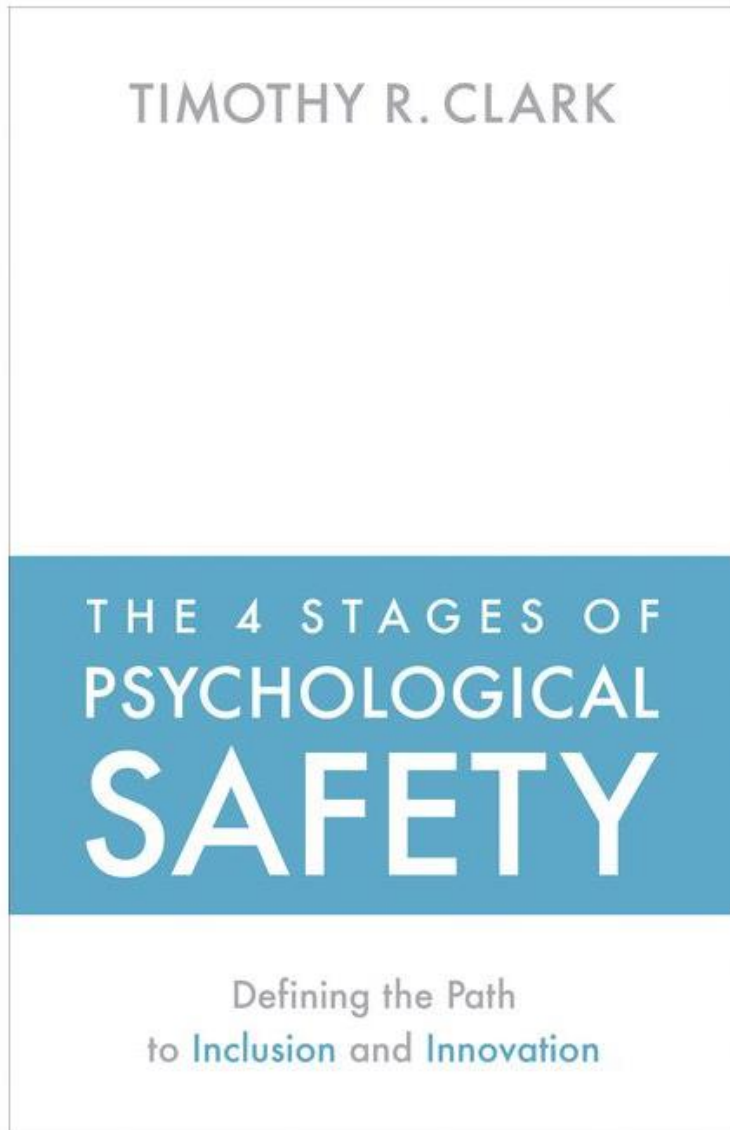
1. Frame the work as a learning problem, not an execution problem
2. Acknowledge your own fallibility
3. Model curiosity and ask lots of questions
4. Solicit input and opinions from the group
5. Share information about personal and work style preferences, and encourage others to do the same



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?

Toyota Production System

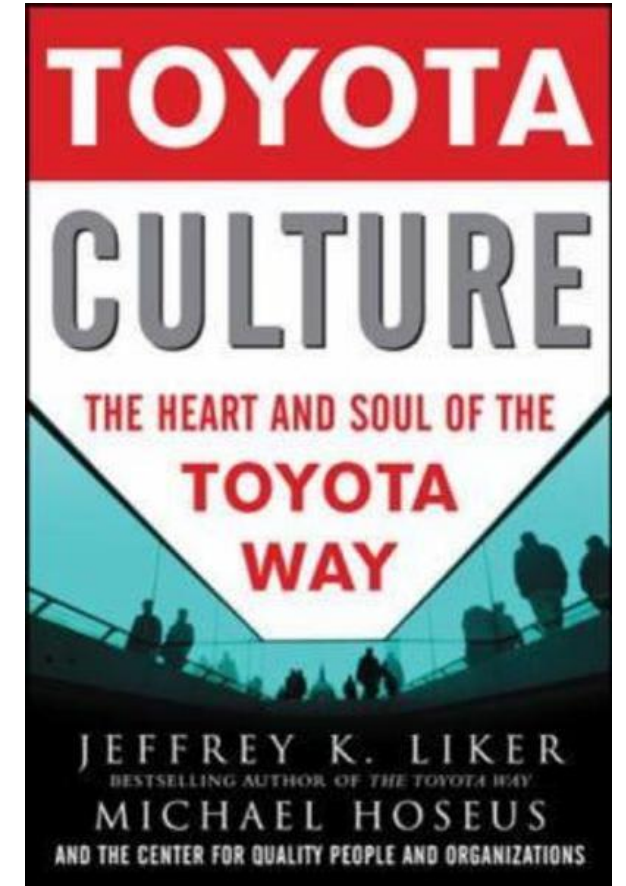


“We define TPS as an organizational culture of highly engaged people solving problems or innovating to drive performance.”

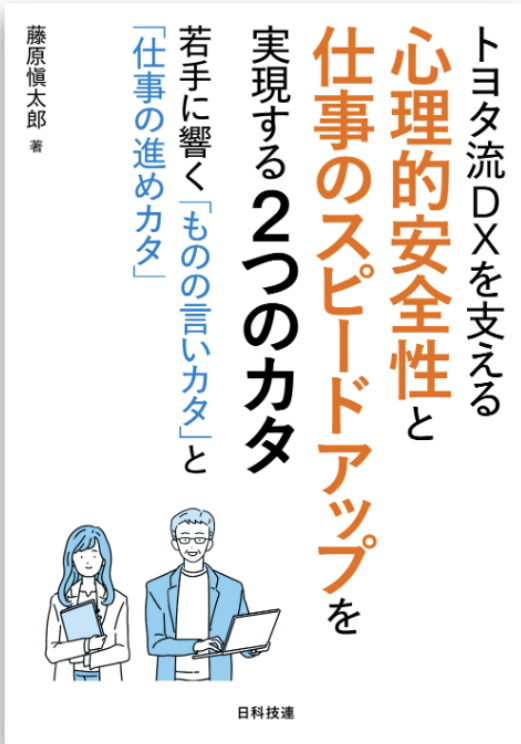
Jamie Bonini
Toyota / TSSC

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



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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!

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/SA2026>
- **Email:** Mark@MarkGraban.com
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