

Leadership for Future Manufacturing

Leading Together -
Psychological safety

14/08/2026



What is Psychological Safety?

"A belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes."

- The Fearless Organisation, Amy Edmondson



What is Psychological Safety?



Your role as a Leader



How to Build Psychological Safety



Before we start

Remove distractions

Be present and have fun!

Commitment to keep discussions confidential

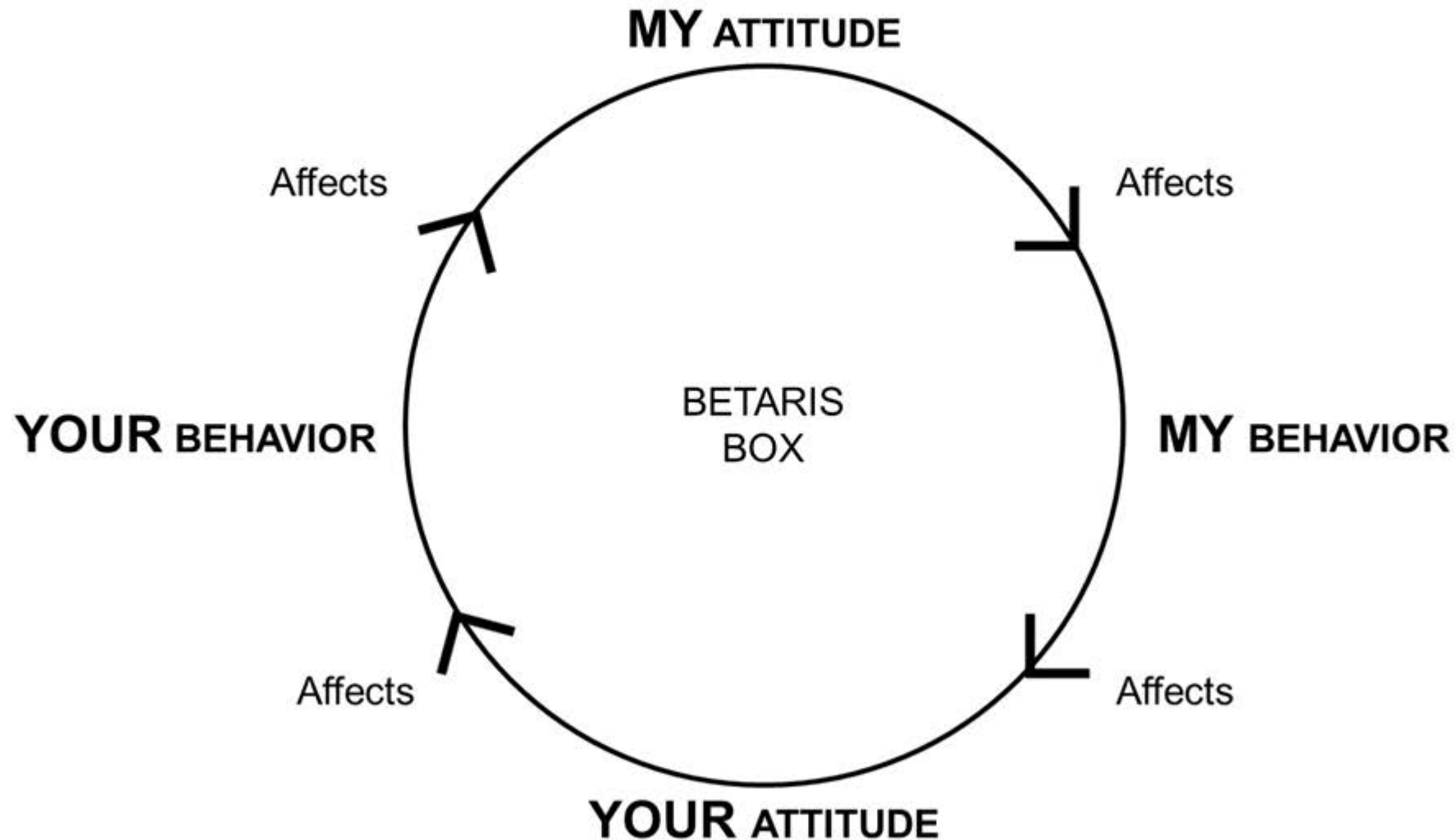
Workbook and pen handy for your own reflections

Mindset of curiosity and positive intent

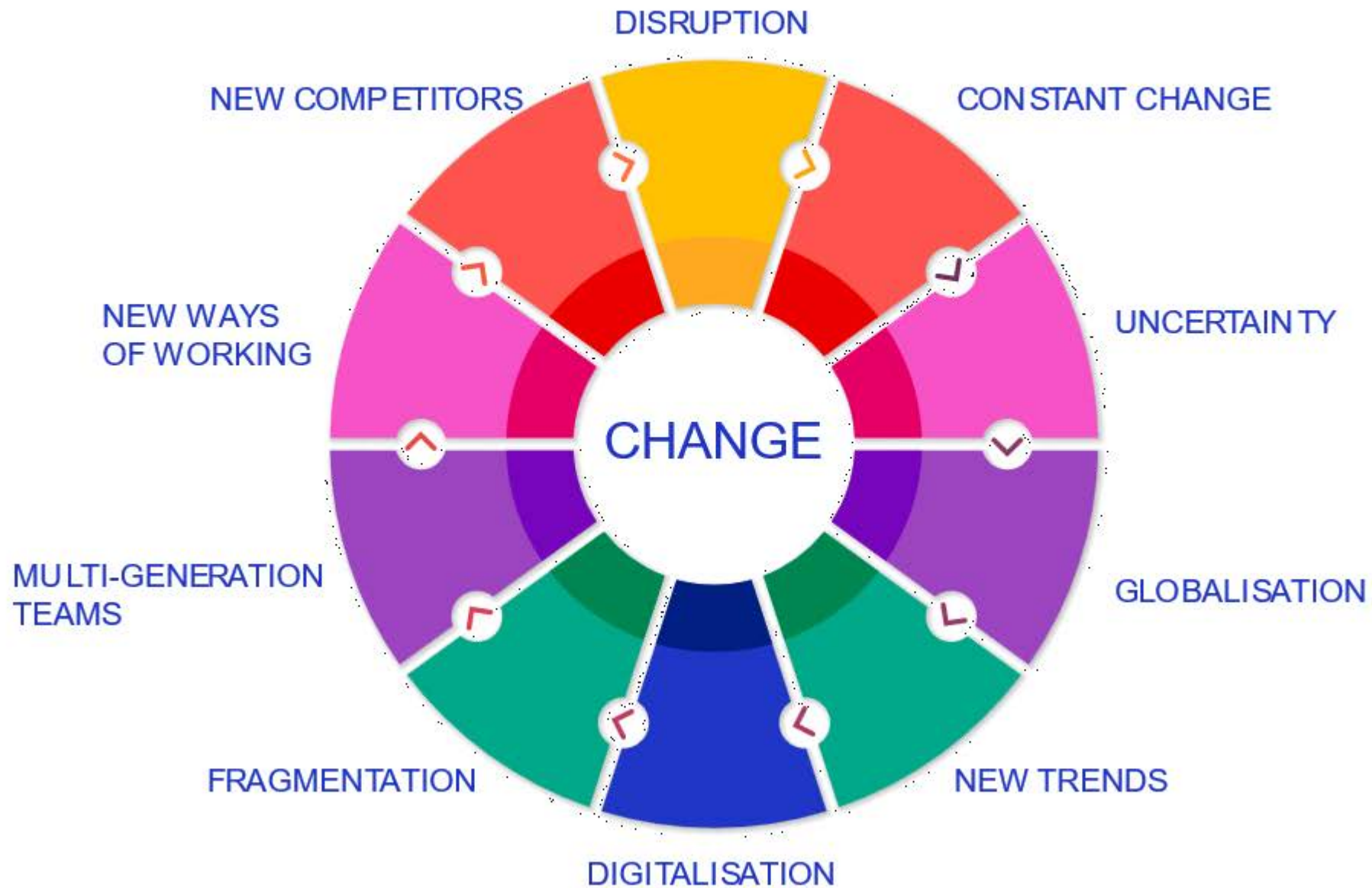
What is Psychological Safety and **why** is it **important?**

Introduction Exercise

The Betaris Cycle – Creating Virtuous or Vicious Cycles Workbook Page 2



The Wheels of Change are in Motion





Our new Compass Organisation gets Unilever future fit for a changing world.



Simpler, faster and more agile



Greater category focus and expertise



More empowered and accountable

AND will unlock the potential of our people to drive our sustainable growth agenda



An effective framework for our leadership

We care deeply about how consumers experience our brands every day, everywhere; about our people's growth and development, and our impact on the planet.

We care about our performance, to a point where it hurts when we don't win.

It is not just about being nice, or avoiding honest conversations about performance and opportunity.

We deliver excellence in what we do at pace. We take personal ownership and hold each other to account - always finding a way to do what we said we will do.

It is not about analysing the inevitable roadblocks, admiring the problem or tolerating mediocrity.

CARE 
DEEPLY 

DELIVER WITH 
EXCELLENCE 

What's the data telling us at Unilever?

1 in 5

- Do not believe that they can speak up in their team without fear of negative consequences

(19% globally UniVoice 2021 & 2022)

On a scale of 1–6 with 6 meaning full Psychological Safety.

- Best team score is: 5.77
- Average team score is: 4.52
- Worst team score is: 2.36

Team Energy Assessment. 17.500+ responses from Feb 2021 until now.



“I worry about the implications of mistakes I may have made.”

Team Energy question that constantly scores lowest

Google Case Study

Google studied team effectiveness over 5 years. They found that psychological safety was the number one factor differentiating their highest performing teams.

Where it was high, Googlers:

- ✓ Brought in more revenue (nearly 50% in sales teams)
- ✓ Were more likely to harness the power of diverse ideas
- ✓ Were rated as effective twice as often by executives
- ✓ Were less likely to leave



Tool: Foster psychological safety

Of the five key dynamics of effective teams that the researchers identified, psychological safety was by far the most important. The Google researchers found that individuals on teams with higher psychological safety are less likely to leave Google, they're more likely to harness the power of diverse ideas from their teammates, they bring in more revenue, and they're rated as effective twice as often by executives.

What does poor Psychological Safety look like?

What are your thoughts?

“No one comes up with a good idea when being chased by a tiger”



The 4 parts of Psychological Safety

Inclusion and diversity



"You've been quiet today, what do you think we should do here?"

"Do we all agree? Then let's think about it and come back when we've thought of the questions and challenges!"

Willingness to help



"I'd love to hear how you've approached this in the past – can you help me see it differently?"

"I've got a few ideas on how you might improve this if you'd like to hear them?"

Attitude to risk and failure



"How can we trial this in a small way so we can get some quick feedback and learn?"

"We thought it would be worth a try, but clearly our approach needs a re-think."

Open conversation



"I'm struggling to understand this approach; I'm worried about a few things."

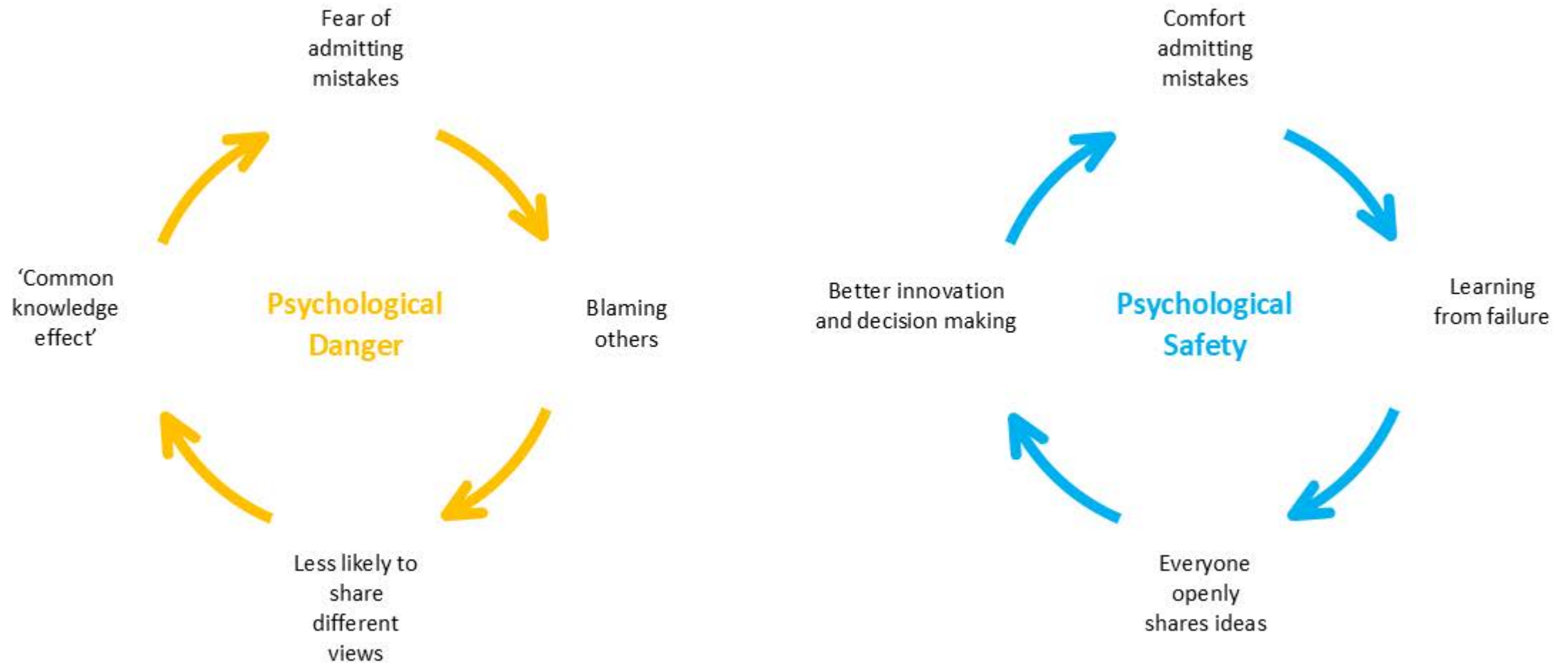
"I'd love to share some ideas on this."

What Psychological Safety is NOT

- Being nice
- A guarantee that all of your ideas will be applauded
- Free from conflict
- Lowering performance standards or ignoring performance issues
- Not being able to hold someone accountable
- A permit to be rude



Why does Psychological safety matter?



Why does Psychological safety matter?

Psychological safety helps us
move from playing **not to lose**
to **playing to win**



Your role as leaders in creating **Psychological Safety**

Leadership behaviours and mindsets

Your role as a caring leader reflective exercise



- Pairs exercise
- For each round you have 30 seconds each to respond to your partner on the question – do not overthink – just respond spontaneously

- Round 1

Share a time where you felt stretched and challenged with a healthy balance of performance and care

- Round 2

Share a time that you have stretched and challenged someone in your team to perform better whilst showing care for them

Let's go deeper – what gets in the way of doing that consistently for your people?

Your role as a leader



High Support

- Create unconditional psychological safety
- Help people to be resilient
- Clear away obstacles and provide resources that the team cannot
- Build inspiration and belief



High Challenge

- Establish strategic choices
- Set clear stretching goals
- Express and reinforce expectations
- Give compassionate and direct feedback

Reflection moment and discussion

What about your own team?

- If your team was here, what would they tell us?
- If you believe they feel safe, what are the signals?
- Workbook Page 3



What am I hearing?

What percentage of what you hear is...

A	B
GOOD NEWS	BAD NEWS
PROGRESS	PROBLEMS
STATEMENTS	QUESTIONS
AGREEMENT	DISSENT
ALL IS WELL	REQUESTS FOR HELP

Let's get practical!

How can I build Psychological
Safety in my team **as a leader?**



Activity – Round 1

Workbook Page 4

In your assigned group – identify someone to role model each of the positions of front line leader and team member – rest are observers

The Scenario

For the front line leader, at the start of your shift you check and you have received an “Urgent” email from your manager. Please review the email and comply with the request.

Debrief

How did everyone feel?

What could have been different or better?

How can I build Psychological Safety in my team?



Setting the stage



What do we mean by 'Setting the Stage'?

1. Framing the work
2. Role Modelling



1. Framing the work

We build safety when we're open and honest about the nature of the journey.

Set expectations about

- **Uncertainty**
- **Failure**
- **Interdependence**



2. Role Modelling Psychological Safety

How you show up matters - your own behaviour sets the tone for everyone else. How?

- Admitting feeling uncertain and not knowing everything
- Demonstrating how you are still making mistakes and learning from them
- Showing up vulnerable and human



Individual reflection moment

In the past week, what have you done to:

- Acknowledge that things might go wrong and that's ok
- Demonstrate that fast recovery and learning are what matter most?
- Show that you do not know all the answers yourself?
- Workbook Page 5



Actively invite engagement



What does 'Actively invite engagement' mean?

1. Inviting engagement is about asking good questions and to listening.
2. It is about being curious and creating the space for every voice to be heard.



Invite engagement: ask good questions

To broaden the discussion

What do others think?

What are we missing?

What other options could we consider?

How would our competitor approach this?

Who has a different perspective?



To deepen the discussion

What leads you to think so?

Can you explain that further?

What's the concern that you have about that?

What do you think might happen if we did X?

Can you give us an example?



Invite engagement: insist on dissent

“ Team, I take it we are all in complete agreement on this decision.

Then I propose we postpone further discussion of this matter until our next meeting to give ourselves time to develop disagreement and perhaps gain some understanding of what the decision is all about.”

Alfred P. Sloan — My Years at General Motors



Building Trust

– Summary of Stephen M.R. Covey model



CONFRONT REALITY



**CREATE
TRANSPARENCY**



TALK STRAIGHT (no
sugar-coating, tell the
truth)



**EXTEND
TRUST**

CARE FOR YOUR PEOPLE

**Without Trust we have
no basis for effective
communication**

**Without TRUST we truly have nothing to positively
influence another person.**

**Imagine you have a TRUST ACCOUNT,
functioning like a bank account, with:**

TRUST CAPITAL

08/27

5482 **** *72



Balance:

0.00

Without Trust we have no basis for effective communication

Without TRUST we truly have nothing to positively
influence another person.

Imagine you have a TRUST ACCOUNT,
functioning like a bank account, with:

DEPOSITS – your trust-inducing actions

TRUST CAPITAL

08/27

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Balance:

+100

400.00

Walks the Talk

+200.00

Authentic in dealing with others

+100.00

Caring and approachable

+ 100.00

Without Trust we have no basis for effective communication

Without TRUST we truly have nothing to positively influence another person.

Imagine you have a TRUST ACCOUNT,
functioning like a bank account, with:

DEPOSITS – your trust-inducing actions

WITHDRAWALS – your trust-eroding actions.

When you are in the negative, how can you expect to be able to get something from your trust account?

TRUST CAPITAL

08/27

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Balance:

-100

- 400.00

Doesn't Walk the Talk	- 200.00
Does not provide feedback	- 100.00
No personal considerations	-100.00

Activity

- Trust Building Group Exercise Workbook Page 6

A - If you managed your priorities correctly, you would be able to get it done.

B - You look uncomfortable with my suggestion, so let's talk through your concerns and come up with a plan.

C - Come to me with solutions, not with problems!

D - Sorry, I changed my mind.

E - I know that you are already busy, but can you help with an urgent priority that has just come up

F - I will come back to you later, I am just on my way to an important meeting

G - We are short on people tonight so go as fast as you can, so we finish on time.

H - I value your opinion and really need your input.

I - I am not sure, let me find out and get back to you.

Trust Generating Behaviours - Summary

- **Talk straight**
- **Show respect**
- **Be transparent**
- **Right wrongs**
- **Show loyalty**
- **Deliver results**
- **Get better**
- **Confront reality**
- **State expectations**
- **Be accountable**
- **Listen first**
- **Meet commitments**
- **Extend trust**

Individual reflection moment

Ask yourself. In the past week:

- **How many good questions have I asked?**
- **Have I actively asked for different views or dissent on important decisions?**
- **When was the last time that in your team there was a debate?**
- **Workbook Page 7**



Respond Productively

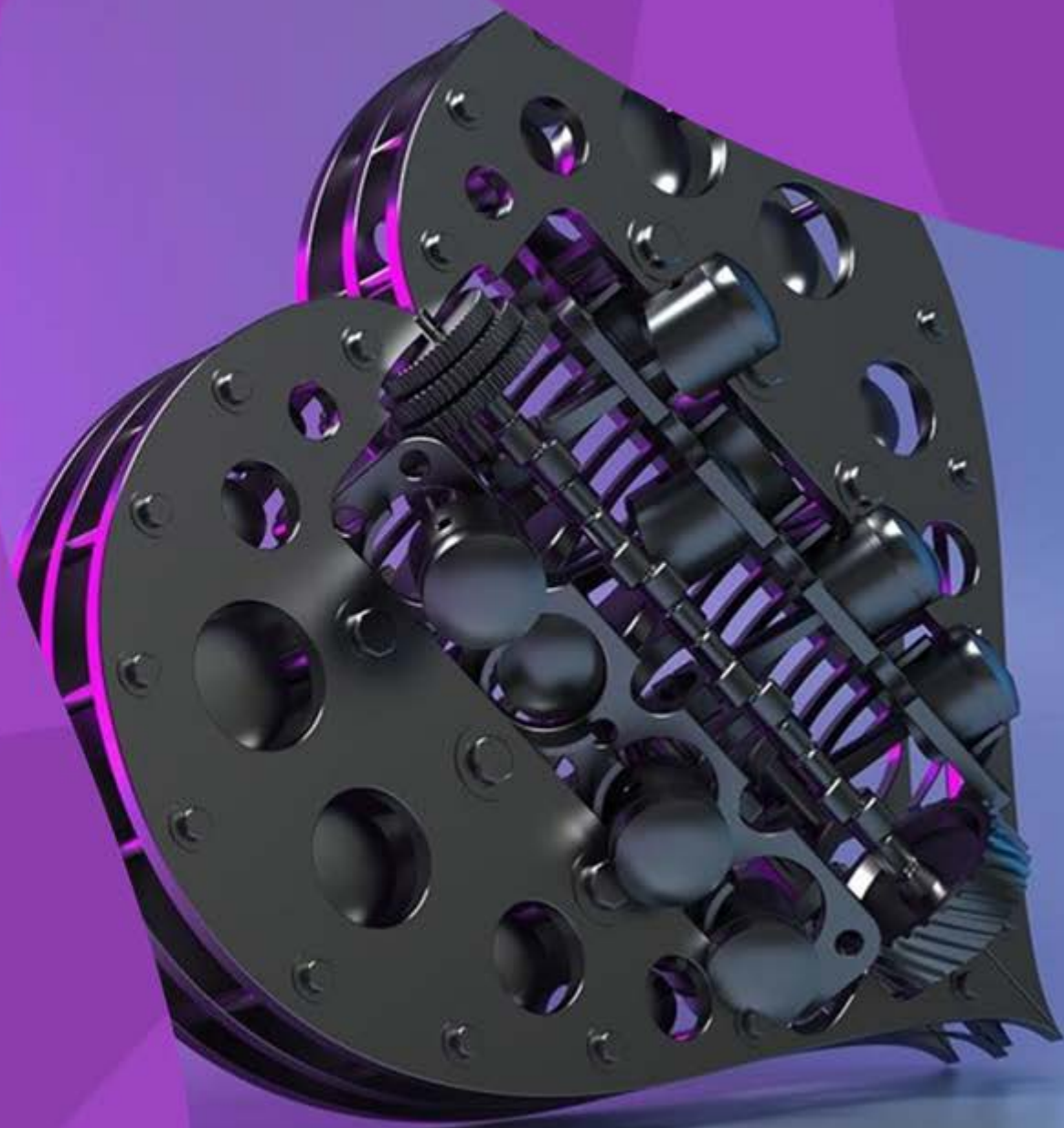


What does 'Respond productively' look like?

“ Speaking up is only the first step. The true test is how leaders respond when people actually do speak up. Stage setting and inviting participation indeed build psychological safety.

But if a boss responds with anger or disdain as soon as someone steps forward to speak up about a problem, the safety will quickly evaporate. A productive response must be appreciative, respectful, and offer a path forward.”

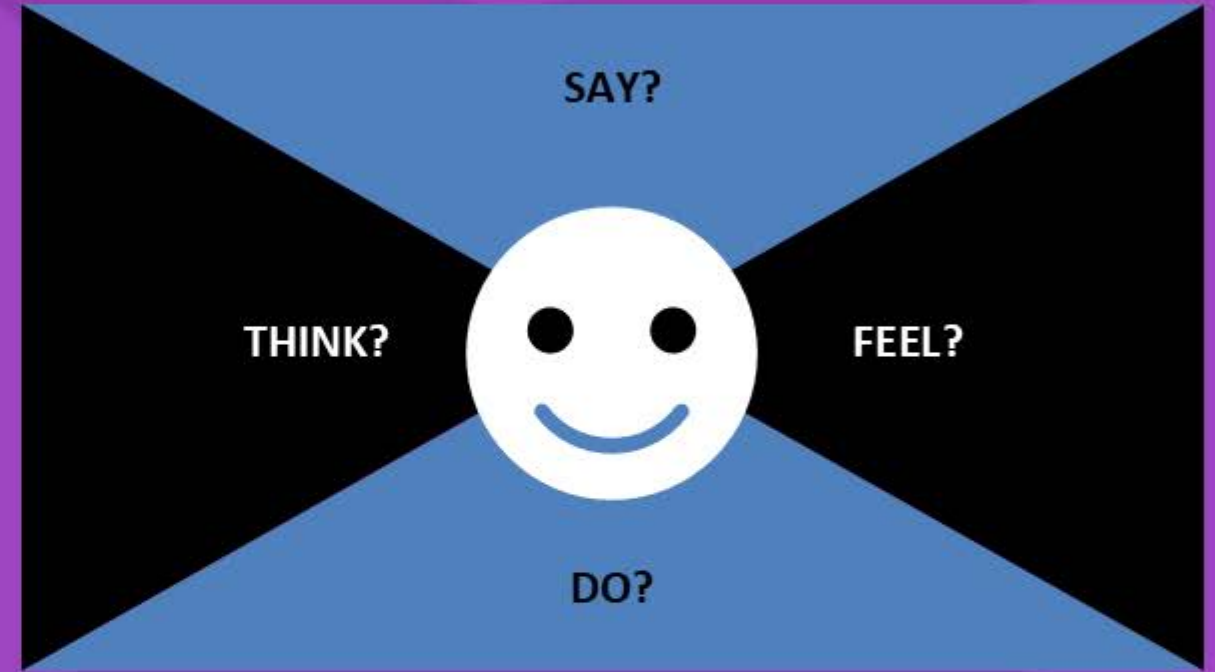
Alfred P. Sloan — My Years at General Motors



Step Into their shoes

– The Empathy Map

This tool, which will help you step into the shoes of your people, helps you go beyond demographic characteristics and develop a better understanding of the environment, your behaviors, your concerns and aspirations



PAINS

GAINS

Activity – Round 2

Workbook Page 8

In your assigned group – you still have the positions of manager, front line leader and team member

The Scenario

There is an urgent request requiring immediate attention and the manager invites the front line leader to discuss the task – modelling setting the stage; inviting engagement and responding productively. Once briefed the front line leader then passes on the task to the team member to complete within the allocated timescales.

Debrief

How did everyone feel this time?

What could have been different or better?

Summary: Building Psychological Safety



Setting the stage

- Frame the work
- Role model psychological safe behaviour.



Actively invite engagement

- Ask good questions
- Invite dissent



Respond productively

- Make your reaction count
- Listen deeply

6 question to ask your team members

What's the thing you see me doing that's helping me best contribute to the team?

What is the thing I do that is detracting from your success?

What's the one thing to know about you that will improve our relationship?

What 's the one thing you need from me that will enable you to be successful?

What's the gift, skill or talent you have that I've overlooked, undervalued or under utilized?

What motivates you and how can we bring more of that to your work?

Your personal action log

Workbook Page 9



Reflecting on your behaviours

Behaviour	What it entails	Reflect on what you have done in the past week to demonstrate these behaviours?	What is the one action you commit to taking in the next week to better set the stage for Psychological Safety in your team?
1  Setting the stage	■ Acknowledging uncertainty and unknowns ■ Showing vulnerability and humility ■ Displaying your true, whole self and showing up with passion		
2  Actively invite engagement	■ Getting curious ■ Asking good questions ■ Inviting dissent/different viewpoints/concerns when navigating complex challenges ■ Listening to new ideas and opportunities to experiment		
3  Respond productively	■ Making your reactions count ■ Showing empathy ■ Listening deeply and being fully present		

COMMIT TO ACTION

STOP START CONTINUE

Review your Personal Action log in the Workbook
and prioritize some actions to take into your daily
routine – Workbook Page 10

One thing I should stop doing / do less of

One thing I would like to start doing / do more of

One thing I should continue doing



Activity – Round 1

In your assigned group – identify someone to role model each of the positions of manager, front line leader and team member

The Scenario

For the front line leader, at the start of your shift you check and you have received an “Urgent” email from your manager. Please review the email and compile with the request.

Debrief

How did everyone feel?

What could have been different or better?

Hi

URGENT

Just at the end of my day, planning got in touch and we need a special order of a small sized rocket to made and shipped within the first 5 minutes of your shift tonight.

It is pretty standard stuff and the spec of the rocket is shown below.

Please work with the team and make sure this rocket is shipped on time.

Thanks

