



A WEEK IN *Learning*

ARTICLE

BAND TOGETHER: FOSTERING PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY WITHIN OUR TEAMS

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Like many, my love for music runs deep. Rock music resonates with me the most due to its electrifying beats and soulful lyrics. From an early fascination with Guns and Roses, *Appetite for Destruction* at the age of five, to the enduring legends like Aerosmith and the Rolling Stones, my journey through the world of rock has been a sonic adventure.

As some favorite bands have disbanded over the years, others, like Aerosmith and the Rolling Stones endure; prompting me to ponder: What keeps these bands together and resilient against the tests of time? Could the forces that harmonize a rock band be akin to what binds our workplace teams?

In the turbulent world of rock, breakups are commonplace. Often attributed to creative differences or clashes which lead to significant departures, such as Slash leaving Guns and Roses. Yet, amid the churn of the industry, certain bands transcend decades, a testament to something more than shared musical passion. It's something intangible, something we recognize in the workplace as Psychological Safety.



"Innovation thrives in an environment that encourages healthy debate and welcomes diverse perspectives."

-Jason Edelman

"I Want to Know What Psychological Safety is... I Want you to Show Me"

Psychological safety is not just an organizational buzzword but it is a fundamental necessity for success. It is the shared belief that within a group, one can express ideas, take risks, and be vulnerable without fear of reprisal or judgment. Much like timeless rock bands navigate creative tensions and individual differences, our teams can thrive when anchored in an environment that values open expression, risk-taking, and mutual support.

Stage 1: Inclusion Safety

The foundation of our collective journey begins with inclusion safety. Much like the harmonious blend of musical notes, our workplace thrives when employees feel welcomed, valued, and respected. Organizations who champion diversity also recognize that a diverse tapestry enhances collective strength. Leadership can cultivate inclusion safety by promoting diversity and ensuring equitable opportunities, creating an atmosphere where every voice is celebrated.

Stage 2: Learner Safety

Transitioning seamlessly from inclusion, our teams enter the realm of learner safety. In this stage, curiosity and growth become driving forces. Encouraging questions, seeking feedback, and engaging in continuous learning is what forms the backbone of our culture.

Organizations provide accessible resources, training programs, and mentorship opportunities which enable individuals to feel supported in their learning journey. By embracing a culture of continuous learning, organizations become more agile and adaptable.

Stage 3: Contributor Safety

The magic happens when teams reach contributor safety. This stage is characterized by individuals feeling empowered to contribute their unique skills and ideas to the organization. Organizations not only recognize, but celebrate, the varied talents their employees bring. Leadership plays a crucial role in fostering contributor safety by acknowledging and appreciating the diverse strengths of the team and inspiring employees to bring their best selves to work every day.

Stage 4: Challenger Safety

The pinnacle of psychological safety, much like the crescendo in a rock anthem, is challenger safety. This is where employees can feel comfortable challenging the status quo, providing constructive feedback, and taking calculated risks. Innovation thrives in an environment that encourages healthy debate and welcomes diverse perspectives. Leaders can champion challenger safety by recognizing and rewarding innovative thinking and fostering an environment of creativity and forward-thinking.

The Four Stages of Psychological Safety:



Inclusion Safety



Learner Safety



Contributor Safety



Challenger Safety

“For Those About to Rock (Psychological Safety), We Salute You!”

Reflecting on these four stages, we acknowledge that creating and maintaining an environment of psychological safety is a shared responsibility. Our workplace is not just a place of business; it is a community where every individual shapes the collective journey.

Every single team member must be committed to creating a psychologically safe environment. Additionally, leaders must champion the efforts to nurture psychological safety within the organization by:

- Promoting open communication
- Providing ongoing learning opportunities
- Celebrating diversity and inclusion
- Recognizing and rewarding contributions
- Encouraging innovation and risk-taking

By embodying these principles, our organization can aspire to be a harmonious ensemble of psychological safety, where every individual feels empowered to contribute their best. Knowing that their voice matters and their unique talents are valued, creates a workplace symphony resonating with unparalleled success, innovation, and fulfillment. A timeless melody echoing the endurance of a rock band through the ages.

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