What is Psychological Safety
Introduction.
**Psychological safety is at the heart of the human experience.** Psychological safety is at the heart of your human experience. Don’t think of it as a theoretical or academic concept or as something that lives only at work. It affects your life—arguably every aspect of it—each and every day.

You influence the level of psychological safety on your team and it influences you. It’s part of your stewardship as a citizen of the world to treat your fellow human beings with dignity and respect—the foundation of psychological safety which we’ll unpack later. All human beings have the same innate need: We long to belong. We are biologically driven to connect. When it comes to the way people interact, the patterns are unmistakable, and the challenge is universal.

Sometimes we’re noble and good to each other. Sometimes we’re criminally irresponsible. Our track record as a species is, for the most part, a chilling history—a pageant of war and a chronicle of conquest. As social creatures, we act like free electrons, demonstrating both connection and contention. It’s true that we need each other to flourish. Yet despite knowing this, we suffer from compassion fatigue, are handicapped by our blind spots, and chronically regress to the mean. We snap back and exile each other. Indeed, the study of humans in social settings is largely the study of exclusion and fear.

Despite our unique life stories, we share common experiences. We have all felt the pain of rejection and reproach. Notwithstanding, we’ve all done some excluding and segregating, some manipulating and controlling, some depriving and belittling, some friend ing and unfri ending. We’ve all drawn racial, social, or other demographic or psychographic lines, and rendered unjust judgments on others and treated them poorly. We know something about marginality because we’ve all been marginalized. We can be benevolent, compassionate, and kind. We can also be, as the Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes put it, “stinkin’, low-down, mean.”

In all our years of working with leaders, we’ve never met an infallible human. Nor have we met a perfect parent, teacher, or coach. Each is a work in progress, an apprentice to greatness. We’re all broken, damaged, wounded, and guilty, and yet possess amazing gifts. How can we take greater responsibility for our relationships and the quality and condition of our families, communities, organizations, and nations? It’s an idealized notion to think we can undock from society and live deliberately in isolation. The monastic, cloistered alternative never works, and virtual reality is a bubble of indulgence. The truth is, we’re embedded in, implicated with, bound to, and shaped by one another. Hannah Arendt wisely observed, “The world lies between people, and this in-between . . . is today the object of the greatest concern and the most obvious upheaval in almost all the countries of the globe.”

We have constructive and destructive tendencies. We invite and disinvite, include and exclude, listen and ignore, heal and abuse, sanctify and scar. We love and hate our diversity. Sometimes we thoughtlessly deploy our poor behavior and rhetoric of exclusion toward others.
This short document is about the interdependence of the human family. We want to shine a light on how we get along, decode the science of silence, and explore what it takes to liberate our voices and connect our hearts and minds. We want to share with you what we’ve learned about the way psychological safety influences behavior, performance, and happiness. What’s the mechanism? How do we activate or deactivate it?

As we begin, consider four questions:

1. First, do you truly believe that all men and women are created equal, and do you accept others and welcome them into your society simply because they possess flesh and blood even if their values differ from your own?

2. Second, without bias or discrimination, do you encourage others to learn and grow, and do you support them in that process even when they lack confidence or make mistakes?

3. Third, do you grant others maximum autonomy to contribute in their own way as they demonstrate their ability to deliver results?

4. Fourth, do you consistently invite others to challenge how things are done in order to make things better, and are you personally prepared to be wrong based on the humility and learning mindset you have developed?

These four questions align with the four stages of psychological safety I’m about to share with you. In large measure, the way you answer these questions will define the way you value human beings and your relationships with them. It will define the way you draw people out or shut them down, create confidence or induce fear, encourage or discourage. It will determine how you lead and influence others.

Though we can be foul friends to each other, we can also be ministers, healers, and good neighbors. We are capable of breathtaking compassion, generosity, and selfless service. We’re not advocating heroism and grand expressions of self-sacrifice. No, our charge is, in the most basic sense, to treat human beings as they deserve to be treated—without arbitrary distinctions. Accept them, encourage them, respect them, and allow them. If you want to be happy, come to terms with your fellow creatures. Lose the mock superiority. Stop nursing wrongs and start reaching out. Too many of us live far beneath our privileges, locked in what W. B. Yeats called the “foul rag and bone shop of the heart.” If you can create a little more psychological safety for your fellow travelers, it will change your life and theirs.
So... **What is Psychological Safety?**

an environment of rewarded vulnerability.

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**The Vision:**

We’ve identified two universally shared goals across teams and organizations:

- Create a Sanctuary of Inclusion
- Create an Incubator of Innovation

That’s why we’re here. We want to create places where people feel like they belong and we can solve problems that require innovative solutions.
Let’s talk about safety. During the last several centuries, we have addressed safety in a physical sense. We’ve spent time, energy, and money trying to solve this problem. And we’ve come a long way. The workplace is “safer” than it’s ever been. But safety isn’t just physical—people aren’t just bodies. It seems obvious, but only recently have we acknowledged psychological safety. People are feelings and emotions. They’re thoughts and dreams. And those can be hurt too.

In 1788 the British Parliament passed the “Chimney Sweepers Act” to stop the practice of conscripting boys as young as four years old to be apprenticed to master chimney sweeps. That law gave expression to a moral position that employers had a “duty of care” to their employees—a concept that has evolved from the time Charles Dickens described England’s “dark, satanic mills” as “soot-vomiting.” Since then the conscience of the world regarding employee mental health and safety has shifted glacially. That is, until now.

The convulsions of 2020 marked the beginning of an accelerating transformation. Emerging from our discontent has come a permanent change in our understanding of employee mental health and safety and what our duty of care is to each other.

We have moved from an (1) agrarian to an (2) industrial to a (3) service, and finally to an (4) experience economy, yet it took more than 250 years to fully acknowledge the need for physical health and safety and build a management system to sustain it. The applied discipline of physical safety is built on a rubric that identifies four standard hazard categories:

1. Physical
2. Biological
3. Chemical
4. Ergonomic

Thousands of organizations around the world have become proficient at continuously identifying and removing these hazards. But it’s only been in recent years that we have begun to reconceive employee health and safety as an integrative concept that includes both physical and psychological domains. As a result, we have adopted a fifth hazard category—psychosocial. Psychosocial risk refers to intangible hazards in a workplace that have the potential to cause mental, emotional, or psychological harm.

Our duty of care to each other is not just physical. It’s psychological.

Enter psychological safety: an environment of rewarded vulnerability.
Rewarded vs. Punished Vulnerability.
Interacting with other people is risky. There’s vulnerability involved. Our behavior is largely determined by whether our acts of vulnerability are rewarded or punished.

**Vulnerability**: Exposure to potential harm or loss

- Asking a question
- Admitting a mistake
- Disagreeing
- Saying “I don’t know”
- Sharing an alternate point of view
- Sharing something personal
- Challenging the status quo

- Giving feedback
- Sharing your emotions
- Sharing an idea
- Asking for help
- Doing something you’re not good at
- Saying no

The way others respond to those acts of vulnerability, whether they punish or reward them, will influence our future behavior.

**Punished Vulnerability encourages**: Self-preservation, loss avoidance, minimum compliance

**Example**: You ask a question in good faith about a detail of a current project you don’t understand. Your manager quickly retorts in front of a group, “What kind of a question is that, you should know the answer by now,” and then quickly moves on.

Have you ever experienced this?
Would you be more or less likely to speak up in the future if this happened?

When our vulnerability is punished, we recoil, retreat, and enter a defensive mode of performance. We focus on self-preservation. We act out of compliance and do the minimum amount necessary to get by.

**Rewarded Vulnerability encourages**: Discretionary effort, meaningful contribution, value creation

**Example**: You challenge the status quo by providing feedback on a critical issue. Your manager responds, “Wow, thank you for your feedback. We really could have made a mistake there. Thank you for speaking up.” Your manager then sends a message to your group acknowledging your contribution and thanking you publicly.

Have you ever experienced this?
Do you feel comfortable speaking up in your current role?

When our vulnerability is rewarded, we engage, contribute meaningfully, and enter an offensive mode of performance. We give of our discretionary effort and spend our time creating value.
What Psychological Safety Isn’t.
Let’s talk about what Psychological Safety Isn’t:

- A shield from accountability (Diplomatic immunity from high expectations)
- Niceness (The veneer of civility that turns to toxic collegiality)
- Coddling (Rolling people in bubble wrap to add to their fragility)
- Consensus decision making (Giving everyone a vote)
- Unearned autonomy (The right to not be managed)
- Political correctness (Compliance with the political agendas of others)
- Rhetorical reassurance (Something you can decree into existence)

Psychological Safety is about acknowledging our common humanity, respecting others, and then working together in pursuit of meaningful goals.

It’s important that we acknowledge that psychological safety, taken too far, becomes problematic. Organizations sometimes pursue niceness, sometimes with good intentions, but almost always with unintended consequences. What’s touted as niceness is often nothing more than the veneer of civility, a cute nod to psychological safety, a hologram that falsely signals inclusion, collaboration, and high performance. In many of these cultures, leaders have simply spread a thin layer of politeness over a thick layer of fear. There is the appearance of harmony and alignment but in reality there’s often dysfunction simmering beneath the surface that results in a lack of honest communication, intellectual bravery, innovation, and accountability.

Here are four reasons organizations pursue niceness:

1. To avoid conflict and gain approval
2. To replace genuine inclusion
3. To show exaggerated deference to the chain of command
4. To motivate people instead of holding them accountable

Here are four downsides:

1. Choked Innovation
2. Bleeding talent
3. Low-velocity decision making
4. Learned helplessness
“

...there is a type of constructive, nonviolent tension which is necessary for growth.

– Martin Luther King Jr. said in his famous Letter from Birmingham Jail

Don’t cover that up in your efforts to be nice.

Channel and manage the tension.

That’s real kindness.
Why Psychological Safety Matters:
The Costs and Benefits.
You may have noticed that the topic of psychological safety is gaining momentum. It’s here and it’s here to stay. Why does the topic have so much traction?

**Social Injustice  The Moral Force**

Human history is a long tale of injustice in human interactions. We need to get along, and we need to figure out how to do it.

**Market Turbulence  The Competitive Force**

Technology, globalization, global health crises, and other factors have increased turbulence in markets. The duration of competitive advantage is being squeezed. Organizations need to respond and they need to figure out how to adapt and stay competitive.

Without Psychological Safety We Lose Big.

What’s on the line?

Everything:

**Bleeding Out Your Best Talent**

An environment that fosters Psychological Safety is quickly becoming a requirement for top performers. These individuals understand the type of environment you need to have in order for them to do their best work. Your best employees will not tolerate unsafe environments where they can’t contribute meaningfully and make things better.

**Failure to Innovate**

Innovation by definition is a deviation from the status quo. Innovation is fueled by ideas and risk taking. Without an environment of rewarded vulnerability, teams will not take risks. Teams that do not take risks or push boundaries will never innovate at rates fast enough to stay relevant in today’s turbulent environment.
Hostile Work Environment

Cultures of punished vulnerability can quickly turn hostile. There are significant liabilities and exposure that comes with hostile work environments that organizations can’t ignore. Harassment, bullying, public shaming—these things have become normalized in many organizations and present not only productivity, quality, and innovation risk, but legal risk too.

Poor Customer Experience

EX= CX. We’re learning that now more than ever. We’ve moved from an Agrarian to a Product to now a Service economy. And now we’re moving increasingly from Service to an Experience Economy. Employees represent the brand and each organization’s brand promise is tested every day; for some organizations it’s thousands of times a day.

Psychological Safety → Employee Experience → Customer Experience

Low-Velocity Decision Making

Low psychological safety makes the necessary discussion and analysis for decision making shallow and slow. You either get an echo chamber in which the homogenization of thought gives you a flawed decision, or you conduct what seem to be endless rounds of discussion in pursuit of consensus. Eventually, this can lead to chronic indecisiveness.

Learned Helplessness

A lack of psychological safety can induce conformity, passivity, and learned helplessness that lowers the bar of performance.
The Solution.
Psychological Safety is the solution to both problems.

Humans yearn for inclusion and belonging. They want to learn, they want to contribute, and they want to make a difference. The 4 Stages is the roadmap for individuals, teams, and organizations to achieve and maintain high levels of psychological safety.
How Do You Create Psychological Safety?
Individuals and teams progress through The 4 Stages of Psychological Safety based on the natural progression of human needs. These are fundamental human needs that exist across demographics, psychographics, nations, and cultures.

**Stage 1 – Inclusion Safety.**

Do I feel included?

The first stage of psychological safety is informal admittance to the team—whether it’s the neighborhood book club or the College of Cardinals. In other words, the members of the social collective accept you and grant you a shared identity. You are now destigmatized as an outsider and brought into the fold. But it’s important to understand that inclusion safety isn’t merely tolerance; it’s not an attempt to cover up differences or politely pretend they’re not there. No, inclusion safety is provided by genuinely inviting others into your society based on the sole qualification that they possess flesh and blood. This transcendent connection supersedes all other differences.

Inclusion safety satisfies the basic human need to connect and belong. Whether at work, school, home, or in other social settings, everyone wants to be accepted. In fact, the need to be accepted precedes the need to be heard.

As the first stage of psychological safety, inclusion safety is, in its purest sense, nothing more than species-based acceptance. If you have flesh and blood and don’t present us with harm, we accept you. Profoundly simple in concept, devilishly difficult in practice, we learn it in kindergarten and unlearn it later.
In our social units, we should create an environment of inclusion before we begin to think about judgments at all. Worth precedes worthiness. There’s a time and a place to judge worthiness, but when you allow someone to cross the threshold of inclusion, there’s no litmus test. We’re not weighing your character in the balance to see if you’re found wanting. To be deserving of inclusion has nothing to do with your personality, virtues, or abilities; nothing to do with your gender, race, ethnicity, education or any other demographic variable that defines you. There are, at this level, no disqualifications, except the threat of harm.

**Inclusion safety is not earned but owed.** Every human has a title to it as a nonnegotiable right. In fact, we can’t sustain civilization without it. We hunger for and deserve dignity and esteem from each other and unavoidably practice morality when we extend or withhold inclusion safety. If there’s no threat of harm, we should give it without a value judgment. As the basic glue of human society, psychological safety offers the comforting assurance that you matter. If you’re a leader and you want your people to perform, you must internalize the universal truth that people want, need, and deserve validation. Inclusion safety requires that we condemn negative bias, arbitrary distinction, or destructive prejudice that refuses to acknowledge our equal worth and the obligation of equal treatment. If everyone deserves inclusion, if we’re all entitled to fellowship and connection, if we have the right to civil and respectful interactions, if the reciprocation of courtesy defines us as a species—we have an obligation to demolish nativism and ethnocentrism. Nations, communities, and organizations aren’t the only offenders. We see alienation within families, as individuals shun, banish, and relegate each other to subordinate status. We see parents and children who neglect or harm each other. And then there are the glorious triumphs when we get it right, when we extend the hand of fellowship and are blessed in that moment with the nutrition of real human connection.

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Learner safety indicates that you feel safe to engage in the discovery process, ask questions, experiment, and even make mistakes—not if, but when, you make them. Without learner safety, you will likely remain passive due to the risk of acting beyond a tacit line of permission. In children, adolescents, and adults, the patterns are the same: We all bring inhibitions and fear to the learning process.

Learner Safety satisfies the basic human need to learn and grow. It allows us to feel safe as we engage in all aspects of the learning process—asking questions, giving and receiving feedback, experimenting, and even making mistakes, not if but when we make them.

Where learner safety exists, the leader creates a learning process with low social friction and low emotional expense. That requires levels of respect and permission that go beyond inclusion safety because the learning process itself introduces more risk, more vulnerability, and more potential exposure to social and emotional harm. With inclusion safety, there’s no active participation requirement other than to be humane and courteous, but with learner safety you must put yourself out there to ask questions, solicit feedback, float ideas, experiment, make mistakes, and even fail. You naturally look around and do a risk/reward calculation in your head: “If I ask that question, or request help, or make a suggestion, or admit I don’t know, or make a mistake, what will it cost me? Can I be myself? Will I look stupid? Am I on trial? Will people laugh? Will they ignore me? Will I hurt my prospects? Will I damage my reputation?” In every learning context, consciously or not, we assess the level of interpersonal risk around us.
How Do You Create Psychological Safety?

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To the universal need to be acknowledged, we add the universal need to learn and grow. Permission in this case is permission for the individual to engage in all aspects of the learning process. Inclusion safety requires that we show courtesy to each other, but with learner safety, we add another social exchange. If we’re giving learner safety to an individual, we want and expect the individual to make an effort to learn. If we’re the learner, we expect the leader, teacher, coach, or parent to support us in the learning process. It’s encouragement to learn in exchange for engagement to learn.

Let us emphasize that granting learner safety is not a passive act. When we grant it, we make a commitment to create a supportive and encouraging environment. We commit to be patient with learners. We commit to model effective learning, and we commit to share power, credit, and resources to enable all to learn. The learner’s side of the social contract is different. The learner hopes, if not expects, to find a supportive and encouraging environment but commits to nothing up front because learning is a process fraught with personal risk. Learners rarely put forth the effort to learn unless learner safety is in place. It’s a “build it and they will come” principle. If you don’t build it, they may still come, but they won’t learn.

Leaders committed to safeguard learner safety understand that learning is where competitive advantage comes from, that it represents the highest form of enterprise risk management, and that the biggest risk a firm can take is to cease to learn. It seems increasingly clear that leaders who do not demonstrate deep patterns of aggressive and self-directed learning in their own disposition are almost certain to fail, whereas the ones who do are almost certain to succeed, provided, however, they combine those learning patterns with the ability to engage people with high levels of learner safety. Ultimately, learner safety doesn’t happen unless it is modeled, communicated, taught, measured, recognized, and rewarded.

Your team may be exquisitely endowed with brilliant people and abundant resources, but if individuals don’t feel free to probe, prod, poke, pilot, and prototype, ask silly questions, stretch and stumble, they-
How Do You Create Psychological Safety?

As individual performances climb higher in a nurturing environment that offers respect and permission, we enter the stage of contributor safety, which invites the individual to participate as an active and full-fledged member of the team. Contributor safety is an invitation and an expectation to perform work in an assigned role with appropriate boundaries, on the assumption that you can perform competently in your role. If you don’t offend the social norms of the team, you’re normally granted contributor safety when you gain competency in the required skills and assigned tasks.

Have you ever been on an athletic team but didn’t get to play in the games? Instead, you sat on the bench. What does it feel like to ride the pine? If your teammates accepted you, you had member safety. If you practiced hard, you had learner safety. But if you never played in the games, you didn’t have contributor safety (figure 4, previous page). Sitting the bench is a state of suspension between preparation and performance. It’s socially and emotionally painful. Then one day the coach taps you on the shoulder and says, “Get in the game.” In an instant, you’re on the field. You’re not spectating anymore, you’re contributing. In that moment, satisfaction replaces suspension. You’re no longer preparing for something that never comes.

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Am I making a difference?
In stage 1, inclusion safety, we accept the individual on human grounds. In stage 2, learner safety, we encourage the individual’s learning on human grounds as well, and then encourage that individual to engage in the learning process. But the next stage of psychological safety is not a natural right. Rather, it’s an earned privilege based on demonstrated performance. With contributor safety, we provide autonomy in exchange for performance. We will empower you if you can deliver results. Contributor safety marks the end of the apprenticeship and the beginning of solid, self-directed performance. It’s time to put something meaningful on the table. The leader grants contributor safety when the individual has the chops to do the job. In business terms, it means the individual is an asset rather than a liability, a net contributor delivering a positive return on investment. The organization grants respect and permission based on the individual’s ability to create value.

Remember, contributor safety is an earned privilege. Despite an individual’s readiness to contribute his or her skill, competence, and experience, we often deny it for illegitimate reasons, including the arrogance or insecurity of the leader, personal or institutional bias, prejudice or discrimination, prevailing team norms that reinforce insensitivity, a lack of empathy, or aloofness. Contributor safety results when the individual can contribute, and the leader and team members are able to manage their egos.

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LeaderFactor ©
How Do You Create Psychological Safety?

Stage 4 – Challenger Safety.

Am I Challenging the Status Quo?

The final stage of psychological safety allows you to challenge how things are done without retribution, reprisal, or the risk of damaging your personal standing or reputation. It gives you the confidence to speak truth to power when you think something needs to change and it’s time to say so. Armed with challenger safety, people overcome the pressure to conform and can enlist themselves in the creative process. Analyzing its massive database of more than fifty thousand skills, LinkedIn conducted a study to identify the most important soft skills. Can you guess what skill was most in demand? Answer: creativity. But creativity is never enough. Only when people feel free and able do they apply their creativity. Each of us protects our creativity under emotional lock and key. We turn the key from the inside out—when it’s safe to do so. Without challenger safety, there’s little chance of that.

Brain researchers used to think that the circuitry of the brain was fixed. They have since learned that the hundred billion neurons and hundred trillion connections among those neurons operate in an incredibly flexible way. The brain has plasticity and can rewire itself. A team is nothing less than a great brain. But the synapses take place between people rather than between neurons. Similarly, there is nothing fixed or hardwired about the speed or patterns of these connections. Teams are astonishingly plastic, so we really don’t know the natural capacity of any team to perform. We simply know they can surprise us because the human ingenuity of a given group of people is unknown and unknowable. More than anything else, team plasticity reflects the leader’s modeling behavior. If the leader suppresses dissent, people recoil as predictably as deer react to sudden movements. If the leader accommodates dissent, it builds the team’s innovation-surge capacity. Collectively, the team has sensory organs that react to the environment, adapting a weave of social, emotional, and intellectual processing to the conditions that surround it.
The culminating stage of psychological safety is the place where respect and permission intersect at the highest level—a super-enriched zone dedicated to exploration and experimentation. To advance from contributor safety to challenger safety requires crossing the “innovation threshold”—a place where the highest possible level of psychological safety replaces what would normally be a place inhabited with the greatest fear. But creating challenger safety is far more difficult than understanding it. It’s the ultimate cultural quest for every leader. Challenger safety is a level of psychological safety so high that people feel empowered to challenge the status quo, leaving their comfort zones to put a creative or disruptive idea on the table, which by definition, is a threat to the way things are done and therefore a risk to themselves personally.

To invite people to challenge the status quo is both natural and unnatural. It’s natural in the sense that human beings are innately creative. The biologist Edward O. Wilson said creativity is “the unique and defining trait of our species.” The creative instinct propels us to challenge the status quo out of a desire to create and improve things, but doing so is unnatural in an environment that we perceive is unsafe. If the environment is a pocket of thick trust, we will go forward with our challenge. If it’s a pocket of thin trust, our self-censoring instinct is triggered, and we will remove ourselves from participation. The atmosphere either draws out or shuts down the creative impulse to challenge. It’s scary enough to speak truth to power. It’s even more scary to speak your opinion to power because there’s a bigger personal risk of rejection and embarrassment.

Clearly, not all leaders are convinced that psychological safety is necessary for innovation. As a result, some leaders believe that psychological safety is nothing more than asking people to be nice, under the assumption that they need to be coddled before they can be expected to engage. Two Australian scholars, Ben Farr-Wharton and Ace Simpson, make this point masterfully. “Through a systems management perspective, the very human concept of compassion seems wasteful. This is because noticing, empathizing with, making sense of and responding to a colleague’s suffering (how we define the process of organizational compassion) may be considered an indulgent and time-consuming process that detracts from immediate work duties.”

Those who say that psychological safety is nothing more than sympathetic and sentimental slush offered by leaders who are unwilling to hold others accountable are in denial themselves. They refuse to acknowledge that you can’t coerce or manipulate innovation. The process is surrounded by political and interpersonal risk. Unless you lower or remove those barriers to entry and those violations in human interaction, people simply will not engage at full capacity.
How Do You Create Psychological Safety?

This final stage of psychological safety governs what are clearly the most sensitive, charged, pressurized, politicized, stressful, and high stakes situations of all. Because the fear and the potential risk to the individual are highest, the level of psychological safety must be deepest. With inclusion safety, you’re asking to be included; with learner safety, you’re asking to be encouraged; with contributor safety, you’re asking for autonomy; but with challenger safety, the social exchange has now gone to another level: The team is asking you to challenge the status quo. That’s a mighty ask! Thus, the only reasonable condition is that the organization protects you in the process. If the organization wants candor, you need cover—you need real and sustained air cover to be brave enough to take what is almost always a substantial personal risk.

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The ultimate source of adaptive capacity, competitiveness, and self preservation, indeed the key to resilience and renewal, is the ongoing ability of an organization to learn and adapt. This capability is what allows us to engage in innovation and give an adaptive or preemptive response. Though it may appear personally threatening, leaders must stand first in line to model the patterns of learning agility. This is not only a fundamental change from the expert model of leadership, but it also requires leaders to assume a very different emotional and social posture. Leaders will increasingly earn competence through their ability to learn and adapt rather than depending on their current knowledge and skills.
The 4 Stages of Psychological Safety Book

This book is the first practical, hands-on guide that shows how leaders can build psychological safety in their organizations, creating an environment where employees feel fully engaged, and encouraged to contribute their best efforts and ideas.

Learn More

The 4 Stages Online Course

This online course is a simple way to show your commitment to creating psychological safety no matter where you work. As a cultural architect in your team, you have a responsibility to create high levels of psychological safety. Receive your certificate of completion upon finishing the online course and 30-day action plan.

Learn More

The 4 Stages Certification

Learn to facilitate The 4 Stages of Psychological Safety training and The 4 Stages Team Survey for your organization or clients. Get full access to 4 Stages facilitator materials and join a community of like-minded certified trainers and coaches.

Learn More

The 4 Stages 90-Minute Virtual Keynote

Request a virtual keynote session hosted by Dr. Timothy R. Clark and empower your organization with a deeper understanding of psychological safety. Each participant will receive a behavioral guide to help put psychological safety in practice.

Learn More

The 4 Stages Team Survey

Psychological Safety is the #1 Variable in Team Performance. The 4 Stages team survey will help you start measuring your team’s level of psychological safety and point to key team factors you can improve. To get where you want to go, you need to know where you are. Figure out where you are, today. Multiple surveys will help you track progress over time.

Learn More

The 4 Stages Team Transformation

Bring Psychological Safety to Your Organization. Where you have psychological safety you have high performing & inclusive cultures. We’ve built the training, technology, and tools to bring measurable results—for individual contributors to the executive team.