

# Leading for Impact: Team Effectiveness in Times of Uncertainty

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# Leading for Impact: Team Effectiveness in Times of Uncertainty

- ▶ *In times of fiscal constraint, psychological safety is not a luxury—it's a necessity.*

# The Teams We've All Been On

- ▶ Some teams feel empowering, others draining—yet the work is the same.
- ▶ What makes the difference?  
**Leadership, trust, and communication.**



What Is

**Psychological**

**Safety**

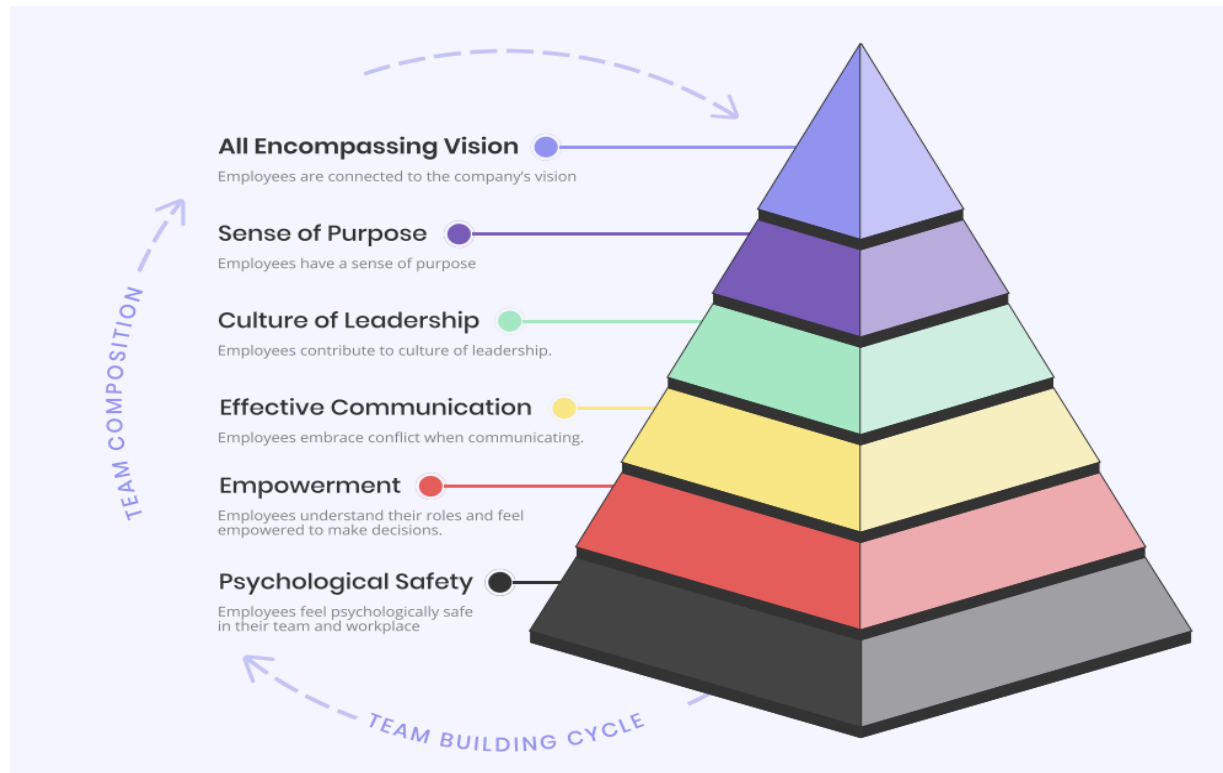
& Why Is It  
Important?

# Why Team Effectiveness Matters Now

- ▶ Economic uncertainty and fiscal constraint
- ▶ Rising expectations and increasing change
- ▶ Innovation and adaptability are essential

# Defining Psychological Safety

- ▶ “A shared belief that the team is a safe place for taking risks.”  
— Amy Edmondson



# Why Psychological Safety Matters

- ▶ 1. Encourages candor and innovation
- ▶ 2. Enables early problem detection
- ▶ 3. Reduces stress & preserves engagement
- ▶ 4. Strengthens Adaptability
- ▶ 5. Builds trust & retention
- ▶ 6. Unlocks Collective Intelligence

# Psychological Safety & AI

EDITORS' PICK | LEADERSHIP > CMO NETWORK

## MIT Finds 95% Of GenAI Pilots Fail Because Companies Avoid Friction

By [Jason Snyder](#), Contributor. ⓘ Jason Alan Snyder is a technologist covering ...

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# Case Studies: Smarter Faster Better (Duhigg)

- ▶ Google
- ▶ Edmonson Hospital studies
- ▶ Saturday Night Live.

# Google Project Aristotle

- ▶ **Project Aristotle – Studied how teams work best.**
- ▶ **Initial research explored various factors that might influence team success**
- ▶ **Q: What do you think was the optimal makeup and complement of teams that led to the highest productivity and most engaged teams? Which individual personality types ?**

# Google Project Aristotle

- ▶ Google found the key to team success wasn't personality mix—but **group norms**:
  - ▶ • Conversational turn-taking
  - ▶ • Social sensitivity
  - ▶ • Respect for divergent views
- ▶ → **It's not who's on the team—it's how they work together.**

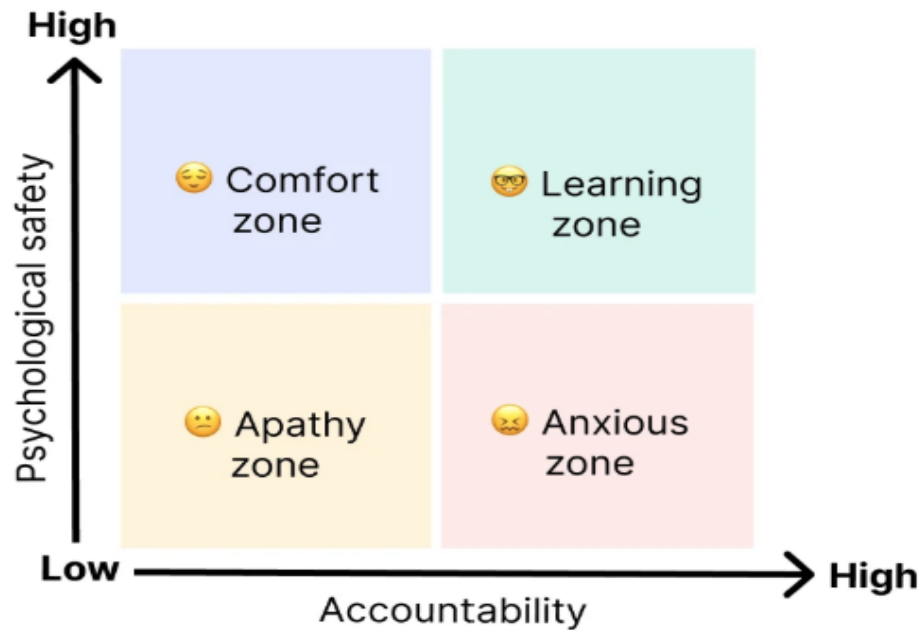
# Edmondson's Hospital Study

- ▶ High-performing teams reported MORE errors—because they felt safe to speak up.
- ▶ Consequences of Loyalty norms
- ▶ **Safety & Accountability increases trust, effectiveness, and learning.**

# What Psychological Safety Is (and Isn't)

- ▶ **IS: Candor, learning, openness, accountability**
- ▶ **ISN'T: Niceness, comfort, low standards, slacking**

# Learning & Performance Zones



# Leadership Practices That Build Safety

- ▶ Admit what you don't know
- ▶ Frame work as learning
- ▶ Ask open-ended questions
- ▶ Listen without interrupting
- ▶ Distinguish types of failure
- ▶ Create structures and rituals for reflection

# SNL Example: Creativity Under Pressure

- ▶ High pressure + high safety = innovation.
- ▶ Norms: inclusion, respect, voice for all.
- ▶ When everyone contributes, creativity flourishes.

# Warning Signs of Low Safety

- ▶ Silence or fear of dissent
- ▶ Hidden mistakes
- ▶ Lack of a safe space
- ▶ Over-comfort = underperformance
- ▶ Hypocrisy - Leaders' words don't match actions

# A Quick Conversation

## ▶ **Think about your team:**

- ▶ Where might your team be hesitating to speak up?
- ▶ Where are you already creating safety?
- ▶ Where could you improve?

# Leading Boldy

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“I define a leader as anyone who takes responsibility for finding the potential in people and processes, and who has the courage to develop that potential.”

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Brené Brown

# Group Norms that Drive Team Effectiveness

- ▶ Encourage Speaking up
- ▶ Social sensitivity
- ▶ Allow failure without punishment
- ▶ Respect for divergent opinions

# From Awareness to Action

- ▶ It's developed **daily** through awareness, practice, Rituals, and culture.
- ▶ Communication Skills.
- ▶ Model Curiosity & Vulnerability.

[Harvard Business Review](#) research on high-performing teams shows a similar pattern: the most successful teams aren't run by the most rigid managers, but by leaders who foster psychological safety, empowerment, and open communication. Those three elements consistently predict whether a team will thrive, regardless of industry.

# From Awareness to Action

## **Recap:**

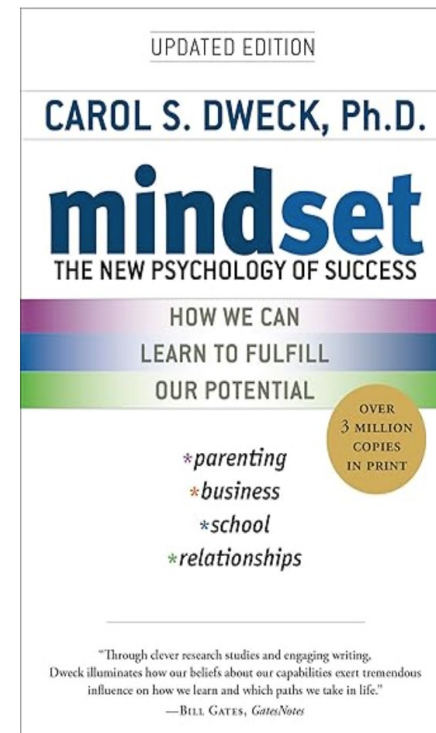
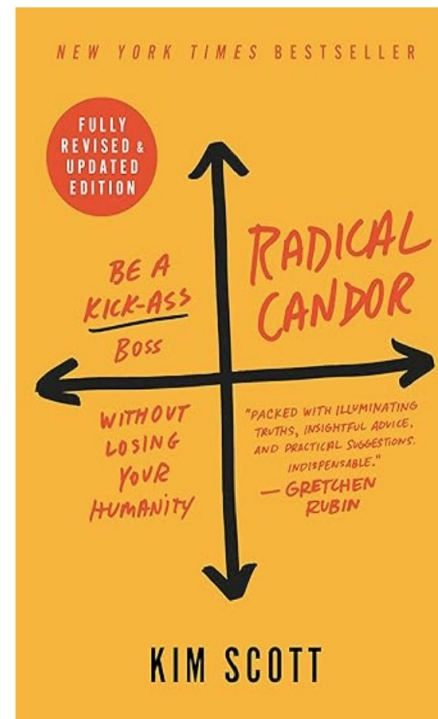
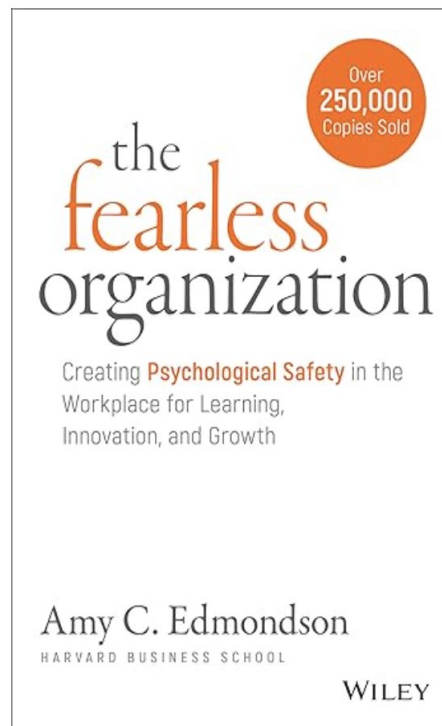
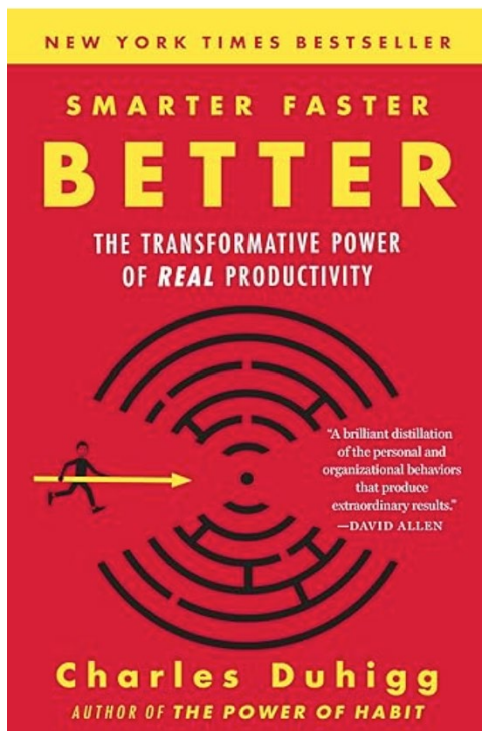
- ▶ Why safety matters under uncertainty.
- ▶ What it looks like.
- ▶ How leaders build it daily.

# Your Leadership Challenge This Week

- ▶ 1. Ask one open-ended question
- ▶ 2. Run one debrief
- ▶ 3. Admit one mistake or uncertainty
  
- ▶ **Small habits → big culture change.**
  
- ▶ Longer term ideas:
  - Establish Group Norms, Rituals and Expectations
  - Create/Review Team Charter

# Closing Thoughts

- ▶ “Psychological safety costs nothing, but in uncertain times it’s the most valuable currency we have.”



Thank you



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***Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer***

*Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation*

*Ministry of Energy and Climate Solutions*

*Ministry of Mining and Critical Minerals*

# What matters most!



# Radical Candor & Psychological Safety

## RADICAL CANDOR



Direct, honest feedback while caring personally

- Focuses on one-on-one interactions
- Growth through clear guidance
- Timely, specific feedback



## PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY



A team-level condition where people feel safe to take interpersonal risks

- Focuses on team culture & environment
- High performance through openness & learning
- Freedom to speak up

# RADICAL CANDOR

*IGNORANCE,  
NO CHANGE*

**Care Personally**

*TRUST,  
FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE*

## **RUINOUS EMPATHY:**

- Silence to avoid hurting the person's short term feelings even though they'd be better off knowing in the long run.

## **RADICAL CANDOR:**

- Asking for criticism.
- Offering specific, sincere praise & kind, clear criticism.
- Gauging how what's said lands, and adjusting.

**Challenge Directly**

## **MANIPULATIVE INSINCERITY:**

- Silent contempt
- False humility
- Protective hesitation
- Poltical behavior
- Passive aggressive behavior
- Back-stabbing
- Self-protective silence

## **OBNOXIOUS AGGRESSION:**

- Loud contempt
- Arrogance
- Character Attack
- Self-righteous shaming
- Bullying behavior
- Front-stabbing
- Entitled bloviation

*MISTRUST,  
NO CHANGE*

*DEFENSIVENESS,  
LITTLE CHANGE*

# Lean in.

## The Three Faces Of GenAI Friction

The table summarizes the three primary types of friction that determine whether GenAI pilots fail or succeed.

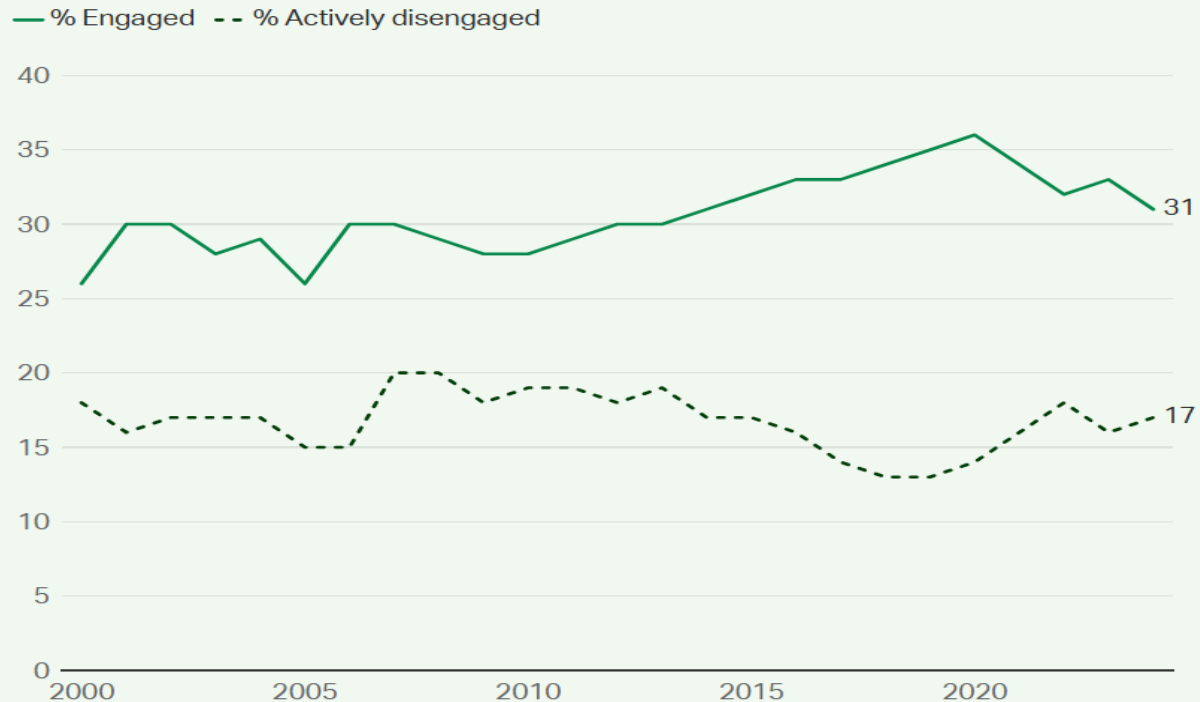
**Human Friction**, **Organizational Friction**, and **Technical Friction** together show that friction is not a flaw to eliminate but a force to design for. Enterprises that calibrate these frictions effectively are the ones crossing MIT's "GenAI Divide" and capturing real ROI.

Type of Friction	Description	Why It Matters for GenAI ROI
<b>Human Friction</b>	Resistance from habit, fear, or uncertainty.	Forces buy-in, builds intentionality, ensures tools are used meaningfully.
<b>Organizational Friction</b>	Policy, governance, or incentive misalignment.	Prevents premature scaling; ensures pilots align with process and accountability.
<b>Technical Friction</b>	Systems that lack memory, learning, or context.	Without adaptability, tools fail when workflows get complex or data grows.

Table: Jason Snyder • Source: Forbes • Created with Datawrapper

# Poll on Employee Engagement

## U.S. Employee Engagement Trend



[Get the data](#) • [Download image](#)

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