

**Deep Dive Summary on Psychological Safety in Organizations**

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Communicate Like A Leader: Be the Message

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## **Psychological Safety in Organizations: The Role of Morals, Values, and Leadership**

Many of our most important morals and values are centered around the principle of delayed gratification, the idea that making the right choice now will yield benefits in the future. Treating others with kindness and respect, for example, may not immediately result in financial gain or power, but over time, it fosters loyalty, strengthens relationships, and creates a supportive social environment. The challenge, however, is that instant gratification often appears more appealing, making the pursuit of long-term moral and ethical commitments more difficult. Developing a strong moral compass takes effort, reflection, and experience, yet even with continuous refinement, no moral compass is ever perfect.

If morals and values vary from person to person, shouldn't organizations place greater emphasis on psychological safety, the assurance that individuals can express themselves without fear of humiliation or punishment? Psychological safety should be ingrained early in education, just like basic skills such as reading and counting. Throughout life, individuals encounter setbacks, mistakes, and ethical dilemmas, constantly learning from these experiences to strengthen their sense of right and wrong. Yet, the challenge remains: knowing what the right thing to do is does not always translate into action, as difficult choices often require courage and long-term thinking.

### **Psychological Safety in Leadership**

As a leader, creating psychological safety is essential for fostering a productive and inclusive work environment. Organizations consist of diverse teams with different strengths, weaknesses, and perspectives, meaning that leaders must be proactive in identifying psychological hazards, factors in the workplace that can negatively impact mental well-being. At

the same time, certain workplace elements, if strengthened, can enhance team effectiveness. But how does one craft a strategy for psychological safety?

A relational approach may be key, focusing on quality conversations and thoughtful questions. Engaging colleagues and employees, building trust, and encouraging open dialogue are foundational to psychological safety. Furthermore, organizations should avoid adopting a top-down approach, where only a few individuals decide what is best for the workforce. Instead, fostering psychological safety requires collaboration, a shared effort to understand and address what well-being means for different individuals and teams.

### **Lessons from Google's Project Aristotle**

Google's Project Aristotle highlights psychological safety as the most critical factor in high-performing teams. The study found that when team members feel safe to take risks, voice concerns, and express themselves without fear of judgment, they perform better. However, psychological safety alone is not enough. Google identified several additional elements essential for team success:

- Dependability – Team members must be reliable and accountable, ensuring that tasks are completed efficiently and commitments are honored.
- Clarity – Clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and goals reduce uncertainty and help team members align their efforts.
- Meaningful Work – When employees see their work as purposeful and impactful, they are more engaged, motivated, and committed.

Notably, Google's findings suggest that the best teams are not necessarily composed of the most talented individuals but rather those who operate in an environment of trust, collaboration, and shared purpose. By employing a data-driven approach, Google analyzed hundreds of teams using advanced analytics to uncover common patterns of success. The results reinforced that team culture, not just individual skill, plays a defining role in overall performance.

### **Building Psychological Safety in Organizations**

Creating psychological safety requires intentional leadership. Leaders must encourage open communication, actively listen to their teams, and model vulnerability by acknowledging their own mistakes and uncertainties. It also involves establishing trust, ensuring that employees feel their voices are valued and their contributions matter.

Ultimately, fostering psychological safety is about more than just improving workplace culture, it is about empowering individuals to bring their best selves to work, take risks, and contribute meaningfully. In an era where diverse teams and constant change define organizations, psychological safety is no longer optional; it is essential for long-term success.

### **The Value of Implementing Psychological Safety**

Wouldn't it make sense to prioritize psychological safety alongside the technical skills we teach in schools and workplaces? Implementing psychological safety in organizations is not just beneficial, it is transformative. When employees feel safe to share ideas, voice concerns, and take risks without fear of embarrassment or retaliation, they become more engaged, innovative, and committed to their work. A culture of trust and open communication fosters collaboration,

reduces workplace stress, and enhances overall well-being. Additionally, organizations that prioritize psychological safety experience higher retention rates, improved team performance, and stronger problem-solving capabilities. In a rapidly evolving world, where diverse perspectives and adaptability are crucial, creating an environment of psychological safety is not only the ethical choice but also a strategic advantage. By investing in this foundation, leaders can cultivate workplaces where individuals feel empowered to contribute their best, ultimately driving both personal and organizational success.

## Sources

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