TEAM UP FAIL WELL LEARN FAST

Amy C. Edmondson | Novartis Professor of Leadership & Management | Harvard Business School
WHY successful organizations today depend on NEW WAYS of working together… and what leaders must DO about it
Can You Tell Which Unit is the Safest?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORK UNIT</th>
<th>DETECTED ERROR RATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MEMORIAL 1</td>
<td>23.68*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIVERSITY 1</td>
<td>17.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIVERSITY 3</td>
<td>13.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEMORIAL 2</td>
<td>11.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEMORIAL 4</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEMORIAL 5</td>
<td>10.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIVERSITY 2</td>
<td>9.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEMORIAL 3</td>
<td>2.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* preventable and potential adverse drug events (ADEs) per 1000 patient-days
You Learn What They Let You Learn

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORK UNIT</th>
<th>DETECTED ERROR RATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MEMORIAL 1</td>
<td>23.68*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIVERSITY 1</td>
<td>17.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIVERSITY 3</td>
<td>13.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEMORIAL 2</td>
<td>11.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEMORIAL 4</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEMORIAL 5</td>
<td>10.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIVERSITY 2</td>
<td>9.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEMORIAL 3</td>
<td>2.34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* preventable and potential adverse drug events (ADEs) per 1000 patient-days

Units are Sorted by Ratings of Reporting Climate
Reporting Climates

“She treats you as guilty if you make a mistake...

I was called into her office and made to feel like a two-year old.”

“She gives you the silent treatment.”

“You get put on trial…”

“People get blamed for mistakes… you don’t want to have made them.”

“Nurses are too hard on themselves… they are harder on themselves than I would ever be.” (nurse manager)

“Mistakes [in this unit] are serious, because of the toxicity of the drugs—so you’re never afraid to tell the nurse manager.”
Be Aware of Interpersonal Risk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NONE OF US WANT TO LOOK:</th>
<th>IT’S EASY TO MANAGE!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IGNORANT</td>
<td>DON’T ASK QUESTIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INCOMPETENT</td>
<td>DON’T ADMIT WEAKNESS OR MISTAKE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRUSIVE</td>
<td>DON’T OFFER IDEAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEGATIVE</td>
<td>DON’T CRITIQUE THE STATUS QUO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An Alternative: Psychological Safety

Psychological safety is a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes.

IT’S ESSENTIAL TO TEAMING AND LEARNING

What gets in the way?
Hierarchy and Psychological Safety


N=1100 clinicians
A Lack of Psychological Safety in the MMT

“I just couldn’t do it [speak up in a meeting about the foam strike risk]. She [senior manager Linda Ham] was way up here [gestures with hand overhead] and I was way down here [gestures with low hand].”

- Rodney Rocha, NASA engineer

in an ABC News interview, trying to explain why he didn’t speak up during the Columbia mission management team (MMT) meeting
Inclusive Leadership

Leaders who:
- Are accessible
- Proactively invite input
- Acknowledge their own fallibility

*Inclusive leaders*

*lower* the psychological costs of speaking up and *
raise* the psychological costs of silence
Team Learning Challenge

_for some, it’s too much change_

“If you see an [MIS case] on the list, it’s like, ‘oh, do we really have to do this... just give me a fresh blade and I’ll slash my wrists right now.” (OR Nurse, Chelsea Hospital)

_for others, it’s a breath of fresh air_

“I was so grateful I was picked [for the team]. Every time we are going to do an [MIS case] I’m excited. I feel like I’ve been enlightened.” (OR Nurse, Janus Hospital)
Making it Safe: The “Worse Before Better” Problem

System-wide patient safety reports at Children’s Hospital
Sacrificing Accountability

Is it a matter of finding the right point on a balance beam?

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

ACCOUNTABILITY

THE POWER OF TEAMING
Psychological Safety & Accountability

- Comfort Zone
- Learning Zone
- Apathy Zone
- Anxiety Zone
“Anything worth doing is worth doing badly.”

CK Chesterton
In organizations that innovate...

PEOPLE MUST BE COMFORTABLE:

- Not knowing
- Not being right
- Asking for help
- Reporting mistakes
- Failing...
nice idea

But, really, Amy…
Isn’t success better than failure?

Well, yes … but, actually, no.

You see, it depends.
Failure Rises with Uncertainty

Factory
- Routine Production
- Efficiency

Hospital
- Complex Service Operation
- Safety & Quality

Research & Development
- Projects
- Innovation

Laboratory
- Basic Science
- Discovery

Uncertainty
- Failure Rates
  - <1%
  - 2-5%
  - 15-50%
  - 60-80%

The Power of Teamming
The Blame Game

POTENTIAL CAUSES OF FAILURE

• Experimentation
• Uncertainty
• Complexity
• Incompetence
• Inattention
• Deliberate Violation

QUESTION Which of these antecedents involve blameworthy acts?

QUESTION What percent of failures in your organization are caused by blameworthy acts?

QUESTION What percent of failures does your organization treat as caused by blameworthy acts?
3 Types of Failures

1. Preventable Failures
   ...where we, collectively, know enough to do it right.

2. Complex Failures
   ... complex factors (internal, external, or both) combine in novel ways to produce failures in reasonably familiar contexts

3. Intelligent Failures
   ... undesired results of thoughtful forays into novel territory
# Reframing Failure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept of Failure</th>
<th>Traditional Frame</th>
<th>Re-Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Failure is not acceptable</td>
<td>Failure is a natural by-product of experimentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beliefs about effective performance</th>
<th>Traditional Frame</th>
<th>Re-Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective performers don’t fail</td>
<td>Effective performers learn from intelligent failures and share the lessons widely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioral response</th>
<th>Traditional Frame</th>
<th>Re-Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-protection</td>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The manager’s job</th>
<th>Traditional Frame</th>
<th>Re-Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prevent failure</td>
<td>Promote learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5 leadership behaviors that foster psychological safety and organizational learning:
5 Leadership Behaviors

▶ Frame the work accurately
▶ Acknowledge limits
▶ Embrace messengers
▶ Listen intently
▶ Encourage dissent
Frame the Work Accurately

ROUTINE, WELL-UNDERSTOOD

VARIABLE, UNCERTAIN, COMPLEX

INNOVATIVE, NOVEL, UNKNOWN

THE POWER OF TEAMING
Framing the Work Accurately in an Innovation Consultancy

“Fail often in order to succeed sooner…”
5 Leadership Behaviors

- Frame the work accurately
- Acknowledge limits

YOU know you’re fallible.
THEY know you’re fallible.
They just don’t know that YOU know...
Embrace Messengers

FAILURE PARTIES AT ELI LILLY
April 2004: Celebrating a chemotherapy drug that failed
André [Sougarret] has remarkable technical competence and is a man with a strategic view. He has a lot of patience, assertiveness, an exceptional ability to listen and reach conclusions after listening to all sides, and a tendency to speak frankly with everyone, whether they are above or below his authority.”

Ricardo Alvarez, Senior Executive at Codelco
Encourage Dissent

“Encouraging dissent is a good way of finding out who the traitors are.”
Encourage Dissent

“Gentlemen, I take it we are all in complete agreement on the 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 (1946). My Years with General Motors.
Parting Words

✓ Aim High
✓ Team Up
✓ Fail Well
✓ Learn Fast
✓ Repeat