



# Psychological Safety

– it's YOUR responsibility, and your opportunity

**Deiric McCann**

Director, Genos International, Europe





Before we begin, let's take a moment to explore the biggest question of all...





“The ultimate question of life,  
the universe, and everything”







# Why should I care?

Better employee engagement and wellbeing

Greater collaboration and knowledge sharing

Increase in problem solving

Stronger workplace diversity and inclusion

Lower employee turnover

Higher performing teams

Employees who are more adaptable to change



25-26 May 2022, Qosmo Hotel Brasov





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Emotional Intelligence Assessments

Interactive Online EI Programs

Leading with Emotional Intelligence

The Emotionally Intelligent Salesperson

Living & Working with Emotional Intelligence

Interactive Online Resilience Programs

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“A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far from here...”

# Have you ever...

- ...known the answer to a problem but felt afraid to say anything?
- ...found yourself in hot water for challenging 'the way we do things'?
- ...been ridiculed in front of your team members?
- ...held back asking a question so as not to look stupid?
- ...been negatively stereotyped in any way?
- ...gotten a hard time for making a genuine error?
- ...had team member(s) make you feel like you don't belong?
- ...had your input unfairly dismissed or ridiculed?
- ...know a better way of doing things, but been too afraid of the consequences of failure to take action?

# Three bullets: how did that make you feel?

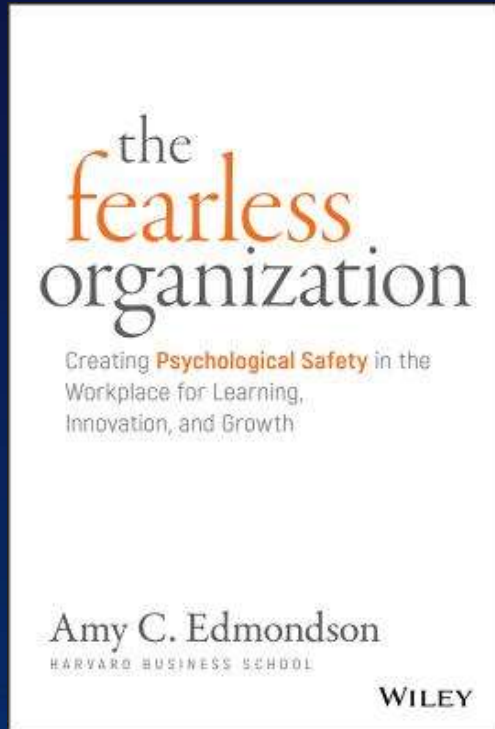
# Amy Edmondson's 'Four Interpersonal Risks'

- If you ask a question you could be viewed as ignorant
- If you make a mistake you might be seen as incompetent
- If you question 'the way we do things' it could be seen as being negative
- If you ask for feedback could be considered intrusive



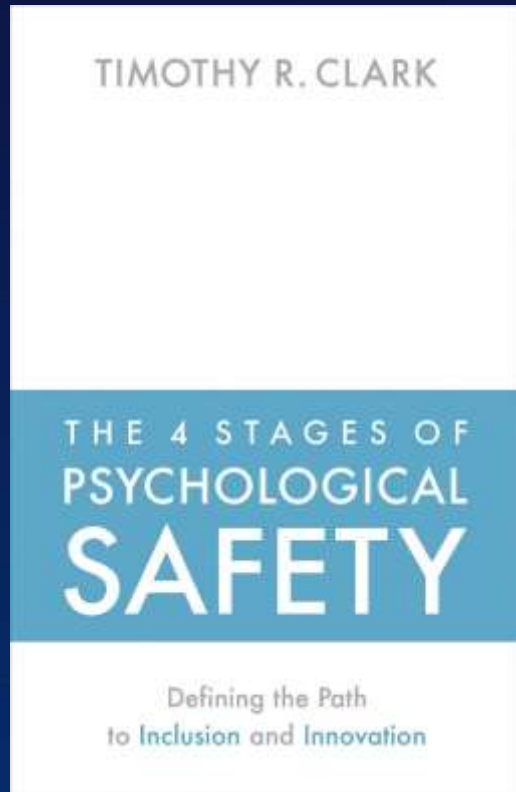
'No one wants to be the skunk at the picnic'

# What is Psychological Safety?



- A belief members of a team that it is safe for interpersonal risk taking
- A sense of confidence that speaking up will not result in rejection, punishment or embarrassment by members of the team
- A team environment of respect and interpersonal trust where people feel comfortable being themselves

# At it's core, Psychological Safety is...



“...the sense that you can be yourself without social, political, economical, or emotional cost”



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# Psychological Safety is not...



- About everyone being a 'nice guy'
- Sacrificing standards for comfort and peace
- Accepting all ideas as equally valuable for the sake of team harmony
- About eliminating all conflict – in fact, we want to encourage Productive Intellectual Conflict whilst reducing Social Conflict



Think of a someone  
who makes you feel  
psychologically **safe**



# 3 Bullets: How does this 'safe' person make you feel?



Think of a someone  
who makes you feel  
psychologically **unsafe**

# 3 Bullets: How does this 'unsafe' person make you feel?

# Emotional Contagion





# Emotional Contagion



“...we generally have little awareness of emotional contagion and its influence on our behavior...

...it starts when we automatically mimic other people’s facial expressions, body language, tone of voice...

...through a variety of physiological & neurological processes, we actually feel the emotions we mimicked — and then act on them.”

# Psychological Safety – whose job is it?



“Emotional Contagion makes  
Psychological Safety  
EVERYONE’S responsibility”  
– and everybody’s opportunity”



# Psychological Safety – whose job is it?



“Psychological Safety is what you experience when you’re confident that those around you will support you in..

...asking ‘silly’ questions, making mistakes trying new ways of doing things, and questioning the status quo

– in bringing your very best self to the table”

# Psychological Safety – an important reality



You either bring Psychological Safety into your team, family, and social circle – or you take it out.

There's no middle ground.



Do **you and your organisation**  
make people feel safe?



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# How to play **your part** in creating a psychologically safe workplace





1. Be a **'don't knower'**  
- let them know you don't  
have all the answers



2. Get everyone involved:  
“what do you think?”  
- and then REALLY listen



3. Intentionally screw up in front of those you want to make feel safe





4. Encourage people to take risks trying new ideas that could improve things - and celebrate the successes AND the failures



5. When people drop the ball, ask: “what did you learn?”

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