Trust and Psychological Safety

Episode II

How to Lead with Vulnerability and Humility
Our Explorations

• Why do we care about trust?
• What is trust?
• How does trust & psychological safety relate?
• What are some factors for leaders?
• How does humble inquiry help?
Build projects around motivated individuals. Give them the environment and support they need, and trust them to get the job done.
Trust_{Given} = Risk \cdot Vulnerability
Trust\textsubscript{Given} = Risk \cdot Vulnerability

In a work relationship, Risk and Vulnerability are \textit{never} zero.
Vulnerability exists because...

• *Every* work relationship involves needing help from another. Examples:
  • Product owner wants help from team to create an application.
  • Manager wants help from their employees to accomplish an objective.
  • Team wants help from the business with information on what they want; their needs.

• **Good teamwork is successful reciprocal help.**
• When help is requested, we place our self-esteem one step lower than the helper(s).
• We expect this reciprocal process to ultimately be fair and equitable.

*Helping, Edgar Schein, 2009*
Perceived Risk
“An Integrative Model of Organizational Trust”; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman; Academy of Management Review; 1995; page 715 (available at JSTOR)
Exercise Time!

- By yourself, brainstorm ways to increase trust through showing Benevolence and Integrity, and also ensuring you have the Authority (skill & power). (2 min)
- Pair up, for 3 min combine and refine.
- Combine into groups of 4, combine, refine, & prioritize. (4 min)
- Elect a spokesperson; we’ll debrief.
Let’s take a sample of a few ‘top 3’?

What trustworthiness factors did they cover?
How do outcomes feedback into these?
A show of hands...

Could you...
- Introduce this approach in a meeting you attend?
- Suggest this as a way of ‘brainstorming’ ideas?

You just experienced a *Liberating Structure* called **1,2,4,ALL**

How does this technique increase trust?
Psychological Safety?
Psychological Safety = \( f(\sum_{1}^{n}\text{Vulnerability}_{\text{Given}}) \)
Psychological Safety = f\left(\sum_{i=1}^{n} \frac{\text{Trust}_{\text{Given}}}{\text{Risk}_{\text{Perceived}}}\right)
Psychological Safety = $f\left(\sum_{1}^{n} \frac{\text{Trust}_{\text{Given}}}{\text{Risk}_{\text{Perceived}}}\right)$

So in work relationships, Psychological Safety is reflected in the amount of trust granted.
So if we can increase Trust, we can increase Psychological Safety.
So where in our Trust Model, play out does this?

Effect things, where can we?
Model of Organizational Trust

Factors of Perceived Trustworthiness

- Authority
- Benevolence
- Integrity

Perceived Risk

Trust

Risk Taking in the Relationship

Outcomes

Trustor’s Propensity

“An Integrative Model of Organizational Trust”; Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman; Academy of Management Review; 1995; page 715 (available at JSTOR)
In Your Group of 4, Discuss These Two Questions for 5 min

• What does the giver of trust have a right to know?
• How is trust typically *managed* when work is given to another?
Trust and Psychological Safety **increase** when we realize that these are created by building relationships instead of transactions.
Key Factors for Leaders

(measurable)
Business Results Needed

Team/Org Behavior Δs

Leadership Behavior Δs

Relationship Linkage

Executive Coaching with Backbone and Heart,
Mary Beth O’Neill, 2007
Leadership in a traditional sense tends to view it in terms of linear transactions and roles, not organic relationships between people exerting influence.

-Gerald Weinberg (paraphrased)
Self-Reflection Exercise

For the following scenario, take 5 minutes and construct questions to help you learn...

...what behaviors need to change for the team/org...
...what leadership behaviors may need to change...
Scenario: Desired Business Results

You are a program manager over multiple teams. One team is struggling to get user stories to a ready state, so you want to improve the readiness of stories brought into their iterations.

Your desired business results...

• **Greater Quantity of Ready User Stories**: want at least the average number of stories from the last 3 Sprints + 1 standard deviation

• **Better User Story Quality**: only stories meeting the Definition of Ready should be accepted

*Remember: you want to create questions that help you learn what needs to change.*
Humble Inquiry

Builds relationships through curiosity

• Instead of transactions of questions centered on answers for you
  move to

• Questions focused on learning from another
  This ‘transaction’ and future ‘transactions’... (i.e. the relationship)

Humble Inquiry helps grant trust and build psychological safety by leaving people owning their method of work and showing your vulnerability, let’s see how...

_Humble Inquiry, Edgar Schein, 2013_
Forms of Inquiry

• **Humble Inquiry**
  - Maximizes curiosity
  - Focuses on learning from another and to minimize my biases
  - Access my ignorance, ask in least biased and least threatening manner

• **Diagnostic Inquiry**
  - Curiosity on something of interest to me
  - Steering conversation for my benefit
  - Influences the others mental process (feelings/reactions, causes/motives, action-oriented, systemic)

• **Confrontational Inquiry**
  - Inserting my own ideas in the form of questions
  - Often close-ended questions

• **Process-Oriented Inquiry**
  - Shift conversation onto itself, about the relationship/discussion unfolding (can be of the 3 forms above)

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*Does not influence content or form of what the respondent says.*

*They still own it.*
Some Examples

• Humble Inquiry
  • What is happening?
  • Go on...
  • Can you give me an example?
  • Where do you want this to go?
  • So...
  • What else?

• Diagnostic Inquiry
  • How do you feel about that?
  • Why did that happen?
  • What have you tried?
  • How would they react to ..?

• Confrontational Inquiry
  • Did that make you happy?
  • Did you do that because ..?
  • Shouldn’t you try ..?
  • Were the others surprised?

• Process-Oriented Inquiry
  • What is happening here? (Humble)
  • What do you think is happening in our conversation? (Diagnostic)
  • Are you upset? (Confrontational)

Note open-endedness

(Humble) (Diagnostic)

Humble Inquiry, Edgar Schein, 2013
Exercise Time

- Pair up, for 5 min...
- Discuss one person’s questions; what types were they? Try to refine them to be humble inquiry questions?
- At the end of 5 minutes, swap and repeat.
- How do these questions create influence?
Forms of Inquiry

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*Humble Inquiry, Edgar Schein, 2013*
Debrief

What happened?
The Johari Window

Known to Self

Known to Others

Unknown to Self

Unknown to Others

OPEN AREA

BLIND AREA

HIDDEN AREA

UNKNOWN AREA

Of Human Interaction, Joseph Luft, 1969

"The Johari window, a graphic model of interpersonal awareness". Proceedings of the western training laboratory in group development, Joseph Luft, Harrington Ingraham, 1955
The Johari Window

Known to Self  Unknown to Self

Known to Others

OPEN AREA

Known to Others

DISCLOSURE

FEEDBACK

HIDDEN AREA

Unknown to Others

SHARED DISCOVERY

UNKNOWN AREA

"The Johari window, a graphic model of interpersonal awareness". Proceedings of the western training laboratory in group development, Joseph Luft, Harrington Ingraham, 1955

Of Human Interaction, Joseph Luft, 1969
Exercise: What are some questions I can formulate to explore the areas that aren’t known to me?

- For our scenario, take 3 min in your group to create questions that:
  - Uncover blindspots
  - Reveal the hidden
  - Explore the unknown

Try to maintain humility...
The Johari Window + Humble Inquiry

Open Area

Known to Self

What do you see?

Unknown to Self

What can we learn?

Unknown Area

Unknown to Others

Humble Inquiry

Known to Others

What can you tell me?

Unknown to Others
Self-Reflection Exercise

Take 2 min, consider what we covered and write down what you will do differently after leaving today.
Summary

• Giving trust creates psychological safety
• Key Factors for Leaders
• Move from transactions → relationships with humble inquiry
• Let the Johari window serve as a mental model
What questions do you have?
Thank You

@paul_boos
703.307.4322
paul.boos@excella.com
http://nimblicious.com

Excella