Teams: Session 1

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“Taking on a challenge is a lot like riding a horse, isn’t it? If you’re comfortable while you’re doing it, you’re probably doing it wrong.”
-Ted Lasso
Leadership at MIT
  • What does it look like?
  • Key skills needed

Personization & Psychological Safety
  • Importance for Teams

User Guide Discussion
Leadership is the process of solving problems that won’t be otherwise handled in the existing system.
Two Key Skills

**DIAGNOSIS**
(identify gaps)

**OBJECTIVE ABOUT SUBJECTIVE**
Constructing conflict

**ACTION**
(closing gaps)

**PRODUCTIVE REASONING**
Resolving conflict
Leadership at Multiple Levels

Leadership at MIT is a process of:

- **Leading Yourself** - holding the tension between your personal aspirations and current capabilities
- **Leading Teams** - constructing and confronting problems that you can’t solve yourself
- **Leading Organizations** - creating organizations that catalyze and coordinate joint problem solving
Once more, there is no evidence of lone inventors performing better in any part of the distribution.

...In fact, the difference across the four categories is significantly larger for the higher quantiles, indicating that lone inventors are particularly disadvantaged when attempting to achieve breakthroughs. (p.50)
Teams Are Humans Connecting

• Human history has pushed us to pool our cognitive power towards solving complex problems together, whether to survive or thrive.

• Inherent challenges with this type of collaboration and teaming.
  o Double-edged sword of bringing different people together.

• Difficult to implement, even though the road is well traveled.
PERSONIZATION & PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY
Personization (not a typo)

Personization is the process of mutually building a working relationship with a fellow employee, teammate, boss, subordinate, or colleague based on trying to see that person as a whole, not just in the role that he or she may occupy at the moment.

- Schein, Edgar H. Humble Leadership
Level 1 v. Level 2 Relationships

Level 1 - typically defined by clear social norms and expectations

Example: I tell the ER doctor personal details related to an injury, she doesn’t share any

Level 1 relationships work fine for work that can be clearly defined in advance (particularly the targets)

Level 2 - emerges from personization, getting to know the whole person and conceptualizing them as a unique individual

Yields better sense of unique skills and information

Can reduce threat of “out-group” stereotypes

Easier to engage others with meaningful work

Edgar Schein, Prof. Emeritus

Leadership Center
Psychological Safety

Novartis Professor of Management & Leadership, Harvard Business School
Psychological Safety

Definition: *The belief that the work environment is safe for interpersonal risk taking*

A *group/team* level phenomenon that emerges from the team and organizational context and interaction.
Psychological Safety – What it Isn't

A key insight...was that psychological safety is **not** a personality difference but rather a feature of the workplace that leaders can and must help create.

- The Fearless Organization, ch. 1

Psychological safety is **not**:
- about being nice
- a personality factor
- another word for trust
- about lowering performance standards
Main Research Findings (Edmondson)

In many orgs, people do not feel free to speak up
- Silence has been implicated in numerous disasters and industrial accidents (e.g., the Columbia disaster)

Positively correlates with a variety of learning behaviors
- Learning from mistakes, quality improvement, reduced “workarounds”, knowledge sharing

Correlates with higher employee engagement

Offsets several other organizational challenges
- Leads to less friction in geographically dispersed teams
- Supports effective conflict resolution
- Leads to improved gains from diversity

Correlates with positive team and organizational performance
- Google’s Project Aristotle is one well documented example
1. Dependability.

Team members get things done on time and meet expectations.

2. Structure and clarity.

High-performing teams have clear goals, and have well-defined roles within the group.

3. Meaning.

The work has personal significance to each member.

4. Impact.

The group believes their work is purposeful and positively impacts the greater good.

Yes, that’s four, not five. The last one stood out from the rest:

5. Psychological Safety.
Setting the Stage for Psych Safety

1. Create clear, shared goals
2. Understand failure is required to succeed and destigmatize it – utilize Growth Mindset*
3. Be "smart enough to know that you are smarter together”
4. Demonstrate humility
5. Engage with curiosity
6. Express appreciation (for a contrary opinion)
7. Sanction violations

*Carol Dweck
SHARE 1 THING FROM YOUR USER'S GUIDE