Teams: Session 1

ABBY BERENSON

Senior Associate Director, MIT Leadership Center
MIT Sloan School of Management

MIT | Leadership Center

"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
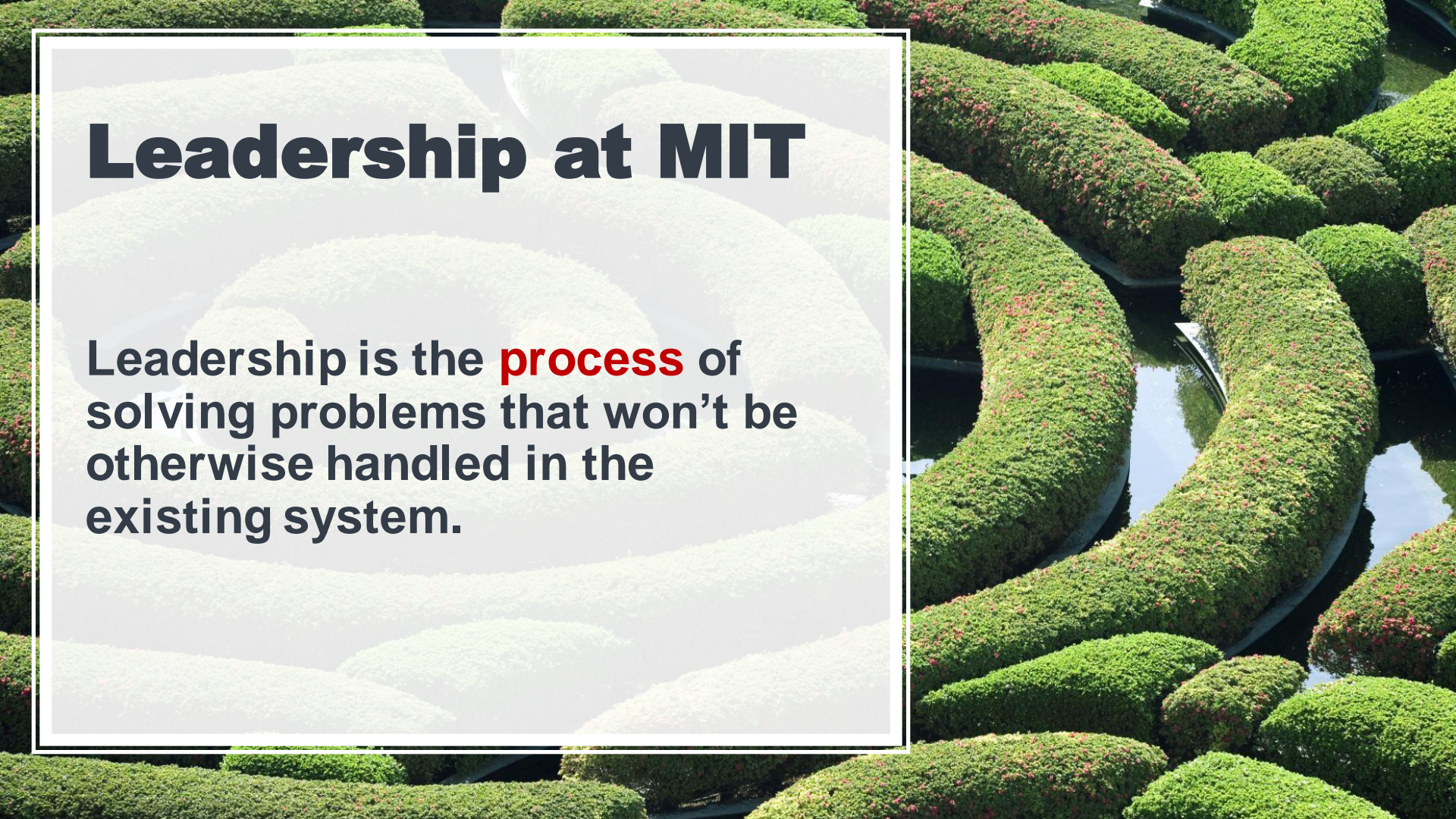
- **What does it look like?**
- **Key skills needed**

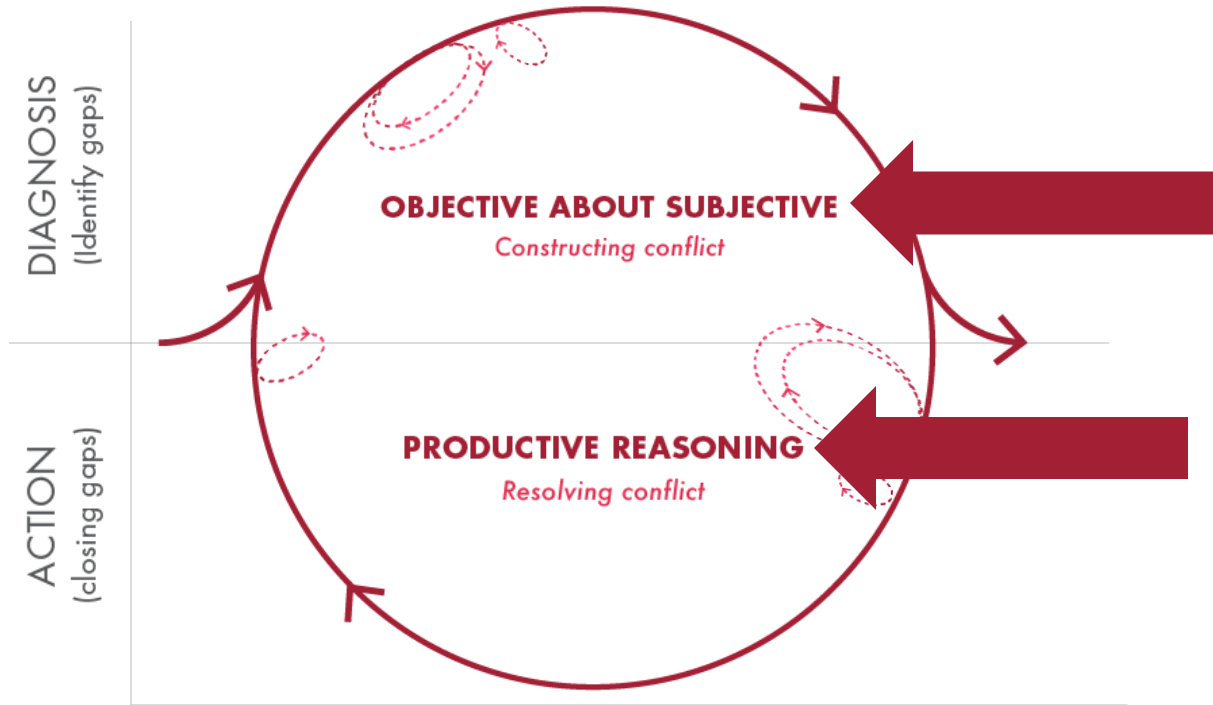## Personization & Psychological Safety

- **Importance for Teams**

User Guide Discussion

AGENDA

MIT | Leadership Center

Leadership at MIT

Leadership is the process of solving problems that won't be otherwise handled in the existing system.

Two Key Skills

DIAGNOSIS
(Identify gaps)

ACTION
(closing gaps)

OBJECTIVE ABOUT SUBJECTIVE
Constructing conflict

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

MIT | Leadership Center

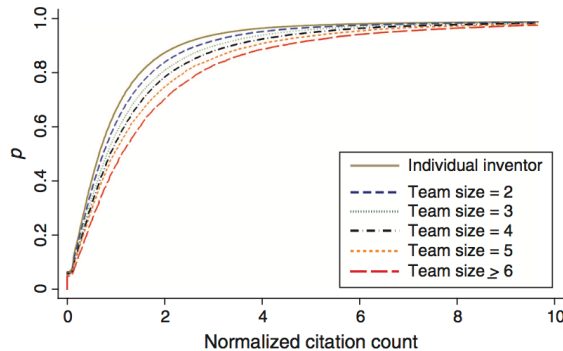# Lone Inventors as Sources of Breakthroughs: Myth or Reality?

Jasjit Singh
INSEAD, Singapore 138676, Singapore, jasjit.singh@insead.edu

Lee Fleming
Harvard Business School, Harvard University, Boston, Massachusetts 02163, lfleming@hbs.edu

Figure 2(a) Cumulative Distribution of Observed Impact of Patents from Individuals vs. Teams

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)

MIT | Leadership Center

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.

Ⅲⅰⅰ┇ | **Leadership Center**

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

MiT | Leadership Center

Level 1 v. Level 2 Relationships

Edgar Schein,
Prof. Emeritus

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

MIT | **Leadership Center**

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 <u>not</u>:

- about being nice
- a personality factor
- another word for trust
- about lowering performance standards

MiT | **Leadership Center**

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*

Mᴵᴵiᴵ | **Leadership Center**

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:
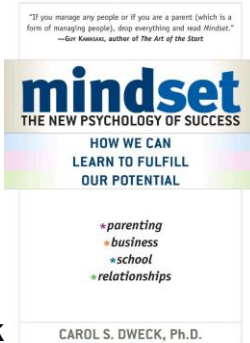
5. Psychological Safety.

Inc.

COMPANY CULTURE

Google Spent 2 Years Studying 180 Teams. The Most Successful Ones Shared These 5 Traits
Insights from Google's new study could forever change how teams are assembled.

MIIT | Leadership Center

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

"If you manage any people or if you are a parent (which is a form of managing people), drop everything and read *Mindset*."
—Guy Kawasaki, author of *The Art of the Start*

mindset
THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY OF SUCCESS

HOW WE CAN
LEARN TO FULFILL
OUR POTENTIAL

*parenting
*business
*school
*relationships

CAROL S. DWECK, Ph.D.

*Carol Dweck