

# OPENNESS SIMPLIFIES EVERYTHING

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CONNECTING  
PEOPLE  
SCIENCE<sup>AND</sup>  
REGULATION<sup>®</sup>

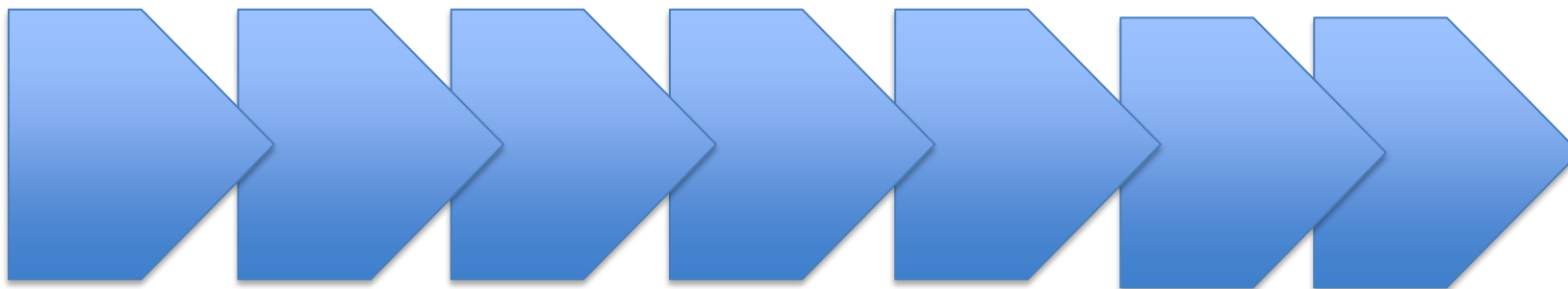
# What is Psychological Safety?

# Psychological Safety - Definition

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

Amy Edmondson  
Harvard Business School  
Professor

# Human errors can occur at any stage



• R&D

• Manufacturing

• Use by Patients

# Why is Psychological Safety in the workplace important?

# The benefits of a psychologically safe workplace

Findings from Google's two-year long study code-named Project Aristotle:

- The **number one factor** for high-performing teams is psychological safety
- This ranks high above all other factors

# When team members feel safe with one another, they are more likely to:

- Admit mistakes
- Partner with others
- Take on new roles
- Generate and harness more ideas
- They are less likely to leave Google



Retention

# An example of negative consequences

- Korean Airline had a string of accidents throughout the 1990s.
- In 1999, Korean Air Cargo Flight 8509 crashed.
- All onboard were killed.



# Lessons learnt from KAL

- KAL - High power distance culture
- Pilots drawn from the military
- Subordinates seldom question their superiors
- Culture cited as one of the contributing factors
- Safety records improved after change initiatives

# How do we foster Psychological Safety?

# Defensiveness is a natural self-protection strategy

- To foster an open and safe culture, we need to understand how defensiveness works

# Defensiveness is a sub-conscious process

- **Fear of being ignored or excluded**
- **Fear of being humiliated or embarrassed**
- **Fear of being rejected or disliked**



Defensive  
Behaviors

## Fear of feeling incompetent or rejection leads to:

- “I have to solve the problem all by myself instead of escalating or asking for help”
- “I will make a fool of myself by sharing my thoughts”
- “I will cover up my mistakes”

# Some suggestions on how to build an open and psychologically safe environment:

- Leadership mindset
- Norms and behaviors
- Knowledge and skills
- Processes and systems

# The mindset change needed for leaders

## CURRENT

- Employees to speak up
- Judge performance
- Project perfection



## NEW

- Managers to listen more
- Coach performance
- Demonstrate vulnerability

## Deming Principle #8

“Drive out fear, so that everyone may work effectively for the company”

**W Edwards Deming**

TQM guru who helped post-WWII Japan to transform its products and goods to world-class quality standards.



Thank you!

# Presenter's Contact

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# Scan this QR code to get your free access to a course on Psychological Safety



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