

# RemarkablePractice

Helping Ambitious Accountants Humanise the Numbers

Resilience  
Round-table

Personal  
Resilience

Business  
Resilience

Client  
Resilience

Remarkable  
Practice  
community

Reminder - what  
IS psychological  
safety?

feel that  
you can  
speak  
freely

no fear  
of  
conflict

constructive  
conflict  
(conversation)

without fear  
of  
repercussion

no concern  
about  
ridicule

speeds  
progress  
up

Reminder - what  
IS psychological  
safety?

Psychological safety is “the belief that you can speak up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes without fear of repercussions.” As Edmondson clarifies, “What that really means is I can do my job without fear of humiliation or punishment.”



LEADERSHIP



AUTHORS

**Amy C. Edmondson**  
Professor, Harvard  
Business School

**Michaela J. Kerrissey**  
Associate  
professor, Harvard  
T.H. Chan School  
of Public Health

# What People Get Wrong About Psychological

# Safety

Six misconceptions  
that have led  
organizations astray.



ILLUSTRATOR  
PETRA ERICKSON

# Misconceptions

|   |  |   |   |   |  |   |  |  |                                    |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|---|--|---|--|--|------------------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | PS means being "nice"                    | tip toe around real issues                  | nobody likes conflict   | want to preserve relationships                            | issues can snowball because not dealt with           | be kind to "confront" issue                       | results in frustration if handled later (too late) | nice means delaying tackling the issue | both avoid because its a challenge | it's often whats not been said might build longer term "unsafety" | Where is the candour?                         |
| 2 | PS means getting your way                | "my way will happen" - isn't necessarily so | getting your way doesn't get the best way   | being heard yes - not necessarily accepting your position | heard but not going with it - maybe                  | create a learning space                           |  |  |                                    |   | Being heard doesn't mean we go with your view |
| 3 | PS means job security                    | people can look busy if it feels 'too' safe | change itself undermines security   | it can feel fearful when change is happening              | they can do what they want act like they want        | can be used against us/firm - weaponise it        | could create unfairness                            | standards are still applicable         |                                    |   | Does layoffs counter a PS commitment?         |
| 4 | PS requires a trade-off with performance | results and relationship is needed          | accountability is still needed for business success and living purpose and values | do my job without fear                                    | clarity about expectations has results built into    | kind is results AND relation                      |  |  |                                    |   | Does PS counter accountability?               |
| 5 | PS is a policy                           | PS happens in the day to day conversations  | PS happens in the structured team and 1-to-1 gatherings                           | might be better not to reference PS                       | action beats words every time                        |   |  |  |                                    |   | Can you "mandate" PS?                         |
| 6 | PS requires a top-down approach          | who is in charge?                           | how do help it work for all parties in a meeting                                  | everyone is responsible for it                            | model good behaviours helps make PS a cultural piece | its not positional - its a skills development job |  |  |                                    |   | Helpful, but not compulsory                   |

1

what do we do...

|                               |  |  |   |   |                                     |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------|--|--|---|---|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| framing the conversation well | be clear on why we are doing what were doing | seeking commitment to deal with issues quickly | encourage coaching - continuous and improving | prepare (7Ps) for conversations - 6Qs - 3Rs - 3Cs | seek common ground - goals/progress |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------|--|--|---|---|-------------------------------------|--|--|--|

2

PS means being "nice"

|                                      |                               |   |                       |         |         |  |  |  |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|-----------------------|---------|---------|--|--|--|
| empathetic about how we got to this? | framing the conversation well | communications skills are crucial to make PS real | learning conversation | I / You | I - You |  |  |  |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|-----------------------|---------|---------|--|--|--|

3

PS means getting your way

|                              |                      |                                    |                                      |                     |  |  |  |  |
|------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|--|--|--|--|
| clarity about whats expected | candid conversations | clarity over the rules of the game | clarity around behavioural standards | You - client - firm |  |  |  |  |
|------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------|--|--|--|--|

4

PS means job security

|                                     |                   |               |             |  |  |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| talk about results AND relationship | clarity standards | common ground | clear goals |  |  |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------|--|--|--|--|--|

5

PS requires a trade-off with performance

|         |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---------|----------|--------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Live it | model it | action |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---------|----------|--------|--|--|--|--|--|--|

6

PS is a policy

|              |                 |                    |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| build skills | lead by example | Values - standards |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|

PS requires a top-down approach

|                                       |                                  |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Improve quality of team conversations | Lead conversations the right way |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|

|                         |                    |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Focus on critical goals | Practice curiosity |
|-------------------------|--------------------|

|                                  |                       |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Everyone's contribution matters! | Start with your team! |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| Remind people constantly of purpose, vision and goals | AARs! |
|---|-------|

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Focus on impact, not activity | Capture reflections and share progress |
|-------------------------------|--|

1 thing of real value today

3-1 ratio - gone well - what can we improve

honest -

nice is not the way

more comfortable to resolve challenges

leveraging the firms goals - reason why

reinforced need to develop managers in skills

Progress works as common ground

by example - to the standard - model behaviours

good refresher on who leads - models this...