

About Sabrina Malter



- Leadership and Learning Coach & Consultant
 - Unveil Business Consulting GmbH i.G.
- 25 years of industry background
- Business Transformations, Organizational Development and Strategy Management
- M.Sc. in Sustainability Management
 - The Open University, UK
- Based in Germany

Building a Learning Organization

Leadership Practices & Human Skills that Promote Learning



In this talk we will cover ...

1. Why we have to build a Learning Organization **deliberately**
2. **Leadership practices** to promote organizational learning
3. **Human skills** to promote organizational learning

The challenge: Unveil the potential of your people and your organization



Photo by [bruce mars](#)

What's needed in our changing,
uncertain and interdependent world
is NOT coming naturally ...



"All those in favor say 'Aye.'"

"Aye."

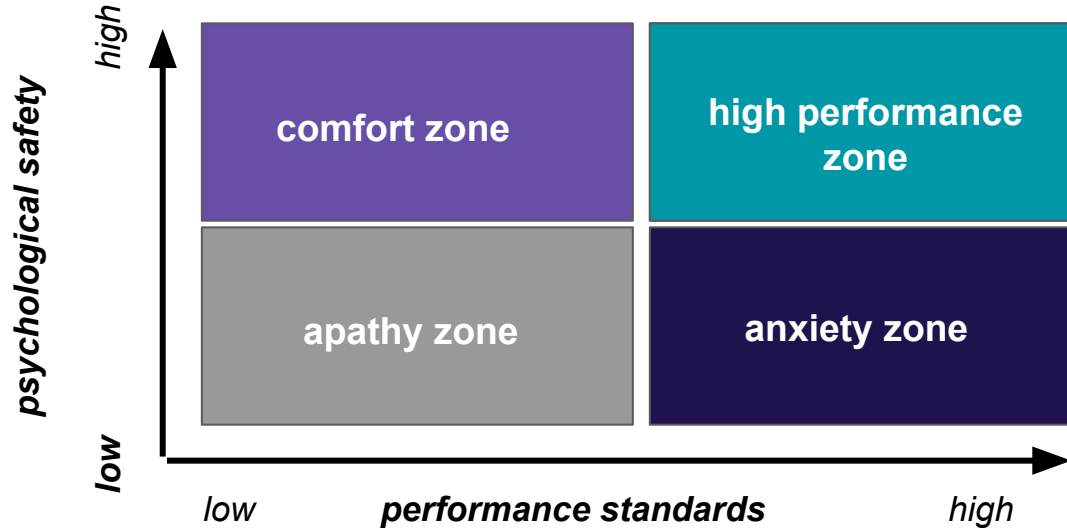
"Aye."

"Aye."

"Aye."

"Aye."

The Learning Zone: High Performance Standards & high Psychological Safety



*Source: Amy C. Edmondson (2020) *the fearless organization*

Actual condition

toxic, unsafe environment

acceptable level as long as need for adaptability is low

level needed during disruptive times

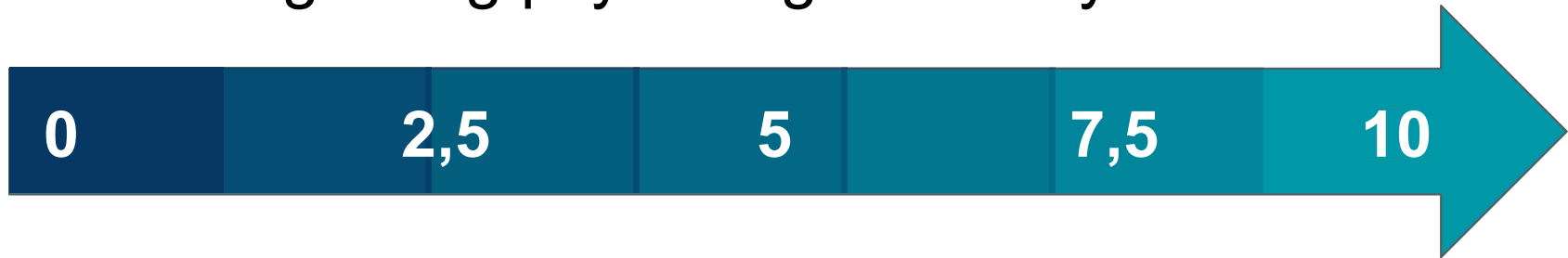


- **we absolutely don't raise even critical concerns**
- **we engage in backstabbing**
- **we focus energy on self-protection**

- **we collaborate effectively across silos and expertise**
- **we consistently speak up with ideas, questions, problems**
- **we engage in conflict without fear and reprisal**
- **we adapt to change effectively**

Poll Question #1

On a scale from 0 - 10, where do you stand in your team regarding psychological safety?



- we absolutely don't raise even critical concerns
 - we engage in backstabbing
 - we focus energy on self-protection
- We don't have a glaring psychological safety problem but***
- we engage in impression management
 - we get little pay off from agile initiatives
- we collaborate effectively across silos and expertise
 - we consistently speak up with ideas, questions, problems
 - we engage in conflict without fear and reprisal
 - we adapt to change effectively

Leadership practices
to promote organizational learning

Leadership practices to promote organizational learning

1 Frame learning as the most critical contribution & invite all brains



Photo by [Lala Azizli](#)

Encourage

- sharing of half-baked ideas, concerns, mistakes and even dissent (for deep thinking)
- failing fast and course correcting (for innovation)
- following procedures (current best practice) **as well as** conscious deviations based on professional judgement **and** sharing of these (excellence)

Leadership practices to promote organizational learning

2 Build trust



Photo by [Bob Dmyt](#)

- with appreciative responses to contributions
- with regular check-ins and going to the Gemba, showing respect and genuine interest in people and their work experience
- by modelling and demanding inclusive behavior
- by leading with kindness



***“The antidote to Fear
is Kindness.”***

— Karyn Ross

*Lean Practitioner, Coach & Consultant
& Author of The Kind Leader*

* Source: Karyn Ross (2021). Kindness.

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/krclean4service_kindness-creativity-leadership-activity-6842495333113622528-AbrT

Leadership practices to promote organizational learning

3 Accelerate learning

- establish platforms for sharing problems, mistakes and learnings
- use coaching questions to promote learning in 1-on-1s as well as within meetings
- deliberately ask for problems, mistakes and learnings during operations reviews or project reviews

Framing the work: Problem solving as a Team Sport

“We all know you are a good manager, otherwise we would not have hired you. But please talk to us about your problems so we can work on them together.”

— Fujio Cho

Former Chairman of Toyota, during his time as plant manager in Georgetown US to James Wiseman during Senior staff meeting





***“The only secret to Toyota
is its attitude towards
learning.”***

— Isao Yoshino

Former Toyota Leader

* Source: cited in Katie Anderson (2020) *Learning to Lead, Leading to Learn*

Human skills
to promote organizational learning

Human skills to promote organizational learning

1 Listen



Photo by [Mimi Thian](#)

- listen with your whole being
- by “seeing” and acknowledging people you show respect for our common humanity

“I see you, and by seeing you,
I bring you into being.”



Sawubona - African Zulu greeting

Human skills to promote organizational learning

2 Communicate in a compassionate and connective way

- based on NVC: Observation - Feelings - Needs - Requests *
- foundation for providing and receiving feedback effectively
- builds psychological safety and trust in teams **



Photo by [Christina @ wocintechchat.com](https://www.wocintechchat.com)

* source: Rosenberg, Marshall B. (2003) *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*

** To promote trust in team even further, I recommend a team workshop series on trust according to Brené Brown, <https://daretolead.brenebrown.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/DTL-Read-Along-Workbook-v2-2020.pdf>

Human skills to promote organizational learning

3 Ask great questions

- ask open ended questions
- go for what and how questions
- avoid prompting and leading inquiry

Asking great questions is the foundation of effective coaching



Photo by [Ludovic Migneault](#)

Poll Question #2

Which obstacles are preventing your organization from becoming a Learning Organization?

Poll Question #3

What could be your one first/ next step
towards a Learning Organization?

Building a Learning Organization - 2022 Virtual Lean Summit on 23 September, 2022

Further reading & free resources

Further reading

Edmondson, Amy C. (2018) *The Fearless Organisation*

Anderson, Katie (2020) *Learning to Lead, Leading to Learn*

Ross, Karyn (2021) *The Kind Leader*

Rosenberg, Marshall B. (2003) *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*

Brown, Brené (2018) *Dare to Lead*

Team development on building trust

Brown, Brené (2020) *Dare to Lead Read-Along Workbook*, p.35

<https://daretolead.brenebrown.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/DTL-Read-Along-Workbook-v2-2020.pdf>

KaiNexus CI webinar on Creating an Intentional People-Centered Culture

Katie Anderson: *Learning to Lead, Leading to Learn: Creating an Intentional People-Centered Culture*

<https://info.kainexus.com/continuous-improvement/continuous-improvement-leadership/leading-to-learn/webinar?hsLang=en>

Thank you!



*Get the slide deck, further reading recommendations
& free resources!*

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