

ENTERPRISE AGILITY FUNDAMENTALS

WORKBOOK



PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY FOR LEADERS EXPOSED TO EXPONENTIAL CHANGE

Creating a Safe Space for an Always Ready Culture

NIROSHI NISSANKA • AVVA THACH

BUILDING MISSION-DRIVEN COMPANIES



WHEN EVERYONE ELSE IS DOWNSIZING

**ENTERPRISE
AGILITY UNIVERSITY**
WHERE SCIENCE MEETS ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

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The Power of Psychological Safety

Introduction

As a leader, understanding psychological safety is critical to navigating accelerated change and exponential markets. People experience higher uncertainty and stress in fast-changing environments, activating our threat detection mechanisms. This can lead to defensive behaviors like avoiding risks, clinging to the status quo, blaming others, and limiting adaptability and progress.



Figure 1.0 The power of a culture of psychological safety is immeasurable and invaluable to any organization wanting sustainable success.

Psychological safety refers to feeling free to express yourself without fear of negative consequences. With high levels of psychological safety, people feel confident engaging productively even during difficult times. They share ideas, ask questions, and take prudent risks, knowing their input is valued.



Organizational Health is psychological safety plus the creation of business value in perpetuity. In Enterprise Agility, business value means value for the Client, Company, and Workforce wellbeing (*Enterprise Agility University and Leading Exponential Change 2018*).

Psychological safety is essential for workforce wellbeing and *Organizational Health* in fast-changing companies. It allows people to feel safe in their roles and continue contributing despite ambiguity. They openly discuss challenges, share concerns, and determine solutions without fear of judgment.



Figure 1.2 The power of psychological safety encourages freedom, creativity, and innovation. Freedom for human expression is the mother of innovation in a disruptive market.

Organizational health involves psychological safety and creating sustainable business value. In the Enterprise Agility Way of Thinking (EAWT), business value means *customer value, company value, and workforce wellbeing*.

Role-modeling Psychological Safety

Your words and actions significantly impact psychological safety and change. If people perceive threats like job insecurity, lack of control, or decreased power or prestige, their stress rises, creativity decreases, and risk-taking declines. In contrast, conveying empathy, granting autonomy, encouraging open exchange, and recognizing efforts cultivate psychological safety for navigating disruption.



Figure 1.3 Psychological Safety is a need from our birth, through our childhood and adulthood...No one is exempted of that need.

By fostering psychological safety in unpredictable environments, you empower people to deal with complexity through partnership. You enable openness to different experiences revealing shared interests and new opportunities where isolation previously prevailed. And you gain access to collective wisdom and creativity for discovering paths ahead that you alone never could.

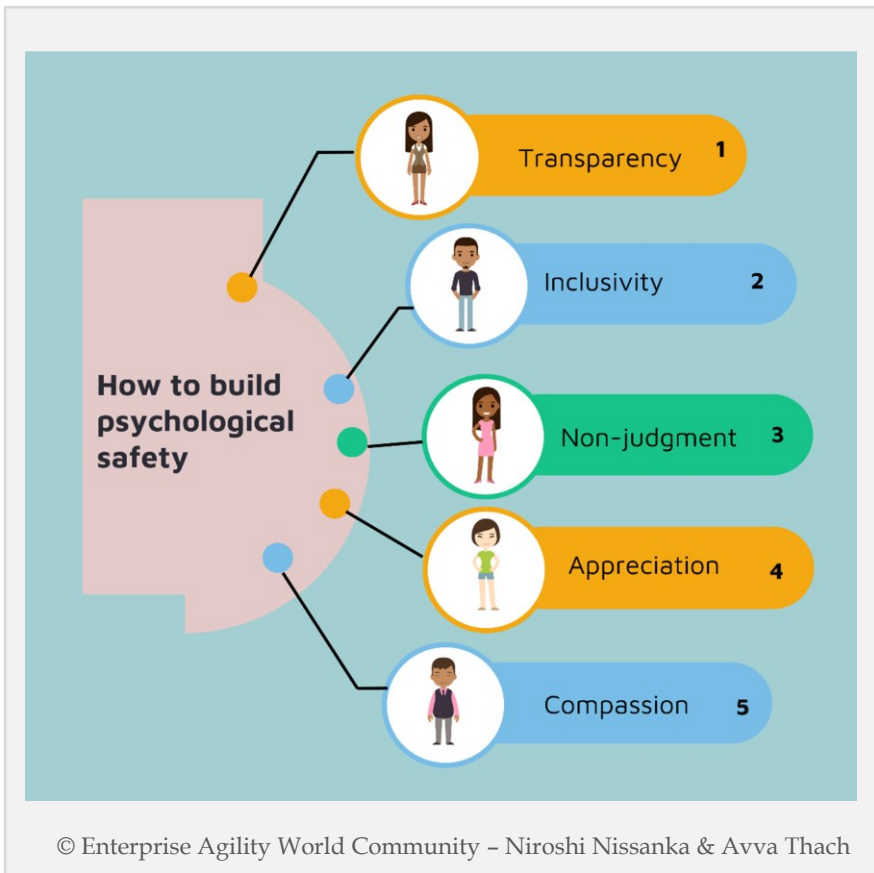
Enterprise Agility requires a psychologically safe environment where people feel engaged, empowered, and able to contribute fully through understanding each other and committing to shared success.

Leaders like you cultivate a growth mindset, distribute leadership, focus on shared priorities, and value learning to enable partnerships based on trust and mutual benefit. This empowers adaptability and progress despite disruption.

How to build Psychological Safety

As a leader, you can inspire and encourage the behaviours and attitudes that promote psychological safety amongst your teams. For effective cultural change, the leaders must lead by example. Some essential components that must be instilled in a culture which embrace psychological safety are:

1. Transparency
2. Inclusivity
3. Non-judgement
4. Appreciation
5. Compassion



Infographic 1.0 – Components of Psychological Safety

Enterprise Agility Universal Agreements and Psychological Safety

As a leader, your words and actions significantly impact organizational health and psychological safety. The *Enterprise Agility Universal Agreements* articulate experiences fundamental to navigating change through partnership, not control. They convey that progress comes from valuing different voices and empowering them. The Agreements are:

1. **The Right to Be Seen:** Recognizing people's value inspires ownership and commitment to shared purposes. People thrive when they feel their presence and contributions matter.
2. **The Right to Be Heard:** Open communication builds understanding and resilience through difficulties together. When people feel heard, they share their thoughts openly.
3. **The Right to Be Empowered:** Empowerment comes from autonomy and resources to determine solutions, not demands. Empowered people show initiative and develop innovative solutions you alone could miss. Distributing authority based on shared interests allows access to more capacity than hierarchy alone.
4. **The Right to Be Part of the Group:** A sense of belonging keeps people connected through change. Encouraging engagement and collaboration maintains relationships and shared responsibility for progress. Success comes through partnership within and across groups.

These Agreements convey that every person and group add value to progress. They represent cooperation where shared possibilities and

priorities determine success together. By trusting that different insights influence direction, these Agreements enable adaptability through partnership, not practices or rules. Engagement emerges from participating in meaningful outcomes, not demands or reactions alone. Your people collaborate because they see how their efforts impact each other, and they feel safe.

These Agreements enable an environment where people feel valued to engage in problem-solving and decision-making, even during adversity and uncertainty. By cultivating a growth mindset, distributing leadership based on shared interests, focusing on mutually agreed priorities, and valuing learning and progress, you can access collective capacity for continuity and shared gains despite disruption.

Your role is to foster understanding across groups by conveying these Agreements in words and actions. Recognizing different experiences influence the way forward together. Distribute authority so people shape solutions, gain ownership, and commit to outcomes in partnership. Value open exchange and willingness to adapt based on shared interests, not enforced rules alone.

These Agreements empower progress through trust in collective insight and mutual benefit beyond what narrow self-interest could achieve. They keep your people motivated, innovative, and connected through difficulty by feeling part of determining meaningful success together. Shared progress becomes possible by empowering different voices rather than imposing direction.

Your organization gains health and adaptability through relationships enabling shared understanding and empowerment. Navigating constant change requires progress through partnership, not practices of control alone. Enterprise Agility Agreements provide a compass for empowering your people to confidently determine the way ahead, despite the disruption, through a commitment to mutual success.

You cultivate psychological safety when you listen without judgment, highlight different views as opportunities to gain new understanding, and frame setbacks as learning opportunities rather than weaknesses. Your

teams can have challenging discussions, report issues promptly, and experiment to find new ways of seeing, and solutions—the capabilities most critical during exponential change.

Psychological safety taps intrinsic motivation and possibility by focusing on experiences and shared interests over rigid rules. It allows groups to determine the best path forward through change together based on today's realities rather than clinging to yesterday's assumptions. And it enables shared leadership in navigating complexity by empowering people at all levels to shape how to fulfill the organization's vision based on mutual understanding. Psychological safety is vital for adaptability and progress in organizations facing rapid change. Though at first it may seem at odds with productivity or efficiency, it leads to outcomes beyond what control or competition alone could ever achieve. By enabling open exchange and experimentation, psychological safety drives innovation, resilience, and shared progress.



Figure 1. 4 Psychological Safety creates a safe place for people to learn, grow and express themselves freely, so they are happier, less stressed and inspired to contribute more. This drives innovation, resilience and shared progress.

Food For Thought

Now, it is your time to think deeply and answer the following questions:

1. Have you ever been employed in an organization where you felt that you are not safe to express your ideas, opinions, or suggestions to improve?

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2. How did it feel, not being able to express yourself honestly and authentically?

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3. Have you experienced an organization and a leader who created trust with his people, which in turn created a psychologically safe workplace for everyone?

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4. What difference did you notice in that psychologically safe workplace?

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a) Did you see people happier?

- b) Did you feel more motivated?
- c) Did you want to contribute more?
- d) Did you feel excited to go to work every day?
- e) Did you see commitment, productivity and profits increase in the business?
- f) Did you feel that your team is ready to conquer anything?

OR...

g) Did you never experience psychological safety in workplaces you have been to before?

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h) Do you wonder whether you will ever experience this ideal workplace?

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5. What are you going to do about it as a professional or a leader in your current organization?

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6. How would you feel as a leader, to hear your team members say below about you?

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“My employer is a great leader, who genuinely cares about creating a culture of Psychological Safety for everyone. He tries hard to maintain fairness and equity for our diverse workforce.

This psychologically safe workplace gives me the ability to achieve my highest potential and contribute to the organizational goals with long-term commitment, dedication, gratitude, and loyalty.

I feel happier, peaceful, less stressed, and always ready for any challenge, as I know my leader and my team are there for me, and that I belong...!”



Developer Nish Talks...

7. Why do you think Psychological Safety is important in the context of **your workplace**?

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8. Why do you think Psychological Safety is important in the context of **your community**?

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9. Why do you think Psychological Safety is important in the context of **your family**?

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10. What are your key takeaways from this workbook?

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Our Purpose in Creating this Workbook for You

This workbook introduces Psychological Safety for Leaders exposed to exponential change and disruption in their leadership journey.

Why is psychological safety crucial in companies exposed to accelerated change?

We created this workbook to support you in taking the first step of the journey of creating psychological safety in the environment you operate. It is indeed worth exploring, learning, and reflecting on this topic. While this document provides some initial information about the topic, you might be able to find more relevant information and supporting materials on the [Enterprise Agility Official Website](#).

This workbook was co-written and produced by *Niroshi Nissanka*, Founder and CEO of Leader Success Institute, and *Avva Thach*, AI Product Innovation Coach.

The two of us, Niroshi & Avva, gift this workbook to you, with much love, and sincere hope that you will start implementing the concepts learned in this workbook and adapt your leadership style and your organization to embrace creating a culture of psychological safety for your people.

It is our passion to inspire you to become the best leader that you can be! We believe that you will create happy, thriving organizations where you and your people flourish, succeed, and embrace change and uncertainty with an always responsive, always innovative, and always ready mindset!

Feel free to connect on LinkedIn and reach out to us for your queries, enquiries or just for a meaningful chat.

We Have Created This Workbook for You



Niroshi Nissanka, BSc | MBA
Founder & CEO - Leader Success Institute
CEO - Eminence Global Coaching & Consulting



Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Specialist, Leadership Coach & Consultant, Keynote Speaker, Emotional Intimacy Certified Relationship Coach

Professional Coach Level IV, Accredited Practitioner & Consultant of Human Behavioral Profiling-Leaders & Teams (EDISC© Level I, II), Certified META Dynamics© Consultant (L I, II) & META Dynamics© Level III Facilitator, Certified Change Consultant EAU
Regional Ambassador - Enterprise Agility University

Connect at:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/niroshi-nissanka-leadership-coach/>

<https://www.leadersuccessinstitute.com/>
<https://www.emotionalintimacycoach.com/>
<https://www.eminenceglobalcoaching.com/>



Avva Thach, M.S. | PCC
Founder & CEO - Avva Thach, LLC
Strategic Advisor | AI Product Innovation Coach



Chief Innovation Officer - Enterprise Agility University
Inspiring Innovation & Leadership Excellence

Doctoral of Business Administration, Candidate, Strategy and Innovation, Certified Blockchain Prompt Engineering & Chat GPT, Certified Advanced AI Product Management by Dr.Nika, Certified Advanced PM SAPM (Stanford University), Certified Kanban System Design (KPM I and KPM II), Certified: Digital Strategies for Business Transformation (Columbia University), iC Agile | (ICP-ACC, ICP-ATF) SAFe SPC 6

Connect at:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/avvathach/>
<https://www.avvathach.com/>