Leadership Essentials

Building A Winning Culture

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

54 GROUP

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Participant Guide

Objective: In this lesson, we look at the leader's role in creating an environment that fosters progress and cultivates a winning culture.

"Winning teams don't believe in excellence – only in constant improvement and constant change."

~Tom Peters

Fighting Human Nature

"The safer team members feel with one another, the more likely they are to admit mistakes, to partner and to take on new roles.   ~Ian Mathews

Challenge: Take yourself back to a time and situation when you decided not to speak out in a difficult situation. Answer the following questions:

1. What were your emotions and thoughts around the situation at the time?

2. Why did you choose silence over speaking out?

3. What role did the leader play in your decision to remain quiet?

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Psychological Safety

"Exceptional companies get the details right. The people on the front line know when things are not going right, and they know when things need to be improved. Listen to them, act on their ideas and your average company will become exceptional."
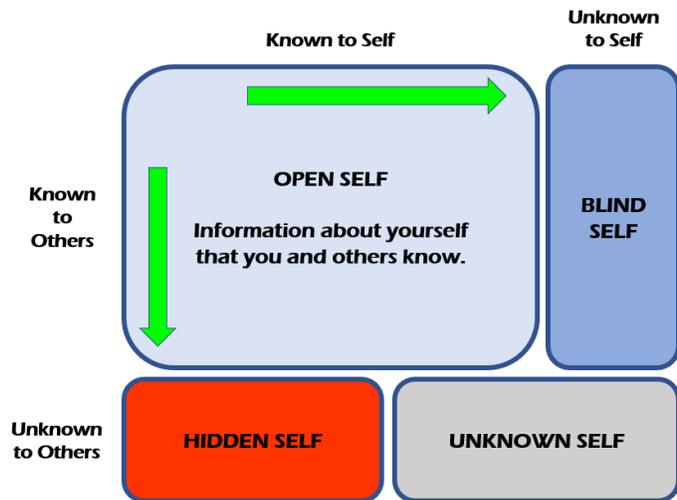
~ Richard Branson, Virgin Founder

Challenge: List the last three failures/mistakes you addressed with an employee and how you addressed each issue in the table below. Keep in mind the following questions:

- Did you address the failure publicly or privately?
- Did you address the failure live or in writing?
- What was your tone with the individual who made the mistake?
- What were the consequences to the employee?
- Who left the conversation with responsibility for rectifying the mistake?
- Who derived the plan to rectify the mistake (ownership)?
- In general, do you spend more time talking to your team about failures or celebrating successes?
- How can you do more of the latter and less of the former?

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Failure/Mistake	How did you address the issue?	Would you change how you addressed the issue and if so, how?

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Where Do You Land As An Open Leader

The best leaders don't leave their teams guessing. Great leaders share as much as they can, professionally and personally. They consciously open up and take a transparent approach to leadership.

Known to Self — **Unknown to Self**

OPEN SELF

Information about yourself that you and others know.

Known to Others

Unknown to Others

BLIND SELF

HIDDEN SELF

UNKNOWN SELF

Part 1 - Challenge: Just Like Me Exercise - How would you rate yourself on each of the following six statements:

	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	I share my beliefs, perspectives and opinions	0	1	2	3
2	I share my fears, anxieties and vulnerabilities	0	1	2	3
3	I share information about my friends, family and children	0	1	2	3
4	I share my desire to feel respected, appreciated and competent	0	1	2	3
5	I share my career ambitions	0	1	2	3
6	I share my boss's expectations of me	0	1	2	3

Ask yourself:

Would your team score you the same?

Consider sharing this short rating quiz with your direct reports. How would they rate each of the six statements about you?

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Part 2 - Challenge: Take a look at the six statements above. As a leader, how can you find ways to share more in these areas?

Replacing Blame with Curiosity

Create an environment where solving problems is about learning, not execution.

Challenge: Think of a situation where a direct report did not complete a task to expected standards? Answer the questions below:

Briefly explain the situation here.

What was the desirable outcome? How did the direct report fall short on the task?

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What do you think was driving the problem?

Were you missing any information? Explain why or why not.

How did you help your employee get back on track?

What approach could have helped to resolve the problem more smoothly?

"Great coaches own the loss, blame themselves and admit their coaching shortcomings that led to the loss. They take pressure off their players by assuming the blame."

~Ian Mathews

Taking Ownership

Teams love to work for a self-deprecating, accountable leader. When addressing an individual about a setback, share a similar example from your career when you came up short.

Challenge: Read the following scenario and provide a response in the box below.

Scenario: An employee missed a key deadline.

In your role as leader how might you respond in this situation?
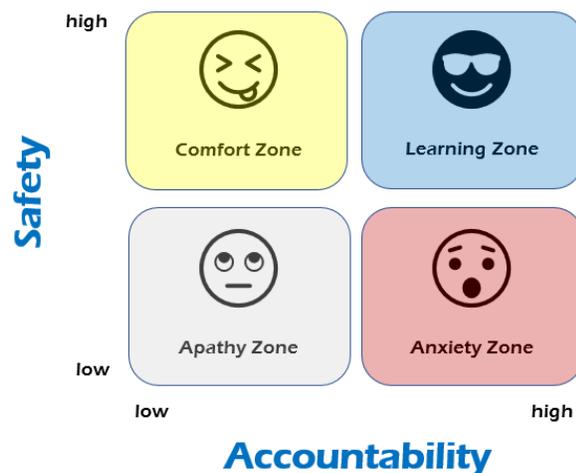*For example: "Can I share a similar example from my career?"*

Anticipate Reactions

"To anticipate the reaction from your team, start with one trusted person on your team. Bring them in to your inner circle and let them know what you are about to communicate. Ask for feedback on how the message makes them feel personally."

~Ian Mathews

Prior to any difficult discussion, it can be helpful to journal your thoughts in advance.

Challenge: Think of a difficult conversation you need to have with one or more of your team members. Ask yourself the following:

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What three ways might my audience respond?

1.

2.

3.

How will I respond to each scenario?

1.

2.

3.

What evidence can I point to in each scenario?

1.

2.

3.

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What evidence might my audience point to?


Is it possible that my message may have unintended consequences?

Are there any individuals who might react more negatively than others? How?

How can I tailor the message so that it makes the most sense?

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Applaud High-Effort Failure

Engage your team to support each other and share examples where they have overcome similar obstacles.
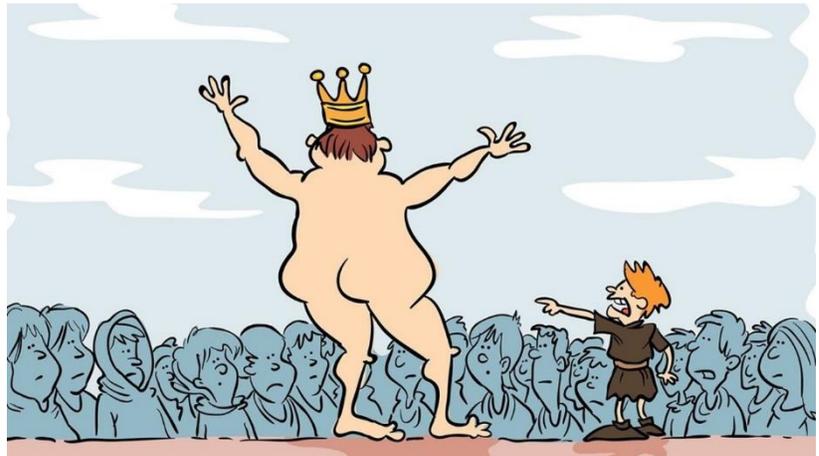
Challenge: What are some steps or strategies you can take to create a "Learning Zone?"

"Teams who feel safe trusting each other can embrace and attack setbacks, obstacles and issues. Without this safety, a team cannot win. Ignore this critical aspect of leadership and risk becoming the naked emperor."

~Ian Mathews

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