



**BOOK  
DISCUSSION  
GUIDE**

THE

# Psychological Safety Playbook

Lead More Powerfully  
by Being More Human



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# ***The Psychological Safety Playbook***

## **Book Discussion Guide**

This discussion guide is intended to help you bring the material from *The Psychological Safety Playbook* into your daily life. By starting these reflections and conversations, you and your colleagues can discover how each of you is contributing to or detracting from psychological safety.

We know that the questions in this guide may prompt you to face some uncomfortable truths, and we understand all too well how challenging this can be. Therefore, we thought we'd each share an anecdote about our own experiences in self-reflection about some of the ideas in the book.



### **Karolin's Reflection**

Personally, one of my big learnings in my journey as a professional was Carol Dweck's concept of a growth mindset. It was a crucial step for me to commit to be willing to make mistakes in order to learn from them. This was not easy for me as I have a strong tendency for perfectionism. It was a relief for me to see failure in a different light: It's not something I need to fear because it indicates that I am flawed, it's something containing a valuable lesson that helps me grow. I try to remind myself that failures are an indication of courage, the courage to try something new. When I invite team members to reflect on a project and provide feedback, I often state explicitly that I'm committed to growth mindset. That takes away a lot of shame and guilt and makes a conversation about failures much more productive. Am I now free of the fear of failure? No, but I've made great progress.



### **Minette's Reflection**

My default reaction when I'm challenged or criticized is to challenge or criticize back, which is the automatic "fight" reaction from the fight-flight-freeze reaction. I didn't realize this about myself until I stumbled upon the book *Radical Collaboration*, which describes the many ways our bodies signal that we're having a defensive reaction. When I started to pay attention, I noticed that when someone challenged me in a meeting, I immediately felt my face get hot. The sudden flushed face was my indicator that I was probably going to react in a way I'd later regret, so I used it as a reminder to pause, take a breath, and ask a curious question, rather than counterattacking. While I can't say I do this 100% of the time, the awareness of how my body reacts when I'm feeling defensive has helped me decide how I want to respond rather than having an automatic and often damaging reaction.

**1**

In your team, how common is it for members to offer dissenting viewpoints, and how open are others to hearing viewpoints that differ from their own? How do you react when someone shares an idea you don't agree with?



**2**

How do you react when you are asked a question that you don't have an answer to? What makes it difficult for you to admit you don't know something in a work setting?



3

What keeps you from listening with full focus to other people? How do you handle distractions, and what do you do to minimize their impact on your conversations?

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4

How do you ensure you are truly understanding what you're hearing?

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**5**

What are the physical sensations you experience when you are feeling defensive? What are your common behaviors when you are feeling defensive? What's your go-to technique to manage your defensiveness in challenging situations?



**6**

What are the situations when it is most difficult for you to choose how you respond instead of reacting automatically? What do these situations have in common? What helps you overcome those autopilot reactions?



**7**

How common is it to discuss failures in your team? What prevents people from discussing what went wrong on a project? How can you encourage your team members to share failures and mistakes so everyone can learn together?

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**8**

How do you deal with your own fear of failure? How hard is it for you to admit mistakes and share your own failures at work? What does your inner voice tell you when you realize you have made a mistake?

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9

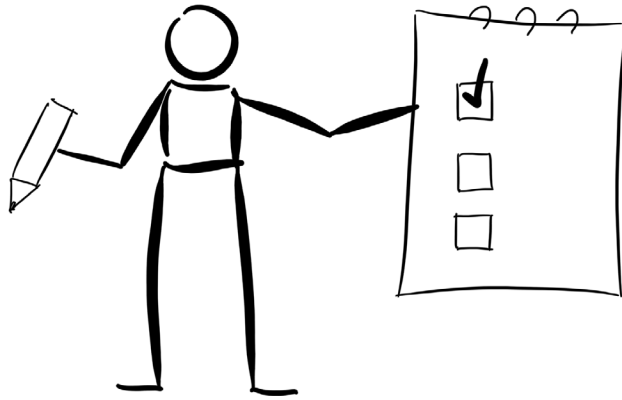
In your team meetings, who generally does most of the speaking and who tends to stay quiet? Are there common traits or patterns about each of the two groups? How do you ensure everyone can fully participate in meetings?



10

How do you deal with interruptions in your team meetings? Reflect on who gets interrupted in your meetings more often than others. What patterns do you notice?





## Continuing Your Psychological Safety Journey

- Spread the word on social media using the hashtag #thepsychologicalsafetyplaybook
- Invite us to speak at your event
- Engage us to lead workshops
- Have us run a psychological safety assessment with your team

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**Share your thoughts and experiences with us – We’d love to hear from you!**

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