

Do You Build Or Destroy Psychological Safety As A Leader?



Welcome and Thank You for Joining!

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- Organizational nerd
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- Thinker
- Adventurer
- Problem Solver

A man in a blue shirt is standing and presenting to a group of people in an office. He is pointing at a whiteboard. The group consists of several people, some sitting at desks and others standing. The office has large windows and potted plants.

“Now remember... this is a *safe space*... Share your ideas...”

I’m not
saying
anything

No one
likes my
ideas

Just wait...
that guy will
start talking

This will all be over
in a moment if we
just keep our
mouths shut...



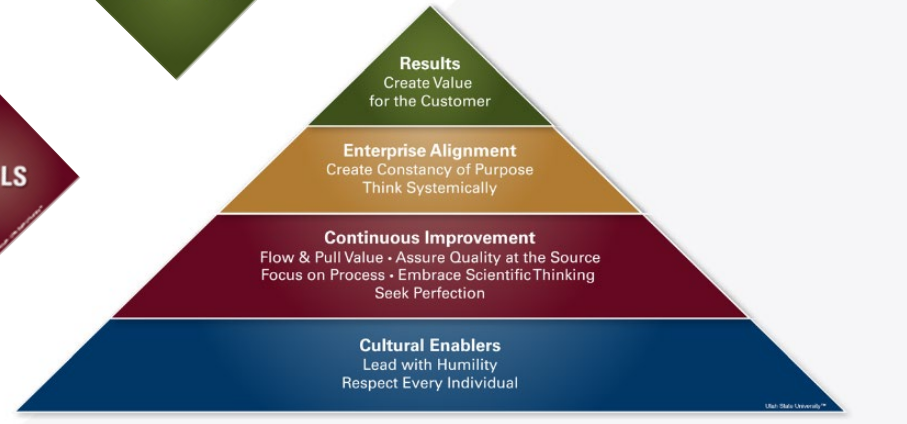
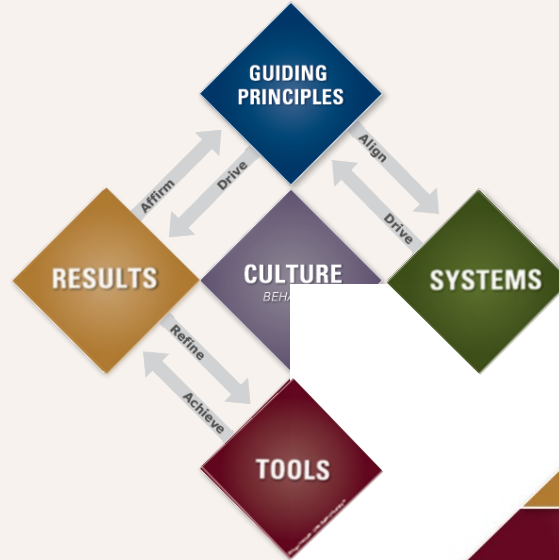
The Path Today

- How we got here
- Conceptual background
- Key concepts related to psychological safety
- Demonstrating the tools!
 - Not good
 - Good
 - Great
- Debrief and take aways

Creating an Environment That Fosters a Culture of Continuous Improvement

How we got here

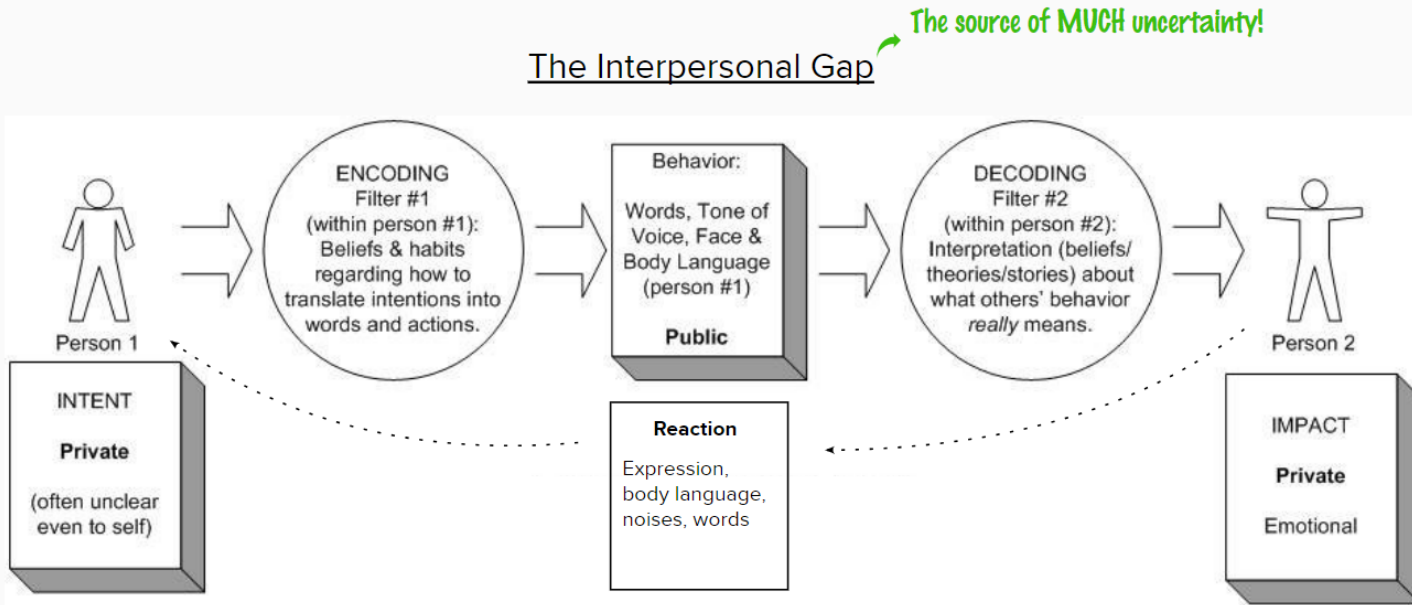
- We wanted better RESULTS!
- First we learn about 5S, Kaizen, A3s, PDCA, and DMAIC
 - Belts for everyone!
 - They don't use them...
- Huddles, daily management, standards, and Strategy Deployment
 - Building our systems!
 - The systems wilt...
- We need the cultural enablers



None of this works if people don't feel
safe to show up and learn.



Respect for People and Psychological Safety....the link



**The difference between the perceptions of
Person 1 and Person 2 is "the gap."**

**Our behaviors (including reactions) can
decrease, or increase, the gap.**

Perceived Safety = Adaptive Skills > Uncertainty(Environment x Self)

Respect for people ← Psychological Safety

- **Why this matters at work?**
 - Continuous improvement and lean thinking require **engaged** team members
 - Closing the interpersonal gap builds **psychological safety** and team engagement
 - Engaged teams lead to **synergy** and experimentation
 - Synergy leads to free-flow of creative ideas, leading to **innovation**

Let's practice!

Round 1

- The most common conversation
- Hold your chat for the debrief time after the round
- Notice the presence or absence of Psychological Safety in the conversation
- **Just observe; we will model**
- Group debrief

Let's practice!

Round 1

Round 1 Debrief

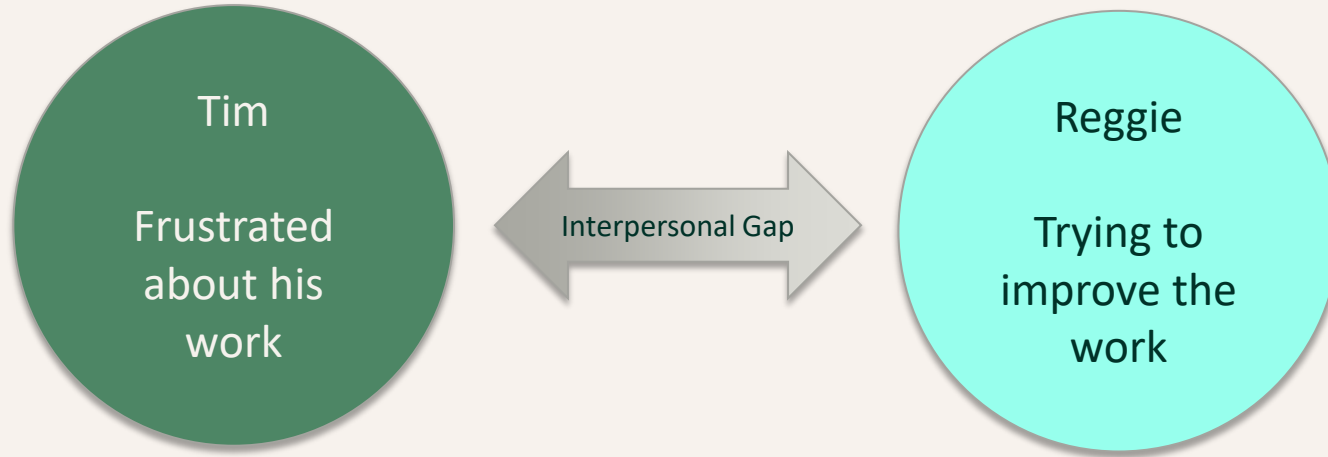
- **How did that go? Does Tim feel safe to engage?**
- **Empathic Listening**
 - Two components of Empathic Listening
 - **Reflect feelings**
 - **Rephrase the content in your own words**
 - A way of closing the interpersonal gap
- *Did we experience “empathic listening” in Round 1?*
- **Avoid autobiographical responses**
 - Advising, counseling
 - Probing, refuting
 - Interpreting, judging
 - Evaluating, fixing

Respect for people

← Psychological Safety

← Empathic Listening

- Empathic Listening helps to build Psychological Safety
- People feel respected when they feel they are heard




You can learn and apply this tool today!
But first, let's go to Round 2....

Respect for people

← Psychological Safety

← Empathic Listening

- Empathic Listening helps to build Psychological Safety
- People feel respected when they feel they are heard



Tim and
Reggie on the
same page

You can learn and apply this tool today!
But first, let's go to Round 2....

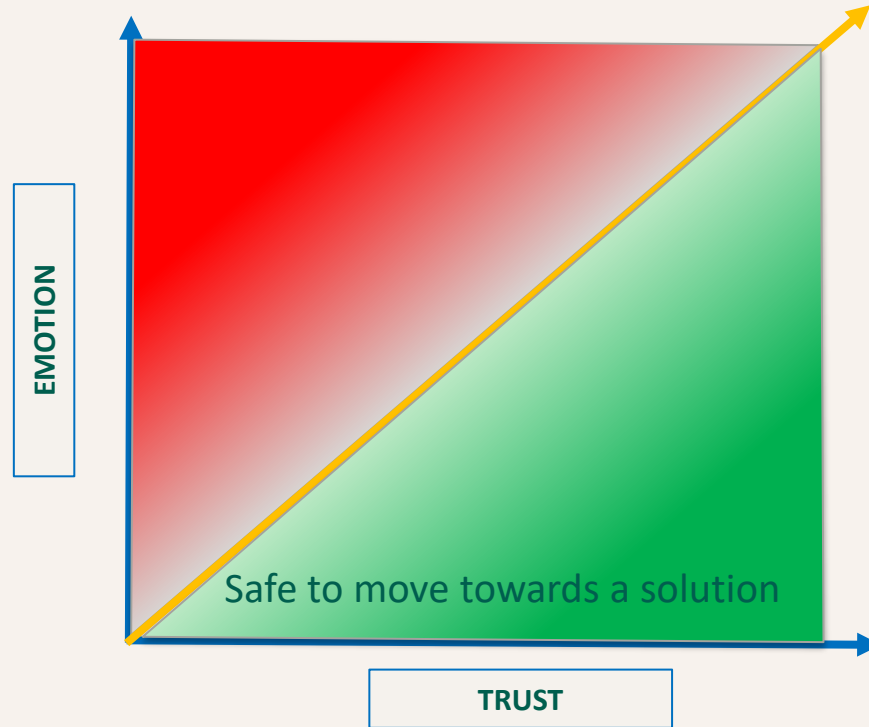
Let's practice!

Round 2

Round 2 Debrief

- Where was the “empathic listening”?
- Where did it go sideways?
- This is HARD!

Round 2 Debrief



Reception of the message

Common Reactions

Reception of the message	Understanding	Inaccurate	Accurate
	No Understanding	Correct what they said (Shrink the gap)	Go Deeper & Move towards a solution (No gap, work together!)
		Defend what they said	Repeat what they said

Sender's Message

This is what happened in Round 1

Have you tried better organizing your work and give people adequate time to provide data?

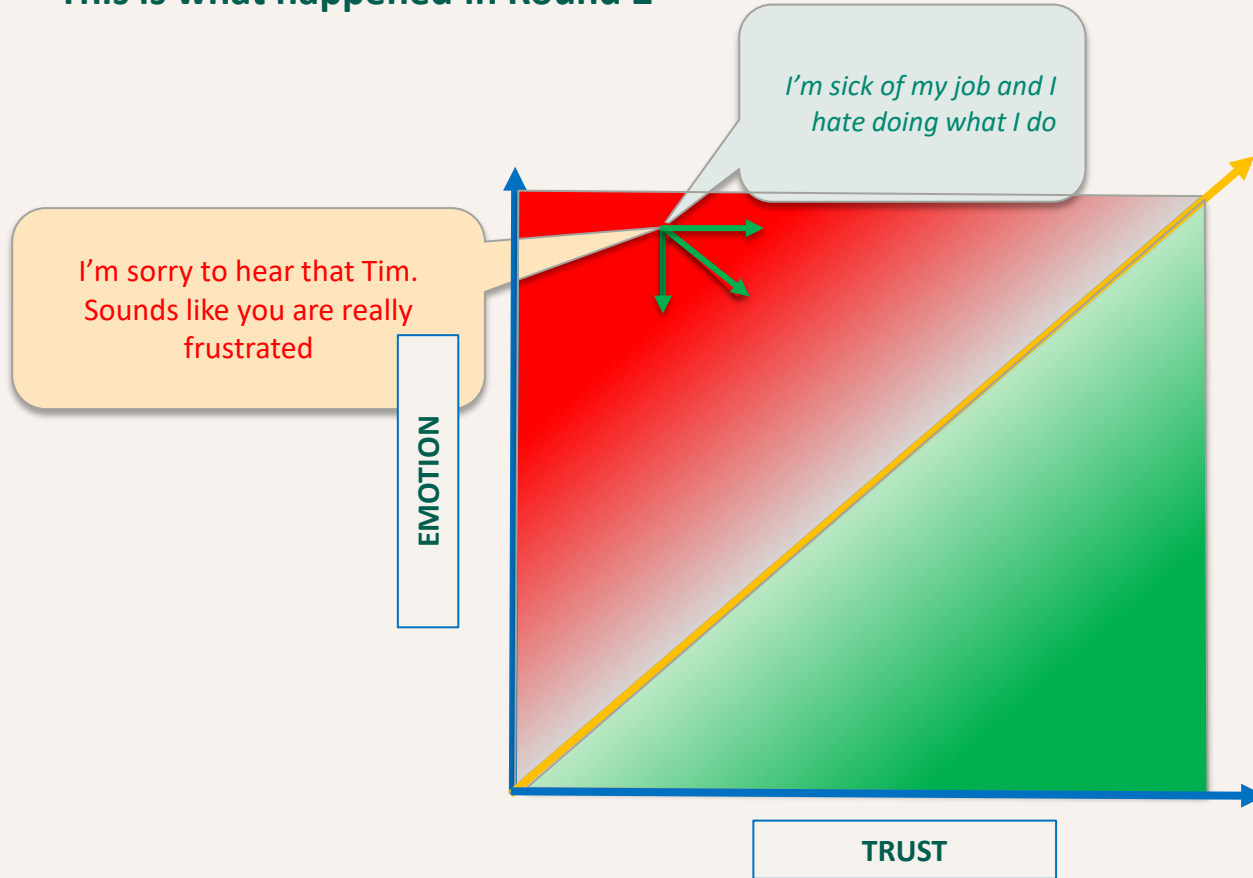
EMOTION

I'm not slow; people don't have the data, I have to keep going back and forth and all I hear from you is about what is missing in the report

It's not a waste of time; it's an important report. I don't understand why you are so slow.

TRUST

This is what happened in Round 2



This is what happened in Round 2

I don't want to throw anyone under the bus. It's not about them, it's the whole situation. Forget it! I'll figure it out.

That's not the point! It's not about the people. It's the whole process.

I'm sorry to hear that,
who is not providing data
to you?

EMOTION

TRUST

This is what happened in Round 2

I don't want to throw anyone under the bus. It's not about them, it's the whole situation. Forget it! I'll figure it out.

I can't help you if you don't tell me who is the problem

That's not the point! It's not about the people. It's the whole process.

I'm sorry to hear that, who is not providing data to you?

EMOTION

TRUST

Let's practice!

- **Round 3**
 - Let's apply the learnings!

Let's practice!

Round 3

Round 3 Debrief

- How did this conversation feel?
- Was there a pattern?
- Did we experience empathic listening?

Things to watch out for

- **Common pitfalls...**
 - Attempting to be "efficient" in relationships
 - Downplaying the importance of practicing empathic listening
 - Using autobiographical responses in high emotion situations
 - Falling for “emotionally manipulative triggers”

This is the FOUNDATION for everything else.

- **Our interactions create our relationships, which enable the culture**
- **Your words are your relationship building tools**
- **Every person has the power to use these tools.**
 - **Do not wait for others to start!**

Now Go Try It!

- **Find a partner, or group, to practice with.**
- **Practice in low stress situations.**
 - **Planning for lunch, hearing about someone's weekend.**
- **Debrief conversations that did not go how you hoped.**
 - **Consider how well YOU practiced the skills.**
 - **What could YOU have done differently?**

PRACTICE!





Resources

- [Shingo Model](#)
- [Interpersonal gap](#)
- [Psych Safety – Amy Edmondson](#)
- [Empathic listening - Covey](#)

- Tim Runge: trunge@rei.com
- Reggie Malli: smalli@rei.com

A photograph of two men standing on a dark, gravelly path in a mountainous area. The man on the left is wearing a grey hooded jacket, an orange beanie, and black pants, holding an orange helmet. The man on the right is wearing a green jacket, a blue beanie, a pink shirt, and black pants, also holding an orange helmet. They are both smiling. In the background, there are green mountains with patches of snow under a cloudy sky.

Thank you! Questions?