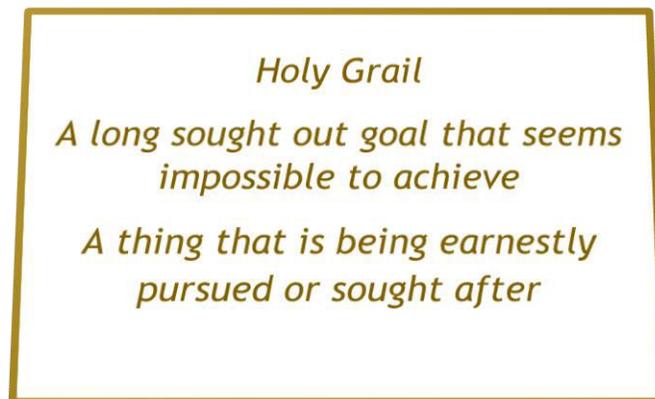


Discover the Holy Grail of Teamwork:
5 Questions to Assess Psychological Safety & 3 Steps to Create It

By Julie Chance

Congratulations!

You have discovered the trailhead to the Holy Grail of Teamwork.



If you have longed for and even pursued (without satisfactory results) a team that communicates and collaborates; focuses on solutions rather than problems, politics or personalities; and makes better decisions faster while actually executing on those decisions...

...Your journey's end is in sight.

Sound almost too good to be true? It turns out there actually is a Holy Grail of high performing teams. It's what Harvard professor Amy Edmondson calls psychological safety - a shared belief among team members that it is safe to speak up.

It's that simple. But you don't have to take my or Edmondson's word for it.

Analytics guru Google spent hundreds and hundreds of hours and probably hundreds of thousands of dollars slicing and dicing the data to figure out what makes great teams great. They came to the same conclusion.

How can you tell if your team has psychological safety?

Answer these five questions.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly Agree
If someone on the team makes a mistake it is <u>not</u> held against them.	1	2	3	4	5
Members of the team are willing to take risks and bring up tough issues.	1	2	3	4	5
No one on the team deliberately acts in a way that undermines the efforts of others.	1	2	3	4	5
Members of the team regularly ask each other for help.	1	2	3	4	5
Members of the team are never rejected for being different.	1	2	3	4	5

Adapted from the work of Amy Edmondson

Add up and record your score (It should be between 5 and 25)

The lower your score the more likely it is that your team lacks psychological safety.

While not statistically valid, here are some guidelines for interpreting your score:

- 25 - *Congratulations! Give yourself a high-five. You have a culture of psychological safety and you likely have the results to prove it. Let's chat. I'd like to learn from you.*
- 20-24 - *You have a high degree of psychological safety which likely leads to a cohesive, high-functioning team that communicates, collaborates and works together to solve problems most of the time. While there is room for*

improvement, you are off to a great start.

- 10-19 - *Time spent developing your team would likely pay big dividends.*
- 5-9 - *As a leader, you are in a position to be blind-sided by things your team knows and is not telling you. Be prepared for unpleasant surprises.*

To get an even more accurate read on your team's level of psychological safety, have your team anonymously answer these questions as well. Then as a team, prioritize your greatest areas of opportunity.

Why does psychological safety matter? When a team lacks psychological safety:

- Staff are not invested and lack engagement
- More time is spent finger pointing than problem solving
- Controversial topics critical to success are ignored or pushed under the rug

Ready to start the journey to the Holy Grail of Teamwork? Here are three things you can do to begin building a more cohesive, higher functioning team now.

1. Help team members find commonalities.

We are hard-wired to trust those who are similar to us and as human beings we all have more in common than meets the eye. At the start of a meeting have team members find three (non-work related things) they have in common with

each other. See if you can find three things the entire team has in common.

2. Help team members develop an appreciation for diversity.

Research shows that teams with diversity of perspective perform better. Those with diverse strengths are also more successful. A great way to start this process is to have team members share a strength or perspective they value in each other. Assessments such as Everything DiSC® can also be effective in helping individuals move from judging differences to valuing them.

3. Develop a culture that supports healthy conflict.

Make it safe for team members to disagree and share concerns. Mine for conflict by encouraging team members to express divergent views or assigning someone to play the role of devil's advocate. Poll for disagreement by asking both, "Does everyone agree?" and "Is there anyone who disagrees?" Reward the messenger rather than shooting him or her.

What's Next?

Taking the actions above will get you started but it is just a start. The quest for psychological safety and high performing teams, much like the quest for the Holy Grail, is a journey, can be challenging and does not come without risk. It should only be undertaken when there is a true commitment on the part of the leader to see the process through and with the help of an experienced guide.

If you are serious about discovering the Holy Grail of Teamwork and building a higher-functioning and higher-performing team that develops real solutions to real-time, real world problems we can help.

Use this link to schedule a time to talk.

<https://www.timetrade.com/book/2P1FC>

Not yet sure the journey to the Holy Grail of Teamwork is a path you want to pursue? Consider this:

To successfully lead in today's environment where change is coming at you from every direction, priorities keep shifting and you are under constant pressure to achieve more requires high functioning teams where:

- Team members engage in lively debate and dialogue around ideas and issues - challenging each other to come up with new and better ways of doing things.
- It's OK to place "Elephant in the room" topics on the table and address them openly and honestly.
- The focus is on "how we can" rather than "why we can't".
- Team members deal with each other directly rather than complaining about each other to you or others around the water cooler.
- Each person is committed and accountable to achieving the organizations goals.

High functioning teams:

- Eliminate time wasters like redundancy and duplication of effort that occur when people operate in silos.
- Make better decisions faster and actually execute on those decisions
- Focus on solutions not problems, politics, or personalities.

If you are open to exploring how developing a high functioning team might benefit you and your organization, use the link below to schedule a time to talk so you can learn more about our Leadership Team Development Process and Leadership Team Retreats.

<https://www.timetrade.com/book/2P1FC>

Or simply give me a call at 972-701-9311 or shoot me an email at jchance@strategies-by-design.com.