

## Discipline!

Everyone keeps talking about this Aristotle study by Google and how it showed that psychological safety is the most important factor for high-performing teams. I wouldn't dispute that at all: without this foundation, you can forget about a lot of other things.

And what happened? An entire million dollar industry has emerged around psychological safety and how to specifically promote and create it, and workshops are constantly being held on this topic. Although, to be honest, they're actually useless, but more about that next time.

Back to this study: it didn't just come up with one factor, but five. Very few people know that. But it did.

It's really stupid, excuse me, when a study comes up with five factors and the whole world only talks about one. Everyone simply ignored the rest of the results. It's like saying, 'The most important factor for survival in the desert is drinking. So here's some water, now off you go to cross the Sahara.' Sun hat? Food supplies? No sign of them. And then people wonder...

Why is no one talking about the second most important factor? Let's at least bring number two into play. That was reliability, and everything that falls under that umbrella – keeping promises, doing tasks conscientiously – has something to do with discipline.

I am a psychologist by training, so of course I am pleased when people talk about psychological safety. But I also spent fifteen years competing in sports, wanted to become a jazz pianist at one point, and was interested in various other things, and one thing is clear: no matter what field you are in, high performance always, and I repeat always, has something to do with discipline.

At first glance, this sounds rather unattractive and stiff, and it certainly fits less well with the zeitgeist than psychological safety, but I can tell you that without discipline, you can forget about achieving much, and besides, it can also be really cool.

I often hear complaints from customers that sound like this: 'We can't get anything done.' 'We don't finish anything before we start the next thing.' 'We never meet deadlines.' 'Everything eventually fizzles out.'

The result: extreme frustration and demotivation. Conversely, when things are going well, when an organisation gets off the ground, when A is followed by B – that is really satisfying, and you don't have to worry about motivation separately, either. It's one of those things anyway: when I hear about measures to increase motivation, I always ask myself: is working there really that shitty? And if so, wouldn't that be the real issue? But that's just a side note.

The nice thing about discipline is that it's really learnable and trainable, even for self-proclaimed chaots.

And it can be supported very effectively with structures: framework processes, checklists, rules, you name it. I know what I'm talking about, after all, I started my professional career as a chaot.

Discipline is an expression of professionalism. And, even if it sometimes gets lost in the shuffle at the moment: an organisation ultimately exists to perform a specific service. Organisational development must therefore always focus also on discipline, and I say this as someone who attaches great importance to the humanistic dimension in consulting and leadership work.

So, if you feel like tuning up your organisation and if the minor league is not enough for you, make sure you also focus on discipline in a positive way.