

## We already know what's important

In my last post, I mentioned that I think workshops with entire teams on the topic of psychological safety are a waste of time, and that I would explain why in this post. Well, here we go.

The point is quickly made: either psychological safety is high, in which case there is no need for a workshop. Or psychological safety is low, in which case a workshop is pointless because no one will speak up due to the psychological... And you can get the theory from the internet, so there's no need for a workshop.

The point is to create an atmosphere in which critical feedback can be given without the person concerned having to fear negative consequences. This, in turn, is not some mysterious magical quality that can be "installed" en bloc, but is made up of obvious elements. The ingredients that characterize such an atmosphere are easy to identify using common sense: appreciation, trust, mutual support, openness to criticism, willingness to learn and optimize, regardless of one's own ego.

Since fear of consequences is closely linked to questions of power ("Who has the power to harm me?"), those in power play a decisive role here and must demonstrate the qualities mentioned above. The behavior of leaders determines whether psychological safety can emerge at all.

The impact that leaders have is fed by many small daily experiences of employees and by evidence of their actions. This evidence of action contributes continuously to organizational development and the development of culture. Therefore, by definition, it cannot be dealt with in isolated formats, but requires constant attention. Managers are closely observed, and employees draw their own conclusions from their observations and experiences.

So if a workshop does take place, it is first and foremost a workshop with the management, who must accept this role. Because if they are not prepared to ask themselves what the state of psychological safety in their company has to do with their leadership work, then you can safely pack your bags. Then it's time to call it a day.

Did you hear the statements made by Philipp Navratil, the new CEO of Nestlé, when he took office? You can read them in the Tagi newspaper from October 17. "I want to create a winners' culture." "I will be ruthless in my assessment of performance." This will make it easy to see who is not delivering and who is not a good fit for Nestlé. He adds that he wants to be transparent.

Justifying ruthlessness (his choice of words, not mine) with transparency: you have to think of that first. I don't expect this to have a positive effect on psychological security, and certain recruiters are likely to tear their hair out. The stock market likes it.

But back to psychological safety: honestly, there's nothing new here. Interpersonal skills, sincerity, reliability, an attentive and open attitude – these are the things that are in demand. And yes, even with these qualities, it is possible to demand performance. I wouldn't put ruthlessness on the list of mandatory requirements.

My suggestion: take psychological safety seriously, but don't look too far. We all know what it is that determines whether we perceive someone as reliable, well-meaning, and trustworthy or not. Focus on putting what we have known for a long time into practice.

What can happen then is absolutely fascinating.