

Book Review – Shyr Chui

Book review - The Fearless Organization. Creating Psychological safety in the workplace for Learning, Innovation and Growth.

Amy C. Edmondson. Wiley 2019

Such was the importance of this topic that I quickly purchased this book after watching a talk given by Amy Edmondson which was recorded and uploaded to YouTube. I was not disappointed by this interesting and engaging read which was well written and, unlike many books based on a single premise, succinct and avoided unnecessary repetition.

If you have ever considered psychological safety in the workplace as either nice but optional, unworkable, or simply trendy, then you should read this. The author makes it abundantly clear that psychological safety should be mandatory, underpinning any organization that values safety, innovation and quality whilst operating in an environment filled with volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA).

The book firstly takes the reader through the science of psychological safety, what it is and how we can measure it. Secondly, she gives corporate examples of high profile failure due to a lack of psychological safety followed by examples of organizations which have flourished in part by incorporating it into their day to day operations. Finally, we are given valuable and practical ideas on how to pursue it and build it into our organizations.

Who is this book for?

Anyone in a leadership role in an organization operating in a VUCA environment.

Section headings:

1. The Power of Psychological Safety
2. Psychological Safety at Work
3. Creating a Fearless Organization

Favorite quote:

“The greatest enemy of learning is knowing - John Maxwell.
By now it should be clear that psychological safety is foundational to building a learning organization. Organizations that seek to stay relevant through continuous learning and agile execution must cultivate a fearless environment that encourages speaking up. In any company that thrives in a complex and uncertain world, leaders must be listening intently, with deep understanding that people are both the sensors who pick up signals that change is necessary and the source of creative new ideas to test and implement.”

Recommended?

5*/5 Leadership reading 101