20th Anniversary …



What Would You Say To… *Yourself?*

Andrew Robinson, Senior IT Support Manager

K.K. Krene / Opn Holdings Co., Ltd., Tokyo
MacSysAdmin, October 2nd, 2025

“Where are all the babies?”

We’re sitting in **The Bishop’s Arms** talking about the week…


THE BISHOPS ARMS
THE BISHOPS ARMS
Inn Keeping with Tradition
Interesting Value
FOR MONEY
BAR FOOD
Age 25 Years
THE BISHOPS ARMS
Inn Keeping with Tradition
A WIDE
Selection of
DIFFERENT
Ales From
MANY
ERDINGER
CASK MARQUE
SATURDAY
Age 25 Years

…about the ‘baby technologists’

If we don’t like the term ‘babies’

Newbies

Newcomers/ New Joiners…?

Team-mates?

Introduction Time!

*Who **was** I?*

- ‘Baby Technologist’
- Unrecognizable toolset
- *Longer ago than I’ll admit (but there are clues!)*



*Who **was** I?*

- ‘IT Support Engineer’
- Pre-MacAdmins Slack
- My first MacSysAdmin!



*Who **am** I?*

Andrew Robinson

- Senior IT Support Manager in Tokyo, Bangkok & other parts of Asia
- ***@Andrew*** in MacAdmins Slack



So, **where** was I?

How to integrate these ‘babies’

…our **junior colleagues**

We seem to be talking about these **new colleagues joining** teams…

We’re **really** talking about **teams**

*(No, not ***that*** Teams)*



Also been thinking about ‘**legacy**’ a lot

MacSysAdmin’s **20th** Birthday

Our new and old MSA **friends**

How many of us are **new** this year?

Thought experiment time!

Look around at this incredible **gathering**

Remembering that **conversation** at The Bishop's Arms…

Think about to **what worked** for us
(since then & up to now)

When **we** were those ‘baby technologists’

What **worked** well?
What **didn’t work** so much?

We have an AMAZING **opportunity** at MacSysAdmin…

To **share** those things…

Here’s my ask:

Take time this week to ask each other these **questions**

(It’s also useful if conversations aren’t **easy**!)

Talk to each other
&
listen to the answers:

“What did we **learn** as we ‘grew up?’”

“What might we pass **on**?”

“What would we **tell** ourselves,
if we could travel back in time?”

“And then, in turn, tell that to the **next generation**”

I'll start!

Things I've **learned** I wish I could go back & tell myself was **important**

(Caveat: This is the Andrew Version)

Look outside technology for ‘values’

Train for ‘**Values**’ rather than ‘**Practices**’

Values are what we feel, deep in ourselves

Practices are operational, tactical
&
ultimately **limited** by tools and time

Technology sometimes focused on **tools**

The **tools** we used 20 years ago, versus today

What we did is similar to today, but **how** we do them now - *different*

Values (what)

vs

Practices (how)

More important to teach **tool use?**

Or is it more important to teach **values?**

The Omni Group

[…We can teach to to write code… what we can't [easily] teach you is how to be … ill at the sight of badly designed software…]

— paraphrased The Omni Group job site text

Adam Savage's **Tested** Channel


Safety
9:48

Adam Savage's **Tested**

- Being a Maker
- Doing the Work
- Excelling at one's Craft

Even shaving!


A SHAVE NEW

These all can **inform** our work in technology

- Change Management
- Troubleshooting
- Team work

Basically, ANYthing can be a **metaphor**

Good to develop a
Metaphoric Mindset

Hone people skills as well as technical ones

I’ve been called
‘a **soft-skills** guy’

I’m **also** an IT manager

I can’t **only** be ‘hard skilled’

Business & **people** as well as **technical** skills

If you talk to another **human** at work… you're on a **team**

We’re really talking about
team functionality

What do teams **need** to **succeed**?

Two areas…

Psychological Safety

It’s hard to get stuff done while **nervous** (or **afraid**)

Teams need to be able to
talk

Teams need to feel **safe** to **innovate**

Not being **afraid** to be fully **engaged**

*"As long as there is **uncertainty** and **interdependence**, building a psychologically safe workplace is **necessary**."*

— Dr Amy Edmondson, ***"Building a psychologically safe workplace"***
TEDxHGSE

Psychological Safety



Psychological safety is a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes.

TEDx HGSE

x = independently organized TED event

Amy Edmondson



Google’s “Project Aristotle”

Understand team effectiveness

Theme : Teams



Collect data and measure effectiveness | **Identify dynamics of effective teams** | Help teams determine their own needs

Share

The researchers found that what really mattered was less about who is on the team, and more about how the team worked together. In order of importance:

- **Psychological safety:** A strong team culture was correlated with each member’s perception of the consequences of taking an interpersonal risk. Those on teams with strong cultures feel safe taking risks in the face of being seen as ignorant, incompetent, negative, or disruptive. In a team with high psychological safety, teammates feel safe to take risks around their team members. They feel confident that no one on the team will embarrass or punish anyone else for admitting a mistake, asking a question, or offering a new idea.

Google's "Project Aristotle"

"Psychological safety was by far the most important of the five key dynamics we found. It's the underpinning of the other four…"

— Julia Rozovsky **"The five keys to a successful Google team"**

What **is** Psychological Safety?

“…belief the work environment is ‘safe’ for interpersonal risk-taking…”

— Amy Edmondson, ***“The Fearless Organization”***

“…when [employees] know they can recover from their mistakes and help others do the same…”

— Amy Edmondson,
“***Follow these 4 steps to create psychological safety in your teams***”

https://www.fastcompany.com/90814937/follow-these-4-steps-to-create-psychological-safety-in-your-teams



HOW psychological safety RELATES TO PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

AMY EDMONDSON

COMFORT ZONE



People are open and collegial but not challenged. On teams, they fail to make major strides.

LEARNING ZONE



People collaborate and learn in the service of high performance, getting complex and innovative work done.

APATHY ZONE



People show up at work with their hearts and minds elsewhere; choosing self protection over exertion.

ANXIETY ZONE



People are reluctant to offer ideas, try new things, or ask for help, putting the work at risk.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY: LOW ↓ HIGH

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS: LOW ← → HIGH

Sketchnote: Tanmay Vora, QAspire.com

www.amycedmondson.com

https://amycedmondson.com/category/psychological-safety/

‘Zones’ of Psychological Safety

- **Comfort** = *high PS, too little performance*
- **Apathy** = *too little of both*
- **Anxiety** = *too little PS, a LOT of performance need*
- **Learning** = *balance of both - where we want to be!*



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Why do we **need** it?

It’s **VUCA**’s world; we just live in it

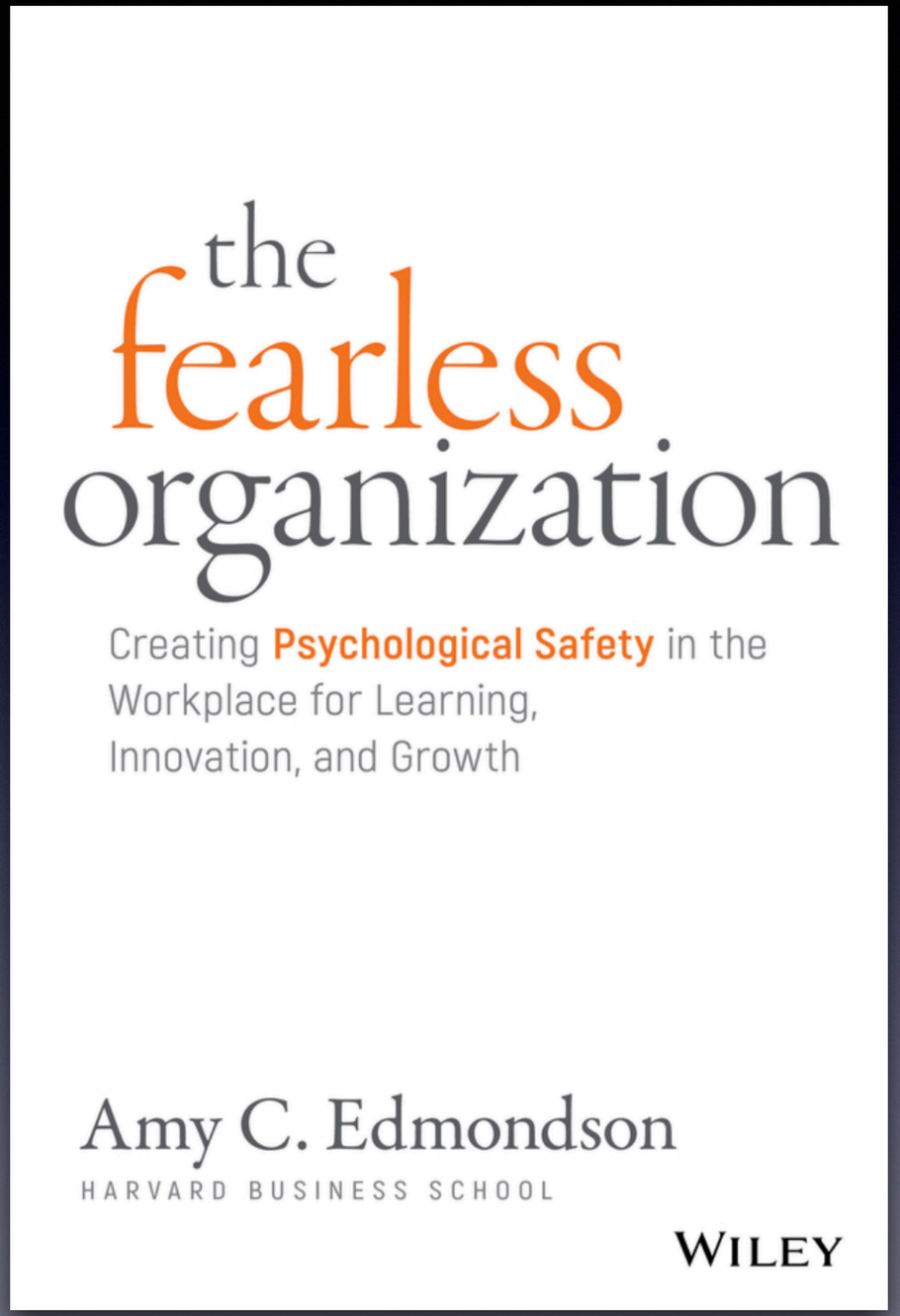
- **V**olatile
- **U**ncertain
- **C**omplex
- **A**mbiguous

Most of our work is **collaborative, complex, uncertain** or **new**

Our tools and workflows are **changing**

We need **high performing teams**

How do we get a psychologically safe **workplace**?


the
fearless
organization
Creating Psychological Safety in the
Workplace for Learning,
Innovation, and Growth
Amy C. Edmondson
HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL
WILEY

Dr. Edmundson's advice for teams

Well, some of it…

“Frame the work as a learning problem, not as an execution problem”

“…failure is not a bug of learning, it’s a feature”

— Rachel Simmons, Smith College,
“The Fearless Organization” A.C. Edmondson

Important to define what we are actually **doing**

“Model curiosity”

Be the person to ask a lot of (thoughtful) **questions**

“Situational humility”

If the boss/ team lead knows **everything**, how will the team ever grow?

Need to know when to be **humble**
&
when to **apply** our knowledge

“Acknowledge [our own]
fallibility”

Team leads, team members, ICs

We all make **mistakes**

*“I may miss something so I need your **help**…”*

Then prepare for **discussion**

“Respond productively”

Discuss, **consider**, brainstorm

LISTEN CAREFULLY

Normalize not knowing

Our team members **will** notice this

Psychological Safety is
key
to a fully engaged team

How can we **multiply** our team?

WALL STREET JOURNAL BESTSELLER

multipliers

HOW THE BEST LEADERS MAKE EVERYONE SMARTER



REVISED AND UPDATED

LIZ WISEMAN

FOREWORD BY STEPHEN R. COVEY

Multipliers (& Diminishers)

Multipliers make others **smarter**, more **effective**

- ***Talent Magnet***
- *Liberator*
- *Challenger*
- *Debate Maker*
- *Investor*

Talent Magnet

- **Engage** with people
  - *Ask them questions*
- **Advance** their careers
  - *More people want to work for them*
- **Appreciate** team's talents & utilize them
- **Get out of the way**

- *Talent Magnet*
- *Liberator*
- *Challenger*
- ***Debate Maker***
- *Investor*

“…With enough good minds on [a problem] we can figure it out…”

Not all decisions need **debate**, but **critical** ones may **benefit**

Debate Maker Multiplier

Frame the Issue

- Question we're trying to answer
- Why is this important
- Who is involved in decision
- How will the final decision be made

There are psychological safety **ideas** here!

Diminisher approach’s differ

Diminisher example

Decision Maker (vs Debate Maker)

- Only a few people worth listening to
- Dominate discussions
- Make fast, forced, ’gut’ decisions
- ‘What’ focused, vs ‘how’ or ‘why’

Accidental Diminishers

Complex vs Complicated

Simple is better… mostly

Rarely is ‘complicated’ our friend

‘Complex’ is **not always** the enemy

Change **Management**

Complicate by **changing** what we don’t need to

Of course, ‘what we don’t need to’ is **subjective**

Subjective evaluation comes from **values**

Values are **learned** from experience

“Without data you’re just another person with an opinion”

— W. Edwards Deming

Resist making emotional ‘gut’ decisions

Fast is not **always** Good…

…Especially without **data**

More things I'd tell myself…

Focus on the ‘Why’ of the choice

If we cannot explain **why** in a short statement… are we sure it’s right?

Your data, your logic, is it **rigorous**?

Does it hold up in a **discussion**?

Discussing is **always** going to improve the choice

Always help with **buy-in** from your team

Always going to result in better **output**

*Defend against ‘**solutioneering**’*

‘Jumping to solutions’

‘Assumptive design’

‘Design by solution’

‘Answer-first thinking’

- ***Jumping to solutions*** – A widely used phrase in design thinking and problem-solving disciplines.
- ***Preemptive problem-solving*** – Acting before the problem is fully defined.
- ***Assumptive design*** – Designing based on assumptions rather than research or validated needs.
- ***Solution bias*** – A cognitive bias where one favors a particular solution from the outset.
- ***Presupposed solutions*** – Suggesting a solution based on assumptions about the problem.
- ***Premature convergence*** – Settling on a solution too early in the problem-solving process.
- ***Design by solution*** – Starting with a solution and trying to retrofit it to a problem.
- ***Answer-first thinking*** – Similar idea in consulting or strategy work, where the answer is formulated before analysis.
- ***Cargo cult solutions*** – Implementing a solution based on superficial similarity to a past success, without understanding the underlying problem.

Leave as much of our Ego as we can ‘at the door’

No matter how much we think we **know**…

There’s someone who knows **more**

Normalize ‘not knowing’ as okay

No one knows everything

No one **can**

Defend yourself **against** your Ego

Ego is **bad** for good managers & **teams**

Don’t be SO in love with an idea that you miss a **reasonable alternative**

Listen more than you Talk

(I need to work more on this)

And when you speak, try to speak **last**

Final Thoughts

Our team ‘group mind’ **can** be awesome

If we have psychological **safety**

Be a **Multiplier** for those around us

It’s not what ***I*** know that matters

How we collectively **use** what we know

We are **rarely** working alone

Inter-dependant
&
Inter-operational

Legacy…

Gratitude…

MacSysAdmin Team!

Speakers!

And everyone watching…Tack!

Fin


MAC · SYS · ADMIN ·
GOTHENBURG

Endnotes

- **Building a psychologically safe workplace | *Amy Edmondson* | *TEDxHGSE*** - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhoLuui9gX8
  - **History of Psychological Safety** - https://psychsafety.com/the-history-of-psychological-safety/
  - **Follow these 4 steps to create psychological safety in your teams** - ***Amy Edmondson and Kim Scott - Fast Company (paywalled link)*** - https://www.fastcompany.com/90814937/follow-these-4-steps-to-create-psychological-safety-in-your-teams
  - https://amycedmondson.com/category/psychological-safety/
    - https://amycedmondson.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/thumbnail_accountability-matrix-Vora-Skethchnote.png
- **Project Aristotle** - ***Google re:work*** - https://rework.withgoogle.com/intl/en/guides/understanding-team-effectiveness
- **The Fearless Organization** by ***Amy C. Edmondson*** - https://books.apple.com/us/book/the-fearless-organization/id1442783464
- **Multipliers** by ***Liz Wiseman*** - https://books.apple.com/us/book/multipliers-revised-and-updated/id1146443252
- **Leading with Cultural Intelligence** by ***David Livermore*** - https://books.apple.com/us/book/leading-with-cultural-intelligence-3rd-edition/id6471329639