

# Psychological Safety: Lessons from Healthcare and Aviation

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## Psychological Safety



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

“A shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking.”

Dr Amy Edmondson, Psychological Safety and Learning Behavior in Work Teams, 1999

**When people feel psychologically safe,**  
**you might hear:**

I don't know, yet.

I need help.

I have an idea.

I think we have a problem.

I disagree.

I'd like to challenge that.

It's ok, we can learn from this.

I made a mistake.

I made a really big mistake.

# The Mental Cost Benefit Calculation

	Who benefits	When benefit occurs	Certainty of benefit
Voice	The organization and/or its customers	After some delay	Low
Silence	Oneself	Immediately	High

Dr Amy Edmondson, The Fearless Organisation

- Fear that asking for help means you don't know what you're doing
- Loss of status with your friends, peers, or boss
- Fear of punishment
- Missing out on promotions or opportunities
- Missing out on bonuses
- Fear of being criticised
- Concerned that it could mean more work to do
- Don't want to be labelled as a problem person
- Don't want to cause trouble
- Don't want to make your boss angry
- Feel you're not expert enough to suggest an idea
- Fear that you're *\*too\** expert to ask for help
- Fear that it won't come out right

# Tenerife, 1977

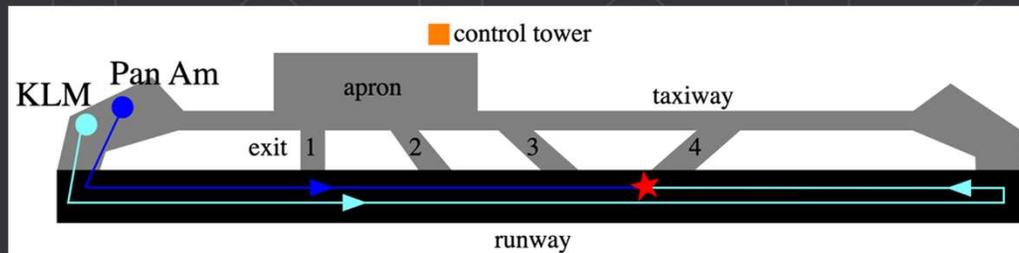


## Flight crew

Captain Jacob van Zanten: 11,000 flight hours

First Officer Klaas Meurs: 9,200 flight hours

Flight Engineer Willem Schreuder: 17,031 flight hours



## Graded Assertiveness:

### P.A.C.E. (Probe, Alert, Challenge, Emergency)

**Probe** – “Are you feeling rested enough to do this journey?”

**Alert** – “I’m concerned that you might be too tired to complete this journey safely.”

**Challenge** – “Wait. I don’t think this is safe.”

**Emergency** – “STOP. You’re not safe to drive.”

# Takeaways

1. Make psychological safety a priority.
2. Decrease the cost & increase the benefit of speaking up.
3. Model psychologically safe behaviour.

**Thanks!**

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# Appendix

# Admitting mistakes



