

Psychological Safety Discussion Questions

1. Think about "Maria" walking into a coaching session with sweating palms and racing thoughts. When have you experienced something similar in a professional learning context? What triggered that response?
2. Think about David Rock's SCARF model (Status, Certainty, Autonomy, Relatedness, Fairness). Which of these social threats is most commonly triggered in your organization's professional development? How might you redesign PD to minimize threat responses?
3. Carol Dweck's research shows that mindset is "context-dependent"—the same person can have a growth mindset in one environment and a fixed mindset in another. What conditions in your school bring out growth mindset in teachers? What conditions trigger fixed mindset?
4. Amy Edmondson's research shows that the highest-performing teams combine high psychological safety with high accountability. Where would you place your team on these two dimensions? What would it take to move toward the "high-high" quadrant?
5. Psychological safety is built through "thousands of small signals that have accumulated over time." What signals—positive or negative—have accumulated in your organization? What one small signal could you change this week?