# Setting Yourself Up as a Collaborative Independent Investigator

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# ICTR Team Science Core



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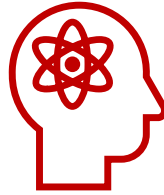Institute for Clinical and Translational Research
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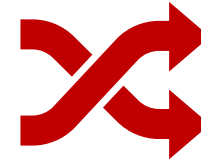UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

# Team Science

Collaborative        Scientific        Interdisciplinary        Interdependent

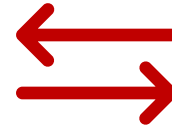Team science allows for greater impact, innovation, productivity and reproducibility

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(National Research Council, 2015; Rolland et al. 2020)

# You only need one skill…

Actively Listen

# What are you listening for?
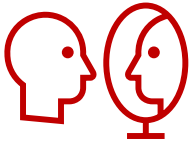
Awareness

Connections

Feedback

Inspiration

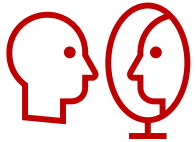Institute for Clinical and
Translational Research
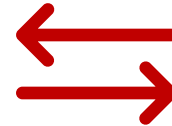UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

# What are you listening for?

Awareness

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# Listening to Yourself: Developing Awareness

- Core Values

- Research Vision

- Definition of "Good" Collaborator

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# Listening to Find What is Important

# Listening to Develop a
# Clear Shared Research Vision



- Clarity in communication to team members.

- Clarity in roles and responsibilities.

- Motivation for the work.

- Target for assessment and evaluation.

- Enhances team effectiveness.

(Bennett & Gadlin, 2013; Stokols et al, 2008)

# Who do you want to work with?

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# What are you listening for?
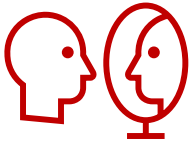
Awareness
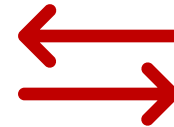
Connections

Feedback

Inspiration

# Listening to Connect with Collaborators



- Attend relevant workshops, conferences, and seminars with an interviewing lens
  - Does their work or expertise fit?
  - Do they have experience collaborating?
  - How do they discuss collaborations and authorship?
  - What kinds of stories do they tell you about their collaborations?

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# Cognitive Diversity

- Refers to differences in perspective or information processing styles -- how individuals engage with uncertain and complex situations.

- Leads to greater innovation and expedited problem solving

- Is less visible and requires targeted assessment
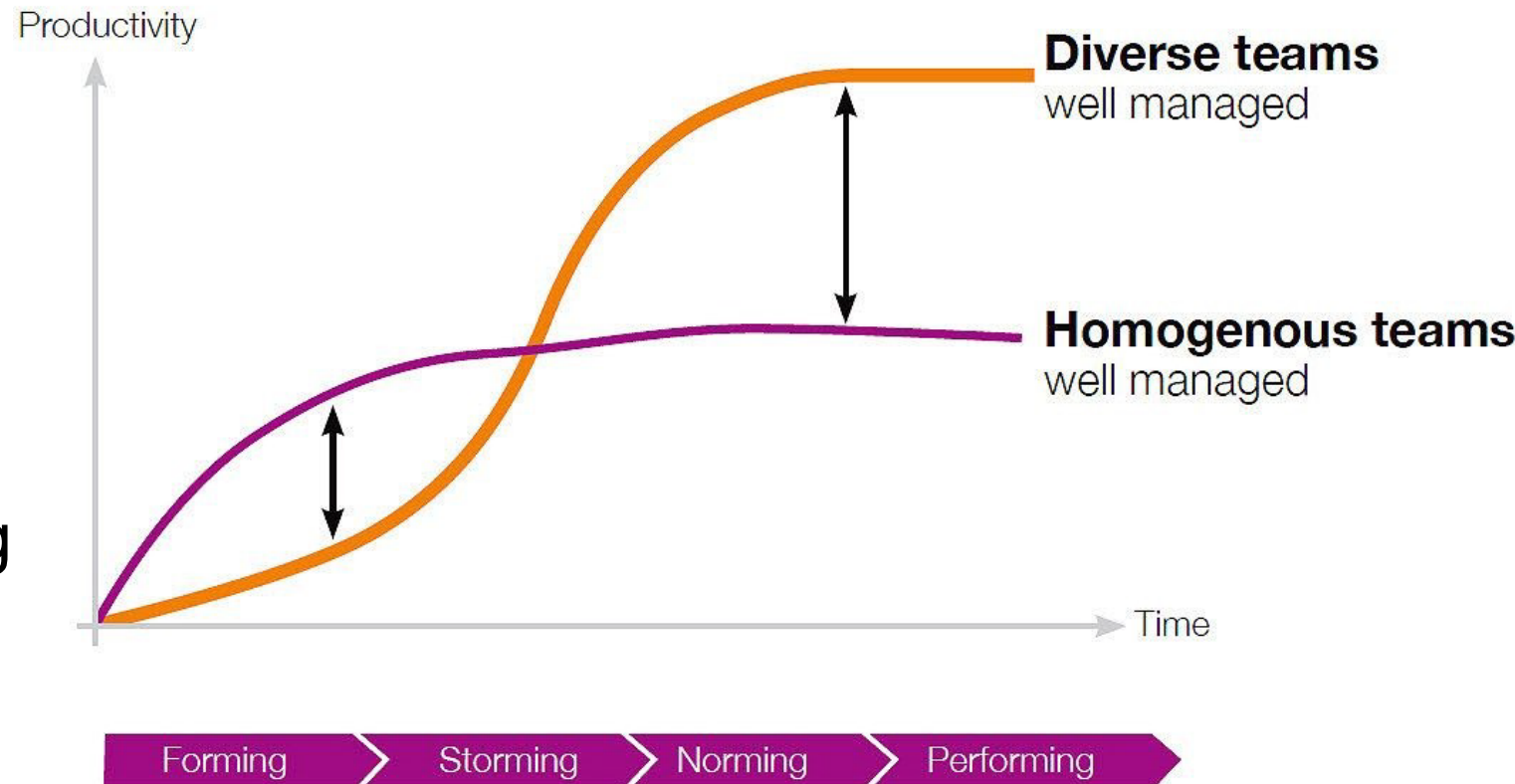


This figure synthesizes the work on the performance of diverse versus homogenous teams by Katherine W. Philips (October 2014) and Bruce Tuckman's framework (1965) for the maturity over time of team performance.

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# Psychological Safety

*"...the belief that the work environment is safe for interpersonal risk taking… Psychological safety is present when colleagues trust and respect each other and feel able—even obligated—to be candid"*
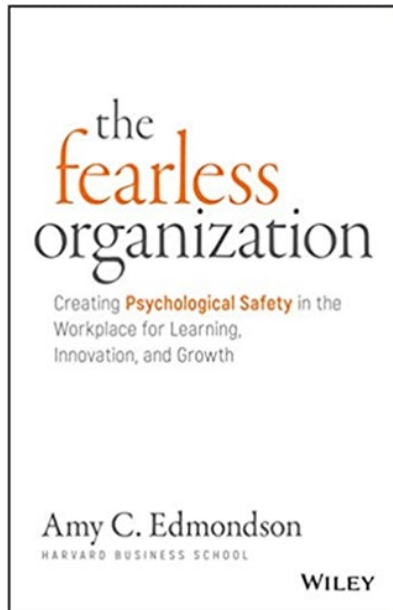


- **Psychologically Safe Cultures**
  - *Everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves, sharing questions, concerns, and mistakes without fear of embarrassment or that they will be humiliated, ignored, or blamed*
  - *Team-emergent phenomena nurtured by every team member*

*"… you don't have to be the boss to be a leader… the practice [of psychological safety] must be co-created—and continuously nurtured."*

# Promoting Psychological Safety is about Listening Well

- Transparently sharing information and motives

- Listening with attention, gratitude, and humility

- Reframing mistakes as opportunities for learning

- Setting boundaries and enforcing accountability

(Edmondson & Bransby, 2023; Oyer, 2015; McCullough et al., 2002; Li et al., 2020)

# What are you listening for?
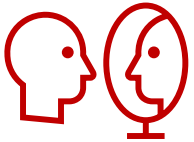
Awareness

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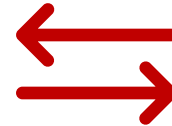
Feedback

Inspiration

# Listening to Others: Growing from Feedback

- Cultivate a Learning Mindset

- Embrace Feedback

- Practice Reflexivity



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# Listening to Change our Mindset about Learning
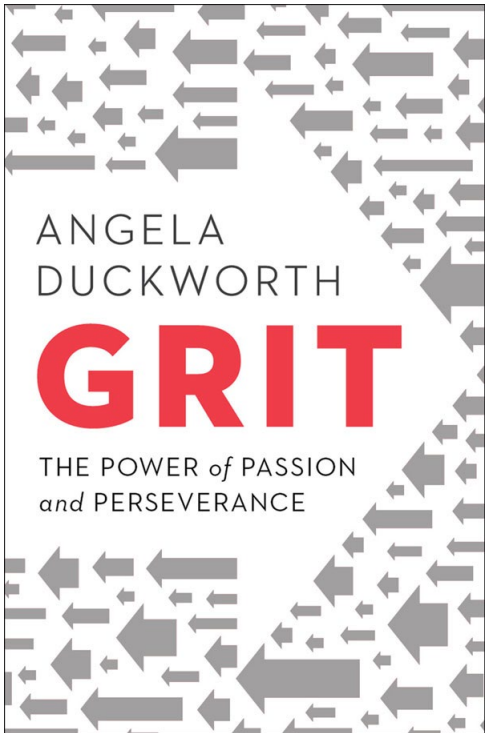
## Fixed Mindset

- Goal: to look smart
- Avoid failure
- Avoid challenges
- Failure defines your identity
- Feedback and criticism are personal

## Growth Mindset

- Goal: to learn
- Confront uncertainty
- Embrace challenges
- Failure provides information
- Feedback is about current capabilities (which can be expanded!)

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# Listening to Feedback as a System



GIVER RESPONSIBILITY

RECEIVER RESPONSIBILITY

1. **Awareness:** Feedback is clear and aligned with the goals of the team and its members

2. **Culture:** Feedback is shared in a psychologically safe environment.

3. **Implementation:** Feedback is presented in the context of available skills and resources

4. **Reflexivity:** Feedback is seen as an opportunity for learning and improvement

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Modified from Figure 1 presented in Nash and Winstone, 2017

# Team Reflexivity Involves Listening to Your Team

- Teams need to regularly reflect to evolve and adapt
  - Vision/goals
  - Roles and Responsibilities
  - Culture
  - Processes

**We do not learn from experience…
We learn from reflecting on experience.**

~ John Dewey

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Schippers, Edmondson, & West, 2014

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# What are you listening for?



Awareness



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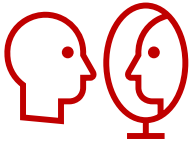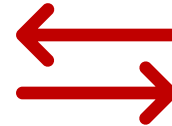
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# Listening to Broader Influences for Inspiration

# High Performing Teams

| | |
|---|---|
| **Team Management** | • Shared Vision, Clear Roles and Responsibilities, Effective Project Management |
| **Communication** | • Shared Knowledge, Transactive Memory |
| **Collaborative Problem Solving** | • Learning/Adaptation, Collective Intelligence, Transdisciplinarity |
| **Affect** | • Trust, Cohesion, Psychological Safety |
| **Leadership** | • Sense-making, Conflict Resolution, Goal-Setting |

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(Brasier et al 2023; Sweeney et al 2023)

# The Art of Listening

Adam Grant ✔
@AdamMGrant

The true leader in a group is rarely the person who talks the most. It's usually the person who listens best.

Listening is more than hearing what's said. It's noticing and surfacing what isn't said.

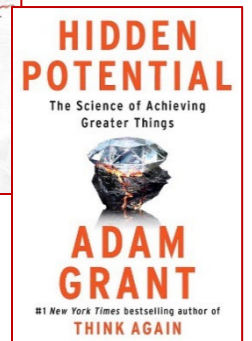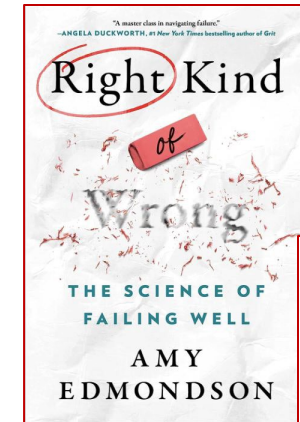Inviting dissenting views and amplifying quiet voices are acts of leadership.

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# To be a successful independent collaborator, all you have to do is



Actively Listen

# To be a successful independent collaborator, all you have to do is

- To yourself to develop awareness
- To members of your scientific community to identify collaborators, learn and grow
- To current team members to ensure your team works well together
- To alternative sources of inspiration to generate new ideas and ways of thinking

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