

Gail Donohue

Optimizing the Environment
for Your Athletes and Coaches



Please use mentimeter to ask a question
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Optimizing the Environment for Your Athletes & Coaches

Sport Ireland's Women in Sport
Coaching Conference

Dec 3, 2022

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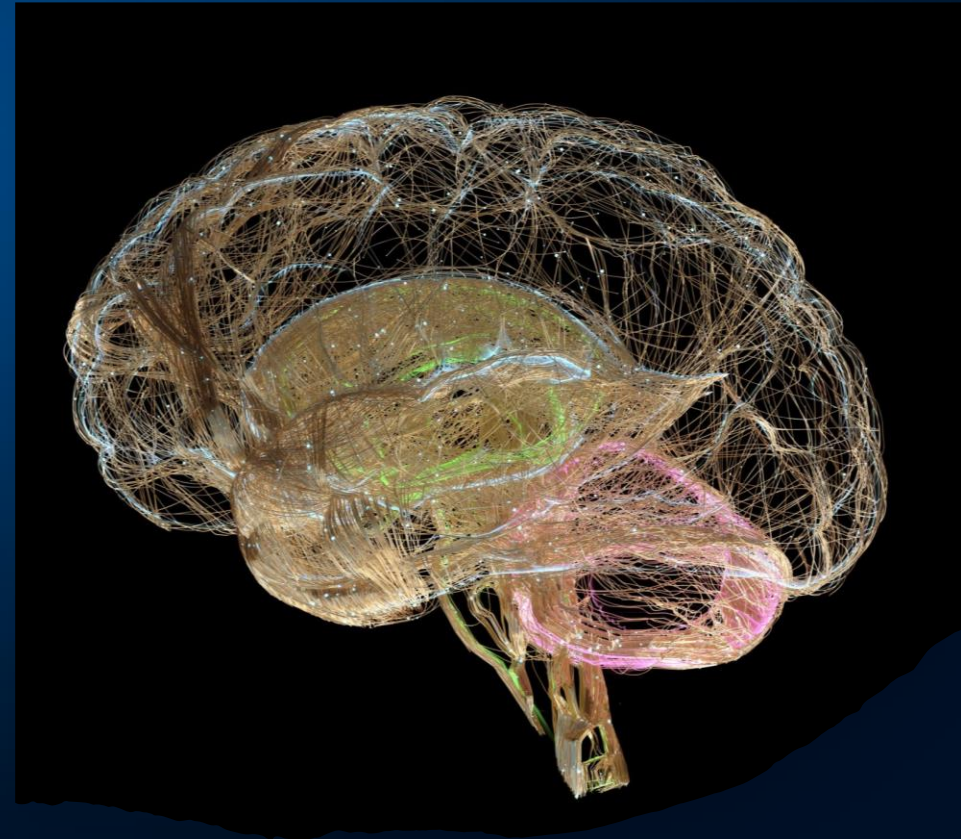
Sport Ireland's
Coaching Plan Vision

Good coaching
makes THE
difference!



Our Time Today.....

1. Optimising the Environment for athletes and coaches.....The changing landscape of sport What was accepted behaviour or considered “normal” is being questioned.
2. Information from neuroscience – understanding your brain and the changing landscape. It makes sense!
3. Application of neuroscience concepts to begin optimising environments to create **more** psychological safety.



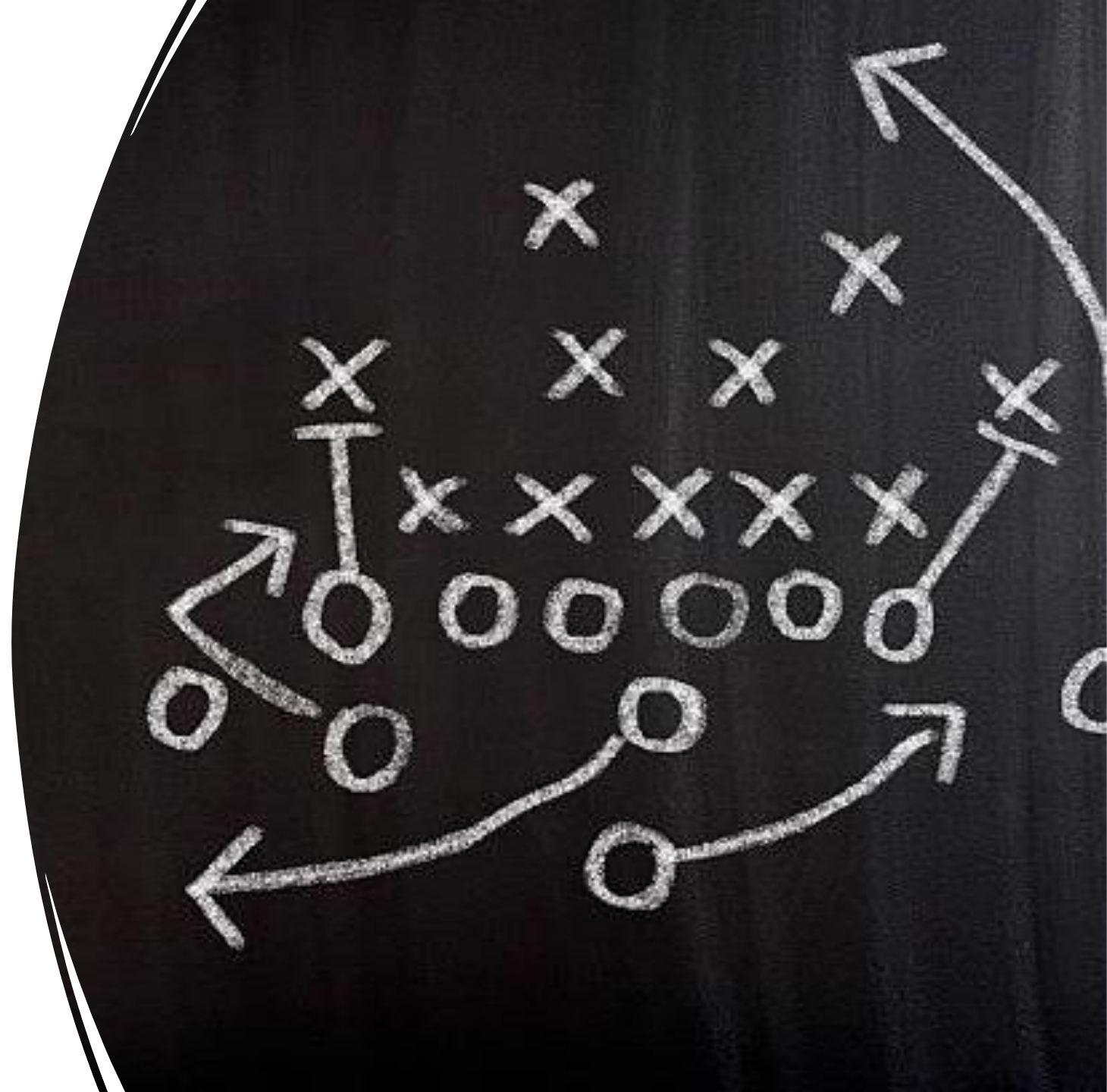


- Communication
- Parents
- How to connect and build trust.
- Coaches want to learn ways to connect with their athletes
- Traditional ways of coaching

- Communication around mental health.
- Tools to manage stress
- Keeping athletes engaged
- Creating a fun environment – keeping everyone enjoying their sport

Optimising Your Environment.....

- Role of Coaches and Sport Leaders is shifting.
- You already know the tactical and technical aspects of your sport!
- Its not about the X's and O's!!!....
- **BE** the leader you'd want to follow.





The GREY AREAS of Sport

- Complexity of the coach / athlete relationship
- History of the sport and sport cultural legacies
- Normalization of behaviours
- No reporting – lack of trust – fear of retribution, ostracization

- 
- Think of BEST COACH you had..... Write 3 descriptors

- 
- Think of WORST COACH you had..... Write 3 descriptors

Classify your descriptors into one of the three columns.....

Emotional Intelligence	Intellectual Intelligence	Technical Knowledge

MY INSPIRATION

**HE MADE US FEEL WE WERE
THE BEST IN THE WORLD**







“To be a technically good coach is one thing, but what gives the coach the “edge” (i.e., the extra effectiveness) in this unforgiving and relentless competitive sport environment is the connection developed between the coach and athlete.”

Jowett, S., & Shanmugam, V. (2016). Relational Coaching in Sport: Its psychological underpinnings and practical effectiveness.



As coaches - the
environments we
create shape mindsets,
beliefs, behaviours &
results:
our own and others



Is your environment.....





MORE Psychological Safety

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY:

- Amy C. Edmondson, who defines it as “a **shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking.**”
- In other words, psychologically safe teams trust each other to experiment without judgement, voice opinions without being shamed, and fail without being labelled a failure.



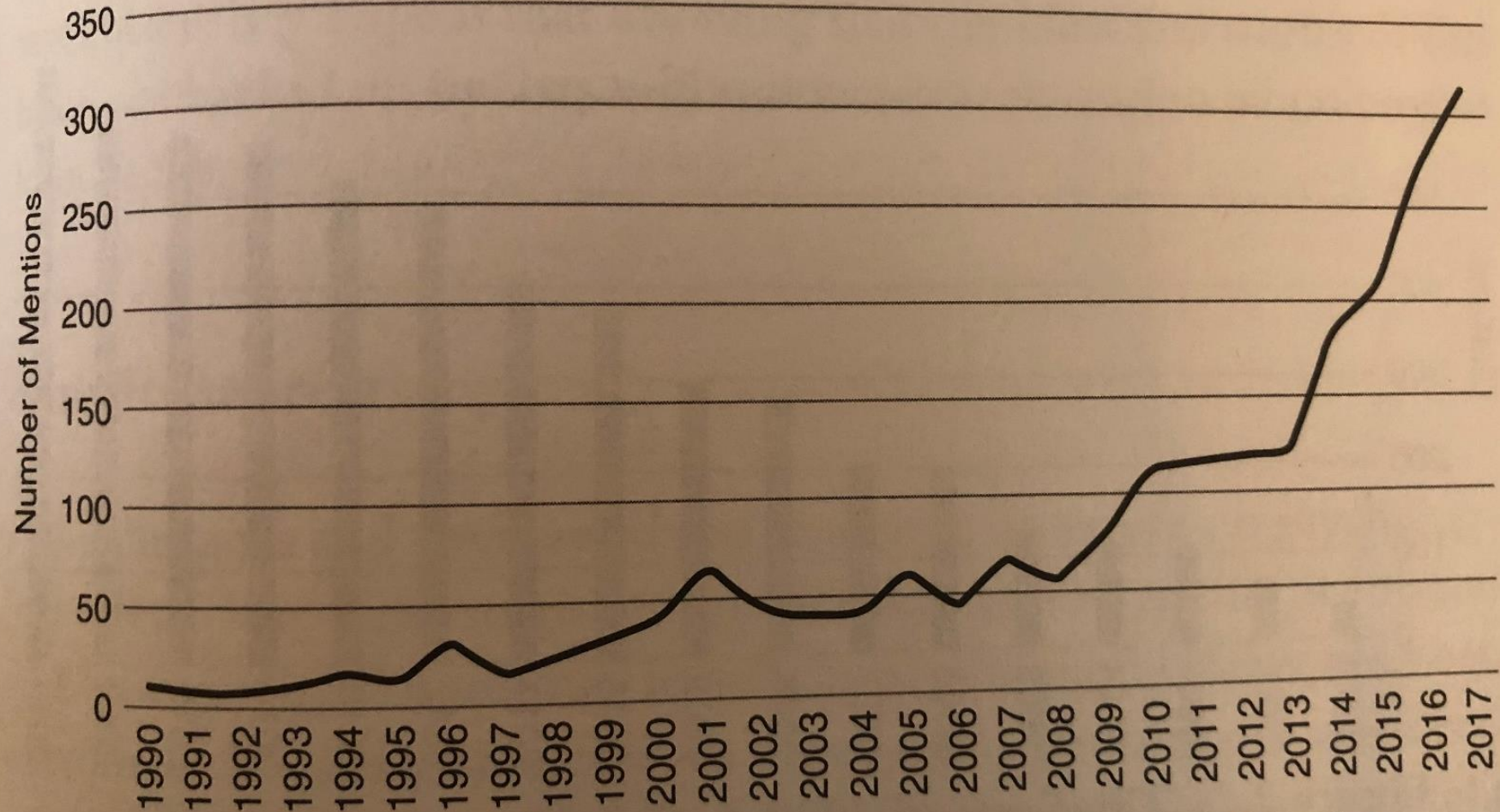


Figure 2.1 Mentions of Psychological Safety in Popular

Coaching GREY AREAS

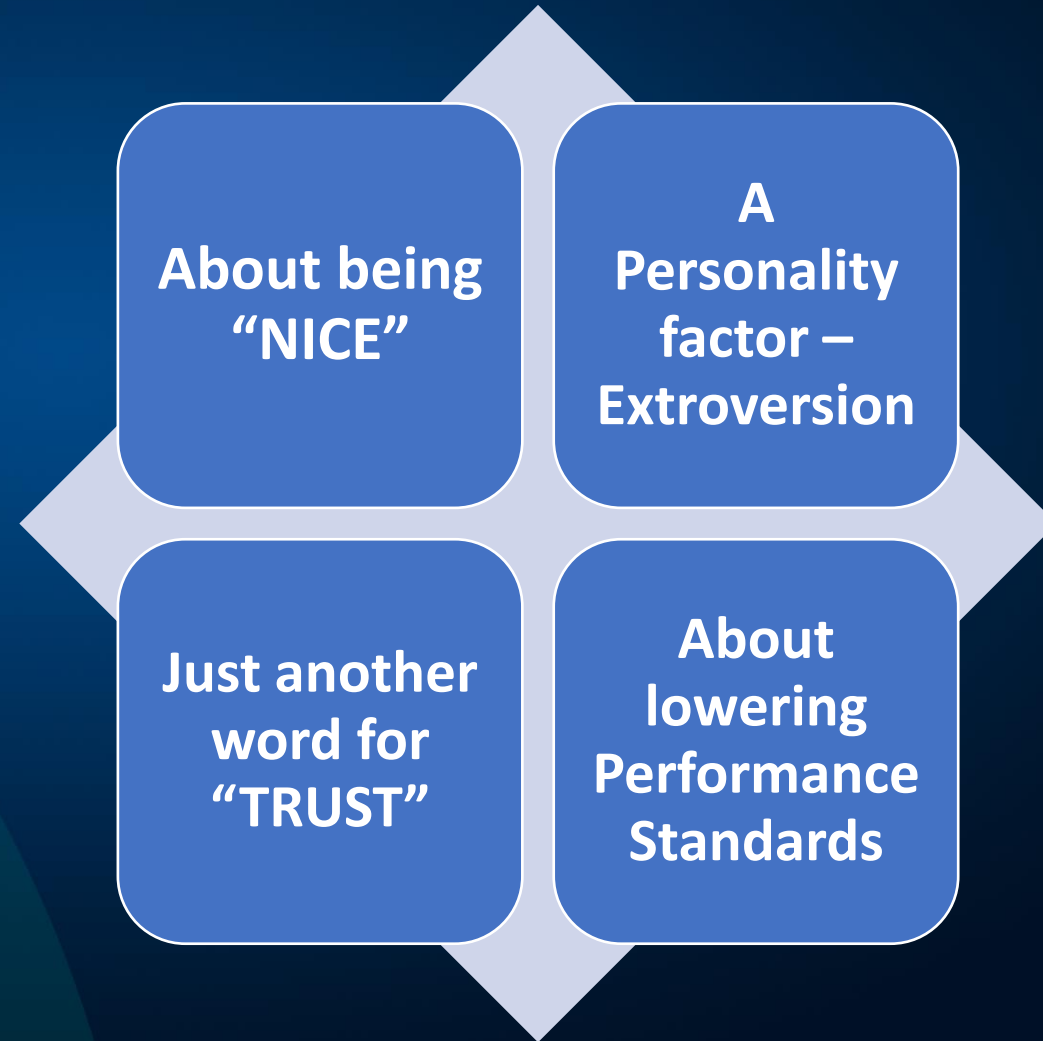
- Soft
- Scorned
- Prioritize sports
- Swearing
- Ridiculing
- Talking and laughing about athletes
- Star athletes not confronted
- Not explaining technique in different ways

Creating Psychological Safety

- Welcome Curiosity
- Give Athletes a Voice
- Earn and Extend Trust
- Promote Healthy Conflict
- Think Differently about Relationships
- Break the Golden Rule



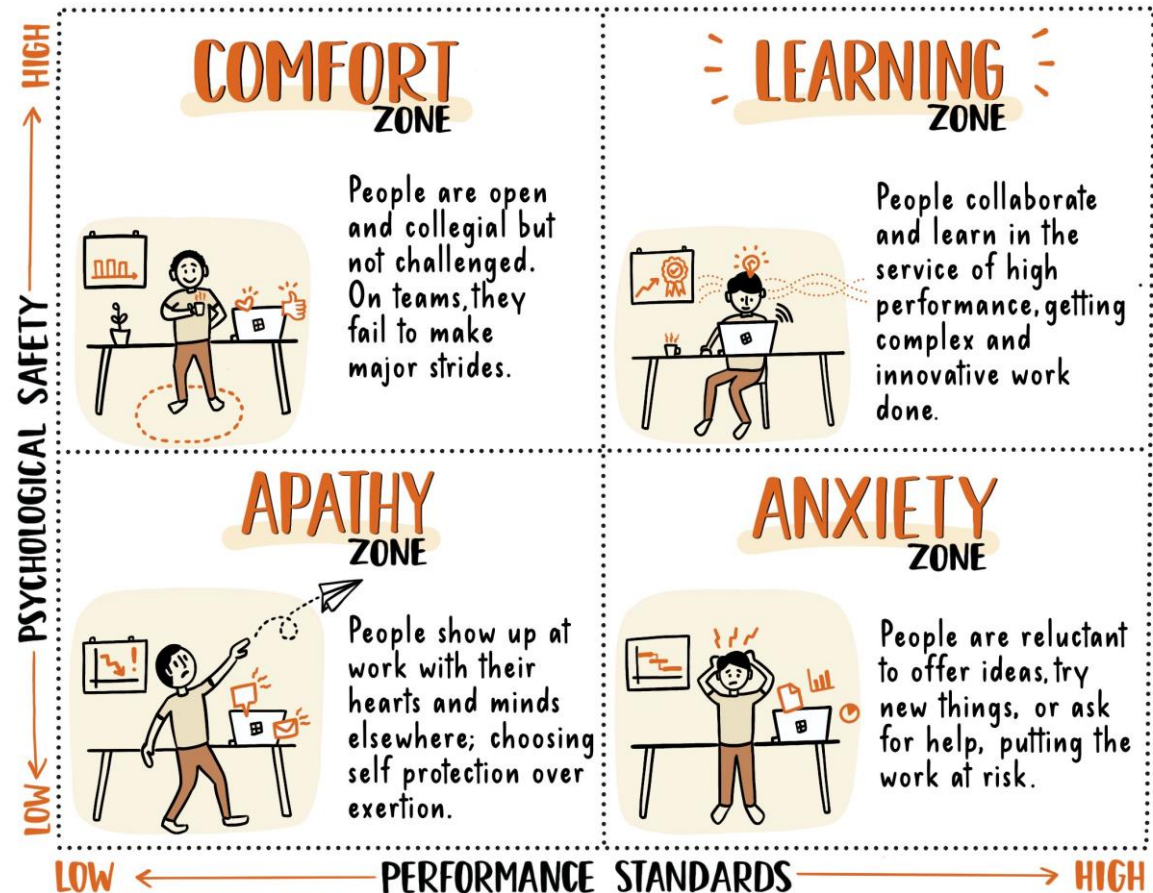
What Psychological Safety is NOT.....





HOW
psychological safety
RELATES TO PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

AMY EDMONDSON

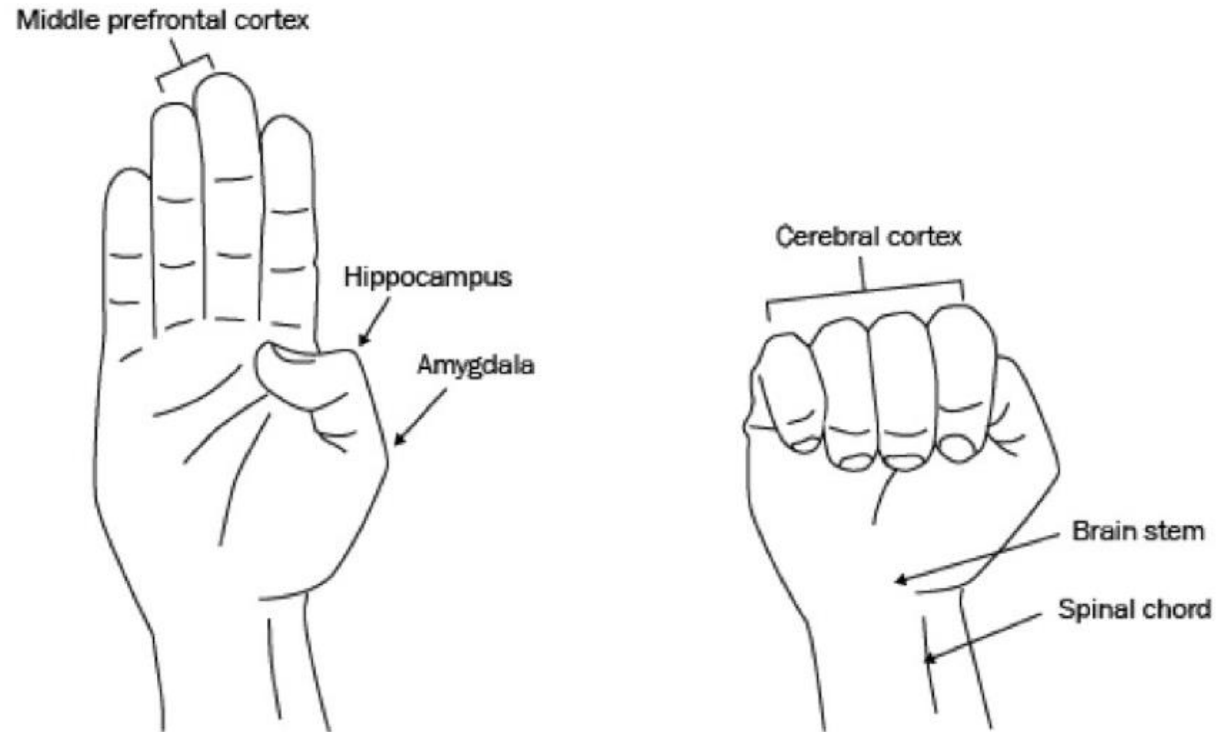


RELATIONAL NEUROSCIENCE 101



Your Brain is a Social Organ





Hand model courtesy of Dan Siegel



YOUR BRAIN

FLIPPING YOUR LID

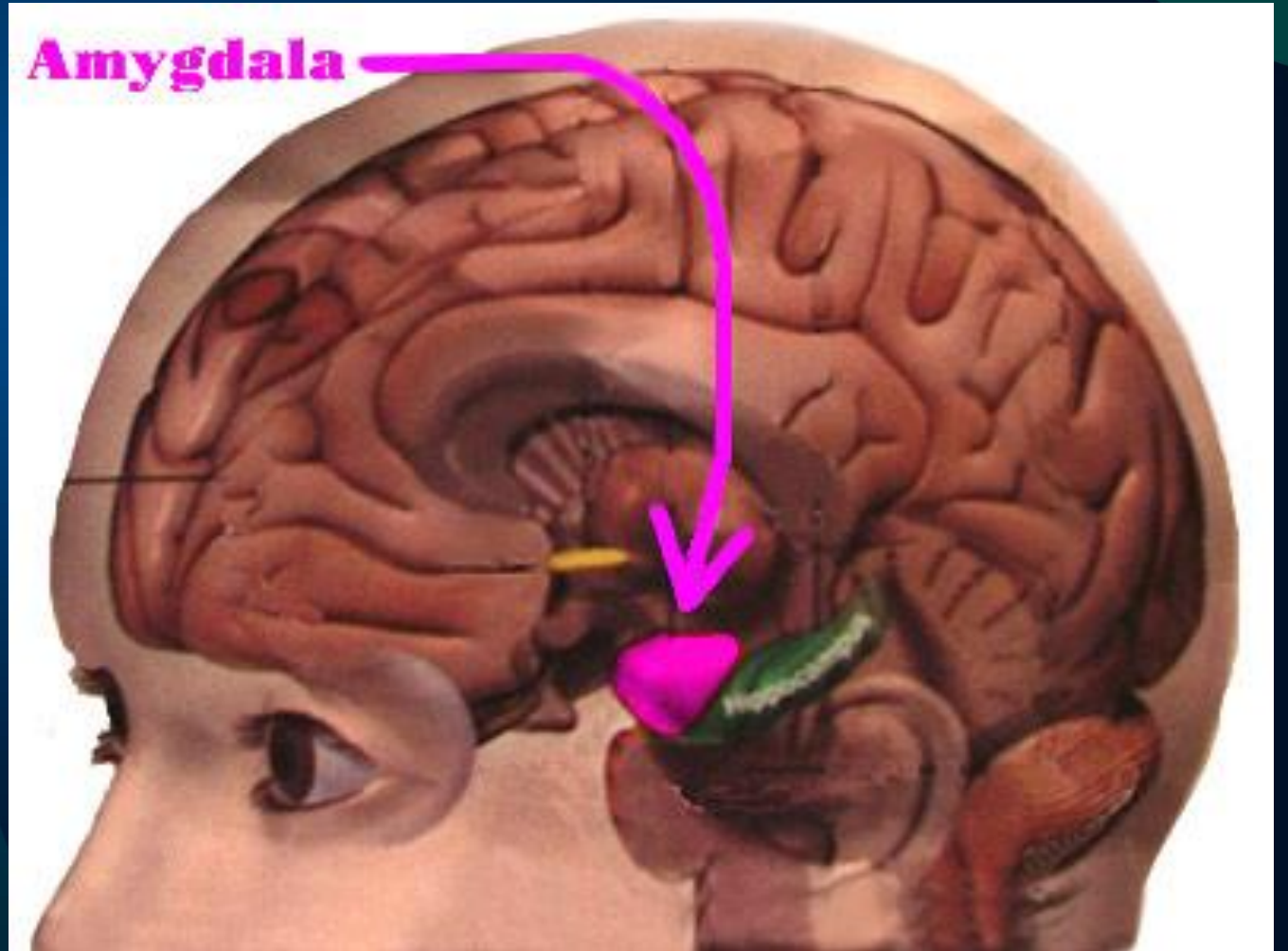
Our Emotions drive US!



Our experiences
and memories
live on within
us.



And are
primarily
stored by the
amygdala



Our emotional memories are linked together
like a Christmas tree light string





Think of a
time when
you may have
“Flipped Your
Lid”

This anger reaction
can unexpectedly
stimulate all the
other unintegrated
memories



Which means
that our anger
can take us
(and everyone
else) by
surprise.



LEFT

LOGIC SKILLS

DAILY ACTIVITIES

LANGUAGE & GRAMMAR

MEMORY

ANALYTIC & DETAIL

SCIENCE

STRATEGY

FACTS

WORDS OF SONGS



RIGHT

CREATIVITY

FEELINGS

CONCENTRATION

PHOTO MEMORY

VISUALIZATION

IMAGINATION

DECISION MAKING

MULTITASKING

INTUITION

ARTS & RHYTHM

ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS



Two
Hemispheres....

The left hemisphere's superpower, it's only tool for the integration of **new information...**





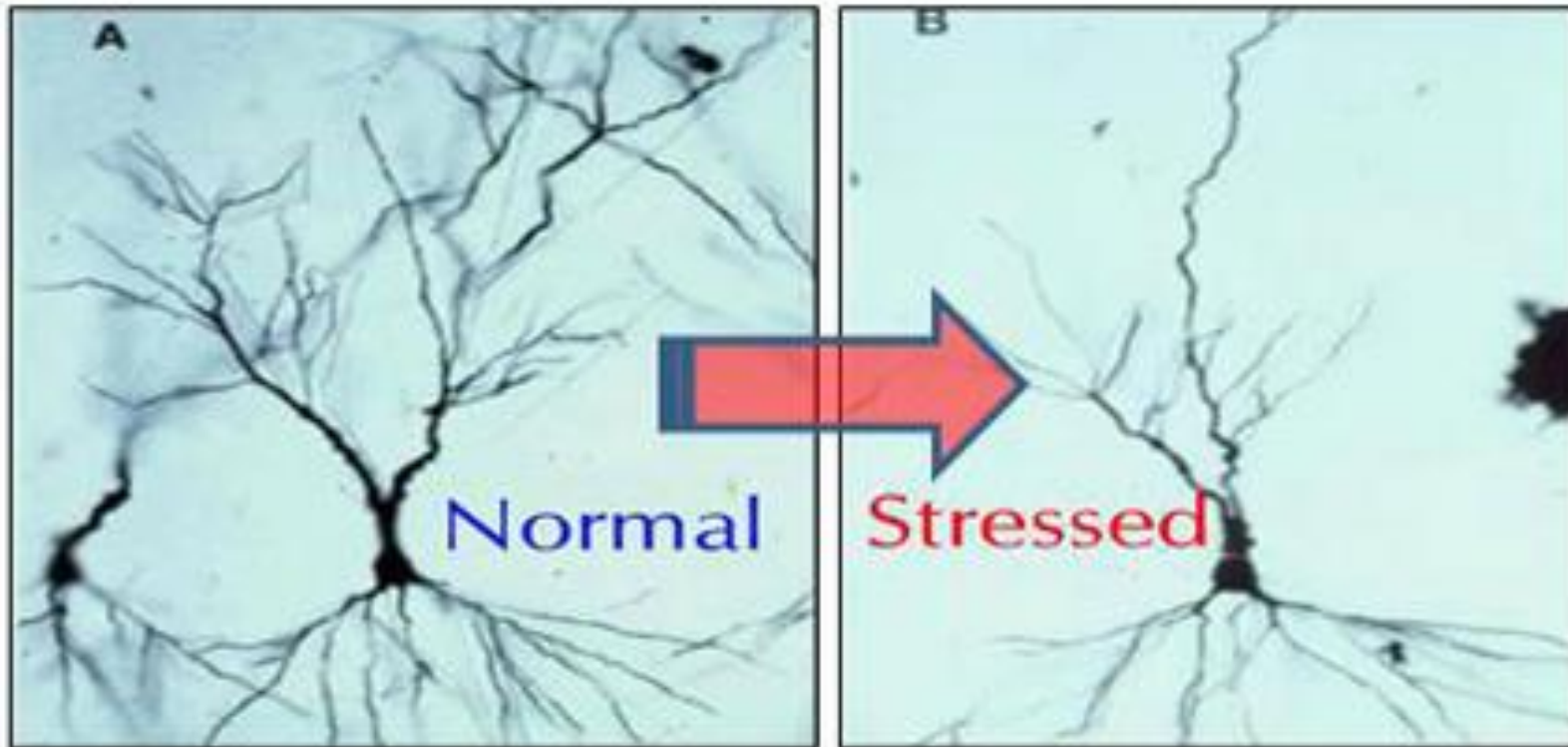
...is the
assignment of
who is
responsible,
otherwise
known and
experienced as
BLAME



Our Biology

- People constantly manage interpersonal risk, consciously and unconsciously

Stress Shrinks Brain Networks





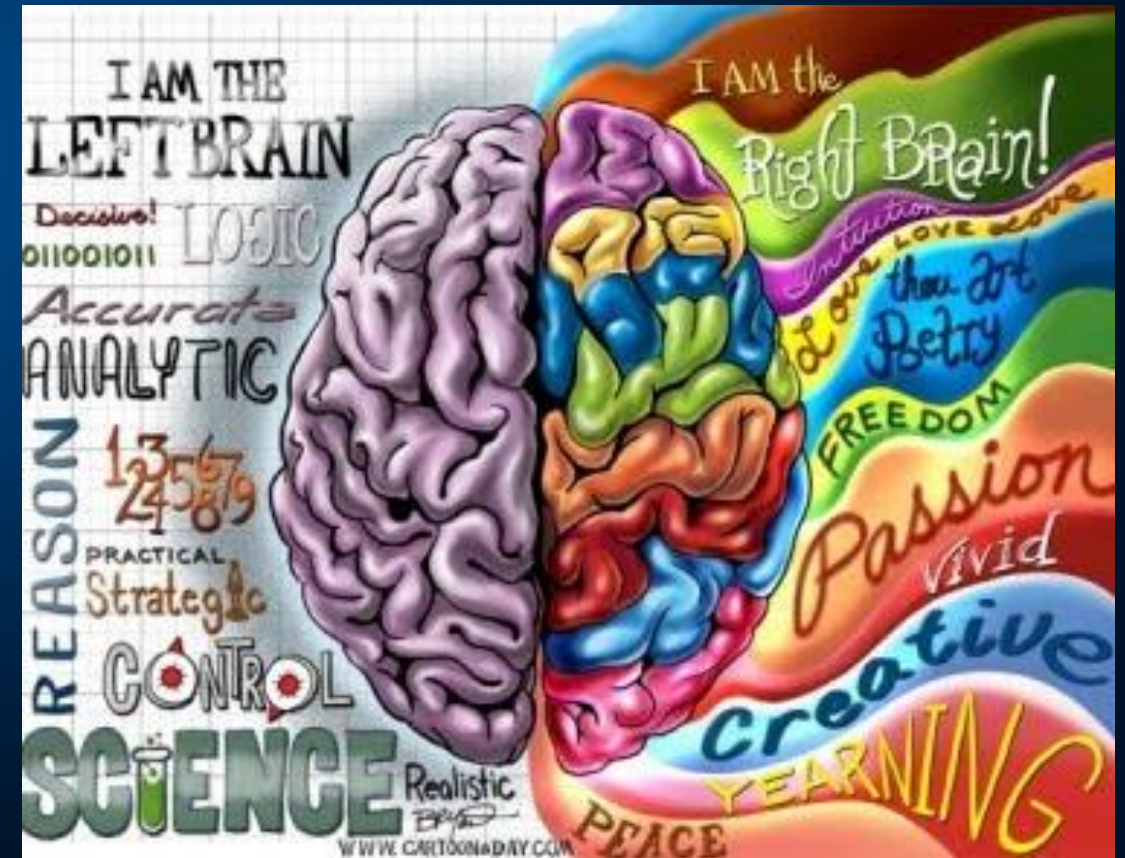
Am I creating an optimal environment for shaping mindsets, beliefs, behaviours and performance?

Am I creating a psychological safe environment for everyone to learn and grow?



Strengths that rely on our right hemisphere

- Seeing others as people
- Emotional memory
- Seeing the big picture
- Dealing with extreme stress
- Handling the new and novel
- Understanding self and others
- Warm curiosity
- Context





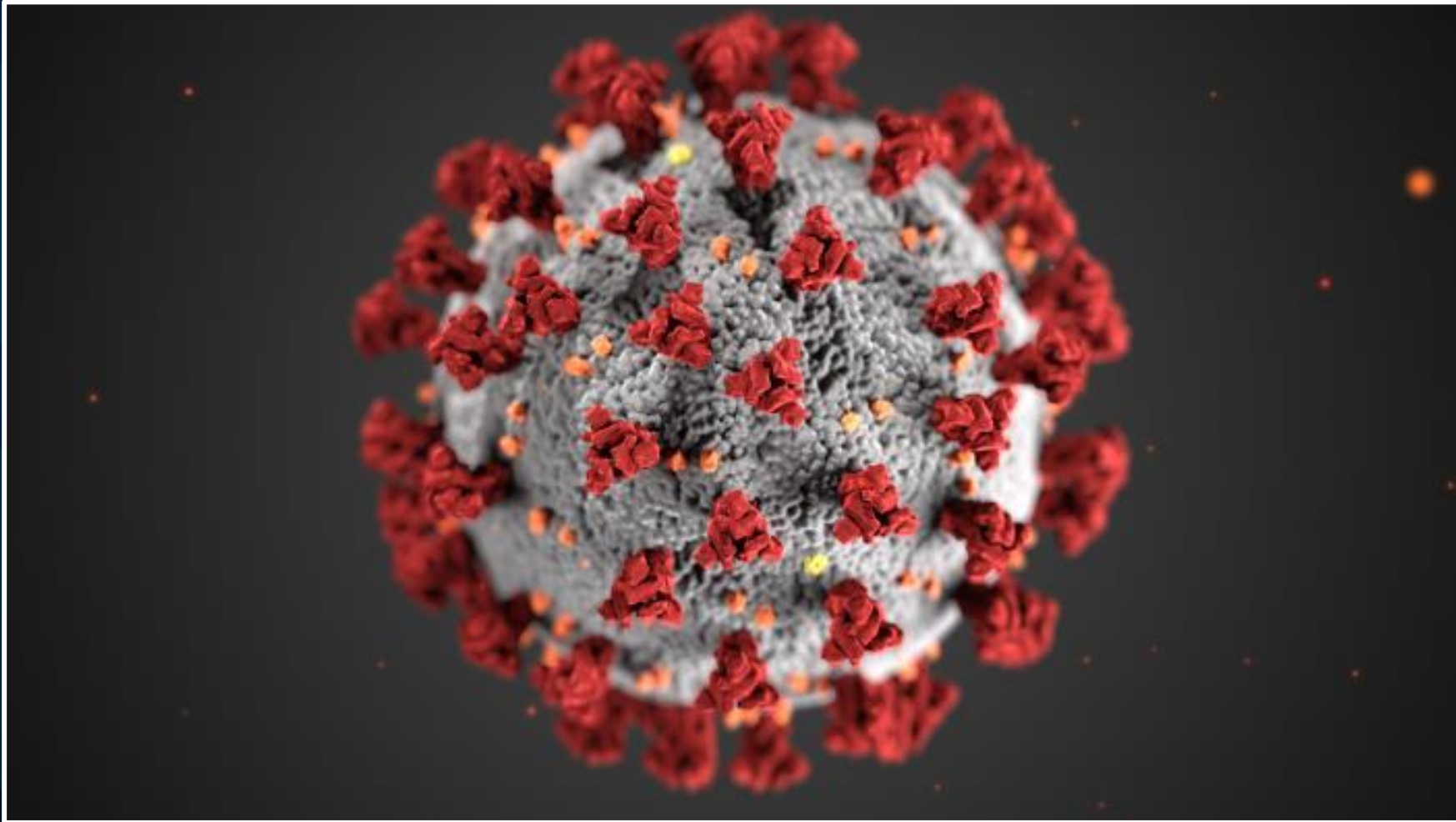
Foundation of Good Coaching.....



“When people start to lose a sense of meaning and get disconnected, that's where disease comes from, that's where breakdown in our health --- mental, physical, social health --- occurs.”



Psychiatrist and neuroscientist
Bruce Perry from “The Myth of
Normal” by Gabor Maté



How do we
stop the
automatic
return?





- What
- Am
- I
- Thinking?

W.A.I.T.



Choose to Be Curious





Name the Emotion to Tame it

CONNECT FACE
TO FACE



A photograph of a corkboard with a light brown, textured surface. A rectangular piece of off-white paper with deckled edges is pinned to the board with two red pushpins at the top. The paper has the words "BE" and "CURIOUS!" written on it in a bold, black, hand-drawn font. The word "BE" is on the top line, and "CURIOUS!" is on the bottom line, both centered horizontally.

BE
CURIOUS!





EMPATHY

(n.) the ability to step into the shoes of another person, aiming to understand their feelings and perspectives, and to use that understanding to guide our actions.

Empathy:

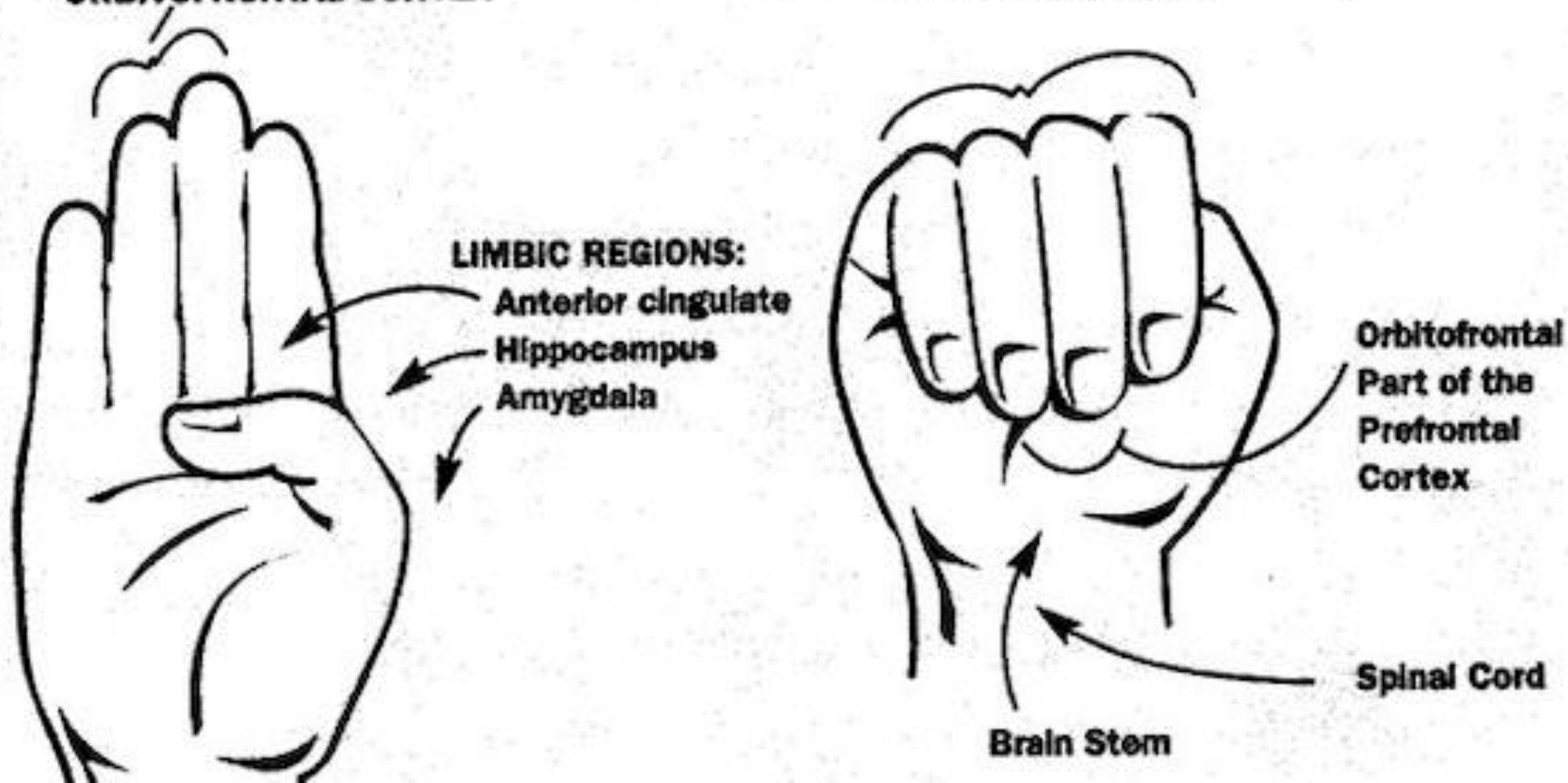
Self Empathy: connect with body sensations, connect with our own feelings and needs. That connection helps us to get clarity and choose our next steps.

Empathy: Empathizing with others by guessing their feelings and needs. The goal is to understand; not to get it right. Sometimes all that is needed is silent presence.

"FLIPPING YOUR LID"

ORBITOFRONTAL CORTEX

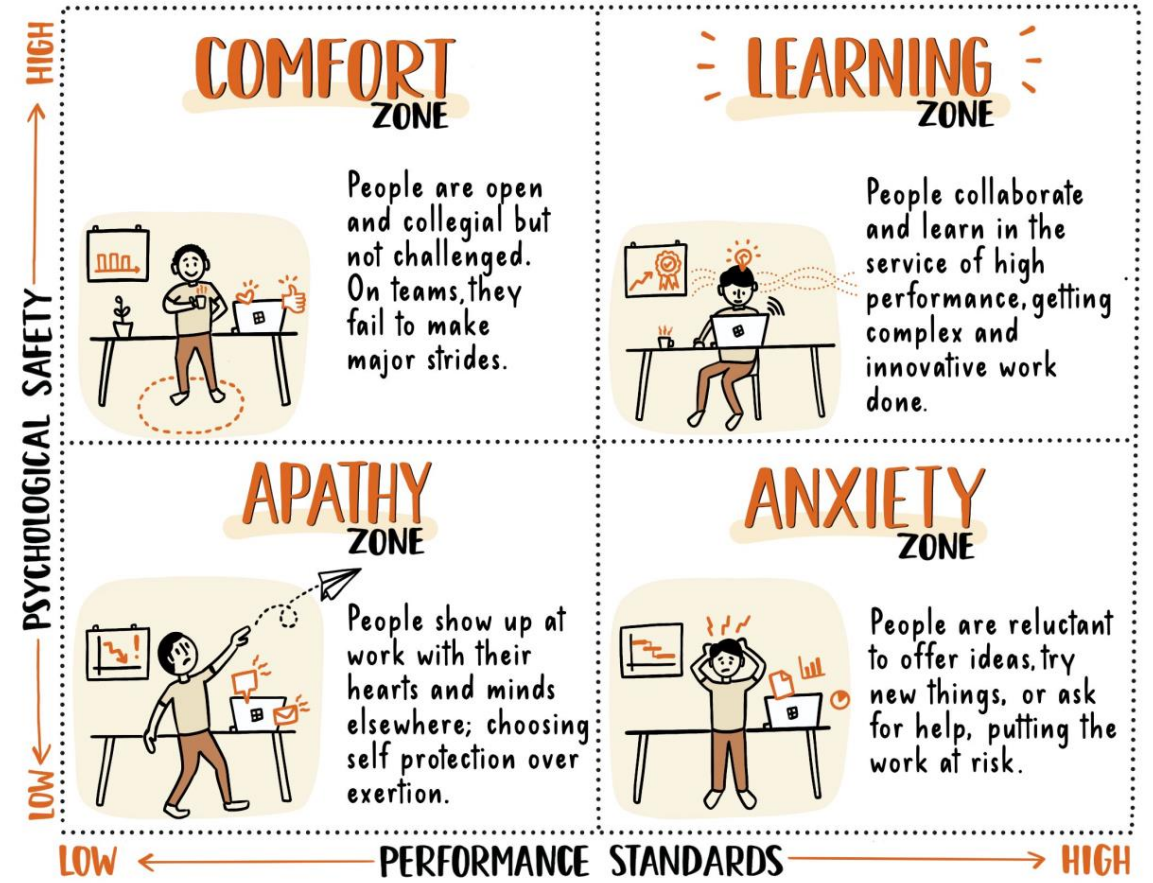
CEREBRAL CORTEX





HOW
psychological safety
RELATES TO PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

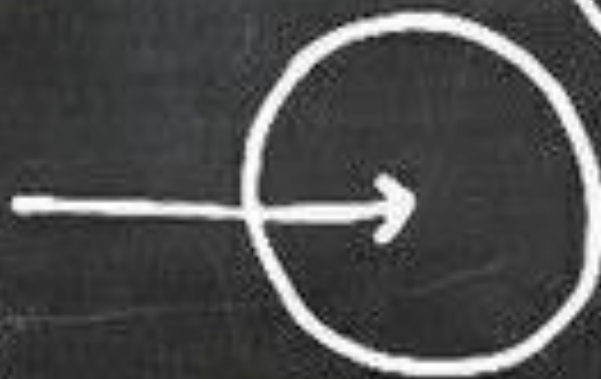
AMY EDMONDSON



GET
(COMFORTABLE
BEING
UN-(COMFORTABLE

Where the
magic happens

Your
Comfort
Zone



**A GOOD COACH
CAN CHANGE
A G A M E .**

**A GREAT COACH
CAN CHANGE
A L I F E .**



Women in Sport Coaching Conference

Thank You

#WomenInSportIRE

