

Leading from a place of self-awareness: Armour vs Daring Leadership

Following on from our Leading our Way workshops, if we want our people to fully show up and bring their whole selves to work so that we can innovate, solve problems, and serve people, we have to be vigilant about creating a culture in which people feel safe, seen, heard, and respected.

To build courage in our teams and organisation we have to cultivate a culture in which brave work, tough conversations and whole hearts are the expectation, and armour is not necessary or rewarded.

In teams where heart and emotion, especially vulnerability, are seen as liabilities, the culture, or in some case individual leaders, strike a bargain to lock up the heart and seal off feelings. They reward armour like perfectionism, emotional stoicism and the false compartmentalising of our lives and our work, keeping things easy and comfortable instead of embracing the necessary tough and awkward conversations, valuing all-knowing over always learning and staying curious. The problem is, when we do this, we kill trust, vulnerability and courage. We need courage and vulnerability to engage all of the behaviours including trust, innovation, creativity and accountability.

Google's five-year study on highly productive teams, Project Aristotle, found that psychological safety, team members feeling safe to take risks and be vulnerable in front of each other, was far and away the most important of the five dynamics that set successful teams apart. Harvard Business School Professor Amy Edmondson coined the phrase psychological safety. In her book *Teaming*, she writes:

Simply put, psychological safety makes it possible to give tough feedback and have difficult conversations without the need to tiptoe around the truth. In psychologically safe environments, people believe that if they make a mistake, others will not penalise or think less of them for it. They also believe that others will not resent or humiliate them when they ask for help or information. This belief comes about when people both trust and respect each other, and it produces a sense of confidence that the group won't embarrass, reject or punish someone for speaking up. It does not imply a cosy situation in which people are necessarily close friends. Nor does it suggest an absence of pressure or problems.

Read *Dare to Lead* by Brené Brown and find valuable tools and resources on her Dare to Lead Hub - <https://daretolead.brenebrown.com/>

Armored Leadership versus Daring Leadership *Content covered on pages*

76-114 of Dare to Lead.

	<i>Armored Leadership</i>	<i>Total: _____</i>	<i>Daring Leadership</i>
01.	Driving Perfectionism and Fostering Fear of Failure	1 2 3 4 ←————→	Modeling and Encouraging Healthy Striving, Empathy, and Self-Compassion
02.	Working from Scarcity and Squandering Opportunities for Joy and Recognition	1 2 3 4 ←————→	Practicing Gratitude and Celebrating Milestones and Victories
03.	Numbing	1 2 3 4 ←————→	Setting Boundaries and Finding Real Comfort
04.	Propagating the False Dichotomy of Victim or Viking, Crush or Be Crushed	1 2 3 4 ←————→	Practicing Integration—Strong Back, Soft Front, Wild Heart
05.	Being a Knower and Being Right	1 2 3 4 ←————→	Being a Learner and Getting It Right
06.	Hiding Behind Cynicism	1 2 3 4 ←————→	Modeling Clarity, Kindness, and Hope
07.	Using Criticism as Self-Protection	1 2 3 4 ←————→	Making Contributions and Taking Risks
08.	Using Power Over	1 2 3 4 ←————→	Using Power With, Power To, and Power Within
09.	Hustling for Our Worth	1 2 3 4 ←————→	Knowing Our Value
10.	Leading for Compliance and Control	1 2 3 4 ←————→	Cultivating Commitment and Shared Purpose
11.	Weaponizing Fear and Uncertainty	1 2 3 4 ←————→	Acknowledging, Naming, and Normalizing Collective Fear and Uncertainty

(chart continued on next page)

Armored Leadership versus Daring Leadership (continued) Content

covered on pages 76-114 of *Dare to Lead*.

	<i>Armored Leadership</i>		<i>Daring Leadership</i>
12.	Rewarding Exhaustion as a Status Symbol and Attaching Productivity to Self-Worth	<p>1 2 3 4</p> 	Modeling and Supporting Rest, Play, and Recovery
13.	Tolerating Discrimination, Echo Chambers, and a “Fitting In” Culture	<p>1 2 3 4</p> 	Cultivating a Culture of Belonging, Inclusivity, and Diverse Perspectives
14.	Collecting Gold Stars	<p>1 2 3 4</p> 	Giving Gold Stars
15.	Zigzagging and Avoiding	<p>1 2 3 4</p> 	Straight Talking and Taking Action
16.	Leading from Hurt	<p>1 2 3 4</p> 	Leading from Heart