

Five Powerful Improv Exercises for Stronger Teams

atd **23**

SAN DIEGO
MAY 21-24

Project Aristotle

Keys of High Performing Google Teams


1. Psychological Safety
2. Dependability
3. Structure & Clarity
4. Meaning
5. Impact

Rozovsky, Julia

Google People Operations

The Five Keys to a Successful Google Team

<https://rework.withgoogle.com>



Teams that innovate quickly, leverage diversity, and adapt well to change are driven by psychological safety. **Organizations that cultivate psychological safety do so through leaders at all levels learning and demonstrating specific leadership behaviors.** A climate conducive to psychological safety starts at the very top of the organization.

McKinsey & Company

Psychological Safety and the Critical Role of Leadership Development

February 2021


Factors of Psychological Safety

1. Equality in Conversational Turn-Taking
2. Ostentatious Listening
 - a. Demonstrating deep listening (reflecting)
 - b. Making eye contact
 - c. Being fully present and distraction-free

Duhigg, Charles

What Google Learned From Its Quest to Build the Perfect Team

The New York Times Magazine. February 25, 2016



Good improvisation is all about listening,
reacting in the moment, creating, and
supporting the ideas of others.

Tom Yorton

Former CEO, Second City Works

Co-Author, Yes, And – Lessons from the Second City

EXERCISE: YES

One way to practice staying present is to simply sit still for a while and listen. For one minute, listen to the sounds close to you. For one minute, listen to the sounds at a distance. Just listen attentively.

**-Pema Chodron
Tibetan Buddhist, Author and Principal Teacher**



EXERCISE: RED BALL

**The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that
it has taken place.**

**-George Bernard Shaw
Playwright**

EXERCISE: GROUP STORYTELLING

There is nothing like a concrete life plan to weigh you down. Because if you always have one eye on some future goal, you stop paying attention to the job at hand, miss opportunities that might arise, and stay fixedly on one path, even when a better, newer course might have opened up.

**-Indra K. Nooyi
Former CEO, PepsiCo**



EXERCISE: THE MARTHA GAME

Synergy – the bonus that is achieved when things work together harmoniously.

**-Mark Twain
Author**



EXERCISE: EIGHT-LINE STORY STRUCTURE

**In order to empathize with someone's experience,
you must be willing to believe them as they see it,
and not how you imagine their experience to be.**

**-Brené Brown, Ph.D.
Researcher, Storyteller, Author**

1. Once upon a time...(current situation)
2. And everyday...(current situation)
3. Then one day...(turning point)
4. And because of that...(opportunity, action)
5. And because of that...(opportunity, action)
6. And because of that...(opportunity, action)
7. Until finally....(turning point)
8. And ever since that day...(learning lesson)



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EXERCISE: ROCK-PAPER-SCISSORS

We rise by lifting others.

**-Robert Ingersoll
Orator**