

Ethics in tech: A psychological perspective on behaviour and organisations

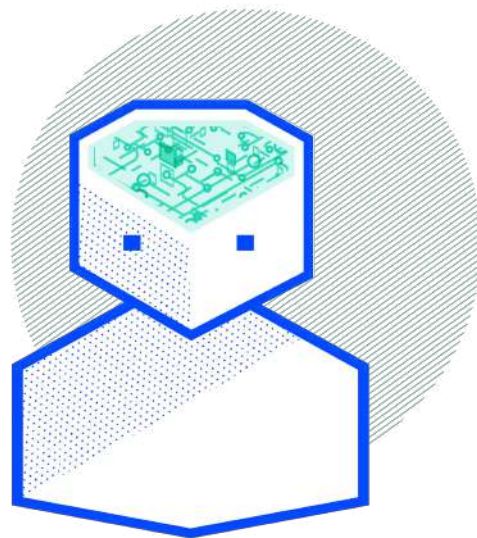
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psychologist

Why good people make bad decisions



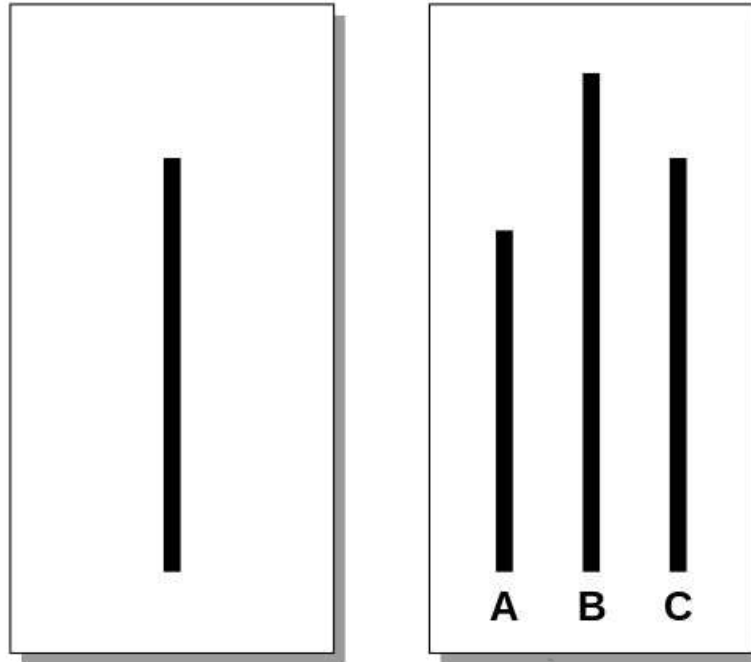
**Why do
people
behave
badly?**

**What can you
do?**

**What can
organisation
do?**



Visual test



Conformity

Solomon Ash



Results

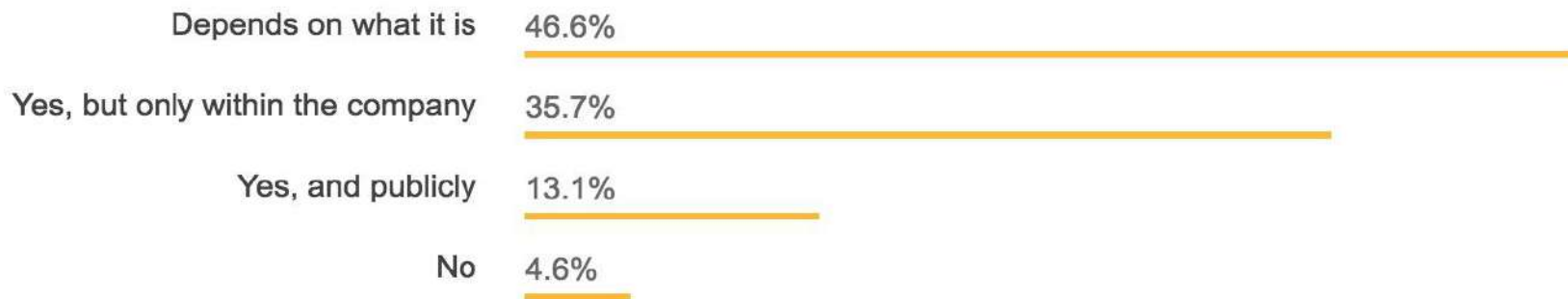
Over the 12 critical trials, **about 75% of participants conformed at least once**,
and 25% of participants never conformed



We have a strong need **NOT** to be
different



How Would Developers Report Ethical Problems with Code?



70,426 responses

In ambiguous situations, **levels of conformity increase.**



The bigger the group and
complicated the task, **the more we
conform.**



Obedience

Stanley Milgram



Experiment



65% administered the highest shock
which would have been fatal.

Who Is Ultimately Most Responsible for Code That Accomplishes Something Unethical?



64,540 responses

Claws of obedience

What can be done?

individuals



What is your inner compass telling you?

a natural feeling that makes people know what is right and wrong and how they should behave

Be courageous

Speak up



<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/nov/01/google-walkout-global-protests-employees-sexual-harassment-scandals>

An Open Letter to Microsoft: Don't Bid on the US Military's Project JEDI

Signed by employees of Microsoft

<https://medium.com/s/story/an-open-letter-to-microsoft-dont-bid-on-the-us-military-s-project-jedi-7279338b7132>

Courage is persistence in the **face** **of fear**

Aristotle



What can be done?

Organisations





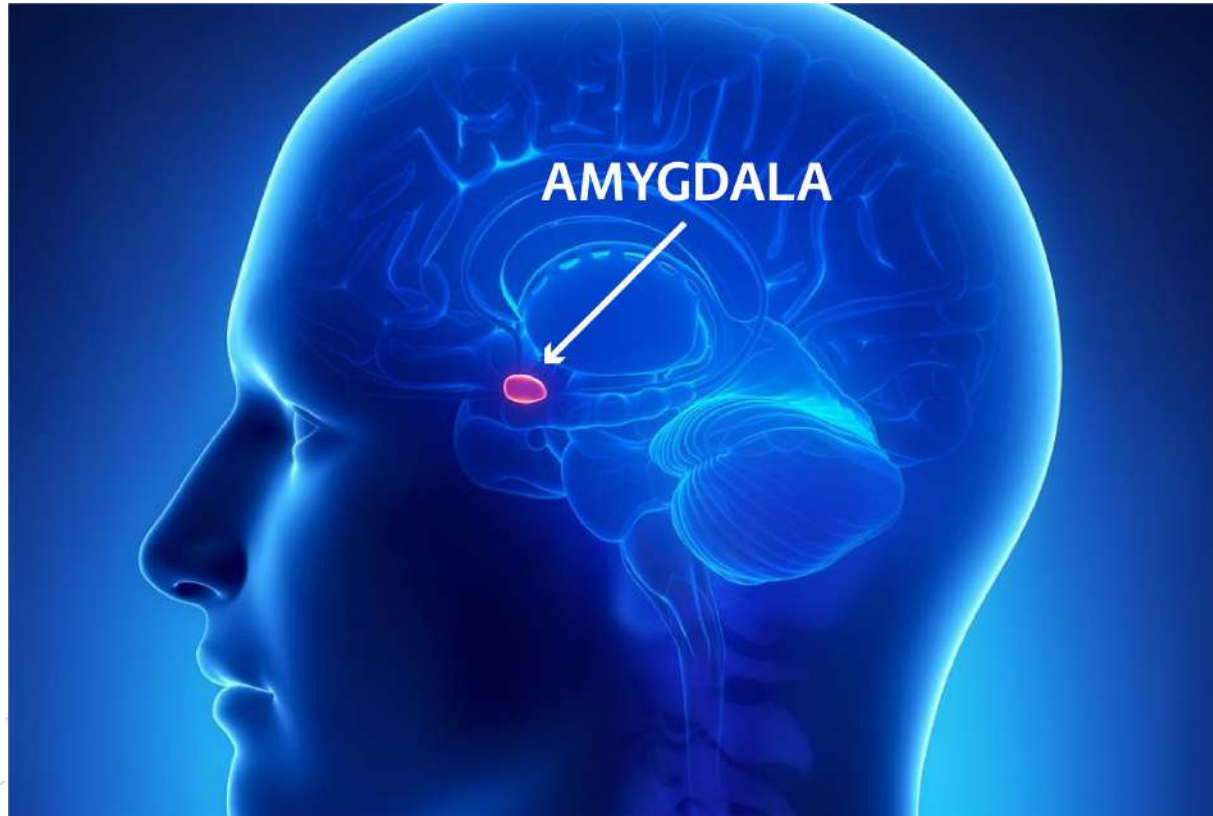
Psychological safety

William Kahn



The ***shared belief*** that one will not be ***punished*** or ***humiliated*** for ***speaking up*** with ***ideas, questions, concerns*** or ***mistakes***

Fight or flight



1

Psychological Safety

Team members feel safe to take risks and be vulnerable in front of each other.

2

Dependability

Team members get things done on time and meet Google's high bar for excellence.

3

Structure & Clarity

Team members have clear roles, plans, and goals.

4

Meaning

Work is personally important to team members.

5

Impact

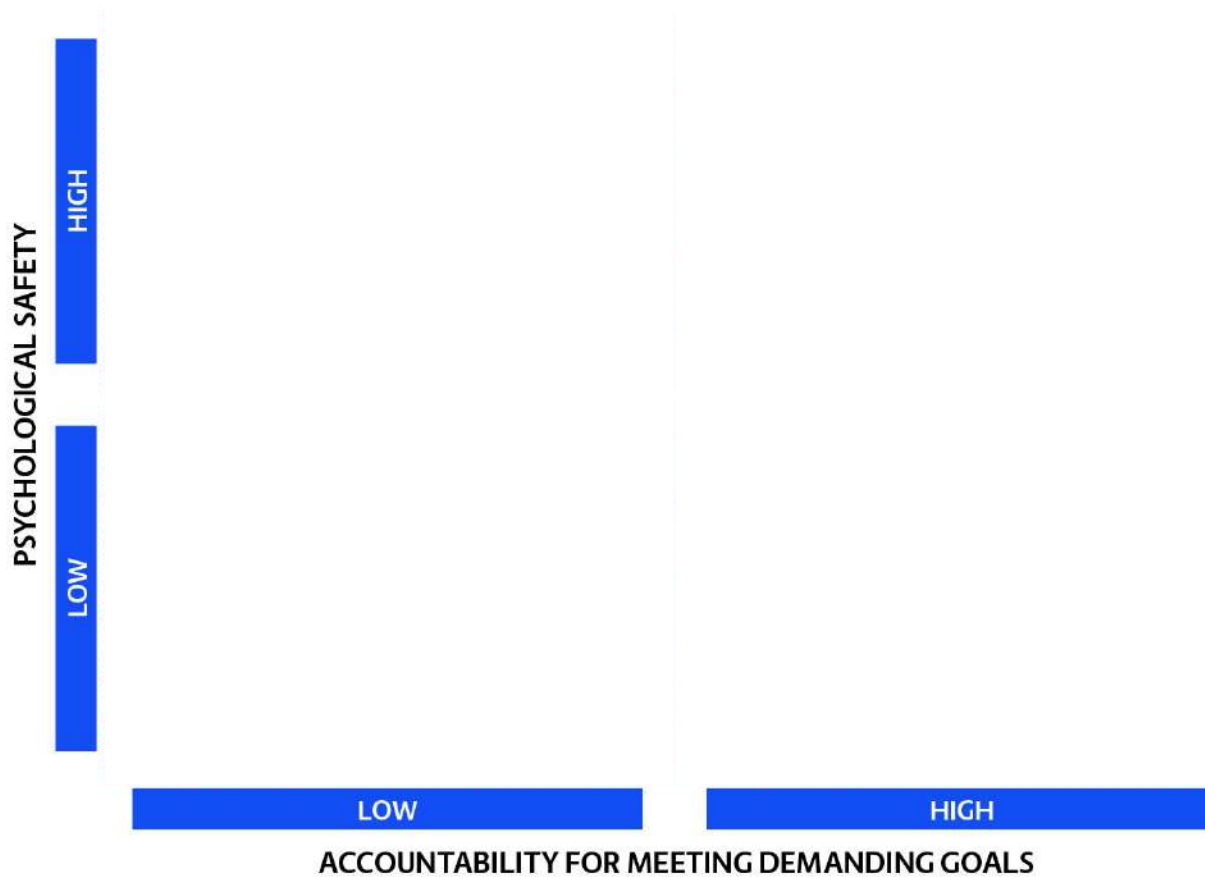
Team members think their work matters and creates change.

re:Work

“In Google’s fast-paced, highly demanding environment, our success hinges on the ability to take risks and be vulnerable in front of peers.”

Paul Santagata, Head of Industry at Google





Amy Edmondson: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LhoLuui9gX8>

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

LOW

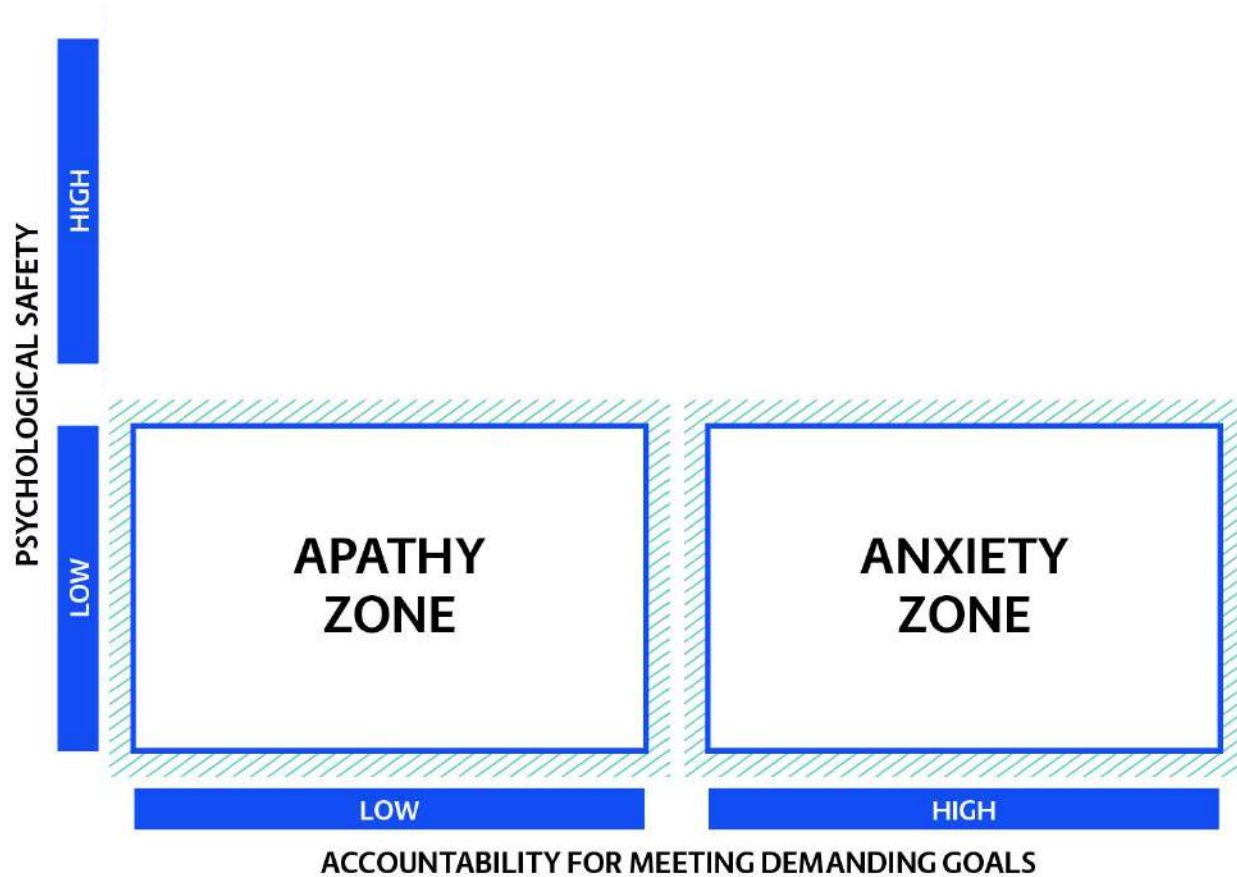
HIGH

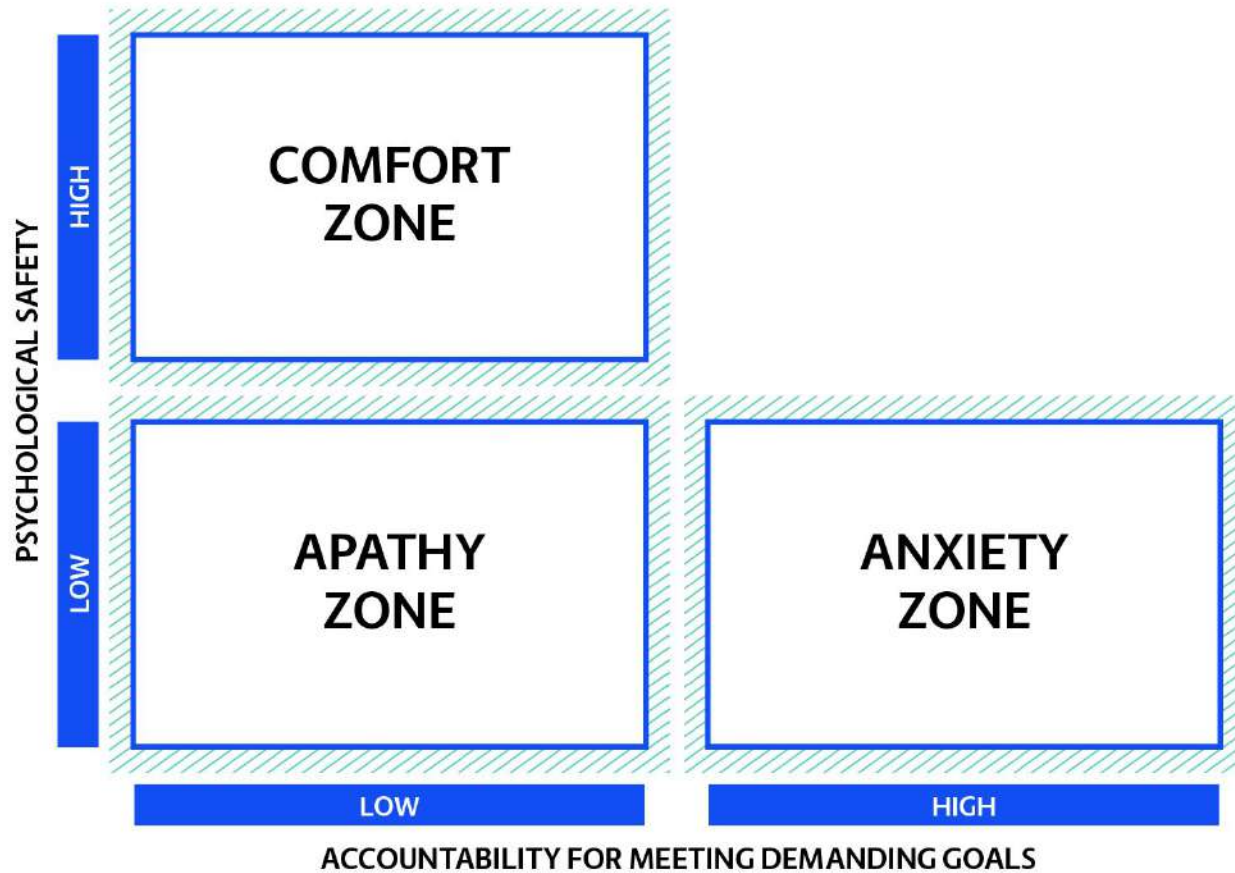
LOW

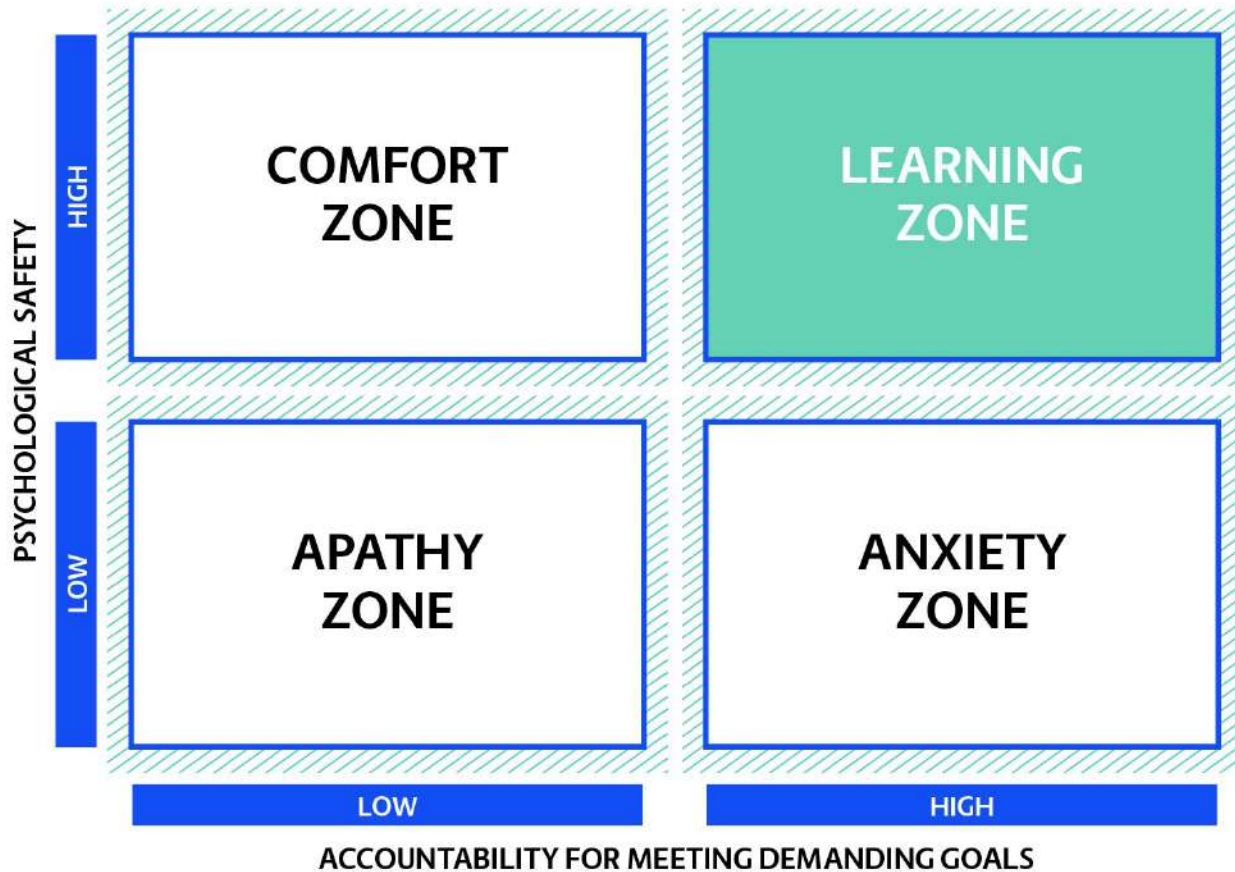
HIGH

**ANXIETY
ZONE**

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR MEETING DEMANDING GOALS







**Learning
Problems**

**Acknowledge
Fallibility**

**Model
Curiosity**



**Why do
people
behave
badly?**

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Knowledge is no guarantee of
good behavior, but ignorance is a
virtual guarantee of bad behavior

Marta Nussbaum (via @EthicsInBricks)



<https://www.coedethics.org/>



Questions?

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