Safety Communication that Engages Worker Wellbeing and Dignity

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The Whole Person

All of us are human beings.
The Whole Person

All of us have human **strengths**

All of us have human **weaknesses**
The Whole Person — Question

Do we punish each other for the human weaknesses that we all share?

— OR —

Do we support and protect each other from our weaknesses?
One shared weakness:
We all make mistakes.
Why?
The Whole Person — Strengths & Weaknesses

Why the lack of focus?
The Whole Person — Strengths & Weaknesses

CORTEX
Conscious
Rational
Long-term
Choice

TRADITIONAL
SAFETY

PHYSICAL
SAFETY
Training
Procedures
Regulations

AMYGDALA
“Alarm Bell”
Unconscious
Instinctive
Instantaneous
Automatic

HUMAN SAFETY

PHYSICAL
EMOTIONAL
PSYCHOLOGICAL
SAFETY

(Adapted from Hanson and Mendius, 2010)
AMYGDALA

“I must survive!”

Fight-or-flight

This is our human response.

This is our alarm bell

…and it will win!

(Adapted from Hanson and Mendius, 2010)
Physical Safety

Programs  Directives

Practices  Regulations
Emotional Safety

Physical Safety

Psychological Safety
The whole person and their wellbeing
Is a workplace that is emotionally safe — and — psychologically safe … a safer workplace?
How do we recognize an emotionally and psychologically safe workplace?
The Whole Person — Dignity

“In some days we will be announcing a new treaty — protection, dignity — to protect all the workers in Chile, not only in mining, but also in transportation, agriculture, fishing, [and] industry.”

—Sebastián Piñera, President of Chile
San Jose Mine, Chile - October 13, 2010
(Translated by CNN)
"All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence."

— Martin Luther King
Local 1199 Salute to Freedom, March 1968
Address to sanitation workers, Memphis, Tennessee
The Whole Person — Dignity

International Labour Organization
(Cited within the Seoul Declaration)

Decent Work
Productive work for men and women
in conditions of freedom, equality,
security and human dignity
What is dignity?

Dignity

*A quality of safety for the entire person*

Less — intellectual concept

More — personal and individual experience

Trust / Respect / Self-respect

Contributing

Being heard

Fulfilling responsibilities

We often become aware of dignity when it is absent.
What is dignity?

The opposite of dignity is humiliation.
Is a workplace without humiliation
...a safer workplace?
Is a workplace with dignity

...a safer workplace?
1 thing = 1 thing

When we talk about multitasking...

ONE THING = ONE ACTIVITY

...but in terms of the amygdala

ONE THING = ONE THING
SURVIVAL = SURVIVAL
— physical / emotional / psychological —
1 thing = 1 thing

1

2

3
1 thing = 1 thing

Tiger (In front of you)

Tiger (Down the hill)

Tiger (Across the river)
1 thing = 1 thing

- Boss Yelling NOW
- Deadline Cut ½ VERY SOON
- Potential Accident POSSIBLE FUTURE
1 thing = 1 thing

Boss
Yelling
NOW

Deadline
Cut ½
VERY SOON

Potential
Accident
POSSIBLE
FUTURE
1 thing = 1 thing

Deadline
Cut \( \frac{1}{2} \)
VERY SOON

Boss
Yelling
NOW

Potential
Accident
POSSIBLE
FUTURE
1 thing = 1 thing

- Emotional Safety
- Psychological Safety
- Physical Safety
1 thing = 1 thing

The Solution

Provide safety for the entire person
— physical / emotional / psychological —

— dignity at work —
1 thing = 1 thing

Wellbeing & Dignity

Good Work (Safety)
Timing is Everything

Our traditional understanding…

Greater success

Greater wellbeing

(Lyubominsky, 2005 / Achor, 2011)
Dignity and Timing

Timing is Everything

Our new understanding...

Greater wellbeing

Greater success

Greater creativity

Better efficiency

Less burnout — less turnover

Greater productivity

(Lyubominsky, 2005 / Achor, 2011)
Dignity and the Two Brains

“THEM” BRAIN
Divides people
Us vs. them
Protection from enemies
Short-term survival

“US” BRAIN
Unites people
Inclusive
Taking care of each other
Long-term survival

(Adapted from Hanson and Mendius, 2010)
Dignity and the Two Brains

OUTWITTED
Edward Markham

He drew a circle
that shut me out…

Us

Them
Dignity and the Two Brains

OUTWITTED
Edward Markham

He drew a circle
that shut me out...

...We drew a circle
that took him in.

Us

Them

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Dignity and the Two Brains

Perhaps dignity and safety are simply a matter of where we draw our circle… how we define “us”.

[Diagram showing two overlapping circles: one labeled “Us” and the other labeled “Them.”]
Communication — Dignity

“The medium is the message.”
—Marshall McLuhan

At work...we are the message.

How we communicate with each other and treat each other is the message.
Dignity is a safe work practice.
Best wishes to you, your families, and your friends.
Thank you!
Video

*Human Beings 2: Being Human — What happens before mistakes?*

www.lanl.gov/safety/videos/humanbeings

www.lanl.gov/safety/videos/safetycinema