

Michelle Ockers:

Welcome back for another episode of Learning Uncut Elevate. In the spirit of reconciliation, I'd like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea, and culture, and to pay respect to elders past, present, and emerging. My guest today is the wonderful Sonali D'Silva. Welcome, Sonali.

Sonali D'Silva:

Hi, Michelle. It's exciting to be on an Elevate episode, and thank you for having me.

Michelle Ockers:

As soon as I saw you speak at the AITD conference recently, I knew I wanted to continue the conversation and what better way to do it than here. Would you like to start by introducing yourself and your work to listeners?

Sonali D'Silva:

I can certainly do that. And Michelle, it was such a pleasure to bump into you a number of times at that conference. So we did exchange a lot of notes and things we feel passionately about. I've had a 25 year career in learning and development and leadership development and still going strong with it because these are areas I feel passionately about. Seven and a half years ago, though, I started my own consulting practice called Equality Consulting, which is based in Adelaide, which is where I am. And this came on the back of a long career in the private sector. So I worked in information technology for a long while in L&D, in healthcare and education. And I felt like a new chapter needed to be written and this was the right time. So my aim with my work now is a straightforward one. I want more leaders to have the competence and confidence to lead with inclusion, show up with more accountability, and have the tools and the resources to create more psychological safety in their teams or at work at large so more people can use their best strengths in service to the team and the organization's most important goals. And that keeps driving me to show up every day and do what I love to do.

Michelle Ockers:

Where does this interest to drive come from for you personally?

Sonali D'Silva:

Oh, such a good question. I tumbled into learning and development by accident many years ago when someone else thought that I would be good at it, but I didn't believe them. And once I started to do training, which very much was lecturing back then, stood behind a podium and you told people everything you want to tell them. And at the end, you had a short Q&A. But I got hooked, even though there wasn't training really, but I felt wonderful when I was with others. And I realized how many things are broken in our work cultures for people, how much of their talent, their ideas kind of get crushed under the weight of incompetence from leaders, which is often unwitting. And I got very passionate about what can we do for leaders so that they can get the best out of their team. And then I have been, and I'm sure you have been, in teams that weren't the best places to be.

Michelle Ockers:

I've had very contrasting experiences. In fact, what's interesting, I had forgotten about this experience I had until just now, I did another podcast called Women Talking About Learning. And literally it's run by a man, but he never talks on the podcast. He gets groups of women

Learning Uncut Elevate Episode 38 Psychological Safety in Learning – Sonali D'silva

together and gives them a topic to talk about. And I did an episode talking about teams, which was the experience of being part of a team, positive experiences, negative experiences. I spoke about that topic with two collaborators I was working with on an initiative at the time, Laura Overton and Shannon Tipton. So I'll add a link to that in the podcast resources if anybody's interested in that, because we do go into, here's a great experience I have working with the team and here's a terrible experience I have working with the team. And psychological safety, no doubt, is a key part of that. So let's move on to that. How would you define psychological safety and why do you think it matters in organizations?

Sonali D'Silva:

Psychological safety is something that has been around in literature for more than two decades as team psychological safety and much longer in psychology as a discipline. In fact, since the sixties, I believe. But 20 years ago, Dr. Amy Edmondson, who's a professor currently at the Harvard Business School, chanced quite accidentally on this idea that teams who did well felt safer to acknowledge their mistakes and therefore did much better, even if they were making mistakes, because they were okay to tell each other what had gone wrong, and then they would fix it. And they would blame less problem solving, which made everybody feel like they had a stake in making things better. And so through her research about two decades ago, she came upon this idea, and I'm using her definition because I love it. And she says, psychological safety is a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes, and that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking. But my favorite part of her definition is, psychological safety is felt permission for candor. And to your point, Michelle, we've all been in teams that function well and some teams that were broken. You have a vibe of whether you should stick your neck out or not. And if you do, what's about to happen to you? So you decide not to very often. And you feel discouraged to share risks, concerns, or even ideas that you think others may see as disruptive or contradictory and we choose to stay silent. So this is something that I feel very deeply about. And the second part of what you asked me is, why is this important? So let me highlight three research-backed outcomes that we can prove are outcomes of psychologically safe environment or climate. And that could be within a team, that could be within the ecosystem of the company. And the first one is feeling engaged and motivated. So if you think about our learners, a lot of this research has happened within intact teams, but we can definitely expand it to a learning team because we are looking at a team of learners, maybe through an extended program at times.

Michelle Ockers:

We've got like cohorts of learners who are from different parts of the organization, even we can view them as a kind of team with the purpose of learning.

Sonali D'Silva:

Absolutely. And we want those learners to feel engaged and motivated. So here's a great tool to do so. It gives people the permission to contribute and helps them feel that their contributions matter. So that means more people are going to come forward and say what's on their minds, which enriches everybody's understanding. We don't have to agree with everything, but it's all right to be able to hear everything. The second thing that it can lead to is it can lead to better decision-making. And how that happens is that when more people speak up without fearing retribution or rejection or ridicule, more ideas come to the table. Perspectives can be pulled from people. And when we speak within the context of diversity, Michelle, about cognitive diversity or thought diversity, it's a wishful thought, but it's hard to come about because you can have people with all sorts of talents and strengths and perspectives at the table, but how are you going to make them talk, right? That's a different bit of hard work. So inclusivity and psychological safety help us to get that outcome of different perspectives ultimately helps us take more robust decisions. And third and last one,

Learning Uncut Elevate Episode 38 Psychological Safety in Learning – Sonali D'silva

it fosters a culture of continuous learning and improvement. Very important for our listeners, I'm sure. And that comes from the permission to make mistakes, not have to feel shame and embarrassment as an outcome, but be redirected to do better. And that amplifies everybody's motivation to improve themselves because they see that as a reward and not something to be feared.

Michelle Ockers:

Absolutely. That's a really lovely, clear break. And this is one of the things I so enjoyed about hearing you speak, and I'm enjoying again, listening to you Sonali, is you're so succinct and clear about why things matter and how to go about addressing them. And I know we're going to talk about some of your resources later, which I've had a look at, and I found them similarly to the point, really clear, really useful. So thank you for the way you express things. I really appreciate it.

Sonali D'Silva:

Oh, thank you so much.

Michelle Ockers:

So let's move on. And I know a lot of your work is around team dynamics and leadership development. But of course, our listeners are learning and development professionals. And I know this really matters in the context of learning as well, both formal and informal learning. And you've touched on both of those aspects. In your introductory comments are about why it matters. So let's talk a little more specifically about the context of learning and how and why it matters. And I don't mind whether you start with formal learning that we structured or more informal learning and that culture of continuous improvement and learning where you'd like to start with that. But let's go a little more deeply into how psychological safety makes a difference for learning.

Sonali D'Silva:

Absolutely. That is a really key aspect of our conversation today, Michelle, isn't it. We do want our listeners to take away some things that they can apply right away, and that's possible to do. And here's some good news. Everything I'm about to share, which are my five suggestions, are research-backed. They aren't my opinions. They aren't conventional wisdom. They are things that are proven to work. So I hope we can take them and run with it. So number one would be acknowledge learner diversity. Number two is encourage teams to bond with each other. Number three is make it acceptable to learn from mistakes. Number four is make sure everyone can feel heard and seen and acknowledged in the room that you are in. And five, stay humble and open to being wrong, even though you may be in the position of telling everybody what's right and what's needed and what they can learn, sometimes we can be wrong. And so let me speak to each of these five a little bit more. Acknowledging learner diversity is something that can happen even before we step into the room because we know who's coming. We can elicit information on people's accessibility needs. We can make some informed guesses on race and culture and gender, looking at people's information in a participant list. It tells you a lot if you pay attention. You can check some names out on LinkedIn at times, if you're unsure how to speak them. Sometimes people share the pronunciations on LinkedIn. So it's very interesting how much access we have to be able to be inclusive of that person even before we have met them. We need to be able to prepare. Now, There's an example. I'll have time for one. I'll share a quick story here. Now, as everyone can tell, I might have a South Asian background because of my accent and how I speak English. And I grew up in India through my very formative years. And when I was young in my learning and development career, I was working with an IT organization. And we did programs for internal customers. So we did programs for engineers of all kinds. And we had a group of people coming in for one of my maybe communication training

Learning Uncut Elevate Episode 38 Psychological Safety in Learning – Sonali D'silva

programs. It was half day and we ended up having a lot of dropouts, which used to happen with internal programs. And I ended up with like five, six people. So the whole room arrangement had to be changed. And they chose to sit in a like this horseshoe, semi-circular format in front of me, and they pulled their chairs and they said, we are just happy to sit like that. I'm like, sure. But there was an interesting gender dynamic. Now, I was a woman doing, you know, doing the program, and I had one young female participant, all five other people were men, and they weren't significantly older, but they were men, and they were technically qualified, but then the woman was also an engineer. Here's something that happened. I unwittingly focused on the men more than on her. And I realized later that that was because I had grown up in a patriarchal society where both people who are senior, older, or male are the ones you're seeking approval from, are the ones you're seeking validation from. And that one woman in my room, and I commend her bravery, came up to me in my coffee break and said, I've noticed you're not looking at me. Why is that? Have I done something wrong? And she looked hurt. I was stunned, Michelle.

Michelle Ockers:

What a gift, though, that she was willing to come up and talk to you about that, right?

Sonali D'Silva:

How brave, how courageous, and that she thought it was important enough for her to say that. I was gobsmacked, but I had the grace, thankfully, to accept her feedback and not defend myself hard. And after the coffee break, I did better, but that has stayed with me more than 20 years later to say, wow, I have to be careful. I think I'm a good person. I'm a fair person, but I did that and I'm a woman. So that was even more ironic. That's something I feel that we can all think about.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah, it's a great example of one of those blind spots we may not even be conscious of, and I think if we have the opportunity to work with others and ask for their feedback, that's particularly useful. Can I just ask a question about acknowledging learner diversity? How, I mean, and what you've talked about is being aware of it yourself. If you're going to be facilitating learning, for example, would you ever make the diversity in the room explicit? And if so, how and why would you do that? Would you call it out to the group right up front?

Sonali D'Silva:

Such a good question. I definitely go into the room and say, I hope we can look around and appreciate we have a room full of differences.

Michelle Ockers:

Yes.

Sonali D'Silva:

And I say that. And I have people look around and I put it out there to say, I hope we can learn from the different perspectives at your table. You're going to get opportunities today through the activities I have planned for the day or for the session. And I hope that we can keep an open mind and listen to each other. It's a good thing if you don't think exactly like the other person. So I put it out there and I make that expectation clear.

Michelle Ockers:

Yes. So that's acknowledging learner diversity. Thank you. The second point you raised was to encourage a team to bond with each other. What does that look like potentially?

Learning Uncut Elevate Episode 38 Psychological Safety in Learning – Sonali D'silva

Sonali D'Silva:

Now, this needs some creativity, Michelle. We'll acknowledge as learning professionals that our context of learning can be very different. It could be self-paced. It could be synchronous and online and live, and it could be live and face-to-face. We can get creative on how we want to do this. I want to tell you a little bit of a secret here. At the conference when we met last at AITD, you took us through a wonderful activity where you gave us index cards at our tables. And we were so many of us in that room. And we were supposed to write a tip or a strategy and communication on that. and then take it to another person that we didn't know in the room, that was the condition you put down, and then swap our tip and our card with them, and then go to another person, which was such a generous thing to do, and talk about what we were learning in real time. And you encouraged us to find two, three people in the time you gave us. I totally stole that activity. It seems such a simple one, and I have been using it extensively in some of my face-to-face workshops, and it really helps people to bond with each other. It's a little awkward, but they get there.

Michelle Ockers:

It's really adaptable, isn't it? And I picked that one up from Laura Overton and who knows where she got it from. But once you've seen that, it's very flexible, that activity. I also really liked some of the activities that Dr. Catherine Lloyd ran as part of the very opening session at the conference where, for example, she gave us beautiful cards that she has made herself. She does a lot of collage and she's made these conversation starter cards. And she encouraged us to pick a card that said something about, you know, what we wanted to, some of our goals for the conference, I think it was, and what sort of conference experience we wanted. And then to, you know, go and talk to people about why we'd picked that card and to circulate around. So anything that gets people interacting and sharing something, I think is useful to help with bonding.

Sonali D'Silva:

Yes. And that condition of go to someone you don't know well enough or don't know at all. And I remember Catherine got us talking to strangers in the room, as did you. And that was that I went back actually in one of the breaks and told her that that was so helpful because I met people that otherwise wouldn't have bumped into.

Michelle Ockers:

Yes. What might that look like or different options if we are online in a virtual setting?

Sonali D'Silva:

I would definitely take advantage of breakout rooms, especially Zoom makes it a little more savvy when we do that. And give people the permission to have their own time without me being there or my presence and let them just have their time. Generally, people come back quite energized and in a positive state, even if they were like a little bit like indifferent in the morning for whatever reason, but they come back more focused out of that activity. And asynchronous, I'll just touch upon that. If we are doing self-based courses where you are not showing up actively, discussion forums can be used as a community tool quite effectively where you give people better prompts than saying, oh, share your views, which is a little vague. Give people better prompts like share a tip or a strategy on whatever is the topic that has worked for you at work. And then please find something someone else has said that you would like to amplify and appreciate.

Michelle Ockers:

Yes, some good examples there. So number three, I think, was making it acceptable to learn from mistakes.

Learning Uncut Elevate Episode 38 Psychological Safety in Learning – Sonali D'silva

Sonali D'Silva:

Yes, absolutely. And I think as learning professionals, we don't need to belabour this point. We get it. But here's something that we don't often talk about. Learning is a choice. Expressing learning behaviors in a learning context is a choice the learner is making. That choice is with them, not with us, which means we have to encourage them to make the choice to learn. And it needs effort from their part. It feels something a little out of the ordinary. And it carries, very importantly, the emotional risk of shame and embarrassment. And that's an interpersonal risk. So when we look at Dr. Amy Edmondson's definition, it's that interpersonal risk-taking, the psychological safety is important, and learning is a risk. So this is when the more we make it acceptable, a simple thing like Michelle, when we are doing a debrief on a scenario and someone gives an answer that is actually not desirable in that context, we don't start with no, we don't start with, actually, that might not be a good idea, right? Because it's a bit direct. One of my ways to circumvent that is to say, okay, yeah, we got one suggestion on the table, who else has another idea? What more can we come up with? And then, you know, it becomes apparent what might work better or not. You don't have to spell it out.

Michelle Ockers:

Yes. You can allow people to read between the lines without calling it out specifically. I like that. The other thing about practice and making mistakes is often with new skills, we only touch the surface in sessions, be they face to face or online, that people need to go away and apply those new skills back in the workplace. So helping them to set up safe practice around new skills is important. I think one of the things I sometimes do is to give people practice scenarios if it's something that they're going to need to get comfortable with before they do it in the real world. and to invite them to pick a buddy to practice with after the session and to arrange time to do some more practice together, for example, in a way that they find, you know, with someone they feel is a safe person for them. I don't know what other tips you might have about kind of that post-session practice and how to set that up for people.

Sonali D'Silva:

Sometimes people are willing for like a 30 minute micro coaching session or a larger group coaching session. which helps people to come back together to reflect on how's practice going for you? What are you struggling with that others are also struggling with? And that makes people feel vulnerable. But if you can create safety, then more people will come up and say how practice is going. And ultimately, we want people to be more competent in whatever it is that we are having them learn. And learning has to come from trial and error. And I think that that is one of the ways that has proven useful for me.

Michelle Ockers:

Yeah. Look, the other thing is with technology these days, particularly with AI and coaching bots, by the time our conversation is going to air, the previous week, episode 149 of Learning Uncut is a great story about how HSBC has introduced coaching bots into their contact center environment. And they've largely replaced face-to-face role plays with their really well scripted, well set up scenarios where the AI can provide feedback. And if people want to get additional feedback from a manager, they can send a recording to a manager to ask for feedback and it's on demand. So people can practice difficult conversations well ahead of having to do them live with customers. So I think there's some really good opportunities to provide people with more practice in safe spaces with AI enablement, if it is done well, of course.

Learning Uncut Elevate Episode 38 Psychological Safety in Learning – Sonali D'silva

Sonali D'Silva:

Absolutely. What a privilege to live in the age of technology that we are. Because I think about me fumbling, bumbling through my team leadership career and learning the hard way and falling on my face. And I'm like, I wish I had an AI tool to practice on before I went and said something.

Michelle Ockers:

Yes, we don't talk about difficult conversations for no reason, right? There are some things that are difficult. And if the first time we're doing it is in the real environment, it can be very uncomfortable for us, as well as the people we're having conversations with, be they other team members or customers. So number four.

Sonali D'Silva:

Feeling heard and visible and seen. Now, there are ways to do that, Michelle. Your index card activity placed the onus on us to contribute in meaningful ways. And I felt significant in that room that you cared about what any of us thought, even though you were standing in a position of authority and expertise, you shared your power with us, so to speak. And we have other sorts of activities that can do something similar. One of my tactics is developed over the many years. I can remember people's names in one shot when they introduce themselves. And I can remember 22 people's names in one shot. And I seldom make mistakes with it, but sometimes I get mixed up about two or three names. And when I come back to people soon after, whether they are making a contribution or they raise their hand, or they are asking me a question, I start with taking their name. And within the first one hour, people realize I remember their names. And I always hear, how can you remember names? But I can see it makes people feel very significant and visible, and they sit up a little bit in their chair because they realize I'm focusing on them. They're important enough for me to have remembered their name. So it's something that I have practiced, but there are many other ways, including looking at the person when they're asking us something, appreciating points of view, especially if they contradict yours, and saying, I'm so glad that you brought up something different than what I of what I was saying, because that's valuable.

Michelle Ockers:

Yes. It can be harder to keep track of everyone in an online setting, of course. So curious about how we manage that. One is group size and reducing the group size in online settings. Another thing I sometimes do, if it is a group any larger than around eight, I will have a second facilitator. And part of their job is to track, like to physically have a list of the people in the room and track how often we're hearing from them, either in the chat or verbally, and then working with me to encourage people to speak up or even messaging them privately. If there's some reason to take on a view, if there's some reason that they're struggling with a view. What other approaches or tips would you have around ensuring that everyone is heard in that online setting? Breakout rooms you mentioned before. I think that's great. Often people are willing to open up more in a smaller group in the breakouts.

Sonali D'Silva:

I would have also shared what you just said was I sometimes call people privately, like message them to say, how are things going for you? Right. I would love to hear more from you. And that way, I'm not making them very self-conscious by calling upon them repeatedly. And there might be a reason they're not wanting to talk or are distracted by childcare or something in the background. One of the things that I try and be mindful of, much like you, keeping a track, when I send people off into a breakout room for an activity, I place the onus on one of them to volunteer to be the spokesperson when they come out. And I say to them, you'll rotate that responsibility so that you are a spokesperson for this one, but if you're sticking with the same breakout room, which at least for a half a day I would, then I'll say

Learning Uncut Elevate Episode 38 Psychological Safety in Learning – Sonali D'silva

who's speaking this time. And that makes people feel, again, a little more alert, and even the quieter ones get to then speak, because they will be volunteered by the group to say, hey, you haven't spoken yet. So I try and distribute that responsibility, because it is a burden to have to pull people's perspectives online. It's harder, because sometimes you can't see everybody very well, or not at all. So that has been one of the small ways in which I try and do that.

Michelle Ockers:

Yes. A client I'm working with at the moment used a technique. It's simple. I hadn't thought about it, but they called it throwing the ball. So, you know, I often end coaching sessions, group coaching sessions, inviting everyone to share a key insight or takeaway. And there's that pause, that space while you're waiting for someone to volunteer and people are gathering their thoughts and they don't want to necessarily be the first. So finding the first one, but after you've found the first one, their job is to throw the ball. So to nominate who's going to speak next. And it works really well. It's so simple. I'm like, I wish I thought of that a while ago, but that's another technique.

Sonali D'Silva:

Totally trying that out.

Michelle Ockers:

It works well. So we're moving on to number six, then staying humble and being open to?

Sonali D'Silva:

Staying humble and open to being wrong. We are in a position of authority. We are there as the expert in the room, even though we wish not to be called that necessarily. But we have to be honest when we are in doubt about what we are saying. Or we are airing an opinion and not a research-backed, provable something. So in my work, both in inclusive leadership, Michelle, and psychological safety, there is quite a bit of research. And there has been an explosion in research in the last five years. So I'm trying to keep up. But because I read so much, you do form your own opinions about your chosen area, right.

Michelle Ockers:

You will have some. Absolutely. And when we all bring those biases to what we're reading and how we're interpreting them and what we take in.

Sonali D'Silva:

And you are learning from experience of teaching that topic. So it's clearing up. So one thing that I do at times is I'll make clear, like today, I took a lot from Dr. Amy Edmondson's research, including in my suggestions, because I didn't want to just air opinions. But they are evidence-based. But when I'm sharing that in a classroom situation, online or face-to-face, I might have a slide or two where I'm talking about my interpretation of what I'm learning about these topics. And I will put that on a slide officially, and I'll say, this is not evidence-backed, this is my opinion, this is how I'm seeing it, take from it what you can. But this is not in your workbook, necessarily, because it's not something I can prove. But I thought this was interesting. What do you think? And I see often people taking pictures of that content if they realize it's not in their notes. And we will have a short discussion on it, which also makes me feel like I'm also humanizing myself to say, I don't know everything. I'm floating a few theories here. What do you say? And if you're out rightly wrong about something, we can have some humour involved in that because it takes the tension away and it allows other people to admit that they made a mistake or they said something they didn't mean or shouldn't have, or it's just out rightly wrong, let's say. And we can ask questions to help others be honest. What part of this feels applicable at work for you? How are things going so

Learning Uncut Elevate Episode 38 Psychological Safety in Learning – Sonali D'silva

far? Could you give me some feedback that helps inform the rest of the day for me? What's making sense and what isn't? Another thing I'm very cognizant of is I'm a non-native speaker of English in Australia. So I say right at the start, I set the tone for others to share what they need to be successful in the room. I say, I speak the way I speak, I do sometimes run away with my thoughts and I can start speaking fast so slow me down if anyone doesn't understand my accent, I'm not offended if you say so to me, point it out so I can do better. I can speak louder, slower, more clearer, and make an effort to do that. And how well am I doing so far? So in about 10 minutes, I check with people if they are understanding everything I'm saying, and I make sure people are nodding and saying they get it. And I think that's unexpected for people, Michelle, because people just want to kind of sometimes mask their differences so that I'm not standing in contrast to you. But I see that as a strength. I'm different. So are you compared to me. And why hide that? It's a strength. We have to amplify that. And it gives, I hope, people permission to be more themselves and to stay honest and humble in the room.

Michelle Ockers:

Absolutely. Thank you. It's always interesting to lean into other people's experience and ask, how does this play out against your experience? What might this look like for you? So thank you for that. Now I have had amongst the many learning uncut episodes and we're up to 149 of our regular case study episodes. Now I've had a couple of specific ones that I wanted to call out. If listeners are interested in looking at in these environments where psychological safety was particularly important. for learning, if anyone wants to take a closer look at them, in their episode 110, which was about an advanced clinical supervision program, that was a conversation with Kate Fraser and Dr. Kuva Jacobs. There were a lot of people on the program who were in clinical supervisory roles who had lived trauma. So there were issues there that a safe environment needs to be created to work through. And the other one is episode 96 with Emma Evans and Annie Kennedy, which was a delightful conversation about the Oceania women's football development, which included participants from 11 Pacific nations which ended up being not just about equipping them to help develop women's participation in football locally, but empowering them with greater confidence as women in relatively patriarchal societies in a male dominated sport. So that was very interesting, the way they went about creating psychological safety there. And of course, Sonali, I know you do a lot of work with inclusive leadership and you've got an inclusive leadership workshop coming up that I just wanted to let people know about if they're curious about that. That is a public workshop. Do you want to tell us a little bit more about that?

Sonali D'Silva:

Yes. Thank you, Michelle, for that. So I'm hosting my second public workshop for the year. I got done in June with one on psychological safety and that was a great learning experience because people brought in their points of view. So excited for 22nd October, which is when I'm doing leading with inclusion as a public workshop full day at Adelaide in the CBD and very excited for that.

Michelle Ockers:

I will put a link to more information on that in the show notes, because you do work directly with a number of organizations around improving inclusion, belonging, psychological safety. So people can check out your website for more information. And you've got a fabulous learning guide to psychological safety, which is jam packed with really rich, actionable steps. clear practical guidance and some great reflective questions around psychological safety in teams. So I encourage people to take a look at that as well. Is there anything you'd like to add to round out the conversation, Sonali?

Learning Uncut Elevate Episode 38 Psychological Safety in Learning – Sonali D'silva

Sonali D'Silva:

I'd say creating psychological safety is a hard job. And Dr. Amy Edmondson says it's more art than it is science. And safety is a fragile thing. So let's not be too hard on ourselves if we unwittingly do things that we then regret. But the best we can do is perhaps apologize or make amends, you know, start afresh the next day. People do respond to our good intent and they see that we sincerely mean for it to be better. So I'd encourage all of us to keep plugging in and aim for something that is precious and has very high dividends. So there's every reason to invest our time in it.

Michelle Ockers:

Thank you so much. I knew I would enjoy our conversation and I did enjoy it very much, Sonali. So thank you for coming on to the podcast to share more about psychological safety, particularly for those of us who are involved in facilitating learning. Greatly appreciate your input.

Sonali D'Silva:

Loved being here, Michelle. Thank you for having me.

Learning Uncut Elevate Episode 38 Psychological Safety in Learning – Sonali D’silva



Learning Uncut are learning and development consultants that help Learning and Development leaders and their teams become a strategic enabler so that their businesses can thrive. We work in evidence-informed ways to drive tangible outcomes and business impact and are strong believers in the power of collaboration and community. We specialise in helping to build or refresh organisational learning strategy, update their L&D Operating Model, enable skills development, and conduct learning evaluation. We also offer workshops to shift learning mindset and practices for both L&D teams and the broader workforce – as well as speaking at public and internal events.

Learn more about us [at our website](#).

About your host, Michelle Ockers



Michelle is the co-founder and Chief Learning Strategy at Learning Uncut. She is an experience, pragmatic organisational learning strategist, L&D capability builder and modern workplace learning practitioner. She also delivers keynotes, workshops and webinars for learning and broader professional or workforce groups at both public and in-house events.

Michelle received the following prestigious industry awards in 2019:

- Australian Institute of Training and Development Dr Alastair Rylatt Award for L&D *Professional of the Year – for outstanding contribution to the practice of learning and development*
- *Internet Time Alliance Jay Cross Memorial Award – for outstanding contribution to the field of informal learning*



Find Michelle on [LinkedIn](#)

