Welcome to our discussion of the principles insights presented by Daniel Coyle in **The Culture Code:** The Secrets of Highly Successful Groups.

THE BIG IDEAS:
The Culture Code discusses a set of three skills. "The three skills work together from the bottom up, first building group connection and then channeling it into action."

1. Build Safety	2. Share Vulnerability	3. Establish Purpose
belonging cues, proximity, communication		develop the story of your group

1. Build Safety

Belonging Cues:

Our primeval amygdala, which houses our fight or flight behavior, is the part of the brain that "plays a vital role in building social connections ... In a heartbeat, it transforms from a growling guard dog into an energetic guide dog with a single-minded goal: to make sure you stay tightly connected with your people."

Cues that create safety possess 3 qualities:

1. **Energy:** They invest in the exchange that is occurring
2. **Individualization:** They treat the person as unique and valued
3. **Future orientation:** They signal the relationship will continue

Proximity:

.Research by MIT's Thomas Allen showed the most successful projects were produced by "clusters of high communicators."

- The Allen Curve shows communication is off the chart at distances of less than 6 meters, and plummets when team members were on a separate floors. This means that those who sit together, work together.
- This also affects digital communications. Workers who share a physical location will email each other 4x as often. They will complete projects 32% faster than teams separated by space.

Listening:

Teams in successful cultures listen to one another. They communicate similarly, "head slightly forward, eyes unblinking, and eyebrows arched up."

Listeners give a steady stream of affirmations -yes, uh-huh. Interruptions shatter the core of belonging - unless they are short bursts of interruptions in a creative session rooted in and born of mutual excitement.

2. Share Vulnerability

People have long thought that we build trust before building relationships. "But science is showing us that we've got it backward. Vulnerability doesn't come after trust - it precedes it."

" ... most of us instinctively see vulnerability as a condition to be hidden. But science shows that when it comes to creating cooperation, vulnerability is not a risk but a psychological requirement."

"People tend to think of vulnerability in a touch-feely way, but that's not what's happening ... It's about sending a really clear signal that you have weaknesses, that you could use help ... A shared exchange of openness is the most basic building block of cooperation and trust."

Vulnerable conversations follow the same steps:

1. Person A sends a sign of vulnerability.
2. Person B detects this signal.
3. Person B responds by signaling their own vulnerability.
4. Person A detects this signal.
5. A norm is established; closeness and trust increase.

"Trust comes down to context. And what drives it is the sense that you're vulnerable, that you need others and can't do it on your own."

There are two critical moments that occur early in a group that foreshadow "Are we about appearing strong, or about exploring the landscape together? Are we about winning interactions, or about learning together?"

They are:

1. The first vulnerability
2. The first disagreement

3. Establish Purpose

"How can a handful of simple, forthright sentences make such a difference in a group's behavior?"

They did: in the history of Tylenol. Begrudgingly, Sr. managers at J&J spent a whole day challenging their credo until they could agree. This was tested when in 1982, Tylenol laced with cyanide was discovered. The CEO ordered a national recall of every Tylenol product against the advice of the FBI and FDA saying, "We believe our first responsibility is to doctors, nurses and' patients; to mothers and fathers and all others who use our products and services." This was the act of integrity called for by the credo.

How do you measure the effect of a narrative? This was tested in the Harvard Test of Inflected Acquisition, Teachers were given a list of 20% bf their class who were "high potentials with unusual potential for intellectual growth". A year later the students growth was measured. The identified "first graders gained 27 IQ points versus 12 points for the fest of the class." But - the test was actually measuring the teachers! The high potentials had been selected at random!

They "aligned motivations, awareness and behaviors" around the identified high performers. Teachers were kinder, provided extra material, called on the students more often, listened and gave them feedback when they made a mistake. "Together they created a virtuous spiral that helped students thrive in ways that exceeded their so-called limits."

Famed restaurateur Danny Meyer, stops mid-sentence to watch what happens when a waiter helps another a waiter clean up a dropped glass. "I'm watching for what happens· afterward...", they could be disinterested or angry - or they will create uplifting energy that has everything to do with each other.
"The number one job is to take care of each other." This commitment didn't come easily. Meyer spent years modeling behavior and it didn't work. He finally had to put names to the desired behaviors to make them stick. He had an offsite where staff "named" priorities:

1. colleagues
2. guests
3. community
4. suppliers
5. investors.

Discussions and Exercises

1

SAFETY SIGNALS: "Safety is not mere emotional weather, but rather the foundation on which strong culture is built. It communicates here is a safe place to give effort."

Read the first column titled "Build Safety" on the reverse side of this page and then proceed to the following question. We are built to require lots of signaling over and over. This is why a sense of belonging is easy to destroy and hard to build. There are clear interactions and signals evident in successful groups.

On the list below, rate the team you lead or participate in on their signaling cues. Rate from 1 to 10, #1 being a **LOW** rating and #10 being a **VERY HIGH** rating. Then discuss your results and potential changes you can make.

☐	Close physical proximity, often in circles	☐	High levels of mixing: everyone talks to everyone
☐	Profuse amounts of eye contact	☐	Few interruptions
☐	Physical touch (handshakes, fist bumps, hugs)	☐	Lots of questions
☐	Lots of short, energetic exchanges (no long speeches)	☐	Intensive, active listening
☐	Humor, laughter	☐	Small attentive courtesies (thank yous, opening doors)

2

Psychologist from Stanford, Yale and Columbia performed an experiment gauging the effect of feedback on students. One form of feedback from the test was termed "magical" because of it's results. The statement drove three cues:
1. You are part of this group
2. This group is special, we have high standards
3. I believe you can reach those standards.

The sentence written on the papers that drove outstanding participation and improvements was, "I'm giving you these comments because I have very high expectations and I know that you can reach them."56
How might you be able to create magical results with feedback in your environment?

3

LISTENING: It is a well known fact that women are interrupted far more frequently in the workplace. Knowing that "interruptions shatter the core of belonging", what can we do to change this behavior?

4

SHARE VULNERABILITY: Read column two, "share vulnerability" on the reverse side.

What surprises you? What stands out? Do you share vulnerability with your teammates that creates a sense of shared responsibility and learning together?

5

When safety is felt, it allows the team to "create a group mind where everybody can work together and perform to the team's potential." There are examples of organizations that have built "hole poking" into their process to share humility, undermine ego, and get to the best product.
- Navy Seals conduct After-Action Reviews (AARs). AARs happen immediately after each mission and consist of a short meeting where the team gathers to discuss and replay key decisions. Rank is switched off and humility switched on." This type of training helped make the Osama bin Laden mission a success.
- Each Pixar movie goes through about six "Brain Trust Meetings" while in development. "The Brain Trust is where we figure out why they [the movie] suck and it's also where they start to not suck" due to the candid and sometimes painful input of veteran directors and producers.

The overriding similarity is that these groups use a process that encourages, "now let's see if someone can poke holes in this" or "tell me what's wrong with this idea." How or where in your routine might you implement a process like this?

6

ESTABLISH PURPOSE: Read column three on the reverse side of this page. Teams are bound together by a shared purpose, goals and values. What is the shared purpose of your team. Have you made it emotionally sticky? What might you do to improve this?

7

HOMEWORK: Laszlo Bock, former head of People Analytics at Google, recommends we ask our team these questions:
1. What is one thing that I currently do that you'd like me to continue to do?
2. What is one thing that I don't currently do frequently enough that you think I should do more often?
3. What can I do to make you more effective? Select the question you would like to research first.