Decoding Culture

Beyond the Fluff and Back to Business
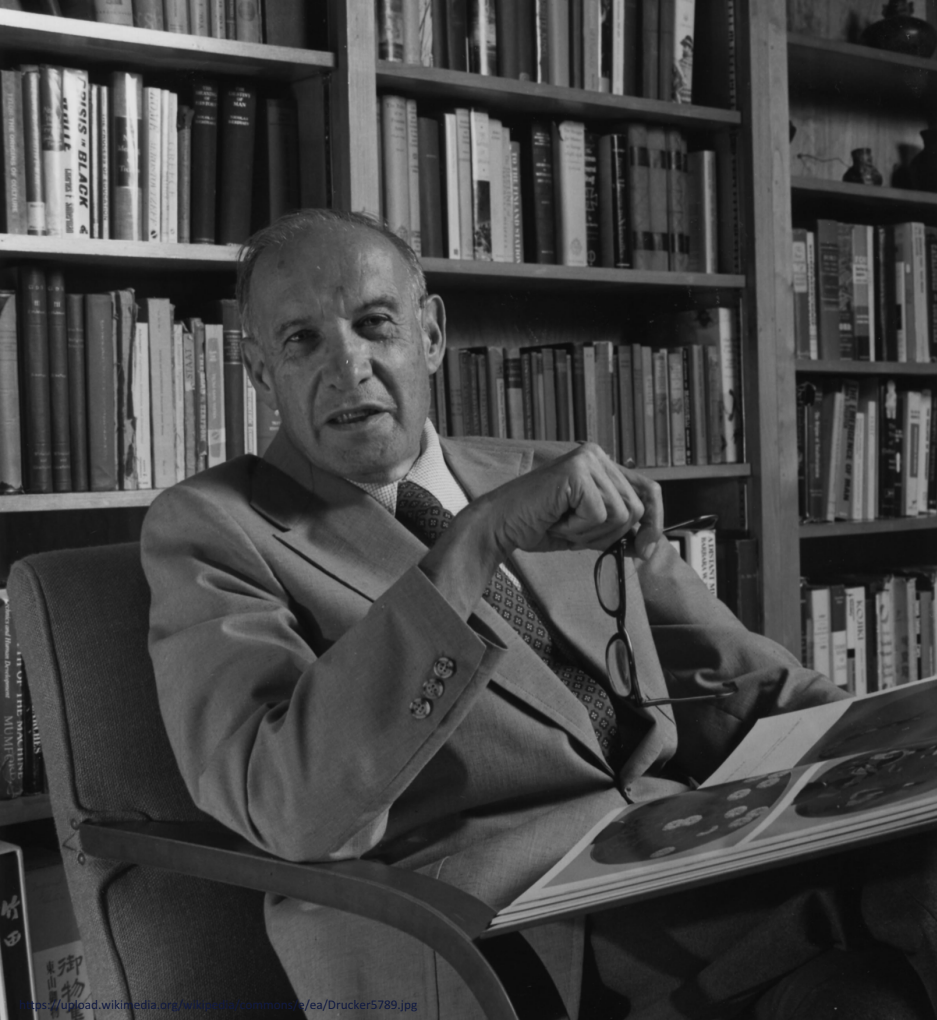
Jeff Gallimore

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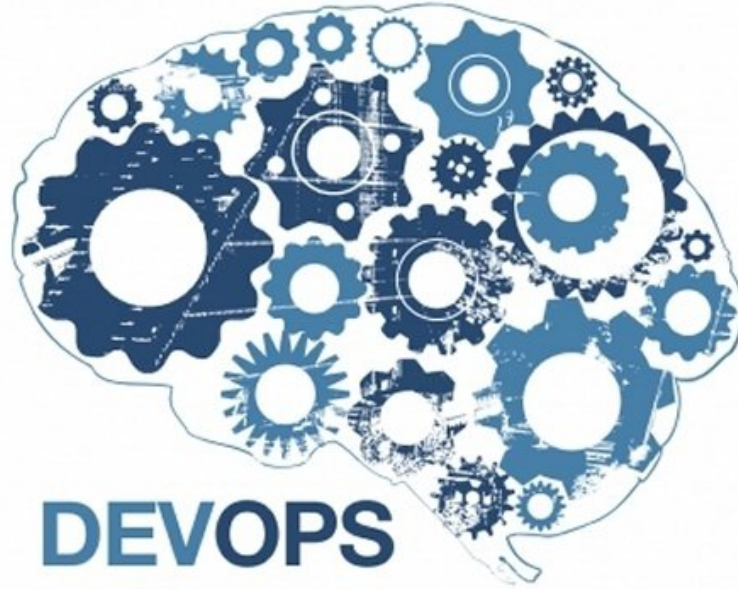
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"Culture eats strategy for breakfast."

– Peter Drucker

Merriam-Webster's 2014 Word of the Year

Culture.

http://core0.staticworld.net/images/article/2014/06/devops-100314993-primary.idge.jpg

The DevOps movement.

Culture
Automation
Lean
Measurement
Sharing

Culture is a key aspect of DevOps.

(So is **Sharing**, which is related to culture.)

Describe your organization's culture.

Take 30 seconds to yourself to come up with an answer for how you would describe your organization's culture.

I'm going to call on a few people to give their answers.

"Please describe your organization's culture."

And then words…

Culture is hard to **describe**.

Researchers begin counting grains of sand on Cornish beach

Tariq Tahir for Metro Wednesday 12 Oct 2011 9:43 pm

Ever wanted to know how many grains of sand there are on an entire beach? Well, researchers have just started counting on a Cornish stretch of sand.

Hi-tech: The scientific equipment is installed on Perranporth beach in Cornwall (Pic: PA)

The team from England, America and Australia is using a 40m beach to assess coastal erosion with more than 100 state-of-the-art instruments

Culture is hard to **measure**.

Culture is hard to **change**.

So What?

f You and 82 others don't give a ...

http://img06.deviantart.net/bd80/i/2011/300/1/6/so_what_button_by_blueberryblack-d4e49uz.jpg

Why is culture important?

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200x more frequent deploys.

2,555x faster lead times.

24x faster MTTR.

3x lower change failure rate.

Effective WIP limits that drive process improvement

Use of visual displays to monitor quality, productivity and work in process

Use of app and infrastucture monitoring tools to make business decisions

Together, the factors on the left model lean management which leads to...

A generative, performance-oriented culture (per Westrum's model)

Higher levels of IT performance (higher throughput and stability)

Lower levels of burnout

Higher levels of org performance (productivity, market share, profitability)

(p. 15)

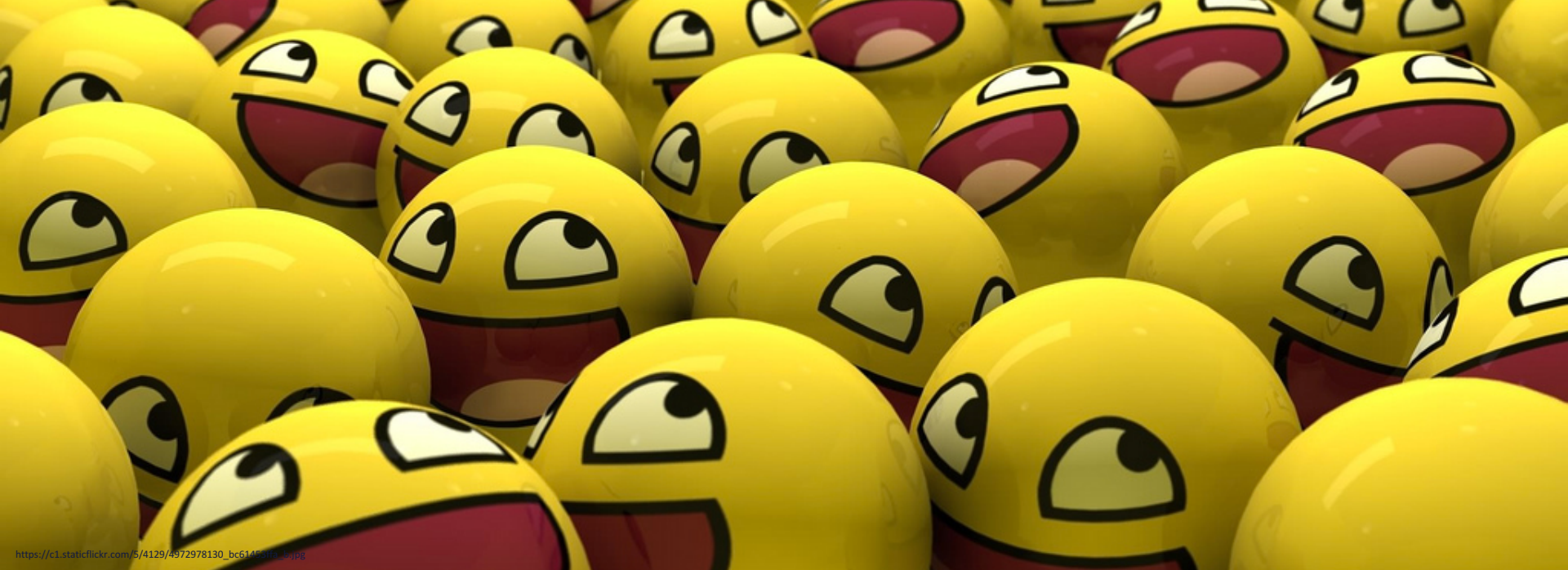Culture predicts both **IT performance** and **organizational performance**.
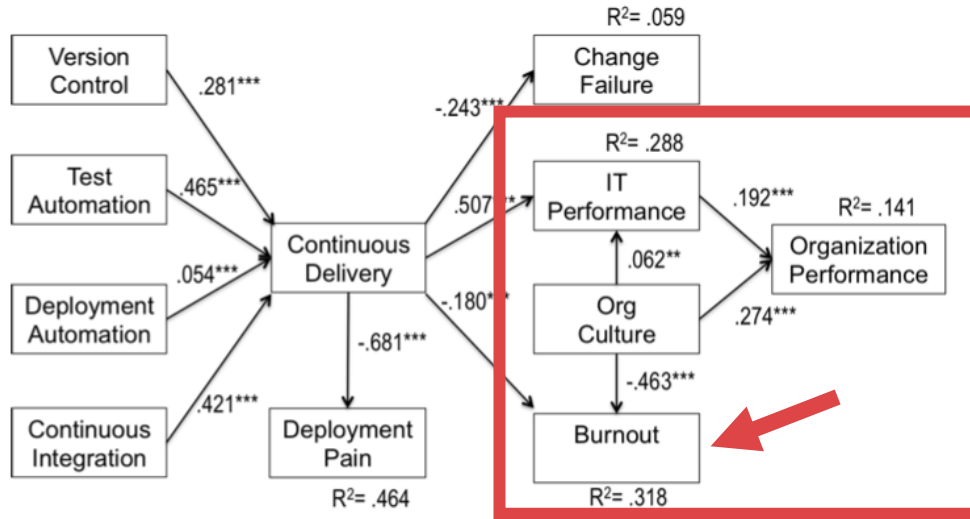
(p. 10)

Because **science**.

Forsgren, N., J. Humble (2016). "The Role of Continuous Delivery in IT and Organizational Performance." (p. 10)

http://i.cdn.turner.com/nba/nba/.element/media/2.0/teamsites/celtics/media/history/championships-910x442.jpg

More successful organizations.

https://c1.staticflickr.com/5/4129/4972978130_bc6145bfffb_c.jpg

Happier employees.

http://i.vimeocdn.com/video/454221405_1280x720.jpg

What is culture?

Westrum's Culture Typology

Table 1 How organisations process information

| Pathological	Bureaucratic	Generative
Power oriented	**Rule oriented**	**Performance oriented**
Low cooperation	Modest cooperation	High cooperation
Messengers shot	Messengers neglected	Messengers trained
Responsibilities shirked	Narrow responsibilities	Risks are shared
Bridging discouraged	Bridging tolerated	Bridging encouraged
Failure→ scapegoating	Failure→ justice	Failure→ inquiry
Novelty crushed	Novelty→ problems	Novelty implemented

Blameless PostMortems and a Just Culture

Posted by **John Allspaw** on May 22, 2012

"Having a **Just Culture** means that you're making effort to balance safety *and* accountability."

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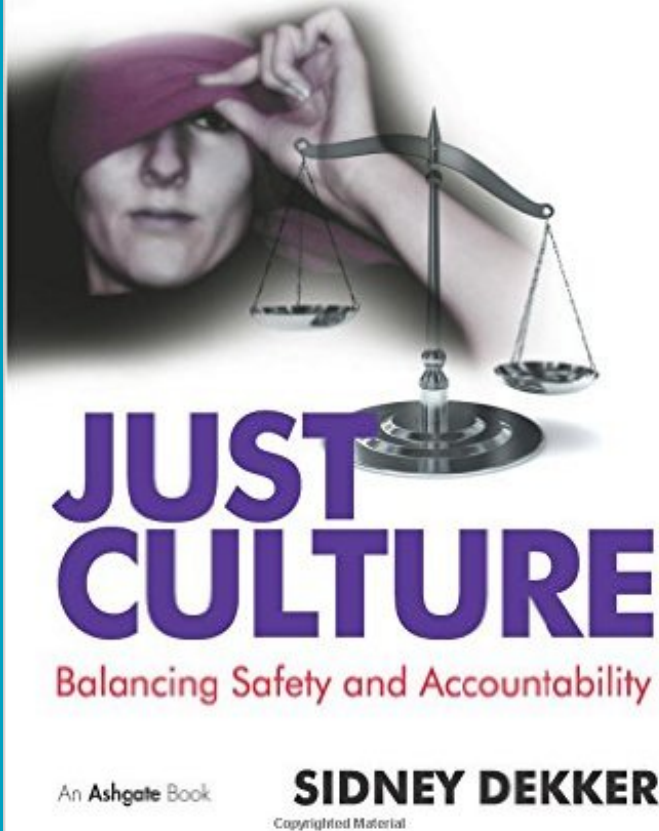
"Work that gets learned-by-doing lives by this pact: Technical errors and their consequences are to be acknowledged and transformed into an occasion for positive experience, learning, improvement." (p. 38)

"The world is complex – live with it. And learn from it what you can." (p. 117)

Creating a climate of fear.

"An air traffic control provider reported a **50% drop in incidents reported** in the year following criminal prosecution of controllers involved in a runway incursion incident." (p. 109)

The organization **lost the opportunity to learn** from the unreported incidents.

https://www.flickr.com/photos/mikecogh/8035396680

Balance accountability and learning.

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Psychological safety.

"If I make a mistake on our team, it is not held against me."

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.

https://rework.withgoogle.com/blog/five-keys-to-a-successful-google-team/

re:Work

A Google study found **psychological safety** was "far and away the most important" dynamic that set successful teams apart from other teams.
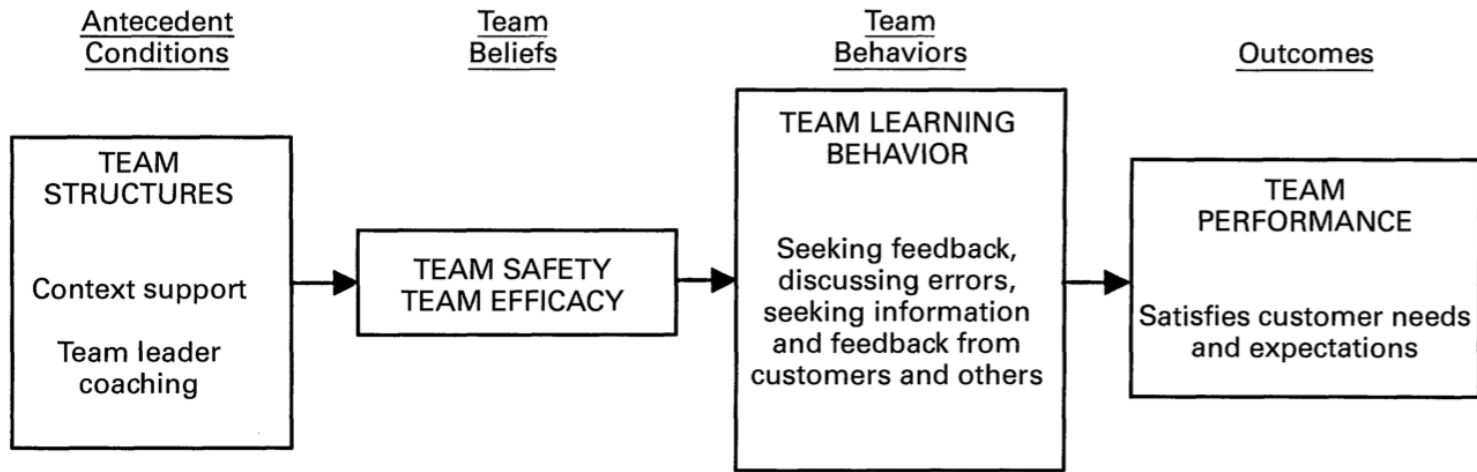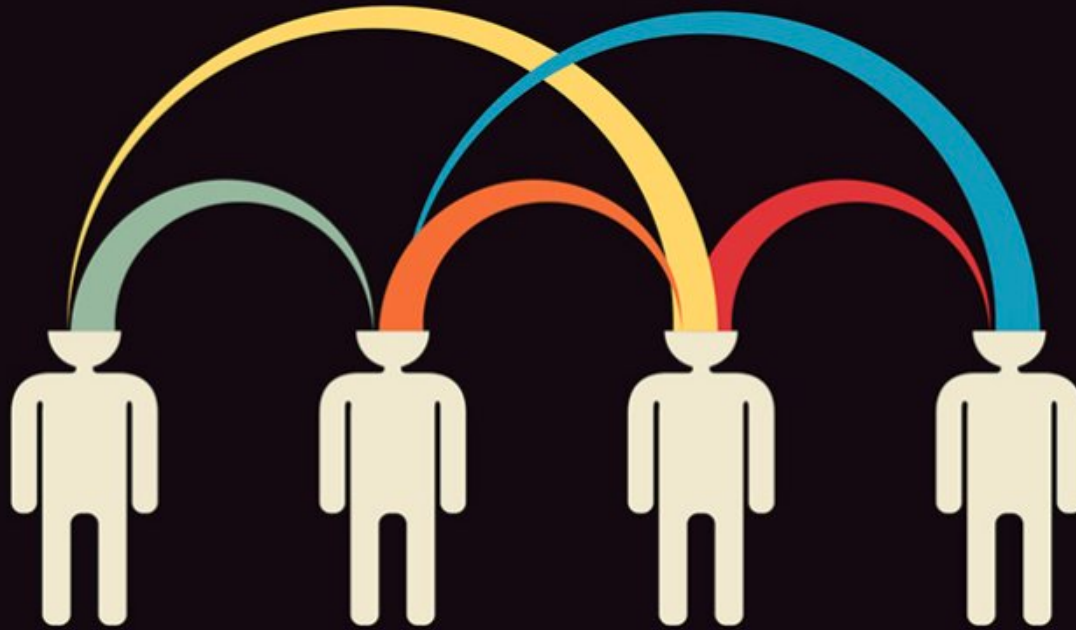
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Because more **science**.

Edmondson, A. (1999). "Psychological Safety and Learning Behavior in Work Teams." (p. 9)

Safety
Learning
Performance

The **safer** you feel, the more you **learn**.
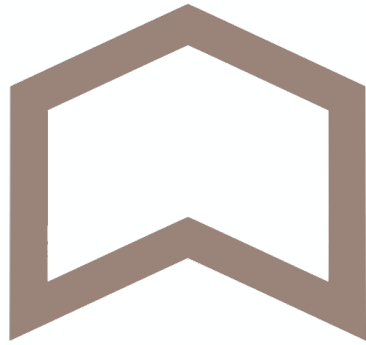
The more you **learn**, the better you **perform**.

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How do you change culture?

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Assess.

https://content.linkedin.com/content/dam/business/talent-solutions/global/en_us/blog/2014/10/measure-quality.jpg
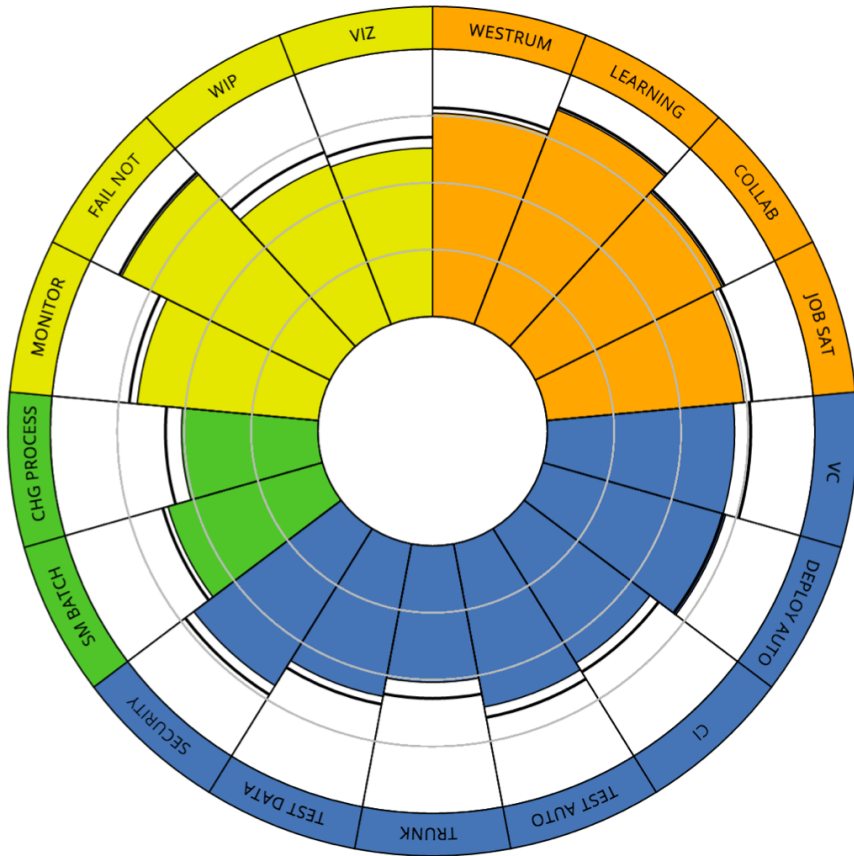
DORA

DEVOPS RESEARCH & ASSESSMENT

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following? On my team...

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
Failure causes inquiry.	◉	◉	◉	◉	◉	◉	◉

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DORA can provide insights on **cultural capabilities**, like

- **Westrum** organizational culture.
- Climate for **learning**.
- **Collaboration** between teams.
- **Job satisfaction**.

…against **industry benchmarks**.

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Assessing culture.

All items measured on a Likert-type scale, 1=Strongly disagree to 7 = Strongly agree

1. On my team, information is actively sought.

2. On my team, failures are learning opportunities, and messengers of them are not punished.

3. On my team, responsibilities are shared.

4. On my team, cross-functional collaboration is encouraged and rewarded.

5. On my team, failure causes enquiry.

6. On my team, new ideas are welcomed.

7. On my team, failures are treated primarily as opportunities to improve the system.
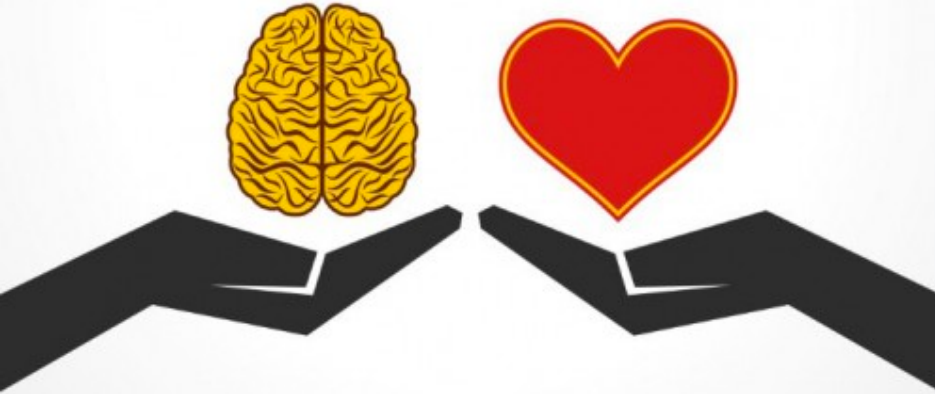
Educate.

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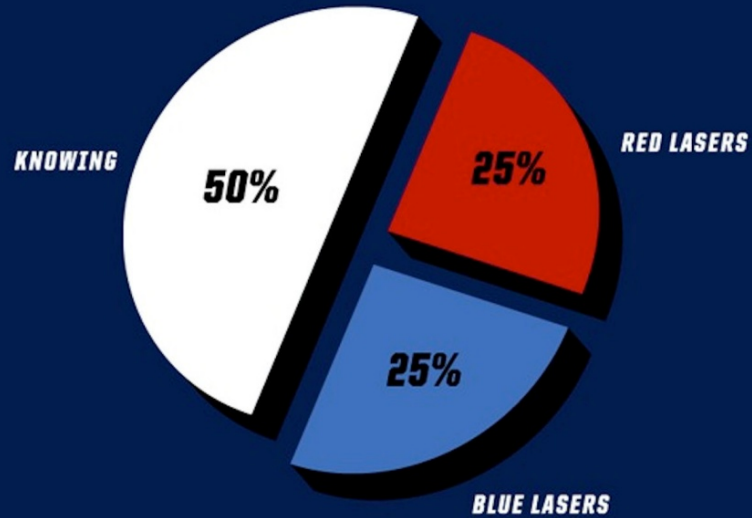
Knowing is half the battle.

Speak to the **head** and the **heart**.

Winning IT and organizational performance.

https://www.flickr.com/photos/44534236@N00
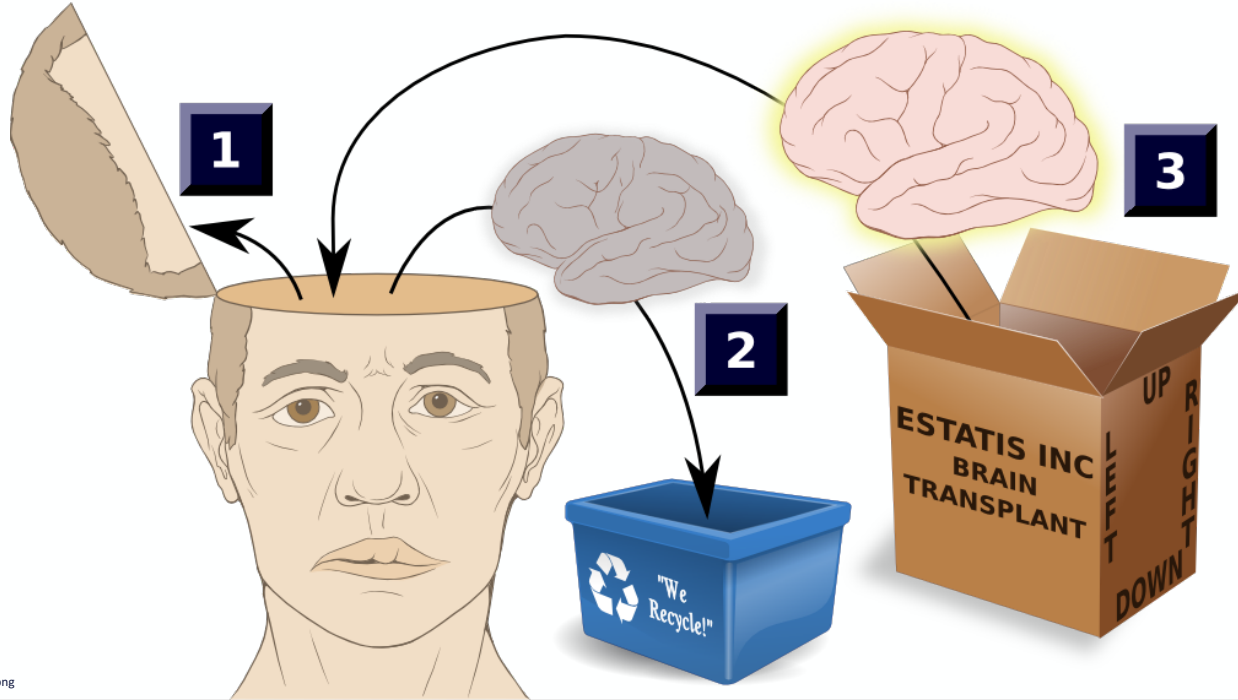
Burnout is real and has a human toll.

Read John Willis' "Karojisatsu" post on the IT Revolution blog.

Think.

http://inutile.club/estatis/brain-transplant/img/scheme.png

Change your mindset.

New Assumptions

People do not come to work to do a bad job.

Everyone is doing the best they can given the information they have at the time.

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Shift from "Who?" to "Why?"

Why did you do what you did?

Why did that action make sense to you at the time?

Why did the system allow you to do that?

Home / Cloud & Services

NEWS

AWS says a typo caused the massive S3 failure this week

The cloud provider is implementing several changes to prevent similar events

What would you think if this happened to you?

Act.

Model the behavior.

1. Frame work as **learning problems**, as opposed to execution problems.

"I have not failed 700 times. I have not failed once. I have succeeded in proving that those 700 ways will not work. When I have eliminated the ways that will not work, I will find the way that will work."

– Thomas Edison

Experiments.

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Our Own Culture Experiment

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Somewhat Disagree
4. Neither Agree Nor Disagree
5. Somewhat Agree
6. Agree
7. Strongly Agree

1. On my team, information is actively sought.
2. On my team, failures are learning opportunities, and messengers of them are not punished.
3. On my team, responsibilities are shared.
4. On my team, cross-functional collaboration is encouraged and rewarded.
5. On my team, failure causes enquiry.
6. On my team, new ideas are welcomed.
7. On my team, failures are treated primarily as opportunities to improve the system.

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Model the behavior.

1. Frame work as **learning problems**, as opposed to execution problems.
2. Acknowledge your own **fallibility**.
3. Model **curiosity** by asking a lot of questions.

You're taking risks.

Show courage.

https://www.flickr.com/photos/mleung311/8854933171

You can be a hero.

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http://static.spin.com/files/120628-bruce.png

To the supervisors, managers, leaders, and anyone who considers themselves a **boss**…

"The supposition is prevalent the world over that there would be no problems in production or service if only our production workers would do their jobs in the way that they were taught. Pleasant dreams. The workers are handicapped by the system, and **the system belongs to the management.**"

Deming, "Out of the Crisis" (p. 121)

https://c1.staticflickr.com/2/1049/5142119589_1aaf74ded4_b.jpg

Speed of the leader. Speed of the team.

You control consequences and rewards.

Culture.

It reflects **how we think** and **what we value**.

It shows up in **how we act**.

It is **changeable**.

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Think different.

Act different.

https://www.flickr.com/photos/esqenzo/268064771

We can make some **beautiful changes**.

Before   After

Perform better.

Feel better.

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Culture matters.

It affects each of us.

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With us...it's personal

We each have **personal experience** with culture.

I AM GOING TO CHANGE MY LIFE TODAY.

I tell myself this everyday but I can never seem to do it even though I desperately want to. I wish I was strong enough. Brave enough. Or stupid enough to go after what I want.

We each have **power for change**.

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