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## Week 19 Focus: Fostering the Skill of Speaking Up

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### Description

In the remote space, creating trust, safety and connection across the team is critical to surfacing the issues which need to be addressed and allowing the team to bring their best work every day. When teams are remote, it's very easy for issues to be left, and fester, becoming even greater issues quickly.

Here's what I shared recently at the Teams365 blog about fostering an environment where people feel safe to speak up.

Check out what I wrote in Teams365 2221:

"As we wind up with our last team essential of the month, I wanted to take us into an area which is critical for team success – the ability to speak up.

When a team feels connected and safe, they are more likely to speak up. The foundation of teamwork is that the fusion of many perspectives, insights and talents is better than one person thinking alone. With this philosophy in mind, it's very likely that there will be divergent perspectives and insights that emerge from across the team. How do you create a context in which people feel that they can share what might be perceived as oppositional insights, without being shut down?

The ability to speak up was identified as a core component for helping teams excel by Amy Edmonson from Harvard. I regularly recommend her 2011 book on Teaming to Organizations, and she has recently followed up with a new book called The Fearless Organization. Take a look at this article.

From large to small invitations there can be many different ways we foster conversation across a team. This might include:

- Dedicating time to brainstorming solutions/perspectives and alternatives to your most pressing opportunities and /or challenges. In the truest sense of brainstorming, we are welcoming ALL different ideas without shutting them down.
- Ensuring that all voices are being heard. This can be done through participatory facilitation techniques. Rather than just going around a table to verbally share ideas, consider giving everyone a set of index cards or post it notes to share their top ideas. Gather these and post them or go through them one at a time.
- Talk about why it's important to bring alternative perspectives to the table.
- Watch your language – how is language shaping an "invitation" to connect and collaborate. Is more ME/YOU language being used or WE?

What other barriers are being created around inviting everyone's voice to the table?"

### Activity

Have a discussion this week around what Speaking Up can look like in your team or organization, and what the value of it is.

### For more on this topic check out:

*Speak Up, Show Up and Stand Out* – Loretta Malandro

*Teaming* – Amy Edmondson

**"The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn't being said."**

Peter Drucker

### Try this out...

Four ways to foster the skill of speaking up –

- Promote brainstorming with a focus on QUANTITY not GETTING IT RIGHT.
- Create a team practice of discussing changes needed.
- In project debriefs talk about learning from past projects around what hasn't worked, as well as what has.
- Have a suggestion box where people can share suggestions around big and small items which need exploration and change.