Voice, Exit, Loyalty, Neglect: What Hirschman Can Teach Us About Product Teams

Anna Lavrova

"Hi, I am Anna and I am an Organisational Coach"

CERTIFICATIONS

- ✓ THEORY U COACHING 2019
- ✓ CERTIFIED KANBAN PRACTITIONER 2016
- ✓ CERTIFIED SAFE AGILIST Since 2017
- ✓ CERTIFIED LESS PRACTITIONER 2017
- ✓ CO-ACTIVE COACHING 2020
- ✓ INTEGRAL COACHING 2021
- ✓ NON VIOLENT COMMUNICATION COACH 2022
- ✓ ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS SYSTEM COACH 2021
- ✓ CERTIFIED EXECUTIVE COACH (CEC) 2021
- ✓ INTERNATIONAL COACH FEDERATION (ICF) CERTIFICATION 2022
- ✓ CERTIFIED ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COACH 2022
- ✓ CYNEFIN TRAINER 2024
- ✓ INCLUSIVE CULTURES COACHING 2024

ORG TOPOLOGIES™
CERTIFIED PRACTITIONER
C-OTP

ANNA LAVROVA, WEMANITY REPLY BELGIUM

Most teams don't collapse...

Most teams don't collapse, they disengage

retros become polite
engineers stop arguing about architecture
people start saying "whatever"

Most teams don't collapse, they disengage

retros become polite
engineers stop arguing about architecture
people start saying "whatever"

cynicism
is the strongest predictor of attrition

RESULTS

ACCOUNTABILITY

COMMITMENT

CONFLICT

TRUST

The Five Behaviors® Model

RESULTS

ACCOUNTABILITY

COMMITMENT

CONFLICT

TRUST

The Five Behaviors® Model

The Pattern We Miss

declining quality
fewer improvements
passive execution

→

lack of motivation
poor attitude
skill problems

Albert O. Hirschman (1915–2012) was a German-born economist, political thinker, and social scientist whose work sits between economics, political science, and sociology.

Albert O. Hirschman (1915–2012) was a German-born economist, political thinker, and social scientist whose work sits between economics, political science, and sociology.

You can now bet on German train delays

bahn.bet	Open

FYI

A statement from DBSM Corporate

In January 2026, Germany's federal court ruled that purchasing a Deutsche Bahn ticket constitutes a form of gambling (Glücksspiel), citing that "the probability of arriving on time is statistically comparable to a coin flip."

Rather than contest the ruling, DBSM embraced it. If riding our trains is gambling, then passengers deserve the right to hedge.

BahnBet is our answer: a platform where you can bet against your own train, turning delays into suffering, and suffering into profit. Every minute of punctuality you lose, you can win back in deliciously valuable caßh.

The DBSM Board of Directors. *Pain with every delay™*

BahnBet

Profit™ with every delay

THE RAILWAY WAS EXPERIENCING A <u>DETERIORATION IN SERVICE QUALITY,</u> YET THE TYPICAL ECONOMIC RESPONSE OF <u>"EXIT"</u> (CUSTOMERS SWITCHING TO COMPETITORS) <u>WAS NOT OCCURRING</u>
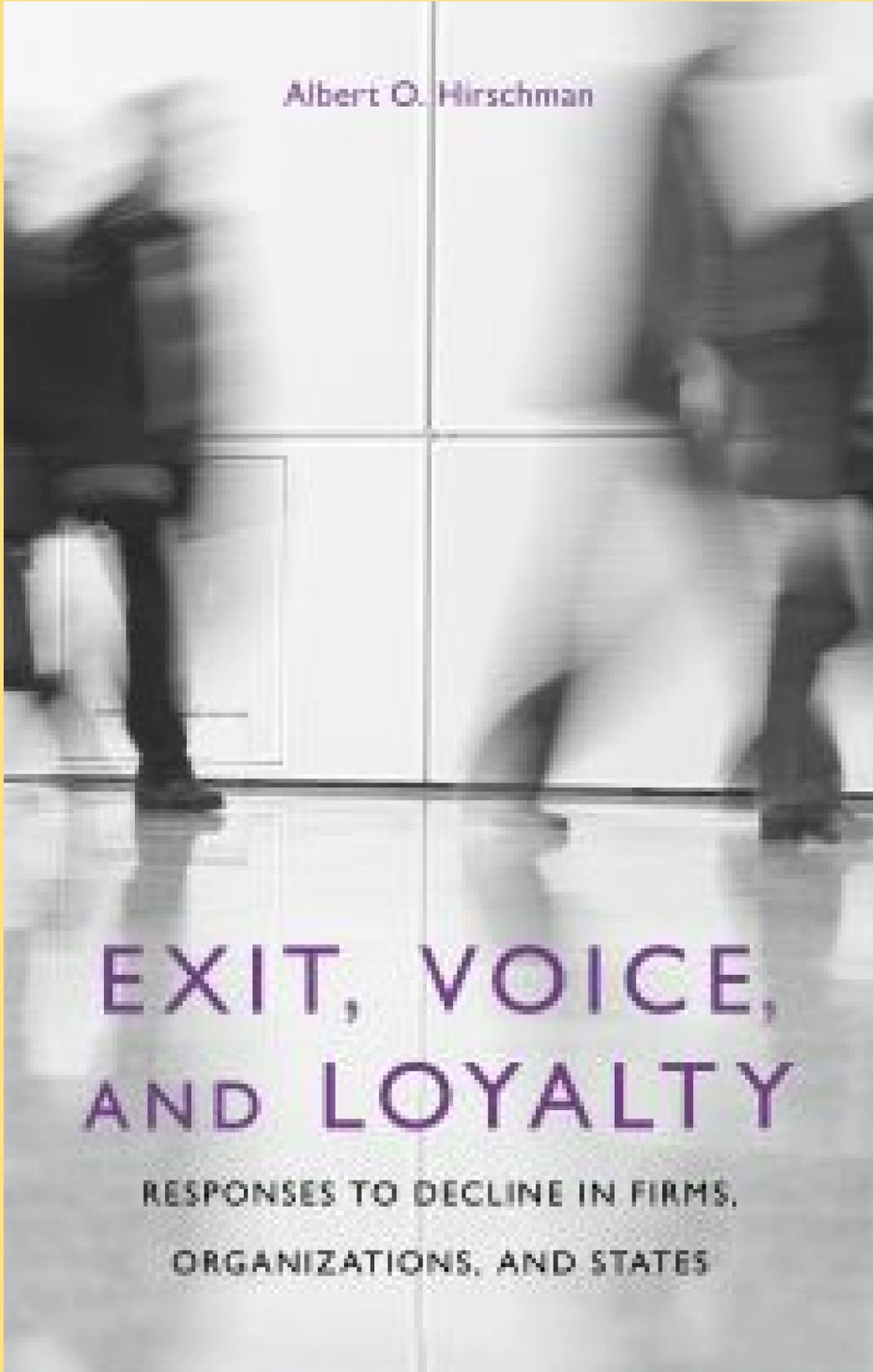
Albert O. Hirschman

EXIT, VOICE, AND LOYALTY

RESPONSES TO DECLINE IN FIRMS,

ORGANIZATIONS, AND STATES
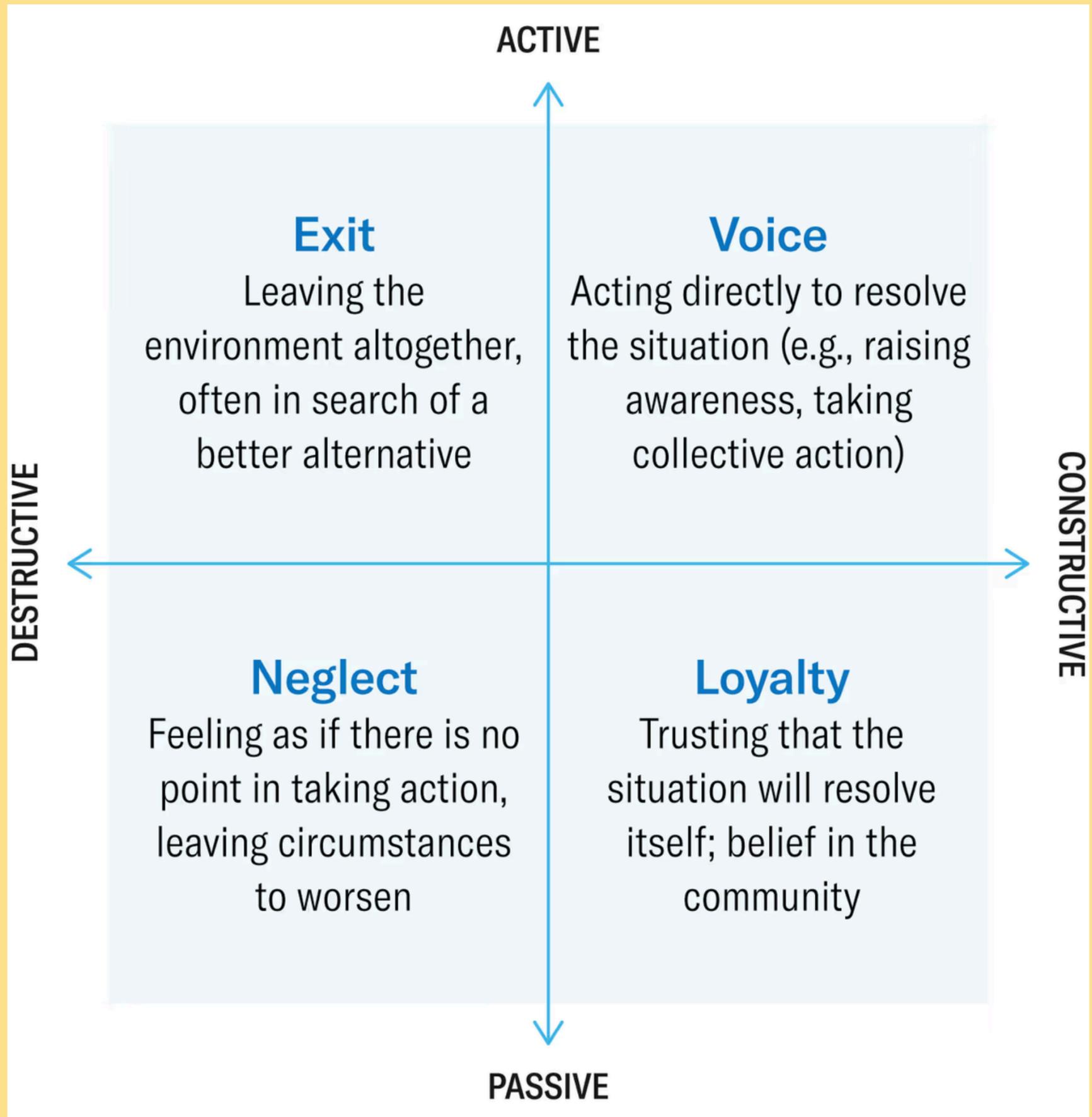
3 possible responses

ISSUE

EXIT
- The issue is important to me
- No matter what I do, there will be no improvement
- I therefore choose to leave and move on in life

VOICE
- The issue is important to me
- I believe I can influence the outcome
- I therefore choose to speak up

LOYALTY
- The issue ranks low among my concerns
- I do not want to waste time on it
- I therefore do nothing and focus on other issues

Adapted from Exit, Voice, and Loyalty by Albert O. Hirschman (1970)

What do people do when the organizations they depend on start to deteriorate?

ignored tech debt
reversed product decisions
roadmap chaos
constant priority shifts

ACTIVE

DESTRUCTIVE

CONSTRUCTIVE

PASSIVE

Exit
Leaving the environment altogether, often in search of a better alternative

Voice
Acting directly to resolve the situation (e.g., raising awareness, taking collective action)

Neglect
Feeling as if there is no point in taking action, leaving circumstances to worsen

Loyalty
Trusting that the situation will resolve itself; belief in the community

Voice becomes more important when Exit is costly

Without loyalty, systems would simply experience rapid exit instead of attempts to repair

The Dangerous One: Neglect

Most teams don't collapse, they disengage

retros become polite
engineers stop arguing about architecture
people start saying "whatever"

cynicism
is the strongest predictor of attrition

Teams stop speaking up when:

1) previous feedback
   changed nothing
2) leaders punish dissent

→

Over time:
Voice → Loyalty →
Neglect → Exit

What Leaders Usually Try

more process
more tracking
more reporting
more alignment meetings

What Voice Looks Like in Engineering Teams
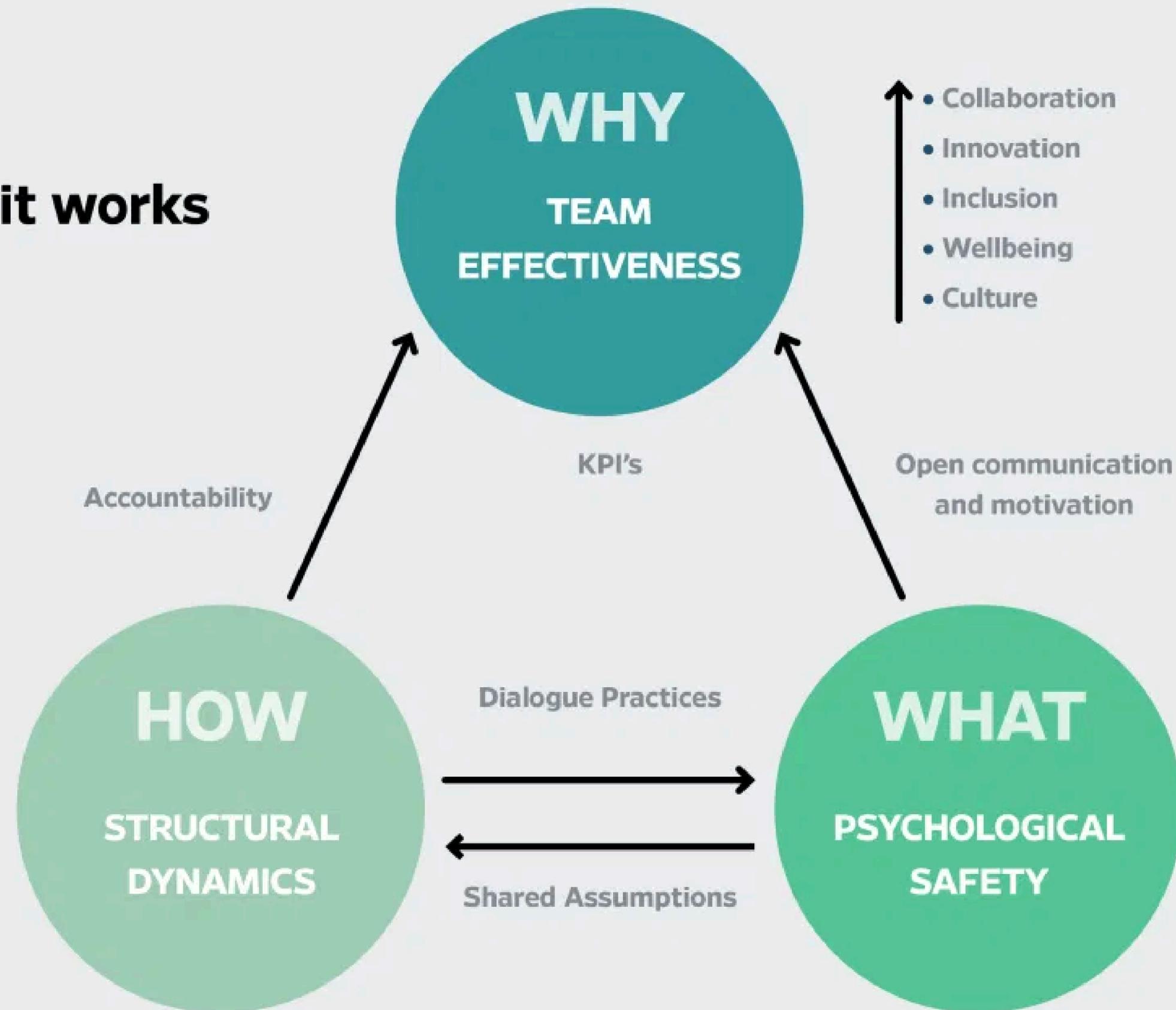
engineers challenge product assumptions
retros produce real changes
architecture debates happen openly
teams propose experiments

Voice is friction that improves the system

Visible Response Loops

what was accepted
what was rejected
why

People speak up when voice produces action.

Psychological Safety is

A belief that you and others
will not be punished or humiliated
for speaking up with
ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes.

Google Project Aristotle identified psychological safety as the #1 predictor of team effectiveness.

The 4 stages of psychological safety

Stage 1
Inclusion safety

Inclusion safety satisfies the basic human need to connect and belong. You feel safe to be yourself and are accepted for who you are, including your unique attributes and defining characteristics.

Inclusion in exchange for human status and the absence of harm

Stage 2
Learner safety

Learner safety satisfies the basic human need to learn and grow. You feel safe to engage in the learning process—asking questions, giving and receiving feedback, experimenting, and even making mistakes.

Encouragement to learn in exchange for engagement to learn.

Stage 3
Contributor safety

Contributor safety satisfies the basic human need to make a difference. You feel safe to use your skills and abilities to make a meaningful contribution.

Autonomy and accountability in exchange for results.

Stage 4
Challenger safety

Challenger safety satisfies the basic human need to make things better. You feel safe to speak up and challenge the status quo when you think there's an opportunity to change or improve.

Individuals or organizations are protected in their vulnerability when they challenge the status quo

The 4 stages of psychological safety

Stage 1
Inclusion safety

Inclusion safety satisfies the basic human need to connect and belong. You feel safe to be yourself and are accepted for who you are, including your unique attributes and defining characteristics.

Inclusion in exchange for human status and the absence of harm

Stage 2
Learner safety

Learner safety satisfies the basic human need to learn and grow. You feel safe to engage in the learning process—asking questions, giving and receiving feedback, experimenting, and even making mistakes.

Encouragement to learn in exchange for engagement to learn.

Stage 3
Contributor safety

Contributor safety satisfies the basic human need to make a difference. You feel safe to use your skills and abilities to make a meaningful contribution.

Autonomy and accountability in exchange for results.

Stage 4
Challenger safety

Challenger safety satisfies the basic human need to make things better. You feel safe to speak up and challenge the status quo when you think there's an opportunity to change or improve.

Individuals or organizations are protected in their vulnerability when they challenge the status quo

1) NORMALIZE DISAGREEMENT (RITUAL DISSENT AND FIVE BEHAVIOURS)
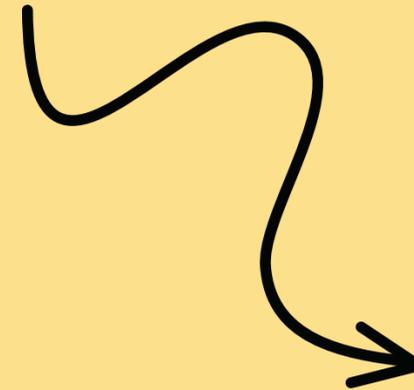
2) SHOW RATIONALE BEHIND YES OR NO

3) REWARD VOICE NOT LOYALTY

Thank you

**connect with me if you want this deck
and drop me some feedback please**

Anna Lavrova

Organisational Coach | Agile
Consulting & Transformation | Leader...