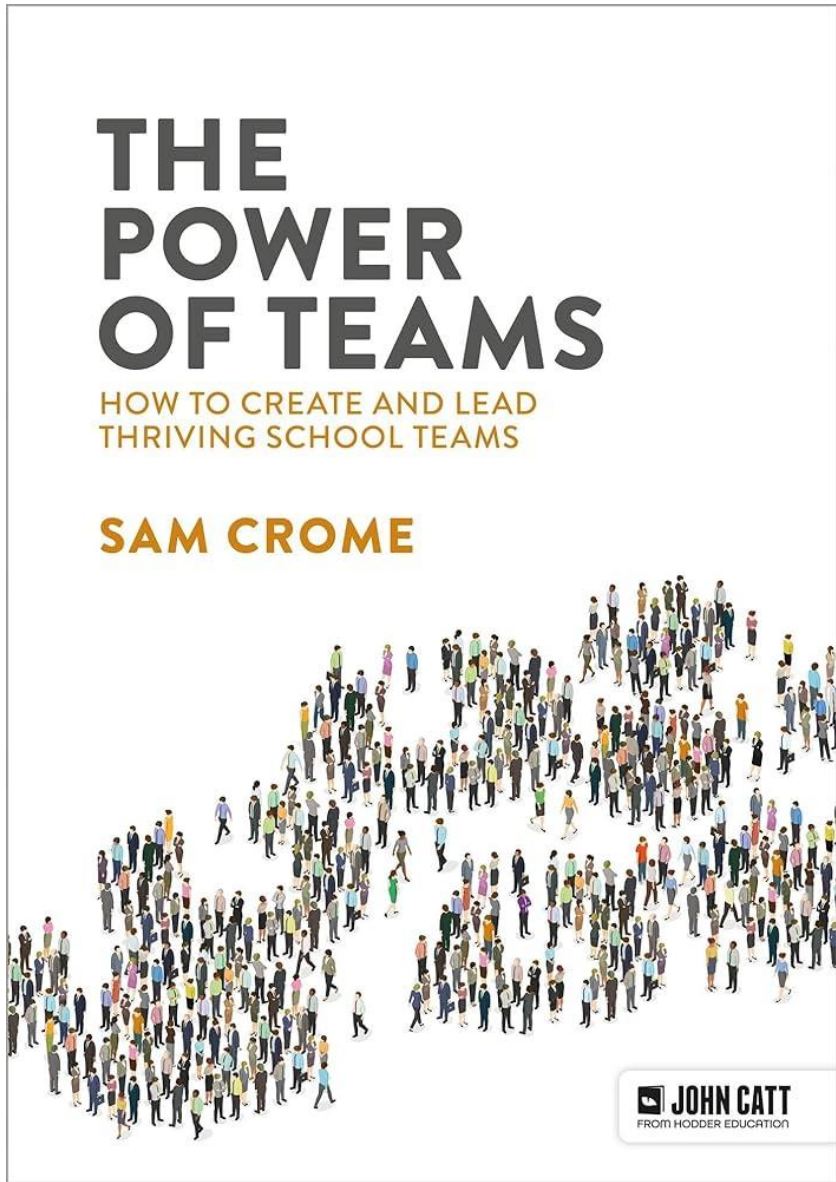


How dysfunctional is your team?

Sam Crome, 2024

research  **ED**







Everything is awesome when you're part of a team!

Sam Crome, 2024



THE LEGO
MOVIE



Why do Lego city teams work so well?

- They all follow the systems
- They know what is expected of them
- Life is safe and predictable!

What are common traits that high-performing teams share? Come up with your list!



Codifying high-performing teams – what the evidence says....

1. Vision and purpose
2. Belonging and trust
3. Ambitious, clear team goals
 - Salas, et al 2018
 - Tannenbaum et al, 2013
 - Bell et al 2018
 - Lacerenza, et al 2018
4. Role clarity, mental models, and systems
5. Communication, candour, conflict
6. Review and evaluate
7. Team diversity and characteristics
8. Learning culture
9. Enabling organisational conditions

A high-performing, thriving team

Team Development

Learning, Coaching, Debriefs, Leadership

Team Dynamics

Motivation, Conflict, Cohesion, Wellbeing

Team Operations

Knowledge, Roles & Mental Models, Communication,
Meetings

Team Alignment

Purpose, Values & Behaviours, Goals

Team Belonging

Psychological Safety, Belonging, Trust

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So, what goes wrong?

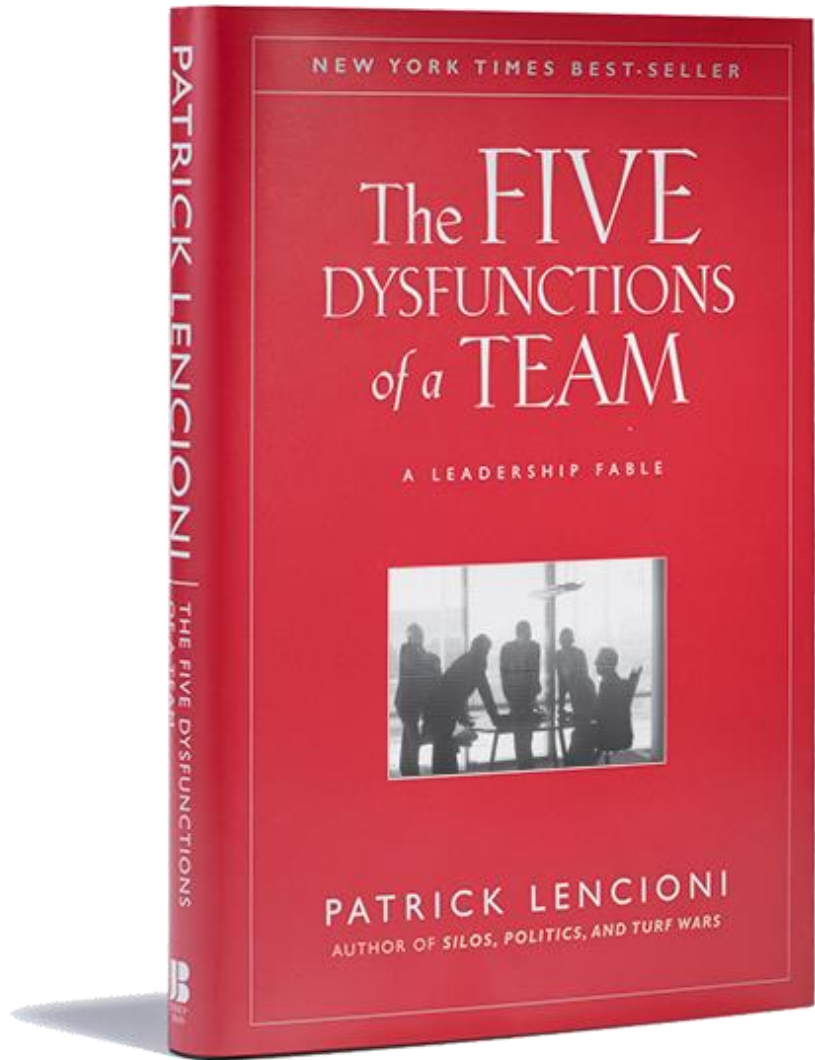
What are the most common causes of team dysfunction?

**No individuality
or creativity**

**No
mechanism
to feedback
/ voice**

**No purpose or
'why', just 'do'**





Overt disagreement and conflict

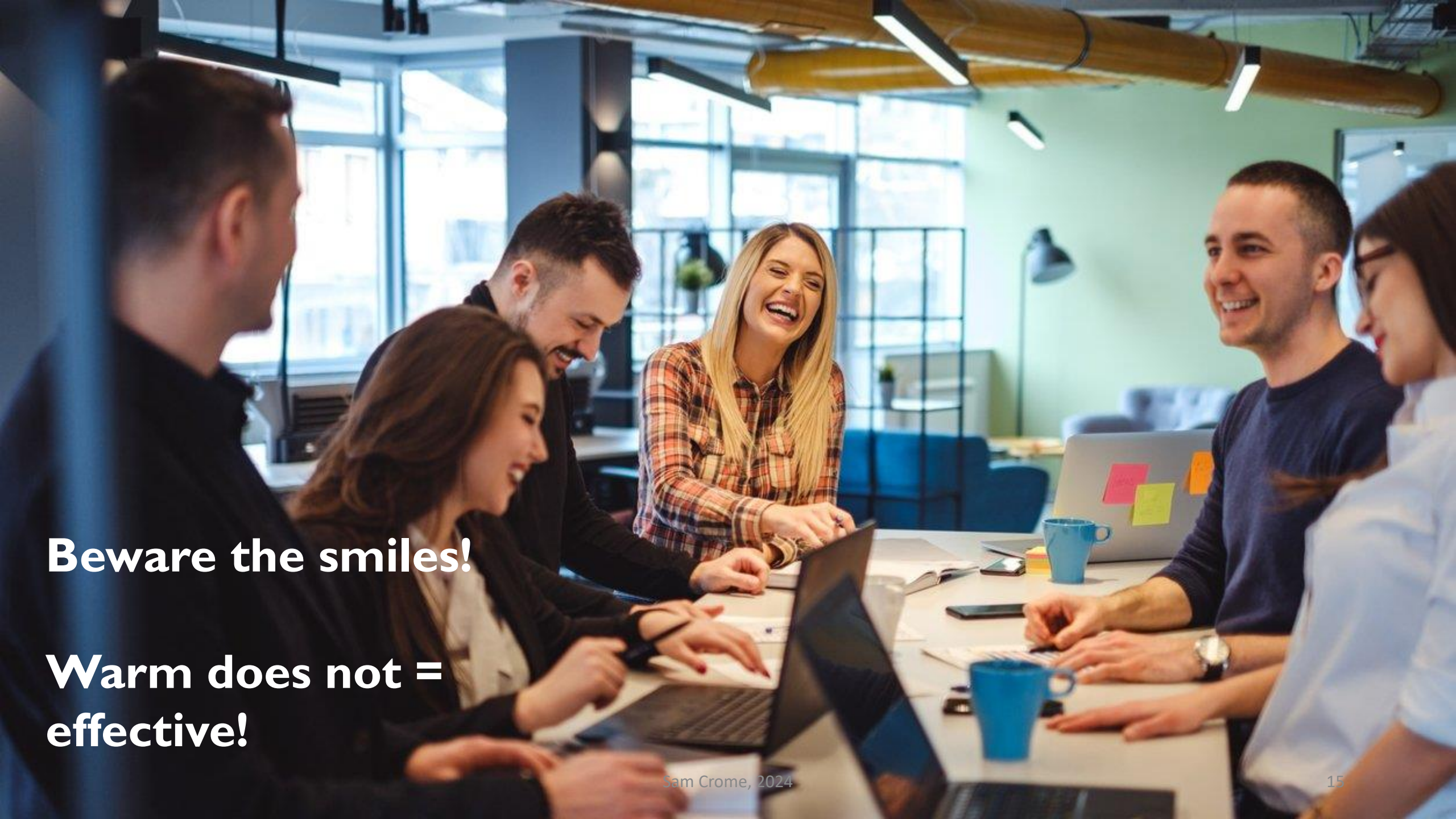


Things left unsaid



**Lack of
voice /
inclusion**

**Team follow
/ are lead
without
involvement**



Beware the smiles!

**Warm does not =
effective!**





So, which dysfunctions shall we unpick today?

1. Lack of Clarity

2. Lack of Trust

3. Lack of evaluation and voice

4. Lack of accountability and pursuit of more

I. Lack of Clarity

Values

Purpose

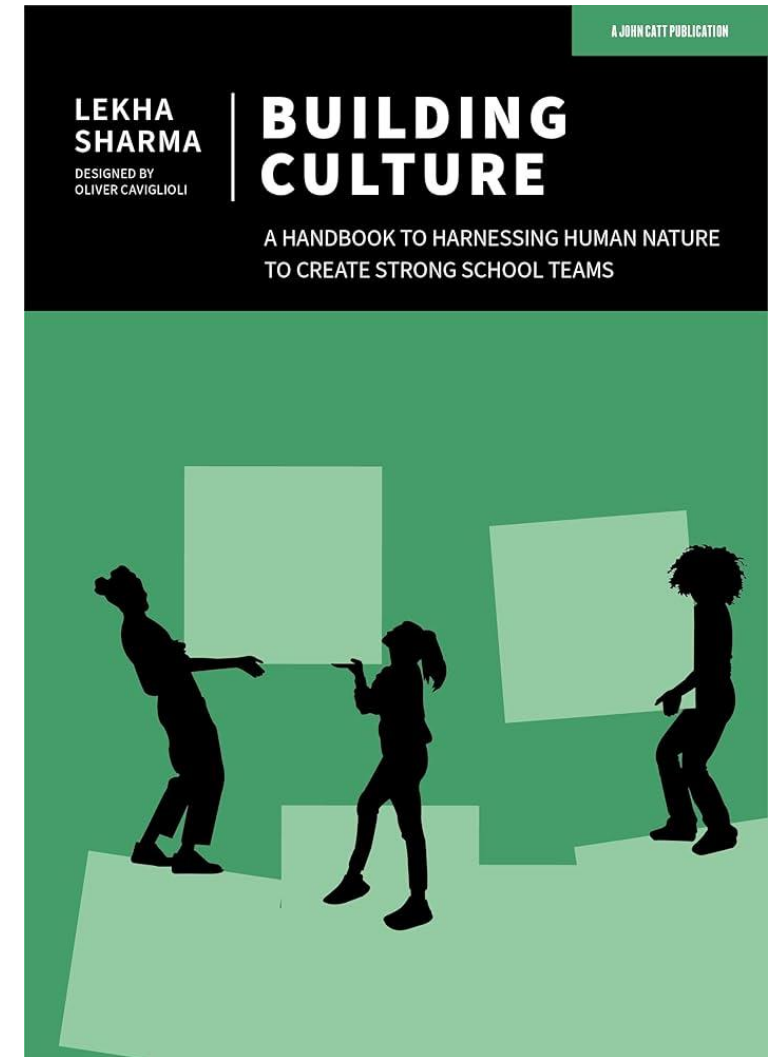
Goals

Roles

Processes

- **Forge together**
- **Regularly articulate**
- **Review (a lot!)**
- **Link to the ways you work**

Having absolute clarity about our collective purpose in schools means every person within it is moving in the same direction. If I know why I'm doing something, I'm more likely to do it. During times of uncertainty, change, and challenge, clarity over our purpose is the sturdy anchor that keeps us grounded



2. Lack of Trust

No trust = no discussion

Fault lines

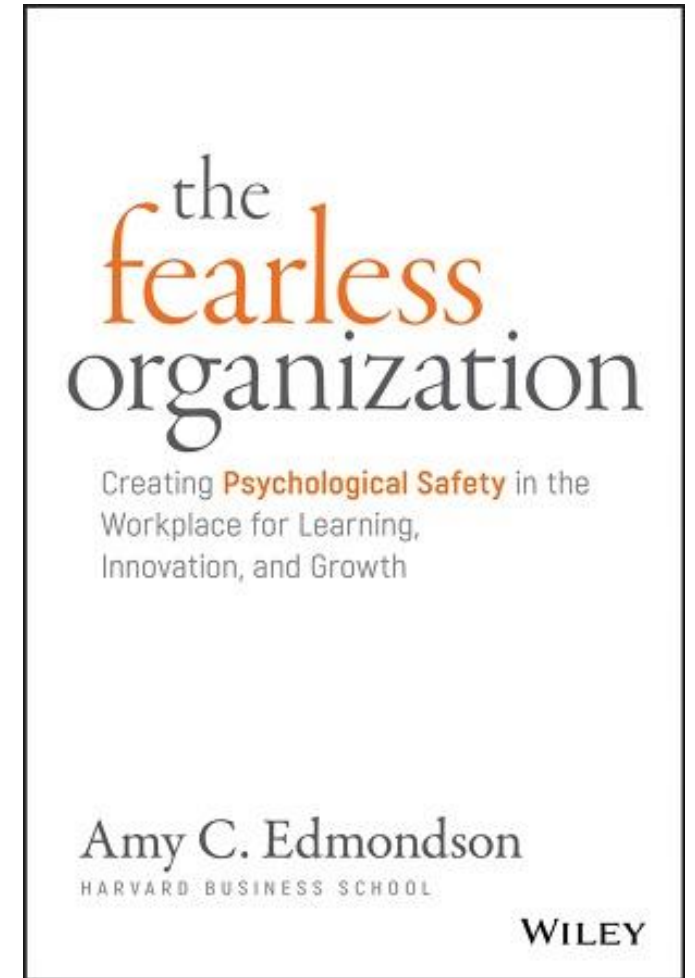
Less sharing /
knowledge
development

- **Build belonging**
- **Psych safety**
- **Create mechanisms for constructive discussion**
- **Team bonding / building activities**

Psychological Safety

Groups perform better when they feel safe, trusted, supported, free to fail, and can engage openly. It is the shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking.

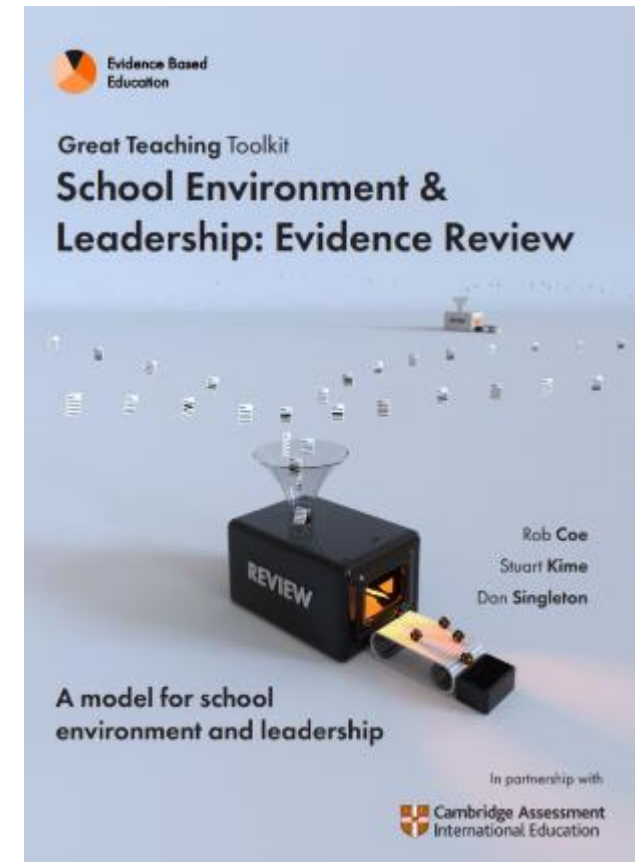
They use this foundation to set ambitious goals and to challenge each other to reach their potential



EBE School Environment and Leadership review 2022

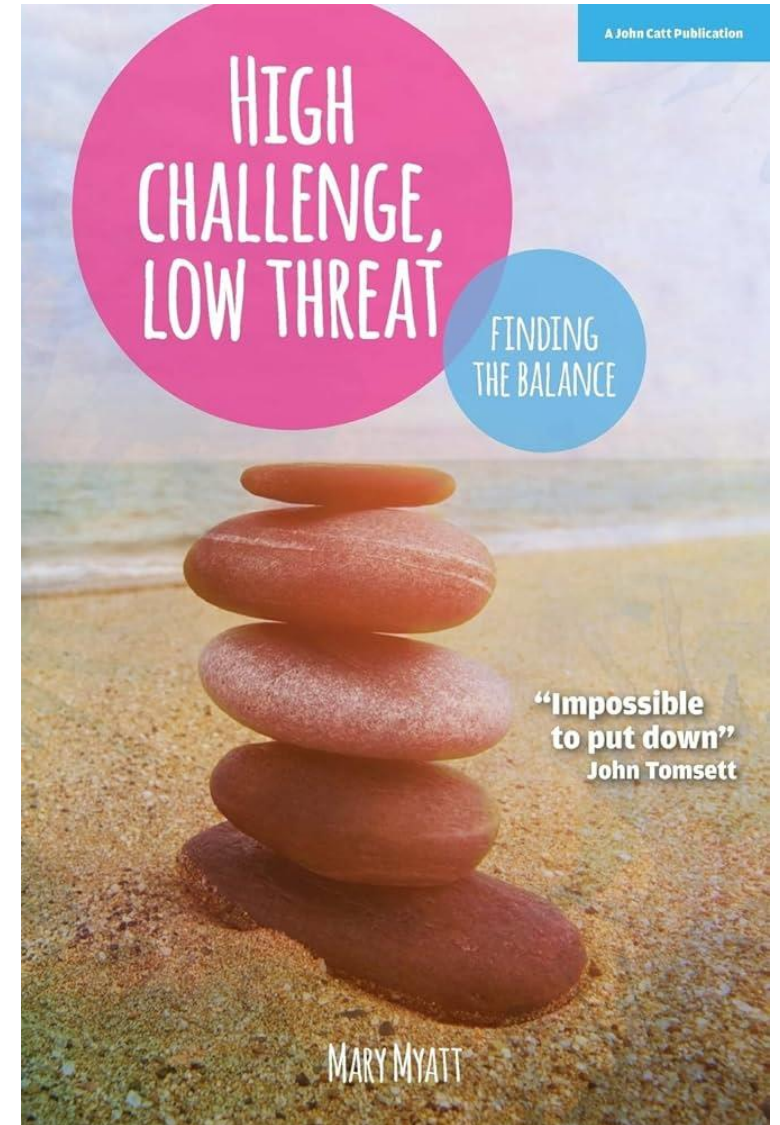
First 'management factor' = supportive working relationships:

- Trust towards leadership
- Willingness from staff to share or expose vulnerabilities
- Feelings of psych safety – it's okay to take a risk or make a mistake
- *(Coe et al 2022)*



Top leaders create a safety net where it is okay to make mistakes. There are no recriminations, only discussion about what might be better. A psychological safe space is the crucial element of creating trust.

And a sense of humour, which means nothing needs to be taken that seriously. Because after all, this isn't brain surgery, and no one is going to die.



3. Lack of evaluation and voice

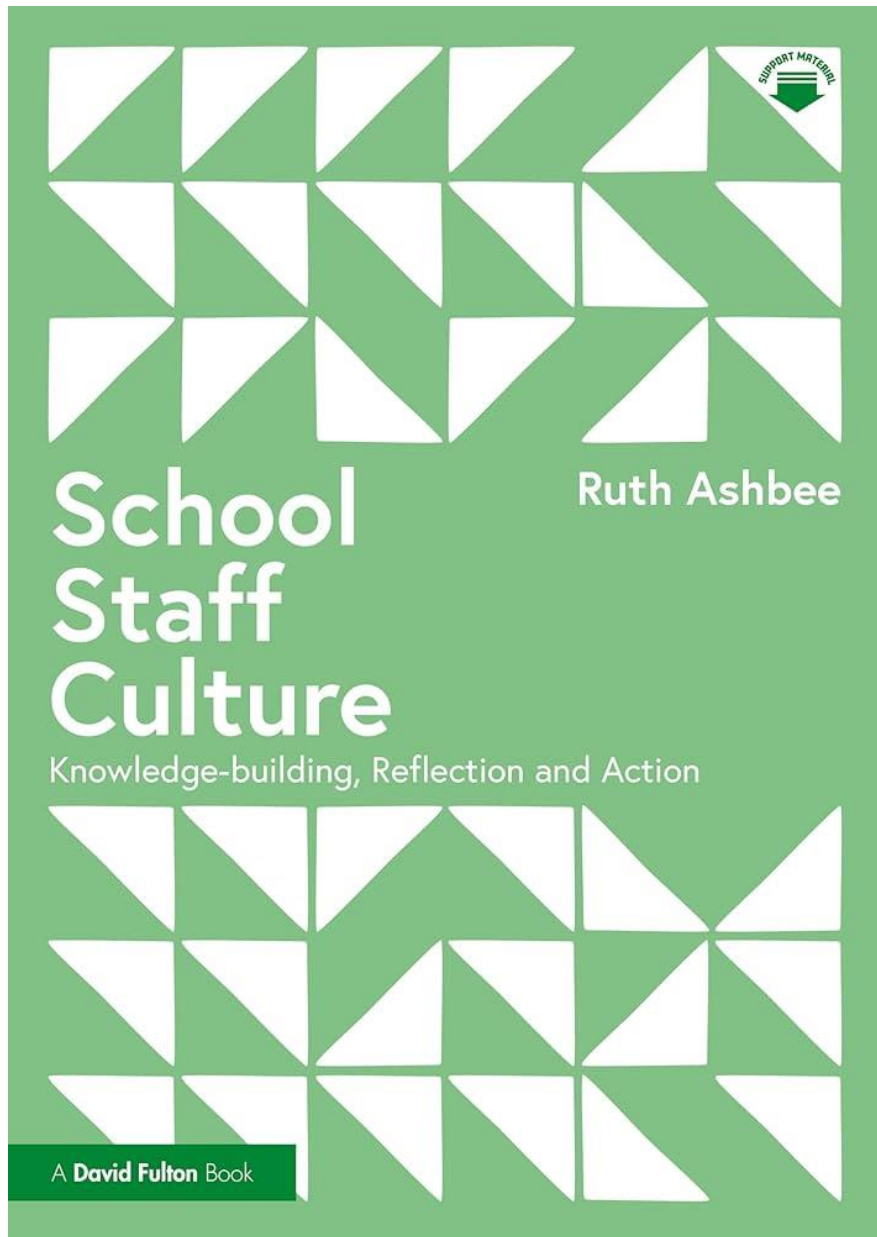
- September launch, July review
- Team work done 'to' the team, rather than with
- Not much chance to feedback, or to discuss successes and failures
- Quiet teams, little conflict

Regular debriefs

Surveys

Asking first

Discussion, debate, life!



Alignment and consistency where it matters is really important. We're not trying to create an army of clones. Disagreement and discussion are key to great culture. If no one is disagreeing with anything, it's not a sign that everything is fine. It's a sign that people do not want to share their views. And this is bad. Very bad.

4. Lack of Accountability

Accountability =
malignant or
missing

Cordial Hypocrisy

Loss of drive

Team goals

**Safe environment
to challenge each
other**

**Review consistency
and follow up**

‘We have created a system in which there inexorable institutional pressures to blame, seek excuses, conceal mistakes, and pass the buck. No one can’t thrive like this. Teachers should be safe from blame’.

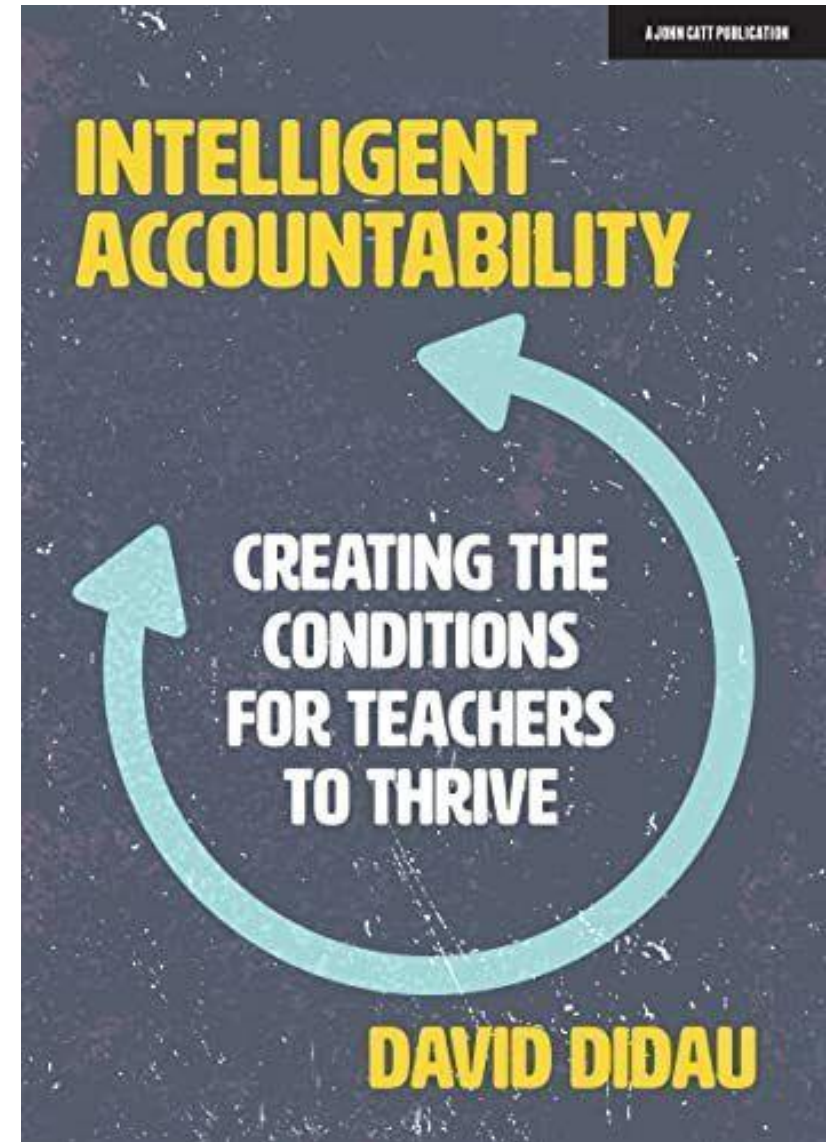
Try:

What worked sufficiently well?

What didn’t?

What could have worked even better?

Why did this work here and not here?



So, dysfunctional teams

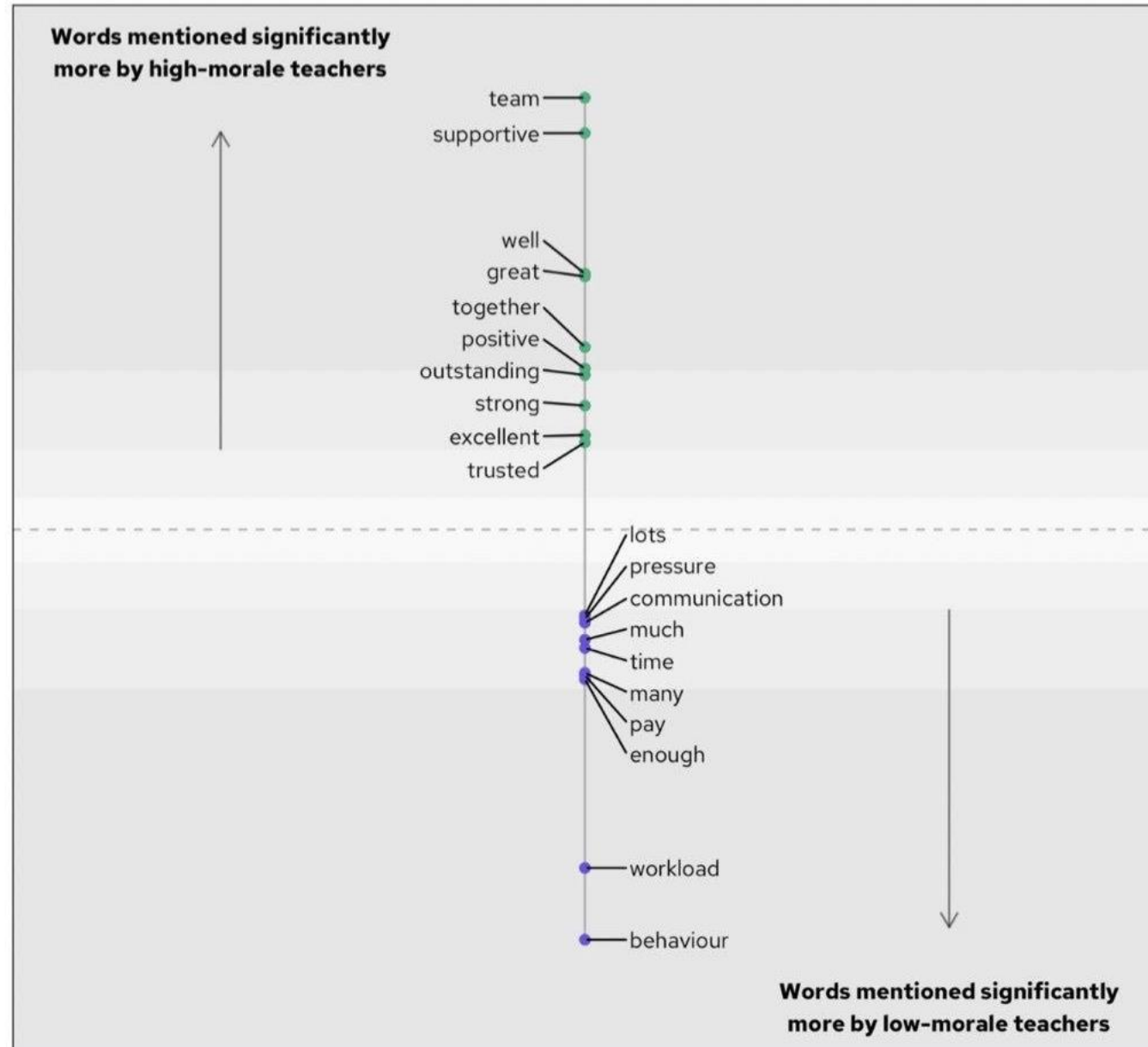
- Are often warm, cordial, superficially bonded
- Quiet, or at least quiet when it comes to matters of importance
- Are unlikely to review or seek feedback
- Unambitious or not fulfilling their potential
- Focus on just doing stuff and not learning and growing

What else helps us avoid these dysfunctions?

- Clear, systematic, agreed upon comms
- Invest in your team's development and focus on learning: CPD, autonomy over learning, knowledge sharing
- Constantly reflecting on team belonging and psych safety and investing in team bonding
- Doing what you say you will – being **CONSISTENT!!**

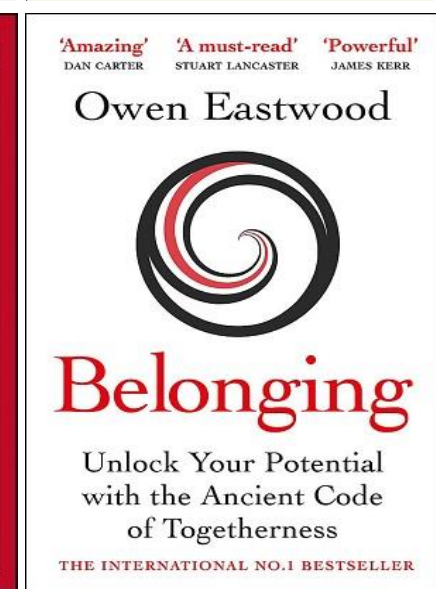
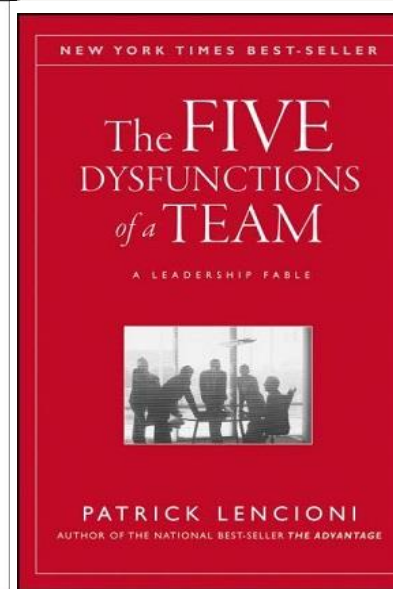
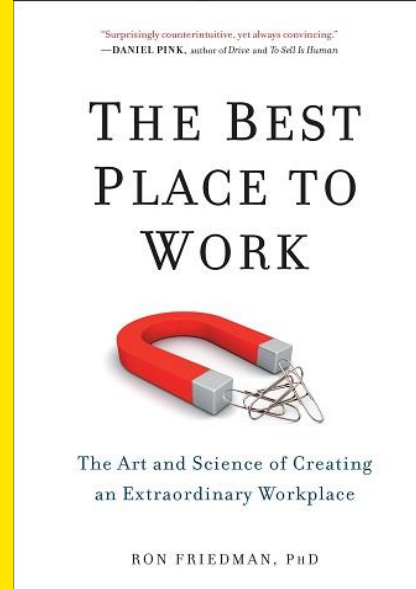
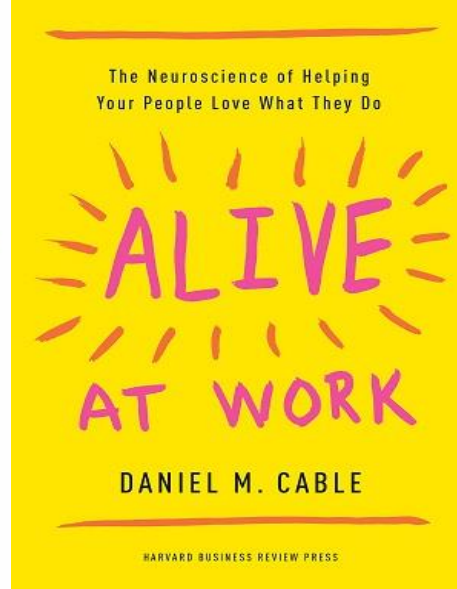
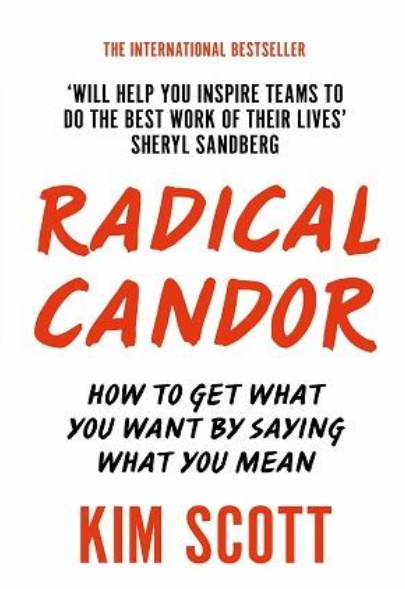
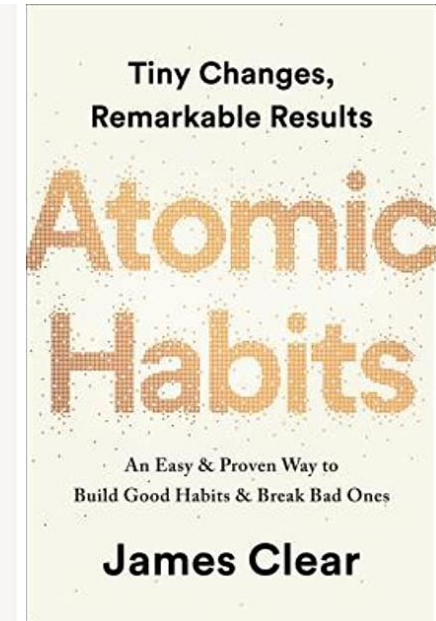
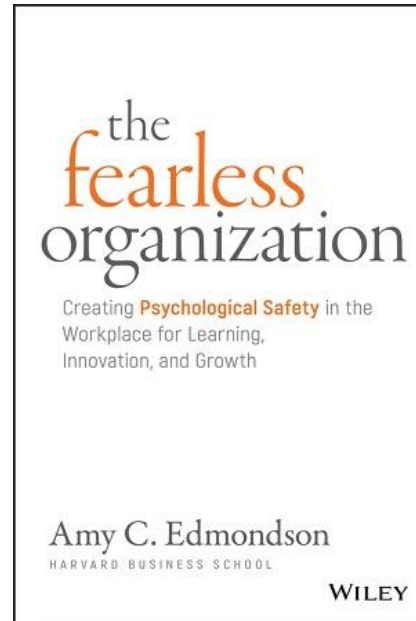
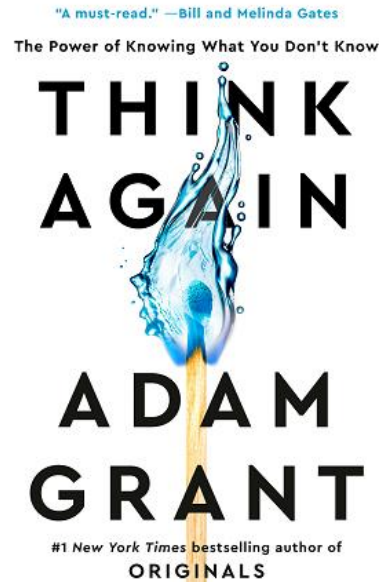
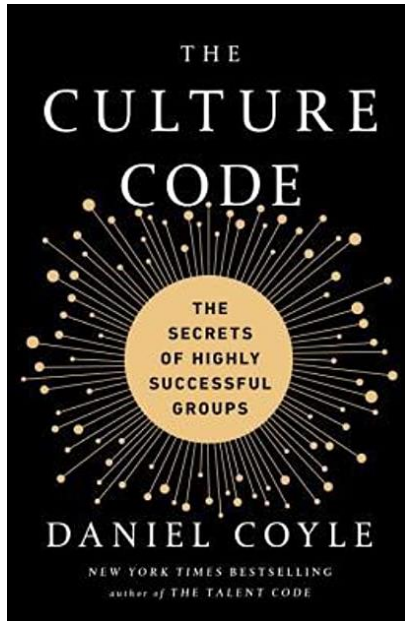
Teacher Tapp 2023

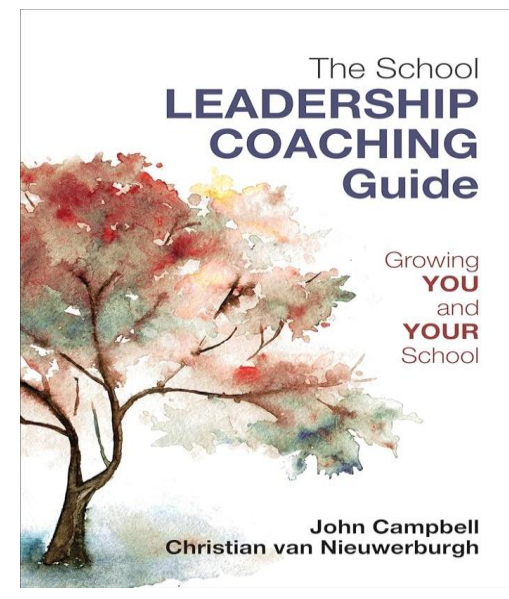
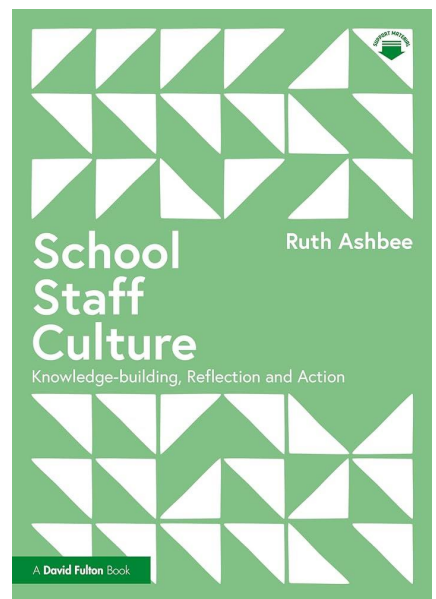
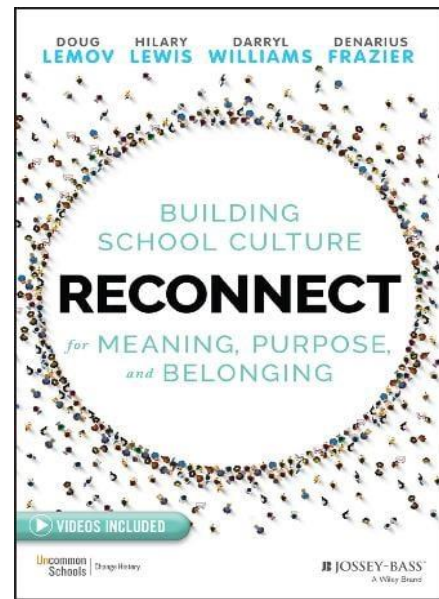
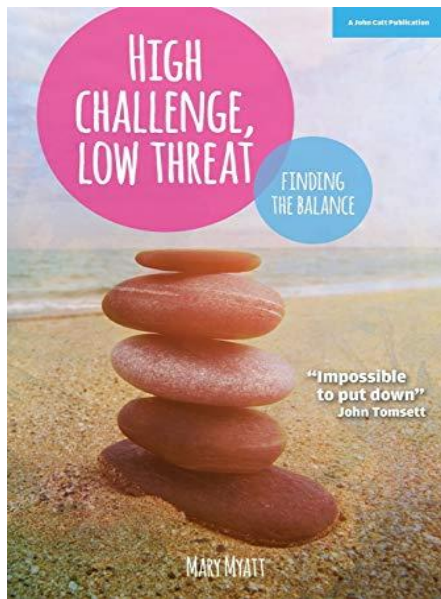
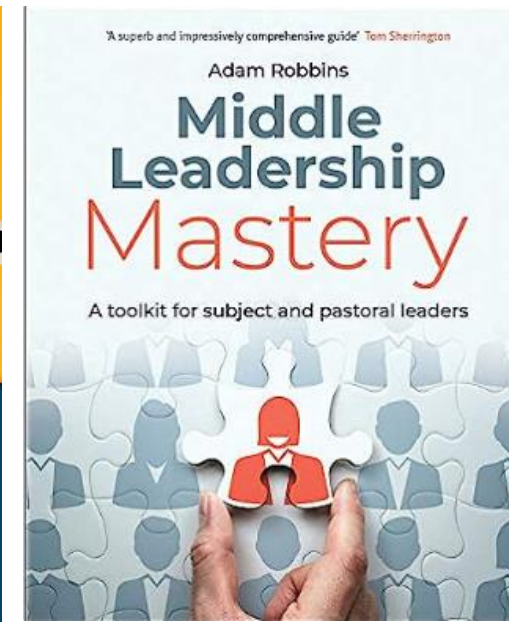
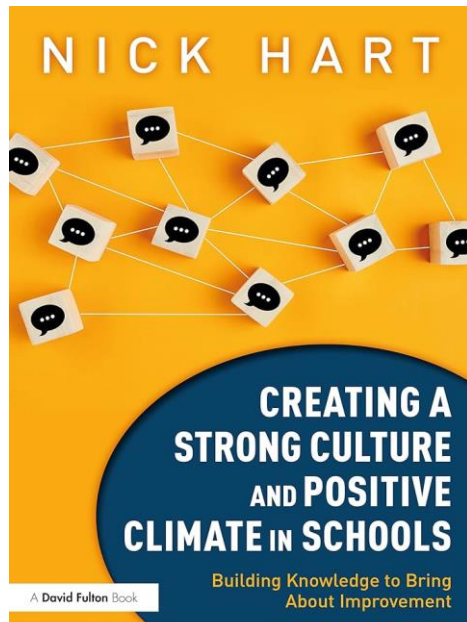
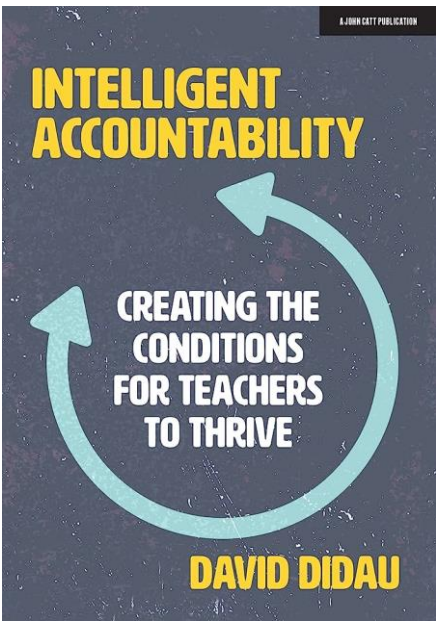
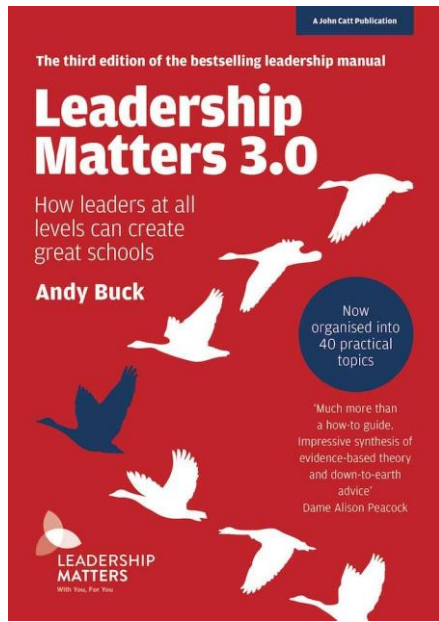
Keyness analysis of question "Tell us why morale is high or low in your school",
crossed against teachers' responses to how morale is in their school



Healthy,
thriving,
functional







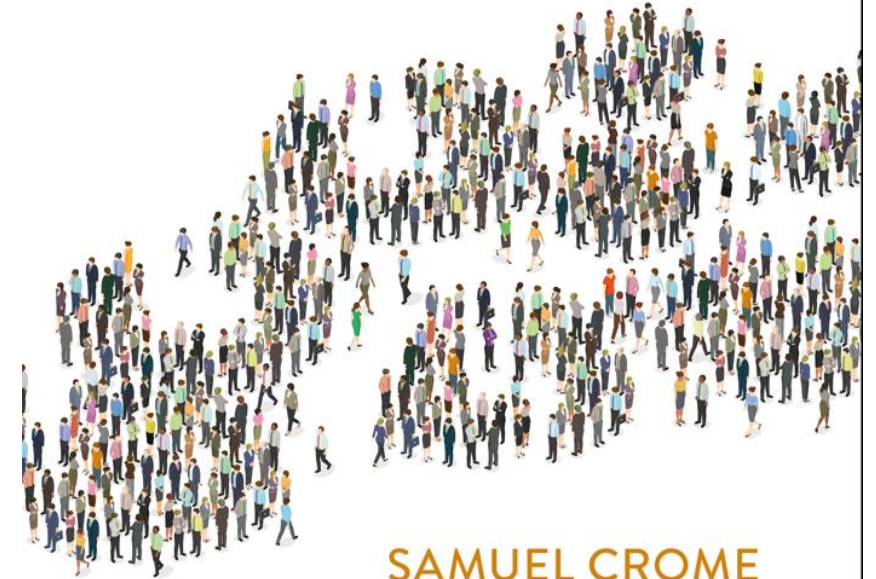
Thank you!

- @mr_crome

- <http://pocketwisdom.blog>

THE POWER OF TEAMS

HOW TO CREATE
AND LEAD THRIVING
SCHOOL TEAMS



References and further reading

- Bell, S.T., Brown, S. G., Colaneri, A., & Outland, N. (2018). Team composition and the ABCs of teamwork. *American Psychologist*, 73(4), 349–362
- Lacerenza, Christina & Marlow, Shannon & Tannenbaum, Scott & Salas, Eduardo. (2018). Team development interventions: Evidence-based approaches for improving teamwork. *American Psychologist*. 73. 517-531. 10.1037/amp0000295.
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