

Growth Mindset Thinkers

Video: Knowing When to Collaborate

(JIM FISHER:) Let me ask -- let me come at this in a different way. A lot of people think collaboration is always good. And sometimes it isn't. Sometimes it isn't. I think about a lot of these, sort of, tactics or what I call "mechanics" of doing things. The way I think about it is that you actually have to be pragmatic about it. So what you have to say to yourself is, "Is this someplace where we want collaboration?" Or is it actually not? Is this something that we could actually --? We need to have everybody together, working together in a productive, kind of, cohesive way. If that's the case, then I have to lead in a way that creates, celebrates collaboration. And makes anything other than collaboration unacceptable.

So as an example of a place, you think about an enormously successful organization like Google. Now Google was built on collaboration. That's what it is. Their basic value is "Do no evil." And that -- a lot of that has to do with the kind of work environment they want to have. It's the same as Issy Sharp's golden rule. And you want to be treated that way because he believes collaboration is in fact the key to doing what he wants to do. But you will notice -- you might have noticed anyway -- there's been big, big stuff in the papers about Amazon. Now, Amazon is not a collaboration place. And the guy who runs it doesn't believe that collaboration is the most effective way to build that person's organization -- to build Amazon. And he has a messy antic view about Amazon as a place which is going to vastly improve the standard of living of people all over the world by bringing them goods and services they never imagined at prices they couldn't -- can't believe will happen. So he has a wonderful idea, what he's trying to do. But he has created a tough, non-collaborative, competitive environment. That's not for everybody. And not everybody should work at Amazon. But you have to admire what they've accomplished. And so I'm much more pragmatic than other people about these sorts of things. You know? You can have -- I would say personally for me, I'm happy in a collaborative environment. That would -- that's me. That's me and my personality. But it's not everybody. I think most times in most environments, collaboration is better than others. But I would also say -- I wouldn't start with that. I would start with saying, "What's the most effective way of getting this group of people to put all their energy into getting us where we need to go?" There's where we need to go; I need them motivated, I need them energized. If collaboration is the best way to do it, then I'd better work on what makes collaboration work. If there's another way to do it that's better, then I'd better create a different kind of environment.