THE HIGH-PERFORMING TEAM

That thing that great teams have that
is hard to define and measure...

CHEMISTRY

90% of Investment analyst list "quality of management team" as the single most important factor for predicting business success.

Team function increases efficiency and quality of work
(meta-study: 185 Case Studies + 12 Large-Scale Studies, Applebaum & Batt)
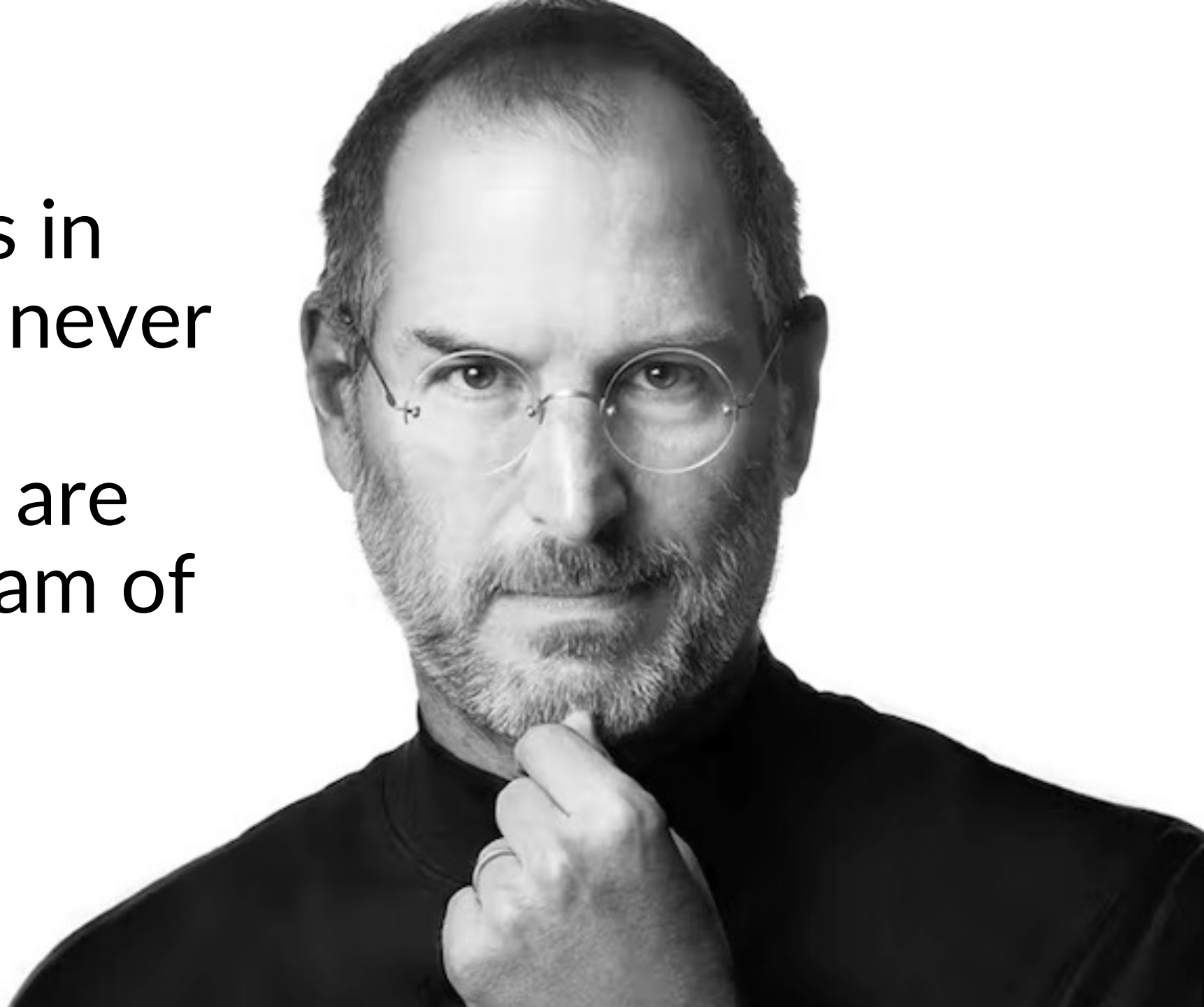
Workgroup cohesion predicts high-performance and goal achievement
(Mullen & Cooper)

"Great things in business are never done by one person; they are done by a team of people."

-Steve Jobs

What employee characteristic(s) predict performance at work?

A. Intelligence

B. Type of Degree

C. School attended

D. Age

E. Experience Level

F. Personality

G. Gender

H. Race

Google

"The whole is greater than the sum of its parts."

Project Aristotle

1. Psychological Safety

2. Dependability

3. Structure and Clarity

4. Meaning

5. Impact

What is Psychological Safety?

The belief that you can express your thoughts, ideas, and concerns in a group or organization without fear of negative consequences like ridicule or judgment.

Edmondson, A. (1999). Psychological Safety and Learning Behavior in Work Teams. Administrative Science Quarterly, 44(2), 350–383.

"Psychological safety doesn't mean that everybody is nice to each other all the time. It means that people feel free to brainstorm out loud, voice half-finished thoughts, openly challenge the status quo, share feedback, and work through disagreements together."

- Center for Creative Leadership

Psychologically Safe Behaviors?

- SPEAKING UP

- ASKING QUESTIONS

- SHARING OBSERVATIONS

- RESPECTFULLY DISAGREEING

- CONTRIBUTING IDEAS

- ACTIVE LISTENING

- THOUGHTFULNESS

- ADMITTING MISTAKES

- VULNERABILITY

- CURIOSITY

- EQUAL PARTICIPATION

- PAUSES FOR SAFETY CONCERNS

- APPRECIATION - IDEAS AND RISK

- TRANSPARENCY

- SUPPORT

- EMPATHY

- "YES, AND" RESPONSES

Nearly half of female business leaders face difficulty speaking up in virtual meetings. While 20% say they are overlooked or ignored. *(Catalyst Survey)*

Only 30% of employees strongly agree that their opinions count at work. *(Gallup Poll)*

THE BUSINESS CASE

A 2021 meta-analysis in the *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* found that psychological safety significantly **lowers emotional exhaustion** and **boosts job satisfaction**.
Newman et al., 2021

Employees in psychologically safe environments report **higher engagement and intrinsic motivation**.
May, Gilson, & Harter (2004), Journal of Organizational Behavior

Edmondson (1999) found that psychologically safe teams were **more effective at learning and adapting**, leading to better performance.
Administrative Science Quarterly

THE BUSINESS CASE

A study by Gallup (2017) found that teams with high psychological safety reported **27% less turnover** and **40% fewer safety incidents**.
Gallup Workplace – State of the American Workplace Report

Research by Deloitte (2020) found that organizations with inclusive cultures—rooted in psychological safety—are:
- **6x more likely to be innovative**
- **2x more likely to meet or exceed financial targets**

Deloitte: The Diversity and Inclusion Revolution

McKinsey & Company also reported in 2020 that companies with strong inclusive environments and psychological safety outperform competitors in profitability by **33%**.
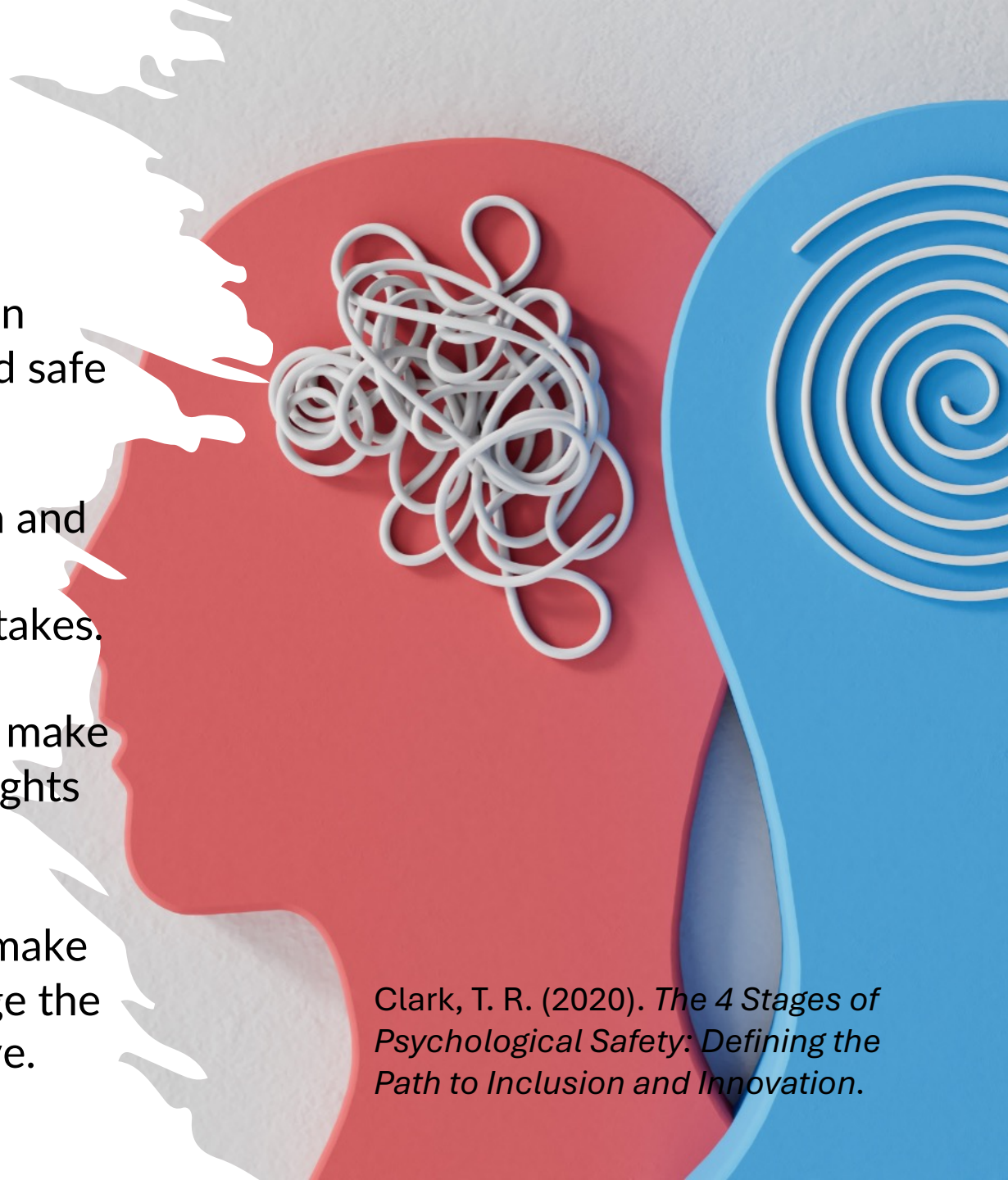***Source***: *McKinsey: Diversity Wins*

THE 4 STAGES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Stage 1 — Inclusion Safety – The basic human need to connect and belong. You feel accepted and safe to be your unique self.

Stage 2 — Learner Safety – The need to learn and grow. You feel safe asking questions, giving and receiving feedback, experimenting and making mistakes.

Stage 3 — Contributor Safety – The need to make a difference. You feel safe to use your unique thoughts and skills to make a meaningful contribution.

Stage 4 — Challenger Safety – The need to make things better. You feel safe to speak up or challenge the status quo when you see an opportunity to improve.
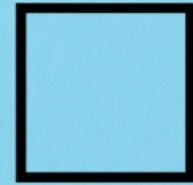
Clark, T. R. (2020). *The 4 Stages of Psychological Safety: Defining the Path to Inclusion and Innovation*.

EVALUATE YOUR TEAM

1. At what stage is your team?

2. What barriers exist for greater psychological safety?

THE SCARF MODEL

5 Domains that Drive Human Social Experience

Status – relative importance to others

Certainty – ability to predict the future

Autonomy – sense of control

Relatedness – sense of belonging

Fairness – perception of fair exchanges

Rock, D. (2008). *SCARF: A Brain-Based Model for Collaborating With and Influencing Others.* NeuroLeadership Journal, 1(1), 44–52.

STATUS

Perceived relative importance or standing compared to others.

Example:

A junior engineer's suggestion is dismissed in a meeting without discussion. They feel undervalued and withdraw from future discussions.

Leadership Tips

- **Recognize contributions publicly**, especially when someone takes initiative or offers a dissenting view.

- **Involve team members in decisions** that affect their area of work.

- **Avoid unnecessary rank pulls**; let competence—not hierarchy—shape discussions.

Example Communication:

"That's a great insight—can you walk us through how you arrived at that conclusion?"

"I would like everyone's unique perspective on this issue."

CERTAINTY

The brain's desire for clarity and predictability.

Example:

When protocols change frequently without explanation, team members become confused and anxious, increasing error rates.

Leadership Tips

- **Be transparent about what is known and unknown**; don't avoid uncertainty—frame it.
- **Set clear expectations**, roles, and decision-making timelines.
- **Use consistent communication channels and rhythms** (e.g., daily briefings, weekly wrap-ups).

Communication Examples:

"Here's what we know for sure right now, and here's what we're still figuring out. We'll update you by Friday."

"It's not easy not knowing, but I will communicate to you as soon as I know."

AUTONOMY

The sense of control over one's environment and choices.

Example:

A supervisor dictates every detail of how a task is done, even when people have the expertise, making them feel micromanaged.

Leadership Tips

- **Provide choice within boundaries** (e.g., "Would you prefer to tackle A or B today?").
- **Involve team members in how goals are achieved**, not just what needs to be done.
- **Allow flexibility** when possible in methods or scheduling.

Communication Examples:

"This is the outcome we're targeting—how do you think we should get there?"

"Given your background and experience, how would you tackle this problem?"

RELATEDNESS

The feeling of social connection, trust, and belonging.

Example:

New team members are excluded from informal conversations or meals, creating feelings of isolation and reduced engagement.

Leadership Tips

- **Facilitate relationship-building moments**—even short check-ins or shared breaks.
- **Lead with empathy**—ask how people are doing, especially during high stress or conflict.
- **Encourage inclusive language** and collaboration rituals (e.g. "We" instead of "You").

Communication Examples:

"Before we dive into today's tasks, let's check in—how's everyone holding up out there?"

"I know the past few weeks have been difficult. I really appreciate your hard work and dedication."

FAIRNESS

Perception that exchanges, decisions, and processes are just and equitable.

Example:

Two workers with similar roles and responsibilities are treated differently in terms of time off or recognition, leading to resentment.

Leadership Tips

- **Explain the "why" behind decisions**, especially if they affect compensation, shifts, or assignments.
- **Use transparent criteria for performance reviews or task distribution.**
- **Invite feedback** on how fair people perceive certain processes to be.

Communication Examples:

"I know this assignment is a stretch. Here's why I chose you, and I want to ensure you have the support you need."

"It seems like you are upset about how things are working. I would like to hear more about your perception of things."

THE SCARF MODEL

SCARF Element	Description	Example	Leadership Actions
Status	Relative importance	Ignored input in meetings	Recognize publicly, avoid rank-based dismissal
Certainty	Predictability & clarity	Vague safety updates	Communicate clearly, provide updates even in uncertainty
Autonomy	Sense of control	Micromanagement	Offer choices, empower decisions
Relatedness	Social connection	Isolation of new team member	Build rapport, encourage inclusion
Fairness	Perceived justice	Unequal treatment	Be transparent, apply consistent criteria

DISCUSSION

1. What SCARF domain needs to be strengthened the most?

2. How will you help strengthen this domain?

THE SOCIAL BRAIN

TOTAL PERFORMANCE

Individual Contribution

+

Team Contribution

Do you want the slides and more resources?

Slide Deck

Free Emotional Intelligence Assessment

Leadership and Brainpower Videos

Give feedback to Jason

Scan this QR code

Or go to

https://talk.ac/jasonjones

and enter this code when prompted

LEADEI

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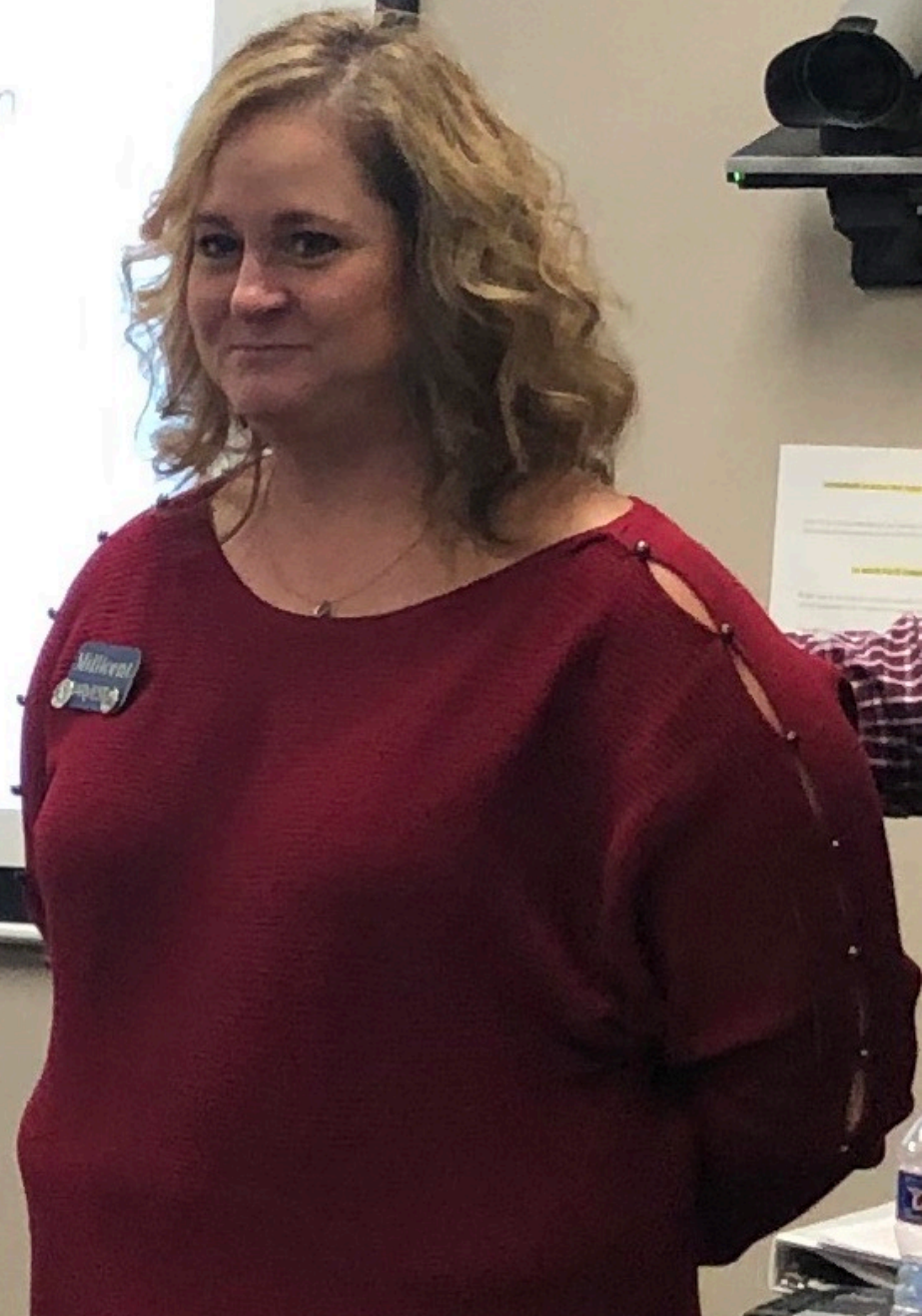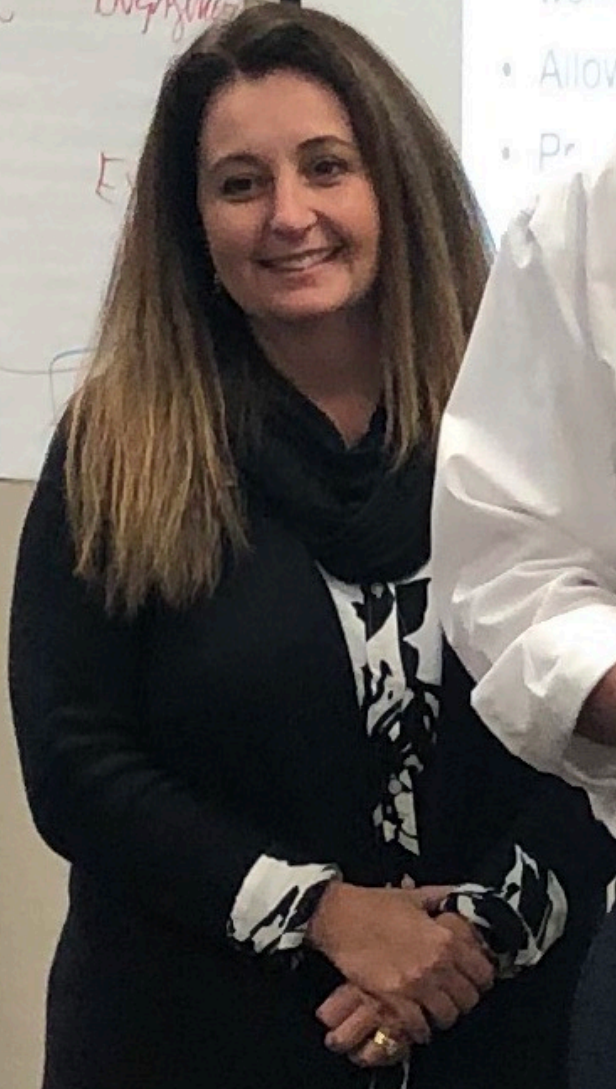
THANK YOU!

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Let's Connect!!

DrJasonJones.com

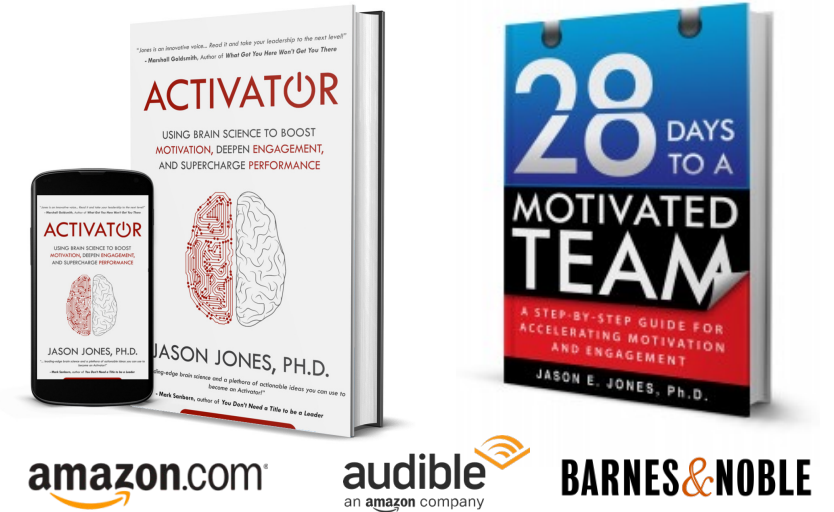DrJ@DrJasonJones.com

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