



Shift Happens

Dr. Maurice Duffy

Small Shifts.

Big Results.

Lasting Change.

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TABLE
CONTENTS

01 The boy who gave away his birthday

02 Poor Psychological Safety: The Silent Corporate Emergency

03 High Performance Isn't an Event. It's a System.

04 Is Psychological Safety a Myth—or Just Marketing

What This eBook Is About — And Why It Matters

*“Shift means: if you do not consciously adopt a mindset, one is subconsciously adopted for you — and sh*t happens. But when you choose with intent, shift happens. And that’s when the path to success opens.”*

This eBook is a quick, powerful read to help shift you to think differently, act boldly, and take control of your mindset. It will be issued monthly.

Written by Dr Maurice Duffy — coach to leaders, athletes, and change-makers — it’s packed with real stories, sharp insights, and practical tools you can use straight away. In future it will include contributions from other Thought Leaders Inside, you’ll find hard truths, hard-won lessons, and bold prompts to shake your thinking, shift your habits, and sharpen your edge.

Why should you care?

Because in a noisy world full of fluff, this cuts through.

Because you’re tired of surface-level advice and want something real — and simple.

Because your mindset is either your engine — or your enemy.

Because small shifts lead to big results.

And because change doesn’t happen by accident. It starts here. No fluff. Just straight-talking help to move you forward.

“MINDSET
MEANS
CHOOSING TO
GIVE FIRST—
TREATING
INFLUENCE AS
THE ENERGY YOU
LEAVE IN
OTHERS, NOT
THE CONTROL
YOU TAKE”

The boy who gave away his birthday

Dr Maurice Duffy

Every year and again at Christmas a kid in my village handed out his gifts to everyone else. A marble. A chocolate bar. A pencil with his name on it.
"Why are you giving us presents? It's your day."

He shrugged: "Because I want you to leave happier than you arrived."
That tiny act rewired the room.
People stood taller. Spoke kinder.
Influence begins with a gift. And the science agrees: nudge theory shows small acts shift behaviour more than rules ever will.

Later, running a global sales team, I learned customers rarely buy what you sell — they buy because they feel understood.

Training salespeople at Google, I repeat the rule: you can't sell unless you know how to buy, first, buy their world. And in networks, most show up to take. The ones who shape the future? They give first.

Influence isn't telling people what to do. It's showing what's possible.
In the end, influence isn't measured by followers but by lives lifted. As Churchill said, "We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give."

The power of giving isn't what leaves your hands; it's what it creates in others.
Influence isn't control. It's the energy you leave behind in other people's minds.



Not manipulation. Not performance.
Presence.

Give that energy and you don't drag people forward — you open a path they choose to walk. It often starts small. The smallest kindness can echo louder than the grandest speech.

Those echoes shape choices. Real influence is what people decide when you're not even there.

Words fade. People rarely remember what you said. But they never forget how you made them feel.
Maya Angelou: "They may forget what you said but they will never forget how you made them feel."

Make people feel seen and giving becomes contagious.

One spark can light a whole community.

“MINDSET IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SILENCE AND VOICE. A FEAR-DRIVEN MINDSET CREATES BURNOUT, ILLNESS, AND COLLAPSE. A GROWTH-DRIVEN MINDSET BUILDS RESILIENCE, HONESTY, AND INNOVATION. THE CHOICE FOR LEADERS IS SIMPLE: PROTECT FEAR, OR CULTIVATE COURAGE.”

Poor Psychological Safety: The Silent Corporate Emergency

Dr Maurice Duffy

We talk about health and safety as if it's helmets, gloves, and high-vis jackets. But the real health crisis inside today's companies is invisible: poor psychological safety.

When people live in chronic fear of speaking up, the damage runs far deeper than missed targets. Fear corrodes. It drives burnout, depression, sickness absence, and ultimately exodus.

Employees don't just disengage --they break. Teams under constant threat don't just underperform --they collapse. The hidden toll is long-term mental health harm and the erosion of institutional memory.

The evidence is clear. Fear of retaliation for speaking up correlates with higher turnover and lower innovation. Staff who believe mistakes will be punished stop sharing ideas. Leaders who weaponise silence may think they're controlling risk, but in reality, they're multiplying it -- creating a culture where the truth is buried until it explodes.

This is not a soft issue. It is not "HR's problem." It is a board-level emergency with measurable cost. Burnout alone costs the global economy billions every year in lost productivity, recruitment, and healthcare. The loss of experienced staff hollows out capability. The collapse of trust makes recovery almost impossible.



Psychological safety isn't about comfort zones. It's about honesty, accountability, and resilience.

A safe team is one where people can raise hard truths without fear. That isn't weakness --it's the foundation of high performance.

The companies that ignore this will keep bleeding talent, reputation, and profit. The ones that face it head-on will build not just healthier teams, but stronger, more innovative, and more enduring organisations.

The question isn't whether you can afford to prioritise psychological safety. The question is whether you can afford the cost of ignoring it.

“PSYCHOLOGICAL
SAFETY IN HIGH-
PERFORMANCE
CULTURES IS NOT
AN EVENT YOU ‘DO’
ON A TRAINING
DAY; IT’S A SYSTEM
YOU BUILD, EMBED,
AND LIVE EVERY
DAY. WITHOUT
THAT SYSTEM,
PERFORMANCE
SPIKES ARE
TEMPORARY AND
FRAGILE.”

High Performance Isn't an Event.

It's a System.

Dr Maurice Duffy

I coach Olympic athletes, CEOs, and teams who play under lights and scrutiny. The constant across all of them is this: results come from systems, not slogans. Team Flow™ — The Seven Forces of High Performance is the operating system I install and enforce. It's simple. It's uncompromising. And it's measured daily. Here is a taster of each programme.

1) 1% Incremental™

Breakthroughs are compounded basics. One tighter leave, one quicker single, one clearer meeting. Tiny gains, tracked relentlessly, change the scoreboard.

2) Power Builders™ (Psychological Safety)

Truth beats talent when pressure spikes. We make dissent safe and fast, so problems show up early—while they're still cheap to fix.

3) Let It Go™

Reset between balls, between meetings, between days. Two minutes on the breath, a fresh picture of the next action. We carry nothing forward that we don't need.

4) Mindset Switch™

Threat or challenge? That lens decides execution. We practice flipping to "challenge" on command: control the controllables, win the next moment.

5) Resilience Engine™

We don't bounce back; we bounce forward. Stress becomes data, data becomes adjustment, adjustment becomes advantage.

6) Practice Power™

Excellence is repetition under consequence. We rehearse scenarios at game-speed with real stakes so habits cash out under pressure.

7) Finish the Process™

Starting is easy; finishing is credibility. We close loops, publish learnings, and then go again—faster, sharper, better.

How do we hold the line? **Weekly accountability** against these forces, with visible metrics: 1% actions completed, feedback cycles closed, reset compliance, challenge framing under pressure, recovery scores, high-consequence reps, and completion rate. What gets measured improves. What gets repeated becomes habit. What becomes habit defines performance. This isn't theory; it's a field manual. Install the system, protect the standards, measure the behaviours—and watch performance compound. When we finish? We go again. Only this time: **faster, sharper, better**.

**“THE TRUTH IS
SIMPLE:
PSYCHOLOGICAL
SAFETY IS NOT A
FEELING YOU
MARKET; IT'S A
DESIGN YOU
BUILD”**

Is Psychological Safety a Myth—or Just Marketing

Dr Maurice Duffy

“Speak up.” It’s painted on office walls, printed on slide decks, and quoted by executives. But ask anyone who has raised an uncomfortable truth and you’ll hear a different story: the poster says safety; the system says punishment.

So is psychological safety real—or just branding?

Here’s the brutal distinction:

Marketing is a survey score, a town-hall promise, a hashtag. It thrives on sentiment. It disappears the moment a complaint threatens revenue, status, or a leader’s ego.

Safety is infrastructure. It shows up as:

- Protection from retaliation with teeth (reinstatement, wage protection, personal liability for retaliators).
- Independent channels that bypass the chain of command.
- Transparent outcomes—what was reported, what was found, what changed.

If you’re unsure which one you have, use the Whistleblower Test. A culture claiming psychological safety should be able to answer yes to three questions:

1. Speed: When someone reports a serious issue, can they reach an independent authority within days—and get a written plan within weeks?
2. Consequences: If retaliation occurs, are there immediate remedies and visible sanctions?
3. Proof: Can the organisation show public, privacy-safe metrics on reports, substantiation, and actions—quarter by quarter?

**Whistleblowers are
2x more likely to be
PUNISHED
than heard**

Most places fail because they confuse comfort with safety. Comfort avoids hard conversations. Safety enables them and protects the people who start them.

The truth is simple: psychological safety is not a feeling you market; it’s a design you build—in law, process, incentives, and leadership behaviour. If you won’t protect dissent, stop selling “safety.” If you will, publish the rules, measure the results, and accept the cost of being accountable.

Posters don’t keep people safe. Structures do.

Keep Connected with Maurice

Dr. Maurice Duffy is a globally recognised mindset coach, leadership expert, and motivational speaker with over 30 years of experience in transformative change. He serves as a Visiting Professor of Innovation and Transformation and Entrepreneur in Residence at the University of Sunderland's He has worked with a diverse range of clients, including global corporations such as Google, Sony, Coca-Cola, Siemens, HSBC UK, P&G, Barclays, JP Morgan, BP, and AXA. His expertise extends to elite sports, having coached international teams and athletes like the Australian Cricket Captain Steve Smith, Durham Cricket Club, Ryder Cup players, and Premiership football players. Additionally, he has advised political figures in Westminster, Washington, and Durban, and has served as Advisor to the Mongolian Government. Beyond coaching, Dr. Duffy is a bestselling author, columnist, and BBC presenter. He regularly shares insights on mindset and personal development through his blog and social media platforms.



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www.mauriceduffy.com



In Dr Maurice Duffy Coaching, discover the raw truth behind elite performance.

No fluff. No excuses. Just real stories, sharp provocations, and practical tools from one of the world's top mindset coaches.

Whether you lead a boardroom, a battlefield, or your own chaotic life, Shift Coaching challenges your thinking, confronts your habits, and rewires your mental game. It's for the doers, the dreamers, and the disrupters. Success isn't luck — it's mindset. And mindset is a choice.

Choose yours. Start now.

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