MODULE OVERVIEW

Power struggles at work: The needs that keep us stuck

Adaptive module | ~20 min

Toxic cultures cost US organizations $223 billion over five years (SHRM), and three in four employees say they have experienced one. This module offers a surprising lens: behind every power game lies a legitimate need from Maslow's pyramid of needs (safety, belonging, esteem, self-actualization), sought in the wrong place, whether people endure the dynamic or drive it. Four levers address this, from the collective framework to inner work on personal quests for identity.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

01 Decode power struggles with Maslow's pyramid of needs: four legitimate ones that trap you if misunderstood.

02 Recognize the two sides of each trap: what you accept out of fear, and what you impose to reassure yourself.

03 Work on the collective framework: everyday psychological safety and shared leadership, as in Spotify's squads.

04 Do the inner work: ease the grip of your quests for identity to cooperate as an adult, with no need to dominate or withdraw.

WHO IT'S FOR

Anyone who wants to cooperate on equal terms, meeting their needs without imposing or hiding them.

- **Prerequisite:** none

HOW THE MODULE WORKS

Self-paced, with practice tailored to each learner.

1 **Self-assessment**: on 9 dimensions, to gauge current habits and guide the practice.

2 **Expert video**: 10 minutes, with 3 pauses for reflection.

3 **Practice scenarios**: the first 2 chosen from the self-assessment, then 16 optional ones. Every answer gets feedback: what it leads to, and one way to improve.

4 **Dated commitment**: one action to try, written by the learner or picked from the suggestions.

5 **Memo to download**: key takeaways, questions, commitment, personal notes and checklists.

ASSESSMENT AND COMPLETION

Pass mark: 80%

The score takes into account your answers to the practice scenarios, your commitment and, where relevant, any additional learning activities. Passing requires a commitment and a score of at least 80%.

METHODS & MODELS

- Pyramid of needs (safety / belonging / esteem / self-actualization) – Abraham Maslow
- Psychological safety – Amy Edmondson (Harvard)
- Squad model – Spotify
- Win-win cooperation – Afthonios method

SOURCES & REFERENCES

- SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management) – toxic workplace cultures cost US organizations $223 billion over five years
- iHire – "Toxic Workplace Trends Report 2025": 75.0% of employees have worked for an employer with a toxic culture, and 78.7% cite poor management as a key factor
- Amy Edmondson – psychological safety, the top predictor of team effectiveness
- Shore et al. (2011) – inclusion, belonging, and uniqueness in teams

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