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Building Trust and Collaboration In the fast-paced world of aviation, trust and collaboration aren't optional—they're vital. Without them, the team fractures, frustration builds, and outcomes suffer. I've seen this play out in the skies and on the ground. Diverse thinking is often present within organisations, but it's rendered useless without an environment of trust to bind it together. The result? Conflict, misalignment, and missed opportunities. So, how do leaders bridge this gap? It starts with curiosity—choosing to explore instead of assigning blame. Leaders must focus on shared goals rather than individual wins and create spaces where robust, respectful debate is encouraged. These were the principles that kept my crew united under pressure and are equally applicable in any organisation. In this session, we'll break down what it takes to foster trust, build collaboration, and lay the foundations for exceptional performance.

The Power of Diverse Thinking Flying fighter jets required every ounce of my training and instinct, but it was the diverse perspectives of my team that kept us ahead of the game. Teams with varied backgrounds and viewpoints can tackle complex challenges with creativity, fill in blind spots, and make better decisions. Yet, diversity of thought doesn't happen by accident—it must be nurtured. As leaders, we need to actively design environments where diverse thinking thrives. This means managing meetings to encourage input, avoiding groupthink, and embracing differences as strengths. When we do, we unlock the true power of collective intelligence, driving innovation and elevating performance.

Building Psychological Safety The most effective teams I've been a part of weren't afraid to speak up. Whether it was challenging an idea, sharing a mistake, or asking a simple question, psychological safety gave us the freedom to operate at our best. Without it, teams withhold critical information, avoid conflict, and collaborate poorly. Leaders play a crucial role in creating psychological safety. It's about building a culture where openness isn't just accepted—it's expected. When teams feel safe, they share more, trust grows, and performance skyrockets. It's a simple principle, but one that transforms the way we work together.

Emotional Intelligence When people picture a fighter pilot, they often think of sharp minds and quick reflexes. But success in the cockpit goes far beyond IQ—it's about EQ, emotional intelligence. The ability to read the room, resolve conflicts, and build relationships is what sets great leaders apart. Emotional intelligence isn't just innate—it's a skill that can be developed. With practice, anyone can improve their ability to connect with others, manage emotions, and navigate challenging situations. These aren't just nice-to-have qualities; they're essential to leading high-performing teams and driving success.

Debriefing In aviation, we live by one rule: never leave a mission without a debrief. Why? Because that's where the learning happens. Too often in business, we rush to the next task without reflecting on what worked, what didn't, and why. The debrief method is a game-changer. It's not about assigning blame—it's about analysing outcomes, identifying root causes, and embedding lessons for the future. This reflective process drives continuous improvement, ensuring teams learn from every success and mistake.

Making Effective Decisions As a fighter pilot, decision-making wasn't a luxury—it was a necessity. Every choice had to be swift and precise, often with limited information. In business, leaders face similar pressures. Slow or poor decision-making can cripple performance, yet many organisations struggle with both. The good news? Decision-making is a skill that can be developed. Understanding the type of decision, knowing who to involve, and leveraging the right tools can drastically improve outcomes. By combating biases and adopting a structured approach, leaders can make decisions that drive progress and enhance team performance.