

A MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

eight

The Eight Principle

*Why Great Organizations
Embrace Opposites Instead of Resolving Them*



MARTÍN GARCÍA

Circulation, not resolution



Every organization lives between opposing forces: vision and execution, psychological safety and high standards, growth and sustainability. We are taught to resolve these tensions, to pick a side, or to freeze them in careful balance. Both moves kill the energy.

The Eight Principle proposes a different move, called circulation: each pole feeds the other, continuously. Take one tension as an example. When people feel safe to speak up, problems surface early and the quality of the work rises. And when high standards come with real support, being stretched reads as trust, which deepens the safety. Neither pole wins; the energy keeps moving between them. Drawn as motion, the shape is a figure eight: two loops joined at a crossing point.

Eight such tensions, organized in four clusters, describe the living anatomy of an organization. The next page shows the map; the pages that follow tour each dimension briefly: the tension, the two flows, and the crossing.

Four clusters, eight tensions

KNOWING

How the organization thinks and learns

- Theory ↔ Practice
- Vision ↔ Execution

BELONGING

How people commit and contribute

- Psychological Safety ↔ Standards
- Purpose ↔ Profit

BUILDING

How the organization is put together

- Structure ↔ Agility
- Individual ↔ System

GROWING

How the organization endures

- Growth ↔ Sustainability
- Short ↔ Long-term

*Psychological Safety ↔ Standards is live today as a free diagnostic:
eightprinciple.com/diagnostic*

KNOWING

Theory ↔ Practice

Every organization runs on ideas: models, plans, frameworks, and on the friction of real work. Most let one dominate: theory that never touches the ground, or practice that never updates the thinking.

FLOW ONE

Theory to Practice: our ideas and frameworks are constantly tested against what actually happens in the field.

FLOW TWO

Practice to Theory: what we learn by doing the work flows back and reshapes how we think.

THE CROSSING

The crossing: thinking and doing are one motion, neither an ivory tower nor blind execution.



KNOWING

Vision ↔ Execution

Vision without delivery is theater; delivery without vision is drift. The loop is alive when each one demands more of the other.

FLOW ONE

Vision to Execution: the long-range vision genuinely drives day-to-day priorities and delivery.

FLOW TWO

Execution to Vision: what we actually ship, and what fails, sharpens and corrects the vision.

THE CROSSING

The crossing: strategy and operations speak to each other weekly, not annually.



BELONGING

Psychological Safety ↔ Standards

Psychological safety, the shared belief that it is safe to speak up, admit mistakes, and challenge decisions, is treated as a tradeoff against high standards: a comfort club or a fear culture. The healthiest teams hold both at once and let them feed each other. This is not about physical safety at the workplace; it is about interpersonal risk.

FLOW ONE

Psychological safety to Standards: people speak up, admit mistakes, and challenge decisions, so problems surface early and quality rises.

FLOW TWO

Standards to Psychological safety: high expectations come with support, so being stretched feels like trust, not threat.

THE CROSSING

The crossing: we sustain psychological safety and high standards at once, neither cozy nor afraid.

This dimension is live: **take the diagnostic**



BELONGING

Purpose ↔ Profit

Purpose that ignores economics becomes a hobby; profit that forgets purpose becomes extraction. Circulation makes each one the fuel of the other.

FLOW ONE

Purpose to Profit: our purpose opens real commercial doors; customers, talent, and partners choose us for it.

FLOW TWO

Profit to Purpose: our profitability visibly funds and advances the purpose, year after year.

THE CROSSING

The crossing: mission and margin are argued in the same meeting, by the same people.



BUILDING

Structure ↔ Agility

Structure without agility calcifies; agility without structure burns out. A stable base is what makes fast movement possible, and fast movement is what keeps the base honest.

FLOW ONE

Structure to Agility: clear roles, processes, and standards give people a stable platform to move fast from.

FLOW TWO

Agility to Structure: when we adapt quickly, the lessons get built back into how we work; the structure learns.

THE CROSSING

The crossing: we change the rules through the rules, disciplined at the core, fluid at the edge.



BUILDING

Individual ↔ System

Heroic individuals eventually exhaust themselves against weak systems; strong systems without strong people go through the motions. Each must amplify the other.

FLOW ONE

Individual to System: talented people push against the system's limits and force it to improve.

FLOW TWO

System to Individual: the system amplifies individual talent; good people become great inside it.

THE CROSSING

The crossing: stars make the system better, and the system makes more stars.



GROWING

Growth ↔ Sustainability

Growth that consumes its own foundations is borrowed time; sustainability with no growth quietly decays. Durable growth is the loop between them.

FLOW ONE

Growth to Sustainability: expansion generates the resources that protect people, assets, and trust.

FLOW TWO

Sustainability to Growth: a durable base of rested people, healthy cash, and earned trust is exactly what lets us keep growing.

THE CROSSING

The crossing: we grow at the speed our foundations can absorb, and strengthen the foundations to grow faster.



G R O W I N G

Short ↔ Long-term

Living quarter to quarter mortgages the future; living only for the future starves the present. The discipline of now funds the bets of later.

FLOW ONE

Short to Long: hitting today's commitments creates the credibility and cash for long-term bets.

FLOW TWO

Long to Short: the long-term direction gives today's tradeoffs a criterion; we know what to say no to.

THE CROSSING

The crossing: every quarterly decision can be explained by the ten-year story, and vice versa.



WHAT'S NEXT

Diagnose your own loops

The first dimension, Psychological Safety and Standards, is available today as a free four-minute diagnostic at:

eightprinciple.com/diagnostic

The remaining seven dimensions, Team Mode for leadership teams, and the full book are in progress. Explore the whole framework at:

eightprinciple.com

Follow the work

The waiting list isn't open yet. For now, drop me a line and I'll add you personally.

Email me to join



The Eight Principle is a framework and diagnostic created by Martin Garcia Acuna. The Psychological Safety and Standards diagnostic builds on Amy C. Edmondson's work on psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999) and her framing of safety and standards in The Fearless Organization (2018). All instruments are original adaptations, not affiliated with or endorsed by Professor Edmondson. Draft for discussion, not for distribution. (c) 2026 Martin Garcia Acuna.