Build Influence with Others,
No Matter Your Role
NTC Annual Symposium 2017

Welcomes/Agenda/Norms/Partners

Self-Assessment of Influence Capabilities
Case Study

Polarity Management
Outcome Mapping

Identity Circle
SCARF Model
Covert Processes at Work

Body Language
Receiving Feedback More Effectively
Apologies and Appreciation

Pinwheel/Next Steps
Resource Review

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Jennifer Abrams is an international educational and communications consultant for public and independent schools, hospitals, universities and non-profits. Jennifer trains and coaches teachers, administrators, nurses, hospital personnel, and others on new employee support, supervision, being generationally savvy, having hard conversations and effective collaboration skills.

In Palo Alto USD (Palo Alto, CA), Jennifer led professional development sessions on topics from equity and elements of effective instruction to teacher leadership and peer coaching and provided new teacher and administrator trainings at both the elementary and secondary level. From 2000-2011, Jennifer was lead coach for the Palo Alto-Mountain View-Los Altos-Saratoga-Los Gatos Consortium’s Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment Program.

In her educational consulting work, Jennifer has presented at annual conferences such as Learning Forward, ASCD, NASSP, NAESP, AMLE, ISACS and the New Teacher Center Annual Symposium, as well as at the Teachers’ and Principals’ Centers for International School Leadership. Jennifer’s communications consulting in the health care sector includes training and coaching work at the Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula and Stanford Hospital and Clinics.


Jennifer has been recognized as one of “21 Women All K-12 Educators Need to Know” by Education Week’s ‘Finding Common Ground’ blog, and the International Academy of Educational Entrepreneurship’s 2015 Entrepreneur of the Year. She has been a featured interviewee on the topic of professionalism for ASCD’s video series, Master Class, hosted by National Public Radio’s Claudio Sanchez, and in the lead article, “Finding Your Voice in Facilitating Productive Conversations” for Learning Forward’s The Leading Teacher, Summer 2013 newsletter; as a generational expert for “Tune in to What the New Generation of Teachers Can Do,” published in Phi Delta Kappan, (May 2011), and by the Ontario Ministry of Education for their Leadership Matters: Supporting Open-to-Learning Conversations video series.

Jennifer considers herself a “voice coach,” helping others learn how to best use their voices - be it collaborating on a team, presenting in front of an audience, coaching a colleague, supervising an employee and in her new role as an advisor for Reach Capital, an early stage educational technology fund. Jennifer holds a Master’s degree in Education from Stanford University and a Bachelor’s degree in English from Tufts University. She lives in Palo Alto, California. Jennifer can be reached at jennifer@jenniferabrams.com, www.jenniferabrams.com, and on Twitter @jenniferabrams.
Our conversations invent us. Through our speech and our silence, we become smaller or larger selves. Through our speech and our silence, we diminish or enhance the other person, and we narrow or expand the possibilities between us. How we use our voice determines the quality of our relationships, who we are in the world, and what the world can be and might become. Clearly, a lot is at stake here.

Harriet Lerner, The Dance of Connection
Case Study – Influence – Setting the Stage

• What great idea do you want others to support?
• Who must be influenced?
• What will others need to do?
• What have you done so far?
• What needs to happen next?
• Where do you think/feel there will be or already is resistance?

We will be using this case study throughout the session so please pick one you feel comfortable sharing with others.
**Reflecting On Your Influence Capability**

Please reflect on each statement and answer honestly, considering feedback you have heard from others – coworkers, spouses, clients, your boss or supervisor. The purpose of this exercise is to help you formulate an action plan to build your capacity to influence others. (based on work of Dr. K. M. Ponder)

1. I listen to and understand the needs and issues facing those I intend to influence.
2. I show respect for the feelings of others by listening non-judgmentally to their concerns.
3. I can assert my position without being seen as argumentative.
4. I can separate facts from interpretations of facts on issues.
5. When I talk about an issue I care about personal benefits accruing to people affected as well as the general benefits.
6. I understand what drives the people I am trying to influence.
7. I am passionate about the position I hold on issues.
8. I explain risks and rewards when presenting an issue to others.
9. People come to me when they need help solving problems.
10. I consult with all stakeholders before making decisions.
11. I present my rationale in a logical way and people see me as an expert.
12. People I lead would characterize me as warm and a good listener.
13. I have a wide network of people that will tell me the truth about the impact of my leadership.
14. My staff and colleagues see me as an expert in my field.
15. I am open to influence and am seen as one who can change his/her mind.
16. I know my ‘bottom line’ and will negotiate on issues that are not crucial to that.
17. I’ve got solid relationships with community members who influence what happens in my organization.
18. I ‘manage upward’ and have solid relationships with my superiors.
19. I’m known as a person who is confident and assertive.
20. People know me as a person who knows the limits of their capability and shows humility.
21. When trying to influence others I often build coalitions of like-minded individuals.
22. I’m known as a person who is polite and open to those who disagree with me.
23. I rarely issue orders or edicts without consulting others.
24. People know me as someone who will compromise.
25. I demonstrate strong commitment to issues that will make my organization successful and act in the organization’s best interest rather than my own.
Influence Capabilities Focused On Today

Outcome Mapping & Polarity Management

• I can assert my position without seeming argumentative.

• I present my rationale in a logical way and people see me as an expert.

• I manage upward and have solid relationships with my supervisors.

Identity Circle, SCARF Model, Covert Processes, Etc.

• I listen to and understand the needs and issues facing those who I intend to influence.

• I understand what drives the people I am trying to influence.

Body Language, Feedback Strategies & Apologies

• I am known as a person who is confident and assertive.

• I am open to influence and am seen as one who can change his/her mind.

• I have a wide network of people that will tell me the truth about the impact of my leadership.

• People know me as a person who knows the limits of their capability and shows humility.

• I am known as a person who is polite and open to those who disagree with me.
# Distinguishing Problems to Solve From Polarities to Manage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problems to Solve</th>
<th>Polarities to Manage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They are not ongoing.</td>
<td>They are ongoing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is an endpoint.</td>
<td>There is not end point.</td>
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<tr>
<td>They are solvable.</td>
<td>They are not solvable.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Alternatives</th>
<th>Interdependent Alternatives</th>
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<tr>
<td>They can stand alone.</td>
<td>They cannot stand alone.</td>
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<tr>
<td>There is no need to include an alternative for the solution to work.</td>
<td>The alternatives need each other to optimize the situation, over time.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Often contain mutually exclusive opposites.</th>
<th>Always contain mutually inclusive opposites.</th>
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<tr>
<th>1. Should we promote Bill?</th>
<th>1. Tough Love &amp; Gentle Love</th>
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<tr>
<td>2. What should we include in our customer survey?</td>
<td>2. Recognize the individual &amp; Recognize the Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. When was the War of 1812?</td>
<td>4. Competing with Others &amp; Collaborating with Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Should we remove one level of management?</td>
<td>5. Work Commitments &amp; Home Commitments.</td>
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Common Polarities in Education
Jane Kise - Unleashing the Positive Power of Differences:
Polarity Thinking in Our Schools

Not ‘Either-Or’ but “Yes, And’

• Autonomy and Collaboration
• Team Relationships and Team Tasks
• Clarity and Flexibility
• Continuity and Change
• Conditional Respect and Unconditional Respect
• Work Priorities and Home Priorities
• Needs of Students and Needs of Staff
• Teacher as Lecturer and Teacher as Facilitator
• Centralization and Decentralization
• School Responsibility and Social Responsibility
Outcome Mapping – 6 Key Questions

1) **What is the presenting problem?**

   *Paraphrase the problem and get it into a clear, concise statement.*

2) **What would you like to see as the outcome?**

   *Articulate the solution concretely. What would you like to see happening vs. what is currently happening? (Existing State TO Desired State) What is your best outcome?*
Outcome Mapping – 6 Key Questions

3) **What would the group/person’s desired behaviors be if the problem were solved?**

*What specific and measurable things would you like to see or hear when the problem is solved? Keep it focused on behaviors one can repeat.*

4) **What would the group/person need to know and be able to do in order to do the behaviors wanted above?** (Internal Resources)

*In order to do these behaviors, what knowledge, skills or awarenesses would the person need to have?*
5) **What are some of the strategies you could use in order to help the group/person build up their/his/her resources and do the desired behaviors?**

   What are some of the specific things you could do to address the needs? Given what you know about the group/person, what language or actions might help him/her do the desired behaviors?

6) **What are some of the resources YOU need in order to execute the strategies above? (internal & external resources)**

   In order for you to do the strategies, what do you need to learn or relearn? What type of personal support do you need? What is your hunch about what emotion or value you need to tap into in order to be most effective?
Adult Learning Assumptions

• Adults have a drive toward competence, which is linked to self-image and efficacy.

• Learning is enhanced when adults are active, involved and self-directed.

• What is to be learned must hold meaning; it must connect with current understandings, knowledge, experience and purpose.

• We don’t learn from experience as much as we learn from processing our experience – both successes and failures. Self-reflection, self-assessment, and self-direction are critical to learning and development.

• Learning is both an opportunity and a risk; it requires dissonance and change.

• Learning is the continual process of identity formation, or growing into more of who we are becoming.

Adapted from the work of Linda Lambert, Professor, Department of Educational Leadership, California State University, Hayward
Why Won’t People Change?
Feeling Some Resistance – Some Reasons For It
Based on the work of Michael Fullan

• People don’t know what to do – lack of knowledge
• People don’t know how to do it – lack of skills/abilities
• People don’t know why they are doing it – the purpose
• People weren’t involved in the decision-making
• People are satisfied with the way things are
• People say workload & pressure are increasing too fast
• People can’t see the benefits of changing
• People don’t see the change agent or advocate as credible
• People don’t sense they have support
• People see that the innovation conflicts with school culture
• People are worried about failing
• People have had negative experiences with change before.
SCARF: a brain-based model for collaborating with and influencing others

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In a world of increasing interconnectedness and rapid change, there is a growing need to improve the way people work together. Understanding the true drivers of human social behavior is becoming ever more urgent in this environment.

The study of the brain, particularly within the field of social, cognitive and affective neuroscience is starting to provide some underlying brain insights that can be applied in the real world (Lieberman, 2007). Social neuroscience explores the biological foundations of the way humans relate to each other and to themselves and covers diverse topics that have a different degree to which they can be operationalized and unambiguously tested. Topics include: theory of mind, the self, mindfulness, emotional regulation, attitudes, stereotyping, empathy, social pain, status, fairness, collaboration, connectedness, persuasion, morality, compassion, deception, trust and goal pursuit.

From this diversity, two themes are emerging from social neuroscience. Firstly, that much of our motivation driving social behavior is governed by an overarching organizing principle of minimizing threat and maximizing reward (Gordon, 2000). Secondly, that several domains of social experience draw upon the same brain networks to maximize reward and minimize threat as the brain networks used for primary survival needs (Lieberman and Eisenberger, 2008). In other words, social needs are treated in much the same way in the brain as the need for food and water.

The SCARF model summarizes these two themes within a framework that captures the common factors that can activate a reward or threat response in social situations. This model can be applied in all of the situations where people collaborate in groups, including all types of workplaces, educational environments, family settings and general social events.

The SCARF model involves five domains of human social experience: Status, Certainty, Autonomy, Relatedness and Fairness.

Status is about relative importance to others. Certainty concerns being able to predict the future. Autonomy provides a sense of control over events. Relatedness is a sense of safety with others, of friend rather than foe. And fairness is a perception of fair exchanges between people.

These five domains activate either the ‘primary reward’ or ‘primary threat’ circuitry (and associated networks) of the brain. For example, a perceived threat to one’s status activates similar brain networks to a threat to one’s life. In the same way, a perceived increase in fairness activates the same reward circuitry as receiving a monetary reward.

The model enables people to more easily remember, recognize, and potentially modify the core social domains that drive human behavior. Labelling and understanding these drivers draws conscious awareness to otherwise non conscious processes, which can help in two ways. Firstly, knowing the drivers that can cause a threat response enables people to design interactions to minimize threats. For example, knowing that a lack of autonomy activates a genuine threat response, a leader or educator may consciously avoid micromanaging their employees or students. Secondly, knowing about the drivers that can activate a reward response enables people to motivate others more effectively by tapping into internal rewards, thereby reducing the reliance on external rewards such as money. For example, a line manager might grant more autonomy as a reward for achieving performance targets.
Before exploring the domains of SCARF individually a brief context of the underlying science of the SCARF model, Namely, the approach (reward)-avoid (threat) response and the impact of this response on mental performance, is provided.

**Foundations of the SCARF model**

**The approach (reward)-avoid (threat) response: a survival instinct**

According to Integrative Neuroscientist Evian Gordon, the ‘minimize danger and maximize reward’ principle is an overarching, organizing principle of the brain (Gordon, 2000). This central organizing principle of the brain is analogous to a concept that has appeared in the literature for a long time: the approach-avoid response. This principle represents the likelihood that when a person encounters a stimulus their brain will either tag the stimulus as ‘good’ and engage in the stimulus [approach], or their brain will tag the stimulus as ‘bad’ and they will disengage from the stimulus [avoid]. If a stimulus is associated with positive emotions or rewards, it will likely lead to an approach response; if it is associated with negative emotions or punishments, it will likely lead to an avoid response. The response is particularly strong when the stimulus is associated with survival. Other concepts from the scientific literature are similar to approach and avoidance and are summarized in the chart below.

The approach-avoid response is a survival mechanism designed to help people stay alive by quickly and easily remembering what is good and bad in the environment. The brain encodes one type of memory for food that tasted disgusting in the past, and a different type of memory for food that was good to eat. The amygdala, a small almond-shaped object that is part of the limbic system, plays a central role in remembering whether something should be approached or avoided. The amygdala (and its associated networks) are believed to activate proportionally to the strength of an emotional response.

The limbic system can processes stimuli before it reaches conscious awareness. One study showed that subliminally presented nonsense words that were similar to threatening words, were still categorized as possible threats by the amygdala (Naccache et al, 2005). Brainstem – Limbic networks process threat and reward cues within a fifth of a second, providing you with ongoing nonconscious intuition of what is meaningful to you in every situation of your daily life (Gordon et al. Journal of Integrative Neuroscience, Sept 2008). Such studies show that the approach-avoid response drives attention at a fundamental level – nonconsciously, automatically and quickly. It is a reflexive activity. It is easy to see that the ability to recognizing primary rewards and threats, such as good versus poisonous food, would be important to survival and thus a part of the brain.

Social neuroscience shows us that the brain uses similar circuitry for interacting with the social world. Lieberman and Eisenberger explore this finding in detail in a paper in this journal entitled ‘The Pains and Pleasures of Social Life’ (Lieberman & Eisenberger, 2008).

**The effects of approaching versus avoiding**

The significance of the approach-avoid response becomes clearer when one discovers the dramatic effect that these states can have on perception and problem solving, and the implications of this effect on decision-making, stress-management, collaboration and motivation.

In one study, two groups of people completed a paper maze that featured a mouse in the middle trying to reach a picture on the outside. One group had a picture of cheese on the outside, the other a predator – an owl. After completing the maze both groups were given creativity tests. The group heading towards the cheese solved significantly more creative problems than those heading to the owl (Friedman and Foster, 2001). This study, supported by several other similar studies, shows that even subtle effects of this approach-avoid response can have a big impact on cognitive performance.

Translating this effect to the social world, someone feeling threatened by a boss who is undermining their credibility is less likely to be able to solve complex problems and more likely to make mistakes. This reduced cognitive performance is

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Synonyms in literature</th>
<th>Which traditional primary factors activate the response</th>
<th>What social factors/situations activate the response</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approach</td>
<td>Advance, attack, reward, resource, expand, solution, strength, construct, engage.</td>
<td>Rewards in form of money, food, water, sex, shelter, physical assets for survival.</td>
<td>Happy, attractive faces. Rewards in the form of increasing status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, fairness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid</td>
<td>Withdraw, retreat, danger, threat, contract, problem, weakness, deconstruct.</td>
<td>Punishment in the form of removal of money or other resources or threats like a large hungry predator or a gun.</td>
<td>Fearful, unattractive, unfamiliar faces. Threats in the form of decreasing status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, fairness.</td>
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driven by several factors. Firstly, when a human being senses a threat, resources available for overall executive functions in the prefrontal cortex decrease. There is a strong negative correlation between the amount of threat activation, and the resources available for the prefrontal cortex (Arnsten, 1998). The result is literally less oxygen and glucose available for the brain functions involved in working memory, which impacts linear, conscious processing. When feeling threatened by one’s boss, it is harder to find smart answers because of diminished cognitive resources. Secondly, when threatened, the increased overall activation in the brain inhibits people from perceiving the more subtle signals required for solving non-linear problems, involved in the insight or ‘aha!’ experience (Subramaniam et al, 2007). Thirdly, with the amygdala activated, the tendency is to generalize more, which increases the likelihood of accidental connections. There is a tendency to err on the safe side, shrinking from opportunities, as they are perceived to be more dangerous. People become more likely to react defensively to stimuli. Small stressors become more likely to be perceived as large stressors (Phelps, 2006). When the boss appears threatening, perhaps they just do not smile that day, suddenly a whole meeting can appear threatening and the tendency can be to avoid taking risks.

Clearly the threat or avoid response is not an ideal state for collaborating with and influencing others. However, this response is the default situation that often occurs in teams. Due to the overly vigilant amygdala, more tuned to threats than rewards, the threat response is often just below the surface and easily triggered. Just speaking to one’s supervisor, or someone of higher status is likely to activate this response. Thus it is much easier to cause aggravation (activate an avoid response) than it is to help others think rationally and creatively (the approach response). Many psychological and brain studies now support this idea, showing that the avoid response generates far more arousal in the limbic system, more quickly and with longer lasting effects than an approach response (Beaumeister, 2001). This discovery that our brain is inherently attuned to threatening stimuli helps explain many disquieting parts of life, from why the media focuses on bad news to why people are self-critical. It also points to the need to understand the social nature of the brain and proactively minimize common social threats.

On the other hand, an approach response is synonymous with the idea of engagement. Engagement is a state of being willing to do difficult things, to take risks, to think deeply about issues and develop new solutions. An approach state is also closely linked to positive emotions. Interest, happiness, joy and desire are approach emotions. This state is one of increased dopamine levels, important for interest and learning. There is a large and growing body of research which indicates that people experiencing positive emotions perceive more options when trying to solve problems (Frederickson, 2001). Solving non-linear problems that require insight (Jung-Beeman, 2007), collaborate better and generally perform better overall.

In summary, the SCARF model is an easy way to remember and act upon the social triggers that can generate both the approach and avoid responses. The goal of this model is to help minimize the easily activated threat responses, and maximize positive engaged states of mind during attempts to collaborate with and influence others.

The SCARF model

While the five domains of the SCARF model appear to be interlinked in many ways, there is also value in separating out and understanding each domain individually. Let’s look now at some of the supporting research for each domain then explore how threats and rewards might be managed in each.

Status

In researcher Michael Marmot’s book The Status Syndrome: How Social Standing Affects Our Health and Longevity, Marmot makes the case that status is the most significant determinant of human longevity and health, even when controlling for education and income. This finding is supported by Sapolski’s work with primates (Sapolski, 2002). Sapolski found that in primate communities, status equals survival: higher status monkeys have lower baseline cortisol levels, live longer and are healthier.

Status is about relative importance, ‘pecking order’ and seniority. Humans hold a representation of status in relation to others when in conversations, and this affects mental processes in many ways (Zink, 2008). The brain thinks about status using similar circuits for processing numbers (Chaio, 2003). One’s sense of status goes up when one feels ‘better than’ another person. In this instance the primary reward circuitry is activated, in particular the striatum, which increases dopamine levels. One study showed that an increase in status was similar in strength to a financial windfall (Izuma et al, 2008). Winning a swimming race, a card game or an argument probably feels good because of the perception of increased status and the resulting reward circuitry being activated.

The perception of a potential or real reduction in status can generate a strong threat response. Eisenberger and colleagues showed that a reduction in status resulting from being left out of an activity lit up the same regions of the brain as physical pain (Eisenberger et al., 2003). While this study explores social rejection, it is closely connected to the experience of a drop in status.

Reducing status threat

It can be surprisingly easy to accidentally threaten someone’s sense of status. A status threat can occur through giving advice or instructions, or nondescript feedback. One of the
slightly ineffective at a task. Many everyday conversations devolve into arguments driven by a status threat, a desire to not be perceived as less than another. When threatened, people may defend a position that doesn‘t make sense, to avoid the perceived pain of a drop in status.

In most people, the question ‘can I offer you some feedback’ generates a similar response to hearing fast footsteps behind you at night. Performance reviews often generate status threats, explaining why they are often ineffective at stimulating behavioral change. If leaders want to change others‘ behavior, more attention must be paid to reducing status threats when giving feedback. One way to do this is by allowing people to give themselves feedback on their own performance.

**Increasing status reward**

Organizations know all about using status as a reward and many managers feel compelled to reward employees primarily via a promotion. This may have the unfortunate side effect of promoting people to the point of their incompetence. The research suggests that status can be increased in more sustainable ways. For example, people feel a status increase when they feel they are learning and improving and when attention is paid to this improvement. This probably occurs because individuals think about themselves using the same brain networks they use for thinking about others (Mitchell, 2006). For example, when beating one’s own best time at a task or sporting activity, the reward circuitry from a sense of being ‘better than’ is activated, but in this case, the person one is ‘better than’ is oneself in the past.

Many everyday conversations devolve into arguments driven by a status threat, a desire to not be perceived as less than another.

Status can go up when people are given positive feedback, especially public acknowledgment. One study showed activation of the reward circuitry in children being as strong as money as when told ‘that’s correct’ by a repetitive computer voice. (Scott, Dapretto, et al., 2008, under review). In your own workplace, think of your people for fear of the request for promotion. However, given the deeply rewarding nature of status, giving positive feedback may reduce the need for constant promotions, not increase it.

Finally, status is about one’s relative position in a community of importance such as a professional group or social club based on what is valued. While society, especially advertising and the media, would have people spend money in order to be ‘better than others’, it doesn’t have to be a zero-sum game. Status can be increased without cost to others or an effect on relatedness. As well as playing against oneself, one can also change the community one focuses on, as when a low level mailroom clerk becomes the coach of a junior baseball team. Or, one can change what is important, for example deciding that the quality of one’s work is more important than the quantity of one’s work.

**Certainty**

The brain is a pattern-recognition machine that is constantly trying to predict the near future. For example, the motor network is useless without the sensory system. To pick up a cup of coffee, the sensory system, sensing the position of the fingers at each moment, interacts dynamically with the motor cortex to determine where to move your fingers next. Your fingers don’t draw on fresh data each time; the brain draws on the memory of what a cup is supposed to feel like in the hand, based on expectations drawn from previous experiences. If it feels different, perhaps slippery, you immediately pay attention (Hawkins, 2004). The brain likes to know the pattern occurring moment to moment, it craves certainty, so that prediction is possible. Without prediction, the brain must use dramatically more resources, involving the more energy-intensive prefrontal cortex, to process moment-to-moment experience.

Even a small amount of uncertainty generates an ‘error’ response in the orbital frontal cortex (OFC). This takes attention away from one’s goals, forcing attention to the error (Hedden, Garbrielli, 2006). If someone is not telling you the whole truth, or acting incongruously, the resulting uncertainty can fire up errors in the OFC. This is like having a flashing printer icon on your desktop when paper is jammed – the flashing cannot be ignored, and until it is resolved it is difficult to focus on other things. Larger uncertainties, like not knowing your boss’ expectations or if your job is secure, can be highly debilitating.

The act of creating a sense of certainty is rewarding. Examples are everywhere in daily life: music that has simple repeating patterns is rewarding because of the ability to predict the flow of information. Meeting expectations generates an increase in dopamine levels in the brain, a reward response (Schultz, 1999). Going back to a well-known place feels good because the mental maps of the environment can be easily navigated. Your fingers don’t draw on fresh data each time; the brain likes to know the pattern occurring moment to moment, it craves certainty, so that prediction is possible. Without prediction, the brain must use dramatically more resources, involving the more energy-intensive prefrontal cortex, to process moment-to-moment experience.
Reducing the threat from uncertainty

Any kind of significant change generates uncertainty. Yet uncertainty can be decreased in many simple ways. This is a big part of the job of managers, consultants and leaders. As people build business plans, strategies, or map out an organization’s structure, they feel increasing levels of clarity about how an organization might better function in the future. Even though it is unlikely things ever go as planned, people feel better because certainty has increased. Breaking a complex project down into small steps does the same. Another key tool involves establishing clear expectations of what might happen in any situation, as well as expectations of desirable outcomes.

Increasing the reward from certainty

Some examples of how increase certainty include making implicit concepts more explicit, such as agreeing verbally how long a meeting will run, or stating clear objectives at the start of any discussion. In learning situations, the old adage is ‘tell people what you are going to tell them, tell them, then tell them what you told them’, all of which increases certainty.

The perception of certainty can be increased even during deeply uncertain times. For example, when going through an organizational restructure, providing a specific date when people will know more information about a change may be enough to increase a sense of certainty. Much of the field of change management is devoted to increasing a sense of certainty where little certainty exists.

Autonomy

Autonomy is the perception of exerting control over one’s environment; a sensation of having choices. Mieka (1985) showed that the degree of control organisms can exert over a stress factor determines whether or not the stressor alters the organism’s functioning. Inescapable or uncontrollable stress can be highly destructive, whereas the same stress interpreted as escapable is significantly less destructive. (Donny et al, 2006). The difference in some rodent studies was life and death (Dworkin et al, 1995).

An increase in the perception of autonomy feels rewarding. Several studies in the retirement industry find strong correlations between a sense of control and health outcomes (Rodin, 1986). People leave corporate life, often for far less income, because they desire greater autonomy.

A reduction in autonomy, for example when being micro managed, can generate a strong threat response. When one senses a lack of control, the experience is of a lack of agency, or an inability to influence outcomes.

Reducing autonomy threat

Working in a team necessitates a reduction in autonomy. In healthcare, for example, where it tends to be counteracted with an increase in status, certainty and relatedness. With an autonomy threat just below the surface, it can be helpful to pay attention to this driver. The statement ‘Here’s two options that could work, which would you prefer?’ will tend to elicit a better response than ‘Here’s what you have to do now’.

Increasing rewards from autonomy

Providing significant autonomy in an organization can be difficult. Yet even a subtle perception of autonomy can help, for example by having self-directed learning portals, where employees get to design their learning curriculum, and self-driven human resource systems.

Allowing people to set up their own desks, organize their workflow, even manage their working hours, can all be beneficial if done within agreed parameters. Sound policy establishes the boundaries within which individuals can exercise their creativity and autonomy. Sound policy should enable individual point-of-need decision-making without consultation with, or intervention by, leaders. In this regard, sound policy hard-wires autonomy into the processes of an organization.

Relatedness

Relatedness involves deciding whether others are ‘in’ or ‘out’ of a social group. Whether someone is friend, or foe. Relatedness is a driver of behavior in many types of teams, from sports teams to organizational silos: people naturally like to form ‘tribes’ where they experience a sense of belonging. The concept of being inside or outside the group is probably a by-product of living in small communities for millions of years, where strangers were likely to be trouble and should be avoided.

In the absence of safe social interactions the body generates a threat response...

The decision that someone is friend or foe happens quickly and impacts brain functioning (Carter & Pelphrey, 2008). For example, information from people perceived as ‘like us’ is processed using similar circuits for thinking one’s own thoughts. When someone is perceived as a foe, different circuits are used (Mitchell, 2006). Also, when treating someone as a competitor, the capacity to empathise drops significantly (Singer et al, 2006).
Neuroscientist John Cacioppo talks about the need for safe human contact being a primary driver, like the need for food (Cacioppo, 2008). In the absence of safe social interactions the body generates a threat response, also known as feeling lonely. However, meeting someone unknown tends to generate an automatic threat response. This explains why one feels better at a party knowing three people rather than one. Alcohol helps to reduce this automatic social threat response, enabling strangers to communicate more easily, hence its use as a social lubricant the world over. In the absence of alcohol, getting from foe to friend can be helped by an oxytocin response, an experience of connecting with the other person. Oxytocin is a hormone produced naturally in the brain, and higher levels of this substance are associated with greater affiliative behavior (Domes et al, 2007). Studies have shown far greater collaboration when people are given a shot of oxytocin, through a nasal spray. (Kosfield, 2005). A handshake, swapping names and discussing something in common, be it just the weather, may increase feeling of closeness by causing the release of oxytocin (Zak et al, 2005). The concept of relatedness is closely linked to trust. One trusts those who appear to be in your group, who one has connected with, generating approach emotions. And when someone does something untrustworthy, the usual response is to withdraw. The greater that people trust one another, the stronger the collaboration and the more information that is shared.

Reducing threats from lack of relatedness

Increasing globalization highlights the importance of managing relatedness threats. Collaboration between people from different cultures, who are unlikely to meet in person, can be especially hard work. The automatic foe response does not get diminished by social time together. This response can be mitigated by dedicating social time in other forms. For example, using video to have an informal meeting, or ensuring that people forming teams share personal aspects of themselves via stories, photos or even social-networking sites. In any workplace it appears to pay off well to encourage social connections. A Gallup report showed that organizations that encourage ‘water cooler’ conversations increased productivity (Gallup, November 2008).

Increasing the rewards from relatedness

Positive social connections are a primary need; however, the automatic response to new social connections involves a threat. To increase the reward response from relatedness, the key is to find ways to increase safe connections between people. Some examples include setting up clearly defined buddy systems, mentoring or coaching programs, or small action learning groups. Small groups appear to be safer than large groups. The Gallup organizations research on workplace engagement showed that the statement ‘I have a best friend at work’ is the single largest predictor of employee in their ‘Q12’ assessment (Gallup Organization). Perhaps even having one trusting relationship can have a significant impact on relatedness.

Fairness

Studies by Golnaz Tabibnia and Matthew Lieberman at UCLA showed that 50 cents generated more of a reward in the brain than $10.00, when it was 50 cents out of a dollar, and the $10 was out of $50 (Tabibnia & Lieberman, 2007). This study and a number of others illustrate that fair exchanges are intrinsically rewarding, independent of other factors. The need for fairness may be part of the explanation as to why people experience internal rewards for doing volunteer work to improve their community; it is a sense of decreasing the unfairness in the world.

Unfair exchanges generate a strong threat response (Tabibnia & Lieberman, 2007). This sometimes includes activation of the insular, a part of the brain involved in intense emotions such as disgust. Unfair situations may drive people to die to right perceived injustices, such as in political struggles. People who perceive others as unfair don’t feel empathy for their pain, and in some instances, will feel rewarded when unfair others are punished (Singer et al, 2006).

Reducing the threat from unfairness and increasing the reward from fairness

A threat response from a sense of unfairness can be triggered easily. The following statements are examples of what employees might say in reaction to a threat to fairness:

• ‘He has a different set of rules for Mike and Sally than for the rest of us.’
• ‘Management tell us that we need to lose headcount, but our sales are carrying the other division and they don’t have to cut anyone.’
• ‘They do all this talk about ‘values’ but it’s business as usual at the top.’

The threat from perceived unfairness can be decreased by increasing transparency, and increasing the level of communication and involvement about business issues. For example, organizations that allow employees to know details about financial processes may have an advantage here.

Establishing clear expectations in all situations – from a one-hour meeting to a five-year contract – can also help ensure fair exchanges occur. A sense of unfairness can result from a lack of clear ground rules, expectations or objectives. Allowing teams to identify their own rules can also help. In an educational context, a classroom that creates the rules of what is accepted behavior is likely to experience less conflict. Examples of the success of self-directed teams in manufacturing abound (Semler, 1993). Much of what these self-driven teams do is ensure fairness in grass-roots decisions, such as how workloads are shared and who can do which tasks.
The issue of pay discrepancies in large organizations is a challenging one, and many employees are deeply unhappy to see another person working similar hours earning 100 times their salary. Interestingly, it is the perception of fairness that is key, so even a slight reduction in senior executive salaries during a difficult time may go a long way to reducing a sense of unfairness.

The wider implications of the SCARF model

Managing oneself

The SCARF model helps individuals both minimize threats and maximize rewards inherent in everyday experience. For minimizing threats, knowing about the domains of SCARF helps one to label and reappraise experiences that might otherwise reduce performance. Labelling (Lieberman et al, 2007) and reappraisal (Ochsner & Gross, 2005) are cognitive tools that have been verified in brain studies to be effective techniques for reducing the threat response. These techniques have been shown to be more effective at reducing the threat response than the act of trying to suppress an emotion (Goldin et al, 2007). Knowing about the elements of SCARF helps one understand issues such as why you can’t think clearly when someone has attacked your status, instead of just trying to push the feeling aside.

Knowing the domains of SCARF also allows an individual to design ways to motivate themselves more effectively. An example might be focusing attention on increasing one’s sense of autonomy during a time of uncertainty, such as focusing on the thrill of doing whatever you like when suddenly out of work.

Education and training

Successful educators, trainers and facilitators intuitively use the SCARF model. They know that people learn best when they are interested in something. Interest is an approach state. Teaching children who feel threatened, disconnected, socially rejected or treated unfairly is an uphill battle. For example, educators can create a nurturing learning environment by pointing out specifically how people are improving, which increases a sense of status. This is particularly important when learning anything new, which can create a threat response. Educators can also create certainty by presenting clear outlines of what is being learned, and provide a perception of some autonomy by introducing choice into the classroom. The key here is for educators, trainers and coaches to value the approach state as the necessary state for learning, and to put effort and attention into maintaining this toward state.

Coaching

Personal and executive coaching can increase all five SCARF domains. Status can be increased through regular positive feedback, attention to incremental improvements, and the achievement of central goals. Certainty can be increased by identifying central goals, and subsequently reducing the uncertainty inherent in maintaining multiple focuses. Breaking down large goals into smaller steps increases certainty about how a goal can be reached. Finding ways to take action when challenges appear insurmountable can increase autonomy. Relatedness can be increased through the relationship with the coach. Fairness can be reduced through seeing situations from other perspectives. The SCARF model helps explain why coaching can be so effective at facilitating change, and points to ways of improving its delivery.

The SCARF model points to more creative ways of motivating that may not just be cheaper, but also stronger and more sustainable.

Leadership development

The SCARF model provides a robust scientific framework for building self-awareness and awareness of others amongst leaders. Many new leaders may negatively impact the domains of SCARF by accident. They may know how things should be done, and subsequently provide too much direction and not enough positive feedback, thereby affecting people’s status. They often don’t provide clear expectations, impacting certainty. They micro manage, impacting autonomy. They want to maintain a professional distance, impacting relatedness. And, they may impact fairness by not being transparent enough. When the opposite happens and you meet someone who makes you feel better about yourself, provides clear expectations, lets you make decisions, trusts you and is fair, you will probably work harder for them as you feel intrinsically rewarded by the relationship itself. Spending time around a leader like this activates an approach response and opens up people’s thinking, allowing others to see information they wouldn’t see in an avoid state.

Organizational systems

SCARF has many implications for how organizations are structured, including reward systems, communications systems, decision processes and the like. The important thing is that the approach state should be seen as the necessary state for learning, and the system should be designed to reinforce that state.
remuneration structures. In the space available in this article we will explore just one of these – reward systems. Techniques for motivating and rewarding staff are largely based on the carrot and stick principle, with the carrot mostly involving money or a promotion. The SCARF model points to more creative ways of motivating that may not just be cheaper, but also stronger and more sustainable. For example, success could be rewarded by increasing people’s autonomy by allowing them to have greater flexibility in their work hours. Or, rewards could be provided via increasing the opportunity for learning new skills, which can increase a sense of status. Or, people could be rewarded through increasing relatedness through allowing more time to network with peers during work hours.

Summary

While the five domains of SCARF reflect core brain networks of greatest significance when it comes to collaborating with and influencing others. Understanding these drivers can help individuals and organizations to function more effectively, reducing conflicts that occur so easily amongst people, and increasing the amount of time people spend in the approach state, a concept synonymous with good performance.

Understanding the domains in the SCARF model and finding personalized strategies to effectively use these brain insights, can help people become better leaders, managers, facilitators, coaches, teachers and even parents.

In the early 2000s, the philosopher Theodore Zeldin said, ‘When will we make the same breakthroughs in the way we treat each other as we have made in technology?’ These findings about the deeply social nature of the brain, and the deep relevance of the domains of SCARF in everyday life, may provide some small steps in the right direction.

Suggestions for future research

An abbreviated list of potential research issues includes the following questions:

- Which of the domains of SCARF generate the strongest threats or rewards?
- Which domains have the longest-term impact?
- What are the links between the domains?
- How can studies be designed to identify individual domains?
- What are the best techniques for minimizing threat and maximizing reward in each of the domains?
- Do people vary in the importance of the 5 domains, and if so are there patterns across men and women, age groups or cultures?
- Is there value in assessing these domains in individuals or culturally in organizations?
- What are the organizational implications of this model for how systems are set up?
- Testing what aspects of the model are most effective to

Acknowledgments

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Credibility and Approachability
Deborah Gruenwald

Playing High
This is the basis of being authoritative.

• Still head
• Speak in complete sentences
• Hold eye contact while talking
• Move smoothly
• Occupy maximum space
• Lean back
• Slow down
• Spread body to full comfort
• Look down (tilt head back a bit)

Playing Low
This is the basis of being approachable.

• Nodding in agreement
• Smile even when it’s not funny (fake smile showing top teeth)
• Hands near face while speaking
• Sound breathless or start sentences with “um”
• Speak haltingly and in incomplete sentences, edit as you go, trail off
• Adjust what you are saying to make others understand, explain yourself
• Yield to the higher status person in speaking – let them take the lead and drive conversation
• Take up as little space as possible; space constrains body
• When walking, move out of other’s path
• Briefly check others’ eyes looking for understanding and acknowledgement
• Look up at other, tilt head down
• Lean forward to check other person’s responsiveness
Strategies for Receiving Feedback More Effectively

"One of the greatest gifts is that of being good at disappointment: having non-persecutory, speedy, resilient, emotional digestion." – Alain de Button

“Others’ views of you are input, not imprint. It’s information, not damnation.” – Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen

Physical

• Eat. Sleep. When you are physically depleted, you feel things in a different way.

• Watch Amy Cuddy’s TED Talk and practice the ‘Wonder Woman’ pose before the meeting.

• If you are taken by surprise, take two DEEP breaths. Get oxygen to your brain.

• Remember: Squeeze your butt cheeks if you fear you are going to cry. Your focus will go downward.

• If you need a minute, sip a bit of water or coffee. Give yourself a second to get your brain in a space to paraphrase. That means bring water to the meeting.

• Put a mint in your cheek to stay in the moment. Physically stay in your body.
Strategies for Receiving Feedback More Effectively

Psychological

• Before you go into a situation you expect to be difficult, ground yourself. Deep breathes. Connect yourself to the earth.

• Create an oval ‘bubble’ of a strong boundary around you. At least one arm’s length in front, behind and on either side of you. Stand firmly in this protective bubble and let the energy of others not penetrate. Hear their words; just keep a sense of self.

• Remember, different cultures listen and give feedback differently – be understanding when it comes at you in a way that isn’t your style and try to accommodate for the styles of others.

• Friend failure, don’t become it. I have heard many people say, “I’m such a failure.” No, actually, you are someone who has failed. You, yourself do not equate to failure. Be wary of labeling yourself.

• Remember to be in the Learned Optimism (Martin Seligman) state of mind. Don’t globalize, localize.

• Continually work on building a ‘growth mindset’ (Carol Dweck) about life. Don’t be fixed in your thinking. Everything can be a learning experience. We are always growing.

• During the conversation, when you notice you are being triggered (perhaps you notice a nervousness in your stomach or tension in your jaw), say hello to the reaction in you, and invite it to sit beside you until the conversation is over. Instead of acting out, you can put the reaction on hold until you have the time and space to nurture it properly. With the time and space you need later, you can learn about what caused that reaction to arise and how you might work with it in the future (from work at http://www.focusing.org/)
Strategies for Receiving Feedback More Effectively

Verbal

• When someone says, “Can I give you some feedback?” Say, “I am open to
  feedback and respond best when it is humane and growth producing.”

• You have permission to ask for clarification. If it is fuzzy, ask for clarity. If
  you don’t understand, ask for more detail. Remember your tone but ask
  for clarification.

AND if it still stings...

• If you are still feeling awful, try a self-compassion or loving-kindness (metta)
  meditation.
• Give yourself a second score – the initial evaluation is not the end of the
  story. It is how you took a ‘shot at figuring out what there is to learn’ that
  also matters. (Heen and Stone)

Statistic about Feedback

The amount of time we need to recover from negative emotions can differ as
much at 3,000 percent across individuals.
(Richard Davidson with Sharon Begley - The Emotional Life of Your Brain: How Its Unique
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The Conversation Continues...

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www.thebounceblog.com - Bobbi Emel, www.bobbieemel.com, @bobbiemel
Reasons Why People Don’t Apologize

• They fear others will lose regard for them, humiliate them, end their relationship with them, become smug and hold a grudge.
• They fear others will find them weak, incompetent, emotional. They don’t want to let their guard down, swallow their pride, feel terrible.

Note: These concerns are about personal comfort and not about the impact of one’s behavior.

People Need Apologies to Heal

What does the person need from my apology?
• Restoration of self-respect and dignity
• Assurance that both parties have shared values
• Assurance that the offenses were not his/her fault
• Assurance of safety in the relationship
• See the offender suffer and show pain
• Reparations for the harm caused by the offense
• Have meaningful dialogue interactions with the offenders
So...What’s The Right Way to Offer an Apology?

• Correctly identify the party(ies) to whom the apology is owed

• Acknowledge the offending behavior in adequate detail

• Recognize the impact the behaviors had on the victim

• Confirm that the grievance was a violation of a social/moral contract by showing shame, remorse, humility and sincerity and a wish to reclaim trust

• Make reparations – offer to do something, buy something, change something

A sample apology

Maria, I am sorry for cutting you off in our meeting today. I snapped at you and didn’t allow you to continue with your idea for helping Matthew. My behaviors were belittling and disrespectful. All the explanation in the world for my responses today and my reasons for acting inappropriately don’t matter. What matters is that I messed up, I feel bad about my actions toward you, and I will not do so again. I am sorry.

Does this fulfill the “requirements” of an apology?
8 Ways to Derail an Apology

• Offering a vague and incomplete acknowledgement
  Saying, “I am sorry” with no more explanation

• Using an impersonal or passive voice
  Saying, “Mistakes were made” but not putting them in a first person active verb – Not owning the mistake.

• Making the offense conditional
  Saying, “If mistakes were made then I am sorry”
  Saying, “If someone might have been upset...”
  vs. saying, “We made a terrible mistake”
  Just let go of the “ifs.”

• Questioning whether the victim is damaged or weak in some way
  Saying, “If anyone was hurt” or “If you were offended...” implies that others might not have been so hurt or wounded by this action and I am only apologizing because you personally were in need of an apology and I am being generous by offering it to you.

• Minimizing the Offense Or “There’s Really Nothing to Apologize For...”
  “In the scheme of things, we have done a good job. Your complaint is one of so few....” really minimizes the impact on that person.
8 Ways to Derail an Apology, Continued

• Using the empathic “I am sorry”
  “I am sorry you suffered so much damage” or “I am sorry you are upset with me” is different than you are sorry for your actions. And while you might be sincere in your communication of regret, your tone might also make all the difference as well. If you are condescending or patronizing with your “I am sorry you feel bad” it continues to limit your responsibility for the impact of your action.

• Apologizing to the wrong party
  Not apologizing to the offended, but instead just apologizing in general to make sure it looks good to the group or to the public is manipulation to protect yourself vs. reconciliation with the victim.

• Apologizing for the wrong offense
  Saying you are sorry for the embarrassment you caused the school for your action isn’t the same for being sorry about what you did to cause the embarrassment in the first place.
The Five Languages of Appreciation

Communicating appreciation in work-based relationships can be difficult, and ineffective, if you don’t understand the languages and actions that are important to your colleagues. *The 5 Languages of Appreciation in the Workplace* shows you how to “hit the mark” in encouraging with your coworkers.

Grounded in the conceptual foundations of the NY Times #1 bestselling book by Dr. Chapman, *The 5 Love Languages*, the ways that appreciation are demonstrated in the workplace can differ significantly from personal relationships. The languages are the same (in name), but their practical application in work-based relationships is quite different. Let us explain each:

**Words of Affirmation.** Words, both oral and written, can be used to affirm and encourage those around us. Some people prefer personal one-on-one communication, while others value being praised in front of others (but it is important to know that relatively few people like to receive public affirmation in front of a large group.)

**Quality Time.** Personal, focused time and attention with their supervisor is highly affirming for some. But others enjoy different types of time — “hanging out” with their coworkers, working together as a team on a project, or just having someone take the time to listen to them. And the type of time desired can differ significantly depending on whether it is with colleagues or with their supervisor.

**Acts of Service.** Assisting in getting a task done can be extremely encouraging to a colleague. Helping a teammate “dig out” from being behind, working collaboratively on a project that would be difficult to do alone, or just working alongside with them on a task, are all ways to demonstrate appreciation for their efforts.

**Tangible Gifts.** The key to an effective gift in the workplace is the “thought,” not the amount of money spent. Taking time to notice what your colleagues enjoy (chocolate, coffee, cashews), observing their hobbies and interests (sports, books, crafts) and buying them a small related gift shows that you are getting to know them as a person and understand what is important to them.

**Appropriate Physical Touch.** While we acknowledge that physical touch is less important in work-based relationships, and the potential for abuse exists, we still find that appropriate physical touch is meaningful. Usually, it occurs spontaneously and in the context of celebration — a “high five,” fist bump, slap on the back, or congratulatory handshake. To not touch one another at all often leads to a cold, impersonal environment.
**Skills Pinwheel**

Ask the three people on the inner circle whatever questions you have regarding your challenge.

**Your question:**

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<th>Other notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Here’s What (fact)</td>
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Resources


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Resources


