

HANDOUT #3

The Neuroscience of Change and the SCARF® Model

The SCARF® model is a summary of five domains of human social experience, which are factors that can activate a reward or threat response in social situations. It is an easy way to remember social triggers that activate either the approach or avoid responses – this is critical for successful change. The SCARF® model points to ways to motivate others - that are “free” - and more successful and sustainable than other approaches.

	<i>What It Is</i>	<i>Key Points</i>	<i>What Leaders Often Do</i>	<i>What Leaders Should Do</i>	<i>Questions to Ask Yourself as a Leader</i>
Status	Our relative importance to others	Status equals survival Perception of lower status reduces cognitive capacity	Do not provide enough positive feedback Lack of two-way involvement	Make people feel good about selves Participate don't dictate	How can we preserve people's status during the change? Can we provide positive feedback?
Certainty	Our ability to predict the future	The act of creating certainty is rewarding Even bad certainty is better than uncertainty	Fail to communicate or transmit unclear or ambiguous expectations	Set, share and reinforce clear expectations	How can we provide some degree of certainty during the change? Can we share plans or at least dates?
Autonomy	Our sense of control over events	Even a small choice or anticipating making a choice is rewarding Micromanaging elicits strong threat response	Make top-down decisions Micromanage with no input	Involvement in decisions Facilitate future-focused insights	How can we offer people control or areas of autonomy over aspects of the change? Can we engage more broadly in change planning/doing?
Relatedness	Our sense of safety with others	Lack of safe social interactions generates threat response Small groups and personal interactions promote trust	Maintain professional distance Engage in task-focused interaction only	Foster personal relations and trust Build connections and teams	How can we embrace connections and feelings of inclusion during the change? Can we create shared goals between people and groups?
Fairness	Our sense of fair exchanges between people	Fair exchanges are intrinsically rewarding Unfairness at work affects mental and physical health	Make decisions that seem inequitable Fail to make processes transparent	Demonstrate fair process	How can we demonstrate fairness and transparency in the change process? Can we involve others in decision-making to some degree?

Now, apply the SCARF® model to your project – to the change you are leading. What can you as a leader do to reduce the threat (the “avoid” response) that may be posed by the change, and increase the sense of opportunity (the “approach” response) for your key stakeholders?

	<i>What It Is</i>	<i>Questions to Ask Yourself as a Leader</i>	<i>Specific Actions I Can Take as a Leader on My Current Project</i>
Status	Our relative importance to others	How can we preserve people's status during the change? Can we provide positive feedback?	
Certainty	Our ability to predict the future	How can we provide some degree of certainty during the change? Can we share plans or at least dates?	
Autonomy	Our sense of control over events	How can we offer people control or areas of autonomy over aspects of the change? Can we engage more broadly in change planning/doing?	
Relatedness	Our sense of safety with others	How can we embrace connections and feelings of inclusion during the change? Can we create shared goals between people and groups?	
Fairness	Our sense of fair exchanges between people	How can we demonstrate fairness and transparency in the change process? Can we involve others in decision-making to some degree?	

Adapted from: David Rock and his colleagues at the NeuroLeadership Institute -www.neuroleadership.com - The SCARF® Model is copyrighted by David Rock

References:

- *David Rock & Jeffrey Schwartz: The Neuroscience of Leadership in Strategy+Business - <http://www.strategy-business.com/article/06207?gko=6da0a>*
- *David Rock & Christine Cox. SCARF in 2012: Updating the Social Neuroscience of Collaborating with Others - http://www.davidrock.net/files/09_SCARF_in_2012_US.pdf*