

**CleverMinds  
Consulting**

## Neuroscience of Leadership


13th National  
**Allied Health**  
Conference

8<sup>th</sup> August, 2019

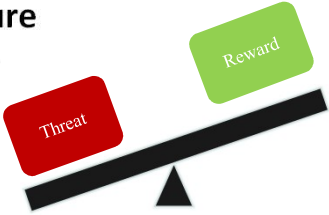
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### Our Brain's Organising Principle

**1. to conserve energy**



**2. to minimise threat/displeasure and maximise reward/pleasure**





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## Brain Structures and Functions

### Thinking

- Understand
- Planning
- Analysing
- Reasoning
- Recall
- Inhibition
- Goal setting

### Feeling

- Processing of emotions
- Memories of emotions
- "Gut feelings"
- Procedural memory
- Habits
- Motivation

Subconscious

### Instinct

- HR, Breathing
- Compulsivity
- Inherently selfish

**Amygdala**  
FFF response

Conscious / Logical

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## Threat (stress) decreases cognitions

### THREAT

AWAY

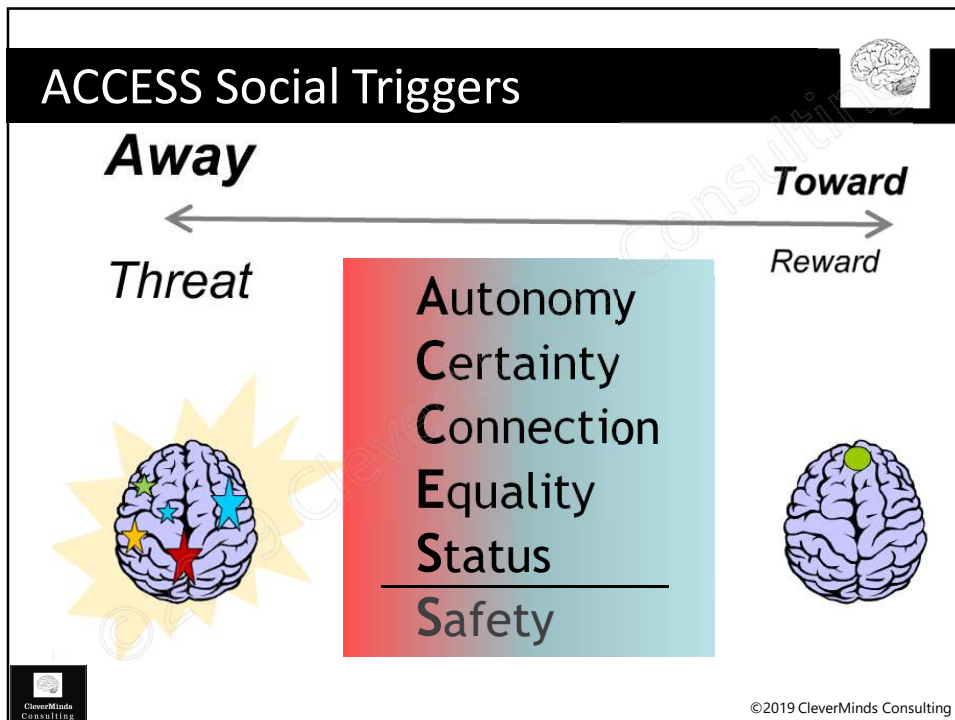
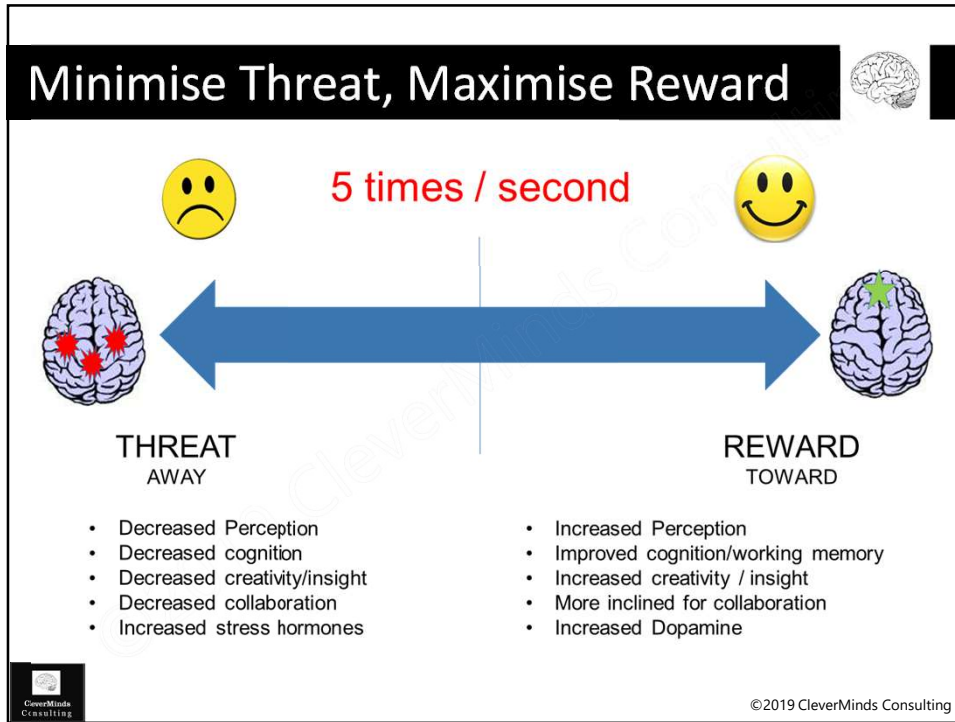
- Decreased Perception
- Decreased cognition
- Decreased creativity/insight
- Decreased collaboration
- Increased stress hormones

### REWARD

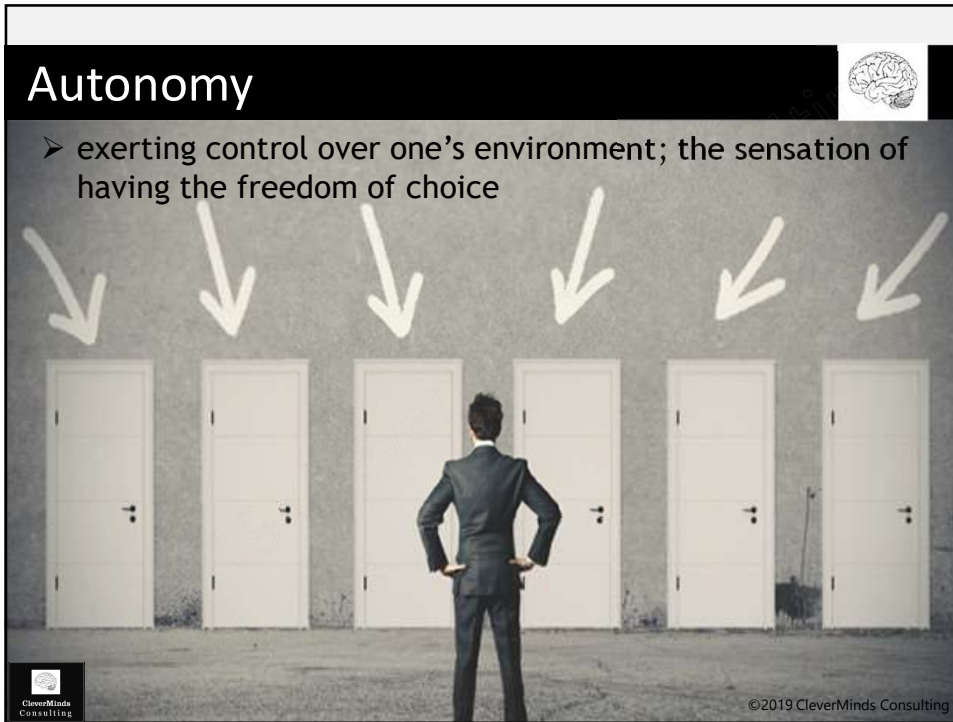
TOWARD

- Increased Perception
- Improved cognition/working memory
- Increased creativity / insight
- More inclined for collaboration
- Increased Dopamine

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## Autonomy



- exerting control over one's environment; the sensation of having the freedom of choice

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## Certainty



- brain is a pattern-recognition machine
- Any deviation from what we expect can trigger threat

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## Connection



- feeling of being "in" or "out" of a social group = belonging
- high importance on relating to others

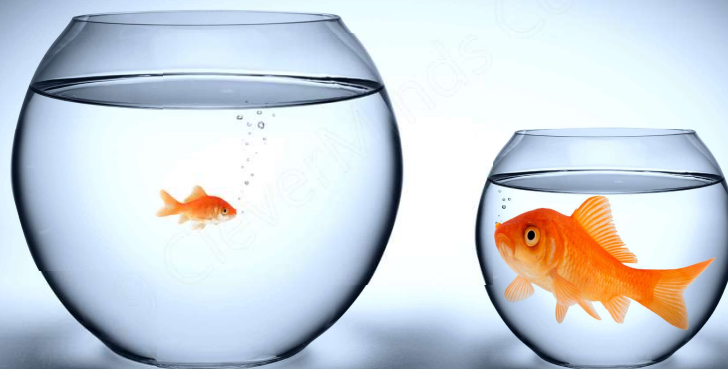


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## Equality




- feeling that a situation is fair; that all parties are receiving what they deserve or are entitled to




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## Status

- relative importance, 'pecking order' and seniority
- also about recognition of work done, and expertise



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## What are your motivators?

**Autonomy :** exerting control over one's environment; the sensation of having the freedom of choice

**Certainty:** brain is a pattern-recognition machine constantly trying to predict the near future. Any deviation from what we expect triggers threat

**Connection:** the feeling of whether we are "in" or "out" of a social group; belonging; high importance on being able to relate

**Equality:** the feeling that a situation is fair; that all parties are receiving what they deserve or are entitled to

**Status:** is about relative importance, 'pecking order' and seniority. Its also about recognition of work done, and expertise

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**Safety:** trumps all other motivators when life in danger

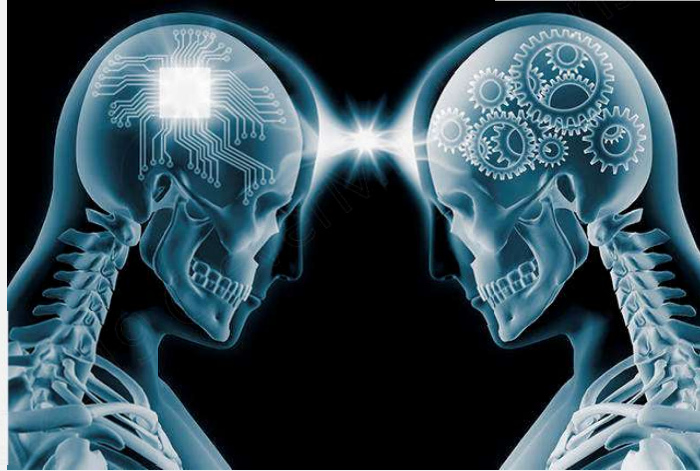
**Rank them 1 - 5 for yourself (leave out Safety)**

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## Homework: Think about your team



Think about your team and rank their top 2 motivators



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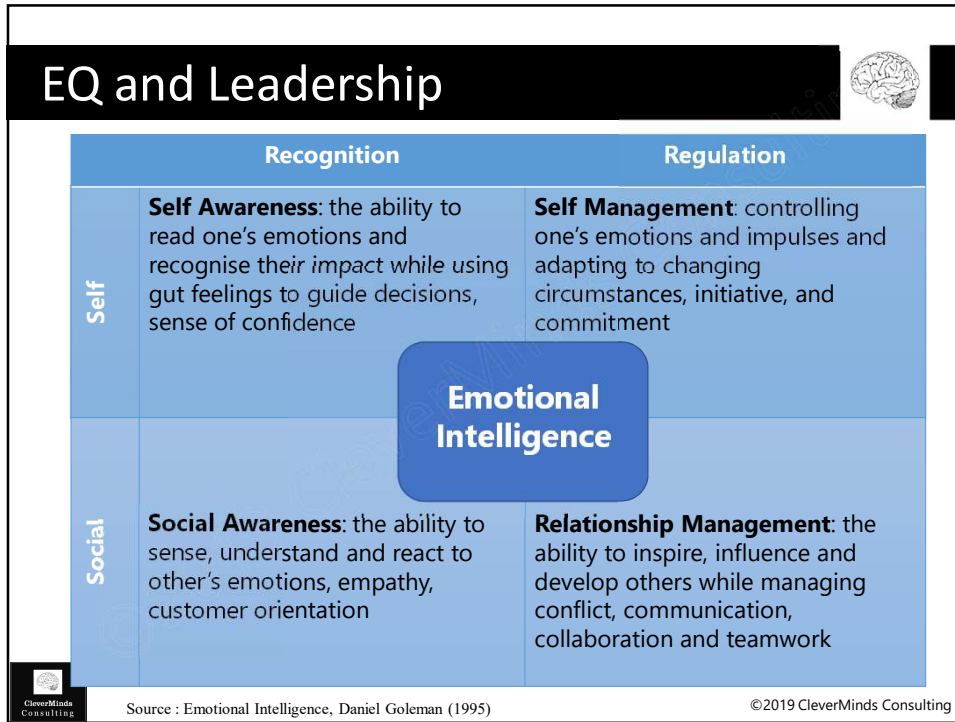
## How do I create psychological safety?



**“Emotional Intelligence** – the ability to understand the needs and strengths of the team – is the quality that will truly differentiate great leaders in the future”



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## Multitasking work culture





**Smoking Marijuana:** 5 points

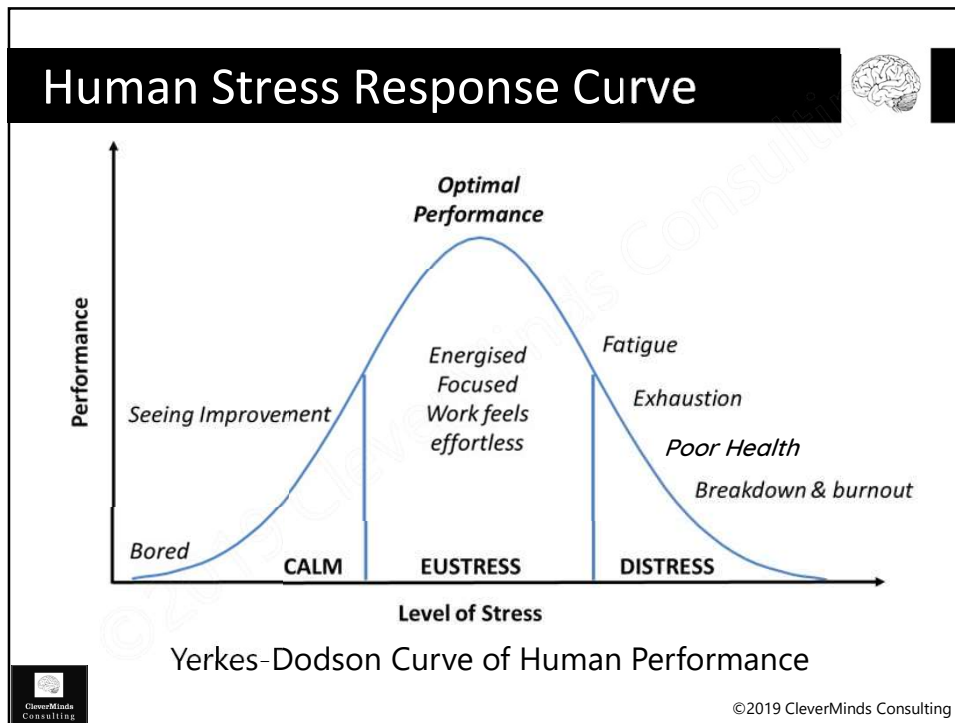
**Losing a nights sleep:** 10 points

**Switching:** Men 15; Women 5

(Bergman, 2010)



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## Emotions are Contagious

1. Emotions come first non-consciously
2. Emotions are contagious non-consciously
3. Regulating emotions is a key skill

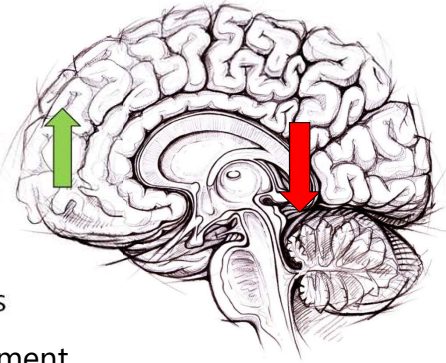
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## Emotional Regulation



### Maintain cognitive control to:

- Be present and deliberate
- Be open to new information
- Not jump to conclusions
- Regulate responses
- Notice the behaviour of others
- Notice changes in the environment



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## BLR : When you're about to lose it



30 second circuit breaker!

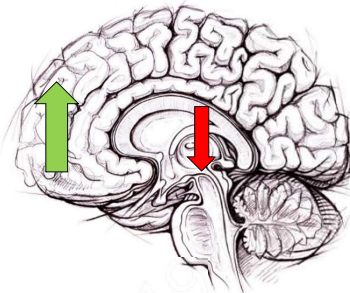
1. Breathe
2. Label
3. Reappraise



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## Label your state

**Activates PFC**




**Calms limbic system**

aggressive aggravated alienated angry annoyed anxious apathetic <b>happy</b> helpless <b>careful</b> cautious confident confused <b>curious</b> depressed determined disappointed discouraged lonely disgusted ecstatic mischievous	envious <b>excited</b> exhausted fearful frightened frustrated guilty relieved sad hopeful hostile humiliated hurt hysterical innocent interested jealous undecided <b>loved</b> embarrassed miserable	negative optimistic paranoid peaceful proud <b>puzzled</b> regretful bashful withdrawn satisfied shocked shy sorry sure <b>surprised</b> suspicious thoughtful enthusiastic
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## Reappraise the Situation



- How can I see the positive in this?
- What can I learn from this?
- What will I gain from this?
- What can I appreciate from this?
- How can I put this into perspective?
- What can I share to help others?



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## Manage your Cognitive Load



### Avoid Switching

- Set time for emails
- Make priority list before opening email
- Eliminate distractions
- Chunk "like" activities



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## Manage your Cognitive load



Take regular **brain breaks**  
(no back to back meetings)



Do you override your natural need for brain-breaks with stimulants, sugar and stress hormones?



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# Mindfulness

Mind Full, or Mindful?

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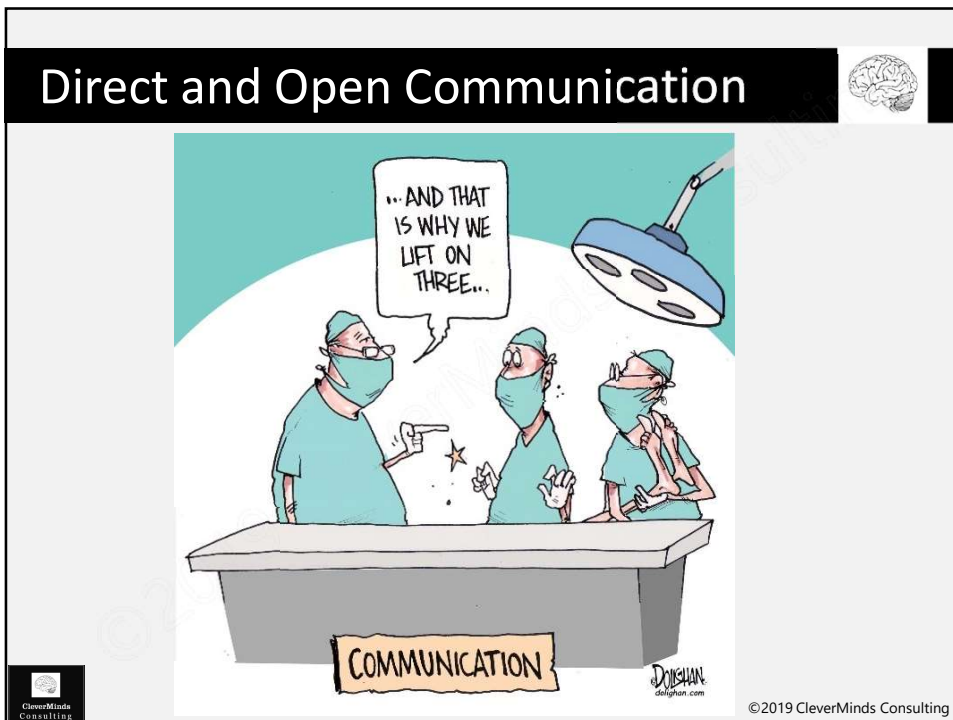
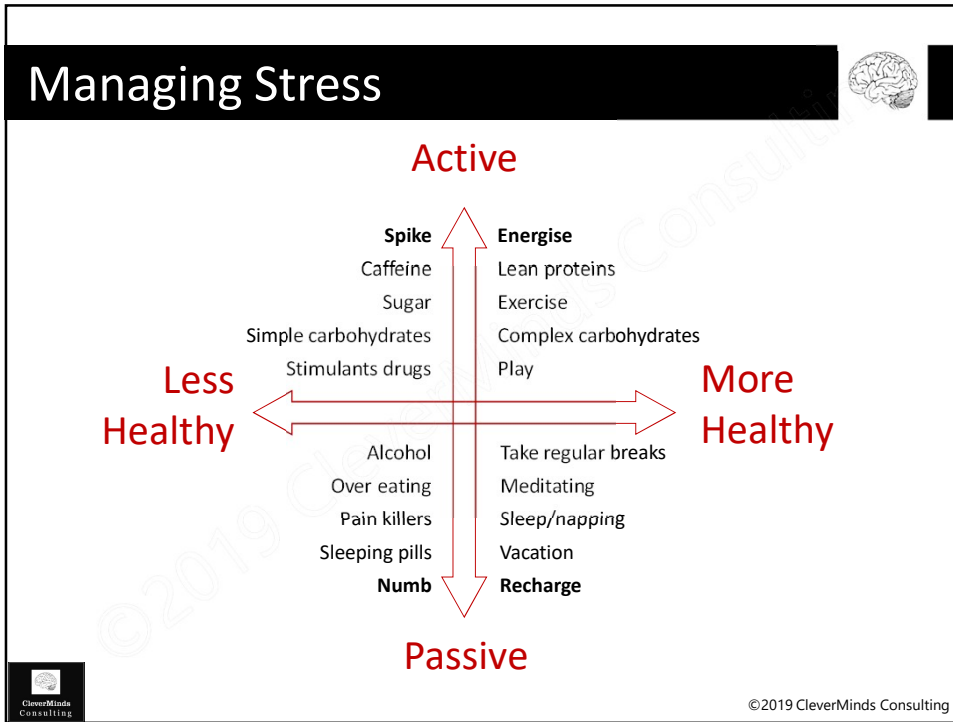
# Top 3 Mindfulness Apps

**The Mindfulness App**

**Headspace**

**Calm**

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## Choose your level of conversation

**VISION :** focussing on what we want to move towards.  
What is our vision or goal overall?  
What is our goal for the conversation?


**PLANNING :** Planning is a high-level conversation—from a bird's eye view.

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**DETAIL :** At times we do go into detail in a conversation  
if we go into detail too soon or stay too long = overly complex

**PROBLEM :** It can be quite useful to identify the gaps  
However, a pure problem focus limits new ideas.

**DRAMA :** Is when we are in full 'limbic mode'. Our focus is on the emotion.  
Can result in catastrophising

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## Change is really hard



**THE QLD BAG BAN**  
ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

**FORGOT REUSABLE GROCERY BAGS...**



**AGAIN!**

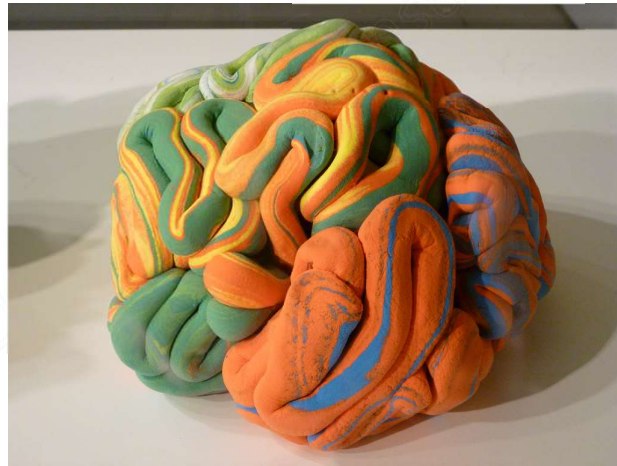
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## Neuroplasticity: the agent for change



“A mind once stretched by a new idea, never regains it’s original dimensions”

Oliver Wendall Holmes



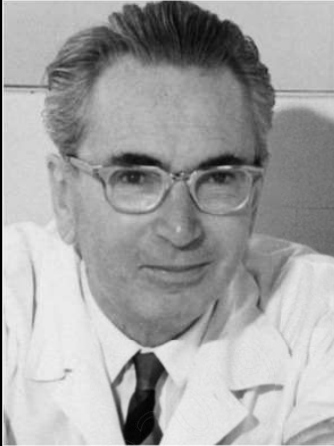
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## Create new pathways for change



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## The Art of Being Deliberate



Between stimulus and response  
there is a space. In that space is our  
power to choose our response. In  
our response lies our growth and  
our freedom.

— *Viktor E. Frankl* —

AZ QUOTES



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**Dr Diane Harner**



✉ [diane@clevermindsconsulting.com.au](mailto:diane@clevermindsconsulting.com.au)  
☎ Mobile: 0468 696 546  
🏠 [www.clevermindsconsulting.com.au](http://www.clevermindsconsulting.com.au)  
🌐 Dr Diane Harner  
🐦 @diane\_harner



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