



# The Coach as an agent of Influence & Change

## Using Neuroscience for Success

Dr Denise Bjorkman

### 1. Introduction

Coaching is a means to bring about growth and change. The coach or mentor is the agent of this change. If a coach wishes to bring about personality and character growth while driving changes in habits, reflection must be caused. A coach DOES NOT give advice. Rather he/she uses Socratic methods to ask meaningful, focused and relevant questions to drive reflection, ownership of new perspectives and therefore change. Habits are hard to change. Even when it is a difference of life or death, only 1 in 10 cardiac bypass patients change their lifestyles.

### 2. Who am I

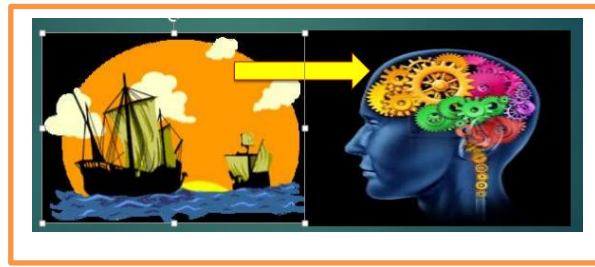
I am a behavioural scientist, business woman (more than 40 years) and mental health practitioner. I am also the CEO of the Neuro Business Institute, President and co-founder of the South African Council for Professional Coaches and Mentors. I currently consult in 19 countries across 4 continents to bring about change in the workplace: institutional, government, security or business. As a global expert on profiling I specialize in risk assessment in appointing top level personnel by assessing patterns of behaviour, decision making and responses to stress. Using state of the art neuro laboratory equipment from Denmark and the Netherlands we are able to look inside the brain and determine how integrated brain functioning is, levels and speed of problem solving, empathy, logic and mental health.

### 3. Enter neuroscience

Neuroscience is simply the study of the nervous system (brain), how it develops and forms new connections, its structure and what it does as an integrated whole. We want to know how people think and why they behave the way they do

The World Economic Forum made it a central theme for business and performance development. \$3 billion has been allocated by the EU to develop the use of neuroscience to help people reach true potential.

Neuroscience is a journey into the brain



Coaching requires strategic competence. If you knew and understand the personality you are working with you would be able provide better guarantees for growth. Neuroscience provides this.

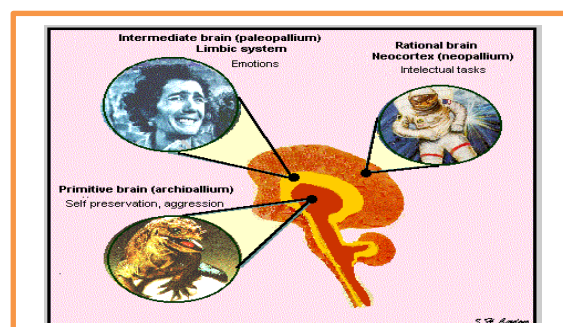
#### 4. 10 Socratesian Coaching methods needed by the brain

Socratesian coaching is top down coaching (using the logical brain or PFC) using what the brain requires to remain interested, excited, inspired and desirous of working with you.

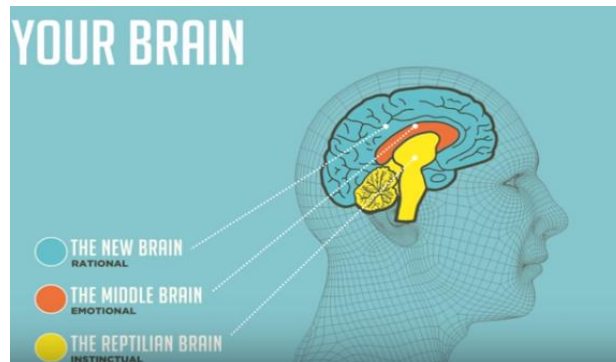
- ▶ Maximize attention and retention:
- ▶ Use a beginning and end
- ▶ Keep focus on goals and outcomes
- ▶ Surprise - Novelty
- ▶ Challenge
- ▶ Repetition and reminders
- ▶ Problem solving and solution seeking questions with reflection
- ▶ Self-regulation and self-discipline (beats IQ hands down for success)
- ▶ Use the voice with chunking for ideas - Byte sized information
- ▶ Giving reasons why - motivation

#### 5. The Brain

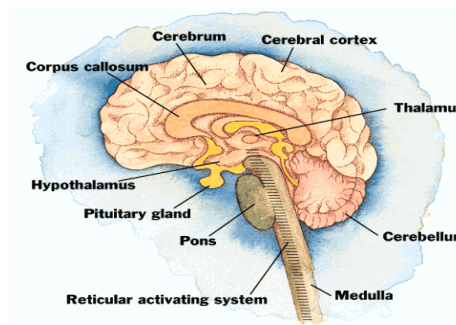
The brain is lazy and lives in the now. It hates using energy. Knowing about three main parts of the brain is a starter.



The reptilian brain is the oldest part of the brain, followed by the limbic system or emotional brain and final the newest part the prefrontal cortex or logical part of the brain. Because the brain cannot multi task, your job is to ensure that the logical part of the brain is engaged.



The eyes are the only visible part of the brain and they are constantly scanning the environment for threat. Know what the different parts of the brain do:



## 6. What is the brain concerned about?

If you understand the workings of the brain you will be able to influence major change. Several models of the brain for a coach are proposed. That of David Rock partially explains it. (T-Scarf)

- ▶ Threat: Withdrawal, flight

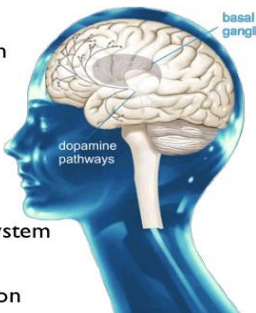
- ▶ Status: Recognition for job well done, self esteem
- ▶ Certainty: Predictability, Reliability – which in turn guarantees safety
- ▶ Autonomy – trust in the person’s ability to rise to the challenge
- ▶ Acceptance - desperate need to be accepted, liked and wanted. The in versus the out group.
- ▶ Relatedness: Belonging and connections; approach; need. The dangers of diversity training rather than inclusion.
- ▶ Fairness – equality. Hard wired for justice



An explanation for Donald Trump:

### Where the elephant lives

- “Primitive” parts of brain
- Basal ganglia
  - Storage of instinctual habitual behaviors
- Nucleus accumbens
  - Center of reward system
  - Wants immediate gratification / satiation

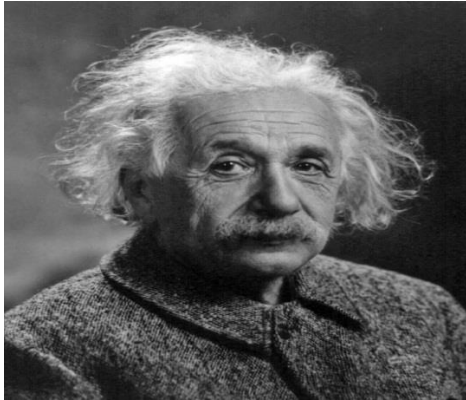


### 6.1. Professional Concerns – this is the environment a coach is working in:

The brain is altering size, structure shape and function

- ▶ Memory is disappearing (it’s in Google)
- ▶ Motor sensory part of brain developing and hippocampus becoming smaller
- ▶ Empathy is disappearing – calculating activity taking its place.
- ▶ Brain is quantitative not qualitative
- ▶ Mental health compromised
- ▶ Narcissism – instant gratification: I want it all and I want it now
- ▶ Utilitarian attitude to friends, family and bosses: What’s in it for me?
- ▶ Data overload
- ▶ Addiction: Dopamine rushes (neuro transmitters in the brain)

- ▶ Superficial emotions and empathy
- ▶ Constant need for stimulation



Digital Addiction environment in which you are coaching:

Albert Einstein said: **'I FEAR THE DAY THAT TECHNOLOGY WILL TAKE ON OUR HUMANITY ... THE WORLD WILL BE POPULATED BY A GENERATION OF IDIOTS,'**

**SPELLING; EXERCISE, HEALTH, SLEEP, NUTRITION, LANGUAGE, MEMORY DEFICIT**

## 7. The neurobiology of change

What are the neural connections that drive behaviour? The interplay between working memory and focused attention is the problem.

Understand Mirror Neurons and their role in empathy, feeling and sensitivity to others

**Mirroring**

**Chameleon effect is automatic** (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999)

**Mirror neurons** (Gallese et al., 1996; Rizzolatti, 2004)

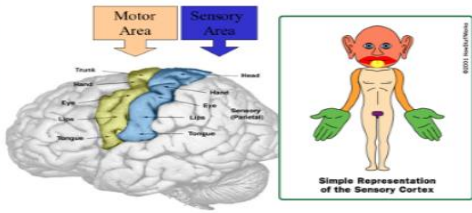
(Gross, 2006)

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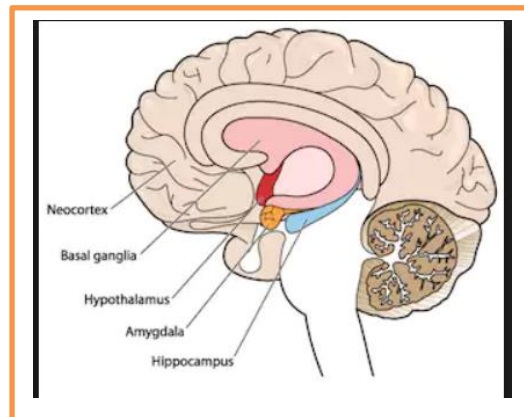
Working memory in the brain is a holding area. New information is compared with old information already stored in the brain. It looks for a match.

The information goes to the prefrontal cortex (PFC) in the brain where rational thought takes place. This place is energy intensive. It only holds a limited amount of information at a time. It gets tired easily. The brain is hardwired to look for environmental errors: differences in existing information and that which is incoming. If a contradiction occurs – threat is in the air. Intense neural firing takes place in the fear centre of the brain. The fear or anger response is counterproductive.

**Gaming Facebook, Smart phones brain area development at the expense of the cortex**



Well habituated tasks are stored in the basal ganglia deep in the brains core. The basal ganglia uses very little energy compared to the PFC. It's used to doing things without conscious thought in a routine activity. Driving a car or riding a bicycle. You don't need to think about it.



**8. In the workplace**

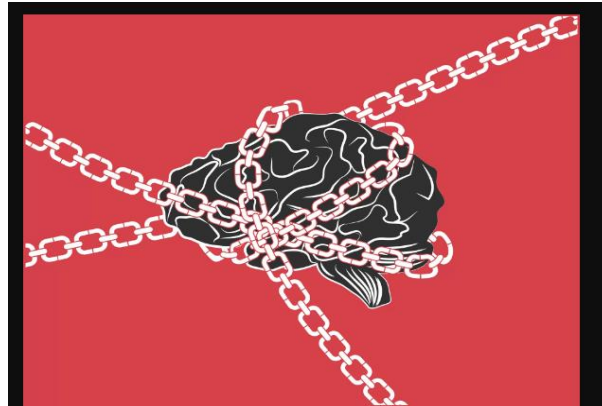
An employee is praised for good work and the reward circuitry kicks in. This settles in the brain as preferred behaviour. When something new is introduced there is conflict and he sees himself as failing.

Social media can be an instrument of damage and dependency - Digital addiction can also impact on responses

- ▶ **Makes the brain and hippocampus smaller** ('The Knowledge')
- ▶ Memory knowledge and useful information suffers
- ▶ **Remember the file name but not what is inside**
- ▶ **False sense of compassion and empathy**
- ▶ **Promotes narcissism and absorption with self**
- ▶ Reduces arborization of neurons – obstructs development (dementia; mental health; disease)

Humans love to do what's easiest - an economy of scale. Forcing change is useless. It has to be done one brick at a time. The key is to sell THE GOAL and achieve focus.

How to take the brain out of chains;



#### 10 Steps towards driving change (Forbes). Brett Gleason. October 2016.

**i) State the change with the coachee and why it is important. The reason why.**

The leader must be able to articulate what the change is about and **what winning looks like on the other side**. Lead from top down.

**ii) Use Chunking, small pieces of information at a time.**

The brain can only handle small bits of information.

**iii) Listen for feedback (the 12 step AA model of articulating**

Buy in can be obtained from getting feedback. Get feedback right through the process. Making it anonymous will help and encourage transparency. Leaders must lead by example in this regard. Change can be scary for the team. Compassion and empathy are important. Leaders must communicate clearly, show discipline and be transparent.

Emotional intelligence is not a soft-side leadership strategy as it may sometimes be perceived. Leaders that actively practice improving their emotional intelligence are better equipped to drive positive change and guide the team through the inevitable obstacles.

**iv) Establish Goals – a function of a coach**

There is a direct connection between personnel goal attainment and personal and mental health. Goals provide certainty and create personal identity, wellbeing, health

Unattainable goals create uncertainty, fear, deep seated insecurity, depression, heightened stress and unhappiness (compromised immune system with absenteeism).

Self-regulation and self-discipline goes with this

**v) Always explain the WHY it must be done. Motivate your answer**

It became very apparent that we need to be doing a better job explaining the “why.” Once a team understands the reasoning behind this change and that the goal is to improve their work balance, efficiency, competitiveness of the company and sustainability revolts slowly subside.

WHY REDUCES THREAT, provides motivation

**vi) Define Clear Roles**

Defining the roles and decision-makers is very important. Everyone with a role in driving change must understand who is accountable, responsible and informed. Specific team members must own certain aspects of the change process.

Once rolls are assigned, make sure that milestones are set, regular check-ins scheduled and a rhythm of communication established.

**vii) Provide Training**

Most of the time, training will be required. Whether it’s a new system, process, software or an overhaul in customer service, the team needs to be well-trained for the changes to not only stick, but to be effective.

Do not forget this part. And yes, time and budget have to be carved out. This is where companies fail much of the time. Leaders have to provide proper time and resources during the roll out period.

**viii) Reward Acceptance Publicly – Reward the behaviour not the ‘genius’.**

Some team members will take well to change and proactively aid in its acceptance while others will be slow to adopt. Have a plan in place to publicly reward those that make the time and effort to embrace change. Especially those that do it with a good attitude and get other team members on board.

Change is inevitable. It’s much less painful doing it right the first time. Following these steps will help increase the speed of change and keep morale high during the process.

**ix) Improve your influence and credibility – be visible**

**x) Repeat, repeat and repeat**

Takeaways:

Start doing .....

Stop Doing.....

Continue Doing.....