



Breaking the Script A Decision Neuroscience Coaching System

Seminar 1 The Brain Science of Story

Introduction: The Basic Script

The Neuroscience of Successful Stories

1. What initially draws us into a story that we want to read or hear?
2. What sustains our engagement as a listener or reader?
3. What do we unconsciously respond to when we hear or read a story that captures our attention?
4. What determines bestsellers from non-sellers?

Mind and Brain Patterns

The Allure of Certainty

The Excitement of Curiosity

The Coaching Story

A story has a beginning, middle, and end – a challenge, development, and resolution.

Questions that frame the coaching story:

1. What would you like us to focus on for this session?
2. Then, what would you like to take away from this session?
3. What is your most important takeaway from this discussion?
4. What do you commit to do by next week?

Several Minds, Two Brains, One Focus

Several Minds

Two Brains

- System 1 (bottom-up)
- System 2 (top-down)

One Focus: The Power Is in the Focus

On Changing a Story

All changes, even the most longed for, have their melancholy, for what we leave behind us is a part of ourselves; we must die to one life before we can enter into another.

Anatole France

Brain Origins of Identity

Internal Compass: Expectation and Prediction

To rationally formulate a decision and consider potential consequences, reflect on a time at some point in the future to look back on that decision.

- What will you be glad you decided to do?
- What is your worth outside your action and achievement?
- What is your identity beyond the recognition you get?
- Is your worth in metrics of intrinsic value and contribution rather than in money and accolades

Seminar 2. Decision Neuroscience Essentials

The Psychology of Decision Making

The decision process can be enhanced to objectively address each of these considerations:

- Zoom out to look at a broader perspective than the spotlight issue.
- Pause to consider before actively deciding.
- Assess assumptions objectively.
- Effectively look at a long-term impact.

Decision-Making: First, Second, and Third Order Consequences

First order consequences: the immediate, obvious, and intended results of doing something

Second order consequences: track the outcome of first order decisions

Third order consequences: the longer-term result of a decision

Key practices to enhance self-awareness include:

- Have a framework for self-awareness
- Objective assessment and self-reflective processes
- Awareness of others' strengths and weaknesses to enhance collaborative potential

ROADMAP System of Decision Making

The ROADMAP System offers a decision neuroscience model to both understand existing algorithms and to systematically generate approaches to new situations where existing models, experience and intuition may not apply.

Recognize and define the specific issue.

Own your determination of the process and the system.

Assess the system of specific steps to specify progress and successive approximation to the destination.

Decide each next step—the best action to move toward the goal.

Map the steps and strategies for progression toward the goal.

Author and analyze each step of this process.

Program your identity to internalize the process as a working model of strategic thinking and action.

Decision Planning Models

A framework is a mental model to make sense of an issue and to provide a structure of possibilities.

- Be aware of the existing frame.
- Create multiple frameworks or hypotheses to consider next decisions.
- Examine the point of reference, and how that can determine a framework.

Decision Making: Analysis and Intuition

This framework of consideration in decision-making can be applied to identifying bright spots, to recognize what is different and how it can apply to a unique situation.

- Identify the challenge and objective
- Gather the data
- Identify the bright spots, even single instances in which the usual problems do not occur
- Study what is done differently in the bright spot versus the usual process

Decision Processes

- Regulate states of mind + manage emotions
- Clarify core ideals and needs
- Adopt a growth mindset for new models
- Principles of deliberate practice

- Select a specific decision
- Focus on the next step
- Engage a skilled mentor, coach or consultant
- Use feedback: objective + subjective

Decision Approaches

- What was the last, most successful experience beyond what you had imagined?
- What personal tools did you rely on or create?
- What was the best practice you used?
- Who will you become in making the choices you consider?

Fundamental Decision Questions

Basic decision-making questions:

- What is the optimum outcome?
- What would be the result of not making the decision?
- What is the uncertainty and risk of the decision?
- Are there biases affecting the assessment and the decision?
- How will you feel after making the decision? A year or five years from now?
- How is your current emotional state affecting the decision?
- Consider other perspectives and frameworks: outside/opposite views?
- Does the decision align with your ideals?
- What is the optimum stopping point for consideration to then make the decision?
- What would you advise someone else in this situation?
- Is there a “bright spot?”
- How can you use feedback to refine the decision-making process in the future?

Uses and Misuses of Intuition

Advantages and Disadvantages of Intuition

- Conscious, deliberate decisions are intentional and considered by assessment, systematic planning, and review of results.

- An intuitive reaction using existing algorithms and operating models can mislead if they are based on an amalgam of past experiences and operations

Seminar 3. Facilitating Strategic Change

Collaboration Strategies

- A conversation that begins with *authoritative, critical, or adversarial remarks* activates the brain's circuitry of *fight and flight*.
- A conversation that begins in a *collaborative mode* induces listening without judgment.

Impact On Change

- Change disrupts predictable, known patterns. It brings certain risks.
- The way we reframe, refocus, and redirect our thinking determines how we will navigate the risks and challenges

How can communication be most effective?

- When it is clear, brief, and specific and humane—the four principles of good writing and speaking.
- Neuroscience shows that we attend to and remember up to ten words at a time. .

Conversational Intelligence : Framing the Co-Created Story

Enhancing Conversational Intelligence

1. Reframing: Change the context to a new perspective to create trust and understanding
 - Hear a question as an opportunity to discuss
 - Regard a challenge as beginning a mutual exploration of new ways of thinking
 - Accept resistance to change as a natural way the mind and brain responds
2. Focusing: Become aware that initial focus as well as refocus is a choice
 - Move from problem to solution
 - Consider an obstacle an opportunity
 - Review the lessons learned from a setback

3. Redirect: Move from stuckness to seeing new possibilities
 - Questions open a closed system of thinking
 - Move to open, candid conversations to change a mindset
 - Use storytelling to transcend the situation to engage both mind and brain
 - Co-create new conversations and collaboration

Appreciative Inquiry in Coaching

Human systems grow in the direction of what they persistently ask questions about.

Dr. Diana Whitney

Dr. Diana Whitney, the founder of Appreciative Inquiry, was a guest in my Mastermind group and described systematic studies of Appreciative Inquiry in organizations that show three major aspects:

1. A focus on what works enhances what works.
2. Focus becomes reality: a focus on possibility elicits a positive mindset; a focus on problems elicits a problem mindset.
3. A focus on what works awakens possibility.

How does Appreciative Inquiry work at a brain level?

Why not focus on problems initially in order to resolve and move beyond them?

For an individual or organization, appreciative inquiry is a foundation of the interchange for any coaching relationship.

Appreciative Inquiry Principles

1. Discovery. What is working best?
2. Dream. What is possible?
3. Design. What options can we create?
4. Destiny. What is your ultimate vision?

Appreciative Inquiry Tools

- Describe a time that was a high point experience, when you were most engaged and felt most alive and vibrant.
- What do you most value about yourself and your work?

- What are the core factors that give life to your organization at its best?
- Imagine yourself a year from now with everything as you wished it would be. Describe that.
- Imagine your organization a year from now with everything as you wished it would be. Describe that.
- What's the most important piece of new behavior to establish in order to move forward?
- For this big change, what is the first decision/behavior that would give you some traction in the process?
- What would demonstrate to yourself that you're moving forward?

How Can You Help Someone Change Their Mind?

People are generally better persuaded by the reasons which they have themselves discovered than by those which have come into the minds of others.
Blaise Pascal, French mathematician and philosopher in the 1600s

Map A New Story: And Navigate With Brain's Error Detection Mechanism

Proven Strategic Tactics for Change:

- Move from the familiar status quo with a very small simple initial change.
- Shrink the change to a simple, clear next step.
- Alleviate uncertainty by making a specific, immediate experience of change manifest.
- Generate a sense of effectiveness by creating options rather than just one solution.
- Find supporting evidence from those who have made a similar specific change.

Engineering Effectiveness: Some Essentials

- Focus specifically on the next step.
- Specify the next step. Not abstract or too global.
- Make changes tangible and concrete.
- Make progress measurable.
- Make progress visible.

Choice Enhancement

The following considerations apply to emotions and choices:

1. Increased tension produces emotional regression.
2. Increased emotion narrows perspective. hurling herself away from logic.
3. When you're in a state of upset, the first order of business is to regulate feelings.
4. Lump tasks according to states of mind required to do them.
5. Learn the optimum state of mind for a particular task.
6. Protect your time for an endeavor of a particular state of mind

Seminar 4. Sustaining and Extending Transformative Success

Successful Navigation of Change and Transformation

Identity Challenges and Transformative Experiences

Internal Compass: Expectation and Prediction

To rationally formulate a decision and consider potential consequences, reflect on a time at some point in the future to look back on that decision.

Reflect again on these 4 questions:

- What will you be glad you decided to do?
- What is your worth outside your action and achievement?
- What is your identity beyond the recognition you get?
- Is your worth in metrics of intrinsic value and contribution rather than in money and accolades?

Assessing Change Experiences: Models and Questions

Fundamental questions to inform the development of this model:

1. What was the most unprecedented or extreme experience you dealt with successfully?
2. What personal tools did you use or create?
3. What best practice you created?

Usual Decisions and Transformative Experiences

Sustainable Success

Common processes among outstanding intellectuals and creative performers:

- Emerging: total engagement in their work
- Incubation: a period of rest and recovery, when they didn't think about their work
- Insight: new ideas and growth in their thinking

Resilience Insurance

A number of factors can tip the balance away from self-awareness and planning toward distraction or impulsivity. :

- Depleted energy
- Lowered blood glucose levels
- Emotional overwhelm
- High demands of self-control and concentration
- Distraction
- Abundance of choices
- Ineffectiveness or powerlessness
- Unconscious biases

A summary of research applied to Mentor Coaching experience to consider :

1. Continue focusing on the value you bring, and your purpose, not on the winning in itself.
2. Sustain focus on the challenges and opportunity in the path ahead.
3. Focus on the present rather than the future and past sustains attention and avoids distraction.
4. Sustain a growth mindset.
5. Manage feelings and states of mind.