

Neuroscience Underpinning The 5 Forces of Change

What does neuroscience tell us about the need to address 'The 5 Forces of Change' during organisational transformation?

1. Certainty

Our need for stability and predictability



2. Purpose

Our need for a sense of purpose



3. Control

Our need for control over the things that affect us



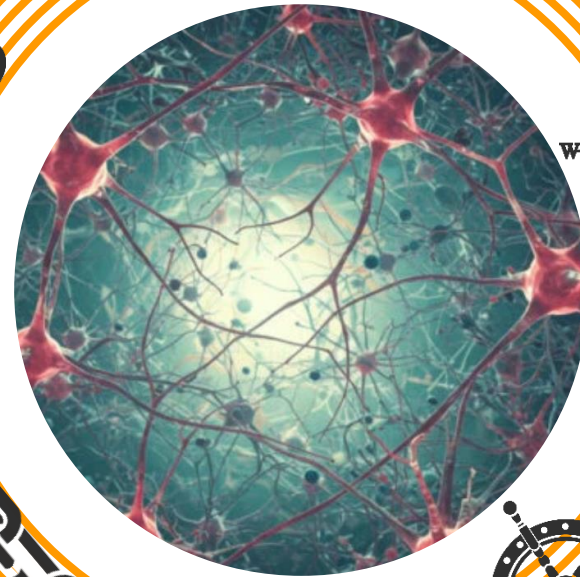
5. Success

Our need for success



4. Connection

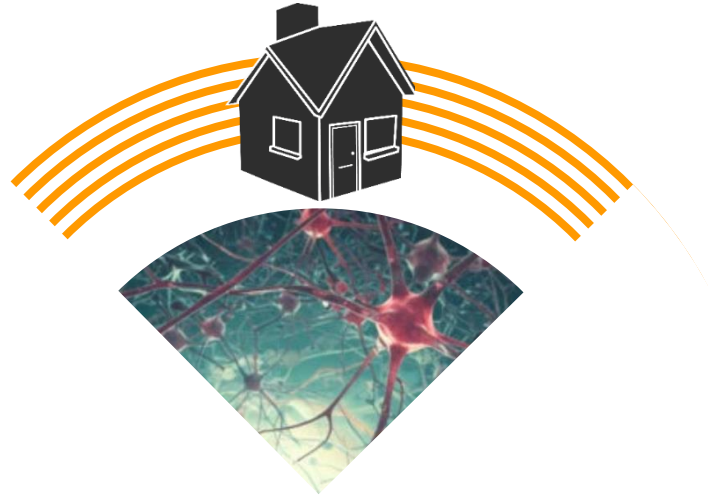
Our need to stay connected to people, habits, ideas & things



Neuroscience Underpinning The 5 Forces of Change

1. Certainty

Our need for stability and predictability



Research Evidence:

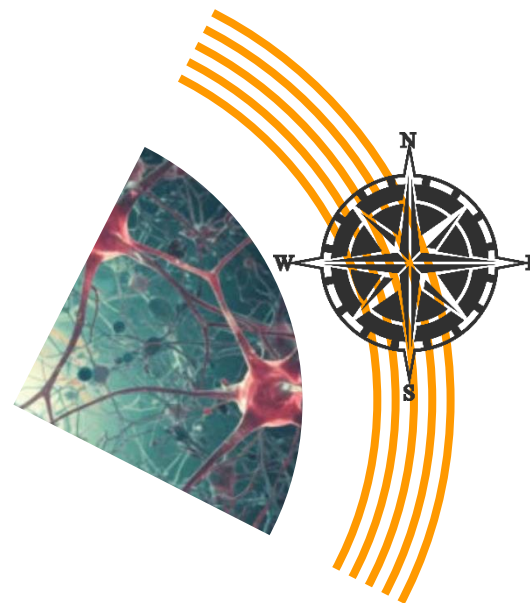
- fMRI studies show increased amygdala activity during uncertain situations, triggering a threat response.
- The prefrontal cortex, responsible for planning, struggles to function effectively when faced with uncertainty, leading to cognitive strain.
- Neurotransmitters like cortisol, released during stress, can impair cognitive function and emotional regulation.

LESSON: Minimising uncertainty reduces stress and resistance to change.

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Research Evidence:

- The brain's reward system releases dopamine when we perceive meaning and purpose, and stimulates the prefrontal cortex, promoting planning and goal-setting.
- Providing a big-picture context satisfies the brain's need to understand cause-and-effect relationships.
- Highlighting the dangers of inaction activates the brain's threat detection system (amygdala), creating a sense of urgency.
- Highlighting benefits activates the brain's reward system, while the positive impact on others (customers, community) activates brain regions associated with empathy and social connection.



2. Purpose

Our need for a sense of purpose

LESSON: A clear and meaningful Purpose* for change activates different brain regions, stimulating positivity, forward-thinking and a sense of urgency.

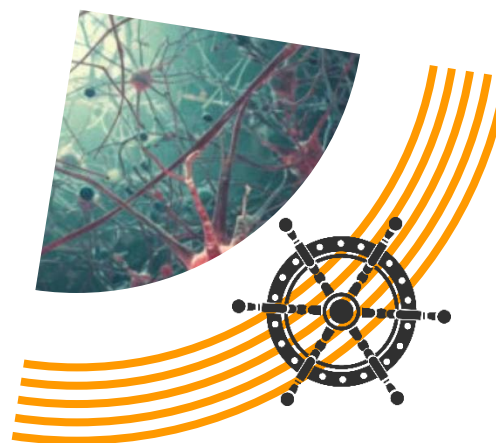
**In this context: Purpose = Context + Vision + Benefits.*

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Research Evidence:

- The brain's sense of control is linked to the prefrontal cortex and the ability to predict and influence outcomes.
- Lack of control triggers the amygdala and increases stress hormones.
- Studies show that giving individuals choices and autonomy reduces stress and improves performance.

LESSON: Giving people control over change improves engagement and reduces resistance.



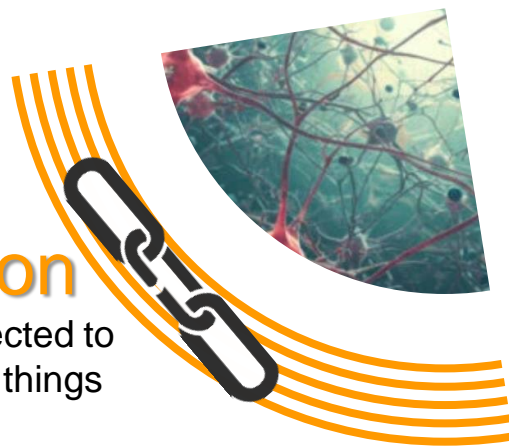
3. Control

Our need for control over the things that affect us

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4. Connection

Our need to stay connected to people, habits, ideas & things



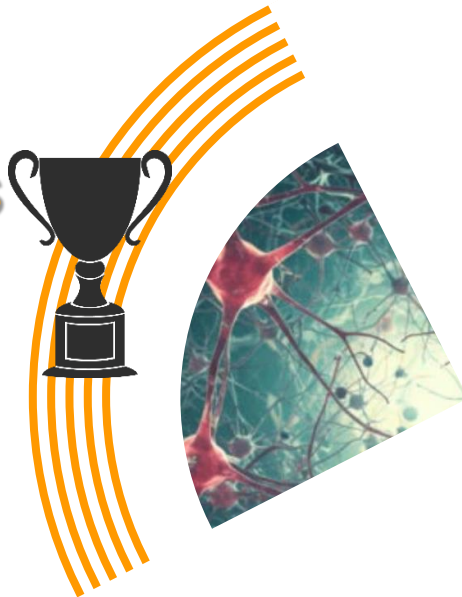
Research Evidence:

- Our brains form associations between people, places, and routines and the reward centres of our brain. Breaking them causes the reward centres to become less active. We feel a sense of loss, like the experience of grief.
- Disruptions to established attachments can activate the amygdala, leading to feelings of anxiety, sadness, and fear.
- Habits and routines create strong neural pathways in the brain. Breaking them requires effort and can lead to cognitive dissonance triggering stress.

LESSON: Losses associated with breaking connections must be actively addressed during change and issues mitigated.

5. Success

Our need for success



Research Evidence:

- Neuroplasticity allows the brain to adapt and learn new skills.
- Providing training and support enhances neuroplasticity and facilitates learning.
- Fear of failure can activate the amygdala and impair performance.
- Dopamine is released when success is achieved, and this helps to reinforce new behaviours.

LESSON: Training and support through transition and beyond enhances motivation and prevents regression.

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To apply neuroscience to organisational change see www.5forcesofchange.com

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