The senior leader & The Human Operating system

Daniel Wood
Executive & Leadership Coach, Behavior Analyst
INTRODUCTION

• All leaders have experienced interpersonal challenges

• Neuroscience has placed leadership in a new perspective

• Somatic (visible) indicators of emotional state are evident

• Neural structure and functioning is impacted over time
INTRODUCTION

Brain Related = Brain Approach

• Emotional Regulation: the limbic system can be excited or locked

• Cognitive Regulation: the neocortex can be inhibited

• People operate at optimal proficiency in a state of balance
The Brain/Mind and the Leader
Aspects of Presence
Conflict and Cohesion
Optimal Mental and Physical Health
LEADER’S BRAIN

• Brain Orientation

• System Integration

• Leader Disposition
BRAIN ORIENTATION

THE TRIUNE BRAIN: Bottom to Top

A. Sensory Brain – innate behavioral knowledge
B. Limbic Brain – affective knowledge
C. Neocortex – declarative knowledge

*mutually dependent and intertwined but may not work well together
SYSTEM INTEGRATION

• Somatic Input – Five senses

• Limbic Processing – Amygdala, Hypothalamus, Hippocampus

• Neocortex Processing – Correlation with knowledge and emotions
DISPOSITION

• How you see yourself – worldview

• How you carry yourself – intentions

• The three self's – Perceived, Actual, Desired
LEADER PRESENCE
NOTICE & IMPACT THE ROOM
LEADER COMMUNICATION

• Awareness – Ability to perceive the temperature (respiration, focus, body position, verbal acuity)

• Calculation of the Message – Readiness of the audience, Conduciveness of the atmosphere, Complexity of the content

• Dialogue – Facial features, Tonality, and Posture

• Reflection – Role of Mirror Neurons
BRAIN CIRCUITRY – DEVELOPMENT AND FUNCTION

Generalized Domains
- Relational connection or social engagement
- Executive function and sense of agency
- Self-development and identity

Specified Domains
- Cognitive problems
- Affect regulation
- Behavioral inclination
- Somatic expression
- Spiritual implications
CONFLICT AND COHESION

• Nervous System
• Chemical Production
• Leaders Influence
Autonomic Nervous System – Regulates involuntary functions; place of chemical neurotransmission

- Sympathetic Branch – fight, flight, or freeze reactions
- Parasympathetic Branch – relaxed physiological state
- The two branches often oppose each other
CHEMICALS AND RESPONSE

Neurotransmitters & Hormones

• Excitatory
  - Acetylcholine: attention, anger, & aggression
  - Norepinephrine: maintain balance; fight or flight

• Inhibitory
  - Gamma Amino Butyric Acid: regulation of anxiety
  - Dopamine: role in reward seeking and motivation
  - Serotonin: highly related to mood; depression
STEPS FOR THE LEADER

• Appreciate what is happening

• Engage and reduce escalation

• Inclusive discussion & decision making
PROMOTION OF MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Process of Neurogenesis
- Impact of Use Dependence
- Process of Neuroplasticity
- Physical Connection
BEST PRACTICES FOR LEADERS

Neuroscience-Based Brain Processes

• Neurogenesis – Production of new neurons in the hippocampus (learning)

• Neuroplasticity – Ability to adapt and change; new neural pathways
BEST PRACTICES FOR LEADERS

The Use Dependent Brain

• A domain of development left unattended will atrophy

• Repeated and patterned stimuli changes the brain

• Repeated Conflict = patterned traits of fear and isolation

• Time solidifies maladaptive neural pathways

• Positive skill building must be patterned, consistent, and reinforced
MODALITIES TO PROMOTE BALANCE

Body-Based: Body awareness and regulation

Somatic Practice: Breathe control and inner-awareness

Expressive: Practice of communicating in a safe experiential way

Mindfulness, Visualization, and Positive Affirmation
RECOMMENDED READING


