

Considering Delivering Bad News to Customers (internal or external)

Presented by Andrew Griffiths

Observations: Habits and memories guide reactions and decisions.

They inform the mind's predictions, bias what a person wants and how they see themselves acting.

Under stress or low self-awareness, habits and memories can make people reactive and play certain games.

Through reflection and practice they can be regulated, redirected and trained.

Check-lists similar to what pilots use in emergency situations can help people react in calmer, more creative and helpful ways.

Learning how to bring out the best in ourselves and others is empowering. We all have a unique and wonderful guidance system that needs maintaining and calibrating for us to survive, enjoy life, serve customers and achieve our potential.



Considering Delivering Bad News to Customers

If bad news is delivered well

- Trust increases
- Customer loyalty strengthens
- Commercial damage is reduced
- Confidence increases
- Learning creates value

If bad news is delivered badly

- Escalations drive frustration
- Competitors get considered
- Costs increase and margins erode
- Confidence reduces
- Learning fails to prevent repetition

Conclusions

- **Relationships are what build companies**
- **Influence comes from being able to be influenced**
- **Humility allows us to listen and respect other people's opinions**
- **Respect is a basic human need**
- **Caring is one of the most powerful things you can do for others**
- **Why's must be acceptable and well thought out**
- **Decision making is not always easy and we need help**
- **Problem solving is part of what makes life rewarding**

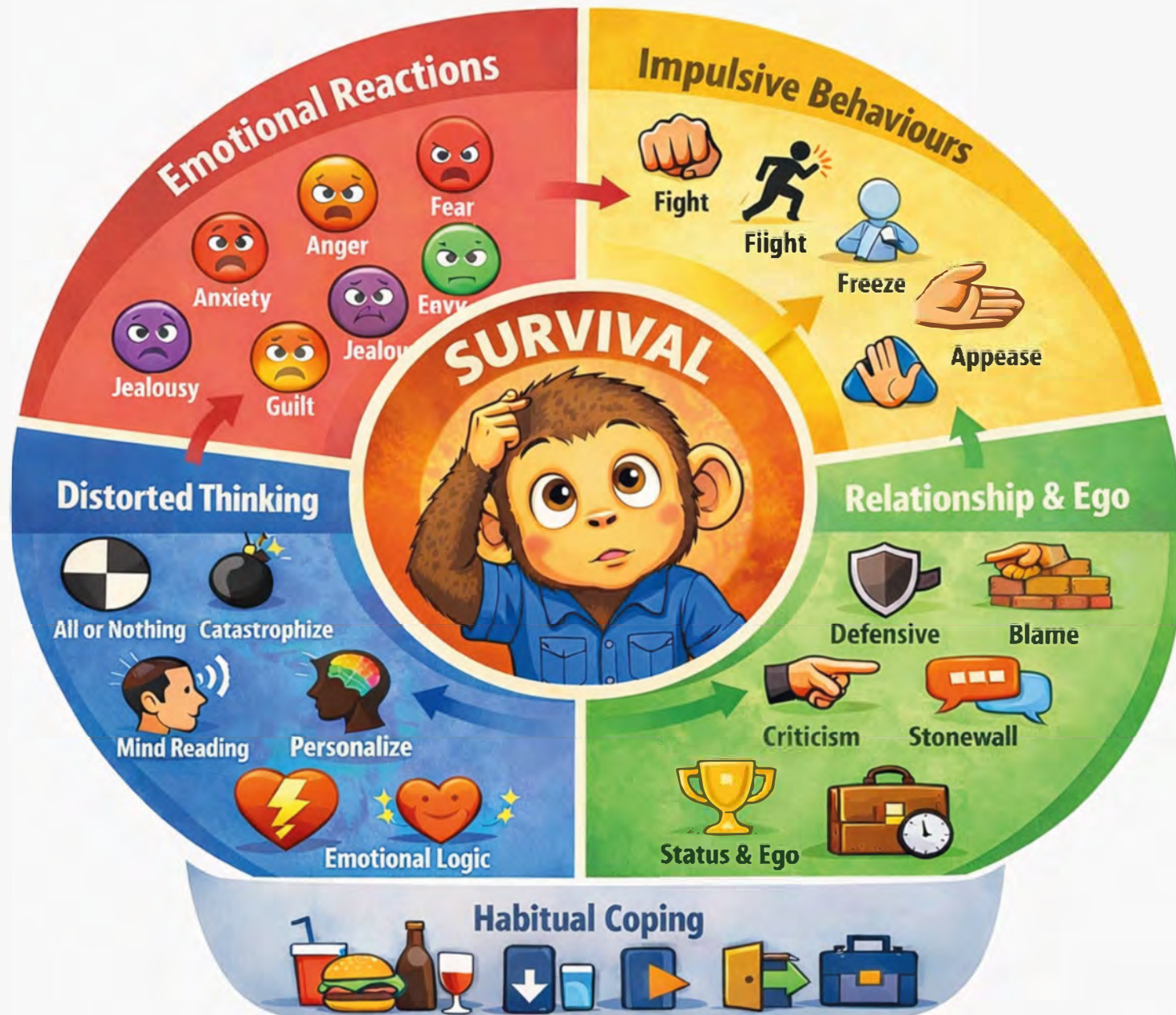
Engineering Human Performance

- Everyone has a unique and powerful **guidance system**
- The guidance systems contains skills, habits, memories, patterns
- Sometimes we are not aware of its influence and bias
- This system is very **fast**

- Our **thinking system** makes decisions using facts and evidence
- The thinking system needs time, energy and patience to work well
- It is worth remembering that thinking requires effort
- This system is **slow**

- Our **survival system reacts** first to threats and opportunities
- The survival system is the **fight, freeze, flight** response
- Learning to work with this system in us and others is empowering
- This system is **fast and strong**, it is alert to achieve what it wants, avoid pain, get pleasure, be safe, it influences self-confidence

- Training can improve all systems
- **Check-lists** are **essential** for performance under pressure
- PSL training and check-lists engineer human performance



The self-confidence choice

Your survival instinct can focus on what other people think of you and the results you are trying to deliver or achieve

Think rationally and focus on doing your best

Just do your best!

This will increase your confidence and your ability to perform

Changing negative thoughts to positive



- Sometimes bad things happen or we find ourselves being asked to do what we don't want to do.
- Reacting negatively to these situations is a sign that your brain is doing what it should.
- However, a more positive mind-set will always be helpful and the brain needs help when what it perceives is be a bad situation or undersirable thing to do.
- Simply press the stop button and ask what's good about this?
- If this doesn't work the first time keep asking until it does and you will find that your brain will react in empowering ways and that you will be more successful.

Consider Your Rules of Engagement

1. Understand customer needs (human, situation, business)
2. Take ownership
3. Use problem solving tactics
4. No blame
5. Be prepared
6. Ask for help
7. Remember 'clarity' empowers progress

Consider Your Rules of Engagement

Be Prepared

Don't Wing It

- Anticipate likely questions and reactions
- Be clear on what you can and can't say
- Get the facts straight (what, why, impact, timing)
- Identify at least one next step or option

Choose the Right Method of Communication

Uncertainty increases stress, certainty reduces stress

- Avoid hiding behind email for significant problems
- Face-to-face for serious issues (or video)
- Phone if immediate and less complex
- Watch out for the temptation to cc (if you need to cc make the why and what clear and easy – check would a call be better?)

Open Dialogue Clearly and Early

Uncertainty will trigger a greater emotional reaction

- Don't avoid the real issue and impact
- Don't blame - take ownership using the power of 'I'
- Don't try to make the problem seem smaller than it is
- Don't leave anything open to misinterpretation

" I need to talk to you about an issue with the delivery schedule..." " I am going to let you down" " What I can do is.."

Be Direct and Honest

Customers tend to respect honesty, you for taking responsibility and ownership

- Avoid jargon, excuses or over-technical language
- Explain what has happened
- Take ownership, even if it's not personally your fault

Consider Your Rules of Engagement

Acknowledge the Impact

Empathy and rapport build trust

- Prepare your evidence, understanding of meaning and impact
- Show you understand what this means for them
- "I understand this could affect your production schedule **because...**"

Pause and Let Them Respond

Listening is one of the kindest and smartest things you can do for others

- It's OK to be defensive, frustrated or afraid
- It's **not OK** to react, to blame or defend
- It's OK to want to interrupt
- It's **not OK** to interrupt

Offer Solutions or Next Steps

Bad news without a path forward and DDT's feels like you don't care and you won't deliver

- Communicate what can be done now
- Provide options where possible
- Be clear on time-lines and actions use DDT (day, date, time)

Agree on a Way Forward

Working together is the best way to approach colleagues and customers (using the word *we*)

- Confirm what will happen next
- Confirm who is responsible
- Confirm when updates will come
- Confirm understanding by asking questions
- Confirm your credibility by taking notes

Consider Your Rules of Engagement

Follow Up (This is Where Trust is Won)

You get to find out how good or bad a business is by the way that it deals with things when they go wrong

- Do exactly what you said you would
- Provide updates even if there is no progress
- Close the loop for all stakeholders
- Pain is a great teacher if you reflect, document and share learning
- Don't be afraid to share learning with customers

The power of words

They

This can create division and silo thinking (they are in sales)

We

This can build high performing teams (we will) and relationships

I

This can reveal a sense of ownership (I will)

Engineering Human Performance

**Helpful
Thinking**



**Good
Check-lists**



**Having pride in
doing the best
work**



**Smart
Reactions**



Do not tell customers that they need to
change their expectations

Do not tell customers that you understand how they feel

Do what you say you are going to do - actions speak louder than words

Dealing with angry people

Storming Fight

Calming

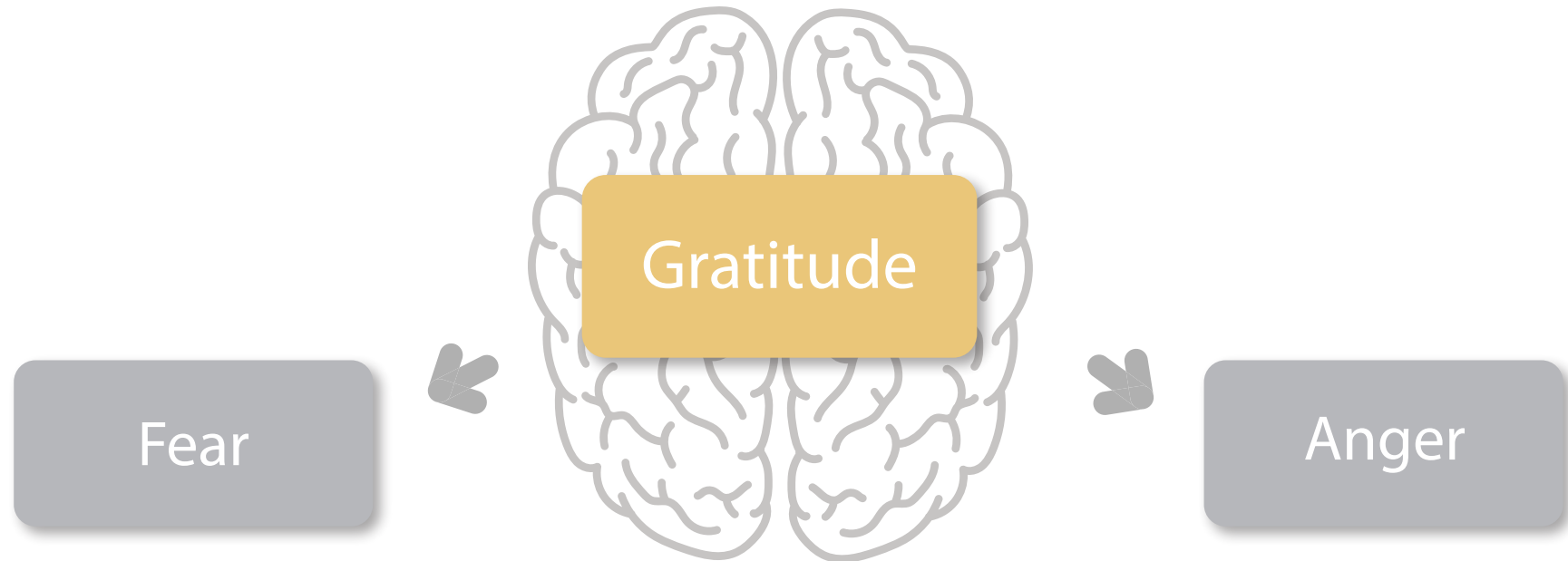
Negotiating

Resolving

Performing

- You can't reason with an angry or furious person
- Adopt a problem solving helpful approach (a "how can I help you ?" approach)
- Be careful not to embarrass or make the person look stupid avoid blame and criticism
- Recognise the person is in fight mode (Anger is a healthy and normal human emotion)
- Remember why people get angry (Needs not being met, fear of loss, desire for gain)
- Slow down, be careful not to rush or push because you are feeling under pressure
- Don't take it personally
- Take a step back to avoid invading the person's space (be aware of your own and the safety of others)
- Ask yourself how you are feeling to check your own emotions and avoid getting angry yourself
- Listen to the person and acknowledge what they have said
- Understand what they need and value
- Ask helpful questions and listen
- Consider your body language, your own non-verbal communication
- Don't focus on what you can't do
- Focus on what you can do to help the person
- Try to give the person options and ask what they prefer

Using gratitude to replace unhelpful emotions



Filling your mind with a deep sense of gratitude
has the potential to remove fear and anger

Customer service excellence

Leadership management

Negotiation skills

Sales training

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