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The ART in Leadership - Adopt. Relate. Transform.

## Psychological Safety in Action, Inclusive Leadership: Diversity as a Superpower

Brian Mhlanga - 2025

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## Fostering trust and innovation Leading diverse, cross-cultural teams

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Some leaders are like this...You just wonder how they got there.



## Leading Self – Bias, Cognisance & Courage



- ***PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION  
PRECEDES ORGANISATIONAL  
TRANSFORMATION***
- ***Things change when I change!***



## LEADING SELF USING THREE LENSES

- . **Cognisance** - being aware of our own filters and blind spots.
- . **Courage** - being willing to sit with discomfort.
- . **Commitment** - the responsibility of leaders to model transformation.



# From Bias to Belonging – Psychological Safety & Inclusion





# Psychological Safety:

The belief that you won't be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes in your work.



## Safety from a brain perspective

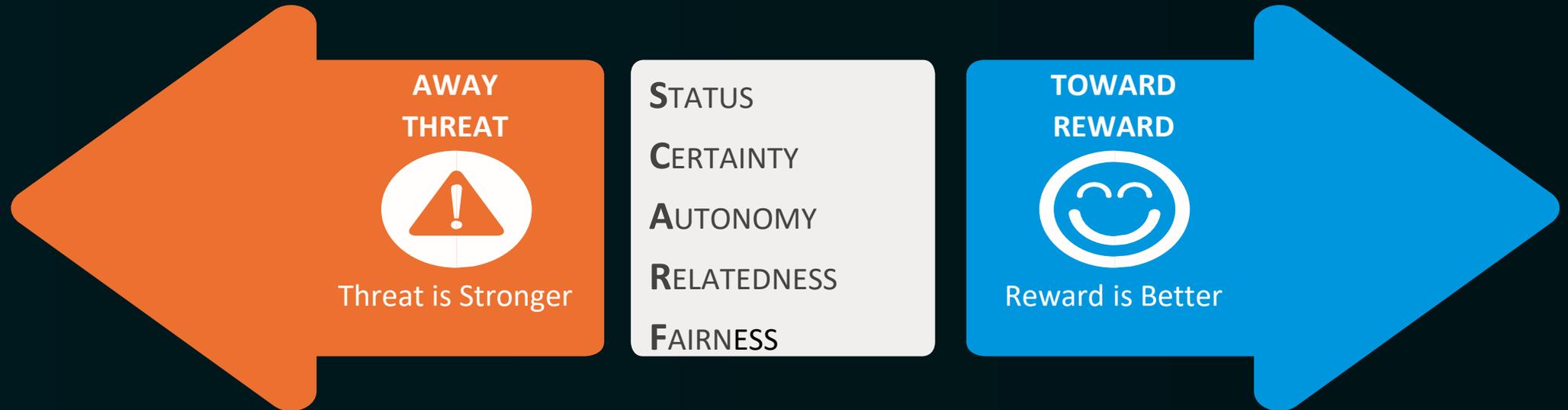
“ Everything you do in life  
is based on your brain’s  
determination to  
minimise danger or  
maximise reward

David Rock, 2009

”



# A framework to work with



AWAY  
THREAT



Threat is Stronger

- STATUS
- CERTAINTY
- AUTONOMY
- RELATEDNESS
- FAIRNESS

TOWARD  
REWARD



Reward is Better



**Status**  
Relative importance to others



**Certainty**  
Ability to predict the future



**Autonomy**  
Sense of control over events



**Relatedness** Sense of safety with others: friend not foe



**Fairness**  
Perception of fair exchange between people



# Creating safety and Inclusion

**By virtue of your role and status as the leader you have the opportunity to build psychological safety in the following ways:**

- Build your teams and make them feel **valued and respected (STATUS)**
- **Create clarity** about their role and purpose (**CERTAINTY**)
- Give people a **voice and choice (AUTONOMY)**
- Build relationships to **foster a learning** and performance environment (**RELATEDNESS**)
- Create fairness through **transparency** and holding people accountable (**FAIRNESS**)



Thank you

