



WSC - Build (psychological) Safety with others

30 second summary:

- ✔ **Summary:** Under 10 minutes, get a list of field-tested strategies to build safety and reduce your triggers in relationships with others
- ✔ **Main Outcome:** You avoid or reduce the impact of your triggers (Reptilian Brain) and the resulting stress and fears when you are meeting with others, and improve your relationship with others
- ✔ **Top Benefit(s):** Higher threshold for your triggers (so lower triggers less often); less stress; more authenticity, confidence and influence especially with others and under pressure
- ✔ **Next Steps:** Test each strategy 2X in the next 14 calendar days then decide to adjust/anchor/drop
- ✔ **Duration:** <10 minutes.
- ✔ **Target Audience:** Anybody willing to reduce stress and anxiety and enjoy their day more
- ✔

Why it works

✔ **Before:**

Many clients report feeling more triggered in the presence of others, especially in meetings with key stakeholders or with high stakes or potential hard discussions...

When we ask our clients about safety and its impact on these triggers, at first they usually don't relate that much...For them, it is all about forcing a change in their environment and spending more time, and money on it. But when they understand that 1) most of their anxiety, stress, fears, and inability to deliver their "Should" is driven by their Reptilian Brain triggering because it believes your Survival is at risk and that 2) Safety is the main driver to get it out of Survival Mode then they pay much more attention to Safety and usually are eager to understand how to build more of it.

✔ **After:**

This post is meant to propose practical strategies that under 5 minutes can increase your feeling and level of safety in relationship with others.

Of course, winning 50 M\$ at the lottery would build a lot of safety and you would approach your CEO with less stress but the strategies we propose here are meant to be 100% under your control!

With safety, less trigger for less time, therefore, less stress, more focus with more lightness so you feel better in meetings, especially when the pressure is on, and get better outcomes (more buy-in, commitment, support, influence...)



Top Strategies to build safety with others

Strategy	Duration	Steps	Example
Get concurrence on relationship success drivers	<10m	<p>Especially at work and with teams as it creates a frame and boundaries that can be leveraged when the situation/relationship is tense or at risk to reframe in a more positive and safe manner</p> <p>-1- Agree that the agenda is about aligning on the success drivers of your relationship (win-win, common ground...)</p> <p>-2- Ask them to share first and reframe what they said</p> <p>-3- State my views</p> <p>-4- Discuss until alignment for :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - win/win (common ground, goal, interest) - rules of engagement, boundaries, vision, mindset, beliefs, values (TO DO , NOT DO)... <p>-Success drivers:</p> <p>-A good framework to cover all of the above is to present my "Vision" as a leader and get feedback then buy-in on it.</p>	<p>-1- share and align on intentions</p> <p><i>-I want to perform and there is something that is/should help me back; I don't like it and would like to get your thoughts on it</i></p> <p><i>-I like to work with you but there is something that happened recently that could impact our relationship, and I do not want that to happen... can we talk about it?</i></p> <p><i>- you and I have an incentive to collaborate because we are part of each other success</i></p> <p>-2- find and align on win/win (common ground, goal, interest)</p> <p><i>- To summarize, I commit to support you in this important goal of yours and you commit to support mind, so we contribute to each other success! Agreed?</i></p> <p>-3- rules of engagement, vision, mindset, beliefs, values (TO DO , NOT DO)...</p> <p><i>- when you have an issue, always propose your default strategy and clearly ask for help</i></p> <p><i>- when I will trigger you, remember that most of the time, I mean well as much as you do, and ask me for clarification</i></p> <p><i>-As a team, we foster a culture where errors are viewed as learning opportunities.</i></p> <p><i>-As a team, we acknowledge progress and effort, not just results.</i></p>
Look/listen for triggers, "Elephants" in the room and Reptilian Brains (yours and your audience's)	<5m	<p>Most issues in relationship are driven when one or more Reptilian Brain of the audience is triggered (because the related brains that build and maintain the relationship are temporarily unavailable)</p> <p>-1- Look for triggers (mine and others) and "elephants" in the room: focus on body languages, non verbal cues and how they make me feel in my guts</p> <p>-2- Use priming: say what I intend, mean or not, that my perception could be wrong...</p> <p>-3- For tough decision, announcement, cancelation, ensure others hear/know that "it is not personal" (if that is the case)</p> <p>-4- if it is personal, start with my positive intentions</p>	<p>-1- Look for triggers (yours and others) and "elephants" in the room</p> <p>-who in the audience could be triggered? (look for body language signs)</p> <p>-ask them how they feel about the situation , and if resistance, reframe win/win and/or intentions</p> <p>-what are subjects that are not being addressed? (elephant in the room); what safety could I build to bring it up?</p> <p>-2- Use priming:</p> <p><i>-I don't mean to say (what you think is true) that this is true, but I'd like to get your thoughts on it</i></p> <p><i>-I am saying that I am right but...</i></p> <p><i>-I am probably wrong...</i></p> <p><i>-I am not saying that this is what you think, or said. But...</i></p> <p>-3- For tough decision, announcement, cancelation, ensure others hear/know that "it is not personal" (if that is the case)</p> <p><i>-Hi John, I have to let you go... BUT I want to say this is not personal: in fact...</i></p>



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Use the feedback loop framework	<5m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -1- ask the other what s/he thinks from her behaviors, actions (that you want to provide feedback on): start with Strengths then with what s/he would do differently in a similar situation in the future -2- reframe what you have heard, at the emotional level -3- get permission to provide my feedback -4- provide my feedback: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -preface opinion with facts as much as possible (so I limit judgement) -own my feelings with priming: <i>You probably see it differently, but "I" feel like...</i> -start with strengths (and celebrate them) then what they would change next time and the additional value it could create -ask others for takeaway and next steps: <i>How does that resonate with you? What are you taking away? What does that mean, in terms of next steps</i> <p>-Success drivers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -create the habit to make feedback part of your recurring 121 agenda: sometimes it will be positive, sometimes there will be none which will make it feel safer 	<p>-Me: <i>Like we agreed before, I would like to share some feedback about the last meeting with Pam, would that be OK with you?</i></p> <p>-Direct Report: "Yes"</p> <p>-Me: <i>"as usual, why don't you start with what you liked about the meeting with Pam and what you would do differently if you could start from scratch"</i></p> <p>-DR: <i>"Sure, I sent my points across and convinced Pam; Next time, I could probably check what she takes and commits out of it"</i></p> <p>-Me: <i>"Makes sense, what I heard is that you were able to influence Pam but you could build more accountability. On my end, I also liked the way you got buy-in on the agenda. In terms of improvement, and I might be wrong, but I felt Pam was upset with what you said... I believe there is an opportunity to build more accountability with Pam but also understand how she feels about the situation... And I am curious to get your view on 1) how you think she felt at the end of the meeting and 2) how you could measure her understanding and commitment with clear deadline"</i></p>
Actively listen	<5m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -1- listen for words but also for non-verbal cues (body language, tone, speed of voice, silents, gut feeling...) -2- use open ended questions more than closed ended questions (Yes/No) especially about how others feel about the situation at hand so I get more context and information and also more material to assess my audience position, thoughts, mood... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Be curious and ask about others options, expectations - Seek if any one is triggered -3- reframe (paraphrase, summarize, bottom-line) what I have understood with soft words (<i>It sounds, it seems, would it be OK if...</i>) and at more emotional level (acknowledge progress and effort, not just results and ask about talents, insights, feelings, emotions, inputs); which allows to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) avoid misunderstanding, b) for my audience to feel acknowledged, cared for, respected and c) to redirect the discuss as appropriate 	<p>-Boss: <i>"We need to step up otherwise we will miss our goals..." (looking angry and stressed...)"</i></p> <p>-Me: <i>"Hey Boss, I might be wrong, but I feel like you are not happy with the team and it makes you angry and stressed... I wonder if you could elaborate on it and on how that feels for you? (example of a reframe at emotional level)"</i></p> <p>-Boss: <i>" Yes I am angry, because I see too many team members, being absent or involved in lower priorities and I am afraid we will miss the deadlines we committed to which is not acceptable..."</i></p> <p>-Me: <i>"the makes senses, you want the team to deliver what you committed to the organization and it seems like they do not focus on key priorities... I would feel the same... Just to be clear, is this comment personal to me or were you addressing the team as a whole or maybe specific members? (reframe + create safety)"</i></p>
Schedule recurring networking meetings to reinforce trust and relationships	<5m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -1- Intend examples for the first meeting: <i>"Noticed I or you have a new role! Following the major change I realize I don't really know you; I wanted to get to know you better, and check if we can identify some win win so we feel part of each other success"</i> -2- be clear on agenda, timing and expected outcomes -3- at the end of each meeting, schedule the next one 	<p>-Hi John, I propose a short 30 minute meeting to get to know each other; I feel we may be key stakeholder's in each other success, and I'd like to discuss with you what that could look like</p>



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Reframe and align on expectations	<5m	<p>Reframe and align on expectations: when expectations are unconscious, unachievable or misaligned, it can lead to misunderstanding and disappointment with impacts that destroys safety.</p> <p>-1- mine but also others' especially if not clearly said or agreed upon -2- until 1) aligned with others'; 2) achievable in time available; 3) under my exclusive control; 4) I feel no stress or potential trigger</p>	<p>Unhealthy expectation: Boss: "I wish all plants could apply their safety rules and deliver to 90%... It would it not be great?"; Me: "That would indeed..." (if not discussed, this could become an expectation you put on yourself)</p>
Adopt a more positive mindset (and prepare myself) and think of how I will convey it across	<5m	<p>-1- catch my judgements on what others believe (especially the negative ones) and release them unless you have facts -2- give benefit of doubt, or misunderstanding -3- be curious and focus on learning and on the other as a partner -4- believe others' intentions are good -5- believe that most of what we all do is not personal and we do hurt, we do not mean to or often unaware of it -6- believe others do their best most of the time -7- Be curious and ask about others options, expectations</p>	<p>Me: "I feel like Pam purposely messed up with this project and missed the deadline... I wonder if I can trust her..." MeI reframe: "It's likely would she do that? What does she have to win? She wants to be successful and in the last 5 years we worked together, she always meant to help and did a good job. Maybe, she meant to deliver but something held her back and she does not feel super proud about sharing... Let me build safety and be curious about how she looks at the situation without blaming her..." MeI after discussion is over: "I am glad I caught and released my judgement and I will remember this discussion next time I feel like that..."</p>
Show vulnerability	<5m	<p>-1- demonstrate openness, honesty and transparency (share my doubts, say <i>Sorry</i>, admit mistakes, laugh at myself...) and hope/ask (but don't expect) for reciprocity -2- Normalize vulnerability by discussing it openly and highlighting its importance in personal growth</p>	<p>-Pam / Direct report: not opening up when you ask about his progress to deliver the goals -Me: "Hey Pam, it seems to me that this question does not make you feel comfortable right now...I am sorry if I got you upset... That was not my intention. What I mean to say, is that when I look at your scorecard, I see a lot of red and when that happens to me, I feel bad and feel not very safe to talk about things that are not doing so well. I am not saying you feel this way but in case you do, I would want us to discuss this ASAP so we have more time to course correct and look good to the organization. How does that sound to you?" -Pam: "Makes sense; I don't like my current results, and a part of me is not quite sure how to approach it..."</p>
Safety in meetings	<5m	<p>-1- Make all attendees feel part of the in-group and create a sense of belonging -2- Ensure that all voices are heard and valued regardless of hierarchy or background. -3- Ask for Feedback, takeaways and next steps <i>It's like we meet again, what would you like to have happen? How will you measure good enough?</i></p>	<p>-1- Me: "Sorry to interrupt Pam, but I don't think it is a Pam or a Greg issue... at the end of the day, we committed to the organization so we win or we fail together..." (sense of belonging) -2- Me: "Thanks Pam for sharing... It is important for me that we commit as a Team and that matter and therefore that I hear everyone's view... Paul, Greg, you have been very quiet so far, and I am curious to know what you think of our discussion so far..." (all voices are heard) -3- Me: "I am mindful, that we only have 10 minutes left in our meeting and I propose to start wrapping up to make sure everyone feels clear on what their takeaway is and what they want to have achieved by the next time we meet; Greg, why don't you start?" (takeaway + next steps)</p>
Create Predictable Systems	<5m	<p>Build routines and processes others can rely on: -1- regular team check-in, 121s, with recurring agendas -2- consistent and not changing KPIs, SOPs -3- Uptodate and agreed upon RASCI (with clear roles, Responsibilities and Decision Making Powers to encourage autonomy)</p>	<p>Regular team check-ins at work. Weekly family meetings at home.</p>
Use Humor Lightly	<5m	Ease tension with appropriate jokes.	<p>At work, joke about shared struggles. At home, laugh about an awkward moment together.</p>
Be Fully Present	<5m	Eliminate distractions and focus fully on the interaction.	<p>Close your laptop during meetings at work. Put your phone away during family conversations.</p>



TO DO

- ✔ **Set a 5 minute timer**
- ✔ **Pick one of the proposed strategies**
- ✔ **Follow the script and think about your next opportunity to apply it**
- ✔ **As you visualize the experience, focus on:**
- ✔ **How you feel below your throat as this is the language of safety (Reptilian Brain)**
on the incremental and relative change for your emotions: it is more a marathon than a sprint
on what you have control over (what you say, your intention, how you listen...), which
excludes others
- ✔ **Act on it now (book a meeting, send a note...) to commit yourself and anchor the memory at body level for a stickier habit**

NOT DO

- ✔ **Stay in your head! (Safety is an emotion therefore to be found in your guts and heart)**
- ✔ **Forget that others have a Reptilian Brain that needs safety too (good news: Safety is contagious and the safety you build for yourself also helps others)**
- ✔ **Spend too much time preparing... the value is in the doing and the emotional experience**
- ✔ **Don't disqualify it yet if I don't feel a major change after the first time**
- ✔ **Multi-task when I do any of the strategies**
- ✔ **Deny or play down the power of my Reptilian Brain (remember it controls most of my stress)**



Your next 2 weeks' steps

✔ **Start NOW or schedule your first try:**

Apply TO DO right away (<30 minutes)

Once done, decide your commitment for the next 2 weeks

How are you feeling right after? Compared to before? What was the value for you?

What to adjust for you to commit for 2 weeks?

Visualize the next time you apply it and how you would like to feel

Celebrate that you have tried something new

✔ **Build your habit (-> more practice -> more results)**

Model: After [OTHER CURRENT HABIT] and at/when [TIME], I will [NEW HABIT] in [LOCATION].

Example: When I sit at my desk for the first time in the morning, I set a timer for 5 minutes, I visualize myself completing one strategy and feeling good about it; then I create a timeslot in my calendar with the details about this strategy; I read them and visualize myself practicing the strategy and feeling safer and less stress as a result. Print your sticky habit

✔ **Total time:**

6 X 5 min = 30m in 2 weeks

✔ **How you measure success:**

Have applied at least 6X times in the next 2 weeks

✔ **What value you can expect:**

Feel safer; Less stress or internal noise; You feel more efficient in meetings (more buy-in, commitment, support...) and that you are building stronger relationships

✔ **How to get started:**

Print and fill your Habit template then apply right away