

# Be Curious!

Why the soft skills are hard



PRESENTER

**Robert Finan**

Grizzled Agile Veteran

# I'm an Engineer

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- I like to **solve** problems
- I like to **build** things
- I like to get things **done!**
  
- But I also like things to be done **right!**

# Being “Right” isn’t enough!

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- I put people in boxes:
  - Unimaginative managers
  - Career-driven ladder-climbers
  - Plays golf with the supplier
  - Grumpy Old Developers
  - Scared of losing control
  
- But they were right about many things!



# We're all involved in change

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- We want to influence or change things
  - Architects
  - Testers
  - Developers
  - Project Managers
  - Designers
- But we often don't have the right skills!

# How I now approach change...

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Meet people and organisations **where they are** -  
not where you think **they should be!**

How do you know where they really are?

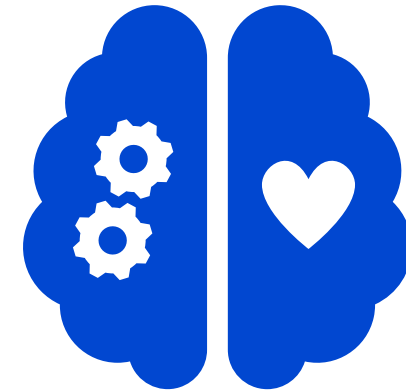
**Be Curious!**

**SCARF**

# SCARF Model

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- **SCARF**: A brain-based model for collaborating with and **influencing** others
  - **Status**
  - **Certainty**
  - **Autonomy**
  - **Relatedness**
  - **Fairness**



Rock, D. (2008). 'SCARF: A Brain-Based Model for Collaborating With and Influencing Others,' *Neuroleadership Journal*, 1, 1-9

# A brain-based model?

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The brain is optimised to **minimise threats**  
and **maximise rewards**



What happens when we feel threatened?

**Cognitive performance drops!**



# Let's look at the different aspects

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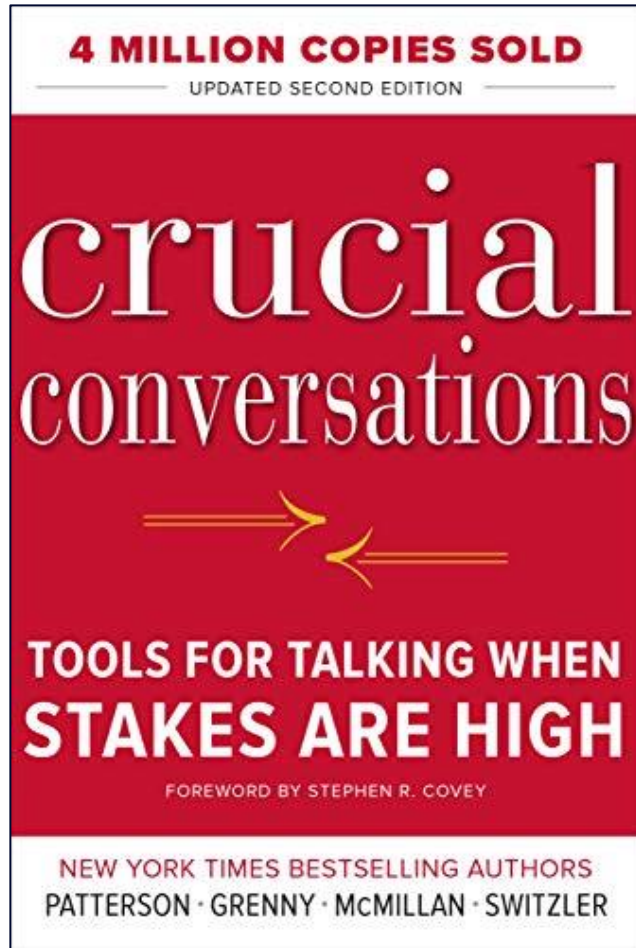
- **Status** is about relative importance to others
- **Certainty** concerns being able to predict the future
- **Autonomy** provides a sense of control over events
- **Relatedness** is a sense of safety with others
- **Fairness** is a perception of fair exchanges between people

Rock, D. (2008). 'SCARF: A Brain-Based Model for Collaborating With and Influencing Others,' *Neuroleadership Journal*, 1, 1-9

# **Crucial Conversations**

# Crucial Conversations

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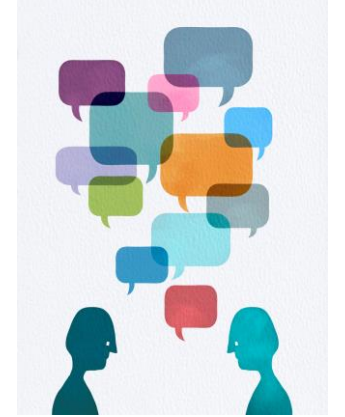


- Stakes are high
- Opinions vary
- Emotions run strong

# Dialog

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The **flow of meaning** between two or more **people**



## Requirements

- **Mutual Purpose:** Do others believe you care about their goals? Do they trust your motives?
- **Mutual Respect:** Do others believe you respect them?

# Style under stress? Learn to look!

## Silence

Withholding Meaning



- **Masking** – sarcasm, sugarcoating, couching
- **Avoiding** – talk, about not about the real issues
- **Withdrawing** – leave the conversation completely

## Violence

Forcing Meaning



- **Controlling** – dominating the conversation
- **Labelling** – in stereotypes or categories
- **Attacking** – make the other person suffer

# Help for when it gets emotional

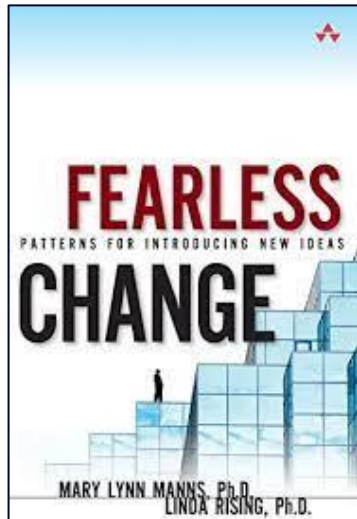
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- Focus on what you **really** want
- Refuse the **Fool's Choice**
- Have we turned to **silence** or **violence**?
- **Make it safe**
- Tell your own story as subjective
- Explore the other people's stories (*mirroring, paraphrasing*)
- Move to Action

# **Fearless Journey**

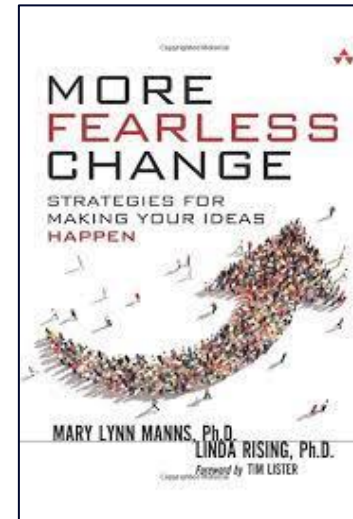
# Fearless Change

*Summary: The 48 patterns for Fearless Change are:*



Ask for Help	Just Enough
Big Jolt	Just Say Thanks
Bridge-Builder	Local Sponsor
Brown Bag	Location, Location, Location
Champion Skeptic	Mentor
Connector	Next Steps
Corporate Angel	Personal Touch
Corridor Politics	Piggyback
Dedicated Champion	Plant the Seeds
Do Food	The Right Time
e-Forum	Royal Audience
Early Adopter	Shoulder to Cry On
Early Majority	Small Successes
Evangelist	Smell of Success
External Validation	Stay in Touch
Fear Less	Step by Step
Group Identity	Study Group
Guru on Your Side	Sustained Momentum
Guru Review	Tailor Made
Hometown Story	Test the Waters
In Your Space	Time for Reflection
Innovator	Token
Involve Everyone	Trial Run
Just Do It	Whisper in the General's Ear

*Summary: The 15 “More Fearless Change” patterns are:*



- Accentuate the Positive
- Concrete Action Plan
- Easier Path
- Elevator Pitch
- Emotional Connection
- Evolving Vision
- Future Commitment
- Go-To Person
- Imagine That
- Know Yourself
- Low-Hanging Fruit
- Myth Buster
- Pick Your Battles
- Town Hall Meeting
- Wake-up Call



# Examples

## Whisper in the General's Ear

*Managers are sometimes hard to convince in a group setting, so meet privately to address any concerns.*

Managers who are against your new idea have the power to block your progress.

Set up a short one-one-one meeting with a manager to address any concerns with the innovation and the effort to introduce it.

From: FEARLESS CHANGE: Patterns for introducing new ideas  
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## Dedicated Champion

*To increase your effectiveness in introducing your new idea, make a case for having the work part of your job description.*

Effectively introducing a new idea into any organization is too much work for a volunteer.

Make a case for including the change initiative as part of your job description.

From: FEARLESS CHANGE: Patterns for introducing new ideas  
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## Champion Skeptic

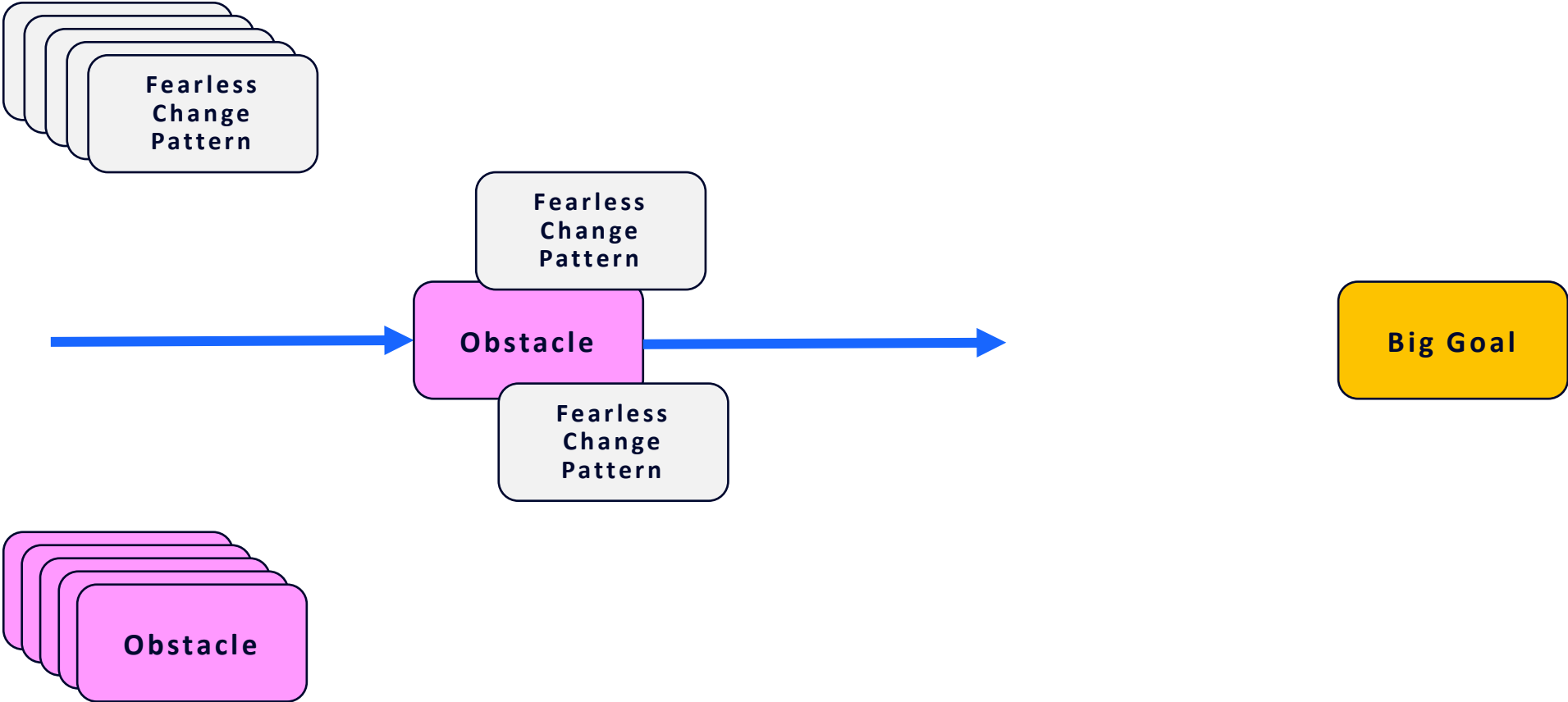
*Ask for Help from strong opinion leaders, who are skeptical of your new idea, to play the role of “official skeptic.” Use their comments to improve your effort, even if you don’t change their minds.*

Some of the resistors to the new idea are strong opinion leaders in your organization.

Ask for help from a skeptical opinion leader to play the role of “official skeptic” or “official realist.”

From: FEARLESS CHANGE: Patterns for introducing new ideas  
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# Fearless Journey



# Fearless Journey

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- Game based on the patterns from Fearless Change
- *<https://fearlessjourney.info/>*
- Collaboratively conceived @ Play4Agile 2011, Game designed by Deborah Hartmann Preuss, Licensed (CC BY SA)
- English, German, French, Spanish, Japanese, Dutch
- Download: *<https://fearlessjourney.info/download/>*

# **Summary**

# Social Media is the opposite of Dialog

## AGILE DRILL SERGEANT

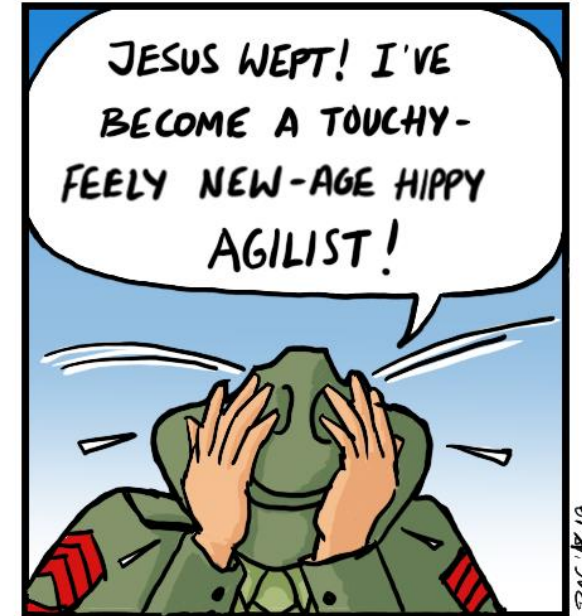
I'M SICK OF ALL THE  
AGILE ONE-UP MANSHIP:  
SAFE SUCKS, KANBAN ISN'T  
AGILE, NO ESTIMATES RULE,  
THE AGILE INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX  
WILL BE THE DEATH OF AGILE,  
SELF-ORGANISATION IS A MYTH,  
PROGRAMMING TRUMPS DESIGN!  
SO MUCH BULLSHIT EGO-TRIPPING!

WHAT EVER  
HAPPENED TO  
LOVE, PEACE AND  
UNDERSTANDING?



## METAMORPHOSIS

JESUS WEPT! I'VE  
BECOME A TOUCHY-  
FEELY NEW-AGE HIPPIE  
AGILIST!



# A wee summary

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- Being **right** isn't enough to get things done
- **Change** is often perceived as a **threat**
- Threats make **crucial conversations** very **difficult**
- There are skills to support engaging in a **dialog**
- By staying open and **curious**, rather than **silent** or **violent**, you may find a **mutual purpose!**