



SCIENCE · PSYCHOLOGY · SKILLS

GRACE UNDER FIRE

GRACE UNDER FIRE - STICKY SITUATIONS AS AN EXECUTIVE

WITH DAVID LIEBERMAN, CHIEF LEARNING OFFICER

www.gravitylearning.com

IN HIGH-PRESSURE MOMENTS, WHAT IS YOUR INSTINCTIVE UNHELPFUL REACTION?

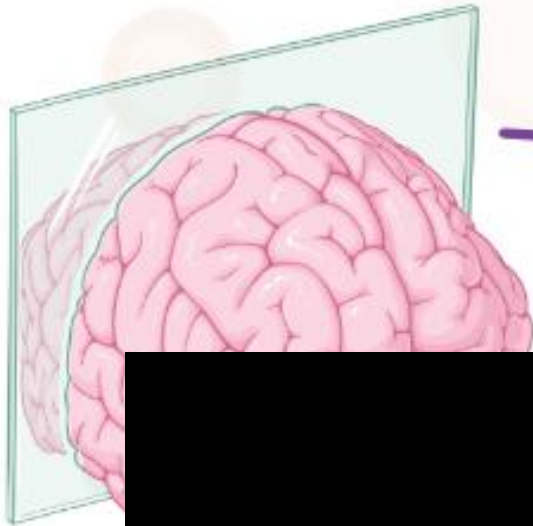
Frozen silence?

Over-talking?

Defending your position?

Something else?

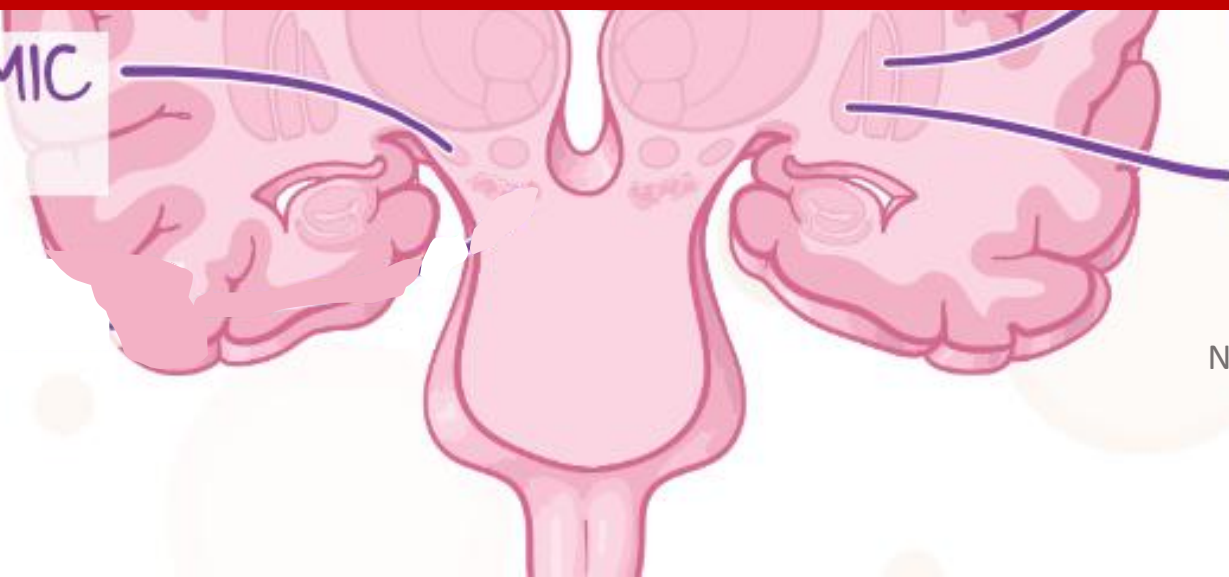




WHY DO WE FREEZE IN STICKY SITUATIONS?

NEUROSCIENCE!

SUBTHALAMIC
NUCLEUS



SOURCE JOURNAL:
Nature Of Communications (2017)

YOU CAN'T JUST

“BE” CONFIDENT

YOU CAN USE
BEHAVIORS TO
REDUCE STRESS.



SOURCE JOURNAL:
Frontiers in Human Neuroscience.

VOCAL CONTROL

TO CALM YOUR BRAIN + APPEAR GRACEFUL

SOURCE:
Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences



VOCAL SMOOTHING

NOT SLOW. SMOOTH.
ADD IN YOUR MELODY.

SOURCE:
Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences

THE WAY WE SPEAK MATTERS...

BUT DO SPECIFIC **SIGNAL WORDS** CHANGE PERCEPTION?

SWAPPING OF A **SINGLE WORD** SIGNIFICANTLY IMPACTS

CREDIBILITY, INTELLIGENCE,
TRUSTWORTHINESS

SOURCE:
Cornell University Research Archive

USE THE EXACT WORD

THAT MATCHES HOW YOU WANT TO BE PERCEIVED

- Decided
- Confident
- Clear Expectations
- Certain
- Committed
- In Control
- Accountable
- Clear

LET'S TRY IT!

The background of the slide is a blurred photograph of a gym. On the left, a portion of a silver weight plate is visible. In the center and right, a black dumbbell is lying on a dark grey mat. The dumbbell has "10 LB" printed on its ends. The overall lighting is soft and focused on the foreground objects.

EXERCISE: GRACE UNDER PRESSURE

THINK OF A SENSITIVE ISSUE/CONCERN YOU NEED TO SHARE WITH SOMEONE OF HIGH STATUS.

DESCRIBE THE ISSUE WITH A SMOOTH VOICE.
USE A CONFIDENCE SIGNALING WORD.

ACTION PLAN

AN ACTION PLAN WITHOUT A WHO AND A WHEN IS JUST A WISH

WHO WILL YOU USE CONFIDENCE SIGNALING
WORDS WITH **TOMORROW**?

A close-up, low-angle shot of a man with a beard and glasses, looking upwards and to the right with a thoughtful expression. He is wearing a white shirt. The background is a blurred city skyline at night.

HOW YOU DISAGREE

SHAPES HOW OTHERS PERCEIVE

LEADERSHIP, COMPETENCE, AND PRESENCE

SOURCE JOURNAL:
Psychological Review

DISAGREE WITHOUT DERAILING

PRESERVE RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH GRACEFUL PUSHBACK



1

Acknowledge their point first

“You may be right.” or “That’s a good point because...”

2

Don’t disagree. **Add something** to the discussion

“Here’s something else to think about...”

3

Present *evidence* or data to reduce the “ego-threat”

4

Finish with shared goals or positive intent

MAKE A STATEMENT YOUR PARTNER CAN DISAGREE WITH

- a. "The methodologies HR uses are outdated and need a complete overhaul."
- b. "Strict adherence to regulatory compliance hinders innovation."
- c. "If a senior leader is delivering results, HR should overlook some cultural concerns."

DISAGREE WITHOUT DERAILING

1. Acknowledge their point.
2. Don't disagree. **Add something** to the discussion
3. Present *evidence* or data, not just what you think
4. Finish with shared goals or positive intent



TAKEAWAYS

- 🍎 It's natural to freeze in tough situations
- 🍎 Control your voice to control your brain
- 🍎 Rely on a step-based approach to act with grace



WHAT IS YOUR COMMITMENT

COMING OUT OF TODAY?



TARGETED
CUSTOMIZATION OR
"READY TO GO"
WORKSHOPS



PEOPLE SKILLS

COMMUNICATION

MANAGEMENT

PRODUCTIVITY

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

L&D CONSULTING

**Together we can affect
and prove something
meaningful.**