

CORE model

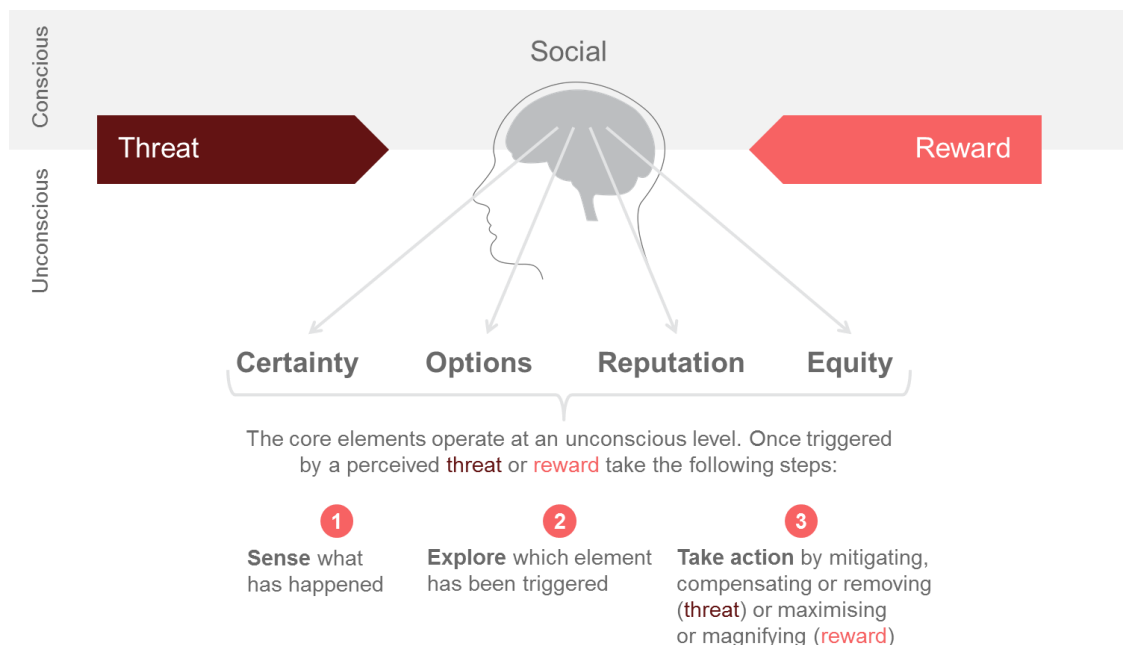
The CORE model sheds light on how people react to change and why many find it so difficult. It is also relevant to help us understand the reaction of others when we influence or persuade them to take a different course of action.

In particular it helps us identify the drivers of threat and reward responses in people. If we can understand this reaction then we are able to use this to inform how we position suggestions and ideas in a way that generates a reward rather than a threat response.

The model is based on two neuro-scientific insights:

1. Motivation driving social behaviour is governed by a principle of minimising threat and maximising reward.
2. The brain networks we draw on to minimise threat and maximise reward are the same brain networks used for our primary survival needs.

In other words, the brain treats social needs in the same way as it treats the need for food and water.



You will notice that 'threat' appears on our model much larger than the reward. This is to highlight that our brain is wired to look for threats rather than rewards. It's one of the reasons humans have survived so

long. But it also means we need many more reward responses than you'd expect in order to feel good, and that one threat can override a number of rewards.

CORE elements

The CORE model identifies the common factors that activate both reward and threat responses in social situations. These fall into four elements of human social experience:

CERTAINTY	the knowledge that we can predict the future
OPTIONS	the extent to which we feel we have choice
REPUTATION	our relative importance to others
EQUITY	our sense that things are equitable

How CORE works – an example

When someone attempts to influence us or persuade us to do something differently we experience this as a threat or reward to any or all of these four CORE elements. This is a neurological response and is automatic; happening in a nanosecond and out of our conscious awareness.

So for example, persuading someone to apply for a new job may create a threat to their **certainty** because they are less likely to know what to expect and how to do the new job. On the other hand, they feel a sense of excitement by the amount of autonomy they will have in the new role and see this as a reward to their **options**. The very fact that you are considering them as a worthy candidate is likely to be perceived as a reward to their **reputation**. When you tell them that they will be required to go through a selection interview they may see this as potential threat to **reputation** but when they reflect they may perceive this as a reward to their sense of **equity**.

These four elements activate either the 'primary reward' or the 'primary threat' circuitry of the brain. For example, a perceived threat to one's sense of equity activates similar brain networks to a threat to one's life. In the same way, a perceived increase to your reputation activates the same reward circuitry as receiving a monetary reward. Our reaction happens in a nanosecond and is an automatic response.

Why so important?

Whether people feel a threat or a reward will have significant impact on their problem solving, decision making, stress management, collaboration and motivation. Knowing the drivers that cause a threat response enables us to design initiatives to minimise threats. Knowing about the drivers that can activate a reward response enables us to motivate people more.

Below is a table to illustrate some typical threats or reward triggers.

Element	Common threat triggers	To reduce threat/increase reward
CERTAINTY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of information about the future • Unpredictable manager behaviour • Job insecurity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telling people when they can expect to know • Setting timelines and agendas for meetings • Laying out plans and breaking down big tasks
OPTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telling people what to do • Micromanaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving people options to choose from • Allowing flexible work times and patterns • Setting clear guidelines that allow judgements to be made within boundaries
REPUTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving advice or instructions • Giving critical feedback • Leaving people out of activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking people to self-assess their performance • Giving public positive feedback • Creating learning and improvement opportunities
EQUITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived Favouritism • Unclear expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being as transparent as possible about how and why

HEAD HEART + BRAIN

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uneven workload distribution	<p>decisions are made</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Setting out and following clear management policies
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