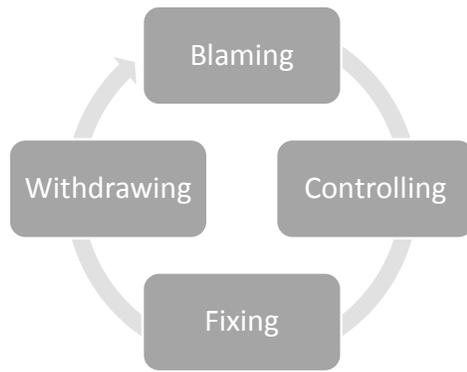


The Cycle of Fear



How do fearful employees respond?

Fight!

- Anger and aggression
- Sabotage
- Impaired self-control

Flight!

- Reluctance to share ideas or observations
- Risk avoidance
- Self-protection
- Hiding and playing it safe
- Silence

“It is a leader’s job to eliminate

FEAR

from the workplace.”*

For reflection:

- *Think of a time at work when you were afraid.*
- *Why were you fearful?*
- *What was the impact of that fear?*
- *What did you do? Or not do?*
- *What did others do? Or not do?*
- *What could have been done to change things?*

How does the body respond to fear?

- The sympathetic nervous system and hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis go into overdrive...fight or flight!
- Body releases hormones to slow down non-essential functions (ie-digestion), sharpen essential functions (ie-vision).
- Increased heart rate, blood flow to muscles, inflammation, anxiety, stress.
- Increased hormone flow to amygdala to focus and create a fragmented, durable memory.
- Weakened immune system, cardiovascular damage, and decreased emotional regulation.
- Trouble focusing on small tasks.

Research suggests that social **disconnection** is processed in the brain in **the same way** as the threat of **physical harm**.

*Quote from Chris Liu,
Director of Washington State’s
Department of Enterprise Services

The Cycle of Love



“When fear goes out of the workplace, something else comes in:

LOVE.

This is a radical idea for us. But why? Love is a fundamental human need.”*

For reflection:

- *Think of a time when you felt loved at work. When you knew you belonged and were cared about.*
- *What was the situation?*
- *How did you know you were loved and belonged?*
- *What was the impact on you?*
- *How did you respond?*
- *What did leaders or teams do to foster love?*

When employees know they are loved and belong, they...

- Share ideas and observations
- Tell the truth about their work
- Admit mistakes, experiment, learn
- Point out problems; offer solutions
- Ask questions
- Collaborate and innovate
- Care for customers
- Deliver results that matter
- Bring their best to work

How does the body respond to love?

- Activates basic reward-related circuits
- Perceives and reports less pain
- Releases stress reducing neuropeptides
- Boosts the immune system
- Protects body from damaging inflammation
- Regulates emotions
- Improved health
- In children, a mother’s love and nurture physically increases the volume of the amygdala.



*Renee Smith Nyberg, Director of Lean Transformation Services | bit.ly/DESLTS

To share your story for research on the impact of love and belonging at work contact: renee.smithnyberg@des.wa.gov