

SCARF Assessment

The SCARF Model summarizes five domains of threat or reward, names *Status, Certainty, Autonomy, Relatedness, and Fairness*. Engaged employees experience high levels of positive reward in the SCARF domains, whereas disengaged employees experience high levels of threats in these domains.

The five dimensions are:

- **Status** is about relative importance to others, or a perception of where we are in relation to the people around us. Our sense of status goes up when we feel 'better than' someone else, creating a reward response.
- **Certainty** is about eliminating ambiguity. The brain is a pattern-recognition machine that is constantly trying to predict the near future, and so it craves certainty to
- **Autonomy** is the perception of having control over our environment; a feeling of having choices. Our ability to influence outcomes triggers our threat sensors which results in fight or flight response.
- **Relatedness** involves deciding whether we are 'in' or 'out' of a particular social group. People naturally like to form tribes where they experience a sense of belonging at work.
- **Fairness** in interpersonal dealings is intrinsically rewarding, independent of other factors. People want to know that they will be treated consistently with their peers.

Practical Application:

- Take the 12 question SCARF assessment and debrief results 1:1 with your employees. Link to assessment: <http://neuroleadership.com/research/tools/nli-scarf-assessment/>
- Before debriefing the results, recognize that there is likely a high level of threat and uncertainty that people are experiencing. Take time to reflect on what area your employee has the highest threat level. The goal of your conversation is to create more comfort with the uncertainty and know that they are supported.
- To create safety in all of your conversations, let your employees know that you care about them and care about their goals. Tailor your comments to alleviate their concerns around their highest threat area, with questions like:
 - You scored highest in ___ area. What has happened to make you feel uncertain?
 - What do you need from me to feel better with the change today?
 - What can we do moving forward to make sure you feel more comfortable?