

## NEUROSCIENTIFIC ILLUMINATIONS for GOAL SETTING & LEADERSHIP

### Background

**Ian Rheeder was the first neuro-leadership practitioner to publish a neuro-leadership model<sup>1</sup> that relates our ascending monoamine system (AMS) to leadership, persuasion and goal setting. Also, this is also the first leadership model that draws a parallel between the affects of cocaine on our AMS and the ability to lead ourselves and others.**

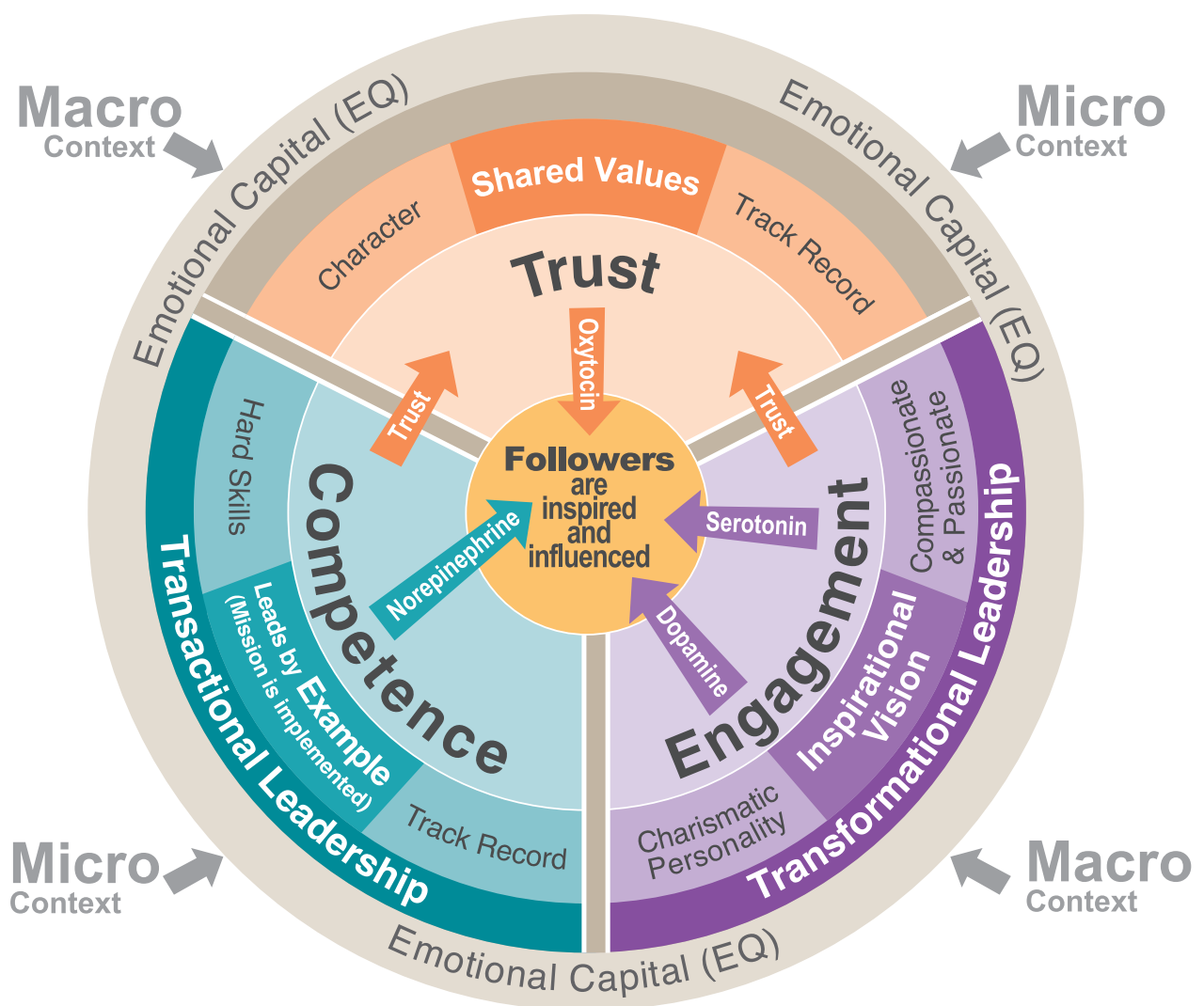
### Awareness of our Complex Brain

The Architect of the Universe has crafted the most extraordinarily engineered device on earth — the human brain. It is our most complex organ yet is made up of 60 percent fat and 75 percent water. But because we did not pay for it, we take our brains for granted. At just 2 percent of our body weight, it is so ferociously energy hungry that it absorbs 20 percent of our blood flow. It uses 160,000 kilometers of blood vessels to feed 100 billion braincells (neurons). Using trillions of synaptic transmissions between these neurons, our mind processes about 400 billion bits of information per second. Yet we are only aware of 2,000 of the 400,000,000,000 bits of information; thus at any one time we are only conscious of a mere 0.00005 percent of what our powerhouse is really calculating. Nevertheless, we are more conscious than any other mammal. A whale's brain weighs in at 6kg, yet it can't compare to our modern and more evolved 1.4kg brain. This is because, in evolutionary terms, the human brain is wrapped in a new 'jacket', our more conscious neocortex.

When it comes to achieving our goals and assisting others to achieve theirs, let us look at how super-conscious *Ascending Monoamine System (AMS)* will keep leaders decades ahead of the pack. In other words, to fully understand how to lead ourselves and others, let us explore the scientific explanation of our *sixth sense*, the *Law of Attentioness*, and the *power of positive thinking and feeling*. You should be stunned at the power of our super-conscious *Ascending Monoamine System (AMS)*. It is important to understand how the universe appears to 'collaborate' with us, because once we are aware, we can consciously tap into this wonderful gift within us and not wait on the universe to make the first move. So, building on mirror neurons and somatic markers, enter our marvellous AMS.

### ASCENDING MONOAMINE SYSTEM (AMS)

With the more recent discovery of the serotonin, norepinephrine and dopamine systems, our ascending reticular activating system has been given the new title *ascending monoamine system* (Ref. Figure 1 below). Interestingly, snorting cocaine also leads to an increase in serotonergic, noradrenergic or adrenergic (adrenaline), and dopaminergic neurotransmissions. This gives us insights into what a great leader can do for a follower. Cocaine, like a great leader, can increase alertness, feelings of euphoria, well-being, energy and motor activity, feelings of competence and sexuality. Great leaders can put their group onto a natural high.



TEC Leadership Model © Ian Rheeder 2012

**Fig 1: TEC Leadership Model**

Along with somatic markers (cellular memory in our bodies), our AMS is the modern explanation of the ‘secret’ and the Law of Attraction which Napoleon Hill explained so well when he described it in these three steps to personal success: “Whatever the mind can conceive, and believe, the mind can achieve.” We thus have the power to control our minds and to create our reality. But Hill also reiterated that we need to *work* to attain goals. Thus the ‘secret’ is a good first phase, but we also need a detailed follow-up plan of action too. In the 1800s, the first modern-day psychologist William James already observed that the ‘greatest discovery of my generation is that man can alter his life simply by altering his attitude of mind.’ In 1905, William Walker Atkinson also revealed the ‘secret’ in his book *Thought Vibration or the Law of Attraction*. In 1926, Robert Collier called his book *The Secret of the Ages*. In 1937 Napoleon Hill wrote *Think and Grow Rich*. In 1953 Norman Vincent Peale wrote *The Power of Positive Thinking*. In 1956, Earl Nightingale made his famous recording, *The Strangest Secret*. In 1965, Joseph Murphy wrote *The Power of Your Subconscious Mind*. And if we really want to go back thousands of years, most philosophers and religions propagate the same timeless advice: “We become what we think”. The Bible reads, “Everything you pray and ask for, believe that you have received them, and you shall receive them.”<sup>2</sup>

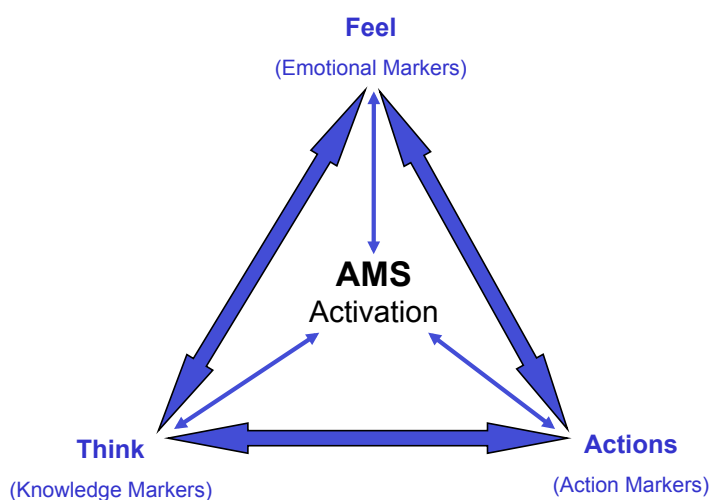
But be warned, we don’t become purely what we “think”. We become what we “*think, feel and do*”. By studying the above mentioned books, it is evident that the ‘secret’ and the Law of Attraction have *not* been shrouded in mysticism at all, but have been recognized and valued over the ages.

So why is the *Law of Attraction* suddenly portrayed with an X-factor status this millennium? It is because this law is so basic and common that it has been repackaged to make the unsuspecting consumer believe that it is the new metaphysical shortcut to prosperity that the world has been waiting for. If anyone should receive praise, however, it should go to the creator of our magnificent mind. The Law of Attraction, or the ‘secret,’ contains no inexplicable formulae and should not be pondered upon with the mystique of a new age religion. Let us discover why:

Most of the time, the Law of Attraction is an off-beam term to use anyway. With the discovery of our AMS (and other parts of our mind), it should be called the ***Law of Attentiveness***. Our AMS takes us from a state of Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) to what I term an Attention Surplus Disorder (ASD). Other synonyms for attentiveness are consciousness, alertness, awareness,

watchfulness, wakefulness and preparedness. But without a sensitized AMS, we would be lulled into unconsciousness or nothingness. *When emotionally aroused, we develop neural structures or “markers” that engage us in cognitive processes that would have otherwise never happened. It’s these inner “representations” – our AMS’s inner neural-markers - that connect us to the outer-environment.*

Thus, paying attention and emotion work with each other. The more emotional we are about a thing, the more we observe that thing. The more we observe that extremely relevant thing, the more emotional it seems. The more emotional it seems, the more we seem to notice it. Activating us, this is how emotions and attention feed-off and build each other. Because our mind does not prioritise things we are not emotional about, irrelevant things pass unnoticed. When we’re not activated by our AMS’s internal representation, we passively ignore things. The discovery of this *cognitive neuroscience* has obvious implications for leaders and marketers – we need to make our target audience emotional about what we wish them to notice. It’s the key to activating and engaging with our followers. To establish a share-of-mind, this is the key to breaking through – to accessing – a target audience’s mental space. This is explained in Figure 2.2. below.



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**Fig 2: Our AMS is Activated by a Mental Representation of our Knowledge, Emotional and Action Markers**

A woman looking for an upmarket hairdresser will assemble a mental representation like this (ref Fig 1): Her *knowledge* markers will be the spelling of the word hairdresser and the shop-front adorned with striking photographs of models displaying attractive hairstyles. The *emotional*

markers are the smell of filter coffee, chemicals associated with hair colouring, relaxing, and the image of her aspirational new haircut. The *action* markers would be the sight of hair being cut, scissors, blow-drying and tossing of hair. Marketers would target all these subliminal markers, and also develop a catchy jingle that pulls them all together when the tune is played.

Understanding the relationship between emotion and attention (our AMS) explains many situations in our internal and external world. The universe does not drop things into our lap or inexplicably remove other people's cars from a parking lot to make space for our cars; rather inline with our internal *markers*, we detect relevant patterns that are always out there, and then by choosing to pursue what we have detected, our mind seems to 'attract' these things into our life. Our AMS detects *coinciding incidence*, which an unconscious person would call a coincidence. Our AMS puts us on an autopilot beeline to achieve our goals. In Dr. Maxwell Maltz's book *Psycho Cybernetics (1964)*, he called this autopilot phenomenon our servo-mechanism.

When we are in control of our own destiny, the Law of Attentiveness opens up opportunities instantly, whereas, because we seemingly have to wait for the universe to act on our behalf, the Law of Attraction is disempowering in comparison. Why wait for the universe to conspire with us? *Why not conspire with a world of opportunities and create many of our own opportunities right now?*

The Law of Attentiveness is further fueled by gaining experience over time and by being extraordinarily conscious, we take notice of our bi-vironment. We develop the knack for, or wisdom to, visualize the opportunities before they appear, enabling us to preempt our own actions. For instance, because his AMS knows what to look out for, a failed but experienced entrepreneur can easily start another business. Empowering isn't it? The *Law of Attentiveness* is not clouded in mysticism like the Law of Attraction; The Law of Attentiveness is completely believable because it has happened to all of us. When we emotionally yearn for something badly enough, our attentiveness of our bi-vironment (inner and outer environments) produces the dots; we then act and join the dots into a workable solution. Our AMS forces us to become inventive and fires up our otherwise dull imagination. We can stare at a cloud in the sky and identify patterns that would have otherwise gone completely undetected.

So how can we program our AMS to alert ('attract') us to what we want in life? Have you ever consciously chosen to learn a new word and then 'coincidentally' heard it used many times shortly after learning it? Coincidence? No. These are just *coinciding incidences* that you are now aware of as the newly learnt word coincides with your AMS. Your AMS, emotionally charged by your desire to learn this new word, picks it out with laser beam accuracy. The day you learn a new word you'll often hear it on the radio or TV the same week. But if your AMS was not sensitized to your systemic bi-vironment, the word would go undetected although you had 'heard' it. The word was always out there *but* you were not filtering it with your AMS.

Like a 360 degree panning radar dish and searchlight, our AMS filters out what we need and want; thus something appears like it was 'attracted' but actually we were merely more attentive and alert in our bi-vironment. Our AMS is one up on consciousness. It effortlessly triggers our automatic extended consciousness — our super-consciousness. We could even decide to look for a message or a shape in a developing cumulonimbus cloud and together with our AMS and imagination this will unfold before our eyes. So we start to notice what we desire. Believing is seeing.

Thus when conscious of it, you begin to witness how your AMS merges your bi-vironment into a cohesive whole. You will become more aware of how the chatter inside your head coincides with your outer-environment. Ask a pregnant (and understandably emotional) woman what she notices when she is pregnant. She inexplicably detects other pregnant woman and becomes acutely attentive to shops running specials on baby goodies. That is not actually inexplicable; that is her AMS alerting and reinforcing itself, it is an incident that is just coinciding with her AMS.

*Seeing, on its own, is not the precondition for believing. Feeling is.*

– Ian McCallum, psychiatrist, 2005

The below table clarifies the Law of Attraction by splitting it up into two completely separate laws: *The Law of Attentiveness* and *The Law of Similar Responses*. By regarding these two laws, we will see how aptly our Mirror Neuron System and our AMS demystify the theology that has been surrounding the Law of Attraction for millennia.

<b>Demystifying The Law of Attraction</b>	
<b>The Law of <i>Attentiveness</i></b>	<b>The Law of <i>Similar Responses</i></b>
Our AMS, assisted by millions of Somatic Markers, makes us super alert or conscious of the activities in our bi-vironment. Once programmed, our goal-centric AMS picks up coinciding-incidences in our bi-vironment, which makes these ‘coincidences’ appear like they were ‘attracted’ into our lives.	When we smile we fire up a smile in the Mirror Neuron System of the people witnessing it. If you are positive, it literally rubs off onto others. Thus the mood you are in becomes the mood of people around you. Your team responds similarly to the vibe that you send out.
<b>Example:</b> If you truly believe that your strategy is going to work, your AMS will make you and your senses super-conscious. You start to notice opportunities and solutions. Like a heat seeking missile, a sensitised AMS will put you on a beeline that will astound you.	<b>Example:</b> Happy and enthusiastic people are attractive. Furthermore, if you want to attract optimistic individuals into your life, start by being optimistic and you will infect others with your positive spirit and emotions too.

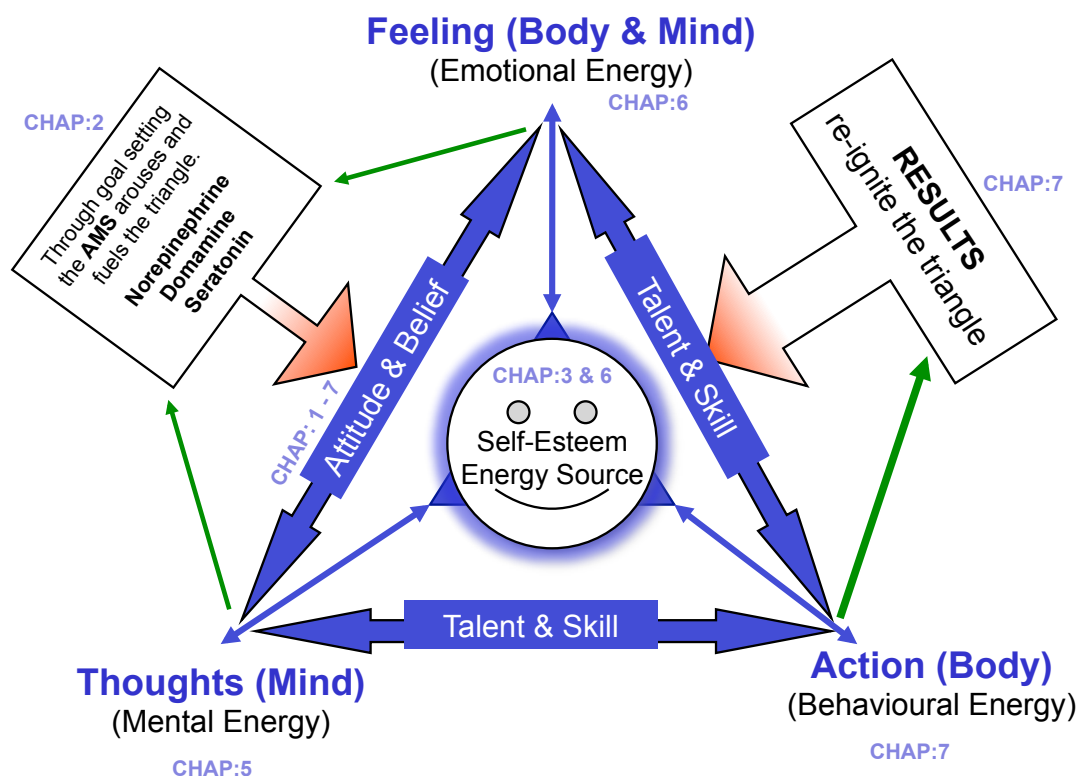
**Table 1: The Law of Attraction is made up of The Law of Attentiveness and The Law of Similar Responses**

Whatever you emotionally desire, your AMS gets to work fast. The more your heart is in it, the more faith and hope you have, the more blatantly these opportunities and valuable resources will ‘appear’. *But don’t just be a witness to what your AMS reveals. Act and do something about it too.*

Besides doing billions of calculations per second on your behalf, the beauty of our AMS is that it works both the day and night shifts, sometimes alerting us to a solution just before drifting off to sleep or awakening the next day. But you must be really emotional about something or your AMS



will not be operating at its full potential, and therefore you will not experience those miraculous “aha” moments throughout the day and night.



AMS: Ascending Monoamine System

**Fig 3: Our AMS is Activated by a Mental Representation of our Knowledge, Emotional and Action Markers**

Inventors, emotionally bent on finding a solution, constantly speak of eureka moments which normally creep up on them whilst quietly relaxing or attempting to fall asleep, or while lying in bed the next morning. It should come as no surprise then that the most creative place in the house for inventors is the bedroom.<sup>3</sup> It is also interesting to note that muscles do not need sleep to recover; it is our brain that needs the rest.<sup>4</sup> During our waking hours, our five senses absorb an enormous amount of data which needs to be consolidated and pigeonholed, shedding new light on the expression “I need to sleep on it.”



**Besides having a strong belief in your goals, there are another two rules:**

- Goals must be crystal clear or your AMS will be confused about what it needs to reveal to you. Confusion, on the other hand, is diffusion of thought and energy.
- As your AMS feeds you new information, also remain open-minded that your plans may need to change.

**Key Takeouts: Ascending Monoamine System (AMS) for GOAL SETTING & LEADERSHIP**

- Humans have an *advanced prefrontal cortex*, allowing us to *consciously visualize* and *reprogram* our unconscious and subconscious minds.
- Our unconscious mind is controlling our conscious mind — our consciousness. But our unconscious was originally partly programmed by our conscious. *So although our unconscious mind controls us, we are still in control of our mind.*
- **Mirror Neurons, Somatic Markers and our AMS are major building blocks for success:**
  - By observing others, *Mirror Neurons* allow us to learn fast. So be careful who you hang out with, because with every passing hour you become more and more like them.
  - Loaded with insight, experience, and wisdom, *Somatic Markers* are stored in the cells of our body and mind. Millions of somatic markers are the multi-layers of experiences, which collectively, whether we like it or not, give us a sixth sense or a connectedness; an extrasensory perception (ESP) into our bi-vironment. But the more conscious our intent of living is, the more alert our sixth sense will be, offering us a better cognitive representation of a complex outer-environment. *The end result is we feel much more in control of our bi-vironment.*
  - The *Law of Attentiveness* is enacted by your AMS. Our AMS is nature's radar system that filters out what we want in this world; but to the uninformed and unconscious mind this would appear like it was 'attracted'. Without our AMS we would be lulled into unconsciousness and neglect to detect incidences that could be beneficial to our strategy. When emotionally aroused, our AMS is a super-conscious, enabling us to be infinitely more intelligent.

**References:**

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