1) NAME AND DESCRIPTION OF THE TOOL

This tool, which can be implemented both off and online, has a six-step structure that gradually increases in difficulty and shows how our brain seeks the security of certainty, even if the result goes against our objectives. Basically, it teaches us that our brain does not always play in our favour, and alerts us to certain decisions and strategies we adopt.

2) OBJECTIVES OF THE TOOL

- Understanding what certainty patterns are and how they work

- To understand how our brains work and how they lead us to make decisions based on certainty.

- Think out of the box and develop imaginative and original strategies.

3) CONNECTION OF THE TOOL WITH THE ENEMY

Cognitive inflexibility is caused because our brains are driven by patterns of certainty and security. It is comfortable with the familiar, whether or not it is good for us, whether or not it is aligned with our desires and outcomes. This causes us not to be flexible and to settle into strategies in which we feel comfortable, but which take us away from our goals. Learning how this works and why many of our decisions are made is key to being flexible.

4) RESOURCES & MATERIALS

A piece of paper

Two markers

5) IMPLEMENTATION OF THE TOOL

- Step 1, 1 minute. Ask participants to draw a large flower on a piece of paper, quickly, without thinking too much. Ask them to show it and they will notice that at least 80% have drawn a daisy.

- Step 2, 5 minutes. Ask participants to:

  o choose a number from 1 to 9.

  o multiply it by 9.

  o If the resulting number has two digits, add them together.

  o subtract 4 from the new number. Then, with the new number, transfer it to the alphabet and find the letter that corresponds to it.

  o Once they have found it, ask them to choose the name of an animal that begins with that

letter.

- o Then, on the alphabet, ask them to go to the letter immediately before it and, once located, ask them to choose the name of a country that begins with that letter.

Once they have done this, say: "I'M SORRY, BUT THERE ARE NO ELEPHANTS IN DENMARK". They will be surprised to find that the vast majority had chosen that combination.

- Step 3, 5 minutes. Explain to the participants that it is now about finding the pattern that you are marking with the clues that you are going to give. Only you know the pattern, and the others have to identify it. First we talk about countries. Say SPAIN, PORTUGAL, ITALY and ask the participants to add a new item to that list. You just say yes or no, depending on whether the new item is in the pattern. We do NOT want them to say what the pattern is, but to add items. They may think first that we refer to Mediterranean countries, and when they finish all the countries they will think the pattern is complete, but they can add more. You can expand the pattern to the EU, Europe, and other continents. Participants will realise that the pattern (and their limits) was much wider than expected.

- Step 4, 5 minutes. Same routine than in step 3. Now say: AMBULANCE, ACCIDENT, ANIMAL, and ask to add new items to the list. Answer yes or no. You can add new items to spice up the search. Now the pattern is "words beginning with the letter A".

- Step 5. 5 minutes. Same routine. Now say: BOOK, FRIDGE, BEER. Ask them to add new elements to the pattern. Answer yes or no, and from time to time add new and absolutely disparate elements to the discussion. The pattern is "things you can buy on Amazon". They will realise that really anything can go on the list, understanding that the pattern is from the beginning much bigger than what they had in their heads.

- Step 6. 15 minutes. Have the participants sit in a circle and take two markers with different coloured caps. Pass them to the person on your right saying: "I hand them over in..." and add whether you do it "crosswise" or "parallel". Indicate to the participants that you are the model, because you are going to do it the right way. It is not a matter of hit or miss, but of identifying the pattern you are setting.

- Ask the participants to say: "I receive them in..." parallel or cross and "I deliver them" in parallel or cross. Even if they don't quite understand the dynamics of the game. Let them try trial and error.

- After the first round, ask if anyone thinks they have identified the pattern. We continue playing, although now we can vary the way in which we hand out the markers, change the caps... This will complicate things and multiply the possible patterns, generating uncertainty among the participants.

- We will ask the participants not to reveal the pattern if they identify it, but to act accordingly by aligning themselves with the pattern and therefore discarding other options.

- We can finish in 3 or 4 rounds, after which we will ask if anyone has identified the pattern. Then we will give the solution: the pattern has nothing to do with the markers, but with the position of our legs when giving or receiving the markers.

6) WHAT TO LEARN

Our mental limits condition our actions and, therefore, our results. We prefer to be right and to make mistakes rather than look for new and original alternatives that can improve our achievements.

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