

Ron Milam
MSOD 612
Assignment 2

1. My three marriages express themselves in the ongoing conversation between my marriage, work and self.

In less than a month, I will marry the woman I love. For the last year, Jennie and I have grown closer during our engagement period and will celebrate our marriage surrounded by our family and friends. My aspiration for our marriage is that we continue to see each other, understand and support where we both are professionally, and cultivate a space for each of us to develop our own selves. Given the busy pace of our lives, I'm hopeful we create a space where we have real conversations about our three marriages, and that our relationship be a "crucible for navigating change".

With work, my aspiration is to focus my attention on becoming a more effective change-agent. This starts with building my own capacity with the MSOD program. As I learn and reflect on my learning, I aspire to immediately put my new knowledge into action with my clients followed by reflection. I want to use the MSOD experience as an opportunity to experiment with different strategies to help both people and organizations reach their own potential. My investment in the MSOD program is a reflection of my commitment to my work.

This then connects to my self. As I navigate change, I want to be mindful of where I'm at emotionally, intellectually, spiritually, physically and socially. "We are the key", Whyte writes. I aspire to be more intentional about reflecting on who I am and giving myself the space to "meditate", whether it be surfing, hiking or just giving myself the space to relax. As Jennie and I get married later this month, I aspire to maintain myself, and our selves, in that partnership. As we work to nurture each other, that will give me greater capacity to connect with others. I look forward to bringing these conversations and aspirations into the MSOD program.

2. I really enjoyed reading “Your Brain at Work” and am already experimenting with various lessons from the book in my professional practice. One area I’m interested in working on more is using the SCARF model as a framework for working with others. Understanding that Status, Certainty, Autonomy, Relatedness, and Fairness can either pull someone towards a reward or trigger threats generated some reflection on my part.

Using this framework in conjunction with my existing facilitation and coaching skills will help me prioritize the questions I ask to clients and leaders I coach. In the past, I might have gone into a coaching session with good intentions, but inadvertently triggered some negative reactions by inadvertently stepping on their sense of certainty or fairness. I will start by more intentionally reflecting on the SCARF principles on myself and ask myself what I can do to move “towards” those I collaborate with.

When it comes to supporting others, I know I’m already good at affirming others (status) and giving people the space to make their own decisions (autonomy), thought I could always improve in these categories. I know I could be clearer around expectations (certainty), more understanding of how people feel unfairly treated (fairness) and continue to find more authentic ways to cultivate relationships (relatedness).

I will use the SCARF principles when giving feedback both to individuals and groups, in a way that affirms people and gives them a space to decide how to grow. I also really like Rock’s “Facilitating Positive Change” model and will continue to experiment with questioning, stating problems simply and providing a space for people to reflect.

3. I found the chapter on “Tough Love” particularly interesting. One thing I find challenging is accountability. I tend to lean more on the “Love” side of Quinn’s spectrum, which potentially leads to a permissive culture. This sometimes looking like my clients saying they will do something and then they let it slide. In my attempt to be supportive and understanding, I often let things go and hope things will get better. Sometimes they do. Sometimes they don’t. I appreciated Quinn’s noting that

there's a tension in tough love, and that it's not always easy to master. He also made a good case for why tough love is necessary. I appreciated his list of specific suggestions to incorporate tough love into my work.

My hopes for the MSOD program is that it will provide me a space to experiment, reflect, refine and experiment some more. I want it to be a space where I actively test out new concepts in a supportive, safe learning community. This includes practicing some tough love in a situation where it's appropriate to do so. I am already making a space to reflect on my experience so far. As one person joked on one of the book review calls we have, the MSOD program is like a fourth marriage. I'm noticing how I make time for studying, the order in which I do things, how I collaborate with my peers, what I'm learning from the program and keeping up with the workload. I feel like I'm in a "ramping up stage" and look forward to taking it to the next level during our first intensive.

4. I enjoyed reading about memories, how we interpret those memories and how we occupy different states in Mindset. It speaks to how people are shaped by their childhood experiences and how those experiences shape how they behave in the present. I appreciated learning that it is so not much how someone is raised which determines their behavior (which is what I assumed), but that their behavior is shaped more by how they interpreted their experiences. I'm curious to now ask people questions that would be on an AAI evaluation, both to friends and family that I have strong relationships with along with people I find challenging. I'm also curious, open and accepting of asking and reflecting on these questions myself.

I feel like my parents raised me with love and nurturing, giving me a strong foundation to work with. I feel like I'm full of self-compassion and self-acceptance. That said, I know I sometimes struggle with frustration and stress, especially in challenging, complex situations. What I desire is a deepened self-understanding and awareness. Through that process, I'm guessing having even more self-compassion and self-acceptance will help me get through any challenges turns along that journey. I'm eager to explore all these during the MSOD program and beyond.

5. I really enjoyed the readings. Going into it, I wasn't all that interested in the mind and how the brain works. Now, I'm fascinated by it and feel like it holds some of the answers to the challenges I experience both with myself and with others. The readings gave me a stronger foundation to understand my own mental landscape and of others.

While I feel like the readings provided a good overview, I'm now interested to put the ideas into practice. I'm curious to see how the intensive is structured and look forward to actively participating in it.

As I think about the readings and moving forward with the program, the following questions emerge:

- What are different ways to start and engage in the marriage/work/self conversation with my partner? With myself?
- As a leader, how do I remind myself and make a space to use the SCARF model? In general with all of these best practices, how do I effectively go from theory to action?
- How I can use tough love to build stronger teams and help the leaders I support reach their full potential?
- What assumptions do I make about others? How do my own memories shape those assumptions? How can I be more intentional about questioning those assumptions?
- As a change-agent, when and how are the best ways to intervene?
- What will my thesis focus on?