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communities

The Emotionally Intelligent Leader

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This is the second in a series of articles distinguishing a savvy vs. struggling leader. Every indicator today points to the fact that in order to survive leaders must be savvy. One sign of a savvy leader, as discussed last month is emotional intelligence.

What is emotional intelligence, and as leaders, why do we care? Long gone are the days where a leader shouts out demands and the followers act accordingly. Today's diverse and ever-changing workforce has more choices and opportunities. As an employee's access to new information and experiences increases, so does the leaders need to enhance their 'people skills' in managing their people's intense emotions, as well as their own.

The formula for an organization's overall success has changed from one of mere strategy and systems to one of keeping its people in high spirits and motivated. Walt Disney said: "You can dream of, design, and build the most wonderful place in the world but it takes people to make that dream a possibility." And people run on emotions.

Emotional intelligence is the ability to connect with, understand and motivate your team on a much deeper level, thus producing greater results. Below are four key elements to emotional intelligence.

Emotional Self Awareness:

Who are you as a leader? Are you calm, passionate, decisive, empathetic, arrogant, confident or bold? Chances are you are a blend of these personas and each one comes with an emotion. Why is this important? Because everyone looks at the boss to gauge who they should be. The emotionally intelligent leader is aware of how their emotions influence the thoughts, decisions and behaviors of their team.

Emotional Self Management: After 9/11, leaders were put to the test and many failed. Savvy leaders dealt with their emotions on their own



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time, knowing their people needed them to lead them through a time of crisis. Today, emotionally intelligent leaders maintain an optimistic and positive disposition, move on quickly from adversity, and implement personal strategies to help maintain positive moods and emotions. Thus, they serve as role models in coping more effectively with daily demands and stresses.

Awareness of Other's Emotions:

Being able to read how a person is feeling is an art. Studies prove: 1) the better a person feels, the greater their performance, and 2) a wide discrepancy exists between what a team needs to succeed and what the leader believes they need. Emotionally intelligent leaders take the time to become adept at reading their team's verbal and nonverbal skills. This awareness allows the leader to more effec-

tively engage with, respond to, motivate and connect with each member of their team.

Emotional Management Of Others: Leaders have an opportunity to affect how their team feels (and thus performs) each day by: 1) creating a work environment that makes people feel more optimistic and positive, 2) communicating and interacting in ways that motivate and engage others, 3) helping their people identify more effective ways of responding to events that cause them stress. The result is that they improve their team's competency, productivity, and performance.

Stay tuned as I'll be writing about each of these emotional intelligent competencies in greater details in months to come. If this topic interests you, begin by simply noticing what your emotional state is in this moment and how it affects those around you. It's fascinating.

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