

The Emotionally Intelligent CEO



With Preethi Fernando
Author of "Emotional Intelligence in Business and Marketing"

The Emotionally Intelligent CEO

Preethi Fernando



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About the Author






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Introduction



Thank you for making the decision to read my book “The Emotionally Intelligent CEO.” The principles that I share here can transform the quality of your life and the quality of the organization that you lead. Even though it is titled “CEO” the thoughts here apply to just about anyone.

I want to give you a very brief introduction as to why I chose to write a book titled “The Emotionally Intelligent CEO.” Emotional intelligence was one of my weakest areas through much of my adult life. I didn’t realize it, at the time. As I got older, I watched different areas of my life slowly disintegrate and shatter into a million little pieces.

Emotionally, physically, and financially, I was left in ashes. There came a point where everything that I had been build-

Introduction

ing, brick by brick, crumbled in front of my eyes. My financial life was a broken disaster, my personal life was in shambles, and my physical health took a massive toll.

In that mess, I also had a decision to make, either to continue and re-build a life following that same template, or to create a brand new one with a completely new script. I was curious how different my life would be if I learned to live with healthy emotional intelligence.

Living life with emotional intelligence has been a rewarding journey. There is no end destination for emotional intelligence. It is a daily, ongoing process. I am now seeing my world through a new pair of glasses.

I hope you can, also.

Emotional intelligence changed my life – for the better. I hope it transforms yours too.

Pr! "i Fernando

Chapter 1

Emotional Intelligence in Very Simple Terms



Emotional intelligence is how well or how poorly we relate to ourselves and to other people around us. It is the intelligent use of emotions.

It is the art of making our emotions work for us by using them to guide our behavior and our thinking.

Emotional intelligence is important because any one can radically alter their lives, for better or for worse, in how they handle their emotions.

When adequately developed and experienced, emotional intelligence empowers us to develop specific skills and abilities to navigate more effectively, through life.

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It is often, the difference maker between a successful and unsuccessful person.

To make that shift from being a good CEO to an outstanding CEO, emotional intelligence is the key ingredient.

Just as the ship's captain can see only above the surface of the water, while sonar provides information about the underwater landscape, emotional intelligence in the workplace helps to see what is being overlooked or downplayed and to go beyond the surface.

It's not about existing; it's about living. It's not just about standing there. It's about being there.

The emotionally intelligent CEO is emotionally available to employees.

They are physically and emotionally present. This does not mean that they must be holding the other person's hand the whole time.

This is not feasible. Rather, they create the feeling of being emotionally available to their staff.

This type of presence validates every employee as a valuable human being.

Emotional intelligence is important because any one can radically alter their lives, for better or for worse, in how they handle their emotions.

The Key Areas of Emotional Intelligence

1. Knowing one's emotions.
2. Managing and regulating one's emotions
3. Motivating one's self
4. Empathy
5. People skills

Knowing One's Emotions – Self Awareness

Self-awareness is the ability to recognize a feeling as it happens. It keeps a CEO from overreacting and amplifying problems and situations in the workplace. A CEO lacking self-awareness tends to blow things out of proportion and consequently spend their prime energy in fighting unnecessary battles.

Self-awareness is a detached, self-reflective state that exists even amidst highly emotional events. It is being aware of both our emotions and our thoughts about the emotions. Being aware of our feelings and our behavior, as well as others' perceptions of us, can influence our actions. Self-

awareness is a learnable skill. It is fundamental to psychological insight.

A CEO with self-awareness is attuned to their moods as they are having them. They are more sophisticated about their emotional lives.

They tend to have a positive outlook on life. Their clarity of emotions makes them more aware of their boundaries.

When the CEO gets into a bad mood they don't ruminate and obsess over it. They can get out of that bad mood or mentally override it sooner, than a CEO who has failed to develop healthy self-awareness.

When a bad mood comes rather than taking it out on an innocent bystander, such as a child, family member, or employee who had nothing to do with it in the first place, they process it and "flush" it out of their system relatively quickly.

They don't allow bad moods to build nests in their heads.

In short, a CEO with self-awareness manages their emotions reasonably well.

When a bad mood comes rather than taking it out on an innocent bystander, such as a child, family member, or employee who had nothing to do with it in the first place, the emotionally intelligent CEO processes it and “flushes” it out of their system relatively quickly.

High self-awareness empowers a CEO to monitor themselves and observe themselves as a bystander.

It gives them a glimpse of how others perceive them. On the other hand, a CEO lacking self-awareness feels swamped by their emotions. They feel helpless to escape them and they allow their moods to take charge of their lives.

As a result, they do very little to escape bad moods, feeling that they have no control over their emotional life. They feel overwhelmed and emotionally out of control.

Primarily, there are two levels of emotions: conscious and unconscious. When emotions simmer beneath the threshold of our awareness they can leave a powerful impact upon how we perceive and how we relate or overreact to people and situations. Often, we are clueless

about how such emotions work or how they unfold in our lives. It is only when the emotion is brought into awareness that the individual could choose behavior.

Managing Emotions – Self Regulation

CEOs who can manage their emotions are seen as being balanced, emotionally stable individuals. CEOs who lack this quality are typically seen as being imbalanced and emotionally volatile. They are unpredictable. They “lose it” very quickly.

Managing emotions is about balance. Managing emotions is not about suppression. Our emotions provide us with clues as to why we do what we do. Stifling our emotions deprive us from accessing that information. Suppressing emotions does not make them go away. A CEO who is constantly changing the location of the company headquarters may think they are getting a fresh start, only to find that the real reason for change is an escape from their emotions.

Seeking a “geographical cure” does not help in the longer run, in managing one’s emotions. It suppresses it for a very short time and then re-surfaces. Suppression can leave emotions free to fester. The self-regulated CEO strives for appropriate feelings proportionate to circumstance.

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Emotions that are continually intense and out of control can develop into hatred, jealousy, anger, depression, and extreme anxiety. Balancing intense emotions is the key to emotional well-being. Managing one's emotions is not a part time-gig. It is a full-time job requiring concentrated effort to become a balanced performer.

CEOs who can manage their emotions are seen as being balanced, emotionally predictable individuals. CEOs who lack this quality are typically seen as being imbalanced and emotionally volatile. They are unpredictable.

Motivating Oneself – Inner Drive

Motivation is using energy in a specific direction for a specific purpose. It is the inner drive of a person. No one else can inject upon another person, that inner drive. They can influence another, but not inject another person. Every individual must cultivate inner motivation.

Inner motivation or inner drive is about self-responsibility. It is the ability to channel emotions toward a productive end and in that process to leave oneself and others feeling fulfilled, not depleted. Self-motivated CEOs leave their staff,

vendors, clients, and the people they influence, in a state of emotional increase, not decrease.

CEOs lacking this inner drive expect others to serve them in slave-like behavior. They have a sense of entitlement. They want everything for nothing. This type of a CEO typically leaves others feeling depleted and disgusted. Rather than earning the admiration of their staff they tend to earn contempt and hatred.

How well or how poorly we do in life, especially in our emotional and mental health, is largely determined by the degree to which we take responsibility for our emotions.

Emotions either get in the way of our goals, vision, and our problem-solving skills; or they enhance our ability to think, plan, and pursue our dreams. How well or how poorly we do in life, especially in our emotional and mental health, is largely determined by the degree to which we take responsibility for our emotions.

If we absolutely have no ability to relate to our emotions

then, that is a powerful indicator of the quality of our emotional and mental health.

Emotions define the limits of our capacity to use our innate abilities. When we are motivated by enthusiasm we are driven closer to accomplishment. When we are driven by intense hatred it is likely to leave a trail of destruction for others.

A CEO whose inner motivation is driven by hatred is likely to spoil things not only for themselves but also for their employees, staff, and for people who are waiting in line to take over the job. They spoil it for all.

Empathy

Recognizing emotions in others is empathy. Empathy is the ability to read and grasp the emotions of another person. Very rarely do people express their emotions in words. Empathy is intangible, not tangible. When empathy for another person is completely disregarded by a CEO it leaves a residue of destruction.

If the staff is paid poorly, overworked, and are in slave-like mode, they may lack the ability to have empathy for their CEO who enjoys a luxurious lifestyle. That feeling of jealousy might come out in poor productivity, using social

media for five hours for personal use during a seven-hour work shift, or being verbally rude to a customer over the phone when calls are not being recorded and monitored. Lack of empathy can affect a company's health negatively.

A CEO practicing empathy might be able to attune better to the staff and make changes to motivate such an employee. This might be through increase of pay, creating less toxic work environments, or talking with employees. One of the strongest empathy builders is for a CEO to spend a day or two, doing the workload of an employee, not just in the workplace, but the whole daily routine, including commuting to work on a train and showing up for work.. For example.

If the CEO owns a chain of gas stations, practicing empathy might be to do a twelve-hour work shift as a cashier to get a sense of what it is like to work in that business.

This is how the CEO can literally put themselves in the shoes of their employees to practice empathy.

This kind of empathy benefits the CEO and the company because it makes the staff feel like the CEO is one of them. It creates a sense of “oneness. It lifts the staff spirits. It also makes the CEO, popular and well loved.

Employees refer to such CEOs as “He is one of us. We love him.”

People Skills

People skills are essential for the nurturing and preservation of relationships. Those who are adept in social intelligence have better social etiquette. They connect smoothly and can better handle the disputes that flare up in any short or long-term relationship.

CEOs with excellent people skills are natural leaders, others feel lifted when they are around them, and people around them are subconsciously directing their antenna towards that individual.

A CEO lacking people skills is quick to cut off communication with someone the minute they run into the smallest of problems with them. They cut off ties with a person who disagrees with them.

They systematically eliminate good talent and surround themselves with the mediocre or the weakest.

This makes them feel important. Poor people skills create poor work environments.

A CEO lacking people skills systematically eliminates good talent and surrounds themselves with the weakest. This makes them feel important.

A CEO with sublime people skills can make their dream, the dream of their staff as well. They can express the unspoken collective sentiment and articulate it to guide the staff towards that dream.

They are the kind of CEO that the staff is motivated to please because they are emotionally nourishing and leave others feeling emotionally stimulated, not depleted. Such CEOs are well loved, respected, and admired by their staff.

The cornerstone of any successful, healthy relationship is effective communication. When there is no communication there is miscommunication.

Without communication there is no connection and hence, shuts off any opportunity to have a healthy, flourishing relationship. CEOs will sound people skills value communication.

When there is no miscommunication there is miscommunication.

How Do You Want to be Remembered?

CEOs lacking in emotional intelligence and who have absolutely no empathy or disregard for another human being *do* get ahead and become financially successful quite often.

By surrounding themselves with the right talent, CEOs who have little regard to staff and employees are often seen, climbing up the professional ladder quickly. Where they fail, however, is in how they are remembered.

The lack of healthy emotional intelligence limits their influence on others, and often times they leave a trail of discontentment, anger, and contempt long after they are gone. They create negative ripple effects and leave a legacy of bitterness. Once they leave their CEO title they become a faint memory of their staff. They are remembered with resentment, not respect.

Emotionally intelligent CEOs on the other hand, are constantly aware of how their actions affect other people and the type of ripple effects that they create.

They are often remembered by their staff, peers, and the people they influence, through a lens of fondness and love.

They picture their lives fast forward to ask themselves, “I wonder how my staff and the people that I serve, remember me, long after I am gone?”

Keeping that frame in mind, they make the adjustments backwards to be conscious of the influence they have on others and the type of ripple effects they create, long after they are gone.

Do you want to be remembered with love, admiration, and respect? Or do you want to be remembered with contempt, bitterness, and remorse? Keeping these two versions in mind, how do *you*, want to be remembered as a CEO? The decision is yours.

How to be Remembered with Love, Admiration, and Respect

The world tends to remember emotionally intelligent CEOs with fondness, love, and admiration, long after they are gone or have left their jobs.

What truly matters is how a CEO is remembered when they no longer have that financial “hold” over their staff with salary, benefits, and severance pay.

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Here are thirteen statements, remembering emotionally intelligent CEOs with fondness and love, long after they have left their jobs.

1. “He was a great CEO to work for. If all CEOs were like him, my job would have been a breeze. He made me feel like getting out of bed every morning and enjoying my hour-long train ride to work.”
2. Once, I saw my CEO taking the toilet brush and cleaning the office bathroom that the employees use. Right after doing that, he got into his chauffeur-drive limousine to take his private jet to leave for Europe. I couldn’t believe my eyes, that he was doing what he pays me to do as a janitor. He put himself in my shoes. He was me.”
3. “I was going through a hard time. I had gotten pregnant, and my boyfriend bailed. My CEO gave me ten minutes of her billion-dollar schedule to listen to my pain. Those ten minutes changed the way I saw her thereafter. She made me feel like giving beyond my best for that company after that day. I loved her as a human being, long after she left the company. Why can’t they all be like her?”
4. “She is one of us”
5. “No matter how wealthy he is, I feel like he relates to my struggles. He cares about what I am

- going through.”
6. She has not forgotten her roots. She is one of the wealthiest people in the world, yet, she is humble in ways I cannot imagine.”
 7. “He is kind and humble. My previous CEO was such a proud jerk. I doubt he even knew what the word “humility” meant.”
 8. “He treated me with dignity, even when he fired me because I had taken some office products which I shouldn’t have.”
 9. “I’d take a massive pay cut to work for a CEO like that, any day.”
 10. “When she led the organization there was no toxicity. No behind-the-scenes manipulation. No hidden agenda. She understood what a waste of time, money, and energy all that stuff was. Everyone was at ease because of that.”
 11. “He was a CEO with a heart”
 12. “She changed the poor image of corporate CEOs of being greedy, selfish, and power hungry, to one of compassion, understanding, and kindness. Nearly everybody who ever worked for her, only had great things to say about her.”
 13. “She was caring. She knew when and how to be tough. At the end of the day, she genuinely cared about the people she impacted.”

How to be Remembered with Contempt, Bitterness, and Remorse

Some CEOs are remembered with anger and remorse long after they are gone. Here are thirteen statements that are likely to be echoed by staff members who have worked with a CEO with unhealthy and destructive emotional intelligence, and are no longer at their mercy for a paycheck:

1. “He was a nasty CEO”
2. “She was a ...” (fill in your own blank)
3. “I had been working for the company selflessly, for twenty years. This was when we all had to show up at the office, punch in, punch out, and remote work was not even heard of. When it was time to let me go, the company attorney sent me a standard e-mail saying my services were no longer needed. That was it. There was no thank you, nothing. What happened to loyalty?”
4. “Whenever she pulled into the parking lot, we all watched from the windows as our stomachs began to cringe”
5. “She made me sick.”
6. “He had all the academic degrees from the finest of schools but had zero empathy. Everyone hated him with a passion. We all needed the money to support our lives, so we faked our smiles and stuck with it.”

7. “All she cared about was “How can I use my staff to make me rich?” And she did whatever she needed to do, to achieve that goal. That was her vision for the company. Boy, was she mean. We called her the ‘Queen of Mean’ She showed a very sweet and kind face to the media thought.”
8. “Everyone was afraid to speak up when she was the CEO. If anyone said a word that was not to her liking, that person was out of a job within a week. We were working in fear.”
9. “When he became the CEO all the talented, brilliant, high performing employees, left, one by one. They knew what was coming. I overstayed-unfortunately.”
10. “She flaunted company wealth, while we slaved away. Whenever we brought up our concerns it was like “if there is no bread, eat cake” type of callous answer. So, we began to give less and less than our best to our jobs. She was the cause; for that company to plummet not the product..”
11. “She took out all her insecurities out on us. How she became CEO I have no idea.”
12. “He had zero people skills.”
13. “She encouraged toxicity to run freely. It made her feel in charge. She always surrounded herself with people who were less qualified than her, because she was able to manipulate them easily.

This put her on the throne. No wonder that company closed its doors within two years of her coming. She got rid of all the good employees because she felt threatened.”

Emotional Intelligence and the Size of our Thinking

Emotional intelligence expands our thinking. We grow according to the size of our thinking. A highly educated, influential, financially rich individual might sometimes behave like a toddler and not even realize it.

They may have aged in years but may have failed to grow in the size of their thinking. Emotional intelligence enlarges the size of our thinking.

Emotions can impair or facilitate our thinking. They serve as a barometer on how well or how poorly a CEO is doing in advancing the company, valuing people, and vision for the organization.

The world around us and the people around us begin to change as we shift our level of thinking. If our thinking is stagnant then the world around us will likely be stagnant as well. For things to change, *we* must change.

This is the essence of emotional intelligence. When *we*

change our thinking, the way we relate to our emotions as well as the emotions of those around us begin to change. Our attitudes begin to shift, and we begin to look at the same old problems through a new lens.

It Makes Sense

Emotional intelligence makes common sense. Simple, common sense comes into play in saving money, time, energy, stress, and resources for everyone. Our reliance on technology, automation, and online lifestyle have dampened our common sense. The more we are connected electronically, the less we are connected emotionally. Furthermore, some of our habits that we don't even think about may defy common sense. Yet, we keep doing the same things over and over simply out of habit.

The more we are connected electronically, the less we are connected emotionally.

The emotionally intelligent CEO practicing common sense stands apart. They are like a shining light in a dark cave. They light up those around them, they bring

emotional refreshment, they prevent money from going waste, and they give guidance for those seeking it. Their common sense is like a guidance system for the staff.

Common sense prevents the emotionally intelligent CEO from worrying unnecessarily. Rather than allowing worry to paralyze them, they use common sense to see things in perspective.

Common sense can reduce stress and frustration. With better communication, emotional support and more disclosure of authentic feelings there is less to be stressed and angry about.

Less stress and frustration at work means better chances at problem solving, happier employees, and less time waste. All these translate into prime customer service, larger dollar profits, and a stronger reputation of being a good business.

Having a socially supportive work environment seems to result in less stress and better health for employees. When employees take less days off for sickness, sometimes which could be true and at others, a means to escape from working, it leads to a better workplace.

It also has a contagious effect on other employees.

Happier work environments boost employee morale. Happy people are infectious.

Building Fear Vs Building Confidence | The Difference Maker

A CEO who uses fear to get things done, extracts the worst, out of their employees. The work might still get done and profits may still be made, yet at what price? At what tension level? No one will ever know.

The emotionally intelligent CEO uses confidence building techniques to motivate the staff to give their best. They spark the inner drive of their staff, not extinguish it.

The two approaches lead to two different kinds of results. The payoff is greater in the longer run, for the emotionally intelligent CEO using confidence-building tactics, instead of fear-building tactics.

There is no expiry date for emotional intelligence. Its fundamentals remain the same, no matter which era we live in or where we live. Emotional intelligence is not time sensitive. The principles of emotional intelligence that were applied a hundred years ago are still relevant today and will continue to be relevant a hundred years from now.

CEOs, at least the successful ones spend a good chunk of their time on people's issues. When people get involved, emotions get involved. Being emotionally intelligent can be

a priceless asset in dealing with people's issues in the workplace.

There is no expiry date for emotional intelligence.

Overrated Job Title

The emotionally intelligent CEO is a doctor, banker, investment specialist, receptionist, a therapist, an accountant, a marketer, a nun, a pastor, lawyer, and counselor combined into one. Whether they like it or not, they must have empathy to be good at what they do and to enjoy what they do on a daily basis. Empathy replenishes them.

For the CEO who genuinely enjoys the job, the need for excellence and influence surpasses a paycheck and the perks that come with the territory.

It is self-fulfillment. They have the job to pull people upward. They have to sense what their clients hope for, fears, dreads, and gets joy from, and clear the path to make those possible. Often times, the client cannot express those in words. The emotionally intelligent CEO must be able to read it. They must develop the instinct to sense it.

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The job description of the emotionally intelligent CEO is often times, overrated. The territory brings with it, long hours, dark moments, the guilt that can arise from moral injury, and a sense of brokenness.

Being emotionally intelligent as a CEO can be extremely lonely sometimes. Emotionally intelligent CEOs tend to be overly responsible for the well-being of others.

They live according to their conscience, which is their inner guidance system.

Being emotionally intelligent as a CEO can be extremely lonely sometimes.

The life of the emotionally intelligent CEO is not as glamorous as others might believe. It's an overrated job title.

The rewards, however, are sublime. They live life to the fullest, day in day out.

Chapter 2

Handling Change the Emotionally Intelligent Way



Changed people change situations. The emotionally intelligent CEO knows they can do more about shaping their future than they can do to change their past.

They are open to believing that there are far better things ahead, than what they have left behind. Consequently, their focus is to shape the future, and not trying to change their past.

They know that they can do very little about what has happened in the past.

The emotionally intelligent CEO knows they can do more about shaping their future than they can do to change their past.

Just as the ship's captain can see only above the surface of the water, while sonar provides information about the underwater landscape, emotional intelligence in the workplace helps to work effectively with change. It helps to foresee problems brewing beneath the surface, it helps to foresee toxic employees getting ready to infect others, and they sound the alarm on crisis situations in the horizon.

An emotionally intelligent CEO might be able to sense a toxic person working from behind the scenes to wreak havoc, even though the symptoms may not have surfaced yet. They may take preventive steps to avoid the workplace from getting consumed by toxicity.

Change affects our emotions. The emotionally intelligent CEO is willing to allow things to change. They allow it in, sometimes with open arms and at other times, quite grudgingly. Flexibility of thought is a helpful ingredient in embracing change and making it a recipe for success.

When something is changing in the company the emotionally intelligent CEO must decide between being unhappy about it and fighting it or going along with it.

When something is changing the first thing the emotionally intelligent does is to change their mind about the change.

If it is going to change anyway, the emotionally intelligent CEO is willing to change their mind and embarks on “I am going to adapt to this, whether it is what I want or not. It is happening anyways, and I can’t stop it.”

Emotional intelligence gives the CEO that willingness to get rid of the hopes, dreams, and blueprints they had planned for the company to be open to having the new ones awaiting them. Flexibility of thinking is key.

The emotionally intelligent CEO cuts their losses short, and lets their profits run. They know when it is time to cut the strings on a venture and to not get emotionally tied to a failed venture.

Successful companies sometimes embark on grandiose ventures, with big hopes, such as opening a new branch to expand their business, or expanding overseas, only to see their plans fall through.

The CEOs of such companies are quick to change the plans they had in mind to either end such projects or to scale back.

Rather than throwing good money after bad, they are quick to cut their losses short.

Emotional intelligence gives us that willingness to get rid of the hopes, dreams, and blueprints we had planned for the company so as to be open to having the new ones awaiting us.

Only a fool thinks they can always do what they have always done. Knowing when it is time for a change and to make decisions accordingly is key to staying in business. Handling changes the emotionally intelligent way helps us to see the world through a new pair of glasses. A person who cannot change their mind, cannot change anything, because their minds are cemented in stone. While this could be an asset in some situations, when it comes to organizational progress, this can become a liability.

Discontentment as a Catalyst for Change

If no one was discontented, dissatisfied, and disgusted, the world would never reach for anything better. Things would always be disgustingly the same. Emotional intelligence allows the CEO to capitalize on that emotional restlessness and provide a product or service to change it.

This enriches their lives along with the lives of others. Rather than avoiding the dissatisfaction, disgust, and discon-

tentment, the emotionally intelligent CEO steps out to embrace them and make a business profit out of it.

Replacing an employee who has been with the company for twenty years can be scary, especially if that employee was a peak performer and brought in massive profits. Even the finest of employees can outlive their purpose within a company.

Knowing when to let go can be discomfoting, especially if we don't know if the replacement is going to work out well. The emotionally intelligent CEO confronts these ambiguous situations, rather than avoiding them. By confronting uncomfortable territory, they grow as a person, and consequently they grow their companies too. To succeed they must strike out new paths, rather than travel the well-worn paths of their predecessors. The emotionally intelligent CEO gets out of the well worn rut.

They don't continue to deepen the well-worn rut, especially if it is clearly not working anymore. They strike out new paths. They dig brand new trenches.

The emotionally intelligent CEO gets out of the well-worn rut. They don't continue to deepen the well worn rut, especially. If it is clearly not working anymore.

Common Sense During Change

Emotionally intelligent CEOs are visionaries, dreamers, innovators, and natural leaders. They are not, however, magicians. The winds of change, especially when it is difficult and treacherous storm, can test the stamina of even the most emotionally intelligent CEO. The magic wand to handle the vicissitudes of change can best be described as common sense.

The CEO with common sense stands out today, as they have presence of mind to rely on human emotions to handle change. Sometimes, the most obvious things are overlooked, and millions of dollars wasted, searching for the advanced, complicated methods. Common sense brings with it the key ingredient that is disappearing today; and that is simplicity. The CEO with common sense can take a complicated task or problem, and with common sense turn it into something simple; at least, the perception of it. This alters the entire organization's approach towards the problem. It also relieves a lot of stress for the employees.

Everyone has common sense, to varying degrees. A few use it. Common sense turns into rust with time, if left unused. It needs to be greased and exercised.

The Changing Seasons of a Company

Life and business are like the changing seasons. The life of a company is like the changing seasons. There is a time for

everything. Nothing stays the same for too long. If they do, it loses that luster that attractive quality, their beauty and effectiveness. A company not changing according to the seasons can become stale and unattractive.

Yes. There is a time for everything.

The life of an individual and the life of a company, organization, association, business, city or town, have parallels. When it comes to a person's life, there is a time to be born, a time to grow, and a time to die. Similarly with a company, there is a time to found a company, a time for expansion for growth, a time for damage control, a time to be stagnant and in some cases, a time to close its doors and shut forever. That is the natural cycle of a company.

Just as a person can wound and heal from problems and crisis, so can a company. A company undergoing massive layoffs, fighting a court battle, or having to go on damage control because of one comment that went viral, can feel "wounded." Whether or not it becomes a permanent wound depends on how a CEO or the person with the most level of influence handles that change.

The healing process can be equally painful just like the wounding phase. Healing, when it is properly handled, brings with it, new rewards. Healing might expand the company's vision, get rid of former employees who are detrimental to the company's growth, hire fresh talent and open new doors.

In the life of a company, there is a time to tear down and a time to build up. This could mean tearing down

projects that are no longer working or it could be tearing down ideas that no longer fit with the company's vision. The time to build up could be starting a new line of products and services, hiring new employees, or hiring a new CEO with new vision.

Just as an individual might smile or weep, a company, too, has similar emotions. There is a time to weep and a time to smile. Smiling at a time when one should be weeping shows apathy and callousness. Knowing when it is time to cry and when it is time to smile displays the empathetic nuance of a company. Letting go of employees who have loyally served the company for thirty years can be a tear-filled experience of weeping. Closing a facility, that once gave thousands of jobs to a community can be a time of mourning. It could be time for laughter to celebrate a major milestone or during a daily Zoom call when someone cracks a sincere wholesome joke. Yes, even within a company, there is a time to weep and a time to laugh.

When it comes to Mother Nature there is a time to plant and a time to uproot. Springtime is generally associated with planting, while fall is typically associated with uprooting. A company too, undergoes the changing seasons. Springtime in a company could be that time to plant an employee for a specific job and fall could mean uprooting that employee from that job description and to re-plant that employee in a different department.

When it comes to human relations there is a time to embrace and a time to give up. A company that embraced

outsourcing their marketing efforts might now decide to give up on hiring from outside as it no longer fits with the company culture. That company might now embrace the previously held method of requiring all marketing staff to work onsite in the office headquarters. This is an example of knowing when to embrace and when to give up. In the changing season of a company's life, knowing when to make those strategic moves can sometimes be daunting for a CEO.

There is a time to search and a time to give up. Searching could be in the form of searching for new ideas, a new location to expand the company, or searching for new talent. There also comes a time to give up those searches, to scale back, to hold on to what is there and to not expand. Giving up is typically seen as being something bad. For a company, it might be a healthy thing to give up and know when to walk away from what they have always done. Knowing what to give up and what to continue embracing, is key.

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The emotionally intelligent CEO is not afraid to let things change within the organization because that is the natural cycle of things. Sometimes change may also mean closing or ending a cycle. Such death, whether it be the death of a physical office site, or a project focus is natural, even for a company. Just like a person has a life and death cycle, so does a company. Some have a short life span while others have a very long-life span.

There is no security in holding on to something that is no longer meaningful. It can be dangerous to hold on to something that has outlived its purpose for the company. Some companies may not be officially dead but not entirely living either. They could best be described as a “living-dead” company. Sometimes, accepting that it is time for a company to close its doors, to say goodbye, and to make room for new businesses to flourish is a noble and financially wise thing to do. Part of handling change the emotionally intelligent way, is to know when it is time to leave the game.

Yes, there is a time for everything. Knowing when it is time for change, and when it is best to hold on to things as they are and not budge an inch can mean life or death.

Growing Pains

A growing company is always changing. It is never stagnant. A stagnant company cannot grow. The emotionally intelli-

gent CEO knows when it is time to disengage and allow employees to make decisions, find solutions, and take calculated risks. They secure an existence outside of the company or organization that they lead. If they put everything into the organization, they could end up being frustrated. Part of having another existence is disengaging from work as needed and allowing the organizations to experience the growing pains.

A company that is constantly evolving is constantly flowing. The emotionally intelligent CEO knows that for a company to keep growing, they must keep flowing. This requires, handling change effectively and facing the growing pains. This is not necessarily physical movement or changing the physical headquarters of the company. Rather it's a movement of changing emotions. Flexibility is key.

Part of handling change the emotionally intelligent way, is to know when it is time to leave the game.

Change Can Be Spicy

Different spices add different flavor to food. Some are spicier than others. Similarly, with change, things can get

heated and spicy. It can rupture organizations, lead to hiccups, add to tremendous profits, and create major losses.

Change is what keeps a company interesting. If everything remains the same old, same old, then, nothing changes. Imagine a company that has no new faces at the company and the same people have been running the show for seventy plus years, the customer are likely to get tired of it. Some companies do exist in this fashion and seem to be thriving. Their growth, however, is limited. The focus of such organizations is survival, not growth. Such companies might never discover the heights they could reach if they embrace change in a healthy way.

Handling the change of employees can be a sensitively, spicy issue. Some employees are ideal for the company for a certain time and then it may be time to let them go. This can get difficult, both for the employee and for the employer. Employees who become too comfortable with their jobs can become stale after a while yet may feel uncomfortable about leaving. The staleness can translate into poor work quality and toxicity.

Some employees cling on to a company like a crutch. The longer they hold on to the crutch the more they get used to it and don't want to let it go. Such employees may become co-dependent on the company.

In a way the CEO might actually be empowering employees by telling them "this is all I can do for you. You must now move on. I am no longer able to provide your paycheck." This can be hard do to. It is, however, a part of

handling change. It takes an emotionally intelligent CEO to muster courage to release long-standing employees from the company whose presence is more damaging than useful.

A CEO might be enabling some employees rather than empowering them by allowing them to stick with the company when they are longer giving their best. Enabling creates employees who have very little willingness to help themselves. All they want is the job, get paid, do the bare minimum (or sometimes, not even that) and still expect the most. Tolerating such employees is disastrous to a company or organization. A handful of good employees may carry the weight by doing the workload of several people. It also prompts the good employees to make an exit or give less than their best.

This is when change can become spicy, yet extremely handy. Delaying change in this type of situation can lead to an infected workforce, the good employees feeling demoralized, unnecessary lawsuits, and the eventual demise of a company. There comes a time when the CEO may have to stop enabling employees and allow them to help themselves. If they don't have a willingness to help themselves, then they must be terminated. While it is important to help people and to be a buffer for them, it cannot be to the point where others don't have the motivation to do anything for themselves.

When something is changing the first thing the emotionally intelligent does is to change their mind about the change.

Change Affects Our Emotions

The emotionally intelligent CEO knows that change affects our emotions. When an organization gets a new supervisor who has a different temperament, voice tone, and attitude, it affects the emotional well being of the people working with that new CEO. When a company gets rid of the old software program that the staff has been using for thirty years and get AI to do the bulk of the work it can create apprehension and anticipation.

Yes, change affects our emotions.

Few people like to change, especially if it means giving up something comfortable.

The CEO too feels their emotions changing and the discomfort that comes with it. Here is the difference in how the emotionally intelligent CEO handles the changing of emotions. Rather than becoming enslaved by those emotions, they rise above them. They see the change from a higher angle that gives them better vision of the situation. Rather than keeping the change an inch away from their eyes, thereby blocking the vision of everything else and becoming blinded by that change, the emotionally intelli-

gent CEO, by rising above that change, maintains composure during it all. They see the larger picture. This is the emotionally intelligent CEO mindset of handling change.

Emotionally intelligent CEOs know that it is fantasy to think that tomorrow will come in a tidy, smooth, predictable manner. To see around the corner and to see things in perspective is to sense the changes happening around them and relate those changes as their own and the company goals.

The Emotionally Intelligent CEO accepts the following when it comes to change:

- They are aware that there is a price to pay for change
- They take hold of some things and let other things go.
- They hold on to some people and let other people go
- They make the shift from “What am I comfortable doing?” to “what can I achieve for the organization that might make me feel uncomfortable?”
- They know that change never stops
- Change requires courage

Emotionally intelligent CEOs know that it is fantasy to think that tomorrow will come in a tidy, smooth, predictable manner.

6-Step Program for Tackling Change

It's not so much about the change, as how the CEO handles the change that can make all the difference.

1 The Emotionally Intelligent CEO is Adaptable

Being too rigid and determined to do things only the way it has always been done makes things unpleasant and difficult when change comes along. Being adaptable greases the process of change. The emotionally intelligent CEO is adaptable. In some cases, it's either adapt or die, when it comes to organizational change.

2 The Emotionally Intelligent CEO Has Flexibility of Thinking

Sometimes, flexibility can become the key to stability. Life is movement, so is the life of a company. If the mind is rigid and set in stone flexibility becomes hard. A malleable mind during change can move from one idea to the next with ease. It absorbs the different input and suggestions presented by different people. The emotionally intelligent CEO is clear about their goals and flexible about the process of achieving those goals. They have a willingness to make U-turns as necessary.

3 Hearts That Bend can Mend

Emotional intelligence touches into the heart of the most stringent minded CEO. A heart that can bend can also mend. Brokenness brings with it, vulnerability. A company or organization can get damaged, breached, broken, and even destroyed. The CEO that has a heart that can be touched by these experiences has a greater ability to mend such companies and breathe in new life. Mending could be in the form of re-building damaged trust, hiring new management, attracting a different mindset for the Board, having the humility to say “I am sorry I failed” publicly, filing for bankruptcy, admitting fraud, closing its doors, or starting from zero.

Hearts that bend can mend.

4 The Emotionally Intelligent CEO Admits to Making Mistakes During Change

It is easier for mistakes to happen when change takes place especially if it is brand new territory that the company has not treaded before. Mistakes are bound to happen. Emotionally intelligent people know that mistakes are part of the game. They also allow others to make the same

admission rather than holding it over them. A CEO who holds on to the mistakes of an employee is likely to distance themselves from them. Employees become afraid if they know that the CEO is going to hold something against them for years if they make a mistake. To build mutual trust the emotionally intelligent CEO admits to making mistakes during change. They are also more accepting of employees making mistakes and have a willingness to learn from them.

5 They Wait for Emotions to Subside Before They Decide

Many of our decisions are emotionally driven. The desire to have a milk shake at the coffee shop is driven by that feeling it creates when we see someone else having it. The desire to buy a brand-new car is driven by a feeling it creates to impress that neighbor or relative. Most of our daily decisions are driven by our inmost feelings.

When a CEO feels angst, restlessness, or fear, they wait till those emotions subside before they decide. The reason being that they know that rested emotions lead to the best outcome.

The emotionally intelligent CEO holds off on decisions when their emotions are raw and restless. Raw emotions like anger, rage, anxiety, and nervousness are not the best times to make big decisions. Something inside is not right. There is restlessness. The emotionally intelligent CEO will “wait another day,” or “wait another minute” and put off the

decision-making process. Sometimes, it could be waiting for another year, or five years, depending on the seriousness of the decision. They wait for their emotions to subside before they decide.

6 Crisis Decisions Are Never Good Decisions

No organization goes for a long period of time without facing crisis situations. During the time of a crisis emotions become volatile, raw, and foggy. The road ahead seems unclear while the road behind seems pretty obvious. During crisis moments the emotionally intelligent CEO holds off on the decision-making process. They know that crisis decisions are never good decisions. They wait till the crisis subsides or they wait till their emotions come to a more stable place before they lead the organization in a healthy direction.

Crisis decisions are never good decisions.

Corporate Inertia and Managing Change

CEOs get tested when changing circumstances turn a winning strategy into a sour experience. They become a “valley of death” for a company and the CEO is caught in the middle of it. If the CEO is not nimble enough to

rethink its strategy, while it still has the assets and strength to change and adapt, it is doomed to wither or die.

With a CEO lacking in emotional intelligence, a symptom known as “corporate inertia” is likely to take over. The CEO fails or overlooks the signs of the coming seas of change. Some fail to act on the impending change altogether. When the change looks all too scary a CEO can be in denial about the situation and allow someone else to handle it. They might tackle the easy problems and completely overlook the large and more significant problems that can impact the future of a company. They may hold off on the bigger problems because they are on their way to retirement and therefore may allow the incoming person to inherit those headaches.

Change is the constant. The emotionally intelligent CEO knows this. They are constantly aware that becoming complacent in success can be lethal. They are constantly ready for change. Being in denial of a problem can haunt them later. Rather than allowing in inertia the emotionally intelligent CEO tackles change head-on. Such a CEO becomes an example for the rest of the staff to show what it is like to not allow corporate inertia to take over in managing change.

Courage

Change requires a heavy down payment of courage. The emotionally Intelligent CEO becomes the change catalyst

for an organization. Rarely does a company become better by chance. Rather, it gets better by change. And that change requires courage.

Here are four things an emotionally intelligent CEO does when they become a change catalyst:

1. They recognize the need for change and remove barriers
2. They model the behavior, thought process, and actions that they expect of others
3. They become champions of the change they are advocating
4. They challenge the status quo to acknowledge the need for change

The above four require one solid quality, and that is courage. It takes courage to act boldly during change. The emotionally intelligent CEO taps into that courage. It takes courage to release the familiar and embrace the unfamiliar, to know when it is time to give up on an idea and embrace a new one, and to cut their losses short. The emotionally intelligent CEO knows that in movement there is life. Having the courage to embrace gives them power.

When it comes to change, the personal abilities of a CEO count immensely in how the change is implemented and spilled across the organization and into the psyche of employees. While technical competence, academic degrees, and intellectual significance can matter, the change catalyst

needs a host of other emotional competencies. The CEO must be able to speak up and challenge the status quo, even if it might mean their job might be on the line or their reputation could get damaged because they are not continuing the current strategies, despite obviously being flawed.

It takes courage to stand up and speak up. It takes greater courage to sit down and listen. There is a time to speak. There is a time to shut up and listen.

Change can sometimes be a mission impossible. The emotionally intelligent CEO who becomes a change catalyst sees it as a mission, not as a job. When it is a mission, there is a deadline, implying that the change process cannot take for the rest of their life. Rather, there is a time to decide, time to implement, and a time to allow that change to unfold and take root. There is also a time to get out. It is sometimes, a mission impossible requiring massive courage.

Change can sometimes be a mission impossible.

Transformational Leadership During Change

The emotionally intelligent CEO understands the need for transformational leadership during times of change. When the time is right, the transformational leader

rises to the occasion to inspire the people they lead, deliver the same old news through a new wavelength, to pump in new energy, and to build hope. At such times the emotionally intelligent CEO becomes emotionally stimulating. They show a strong belief in that vision, and they get others excited about that vision. This is how they become transformational during times of change.

The emotionally intelligent CEO realizes that motivation and inspiration energize people, not by pushing them in the right direction as control mechanisms, but by satisfying their basic human needs by creating a sense of belonging, a feeling of control over their lives, and a sense of caring. Such feelings touch people deeply and elicit a powerful response. It also deepens loyalty and trust that they have in their CEO. This kind of response is powerful, especially during change, which takes a lot of energy to implement.

Caring CEO

Caring is one of the most significant contributions to becoming an emotionally intelligent CEO. . It takes a lot of effort, time, and energy to create a caring culture in the workplace. The soft skills of emotional intelligence make all the difference.

Change creates anxiety, stress, restlessness, and pain. Employees have a yearning to feel cared for, during change. The emotionally intelligent CEO relates to this yearning. Underneath that yearning is a deep fear of change.

Showing they care in a sincere way is a great strategy to build the confidence of the people, build trust, correct any wrong doings of the past, and to strengthen the image of the CEO.

A caring CEO genuinely cares about the staff, volunteers, customers, and patrons. They create an environment where everyone feels valued, supported, appreciated, and heard. No matter how busy they are, they make time for others.

Caring CEOs know how to value the staff and fine tune their talents and skills to better serve the company. This increases productivity, profits, and a happier work environment. Caring leadership creates a sense of belonging. A sense of belonging lifts the angst from the workplace. This puts the staff at ease to give their best, above and beyond. They feel like going the extra mile to make the CEO shine. In the longer run, when there is caring leadership, everybody benefits.

A CEO rarely becomes caring by accident. It must be nurtured and nourished over time.

The emotionally intelligent CEO shows they care by listening to their employees. No matter who suggests the feedback, especially during change they are on higher alert than usual when it comes to listening to their employees. They are willing to put their personal differences and personality conflicts aside for the sake of the company. This is a sign that they care about the people as well as the company.

The caring CEO practices active listening. It is not listening for the sake of listening. It is listening for the sake of caring. They might repeat or clarify what was said, to indicate that they are genuinely following the dialogue, they might nod their head, their body language might show alertness rather than lethargy. These are physical components of active listening. It sends home the message of “I do care about your well-being.” To the employees undergoing change, this message can mean a whole lot.

Underlying the caring is the understanding that at the end of the day every person is a human being with feelings. Not a case number. Artificial intelligence makes the staff feel like a case number. Emotional intelligence makes the staff feel like a human being. They have a yearning to feel cared for, even though they may not say or show it. Sincere caring shows a person that they are being appreciated, many people feel unappreciated by their CEOs. The emotionally intelligent CEO earns the loyalty of their employees by appreciating them. This in turn can translate into dollar profits in the long term. It also attracts peak performing employees to apply for jobs to work at a caring organization.

Artificial intelligence makes the staff feel like a case number. Emotional intelligence makes the staff feel like a human being.

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At the end of the day everyone has a yearning to feel validated. No matter what a person's job title or income bracket maybe, every person has a yearning to feel validated.

Especially during change, that yearning is high. The emotionally intelligent CEO delivers that validation by showing they care.

Old Habits Die Hard

The emotionally intelligent CEO understands that cultivating a new skill is gradual. It has stops, starts, detours, and pauses.

The old ways will reassert themselves from time to time. This is particularly true at the beginning when the new habit feels strange, scary, uncomfortable, and unfamiliar, and the old habit still feels natural.

Temporary lapses are expected and will happen when change takes place within an organization. After all, old habits die hard. Here is where the insight of the emotionally intelligent CEO comes into play.

The key to using slips constructively is to realize that a step backward is not the same as a total relapse. Using encouragement, understanding, and compassion, the emotionally intelligent CEO is available during such relapse. Rather than making the team feel bad about themselves the

emotionally intelligent CEO inspires them to pick themselves up one more time. By being emotionally available to the team, employees become more attuned to the bad days when they revert to their old habits that are comfortable to them.

Being Emotionally Present

The emotionally intelligent CEO through words, example, and actions is emotionally present during change.

They are engaged.

They send the following important message during change: “We all have the courage to leave the familiar, in order to discover the unfamiliar. Let’s make that crossing together, to leave our comfort zones and to tread into uncomfortable territory.”

Being emotionally present to instill courage within the team prevents the team from feeling demoralized when they have a relapse and return to their old habits.

It becomes a vaccination against despair.

If not for the emotional presence, an organization undergoing massive change is likely to interpret the lapse as pessimism, as a total failure as though they are permanently flawed.

Instead, the emotionally intelligent CEO sends the constant message that change is possible. That it is okay to feel “out of sorts” for a while.

Send the following important message during change: “*We all have the courage to leave the familiar, in order to discover the unfamiliar. Let’s make that crossing together, to leave our comfort zones and to tread into uncomfortable territory.*”

Unlearning an Old Habit and Learning Brand New Habits

The emotionally intelligent CEO knows that change takes time. Patience is key. An impatient CEO who expects change to take root overnight fails to connect with the organization. Change affects our emotions, and the emotionally intelligent CEO is aware of that. Sending the staff for a day long seminar on emotional competency may not produce miraculous results. Transformation does not happen overnight, rather, over time. A single seminar or workshop is a beginning, but it is not sufficient.

Transformation does not happen overnight, rather, over time.

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People learn a new skill more effectively if they have repeated chances to practice it over an extended period than if they have the same amount of practice lumped into a single intensive session.

Reaching the point where a new habit replaces the old takes extensive practice. It is easy to revert to old ways. Patience is a virtue, to see change being implemented.

The longer people work at changing, the more durable the change will be. Weeks are better than days, months are better than weeks.

The emotionally intelligent CEO knows that over-learning a new habit is better than under learning. When people practice a new habit repeatedly where they can do it well, it greatly reduces the likelihood they will revert to the old habit under pressure.

This change can be difficult, yet possible.

New habits related to emotional competence take far longer to seep through than learning a new skill such as learning a new software program.

The reason being that with replacing an old emotional competence and replacing it with a new one requires an unlearning process and then replacing it with a new one.

Emotions are deeply ingrained. Unlearning an old way of thinking or feeling takes longer and is more complicated than learning a new software program.

While there is no specified time, the period for an

emotional competence to take root can take six months or longer. On the other hand, learning a new software program can take a few days or a month.

Unlearning an old way of thinking or feeling takes longer and is more complicated than learning a new software program.

An emotional competence that is being introduced as brand new, such as making eye contact when someone is talking, can take less time than it would to unlearn an emotional competence.

Unlearning how to not rush into assumptions can take a longer time than it would be to learn brand new, how to make eye contact when someone is talking.

Long established habits like having a short temper are deeply ingrained. In such cases we need to work both at unlearning the old automatic habit and at replacing it with the new, improved one.

Chapter 3

Chief Listening Officer



It takes courage to stand up and speak. It takes greater courage to sit down and listen. Listening, true listening, is, a lot of work. Sometimes it surpasses listening to what someone is saying, and the words being spoken. Listening means to be attuned to the world surrounding us, staying current, seeing ahead, and knowing what to weed out from a conversation.

Emotionally intelligent CEOs are excellent listeners. They think about everything they say, but don't say everything they think. They know when to stop talking and when it is better to start listening. Having that discernment of when to stop talking and to start listening can be such a stress-saver.

Not every CEO has the oratory skills of the Roman Emperor Cicero. However, nearly all of them cultivate the

art of listening. They know that CEO communication isn't just dispensing information.

It is hearing it as well. They spend more time hearing, rather than talking. Emotionally intelligent CEOs know it is more important to listen much more and talk less. That's why they have two ears and only one mouth.

They listen more and talk less.

Emotionally intelligent CEOs think about everything they say but doesn't say everything they think.

They listen long enough so that the people talking feel heard. Then, they stop. Listening does not mean that they listen endlessly and allow the other person to go off on a rant that take all their time.

Excellent listeners don't allow ramblers to waste their precious minutes and seconds. They know when it is time to pass the baton. They also know when it is time to get up and leave or when it is time to remove themselves from that useless group chat that is getting them deeper into a hole.

The chief listening officer is like a physician with excellent bedside manner. In order to prescribe the best medi-

ciné, they must first listen to the needs of the patient. A doctor who simply starts prescribing meds without listening to the patient's ailment is not going to make a sound diagnosis. Sure, there are many doctors like that today who are making good sums of money without being good listeners. They are usually not the ones however who make the climb upward to becoming outstanding and well loved physicians. They remain the average physician.

There is danger to not listening. A doctor who fails to listen could prescribe the wrong medicine or the wrong dose of medication. This could lead to a malpractice lawsuit, the doctor being mandated to take a course on communications skills, being put on administrative leave, facing a prison sentence if it causes a wrongful death and much more.

The consequences of failing to listen can be dire for a CEO. It could lead to the loss of money, hiring a wrong employee, letting go of a good employee, facing lawsuits, and the list is endless. There is danger to not listening.

Being a great communicator is not just about being a great orator or going viral on You Tube. The emotionally intelligent CEO knows what needs to be expressed and what is best left unexpressed; They know who to express it to and who to leave out. They make themselves worth listening to when they speak using relevant stories, examples, or humor, and real life experiences. The emotionally intelligent CEO knows that communication, speaking, listening, is about bonding and connecting, not just dispensing data.

Tips for better listening skills:

- ***Have eye contact with the speaker***
 - ***Don't cut off statements***
 - ***Respond genuinely***
 - ***Understand the process, not only conclusions***
 - ***Don't impose your own view, but listen responsively to develop the speaker's own conclusions***
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The Art of Effective Listening

Listening is an art. People who seem easier to talk to, get to hear more. The first step is giving the message that one is open to listening. CEOs with the “closed door, get out of my way” policy lacks empathy. CEOs with the “open door” policy appear more approachable and go out of their way to hear what people have to say. People who seem easy to talk to get to hear more.

A caring CEO, listens. CEOs who cannot listen or do not want to listen come across as indifferent or uncaring. This emotional response of being uncaring makes the other party less communicative and sometimes, angry.

Desperation is not a good listening skill, especially in sales. When we are desperate to make a sale, we don't listen as well.

The emotionally intelligent CEO knows there is nothing better in selling than when someone objects to something and they can say with empathy “You are absolutely right, we should take that into account,” rather than disagreeing and pulling the power trip. The emotionally intelligent CEO does much better at sales when they listen and sympathize with the other person’s viewpoint, even if they vehemently disagree. They validate the customer, no matter how bizarre and wrong the customer maybe. Knowing how to validate is a key part of effective listening, especially when two parties disagree.

Knowing how to validate is a key part of effective listening, especially when two parties disagree.

Listening well and deeply means going beyond what is being said on the surface. It means asking a lot of questions. Sometimes it means restating in one’s own words what was told, to make sure it was understood accurately. That is “active” listening. The emotionally intelligent CEO knows that “active” listening is a whole lot of work. It takes energy, time, and effort. A mark of having truly heard someone else

is to respond appropriately, even if that means making some change.

Heart leaders listen well. They understand that in business they need to have the analytics, the discipline, and the guardrails of profit, compliance, and the laws. They also understand that without the heart and caring they miss the greater potential for business. Listening to the heart gets them connected with the humanity of a business.

People who seem easy to talk to get to hear more.

Good Listeners Have Great Intuition

Peak performing CEOs are usually intuitive. They have an ability to extract the right answer from the limited information they have and the confidence to make decisions armed only with that information. Yes, they engage with their mind, and listen with their heart. The emotionally intelligent CEO has the awareness that to differentiate and to move to the future, they must rely on intuition. Acting on intuition does not mean ignoring the facts and data. What it does mean is that we trust ourselves. Intuitive people know that while numbers may reveal what happened, they don't always tell you what to do. Intuitive people know that they

can do little to change the past. They can do a whole lot more about the future.

Intuitive people know that they can do little to change the past. They can do a whole lot more about the future.

A CEO who listens well, who has the confidence to lead with the heart can keep data and processes in their proper place. People who listen well develop instinct. They see instinct as a great simplifier. Having good instinct does not complicate things; it simplifies things. While they agree that data can yield valuable insights, instinct is essential to running and simplifying a business. Listening brings in the human perspective. Listening to that “gut” is knowing “in our bones” what path to take when the road seems foggy, when no one is there to hold our hand to say “I got your back,” when we feel totally lost.

Artificial intelligence cannot listen with their “gut.” An emotionally intelligent CEO, can. That’s the difference.

The Value of Silence

To be still and to think little could be the cheapest medicine to cure many diseases affecting a company. At least, that is how an emotionally intelligent CEO feels sometimes, during chaos. They value the power of silence.

Silence has a way of clearing out the clutter. When the funding falls through, when key employees quit, when there is a lawsuit pending, when the toxicity is infecting the entire staff, and office morale is an all time low, it is chaos.

During this chaos the emotionally intelligent CEO keeps still within themselves. In order to tackle the chaos, they must occasionally turn away from it and practice silence.

To be still and think little could be the cheapest medicine to cure many diseases affecting a company.

Silence is a key part of listening. Silence comes under the category of “meaningful” listening. Essentially, it means that when people talk or answer questions, the emotionally intelligent CEO listens and remembers what was said. That is how they differentiate and rise through the ranks.

It is hard for people to feel engaged if they are not listened to. We give and express respect when we listen in silence, to the other person. Looking at text alerts, looking at the caller ID or yawning while the other person is talking are not signs of respect. They send the signal that nothing of what is being said is going in. It shows lack of emotional intelligence. Listening silently is a way to demonstrate self confidence in not needing the one to be talking. By giving the time to the other person, we increase our chances of being heard when it is our time to speak.

Emotional Presence

Being emotionally present during boring, dragging meetings takes skill and a whole lot of effort. It is easy to be emotionally absent and yet be physically present at such meetings. Sometimes, it is better to be that way- to just show up in body but not in spirit. For the most part however, being emotionally present is a key part of listening. When we intensely listen to people they tell us things, things that often others don't know because they didn't pay attention.

The emotionally present CEO knows that if their mind is someplace else, that it can be a waste of time. Why go through the effort of observing, studying, and asking questions, if they are not mentally and emotionally present? After all, the emotional absence shows up on their body, eyes, and face.

The emotionally intelligent CEO knows what it is like to

listen to drier-than-dirt boring meetings. They still focus on the people they are with. They know the repercussions if the boredom becomes too obvious. Trying to sneak and read your smartphone under the table is poor body language to exude at a boring meeting. The emotionally intelligent CEO does not pretend to be there. They *are* there.

The emotionally intelligent CEO does not pretend to be there. They are there.

Wherever You Are, Be There

Rather than thinking about what you are intending to say the whole time the other person is talking, just simply listen. It is difficult to listen to the other person if you are planning to speak the whole time. Resist the urge to interrupt, reply, and blurt out responses. The emotionally intelligent CEO exercises restraint, biting their tongue the whole time.

Effective listeners get the bulk of their information and feedback from listening. The average CEO listens because they are afraid, they will be attacked or may look foolish and inadequate in front of others. The underlying reason for the average CEO to listen attentively is for self-protection. The emotionally intelligent CEO on the other hand listens to be

open to new information, be ahead of the curve, and get hidden insight from different perspectives.

Rather than getting preoccupied with presenting the right words and looking good, the emotionally intelligent CEO considers what others are saying and how their words are affecting people.

Listening Landmines

Here are listening landmines the emotionally intelligent CEO avoids:

- Trying to read the other person's mind, during the conversation
- Getting preoccupied with that perfect comeback line
- Selectively absorbing only the parts they want to take in
- Interrupting and derailing the conversation
- Roll the eyes
- Finishing the sentences for the other person
- Talking over the other person

13 Listening Skills for the Emotionally intelligent CEO

Any person can master these thirteen listening skills if they work hard at them.

1 Keep it Simple and Structured

Keeping it succinct sends the following message: Tell me what I need to hear. Not what I want to hear. The more ideas an emotionally intelligent CEO has, the fewer words they take to express those ideas.

The emotionally intelligent CEO keeps it compact. Think of the semi-truck versus the compact car. When the car is compact it can go faster, stop quicker, change lanes smoother and overall, is nimbler. When the CEO is compact in the follow up response, body language, and listening skills, it creates brevity, sensitivity, and better time management. It makes things more structured and to the point. When the semi-truck concept appears, the conversation begins to derail, become awkward, it could hit a sensitive nerve, one person could flare up and walk away. Unnecessary negativity could creep in leading to unwanted hassle.

Keeping it compact keeps things to the point. CEOs are mindful of “sound bites” which are short, succinct words that have impact and makes the headlines. Emotionally intelligent CEOs only let the listener know, what they need to know. Nothing beyond. For them, brief isn’t enough. Every word, every blink of an eye, every smile (or frown) matters. It counts.

The emotionally intelligent CEO makes sure they have every word they say mean the right thing, most of the time. For them, every word carries the weight of a century. They weigh it, consider it, and think through it, before releasing it

from the mouth. The emotionally intelligent CEO does not talk to make time. They talk to save it.

The emotionally intelligent CEO does not talk to make time. They talk to save it.

2 Keeping it to the Point

Frequently, people act like they are listening when they are not listening at all. Emotionally intelligent CEOs either listen, or show that they are, or get out of that conversation very quickly. Every minute matters to them, sometimes, every second.

When someone begins to ramble, the conversation begins to become a waste of time. Emotionally intelligent CEOs know how to draw everyone back into a conversation. When people at the office are going off point the CEO is likely to reel them back in with a comment such as “We could talk all day about this. I believe I have some key issues. Let’s come back to the decision. Should we expand on the new wing or cut back?”

The emotionally intelligent CEO is like the courtroom judge. They listen to all sides, without taking sides. Then, they reflect. They are typically, the last to speak, not the first

person to blurt out on how things ought to be. Emotionally intelligent CEOs get right to the point. They don't want others to waste their time, and they don't waste other people's time.

3 Emotionally Intelligent CEOs Know When to Expand on Their Words

There are times when a single word answer or brief conversations can damage relationships, lead to misunderstandings, or escalate misgivings between one another. Sometimes, brevity can be deadly. A longer explanation is needed.

A time not to be too brief is while answering a question from someone to which the CEO has delegated a task. Rather than giving a one-word answer, they might explain a little more than they typically would. This increases people's comfort level when more details are provided. Emotionally intelligent CEOs know that in some situations, brevity can be disastrous. They don't want to look like they are ducking out on tough questions, glossing over difficult matters, or overlooking what is important.

Emotionally intelligent CEOs make communication a two-way street as much as possible.

Healthy communications are a two-way street. This reinforces to the person talking that the CEO values their opinion, that the input of the person talking, does matter. Very often, it is easier and faster to delegate directly and

specifically with no debate. Emotionally intelligent CEOs know that in order to build motivated support, they should avoid that approach where it is a one-way street.

4 Every Person Carries Influence

Everyone carries influence. Some, more than others. Not everyone is a customer to your business. Yet, every person carries some kind of influence. That person who might never be a customer could however have the influence over someone who could potentially become a customer and how they talk about your business.

Everyone carries influence. Some, more than others.

It is easy to snap at the client who calls at 7:00pm, get agitated by the secretary at the brokerage house who cannot find your account, or become exasperated at the clerk at the gas station who lets other people cut in line before you without saying something.

They may not be direct customers to your business.

They are the type of people that you are unlikely to deal with or see again.

Emotional intelligence expands the CEO's mind to think wider. The world is an oyster. They imagine that the clerk who allowed two other people to cut in front of you, could actually be the 16-year-old daughter of one of your clients, the secretary who is clueless about your account could be going home to a physically abusive husband.

Even if you may never see those people again, snapping at the person or saying something out of line could get you recorded on cell phone and go viral on social media.

It can come to haunt your CEO image. Even while standing in line at the grocery store, the CEO is sometimes on guard, assuming they are being watched.

Emotionally intelligent CEOs pay attention to their reputation. Embarrassing someone or berating them could possibly be the end of the CEO title. It could cause them to spend the next six months on damage control, re- building their image, or having to say sorry to someone they disrespect with a passion.

All of which could have been avoided if they were conscious of the fact that every person carries some level of influence. Emotionally intelligent CEOs know that they will get nowhere in the long run or short run by humiliating someone privately or publicly.

They see nearly every person they meet as a person of influence, a possible customer.

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5 After Taste

We create ripple effects everywhere we go (or stay). The type of ripple effects that we create either leave others in increase or in decrease. Emotionally intelligent CEOs pay attention to the ripple effects they create, that after taste. The emotionally intelligent CEO leaves a good taste, both verbally and visually, whenever possible. They avoid the body language that sends a neon flashing light that says, “you are so stupid.”

Rarely do they talk to someone assuming they will never do business with that person, ever again. Especially in the world of internet, everyone is connected. Rather than yelling off at a customer saying, “Don’t ever come into my store again,” the emotionally intelligent CEO might say “We look forward to doing business with you when the time seems right.” Deep inside, they treat the other person as their next biggest client, ten years down the road.

6 Hearing Things Differently

Emotionally intelligent CEOs have awareness that listening skills vary according to each person

A person raised in a violent, conflict-ridden household is likely to have a different listening style than someone who spent the first 20 years of their lives in a quiet, soft-spoken home. Someone who lived in a 50-foot-tall high rise apartment complex is used to listening in small, confined spaces, while someone raised in a 300-acre sprawling ranch in

Montana maybe used to open spaces and loudness in talking. A child growing up in a home with a stay-at-home mother is probably more used to having conversations in the home rather than a child with two working parents with incredibly long working hours and are hardly available to talk to the kids. The six-year-old who spends their after school hours in a loud, metal working factory to be with their dad would have different listening skills than a person who frequents the quiet country club for lunch every afternoon. The listening style of someone living in the wilderness of Africa might be radically different with that of someone growing up in a mansion in Darien, Connecticut. These are a few examples to show that our listening styles can vary.

Emotionally intelligent. CEOs are tolerant and aware of the fact that the other party is probably not following the same communication rules as them. The other person's upbringing, training, exposure, and temperament could have been radically different. They leave room for variations when it comes to listening styles.

7 Disagreement is not a Sign of Disloyalty

Emotionally intelligent CEOs understand that when an employee, client, or a stranger overtly disagrees with them or objects to something that they said, it is not dislike, disloyalty, or rejection. It might simply be their style. They may also be saying it to be of help, to save the other person from a major catastrophe, In a world where the word “no” is

coated in various flavors, sometimes, it can be refreshingly welcoming to hear someone disagree with bluntness and openness.

The emotionally intelligent CEO understands that disagreement is not the same as disloyalty. Disagreement can be the very thing they need at that junction to prevent a disaster from exploding.

In a world where the word “no” is coated in various flavors, sometimes, it can be refreshingly welcoming to hear someone disagree with bluntness and openness.

8 The Emotionally Intelligent CEO Uses Variety in their Follow-Up Responses

When someone else is doing all the talking and the possibility of an interjection seems nil to none, it is common for the listener to repeat “Yes,” “Yeah,” “Okay” and keep nodding the head. The emotionally intelligent CEO, as tedious as the conversation maybe, might use variety to acknowledge what is being said. They give their acknowledgements some personality, by saying “good point,” “I see where you are going with this,” or “exactly.” They avoid the

tone in their voice that says “Yeah, get on with it. I am busy.”

9 The Emotionally Intelligent CEO Gets Internal Feedback About the Listening Styles

Being able to receive feedback helps the emotionally intelligent CEO to get better at listening. They may pick someone to attend a meeting with and allow that person to be the eyes and ears of what is happening. This helps them to improve their listening. In essence the emotionally intelligent CEO is humbly asking a third party “how is my listening?” This is the kind of visible banner we see posted on some trucks on the road that say “how is my driving?” and there is a phone number to call with feedback.

10 The Emotionally Intelligent CEO Gives the Personal Touch with Handwritten Notes

A powerful, personal way that the emotionally intelligent CEO sends a message that says “I hear you. I am listening. Talk to me” is through handwritten notes. Receiving a handwritten note on good stationery from the CEO is a joy for the staff. This is an emotional intelligence tool because it shows the CEO cares enough to give it time.

Handwritten notes are rare in the CEO world today. It is an emotionally intelligent technique to say “I care enough to listen.” It shows deliberation. It also gives the receiver some-

thing to read, review, and reflect on, when needing a good boost of motivation. The emotionally intelligent CEO also knows that many will keep that handwritten note in a safe place for years to come. They will be heard, many times over and over, every time the receiver opens that card.

Handwritten notes are rare in the CEO world today. It is an emotionally intelligent technique to say “I care enough to listen.”

At a deeper level, this simple gesture of a handwritten note could prevent a company from a million dollar lawsuit. An employee who gets fired and feels they were wronged, might not file a lawsuit because of their nostalgic recollection of receiving a handwritten note from the CEO of that company two years prior. Who knows, that may have been the first and only handwritten note that employee may have ever received. This could prevent the employee from filing a lawsuit that could get the company into trouble, lead to financial loss, or possibly get the CEO fired. All because of a simple, handwritten card and the positive emotional ripple effects associated with it.

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11 Empathy and Listening

Sensing what others feel without their saying so captures the essence of empathy. Some people cannot adequately express themselves. They rarely tell in words what they feel. Instead, they tell us in their tone of voice, facial expressions, and other nonverbal ways. The ability to sense these subtle communications builds on more basic competencies, particularly self-awareness and self-control. Without the ability to sense our own feelings-or to keep them from swamping us, the emotionally intelligent CEO is out of touch with the moods of others.

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Empathy is our social radar. The person lacking empathy is “off.” Being emotionally tone-deaf leads to social awkwardness. Not being able to read another person can lead to misconstruing feelings, create rude and blunt remarks that are out of line, and turn a good employee into a despicable one. The lack of empathy can lead to a CEO

responding to other people as stereotypes rather than unique individuals.

12 Applying the Three Levels of Empathy in Our Listening Skills

Empathy can be broken down to three levels. The emotionally intelligent CEO who practices it well embodies all three well and applies them on the job.

1. At the very least empathy requires being able to read another's emotions.
2. It entails sensing and responding to a person's unspoken concerns or feelings.
3. At the highest level empathy is understanding the issues or concerns that lie behind another's feelings.

Here is an example of how these three levels can unfold and how an emotionally intelligent CEO might handle it. This example shows how it unfolds in the listening process. The CEO appoints two staff members who have never worked together before, to jointly do a nighttime shift at the call center. Ramya and David are now assigned to work together. Right after the first shift Ramya calls in sick the next day. The following day she shows up with her mother for work, which is highly unusual and not allowed. After a

few weeks she tells the boss that feels too ill to work on that shift.

A CEO lacking emotional intelligence and completely void of emotion might fire Ramya or continue to ignore the situation. This can lead to David becoming frustrated as he feels like he is showing up for work while Ramya is slacking, he might bring his girlfriend in for work since Ramya's mother is tagging along, and he too, might call in sick. Eventually, it could lead to that department collapsing.

Did the CEO listen well? Probably not. The CEO had no empathy towards the situation. He failed to read the emotions underneath the actions.

The three levels of empathy unfold as follows. Every level tests the listening skills of the CEO. The first level requires a CEO at the very least to be able to read Ramya's emotions. Does Ramya feel at ease or visibly uncomfortable? Noticing her discomfort is passing that first level of empathy. The second level entails sensing and responding to Ramya's unspoken concerns or feelings. While she has not said anything directly to the CEO the presence of her mother at the workplace seems odd. If the CEO is a good listener this should become an expression of her concern for being there alone with David during the night shift. To have this insight requires the third level of empathy, which is the highest level of relating to another person's needs and putting oneself in another person's shoes. Ramya comes from a different culture, where women do not typically work alone side by side with men. Hence her mother has insisted

on being physically present at the office site. Ramya cannot quit her job as she supports her family financially. This is where it would be of help to sit down with Ramya to ask what can be done to lift the barriers to have better productivity and minimize absenteeism. Can the shifts be staggered? Would she be comfortable working with a female during the night shift? Can she do the workload of both David and herself?

The emotionally intelligent CEO listens very differently. They are willing to expand their thinking and become creative in getting the most out of employees. Emotional intelligence-based listening in this case, prevents the CEO from misunderstanding Ramya, driving David to find another job because he feels like he has to make up for Ramya's absence, and decreased productivity.

The key to knowing another's emotional terrain is an intimate familiarity with our own. When we are highly attuned to ourselves, we are able to put aside our own emotional agendas for the time being so that we can clearly receive the other person's signals. The prerequisite for empathy is self-awareness, recognizing the visceral signals of feelings in one's own body.

13 Keeping it Smooth

The emotionally intelligent CEO exudes smoothness whenever they can. They go above and beyond to avoid yelling, arguing, needless confrontation, bickering, and toxi-

city from infecting the mood of a working environment. There is a spontaneous entrainment that happens when two people start talking with each other and are on the same emotional wavelength. When there is a healthy level of emotional intelligence they immediately begin to fall into a subtle dance of rhythmic harmony, synchronizing their movements and postures, their vocal pitch, role of speaking, and even the length of pauses between one person's speaking and the other's response. By keeping it smooth, they take the edge off.

By keeping it smooth, they take the edge off.

Chapter 4

Handling Difficult Conversations



Difficult conversations are not simple. Most people avoid difficult conversations like the plague. They stand by the sidelines allowing other souls to volunteer to come forward and face ugly conversations.

Difficult conversations become hostile, unpleasant, and surface the rawness of negative emotions. The person handling those difficult conversation is often seen as a “bad” or unpopular person. The reality is that a CEO must face difficult conversations and may not always become popular and well-loved as a result. Yet, they must be faced.

While you can choose to avoid having discussions altogether, being able to successfully navigate a difficult conversation can bring about positive change and save relationships. It can eliminate misunderstandings from

taking mental root within employees. It can uproot unnecessary rumors and gossip floating around, that eat into workplace productivity, and stop the spread of lies about people. Facing difficult conversations can lift the angst and awkwardness that's constantly floating in the office "airspace."

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While others flee from a difficult conversation, the emotionally intelligent CEO is often likely to find themselves all alone when it comes to facing those ugly, unpleasant talks that are conveniently avoided.

They see those conversations as opportunities that can add another dimension to their stature as an influential and powerful CEO. Handling difficult conversations is a way to stand out and shine.

When a difficult conversation is addressed and not delayed it sheds light on how to receive a problem. It tweaks the lens in how a problem is viewed. It also helps to determine if the problem should be addressed at all.

Without a conversation miscommunication, manipulation, and misunderstanding begin to breed and flourish freely. Facing it helps to determine if there is actually a problem at all or if it is a hyped-up unnecessary lie.

When difficult conversations are addressed, it plants the seeds for some kind of change. It creates a glimmer of hope that the unhealthy dynamic might begin to disappear, at least for a little while.

Postponing a difficult conversation removes this kind of hope. Facing difficult conversations pushes an organization to embrace constructive change. If the friction is ignored the situation continues to be static. The problem will take deeper and deeper root until it becomes too late to address it.

Which direction this change takes place depends on the person leading the conversation and the person with the most influence. While the destination of a problem cannot be changed overnight, direction can be changed overnight. It all begins by addressing and confronting the difficult conversation.

Facing a problem rather than running away from it, often leads the way to a deeper understanding of why that problem is happening, in some cases recurring, and why an individual keeps doing things the way they do.

Deeper understanding of a situation opens creative approaches to handling the same old problems.

Often, the stand-off point is having a difficult conversation in repairing damaged or destroyed relationships.

How many relationships that have been severed, destroyed without repair, and shattered to bits could have been easily avoided of disastrous outcomes if difficult conversations were faced on time?

One may never know because those conversations were never held on time, or they were handled in disastrous ways. To effectively repair a damaged relationship, the problem has to be faced.

Often, the stand-off point is having a difficult conversation in repairing damaged or destroyed relationships.

The emotionally intelligent CEO knows that avoiding difficult conversations is not always the best option. They know that sometimes, the best path forward is to face those difficult conversations, head on.

Difficult conversations are easy to ignore yet hard to live with. Ignoring them is a slippery slope into frustration, despair, and financial loss for an organization.

The Onion Syndrome

Sometimes the outer skin and the outer layers of an onion appear to be fine. Yet, when the skin is peeled off and the layers are removed a rotten odor begins to attack the nasal senses. The stench gets stronger and stronger as the core of the onion is approached.

Simply peeling away the skin does not take care of the rotten onion. The layers must be removed one at a time until the rotten core is found.

Difficult problems that happen in a workplace take a similar effect just like that rotten onion. Glossing over the problem, pretending it does not exist, delaying it, or blaming everyone else and doing nothing about it, simply allow the problem to take deeper root, just like allowing the onion to rot completely.

Stepping up to face the ugliness of a problem is like facing the core of a rotten onion. It's not a pleasant sight, it's not a pleasant smell, nor is it a pleasant touch. Yet, to rise above that problem that difficult conversation must be held. That rotten core must be removed first, before moving in a healthier direction.

The Deeper the Problem, the Deeper the Need for Team Work

As the problem escalates, the need for teamwork elevates. Good times attract good employees. Bad times test them. As

the problem thickens people begin to disappear, especially when they realize that it is not fun to be around that problem, or if they feel that they are not going to get the benefits that they anticipated.

As the problem deepens, the stress deepens. It puts added pressure on the CEO to face it to erase it.

It is when the need for teamwork is at its peak that the emotionally intelligent CEO finds themselves alone.

They often face the difficult questions posed by the media, alone; they may find that there are plenty of people waiting to find fault with them; employees that they thought were for them may now be against them; their family and friends may screen phone calls because they don't want to get involved, and their friends might join hands with competitors because of financial benefits.

Good times attract good employees. Bad times test them.

What typically happens is that as the problems becomes uglier and uglier, and its "stench" becomes unbearable, the loyalty numbers begin to dwindle, the availability of others take a dip; employees flee the company like rats

deserting a sinking ship. The availability of people willing to forego their TV couch time, vacations, and their social interactions to face the problem become smaller and smaller. These are the times that friendships, employee loyalty, and stick-to-itiveness get tested. An emotionally intelligent CEO knows that they are being watched, every step of the way in how they handle the problem during such difficult times. As the problem deepens those watching in the sidelines are silently talking amongst themselves “Let’s see how the CEO handles this problem.”

Why Emotions Matter During Difficult Conversations

Emotions can make us or break us. How the emotionally intelligent CEO regulates their emotions preceding, during, and after that difficult conversation, how they take in the aftershocks of a painful encounter, whether they bounce back or become bogged down by the conversation, and the trauma they experience after the event has passed are just a handful of ways in how emotional intelligence gets tested during difficult conversations.

Difficult conversations and situations can trigger strong emotions and stress. These can interfere with one’s communication, judgment, and relationships. Therefore, it is essential to manage emotions and stress, and help the other person do the same. This avoids reacting impulsively or defensively. To help the other person manage their emotions

and stress, emotionally intelligent CEOs use supportive and reassuring language, and offer empathy and assistance.

A CEO lacking emotional intelligence might avoid the difficult conversation altogether and expect the problem or point of friction to slowly disappear by itself. On rare occasions, this does happen, where a major problem automatically disappears.

Difficult conversations can dissolve into madness if emotions take over.

Difficult conversations can dissolve into madness if emotions take over. A CEO who lacks self-regulation might lash out, get into verbal rage, go off topic, and air dirty linen, during a difficult conversation. Having the upper hand of authority may help them to get away with such behavior and even come out stronger. The residue it leaves however damages employee morale.

The emotionally intelligent CEO has better control of their emotions during difficult conversations. They pay attention to the long-term impact of their emotions on the staff and employee morale during difficult conversations. They know it matters.

Facing the Standoff, Head On

To face the difficult conversations, the emotionally intelligent CEO accepts the reality of the situation, not as they would like it to be but as it actually is. Facing the reality in how it is and not how they would like it to be gives them the advantage of addressing the problem at hand with truthfulness. It removes the façade, pretensions, and lies. It exposes without delay, the difficult conversation that needs to take place, to deal with the problem. This creates transparency.

At a time when many people turn the other way or are in denial of having to face a difficult conversation, the emotionally intelligent CEO tackles it head on. They handle the difficult, ugly, tumultuous conversations that nobody else wants to have. Just like everyone else they, too, might feel fear, anxiety, anger, and frustration, during the process. Yet, they face the standoff.

What sets apart the emotionally intelligent CEO in facing difficult conversations is their willingness to confront those unpleasant situations head on and not palm them off to someone else for convenience. They have a willingness to take responsibility to attack the problem by facing those difficult conversations. They admit the existence of the problem and are not in denial of it. Emotional intelligence makes them face the reality of the situation. Facing the reality and accepting it for what it is, and not for what they would like it to be, gets the emotionally intelligent CEO ahead of the curve in finding right solutions.

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Facing the reality and accepting it for what it is, and not for what they would like it to be, gets the emotionally intelligent CEO ahead of the curve in finding right solutions.

We never know when something we say (or don't say) is a chance encounter that may create a path to greatness or end in disaster. The emotionally intelligent CEO takes a few seconds, or sometimes days, or even months, depending on the situation, to think about the most effective way to handle difficult conversations. Some decisions may be postponed for years, depending on their gravity and repercussions.

Composure During Difficult Conversations

Difficult conversations tend to deteriorate quickly. They turn sour and can often end up in stalemate. The emotionally intelligent CEO knows that difficult conversations can go smoother with effective communication. If both parties are yelling at each other, it is an indication that the difficult conversation has only festered and whatever that happens subsequently is probably not going to be

the best outcome. Difficult conversations, when handled with grace and composure can turn out to be beneficial sometimes.

Being assertive, aggressive, and tough are not necessarily defeating behaviors. They can be very helpful in boosting morale and increasing productivity in the workplace, depending on how they are executed. In polite societies where great emphasis is placed on pleasing the customer and the word “no” is seen as something negative, being graceful and composed are the standard etiquette.

Composure does not work every single time, with every single person. Some people don’t understand this approach. They misunderstand it to be a weakness.

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It’s more effective to enter a difficult conversation with a calm attitude than an agitated one. Calmness has a better opportunity to open new doors. Agitation is more likely to shut the doors that are still left open for reconcilia-

tion. However, this approach of being calm may not work every single time with every single person.

Some people see calmness as a weakness. They see kindness as a weakness. In such cases it takes emotional intelligence to decide it is time to switch gears to a more aggressive and confrontational approach. With some people it may call for “losing” one’s composure to be assertive, in order to get heard.

Some people misunderstand composure to be an opportunity to dominate the other person and overpower them, rather than working through the problem to arrive at a healthy resolution. This may particularly be the case when dealing with males from some countries who are used to always being in charge and expecting everyone else to be “beneath” them. In such cases being composed can in fact backfire and allow the other person to continue with the wrongdoing and escalate the problem.

The emotionally intelligent CEO tries the composed approach and when the realization dawns upon them that it is not working and is in fact aggravating the problem, they turn it up a notch to become forcefully tough. Kind people can also be the toughest. Their toughness gets tested when they deal with difficult people. Knowing when to switch gears requires self-awareness. Switching from calmness to a more aggressive approach during a difficult conversation should become a tool of last resort after several attempts of being graceful and composed have failed.

Tough Compassion

Tough compassion is an attractive quality of the emotionally intelligent CEO. Deep inside, people with tough compassion have kindness. Kind people can be tough, aggressive, and assertive. They know when to use aggression, assertion, and toughness to shoot for the right outcome.

Kind people know when to say *no*.

Kindness is not meekness. Kindness, when used in proper measure and sincerity, is an attractive quality. Kindness feeds into a compassionate approach of handling difficult conversations.

Emotionally intelligent people practice kindness in handling difficult conversations. Being kind does not necessarily mean that someone is a pushover or that they can be easily taken advantage of.

Kindness can become handy when an uncompromising approach is needed to handle some people and some situations. Kind people use an uncompromising approach of compassion when other attempts to engage with difficult people fail.

Kind people practice tough compassion. They don't allow others to treat them like a yo-yo. Tough compassion is enforcing principles in the workplace, empowering employees to take responsibility, the willingness to stomach some humiliation in the moment to enjoy long term positive results in the future.

Tough compassion means speaking up, not with hatred but with conviction. It empowers a person to take responsibility. It reduces opportunities for one employee to blame someone else and evade responsibility.

In committing to tough compassion one accepts the discomfort created for everyone involved, with the hopes that the person engaging in some conflict might either stop the pattern or do something differently.

Diplomacy in Difficult Conversations

Diplomacy is the art of maintaining functional, peaceful relationships in the workplace, especially when things get ugly. When practiced effectively, it leaves people in emotional increase and a good after taste.

The emotionally intelligent CEO practices diplomacy in having the difficult conversations. Being diplomatic does not mean being passive, submissive, or giving in to every demand of the other party. Diplomatic people express their opinions, needs, and boundaries; they simply assert themselves and their goals in respectfully peaceful ways.

Assertiveness means stating your position clearly and confidently, without being unfairly aggressive or manipulative. Being respectful means acknowledging the other person's position and rights, without being dismissive, rude, or demeaning. Seeking common ground and compromise helps in the diplomatic process.

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Here are five ways that the emotionally intelligent CEO practices diplomacy in the workplace:

1. Active listening
2. Staying objective rather than becoming emotionally entangled in a heated conversation
3. Avoid blame and shame
4. Emphasize relationships over tasks
5. From building a network, you move on to building relationships

Diplomats know that having heated conversations around a tough topic is far easier if they have already established a relatively healthy relationship with that person. To channel into this diplomacy, emotionally intelligent CEOs deliberately build relationships before they must ask for a favor or request something from someone else. Diplomatic CEOs first ask the other person what they can do for the other person, rather than determining what can the other person do for them.

Diplomats know that having heated conversations around a tough topic is far easier if they have already established a relatively healthy relationship with that person.

. . .

When diplomats need to engage in a difficult conversation, they first think of how to approach the conversation and how it might deepen or damage the existing relationship. They also ask themselves “Is this conversation best left, unsaid?” Or they might do a quick mental consultation to ask themselves “Is this the right time for this conversation?” Should I wait?”

A diplomatic CEO knows that they are not just representing themselves. They are representing a much greater cause and collective. They learn the triggers that get their emotions riled up and come up with effective ways to contain their emotions during difficult conversations. They use candor as necessary to be direct in a very diplomatic way.

Diplomacy enlightens a CEO to determine whether being discreet or extremely open would be better during difficult conversations. Sometimes the most appropriate action may be to withhold one’s opinion, or it may be possible to introduce an idea, or favored outcome, in such a way that the other person can take ownership of it. In other situations, it may be best to take a direct stance, stating exactly what you want and how you intend to achieve it.

Another skill for diplomacy is finding common ground and compromise with the other person. This means looking for areas of agreement, mutual interest, or shared values, and using them as a basis for negotiation and collaboration.

Compromise means being willing to give and take, and finding a solution that meets both parties' needs and interests, without sacrificing your core values or principles. To seek common ground and compromise, use positive and cooperative language, emphasize the benefits of the outcome, and express appreciation and gratitude.

9 Principles the Emotionally Intelligent CEO Follows When Attempting Difficult Conversations

Here are seven principles the emotionally intelligent CEO embraces in having a difficult conversation.

1 They Wait Till Their Emotions Subside Before They Decide

They give themselves time to calm down before they discuss the issue. They know that if they are angry or hurt, it may not be the best time to talk. It's more effective to enter a difficult conversation with a calm attitude. To calm down they may go outside for a walk, switch off the laptop to prevent themselves from sending a foolish e-mail that could cost them later, or practice quiet reflection. Whatever the strategy maybe they wait till their emotions subside before they decide.

. . .

2 Face the Issue as Soon as Possible

It's tempting to put off difficult conversations. However, not dealing with the issues can make them worse. In addition, it can prolong the anger and resentment that one feels. Emotionally intelligent CEOs find the courage to face the other person and make the conversation happen.

3 They Decide. They Don't Sit on the Fence for Too Long Wondering What to Do

A decision must be made on whether or not to embark on a difficult conversation. During the decision process here are some questions to keep in mind:

- What is the goal with this conversation? It's important to have clear goals in mind ahead of time to stay on topic.
- What outcome am I shooting for?
- Do I want to see things change? Or do I want things to remain the same after this difficult conversation has taken place?
- Do I want the other person to apologize?
- Do I want to apologize to the other person?

4 Valuing Silence and Pauses in the Conversation

The emotionally intelligent CEO knows how precious

silence and pauses can be during conversations, especially during difficult ones. It is not about getting the last word in. It is not about being right. It is about the processes involved in getting a favorable outcome. Silence and pauses are part of those processes. Emotionally intelligent people don't feel like they must fill every minute with words. Silence can be used to give both sides a break and a chance to figure out what to say next. It can help you analyze the previous words. Pauses can also help you both maintain calm.

5 They See it From the Other Person's Perspective

Give some thought to the other person's perspective. Put yourself in their shoes and try to view the situation from their point of view. Could you have made a wrongful assumption? Don't jump to conclusions but keep an open mind and attitude. This is a valuable way to de-escalate a confrontation during a difficult conversation.

6 Active Listening

One of the most important skills for diplomacy is empathy, which means putting yourself in the other person's shoes and trying to understand their perspective and feelings. Empathy can help you avoid assumptions, judgments, and defensiveness, and show respect and care for the other person. To demonstrate empathy, use active listening techniques, such as paraphrasing, reflecting, and asking open-

ended questions. This can help you clarify the situation, acknowledge the emotions, and build rapport.

Listening without interruption and reflecting back on what you have heard and understood shows you are genuinely interested in their views and you care and respect them and the relationship. Active listening shows that you are validating the other person.

7 Follow Up

After the difficult conversation has taken place, follow up and follow through as necessary. This means checking in with the other person after the interaction, and making sure that the agreed actions and solutions are implemented and monitored. By following up and following through, you can show your commitment, accountability, and respect for the relationship, and prevent misunderstandings, conflicts, or resentment. To follow up and follow through, use clear and consistent communication, and provide feedback and recognition. At the end of the conversation, ensure everyone is clear about expectations, agreements and responsibilities.

8 Preparation

Preparing to launch a difficult conversation involves more than rehearsing the words and body posture, repeatedly. A CEO who is emotionally angry, no matter how many times the lines maybe rehearsed and the body posture is

mastered, that preparation is not going to help in effectively handling the difficult conversation. Their emotion of anger will overrule the conversation. Preparation involves the proper management of emotions. Anger needs to be addressed first, before the body posture is rehearsed.

Before you approach a difficult conversation or situation, take some time to understand the context. What is the goal of the interaction? What are the expectations and needs of the other person? What are the potential risks and benefits of the outcome? By answering these questions, you can prepare yourself mentally and emotionally, and choose the best time, place, and tone for the conversation.

The emotionally intelligent CEO prepares before the conversation. If it is about a company decision, they consider all aspects of their concerns. Making a list of things they will talk about is part of the preparation. If they need to bring up previous incidents where things failed or went well to help the conversation at hand, they may do that as well. Preparation may also include a view of the future. The emotionally intelligent CEO might find the heart of the issues to not get lost during the conversation.

The emotionally intelligent CEO knows that some people are easy to deal with; others are more difficult. They will spend more time preparing for a conversation with a difficult customer. If it is someone who plays mind games there needs to be deeper preparation. They may even rehearse conversations such as “if the client says this, I will follow up with this statement.” Being prepared for difficult

conversations can save time, effort, and unwanted stress later on.

9 Face it, Not Fester it

Allowing things to fester before they are faced may give you time to cool off and get your emotions in check. It is also festering the situation as you are avoiding the problem. Avoidance means the behavior will go forward unaltered and unchecked, since the recipient has not heard your views. The consequences of that unwanted behavior will continue unabated until the issue is deal with.

Face it, to Not Fester it

A CEO lacking in emotional intelligence procrastinates the difficult conversation. Underlying that procrastination is often, fear and anxiety. That fear and anxiety comes out in different forms such as “I will wait till the next quarterly report,” “It is not that bad after all. It will resolve itself,” or “It’s not my problem.”

A CEO with healthy emotional intelligence is likely to have the difficult conversation without delay. They know, the

sooner the matter is dealt with, the sooner they can move on to the next thing on the agenda. It also buys them peace of mind.

The 4 Stages of a Difficult Conversation

An emotionally healthy CEO embraces the following four stages, when everyone else has bailed and they alone have to tackle that ugly conversation.

1. They are clear about the issue
2. They don't hesitate in having the conversation
3. How the conversation takes place
4. They allow the other person to talk and be open

The first step of clarity is critical. Bombarding an employee saying "I pay you this much and you are slacking at work and watching social media" is not going to cut it. Yet a CEO lacking in emotional intelligence who maybe simply brilliant in IQ might use that tactic in having a difficult conversation. It will only cause the employee to build a wall of defensiveness immediately and make life even more difficult for that CEO.

An emotionally intelligent CEO will have a different approach. They will have specific details about the exact behaviors and tell what is not acceptable and what they would like to see instead. It might be worded this way: "While our company does require social media use, we

would like to limit its use to work related matters only. I would like to see that the social media time coming from you furthers our company agenda. I cannot have it mixed with personal use.” The emotionally intelligent CEO is more succinct in having this difficult conversation.

The second step of procrastination maybe related to fear or anxiety. There may be some previous history with the other person and this could lead to fear. It could also be the fear on the part of the CEO as a person. It could also be related to the CEO caring about the other person’s feelings and the dread that can come out of it, wondering if the employee might continue liking you or if they will get angry.

An emotionally intelligent CEO knows that withholding a difficult conversation by procrastinating it is in the long run, not healthy for the company. Just as a parent who withholds teaching from the child for fear that the child will throw a tantrum is not serving the child any good in the longer run, and emotionally intelligent CEO knows that delaying the difficult conversation or being in denial will only damage the company, and potentially cost the CEO their job in a downturn of events.

The execution of the conversation or how the conversation takes place is the third step. CEOs lacking in emotional intelligence might beat around the bush and try to sugar coat the reality, hoping someone else will tackle the ugliness of the conversation. Soft pedaling the issue to protect the employee’s feelings can make matters worse. By and large, if the news is ugly, the employee would rather hear it directly

once, rather than hearing it indirectly a thousand different times. They would rather get one heavy blow rather than getting a thousand different blows extended over a two month period in small doses.

Emotionally intelligent CEOs are direct and they are sensitive. They know how to deliver a clear and direct message with crystal clear honesty. They do it with awareness, with empathy. An emotionally intelligent CEO first asks themselves the question: “how is this delivery going to affect the person’s self image?” They then adjust their approach accordingly. They combine directness with sensitivity.

The fourth step is allowing the other person to talk. Sometimes all the other person is looking for might be someone to talk to, someone who might just give them a few minutes of their life. Sometimes they may be looking for a venue to give vent. An emotionally intelligent CEO will listen.

The Art of Tackling Emotional Outbursts and Eruptions in Difficult Conversations

Difficult conversations rarely go as planned. Emotions are involved, the feelings levels are high ready to erupt when a raw nerve is touched. An emotionally intelligent CEO knows that when that raw nerve is touched they have very little control over the other party’s response. It’s like opening up a can of worms and the outpouring has started.

What the CEO *does* have, is how they handle that situation. These are the times that the executive presence of a CEO gets tested, sometimes in public. If handled properly an emotionally intelligent CEO can minimize the damage to the relationship and return the conversation to a productive space where both parties are listening to one another. This may not be possible sometimes, however.

CEOs with healthy emotional intelligence avoid two mistakes when someone lashes out at them during a difficult conversation or allows their emotions to take control of them.

1. They avoid saying “Calm down.” Here is the emotional intelligence reasoning behind it.
Telling the angry person to calm down and relax is another way of discounting the other person and saying the other person is wrong. This can only escalate the situation and completely spin out of control.
2. They avoid lashing back at the person and taking it a notch up to become even angrier. Here is the emotional intelligence reasoning behind it. When the second person also lashes out the subsequent conversation becomes dysfunctional and most likely will derail beyond the subject at hand.
Nobody benefits in the end.

Here are some ways that the emotionally healthy CEO might handle a situation when the other person lashes out during a difficult conversation.

1. They might do their best to stay calm and listen to the other person, to the best of their ability. They might reiterate this by saying “I know you are upset. I would be too if my boss just said that to me.” Here is the emotional intelligence reasoning behind it. Saying that statement shows empathy.
2. An emotionally intelligent CEO, during an emotional outburst might give the other person the gift of time. Here is the emotional intelligence reasoning behind it. They know that at the end of the day, what someone needs the most is someone to talk to, not necessarily someone to argue with. The outburst might actually be a way of communication, a cry for a yearning to feel heard. Emotionally intelligent people know that most of the time if people have their say their anger is likely to dissipate right in front of their eyes.
3. They might say “I am sorry. We need to discuss this at a better time. Today is not our day.”

Chapter 5

Handling Crisis the Emotionally Intelligent Way



*Conflict builds character.
Crisis defines it.
A crisis does not define a CEO.
It reveals a CEO.*

In the midst of chaos, there is also opportunity. Rather than embarking on the blame game, running away from the crisis, or pretending that it does not exist, the emotionally intelligent CEO faces the crisis, head on.

They don't do it alone.

They do it together, because alone they may be able to go far but it can take a long time. Together, they can go farther, faster.

Therefore they opt for the “together” mode in journeying through the crisis and discovering the gem that lies on the other side. On the other side of the crisis is often times, the advantages of greater opportunity, waiting to be seized.

A crisis does not define a CEO; it reveals a CEO.

One of the biggest challenges and opportunities that can befall a CEO is a crisis that tests their leadership, decision making skills, and integrity. This is when an executive presence is put on trial, asserted, or sometimes destroyed.

Crisis situations exposes our “rawness,” our “realness,” our vulnerability.

The finest moments in a person’s life are likely to happen when they feel the most uncomfortable, unhappiest, or unfulfilled. One’s defining moments are revealed in how they make a comeback after a crisis.

While such moments can be depressing, defeating, and extremely discouraging, they can also become the bed or

foundation for something greater that can set that person apart from the rest, to shine.

When we are driven by discomfort, discouragement, and despair, we are likely to step out of our ruts and start searching for a new road. It is the same for a company or organization.

The finest moments for a company or organization are likely to happen at its weakest or darkest hour, depending on the person who steers the organization at that time and yields the most influence. The story of Tylenol, that is shared towards the end of this chapter is an ideal example of making a comeback after crisis.

One's defining moments are revealed in how they make a comeback after a crisis.

Theatrical Influence

Every person carries influence. Some, more than others. While the CEO is generally regarded as the person carries a high level of influence, sometimes, this might not be the case. The CEO might only be a face for that organization with little or no influence. The CEO job title may not

always correlate to the level of influence they yield in a crisis situation. Sometimes the person who we think is the CEO and the individual who yields the highest level of influence and is actually steering the wheel during a crisis may actually be two different people altogether.

It could be the CEO's partner, spouse, secretary, older daughter, confidante, or the vice president of the company.

Leadership is influence. Influential leadership is defined during moments of crisis. The person at the helm steering the ship during such storms is often the CEO.

The GPS guiding them is emotional intelligence. Yes, influence matters, particularly during times of crisis. It determines the future of the people involved, both directly and indirectly. Influence is a strangely complicated thing.

Emotional display is like theater. There is a backstage and the front stage. The backstage is the hidden area behind the curtain where we feel our emotions. The front stage is what the audience sees where we present the emotions that we choose to reveal.

Emotional displays are more often carefully stage-managed when interacting with customers and less well managed backstage. This discrepancy can have devastating effects on a business and the image of the CEO. The most

effective situation happens when the two are closely connected.

In the past it used to be that “Behind every successful man is a woman.” While this principle is so outdated and terribly old fashioned today, it could be replaced with the following: “Behind every CEO is someone that you may not know.”

In other words the CEO might only be a façade or a puppet. The real person pulling the strings behind the puppet-like CEO could be someone totally unknown and in the background.

Here are a few examples. In a marriage it may not be that tough, outspoken, husband who has an extremely influential job who is the CEO running the show. It could actually be that soft spoken, docile, stay-at-home wife who is rarely seen in public, who yields the deepest influence in the decisions making process during a crisis.

In a church the CEO might not be the pastor or the Parish priest who makes decisions with budgeting, scheduling, and congregation conflicts. It could actually be the church secretary answering phones, a long time church-goer, or the biggest donor who yields the deepest influence. In a medical clinic the CEO might not be the surgeon with stellar degrees and outstanding bedside manner who is in

charge. The real person steering the day-to-day affairs of that clinic might be the surgeon's wife who manages the staffing and answers phones.

When the chief executive officer is someone other than the person who has the title it can be a good or bad thing for that organization, depending on how the influence spills over.

Sometimes, it can have disastrous consequences because it leaves people confused as to "who is actually running the show.". The person pulling the strings behind the CEO during a crisis might have a hidden agenda that no one knows about. That agenda may or may not align with the organization's vision.

In the midst of chaos, there is also opportunity.

The Palm-Tree

Palm trees bend easily during hurricanes, sometimes their branches even touching the ground. The scientific reason for their ability to bend and not break is the fibrous, wet, and woodless trunk which keeps it strong.

The palm trunk has a soft vessel. This softness makes the palm tree to be very flexible. Flexibility makes the palm tree well adapted to hurricanes and windy areas.

This flexibility gets tested during hurricanes. Instead of breaking into a million little pieces, they bend and come out even stronger. While this is not the same for all palm trees, those that originate in the Caribbean where hurricanes are common, have more toughness during storms.

The emotionally intelligent CEO is like the palm tree during hurricanes of change. Change can come in hurricane-like proportions to a company or organization during a crisis.

Like palm trees, emotional intelligence makes a person ultra-resilient during workplace storms. The emotionally intelligent CEO bends, not break, during storms. Even when crisis, inter-personal conflict, scandal, financial obstacles , and a comment taken out of context goes viral, they are able to bounce back more quickly rather than get completely annihilated by them. They are ultra-resilient in making a comeback after a difficult storm.

Change Takes Time

Outer change of circumstances can cause inner change of emotions. Inner transformation, especially where emotions are intricately intertwined, can take a long time, before the change happens all at once.

The churning of emotions is a slow process. The outside world only sees the immediate result. For the person making the changes from the inside, it is a slow and sometimes arduous process.

We spend our lives avoiding the situations and difficult things that help us grow. It's when we stay with uncertainty and discomfort without trying to fix it and change everyone around us, that we connect with ourselves and become self-aware.

This bends us, it does not break us.

Emotions During Crisis Times

Every great change is preceded by chaos. After a natural tsunami the landscape changes, houses turn to rubble, people lose their lives, the ocean undergoes a shift.

People undergo “tsunami” like experiences. After a person undergoes a life changing experience, whether it be the death of a loved one, a transition in the rites of passage,

bankruptcy, or a traumatic event that they never saw coming, things can never be the same again.

- Chaos leaves its mark.
- Change affects our emotions.
- Crisis affects our emotions even more.

Chaos leaves its mark. Change affects our emotions. Crisis affects our emotions even more.

Companies, organizations, and associations experience chaos that leaves its mark. It could be a lawsuit, bankruptcy, a fire, hiring an employee from hell, the wrong CEO leadership, loss of money or low morale among employees and more.

Chaos brings change; sometimes which can be good, and sometimes which can be disastrous.

Emotionally intelligent CEOs share the aspiration to be remembered as builders, not wreckers. How they are

imprinted in the minds and hearts of the people they serve get tested during crisis situations, because their emotions get expressed during such moments.

Every great change is preceded by chaos.

The workplace is a special case when it comes to emotions, almost a “culture” apart from the rest of life. Within our intimate zones, the way we express our emotions can be vastly different from how we express ourselves to the stranger at the grocery store.

Within friends and family we can comfortably bring up what is in our hearts. At work, a different set of emotional ground rules prevail. They are more pronounced during crisis moments.

The rules for emotional expression vary vastly from country to country, from town to town, from continent to continent. More than anything, it varies from individual to individual.

Two CEOs might have two very different emotional expressions towards the same crisis. Such different reactions

could stem from their childhood upbringing, trauma, the school they attended, if they were home schooled, interactions with parents, and a million other factors.

Emotionally intelligent CEOs share the aspiration to be remembered as builders, not wreckers. How they are imprinted in the minds and hearts of the people they serve get tested during crisis situations.

Emotional Expression During Crisis

There are no set rules when it comes to emotional expressions during crisis situations. Some people are naturally expressive; others rarely smile.

It is said of Cornelius Vanderbilt , the “Commodore” (1794-1877) who went on to become America’s richest man, that he was never captured, with a smiling face. Some people are born with more expressive faces than others.

The emotionally intelligent CEO appears human like, rather than robot like. They become approachable, shows caring, and has composure. Such a temperament comes across through their word choice, online social media posts,

facial expressions, attire, tone of voice, and how they align their actions with their words.

The emotionally intelligent CEO pays attention to their outer image during crisis situations. Here is an example. The CEO of a billion-dollar corporation who is faced with an oil spill in the middle of the ocean appearing on a cruise liner in a designer wear suit, tie, and shoes may send the wrong emotional signal to the company and the people impacted.

While their designer suit may not be directly connected to their emotions, it becomes a reflection of how they relate to the situation. A better way to make an emotional connection that is congruent with their facial expression might be to go on a smaller boat, dressed in a casual T-shirt and jeans, and blend with the people impacted.

This is an example of how emotions can become expressed through external attire and outfit during a crisis situation.

Emotions and how they are expressed varies with the tiers, income levels, and hierarchy. While superior managers maybe more spontaneous than their mediocre peers, senior executives maybe more controlled in expressing their personal feelings than managers working underneath them.

These are examples of how measured approaches in the top tiers differ from the lower ones.

Emotional expressions vary among countries. In some countries a woman making direct eye contact with a man is seen as promiscuity.

In other countries if a female CEO fails to make direct eye contact with a male counterpart about a business deal, it might be seen as a shady deal or dishonesty.

What is appropriate in one country may appear an unseemly outburst of rudeness in another.

Seasons have changed from the time of Cornelius Vanderbilt, of whom it is said that he rarely smiled. In today's context, the CEOs who stand out and make great strides are the ones who relate to the people they serve.

One way to do this is through a smile. Successful CEOs today, are approachable and human-like.

In the United States being emotionally unexpressive often communicates a negative message, a sense of distance or indifference, and even an indication of poor mental health. A smile in the right proportions to suit the situation sets apart, the emotionally intelligent CEO from the rest.

In the United States being emotionally unexpressive often communicates a negative message, a sense of distance or indifference, and even an indication of poor mental health.

Self Control

In crisis management, the key is not getting the good from going bad; it is preventing the bad from getting worse or completely disastrous.

Rather than trying to change the emotional reactions of the other person, the CEO strives to keep their disruptive emotions and impulses in check during crisis.

The CEO who has self-control does three things during crisis moments:

1. They manage their impulsive feelings and stressing emotions well
2. They stay composed, positive, even in trying, stressful moments
3. They think clearly and remain focused under pressure

During crisis moments having self-control allows the emotionally intelligent CEO to think clearly and not be swamped by anxiety. When there is a tirade, they don't feel intimidated.

They can take it in without becoming unhinged. They send the message to the other person that there is no reason to be so agitated. After all it is not in measure of comfort, but in the moments of a crisis does the emotionally intelligent CEO gets to shine.

It is not in measure of comfort, but in the moments of a crisis does the emotionally intelligent CEO gets to shine.

This skill is largely invisible. Here is the reasoning why. Self control, especially during stressful moments, verbal outrage, and yelling, manifests largely in the absence of more obvious emotional fireworks. Here is how it comes across:

They remain unfazed under stress, they don't lash back when someone pushes their buttons at exactly the right second, they don't do tit for tat.

. . .

Here is another reason why the emotionally intelligent CEO has self-control under crisis situations. It is related to time management. Every day, the to-do lists are mounting.

It takes self-control to resist seemingly urgent but actually trivial demands. Everything the CEO chooses to get involved in, is an act to say no to something else. They are cautious what things they give their precious seconds do. Self-control helps them to function at that intense level..

Self control allows the emotionally intelligent CEO to take control of their own state of mind. They are aware that moods exert a powerful pull, on thought, memory and perception.

An angry CEO is more likely to remember a comment that was made by a colleague. It could have been a harmless, innocent comment, such as “How are you doing today?” Because of anger they may have heard that comment very differently. Emotionally raw moments can make us hear an innocent comment through a devious lens, leading to damaged relations, unnecessary lashing out, or firing someone in error.

A calm CEO on the other hand might hear the same comment very differently. The emotionally intelligent CEO understands how valuable self-control can be and take control of their own state of mind.

Crisis Landmines

There are myths and misconceptions about crisis situations. Emotionally intelligent CEOs respond well to crisis situations because they are more aware of the misconceptions associated with them. The ones who lack emotional intelligence can become a prey to them that leave them out of their job, their reputations tarnished, and the like.

Here are some common misconceptions about crisis situations that CEOs tend to have. These are crisis landmines that ought to be avoided whenever possible.

Crisis Landmine #1 : My bank account is larger than that of the media reporter. I am more powerful. That scathing article will do nothing to harm my reputation. My money power can crush what that article is doing in a heartbeat.

Maybe.

Maybe not.

Never underestimate the power of the media. Some CEOs tend to rank themselves higher than reporters in relation to net worth. Thinking this way can be disastrous for a CEO. Net worth is not the only assessment of money, power and influence. Reporters are powerful because they carry the weight of a click of a button that shapes the minds

of millions of people. Reporters are inquisitive. When they don't get answers to their questions, they ask more questions. An emotionally intelligent CEO is wary of this landmine to think they are more powerful than the media. They respect the power of the reporter.

Crisis Landmine #2 : “Since my company is not making the news, we don't have any crisis situations.”

The main experience of a business crisis is typically associated with what is seen in the news, on social media, or on blogs. If an organization does not make it to the news in a problematic way it is typically assumed that it is not facing any crisis situations, and that things are functioning fairly smoothly.

It is dangerous for a CEO to assume that simply because they are not making it to the news about a problem that they are in the “crisis-free” Green zone. Not necessarily. That may be so- for the moment. Beware, there could be a crisis brewing underneath like a volcano, that has not erupted yet. Emotionally intelligent CEOs are aware of what is going on around them, in their organization, especially when everything seems fine. Not making it to the news with a crisis is not an indication that everything is fine and dandy within the organization. It could very well be that a crisis is waiting to explode, right around the corner.

. . .

Be vigilant.

Crisis Landmine #3 : Hiring the Best Corporate Law Attorney is Better than Admitting Guilt

Sometimes the court of law might work, but it could be the wrong strategy in the court of public opinion.

Sometimes the court of law might work, but it could be the wrong strategy in the court of public opinion.

Massive wealth and power can downplay the influence of the average citizen. Wealth and power have a deceptive way of masking a CEO from reality. The CEO of a billion-dollar corporation might underestimate the power of the average citizen.

Deception might lead them to assume that by paying a hefty sum to a corporate attorney, they could get out of a mess. When dealing with a crisis some business executives

automatically dial their top-level attorneys to take care of the mess.

Some CEOs who have become distanced with how the world of reality operates, tend to think that the high-powered attorney has heaven like abilities to wash away all the mess with a magic wand. CEOs who turn to the legal strategy on autopilot may have great faith in the system to work. This could become a landmine at some point, in how a crisis is handled.

Having insight into the struggles of the average citizen, knowing “where” the customer is coming from, and understanding client needs can be the difference maker.

CEOs who “walk” with their constituents, who stay in touch with their customers, who come in direct contact with their staff and listens to them have better insight into the lives of the people they influence. Their point of contact goes beyond the board room.

Daily, the emotionally intelligent CEO keeps it as a mission to better relate to the people they influence and serve. They are in touch with them. This insight is priceless during a crisis.

Like a military that is ready not only to attack but to attack with the right strategy, a CEO who walks with people is ready to tackle a crisis with the right weapon, at the right

time. And that right weapon may not always be the corporate attorney.

Throwing the legal kitchen sink is like snake-oil. It may or may not work.

Emotionally intelligent CEOs look at a crisis a little differently. While the thought of the legal approach maybe brewing silently in the backburner, and is awfully attractive to tap into, their auto response is more emotion oriented.

They pause to reflect.

They ask themselves the question “Would I fare better if I admitted fault?”

Their decision to contact attorneys might be to discuss the latter approach of accepting responsibility by admitting fault, rather than to go on the defensive mode by throwing the legal kitchen sink.

Sometimes the court of law might work, but it could be the wrong strategy in the court of public opinion.

Failure to accept responsibility, admit guilt, or apologize has taken many companies down a long, nightmarish, humiliating, road of extended lawsuits, bankruptcy, and damaged reputation.

It could all have been avoided if the CEO took an emotionally intelligent approach and handled it from an emotional angle rather than a legalistic, law-suit angle.

Throwing the legal kitchen sink is like snake-oil. It may or may not work.

Crisis Landmine #4 : Let's start building the ark when it starts raining

Going online to buy an umbrella once a downpour has started is a little too late. That online purchase should have been done while the weather was relatively dry and smooth sailing.

A company that has been smooth sailing in a steady fashion with no unexpected detours, could become very comfortable with hitting the cruise control button.

While other companies go belly up, get bought over, undergo employee layoffs, and experience scandals, if your company is steadily rising, it is natural for a CEO to assume their company is doing all the right things and that is why it is being spared of all those heartaches.

It is even more likely for a CEO to assume that the reason the company is doing so well without any flaws is because of their sublime leadership.

Maybe so.

Still, wait a minute or two before comfortably settling that halo around your head.

No individual journeys through life for long periods of time without facing some type of crisis.

Similarly, no company is spared of crisis.

That's like saying there are some lucky individuals that journey through life without any difficulty because they are good and are doing all the right things.

Not so.

CEOs that adopt the strategy of "Let's cross that bridge when we come to it" can sometimes be dangerous for the long-term survival of that company.

Waiting for a crisis to happen and to then decide what

needs to be done can be a landmine. When it's raining, it's too late to build the ark.

The emotionally intelligent CEO is constantly prepared. There are reserves in place, in case a crisis erupts. They know that if it is raining, it is too late to build the ark.

That is like running to the store in the rain to buy an umbrella, when it has already begun to rain. A more prudent thing is to buy the umbrella and keep it at home in case it rains and you have to step outside. Rather than becoming complacent, they become cautious.

“When it’s raining, it’s too late to build the ark.”

5 Ways an Emotionally Intelligent CEO Handles Crisis Situations

Emotionally intelligent CEOs approach crisis situations within their companies and organizations with a two-pronged sword. Here are the two sides to that sword:

1. An operational response
2. A communication response

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Emotionally intelligent CEOs know that the way they face the crisis has a deep impact on how they are seen by the media, by the Board, their family, and employees, among others.

In some cases, such as with global companies touching every corner of the planet, how a CEO handles a crisis affects how that CEO is seen by the entire world. That is indeed a lot of pressure resting on human shoulders.

A CEO with mid-level of emotional intelligence tends to focus too much on one or the other of the above two responses.

They might focus too narrowly on the operational response.

In other words, they might steer the staff to put their entire focus on correcting the problem to stop the bleeding.

In that process they may overlook the importance of communicating with the staff, with the media, with the stakeholders about what is going on and the impact it is having on the constituents.

Overlooking the second step can lead to a failure in their response to the crisis.

From an emotional intelligence perspective, the CEO

who forgets to put themselves in the shoes of the public, the customer, the media, and the world that is watching them, can lead to a failed response.

The CEO becomes too engulfed in correcting the problem from their end that they fail to have empathy towards the stakeholders and the public and what they are going through.

A CEO might also make the mistake of focusing too much on the communication response.

For example, if there has been an oil spill on the highway the CEO might spend the bulk of the immediate response with attorneys, press writers, media team, and publicists to make sure the statements are properly worded, the documents have the correct signatures, and the wording choice sounds very empathetic to the public.

If the documented and verbal communication are flawlessly executed during the crisis by the CEO, but their actions fail to support those statements, it can lead to a failed response.

This can backfire with the stakeholders and public as a fake response.

There can be a backlash against the company which can cause a secondary (unwanted) crisis that can intensify the damage.

This could have been avoided if the second step of communicating with the public and stakeholders was effec-

tively balanced with following through to correct problem, which was the first step.

The Three Pronged Sword To Handling a Crisis

To protect their executive presence, emotionally intelligent CEOs approach crisis situations, whenever possible, by breaking it into three parts:

1. What will I do to correct the problem?
2. How will I approach this problem?
3. How will I communicate this problem to the Board, to the media, to the employees, and others involved?

A CEO lacking emotional intelligence will break it into three parts that might look like the following:

1. What can I do to hide this problem?
2. Who can I blame?
3. Who can I use as a scapegoat to deal with this mess so that I can move on with my agenda?

Once the crisis is broken down it becomes more manageable.

The first step of “What will I do to correct the problem?” gets the CEO in taking actions, both short- and long-term actions, to attack the problem.

This could be to assign the problem to someone within the organization, give it some thinking time, talking with the customers to find out their perspectives, among other action steps.

The second step of “How will I approach the problem?” is important because it defines the method for taking the necessary actions.

The approach taken to handle the problem can either escalate or diffuse the problem.

The right and effective approach might uproot the problem altogether so that it does not continue to re-surface.

It may mean to admit fault by biting their tongue and swallowing a massive pill of humility. It may mean to embark on the corporate attorney route.

It may mean to file a lawsuit. It may mean to steer completely out of the legal route and handle it through a “feelings-based” route of empathy.

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The third step is “How will I communicate this problem to the Board, to the media, to the employees, and others involved?”

It may mean bringing up things from the past that no one in the organization knew about, revealing people who have created the situation and are no longer within the organization, calling a press conference, Tweeting, among others.

They know that every word that is used with the media can shape public opinion, which in turn, can affect the outcome.

The CEO Psychic

The emotionally intelligent CEO is always on guard to unseen punches that lie ahead. For a boxer the punch that knocks them down the hardest is the one they don't see coming, the one that takes them by complete surprise from the back.

Similarly, the punch that knocks down an organization the hardest is the one that the CEO does not see coming. The backstabbing, office politics, behind the scenes activities, secrecy, betrayals from friends, are the punches that can annihilate the esteem, self-worth, and reputation of a CEO.

As a result, they are constantly vigilant. Rarely is there a “pull-off” shoulder to let the flow of traffic by and simply watch everyone else pass by.

The CEO is constantly leading the way, most of the time.

Rarely is there a “pull-off” shoulder to let the flow of traffic by and simply watch everyone else pass by. The CEO is constantly leading the way, most of the time.

They are attuned to the rhythm, the pulse, the temperature of their organization. They know when something is looming ahead. They can foresee what’s coming, as minor as it maybe.

Just as we can feel our body temperature changing when we have a fever, the emotionally intelligent CEO “feels” the temperature of an organization shifting when there is an impending crisis. When a crisis happens, they shape their thinking into a solution mode and pre-lay the outcome first.

They anticipate the problem, keeping that outcome in mind.

Emotionally intelligent CEOs visualize the potential outcome ahead of time. Sometimes that outcome is ugly,

sometimes it is pretty, sometimes it is midway between the good, bad, and ugly.

They know what is going to happen if they correct the problem in one way and not the other way. They already foresee the answer. If it is a CEO emotionally attuned to the pulse of the organization they lead by that *feel*, that pulse.

They have a “psychic” like intuition to foresee crisis situations, most of the time. It is impossible to foresee every single crisis that is going to affect an organization. Emotional intelligence helps to foresee most of them.

The emotionally intelligent CEO embraces the following principles for crisis management.

1 Anticipate the crisis and have a plan in place, *before hand*

The emotionally intelligent CEO is prepared. If one employee in their department is becoming sloppy, showing up late, misses out on online meetings, and is not contributing as well as he used to, an emotionally intelligent CEO is attuned to those emotional cues. Rather than giving a tenth warning and ultimatum that have produced zero effective results, they are likely to perceive those as warning signals that the employee is biding time, looking for another job with a bigger pay. Here is the emotionally intelligent approach to the situation. Rather than waiting for that day

for the employee to not show up for work and the entire department goes on crisis mode, an emotionally intelligent CEO might put up a part time hiring sign on the company social media as back up. If the current employee never leaves the new hire might fit for a different part time position. This is an effective crisis management technique.

Red flags are useful only if they are detected before a decision is made. The emotionally intelligent CEO constantly has plans in place and looks out for Red flags. Rather than looking back at the Red flag after decisions have been made, they foresee the Red flags before making major decisions.

Red flags are useful only if they are detected before a decision is made.

2 Rehearse the Crisis

Another option is to rehearse the crisis scenario as if it were already happening. Rather than postponing an eventual crisis or being in denial that it is ever going to happen, they take personal responsibility for it, by rehearsing it.

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If it is a grocery chain, for example, what would be an effective crisis management strategy if the grocery chain is unable to fill up the shelves with fresh produce because of a war overseas that is disrupting the supply chain? An emotionally intelligent CEO might rehearse the scenario ahead of time, and not wait for this to happen. Rather than waiting for an international war to unfold, they may connect with the staff to get different ideas about a backup plan; they may pre-order substitute products as replacements. If that store is relying on that country for kale, leeks, carrots, and other fresh produce, that CEO might ration vegetables, give seed packets for families to grow produce in their backyards, teach canning workshops onsite, have an expert gardener drop by to share their knowledge on hydroponics, and similar measures.

By rehearsing the scenario and imagining the crisis was already unfolding the emotionally intelligent CEO empowers the people that they serve to help themselves. This takes the pressure off one person, helps to prevent a small problem from erupting into a crisis, and can also make that grocery store shine when everyone else around them is scrambling for answers.

Rehearsing is a type of preparation. Rather than feeling helpless about the lack of fresh produce coming from

overseas, the emotionally intelligent CEO will get different solutions to make the community feel empowered. Feeling empowered is an emotionally intelligent techniques rather than feeling helpless.

3 Get as Many Facts as Possible

Rather than acting on impulse like a loose cannon, the emotionally intelligent CEO will first get the facts. Sometimes however, getting too many facts from different angles and perspectives can warp the best, practical response. In some situations, the less facts and perspectives given by highly informed individuals, the better the outcome might be. That outcome might be more practical. Sometimes the experts may be so removed from reality that they could derail the CEO's thinking. Generally speaking, however, it is recommended to get an accurate assessment of what is going on by consulting with experts.

4 Talk to the Right People. Don't talk to the Wrong People

Many CEOs have gotten themselves in deep trouble by giving a statement to the media or firing the wrong employees before they were accurately informed fully about the crisis by the right people. The emotionally intelligent CEO is also aware of manipulation and how that could cost them the position or them get into legal trouble. Manipula-

tion distorts the facts. A manipulative employee could artificially create a crisis within the organization and give false information to the CEO, knowing the type of action that would be taken with the misleading facts. Since it typically happens behind the scenes, the damage may already be done, before decisions can be made to prevent a crisis.

An emotionally intelligent CEO, therefore, will talk to different people, look at numbers, look at the statistics if that is necessary, and will get an accurate pulse of the situation. Once the facts are available it becomes easier to formulate a plan of attack. Sometimes there is very little time or in the case of an unforeseen natural or man-made disaster, there is no time at all to investigate the situation thoroughly and to do second and third verifications of what is being said.

Talking to the right people is important. What is even more important is to eliminate or minimize talking to the wrong people. The right people improve the clarity of thinking during a crisis. The wrong people fog that clarity.

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5 Picture The Ideal Outcome

The emotionally intelligent CEO is constantly churning the belief that this crisis does not define them; it reveals them. Before planning the strategy to attack the crisis head-on before approaching the crisis, an emotionally intelligent CEO will spend some time visually designing where they want to end up when the crisis is over. They ask themselves the following four questions:

1. “How do I want to envision my organization once this crisis has passed?”
2. “How do I want to be perceived by others, once this crisis has passed?”
3. “How will I see myself once this crisis has passed?”
4. “Will I leave others in emotional increase or emotional decrease after this crisis?”

This visualization happens before or during the crisis. Asking this outcome-based question will shape the tone, the strategy, the word choice, and the method that the CEO will use in media communications, who to reach out to, and what route to take for damage control. It will determine the type of impression the CEO leaves with the consumers and the public, once the crisis has passed. It will determine where the company will end up in rankings five years down the road. A CEO lacking in emotional intelligence might respond impulsively, leading to a knee-jerk reaction.

6 Being Emotionally Present During A Crisis

Many people like to hide, take a vacation, have the secretary answer the phone with the traditional “He’s at a meeting” line, or have frequent visits with the therapist when there is a crisis within the organization.

This can be a mistake. Refusing to speak to the media, avoiding the public face to face, and hiding from behind a screen and clicking the button on a few attorney-approved phrases can escalate the initial crisis into a secondary crisis.

Hunkering down, being out of sight, locking out of social media accounts is the verbal equivalent of “No comment.” If the CEO has “no comment” during a crisis, who does?

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The emotionally intelligent CEO runs towards the crisis. They become alive during a crisis. They are not just physically present, but emotionally present as well. They don't run away from a crisis.

They muster courage to face the crisis rather than hide from it. By running towards the crisis they are emotionally and physically, available to handle the situation.

The emotionally intelligent CEO runs towards the crisis. They become alive during a crisis.

7 Being In Touch With The Problem

Being in touch with the problem helps to build trust with the people. Being out of touch and doing the least to come out unscraped at the other end of the crisis can lead to contempt among staff, clients, and the public. It betrays trust.

A CEO who is in touch with the problem nourishes openness and honesty. Being open and honest with the public often can attack the crisis head on, giving some hope of resolution or normalcy. It also creates transparency. The

emotionally intelligent CEO makes themselves available during crisis situations. They become relatable to the needs of the media and the public.

They immediately ask themselves the question: “If I were a stakeholder, wouldn’t I want to know what is going to happen to the money that I have invested in this organization?” By asking this basic question they are practicing the emotionally intelligent strategies of self-awareness and empathy. They put themselves in the shoes of the other person.

8 Respecting Reporters

When reporters come knocking at their door, the emotionally intelligent CEO is likely to go out of their way to be available to both the media and the stakeholders involved in the situation, rather than hiding inside the bedroom closet. They practice self-regulation when reporters ask difficult questions. Rather than going off on a rant to ridicule the reporter the emotionally intelligent CEO may self-regulate their emotions and have composure. By doing so they are butting with the problem, head on, rather than running away from it.

The faster we run away from a problem, the harder the problem comes after us. The sooner we face it and attack the problem, the quicker it leaves us alone.

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The emotionally intelligent CEO knows that being available for reporters, for the stakeholders, for the employees, takes the power away from the crisis. Avoiding them and hiding from them makes the crisis even stronger. Here lies the emotional intelligence reasoning behind it. The farther we run away from a crisis, the harder the crisis will come after us.

9 Emotional Self Control

It is not “other’s” control. It is “self” control.

It is not “other’s” control. It is “self” control.

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If a crisis is to be handled in an effective, beneficial way, it demands for emotional self-control. The emotionally intelligent CEO is constantly aware of that. Emotional self-control is not something that can be given life to, out of nowhere. It must come from somewhere. It must already be available within the CEO to be effectively tapped into, during a crisis. Emotional self-control takes practice. Few people are born with it. It gets tested during crisis situations.

People lacking in emotional intelligence also lack emotional self-control. The reason being that they lack self-regulation. Not having the ability to regulate one's emotions when there is an unexpected situation that comes without warning leads to lack of emotional self-control.

10 Emotional Finesse

During crisis situations the emotionally intelligent CEO shows emotional competence rather than emotional over-control. Someone lacking this might show emotional crudeness or clumsiness. Just as refined oil and crude oil stand apart, so does emotional crudeness versus emotional finesse.

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Emotional competence implies that they have a choice as to how they express their feelings. The way they express their feelings during a crisis comes across as emotional finesse. Emotional finesse is a refreshingly human quality that emerges during a crisis. Like a solitary cactus flower that blooms in the desert, it is rare and special.

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11 Using Anger, Sadness, and Anxiety in a Beneficial Way

Emotional self-control does not mean denying or repressing true feelings. “Bad” moods, for instance, have their uses: anger, sadness, and fear can become sources of creativity, energy, and connectedness, depending on how they are handled.

Anger can be an intense source of motivation particularly when it stems from the urge to make an injus-

tice, right. Sometimes anger is necessary to speak up and confront someone who has done a terribly wrong thing and is about to get away with it for the hundredth time. Shared sadness can knit people together.

It can make a workplace seem more caring. Anxiety is not necessarily a bad thing. The anxious CEO, who is thrown into an unforeseen crisis, who does not allow that anxiety to overwhelm them, can stir the creative spirit of others to rise above their problems.

12 Balance Between AI and EI

A crisis makes anyone feel vulnerable, afraid, and sometimes isolated. While the CEO maybe driven by artificial intelligence (AI) with the research, facts, trends, and predictions, the emphasis should be on emotional intelligence (EI) in the decision making process.

Yes, get the facts from AI, but the process should come from EI, because human feelings are involved every step of the way.

13 Don't Become A Robot

While emotional self-control can do wonders during a crisis situation, doing too much of it can lead to disaster. Overcontrolling the emotions during a crisis can lead to a “serial killer” approach of coming across as a psychopath, a completely unfeeling CEO.

This could perhaps be far worse than a reaction where there is no emotional control at all. During a crisis people more than anything, want to feel like the CEO relates to their predicament. Overcontrolling their emotions and appearing robot-like is not going to help.

Emotional self-control, especially during a crisis, is not the same as overcontrol, the stifling of all feeling and spontaneity. In fact, there is a physical and mental cost to emotional overcontrol.

Emotionally intelligent CEOs know the price they must pay when they stifle their feelings as well as those around them. It leads to unhappy work environments, employees not wanting to give their best, employees going out of their way to file lawsuits because they felt stifled, time waste, money waste, and employees feeling demoralized are some of the things that can happen when the CEO practices emotional overcontrol, to look tough and composed.

CEOs who stifle their feelings, especially strong negative ones, tend to raise their heart rate and have increased tension. It comes across to those around them. It can be “felt” by others.

Here is how the emotionally intelligent CEO makes the connection in how it impacts the business, their image, and mars their reputation. When such emotional suppression is

chronic, it can impact thinking, hamper intellectual performance, and interfere with smooth interactions.

This does not work in the best interest of the CEO, nor does it work in the best interest of the company they serve.

Tylenol and Re-Building Trust

Crisis situations are pivotal times to either build or break trust. The story of Tylenol is a case in point. In 1982 Tylenol was the best-selling, nonprescription pain reliever that was being sold in the United States.

There were a series of deaths in Chicago, beginning with a twelve-year-old girl, who had a headache and her parents gave her a Tylenol. She died the following morning.

Several deaths followed — in quite the same fashion.

This was a crisis.

Someone had put Cyanide capsules in selected bottles of Tylenol. To this day, the perpetrator has never been found.

Sales plummeted. Parents freaked out. It shattered the company's image. It could have been the end of Tylenol.

Crisis moments do not define a company They *REVEAL* a company. This crisis revealed the character of the Tylenol company.

More importantly, it revealed the character of the

people with the highest level of influence at the time in how they handled the crisis.

Crisis moments do not define a company They reveal a company.

It was a subsidiary of Johnsons and Johnson that manufactured Tylenol. The company took an active role in cooperating with the authorities.

Rather than avoiding the media and staying in hiding, they relieved the pain of the people by proactively coming forward to face the media to answer painfully difficult questions.

Johnson and Johnson used the media to issue a national alert to tell the public not to use the Tylenol product. In the first week of the crisis Johnson and Johnson established a 1-800 hotline for consumers to call.

Johnson and Johnson chairman James Burke in working with the local district attorney agreed to pull out all Tylenol capsules off the shelf.

It marked the first mass recall in US history involving

more than 31 million bottles and costing the company more than \$100 million at the time.

Sales plummeted. Employees worried that Tylenol would not survive as a brand. Production was halted indefinitely. People were told to throw away all their Tylenol capsules or turn them over to the police.

Bottles of Tylenol that were not tossed were sent to the laboratory for testing. More than 10 million capsules were tested for cyanide. Hospitals, clinics, and customers were sent notices saying Tylenol was “taking it back, lock, stock, and barrel.” Parents were terrified.

Johnson and Johnson tried different strategies to restore public confidence. Someone suggested they re-name the brand name.

The company took a more deep-rooted strategy to rebuild trust during the crisis.

Rather than doing a superficial alteration of changing brand names, they dug deeper towards the root cause of the problem. They attacked it, head on.

Emotional intelligence was the difference maker in how the crisis was handled. During the crisis, someone had

the presence of mind and common sense to ask a very simple question.

“If I were a mother, a father, a grandparent, or family member suspected that one of my pills in my medicine cabinet at home was laced with cyanide, what would *I* do?”

Would I throw only a few select capsules that I bought from one pharmacy and not the other or would I throw away every single Tylenol pill in my medicine cabinet?”

Having the common sense and presence of mind to ask this simple question was a key sign of emotional intelligence.

Strategic use of emotional intelligence during a crisis moment ultimately became a life-saver for Tylenol in re-building trust in the American psyche.

Trust, and more importantly re-building damaged trust is key in emotional intelligence.

First, they pulled off every single pill from pharmacies throughout America. The recall announcement however was unpopular on Wall Street where J & J’s stock continued to drop, and marketing experts predicted the quick demise of Tylenol.

The medication’s share of the market dropped from 37% to 7% within a few months. Prominent advertising executives predicted consumers would not see the Tylenol name on any form, or on any store shelves, within a year.

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Less than two months after the murders Johnson and Johnson introduced triple-sealed packaging that included a box with glued flaps, tight plastic wrap around the bottle cap, and a foil seal covering the mouth of the bottle.

The company's key initiative involved tamper-evident packaging to help consumers feel safe enough to take Tylenol again. Labeling on the box and bottle warned consumers not to use the medicine if "safety seals" were broken.

With this effective tamper-evident packaging Johnson and Johnson re-introduced the product to the market as capsules.

In announcing the new packaging CEO Burke said Johnson and Johnson considered it a "moral imperative, as well as good business" to restore Tylenol to the same prominence it held to the market prior to the poisonings.

The company first did serious repairing and damage control, before doing any kind of preparing of new products.

To boost consumer interest Johnson and Johnson launched a media blitz promoting the safer bottles. They highlighted the financial hit the company took from the country's first mass recall.

Chairman Burke along with other Johnson and Johnson

executives spoke about corporate responsibility and how they put people before profit. These were strategic emotionally intelligent steps that the CEO proactively took to rebuild damaged trust.

They faced the media instead of running away from reporters, they answered the difficult questions posed by difficult reporters instead of saying “I don’t have that information right now,” they stayed with the crisis instead of going on a family vacation, and they put their entire focus on this crisis, instead of downplaying it, and they put their energy in addressing the crisis from the root instead of doing a superficial approach.

All these collectively defined the CEO leadership stance in handling the crisis.

With the Tylenol crisis Johnson and Johnson understood the gravity of the problem. They stopped everything else and put their entire focus on this problem.

They knew that how they handled this problem would determine whether the company would stay in business for years to come.

Johnson and Johnson gave top priority to the Tylenol crisis, putting other things on hold.

They went further. Tylenol also offered a free bottle of safety sealed Tylenol to anyone who called the

company and requested one. It installed scores of new phone lines, then recruited staff and their families to answer the phones.

It was a major step forward in re-establishing the confidence of the public.

It was not so much about the crisis, as it was about *how* Johnson and Johnson handled the crisis that became a pivotal turning point in restoring public trust. Pulling off every single Tylenol pill off the shelves of America was a half time adjustment that Tylenol made, with very little time to decide, to make a successful comeback for the second half of their life story.

It was not so much about the crisis, as it was about how Johnson and Johnson handled the crisis that became a pivotal turning point in restoring public trust.

Johnson and Johnson spent millions, on damage control, to get their sales back.

They had to repair that crisis situation first and go on

The Emotionally Intelligent CEO

damage control and earn trust in order to get their sales numbers rebound. It revealed the character of the company.

Emotional intelligence was the difference maker.

Also by Preethi Fernando



Emotional Intelligence in Business and Marketing:

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