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## From the desk of *Richard Metheny*

This is an emotional issue newsletter - or should I say an issue about emotions and how they play a huge role in our life as a leader. Recently I worked with a client, a brilliant geophysicist, who is at the point in his career where he is being asked by the organization to lead a team. His challenge is that he has a narrow range of affect (externally displayed emotions) and it limits his ability to inspire and motivate. Add to this is the dissonance created for him by any discussion of emotion. He is a scientist; emotions don't compute. Words from this song may describe how he feels:

*Get a grip on yourself you know you should  
I got a grip on myself and it feels good  
Get a grip on yourself take my advice  
I got a grip on myself and it feels nice*

"Get a Grip" from the All About Chemistry album, Semisonic

We are educated to believe that emotion is bad. Emotion, we are told, clouds the intellect and interferes with the objective analysis of facts. We understand that excessive emotions like intense anger have tremendous power to damage the complex social relationships on which we rely. We have common misconceptions about emotions at work: it's unprofessional to bring emotions to work, emotions distort the logical reasoning process that allows you to solve workplace problems; if you show emotions at work, people will view you as weak, to work well with someone, you have to be friends with him or her, your private concerns should never effect your work performance, enthusiastic approval of employees undermines a manager's authority; and there are emotions that are good for work and there are emotions that are bad for work. However, consider these stories.

Wally, the CEO of a large restaurant company, stood before employees in a quarterly meeting telling a story about exceptional contributions made by one member of the their family of employees. The story was emotion-packed and the audience was drawn into the emotions of the story. Wally choked up and had to pause the storytelling. Many people in the audience had tears in their eyes, too. The audience was reminded of why they worked for the company.

Charlie made a comment in a meeting and I suddenly felt a rush of energy. My face flushed and ears turned red as I squeezed the edge of the table for dear life. Some part of me knew that this feeling was not proportionate to Charlie's comment or intention, but something was triggered in me nonetheless, and I was ready to bite his head off.

The stories of Wally and his employees and Charlie and I are similar in that they are about emotions and different because of the outcomes. I was one of Wally's employees and was deeply moved by his story; it reinforced my passion for the company - a very positive example of emotion at work. Charlie violated one of my values that when you make an agreement with another person you keep that agreement; he broke his agreement in a meeting and it invoked a different kind of emotion - unrestrained this experience would have been a negative emotional experience. Both stories were opportunities for me to learn and grow.

With the popularity of emotional intelligence the discussion about how we leverage and engage the emotional side of ourselves to be effective leaders is becoming more common. Emotions act to motivate us and can be used effectively to motivate others. Emotions are a part, a big part of business and leadership. Interestingly, information on leadership strategy and tactics fill the business bookshelves, while discussion of the emotional aspect is surprisingly absent. UCLA research indicates that only 7% of leadership success is attributable to intellect while 93% of success comes from trust, integrity, authenticity, honesty, creativity, presence, and resilience.<sup>1</sup>

People make and sell the products in organizations. People manage the processes and systems in organizations. Why then has the understanding, management and utilization of emotions not been a priority in leadership development? Many leaders are unequipped to deal with the emotional challenges of business they lack emotional mastery. Former General Electric CEO Jack Welch made a similar observation about the importance of emotions in the business world. "Emotional intelligence," he noted, "is more rare than book smarts, but my experience says it is actually more important in the making of a leader - you just can't ignore it."

So get emotional, it's okay.



Focus Area Of The Month: *Consciousness of Self Part IV*

**I**n 1990, John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey published a series of papers on emotional intelligence. They suggested that the capacity to perceive and understand emotions defined a new intelligence. The Mayer-Salovey model defines emotional intelligence as the capacity to understand emotional information and to reason with emotions. More specifically, they divide emotional intelligence abilities into four areas -- in their four branch model:

1. The capacity to accurately perceive emotions
2. The capacity to use emotions to facilitate thinking
3. The capacity to understand emotional meanings
4. The capacity to manage emotions

Daniel Goleman popularized his view of emotional intelligence in the 1995 best-selling book: [Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ](#) and can be given credit for popularizing the term as part of our leadership vernacular. Goleman's ideas have been criticized by Mayer and Salovey, and others, because he modified the scope of the term, and discounted many of the aspects proposed by Mayer and Salovey. Social scientists are skeptical of the current measurement tools and their predictability of leadership effectiveness (Zacarro and Horn, 2003) but the theories are intuitively appealing. If we concur that self-awareness or conscious leadership is a key to leadership effectiveness, then we



can easily leap to the conclusion that self-awareness includes an intimate understanding of our emotions and how they positively or negatively affect our ability to lead.

What are emotions and what is emotional mastery (the capacity to manage our emotions)? Emotions are interpretive plans that give shape and meaning to feelings of the body; emotions effect perceptions, actions, decisions, and relationships; emotions are built into our physical system, and emotions guide us and help us to communicate with others. They become problems only when we judge them as wrong, bad, or inappropriate. When we let our emotions run us, we miss the message that they carry. When we stuff them down for fear of what they might cause us to do, they simply lie in wait to emerge with a vengeance later on. Transactional Analysis speaks about trading stamps - people make collections of archaic feelings and then later cash them in for a psychological prize. Emotional mastery is the ability to process our emotions so that we receive their message and use their energy for appropriate action and avoid the unconscious “trading of stamps”

Our emotions are very much a reflection of our beliefs about life events. For example, if you believe that you are your work and you suddenly lose your job, you are likely to feel an incredible amount of fear, as you perceive your very survival to be at stake. If you repress this fear, possibly because you view it as a weakness, you'll probably experience anger or rage and at some point, you will likely lash out at whomever's available.

If on the other hand, you are a person who views your job simply as one aspect of your life, and you know that your inherent value lies in your unique skills and qualities, then your feelings and response to losing your job will probably be a whole lot different. You may just view this loss as an opportunity to explore a whole new path for yourself.

The bottom line here is this: how you feel in any situation corresponds exactly with what you believe about yourself and the situation. Master your beliefs, and you'll master your emotions.

▶ ... continue on page 3

► *continued from page 2 ...* Emotions affect decision-making. Decision-making is a cognitive process where the outcome is a choice between alternatives. We often have different preferences as to our preferred approach, varying between thinking and feeling. When we use logic to make decisions, we seek to exclude emotions, using only rational methods, and perhaps even mathematical tools. The foundation of such decisions is the principle of utility, whereby the value of each option is assessed by assigning criteria (often weighted). How many times have you “calculated” that one decision had a greater percentage chance of succeeding versus an alternative decision?

There is a whole range of decision-making that uses emotion, depending on the degree of logic that is included in the process. A totally emotional decision is typically very fast. This is because it takes time (at least 0.1 seconds) for the rational cortex to get going.<sup>2</sup> This is the reactive (and largely subconscious) decision-making that you encounter in heated arguments or when faced with immediate danger. Common emotional decisions may use some logic, but the main driving force is emotion, which either overrides logic or uses a pseudo-logic to support emotional choices (this is extremely common). Another common use of emotion in decision is to start with logic and then use emotion in the final choice.

Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio<sup>3</sup> studied people who had received brain injuries that had had one specific effect: to damage that part of the brain where emotions are generated. In all other respects they seemed normal - they just lost the ability to feel emotions.

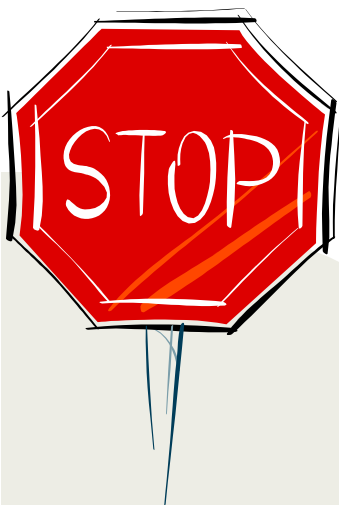
The interesting thing he found was that their ability to make decisions was seriously impaired. They could logically describe what they should be doing, in practice they found it very difficult to make decisions about where to live, what to eat, etc. In particular, many decisions have pros and cons on both sides. Shall I have the fish or the beef? With no rational way to decide, they were unable to make the decision.

So at the point of decision, emotions are very important for choosing. In fact even with what we believe are logical decisions, the very point of choice is arguably always based on emotion. We talk about decisions that feel or seem right. When logical decisions are wrong, we will often feel that this is so. Emotions are perhaps signals from the subconscious that tell us a lot about what we really choose.

An even stranger factor is research where the subject's brain was wired up to recorders and the subject was asked to simply press a red button at any time. The notion was that if the conscious mind was in charge, then that part of the brain would be seen to change first, and if the decision started in the subconscious, then electrical activity in that part of the brain would work first.

And the answer was...that the subconscious started activity first. The shocking conclusion is that the subconscious is in charge of the bus, and that we are living an illusion of conscious choice. As emotions also stem from the subconscious, then this makes it even more likely that decisions have a strong emotional influence. It also supports the need of self-awareness and expanding the breath of the open self. Become aware of these emotions and their effect on you.

Progressive leaders are emotionally aware leaders. They become more fluid in terms of emotion, able to use whatever emotion is most appropriate, and being able to use the full range as necessary. They are the ones that become the beacon of true leadership. They are the ones that make it to the top!



## Recommended Self Awareness Activities: *Master Your Emotions*

**A**re you emotionally mature? If you avoid your emotions, you may become dissociated - robot-like. If you feel but avoid expressing your emotions, you may falsify your relationships, undermine your health and delay your personal development.

How do you recognize emotional maturity? Read the statements below and check the boxes that are true for you.

- I know what I want and am making it happen
- I think before acting and have control over one's behavior
- I am self-reliant and have the ability to take responsibility for my life and actions
- I am patient
- I have the ability to connect with others in a cooperative and positive way
- I genuinely care about others and demonstrate that ability
- I am honest and live by my principles
- I have moderation and balance in all things
- I have the ability to follow through, even when it is difficult
- I am humble and have the ability to say, "I was wrong. I am sorry."

The statements above are a list of qualities that emotionally mature people possess. Any unchecked box indicates part of your life where you may be emotionally immature. The unchecked boxes have presented you an opportunity to expand your "open self."

Your emotional maturity will be immediately apparent in your relationships. Do you:

- communicate appropriately? (for the relationship type)
- clarify mistakes and wrong assumptions?
- provide balance or justice when things go wrong?
- build and maintain friendships?
- teamwork toward shared goals?
- inspire and lead?

The insights below will help you lay down a solid foundation for managing your emotions and progressing forward in your leadership journey<sup>4</sup>:

- **Learn rather than defend.** Instead of going into a defensive mode and trying to protect or force your views, learn from the situation. Ask yourself what is really going on with that upset employee or coworker. The old saying is true, "When you change someone's point-of-view against their will, you've never truly changed them." From the moment you lose control and retaliate (even if you are right) you've lost the battle. However, by controlling your emotions and investigating the other's viewpoint, you open yourself to a calm and enlightening discussion.
- **Acknowledge rather than agree.** It is possible to acknowledge that someone has a different point-of-view than you have without agreeing with their point-of-view. What happens, more often than not, is that the more strongly someone disagrees with us, the more adamant we become about convincing them we are right. Before the situation gets out of control, ask yourself, "How important is it that they agree with me?" If the answer comes down to a matter of personal pride - let it go. Acknowledge and respect other's views, the fact that you have a conflicting opinion and allow the conversation to drift to another topic.
- **Express your emotions.** Expressing empathy and being emotionally honest is one of the things that will make you a true leader. Everyone you work with already knows you are human. When you share your strengths, weaknesses, triumphs and trials honestly with those around you, you make a more personal connection. Let us never forget, people follow those they like. While your primary concern at the office may not be to make friends; opening yourself up to your team will help develop a sense of trust and loyalty towards you.
- **Stay in integrity with your values.** Emotional control does not equate to silence. Just the opposite. When a difficult subject needs to be addressed, you will be fully able to do so with a level head. When the truth needs to be told, you will be a person other's look to. By showing others you are filled with integrity and you stand by your values will help to define your reputation. Respect always follow those whose "yes" means "yes" and whose "no" means "no".
- **Tactfully handle the negative.** It seems, regardless of the size of organization you work for, that negative people will always be present. These are the ones that continually complain, create confrontations and lack control of their emotions. If their contribution to your team does not outweigh the damaging attitude, you may want to consider having them transferred to a position where they would be more suited. Be aware of these personality types. Also be prepared to handle the challenges they will bring to you as you prepare to develop your new emotional steadiness.

## The Aware Leader

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