Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Resolution

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Fred McGrath has been designing and delivering experiential, interactive keynotes, seminars, and webinars for legal professionals and business leaders for over 20 years. His strong advocacy of inclusive, improv-based training stems from a successful acting/screenwriting career in Hollywood. Before focusing solely on leaderships training, Fred was a busy working actor and veteran of over 100 national commercials as well as numerous co-starring roles in network dramas and sitcoms. Always exceeding expectation with no shortage of fun and laughs, Fred engages participants on a wide variety of topics with his unique approach. Year after year, Fred continues to be one of the highest-rated professional development trainer/coaches anywhere.

"In the corporation of the future, new leaders will not be masters, but maestros. The leadership task will be to anticipate the signs of coming change, to inspire creativity, and to get the best ideas from everybody.
    --Ned Herrmann, author of *The Creative Brain*

"Cognitive learning promotes improved knowledge. Experiential learning promotes improved behavior.
    --Fred McGrath

The Advantages of Emotional Intelligence and Experiential Training

Emotional Intelligence (EI), the key to improving client building, existing relationships, negotiation techniques and leadership skills, can best be taught, accessed, coached, developed and enhanced by using improvisation techniques to support emotive learning. Cognitive learning is less effective because it is knowledge-based. As such, comprehending the concepts of EI is not enough. Increasing one's EI is like exercising a muscle rather than learning more about a topic. It requires the appropriate action and reinforcement -- much like lifting weights to develop stronger muscles rather than reading an exercise book.

The EI Evidence Is In

Based on years of behavioral research, Daniel Goldman reported in his groundbreaking book, *Emotional Intelligence*, that an IQ oriented view of intelligence is far too narrow. Goldman points out that EI is the most critical factor in creating a successful career and life. Those with high "EQ" build flourishing careers and lasting meaningful relationships. Unlike IQ, which is set for life, EQ can be considerably improved by way of emotional-based training and workshops.

High EQ leaders attend to business *and* emotional needs - a subtle but crucial dimension of success. How crucial? Let's look at some recent research on this subject:

- A study of 515 senior global executives found the most successful executives had the strongest emotional intelligence. In fact, EQ was a better predictor of leadership success than relevant business experience, previous academic achievement, or IQ.

- The Center for Creative Leadership conducted a "Derailed Executives" study which analyzed rising stars that burned out prematurely. The primary cause of derailment was "interpersonal deficits," not technical abilities.

- American Express Financial Advisors' attended EQ training and increased sales by 18%. Overall sales in regions where the managers attended the program were 11% greater than sales where managers did not attend.

EI for Business:

- The reasons for losing customers and clients are 70% EQ-related (e.g., didn't like that company's customer service). *Forum Corporation on Manufacturing and Service Companies, 1989 - 1995*

- 50% of time wasted in business is due to lack of trust. *John O. Whitney, Director, Deming Center for Quality Management*

- In one year, the US Air Force invested less than $10,000 for emotional competence testing and saved $2,760,000 in recruitment costs. *Fastcompany "How Do You Feel," June 2000*

- In a multinational consulting firm, partners who showed high emotional intelligence earned 139% more their partners with lower emotional intelligence. *Boyatzis, 1999*

- American Express tested emotional competence training on financial advisors. Trained advisors increased business 18.1% compared to 16.2%, and nearly 90% of those who took the training reported significant improvements in their sales performance. Now all incoming advisors receive four days of emotional competence training. *Fastcompany "How Do You Feel," June 2000*

- After supervisors in a manufacturing plant received emotional competency training, lost-time accidents were reduced by 50%. Formal grievances were reduced from an average of 15 per year to three per year, and the plant exceeded productivity goals by $250,000. *Pesuric & Byham, 1996*

- Top performing sales clerks are 12 times more productive than those at the bottom and 85% more productive than an average performer. Technical skill and cognitive ability only accounts for one-third of this difference. Emotional competence accounts for the remaining two-thirds. *Goleman, 1998*

- 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. *Cited in Cooper and Sawaf, 1996*

- At L'Oreal, sales people appointed on the basis of certain emotional competencies significantly outsold sales people appointed using the company's old selection procedure by $91,370, increasing net revenue by $2,558,36. Salespeople appointed on the basis of emotional competence also had 63% less turnover during the first year. *Spencer & Spencer, 1993; Spencer, McClelland, & Kelner, 1997, cited in Cherniss, 2000*

- The most effective leaders in the US Navy were warmer, more outgoing, emotionally expressive, dramatic, and sociable. *Bachman, 1988, cited in Cherniss, 2000*

- Workers with high work pressures and poor time management skills are twice as

likely to miss work. Employees who have strong self-management skills cope better with work pressures. *Essi Systems, 1997*

The Art and Skill of Emotional Intelligence (EI)

EI is the degree of mastery over one's emotional world; an adept relationship between feeling, thinking, and acting; the skill to manage, control and shape his or her emotional states so they become reliable assets; the ability to consciously manifest feelings in order to help achieve desired successes and goals; the intuitiveness to engage various levels of empathy and sympathy in order to enter, influence, maintain, grow, and enrich both professional and personal relationships.

The four major skills that make up emotional intelligence are:

Self-Awareness – The ability to read one's emotions and recognize their impact while using gut feelings to guide decisions. This is the gold standard of emotional intelligence, the foundational element on which all other emotional competencies are built. According to research, people who lack self-awareness are much more likely to derail in their careers than people who are skilled in these competencies. This cluster includes an awareness of one's inner emotional life, knowledge of one's strengths and limitations, as well as self-confidence.

Self-Management – Involves controlling one's emotions and impulses as well as adapting to changing circumstances. Awareness of your emotions is not enough. Another key set of competencies revolves around the ability to take the next step: managing those emotions. In research that centered on business leaders who were pursuing promising careers and then "derailed," the most significant factor leading to derailment was lack of impulse control. In other words, whether or not they were aware of their emotions, they allowed them to erupt in ways that caused trouble.

Mindful of Others **-** The ability to sense, understand, and react to others' emotions while comprehending social networks. Emotional intelligence competencies include not only dealing effectively with oneself, but also dealing effectively with others. This cluster of competencies includes the ability to be empathetic, to understand organizational politics, and to be service-minded.

Relationship Management – The ability to inspire, influence, and develop others while managing conflict. This includes being able to have a palpable influence on friends and colleagues in order to advance the connection. Another key attribute to this stage of EI is the skill to resolve conflicts without jeopardizing interpersonal connection(s). Someone with EI skills also has the ability to rally people towards worthwhile causes and goals, author social connections and team building, and inspire leadership.

Additional benefits from optimizing emotional intelligence include:
- Mastering the "dance" between emotions, thoughts, and actions.
- Consistent understanding and control over one's emotional states.
- Successful movement toward beneficial integration.

- Increased capacity to master conflict resolution through empathetic understanding.
- Skillful development and maintenance of desired interpersonal relationships.

<u>Power of Empathy</u>

The "secret" is no secret at all: Emotion is a powerful resource, yet many leaders just don't optimize it. Much communication occurs nonverbally. Consequently, a critical leadership skill is *empathy* - the ability to sense and respond to the feelings of others. Why? Well, it's easy to find out what the business issues are; it takes savvy to uncover the personal issues that drive or resist change.

Mastery of True Empathy Empowers Leaders to:
1. Understand team member from *their* point-of-view.
2. Defuse conflict using five simple steps.
3. Enhance team performance capabilities.
4. Strengthen team dynamics via identifying and honoring "archetypes."
5. Improve/ensure desired results.
6. Use creativity to optimize projects' processes and outcomes.
7. Invite all to bring who they are to where they are.
8. Create a dialogue, not a monologue, which promotes ownership, pride, respect, and synergy.

Conflict Resolution

CON-flict (kŏn′flĭkt): A state of disharmony between incompatible or antithetical persons, ideas, or interests; a clash.

Res-o-LU-tion (rĕz′ə-lōō′shən): A formal expression of opinion or intention agreed on by a legislative body, committee, or other formal meeting.

<u>Primary Stages for Successful Conflict Resolution</u>

1. Transpose differences to present a problem with enough commonality to be solved with mutual interests.
2. Create genuine motivation to arrive at a mutually beneficial solution.
3. Apply Emotional Intelligence: awareness of internal world, thoughts, emotions, distortions, desires, and needs.
4. Apply empathetic skills: willingness to leave one's self-interests in order to thoroughly envision the situation from another's perspective.
5. Ability to maintain your needs and wants while practicing compassion.
6. Ability to listen with intent and without distraction.
7. Ability to genuinely indicate that another has been heard without prejudice.
8. Keep to the "yes, and…" in order to promote good faith.

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The "Change Model" Process

A Simplified Methodology for Successful Conflict Resolution

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1. Begin with mutually agreed-upon objectivity regarding issue or problem.
2. Communicate personal feelings using only "I" statements.
3. Communicate personal fantasies or subjectivity using only "I" statements.
4. Negotiate a mutual agreement geared to reducing the likelihood of a similar conflict.

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Five Tips for Confronting Someone Effectively and Safely

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1. Respect the other person's character through actions, tone and words.
2. Be objective and strive for visual or verbal cues of agreement.
3. Rather than show your PhD on what you don't agree on, show your EI and help determine what you do agree on. Look for common ground and build on it.
4. Create safety for the other party and be on the lookout for defensiveness.
5. Let silence happen. Lack of words does not indicate something meaningful is not taking place.

The Key: Being Present

So much of our contemporized mind struggles in a secret world of duality between our natural authentic-self and our ego-based, manufactured self. In our roles as businessperson, parent, partner, friend, or consumer, we find little time for reflection. This inherent dissonance leaves no room for fully experiencing the now in our daily lives.

Our natural "non-duality" state provides us with the harmony to access gifts which we all naturally possess: peace, empathy, and compassion, to name but a few. As the natural self emerges, the fear, stress, and self-judgment authored by the shadowy manufactured self dissolve.

When we are fully present (this is sometimes referred to as "mindful living,") negative brain chatter can be upstaged by our simple commitment to the moment. With this commitment, even drinking a glass of water can be very engaging.

So how can we move away from this "daily duality" where so much fear and tension is manifested? By practicing the opposite. Let's call it a living meditation. Instead of pretending to be fully listening to a client or colleague while instead thinking of something else, listen with intent.

And when the duality begins, politely decline the invitation and go back to the intent of simply listening. Again and again and again. . . this is the way back to "no mind" (the opposite of "being in your head") and being part of the present.

Practice being in the now every chance you can. At this time in history, we can only counter the forces that pull us in multiple directions and dissociate us from the moment by our dedication to the practice of being fully present in the now as best we can.

There will be strong "habit energy" calling, tugging, and nagging you back toward the world of distraction. Notice, allow, and let it pass. Observe your breath, study details, and relax.

Surrendering to this black hole of distractions wears away at the integrity of who we are. Our lives are less than they could be and that is a tragedy – not as a forest fire or earthquake is pure, quick tragedy, but as rain hits a rock until one day, the rock erodes and cracks open. We measure our life experience in just that: experience. To spend most of our time maintaining a purgatory of consciousness is to remove oneself from life itself – a human dreaming rather than a human being. And that's a high price to pay, one moment at a time.

Brain Structure Altered by Meditation

ScienceDaily (Jan. 21, 2011) — Participating in an 8-week mindfulness meditation program appears to make measurable changes in brain regions associated with memory, sense of self, empathy and stress. In a study that will appear in the January 30 issue of *Psychiatry Research: Neuroimaging,* a team led by Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) researchers report the results of their study, the first to document meditation-produced changes over time in the brain's grey matter. "Although the practice of meditation is associated with a sense of peacefulness and physical relaxation, practitioners have long claimed that meditation also provides cognitive and psychological benefits that persist throughout the day," says Sara Lazar, PhD, of the MGH Psychiatric Neuroimaging Research Program, the study's senior author. "This study demonstrates that changes in brain structure may underlie some of these reported improvements and that people are not just feeling better because they are spending time relaxing."

Previous studies from Lazar's group and others found structural differences between the brains of experienced mediation practitioners and individuals with no history of meditation, observing thickening of the cerebral cortex in areas associated with attention and emotional integration. But those investigations could not document that those differences were actually produced by meditation. For the current study, MR images were taken of the brain structure of 16 study participants two weeks before and after they took part in the 8-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Program at the University of Massachusetts Center for Mindfulness. In addition to weekly meetings that included practice of mindfulness meditation -- which focuses on nonjudgmental awareness of sensations, feelings and state of mind -- participants received audio recordings for guided meditation practice and were asked to keep track of how much time they practiced each day. A set of MR brain images were also taken of a control group of non-meditators over a similar time interval.

Meditation group participants reported spending an average of 27 minutes each day practicing mindfulness exercises, and their responses to a mindfulness questionnaire indicated significant improvements compared with pre-participation responses. The analysis of MR images, which focused on areas where meditation-associated differences were seen in earlier studies, found increased grey-matter density in the hippocampus, known to be important for learning and memory, and in structures associated with self-awareness, compassion and introspection. Participant-reported reductions in stress also were correlated with decreased grey-matter

density in the amygdala, which is known to play an important role in anxiety and stress. Although no change was seen in a self-awareness-associated structure called the insula, which had been identified in earlier studies, the authors suggest that longer-term meditation practice might be needed to produce changes in that area. None of these changes were seen in the control group, indicating that they had not resulted merely from the passage of time.

16 Ways To Stay in the Moment

1. Remind yourself it is impossible to be anywhere other than where you are at any given time. These perceptions of elsewhere are created in one's imagination.

2. Commit to returning to authenticity and let go of "manufacturing."

3. Remind yourself if you're not in direct, pending danger, fear is most likely optional.

4. Breathe.

5. Focus with sincere intent on the present reality and truly believe you are exceptionally qualified to participate in it.

6. Fully trust your authentic actions, reactions and input. A commitment to this simple principal will banish judgment, fear, and insecurity.

7. Relinquish the constant "self-monitoring."

8. Breathe.

9. Inadequacy is an illusion we rehearse in our minds. The objective data does not support your self-judgment.

10. If you do not feel centered, then empty your mind, focus on the now, tune in, fully believe in yourself, and pay attention.

11. Do not judge silence. There is no need to fill the space with words. Speak when you have something to communicate.

12. Breathe.

13. Do your homework and always know more than you are expected to know.

14. Confidence is simply the byproduct of an unwavering acceptance that who you are at any given moment is more than adequate.

15. Remember the truism: you are not what you do; you are someone who does.

16. Practice, practice, practice the above in all situations.

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