PRIMAL LEADERSHIP

Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence


Aung Tun Thet
Gifted leadership occurs where the heart and head – feeling and thought – meet.

The manner in which leaders act – not just what they do, but how they do it – is a fundamental key to effective leadership.

The reason lies in the brain.
The Brain is an Open Loop

- We rely on connections with other people for our emotional stability.
- Emotions are contagious.
- The more positive the overall moods of people, the more cooperative they worked together and the better the results.
Laughter and the Open Loop

Among working groups, cheerfulness and warmth spreads most easily.

Laughter is largely involuntary.

Laughter in the workplace signals trust, comfort, and a shared sense of the world.
Why Good Leaders Must Read Emotions

🌟 Resonant leaders are attuned to their people’s feelings and move them in a positive emotional direction.

🌟 Emotionally intelligent (EI) leaders used empathy to attune to the emotions of the people they lead.
The Four Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence

- Self-awareness
- Self-Management
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Management
Self-awareness

- Emotional self-awareness: Reading one’s own emotions and recognizing their impact and using “gut sense” to guide decisions.

- Accurate self-assessment: Knowing one’s strengths and limits.

- Self-confidence: A sound sense of one’s self-worth and capabilities.
Self-management

- **Emotional self-control**: Keeping disruptive emotions and impulses under control.
- **Transparency**: Displaying honesty, integrity and trustworthiness.
- **Adaptability**: Flexibility in adapting to changing situations or overcoming obstacles.
- **Achievement**: The drive to improve performance to meet inner standards of excellence.
- **Initiative**: Readiness to act and seize opportunities.
- **Optimism**: Seeing the upside in events.
Social Awareness

Empathy: Sensing others’ emotions, understanding their perspective, and taking active interest in their concerns.

Organizational Awareness: Reading the currents, decision networks, and politics at the organizational level.

Service: Recognizing and meeting follower, client or customer needs.
Relationship Management

- **Inspirational leadership:** Guiding and motivating with a compelling vision.
- **Influence:** Wielding a range of tactics for persuasion.
- **Developing others:** Bolstering others’ abilities through feedback and guidance.
- **Change catalyst:** Initiating, managing and leading in new directions.
- **Building bonds:** Cultivating and maintaining relationship webs.
- **Teamwork and collaboration:** Cooperation and teambuilding
The Leadership Repertoire

Six distinct approaches to leadership

Four of the styles – **visionary**, **coaching**, **affiliative** and **democratic** – create the kind of resonance that boosts performance.

The other two – **pace-setting** and **commanding** – should be applied with caution.
Visionary Style

- Articulates where the group is going, but not how it gets there – setting people free to innovate, experiment and take risks.
- Inspirational leadership is the EI competence which underpins the visionary style.
- Transparency, another EI competence is crucial.
- The EI competence which matters most to visionary leadership is Empathy – the ability to sense what others feel and understand their perspectives.
Coaching Style

- The art of one-on-one.
- Coaches help people identify their unique strengths and weaknesses, tying those to their personal and career aspirations.
- Effective coaching exemplifies the EI competency of developing others, which lets a leader act as a counselor.
- It work hand-in-hand with two other EI competencies: emotional awareness and empathy.
Affiliative Style

- A caring approach.
- Represents collaborative competency in action.
- Most concerned with promoting harmony and fostering friendly interactions.
- Focus on the emotional needs of others, using empathy.
- Many leaders combined the Affiliative Style with Visionary Style – a potent combination.
Democratic Style

- Builds upon a triad of EI competences – teamwork and collaboration, conflict management and influence.
- Great listening skills and true collaborators.
- Quell conflict and create harmony.
- Empathy also plays a role.
- Works best when a leader is unsure of the direction to take and need ideas from others.
Pacesetting Style

- Must be applied sparingly, restricted to settings where it truly works.
- Obsessive about doing things better and faster, quickly pinpointing poor performers.
- Pacesetter who lacks empathy can easily be blinded to the pain of those who achieve what the leader demands.
- Works best when combined with the passion of the visionary style and the teambuilding of the affiliative style.
Commanding Style

- The least effective style.
- Demands immediate compliance with orders, without explanations.
- Works on limited circumstances, and only when used judiciously – for e.g., genuine emergencies.
- Draws on three EI competencies – influence, achievement and initiative.
- In addition, self-awareness, emotional self control and empathy are crucial.
Developing Emotionally Intelligent Leaders

- The key to learning that lasts lies in the brain.
- EI involves circuitry between the frontal lobes and the limbic system.
- Skills based in the limbic system, which is a slow learner, are best learned through motivation, extended practice and feedback.
- To improve leadership skills requires plenty of practice and repetition.
Are You a Boiling Frog?

Some leaders settle into a routine or let small conveniences solidify into large habits – and allow inertia to set in.
Self-Directed Learning

Leadership development must be self-directed.

Self-directed learning involves five discoveries: each representing a discontinuity.

The first discovery: My ideal self – Who do I want to be?

The second discovery: My real self: Who am I? What are my strengths and weaknesses?

The third discovery: My learning agenda – How can I build on my strengths while reducing my gaps?

The fourth discovery: Experimenting with and practicing new thoughts, behaviours and feelings to the point of mastery.

The fifth discovery: Developing supportive and trusting relationships that make change possible.
Boyatzis’s Theory of Self-Directed Learning

1. My Ideal Self: What do I want to be?

2. My Real Self: Who am I?

3. My Learning Agenda: Building on my strengths while reducing gaps

4. Experimenting: With new behaviour, thoughts & feelings

5. Developing trusting relationships that help, support & encourage each step

In the process

Practicing: The new behaviour, building new neural pathways through mastery

My Strengths: Where my ideal and real self overlap

My Gaps: Where my ideal and real self differ
The First Discovery: 
*The Motivation to Change*

The first discovery – the ideal self is where the change begins.

You, 15 years from now and were living your ideal life: what kinds of people are around you? what does your environment look and feel like? What would you be doing during a typical day?

What are your guiding principles?

What are your core values in the areas of life that are important to you, such as family, relationships, work, spirituality, and health?
The second discovery: Looking at Your Real Self

- Taking stock of your real self starts with an inventory of your talents and passions – the person you actually are.
- Actively seek negative feedback, using 360 degree evaluation.
- Multiple views gives a more complete picture.
- Then, examine your strengths and gaps.
- Create a personal balance sheet, listing both.
The third discovery: a practical plan to learn leadership skills

- Focus on improvements you are passionate about, building on your strengths while filling the gaps.
- Set specific, manageable learning goals.
- Goals:
  - should build strengths;
  - must be your own, not someone else’s;
  - must be flexible & feasible, with manageable steps;
  - must fit your learning style.
The Fourth Discovery: 

Experimenting

Reconfigure your brain as you practice new behaviours to the point of mastery.

Rehearse the behaviour at every opportunity until it becomes automatic.

Use the mental rehearsal technique. Envision yourself repeating the behaviour you want to master over and over again.
The Fifth Discovery:
Supporting & Trusting Relationships

- Having supportive people around you when you want to change makes big difference.
- Positive groups help people make positive changes, especially when the relationships are filled with candor, trust & psychological safety.
- This safety is crucial for learning to occur.
- Find a mentor, hire an executive coach.
Building EI Organizations

Changing a single leader is only the beginning.

The rest of the job is to develop a critical mass of resonant leaders and thereby transform how people work together.
Parallel Transformations

Leadership development works when there is parallel transformations in the organizations that those leaders guide.

Groups only begin to change when they understand how they work, especially if there is discordance.

They must understand what the underlying group norms are, and then develop the ideal vision for the group.
The Power of Group Decision-Making

- Group decision-making is superior to that of the brightest individual in the group – unless the group lacks harmony or the ability to cooperate.
- Groups are smarter than individual when (only when) they exhibit the qualities of EI.
- To lead a team effectively, you must address the group reality.
- Leaders who have a keen sense of group’s norms and who are adept at maximizing positive emotions can create EI teams.
Maximizing the Group’s EI

- A group’s EI requires the same capabilities that an EI individual does – self awareness, self management, social awareness and relationship management.
- Emotions are contagious and a team leader needs to understand how to keep a bad mood from spreading.
- The leader should start by helping the team raise its collective self-awareness.
- Uncover the less-productive norms and work with the team to change them.
A leader who wants to change an organization must first understand its reality.

Change begins when EI leaders actively question the emotional reality and cultural norms underlying the organization’s daily activities and behaviour.

The leader has to pay attention to people’s emotions.

Even toxic organizations can change.
Dynamic Inquiry

- A process which can help you discover an organization’s emotional reality.
- Uses focused conversations and open-ended questions to get to feelings.
- Themes become apparent from these conversations, which are then taken to smaller groups for more discussion.
Creating Sustainable Change

- Cultivate a dispersed cadre of EI leaders.
- Leadership training must be a strategic priority and be managed at the highest level. Commitment must come from the top.
- Design a process that lets those leaders uncover their own dreams and personal ideals, examine their strengths and gaps, and use their daily work as a learning laboratory.
Leadership Development Process

- Self-directed
- A tie in to the organizational culture
- Learning events emphasizing individual change
- Learning about emotional competencies
- Creative learning experiences
- Relationships that support learning, such as executive coaching