

EQ AND RESONANT COMMUNICATION - INPUT

INTRODUCTION

Emotions are at the center of our thinking, decision-making and interactions. They are not separate from reason because they give us insights on what we value. Module 1's input on emotional intelligence highlighted how reading and educating our emotions is at the core of understanding ourselves. While the focus of module 1 was more on Self-Awareness and Self-Management, in this module the focus is on the work of leading interpersonally. In this context, this section highlights the importance of understanding and managing not only our emotions but also those of others, in service of building resonant relationships and fulfilling the mission.

MAIN IDEAS

Emotional Intelligence and Resonant Leadership

While the invitation to work and collaborate with others for the mission is a worthy one, we cannot deny that the experience is not always easy. A critical dimension of being in relationship with others is realizing that:

- each of us experiences emotional states that we call moods,
- and that emotions spread irresistibly whenever people are near each other. People 'catch' emotions most easily from the leader. This automatically has effects on whether people feel supported, inspired, valued, motivated, etc.

A study by Boyatzis & McKee shows that:

- an organization's climate—in other words, how people feel about working at a company—can account for 20-30% of organizational performance.
- roughly 50-70% of how employees perceive their organization's climate can be traced to the actions of one person: the leader.

In this perspective, the way leaders operate at the socio-emotional level will impact the emotional states of people around them. Depending on their leadership styles and ability to direct their moods:

- Leaders can either have a positive effect on their teams, aligning everyone onto their upbeat wavelength and reinforcing cohesion, harmony and emotional safety even in tense situations (we will refer to this as developing “**resonance**”). In this state, leaders manage their feelings in a way that supports the group to meet its goal and genuinely connect with others.
- Or, they can create “**dissonance**” where their negative expressions clash against the emotions of others.

The Components of Emotional Intelligence

By emotional Intelligence we refer to the capacity of being aware of and managing the emotions of both oneself and others in order to elicit the most productive interactions possible. By developing our empathy, social awareness and relationship management, we facilitate greater cohesion, trust, collaboration and mutuality.

Given the large scope of the topic, we include key insights in the following summary table and invite you to explore the Resource document for books and articles as follow-up readings.

A brief on Emotional Intelligence

based on the work of Daniel Goleman and Richard Boyatzis

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| <p>Self-Awareness <i>Awareness and understanding of one's emotions</i></p> | <p>A lack of connectedness to our affect will have consequences on our social interactions. On the other hand, a high degree of connectedness is not easy to manage, but becomes a resource for working with others.</p> <p>Developing self awareness involves asking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What am I feeling? Why? How might I express this or not? Is my self-assessment accurate? |
| <p>Self Management <i>How one acts based on the emotions experienced</i></p> | <p>This involves moving from feelings to actions and asking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Like a baby needs to learn to soothe itself, how can I demonstrate emotional self-regulation? - How do I “shift states”? How do I cultivate a sense of relative balance and find my calm when circumstances are “hot”? - Can I bring emotions to bear in the right settings? - How do I manage intense emotions enough that I can act with integrity and reliability despite the challenges I’m experiencing? |
| <p>Social Awareness <i>One's ability to sense what emotions others are experiencing</i></p> | <p>Growing in social awareness is about attuning to how others feel and what they are thinking, recognizing and acting on the social undercurrents (people’s emotions, beliefs, and drives; culture, relationships, and group dynamics). In the absence of a certain capacity for sharing one’s feelings (true empathy and compassion), no helpful relationship is possible.</p> <p>This involves asking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When I am listening, do I feel anything from the other? What resonates within myself as I am listening? - How do I cultivate empathy for others? How do I do at reading and understanding the emotions of others? - How safe do others feel around me? How can I express both understanding and care? <p>Refer to next page for a deeper exploration of emotional safety.</p> |
| <p>Relationship Management <i>How one chooses to interact with others based on self-awareness, self management, and social awareness</i></p> | <p>The fruits of relationship management are a resonant and transformational leadership grounded in inspiration, motivation, developing others through coaching or mentoring, influence, teamwork and collaboration, inquiry in action..</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How invested am I in building my team and fostering cohesiveness? - How well do I manage my relationships with others and balance motivating them while keeping discipline? |

Emotional Safety in Interpersonal Communication

The latest research on neuroscience confirms that our brain is continuously detecting through our senses whether we are in a situation that is safe or not (Stephen Porges). Psychological or emotional safety is a shared belief held by individuals that their relationship is a safe space for interpersonal risk-taking (Edmondson, 1999). When our interactions are safe, trusting and mutual, we are more comfortable being ourselves and therefore establish solid bonds with each other which shape our leadership and work performance just as much as our focus on efficiency.

Why does it matter for leadership?

Safety is a fundamental human need deeply wired into our minds and bodies that involves the feeling of security and protection from physical **and** emotional harm. Psychological safety is the extent to which we view the interpersonal and social climate as conducive to interpersonal risk; it is a measure of our willingness and disposition to trust others.

When as a child we felt safe, we took risks, raised our hand at school without fear and dared to explore our surrounding environment. Conversely, under the wrong surrounding conditions, we felt unsafe and were forced to expend our own time and energy to protect ourselves from others instead of reaching out to them. The same applies to our adult life. When we feel safe in our interactions, our ability to fully express ourselves increases and our social engagement system makes it possible for us to connect to others, trust, listen to and empathize with them.

Research conducted by Google on Project Aristotle showed that the number one trait that separated successful and high-performing teams from average ones was emotional safety. It is when individuals feel safe to take risks, show up fully and be vulnerable with each other that the most rewarding work takes place. Feeling emotionally safe enables us as well to be creative and bold in both our actions and ideas. When we feel safe, we work at our best: we naturally act from our talents and strengths and feel energized to share them with others and seize opportunities.

What does emotional safety imply?

There are many ways to make an environment and interaction feel safe and secure for people to communicate at their best. Empathy is at the heart of emotional safety as it helps affirm struggles and vulnerabilities as normal human experiences instead of judging them as right or wrong. Consistency, predictability and personal accountability are also key (whereas moodiness and unpredictability are draining behaviors that put a strain on emotional safety).

Other elements include:

- A non judgmental and positive attitude to vulnerability, mistakes and imperfections. [Link](#)
- Gratefulness and appreciation for whom others are and what they bring to the relationship (including specifically their difference and diversity).
- An open disposition to ask others for help.
- Honesty, openness, an ability to have difficult conversations and bring up problems and tough issues without fear of recrimination.
- Building confidence and viewing others in a positive light.
- A recognition of the unique skills and talents that each bring in, and an investment of these gifts in the service of the relationship.
- Tolerance, acceptance of mistakes as opportunities for learning and growth.
- Sharing credits and giving praise.

IGNATIAN NOTE

Emotional Intelligence in the Ignatian Tradition

In his autobiography, Ignatius shares a personal experience where his inability to manage his emotions could have led to very dangerous outcomes. He relates the story of his faith dialogue with a Moor that went painfully astray.

*And at this there came upon him some impulses creating disturbance in his soul; it seemed to him he had not done his duty. And these caused him anger also against the Moor; it seemed to him he had done wrong in allowing that a Moor should say such things of Our Lady, and he was obliged to stand up for her honour. And thus there were coming upon him desires to go and find the Moor, and stab him for what he'd said. **Autobiography of Saint Ignatius [15-16]***

Following his conversion, and as he grew in his spiritual life, Ignatius recognized that his behaviour in this incident was fed on disordered feelings, opinions, ideals and interpretations that could have generated an explosive outcome. As he grew in self-awareness, sensitivity, love and humility he was able to share this shaming event and make it available to others as a learning experience.

In the Spiritual Exercises, Ignatius draws our attention to emotions and affect for many reasons, including the way in which we can read them as expressions of the “movement of spirits,” the felt effects of the presence of the Holy Spirit, or the “enemy of our human nature.” In the language of consolation and desolation, Ignatius describes how the harmony with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit encourages us with energy, peace, and a sense of deepening our faith, hope, and love. By contrast, the effect of the “enemy spirit” is that of desolation, undermining our energy for life, our integrity of relationship with self, others, and God, and diminishing our sense of faith, hope, and love.

While modern psychology might express these realities differently, Ignatius intuitively understands the nature of emotion and the power they have to support our living in a way congruent with Christ’s example and teaching, and also the way in which particular emotions - anxiety or despair, for instance, can bring harm to ourselves and others.

Ignatius understood emotions as signposts, without giving them the last word.

*“It seems that in all matters Father lets himself be guided by reason... and he holds this rule in all things, and prescribes it for others. And he says that this is what distinguishes human beings from the rest of animals. And this is the most, or one of the most, outstanding of our Fathers’ qualities.” **Memoriale (300)***

However, as much as he was led by reason in his decision-making and leadership, Ignatius equally put emphasis on emotions and affect. In his book, *Directions for Communications*, Willi Lambert shares the following:

*“It would be completely amiss to equate reasonableness with unfeeling, with a view to sheer effectiveness, with rationality. Ignatius worked on his environment not as a “brain”, as we say, but as someone who obeyed reason. (...) It sounds paradoxical, but it is correct: as much as Ignatius is famous for his “reasonableness”, he relied just as much, in the context of the “discernment of spirits”, on inner movements, sensibilities, and feelings. These he regarded as of the highest value. But here too, the fact remains: feelings serve as signposts, as warnings, as confirmation, but do not have the last word, which goes to the deeper sense and awareness of value oriented to Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God.” **Willi Lambert, Directions for Communications***

Ignatius' attention to emotions was also visible in his interactions with others. In meetings, he often asked companions to notice and free themselves from fears or attachments for the meeting to move forward. (Lambert).

Many other insights can be drawn from Ignatius' life and his rich spirituality: the rules for discernment, the Examen, the importance of bringing the right emotions into pastoral work as we seek to support and encourage the spiritual growth of others, are examples of practices of emotional intelligence that are relevant to our leadership work today.

EXPECTED LEARNINGS AND OUTCOMES

1. Connecting with Module 1's input on Emotional Intelligence and linking it to Resonant leadership
2. Understanding the relevance of Emotional Intelligence for relationships and leadership work
3. Introducing the concept of emotional safety as foundation for interpersonal communication and resonant interactions
4. Reflecting on the levels of connection in our relationships with others
5. Introducing practices to foster resonant and emotionally-safe environments

“Anyone can become angry – that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way – this is not easy.”

Aristotle