Chapter 10

Emotional Intelligence and Empathy:
A Prosocial Approach to Leadership Communication

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ABSTRACT

The rise of emotional intelligence (EI) and the continuing growth of online interactions work together to demonstrate the importance of participatory decision making as a motivational technique. However, participation in decisions requires that the leader act in a prosocial manner, focusing on outcomes that are beneficial to more than just the leader. A prosocial attitude leads to creation of buy-in through shared value and good management of emotions, requiring skill in both EI and empathetic approaches. EI is about connecting with one's own emotions and those of others to enable effective leadership communication. Empathy is the ability to understand someone else's emotions, feel them as if they were yours, and even to take some action in support or mitigation of those feelings. The lack of feedback or agreements on shared value in online interactions are highlighted when people are forced into face-to-face interactions and are subsequently unable to find these important communication tools. This chapter offers a new approach to leadership communication.

INTRODUCTION

In today's communicative environment, leaders need more than Emotional Intelligence (EI). Empathy is an important trait that must be mastered to achieve the best in communication, whether face-to-face or online. This is important because emphasis on EI and the continuing growth of online interactions work together to demonstrate the importance of participatory decision making as a motivational technique. However, participation in decisions requires that the leader create buy-in through shared value and good management of emotions, requiring skill in both EI and empathetic approaches.

EI is about connecting with one's own emotions and those of others to enable effective leadership communication. Empathy is the ability to understand someone else's emotions, feel them as if they were your own, and even to take some action in support or mitigation of those feelings. The lack of feedback or agreements on shared value in online interactions is highlighted when people are forced into face-to-face interactions and are subsequently unable to find these important communication tools. Mastering these abilities will give leaders ways to build a collaborative culture, emphasize everyone's strengths, and work to improve weaknesses. The literature review begins with an examination of leadership styles with emphasis on democratic/participative style and servant leadership.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are nine leadership styles that are commonly recognized by experts studying the subject, so it is appropriate to review them in this work. The focus of this article is on the relevance of democratic or participative leadership and an understanding of servant leadership. Democratic/participative leaders must be adept at getting input and creating collaboration to get a final decision that has everyone's buy-in. The chance to participate at this level normally delivers high job satisfaction and great creativity. The participative approach requires patience to work, because deliberations tend to be slow. This is not the best approach if you need quick decisions.

Servant-leadership is present when leadership and team members share authority by addressing and prioritizing personal needs while collective decision-making is encouraged. This approach should bring high morale and promote diversity. Critics of the approach point to conflicts of interest that can arise when business objectives take a back seat to employee interests and suggest the leader lacks authority. The other seven styles, in no particular order, are (Anderson & Sun, 2017, pp. 77-79):

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