

Ties that Bind

MINNESOTA BUSINESS

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Family Business Leadership

Part three in a three-part series on navigating the myths and “high C’s” of leadership | BY Tom Hubler



importance of embodying leadership skills and developing practices that sustain them over time, across our careers. EQ is vital.

But what characteristics of EQ are needed? The first is awareness of self. This is our ability to read and understand external stimuli and what it invokes in us. Our external awareness causes our internal response. Many people are unaware of their personal

question some of your assumptions regarding people, emotions, motivation and how you look at the world.

The second characteristic of EQ is awareness of others; learning how to understand and read others. Pay attention to how other people respond to you, in other words “watch them” responding to you. Much has been written about “body language,” but in my experience it too easily assumes the behavior of the other person, causing one to jump to conclusions that may be wrong. I believe it is better when you note a behavior to verbally ask whether or not your assumption is correct.

In any case, attend to the behavior clues that someone gives you. Use those clues to help you to understand him or her.

Motivation is the third characteristic of EQ; motivating yourself and others. The two key elements of motivation are purpose and vision. A leader understands that his or her purpose is necessary for self-motivation. A shared vision is critical to motivating others, whether business family members, other relatives or the company at large. Vision involves others and draws them into the desired outcome.

The fourth EQ characteristic is learning how to

barometer—developed by family of origin, parents, early teachers, and other subtle influencers—that deeply, subconsciously condition our body’s reactions.

Leaders learn to read their internal clues to external stimuli. They develop practices to heighten self-awareness through quiet time in daily nature walks, listening to music, journaling, jogging or some other quiet sporting activity.

Meditation is one of the easiest practices to undertake, and you can begin by simply dedicating 15-20 minutes of daily quiet time.

Use this period to reflect and

Earlier articles in this series determined that leadership can be learned and practices must be developed to personify those leadership skills. In his book *Synchronicity: The Inner Path of Leadership*, Joseph Jaworski lists eight perspectives of leadership. The first is: “The trouble with American leaders is their lack of self-knowledge.” Daniel Goldman, author of *Emotional Intelligence*, declares that 80 percent of success is due to EQ (emotional intelligence) and only 20 percent is due to IQ (intelligence quotient).

Because leadership is mostly *relational*, EQ is naturally an important factor. The first article in this series (appearing in November 2007) described the “C” that represents Character which is expressed by your EQ skills. The second installment (appearing in the January 2008 issue) emphasized the



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manage your “emotional brain,” the amygdala, one of two small almond-shaped masses of gray matter in the brain. It regulates how we react to external stimuli, demonstrating how certain things or people can “push our buttons.”

In his book, *Compassion in Action*, Ram Dass describes his relationship while he cared for his father late in his father’s life. He tells us that his father would sow seeds of discontent and pick out his vulnerable spots. Dass was reacting through his amygdala.

I think most of us have experienced times when our parents have picked out our vulnerable spots. The leader learns to manage that reactivity. People “grab” at leaders all the time and try to throw them off track. The EQ response is to go to your center, manage the amygdala response and face the challenge. Business family leaders use this skill to negotiate the tough emotional field of the family business.

The fifth and final characteristic of EQ is understanding relationships. Leadership creates shared visions by working in relationships. The critical interaction of relationship skills and leadership requires practice (as described in the second article in the series). Integrating mind and body to dem-

onstrate leadership skills makes you authentic and effective in today’s world of collaborative leadership. Top-down leadership styles rarely work anymore. Successful leaders use collaborative skills backed by emotional intelligence.

In the family business, collaboration is not only critical, but essential to maintain harmony and shared goals with other members of the family. You can anticipate collaboration when you focus on the three C’s: Commitment, Competency and Character.

Take this action step: In your next family business meeting discuss the practices in your family business that support successful leadership. Brainstorm what innovations would build upon them so that next generation leaders in your business family learn to “know themselves” as they respond to others. In doing so, they will be rewarded with the confidence, trust and admiration of everyone around them—family, co-workers and community. **MB**