



Leadership Development

Anywhere, Anytime

Practical Tips for School Leaders – #37

August 3, 2020

The Importance of Emotionally Intelligent Leaders – How do you describe your ability in this skill?

Emotionally intelligent leaders know themselves and they know their people. They are aware of the emotional state of their staff and are able to manage diverse emotions in ways that help people move ahead while dealing with difficult situations.

1. Monitor the emotional climate of your staff. Use an intentional process to continually identify the emotions of team members. In doing this you will be able to look for emotional signs that may hinder the present course.
2. Express your own feelings. Set the right tone by being candid and open with team members regarding how you feel. Leaders need to maintain balance to help others. Use your emotions, once identified, to steer the course. Share as much of yourself as you are comfortable doing. Keep in mind that trusting relationships are generated from reciprocal conversations.
3. Consider how your behaviors influence the emotions of others, A leader's words and actions have the potential to impact the emotions of team members. Your behaviors can even derail forward progress. Be mindful when anticipating the needs of others.
4. Employ the skill of empathy; put yourself in another's shoes. Gain the perspective of team members to help make better decisions. All team members want to be respected and understood. If you are an empathic leader, you understand your staff which has the capacity to build stronger relationships.
5. What are the emotional dynamics of the team? Use strategies to help you know the pulse of the organization, observe, communicate, model and use inquiry to bring out the emotions of others.
6. Try to reframe the way you think about a situation by implementing the following:
 - ✓ Expect the world to be complicated and messy.
 - ✓ Look for the reasons and causes for problems and difficult situations. The innovative mindset refers to this as problem-finding.
 - ✓ Use inquiry to your advantage by asking open ended questions of team members and providing ample time to reflect and respond.

- ✓ Focus on the situation at hand. Try not to deviate, get in the weeds or run-down rabbit holes. Stick to the facts as presented.
 - ✓ Use a positive mindset as much as possible. Remember your emotions are contagious.
7. Manage a situation by defining optimal boundaries related to the topic. The leader needs to leverage the team members strengths and emotional intelligence to accomplish the task. Extremely sensitive issues may bring out strong emotional reactions from some team members which could thwart the ability to respond. In some cases, it is advantageous to focus on relationship building providing ample time for team members to express their feelings.
 8. Seek out the help of others for advice or to share the emotional burden. Adopt a thought buddy; someone who is loyal and trustworthy who you can share your thinking. In a recent study this was cited as the most 'emotionally intelligent' thing a leader can do when they face tough times.
 9. Help others develop their emotional intelligence through sensitivity and personal conversations conducted within an atmosphere of trust. Practice the four distinctions of trust; sincerity, reliability, competence and care.

Feltman, Charles. *The Thin Book of Trust*. 2009

Cherniss, Cary & Roche, Cornelia. *Leading with Feeling*. 2020