

# Leading from Feeling:

## Coaching Tools for Interpersonal & Organizational Excellence

Become a better leader by following these 10 tips.

By Oshana Himot

Since Daniel Goleman's best-seller *Emotional Intelligence* was published, there's been increased awareness of how emotions affect the ability to lead others and create a successful organization. You can solve challenges more easily when you work with your feelings in a positive way and solve interpersonal issues when they arise.

A few simple techniques will go a long way to increase harmony and effectiveness among you and your staff. Here are 10 ways you can integrate your feelings so they enhance the way you guide your organization.

Start a leadership journal to record the changes you're experiencing.

There's a gift in every situation. What is the gift for you?

### 1. Feel What You Feel

First of all, let yourself feel whatever you're feeling. For example, if you're upset by the actions of one of your staff, simply feel the emotions without taking any action. Let's say the human resources director isn't doing the job the way you feel it should be done. Instead of reacting or talking to the director, spend some time feeling your feelings — anger, disappointment, frustration, whatever they may be. After working with your feelings for awhile, you may find that you see the situation in a new way or that some of your upset feelings dissipate. This enables you to have a much different conversation than

you would have had with your staff member. Taking this approach can lead to more positive results for everyone.

### 2. Accept Your Feelings — Whatever They Are

As you feel your emotions, let yourself accept them. When you begin to accept them, they naturally change and become lighter.

### 3. Explore Your Feelings

Be open and willing to look at anything that's causing you to feel upset in any way. When you examine your feelings more deeply, you'll often find new and creative solutions which work for everyone.

### 4. Take Time for Self-Inquiry

Taking a little time out for self-reflection yields enormous results. Even five minutes can go a long way toward giving you a fresh

perspective and new possibilities. You may realize what you did to create a difficult situation or see it from a different point of view. You're sure to receive insights that weren't available before.

### 5. Find the Gift in Every Situation

Take the example of the human resources director. What's the gift in this case? Maybe you have a hard time giving honest feedback to your employees. Now you have an opportunity to work on this. What is it about giving feedback that's challenging for you? Is it that you want your staff to think highly of you? Is it that you don't know how to communicate your feelings in a way that's both honest and constructive for the other person?

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### 6. Use Your Heart to Change the Energy

You can use your own heart to shift the energy of your feelings in a positive way. The energy of the heart is the force of love and compassion. It's the most powerful energy there is.

Let's say you're feeling anger toward your human resources director. Close your eyes and focus on your heart, which is between your two breasts at the breastbone. Bring the anger into your heart center. Do this a few times until you feel the anger change in some way. Usually it will become lighter.

When the energy has shifted in a positive way, ask yourself: What do I feel about the situation now? What action do I want to take, and when?

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For deep or longstanding situations or feelings, practice this exercise for 90 days. Start a leadership journal to record the changes you're experiencing.

### 7. Develop Your Leadership Traits

Make a list of the leadership qualities you possess. Note the ones you'd like to strengthen and the positive effects they'll have on your organization. Choose the one that's most important to you or that you feel will have the biggest impact on your organization. Find at least one way to work with this quality each day, and record your progress in your leadership journal.

### 8. Visualize

Find a quiet place. Repeat aloud or silently the name of the leadership quality you're developing. Take time to examine its meaning. Feel how living this attribute enriches your life and organization. See wonderful opportunities coming into your organization — new donors, projects, or your organization's expanded contributions to the community you serve. Enjoy the positive feelings you experience as you connect to the endless possibilities for service that your organization is creating.

Describe your insights from this work in your leadership journal. Use this exercise daily to strengthen your leadership characteristics.

### 9. Look for Positive Qualities in Others Too

As you discover your own leadership traits, you'll notice them in your staff as well. Be delighted as you witness staff members expressing their own special talents. As you focus more and more on the positive aspects of your staff and organization, you'll attract many

exciting opportunities for service and growth.

### 10. Tune In to Your Intuition

Intuition is one of the faculties you naturally use without even thinking about it. Trust your deepest feelings about situations you encounter. Balance these feelings with the information you've been given and the suggestions of your staff and other constituencies. Use your intuition to further enhance the leadership of your staff and organization for the greatest good of all.

By practicing these simple yet profound coaching tools, you'll find that your staff begins to work together more harmoniously and create better results. If you like, share these ideas with them and work on them together. Enjoy the new and positive changes which unfold for your staff, organization, and community. ■

### Resources

Craig, Jeanne Anne, "No Need to Work on EQ," *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 23, No. 5.

Naughton, Colleen, "Twelve Self-Renewal Steps for Executive Directors," *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 15, No. 3.

Neck, Chris & Robert Ashcroft, "Inner Leadership: Mental Strategies for Nonprofit Staff," *Nonprofit World*, Vol. 18, No. 3.

These resources are available at [www.snpo.org/members](http://www.snpo.org/members).

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