



“There’s no problem-free scenario.”

Here are ways to keep your feelings from interfering in these common scenarios:

## Use Perspective as a Managing Tool

In the first scenario, when you’re hurt by disrespectful employees, the key is to understand that it’s not about you. People rarely wake up wondering “How can I really hurt someone today?”

It’s more likely that they’re insecure, in a poor fit, or there’s some other reason that caused the behavior. You may not know why they did what they did, but when you de-personalize the behavior and remember that it’s not about you, that they’re dealing with their own reality, it will help calm your flight-or-fight emotions.

Then you can focus on your job: to help get them back on track – or into a better fit.

## Frame Your Problems

In the second scenario, where you’re facing pain or discomfort, such as the risk of embarrassment or rejection, there are two techniques that can help:

**Technique 1: Ask yourself** which set of problems you want to have.

There’s no problem-free scenario. Leadership is a conscious choice to embrace problems and to solve them. It’s not *if* problems, but *which* problems.

When you remind yourself that you have a choice, you prevent victim thinking from setting in. You might ask yourself, for example: “Do I want the problem of being disliked (that comes with removing a poor performer) or do I want the problem of a team performing poorly (that comes with allowing a poor performer to stay)?”

You’re not a victim. You have a choice to make. Framing your choices gives you power and you’re less likely to want to hide from the pain.

**Technique 2: Connect** to what matters most.

The second way to face emotional pain is to reconnect with your leadership values. For example:

“I want the team to grow and succeed” or “I value results and relationships.”

Then ask a “How can I . . .” question to align yourself with what you value. For instance:

“How can I do what’s in the best interest of the team?” or “How can I focus on results and relationships in this situation?”



## Put Your Feelings to Good Use

Don’t discount the power of emotions. Learn to understand feelings in all their variety, and use them to your benefit. Discover the nuances with articles such as these at NonprofitWorld.org:

**Leading from Feeling** (Vol. 27, No. 1)

**Risk & Your Brain** (Vol. 38, No. 4)

**Smart and Fast Are Not Enough: The Need for Better EQ** (Vol. 29, No 1)

**Fear of Feelings** (Vol. 17, No. 2)

**Grounded Visioning: A Quick Way to Create Shared Visions** (Vol. 26, No. 4)

**Counteract Stress to Make the Best Decisions** (Vol. 28, No. 1)


**Creating a Values-Based Road Map** (Vol. 23, No. 2)

**What Can Your Angry Customers Teach You?** (Vol. 40, No. 3)

**How to Encourage People through Disappointment** (Vol. 42, No. 1)

**The Risky Six: Keys to Shed Fear & Take Smart Risks** (Vol. 40, No. 2)

Asking a good “How can I . . .” question re-engages the thinking part of your brain and relaxes the powerful emotions that can push you in a different direction.

Effective leaders channel their emotions into healthy relationships with their team. They put aside their limited self-interests in favor of what will be best for the organization in the long run. 

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*David Dye is a keynote speaker and trainer who helps leaders achieve breakthrough results. He and Karin Hurt are the authors of Winning Well: A Manager’s Guide to Getting Results Without Losing Your Soul, Courageous Cultures, and Powerful Phrases for Dealing with Workplace Conflict. They are partners in the leadership training and consulting firm Let’s Grow Leaders (letsgrowleaders.com).*