



Impact

Thoughts on leadership
by Karl Pister



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2500 years ago Plato stated "all learning has an emotional base". Not bad for someone who had no neurological research to back him up. Recent research certainly establishes that emotions are a key component of effective learning. And learning and leadership go hand-in-hand.

I would add my changes to that quote as "all stellar leadership has an emotional base".





There seems to exist a bias against emotion from many leaders. Being 'emotional' is a pejorative. They want pure empiricism. Numbers...data...metrics. And they are absolutely correct with their results-driven approach, with some caveats...

Do you remember that presentation you were in at that pre-Covid conference? That presentation filled with Powerpoint slides crammed with vital data that you couldn't read? Do you remember walking out of that saying "YES!!!!...I am going to act on that!!.....probably not.

I participated in a medical conference about eighteen months ago. I gave one of the first presentations, and then stayed to learn throughout the rest of the day. I did learn quite a bit about the medical procedures pertinent to the specialty. But what I really learned was how people reacted to the presentations.

I don't want to sound critical, but I really doubt that many of the participants today can remember what was said. Why? Because eyes were glazed over. Texting was rampant. Figetting was everywhere. The presenters had a monitor where they could see their slides....and they read them...and they read them.



And then, in the middle of the conference, a presenter stood and enthusiastically began his presentation. He talked about a program he led that involved first responders as part of the emergency treatment portion of the specialty. Anyone walking away from his presentation could have replicated what he had created. And they could probably remember it today also.

Why? He had emotion. It was enthusiasm. He shared pictures. He created an environment of buy-in. He showed interviews. And yes, he showed metrics. Door-to-needle times had dropped significantly. Quality measures had improved. Patient satisfaction had improved...who wouldn't want to be on that medical team?

Did his "emotion" detract from his data? Quite the opposite. By the time he got to his data, there were few people who did not have their full attention on him, taking notes, and asking questions.

If that sounds to fluffy, I would refer you to an excellent book I am currently reading, *Leadership at Scale*, produced by McKinsey and Company.



Using the massive McKinsey research capabilities, they are able to analyze and delve into themes that not only have qualitative value, but can be substantiated quantitatively.

I read this morning from chapter five in the book. The points noted above are carefully documented with thirty-four references for points noted in the twenty-seven page chapter.

So, in conclusion, in the words of John Maxwell, "leaders are learners". I would add, leaders are teachers. And 'students', those you lead, learn best, when connecting emotion is part of the learning environment.





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