

The really intelligent businesses!

(Part 2 of 3 parts)

"It's a constant struggle to keep control, self-discipline, to maintain a course of action that will best ensure survival, because I can't be sure what the course is, all I can tell myself is "you are doing the best you can"- Stephen Callahan.

Steven Callahan is a naval architect, and most notable for having survived 76 days adrift, alone, on the Atlantic Ocean in a survival raft. The above were ways he spoke to himself in the isolation of the Atlantic.

The building of an emotionally mature workplace requires first and foremost leaders to serve as examples and role models of the values the company is espousing, and this makes building an EQ environment so challenging. Emotionally Intelligent behaviour as Steven Callahan records, is where self-control, self-discipline, and maintaining the right course of action, are constantly required.

EQ is not developed by simply repeating a set of values like some kind of mantra. There needs to be congruence (alignment) between what is stated as company policy, and what actually happens on the factory floor or in office corridors. Company procedural policies when broken or overlooked can generally be rectified without too much damage. However values, when broken or un-done, even if just an isolated act, undermine trust and confidence. Incongruence of application in policies can be frustrating; incoherent behaviour by leadership in the way they interact and deal with issues undermines the confidence and hope of staff.

When confidence in leadership is questioned, management declarations about improvements and goals tend to get met with cynicism and skepticism.

The plan to build any form of EQ culture requires the absolute commitment and dedication of the chief executive and his/her leadership team. Simply put, the cold truth is: leaders, who will not develop and nurture their own brave and strong emotional hearts, will end up hurting the emotions and hearts of those working for them. The nature of values is they find their expression, life and vibrancy in the day-to-day interaction between people. Value Statements may look good on the wall, but staff want to see how well they are written in the hearts and minds of their leaders. Developing EQ in an organisation without the full demonstrable support of management is a waste of time and money. In fact passive anger and frustration are more likely to multiply.

Establishing such a culture is a process; it takes time, and requires engagement with all staff. The greatest payment leaders can make to their employees is time, moral support, and encouragement, yes, even in the midst of errors.

The Norwegian expression that "the fish rots from the head" could not be more apposite. The converse is true; the head also inspires the body. If one is going to enhance or develop an EQ culture, then leaders will need to be the prime demonstrators of such behaviour. Never forget "he who controls his spirit, is better than he who rules a city" and it is in controlling one's emotions that maturity is best exhibited! If ever we can be of assistance with nurturing the emotional quotient of your team, we would be delighted to be contacted. Until next time, yebo!

