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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE/PERSONAL RESILIENCE/and PERSONALYSIS[®]: Essential Elements For Successful Personal/Organizational & Whole System Transformation

Ted Ball

While I always worry about the perception that I'm crying: "wolf!", I really do know what it takes to succeed in "transforming" -- the extraordinary organizational/human journey that is the equivalent of moving from caterpillar to butterfly. I've been in the "transformation business" for twenty years. It is our business to know how and why 30% of organizations succeed at a specific change methodology called "**transformation**".

The fact is that organizational and whole system transformation means "big change" -- not a great environment for humans.

Such environments often feel chaotic and dangerous for top management, and for front-line workers. Middle managers mostly feel "torn" between their bosses, who want wonderful outcomes, and the realities faced by front-line care providers -- who must live inside systems, structures and processes that aren't designed or aligned to deliver on the outcomes required/needed by either patients or staff.

The truth is that people become fearful and anxious in such conflicted, stressful, no-win environments -- where people get blamed all the time. Health care services are in fact one of the more toxic work environments in Canada, according to tracking studies on 14 Industries over 10 years.

Authors **Cooper & Sawaf**, in their book *Executive EQ*, suggest that we "reflect on the amount of time and energy we spend on protecting ourselves from others we do not trust, on avoiding problems we do not discuss, remaining silent and going along with decisions we disagree with, instead of being open to exploring and acting on opportunities and insights that spring from our emotional intelligence".

Think about it. Think about the waste in human energy! These health sector cultural issues really must be addressed. People need to live and function in safe, supportive environments -- not the stressful and threatening environment we experience today.

The authors define "*emotional intelligence*" as "the ability to sense, understand, and effectively apply the power and acumen of emotions as a source of human energy, information, connection and influence". E.Q. is what drives and inspires us towards living out our core values and our purpose in life.

Challenging the commonly held assumption that emotions are either “good” or “bad”, Cooper and Sawaf make the point that emotions “serve as the single most powerful source of human energy, authenticity, and drive that can offer us a wellspring of intuitive wisdom.”

Daniel Goleman’s two block-buster books, *Emotional Intelligence*, and *Working with Emotional Intelligence* have profoundly contributed to our understanding of the extent to which our emotions -- our feelings -- impact on our thinking.

By slowing down the process, by practicing reflection, by thinking about our thinking, and by striving to know ourselves and those around us better, we can come to learn how we can become more integrated -- as individuals, as a system of individuals, and, as a service delivery system focused on patients who need our support and care.

The feedback and information that emotions provide us with can be extremely important, powerful and productive. The key is to have developed our E.Q. to the extent that we learn to acknowledge and value core feelings, in ourselves -- and others -- and to respond to that information appropriately.

“It is this feedback - from the heart, not the head - that ignites creative genius and intuition, keeps us honest with ourselves, shapes trusting relationships, clarifies important decisions, provides an inner compass for life and career, and guides us to unexpected possibilities and breakthrough solutions”, says Goleman.

Researchers and change management practitioners carefully explore "what went right" in the 30 percent of cases where organizations, and networks of organizations, successfully transformed. Are you interested in "what worked", and "what didn't work"? If you are, you can learn how to squeeze into the **30% Club for Successful Transformation**.

Experience tells us that the leaders at most *Health Links* will attempt re-invent the wheel -- and then, after 24 to 36 months of painful struggles, land squarely in the **70% Club Of Failed Transformations**. It is always interesting to watch decision-makers dismiss the knowledge about best practice transformation. They confidently deny that there will be a 70% failure rate among *Health Links*.

"Oh, such negativity! Tisk. Tisk. You should stop being so negative," is a common response I hear. But, sorry folks, these are the facts: only 30% of large-scale transformations ever succeed -- TQM/CQI, downsizing, mergers, re-engineering, lean thinking -- all experienced 70% failure rates. Why would that be different for the 80 *Health Links*?

Right off the bat, we remind people what they are told in *Change Management 101*: that they will not go very far without a "Shared Vision". We show them the data on the cases where health system transformation failed -- which indicates that less than 5% of front-line workers actually understood the vision, or even knew about it. Are people really hearing that? I don't think so. Do you?

Look around, how many *Health Links* are obsessed with forging a "*Shared Vision*"? How many are engaging the front-line to work in partnership with patients/clients/families to design a better more patient-focused services system?

See what I mean? Trust me. We will indeed see 70% failure rates in Ontario -- because experience tells us that most will never take the time to engage people in creating a Shared Vision -- or follow any of the other essential elements and critical success factors for leading and executing a successful transformation.

I find it interesting that one of the common elements among the organizations that have successfully transformed is the great sense of "togetherness", or sense of true "community" that gets created through the start-up phase of their transformation journey. We know from the literature, and from deep experience, that as an organization transforms, people become more authentic, and more caring towards one another. People get connected -- as people. They feel better understood, supported, respected and valued.

The greatest transformations have taken place in organizations, or systems of organizations that have become *Learning Organizations* -- with a mindset and discipline for continuous improvement, discovery and innovation.

Such shifts do not occur overnight. It takes enlightened and adaptive leadership at both the *Health Link* CEO-level, and within each organization in the partnership.

The process is accelerated when a critical mass of people within an organization are on a personal journey of change. They become more aware of themselves, and better understand the impact they have on others. Best practices suggests that a critical success factor for transformation is the "modeling of emotional intelligence" by the leadership of the organization, and by the leaders of *Health Link Partnership*.

In *Primal Leadership*, **Daniel Goleman** points out that while most people recognize that a leader's mood – and how he or she impacts the mood of others – plays a significant role in any organization, emotions are often seen as "too personal" and "un-quantifiable" to talk about in a meaningful way.

But research in the field of emotion has yielded important insights into not only how to measure the impact of a leader's emotions, but also key insights into how the best leaders have found effective ways to understand and improve the way they handle their own, and other people's emotions. Understanding the powerful role of emotions in the workplace sets the best leaders apart from the rest – not just in tangibles, such as better bottom-line results and the retention of talent; but also in the all-important intangibles, such as higher morale, motivation, commitment and innovation.

This emotional task of the leader is *primal* – that is, first – in two senses: It is both the original, and the most important act of leadership, according to Goleman.

In the modern organization, this primordial emotional task – though by now largely invisible – remains foremost among the many jobs of leadership: driving the collective

emotions in a positive direction -- and clearing away the smog created by toxic emotions. This task applies to leadership everywhere -- from the boardroom, to the point-of-care.

Quite simply, in any human group the leader has maximal power to sway everyone's emotions. If people's emotions are pushed toward the range of enthusiasm, performance can soar; if people are driven toward rancor and anxiety, they will be thrown off stride. This indicates another important aspect of *primal leadership*: Its effects extends beyond ensuring that a job is well done. Followers also look to a leader for supportive emotional connection – for empathy.

All leadership includes this primal dimension, for better or for worse. When leaders drive emotions positively, they bring out everyone's best. We call this effect "*resonance*". When they drive emotions negatively, leaders spawn "*dissonance*", undermining the emotional foundations that let people shine. Whether an organization withers or flourishes depends to a remarkable extent on the leaders' effectiveness in this primal emotional dimension.

What concerns me when I think about introducing the front-line of healthcare service providers to the *Health Link* paradigm is: what is the existing level of *resilience* in the healthcare delivery system? Our system has been through a lot over the past ten years: re-engineering/mergers/lean thinking/ etc. healthcare governance should be seeking to discover: Are people at your organization becoming "change fatigued"? Is everyone ready for even more "big changes" -- from caterpillar to a butterfly?

I'm always amazed at how resilient and dedicated our front-line care providers are.

While I am sometimes not popular with senior managers for saying so, almost all organizational and whole system transformation failures, failed at the top -- where life at the top of the health sector can be both brutal and rewarding.

I'm fascinated that researchers have traced *resilience* -- the capacity to re-cover from adversity -- to a network of brain regions and the production of certain chemicals in the brain. *Resilience* relies on neural circuits governing fear, reward and social and emotional regulation -- all going down in a chemical soup that can be altered by the CEO, and by other leaders, when they shift their behaviors intentionally.

Sure, I know: easy to say, harder to do.

Resilience is the ability to modulate and constructively harness the stress response. A person can boost his or her resilience with strategies that include: reframing, enhancing positive emotions and connecting with others. Success on transformation will absolutely hinge on "resilience". Set backs are part of any endeavor -- and those who react to them productively, will make the most progress.

However, bottom-line: our experience after 20 years in the "organizational transformation business" teaches us that the 30% of successful organizational transformations are caused by certain leadership styles: *adaptive*, *primal*, and *generative*. That's why we teach these

models/skills/ and "ways of being". We show leadership teams how to create a "safe environment" for transformational change.

Critical to building "resilience" is the capacity to face fears, experience positive emotions, search for adaptive ways to reframe stressful events and poor relationships.

Resilient people thrive when leaders are primal.

Making **primal leadership** work to everyone's advantage lies in the leadership competencies of *emotional intelligence*: how leaders handle themselves and their relationships. Leaders who maximize the benefits of primal leadership drive the emotions of those they lead in the right direction.

For the most part, the brain masters the competencies of leadership – everything from self-confidence and emotional self-management to empathy and persuasion – through implicit learning. But strategies for community building and for building emotional intelligence has to be deliberate.

The very best tool I have ever seen/experienced for successful personal and organizational transformation is a framework for emotional intelligence, a powerful tool called **Personalysis®**. This is a remarkable framework and tool that has helped numerous organizations as they underwent their fundamental transformations.

I believe it works as well as it does because, paradoxically, the root to empathy, and to empathic leadership, is through self-awareness. Time and again we learn: the more you understand yourself, the more empathic you become.

A few years ago, when I had to write a chapter of a book on the topic of "*Organizational Transformation*", at the publishers expense, I actually got to test five competitive emotional intelligence frameworks to confirm my personal experience over 15 years: that the **Personalysis® Framework** is the very best tool of its kind.

This type of framework and language is absolutely essential to enable senior and middle managers to go through the chaos of transformation with such a personal grounding tool that enables them to use the methodology, language and frameworks in ways that facilitate transformation in very supportive ways. If you are thinking about getting a *Personalysis® Report*, call me at **416-581-8814**.

Try it. It will provide extraordinary value and insights.

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