

THE

EMOTIONALLY

AGILE

LEADER



LIVING, LEARNING, AND LEADING
IN A CHAOTIC WORLD

CHAPTER 1

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INTROSPECTIVE

Emotionally Agile Leaders Understand Their Emotions

*If you know the enemy and know yourself you need
not fear the results of a hundred battles.*

—Sun Tzu

In August 1902, Rafford Pyke wrote an article called “What Men Like in Men.” (In 1902, no one would think twice about a title worded this way.) Pyke explained this:

The typical man is curiously deficient in a capacity for self-analysis. He seldom devotes any serious thought to the origin of his opinions, the determining factor in his judgments, the ultimate source of his desires, or the hidden mainsprings of his motives. In all that relates to the external and material world he observes shrewdly, reasons logically, and acts effectively; but question him as to the phenomena of the inner world—the world of his own Ego—and he is dazed and helpless.¹

Here is the problem. Many leaders suffer from extreme introspection aversion. We are unwilling to take an objective look at ourselves and our leadership style. We fail to do the work to understand ourselves. Introspection is a powerful leadership tool, but we often neglect to use it.

But Emotionally Agile Leaders must be introspective. They should know their strengths and weaknesses better than anyone. How do they accomplish this? They continually work to increase their self-awareness. They request feedback from others about the impressions they make on other people and the wake they create with their decisions.

When you ask yourself what behaviors hold you and your team back, you can recalibrate your leadership style for the better. This pursuit of self-awareness is the essence of emotional intelligence and emotional agility as it relates to leadership. When you give your staff the freedom and the space to tell you the hard truths, without fear of repercussion, you'll get valuable perspectives of yourself and make a giant leap forward in maturing as a leader.

In this first section, we'll look at how leaders can strengthen their level of introspection.

What Should the Emotionally Agile Leader Learn?

The person who strives to become an Emotionally Agile Leader must begin by looking inward. Before we can start changing our actions to become more effective leaders and mentors, we have to first begin with ourselves and find out what our patterns are and why we fall into those patterns. We have to learn and accept our strengths and our weaknesses and become aware of how we are affecting others. Real leaders do not blame others for why they aren't successful as leaders. Instead, they learn more about themselves in order to understand how they impact other people. Once you know how you come across to others, you can begin to change how you interact with them. You must have this

Introspective

awareness before you can figure out how to lead well and influence others.

The Emotionally Agile Leader knows that orthodoxy leads to orthopraxy. In other words, knowing leads to doing. The more you understand yourself, the better you understand the areas in which you need to grow. In this case, knowing involves self-knowledge and self-awareness.

Understanding ourselves is also where agility comes into play. Leaders have to understand the root of their emotional responses so they can pinpoint emotions that are affecting them negatively and learn to quickly adapt to challenges they face throughout the day. Recognizing negative emotions you suffer from can help you grow and thrive in the workplace instead of falling prey to weaknesses. As we begin to learn about ourselves, let's look at some of the most common emotions that can negatively affect leaders.

Paul Ekman is an American psychologist and professor emeritus at the University of California, San Francisco. He identified six basic emotions from which all others stem. He claims that anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise are the basis for all emotional expressions. Robert Plutchik, professor emeritus at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, identified eight emotions. He grouped them into four pairs that represent polar opposites. Those pairs are joy-sadness, anger-fear, trust-distrust, and surprise-anticipation.²

My observations and experiences have pointed to some variation within these core emotions as described in many academic writings. For instance, I have not found disgust to be particularly prevalent from a leadership perspective, but I have found jealousy to be a core emotion that affects leaders and their leadership endeavors.

The Emotionally Agile Leader

The real key for Emotionally Agile Leaders is to identify the core emotions within themselves so they can go from understanding to managing those core emotions. The principle they must live by is this: You can't work on what you can't identify.

Let's look at the core emotions that can significantly affect leaders.

Anger

Anger is a powerful emotion—even emotionally strong, mature leaders still get angry. Anger can be harnessed for positive results, but if not controlled, it can destroy our relationships in the workplace and our effectiveness as leaders. What are the roots of anger?

Unmet or Unrealistic Expectations

One common root of anger is having set expectations that are not fulfilled. Maybe we've had experiences in other settings or contexts, and we expect to have the same experience in the current context. We also may not have an accurate assessment of the current situation and have thus created unrealistic outcomes. In other words, when a team is assigned an arbitrary deadline and the timeline of the project should be double the allotted time, it is not very realistic to expect success for that project.

Anger can have severe consequences. It creates lack of trust from employees and brings about broken relationships. It also creates a lack of communication due to fear among employees and even peers. Anger creates a failure to see situations objectively and make sound decisions.

Disappointment

Another root cause of anger is disappointment. We are often disappointed because those around us did not act the way we

had hoped they would. While that might seem similar to the discussion about expectations, it's actually different because disappointment may occur regardless of whether the situation warrants it or not. In other words, we can experience disappointment whether our expectations are reasonable or unreasonable. In fact, our disappointment tends to be much greater when the person who causes the disappointment has the necessary skills to accomplish what we expected of them but fail to follow through. We feel disappointed with their results and usually with them as well. We can also be disappointed in ourselves for the same reason. Perhaps we just didn't try hard enough, or perhaps we procrastinated and didn't have time to do our best with the project.

Disappointment with ourselves and other people can then turn into anger. We're angry at people for not working hard, we're angry at ourselves for wasting time, or maybe we blame other people for the disappointing results when deep down we know the result was our fault. Differentiating and separating our disappointment from the act and the actor requires high levels of maturity and emotional intelligence.

What are the consequences of our disappointment? Disappointment can lead to broken relationships along with broken communication due to fear among employees and peers. It can also cause a failure to see situations objectively and make sound decisions. Recognizing trends of disappointment is vital in strengthening our relationships in the workplace.

Lost Opportunities

Lost opportunities can be another significant source of anger for leaders. We may have missed a chance to accomplish something special, and the opportunity will never come

The Emotionally Agile Leader

around again. That situation is at the root of many of my own emotions. Lost opportunities haunt me and cause me to feel intense emotions of loss, sadness, anger, and frustration.

Like many in my generation, I was raised with this maxim: You never get a second opportunity to make a good first impression. Did you catch the word that haunts me? It's that word *never*. Never is a very long time. To think that I would have one chance and one chance only at something can be almost paralyzing at times. What if I mess up? What if my first impression is not positive? I will never be able to recover from that first impression and turn things around.

From a more mature perspective, the reality is that life does offer second chances. I can even turn around a bad first impression. However, the thought of having one chance and one chance only and missing that opportunity still looms large in my psyche.

But giving into anger because of lost opportunities leads to harmful effects for leaders. We can develop a paralyzing fear of doing anything at all in case something goes wrong and causes us to waste an opportunity. The fear prevents us from even trying. We can also begin to take on an overly analytical approach to everything in life. Instead of trusting our instincts, we try to look at each situation from every possible angle before we make a move. And as a result, the thing we fear the most—missing an opportunity—happens because of our lack of action.

Missed Deadlines

Recently, I missed a significant deadline at work. I had been assigned some deliverables by very senior executives in my organization. But I wasn't at the meeting where these tasks were assigned, and as a result, I had an unclear picture of my responsibilities.

Introspective

I worked diligently on the assignment. About a week and a half before the deadline, I was reviewing my progress with my boss in a one-on-one session in her office and reported that I had nearly completed the assignment and would be ready by the end of the month's deadline. As I began to describe my deliverable, her eyes grew wide. What I had produced was not what she was expecting and had agreed to. There was much more to the assignment than I had realized. Much more detailed research needed to be done, and that research would take about six more weeks to accomplish. Had I understood that from the beginning, I would have had plenty of time to accomplish the assignment. But now I would miss the deadline.

Thankfully, the failure wasn't fatal. Of course, my boss, colleagues, and I were disappointed, but we were able to quickly regroup and determine that the deadline was arbitrary to begin with. What's more, we hadn't clearly communicated with one another, so we learned more about each other's communication styles and how each of us used a different set of base assumptions.

When encountering missed deadlines, anger is an easy emotion to jump to. We often don't pause to consider the workload of our employees or the events that went wrong. In other words, was there a catastrophic event that impacted the deadline in an unforeseeable manner? We also do not consider that we may have been poor planners and did not adequately prepare for the approaching deadline.

If we react with anger when deadlines are missed, what are the potential consequences? The results of the anger generated within our emotional self and the anger felt by our followers are substantial. Such anger can fracture longstanding relationships and inhibit the growth of developing relationships.

Unexpected Results

Half of my time is spent in an engineering environment. Engineers tend to build everything from mathematical calculations. Their motto is this: If you can't do it in an Excel spreadsheet, it isn't worth doing. They love that mathematics is defined. If you add a column of numbers today and then add that same column of numbers in a year or a thousand years, you'll get the same result. Numbers do not waver. In this environment, an unexpected result can almost cause panic.

The other part of my time is spent working with non-profit organizations. These are typically not led by engineers. They are more often led by visionaries and charismatic leaders. The very thought of predicting a result is foreign to them. They would rarely sit down and develop a what-if scenario. The thought of contingencies and plan B is far from their minds.

Yet both groups have expectations. The engineers have their expectations documented, and the visionaries don't. But both groups have them, and both groups can have similar emotional responses to any unexpected results.

There is a great line from the movie *Forrest Gump* that comes to mind here. The lead character, Forrest Gump (played by Tom Hanks), said, "My mamma always said life was like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're gonna get."³ Forrest's mother was right. We need to be prepared for the possibility that the piece we bite into has the dreaded creamy orange filling instead of the caramel we were expecting.

But when we have planned and prepared for *X* only to have *Y* happen, Emotionally Agile Leaders know how to handle that situation, and they do not panic. Instead, they go back to the starting line and start over. Or they might take the unexpected results and modify them so they fit the purpose.

Introspective

You must be prepared for the possibility of an unexpected result. An Emotionally Agile Leader is mentally and emotionally ready for life's curve balls.

What does anger due to unexpected results affect? Just like the discussion on missed deadlines, the anger generated when we encounter unexpected results can lead to an overall lack of trust toward the people who produced the unexpected results. This anger will erode a leader's confidence in their team and make team members fear bringing anything unexpected to the leader.

Lack of Loyalty

The final significant cause of anger is lack of loyalty. The reality of life in the workplace today is that there seems to be a larger population of workers who are not loyal to the organization versus those who are loyal. And much of the research on employee transition shows that employees leave a boss more often than they leave a company.⁴ This is a sobering thought for leaders.

Encountering disloyalty in our employees can be very disheartening and lead to deep anger. We feel betrayed and frustrated and begin to lose trust in our team. However, loyalty is a complex matter. What I perceive as a lack of loyalty can often just be the natural questioning of my leadership by some people around me. People need to understand why we're doing what we are doing. Many times, we want to take routine questions and even routine challenges to our leadership as an attack upon us rooted in a lack of loyalty. Or perhaps I perceive disloyalty because of my insecurity or a false perspective. And it is that complexity and our own emotional agility that can cause us to misinterpret whether or not someone is disloyal.

The Emotionally Agile Leader

What are the consequences of anger toward perceived disloyalty? The most obvious consequence is turnover within an organization. If your employees feel you are bitter toward past workers or do not trust their loyalty, they can easily become discouraged. They feel hopeless about impressing you and about gaining your trust because they know they're working hard and don't know what else to do to earn your trust. Establishing a clear understanding of loyalty among your followers, as well as your reaction to disloyalty, is vital to becoming an Emotionally Agile Leader.

Fear

Why do leaders become afraid? Fear can creep in because leaders feel like they've lost control of a situation. It can be rooted in self-doubt and lack of confidence. Fear can also overtake us because we did not adequately prepare. (Do you remember the fear of being called on by a teacher when you hadn't read the homework chapter the night before?) Let's discuss some of the typical causes of fear for leaders.

Loss of Control

Rudyard Kipling started his poem "If" like this: "If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you."⁵ What aspect of your workplace is out of control? Is it the situation that is out of control, or is it those around you? Or are you out of control? Let's assume that you have correctly evaluated the situation and that things are, in fact, out of control. How did the situation get to that point? Where did you lose control? One of the things that the Emotionally Agile Leader understands is that there are at least two types of situations out there. There are those that I *can* control. And there are those that I *cannot*. Emotionally Agile Leaders understand that distinction and focus most, if

not all, their energy on those situations that can be controlled and then dismiss those that cannot be controlled after a quick triage. All their remaining energy then flows toward the situations that can be controlled.

Further triage can even point Emotionally Agile Leaders to the level of effort needed to create control in every situation. For instance, if you are leading a project team with a fixed budget and no contingency, then expending emotional energy on trying to boost the budget will not be productive. Consider reducing the scope instead. I may not be able to control the income or revenue, but I can control the expenses. Emotionally Agile Leaders follow that initial triage with a further quick analysis so they can focus on the things that bring about the greatest return on the investment of their time, talents, and treasures.

What are the consequences of fear caused by loss of control? The effects on leaders can be debilitating. Fear of losing control ranks right up there with fear of speaking in public. We can often avoid the need to speak in public, but the fear of losing control seeps into our consciousness and subconsciousness without always having a cause-and-effect connection. Leaders who suffer from this fear tend to become more and more withdrawn and inwardly focused. That, in turn, begins to affect them externally because they abandon relationships and responsibilities they cannot control and instead seek to control the only thing they can control: themselves.

Another way we manifest fear from losing control is to supervise those around us ever more tightly. In business settings, that results in micromanaging. When a leader has experienced and capable followers, micromanaging has a huge negative impact on the team and reduces productivity. The team is so busy worrying about what their leader will think,

The Emotionally Agile Leader

say, or do that they have no time for creativity and innovation—two things so desperately needed in organizations.

Leaders with a bent toward perfectionism are some of the most susceptible to feelings of loss of control. The Emotionally Agile Leader must become comfortable with a certain amount of uncertainty and be willing to let their followers achieve their potential.

Self-Doubt

Why do we doubt ourselves? Many of us have struggled with self-doubt our entire lives, and at times, leaders struggle more with self-doubt. Consider how we viewed ourselves as children and how those who had a real influence over us viewed us. Were we given the appropriate amount of encouragement and praise for our efforts and outcomes? Did key people in our lives fail to encourage us? Did they plant seeds of insecurity? Or does our self-doubt stem from current situations when we face a new or unexpected challenge?

Self-doubt is usually manifested in several ways. One is the inability to give yourself a little credit for doing something right. Another is that sometimes you feel like a poser. And sometimes you have a soundtrack playing in your head from your childhood and can't hear any other message. We tend to record the things that people have said to us over the years. Many of us remember exactly what was said and how it made us feel as if it were yesterday.

But all these manifestations allow fear to creep into our minds and into how we interact with others. Here again is where emotions collide. Self-doubt is permanently connected to the emotion of fear. And if it's not exactly fear you feel, then maybe it is fear's cousin—dread. Dread is the emotion of great apprehension about something or someone. It

Introspective

is different from fear in that fear is often associated with the unknown, while dread is that negative emotion we feel when we anticipate something very unpleasant we have experienced before.

Fear and dread in the lives of leaders will usually have a direct effect on their workplace. What does our team hear from us when the stress level is high? Is it a diatribe? Is it the same type of soundtrack you might be playing in your head? If it is, then understand that this soundtrack sticks in people's minds just like the song "Let It Go" from the movie *Frozen*. Once you hear that song, you just can't get it out of your head, right?

As leaders, it is important to remember the role we play in our followers' lives. In many work situations, we spend more time with our workmates than we do with our families. Projects have deadlines, and deadlines cause stress. How we perform, how we communicate, and how we respond to those around us have a lot to do with what those relationships will become over time. What does our team hear from us when things are going well? What do they hear from us when things are not going so well? How do we deliver a message under each of those circumstances?

We all know the basic leadership principle that says to praise publicly and correct privately. Let your words that are said in public be affirming words that build your team up. Don't seek to criticize in public. There is a time and a place for that. We need to be sure that our expectations for performance are, indeed, appropriate to our team members' skill levels and realistically achievable.

Remember, your words of praise will be indelibly recorded on the soundtrack of their minds. Unfortunately, so will the things we say that wreck our followers' confidence and

The Emotionally Agile Leader

self-esteem. Let's be the kind of leader that our team wants to follow, not the kind of leader that yells orders and then is negative about the way they are followed. When you do that, you are creating a soundtrack in their minds that is hard to erase or record over.

The consequences of our endless loop of negative messages and self-doubt can be debilitating, and the consequences on our followers will be the same. Why would their psyche respond any differently than our own under the same stimulus?

Lack of Preparation

Consider for a moment Humpty Dumpty, that character from our childhood nursery rhymes. Obviously, Humpty Dumpty possessed a certain amount of planning and preparation skills. Otherwise, how would he have gotten his rather portly, fragile self perched atop that wall in the first place? But that is where the planning seems to have stopped. Apparently, he had not contemplated what would happen if he lost his balance, if there was a sudden gust of wind, or if some nefarious character from another nursery rhyme pushed him off the wall. (I bet it was Simple Simon or maybe even Jack Horner who did it.)

Why are we unprepared? Perhaps we did not plan appropriately. We may not have had adequate resources. It is even possible that we underestimated the task from the very beginning. Regardless of the reason, we fear that our lack of preparation will be exposed, and we fear the consequences that exposure will bring.

Everyone remembers that feeling of showing up at school in the morning and realizing there is a test for which you did not study. That feeling is rooted in fear—fear of failure, fear of being the only one to not do well since everyone else studied the night before, and fear of the consequences when

grades are posted. These are just a few examples of the kind of fear associated with lack of preparation.

Most leaders have skills in basic planning and preparation. But Emotionally Agile Leaders are also skilled in the tasks of planning and preparation to grow and increase their leadership scope and influence. Properly prepared leaders exude confidence. And confidence draws more followers, thus increasing their scope and influence. That builds the leader.

Since Emotionally Agile Leaders are more self-aware and socially aware, they build certain things into their planning. Perhaps in meetings, they allow more time for discovery and brainstorming on the front end because some people take a long time to warm up and begin to contribute in a group setting. Maybe they plan extra team recognition events since some people need that for their own sense of purpose and a feeling that their contributions are noticed and valued. That builds the followers and the organization. All these planning activities have their genesis in the planning skills of an Emotionally Agile Leader.

If you love failure, then simply do nothing and do not prepare. But make no mistake, fear will result from a lack of planning and preparation.

Jealousy

Why do leaders become jealous? Leaders can, of course, become jealous when they want what they cannot have or want what rightfully belongs to someone else. Jealousy is rooted in trust—or actually distrust. That distrust can be toward someone else, or it can be distrust of ourselves.

Distrust of others comes from an erosion of the trust of those who have done something to make us ponder our motivation. Did they have their own best interest at heart and

therefore place themselves above the team and the organization? If so, then we become jealous of them.

Distrust of ourselves comes from knowing our own weaknesses (self-awareness) but having no confidence in our ability to control them (self-management). We then allow that emotion to turn into jealousy when we see others (social-awareness) who have those same weaknesses yet seem to be overcoming them (self-management).

Comparison

Playing the comparison game is always dangerous. We like to point to that one person we know who has what we don't have. We compare ourselves to that person and ask: Why can't I be like them?

Comparison is rooted in trust. I do not trust the truth that if I work hard and work with integrity I will usually compare favorably with my peers. Judging ourselves by our motivations and desires can be very tempting. We feel like we are working as hard as the next person, yet our careers have taken different trajectories. We lack the self-awareness to realize we have taken shortcuts while others are putting in the hours and working harder than we are. Of course, life is not always fair. Sometimes, we are doing all the right things and still don't achieve the results we want.

What are the consequences of falling prey to comparison and jealousy? Comparison affects our contentment. As I write this section, I find myself in Bangalore, India, where comparisons take on a much different set of observations. Every morning on my way to the office, I see untold numbers of people with whom I would come out favorable if I chose to compare myself to them. But we usually don't compare ourselves to those less fortunate than we are. It's more com-

Introspective

mon to compare ourselves to one person who has something we do not have. I tend to compare what I do not have to what someone else seems to have. That comparison leaves me feeling lacking and wanting and quickly leads to feelings of jealousy. Any leader living with these emotions will slowly become a poison in the workplace.

Discontentment

Similar to the previous point, discontentment in general leads to jealousy. Am I always in need of one more thing to make me satisfied about the company? Do I need that senior leader to approve my work and acknowledge me publicly? Perhaps I see others receiving recognition, and the more they receive and the less I receive, the greater my discontentment level. Discontentment is a breeding ground for jealousy and many other negative emotions.

Projection

Projection is the act of viewing a situation and transmitting our feelings about it onto someone else. Most often, we are not aware that we are doing this. Instead, we feel justified in our anger or jealousy toward the other person when, in fact, it is our own behavior or feelings that are at the root of the jealousy.

The classic example often used to explain projection is the husband who feels a strong sense of attraction to a woman who is not his wife. His inner values tell him that is wrong. But rather than owning up to those feelings and working on his marriage, he projects his feelings onto his wife and accuses her of being unfaithful.

What are the consequences of projection? Projecting feelings of jealousy can drive a wedge between individuals and lead to increased feelings of anger and hostility. Hostility

then feeds our negative emotions and makes it easier for us to experience stronger negative feelings and justify the wedge that now exists between us.

Protection

Another root of jealousy is protection. Protection as it relates to leadership means guarding the interests we have in advancing our leadership position or in defending against negative self-views that can be self-defeating.

First, what are we protecting? Most often, it is our own self-interests. High on the list of things we often protect is our ego. Unhealthy protection mechanisms include feelings such as denial, regression, repression, and sometimes acting out in negative ways. What is deemed to be healthy protection may include sublimation and compensation. However, both of those psychological terms have unhealthy aspects when carried to an extreme or when they remain unresolved for an extended period of time. I am not a psychologist, so I will not delve deeply into those terms. But there is a wealth of emotional and psychological help for those who would like to seek it.

What does protection affect? Protection is a fight-or-flight emotion. It can cause us to examine a situation or a relationship to much greater depths in order to determine if we want or need to be part of it on a long-term basis. In other words, do I stay and fight for the relationship or situation, or do I take flight and remove myself from what could be a harmful situation?

As much as this point is about self-protection, it is also about protecting others. Here is the tie to jealousy. We experience jealousy when we are denied the ability to protect someone or something that we feel needs protection. We become jealous of the protector.

Competition

Competition can be healthy and motivational, but not all competition is positive. We should not have to feel as though we are competing for the love of our family members, because competition means there is a winner and a loser. If I am the loser, I can become jealous of the winner, especially when they win much more often than I do.

What are the consequences? Jealousy places an unhealthy lens over competition. We view every activity as a win-or-lose situation. Competition affects our energy level and the focus of our attention. Instead of competing for attention with the object of our jealousy, why not focus on what differentiates us and our leadership abilities from the run-of-the-mill variety that is so prevalent? One of the guys in my circle of influence often says that there are riches in the niches. He means that there is great value in being uncommon. Celebrate the difference, and make the most of its positive potential.

Pride and Ego

Pride and ego are at the root of the downfall of many leaders. Whether we begin to believe our own so-called press releases or just have an unhealthy ego, the end result can be disastrous for leaders as they become more and more disconnected from their followers.

Why do leaders often begin to develop an unhealthy view of themselves? It is often because certain levels of influence and power come with leadership roles. And as emotional intelligence reminds us, we must know and understand ourselves fully and accurately, and then we must manage or control ourselves in order to become more emotionally intelligent. Is our pride caused by an unrealistic view of ourselves? Are we

The Emotionally Agile Leader

unable to see ourselves as those around us do? Or are we just choosing to be ignorant of how we come across?

The root of pride is found in its definitions—absorbed in oneself, boastful, conceited, narcissistic, self-absorbed, self-centered, self-important, self-interested, self-seeking, selfish, and vain. None of these seem to reflect a very high level of self-awareness and self-management, do they? In fact, they are quite the opposite.

What are the effects of pride? One effect is that leaders fail to serve their followers and those around them. That damages not only their relationships with their followers but also their work.

Let me provide an example from a recent business trip. It was the last night of my stay at the very luxurious Ritz-Carlton in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Apparently, someone had alerted the general manager that I would be leaving very early the following morning. So he came to my dinner table in the dining room to introduce himself and say thank you for my extended stay (I had been at the hotel for three and a half weeks.) Soon after our brief discussion, I saw an extraordinary example of servant leadership.

A woman walking through the lobby was struggling with a large balloon bouquet and a suitcase. There were several other staff members in the vicinity who probably saw her. But the general manager did something that has stuck with me ever since. He graciously walked over to her, picked up her bag, and carried it to the bell captain while she completed her checkout routine.

He could have snapped his finger and had one of the junior hospitality staff take the bag. He could have very subtly caught the eye of one of them and asked them to do the menial task of carrying her bag. After all, he was the most

Introspective

senior person and outranked everyone else on the staff. His place was at the top. I wonder if he started his hotel career as a bellboy. I wonder if he ever thinks of those early days.

My guess is that he has not forgotten his more humble beginnings. My guess is that he has always had a servant's heart. My guess is that his focus on the patrons of the places he has worked has been what has propelled his career. My guess is that he has never lost sight of the customer.

What about you? What is your place? Do you know it? Are you in a place where you think you are above certain tasks? If so, be careful. You just might lose your place to someone who is still willing to carry a bag.

I said at the beginning of this section that pride and ego are at the root of the downfall of many leaders. Perhaps it is in the nonprofit world that we often see the glaring effects of these disasters. Of course, they occur in the commercial and academic worlds, but it seems to be a greater disaster for nonprofits (churches, charities, and philanthropic organizations) that should somehow be exempt from the negative consequences or oversized pride and ego.

An unhealthy level of pride is as hard to recognize in ourselves as it is easy to recognize in others. Let me take a moment to urge you to seek out the input or feedback from people you trust to help you gauge the level of pride you have for yourself or your leadership efforts. Then, take that feedback and seek the tools to help you develop a healthier, more humble level of pride.