manageris

Use your emotions as incentives to action

The stakes

Emotions don't have a good reputation in business. This is understandable when emotions drive us to make irrational decisions or say things we later regret. However, in practice, emotions are destructive only when they govern our behavior unwittingly, which happens precisely when we try in vain to ignore them! More often, feelings are valuable in alerting us to indicators whose implications we have not yet had time to articulate consciously and in driving us to move in the right direction.

Use your emotions as a rudder

Psychologists have identified four main emotions from which all feelings tend to derive. Each of these emotions triggers specific physiological and psychological responses which drive us to act in a certain way. Being consciously aware of these effects can help us to manage their involuntary impact and use our feelings as a source of energy.

FEAR

(Worry, shame, guilt, etc.)

MECHANISM

Freezes physical action until a fight or flight decision can be made; directs blood toward the muscles to prepare for flight; focuses attention on the threat.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- · May alert you to the presence of risks.
- Energizes you to take preventative measures.

PRECAUTIONS

- Try to find solutions more creative than flight.
- Don't focus all your attention on the threat.

JOY

(Excitement, pride, euphoria, etc.)

MECHANISM

Secretes hormones that produce a general sense of well being, inhibits negative feelings and encourages action

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Inspires you to undertake new projects by conferring optimism.
- · Facilitates contact with others to share your joys.

PRECAUTIONS

- Keep your feet on the ground, and don't overestimate the chances of success of your projects.
- Don't overestimate your energy over time.

key action drivers

ANGER

(Rage, hate, jealousy, etc.)

MECHANISM:

Increases blood flow to the hands to prepare the body to seize a weapon or strike out, and the flow of adrenalin to provide more power.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Mobilizes your energy to change things.
- Signals an unacceptable problem and gives courage to resolve it.

PRECAUTIONS:

- Seek the root cause of your anger. Anger is often sublimated and hence may arise in a roundabout way.
- Try to express your anger without hurting yourself or others needlessly.

SADNESS

(Boredom, despair, nostalgia, etc.)

MECHANISM:

Triggers a drop in energy which provokes the introspection needed to draw conclusions on the situation and prepare to rebound.

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Helps you to accept things you cannot change.
- Helps you make the transition toward a different future.

PRECAUTIONS:

- Consider sadness as a step toward acceptance and not as a problem in itself.
- Decide that the sadness phase must come to an end to keep it from becoming ingrained.