



## Management and Performance Associates – June 2010

### Emotion or reason? Which one determines success?

How many professionals do we know, who are brilliant in their technical competence but emotionally unstable, and therefore could not advance as far in their careers as they would have liked?

How many professionals do we know who are average in their technical competence but emotionally mature and advanced beyond the limit that their technical competence would suggest?

The ability to deal with our own emotions is critical in building brilliant careers and gratifying work experiences.

What prevents the emotionally immature to achieve more positive results in their professional journey? What can their managers and peers do to help? What can and should the emotionally immature do for themselves?

#### 1. Self-Assessment

Normally, people who are overly critical of others do not have time for self-assessment. Stop looking for weaknesses in others and start asking yourself to what extent are you contributing to the negative reaction in others and helping to create difficult situations at work and with your team.

#### 2. Openness to feedback

Even though we may not agree with the images that others have about us, it is that image that they will have in mind when making any decisions about us and in their interactions with us. Therefore, our willingness to receive feedback is a way to build closer, more solid and more mature relationships. Feedback will give us the opportunity to bring the image that we would like to project and the image people have about us to the same level.

#### 3. Openness to an honest conversation

A good, honest conversation is not about looking for blame, and does not involve an endless list of excuses and defenses. An honest conversation means to listen and position yourself, with a positive agenda. It identifies actions and reactions that contribute to a healthy and adult relationship, including what needs to be adjusted or modified in order to reach that kind of relationship.

#### 4. Establishment of limits

Some professionals, grownups evidently, make some spoiled kids look like little angels. At the first sight of behaviors which are not compatible with the work environment, or with the level of respect and maturity that is expected, take charge. If we are talking about someone who reports to you, give this person feedback and remind him/her what your expectations are in addition to clarifying what the consequences are if the behavior continues. If we are talking about a peer, assume a firm but controlled position, clearly demonstrating that his kind of behavior is unacceptable and does not help at all.

#### 5. Valuing and reinforcing the need for a healthy work environment

Each team member is responsible for contributing to and acting with a clear objective of building a healthy work environment. This does not mean that we will not have disagreements, different thoughts and opinions. Disagreements and conflicts should be dealt with candidly, in a constructive and respectful manner.

#### 6. Careful with stress factors

Work overload, repetitive and/or uninteresting work, a tense or depressing climate, lack of recognition, lack of



opportunities and lack of respect and inclusiveness are examples of stress factors which could leverage the difficulty that some people have in dealing with their own emotions.

Back to the initial question. Emotion or reason? – Which one determines success? The answer is simple: both. Emotion and reason are like the two sides of the same coin.

***The relation between reason and emotion is an old problem, generally solved by placing one in opposition to the other. The meaning of this dichotomy in our civilization constitutes a subject in itself, but its tragic effects are everywhere, in the violence of the emotion not attenuated by the reason and in the sterility of the intellect not tempered by the emotion (James Hillman)***

This month we invited Fernando Pinto, Human Resources Director, ESPN Brazil, to share his best practices with our readers. This is what he has to say about the topic:

*The balanced combination of emotion and reason is the perfect equation for success. At ESPN, we deal with both daily, as we are directly connected to a subject in which emotion is prevalent--sports, and reason, which ensures that we are always keeping an eye on our goals. Our daily challenge is to know how to balance sports' emotion – which brings us rhythm and makes us different – and to keep the needed attention on planning.*

**See you next time. We welcome your feedback.**

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