

Leadership Influence: Managing Your Attitudes and Emotions

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"Effective leadership does not happen by chance. It happens on purpose."
Henry Blackaby



One of the greatest strengths effective leaders have is an ability to properly manage and control their emotions. The Bible is full of leaders reaping the consequences, both positive and negative, of responding out of emotion.

Moses found out the hard way that responding out of your anger can have serious ramifications. He struck a rock out of anger to produce water for his nagging followers which resulted in this response from the Lord: "Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them" (Num 20:12). Wow, all that for reacting out of emotion! It's interesting to note that in this case, the emotion stems from a lack of trust in the Lord and His work.

In vivid contrast, we see David dancing and rejoicing before the ark of Lord resulting in worship that was so radical his wife called it "vulgar" (2 Samuel 6). David's emotion—unrestrained in this case—brought pleasure to the Lord.

There is strong link between our attitudes and our emotions. It's clear that our attitude determines the emotional trajectory in which we lead (i.e., the way we approach the ministry God has called us to and the influence we have on others.) In aviation, your attitude (pitch) can mean life or death. The same is true in biblical leadership. An unchecked attitude can result in devastating consequences and emotional bankruptcy.



It's been said that a pessimistic leader is an oxymoron. Leadership, by its very nature, requires a positive perspective (attitude) in leading others towards a preferable future. That attitude breeds compelling emotions within the leader and directly affects their leadership sphere.

Winston Churchill once said to his men who were in the trenches during WW I, "Laugh a little and teach your men to laugh...if you can't smile, grin. If you can't grin, keep out of the way until you can." Joy is an essential element in leadership. In Jesus' ministry joy was a defining marker. More than just a moral booster, joy helps us tackle the impossible and see the possibilities.

A critical or cynical leader, on the other hand, can easily be swept away by the negative emotions that surround those attitudes. Like toxic waste, they can seep into every aspect of our lives. How we explain the events that happen to us directly relates to our attitude and emotion.

That's why Paul urges us in Romans to be "transformed [continually] by the renewing of your mind." Paul understood that changing the way we think will inevitably change our attitude and emotion. Our thoughts are often the last place we think of to make changes when it comes to our attitude and emotions. However, what we are thinking is the key to our ability to read our emotions, control them, and recognize their impact on those we lead.

How are you doing in managing your attitudes and emotions? Find out by downloading this [Leadership Attitude Check worksheet](#).

Ron Marsh is a certified life coach who helps others live in the center of the purpose and passion. Meet Ron at www.PurposeFilledLife.com or www.CoachingPastors.com/Marsh.html.