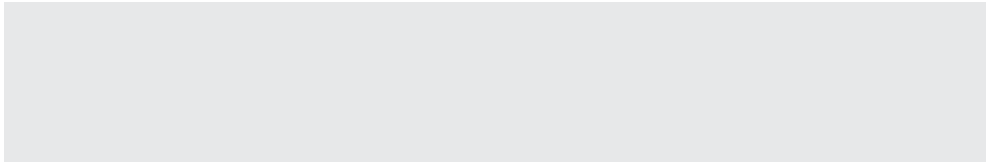


BOOK REVIEW

**PRIMAL LEADERSHIP: REALIZING THE
POWER OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**



leadership context requires. The unique elements and relevant contextual applications of each of these particular styles are well defined for the reader seeking a better understanding of versatility in leadership. This may prove especially helpful for the developing leader who practices the pacesetter or command styles, those that conform to the linear models that deny the value of emotion having a rightful place in the context of organizational leadership.

“Old leaders can learn new tricks” (p. 96). This reveals the authors’ underlying assertion that leadership skills can be learned. It challenges the notion that “leaders are born” (nature) and posits that leaders can be made through intentional learning (nurture). Old behaviors can be changed and emotional intelligence can be acquired. Self-awareness is a critical component of this change process, as is candid assessment by others around a leader. Research referenced reveals that most leaders overestimate the effectiveness of their leadership; as a rule subordinates rate leaders’ skills and behaviors below what the leader perceives of self. Awareness of this tendency is a necessary enabling of the process of learning and change that leads to more effective leadership contribution.

The learning necessary to effect change in old leadership behaviors is referred to as “limbic learning” (p. 102), in contrast to learning centered in the neocortex, which processes and stores information. Limbic learning connects with the emotions and needs a context of practice and repetition. Building emotional intelligence requires an underlying motivation born of sincere desire; concerted effort must occur in an environment where practice of the skills takes precedence over cognitive learning of information. This approach produces sustained learning that is less likely to be forgotten than training that takes place at a traditional workshop or seminar. It is primarily self-directed and happens in the non-linear context of the tumult and possibilities of our relationships.

The journey to developing leadership competency in the arena of emotional intelligence requires the forming of a vision of self that is consistent with principles that support the model. Goleman et al. refer to the creation of a mental model of an ideal self (p. 118) that is congruent with one’s values and dreams. The ideal self is contrasted with the ought self that reflects what others feel or think one should be. Coming to grips with the ideal self is the foundation of the personal visioning process necessary for the deep change required for the development of emotional intelligence. Without it the passion to lead toward a common goal will be lacking. This ideal self is ever-changing due to the dynamic nature of learning development in relationship with others, and as such becomes a lifelong journey. It is the ever-unfolding terminals—where one is as a leader and where one wishes to be. The gap in between provides the setting for learning and growth.

It is common for organizations to focus primarily on the issues and processes within the gap of what a worker is and what one might become. Performance reviews and evaluations can ignore what a person might become by concentrating on what the present seems to indicate that person to be. The gap should not be the primary focus, since it over-emphasizes the competency areas that need work rather than emphasizing people’s abilities. “But that means the capabilities that people value, enjoy, and are most proud of get lost in the process” (p. 137). The time element involved in limbic learning begs us to look differently at assessment and evaluation of those we lead. When applied to leadership, the elements of emotional intelligence employ an expansive transformational view of the members who support the mission of the organization or community.

The book orders steps to learning in Five Discoveries as follows:

1. The ideal self—where change begins. This step asserts that “connecting with one’s dreams releases one’s passion, energy, and excitement about life” (p. 115).

ership style challenges this comfortable context and requires learning that leads to fundamental change. Goleman et al. project the necessity of making leadership development a strategic priority that emanates from the core of the enterprise. The culture of the organization must be