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SBIE DISCLOSURE



EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE GAINS SPACE IN PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS AND LOOKS TO CONSOLIDATE A NEW ERA

Disseminated in the 1990s by psychologist Daniel Goleman in the best-seller *Emotional Intelligence*, the concept that translates the influence of emotions in everyday attitudes of human beings still has a lot to advance inside corporations. "Emotions intermingle with all human relationships. The fact is that the subject still appears in a camouflaged manner inside companies. This causes emotions to act more intensely in the professional field than in the personal field," says Rodrigo Fonseca, president of Brazilian Society of Emotional Intelligence (SBIE).

According to him, the competitiveness of companies that aim to be successful in the current era of information is intrinsically linked to the emotional development of professionals that make up their teams. "Companies need to discover, once and for all, how to insert emotion in the corporate environment, since the workplace is nothing more than a school of human beings, where we are constantly undergoing learning and evolution. And the development and strengthening of emotional intelligence comes from experiences earmarked for such," he says.

In this month's Interview, Fonseca talks more about the concept, lists the most efficient strategies for professionals to strengthen their emotional side and points out trends of companies looking to establish themselves in a future that is already being created.

O Papel – What is the definition of Emotional Intelligence? What factors comprise the personality of an emotionally intelligent professional?

Rodrigo Fonseca – Emotional Intelligence is the ability to recognize and deal more effectively with one's own emotions and those of others. Any human being can develop this skill, beginning with the perception of emotions, passing on to the identification of their triggers and learning the best ways to express them. Therefore, I would say that it is the ability to direct and channel the energy generated by emotions, be it characterized by crying, a tight throat, a pain in the chest or shaky hands, in the best manner possible and that generates better results for everyone. If we look at the origin of the word emotion, we will find a clear explanation of its function in the everyday of human beings: it comes from the Latin word *emovere*, where the prefix "e" means "external" and the suffix "movere" means movement. This means that every human emotion has the objective of creating movement and external changes. If something makes us sad, for example, this emotion surfaces as an incentive to change that situation, as does fear, which makes it even clearer that we need to adopt a different attitude. Once we know our own emotions, we began to identify and better react to our feelings and of others too, since we are humans and everything happens in a very similar way for all of us.

O Papel – Based on your 18 years of experience in the area, would you say that Emotional Intelligence ranks with technical knowledge when analyzing the skill-building of a professional?

Fonseca – Certainly, learning to deal with emotions is just as fundamental as technical or theoretical knowledge. In the free course that I offer weekly on Emotional Intelligence at Centro Emocional (www.sbie.com.br/centroemocional), I explain to students that this is probably the first opportunity that they are getting to focus on emotions. We don't learn to deal with them in our homes, with our parents, much less in schools or universities, with our friends, or even, in the corporate world, with leaders and work colleagues. It is common for us to spend our entire life feeling some type of emotion without having the slightest idea of what to do about it. This is where the two basic ways of dealing with it come into play: repressing or exploding. Any one of them brings harmful consequences, including diseases. The ideal is to know

how to channel them in the most appropriate manner in order to build, rather than destroy, life opportunities and relationships.

O Papel – In your opinion, do Brazilian professionals give Emotional Intelligence the attention it deserves? Or, on the contrary, this aspect ends up being neglected by the vast majority of professionals in the market?

Fonseca – Unfortunately, Emotional Intelligence is still an aspect neglected, not only by professionals in the Brazilian market, but also around the world. Many have not yet noticed that we are living the beginning of a new era. We have already lived this era of information, characterized by significant, easy to access, cognitive knowledge, but also an era of extremely rapid changes. The main differentials of a high-performance professional today is to be one who, in addition to technical knowledge, which many people possess today, has an excellent capacity to work in teams, to accomplish things, lead, decide and create a healthy environment, so that all those working around this person can work in the joint pursuit of achievements for everyone.

O Papel – What should a professional interested in strengthening or perfecting his or her Emotional Intelligence do? What advice would you give to this person?

Fonseca – Many times, we don't know how to deal with emotions because we aren't aware of them. So, the first step is to take a minute for yourself and know them. When you begin to notice what is truly happening inside you, you are able to identify the triggers that provoke such emotions. What causes fear, or anger? What causes anxiety? Or even, what really makes you happy? It is necessary to meditate on your emotions for five minutes, close our eyes and understand what you are feeling. The second suggestion is to stop and breathe when experiencing a very strong emotion attack, since breathing helps control our emotions. Deeper, more concentrated breathing in a difficult meeting, for example, helps control the reaction time of tonsils, which body organ triggers hormones like adrenaline and cortisol, responsible for fear. In 6 to 10 seconds maximum, the tonsils flood our brain with these hormones. By breathing for this amount of time, a person's reaction can be totally different than one made on the spot, since it will have had time to think, rather than explode.

Fonseca: The main differential of a high-performance professional today is to be one who, in addition to technical knowledge, is having excellent decision capabilities and knowing how to channel one's emotions

Another efficient technique is to use memory to remember facts of our life. By closing our eyes and thinking about a happy moment we experienced, we are capable of appeasing a moment of sadness or a difficult situation. Right before speaking in public, if fear surfaces, a person will feel more confident to face the situation by remembering moments in which it demonstrated a lot of courage. Every time we activate memories, we are necessarily producing hormones congruent with experiences already experienced, that is, our brain already knows the neural trail it must follow. Another suggestion is to pay attention to body posture. Body posture has a very strong influence over our emotions, being capable of altering them completely within a short period of time. Open chest, raised shoulders, head at the line of the horizon, firm legs and deep breathing, for example, make the brain produce hormones associated to confidence and courage.

O Papel – How can companies create a more favorable environment for balancing Emotional and Intellectual Intelligence?

Fonseca – The first way for making a more favorable environment for this balance is to stimulate the emotional aspect in companies, by encouraging the construction of healthy relations inside the company. There are many ways to promote this, from events to bring employees together, and others that bring the family inside the company, and even the so-called decompression rooms where a professional can relax, talk, unload, rest and play at any time during working hours. Google is a successful example and became famous for offering these opportunities to its employees. The main practical obstacle is that many companies still prefer to pretend that the emotional aspect does not exist or that it hinders professional relations, when in fact, human beings only work because of their emotions. Mankind works to achieve its objectives and dreams, to feel useful in society, which characteristics are totally linked to our emotional brain. It's impossible to separate emotion from intellect and leave it outside of the company.

O Papel – Is the balance between these two aspects (emotional and intellectual) even more important for professionals that hold leadership positions? Why?

Fonseca – Without a doubt, the work of leaders basically involves dealing with people. It is necessary to work with inspiring leadership, revealing to employees the real purpose of a given job, motivating them to do the best that's in them. This can only be conquered through the emotions of people – even when we use cognitive arguments, we're only giving rational justifications to produce our emotions. Of course reason is also always present, backed by numbers, spreadsheets and facts, but the presence of emotion is equally indispensable for

the execution of any job. Leadership positions have the function of maintaining the team united, stimulated and productive. These goals can only be achieved, without stressing the team, with an emotionally developed leader. To think that interaction among employees is a waste of time, or make people work more rather than focus on results, or else, be a boss who shouts, gives orders with no margin for discussion and who humiliates employees, are examples of things that go in the opposite direction of inspiring leaders. Another big mistake I see among leaders of big companies is that they are unable to engage their coworkers towards a greater cause. Each coworker must understand what its role is and what the work he or she does contributes to the whole. This is completely different than working to achieve a goal in the pursuit of results only for the company. As a society, we have reached a moment where we must discover the purpose of our job or suffer the perils of depression, panic attack or anxiety. Leaders need to be aware of this in order to maintain employees healthy and productive.

O Papel – What are the trends in Emotional Intelligence? What do you envision for the next years when thinking about the importance of EI in the day-to-day of companies that aim to be competitive in the market?

Fonseca – More and more, companies will come to the conclusion that technical background is no longer sufficient when applied individually. Successful results from the combination of emotional intelligence and technical qualification will become increasingly recognized and lead companies to seek paths to strengthen the emotional intelligence of their teams. Companies will have emotional intelligence training centers, as we already see in partnership with technical education centers. We have been monitoring some initiatives in this field with companies that invest in training programs offered by SBie. I also believe that companies will begin to set up universities, such as Bradesco University (Unibra), which is in contact with us to insert Emotional Intelligence in the routine of employees through a program aimed at promoting emotional development on a daily basis. Preparation and emotional tests, especially developed for leadership positions, will begin to be applied more frequently in the near future, for purposes of identifying inspiring leaders. Emotional rehabilitation centers will also begin to grow in corporations to help professionals experiencing moments of greater stress and strain. This will be a natural evolution process, considering that today, a professional receives roughly 20 years of academic education and only his or her cognitive aspects have been considered during this development phase. The trend will be the union of 'knowing' and 'doing', whereby 'knowing' is theoretical (IQ) and 'doing' is emotional (EQ). ■

Note: For more information about the Brazilian Society of Emotional Intelligence (SBie), visit www.sbie.com.br