

Look within for help when losing balance

Published in South China Morning Post on 11 November 2006

By Sebastien Henry, Executive Coach & Trainer

Leading with Emotional Intelligence Expert for Progress-U Ltd.



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DO YOU OFTEN feel like you are walking a thin line at work and struggling to keep your balance? And whenever you lose your balance you feel overly tired, irritable, perhaps lacking motivation or energy? You may even have to cope with intense emotional peaks, such as sadness, anger and frustration.

Your emotions do not have to be like neighbours you do not get along with. The "less you see them, the better" principle does not have to apply in this case.

What if, instead, you could see your emotions as "helpful neighbours", always ready to come to your assistance when you ask?

They would be there right next to you (inside you, in fact) and happy to help any time you think you are in danger of losing balance or going off track.

There are two steps to using your emotions to maintain your mental balance.

The first is to identify our emotional patterns, as we experience sadness, joy, jealousy and so on. When we start paying more attention to our emotions, we notice patterns. We have our own way of getting angry, sad, frustrated, jealous or joyful. It is often unconscious, but it works beautifully.

The founders of NLP (neuro-linguistic-programming) even say provocatively that we have "strategies" for getting depressed or angry. It's just that we do not know these strategies.

Remember those chemistry classes when you were taught that mixing elements would result in a specific colour, smell or shape? Emotions are much the same.

Mixing certain conditions (for example, working with these people, doing this kind of work, working for this amount of time, doing this amount of exercise) results in a specific emotion.

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This emotion manifests itself in a particular way in our minds and bodies.

Any time these conditions come together, chances are this specific emotion will surface.

The second step is to use this awareness of our patterns to preserve our balance. Once we are familiar with our emotional patterns we are in a better position to avoid the conditions that throw us off balance.

For example, if I felt that working 10 hours a day with one particular person, or doing one particular task, would result in my feeling depressed within a week, I could start taking corrective action by eliminating some of these conditions, just as I would eliminate a certain chemical element from an experiment before it went wrong.

We may say we have no choice, but experience has shown again and again that we are aware of only a fraction of the options around us.

Often the problem with balance is that by the time we notice we are losing it, we have already lost it. Spotting the early signs of losing balance is crucial.

Knowing our emotional patterns is important here.

So let us try to see our emotions as good neighbours we can turn to in order to preserve our balance at work. They are always there whenever we need them.

We just have to start paying more attention to them and ask for their help when we need it.

Contributed by Sebastien Henry, certified NLP trainer and emotional intelligence (EI) expert at Progress-U Limited, an innovative training and coaching company whose mission is to develop first-class leaders in the Asia-Pacific region.

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Sebastien Henry is Progress-U's expert for Emotional Intelligence. Developing his Emotional Intelligence in his previous corporate career was a real priority (regional position in Asia at a multinational company). Now he focuses on helping business leaders to become more inspiring leaders, motivate their people and retain the best by developing their EQ.

Sebastien firmly believes in action, and the tools he is using and sharing are derived from 4 areas of his life:

- His business experience as a corporate executive
- Intensive mountaineering and rock climbing (7a onsight and more than 50 alpine routes)
- Teaching and coaching prisoners
- Daily meditations for more than 5 years

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