Emotional Intelligence

I tend to think that people could be over-dimensioning the concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI). There are many researchers claiming for the goodness of the EI, but also there are many researches claiming for the uselessness of the EI. And at the end, it is easier to buy-in a concept that takes our attention than a concept that supports the status quo. Similar to Global Warming, it is easier and takes more attention to talk about apocalyptic catastrophes instead of seriously debate the subject and understand the Global Warming Swindle theory or the Climategate. An old journalist quotation says "it is easier to talk about the airplane that crashed than the one million that landed without problem"

We can read statement such as “Several studies suggest that EI plays an important role in job performance. One study looked at the characteristics of engineers at Lucent Technologies (now Alcatel-Lucent) who were rated as starts by their peers. The researchers concluded that stars were better at relating to others. That is, it was EI, not IQ, that characterized high performers.” (Langton, Robbins and Judge, 2010). This sentence has many interesting things to be discussed as a common topic when we read about EI: for example, there is not reference to the study, when it says “high performers” it does not says for what, it could be engineers working at HR which we could expect very low performance. Probably the IQ of who is taking those conclusions guides both the way to conduct the study and its conclusions.

Researches who oppose to the EI usually argue against the vague of the concept and that it can not be measured. The example of that could be found on the Table 3 from Côté et al. (Côté, S., Lopes, P., Salovey, P., and Miners, C., 2010) where they have evaluated Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional stability, Extraversion, Openness to experience, Self-monitoring, Cognitive intelligence, Overall emotional intelligence, Ability to perceive emotions, Ability to use emotions, Ability to understand emotions, Ability to manage emotions, and Leadership emergence. In Langton et al. (Langton, Robbins and Judge, 2010) we find the following statement “different researches often focus on different skills, making it difficult to get a definition of EI. One researcher may study self-discipline. Another may study empathy. Another may look at self-awareness. As one reviewer noted, “The concept of EI has now become so broad and the components so variegated that … it is not longer even an intelligible concept.”

So, it seems that the EI concept sells very well and it is interesting for the point of view of philosophical academia discussion subject, but it fails when we try to apply it in situation that try to solve a practical not-particular problem.

Feedback

Getting and giving feedback looks to be an essential action from a leader; the leader should guide people to the envisioned stage, setting partial and global goals that they allow to measure the quality of the transitional stages. It looks important to have a continue feedback in both sides to maintain the process in the correct way over the time. In other case, the leader could lose people of miss the target, and when s/he realizes that, it could be late.
There is different level or necessities of feedback, for example the feedback generally goes from the leader to the followers, but also it could go in the opposite direction. For the point of view of the leader toward the follower feedback, there is a substantial difference when the leader has a charismatic or non-charismatic behaviour. For a charismatic behaviour, the leader exposes frequently his/her leader characteristics and it is not necessary a high degree of feedback. For non-charismatic leaders, the feedback and interaction are essential to maintain the performance of the team/followers.

The bottom to top feedback direction could be seeing as an important process for the leader in knowing the motivation, concerns, restlessness of people, but also it could act as a limitation or noise for the leader values and vision. This last situation is represented by Groucho Marx quotation “Those are my principles, and if you don't like them... well, I have others.”. The leader could fall in a shift of values, principles and vision by the influence of the followers. So, this kind of feedback is very useful and risky at the same time for the leader.

Doing focus in non-charismatic leaders, who are the biggest group, there is extensive empirical evidence (Shea and Howell, 1999) of the importance of feedback in leadership performance. In this reference we could see many examples and conducted studies stressing the significant higher performance in those cases where the systematic feedback is conducted. The concept of efficient feedback has won acceptance looking for the most efficient process for the feedback. Specifically, feedback containing hints that support learning and attract attention to feedback-standard discrepancies, self-awareness and self-efficacy are likely to substantially increase performance.

Finally, for the point of view of the leader getting feedback, the 360 degree feedback appear to be a powerful and extended tool receiving valuable feedback for the close environment that the leader is related.

References


