

Transcription - Being Emotionally Objective

Welcome back, I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec. Today we're going to discuss how you remain objective as a leader, particularly when you're emotionally invested in the activities that are happening and in the relationship generally.

I think if you ask someone, you say to one of the leaders, this is what we've got to talk about, the person would immediately think, I'm always objective and I think we say that because you do try but the fact is that you're a human being and a human being has inbuilt biases that we're not even aware of. So for example you've got a team of people and if you really are honest with yourself you might find that you like some more than others. To what extent that's back to effects your leadership and you not being objective is probably a question that may not have thought about or thought no no I don't. When we're at work everyone is equal or even at home with your family, children whatever, you say you're being unbiased and being very objective in my decision making but you are influenced.

So influence may be because of the different team members that you have. Some of them, they just have a little bit more personality that works for you, which means that they're more engaging when they talk, they can express themselves better, and you have another person who would probably, at some point, at some time, have a much better idea except that person's delivery is not as good or you're really haven't got to know them.

Stopping there, I would think so what does that mean? Do I have to know each member of mine and like them equally for me to be objective? The answer to that is absolutely not. You can't be like that. What you've got to know is, actually check up on yourself each time you're about to make a decision, and say am I being objective? What's the pros and cons and actually face those things about oh I'm listening to Joe and I really like Joe's already as Joe's great and he's been so good in the past and blah blah blah I'm looking at Adam and Adam is, I'm not keen on what he said. Go back to that. Am I not keen on the content, the idea, have I validated the idea, have I validated my thinking and my emotions?

So we're really talking about emotionally invested in two levels, emotionally invested in the project or the activity or the decision that has to be made and then the contributions that come with making that decision or moving that task forward. For me it would be about having measures in place. I think that the objective measures for moving a project through its timeline are the things that take the emotion out of those decision making processes but you will still be emotionally involved in the project and in the team and in the team's performance, so you can't ever be objective I don't think. You can't ever be completely objective. No decision is without emotion at some level, whether it's because you're keen to get it done, whether you just wanted it out of the way, whether you like the people, whether you don't, there will always be a level of emotion because there is a level of commitment for you as a leader and as a manager. There may be some sort of emotional investment in your career in this organisation and in this process and to put all of that aside

and be simply and completely and purely objective would make you artificially intelligent and those decisions get made for different reasons and not by people.

The other factor in not being objective is your own biases that you may not be aware of. Let's talk about introducing a project or something like that and maybe you had previous experience. Previous experience could be you were against it last time when you were a team member and they pushed it and it didn't work, so now you've already got that in built feeling and emotion about that topic or that you actually said it shouldn't happen but now you believe it should and you think about what everybody's going to think, the people inhouse are going to think, oh now he's turned because he's a leader. These are emotional biases, so yes go back to validating why and what changed between last time and now, look at the facts, look at the circumstances, look at the environment and have solid analysis to back you up in your own mind which way to go.

You also run the risk, we'll talk in a moment, about the negative emotions and conflicting emotions but there might be the other end of the scale. You might be really excited and really enthusiastic and you might have passed that on to the team and they might also be enthusiastic and really keen to get it done and that emotional investment in the project and in success and the excitement of bringing something new to bear perhaps might pull you through and help you to move the project forward without making well-based decisions. It's still coming back to having measures in place that are objective measures and those things need to be set out at the beginning of the project and certainly you can review them but again we're looking at the reviews not being an emotional investment in wanting the task done or wanting a better result than you're getting or pushing it forward faster because you are getting better results than you expected.

So I guess in summary, always remember whilst your intent is to be objective and your track record might prove that you are objective, each time you've got to remind ourselves or certainly do and say, have I thought about all of those, is that because I hate what I'm doing in this case or I'm not supportive or am I very enthusiastic and then what's with the filters and that is have I got the people, am I listening to the diverse opinion, are those opinions backed by information and facts that will help me get the best decision at the time.

So maybe also it's something as simple as keeping track of what you're doing during the day. I've been introduced in the last couple of weeks to a new form of daily diary, I suppose you could call it, and it's simply a matter of every time you make a decision you put down a face on the app that's on the phone. So it's a smiley face or it's a straight line or it's an unhappy face, there's about five different levels and what it does by the end of the day is you look back at that and you think, oh this decision I was happy with and why was I happy with it. So it's just some tools to do a review of how you make your decisions throughout the day and whether there's a time in the day where you make better decisions, where you are less emotionally involved. I know for me, the time between four and five o'clock in the afternoon is the worst time for me to make decisions. That's when I am, biorhythmically as we used to say in the 80s, at my low and I don't make good decisions at that time of the day. I do make better

decisions in the morning, that's just me, I'm a morning person. I know that for many, they are night persons, the evening person, that they make better decisions early afternoon to the evening, so those sorts of things you need to know about yourself, you need to know about your team because if they're making decisions or they're giving you information at the wrong time of the day for them, then you're not getting the best information, you're not getting the best basis for making your decisions. So it's about knowing yourself, coming back to knowing yourself, knowing when is a good time for you to make a decision and as much as you can know. I know that theoretically it all sounds good but I'll make decisions in the morning. You know to make decisions at the right time but being aware of the fact that that's not a good time for you to be making decisions you're probably more careful about the decision that you're making, if you know, if you've already identified that that's not a good time for you of the day to be making decisions then you are more careful about making the decision.

Does that then make it a better decision because you are more measured, you're more careful about the environment and the decision you're making rather than I'm always good in the morning so I'll just make my decisions in the morning and I'll just make them regardless and that's probably not as good a process to be unless you really come up that your decisions in the morning as the best ones that can be made.

I think we've finished that topic for you for today. I'm Kim Baillie, she's Fulyana Orsborn and this is Inside Exec.