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Dear Reader,

I prepare these newsletters thinking of giving you small surprises. But this time the surprised one is me. When I invited our colleague Sharon Lamm to submit an article on stress management, a subject on which she often presents, I received her article and you see it below.

Now it is part of my personal ethic as the Editor to stay away from commercial or promotional contents about LIM and its services. I have maintained this newsletter for almost ten years now as a publication meant to inspire, to challenge thinking, to present new perspectives and cutting edge ideas. I consider that if any reader is interested in what LIM does, s/he will just click on the website. When I received this article I found myself in a bit of a dilemma. My hesitation centered on whether, in the name of my personal professional ethics, I had the right to deprive Sharon of the opportunity to share something that is very close to her heart, very current, real and intense. And it was not only about her voice, but about the voices of the leaders speaking through her. I decided that we would publish it as it is, with respect for her and for each individual she interviewed in her research, honoring each one of their candid sharing.

So with a bit of - probably unnecessary- embarrassment - thank you, Sharon.

Isabel Rimanoczy
Editor

Quote of the Month

***"Take your practiced powers and stretch them out
Until they span the chasm between two contradictions.
For the god wants to know himself in you."***

*Rainer Maria Rilke (1875 - 1926)
German Poet*

LIM NEWS



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WHERE HAVE ALL OUR LEADERS' HEARTS GONE?

by Sharon Lamm, Ed.D.

I must thank my anger and compassion for the impetus to write this article. When Isabel invited me to write an article, I was going to write about stress management and then I realized I am stressed about another issue and was guided to write about "Where are the hearts in our leaders today?"

I am tired of hearing about the firing of leaders for sexual harassment and ethical scandals like Enron and Tyco. It leaves me with a critical question that stresses me out in a positive sense because it is encouraging me to take action. Where have all our leaders' hearts gone?

For years I thought anger was a "bad" negative emotion and tried not to feel or express it. Now I can see a healthy expression of anger is often a motivator to help take passionate and committed action. I am choosing to take action through writing this article, a book, and focusing my executive coaching on opening leaders' hearts to their own humanity.

The truth is that stuff (a technical term) happening in our country is unacceptable for me. I have coached senior executives for 20 years around the globe and I am tired of hearing that they are "maxed out" on anti-depressant medication and still feel crappy. I feel sadness when I hear most of my executive's spouses are ready to leave them because they are tired of raising families by themselves, continuously moving around, and never seeing their husbands (which most executives are). I can't blame their spouses as I would leave a situation like that as well yet we see corporations expecting this of their people. When you give your soul to the corporation you become a high potential and on the fast track.

Then we wonder why we see Enron's, Tyco's, and sexual harassment by corporate and political leaders? One possible explanation I see is that leaders who give so much may be burned out and just want to feel some love, whether that is through money, human love, or making their way up the corporate ladder. Isn't this basically the human condition - that we all want to feel loved, appreciated, and valued for who we are? So what can we do?

I have to thank organizations like LIM and MiL for doing it. In 2000 I completed my doctoral dissertation on the connection between Action Reflection Learning and transformative learning. Action learning is one leadership development methodology that really helps leaders open their hearts. The human heart is where love lives and where qualities such as humility, compassion, inclusiveness, tolerance, empathy live. When we enter our hearts and make choices from here, we

can make more informed and service-oriented choices.

In my dissertation, I studied the Volvo Truck Management Program which LIM and MiL collaborated on facilitating and designing. It was a nine-month program with four program weeks in different parts of the world. Diverse (cultural, functional, gender) project teams worked on real business problems and presented their recommendations to executive management at the end of the program. Workshops, seminars and just-in time learning reflection also helped the teams learn and participants had practice opportunities back on the job between the program weeks.

I am simply amazed at the way this program helped leaders to open their hearts. Mike (a pseudonym), one of the program's participants, illustrates becoming more tolerant when he says,

"The biggest change is I more accept that people are different. I understand a bit more why they are different. It can be very enriching to have different viewpoints. I'm much more appreciative of that now."

Sunny, shows how his heart opened in inclusiveness to feel more part of the human race,

The program "was the first time that I got to go abroad to be strange in a strange land to get thrown in with people from totally different cultures, different backgrounds. I see myself more part of the world now...I don't see my little corner of the world as important as it used to be. I identify more as a member of the human race...It made me reflect on the opportunity I was given to be born. Now when I say the word, Volvo, I don't think of the United States. I think of the whole world and what can we do on this end that ties into what they are doing 10,000 miles away that makes things better for the whole."

Lance who admitted to being one of the most arrogant people before the program awakened his heart in humility,

"Before the program I was convinced I was the owner of the truth. I think I was too directive...After, I said that never, nobody has in fact the truth. It means that it is possible for me so say or to think I was wrong, and I change my mind and then accept that. In preparation for decisions I think it's important now that I have others points of view and I change if they are right."

Lindsay opened the beautiful heart quality of courage when he shared,

"The program has given me more confidence to take control of issues...You've got to be man enough to stand up and say we've made some mistakes - let's change it...People are listening because they are saying well at least somebody's got the guts to do something. Recently I challenged my people to show some determination and look outside the normal square box and ask what else can we do to change this? We're saying we can't get the information, well I don't believe that. I mean we need to find a way, and that actually worked for me last week, as results began to show it."

The continuous action and reflection in the program helped Castle and many other participants open their hearts in patience,

"I am more patient today. Reflection to me is to discuss it with people and question your own thoughts and allow that you were wrong. Allow for changes. Stop and reflect is part of me now."

Gentle provides an example of how many participants became more empathic,

"Before the program, if somebody came up with something which I did not think was relevant, I just ignored it and went on. It was very easy to make a quick judgment. I was so convinced myself of what I wanted to do, so I just let them talk and I didn't listen. What I'm trying much more than before is to put myself in the other person's situation and ask, Why does he say it like that? What does he know?"

The Dalai Lama (1998) believes that fostering the virtues of patience, empathy, tolerance, and humility is all about awakening the human heart. Some would argue these qualities are more feminine than masculine but perhaps they are simply human qualities that we learn to neglect because of our busy schedules?

Perhaps executives have such busy schedules that they forget to connect with their hearts on a daily, weekly, monthly or yearly basis. Forgetting to connect with our heart may lead to mindless unethical actions like Enron and Tyco or sexually harassing a female executive. They are often so burned out they have no time to be with their hearts. As Lyle, a Volvo Truck program participant, said,

"One evening we went through our lives...that had to do with my feelings...I started almost crying about something when I started to tell about it. Actually we were drawing pictures of our lives...My end drawing was man sitting like this tired...that was something I realized about myself. I was rather tired...burned out."

Lyle's emotional heart sharing actually caused Castle to make a change in his life, as Castle shared,


"We had a very very emotional discussion, stayed up most part of the night and it left some strong memories and feelings (with Lyle's sharing). It helped me in thinking what I should not do myself. I got an eye-opener in that discussion that I've been sacrificing the personal part of my life. I'm convinced I am not going on that route."

As Gentle said, "I think I am not ignoring my wife in the same way I did before. I take my time to sit down and talk much more. Before the program, I came home and I could just go around being mad and angry and frustrated and she could not talk with me."

Lindeman, an adult educator from the early 20th century, wrote in 1926 about his belief that if adult educators did nothing else but make adults enjoy their leisure time more, it would be a great service to humanity. Stephen Covey considered that a manager's life outside the workplace is as important to effectiveness as is the learning of specific skills. My research of the Volvo Truck ARL program showed that improvement in personal lives actually increased work effectiveness versus decreasing it and in some cases it increased company loyalty.

I write this article to thank and appreciate organizations like LIM and MiL who are doing great work to help make this world a better place. Our world needs all the help it can get. You are helping

leaders to open their hearts to increasing levels of humility, tolerance, empathy, patience and their humanity, which hopefully is helping them make more informed, compassionate and loving choices.

I only wish political leaders could have the opportunity to participate in an ARL program. Think about how our world could change if leaders were able to say, hey I made some mistakes, I thought I was right but I was wrong and I did not listen or value others' inputs. I guess you can tell where my political bias and beliefs are. LIM and MiL - any thoughts about taking Action Reflection Learning to the political arena? Perhaps it could stop war and encourage peace. 

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Dr. Sharon Lamm Hartman is an executive consultant and coach with over 20 years of international experience. She holds a doctorate from Columbia University where she did groundbreaking research in leadership development and personal transformation, receiving the Center for Creative Leadership's Walter Ulmer award. Her work has been published in leadership publications and books and was featured in Oprah Magazine. An experience of realizing she had everything she ever wanted yet something was still missing, inspired her to write her first book, *The Heart's Way*, which soon will be available. Her current purpose is to help leaders open their hearts to their own humanity and make more informed choices. Sharon@insideoutlearninginc.com - www.insideoutlearninginc.com.

Editor's Note:

Actually, we have played with the idea of a Presidential Academy. Why do florists, podiatrists and realtors need to study and get a license that certifies they are prepared for the job, and presidents of countries are not required any specific training? Whose incompetence is potentially more harmful? We thought of negotiation courses, dialogue, environmental literacy, systems thinking, religions of the world...

If you want more triggers for reflection, visit <http://isabelrimanoczy.blogspot.com>.





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