

Chapter 3

SELF-ESTEEM & EQ AT THE LEADERS' CRITICAL CORE

Self-Esteem: what it is and why it is so important

"Who is the happiest of men? He who values the merits of others, and in their pleasure takes joy, even as though 'twere his own." -- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749 - 1832)

"A leader will take you further than you would go on your own. It's what you inspire others to do; their self-esteem." -- Sir Terry Leahy Tesco's celebrated CEO (2012)

"It is not easy to find happiness in ourselves, and it is not possible to find it elsewhere."
-- Agnes Repplier (April 1, 1855 – November 15, 1950) was an American essayist

This chapter sets out to elucidate that self-esteem is not a small component of emotional intelligence (EI), but is the main platform of a high emotional quotient (EQ). Possessing a healthy self-esteem – emotional capital – has thousands of benefits. Benefits, not just for ourselves but also for everyone we have contact with. On the other hand, having a low self-esteem has thousands of drawbacks and hindrances. So let us discover why self-esteem forms the epicenter of a great leader. And why a poor self-esteem is also the common trait of autocrats and cruel leaders.

As a business consultant, I'm often assigned the task of improving the synergies between strategic business units (SBUs) within the same group of companies. I've learnt to begin the process by interviewing the SBU heads, and have discovered an undeniable correlation between unstable alliances and business unit managers suffering from low self-esteem (self-loathing), and due to that, low emotional intelligence. Naturally, to break down the silo-mentality between SBUs, we need to align incentives, information flow, communication and reporting structures; but nothing trumps a *self-assured* manager to get a great cooperative mindset going. *This is because self-esteem governs our intrapersonal communication — the communication we have with ourselves every second of the day; this in turn influences all other communication we have with others.* Yet when companies are

floundering, discussions concerning the low self-image, self-centeredness or narcissism of managers seem to be, unfortunately, the very last item on the agenda. Secondly, anyone who attacks the concept of self-esteem as self-centeredness certainly has the wrong definition of what a healthy self-esteem really is. People with a negative self-esteem simply feel bad about themselves. *Whereas a positive self-esteem is the necessary resource, that underpins the ability to improve our emotional management with others and ourselves.* Self-esteem is how we rate ourselves against our own values, and it plays a major part in coherently managing our emotions in demanding situations. Great leaders have a strong desire to assist others in achieving this state of comfort too. Medical doctor and mind-body expert, Deepak Chopra, describes leadership as follows: ‘The criteria for inspired leadership don’t need to be shadowed in mystery. In fact, they are simple: great leaders are those who can respond to their own needs and the needs of others from the higher levels of spirit with vision, creativity, and a sense of unity with the people they lead.’¹ Therefore it is evident that authentic leaders have their own needs or goals met, and desire the same state for their group too.

Professors of organizational behavior, David Messick at Northwestern University and Roderick Kramer at Stanford University, cite professor of psychology Tom Tyler’s work at New York University:

Tyler probes into the source of people’s concerns with fair process and concludes that the major source of his concern has to do with the ability to construct and nurture a positive image of oneself. Pride and positive self-regard seem to be the drivers of the system, and leaders who understand the importance of this psychological need are likely to excel as leaders.²

In his book *Winning*, Jack Welch’s 3Ss for “winning” are *self-confidence*, *simplicity* and *speed*. He noticed that *insecure* leaders become lethargic bureaucrats, are not open to new ideas and are unwilling to share them. Welch also observed that insecure leaders are not comfortable keeping things simple, which destroys the take-up speed and implementation of their muddled vision and mission.

Like Jack Welch, all contemporary authors on leadership directly or inadvertently give reference to self-esteem as a personal quality of an excellent leader or manager. Inadvertently, some expert leadership authors like Richard Boyatzis may have used terms like “self-efficacy”, “internal locus of control” and “self-confidence” to describe the effective manager³ (which are all typical traits of a healthy self-esteem). Thus self-esteem is seldom given the credence it deserves. Examining Warren Bennis’ top ten traits of dynamic leaders, many too are mere by-products of a healthy self-esteem: self-knowledge, open to feedback and criticism, eager to listen and learn, need for revision, and helps

others to learn.⁴ George Goethals at the department of psychology at Williams College, describes the importance of self-esteem in the leadership context as follows:

From acting consistently with the ideals of the group, as expressed by the leader, there is a gain in self-esteem. Positive self-esteem, a powerful reward, derived from a clear identity and a behavioral commitment to the values and goals associated with that identity. People believe in the leader's vision, and their sense of self comes from working with other group members towards actualizing it. The result is increased "Meaningfulness."⁵ (Goethals)

At seminars I regularly ask large groups of business people this question, "If your boss felt more comfortable and confident in their own skin, would they make better leaders? Would they want to assist you to win too? Would they have higher leadership intelligence?" The answer is always a resounding yes! To read books on leadership is one thing, but to be comfortable in one's own skin, — ah, now that's something much more beneficial. *Self-esteem permeates through everything the leader says and does.* Insecure leaders display mistrust, possessiveness, suspicion, and fear. Whereas secure leaders display trust in their followers and want to empower them. Emotional balance, feeling centered, stability and wellbeing are heavily dependent on self-esteem. *And because the leader sets the overall tone of the organization, their feeling of emotional security is vital.*

Although the term emotional intelligence (EI) can be traced back to the 1960s, in 2008 management expert and professor of psychology at University College London, Adrian Furnham suggests:

There is no agreement about what features, factors, abilities or skills forms part of EI. As more and more tests of, and books about, EI appears on the market, the situation gets worse rather than better. Most, but not all, theories and systems include ideas about emotional awareness and regulation.⁶

It is evident that most areas of psychology are fluid, which is good in a way, because people are fluid not fixed. Our minds are fluid not fixed. Thus adopting an eclectic approach to psychology makes sense. But whilst this EI debate continues (like countless other areas of the over forty major different schools or branches of psychology), the one major cause of high EI is evident; managers that have a high self-esteem naturally spawn high leadership and emotional intelligence. This EI, high or low, then

oozes into every facet of the business and becomes the general emotional climate of the organisation. Through our mirror neurons, the leader's wellbeing becomes the organisation's wellbeing. When we look at the characteristics of leaders or manager suffering from low self-esteem, one begins to understand why self-esteem expert, Dr. Nathaniel Branden says, 'It's impossible to have too much self-esteem.'

You control nothing until you control yourself.

-- Jacob McAllister

If a manager has a weak or negative self-concept, this negativity emotion is transferred to (or pinned on) his team in an exhaustive array of negative ways. Sigmund Freud called this 'projection' *transference*. These insecure leaders tend to have a *diminishing* effect on followers; whereas secure leaders have a *multiplying* effect. The *deminisher's* toxic energy is then spread around and mopped up by people unqualified to handle the toxicity. Yet when a leader or manager genuinely likes himself, the opposite is true. The *multiplier's* positive attitude tends to rub off in powerfully positive ways, and thus toxic handlers are not required. As Daniel Goleman says, emotions are "contagious". And because there is no need to build silos around themselves, secure managers (normally loaded with solid business experience and competencies) are naturally interested in the wellbeing of others and don't "keep their cards close to their chest." When you have a good sense of yourself you don't need to take from others to meet your unmet needs, you like to contribute.

Because we often don't like what we see in ourselves, the world is also the target of our negative projections. -- Ian McCallum (psychiatrist, 2005)

In his exquisitely researched book, *Toxic Emotions at Work*, professor of organisation behavior Peter J. Frost, helps explain how negative emotions spread in the workplace:

Regardless of the evidence confirming how important it is to pay attention to people's emotions, however, most organisations and their leaders continue to disregard the feelings (particularly negative ones) that their own policies and attitudes trigger in employees. But anger, sadness, and disappointment don't go away. Into this unacknowledged and tricky world steps the toxin handler: the peacekeeper, the emotional firefighter, the lay therapist. Unlike the fighters of real fires, however, she has no admired and official status, nor has she the tools and training for the job.⁷

Facial surgeon and author of *Psycho-Cybernetics*, Dr. Maxwell Maltz, realized that many patients who were given the perfect prosthesis or face still suffered the same insecurities and discontent they had prior to the plastic surgery. The facelift or prosthesis was only a temporary camouflage for deeper feelings. This observation led Dr. Maltz to uncover the root cause of people's troubles: their self-image. Self-worth, which is an 'image' or self-concept embedded as emotional-esteem in the *subconscious limbic system*, deeply affects our feelings, behavior and personality, to the point that if this image is not congruent with our values and goals, our goals will unfortunately not be attained.

The Oxford dictionary's definition of self-esteem is: *confidence in your own worth or abilities*.

Dr. Nathaniel Branden suggests self-esteem has two components:

- *Self-efficacy*: Self-confidence in our ability to cope with life's challenges.
- *Self-respect*: We experience ourselves as deserving of achievement, love and happiness.

A few synonyms for self-esteem are self-worth, self-respect, healthy self-concept and healthy self-image. Self-confidence in a particular area of life (i.e. sport), however does *not necessarily* equate to general self-esteem. Self-esteem is an *overall evaluation* of your own worth. Self "esteem" (Latin "to estimate") poses the critical question: Do you feel, in your estimation, that you deserve respect, love, happiness, peace and wellbeing? People who answer "no" are not okay with their self-worth and have trouble attaining a balanced and fulfilled life. Unconsciously, with this continuous neurological and neurobiological "*insecure tension*", they either feel they do not deserve (or to compensate they feel they over-deserve), and so in its insecurity and resultant physiological sensation of fear, the id-ego reacts, often with butterflies the size of eagles. But of major importance to this book, *self-efficacy*, which affects all our social interactions, has been cited as one of the major traits of successful leaders.^{8,9}

The five major advantages of living and leading with healthy or high quality self-esteem are:

- In the 1960s Dr. Branden observed that a high-quality self-esteem is the governing emotion that resonates positively at the centre of our being. Low quality self-esteem, known as *narcissism*, is the opposite of a healthy self-esteem. Narcissism is accompanied

by an anxious background noise (insecure tension) that negatively impacts our thoughts, feelings and actions.

- Dr. Abraham Maslow and Dr. Branden agree that a high quality self-esteem is a *human need*, and contributes heavily to self-development and the development of a healthy personality. People with low self-esteem often err on the safe side, and avoid goal setting.
- The more relaxed a person is in their own skin, the more conscious they are of their inner and outer-environments. A pioneer of self-esteem, Nathaniel Branden says, ‘I think of self-esteem as the immune system of consciousness.’ In their article Petri Aaltonen and Heini Ikävalko have realized that managers and leaders are *only successful when they are conscious of their leadership role*.¹⁰ Consciously and unconsciously, our self-image affects our body at a cellular level (epigenetic science suggests that the body and mind are heavily interlinked). Over an extended period of time, if our thoughts about ourselves are unsupportive (versus supportive), we will feel the toxicity at an emotional and physical level. Our toxic body, then in turn hurts our toxic mind. So, be careful how you feel about whom you are; your body is listening and responding with every cell. People who view others in terms of what they can "get" out of them, are limited listeners - - emotionally deprived. They make selfish listeners because they are thinking, "how can I receive". Authentic love for oneself is like everything else, if you don't have it to give you simply can't give it -- can't afford it. The hallmark of humility is being comfortable in your own skin -- authentic self-esteem. It is not unexpected that humble people make good listeners; it's because they want to give; want to shine their inner warm-light on the receiver. People who lack humility are also not self-aware and don't possess the awareness to look within. After all, it's unnecessary to work on their perfection. Yet if they were willing to look within they would become more self-aware. And so they are caught in a trap.
- Demonstrated over millennia, humility is not a choice but an essential prerequisite for survival. Why? Because those with humility have self-awareness and awareness of others, which makes friends and strong alliances.

But we need to take full responsibility for creating our self-worth, our emotional-esteem. The saying “I have met the enemy, and it is me” refers to lack of self-esteem holding us back. We should not feel enslaved by our inner and outer environments. In the context of this book, I prefer to define self-

esteem as merely “*being comfortable in your own skin*” (okayness), especially in your particular role as a leader. And because self-esteem has *accompanying emotions*, we could also refer to it as *emotional-esteem*.

The deepest human need is the need to be appreciated.
-- William James (The Father of Modern Psychology)

We come out of the womb with a tattoo inside our foreheads, “I need to feel appreciated.” And once we truly feel okay with ourselves, that need to feel important (status and power) and appreciated (relatedness), diminishes.

American psychologist William C. Schutz (1925-2002) realized that humans have three relationship needs: *inclusion, control and openness*. Schutz also observed three relationship fears: the fear of being *ignored, humiliated and rejected*. Building on Schultz work, in his book, *Your Brain at Work (2009)*, neuro-leadership expert David Rock has reviewed hundreds of neurological studies, and suggests that Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (food, water, sex, safety, social, self-esteem, self-actualization) Maslow, A.H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370-96. Retrieved from <http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Maslow/motivation.htm> should also include another five basic social needs. Interestingly, and unlike Maslow’s food and water, they are all psychological *social* issues that our brain registers as survival essentials. And because the workplace is an extremely social environment, this model should be taken seriously. Rock refers to this model as “A brain-based model for collaborating with and influencing others.” Rock’s brain-based SCARF Model¹¹ needs are: *Status, Clarity, Autonomy, Relatedness and Fairness*.

Status - relative to others, how important do they feel

Certainty - future predictions

Autonomy - a sense of freedom to control events

Relatedness - a sense of feeling ‘safe’ in the presence of others, and

Fairness - equality or fair exchange between people, especially observable in sibling rivalry

And when you don’t have them like a ‘SCARF’ around you, or when you lose them, they rock your limbic system into over-arousal, disabling the effective and efficient use of your rational prefrontal cortex. With an acute awareness of Rock’s SCARF Model, it now becomes clear

why it is so important to satisfy these five SCARF needs in our followers — it frees up their prefrontal cortex to solve complex issues. If you want to test the SCARF model, think about the emotional trauma caused by an unfair dismissal — every aspect of SCARF is negatively impacted upon. And why does the *insecure* leader cling to power? It is because their insecurity intensifies their need for status, clarity, and autonomy. Ever wondered why an anorectic will seemingly irrationally give up Maslow's basic need for food? That is because she has a heightened craving to have her basic needs for status (self-esteem/importance), autonomy (control) and relatedness (popularity or the sense of feeling 'safe' in the presence of others) met.

My point is this, how much quicker would you be threatened by the loss of status, clarity, autonomy, relatedness and fairness (inequity), if your limbic system was *already* aroused — the state consistent with a low self-worth? And how much more in control, rational and aware of self and others would you be if you were in a relaxed state?

At a deeply unconscious level we need to feel that we deserve. 'Low self-esteem,' said Maltz, 'is like driving through life with your handbrake on.' It's a ball and chain. *From our general wellbeing to our physical health — everything pivots around the positive mental and physical feeling of a healthy self-image.*

If we have negative feelings of self-worth — negative emotional-esteem — these feelings in turn create unconscious negative thoughts, which again feed the initial negative feeling, and so our entire psyche, and our body in which it is housed, both suffer. This cycle of *self-loathing* and *self-defeat* is difficult to break free from. While high self-esteem is a source of white light connecting the inner and outer environments, low self-esteem is a reservoir of darkness — a negative emotional state — which we unintentionally then transfer onto others.

The rule is pretty simple: if we are not comfortable in our own skin we will transfer these negative emotions onto others almost as if *they are* the problem. They pick up our vibe. That is the power of the id-ego and this underlying conflict: it deflects inner pain onto others. This negative state will of course then only 'cycle' more negativity into our private and business lives. If we harbor hatred and anger, this festers not just in our inner-environment but will manifest itself as outward hatred and anger in our

bi-vironment. We are more inclined to look at the world through hateful eyes and miss the delight that the white light would have to offer.

Having a low self-worth is like planting a poisonous virus inside your body, mind and spirit. Toxic feelings about ourselves leads to toxic thoughts, which lead to toxic acts, and observable ill health. Our self-image, our self-worth, is our own personal CEO, our “Chief Feelings Officer” or CFO. Self-esteem thus is not a luxury but a necessity for wellbeing. Allowing our prefrontal cortex to operate properly, it’s the crux of *self-regulation and self-awareness*. It unblocks negativity for true success. It releases us from the cycle of negativity and opens the road for personal and business success.

But do not equate love-for-self with self-indulgence; nothing could be further from the truth. It is by having a genuine love for oneself that we indulge and immerse others in the same stuff. Secondly, do not confuse an excessive interest with oneself and appearance with a high self-esteem; that’s narcissism or arrogance. *Self-esteem and narcissism are at completely opposite ends of the spectrum*. Emotional-esteem vs. emotional-disesteem. The insecure person is narcissistic whereas the person who genuinely accepts himself does not need to show-off. The narcissist, who *appears* to ‘love’ himself, does so because he does not *genuinely* love himself. And because the narcissist is void of love he cannot, in the true sense of the word, love someone else either; they rather, hate their neighbor as they hate themselves. They have, unfortunately, a reservoir of darkness rather than light. Interestingly, a superiority-complex, often appearing as narcissism, is also borne out of an inferiority complex. To screen feelings of inferiority from others, an insecure person feigns superiority to cover up their insecure tension. They thus create another person, the *alter ego* (Latin, “the other I”) to protect their true self. But they themselves are generally unconscious of this second self.

If people genuinely liked themselves, they would be happier. They would get to choose how to act and react. If people cannot feel and give love, then there is no love of self — a bankrupt soul intent on taking rather than giving. And a bankrupt soul is not in charge. Weak, it allows the ancient limbic system — the id-ego — to steer it. Preoccupied with their id-ego’s survival, insecure knee-jerk managers often put themselves first, have a sense of entitlement, are obviously uncompassionate, narcissistic, self-serving, conceited, disrespectful, reactive, unstable and lacking in true courage. According to Aristotle’s law of cause-and-effect, the inside of us becomes the outside; our inner attitude becomes our character. An unhealthy inner-environment turns obstacles into disasters. But a healthy inner-environment turns adversity in the outer-environment into opportunity. Our dark-hate or

light-love surfaces. Instead of experiencing “insecure tension” we enjoy the “creative tension” in our inner-life — high energy but still in a calm but vibrant state. Positive emotional-esteem.

At the seat of a healthy soul (emotions) is a healthy self-esteem. When you feel soulful you are authentically you. Imagine if on a minute-to-minute basis your conscious, pre-conscious and unconscious thoughts about your self-worth were negative. The cumulative snowball effect on your entire mind and your body proper would be devastating. You may, for instance, think happy thoughts, but they will soon be tainted and imbedded in a substrate of negative emotions and feelings. Living off an empty soul or energy source, you will feel depleted. You will not feel soulful you will feel fake. And the way you see yourself is the way you will see everyone around you. Love your soul and you love the world. But if your soul is depleted of spiritual energy or positive emotions, the world, and your organization, appears depleted and full of negative vibrations. When you are truly comfortable in your own skin, you leave the physical world — the world of the id-ego — and enter into an inspired spiritual world.

Now study the following instructions which are often promoted by spiritual leaders and authors, and *notice how difficult they are to achieve if you are feeling insecure or suffering from low self-worth:*

1. In tackling life’s challenges, be comfortable failing.
2. Be comfortable being wrong.
3. Don’t take things personally. Don’t be oversensitive but rather be able to laugh at yourself.
4. Never gossip or think negatively about anything or anyone.

What many authors leave out are the instructions on how to implement this list, and extremely few even touch on the centre secret: how to build a well of positive self-esteem energy — the placenta that feeds any well adjusted person. Assuming we want to tackle the above list, the challenge is much easier when the anxious id-ego is not the energy source, but instead, we are driven or biased by a healthy and relaxed sense of worth.

According to Jim Collin’s exhaustive study in his book, *Good to Great*, the one real demonstrable variable that made good companies great, were their passionate, determined but *humble* leaders.¹² So yes, business success is a ‘soft’ issue. A *very* ‘soft’ issue, but which produces hard results. Collins called these leaders “Level 5 Leaders”; because they liked themselves, they were able to channel their id-ego needs away from themselves into the larger good of the organization. That is the kind of boss everyone wants to

work with. They took 100 percent responsibility for their micro and macro environments. They were just ordinary people, who in a quiet determined way produced extraordinary bottom-line results. Humble, of course, meant that the leaders had a healthy sense of worth and values. They were open to their team members' opinions — true signs that leaders are okay with themselves. But do not mistake a humble person for an inferiority complex that can't say "boo to a goose." When it is needed, a humble person who knows his self-worth will assert himself. Unless we like ourselves, advice on leadership is thus difficult, if not impossible, to apply effectively. Humble leaders also offer encouragement and praise. Harvard Business professor John Quelch says, "The days of the command-and-control, take-no-prisoners "hero" chief executive are numbered... Business success increasingly depends on the subtleties of soft power."¹³ World renowned emotional intelligence author, Daniel Goleman says that a leader who does not praise, will erode their followers' spirit and the satisfaction they take in their work — and that these are the very things that motivate most high-performing workers.¹⁴ Praise reinforces good behavior. Bob Wall, in his book *Coaching for Emotional Intelligence*, also believes that praise is necessary and makes people more receptive to constructive criticism.¹⁵

Take for example the ancient advice: "Never take anything personally." But if we suffer from an inferiority complex, we take negative feedback too personally. However, if we are secure within ourselves, we will even invite feedback or constructive criticism.

Nothing would ever be done if people feared critics. -- ANONYMOUS

Dr. Alfred Adler observed that the person having a superiority complex or show-off was linked to the feelings of inferiority and often this person over gesticulates when talking. Now consider the advice, "love your neighbor." You can *only* love you neighbor *as* you love yourself. If you are patient and kind with yourself, you will likely be patient and kind with someone else. If a group of people or nation has a "chip on their shoulder," they so often take the war they have within themselves and transfer it onto others. Leaders who take offence are at least half the problem.

Let us look at South Africa's last four major perpetrators of apartheid, and how they justified and rationalized being bitter racists. The First Anglo-Boer War (1880-1881) opened up bitter hatred and serious psychological wounds amongst the Afrikaaner. D.F. Malan was just 26 at the start of the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902), where the Boer or white Afrikaaner, after trekking to another part of

South Africa, were justifiably bitter about the British Empire driving them off their land *again*. If that was not bad enough, their crops were burnt and 30 000 women and children died in British concentration camps. This together with the brutal slaying of Piet Retief's entire party, including defenseless women and children by Dingane in 1837, was enough to warrant their harsh stance against all other tribes in South Africa. The Boers would use these incidences to fuel and 'justify' their laager mentality, white supremacy and elite Afikaaner nationalism, that Hendrik Verwoerd, B.J. Vorster and P.W. Botha would so carefully preserve. It was only until F.W. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela came to power, *without* the preverbal bullying chips on their shoulders, that they benevolently began to lead *all* South Africans.

How can someone who is always ill at ease possibly truly love another? Again, if we follow the great Dr. John Maxwell's advice in his recent book, *Leadership Gold*, 'I would vow to love people before trying to lead them.'¹⁶, it is *unworkable* to truly love and manage work associates unless we love and accept ourselves first.

When we observe the positive characteristics of a person who has a high self-worth, self-esteem is undoubtedly one of the greatest, if not *the* greatest, virtue or quality a human can hold. When you are relaxed about who you are, the world seems so much more tranquil too. As self-esteem breeds humility, there's no reason to blow your own trumpet; and like a soulful Nelson Mandela, a man with healthy self-esteem tends even to boast about his weaknesses.

If a person is confident enough in the way they feel, whether it's an art form or whether it's just in life, it comes off - you don't have anything to prove; you can just be what you are. -- Clint Eastwood¹⁷

But for this to happen, as American author Anna Quindlen suggests, we need to take control of our own lives:

'I... walked for miles, at night along a beach, writing bad blank verses and searching endlessly for someone wonderful who would... change my life. It never crossed my mind that that person could be me.'

Low Self-Esteem: Causes and Consequences

Causes of Low Self-Esteem

A man's worst enemies can't wish on him what he can think up himself.

-- Yiddish proverb

Feelings of inferiority are usually based on actual or imagined incidences in our life, which develop into an inferiority-complex. Typically, we were emotionally hurt during our formative years — our dysfunctional parents may have focused more on our shortcomings, or we were branded “stupid” or “evil,” or we were not loved, or we suffered gender or racial inequalities, or we may have compared ourselves with more gifted siblings, teenagers or celebrities. Because they have no real life experience yet, children are particularly vulnerable to internalizing personal criticism received from the role models. We may have been brought up in a poor, low status neighborhood, or our parents, with their own apparent low self-esteem, passed on their emotional-disesteem. Or self-pity may have escalated a minor incident into a major ‘trauma’ as we do make up many of our memories and attach the accompanying emotion to them to justify our current state. So, with the help of that little sabotaging voice inside our head, we unconsciously begin to develop our self-concept in our youth.

We judge ourselves by what we feel capable of doing, while others judge us by what we have already done. -- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (US poet, 1807 – 1822)

Let’s look at the neuropsychology of an insecure child’s brain. How does our brain function change the way we think feel and act? Because the lower-level structures of a human brain and pig brain are almost identical, experiments on other mammals help us understand how the human brains develops and functions.¹⁸ Nurtured mammals display a well-developed and healthy limbic system (i.e. hypothalamus, hippocampus and amygdala), yet when prematurely removed from a supportive environment (even just social isolation for one day), the resultant psychosocial stress causes their emotional intelligence to be reduced — displaying irrational and aggressive behavior later on in life. This is because the hippocampus and amygdalae stored the negative emotional memory. In a recent experiment, suckling piglets prematurely removed from their mothers became aggressive bullies, suggesting that parenting styles can permanently affect our brain development and even a child’s genes.^{19, 20} Which unfortunately means that dictators and criminals, in this instance, are often

predisposed to developing this belligerent behavior before their second birthday — and thus strictly speaking, their loathsome behavior is not entirely of their own doing. This is why we should be tough on the crime and not the criminal. With all this emerging evidence, it is pretty clear what South African's should be doing to curb crime. Just hugging an unloved orphan would advance this crucial brain development, generating positive memories of empathy in the hippocampus and amygdalae. If you study a dozen mainstream religions, they all have the same verse in their Bible: "Love and/or respect your neighbour as you love and/or respect yourself." And if there is no self-respect (self-esteem), then there is no respect for others.

In a 2010 study of violent criminals in South Africa, Professor Astrid Berg and Dr. Amelia Kleijn argue strongly that psychopathic tendencies are made, not just born. In a TV interview Prof Berg said:

Babies come into this world hard-wired — pre-wired — to connect with another human being. They need another human being to make them feel safe, to make them feel contained, and it is within that first relationship that is embedded all other relationships. More and more research is emerging that shows early childhood trauma to have an effect on brain development. For example, trauma elevates the stress hormone called cortisol. And cortisol has been found to actually cause cell death in some parts of the brain, particularly what is called the limbic system, deep inside the brain. *The architecture of the brain may actually be altered* and those children who have been subjected to chronic abuse in their first 18 months of their life, which really has profound implications because, up to a point, it is irreversible. There is really nothing in the child that would want to connect with other people in an emphatic way. Empathy, for starters, cannot develop because they've never had an empathic response.²¹

When the Pilansberg National Park's elephant population was culled, the youngsters who witnessed the family massacre, grew up to become rhinoceros bullies. Almost the entire rhino population was bullied to death by insecure elephants.

If a child's self-esteem was shattered before starting school, he would have carried these insecure feeling through school, which could have affected academic, sporting and social performances. An insecure kid might battle to concentrate, listen and may be preoccupied with this anxious-noise whilst doing homework. Insecurity often manifests itself as either the playground bully or the painfully shy child, but in both cases the child with low self-esteem is socially inept. Characteristically with a low

self-awareness, the anxious id-ego puts up a smoke screen to save face; and so the child with low self-esteem is unaware of his bi-vironment. This condition advances the child's loneliness, further exacerbating low self-worth, often trapping a child into a cycle of low self-esteem.

Interestingly, what leads to low self-esteem in school is not necessarily the same in midlife. For instance, school was mainly about popularity, looks, good grades, parental acceptance and sporting achievements. An adult primarily evaluates his self-worth against his career, marital success, retirement or financial prospects.

Amazingly it is these feelings of insecurity that drive ambition, climbing the corporate ladder and greed for material possessions as an adult; the bigger the divide between where we are now and where our id-ego wants to be, the stronger our feelings or drive will be. So, driven mainly by unconscious insecurities, we set ambitious goals to relieve the inner pain, but it is also these very goals that paradoxically remind us of our insecurities, which makes us *feel* even worse. It is that ensnaring cycle again. Unfortunately, when the perceived gap between where we are and where we want to be seems insurmountable, we may withdraw completely from our ambitions and choose to rather wallow in the hopeless emotion of self-pity.

Dire Consequences of Low Self-Esteem

“The ego shuns the present moment, where it may be revealed for what it really is -- a sham; so the ego is chiefly concerned with the future, where 'more' will lead to happiness, or with the past and the previous successes or failures that established its identity.” -- *Living in The Now*, Jill Jacques. p.48

Anxiety is the mark of spiritual insecurity. -- Thomas Merton

M Scott Peck, psychiatrist and author of *The Road Less Travelled*, said “Until you value yourself, you won't value your time. Until you value your time, you will not do anything with it.” Benjamin Franklin said the same: “Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of.” As we all have the same amount of time, this relationship between time and self-esteem is important to point out, but it seems that those who love life do so much more with their time. Time is the most valuable commodity we have, but if we are dissipating our energy inefficiently through

hatred and hostility towards self and others, this brief trip will have been unproductive and time-wasting.

Low self-esteem is an expression of deprivation. The consequence of deprivation is rage and neediness. Thus people not only need their point of view to be paramount – which leads to competition as opposed to a cooperation. In contrast, a self-assured manager comes from a ‘filled-up’ place and is thus not only more generous, but also more able to see him distinctly and separately from what makes up another person.

When it comes to business and social relationships, a low self-esteem is an inner neurotic conflict between two warriors, the id-ego and the soul — a tug-of-war between our primitive amygdalae and our modern prefrontal cortex. The id-ego uses guilt, fear, jealousy, greed and anxiety to prepare the self-deceptive battle mask of the ‘confident’ person. Yet we are only deceiving ourselves; beneath the clean looking exterior is another dirty face; we just cannot see it. The id-ego has a clever knack of digging its heels in, and so we repress or deny the veiled inner-face. That’s the tragedy of a low self-esteem; the bearer is unconscious of the deceptive mask. The facade masks or anesthetizes their consciousness in an intimidating world. The antidote? Self-esteem.

To maintain a healthy, albeit it pseudo self-regard, the cause of this inner underlying conflict (low self-esteem) is repressed so deeply in the unconscious that the original cause is inaccessible, *but the unconscious emotional turmoil is nevertheless still felt every moment — day and night.*

Psychiatrist, Edward Hallowell suggests if we are fearful, we do not use the “higher regions” of our brain, ‘You become curt, peremptory, aggressive, dogmatic, deaf, unempathic — in short, stupid. ... People lose their very tools that they need the most: their ability to hear and listen to others, their creativity, their flexibility, their empathy – even their memory.’²² With this in mind, it is no wonder insecure and nervous people cannot remember names straight after being introduced to a stranger.

People with low self-esteem burn mental and emotional energy uneconomically, hurting their nervous system. Motivational speaker Zig Ziglar says, “When you have nothing to hide, you have nothing to fear.” When we fear, we hide. It is this repressed inner struggle that unfortunately spills over into an outer struggle with everyone we interact with, yet, to maintain our self-regard, we don’t see it.

It is easy for a high self-esteem person to spot a low self-esteem. Ask this question: Do you know someone in your family that regularly has fallouts with other relatives at family occasions? Or, who has the most fallouts with people at work? That is a sure sign of an insecure person. Because this person is at odds with himself, he is frequently at odds with others; but he will not see this either.

These are some of the debilitating low emotional intelligence characteristics of a leader with low self-esteem. Seeing such a list, it is apparent that as leaders we simply cannot value ourselves enough.

None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe they are free.

-- Johan Wolfgang von Goethe (1749 – 1832)

Relational Detriments:

People with low self-esteem may find that *helping others does not come naturally*. They tend to only help their fellow man when instructed to do so, or for equitable reward when reciprocal altruism is a strong possibility. Any flicker of altruism or self-sacrifice is the enemy of the id's obsession – unless, of course, it's for self gain or affection. In their book *Superfreakonomics*, Levit and Dubner cite Gary Becker's altruism research where he found that parents in retirement homes were more likely to be visited by their grown children only if a large inheritance was expected. Visits were more frequent especially where there was more than one sibling competing for the inheritance.²³ And so it is for the low self-esteem leaders, the followers detects the disingenuous relationship, shattering trust and the emotional bond.

People with low self-esteem may find that, like insecure teenagers, they have an *inherent hostility towards those who can help them the most*, often unnecessarily ending intimate relationships. Hitler, plagued by his lackluster childhood, was driven by his felt inferiority to grandiosity. Like an addict will justify their addictions, Hitler's inner self-dissonance led to his moral-dissonance; then to justify this inner-struggle, self-delusions were created so his "ends justified the means". In *Mein Kampf* he boasted how good his voice was and how he loved 'violent arguments with his classmates.'²⁴ Showing lack of empathy, he terminated his romantic relationships in the most hostile ways and claimed that he never wanted children because they would never match his genius. Three of his girlfriends committed suicide.

There is a saying "Never argue with a fool"; that's because they have no self-awareness, so you will never have a reasonable conversation with them. Insecure and foolish leaders behave no differently. This is merely the id-ego defense mechanism -- the dishonesty of a low self-esteem -- at play.

Rather than love, than money and than fame, give me truth. -- Henry D Theroux

People with low self-esteem may find that, wearing a mask of arrogance or superiority, a facade over their inferiority complex, *they repel people*. This only further aggravates their insecurity, causing them to be locked into a vicious arrogance/insecurity cycle.

People with low self-esteem may find that they present an exterior veneer of loud labels and symbols of success. Another symptom of their low self-esteem is a *poisoned spirit, ready to poison their community*. Every now and then they realize that the 'gentle giant' is so much easier to be around than the 'small' person, but their obsession with survival does not allow them to tap into their outer-environment and reach out to help another.

People with low self-esteem may find that hurting others is just another symptom of their poor self-worth neurosis. *They hurt others by transferring or projecting their repressed resentment and anger onto them*, but don't realize that this hatred hurts themselves more than the people on which it is doused. They even hurt the people they love the most and then take pleasure in watching them suffer. This emotion is called schadenfreude (the pleasure derived from the misfortunes of others). Aristotle wrote, 'As for the pleasure in hubris, its cause is this: men think that by ill-treating others they make their own superiority the greater.' So the insecure create dysfunctional families and organisations. But doing this may also make them feel guilty, and guilt is the most draining emotion.

People with low self-esteem may find that they *energize themselves by deflating or sucking the energy out of others*. Ghandi said 'You can judge a society by how they treat their weakest members.' How would a wholesome society or individual treat a family pet or the poor? Would a criminal rather choose to be a prisoner in starving country or in prosperous one? Sufferers with a low self-worth often deliberately pass on their suffering. Incidences of HIV positive sufferers that purposefully and knowingly pass on their virus are rife.

People with low self-esteem may find that *they care too much about other's opinions of them*. Recently a woman hominid who died 75,000 years ago was uncovered in a cave in southern Africa, and because she was wearing a necklace, archaeologists cited proof that we have always cared about what others think of us (status). However, when we are over-anxious for the approval of others and believe others are as obsessed as we are about our looks, then this anxiety-disorder can rear its head in two ways: we overcompensate either by showing off arrogantly or we become painfully shy and internalize everything. Psychiatrist Glen Gabbard observed that narcissism could be divided into two subtypes: The *oblivious* subtype is arrogant and thick-skinned, and the *hypervigilant* oversensitive, ashamed, shy and the need to please.²⁵ Coined by Dr. Harriet Braiker, this “disease to please”²⁶ of caring *too* much about what others feel, forces us to play second fiddle and be taken advantage of.

Another Consequence of Low Self-Esteem: Corruption and Crime

A view of deliberately hurting or diminishing another's self-esteem is only a sign of an already spiritually bankrupt soul and would only perpetuate evil in this world. It is now common knowledge that the worst sinners and criminals are those who have a low self-esteem. German Jews, with their exceptional IQ and brilliance across almost every sphere in Germany, made an insecure Hitler insanely jealous. His insecurity created the Holocaust. The Jews of Palestine, now insecure with a downtrodden self-image (and justifiably so), forcefully created the State of Israel in 1948, hurting the Palestinians. The Afrikaaner, bullied into concentration camps by the British, and narrowly losing the Boer War in 1903, emerged more insecure but determined to have South Africa segregated. A narcissistic Idi Amin jealous of the successful Indian traders, threw them out of Uganda crippling his economy. With an already shocking record of human right abuse against his own people, Robert Mugabe, jealous of the extremely successful white farmers, did an inhumane land grab, bringing Zimbabwe to its knees. The 1994 Rwandan Genocide was no different. Rwanda lost 20 percent of their population (800,000) in a civil war between the minority Tutsis and majority Hutus. The cause? Centuries of ethnic-tense insecurity brought on by being suppressed by the minority Tutsis. There is a direct connection between a low self-esteem and crime. It projects and unleashes itself in brutal ways. Feelings of low self-worth are often repressed, but are decisive in unconsciously steering behavior. Behavior psychology is systemic — there is always a cause to our behaviour.

With a low sense of worth, ‘enough’ is never enough. They will always need more and more worldly status. Hitler wanted just one more country... then another, and another. That is the neurosis of a low

self-worth — the emotional void is never satisfied, so the id-ego blindly does anything and finds everything to glut itself on.

A recent TV documentary, *The Making of a Monster*, investigated three of Britain's worst serial killers. The one thing these men had in common was a lack of self-esteem. The latest 'monster' to rock Europe is Austria's Josef Fritzl, a seemingly intelligent and successful retired electrical engineer, who in 2008, confessed to committing Austria's worst child abuse and incest. His childhood? Josef was brutally abused daily by his hot-tempered mother and after the Second World War he was a fatherless 9-year-old, cold and unable to feel sympathy. His eroded self-esteem resulted in what psychiatrists call a 'power complex,' where as a parent he exercised absolute control over his daughter.²⁷ South Africa's worst serial killer, Moses Sitole, was abandoned by both parents before the age of six then mistreated in an orphanage. The worst serial killer in the world, Pedro López, suffered the same ill-fated upbringing. "The Monster of Norway", 32-year old Anders Behring Breivik, who gunned down 90 innocent civilians in 2011 looked seemingly normal. But apart from being abandoned by his father at age one, he was described by a friend as having "a big ego". In May 2013 Ariel Castro was arrested for kidnapping and keeping hostage three Cleveland adolescents. Dr. Patricia Saunders, a clinical psychologist and forensic psychologist said this about the psychology of a pedophile like Castro: "I think that neglect played a psychological role — they might have felt like objects, things for their parents' use. It is not a far leap to feeling like a slave, and this crime may represent an attempt to master what was done to them."

Evidence shows that having only one parent contributes to low self-esteem. Seventy three percent of adolescent murderers come from mother-only homes. Fatherless kids are 1500 percent more likely to have behavioural disorders. Daughters who are brought up by only a mother are 92 percent more likely to divorce and 660 percent more likely to be teenage mothers.²⁸ Not surprisingly then, dictators Joseph Stalin, Saddam Hussein, Robert Mugabe and Idi Amin were all abandoned by their fathers during childhood. Adolph Hitler lost both parents in his teens. Dictator Kim Jon-il lost his mother when he was seven. Frederick L. Coolidge and Daniel L. Segal, together with informants, concluded in a study that Kim Jon-il's behaviour, like dictators Joseph Stalin, Adolph Hitler and Saddam Hussein, all suffered from the "big six" personality disorders: narcissistic, paranoid, sadistic, antisocial, schizoid and schizotypal.²⁹ These disorders lead to a Machiavellianism or a manipulative leadership style, and along with narcissism and psychopathy are three distinct personality constructs referred to as the *dark triad*.³⁰ Leadership expert, professor Joseph Nye, warns against charisma with manipulative intent, 'As we saw earlier, charisma itself raises interesting moral issues as a soft power instrument. When combined with

narcissism, it can be highly dangerous.³¹ Driven by his childhood traumas and inferiority complex, Roman Emperor, Caligula (37 AD to 41 AD), killed and raped for entertainment (Caligula meaning "little soldier's boot", the diminutive form of *caliga* because of his small feet). With their overinflated sense-of-worth, psychopathic goal driven killers like Genghis Khan, Julius Caesar, Himmler, Goering and Caligula killed without feeling guilt or remorse.

Again because of low self-esteem, a child prodigy and Harvard PhD graduate became one of the USA's most wanted serial killers. Theodore Kaczynski seemed to have it all, but like an iceberg, what you could not see was his inferiority complex below the waterline, and because of it he became the Unabomber, a code name for the "university and airline bombings" he committed between 1978–1995.

With a genius IQ of 167, Kaczynski skipped the sixth grade, when he did not fit in with the older children he was bullied. At the tender age of 16 he started at Harvard where he again felt inferior both in age and wealth. In 1967, he became Assistant Professor of Mathematics at the University of California. But that too was short-lived; students picked up on his nervousness as a lecturer and rated him poorly. Feeling intimidated by the world, in 1967, at age 26 he resigned and degenerated into a dangerous recluse. What we must realize is that people who have low self-esteem don't have much self-reliance, and without articulating it, they unconsciously expect society to solve their problems. Thus Kaczynski took his revenge on the 'system' that was, in his mind, not supporting him.

Visiting Kaczynski frequently, two prison psychologists could not find any serious mental illness. But then, I suppose, low self-esteem has not yet been classified as such.

Adolf Hitler & Other 'Big Men': Low Self-Worth at the Core of Their Evil Wishing

When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace. -- Sri Chinmoy Ghose

When a tough business turnaround is required, sometimes the situation demands an autocratic style. A tough and direct personality style is thus quite common in management, and it works pretty well when complemented with a healthy self-esteem. But insecure people are power lovers, and by spreading that sort of 'love' around, there is little chance of peace. The problem with Adolf Hitler was that his meteoric "command & control" style was accompanied by a vulgar lack of self-worth — that is the

recipe of a malevolent monster in management. Who would you rather work with — an egotistical, irritable moaner, or an unselfish, even-tempered, high EQ manager? *And this is exactly why top companies attract top leaders, who in turn attract and keep the best talent.*

Nearly all men can stand adversity - but if you want to test a man's character - give him power.

-- Abraham Lincoln

At 5ft 9in, Hitler was not that physically small for a European, but other factors made him feel ‘small’. Hitler lost both parents in his teens, he suffered from “sex organ inferiority,” and he had a series of failures that he took personally, all of which fueled his desire for power and ‘success.’ The embarrassment of losing World War I only rubbed salt into his festering wounds. Indicative of ‘small man syndrome (‘S’MS), Hitler claimed that he wanted to become the greatest man in history, *even if Germany suffered for it.* His self-pity and ‘S’MS complex forced him to embark on a megalomaniac

Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great. -- Mark Twain

Big Man (or in Africa “Big Chief”) quest to squash his feelings of inferiority, but like Stalin, Mubarak, Gadhafi, Shaka, Dingane, Mugabe, Amin and most dictators of the world, he ended up destroying himself. Besides destroying their own lives, the “great person” or Big Man leadership theory just does not work in our modern democracy. *What we need today are leaders who empower and make followers feel great.* And as we are witnessing in the Middle East and in most African countries, the predestined consequence of self-interest is civil war and death. ‘S’MS can be completely removed by working on self-esteem, which is covered in Chapter 6, *Emotional Energy and Motivation.*

Interestingly, and unconsciously of course, we rate dead leaders considerably higher than if they were alive! So before we discuss leaders who are deceased versus alive, the *death positivity bias* must be considered. In Scott Allison and Dafna Eylon’s study they noticed that ‘participants formed significantly more favourable impressions when they believed he [the leader] was dead than when they believed he was alive.’³² This is an important discovery, especially amongst certain cultures who revere their ancestors more than the living.

Growing up, most dictators did *not* have their intellectual and emotional ‘vacuums’ filled. Most were abandoned by a parent, or were badly parented. They were physically and/or emotionally bullied. Driven by insecurities, they then unconsciously began investing enormous energy pursuing ambitious external cravings. Thus if a leader is at war within himself, a state of lowered emotional intelligence, the Big Man will often selfishly waste energy accumulating trophies and medals. Typical of the behavior of a man with low self-worth, at the end of the war Hitler wanted the whole of Germany to go down with him too, and like another self decorated Big Chief, the illiterate Idi Amin, showed no remorse butchering people in Uganda either. Hitler’s overaggressive reaction to everything was the way he compensated for feeling ‘small.’ And so the Small Man creates the *alter ego* state — The Big Man. This emotional and charismatic Big Man pathos of leadership may have worked in the past — in a different context — but in today’s socially-networked-knowledge-economy, exceptional educational capital and hard competencies are vital to engage and persuade a company or country. Before he became the Zulu warrior king, Shaka, was a deeply insecure boy. Born out of wedlock and disgraced by the abandonment of his father, he and his mother went into exile away from their home tribe. We now know that we have a basic neurological need for “relatedness”, and that being ostracized is a form of trauma! Energised with vindictiveness and the paranoia of a humiliated and bullied child, Shaka poured his anxious-energy into becoming a military genius. A monster that would wreak untold pain on millions of Africans, and crudely destroy innocent childhoods. But why was he so brutal and inhumane to his own people? After his mother’s death, for instance, he massacred about 7,000 of his own people because they were not mourning deeply enough.³³ Paranoid of having a son that may one day challenge his throne, or attempt to kill him, Shaka murdered the maidens that he impregnated. The inevitable end of this self-interest in 1828 was Shaka’s assassination by his half-brother Dingane. Dingane was an equally ruthless leader who also did not “ubuholi nobuntu” (Zulu “lead humanely”). He was known for executing woman and men for uttering annoying comments, and faced the same departure as his half-brother he murdered. Dingane’s successor and half-brother Mpande planned his successful assassination in 1840.³⁴ Astonishingly there is a striking similarity between so many evil leaders, and their unfortunate childhoods. The charismatic and ferocious Genghis Khan (1163 – 1227) lost his father when he was a boy and at 13 murdered his half-brother. The low-self esteem of an unhappy childhood is so often transferred onto the next generation. Kim Jong-il, Jiang Qing, Idi Amin, Julius Malema, Joseph Starlin and Robert Mugabe all had major parenting issues growing up, triggering their cold and coercive approach to leadership. But why did so many leaders literally get away with murder and/or inciting murder? The answer lies in *context*. In 1904, commander in chief of German South-West Africa (now

Namibia), Adrian Lothar von Trotha encircled the Herero tribe and drove them into the Kalahari Desert. It is estimated that just 15 000 of the 80 000 Herero people survived. In 1905 he slaughtered the Nama people too. But because of the political, socio-cultural and legal *context* just 100 years ago, and because of the absence of global media, he was never brought to book. Leadership styles this century have changed — radically.

If this coercive Machiavellian leadership did not always work well in the past, then the new contextual setting of the twenty first century certainly will not allow an exclusive command-and-control approach either. When bullying followers with intimidation and threats has worked in the past, it has been because the leader had such a charismatic vision, that the followers were prepared to endure the immediate pain for long-term gain. However, with a scarcity of skilled experts free to globally roam, leaders must lead with strong vision and inspired co-operation. We will cover different leadership styles in Chapter 4.

The following table is a snap-shot of two different Hitlers. If only he had been secure within himself, Hitler could have been an honorable transformational leader. The wisdom that he gained was always overshadowed by his inferiority complex — his unhealthy personality — allowing his animal id instincts to take the irrational lead.

An unhealthy leader with low self-esteem who is ID EGO-CONTROLLED	A healthy leader with a well-balanced self-esteem who is EGO-CONTROLLED
Low self-esteem and self-worth	High self-esteem and self-worth
Unconscious denial and rationalization	Conscious of his thoughts and actions
Excessive and dominant id-ego (limbic system)	Developed super-ego (prefrontal cortex)
Megalomaniac and inflexible	Strong willed manager and leader
Mass murderer, torturer with no conscience	Compassionate and considerate
Pushy, dictatorial and inconsiderate	Assertive and directive, yet humble
Arrogant, loud and malevolent	Humble, loving and benevolent
Snobbish and smug	Quietly accomplished and confident

THE INCREDIBLE IMPORTANCE OF HEALTHY SELF-ESTEEM FOR THE LEADER

What you think of yourself is much more important than what others think of you.

-- Lucius Annaeus Seneca

When we look at the disadvantages of low self-esteem and the benefits of high self-esteem, we begin to understand the crisis of living and leading without it.

Living in a more stressed, competitive and faster moving world requires stamina, emotional intelligence and psychological resources that previous generations did not necessarily depend on.

British Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli, has said, 'The secret of success in life is for a man to be ready for his opportunity when it comes.' And a big part of "being ready" is to *feel* worthy of opportunity when it knocks, and where there is none, to create opportunity.

During the 20th century most people fixated on intelligence quotient (IQ), but there is now a mass of research that purports emotional intelligence (EI) as a greater determinant of success. This does not imply that IQ is unimportant, but rather proposes that we need a 'mixed intelligence' of both IQ and EI to succeed. Our IQs are relatively fixed, but as with self-esteem, emotional-esteem or EI can be developed. *So if the new paradigm considers EI as a critical component of success, then it stands to reason that self-esteem, which constitutes a massive part of our emotional capital, must play a major role in our everyday lives.*

The EQ and self-esteem assessment has one major flaw; it's a self-assessment. Self-assessment requires self-awareness; but leaders with a low self-esteem have none! Thus the leaders' followers should be the assessors of the leader's self-esteem and EQ. This commonly done when followers anonymously rates the leader in a 360⁰ survey

High self-esteem managers handle stress better, are optimistic, can motivate themselves, have healthier relationships, are generally in a good disposition and happier than disesteemed managers. They are conscious that they are just briefly passing through this world, so there is no need to be egotistical. They are conscious that youthful looks are temporary. Because they love peace, high EI people want to

manage their emotions and do not allow their emotions to manage them. They are great people to have a relationship with, and great people to manage a business or country. *EI affects how we think, feel and act. If both parties in a relationship are in a healthy state, they will resonate.*

We need to remind ourselves that businesses are run by humans, not machines. Emotional intelligence quotient (EIQ) governs our personal and interpersonal relationships, and thus is a construct vital to success and happiness. In psychologist's Daniel Golman's 1998 Harvard Business Review article *What makes a leader?*³⁵ his study of 188 companies found that EIQ was twice as important as IQ or other technical skills. Goleman stated that EI may sound "soft and unbusinesslike", but he found a compelling correlation between emotional intelligence and superior business performance. In his co-authored book, *The New Leaders*, Daniel Goleman construct of EI consist of two main domains — *personal* and *social* competences.³⁶

Bob Wall, an experienced EI coach, stated, 'Self-awareness and self-control is the key stone of emotional intelligence... The greater our degree of self-awareness, the more we can develop self-control.'³⁷

Looking at Goleman's definition of EI above, it is clear that *self-esteem*, *personality style* and *ability* all play a role. The leader, self-aware with self-esteem, and self-confident with ability, can easily 'stretch' to meet the demands of varying leadership situations. My definition of EI is therefore:

Emotional Intelligence = Self-esteem (which includes talent and ability) x Personality Temperament

The self-reliant or self-confident person knows within his heart that he is responsible for his own success, but with low self-esteem, a self-pity victim mentality will allow and maintain a bad habit to justify future failures. With so many of life's challenges to be faced and met and overcome, an unhealthy self-worth is probably the biggest detriment to our character. In Chapter 6 observe the crucial fourteen steps of how to build a high self-esteem. High self-esteem (HSE) breeds high emotional intelligence (HEI). *Both of the major domains of emotional intelligence – **personal competence and social competence** – are bolstered and sustained by creating and maintaining a healthy self-esteem.*

It then makes sense why one of the most common causes of clinically diagnosed illnesses and behaviors is the lack of self-esteem. In adults, teens and children, these are just a few symptoms of self-dislike or

self-disrespect: greed, low academic achievement, depression, suicide, failed relationships, neurosis, psychosis, suicide, alcoholism, eating disorders, teenage pregnancies, substance abuse, narcissism, gambling, criminality and painful shyness.

If healthy self-esteem can minimize these problems, then it is critical for a manager to both have a healthy self-esteem, as well as lead others in the same healthy direction.

It seems that in reality, once an individual has fully realized his potential, he dedicates himself to others. Maslow noted that once we are self-actualized, we are accepting of ourselves and become much less prejudiced.³⁸ When comfortable in our own skin we are generally in a good mood and more inclined to serve others. Adrian Furnham, Professor of Psychology at University College London says “Various studies have shown that when people are in a good mood they are much more likely to help others.”³⁹

*If there is love and integrity in the heart, there will be beauty in the character.
If there is beauty in the character, there will be harmony in the home.
If there is harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation.
When there is order in the nation, there will be peace on earth.*
Chinese Proverb

To ‘Be’ Or To ‘Become’?

Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there. -- Will Rogers

I question recommendations which justify drifting through life without a role — just ‘being’ in our comfort zones. Another modern carefree cop-out is the supposed advice of *not* giving ourselves a title or label. But I believe that by labeling ourselves “leader” or “teacher,” we acknowledge boundaries of responsibility, which means we can not just ‘be’ anymore. But a human ‘being’ is a misnomer. We are not human beings, but *human becomings*.

In a fast changing world, “becoming” has never been more important. You had better keep learning, reading, meeting people and goal setting. When organizations stagnate, they fold. When humans stagnate, we join the living dead. Becoming requires an imaginative and curious mind to break the shackles of boredom. It requires tinkering. Not evolving fast enough, the extinct dodo was just being, but what makes us different is our choice to become and take on a *multitude* of roles and responsibilities.

A piece of petrified wood is just ‘being’ but when it lived, it was a seed that became a tree. During different seasons it had different roles to play. It might be cool to bury our heads in the sand and just ‘be’ for a while, but even if we are on the right GPS coordinate today, we will be lost and smacked from behind when the world changes around us.

Charles Darwin observed, ‘It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.’ Not adapting is a short-term cop-out. Even though you may think that it is fashionable to just ‘be,’ you’ll eventually be wiped out by those who have changed and adapted — the people who became successful and the organizations that reinvented themselves. T. S. Eliot eloquently said, ‘If you haven’t the strength to impose your own terms upon life, you must accept the terms it offers you.’ Or as Maya Angelou put it, ‘If you don’t like something, change it. If you can’t change it, change your attitude.’ Slothfulness, as opposed to curiously exploring opportunities, is a waste of a life. Boredom, as opposed to matching your strengths with opportunities, is a waste as well.

I think. Therefore I’m an intelligent computer.

I think and feel. Therefore I’m a human just ‘being’.

I think, feel and do — in any order. Therefore I’m a human that’s ‘becoming’.

Certainly, just ‘being’ has some occasional benefits. An excellent exercise in ‘being’ is to consciously quiet the clutter of the mind by not worrying about a plan for today and tomorrow, and just see the world through the eyes of a carefree child. Don’t judge a thing. Don’t yearn for anything more than you already have. This is how we absorb a beautiful scene and feel calmness inside. Being quiet is a great exercise to assess where you are ‘at’ and where you want to ‘be,’ but to live every waking moment just ‘being’ is an insult to our maker. ‘Being’ is great for reflecting on our calling and life’s purposes, but to ‘be’ in that state *indefinitely* is self indulgent, a lifestyle requiring little effort and responsibility, an escape from reality. To check that we are on course, quiet time for reflecting, is even necessary for sustained action. ‘Being’ may be appealing in the short term, but by being stuck in ‘being’ over the long term we will become irrelevant in our community and the outer-environment.

Do not keep staring at life. Experience it too by climbing in and becoming. If we decided to just ‘be’ at age 18, what would we be at age 28? An 18 year old in a 28 year old container. The world would have changed and we would be left behind. It will be difficult for us to socialize and have a conversation. It will be near impossible to start and support a family. ‘Being’ is not a substitute for

deliberate action. We are human *becomings* not human *beings*, and not being content with the status quo is the very reason we have had so many breakthrough discoveries.

Discontentment with our current lot in life actually fuels invention, but it also requires courage to become what we envisage. The best organizations in the world would be swiftly destroyed by their competitors if they traded *becoming* for stagnation. People who stretch themselves in their strength zones are inspired. People generally love life when they're engaged at what they're good at (in the 'flow'). Finding and tackling life's challenges, is in fact, one of the cornerstones to happiness and wellbeing, and it is this feeling that spawns feel-good hormones called endorphins (also released when we laugh) which replace the stress hormone cortisol.

In his book *Flow*, this is what Professor of Psychology Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (pronounced cheek sent me high) called "The Psychology of Optimal Experience" or a state of "flow": when we take our best *skills* and optimally apply them to a *challenge*. In doing so, we find happiness in the 'flow.' George Bernard Shaw also noticed this when he stated, 'This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one... the being a force of nature...' When author Bryce Courtney writes, he is so 'in the zone' or 'flow' that an intense 12-hour seating feels like an hour of bliss. If you are loving your work, or working your love, you're in the flow. When in the flow, says Csikszentmihalyi, 'self-consciousness disappears and time becomes distorted.' Time becomes warped; time flies, freezes and even slows down when we are in the groove. This flow or experience of contentment can be so intense that we are undistracted by our usual mundane worries. Momentarily we lose our minds and find something that is authentically us. We leave the material world and enter the world of the spirit.

'Becoming' is thus a good spiritual, emotional and physiological experience, enjoyable therapy during and after a challenge. *'Being' in the flow is 'becoming' and doing what you love, using your skills and talents, not just existing.* This is why it is so important to cultivate our talent and skills, so that when we choose to, we can get into the 'flow'.'

This is another example of action (not thought) creating happiness. Inspiration or good feelings come through the process of acting. Imagine the awful feeling of starting each day, and living each waking moment, without a purpose or without loving what you do. Imagine the pathos of living a fake life

according to someone else's rule book. It must feel equally disempowering waiting for someone or something else to give our life meaning.

Michael Malone in his book *Psychetype* said this about happiness, becoming and consciousness:

If he faces the truth without panic, he will recognize that there is no meaning to life except the meaning man gives his life by unfolding his powers, by living productively; and that only constant vigilance, activity and effort can keep us from failure in the one task that matters — the full development of our powers without the limitations set by the laws of our existence... to be himself and for himself to achieve happiness by the full realization of those faculties which are peculiarly his — of reason, love and productive work. Productiveness is man's ability to use his powers and to realize the potentialities inherent in him ... he must be free and not dependent on someone who controls his powers... he can make use of his powers only if he knows what they are, how to use them and what to use them for... they [must not be] masked and alienated from him.⁴⁰

But not everyone has an aggressive flesh-eating ambition, and thank goodness for that, as unbalanced ambition to reach the top at any cost can lead to ill-health and other issues. But be aware that if we have no moderate goals, life soon takes on a mundane existence. And if this is the case, perhaps we just have not found what excites us yet. Furthermore, without clear goals, we will dissipate our valuable energy too thinly to make an impact on any one thing. That is to not say that people without written goals are not ambitious or successful, millions of people have landed up inheriting very challenging positions, some without even realizing it are achieving the boss's or parents' goals. The difference is this: goals that are set deliberately by us are so much more fulfilling when achieved, as we have accomplished exactly what we wanted to accomplish.

Internal Locus of Control (ILOC) vs. External Locus of Control (ELOC)

Self-actualizing people must be what they can be. -- Abraham Maslow

Further illuminating why some people prefer always 'being' to 'becoming', is assisted by understanding Dr. Julian Rotter's concept of external locus of control (ELOC). He noticed that some personality types, normally self-doubting individuals, believed that their destiny is guided by luck, fate and external factors. ELOC folk are not inner-directed but outer directed. They feel dependent on and

easily accept an external ‘authority’. They rely on an external “locus” (Latin for “place”) from which they are controlled. They have an emotional or psychological need to rely on something other than themselves, and feel disempowered or helpless without this external locus of control. They are controlled by the outer-environment, other people or a higher power. They elucidate that their good and bad luck was predetermined by an external force, and often concoct cause-and-effect theories to make sense of the world around them. “I messed up because it was meant to be.” they say. Thus they go whichever way the wind and the waves transfer them. In other words, ELOC folk give themselves permission not to take responsibility for the way life unfolds — they have a self-imposed self-restricted belief that life is out of *their* control. But beware, an ELOC person who metaphorically ‘walks into a hail of bullets’ and believes they will not be injured, has taken it too far.

It makes sense to rely on our *internal locus of control (ILOC)*, and *trust* in us. How else will we ever feel our true power? But this takes personal responsibility and honesty. Life with self-discipline is true sanity; but this first requires looking at your life (reality), make a plan, and then become enthusiastically optimistic. You need this ‘map’, and if you like the destination, it gives you an emotional “why” to live and act out your dreams. The age-old secret is to ask, “Where am I right now (reality), what destination do I want to go to (why), and how am I going to get there (plan)?” Life is a disciplined conscious transition from “here” to “there”. Yet surveys show that only a tiny percentage (2-9%) of people know this — they are the same internal LOC sample. This is important because when faced with inevitable adversity, we feel like we can take immediate steps to solve life’s issues — giving us a sense of control that is always with us. ILOC folk feel empowered, or as Earl Nightingale said ‘People with goals succeed because they know where they're going.’ French general Napoleon Bonaparte said, ‘*Circumstances!* I make circumstances!’ In one of Nelson Mandela’s favorite poems, *Invictus* (1875), William Earnest Henley wrote ‘I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul.’ Jack Welch, the record breaking CEO of General Electric also said ‘Face reality as it is, not as it was or as you wish it to be.’

We are not creatures of circumstances; we are creators of circumstances. -- Benjamin Disraeli, British Prime Minister (1804 - 1881)

ILOC people are self-reliant, buoyant, opportunity makers, and are thus our most observed achievers. However, insecure teenagers and elderly folk often surrender to an external orientation (ELOC), as simply conforming to the environment, like peer pressure, allows them to lead relatively carefree lives — and to the ELOC this light-hearted go-with-the-flow lifestyle is perhaps what they need. The choice is yours, but be conscious of the difference and find the right balance for yourself. For instance, a

recovering alcoholic who has depleted internal resources needs the spiritual ballast of an external LOC, but as they gain confidence, they typically develop a healthier balance of both external and internal control.

So why not double our chances of success and be a bit of both external and internal control? Life is just too short to leave everything to the extremity of external chance. Decide in your heart what you want first, and then allow for some guidance from an external source too; however the person who does not know in their heart and mind what they want, will never feel truly free. Warren Buffet's former daughter-in-law, Mary Buffet, says his position as the world's richest person (2008) was due to mirroring his father's *internal* LOC:

As a town man, Warren was deeply influenced by his father, Howard, who had a strong internal locus of control. This taught Warren that he, not the world, was in control of his life and that he, not the world, would determine what his life would look like.⁴¹

Of course, fate and luck play a role in our lives, but we can take an external LOC outlook too far by releasing ourselves completely from responsibility. A real quandary with external LOC individuals is that they fabulously rationalise unfortunate situations — blaming things on an external force for their mistakes. They may say “The devil made me do it.” For example an external LOC person, who accidentally goes through a red traffic light and kills someone, will rationalise that it happened for a “reason”; or in chronic cases, will deny the incident happened at all. They ponder that life may just be a dress rehearsal. As they say, ignorance is bliss and may be therapeutic in the short term, but without learning the lesson, the accident will probably happen again. Was the “reason” not their fault? Don't just say “everything happens for a reason” and leave it at that. Find the lesson and tailor your strategy accordingly.

In the same vein, when the *external* LOC individual achieves something great, they take no merit either; in fact this just reinforces their belief that they are connected to superior powers (somewhere in the universe) that drops stuff into their laps. They are often neither praiseworthy nor blameworthy.

Some folk believe they have such superior powers controlling them, that they should take note of what psychiatrists Dr. John O'Brien and Dr. John Brennan had to say in an article called *Do You Need Psychotherapy?* They noticed that if you ‘think you have superior powers or that other people are using superior powers against you’, then this ‘could be an important early-warning sign of a serious emotional problem.’ A ‘well-adjusted person will rarely or never’ have these feelings of superior

power.⁴² Psychoanalytically inclined psychologists research suggests that children who have had difficult childhoods, sometimes grow up to have delusions. This they say is an ‘impairment in the ego defence system aimed to protect and bolster the self.’⁴³

So whether doom or luck, the *external* LOC leader puts it down to fate, whereas the *internal* LOC leader takes responsibility for their flawed strategy; then adjusts their future strategy and behaviour accordingly.

Key Takeouts: Self-esteem at the leaders’ critical core

“The drama of our lives is the external reflection of our internal vision of ourselves-of our competence and worth.” -- Dr Nathaniel Branden, Pioneer of Self-esteem construct

- Self-esteem, an emotion housed in both our body and mind, is not a luxury but a necessity for wellbeing and true success.
- The way we think about ourselves determines how we think, feel and act.
- If we have a low self-worth we will overreact to constructive feedback, whereas if we have healthy self-esteem, we will invite constructive criticism.
- If the new paradigm considers emotional quotient (EQ) as a critical component of success, then it stands to reason that self-esteem, which forms a critical part of emotional quotient (EQ), must play a major role in our everyday lives.
- Low self-esteem is accompanied by an overly anxious id-ego (limbic system), whereas high self-esteem is accompanied by an id-ego that has waned, allowing a healthy soul to emerge.
- Low self-esteemed people burn mental energy uneconomically, hurting their nervous system. It is this inner struggle, which unfortunately spills over into an outer struggle with whoever they interact.
- Denial, rationalization and a diminishing conscience are marks of low self-worth. My intense *self-consciousness* anaesthetizes my *consciousness-of-self*, so I forget to tap into my bi-vironment. A low self-worth and conscious awareness rarely coexist. Look at what Dr. Carl Jung says: "The foundation of all mental illness, is the

unwillingness to experience legitimate suffering." Or in another one of his other quotes, "What we resist will persist." We need to get conscious, then ride and tame our inner bucking-brancos, or we will perpetuate our inner cognitive dissonance.

- The emotions of self-trust, self-esteem and self-worth are at the centre of success. This, as we will discover in the chapters ahead, will radically affect our emotional, mental and physical energy levels.
- Just existing in this world and *continuously* 'being' is a "permissible external locus of control (ELOC)," which will inadvertently set us up for failure. We will walk into a hail of bullets and not notice it, until it's too late. By improving our self-worth, we will begin to trust in ourselves more and take responsibility for 'becoming' something in life. A healthier balance of blending some internal and a lot of external propulsions, will double our chances of attaining our goals.
- In moving towards a destination, faith alone is no substitute for work. We need both.

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