



THE EXTRAORDINARY POWER OF

Emotional Intelligence

Leadership & Case Acceptance by Feel

by Bob Frazer, Jr., DDS

Like it or not, dentists need to manage the mood of their practice. Moods are less intense sustained emotional states. Gifted dentists accomplish this through a blend of psychological abilities called **Emotional Intelligence**. They recognize their own feelings and those of others, plus manage their emotions in a way that positively influences others. We constantly interact with and respond to the emotions of others. This is called **interpersonal limbic regulation**. It's so powerful that when three strangers sit silently facing one another for two to three minutes, the most emotionally expressive person affects the

emotional state of the other two.¹ And, no words were spoken! Research has shown that the leader's emotions have the largest influence on the emotional climate of any group. When leaders drive emotions positively, it's called **resonance**. When negative, it's **dissonance**.² Our office's emotional climate has a huge impact on our patients' sense of safety and trust, directly affecting their acceptance of our treatment recommendations.

In the early '60s, a study utilizing a patient survey to better understand patient perceptions of excellence was done by SRI. The Academy of Dental Practice Administration identified 25 finest prac-

tices. Those practices included the likes of Drs. L.D. Pankey, Bob Barkley, Harold Wirth, etc. SRI randomly surveyed one hundred patients in each practice, asking them a series of questions including the perception of doctor's competence, punctuality, availability, communication ability, satisfaction with fee, caring, etc. I remember Dr. Barkley recounting this research.

With such outstanding practices, all scores were high, but by far the highest score was given to one statement in the survey: ***"The doctor and his staff genuinely like one another."***

This initially surprised me as it did Barkley, but in the light of E.I. research, it makes sense. So what is the day-to-day emotional climate of your office and how are you influencing that climate? How could you become more resonant? First, decide you truly want to be more emotionally intelligent and resonant.

If you want to grow your E.Q., here are five questions to answer on a 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) scale to get a sense of your current E.Q.

Although highly subjective, this gives you a beginning point in your journey toward elevating your E.Q. Ask a close friend or co-worker who'd give you an honest opinion to do the same rating on you, then compare scores.

1 What is my capacity for recognizing my feelings? *In the heat of the moment, am I aware of what I'm feeling and can I label those feelings?*

2 What is my capacity for recognizing the feelings of others? *Again, in the heat of an event, do I recognize the other's feelings and can I label and understand them?*

Emotional Check-In

One great aid to those who are emotional avoiders is a "Feelings Board". A simple cork-board hangs near where we hold our A.M. huddle. The days of the week are across the top and the names of each team member down the left. On the bottom is a legend:

- **Yellow** = On top of the world, warm & fuzzy
- **Green** = 80% of me is great, 20% is struggling
- **Blue** = Emotional today and need a hug
- **Black** = Emotional, but don't need a hug!
- **White** = Give me space today
- **Red** = Feel bad – Parkers at fifty paces!

Each morning, everyone puts up feelings flags upon arrival. This serves as a great self-awareness step for all. You can of course change your flags during the day!

3 Do I use emotions to motivate myself – or do emotions tend to de-motivate or arrest my progress?

4 Do I manage emotions well in myself – when I experience an emotion, do I channel it in a positive way? *Fear can be paralyzing... one must feel the fear, express it and then act bravely.*

5 Do I manage emotions well in my relationships – or do emotions actually interfere in many of my relationships?

Empathy

Empathy is sensing another's emotions and also understanding their perspective, then taking an active interest in their concerns.

Transparency

Transparency (displaying honesty, integrity and trustworthiness, disclosing your feelings) is an E.I. competency hallmark of star leaders that we develop in all our clients.

That is not to say that we must always tell one another how we are feeling. There are times, especially in doctor-patient and doctor-staff interactions, that emotional disclosure could have a negative effect. However, much more often, such disclosure has a strongly positive effect.

¹ Friedman and Riggio, *Journal of Non-Verbal Behavior* 6, 1981, pp. 32 - 58

² Daniel Goleman, *Primal Leadership*, Harvard Business School Press, 2002



Bob Frazer, Jr., DDS, FACD, FICD

For 30 years, Dr. Frazer lead a highly successful (top 2%) insurance independent, relationship-based, values-driven dental practice.

He and his firm offer dentists a range of transformational services: Applied Strategic Planning, Emotional Intelligence training, Performance Coaching, Wilderness Adventures, Leadership Adventures, and a National Study Club. Recognized as the foremost authority in Applied Strategic Planning and Emotional Intelligence in dentistry, he helps dentists achieve lives of balance, fulfillment and significance.

A masterful storyteller, Dr. Frazer shares how to harness the powers of vision and emotional intelligence in one's life and practice. A pioneer in collaborative diagnosis, he and his associates teach dental teams how to interpret value so you patients routinely choose your finest, most complete care.

He is a Fellow of the American and International College of Dentists. Dr. Frazer has presented more than 1000 programs and published more than 50 articles in dental journals including 20 articles on Emotional Intelligence.

Contact Dr. Frazer at the email address below for a complimentary article on seven ways to grow your emotional intelligence.

R.L. FRAZER & ASSOCIATES, INC.
(512) 346-0455

www.frazeronline.com
bob@frazeronline.com



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Mei Miao
mmiao@bbandt.com
direct 972.754.1443

