

Expert Tips

Advice You Can Trust From the People You Know

Emotional Management Technology

How to turn your emotional ore into gold

BY JEFF SAARI



The health of a business is a recipe that has many ingredients. One crucial ingredient is that top leaders need to become masters of their emotional world. This level of awareness and engagement with the self can then, over time, be transferred to teams and employees throughout the organization. By equipping your company with solid emotional management skills, morale, collaboration and innovation are taken to a whole new level.

I have created an emotional management technology, called the S.T.A.R.R model, to help leaders become more emotionally intelligent and then bestow that gift to others. I call it “technology” because it is a proven method I have used with hundreds of people in different industries.

In this article, I will unveil my model so you can put this art and science to use immediately to great effect in your company.

EMOTIONS DRIVE BUSINESS RESULTS

I am delighted and honored to do the kind of coaching work that I do with the caliber of leaders that I support. These leaders come from a wide array of sectors and understand that emotions drive business

results. If people aren’t engaged in the workplace, then all sorts of problems can exist, from apathy to sarcasm to aggression.

Unfortunately, wherever human beings organize themselves, there is a propensity for dysfunction. Negativity unchecked can run rampant and have multitudes of adverse impacts in business: loss of productivity, low morale, and turnover to name a few. It takes a special leader to make developing emotional skillfulness a top strategic effort. It also takes a special leader to realize that often, as John Yokoyama said in his book *When Fish Fly*, “The fish stinks from the head.” Don’t be a leader who is the stinky head or falls prey to what Daniel Goleman calls “CEO disease.” That is, having a higher opinion of your leadership than those people whom you support.

STIMULUS, TRIGGER, ACTION, RESULT, REPEATABLE

The S.T.A.R.R model works for most adverse situations that occur and is an acronym for Stimulus, Trigger, Action, Result and Repeatable pattern.

It works like this: An unforeseen and unwanted situation happens (stimulus) where our needs, desires or expectations aren’t met which can lead to a negative feeling (trigger). This feeling leads us

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to take an action and get a result. Usually, this action and result can be categorized as a repeatable pattern in your life.

If for example, one of your middle managers is negatively sarcastic at times and this frustrates you, then the sarcastic comment is the stimulus and frustration you feel is the trigger. Let's say you then avoid the person, tune out or roll your eyes and walk away. These would be the particular actions you take to deal with the negative feeling. The result is a poor working relationship and feeling disconnected from the manager as well as no change in the behavior. Over and over again this happens, making it a repeatable pattern. And to put the icing on the cake you probably blame your manager for your stress and complain to others about him, thus perpetuating negative behavior in the workplace, the very same thing you disdain in him.

USING CALMING TACTICS

So what can you do? In the interface between having an adverse feeling from a non-ideal stimulus and taking a non-supportive action can be a pause, what I call a "calming tactic." This is an action you will take to calm down your trigger first, before rolling your eyes at your manager. Taking a couple of deep breaths, taking a pause or break, taking a walk to the water cooler, etc., are ways to keep you more calm and collected. Think about something that would fit for you to calm yourself down and employ it immediately. By doing this, there will be a little wiggle room for you to think rationally about the situation and take an action that will support your desired result and keep your values intact.

YOUR TRIGGERS ARE YOUR FRIENDS

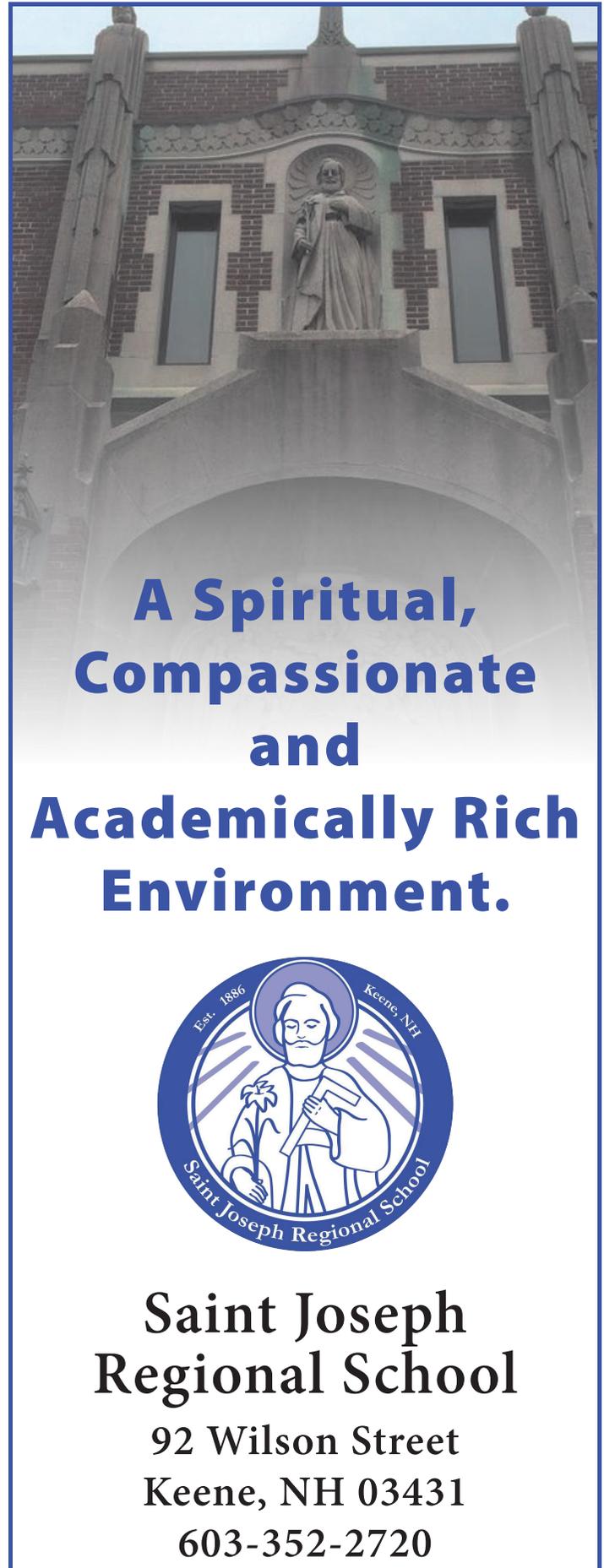
But what is your desired result? Your triggers are actually messages in a bottle for you to take out and read. They can shed light on how a less-than-ideal situation would look if it was to your liking.

In this case, you probably want your manager to use less sarcasm and communicate more respectfully. And instead of the actions that don't support your desired result (tuning out, avoiding, eye rolling) one inspired action you could take is to give the person feedback about his behavior.

Delivering feedback itself can cause another trigger (fear, for instance), but if you don't do anything differently, the negative behavior most likely will persist. You get to find the courage to show up for what you truly desire, take a risk and speak up respectfully to hopefully effect a change in your world.

Believe it or not, most times feedback is well received, and change ensues. By doing this again and again you will turn your emotional ore into the gold of change. ■

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