



The Handling of Feelings in Projects

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VERKEFNASTJÓRNUNARFÉLAG ÍSLANDS
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Agenda



- Some principles concerning the expression of feelings
- Taking risks in the expression of feelings and emotions
- Feelings difficult to face
- Feelings about yourself
- How to increase your self-confidence

Some principles concerning the expression of feelings

- You continually express feelings
- Emotionally poor interpersonal life, or the other extreme?
- How to express feelings in a constructive way?
- Conflicts shall be settled without permanent damage
- The solution of negotiations needs to satisfy many needs



Some principles concerning the expression of feelings



- How to express your feelings successfully?

Legitimacy



- It is legitimate to have feelings and emotions
- It is legitimate to feel stressed by role conflicts
- Being unable to resolve work-family conflict lowers satisfaction
- Job performance is best when the ideals of your team match with those of your organisation
- Task and socio-emotional needs of your team need to be met

Self-expression and genuineness



- Let your emotions reveal who you are
- Some have trouble expressing positive or negative emotions
- Emotions in themselves are neither good nor bad
- Being angry is not evil but simply human
- Many learn to avoid negative emotions at all costs

Constructive expression



- Emotions can be used as weapons or as instruments of manipulation
- Positive and negative emotions can be expressed constructively
- Dumping emotions on others is not very constructive

Dealing with emotions as they rise



- Express them when you feel them, even though the emotions may be negative
- Gradually increasing intensity of emotion instead of an overwhelming final outburst
- Deal with feelings while they are still manageable

Emotional control, not repression



- Emotions that are repressed tend to leak out in disguised ways
- Suppressing your feelings adds to stress
- Emotional expression can be strong and disciplined
- Concept of “emotional intelligence”
- Learn to listen and to interpret emotions

Emotional assertiveness



- All project teams experience some conflict
- You can respond
 - Compliantly
 - Aggressively
 - Assertively
- Dangerous if criticism deals with personal rather than work related issues

Non-assertive behaviour



- You apologize
- You listen but respond very little
- You swallow your emotions
- You feel empty and impotent
- Be sensitive to the existence of cultural differences

Aggressive behaviour

What did you call
the help desk?



- You listen briefly and then shout angrily
- You dump out your feelings
- Immediate relief, but afterwards you feel guilt and isolation
- Has the other side a legitimate complaint about your behaviour?
- Agree with the criticism rather than launching a counterattack
- Tell yourself that his behaviour will not affect the outcome

Assertive behaviour



- You listen to what the other one has to say
- You indicate that the issues he brings up are valid
- You let him know that other feelings are getting in the way of discussing constructively
- Assertive behaviour allows for ventilation but leaves the door of communication open
- Challenging when people are separated by locations, language and cultural differences

Taking risks in the expression of feelings and emotions

- How directly do you express emotions, regarding
 - space
 - time
 - object



Taking risks in the
expression of
feelings and
emotions



- Ask questions and listen to the answers
- Ask open questions
- Check the understanding

Feelings difficult to face



- Difficult feelings
 - Feelings of incompetence
 - Sensitivity to rejection
 - Guilt
 - Depression
 - Dependency (ánauðar)
- Ways to overcome such feelings
 - Do a good job, but not a perfect job
 - Collect data
 - Support network
 - Put your feelings into words

Feelings difficult
to face



- Climate of trust and acceptance
- Project manager's job to create this climate
- Summaries after meetings

Feelings about yourself



- You have a variety of feelings about yourself
- There is probably a pattern to them
- These feelings influence the way you interact with your project team
- Feelings you have learned from early childhood
- Get in touch with your feelings
- As charismatic PM, appeal to emotions more than to minds
- Improve self-esteem of your project team

Feelings about yourself



- Feelings about yourself affect the way you interact with others
- Understand your own emotions and how they affect your life and work
- Self-awareness as the basis of all of your other competencies
- Before you can understand other people well, you must first understand yourself
- Understanding yourself should lead to increased self-confidence

Increasing your self-confidence



- Score a few easy victories
- Use positive self-talk
- Use positive visual imagery
- Become self-directing
- Talk with optimism
- Dress and act professionally
- Develop a solid knowledge base
- Develop and publicize new skills
- Show intensive pride in your work
- Take risks
- Be flexible and adaptable
- Overcome shyness by focusing on other people



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Summary

- The constructive handling of feelings and emotions is centrally important to manage IT projects successfully
- Conflicts shall be settled without permanent damage
- Deal with both positive and negative feelings while they are still manageable
- Suppressing your feelings adds to stress
- Learn to listen and to interpret emotions
- Be sensitive to the existence of cultural differences

- Allow for emotional ventilation, but leave the doors of communication open
- Ask open questions and check your understanding
- Strive to do a good job, but not a perfect job
- Collect data in the preparation of a meeting
- Establish a climate of trust and acceptance in your project
- Improve the self-esteem of your project team
- Self-awareness as the basis of all of your other competencies