

A Leadership Minute

ON TRUST AND PURPOSE

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE



We're Not Going to Talk About Emotions, are We?

We really want to talk about two critical components of effective leadership: **Trust** and **Purpose**. But we can't talk about either without first talking about emotions.

That brain of yours won't let us. So, we are going to talk a little science first; brain science.

Here's a little, admittedly simplistic, schematic of your brain. For our discussion here, your brain has two important parts: one is the **Cortex** (all that blue stuff below). That part gives us language and rational thinking and planning and problem solving. Lots of important stuff for leading a business. The brain also has a part called the **Amygdala** (the black squiggles on the schematic). This is where we have intuition and feelings. It's also **where we make decisions**. Seriously. And to complicate things just a little more, the **Amygdala has no language**. And did we mention that the **Amygdala** is way faster than the **Cortex**? 200 milliseconds vs. 3 seconds. Definitely the brain's hare.



"Only in growth, reform, and change, paradoxically enough, is true security to be found."

...Anne Morrow Lindbergh

All this time, while you thought you were making decisions using those awesome analytical and verbal powers of the **Cortex**, the **Amygdala** has actually been running the show. Even before you could "think" about it.

Am I Just "Going With My Gut"?

Despite that common phrase, not really. Your gut may be the physical place on your body where an emotion is felt (like fear or anxiety), but your **Amygdala** houses more than emotions. It also holds your **intuition**. This is where your brain stores all your experiences, inferences and contemplations.

Think of it this way: you have lots of education, expertise and experience. When you make a decision—particularly when you do

pur·pose

(noun) the reason for which something is done or created or for which something exists

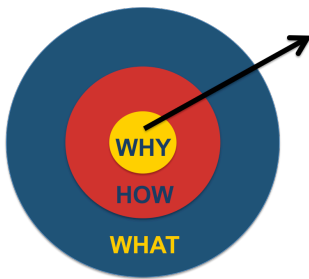
trust

(noun) the firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something

Start with WHY

“Great leaders think, act and communicate from the inside out.”

...Simon Sinek



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so under pressure, the **Amygdala** takes that problem, squares it with your base of knowledge, identifies similar situations you have wrestled with in the past, and chooses a set of feasible solutions. That's **intuition**. Nada to do with feelings. And everything to do with your storehouse of knowledge and experience and reflections.

Two things about that get in the way. First, it all happens so fast that we have trouble believing it. And second—remember the **Amygdala** has no language—we often can't express why we just made that decision.

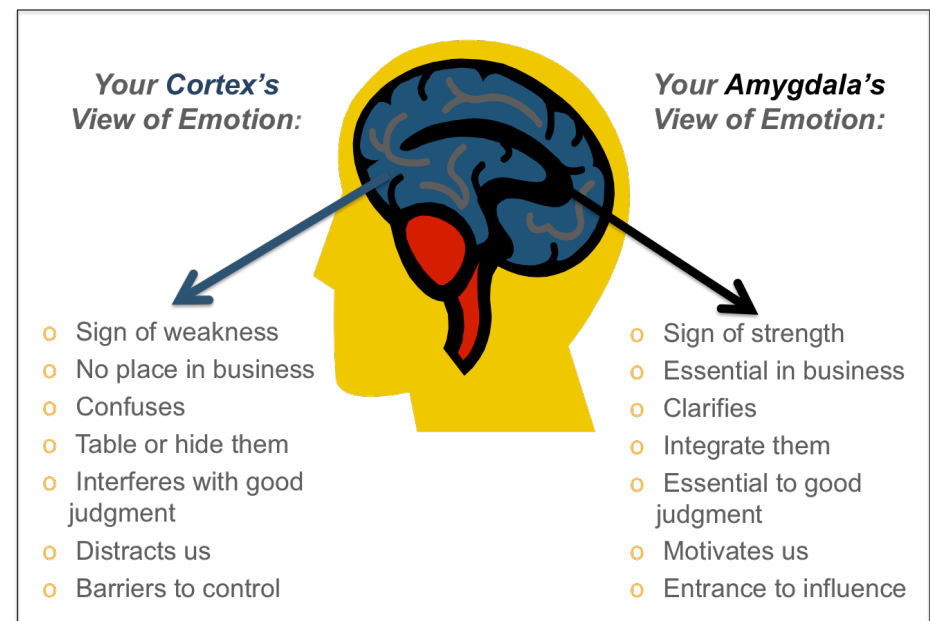
What's This Got To Do With Trust or Purpose?

One more thing about that brain of yours. The “**what** and **how**” of anything we do gets processed in the **Cortex**, but **why** we do what we do—that gets processed in the **Amygdala**.

Both **Trust** and **Purpose** rely heavily on the **why** of things. Our stories, our company's stories. Their meaning. Our feelings. Our reflections on a lifetime of experience.

Defining a **Purpose** and building **Trust** are critical for effective leadership. They are also inexorably linked. Without knowing or understanding the **Purpose** behind our actions, those we lead may have difficulty placing their **Trust** in us.

It's such an emotional thing. An emotionally intelligent thing.



Two views. Both in your head. Use only one and it may choose for you.

Blame it on your brain.