

Training Manual

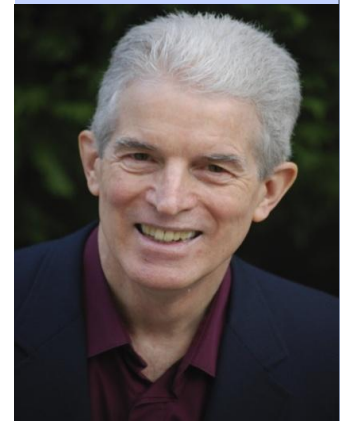
FOR THE Virtual Workshop Series and
Self-Study Program:

Module 1: Strategic Thinking: What Really Matters

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Facilitated by
William R. Murray
Harvard MBA, Yale M.Div.,
MCC
bmurray@eaglealliance.com

CEO of Eagle Alliance
Executive Coaching, LLC

919-240-7924
301 New Parkside Drive,
Chapel Hill, NC 27516-1160

Module 1:

Strategic Thinking: What Really Matters

Introduction

This collection of articles **reinforces and supplements** Module 1, “Strategic Thinking: Goals, Values, and Strategies,” of my **Tele-Workshop Series, Leadership Communication®: How to Communicate with Emotional Intelligence for Powerful Leadership**.

These articles can increase your ability for **leadership** and your **professional effectiveness**. If you enjoy and learn best by reading, they can stand alone. It is best to read them in order rather than at random.

These articles will also profit you after you have completed Module 1 of the Tele-Workshop for they will remind you of key points you have learned. If you have missed any sessions, they will help fill you in.

Even if you attended all the sessions, these articles will reinforce your learning. You will see the learning points in new contexts.

These articles will also reinforce and supplement your learning if you take the **Self-Study Program** version of my **Tele-Workshop Series, Leadership Communication®: How to Communicate with Emotional Intelligence for Powerful Leadership**. This program gives you **over 80 audio recordings** of live Tele-Workshop sessions to listen to on an MP3 player at your leisure—anywhere, anytime.

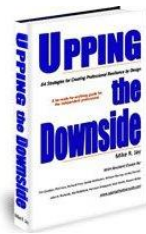
In short, these articles will **enrich your learning experience**. They will help make it stick—and last.

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Bonus:

My published book chapter, *“Emotional Intelligence for Resilience,”* is available for free on our web site, <http://www.EagleAlliance.com>. Look for the book cover of the Amazon best-seller, *Upping the Down Side*:



What Really Matters

It is important to always know what really matters to us. We need to know this in a broad general sense and be conscious of this. It's best to write this out in a **personal**

mission statement. I have assisted over 100 people to write one. Then we need to know what really matters to us in every particular situation.

We would be more effective if we could remind ourselves of this question of what really matters many times a day. Usually we forget and go on automatic pilot. Things take over and motivate us that are not our deepest value. They are not what really matters. They are just something that matters at a surface level. So it is important for us to get down deep into our **core values** and know what really matters at a deeper level.

Story – an example:

I was once working for a giant corporation as a project manager in the management development department. The head of that department asked me to be on a special project. He skipped over my own boss who reported to him and dealt with me directly on this project. I became a project manager over a project team of a dozen. All the members on that team outranked me. They were vice presidents and department heads.

Our objective was to determine if our large company should start using computers for training purposes. It was an important decision to decide yes or no, and also, to decide on how to implement this if we decided to go ahead. We had two thousand locations and two hundred thousand employees and so it was important to allocate computers as a resource in a cost efficient way. On this big project, I spent about a year coming up to the recommendation that we start to employ computers, and that recommendation was immediately followed by senior management.

However during that year I accidentally got on the wrong side of my own boss. He was miffed that I was heading up this prestige's project and he had nothing to do with it. Secondly, he got miffed that I was neglecting my regular duties of leading workshops on leadership and communication for managers. I wasn't doing my fair share of those which was obvious to everyone, but it also seemed obvious to me that this project had to take priority.

What really mattered to me at that moment? I would like to answer that question on **four levels**, doing, feeling, thinking, and values.

On the **doing level**, what was really important to me was that I act as a project manager in a way that made this project efficient and effective, serving the company well with our time and money. On the project we were traveling all over the nation and interviewing people about how they might use computers for training. 5

On the **level of thinking**, I was thinking that it was a wonderful opportunity for my career. It put me in front of a lot of important people that I normally didn't see. And I was good at project management so this would be a feather in my cap and help my career. I was also thinking this was really something that the company needs to start doing so I wanted to create a good study to support making this move.

On the **level of feelings**, I was proud to have this assignment. I was very happy for it. I was very enthusiastic and committed. That's what really mattered to me in the world of feelings.

Then finally on the **level of values**, what were my core values operating at this time? You can probably deduce this from what I have already said. One core value was to serve the company and get something done that would make it more effective in the world of management training. Another value was to advance my own career. And it was important to me to be competent and effective as a project manager. It was also important to me to have good relationships with my department head, who put me on this project, and my project team, and all of the people we were interviewing.

The story goes forward and something changed. My immediate boss got mad at me so I had to confront him. I asked, "What's wrong?"

He said "You are neglecting your duties around here and I want you to do more of those workshops on leadership and communication skills like you use to do."

I said, "You know I am on this special project and it is taking priority." That was the end of the meeting. My boss grew angrier as time went on.

So with this happening, what really mattered to me? All the same things as before really mattered to me, and one additional one - keeping a good relationship with my boss, which rose up as a value.

On the **level of thinking**, my thinking at this time was that the department head should be running interference for me. He should be clearing the way with my boss, and he was apparently not doing that. This was something these two should be taking care of. But they are not.

On the **feeling level**, I was annoyed at both of them for leaving me in the lurch and letting me get dumped on by my boss.

I needed to somehow resolve this conflict with my boss. The **new value** that arose was to restore harmony with my boss. That became what really mattered most. Therefore, I called another meeting with my boss and we talked more this time. I was smart enough to ask, "What would make you happy? You know I have this special project. You know I can't go back to the old ways, when I had lots of time for workshops. What exactly do you want from me?"

He said, “Well, Bill, if you just lead maybe two workshops a month so you - at least show up so the other people aren’t complaining about what happened to you. Have at least a token presence in front in the leadership training department - that would do it.”⁶

Level of doing: I said, “Good - you got it! Your request is fulfilled as of now. Give me a couple of days to lead workshops next month.” I was glad to give him some time as a way of resolving this conflict and satisfying my value of harmony with my boss.

You can see from this story how important it is to keep monitoring what really matters because this changes when circumstances change. Knowing what really matters can guide our lives in a satisfying way that is **in harmony with our deeper values**. And we will have **fewer reactive knee jerk** type actions.

A knee jerk type reaction back then might have been for me to go to the department head and complain about my boss. It might have worked in the sense that my boss may have gotten off my back. But he was the kind of guy that would not have forgiven me for going over his head to complain to his boss. Therefore, that strategy would have sabotaged my desire for harmony in my relationship with my boss.

In some situations you may have to go above your boss and complain. But in this situation, fortunately, I didn’t. I was paying attention to my value of harmony with my boss. It might have been different if I had believed, on the other hand, that I really couldn’t take time for leading workshops because I needed to spend all my time on the project. If that was my top value to simply succeed at this project, then I might have gone to the department head. I would have asked him to run interference with my boss and iron things out.

You can see how important it is to know what really matters to you in each situation and let this guide your actions. That way your actions are in concert with your values. You then feel an inner harmony that motivates you and makes you **committed to your goals based on your values**. And commitment leads to **success and resilience**.

Would you like assistance in staying tuned in to what really matters for you and making good decisions based on that? Please consider exploring my **Executive Coaching for individuals and small groups**.

Case of the Uncooperative Team Member

The following case was offered by a participant of my company-sponsored Tele-Workshop series, Leadership Communication®: How to Communicate with Emotional Intelligence for Powerful Leadership.

I, Sally, (not real name) am a project manager in packaging. A team member named Jane has not given me contact details for an external supplier despite numerous requests. I am not sure what the reason is for her refusal.

I could insist, but I don't want to hurt our relationship because she is a hard worker on my project. Also, she has a close relationship with the supplier and I might lose the supplier if she got annoyed enough to leave in a huff.

There is urgency because she is a temporary employee and might leave so that I would not know whom to call at the supplier. In general I wish to be able to contact all suppliers directly when I chose.

Our discussion:

What does Sally, the Project Mgr. **really want**? Participants answered:

To be in control of the project. Information - contact names, etc. To do her job efficiently.

I said, "There must be something else. Why? Because if these 3 desires were all there is, Sally would have followed up her requests more firmly and forced Jane to divulge. She could have gone in to Jane and banged her fist on the table."

What else does Sally want?

Jane should take the initiative in responding.

Sally wants Jane to acknowledge Sally's role and authority. Sally also wants to keep Jane's good will. If Jane gets miffed - she might quit and take the supplier with her.

Digging deeper:

If you just pick the first strategy that comes to mind, you may not get what you really want.

By '**peeling the onion**' you get clearer about what you really, really want.

This process of digging deeper, pondering what you really want, **increases your resourcefulness**.⁸

Strategies:

First get clear on what you really want, then create strategies to get it.

The first strategy was to keep on making requests. This strategy did not work. Insanity is doing the same thing and expecting a different result.

A knee jerk strategy would have been to force the issue. But if you just picked this strategy, force Jane to tell, you may not get what you really want.

The group went on to create better strategies:

1 - Talk to her: Ask, "Can we have a chat?" This is asking permission to have a conversation. It is important to do this first because you respect the other person's time and needs - they may be busy.

2 - State the situation: "I've asked you a number of times" Remember to stick to the facts. DON'T use judgmental, inflammatory, accusatory words.

3 - Direct question: "Is there any reason why you can't share the supplier's contact details?"

4 - Then play it by ear.

Possible responses from Jane: "The reason I have not replied is because you'll be contacting the supplier and I'll lose control. I want to continue as the liaison."

Possible response from Sally: "That's a valid reason; however you might get run over by a bus or something so I need the contact information. You can stay the main liaison. Just let me have contact information so I can back you up."

These **strategies are more elegant** because our process of digging deeper into what we really want made us more **resourceful**.

You can learn these processes to be more resourceful, resilient, and effective in my public section of my **Tele-Workshop/webinar series**, Leadership Communication®: How to Communicate with Emotional Intelligence for Powerful Leadership.

Strategic Thinking

“He impaired his vision by holding the object too close. He might see, perhaps, one or two points with unusual clearness, but in so doing he, necessarily, **lost sight of the matter as a whole.**” - C. Auguste Dupin in *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*.

In 1974 I was recruited out of The Harvard Business School to be a line manager in a large retailing firm. My company dominated the retail market by offering a huge selection of items for customers to choose from. We drove the Mom and Pop stores out of business and grew quickly.

Our buyers and merchandisers became focused on this winning formula of having a huge selection of each category of merchandise we carried. They got more skilled at buying and displaying merchandise.

However, they began “holding the object too close.” They “lost sight of the matter as a whole.” What did they overlook? The **big picture** of customer satisfaction. Surveys began to show that customers found shopping in our stores to be an uncomfortable experience. We tried to make our stores prettier, cleaner, with wider aisles, etc. But still customer discomfort remained.

Then a competitor got the big picture clear. Customers felt weary in stores like ours from having too many decisions to make. This retailer began to reduce the selection of merchandise and keep only the most popular items. They advertised that their stores were easy to shop in. You can get in and out fast and easy. They began winning market share.

What are the places where you or your company is focusing too closely on the details of maintaining your current approach? Where do you **need to back up to see the big picture?**

I coach clients to see the big picture by frequently asking them variations of the question, “**What really matters here?**” Maybe it is not having the largest possible selection of merchandise, well displayed. Maybe it is learning what the customer thinks. Thinking strategically is important in most leadership positions.

Do you have anyone **prodding you to think strategically?** If not, please consider my Executive Coaching. You can read about it by clicking on my web site on the link in the navigation bar, Executive Coaching Services. Or call me, Bill Murray, at 919-240-7924.

Personal Mission Statements and Emotional Intelligence

Stephen Covey, in his book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, advocates strongly for writing a **personal mission statement**. Then use this as a **compass** in specific situations. He gives many reasons why having a personal mission statement is a **crucial ingredient** for highly effective people.

I have twice attended 3-day workshops sponsored by Covey Associates. The workshop leader asked us each time to raise our hand if we had written our personal mission statement. In each workshop, I was the only one who had written one. I was shocked. Covey's book gives so many good reasons for doing this. Why would someone sign up and pay for these workshops if they had not done this? The workshop leader guided us through writing our personal mission statement right then and there.

Writing your personal mission helps you **clarify your core values**. Your values can be your compass to guide you **through turbulence**. You **make good decisions** when they are based on your core values. You have to get clear on what really matters to you in the big picture. The clearer you get on what is important, the better you get at finding strategies to get there.

Clarity of intention is an important part of **emotional intelligence and effectiveness** in both big-picture and small-picture views. The big picture is about your core values that guide your life. The small picture is about what you want in a given situation. Ideally, you should get clear about the big picture values so that they inform what you want in daily situations. A good way to get clear about the big picture values is to write a personal mission statement.

I wrote my personal mission statement years ago, and it has kept me **focused**. I refer back to it to remind myself of my deeper values so that I express them in daily challenges. For example, a deep value in my personal mission statement is to help people develop professionally. Sometimes doing that may pull a person out of their comfort zone, and they may react negatively. This is a challenge to me. Do I continue to pull them out of their comfort zone, or back off? Then I remind myself of my value of developing people, and stay the course, but possibly with a different approach. This gives me a sense of integrity, which is another goal in my mission statement.

I noticed years ago that people don't seem to get around to writing their personal mission statement. Since then **I have coached over 100 people through writing** their own personal mission statement. All have been **energized by the process**. Some have 11

told me later on that they kept on referring to their personal mission statement and were able to stay focused on their major goals. They were **performing better** as a result.

The personal mission statement is crucial for the **big picture**. I believe, however, that other forms of detailed planning are a matter of personal preference. Some people like more detailed goals and action steps planned out in advance. They make a plan and work the plan. Others prefer to stay flexible and react to needs in the moment. Either way may be more effective for a



given person or in a certain work environment. Some work environments require a lot of planning. Others require fast shifting around. Some require both at different times.

I encourage you to **get clear about your core values and intentions**. Write your personal mission statement. If necessary, **get my help**, but do it. For more information, call me, Bill Murray at 919-240-7924.

Losing Your Focus

What happens when we lose our focus and how can we regain it?

Brain **neurological studies** now give us a clearer picture of what happens when we lose our normal self control. A primitive part of human brains, called the amygdala, is the equivalent of the lizard's brain. Its main function is to insure our survival by helping us notice dangerous situations and respond lightening fast with fight or flight actions. Thousands of years ago, this was crucial. If we saw a tiger, we had to react fast. In a split second we had to recognize the danger and decide to run or fight.

In such cases, the amygdala takes over the brain and directs blood to the arms and legs. Why? So we can run or fight. The brain has done its job so blood is rushed out of the brain. This reaction to danger still happens and it still saves our lives. For example, if we are lost in thought and step off the curb in front of a bus, the amygdala takes over and we jump back on the curb. We did not reason this over. It was instantaneous.

Now the problem is that this happens many other times too and gets us into trouble in the office. Lack of anger control is one of the main problems executives are asked to solve through executive coaching. Do you sometimes lose it in office situations and say things you regret later? Probably, you perceived someone as threatening you in an emotional way. Then your amygdala took over and caused you to fight with an aggressive comment.

Sometimes the same thing happens to the other person. Then the argument escalates. Each person gets angrier and says more forceful, often derogatory things. In comedies, the actors sometimes go on to physically wreck something of the other person's, who then retaliates in kind. As we laugh the actors tear each other's belongs to pieces. Why do we laugh? Because the comedy exaggerates something that happens to us all the time – a fight escalating.

Or your amygdala may cause you to flee by physically avoiding a person or emotionally withdrawing. But in fact you may need to confront this person.

The **amygdala cannot reason it through**. It is not that sophisticated. The part of the brain that reasons is the frontal cortex. But it has been hijacked by the amygdala. We sometimes say, "He lost his head." Right, his extra blood left his brain in favor of his arms and legs. This ancient reaction did not help in his office situation.

Now what can you do about this? **Learn to notice sooner** when you are beginning to get upset and learn ways to cool off. More about this in my next Tips.13

Learn more about **keeping your focus in my Tele-Workshop**, Leadership Communication®: How to Communicate with Emotional Intelligence for Powerful Leadership, described at:

<http://www.EmotionallyIntelligentLeadership.com/index.htm#bottom/> – scroll down.

Keeping Your Focus in Crucial Conversations

Once we know what we really want in a given situation, the trick is to **keep our focus when we encounter difficulties**. If our goal is difficult and complex, we will encounter difficulties and need to handle them through crucial conversations. If we don't handle them well, they may throw us off track so that we lose our focus.

For example, let's say Bob is a key team member on a project you are managing. You think he has taken an action that leads in a non-productive direction. You decide to talk with him about it to understand him better and maybe persuade him.

You tell Bob what is wrong with his action. Bob responds that your remarks are off target. You really don't understand the situation. He may just quit your project because he does not want to work with someone who is so short on understanding.

This was an unexpected difficulty. What if Bob's accusations make you lose it and you respond with a judgmental remark? Normally, you are able to keep calm. But this time, imagine that you lose it. You accuse him of not pulling his weight on this project and just wanting to take his action as a lazy way out.

Now what will happen? **Escalation**, right? Both of you will likely get angrier and more defensive. Most likely, you have **lost your original focus** on goals of gaining understanding and persuading Bob. Now you just want to prove that you are right and he is wrong. The new focus takes over. Your mind comes up with more reasons you are right and you tell Bob with more emphasis, a stronger tone of voice. And he does the same back to you.

This is leading to a no win outcome. **How can you get back** to a productive conversation?

First, you have to **notice** that you have lost your focus. This is a key skill of emotional intelligence, noticing what is going on inside of you. You have to notice that you have become angry and defensive. Physical symptoms can tell you this. Are your fists clenched or your teeth? I shall describe physical symptoms more in another Tip.

Then you have to **remind yourself of your original goal**, what you really wanted in this situation. Just ask yourself that question again, **"What do I really want here?"** Asking the question will calm you down and get you more rational.

Take time out if necessary and come back to the conversation later. Make sure that you are **centered** this time and keep reminding yourself about what you really want. Then talk with Bob about his actions and your proposed actions in a manner he can hear – more about that later.

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These and other techniques can help you keep your focus. Learn more about these in my **Tele-Workshop/webinar**, Leadership Communication®: How to Communicate with Emotional Intelligence for Powerful Leadership, described at <http://www.EmotionallyIntelligentLeadership.com/index.htm#bottom/> – scroll down.

Regaining Your Focus to be Emotionally Intelligent

How can we regain our focus once we have lost it?

The problem in some stressful situations is that our amygdala, a primitive part of the brain, hijacks the reasoning part of the brain and throws us into a fight or flight response. In the office this usually means being overly aggressive or withdrawing. We say a person has lost his head or that he is overly passive.

Now what can we do about this? First we can learn ways to slow down our reactivity so that the amygdala gets fired up and takes over less often. Unfortunately, in the modern office with layoffs and other stress, we are going in the opposite direction. More and more people enter a difficult conversation already stressed out from other situations. They are operating with a hair trigger on their emotions.

That is why emotional intelligence is becoming an important goal of executive coaching and training programs like ours. One thing we all need is enough time in our lives when we are calm and relaxed. You can add to this by practicing some form of meditation. This raises your threshold to stress so that you can stand more stress without going into a stress reaction of fight or flight.

Another way to lower your reactivity is to start journaling, psychotherapy, support groups, coaching or some other way of noticing more often what is going on inside of you. The goal is to notice sooner when you are just starting to get upset about something. Then if you ponder your feelings of upset such as annoyance, you catch yourself before you lose it.

Most people who blow their top often, do not notice the earlier feelings of annoyance before they lose their temper. If you call them on it, and ask, "Why are you so mad?" They may answer, "Who me, mad?" You can see it in their flushed face or clenched fists, but they are unaware of their anger.

Gandhi said that he had learned through his spiritual practices never to hate anyone. He was at a very advanced level of emotional intelligence. We can join him on the path of emotional intelligence, learning how to stay calm and centered.

However, until we reach advanced levels of emotional intelligence like Gandhi, we will have times when we lose it. We will then tend to say angry things or withdraw. Neither option will serve us well in the office or the home. Then we need recovery techniques. Stress management and emotional intelligence books offer some help. You may get my book chapter, "Emotional Intelligence for Resilience," for free on the home page of my web site.^{17 18}

More Techniques for Regaining Focus

Here are some ideas in addition to those I have given in other Tips and articles on **how to regain our focus** once we have lost it. When we respond to a stressful situation, we sometimes lose self-control as our amygdala takes over. The amygdala is a primitive part of the brain that recognizes threats and instantly throws us into fight or flight – or in the office, aggressive behavior or avoiding.

The **trick is to notice** when this has happened. How? When the amygdala takes over, we will have **physical symptoms**. Learn what yours are so you can notice them quickly. Here are some physical symptoms that participants have mentioned in my Tele-Workshop, Leadership Communication®: How to Communicate with Emotional Intelligence for Powerful Leadership: tenseness, anxious, heart racing, breathing shallow, breathing fast, face flushed, making fists, clenching teeth, tightening certain muscles, perspiring, glaring, avoiding eye contact, frowning, grimacing, numbness, changes in posture such as slumping or standing taller, etc.

Take a moment and write down what **physical symptoms you tend to manifest** when you get upset. Yes, people advise you to notice your emotions. You need to know when you are getting angry, sad or just want to withdraw. However, noticing our emotions takes more skill. I advise you to start first with noticing your physical symptoms. They will clue you in when you are first starting to get upset. That noticing early on is crucial. Or if you have already lost self-control, noticing your physical symptoms is the fastest way back to self-control.

Once you have noticed a physical symptom, you must **pause**. The pausing is crucial to regaining self control. Just stay with noticing the physical symptoms.

Then start some **recovery technique** that works for you. What is yours? Some people take some deep breaths. Taking a time out can be crucial. Just say, “I need to talk with you about this at another time.” Some people excuse themselves and go for a walk. Movement is an excellent technique. Or take time to meditate or pray or talk with a friend.

Then ask yourself, “**What am I feeling? What emotions?**” When that becomes clear to you, you will probably have enough emotional intelligence to regain the sort of behavior you want.

In other Tips I have emphasized the importance of knowing what you really want in a given situation. So ask yourself now, “**What do I really want here?**” If you stay upset, you probably will try to prove that you are right. If you can regain composure, you may realize that what you really want most is to maintain a good working relationship with this person.

Can you think of situations where you successfully practiced some of the approaches I have just described? Congratulations. Now what can you do to make this happen more often? Devise your own ways.



Here is a summary:

You need to notice your physical symptoms.

Pause and keep noticing physical symptoms.

Then choose your favorite way of handling upset such as deep breathing, etc.

Notice your emotions, mad, sad, afraid, etc.

Ask yourself, “What do I really want here?”

Regain composure.

Choose a reasonable action to respond to the situation.

Learn more about “Techniques for Regaining Focus” in my Tele-Workshop, Leadership Communication®: How to Communicate with Emotional Intelligence for Powerful Leadership, described at: <http://www.EmotionallyIntelligentLeadership.com/index.htm#bottom/> – scroll down.

Meaningful Work as Part of Emotional Intelligence

Do you find your work meaningful? The Harvard Business School Alumni Bulletin for December 2007 on pages 34-35, has an article on “How Business Schools Lost their Way.” HBS associate professor Rakesh Khurana has written a book that points out problems including, “...business schools on average are not providing some way for them (students) to link the values they have to the work they are going to be doing. And as a consequence, many students have adopted a view of the world in which they believe they cannot live their values through their work.” ... “By denying students the opportunity to see the possibility of living their life as a profession, seeing meaning in their work, seeing their work as a calling....”

What do you think? Can MBA graduates find meaning or are they destined to be just hired hands for corporations? Whether you are an MBA or not, I wonder if you see your work as a calling? Would you care to dialogue with me, Bill Murray, about this? Please write a comment on this Blog using the “Leave a comment” below or the “Comments” link above, just below the Title of this blog post. Or you may telephone me at 919-240-7924 or email me by using the “Contact Us” link on above navigation bar.

How do we find meaning in our work? Of course, there are many ways. My own twin degrees, a MBA from HBS and a M.Div. from Yale represent part of my efforts to integrate achievement with meaning, success with significance.

I have for decades assisted leaders and professionals to find meaning in their work. In my approach, your first step in finding meaning is to look deeply inside yourself to gain clarity on what you really value. Then develop strategies to make your values more honored in your work. I assist clients to take these steps in my individual Executive Coaching and in some modules of my Group Executive Coaching described on the link Executive Coaching Services on the above navigation bar.

I suggest you explore my individual **Executive Coaching Program** or experience a Complimentary Session of my **Group Executive Coaching Program** and see how powerful it can be. Sign up here, scroll down to the yellow highlighted form “Get Complimentary Session ”: <http://www.EmotionallyIntelligentLeadership.com/index.htm#bottom> .

Story of the Eagle as Chicken

A baby eagle became orphaned when something happened to his parents. He glided down to the ground from his nest but was not yet able to fly. A man picked him up. The man took him to a farmer and said, "This is a special kind of barnyard chicken that will grow up big." The farmer said, "Don't look like no barnyard chicken to me." "Oh yes, it is. You will be glad to own it." The farmer took the baby eagle and placed it with his chickens.

The baby eagle learned to imitate the chickens. He could scratch the ground for grubs and worms too. He grew up thinking he was a chicken.

Then one day an eagle flew over the barnyard. The eagle looked up and wondered, "What kind of animal is that? How graceful, powerful, and free it is." Then he asked another chicken, "What is that?" The chicken replied, "Oh, that is an eagle. But don't worry yourself about that. You will never be able to fly like that."

And the eagle went back to scratching the ground. He continued to behave like the chicken he thought he was. Finally he died, never knowing the grand life that could have been his.

Are there any ways that you see yourself as a barnyard chicken and are not aware of your potential grandeur? You could soar like an eagle. What would that look like for you?

Want to read an example of my own? Maybe that will help you think of your examples.

I am a leadership development consultant. I coach leaders how to be more effective through emotional intelligence. I coach one-on-one and in small groups via my Virtual Workshop, Leadership Communication®: How to Communicate with Emotional Intelligence for Powerful Leadership. My scratching on the ground is the time I have to spend marketing.

My identity as a soaring eagle would be to have financial abundance so that I could devote all my time to coaching non-profit leaders. I already do donate some time to leaders of a large homeless shelter. I love doing that and would like to soar to doing it full time. Maybe some angel donor will finance this non-profit leadership development. Maybe I need to search harder for such a donor instead of marketing for corporate paying business. Then I could be an eagle.

What is your example? What would it be like for you to soar like an eagle?

Here is a quote that expands on the point of this eagle story.

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We are born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us, it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we

unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

- Marianne Williamson

How are you playing small? Can you think of any examples right now?

Marianne says, “We are all meant to shine.” How might you shine more?

Our Executive Coaching can help you shine more. We can help you spot when you are playing small and move to shining. We can help you identify your potential to soar like an eagle, and then start doing it.

That is why we named our company, Eagle Alliance. We help eagles to soar. Call me, Bill Murray, at 919-240-7924 for information on our individual and small group Executive Coaching programs. Or click on <http://www.eaglealliance.com/services/>.

Emotional Intelligence for Hard Financial Times

Every day, it seems, the news gets worse about bank failures, unemployment, etc. The nation seems to be gripped fear and insecurity. Into this scene comes a new leader, a new team, talking about hope. Is there any way we can hope? Is this all smoke and mirrors? Conventional wisdom would say we're in for a rough ride and all that hope will turn into disillusionment. Remember the Great Depression? Could it happen again?

It's interesting that the word **"depression"** has a dual meaning. It is remembered as a time of severe financial distress. It is also the name of a mental health malady that has become the psychological equivalent to the common cold. Could there be a relationship between the two meanings of this word?

Dr. Martin Seligman coined the term **"learned helplessness"** and saw it as the psychological cause of depression. He found that if a dog received electric shock each time he tried to leave a cage, he would eventually stop trying and lie in the corner in a doggy depression. This would continue even after the electric shocks were removed. The dog learned to be helpless. Dr. Seligman later regretted these mean experiments.

Learned helplessness happens when a person (or a society) experiences a series of bad experiences and develops a sense of powerlessness around being able to change things – thinking "that's just the way life is". This results in depression, worry and anxiety and becomes contagious, perpetuating itself in falling stock markets, unemployment, etc. This exacerbates the very real problems we are having, causing an unproductive case of personal or societal depression.

In past Tips, we talked about how stress "hi-jacks" the more creative part of our brain and causes us to react in rigid, unproductive ways. The part of our brain that is creative, resourceful and resilient gets closed down and we have a hard time problem solving and finding new options.

Daniel Goleman, author of a book on emotional intelligence describes ways to minimize this reactivity and **create more resilience** in our psyches. In brain scan experiments with Buddhist monks, and also with ordinary folks like you and me, researchers have found that simple forms of **meditation and stress management** could enable people to soothe the reactive brain and create a more resourceful state of mind.

So do we believe our fears or hopes? We have a choice. Either way, we will be right. Believing completely in our fear will trigger unproductive behavior and produce negative results, just as we feared. However, if we use our fear as a signal to stop, breath, relax and reflect, we can connect with our more creative and resourceful states of mind and perhaps find the hope we need to move ahead. Choosing hope can produce more hope which can produce more creative action and problem-solving.

Here's a short **exercise** from an organization called **"Heartmath"** which can quickly put you into a more positive, resourceful state.



- Focus your attention in the area around your heart. You can place your hand over your heart to help. Pretend you are breathing through your heart area. Breathe slowly, deeply and gently (to a count of 5 or 6) until your breathing feels smooth and balanced. Do this for about one minute and notice any changes.
- Continue to breathe through the area of your heart and find a positive feeling, like appreciation for someone or something. You can recall a time when you felt appreciation or care and re-experience that feeling. It could be for a pet, a special place in nature, or an activity that was fun. Once you have found a positive feeling – sustain this feeling by continuing heart focus, heart breathing and heart feeling.
- Allow the positive feeling to grow and grow.

Learning how to be more **hopeful** will make us more **resourceful and resilient**. This will help us fend off individual and social depression.

Kathy Murray

Emotional intelligence in downturns

Emotional intelligence is crucial in times of economic decline and layoffs. Managers need emotional intelligence to cope with the dissatisfaction of employees. Employees need emotional intelligence to cope with their stresses of increased workloads, sad feelings for those forced to leave, and fear for their own future. Everyone needs emotional intelligence to cope with all the change that occurs.

In times of economic downturn, leaders redesign their organizations. They institute changes to promote productivity and cut costs. Change naturally provokes fears. In times of downturn, fears are all the greater. People worry, “Will I survive the layoffs? How much harder will my work become as I pick up the slack of fired employees and managers? How much will changes disrupt my own work and approach? Will I be overwhelmed or able to change enough to survive emotionally?”

Part of emotional intelligence is the ability to handle our own feelings, our fears, sense of overwhelm, and resentments. We need self-awareness to get clear about our feelings and then we need the ability to face them squarely and have self-acceptance. For example, if we are scared, it is best to fully acknowledge that to ourselves.

Then we need the emotional skill and self-confidence to change if necessary to cope with organizational changes and new challenges. Maybe we must work faster to handle a greater workload or interact with more people than before the changes.

Of course, in times of change we need interpersonal skills more than ever. Leaders must facilitate more communication to help people cope. It helps to provide people a safe place to vent their feelings of frustration and overwhelm, and sadness about those who have been forced to leave. It helps to facilitate communication to make the new organizational structures work. New people and groups have to learn what is important to the other group. What does it take to get along and be productive?

How can you improve your emotional intelligence and reap these benefits? You can continue to read these short articles that I write weekly. That gives you suggestions. Then what you need is a way to learn new skills and practice them. That is available to you in my Tele-Workshop, Leadership Communication®: How to Communicate with Emotional Intelligence for Powerful Leadership and in my individual Executive Coaching.