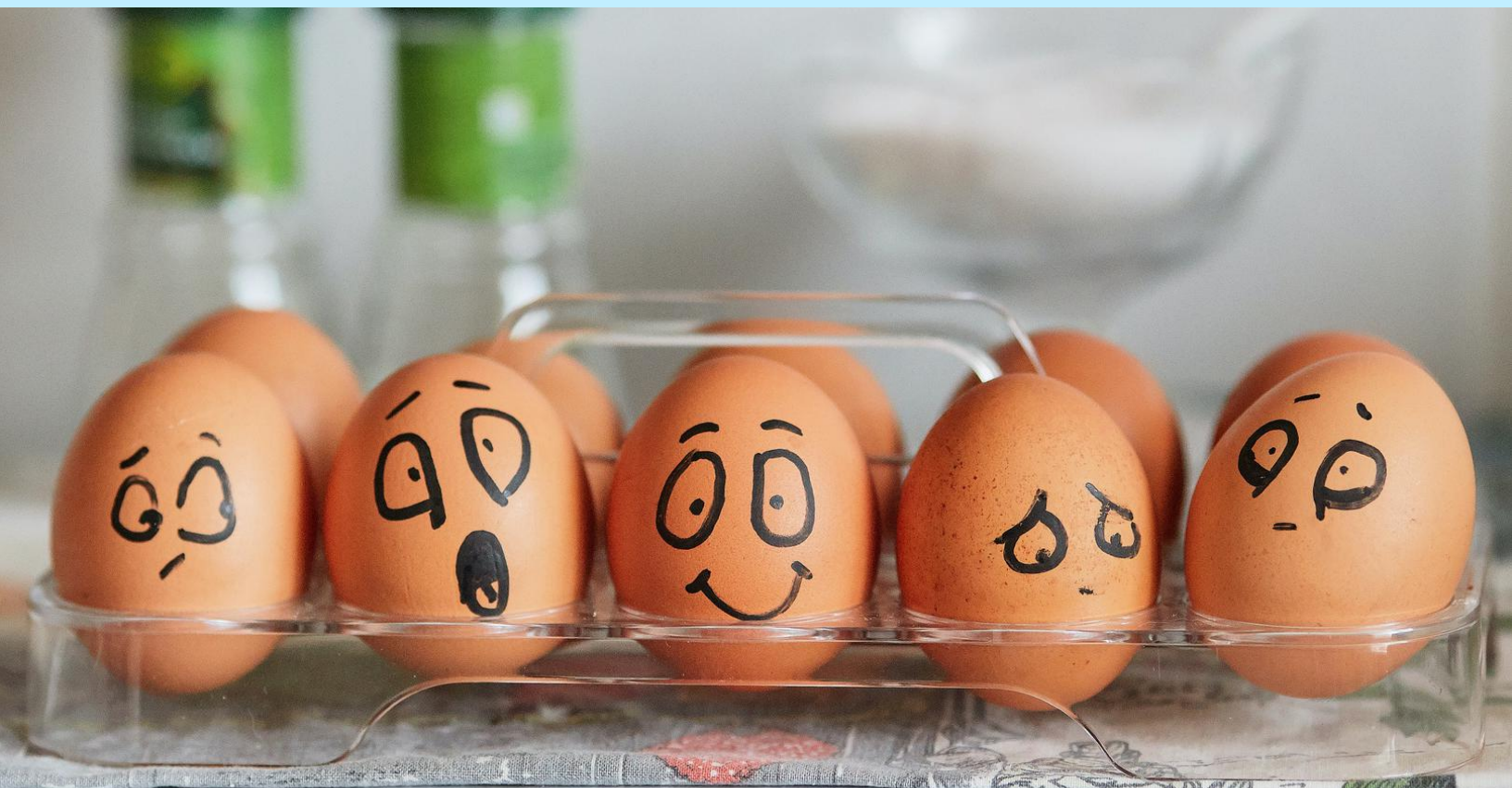


Work+Joy

THE F-WORD AT WORK

A FIELD GUIDE TO EMOTIONS IN THE WORKPLACE



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LIFTING THE RUG ON EMOTIONS

Whether we like it or not, we spend our days awash in emotions. This happens whether we're eating our breakfast, driving into work, talking to colleagues or clients, reading email, playing with our pets, or spending the evening with family.

Feelings impact all areas of our lives.

However, we spend a lot of time trying to ignore them or deny their existence. Especially at work.

We have a long history of trying to shove emotions under rugs or of telling people to leave them at the door. But this is not possible.

Worry. Joy. Fear. Hope. Insecurity. Pride. These and a hundred other emotions write emails. Attend meetings. Work on projects.

It's impossible to remove them. Because, at the end of the day, emotions are what makes us human. We are always feeling. All we end up doing is ignoring them.

This is to our own detriment.

THE IMPACTS

When we try to bottle up our feelings, we just make things worse. Research shows that shoving emotions down inside us does not make them go away. When people try to swallow their emotions and not show them, they often end up feeling stronger emotions.

This creates emotional dissonance - when we can't or aren't allowed to feel our feelings. People may partake in impression management, hiding how they feel and what they think based on those feelings which leads to a lot of emotion work. If you are already in a profession (like health care or customer service) that requires high levels of emotional labour, this makes it worse and leads to burnout.

Emotional skills can seem fuzzy or touchy-feely, especially in the business world. But the opposite is true. These are mental skills like any other - they enable us to think smarter, be more creative, and to get better results from ourselves and the people around us.

When we learn these skills it means we don't allow feelings to get in the way, instead we restore balance to our thought processes and prevent emotions from having undue influence over our actions and culture.



**We believe we are thinking
creatures who feel when
we are feeling creatures
who happen to think.
- Jill Bolte**

2 TYPES OF CULTURE

When it comes to culture and the role emotions play in it, we need to look at culture in two different ways.



Cognitive Culture

Cognitive culture sets the tone for how employees think and behave at work and includes such things as purpose, vision, values, and norms. Often cognitive culture is communicated through words - verbally or written.



Emotional Culture

Emotional culture is made up of emotions and feelings, including fears, that employees experience in the workplace, and everything that leads to them being expressed or repressed. Emotional culture is created in micro moments and recognized through facial expressions, body language, decor, rituals and routines, it is more likely led by the individuals themselves, rather than the organization.

The larger the gap between the two cultures, the harder it is to build a healthy organization.

If you say you have a culture of innovation (cognitive), but your emotional culture is one of fear, there is a mismatch. Or if you say you value high-quality care (cognitive), but the main feeling amongst your employees is overwhelm, our organization is going to struggle.

TIGERS AT WORK

Every organization has an emotional culture, even if it's one of suppression." - Sigal Barsade & Olivia O'Neill

Your team's or organization's emotional culture impacts how people act, think, and the beliefs and values they hold.

Our feelings predispose us to act in certain ways and have stories attached to them. So we feel something which predisposes us to behave in a certain way which then informs our beliefs and values.

The very word emotion means "energy in motion" and is derived from the Latin verb meaning "to move". Emotions came about as innate responses to challenges. They evolved to spur us into life-saving action - if a tiger appears - get frightened and run away.

There are no tigers roaming our businesses, however, emotions are still rampant and impact our behaviours.

When we are embarrassed, we will want to hide what we have done from others or hide ourselves away from others. We believe we have done something that will make others think poorly or differently of us.

When we feel hope, we are predisposed to move toward the future. We believe that the future will be better than the present, and we want to be there.

It doesn't mean because we feel an emotion that we will act or behave a certain way, but we will feel that we want to. The more we recognize and understand our emotions (and those of others), the more accurately we can decide how we need to behave in those moments.

EMOTIONS MATTER

Think of the role of feelings in these situations.

If someone feels excluded, how might they collaborate with team members?

If someone feels afraid, how might they contribute during team meeting?

If someone feels confident, how might this impact their work performance?

If someone feels frustrated, how might this impact their decision-making?

If someone feels excited, how might they look at change?

If someone feels confused, how might this affect their engagement?

If someone feels empathetic, how might they deal with a customer problem?

When we and those around us lack this emotional knowledge it's difficult to understand why people act certain ways, how to get people to act in other ways and how to manage it all.

We also lose valuable information on the experiences we have. When we learn to understand our feelings, we can use the information to make thoughtful decisions on our actions (or assess the stories we're telling ourselves).

When we choose (or are forced) to ignore or suppress them, we cut ourselves off from this important data and insights. It's like driving a car with your eyes closed.

Feeling and thinking aren't opposed to one another. Feelings can inform our thinking.

We're long past the days of being able to pretend there is no room for emotions and feelings in our workplaces.

If we want more productive and engaged people, teams, and cultures, emotions and feelings must play just as much a role in our strategic plans as finances and technology.

4 MOST COMMON EMOTIONS AT WORK

According to a study by Cynthia Fisher at Bond University, the most common emotions experienced at work are difficult ones: frustration, nervousness, anger, and dislike.

When we look at these emotions, what data do these give us about people's thoughts or beliefs and how they might be predisposed to act?

Frustration

Something is taking too long or is too difficult.

Nervousness

Fear or apprehension about a specific situation.

Anger

Being treated unjustly or something that matters to us is being threatened.

Dislike

Don't enjoy something or someone and want to avoid it or them.

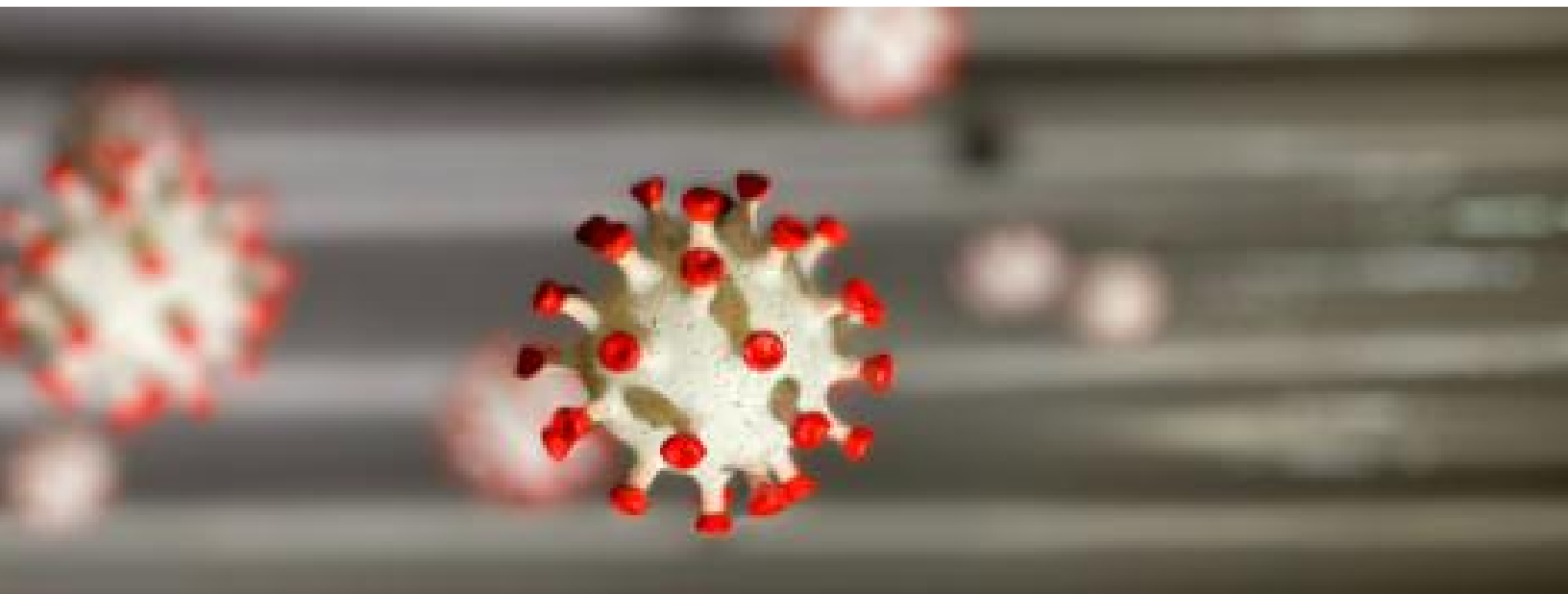
EMOTIONS ARE CONTAGIOUS

If we're not aware of it, we can literally catch other people's feelings. If it wasn't bad enough having to worry about catching the cold that Dan walked in with, you also have to worry about catching his bad mood. This is referred to as "emotional contagion" and was first characterized by Elaine Hatfield.

We "catch" emotions in the workplace from nonverbal signals. We mimic facial expressions, body language, voices & tone, movements, etc. and then by doing so we feel the corresponding emotion. For example, if you're around someone who is anxious, without realizing it, you might start to feel fearful yourself and behave accordingly.

Research by Sigal Barsade shows that one "bad apple" can cause a whole group to feel apprehensive, angry and dejected creating morale and cohesion problems, unrealistic cautiousness, and less acceptance of new ideas.

Emotional contagion is more powerful with unpleasant feelings (we tend to pay close attention to the negatives in our environment), but it also occurs with pleasant ones like optimism, compassion, and joy. One "good apple" can offset the impacts of negativity and improve decision-making, openness, and collaboration.



HARNESSING EMOTIONS

Our organizations are full of emotional energy.

We can consciously use emotional information to guide us as leaders. Dan Newby puts leadership in a whole new light when he says it can be thought of as “the ability to generate the emotions required for the task at hand.” We often talk about leaders motivating others, but one part of that equation we often miss is the knowing the emotions that drive that motivation.

Without open discussions on how work - the environment, the people, and the tasks - makes people feel, we can't make the positive changes necessary to build true engagement.

If you want people to act and behave a certain way - you must ask first how they need to feel to do so.

Then build a workplace culture that supports those feelings.

**Culture is how employees' hearts
and stomachs feel about Monday
morning on Sunday night.
- Bill Marklein**

VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS

Say good-bye to feeling frustrated, stuck and overwhelmed.
Say hello to creating a workplace where people thrive (including you).



EMOTIONAL CULTURE FOR TEAMS

Through this highly interactive and hands-on workshop, your team will work together to identify and build the positive emotional work environment pivotal not only for their success at work, but also their happiness and wellbeing.



EMOTIONAL CULTURE FOR LEADERS

Through this highly interactive and hands-on workshop, your leaders learn how to lead through the lens of emotions to have a greater impact on performance and team culture by identifying the feelings necessary for success.



A GREAT PLACE TO WORK

No more Monday blues, Sunday scaries, or quiet quitting. In this hands-on, practical workshop, you'll design your employee experience at every touch point to reinforce the desired feelings necessary for high levels of engagement.

No matter what business you are in - big, small, profit or non-profit - if you have people, you have emotions in your workplace. Don't settle for just trying to manage emotions, leverage them to create a better, more human, workplace.

Open the door and welcome emotions into your team and organization.

WORK+JOY

Not only do I think that work doesn't need to suck, I believe it can be joyful.

At Work+Joy, I help leaders just like you create team cultures that earn people's enthusiasm, initiative & loyalty.

For the past 15 years, I have made this my purpose when training and consulting organizations and individuals in team building, leadership, culture, communication, and change.

I know that when people are given new information, they are able to look at their business practices with creativity and fresh insight. I'm driven to help bring more of what makes us human into workplaces – connection, enthusiasm, compassion, and joy.

**A workplace void of any passion,
excitement, and enthusiasm is a
day prison. - Joe Folkman**

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