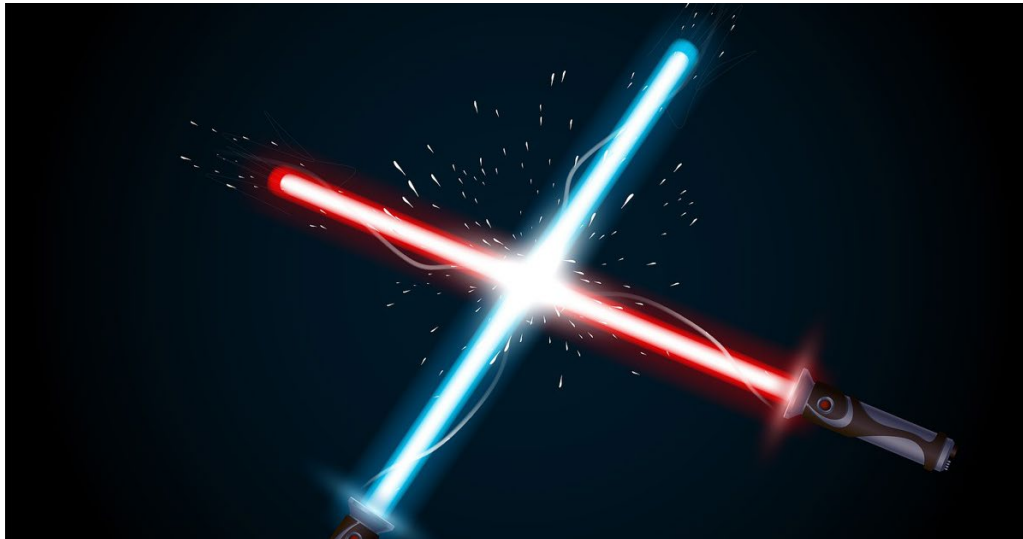




## Issue 220 - July 2021



I've loved the Beatles for decades. Saturday has been Beatles Day at our house for many years. A big reason I subscribe to Sirius radio is because of Channel 18 -- The Beatles channel. Our son, Chris, is now a Beatles fan after all those years of relentless exposure to their music.

There are many reasons for 1960s Beatlemania and the endurance of their music. A big one is their upbeat music focused on love. As their song, *The Word*, explains, "Say the word and you'll be free; Say the word and be like me; Say the word I am thinking of; Have you heard the word is love?"

Another favorite is Star Wars -- especially the original trilogy. Some of the other episodes are good, and some are unwatchable. Star Wars is a classic good guys versus bad guys tale based on powerful concepts of mythology identified by Joseph Campbell in his classic book, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* ([click](#) here to read my review of his biography and work).

A central thread running through the *Star Wars* stories is "the force." The *Star Wars* website gives this definition, "The Force is a mysterious energy field created by life that binds the galaxy together."

The light and dark sides of our life force are the two very powerful emotions

### In this Issue:

**Emotions at Work:  
How Soft Skills  
Produce Hard Results**

**Thoughts That Make  
You Go Hmmm on...  
Strong Leaders  
Boosting Positive  
Emotions**

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of love and fear. Love plays to our strengths, optimism, hopes, and dreams. Fear accentuates weaknesses, feeds on pessimism, and points to dystopian futures.

**Love isn't "the word" found in many organizations. Fear's more like it.** Fear of criticism, fear of failure, fear of getting caught, or fear of speaking up. The L-word makes many managers squirm. These are the same managers loudly pronouncing goals of higher employee engagement and increased customer loyalty. They'll often use another L-word -- leadership -- in ignorance of how their loveless orientation is rooted in pessimism and fear. These managers use "leader-speak" about vision, values, engagement, or caring, but their rhetoric is often heartless.

Love is the word of this issue. We'll start with Zenger Folkman's research on emotions at work, showing how soft skills produce hard results. Strong leaders boost positive emotions. You can read a few insightful thoughts on this vital topic. In *Love Them and Lead Them*, we'll see examples of leaders bringing the love.

Are you feeling the love? Unless you're a great actor, it's hard to fake what you don't feel. BS meters are ever more sensitive these days. Few uninspired leaders can inspire and impassion others. Creating leadership energy is an inside job.

In *The Word*, the Beatles also sing, "Now that I know what I feel must be right; I'm here to show everybody the light" What's "the word" most people associate with your leadership? Are you tapping into the light or dark side of The Force?



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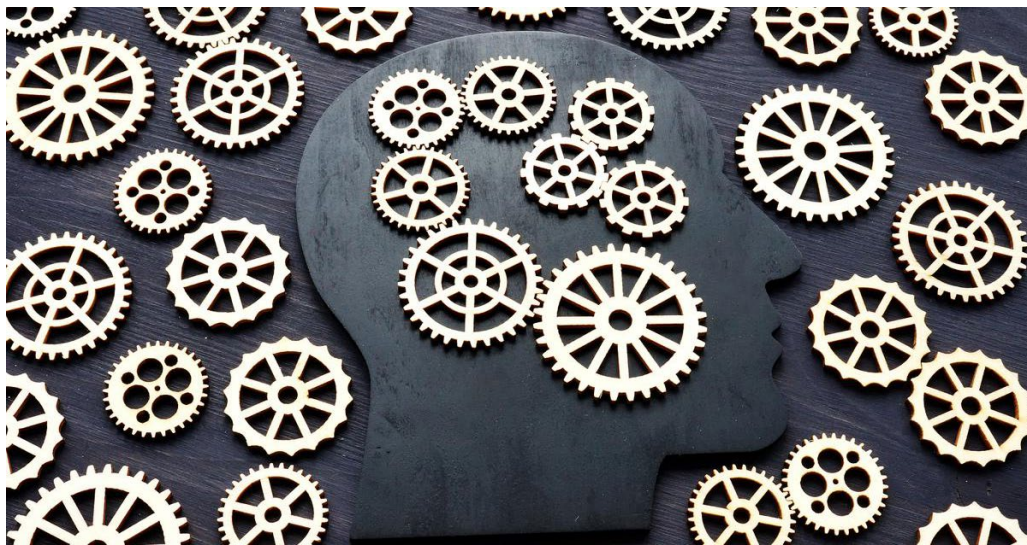


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# Emotions at Work: How Soft Skills Produce Hard Results



Emotions are the heart of life and leadership. Health, happiness, and high performance are highly dependent on emotions. In their seminal book, *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee explain the book title by pointing to emotional impact as being at the very core of leadership. Emotional connections are a timeless and primary task of leaders.

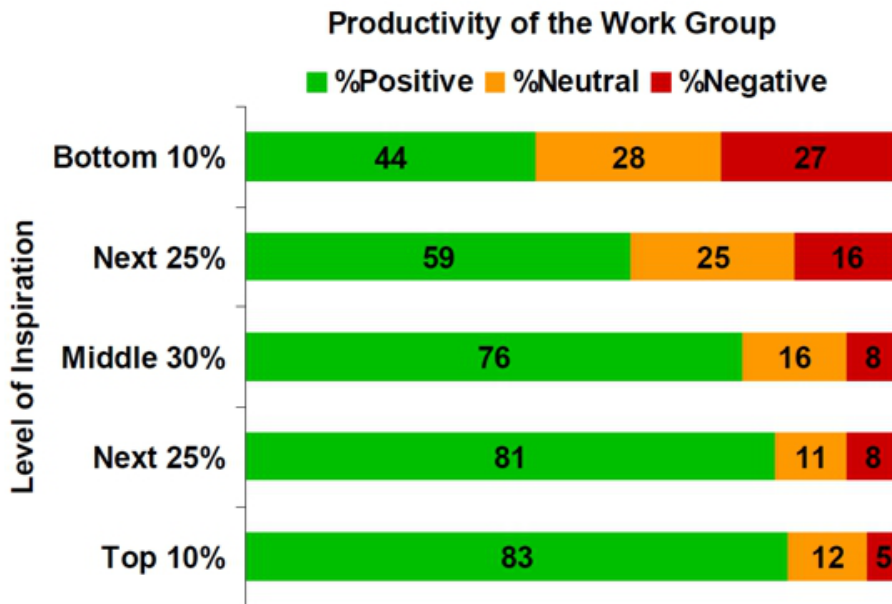
History shows the pivotal role beliefs and emotions play in an array of outcomes. The authors write, "Leaders have always played a primordial emotional role. No doubt humankind's original leaders -- whether tribal chieftains or shamanesses -- earned their place in large part because their leadership was emotionally compelling...the leader acts as the group's emotional guide...in any human group the leader has maximal power to sway everyone's emotions. If people's emotions are pushed toward the range of enthusiasm, performance can soar; if people are driven toward rancor and anxiety, they will be thrown off stride. ...great leaders move us. They ignite our passion and inspire the best in us. When we try to explain why they are so effective, we speak of strategy, vision, or powerful ideas. But the reality is much more primal: Great leadership works through the emotions."

Zenger Folkman's research shows just how powerful emotions are in driving behavior. In their research paper, **Emotions at Work**, ZF studied their 360 database to look at the impact of inspiration on productivity. Employee perceptions of their work group's productivity were correlated with their ratings of their immediate manager on inspiration. The results clearly show the enormous emotional impact of the leader:

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This research is detailed in Zenger Folkman's book, *The Inspiring Leader: Unlocking the Secrets of How Extraordinary Leaders Motivate*. The book's main chapters outline the six core leadership behaviors that Zenger Folkman find have the biggest impact:

1. Setting stretch goals
2. Creating vision and direction
3. Communicating powerfully
4. Developing people
5. Being collaborative and a good team player
6. Fostering innovation

Highly effective leaders play to their strengths in making emotional connections with their teams in six different styles:

1. Enthusiast
2. Visionary
3. Involver
4. Expert
5. Principled
6. Driver

As a few **key quotes** from *The Inspiring Leader* show, "adequate leaders get everyone to do their jobs, but inspirational leaders are able to get people to rise far above that mark and achieve more."

Emotions are highly contagious. Are yours worth catching?

# Thoughts That Make You Go Hmmm on... Strong Leaders Boosting Positive Emotions



Adding to the previous article on **Emotions at Work...**

*"If you ask subordinates what they want in a leader, they usually list three things: direction or vision, trustworthiness, and optimism. Like effective parents, lovers, teachers, and therapists, good leaders make people hopeful."*

- Warren Bennis, *An Invented Life: Reflections on Leadership and Change*

*"Leadership is almost all emotional intelligence, especially in distinguishing between what managers do and what leaders do..."*

- Daniel Goleman, *Working with Emotional Intelligence*

*"Emotions are contagious. Research shows that they determine 50% to 70% that climate, in turn, determines 20% to 30% of a company's performance. What's more, Emotional Intelligence accounts for 85% of what distinguishes the stars in top leadership positions from low-level performers."*

- Loren Gary, "Becoming a Resonant Leader," *Harvard Management Update Special Report*

*"To offer a people hope is to acquire a position of leadership in their lives."*

- Winston Churchill

*"Our study of effective executives has uncovered many ways in which their decisions, words, and actions make the people they*

*lead more hopeful. Collectively, these practices are the basis of a leadership tool kit for building and sustaining hope. But the most important change comes when a leader is simply more mindful of this vital part of her or his mission."*

- Harry Hutson and Barbara Perry, authors of *Putting Hope to Work: Five Principles to Activate Your Organization's Most Powerful Resource*

*"A decade of research on high and low performance teams by psychologist and business consultant Marcial Losada....based on Losada's extensive mathematical modeling, 2.9013 is the ratio of positive to negative interactions necessary to make a corporate team successful. This means that it takes about three positive comments, experiences, or expressions to fend off the languishing effects of one negative. Dip below this tipping point, now known as the Losada Line, and workplace performance quickly suffers. Rise above it -- ideally, the research shows, to a ratio of 6 to 1 -- and teams produce their very best work."*

- Shawn Achor, *The Happiness Advantage: The Seven Principles of Positive Psychology That Fuel Success and Performance at Work*

*"No one wants to work for a grouch. Research has proven it: Optimistic, enthusiastic leaders more easily retain their people, compared with those bosses who tend toward negative moods."*

- Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis & Annie McKee, *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*

*"Recent research, however, suggests that pessimistic managers may not only plan for the worst, but invite it. Margaret Greenberg and Dana Arakawa, graduates of the Master of Applied Positive Psychology program at the University of Pennsylvania, studied the effects of optimistic managers and found that optimists may do a better job of helping employees reach goals and be more productive...."*

*Unlike many personality traits and talents, optimism is one of the few emotions that people can acquire."*

- Jennifer Robison, "It Pays to Be Optimistic," *Gallup Management Journal*

*"A McKinsey Quarterly survey of 1,147 executives found that the five elements of centered leadership (meaning, framing, connecting, engaging, and energizing) are mutually reinforcing."*

*Respondents, who reported that they frequently practiced four or all five gave high ratings to their passion for their work, their effectiveness as leaders, and their satisfaction with life."*

*- Scott Keller and Colin Price, **Beyond Performance: How Great Organizations Build Ultimate Competitive Advantage***

## Love Them and Lead Them



In his book, *Lovemarks: The Future Beyond Brands*, Kevin Roberts, CEO of the global advertising agency, Saatchi & Saatchi, explains that **fads attract, but without love, it's a passing infatuation**. He shows that **the most successful organizations create fanatical loyalty that goes way beyond reason to highly charged emotional connections**. Chapter titles include "All You Need is Love," "Love is in the Air," and "What the World Needs Now."

Companies decimated by the pandemic especially need to feel the love to bounce back. That's particularly true in the airline industry. Airline revenues collapsed while fixed costs stayed high. If you're going to bet on an airline most likely to soar as travel resumes, put your money on Southwest Airlines. They were named the #1 U.S. airline in *The Wall Street Journal's* annual ranking for 2020 based on key operational performance metrics. In his decades of research studying what differentiates great companies, Jim Collins has featured the company's long track record of investment returns way beyond other companies -- in their industry and most others.

So, what's love got to do with it? Southwest Airlines has been giving its employees and customers L -- love and leadership -- since its founding in 1971. According to a documentary video we often use in our **culture**

**development** planning sessions, Southwest Airlines is *"the company that love built."* Southwest first started flying from Love Field in Dallas, their stock symbol is LUV, and their logo features a big red heart in the center. *"We have always felt that a company is much stronger if bound by love rather than by fear,"* explains Herb Kelleher, co-founder, and former CEO. The documentary outlines how *"love becomes an action verb that clears a path for what really matters."* An employee hosting much of the video explains, *"we transfer our love for what we do, and for each other, to the customer."*

Love is an extraordinarily powerful emotion driving behavior, if not life itself. Many ancient spiritual traditions and modern research, such as Near Death Experiences, point to love as the center of our being.

Managers aren't comfortable with this powerful emotion in the workplace. The culture of too many organizations is like the bumper sticker "I am neither for nor against apathy." Managers pay a big price for failing to engage hearts.

Leaders bring the love. Passion and love are affairs of the heart, not the head. We aren't rational creatures. Humans use thinking and reason to solve problems and make plans. But it's our hearts more than our heads that move us. Most "rational thinking" is justifying actions that start with our feelings. We often make decisions that "feel right," then start looking for the "facts" to support them.

Leadership is centered on emotions. Highly effective leadership stirs our dreams, inspiration, excitement, desire, pride, care, and passion. Our love. The areas of our lives where we show the strongest leadership -- including our communities, families, organizations, products, services, hobbies, and customers -- are where we're most in love.

Tim Sanders makes love a strategic cornerstone of a company's operations in his book *Love Is the Killer App: How to Win Business and Influence Friends*. He wrote, "I don't think there is anything higher than Love.... Love is so expansive. I had such a difficult time coming up with a definition for Love in my book, but the way I define Love is the selfless promotion of the growth of the other."

Are you living life for the L of it -- laughing, learning, leading, and loving?



## Are you Feeling the Love ?



Early in my career, I worked in a company with an inspiring and passionate CEO. He often said, "If you love what you're doing, you never have to work again." Love that concept! Most of us hate work. It's a four-letter word. Hard work is why I left the family farm. Whenever a job started to feel like work, I quit.

Fortunately, that's only been a few times in my career. I've put years of long hours into my career without really working.

The "father of modern management," Peter Drucker, said, "your first and foremost job as a leader is to take charge of your own energy and then to help orchestrate the energy of those around you." If you're going to be an effective energy leader, then your work can't be work. You need a job that isn't a job, it's a joy. When you love what you're doing, you never have to go to work again.

Highly effective leaders are in love with the organization, community, or team that they work or live in. Their love is expressed in a deep desire to see that organization, community, or team grow to its full potential. Leaders love the people they work with enough to contribute to their growth and development.

That doesn't mean we always like or agree with everyone. As with family, we often don't get to pick and choose teammates, bosses, and the like. Some of them aren't people we'd invite to dinner or choose as a friend. However, leaders love their organization's greater purpose and see its products or services contributing to a bigger world that they love. That love -- and desire for growth and development -- extends to everyone involved.

If you're not leading a meaningful life, it's hard to help others find meaning. If you don't feel a sense of connection to a bigger purpose, it's hard to unify others. To impassion others, you need to either find the work you love, or learn to love the work you have. If your current job isn't energizing you so

you can energize and lead others, you have four choices:

1. Do nothing but wish for your fairy job mother to magically appear and energize your life;
2. Move out of a leadership role and play to your strengths and passions in other ways such as technical or advisory roles;
3. Figure out what your personal vision, values, and purpose are and transform your current job into your life work;
4. Figure out what your ideal job is and find or create it.

As leadership researcher, author, and professor, Warren Bennis, once concluded, *"a basic ingredient of leadership is passion -- the underlying passion for the promises of life, combined with a very particular passion for a vocation, a profession, a course of action. The leader loves what he or she does and loves doing it."*

Inspiration, passion, and love. It's hard to fake what you don't feel. It's really tough to impassion others about their work unless you're impassioned about yours. Creating leadership energy is an inside job.

## **Bridging the Distance: Reading, Leading, and Succeeding**



Leaders bring hope, optimism, and positive action. That's really tough to do while social distancing and facing an uncertain future. We multiply misery if we allow the pessimism plague to infect us as well.

To counter Headline Stress Disorder and strengthen resilience, I actively scan a list of resources for research, articles, and tips on leading ourselves and others through these turbulent times. I post those articles every day.

Let's shorten our social media distancing. Follow or connect with me:

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Together we can Learn, Laugh, Love, and Lead -- just for the L of it!

## Read *The Leader Letter* in Weekly Installments



The items in each month's issue of *The Leader Letter* are first published in my weekly **blog** during the previous month.

If you read each blog post (or issue of *The Leader Letter*) as it's published over twelve months, you'll have read the equivalent of a leadership book. And you'll pick up a few practical leadership tips that help you use time more strategically and tame your E-Beast!

## Feedback and Follow-Up

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Let's leverage our leadership strengths to work together and get through this challenging time.



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