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Care for people and corporate intelligence
Emotions, learning and organizational dynamics

We read more and more often about how important emotions are to promote in the workplace, the ability to learn and open up to innovation, trying to get out of the cage of habits and customs. Articles and books, often coming from overseas, reiterate how the role of emotions is prevalent in human organizations, therefore also in the specific context of working groups and more generally in companies, are the engine or, on the contrary, the brake on the development of a high creative capacity.

Pier Mario Vello, *a man of culture, was Secretary General of the Cariplo Foundation*

You could write a lot about this subject and without going very far I think that a very significant contribution, besides extremely structured and profound, is what Pier Mario Vello, who died prematurely in 2014, gave us with his books not just from a very in-depth theoretical basis but also from the experience of managing multiple organizations.

An eclectic, sensitive and extremely intelligent personality capable of moving from the areas of philosophy to management, from business to philanthropy, to literary poetry.

I had the privilege of working with him for some years, deepening and elaborating the themes discussed below, and subsequently sharing a deep friendship and in this article I would like to summarize some of the main points of his teaching, which I have experimented in my professional life, having continuous confirmations about the validity.

In business, leadership styles, organizational structures, "power" management, information flow, practices, values (even those that are not said but experienced) are factors that can move in a positive sense rather than annihilate what we could define , without imagination but using a common term in the language of management, 'corporate intelligence'.

The ability to learn, or to grasp the determinant signals, therefore becomes vital but even more is the ability to act, or react, on the basis of what has been learned, with actions whose realization becomes even more complex because it is not it is a matter of an individual but of a group and we know well how group dynamics can be very distant and unpredictable from those of the individual.

Those who have managing roles, therefore, cannot fail to consider all those aspects that, if mishandled, are likely to make their brilliant intuition vain, or risk not to draw on the many brilliant insights of those who work with them.

In other words, two strands must constantly travel hand in hand: B business and OR organization It will sound trivial but it is not infrequent to find companies that, for example, make the centrality of the customer their main slogan and then, in reality, he is so far and idealized to become an image far from the real or making the company itself so bureaucratic, inaccessible,

long in the answers to make every real connection vain.

In this sense we can configure a contrast between what we could call 'opaque structures' and 'transparent structures'.

Let's see in more detail what are the elements that characterize, differentiating them, these two antithetical organizational forms

Transparent structures	Opaque structures
. Simplicity	. Complication
· Speed	· Slowness
· Transparency	· Opacity
· Low distortion	· Strong distortion
· Strong bonds	· Weak links
· Flexible bonds	· Rigid bonds
· Creativity	· Unproductivity

Transparency in this sense is a strategic requirement, it is a condition for communication, it is characteristic of democratic and flexible groups, for this reason we need to know how to communicate to people.

But how do you learn within organizations?

Referring to epistemology studies and group dynamics studies from Jean Piaget to Melanie Klein, Wilfred Bion, Donald Meltzer, Martha Harris and Robert D. Hinshelwood, the following categories can be distilled:

Learning mode
· Learn from experience
· Learning by projective identification
· Learn for obsessive collection
· Learning by stealing and collecting
· Learn by submitting to a persecutor
· Learning by adhesive identification

Let's take a closer look at each of the aforementioned methods, which we will certainly be able to find in the baggage of our experiences.

Learn from experience
It represents the richest and most profitable way of learning. According to Bion's model, later taken up by Meltzer, learning from experience means finding meaning and order in the chaos of facts and data and this is both a cognitive and emotional experience.

Learning by projective identification
We could also define this mode "learning by envy". Projective identification is described for the first time by Melanie Klein and is the basis of many learning cases. By projective identification we mean that process by which the subject pours towards external objects, that is, projects into them, positive and negative values (and contents) that are originally contained in the subject

itself. This way of learning, when projective identification is excessively present, is driven by envy. The consequence is that a process of criticism and discernment is lacking and therefore the strong risk is that the skills are overestimated and reproduced mechanically without real learning from experience. Learning by envy is, in other words, an imitation, but also at the same time, an attack and a groped attempt to appropriate highly desired knowledge and skills. In an organizational context, this mode generates areas of privilege, the prerogative of the dominated corporate function.

Learn by obsessive collection
Learning through obsessive gathering means killing the vital flow of experiences by aiming exclusively at an inanimate collection of facts and data.

A distinctive feature of this mode is the inability to produce a complete picture of the facts or of the business, because this collection is still incomplete and, since it is not processed, does not generate a real learning process. Those who act in this way are in difficulty in giving meaning to the experiences on the basis of a few essential and incomplete elements.
From a business point of view, it is not difficult to find organizations in which the impulse to catalog and mummify is expressed in the excessive use of internal memos and reports. The obsessive collection for the purposes of mummification of facts has as its outcome the discharge of the memory of vital and decisive experiences. The end is substantiated in the collection and cataloging, and then you can better forget. Those who in the company obsessively write internal communications and reports often forget to act and to dialogue with people.

Learning by submission to a persecutor
It is a tyrannical modality, in which the cognitive gain is obtained thanks to the mechanical and passive adaptation to the rules dictated by the "boss". Vulgarly we could also define this mode "of the stick and the carrot".

The basis of this kind of modality is the belief that people who have to learn new skills and new knowledge are structurally inferior and passive in the process. In a metaphorical key, the learning process could be a funnel in which knowledge is transferred towards the brain of the collaborators.

Since the process of learning by submission never realizes a sharing of ideas, it follows that the widespread creative process is never activated. In organizations where this mode of learning is prevalent it is also rare to find cases of real passion for work and for people.

In this sense, there are no experiences of *reverie* and aesthetics; there is no pleasure to learn and progress, we learn by obeying. The knowledge learned through submission to a persecutor is weak, combined with feelings of rebellion and negativism; the knowledge is expelled as soon as the persecutor absents or frees himself.

Learning by stealing and collecting
This is a sneaky way to learn and the company does not benefit from those who learn by stealing and collecting, indeed the organization is depleted. Basically, this type of learning implies an emotional detachment that is essentially consolidated or because the subject has already decided that he will leave the company in the near or distant future or because the subject has decided not to play any central role in the working group.

In this sense, this form of learning seems to be strongly connected to the assumption of marginal positions in the group, both from an emotional and a value point of view. Often the lack of social integration in the organization is a concomitant phenomenon of learning by stealing and collecting. In companies this type of learning is very widespread as it is very easy to meet non-recognition behaviors.

Learn by adhesion
At the base of the people who learn by adhesion there is a fragile emotional structure, which does not allow them to form a container sufficient for learning and, therefore, they need to passively adhere to already conceived and already constituted external schemes. It is a primitive and limited way of learning because it has its origins in thought apparatus so weak as to be ineffective.

The subjects who adopt this method are excellent passive and gregarious performers who need guidance and in the working groups they gladly take on roles of executive assistance, non-creative secretariat.

In practice, only the outward aspects of the dominant patterns and styles are imitated, or only the external and socially visible qualities are replicated. In other words, it is accompanied by a

conformism with the visible surface, lacking emotional involvement. Consequence of this modality is that autonomy is not developed and therefore does not allow learning to learn.

| Type of learning	Activated emotional functions	What is learned
From experience	Generating love, supporting hope, thinking, dealing with demotivation	To grow
By envy	To spread hate, to produce lies and confusion	To possess privileges and status
For Obsessive Collection	Emanate Persecutory Anxiety	To possess marginal knowledge objects
By submission to a persecutor	To spread hate, to produce lies and confusion, to emanate persecutory anxiety	To obey and to disobey
Stealing and collecting	To spread hate, producing lies and confusion	To attack
By adhesion	Sowing despair, emanating persecutory anxiety	To imitate

The role of the manager or of the management team, established that it intends to promote learning, to what should principally pay attention?
Within the organization, those who have managing roles must work to try to create the appropriate conditions for a virtuous path towards widespread intelligence to be realized. To this end we can outline some salient steps of an effective managerial path.

Managerial path
· Define the action scenario (top-down)
· Define the vision (bottom-up)
· Define company values (top-down)
· Define the company guidelines, the 'how' (top-down)
· Communicate and share Vision, Values and Guidelines (top-down)
· Select people suitable for the vision (top-down)
· Undertake a continuous training itinerary (top-down)
· Adapting career paths and rewarding system (top-down)
· Continuously stimulate comparison and innovation (top-down)
· Adopt and improve managerial tools (bottom-up)

An essential element for the development of business intelligence and creativity is the ability to observe reality from multiple vertices of observation. We know how habits and usual practices play a role of curbing the ability to critically ask the 'why' of what is done.
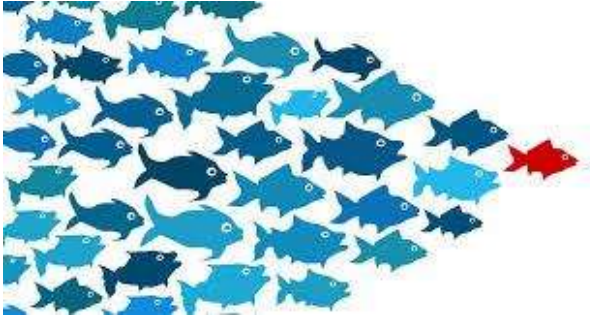
The ability to 'distance themselves' and 'dare the void' are equal to the ability to 'observe from multiple vertices', influenced by emotional factors that pervade the individual and the organization itself according to a relationship scheme that can become or a circle virtuous or, on the contrary, a vicious circle able to amplify or annihilate the aptitude for learning new elements, thus promoting or preventing creativity.
Emotions are repeatedly cited as determining factors in how organizations learn and operate.

Which emotions do you refer to? What role do they play?
What are the positive, or epistemophilic, and which instead of a healthy and correct corporate intelligence?

Donald Meltzer

The most structured reference can be found in the studies of Donald Meltzer, a pupil with Bion of Melanie Klein, who lists eight of them in his book "Studies of extended metapsychology", subdividing them precisely between constructive and destructive.
It is undoubted, in fact, that emotions support the life of a company as well as the life of each individual and play an essential role in the contexts of group dynamics.
Bion argued, based on the evidence of his research, that a theory of mind must also be a theory of emotions because they support or nullify, exalt or depress cognitive activities within an organization.

Positive (epistemophilic) emotional functions	Negative emotional functions
1. Generate love	5. Spread hatred
2. Supporting hope	6. Sowing despair
3. Think	7. Produce lies and confusion
4. Contain depressive suffering	8. Emanate persecutory anxiety

Let's see how they manifest themselves and what effects they cause in organizations.

Generate love

This emotional function is closely linked to intelligence.

Generating love for what is done, for the task, for the people involved in the projects and the challenges undertaken, reinforces the confidence and security of the working group, making it more cohesive and compact.

It is difficult for a leader to know how to evolve his organization if he is not moved by genuine and profound interest in the people around him and working with him.

Having a passion for people and for what we do is the fundamental requirement not only of an advanced and effective leadership, but also of widespread corporate intelligence.

Although it is not as widespread as an element generally considered in the strategies for the foundation of corporate values, this is a fundamental and indispensable emotional function for the functioning of any work group.

Effects of generating love
· Increases the sense of security of people
· Balanced behaviors are strengthened
· Increases dependency in the group
· Improves the capacity for creative fantasizing
· Improve the ability to tackle difficult tasks

It is important to underline how the passion for people and for work specifically activates two types of functions:

-The *reverie*: that is the ability to perceive and understand the needs of the people around and face them. This is the positive ability to fantasize, to know how to imagine improvement and to constitute a positive and receptive pole of latent needs ("reverie" means dream, fantasy in French.) In Bionian terminology it represents the ability to constitute itself as a positive pole of projective identification. and to activate processes of positive reverie related to caring, having

care).
- The *aesthetic experience*: that is to perceive that what you are doing is in some way beautiful and has a value. This experience, emotionally charged with meaning, is an aesthetic experience, it is the feeling that what you are doing has meaning and is beautiful.

How to develop a passion for people and the task:
· Take into account the interest of people in building their tasks and roles
· Choose open and flexible people
· Facilitate the practical explanation of each person's personal potential
· Mediate the contrasts in the working group
· Facilitate mature dialogue between people in the group
· Highlight progress and positive work done
· Urge to daydream
· Training professionally and culturally
· Explicit the value of passion for the task and for people as fundamental to the group

Supporting hope
Hope has to do with the way we relate to the future. The group member that performs the emotional function of sustaining hope also has the ability to see the future in a positive way. This ability seems to derive from knowing how to maintain a sense and a proportion in all things. This is why the most balanced people are also more able to perceive the future and the changes.

Effects of supporting hope:
· Balance between constructive and destructive strength within the group
· Encouragement of aspirations
· Availability to risk
· Increased thirst for knowledge and learning new skills
· Better ability to tackle difficult tasks

The habits, the overwhelming weight of the past, the successes as well as the lived failures work, if they play an exaggerated role, act like a cancellation of the future. If this dynamic prevails, the organization's reaction will be to neutralize any innovative and divergent leaders, even if they are bearers of new intelligence.

How to develop hope:
· Work on the future and on the objectives of the projects
· Reduce attention to the past and errors
· Allow and solicit risk assumption
· Recognize and support improvement efforts
· To dramatize difficulties and failures
· Discourage the overestimation of oneself
· To educate in the production of entrepreneurial visions
· Explicit hope and optimism as values for risk-taking

To think
The function of thinking is able to give meaning to people, regardless of status, role and seniority, therefore creates a leadership based on competence and not on corporate power. In this sense, those who want to develop corporate thinking must be ready to renounce their power based on

age or other forms of barriers and to gain meaning within the organization for the expertise and contributions of thought they provide

Here we need to better specify what we mean in this context with the term " to think". The most common meaning in management language is that *thinking* is a mental output of managers; in this sense, what is taught is a series of operational schemes or functions and good behavior habits are recommended. In short, it is as if we consider that thinking was a mechanical action contained in such structures.

Here we talk about thinking meaning something that has to do with the epistemophilic drive, with the desire to learn and learn to learn, that is not so much the final result what is important but its general process and the connection with the emotions that help its development.

An important condition for this to be possible is that the company organization does not restrict itself to functional organizational schemes, which raise barriers to interaction between people. In fact, thought exists and develops only in the presence of a complex possibility of connections, both on a biological level and on a social and corporate level.

Effects of thinking:
· Increase the capacity of the group entrepreneurial vision
· Increases the range of behavioral strategies to cope with problems
· You agree to learn from others
· Increases the significance of the work produced
· The future is faced with minor anxieties
· Increases the significance of the member of the thinking group
· People are more focused on task and skills and less on roles

In order that the cognitive process does not end and does not turn off, it is necessary that the thought, as a desire to learn and learn to learn, is widespread in the organization. In short, we need to reach a critical mass in order to trigger a process of communication and references with other business areas in order to reach, in fact, a threshold level in which the process of thinking strengthens itself and becomes autonomous.

How to develop thought
· Facilitate the exchange of knowledge between people
· Encourage direct and disinterested confrontation
· Building non-homogeneous groups
· Working on the task and on common progress, and not on the relationship between people
· Facilitate the rapid exchange of information and transparency

· Encourage participants' contribution and thought in the working groups
· Be ready to collect new and unexpected ideas and change strategies
· Form to creativity
· Form to the scientific method
· Explicit thinking as a contribution desired by people
· Recognize and reward new ideas

Contain depressive suffering
Although this task is one of the leaders of an organization's leader, each member is able to perform that role.

Depressive suffering is a phenomenon that is certainly present in the course of life and also in the life of the company and the crucial point is not the idyllic one of eliminating it but of putting actions in a position to contain it within acceptable limits and above all recognizing the mechanisms by which be able to get out.
Unmanaged depressive suffering often manifests itself in the organization as a widespread state of increasing irritability and not necessarily as a manifest and explicit problem.
The ability to work out, by overcoming it, the depressive suffering and to face the frustration is certainly present in different degree in each individual and will therefore be very important, refining the sensitivity to recognize this dowry in the collaborators, create working groups also balanced by this point of view.

Effects of containing depressive suffering
· Strengthens the position of the leader
· It is a precondition for learning from experience
· Attenuates the fragmenting forces within the group
· Limit the persecutory depression and the hunt for the guilty
· Limits the irritability of people
· Limit the behavior of picking up, stealing and 'each for oneself'
· Limits group fragility to difficult tasks

The ability to face and contain suffering is a fundamental requirement for the process of learning from experience to be activated. In the absence of this capacity, the whole group tends to become depressed and fragmented, slowing down or even inhibiting the learning process.
For this reason, the demotivated groups tend to ignore the rest of the company, to close in on themselves, insensitive to the rest and irritable, not seeing possible lateral ways of exit, not learning from experience.
Even if the simple incentive systems cannot be considered sufficient to guarantee the capacity to

contain suffering, the dynamics of recognition play a fundamental role. Recognizing means rewarding, but also and above all recognizing the importance and the uniqueness of each person involved in the process

How to contain depressive suffering
· Leverage the skills acquired
· To highlight both the negative and the positive facts
· Predict and explain the difficulties of the route
· Develop the harmony of the working group
· Develop the mutual aid capacity within the group
· Attenuate the tension in times of stress
· Form and recognize efforts
· Explicit the value of the containment of suffering as a leadership element
· Informal approach to people

Let us now analyze the negative emotional functions, that is, those which, if present prevalently within the organization, inhibit their ability to learn.

Spread hatred
Those who spread hatred attack the emotional bonds existing between people and disintegrate, in the long run, the group and limits its intellectual vision.
In organizations where a highly competitive spirit prevails from the professional point of view, the spread of hatred becomes a detectable risk in the creation of rival gangs, which act without exclusion of strokes for career purposes. The bands, as Donald Meltzer observes, are by definition tyrannical and have within them a political or charismatic leader, who is therefore not necessarily by competence, but by power.

In these areas we work in a basic assumption of dependence (in the group, Bion identifies the existence of a phantasmal reality that catalyzes the emotional life of the group itself, is repeated in a characteristic way and is expressed through three 'basic assumptions': l basic assumption of coupling, attack-flight and dependence) and widespread corporate intelligence is compromised, since the predominant value sought is not the sharing of intelligence but the exclusive possession of power.

A characteristic of these environments is that, since the submission to the tyrant is very strong, the bands pervaded by hatred are also very cemented and compact.
The organizations that have rival gangs within them break up very early and have paranoid attitudes to reality: generally the blame for something is always postponed to others, competitors, the market, politicians, colleagues of other functions.

Effects of spreading hate
· The ties of the working group are attached
· A band is produced without order
· They develop leaders for tyranny
· There is rapid learning by submission to the head
· Unfair behavior is developed
· Distrust and closure develop in people
· Opportunistic behaviors increase: only what is convenient to say is explicit
· The ability to produce and create the group is reduced

Sowing despair
The emotional function of despair, contrary to that of sustaining hope, emerges from the loss of balance and the inability to mediate constructive and destructive forces.
The pessimism that spreads from this function spreads rapidly because it activates defensive behaviors and relies on the deep feelings of uncertainty and insecurity of the members of the organization.
Since threats are felt as overwhelming and destructive forces as invincible, the one who sows desperation within the organization activates defensive behaviors, alert group members against possible external persecutors or against creeping internal disruptive forces.
The desperate has in fact declared a abandonment of the camp and is in dire need of solidarity and companionship, and this function has a great propensity for interpersonal diffusion.
The sense of imminent external catastrophe, or of the inevitability of the negative internal course of things, prevents evolved forms of learning and intelligence.

Effects of sowing despair
· Learning from experience is discouraged
· There is abandonment of the field and the task
· "Raise before the catastrophe" attitudes are encouraged
· There is learning about irrelevant skills
· A parasitic relationship is established with the group (of the type "we are together to save ourselves")
· Destructive relationships with the group are established

Produce lies and confusion
Within the company, this type of relationship prevents the propagation of thought and the consolidation of working groups as it undermines at the root the sense of trust and cohesion.
Wilfred Bion defined the lie in all its destructive scope: "the lie is the link between two minds that leads to the destruction of both".

By inhibiting trust, the production of lies nullifies the possibility of sustaining hope; it not only prevents thought but annihilates it.

Among the negative emotional functions is certainly the most dangerous because it is the most devious.

Given its enormous destructive potentiality, it is, in fact, a poison of the mind to which a false food is given, the leaders must constantly seek clarity and tell the truth, even if unpleasant.

Effects of the production of lies
· The organization is threatened at its roots
· Increase of uncertainty
· Increased cynicism
· Destructive impact on the impulse to learn
· Destruction of the team
· Asocial and antisocial tendencies emerge
· Increases confusion

Emanate persecutory anxiety
It is possible to meet business leaders who, on the one hand would like to have more creative and entrepreneurial collaborators, do not fail to emanate persecutory anxiety during each verification meeting.

Terror is easily propagated, especially if it comes from above, and the fear of error and its consequences paralyzes the function of hope and inhibits the widespread entrepreneurial spirit.

The obvious effect is to paralyze the function of learning and to block hope.

In this way the capacities of intelligence and cohesion, as well as mimetic ones, do not emerge so much, that is yes-man triumph. It should be noted that mimetic capacity is more suited to assimilate and reproduce social roles, with their symbologies and privileges, but does not assimilate the profound emotions of role and experience. Managers with persecutory anxiety propagate terror, inhibit thought, activate crusades, and seek above all others' faults. In this type of companies, we often find a mixture of good education, formalism, false concern directed exclusively towards higher hierarchical levels, coldness, uncertainty and use of status symbols.

Effects of emanating persecutory anxiety
· Paralysis of the function of thinking
· Inhibition of the entrepreneurial spirit
· Destruction of hope
· Mimetic behavior
· Formalism, false concern only upwards
· Yes-man triumphs

Knowing the various ways of interaction between emotions and the development of both individual and group intelligence is therefore decisive for each leader who places the development of learning and creativity of the company or of the group that guides. To deny such factors or to underestimate them, putting the arrogance of the self or the possessed power before it, risks to lead to nefarious outcomes or in the best of non-lasting situations.

The task of the leader is certainly not easy, but knowing those who are critical to understand the dynamics present within the organization and to set policies and actions in the right direction is a duty for every person with managerial responsibilities.

To conclude with a quote, perhaps provocative and in contrast, but containing a lot of wisdom, we can remember a phrase of Lau-Tzu: *"leader is great if people just know that he exists, less good if he is obeyed and acclaimed, bad if he is hated. Lack of respect for people and people will lack respect for you; but of a good leader who speaks little, when his work is finished, and the goal reached, they will say: "we have done it ourselves" "*.

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