

May 2023

Letter from the Executive Director



What tools are in your Swiss Army Knife for Emotionally Intelligent Leadership?

This month I'm re-reading one of my favorite Minnesota authors - Bill Holm - and one of his greatest essays - "Swiss Army Knife: A History" - in which he relates his deeply human, foible-rich experience of learning, with self-aware humor and grace, to get done what needs to get done with the tools you have. It's an essay in a collection of essays that I have returned to again and again over the past 30 plus years for inspiration and new insights to what it means to be emotionally present and receptive to learning and growing in the moment no matter the circumstance.

Toolkits for effective leadership are always on our minds.

The month of May is an exciting time of transition in our toolkit sharpening calendar. This month, Future Leaders Academy members are setting new goals and reflecting on their new and ever-changing toolkits for emotionally intelligent leadership. Our 2023-2024 Future Leaders will soon transition to the Mentorship phase of the Future Leaders Academy, while our 2022-2023 Future Leaders will transition from the Mentorship to Lifelong Learning, Growing, and Leading, respectively.



Learning and growing are possible if we feel supported, safe and challenged in just the right ways. There is no magic Swiss Army Knife-like toolkit that makes learning, growing, and leading well a lifelong given.

Board Member Patrick Riley models emotionally intelligent leadership as a deeply generous, curious, and self-aware member of our board who shows us above how change and opportunity can come together.

Our goal with the Future Leaders Academy is to affirm and hone key emotionally intelligent toolkit to persevere, rebuild and reassess at any point in your life, thanks to self-awareness, social awareness, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, and self-management. (Self-compassion figures prominently too, when something trips you up and your linear vision of progress becomes more humanly organic, realistic and spatially attuned to life's rhythms).

When setting goals for yourself in a given time-frame, how do you go about assessing your personal growth?

Join us this month as I and our first cohort of Future Leaders assess growth in our skills for emotionally intelligent leaders over the past 18 months, since the 2022-2023 Future Leaders began the Leadership Workshop in January 2022. How much have your personal 'Relationship Skills' grown since then (1=Not at All; 2=Not So Much Growth; 3=Some Growth; 4=Notable Growth; 5=Extreme Growth)? What are some examples of that growth. What about growth in 'Self-Awareness' and the other skills in the graphic above.

I thought a lot about these skills when I broke my leg and ankle one February morning this year. I thought about how numerous cool, calm and deeply kind strangers in Minneapolis' Harrison neighborhood where I live helped me when they could have gone about their busy day during rush hour. I also reflected on how a previous job in which I was responsible for assisting college students experiencing

medical emergencies navigate a medical system in another country may have helped me to channel an emotionally productive response when my own unexpected medical moment arose. Or was it my own family's penchant for finding humor in all things that helped me at that moment?

What I do know is that taking time to reflect is critical for lifelong learning, growing and leading my own life as best I know how.

We have great confidence in our Future Leaders as they create and recreate their emotionally intelligent leadership skills as part of their toolkit for life too.

We're excited to hear their own visions and reflections during the Future Leaders Academy Graduation + Celebration on June 3rd. Stay tuned for much more in the coming weeks.

- Brian Hammer, PhD, Executive Director

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