

Book Review : Human Drama Inc. Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

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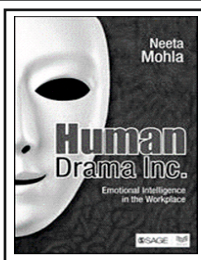
Abstract

The book review analyzed Neeta Mohla's book - *Human Drama Inc. Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace*. The author, through this book, showcased various insights of emotional intelligence from an organization's perspective. The author depicted through the book how an employee can make his/her organization a better place to work by displaying the right emotions.

Key words : emotional intelligence, stress management, social skills, self-motivation

JEL Classification : J24,M10,M14, Y92

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Book : *Human Drama Inc. Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace*

Author : Neeta Mohla, MD InspireOne Consultants

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Neeta Mohla, a trainer by profession, has depicted new insights of managing emotional intelligence at the work place through her book, *Human Drama Inc. Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace*. According to her, employees can make their organization a better place to work if they know how to manage their “emotional intelligence” with shrewdness and exhibit controlled behavior.

The author in this book has defined emotional intelligence as a combination of two words - “emotions” & “intelligence” and emphasizes that national, organizational, and professional cultures have an influence on the way emotions are perceived, interpreted, and also acted upon in an organization by an employee.

Every scene/chapter in this book ends with an activity or toolbox for self-assessment. These practical exercises help readers to analyze and overcome their shortcomings. Every concept presented in the book is sufficed with real-life experiences of persons, which makes the book highly readable and absorbing.

The book is presented in the form of five different 'ACTS,' unfolding 'DRAMA,' each presented in the form of small stories/situations. Each act is further presented in the form of scenes. Each scene is expressed with a real-life story.

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Act I

It focuses upon the concept of self - awareness. According to the author, there are four important concepts, that is, self-appraisal, emotional self-awareness, objectivity, and self-expression.

(1) Scene 1 - Self-Appraisal : The author, with this story, conveys to readers that one's passion and self-awareness can drive them to achieve their dreams, no matter how many troubles they face. Kamal, who hails from a middle-class family, always dreamt of becoming a film director. Being good academically, Kamal secured the much-needed scholarship at King's College, Cambridge University and thereby was hired by Harrison Consulting Group with a handsome salary. He started enjoying his job because it gave him an opportunity to travel across various countries on assignments. During such visits, he took out time from his work and started networking with film producers and directors. His dream of film making soon came true when he was offered to assist a big film maker in India. He took up this opportunity and there was no looking back. The author, with this story, conveys to her readers that with self-appraisal abilities, Kamal could ultimately realize his big dream of becoming a film director.

(2) Scene 2 - Self-Awareness : Meeta, a young woman working with an international consulting firm, loved her challenging job and was consistently climbing the ladder of success. Soon, trouble started in her married life and frequent quarrels at home started affecting her work. Meeta felt it was because of her demanding job that she was not able to focus on her personal life. However, she soon discovered that her spouse was cheating upon her, and this, in fact, affected her professional life and not the reverse. It was only when her marriage ended that Meeta reflected on her inner self and realized the cause of her anxiety and importance of dealing with problems on time and not ignoring them.

(3) Scene 3 - Objectivity : Sahil's story explains how lack of objectivity causes stress and impacts one's personality. Objectivity is one's ability to assess situations free from biases of one's own feelings, thoughts, etc. Sahil, who gets to mentor Mohit owing to his underperformance, coaches him to get better results. By the time Mohit improves his performance as per the parameters in place, the HR policy in the organization gets revised and as per the new scale, Mohit would still be an underperformer. Sahil, upon learning that Mohit cannot get promoted and unable to communicate the same to him, decides to resign. Sahil not able to objectively assess the situation ends up derailing his career path.

(4) Scene 4 - Self Expression : The author, through this scene, highlights the importance of belief in oneself. Akansha, a senior software engineer in an IT firm, was informed by her manager about the under-performance of her team. Since then, she started feeling the pressure at office. At the personal front, she always felt she was being taken for granted by her in-laws and felt helpless to confront anyone. When Akansha's manager enrolled her for a workshop, she realized the importance of expressing one's feelings and structuring messages while communicating. Post this workshop, Akansha started active communication in her team. One of her team members was surprised with the feedback given by Akansha regarding his under-performance, but he also felt good about the way Akansha communicated it. Akansha resolved to apply the same technique back home.

ACT II

This portion of the book explores five important concepts of self-management that include understanding stress management, impulse control, self-reliance, and adaptability.

(1) Scene 1 - Stress Management : Neeta insists that managing stress is important early in life. The protagonist Prashant is constantly derailed in his career because of his incapability to cope-up with stress. His career is getting affected owing to his frequent job hops. When probed by his father, Prashant reveals his inability to handle workplace pressures and taking decisions under extreme pressure. His father then recalls his childhood behavior of avoidance and falling sick before 'crucial examinations'. Through this, the author highlights the fact that a person's present behavior may have roots in his/her childhood.

(2) Scene 2 - Impulse Control : Shiv is a high performing employee. However, as a leader of the team, his performance is low. The reason being he constantly dictates his team members and assigns them targets, irrespective of their acceptance. He often lashes out at his team members in case of error and never gives an opportunity for them to explain. Shiv's manager makes him realize that good performance is not just about achieving numbers, but to master softer management skills. In short, to master impulse behavior.

(3) Scene 3 - Believing in Yourself : Ravi, who moved to India post partition, started working as a clerk in a construction company. As time passed, he started liking this industry and intended to start his own business in construction. When he received the marriage proposal of Geeta, whose father was a restaurateur, he agreed to marry her but disagreed to take over her father's business, even after much persuasion. Soon after his marriage, trouble started in his present company and the company had to be closed as it incurred huge losses. He now had to take care his father-in-law's restaurant to support himself and his family, but he did not give up his dream of starting his venture in construction. He partnered with one of his friends and floated a new construction company, putting all his experience from his previous organization to use. They started with small contracts and soon started getting big contracts. There was no looking back since then as Ravi's company got listed on NSE. Ravi's success was a result of sheer grit, determination, and self-belief.

(4) Scene 4 - Going with the Flow : Adaptability is key to one's success. One should accept change and adapt to it before being forced to change, or when it is too late. In this story, Harsh, a 25-year-old young journalist, learns to accept and adapt to change rather than being stagnant and reluctant. Harsh learnt this lesson from his father, Vinod's experience. Vinod, who was working with a company for 20 years, was transferred to their Pune branch for non-performance (though it was not true), however, Vinod could not adjust himself with new colleagues and work environment. Vinod was finally asked to take voluntary retirement. Vinod, who was apprehensive of working at a new work place, started giving home tuitions to earn his living.

(5) Scene 5 - Navigating Daily Obstacles : Problem-solving is an important skill and an asset for any employee. Mastering problem solving skills will help in foreseeing possible solutions for an issue on hand. Sandeep is a good worker, but lacks problem solving abilities. On a certain occasion, he failed to perform a task on time against his own anticipation. Sandeep was given a task of preparing a first level analysis report of a particular project with a deadline. He collected most of the information required, but certain information from corporate accounts was pending. Over the weekend, Sandeep did not receive the required information, nor did he take any proactive action. On the day of the deadline, Sandeep was too panicked to face his boss as nothing happened according to his anticipation.

Act III

In this section of the book, through a series of stories, three important components of self-motivation are expressed, they being - optimism, achievement drive, and contentment.

(1) Scene 1 - Staying Away from the Dark Side : In this scene, readers would understand how an optimistic approach contributes in making a successful career. Afzal was made to choose a career in engineering by his father against his wishes of making a career in art and design. Afzal was hired on-campus by a big MNC in the IT industry. He did join the company, but soon his manager observed that Afzal lacked the energy and interest in his current job. However, seeing a spark in Afzal, his manager decided to take him under his supervision. The new assignment of Afzal required him to work closely with the design team, and his joy was evident through his peak performance. His optimism finally paid off.

(2) Scene 2 - Striving to Realize your Potential : This scene highlights that the need for high achievement brings the best in an individual. Sylvester Lobo is the CEO of the fastest growing telecom handset manufacturing company and has two sons, Peter and Christopher. Mr. Lobo ensured that both his sons work in the family business and were inducted in junior management levels so that they would experience the nuances of the business. Christopher was rule-bound and risk-averse, while Peter was risk-taking and unconventional in his approach. When Peter demanded to get the responsibility of sales for a geographical region, he was given responsibility of the Chennai office, which was already in a state of non-profit. Peter was more than thrilled to take up this responsibility and through his dynamic and unconventional work style, the Chennai office of the company soon became profitable.

(3) Scene 3 - Having a Positive Approach to Life and Enjoying Yourself : In this scene, the author narrates the importance of being content in life. According to her, content people have full control over their life and enjoy their life. Radha, a pleasant lady with a decade of work experience, seems to be carrying the baggage of a broken marriage in her present life. Though she is doing decently well in her present job, she also has a big challenge of raising her daughter all alone. Most of her time and energy is spent on her work and the little one. She is doing everything right, but she has lost the ability to enjoy her life and, therefore, she is not leading a joyful and contented life.

Act IV

Human beings are social beings and they engage in social contacts, however, managing and cultivating relationship goes beyond simple communication.

(1) Scene 1 - Reaching Out and Creating Connections : The author feels an individual needs to be a good listener to be empathetic. An empathetic individual brings in a win-win situation for his/her business/organization. Mrs. Nambiar, branch manager of an international bank in Chennai, was given the task of communicating to her employees the harsh news of branch closure. At the same time, across all branches, an employee satisfaction survey was conducted that included the Chennai branch as well. Mr. Shroff, the managing director of the bank, sought the E-SAT for the Chennai branch, assuming the ratings would be negative. To his surprise, the E-SAT for this branch was 4 on 5. This made him to reschedule his visit to the Chennai branch only to find the empathetic, friendly attitude of Mrs. Nambiar towards her employees. Mr. Shroff understood that it's not the bad news that concerned the employees, but the way it was communicated to them and the empathetic approach of their manager.

(2) Scene 2 - The Power of True Communication : For the success of any organization, it is important that there exist trust among its employees. To ensure this trust and to keep employees motivated, effective communication system is of utmost importance. Sohini had joined MediaNow as a salesperson and within a quarter, she started showing results by achieving her target assigned. Ms. Ragini joined the organization as her sales head - a position

which Sohini was eyeing ever since the position was vacant. Sohini started resenting Ragini as she felt Ragini was not competent for the job and was openly sharing her opinion in the organization. Agitated, Sohini soon found a job with the competitor company - NewTimes. She presumed her previous clients would continue working with her in the new company. However, many refused to work with her owing to her vengeful act and negative word of mouth in the market.

Act V

Social skills play a very vital role in corporate life as well as personal life. Social skill is the ability to get along with people and establish a relationship. In this Act, two important components of social skills - interpersonal relations and group orientation are explained with appropriate real-life examples.

(1) Scene 1 - Building Bridges, not Walls : Interpersonal skills are a prerequisite in both personal and professional life ; education alone does not ensure it. Srishti was very focused since her school days and planned to go for higher studies to Trinity University, Texas. Being focused, she always spent time among books, completely ignoring her college and social life. Though she achieves all that she ever wanted to in professional life, her personal life faltered when she was termed highly introvert and less caring by her husband. No wonder her marriage ended. In contrast, Farhan, Srishti's classmate in school, was active socially, made friends, and was ever smiling. His social aptitude helped him not only to establish his entrepreneurial venture, but also lead a happy personal life.

(2) Scene 2 - Becoming Part of a Larger Whole : Accepting the larger opinion of the group while keeping aside personal interests is an important trait of a successful manager. Abhijit was known in the industry for his sound knowledge and strategic thinking ability. When he joined Xenon Company, his initial performance reports were good, but it slowly started falling. Alarmed by the report, Abhijit called for a group meeting to discuss the future course of action. He proposed to launch a new product for the young age group. The product did not get good reviews from test marketing. Majority of his group members were of the view that the launching of the product must be deferred as the market timing was not appropriate. Abhijit did not want to give-up this product; however, he assured the group that he would introspect his decision. At the end, he decided to go by his group's decision, thereby upholding group values against his individual interests.

Conclusion

The author, in a very crisp manner, within limited pages (185 pages) has focused on application of emotional intelligence in dealing with critical organizational issues such as conflict, change, performance, customer service, and leadership. This book would act as a great source of learning for leaders, managers, employers, and employees of any organization to get insights about emotional intelligence typically/practically applied at the workplace, personal life, and also for self-growth. This book would act as an eye-opener both for employees and organizations who still dwell in the conventional hierarchical structure where employees are expected to accept the supremacy of their superiors and encourage no direct communication. The book can serve as a useful source even for the corporate trainers to update themselves on the emerging trends of emotional intelligence.