

# Sharing a lousy temper with the team helps mental task performance

November 2 2010

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Managers who want their team to perform better should let employees express negative emotions. Teams who share bad feelings solve complicated problems better, share more information with each other and have a greater solidarity, concludes Dutch researcher Annefloor Klep.

Many organizations want their employees to regulate [negative emotions](#) and only show positive ones. However, from the experiments of Annefloor Klep it has become apparent that this isn't always the right strategy. She found out that teams which share positive emotions are better at creative tasks; however, analytical tasks are handled better if a [team](#) shares negative emotions.

Klep let her test subjects see cheerful films or specifically sad ones, and looked afterwards at how her fictitious employees worked together and how successful they were in performing creative or specifically analytical tasks. Groups who were shown sad films and talked about it before they started their task, performed difficult decision-making tasks the best, also better than groups who had seen a sad movie but hadn't been allowed to discuss it. A team can therefore benefit considerably from expressing negative feelings and sharing these.

Moreover, in certain conflict situations, sharing negative emotions appeared to work out positively. The researcher gave certain teams the impression that there was a problem with their relationships. These types of relationship conflicts can significantly hinder working together

effectively. However, by sharing negative feelings the group members can more easily put aside their problems. They don't waste time on the conflict and can completely focus on the job they have to finish as a team.

However, only complaining is not a smart idea. Sharing positive emotions has its advantages as well. Creative tasks are thus easier for a team, certainly if the team members aren't sure about their feelings. Unsure group members feel empowered by this.

According to Klep, teams which often work together over a longer period of time can reap greater rewards by sharing emotions. If teams expect to have to meet with each other again at a later stage, the effect of sharing negative emotions is even greater than that of sharing positive ones. Analytical tasks are performed better; however, the creative process is certainly under a lot of pressure.

Provided by Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)

Citation: Sharing a lousy temper with the team helps mental task performance (2010, November 2) retrieved 3 May 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2010-11-lousy-temper-team-mental-task.html>

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