

LEADERSHIP LESSONS FROM TANGO... **(Part 2)**

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(Part 2)

Dear Reader,

This is the second part of my article on leadership lessons that one can learn from tango. This time, I would like to share with you the 2nd insight that I learned while I was learning tango.

Tango requires a very good combination of masculine and feminine energies. At first glance, the business world doesn't seem to require the same combination: many successful managers (male or female) get by or even succeed by tapping exclusively into their masculine energy.

Although a leader can succeed by using mostly masculine energy, the truly inspiring leaders are the ones who know how to use both.

Let's have a closer look at what I mean by "feminine energy" and "masculine energy".

Feminine energy, in women or in men, is the energy that makes it possible to sense and feel other people, to connect with their emotional state, to pay full attention to the quality of a relationship, sometimes giving it priority over any other consideration.

The masculine energy, in women and in men, is the one-pointed energy oriented to achievement, making it possible to focus entirely on one goal decisively. It may lead to the point of disregarding any other aspect, sometimes at the expense of personal relationships.

All of us have a combination of these two energies to some degree. **The thing is, masculine energy is much more valued than feminine energy in a corporate environment.**

For instance, there are still many companies where the HR Department, the only one where feminine energy is “officially” required, is still struggling to be as influential as others at the board level.

In tango, masculine energy is a must for the leader (usually the man, most couples being made of a man and a woman). Decisiveness for every step is crucial. Leading assertively is what is expected, and hesitations regarding the next step will contribute to damaging the harmony with the follower.

Feminine energy in tango is just as important as masculine energy. Tango dancers talk a lot about the connection with the follower. Some teachers even convey the message that this connection is what matters most.

Nurturing this connection means consciously paying attention to the feelings of the follower, to her breathing, to where her body is. This makes it necessary to pause at times for a few seconds, especially in case the leader has been focusing too much on his own steps or on the next steps, losing awareness of what his partner was experiencing.

There is always a risk of losing the connection with the follower, and masterful dancers are the ones who never lose this connection. Because they value it highly.

The same scenario is observable in the corporate setting. **I have seen many cases in my professional work with leaders where this connection between a leader and a follower is damaged or lost because the leader used mostly her or his masculine energy to lead.** The end result often is dis-engaged team members.

What about you? **What energy are you mostly relying on?**

Are you taking pauses in your striving to achieve your goals in order to re-establish the connection with your followers? To connect with them to sense what they feel and need? **Are you making enough use of your feminine energy (a question particularly relevant for male leaders)?**

If not, you are probably missing a chance to enjoy the benefits of an authentic connection with your followers: harmony, engagement, and, last but not least, enjoyment.

Warmly

Sebastien



Sebastien Henry is **Progress-U's expert for Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and stress management**. He works with executives who want to:

- avoid feeling exhausted and uprooted as their career takes them to the top;
- become more inspiring leaders by developing their Emotional Intelligence (EQ) at work; and, as a consequence
- be able to motivate their people more and retain the best.

Having worked in an Asia-Pacific regional position at a multinational company, Sebastien has experimented extensively on how to develop Emotional Intelligence in his daily work life. He is currently writing a book on this topic. His articles on Emotional Intelligence in Leadership have been published in Human Resources and South China Morning Post.

He firmly believes in action, and the tools he uses and shares are derived from several areas of his life: his business experience as a corporate executive, of course, but also his intensive practice of mountaineering and rock climbing (7a on-sight and more than 50 alpine routes), his commitment to teach and coach prisoners, and his daily meditations for more than six years.

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