

# What a business leader can learn from blushing



We all have in our minds certain qualities and physical attributes we admire about a leader. If you are pursuing a leadership role or finding yourself becoming an unexpected leader, there's a myriad of leadership training to guide you.

However, I must warn you there's nothing to prepare you for the "leadership blush" that heat intensifying, full-face,

blood rushing blush coming out of nowhere.

## **Blushing**

Mechanically, blushing is simply a spontaneous opening of the blood vessels allowing more blood to reach the skin surface of the face and neck. This causes an overall reddening of the area which may last for several seconds.

Psychologically, the blushing response is based on an emotional trigger. The triggers are most likely to be situations of embarrassment or some form of social anxiety.

## **Blushing Circumstances**

Some of the unexpected circumstances that set off these emotional triggers for anyone, but especially for leaders are

- Being caught off guard, unprepared or in circumstances not knowing how to respond
- Sensitivity to criticism or afraid of what others think about you
- Not comfortable when being singled out for recognition or praise
- Being asked person questions
- Creating a faux pas over not knowing the rules, the way things are done, or what is expected

## **What's to be learned from blushing**

Blushing is a built-in human response and some blush more or less than others.

Blushing is an indication that human emotions are part of an interdependent networking system of a mind-body unit.

Research shows that emotions are peptide hormones acting as messengers and sharing information between the brain/mind and the body.

It's these emotion messengers produced in both the brain and

the body that trigger the psycho-physiological blushing response.

### **Avoiding the “leadership blush”**

Part of being a leader is being prepared and knowing that you can't control everything. Problems, miscommunication, and mistakes will happen and that they need to be resolved as quickly as possible. But, nobody wants to be caught in a blush.

While that's true, there's nothing to stop it once your emotion messengers have been set in motion. However, here's what you can do to minimize blushing

- Make sure you're prepared as you possibly can be.
- Have some deflecting statements ready at hand. Watch any political talk show and notice how politicians defer from answering certain questions.
- Rehearse your responses to any potential criticisms.
- If you find yourself in an embarrassing situation, find something humorous to say if appropriate.
- Created a faux pas? Acknowledge your lack of knowledge and apologize.
- If uncomfortable with recognition and praise, smile, say thank you, and keep smiling.

Being a leader is tough and blushing in embarrassing circumstances is an honest response to who you are. What blushing moments to you remember?

Watch how these two presidential leaders handled it.