

The things a dragon fly can teach us.

Insects have many interesting and useful traits that are helpful for us consider in our own lives.

I was walking through the beautiful grounds of a training facility in Pakua, Tangail about three hours drive from Dhaka, Bangladesh last week.



I was snapping pictures of the local scenery particularly the flowers when a large dragon fly landed on a branch in front of me.



This dragonfly had me thinking that we can learn interesting lessons from the insects around us.

I explored three interesting facts about dragon flies and this is what I discovered.

Rest and relaxation to prepare.

Dragonflies cannot work their wing muscles well when they are cold and so they take their time to warm up ensuring their wings work efficiently. They bask in the sun or exercise them to prepare themselves for flight.

The same is true for us humans. We need to have time to prepare, to build our strength and to practice using our “muscles”. In the work place - being able to prepare ourselves to be focused, to think well; prepare our

relationships for good team work and lastly rest when we are tired and care for ourselves.

In today’s world of instant communication and constantly being available we need to remember to rest and relax.

Our organisations need to also use the idea of preparing by allowing time for rejuvenation, development of ideas and ensuring that its systems are ready to go.

Many examples of poor testing of new changes abound and led to waste and frustration.

Teach our young.

Some dragonflies are multi-generational migrators, flying annually around the world. They have an ability to teach their young what to do and where to go even after their own death. They have been doing this for centuries.

Passing down old knowledge was a useful practice in previous centuries. Have we in our western ways for the most part, forgotten that? We need to think like the dragonfly and consider a multigenerational focus. Aboriginal people from the central desert in Australia already know this and consider seven generations ahead before making wise decisions.

What can we do to stretch the short term thinking of our organisations, businesses, governments and our communities to consider the long game?

In organisations, how can we ensure people leaving and those arriving can learn from each other? And how can you support yourself to think for the long term, perhaps seven generations into the future instead of one pay packet until the next?

Agility in response to demands.

Dragon flies have the ability to fly up to speeds of 97 km/hr and can decelerate from 56 km/hr - 0 km/hr in less than a second! They can even fly backwards. Their two sets of wings are part of the reason they are exceptionally agile. This of course helps it cope with finding prey and changing wind conditions.

How can we be flexible, agile and adapt to the changing times we are living in whilst being prepared and able to back track if we need to? Developing our personal risk management skills means having strategies for observing and recognising risk, for thinking well before making decisions in the moment and the ability to respond with agility when faced with adverse conditions.

Our organisations need to have the collective skills, systems and strategies that allow a change in direction when that is what is required.

My take on the three skills of the dragonfly are rooted in the concept of emotional intelligence. Specifically: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and communication.

We need these skills more than ever. Take time to develop them in yourself.

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