

### **EXERCISE: GAUGING THE MOOD (Post Workshop)**

Next Time you are in a meeting at work, assess the mood of the group at work, assess the mood of the group by simply relying on sensory information – what you see and hear.

#### **Seeing:**

- Pay attention to how people look at one another whilst they are speaking or listening. Do they look each other straight in the eye (which may indicate confidence)?
- Does the speaker look at everyone or just focus on one individual? (The former could reflect comfort with the group as a whole and a sense of the group being a team.)
- Do listeners stay focused or do their eyes wander? (The former suggests interest in what is being said, the latter indicates lack of interest.)
- Do you see people smile, smirk, frown or glare?

#### **Hearing**

- Tune into the sounds in the room, people's voices.
- When a person speaks, is there quiet except for the person's voice or do you hear people moving in their chairs? (The former suggests interest, the latter perhaps boredom)
- Do people speak stridently (this might reflect anger or frustration) or hesitantly (this might reflect a lack of knowledge of the subject)?
- Do you hear a lot of mumbled conversations while someone is talking? (This could indicate enthusiasm with what the person has to say and eagerness among individuals to comment further. Or, could it denote disapproval, with individuals expressing their disagreement to the colleagues?)
- Do people yell or whisper, moan or interrupt?

At the end of the meeting, look at all the information you have collected and see what you can reduce about the mood of the group, based solely on this information.

- Was the team enthusiastic?
- Did they seem pleased that management was willing to try some new idea?
- Did they appear to want to work together as a group to implement the changes?
- Did they all appear to grasp the importance of making the changes?

This observation exercise shows how sensory information can be used to influence your assessments. Being aware of how this happens enables you to rely more on your senses and therefore establish more accurate assessments. It helps you to move from what you think you see, to what you actually observe.

Source: adapted from *Emotional Intelligence at Work*, Hendrie Weisinger