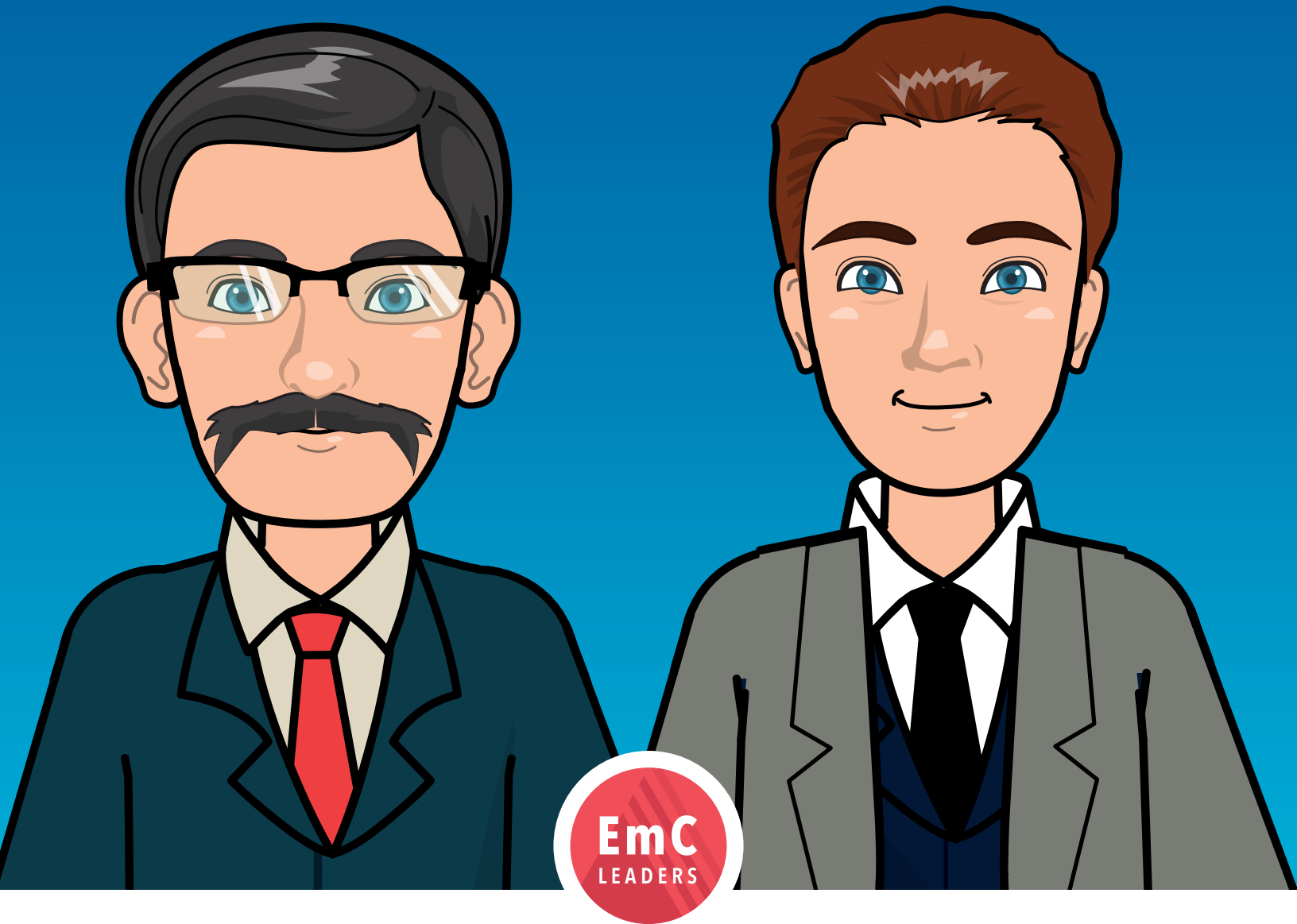


# Tom and Brandon

## CASE STUDY



Presented by: EmC Leaders

In this case study, we will show you how Tom and Brandon move from the spiral of disconnection to a conversation of connection and repair.



Tom is the CEO of an energy company. He has an excellent resume and top-notch leadership experience.



Brandon is the IT manager. As an expert in his field, his technical skills are critical to the company.

They have worked together for two years and care a lot about the products they are developing.



Tom and Brandon have been experiencing some difficulties in their interaction and in meetings.



Tom becomes withdrawn and distant, and Brandon becomes aggressive. He lectures Tom, criticizes, and tells him how to act with other managers.

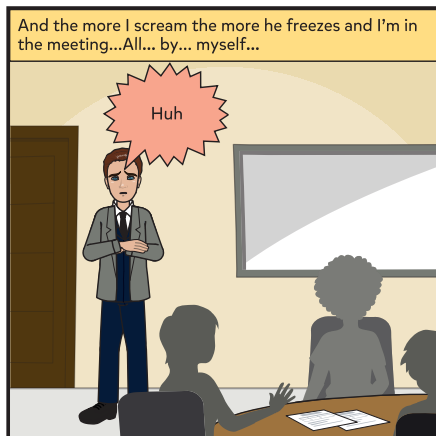
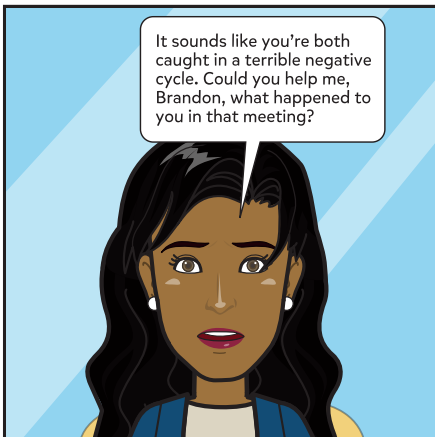
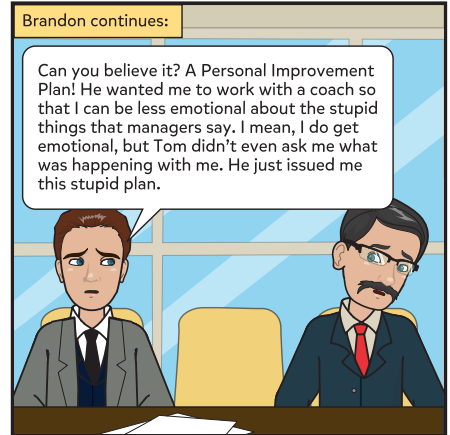
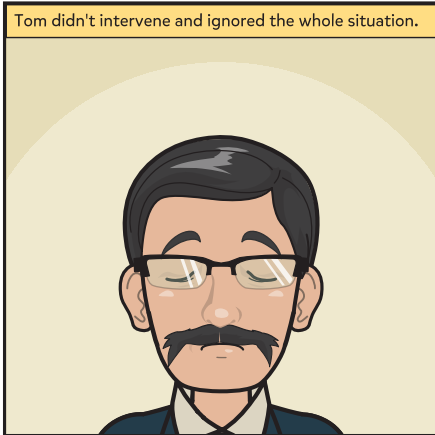


When Tom hears it, he shuts down and avoids Brandon. He doesn't look, respond or engage with him. The more Tom ignores him, the more aggressive Brandon becomes.



This pattern has been going on for some time. They have agreed to attend an EmC session with Anna, an EmC Certified Coach.



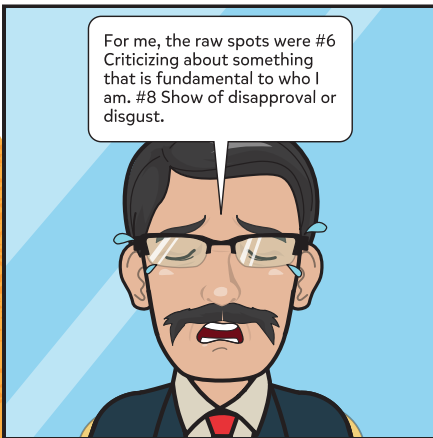


Brandon's amygdala picks up on Tom's shutdown. As Tom stonewalls Brandon the main emotional message that comes through is, "I don't matter to Tom. He doesn't care about me." Attachment panic is now hijacking both of their brains.



And indeed, that makes sense. The things that Tom is saying have been said by many withdrawers. That's the phenomenon that goes on when people get overwhelmed.

Our brains read the message on the other person's face in 100 milliseconds, and in another 300 milliseconds, we literally feel what the other person feels, courtesy of mirror neurons. So, when Tom sees Brandon's irritation, he becomes overwhelmed and shuts down.



As Tom shares his raw spots, his face changes and he looks very sad.





As Brandon shares his raw spots, he becomes calm, his tonality changes into reflective, and he looks sad. Courtesy of his mirror neurons, Brandon feels Tom's helplessness and moves from misattunement and disconnection into a moment of reflection.



Emotions are fast. Research shows that naming primary and softer emotions calms people down, allowing them to be more open and responsive to the other person's experience and be empathic.



Brandon talks about his emotions in a way that acknowledges and exposes his vulnerability and pain. He does not assign blame to Tom. This ability to express pain through emotions is the first step in the EmC roadmap to reconnection.



As Tom gets in touch with his emotions, he explores and discloses his experience. He is able to reflect; his prefrontal cortex can reengage as his amygdala relaxes, and stops the alarm signals that control his energy and attention.



My image is like I'm a blank piece of paper flapping around, lost in the wind, with lots of energy wasted.



My image is like I'm standing all by myself and the rest of the team are pointing their guns at me.



The life-and-death imagery of "gunpoint" is typical. This kind of attachment distress, unless and until it is repaired, will continually trigger and spark the negative pattern again and again.



My whole body starts to shake.



I feel tightness in my chest.



I hear you. That is a terrifying feeling. What was your worst fear about yourself, the other person and your relationship in that moment?



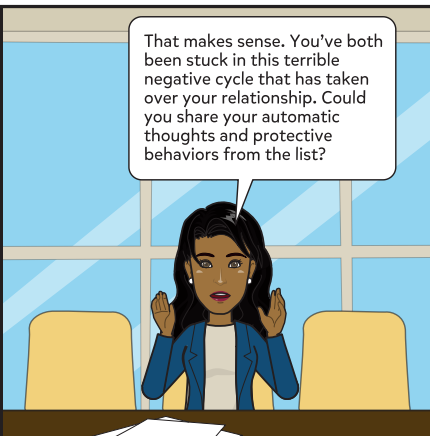
My worst fear is that I'm inadequate as a CEO. Brandon will think that I don't care about him, and our relationship will continue to suffer.



My worst fear is that I'm a failure.



My worst fear is that I'm a failure. I've lost Tom and I'm standing all by myself. We'll be stuck in a perpetual disconnection.



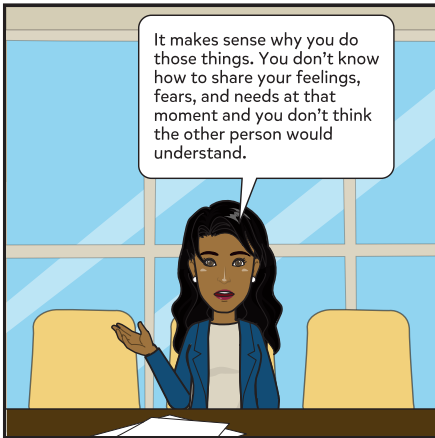
That makes sense. You've both been stuck in this terrible negative cycle that has taken over your relationship. Could you share your automatic thoughts and protective behaviors from the list?



My thoughts are... How dare you and I have to stop you.



My thoughts are... I give up and what does it take to get this right?

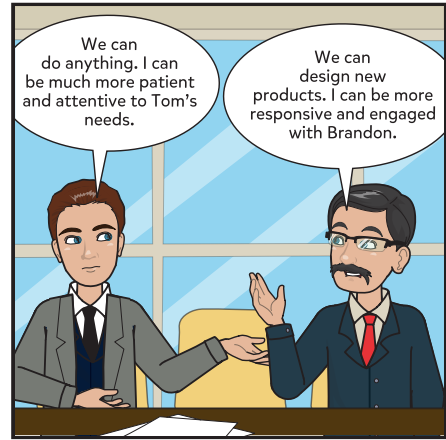


Tom and Brandon are moving into a bonding conversation where they can be open to share what they need to feel safe and connected. Anna helps them to clarify their needs. This is the step for forming a more secure bond. As they do this step they open the door for change.



This is touchdown. Their emotions and the needs behind them are now organized, so they can be more clear and coherent with their message. They can be there for each other and offer a safe haven and secure base. This kind of response changes the bond and the relationship.

Research shows that we can change these strategies; we can learn to use new steps to change the music and create a new dance. Now, Tom and Brandon feel safe to be curious and explore a new way of interacting.



As Tom and Brandon relax and shape a safe connection, they can better communicate, be more productive, and engage in a much more effective way than before. With synchrony in their interaction, they'll continue to nurture their connection.

Guiding this conversation using the EmC Model, Anna helped Tom and Brandon reach new levels of understanding and trust, levels that will persist and make their relationship stronger.

You have taken a journey through the science of emotional connection. It is our survival code and contains a roadmap that we can understand and learn. This means that creating resilient teams is not a dream, but an attainable goal. And that changes everything.

Learn more at [www.emcleaders.com](http://www.emcleaders.com)