

# Emotional and Social Intelligence



## Managing Emotions Within Yourself and With Others

Whether we are aware of them or not, emotions affect how we experience life; they are a basic element of our human nature and cast a hue on how we perceive the events that take place around us. Being aware of our emotions helps us function better as individuals and as members of groups. On a personal level, understanding and mastering emotions helps us develop traits such as discipline, drive and motivation. This self-awareness can, in turn, make us more adept at reading other people's feelings and seeing their multidimensionality which increases our ability to communicate with them more effectively. This, of course, is critical to any great leader as his/her success is dependent on the ability to influence, inspire, motivate, persuade and develop others.

### *Why it matters:*

*Empathic emotion, as rated from the leader's subordinates, positively predicts job performance rating from the leader's boss.*

## Steps to Developing Your Emotional and Social Intelligence

### **Develop Emotional Self-Awareness**

Ask yourself: What you are feeling (anger, happiness, fear)? When you are feeling it (after a particular experience, during a specific time of day, in the presence of a particular person)? What brings on that feeling (is there a trigger for this emotion)? What makes it more or less intense (do I react more strongly given any particular set of circumstances)?

### **Exercise Self-Management**

Be flexible and adaptable to various work situations and control the way you express feelings or emotions, especially strong ones. Remain positive and focus on results. Use

your self-awareness to anticipate how you might react impulsively or become angry, depressed or agitated by conflicts and stress at work. For example, if you feel anger rising, take a step back and practice postponing your response time until you can calm down and evaluate a situation. Or, if you're feeling anxious, ask yourself: What's really going on here? What's the worst thing that could happen and how likely is it? Is this within my control and, if so, what can I do about it?

### **Cultivate Empathy**

Practicing empathy (singled out by Forbes contributor George Anders as “The Number One Job Skill in 2020”) is trying to experience the feelings, thoughts or motives of another person. Empathy is one of the five key components of emotional intelligence. Making a habit of reading other people's moods and body language and attempting to understand the reasons for their actions as well as their values and points of view require much skill and repetition. Remind yourself that your perspective is unique to yourself and try to listen with the intention of understanding what others are expressing or feeling. Showing empathy does not mean that you agree with the other person, but it reveals that you are trying to understand how they see things from their point of view.

### **Manage Your Relationships**

An emotionally intelligent leader can manage relationships effectively by offering feedback, encouragement and true concern for the development of others. Recognizing the many dimensions that make up a person (his/her experiences, values, interests, personal relationships, talents and struggles) will only enhance a leader's ability to inspire and bring out the best in him/herself and others. But remember, managing relationships requires willingness and time.

### **Tune into Others to Develop Social Awareness**

Learn how to “read” people. Be attentive not just to their words but to how they are communicating with their bodies. Is someone avoiding your gaze, fidgeting, sighing or slouching? Sometimes our bodies' messages do not agree with our verbal messages. Pay attention to non-verbal clues about how people might be feeling and remain mindful of how your own body language may be sending signals.

### **Remain Open and Constantly Seek Feedback**

Seeking feedback is not seeking approval but rather remaining open to reevaluating yourself and your actions against the information that you receive. 360° evaluations (which provide leaders with anonymous feedback from a variety of raters including colleagues, direct reports, supervisors and customers) are a great feedback tool on your emotional and social savvy. Also, test your abilities by asking others you trust if you have correctly identified their emotional clues and don't be afraid to explore your own thoughts and reactions.

Having a certain level of education, understanding job duties and expectations, and acquiring experience are important for professional success. However, if you seek to excel as a leader, developing emotional and social intelligence can make the difference between routinely managing workers and truly inspiring others to join you enthusiastically in achieving a common purpose.

## Developing Empathy

1. Listen – truly listen to people
2. Don't interrupt
3. Tune in to non-verbal communication
4. Spend time understanding how you come across
5. Use people's names
6. Be fully present
7. Smile
8. Encourage people when they speak up
9. Give genuine praise and recognition
10. Take a personal interest in people
11. Imagine what it's like to do someone else's job
12. Ask clarifying questions (Why? When? How?)

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