



Book

Working With Emotional Intelligence

Daniel Goleman
 Bantam, 2000
 First Edition: 1998
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Emotions convey lessons you – and your organization – need to know. First step: self-awareness, for you and the company.

Recommendation

Author Daniel Goleman applies the rules of "emotional intelligence" to the workplace. Being intelligent counts in the world of business, but the interpersonal smarts referred to as "emotional competencies" count even more. Goleman, who wrote the seminal book *Emotional Intelligence*, underscores his conclusion with numerous studies and anecdotes, showing that those who have "people skills" are likelier to succeed. Skills that help teams collaborate are increasingly important as coalition building emerges as the model for getting things done. Goleman includes thorough guidelines for implementing effective "EQ" training programs. Companies that train managers in "emotional competencies" reap concrete business benefits: increased sales, more seamless teamwork, and constant improvement based on analysis and feedback. *getAbstract* highly recommends this well-written book on how understanding feelings adds to your bottom line.

In this summary, you will learn

- Why "emotional intelligence" is crucial to leaders, teams and organizations
- How to improve your company's "EQ" and your own

Take-Aways

- As your career advances, interpersonal skills matter more than cognitive skills.
- Luckily, unlike cognitive skills, you can improve your "emotional competencies."
- To improve your "empathy," the core attribute of emotional skill, learn to listen.
- Emotional awareness is honed during downtime, and yet you must be able to draw upon it in a pinch. Take time to develop it.
- Understanding your own feelings improves your ability to understand others' feelings. It sharpens your "radar."
- Be aware that in some cases too much empathy is inappropriate.
- "Feedback" is essential when you are trying to change ingrained habits. Keep track of your progress as you improve your emotional skills.

- Moods are catching, so try to spread a good one. Understand what affects your mood.
- Many characteristics that help individuals succeed are also important for organizations, such as reliability, openness and emotional sensitivity.
- "Emotionally intelligent" organizations value the bottom line contribution of employees who practice "soft people skills."

Summary

“Emotional awareness starts with attunement to the stream of feeling that is a constant presence in all of us and with a recognition of how these emotions shape what we perceive, think and do.”

“From that awareness comes another: that our feelings affect those we deal with.”

“People gravitate to what gives them meaning, to what engages...their commitment, talent, energy and skill. That can mean changing jobs to get a better fit with what matters to us.”

People Who Like People

Managers today worry about losing their jobs – and with good reason. The days of working 30 years for one company and then retiring are done. An advanced degree and technical know-how do not guarantee that you will keep your job. Evidence reveals that today's employers seek new hires who have better listening skills, who accept criticism well, whose personalities exhibit overall situational flexibility and who are self-directed. Companies now need employees with "people skills." In the modern workforce, "emotional intelligence" or "EQ," offers a more complete measure of professional success than IQ. Many studies show that IQ without an emotional component is not enough for success. But, in contrast to cognitive intellect, you can improve your emotional intelligence.

The emotional competencies necessary for success include the ability to self-start, grasp personality-based politics and get along with others. Companies prize these skills more than know-how. Studies probing different angles of what you need to be a "top performer" all yield the same startling result: most companies feel that interpersonal skills are more important to job excellence than intellectual ability or technical understanding, in fact, they are twice as important. "Emotional competence" is a particularly crucial component of leadership.

Go with Your Gut

Aside from talent and expertise, to excel you need such emotional skills as self-knowledge, the ability to manage your feelings, concern for others, social adroitness, enthusiasm and commitment. Developing "rapport" requires gaining trust, the key to influencing others and getting your goals approved. These emotional intelligence competencies are the basis of strong leadership skills.

Emotional strength enhances decision making. Heed your intuition. Those vague feelings about the right thing to do in a given situation provide a wealth of input you should weigh. Your feelings add dimension to your choices. People who are aware of their feelings and their impact show more empathy. How can you improve your self-awareness? One way is to keep a journal of behaviors you want to change, so you can analyze them later for clues about what sets off your ingrained emotional patterns. For example, record the moments when you get irritable or say something you regret to develop a list you can use to identify conditions or situations that provoke you, so you approach them with more self-awareness in the future.

Unless you allow space in your life to listen to your emotions, you cannot develop your awareness of the nuances of your inner emotional "radar." Emotions evolve in a different time frame and do not respond to deadlines. They are not available on demand. You must cultivate the space for emotional awareness, tune into it and explore it to get to know it. That requires downtime for quiet contemplation of your emotional reactions.

Self-confidence resonates with others; it inspires trust. Those who lack confidence find it hard to make tough decisions in the face of unknown variables, especially decisions that contradict the prevailing view. Self-confidence stokes courage and

“These times call for... adaptability. Stars in this competence relish change and find exhilaration in innovation. They are open to new information and...can let go of old assumptions, and so adapt how they operate.”

“The more accurately we can monitor our emotional upsets, the sooner we can recover from distress... Emotional clarity, it seems, enables us to manage bad moods.”

“Influence entails handling emotions effectively in other people...Star performers are artful at sending emotional signals, which makes them powerful communicators, able to sway an audience – in short, leaders.”

“Just one cognitive ability distinguished star performers from average: pattern recognition, the ‘big-picture’ thinking that allows others to pick out the meaningful trends from the welter of information around

risk taking. An AT&T study showed that mid-level executives with a strong belief in their skills from the beginning of their careers had greater success. A study that followed people over their lifetimes found that those with more childhood self-confidence reap greater professional rewards as adults.

The Flow of Information

The brain's cognitive and emotional centers sometimes work at odds with each other. Under stress, the brain's emotional center switches into the emergency response mode and siphons off resources your mind usually devotes to cognition. This happens when people suffer "stage fright" and fear overwhelms the brain's ability to recall what they were supposed to do.

Too much sensory stimulation, an overload of information flooding in at once, destroys the mind's ability to focus and stresses the body into perpetual emergency survival mode. Being able to activate your emotional restraint is crucial for performing under stress, not only for the benefit of remaining diplomatic even when you're angry, but also for the ability to concentrate despite "distractions." Of course, you should remain aware of your emotions, and even use them to reach your goals. However, allowing emotion to override your ability to function rationally leads only to negative consequences. Don't let anger and fear derail you.

Business success demands a steady attitude and a dependable manner. You must adjust calmly to unforeseen changes and remain emotionally open. In the work world, you cannot let a passing state of mind dictate your actions. To maintain the serenity you need for work, cultivate strategies for coping with stress. To make those around you feel confident about you, be sure they always know where you stand. Act transparently and ethically. If you're scrupulous, even if you make a mistake, others will trust you to admit it and try to fix it.

Change is a fact, especially in business. It requires the ability to acclimatize to meet constantly shifting demands, and to entertain new ideas and novel approaches to old problems. Creativity is really just daydreaming unless you add the "emotional competencies" to present new ideas to others and ask for their support.

Work that combines a sense of challenge and creativity, work you love, makes it easy to become so absorbed that you lose track of time, achieving a state of "flow." This focuses all of your senses in the service of your work. Inspiring work energizes you to do your best and makes the labor seem almost effortless. Such motivation is important for peak performance. Employers prize this level of dedication, "drive to achieve," optimism, quest for constant improvement and ability to self-start. Employees who feel their company's values align with their own come closest to this level of commitment, which breeds loyalty and trust. An optimistic attitude can make a real difference in how workers view reversals, either as opportunities to learn from their errors or as devastating obstacles.

Strengthening Ties

One tried-and-true strategy for increasing sales is to put yourself in your customer's shoes and figure out what you can suggest to improve his or her business. This ability to intuit the feelings of others by picking up subtle clues about their personalities, likes and dislikes from their behavior or vocal mannerisms is called "empathy." The inability to empathize indicates a concomitant lack of social grace. Empathy is an essential building block in the social skills necessary for business. Sensitivity to others' needs underlies the ability to provide good service, be a mentor and navigate diverse, and sometimes conflicting, workplace personalities.

Develop greater empathy by consciously improving your listening skills. This has a bonus: If you are a good listener, people will want to tell you more. However, as crucial as it is to be sensitive to others' feelings and wishes, to get your employees

them and to think strategically far into the future.”

“While...relevant technical expertise is vital to generating innovative ideas, when it comes to putting those ideas to practical use, navigating the web of influence that permeates an organization makes all the difference.”

“The art of maximizing intellectual capital lies in orchestrating the interactions of the people whose minds hold that knowledge and expertise.”

“Understanding someone's point of view or perspective – knowing why they feel as they do – does not inevitably mean embracing it.”

“Beyond zero tolerance for intolerance, the ability to leverage diversity revolves

to improve, you must be able to give them constructive, objective feedback. Sometimes too much empathy can be a drawback, particularly if you must make a decision without regard to emotional fallout. However, optimal productivity requires strong interpersonal relationships, which you may devastate if you do not pay enough attention to the emotional impact of your decisions. This balancing act requires sensitivity to everyone's needs.

Knowing how to respect the differences among people in today's culturally diverse workforce, while pulling everyone together as a team, is a crucial management skill. If you create an atmosphere of respect for each person's skills and encourage assorted perspectives, your team members' differences can lead to unexpected "opportunities." Whether you are aware of your impact or not, your attitudes, feelings and expectations influence those around you. Try to become aware. Understanding and evaluating others' feelings underlies all negotiations. The easiest way to persuade others is to start from their desires and expectations, as you see them. Getting what you want requires building an emotional connection to those you wish to direct or persuade.

Part of strengthening your empathy is developing the ability to set aside distracting thoughts and emotions, so you are fully present for the situation at hand. Marshalling your feelings is crucial to interpreting the underlying politics of any situation you seek to influence.

Following the Leader

Many people are adept at the "social skills" needed to advance, yet they falter because they don't remain open to those they supervise. Subordinates follow leaders, but not just to serve business goals. People follow a leader's style, energy level and emotional approach. When leaders convey loyalty to the firm and optimism about it, workers resonate to that message.

If you use your listening skills, empathy and sensitivity to understand other people's fears, you will develop the tact you need to be a leader, especially in tough times. People are inspired to excel when they see clearly that the leader values their individual contributions. Leaders' emotional intelligence translates to organizational EQ. Often that attribute attracts clients, even more than brains or track record. Once again, the skills that create empathy – active listening and seeing a situation from another's point of view – are vital.

Emotionally Intelligent Networks

Networks that harness the creativity and intellectual power of groups are increasingly important. When a team performs with "EQ," the results are better than managers might forecast just based on the individual abilities of the team members. Identifying what you might have in common with another team member is an important first step in building and maintaining rapport. In time, such connections result in a network of interpersonal relationships that extend your potential influence beyond the limits of your individual reach.

In the past, star employees were rewarded more than good team players. That is changing as businesses realize significant bottom-line results based on working teams. A loose confederation of team members, including supervisors, tends to work better than a traditional authoritarian structure. Team rules that emphasize respect and openness engender solidarity, creativity and goal-driven consensus. An adept team leader should model confidence, openness to new ideas and eagerness to analyze feedback to improve the team's results.

Bolstering Your EQ

As you mature, so does your radar for sensing the emotional dimension in your interactions. You can enhance your ability in this area with practice, but you must be willing to change old habits. That requires awareness of your ingrained feelings, responses and behaviors. It means developing a plan to replace an old

around three skills: getting along well with people who are different, appreciating the unique ways others may operate, and seizing whatever business opportunity these unique approaches might offer.”

“Persuasion is lubricated by identifying a bond or commonality; taking time to establish one is not a detour but an essential step.”

habit with a new one, as well as committing to being patient and allocating time to let a new behavior take hold. Focus on one realistic goal at a time. To measure your progress, develop a plan that includes feedback. This provides the objective assessment you need to adjust your behavior. Scrutinize and challenge interactions that don't work to ascertain the underlying presumptions they might reveal.

Only those organizations that appreciate people skills and value relationship-based programs, such as mentoring, will reap the benefits of "emotional intelligence." Too often people-to-people skills, and the time it takes to develop them, are under appreciated.

Beware of the bad habits of emotionally clueless organizations. They give their people too much to do. They micromanage subordinates. They don't show enough employee appreciation, a problem that is reflected in a lack of positive feedback, career opportunities and fair pay. Indifference to creating a workplace "community," or blithe oblivion to unfair or unethical company practices, erodes employees' confidence in the organization. To improve overall functioning and reap the rewards of emotional intelligence, implement policies that improve your organization's self-awareness. Companies must become sensitive to providing the intangible benefits people need to connect their personal values to their jobs. "Collaboration," honest communication and attention to basic human emotional needs, such as respect, will go a long way toward raising your organization's EQ.

About the Author

Daniel Goleman received his Ph.D. from Harvard and is Co-Director of the Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations at Rutgers University. He is the author of many books, including the groundbreaking *Emotional Intelligence*.

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