



DEVELOPING YOUR  
EMOTIONAL  
INTELLIGENCE

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# Emotional Intelligence

DRIVING IMPROVED PERFORMANCE



## INTRODUCTION

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# Why it is Essential to Develop Emotional Intelligence

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Emotional Intelligence is the key differentiator that sets the best leaders apart from the rest.

The reason emotional intelligence (often written as EQ or EI) has such a significant impact on success is because leaders with strong EQ:

- *Demonstrate interpersonal skills that earn them respect and enable them to effectively influence, implement change, negotiate, manage conflict, and bring people together to accomplish goals.*
- *Keep cool under pressure and quickly bounce back from setbacks.*
- *Manage impulses and keep a steady long-term focus.*
- *Set the most effective emotional tone during meetings and interpersonal conversations.*
- *Actively listen and understand others' needs and motivations.*
- *Express emotions productively and elicit emotions when needed.*
- *Understand how emotions impact their decision-making and problem-solving and consciously use emotional data to increase their effectiveness.*
- *Accurately read emotional cues from others and discern how what they say and do impacts others.*

Consider how important all of this is for the safety manager who needs to eliminate accidents, the sales person who needs to increase sales, the leader in a constantly changing culture, or the manager who wants to advance.

This isn't to say that IQ isn't important; it is. There is a certain level of intellectual ability required for every position. Beyond that, it is the ability to understand and work with others that sets the best leaders apart and leads to success. That is where emotional intelligence comes in. Leaders who think they can succeed by relying solely on their intellect are missing a huge opportunity.

The good news is that unlike IQ that remains relatively stable over time, EQ can be developed. When you consider all of the skills emotional intelligence impacts, how can you afford not to develop it?

*“Emotional Intelligence accounts for nearly 90% of the differences between star performers and average performers in leadership positions.”*

*- Daniel Goleman-*



The background features a stylized human head profile in shades of green on the left. Inside the head, there are several interlocking gears in shades of orange and yellow. Abstract, flowing shapes in green and orange are scattered throughout the composition, creating a sense of movement and interconnectedness.

CHAPTER 1

# **SELF-AWARENESS**

The Foundation of  
Emotional Intelligence

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# Why Self Awareness is Critical in Emotional Intelligence

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Self-awareness is the degree to which a leader is aware of and understands his or her thoughts, feelings, strengths, and weaknesses. It is as critical for long-term planning as it is in high-pressure negotiations and presentations. In fact, the very ability to make a decision requires not only raw data and intellect, but also emotional information. The more quickly you can identify your emotions and those of others, the more proactively you can respond and take control of a situation.

## *How important is self-awareness?*

*A study done at Cornell found that self-awareness was the strongest predictor of a leader's success.*



It isn't hard to understand why self awareness is so important when you consider all of ways that emotionally intelligent leaders excel. Below are just 3 of the areas where emotionally intelligent leaders exhibit heightened awareness.



# 1. Tuning into Emotions

A study by Bradberry and Greaves showed that only 36 percent of people tested were able to accurately identify their emotions as they experienced them.

We all experience “gut feelings” at times. Self-aware leaders don’t ignore them; they identify the emotion and the information it provides. Our emotions come from a part of our brain that gets a constant feed of information directly from our senses. It happens far faster than we can consciously think, so the information is relayed to us in the form of emotions. Deciphering those emotions and the information we get from them help us make better decisions and solve problems faster and more effectively. People who aren’t aware of their emotions are at a tremendous disadvantage because they are missing out on an important source of information.

# 2. Become aware of your emotional reaction to people and situations.

Do you feel anxious each time a certain phone number appears on your caller ID? Are you more likely to feel a sense of dread or excitement when asked to give a presentation?

It is important for us to understand the emotions certain events and people trigger in us as well as the why behind them so we can take control of our response. Keep in mind that our emotions drive our behavior. A lack of social awareness leads to reflexive rather than purposeful behavioral reactions. Once you are aware of the emotion, you can choose how you respond.

## Three ways to increase your emotional awareness:

- **Tune into physical cues.** Our emotions are reflected in our bodies. Do you tap your feet when impatient? Clench your fists? Fidget?
- **Ask yourself how you feel.** Check in with yourself throughout the day to stay in touch with how you feel. Record the feeling and the reason.
- **Journal.** Reflecting on various experiences at the end of the day and describing how you felt will increase your awareness. Remember, emotions enable us to make better decisions and effectively manage relationships.



### 3. Know Your Strengths and Weaknesses

A leader's success depends in large part on his or her ability to leverage strengths. While self-awareness includes knowing what you are good at, it also includes knowing what you are not good at and admitting when you don't have the answer. Those who operate under the assumption that they have to know everything and be good at everything are doing themselves and their teams a disservice. They miss opportunities to elicit ideas from others and leverage team members who have strengths they lack. The leader who is unwilling to admit weaknesses and mistakes also sets the tone for the organization that it is unacceptable to have weaknesses and make mistakes. That is not only unrealistic, it prevents people from asking for help and causes them to take risks they shouldn't take.

#### **Effective Ways To Uncover Strengths/Weaknesses**

**Take a validated leadership assessment.** *A comprehensive assessment that reveals how one's natural tendencies impact leadership competencies can give a great deal of insight into strengths and weaknesses. With those results, leaders can find new ways to use natural strengths and decide whether to develop weaknesses or compensate for them.*

**Complete a 360 multi-rater assessment.** *Have you ever wondered how others perceive you? You can't know for sure unless you ask. A 360 is a survey taken by the leader as well as his or her boss, peers, and team. This is a great way to help uncover any potential blind spots and help the leader get a clearer understanding of how others perceive him or her. It is common in a 360 report to see that one group of people has a different perception of a leader than another group. That can be valuable information to have.*

Emotionally intelligent leaders have a clear understanding of their strengths and how to leverage them to maximize their effectiveness. They also have the courage to explore their weaknesses and understand how those weaknesses impact performance.

The first step to developing your emotional intelligence is increasing your self-awareness in these three areas: emotions, reactions to people and situations, strengths, and weaknesses. Once aware of emotions, the challenge is to express them effectively so they don't inhibit your ability to negotiate, present, and manage conflict.

The background features a stylized human head profile in shades of green and yellow. Inside the head, there are several interlocking gears of varying sizes and colors (orange, yellow, and green). The overall design is clean and modern, with a focus on the intersection of human emotion and mechanical processes.

CHAPTER 2

# EMOTIONS

Managing Emotions  
for Success

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# Reign In Some Emotions, Summon Other Emotions


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## *Consider the following situations:*

- *You feel personally attacked by a peer in a meeting. Can you effectively manage your anger and continue to participate productively in that meeting?*
- *You and your team feel overwhelmed and you are headed into a meeting to talk to them about moving a deadline up. Are you able to rally for them?*
- *You are about to talk with three leaders one and two levels above you about a serious mistake your team made last quarter, and you're nervous. Can you summon the confidence you'll need to succeed in that meeting?*

These are just a few examples of times leaders need to manage emotions to be effective. At times, they need to reign in the expression of a strong emotion and at times they need to summon an emotion they don't currently feel.

There are many specific strategies leaders can use to effectively manage their emotions throughout the day. Following are three of the strategies we teach in our course on emotional intelligence.



## 1. Take ownership of your emotions.

Your emotions and how you express them are your responsibility and no one else's. Whenever you say "He made me feel...", you are giving someone else control over your emotions. We've all said at one point or another, "She makes me so mad!" or "He drives me crazy!" From this point forward, erase these phrases from your vocabulary.

It's important for leaders to take ownership of their feelings toward those with whom they work. Leaders are people too, and they will like some people more than others. If a manager has automatic or persistent negative feelings about an employee, the manager may fail to notice the employee's positive contributions to the team and only notice the employee's areas for improvement. Those negative feelings would also bleed into every interaction with that employee if the leader is not consciously managing them. The first step is to own those feelings.

## 2. Manage your thoughts.

Our thoughts drive our emotions and our emotions drive our behavior. Uncovering automatic thoughts and changing those thoughts can change the emotion that follows and result in more productive behavior.

For example, most stress comes from how we perceive or interpret events. The person who goes into a presentation for senior leadership thinking, "I hate presenting; they are going to annihilate me!" is likely to experience a destructive level of stress. The person who goes into that same meeting thinking, "I have an opportunity to prove myself. I am prepared for whatever they throw at me" is likely to be energized and ready to perform.

In order to effectively reframe a situation, it is essential to identify the thought causing the emotion. Once the thought is identified, it can be changed. That will in turn change the emotion making you more effective.

### 3. Escape the emotional hijack.

We experience emotional hijacks when the emotional part of the brain takes over or hijacks the part of our brain that houses the executive functioning. This leads to difficulty with concentrating, problem solving, and memory lapses. A person experiencing an emotional hijack often says or does something regrettable. Once they calm down, it is common to hear, “What was I thinking?” The answer is, they weren’t.

#### *Signs of emotional hijack in someone:*

- *They don’t listen to others.*
- *They become very defensive.*
- *They lash out or withdraw.*
- *Their mind goes blank and they are unable to access information they thought they knew cold.*



There are several effective strategies to escape the emotional hijack. During our course, *Increasing Your Emotional Intelligence*, we cover and practice several methods that help to shift your brain’s focus from the emotional to the executive center of the brain, allowing you to focus and think clearly again.

Managing emotions is a critical skill that emotionally intelligent people exhibit. Those who have developed it earn the respect of others by remaining even keeled in difficult situations, responding effectively in a crisis, and treating others with respect in all circumstances.



CHAPTER 3

# **SOCIAL AWARENESS**

3 Keys To Social  
Awareness

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# Social awareness helps leaders communicate more effectively.

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## *Think about these three situations:*

- *When involved in a negotiation or a high-stakes conversation, are you able to see things from the other person's perspective and use that information to find a mutually beneficial solution faster?*
- *Do you tend to take what people say at face value and then find yourself surprised that you missed key information?*
- *Have you witnessed leaders alienate or condescend to others either in person or on social media without realizing the impact they had?*

Affirmative answers to these scenarios reflects potential lack of social awareness, the third characteristic of emotional intelligence in this series of articles.

**Individuals with well-developed social awareness accurately read others and pay careful attention to how their own communication impacts the feelings, perceptions, and behaviors of other people.**

Everyone can develop social awareness by applying and practicing the following three exercises.



# 1. Empathy: the foundation of social awareness

*Empathy gives us insights into what others may be feeling or thinking, helps us build trust, helps us understand why people react the way they do, and influences our decisions.*

Empathy involves listening with the goal of clearly understanding someone, not necessarily agreeing with that person. During our *Maximum Influence* course, we teach 5 approaches to listening. Of the 5 approaches, evaluative listening is the most likely approach to undermine empathy. The primary purpose of evaluative listening is to judge what is heard. If you're not careful, your evaluative listening will inhibit your ability to empathize.

*Empathy requires that you suspend judgment as you listen and simply try to understand the other person.*

There are countless opportunities throughout the day to empathize that will help you be more effective and help save you time, whether you are negotiating, engaged in a high-stakes conversation, meeting new team members, or delivering a difficult message.

In addition to listening without judgment, asking questions is another powerful and effective tool you have to understand others. The more you ask questions with the goal of gaining a clear understanding, the more open others will be and the faster you will build trust and get things done.



## 2. Become fluent in body language.

The vast majority of communication is conveyed through body language and tone. People rarely tell us how they really feel, especially in a business setting, so we may miss that they are overwhelmed, skeptical, disinterested, etc. unless we listen beyond their words. When it comes to understanding others, especially how they feel, it is important to pay attention to their nonverbal communication in addition to what they say.

- *If you've talked with someone who tells you they understood what you said, but they look confused, do you take their words at face value? Or do you use their facial expression as a cue that more communication is needed?*
- *If your team looks bored in your meetings, do you press on and assume they are really attentive? Their boredom may indicate that it is time to change your approach.*
- *If one person on your team looks excited about a change, do you leverage that nonverbal excitement to help get others on board?*

## 3. Social Awareness includes both your interpersonal and online presence.

Our online impact has become just as important as our interpersonal impact. Are you aware of the emotional impact you have on others when you share and comment online? What about your tone in emails? Do you intimidate others? Do they feel valued? Do they perceive you as a leader with high integrity that they want to perform at their best for?

I have coached many leaders who have been oblivious to how others think or feel about them. They simply had no idea that their behavior shut people down in meetings or that online comments caused people to view them as insensitive or unprofessional. Paying attention to how others respond to you both interpersonally and online will give you important information to help guide your interactions for greater success.

The background features a stylized human head profile in shades of green and yellow. Inside the head, there are several interlocking gears in orange and yellow. The overall design is modern and abstract, with flowing lines and a clean, professional look.

CHAPTER 4

# RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

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# Relationship building for maximum return on investment

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Leaders need to build relationships within their team, with their direct reports, across teams, and with stakeholders in order to maximize their effectiveness and efficiency. These relationships don't just happen; they require insight and effort to be mutually beneficial. Emotionally intelligent leaders understand this and prioritize building relationships because they know these relationships are essential to:

- *Influencing effectively*
- *Driving change*
- *Managing conflict*
- *Navigating organizational politics*
- *Collaborating*
- *Building and nurturing a professional network*
- *Assembling the best people for projects*

Emotions play a role in every interaction you have whether you are aware of them or not. Leaders who identify emotions during an interaction, understand their impact, and respond effectively, work well with and through others to achieve results. This takes a conscious effort and the integration of self-awareness, self-management, and social-awareness.



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# Emotional Contagion

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One very important concept of relationship management is emotional contagion. This is the phenomenon of emotions spreading from one person to another, often without any awareness that it is taking place. Emotionally intelligent leaders know when they are catching emotions from others and consciously choose which emotions others catch from them.


*"People will forget what you said; People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel."*

*- Maya Angelou -*

Influencing another person's emotional state for better or worse is perfectly natural; we do it constantly and automatically. Although we are often unaware it is happening, it significantly impacts our relationships.

The question is, "What emotional impact do you have on others?" When you ask someone for help, do they feel delighted to help or pressured to help? When you assemble a small group to collaborate are people more likely to be enthusiastic or apprehensive?

We know that people perform better in a positive, high-energy environment, than in a negatively charged environment. You can positively impact the emotional climate of your organization by consistently applying the three principles below:



## 1. Leaders influence the emotional climate

*What kind of emotions are you spreading through your organization?*

The leader has the greatest impact on the emotional climate of the organization and needs to own this responsibility. People watch leaders constantly and look for clues for how to respond to different situations. Even a small change in the facial expression or tone of voice can trigger emotional contagion and send positive or negative emotions quickly through a team.

A leader who is able to project a calm demeanor in the midst of a crisis is likely to have a team that feels safe and continues to perform.

## 2. Express the emotion you wish to spread

*Are you expressive enough to transfer emotions to others?*

We don't typically express our emotions verbally. We express them through our body language and our tone. Saying you are excited in a flat voice will come off as flat and not energize anyone around the idea. If you want to convey excitement, it is important to look and sound excited. This doesn't mean jumping up and down, but it is important to have some energy in your voice as well as your face and body.

If a leader is passionate about an idea, but doesn't express passion as he shares the idea, it is unlikely that listeners will become passionate and buy into it.

### 3. The power of expressing positive emotion

Positive emotions originating from the leader bounce around the team and create a positive energy in the workplace. When the leader is able to channel that energy into achieving goals, problem solving, and innovation, everyone benefits. A positive organization is easier to lead and promotes a more open exchange of ideas.

#### **Leaders should share:**

- **Gratitude** - People get energized when they feel appreciated and are more likely to repeat the behavior that elicited the gratitude.
- **Pride** - The pride we feel in our work directly impacts our results. It is important that everyone in the organization has a strong sense of pride in what they do. Because leaders set the emotional tone, the pride starts with you.
- **Passion** - If you are passionate about what you are trying to accomplish, those around you are more likely to get energized and excited and that spills over to the customers.
- **Optimism** - Optimism impacts much of what we do including how we respond to inevitable setbacks. As the leader, it is important to model optimism, encouraging resilience by focusing on what can be done to bounce back rather than how awful the setback is. Doing so not only gets people back on track, it raises the positive energy of the team.

The image features a stylized human head profile in shades of green on the left side. Inside the head, there are several gears of varying sizes and colors (orange, yellow, and white). The background is white with green and orange abstract shapes, including a large orange gear in the upper right and a green leaf-like shape in the lower left. The text is centered within the head profile.

CHAPTER 5

**STRESS &  
RESILIENCE**

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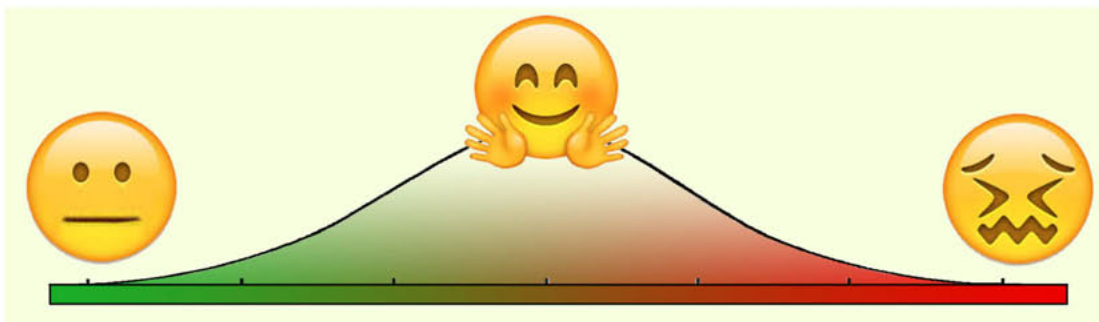
# 4 Things To Know That Will Increase Your Resilience

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Like it or not, stress is part of our lives. We work in a world where people feel overwhelmed by long hours, struggle to keep up with the pace of change, and cope with the constant threat of down-sizing. While there is no magic formula to reduce stress, we have more control over it than most people think.

In our course, *Increasing Your Emotional Intelligence*, we spend time learning several ways to develop and increase resilience for stress management. Following are four of the key components that will help you build resilience, manage stress, and bounce back faster to keep your performance high.

## 1. Know your optimal level.



We tend to perceive stress as negative, but that isn't always the case. At the right level, stress can work for us as a catalyst for high performance.

Some stress can provide us with energy and focus to help us perform. At the ideal level, we perform best and are 'in the zone'. But levels beyond that is where we begin to make mistakes and underperform. Over time, chronic stress can lead to a variety of health problems. There are times you may need to increase the positive stress and times you'll need to decrease the negative stress to get to that optimal level. The only way to do that is to know your optimal level.



## 2. Know your signs

We all experience the effects of stress differently. Some people get headaches, some can't sleep, and others get snippy with co-workers. Many people believe they know when they're experiencing stress, but a study by Bradberry and Greaves found that only 36 percent of people tested were able to accurately identify their emotions as they experienced them. Thinking through your physical, emotional, and psychological signs will help you identify and then manage your stress more effectively.

## 3. Know your plan

You can't passively manage your stress. It's important to have a clear plan and make a conscious effort to execute that plan. Emotionally intelligent people have a plan for managing stress in the moment, during short breaks, after work, on weekends, and annually. Breathing, exercises, meditation, vacations, and a 5- minute walk, are all examples of strategies you can add to your plan. If you don't plan to manage your stress, it will manage you.

## 4. Know you can bounce back

Optimistic people believe that they will find a way out of even the most difficult circumstances. They understand that setbacks are temporary and believe their actions will impact the future. They develop effective coping strategies and supportive personal and professional networks both inside and outside of work, which helps protect them from the negative impact of stress. The good news is that optimism can be learned. The sooner you make a conscious effort to find the good in circumstances or take steps to move through a negative situation into a more positive situation, you'll find your stress decreasing as you begin to bounce back.

For more information on  
***Increasing Your Emotional Intelligence***  
or other workshops and Leadership Development training  
opportunities, please call

**(651) 322-7821**

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*Dr. Heather Johnson is a nationally recognized speaker and expert in developing individuals and teams. As a Psychologist with over 20 years of business experience, she is able to quickly determine what is holding individuals and teams back and collaborate with clients to generate solutions that get long-term results.*

*Whether facilitating or coaching, Heather creates an environment that challenges people to look at things from a different perspective and engages all participants. Workshops are interactive, personalized, and focused on practical application, enabling participants to apply what they learn immediately and maximize their potential.*

*Clients view Heather as a true partner as they benefit not only from customized business solutions, but also coaching, access to valuable resources, and the opportunity to connect with other seasoned leaders. Using a combination of customized workshops and personalized assessments, individuals and leaders get insights into themselves and their teams that increase their effectiveness significantly. Dr. Heather Johnson is truly a catalyst for change.*