

How to Be Emotionally Intelligent

By Daniel Goleman

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What makes a great leader? Knowledge, smarts and vision, to be sure. To that, Daniel Goleman, author of “Leadership: The Power of Emotional Intelligence,” would add the ability to identify and monitor emotions — your own and others’ — and to manage relationships. Qualities associated with such “emotional intelligence” distinguish the best leaders in the corporate world, according to Mr. Goleman, a former New York Times science reporter, a psychologist and co-director of a consortium at Rutgers University to foster research on the role emotional intelligence plays in excellence. He shares his short list of the competencies.

1. SELF-AWARENESS

Realistic self-confidence: You understand your own strengths and limitations; you operate from competence and know when to rely on someone else on the team. Emotional insight: You understand your feelings. Being aware of what makes you angry, for instance, can help you manage that anger.

2. SELF-MANAGEMENT

Resilience: You stay calm under pressure and recover quickly from upsets. You don’t brood or panic. In a crisis, people look to the leader for reassurance; if the leader is calm, they can be, too. Emotional balance: You keep any distressful feelings in check — instead of blowing up at people, you let them know what’s wrong and what the solution is. Self-motivation: You keep moving toward distant goals despite setbacks.

3. EMPATHY

Cognitive and emotional empathy: Because you understand other perspectives, you can put things in ways colleagues comprehend. And you welcome their questions, just to be sure. Cognitive empathy, along with reading another person’s feelings accurately, makes for effective communication. Good listening: You pay full attention to the other person and take time to understand what they are saying, without talking over them or hijacking the agenda.

4. RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

Compelling communication: You put your points in persuasive, clear ways so that people are motivated as well as clear about expectations.

Team playing: People feel relaxed working with you. One sign: They laugh easily around you.