

JUST HOW MUCH EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE MATTERS?

If you realize the importance of internal relationships, and you know how much our emotional intelligence can do to put people at ease, create trust and respect, help align people and further a can-do attitude, then I believe you will appreciate this article. I would certainly welcome your feedback and ideas.

If you are not especially familiar with emotional intelligence and the part it plays in highly effective leadership, I hope you will read this short article carefully as I have given this a lot of thought. There is important information here that can help you.

Emotional intelligence leads to personal achievement, happiness and professional success.

It is widely accepted that soft skills make an important difference in how people feel and respond to their boss and senior management. If they feel they are valued, appreciated and heard, they are engaged and motivated to achieve goals set out by leadership.

An indicator of how well we use our soft skills is our level of emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence is that “something” within us, that something that helps us to sense how we feel and enables us to sympathize with others. Emotional intelligence gives us the ability to be present and listen to someone when they most need it. It is that part of us encouraging us to make good decisions and communicate effectively despite negative emotions and stress.

The four main skills of emotional intelligence are:

- **Self-awareness** – our ability to perceive our emotions and understand our tendencies to act in certain ways in given situations
- **Social awareness** – our ability to understand the emotions of other people, what they are thinking and feeling
- **Self-management** – our ability to use awareness of our emotions to stay flexible and direct our behavior positively
- **Relationship management** – our ability to use our awareness of our own emotions and those of others to manage interactions successfully

Some of us are born with a great deal of emotional intelligence; others are not. Most of us are not aware of how our emotions may be adversely affecting our thinking and our reactions. The good news is that we can learn to increase our emotional intelligence. We can take a simple test to determine our EQ, our level of emotional intelligence. I recommend doing this, as the skills we can measure are the ones we can best improve.

According to Patrick Kilcarr, PhD, Director of the Center for Personal Development at Georgetown University, the various assessment tools available which measure an individual's emotional intelligence offer a treasure trove of information about our relationship to our emotions and how those emotions influence the relationships in our lives.

An assessment allows us to take an honest and accurate look at how we are operating internally and in the world. The beautiful part of this is that we can change our way of functioning in the world, moving us toward feeling a greater sense of personal balance and authenticity, while sculpting the precise type of relationships we want.

When we gain in our effective use of emotional intelligence, we will increase our ability to develop more solid, trusting relationships in our business arena. Relationships are so important to our success in business, but not just our relationships with clients. Our internal relationships – the ones we have with our colleagues and team members – mean a great deal. They can make or break us!

In my experience, the most productive organizational cultures are those managed by women. Why? Because women's relationship skills build trust and collaboration. For this reason, I strongly believe that business leadership is best shared between women and men. We have different natural leadership strengths, and combining our talents significantly strengthens our business cultures.

Think this is important? You bet it is. Women, on average, have an overall emotional intelligence that is four points higher than men's. In fact, women generally score higher on self-management, social awareness and relationship management, while our scores on self-awareness tend to be equal.

Yet men run most of our companies. Recent research by TalentSmart, a recognized leader in the emotional intelligence field, shows that 85% of business people do not feel respected and valued by their employer. Do you think their bosses know this? Not likely!

We will all benefit from being much more aware of the impact of emotional intelligence. From now on, let's:

- Promote people to management positions because of how effective they will be as leaders, not because of what they know and how long they have worked.
- Recognize that emotional intelligence may well be more important to job performance than any other leadership skill.
- Work to improve our emotional intelligence competencies.

Emotional intelligence is the single best predictor of performance in the workplace and the strongest driver of leadership and personal excellence. The wonderful book, *The Emotional Intelligence Quick Book*, points out that the more we exercise our emotional intelligence skills, the more we will get out of life. These critical skills drive teamwork and excellent client service.

My invitation to you is to read the research about emotional intelligence and to make this a priority in your business. I have personally taken the short EQ test. I now have a baseline of my level of emotional intelligence, and I am committed to improve my competencies.

Once you have your appraisal and know your baseline, you can identify the skills that you feel could help you in your business and also, certainly, in your personal life.

Our understanding of emotional intelligence will vastly improve our internal relations and deepen our sense of personal fulfillment and professional accomplishment. And stronger internal relations mean a stronger bottom line. High EQ leaders vastly improve the performance of our companies. I hope you will accept the importance of emotional intelligence, and make it a high priority to increase your EQ.

Take the EQ Assessment

If you're ready to take the next step toward greater emotional intelligence, I suggest you read *The Emotional Intelligence Quick Book*, by Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves. This excellent book will guide the process for you and lead you to a good EQ assessment.

About The Author



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