



FIVE WAYS

Developing Emotional Intelligence Can Make You

A BETTER LEADER



MyLeadershipHub

Learn. Grow. Connect.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
SELF REGARD respecting oneself while understanding and accepting one's strengths and weaknesses.	4
ASSERTIVENESS communicating feelings, beliefs and thoughts openly, and defending personal rights and values in a socially acceptable, non-offensive, and non-destructive manner.	6
EMPATHY the ability to recognize, understand, and appreciate how other people feel.	8
REALITY TESTING the capacity to remain objective by looking past these biases and seeing things as they really are.	10
STRESS TOLERANCE our ability to recognize and manage our emotions in stressful situations.	12
SUMMARY	14

INTRODUCTION

By now you have probably heard of **emotional intelligence**.

It refers to the way that we perceive, understand, and react to emotional information as part of our daily lives. Emotional intelligence affects every action you take and every interaction you have. It impacts your leadership, your followership, and your relationships both inside and outside of work.



Consider this common scenario: It's been a long week and you arrive home from work to find your spouse, partner, or significant other waiting for you. You are later home than you said you would be because of heavy traffic, and you are feeling a little fried. Your partner sees that you are tired, and so instead of expressing their disappointment at you being late (a demonstration of good emotional intelligence), they welcome you home, and ask what you want to order for dinner—Chinese food or pizza? Tired from the long work week, you say that you simply cannot make one more decision right now (cognitive depletion in decision making is a real thing!). Hearing this, your significant other says “OK, let’s get Pizza,” to which you respond, “I don’t really feel like pizza.” This leads to questions about why you didn’t say that in the first place, and so on and so on. Now, instead of a relaxing Friday evening, you watch a movie in silence while eating leftovers. Sound familiar? It’s certainly happened to me a few times in the past.

Now, what if I told you that by working on your **emotional intelligence**, or EQ as we refer to it, you could better understand, process, and in some cases avoid these difficult situations altogether? That’s the power of developing your emotional intelligence. And, of course, emotional intelligence is just as powerful in work settings, or on the board you volunteer on, or...well...just about anywhere.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence is not a new concept, a fad, or flavor of the month.

The idea that there are multiple types of intelligence goes back as far as the 1920's, and scientists and practitioners worked hard over the course of the 20th century to better understand what emotional intelligence is. In 1996, Daniel Goleman, one of the world's leading authorities and advocates of emotional intelligence, published his book *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ*. It was that book, perhaps more so than anything else, that thrust emotional intelligence into the common understanding.

I am very lucky that I get to work with literally hundreds of leaders every year on their emotional intelligence. I also get to see what impact leaders have in their workplaces. Through that work, I have come to one simple conclusion: Of all the things you can work on to become a more effective leader, none have a more immediate or far-reaching impact than developing emotional intelligence. In this white paper, I'll show you how to better understand and develop five areas of emotional intelligence that are critical to your leadership.

Before I do that, though, let me show you a model of emotional intelligence that you can use to better understand this critical construct.

“Of all the things you can work on to become a more effective leader, none have a more immediate or far-reaching impact than developing emotional intelligence.”

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the Emotional intelligence Construct

It has been said that in order to work on something, you need to give it a name. This is true of emotional intelligence. Without breaking emotional intelligence down into an understandable construct, it's hard to figure out what it's made up of or what you want to go to work on. Because of that, it's useful to look to the EQ-i 2.0 Model of Emotional Intelligence shown below. This model, originally developed in the 1990's by psychologist Reuven Bar-On, and subsequently updated in the early 2011, breaks emotional intelligence down into five areas called composite scales, and 15 more

specific elements, which we call subscales. Each of these subscales has specific behaviors or characteristics associated with it. In this paper, I will explore the five subscales that I have found to be critical in effective leadership: Self-Regard, Assertiveness, Empathy, Reality Testing, and Stress Tolerance. This is not to say that all 15 of the subscales don't play an important part—they most certainly do—but the five discussed here come up frequently in our work with leaders, and give you a taste of what you can do in practical terms to develop your leadership overall.



Copyright © 2011 Multi-Health Systems Inc. All rights reserved.
Based on the original BarOn EQ-i authored by Reuven Bar-On, copyright 1997.

Let's start our exploration with **Self-Regard**.

SELF REGARD

Self-Regard has a lot to do with the conversations that go on in your head.

self-re·gard

/',self rə'gärd/

respecting oneself while understanding and accepting one's strengths and weaknesses.

Self-Regard is “respecting oneself while understanding and accepting one’s strengths and weaknesses. Self-Regard is often associated with feelings of inner strength and self-confidence.”¹ Leaders who have a high level of Self-Regard will often demonstrate a high level of genuine confidence, and while they may experience failures like everyone else, they will openly and easily admit mistakes and look for the learning to be had from the experience. Leaders with a lower level of Self-Regard may experience varying degrees of self-doubt and may question their decisions both before and after they make them. When things go well, they will often externalize the success factors, and when things go poorly, they will internalize causes.

Self-Regard has a lot to do with the conversations that go on in your head. As leadership and marketing expert Seth Godin asks, “If the voice inside your head was a real person, would you choose to spend time with them?” For most of us, the answer is mixed, however for some leaders there is a significant amount of negative the self-talk. When that happens, it’s harder for that leader to see the value that they bring.

¹ Copyright 2011 Multi-Health Systems Inc.

SELF REGARD

Building Self-Regard is about being honest with yourself about the **positives** that you bring to the world, as well as the things that you need to **work on**.

Here are some things you can do today to start understanding and building your Self-Regard:

1

At the end of each day, reflect back on the happenings of that day. What went well? What did you achieve? What did not go so well? What could you have done differently? After a week or so of doing this, read back through your reflections and look for patterns. How much of your self-talk is negative, and how much positive? Are you giving yourself credit for the good you are bringing?

2

Learn to accept praise and process criticism. Often, leaders with lower levels of Self-Regard will be dismissive of praise and attribute it to some other person or factor. This is completely appropriate where someone else was responsible. But in other cases, it seems like a deflection. Learn to say "Thank You – I appreciate it!". On the flip side, when someone criticizes you (or you perceive them to criticize you), thank them for the critique but then process the information. How realistic is their criticism? How much of their criticism was really about you, and how much was about external factors? Be realistic about both possibilities.

3

Practice positive self-affirmation. I know, I know. You've heard that before in some self-help article and it sounds really 'woo-woo' and soft. But the reality is that it works. Trust me on this one—when I have experienced very difficult times in my life, a positive affirmation each morning has helped me understand that I am in control of my own destiny and that not everything is bad. Even today, every journal entry I make (I'll get into more about journaling later) starts with a positive affirmation, which I will often recall over the course of the day.

As you can see, the activities are simple, small, and easy to do. We are not trying to reinvent your leadership overnight here (that doesn't work, and be wary of anyone that tells you they can help you do that). Developing your emotional intelligence is about getting into a daily practice of psychologically healthy habits.

Now, let's take a look at our next area—**Assertiveness**.

ASSERTIVENESS

Assertiveness “involves communicating feelings, beliefs and thoughts openly, and defending personal rights and values in a socially acceptable, non-offensive, and non-destructive manner.”¹ When you think about effective leadership, you probably think that a certain level of **Assertiveness** is needed, and you would be right. However, this is an area where leaders need to be able to adapt to situations easily, particularly those where a more collaborative approach is best.

Leaders with a very high level of Assertiveness will typically be very comfortable voicing their opinions on issues, and may put forward ideas forcefully. They will find it easy to tell others what they think, and say “no” when they need to. On the other hand, leaders with lower levels of Assertiveness may find it more difficult to assert their idea or thoughts, and they may back down in situations even when they know they are right.

¹ Copyright 2011 Multi-Health Systems Inc.

When you think about effective leadership, you probably think that a certain level of Assertiveness is needed, and you would be **right**.

as·ser·tive·ness

/ə'sɜːdɪvənəs/

communicating feelings, beliefs and thoughts openly, and defending personal rights and values in a socially acceptable, non-offensive, and non-destructive manner.



ASSERTIVENESS

If **Assertiveness** is an area you would like to explore or work on, consider these activities:

1

After a situation where you feel like you should have been more assertive, or perhaps you felt like you were too assertive, make some notes about the conditions of the event. Are there certain people or situations in which you tend to be more, or less, assertive? What are some situations where you feel you might need to increase your Assertiveness?

2

In a situation where you feel like you want to say something, for example in a meeting, but can feel yourself holding back, write down what it was you wanted to say and then read it back. Do you still want to say it? If so, now may be the time. Practice this a few times in different situations to get a feel of what you would say if you were to say something.

3

In a meeting or other interactive situation, if you disagree with what is being said, speak up and start by saying 'I have a different perspective...' (This is less confrontational than saying 'I disagree'.) and then explain in as simple terms as possible how you see things differently. Try this a few times, as appropriate, and you will be surprised at how you become more comfortable speaking up.

ONE MORE BONUS ACTIVITY

! if you are one of those people who have a tendency to 'conditionalize' statements, make a conscious effort to stop doing it. If you start a suggestion with 'I know this is going to sound crazy,' or 'I don't know if this will work, but' then you are trying to soften your suggestions which is a sign of a lower level of Assertiveness. And, it's an easy one to stop doing when you become more aware of it.

Now, let's take a look at our next area of emotional intelligence—**Empathy!**

EMPATHY

em·pa·thy

/'empəTHē/

the ability to recognize, understand, and appreciate how other people feel.

“Empathy should be considered a two-way street.”

Empathy is ..“the ability to recognize, understand, and appreciate how other people feel. Empathy involves being able to articulate your understanding of another’s perspective and behaving in a way that respects others’ feelings.”¹

We all want to work for leaders that have a healthy level of **Empathy**. These leaders take a real interest in other people as individuals and don't just see them as a resource that simply needs to be used. It's also important to remember, though, that Empathy should be considered a two-way street. While you can and should be empathetic towards those you lead, you must also be empathetic towards your own leader, assuming you have one.

Leaders with a high level of Empathy will take time to understand how their decisions and actions will affect others on their team. They don't consider only the practical implications, but also the emotional impacts as well. For example, while cancelling a project might be good from a workload perspective, they are more likely to appreciate and understand that the people working on that project might feel like their time and effort have been wasted. The highly empathetic leader would ask themselves what can they do to both acknowledge and address that. On the other side, a leader must be careful to balance the needs of those on their team with the practicalities of the project or the organization for whom they work.

¹ Copyright 2011 Multi-Health Systems Inc.

EMPATHY

Here are some simple activities you can do to develop your **Empathy**:

1

If someone reacts unexpectedly to a decision you make or an action you take, ask a follow up question to better understand their perspective. Where possible, try to name an emotion in your question (understanding that you may get it wrong) as it opens up a new avenue of explanation from the other person. For example, "You seem annoyed/upset/angry/surprised. Can you tell me a little about that?"

2

Don't just ask, "Did you have a good weekend/evening/day?" Instead, ask an open-ended question like "What did you get up to today?" and then actively listen to the response.

3

Before taking action or implementing a decision, write down the names of the people who will be affected or impacted and ask yourself, "Who's losing what?" This works even with positive changes and helps you to better understand where there might be emotional reactions to your decisions and actions.

BALANCING SUBSCALES

The balance between emotional intelligence behaviors is critical, and the EQ-i model, with its 15 subscales lets us understand these balances and the role they play in leadership. For example, consider the last two subscales we looked at: Assertiveness and Empathy. If a leader had a very high level of Assertiveness and a much lower level of Empathy, they may find that they push hard for their ideas and agendas, but that they don't adequately consider the impact those might have on others. Conversely, a leader with a very high level of Empathy and a lower level of Assertiveness may not take necessary actions because they become overly concerned about the impact they may have on others. When it comes to emotionally effective leadership, balance is everything! If you are interested in learning more about your own unique EQ profile, and the balances between subscales, consider joining our Build Your Leadership EQ webinar series or have your own personalized 1-on-1 EQ-i debrief with an experienced EQ coach.

Now, let's move on to our next area of emotional intelligence—**Reality Testing**.

REALITY TESTING

Did you know that there are more than 120 identified **cognitive biases**?

A cognitive bias is flaw in how we see things in a given situation.

A cognitive bias is flaw in how we see things in a given situation. For example, a cognitive bias might cause us to ignore or deny information if it doesn't support what we already think. Another might cause us to see something or someone in an unrealistically positive way because we are attracted to it or them.

Our next area of emotional intelligence, **Reality Testing**, refers to "the capacity to remain objective by looking past these biases and seeing things as they really are. This capacity involves recognizing when emotions or personal biases can cause one to be less objective."¹

Leaders with a high level of Reality Testing are able to understand where their emotions may be affecting the way they are seeing things. They are more likely to be realistic about the outcomes of a situation and behave accordingly. For example, you might hear them say, "I know it seems like we are making a decision too quickly, but if we don't act now we will lose the opportunity," or, "We need more information before we can take action." And, of course, if

their Reality Testing is high, they would most likely be correct in their assessment.

Leaders who score lower Reality Testing may fantasize about unrealistically optimistic outcomes or catastrophize about overly negative ones. They may act too fast or too slow, because they don't fully understand how their personal biases, or their emotions, are impacting their decision-making processes. They may not understand that others see things differently or have trouble seeing how their own feelings on an issue might be affecting their views.

re·al·i·ty test·ing

/rē'alədē/ /testiNG/

the capacity to remain objective by looking past these biases and seeing things as they really are.



¹ Copyright 2011 Multi-Health Systems Inc.

REALITY TESTING

Some simple activities for developing your **Reality Testing** include:

1

When contemplating a decision, ask other people for their view on the issue. If possible, try to ask someone whose views on the issue are very different from your own.



2

Reflect back on a recent decision you made that didn't turn out the way you thought it would. Make some notes about what you may have missed in the lead up to the decision. What role did your own biases play in the decision-making process, and how might you not make the same mistake again?

3

When you feel yourself becoming triggered by a situation, ask yourself what emotions you are experiencing and why. Consider how these emotions might affect your decision-making processes and think about whether you might need time for these emotions to subside before the decision is made.



Ultimately, only you can understand the role of emotions in your leadership—but talking to others can help. That's why so many leaders find working with a coach to be so helpful. They become a sounding board for improving their understanding of the part emotions play in your leadership.

Let's move on to the last area of emotional intelligence we'll discuss here—**Stress Tolerance.**

STRESS TOLERANCE

The concept of **stress** comes from an engineering analogy.

When something is placed under pressure, it becomes deformed and doesn't look or act the way it normally would. Consider a bookshelf with too much weight between the two supports, which causes the wood of the shelf, making everything on either end tilt toward the center. Similarly, when we become stressed, we tend to not behave the way we normally would, just like the shelf. For example, we may become more, or less, direct, or more or less vocal. This inconsistency in behavior can be quite unnerving for those that we lead. After all, people love consistency.

Stress Tolerance, then, "is our ability to recognize and manage our emotions in stressful situations." I know that, when I started out as a leader, I would find even the simplest of stressors would cause me to behave differently. The problem is that today's work world is full of stressors. Pressure to do more with less time and pressure to get increased productivity from team members, all while key resources are reduced.

Effective leaders need to have a good level of Stress Tolerance because those they lead need them to be confident and consistent in their role. However, they must also keep in mind that those they lead or work alongside may not have the same degree of Stress Tolerance. This can sometimes lead to a disconnect where followers feel like the leader doesn't understand the gravity of the situation or the impact it might have, even when that leader does. On the lower side, leaders with a low level of Stress Tolerance can sometimes seem to be 'losing their heads' during difficult times, which can cause worry throughout the team and a lack of confidence in the final decision.

Interestingly, the psychological and physiological impacts associated with stress can be significant. As one of my mentors once said to me, "If you want to live longer, you need to learn how to handle stress well!"

stress tol·er·ance

/stres/ /'täl(ə)rəns/

our ability to recognize and manage our emotions in stressful situations.

¹ Copyright 2011 Multi-Health Systems Inc.

STRESS TOLERANCE

Here are some things you can do to improve your **Stress Tolerance**:

1

Recognize the factors that cause you to get stressed. For example, is it volume of tasks, interpersonal relationships, or difficult conversations? Reflect on what it is about these situations that you find most stressful. Why do you think it is those things (or that thing) that causes you so much stress? What is it about that which creates a stress reaction?

2

Take up one of the many recognized ways to manage stress in the moment, such as diaphragmatic breathing, taking time-outs, or meditation.

3

If you find yourself in a stressful situation where stepping away is a possibility (for example, a difficult conversation that you can feel is escalating), tell the other person that you'd like some time to think and that you'll get back to them on the situation tomorrow. You'd be surprised at how easy this is to do and how, in most cases, the other person will simply agree (they may well be feeling stressed too!).

LEADERSHIP JOURNALING

You may have realized by now that I am a huge fan of writing down your thoughts and ideas when it comes to developing emotional intelligence. Many of the activities I have talked about have some kind of reflective process associated with them. It really is an effective way of better understanding your thoughts, ideas, and even your potential actions. I encourage all the leaders I work with to start journaling as a daily practice, but many don't know quite how to get started. To help them get going, I created a 14-day Leadership Journaling QuickStart program. The program includes a morning message with a link to a short video lesson and an evening message with a journaling prompt. The total time investment per day is no more than 30 minutes.

You can read more about the program at www.myleadershiphub.com/ljqs.

SUMMARY

I hope you have found these tips for developing your emotional intelligence to become a more effective leader useful. If you are interested in taking your emotional intelligence and leadership further, here are a few suggestions:

1. Sign up for our free 14-day Leadership Journaling Quickstart Program

This program is designed to get you into the habit of leadership journaling – one of the most effective ways to understand and develop your leadership. For two weeks you will receive a message each morning with a link to that day's video and a message in the evening with a daily journaling question. Visit myleadershiphub.com/courses/ljqqs to enroll.

2. Take our Leaders Guide to Emotional Intelligence Course

This three-week, self-paced course digs deep into the emotional intelligence construct and provides all the tools, resources, and worksheets you will need to develop your EQ. You can find out more information and enroll in the course at myleadershiphub.com/courses/the-leaders-guide-to-emotional-intelligence.

3. Become a Member of My Leadership Hub

My Leadership Hub provides online leadership training built on a foundation of emotional intelligence. Our mission is to give leaders the tools and education they need to create healthy, productive work environments for themselves and those they lead. Subscription to My Leadership Hub includes access to our catalog of online courses, monthly live webinars, discussion forums, and cohort-based curriculums. Become a member at myleadershiphub.com/membership-options.

4. Explore 1-on-1 Coaching

With our individualized coaching packages, you'll work with a qualified and experienced EQ coach who will challenge your fundamental beliefs about your leadership and create a personalized plan for your EQ and leadership development. Find more information about our coaching plans at eqdevgroup.com/emotional-intelligence-coaching.

If you have any questions about the programs mentioned above or EQ in general, drop us a line at info@myleadershiphub.com. We'd be happy to chat with you!

Meet The MyLeadershipHub Team

We are here to help you become a more effective leader! We are passionate about leadership development, emotional intelligence, and building stronger organizations and teams. With more than 20 years of helping leaders to grow and develop, we have seen the impact of understanding and developing emotional intelligence and are honoured to be part of your journey.



Drew Bird

Drew's lifelong passion for individual and organizational improvement has seen him move from the server room, to the boardroom and everywhere in between. After 15 years working in the IT field, Drew realized that his real passion was helping people to better understand both themselves, and others around them. Drew learned early on that awareness and competencies in areas such as emotional intelligence, adaptability, hardiness, resilience, and risk influence and guide a persons thought and action. By developing effective, empathetic and considerate learning and development opportunities, Drew helps people to find the very best versions of themselves and bring that to everything they do.



Karen Bowen

You are just as likely to find Karen at the front of a group of executives as you would leading a spin class. Her belief in the untapped potential of individuals, and by extension the organization they work in, drives Karen to create dynamic, interactive learning experiences that help unlock the mysteries of both individual and organizational life. She believes we are accountable for our own experience and empowered in the choices we make. Drawing on her own life experience as a leader in large, complex environments, Karen's goal is to help people see the power that resides within in them, and give them the tools to manifest that power for maximum, positive impact.



Rachel Milledge

Rachel has had many titles over the years but in almost any organization she has worked with she has often taken on the role of Director of GSD...that's getting stuff done. Whether it is figuring out a technical problem, producing an online course, facilitating workshops or events, or fixing spreadsheets, she loves any problem that needs an organizational solution. With a lifelong passion for making things more efficient and finding ways to streamline processes, she is just as likely to use a spreadsheet to track her skiing or paddling trips as she is to create one for budgeting or planning purposes.