

Leading With the Whole Brain

MSBCoach White Paper

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What sets one leader apart from another leader? Why do some leaders have an ability to motivate themselves and those around them to accomplish great things?

There are several factors that create success for a leader; however, Emotional Intelligence is being quickly rated among the top indicators. In the article "EQ vs. IQ - emotional intelligence, intelligence quotient"¹, Cynthia L. Kemper states, "For those in leadership positions, emotional intelligence skills account for close to 90 percent of what distinguishes outstanding leaders from those judged as average."

Emotional Intelligence (EQ or EI) describes the capacity of a person to perceive, gauge and manage the emotions of themselves and others. If emotions are not managed properly, they can become a stumbling block in personal as well as professional relationships.

Emotionally intelligent leaders use their whole brain and are driven by their character and values rather than by the whim of their emotions.

Harvard Business Review says, "In hard times, the soft stuff often goes away. But Emotional Intelligence it turns out isn't so soft. If emotional obliviousness jeopardizes your ability to perform, fend off aggressors, or be compassionate in a crisis, no amount of attention to the bottom line will protect your career. Emotional Intelligence isn't a luxury you can dispense with in tough times. It's a basic tool that, deployed with finesse, is the key to professional success."

Often leaders are afraid of emotions and want to run everything from logic only. True leadership is engaging the whole brain. When a leader is emotionally intelligent, he or she is more likely to engage the entire brain. Dr. Childre of the Institute of HeartMath² said, "When your heart is really into something; when you are working from a place of heartfelt emotions – like empathy, appreciation and care, the result is more efficient management of the brain." Dr. Cryer, also of the Institute of HeartMath added, "At a biological level when your heart is engaged, greater physiological coherence is accomplished. The heart produces an electric signal 40 to 60 times stronger than the brain; therefore, electrically speaking, the heart is the dominate force in the body."

¹ Communication World, <http://FindArticles.com>, 07 Mar2012.

² <http://heartmath.com>

Emotional Intelligence is a combination of four components:

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1. Self-awareness
2. Self-management
3. Social Awareness
4. Relationship Management

Let's break each of these areas down:

- Self-awareness is the capacity to distinguish and understand your internal moods, emotions and drivers.
- Self-management is the capacity to control or re-direct your inner emotions so that your inner state doesn't necessarily match your outer state and manage your outcomes in emotionally charged situations.
- Social awareness is the capacity to discern and connect with others' emotions to handle people according to their emotional reactions and to be aware of how you are perceived by others.
- Relationship management is the capacity to manage relationships and build networks, including the ability to find common ground, engage others and build connections.

Leaders who are self-aware are able to:

- Identify the different emotions going on inside of themselves
- Gain an accurate assessment of why they are feeling the emotions
- Identify the outcomes they desire
- Increase their self-confidence through this awareness
- Be more optimistic
- Use words to explain how they feel
- Understand there can be multiple emotions surging at the same time
- Become more comfortable with themselves

Leaders who are self-managed are able to:

- Have higher levels of achievement and drive
- Create stability within themselves
- Trust themselves
- Show higher levels of commitment
- Be more adaptable
- Understand that their internal emotional state does not have to correspond with their behavior
- Balance their impulses
- Take responsibility for themselves and their behaviors
- Live in integrity with themselves
- Manage change at higher levels
- Work through new ideas without judging
- Take initiative

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Leaders who are socially aware are able to:

- Read body language and non-verbal cues
- Provide empathy and sympathy for others
- Have an awareness of how others are feeling, their needs and concerns
- Have the “pulse” of what is happening in office culture
- Have higher levels of organizational awareness
- Build trust with others
- Strengthen relationships

Leaders who manage healthy relationships are able to:

- Understand what you say and express has impact on others and relationships
- Develop others
- Leverage their influence
- Value diversity
- Improve communication
- Manage conflicts
- Become a change catalyst
- Build strong bonds
- Increase team work
- Collaborate
- Lead
- Share credit
- Listen

The good news of Emotional Intelligence is that, unlike IQ, which pretty much is set, a leader can learn and develop these skills.

Below are ways a leader can strengthen each of the four components of Emotional Intelligence and suggestions to help engage their whole brain in leadership:

Self-Awareness:

- Identify a recent experience where you wish you had responded differently. Ask yourself:
 - What were you feeling?
 - How did those feelings drive your reactions?
 - What outcomes did you get?
 - How would you like that outcome to be different?
 - What behavioral changes can you make to create the outcomes you identified?

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- Become aware of your internal feelings and identify “why” they are present.
- Identify your values and beliefs.
- When you have a successful day, identify the steps that created that success and use this knowledge to re-create other successes.
- Request feedback from peers, leadership direct reports, friends or family.

Self-Management:

- From your self-awareness, you have identified your positive and negative feelings/responses. Through self-management, you will identify steps to create different outcomes
- Part of self-management is experimenting to find new and better responses, then consistently engaging in the newly managed activities
- Journaling is a good way to become more aware of outcomes in emotionally charged situations and processing through how you can take ownership to change the outcome – remember you cannot change anyone but yourself
- Take the necessary time before you confront or respond to be sure you have your emotions in control. This will allow you to think through all the possibilities and respond appropriately
- Practice and experiment

Social Awareness:

- Ask yourself the following questions and then work to manage them according to your answers:
 - Do others think my expectations are unrealistic? If so, what can I do differently?
 - How would helping others be beneficial – how will I do this?
 - What do others need for me to be successful?
 - How will I be more aware and attentive to the needs of others?
 - How can I better deal with conflict in a neutral/non-confrontational way?
 - What behaviors do I have that hinder others and how will I change those behaviors?
- Ask colleagues, leadership, direct reports, friends and family for honest feedback and then self-manage to create something different
- *Seek to understand before being understood* – Steven Covey

Relationship Management:

- Take a look at your current relationships and identify whether they are strong and healthy
- Be aware that healthy relationships are a combination of give and take
- Ask yourself if you are willing to be vulnerable – if not, identify what you are fearful of
- Observe someone who has strong relationships and ask them to mentor you
- Identify how you can support others and act upon what you have identified
- Make a conscientious effort to listen, connect with others and expand your professional network

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Bottom line, what separates effective leaders and top performers from the average is Emotional Intelligence, and it is something you can develop. Emotionally intelligent leaders use their whole brain and are driven by their character and values rather than by the whim of their emotions.

The author, John Maxwell, does a great job of summarizing the content presented in this article by highlighting the difference between character-driven and emotion-driven leaders. We will wrap up with his words of wisdom from his book, “Developing the Leader within You”³.

Character Driven Leaders	Emotional Driven Leaders
Do right, then feel good	Feel good, then do right
Are commitment-driven	Are convenience-driven
Make principle-based decisions	Make popular decisions
Let action control attitude	Let attitude control action
Believe it, then see it	See it, then believe it
Create momentum	Wait for momentum
Ask, “What are my responsibilities”	Ask, “What are my rights”
Continue when problems arise	Quit when problems arise
Are steady	Are moody
Are leaders	Are followers

³ Thomas Nelson Publishers. Copyright ©1993 by John C. Maxwell.