

Leading with Feeling

The Four Keys of Emotionally Intelligent Leadership

By Debra Hamilton

True or False? Feelings play a key role in effective leadership. *True.* Emotions, not intellect, naturally connect and inspire people, and the best leaders know how to leverage their feelings to build bonds and achieve business goals. This emotional self awareness, as well as being in touch with the emotions of others, is called *emotional intelligence*, and accounts for nearly 90% of the difference between *average* and *highly successful* leaders.

What about IQ? Doesn't intelligence equal success? Being smart is important, but it is not enough. According to Dotlich and Cario, authors of "Why CEOs Fail," leaders, no matter how brilliant, will derail if they fail to make a real emotional connection with others. As leaders acknowledge their feelings and use them in making wiser decisions, they help create a culture of openness and trust, and thus drive business results.

So, how do you know if you are an emotionally intelligent leader? Ask yourself these questions:

- Do I motivate others by creating a positive emotional tone that is fueled by optimism and hope?
- Am I in touch with my own thoughts and feelings and those of others?
- Am I mindful—authentic and present in the moment—and agile in the face of challenge?

Based on Daniel Goleman's decade of research and model of Emotional Intelligence, here are the four keys of emotionally intelligent leadership:

1. Self-Awareness: Self-awareness is the basis of emotional intelligence. Leaders with this competence:

- Are mindful of which emotions they are feeling and why
- Understand the link between their feelings and thoughts and behavior
- Recognize how their feelings impact their performance

2. Self-Management: How we manage our internal state can be the difference between achieving goals and derailing. Leaders with this competence:

- Manage their impulsive feelings and distressing emotions
- Remain composed and optimistic in stressful situations
- Stay focused, adaptable, and agile during times of change

3. Social Awareness: Being in touch with the feelings of others and the organization's climate gives leaders an edge in achieving business objectives. Leaders with this competence:

- Are empathic—sensing others' feelings and perspectives and taking an interest in their concerns
- Recognize and develop key internal networks
- Leverage diversity and attend to customer needs

4. Social Skills: Managing professional relationships well leads to improved communication and greater influence. Leaders with this competence:

- Inspire and motivate others
- Develop others through feedback, reward, mentoring, and coaching
- Manage crucial conversations and conflict
- Champion and manage organizational change

Raising emotional awareness takes commitment and practice. Leading with feeling cascades down through an entire organization, benefiting everyone through collaboration, greater focus on business objectives, higher performance, and increased bottom-line results.

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