



Emotional Intelligence

What's the big deal??

Written by Cam Yenokida

©2024

www.achieve-excellence.com

Achieving YOUR Excellence is our only mission.

“The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind.” – William James

If your teammates didn't enjoy working with you, wouldn't you like to know?

And is it even that big of a deal?

Here's the reality...there are a variety of underlying currents impacting nearly every organization.

Technological innovation continues to disrupt industries, workforce demographics are evolving, generational diversity is widening, remote and hybrid work is more prevalent than ever, and the demand for new skills is becoming increasingly critical to a company's survival.

And yet, through all these iterations, there seems to be one consistent ingredient for all high-performing business units.

Leaders with exceptional skill sets who can inspire and elevate people to harness their inherent strengths, close the gap on real blind spots, and work towards a common goal together.

“The bad news is time flies. The good news is you're the pilot.” – Michael Altshuler

Emotional intelligence (EI) is one of the most important skills for accomplishing this. It is the ability to recognize, manage, and influence emotions—both for oneself and others.

It is arguably one of the most important skill sets for successful leaders because it directly correlates to one's ability to successfully maintain a strong and healthy relationship.

Imagine this; you walk home after a long workday to your wife of nearly 15 years. She's crying in bed, and when you move towards her to figure out why, she says simply, “I'm not happy. I haven't been for a while. Haven't you noticed?”

What? How could this be? You work countless hours to provide for the family. You do the dishes. You take days off to be with the kids. You go on vacation together. You take out the trash (occasionally). You, you, you probably haven't been paying attention to how important emotional intelligence really is.

So, yes – it is a BIG deal.

“The easiest person to deceive is one's own self.” – Edward Butler-Lytton

Pay attention to these 4 benefits you will experience by enhancing your emotional intelligence.

1. **Improved Relationships:** It helps you build stronger relationships by fostering empathy, effective communication, and conflict resolution.

People with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to navigate complex social dynamics and build trust because they can recognize other people's perspectives and regulate their own behaviors.

www.achieve-excellence.com

Achieving YOUR Excellence is our only mission.

2. **Better Decision-Making:** By being aware of and managing your emotions, you can avoid impulsive decisions that are driven by stress or anxiety.

This leads to more thoughtful, strategic decision-making that aligns with a long-term vision.

“Great leaders move us. They ignite our passion and inspire the best in us. When we try to explain why they are so effective, we speak of strategy, vision, or powerful ideas. But the reality is much more primal. Great leadership works through the emotions.” – Daniel Goleman

3. **Increased Leadership Influence:** In leadership roles, your ability to inspire and motivate teams is vital.

Leaders with high EI create more cohesive teams, drive engagement, and foster a collaborative culture through inclusive words and actions.

4. **Stronger Resilience and Stress Management:** High emotional intelligence allows you to cope with stress more effectively.

Instead of being overwhelmed by pressure, you can maintain composure, find solutions, and remain productive by not allowing your reactions to affect your ability to take appropriate action.

The good news is emotional intelligence is a learned behavior and can be developed with conscious effort.

Especially if someone finds themselves in a similar situation to the marriage example above, we’d all hope there was an opportunity to correct our behavior and move towards our desired outcome together.

So, let us outline the key areas to focus on in strengthening this skill set.

1. **Self-Awareness:** Start by understanding your own emotions, specifically your responses to certain situations.

Consider, for example, a moment when you quickly become frustrated in a conversation with a co-worker, roll your eyes (either visibly or in your mind), a moment of pure joy and elation, and a terrible night’s sleep with constant stressors clouding your ability to drift into calmness.

Write down the specific events that preceded each response. Include a brief description of what occurred and how these feelings can impact your thoughts and behaviors.

“Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.” – Viktor Frankl

2. **Self-Regulation:** Once aware of your emotions, work on managing them.

Practice pausing before you react in an emotionally charged situation. Create a list of more positive responses for when these instances occur.

www.achieve-excellence.com

Achieving YOUR Excellence is our only mission.

In addition to pausing, this could include exercising, journaling, taking a few deep breaths to collect your composure, or showing gratitude and appreciation for others. Track your progress and reflect on it.

3. **Empathy:** Practice your ability to understand and share the feelings of others.

Active listening will be important here, so pay close attention to both verbal and non-verbal cues. Imagine yourself in other people's shoes to understand their perspectives.

Challenge yourself to look at each situation through the lens of another person, including any possible sensations that might arise.

"We have what we need, if we use what we have."
– Edgar Cahn

4. **Interpersonal Communication:** Emotional intelligence is not just about managing your own emotions but also interacting effectively with others.

Practice actively listening, communicating with assertiveness vs. aggression, clarifying other people's perspectives, and collaborating on solutions as a team.

A skilled communicator is someone who can recognize and adjust to a variety of

communication styles to enhance a collective understanding.

Remember that boosting your emotional intelligence is a journey and not a sprint.

It can also be a journey best traveled with a trusted advisor. Consider, for example, the benefits of hiring a skilled leadership coach to enhance your existing abilities and assist you in achieving even greater results.

Stay patient with yourself, practice consistently, and watch how it will transform your interactions and relationships in both your professional and personal life.

"Excellence is the unlimited ability to improve the quality of what you have to offer." – Rick Pitino