

Developing Your Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

It is not enough to intellectually understand the various competencies of emotional intelligence. Nor is it enough to make a decision to behave differently. You will not enhance your EQ competencies simply because you choose to do so. It takes practice - repeatedly trying out new behaviors you want to adopt until they become new habits. Replacing old habits with new, more effective ones is not always comfortable and it certainly is not an easy quick fix. You will develop and improve your emotional intelligence, and therefore your leadership success, through consistently putting new behaviors into action in real-world situations.

The following exercises, tools and ideas are designed to get you started. Many of the ideas listed are micro-initiatives - small things that, done regularly, can enhance and improve a leader's emotional intelligence. As with any personal development initiatives, start small and choose only a few areas to focus on at once until they become habits and part of the fabric of your natural leadership behaviors.

You are what you repeatedly do. Excellence is not an event -

-Aristotle

Intrapersonal

Competencies:

Do I have a positive self-image? Am I aware of my emotions as they happen to me? Am I able to express myself in a positive way about my emotions? Am I able to have an opinion, regardless of whether it is shared by anyone else? Do I need anyone's permission to take action? How fulfilled am I in all the important areas of my life?

Micro-Initiatives:

- Keep a Journal or "Lessons Log" to keep track of your emotions, thoughts and experiences; capture what works and what doesn't as well as important insights.
- Monitor your emotions (both positive and negative) during interactions with others; reflect on what you are feeling and why.
- Look for the benefits vs. the risks in expressing your emotions to people you work with.
- Build confidence by recognizing and rewarding your successful efforts and achievements.
- When experiencing strong emotional reactions, stop and focus on why you are feeling the way you do.
- Examine your goals to determine if they are helping you to achieve your career and life aspirations; analyze what may be holding you back from achieving a specific goal.
- Let others know what development goals you are working on and ask for their help or advice if appropriate.
- Other: _____
- Other: _____

Interpersonal

Competencies:

Can I understand why someone feels the way they do, without necessarily agreeing with them? Do I have a need to connect with a larger world than just the immediate one around me? Can I establish and maintain mutually satisfying relationships with others?

Micro-Initiatives:

- Focus more on inquiring vs. advocating when interacting with others; ask questions, show curiosity and interest in others' thoughts and emotions.
- Look for similarities; try to find common ground when interacting with others, particularly when in conflict; look for good - assume others have the best of intentions.
- Study others in the organization who you think are empathetic; observe their interactions and identify the qualities you observe.
- Find time for unhurried interactions with others; share a few personal activities or insights with those you work with.
- Increase opportunities for involvement in group activities and functions in order to cultivate a feeling of contributing to the community at large.
- Seek out people you normally don't interact with very much - solicit their opinions or insights on an issue.
- Use your journal to capture examples of miscommunication - analyze them and identify alternative approaches to the situations.
- Other: _____

Other: _____

Stress Management

Competencies:

How well equipped am I to handle adverse events in life? How patient am I? Am I able to resist the immediate impulse before I act?

Micro-Initiatives:

- Create a positive internal script that you can say to yourself when things get tough or stressful.
- Balance work/life demands by including rest and relaxation as well as exercise and proper nutrition; ask for help when you need it and don't be afraid to say no.
- Reframe your anger/negative emotional response to a situation and see if the situation can be interpreted differently; take a time out if your emotions are getting out of control.
- Ask someone you trust to observe you and give you feedback on your emotional control.
- Focus on the things you can control or influence in a situation, not on what you cannot control.
- Try on a new behavior. Next time in a meeting if you normally hold back your views, express yourself... If you normally jump to express yourself, hold back.
- Use your journal to document situations or people that create the most anxiety or stress in your daily life and develop a response plan to help you take control of your responses.

Other: _____

Other: _____

Adaptability

Can I separate fact from fiction when faced with problems? Am I able to make a change in direction when it is clear the plan is not working? Do I have a way to determine the root cause of problems and figure out the best way to solve them?

Micro-Initiatives:

- Consider how past experiences with change have resulted in better outcomes; identify how they can be applicable to new challenges.
- In problem situations, identify alternative actions you could take to capitalize on your strengths and minimize your weaknesses.
- Ask for input from people whom you normally do not involve in the decision-making process.
- Focus on concrete, attainable and practical goals with multiple plans of action.
- Apply cost/benefit analysis to important decisions; brainstorm alternative actions and weigh the pros and cons of your ideas to help avoid rash decisions.
- Genuinely invite other people's ideas and opinions when resolving problems before you state your own ideas and opinions.
- Use your journal to document the steps you take toward your personal goals or vision.
- Other: _____

Other: _____

General Mood

Competencies:

Do I feel my near-term future is full of promise and possibilities?
Am I satisfied with where I am right now?

Micro-Initiatives:

- Do something you find enjoyable and interesting periodically (weekly, monthly, etc.), particularly when you are feeling negative.
- Focus on and work with your strengths. Find ways to capitalize on your strengths in difficult situations.
- Have a reality check. When feeling overly pessimistic, ask yourself how likely the negative event/action will occur and what positive measures can you take to prevent it.
- Focus on your internal dialogue. Replace negative thoughts with positive affirmations.
- Create a personal motivation team - two to three people who can help you feel good, lift your spirits and support you in your goals.
- Use your journal to document the good things that have happened to you each day, no matter how small.
- Other: _____

Other: _____