

Forward Motion Coaching Newsletter

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Emotional Intelligence and Why It Can Matter More than IQ

It's a sadly familiar scenario: a sales, marketing, or technology "star" gets quickly promoted through the ranks, only to stall upon reaching a corner office. Typically, the problem has nothing to do with technical skill, intelligence, or experience – the areas that are rigorously evaluated to determine who gets hired and promoted. Instead, derailment is most often a consequence of inadequately developed emotional intelligence, or what used to be termed "people skills."

Emotional intelligence can be broadly defined as an individual's ability to understand and manage his or her own emotions, and to respond empathically and authentically to others. Daniel Goleman popularized the concept in two hugely popular books, "*Emotional Intelligence*" and "*Working with Emotional Intelligence*." He identifies five "EI" categories (self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skill) that enable people to develop a host of specific competencies, including self-confidence, initiative, achievement drive, service orientation, and persuasiveness.¹

EI capabilities become more critical as job complexity increases, and intangibles like "leading and motivating" become key requirements. Goleman found that 67% of the abilities needed for effective performance were EI competencies, and that IQ accounts for only about 25% of job success.² Hallmarks of emotionally savvy managers are things like being able to accurately assess one's strengths and weaknesses, develop trust and get buy-in from others on projects, think before taking action, and other characteristics commonly associated with seasoned and effective leaders.

Boorish or disengaged managers, on the other hand, do a lot more than generate "boss from hell" stories to trade over drinks at the local watering hole. A poor relationship with a supervisor is consistently ranked as the top reason that people leave their jobs, and "insensitivity to others" is the top cause of executive derailment.³

The good news is that emotional intelligence can be learned, although it requires commitment and courage to change personal patterns of interacting. Coaching and other one-on-one development programs are the most effective for developing new "emotional habits," because these competencies are governed by a different area of the brain than cognitive learning.⁴ While workshops are useful for introducing concepts, it takes on-going practice and reinforcement to become more "EI savvy."

April's Coaching Challenge: One way to increase your emotional intelligence is to pay attention to how your personality style influences the way you perceive and react to people and situations. For example, are your perfectionist tendencies keeping you from seeing the big picture? Do you procrastinate trying to weigh all of the options? Have colleagues accused you of being "negative" when you're trouble-shooting a project? Do you neglect to solicit ideas from others in order to get the job done?

Once you identify a pattern, make a note of each time you notice it come up over a one or two week period. See if certain people or situations trigger it, so that in the future you can be ready with a new way of responding. For instance, if your habit is over-preparing for worst case

scenarios, and weekly planning meetings trigger this pattern, you can decide to come to the next session with some positive potential outcomes to off-set any negative ones.

You can learn more about personality style, self-awareness, and how to break free from old habits in *The Personality of Business: Manage Your Style for Greater Success*, a new guide that's available at no charge from Forward Motion Coaching (see below for details about how to get your copy).

1, 2 Daniel Goleman, *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, © 1998, Bantam Books

3 Morgan W. McCall Jr. and Michael M. Lombardo, "What Makes a Top Executive?" *Psychology Today*, February 1983

4 Cary Cherniss, Ph.D., Daniel Goleman, Ph.D., Robert Emmerling, Kimberly Cowan, and Mitchel Adler, "A Technical Report Issued by The Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations," www.eiconsortium.org

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