

The Characteristics of Emotional Intelligence

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In his book, *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, author Daniel Goleman writes, "For star performers in all jobs, in every field, emotional competence is twice as important as purely cognitive abilities. For success at the highest levels, in leadership positions, emotional competence accounts for virtually the entire advantage." According to Goleman, emotional intelligence (EI) is the hidden ingredient in the outstanding performer. Individuals with high EI are those with exceptional relationships, a keen sensitivity to the needs and desires of others, and an attitude of collaboration towards employees and colleagues.

Goleman cites five elements, or dimensions, of "Emotional Competence": self-awareness, motivation, self-regulation, empathy, and adeptness in relationships. Within these five dimensions are a total of 25 competencies that fall into two main categories: personal competencies (how we manage ourselves) and social competencies (how we handle relationships). The goal is not to master every competency within each dimension, but to have strengths in many competencies spread across all of the dimensions.

How many of the 25 competencies do you need to demonstrate EI? Goleman says that you must hit a critical mass, or "tipping point," of EI competencies that includes some from each of the five EI dimensions. Once you reach the "tipping point," the probability of being a top performer shoots up. According to Goleman's data, the three emotional competencies most often leading to

success are initiative (achievement, drive, and adaptability), influence (effective team leadership and political awareness), and empathy (seeing things from others' point of view.) Below are some traits of those who successfully demonstrate high EI:



- Self-control: The successful are composed under stress, confident, and dependable. Those lacking self-control handle pressure poorly and are prone to angry outbursts.
- Conscientiousness: The successful are responsible. They admit mistakes, correct problems, and move on. Those lacking in this quality react to failure defensively, often denying it or seeking to cover it up.
- Trustworthiness: The successful possess high integrity and a concern for others' needs above their own needs. This helps them command respect. Those failing here usually do so because they are trying to get ahead at the expense of others. This may result in short-term gain but long-term loss.
- Social skills: The successful are empathetic and sensitive, showing tact and consideration for everyone. Those having difficulty with social skills lack empathy and are often arrogant, abrasive, and intimidating.
- Building bonds and leveraging diversity: The successful appreciate diversity and get along with all kinds of people. Those having difficulty in this area are insensitive and often manipulative, failing to build networks of cooperative people.

How'd you do? Remember, unlike IQ, EI can be learned. I encourage you to become a student of emotional intelligence. 📖

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