



## Developing Emotional Intelligence

*By Rob Faw*

Emotional intelligence is a critical competency for 21st century leadership. Leaders must be able to take an adaptive approach towards change resulting from competitive forces in the global marketplace, organizational downsizing, and production outsourcing. The history and study of emotional intelligence began as a social intelligence concept developed by behavioral scientist E.L. Thorndike in 1920. In 1993, Harvard theorist Howard Gardner suggested there are five distinct categories of emotional intelligence including self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. And most recently, Harvard psychologist Daniel Goleman believes emotional intelligence can be learned and improved upon.

In his seminal work, Goleman introduced millions of readers to the concept of emotional intelligence – in what he describes as an amalgamation of psychological skills and traits that he claims accounts for 80% of life success. Research suggests that the leaders with emotional intelligence have an increased capacity to develop empowered teams and create high performance in the workplace.

Throughout my career and coaching practice, I've introduced emotional intelligence assessments and training are extremely useful tools for executive leadership development. Studies have found, and my own experiences affirm, that emotional intelligence is a behavioral influence that positively affects economic growth and financial results. Leaders with emotionally intelligent social skills can be more effective communicators, change agents, conflict managers and collaborators. It has been my experience that exceptional executive leaders are emotionally intelligent.

The pace of the Information Age often strains an executive's self-confidence, self-control, and empathy towards fellow employees, resulting in personal ineffectiveness and organizational inefficiency. This situation often catches an executive by surprise. A five-layer emotional intelligence model can provide context for understanding, growth, and development.

*Self-awareness* is the base-layer or foundation of emotional intelligence. The process of self-awareness helps a person understand individual strengths, weaknesses, and recognition of emotions that can affect thoughts and behavior. *Emotional control* is the next layer, where an individual learns how to control impulsive feelings and behaviors in a healthy way, takes initiative, keeps commitments, and adapts to change. The third layer is *self-motivation*, where a person uses emotions to meet goals through restraint, hope, and optimism. Empathy is the fourth layer. *Empathy* is an understanding of the emotions, needs, and concerns of other people and ability to pick up emotional cues and feel comfortable socially. The final and highest layer of emotional intelligence is *relationships*. You can develop and maintain good relationships, communicate clearly, inspire and influence others. With these emotional intelligence attributes, a person can work well on a team and manage conflict.

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