

Developing Emotional Intelligence

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Daniel Goleman perceptively and accurately noted that emotional intelligence is critical to leadership success, claiming that emotional intelligence is far more important to leadership emergence and effectiveness than intellectual capacity. Goleman's research later confirmed an 85% relationship between emotional intelligence and leader effectiveness. It may be the most critical area for current and aspiring leaders to develop. While leadership scholars accept the importance of emotional intelligence for leadership and the fact that emotional intelligence can be developed, there appears to be some uncertainty around how emotional intelligence can be developed. The authors shed light on that area and provide current and aspiring leaders with some proven strategies for developing the four predominant components of emotional intelligence. The importance of emotional intelligence to leadership is well documented, and leaders would be well served by working to heighten their levels of emotional intelligence and, in doing so, increase their leadership potential, efficacy, and impact.

Keywords: leadership ; leader effectiveness ; emotional intelligence ; development

Emotional intelligence has garnered considerable attention in the leadership literature over the last 30 years. Significant research and articles in the academic and popular press have focused on what emotional intelligence is and why it is essential ^{[1][2][3]}. Specifically, Goleman's book entitled, *Emotional Intelligence: Why it May Matter More than IQ*, brought the study of emotional intelligence into mainstream media and has been praised by scholars and members of the popular press for its impact. *The New York Times* bestseller was highlighted on the cover of *Time* magazine and received praise from scholars and practitioners alike.

Salovey and Mayer ^[4] first defined emotional intelligence as a type of social intelligence that allows leaders to monitor their emotions and the emotions of others to improve communication and a leader's decision-making abilities. Salovey and Mayer's definition focused solely on the emotions of the self, the emotions of others, and the information that can be collected and processed to connect the emotional and rational parts of the brain. Cherry ^[5] believed that emotional intelligence heightened people's ability to perceive, interpret, demonstrate, and control their own and others' emotions, facilitating more effective communication and better decision-making. Her interventions helped to advance the concept by highlighting how high levels of emotional intelligence help leaders to understand, interpret, and respond to the emotions of others. Goleman popularized and quantified the concept of emotional intelligence by noting that emotional intelligence consisted of four predominant components: (a) self-awareness, (b) self-management, (c) social awareness, and (d) relationship management.

Emotional intelligence gives leaders the capacity to think conceptually and better understand the perspectives of others. This ability impacts the quality of interactions leaders have with other people. Leaders can view someone conceptually by understanding that people are composed of their intelligence quotient (IQ), emotional intelligence, and personality. A person's IQ and personality are relatively fixed traits. As a result, once someone better understands that person's IQ and personality, they can determine how to effectively interact with them. However, emotional intelligence skills can be developed, and people must continually employ empathy and relationship management skills to determine how to interact with them. These areas are relatively close. Therefore, if someone decides to develop their emotional intelligence, they can transform a part of themselves that is identified during situations that require the use of their emotional intelligence skills.

Contemporary leadership scholars remain focused on the topic of emotional intelligence and its impact on better decision-making and problem-solving ^[6], as well as employee motivation and job performance ^{[7][8]}. Other contemporary scholars call for emotional intelligence to be embedded in leader development programs ^[9]. Emotional intelligence remains a critically important area of development for leaders seeking to heighten their efficacy and impact.

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