



# The Emotional Intelligence of the Leader – Is It a Must?

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Received: October 10, 2023

Accepted: November 17, 2023

Published: March 16, 2024

## Keywords:

Empathy;  
Emotional intelligence;  
Emotional control;  
Leadership



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**Abstract:** *The leader is a fascinating figure with his behavior, and his vision for development and is a complete role model. He not only aims to bring his associates together but is mainly concerned with team building and solving problems of all kinds, including interpersonal ones. Therefore, the leader is emotionally intelligent, and able to unite people from different cultures, thus showing empathy and his inherent intelligence, namely on an emotional level. The current paper introduces emotional intelligence, by providing arguments why a leader needs to be emotionally intelligent. At the same time, the employee benefits of being led by an emotionally intelligent leader are also presented. Cases on emotional intelligence are also presented.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Leaders face many challenges in their daily life activities. Besides setting goals and creating the vision for the development of the organization, their main task is to create a successful team. In this regard, in addition to being good visionaries, they also need to possess a complex of skills, such as interpersonal to be effective in solving problems. The main problems in an organization arise from the communication process, therefore we are looking for leaders who, in addition to being innovators, are very good communicators and show empathy.

## 2. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF THE LEADER

Is the leader emotionally intelligent, and if so, why?

Emotions play a crucial role in our lives and while regulating them is important in general, their importance is enhanced in a work context, where there are different feelings and behavioral rules in the presence of different job demands arising from both horizontal and vertical interpersonal relationships. In their daily work activities, staff continuously invest their work-related emotions, attitudes, and perceptions of work and colleagues. In this regard, the effective management of emotions also contributes to a high degree of professional attitude (Yordanova & Dineva, 2022).

Goleman's (1995) model of emotional intelligence is extremely popular among academics and practitioners and serves as the basis for the development of process-oriented leadership theory by Allen et al. (2012). According to the aforementioned authors, the success of the leader depends on the combination of cognitive processes, personality traits, behavior and competencies that interact with each other (Allen et al., 2012, p. 183). That is why the authors themselves develop three factors and leadership capabilities of EI, namely:

- Context – environmental awareness and group understanding;

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- Self-emotional self-perception, honest self-understanding, healthy self-confidence, emotional self-control, authenticity, flexibility, achievements, optimism, initiative;
- Others – Empathy, Citizenship, Inspiration, Influence, Coaching, Agent of change, conflict management, developing relationships, working in a team, and capitalizing on differences (Yordanova & Dineva, 2022).

Emotional intelligence represents the ability to understand and successfully manage our emotions. In this regard, Goldman identified components that create emotional intelligence:

- Self-awareness is expressed in understanding and knowing our own emotions. If we know how and realize what we experience will influence us to make an easier decision. The self-knowledge of the emotional state is important in terms of our self-regulation as individuals.
- An emotionally intelligent leader is not only aware of his feelings, but above all he knows how to control them. Effective self-control of emotions allows one to easily reach the set goals without the cost of excessive stress. For example, a narcissistic leader uses fear to manipulate and control subordinates more easily. The emotionally intelligent leader aims to bring his team together by being able to keep his emotions so that he does not provoke stressful situations.
- An emotionally intelligent leader is not only self-aware and self-controlled in his emotional state, but is also self-motivated and thus is an example for his followers by his purposefulness and vision for development.
- Emotional intelligence includes empathy, such as the ability to feel the emotion of the other person with whom we communicate. Contrasted with destructive leaders such as narcissists, manipulators, etc., who certainly do not possess any tolerance and are unable to show sympathy to their co-workers, the emotionally intelligent leader has this gift that not all people possess, but which is very useful because it concerns the sensitivity of the individual and his tendency to respond to socially significant phenomena in society. Toxicity in the behavior of the narcissistic leader finds expression in aggression and his lack of ethics, as it happens (Yordanova & Dineva, 2022). For this purpose, it is good to gather evidence of how specifically its actions defame or attempt to damage the reputation of your colleagues. Usually, narcissists are productive for the organization, but they create a toxic organizational climate around them, not allowing competition, driven by their sick egos (Yordanova & Dineva, 2022).

Empathy is inherent in the social professions, where communication is a very important element as part of the profession of the teacher, the social worker, or the doctor.

Why should an organizational leader possess emotional intelligence?

The first argument for the need for a leader to be emotionally intelligent stems from the essence of his work, namely the interaction with people and the need to understand and accept the problem from their perspective. To be able to effectively and efficiently manage his team, the leader must be an excellent communicator ie. not only be able to speak, but also to listen and take to heart the problems of his employees, in order to more easily connect them to the goals of the organization. In other words, emotionally intelligent leaders are more willing to show empathy for the problems of their associates (George, 2000).

According to the research, managers with a high level of emotional intelligence are more productive when they have to solve controversial issues, resulting from organizational conflict (Côté & Miners, 2006).

On the other hand, leaders possessing emotional intelligence make decisions more successfully, as they feel and take into account the emotions of other employees, on the other hand, they are self-controlled and master their emotions in a conflict situation. This circumstance is a prerequisite for more effective decision-making as well as making the organization more productive (Goleman, 1995).

An emotionally intelligent leader is always motivated in this way as well is an excellent role model for his team to follow. In contrast to the narcissistic leader or manipulator who is always self-promoting and ignoring on purpose the achievements of other employees, an emotionally intelligent leader always gives a positive and highly constructive assessment of his team, thus motivating and inspiring them even more through his positive example (Yordanova & Dineva, 2022).

Driven by their empathy, emotionally intelligent leaders can involve their associates, encourage them, and successfully involve them in the work task, increasing their loyalty as well. In the case of such a leader, employees are motivated to work because they are treated with respect and are more dedicated and loyal to their leader.

Unlike the narcissist, who creates a toxic atmosphere in the workplace in his constant pursuit of self-aggrandizement and destruction of his competitors, the emotionally intelligent leader creates an extremely positive work environment and thus retains the best employees.

### 3. CASE STUDIES

Exemplary case studies to stimulate emotional intelligence.

*Case study 1: Your employee is constantly late in handing in his/her reports, with the last week being late for work by half an hour. After talking with you, as his supervisor, it becomes clear that he has family problems. He is facing a divorce and is having difficulties with the arrangement of viewing children. How would you deal with this employee in this particular situation?*

Option 1: A work-oriented leader. Shows no interest in the welfare of its employees. The main criterion for their success rate is measured in their productivity, namely whether they achieve the goals set by the management.

Option 2: Employee-oriented leader. In conversation with the employee, will discuss what the problem is and how management sees its solution. If that leader also has some degree of emotional intelligence, he will show or empathize or will propose a mutually acceptable solution to both sides, for example, working from home in case the job allows it or additional employment from home.

*Case study 2: You as a team leader strive to achieve the best results. You notice that the work of one of your best employees has recently been slow, poor quality of reports. How would you proceed bearing in mind that the deadline for handing over the whole project coming up?*

Option 1: You will reprimand him because he lowered his work performance, and thus affects the quality of the entire project. You'll threaten him with a pay cut if he doesn't improve in a week.

Option 2: You will talk to him as a leader with emotional intelligence. You will tell him that he is a key player for you and you rely on him a lot and will ask if any personal issues have affected his current results.

## 4. CONCLUSION

To summarize, a leader's emotional intelligence is needed in today's intercultural environment. There are several successful strategies for its improvement, namely:

1. Strive for non-critical observation and analysis. The goal is to clarify the cause of the occurrence.
2. To trace our reactivity to other people, in this sense whether someone else's approval is sought or there is criticality towards others.
3. Is the self-assessment realistic, are we aware of our emotions and can control them. Self-assessment and subsequent self-control are objective prerequisites for increasing the emotional intelligence of both us as employees and in terms of our perception of the leader.
4. Evaluation of our reaction in case of force majeure or stressful situations reflects another aspect of our motivation. If in stressful situations, we transfer the responsibility to other persons, this testifies to our emotional immaturity. A successful leader not only solves problems but is also aware of the responsibility he is taking on.

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