

Leadership and emotional intelligence: A key to becoming an inspirational leader

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What or who inspires you? Have you ever thought about it?

The growing complexity we have been facing in recent years and the global acceleration we are experiencing are leading to instability, isolation and fear. In order to cope, some people turn in on themselves, only increasing their isolation; others look for reassurance within a group (team, voluntary association, choir, etc.), seeking points of reference and inspiration.

The same is true in the context of businesses and organizations. Reflect for a moment on the various senior managers, bosses and leaders you have been associated with (men and women) and think of those who have left a positive mark on you. What was it about them that made them special? You will very quickly realize it was on account of their values, courage, determination and the way they acted as role models that these people were a source of inspiration for you. They were not perfect, obviously – they were very much human beings, but they had strong principles and took a clear line. In addition, they were probably strong on emotional intelligence.

If you consider statistics correlating the “performance orientation” and “emotional orientation” dimensions, you will find that leaders who are strong in both areas and get high scores on both axes tend to be successful and are regarded as inspirational leaders.

Such leaders have what is referred to as high emotional intelligence. This quality is central to the nine dimensions of what makes a good boss (see the 8-minute video at www.lp3leadership.com) and is an integral part of self-reflection.

Indeed, a good Leader is self-aware (strengths/Potential), controls his/her impact (Power) and thus achieves the desired level of Performance (LP³).

At the 2020 World Economic Forum, emotional intelligence was included in the top ten key skills needed to manage humanity’s future. It was ranked 6th, ahead of decision-making (7th).

But what exactly is emotional intelligence?

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a concept introduced in 1990 by the psychologists Peter Salovey and John Mayer, referring to the capacity to recognize, understand and control one’s own **emotions** and engage with the emotions of others.

Daniel Goleman, a psychologist and science journalist, popularized the concept in 1995.

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Goleman's model was based on four main concepts.

1. The first, **self-awareness (self-perception)**, is the capacity to understand one's emotions, recognize their influence and use them to guide decision-making.
2. The second, **self-management (self-control)**, consists of controlling one's emotions and impulses, and adapting to a changing situation.
3. The third concept, **social awareness (empathy)**, consists of the capacity to detect and understand others' emotions and respond appropriately to them.
4. Finally, the fourth concept, **relationship management (influence)**, is the capacity to inspire and influence others while encouraging their own development and managing conflicts.

This emotional intelligence framework has been adapted to the contexts of different businesses and organizations. Within this organizational context, there are a number of sub-competences and capacities for each component, which contribute to a higher level of emotional intelligence and therefore greater success.

Self-awareness:

- Emotional awareness: recognizing one's emotions and their effects
- Self-assessment: knowing one's strengths and weaknesses
- Self-confidence: confidence in one's own worth and capacities

Self-control:

- Self-management: managing emotions and disruptive impulses
- Trust: maintaining standards of honesty and integrity
- Conscientiousness: assuming responsibility for one's personal performance
- Adaptability: flexibility in managing change
- Innovation: being at ease with and open to new information

Self-motivation:

- Motivation to succeed: making the effort to improve and achieve excellence
- Commitment: aligning oneself with the group's or organization's objectives
- Initiative: being ready to grasp opportunities
- Optimism: perseverance in the pursuit of objectives despite obstacles and setbacks

Empathy/social sensitivity:

- Empathy: engaging with the feelings and viewpoints of others and taking an active interest in their concerns
- Willingness to serve: anticipating, recognizing and responding to customers' needs
- Development of others: having a sense of what others need in order to develop their capacities
- Capitalizing on diversity: cultivating opportunities arising from personal differences
- Political awareness: reading the emotional currents and power relations within a group

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Social skills

- Influence: using effective tactics to persuade others
- Communication: sending clear, convincing messages
- Catalyst of change: initiating or managing change
- Conflict management: negotiating and settling disagreements
- Creating connections: fostering instrumental relationships
- Collaboration and cooperation: working with others to achieve common objectives (see emotional intelligence in the workplace)
- Team skills: creating a cohesive group

If you are already familiar with the three LP3 approaches (Leader – Team – Partner), you will have spotted the connection between these skills and those pertaining to the three approaches. Indeed, if you ask employees what they expect from a good boss, a good team or a good partner, they will come up with most of the factors mentioned above. So it's just common sense!

The difficulty is to be aware of it, take it into account and, above all, act accordingly.

With this in mind, several of my earlier articles provide additional guidance or go into these matters in greater depth, giving you practical tools for mastering these elements.

Embrace an open-hearted approach. Emotional intelligence is the quality that distinguishes us from machines and computers, that makes us unique and irreplaceable.

So, be positive and inspirational leaders.

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