



The Power of the Emotionally Intelligent Leader

I am a frequent reader of the *Harvard Business Review* and a big fan of their insight on what is happening at the highest levels of business and leadership in the U.S. and the rest of the world. In my readings I have noticed that there is a key trait that is unmistakable in great leaders today, and that is the art of leading people. It is obvious that the perception of the leader who is great at running the numbers is inferior to the view of someone who truly knows how to grow a business. The term "emotional intelligence" is becoming highly regarded as the key trait behind successful leaders who know how to grow their business versus the failed attempts to simply reengineer companies by cutting cost.

The great news is that unlike IQ, which is generally fixed by about age 10, the intuition necessary to be an emotionally intelligent leader only grows with maturity and experience. Therefore, these are traits that anyone who is motivated can gradually learn through consistent reading and study. The key traits for emotionally intelligent leaders should consist of the following:

1. **Awareness of your strengths and weaknesses.** It never ceases to amaze me how most people will overestimate their strengths while underestimating their weaknesses. Two years ago I had an eye-opening experience where I had a psychologist do a DISC profile on me. I was surprised at the information, but my staff roared in laughter and nodded in agreement as I read about my idiosyncrasies that my test exposed. Later another person tested our key staff with a KOLBE exam that showed us how to work together more effectively. If you are interested in either of these tests, please feel free to contact us, and we can help you with these tests for a small fee.
2. **You must choose to grow.** All people say that they want to grow, but only a select few are willing to pay the price both literally and figuratively to invest in themselves and put forth the extra effort to really grow personally and professionally. This effort will require constant reading and consistent feedback in learning from mistakes to grow and improve. The price of victory is high, but not as high as the cost of failure.
3. **Surround yourself with people who will tell you the truth.** The further most people rise up the executive ranks, the more likely confidants are to become a "yes" person to them. In studying history it is clear that John F. Kennedy truly blamed himself for listening to advisors on the Bay of Pigs fiasco versus following his own "gut" and intuition. Some followers become "yes" people, while some have ulterior motives. True leaders must learn to assess people and avoid both of these types for their inner circle.
4. **Control your passion.** People are naturally attracted to a charismatic personality, but this strength taken to an extreme can turn into a weakness. Many people will attempt to get to the top with only passion and their hard work. However, too much passion kills the emotional connection necessary to lead people. Instead of following you out of respect, some people will merely be following you from fear of retribution if they do not do what you wish. This is a very negative environment. Control your

passion; otherwise, you may not have the relationships to get the most from your employees under extreme pressure or when their loyalty is tested. Driven personalities must learn to lower their passion, be more approachable and see how much better people will respond to you.

5. **Character will make you or break you.** You may rise to the top based on your passion, sheer will and hard work, but only people with deep character will be able to stay on top for the long haul. The best leaders know their purpose in life and have a deep appreciation for their core values. They have a set of principles they refuse to compromise under any circumstance. The principles are grounded in values based on the leader's often divine purpose in life.

A true leader who leads based on principle rather than public opinion will find themselves personally troubled and discontent when there is a disconnect between their core values and doing what they feel others are pressuring them into doing.

There is a valid statement that is posted in the children's wing where we attend church. It says, "Doing what is popular is not always right. Doing what is right is not always popular." People who lead based on these principles will be less likely to have a disconnect between their true self and what businesses pressure them into doing.

By choosing to incorporate these five key traits into your life both personally and professionally, you will be able to evolve into an emotionally intelligent leader. Through intense study and continuous achievement in learning, you will be on the road to becoming an unmistakable great leader.

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