



The Emotionally Intelligent Manager

How to Develop and Use the Four Key Emotional Skills of Leadership

by David R. Caruso and Peter Salovey
Jossey-Bass © 2004
320 pages

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Take-Aways

- Emotions are adaptive behaviors, not antiquated impulses from our evolutionary past.
- Emotions contain valuable data. They are primarily signals that provide information.
- Corporate efforts to suppress emotions are counterproductive.
- The principles of emotional intelligence are: emotion is information, ignoring or hiding emotion rarely works, effective decision-making includes emotion, logic patterns dictate emotion, and emotional universals and specifics both matter.
- To become an emotionally intelligent manager, learn to work with your emotions. Then learn to read other people's emotions and the information they convey.
- Discerning others' emotions carries many advantages. Emotional displays often hide true emotions, which can give you crucial data for managing and motivating.
- Emotional identification — defining the emotion you and others feel — is an essential ability and may be the first step in planning changes and improvements.
- Some 53% of workers say they express anger at work. Only 19% express joy.
- Base your decisions on a balance between heart and mind; do not ignore either one.
- It's not easy, but companies can build more emotionally intelligent managers.

Rating (10 is best)

Overall	Applicability	Innovation	Style
9	10	9	8

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Relevance

What You Will Learn

In this Abstract, you will learn: 1) The six principles of emotional intelligence; 2) How to read people more effectively; and 3) How to develop managers with emotional intelligence.

Recommendation

It's rare for a business book to offer first-hand, practical advice from a thinker who has revolutionized academic thought in his field. Here, that thinker is co-author Peter Salovey, the pioneer who invented the concept of emotional intelligence. Salovey provides a practical, application-oriented guide. With co-author David R. Caruso, he shows you how to take the idea of emotional intelligence — that emotional well-being and wholeness are at least as essential as intellectual capacity — and use it to do something truly relevant: create emotionally intelligent managers. The authors thoughtfully steer away from the superficial, self-help genre pitfall that purports to offer an easy one-book panacea. Instead, they offer a series of case studies and interactive exercises that may help even the most hard-hearted executive become less emotionally challenged. *getAbstract.com* gives this book its highest recommendation; it's a gift to those toiling in the emotionally barren modern workplace.

Abstract

Emotions at Work

The common view of emotions in the workplace is negative. “Don’t get so worked up,” people will advise you. Or they may say, “You need to keep a cool head” or even, “Let’s not let our emotions carry us away here. We need to think rationally.”

All of this is bad advice. These statements actually reflect a common, misguided notion of what emotions really are. It’s the idea that emotions are remnants from millions of years of evolution, and that a more “perfect” person would necessarily be more rational and, thus, less emotional. Emotions, then, are about as useful as your appendix, and to the extent they can be removed from your behavior, you’re likely to be better off without them.

The problem with this view is that it is patently, scientifically false. In fact, work conducted by University of Iowa neuroscientist Antonio Damasio shows that emotions are integral to the human thought process, rather than a secondary legacy. Indeed, as human brains have grown more complex through millions of years of evolution, the wiring for emotion remains. Emotion cannot be surgically removed from intelligence. The time has come for managers, instead, to say things like, “It’s time that all of us get a little excited,” and, “We need to look at this problem emotionally instead of logically.” The key to being an emotionally intelligent manager is integrating rational and emotional responses. Too much of one or the other can lead to poor decision-making. The six principles of emotional intelligence are:

1. Emotion is a form of information — Emotion contains data. It is not random or chaotic. It is more a form of thinking, not something that interferes with thinking. Emotions prepare you for action, focus your attention and help you cope. While emotions are not always full of data, they often provide data about relationships and people. In short, emotions help you survive.

“Emotions do matter — all the time. We believe that to ignore their role, to deny the wisdom of your own emotions and those of others, is to invite failure as a person, as a manager, and as a leader.”

“An emotionally intelligent manager experiences the emotions and then uses the power of emotion as a springboard to a successful, productive outcome.”

“We are taught that emotions should be felt and expressed in carefully controlled ways, and then only in certain environments and at certain times.”

“The integration of rational and emotional styles is the key to successful leadership.”

“Emotions contain data about you and your world. Emotions are not random, chaotic events that interfere with thinking.”

“We all love positive emotions and recognize their positive effects on health and well-being, but there should be a fond place in our hearts for the so-called negative emotions such as fear, anger, and disgust. There’s a time for peace — happy emotions — and there’s a time to fight — to feel negative emotions.”

2. Trying to ignore emotions rarely works — When people try to suppress emotions in the name of efficiency or objectivity, they actually end up remembering less information. It’s not that emotionally intelligent managers are always upbeat. They acknowledge and use emotions to find more productive outcomes.
3. People aren’t very good at hiding emotions — Actually, hiding emotions rarely works, yet the suppression of emotions within organizations takes many forms. While anger tends to be frequently expressed at work, joy is rarely expressed. Organizations allow certain expressions and discourage others.
4. Effective decision-making must account for emotions — Do not block your emotions. Fully incorporate them into your decisions. Emotions are part of what truly makes people human and, indeed, they are part of your rationality.
5. Logical patterns dictate emotions — Emotions influence thinking. Positive emotions add to creativity; negative emotions provide focus, particularly in dealing with details.
6. Account for emotional universals and specifics — Emotional universals exist. For example, the happy face symbol is recognized worldwide. However, expression of emotional specifics varies widely. This includes emotional display rules (“big boys don’t cry”) and social perceptions. For instance, people react differently as to whether a display of anger, a primary emotion, is appropriate. They may feel varying degrees of such secondary emotions as shame or guilt.

An Emotional Road Map

Emotions matter a lot, yet managers are very rarely trained how to manage emotion. Becoming an emotionally intelligent manager means learning to identify the data in feelings. At times this may seem like following a rote schematic design rather than responding spontaneously, but the Emotional Blueprint will help you make better decisions.

When you gain emotional intelligence, you attain four related abilities: 1) the ability to read others and identify emotions, 2) the ability to “get in the mood” and use emotions to motivate yourself and others, 3) the ability to predict the flow of your emotions and what will happen next, and 4) the ability to manage emotions, that is, to use the data emotions provide. To develop an effective map to guide your response to your emotions, closely study the acquisition and benefits of these four emotional abilities.

Reading People

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if people carried around clearly visible signs that declared their emotions? “I’m feeling frustrated today because of an argument with my wife,” might be one. Or, “I feel like a failure because I missed my bonus numbers this quarter.”

The data will never be that clear, but emotionally intelligent managers try to understand the emotions behind behavior. Skillful managers will sense what people feel and openly discuss feelings. They aren’t afraid to show their feelings, from frustration to appreciation. Perhaps because emotionally intelligent managers recognize their own emotions, they are also able to read others’ feelings with surprising accuracy — almost as if their employees were wearing placards. Managers who lack emotional intelligence, however, misread others’ emotions, clam up rather than talk about emotions, rarely show emotion, maintain neutral expressions, and misunderstand or fail to articulate their own feelings.

The Essential Ingredient: Awareness

How do you identify emotions? It begins with awareness. Right now you feel a certain way, whether you realize or admit it. Think about how you feel. Are you always as aware as you might be of your feelings? The essential structure material for emotional

“Management is not about avoiding conflict and making everyone happy all the time. Management is more about effectiveness, and effectiveness requires a range of emotions.”

“The expression of joy is an important part of the emotionally intelligent manager’s tool kit, and we need to celebrate our successes more often and encourage each other to reproduce that success.”

“Emotions motivate our behavior in ways that are adaptive and helpful to us. Emotions are not extraneous. They don’t just add interest to our lives; they are critical to our very survival.”

“Emotions make us truly human and undergird rationality, and, as such, emotions must be welcomed, embraced, understood, and put to use.”

intelligence is awareness, but it must not be obsessively introspective. Suppose you are at a sales meeting that doesn’t really interest you. How do you feel, and why? Are you exhausted and thus disinterested? Could you be harboring frustrations about the way management is spending your time? Are you bored? The crucial idea is that your emotional reaction to the presentation provides insights and data about the message itself — in this case, that the speaker may be doing a poor job of holding others’ attention.

One important element of reading others is the ability to read facial expressions and identify the associated emotions. After all, emotions are a signaling system that contains data, and if you miss the signal, you miss the data. On the most basic level, if you can’t tell the difference between rage and joy, you will be unable to distinguish friend from foe. Emotional identification is the ability to distinguish the emotion being felt, whether by you or by others.

Emotionally intelligent managers learn to “read between the lines,” to take what they know about a situation, factor in emotional and behavioral clues, and derive a more complete picture. Emotional displays — everybody grinning at the holiday party — and true emotions differ. When you can read between the lines, you’ll be able to distinguish true emotions from emotional display. Emotional display contains valuable information — what people want you to think they feel — but the actual emotions underneath may be quite different. Look for three main types of clues for information about someone’s real emotional state: facial expression, nonverbal body posture and voice (pitch, tone and rhythm).

To read others’ emotions, blend the inputs. First, be aware of your emotions. Then, process what the other person says, in terms of emotion-based words used, and the person’s tone, pitch and speed. Consider nonverbal information, like posture, gestures, words related to gestures and facial expressions. Be keenly aware of any discrepancy between words, tone and expression, but don’t jump to conclusions about what these discrepancies may mean. Use statements that begin with “you seem” to give the person an opportunity to confirm your reading of their feelings. You can also check your impressions with another observer for additional insight.

Leaders must build trust and establish rapport, both of which depend on emotion. Emotionally intelligent managers learn to use emotions to motivate groups. Rather than spurn your emotions, try to understand how to apply them to help you and your colleagues. A lack of emotion can limit your thinking. Breakthrough ideas often follow from emotional difficulties. Rather than resist emotions and assume they are counterproductive, embrace them as an important component of your thought process.

Predicting the Emotional Future

Emotions don’t happen randomly. They obey the laws of cause and effect. While emotions are complex, once you understand the cause and effect relationship you can predict how various outcomes will affect a group or a person’s emotions. This enables you to do “what-if” analysis and planning. Of course, emotions aren’t completely predictable. But by studying what makes people feel as they do — including yourself — you can begin to achieve a degree of confidence about what emotional turn will take place next.

Managing Emotions

The ability to manage emotions is the keystone of emotional intelligence. This does not mean you no longer feel emotions, but rather that you are able to translate them into effective action and behaviors. Successfully managing emotions simply means basing

“Emotions are not randomly occurring events. Each emotion has its own moves, sort of like in a game of chess. You just have to know which piece you have and the rules that govern that piece.”

“The emotional system is an intelligent system; that’s why it evolved in animals, including humans. Our emotions point us in the right direction and motivate us to do what needs to be done.”

your behavior on a balance of thoughts and feelings. Let one inform the other, balancing heart and mind, so that your conduct is guided by both your thoughts and your feelings.

Managing Anger at Work

One study indicated that 53% of workers express their feelings of anger, but only 19% express joy, the least frequently expressed emotion. Anger management is clearly a workplace issue. Before you can handle angry feelings better or manage other peoples’ anger, learn how to distinguish feeling angry from acting due to anger. Anger can be powerfully constructive or destructive. The determining factor is whether you let the emotion control your behavior. The emotionally intelligent manager learns to disengage the emotion from the response, without ignoring the emotion.

Suppose you’re making a presentation. A subordinate continually interrupts in a way that questions your underlying assumptions, leading the presentation astray. To respond, first identify your own feelings of frustration, then establish that despite that frustration, a real threat does not exist. Next, use emotional experience to consider the other person’s point of view. This will help you understand the emotion, which will lead you to manage the emotion, perhaps by frankly publicly stating your desire to move forward while also indicating your willingness to discuss your subordinate’s concerns in private later. Anger itself isn’t the problem. The real challenge is learning how to get angry and what to do about it.

Managing Groups

With groups, consider several questions. Ask how group members feel about the situation they are encountering. Consider how their feelings influence their thoughts and behaviors. Thinking about why they feel as they do will inform you about how their feelings are likely to change as events develop. Consider what you can do with their emotions, that is, how you can help them integrate their feelings into their behaviors in the workplace.

Emotionally intelligent managers build strong teams, plan and decide efficiently, motivate others well, communicate vision, promote positive change and create productive and effective interpersonal relationships. To encourage and build emotionally intelligent managers, your organization first must come to understand that emotions are positive, offer data that assists in decision-making and promote effective adaptation to the environment.

To the extent that you can learn to manage your emotions, you increase your chances of success. Do not suppress, vent or avoid your feelings; instead, integrate them into your thinking and use them as a source of information and inspiration.

About The Authors

Peter Salovey, dean of Yale University’s Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, is the Chris Argyris Professor of Psychology at Yale and president of the Society for General Psychology. A leading authority on the psychological consequences of emotion, he was founding editor of the *Review of General Psychology*. David R. Caruso is a management psychologist and research affiliate in the Department of Psychology at Yale. He is a consultant and seminar leader who specializes in executive coaching, career assessment and leadership development.