

AJAYI CROWTHER UNIVERSITY

Being a Top- Class: The Role of Emotional Intelligence

By

Lovedays EGBEDION,

Head, Clients Services

M8 Global Group.

June 9, 2010.

URL:www.m8globalgroup.com,Email:drlovedays@yahoo.com,Tel:+234-8067001035.

Introduction

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the capacity for understanding our own feelings and the feelings of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing our emotions effectively in our relationships.

Emotional intelligence is sometimes referred to as “people smarts.” It is not generally included in the type of intelligence evaluation included in the traditional concept of IQ, which mainly focuses conceptual abilities, but it is a very important personal attribute.

Rather than being a single characteristic, emotional intelligence can be thought of as a wide set of competencies that are organized into a few major clusters. The most widely accepted view of emotional intelligence identifies 20 competencies, which are in turn organized into four clusters:

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- Social Awareness
- Social Skills

Why is it Important to Develop My Own Emotional Intelligence?

Recent research suggests that the competencies associated with emotional intelligence are not set in stone at birth, but that the emotional competencies can indeed be learned and developed even till the age of 70years!

There are many benefits associated with developing your own emotional intelligence capabilities, and those benefits range from the personal to the organizational. The higher your emotional intelligence, the more likely you are to succeed in personal and professional relationships. There is a strong correlation between well-developed emotional intelligence and personal self-satisfaction and overall self-confidence.

Having a good understanding of yourself, your strengths, and your weaknesses is essential to being a top class performer when on any human endeavour.

When your emotional intelligence is fully developed, it is easier to work well under constantly changing circumstances and to act on your ideas in ways that benefit the organization and community.

Four Clusters of Emotional Intelligence

1. Self-Awareness
2. Self-Management
3. Social Awareness
4. Social Skills

Self-Awareness

This is the ability to accurately sense and identify personal feelings, along with the ability to understand and evaluate them. To be fully aware of your feelings you must first identify them, and then you must acknowledge and accept them.

Self-awareness is concerned with knowing about your own internal states, preferences, resources, and perceptions. As you become more self-aware, you become better able to be in touch with your own feelings.

Self-awareness is very important to achieving success at work. Not being in touch with your own feelings in sufficient degree can handicap your overall effectiveness.

Individuals who have high self-awareness are able to conduct accurate self-appraisals, are self-confident, are authentic, welcome feedback, perceive situations accurately, and are willing to take risks for what they believe to be right.

The Self-Awareness cluster contains three basic competencies or subcategories:

- Emotional self-awareness
- Accurate self-assessment
- Self-confidence

Emotional Self-Awareness is the ability to recognize your own emotions and their effects, to identify how you react to cues in the environment, and to understand how your emotions affect your overall performance.

Individuals in which this competency is highly developed:

- Are aware of their feelings
- Understand the connection between their own feelings & what they think, do, and say

- Know why certain feelings occur in themselves
- Recognize how their feelings affect their performance
- Understand the implications of their actions
- Are aware of how they are guided by their values and goals

Accurate Self-Assessment is the process of identifying your inner resources, abilities, strengths, and acknowledging and accepting your limits. It is based on the desire to receive feedback and new perspectives about yourself and is motivated by the desire for continuous learning and self-development.

Individuals in which this competency is highly developed:

- Have a sense of humor about themselves
- Are knowledgeable of their own strengths and weaknesses
- Have the ability to be reflective to learn from experience
- Are receptive to candid feedback, new perspectives, continuous learning, and self-development

Self-Confidence is your own belief in your capability to accomplish a task. Self-confidence includes acknowledging and affirming that you are the best person for the job that you are doing. It is also about conveying your ideas and opinions in a confident manner and having a positive impact on others.

Individuals in which this competence is highly developed:

- The belief that they are the most capable person for the job
- The ability to present themselves in an assured, unhesitating manner
- The courage to voice views that may be unpopular and to go out on a limb when following their convictions
- The ability to be decisive and to make sound decisions despite uncertainties and pressures

How to Improve and Develop Self-Awareness

- Increasing your self-awareness will require serious thought and effort.
- You will have to be objective about yourself and your own perceptions as you examine your inner feelings and explore your reactions to be the people and events in your work life.
- Specifically, you will have to summon the courage to objectively examine the ways that you make appraisals, tune in to our senses, and get in touch with your feelings.
- You will have to learn how to identify your true intentions and pay close attention to your actions.

Tips for Developing Self-Awareness

Emotional Self-Awareness

- Pay attention to the physical reactions aroused in your body during stressful situations.
- Keep a journal where you write down your behaviors and inner feelings when faced with stressful situations on a daily basis.

Accurate Self-Assessment

- When interacting with people with whom you feel comfortable, ask for their constructive feedback about your actions and behaviors.
- Make a list of what you believe to be your strengths as well as any areas where development is needed, and then compare your own list and a similar list prepared by someone else.

Self-Confidence

- Adjust your thinking and behaviour so that they closely match those of someone who models that trait of self-confidence—with that model in mind, act decisively, instead of self-consciously watching your every move.
- Find someone you trust who would be willing to help you to objectively analyze your abilities.

Self-Management

Self-Management is the ability to understand your emotions and then use that understanding to turn situations to your benefit. It is also the ability to use your feelings to reason well and act intentionally.

Why is Self-Management Important?

Self-management is important because people who are able to manage their emotions do better in life.

The more people allow emotions to control and direct their behavior, the worse they do in life. People who are good managers of their emotions are open to change, effective in mood management, consistent in stress management, they are intentional, productive, and behave in a reasonable and rational way.

The Self-Management cluster contains six basic competencies or subcategories:

- Emotional self-control
- Trustworthiness
- Consciousness
- Adaptability
- Optimism
- Initiative

Emotional self-control: The ability to keep impulsive feelings and emotions under control. It is being able to restrain negative actions when provoked, when faced with opposition or hostility from other people, or when working under pressure.

Individuals in which this competency is highly developed:

- Deal calmly with stress
- Display impulse control and restraint
- Stay poised and positive, even in trying moments
- Think clearly and stay focused under pressure

Trustworthiness is maintaining standards of honesty and integrity. It includes communicating intentions, ideas, and feelings openly, and welcoming openness and honesty in others.

Individuals in which this competency is highly developed:

- Act ethically and are above criticism
- Build trust through reliability and authenticity
- Are authentic - what you see is what you get
- Have a tough stance, even if they are unpopular
- Confront unethical action in others

Consciousness is about taking responsibility for personal performance. It reflects an underlying drive for being reliable and delivering quality work.

Individuals in which this competency is highly developed:

- Follow through on commitments and keep promises
- Hold themselves accountable for meeting their objectives
- Are organized and careful in their work
- Pay attention to detail.

1

Adaptability is the ability to be flexible and work effectively within a variety of changing situations and with various individuals and groups.

Individuals in which this competency is highly developed:

- Can smoothly handle multiple demands, shifting priorities, and rapid change
- Are flexible in how they see events
- Adapt plans, behavior, or approaches to fit major changes in situations

Optimism is about seeing the world as a glass that is “half-full” rather than “half-empty”. It is the ability to see good in others and in the situations at hand. Threats are viewed merely as opportunities that can be acted upon and taken advantage of to achieve optimal outcomes.

Individuals in which this competency is highly developed:

- See opportunities rather than threats
- Have mainly positive expectations about others
- Have hopes that the future will be better than the past

Initiative is the ability to identify a problem, obstacle, or opportunity and take action on it.

People with initiative are consistently striving to do better, to experience new challenges, and to be held accountable for their actions and ideas.

Individuals in which this competency is highly developed:

- Seek out fresh ideas from a wide variety of sources
- Act rather than wait
- Entertain original solutions to problems, and generate new ideas
- Take fresh perspectives and risks in their thinking

Tips for Improving Self-Management

Emotional Self-Control

- Make a list of all the things that trigger you to lose control. Create a strategy to prevent these triggers from causing you to lose your composure and your self-control.
- Reduce your stress through physical activity, or other types of relaxation.

Trustworthiness

- Spend some time exploring the values and principles that you feel most strongly about and write down the important ones. Next to each one examine whether your behaviour is consistent with these values, and ask yourself what you would need to do differently in order to be more genuine and be true to your beliefs.
- Consider the issues on which you are willing to act against all opposition. Clarify for yourself what is and is not worth fighting for.

Conscientiousness

- Keep a detailed filing system for all monthly bills, telephone, rent, heat, etc.
- Build routine checks into your calendar to ensure devotion to deadlines, policies, and standards. In the event that you find something that does not reach the desired standard or that will take much longer than the time frame given, work through your plan to give the task at hand more time and effort.

Adaptability

- Periodically review the processes you or your department has in place. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each? Is there a better, more efficient way of approaching things?

- When current strategies are not working, stop what you are doing, acknowledge that it is not working and make the necessary changes to your plans, activities, objectives, or behavior.

Optimism

- For two or three days, make a list of all the difficulty you encountered, and write down the consequences next to each one. Note that when your feelings are pessimistic in nature, positive activity is shortened, but when your feelings are optimistic in nature, positive energy flows.
- Try to change your thoughts from negative to positive.

Initiative

- Volunteer to be a leader of a service organization that markets its information to the community and solicit funds for support
- Make a list of all the external factors that affect your department and of all the internal factors affecting the department. Then map out the steps needed to capitalize on those opportunities and take actions to prevent significant problems.

Social Awareness

This refers to how people handle relationships and awareness of others' feelings, needs, and concerns. It is the ability to recognize and appropriately respond to the emotions and feelings of others.

The Social Awareness cluster contains three basic competencies or subcategories:

- Empathy
- Organizational Awareness
- Service Orientation

Empathy is about understanding other people. It is the ability to hear and understand accurately unspoken or partly expressed thoughts, feelings, and concerns of others. People with empathy are able to constantly pick up on emotional cues, and they can appreciate not only what people are saying but also why they are saying it.

Individuals in which this competency is highly developed:

- Are attentive to emotional cues and listen well
- Accurately read people's moods or nonverbal cues
- Respect and relate well to people of diverse backgrounds
- Shows sensitivity and understand of others' perspectives
- Help out based on understanding other people's needs and feelings

Organizational awareness is the ability to understand the power relationships in one's group or organization. This includes the ability to identify the real decision makers and who can influence them. It is also about recognizing the values and cultures of organizations and how they affect the way people act and behave.

Individuals in which this competency is highly developed:

- Understand the political forces at work in the organization
- Accurately read key power relations in groups or organizations
- Understand values and culture of groups or organizations

Service orientation is anticipating, recognizing, and meeting other people's needs. It means focusing one's efforts on others, and reaction to the requests of others.

Individuals in which this competency is highly developed:

- Are attuned to providing satisfaction to others
- Match their services to meet others' needs
- Gladly offer appropriate assistance
- Makes themselves available to others

Why is Having Social Awareness Important? Social awareness is very important for creating and maintaining good working relationships with other people.

- People high in social awareness can feel what other people are feeling and can put themselves in their shoes, are able to read non-verbal cues, read messages conveyed by facial gestures, posture, eye movement, and body language.

Tips for Improving Social-Awareness

Empathy

- Pay attention to critical interactions with others
- Turn off the sound on the television and watch it to see if you can identify moods and nonverbal cues of the actors without hearing anything

Organizational Awareness

- Identify key people inside and outside the organization who exert influence over policies and activities. Create an influence chart for your organization or department and compare it to the formal organization chart
- In your discussions with others, try to get their perspective on how to get things done within the department. Try to provide information about unspoken organizational constraints that may prevent certain things from happening at certain times.

Service Orientation

- Set a measurable goal to improve the level of service you provide to others. Include a needs analysis, an analysis of your service, and an analysis of the concerns and needs of others.
- Start a reading file of articles about the needs of others in your department or organization.

- Take action to change or modify some procedures in your department that others have complained about.

Social Skills

Social Skills refers to a proficiency at suggesting desirable responses in others. People with good social skills are good business leaders, leaders in society, and effective parents who understand that personal success and group or family success are inseparable.

They lead by example, encouraging others in positive ways, validating them and creating trust within them.

The Social Skills cluster contains eight basic competencies or subcategories:

- Developing others
- Inspirational Leadership
- Influence
- Communication
- Change Catalysts
- Conflict Management
- Bonding bonds
- Team and Collaboration

Developing others is the ability to promote the long-term learning or development of others. Its focus is on the developmental intent and effect rather than on the formal role of teaching or training. Those who do this well spend time to help people find their own way to excellence through specific feedback on current performance.

Individuals in which this competency is highly developed:

- Acknowledge and reward people's strengths, accomplishments, and development
- Offer useful feedback and identify people's needs for development
- Act as a mentor by giving timely coaching, and offering assignments that challenge and grow a person's skills.

Inspirational leadership is the ability to take on the role as leader of a team or group. Inspirational leaders work to bring people together to get the job done, they build a strong sense of belonging within the group leading others to feel they are part of something larger than themselves.

Individuals in which this competency is highly developed:

- Inspire others by articulating and arousing enthusiasm for a shared vision and mission
- Step forward to lead as needed, regardless of position
- Guide the performance of others while holding them accountable
- Can make activities or projects engaging
- Lead by example

Influence is the ability to persuade, convince, or impact other to get them to go along with or support your agenda. Influence is about grabbing someone's attention and passing on something they want to hear.

Individuals in which this competency is highly developed:

- Are skilled at persuasion
- Can fine-tune presentations to appeal to the listener
- Use complex strategies like indirect influence to build consensus and support
- Anticipate how people will respond to an argument and adapts their approach accordingly

Communication is the ability to send clear and convincing messages to an audience in open and effective way. People high in communication make their presentations engaging and are open to dialogue with the audience.

Individuals in which this competency is highly developed:

- Use nonverbal cues, like tone of voice, to express feelings that reinforce messages in presentations
- Deal with difficult issues easily
- Listen well, seek mutual understanding, and welcome sharing of information
- Promote open communication and stays receptive to bad news as well as good

Change catalyst is having the ability to alert, energize and lead groups to bring about specific changes in the way things are done. This competency is about recognizing the need for change and taking ownership of change initiatives in order to move the group or department forward.

Individuals in which this competency is highly developed:

- Recognize the need for change and removes barriers
- Challenge the status quo to acknowledge the need for change
- Champion the change and enlist others in its pursuit

Conflict management is the ability to handle difficult individuals, groups of people, or tense situations with discretion. This involves coming face to face with the conflict rather than trying to avoid it. This competency entails focusing on the issues rather than the people and working to de-escalate bad feelings.

Individuals in which this competency is highly developed:

- Encourage debates and open discussion
- Orchestrate win-win solutions
- Communicate the positions of those involved in a conflict to all concerned

Building bond is about working to build or maintain friendly, reciprocal, and warm relationships or networks with people. It means developing and maintaining good relationships with a variety of people.

Individuals in which this competency is highly developed:

- Develops and maintains an extensive informal network
- Nurtures relationships related to activities or projects
- Makes and maintains personal friendships among work associates

Teamwork and Collaboration is about working cooperatively with others, being part of a team and working together as opposed to working separately or competitively. It is enjoying shared responsibility and rewards for accomplishments. It is actively participating and enjoying building the capability of the team.

- Individuals in which this competency is highly developed:
- Collaborates, and shares plans, information, and resources
- Promotes a friendly, cooperative climate in groups
- Draws all members into active and enthusiastic participation
- Builds team identity and commitment

Why are Social Skills Important?

Social skills are the basic skills everyone needs to have in order to be effective at anything they do. Not having the basic social skills can severely limit the quality of work that you produce.

Tips to Improve and Develop Social Skills

Developing Others

- Regularly take time to talk to individuals about their aspirations, the things they want to do better, and the things they would like to try out.

Inspirational Leadership

- When launching significant new projects or initiatives, consider spending time with the team, create a vision for the work to be done, and build commitment to moving forward.
- Interview or shadow a leader whom you find inspirational. Ask yourself why you find these individuals inspirational, analyze their style, and ask how they view their roles.

Influence

- Form a study group among colleagues to talk about successful experiences and reality-test future strategies.
- Take part in a task force or committee on an important and timely organizational or cross-departmental problem.

Communication

- Identify and observe others who have an engaging style while presenting, pay attention to their nonverbal cues, and the visual aids they use to get their meanings across.
- When delivering information to people, encourage them to ask questions and encourage them to summarize your key points to ensure they have understood you.

Change Catalyst

- Think about the worst possible change that might happen to you and your team or department. Write a list of possible benefits from that change and think about how you would sell those benefits to the team or department if you had to.
- When preparing to tell others about change, think about each person, how will the change impact this person? How has he or she responded to change in the past? What questions or comments might he or she have? Use your answers to prepare for a discussion with this person about the upcoming change.

Conflict Management

- If you are sensing trouble brewing with an individual, take steps to bring the disagreement or grievance into the open before it turns into a conflict situation.
- When in a heated discussion, focus on the issues at hand and leave personal matters aside. Ask yourself “Is what I am saying or doing productive in trying to resolve this situation?”

Building Bonds

- Take part in professional associations or appropriate social events to build your network and strengthen your relationships.
- Identify organizational dynamics. Practice thinking in terms of these dynamics rather than simply about individuals or roles. What are the general relationships of people and groups within the organization?

Teamwork and Collaboration

- Create a symbol for a group or team to rally around, or hold a get-together to celebrate the team’s success.
- Avoid taking control of the agenda or being the first to make suggestions, share the different roles being played in a group.

Conclusion

Identifying emotions provides awareness of emotions and the ability to accurately read other people’s emotions. Using emotions provides a means to generate ideas, a feeling, or a team spirit. Understanding emotions offers insights into what motivates people and others’ points of view. Finally, managing emotions allows you to stay open to your emotions, which have valuable information, and use them constructively.

There is evidence to suggest that emotionally intelligent leadership is the key to creating an academic climate in which students are nurtured and encouraged to do their best.

In a study at Johnson & Johnson, high performers had higher levels of self-awareness, self-management capability, social skills, and organizational savvy which are all considered part of emotional intelligence and are learned responses that are needed for superior leadership.

Several researchers have successfully demonstrated that emotions are related to several of the key issues in leadership. Several quantitative and qualitative studies have provided evidence that empathy is an important trait that predicts and plays a role in leadership emergence.

In this light, a conscientious efforts by the students and staff of Ajayi Crowther University to develop their emotional intelligence through the establishment of a Soft Skills Center shall ultimately lead to the realization of the institution mission and vision-a top class institution!

Thank you.