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# Why Emotional Intelligence Matters At Work And How You Can Improve



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Emotional intelligence in the workplace has become a key part of mainstreaming organizational effectiveness and can help individuals get ahead. In fact, there is evidence that emotionally intelligent people account for the [highest percentage of top performers](#) in many

organizations, and studies show that people with a higher emotional intelligence [typically earn more](#).

So, what is emotional intelligence? Although emotional intelligence has gained mainstream attention in the workplace in recent years, the concept itself is fairly old. The term emotional intelligence was [coined by John Mayer and Peter Salovey](#) in 1990. They define emotional intelligence as a set of skills that allow folks to accurately express and interpret their emotions and those of people around them. In essence, emotional intelligence is a form of self-awareness that makes you understand emotional expression both personally and from others.

## What Emotional Intelligence Looks Like In The Workplace

There are several reasons why people with high emotional intelligence tend to do well in the workplace. First, they can typically manage work-related stress better. This makes it easier for them to navigate difficult moments at work compared to low EI employees. In addition, emotionally intelligent people tend to [foster better team dynamics](#). They can inspire and maintain cohesive team cooperation, which ultimately leads to improved productivity and performance. Also, employees with high emotional intelligence often make better leaders. They can make key decisions solely based on logic and available facts as opposed to just emotions. This, in turn, helps them to maintain a clear strategic vision for the organization and everyone working in it.

Emotional intelligence at work manifests itself in several ways. Here are some key characteristics that would typically suggest you have high emotional intelligence:

### Self-Awareness

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Employees with high emotional intelligence will often be self-aware. They typically know how to identify and interpret their own emotions and those of the people they work with. This allows them to manage workplace interactions and deal with stress better. They are also better at **stopping negative thoughts** that may affect their mental health and productivity by practicing positive self-talk in the form of compassion, gratitude and forgiveness.

### Self-Regulation

Emotionally intelligent people are also very good at self-regulation. Because such people can objectively interpret and understand emotions, they can appraise themselves and initiate changes in behavior to achieve work-related outcomes.

### Empathy

Learning empathy is one of the most important soft skills for better team dynamics and workplace interactions. Emotionally intelligent people are normally good at putting themselves in other people's shoes. This allows them to build better and more productive working relationships. In fact, this is often why emotionally intelligent leaders can inspire employees to become the best version of themselves.

### Motivation

Emotional intelligence is also crucial in building self-motivation. When you are emotionally intelligent, you find motivation and inspiration from within. This allows you to stay focused and driven toward both your personal and organizational goals.

### Social Skills

Finally, emotional intelligence can help you build additional social skills that ultimately help you interact and relate with people better. Whether it's proper communication, public speaking or any other social skills, emotional intelligence can help you learn and build upon these traits.

## **How To Improve Your Emotional Intelligence In The Workplace**

If you want to improve your emotional intelligence, there are steps you can take. Here are some easy ones to start with:

### **Embracing Conflict**

One of the best ways to improve your emotional intelligence is to develop healthier and more effective conflict-resolution skills. For this reason, instead of trying so hard to avoid workplace conflict, put yourself out there, accept constructive conflict and find solutions with your co-workers.

### **Elevating Self Awareness**

You can build your self-awareness by seeking regular feedback from mentors, managers and colleagues. It's also important to listen to yourself and periodically observe and reflect on your emotional state. If you can anticipate how you react or how other people react under different circumstances, you are more likely to develop a strong sense of emotional intelligence in the long run.

### **Withholding Judgment**

Different people have different ways of coping when they face emotional stress. Instead of judging them for not living up to your expectations, practice empathy and patience. Withholding judgment gives you time to consider different situations more deeply, something that helps you react proportionally and appropriately.

### **Developing A Culture Of Teamwork And Cooperation**

It's also a good idea to develop a strong culture of teamwork and cooperation at work. When you work with people and feel part of a team, it becomes easier to read human cues and understand human emotional expression. In the end, this helps you build empathy and self-awareness.

### Practicing Active Listening

Lastly, it's incredibly important to learn and practice active listening at work—in other words, listening to understand instead of listening to respond. When you listen to people and their views, it's easier to know how they are feeling. This will help you act accordingly.

In conclusion, emotional intelligence is perhaps the most important soft skill employees need to succeed in the modern workplace. Although some people are better at it than others, the good news is that this skill can be learned and honed over time through emotional intelligence training. The sooner you start, the better.

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