

Iceberg of Success and Happiness

Organizations begin to suffer when you don't feel your leaders are sincere or accountable or feel you cannot be honest and open with your leadership. Similarly, when the leader and employee relationship is strong, organizations flourish. So, what is the difference between the leader who inspires a strong work relationship versus the leader who makes you want to run for the door? The answer is emotional intelligence.

What is emotional intelligence, and what are its elements?

Emotional intelligence (or EI) is the awareness of, control over, and ability to express your own emotions and understand and manage the feelings of those around you. When you have a high EI, you know what emotions are, what they mean, and how they impact your team members. As you mature from a child to a young adult in school, you learn that IQ helps you master technical skills. Once in the workplace, however, you find that it's EI that determines your success. But what are the elements that make up emotional intelligence?

The 5 Pillars of Emotional Intelligence

In his book, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, Daniel Goleman describes five elements of emotional intelligence.

1. **Self-awareness:** You understand your strengths and weaknesses and how your actions affect others. You learn from constructive criticism.
2. **Self-regulation:** You responsibly reveal your emotions and exercise restraint when needed. You don't shove your feelings down but instead express them with restraint and control.
3. **Motivation:** You're not motivated by money or a title. You're self-motivated. You are resilient and optimistic in the face of disappointment.
4. **Empathy:** You have compassion and an understanding of human nature that enables you to connect with other people on an emotional level. This connection allows you to respond genuinely to others' concerns and indeed be of service.
5. **People skills:** You can quickly build rapport and trust and earn the respect of those around you. You enjoy people and avoid power struggles and backstabbing.

How can you improve your emotional intelligence and reap the benefits?

Emotional intelligence isn't necessarily something you're born with or master overnight like many things in life. For most individuals, it's something you've learned, refined, and honed over time.

KRW co-founder Fred Kiel found that management team leaders who chose to improve the way they embody integrity, responsibility, forgiveness, and compassion returned astounding results. Kiel previously admitted how he struggled during the early part of his career because he lacked EI. He expressed that “While I never engaged in any illegal behavior, I’m sure many of my colleagues in those days felt that I was more than willing to throw them under the bus if it meant success for me.” But with effort, he became more aware of his emotions and woke up as a business leader - allowing others to follow suit.

Here are 10 techniques you can use to improve your EI and grow as a leader:

1. Ask for objective feedback from the people you work with and seek guidance from trusted mentors.
2. Keep a journal to improve your self-awareness.
3. Take a breath and slow down when you experience intense emotions, so you have a few moments to examine what you’re feeling.
4. Write down your values and post them where you will see them often. Visibly seeing your values reminds you of what’s essential.
5. Exercise an optimistic mindset - knowing it becomes more natural over time.
6. Put yourself in the shoes of your employees and colleagues.
7. Pay attention to your body language and what it may be communicating to others.
8. Acknowledge and address your team members’ feelings. For example, “Mary, thank you for putting together that report, even though we ended up not using it for the project. I know you must have felt frustrated to have put in all that work for nothing. Here’s how I’m going to prevent this from happening again ...”
9. Take a conflict resolution class.
10. Praise your team members often and openly.

Why is emotional intelligence the key to your success?

When you enhance your emotional intelligence, it aids in the betterment of the organization. Once team members notice the shift in communications and feel its benefits, revolutionary things happen naturally.

If you feel that sharpening your EI is unnecessary, perhaps this is a mirror for you to self-reflect. In my many years of experience partnering with business leaders to guide strategic initiatives, I’ve found that the most impactful and successful leaders make EI a lifetime practice. So, follow the tips in this article, and experience the subtle shift in energy within. Then notice how your

team and the entire organization reap the rewards.

EI is a crucial element when incorporating any positive change in your organization — and it's ingrained in the SparkPath methodology. Learn more about how we manage and support program delivery to help business executives advance their organizational and enterprise initiatives.

later in the day. Each person is different and processes food differently. That said, the holidays bring many foods you are not used to eating in your diet and may have adverse effects on your body's energy level and overall health.

Consider indulging during the holidays with intentionality, balance a festive morning brunch with a healthy lunch and dinner. Or consider bringing a healthier dish to an event that resembles your regular eating patterns. Similar to the way you work, it's important to celebrate the wins and accomplishments and equally important to return to your day-to-day responsibilities.

-Erica



A passionate organizer of people and initiatives, Erica Smigielski brings over twenty years of experience in project leadership to financial software and SaaS companies who want to launch their next big idea. She leads large-scale, complex projects like product launches and company mergers and acquisitions as well as focused efforts to bring structure and process to fast-track businesses. Erica holds certifications as a Stanford Advanced Project Manager as well as a Certified Group Facilitator, making her a master orchestrator of strategic planning, as well as a skillful communicator who can expertly navigate complex group dynamics.