

How emotionally intelligent are you?

Emotional intelligence is the ability to be fully aware of our own emotions as well as the emotions of other people around us. Being emotionally intelligent involves managing both your own and other's emotions in a healthy and productive way.

With that, it's essential that managers in the modern day workplace are emotionally intelligent so they can manage their own emotions and the emotions of others.

So how can you improve your own emotional intelligence?

Firstly, you need to take some time for yourself to consider your emotions.

With most managers rushing between commitments, meetings and being busy for most of the day – most people lose touch with their emotions entirely.

You need to spend more time and pay more attention to how you're feeling. One way to do this is to take some time during the working day, maybe at lunchtime, to take some time to yourself, take several deep breaths, and notice how you're feeling emotionally.

Is this showing up as a physical feeling, what does this sensation feel like?

Secondly, you need to pay attention to your own behaviour

To improve your own emotional intelligence it is essential to be conscious of your own behaviour. When you are experiencing different emotions – take note of how you behave during each different emotion. How does being angry or upset affect your communication with your team, or your productivity?

Thirdly, you need to take responsibility for your feelings and your behaviour.

You have to acknowledge the fact that your emotions and your behaviour come from you – you are the one that is responsible for both. If a member of your team says something derogatory towards you and you instinctively react to them in a negative way – they didn't make you lash out, the reaction you give is entirely your responsibility.

Once you take responsibility of your behaviour and your feelings, this will have a positive impact on all of your working relationships.

Furthermore, you need to respond instead of react.

To achieve your own high level of emotional intelligence it's vital you know the difference between the two. When you react, it's an emotional trigger where you retort in an unconscious way that relieves that emotion – you may react if someone interrupts you when you talk and you snap back at them straight away.

The difference with reacting is it's a conscious reaction, where you may pull up the person interrupting after they have finished their sentence.

Responding instead of reacting ensures that you remain in control of your emotions at all times during the interaction.

An essential skill when improving your emotional intelligence is to practice empathy.

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. How you practice empathy is by taking a situation that you have been in and taking some time to ask: "Why am I feeling like this?"

If you take stock of how you feel in certain situations, it will get easier with practice to transfer this to how other people are feeling.

A further essential is that you have to create a positive environment

Take some time to yourself to notice what is going well in both your working and personal life and what you're feeling grateful for. By constantly reminding yourself of what you're grateful for and what is positive in your life right now, it can improve your quality of life and can be infectious with members of your team.

The final thing to consider is emotional intelligence is a process that is life-long and not just a one off

Emotional intelligence is something that has to be maintained – even if you feel like you're fully in control of your emotions, you have to keep practising to ensure you don't ever let it slip. There is no upper limit when it comes to emotional intelligence and it is always possible to keep improving.

So when improving your emotional intelligence, consider these seven steps:

Step one – take some time to consider your own emotions

Step two – pay attention to your own behaviour

Step three – take responsibility for your own feelings and behaviours

Step four – think about responding as opposed to reacting

Step five – you have to practice empathy

Step six – create a positive environment for yourself

And step seven – consider emotional intelligence as a lifelong process and not just a one off exercise