

What is Emotional Intelligence?

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The Theory

Background

The first use of the term Emotional Intelligence (EQ) appeared in the 1960s, but the concept came into use in the academic community in the 1980s. The theory of EQ speculates that just as people have a wide range of intellectual abilities, they also have a wide range of measurable emotional skills that profoundly affect their thinking and actions. The term became widely known with the 1995 publication of *Emotional Intelligence: Why it Can Matter More Than IQ* by author and psychologist Daniel Goleman.

Goleman was the first to apply this concept to the business world in a 1998 article in the Harvard Business Review. He researched nearly 200 multinational companies and found that while the qualities we usually associate with leadership—intelligence, toughness, determination, and vision—are necessary for success, they are not enough. He found that effective leaders also have a high degree of EQ, which includes self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

In his research, Goleman found direct ties between EQ and measurable business results, although his results have been debated. Nevertheless, his findings are the definitive reference on the subject of EQ.

Goleman notes that although leaders are all different—some are authoritative, others quietly analytical, for example—they are all alike in one crucial way: they all have a high degree of EQ. He found that although IQ and technical skills are necessary for a leader, they are “entry-level” requirements for executive positions. But without EQ, a person won’t make a great leader. Goleman identified five “pillars” of EQ.

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THE FIVE ELEMENTS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AT WORK

	Definition	Hallmarks
Self-Awareness	The ability to recognize and understand your moods, emotions, and drives, as well as their effects on others	- Self-confidence - Realistic self-assessment - Self-deprecating sense of humor
Self-Regulation	- The ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods - The propensity to suspend judgment—to think before acting	- Trustworthiness and integrity - Comfort with ambiguity - Openness to change
Motivation	- A passion to work for reasons that go beyond money or status - A propensity to pursue goals with energy and persistence	- Strong desire to achieve - Optimism, even in the face of failure - Organizational commitment
Empathy	- The ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people - Skill in treating people according to their emotional reactions	- Expertise in building and retaining talent - Service to clients and customers
Social Skill	- Proficiency in managing relationships and building networks - An ability to find common ground and build rapport	- Effectiveness in leading change - Persuasiveness - Expertise in building and leading teams

Daniel Goleman

Daniel Goleman is the author of *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* (Bantam 1995) and a coauthor of *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence* (Harvard Business School, 2002). He is the cochairman of the Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations, which is based at Rutgers University's Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology in Piscataway, New Jersey.