

# LEADERSHIP SKILLS

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## HOW TO USE EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

Insights from Executive Leadership Coach  
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Emotional Intelligence is vital to effective leadership.

To achieve a high EQ-i, one must develop a strong sense of their own emotional state and authentically gauge the emotions of others.

With 2020 pushing so many people out of the office and into remote work, leaders are still grappling with the work-life balance thrust upon them and their employees.



Maintaining morale and connection in this new norm is key to the collective wellbeing, and the organization's overall success.

As we move forward in 2021, we discuss actionable tips to create a pleasant and fruitful sense of the new normal, leveraging the powerful precepts of [Emotional Intelligence \(EQ-i\)](#). These developed skills will help you assess your own EQ-i so you can lead your team with optimal focus and success.

## **How To Use Emotional Intelligence To Strengthen Your Leadership Skills**

### **Exercise Social Responsibility**

Working from home can feel lonely, with sudden isolation and a genuine lack of in-person contact. Exercising social responsibility, you surmount this feeling by utilizing your moral compass toward the greater good—contributing to society and its needs.

[Bob Stiller](#), founder of Green Mountain Coffee, knows that employees are more motivated “when there’s a higher good associated with it. It is no longer just a job. Work becomes meaningful, and this makes us more competitive.”

This psychology transcends your work setting, and even though you are shut in, there are [remote volunteer opportunities](#) out there.

## *Leadership Skills: How To Use Emotional Intelligence to Your Advantage*

Brainstorm with your team to encourage participation to boost morale and create a sustainable company camaraderie.

With many organizations preparing for the workforce to be more flexible moving forward, leaders will be faced with the challenges of creating, fostering, and nurturing a company culture within a hybrid environment.

Leaders should be clear about big picture goals and articulate expectations. A collective purpose for hybrid teams will create the feeling of connectivity and ensure people are experiencing a sense of belonging.

With the right kind of focus, businesses can adapt and your company's culture will persevere.

## **Engage in Emotional Self-Awareness**

You will be seeing a familiar person in your new workplace: you, and mostly you.

For this reason, having a healthy relationship with yourself will prevent loneliness and instead promote contentment.



That said, when you are going into something you know will be unpleasant, having the near certainty that you will come out a better and more valuable person on the other side will keep you focused and satisfied.

Ask anyone who has gone through [SEALs BUD/S](#) training, for example. These military superheroes go through some of the most grueling physical and mental torture known to man while understanding that they will be able to make global contributions that few can.

Science shows there is no better activity than [meditation](#) to both decompress and get to know yourself. It even develops other aspects of emotional intelligence not expanded upon here, like self-actualization, stress tolerance, and flexibility.

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With life slowing down, nothing is stopping you from a five-minute breather. Simply choose a quiet setting where you can avoid disruption, turn your chair away from your screen and start. You will be so happy you did.

## Control Your Impulses

Remote work inspires extracurricular temptations in most.

You will likely find yourself in the kitchen more than usual, wanting to watch TV, or, heaven forbid, playing video games.

Your ability to delay and redirect these lures can make or break your at-home performance and satisfaction.

And to your leaders and teams, there is no change more noticeable than the productivity drop-off from distraction. And as more companies transition to virtual or hybrid workforces, it being proactive to keep teams focused has never been more important.



So, do things to keep yourself honest. Turn your cameras on for remote calls so coworkers can see any body language symptomatic of distraction.

Set up lots of one-on-ones with colleagues, leaders, and employees to stay connected to the personal dynamics of your company, which will keep you more focused on its mission and your work.

Organize virtual happy hours to take place at the end of the workday, again, to foster camaraderie, knowing you will have decompression time in your future when you have to stay dug into difficult tasks.

Finally, put planned breaks in your calendar and honor them. Do so, and your subconscious will avoid becoming a restless mess.



## EQ-i and Soft Skills: Help Bridge the Gap

Having a stronger sense of self awareness and the ability to better gauge others, will help you to improve your soft skills.

As not all employees are working in person, managers can sometimes overlook the “people skills” needed to streamline successful communication among remote teams.

Soft skills can [be developed](#), particularly in the face of adversity and in an employee led by individuals who embody them. The development of these skills can be promoted by [transforming a workplace culture](#) from the bottom-up and top-down.



Here we give examples of questions leaders can ask to improve the skills gap.

## How Are You Creating a Culture of Leadership?

CEOs say leadership among today’s workforce is difficult to find, but [millennials](#) contradict this perception. They believe they can make a positive impact on the world through meaningful work — in a collaborative setting.

Indeed, the capacity and desire to lead is pervasive. Perhaps it is the difficulty hiring managers have retaining the young workforce that has created a jaded perception of leadership skills in the workforce. Regardless, employees will model the behaviors managers and CEOs alike constantly display. So be clear about the leadership you wish to see.

Be proactive about [building relationships](#) with your team — “grounded in integrity, openness, ongoing engagement, and above all, bring together an element of trust,” says Bob Moritz, Chairman of PwC.

Learn about their lives and show interest in them, for example, and they will do the same with their counterparts. The little things will go a long way in cascading tendencies toward leadership.

## Do You Embrace Problems?

Good problem solvers are in high demand.

Employees who can resolve issues swiftly and effectively typically work for organizations that treat problems as [opportunities for growth](#).

Start by working with your team to solve a problem you would normally handle alone.

Avoid showing any infectious feelings of panic and frustration. Instead, create an enjoyable, collaborative problem-solving environment that instills confidence in your employees to work together for the best solution.

Day-to-day, it is also vital to arm your employees with enough information to make important decisions, tackle a range of issues and understand the needs of the organization.

Having this information readily available will ensure empowered, self-starting, intelligent action. And in the end, a culture of collaborative problem-solving will foster a closer, more united, and transparent workforce.



## How Are You Encouraging Risk-Taking?

Along the same lines of empowerment, if employees don't feel permitted to make mistakes, they will avoid taking risks for fear of failure. Creativity and innovation cannot exist in the presence of fear.

Consider how you empower your team to take risks and, yes, fail. Are you actively encouraging them to take chances? If not, you could be causing your perceived lack of creativity. Deloitte Chairman and CEO Janet Foutty, a [proponent of risk-taking](#), asserts failure "is not as bad as you think" as long as you seek help and ask yourself the all-important question, "What can I learn?"

Encourage your team to stretch limits and take risks. If employees fail but also learn from it, they will be more creative and resilient. When your team knows you support them, fear will no longer keep their thinking inside the box.

Capitalize on your missteps by admitting where you went wrong and what you learned. Your transparency and vulnerability will inspire the confidence and courage to implement their ideas and learn from their mistakes.

Exceptional leaders appreciate their employees' immense value and invest in developing skills when a culture shift is necessary. Those looking to inspire change, invoke higher performance and develop soft skills need to be aware of how they may be contributing to the problem and be open to transforming the organization's practices and their own.

Doing so will improve the outlook for companies, their shareholders, and employees. According to Moritz, focus on "trust, purpose and the interactions that can bring us closer together."

### **Are you interested in taking our EQ-i Assessment?**

Emotional intelligence is recognizing your emotions, what they are telling you, and how they are affecting others. Adopting practices toward understanding helps to better manage your relationships with others, improve soft skills, and build a stronger workforce. For inquiries on the EQ-I 2.0 Assessment [click here.](#)