

Transformational Leadership Behaviour and Intelligence

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When you think of a 'perfect leader', what comes to mind?

You might picture someone who never lets his temper get out of control no matter what problems he's facing or you might think of someone who has the complete trust of her staff, listens to her team, is easy to talk to and always makes careful, informed decisions.

This where emotional intelligence comes to limelight.

Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand and manage your own emotions and those around you. People with high degree of emotional intelligence know what they are feeling, what their emotions mean and how these emotions can affect other people. For leaders, having emotional intelligence is essential for success. After all, who is more likely to succeed- a leader who shouts at his team when he's under stress or a leader who stays in control and calmly assesses the situation?

Transformational leadership is a style of leadership where a leader works with subordinates to identify needed change, creating a vision to guide the change through inspiration and executing the change in tandem with committed members of a group. We will be relating **Transformational Leadership (TL) to Emotional Intelligence (EI)**.

There are five key elements to this:

1. Self awareness
2. Self regulation
3. Motivation
4. Empathy
5. Social skills

The more that you, as a leader manage each of these areas, the higher your emotional intelligence. So let's look at each element in more details and examine how you can grow into being a transformational leader.

I always tell people **KNOW THYSELF!**

Self awareness

If you're self aware, you always know how you feel and you know how your emotions and your actions can affect the people around you. Being self-aware when you are in leadership position also means having a clear picture of your strengths and weaknesses. It means behaving with humility. You will know how to curtail your weaknesses, improve on what you lack, e.t.c

Self Regulation

Leaders, who regulate themselves effectively rarely verbally attack others, make rushed or emotional decisions, stereotype people or compromise their value. Self regulation is all about staying in control.

So how can we improve your ability to self regulate?

Know your values- Do you have a clear idea of where you absolutely will compromise? Do you know what values are most important to you? Spend some time examining your "code" of ethics. If you know what's most important to you, then you probably won't think twice when you face a moral or ethical decision- you'll make the right choice.

Hold yourself accountable- If you tend to blame others when something goes wrong, stop. Make a commitment to admit your mistakes and to face the consequences, whatever they are. You'll probably sleep better at night, and you'll quickly earn the respect of those around you.

Practice being calm- The next time you're in a challenging situation, be very aware of how you act. Do you relieve your stress by shouting at someone else?

Practice deep-breathing exercises to calm down.

Also, try to write down all of the negative things you want to say and then rip it off and throw it away. Expressing these emotions on paper (and not showing them to anyone!) is better than speaking them aloud to your team. What's more, this helps you challenge your reactions to ensure that they are fair.

Motivation

Self motivated leaders work consistently towards their goals and they have extremely high standards for the quality of their work. How can we improve your motivation? Re-examine why you are doing your job or being a leader. It's easy to forget what you really love about your career. So take some time to remember why you wanted this position or status you are currently in.

Know where you stand- Determine how motivated you are to lead. There are leadership motivation assessment tests that can help you clearly see how motivated you are in your leadership role. If you need to increase your motivation to lead, it redirects you. Be hopeful and find something good. Motivated leaders are usually optimistic no matter what problems they face. Adopting this mindset might take practice but it's well worth the effort. Every time you face a challenge or even a failure, try to find at least one good thing about situation. It might be something small, like a new contact, or something with long term effects like an important lesson learned but there's almost always something positive, if you look for it.

Empathy

For leaders, having empathy is critical to managing a successful team or organization. Leaders with empathy have the ability to put themselves in someone else's situation. They help develop the people on their team, challenge others who are acting unfairly, give constructive feedback and listen to those who need it. If you want to earn respect and loyalty of your team, and then show them you care by being empathic.

How can you improve your empathy?

Put yourself in someone else's position. It's easy to support your own point of view. After all, it's yours! But take time to look at situations from other people's perspectives. Do we notice that I'm giving the "why" in every point?

Pay attention to body language. Perhaps when you listen to someone, you cross your arms, move your feet back and forth or bite your lip. This body language tells others how you really feel about a situation, and the message you're giving isn't positive.

Learning to read body language can be a real asset in a leadership role, because you'll be better able to determine how someone truly feels. This gives you the opportunity to respond appropriately.

Respond to feelings. You ask your assistant to work late – again and although he agrees, you can hear the disappointment in his voice. So, respond by addressing his feelings. Tell him you appreciate how willing he is to work extra hours and that you're just as frustrated about working late. If possible, figure out a way for future late nights to be less of an issue (for example, give him Monday mornings off).

Social Skills

Leaders who do well in the social skills element of emotional intelligence are great communicators. They're just as open to hearing bad news as good news and they're expert at getting their team to support them and be excited about a new mission or project. Leaders with good social skills are also good at managing change and resolving conflicts diplomatically. They're rarely satisfied with leaving things as they are but they don't sit back and make everyone else do the work. They set an example with their own behaviour.

So how can you build social skills?

Improve your communication skills. How well do you communicate? Learn how to praise others. As a leader, you can inspire the loyalty of your team simply by giving praise when earned. Learning how to praise others is a fine art but well worth the effort.

In a nutshell, to be an effective and a transformational leader, you must have a solid understanding of how your emotions and actions affect the people around you. The better a leader relates to and works with others, the more successful he or she will be. Take the time to work on self awareness, self regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. Working on these areas will help you excel in the future.

I appreciate everyone tonight. My desire is that we will become transformational leaders with emotional intelligence, practicing what we preach.

Thank you SI4DEV. Do have a wonderful evening.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (Q&A)

Q: When you think of a 'perfect leader', what comes to mind?

A: Can a leader be perfect? I consider them more like the servant leaders. Leaders not too concerned about their ego, but care more for the people.

Q: Is there any tool to assess yourself?

A: Yes there is. It starts with being conscious. Conscious of your words, actions, thinking, etc. There are ways of improving self-awareness.

- **Keep Journals**

Journals help you improve self-awareness. If you spend just a few minutes each day writing down your thoughts, this can move to a higher degree of self-awareness.

- **Slow Down**

When you experience anger or other strong emotions, slow down to examine why. Remember, no matter what the situation is, you can always choose how to react to it.

Q: If empathy is being in someone else's shoe, what is sympathy? Would it not be enough to be sympathetic?

A: Sympathy is more like feeling sorry for someone because the person deserves to be. It has to do with feelings. Empathy on the other hand, transcends sympathy. Sympathy is feeling compassion or pity for the hardship or challenge that another person encounters while empathy is putting yourself in the shoes of another.

Both words are often used interchangeably (incorrectly so) but differ subtly in their emotional meaning. Sympathy is on the surface and can be faked while empathy is true and deep.