

In his book, *Working With Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman argues that workplace competencies based on emotional intelligence play a strong role in star performance, whilst leading coach Sir John Whitmore sees EQ as becoming an increasingly important leadership skill as organisations change and become less hierarchical.

To understand your own EQ, consider how you manage your emotions and the strategies that you use when needing solace and balance. EQ is about:

- Recognising how you feel and what has triggered that.
- Realising how you motivate yourself and what your drivers are.
- Recognising and understanding emotions in others. Can you step into their shoes for a moment?
- Assessing the way you manage relationships and manage emotions in others.

Take the sportsman who has just lost the most important game in the season. Despite his huge disappointment, he has to respond appropriately to the people who have paid to see him, he has to communicate and empathise with the team and his manager, and most of all he has to deal with the emotions and move on so that he can go out and play in the next game truly believing that he can and will win.

As a manager and leader you will need to manage your own emotions whilst also empathising, motivating and empowering your staff. Strong and successful leaders have been shown to possess these skills. They are able to clearly communicate, empathise with those around and respond to situations appropriately.

### On reflection...

- Did anything happen today that triggered negative emotions?
- How did you deal with those emotions...? Did you speak to people? Withdraw? Take action? React with anger? Reassess the situation and move on?
- Think of a time when you have been really motivated. What environmental and internal factors contributed to this?
- How easily are you able to empathise with others in your team?

## Build a supportive network

If you look out for them, you'll likely meet a wide range of interesting, experienced and knowledgeable people through work, at events and through friends and family.

Mutually supportive relationships with a range of very different people can be helpful

when you have bad days, or times when you don't know how to deal with things. They will be there to talk to, laugh with, get advice from and generally seek reassurance from.

### Build up your network through:

- Talking to and spending time with, colleagues outside of work.
- Finding a mentor – this might be someone who is in the same business area as you who has more experience and knowledge.
- Being open to having coffee with consultants and freelancers you have worked with even when you don't currently have work for them. They can often become friends as well as colleagues and will have an outside perspective on things.
- When you meet people, building rapport through asking them questions about themselves; share common experiences.
- Identifying people who are good at what you do and research how they are resilient.
- Attending a relevant seminar or professional event and talk to the people beside you.
- Joining a network of people in a similar field or role, such as the Campaign for Learning's National Workplace Learning Network.
- Offering to be a mentor for others.
- Using a coach!

It's important to make sure that your network consists of people who are positive and supportive and are able to see potential in situations. Negative people will drain your energy and won't be able to give you unbiased and constructive feedback.

Consider having members of your network who are more experienced or very different from you in their outlook so that their point of view can stretch your own thinking and perspective.

A strong network will help you feel stronger and supported, part of a team and therefore able to take risks and try new ways of working.

### On reflection...

- Is your present network of friends generally positive and supportive?
- Who can you talk to when you need a sounding board?
- Is there someone whose work and attitude you admire who you could ask to be your mentor?
- How can you extend your network with people who will stretch your thinking?

## Manage your anxiety

### Stop and manage your own anxiety when you feel overloaded, confused and challenged.

Sometimes being a manager means that you have to take on more responsibilities at short notice and manage a wide range of issues from HR to finance. If you're rushing between meetings, dealing with tricky people issues and running out of hours, you may feel anxious and tired. It's important to realise when your state has changed and recognise the impact this has on how you react to people and challenges.

The good news is that there are things you can do to help yourself in this situation.

**Breathe:** Your physiology can have a huge impact on your thoughts and your ability to deal with stress. Often we don't think about our breathing, and it can be short and shallow. Breathing deeply is calming and helps the body deal with the symptoms of stress.

**Act 'as if':** Holding your body 'as if' you are feeling confident and in control will not only convince those around you that you can handle it, but also yourself. It's hard for your body to be anxious when it's acting confidently. For instance act 'as if' in these ways:

- Think of how you are when you are confident.
- Stand and hold yourself as you do when you feel confident and comfortable.
- Slow down your breathing.
- Replicate the tone and volume of your confident voice.
- Make eye contact with others in the same way that you do when you feel assured and confident.

### Remember who you are when you're at your best and then replicate it!

**'I am':** Affirmations are a way of reminding yourself of your strengths, of the type of person you want to be and a way of giving yourself a pep talk. It follows on from acting 'as if'. Remember, your focus and thoughts will drive your actions, so if you tell yourself I AM confident and capable again and again, you start to believe it and you will act and feel confident and capable.

