

BECOMING AN EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT LEADER

“To become the best version of yourself, the most empathetic version, the most compassionate and kind version—takes work!”

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Beginning your journey: Reflecting on intentions, mindfulness and self-awareness.

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We are now well into 2021, and I hope this year will be a much better year for all.

It is interesting that, although 2020 was such a tough year with so many challenges, for some the silver lining was that they were able, or maybe forced, to get to know themselves at a deeper level.

I have heard from several contact center and CX leaders that they have taken more time to reflect and journal, invest time in self-care through working out more, cooking and eating healthier, finding hobbies that brought joy, and most importantly, gaining compassion for those who are going through hard times due to COVID job displacements, living situations and general stressors.

Many had time to dig deep and reflect on

themselves. Many had goals of becoming a better version of themselves. All of these actions and intentions are part of the journey of becoming a more emotionally intelligent leader!

This brings us to the topic of emotional intelligence. This area of discussion and study is so broad and deep, yet the word is used so loosely. Over this three-part series, we will be examining the various building blocks of emotional intelligence and how to truly become an emotionally intelligent leader. We will take a holistic journey toward becoming an emotionally intelligent leader through understanding and reflecting on:

- Intentions
- Mindfulness
- Building blocks of emotional intelligence

- Personality style/temperament (to help with your self-awareness)

Let's start the journey!

Setting Intentions

It all begins with **INTENTION**. To get started on any journey AND to benefit from it, one must begin with setting intentions. Setting intentions for the year (self-awareness) involves:

- Setting your intention for organizational and self-awareness.
- Reflecting on what you've learned.
- Understanding that emotions are contagious, so what type of ripple effect do you want to create?

When setting intentions for your leadership development, think about these areas:

- Self-care
- Behaviors
- Words used
- Perceptions
- Thoughts
- Responses

Ask yourself, as I start this journey, I would like to (select the ones that resonate with you or add your own):

- Delegate** and empower to my team more effectively.
- Become a more attentive **listener**.
- Manage my time better and invest in **self-care**.
- Strengthen and improve communication with my team/peers/partner/family members.
- Better understand** how others perceive me.



FIGURE 1: The Four Self-Awareness Archetypes

This 2x2 matrix maps internal self-awareness (how well you know yourself) against external self-awareness (how well you understand how others see you).

	Low External Self-Awareness	High External Self-Awareness
High Internal Self-Awareness	<p>INTROSPECTORS</p> <p>They're clear on who they are but don't challenge their own views or search for blind spots by getting feedback from others. This can harm their relationships and limit their success.</p>	<p>AWARE</p> <p>They know who they are, what they want to accomplish, and seek out and value others' opinions. This is where leaders begin to fully realize the true benefits of self-awareness.</p>
Low Internal Self-Awareness	<p>SEEKERS</p> <p>They don't yet know who they are, what they stand for, or how their teams see them. As a result, they might feel stuck or frustrated with their performance and relationships.</p>	<p>PLEASERS</p> <p>They can be so focused on appearing a certain way to others that they could be overlooking what matters to them. Over time, they tend to make choices that aren't in service of their own success and fulfillment.</p>

Source: Dr. Tasha Eurich, www.tashaeurich.com

- ☑ **Improve** my thoughts, actions and the words I choose to use.
- ☑ Be **more present** with my teams, family, friends, myself.
- ☑ Gain clarity on my own self-**perception**.
- ☑ What does my BEST self look like?

Upon completing the above, reflect and write down the answer to:

1. How do YOU show up for yourself and for others?
2. Are you authentic in your relationships?

Mindfulness: Be Here Now!

The first step for every person is to: **BE HERE NOW**. This statement will make more sense as we continue and realize the importance of being fully present.

Slowing down a bit to feel, to breathe, and eventually, to meditate will enable you to take a pause, reflect and become more self-aware.

We will examine various techniques that can help you on your journey throughout this series.

In an article titled "[Slow Down to Get](#)



[Ahead](#)," published on the website Mindful, author Dawa Tarchin Phillips explains how to use mindfulness to get clear on your purpose. He suggests reflecting on the following key points:

1. What does success mean to you?
2. Identify the strengths needed for success.
3. Expand those strengths in the present.

The journey to becoming more emotionally intelligent requires considerable prework, such as all the reflection mentioned above. It is more meaningful than many of the buzzwords floating around because, to become the best version of yourself, the most empathetic version, the most compassionate and kind version—takes work!

The Building Blocks of Emotional Intelligence

Over the next three articles, we will examine the basic building blocks of emotional intelligence. According to psychologist Daniel Goleman, author of "Emotional Intelligence," these are the basic building blocks:

1. Self-awareness. This is your ability to

recognize how your feelings impact your behavior and your interactions with others.

- 2. Focus.** This relates to how well you pay attention.
- 3. Emotional balance.** This is your control over your impulses and emotional reactions.
- 4. Empathy.** This is your capacity to tune into others and their feelings.
- 5. Positive outlook.** This is the ability to see opportunities even amid challenges.
- 6. Adaptability.** This is how you react to change.

The first area that we will review is developing **SELF-AWARENESS**. Only through examining the self can one reflect, grow, learn and adapt. Self-awareness is the foundation and the heart of emotional intelligence.

What Is Self-Awareness?

Goleman states that self-awareness is the ability to recognize what you are feeling and how this impacts your outcomes and relationships. In the broadest sense, self-awareness refers to our capacity for introspection, to be aware of our mind's contents, reflect on them, and be aware of awareness itself.

WHY IS SELF-AWARENESS IMPORTANT?

Becoming more self-aware can help you to **understand** your wants, needs and desires, strengths and opportunities to grow, and helps to peel away all the “layers of the onion” that we arm ourselves with. When you become more self-aware, you become free to uncover destructive and unhealthy habits, as well as tendencies that may not be in your best interest.

Plain and simple, without true self-awareness, the ego takes over our decision-making. You can see people who are sometimes totally unaware of what they say and how they say it—their actions and behaviors are all driven by their EGO. Self-awareness helps us to manage our impulses, motivations, responses and behaviors, as well as the words we use.

FIGURE 1 illustrates the Four Self-Awareness Archetypes, developed by organizational psychologist Dr. Tasha Eurich, author of “Insight.” The goal for leaders is to move in the direction of the top right quadrant, which indicates both high internal and high external self-awareness. This is where leaders know who they are, are aware of their blind spots, are open to challenges, and begin to realize the benefits of their self-awareness.

As you begin the journey, it is important to take an honest inventory of your strengths, opportunities to grow, overall temperament, likes, dislikes, whether you are task- or people-oriented, outgoing or reserved.

4. What qualities do you most admire in yourself?
5. What is your biggest weakness?
6. What is your biggest strength?
7. What things scare you?
8. Do you make decisions logically or intuitively?
9. How would you complete the question: “What if?”



“

About 85% of the factors contributing to success are related to the ability to work effectively with people.

”

—DALE CARNEGIE, “HOW TO WIN FRIENDS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE”



To better understand yourself, you also can complete a DISC Personality Assessment to identify your basic tendencies, motivators, communication style, blind spots, strengths and areas of concern. DISC is an acronym for the four main personality profiles in the DISC model:

- DOMINANCE:** Doer, decisive, outgoing, task-orientated, fast, “do it now”
- INFLUENCE:** Inspiring, enthusiastic, outgoing, people-oriented, “let’s have fun”
- STEADINESS:** Steady, supportive, sensitive,

reserved, people-oriented, “let’s work together”

COMPLIANCE: Cautious, concerned, reserved, task-oriented, “let’s do it right”
 (See my June 2020 *Pipeline* article, “[DISC Temperaments under Stress](#),” to learn more about how understanding personality temperament can be very helpful when navigating through stressful times.)

There are several psychometric assessments that can help you to identify your basic personality blend, which will serve as additional tools to help in your self-awareness journey!

Looking Ahead

As a leader embarking on increasing emotional intelligence, I would invite you to reflect on some of the benefits of this additional work and development you are putting in.

Think about the impact to your level of **INFLUENCE** within your workplace, family and social circles. Leadership, regardless of role, can be described as influence.

Reflection: Where else will the work impact your life?

I leave you with this quote by Scottish-American naturalist, author and environmental philosopher John Muir: “When we try to pick anything out by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.”

In the next article, we will examine focus, emotional balance and empathy with the understanding that self-awareness is the foundation of emotional intelligence, and we will then build upon that foundation. I wish you grace, kindness and compassion for yourself as you embark on this journey! •

Understanding Your Personality

There are many questions to reflect upon when going through your personal self-awareness journey. In a recent article titled, “[17 Self-Awareness Activities and Exercises \(+Test\)](#),” published on the Positive Psychology blog, author Leslie Riopel, Professor of Psychology at Northwood University, listed the following self-awareness questions on personality:

1. Describe yourself in three words.
2. Ask yourself if your personality has changed since childhood.
3. Is your personality like either of your parents?



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