



EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT

DEFINITION

An emotionally intelligent leader understands both their own and others' emotions, adjusting their interactions to show empathy and strengthen trust and communication.

WHY IT MATTERS

Emotional intelligence helps you build stronger relationships, reduce conflict, and work more effectively with others. People with high emotional intelligence are often more trusted, respected, and better able to influence and support those around them, whether they have a formal leadership title or not.

HOW CAN I MAXIMIZE THIS ATTRIBUTE?

Maintain self-awareness

- Notice your physical cues when you feel stressed, frustrated, or excited; and pause before responding.
- Even if you're not leading the room, you can model calm under pressure: pause, ask clarifying questions, or choose to listen instead of reacting quickly.

Practice empathy in conversation

- In a disagreement, you might try: *"It sounds like this mattered a lot to you. Could you tell me more about that."*
- Acknowledge feelings without trying to fix them right away. Phrases like, *"That sounds frustrating"* goes further than advice.

Adapt your communication style

- Pay attention to tone and body language, especially in tense moments. Adjust how you communicate to meet the needs of your audience.
- In a group setting, notice who is quiet or withdrawn and invite them in gently: *"I'd love to hear your take if you're comfortable sharing."*

Name and normalize emotional awareness

- Call out group dynamics constructively. For example: *"I'm noticing some tension. Should we pause and talk through it?"*
- This can be powerful whether you're leading a team, unit, group, or contributing as part of one.

HOW CAN I STRENGTHEN THIS ATTRIBUTE?

Use reflection to identify patterns

- Ask yourself: *"When did I feel emotionally reactive today, and how did I respond?"*
- Keep a short journal or notes to build self-awareness over time.

Observe others with curiosity

- When someone reacts strongly, consider: *"What might be going on for them?"* rather than judging or jumping in.

Ask for feedback on your emotional impact

- For example: *"When I respond in tense situations, how does it come across?"*
- Invite a trusted colleague to share an example of when you showed emotional intelligence and an example of when you could have improved.

Practice active listening

- In your next conversation, focus on not interrupting. Paraphrase what you hear before responding.
- You don't need a formal title to be a calming presence and effective listener.

TAKE ACTION

Choose one of the actions above and make a plan to use it this week. You may also want to use the Leadership Development Planner for more intentional leadership growth.