

## Leading with Emotional Intelligence

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Great leaders not only motivate, they inspire with a vision so compelling we develop a passion to follow them. In the next few editorials we will explore together those traits of what some call the “soft” side of leadership and management—emotional intelligence.

In *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman defines emotional intelligence as “the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships.”

Those with high emotional intelligence have a kind of intelligence that extends beyond IQ. Simply put, emotional intelligence is a different way of being smart. This is not to say that IQ is not important. However, emotional intelligence is the quality that enables leaders who inspire us to follow.

So how does expertise fit into this success equation? Expertise—a combination of common sense plus specialized knowledge and skill that we attain in our jobs—is a baseline competency that we bring to the job. Like IQ, experience and expertise matter. But, as Paul Harvey would say, emotional intelligence is “the rest of the story.”

You can easily spot emotional intelligence in the rising stars in our profession. These are the folks you want on your team. Individuals with:

- The ability to learn on the job
- Good listening and oral communication skills
- Adaptability and creative responses to setbacks, barriers, and obstacles
- Confidence, motivation, and a good work ethic with the desire to

advance one’s career and to take pride in one’s work

- Group and interpersonal effectiveness, cooperativeness, teamwork, and the ability to resolve conflicts constructively
- Effectiveness in wanting to contribute to the organization
- Leadership potential.

In cancer care, as in many professions, the proliferation of new information exceeds our ability to master every clinical or management area. So we want team members who are flexible, able to learn on the job, and value the knowledge of others. And depending on the situation, the same individual can be both a leader and a follower. Emotional intelligence gives us the sensitivity to know when to assume each role and teaches us to value people and relationships before results.

According to research data, the good news is emotional intelligence can be learned. Although some may naturally possess a higher level of this trait, we can all grow in our emotional intelligence if we have the inclination. Growing our emotional intelligence, however, requires not only the desire to learn through study and observation, but finding a mentor to provide feedback when needed.

Emotional intelligence includes self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. We can start by asking some tough questions: *Are we difficult to work with or are we viewed as natural leaders? Do we take creative risks? Are we adaptable? Do we undermine the self-confidence of others or do we inspire and guide?* I believe we would all do well to improve our emotional intelligence. Next issue, we will explore the attributes of emotional intelligence further. Stay tuned. 🎧



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