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"I.Q. and technical skills are important, but emotional intelligence is the Sine Qua Non of leadership." Daniel Goleman

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THE IMPORTANCE OF AN EQ FOCUS IN LEADERSHIP

By: Michael J. Stabile

To be really effective in leadership today we need a new focus, which includes the emotional assets of the business. Understanding



feelings lies at the heart of business success. Positive emotions lead to great actions. Emotional factors are what enable people to work well together, enable people to remain

resilient in the face of setbacks and

opposition, enable us to build cohesive teams and to encourage weaker members to step up to the challenges and manage stress. It's the emotional factors within a business that will determine whether they will employ you, buy from you, hire you, or enter into strategic relationships with you.

"Research shows convincingly that EQ is more important than IQ in almost every role and many times more important in leadership roles. This finding is accentuated as we move from the control philosophy of the industrial age to an empowering release philosophy of the knowledge worker age" – Stephen Covey

"To be successful in our personal and professional lives we need emotional intelligence (EQ). To be great leaders we need the skills to manage our emotions well and influence the emotions of other people toward positive outcomes."

– Dr Martin Newman

As a leader, here are some things you can focus on to develop and increase your emotional



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intelligence: reading and interpreting social cues, controlling impulses, setting goals, identifying alternative actions and anticipating consequences, understanding the perspective of others and behavioral norms, having a positive attitude towards life, and developing self awareness through realistic expectations of yourself.

You can also develop your verbal skills to ensure that you are making clear requests, responding effectively to criticism, resisting negative influences, listening to others, and helping others.

In this issue of the Servant Leadership Newsletter, we are highlighting the importance of emotional intelligence in leadership and some ideas of to grow in this area.

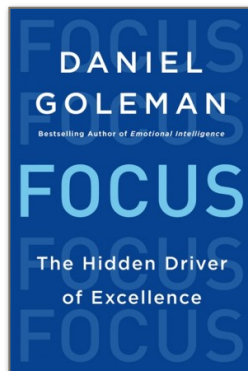
THE FOCUSED LEADER

By: Daniel Goleman

Do you have trouble remembering what someone has just told you in conversation? Did you drive to work this morning on autopilot? Do you focus more on your Smartphone than on the person you're having lunch with? Attention is a mental muscle; like any other muscle, it can be strengthened through the right kind of exercise. The fundamental rep for building deliberate attention is simple: When your mind wanders, notice that it has wandered, bring it back to your desired point of focus, and keep it there as long as you can. That basic exercise is at the root of virtually every kind of meditation. Meditation builds concentration and calmness and facilitates recovery from the agitation of stress.

Attention is the basis of the most essential of leadership skills—emotional, organizational, and strategic intelligence. And never has it been under greater assault. If leaders are to direct the attention of their employees toward strategy and innovation, they must first learn to focus their own attention, in **three broad ways: on themselves, on others, and on the wider world.**

Every leader needs to cultivate this triad of awareness, in abundance and in the proper balance, because a failure to focus inward leaves one rudderless, a failure to focus on others renders



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one clueless, and a failure to focus outward may cause one to be blindsided. The good news is that practically every form of focus can be strengthened.

The author of *Emotional Intelligence*, *Social Intelligence*, and many other books on the power of cultivating awareness explains why focus is crucial to great leadership. **Focused leaders can command the full range of their own attention: They are in touch with their inner feelings, they can control their impulses, they are aware of how others see them, and they can weed out distractions and also allow their minds to roam widely, free of preconceptions.**

The primary task of leadership is to direct attention. **To do so, leaders must learn to focus their own attention.** When we speak about being focused, we commonly mean thinking about one thing while filtering out distractions. But a wealth of recent research in neuroscience shows that we focus in many ways, for different purposes, drawing on different neural pathways—some of which work in concert, while others tend to stand in opposition.

Grouping these modes of attention into three broad buckets—focusing on *yourself*, focusing on *others*, and focusing on *the wider world*—sheds new light on the practice of many essential leadership skills. Focusing inward and focusing constructively on others helps leaders cultivate the primary elements of emotional intelligence. A fuller understanding of how they focus on the wider world can improve their ability to devise strategy, innovate, and manage organizations.

Every leader needs to cultivate this triad of awareness, in abundance and in the proper balance, because a failure to focus inward leaves you rudderless, a failure to focus on others renders you clueless, and a failure to focus outward may leave you blindsided.

Focusing on Yourself

Emotional intelligence begins with self-awareness—getting in touch with your inner voice. Leaders who heed their inner voices can draw on more resources to make better decisions and connect with their authentic selves. But what does that entail? A look at how people focus inward can make this abstract concept more concrete.

Self-awareness. Hearing your inner voice is a matter of paying

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Careful attention to internal physiological signals. These subtle cues are monitored by the insula, which is tucked behind the frontal lobes of the brain. Attention given to any part of the body amps up the insula’s sensitivity to that part. Tune in to your heartbeat, and the insula activates more neurons in that circuitry. How well people can sense their heartbeats has, in fact, become a standard way to measure their self-awareness.

Gut feelings are messages from the insula and the amygdala, which the neuroscientist Antonio Damasio, of the University of Southern California, calls *somatic markers*. Those messages are sensations that something “feels” right or wrong. Somatic markers simplify decision making by guiding our attention toward better options. They’re hardly foolproof (how often was that feeling that you left the stove on correct?), so the more comprehensively we read them, the better we use our intuition.

Consider, for example, the implications of an analysis of interviews conducted by a group of British researchers with 118 professional traders and 10 senior managers at four City of London investment banks. The most successful traders (whose annual income averaged £500,000) were neither the ones who relied entirely on analytics nor the ones who just went with their guts. They focused on a full range of emotions, which they used to judge the value of their intuition. When they suffered losses, they acknowledged their anxiety, became more cautious, and took fewer risks. The least successful traders (whose income averaged only £100,000) tended to ignore their anxiety and keep going with their guts. Because they failed to heed a wider array of internal signals, they were misled.

**THE FOUR BASIC MOVES TO
STRENGTHEN FOCUS**

By: Daniel Goleman



The more focused we are, the more successful we can be at whatever we do. And, conversely, the more distracted, the less well we do. This applies across the board: sports, school, career.

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Focus is the hidden ingredient in excellence —“hidden” because we typically don’t notice it. But lacking focus we are more likely to falter at whatever we do. A test of how concentrated college athletes are, for instance, predicts their sports performance the following semester. A wandering mind, studies show, punches holes in students’ comprehension of what they study. And an executive tells me that whenever he finds his mind has wandered during a meeting, he wonders what opportunities he has just missed.

The ability to focus is like a mental muscle. The more we work it out, the stronger it becomes, much like using a Cybex at the gym for sculpting pecs.

In research at Emory University by Wendy Hasenkamp she imaged the brain of volunteers while they paid attention to their breath. They didn’t try to control their breathing in any way, but just concentrated on its natural flow.

She found there are four basic moves in the mind’s workout for focused attention:

- 1) *Bring your focus to your breath.*
- 2) *Notice that your mind has wandered off.*
- 3) *Disengage from that train of thought.*
- 4) *Bring your focus back to your breath and hold it there.*

And the next time your mind wanders off and you notice that you’re thinking about, say, your lunch rather than your in breath, repeat that basic mental rep again. And again, that’s the way to strengthen the brain’s circuitry, centered in the prefrontal cortex just behind the forehead, that both puts your attention where you want it to go, and brings it back when you wander off.

But this seemingly simple mental routine is deceptive—looks easier than it actually is. Try it for one minute, and if you’re like most of us, you’ll inevitably find your mind wanders off to some other thought. And those thoughts are seductive.

It takes mindfulness—an active attention to notice that your mind has drifted, and a mental effort to end that reverie and go back to the breath. But this mental workout, if done with regularity and persistence, will make it easier to keep your focus where you need



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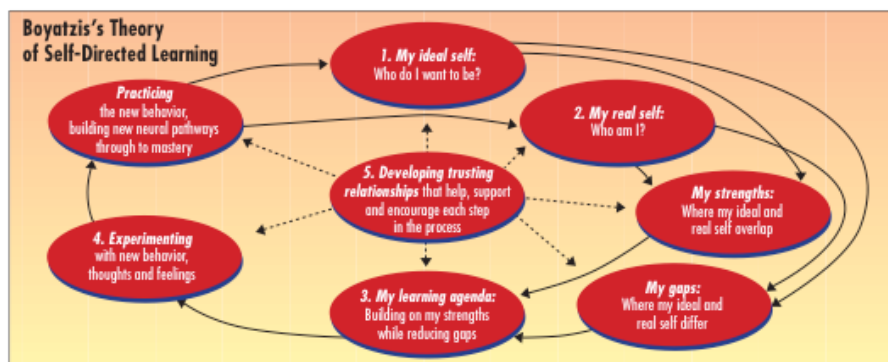
it to be. And that will help you put off checking that message until later, so you can get that report done now.

Developing Emotionally Intelligent Leaders

The key to learning that lasts lies in the brain. Remember that emotional intelligence involves circuitry between the prefrontal lobes and the limbic system. Skills based in the limbic system are best learned through motivation, extended practice and feedback. The limbic system is a slow learner, especially when trying to relearn deeply ingrained habits. This matters immensely when trying to improve leadership skills. These skills often come down to habits learned early in life. **Reeducating the emotional brain for leadership learning requires plenty of practice and repetition.** That’s because neural connections used over and over become stronger while those not used weaken.

Self-Directed Learning

To work, leadership development must be self-directed. You must want to develop or strengthen an aspect of who you are or who you want to be. This requires first getting a strong image of your ideal self, and an accurate picture of your real self.



Self-directed learning involves five discoveries, each representing a discontinuity. The goal is to use each discovery as a tool for making the changes needed to become an emotionally intelligent leader. People who successfully change move through the following stages:



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- **The first discovery: My ideal self — Who do I want to be?**
- **The second discovery: My real self — Who am I? What are my strengths and gaps?**
- **The third discovery: My learning agenda — How can I build on my strengths while reducing my gaps?**
- **The fourth discovery: Experimenting with and practicing new thoughts, behaviors and feelings to the point of mastery.**
- **The fifth discovery: Developing supportive and trusting relationships that make change possible.**

