

Emotionally Intelligent Leadership

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Since the Fraternity's founding, Chi Omega has been committed to developing women leaders, both as undergraduates and alumnae. A search for the word "leadership" on Amazon.com returns more than 178,000 results. Amazingly, a similar search on Google yields 269 million hits! Consider that you can read more than two thousand published definitions of leadership. Yet, although the topic of leadership is far-reaching, surprisingly few books focus on leadership as it applies to emotional intelligence.

Collegiate Chi Omegas, and all undergraduate students, have a terrific "learning lab" at their disposal. The campus environment offers a rich and plentiful array of opportunities for students to practice leadership skills for four or maybe five years. Campus-based organizations, residence halls, teams, and related opportunities provide them many ways to get involved. Stu-

dents can experiment with an assortment of approaches to leadership, honing the philosophy and style that best suits them.

Unless students intentionally reflect upon successes and failures, many of the learning opportunities may fall to the wayside. In addition, without consistent guidance from advisors or local mentors, undergraduate leaders may make the same mistakes repeatedly. An exploration of emotionally intelligent leadership (EIL) provides undergraduates the opportunity to pause and reflect on how they can enhance their approach to any leadership role.

What Is Emotionally Intelligent Leadership?

Emotionally intelligent leadership synthesizes two major bodies of research and theory: emotional intelligence and leadership. In 1990, Peter Salovey and John Mayer published a scholarly pa-

per in which they coined the term "emotional intelligence." They defined emotional intelligence as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions." For EIL to be demonstrated, the leader must be conscious of three fundamental facets that contribute to the leadership dynamic: consciousness of context, consciousness of self, and consciousness of others.

To clarify what is meant by consciousness of self, others, and context, let's examine President John F. Kennedy as an exemplar of this model. President Kennedy (self) was elected at a time (context) when his personal leadership attributes and his message aligned with that being sought by the people of the United States (others). Would President Kennedy be elected today? No one knows for certain. Based on our reading of theory and research on leadership, one thing is

certain: Were he to seek election today, Kennedy would need to align his message with issues that mesh with our current reality and context. After all, leaders must be aware of their own capacities, the needs of those who follow them, and the environmental factors that come into play.

EIL consists of 21 capacities to which a leader should pay attention (see sidebar). We chose "capacity" to describe what leaders need because of our belief that everyone has the ability to develop the skills required to lead others effectively. The question comes down to choice: Do we want to?

Developing Your Emotionally Intelligent Leadership

To develop your EIL, you need a healthy balance of these three capacities. There is no fixed formula for balancing these capacities; that would minimize the complexities and realities of leadership and of us as human beings.

One of the great challenges of EIL is that each capacity requires its own balance. The trick is that the right level of being in balance is dynamic: it's constantly shifting. In other words, an appropriate capacity for developing relationships in one context may be inadequate in others, based on the leader, the followers, and the context. The best leaders realize this, and they intentionally adjust their approaches or levels based on the needs of others and the context.

Leadership development is a long-term endeavor, a journey that all of us must consistently work on if we want to develop and grow. As with any knowledge, skill, or ability, you need to reflect on your successes and failures, observe others whom you admire and respect, and engage in trusting relationships with people who will provide you with open and honest feedback. And don't forget: To demonstrate emotionally intelligent leadership you must transfer this knowledge into action.

The choice is yours: Are you ready to make it?

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The 21 Capacities of Emotionally Intelligent Leadership

Consciousness of Context

The environment in which leaders and followers work

- *Environmental awareness:* Thinking intentionally about the environment of a leadership situation
- *Group savvy:* Interpreting the situation and/or networks of an organization

Consciousness of Self

Knowing yourself in terms of your abilities and emotions

- *Emotional self-perception:* Identifying your emotions and reactions and their impact on you
- *Honest self-understanding:* Being aware of your own strengths and limitations
- *Healthy self-esteem:* Having a balanced sense of self
- *Emotional self-control:* Consciously moderating your emotions and reactions
- *Authenticity:* Being transparent and trustworthy
- *Flexibility:* Being open and adaptive to changing situations
- *Achievement:* Being driven to improve according to personal standards
- *Optimism:* Being positive
- *Initiative:* Wanting and seeking opportunities

Consciousness of Others

Being aware of your relationship with others and the role they play in the leadership equation

- *Empathy:* Understanding others from their perspective
- *Citizenship:* Recognizing and fulfilling your responsibility for others or the group
- *Inspiration:* Motivating and moving others toward a shared vision
- *Influence:* Demonstrating skills of persuasion
- *Coaching:* Helping others enhance their skills and abilities
- *Change agent:* Seeking out and working with others toward new directions
- *Conflict management:* Identifying and resolving problems and issues with others
- *Developing relationships:* Creating connections between, among, and with people
- *Teamwork:* Working effectively with others in a group
- *Capitalizing on difference:* Building on assets that come from differences with others



About the author

Marcy Levy Shankman has been training and consulting in leadership development and organizational effectiveness with higher-education institutions, non-profit organizations, and high schools since 1998. As owner of MLS Consulting, LLC, Marcy focuses on strategic planning, designing leadership curriculum, and facilitating leadership seminars and board and staff retreats. In addition to a bachelor of arts degree from the College of William and Mary and a master of arts from the University of Maryland at College Park, Dr. Shankman earned a Ph.D. at Indiana University. Marcy is an active volunteer and lives in Cleveland, Ohio, with her husband and two children.

You may learn more about emotionally intelligent leadership and contact Marcy at www.mlsconsulting.net.

