

Emotional Intelligence: How to Lead from Within

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SUBJECT(S): Career Development, Communication, Management

GRADE LEVEL(S): 9, 10, 11, 12

≡ OVERVIEW:

In this lesson, students will learn how to lead from within by learning to manage both their egos and their emotions. They will begin by brainstorming a list of famous people and CEOs who are known to be hard to work with. Then, they will listen to a Knowledge@ Wharton podcast. After that, they will write their own responses to a list of quotes that were mentioned in the podcast and the class will discuss their responses and what it means to lead from within. Finally, to get students in touch with their own egos and emotions, they will each make a list of their personal strengths and weaknesses and choose one from each category to share with the class. This is done to get students comfortable with recognizing what they may be good at and also what improvements they still need to make.

≡ NBEA STANDARD(S):

- Career Development, I. Self-Awareness
- Communication, III. Workplace Communication
- Management, IV. Personal Management Skills

≡ RELATED ARTICLES:

- [“The Conversation: Navigating the Nuances of Emotional Intelligence”](#)
- [“Mountain Guides Teach Us About Leadership”](#)

- “Leadership Secrets from a School that Turned Out Some Top CEOs”
- “Leadership Challenges from an FBLA President”
- “Great Leaders Recognize and Value the Power of Emotions”
- “American Express Embraces Privilege and Purpose”
- “5 Leadership Lessons from Israeli Model Titi Aynaw”

Common Core Standard(s): Craft and Structure, Technology and New Media, Key Ideas and Details

Objectives/Purposes: Students will learn strategies to manage their emotions and egos.

Knowledge@Wharton Article: [“Leading from Within Means Learning to Manage Your Ego and Emotions”](#) (podcast)

Other Resources/Materials:

- Internet access
- Whiteboard/ Markers
- Worksheet with quotes

Activity:

1. (5-10 mins) Have students brainstorm a list of people, (CEOs, celebrities, politicians and athletes) who are (or were) infamous for being mean or difficult to work with. Examples of such persons may include:

- Donald Trump
- Steve Jobs
- Elizabeth Holmes (Theranos)
- Naomi Campbell
- Martha Stewart
- Simon Cowell
- Kobe Bryant

Then have students share their lists with the class and discuss how and for what reason these people have earned their negative reputations.

2. (15-20 mins) Have students listen to the podcast, “Leading from Within Means Learning to Manage Your Ego and Emotions.” During the podcast, have students take notes on how and why managing others begins with managing oneself. After the podcast is over you can mention the takeaways and see if students have any reactions or questions to the podcast.

Takeaways:

- American society has been trained to measure business success solely by the calculation of shareholder value. That, in turn, has bred a generation of top executives who have “bought into the idea of ego, power, extravagance, arrogance and total disregard for other people’s feelings.”
- “If you start with the premise of increased income for me and my shareholders, you get the big scandals you have had recently.” For the individual business leader, success should be much more – “having meaning in your life, having love and compassion, self-esteem and a sense of connection with your own creativity.” Absent that, “egocentric leaders become most insecure, anchoring their self esteem in external things such as money and power.”
- So managing others begins with managing oneself.
- Academics would say that it’s part of having a high level of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence may be defined as “the capacity to think intelligently about our emotions and to have our emotions help us learn how to think more intelligently.”
- Part of it is the ability to regulate one’s emotions to come to a greater awareness of one’s inner self, she says. But emotionally intelligent people also know to regulate others’ emotions. It is an essential skill in leading people.
- We influence others all the time emotionally. A leader who knows that can be tremendously effective in fixing a bad situation or reinvigorating members of his organization, captivating people, or calming them down. People resonate with people who connect to them emotionally.” It is a learned ability.

3. (15 mins) After students are done listening to the podcast and discussing takeaways, give them a sheet of paper with the following quotes (from the podcast) and have them respond to each one individually on the paper.

Quotes:

- “The Ultimate test of leadership is what happens to a company after the CEO leaves.”
- “A leader needs to evaluate strengths and weaknesses.”
- “Build neighborhoods and be a good neighbor.”

- “It is necessary to navigate rather than rule.”
- “I learned that one needs a moral compass, that loyalty and respect are earned and that good communications are vital.”
- “I know that I am responsible for 70 families, so I never lose sight of that.”

Once students have finished, have them discuss their responses with each other in groups and then go over them as a class.

4. (10 mins) Have students reflect on what their own strengths and weaknesses as leaders are or might be. Then have them write a list of these strengths and weaknesses. Have each student share one strength and one weakness with the class. This is done to get them comfortable with the fact that they have both strengths and weaknesses.

5. (5 mins) Keeping students’ strengths and weaknesses in mind, have each student develop their own quote that reflects how one can manage their ego and emotions. Encourage them to infuse their own life experience and wisdom they have gained from that experience into the quote.

Tying It All Together: To tie this lesson together, you can have students think back to the opening activity where they had to brainstorm a list of famous people who had a negative reputation. Have them think about the reasons those names came to their minds and, in light of what students have just learned about emotions and management, have them think of what they may be doing wrong. Then have students reflect on and discuss if any of them carry any of the negative traits associated with these leaders. Are these types of traits things people can learn to control or are they inherent in some personalities? Furthermore, have students think about all of this in a business leadership context. If they were a CEO of a company, what type of leader would they like to be? What type of leader would they like to work for?

Practice Outside of the Classroom: Encourage students to take note of how they manage their egos and emotions in group situations and work to manage both in a way that is effective and productive. Perhaps the next step beyond this lesson is to teach strategies to help students develop and shape their own emotional intelligence. Have students read the Knowledge@Wharton High school story [Great Leaders Recognize and Value the Power of Emotions](#), which introduces RULER, an acronym to help them understand and express emotions appropriately in the workplace.

What Worked and What I Would Do Differently: I found that this lesson worked well with students. The beginning activity is important to draw them into the lesson. They get to discuss

some famous figures that they find interesting and gossip about why some believe they have bad reputations. This is also a good way to highlight the lesson concept and it will give you some examples to bring up in conversation. When having students discuss their responses to the quotes, I did not have them do this in groups and instead allowed students to volunteer a response. I found that this worked fine but if you have a large class, you may get more students engaged by having them share and discuss their responses in smaller groups. If you do that and determine that students are having lively discussions, it may not be necessary to discuss the quotes as a class. Finally, I found that when asking students to share one of their weaknesses, a couple declared that they did not have any. Thus, you may want to preface that part of the activity by reminding students that each one of them has strengths and weaknesses and that no one is perfect. Make an example of yourself by sharing one of your weaknesses and one of your strengths. As students share their strengths and weaknesses, have them share their weakness first and their strength last.

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