

THE ART AND SCIENCE OF **COMMUNICATION** AND WHY THE DETAILS MATTER

Day 3: Why Emotional Intelligence is the key to being a great communicator

When we communicate to others our intention might be to express a thought, a feeling, or an idea. Being able to accurately convey what we intend to communicate can be challenging because there is always at least two people involved. Those two people may not always be “on the same page” because they bring different life experiences and emotional states to the conversation. It is easy to see why both *self-awareness* (a sense of how you are feeling) and *empathy* (a sense of how the other person is feeling) are key to any dialogue. Self-awareness and empathy are just two ingredients in a large cookbook that makes up a field of study called Emotional Intelligence (or simply “EI”). Our Day 3 Challenge will explore EI, its impact on communication and organizations. **This challenge consists of 1 book-summary, 1 video, and 2 tasks.**

Today's Mentors:



Daniel Goleman is an internationally known psychologist who lectures frequently to professional groups, business audiences, and on college campuses. As a science journalist, Goleman reported on the brain and behavioral sciences for The New York Times for many years. His 1995 book, *Emotional Intelligence* was on The New York Times bestseller list for a year-and-a-half, with more than 5,000,000 copies in print worldwide in 40 languages.



Alan Alda has earned international recognition as an actor, writer and director. He played Hawkeye Pierce on the classic television series *M*A*S*H* and wrote and directed many of the episodes. He founded the Alan Alda Center for Communicating Science at Stony Brook University, helping to develop innovative programs that enable scientists to communicate more effectively with the public. He is the author of a best-selling book called *If I Understood You, Would I Have This Look On My Face?—My adventures in the art and science of relating and communicating*.

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Summary based on *Emotional Intelligence – Why it Can Matter More than IQ*

By Daniel Goleman

Book Summary

(continued)



Daniel Goleman's book *Emotional Intelligence – Why it Can Matter More than IQ* starts off by describing the brain's emotional architecture which offers an explanation for those baffling moments in our lives when feeling overwhelms all rationality. Understanding the interplay of brain structures that rule our moments of rage and fear—or passion and joy—reveals much about how we learn the emotional habits that can undermine our best intentions, as well as what we can do to subdue our more destructive or self-defeating emotional impulses. These are moments of impassioned action that we later regret, once the dust has settled; the question is how we so easily become so irrational.

The slow, deliberate forces of evolution that have shaped our emotions have done their work over the course of a million years; the last 10,000 years—despite having witnessed the rapid rise of human civilization and the explosion of the human population from five million to five billion— have left little imprint on our biological templates for emotional life.

These “emotional hijacks” originate in the *amygdala*, a center in the limbic brain. In the brain's architecture, the amygdala is poised something like an alarm company where operators stand ready to send out emergency calls to the fire department, police, and a neighbor whenever a home security system signals trouble. Incoming signals from the senses let the amygdala scan for potential danger.

This puts the amygdala in a powerful position in mental life, something like a psychological sentinel, challenging every situation, every perception, with but one question in mind...the most primitive: "Is this something I hate? That hurts me? Something I fear?" If the moment at hand somehow draws a "Yes"—the amygdala reacts instantaneously, like a neural tripwire, telegraphing a message of crisis to all parts of the brain.

When it sounds an alarm of, say, fear, it sends urgent messages to every major part of the brain: it triggers the secretion of the body's fight-or-flight hormones, mobilizes the centers for movement, and activates the cardiovascular system, the muscles, and the gut. Other circuits from the amygdala signal the secretion of emergency dollops of the hormone norepinephrine to heighten the reactivity of key brain areas, including those that make the senses more alert, in effect setting the brain on edge.

It is easy to see how in a very real sense we have two minds, one that thinks and one that feels. These two fundamentally different ways of knowing interact to construct our mental life. One, the rational mind, is the mode of comprehension we are typically conscious of: more prominent in awareness, thoughtful, able to ponder and reflect. But alongside there is another system of knowing: impulsive and powerful, if sometimes illogical—the emotional mind.

These two minds operate in tight harmony for the most part, intertwining their very different ways of knowing to guide us through the world. Ordinarily there is a balance between emotional and rational minds, with emotion feeding into and informing the operations of the rational mind, and the rational mind refining and sometimes vetoing the inputs of the emotions. In many or most moments these minds are exquisitely coordinated; feelings are essential to thought, thought to feeling. But when passions surge the balance tips: it is the emotional mind that captures the upper hand, swamping the rational mind.

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Book Summary (continued)

The goal is balance, not emotional suppression: every feeling has its value and significance. A life without passion would be a dull wasteland of neutrality, cut off and isolated from the richness of life itself. But, as Aristotle observed, what is wanted is appropriate emotion, feeling proportionate to circumstance.

In *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle's philosophical enquiry into virtue, character, and the good life; his challenge is to manage our emotional life with intelligence - Our passions, when well exercised, have wisdom; they guide our thinking, our values, our survival. But they can easily go awry, and do so all too often. As Aristotle saw, the problem is not with emotionality, but with the appropriateness of emotion and its expression. The question is, how can we bring intelligence to our emotions— and civility to our relationships and social systems?

An example of managing our emotional life with intelligence is *self-observation*, which manifests itself simply as a slight stepping-back from experience, a parallel stream of consciousness that is "meta": hovering above or beside the main flow, aware of what is happening rather than being immersed and lost in it. It is the difference between, for example, being murderously enraged at someone and having the self-reflexive thought "This is anger I'm feeling" even as you are enraged.

The more open we are to our own emotions, the more skilled we will be in reading feelings. The key to intuiting another's feelings is in the ability to read nonverbal channels: tone of voice, gesture, facial expression, and the like.

Daniel Goleman provides a concise roadmap that encapsulates Emotional Intelligence; one we can try to follow and practice again and again (see graphic below). We start with self-awareness, then move to self-management, eventually to social-awareness, and finally to relationship management.

SELF-AWARENESS	SELF-MANAGEMENT	SOCIAL AWARENESS	RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT
Emotional self-awareness	Emotional self-control	Empathy	Influence
	Adaptability		Coach and mentor
	Achievement orientation	Organizational awareness	Conflict management
	Positive outlook		Teamwork
			Inspirational leadership

The aptitudes that strongly influence communication are circled in red. Keep these in mind and apply them when you communicate.

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Book Summary

(continued)

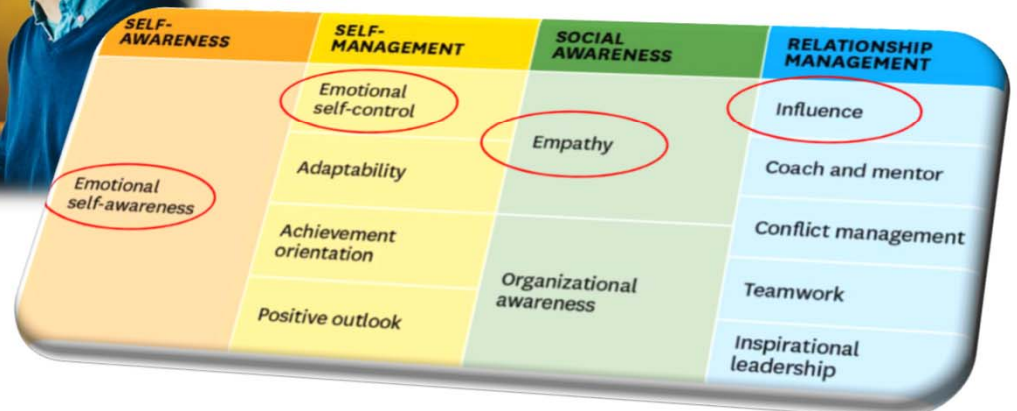
Before, during and after your next conversation ask yourself the following questions:

- Am I aware of my current state of mind? How might my emotional state effect the conversation?
- Once engaged in conversation, am I able to monitor and regulate my emotional state?
- Is my emotional capacity at this moment capable of empathy?
- Am I empathizing and correctly interpreting the other person's emotions?
- Am I influencing the other person in a manner that achieves my intention for communicating?

Think about how much more powerful and effective your conversations would be if both you and the receiver followed this playbook. How many conversations (and possibly relationships) might have been salvaged if these steps were taken?

Think back to the last time you "lost it," blowing up at someone—your spouse, child, coworker, or perhaps the driver of another car—to a degree that later, with some reflection and hindsight, seemed uncalled for. Could it have been prevented with some self-awareness, self-control, and empathy?

In communication, sometimes we only get one shot to “make it or break it”. There is no “undo” button that can magically reverse the words from our mouth and erase the expressions on our face. For that reason, Emotional Intelligence is not only the key to being a great communicator, it is the essence of and at the heart communication. It allows us to derive and deliver meaning to words, which impact the lives around us. That is a tremendous responsibility.



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The Heart of Good Communication is Connection

Interview with Alan Alda

Video



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Reading Facial Expressions

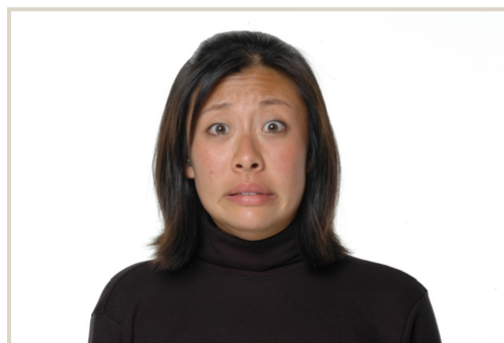


Task 1

1. Click on the link below to take a test to see how well you can “read” facial expressions.
2. Post your score on our CVWD intranet chat room for the Day 3 Challenge. See how your score compares to others you work with.
3. Next time you are walking around in a public place (e.g. at a grocery store), play this same game. Start “pegging” an emotion to the face of random strangers. This will help you get in the routine of practicing empathy.

Test Your Emotional Intelligence

How well do you read other people?



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Mirroring and the Imaginary Ball – Learning Empathy through Improvisation

Task 2

Task 2 will be performed as a group at the next All-Hands Meeting.

