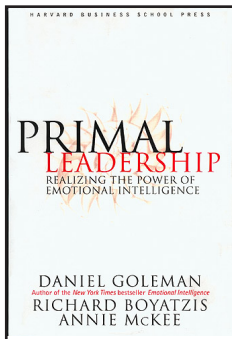


Book Reviews for Managers

Primal Leadership

Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence

by Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis & Annie McKee



Harvard Business
School Press, 2002,
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*"The best leaders
create resonance"*

REVIEWED BY IAN COOK

Not another book on leadership!" you say? Well, yes, of course, it is. But here Dan Goleman and his colleagues take a different look at the subject. They look at leadership in terms of Emotional Intelligence by focusing on the question *what makes leaders effective?*

Their answer has a ring to it (especially since it comes from the world of music). The best leaders create *resonance*—in their units and amongst their staff. The term "resonance" refers to sounds coming from two or more sources being synchronous or in harmony. Resonant leaders create harmony. They weave together the logical and emotional sides of people to create commitment that consistently generates superior results. The book cites a number of studies that show a direct correlation between how people feel and the results they produce.

Poor leaders, on the other hand, create *dissonance* in the workplace. The aggressive, parental or neglectful way that they manage causes people around them to spend a lot of their time in "fight or flight" arousal. Their thinking becomes muddled and they consume a lot of valuable energy keeping their negative emotions under control.

How do you develop into a resonant leader? Say the authors, develop your emotional competencies. There are nineteen such competencies, spread over four domains: *Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, and Relationship Management*. While an appendix in the book provides a thumbnail of each competency, for background on the nineteen you might want to pick up Goleman's last book, *Working with Emotional Intelligence*.

The authors' case: Their research indicates that how people feel about their particular work situation, or climate, can account for 20–30% of business performance. Also, 50–70% of how employees perceive their organization's climate can be traced to the behavior of their immediate boss. So, how well leaders at all levels manage their own emotions and affect the emotions of their employees can no longer be discounted as some "touchy feely" issue. This is a significant business issue with proven impact on the bottom line!

The authors' good news: While there is a genetic, innate component to our EQ, we, as managers/leaders, can improve our emotional competencies. Furthermore, developing a manager's EQ does not require that he or she build a proficiency in all nineteen competencies. Strength in five or six of the nineteen, spread over the four domains, is sufficient.

A different kind of learning. This book confirms that the way humans learn leadership skills is quite different from the way they learn technical and analytical problem-solving skills, strategic thinking and product knowledge. The latter subjects involve cognitive skills and information acquisition that engage that logical processor in our brain, the neo-cortex. These skills and knowledge can be learned and applied relatively quickly.

The learning of leadership and emotional skills, on the other hand, takes place in the more primitive limbic region of the brain. This part of the brain learns more slowly. Here you usually have to erase deeply ingrained habits and response patterns before you replace them with new, more functional ones. For example, let's say that for years your habitual response when people are angry with you has been

to withdraw and give in. It will take a lot of practice, not to mention courage and commitment, for you to “program” in a new reaction (habit)—that of staying connected and asking questions about the anger.

Good leaders of people acquire their emotional competency over time, often starting in their teens in school or community clubs and activities. (Parents should note this window of opportunity for accelerated leadership skill development—through adolescence and into the early 20’s—when the brain is still laying down the original circuitry for emotional habits.)

Goleman et al. prescribe a five-point approach to learning emotional competencies:

1. Identify your *Ideal Self*—how you want to be and what you want to be able to do
2. Assess/discover your *Real Self*—how you currently behave, how others experience you and what your deep, operating beliefs are. [NOTE: Tension from the gap between (1) and (2) creates the energy to motivate your commitment.

3. Develop a *Learning Agenda* (plan) that includes which competencies (a tip—build on your strengths) to focus on and where you will learn and practice them. (e.g., in an interactive training workshop, on the job, within your family, in a community volunteer capacity)
4. *Practice* your new habits/skills over and over again. In time you will drive your new competencies into your subconscious and make them your new default behavior.
5. *Trusting Relationships* are essential for practicing your leadership skills because the emotional component requires a relationship and because you may feel vulnerable trying out these new, even strange, behaviors.

The book winds down with chapters on building emotional intelligence within your teams and your organization.

Emotions are at the heart of effective leadership. Get and read this book if you are ready to (1) develop excellent leadership skills in yourself and your managers and (2) look beyond the analytical, technical and cognitive skills to the personal and social competencies that separate the best from the rest.

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Ian Cook, trainer, consultant, keynote speaker and Principal of Fulcrum Associates Inc., helps managers and supervisors get more from their people and teams through modern leadership approaches. Contact Ian to discuss the ideas in this article or to find out about related training programs, facilitation and coaching services, and keynote presentations for your organization.

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