

The Successful SUPERVISOR

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Tips from  LifeSolutions

Developing social intelligence skills is within the capacity of every manager and supervisor. Applying these skills when working with others is a “work in progress.” Social intelligence asks you to put the focus on the other person: a manager is someone whose job is to help employees to do their best. In this second installment, we’re exploring the role of positive emotions in being a more socially intelligent leader. Because we are always interested in your questions and comments, please contact LifeSolutions at ask@lifesolutionsforyou.com or call an EAP account manager at 1.800.647.3327.

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Did you know that on a good day, we experience 8 to 12 annoying stressors — and that those stressors can have a negative impact on our brain function? Research indicates that significant impairment in the cognitive, emotional, and perceptual areas of the brain will result from an ongoing onslaught of negative experiences. The impact over time can be much more severe for some than for others. It is helpful for a manager to recognize and assist employees who are more vulnerable. To put it another way, it’s helpful to learn to observe who experiences these stressors as an overload and who can more easily take them in stride. With that information you can assist your employees to do their best at work.

Managers and supervisors have an awesome responsibility. Their job involves encouraging staff to take a positive approach to work on a daily basis. Managers can accomplish this task by increasing their understanding and use of social intelligence. On a practical level, this means being interested in the goals and aspirations of the employee and then creating the conditions that help that person to the extent possible, realize their aspirations.

Researchers are demonstrating that there is a scientific basis for the beneficial effects of positive emotions on perception, relationships, motivation, and accomplishment. Approaching employees in a positive way helps them to be open to receive and process information more effectively. By expressing appreciation for an employee’s talents, contributions, and unique skills, a manager is capable of quickly helping that employee to be more receptive perceptually to engaging in out-of-the-box problem solving, better decision-making, and creative solutions

According to Barbara Fredrickson, PhD, Kenan Distinguished Professor and Director, Positive Emotions and Psychophysiology Laboratory, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, there are two ways to express appreciation: high and low quality. Insincerity (low-quality expression) doesn’t help the employee and is easily detected. High quality expressions require communicating a genuine understanding and appreciation of the employee’s gifts and qualities.

Did you know?

- ◆ It takes at least three months to learn a new habit — and to make the practice of approaching/appreciating employees in a positive way a natural part of your process as a manager.
- ◆ The impact of every negative emotion that you express to an employee needs to be neutralized by expressing at least three positive emotions to him or her. This is not to say that the negative side of things is not important, but negative comments need to be communicated in the right

context and proportion if you want to help your staff function at their best.

What kind of behaviors would a “socially intelligent” manager or supervisor display? Here are simple, examples interpreted from the work of Marcial Losado, PhD, and Emily Heaphy [The Role of Positivity and Connectivity in the Performance of Business Teams: A Nonlinear Dynamics Model, 2004]:

- ◆ Ask instead of talk.
- ◆ Observe more and do less.
- ◆ Be more positive than negative in what and how you communicate.
- ◆ Focus more on the other person than on yourself.

What does socially intelligent leadership look like?

- ◆ Leaders who do not inhibit or impede others.
- ◆ Leaders who actively enhance the performance of others.
- ◆ Leaders who leverage the capacity for interconnectedness.
- ◆ Leaders who know that the way something is communicated is often more important than what is communicated.

According to Daniel Goleman, psychologist and author:

“There is no magic recipe for what to do in every situation, no five-steps-to-social-intelligence-at-work ... The affective currents ... have real human consequences and they matter for people’s abilities to perform at their best. And because emotions are so contagious, every boss at every level needs to remember he or she can make matters either worse or better. “

LifeSolutions’ manager consultations are available and easily accessible. We can coach you to help you increase and use your social intelligence effectively. Call LifeSolutions with any questions or if you wish to consult with our team.



As leaders, what we do and say can have significant impact on those around us. *LifeSolutions* offers a series of self-guided online courses specifically developed to equip managers and supervisors with the appropriate tools to help make a positive impact in the workplace.

In keeping with the theme of this month's The Successful Supervisor, we offer the following Skill Builder course:

Applying Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

◆ How to think intelligently about emotions

- The purpose of emotion
- Techniques for interrupting your automatic responses
- Ways to rewrite your emotional script
- Methods for eliminating the causes of anxiety, rage, and depression
- Tips on becoming more optimistic
- How to motivate yourself
- Ideas for finding greater meaning in your work

◆ The keys to behaving wisely

- Skills for listening to and understanding the feelings of others
- A tool for expanding your emotional vocabulary
- How to adapt to the communication styles of others
- Guidelines on managing anger and stress
- A system for handling angry people
- Tips on relieving stress and recharging your emotional batteries
- How to leverage your strengths

◆ Techniques for fostering emotional intelligence in others

- Methods for promoting organizational self-awareness
- Guidelines for giving feedback effectively and inoffensively
- Suggestions on receiving feedback non-defensively
- Ideas for fostering a climate of civility

Follow the steps below to learn more and to get started:

- ◆ Access www.lifesolutionsforyou.com.
- ◆ Click on the *WorkLife* login at the top right.
- ◆ Enter your company code. If you do not know your code, call 1.800.647.3327.
- ◆ Locate *Site Search* on the right-hand side of the page.
- ◆ Type in *emotional intelligence*.
- ◆ Scroll down to the *Skill Builders* section.
- ◆ Select *View All* and then select *Applying Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace*.

If you have questions, call **1.800.647.3327**.

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