

# THE POWER OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

---

*A Practical Guide to Self-Awareness, Self-Management,  
Social Awareness, and Relationship Management at Work*

Based on the SDV Lunch & Learn Series

**Presented by David Mantica**

May 2026

# Contents

---

Foreword: Why This Book Exists .....	4
Chapter 1: It Is All About You .....	5
Chapter 2: How You Walk Into Each Day — Mindset .....	8
Chapter 3: The Brain You Did Not Choose .....	13
Chapter 4: CBT, DBT, and Changing Beliefs Before Behaviors.....	17
Chapter 5: The Amygdala Hijack — When Your Brain Betrays You .....	21
Chapter 6: Negative Self-Talk and Cognitive Distortions .....	25
Chapter 7: Psychological Safety — The Soil EI Grows In.....	29
Chapter 8: The Power Paradox .....	32
Chapter 9: The Four Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence .....	35
Chapter 10: Dimension 1 — Self-Awareness .....	37
Chapter 11: Dimension 2 — Self-Management .....	41
Chapter 12: Dimension 3 — Social Awareness .....	45
Chapter 13: Dimension 4 — Relationship Management .....	49
Chapter 14: Responding to Emotional Outbursts in Others .....	54
Chapter 15: EI in an AI World.....	57
Chapter 16: Your 30/60/90-Day EI Development Plan .....	60
Sources and Further Reading.....	64

## Foreword: Why This Book Exists

---

This book is built from a single Lunch & Learn session I gave on emotional intelligence — one of more than a thousand sessions I have delivered on adjacent topics over the years. The session was a working conversation, not a polished keynote. People asked questions, hot buttons came up in real time, and we wandered between neuroscience, mindset, and the day-to-day frustrations of working with other humans.

That conversation is the spine of what follows. But a one-hour talk — even a good one — only goes so far. So I have taken the structure I use in the room, kept the parts that resonated most with the participants, and filled in the gaps with research-backed techniques you can actually use on Monday morning. I have leaned on the work of Daniel Goleman, Carol Dweck, Amy Edmondson, Dacher Keltner, and the cognitive-behavioral tradition that started with Aaron Beck. The Sources and Further Reading section at the end lists every reputable outside source I drew from.

A few things to set expectations:

- This is not a self-help book that promises to change your life in 30 days. Emotional intelligence is a skill, and skills take reps.
- It is not a clinical manual either. If you are struggling with serious anxiety, depression, or trauma, please work with a licensed professional. The techniques here are useful, but they are not therapy.
- It is honest about the fact that your brain is, in many ways, working against you in modern knowledge work. The good news is that knowing this is half the battle.

Read this however you like — cover to cover, or one chapter at a time over breakfast. Each chapter ends with a short practice you can run that week. If you do nothing else, do those.

— *David Mantica*

## Chapter 1

# It Is All About You

---

Imagine, for a moment, a person you really do not like. Not someone you mildly dislike — someone whose name on a calendar invitation can ruin your morning. Picture how they walk into a room, what they say, the way they make decisions. Hold them in mind.

Here is the uncomfortable opener for this book: somewhere out there, someone else is doing exactly that thought experiment. And they are imagining you.

That is not a guilt trip. It is the foundation of everything that follows. Emotional intelligence — the skill of being aware of your own emotions, understanding others, and using that awareness to behave well in the world — is something you can only practice on yourself. You cannot install it in your boss, your direct report, your spouse, or your teenager. You cannot change other people. Not even a little. You can influence them — sometimes powerfully, and we will get to influence — but the only person whose actions and reactions you actually control is you.

### **The Core Premise**

You cannot change other people. You can influence them. The one thing you absolutely can change is your own actions and reactions. Everything in this book is built on that premise.

### **Why “It Is All About You” Is Liberating, Not Selfish**

People hear “focus on yourself” and assume it is a license for navel-gazing. The opposite is true. When you stop trying to fix other people, three things happen:

1. You stop expending energy on a project that has never worked for anyone in human history.
2. You free up that energy to work on the one variable in the system you actually control.
3. Paradoxically, the people around you often start behaving differently — because you are behaving differently. That is influence.

In every session I have run, the first question is some version of: “How do I get my manager to stop doing X?” or “How do I make my employee finally understand Y?” My answer is always the same. You don’t. You change what you do in response to X. You communicate Y differently. You stop treating the other person as a problem to solve and start treating your own reactions as the variable in the equation.

### **Nice Is Not the Same As Likable**

One quick aside before we go further. People often equate emotional intelligence with being nice. They are not the same. Some of the most unlikable people in any office are perfectly nice — polite, smiling, never raises their voice — and yet you would walk an extra block to avoid them at the coffee shop. Likability comes from being present, paying attention, treating people as individuals, and being trustworthy. Nice is a thin veneer. Emotional intelligence builds the real thing underneath.

### **This Week's Practice**

#### **Practice 1.1 — The Variable Switch**

Pick one ongoing frustration you have with a person at work. For the next seven days, every time you catch yourself thinking “Why do they always...?” or “If only they would...,” rewrite the sentence in your head to start with “How could I...?”

“Why does my manager always change the deadline?” becomes “How could I build slack into my own timeline so a deadline change does not blow up my week?”

Notice how much faster your problem-solving brain engages when you are the subject of the sentence.

## Chapter 2

# How You Walk Into Each Day — Mindset

Your brain has two jobs it inherited from a few million years of evolution: keep you alive, and do so as efficiently as possible. If your brain had its way, you would be wrapped in bubble wrap, watching Netflix, and eating something with too much salt. That is what it considers a successful day.

This is a problem because almost nothing in modern knowledge work is about surviving a predator or conserving calories. Yet the wiring is still in there, running in the background, every minute of every meeting. The first place this shows up is in how you walk into the day — your default mindset.

### Fixed vs. Growth Mindset

Stanford psychologist Carol Dweck has spent her career studying two basic orientations people take toward their own abilities, and toward the abilities of those around them. She calls them the fixed mindset and the growth mindset.

**A fixed mindset** treats abilities as a fixed quantity — you either have it or you don't. People with this mindset see challenges as threats (because failing exposes the ceiling on their ability), avoid feedback, and feel diminished when colleagues succeed.

**A growth mindset** treats abilities as developable. Dweck's research, summarized in her book *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, shows that this orientation is supported by neuroplasticity — the demonstrated capacity of the brain to form new connections through new experiences. People with a growth mindset see challenges as information, treat failure as data, and feel inspired (not threatened) when others around them succeed.

Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset
"I'm either good at it or I'm not."	"I can learn anything I put effort into."
"When I'm frustrated, I give up."	"When I'm frustrated, I persevere."
"Don't challenge me."	"Challenge me — that's how I grow."
"When I fail, I'm no good."	"When I fail, I learn something."
"Tell me I'm smart."	"Tell me I worked hard."
"If you succeed, I feel threatened."	"If you succeed, I'm inspired."

Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset
“My abilities determine everything.”	“My effort and attitude determine everything.”

### Why Most of Us Default to Fixed

The fixed mindset is the natural default, and our schooling reinforces it. Traditional education grades you on how well you repeat what an authority figure already knows. The reward signal is: get it right the first time. The implicit lesson is that intelligence is a fixed property you have, and tests reveal it. Almost nobody is graded, growing up, on the much more useful skill of adjusting and learning after they get something wrong.

So most people walk into the working world with the wrong wiring for it. Real work — the kind that matters — rewards learning, adapting, pivoting, and continuously improving. It punishes the person who can only perform what they already mastered. In a world of VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity), which AI is accelerating at a pace none of us are quite ready for, the fixed mindset is a serious liability.

#### Language That Builds Growth Mindset

Instead of “I made a mistake.” → “Mistakes help me learn.”

Instead of “This is too hard.” → “This will take learning and effort.”

Instead of “I give up.” → “Let me try another way.”

Instead of “I’m not good at this.” → “I’m not good at this yet.”

The word “yet” is the single most powerful linguistic move in Dweck’s framework. It converts a closed door into an open one.

### The False Growth Mindset

A warning. Dweck has been blunt about the misuse of her work. Saying “we have a growth mindset around here” in a corporate all-hands does not create one. A false growth mindset is when leaders parrot the language but still punish failure, avoid honest feedback, and reward only the people who never miss. Real growth mindset cultures share three traits: (1) honest, specific feedback even when it is hard; (2) celebration of strategy and effort, not just outcomes; (3) genuine permission to experiment and fail without career consequences. If those three are missing, the slogan is just decoration.

### Beyond Growth: The Benefit Mindset

There is a further step worth knowing about. Once you have moved past fixed and are operating from growth, you can move to what some researchers call a benefit mindset: actively doing things that benefit those around you, not just yourself. Counterintuitively, that orientation tends to produce positive outcomes for you, too — you become the kind of person others want on their team. But you cannot skip from fixed to benefit. The growth mindset is the bridge.

### **Frustration: The Gateway**

If I had to pick a single emotion that does the most damage in knowledge work, it would be frustration. Frustration is the gateway drug to all the bad behaviors — lashing out, withdrawing, gossiping, quitting in your head, sandbagging, freezing on decisions. It is also the most reliable signal that your mindset has slipped into fixed mode.

One of my favorite interview questions is to ask candidates what frustrates them, and then ask how they manage and work through that frustration. The first half of the question is about self-awareness — do they even know what trips them up? The second half is about self-management — do they have any tools, or do they just white-knuckle through it? You can tell more about someone’s emotional intelligence from those two questions than from an hour of behavioral interviews.

### **This Week's Practice**

#### **Practice 2.1 — The “Yet” Audit**

For the next seven days, every time you say or think a sentence of the form “I can’t...” or “I’m not good at...,” add the word “yet” to the end.

Do not argue with yourself about whether it is true. Just add the word. The point is to install a tiny pattern interrupt that keeps the door open instead of slamming it shut.

At the end of the week, look back at your list. You will be surprised how many sentences sounded like permanent verdicts but were actually just status reports.

## Chapter 3

# The Brain You Did Not Choose

---

Before we go further into emotional intelligence as a skill set, you need a working mental model of the brain you are trying to operate. The model does not need to be precise enough to pass a neuroscience exam. It just needs to be accurate enough that you can predict how your brain will behave under stress — so you can plan around it.

### Four Things Worth Knowing

4. Your brain weighs about 2 percent of your body mass but burns roughly 20 percent of your energy intake. It is expensive to run, which is why it tries to conserve effort wherever it can.
5. Its top priorities are survival and efficiency — in that order. Both predate the invention of email, performance reviews, and quarterly OKRs by about a hundred thousand years.
6. We did not evolve for office work. Almost nothing in modern knowledge work resembles the threats and rewards your brain was tuned for, yet the same machinery handles both.
7. When you are not paying attention, your brain runs on stored assumptions and beliefs. It defaults to whatever worked last time, even if last time was a long time ago and the situation was different.

### You Do Not See With Your Eyes

This is one of the most useful facts about perception, and most people never think about it. Your eyes are not really cameras — they are sensors that convert light into electrical signals. Your ears do not really hear — they convert pressure waves into electrical signals. The thing that actually sees and hears is your brain, and your brain is constantly filling in gaps with what it expects to be there.

This is why, if you wake at 3 a.m. and see a shadow in the corner of your room, your brain hands you “intruder” before it hands you “coat on a chair.” The pattern-matching machinery runs first. The fact-checking machinery runs later, and only if you give it time.

The same thing happens with email. You read the subject line. Your brain runs a quick check against everything you remember about the sender, the project, and your last interaction. By the time your eyes have moved to the body of the message, your brain has already decided what the message means. If the prediction is “this is going to be bad,” you may not even read the rest of it carefully. You will just react to what your brain decided was there.

### **Daniel Kahneman, “Thinking, Fast and Slow”**

Kahneman’s book is the long-form version of this idea: we have a fast, automatic, pattern-matching system (System 1) and a slow, effortful, deliberate system (System 2). System 1 is brilliant most of the time and quietly wrong some of the time. Emotional intelligence is, in large part, the discipline of catching System 1 before it commits you to a response, and bringing System 2 online.

If you have not read it, it is worth the time. It will change how you watch yourself think.

### **Heuristics: The Brain's Shortcut Library**

Because your brain is expensive to run, it stores shortcuts. Every time you successfully handle a situation, the brain remembers the pattern and tries to reuse it next time. These shortcuts are called heuristics, and they are why you can drive a familiar route home without consciously thinking about every turn.

Heuristics are wonderful right up until the situation changes. The route from work to home is the same most days, so the shortcut works. The person who sent you that email is not the same person they were six months ago, and the project is not the same project, but your brain may still be running the shortcut from six months ago. This is why genuinely new situations — a new manager, a new role, a new technology like AI — require deliberate attention. The shortcuts will mislead you.

### **Why This Chapter Matters**

Everything that follows in this book — the four dimensions of emotional intelligence, the techniques for managing self-talk, the influence skills, the listening skills — is fighting against this preset wiring. None of it is intuitive. None of it is the path of least resistance. If you find emotional intelligence work tiring, that is not a sign you are bad at it. It is a sign you are doing it. A day of high-EI engagement — reading people, adjusting your communication, catching your reactions — will leave you feeling like you ran a marathon, because at the neurological level you sort of did.

### **This Week's Practice**

#### **Practice 3.1 — Catch the Fill-In**

Pick one email this week that triggered an immediate negative reaction. Before responding, ask yourself three questions:

1. What did the message actually say, word for word?
2. What did my brain add that was not literally there?
3. What is the most generous interpretation of what was actually written?

Then respond to the message your brain wrote, not the message your brain heard.

## Chapter 4

### CBT, DBT, and Changing Beliefs Before Behaviors

---

Two of the most useful frameworks for understanding why behavior change is hard, and how to actually do it, come from clinical psychology: cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and dialectical behavior therapy (DBT). You do not need to be in therapy to use the ideas, and we are going to use them here in a non-clinical way. If you are managing something more serious, please work with a licensed professional — but the concepts are still worth understanding.

#### CBT: The Causal Chain

CBT, originally developed by Aaron Beck in the 1960s, rests on a simple but profound idea: thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are linked, and you can intervene at any point in the chain to change the others. Decades of randomized controlled trials have shown CBT to be effective for anxiety, depression, and stress, and the same principles have been adapted for the workplace under labels like work-focused CBT and cognitive restructuring training.

Here is the chain I use in sessions:

#### The Belief → Action Chain

BELIEFS & VALUES (what you hold to be true about yourself, others, and the world)



THOUGHTS (the running internal commentary that interprets what is happening)



FEELINGS (the emotional response that comes from those thoughts)



BEHAVIORS & ACTIONS (what you actually do)

The mistake almost everyone makes is trying to change behaviors and actions without changing the beliefs underneath. It does not stick. You can white-knuckle a new behavior for a week, maybe a month, but the moment you are tired, stressed, or surprised, the old behavior comes back. The belief was never updated.

#### A Personal Example

I am overweight. I know it. My brain knows it affects my joints, my heart rate, my long-term health. None of that changes the behavior, because the underlying belief is still “I’d rather be heavier and enjoy my evenings than thinner and counting every calorie.” Until that belief shifts, no diet sticks. This is why behavioral programs that focus only on tracking macros or banning food groups have such poor long-term success rates, and why programs like Noom — which deliberately spend most of their content on belief work — do better. The behavior follows the belief, not the other way around.

Now translate that to work. You decide you are going to be a more patient manager. You read a book. You make a chart. You stick a sticky note on your monitor. For two weeks, it works. Then a deadline slips, you are tired, and you snap at someone in a one-on-one — because the underlying belief (“mistakes are dangerous, I need to react fast to keep things on track”) was never actually addressed. The sticky note never had a chance.

### **DBT: The Four Skills**

DBT, developed by Marsha Linehan, adds a complementary set of skills focused on managing strong emotions in real time. Four skill areas matter for our purposes:

- **Mindfulness** — the ability to observe your own thoughts and feelings without immediately acting on them. This is the foundation. Without it, the other three do not function.
- **Distress tolerance** — sitting with discomfort long enough that you do not have to make it go away with an impulsive action.
- **Emotion regulation** — understanding what emotion you are having, why, and what to do with it instead of being driven by it.
- **Interpersonal effectiveness** — asking for what you need, saying no, and maintaining relationships even when there is conflict.

If you read those four skill areas and think they look exactly like emotional intelligence — you are right. DBT essentially codifies, in clinical language, the same skill set Goleman codified for the workplace. The clinical version is more rigorous; the workplace version is more accessible. They point at the same skills.

### **Why “Just Stop Doing It” Does Not Work**

Take the fear of flying as a useful example. The naive approach is to tell yourself “planes don’t crash, so stop being afraid.” That fails, because planes do, very rarely, crash. The belief “planes are perfectly safe” is not actually true, and your brain knows it. So the fear comes back.

The DBT-style approach is to look honestly at the evidence: how often planes crash, in what conditions, compared to the risks you accept every day in cars, in showers, or crossing the street. The goal is not to suppress the fear with a lie. It is to put the fear in proportion to reality so it stops running the show. You end up with a more balanced belief (“flying carries a small, manageable risk that I accept for the benefit

of getting where I am going”) which is true, and which generates a much more functional set of feelings and behaviors.

The same process works for the work fears that actually trip you up: “If I push back on this, I’ll get fired.” “If I admit I don’t know, they’ll lose confidence in me.” “If I delegate this, it won’t get done right.” Each of those is a belief, not a fact. Each can be examined.

### **This Week's Practice**

#### **Practice 4.1 — Trace One Reaction Back to Its Belief**

Pick a moment this week when you had a stronger reaction than the situation deserved. Walk it backward through the chain:

1. What did I DO? (the behavior)
2. What did I FEEL just before? (the emotion)
3. What was I THINKING? (the running commentary)
4. What BELIEF would I have to hold for that thought to make sense?

Write the belief down. Then ask one question: is it actually true? Not “does it feel true” — is it actually true. You may find the whole stack collapses once the belief at the bottom is examined.

## Chapter 5

### The Amygdala Hijack — When Your Brain Betrays You

---

If there is one piece of neuroscience worth understanding in detail, it is the amygdala hijack. The term was coined by Daniel Goleman in his 1995 book

*Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, and it describes exactly the experience you have had hundreds of times without knowing what to call it: the moment when something sets you off and your reasoning brain goes offline before you can stop it.

#### What Happens in the Brain

Sensory information — a tone of voice, a critical email, a colleague’s eye-roll, a sudden noise — enters through the thalamus, which is a kind of relay station deep in the brain. From there, the signal takes two simultaneous paths.

The fast path goes to the amygdala, an almond-shaped structure that is part of the limbic system. The amygdala’s job is threat detection. It checks the signal against your stored library of threatening patterns and, if it finds a match, it triggers the fight-flight-freeze-fawn response and floods your body with cortisol and adrenaline. This happens in roughly 12 milliseconds.

The slow path goes to the cortex — your thinking brain — which examines the signal carefully, considers context, weighs alternatives, and produces a reasoned response. This path takes hundreds of milliseconds, sometimes longer.

Because the fast path is so much faster, the amygdala has often already triggered a full-body stress response before the cortex has even started analyzing the situation. The amygdala has, in effect, hijacked control of your behavior. The cortex catches up later — and that is usually when you find yourself thinking, “What just happened? Why did I say that?”

#### The Body in a Hijack

Heart rate up. Breathing shallow. Pupils dilated. Muscles tight — especially jaw, shoulders, fists. Skin clammy or goosebumps. Stomach tight.

Crucially: cognition impaired. Cortisol suppresses prefrontal cortex function, which is the part of your brain that handles judgment, perspective-taking, and complex decision-making.

This is why you cannot think clearly when you are flooded. The hardware is literally throttled.

## The Critical Mismatch

Here is the part that should give every knowledge worker pause. Your amygdala cannot tell the difference between a physical threat and a symbolic one. A truck barreling toward you and a sharply worded email from your boss both trigger the same response. A predator in the bush and a hostile question in a meeting both produce the same flood of stress hormones.

Worse: a perceived threat is treated identically to a real one. You do not have to actually be in danger. Your amygdala just has to think you are. This is why losing a job and losing a loved one both feel like an existential threat. Cognitively, they are obviously different. Neurologically, the body's alarm system processes them the same way.

## How to Stop a Hijack in Progress

The acute phase of an amygdala hijack typically lasts 20 to 60 minutes — the time required for the stress hormones to clear your bloodstream. Once it is running, you cannot reason your way out of it. You can, however, intervene early enough to short-circuit it. Multiple sources — Goleman, Healthline, MasterClass, the Harrison Riedel Foundation — converge on roughly the same protocol:

8. **Notice the body, not the situation.** Your heart, your jaw, your shoulders. The body shows you the hijack before your brain knows it is happening.
9. **Name the emotion out loud, or at least clearly in your head.** “I am furious right now.” “I am terrified of this meeting.” Labeling an emotion activates the prefrontal cortex, the part of your brain you need back online. This is sometimes called “name it to tame it.”
10. **Use the six-second rule.** The peak chemical surge dissipates rapidly. Six seconds of doing nothing — not responding, not speaking, not typing — is often enough to give the cortex a chance to come back online. Count to six in your head before opening your mouth. It is harder than it sounds.
11. **Slow your breathing.** Box breathing works: in for 4, hold for 4, out for 4, hold for 4. Repeat three or four times. This activates the parasympathetic nervous system, which is the chemical antagonist to the fight-flight response.
12. **Change your physical environment.** Stand up. Walk to the window. Get water. Movement plus a new visual environment forces your brain to engage with the present, which is exactly the part that goes offline during a hijack.
13. **Buy time, then respond.** “Let me think about that and get back to you this afternoon.” “Can we revisit this tomorrow with fresh eyes?” For email: write the angry reply if you must, but save it as a draft. Never send anything important inside the 20–60 minute window.

## Building the Long-Term Defense

In-the-moment techniques are necessary but not sufficient. Over time, regular mindfulness practice has been shown to strengthen the neural pathways between the amygdala and the prefrontal cortex, making hijacks less frequent and less severe. Apps like Calm and Headspace teach the skill systematically. Twenty minutes a day for eight weeks is the dose at which most meditation studies start to show measurable changes in stress reactivity. You do not need to become a Buddhist monk — you just need to build a routine practice of noticing your own thoughts without reacting to them.

Sleep, exercise, and limiting caffeine all reduce your baseline arousal level, which means it takes more to push you over the edge into hijack territory. None of this is glamorous advice. All of it works.

### **This Week's Practice**

#### **Practice 5.1 — Map Your Hijacks**

For one week, keep a simple log of every time you notice your body going into stress response. You do not need elaborate detail — a line in a notebook is fine.

Record three things: (1) the trigger, (2) the body signal that showed up first (jaw, chest, stomach), and (3) the time of day.

At the end of the week, look for patterns. You will probably see that your hijacks cluster around specific people, specific kinds of messages, or specific times — often the end of the day when your blood sugar and willpower are both depleted. That map is gold. It tells you exactly where to deploy the techniques above.

## Chapter 6

# Negative Self-Talk and Cognitive Distortions

---

Everyone has a running commentary in their head. The Buddhists call it the monkey mind. Modern psychologists call it the default mode network. Whatever you call it, it is on most of the time, and most of the time you do not notice it. You only notice the residue — the headache, the tight chest, the inability to sleep, the inexplicably bad mood you brought home from work.

The first job in working with self-talk is hearing it. The second job is not believing it without evidence.

### The Cognitive Distortions

In the 1960s, Aaron Beck cataloged a set of recurring thinking errors that show up in people with anxiety and depression — and, as it turns out, in everyone else too. These errors are called cognitive distortions. They are automatic, they happen below conscious awareness, and they reliably produce more negative emotion than the situation warrants. Learning to spot them is one of the highest-leverage skills in this whole book.

Here are the ten most common distortions, with workplace examples and reframes:

#### 1. All-or-Nothing Thinking

**The distortion:** Seeing situations in black-and-white terms with no middle ground.

**Example:** “My boss made edits to my draft. I clearly cannot write.”

**Reframe:** “My draft needed edits, like most drafts do. That tells me something about this draft, not about me as a writer.”

#### 2. Catastrophizing

**The distortion:** Predicting the worst-case outcome and treating it as inevitable.

**Example:** “If we lose this client, the whole business shuts down.”

**Reframe:** “Losing this client would hurt. What are the realistic outcomes — not just the worst one — and what could we do about each?”

#### 3. Mind Reading

**The distortion:** Assuming you know what someone else is thinking, with no actual evidence.

**Example:** “She didn’t respond to my Slack — she’s angry with me.”

**Reframe:** “She didn’t respond. There are at least ten reasons that have nothing to do with me. I could ask if I need to know.”

#### 4. Overgeneralization

**The distortion:** Treating one bad event as a permanent pattern. Watch for the words “always” and “never.”

**Example:** “I always mess up these client calls.”

**Reframe:** “This call did not go well. What specifically was off, and what would I do differently next time?”

#### 5. Personalization

**The distortion:** Assuming you are the cause of negative events that have other causes.

**Example:** “The team missed the deadline because I should have caught the issue sooner.”

**Reframe:** “Multiple factors contributed to the miss. What was actually in my control, and what was not?”

#### 6. Labeling

**The distortion:** Attaching a permanent identity label to yourself or others based on one event.

**Example:** “I’m a terrible manager.” “He’s a jerk.”

**Reframe:** “I made a poor call in that conversation.” “He handled that interaction badly.” Describe the behavior, not the identity.

#### 7. Mental Filter

**The distortion:** Focusing exclusively on one negative detail and filtering out the positives.

**Example:** Nine compliments and one criticism in a performance review — and all you remember is the criticism.

**Reframe:** Write down the full list. Force yourself to look at the whole picture, not the most painful slice.

#### 8. Discounting the Positive

**The distortion:** Acknowledging good outcomes but dismissing them as luck, fluke, or not really counting.

**Example:** “Yeah, that project worked, but only because the timing was right.”

**Reframe:** “What specifically did I do that contributed to this working? I want to keep doing that.”

#### 9. Emotional Reasoning

**The distortion:** Treating feelings as facts. “I feel it, therefore it must be true.”

**Example:** “I feel like a fraud in this role, so I must actually be one.”

**Reframe:** “I feel like a fraud. That is a feeling, not evidence. What is the actual evidence about my work?”

## 10. “Should” Statements

**The distortion:** Holding yourself or others to rigid rules that produce guilt when violated.

**Example:** “I should be over this by now.” “He should know better.”

**Reframe:** Replace “should” with “I would prefer” or “I’d like.” Keeps the goal, loses the moral weight.

## The Cognitive Restructuring Worksheet

The core CBT technique for working with distortions is cognitive restructuring. It is a five-column process you can do on paper or in any notes app:

### The Five Columns

1. SITUATION: What actually happened? (Just the facts, no interpretation.)
2. AUTOMATIC THOUGHT: What did your brain immediately tell you it meant?
3. DISTORTION: Which of the ten distortions is this an instance of?
4. EVIDENCE: What is the actual evidence for and against the automatic thought?
5. BALANCED THOUGHT: A more accurate, more useful interpretation of the same facts.

Do this on paper, not just in your head. The act of writing forces System 2 to engage. Most people find that after they write the situation and the automatic thought, the distortion is obvious. After two or three weeks of this practice, your brain starts catching the distortions in real time, without the paper.

## This Week's Practice

### Practice 6.1 — The Distortion Inventory

Pick the three distortions from the list above that you suspect are your most common. Most people have a personal top three — mine are catastrophizing, all-or-nothing, and “should” statements. Once you identify yours, write them on a sticky note where you will see it.

For the next week, every time you catch one of your top three running, just name it. “There’s the catastrophizing again.” You do not have to fix it. Just notice it. Awareness alone is most of the cure.

## Chapter 7

# Psychological Safety — The Soil EI Grows In

All the techniques in this book operate inside an environment. The environment matters. Harvard Business School professor Amy Edmondson has spent twenty-plus years studying what she calls psychological safety — the shared belief, held by members of a team, that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking. In a psychologically safe team, people can speak up, ask questions, admit mistakes, and challenge ideas without fear of being humiliated, punished, or pushed out.

Edmondson’s research, summarized in

*The Fearless Organization* (2018), has established psychological safety as the single strongest predictor of team effectiveness in modern knowledge work. Google’s internal study of its own teams (Project Aristotle) reached the same conclusion independently.

### The Two-by-Two

Edmondson’s framework crosses two dimensions: psychological safety (low to high) and standards (low to high). Most people assume “safe” means “soft.” It does not. The interesting quadrants are these:

Quadrant	What It Produces
Low safety + Low standards (Apathy Zone)	People show up, do the minimum, leave on time. Nobody risks much because there’s no reason to.
Low safety + High standards (Anxiety Zone)	Driven results, burned-out people. Innovation dries up because nobody will risk a wrong answer. Common in old-school finance and consulting.
High safety + Low standards (Comfort Zone)	Pleasant culture, mediocre output. Everyone’s nice. Nothing important gets done.
High safety + High standards (Learning & Performance Zone)	Where real high performance lives. People take risks because they can. They are held accountable because the standards are clear. Mistakes become learning, not blame.

If you are a leader, the only quadrant worth aiming for is the top-right. If you are an individual contributor, knowing which quadrant your team is in tells you a great deal about what you are up against.

## The Hard Truth

Here is something most leadership courses skip. As a leader, you can shape conditions that make psychological safety more likely. You cannot decree it. People feel safe because they have evidence — they spoke up once, nothing bad happened, the cycle repeated. That evidence accumulates slowly and can be destroyed in one bad meeting. One eye-roll from a senior leader when a junior person asks an obvious question can set safety back by months.

And from the other side: a leader can create the most generous conditions in the world, and an individual who is convinced everyone is out to get them will not feel safe in any of them. Acceptance of safety is something the individual has to do. Past trauma, prior bad jobs, family dynamics, imposter syndrome — all of these can keep someone in the anxiety zone in an objectively safe room.

## Four Practical Moves for Leaders

Edmondson and her colleagues at Harvard have distilled their research into four moves that consistently build safety:

14. **Frame work as a learning problem, not an execution problem.** “We’re figuring out a new market” is a learning frame. “We’re hitting our number” is an execution frame. Learning frames license questions and experimentation. Execution frames don’t.
15. **Acknowledge your own fallibility, out loud.** “I may be wrong about this — push back if you see it differently.” Said early and often. The leader’s admission of uncertainty is the signal everyone is waiting for.
16. **Model curiosity by asking many questions.** Especially questions where you genuinely do not know the answer. People take their cue from how the most senior person in the room treats not-knowing.
17. **Respond productively when people take the risk.** Especially when they bring you bad news or a dumb question. The first ten times someone speaks up, your reaction sets the next thousand. Thank them. Be curious. Never punish the messenger — even subtly.

## If You Are Not the Leader

You can still influence the climate around you. Speak up first when you have a chance — ask the obvious question, admit when you do not understand, model the behavior you want to see. Other people will follow. Find one or two peers who will support you and create a small pocket of safety around your immediate work, even if the larger culture is anxious. Decline gossip; decline blame-fests. Each small act compounds.

## This Week's Practice

### **Practice 7.1 — The Safety Audit**

Score your current team on Edmondson's four leader behaviors above, on a 1–5 scale. Not in the abstract — think of specific examples from the last month.

Then ask: where is the lowest score? That is the place a single change would do the most good. If you are the leader, you have your homework. If you are not, you have a clearer map of what kind of environment you are in.

## Chapter 8

# The Power Paradox

---

There is an uncomfortable finding that everyone in a position of power needs to know about. I am going to spend a chapter on it because it is one of the most reliably documented effects in social psychology, and almost no one I have met in the working world has heard of it.

Dacher Keltner is a psychology professor at UC Berkeley who has spent more than twenty years studying power. His work is summarized in

*The Power Paradox: How We Gain and Lose Influence* (2016). The paradox, in one sentence: we usually gain power by being empathetic, generous, and socially intelligent — and then power itself tends to erode those exact qualities.

*“Subjects under the influence of power, he found in studies spanning two decades, acted as if they had suffered a traumatic brain injury — becoming more impulsive, less risk-averse, and, crucially, less adept at seeing things from other people’s point of view.”*

— Summarizing Keltner’s findings

### What the Research Shows

Across multiple studies and replications, people who feel powerful — whether because of role, wealth, or just being told in an experiment that they are in a powerful position — show measurable changes:

- Reduced ability to read others' emotions accurately
- Less listening, more interrupting
- Greater impulsivity, less risk aversion
- Reduced “mirroring” — the subtle, automatic mimicry that helps us experience others’ emotions vicariously
- More swearing, more rudeness, more unilateral decisions
- Wealthy drivers are about half as likely to yield to pedestrians at crosswalks

Keltner is careful to note that the powerful do not necessarily think they are better than other people. They just stop thinking about other people as much. The cognitive bandwidth that used to go to reading the room is now going somewhere else.

### The Mirroring Effect

McMaster University neuroscientist Sukhvinder Obhi did something especially interesting. He put both powerful and not-so-powerful people under a transcranial magnetic stimulation machine and watched what happened in their brains when they observed others performing actions. What he found was that power impairs mirroring — the neural process where the part of your brain that would perform an action lights up sympathetically when you watch someone else do it. That mirroring is one of the building blocks of empathy. It is part of how you can almost feel what someone else is feeling. And it dims when power increases.

### **Power Is Not Just Money or Title**

The studies cover much more than CEOs and politicians. The effect shows up in any context where someone feels more powerful than others around them. Power at home. Power in a church group. Power on a parents' committee. Power as the senior person in a meeting. Power as the customer at a counter. If you are a manager, you have it. If you are a parent, you have it. If you have any structural advantage in a particular setting, the effect is in play.

This is why most of us, looking back, can remember moments where we behaved worse than we would have wanted to — not because we are bad people, but because the situation gave us a power advantage we did not consciously notice.

### **How to Counter It**

Keltner is also clear that this is not destiny. Some powerful people retain their empathy and social intelligence — he calls this “enduring power.” The first defense is awareness. If you know power tends to do this, you can watch for the signs in yourself.

Specific countermoves drawn from his work and other research on the topic:

18. **Listen more than you talk in any setting where you are the senior person.** If you find yourself talking more than half the time in a one-on-one, the math is wrong.
19. **Ask questions you do not know the answer to.** Not gotcha questions. Real ones. You will be surprised how much information stops flowing once people assume you only ask questions to test them.
20. **Maintain explicit downward feedback channels.** Skip-level meetings, anonymous surveys, a trusted peer who will tell you what people are actually saying. People will not volunteer hard truths to powerful people. You have to create the conditions for it.
21. **Do a periodic mental audit.** In any decision involving people who report to you or depend on you, ask: am I thinking about how this lands for them, or only about how this affects me and the outcome? Most of the worst leadership decisions in any organization come from people who never paused to ask that question.

22. **Catch the small stuff.** Interrupting in meetings. Cutting off junior people. Skipping greetings. Reading email during a one-on-one. These are the everyday tells. They are not catastrophic individually. They are catastrophic in aggregate, over years, because they tell everyone around you that you do not see them.

### A Confession

I had to learn this in my own career. There were times, when I owned my company, when I caught myself thinking some version of “They’re lucky to have these jobs — if I hadn’t taken the risk, they wouldn’t be here.” That kind of thinking is the corruption of power in real time. It manufactures value out of position rather than recognizing the actual contribution of the people doing the actual work. I do not think I am unusual in having thought it. I think most leaders have. What matters is catching it.

### This Week's Practice

#### Practice 8.1 — The Power Inventory

List every setting in your week where you have a power advantage. Be honest — include the obvious (managing people at work) and the less obvious (you’re the customer; you’re the senior person on the committee; you’re the parent).

For each one, ask: how would the lower-power person in this setting describe my behavior? Not how I would describe it. How would they?

If you have a trusted peer, ask them to read your list. Their face will tell you a lot.

## Chapter 9

# The Four Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence

---

We have now spent eight chapters on the foundations — why this matters, the brain you did not choose, the techniques for catching yourself before you spiral, and the contexts (psychological safety, power) that shape everything. From here on out, we get to the actual model.

Daniel Goleman organized emotional intelligence into four domains, building on the work of John Mayer and Peter Salovey, who coined the term in the early 1990s. Goleman’s four-domain framework appeared in his 1995 bestseller

*Emotional Intelligence* and has been the dominant framework in workplace EI ever since. Within each domain are specific competencies — twelve in the most recent version Goleman uses with Richard Boyatzis at Case Western.

### The Four Domains

#### The Goleman Framework

- 1. Self-Awareness** — the ability to read your own emotions and recognize their impact, using gut feelings to guide decisions.
- 2. Self-Management** — the ability to control your emotions and impulses and adapt to changing circumstances.
- 3. Social Awareness** — the ability to sense, understand, and react to others’ emotions while comprehending social networks.
- 4. Relationship Management** — the ability to inspire, influence, and develop others while managing conflict.

### Personal vs. Social, Awareness vs. Action

The four domains form a natural 2-by-2. Two are about you (self-awareness, self-management); two are about others (social awareness, relationship management). Two are about perceiving (self-awareness, social awareness); two are about doing (self-management, relationship management).

This matters for development order. You cannot manage what you cannot see, and you cannot see others well until you can see yourself. So the domains build in sequence: self-awareness enables self-management; both together enable social awareness; the three together enable relationship

management. People who skip ahead — trying to influence others while still oblivious to their own emotional state — do real damage. We have all worked with one. The ones who actually move people are the ones who started with themselves.

### **EQ vs. IQ**

IQ — cognitive horsepower, the rate at which you absorb new technical information — is essential for getting into a field. It is what gets you the job, the degree, the technical credential. After that, its predictive power for further success drops sharply. Goleman’s research, summarized in *Harvard Business Review*, has shown that emotional intelligence accounts for somewhere around two-thirds of the differentiating factor among high performers in leadership roles. One often-cited figure: about 75 percent of the time, high-EQ candidates beat high-IQ candidates when being considered for promotion.

Here is the asymmetry. Your technical expertise is a depreciating asset. The world keeps moving, and the specific skills that were valuable five years ago may not be valuable now. (Ask anyone who built a career around direct mail marketing.) Your emotional intelligence is an appreciating asset. It works in every role, every industry, every life stage. It does not get obsolete. And in an AI world that is automating more and more of the technical work, EI becomes more valuable, not less.

### **This Chapter's Practice**

#### **Practice 9.1 — The Self-Score**

On a 1–10 scale, score yourself in each of the four domains. Then score yourself the way you think your closest colleague would score you. The gap between the two numbers tells you where to start.

## Chapter 10

### Dimension 1 — Self-Awareness

---

Self-awareness is the foundation domain. Research at Cornell University, summarized by Goleman, has found that emotional self-awareness is the single strongest predictor of overall success across business leaders. It is also the hardest of the four to develop, which is why we are starting here.

#### The Three Competencies

Goleman breaks self-awareness into three competencies.

**Emotional self-awareness** is the ability to recognize what you are feeling, in the moment, and to understand the effect it is having on your thinking and behavior. The bar is low and most people miss it. Can you accurately name the emotion you are having right now? Not “stressed” or “fine” — those are placeholders. Are you anxious? Resentful? Disappointed? Excited? Lonely? Each of those produces very different behavior and requires different management.

**Accurate self-assessment** is the ability to know your real strengths and your real limits, and to use that knowledge to make better decisions. The trap here is in both directions — overestimating your skill in some areas and underestimating it in others. Both are equally common, and both lead to poor decisions about what to take on, what to delegate, and where to invest in development.

**Self-confidence** is having a strong sense of your self-worth and capabilities. This is the trickiest of the three. Real self-confidence comes from accurate self-assessment plus a genuine sense of self-worth that is not contingent on the latest performance review. People often confuse self-confidence with bravado, which is its opposite: bravado is performed certainty masking actual doubt. Real confidence is quieter and harder to shake.

#### The Identity Problem

One subtle point worth dwelling on: in Western working culture, we are taught to define ourselves by what we do. “What do you do?” is almost always the second question at a networking event. The problem is that what you do is a contingent thing. Companies fail. Roles change. Industries get disrupted. If your identity is fully wrapped up in your job title, then any threat to your job is a threat to your identity, and that triggers exactly the kind of amygdala response we covered in Chapter 5.

Real self-confidence requires separating who you are from what you do. What you do is an arrangement: skills you bring, problems you solve, value you create in exchange for income and meaning. Who you are is bigger — your character, your relationships, your curiosity, your sense of purpose. When you are clear

on the difference, you can take risks at work, including the risk of being honest, because work is no longer the entire structure of your self.

### Tools for Developing Self-Awareness

This is the domain where you cannot rely on introspection alone. Your brain is the unreliable narrator we have been discussing for ten chapters. You need external signals. The most useful tools:

23. **Daily retrospective.** Five minutes at the end of the day. What went well, what did not, where did I notice myself being thrown off, what did I do with it? Written down. The act of writing forces specificity.
24. **360-degree feedback.** Formal or informal. Ask peers, direct reports, and manager what you do well and where you have blind spots. Make it anonymous if you can. The first few times I did this in my company, I was astonished by what I learned. The gap between how I thought I came across and how I actually came across was sobering. It always is.
25. **A family 360.** Ask your spouse, your kids, a sibling, what you are like to live with. This is not for the faint of heart. It is also one of the most clarifying things you can do. You will learn things that have been true for years that no one had ever told you.
26. **Strengths assessments.** CliftonStrengths (formerly StrengthsFinder), VIA Character Strengths, the Hogan suite. These are not perfect, but they give you language for things you might struggle to name on your own.
27. **Body awareness.** Your body shows you what you are feeling before your conscious mind labels it. Headaches, intestinal discomfort, jaw tension, shallow breathing — these are data. Pay attention.
28. **Mindfulness practice.** Ten to twenty minutes a day of doing nothing but observing your own thoughts and sensations. The skill that builds is the meta-skill behind every other technique in this book — the ability to notice yourself thinking without immediately acting on the thought.

### What to Watch For

Specific questions to develop the habit of looking inward:

- When I felt stressed today, what was going on around me?
- When I felt energized, what was going on around me?
- Did my actions match my words this week? Where did they not?
- What were my intentions going into [meeting X]? Did I act in line with them?
- How would someone watching me describe what I valued in that conversation?

### This Week's Practice

### **Practice 10.1 — The Five-Minute Retrospective**

For seven straight days, at the end of the workday, write down four things:

1. One thing I did well today.
2. One thing I would do differently.
3. One emotion I felt strongly and what triggered it.
4. One thing I want to carry into tomorrow.

Keep them. At the end of the week, read all seven in one sitting. Patterns will emerge you cannot see from a single day.

## Chapter 11

### Dimension 2 — Self-Management

---

Once you can see yourself, you can manage yourself. Self-management is the ability to control your emotions and impulses, adapt to changing circumstances, and stay aligned with your standards and goals when things are not going your way.

#### The Six Competencies

**Self-control.** Keeping disruptive emotions and impulses under control, especially under pressure. This is the muscle that lets you not send the angry email, not interrupt the colleague, not blurt out the half-formed criticism.

**Trustworthiness.** Maintaining standards of honesty and integrity. Trust is built in small repeated moments — keeping commitments, owning mistakes, telling the truth when it would be easier not to. It is destroyed faster than it is built.

**Conscientiousness.** Taking responsibility for your performance — and for your underperformance. The mature version of conscientiousness is not perfectionism. It is honest accountability.

**Adaptability.** Being flexible when circumstances change. This is the competency AI is making most valuable. The pace of change is no longer optional to manage — it is the job.

**Achievement orientation.** Striving to meet or exceed a standard of excellence, with the energy to keep going when it gets hard.

**Initiative.** Acting on opportunities without being told to. Spotting what needs doing and starting before someone asks. As organizations flatten and fewer people manage the day-to-day, initiative is the difference between people who get more responsibility and people who get less.

#### The Hot Button Exercise

Most self-management failures happen at predictable moments. The same words, the same situations, the same people trigger the same reactions in you over and over. We call these hot buttons. The exercise is simple but takes honesty to do well.

##### The Hot Button Audit

Make a two-column list. In column one, every situation, phrase, or behavior that reliably gets you frustrated, irritated, or angry. Be specific. Not “when people are rude.” More like “when someone

interrupts me in the middle of a sentence,” or “when my manager rewrites my work without telling me what was wrong with it.”

In column two, ask why each trigger lands so hard. What does it mean to you that the other person probably doesn't know? “I need to feel heard,” “It makes me feel disrespected,” “It reminds me of how my father used to dismiss me” — whatever the actual underlying belief is.

You cannot eliminate hot buttons. You can stop being surprised by them. And once you stop being surprised, you can choose how to respond.

Share your hot button list with someone you trust — a peer, a coach, a mentor. They will probably tell you they have noticed at least one of them already. That part is humbling but useful. Knowing that other people can see your hot buttons takes some of the secret power out of them.

### Practical Techniques for Self-Management

There is no single technique that works for everyone, but the following have evidence behind them and are widely used:

29. **Physical exercise.** Probably the single most reliable intervention for emotional regulation. The mechanism is complex — cortisol clearance, endorphins, sleep improvement, blood sugar regulation — but the result is consistent. Walk daily. Lift something heavy three times a week. The benefit is not in the gym; it is in everything else.
30. **Sleep.** The amygdala is roughly 60 percent more reactive on five hours of sleep than on eight. If you have a high-stakes conversation tomorrow, the most important preparation you can do is go to bed early tonight.
31. **Meditation / mindfulness.** Builds the prefrontal-amygdala connection over time. Apps like Calm and Headspace make it easy to start. Ten minutes is enough.
32. **Journaling.** Especially structured journaling — the cognitive-restructuring worksheet from Chapter 6, or a daily retrospective. The act of writing externalizes thoughts and lets you examine them.
33. **The 90-second rule.** Neuroanatomist Jill Bolte Taylor popularized the observation that the physical chemistry of an emotion clears the bloodstream in about 90 seconds. If an emotion is still running ten minutes later, you are feeding it with thought. Notice when that happens.
34. **Calendar self-management.** This is one I rely on heavily. If I am not in the right state of mind for a particular conversation — a yearly review, a hard feedback session, a customer save — I move it. Two hours, four hours, sometimes a day. The cost of postponing is almost always smaller than the cost of conducting an important conversation in a bad state. Self-management includes the wisdom to know when not to engage.

35. **Pay-it-forward acts.** Doing something useful for someone else, especially when you are stuck in a negative loop. The state change is reliable and the side effect (a stronger relationship, often) is real.
36. **Limit decision points.** Willpower is finite. If you find yourself wrestling with the same choice every day (whether to check email at 11 p.m., whether to skip the gym, whether to respond now or later), make a rule once and follow it. The fewer in-the-moment decisions, the more capacity left for the ones that matter.

### A Personal Aside

I am going to keep using my weight as an example because it is the cleanest one I have. For me, self-management around food fails most reliably at night. The self-awareness step was admitting that. The self-management step is rearranging my environment — what is in the kitchen, when I eat dinner, what I do with my hands after 9 p.m. — so that the right behavior is easier than the wrong behavior. Willpower in the moment loses to designed environments almost every time. The same principle applies to every other recurring failure of self-management. Design around it. Do not just try harder.

### This Week's Practice

#### Practice 11.1 — The Hot Button Map

Complete the Hot Button Audit above — at least three triggers, ideally five. For each one, write down a single concrete technique you will try the next time it shows up. Not “I’ll be more patient.” More like “I will count to six before I respond,” or “I will ask one clarifying question before I push back,” or “I will say ‘let me think about that’ and reply by email tomorrow.”

Keep the list somewhere you can see it. Hot buttons are reliable. Plan for them.

## Chapter 12

### Dimension 3 — Social Awareness

---

Once you can see and manage yourself, you can start reading others. Social awareness is the ability to sense what other people are feeling and thinking, understand the dynamics of a group, and read the emotional currents of an organization. The three competencies inside it are empathy, organizational awareness, and service orientation.

#### Empathy

Empathy is the ability to understand what another person is experiencing from inside their frame of reference. Goleman, drawing on the work of Paul Ekman and others, distinguishes three kinds:

**Cognitive empathy** — understanding how another person sees the world and how they are likely to think. Useful for persuasion, teaching, and selling. Without the other two, it can shade into manipulation.

**Emotional empathy** — actually feeling what another person is feeling, at least to some degree. This is the mirroring we covered in Chapter 8. It builds rapport and trust. Too much of it, without boundaries, leads to burnout, which is a real risk for caregivers, therapists, and managers.

**Compassionate empathy** — understanding and feeling, but also being moved to help. This is the most complete form and the most useful in leadership. You see, you feel, you act.

#### Empathy Is a Skill, Not a Personality Trait

Some people are naturally more empathetic, but everyone can improve. The skill is built primarily through deliberate exposure to other people's frames of reference. A few practices:

37. **Cognitively diverse groups.** Spend time with people who think differently from you — different functions, different backgrounds, different countries, different generations, different political views. Identity diversity tends to produce cognitive diversity, because people who have grown up in different social, economic, and political environments develop different ways of seeing problems. You cannot empathize with thinking you have never been exposed to.
38. **Read fiction.** There is real research showing that literary fiction — not just any reading, specifically character-driven fiction — improves theory of mind, which is the cognitive basis for empathy. You spend hours inhabiting another consciousness. Even your brain treats it as practice.
39. **Ask, then shut up.** “Help me understand how you see this.” Then — and this is the hard part — actually listen until they are done. Most people listen for an opening to make their point. Real empathy listens for the actual point being made.

40. **The two-chair exercise.** When you are in conflict with someone, physically sit in two chairs in sequence. Sit in your chair and state your position. Then sit in their chair and state theirs, in their words, as fully as you can. Do not caricature. Steelman it. If you cannot do this, you do not yet understand them well enough to negotiate.

### **Organizational Awareness**

Beyond reading individual people, organizational awareness is reading groups, factions, and unspoken power dynamics. Every organization runs on two structures — the org chart and the actual one. The actual one includes the trusted advisors who are not in the official chain, the meetings that happen before the meetings, the alliances and rivalries that shape what gets approved and what dies in committee.

Becoming organizationally aware is mostly about paying attention. Notice who defers to whom. Notice who gets quoted in someone else's presentation. Notice who is invited to the small meeting before the big meeting. The signals are everywhere; most people do not register them.

When you join a new organization, the first 90 days should be heavily weighted toward observation. Ask questions. Take coffee with people. Find one or two trusted insiders who will explain the real map to you. The cost of moving too fast in a new organization, before you understand the dynamics, is much higher than the cost of moving carefully.

### **Service Orientation**

Service orientation is the disposition to anticipate, recognize, and meet the needs of the people you serve — customers, colleagues, direct reports. A useful refinement that has shown up in recent leadership writing is the distinction between servant leadership and host leadership.

**A servant** waits for needs to be expressed and responds.

**A host** sets the conditions for needs to be met before they are expressed. A good host introduces guests to each other, anticipates what people might want, and creates the environment where the experience succeeds.

In social-awareness terms, the host orientation is the higher form. It uses the awareness you have built to proactively shape situations for others, rather than just reacting when they tell you what they need.

### **A Cautionary Story**

Years ago, my team had a couple of important instructors flying in from Denver. I asked where they wanted to go for dinner — they were our guests, they'd traveled, we were doing good business together. They said sushi. The market manager said something like, "I don't want sushi, we're not going." I still remember the moment. From a social-awareness and relationship-management standpoint, that was a complete failure. The guests had stated their preference. Our job, as hosts, was to make their visit work — not to optimize our own preference. Sometimes you order the chicken. That is what service orientation looks like in practice.

## **This Week's Practice**

### **Practice 12.1 — The Two-Chair Steelman**

Pick someone you are currently in disagreement with at work. Write out their position — not the strawman version, the strongest version, in their own framing. Use language they would actually use. Include the legitimate reasons they hold the view.

When you can write their position so well that they would read it and say “yes, that’s exactly what I think,” you have done the empathy work. Now you are ready to talk to them. Not before.

## Chapter 13

### Dimension 4 — Relationship Management

---

This is where the other three domains come together. Relationship management is the skill of working with and through other people — inspiring, influencing, developing, communicating, managing conflict, building bonds, and collaborating. It is the visible output of all the inner work.

Goleman lists eight competencies under relationship management. Rather than march through them mechanically, I want to focus on the four moves that show up most often in real work.

#### Move 1: Adapt to the Person, Not to Yourself

The single biggest mistake in relationship management is treating everyone the same way. Your brain wants to do this because it is efficient — same script, same approach, less effort. But it does not work. Different people need different things to be reached.

Some people want the answer first, then the reasoning. Others need to walk through the why before they can hear the what. Some respond to data; others respond to stories. Some want feedback in private and in person; others prefer written, async, with time to digest before discussing. Some want to be told directly when something is wrong; others need it framed and softened. Neither preference is right or wrong. The mismatch between someone's preference and your default is what produces friction.

This requires social awareness (Chapter 12) plus the discipline to use it. The questions you are asking yourself, every interaction:

- How does this person prefer to receive information?
- What is their pace? Fast or slow?
- Do they want to be told, or do they want to figure it out themselves with my help?
- Public or private?
- How do they respond to change — with story, with logic, with assurance of why?

This is inefficient. Your brain does not like it. The payoff — in influence, trust, and actual work that gets done — is enormous.

#### Move 2: Active Listening

Most people do not listen. They wait for their turn to talk, scanning your sentences for an opening to insert their point. Active listening is the discipline of staying with the speaker until they are done, and verifying that what you received is what they sent.

The mechanics, drawn from research and clinical practice:

41. **Minimize distractions.** Phone face down. Laptop closed if possible, or at least the lid lowered. Eye contact when in person; camera on if remote.
42. **Do not plan your response while they speak.** This is the hardest part. If you catch yourself rehearsing what you will say next, you are no longer listening. Notice and return.
43. **Use silence.** Most people fill silence with the most superficial version of what they wanted to say. If you wait a beat, the second sentence is almost always more honest than the first.
44. **Paraphrase back.** “Let me make sure I have this right. You’re saying...” Then say it in their words, not yours. If you got it wrong, they will correct you. If you got it right, they will feel heard — maybe for the first time that day.
45. **Ask open-ended questions.** How and what questions, not yes/no questions. “How are you thinking about it?” “What would success look like to you?” “What would have to be true for this to work?”
46. **Notice non-verbal cues.** Tone. Posture. Pace. Hesitation. The words are sometimes the least informative part of what someone is saying. If their voice tightens when they say “I’m fine,” they are telling you something.

### A Hard Practice

In your next three meetings where you are not the most senior person, try to be the last one to speak. Not silent the whole time — just last. Listen to everyone else first.

It is harder than it sounds. The urge to jump in is strong. The information you gain by waiting is consistently worth more than the information you would have added by going early.

### Move 3: Influence Without Authority

As organizations flatten and matrix structures spread, more of the work gets done across reporting lines than within them. You increasingly need to influence people you do not manage. The traditional levers — telling, reviewing, paying — are not available. What is left is influence.

The basics of influence in EI terms:

- **Credibility first.** People are influenced by people they trust. Trust is built through reliability and competence over time. There is no shortcut.
- **Understand their goals, not yours.** If you want someone to do something, frame it in terms of what they care about, not what you care about. This is empathy applied.

- **Find legitimate alignment.** If their goals and yours genuinely do not overlap, do not pretend they do. Influence built on misrepresentation breaks the moment they figure it out.
- **Make it easy to say yes.** Pre-think the objections. Bring options instead of asks. Reduce the work required of the other person.
- **Reciprocity matters, but is not the whole thing.** Being useful to others over time creates a stock of goodwill you can draw on. It is not a contract. It is a relationship.

#### Move 4: Conflict Management

Conflict is unavoidable in any team that does real work. Conflict avoidance, not conflict, is what damages teams. The goal is not to eliminate disagreement; it is to handle disagreement well.

Practical principles, drawn from the negotiation and mediation literature:

47. **Separate the person from the problem.** Critique the work, the proposal, the behavior — not the person. “This approach has these risks” is workable. “You are reckless” is not.
48. **Focus on interests, not positions.** Positions are what people say they want. Interests are why they want it. Two people with opposing positions often have overlapping interests. The work is to surface them.
49. **Acknowledge feeling before debating facts.** “I can see this is frustrating” goes much further than “You’re wrong about the data.” People cannot hear data when they feel unheard.
50. **Pick the right time.** Hard conversations late on Friday almost never go well. Neither do hard conversations when one party is tired, hungry, or just finished a different hard conversation. Schedule for both people’s best state, not yours alone.
51. **Find areas of agreement first.** “Here’s what we both seem to agree on...” narrows the actual disagreement and creates momentum.

#### Building a Personal Board of Directors

One of the highest-leverage relationship-management moves I know is building what some people call a personal board of directors — three to five people, outside your immediate org, who will give you honest counsel about your career and your blind spots. They are not friends in the usual sense, though some will be friends. They are people who care about you and will tell you the truth.

Choose people who think differently from each other. Choose at least one who will push you on your weaknesses. Meet them quarterly or so. Be specific in what you ask for. Bring real problems. This costs almost nothing and pays out for the rest of your career.

#### This Week's Practice

### **Practice 13.1 — The Communication Match**

Pick the three people you most need to work with this quarter. For each, answer the following from memory:

- Do they prefer the answer first or the reasoning first?
- Do they prefer in-person, video, async written?
- What pace works for them?
- What do they actually care about — not at the level of “the business,” but specifically?

If you cannot answer all four for any of the three, that is your gap. The next time you meet them, the goal is to listen more than talk, and start filling in the blanks.

## Chapter 14

### Responding to Emotional Outbursts in Others

---

Most of this book has been about your own emotional regulation. But you will also, regularly, find yourself in front of someone else who is having an amygdala hijack of their own. A direct report who is in tears. A peer who is shouting. A customer who is escalating. A teenager. A spouse. The choices you make in those moments matter, and they are not obvious.

There are four broad responses, and you will use all of them in different situations. The trick is choosing which one when.

#### 1. Avoidance

Sometimes the right move is to step back. Not forever — but in this moment. If someone is mid-hijack, no real conversation is going to happen. Their cortex is offline. Anything you say will land as further provocation.

When to use it: when the other person is too activated to think, when the emotional intensity is escalating, when there is no immediate decision that has to be made.

How to do it well: “I can see this is intense. Let’s come back to this in 30 minutes / tomorrow morning / after we both have some space.” Said with warmth, not coldness. Avoidance is not abandonment. You are not walking away from the person; you are walking away from this specific moment.

When not to use it: avoiding a conflict that needs to happen, hoping it will go away. It does not.

#### 2. Smoothing Over

Sometimes you can soften the moment without resolving the substance. Acknowledging the emotion, lowering the stakes, finding a face-saving exit. “You know what, I think we both got more heated than we needed to. Let’s reset.”

When to use it: in lower-stakes conflicts, when preserving the relationship matters more than winning the point, when the other person needs an off-ramp to step back from a position they overcommitted to.

When not to use it: when there is a real issue that has to be resolved. Smoothing over a substantive problem repeatedly is how teams accumulate the kind of unaddressed tension that eventually blows up.

#### 3. Confrontation

Sometimes you have to address the behavior directly. A direct report's pattern of outbursts is hurting the team. A peer is consistently undermining you in meetings. A customer is making unreasonable demands. Smoothing it over no longer serves anyone.

Confrontation done well is calm, specific, and focused on behavior rather than character. "In the meeting just now, you cut me off three times. I want to talk about that." Not "You're always so dismissive." Specific behavior. Specific moment. Specific impact. Specific request.

When to use it: when the pattern is repeating, when the stakes are real, when avoiding it costs more than addressing it.

When not to use it: in the moment of the outburst itself. Wait for the chemistry to clear. Then confront.

#### **4. Collaboration**

The most useful response, when both parties can manage it, is to work the problem together. "We clearly disagree on this. Let's try to understand what we both actually want and see if there's a third option."

When to use it: when both parties have enough emotional regulation to engage rationally, when the relationship is durable enough to handle real discussion, when the actual problem is solvable.

How to do it: name what you are doing. "Let me try to understand your view first." Then actually understand it. Then state your view in non-blaming language. Then look for the overlap. This is the slow path and it is almost always the right one when conditions allow.

#### **The Soothing Skill**

In any of the four modes, one specific skill is high-leverage: helping another person calm down. The mechanics, drawn from clinical practice and crisis-de-escalation training:

52. Slow your own breathing first. Their nervous system will, to some degree, sync with yours. If you are calm, you give them permission to become calmer.
53. Drop the volume of your voice. Not whispering — just below normal. People will lean in and lower their own.
54. Acknowledge the feeling without endorsing the behavior. "I can see why you're upset" does not mean "I agree that yelling was the right move."
55. Use names. "Sarah, I hear you." The use of a name is a quiet reminder of personhood and connection.
56. Give them something to do. "Let's walk over to the conference room." "Let me get you a water." Physical action helps discharge the body's stress chemistry.

Notice that none of these are about logic or content. Logic does not work on a flooded brain. State first. Substance later.

## **When You Are the One Being Confronted**

The same techniques apply when someone is mid-outburst at you. Your job is to keep your own amygdala from hijacking in response. Slow breathing. Name what you are feeling silently. Buy time. “Give me a moment to think about what you’ve said.” Almost every conflict gets worse when both parties spiral. It tends to de-escalate when one of them does not.

## **This Week's Practice**

### **Practice 14.1 — The Last Outburst**

Think of the last time someone had an emotional outburst at you or in front of you. Walk it back through the four modes above. Which one did you use? Was it the right one?

If you could re-run the scene, what would you do differently? Write it down. The next time it happens — and it will — you will have a plan instead of an improvisation.

## Chapter 15

# EI in an AI World

---

A book about emotional intelligence in 2026 would be incomplete without addressing the elephant in every room: AI. Specifically, generative AI — large language models, code assistants, image generators — is automating work that we used to think of as the highest-value cognitive labor. Drafting documents. Writing code. Summarizing meetings. Analyzing data. Designing presentations. Tasks that took specialists hours can now be done in minutes by anyone with a subscription.

The natural reaction is fear. If a machine can do what I do, what is left for me? The more useful framing is to look at what AI is good at and what it is not, and ask which of your skills become more valuable in that division of labor.

### What Machines Are Good At

Generative AI excels at:

- Repetitive tasks at scale
- Analyzing structured data
- Pattern recognition across large bodies of text
- Producing first drafts in any format
- Consistent execution — it does not get tired or distracted
- Operating around the clock

Where it falls short:

- Instinctive judgment in novel situations
- Genuine emotional perception
- Context-sensitive ethical decisions
- Versatility under ambiguity
- Sensing what is true beneath what is being said

### What Humans Are Good At

Look at the list of human strengths and you will notice something. It is nearly the same list as the four dimensions of emotional intelligence. Self-awareness. Self-management. Social awareness. Relationship

management. Reading the room. Handling the conflict that the model cannot mediate. Earning the trust that a counterparty has to place in someone, eventually, to close the deal.

Far from making EI less valuable, AI raises its premium. The cognitive baseline is automated; what is left as the differentiator is the human stack.

Strengths of Humans	Strengths of Machines
Instinctive judgment	Repetitive actions at scale
Creativity from messy context	Analyzing structured data
Emotional perception	Consistent performance
Context-sensitive decisions	Tireless operation
Versatility under ambiguity	Scalability

Limitations of Humans	Limitations of Machines
Fatigue	No instinctive understanding
Scale limits	Needs context spelled out
Errors under pressure	No emotional discernment
Hates monotony	Limited flexibility without training

### The New Skill Stack

The work that survives, and grows, in an AI-enabled environment looks like this:

- 57. **Problem framing.** Knowing what to ask is now more valuable than knowing how to do. Humans frame; machines execute.
- 58. **Judgment under ambiguity.** Deciding what to do when the data is incomplete, the stakeholders disagree, and the right answer is genuinely unclear. AI is not going to do this for you any time soon.
- 59. **Trust and influence.** Closing the loop with real humans — customers, partners, employees — who will only do business with someone they trust.
- 60. **Coaching and developing others.** This is fundamentally human. It requires reading where someone is, what they need, what they are ready to hear. Machines can supplement; they cannot replace.

61. **Synthesis across messy domains.** Taking insights from places no model has connected before. Tying ethics to engineering. Tying neuroscience to leadership. The world needs more of this, not less.
62. **Continuous learning.** The half-life of specific technical skills is collapsing. The person who learns continuously — a growth mindset, in Dweck's terms — will outpace the person with the deepest current expertise five years out.

### **The Bottom Line**

If your career has been built on a depreciating expertise — a specific tool, a specific process, a specific workflow that AI can now do — the appreciating asset to invest in is your emotional intelligence. The work that does not commoditize is the work that requires reading people, building trust, navigating conflict, and making judgments that cannot be reduced to a prompt.

That is also, conveniently, the most satisfying work to do.

## Chapter 16

# Your 30/60/90-Day EI Development Plan

---

Reading is not learning. The patterns of behavior we have covered — catching your hot buttons, restructuring your thinking, listening before talking — only become real if you practice them. What follows is a 90-day plan that sequences the development logically. You can adjust the pace. You cannot really skip steps.

### Days 1–30: Self-Awareness Foundation

The goal in the first month is to see yourself more clearly. No behavior change yet — just observation.

- **Week 1:** Begin a daily 5-minute retrospective. Four lines: what went well, what would I do differently, one strong emotion and its trigger, one thing to carry into tomorrow. Do not skip days.
- **Week 2:** Map your hot buttons. Two columns: trigger and underlying belief. Aim for at least five.
- **Week 3:** Track your amygdala hijacks. Body signal, trigger, time of day. Look for the pattern at the end of the week.
- **Week 4:** Identify your top three cognitive distortions from the list in Chapter 6. Notice them in real time. You do not have to fix them yet — just name them.

### Days 31–60: Self-Management Skills

Month two is about building the skills to act on what you now see.

- **Week 5:** Begin a daily 10-minute mindfulness practice. Calm, Headspace, or a free guided meditation — the app does not matter. Consistency does.
- **Week 6:** Practice the six-second rule. Every time you feel a hijack starting, count to six before responding. Keep score: how many times did you catch it?
- **Week 7:** Run the five-column cognitive restructuring worksheet on paper at least three times this week. Once it gets boring, it has become automatic.
- **Week 8:** Audit your sleep, exercise, and caffeine. Pick the one with the worst score and improve it for the rest of the program. Self-management has a physical floor.

### Days 61–90: Social Awareness and Relationship Management

Now you turn outward. Use the foundation you have built.

- **Week 9:** In three meetings, be the last to speak. Take notes on what you learned by waiting.

- **Week 10:** Run the steelman exercise on someone you disagree with. Write out their position in their words until they would agree it is theirs.
- **Week 11:** Map the communication preferences of the three people you most need to work with. Communicate to those preferences this week, not your defaults.
- **Week 12:** Begin building your personal board of directors. Identify three people, set up the first conversation, and explain what you are asking for.

### **What to Expect**

A few honest predictions about how this will go.

You will miss days. That is normal. Pick up the next day; do not start over.

Some weeks will feel like nothing changed. That is also normal. The skill is compounding even when the daily evidence is invisible. Look back at the end of the 90 days, not the end of each week.

Some people will notice the change before you do. A spouse, a peer, a direct report. When they comment on it, take the data seriously. External feedback on your internal work is gold.

And one piece will likely surprise you. Most people, after 90 days of consistent practice, report not that they feel like a different person, but that they feel more like themselves — less reactive, less consumed by other people's emotions, more able to do the work they actually care about. The point of emotional intelligence is not to become an emotionless professional. It is to stop being run by emotions you did not choose, so you can spend more energy on the things that matter.

### **A Final Word**

Emotional intelligence is, in the end, a kind of discipline. Not the grim kind. The kind that frees you. You are not trying to suppress your humanity in service of professionalism. You are practicing the skills required to be a fully present, well-regulated, generous human being in the contexts that matter most to you. The work is internal. The benefits show up everywhere else.

Good luck. Stay in the growth mindset. And remember that the variable you can change is the one you are working on right now.

— David

## Sources and Further Reading

---

This book draws on the academic and applied literature on emotional intelligence, cognitive behavioral therapy, mindset, psychological safety, and the social psychology of power. The sources below are the reputable outside references I relied on while writing. They are also excellent starting points if you want to go deeper on any chapter.

### Foundational Books

1. Goleman, Daniel. *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*. Bantam Books, 1995.
2. Goleman, Daniel, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee. *Primal Leadership: Unleashing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*. Harvard Business Review Press, 2002.
3. Dweck, Carol S. *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. Ballantine Books, 2006.
4. Edmondson, Amy C. *The Fearless Organization: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace for Learning, Innovation, and Growth*. John Wiley & Sons, 2018.
5. Keltner, Dacher. *The Power Paradox: How We Gain and Lose Influence*. Penguin Press, 2016.
6. Kahneman, Daniel. *Thinking, Fast and Slow*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011.
7. Salovey, Peter, and John D. Mayer. "Emotional Intelligence." *Imagination, Cognition and Personality* 9, no. 3 (1990): 185–211.

### Peer-Reviewed and Academic Sources

8. Edmondson, Amy C. "Psychological Safety and Learning Behavior in Work Teams." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (1999): 350–383. Available at [https://web.mit.edu/curhan/www/docs/Articles/15341\\_Readings/Group\\_Performance/Edmondson%20Psychological%20safety.pdf](https://web.mit.edu/curhan/www/docs/Articles/15341_Readings/Group_Performance/Edmondson%20Psychological%20safety.pdf)
9. Goleman, Daniel. "Leadership That Gets Results." *Harvard Business Review* (March–April 2000): 78–93.
10. Goleman, Daniel, and Richard Boyatzis. "Emotional Intelligence Has 12 Elements. Which Do You Need to Work On?" *Harvard Business Review*, February 6, 2017. <https://hbr.org/2017/02/emotional-intelligence-has-12-elements-which-do-you-need-to-work-on>
11. Claro, S., D. Paunesku, and C. Dweck. "Growth Mindset Tempers the Effects of Poverty on Academic Achievement." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 113, no. 31 (2016): 8664–8668.
12. Mai Thi Dung. "The Application of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in Workplace Settings." *International Journal of Scientific Research and Management* 13, no. 12 (December 2025). <https://ijsrm.net/index.php/ijsrm/article/view/6830/6830>
13. Hofmann, S. G., and J. A. J. Smits. *Cognitive–Behavioral Therapy for Adult Anxiety Disorders*. Multiple references on CBT effectiveness as cited in NIH Public Health Service publications. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8489050/>

14. Imamura, Kotaro, et al. "A Web-Based Training Program Using Cognitive Behavioral Therapy to Alleviate Psychological Distress Among Employees: Randomized Controlled Pilot Trial." *JMIR Research Protocols*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4275471/>
15. Montag, C., and J. Panksepp. "Personality Neuroscience: Why It Is of Importance to Consider Primary Emotional Systems." In *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences*, edited by V. Zeigler-Hill and T. K. Shackelford. Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag.

## Reputable Web Sources

16. Daniel Goleman Emotional Intelligence Courses. "EI Overview: The Four Domains and Twelve Competencies." <https://danielgolemanemotionalintelligence.com/ei-overview-the-four-domains-and-twelve-competencies/>
17. Big Think. "Emotional Intelligence: The 4 Domains of High Performance." Interview with Daniel Goleman. <https://bigthink.com/series/the-big-think-interview/daniel-goleman-emotional-intelligence-538541/>
18. Harvard Business School Working Knowledge. "Four Steps to Building the Psychological Safety That High-Performing Teams Need Today." <https://www.library.hbs.edu/working-knowledge/four-steps-to-build-the-psychological-safety-that-high-performing-teams-need-today>
19. Edmondson, Amy C. "Psychological Safety." Personal site, with resources and the Fearless Organization Scan. <https://amycedmondson.com/psychological-safety/>
20. Greater Good Science Center, UC Berkeley. Keltner, Dacher. "The Power Paradox." [https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/power\\_paradox](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/power_paradox)
21. Berkeley Wellness. "How Power Corrupts Us: An Interview with UC Berkeley's Dacher Keltner, PhD." <https://www.berkeleywellness.com/healthy-mind/mood/article/how-power-corrupts-us>
22. Othering & Belonging Institute, UC Berkeley. "How Power Makes People Selfish." <https://belonging.berkeley.edu/uc-berkeley-professor-dacher-keltner-explains-how-power-makes-people-selfish>
23. NPR Hidden Brain. "The Perils of Power." Transcript at <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/492305430>
24. Healthline. "Amygdala Hijack: What It Is, Why It Happens & How to Make It Stop." <https://www.healthline.com/health/stress/amygdala-hijack>
25. Simply Psychology. "Amygdala Hijack: How It Works, Signs, & How To Cope." <https://www.simplypsychology.org/amygdala-hijack.html>
26. MasterClass. "Amygdala Hijack: How to Prevent an Amygdala Hijack." <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/amygdala-hijack>
27. Wikipedia. "Amygdala Hijack." [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amygdala\\_hijack](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amygdala_hijack)
28. Harrison Riedel Foundation. "When Emotions Take Over: Understanding the Amygdala Hijack." <https://www.harrisonriedelfoundation.com/when-emotions-take-over/>
29. Positive Psychology. "Cognitive Distortions: 15 Examples & Worksheets." <https://positivepsychology.com/cognitive-distortions/>
30. Therapist Aid. "Cognitive Distortions." <https://www.therapistaid.com/therapy-worksheet/cognitive-distortions>

31. Calm Blog. "11 Cognitive Distortions & How to Reframe Negative Thinking."  
<https://www.calm.com/blog/cognitive-distortions>
32. Center for Creative Leadership. "The Stories We Tell: Why Cognitive Distortions Matter for Leaders."  
<https://cclinnovation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/thestorieswetell.pdf>
33. Growth Engineering. "Dweck's Mindset Theory: How to Develop a Growth Mindset."  
<https://www.growthengineering.co.uk/growth-mindset/>
34. OECD. "Growth Mind-Set." Future of Education and Skills Learning Compass.  
<https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/topics/policy-issues/future-of-education-and-skills/learning-compass-constructs/GrowthMindset.pdf>
35. Babson Thought & Action. "Empathy and Active Listening Skills: Here's How to Do Them Better."  
<https://entrepreneurship.babson.edu/empathy-and-active-listening/>
36. Schulich Executive Education. "Active Listening Skills for Leaders."  
<https://execed.schulich.yorku.ca/news/active-listening-skills-for-leaders-how-to-communicate-with-clarity-empathy-and-impact/>
37. Asana. "Effective Active Listening: Examples, Techniques & Exercises."  
<https://asana.com/resources/active-listening>
38. Washington State University Human Resource Services. "Empathy and Active Listening — Essential Skills for the Future of Work." <https://hrs.wsu.edu/empathy-and-active-listening-essential-skills-for-the-future-of-work/>
39. Positive Psychology. "Active Listening: The Art of Empathetic Conversation."  
<https://positivepsychology.com/active-listening/>
40. Ohio State 4-H. "Daniel Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Quadrant."  
<https://ohio4h.org/sites/ohio4h/files/imce/Emotional%20Intelligence%20Background.pdf>
41. The Behaviour Institute. "CBT in the Workplace." <https://thebehaviourinstitute.com/cbt-in-the-workplace/>
42. Disruptive Leadership Institute. "Goleman's Emotional & Social Intelligence (ESI) Framework."  
[https://www.disruptiveleadership.institute/goleman\\_emotional\\_social\\_intelligence/](https://www.disruptiveleadership.institute/goleman_emotional_social_intelligence/)