

# How do we start to practise?

*“The teaching of Socrates’, “know thyself”, is the cornerstone of Emotional Intelligence”*

*Daniel Goleman*

Following the framework established by David McClelland and Daniel Goleman, all the competences included in the umbrella term, Emotional Intelligence, are based on the first block: self-knowledge or self-awareness.

Self-knowledge increases self-confidence and this increases leadership capacity. Good leadership means being aware of our emotions, strengths, values, aspirations and being able to reflect and learn from each experience. Knowing who we are gives us an authentic security that generates confidence in other people.

As Richard Boyatzis points out in his book, *Becoming a Resonant Leader*, “Leadership is a conscious process, which begins with clarity about one’s personal vision and hopes for the future”. It is about having as dispassionate and accurate an assessment of oneself as possible.

Let’s start by analysing our values with a simple exercise:

**Think of someone from your past who had a special influence on you, who helped and supported you, in your personal and/or professional life. It could be a boss from years ago, a teacher or a mentor. What do you think were their main strengths and values? How did they act? What were their attitudes? How did they make you feel? What atmosphere did they create?**

I suggest you reflect on the result. The values that appeared visibly or behind the sentences you have written in this exercise provide information about what is important to you. Values are based on beliefs that influence how we interpret reality, determine our attitudes towards

other people and, in general, influence our behaviour.

The values that you listed may be cooperation, authority, responsibility, independence, commitment, personal development, family, authenticity,...

You can rank these values; putting the one you consider most important to you now or would like to be in the future at the top of the list.

The next exercise is without a pen and paper. Sit on a chair, with your feet flat on the floor, legs slightly apart, back straight, arms resting in your lap or on your thighs. Close your eyes and take three deep breaths. Now, let your body decide the rhythm and intensity of your breathing. Stay still for a few minutes observing your breathing. Now bring to mind a moment in your professional life when you felt especially satisfied with your work, proud and maybe even surprised by the result. Recall the experience in detail.

**What do you think was your contribution to making that work go so well? What skills did you put into practice? How did you feel about it?**

One of the most difficult tasks at work is managing your own energy. Achieving that internal state of flow, when there is total focus on the task in hand, requires putting your skills into practice; challenging them, with considerable self-knowledge and self-management. This is so you can replicate that extraordinary result as well as that moment of extreme well-being.

Finally, I suggest you establish your vision. We are often very clear about what we do NOT want, but not so clear about what we DO want to achieve. The usefulness of this exercise increases with the level of detail reached. Therefore, I recommend you dedicate 15-20 minutes a day to this for 2 or 3 weeks.

**Five years have passed. Everything has been going great. Draw, write, describing your ideal situation in life and at work. “I work at ... my tasks consist of... I interact/collaborate with... I earn... I have... Every day I dedicate time to... At least once a year I...”**

Creativity, the ability to dream and imagine are essential in this exercise. Let your feet come off the ground as much as you can!