



Rethinking Coaching and Emotions with New Artificial Intelligence

Energizing Clients with Cutting-Edge, Artificially
Intelligent Measurement of Sentiment

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With a foreword by
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Foreword

At the time this book is written we are in the midst of two significant transitions with an additional one looming in the wings. The first being the existential threat of human-induced climate change, and the second, akin to the industrial revolution, the advent of artificial intelligence in our everyday lives. The third possible significant transition is navigation through the societal limits of capitalism. Drs. Barney and Madigan are pioneers in the development and deployment of artificial intelligence, and more specifically in the use of artificial intelligence in individual assessment. The fruits of their labor will allow coaches to work more efficiently and put their skills to use more effectively. Tools such as the one they describe so well in this book will become commonplace in the next 5 to 10 years.

The authors provide an excellent overview of the need and use for emotions in the workplace. As they so well point out, use of emotion will always exist in our interaction with others. For we are indeed mammals—and perhaps more importantly, tribal creatures. Our tribal nature has likely been key to our survival as a species, and emotions have played a large part in that. In-group and out-group reactivity likely drives much of our behavior, and most of this is emotion-based. Some is conscious and some is unconscious.

In this book, the authors provide compelling reasons for coaches to be interested in clients' emotions and explain how simple, non-invasive intelligent software will ease that burden from coaches, allowing them to spend more time at what they do best—listening to clients and evoking new awareness in them.

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Authors' Note

With news that silicon valley social media moderators are suffering from the horrors of screening traumatic content, the role of emotions at work is big news. While pathological emotions are out of scope for workplace coaches, emotions have always been a part of coaching because they're a part of learning.

In the last two decades, skills related to emotions have become popular. The “emotional intelligence” movement promoted by the journalist Daniel Goleman was a major impetus for many coaches to address feelings in their work.

But too often in the business world, fads and fashion are fool's gold. Fashionable workplace movements like emotional intelligence often oversell their benefits with extraordinary claims like “emotional intelligence is more important than cognitive ability,” even when these assertions are unsupported by scientific evidence.

In this book, we sort the wheat from the chaff and celebrate new science and artificially intelligent technology that can better help extend coaches' relationships into clients' daily lives. We believe you'll find these innovations exciting and useful to take coaching to a new level.



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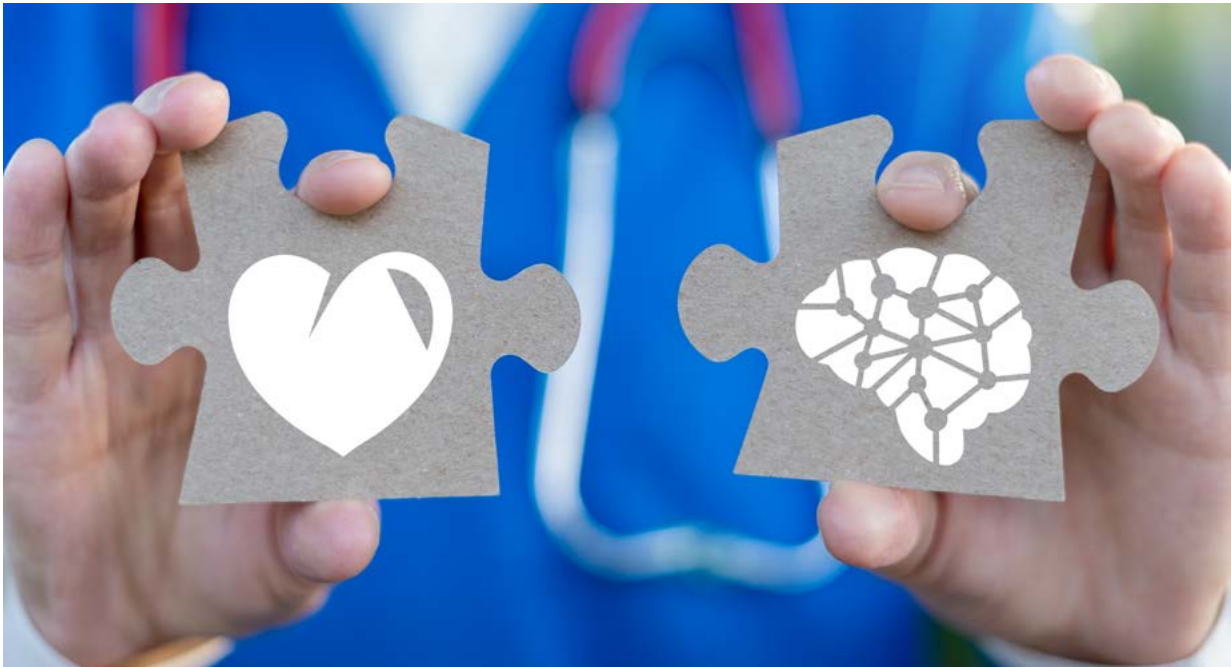


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¹<https://www.cnet.com/news/fight-against-child-sexual-abuse-images-requires-smarter-tech-google-expert-says/>

Chapter 1:

How are Emotions, Work, and Learning Connected?



The ancient Greek philosopher Plato wasn't as smart as he thought. Well, that's not fair. He was probably pretty smart, but he did get one thing about human nature wrong.

Thousands of years ago, around 370 BC, Plato likened the human mind to a charioteer trying to control two winged horses. The chariot's driver represents the rational mind in this allegory. It strives to control the flying beasts and keep the chariot from crashing down to Earth. One of the horses is noble, well behaved, and tries to climb to the heavens so that it can sneak a peek at great truths. So no problem there. The other horse, though, is unruly and represents more base impulses and emotions. It's constantly trying to pull the chariot earthward, away from the transcendent and ideal.

This allegory paints the enduring picture that we're probably all familiar with: the struggle between reason and emotion. Our irrational, churning emotions are something to be mastered with logic, Plato said. It's an appealing ideal asserted every time we think we're being pretty smart and thoughtful. When faced with a challenge or a decision, we tend to

believe we should set aside emotions think objectively about our situation until the work is done.

Or, at least that's what we'd like to think.

Feeling emotions is part of what it means to live and learn.² Humans are emotional creatures whether we're at work, play, or home. Emotions are core to making sense of the world and to learning because we have evolved them to help us cope and adapt. What's more, emotions can even be extremely useful in the workplace, where they aren't often thought of as desirable. Sure, we might seethe in frustration, anger, or disappointment when we have a conflict with our boss, lose a customer, or make a mistake. But we also feel electrified when we get promoted, solve a difficult problem, or receive deserved praise. We feel proud when we help co-workers and we are sometimes motivated to do our best work by anxiety or a desire to avoid embarrassment.

And, of course, there are the emotions of others to contend with. Clients, managers, co-workers, and customers all have and share emotions that impact how we work. It's important to recognize those emotions, figure out how to best navigate them, and help others work through them.

Which is all to say that emotions are becoming more important in the workplace, not less.



Workplaces Are Full of Emotion

More than 30 years ago, leadership experts Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus inspired the US Army to describe the modern world as Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous, or "VUCA" for short.³ VUCA is frequently the reality of today's work where leaders and other employees swim in an endless and bewildering

sea of disruptive technology, changing global power structures, and difficult to predict marketplaces. Many forms of competition and technology - notably artificial intelligence, blockchain, internet of things, and nanotechnology - all portend major upheavals to white-collar jobs for the first time in history. While there are basic emotions involved in this change, it also leaves more service sector jobs for people, where feelings can be even more important than in manufacturing.

But different people may react to each element of VUCA in their own ways depending on their own circumstances. A highly ambitious leader with a great deal of optimism, creativity,

²Hawkins, J.A. (2017). Feelings and Emotion-Based Learning: A new theory. Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN 978-3-319-66056-1

³For example, see <http://usawc.libanswers.com/faq/84869>

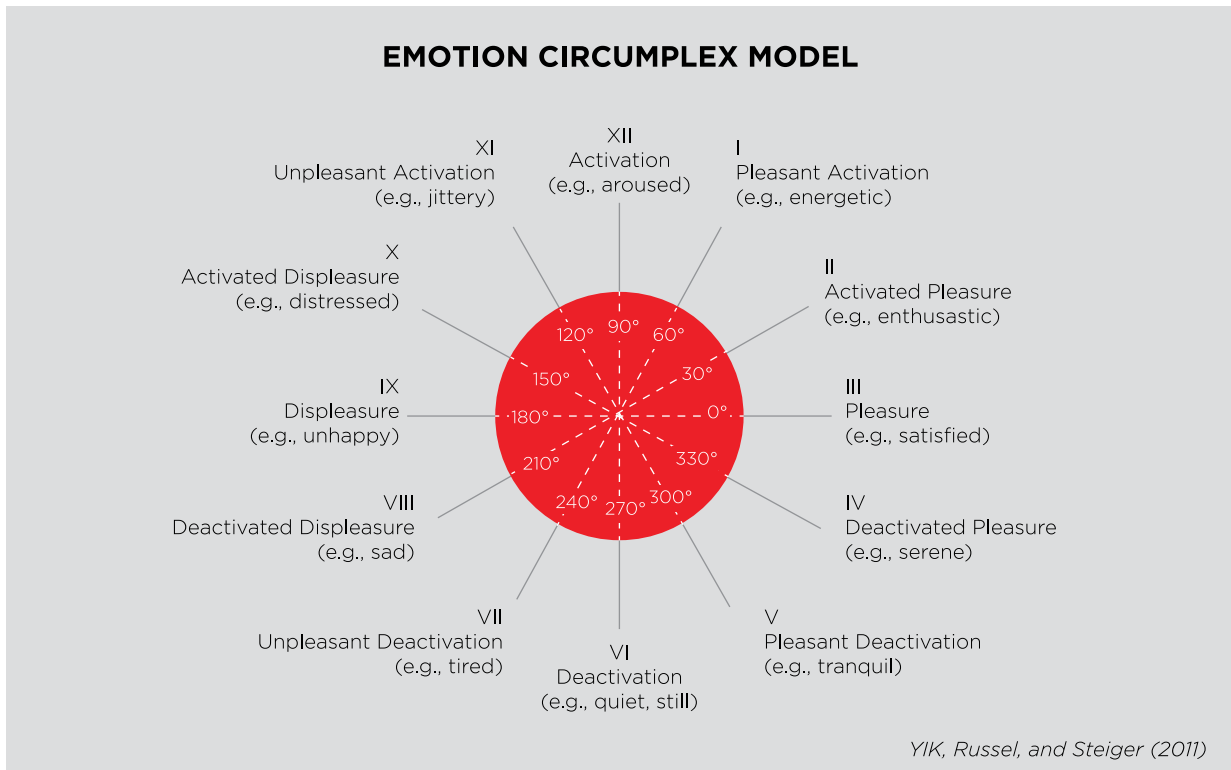
and intelligence might see VUCA situations as fascinating, exciting problems to solve. Conversely, we might expect that someone who just became a CFO as an expatriate in a failing business would feel frustration, fear, and anger because her work is so challenging.

Even in more sedate settings largely free of VUCA, people who are trying to develop new skills or adapt to new challenges should experience a wide range of emotions. People should expect to feel frustrated or annoyed when they make the same mistake multiple times, even on difficult tasks. This is because they won't grow if they don't stretch themselves on difficult tasks. Thus, some negative emotions are unavoidable.

Conversely, stretching oneself and succeeding on a new, difficult task feels like a real victory. Maybe all the frustration that preceded that victory makes things more intense and will motivate the person to try learning even more. This sort of ongoing workplace learning is not optional - it's the price of becoming proficient enough to get and keep a job. Leaders who fail to continuously learn will have drastically worse employment prospects in an era where AI is taking over tasks as complex as legal contract review, drug discovery, and truck driving. This can lead to a lot of different emotions that need to be recognized, understood, and managed.

The Emotion Circumplex Model

One excellent framework for understanding emotions puts them into a circle, or "circumplex." The horizontal, or x-axis, depicts the valence of the emotion - the degree to which a feeling is pleasant or unpleasant. The vertical, or y-axis, represents the activation level of the same sentiment, from deactivated to activated. Think of it as how intense the emotion is. Figure 1 plots all human emotions into this circumplex:



This circle organizes the mixture of emotions that someone might feel in a given day. Ideally, someone working to develop themselves would feel emotions as they're trying to practice in an intentional and effortful way. If they're actively trying to stretch themselves to do appropriately developmental tasks, they'll make some mistakes. They might get new insights into how to do it better the next time. They might have small victories. The best learning happens when people experience an active emotional "mix" of both positive and negative emotions. This active combination of emotions indicates that they are deeply engaged in their development and not ruminating or asleep at the wheel, peacefully content with the status quo.

Emotions, Learning, and Work

Emotions, however, are not only unavoidable in the workplace, they are also important to learning, sense-making, and motivation. Like the chariot driver in Plato's allegory, we must learn to purposefully direct our emotions and manage them to our benefit.

We all remember when we tried to learn how to ride a bicycle. At first, it was hard to even balance on two wheels. It was scary and made us unsure of ourselves. We worried about falling off the curb, skinning our knee, and scratching the bike. And probably did fail more than a few times. But then we figured out how to push the pedal, keep the bike upright, and build momentum. Once we got the hang of balancing and peddling, we might have frantically tried to steer back and forth and sustain our forward progress. Each failure brought us a little improvement, and each baby step felt good. The first time we successfully went down a big hill, it was thrilling and we couldn't wait to do it again. This combination of feelings is the emotional mix typical to any learning experience.

To get better at anything requires deliberate, concerted, and focused practice rather than just passively experiencing new tasks. That's why we can't just watch videos, television, or



YouTube channels to develop to our full potential. We also cannot grow if we perform tasks thoughtlessly. Concerted practice involves effortful meta-cognition – that is, thinking about how you're doing the task and what you're learning from it while you do it. If you practice well, you'll notice where you're improving, where you're making mistakes, and what you might do differently to make things go better the next time. The key is to process both the emotions you're feeling and the performance-related feedback you're getting so that you can organize both into what you already know. This deep

processing is key to making these experiences become your teachers, and realize your goals.

Emotional Labor

Emotional labor is another area where emotions become important to the workplace. The term refers to tasks that require the use of emotions to be proficient on a job. Actresses, CEOs, and Flight Attendants all have to manage their own emotions, but sometimes they also deal with the emotional behaviors of others in order to be effective.

The job of hospice nurse, for instance, involves caring for patients who are near death and simultaneously helping their families. The challenge of acting with dignity, having compassion for others, and coping with death and the resulting grief can be tremendously taxing. But this kind of labor shows up in all kinds of jobs. Waiting tables also requires emotional labor, for example. Even when a waitperson is not feeling great, they have to smile and appear happy. And if the kitchen makes a mistake it wasn't the food server's fault, but they have to apologize and appease angry or displeased customers or else it could affect their tip.

While Artificial Intelligence is already taking over jobs that have been done by lawyers, truck drivers, and personal assistants, it can't take over all the emotion-related work needed. Robots aren't appropriate, and won't anytime soon be able to take on jobs that require humans to use and manage emotions appropriately. For example, just in the healthcare industry, no AI or robot can care for



newborns, perform hospice care, or triage in emergency medicine in an empathic way. Senior leaders of all organizations have to manage their own, and others emotions, and their role cannot simply be automated with Machine Learning algorithms anytime soon.

Emotional Leadership and Derailers

Those in senior leadership positions deal with intense emotions more than many other roles, especially when they do their job well. This is because effective leadership involves inspiring followers and getting them excited enough about the greater good to set aside their individual preferences. The skill of inspirational oration, or charisma, is a crucial way that transformational leaders transmit the emotions required for the team to achieve their goals. If we all repressed our emotions at work, there would be no charismatic leadership.



Great leaders also ignite “emotional contagion” that serves to motivate and unite others toward shared identities and coordination. The team should feel commitment, enthusiasm, and resolve to chew through the painful brick walls that inevitably get in the way of their goals. Because the job of a transformational leader is tough, many brilliant, creative, and technically proficient leaders end up derailing because

they don’t behave appropriately with their peers or subordinates. Derailing executives may become aggressive or deflated in highly stressful, bet-the-company types of situations that require intestinal fortitude, sensitivity to a variety of stakeholders preferences, and the ability to persevere in the face of that adversity. Similarly, senior leaders need to manage inappropriate emotions and behaviors in their teams in order to achieve their goals and ensure that a diverse range of people in the organization feel welcome.

Chapter 2:

Emotional Skills



Emotional intelligence is an old idea that came back into fashion when science journalist Daniel Goleman released his 1995 New York Times bestseller, *Emotional Intelligence*. But before that, John Dewey called the concept “Social Intelligence,” and researchers such as eminent psychologist Edward Thorndike studied it until the 1950s when scientists felt it was typically defined and measured poorly. The idea eventually made a comeback, thanks mostly to Goleman’s popularization of work by Peter Salovey & John Mayer in 1990. But like the pet rock fad from the 1970s, just because a business idea is popular doesn’t mean it is useful. When someone makes extraordinary claims that aren’t accompanied by extraordinary evidence, we should be skeptical. It begs the question: was Goleman’s revival of the concept supported by any substantive new science that overcame the 100 year old issues that had dogged the idea up until then?

The 1990s definition of Emotional Intelligence is a set of three skills including 1) the capacity to monitor one’s own feelings and the feelings of others 2) to identify and differentiate different emotions and 3) to use emotional information to guide one’s thinking and actions.⁴ Today, as we’ll see in a moment, the research suggests there are four major elements to emotional skills, and they’re actually situated in a broader constellation of attributes about people, rather than just a simple measure of “Emotional Quotient” (EQ).

⁴Salovey, P., & Mayer, J.D. (1990). *Emotional Intelligence: Imagination, Cognition and Personality*, 9, 185-211. DOI: 10.2190/DUGG-P24E-52WK-6CDG



Single Ability vs. Mixed Models

Since the 1990s, researchers have gravitated toward two different models. The first of these is the ability model, which suggests that emotional information processing is a particular form of mental intelligence. These are called “ability models” because they treat dealing with emotions as part of intelligence and mentally solving problems that involve emotions. The other set of approaches are called mixed models because they combine a cornucopia of dimensions – cognition, skill, affect, identity, and personality – into their version of “emotional intelligence.”

So which model is correct? Is emotion really part of cognition, or is being effective with emotions much more

multifaceted? Meta-analyses that combine many different individual studies can help us answer that question. Three such meta-analyses, for example, have found that ability models fit better with longstanding models of personality and cognitive ability, and that such models are consistent with other literature about emotions from counseling psychology, psychiatry, and neuroscience. There is also some emerging new research suggesting that the ability type of emotional intelligence is a subset of overall general intelligence, alongside more traditional cognitive abilities such as fluid intelligence, crystallized intelligence, quantitative reasoning, visual processing, and memory. It appears that mixed models have less support because they’re typically not as careful about separating what is cognitive or personality from what is emotional, and the most holistic emotion models look at each component, and how they combine to affect workplace behavior.

Emotional Skills

Fundamentally, the latest research suggests that emotions are relevant to cognition and are better conceptualized as skills, proficiencies, or competencies that are affected by personality and cognitive ability. The four major skills of emotion include⁵:

Emotion Perception: The ability to identify emotions in one’s self and others, as well as the emotion present in things like art, music, and stories. Noticing feelings is required before any understanding, regulation, or management can take place.

Emotion Understanding: The comprehension of how emotions evolve, how they are

⁵Schlegel, K., & Mortillaro, M. (2018, October). The Geneva Emotional Competence Test (GECe): An ability Measure of Workplace Emotional Intelligence. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 104(4), 1-22. DOI: 10.1037/apl0000365

different, and what emotion is most appropriate for a given context. Understanding sentiment involves creating and refining mental models of what emotions mean, and what emotions are appropriate in different social and cross-cultural situations. These mental models are a form of knowledge and include information about team, cultural, or social norms.

Emotion Self-Regulation: The effortful, conscious regulation of one’s own emotions to enhance effectiveness or development. This involves using different approaches to a person’s “self-talk,” including reappraising situations and distracting oneself from some feelings that might be inappropriate, unhelpful, or even damaging. It can also involve, to a limited degree, the temporary suppression of emotions when showing them could be damaging or inappropriate. However, note that suppression tends to be stressful, taxing, and ineffective when used too much.



Emotion Leadership: Influencing the emotions or the emotional behaviors of others. Great individual contributors and managers provide the emotional support of colleagues and subordinates. Whether or not they’re the “boss,” effective emotional leaders both praise others for their accomplishments and/or constructively address conflict in a team.

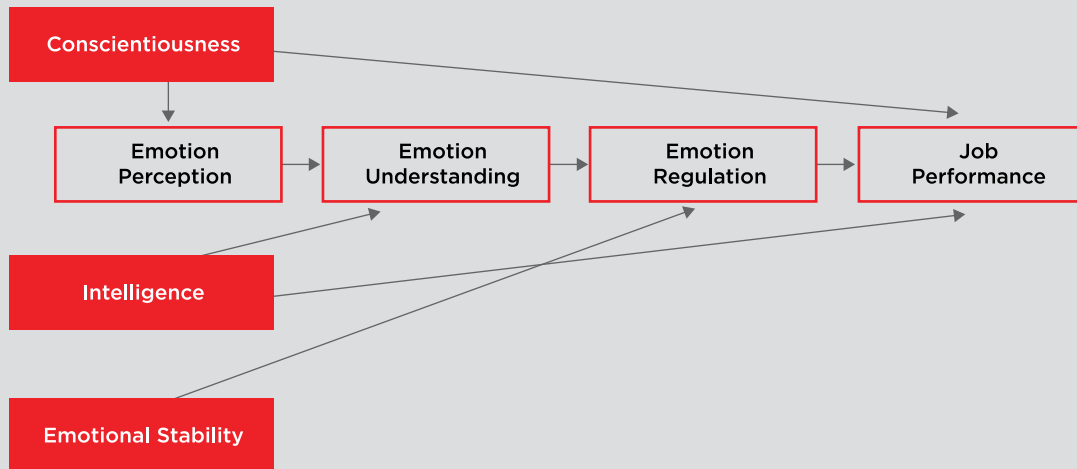
Improvement

A key insight here is that these are areas where people can learn how to improve with the right kind of practice and coaching. Further, meta-analyses have shown that coaching these skills is substantially more powerful when combined with an understanding of personality and cognitive ability. Figure 2 below shows an overview of how personality and cognitive ability are related to these four emotional skills, how the emotional skills are related to each other, and how it all drives job performance in jobs like leadership where dealing appropriately with emotions is important to success.

⁷ Antonakis, J. (2015, March). Emotional Intelligence: The hype, the hope, the evidence. Emotion Researcher. <http://emotionresearcher.com/emotional-intelligence-the-hype-the-hope-the-evidence/>

⁸ Credé, M., Tynan, M. C., & Harms, P. D. (2017). Much ado about grit: A meta-analytic synthesis of the grit literature. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 113(3), 492.

Table 2: Intelligence, Personality and Emotional Skills



Adapted from Joseph and Newman (2010)⁶

Conscientiousness & Emotions

First, let's review the implications of conscientiousness on a person's ability to perceive emotions shown in Figure 2. Conscientious people are very prudent, they love details, and they tend to be more self-conscious. Because they're more likely to feel guilt or shame if they make a mistake or break a promise, conscientious employees and leaders are more vigilant about emotions in the workplace. They try to avoid damaging relationships or hurting their reputation. Conscientious people are also better at controlling their impulses, so they tend to be more geared toward using their emotional "radar" to make sure they're reading the emotional situation correctly. Multiple meta-analyses have shown that multisource, 360-degree surveys, are the best way to measure conscientiousness^{7,8,9} to give the coach and client the most confidence about how high or low a client is at the beginning of an engagement and whether there is enough precision to notice any improvements at the end. When a coach has a good measure of a client's conscientiousness, it can be useful for the coach to know if that client is likely already going to be good at emotion perception, or whether that's an area that might need work.

⁶ Adapted from Joseph, D.L., & Newman, D.A. (2010). Emotional Intelligence: An integrative meta-analysis and cascading model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 95, 54-78. DOI: 10.1037/a0017286

⁷ Connolly, B.S., & Ones, D.S. (2010, November). An Other Perspective on Personality: Meta-Analytic integration of observer's accuracy and predictive validity. *Psychological Bulletin*, 136(6), 1092-1122.

⁸ Oh, I-S., & Berry, C.M. (2009). The Five-Factor Model of Personality and Managerial Performance: Validity gains through the use of 360 degree performance ratings. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 94(6), 1498-1513.

⁹ Oh, I-S., Wang, G., & Mount, M.K. (2011). Validity of Observer Ratings of the Five-Factor Model of Personality Traits: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(4) 762-773.

General Mental Ability & Emotions

Second, Figure 2 also shows how traditional mental intelligence, often called cognitive ability, predicts a person's ability to understand emotions. Emotion understanding is a type of knowledge, and mental capacity relates to a person's ability to learn, integrate information into what they already know, and process information quickly. When a coach has a smart client, that client might already have learned about emotions and the coach may not need to support them on that topic. Alternatively, if the astute client is early in their career, it may be easier for such a client to learn about emotions and what is appropriate in different situations for themselves and others around them.

Adjustment & Emotions

Third, Figure 2 also shows how emotional stability, a person's capacity to handle stress, relates to their ability to self-regulate. People high in adjustment weather daily stressors very well and even stand up to the business equivalent of machine-gun fire. People low in adjustment try very hard to regulate their negative emotions because so many things annoy, stress, or otherwise displease them.



Paradoxically, even though they spend more effort on emotion regulation, employees who are low in adjustment are generally less successful at handling stress. These types of clients may try to “surface act” or pretend to be coping. Their facial expression, for example, may be put on and not reflect how awful they really feel. This kind of behavior can be exhausting and even damaging in the long run. Coaches who have clients that are lower in adjustment may need to elevate their emotional labor to help clients redirect their negative emotions into looking at the silver lining among the dark clouds. This can involve asking questions about what the client has learned, or what has gone better this time.

Chapter 3:

Coaching and Emotions



Now we come to the discussion of how coaches can best take emotions into account when helping clients meet their development goals. If you are a coach working with a client, this may represent an entirely new world and set of opportunities for you. But given everything discussed so far, you should realize how much value a coach can add by being aware of and actively including workplace emotions in a leader development engagement. And at the same time, you should realize that clients may reject a coach if they don't feel understood, empathized with, and remain hopeful that the engagement could pay off.

The good news is that there's a lot known about what you as a coach can do and skills you should develop to take workplace emotions into account.

Emotion Skills Coaches Should Possess

Before we get to what coaches can do, let's talk about some emotion-related skills that all coaches should have and strive to develop. As a baseline, coaches should also possess knowledge and skill in each of the four phases of the emotional skill process discussed in the previous chapter, but with a slant towards using these skills to help others:

Emotion Perception

This is the ability to recognize emotions in coaching clients, including when they've made a bit of progress that is praiseworthy and when they are ruminating or wallowing in a setback. Coaches should be able to help them climb out of negativity holes with questions about what they could do differently next time and what parts might have gone well. Similarly, if the client is too positive, they may miss chances to learn. Coaches should ask overly positive clients questions that probe about what could have gone better, or whether others might have seen opportunities for improvement to make sure the client is processing all they can from each experience and turning overlooked lemons into lemonade.

Emotion Understanding

Coaches need to know that clients should ideally be applying the coaching so that they experience a mix of positive and negative emotions. If the client is also working on emotions as his or her goal of the coaching, then they also may need coaching on what is appropriate (or not) for the client to display in different situations and help clients better cope effectively.



Emotion Self-Regulation

A coach's job requires dealing with both tense situations like meeting a combative executive and helping clients celebrate progress to maintain motivation to stay on course to achieve the goals. Coaching involves a form of emotional labor to make sure a coach is "showing up" in a live session with appropriate body posture, eye contact, facial expressions, intonation, and diction. Coaches need to maintain appropriate composure during times of stress or conflict, and respond appropriately to meet the needs of their clients.

Emotion Management

Leaders at all levels have a role in creating a proper workplace climate with appropriate emotions in the life cycle of an organization or employee. What might not be so obvious is that even individual contributors have a role to play in making sure others get recognized for their successes and supporting any co-workers who might be experiencing inappropriate emotions from others (e.g., abuse). Managing workplace emotions is a key component in creating an inclusive work environment where diverse types of people and skills can collaborate effectively. Consequently, coaches should be prepared to help individual contributor clients influence the emotions of others at work as well.

Helping Clients With Emotions

A coach's core job is to help their client achieve goals. In part, this involves supporting the clients' ability to process and integrate emotions and learning, plus potentially helping them change counter-productive emotional processing. Coaches may also need to assist clients in repairing relationships damaged from historically ineffective emotional skills. There are many things that coaches can do to help their clients deal with and leverage emotions in the service of their development goals. Some of these things should be done before the coaching engagement even begins. Let's review some of the most important and impactful responsibilities.



Setting Expectations Around Emotions

Because learning and practicing new skills can involve strenuous, effortful, stressful, and repetitive activities undertaken for extended periods of isolation while away from the coach, it is important that coaches systematically set expectations at the outset about what emotions are a normal part of such development. The very best coaches emphasize proactive expectation setting before the engagement begins, particularly when coaching those who are derailing

because they're unaware of their anxiety and blind to the consequences of their actions. Specifically, coaches should prepare their clients to experience a mix of negative and positive emotions when they're practicing in an effortful and deliberate way. And understand what it may mean if they are not experiencing such emotions.

Similarly, coaches need to watch out for emotion that is not a healthy mix of both positive and negative sentiment. If the sentiments expressed in communication with the coach are uniformly neutral, it suggests the client may be censoring the information (perhaps because they don't trust that communications with the coach are private), or that they're not practicing on hard enough tasks with enough effort to experience both success and failure. On the other hand, if the emotion is too positive, the client may be practicing behaviors that are too easy or have already been mastered, which isn't very developmental. Finally, if the emotions expressed by the client are uniformly negative, it suggests that the client is not stepping back and seeing the silver lining among the development clouds so that they can learn from them. Influencing clients to share this level of detail about what they're feeling can help you intervene with emotional support or other forms of aid.

Monitoring Energy Levels

Similarly, coaches also need to monitor the energy levels of their clients' emotional states. Deliberate, effortful practice involves active energy put into learning from experience, with a powerful combination of both positive and negative emotions expressed. Passive or

neutral emotions about feeling lethargic, bored, or disconnected suggest that something is wrong. It could be that the client is not putting forward enough energy to trigger the kinds of experiences that would be both emotional and developmental. Also, inactive emotions may suggest that the client is just not practicing at all. Finally, it could be that the client is practicing well, but they're just not sharing enough with you. If this is the case, then coaches need to set expectations and create opportunities for such sharing.

This can be difficult, but fortunately technologies exist and more are emerging that will make monitoring energy levels easy and accurate. Having clients write in online journals that are easily shared with coaches and having artificial intelligence monitor and flag those journal entries for indicators of emotional states are both realities that are discussed later in this book.

Self-Regulation of Emotions

Once expectations for the types and intensities of emotional experiences are set, coaches can help clients develop skills around self-regulation of emotions as needed. With self-regulation, many strategies have been shown to help people express and experience emotions appropriately. It can also help to teach the client how to become aware of their emotions in a mindful and non-judgmental way. The meta-analyses suggest that the best methods for helping clients regulate their own emotions include distraction, reappraisal, avoiding suppression, and flexibility.¹⁰



Avoiding Suppression

Clients who try to hide how they're feeling expend a great deal of energy to do so, which can be detrimental to their well-being and have other physiological downsides. Trying to erase the thoughts that lead to emotions, or the sentiments themselves, is ineffective and destructive in the long run. Instead, clients should deal with those emotions in one of the ways described below.

Distraction

When a client is struggling with highly negative emotions that are making it hard for them to learn or cope, they can actively think about something positive or unrelated to help redirect their attention.

¹⁰ Webb, T.L., Miles, E., & Sheeran, P. (2012). Dealing With Feeling: A meta-analysis of the effectiveness of strategies derived from the process model of emotion regulation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 138(4) 775-808. DOI: 10.1037/a0027600

Reappraisal

Clients can also work on re-interpreting what an emotion could mean or where it is coming from. This could involve reframing it as an emotion that is normal for the current situation, and not evaluating oneself for experiencing emotions out of one's control. Another reappraisal can be to have a client commit to ask themselves, "What can I learn from this emotion?" the next time they experience it. Alternatively, they can reinterpret the feeling and ask themselves "What if a different situation triggered different emotions in me?" Finally, clients could also take the perspective of someone they respect such as by asking themselves for example, "What would my mentor say about this situation and how would she react?"



Flexibility

Evidence suggests that flexibly using a variety of distraction and reappraisal methods over time is most effective. In particular, clients with low scores in the personality trait of adjustment should try a variety of techniques given their difficulties with regulating their emotions. Such clients could benefit from a coach suggesting distraction, and reappraisal as coping mechanisms, for example.

Sense-Making

Coaches need to help clients process and make sense out of their emotions over the course of a coaching engagement. Crucially, coaches should ask probing questions to direct the client to reflect on the meaning of their feelings, reappraising their evaluation of themselves and their emotions and connecting those insights to lessons they've previously understood. Research has shown that helping clients re-appraise situations by asking questions such

Coaching Is Not Therapy

Extreme emotions require extreme levels of skill almost sure to be beyond the scope of practice for a leader development coach. Psychiatrists and clinical psychologists are experts in abnormal behavior, including those that could come out in a coaching engagement. To attempt to remedy mental health or similar issues without the training and certification required to do so would be irresponsible and even unethical. If some of the emotions expressed are incredibly out-of-place and abnormal for the workplace, or if they look like they could involve serious harm to the client or others, a responsible coach does not try to treat those symptoms. Instead, coaches need to make sure the client gets the professional help they require. ICF has an excellent, [one-page resource](#) if you need more guidance.



as “If I had done something differently, would it have gone better?” or “How can I let that mistake teach me what to do better next time?” is among the most effective ways clients can make meaning out of an experience.¹¹ Re-appraising emotions and experiences and then making meaning out of them is more effective than having clients trying to suppress emotions. Suppression, as mentioned above, is exhausting and can even hurt one’s health.

While thinking or talking out loud are two avenues for sense-making, research also supports another one that clients may be much more comfortable with: expressive writing and journaling. Simply writing short but focused journal entries about one’s experiences can help unpack and make sense of the emotions and other experiences inherent to development. This is a topic that we will discuss in more detail during the next chapter.

¹¹ Pennebaker, J.W., Smyth, J.M. (2016, July 15). *Opening Up By Writing It Down: How expressive writing improves health and eases emotional pain* (Third Edition). The Guilford Press. ISBN-13: 978-1462524921

Chapter 4:

New Technology and Tools for Managing Emotions at Work



Pointing out how technology can help emotions may seem ironic given how central we consider emotions to be to the human experience. At the same time, recent advances in information technology and artificial intelligence (AI) are extremely relevant for paying emotions their due during coaching engagements. “Sentiment analysis” is a term used by many computer scientists to describe how an AI can evaluate something like a written journal entry or an e-mail and identify what emotions are present and at what levels of intensity they are being expressed. Such a tool can be a boon to any coach wanting help with quickly identifying clients and experiences that need their immediate or extra attention in order to deepen their relationship with a client or maximize their development. This can be especially helpful for monitoring ongoing communications or journal entries between scheduled meetings.

Given this, many of these new technologies have started to show up in platforms and products used by coaches around the world. It remains, however, the coach’s responsibility

to separate science from pseudoscience and make responsible choices based on criteria like measurement rigor and evidence-based design.

Is Measurement Important for Emotions?

Within the field of computer science, sentiment analysis has been a potent line of research to help understand emotions in social media, Yelp ratings, and many other customer-related emotion applications. However, the computer science profession does not subject their AI ratings of emotion to the sort of measurement scrutiny that is typical in the sciences, including industrial-organizational psychology. Because machine learning is infamously biased because of the samples that are used to teach the AI and the quirks of different deep learning algorithms, we should not assume that these estimates of emotion are fair, accurate, or precise unless we have evidence that they work like a thermometer or ruler.

Trust is paramount in coaching relationships. For a client to open up and take seriously a coaching engagement, they have to believe that the tools and coach are competent, have high integrity, and are eager to point their coaching skills conscientiously toward the client's goals. Emotional AI that is not fair, inaccurate, and biased could hurt that trust by



misdirecting a coach's attention on false positive and false negative "warning signs" about emotion-related coaching. Coaching measurement, whether it is with or without AI, needs to make sure that it acts like a thermometer, where one unit and one unit are two units, on a linear scale that doesn't measure more than one thing at a time¹². Furthermore, even the best measures have some error in them. Useful psychometric measurements report how certain the

instrument is about whether the person falls on the line of interest – they are honest and transparent about their uncertainty. In the case of emotions, we're interested in two separate rulers – one for negative emotions and the other for positive emotions. This allows us to see if the client has a good mix of both types. If there is no significant trend over time, we would like to make sure we don't report any pattern. Conversely, if the instrument is sensitive enough to notice changes, we'd like to know that so we can coach accordingly. Precise measurement is key to quickly and efficiently scanning many clients and their emotions over time. Looking at red flags and changes in trends can augment our relationships with clients, but only if those data about the clients' emotions are themselves trustworthy.

¹² For more on this concept, see another one of our free books "A New High Tech Paradigm for Measurement in Coaching" available at www.leaderamp.com/downloads.

Completely inaccurate measures will misguide the coach, and no measure can be entirely accurate. This is the reason why coaches should seek the latest measurement science in all assessments, including those used for emotions. If the sample of information a coach is viewing is limited, the measurement should be less certain than one with more information. Furthermore, many assessments used in coaching are plagued by bias. Bias can threaten trustworthiness by being less effective and unfair to some clients, limiting the coach's credibility by relying on false positives and false negatives. For these reasons, new AI helps make sure that emotion AI is fair, accurate, and precise.

Cloud-Based, Sharable Development Journals

A platform like LeaderAmp that allows a client to write in a cloud-based journal that is kept private between the client and coach can help a coach integrate emotions into a developmental engagement. People

who use expressive writing to describe their emotions benefit from a wide range of outcomes, including improved self-regulation, better working memory, and more in-depth understanding of how emotions affect learning. Then, if the client journals in a digital journal, the coach can see the sort of mix of emotions as well as progress and setbacks that the client is experiencing. When a coach is reading a journal, looking at how well the client summarizes the learning and the setbacks is one way to know if they're processing the experience deeply or merely typing verbatim facts that are shallowly processed.



This expressive writing technique was developed over 20 years by Professor James Pennebaker at the University of Texas-Austin, who calls it “Expressive Writing.”¹³ It involves writing about an experience for 15-20 minutes per day for three or four days a week. Pennebaker's research shows that whenever possible, coaches should monitor clients' journal entries to see if they reflect an active or passive tone. Journal entries that reflect a passive “being confronted by” style of writing focus on too much detail, direct quotes, and transcription. This is not good for learning because, like neutral emotions, it suggests they're not investing the effort required to harvest lessons learned from their experiences. Conversely, clients who actively confront situations and write about them in their journal are much more effective. The styles of journaling that are better at facing and learning from experience are broader in coverage, more integrative, and better at summarizing useful and painful situations. The practice of deeply processing a journal helps knit the client's own personal views into something meaningful and integrated with previously learned information.

¹³ Pennebaker, J.W., Smyth, J.M. (2016, July 15). *Opening Up By Writing It Down: How expressive writing improves health and eases emotional pain* (Third Edition). The Guilford Press. ISBN-13: 978-1462524921



A key reason for clients to journal is to sense make – rethink events to understand and integrate their emotions with their learning. Key to making sense of experience is for the client to explore the underlying reasons that explain confusing or ineffective behavior, including problem-solving. These journal entries can also give coaches clues about effective tactics clients are using, or ineffective tactics they should avoid (e.g., avoid concentration on feelings or needless suppression). Client focus should be on summarizing and integrating to distill complex experiences into understandable ‘packages.’ Coaches should praise clients when they confront their experiences, by candidly summarizing the good and the bad; and redirect passive journal entries that are mere transcriptions or show limited cognitive processing about facts and mixed emotions.

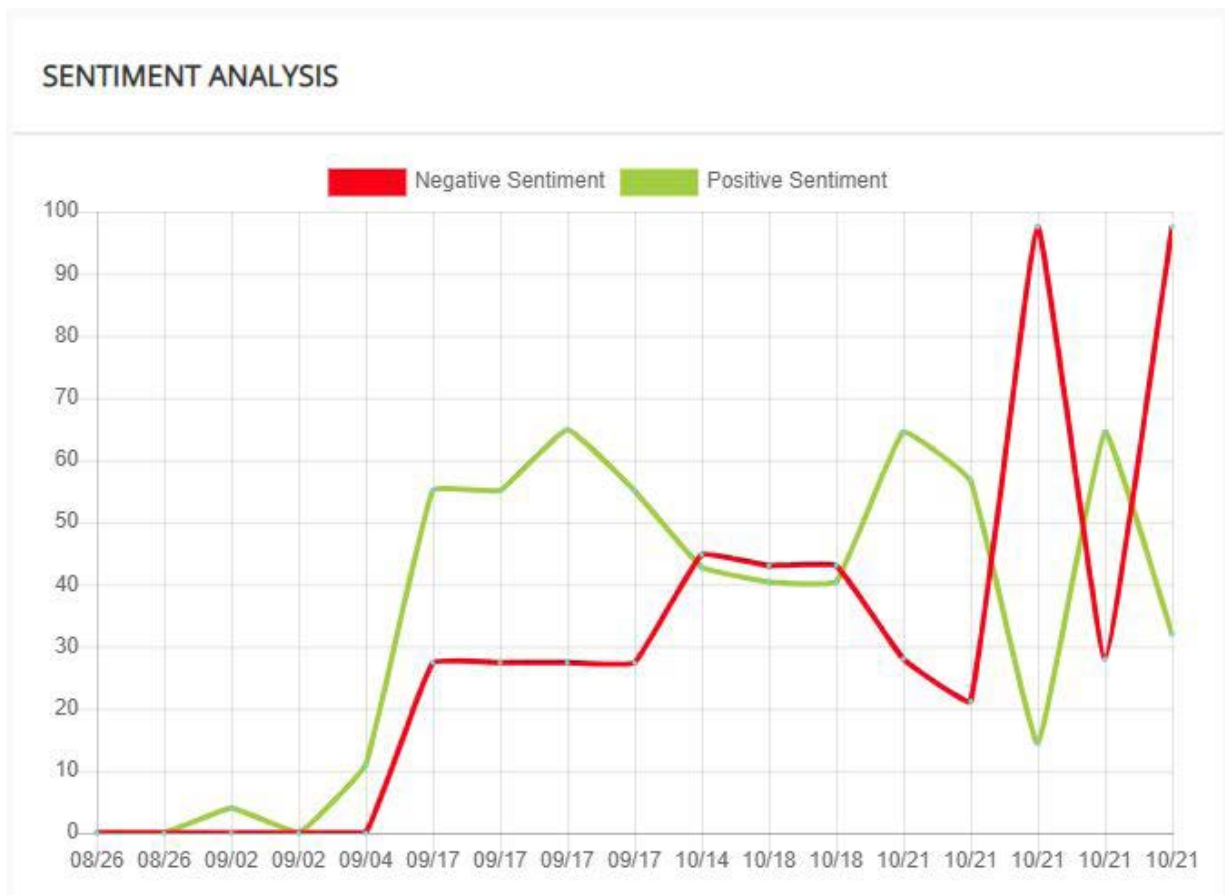
As a side benefit, when clients write in a digital cloud/mobile platform (such as the one offered by LeaderAmp), coaches can monitor all of their clients’ emotional mixes to see what forms of support might be most appropriate, even when they’re not together.

AI Powered Sentiment Analysis

Historically, coaches would use assessments and various job aides to deal with emotions in coaching, as well as their own intuitions and probing questions. While coaches have been using the best “Big Five” personality assessments for decades, more recently coaches have begun to rely on “Emotional Intelligence” as the starting toolset. Others might use tools such as the Geneva Emotions Wheel in the coaching process to help understand a client’s feelings, or to help a client grow emotional skills.

But these are all cumbersome processes that require specialized knowledge to use and interpret. Thanks to new forms of AI, emotions can be part of the coaching process, even

when the coach and client are apart. When clients perform expressive writing exercises in an electronic journal from their phone, tablet, or computer, it gives a coach a confidential, private window into how that client is coping emotionally. LeaderAmp’s EmotionMetric AI is a new form of psychometric emotion measurement that helps coaches measure each journal entry’s mix of positive and negative sentiment. At a glance, coaches can see the history and trends of emotions and support clients with cloud/mobile messages, and plan the next live session they will have with the client.



A LeaderAmp coach’s view of sentiments displayed in a client’s journal entries, over time.

Such information can be extremely useful for coaches checking in on clients between live meetings and using the EmotionMetric results to further investigate or prioritize clients who are reporting strong emotional reactions. Sometimes an impromptu message or spontaneous kudos is just the thing clients need at that moment, and coaches would not have known to offer it without the AI assistance. Other times the AI may draw something to the coach’s attention that he or she doesn’t need to address immediately, but which makes for a good topic to revisit during a later meeting or message. The idea is not for the EmotionMetric AI to replace the coach in these matters, but to assist him or her and provide additional, relevant information.

Chapter 5:

Conclusions and the Future of Emotions and Coaching




Emotions and learning are very much intertwined. While traditional coaching involved in-person emotional support, the reality is that many of the emotions a client faces are when they're with their team or back on the job. The needed mix of positive and negative emotions is important even when clients and coaches are apart.

The new LeaderAmp EmotionMetric AI can measure a client's emotions in their digital journal and provide coaches immediate feedback while keeping track of the client's sentiments over time. This provides an unprecedented ability for the coach to extend their relationship into the client's daily lives, in-between sessions. Looking at the pattern of the clients emotions over time allows a more holistic and systematic perspective as to whether the client is making progress, or needs more support.

All Posts Chat Journal Entry Notes to Self

Oct 22 2019

Journal Entry



Today I wanted to work on my confidence. I had a meeting with my supervisor, and she pointed out a calculation that I had gotten incorrect in my project proposal. The proposal is for a quality improvement project that I'm really excited about, and the calculation was a pretty simple return-on-investment number that I had put in the wrong number for. I like my supervisor and I know she has my best interests at heart. She was looking out for me by pointing out this error. I decided to look at her feedback as constructive and helpful, and reassured myself that I was still smart and capable. She and I talked about how I could fix the calculation, which I was mostly able to figure out myself, as I just needed to figure out where to go to find the right numbers. This made me feel pretty pleased and confident about my abilities, because I didn't really need her help. However, she was still very kind and encouraging. I left the meeting feeling good and positive about the interaction, and I feel confident and enthusiastic about the project proposal. It feels like my confidence has been improving over the past few weeks, and I am excited to see how I continue to improve.

Read on Oct 22 2019 11:32 am 11:32 am

A LeaderAmp coach's view of sentiments displayed in a client's individual journal entry.

But many more applications are coming. In a few years, for example, this AI will be able to be integrated into a real-time estimate within a videoconference to give the coach real-time emotion measurements to help coach the coach around supporting clients during sessions as well.

About LeaderAmp

LeaderAmp is an award-winning, enterprise-ready platform for mobile coaching, assessment, and journaling. It complements individual, mobile, and group coaching by embedding expert and AI-powered coaching and development into people's daily work lives. The current version includes 18 areas of leader potential and performance. It can be extensively customized to different coaching areas, workflows, and user interfaces.

Find out more at LeaderAmp.com



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