

SKILL ASSESSMENT

- Self-Awareness Assessment
- Emotional Intelligence Assessment
- The Defining Issues Test
- Cognitive Style Indicator
- Locus of Control Scale
- Tolerance of Ambiguity Scale
- Core Self-Evaluation Scale (CSES)

SKILL LEARNING

- Key Dimensions of Self-Awareness
- The Enigma of Self-Awareness
- Understanding and Appreciating Individual Differences
- Important Areas of Self-Awareness
- Summary
- Behavioral Guidelines

SKILL ANALYSIS

- Communist Prison Camp
- Computerized Exam
- Decision Dilemmas

SKILL PRACTICE

- Through the Looking Glass
- Diagnosing Managerial Characteristics
- An Exercise for Identifying Aspects of Personal Culture:
A Learning Plan and Autobiography

SKILL APPLICATION

- Suggested Assignments
- Application Plan and Evaluation

SCORING KEYS AND COMPARISON DATA

1

Developing Self- Awareness

SKILL DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

Increase personal awareness
of your:

- SENSITIVE LINE
- EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE
- PERSONAL VALUES AND
MORAL MATURITY
- COGNITIVE STYLE
- ORIENTATION TOWARD
CHANGE
- CORE SELF-EVALUATION

DIAGNOSTIC SURVEYS FOR SCALE SELF-AWARENESS

SELF-AWARENESS ASSESSMENT

Step 1: Before you read the material in this chapter, please respond to the following statements by writing a number from the rating scale below in the left-hand column (Pre-assessment). Your answers should reflect your attitudes and behavior as they are now, not as you would like them to be. Be honest. This instrument is designed to help you discover how self-aware you are so you can tailor your learning to your specific needs. When you have completed the survey, use the scoring key at the end of the chapter to identify the skill areas discussed in this chapter that are most important for you to master.

Step 2: After you have completed the reading and the exercises in this chapter and, ideally, as many of the Skill Application assignments at the end of this chapter as you can, cover up your first set of answers. Then respond to the same statements again, this time in the right-hand column (Post-assessment). When you have completed the survey, use the scoring key at the end of the chapter to measure your progress. If your score remains low in specific skill areas, use the behavioral guidelines at the end of the Skill Learning section to guide further practice.

Rating Scale

- 1 Strongly disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Slightly disagree
- 4 Slightly agree
- 5 Agree
- 6 Strongly agree

Assessment

Pre-	Post-	
_____	_____	1. I seek information about my strengths and weaknesses from others as a basis for self-improvement.
_____	_____	2. When I receive negative feedback about myself from others, I do not get angry or defensive.
_____	_____	3. In order to improve, I am willing to be self-disclosing to others (that is, to share my beliefs and feelings).
_____	_____	4. I am aware of my personal cognitive style and how I process information.
_____	_____	5. I have a good grasp of what it means to be emotionally mature, and I demonstrate that capability.
_____	_____	6. I have a good sense of how I cope with situations that are ambiguous and uncertain.
_____	_____	7. I have a well-developed set of personal standards and principles that guide my behavior.
_____	_____	8. I feel in charge of what happens to me, good and bad.

- _____ 9. I seldom, if ever, feel angry, depressed, or anxious without knowing why.
- _____ 10. I am conscious of the areas in which conflict and friction most frequently arise in my interactions with others.
- _____ 11. I have a close personal relationship with at least one other person with whom I can share personal information and personal feelings.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT

Please reply to each item below by selecting the one alternative that is most likely to be your response. Think about the way you usually respond to these kinds of situations, not the way you would like to respond or the way you think you should respond. No correct answers exist for any of the items, and your scores will be most useful if you provide an accurate assessment of your typical behavior. Mark only one answer per item.

1. When I get really upset, I . . .
 - a. _____ Analyze why I am so disturbed.
 - b. _____ Blow up and let off steam.
 - c. _____ Hide it and remain calm.
2. In a situation in which a colleague takes credit in public for my work and my ideas, I would probably . . .
 - a. _____ Let it slide and do nothing in order to avoid a confrontation.
 - b. _____ Later—in private—indicate that I would appreciate being given credit for my work and ideas.
 - c. _____ Thank the person in public for referencing my work and ideas and then elaborate on my contributions.
3. When I approach another person and try to strike up a conversation but the other person doesn't respond, I . . .
 - a. _____ Try to cheer up the person by sharing a funny story.
 - b. _____ Ask the person if he or she wants to talk about what's on his or her mind.
 - c. _____ Leave the person alone and find someone else to talk to.
4. When I enter a social group I usually . . .
 - a. _____ Remain quiet and wait for people to talk to me.
 - b. _____ Try to find something complimentary I can tell someone.
 - c. _____ Find ways to be the life of the party or the source of energy and fun.
5. On important issues I usually . . .
 - a. _____ Make up my own mind and ignore others' opinions.
 - b. _____ Weigh both sides, and discuss it with others before making a decision.
 - c. _____ Listen to my friends or colleagues and make the same decision they do.
6. When someone that I do not particularly like becomes romantically attracted to me, I usually . . .
 - a. _____ Tell that person directly that I am not interested.
 - b. _____ Respond by being friendly but cool or aloof.
 - c. _____ Ignore the person and try to avoid him or her.

7. When I am in the company of two people who have diametrically opposing points of view about an issue (for example, politics, abortion, war) and are arguing about it, I . . .
 - a. _____ Find something upon which they can both agree and emphasize it.
 - b. _____ Encourage the verbal battle.
 - c. _____ Suggest that they stop arguing and calm down.
8. When I am playing a sport and the game comes down to my last-second performance, I . . .
 - a. _____ Get very nervous and hope that I don't choke.
 - b. _____ See this as an opportunity to shine.
 - c. _____ Stay focused and give it my best effort.
9. In a situation in which I have an important obligation and need to leave work early, but my colleagues ask me to stay to meet a deadline, I would probably . . .
 - a. _____ Cancel my obligation and stay to complete the deadline.
 - b. _____ Exaggerate a bit by telling my colleagues that I have an emergency that I can't miss.
 - c. _____ Require some kind of compensation for missing the obligation.
10. In a situation in which another person becomes very angry and begins yelling at me, I . . .
 - a. _____ Get angry in return. I don't take that from anyone.
 - b. _____ Walk away. It doesn't do any good to argue.
 - c. _____ Listen first, and then try to discuss the issue.
11. When I encounter someone who has just experienced a major loss or tragedy, I . . .
 - a. _____ Really don't know what to do or say.
 - b. _____ Tell the person I feel very sorry and try to provide support.
 - c. _____ Share a time when I experienced a similar loss or tragedy.
12. When someone makes a racist joke or tells a crude story about a member of the opposite sex in mixed company, I usually . . .
 - a. _____ Point out that this is inappropriate and not acceptable, and then change the subject.
 - b. _____ Ignore it so I don't cause a scene.
 - c. _____ Get really upset and tell the person just what I think of what he or she said.

THE DEFINING ISSUES TEST

This instrument assesses your opinions about controversial social issues. Different people make decisions about these issues in different ways. You should answer the questions for yourself without discussing them with others. You are presented with three stories. Following each story are 12 statements or questions. Your task after reading the story is to rate each statement in terms of its importance in making a decision. After rating each statement, select the four most important statements and rank them from one to four in the spaces provided. Each statement should be ranked in terms of its relative importance in making a decision.

Some statements will raise important issues, but you should ask yourself whether the decision should rest on that issue. Some statements sound high and lofty but are largely gibberish. If you cannot make sense of a statement, or if you don't understand its meaning, mark it 5—"Of no importance."

For information about interpreting and scoring the Defining Issues Test, refer to the scoring key at the end of the chapter. Use the following rating scale for your response.

Rating Scale

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 1 Of great importance | This statement or question makes a crucial difference in making a decision about the problem. |
| 2 Of much importance | This statement or question is something that would be a major factor (though not always a crucial one) in making a decision. |
| 3 Of some importance | This statement or question involves something you care about, but it is not of great importance in reaching a decision. |
| 4 Of little importance | This statement or question is not very important to consider in this case. |
| 5 Of no importance | This statement or question is completely unimportant in making a decision. You would waste your time thinking about it. |

The Escaped Prisoner

A man had been sentenced to prison for 10 years. After one year, however, he escaped from prison, moved to a new area of the country, and took on the name of Thompson. For eight years he worked hard, and gradually he saved enough money to buy his own business. He was fair to his customers, gave his employees top wages, and gave most of his own profits to charity. Then one day, Ms. Jones, an old neighbor, recognized him as the man who had escaped from prison eight years before and for whom the police had been looking.

Should Ms. Jones report Mr. Thompson to the police and have him sent back to prison? Write a number from the rating scale on the previous page in the blank beside each statement.

- _____ Should report him
 _____ Can't decide
 _____ Should not report him

Importance

- | | |
|-------|---|
| _____ | 1. Hasn't Mr. Thompson been good enough for such a long time to prove he isn't a bad person? |
| _____ | 2. Every time someone escapes punishment for a crime, doesn't that just encourage more crime? |
| _____ | 3. Wouldn't we be better off without prisons and the oppression of our legal system? |
| _____ | 4. Has Mr. Thompson really paid his debt to society? |
| _____ | 5. Would society be failing what Mr. Thompson should fairly expect? |
| _____ | 6. What benefit would prison be apart from society, especially for a charitable man? |
| _____ | 7. How could anyone be so cruel and heartless as to send Mr. Thompson to prison? |
| _____ | 8. Would it be fair to prisoners who have to serve out their full sentences if Mr. Thompson is let off? |
| _____ | 9. Was Ms. Jones a good friend of Mr. Thompson? |

- _____ 10. Wouldn't it be a citizen's duty to report an escaped criminal, regardless of the circumstances?
- _____ 11. How would the will of the people and the public good best be served?
- _____ 12. Would going to prison do any good for Mr. Thompson or protect anybody?

From the list of questions above, select the four most important:

- _____ Most important
- _____ Second most important
- _____ Third most important
- _____ Fourth most important

The Doctor's Dilemma

A woman was dying of incurable cancer and had only about six months to live. She was in terrible pain, but was so weak that a large dose of a pain killer such as morphine would probably kill her. She was delirious with pain, and in her calm periods, she would ask her doctor to give her enough morphine to kill her. She said she couldn't stand the pain and that she was going to die in a few months anyway.

What should the doctor do? (Check one.)

- _____ He should give the woman an overdose that will make her die
- _____ Can't decide
- _____ Should not give the overdose

Importance

- _____ 1. Is the woman's family in favor of giving her the overdose?
- _____ 2. Is the doctor obligated by the same laws as everybody else?
- _____ 3. Would people be better off without society regimenting their lives and even their deaths?
- _____ 4. Should the doctor make the woman's death from a drug overdose appear to be an accident?
- _____ 5. Does the state have the right to force continued existence on those who don't want to live?
- _____ 6. What is the value of death prior to society's perspective on personal values?
- _____ 7. Should the doctor have sympathy for the woman's suffering, or should he care more about what society might think?
- _____ 8. Is helping to end another's life ever a responsible act of cooperation?
- _____ 9. Can only God decide when a person's life should end?
- _____ 10. What values has the doctor set for himself in his own personal code of behavior?
- _____ 11. Can society afford to let anybody end his or her life whenever he or she desires?
- _____ 12. Can society allow suicide or mercy killing and still protect the lives of individuals who want to live?

From the list of questions above, select the four most important:

- _____ Most important
- _____ Second most important
- _____ Third most important
- _____ Fourth most important

The Newspaper

Rami, a senior in high school, wanted to publish a mimeographed newspaper for students so that he could express his opinions. He wanted to speak out against military build-up and some of the school's rules, such as the rule forbidding boys to wear long hair.

When Rami started his newspaper, he asked his principal for permission. The principal said it would be all right if before every publication Rami would turn in all his articles for the principal's approval. Rami agreed and turned in several articles for approval. The principal approved all of them and he published two issues of the paper in the next two weeks.

But, the principal had not expected that Rami's newspaper would receive so much attention. Students were so excited by the paper that they began to organize protests against the government, hair regulation, and other school rules. Angry parents objected to Rami's opinions. They phoned the principal telling him that the newspaper was unpatriotic and should not be published. As a result of the rising excitement, the principal wondered if he should order Rami to stop publishing on the grounds that the controversial newspaper articles were disrupting the operation of the school.

What should the principal do? (Check one.)

- _____ Should stop it
 _____ Can't decide
 _____ Should not stop it

Importance

- _____ 1. Is the principal more responsible to the students or to the parents?
 _____ 2. Did the principal give his word that the newspaper could be published for a long time, or did he just promise to approve the newspaper one issue at a time?
 _____ 3. Would the students start protesting even more if the principal stopped the newspaper?
 _____ 4. When the welfare of the school is threatened, does the principal have the right to give orders to students?
 _____ 5. Does the principal have the freedom of speech to say no in this case?
 _____ 6. If the principal stopped the newspaper, would he be preventing full discussion of important problems?
 _____ 7. Would the principal's stop order make Rami lose faith in him?
 _____ 8. Is Rami really loyal to his school and patriotic to his country?
 _____ 9. What effect would stopping the paper have on the students' education in critical thinking and judgment?
 _____ 10. Is Rami in any way violating the rights of others in publishing his own opinions?
 _____ 11. Should the principal be influenced by some angry parents when it is the principal who knows best what is going on in the school?
 _____ 12. Is Rami using the newspaper to stir up hatred and discontent?

From the list of questions above, select the four most important:

- _____ Most important
 _____ Second most important
 _____ Third most important
 _____ Fourth most important

SOURCE: Adapted from Rest, 1979.

COGNITIVE STYLE INDICATOR

This instrument assesses the way you gather and evaluate information and make decisions. There are no right or wrong answers, and the accuracy of your results will depend on the extent to which you honestly answer each question. Please use the following scale in responding to each item:

Rating Scale

- 1 Totally disagree
- 2 Disagree
- 3 Neither agree nor disagree
- 4 Agree
- 5 Totally agree

- _____ 1. Developing a clear plan is very important to me.
- _____ 2. I like to contribute to innovative solutions.
- _____ 3. I always want to know what should be done when.
- _____ 4. I prefer to look at creative solutions.
- _____ 5. I want to have a full understanding of a problem.
- _____ 6. I like detailed action plans.
- _____ 7. I am motivated by ongoing innovation.
- _____ 8. I like to analyze problems.
- _____ 9. I prefer a clear structure to do my job.
- _____ 10. I like a lot of variety in my life.
- _____ 11. I engage in detailed analyses.
- _____ 12. I prefer well-planned meetings with a clear agenda.
- _____ 13. New ideas attract me more than existing solutions.
- _____ 14. I study each problem until I understand the underlying logic.
- _____ 15. I make definite appointments and follow-up meticulously.
- _____ 16. I like to extend the boundaries.
- _____ 17. A good task is a well-prepared task.
- _____ 18. I try to avoid routine.

SOURCE: *Cognitive Style Indicator*, Cools, E. and H. Van den Broeck. (2007) "Development and Validation of the Cognitive Style Indicator." *Journal of Psychology*, 14: 359–387.

LOCUS OF CONTROL SCALE

This questionnaire assesses your opinions about certain issues. Each item consists of a pair of alternatives marked with *a* or *b*. Select the alternative with which you most agree. If you believe both alternatives to some extent, select the one with which you most strongly agree. If you do not believe either alternative, mark the one with which you least strongly disagree. Since this is an assessment of opinions, there are obviously no right or wrong answers. When you have finished each item, turn to the scoring key at the end of the chapter for instructions on how to tabulate the results and for comparison data.

This questionnaire is similar, but not identical, to the original locus of control scale developed by Julian Rotter. The comparison data provided in the scoring key comes from research using Rotter's scale instead of this one. However, the two instruments assess the same concept, are the same length, and their mean scores are similar.

1. a. Leaders are born, not made.
b. Leaders are made, not born.
2. a. People often succeed because they are in the right place at the right time.
b. Success is mostly dependent on hard work and ability.
3. a. When things go wrong in my life, it's generally because I have made mistakes.
b. Misfortunes occur in my life regardless of what I do.
4. a. Whether there is war or not depends on the actions of certain world leaders.
b. It is inevitable that the world will continue to experience wars.
5. a. Good children are mainly products of good parents.
b. Some children turn out bad no matter how their parents behave.
6. a. My future success depends mainly on circumstances I can't control.
b. I am the master of my fate.
7. a. History judges certain people to have been effective leaders mainly because circumstances made them visible and successful.
b. Effective leaders are those who have made decisions or taken actions that resulted in significant contributions.
8. a. Avoiding punishing children guarantees that they will grow up irresponsible.
b. Spanking children is never appropriate.
9. a. I often feel that I have little influence over the direction my life is taking.
b. It is unreasonable to believe that fate or luck plays a crucial part in how my life turns out.
10. a. Some customers will never be satisfied no matter what you do.
b. You can satisfy customers by giving them what they want when they want it.
11. a. Anyone can get good grades in school by working hard enough.
b. Some people are never going to excel in school no matter how hard they try.
12. a. Good marriages result when both partners continually work on the relationship.
b. Some marriages are going to fail because the partners are just incompatible.
13. a. I am confident that I can improve my basic management skills through learning and practice.
b. It is a waste of time to try to improve management skills in a classroom.
14. a. More management skills courses should be taught in business schools.
b. Less emphasis should be put on skills in business schools.
15. a. When I think back on the good things that happened to me, I believe they happened mainly because of something I did.
b. The bad things that have happened in my life have mainly resulted from circumstances outside my control.
16. a. Many exams I took in school were unconnected to the material I had studied, so studying hard didn't help at all.
b. When I prepared well for exams in school, I generally did quite well.

17. a. I am sometimes influenced by what my astrological chart says.
b. No matter how the stars are lined up, I can determine my own destiny.
18. a. Government is so big and bureaucratic that it is very difficult for any one person to have any impact on what happens.
b. Single individuals can have a real influence on politics if they will speak up and let their wishes be known.
19. a. People seek responsibility in work.
b. People try to get away with doing as little as they can.
20. a. The most popular people seem to have a special, inherent charisma that attracts people to them.
b. People become popular because of how they behave.
21. a. Things over which I have little control just seem to occur in my life.
b. Most of the time I feel responsible for the outcomes I produce.
22. a. Managers who improve their personal competence will succeed more than those who do not improve.
b. Management success has very little to do with the competence possessed by the individual manager.
23. a. Teams that win championships in most sports are usually the teams that, in the end, have the most luck.
b. More often than not, teams that win championships are those with the most talented players and the best preparation.
24. a. Teamwork in business is a prerequisite to success.
b. Individual effort is the best hope for success.
25. a. Some workers are just lazy and can't be motivated to work hard no matter what you do.
b. If you are a skillful manager, you can motivate almost any worker to put forth more effort.
26. a. In the long run, people can improve this country's economic strength through responsible action.
b. The economic health of this country is largely beyond the control of individuals.
27. a. I am persuasive when I know I'm right.
b. I can persuade most people even when I'm not sure I'm right.
28. a. I tend to plan ahead and generate steps to accomplish the goals that I have set.
b. I seldom plan ahead because things generally turn out OK anyway.
29. a. Some things are just meant to be.
b. We can change anything in our lives by hard work, persistence, and ability.

TOLERANCE OF AMBIGUITY SCALE

Please respond to the following statements by indicating the extent to which you agree or disagree with them. Fill in the blanks with the number from the rating scale that best represents your evaluation of the item. The scoring key is at the end of the chapter.

Rating Scale

- 1 Strongly disagree
- 2 Moderately disagree
- 3 Slightly disagree
- 4 Neither agree nor disagree
- 5 Slightly agree
- 6 Moderately agree
- 7 Strongly agree

- _____ 1. An expert who doesn't come up with a definite answer probably doesn't know too much.
- _____ 2. I would like to live in a foreign country for a while.
- _____ 3. There is really no such thing as a problem that can't be solved.
- _____ 4. People who fit their lives to a schedule probably miss most of the joy of living.
- _____ 5. A good job is one where what is to be done and how it is to be done are always clear.
- _____ 6. It is more fun to tackle a complicated problem than to solve a simple one.
- _____ 7. In the long run it is possible to get more done by tackling small, simple problems rather than large and complicated ones.
- _____ 8. Often the most interesting and stimulating people are those who don't mind being different and original.
- _____ 9. What we are used to is always preferable to what is unfamiliar.
- _____ 10. People who insist upon a yes or no answer just don't know how complicated things really are.
- _____ 11. A person who leads an even, regular life in which few surprises or unexpected happenings arise really has a lot to be grateful for.
- _____ 12. Many of our most important decisions are based upon insufficient information.
- _____ 13. I like parties where I know most of the people more than ones where all or most of the people are complete strangers.
- _____ 14. Teachers or supervisors who hand out vague assignments give one a chance to show initiative and originality.
- _____ 15. The sooner we all acquire similar values and ideals the better.
- _____ 16. A good teacher is one who makes you wonder about your way of looking at things.

SOURCE: *Tolerance of Ambiguity Scale*, S. Budner (1962), "Intolerance of Ambiguity as a Personality Variable," *from Journal of Personality*, 30: 29-50. Reprinted with the permission of Blackwell Publishing, Ltd.

CORE SELF-EVALUATION SCALE (CSES)

Below are several statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the response scale below, indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

Rating Scale

- 1** Strongly disagree
- 2** Disagree
- 3** Neutral
- 4** Agree
- 5** Strongly agree

- _____ 1. I am confident I get the success I deserve in life.
- _____ 2. Sometimes I feel depressed.
- _____ 3. When I try, I generally succeed.
- _____ 4. Sometimes when I fail I feel worthless.
- _____ 5. I complete tasks successfully.
- _____ 6. Sometimes, I do not feel in control of my work.
- _____ 7. Overall, I am satisfied with myself.
- _____ 8. I am filled with doubts about my competence.
- _____ 9. I determine what will happen in my life.
- _____ 10. I do not feel in control of my success in my career.
- _____ 11. I am capable of coping with most of my problems.
- _____ 12. There are times when things look pretty bleak and hopeless to me.

SOURCE: Judge, Erez, Bono, and Thoreson, 2003. Courtesy of Personnel Psychology.

Key Dimensions of Self-Awareness

For more than 300 years, knowledge of the self has been considered to be at the very core of human behavior. The ancient dictum “Know thyself” has been variously attributed to Plato, Pythagoras, Thales, and Socrates. Plutarch noted that this inscription was carved on the Delphic Oracle, that mystical sanctuary where kings and generals sought advice on matters of greatest importance to them. As early as 42 B.C., Publius Syrus proposed: “It matters not what you are thought to be, but what you are.” Alfred Lord Tennyson said: “Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control, these three alone lead to sovereign power.” Probably the most oft-quoted passage on the self is Polonius’ advice in *Hamlet*: “To thine own self be true, and it must follow as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man.”

Messinger reminded us: “He that would govern others must first master himself.” **Self-awareness** lies at the heart of the ability to master oneself, but it is not sufficient. While self-management depends first and foremost on self-awareness, as illustrated in Figure 1.1, other self-management skills are closely linked to and build upon self-awareness. Developing self-control, for example, and clarifying priorities and goals, help individuals create direction in their own lives. Effectively managing time and stress make it possible for individuals to adapt to and organize their surroundings.

This chapter centers on the core aspects of self-management and serves as the foundation for the

following chapter on stress and time management. Moreover, as Figure 1.1 illustrates, when problems arise in personal management, the easily recognized symptoms are often time pressures or experienced stress. However, those symptoms are often linked to more fundamental problems with self-awareness and out-of-balance priorities so we begin with a focus on enhancing knowledge of oneself.

Despite the research cited above, students of human behavior have long known that knowledge of oneself—self-awareness, self-insight, self-understanding—is essential to one’s productive personal and interpersonal functioning, and in understanding and empathizing with other people. A host of techniques and methods for achieving self-knowledge have long been available—including group methods, meditation techniques, altered consciousness procedures, aromatherapy, assorted massages, physical exercise regimens, and biofeedback. It is estimated that Americans alone spend between \$30 billion and \$50 billion on such therapies. In this chapter we do not summarize those various approaches to enhanced self-awareness, nor do we espouse any one procedure in particular. Instead, our objective is to help you understand the importance of self-awareness if you are to be a successful manager—or a successful individual—and to provide you with some powerful self-assessment instruments that are related to managerial success. Our emphasis is on scientifically validated information linking self-awareness to the behavior of managers, and we try to avoid generalizations that have not been tested in research.

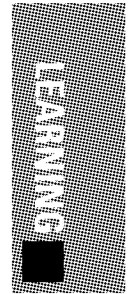
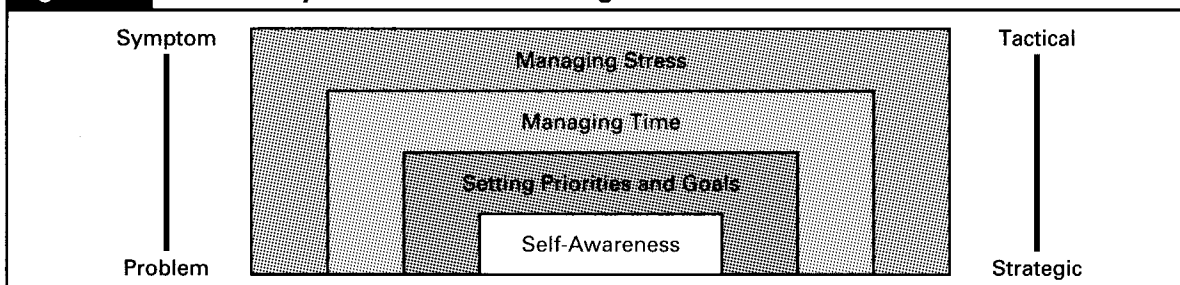


Figure 1.1 A Hierarchy of Personal Life-Management Skills



The Enigma of Self-Awareness

Erich Fromm (1939) was one of the first behavioral scientists to observe the close connection between one's self-concept and one's feelings about others: "Hatred against oneself is inseparable from hatred against others." Carl Rogers (1961) later proposed that self-awareness and self-acceptance are prerequisites for psychological health, personal growth, and the ability to know and accept others. In fact, Rogers suggested that the basic human need is for self-regard, which he found to be more powerful in his clinical cases than physiological needs. Brouwer (1964, p. 156) asserted:

The function of self-examination is to lay the groundwork for insight, without which no growth can occur. Insight is the "Oh, I see now" feeling which must consciously or unconsciously precede change in behavior. Insights—real, genuine glimpses of ourselves as we really are—are reached only with difficulty and sometimes with real psychic pain. But they are the building blocks of growth. Thus, self-examination is a preparation for insight, a groundbreaking for the seeds of self-understanding which gradually bloom into changed behavior.

There is little question that the knowledge we possess about ourselves, which makes up our self-concept, is central to improving our management skills. We cannot improve ourselves or develop new capabilities unless and until we know what level of capability we currently possess. Considerable empirical evidence exists that individuals who are more self-aware are more healthy, perform better in managerial and leadership roles, and are more productive at work (Boyatzis, 1982; Cervone, 1997; Spencer & Spencer, 1993).

On the other hand, self-knowledge may inhibit personal improvement rather than facilitate it. The reason is that individuals frequently evade personal growth and new self-knowledge. They resist acquiring additional information in order to protect their self-esteem or self-respect. If they acquire new knowledge about themselves, there is always the possibility that it will be negative or that it will lead to feelings of inferiority, weakness, evilness, or shame. So they avoid new self-knowledge. As Maslow (1962, p. 57) notes:

We tend to be afraid of any knowledge that would cause us to despise ourselves or to make us feel inferior, weak, worthless, evil, shameful. We protect ourselves and our ideal image of

ourselves by repression and similar defenses, which are essentially techniques by which we avoid becoming conscious of unpleasantness or dangerous truths.

We avoid personal growth, then, because we fear finding out that we are not all that we would like to be. If there is a better way to be, our current state must therefore be inadequate or inferior. The realization that one is not totally adequate or knowledgeable is difficult for many people to accept. This resistance is the "denying of our best side, of our talents, of our finest impulses, of our highest potentialities, of our creativeness. In brief, this is the struggle against our own greatness" (Maslow, 1962, p. 58). Freud (1956) asserted that to be completely honest with oneself is the best effort an individual can make, because complete honesty requires a continual search for more information about the self and a desire for self-improvement. The results of that search are usually uncomfortable.

Seeking knowledge of the self, therefore, seems to be an enigma. It is a prerequisite for and motivator of growth and improvement, but it may also inhibit growth and improvement. It may lead to stagnation because of fear of knowing more. How, then, can improvement be accomplished? How can management skills be developed if the self-knowledge necessary for the development of those skills is resisted?

THE SENSITIVE LINE

One answer relies on the concept of the **sensitive line**. This concept refers to the point at which individuals become defensive or protective when encountering information about themselves that is inconsistent with their self-concept or when encountering pressure to alter their behavior. Most people regularly experience information about themselves that doesn't quite fit or that is marginally inconsistent. For example, a friend might say, "You look tired today. Are you feeling okay?" If you are feeling fine, the information is inconsistent with your self-awareness. But because the discrepancy is relatively minor, it would not be likely to offend you or evoke a strong defensive reaction. That is, it would probably not require that you reexamine and change your self-concept.

On the other hand, the more discrepant the information or the more serious its implications for your self-concept, the closer it would approach your sensitive line, and you would feel a need to defend yourself against it. For example, having a coworker judge you incompetent as a manager may cross your sensitive line

if you think you have done a good job as a manager. This would be especially true if the coworker was an influential person. Your response would probably be to defend yourself against the information to protect the image you hold of yourself.

This response is known as the **threat-rigidity response** (Staw, Sandelands, & Dutton, 1981; Weick, 1993). When individuals are threatened, when they encounter uncomfortable information, or when uncertainty is created, they tend to become rigid. They hunker down, protect themselves, and become risk averse. Consider what happens when you are startled or suddenly shocked by something unexpected. Physically, your body tends to become rigid in order to protect itself. It tightens up to safeguard stability. Similarly, individuals also become rigid—psychologically and emotionally—when they encounter information that is a threat to their self-concept. They tend to redouble their efforts to protect what is comfortable and familiar (Cameron, 1994; Cameron, Kim, & Whetten, 1987; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2000). They rely on first-learned or most reinforced behavior patterns and emotions. When discrepancies in the self-image are encountered, in other words, the validity of the information or its source is denied, or other kinds of defense mechanisms are used to ensure that the self-concept remains stable. Crossing the sensitive line creates rigidity and self-preservation.

In light of this defensiveness, then, how can increased self-knowledge and personal change ever occur? There are at least two answers. One is that information that is verifiable, predictable, and controllable is less likely to cross the sensitive line than information without those characteristics. That is, if an individual can test the validity of the discrepant information (for example, if some objective standard exists for evaluating the accuracy of the information), if the information is not unexpected or “out-of-the-blue” (for example, if it is received at regular intervals), and if there is some control over what, when, and how much information is received (for example, if it is requested), the feedback is more likely to be heard and accepted. The information you receive about yourself in this chapter possesses those three characteristics. You have already completed several self-assessment instruments that have been used extensively in research. Their reliability and validity have been established. Moreover, they have been found to be associated with managerial success. Therefore, as you analyze your scores and seek honestly to understand more about your underlying attributes, you can gain important insight that will prove to be very useful.

A second answer to the problem of overcoming resistance to self-examination lies in the role other people can play in helping insight to occur. It is almost impossible to increase skill in self-awareness unless we interact with and disclose ourselves to others. Unless one is willing to open up to others, to discuss aspects of the self that seem ambiguous or unknown, little growth can ever occur. **Self-disclosure**, therefore, is a key to improvement in self-awareness. Harris (1981) points out:

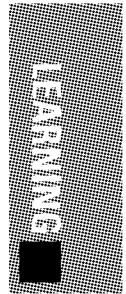
In order to know oneself, no amount of introspection or self-examination will suffice. You can analyze yourself for weeks, or meditate for months, and you will not get an inch further—any more than you can smell your own breath or laugh when you tickle yourself.

You must first be open to the other person before you catch a glimmering of yourself. Our self-reflection in a mirror does not tell us what we are like; only our reflection in other people. We are essentially social creatures, and our personality resides in association, not in isolation.

As you engage in the practice exercises in this chapter, therefore, you are encouraged to discuss your insights with someone else. A lack of self-disclosure not only inhibits self-awareness but also may affect adversely other aspects of managerial skill development. For example, several studies have shown that low self-disclosers are less healthy and more self-alienated than high self-disclosers. College students give the highest ratings for interpersonal competence to high self-disclosers. Individuals who are high self-disclosers are liked best, and excessive or insufficient self-disclosure results in less liking and acceptance by others (see, for example, Covey, 1989; Goleman, 1998b; Kelley, 1999).

Some of the exercises in this chapter will require you to discuss your experiences with others. This is because involving others in the process of self-understanding will be a critical aspect of your personal growth. These interactions, of course, should be sincere, honest, and motivated by self-understanding and self-improvement. Never should the information you share or receive be used to judge or wound another person. Maintaining a trusting relationship with someone with whom you can share is a critical prerequisite to self-understanding.

The enigma of self-awareness can be managed, then, by exercising some control over when and what kind of information you receive about yourself, and by



involving others in your pursuit of self-understanding. The support and feedback individuals receive from others during the process of self-disclosure, besides helping to increase feedback and self-awareness, helps information contribute to greater self-awareness without crossing the sensitive line.

Understanding and Appreciating Individual Differences

Another important reason for focusing on self-awareness is to help you develop the ability to diagnose important differences among others with whom you interact. There is considerable evidence that an individual's effectiveness as a manager is closely related to his or her ability to recognize, appreciate, and ultimately utilize key, fundamental differences among others. This topic is commonly discussed in the management literature under the subject of "managing diversity." The diversity literature has progressed through a series of stages, beginning with a plethora of statistics demonstrating the extent to which, and the specific ways in which, the workforce is becoming more diverse. This was followed by evidence-based arguments touting the merits of a diverse group of workers contributing to the performance of a work group (Cox, 1994). The primary sources of diversity discussed in this literature are gender, age, culture, and ethnicity.

In this chapter, and throughout the book, we use broader, more inclusive, and less ambiguous terminology that is more conducive to skill development. Whereas it is difficult, for example, to understand all the ramifications of "managing diversity," it is not difficult to be sensitive to certain important differences that affect the way you manage others. In other words, this chapter has two objectives: (1) to help you better understand your own uniqueness as an individual—to become better equipped to manage yourself—and (2) to help you diagnose, value, and utilize the differences you find in other people.

Self-knowledge will help you understand your own taken-for-granted assumptions, trigger points, sensitive line, comfort zone, strengths and weaknesses, and so forth. This knowledge is useful for all of us, not because we can or should change fundamental dimensions of ourselves, but because it helps make our interactions with others more effective and insightful. It also helps us gain a more complete understanding of our potential for contributing value in our future career roles and our special strengths relative to others. It is not unusual for many of us to feel intimidated at times, for example, by heroic or luminary figures whose suc-

cess is attributed to charisma, intelligence, or style. We feel we are somehow diminished and less able because of what we see in others. Self-knowledge allows us to recognize our own special gifts and strengths and to capitalize on our talents.

Diagnosing fundamental differences in others is, similarly, an important part of being an effective manager. Being aware of, and empathetic toward, the different perspectives, needs, and inclinations of other people is a key part of emotional intelligence and interpersonal maturity. Most people, however, have a tendency to interact with individuals who are like themselves, to choose similar people to work with them, and to exclude others who seem to be different (Berscheid & Walster, 1978). The history of human warfare and conflict testifies to the fact that differences are usually interpreted as frightening or threatening. However, although fostering similarity seemingly makes it easier to interact with other people, especially in a work setting, it also reduces creativity, complex problem solving, and the likelihood that working colleagues will challenge the perspective of the authority figure. Research on organizational failure has repeatedly demonstrated that a lack of diversity in the composition of key decision-making bodies makes it difficult for them to recognize changes in their environment and to respond in appropriately new and novel ways (Cameron, Kim, & Whetten, 1987).

One key to helping individuals feel comfortable discussing ways in which they are different is by sharing a commitment to focusing on *differences* not *distinctions*. We observe differences; we create distinctions. Differences help us understand potential sources of misunderstanding between people and give us clues for how we can work together more effectively. Distinctions create social barriers between people for the express purpose of creating (or reinforcing) advantages and disadvantages. When someone discounts the opinion of a coworker, for example, on the grounds that the person is "a member of the old boys' club," "from marketing," "a woman," or "doesn't have a college degree," he or she is creating a distinction that is not only potentially hurtful on a personal basis but ineffective for the organization.

The creation of such distinctions destroys trust among people, even if the distinctions refer to individuals who are not present. If you were to apply distinctions that belittled someone in another group, for example, that action plants a seed of mistrust in the minds of people who are present regarding what distinctions you may be privately using to discount them. The point is, recognizing differences is not the same as evaluating

distinctions. One is helpful; the other is hurtful. Moreover, when others feel that self-disclosing information could be used against them—that is, they could be placed on the disadvantaged side of a distinction—they will be reluctant to participate in any self-discovery process, especially one that requires them to share information about their personal characteristics.

To repeat, self-awareness and understanding differences cannot occur without self-disclosure, sharing, and trusting conversations. Self-knowledge requires an understanding and valuing of differences, not the creation of distinctions. We encourage you, therefore, to use the information you discover about yourself and others to build, grow, and value both of you in your interactions.

Important Areas of Self-Awareness

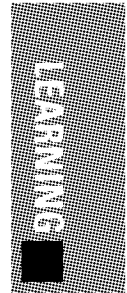
Of course, an innumerable quantity of personal dimensions is available to explore if one is to develop in-depth self-awareness. For example, numerous aspects of cognitive style have been measured; authors have identified more than a dozen “intelligences” (ranging from social and practical to cognitive and creative); literally hundreds of personality factors have been investigated in the psychological literature; the mapping of the human chromosome has raised the possibility that hundreds of physiological differences may be crucial in understanding behavior; gender, age, cultural, ethnic, and experience differences all develop individually over time. It is impossible, of course, to accurately select the few best or most central aspects of self-awareness because the alternatives are just too numerous. On the other hand, we focus here on five of the most critical areas of self-awareness that have been found to be key in developing successful management. They are: emotional intelligence, personal values, cognitive style, orientation toward change, and core self-evaluation. These areas represent a limited set of factors, of course, but they have been found to be among the most important predictors of various aspects of effective managerial performance—including achieving life success, performing effectively in teams, competent decision making, life-long learning and development, creativity, communication competency, job satisfaction, and job performance (Allan & Waclawski, 1999; Atwater & Yammarino, 1992; Goleman, 1998b; Judge et al., 2003; Parker & Kram, 1993; Sosik & Megerian, 1999; Cools & Van den Broeck, 2007).

Research on the concept of **emotional intelligence**—the ability to manage oneself and to manage relationships with others—has been identified as among the most important factors in accounting for success in leaders and managers (Boyatzis, Goleman, &

Rhee, 2000; Goleman, 1998a). In particular, self-awareness has been identified as a crucial aspect of emotional intelligence, and it is more powerful than IQ in predicting success in life (Goleman, 1995). One study, for example, tried to identify differences between star performers and average managers in 40 companies. Emotional intelligence competencies, including self-awareness, were *twice* as important in contributing to excellence as cognitive intelligence (IQ) and expertise (Goleman, 1998a). In a study of a multinational consulting firm, superior performing partners were compared to average performing partners. Superior performers—who had significantly higher emotional intelligence and self-awareness scores—contributed more than twice the revenues to the firm and were four times more likely to be promoted than those with low self-awareness and emotional intelligence (Boyatzis, 1998).

Personal values are included here because they are “the core of the dynamics of behavior, and play so large a part in unifying personality” (Allport, Gordon, & Vernon, 1931, p. 2). That is, all other attitudes, orientations, and behaviors arise out of an individuals’ values. Two major types of values are considered: *instrumental* and *terminal* (Rokeach, 1973). We present research findings that relate personal development in these two types of values to successful managerial performance. The assessment instrument that assesses your values development is discussed, along with information concerning the scores of other groups of people. You will want to compare your scores with individuals who are close to you, as well as with successful managers. Some comparison data is provided for that purpose. Because this discussion of values development is connected to ethical decision making, the implications of managerial ethics are also discussed in this section.

A third area of self-awareness is **cognitive style**, which refers to the manner in which individuals gather and process information. Researchers have found that individual differences in cognitive style influence perception, learning, problem solving, decision making, communication, and creativity (Cools & Van den Broeck, 2007; Hayes & Allinson, 1994; Kirton, 2003). A large number of dimensions of cognitive style have been identified, but we have selected an instrument in this chapter that captures the most frequently studied dimensions (Cools & Van den Broeck, 2007). A discussion of the critical dimensions of cognitive style is presented, and it will assist you in learning more about your own style based on the assessment instrument that you have completed. Empirical research linking cognitive style to successful managerial behavior is also discussed.



Fourth, a discussion of **orientation toward change** focuses on the methods people use to cope with change in their environment. In the twenty-first century, of course, all of us will be faced with increasingly fragmented, rapidly changing, tumultuous conditions (Peters, 1987). It is important that you become aware of your orientation toward adapting to these conditions. Two important dimensions—*locus of control* and *intolerance of ambiguity*—have been measured by two assessment instruments. Research connecting these two dimensions to effective management is discussed in the sections that follow.

Finally, **core self-evaluation** is a recently developed construct that captures the essential aspects of personality. More than 50,000 studies have been conducted on what has been referred to as “the Big Five” personality dimensions—neuroticism, extroversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness—but an underlying factor has been found to account for the effects of these personality dimensions. It is referred to as core self-evaluation (Judge et al., 2003), and we provide an instrument that assesses your core self-evaluation. Some important research on this construct is explained in this chapter relating to how scores correlate with success at work and in life. By analyzing your scores, you not only learn about your underlying personality dimensions, but you also will learn about how they are associated with other important behaviors such as motivation, problem solving, creativity, life satisfaction, and work performance.

These five areas of self-awareness—emotional intelligence, personal values, learning style, orientation toward change, and core self-evaluation—constitute the very core of the self-concept. Emotional intelligence identifies the extent to which people are able to recognize and control their own emotions, as well as to recognize and respond appropriately to the emotions of others. Values identify an individual’s basic standards about what is good and bad, worthwhile and worthless, desirable and undesirable, true and false, moral and immoral. Cognitive style identifies individual thought processes, perceptions, and methods for acquiring and storing information. It determines not only what kind of information is received by an individual, but how that individual interprets, judges, and responds to the information. Orientation toward change identifies the adaptability of individuals. It includes the extent to which individuals are tolerant of ambiguous, uncertain conditions, and the extent to which they are inclined to accept personal responsibility for their actions under changing conditions. Core self-evaluation identifies the general personality orientation that guides behavior. It

uncovers levels of self-esteem, self-efficacy, emotional stability, and self-control that have important effects on individuals’ happiness as well as managerial effectiveness. Figure 1.2 summarizes these five aspects of self-awareness, along with their functions in defining the self-concept.

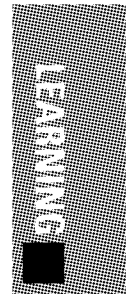
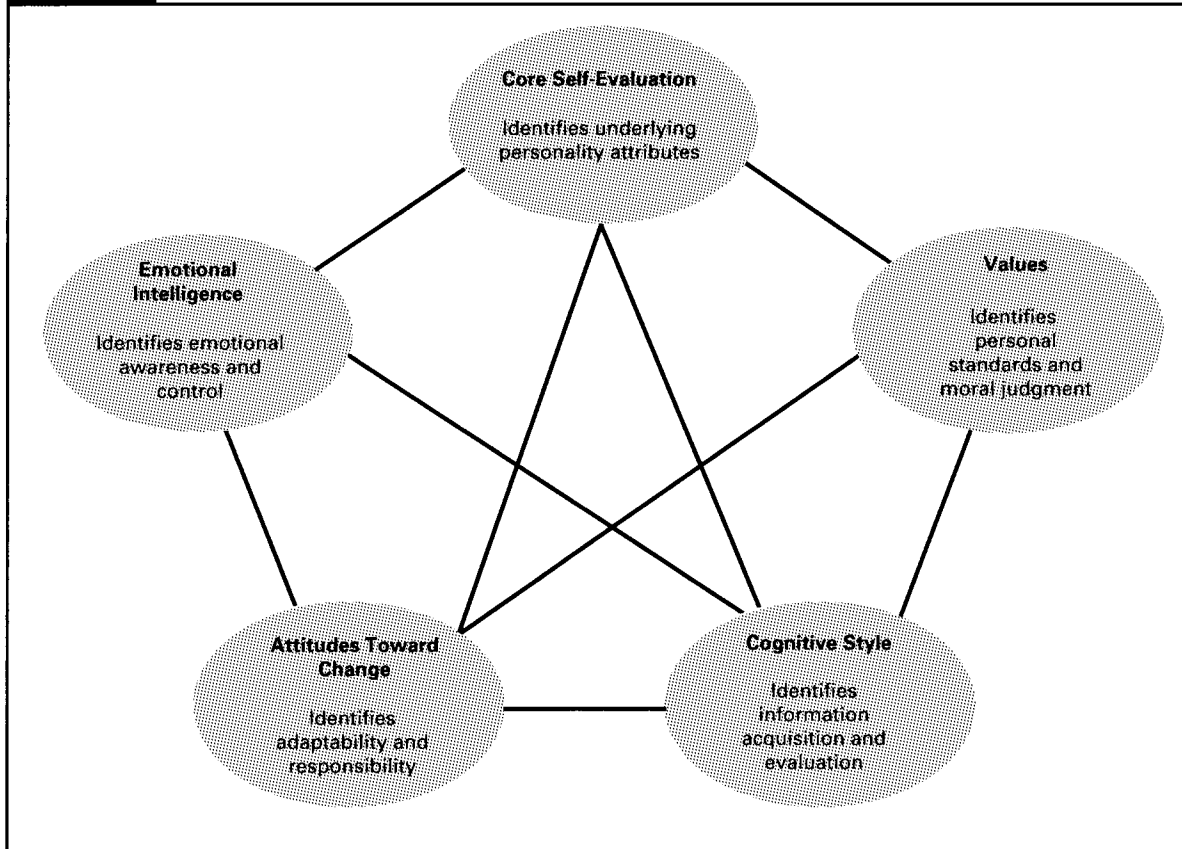
Again, many other aspects of self-awareness could be considered in this chapter, but all these aspects of the self are related fundamentally to the five core concepts discussed here. What we value, how we feel about ourselves, how we behave toward others, what we want to achieve, and what we are attracted to all are strongly influenced by our emotional intelligence, values, cognitive style, orientation toward change, and core self-evaluation. These are among the most important building blocks upon which other aspects of the self emerge.

On the other hand, if you want to do a more in-depth analysis of multiple aspects of self-awareness, instruments such as the Strong-Campbell Vocational Inventory, the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test, and a host of other instruments are available in most college counseling centers or testing centers. Be careful, however, of the multiple assessment instruments you can find on numerous Web sites. Most are not reliable or valid. On the other hand, no one, it should be emphasized, can get too much self-knowledge.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Emotional intelligence has become a very popular topic that, unfortunately, suffers from the problem that almost all trendy concepts encounter. Its meaning and measurement have become very confusing and ambiguous. Emotional intelligence has come to encompass almost everything that is noncognitive—including social, emotional, behavioral, attitudinal, and personality factors—so the extent to which it can be adequately measured and predictive of outcomes remains cloudy. Since the publication of Daniel Goleman’s book *Emotional Intelligence* in 1995, interest in the concept of emotional intelligence has mushroomed (even though the concept was introduced in 1990 by Salovey and Mayer). Several thousand books have been published on the topic, and scores of consulting companies and executive coaches now advertise themselves as experts in helping others develop emotional intelligence. The number of instruments available to assess emotional intelligence is voluminous (more than 100), although only three or four have been scientifically validated and used in any systematic investigations.

Figure 1.2 Five Core Aspects of Self-Awareness



In particular, only Bar-On's *EQ-I* measure (Bar-On, 1997)—a self-report instrument that defines emotional intelligence as an array of noncognitive skills; Salovey's *Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale* (Salovey & Mayer, 1990)—a behavioral assessment that defines emotional intelligence as “a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action”(p. 185); and Goleman and Boyatzis' *Emotional Competence Inventory* (Boyatzis et al., 2000)—a 360-degree assessment that defines emotional intelligence as “the composite set of capabilities that enable a person to manage himself or herself and others,” (p. 344) have been scientifically validated. The trouble is, each of these instruments is far too lengthy to be included in this text, and each is protected under copyright. Virtually all other instruments, including the one included in this book, are designed merely to provide a general estimate of particular dimensions of emotional intelligence, and extensive research has not yet been published.

As you can tell by the widely differing definitions associated with the three major assessment instruments

described above, the concept of emotional intelligence has been defined as embracing almost everything. A scan of the scientific and popular writing on emotional intelligence confirms this conclusion—almost everything and anything is defined as an aspect of emotional intelligence. Our colleagues Richard Boyatzis and Daniel Goleman, for example—two of the chief researchers in the field of emotional intelligence—explicitly include all capabilities that help people manage themselves and others. These include, for example, leadership, influence, conflict management, communication, self-confidence, and teamwork. Other scholars limit emotional intelligence to a much narrower set of factors. Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (1998) for example, reduce emotional intelligence to the ability to adequately diagnose and react to emotions.

One way to clarify this problem of multiple definitions is to differentiate between *emotional intelligence* and *emotional competence*. Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to diagnose, understand, and manage emotional cues. Emotional competence refers to the noncognitive capabilities and skills—including social skills—that affect human functioning. The first

definition is the one we have adopted in this chapter because the remainder of this book is focused on helping you develop competency and capability in skills that some would include under the emotional competence umbrella. That is, the management skills covered in this text—which have been well-researched and found to predict the success of managers and leaders—are sometimes included in discussions of the impact of emotional intelligence. In this regard, we agree that they are critical. These noncognitive skills and abilities are, in fact, among the most important factors in explaining why some people succeed as leaders and managers and others do not.

On the other hand, a much narrower treatment of emotional intelligence limits it to *emotions*, not to social or interpersonal skills. This is the position we adopt in this chapter. We will help you assess, in an in-depth and rigorous way, other social and behavioral skills throughout the remainder of the book. It is important to point out that a certain degree of emotional *intelligence* is necessary in order for people to develop emotional *competencies* (i.e., social and behavioral competencies), so this aspect of self-awareness is an important prerequisite to your developing other management skills.

Emotional intelligence, then, refers to: (1) the ability to diagnose and recognize your own emotions, (2) the ability to control your own emotions, (3) the ability to recognize and diagnose the emotions displayed by others, and (4) the ability to respond appropriately to those emotional cues. These abilities are not in-born but can be developed and improved. Unlike IQ, for example, which remains relatively constant over a lifetime, emotional intelligence can be enhanced with practice. With concerted effort, people can change their levels of emotional intelligence. The instrument you completed in the Pre-assessment section assesses these four dimensions, and we briefly explain them below.

One of our acquaintances, who now readily admits having made progress in developing emotional intelligence, had a great deal of difficulty recognizing and diagnosing her own emotions. When something seemed to go wrong and she was asked, “Are you upset?” she would invariably deny her feelings—“No, I’m fine.” She had never learned to accurately diagnose her own emotional state. This ability is simply the capacity to identify and label your own emotions. Try, for example, to identify the emotion you are feeling right now. Can you label it? Emotionally intelligent people are able to get in touch with and accurately *diagnose* their own internal feelings.

Emotionally intelligent people are also able to *regulate* and control their emotions. They are less likely to

blow up and lose control, less likely to experience debilitating depression and anxiety, and more likely to manage their own emotional states than those with less emotional intelligence. Think of how you behave in a sporting event, for example, when the officials make a bad call; when someone gets angry at you and berates you; when you are criticized for something you did; or, alternatively, when you receive special accolades and recognition. Emotionally intelligent people remain in control of their emotions, whereas less emotionally intelligent people lose control. This ability does not mean being bland or even-tempered all the time—emotionally intelligent people may display a wide range of emotions and intensity. Instead, it means that a person can control his or her emotions so that they are not unrestrained.

Emotionally intelligent people are also able to accurately diagnose and empathize with the feelings of others. They are sensitive to what others are experiencing, and they can share in those feelings. Empathy refers to the ability to understand and connect with others’ feelings. It does not mean sympathizing or adopting the same feelings, and it is not based on a memory of having experienced the same emotions. If someone has experienced a tragedy or loss, for example, emotionally intelligent people can empathize, share in, and understand those feelings even if they have never experienced something similar. They need not be depressed themselves, for example, in order to understand the depression of others.

Emotionally intelligent people also *respond* appropriately to the emotions of others. Their responses match the intensity of the emotions other people feel, and they support and encourage emotional expressions. That is, if others are excited and happy, they do not remain aloof and withdrawn. They endorse the expression of emotions in others, rather than suppressing or censoring those emotions. On the other hand, they are not merely manipulated in their feelings and responses by the emotions of others. They don’t respond merely on the basis of others’ feelings. Rather, they remain in personal control of their responses. They advance a sense of caring for, and acceptance of, the other person by means of their emotional responses.

One reason emotional intelligence is so important is that general competency levels seem to have deteriorated over time. Whereas average IQ points have increased almost 25 points over the last 100 years—people tend to be smarter now than 100 years ago—emotional intelligence scores have actually declined (Goleman, 1998a). Think, for example, of the amount of litigation, conflict, disrespect, and divorce that