

Improving Your Perception – Assessment Activity

There are several theories and conceptualizations of emotional intelligence. Daniel Goleman is the psychologist and author who did much of the influential pioneer work on EQ in the mid-1990s. Goleman believes that outstanding leadership requires a combination of self-mastery and social intelligence, which have two competency areas: perception and skills.

How competent are you in the area of perception? Use this activity to assess your perception competencies and to identify ways you can improve your self-perception and social perception.

Perception

There are three main perception competencies:

Reading yourself

Accurately reading your own emotions is a basic aspect of emotional intelligence and helps guide your decision-making process. This competency underlies all other processing of emotional information. Your own emotions include areas of beliefs and core values, as well as preferences, goals, strengths, weaknesses, and intuition.

Empathizing

Awareness of your social surroundings can be built through empathizing, which is sensing and taking an interest in other people's emotions and perceptions. Empathy has components that are both cognitive and emotional. It allows you to understand others' core values and points of view while remaining independent.

Reading the big picture

Being able to read the big picture facilitates an understanding of relationship networks, trends, and the politics of larger groups and organizations. A high-level view allows you to see the reality of things, not just how you'd like them to be.

Perception Assessment

Use the following table to assess your skills in the three areas of perception – reading yourself, empathizing, and reading the big picture. For each of the questions in the two EQ domains, rate your skill level from 1 (Poor) to 5 (Excellent).

After you're done, consider any gaps or weaknesses to identify ways you can improve and sharpen your self-perception and social perception.

Self-perception

Reading yourself

Questions to ask yourself	My Skill Level
Do I solicit feedback from multiple sources?	1 2 3 4 5
Can I identify my strengths, weaknesses, and emotional triggers?	1 2 3 4 5
Can I interpret my goals and feelings?	1 2 3 4 5
Do I observe myself as though I were viewing another person?	1 2 3 4 5
Do I record my reactions and thoughts in a journal?	1 2 3 4 5

Social Perception

Empathizing

Questions to ask yourself	My Skill Level
Do I listen to the other person first in a conversation?	1 2 3 4 5
Do I stand in that person's shoes?	1 2 3 4 5
Do I search for common ground between us?	1 2 3 4 5

Reading the big picture

Questions to ask yourself	My Skill Level
Do I track emotions during meetings?	1 2 3 4 5
Can I fully analyze my firm's organizational culture? As part of this, do I fully understand the organizational structure?	1 2 3 4 5
Can I accomplish things both formally and informally?	1 2 3 4 5
Do I know who the key decision makers are?	1 2 3 4 5
Can I recognize who influences whom and who seeks advice from whom?	1 2 3 4 5
Do I know who has worked together before and for how long?	1 2 3 4 5

Improvements

Now that you have assessed how effective you currently are at reading yourself, empathizing, and reading the big picture, identify your weaknesses in each area and improvements you can make to become better at self-perception and social perception.

Reading yourself

Weaknesses:

Improvements I can make:

Empathizing

Weaknesses:

Improvements I can make:

Reading the big picture

Weaknesses:

Improvements I can make:
