

Emotional Intelligence in Action: Training and Coaching Activities for Leaders, Managers and Teams, by Marcia Hughes and James Bradford Terrell. 2012. San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer. 476 pages. Paper. \$50.00.

Book's Purpose or Theme *Emotional Intelligence in Action* was written to show managers and leaders how to build effective emotional skills and create real change for individuals and teams.

Brief Summary of Content Emotional intelligence (EI) has been deemed critical for personal and business success and much has been researched and written regarding its importance. Case studies demonstrate its effectiveness. Yet, there is little to guide us in the development of the competencies that comprise the emotionally intelligent individual. "This book addresses that need by providing experiential learning scenarios drawn from real life to enhance emotional intelligence skills and competencies." The book is organized into three parts. The first section provides an overview of using emotional intelligence to create real change, why it's important, the integration between thinking and emotions, and how to best use the book. This section also reviews several instruments that can be used to measure EI although it does indicate that an assessment is not critical. Part Two of the book explores 16 emotional intelligence and well-being skills: self-regard, self-actualization, emotional self-awareness, emotional expression, assertiveness, independence, interpersonal relationships, empathy, social responsibility, problem-solving, reality testing, impulse control, flexibility, stress tolerance, optimism and happiness/well-being. Each chapter first defines the skill then discusses the advantages of possessing it and disadvantages if it is a weaker area. Next the authors provide instructions on how to develop skillfulness in the area followed by a section titled Transformational Benefits, which delves into how building this competency can "transform one's experience of life". Lastly, each chapter concludes with a listing of a Star Performer who in real life exhibits this skill and a section titled Reel Performer in which they list a movie, which demonstrates the concept. Part Three of the book comprises two-thirds of the book and contains easy, practical and impactful activities to develop each of the competencies with at least four activities to select from. The first three sections of each exercise explain *why* you would have participants do the exercise, *how* they will engage with the instructional material to generate the learning experience and *what* the desired results would be. The website for the book includes easily downloadable copies of all handouts associated with the exercises. Although the book is designed for coaches, facilitators, trainers, and managers to use with groups or teams, the exercises can also be used in individual sessions when needed to develop specific competencies.

Most Useful Things Learned from the Book

There are many books written about emotional intelligence and I've looked at several of them to gain a better understanding of the concept but most are very theory based. You don't receive a good sense of what the competency is like in action and typically they don't provide ideas and examples of how to develop those skills. This book provided an easy to understand explanation of each of the competencies. I particularly liked that each skill was explored individually and that you also learned about the transformational benefits of improving or developing the skill. So, not just the how, but also the why. And, if you were unclear as to what the competency involved, you could even see it in action through the movie suggestions provided. Another useful component of the book was that although written for managers or supervisors to develop skills in their team members, the activities could also be used in an individual setting. The downloadable activities were an added element, which made it easier to share the assignments electronically with participants. As a trainer, I found it very useful that they included Facilitator Competencies for each of the exercises, which provided insight as to how skilled the facilitator should be to achieve success. They also incorporated Facilitator Guidelines for each of the activities, which included: preparation for your session, materials needed, debriefing and reflection questions, and selection of appropriate exercises. Each of these elements will ensure a more successful outcome.

Critique and Feedback

Overall, I really liked this book. It provided a complete overview of EI without becoming too theoretical in its interpretation. It offers simple, easy to implement learning scenarios, which can help every individual and team to develop the competencies necessary to become more emotionally intelligent. As stated in the book: "Exploring and developing our emotional intelligence not only makes us happier, but it makes us able to motivate ourselves, manage stress in our lives, and resolve conflicts with others." And, for most of us, those are goals we strive towards so learning how to achieve them can create a positive outcome whether we're applying the competencies to our personal lives or guiding others in developing the skills.

Reviewed by **Shirley Rowe**

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