Assessment of Emotional Intelligence–Keys to Success in the Workplace

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Introduction

In his book Working With Emotional Intelligence Daniel Goleman explains that the rules for work are changing. He states that a new yardstick is being created. This yardstick is not meant to measure one against the old standards such as general intelligence or training and experience but rather against how well one handles oneself and others. Daniel Goleman goes on to state that these new rules have little to do with what we were told was important in school. Academic ability has little to do with this new yardstick. He states that the new yardstick takes for granted having enough intellectual ability and knowledge to perform the job. It takes into account other personal qualities such as interpersonal awareness, empathy, drive strength, motivation, adaptability, and persistence or a willingness to do whatever needs to be done in order to get the job done. (Goleman, 1998)

What Daniel Goleman is referring to here is that in today's workplace there are a new set of skills that are necessary in order for people to function successfully. These skills address factors that are now called emotional intelligence. Howard Gardner, in this Theory of Multiple Intelligences, suggests that there are many different types of intelligence however there are seven basic intelligences or domains of talent. They are linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic (which dancers and athletes use), intrapersonal (insight into yourself), and interpersonal (understanding of others). Each of these is relatively independent of each other. (Gardner, 1983)

Several psychologists today refer to Howard Gardner's last two intelligences, intrapersonal and interpersonal, as emotional intelligence or the ability to identify your own, as well as others, emotions accurately, express them clearly, and regulate emotions in self and others.

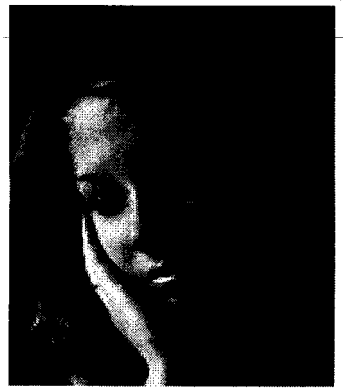
People with high levels of emotional intelligence use their emotions to help motivate themselves (drive strength/motivation), to understand themselves and others (interpersonal awareness), and to help them commit and follow through on a project (commitment). People with emotional intelligence also tend to be effective leaders (sales orientation/leadership), are able to adapt to change and learn new skills (change orientation), and are able to work as members of a team.

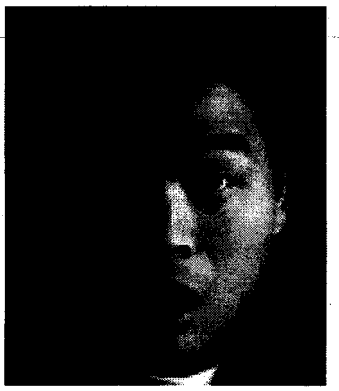
Definition of Emotional Intelligence

Gary Low and Darwin Nelson (1999) defined emotional intelligence as a learned ability to identify, experience, understand, and express human emotions in healthy and productive ways. Emotional intelligence skills are primary factors of motivation and the gateway to lifelong learning and high levels of achievement. Research worldwide indicates that emotional intelligence skills are essential to all learners. (Low and Nelson, 1999)

What Are Emotions?

Webster's New World Dictionary defines emotion as a strong feeling, excitement, a capability of having the feelings aroused to the point of awareness, or complex reactions with both mental and physical manifestations such as love, hate, fear, and anger. Gary Low and Darwin Nelson went on to expand this definition to explain primary emotions. Primary emotions as shown below and are recognized by all people all over the world. The important thing to remember about emotions are that when emotions are experienced in the present and they are labeled quickly and correctly, one can choose how to act. This is a very important concept for when one labels the emotion correctly and as a result choose the correct reaction, positive things occur in one's life. When one labels the emotion incorrectly and chooses an inappropriate course of action, negative things occur in one's life.

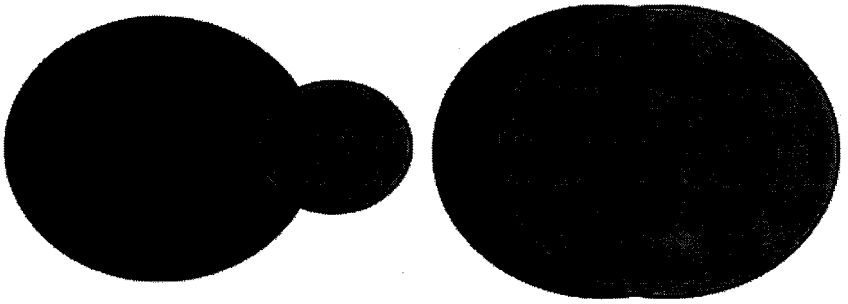




How Can Emotions Be Learned?

Emotions are learned by prior learning experiences. When an emotion is connected to a prior learning experience it is referred to as an emotional attachment. We have an emotional attachment to that which we are first exposed. As a result, we usually prefer people or things we first contact. This is true even in negative situations such as abuse. A person might become attached to hitting or wanting to be hit. While this sounds contrary to basic human logic, the fact still remains – what we are exposed to is what we become familiar with and is what we seek out.

Our emotions are learned through a process of assigning feelings to previous learning experiences. Our emotions lead us to choices in our lives. Our choice indicates our comfort zone.



Our emotional attachments indicate the circle of behaviors in which we prefer to operate within. Our choices indicate our comfort zone. It is not negative to be attached. Attachment is part of the human condition. Attachment indicates value systems. Potential for conflict exists when a person you are communicating with has a different comfort zone than yours. Successful human communication is the result of being able to recognize the differences between your value system and someone else's and to allow for those differences to exist. (Thoelke and Neilson, 1981)

One method of assessing for emotional intelligence is the Personal Skills Map®. The Personal Skills Map is designed to identify emotional intelligence in order to assist users to become successful in life, school and work. It is also designed to identify and remove defensiveness to change as well as to create a buy-in attitude which makes personal change and growth possible. The Personal Skills Map assessment approach is a positive and person-centered guide that suggests possible directions for skills training and learning experiences fostering healthy personal growth and development. The competencies covered in this assessment have been identified as the key competencies needed in a high-functioning individual. The scales included in the Personal Skills Map are:

- **Self-Esteem** - this scale indicates a self-perceived level of personal worth. Our research on this skill shows that it is the most fundamental of all the skills and it relates to major aspects of mental health and healthy personality.

- **Interpersonal Assertion**–this scale indicates how effectively individuals use direct, honest, and appropriate expression of thoughts, feelings and behaviors in dealings with others. It indicates an ability to be direct and honest in communicating with others without violating the rights of the other person.

- **Interpersonal Awareness**–this scale indicates an individuals' evaluation of their abilities for appropriate social, emotional, and physical distance in verbal and non-verbal interactions with others.

- **Empathy**–this scale indicates an individuals' ability to sense, understand, and accept another person's thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Empathy is a primary characteristic of skilled communicators. Persons with strong empathy tend to be sociable and outgoing.

- **Drive Strength/Motivation**–this scale indicates motivation and goal-setting abilities. Drive strength shows an ability to marshal energy and motivation toward the accomplishment of personal goals.

- **Decision Making**–this scale indicates perceived skill in formulating and initiating effective problem-solving procedures. The ability to make decisions is a key ingredient of self-acceptance and positive self-regard.

- **Time Management**–this scale assesses ability to organize and use time to further individual and career goals. Ability to manage time indicates high self-regard, sensitivity to needs and perseverance in completing tasks.

- **Sales Orientation/Leadership**–this scale indicates perceived skill in positively impacting and influencing the actions of other people. The ability to influence others in a positive way is an important aspect of leadership/sales orientation.

- **Commitment Ethic**–this scale indicates perceived skill in completing projects and job assignments dependably and successfully. Persons with strong commitment ethic are usually perceived as dependable and committed by others, are inner-directed and persevere in completing projects regardless of difficulties encountered.

- **Stress Management**–this scale assesses perceived skill in managing stress and anxiety. Persons with skills in managing stress positively are competent managers of time and are flexible, self-assured, stable and self-reliant.

- **Physical Wellness**–this scale reflects the extent to which healthy attitudes and living patterns important to physical health and well being have been established. Physical wellness is highly correlated to positive stress management and high self-esteem. Persons with high scores have developed high levels of self-control with regard to potentially harmful behavior patterns.

- **Interpersonal Aggression**–this scale assesses the degree to which communication styles violate, overpower, dominate or discredit another person's rights, thoughts, feelings or behaviors. High interpersonal aggression is related to the personality characteristics of rebelliousness, resentment and oversensitive response to real or imagined affronts.

- **Interpersonal Deference**–this scale measures the degree to which one's communication style is indirect, self-inhibiting, self-denying and ineffectual for the accurate expression of thoughts, feelings and behaviors. High interpersonal deference is related to the personality characteristics of apprehensiveness, shyness, and over-sensitivity to threat or conflict.

- **Change Orientation**–this scale indicates the degree of motivation and readiness for change in the skills measured by The Personal Skills Map. A high score indicates dissatisfaction with current skills and a strong conviction of the need to make personal changes.

Core Abilities and the Personal Skills Map

	Core Abilities or Competencies	Key Emotional Skills
Part One	Relationships and Interpersonal Communications Under Stress	1. Assertion 2. Aggression – Anger Control 3. Deference – Fear Control
Part Two	Personal Leadership	4. Awareness 5. Empathy 6. Decision Making 7. Leadership – Influence
Part Three	Self Management in Life & Career	8. Drive Strength - Goals 9. Time Management 10. Commitment Ethic 11. Positive Personal Change – Comfort
Part Four	Intrapersonal Development	12. Self-Esteem 13. Stress Management 14. Physical Wellness

The authors of the Personal Skills Map, Gary Low and Darwin Nelson, developed a Personal Skills Model of healthy personality based on the assumption that healthy or skilled living is a result of learning essential personal skills in intrapersonal, interpersonal, and career/life management areas. A person is viewed as possessing all the creative resources necessary for healthy living. Personal growth and change are viewed as a life-long process of recognizing, learning and developing personal skills.

A healthy personality is seen as a process of personal skill development that moves the person toward skilled and creative living that is congruent to the individual values of the person. A lethal or destructive personality is viewed as the result of unresolved impasses to personal growth and the person's failure or lack of knowledge in the process of making personal changes. Self-defeating and destructive living patterns are viewed as the end result of undeveloped personal skills.

Performance Area I: Healthy Relationships and Interpersonal Communication

This performance area of life consists of the skills and competencies essential to establishing and maintaining a variety of strong and healthy relationships. Effective communication is key to positive and healthy relationships. Communication is especially difficult under stressful conditions. Assertion is a powerful emotional skill that helps a person to communicate more effectively, honestly, and appropriately. Aggression and Deference are patterns of communication that need to be converted to the emotional skills of Anger Control/Management and Fear Control/Management.

Performance Area II: Personal Leadership

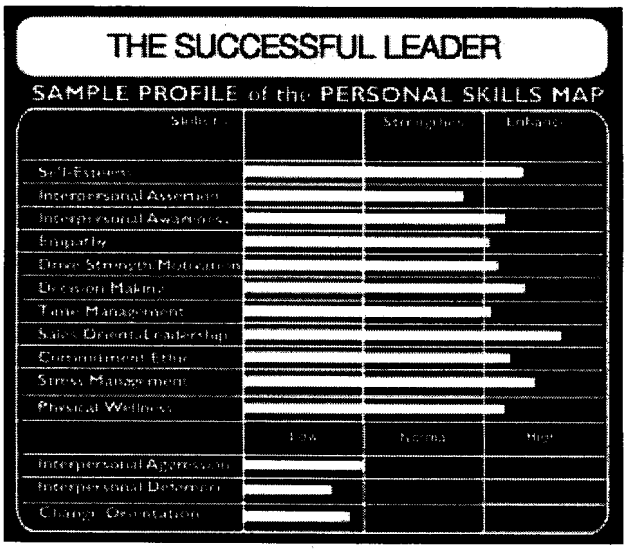
This performance area of life consists of the skills and competencies essential for developing effective leadership centered around the person. Personal Leadership consists of four interrelated and powerful emotional skills. These skills enable a person to lead self positively and to work well with others. Effective people learn and develop appropriate social skills (Awareness); effective people accept and accurately understand others (Empathy); effective people make decisions and solve problems (Decision Making); and effective people influence others in positive ways (Leadership or Sales Orientation). These emotional skills are essential to working effectively in many situations of life involving a wide range of people.

Performance Area III: Self-Management in Life, Family, and Career

This performance area of life consists of the skills and competencies essential to effective self-management. To be productive, healthy, and successful, a person must learn, develop, strengthen, and enhance the emotional skills and abilities that enable the person to manage self. Effective self-management involves three interrelated, powerful emotional skills that enable a person to manage personal motivation, time, follow-through, and change. To be successful, satisfied, and happy, a person must learn to motivate self and achieve meaningful goals in life (Drive Strength); view time in the present and not be unduly worried about the past or future (Time Management); and make commitments and complete projects in a dependable manner (Commitment Ethic). In addition, a person needs to be able to convert a potential problem area (Change Orientation) to the emotional skill of Positive Personal Change.

Performance Area IV: Intrapersonal Development

This performance area of life consists of the skills and competencies essential to emotional learning and self-knowledge. Intrapersonal skills are critical to discovering and using one's personal belief system toward the betterment of self. Intrapersonal skills involve how a person feels about self, values self, and behaves towards self. They also involve one's perception of the future, as well as the management of all types of stress and problems in life. These emotional skills enable people to deal effectively with self (Self-Esteem), with the intense stress, pressure, and demands of daily life and work (Stress Management), and with the need to maintain a healthy lifestyle (Physical Wellness). The quality of life and survival depend on these powerful emotional skills. (Low and Nelson, 2002)



This pattern predicts a person who is a strong leader and is emotionally intelligent. All of the skills are high and many are in the Skill to Enhance area. All of the skills may never reach the Skill to Enhance area because it is hard to use all of these skills on a daily basis. This person should make a good leader because personal skill capacity has been developed. This person could even assist others in their skill development. The high Sales Orientation/Leadership level indicates the ability to have great influence and impact on others. This person feels good about himself/herself and his/her ability to work with others. He/she is inner-driven, follows through, and is able to be organized, to solve problems, and to make good decisions, as well as to communicate in ways that do not hurt him/her or others.

What Employers Want

A recent survey of American employers shows that more than one half the people who work today lack the motivation to keep learning and improving in their job. Four out of ten are not able to work cooperatively with fellow employees, and 19% of those applying for entry-level jobs do not possess enough self-discipline in their work habits. (Harris Education Research Council, 1999)

In a national survey of what employers want in entry-level workers, technical skills are less important than the ability to learn on the job. After that, employers want:

- Ability to learn new skills
- Reading, writing, computation, and oral communication skills
- Adaptability, problem solving and creativity
- Managing personal and professional growth, motivation, and goal setting, planning skills
- Interpersonal skills, teamwork, ability to negotiate differences
- Influencing skills, wanting to make a contribution, leadership

(Carnevale, Gainer and Meltzer, 1999)

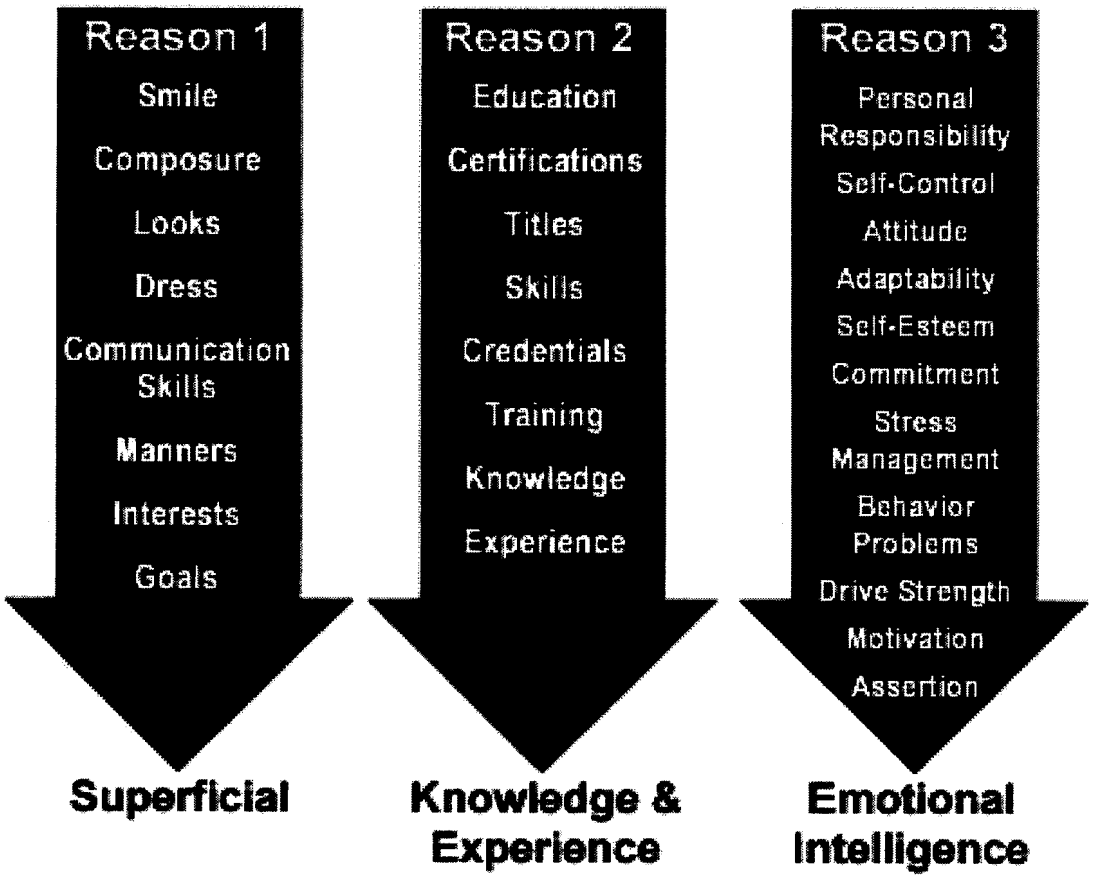
Of the previous skills, only one is focused on academics and the rest are all emotional competencies. Included are emotional intelligence skills such as: interpersonal awareness, empathy, interpersonal assertion, drive strength/motivation, decision making, commitment ethic, sales orientation/leadership, stress management, and change orientation.

Turnover Process

Employee turnover is a serious problem in our workplace today. There are usually two basic types of turnover. The first is a choice made by the employee (quitting) and the second is a choice made by the employer (firing).

Here is how the turnover process works:

Some companies hire for Reason 1, some companies for Reasons 1 and 2, but most companies lose people because of Reason 3.



This being the case, perhaps it is time to pay more attention to Reason 3 – Emotional Intelligence in our hiring practices. Keep in mind that all of the skills in the Reason 3 column can be learned and developed throughout one's lifetime. Emotional intelligence skills can be assessed and learned. Because emotional intelligence can be learned, it can then be taught. The key here is proper identification is required before intervention strategies become useful in the skill enhancement process.

Improving Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

Unlike IQ, EQ can be developed, strengthened, and enhanced throughout one's lifetime. When EQ is improved, it can have an immediate beneficial impact on one's health, one's education, one's relationships, and one's work.

Here are some basic steps to improving Emotional Intelligence.

Step 1. Develop an accurate awareness of strengths and weaknesses (Assessment).

Step 2. A willingness to change must be developed (Change Orientation).

Step 3. Provide skill building activities to improve skill deficiencies (Skill Enhancement).

Step 4. Practice and model new behaviors until they become habits.

Here are some common characteristics of an emotionally intelligent learner:

Emotionally Reactive		Emotionally Intelligent
• Overwhelmed Too Often	vs	Resilient
• Reactive to Stress	vs	Proactive/Planned Strategies In Response to Stressor
• Emotionally Driven Behavior	vs	Intentionally Reflective Behavior
• Self-Doubting	vs	Self-Confident
• Deficit/Weakness Focused	vs	Strength Focused
• Resistant To Change	vs	Flexible/Open to Change
• Aggressive/Non-Assertive Communication Style	vs	Assertive Communicator
• Performance Decreases Under Stress	vs	Performance Improves Under Stress
• Pessimistic/Sarcastic Negative Focus	vs	Optimistic/Hopeful Positive Focus
• Relies on Reactive Habits	vs	Relies on Skills (Positive Habits)
• Makes the Same Mistakes	vs	Learns From Experience

(Low and Nelson, 2002)

The Skill Enhancement system that accompanies the Personal Skills Map is centered around a theory of learning that assumes that the individual organizes and learns information by using both thinking (cognitive) and feeling (emotional) systems.

The Skill Enhancement program is based on eight basic concepts:

1. Success is a process, not a destination. It is the gradual accomplishment of a worthwhile, personal goal that is both challenging and within reach.

2. Failure is not the opposite of success. Failure is a vital and valuable part of the success journey. Fear of failure only causes us to avoid beneficial change.

3. Successful people are those who are willing to do whatever it takes. Successful people look for opportunities to take on extra work or responsibility that will bring them closer to their goals.

4. Learning is often a prerequisite to doing. We must prepare ourselves – through learning – to be effective in doing what needs to be done to achieve our dreams.

5. Learning is change in knowledge, values, attitudes, priorities, and behavior. If learning does not occur, there is no change, no doing, no success.

6. Learning occurs to the extent that we are motivated to change. The learning process continues when we make a true commitment to change.

7. Learning is applicable to the real world when we take steps to integrate that learning into our daily activities.

8. If learning is to fuel the success process, we must continually practice self-awareness and commitment, and apply what we learn to our lives and our work.

The Skill Enhancement program has the following outcomes:

1. Defines the targeted skill.

2. Shows how a lack of the targeted skill interferes with success in life and work.

3. Demonstrates how individual performance can improve with the acquisition of the targeted skill.

4. Provides simple, step-by-step procedures to improve the targeted skill.

5. Creates a personal plan or contract for improving the targeted skill over a 21-day period.

Change Your Thinking – Change Your Life

Some people believe that change is difficult and, therefore, avoid it. The truth is:

- Change is fun and stimulating!
- Change brings success and success is fun!
- Success is a day-by-day process that is easy to accomplish!
- Mistakes are good – they teach us where to change!

This is the truth! The most successful people in all walks of life have demonstrated it. To make this true, users must take charge of their thinking. The Success Profiler will show users a process used by all successful people (almost without thinking!) to take control of their thought processes.

The following procedure for changing how we think is a cornerstone for self improvement. This is how all success, learning, and change begin:

1. First, think something over and over. (This is a conscious process, and we control it.)
2. Eventually come to deeply believe that the repeated thought is true. (This happens automatically.)
3. Daily attitudes begin to reflect this belief. (This, too, happens automatically.)
4. Feelings are strongly affected by attitudes. (This also happens automatically.)
5. Behavior is completely determined by feelings. (This happens automatically, with a little conscious push from all of us.)

Our dominant thoughts will eventually control all of our behavior, whether we realize it or not.

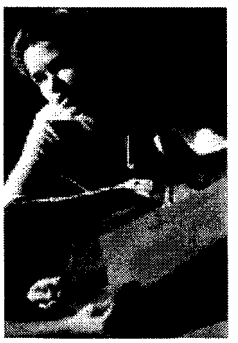
The skill enhancement system provides knowledge (cognitive) and also addresses the changing of habits. The wonderful thing about habits is that they were all learned. Because habits are learned behaviors, they can be unlearned and/or changed. Here is the procedure for changing a habit:

- Change what you say – positive affirmations.
- Your verbal statements control your feelings.
- Your feelings control your thoughts.
- Your thoughts control your behaviors.
- Your behaviors control your habits.

Negative inner self learning:

Step 1 Constantly criticize behavior.

Step 4 Criticize results which leads to the continuation of the bad behavior.



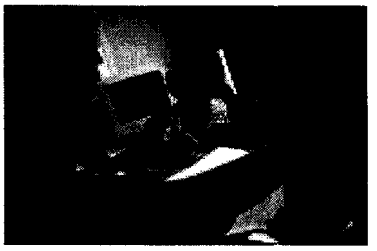
Step 3 Try hard to perform the behavior correctly.

Step 2 Command oneself to change the behavior.

Within each of us is a critic. This critic can tear us down or build us up. It is up to us to identify our dominant thoughts about ourself (awareness). If our thoughts are more negative than positive, then something should be done to change the negatives to positives. Here is a simple and very effective way to do this. This procedure is key to the intervention strategies of the Personal Skills Map. The intervention strategies address both the cognitive as well as the emotional learning systems to effect change. Here is how it works:

Positive inner self learning:

Step 4 Observe the results until the desired behavior is achieved and becomes a good habit.



Step 1 Observe existing behavior without judgment or criticism..

Step 3 Allow the activity to occur, again reserving any judgment.

Step 2 Decide what changes are necessary and recall the desired performance or improvement through remembering the correct process or procedure.

(Gallwey, 1973)

> Whether you think you can or think you can't, you're probably right.
>
> —Henry Ford

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