

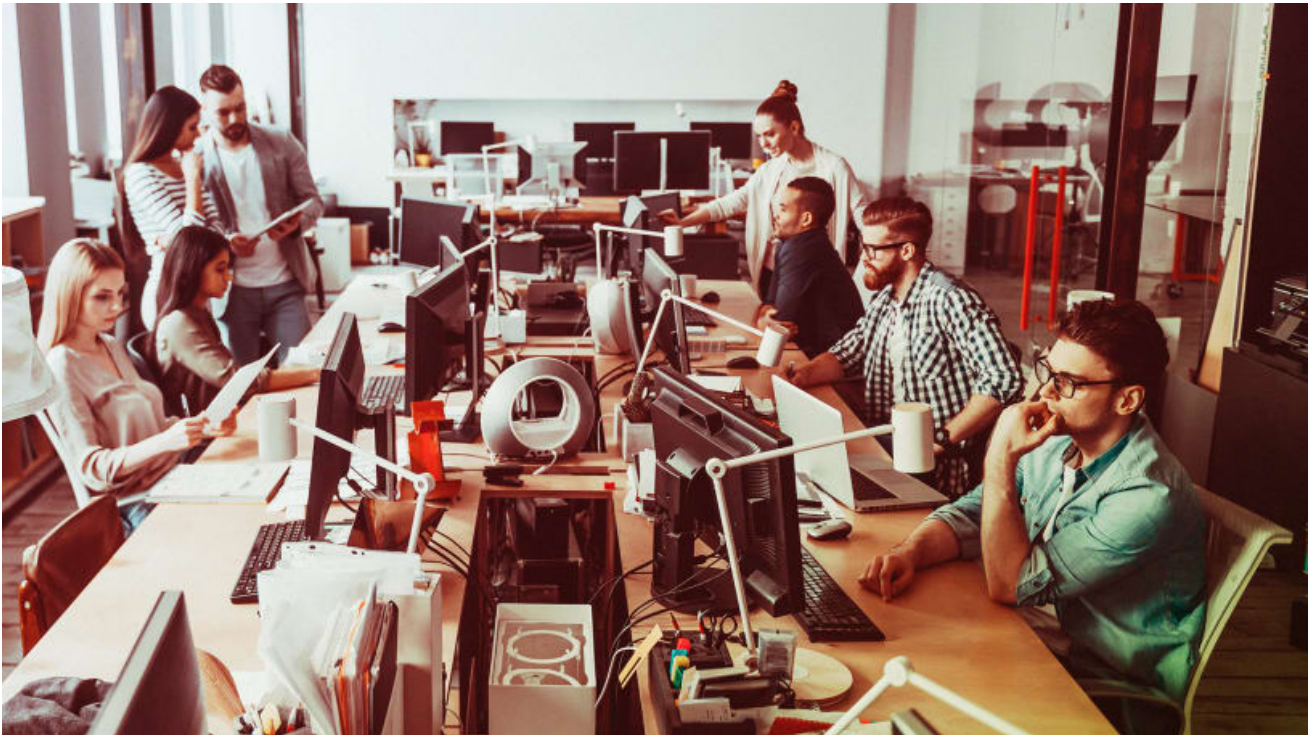
Emotional Intelligence Is The Real Secret To Getting Promoted Faster

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Your technical skills probably won't secure you that management role, but these seven habits might.



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By [Harvey Deutschendorf](#) 4 minute Read

There was a time not too long ago when the person with the most technical knowledge got promoted fastest. But that's often no longer the case.

Once someone gets promoted, [technical skills become less necessary](#), and interpersonal ones become more critical in their place. You've probably already heard that [emotional intelligence is a top factor in companies' hiring decisions](#), but it plays a major role in how employers choose to promote their team members, too. This isn't exactly news; in [a 2011 Career Builder survey](#) of more than 2,600 hiring managers and HR professionals, 71% said they valued emotional intelligence over IQ in general, and 75% said they're typically more likely to promote an employee with high emotional intelligence and a comparatively lower IQ than one where that ratio is flipped.

So when you're gunning for your next promotion, your main objective might be to dial up [those so-called "soft skills"](#) in order to show your boss you've got the emotional intelligence it takes to excel. Here are a few skills you'll want

to make sure your boss can give you high marks for.

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1. You Can Manage Your Emotions Under Pressure

As your responsibilities increase, so will the pressure and demands on you. That means you'll need to stay calm, keep your feelings in check, and avoid reacting impulsively to every crisis (or perceived crisis) that pops up. Your boss needs to expect that you'll handle tough situations smoothly and calmly. Anyone who's reporting to you will need reassurance and support when the stress starts to increase, so if you want to show that you're management material, it's smart to [model that poise and composure](#) early on.

2. You Listen In A Way That Makes Others Feel Heard

Lots of workplace crises can be avoided simply by making people feel heard and understood. That one reason why [hiring managers cite listening](#) as a critical job skill. Even if somebody's idea or advice isn't acted upon, they need to feel like their contribution is valued, and you don't need to bend over backwards or condescend to your colleagues to do that—you just have to listen actively to them. As a manager, your team's productivity depends on how motivated they feel to do their best, and that begins with making them feel heard. It never hurts to [brush up on those listening behaviors](#).

3. You're Quick To Show Empathy

Everyone has a life outside of work that can affect their performance on the job. Family members and friends fall ill, relationships end, and lots of other life events can crop up. The best bosses aren't those who just shepherd projects along with ruthless efficiency—they're ones who treat their team members as actual people. Fortunately, it takes no technical training whatsoever to show your coworkers a little empathy. Being sensitive to the things that affect them in the office can make all the difference between helping somebody through a really hard week and leaving them angry, resentful, and looking for a new job.

4. You Take Responsibility For Your Mistakes

Emotionally intelligent people are good at taking their missteps in stride. That helps them [learn and improve faster](#) after a slip-up. Why? Because they're less likely to see the mistake as a personal failure—a potentially [powerful mind-set that employers look for](#) in up-and-coming leaders. Instead of fearing criticism and rebuke, you'll want to show your boss that your bigger fear is not taking the initiative to try something new. So try not to wallow in failure the next time you make an error—own up to it as quickly as you can, and take the reins in finding a solution. That's exactly what emotionally intelligent managers are expected to do.

5. You're Always Open To Feedback

Keeping your ego in check can also help you stay open to constructive criticism—especially the kind that less emotionally intelligent people might find hard to take. Make sure you show your manager that you're always looking to improve, even in small ways. Companies are more willing to promote employees who see feedback as a chance to grow, not a risk to their credibility or as some kind of personal slight. Demonstrating this is actually pretty easy; it all starts by assuming that your boss has good intentions whenever they critique your work.

6. You Can Work Through Conflicts

Getting promoted means you'll have to deal with the inevitable conflicts among the people reporting to you. Even the most serene workplaces occasionally have mini power struggles and squabbles—that's only natural. But the most effective managers aren't fazed by these disputes. They can approach them without become emotionally involved themselves, look for common ground, and listen to all sides with an eye toward the bigger picture. That isn't always easy, but if you can show you're an effective mediator, you'll likely show that you'll also be an effective manager.

7. You Earn Others' Respect (For The Right Reasons)

This last factor is the sum of the previous six skills. People who are able to keep their emotions under control, listen to others, and treat them fairly and authentically earn the respect of those they work with. They don't intimidate, condescend, or hog the spotlight in order to attract their colleagues' attention. Being approachable is actually a hugely undervalued leadership skill, but it's one emotionally intelligent people find natural. It's just about seeing your own role as helping others succeed. If your boss notices that's the approach you're taking to your work, they'll be more likely to consider you for a promotion—and they'll have few reasons to regret it afterward.

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[Reinventing Memorial Day: Beyond The Mattress Blowout Sale](#)

From the archive, we pose a question that's still as relevant as ever: Why has Memorial Day, like so many of our national holidays, been reduced to appliance sales, fast food specials, and vacation deals?



By [Steve McCallion](#) 3 minute Read



*Remembering Memorial Day is an opportunity to reconnect the American Experience with its core promise.
Rock Island National Cemetery, Arsenal Island, Rock Island, Illinois, Memorial Day weekend, 2008
Photo (cc) by flickr user Dustin C Oliver*

With the recent near-collapse of our economy, the ways in which we understand and celebrate national holidays seem particularly challenged. This erosion of meaning is just one of many examples of the growing gap between the promise of America—freedom and opportunity through sacrifice and unity—and how people experience Brand

America. Like any brand, America will have to close this gap to thrive in the future.

Remembering Memorial Day is not about believing in war. It's an opportunity to reconnect the American Experience with its core promise, and reinvigorate the nation's signs, symbols, myths, and metaphors with authenticity and relevance. The following is the first in a series of thoughts exploring how design thinking might help do this.



In this era of convenience and instant gratification it's difficult for us to stop and take the time to remember. Members of the Arizona National Guard carry the casket of U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Glen Jacob Whetten, past his grieving family during a dignified transfer ceremony at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz. Photo (cc) by flickr user The National Guard

We Start With Memorial Day

Memorial Day began as a day of remembrance for fallen servicemen, first observed on May 30th, 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery. From its inception, this was a solemn occasion. Businesses closed for the day, and towns large and small held parades ending at the local cemetery, where elegies were delivered and prayers offered for the fallen. Citizens tended the graves of the honored dead, decorating them with flowers and flags.

For its first hundred years of observance, Memorial Day was both authentic and relevant. Parades made sense back then, because they were effective at connecting with communities. Shutting down cities and businesses was a powerful sign of unity and sacrifice, in recognition of the price a few had paid so others could enjoy freedom and opportunity.

While some exceptional examples of remembrance persevere, for most Americans Memorial Day has become just another long weekend: a mark of summer's onset, a day when you don't have to plug the parking meter. If you are in the market for a new mattress or some outdoor furniture, you'll have plenty of sales to choose from. Should you happen to drive by a military cemetery or government building on your way out of town, you might see miniature flags clustered around headstones or flags at half-mast, but little else.



The meaning of Memorial Day has been displaced by our nation's drive for convenience and commerce. Linens'n'Things, Nike and Macy's offer customers discounts to shop on Memorial Day.

A quick survey of friends and coworkers revealed plenty of positive associations with Memorial Day—barbecues, road trips, ball games, and the like—but little relating to its original purpose, and certainly nothing connected to its initial promise of freedom and opportunity, and collective sacrifice. “I should be thinking about something else,” we may briefly wonder, “but it’s really about the beginning of summer.”

In this era of convenience and instant gratification—when mobile screens hold more interest than parades; when regulations are needed to prevent texting while driving; when TV idols are created in the time it takes to sing a song—it’s difficult for any brand to break through the noise and be relevant. For Memorial Day, it’s particularly hard because it requires us to stop and take the time to remember.

So what’s the role of unity and sacrifice in a world obsessed with instant gratification? Can we make Memorial Day relevant again? How do we reconnect a new generation to the authentic American promise? In my next couple of posts we will explore specifically how the meaning of Memorial Day was lost and what we can do about it.

More from Steve McCallion’s [Reinventing Memorial Day series](#)

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Steve

McCallion, executive creative director at design and innovation consultancy Ziba Design, is a skilled innovation architect and brand strategist. His groundbreaking work includes redefining Umpqua Bank's role as an anchor for community prosperity, creating Sirius Satellite Radio's award-winning experience for the "iPod fatigued," and working with real estate developers Gerding Edlen to create more meaningful neighborhoods. Other clients include Xerox, Black & Decker, Whirlpool, FedEx, McDonald's, Coleman, Kenwood, and Compaq. Steve's primary charge is to foster Ziba's consumer experience practice. He founded the company's award-winning Design Research and Planning practice group, which has developed proprietary research and design planning methodologies.

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