

Cultivating Emotional Intelligence

Developing emotional intelligence is a lifelong journey that requires dedication and practice. Here are some practical tips to enhance your EQ and overcome adversity:

1. **Self-Awareness:** Take time for self-reflection to understand your emotions, triggers, and patterns of behavior. Journaling, mindfulness practices, and seeking feedback from trusted peers can aid in this process.
2. **Self-Regulation:** Learn to manage your emotions effectively by practicing techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, and reframing negative thoughts. Setting boundaries and adopting healthy coping mechanisms are also crucial aspects of self-regulation.
3. **Social Awareness:** Tune into the emotions of those around you by practicing active listening and empathy. Pay attention to nonverbal cues and strive to understand the perspectives of others, even in challenging situations.
4. **Relationship Management:** Build and nurture positive relationships by communicating openly, resolving conflicts constructively, and showing appreciation for others. Invest time in developing your interpersonal skills and fostering a supportive network.

Real-Life Applications

Emotional intelligence finds practical applications in various aspects of life, from the workplace to personal relationships. In professional settings, leaders with high EQ are better equipped to inspire and motivate their teams, navigate conflicts, and foster a positive work culture. Similarly, individuals

with strong EQ tend to have healthier personal relationships, as they can communicate effectively, resolve conflicts, and cultivate empathy and understanding.

Additional Resources

To delve deeper into the topic of emotional intelligence and its role in overcoming adversity, consider exploring the following resources:

❖ *"Emotional Intelligence 2.0"* by Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves – This bestselling book offers practical strategies for enhancing EQ and thriving in both personal and professional domains.

❖ *"The Power of Emotional Intelligence"* (<https://hbr.org/2015/04/the-power-of-emotional-intelligence>) – This Harvard Business Review article highlights the importance of emotional intelligence in leadership and provides insights from research and real-world examples.

❖ *"Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ"* by Daniel Goleman – Goleman's seminal work explores the significance of emotional intelligence in achieving success and fulfillment in life.

By honing our emotional intelligence skills, we can navigate life's challenges with grace and resilience. As we cultivate self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, and relationship management, we empower ourselves to overcome adversity and thrive in the face of uncertainty. ♦

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"Emotional intelligence is the master key that unlocks the doors to understanding ourselves and others, illuminating paths of empathy and connection in a world yearning for genuine human bonds."

Problems

"The only difference between a problem and a solution is that people understand the solution."

~ Charles Kettering

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For example, a company sees its consumers are leaning more heavily towards eco-friendly products so it will refresh its strategy to also focus on that target market's preferences.

The worst kind of business strategy pivots are “reactive” versus “proactive”. This is often when a business waits too long to innovate or remain modern to its target audience. Businesses are forced to rethink their entire model which may force layoffs or restructurings because of long-term profit losses.

In stark comparison to that scenario, the best pivots in business are always completed strategically and proactively to keep a company at the top of its game. Business strategy pivots do not always mean layoffs, spending cuts, or intensive “round the clock” crisis reparations. Great business strategy pivots are executed in the name of growth, opportunity, and with long-term success in mind for the company, its staff, its customers, and its investors.



When do I know it's time to pivot?

It's time to pivot if your quarterly reports are feeling that you could meet customer expectations better, shift (or expand) your target audience to boost sales, or to accommodate major changes in your industry or the economy in general.

Being flexible, especially during times of change (like COVID-19) can be key to surviving and thriving as a small business. Not to mention the morale boost that a pivot may provide your employees and investors as you prioritize innovation and better service delivery in your existing market share.

How to execute a great business strategy pivot

- **Assess your current situation**

Take the time from the outset of your potential business strategy pivot to really take stock of where your business is currently at. List your strengths, weaknesses and potential opportunities. Without a level of self-awareness and reflection you won't be able to formulate a plan that makes sense for your business in its next evolutionary stage.

- **Innovation includes all voices**

Innovation is best found in all corners of a business. Don't take a single idea and run with it without consulting the rest of your employees.

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One Minute Ideas

A One-Minute Problem Solver

When you want people at your next meeting to think creatively to solve a problem, watch your language. How you frame a problem can make it more difficult for others to think creatively.

Here's a one-minute exercise from creativity expert Michael Michalko that highlights the difference:

Display to your group these letters: C-S-R-I-E-X-L-E-A-T-T-T-E-R-E-S. Then ask "How can you cross out six letters to form a common word?"

After they attack this problem for a while, ask them to reconsider it by asking "In what ways might you cross out six letters to form a common word?"

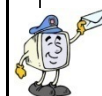
The second question, Michalko says, opens the door for more than one possible solution and that stirs creativity.

(Answer: Crossing out S-I-X-L-E-T-T-E-R-E-S leaves the word C-R-E-A-T-E.)

Suggestion: Use Michalko's "invitational" phrase *In what ways might ...* to introduce a problem-solving statement.

Source: *Cracking Creativity: The Secrets of Creative Genius*, by Michael Michalko

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Focus groups, strategy sessions, and discussions with your customers may all be things that you want to engage in ahead of launching a fully formed business strategy pivot. Be sure that you're including diverse perspectives and opinions on product changes as you don't want to miss the mark or alienate a customer segment.

- **Reassess your audience and their problems**

If your product isn't selling – it could be the way that you're engaging your audience in your marketing, that the product doesn't appeal to your audience, or that the branding is no longer relevant to the audience. Don't overlook your target customer and don't be afraid to pivot your business strategy to meet their needs. At the end of the day, your success hinges on customers and should focus on exceeding their expectations.

- **Assess your competition**

You can take some serious notes from your competition as you consider a business strategy pivot. Whether you are able to uncover what they're doing well or what they're failing at – your business stands to win by taking a look outside of your own four walls. Make sure that any business strategy pivot you want to implement is do-able but take advantage of things your business may have that others don't (like the ability to move and implement quickly as a start-up).

- **Ensure you have a strategy in place**

You have to make sure that you're not abandoning your current path for a half-baked pivot. Spend the time and money to ensure that your strategy is ready to launch before you make the pivot. Make sure that you give it a timeframe for success and don't give up on the pivot too early (but also be open to recognizing if you need to re-pivot or if the pivot is a failure). ♦

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*"The difference between mere management and leadership is communication."
~ Winston Churchill*

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