



Feelings that Lead

Instead of pushing emotions aside, effective leaders recognize them as valuable data. According to the *Harvard Business Review*, emotional intelligence starts with awareness and leads to stronger teams and better decisions. Here's how to tap into it:

Notice Emotional Signals

Pay attention to physical and behavioral cues such as tight shoulders, silence in a meeting, or a shift in energy. These are signals, not distractions.

Name Emotions Precisely

Avoid vague terms like “stressed” or “fine.” Build a richer emotional vocabulary to improve clarity and reduce reactivity for yourself and your team.

Explore the Need Behind the Feeling

Emotions point to unmet needs or values. Ask: *What is this emotion trying to tell me?* Extend that curiosity to others to uncover what may be unspoken.

Normalize Emotional Expression

Model openness by acknowledging shared stress or inviting honest reflection. When emotions are accepted, trust and performance grow. Using your Crucial Conversations skills you might say, “I noticed...(share a fact)” and “I’m beginning to wonder...(share your story),” then ask, “What’s your perspective? (ask for their story).” When emotions are shared and understood, trust and performance can grow.

If you would like to learn more about Emotional Intelligence, check out the Learning and [Leadership Development Course Catalog](#) to see when this class is offered!

-Learning and Leadership Development

Harvard Business Review (2025, October 8). *Emotions are a Leadership Asset*. LinkedIn. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/emotions-leadership-asset-harvard-business-review-m2upe>