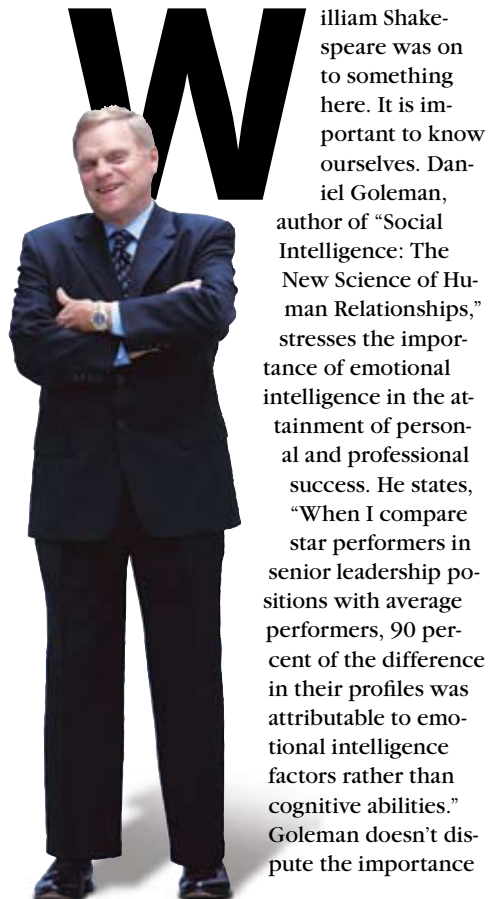


TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE BY KENNETH A. "BUZZ" SHAW

## KNOW YOURSELF



**W**illiam Shakespeare was on to something here. It is important to know ourselves. Daniel Goleman, author of "Social Intelligence: The New Science of Human Relationships," stresses the importance of emotional intelligence in the attainment of personal and professional success. He states, "When I compare star performers in senior leadership positions with average performers, 90 percent of the difference in their profiles was attributable to emotional intelligence factors rather than cognitive abilities." Goleman doesn't dispute the importance

of general intelligence; rather he is saying that at some point emotional intelligence kicks in as a way of distinguishing the great from the good.

Goleman believes there are five major components of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skill. To me, the most important by far is self-awareness and I am going to tell you why.

Self-aware leaders can realistically assess their strengths/weaknesses, likes/dislikes and so on. They know themselves. It puts them in the best position to make maximum use of their abilities but also to better assess what kind of team they need to be effective.

Of course, we do spend a lot of time fooling ourselves, so we need to be careful. But we can and must try harder to be objective. One way is to ask others how they see us and compare it to our own views. Another is to use one of the various personal inventories available for this purpose, have others complete the same inventory and compare results.

The most popular inventory is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, often used in the business world. It helps us examine ourselves on the dimensions of: extroversion versus introversion, sensing versus intuition, thinking versus feeling and judging versus perceiving. I have taken the Myers-Briggs a half-dozen times and my results are always the same. My loved ones also agree that the profile describes me. So, either I have effectively fooled myself, the inventory, and my loved ones or it is a helpful way of describing who I am.

And there is no shortage of other self-assessments. One I particularly like is by Bob Philips and Kimberly Alyn. In their book, "How to Deal with Annoying People," they describe four social (read leadership) styles: analyticals, drivers, amiables and expressives.

Use a personal inventory or just try to explain yourself to yourself, but be sure to validate your views by getting the perspective of others. Knowing yourself makes you a more effective leader; it can also help you pick your team.

We have a tendency to want to work with people just like ourselves, even if we don't realize it. But this doesn't give us the strongest team. The driver who moves quickly, is hard working, decisive and somewhat controlling needs an analytical type to ensure thoughtful, disciplined decisions even if it takes longer to get them. Amiables remind us of the need to include the human factor and expressives often come up with that breakthrough idea that puts us ahead of the competition. While those different from us are annoying at times, they offer a way of ensuring our effectiveness. It makes our team more than the sum of its parts.

First it is important to know ourselves better — self-awareness — and to use this information to be a better leader and team builder. It is not too late to start. I think I will take the Myers-Briggs again. **S**

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Kenneth Shaw also makes his expertise available to the public through a new leadership podcast series drawn from his book, "The Intentional Leader." The podcasts are available online at <http://whitman.syr.edu/shaw/podcasts.asp>.