

PODCASTS SERIES AS A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSING EMOTIONAL, COGNITIVE, AND SOCIAL LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

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ABSTRACT. The present paper aims to analyze how successful leaders develop their competencies, along with the level of interconnection between emotional, cognitive and social competencies. In this context, the main objectives of the study are: to analyze their development, as well as to identify interdependent relationships.

Through the qualitative methodological framework, the research addresses an in-depth analysis of the development and interconnection of essential dimensions, such as emotional self-awareness, confidence and self-worth, innovative and strategic thinking, the ability to coach others, and inspiration.

The results highlight the central role of emotional competence in supporting the other dimensions of leadership. Emotional self-awareness contributes to the development of innovative and strategic thinking by stimulating intuition, authenticity in decision-making and resilience, but also by reducing the influence of the ego. Socially, it facilitates the coaching and the ability to inspire, while self-worth supports a constructive relationship with failure. It was also found that there is an interdependence between cognitive and social competencies, although to a lesser extent. Therefore, given the major influence of emotional competencies on leadership development, it is recommended to integrate them as a central element in training programs.

Keywords: leadership competencies; emotional competencies; cognitive competencies; social competencies; podcasts.

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Introduction and literature review

Throughout the last several decades, the study of leadership competencies has significantly broadened, influencing both scholarly research and organizational practices. Nevertheless, the conceptualization and implementation of these competencies are still constrained, as numerous institutions continue to regard leadership competency models as fixed frameworks rather than dynamic abilities (Azhar & Ayobami, 2025). A competency has four main characteristics, according to the KSAO model: (“k” – *knowledge*) knowledge of general concepts, (“s” – *skills*) skills to put concepts into practice, (“a” – *abilities*) general skills and (“o” – *other characteristics*) other relevant components (Fischer & Neubert, 2015). Leadership competencies are divided into three categories, according to the three types of intelligence: emotional, cognitive and social (Boyatzis, 2007). Elsbach et al. (2026) refer to leadership as a dynamic process that is shaped by the traits and behaviors of leaders, the nature of followers, and the environment in which leadership is enacted. Effective leadership demands a tailored approach, wherein each manager cultivates a distinct and clear understanding of leadership that is informed by their individual context, personality, and skills (Trost, 2025).

Emotional intelligence

Goleman (1995/2008) refers to *emotional intelligence* as self-reflection or observation that results in identifying, understanding and managing an emotion in oneself or in others. Self-awareness is important to cope with change. Once emotions in oneself, such as anxiety, are managed, the leader can help other members to cooperate. Relationships that are based on mutual trust practice honest, unfiltered communication, which facilitates solving problems in a shorter time. When employees feel safe, it will become natural and comfortable for them to express their own ideas and opinions, facilitating innovation and resulting in a thriving organization. The leader’s emotional competencies create a catalytic reaction: from the leader to the employees, from the employees to the wider society, depending on the vision and goals of the organization. Employees whose managers have high levels of emotional intelligence stay with the company longer, and 85% of leaders’ competencies are emotional intelligence competencies.

Leaders who know their emotions make better decisions, managing to make intuitive choices (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001).

The *emotional leadership competencies* identified by Goleman et al. (2013/2018) are: emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment, self-confidence, self-control, transparency, adaptability, ambition, initiative and optimism. In addition to these, the following have been identified: conveying security, resilience and decision-making.

Emotional leadership competencies

Self-awareness

Goleman et al. (2013/2018) explain emotional self-awareness in leadership as the leader's connection to "*inner signals*", understanding how they influence their actions and performance. They know their values well, are guided by them, and "*can often intuit the best course of action*", seeing beyond the current situation. One of these *signals* referred to is intuition. A leader who has a high level of self-awareness naturally allows himself to be prompted by this instinctive feeling when acting. There is a strong connection between vision and intuition, as it goes beyond consciously analyzed data. Hallo and Nguyen (2021) suggest that intuition can provide a starting point for the critical thinking process and, compared to conscious data analysis, intuition can be approached as a shortcut to decision-making, and this can be something that develops gradually, based on the accumulation of knowledge, or it can be unpredictable, spontaneous.

Emotional self-awareness involves setting principles and values that the leader allows himself to be guided by in making decisions. These ethical principles are built on the basis of previous experiences or within the process in which the leader is currently, and reflect the extent to which the leader has them for himself and for others. The loyalty that the leader has towards this ethical code, determines him to bring it to the organization, for the good of the people he leads (Azuka, 2009). The integrity of the leader, for example, has a direct impact on the performance of the people he leads (Gea, 2016). Goleman et al. (2013/2018) argue that emotional self-awareness involves an assessment and understanding of one's own feelings, strengths and weaknesses. Good leaders do not exaggerate when they self-analyze and do not try to hide from others when they make mistakes. This attitude benefits the people the leader leads, as people are naturally attracted to authenticity, and transparency can facilitate interpersonal connection.

A study by Eurich (2018) shows that emotional self-awareness is divided into two categories: internal and external. The internal one refers to clear knowledge of one's own passions, values, reactions, feelings, weaknesses,

and how they influence others. The external one refers to how leaders perceive themselves to be seen by others, and thus are more open to working on their weaknesses to improve their relationship with the people they lead. This study contradicts the idea that experience increases the level of emotional self-awareness. One way to cultivate this leadership skill is to be open to criticism from other people in authority or employees. Introspection often does not work, because many people practice it incorrectly and end up criticizing themselves severely. Instead of analyzing past events, leaders will increase their level of emotional self-awareness if they ask themselves the question “*What?*” can I do well at the moment or in the future, or “*Which?*” are those things, thoughts, patterns, that no longer need to be taken into account in the future. Based on these studies, emotional self-knowledge has a possible contribution to the development of social skills (coaching and inspiration) and in the development of innovative thinking.

Confidence and self-worth

In the case of *self-confidence*, Hollenbeck and Hall (2024) argue that there are several ways in which self-confidence could be acquired, such as the experiences we and those around us have, persuasion from other people, and managing emotions in various contexts and moments. The study highlights three important aspects related to self-confidence. The first is that this competence is an assessment of one’s own capacity to do something as well as possible and is recognized as a specific element of effective leadership, and this capacity refers to the entirety of the leader’s abilities and resources, related to the degree of difficulty of the task. The second is the idea that self-confidence is a way of thinking that can be right or wrong, depending on the correctness of the data that is judged. It can also be a perception that the leader has on the difficulty of the task or his ability to perform it. The third aspect is that it stands out in relation to a task. This can be developed by changing the way one perceives one’s own capabilities or task. The fourth aspect highlighted is the possibility of changing the level of self-confidence by changing the perception of the difficulty of the task to be performed or one’s own abilities. A fifth aspect that the paper addresses is the distinction that must be made between self-confidence and self-esteem, which is “*a judgment of self-worth*”. The sixth aspect refers to repeated cycles of exercises through which it is possible to develop this competence. In addition, several characteristics of leaders with a high level of self-confidence are listed: they find solutions much more easily, have much higher goals, are open to more combinations of opportunities. Leaders have the responsibility to inspire the people they coordinate too with self-confidence. Thus, self-confidence has a possible contribution to the development of social and cognitive competencies analyzed.

Regarding *self-worth*, Fenton (2022) believes that it is the competency that determines the success of a leader most strongly. Therefore, leaders with a low level of self-worth feel that they are never good enough, but those with a high level of self-worth understand that they are constantly learning. The study highlights three main aspects related to the development of self-worth: recognizing the current level of self-worth, consciously choosing to increase self-worth, and constantly practicing increasing self-worth. This development involves practices such as transforming moments of failure into learning moments and overcoming fear. Furthermore, self-worth can be conditioned by certain factors, such as the need for approval, appearance, living in accordance with a set of moral values, comparison with others, academic or work performance.

There have been developed several theories that support the development of self-worth. One of these is called psychoanalytic analysis, which presents how, what specialists call the “*superego*”, suppresses thoughts that do not fit into a belief, a set of learned values or standards. Another theory is transactional analysis, through which leaders model their self-worth according to the way other people live, but this is a model that harms the leader's behavior. The starting point for self-worth is *emotional self-knowledge*. For the leader who has unconditional self-worth, his or her mere existence is enough to have a high level of self-worth. Leaders who have conditional self-worth have long-term internal conflicts (Birni & Eryilmaz, 2024).

The role of a leader is to encourage the growth of the self-worth of the people he leads, especially when they demonstrate ambition, determination and the desire to develop (van Dierendonck & Driehuizen, 2015). For example, if the leader conditions his self-worth on his performance compared to the performance of others, he will always have a feeling of dissatisfaction and failure, he will be constantly in a competition, trying to prove his merit to himself and others. These negative feelings will not allow him to enjoy victories, to see failure in a healthy way and will affect the relationships he has with the team. If he conditions his self-worth on something positive, he will be freed from the stress of competition and internal conflicts. Thus, he will focus on how he can train others, on encouraging them, especially having this perspective of the fact that people are different from each other, have different strengths, different passions, different learning styles. Because leaders with high levels of self-worth have a healthy perspective on failure, there is a possible connection between developing self-worth and developing innovative thinking, given that the latter involves approaching situations in an unusual manner.

Cognitive intelligence

Cognitive intelligence refers to the ability to think systematically and recognize patterns (Boyatzis, 2007). In other words, it is logical and strategic

thinking. We can thus understand why the initial theories related to *intelligence quotient* (IQ) stated that it cannot be modified (Goleman, 1995/2008). Although it does not predict success to the same extent as emotional intelligence (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001), cognitive intelligence has an important role in leadership, given the level of cognitive challenges that come with the role of leader (manager, in particular). IQ predicts how well cognitive challenges will be managed (Goleman, 1995/2008), and cognitive intelligence is the first step to a leadership position; without it, “*access is denied*” (Goleman et al., 2013/2018). Some of the challenges a leader may face are: periods of crisis, a large number of responsibilities, the high level of information processed, distraction, and the organization’s need to remain competitive.

Cognitive skills are divided into: (a) creative thinking, and (b) critical thinking (Sun & Lau, 2009). A cognitive skill that belongs to critical thinking is the ability to analyze information and situations (Boyatzis, 2007; Cherniss & Goleman, 2001). In addition, the following cognitive skills have been identified: innovative thinking, problem solving, time management, the ability to memorize and learn, strategic thinking, concentration, decision-making.

The leader sets a standard for the way of thinking and approaching situations, giving the team a direction towards achieving its goals. Thus, the statement “*all eyes turn to the leader*” may not be valid only in the case of emotional intelligence, as stated by Goleman et al. (2013/2018). Facilitating learning in the organization is one of the most important leadership competencies, introduced into the organization by the leader’s interest in his own development in knowledge and his own performance (Giles, 2016), which tells us that the way and the level in which it is introduced depends on the leader. One of the first theories on *social intelligence* claims that this type of intelligence can be assessed by studying the individual’s behavior in society, the level of general knowledge he has about the society in which he lives, taking into account his personality type (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001). In a business context, a leader lacking these social skills could be seen as a repulsive person whose presence creates discomfort. Therefore, their position of authority may not be taken seriously, certainly not to the same extent as a leader who knows how to pay proper attention to those around them.

Cognitive leadership competencies

Innovative thinking

Innovative thinking has as its starting point creative thinking, and the latter has been considered by many to be a gift that people are born with. However, de Bono (1993/2012) presents some techniques through which creativity can be

developed. Since specialists claim that innovative thinking means putting creative ideas into practice, it is implicit that innovative thinking can be developed, just like creative thinking. Methods for developing creativity are:

- *"The six thinking hats"* – refers to different techniques that bear the names of hats associated with different colors. The white hat refers to the current information held, the information that needs to be obtained and the method of obtaining it. The red hat means the emphasis placed particularly on feelings, sensations, instinct. The black hat refers to a cautious approach to decision-making. The yellow hat means a conscious effort to see the potential that each and every idea has. This is a rational and optimistic approach. The green hat involves the challenge of finding alternative solutions. The blue hat is the design of a plan, a strategy, to organize the creative process effectively.

- *"The creative challenge"* – this approach to leadership implies dissatisfaction with current methods of solving a problem. Such an attitude justifies the analysis of new possibilities. Through creative challenge, the leader seeks a very clear *"Why?"* for the current course of action, and if this is not satisfactory enough, he will seek a new method of solving the problem, which is well justified. Creative challenge can be achieved through three methods. The first is *"blocking"*, which completely eliminates the possibility of acting using the existing method, thus forcing the leader to look for a new method. The second is *"escape"* and refers to the removal of an aspect that dominates the leader's thinking when he wants to act, in such a way that he can find new solution methods. The last method is *"giving up"*, which refers to the awareness that the problem does not need a new solution method.

- *"Challenging the shaping factors"* – involves challenging certain factors that influence the way leaders think and, implicitly, their actions. This challenge paves the way for new innovative methods of action. The shaping factors are: *the dominant concept, the assumptions, the limits, the essential factors, the avoidance factors, the either/or polarizations*. *The dominant concept* refers to the fixation on a single idea about solving the problem, preventing innovative thinking. *Hypotheses* are the assumptions that influence the way a problem is solved and that must be removed in order to discover other methods. *Limits* can be challenged or imposed, both variants being challenges that give rise to new ideas. *Essential factors* are factors that are absolutely necessary and justify the current way of acting. *Avoidance factors* are those that leaders naturally want to avoid, but challenging them means removing the need to avoid them. *Either/or polarizations* mean considering several variants simultaneously, proving that the situation can be seen from two perspectives. Contesting it means refusing to view it from only the two perspectives.

Strategic thinking

Strategic thinking in leadership involves the leader's understanding of both the external environment and the company's internal capabilities. At the same time, the leader must know how the organization influences the external environment or how it responds to changes in it (depending on the company's positioning on the market). At the heart of this competence are certain skills, such as noticing emerging opportunities and certain market gaps. Strategic thinking often means generating new ideas, and thus is closely related to *innovative thinking*. The leader often has to negotiate with other people in the organization to implement new strategies. To think strategically, leaders must be open to change. To develop this competence, leaders practice their ability to judge situations themselves, instead of asking for the opinion of other people, when certain decisions need to be made. Leaders can practice reflective learning, by analyzing difficulties and suggestions, to discover new solutions. Hypotheses testing and judgment formed on events can be done based on previous actions and results from the leader's experience. Often, reflective thinking comes through both rational thoughts and feelings (Norzailan et al., 2016). Thus, *emotional self-knowledge* and *inspiration* have a possible influence on the development of *strategic thinking*.

Social intelligence

Social intelligence refers to the way in which a person manages their own emotions in relation to other people and how they succeed changing the emotional state of someone else, through a deep understanding of the emotions of those around them. Social intelligence involves, more precisely, the expression of emotions towards others (Goleman, 1995/2008). In the field of business, this can mean the ability of a leader to transmit to the team their own passion, confidence, vision, enthusiasm, seriousness, commitment, convincing employees of the importance of the cause for which they collaborate (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008). Thus, the leader not only sets the standard for emotional and cognitive intelligence in the organization, but is the main factor in a healthy environment in terms of interpersonal connection. The leader's social intelligence not only attracts people who make a special contribution to the organization and keeps them, but also sees the potential in people who do not yet reach a very high level of performance, but are willing to learn, change, listen, follow a mentor.

The level of emotional intelligence of the leader, then taken over by the team, can radically change the performance of employees. Among the most important leadership competencies are the empowerment of employees to carry out tasks and the sense of belonging transmitted to them (Giles, 2016).

The social leadership competencies identified by Goleman et al. (2013/2018) are: empathy, organizational awareness, caring, inspiration, influence, coaching, facilitating change, conflict management, team spirit and collaboration. In addition to these, communication and delegation of responsibilities were identified.

Given the current studies on the level of importance of each type of intelligence, and implicitly, the competencies related to each category, the following question arises: “*Can the complete equipping of leaders, so that they are set for success, be done by equally developing the competencies related to each of the three types of intelligence?*”. The answer to this question can provide an understanding of how these competency development strategies should be formed or, more precisely, whether the need for a balance between the three types of competencies related to each type of intelligence is a criterion that must be taken into account. In this paper, the focus will be placed on a small number of competencies, related to each type of intelligence.

Social leadership competencies

Coaching

Coaching is the skill of understanding others and helping them reach their potential in their professional lives. A leader who will coach must understand that the team needs the same vision and goals, which are clearly communicated and followed by each person. The team must be actively involved, information must be clearly communicated for decision-making, conflict must be resolved with each person's interests in mind, and attention must be paid to the development of each person on the team. Leaders provide direction, encourage personal interconnectedness, and mutual respect. Each person's goals must align with the goals of the organization or department (Gmelch, 1994).

Harkavy (2007) states that the first step in developing others is to adopt the mindset that the leader's role is to improve the careers of the people he leads. For successful leaders, the highest priority is to develop others. Some essential steps listed and explained in his study for acquiring this social skill are: communicating the truth, serving others, being aware of the time limit and appreciating talent. A first step in coaching begins in the character of the leader. If the leader communicates transparently, it will facilitate the openness of subordinates. Serving others most reflects the leader's willingness to help people develop, through the willingness to listen to people's needs, their feedback, by offering encouragement and by taking intentional time to get to know subordinates. Timeline awareness refers to the leader's willingness to intervene for the benefit of those they lead, at the right time, and to understand the evolution of the process that the subordinate has to go through in order to grow and succeed in improving

themselves in the work they contribute. Talent appreciation refers to encouraging people, understanding the strengths that people have and highlighting and complimenting them in discussions.

Inspiration

Inspiration is the leadership competency through which the team is mobilized to fight for common goals. Although the impact is strong on the team, the competency begins with what the leader believes about the future of the company and the ideal organizational culture. Inspiration means the leader's ability to convey the same vision to subordinates and to make them aware of the change they bring to society. Because inspiration begins with the leader's vision, the leader has the responsibility to be the first to act according to the values he believes in, before asking subordinates to adopt them. Thus, if the leader wants an organizational culture in which feedback is practiced, honest communication, in which people have respect and help each other, in which there is patience and understanding, then the leader must be the first to receive feedback, who opens up, who is transparent and who prioritizes others. Goleman et al. (2013/2018) define inspiration as resonance, through which the leader is connected to the feelings of others. Through resonant leadership, the leader demonstrates to subordinates that they are understood. Through the positive emotions the team experiences, they become willing to follow the leader.

There are a number of issues associated with resonant leadership. The first is the leader's ability to receive feedback. Many subordinates are reluctant to be honest with their leader about how well they are performing. Either it is a problem with the leader, because they are unable to properly assess themselves and understand their shortcomings and, as a result, cannot receive an honest assessment from anyone else, or the problem is the subordinates' mentality. Subordinates may be reluctant because they want to appear overly optimistic in the eyes of the leader, or there is a fear of the leader. Thus, it remains the leader's duty to encourage the team to give honest feedback, to build trust in the relationship with subordinates, to take a stand when receiving information, and to be open to learning new things from those they lead.

Another aspect refers to the self-improvement of the leader, which is based on "*the five discoveries*", according to a model developed by Boyatzis (2007). These discoveries are: the leader identifies what the ideal of his or her future self looks like, what are the weaknesses and strengths he or she currently has, how the qualities he or she currently has can be improved, practicing this development model until it becomes a natural behavior, discovering the relationships that encourage and support this change in the leader's life. Inspiration means that, in order to produce real change, the leader must discover

a vision that generates this resonance, about which Goleman (1995/2008) talks. He argues that leaders must first analyze themselves, in order to understand what their own vision for the organization is and what is missing for it to be fulfilled. It is good for the leader to turn to subordinates, to analyze together the point where they are and the one where they need to reach, in such a way as to create that belonging to the group and that motivation for change. This is called harmonization and refers to an emotional connection at the team level, which mobilizes people to strive to achieve their goal. The leader must ensure that each subordinate has a direct contribution to the implementation of the change, and each person is aware of his importance in the organization.

Material and method

The purpose of this research refers to the analysis of how successful leaders develop their competencies and the level of interconnection between emotional, cognitive and social competencies. The general objectives of the paper are: (A) Analysing of the development of leaders' emotional competencies, (B) Analysing of the development of leaders' cognitive competencies, and (C) Analysing of the development of leaders' social competencies.

The specific objectives of the paper are: (a) Identifying how emotional self-knowledge is developed, (b) Analyzing the level of interconnection established between emotional self-knowledge and the other competencies analyzed, (c) Identifying how self-confidence and self-worth are developed, (d) Analyzing the level of interconnection established between confidence and self-worth and the other competencies analyzed, (e) Identifying how innovative thinking is developed, (f) Analyzing the level of interconnection established between innovative thinking and the other competencies analyzed, (g) Identifying how strategic thinking is developed, (h) Analyzing the level of interconnection established between strategic thinking and the other competencies analyzed, (i) Identifying how coaching is developed, (j) Analyzing the level of interconnection established between coaching and the other competencies analyzed, (k) Identifying how inspiration is developed, and (l) Analyzing the level of interconnection established between inspiration and the other competencies analyzed.

The approach used in this paper is qualitative in nature, to understand how leaders have experienced the development of competencies and what their impact is in the organizational environment. This analysis is conducted on existing data, based on 14 episodes of the podcast Craig Groeschel Leadership Podcast, where the guests are leaders from the business environment, non-

profit organizations or leaders in other fields, such as medicine and sports. This research starts from the hypothesis that leadership competencies can be transferred from one field to another. The purpose of the podcast is to provide listeners with information about what leadership means, while also giving leaders the opportunity to describe their own professional path. The competencies analyzed are attributes that we can observe in the people around us. In leadership, these competencies take on a higher purpose, depending on the level of influence that the leader has.

Firstly, 14 episodes of the podcast launched in 2016 were selected for analysis. Craig Groeschel, its host, has over 25 years of leadership experience. In total, 13 guests were interviewed (the same guest appears in two episodes, in March 2022 and March 2024, and in one episode there is present only the podcast host, who talks about his own experiences, “playing the role” of a guest). The guests live in the United States of America, and the podcast is international, in English. The shortest episode is 21:25 minutes long, and the longest is 1:08:23, the episodes totaling approximately 11 hours of data. The chosen episodes date from 2018 to 2024. 13 of the episodes are video material, and one is just audio material. The podcast is public, posted on platforms such as YouTube and Spotify.

After selecting and listening to them, the episodes were transcribed. The episodes begin with the podcast host introducing the participants to the audience, providing the most important details about their professional or personal progress. Craig Groeschel leads the conversations by asking questions to which the guests respond and, depending on the direction the guest’s answer takes, Craig brings interpretations to clarify the message and then launches other questions to reach a greater level of detail in the story. Many guests mention their own theories deduced from the experiences they have had. The podcast does not focus explicitly on leadership skills, but rather on recounting the experiences and stages of the process that leaders have had. Several topics are addressed in the episodes, depending on the background of each guest so that the episodes are titled according to the prevailing topic. Most guests have certain strengths, and the conversation is built around them. The guests talked about how they make decisions, their relationship with failure, the experiences they had with people in the organizational environment, the lessons they had to learn to face challenges, and many of the listeners probably resonate with these feelings.

After going through the episodes, the information was distributed according to the categories of skills, and subsequently, the leadership skills that predominated in the transcribed text were selected. Thus, the research was reduced to seven leadership skills. An inductive analysis was carried out, starting

from these data. The experiences of the guests were interpreted to draw conclusions, but even in the content of the episodes, interpretations made by Craig or the guests can be observed.

Results and discussions

Topic 1a – Emotional leadership competencies: Emotional self-awareness

One of the podcast guests is Jamie, whose vision was to change the beauty industry and give new meaning to the word “beautiful” among girls and women. Jamie had many moments when intuition helped her make the right decision, despite the circumstances she was in, despite the hundreds of rejections and shortcomings that constituted the process of materializing her business idea. The first time the idea came to her – “*this sort of entrepreneurial spark*” –, but immediately the thoughts of insecurity came: “oh, but you don’t know anything about that industry, the beauty industry”. She created the product, but all kinds of challenges came (Groeschel, 2022). An investor told her that the product was good, but he wouldn’t invest in it because women wouldn’t buy make-up from someone who looked like her. Then, intuition helped her make the right decision, to continue trying to promote her product:

Six years later, when L’Oréal bought this little, tiny company I started in my living room for \$1.2 billion cash, and it was their largest acquisition in the US history for them, they made me the first woman to hold a CEO title in their 100 plus year history [...] and that’s when I heard from that investor for the first time [...] I hadn’t heard from him in six years. And he said, congratulations, I was wrong. I’m so happy for you (Groeschel, 2022)!

What emerges from this first example is that intuition increases the leader’s level of *self-confidence* in moments of uncertainty, when there is no clear data to guarantee success. *Self-confidence* supports the development of *innovative thinking*, which may involve solving an existing problem by applying an absurd idea. This idea was so unusual that it was categorically rejected, but the certainty of its functionality, encouraged not by concrete data, but by an intuitive feeling, gave Jamie the courage to try to implement it.

One of the factors that stimulates innovation is limited resources. Given limited financial resources, Jamie employs a solution that does not seem very promising, but nevertheless, based on listening to her intuitive feeling, she received the necessary resources. Jamie explains how she came to listen to that instinctive feeling, intuition:

I think it's a muscle that we build over time and I think it's a lifelong journey [...] I think back to times in my life where I just knew I was right, I had a gut feeling, but I didn't listen to it [...]. Or on the flip side, times we've trusted ourselves [...] and what happened when we did in both occasions. And the more we reflect on those, the more we're able to build our muscle of intuition over time (Groeschel, 2022).

Leaders who have a high level of self-awareness are aligned with “*what is good for them*”. These leaders know their values very well and will not compromise their integrity to the point of refusing an opportunity that is very good from some points of view, but that is not in line with their beliefs and goals (Goleman et al., 2013/2018).

Jamie had the opportunity to accept a tempting offer, but it was completely contrary to the purpose for which she started her business. The external consultants she hired told her that she would be guaranteed success if she represented her product with models who looked perfect, but she wanted to appear on television with her visible skin condition, along with other models of various ages, ethnicities, and skin conditions, an idea that terrified her. From this experience it emerges that emotional self-knowledge, from the perspective of maintaining integrity and authenticity, can give rise to an unusual idea, which is related to *innovative thinking* and can pave the way for its success in society:

And for whatever reason, I kept imagining a single mom in Nebraska folding laundry, who was too busy to remember that she mattered, that she's beautiful. And I just had this moment in that car where I thought, if she's gonna turn that television on, see me for three seconds, I don't care if she's gonna buy anything. I'd rather have her see me showing women who look like her, like calling them beautiful and meaning it. And I'd rather stand for that than sell a whole bunch of product and stand for nothing. And so I knew what I had to do, but I was scared [...]. And I remember the moment my bright red bare face before shot came up on TV and I remember walking over to the models, all different skin tones and ages and sizes and calling the beautiful [...]. And then literally right at the 10 minute mark, the giant SOLD OUT sign came up across the screen and they cut (Groeschel, 2022).

Another guest, Cynt, had the opportunity to be promoted at the age of 21. However, knowing her values well, she decided to turn down the position. All of her actions demonstrated sincerity towards her own faith and mission:

First, I learned our business [...] and I actually turned down a few promotions [...] just because I wanted to learn our business [...]. I had an opportunity to take my boss's job a year and a half into it [...]. I didn't do that because I wanted to just learn our business because I knew I would climb in the business, but I wanted to know what was going on there [...]. I just didn't wanna

be one of these bosses that had to just totally rely on their people, which you do rely on your people, but you wanna know about the area so you can truly serve them [...]. I truly learned the business for the sole purpose of being able to serve [...] (Groeschel, 2023b).

This example given by Cynt shows that understanding one's own feelings and motives leads to the development of *inspiration*. She manages to follow the model presented by Boyatzis (2007), practicing "*the five discoveries*": Cynt understood what kind of leader she was at that time and what kind of leader she wanted to become; she understood that, in order to improve her leadership qualities, she had to learn how to climb poles (the training process); she improved in this activity by participating in several courses. The people who supported her in this process were those who taught her courses, and the people who motivated and encouraged her were the installers and technicians. Cynt, through emotional self-knowledge, manages to develop her *inspiration* competence, because she demonstrates, through her actions, the principles she believes in and wants them implemented at the organizational level. These are: integrity, the fight for change, the willingness to be a support for the people around you, the attitude of service, altruism, solicitude, devotion. At the same time, the development of *emotional self-knowledge* is interconnected with *coaching*.

The desire to be a support for others is detected when the leader self-analyzes his feelings (whether he does it consciously or not). The way to implement it, as demonstrated by the example given by Cynt, also begins at a point of emotional self-knowledge, in which the leader is honest about the point where he is and the point where he needs to reach, in order to be able to offer subordinates the necessary support to facilitate their work in the organization. This availability demonstrated by Cynt contributes to *inspiration*, in that a leader who proves to be available to be taught, will determine, through resonance, his subordinates to be receptive when he teaches them new things. Cynt's behavior facilitates the coaching of others by gaining the trust of subordinates.

Topic 1b – Emotional leadership competencies: Confidence and self-worth

Jamie points out that no matter how successful a company, project, or team is, they may not move forward because of the fear that underlies a lack of self-confidence (Groeschel, 2024c). This explains how failure or rejection can be the cause of a lack of self-confidence or self-worth. When self-worth is affected, it is an identity issue: the leader identifies with negative experiences and emotions of helplessness and failure:

Two things happen when we start to face a lot of rejection or have had a lot of failures either presently or in the past is we often... of course, it affects our confidence 'cause it's an external thing. But where it hurts our self-worth is when we let it take root and we start to think we're a failure or we've had so many rejections, we're a reject. And that's when it can affect both (Groeschel, 2024c).

The attitude that a leader has towards himself and the way he evaluates his abilities will affect the quality of the task he performs. So one of the essential steps in redefining the leader's self-worth is to accept the idea that failure is part of the growth process and that it is not a defining element for the person and, very often, not even for the skills he has or the work he has done. The leader's identification with negative emotions can result in a mental block that will prevent the leader from persevering in pursuing the vision he has.

This idea of defining the leader's identity is supported by other guests. The advantage of this practice is that leaders force themselves to remain loyal to the truth and will practice until the rejection of negative thoughts becomes automatic: *"The more I apply these, the more resilient you'll become"* (Groeschel, 2024c). Carly supports the idea that fear is a normal response that leaders can have in the face of challenge, but that it can be diminished through practice:

Courage takes practice. And until and unless we can get over our fears, we [...] will never fulfill our potential and we won't make the kind of positive contribution that we're meant to make. [...] the fear diminishes in the sense that the small things don't scare you anymore, but there are big things that still might scare you. For example, by the time I got to be a CEO, I wasn't afraid of people's criticism. That's a good thing, because criticism is always the price of leadership. And you have to be able to withstand criticism and you have to be able to say: "What other people say about me doesn't define me. What defines me is my own character, my own behavior, my own choices, my own impact". And so you get better at bigger fears, but fear is part of the human condition and all of us have it; courage takes practice (Groeschel, 2019b).

Liz redefines criticism as an opportunity to learn something new. On the other hand, she addresses external and internal sources of criticism (from others and from oneself) as reactions to a fear-inducing challenge:

There's external criticism. So this is when you're like, they don't get my idea. They're not, you know, they're not taking me up. They're not taking me seriously. The circumstances aren't right. It's, you know, the market's down, whatever it is. And then there's internal criticism where you start to say like, I'm not good enough. I'm stupid. I don't deserve to be here. [...] The moment I have the instinct to criticize, that becomes like the signal to me, this like, to like, oh, get curious, lean into that, ask the question (Groeschel, 2019b).

Amy supports the idea that self-confidence can be acquired through practice, through the successes that the leader has after trying something but, up to that point of self-confidence, the leader can call on courage, which means the willingness to try, despite the uncertainty of obtaining results:

When I talk about this idea of confidence is earned, what I mean by that is when you start to put yourself out there, and in my case, start to build a business, and I do my first launch, and it doesn't work out, and then I do another and I start to grow it, that is where the confidence comes in. I have a proven track record, it might be small, but like inch by inch, it's starting to work. So my confidence starts to grow. I'm earning it, I'm putting in the time, I'm putting in the work. But before it starts to work, and it took me a good two years before my business really started to work, that's where I had to rely on the courage. Because the number one insecurity I had is that I wasn't good enough (Groeschel, 2023a).

What can be observed in the previous examples is that most leaders, when talking about self-worth and identity, mentioned failure or rejection. Thus, they conditioned their self-worth to negative factors. Regarding self-confidence or fear reduction, most recognized that repeated practice is needed to acquire them. Another common element observed in the reports is that most mentioned the connection between self-confidence or self-worth and an idea, a challenge, a task, thus supporting the theory of Hollenbeck and Hall (2004), which states that self-confidence can be influenced by the wrong perception that leaders have of their own abilities, or by the perception they have of the degree of difficulty of the task to be performed. Thus, the level of development of self-confidence and self-worth influences the accomplishment of tasks and the implementation of ideas generated by *innovative thinking*.

Topic 2a – Cognitive leadership competencies: Innovative thinking

Good leaders know how to balance the use of ideas and feelings. There are close links between the neural systems related to cognitive skills and those related to emotions (Goleman et al., 2013/2018). According to Groeschel (2018b), in order to meet people's needs, a leader needs to learn to innovate, and what differentiates innovative people from creative people is that innovators are *"those who put ideas into practice"*. The importance of innovative thinking in leadership is reflected in the need to remain relevant in a world that is constantly changing. The way in which creative and innovative thinking can bring stability in times of uncertainty or crisis is by creating new future possibilities and finding *"ways to deal with various possibilities"* (de Bono, 1993/2012). Groeschel (2018b) lists four elements that pave the way for innovation: a problem to solve, limited resources, openness to failure, and an unusual idea. He states that leaders must

train their minds to view problems as opportunities for innovation. Problem solving involves reactive thinking, but developing creativity can also involve proactive thinking (de Bono, 1993/2012).

Although Carly does not exemplify how innovation involves solving a problem, she argues that it is a leader's duty to have such a mindset and bring about change, demonstrating the proactive thinking found at de Bono (1993/2012). This perspective helped her advance professionally, becoming the company's CEO:

If the purpose of leadership is to change the order of things for the better, then they must run towards problems. But it's also true that if you want to unlock potential, if you want to achieve more, if you want someone to figure out what they're made of, they have to tackle something hard, not something easy [...]. Find a problem that's close to you and that you care about. Don't pick an abstract problem, find a problem that's close to you and that impacts you, and think about why you care about that problem, and then begin to gather others who care about that problem [...]. Solving problems can bring joy in addition to unlocking your own potential (Groeschel, 2019a).

In Bobby's case, it turned out that the lack of financial resources for human resources can generate other creative methods of attracting people, and several guests recognize that the role of a leader who has a vision is to start the activity at the point where they are and with what they have available:

So I love leading with vision, and because I'm a visionary, that's a little bit easier and I am a lover of words, so I can paint a picture. And I love to say I pay people an opportunity. I may not be able to pay people with large financial donations or acquiring people through large paychecks, but I love to pay people an opportunity (Groeschel, 2021).

Two other guests acknowledge that the role of a leader with a vision is to start where he is and with what he has:

So each step along the way at the beginning, we found that we really had very little, but my role was to cast vision for this [...]. But if we had started saying: "Hey, we need to have all this in place before we could begin" we would never have started because we had so little at the time and so much that we needed (Groeschel, 2018a).

I started out in journalism and became increasingly interested in issues that were facing women and girls that were living in extreme poverty and in conflict and post-conflict zones [...]. It was that moment in the story when I realized I had all these like big ideas and go beat, an international correspondent for a really well-known news organization, come up with a corporate philanthropy scheme that involves millions of dollars that we can pour into initiatives that will help benefit women and girls. But the thing was, I wasn't doing anything about it because all of those either felt like external factors, right (Groeschel, 2019b)?

In this last example, Liz demonstrates how concept challenge works. The concept challenge is the idea that women and girls living in extreme poverty need support. The concept challenge was done by addressing the idea that a single woman in this context needs help.

Regarding openness to failure, most of the above accounts have one thing in common: the experience of failure. This willingness to fail must be adopted especially when leaders come up with new ideas that are contrary to the current habits that people have. Often, ideas are born from the inner conviction that they are responsible for bringing about change in ways that no one else has had the courage to do so far. They demonstrate integrity and authenticity, but can easily be met with adversity and challenges, due to the reluctance that people have towards change. This approach is linked to another method of developing creativity, proposed by de Bono (1993/2012), called “*creative contestation*”, through which the leader categorically refuses current approaches to a situation, requiring clear justifications regarding the current practices of that situation.

Approaching a problem authentically means being open to failure and rejection. Scott was struck by the reluctance of the people then until he began to have the conviction that he must bring water to the people of Africa:

Well, I listened to everyday people and I listened to their objections. So why they weren't giving to charity, why they were distrustful [...] and my friends worked at Sephora and MTV and Goldman Sachs. So as I was telling them of this passion to get clean water [...] people were like: "What? Humans are drinking dirty water?". So I would prove to them by what I had seen and what I'd experienced that was true. And then I said: "Well, what would stop you from giving?" "I don't know where my money's going. Would my money even make a difference? Would it even reach Africa?". So objection after objection kept coming in and I realized, wow, what if I could create a completely different charity that would operate differently, that would think differently, where money would flow differently, that would speak to these objections [...]. 70% of Americans believe charities waste their money. So 7 out of 10 potential givers have a story in their mind that the charity is gonna be a bad steward of their gift. So I had this crazy idea, what if we could promise the public that 100% of whatever we raised would go directly to the construction of a water project that would help the most marginalized people in the world [...]. So we became the first charity in the world just to geolocate on Google Earth and Google Maps every completed project, and we'd send the satellite images back to a donor so they could see exactly where their money went, where 100% of it went, and nobody was doing this. So it felt like a super charity to people. This is transparent, it's innovative, it's digital, it's a feedback loop and it started to grow really, really quickly (Groeschel, 2024d).

This example demonstrates that failure can be the very point where innovative ideas are generated. Because people didn't have the confidence to donate, Scott had to come up with a new solution. When failure is evaluated, alternatives can emerge. This moment and result of failure was experienced by Liz:

I started a charity and then realized that we needed to be investing in marketplace business solutions to solve some of the world's most challenging problems. And so, started a chicken farm and that failed. And then I launched a tiny little sandal company and made a promise to three young women that if they made sandals for the next nine months, that they would go to college and then came back home to the US and started selling strappy sandals out of the back of my car. And that's kind of how it all started (Groeschel, 2019b).

The creative challenge through escape can also be seen in Will's case. He refuses to run his restaurant according to the common model and principles, which aim to improve the menu. The element of authenticity and the assessment of failure are also found in his experience:

That night that we came in 50, I wrote on a cocktail napkin, we will be number one in the world. But a goal without a strategy is nothing more than a pipe dream. I needed to identify what was our impact going to be. And so I thought about the chefs, if they became number one, because they were unreasonable in pursuit of product and relentless in pursuit of change, our impact was going to come through being unreasonable in pursuit of people and relentless in pursuit of the one thing that will never change, which is our human desire to feel seen, to feel cared for, to feel a sense of belonging, our collective need to feel a little more loved. And so that's when I wrote Unreasonable Hospitality on a Cocktail Napkin, we ultimately became number one because we made the choice to be as unreasonable in pursuit of how we made people feel as every other restaurant on that list was purely in pursuit of the food they were being served (Groeschel, 2024a).

It can be seen that most of the guests had an unusual idea (or more) that they were willing to give a chance to, many of them despite their lack of professional training, lack of resources and the fact that people around them did not see their potential. What can be observed in the case of leaders who have developed their innovative thinking skills is the need to know very well the reason why they create and what is the impact they will have on society, which demonstrates, once again, *emotional self-knowledge* as a starting point for *innovative thinking*. The resilience they demonstrated relative to rejection and failure proves the impact that *self-confidence* and *self-worth* can have on the success of *innovative thinking*. These leaders, before asking their subordinates

to behave in a way that demonstrates loyalty to the vision and values they believe in, reach the required standard themselves, *innovative thinking* being thus strongly interconnected with *inspiration*.

Topic 2b – Cognitive leadership competencies: Strategic thinking

Strategic thinking involves both identifying new opportunities and discerning the most profitable ones. That is why the leader must have a clearly established vision in order to make decisions based on their relevance to the company's long-term objectives. The guests relate to this aspect in a similar way:

I'm very clear about my meaningful mission [...]. I know what I'm doing [...]. It's easier to make decisions. Maybe it's like: "I have a six month mission, it's three years, maybe, who knows?" and this can evolve and change over time (Groeschel, 2023c).

The detachment principle as defined is recognizing when holding on does more harm than good [...]. And that's what's so important about this detachment principle is that you can't start focusing on what lies ahead unless you detach from what was already passed and is no longer relevant in a situation. The person who can detach from the present inevitability and begin focusing their efforts on the outcome is gonna be better prepared for that outcome. And for many leaders, the challenge is often their inability to detach their ego and their pride to something that was (Groeschel, 2023d).

Previous guest stories show that ego can influence the decisions made by the leader, thus affecting the organization he leads. Thus, *strategic thinking* is influenced by the level of *emotional self-knowledge* of the leader. If he is willing to analyze his actions, feelings and motivations, the result will consist of better decision-making and a more efficient allocation of the organization's resources, pursuing opportunities that align with the company's objectives. Some leaders choose to intentionally limit themselves to a very limited number of objectives. This allows them to focus resources and labor on a few elements that are most relevant to the development of the company at the moment. And, for entrepreneurs who are just starting out, the best strategic decision is to focus on a single important objective to be accomplished:

I would limit it [the objectives' number] to 10 because the more numbers I have, the more overwhelming it feels for me and my team. There's only so many things that we can do. I have a small team, I have 20 people on my team [...] but for the volume we do, it's a pretty small team. And so I know that we can't get to everything, so if I keep their eye on what's most important, I know that the levers will be pulled correctly. And the reason why we chose these specific levers are they're the areas that I know that I'm good at (Groeschel, 2023a).

The following examples illustrate how strategic thinking can be used within a team. For some leaders, the strategic decision is to form their team in such a way that other members complement them in areas where they lack sufficient knowledge. For others, who have a small team, it is more effective to pursue simple goals and constantly refine how the team achieves them. Thus, strategic thinking plays an important role in *coaching*:

I am a visionary, I'm a motivator [...]. Where I lack is structure. And I could see where we're going, I just don't know how we're going to get there [...]. So I'm looking for people who think differently than me, that are not afraid to push back [...] so I think when we build a team I wanna make sure that it's super diverse, that it's not just the same type of person wanting the same type of outcomes. I want it to be robust and look different and I'm not okay with pushing back (Groeschel, 2021).

I think one of my strengths is that I actually don't love variety. I love going deep with just a few things. And so what I learned early on in my business is in order to, before I add something new, I first have to ask myself what's already working and what can I optimize so I do not have to start from scratch. That has been something that has helped me immensely. Also, simplifying things [...]. And so when I add something new, I have to ask myself, what's going to come off the table or what's no longer going to get the attention that it was getting [...]. We're only one small team (Groeschel, 2023a).

Topic 3a – Social leadership competencies: Coaching

Goleman et al. (2013/2018) argue that good leaders are motivated by a sincere desire to help others develop, knowing their strengths and weaknesses. They understand how to give feedback and how to offer criticism to help achieve the goals that the people in the team have. A good leader can see the potential of a person to grow professionally, and thus, when bringing someone new to the team, their willingness to learn and their character are priority criteria in making the hiring decision. For a healthy environment, employees must be chosen according to similar criteria, and everyone must be given the opportunity to grow and be equipped within the team:

And so I look for three things when I'm interviewing someone. Do they have integrity? Do I think they're going to work hard? And are they someone that the people who already work for me will get along with? Because hospitality is a team sport and a team cannot thrive in the absence of chemistry. If the answers to those three questions are yes, they have integrity, I think they're going to work hard and they're going to get along with the people on my team, there's nothing that we do that's all that difficult and if I'm willing to invest enough in them to set them up for success, I can teach them the rest of it. At that point, it's just giving them time to fully absorb the culture we've created (Groeschel, 2024a).

One of our values is that everybody needs to be coachable. And what I mean by that is that everyone comes with skill sets and knowledge into our company and we expect a lot from our employees in terms of their ability to make things happen. But I also don't expect them to know exactly how we do everything (Groeschel, 2023a).

Stephanie prioritizes connecting honestly with the people on the team she leads, looking for things she has in common with them. What we observe in Stephanie is that a good leader goes beyond his official position in the organization and makes himself available to his team. From Stephanie's behavior we observe that it is not a sign of weakness or lack of authority for the leader to create a bond of friendship with the team he leads. On the contrary, by being willing to make himself vulnerable and listen to others when they open up, he may gain more authority and respect in the eyes of others. Leaders who have such behavior are based on a well-developed *self-worth*, because they do not condition their value on the people they interact with and their hierarchical level or even their own. Such leaders also do not associate their identity to the position of authority they hold. This aspect can be deduced from the accounts made by Stephanie:

When I think of the word ally, so A-L-L-Y, is ask, listen, learn, and then you take action, right? So every team I've ever had, whether they were like me or usually not like me at all, is I spent time connecting with them just as a human being. It's like [...] he is somebody's father, somebody's brother, somebody's son, somebody's best friend. That's how I really want to get to know him. And then once I'm able to do that, he can see my sincerity, right? Because I'm truly trying to understand him as a person. Then the guards start to come down on both sides, right? And then all of a sudden we can realize that we've got more in common than we do not. And now we can get to the same beat of the same drummer, right (Groeschel, 2024b)?

The leader must understand that the position of authority means the willingness to sincerely help those he coordinates and, due to their possible reluctance to receive help, he is forced to convince them that this aspect is part of his responsibility as a leader.

Leaders must learn to empathize with diverse groups of people, whether they are teams they lead or teammates. This way, when one person puts themselves in an uncomfortable position to create resonance, the other person will understand that the relationship is a safe space for mutual openness and vulnerability. From that point, they understand that they have strengths and weaknesses and that their strengths can complement each other, resulting in excellence. One such example is Carly's experience:

So Carl was my first teammate when I joined the corporate America AT&T [...]. And so he didn't really like being teamed with me. So the very first meeting that I was going to have with his clients who were now also going to become my clients, he showed up my desk and said "you can't come to the meeting" [...]. I was humble enough to understand I have to work with Carl. I don't know these clients, I don't know this company, I need some of the knowledge and the relationships that he has if I'm gonna do my job. But I also began to have empathy for Carl because it turned out that Carl was afraid too. What Carl was afraid of was being kicked to the side of the road after a lifetime of a career that he was proud of. And so with that combination of humility and empathy and Carl figured out he needed me because I would attend to the details of getting things done that he wasn't very good at. So we became good colleagues and good teammates (Groeschel, 2019a).

The importance of celebrating victories with the team is recognized by both Stephanie and Will, but from two different perspectives: the first suggests the importance of a sense of belonging to the group of people working together, and the second suggests celebration as a method of encouraging behavior that best reflects the core values and purpose of the organization:

So we're going to be in a spirit of celebration all the time. I always want everybody to have a lot of fun. They're going to spend more time together than they will with their family. So how do we celebrate that (Groeschel, 2024b)?

Every time someone on my team did something great, the next day in our daily huddle, we would celebrate them. Not just to make them feel good, not just to show everyone else that they should do something awesome because they wanted that incredible feeling of affirmation, but also every time we celebrated something in front of the group, people had a slightly better understanding of what we thought good looked like (Groeschel, 2024a).

Through feedback, the quality of work is improved. Will explains step by step what it means for him to give feedback in the most effective way to people in such a way that, through the message conveyed, the person brings the best possible results in the future. His way of delivering feedback is divided into the following steps: organizing specific meetings for feedback and clarifying the purpose of the meetings (so that people are more receptive), and the way he delivers criticism is based on a series of principles:

First, criticize the behavior, not the person. It's never the person you're criticizing. It's just that thing that they did. Two, criticize in private, never in public. When you're offering someone criticism, it's a message that you want to make sure they're able to receive, and if you do it in public, a wall of shame is going to go up, and they are not going to hear a single thing you're trying to say. Number three, it is not emotional, and you cannot make it emotional. Because the moment you bring emotion into a conversation like that, you're inviting the other person to do the

same in return, which once again clouds the entire exchange. Number four, criticize consistently, and I mean every single time. [...] ask the question before you say the thing [...]. And then always in private [...], that doesn't mean you need to go and find an office in the back and sit down and close the door and have the conversation [...]. You can't love on everyone in the same way, in the same way that you can't criticize everyone in the same way (Groeschel, 2024a).

Topic 3b – Social leadership competencies: Inspiration

One way a team can learn what their attitude towards work should be and how they can adopt the values and vision of the leader is to observe them in the leader, first of all. A leader who actively practices what he believes in is much easier to be followed, as a standard or ideal for employees. Will was able to inspire his team to work effectively towards achieving the goals of the restaurant he runs by taking the time to spend with the employees, by getting to know them personally, in such a way that this mentality of serving those around him is first seen in him, as a leader, and then adopted by the entire team:

I always found that the best way to teach and inspire my team around what our brand of hospitality looked like and how I wanted them to extend it to our guests was to first show it to them and find creative little ways to create surprise and delight moments for my employees from like the very get-go. Because if they could witness firsthand from me the fact that I would be present with them, that I didn't need to take myself so seriously, that I was going to care enough to listen to who they were and then to do something with what I heard, and then do these little things for them, they very quickly started to understand what right looked like and how we wanted to pay that forward to the people we were serving (Groeschel, 2024a).

In meetings, Stephanie conveyed the message to the teams she led: “I expect you to be your brother’s keeper” but there was a moment when she had to prove through her own behavior that she believed in this message and indirectly (but still much more convincingly) convey the idea that people in a team must take care of each other. That moment was when a person on the team Stephanie led made a mistake that would cost the company \$325,000. Her willingness to defend an employee proves that Stephanie had a lot of *self-confidence* and a healthy *self-worth*, given the certainty she had in the decision she made, despite her boss’s impulsive reaction:

And so I remember [...] I get called into the CEO's office who I reported into and he was livid, which I don't blame him [...]. And I remember he said to me: "Who did this?", because he wanted a name. And I was like "I did this. As far as you're concerned, I did it." [...] He actually got madder when I made that

comment. He said "You don't write proposals; I know you didn't do this." And I was like: "But my team, we have a process. And that process wasn't followed. So as far as you're concerned, I did it. And so I never gave up the name. [...] And so now, of course, I'm gonna handle it on the opposite end with the teammate [...]. The point was the leader always protects the team, no (Groeschel, 2024b)?

Will also highlights that even receiving criticism must be seen first in the leader and then can be adopted by the rest of the team. Thus, the leader inspires by setting a standard in the attitude towards the rest of the team. Will has an honest attitude and is ready to admit where he went wrong. It can be seen that Amy has the same approach:

I'm the leader of this group of 150 people, and the exact thing I told them to do was the thing that resulted in this moment of failure. Sometimes you learn from adversity, sometimes adversity fuels your competitive fire. In that case, it just gave me the opportunity to do something that I wish more leaders were comfortable doing in front of their entire teams, which was to stand up and apologize. And I see us on that moment of adversity, I stand up in front of the entire staff, I called an all-staff meeting and apologized for the fact that I'd become so focused on winning that I'd lost sight of the very thing that had gotten us that far along in the game. And after that, we went right back to doing things the way we always had (Groeschel, 2024a).

I find myself saying sorry more than I'd like to admit, but if I can be coachable [...] I encourage them to give me that feedback, then I feel as though it can be reciprocated [...] I have friends that I encourage to kind of call me out and my employees as well (Groeschel, 2023a).

These examples highlight the fact that an important role in the development of this competence is played by the development of *self-worth*. The leader's willingness to be corrected means that he has a healthy relationship with failure and that he understands the continuous learning process in which he is involved.

To increase passion for their work, some leaders find ways to remind their team why they're fighting together. Will constantly talks in meetings about the impact they make on people's lives through the way they serve in the restaurant, and Jamie's team had notes on their desks with the purpose of the business written on them. Stephanie talks in meetings about vision, having a plan ready to fulfill it. These examples demonstrate that leaders, before being an inspiration to others, develop their *emotional self-knowledge*. In this way, they manage to remain loyal and ambitious towards their vision, and then manage to transmit this enthusiasm to others:

Because I don't care how much you like your job, sometimes work is really hard. And if you don't believe that there's importance in how you spend your days, it's really hard to bring your best self to the table on those difficult days. Every month, without fail, I would talk about in my daily huddle how there is nobility in service, how in restaurants we get to help people celebrate some of the most important moments of their lives, so we can conversely give them the grace of only for an hour or two to forget about their most difficult moments, how we can inspire people to be better versions of themselves through our attention to detail, how we give people something to look forward to (Groeschel, 2024a).

And I think a big part of the great resignation and all the things happening in society right now it's easy as a leader to forget that your team may not truly know why they're doing what they're doing for you and with you [...]. We had these little cutouts, like literally paper cutouts that had our why in the middle and it had our customer in the center and it had our four pillars of our mission at IT Cosmetics and they were on every person's desk. And I would ask our team whenever they're making a decision, whether it is a product development decision or a hiring decision, or a marketing decision that they try to run it through the lens of that image of what matters to us, where we're going, why we're doing what we're doing (Groeschel, 2022).

Conclusions

The objective of this paper was to analyze how *emotional, cognitive* and *social leadership competencies* are interconnected, with the aim of providing a deeper understanding of the most effective ways to equip leaders. Regarding the specific objectives, the paper aimed to analyze the development strategies of the following leadership competencies: *emotional self-knowledge, self-confidence, self-worth, innovative thinking, strategic thinking, coaching, and inspiration*. In terms of results, the following aspects emerge:

Emotional leadership competencies have a strong influence on the development of *cognitive competencies*. *Emotional self-awareness* can support *innovative thinking* by: developing intuitive feeling, proven authenticity in decision-making, problem solving, willingness to provide help, resilience developed in response to failure and rejection. *Emotional self-awareness* supports *strategic thinking* by removing ego in decision-making.

Emotional leadership competencies facilitate *social competencies*. *Emotional self-awareness* can support *coaching* by developing intuition, willingness to help, and empowerment of subordinates. *Self-worth* supports *coaching* through the healthy relationship leaders have with failure. *Emotional self-awareness* supports *inspiration* through personal vision and values.

Social competencies and *cognitive competencies* are interconnected, as developing *inspiration* can influence how ideas are generated within *innovative thinking*. *Strategic thinking* also plays an important role in coaching through how subordinates' autonomy and collaboration are developed within the organization.

Thus, *emotional leadership competencies* have a very strong influence on the development of *social* and *cognitive leadership competencies*. At a much lower level, it can be observed how social and cognitive skills support each other. The final recommendation of this study is to specifically include *emotional competencies* in the construction of leadership competencies training programs.

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