



Revista Digital de Investigación y Postgrado

ISSN: 2665-038X

ISSN-L: 2665-038X

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Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Investigación Y  
Postgrado

República Bolivariana de Venezuela

Campos Medina, María Auxiliadora  
Entrevista al Dr. Daniel Goleman autor del libro Óptimo  
Revista Digital de Investigación y Postgrado, vol. 6, 2025, January-June, pp. 173-177  
Instituto de Estudios Superiores de Investigación Y Postgrado  
San Cristóbal, República Bolivariana de Venezuela

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.59654/txefx83>

Available in: <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=748581385010>

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# Interview with Dr. Daniel Goleman Author of the Book *Óptimo*\*

## Entrevista al Dr. Daniel Goleman autor del libro *Óptimo*



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**Received:** August / 15 / 2024

**Approved:** September / 27 / 2024

**How to cite:** Campos, M. M. A. (2025). Interview with Dr. Daniel Goleman author of the book *Óptimo*. *Revista Digital de Investigación y Postgrado*, 6(11), 161-164. <https://doi.org/10.59654/txefx83>

\* Imaginary interview with Dr. Daniel Goleman.

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## Abstract

Emotional intelligence, encompassing emotions, their neurological basis, and management, has transformed fields such as education, psychology, sociology, and business leadership. Daniel Goleman's groundbreaking theory on emotional intelligence highlights it as crucial for personal and professional success, on par with cognitive intelligence. In his latest book, *Óptimo* (2024), Goleman presents purpose-centered strategies, offering techniques for self-awareness, conscious perception, burnout management, empathy, and building collaborative teams—all within a highly technological context to boost satisfaction and productivity. This summary introduces an imaginary interview with Goleman, aiming to explore the key elements of *Óptimo*. In conclusion, Goleman emphasizes that a fulfilling life is closely tied to developing emotional abilities.

**Keywords:** Óptimo, satisfaction, emotional intelligence, empathy, productivity.

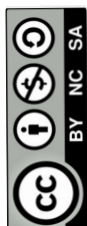
## Resumen

La inteligencia emocional, que abarca las emociones, su base neurológica y su gestión, ha transformado campos como la educación, la psicología, la sociología y el liderazgo empresarial. La teoría innovadora de Daniel Goleman sobre la inteligencia emocional la destaca como crucial para el éxito personal y profesional, al mismo nivel que la inteligencia cognitiva. En su último libro, *Óptimo* (2024), Goleman presenta estrategias centradas en el propósito, ofreciendo técnicas para el autoconocimiento, la percepción consciente, el manejo del burnout, la empatía y la construcción de equipos colaborativos, todo en un contexto altamente tecnológico para mejorar la satisfacción y productividad. Este resumen introduce una entrevista imaginaria con Goleman, con el objetivo de explorar los elementos clave de *Óptimo*. En conclusión, Goleman enfatiza que una vida plena está estrechamente ligada al desarrollo de las habilidades emocionales.

**Palabras clave:** óptimo, satisfacción, inteligencia emocional, empatía, productividad.

It is an honor to interview Dr. Daniel Goleman, psychologist, journalist, author, and speaker, who has left a significant legacy in the study of emotions. He earned his Ph.D. in clinical development psychology and personality and graduated with the distinction *Magna Cum Laude*, which earned him a scholarship to pursue his doctorate in psychology at Harvard University. He worked as a writer for *The New York Times* in the Behavioral and Brain Sciences section for many years. He is the author of numerous books, including the bestseller *Emotional Intelligence*, with over five million copies sold and translated into 40 languages. He is also co-director of the Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations and has been nominated for the Pulitzer Prize several times.

Today, we will talk with this distinguished scientist about his latest work, *Óptimo: Empatía, rendimiento e inteligencia Emocional*, in collaboration with psychologist Cary Cherniss. This book outlines techniques to achieve greater productivity and satisfaction, tools to address workplace conflicts, and the alarming burnout syndrome that has brought about absenteeism, dismissals,



conflicts, somatization, and mental health problems. It also examines emotional management in various contexts, including technology.

The author explains that empathy, a core component of emotional intelligence, cannot be emulated by artificial intelligence due to the complexity of the neural connections activated during empathetic interactions—something devices and Artificial Intelligence cannot replicate.

**Interviewer:** *In your recent work, *Óptimo*, you emphasize the importance of self-awareness and emotional self-management, with realistic goals and self-motivation to achieve complete satisfaction. What are the tools to achieve this?*

**Dr. Goleman:** It is essential to understand emotions, to be aware of what we experience, and the true origin of our feelings. This helps us manage them optimally, avoiding reactions that lead to negative consequences and impulsive decisions. In *Óptimo*, I recommend techniques such as deep breathing and mindfulness practice, which involve awareness of the present moment. Additionally, cultivating positive habits and maintaining an open, growth-oriented mindset are necessary for consistency and perseverance to reach set goals.

**Interviewer:** *Dr. Goleman, which aspects of emotional intelligence should be emphasized in university education to optimize students' cognitive processes and improve teacher effectiveness?*

**Dr. Goleman:** For decades, I have researched the foundations for achieving academic success. Among them is emotional self-awareness, which involves understanding one's emotions, strengths, and weaknesses for better stress management. Emotional perception contributes to academic success. Neurologically, the amygdala, which stores emotional memory, activates under stress and interferes with the hippocampus, a brain structure related to learning and memory. Therefore, there is a dual relationship: better emotional management leads to better information encoding and retrieval.

The harmonious development of the cerebral cortex also supports the regulatory activity of the amygdala, reducing the impact of stress and anxiety on cognitive processes. It is essential to focus emotions on realistic, well-defined, and achievable goals, with sustained motivation and the resilience needed to overcome obstacles that often lead to poor performance, dropout, and frustration.

Moreover, social skills, such as effective communication and teamwork, are essential tools in knowledge production, conflict resolution through group thinking, and productive learning environments in digital communities and AI-disrupted spaces. Each member can shine for their unique skills in virtual learning and social media environments, where cooperative, empathetic, and synergistic presence is essential.

**Interviewer:** *According to what you explained in your recent work, emotional management contributes to a state of high performance and satisfaction. Which personality traits can facilitate or hinder this process?*



**Dr. Goleman:** Extroverted individuals are generally more sociable and inclined to engage in group settings, which provides an opportunity to develop social skills like communication, empathy, and the management of others' emotions. People prone to neuroticism often face difficulties managing their emotional world, as they tend to experience anxiety, sadness, anger, and irritability more intensely, are more sensitive to stressors, and are consequently prone to interpersonal conflicts and low frustration tolerance.

Likewise, people with flexible thinking can adapt to uncertain times and life transitions, such as the disruption brought by artificial intelligence. As I mention in this publication, AI is not static; it can develop independently of personality. Better emotional management leads to higher performance and personal satisfaction, defined as having a productive and meaningful day achieved through effective emotion management to balance performance and well-being.

**Interviewer:** *In the organizational setting, how can emotions be managed in a hyper-technological world where empathetic communication is minimal?*

**Dr. Goleman:** Empathy is essential for a productive and harmonious work life. There are three types of emotional connection with others: cognitive empathy, which is understanding what the other person feels and thinks; emotional empathy, which involves feeling what the other person feels due to neural mirroring of the other's emotions; and compassionate empathy, which involves acting with compassion and support in conflict or emergency situations.

Empathy contributes to productivity by promoting a reason-emotion balance, preventing conflicts, and fostering open, effective communication. In a tech-mediated world, empathy management becomes a challenge, but it requires conscious device use and attention to nonverbal cues in video calls. Genuine interest in the emotions expressed in conversations is crucial. Organizations should offer seminars or workshops on leadership and emotional competencies, as employee satisfaction and, consequently, productivity depend on it.

We thank Dr. Goleman for the depth of his insights in this interview, where he offered us a glimpse of his latest work, *Óptimo: Cómo alcanzar la excelencia personal y laboral todos los días*, co-authored with Cary Cherniss. The book emphasizes tools like deep breathing, perceptive awareness, and empathy as essential life habits for satisfaction and performance. Addressing these themes has a profound impact on organizational productivity, especially for universities. They must embrace the challenge of fostering a culture of emotional awareness, innovation, and adaptability in a hyper-technological, ever-evolving context to prevent dehumanization in cyber society. Without emotions and motivation, humanity risks becoming a slave to its own creation.

## Reference

Goleman, D. y Cherniss, C. (2024). *Óptimo: Rendimiento, empatía e inteligencia emocional*. Editorial Kairós.

