

The Experts Teach: Emotional Intelligence

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The Experts Teach

Emotional Intelligence

The Experts Teach: Emotional Intelligence

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Preface

Introduction to “The Experts Teach: Emotional Intelligence”

In each of “The Experts Teach” series, we’ve gathered together some of the world’s best thinkers to share their ideas with you. Their ideas offer new, refreshing, and insightful ways to look at old themes, allowing you to discover new perspectives, develop your understanding, and change the way you think.

Profile of Editor Eric Garner

Eric Garner is an experienced management trainer with a knack for bringing the best out of individuals and teams. Eric founded ManageTrainLearn in 1995 as a corporate training company in the UK specialising in the 20 skills that people need for professional and personal success today. Since 2002, as part of KSA Training Ltd, ManageTrainLearn has been a major player in the e-learning market. Eric has a simple mission: to turn ManageTrainLearn into the best company in the world for producing and delivering quality online management products.

Profile of ManageTrainLearn

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1 How to Make People Happy and Yourself Feel Great – The Science of Emotions by Joshua Uebergang

I just finished another midnight shift at a job I did not like. I smiled, my eyes were open, I felt good about myself. I said my usual goodbyes to a friend and sprung into my car. My friend reversed his car before I had the chance to leave my car park. He had beaten me this time. It was an unspoken game that took place each time we left work. I waited for him to get out of the way before I reversed to make my way home.

As I drove, the open car park gave me an invitation to have a little fun with my car. If landscapes could talk, this one was whispering into my ear that I should spin the wheels. “Besides, it’s late at night. No one is around. It’s an open car park with no danger. Do it!” Like a vulnerable teenager succumbing to peer pressure, I accepted the invitation.

My foot pressed the accelerator as I spun the wheel left to get quick around the first corner. The rear tires lost their stability as the car slide side-ways. The car became an extension of my body as it mimicked my ecstatic mood. I entered the next turn and spun the wheel right. The sound of screeching tires was water fertilizing my increasing smile. Smoke filled the rims of my tires and a shot of adrenaline filled my body.

Following the two consecutive drifts, I straightened the car and approached a set of traffic lights on the main road that would take me home. Had this been during the daytime, about seven cars would be in front of me before the upcoming traffic lights.

My friend who had left before me had passed through the traffic lights three seconds ago so the lights were still green. Keeping in the mood, I put my foot down to catch the green light. I would safely make it. I turned around the corner with a soft screech of the tires. 20 meters in front of me on the side of the road were two police officers beside their vehicle. Lucky me.

The police pulled me over. Opposite to what you might be thinking, I was not concerned. I was still in my elevated state. I smiled. I wound down my window and an angry officer came charging at me, yelling, “What the hell are you thinking? What the hell is going through your mind?” I paused momentarily, unaffected by his aggressive state. I said smilingly, “I’m just happy, I guess.” Not a smart response. Not a smart response at all.

My happy mood seemed to pour fuel on his already raging fire. “Bloody hell mate! I could just give you a ticket right now!”

As I thought how to approach this difficult situation, I was still happy then it hit me. I knew I should have said something else. I gulped. My mind rushed to think of some communication techniques I could use as a life boat to save me from drowning in the conversation. All that came to mind were some techniques on getting out of a speeding-ticket. I annoyed the officer enough so surely it couldn't get worse.

My smile began to lower. I no longer made eye contact with the officer. The officer's raging mood began to infect me. He was making me feel angry. It was as if my body was overcome by an emotional virus from the officer who was the virus' host.

I thought of the techniques to get out of a speeding-ticket and realized I was already beginning to use them. It was too late to make the officer feel safe as he approached the car, but I needed to no longer act oblivious to my mistake. I needed to show respect as officers are in a clear position of authority and often experience disrespect throughout their day that only makes them more determined to convict guilty citizens. “You're right,” I replied. “I was stupid and careless.”

The officer was still enraged and continued to threaten me with a ticket. I knew he could easily write me a ticket, but he was not writing one. I kept myself aligned with the officer's reality by remaining in a “Yes I'm wrong, stupid, and shouldn't have done that” mood. I continued to play psychological judo, and match my mood with his own, until two minutes later he said to drive away. And oh, no ticket!

I drove off – though feeling pleased I had beaten a reckless driving ticket – in an irritated state. The officer had destroyed my happy mood. It took two minutes of talking with the officer to completely transform my happy state into a joyless, gloomy mood, which I remained in for another two hours until I went to bed.

The Science of Emotional Contagion – How Two Minds Infect One Another

People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel. Maya Angelou, poet and actress

Any emotion, if it is sincere, is involuntary. Mark Twain, highly quoted writer

You can close your eyes to the things you do not want to see, but you cannot close your heart to the things you do not want to feel. Anonymous

“I am involved in all of mankind”. John Donne, 16th century poet

My story depicts your reality with emotions. Every day you interact with people in different moods. Sometimes you are happier than people; other times they are happier than you. Emotions transfer between people. This is a fascinating peculiarity with emotions. Have you ever noticed how we feel in our interactions is not only dependent on our internal state?

How did you feel when someone really annoyed began talking to you? You became more annoyed.

How did you feel when someone unhappy began talking to you? You become unhappy.

How did you feel when a depressed person shared their misery with you? You felt depressed and miserable.

How did you feel when a charismatic person talked to you? You felt his energy and you began to feel happier.

You can catch an emotional cold.

Psychologists call this phenomena “emotional contagion”. It is a psychological and physiological process – a transference of emotion that can occur from mimicking body language. Elaine Hatfield, a professor at the University of Hawaii, in a study with John Carlson and Christopher Hsee, had college students watch a videotape of a man describe two very emotional experiences: his life’s happiest and saddest events. While the college students watched the tape, they were taped so the researchers could record the students’ emotional responses. The students were also asked what feelings they experienced for each story at the end of the video.

Researchers found that students showed and expressed the recorded person’s emotions. The student’s felt happy when they watched the man describe his happiest event. The students felt sad when they watched the man describe his saddest event.

Hatfield and her two colleagues, John Cacioppo and Richard Rapson, in their co-authored book Emotional Contagion, say the psychophysiological phenomena occurs from automatically matching facial expressions, vocalics, postures, and movements. Hatfield says, “People tend to experience emotions consistent with the facial, vocal, and postural expressions they adopt.”

When you really listen to a friend, empathy puts you in their shoes to experience what they talk about. The friend describes an argument with an ex-partner, the yelling, the misunderstandings. You vividly see what your friend talks about. The experience lets you feel the pain your friend feels. Well-known psychologist Albert Bandura says the shared experience results in a shared feeling. That is the price of listening: not only can you catch a cold, but you can catch an emotional cold.

Mirror Neurons – The Mind’s Mirror

There is a scientific explanation behind how our emotions – an experience of mind and body – transfer to somebody else. In 1980s, three Italian researchers made what is said to be one of the greatest neuroscience breakthroughs in recent times: discovering the mirror neuron. Three researchers in an experiment attached electrodes to a macaque monkey’s brain. This enabled the researchers to determine what movements caused what neurons to activate. As the monkey reached for food, the researchers took note of single neurons being fired.

One time when the electrodes were still attached to the monkey, the researchers grabbed a piece of food themselves, then handed it to the monkey. To their surprise, the researchers saw the monkey’s neurons fire! By accident, the researchers had discovered that when they grabbed a piece of food, the monkey had the same neurons light up as if it picked up the food. The researchers came to name these neurons “mirror neurons” because they were like the mind’s mirror. The mirror neurons reflected what the person or monkey saw.

The finding may appear insignificant, yet the breakthrough discovery has led to researchers to better understand autism, empathy, altruism, and general learning. Mirror neurons are responsible for tuning-in to another person’s behavior. The neurons are responsible for an awareness and shared-feeling between two people. This one type of neuron is responsible for the significant role of learning, understanding, and feeling.

How to Make Others Feel Great

An amazing, almost mystical link takes place to connect the brains thanks to the mirror neuron. A signal sent from either individual in the psychological connection travels via the link to similarly affect the recipient. Hatfield says, “We reflect what they feel.”

Smile at a baby, or almost anyone for that matter, and the baby’s mirror neurons fire to trigger an automatic smile. That is why the age-old saying, “smiling causes the whole world to smile with you”, is true. Not only is emotional contagion a replication of another’s emotions, but it is a biological dance. It is an interlinking of mind and body.

The biological dance is an important part in group dynamics. Janice Kelly, a professor of psychological sciences at Purdue University, says emotional contagion causes people to converge into an affective homogeneous group. In other words, group members experience the same emotions overtime as their fellow members. Kelly says that people with highly expressive body language are more able to impose their emotions on others. The distinctive nonverbal signs allows individuals to pick up on the person’s emotions and become infected by their emotional state. Here we see another age-old saying, “monkey see, monkey do” proven.

How to Be Great

Another age-old theory of staying away from toxic people because they pull you down is now a physiological and psychological fact. Being around suppressing or uplifting people affects your body and mind. We were born for interaction and connection with one another. We are a social animal.

If you study self-help, you know the benefits of making friends with wealthy people if you want to be wealthy. If you want to be happy, you make friends with happy people. If you want to be confident, you make friends with confident people. If you want to be funny, you make friends with funny people. Observance creates transference.

Observance creates transference.

Athletes often play their sport better after watching superior athletes excel in the same sport through the magic of transference. You come to pick the characteristics you see in others because they infect you with their style, knowledge, and emotions. Being around people you want to be like is a secret of self-transformation to stimulate that emotional desire needed for growth.



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Whether you intend to be infected by someone or not is irrelevant to mirror neurons because they are responsible for imitating other people. You do not decide to take in the exposure – the adaption from mirror neurons is an automatic process. Our parents told us to avoid hanging out with the wrong people for a reason. “People are like dirt,” said the classical Greek philosopher Plato. “They can either nourish you and help you grow as a person or they can stunt your growth and make you wilt and die.” It is reality that you absorb the characteristics of people you observe.

Put yourself in a group where the individuals are depressed and you will become depressed. Put yourself in a group where the individuals blame others and you will blame others. Put yourself in a group where the individuals are prejudice against blacks and you will become prejudice against blacks. Or in my case: do something stupid on the road in front of a police officer to make him angry so you become angry.

Really great people make you feel that you, too, can become great.

Mirror neurons are not all bad news. In fact, they can be wonderful! Mirror neurons do not have to be the only source of influence on your mood or way of thinking. You can still be with depressed, blame-filled, or prejudiced individuals without taking on their characteristics. Therapists, social workers, and doctors are a few categories of professionals who need to work with people in the “don’t infect me with your emotional disease” category. Even so, people in such professions have a harder time making themselves immune from emotional diseases because mirror neurons are a part of the brain every moment of life.

Though you and I will always be around less-than-optimal people, we need to put ourselves around people who have the characteristics and emotions we want. We naturally gravitate towards these people. They have a set of likable characteristics that draw us to them to bring out the best in ourselves. As Mark Twain said, “Really great people make you feel that you, too, can become great.”

The Brain’s Low Road and High Road: Brain Secrets to Smart Living

While emotional contagion is an important variable of the formula to become who you want, it is also important you do not rely on other people to make you feel good. Letting the emotional parts of your brain (mostly the almond-shaped amygdala located deeply beneath both sides of your temples) roam like a child on the street is dangerous. Neuroscientists say you can control emotional responses to a certain extent.

When our ancestors faced a dangerous predator, they had to make a quick decision, an emotional response void of time-consuming rationalization that puts the person's life at risk. Their eyes would widen and pupils dilate to visually take in more information. They received a shot of adrenaline to increase the supply of oxygen and glucose to muscles for strength and speed. Unnecessary bodily functions like digestion became suppressed. In terms of brain functions, neurological signals detour the slow responding "high road" and take the "low road" to produce a quick response. (I recommend you grab Daniel Goleman's Social Intelligence to better understand the neuroscience behind emotions).

In a low road response, the sensory signals bypass the cortex and go straight to the amygdala to produce a reflexive response. Going straight to the more primitive amygdala produces reflexive, unconscious decisions. Neuroscientists say these primitive parts of the brain are difficult to change.

One low road response could be your reaction to a loud bang. The ear-busting sound causes an adrenaline response like widened eyes, dilated pupils, and increased supply of oxygen all in the first few milliseconds you hear the sound. You quickly look towards the bang to rapidly calculate whether it signals danger. If you cannot see the source of the sound, you unconsciously resort to social proof by looking at people's faces to see their reactions and how you should respond. These decisions take less than a second.

Babies are frightened by loud noises because they have yet to discover that loud noises can be safe. You would scream, cry, and sprint away from loud noises if your brain overtly emphasized the low road in everyday living. This is where the high road, a more analytical neurological path in your brain, comes in to better control your emotional responses.

The high road is a slower response path that uses the logical parts of the brain like the frontal cortex and the hippocampus (your memory) to respond appropriately to stimulus. These brain parts are vulnerable to neuroplasticity that describes physical change. The brain gradually shapes itself by learning that all loud bangs are not dangerous.

After the first seconds following a loud bang, your brain transitions over to the high road by analyzing the situation. While the low road is responsible for reflexive decisions beyond your control, the high road can jam a cognitive wedge in the low road to help you better adapt and survive. A cooking saucepan dropping on the hard kitchen floor does not trigger you to bash on a neighbor's door for help.

The Scientific Method to Be Happy and Likable

Some neuroscientists say it is impossible to control all emotional responses due to the brain's low road producing a quick response for survival. Researchers agree you can put your brain's high road to better use. When you think about an emotional response, you use the logical prefrontal cortex to override the signals received by the emotional amygdala. This is where neuroscience meets personal development.

One of my favorite techniques that uses my high road to take me to happiness, stability, and understanding is reframing. In reframing, you manipulate your initial interpretation, often a quick-response, in a situation to produce a response that benefits you and your relationships.

A powerful reframe described in my Communication Secrets of Powerful People program is positive intention framing. In positive intention framing, you identify the positive intention relevant to the limiting situation. Let's say you are in a serious argument with your spouse. Most people in such an argument let: 1) the low road control the argument as they react impulsively and later regret what they said during the heated disagreement and 2) emotional contagion infect themselves with a negative mood for hours following the argument. You can have a degree of control over impulsiveness and emotional infections by reframing.

A positive intention reframe could identify your spouse's yelling as their need to be heard, understood, and received; instead of a personal attack. Alternatively, you could positively reframe your spouse's yelling as a welcomed release of frustration so you can listen to what concerns him or her.



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The purpose of positive intention reframing is to stop you from thinking your story is right and that hidden information exists. It does not directly manipulate your emotions, rather it opens your mind to empowering options, which alters your emotional state. Reframes use your prefrontal cortex to take the high road and interpret the situation in a way that lets you act resourcefully. Reframing is proven by research to be one of the most effective anger management techniques. (I give you six other specific, easy-to-use reframes for any situation in my program, which you can read about by clicking here.)

The Shocking Truth About Happy People

Happy people are experts at reframing initial interpretation (“He is a ****head for cutting me off in traffic!”) into empowerment (“He mustn’t have seen me”). They use their prefrontal cortex to take the brain’s high road. What happens outside does not matter because their mental attitude is what matters. “Happiness doesn’t depend on any external conditions,” said Dale Carnegie, “it is governed by our mental attitude.”

Contrary to what you may think when someone is angry, happy effective communicators do not think positively to stop themselves becoming angry. Let’s say an aggressive person talks to someone with effective communication skills. The effective communicator is able to defuse the aggression through their communication style even though the emotional aggression is still received. A good communicator feels the aggression, but they reframe their response, which enables them to control emotional contagion and a destructive low road reaction. They see it in frames such as, “He’s trying to get me to understand him.” or “I enjoy the problem coming to surface instead of it remaining hidden where it eats away the relationship.” These frames let the effective communicator efficiently respond.

The happy effective communicator does not avoid anger. The happiest people get angry, cry, and accept emotions. Happy effective communicators are so because they embrace all emotions and open their minds to other interpretations.

Happy effective communicators embrace all emotions.

Happy people express anger by owning it (“I am angry!”). The problem of emotional contagion in bad communication, therefore, is not the current emotion, but how it is expressed. Blaming someone for your anger (“You’re a ****en idiot!”) makes them angry. When you harmfully express anger, the emotional infection escalates. Alternatively, suppression of anger avoids reality as resentment builds and the relationship withers away to its death.

In terms of depression, emotional contagion and reframing is no different. Depressed individuals seek isolation to feel better about themselves. The isolation compounds their depression – an ironic effect. The solution to depression is too complex for discussion in this article, yet sufferers are better off interacting with happier people to beat depression than being in isolation. They need destructive interpretations (“I’m a loser”) reframed into ownership and empowerment (“I’m feeling down today”). Similarly, they should make mirror neurons benefit themselves by smiling – even if it feels artificial – as it forces the body to be happy.

Emotional contagion can work for you or against you. Its affect is decided by how you use the high road of your brain.

The Best Technique to Change People’s Emotions: Emotional-Leveling

We now see how reframing controls your responses to situations. What about other people’s responses? Should you let other people react in whatever way they happen to react? Can you use a technique to uplift other people and have emotional contagion help your relationships?

In general, do not worry about people’s responses because your response is what matters. Worrying over people’s responses is a powerless concern for the future. Trouble results the moment you try to directly manipulate a person’s emotions just like your own emotions.

Do not worry about people’s responses because your response is what matters.

Forcing your happiness on someone unhappy, negative, or angry is counter-productive. When I was happy and smiling, the angry police officer became more infuriated.

The next time someone around you is angry, look them in the eye, smile, and tell them, “What a beautiful day!” The person will become more angry and say something like, “It’s a disgusting day.” At times your happy attitude may change someone’s unhappy perspective, but the technique is unreliable because it suppresses present emotions. What is an effective communicator to do when emotional contagion creates an ineffective, unproductive environment?

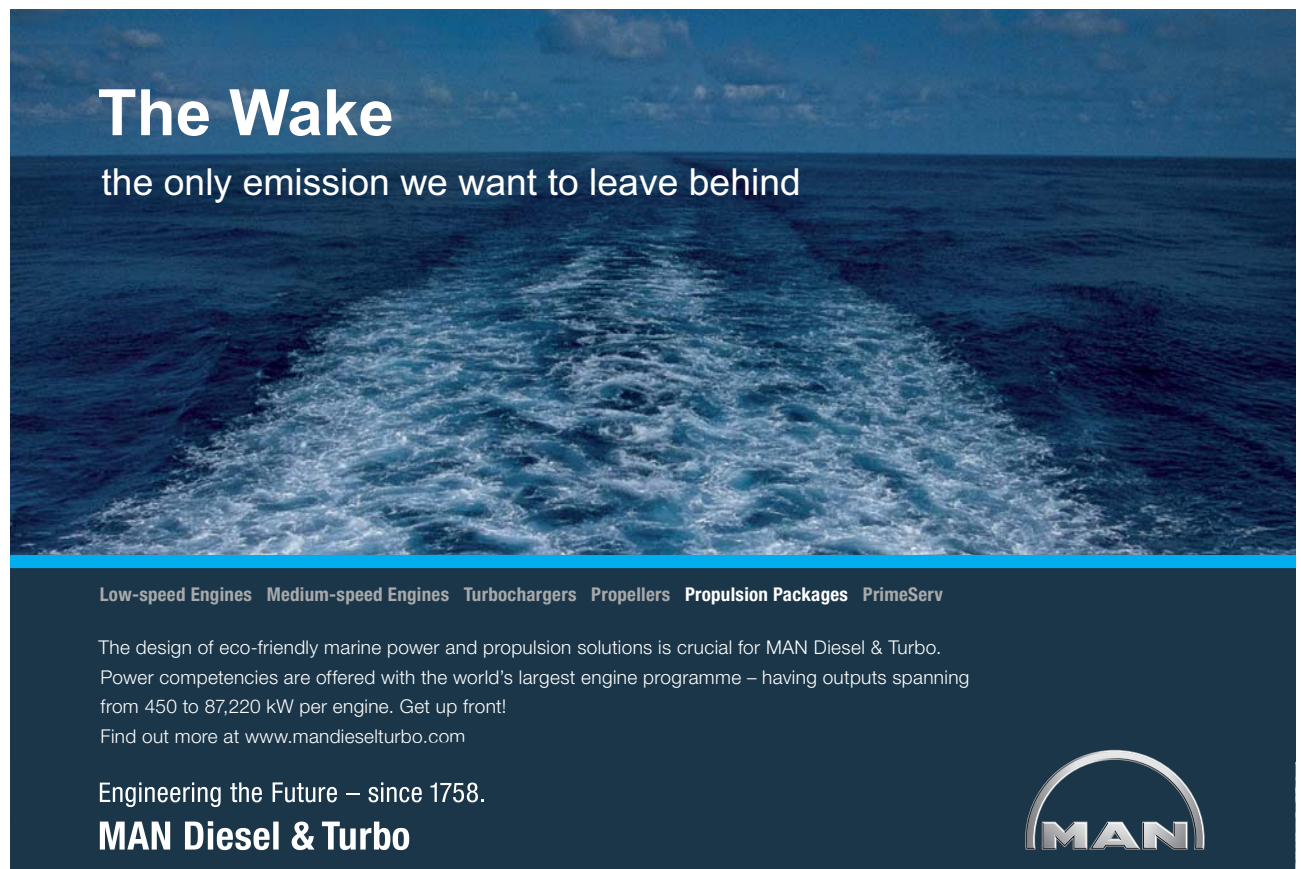
How Fights Escalate with Emotional Contagion

Emotionally out of control conversations (or monologues) start with one person injecting an emotion into their conversation partner. When the partner is a poor communicator who reacts impulsively, his mirror neurons mimic the person’s harmful state. The newly infected person becomes a carrier, reciprocating the infection to the original carrier who’s emotional disease worsens.

Once the emotional infection becomes too much for the individuals, they leave the conversation only to contaminate other people. An emotional infection outbreaks. A simple disagreement escalates into a large – sometimes life-threatening – conflict with innocent people.

On one level you need to prevent yourself from being a carrier. When you talk to a friend in need, you are faced with the challenge of empathizing with your friend’s pain. You draw yourself into your friend’s struggle and feel the same pain. (True empathy does not make you a carrier.) At another level you need to prevent other people from being carriers. Sometimes people go nowhere productive and you need to put them into an emotionally empowering state. These mood challenges exist when you want to bring the best out of people.

The technique of reframing minimizes the likelihood of you carrying a dangerous emotional virus, while a technique I call “emotional-leveling” helps you prevent people from remaining in states that do them and others harm. Doing these two things controls emotional contagion to build happiness, power, and healthy relationships.




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The emotional-leveling technique firstly adjusts your emotions to reflect the other person's emotional state. You then slowly raise your emotions and simultaneously theirs with emotional contagion and mirror neurons until the person enters the desired state. The technique does not try to manipulate the person's emotions; it encourages them to feel one's emotions and then move forward in healing. (I cannot emphasize enough that you must allow others to accept and express their emotions. Do not use the emotional-leveling technique to avoid emotions.)

Again, you firstly connect at their level. Do not fight anger with happiness nor should you reciprocate verbal aggression. If the person is aggressive or depressed, take on a similar emotional level to build empathy and understanding. If an aggressive person walks around, walk around with him or her. If someone talks fast, you should also talk fast. For a depressed person, show you are also feeling depressed without developing depression. Be slower in your movements, speak softer, and have similar facial expressions as the person. Your goal is to enter their state without escalating the problem.

Once you connect at the person's level and let him or her process present emotions, you then raise your emotional state. Make a joke or use a reframe on the situation. How does the mindset of this technique differ to being an annoying happy person smiling at everyone? Instead of reaching down to pull the person out of their emotional hole only to have them reject your assistance, you jump in the hole and let them stand on your shoulders to climb out.

Your reframes get accepted because you are in the person's emotional state! If you were happy and told an unhappy mate who recently broke up that he should lighten up, he will reject your reframe and dislike you. On the other hand – and this is where the power of emotional-leveling comes in – if you are also unhappy after communicating with him, such that he knows you share the same emotional state, he will accept a reframe like, “Break ups are painful, yet they allow you and I to meet future partners we will love.”

If you combine the reframing technique with the emotional-leveling technique, you control your emotions and thoughts and help other people control their emotions and thoughts. These two skills help you and others express, share, and manage emotions that otherwise harm relationships. You transform what would normally be a destructive emotional outbreak into a positive outbreak.

Emotional contagion is a fascinating topic. You can make the psychological and physiological phenomena work for you instead of feeling you are its victim. Interact with people you want to be like. Reframe situations to travel along the high road to happiness. Make people's mirror neurons mimic your rising state and their biology will become like yours. It seems like magic, but it is science.

About the author

Joshua Uebergang, known as the “Tower of Power”, is a social skills coach, author, and owner of Australian company Tower of Power where shy guys discover how to win friends and influence people. Visit his blog and sign-up free to get conversation techniques, confidence-boosting strategies, and people-magnetic tips by email, along with blog updates, and more! Go now to TowerOfPower.com.au.

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2 Emotional Intelligence for Today's Leaders Part I: Self-Awareness by Astrid Baumgardner

Lately, there has been a lot of press about the importance of emotional intelligence for successful entrepreneurs and leaders.

Recent reports indicate that applicants to Yale's School of Management will be tested on their emotional intelligence.

An entrepreneur and investor with a Harvard MBA published an article in Forbes magazine about the importance of getting an "emotional education" in addition to a traditional education. Daniel Goleman, author of the groundbreaking book Emotional Intelligence, posted an article on LinkedIn with 9 different questions to help you evaluate your own emotional intelligence.

So what is emotional intelligence and why should leaders cultivate this skill?

Emotional Intelligence (know as "EQ", as opposed to "IQ") is the ability to recognize and control your emotions and then pick up on the emotions of those with whom you are interacting in order to influence and work effectively with them. It's the ability to express the appropriate emotions at the appropriate time.

This psychological model was introduced in 1990 by Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer and popularized by science writer Daniel Goleman in his groundbreaking work, Emotional Intelligence (1995). Emotional Intelligence has been called "a revolutionary, paradigm-shattering idea" (Harvard Business Review) since it is strongly correlated with success.

Having high EQ is the way to get buy-in from the people with whom you are dealing and get them to listen, be engaged and inspired to follow your lead. Research has shown that having high EQ is a better indicator of success than having a high IQ. That is why it is such an important leadership skill. The great thing about EQ is that it is a skill set that you can develop to make you a more effective leader. Let's take a closer look.

EQ involves four underlying sets of skills, two having to do with your own emotions and two having to do with the emotions of those around you:

YOU or Personal Competence:

1. SELF-AWARENESS: You are aware of your own emotions; and
2. SELF-MANAGEMENT: you effectively manage your emotions.

OTHERS or Social Competence:

3. SOCIAL AWARENESS: You are able to sense the emotions of and empathize with those around you; and
4. RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT; you know how to interact with, influence and work effectively with other people.

EQ in Practice

Here is how EQ works.

Suppose that you are working closely with a collaborator who makes a lot of demands about how a performance or a presentation is supposed to run. You have just received an email from this person in which she has yet another requirement when you thought that everything had been agreed upon.

What would your first impulse be upon receiving this email?

Rather than stewing over this email and sending an explosive response, people with high EQ slow down before reacting. So let's learn some concrete strategies that will enable you to develop high EQ so that you can be on top of your game and know how to use and express your emotions in order to elicit the best possible results.

It starts with the first of two elements of EQ involving you: Self-Awareness.

EQ Skill #1: Emotional Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is your ability to perceive your own emotions accurately in the moment and understand your tendencies across situations. Self-awareness also means that you are able to assess the impact of your emotions on those around you. Self-awareness is the first step in developing high EQ because it helps to make sense of your emotions in the moment so that you can formulate the appropriate response.

4 Strategies to Improve Your Self-Awareness

Here are some strategies that you can use to improve your self-awareness.

1. Notice Your Feelings

In order to become aware of your feelings, it helps to be able to label those emotions. One simple model involves 5 core emotions, with a range of intensity from high to medium to low:

Happiness (elation to cheerfulness to feeling mellow and content)

Sadness (depressed, somber, disappointed)

Anger (furious, agitated, irritated)

Fear (terrified, upset, worried)

Shame (remorseful, guilty, bashful)

How do you feel about the email from your collaborator?

A good way to develop self-awareness is to notice yourself when you are under stress since this is when you are likely to experience strong emotions. Start labeling those feelings. Notice any uncomfortable body symptoms. Pay attention to your behavior under stress. And keep track of the negative thoughts that accompany these strong emotions.

In order to develop self-awareness, keep track of your emotions and thoughts, as well as the situations or people that trigger strong emotions. You can do this by sending yourself a text message or an email, writing a post-it note or writing things down in a journal.

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2. Accept your feelings

If this email has evoked strong emotions on your part, how do you feel about that?

A lot of people judge their feelings as good or bad. People with high EQ accept their emotions because your emotions give you important clues as to what is going on. For example, if you are angry, something has triggered you. If you are sad, something important may be missing. And of course, if you are happy, pay attention to what is working.

Moreover, by refraining from labeling your emotions and by allowing your emotions to surface, they will run their course and you can move on.

3. Be aware of the impact of your emotions on others

What do you feel like doing in the situation when you receive an email that might cause you to lose it?

Self-awareness also involves observing how your emotions affect others. For example, if you blow up at your fellow collaborator, that behavior will have an effect on the other person as well as everyone else who is present and those people will also be affected, perhaps with a pit their stomachs waiting for you to lash out at them. Over the long run, this will make it harder for people to trust you.

So spend some time reflecting on how your behavior is affecting others. Journaling about such experiences can help you to spot an unhelpful behavior and learn how to control it.

4. Check in with trusted mentor or friends

A great way to gain self-awareness is to solicit feedback from trusted friends, family members, colleagues or mentors about your behavior. This is especially helpful since we may have a hard time assessing the impact of our behavior on others. Ask for specific examples and situations and be sure to look for patterns. Yes this takes a lot of courage and by doing so, you are showing yourself and those around you that you are committed to being a trusted colleague and a valuable contributor and leader.

About the author

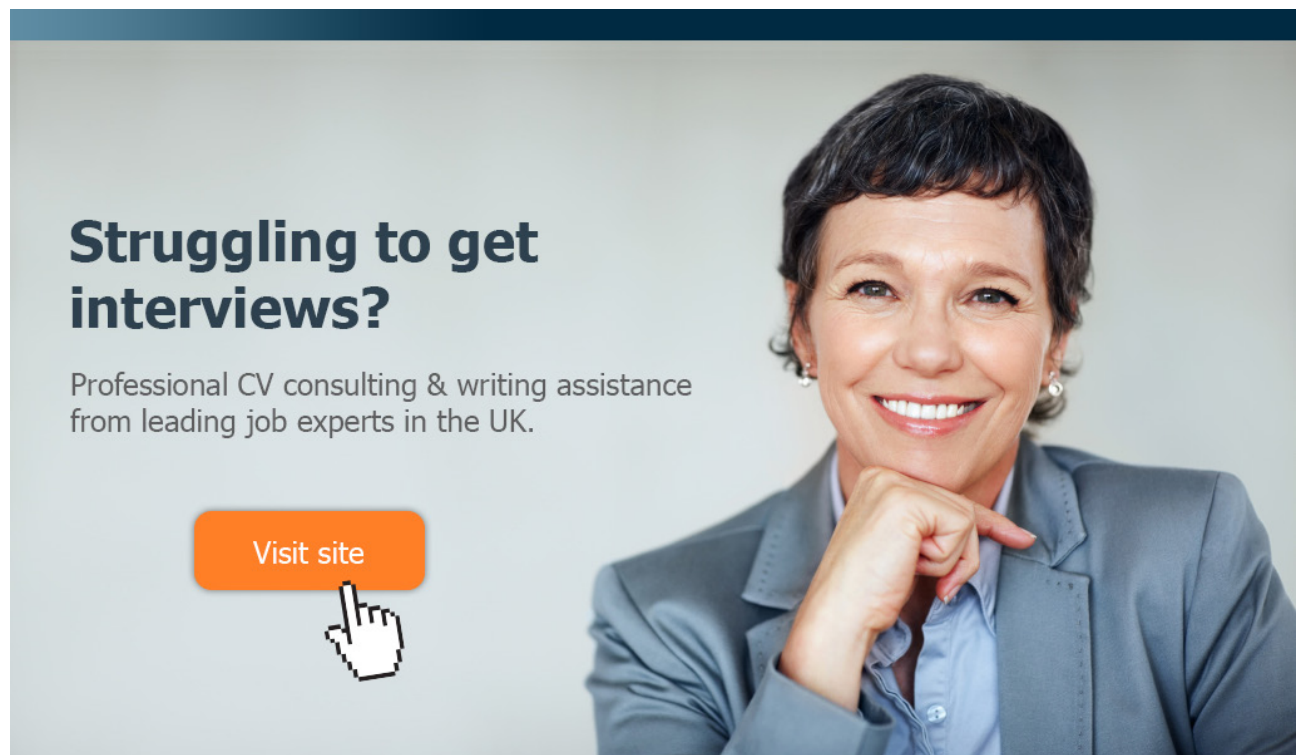
Astrid Baumgardner, JD, PCC is a professional life coach and lawyer, Coordinator of Career Strategies and Lecturer at the Yale School of Music and the founder and President of Astrid Baumgardner Coaching + Training, which is dedicated to helping musicians, lawyers and creative professionals take charge of their lives and experience authentic success. In addition to her work at YSM and her individual coaching practice, Astrid presents workshops at leading conservatories and law firms on topics including Career Planning, Goal-Setting, Time Management, Dynamic Communication, Conflict Management and Personal Branding and Networking. She is the author of numerous articles on the various aspects of how to achieve and live authentic success.

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3 Emotional Intelligence – The Importance of Self- Leadership by Byron Stock

What key skills and abilities separate outstanding leaders from mediocre ones? What distinguishes star performers from good ones is how they handle the emotionally charged situations that they face each day. Developing Emotional Intelligence is critical for business leaders who want to succeed in the 21st Century.

Peter's Story – After landing a challenging job as a new product manager, Peter was on top of the world. His degree from a top school, hard work and excellent organizational skills all contributed to his success.

Impressed by his accomplishments, Peter's boss assigned him the responsibility of locking in transactional and subscription revenue with content providers. Peter was in the final stages of negotiations with a vice president who verbally agreed to pay \$250,000 for the number one position on Peter's telecom product.

Landing this deal was important for Peter's career – the boss would be impressed, and it would help him meet one of his financial targets for the year. Feeling confident, Peter assured his boss and the company president that the deal was locked.

The Unexpected

But when Peter met with the VP to get the agreement signed, things took an unexpected turn.

“The number one slot is very desirable,” the VP told Peter. “However, we would like to put your product brand name on our web site instead of paying you \$250,000. In any given day, we have literally millions of hits. It could be great exposure for you.”

In a nanosecond, thoughts of failure blistered through Peter's mind: “What's the President going to think? I promised him this was in the bag! What's this going to do to the product launch date? The president blew up the last time one was delayed! I'm not going to meet my financial goal! They're going to fire me if I don't get this deal closed!”

Peter panicked, and before he even had time to consider his words, his angry thoughts and emotions burst forth, unfiltered.

“What? You agreed to \$250,000. I’ve already told the President you agreed, and now you want to back out? We don’t need exposure on your web site! I can’t believe you’re pulling this on me!”

After he spewed out his anger, Peter got up and walked out.

The Missing Piece

Whether he realizes it or not, Peter has just highlighted the one skill he’s lacking. Despite his many accomplishments, his lack of “emotional intelligence” just cost his company money. The new product launch will be delayed, which will negatively impact the company’s income, as well as erode their market share. His harsh emotional reaction effectively shut down communications, making it impossible to even talk about compromise.

Unfortunately, what happened to Peter is not unusual. The skills that most people think are critical for success (vision, organization, aggressiveness, etc.) couldn’t help him when he faced what he perceived as a threatening situation.

What key skills and abilities separate outstanding leaders from mediocre ones? What distinguishes star performers from good ones is how they handle the emotionally charged situations that they face each day. It is critical for business leaders who want to succeed to develop emotional intelligence skills.

I Was So Mad...

Emotional situations do more than just make people feel “stressed. Often, the part of the brain called the amygdala triggers emotional responses. One important function of this part of your brain is to compare incoming sensory information, what we see, hear, feel, taste, or smell with emotional memories, to determine if what’s coming in is a threat.

The amygdala links our emotions to our nervous system in a powerful way. If you feel threatened, that power allows this little part of your brain to “hijack” the neural pathways, triggering an emotional response before the higher brain centers even receive the sensory information. And emotions like anger, frustration, anxiety and fear are triggered by the feeling of being threatened.

Simply put, because the rational parts of your brain have not received the sensory information before you act, you literally can’t think straight.

Your ability to perform physical acts can also be affected. Have you ever hit a bad golf shot and gotten mad at yourself? What typically happens on the next shot? Another bad shot!

Beyond that, what we perceive causes biochemical reactions that affect our physical energy, our mental clarity, our emotional balance and personal effectiveness. All of which play a part in rational thought, communication and problem solving.

So how can you avoid a “hijacking?” By improving your emotional intelligence skills.

Let’s go back to our earlier example. Would the results have been different if Peter had been given the opportunity to enhance his EI skills? What if he came into that difficult meeting armed with the ability to manage his emotional reactions?

By managing (that is, choosing) his emotions and handling a difficult situation smoothly, Peter would strengthen, rather than weaken, the business relationship and communications. The product would have a greater likelihood of being launched on time, having a positive impact on income and on perception in the market place. As an added bonus Health Fitness Articles, Peter’s reputation and career potential would be greatly enhanced.

About the author

Byron Stock guides individuals and organizations toward excellence by helping them develop their Emotional Intelligence skills as a powerful tool to achieve strategic objectives, lead change and create resilient, high-performing organizational cultures. Learn about Byron’s quick, easy, proven techniques to harness the power of your Emotional Intelligence at www.ByronStock.com.

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4 Is Emotional Intelligence Just the Fad du Jour? by Susan Dunn

“I’ve been doing this for 15 years,” Annette told me. “It just wasn’t called this.” I was...to a...in...about the field of... ...and she was sure she’d found

“I’ve been doing this for 15 years,” Annette told me. “It just wasn’t called this.” I was explaining to a counselor in Australia about the field of emotional intelligence, and she was sure she’d found it first. Likely you’ll feel the same way.

“Oh, I know what you’re talking about,” James tells me, as I present a proposal to coach his staff on EQ. “Team building, leadership, getting along, cutting down on the politics. Why didn’t you say so?”

Emotional intelligence, also known as EQ (and EI) isn’t a new concept. Most people recognize it right away, or parts of it anyway. It’s what used to be called “social skills,” or “people skills,” or “common sense,” or “gut feeling.” And it’s spreading around the world like wildfire.



The advertisement features a central image of a smiling teacher leaning over a laptop to assist two young students, a boy and a girl. To the right, there are two smaller circular inset images: one showing three children looking at a book together, and another showing children working at computers in a classroom. The background is a vibrant yellow and orange swirl design. In the top left corner, there is a logo for 'e-learning for kids' consisting of a grid of colorful squares. In the bottom right corner, a green oval contains a list of achievements. At the bottom of the advertisement, there is a paragraph of text about the organization's mission and contact information.

e-learning for kids

- The number 1 MOOC for Primary Education
- Free Digital Learning for Children 5-12
- 15 Million Children Reached

About e-Learning for Kids Established in 2004, e-Learning for Kids is a global nonprofit foundation dedicated to fun and free learning on the Internet for children ages 5 - 12 with courses in math, science, language arts, computers, health and environmental skills. Since 2005, more than 15 million children in over 190 countries have benefitted from eLessons provided by EFK! An all-volunteer staff consists of education and e-learning experts and business professionals from around the world committed to making difference. eLearning for Kids is actively seeking funding, volunteers, sponsors and courseware developers; get involved! For more information, please visit www.e-learningforkids.org.



“Let me leave you with the million Ringgit question,” writes a Malaysian consultant. “Is it imperative to measure our emotional intelligence and take appropriate steps to bridge our EI gaps? Only you can decide. I rest the case with you.”

An Australian reporter writes, “Top leaders are getting in touch with their emotions and those of their staff as intuition and emotional intelligence become the hottest management buzzwords.” And international EQ conferences are planned this summer in the UK and Canada.

Emotional intelligence is spreading around the world because it’s needed, and it’s far from a buzz word or the fad-du-jour. According to Daniel Goleman, Ph.D., whose book “Emotional Intelligence” popularized the concept some years ago, non-cognitive factors account for about 80% of adult success.

Researchers such as Martin Seligman, Ph.D., Daniel Goleman, Ph.D., Peter Salovey, Ph.D., Reuven Bar-on, Ph.D., Con Stough, Ph.D. wanted to find out what factors besides IQ contributed to our success and happiness. They’ve named the competencies (or qualities, or skills), designed assessments, developed individual and business programs, and made some complex behaviors (like “people skills”) understandable and teachable. Yes, unlike IQ, EQ can be improved over the lifetime and according to Goleman, it’s 2-4 times as important to our success and happiness.

WHAT COMPETENCIES ARE INVOLVED?

Things like self-awareness, managing our own emotions and those of others, team building, leadership, negotiation and communication, constructive discontent, recognizing nonverbal signs and emotional content in poetry and art, personal power, integrity, focus, being self-motivated and able to set priorities, flexibility, creativity, trust, and good intuition – to name a few.

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN REAL LIFE?

Tomorrow, what skills will you need to have at work besides your degree to forge 10 people from 5 different cultures, 4 religions, 2 generations, 6 ethnic backgrounds, 2 sexes, and 4 departments, with 3 learning styles, 5 communication styles, and 4 occupations, 1 of whom is introverted, 1/3rd of whom are left-brained, 1 of whom is hearing-impaired, 4 of whom are depressed, half of whom are single, 3 of whom you’ve never met before, and 3 of whom are speaking a second-language, whose IQs range from 110–150, into a team able to produce a work product to specification, on time, and within budget?

And then pick up your mother from eldercare, and go home to a loving relationship in a strong marriage that nurtures two children?

You’ll need emotional intelligence!

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN EQ IS LOW?

It's expensive in terms of lost money, opportunity, time, relationships, promotions, careers, projects, goals, accomplishments, self-esteem, marriages, physical and emotional health, and even life.

- 75% of careers are derailed for reasons related to emotional competencies
- 70% of the reasons why customers and clients are lost are EQ-related
- 50% of time wasted in business is due to lack of trust
- Seniors get worse in hospitals when the physical therapists don't engage with them
- Counseling clients fail to change because their counselors lack empathy or optimism
- 50% of marriages fail
- Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for youths aged 15–24 in the US
- Think this is because of industrialized society? Think again. Samoa has the highest suicide rate in the world.
- Impulsive boys are 3–6 times as likely to be violent adolescents
- Low levels of empathy predict poor school performance
- Gifted children manifest a near “blindness” to social cues which leads to isolated and sad childhoods
- Doctors with poor EQ skills get sued more
- 75–90% of visits to primary care physicians in the US are due to stress-related problems
- Pessimists live shorter, unhealthier, unhappier, lives, and are less likely to achieve their potential than optimists
- College students in a study with the same IQ and GPA who did not write down their career goals with intentionality were 50% less successful 15 years later
- Perfectionism is potent. Perfectionists produce better work, get better grades, get enormous positive feedback. Perfectionists also have a markedly higher suicide rate.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO IMPROVE YOUR EQ?

- Work with an EQ coach.
- Browse my website for resources, websites, books, articles
- Take The EQ Foundation Course© (<http://www.susandunn.cc/courses.htm>)
- Subscribe to “It's About My Personal & Professional Development” and “EQ in the Workplace” ezines.
- Check out <http://www.eiconsortium.org> for the latest research and writing Article Submission, and also research data confirming the positive results EQ training can bring to an individual and also to an organization.

You know there's more involved in success and happiness than cognitive skills alone. Why not investigate the possibilities!

About the author

Susan Dunn coaches in all areas – career, dating, relationships, leadership, resilience, stress management, anger management, wellness, emotional intelligence, parenting, transitions, purpose of life, retirement, and more. SUSAN HAS BEEN CHOSEN ADULT & SENIOR DEVELOPMENT EXPERT for SelfGrowth, the largest self-help portal on the Internet, rated #1 by google and yahoo. She is FIND YOUR DREAM PARTNER for a major website, and ASK THE EQ EXPERT for WebProNews and Life Lessons from Movies.

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5 Anger – Managing a Powerful Emotion by Dr. Maynard Brusman

All of us get angry although some people might not like to believe this. Anger is an emotion that can occur when there is a threat to our self-esteem, our bodies, our property, our ways of seeing the world, or our desires. People differ in what makes them angry. Some people will perceive an event as threatening, while others see no threat at all in the same event. Our responses to anger differ greatly as well. Some people are able to experience angry feelings and use them as a way of solving problems rationally and effectively. Others turn their anger inward and engage in self-destructive behavior. Other people strike out when they feel angry. And some refuse to acknowledge their anger or they confuse anger with other emotions such as vulnerability or fear.

When anger occurs, the body goes instantly into a series of mind-body reactions involving hormones, the nervous system and the muscles. This involves a release of adrenaline which results in shortness of breath, skin flushing, muscle rigidity, and tightening in the jaw, stomach, shoulders and hands. Our thoughts can become fragmented and our eyes may dart from object to object. We become agitated and may even tremble. Our first impulse may be to take action which could turn out to be destructive.

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Think of anger as a tool for survival. When we perceive a threat, we experience a fight or flight response. That is, we will either struggle to avert the threat or we will flee the situation. Either response can be adaptive, depending on the circumstances. Anger is a tool that, when used effectively, can motivate us to solve problems and confront threats in a sensible manner.

Some children are brought up to feel comfortable with their anger. When they feel angry, they have a parent or other adult who helps them to experience this emotion, to become familiar with it, and to contain their responses to it. With the guiding hand of a stable adult, they learn to trust in their anger, to feel secure when anger occurs, and to direct it non-destructively and productively. They accept anger as a basic emotion which can be used in a positive way. They experience anger fully but they are able to moderate their responses, a skill they will be able to use throughout their lives.

Unfortunately, many of us, as we grew up, lacked helpful guidance in learning to deal with our anger which is widely seen as a negative emotion which should be suppressed. A common myth suggests that healthy, happy people do not get angry. Nothing could be further from the truth. How often have we been told never to show our anger, never to experience it? How many people have been made to feel shame for having anger, only then to turn their anger inward and chastise themselves for feeling this very normal emotion? If we don't recognize or experience anger, how can we familiarize ourselves with ways to deal with it adaptively? If we turn it inward on ourselves, how can we use it to deal proficiently with problems in the real world? Luckily, even if we learned maladaptive ways of handling anger in childhood, we can acquire more effectual methods of dealing with this emotion in adulthood.

Directing Anger toward Others

Those who were told in childhood to avoid anger may never come to know what their anger is all about. Thus, they fear the emergence of angry feelings and when their anger is triggered, they may find themselves out of control. Indeed, for those who are unfamiliar with anger, the likelihood of catapulting into rage becomes a real possibility. When things are at their most extreme, people can get hurt, damaging words can be spoken, and property can be destroyed. When people rage, they often want to overwhelm the other person who made them angry B but they fail to understand that the consequences of raging will generally backfire on them. They lose credibility and respect in the long run, and there may even be legal consequences.

Anger directed toward others can also express itself in various forms of behavior, such as:

- Verbally abusing, berating and lecturing other people
- Holding grudges
- Manipulating others to get what you want
- Using sarcasm to show your superiority
- Harboring vengeful thoughts
- Refusing to see your part in a problem and placing the blame on another person or a situation
- Using the silent treatment
- Using unfair tactics on others and catching them off guard (passive aggression)
- Displacing anger on those who are weaker, but not the real cause of the anger

The way we handle anger in adulthood has much to do with the strategies we learned in our earlier years, as well as the role-modeling we were exposed to. Some people feel that venting their anger will dissipate it, but research argues against this myth. Venting anger unproductively usually just increases the probability of getting angrier.

Directing Anger Inward

Many people have been made to feel ashamed for having anger. If our self-esteem has been damaged, we are ripe candidates for blaming ourselves when we are angry. Women may be particularly susceptible because of cultural expectations to be nice. We may learn to direct our anger inward, toward ourselves, rather than attributing it to a perceived threat in the external world. We may berate ourselves and engage in self-destructive behavior as a consequence. Anger directed toward ourselves can manifest itself in...

- Physically harming ourselves
- Blaming ourselves for problems, even when we are not really the cause of the problem
- Refusing to feel any emotions, numbing out
- Running away from problems and never addressing them
- Abusing drugs, alcohol, food or participating in other forms of addiction
- Engaging in dangerous behavior, such as reckless driving or thrill-seeking behavior
- Feeling uncomfortable in spending time alone
- Never letting go of anger and allowing it to store up

Some Suggestions for Taking a Positive Approach toward Anger

- The most important thing one can do to manage anger is to get to know this emotion, and to know it well. Ask yourself the following questions. What triggers my anger? Are there any themes in these triggers (for example, feeling condemned, feeling controlled by others, feeling rejected)? What happens in my body when I'm angry? What are my thoughts when I feel angry? What actions do I feel compelled to take? When you know your anger, you can have a more controlled response to it. This puts you into the position of having more choices in how you handle angry situations.
- Our thinking influences the feelings we have about certain situations. Examine the automatic hostile thoughts you have about these situations. For example, when a friend ignores you, do you automatically begin to have negative thoughts about this person? These negative thoughts can ignite a process of angry feelings. But you can ward off these feelings if you change the negative thoughts to more positive ones. Perhaps your friend was having a bad day or didn't know that you were trying to make contact. Taking a more compassionate, forgiving, and trusting stance toward the world can give us a sense of empowerment where we are in control, not our anger. Even if we are insulted or rejected, isn't it better to see what the problem is, taking a flexible attitude toward the situation, and solve the problem rationally rather than simply reacting to it in a way which could be destructive to everyone involved? When we examine the thoughts which lead to angry feelings, we raise our threshold for sliding into an angry response.
- Anger, used productively, is a problem-solving tool. Once we have learned to contain our anger and change our negative anger-provoking thoughts, we can then take an assertive position in dealing with problems. Assertiveness is logical and non-emotional. There is no uncontrolled anger in a truly assertive response. Rather than having an angry blowout with your friend, simply tell her that you felt frustrated and rejected when she failed to return your phone call. Then you will hear her side of it, and communication about the problem can begin. Assertiveness is a way of defining the limits of your boundaries. You can let others know who you are and what you expect (although this does not mean that they will do what you want). In taking an assertive response, you solve the problem rather than letting it fester into destructive anger.
- It is better to be close than right. Striving to be right has caused many wars and few wars have produced real winners. Most people involved in a dispute believe that they are right and the other is wrong and both sides can usually muster up the evidence to support their case. Rather than falling into anger and taking an adversarial position when there is conflict, try using good communication skills to solve the problem. Learn how to listen to the other party. Speak in terms of I-statements rather than blaming others and putting them on the defensive. Don't bombard the other person with a litany of past grievances just address the issue at hand. Good communication skills can be learned in a therapeutic setting.

- Finally, there are a number of other methods for dealing constructively with anger. For example, if you have anxiety associated with anger, get some physical exercise to dissipate the anxiety. Take some calming deep breaths. Or write out your angry feelings (write in a journal, or compose a letter or email but do not send it!). If an angry situation is getting out of control, leave the situation give yourself some time to cool off. And above all, don't take action when you are angry (repeat to yourself privately in an angry situation Don't take action. Don't take action. Tell yourself, I'm a loving and good person who has integrity and I'm going to stay that way.

“If your heart is a volcano, how shall you expect flowers to bloom?” Kahlil Gibran

An Exercise for Exploring Anger

Do this exercise once a day for a month or so. It only takes a few minutes. This exercise encourages you to explore your anger so that you can take a more contained approach toward it.



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Find a quiet time and place with no distractions (turn off the TV and background music). Close your eyes and visualize someone you are angry with. Feel the anger welling up inside you. Make the anger swell. Now observe your body's reaction to the anger you are feeling. Observe your thoughts during your anger. Feel your state of being angry and then breathe calmly and deeply. Now tell yourself: I'm not going to take action; I'm just going to breathe my way through these feelings until I can handle them comfortably. My anger is my own, and I am in control of it. And in time you can come to realize that you feel comfortable with your anger. It's simply a normal emotion which, in the end, can help us to deal with life's problems. (Note: since anger is such a powerful emotion for some people, it is strongly recommended that this exercise be done under the guidance of a trained psychotherapist.)

Controlling the Escalation of Anger

When anger goes out of control the consequences can be devastating and irreparable. When people have a destructive angry episode, there is a series of steps involved in the escalation of the interaction. We should aim to stop the escalation before it spirals completely out of control. We can learn to break into this chain of behavior at any point to prevent anger from reaching a destructive level, although the interventions are more effective at the earlier stages of the sequence.

First there is a triggering event. All of us have different events that can trigger anger, but in most cases the event is something that serves to make us feel threatened.

Next the event is interpreted. It is our interpretation of the event that can send us instantaneously into an angry state. If the event taps into our unresolved issues regarding rejection, humiliation or being controlled or abused, we are likely to interpret it as a threat. If we rely on rigid patterns of thinking involving shoulds, musts, and ought tos, we are likely to justify our anger. In order to break the chain of anger at this point we need to go immediately into a more flexible mode of thinking so that we can interpret the event in a positive light and with compassion.

Third, we quickly have a physical reaction to anger with a rush of adrenaline which causes stress, quick movements, fragmented thoughts, and a need to take action. To intervene at this point, we should breathe deeply, work on calming ourselves and refuse to take destructive action. If necessary, it may help to leave the situation entirely to calm down.

Then, we go into a stage of automatic negative thoughts which increase our perception of being harmed and justify our physical reaction. These thoughts usually involve self-righteous beliefs and a desire for vengeance. There is often little logic associated with these thoughts. We engage in name-calling, threats to the other person, self-justifying statements, assumptions that we are being threatened, and catastrophizing. At this point, observe your thoughts and statements and simply refuse to engage in this stage of the process. Breathe deeply, count to ten and avoid saying anything inflammatory.

Examining our anger often means taking a journey into our past, into our inner lives. Our anger is a mirror of the injustices which have been committed against us in earlier years. It reflects our fears of vulnerability, our rejections, our invalidations. Coming to terms with anger, means resolving these old issues and then facing life anew with flexibility, compassion and true integrity.

“In the depth of winter I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer.” Albert Camus

About the author

Dr. Maynard Brusman is the founding principal of Working Resources, a San Francisco-based leadership consulting and executive coaching firm. He is a recognized leader in the fields of psychological testing for employment screening, interviewing and selecting emotionally intelligent people, 360 feedback performance appraisals, managing change, resiliency, interpersonal communication, leadership coaching, and strategic planning for human capital development. He is frequently called upon as a trusted advisor to senior leadership teams.

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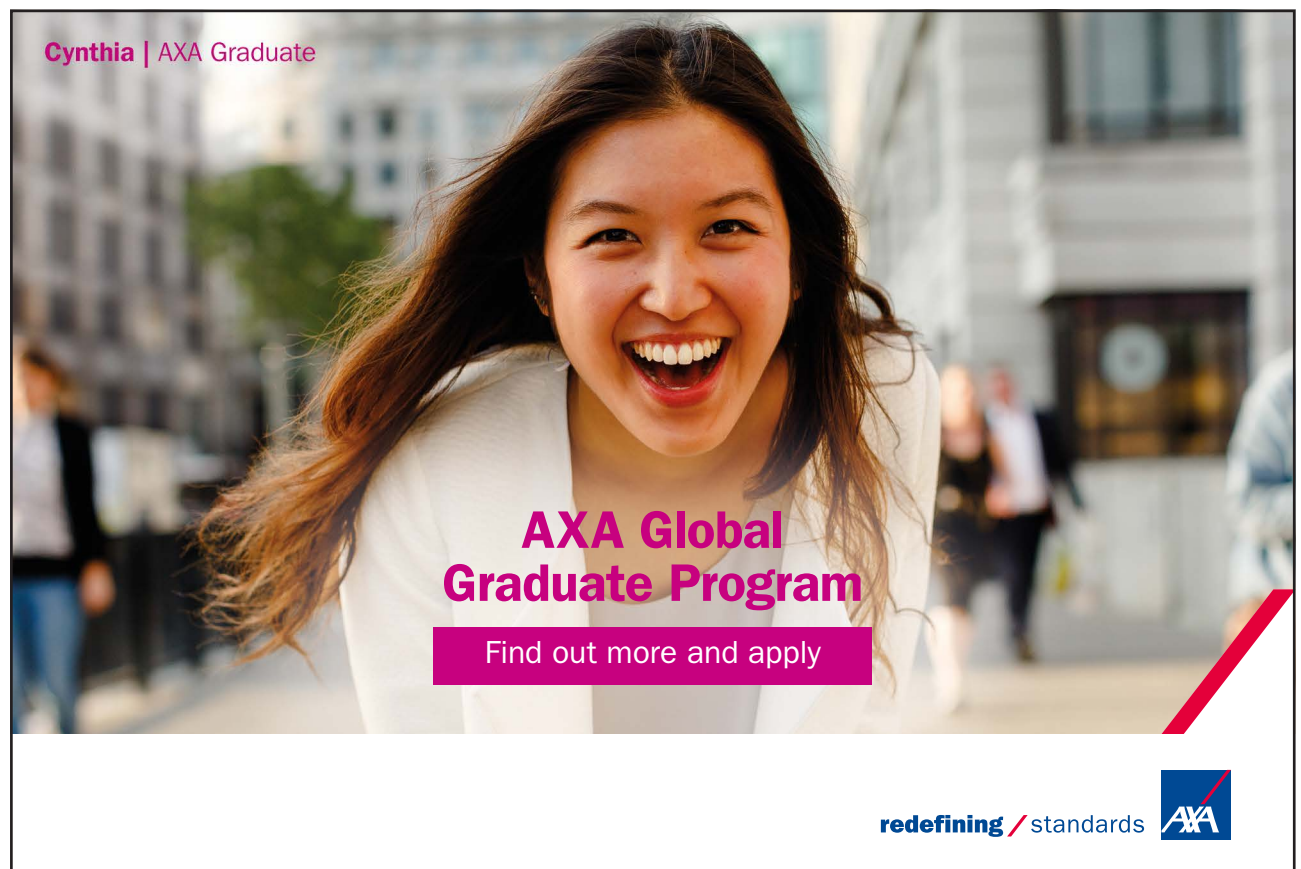
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6 Soft Skills, Hard Results (Part 1) by Jim Clemmer

Leadership deals with the world of emotions and feelings. It is more of an art than a science. Like artists, leaders have the ability to share their vision of the world. Leaders influence our perceptions and help us look at situations in new ways. These skills – and the leadership principles that guide their development – are critical to the success of an organization or team.

Of course, there are some people who remain unconvinced of the value of these “soft skills.” They’re typically managers with minimal leadership qualities, who prefer to focus on being bottomline driven, strategists, marketing aces, technical experts, “snoopervisors,” and so on.

These managers often talk about the importance of personal effectiveness and development. They pledge undying allegiance to values, mission, and vision. They go on about people issues, like communication, teamwork, respect, and service. But they really think it’s just a lot of fluff.



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Well, maybe they should think again. Now there is hard evidence that those “soft” leadership principles are the major factor in what makes a high-performance team or organization. The exciting and rapidly expanding research on emotional intelligence shows that a leader’s personal characteristics and leadership competencies have a direct bearing on his or her personal performance – as well as on that of their team and organization.

For example, studies show that even a leader’s mood is highly contagious. Depending on whether he or she is upbeat and supportive, or cranky and disapproving, the team will either be charged with high achievement or poisoned with deadly toxins.

Improving Our Emotional Intelligence

Cary Cherniss, at Rutgers University, has found “there now is a considerable body of research suggesting that a person’s ability to perceive, identify, and manage emotion provides the basis for the kinds of social and emotional competencies that are important for success in almost any job. Furthermore, as the pace of change increases and the world of work makes ever greater demands on a person’s cognitive, emotional, and physical resources, this particular set of abilities will become increasingly important.”

There’s not a lot we can do about the processing power between our ears. For the most part, we’re stuck with whatever intelligence quotient (IQ) we’ve got. The good news for many of us, is that our IQ is dramatically less important to success and happiness than our emotional intelligence (EQ). What’s even better is that EQ, unlike IQ, can be improved. It’s not easy (nothing worth doing ever is), but it can be done.

As University of Toronto psychology professors Steven Stein and Howard Book (what better name for an author?) write in their book, *The EQ Edge: Emotional Intelligence and Your Future*, “We know that emotional intelligence can be enhanced because we’ve seen it happen over and over again as we’ve worked with corporate CEOs and other executives, school teachers, military personnel, counselors and consultants, mental health professionals, and husbands and wives. Adopting proven methods found in cognitive and behavioral therapy, as well as from psychodynamic theory, we have trained many of these individuals to increase their emotional intelligence in easily understandable and proven ways.”

Improving our emotional intelligence starts with a clear picture of our ideal self. This is at the hub of our Leadership Wheel: Where am I going (or what is the picture of my preferred future)? The next step is a “gap analysis,” or assessment of my current strengths and weaknesses, followed by a plan for bridging those gaps (building on my strengths and strengthening my weaknesses). Then the real improvement work begins – experimenting with new behaviors, reframing my thinking, developing skills, and mastering feelings. This can often be reinforced by forming new relationships, or by changing the dynamic of existing ones. These steps are generally difficult to sustain on our own. That’s why personal coaches, counselors, and consultants have become so popular. They help us step back from the movie of our life, to review and reset our thinking and actions.

About the author

Jim Clemmer has been writing and speaking about leadership, change, team, and organization effectiveness for over 30 years. His extensive research, broad experience with hundreds of organizations and thousands of people, and deep understanding of these topics makes him an internationally recognized leader in the field. Beyond his seven books, he's written hundreds of columns and articles for newspapers and magazines.

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7 Soft Skills, Hard Results (Part 2) by Jim Clemmer

“We should take care not to make the intellect our god. It has, of course, powerful muscles, but no personality. It cannot lead, it can only serve.” – Albert Einstein

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Cary Cherness of Rutgers University in “The Business Case for Emotional Intelligence” (www.eiconsortium.org), makes a strong case for having a high EQ. According to Cherness, “Competency research in over 200 companies and organizations worldwide shows that about one-third of the vast difference between high and low performers (top performers are 12 times more productive than those at the bottom and 85 percent more productive than the average performer), is due to technical skill and cognitive ability while two-thirds is due to emotional competence. In top leadership positions, over four-fifths of the difference is due to emotional competence. An analysis of more than 300 top-level executives from fifteen global companies showed that six emotional competencies distinguished stars from the average: Influence, Team Leadership, Organizational Awareness, Self-Confidence, Achievement Drive, and Leadership.”

Of course, there are some people who remain unconvinced of the value of these “soft skills.” They’re typically managers with minimal leadership qualities, who prefer to focus on being bottom-line driven, strategists, marketing aces, technical experts, “snoopervisors,” and so on. These managers often talk about the importance of personal effectiveness and development. They pledge undying allegiance to values, mission, and vision. They go on about people issues, like communication, teamwork, respect, and service. But they really think it’s just a lot of fluff. Well, maybe they should think again.

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8 Working With Emotions by Brent Filson

Many leaders don't trust strong emotions. They feel they're a toxic cocktail in any organization, a cocktail that isolates people, thwarts rational plans, and promotes sloppy thinking.

Haven't you heard people say when they are in a crisis, "Let's not get all emotional over this!"

The book "Emotional Intelligence" started to change people's thinking by showing that the brain uses both reason and emotion to analyze and deal with our environment. Years before that book came out, (e.g. in my interview in the premier issue of Psychology Digest in 1994), I advocated the use of emotion in leadership. Here are ways you can make best use of emotion in your leadership.

Trust emotion. The function of the questions is to comprehend the emotional needs of your audience so you can motivate them to take action that gets results. The reality of most leadership situations is grounded in the audience's emotions. Their perception of the value you bring to them will always be linked to those emotions. People usually react by feeling first, analyzing second. When you understand that emotional reality, you can speak to it. When you speak to that reality, people see you in new ways. When they see you in new ways, they act in new ways.

Define the problem in the emotion. Each emotion of your audience is a problem and a solution. When you can clearly define that problem, you are on your way to getting a solution. Furthermore, as a leader, always try to help them solve their problems. If you aren't trying, you are not their leader, even though you may have nominal authority over them.

Challenge yourself. The answers to these questions are often your calls to action. What people feel emotional about is often precisely what you should take action on – or avoid taking action on. Avoiding action is often powerful action in and of itself.

Define reality. Constantly clarify reality for the people you lead by constantly asking and answering these questions. They will not listen to your reality until you validate their reality by continuously communicating the answers. When you speak to what is real to people, to their emotions and what triggers those emotions, you become real to them, not a caricature of a leader, which is too easy for them to dismiss or despise.

Be confident. View the questions as confidence-builders. Your confidence in tackling leadership challenges is linked to your knowledge of and your ability to take action from the emotional dynamics of those challenges.

Create value. You are not their leader until they buy in emotionally to your leadership. They will not buy in until they see value in you and your leadership. They see value in you when you create value for them within the context of the answers to the Needs questions.

Understand the major emotions. These are major emotional provinces: Ego. Greed. Job. Family. Spirit.

Emotion drives motivation. Emotion drives motivation. Motivated people are emotionally involved in their work and are more productive and innovative than people who aren't so involved.

But emotion is the blasting powder of leadership. Blasting power can move mountains but also blow up in your face. Emotion can move audiences, but if used in a false way to manipulate a response, that emotion can turn your audience against you. Leaders must skillfully use emotion not have emotion use them.

Communicate emotion. They must clearly understand the emotion you felt in experiencing the Defining Moment. This does not necessarily mean that you become emotional in your communication. The objective is not for you to feel it but for your audience to get it. They will get it when you describe the facts of what transpired. Communicated emotion, linked to their needs, lights the fuse of action. You must want to communicate it!

Promote purpose: When your audience does take action, they should know exactly what they are doing and why they are doing it. Purpose in leadership talk has three aspects: reason, feeling and awareness. People should understand the rational justification for the action; they should have an emotional commitment to the action; and be fully mindful that they are taking action.

Speak to their emotions. Those needs, or emotional talking-points (or the single emotional talking-point) are the major structural headings of your talk.

Validate their emotions: In The Leadership Talk, the act of recognizing the emotional issue and agreeing on its relevancy or irrelevancy in getting Results.

About the author:

The Filson Leadership Group, Inc. All rights reserved. The author of 23 books, Brent Filson's recent books are, THE LEADERSHIP TALK: THE GREATEST LEADERSHIP TOOL and 101 WAYS TO GIVE GREAT LEADERSHIP TALKS. He is founder and president of The Filson Leadership Group, Inc. For more than 21 years he has been helping leaders of top companies worldwide get audacious results. Sign up for his free leadership e-zine and get a free white paper: "49 Ways To Turn Action Into Results," at <http://www.actionleadership.com>

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"I studied English for 16 years but...
...I finally learned to speak it in just six lessons"
Jane, Chinese architect

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9 11 Tips from Benjamin Franklin to Make Friends by Joshua Uebergang

Few people can boast achievements equal to what Benjamin Franklin (Jan 1706–Apr 1790) accomplished in his lifetime. Coming from simple, working class roots, he made his wealth with his printing business then went on to invent many useful things; the lightning rod, the Franklin stove, the Glass Armonica, bifocals, and Daylight Savings Time. Not just an inventor, he discovered the gulf stream and whirlwinds.

Discontent with all of that, he is also a founding father of the U.S.A. – often hailed as “The First American” for his campaigns towards colonial unity. He served as the governor of Pennsylvania and the U.S. Ambassador to France. A pretty full life don’t you say?

On top of it all, Franklin was well-liked for his wit, charming to men and women, high in his diplomatic ability, and constantly working on a kind personality. A man who greatly impacted politics knew how to get people on his side. Franklin was friends with Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, Samuel Adams, James Madison, William Keith (the governor of Pennsylvania) and some important European thinkers like Hume and Priestley. He was known to make friends wherever he went, and to keep those friends.

So what can we learn from Benjamin Franklin about making friends? From the age of 20, Franklin set himself 13 virtues to follow, covering many aspects of life. Some of these virtues give good suggestions on how to improve your social life, but his pearls of wisdom don’t stop there. Through his life, Franklin dropped many tips to make friends.

Tip 1: Speak good of people

Speak ill of no man, but speak all the good you know of everybody.

If you think the U.S.A. was founded purely on intelligent, friendly debate, think again. Setting the foundations for a great nation was no easy task. The founding fathers allegedly argued like nobody’s business! John Adams in particular was no big fan of Franklin, commenting, “That I have no friendship for Franklin I avow. That I am incapable of having any with a man of his moral sentiments I avow.”

Franklin, on the other hand, vowed to see the good in people and avoided talking badly about them. He said of John Adams, “He means well for his country, is always an honest man, often a wise one...”

When you disagree with someone, it's tempting to complain about him behind his back. When you hate someone, it's even more tempting. People filled with venom and spite rarely attract nice friends. The next time you want to drop a negative comment about someone, stop yourself then find something positive to say about them. You'll be surprised at how people warm to you when they know others would respond with bitterness.

Tip 2: Be nice to enemies

Be civil to all; sociable to many; familiar with few; friend to one; enemy to none.

As a young man, Franklin was quite tactless. With effort, he became so good at handling people that he became a founding father, and even an Ambassador to France. He didn't do it without ruffling a few feathers – when he started campaigning for American independence, many of his English friends and even his own son turned their backs on him.

Despite this, Franklin remained in contact with “enemies” across the ocean and continued to be sociable whenever possible. His biographer, Isaacson, said, “His most notable trait was a personal magnetism; he attracted people who wanted to help him. Never shy, and always eager to win friends and patrons, he gregariously exploited this charm.” Although he pulled himself up from poverty, he didn't leave his old friends behind when he made his wealth.

You are bound to meet people you don't get on with or you dislike. Franklin's tip to make friends is to be pleasant and polite to everybody. By being a generally nice person, you draw more people to you than if you go around making enemies. Treat everybody with respect, even those who you don't agree with; you never know what might turn into a friendship.

Tip 3: Honor honesty

Honesty is the best policy.

Franklin printed this quote in his Almanack. When his printing career evolved from apprenticeship to producing the Pennsylvania Gazette and the Poor Richard's Almanack, Franklin could have done whatever possible to sell papers. Although the temptation loomed, Franklin held a strict policy of not printing any libel or insulting views of foreign governments.

Tricks and treachery are the practice of fools.

Honesty was an important virtue to him because of his Puritan upbringing and the social benefits it could deliver. He is also quoted as saying, “Let honesty and industry be thy constant companions” and “Tricks and treachery are the practice of fools, that don't have brains enough to be honest.”

When your thoughts line with your actions and words, you are honest. You don't have to tell everybody exactly what you think of them, but many people appreciate honesty if you present it in a diplomatic way. Men, I've found women appreciate it when you call them out on their dodgy behavior rather than being dishonest through silence.

People can spot fakers. If potential friends find out you've lied about something, they distrust you over even frivolous things like repaying a movie ticket that affect your relationship.

Tip 4: Add value to a conversation then employ silence to empower what you say

Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.

Franklin knew how to negotiate. What mattered was the benefits to the parties involved. You could ramble on about a lot of things yet it'd be distilled back to how it affects you and others making the decision.

A second part of this quote suggests minimizing noise. Silence is one of the thirteen virtues Franklin wrote at the age of 20, and swore to live by. Imagine what life was like in his time – the evenings would be quiet without electronic entertainment to fill the silence. With few distractions, important topics could be discussed such as Franklin's favorite subjects of politics, philosophy, and science.

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Maybe some of his acquaintances were fonder of filling the silence with worthless conversation. Franklin was not referring to being completely silent or to avoid all small talk, but to useless, uneducated nonsense rather than adding value to a conversation. In this day and age, the art of quality conversation seems to be fading; we would rather absorb ourselves in our cell phones and laptops than really talk to each other.

Employ the virtue of silence in terms of being fully present in every conversation. Don't play on your phone or answer text messages when someone else is talking to you – it's poor social etiquette. Treat every conversation as important, and devote your mind to it. If you want to make friends, develop your conversation topics.

Tip 5: Do not gossip and instead think well of others

Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly, and, if you speak, speak accordingly.

Another of Franklin's 13 virtues is sincerity. You already know Franklin was a big fan of honesty, and sincerity is a big part of that. When Franklin was unhappy with somebody, he did not go behind their backs but told them directly. On reading a manuscript for Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason*, Franklin was upfront about his feelings: "...You strike at the foundations of all religion... I would advise you... not to attempt unchaining the tiger, but to burn this piece before it is seen by any other person."

When you disapprove of someone's behavior or opinion, it is tempting to smile and pretend to agree, then later whisper about them behind their back. Being sincere means being honest, meaning what you say, and not gossiping about people behind their backs. Franklin even suggests we think innocently – if you don't have bitter or judgmental thoughts about someone, you're less likely to gossip. If you find yourself judging someone's behavior, see the possibilities from their point of view to build compassion.

Tip 6: Respond positively to criticism

Critics are our friends, they show us our faults.

When John Adams quipped, "His whole life has been one continued insult to good manners and to decency", Franklin could have responded with anger and defensiveness. Instead, he pointed out the good qualities in Adams (see #1) and quipped that critics should be loved because they show our faults.

When somebody criticizes you, the natural reaction is to get defensive, become angry, and retaliate. You easily find yourself in an argument. Instead, listen to what they're saying and imagine it's about a third-party.

It's hard to remove the sting, but sometimes the other person tells you something to help you. Look for the lesson in their message; if someone tells you you're too quiet, instead of getting angry, think about ways to deal with that knowledge (such as speaking louder, contributing to conversation more, or finding people who appreciate it).

Tip 7: Keep your tranquility over trivial incidents

Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.

Whether dealing with an angry Englishman, finding a beer spilled over him in a bustling tavern, or being held up by a delay; Franklin had plenty of reasons to lose his cool. Whether he did or not is not clear, but another of his 13 virtues was tranquility. He saw plenty of others losing their temper over trivial incidents and decided he would not waste his energy.

When someone cuts past you in line, you stub your toe, or your phone messes up, you might find yourself boiling with anger. But what do people around you think if you swear and curse? Flashes of anger are scary, and potential friends will find it hard to trust someone who gets mad so easily.

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Pay no attention to the incident when someone accidentally spits on you when talking, says a rude comment about you, or profusely sneezes. When you feel anger bubble, breathe deeply and count to ten. Ask yourself whether it is worth getting angry at things that happen to everyone or at things beyond your control.

Tip 8: People remember how you make them feel

A slip of the foot you may soon recover, but a slip of the tongue you may never get over.

In his youth, Franklin was quite tactless. He admitted a fondness for starting arguments for arguments' sake. During heated political discussions with former English friends, and while arguing with other founding fathers, he learned the hard way that you can't take back something you say in the heat of the moment.

Leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.

Franklin also said, "Remember not only to say the right thing in the right place, but far more difficult still, to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment." With his razor-sharp wit, he learned to hold back his clever quips. In the heat of an argument, you might think of the perfect put-down. Stop and think about it. While saying what's on your mind might make you feel better for a moment, people will remember it so think before you speak.

Tip 9: Asking for a favor can build friendship (the Ben Franklin Effect)

He that has once done you a Kindness will be more ready to do you another, than he whom you yourself have obliged.

Franklin in his autobiography explains how he won a rival legislator onto his side in an unusual way – he asked him for a favor. After Franklin thanked the legislator for his compliance by lending Franklin a rare book, he found the guy was suddenly friendly and willing to do more favors for him. They became great friends. This line of thinking was so unique it is dubbed the "Ben Franklin effect".

We usually think doing favors for others will win them over to us, but Franklin's advice is to do the opposite. Convince someone to do you a small favor like borrowing their phone to make a call or borrowing a good book they have. Express your gratitude, and from then they'll be open to doing other favors for you. If you treat this right (i.e. don't treat them like a servant) you could gain a great friendship.

Tip 10: Let your best friendships develop over time

Be slow in choosing a friend, slower in changing.

Franklin was known for being friendly, or at least civil, to everybody (#2). We know even after achieving fame and wealth, Franklin didn't turn his back on his old friends – he still considered himself a printer at heart. You can find tons of letters online that go to show how much effort he put into keeping friendships, but how many people did he consider true, close friends?

When you're lonely, it's easy to grab onto the first nice person and try turning them into your best friend. It doesn't always work that way. You'll find some people are nice on the surface but no good at being close friends; your best friends will take time to find. It's also tempting to act like somebody you're not to get close to someone. Eventually they work out you're different from the persona you put on.

Tip 11: You must earn a kind word

If you would reap praise you must sow the seeds, gentle words and useful deeds.

Another quote from the Poor Richard's Almanack; Franklin didn't expect to be spoken of highly for no reason. As well as his numerous scientific and political achievements, he was a kind and honest friend to many, and it was the combination of personality and achievements that brought him much praise in his time, and continues to do so today.

You can't expect people to speak highly of you if there's nothing to compliment. Be nice to people, do "useful" things – not only favors for others, but in your personal life. If people can see you are kind, ambitious, interesting, or fun, they will want to get to know you more. Don't sit around waiting for people to automatically like you. Work on becoming a great person in your own right, be nice to others, and people will gravitate toward you.

About the author

Joshua Uebergang, known as the “Tower of Power”, is a social skills coach, author, and owner of Australian company Tower of Power where shy guys discover how to win friends and influence people. Visit his blog and sign-up free to get conversation techniques, confidence-boosting strategies, and people-magnetic tips by email, along with blog updates, and more! Go now to TowerOfPower.com.au.

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10 How to Not Care What People Think of You – and Release Your People-Magnetic Self into the Conversation

by Joshua Uebergang

You arrive for a party at a friend's house and open the front door. It seems all eyes are on you as you walk into the room. Nervous thoughts rush through your mind: "What are they thinking about me?" "Does he think I'm weird?" and "Is that person laughing at my looks?"

When you think others always judge you, you become socially awkward, talk less, and shut-down. This is essentially a social anxiety disorder. It becomes difficult to socialize, have fun, and make friends.

I often get asked how someone can overcome these thoughts where they worry what others think because I had the same problem years ago. I fretted over people's judgments of me in conversations and general social situations. I stand at 6'9" (206cm) and attract attention where I go (at least that's what my inner-voice told me). Some people go about their day as I walk by while others gawk. I'm tall, not deaf! I had thoughts like, "Why are they looking at me like that?" destroyed my ability to socially enjoy myself until I discovered a few secrets I will share with you in this article that transformed me into a confident, happy, powerful person.

Surviving the Brutality of People's Thoughts

Why are you concerned what people think of you? Take time as you explore your concerns. Analyze your unexplored fears and anxieties. Read on once you have thought deeply about this question.

As you explore your worries and anxieties about people's thoughts towards you, you will see the problem boils down to worrying if people accept or approve you. Your worries center on accurate mind-reading in hope of adjusting yourself to be accepted or approved by people.

Social acceptance is important for everyone. If our ancestors were rejected and ostracized from their tribe, it was a death sentence because they had to confront other tribes and animals while hunting and gathering food by themselves. It was near impossible to survive alone.

Your fears are a survival mechanism so it is okay to want acceptance, but because interactions and group structures have changed after thousands of years, you have outdated ways of thinking and behaving. What thoughts and beliefs helped humans thousands of years ago – even you last year – are unlikely to serve you well now. When you worry what people think of you, does it help you survive? Does it improve your conversation skills?

...chokes your social skills as you become unable to release your real, powerful self into the conversation.

If you think about thinking about people's thoughts, you see the anxious process does more harm than good. It chokes your social skills as you struggle to release your real, powerful self into the conversation. When you try to determine people's judgments towards you, your perception of their social judgments creates inhibition and blinds your natural, magnetic personality.

We worry what people think of us more than we know:

You keep quiet in a meeting as you withhold your ideas in fear of saying the wrong thing and being rejected. From a survival perspective, the fear makes sense because you could be ostracized from the workplace and lose your job, money, and lifestyle. In reality, suggesting an idea will never cause such a drastic outcome (unless you say something absurd like, "Let's steal from the poor", but even then your coworkers will probably laugh-off your remarks).

When you talk to your spouse, you know something needs to be said, but you keep quiet because you fear his or her reaction. From a survival perspective, this could ultimately result in a break up where your genes cease to pass onto the next generation. If you say what is on your mind, however, your relationship strengthens because you discuss what really matters. (Difficult Conversations is a great book for these tough conversations.)

You avoid doing something silly or unusual in public because you fear other people will label you as "weird". Some couples do not kiss in public because they worry what the viewing public will think. The same survival principles hold true again: the fear originates from being ostracized from society. No one is going to reject you – yet alone remember you – because you did something you consider an embarrassment.

If you do something people label daring, they may put you down, but most admire your courage. (Tweet this quote.) More often than not, something that is "out there" may not even be "out there" because we fathom what constitutes safety. Giving your opinion in a conversation is not going to determine if you live or die even if it appears daring to you.

Although it is uncomfortable to take action on something you are inhibited over, the return is greater than the initial expense. When you decide to not mind-read people in your conversations, your discomfort increases the same time your power increases. This is as certain as water grows a plant. Facing the uncomfortable makes you powerful.

Your Innate Gift of Mind-Reading

Our ability to infer a person's mental state is referred by psychologists as having a "theory of mind". The survival mechanism of mind-reading adapts you to diverse people. It is powerful if you know how to use it.

Researchers agree our theory of mind develops around two years of age. Toddlers can calculate people's desires, intents, and thoughts. If a toddler sees a crying baby, she infers the distressed baby's mental state. The toddler may tug her mother's sleeve, pulling her to comfort the distressed baby. Up until then, you will not see empathetic children with mind-reading skills.

If you were like a baby absent of a theory of mind, you would continuously get in social and emotional trouble. A theory of mind helps you to do the closest thing to mind-reading as you dig into a person's mind. You are able to see the intangible like: a young boy picked on at school feels hurt and alone; your partner comes home from work smiling, leading you to believe he or she had a good day at work; a depressed friend who recently broke up with her boyfriend leads you to think she needs space for recovery. Your inference into mental states helps adjust your behavior to better accommodate people.

Your inference into mental states helps adjust your behavior to better accommodate people.



The advertisement features a black header with the CMO Inspired Conference logo on the left, which consists of a green speech bubble containing the letters 'CMO'. To the right of the logo, the text reads 'INSPIRED CONFERENCE' in large white letters, followed by '25 OCTOBER | DE VERE BEAUMONT ESTATE | OLD WINDSOR UK' in smaller white letters. Below the header is a photograph of a large, white, classical-style building with a fountain in the foreground. At the bottom of the advertisement is a collage of four images: a woman speaking at a podium, a woman in a black dress speaking into a microphone, a large audience seated in a conference room, and a man presenting a slide on a screen. Below the collage, the text 'Join Over 100 Chief Marketing Officers & Digital Innovators' is written in green.



What if, however, your friend who broke up with her boyfriend, wants to be comforted by you. Because you guessed she needed space, she would feel neglected, ignored, and more rejected. Inaccurate mind-reading causes relationship destruction.

Tell someone their destructive mental state or intent behind an action, such as, “You’re jealous because you think...”, and you will cause immediate trouble. This is what I refer to as “diagnosing” where we figure out people’s intents behind their actions, which gets us into arguments and detracts from our power with people. (I recommend you read the third chapter on diagnosing of my Communication Secrets of Powerful People for more information about this bad communication habit.)

Your Superpowers

You are no Magneto, Cyclops, Spiderman, Batman, or Superman, but you have superpowers. You can read people’s minds. Be careful with being consumed by this power, however. Over-reliance on your superpower can make citizens hate you.

Mind-reading also frustrates the beholder. We jeopardize our well-being from judgments because we have limited ability to infer someone’s mental state. A person laughing at a distance who makes eye contact with you may be giggling at a joke, not you. You think people judge you – a useful process when used correctly – but it too often sends you to mental imprisonment. You become anxious and constrain your real self from entering the conversation. Your theory of mind is too often an unreliable tool to calculate what people think.

You were given the ability to read someone’s mind so you could better adapt to the environment. Someone aggressively staring you down triggers thoughts of potential danger, allowing you to change to survive the threat. You can be over-reliant on this skill by worrying about people’s thoughts when there is no concrete evidence (such as nonverbal communication) that signal you need to adjust your behavior. What is used to survive and better connect you with people, separates you.

Approval Versus Acceptance – And Why It Matters to You

Let’s look at a paradoxical outcome seen in the following example of someone concerned about social acceptance and meeting a person’s expectations – and be sure to learn from this example. A guy is meeting his girlfriend’s parents for the first time. He worries about being “good enough” and living up to the high expectations of her parents. He does not want to break up with his girlfriend.

He has two extremes to choose from:

He gains their approval.

He gains no approval.

Let's say the guy chooses the first option. In this situation the guy is determined to get the parents' approval. He analyzes the situation, thinks, worries, and focuses on what the parents could think. He tries to mind-read the parents, which makes him anxious.

When the guy tries to calculate what the parents expect of him, he gets stressed and anxious. His continual analysis of the parents' thoughts causes awkward behavior. He becomes fidgety, apologetic, and strangled from his natural self. He gets along great with friends, but when it comes to talking with strangers he feels awful.

In this first situation, the guy forward-thinks and screws his chances of gaining the parents' approval because he is seen as needy and lacking confidence. The guy needs people to validate his identity, which ironically causes them to disapprove him.

When you need approval, people sense it as neediness then reject you. A weak self causes you to be rejected and makes you feel less worthy. The cycle continues as you develop an inferiority complex where you feel less than others.

People with low self-esteem who worry what others think, get their self-esteem from external sources. They feel good when others think good of them and feel bad when others think bad of them. This is why praise and compliments can be a dangerous communication barrier.

When you derive your powerful self from competence, capability, and self-responsibility – instead of external validation that moderates your behavior – you release your powerful self into the conversation.

In the second situation, the guy does not require the parents' approval. If he finds something funny, he laughs. If he wants something, he asks for it. If he likes something, he says so. These behaviors are different to the first situation where the guy is fidgety, apologetic, and strangled from his natural self.

You may think “he can't just ignore the parents' approval of him because he'll screw up!” The same thought drives destructive mind-reading: you think mind-reading people's judgments helps your ability to adapt, but more destruction than construction occurs. Your confidence and self-esteem gets knocked down from the destruction of so-called “adapting”.

It is okay to want people to like you without their approval, but not needing approval is different from reckless behavior and not caring what people think of you. Having no need for approval does not mean you run down the street screaming and waving your hands above your head. Reckless behavior will have you cut from society by getting in prison or a mental institution. A healthy balance is possible. You can moderate behavior without needing people's approval.

Beyond What People Think of You: How to Become More Powerful in Conversations

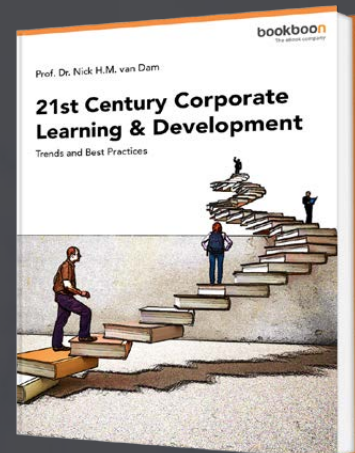
An elimination of harmful mind-reading is only the first step to not care what people think about you. Because you infer people's thoughts to get along with people, the second step is to replace the anxious behavior with something to help you with people. Behavioral adjustment to get people to like you is what mind-reading poorly achieves.

In our example, once the guy does not require his girlfriend's parents to validate if he is good enough for his girlfriend, the battle is half won. He still needs to adapt. He needs to do things like be polite, friendly, joke around, and other things to gain the parents' acceptance.

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Acceptance differs from approval. Seeking approval passes a test to grant yourself permission to be who you are. It is about being “good enough” to meet someone’s standards. On the other hand, acceptance for our purpose builds a positive response to something that is offered. When you seek acceptance, you have a strong sense of self that you present to people, and whether they accept it is up to them. Should people not accept you, it does not diminish your self-esteem because your powerful self comes from inner worth, not external validation. Approval and acceptance are valuable terms you need to reread, understand, and burn into memory.

If you are to be powerful with people, you must build acceptance by doing things people favor, such as starting interesting conversations, making a good first impression, and using other effective communication techniques. Grow yourself and adapt to situations, but do not feel people must validate your reality. Work towards acceptance, but do not worry for approval. Powerfully confident individuals do not require people’s approval at all. They are concerned about people in their life, but they do not limit or inhibit themselves. They seek acceptance without approval.

Once you know the difference between acceptance and approval, and how to build acceptance, release your spontaneous self that attracts people in conversations. Dr. Maxwell Maltz in *The New Psycho-cybernetics* writes about self-consciousness and releasing your powerful self into the conversation:

The reason some people are self-conscious and awkward in social situations is simply that they are too consciously concerned, too anxious to do the right thing, and too fearful of saying or doing the wrong thing... If these people could let go, stop trying, not care, and give no thought to the matter of their behavior, they could act creatively, spontaneously, and ‘be themselves’... Your creative mechanism cannot function or work tomorrow – or even a minute from now. Only right now.

The paradoxical effect of releasing yourself in the conversation discussed by Dr. Maltz is that people accept you when you stop trying and start being. We fear revealing our true self into conversation, but when we unleash it, people feel it and become attracted to our authenticity.

The guy in the second situation who does not require the parent’s approval, feels confident and others see it. The parents are more likely to accept him. When you rise above the need for people’s approval, your confidence soars, worrying vanishes, and fear of how others see you stops. You are happy with who you are and what you can do.

It surprises me that the purpose of worrying what people think of you is to get them liking you. It is Zen-like that when you trash such thinking, you achieve its goal.

How to Be Free in the Present Moment

The Power of Now

Follow these tips to pull your mind from the past or future into the present:

Accept your present feelings. It is okay to feel what you feel.

Avoid self-criticism.

Notice bodily sensations. An awareness of your body draws your mind to the present.

Focus fully on your partner's words and body language. You cannot predict the future when your mind is occupied with present information.

A great pianist never anticipates, when performing, every detail needed to play a great song. The pianist allows himself to be enthralled in the moment as his natural playing abilities shine through his music. His focus in the moment makes people accept and like his music.

In a conversation, do not anticipate people's thoughts towards you, then your natural, powerful personality will be seen. You will behave freely as you do with friends. Act as if no one thinks about you because few probably are. Turn-off the imaginary spotlight you see on yourself and you will be amazed at your high self-confidence. Your new-found confidence will radiate into your conversations as you free yourself from inhibition and release your real self.

Be in the now as you surrender yourself to the moment.

I want you to live in the present moment instead of anticipating the future. Be in the now as you surrender yourself to the moment. People's reactions do not matter because all that matters is how you respond right now.

Your thoughts about people's thoughts towards you is an outdated way of thinking that destroys your ability to make conversation. Make the shift to act boldly, build internal sources of validation, gain acceptance (instead of approval), and live in the present moment by not anticipating people's judgments. You will be unconcerned what people think of you as your powerful self releases into the conversation.

About the author

Joshua Uebergang, known as the “Tower of Power”, is a social skills coach, author, and owner of Australian company Tower of Power where shy guys discover how to win friends and influence people. Visit his blog and sign-up free to get conversation techniques, confidence-boosting strategies, and people-magnetic tips by email, along with blog updates, and more! Go now to TowerOfPower.com.au

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11 Controlling Your Own Emotions and Responses by Thomas Cox

How can we be better at controlling our emotions? How can we actually choose how to respond to difficult situations, rather than merely reacting in some automatic and possibly destructive fashion?

Most reactions have to do with a sense of loss-of-control, and most of us just react. We will start to control our own emotions and responses as we move from reaction to response, from the automatic and unthought into the chosen, deliberate and thoughtful.

My first guest was Aila Accad, RN, known as the “Stress-Busters Coach” – she is an award-winning speaker and best-selling author who holds both Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in nursing. She specializes in quick ways to release stress and reclaim energy.

After teaching stress-management for over 25 years, Aila had her own stress crisis, which led to an instant stress breakthrough. She just published her findings in the new Amazon best-seller, “34 Instant Stress-Busters, Quick tips to de-stress fast with no extra time or money.” She is president & founder of LifeQuest International, LLC.

How did she get moved to focus on stress? As a senior in nursing school she heard that 85% of illness comes from stress. Aila has come to believe that all stress comes from a single, root cause.

That “one cause for stress” is the sense of a lack of control.

Aila, as I mentioned, had a stress crisis of her own. She had everyone else’s to-dos on her list and none of her own – she had the to-dos of her boss, employees, kids, husband, and especially parents. She was not working on her own needs. She found that the antithesis of stress is to relax, to stop trying to control things you cannot control, and to be curious about the unknown and uncontrollable future.

Whenever she hears the word “SHOULD” she asks, “Who made that up? Where did that come from?” She suggests we move away from judgment and self-recrimination, and go to a place of curiosity.

Thinking “outside the box” is old thinking – there is no box. To handle a rapidly changing world, we need that sense of relaxation and curiosity.

When we talk about stress management, we’re accepting stress and just shuffling it around. Much of it is surface talk and surface work – the underlying sources of stress remain.

“Stress-busting” is where you notice you are feeling a lack of control, and you immediately do things to regain control, by shifting your attention to things you can control:

Take control of your breathing

Smile

Then you can turn to any page in her book and do immediately whatever is on that page – each is a technique for immediately reducing stress. Here are two of them:

Turn off the news.

Learn and use the Emotional Freedom Technique – a tapping technique for calming.

My second guest was Beverly Flaxington, an accomplished business consultant. Bev held many senior level positions in the corporate realm and has been a consultant running her own business since 1995. She is a professor at Suffolk University teaching “Small Business Management” and “Organizational Behavior”. Beverly is a Certified Hypnotist, Certified Professional Behavioral Analyst (CPBA) and Certified Professional Values Analyst (CPVA).

Beverly’s newest book, *Understanding Other People: The Five Secrets to Human Behavior*, was released in May 2009 and is available on amazon.com. It has been called “a truly valuable read” by the Midwest Book Review.

Beverly has a varied background and has long worked with folks from all walks of life. She found herself seeing a lot of the same challenges, and she noticed that there are some universal truths. Understanding these can help you get along much better with other people.

It’s All About Me – not that we are self-obsessed, however we all do have a view on the world, which comes from our unique background and upbringing and history. We listen with our filters on, and we tend to react because our filters tell us that certain things are good and other things are bad. What we hear is not what you say – we hear what our filter tells us we hear. We hear what we think the other person must mean. Joe did X, and I know that if I did X then it would be because I meant Y, therefore Joe must mean Y.

How do I separate facts and data from emotional responses? Our reality is based on our memories of what we felt. Think about a fight you had last year. You most likely remember almost none of the dialog, and a little bit about what the other person’s message was, and you strongly remember how you felt about it, and your conclusions flow from those feelings.

Check yourself regularly here. We go from fact, to interpretation, to emotional reaction. And we treat our emotional reactions and conclusions as if they were facts.

The way out of this is, to adopt an “interested observer” role and to enhance our awareness. We have to notice our triggers. Step outside the theater. Step out of our regular roles. Take a position of curiosity.

Our Behavioral Styles Come Between Us. You could be very results oriented and goal-focused and fast. I could be very slow, thoughtful, and methodical. Then put us on the same team. Our approach to problems is very different. You might intimidate me. There are four areas where we can clash – Problems, People, Pace, Procedure.

What's our approach to problems? What's our approach to other people? What's our preferred approach to pacing? How do we go about our work, what procedures do we use and respect?

If you interpret my slow pace to "not caring" then you'll treat me as someone who doesn't care, even though I do. I might interpret your speed as carelessness – and now I think you don't care about the result being solid. When we realize that we have styles that differ, we can cut each other slack and not rush to judgment.

Your Values Speak More Loudly Than You Do. By grasping what the other person's values are, you can understand how they are motivated, what drove their behaviors. If you realize you don't yet know their values, then you can again stop your rush to judgment, and you can take the time to discover their values. Once you know the other person's values, you can start to interpret their actions more accurately.

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Don't assume that I know what you mean. Just because you know what you mean, doesn't indicate that I know what you mean.

I'm OK, you are most definitely Not OK. I may be powerfully tempted to make you look bad so that I can feel better about myself. This is a common drive. And we can get past that and move toward win-win.

Final thought: how can I put this to immediate use? I can pick just one interaction today – one that is bugging me – and work on “stepping outside the theater” and getting a new, fresh perspective on the interaction.

About the author

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12 Unlocking the Passion Paradox by Kevin Eikenberry

Passion is great, but what do you do when you just aren't feeling passionate about much of anything? Leadership and learning expert Kevin Eikenberry shares six ways to unlock this powerful paradox.

In my opinion, passion is one of the most attractive qualities a person can possess.

When you are passionate about something, others are drawn to you; you are able to influence more effectively and lead more successfully.

Beyond these interpersonal facts, there are valuable personal benefits for possessing passion in your life.

When we are passionate we are more productive, happier, healthier, have more energy, less stress, higher work/life satisfaction and typically a better attitude about everything in our lives.

Which highlights what I call The Passion Paradox – passion is great, but what do you do when you just aren't feeling passionate about much of anything?

It is a common challenge, and why I call it a paradox.

Passion is something we want, but we don't always know how or where to find it.

Actually, part of the answer comes in that last sentence. Here's that part again: "...we don't know how or where to find it."

Most people are waiting for passion to find them, or on a situation, job or relationship to bring them passion. When the benefits are so great – why should you wait?

You'll begin to unlock the passion paradox when you go looking for the passion(s) in your life – being proactive – rather than waiting for them to find us.

So if you find yourself feeling frustrated, despondent or generally not feeling very inspired or passionate about things, go on a “passion hunt” with one or more of the following ideas:

Look for good.

Things in your life or in your job might not be great right now; passion low or nonexistent. The outlook might seem a little bleak, or the job doesn’t “do anything” for you, but part of that is up to you. What are you looking for? Are you becoming cynical or focusing on the things you don’t like? Start looking for the good in your situation – even super, small good things. Once you get your mind looking for the good, you will begin to find it. Overtime, this habit will help you find wonderful things – if you continually look for the good.

Look to serve.

When you are serving, helping or encouraging others, passion will often arrive. Find service opportunities in your current situations or find ways to volunteer your time and talents. You might be surprised how fast passion arrives when you look to serve.



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Look at the big picture.

You'll be able to put your problems and challenges in context when you take a minute to consider the big picture. Hopefully taking a longer view will help put things in a more proper perspective and show that the current challenges and frustrations that seem to be sapping your passion are temporary. You will often find your passion when you look at the big picture.

Look at your attitude.

When your attitude is more positive it is easier to feel passionate, find passion and attract passion. The opposite is also true. Your attitude is your choice. Are you choosing the attitude that is conducive to finding your passion? If you want more passion in your life, look at your attitude.

Look in other parts of your life.

Maybe passion is lacking in one part of your life. If so, look elsewhere. Remind yourself of and immerse yourself in a hobby. Find the passion in other areas of your life (other than work, as an example). You may not, in every minute of your life, have passion in all of your life, so look to other areas to find and feed your passions.

Look at your choices.

Bottom line? We all have choices to make that will impact the amount of passion in our lives. Each of the other suggestions above have an element of choice in them. If you want more passion in your life, take responsibility for the choices you make. If you want to find passion, look at your choices.

Will these things guarantee passion in your life tomorrow? No. (But you might be surprised how quickly things will change for you when you start looking.) That however is not the most useful question to be asking right now.

The more productive question is: What am I willing to do to put more passion into my life?

Opening your eyes and beginning to look in the ways I've suggested are all proactive ways to begin rekindling or even finding your passion. As with most things, when you actually look, you'll have a much greater chance of finding.

Happy hunting!

About the author

Kevin Eikenberry is a leadership expert and the Chief Potential Officer of The Kevin Eikenberry Group (KevinEikenberry.com), a learning consulting company. To receive a free Special Report on leadership that includes resources, ideas, and advice go to kevineikenberry.com/leadership.asp or call us at (317) 387-1424 or 888.LEARNER.

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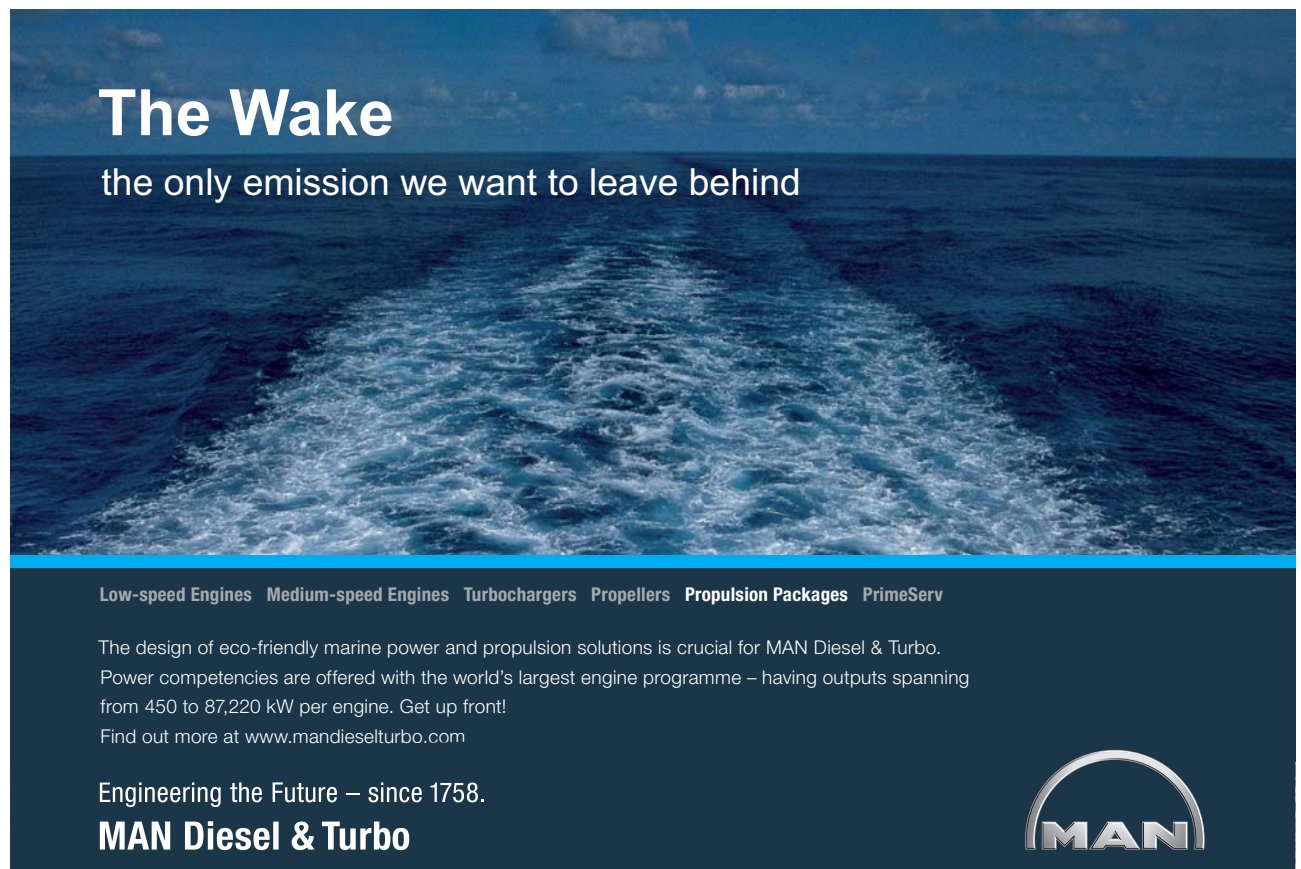
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13 Emotional Intelligence for Today's Leaders Part II: Self-Management by Astrid Baumgardner

Once you have developed better self-awareness, there is a second skill in developing personal competence: self-management.

Self-management is the ability to express the appropriate emotions at the appropriate time. Self-management is about slowing yourself down so that you can check any inappropriate behaviors and formulate the most appropriate response to the challenging situation.

Self-management strategies fall into two categories: actions to take in the moment so that you do not act on your emotions inappropriately and long-term actions that help you to improve your response to emotionally charged situations.

Let's continue with our example of the email from a collaborator with whom you have been working closely. This individual makes a lot of demands about how a performance is supposed to run and her latest email lays out yet another requirement just when you thought that everything had been agreed upon.

If your first thought in receiving this email is to send back a nasty email or pick up the phone to yell at your collaborator, here are some alternatives that can help to slow you down and manage your emotions more effectively.

EQ Skill #2: Emotional Self-Management: Actions in the Moment

1. Take a deep breath

One of the quickest way to reset your emotions is to pause and take 3 deep breaths. Often, this strategy can clear your mind and get you back on track.

2. Take a break before you react

If you are tempted to send an explosive email, write a draft and save it. If possible, sleep on it and then revise the email. If you do not have 24 hours, take a short break. Leave your workspace or office, take a walk, get a cup of tea or do something else that takes you out of your explosive environment.

3. Focus on what is working, rather than what is broken

When faced with emotionally challenging situations, we are often tempted to focus on what is not working. Change your perspective to focus on the positive aspects of your situation. Look for what is working. Take a moment to reframe your emotional challenge in terms of the opportunities for growth and learning. In addition, focus on what you CAN do instead of what you CAN'T do.

Changing your perspective can help to calm you down and frame the appropriate response.

4. Visualize yourself at success

Visualization is another powerful way to change your thinking and get you in a positive mindset. Visualize yourself being at your best and then imagine how you would handle the situation if you were in fact your best self. Zero in on one characteristic that will power you through this emotionally charged situation and then act accordingly.

5. Change your negative self-talk

Emotionally charged situations can sometimes cause you to doubt yourself and your ability to manage the situation and give rise to negative self-talk. If you have practiced becoming aware of your strong emotions and any corresponding negative thoughts as part of your self-awareness, you will become aware of those thoughts. Make a choice to replace the negative thought with a more empowering thought.

Finally, take responsibility for your part of the situation, instead of blaming others. This too will help to reduce negative self-talk about yourself and others.

6. Talk to someone objective

Instead of reacting right away, make it a point to talk to someone who is not emotionally invested in the situation. This can help you to gain perspective, as well as brainstorm possible solutions.

EQ Skill #2: Emotional Self-Management: Long-term Strategies

To build up your self-management mojo, invest in some long-term strategies that will help you manage your emotions more effectively:

7. Make time every day for problem solving

A great way to clear your mind and practice self-management is to spend 15 minutes day thinking about your decisions and how satisfied you are with the results. Observe situations that you handled well and figure out your process so that you can rely on it the next time a challenge arises. Learn from the situations where you did not feel on top of your game and think about what you would do the next time.

8. Check in with a skilled self-manager

You can also seek out someone who is skilled at managing his or her emotions and see what you can learn from this person. Ask this person for feedback on how well you manage your emotions. Solicit his or her advice on how you can do better.

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9. Practice visualizing

Another way to use visualization is to think through the challenge and focus on what in particular seems difficult whether it is the personalities, the lack of resources, the skill level and/or the behaviors. Then, work your way through the difficulties and think about how you would like the situation to run. How do you feel? What are you doing?

You can practice running the difficult scenario in your mind and then use your ideas to turn your situation around the next time it comes up (which in fact is a way to change the situation!)

10. Recharge your body

A long-term strategy that can help you manage strong emotions is to relieve stress by engaging in exercise or other recharging activities like yoga, meditation or a massage. By making it a practice to take time out for physical and mental renewal, you will feel a lot better about emotionally charged situations.

Next time, we will take a look at how to increase the other two elements of EQ: social awareness and relationship management. For now, pick a few of these strategies and start to build your EQ!

About the author

Astrid Baumgardner, JD, PCC is a professional life coach and lawyer, Coordinator of Career Strategies and Lecturer at the Yale School of Music and the founder and President of Astrid Baumgardner Coaching + Training, which is dedicated to helping musicians, lawyers and creative professionals take charge of their lives and experience authentic success. In addition to her work at YSM and her individual coaching practice, Astrid presents workshops at leading conservatories and law firms on topics including Career Planning, Goal-Setting, Time Management, Dynamic Communication, Conflict Management and Personal Branding and Networking. She is the author of numerous articles on the various aspects of how to achieve and live authentic success.

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14 Emotional Intelligence – Key Benefits by Byron Stock

Increasing your Emotional Intelligence skills offers significant benefits in areas that embrace virtually every behavior, every action and reaction, and every situation you may encounter. This applies to your business and professional interactions as well as your family relationships, from the broad sweep of major, multi-million dollar corporations to the day-to-day small incidents that influence your life.

The benefits of increasing your Emotional Intelligence skills fall into three basic areas: decision-making, relationships, and health. These areas are comprehensive in that they impact every action and reaction, every behavior and every circumstance. They are integral to your professional relationships as well as your family interactions, from the broad sweep of day-to-day small incidents that influence your life to major, multi-million dollar corporations.

Decision Making

By becoming aware of what you are feeling in the moment you have information you can use to make a decision about what to say or do now. You can think and act more rationally in the moment by developing emotional self-regulation skills that enable you to quickly transform negative, draining emotions into more positive, productive ones. Your moment-to-moment decision-making is enhanced significantly. These skills will help prevent you from reacting and allow you to respond more thoughtfully and thoroughly. Your effectiveness, your confidence and your motivation are all positively impacted when you are in control of your emotions.

Relationships

Emotional Intelligence skills will not only empower you personally, they will have a positive impact on your relationships with others as well. For example, instead of blowing up when your project manager announces a deadline without consulting you, managing your emotional reactivity enables you to remain calm, ask good questions, perhaps even influence the deadline – all the while preserving your good working relationship with your manager. In contrast, a breakdown in communication and barriers to working effectively would have been the result of a negative, reactive response on your part. As a result, a great deal of time and effort would need to be exerted to repair the damage to the relationship. When relationships are maintained and enhanced, all parties benefit.

On the home front, when your child comes home with a poor test score or lower grade than you think he can earn, rather than putting him on the hot seat, you can show him you care and are concerned about him, and still maintain a firm but understanding approach to the situation. Think of the positive effect this is likely to have on your relationships with your children.

When using simple EI techniques, participants in my programs have been astounded by their children's responses. For example an SVP of HR for a large organization discovered his son had charged a tank of gas on his credit card. His immediate reaction was to grab a baseball bat to get his son's attention. However, he was able to manage his emotions by using a simple, quick emotional management technique and asking himself, "How can I best handle this situation?" As a result, he and his son discussed the situation calmly (no bat was involved). For punishment, his son was not allowed to drive his own truck for a week. When the son asked, "How am I going to get to work?" Dad's reply was, "That's your problem." The next morning the son called his dad at work and thanked him for having a conversation instead of a yelling match.

This story demonstrates how managing emotions can have a significant impact. The conversation and interaction was very different than the usual, and the relationship was improved. And the dad was being a much better role model for his son.

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Health

The third area affected by developing your Emotional Intelligence skills, but certainly not the least, is your health. Negative emotions fuel higher cortisol levels, often called “the stress hormone.” Excessive cortisol levels, over time, can cause acid reflux, sleeplessness, asthma, ulcers, loss of bone mass and osteoporosis, low sperm count, redistribution of fat to the waist and hips, and fat buildup in the arteries, which can lead to heart disease and numerous other diseases (McCarty, Borrios-Choplin et al. “The Impact of a New Emotional Self-Management Program on Stress, Emotions, Heart Rate Variability, DHEA and Cortisol” Integrative Physiological and Behavioral Science 33(2):151-70, 1998). Mismanaged emotions, correlated with dysrhythmias in our Autonomic Nervous System, are associated with many diseases including asthma, chronic fatigue, depression, hypoglycemia, hypertension and many more. Learning to transform from negative emotions into positive productive ones throughout the day or night over a sustained period of time has been shown to have a positive impact on many health-related problems. In my programs, participants most frequently mention a significant elimination or reduction of sleeplessness, often in a couple of weeks.

The good news is that developing Emotional Intelligence skills is not hard. People have realized the benefits in a very short period of time by applying simple, proven techniques consistently. They have reported improvements in all of the categories – decision-making Business Management Articles, relationships and health.

About the author

Byron Stock guides individuals and organizations toward excellence by helping them develop their Emotional Intelligence skills as a powerful tool to achieve strategic objectives, lead change and create resilient, high-performing organizational cultures. Learn about Byron’s quick, easy, proven techniques to harness the power of your Emotional Intelligence at www.ByronStock.com.

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15 Intuition: An Emotional Intelligence Competency by Susan Dunn

Intuition is an EQ competency, that is it's considered something necessary to successful living, and something to be respected and valued. In recent years it has emerged from obscurity, even suspicion. What exactly is intuition?

Main Entry: in·tu·i·tion

1: quick and ready insight

2 a: immediate apprehension or cognition

b: knowledge or conviction gained by intuition

c: the power or faculty of attaining to direct knowledge or cognition without evident rational thought and inference (www.m-w.com)

According to Intuition magazine online, “intuition is increasingly recognized as a natural mental faculty, a key element in the creative process, a means of discovery, problem solving, and decision making. Once considered the province of a gifted few, it is now recognized as an innate capacity available to everyone—not a rare, accidental talent, but a natural skill anyone can cultivate.” Remember those math problems you got the correct answer for, but you didn't get full credit because you couldn't show your work? Intuition, Intuition magazine says, “is a key ingredient in what we call genius, and it is also an important tool when applied to everyday life.”

That having been said, from where does this almost mystical ability come?

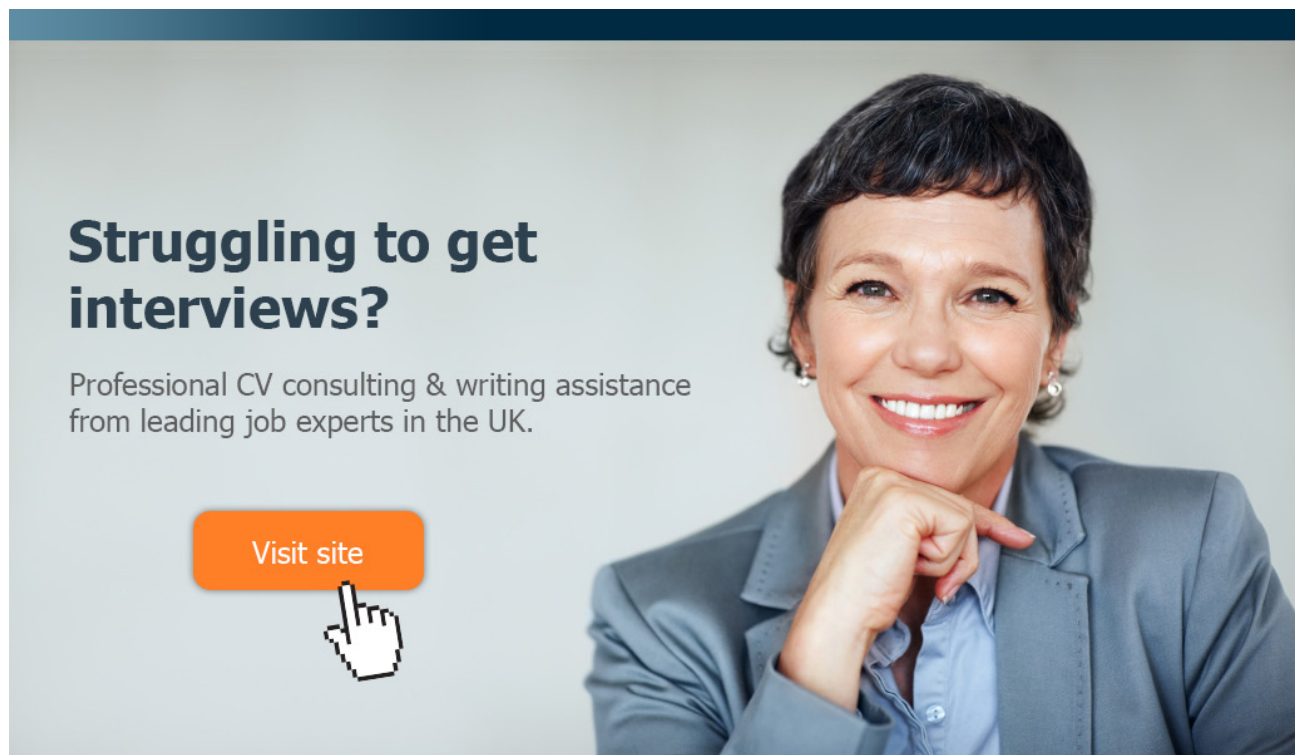
In their amazing book, “A General Theory of Love”, authors Lewis, Amini and Lannon, all doctors, agree that all of us acquire wonderfully complicated knowledge that we cannot describe, explain, or recognize.

They cite researchers Knowlton, Mangels and Squire, who devised an interesting experiment – they gave subjects the task of predicting the weather in a simple computer model. They designed the experiment so that as unhelpful as the cues looked, they did relate lawfully to the outcomes, but the relationship between cues and effects was deliberately such a complex and probabilistic function that even the smartest person couldn't figure it out. It was way too difficult for logic to unravel; that is, subjects would have to approach this task without the use of the neocortex.

The researchers were right. No one figured it out, but that didn't stop them from getting better at the system they couldn't understand or describe! After just 50 trials, the average subject was right 70% of the time, which means, of course, that some were doing far better than that. What they were doing was gradually developing a feel for the situation and intuitively grasping the essence of what was going on.

We tend to believe that success can only come from understanding (via the neocortex), but in reality our marvelous brains, when presented with repetitive experiences, are able to extract unconsciously the rules that underlie them. "Such knowledge," say Lewis, Amini, and Lannon, "develops with languorous ease and inevitability, stubbornly inexpressibly, never destined for translation into words." Words being a neocortical ability.


Things we can't describe, but we "know," come from our implicit memory. Our implicit memory ensures that "camouflaged learning" permeates our lives. Spoken language, for instance, is a confusing assortment of phonological and grammatical rules that we couldn't possibly describe, yet we all learn to speak our native tongue. In fact, children are able to learn it without any formal instruction at all. Similarly, in learning foreign languages, it's generally considered that "immersion" is the best way to attain fluency – spending your days with native speakers and just absorbing it. Consider the extent to which we intuit. In his book, "Language Instinct," Steven Pinker observes that we all 'know' that "thole, plast and flicht are not English words but they could be, whereas vlas, ptak, and nyip cannot be English." Why? Well, just because, but wouldn't you agree?



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The advantages of intuition? It's much quicker – and also surer – to use your intuition. You have a greater grasp on reality, as it were, when you don't confuse things by bringing in the neocortex. "Reason," said Pascal, "is the slow and tortuous method by which those who do not know the truth discover it."

"There is guidance available to us at all times," says Penny Peirce, "just below the surface of our logic, just after we stop pushing and striving, just before we jump to conclusions. By cultivating the ability to pause and be comfortable with silence, and then by focusing steadily and listening for the first sounds or feelings, for the first impressions, you can help your intuition wake up suddenly and enthusiastically, as if from a long winter's nap."

How do you develop your intuition? One way is to learn to still your self-talk, what I refer to as "the Talking Head" – that constant yammering that goes on inside your head. Get centered. Quiet your thinking mind. Slow down and focus on one thing at a time. Listen. Practice.

"Although intuition is a natural resource," says Nancy Rosanoff, an intuition trainer, "it functions best when developed and exercised. Like a muscle, intuition becomes strong, reliable, and precise when trained and put to use."

So what's the buzz about intuition? It's coming into its own. It's getting legitimate. Corporations are even hiring intuitionists to make decisions. I say it's about time, because it's a much surer way to make a decision than are logic and reason; an important decision that is. How much data would be too much to know about the woman you're going to be leaving your baby with all day? About the man you're considering marrying? At some point the data ends, and you make a decision based on your feelings. Do you doubt this? Oliver Wendell Holmes, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, said that 90% of the decisions at his level were emotional. He just rationalized them afterwards. As we all have done.

"In small matters, use the head," said Freud, "and in large matters use the heart." And that's intuition!

About the author

Susan Dunn coaches in all areas – career, dating, relationships, leadership, resilience, stress management, anger management, wellness, emotional intelligence, parenting, transitions, purpose of life, retirement, and more. SUSAN HAS BEEN CHOSEN ADULT & SENIOR DEVELOPMENT EXPERT for SelfGrowth, the largest self-help portal on the Internet, rated #1 by google and yahoo. She is FIND YOUR DREAM PARTNER for a major website, and ASK THE EQ EXPERT for WebProNews and Life Lessons from Movies.

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16 More Evidence that Soft Skills Produce Hard Results by Jim Clemmer

How frequently and effectively do you recognize, engage, and coach the people you lead? Are these strengths or weaknesses? How do you know? What's your awareness of your self-awareness?

As organizations rebound and rebuild for the coming years, Coaching and feedback – Jim Clemmer's Leader Letter these "soft skills" are key to higher performance. A Towers Watson study entitled, Perspectives: Turbocharging Employee Engagement – The Power of Recognition from Managers found, "companies with a highly engaged employee population reported significantly better financial performance (a 5.75% difference in operating margins and a 3.44% difference in net profit margins) than did low-engagement workplaces." They also found that companies with higher engagement levels "produced returns 9.3% higher than the returns for the S&P 500 Index."

Towers Watson found that key elements of engagement are caring leaders, development opportunities, and feelings of empowerment or ability to control one's own work. The role of recognition was an especially striking finding in their study: "strong manager performance in recognizing employee performance increases engagement by almost 60%." There's a good hard result from a soft skill.

Their Global Recognition Study found three keys for managers:

Engage in Candid Conversations – personal, not just information, and listening to opinions and concerns.

Define Clear and Relevant Performance Targets – focus on top goals, break down objectives, and clarify responsibilities.

Hold People Accountable for Their Results – evaluate performance accurately and address low performance effectively.

The dilemma is that too often average or low performing managers think they're doing a much better job than others feel they are. And it's their lack of self-awareness that both causes and covers up the problem. In "Soft Skills Boost the Bottom Line", Green Peak Partners and Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations report, "self-aware leaders who possess strong interpersonal skills deliver better financial performance." They found, "executives whose interpersonal skill scores were low scored badly on every single performance dimension. A high self-awareness score was the strongest predictor of overall success...executives who are conscious of their own weaknesses are often better able to hire subordinates who perform well in areas in which the leader lacks acumen."

This is consistent with the growing body of research on Emotional Intelligence. Self-awareness is the foundation upon which the other personal development habits and interpersonal skills are built. So how are you doing? How do you know?

About the author

Jim Clemmer has been writing and speaking about leadership, change, team, and organization effectiveness for over 30 years. His extensive research, broad experience with hundreds of organizations and thousands of people, and deep understanding of these topics makes him an internationally recognized leader in the field. Beyond his seven books, he's written hundreds of columns and articles for newspapers and magazines.

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17 EQ Communication

by Joshua Freedman

Research on emotions and the brain has helped clarify key communication tools. Paying attention to emotional subtext will build a deeper person-to-person communication. If you learn to listen from your mission, you will leap ahead in problem solving. Finally, make sure you know “whose ‘but’ ‘should’ be on the line” to ensure that communication is a two way process, not an assertion of power.

Emotional Subtext

You know how you can coo to your dog in a really sweet, loving voice, “Oh you stupid mutt I am going to get you for chewing up the sofa again,” and he hears, “good boy, sweet boy, good boy”? I hate to admit this publicly, but I am a bit like that dog in a recurring argument with my wife. It goes like this:

“Honey, are you mad?” (I ask innocently)

“No.” (I hear some tension in her voice) “I am not mad.” (That sounds like anger to me!)

“Hmmm,” I ponder to myself, “she sure sounds mad...” “Uh, are you not even a little mad?”

“I said I am not mad, okay?”

“Okay, I just... well, I feel like you are mad.” In hindsight, I see this is a tactical error, but I somehow go for it every time. Before long, she’ll say, “Well now I am mad, you made me mad!”

In our case, I am sure some of the miscommunication comes from each of us. Most of the time when I ask if she is mad, she actually is mad – but like many people who do not like conflict, she does not want to seem mad. I make it worse by “picking” at the irritation.

In the office, people often follow the same pattern, but the reactions are cloaked in politeness. I say to my colleague, “So are you okay with this proposal?” He isn’t, but doesn’t want to argue about it, and says, “Sure, it is okay.” And I hear, “Don’t be an idiot, I hate it!” I am left with mixed messages and am unsure what he really thinks and how he really feels about the proposal and about me.

It is easier to see emotional subtext by watching others than by watching ourselves. For instance, turn on a congressional debate, and notice when a representative stands and says, “I would like to disagree with my esteemed colleague from across the aisle.” We all hear just how “esteemed” the colleague is at that moment – but the speaker pretends he is being polite, and the “esteemed colleague” is often provoked to respond to the emotion under the words.

If you break a communication down into component pieces, research shows that around ten percent of the message is the words (Merabian et al). Most of the message is the tone and other “paralanguage.” And while we frequently manipulate the words (i.e., lie), even a 5 year old child can accurately decipher the paralanguage in less than 10 seconds.

Why does it matter? After all, in most of our daily communication, we work hard to build clarity and to be tactfully truthful. Usually the issue is more confusion than deliberate obfuscation. One source of that confusion is the reality that we usually feel more than one emotion at a time.

In the “I am not mad” fight, Patty (my wife) probably was not, in fact, mad. She was a little “irritated mad,” or some part of her was mad, or she was mad in some ways or peeved about something. She was not “full-blown, duke-it-out mad,” so she was not deliberately deceiving me – rather she was conflicted, and I perceived one piece of the puzzle. I focused on that piece because of some of my own feelings, so all in all we achieved a limited communication with little depth, shallow context, and muddy clarity.

To avoid this pitfall, perhaps the most essential tool is for me to be clear on what I am feeling – or more accurately the blend of emotion I am feeling – and ensure that my spoken communication does not contradict that palette of feelings. If I cannot align my thoughts, feelings, and actions, I will need to postpone the discussion until I can be more completely clear.

Listen From Your Mission.

There is no effective communication without effective listening. Listening is the tool which turns words into communication. Right now, you could be reading this article and no matter how clever or useful these words may be, if you are thinking of something else entirely and not “listening,” the words on this page will not enter your brain. Physiologically, there is a part of your brain – the thalamus – which decides where to send incoming signals. The thalamus is like a great receptionist in the office of your brain. It looks at the “phone” in your brain, sees three lights on, and says, “no way that brain is going to take another call – I’ll just get rid of this guy.” And like a good receptionist, the thalamus is highly sensitive to what’s going on in the office, sees how tense people are, how busy, how concerned, and evaluates incoming traffic.

Also like great receptionists, you can not fool your thalamus. You say, “I am ready to take the call,” but mean, “I can’t believe I’ve got to take another call now, this is totally insane, I am still...” and your thalamus doesn’t let real content into the decision making parts of your brain because they are already busy.

So if you want to actually listen, you have to go beyond the outward steps of “active listening” we all learned as rote procedure for dealing with conflict. You actually have to care. You might not care about the person, you might not care about the conversation, or the issue, but you do care that your behavior helps you meet your real goals, your objectives. For many people, that personal mission includes some kind of problem solving, some kind of learning, some kind of personal accountability, some kind of making the world better. Chances are, if you can not summon one of these commitments – to the person, to your mission, to your organization, then your communication is doomed to shades of mediocrity.

Perhaps this capacity is one of the reasons that emotional intelligence is such a critical part of success. People who can bring their hearts on-line are able to listen to the message beyond the words. They are able to turn the conflict into a learning opportunity. To persevere in spite of the complexity, the messiness, the frustration.

Whose “But” “Should” Be On The Line?

An advertisement for SKF. It features a woman with long dark hair smiling in the foreground, with a wind turbine in the background against a blue sky. The text 'Brain power' is written in large white letters on the left. On the right, there is a block of text about wind energy and SKF's role. At the bottom left, there is a call to action to visit the SKF website. The SKF logo is in the bottom right corner of the ad area.

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Conversations frequently occur against a backdrop of shifting power. The concern over who gets to have the final word is as old as the perennial 3-year-olds' cry: "You are not the boss of me!" So between "Well our data shows," and the "In every case I've managed," and "I was just speaking with..." we have a tremendous range of not-so-veiled statements that mean, "I deserve to be listened to." "I have a place at this table." "I am right."

We also have learned a host of more subtle words which help grab power. The problem is that power grabbed is not usually lasting – and bludgeoning employees with our own status does little to generate collaboration and rarely moves us closer to actually solving a problem or meeting a challenge.

Two of the most pervasive power-grab words are "but," and "should." Personally, I learned them from my grandmother. "Josh, you are such a good, smart, creative young man, but why aren't you a lawyer? You should be a lawyer – or a doctor." I love my grandmother, and I forgive her, and I know that is part of a grandmother's job. At the same time, it is not my job in daily conversation.

When I say "but," I am actually saying, "everything before the word 'but' is not actually important to me." "It is a good proposal, but..." "You've been a great help, but..." "I love the model, but..." An alternative to "but" is "and." "The report is good, and unfortunately I don't think it is going to fly." There is no need to totally eliminate "but" – sometimes it is exactly what you mean: "These are all valid reasons, but I am going to take the risk anyway."

The "should" means that I have the right – even the obligation – to set your priorities for you. Often this feels like the case; you might feel perfectly entitled to set your assistant's priorities. But (ah, hear that?), don't then turn around and ask why he is not a self-starter, why he lacks initiative, why you always have to spell out the agenda. So far more valuable than "should" is "could with feeling." "You could do the filing first, and that would help me."

About the author

Joshua Freedman is the Director of Programs for Six Seconds, a nonprofit organization supporting the development of emotional intelligence through training and materials [www.6seconds.org]. Josh is the co-author of the Handle With Care emotional intelligence series, and the editor of EQ TODAY: Making the Most of Emotional Intelligence.

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18 The Isle of Play

by Anabel L. Jensen

“We do not stop playing because we are old, we grow old because we stop playing.”

– Unknown

Play is the way we encounter our world most openly. At play we are most ready to assimilate life’s lessons, its symmetries and patterns, the ethical implications of cause and effect. The ultimate purpose of play is to learn self-control and self-discipline. We must be in charge of ourselves.

The threads we discover through play or a hobby or an interest or even a “passing fancy/seeming passion” are often the ones that prove most fruitful when we pursue them through intense research or another discipline. For example, I remember the story about the woman who by watching the ants in her backyard became a published authority. Guided by chance and intuition, she discerned a pattern where all seemed random before. Her curiosity then kicked in, prompting a more orderly examination of her first observation. She was well on her way to unfolding a hypothesis and groundbreaking research.

Rollo May in his book, *The Courage to Create*, says creativity and innovation occur when we shift from play to work and from work to play. In other words, this strategy breaks up the deadlock or the ‘log jam’ in the brain.

Research in work situations indicates the importance of a pause – to think, dream, create, and invent. At least 15% of the work day should be dedicated to pause time – social, fun, or exercise. A general rule is that workers need 5 to 10 minute breaks every one to two hours. Specifics depend on the work and the worker. The ideal break involves some form of exercise (i.e., walking, basketball, throwing horseshoes, etc.). At this point, some innovative companies have instituted a designated “play period” for working on whatever projects hold some fascination for the employee.

If formal play-breaks are not built into the work day, employees can develop their own. Perhaps it is time for a brisk race to the water cooler (with the added benefit that the brain requires water for optimal functioning). Or maybe a quick jog to another office to tell a joke or share a cartoon (with more side benefits: humor increases productivity and creativity, reduces stress, and boosts the immune system).

Based on experience and results, play has proved itself to be beneficial: both to the emotional health of the workers and the fiscal health of the company.

To learn about play, we need only pay attention to our children. “Simple, Mom,” my eight year-old son explained, “it’s ‘work’ when you tell me to do it; it’s ‘play’ when I want to do it.”

Plato said, “Life must be lived as play.” In ancient Greek, the word for education is “paidia” and the word for play is “paidia.” Perhaps they recognized that at play the mind is at its most energized, its most active.

In our culture, it is widely accepted that for young children, play is necessary and productive – perhaps even crucial. Play is related to the development of children’s language, their social competencies, and their problem-solving abilities (Athey, 1987; Rogers and Sawyer, 1988). It is their first introduction to their country’s culture; it is their first form of learning; it is their first opportunity for independence and interdependence.

Unfortunately, once a child enters school, play becomes imperiled and secondary: “Finish your math problems, so you can go out and play.” “Practice your flute, then you can go to your friend’s house.” Teachers and parents alike treat play as frivolous – a reward for good work and good behavior, or maybe a break from “real” work. What many parents and most teachers have missed is that the byproducts of play – laughter, joy, and fun – are critical assets for life-long learning. We will give much more of our time and energy to that which we enjoy; we will persist! And persistence is the only attribute that has been demonstrated to correlate with improvement in I.Q. scores.

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Play teaches us so much; perhaps best of all it shows us how to love. I learned this lesson one summer when my son, Caleb, was seven.

It had rained steadily all day.

Caleb and his slightly younger cousin, Kory, had exhausted every indoor toy there was. They were starting to whine: “We’re bored. We don’t have anything to do.”

I attempted a new diversion: “How about building a fort?”

“We’ve already done that.”

“Yeah, that’s for babies.”

My mother, Grandmother Leslie, my sister, Tamie, and I were ready to scream ourselves. Then miraculously the rain stopped. “Yeah! Let’s send them outside.” We were saved. It was a summer afternoon; the sun was now shining brightly, so out the boys went in their shorts.

We grownups took a collective deep breath and enjoyed the respite. Grandmother Leslie stood at the window watching the boys – I’m sure she was thinking that Tamie and I were not paying them enough attention. Suddenly she looked aghast: “Oh, no! They’re fighting! They’re slinging mud at each other. Anabel, Tamie, go and stop them. They’ll make a mess or hurt themselves.”

Tamie and I looked at each other and smiled. Then we laughed. We were both thinking the same thing. The boys needed to let go of some of that boxed-up energy. At Grandmother Leslie’s urging, we went out, but only to egg them upward and onward. “Caleb, that last mud ball missed Kory’s forehead. Try again.” Tamie’s advice to Kory had a similar ring.

Grandma was apoplectic. Before we knew it, several additional family members joined the game – Grandpa Leslie and Kory’s father (Tamie’s husband) and a handful of additional nieces and nephews. What a riot. Mud was everywhere. But, did we ever have a good time! Out came the cameras. The pictures are hilarious. Only with diligence can separate family members be identified because everyone looks like mud statues. “Is that Caleb or Kory? Must be Caleb. He’s a couple of inches taller.” Then came the hose to wash the mud off and find the boys and other family members beneath.

Would we do it again? You bet! We all had fun, and most importantly, we knew that we were building memories of love and family. For children, these memories shape identity; they help children define themselves in relation to others.

This connection between self-definition, love, and play is a profoundly important component of raising principled children. Consider that the word “discipline” comes from the root of “love” – an emotion that is demonstrated by parents to their children through play. It begins with “cooing” adults, and “patty cake,” and extends to pretend “tea parties” and real “mud pies.” And it is through continued play that children...

- teach each other and themselves to set goals – “Let’s build a fort.”
- establish boundaries – “This edge of the curb is ‘out.’”
- agree to cooperate – “Let’s take turns. You go first.”
- choose a leader – “I’m king of the mountain.”
- make agreements – “I’ll try if you go first.”
- learn to take risks – “I double dare you.”
- learn the roots of empathy – “Are you hurt? Are you okay?”
- solve the unsolvable – “We’ll use these rolled socks for a ball.”
- and learn to forgive – “I’m sorry, I got carried away.”

So, let me enter a plea for play. Are you now playing in your life, or has it become heavy and serious? Do you sing in the car, frolic in the garden, or race desk chairs down the hall? Do you make up games that let laughter well forth and fill you with optimism?

I love the advice of George Bernard Shaw: “I want to be completely used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. I celebrate life for its own sake. Life is no ‘brief candle’ to me, but rather like a splendid torch which I hold in my hand at this moment in time and I want it to burn as brightly as possible before passing it on to future generations.”

Unfortunately, usually only small children, fools, and geniuses allow themselves to play. Remember, play is the balancing factor we all need – the vine that twines together the work of the mind and that of the body. It is also the cushion between that which meets our obligations and that which satisfies our souls.

Applications:

1. Fight idleness and boredom with play. Make a personal goal to learn something new continually. Once mastered (i.e., language, crocheting, tennis, chess, etc.), move on to something new. Commit to new hobbies, new interests, and new friends.
2. Transform depression into optimism. Offer to be a volunteer (i.e., teach someone to read, help with mailings, telephoning, play games with the elderly, etc.).
3. Encourages the continued development of your brain through play. While the total number of neurons decreases with age (i.e., some researchers say 100,000 per day), the ratio of synapses to neurons increases for those who continue to use their brains and decreases for those who stop using their brains. That increased number of synapses means neurons are better connected and more functional, reducing memory loss.
4. Exercise. This physical variation of play can arrest and perhaps even reverse many of the degenerative physical effects of aging.

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Put some “play” back into your life. Try any or all of the following:

1. Call a friend and ask her to do something spontaneous (i.e., dinner, movies, a walk, ride the bus and get off at an unexplored stop, etc.);
2. Maintain a level of curiosity about “how and why” things work. Find out about army ants, the stock market, the communication system of dolphins, your office phone system, how to build peak performance, etc.).
3. At line in the grocery store, share a story with your “line neighbor” and make it a quest to discover something interesting.
4. Make a list of what was fun and entertaining for you as a child (i.e., tree houses, paper dolls, water fights, dancing, etc.).
Think of creative ways to transport childhood pleasures to adult treasures.
5. What did you miss out on as a kid, but could take up now (i.e., sculpting, a musical instrument, drama, canoe construction, etc.).
6. Make a list of energy playmates, deliberately choose individuals younger than yourself (i.e., neighborhood kid, niece, grandchild, etc.) and invite them over on a regular basis.

The following change makers “played” into their fifties, seventies, and eighties. And look at some of their accomplishments.

George Frederick Handel wrote the Messiah at age 56.

Grandma Moses retired from crocheting because of arthritis around the age of seventy and took up painting.

Thomas Edison worked and produced from the time he was 12 until he reached his middle eighties.

Albert Schweitzer, physician, philosopher, prolific author, accomplished organist, and organ builder stated that he “worked better after playing seriously.”

Margaret Mead, anthropologist, wrote 34 books, scores of articles, produced 10 films, and lectured constantly across the U.S. In her late sixties she said, “I expect to die, but I don’t plan to retire.”

About the author

Anabel L. Jensen, author of this article, started a new organization to teach emotional intelligence at age 57. Since starting Six Seconds (www.6seconds.org – (650) 685-9885), she has co-authored 3 books and 4 calendars, traveled thousands of miles, and visited four continents to teach people emotional intelligence skills can change the world, so long as we each begin with ourselves.

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19 A Gentle Bulldozer: Leading with Empathy by Marilynn Jorgensen

“But how can I push people and maintain good relationships?” I was surprised by the conversation with one of my clients, a c-level executive in a multinational organization. You might expect a man in this role to be a “driver,” but this leader is quite the opposite. He wants to lead, to stand up for what’s important, to rally people. At the same time, he values peace and kindness. Can these two exist together?

I told my client, “Sometimes people describe me as a gentle bulldozer.” I ran a business for 25 years, and, like all leaders, found there were many balls to juggle. People have differing needs, and sometimes the business needs and the personal needs are well aligned... but sometimes not. What I learned in that experience is it’s possible to have both. Maybe not both in the same second, but both in the same quarter. I’m committed to being an ally and practicing empathy. At the same time, I’m committed to moving the situation forward.

To achieve this balance, the skills of emotional intelligence are invaluable. In the Six Seconds Model of Emotional Intelligence, there are three “pursuits” that work in a cycle:

In Know Yourself we build self-awareness, we can each learn about our own strengths and vulnerabilities. We can understand what “pushes our buttons” and how to work with and around our own patterns. From this strong foundation, we can balance “Choosing” to get results, and “Giving” to build connection.

One of the key competencies in Choose Yourself is a skill called “Apply Consequential Thinking,” which is about evaluating costs and benefits. What is the result we want, and how do we optimally move toward that?

In Give Yourself, Empathy is essential. How do we meaningfully, authentically, connect with others and their needs?

When we put these together, something surprising emerges. It’s not an “either or,” it’s a “both and.” The two components multiply and we are able to move ourselves, others, and the organization forward.

Awareness: Know Yourself is based on insight.

Choice: Choose Yourself comes with commitment.

Purpose: Give Yourself builds connection.

To put these steps in action:

Awareness. Invest in your insight by giving yourself a moment 3-4 times each day to review your recent reactions. Where are the moments you do something other than what your ideal? Pay close attention to those potential moments when you are “derailed”. Identify patterns of responding that compromise your leadership. For example...saying “Yes” in order to avoid conflict or maintain peace with the team, or over-controlling/under-controlling when you feel uncertain.

Intention. In thinking about one of those derailing patterns, identify multiple choices of how you could respond instead. Explore. Test an option that feels authentic and has the possibility of steering the outcome in a direction that leaves you feeling confident, motivated and fully expressed. Ask yourself, “What results would I like to achieve?” Then choose a new way of responding that aligns with those results.

Purpose. Ask powerful questions in order to understand others and to engage beyond the surface level. ”What does this mean to you?” ”What is most important?” ”How do I want to show up as a leader?” Pay attention not just to others’ words, but to the feelings you can detect behind those words. Get curious. Also consider if there is alignment between how you are acting, the short term results you want, and your long-term goals. Repeat starting with step 1 and refine so your responses are better aligned to your personal purpose.

Follow these three steps at least once a day this week. What happens to your leadership? How do you feel at the end of the day? Can you unleash your gentle bulldozer?

About the author

Marilynn Jorgensen is one of Six Seconds’ Master Trainers and leads Six Seconds’ coach training and the development of effective EQ coaching.

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20 EQ Leadership by Joshua Freedman

Leaders who practice EQ behaviors are leading with EQ. If they also practice EQ principles, then they are engaging in EQ leadership.

The essential EQ leadership principles are the following:

The leader commits to co-creating an organization in which individuals can be and do their best to achieve shared goals.

The leader encourages people to create and articulate a shared vision and mission that is inspiring.

The leader shares authority and accountability with others.

The leader encourages people to work interdependently to achieve a shared goal.



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The leader co-creates a climate in which people respect each other, believe in their own self-worth, and value authenticity.

The leader co-creates mechanisms so that meaningful and whole-hearted participation can happen.

The leader exercises his/her personal power (rather than positional power) ensuring that the best decisions are made yet refusing to be treated as or to regard him/herself as a heroic leader. As the organization matures, members view themselves as leaders.

The foundation of this leadership model is the high EQ person:

The EQ person knows him/herself.

The EQ person is true to his/her whole self.

The EQ person is authentic by being transparent and congruent.

The EQ person uses his/her special talents as a source of personal power.

The EQ person uses his/her mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual energy to be and do their best.

The EQ person has a high level of the following EQ competencies which he/she is continuously striving to improve:

Self-awareness: Recognizing the causes and effects of your own feelings and reactions.

Managing emotions: Understanding your emotions and using that understanding to your and other's benefit.

Optimism: Recognizing that you have choice, energy and power over your own life. Optimism includes initiative and long-term thinking.

Social Awareness: This includes not only empathy (sensing other people's feelings and perspectives) and compassion, but social discernment – the ability to recognize differences and obstacles between people.

Social Skills – This includes communication (attentive listening, speaking for self), collaboration (engaging in dialogue, holding conflict) and team-building.

Commitment to a Noble Goal: Commitment to service that benefits others and the world at large.

About the author

Joshua Freedman is the Director of Programs for Six Seconds, a nonprofit organization supporting the development of emotional intelligence through training and materials [www.6seconds.org]. Josh is the co-author of the Handle With Care emotional intelligence series, and the editor of EQ TODAY: Making the Most of Emotional Intelligence.

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21 Emotional Intelligence vs. Cognitive Intelligence by Susan Dunn

DEFINITIONS

Emotional Intelligence – Understanding your own emotions and those of others, and being able to use this information to bring about the best outcome for all concerned. Knowing where emotions come from and being able to manage your own and those of others. Knowing what emotions mean and what information they are providing. Being able to work well with others as well as alone. Being able to combine cognitive knowledge with emotional knowledge and use them in tandem.

Cognitive Intelligence – Intellectual abilities such as logic, reason, reading, writing, analyzing and prioritizing. These go on in your own head and utilize only the neocortex, not the emotional centers of the brain which also provide crucial information. These abilities do not require any social skills per se, i.e., you can solve a math equation by yourself, or write an essay, or balance a business' books by yourself.

COMPARISONS

Being effective both alone and as a team player vs. Only effective when working alone

Being able to manage your own emotions vs. Having temper tantrums, sulking or withdrawing

Being able to empathize with others and knowing where they're coming from vs. Not being able to grasp the feelings of others and understand how the emotions are affecting the situation

Using an emotional appeal to convince someone of something v. Using an intellectual appeal to convince someone of something

Knowing that motivation is a feeling word v. Thinking that motivation is a thinking word

EXAMPLE

Bill was brilliant in his field and the best IT person in the office as to technical skills, but his people skills were very low. He was abrasive, arrogant, short-tempered, and a perfectionist. Other people didn't like to work with him, and he was unable to explain things in terms other people could understand.

Mary, who was also in the IT department, had good technical skills and a good education, though it was less than Bill's. However, her emotional intelligence more than made up for this. She was able to handle herself and other people well and to explain things calmly and clearly. People loved to work with her and requested her by name. She received promotion after promotion because of her technical expertise and her high emotional intelligence.

KEY POINT

Many people with very high IQs (cognitive intelligence) do poorly in work and relationships because they have low EQs (emotional intelligence). They sabotage themselves because they can't manage their own emotions or those of other people, and they sabotage projects because they may have all the logical, rational and analytical "answers" but they don't have the "soft" skills to move a project forward.

BENEFITS

Emotional intelligence accounts for more success and happiness in life than intellectual intelligence.

RELATED DISTINCTIONS

- Soft skills vs. Hard skills
- Knowing people v. Knowing facts
- Thinking and feeling v. Thinking only

Learn to develop your emotional intelligence as well as your skills and technical expertise and you'll do better in your career. Developing your emotional intelligence is also crucial for personal and family relationships. Hire a certified emotional intelligence coach and get started today. Your career and relationships could depend upon it.

About the author

Susan Dunn coaches in all areas – career, dating, relationships, leadership, resilience, stress management, anger management, wellness, emotional intelligence, parenting, transitions, purpose of life, retirement, and more. SUSAN HAS BEEN CHOSEN ADULT & SENIOR DEVELOPMENT EXPERT for SelfGrowth, the largest self-help portal on the Internet, rated #1 by google and yahoo. She is FIND YOUR DREAM PARTNER for a major website, and ASK THE EQ EXPERT for WebProNews and Life Lessons from Movies.

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22 How Many Companies Lose That Loving Feeling by Jim Clemmer

“Some people can think no deeper than a fact.” – Voltaire (pseudonym of Francois Marie Arouet), 18th century French philosopher and dramatist

Many successful companies were started by passionate zealots with a strong technical expertise matched only by their powerful vision and intense drive to succeed. This energy and excitement attracted like-minded people (team members, customers, partners, investors, etc.) and fuelled their early growth. But because these companies weren't well-balanced, their management systems and processes were often weak. So at some point in their development, either the financial struggle or the desire of the original owners to “cash out” triggers a sale, merger, or hiring of new senior managers.

Then the “professional managers” take over. Slowly the spirit and vitality is squeezed out of the company. The sense of making a difference and being part of a cause is replaced with goals, objectives, and “the bottomline.” Communications that once reported exciting news of new customers, fledgling products developed on a shoe string, new market frontiers opening, and outstanding service delivered in extraordinarily tough circumstances is now filled with dry reports on progress to sales and profit goals, committee activities, strategies, budgeting, and business planning.

It's uninspiring and lifeless. It turns people into their roles, systems, and processes. They become number crunchers, order processors, product producers, sales pushers, researchers, technical problem solvers, managers, and budgeters. Their heart and soul are lost. They went from being part of a cause that provided a paycheck to collecting a paycheck without a cause.

But many people aren't taking it any more. We've run into dozens of people in the last few years who've taken early retirement, gone back to school, started their own business, or turned down a bigger job assignment. They took a financial loss in order to make a deeper gain. Their personal net worth has been dramatically boosted by how they feel about the person staring back at them each morning in the bathroom mirror.

Many of these once exciting companies start as living, breathing (sometimes close to uncontrolled) organisms who, like a mysterious life form in a Star Trek episode, feed and grow on human energy (which they multiply and return). Much of that entrepreneurial energy comes from market and financial successes. Just the belief in that eventual success may be enough. But once the Technomanagers take over, that once living organism becomes a lifeless machine that feeds strictly on money. There is a vague sense that people and energy somehow help to create the money. But everybody is too busy looking for more money, to pour into the increasingly demanding machine, to bother checking out that fuzzy notion.

The intangible sense of spirit is even more critical in people-dependent service businesses. The maturing and growing training and consulting field is a good example. Within this fast evolving industry, many high performing start-up firms have been acquired or merged by larger Technomanaged (focused on management systems and technology) companies. As those spirited, organic firms become company machines, their founding spirit and best people slowly disappear. During periods of high growth these problems are papered over with money. Once the growth slows down, many of these Technomanaged companies, with their hollowed out souls, become mere shells of their former selves.

About the author

Jim Clemmer has been writing and speaking about leadership, change, team, and organization effectiveness for over 30 years. His extensive research, broad experience with hundreds of organizations and thousands of people, and deep understanding of these topics makes him an internationally recognized leader in the field. Beyond his seven books, he's written hundreds of columns and articles for newspapers and magazines.

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23 Why Logic Always Fails You by Steve Pavlina

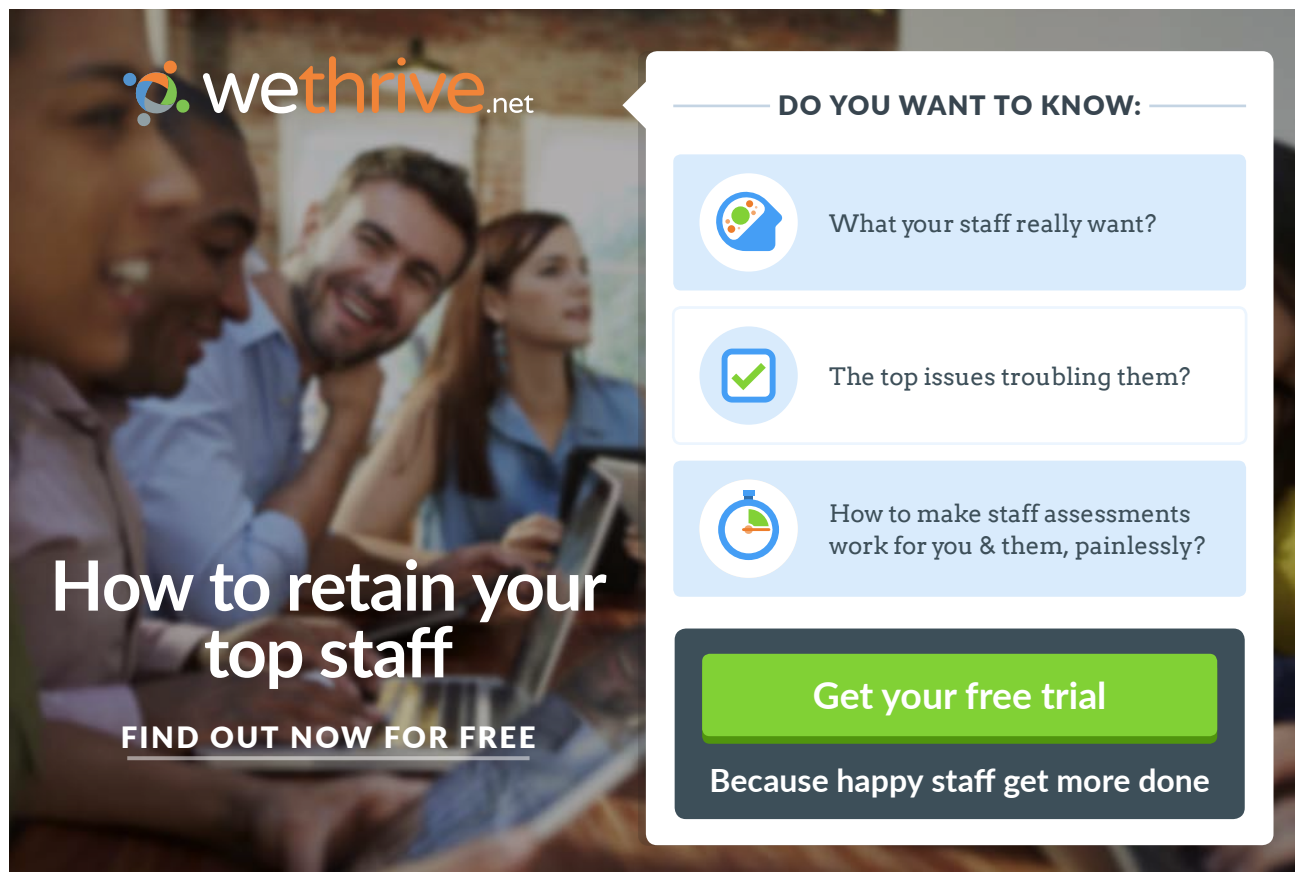
What part of your life always seems to be on the back burner? Is it a certain relationship? A hobby you've always wanted to enjoy? A spiritual pursuit?

Do you tell yourself that someday this part of your life will move to the front burner and become a priority? How will that actually happen?

Back burner items tend to remain on the back burner indefinitely. They rarely make it to the front burner on their own. The reason they're on the back burner is because you put them there, probably because you deemed something else more important.

At one point you may have put your career first. Or your health. Or a particular relationship. But are those priorities still right for you today? Are your current priorities still correct?

If you ask this question in a cursory way, you'll almost always answer yes. If you told yourself a year ago that your finances must be your #1 priority, they'll have a tendency to stay there. Whether you've made measurable progress or not, you'll have a tendency to stick to essentially the same priorities year after year.



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A True Priority or a Distraction

If your current prioritization tends to be self-perpetuating, how do you know when it's time for an adjustment? You probably won't figure it out just by asking if anything needs to be adjusted.

Generally the way you'll notice that an adjustment is needed is that you'll notice a nagging feeling that something isn't right with the way you're currently living.

Another clue is that you won't seem to be making much progress in your top priorities. If you look at your actual results in those areas, you'll see evidence that you're drifting or even declining.

Often this happens because we like to assume that we can improve some area of life by making it the #1 priority. For instance, if you feel that your finances are weak, you may decide to focus on making more money for a while. But then a few years pass, and your finances don't seem to be that much better. Overall you feel more stressed too. The main reason you failed here is that making money wasn't a true priority. It was actually a distraction from a deeper, more important part of your life.

Blocking

When false priorities are mistaken for true priorities, some blocking is bound to occur. You'll feel resistance when you try to move forward on priorities that seem to make logical sense but which don't connect with your true desires. No matter how hard you push against that resistance or what techniques you try to use to get past it, it will still be present. That's because your mistake was further upstream. Your priorities weren't aligned with your true desires.

When you realize you're in a blocking situation, give yourself some time to pause and reflect. Even if you didn't explicitly write down your priorities, what do your thoughts tell you about what's most important to you?

If it's convenient for you, jot down a quick list of your top mental priorities. Maybe you'll come up with something like this:

- Making more money
- Improving my overall health and fitness
- Spending time with my significant other
- Being more focused and productive at work
- Learning new skills

But if you were to actually look at your actions as an objective observer might do, you may see that you've been prioritizing your day very differently in practice:

- Communication (email, texting, phone calls)
- Social networking
- Consuming information (blogs, news, videos, etc.)
- Doing urgent work
- Being entertained

These aren't complete lists, but I think you get the idea – your mental prioritization and your real world actions are not in sync.

If you discover something like this, don't panic. It's quite common for people to have two lists that are clearly not aligned. Fortunately this is a fixable problem.

The False Belief You Must Release

The reason for this dichotomy is a common false belief. It's the belief that prioritizing is a logical affair, that it's something you can achieve with your logical mind.

In fact, an equally mistaken approach is the belief that this is something you can discern intuitively. That approach will also fail.

Your logical mind is the part that comes up with solutions like: If my finances are the weakest part of my life, then I should make that my top priority for a while. Giving my finances more attention will surely improve them, and then when things are going really well in that area, I can make something else a priority.

This sounds very believable. So it comes as a real blow to the logical mind when this seemingly sensible solution doesn't actually work. This throws the logical mind for a loop because after all, it should work, right?

Actually it shouldn't work. There's an error in the logic here. The assumption that turning a lagging area of your life into your top conscious priority will cause that area to improve is a false assumption. Much of the time, it turns out not to be true.

Many times when you take a lagging area of your life and make it your top priority, that area will continue to stagnate. Sometimes it will even get worse.

And sometimes you can ignore an area of your life, and it will improve all by itself.

We could go really deep into this, but for now I just want to plant the seed in your mind that turning a lagging area of your life into your top priority may in fact be a mistake. Sometimes it's the worst thing you can do. You'll see why this happens a little later in this article.

Why the Logical Mind Cannot Prioritize

If you try to set priorities in a logical manner, failure is guaranteed. This is because logic cannot provide a context for prioritizing.

There's a special class of brain injuries whereby people cannot feel any emotions, or they're unaware of their emotional states. Interestingly, these people cannot function well at all. They might spend a whole day deciding where to go for lunch, evaluating all sorts of irrelevant details such as the lighting conditions in each restaurant or which table they might get. Such people may brush their teeth 20 times a day, thinking it was a reasonable thing to do. They don't have a context for separating the relevant from the irrelevant.



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Some companies claim to make data-driven decisions, but that's a misnomer since there must always be an emotional context behind the usage of data. There's no logical reason for why a company must grow or why it must sell more products or have more impact. It could just as easily shut down, and the people could go do something else instead. Even the choice to make data-driven decisions is an emotional one. The emotional brain provides the context for feeling that it's good to grow a company; then the data can be logically analyzed to determine what avenues may support that growth better than others. But ultimately the whole decision chain begins with an emotional context, and even data-driven decisions are normally littered with emotional checkpoints.

If you were to try to prioritize your life on a purely mental/logical level, you'd find the task impossible. You cannot logically evaluate and sort the infinite possibilities available to you. In fact, if you try to go that route, you'll surely experience bouts of analysis paralysis, where you get so caught up in analysis that you hardly get anything done.

Let the Heart Lead

The solution to this trap is simple: Let the heart lead. Use your emotions to prioritize.

This may sound like a cop-out, but there's a more empowering way to look at it.

First, you're going to do this anyway. If you try to use the logical prioritization approach, some part of you won't cooperate. Your mental priorities may look great on paper, but you won't actually follow them. When have you ever prioritized your life logically and even come close to sticking to your priorities?

The closest you'll get will be to use drugs like coffee to try to throw your hormones out of balance and overstimulate the logical mind, but your emotions will still reassert themselves from time to time, and the signals will only be more scrambled. In the end your emotions will make you feel worse when you try to graft a logical prioritization onto your life by force. This approach will take you further away from genuine happiness, and it's ultimately counter-productive.

Maybe someday there will be a better substitute for your emotional brain, but for now you're stuck with it. Fortunately that isn't such a bad thing. Your emotional brain is much older than your logical mind, being subjected to many more cycles of evolutions. Your emotional subsystem is a finely honed instrument, far beyond the capabilities of even our most advanced supercomputers.

The logical mind is good at certain things, but prioritizing the big picture isn't one of its strengths. This is, however, a major strength of the emotional mind. These two aspects of mind complement each other beautifully, but in the Western world we often have the relationship backwards. We need to learn to prioritize with the heart and the emotions, not with the logical mind.

Physically speaking, your emotional brain is mostly in your head, but it's also partly in your chest. Your heart actually has its own tiny brain consisting of about 40,000 neurites. It's primitive compared to the brain in your head, but it's also loud. The communication channel that sends signals from heart to brain is like a firehose, whereas the channel going from brain to heart carries much less bandwidth – more like a thin straw. Essentially the heart functions as a state controller for the brain. The heart can easily tune out the brain, but the brain cannot easily tune out the heart. When you feel strong emotions, those emotions will take over your thinking, determine the types of thoughts you can or can't have in those moments. But you may find it very difficult to think your way out of strong feelings.

Heart-Centered Prioritizing

When you prioritize with the heart, it's important to get a clear signal. I recommend that you consume no drugs like caffeine or alcohol for at least a week just to be safe. Otherwise your nervous system is likely to be out of whack, and the heart-mind communication won't work as well. If you really want to amp it up, eat all raw for a week, or try fasting, juice fasting, or mono meals for a few days first.

You'll want to achieve a state known as coherence, where the heart and brain synchronize their communication patterns. This is the difference between listening to music and listening to noise.

To achieve coherence, you need to focus on creating a certain emotional state. Once you're in that state, your brain will sync to your heart. This can be physically measured with the proper equipment. Perhaps the most significant change is in your HRV (heart rate variability). When you're out of coherence, your HRV bounces around chaotically. When you're in coherence, your HRV looks like a smooth sine wave if you were to graph it over time. Your heart actually speeds up and then slows down in a very flowing pattern, almost like music.

Emotionally this state of coherence can be described as: unconditional love, compassion, appreciation, and gratitude. If you're feeling these emotions, you're there. If you're not feeling these emotions, you're not there. Feeling neutral or okay or fine is not coherence.

Coherence has many benefits. It feels good emotionally, but it's also good for your health, your mental performance, your social life, and beyond.

While the heart is the loudest voice in heart-brain communication, the brain can still influence the heart. So you can create this coherence state by holding thoughts in your mind that are congruent with these feelings. You can recall positive memories or use visualization. Another method is to listen to music that evokes these emotions. I like the song One by U2.

Play around to find a method that works for you. You can do it all in your mind if you want, such as by visualizing a positive scene, but you can just as easily induce coherence through external means, such as by cuddling someone you care about.

The reason to put yourself into a state of coherence first is simple: incredible clarity. Once you're in this state of coherence, you can trust that your heart-brain communication will be at peak efficiency. You can still attempt to prioritize outside of this state, but the results won't be as reliable.

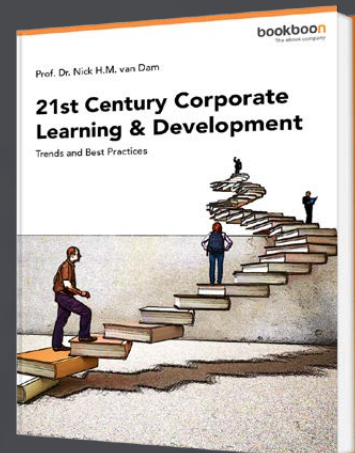
Now while you're enjoying this warm, glowing heart-centeredness, ask yourself what's most important to you in life. Create your prioritization list by focusing on your feelings. I expect you'll find this pretty easy to do.

You'll probably notice that the way your heart prioritizes is very different from the way your logical brain works. For instance, when you're in coherence, it's pretty obvious that making lots of money isn't that important, and it may not make it onto your priority list at all.

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You may come up with a list that looks something like this:

- Feeling connected
- Helping people
- Serving the greater good
- Being kind
- Sharing my gifts and talents with the world

Please do try this for yourself. Don't just read this article and skip this exercise.

You'll probably notice that heart-centered prioritizing is actually faster and easier than logical prioritizing.

The heart-centered approach is also more consistent. When you use the logical approach, you'll get different answers each time. Every month you apply hard logic to set your priorities, your answers will keep shifting, sometimes radically. But with the heart-based approach, you'll find that your answers remain remarkably consistent. You may use different words to describe your priorities and shift the ordering around a little, but you'll be struck by a feeling of coming home to a delightful sense of clarity each time you do this. It may feel like remembering rather than prioritizing. The answers flow with little effort.

When you're in coherence, your logical brain will function better too, and it will work harmoniously with your emotions to help you create what you desire.

We can also see why it doesn't work to prioritize based on logic alone. Even prioritizing based on intuition doesn't work. The reason is that these approaches ignore the importance of coherence. Each time you try to apply your logic or intuition to a problem, you'll be in a slightly different emotional state. That emotional state will dictate what sorts of solutions you come up with. And if the emotional states don't match from one month to the next, your solutions will be discordant, and you'll find it hard to create plans that stick. It's like listening to music where each track keeps drifting off key – it may still look like music on paper... but not when you listen to it.

We can also see why turning a lagging area of your life into your top priority will often backfire. If focusing more attention on that lagging area makes it harder to achieve coherence, your results will suffer. So if you feel a sense of financial lack and then try to push yourself to make more money, you'll probably be more likely to induce feelings of stress and overwhelm instead of appreciation and gratitude. And so your emotional brain will lead you to procrastinate. It's actually trying to get you away from those negative feelings and nudge you in the direction of coherence. This is why you may find yourself addicted to email or social media, which may help you feel better than stressing yourself out with work you don't enjoy. A better solution is to enter the coherence state deliberately and then decide what to do from there.

Taking Action

When you're ready to take action on your priorities, start by returning to coherence again. Use your favorite method to create feelings of unconditional love, compassion, appreciation, and gratitude. This way you'll be syncing to the same state you used to create your priorities, so you won't have the feeling of second-guessing yourself.

In this state, the right actions will tend to emerge fairly easily. For me it was the desire to write and publish a new article on this beautiful Saturday morning while sipping a banana-coconut smoothie. My desire is to help you gain more clarity and experience more flow and happiness in your life.

Returning to this state of coherence when you set priorities and when you act on them is better than trying to prioritize while you're in one state and then taking actions in discordant states. Don't expect good results if you prioritize from a state of desperation and then try to take action from a feeling of stress. Sync your emotions to the coherence state before you prioritize and before you take action. With practice you can do this in a matter of seconds. This is a high leverage practice that makes a world of difference.

A Global Perspective

Imagine how the planet would change if more people began each day by syncing to coherence first. Imagine if governments and corporate boardrooms took a couple minutes to sync to unconditional love before they made key decisions. How many problems could we avoid with this one simple practice?

Wouldn't this be more impactful and consistent than having each person show up with discordant feelings such as fear, greed, overwhelm, etc.?

You can try this with your family and friends as well. The next time you have a disagreement with someone close to you, pause for a moment and see if you can get yourself and the other person to sync to coherence first. Then see what becomes of your disagreement.

Syncing between multiple people is like playing in an orchestra. Each individual may have a different instrument and may play different notes at different times, but their output can flow together harmoniously. When multiple people sync with coherence, they create beautiful music. When they're out of sync, they create some form of noise.

Consider a 30-Day Coherence Trial

If you want to make syncing to coherence a habit, consider kicking off a 30-day trial. It's really not that difficult to do, and the potential benefits are huge.

To start the trial, take a few minutes to sync to coherence, and then jot down a list of your top priorities in life. It doesn't have to be a long list, and the exact ordering isn't that important. Just write down whatever comes to you.

When you're ready to begin the action part of each day, pause again for a moment and sync to coherence. Then get started by taking the next action you feel inspired to take.

This syncing step only takes a few minutes at most. It can be as simple as playing a song that makes you feel appreciative and loving. Then proceed from that state as you move forward. Try to hold onto it as long as you can.

When you notice that you've lost touch with the coherence state and you're drifting into discordant feelings and losing clarity, take another time-out to re-sync to coherence. Again, this doesn't take long at all. Recall a happy memory. Play some inspiring music. Or send a quick text message to someone you love: I'm really grateful you're in my life. I deeply love and appreciate you. <3

Since I completed my 30-day music trial this week, I'm kicking off this new 30-day trial today. My commitment is to sync to coherence at least twice per day. I started this morning by syncing to that state and feeling inspired to write and share this article with you. I hope you find it helpful. Have a beautiful day!

About the author

Steve Pavlina (born April 14, 1971) is an American self-help author, motivational speaker and entrepreneur. He is the author of the web site stevepavlina.com and the book *Personal Development for Smart People*. Pavlina's blog covers topics such as personal development and success; consciousness and courage; productivity, motivation and goal setting; career, wealth and business; and spirituality. (Wikipedia)

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On December 15, 2010, Steve Pavlina released all the content he had created till that date (excluding his book *Personal Development For Smart People*) and all content he would create in the future (unless explicitly specified) in the public domain.

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24 Emotional Intelligence – Key to Resilience in a Stressful World by Byron Stock

The demands of today's world can evoke negative emotions that, when not handled effectively, result in high levels of stress. Through developing Emotional Intelligence (EI) skills we can transform those negative emotions into positive, productive behaviors that enable us to accomplish more and feel better.

The key to attaining resilience in this stressful world is to develop Emotional Intelligence (EI) skills. Today's headlines leave little doubt of the detrimental effects of stress. The demands, pressures and challenges we face daily can evoke negative emotions that, when not handled effectively result in high levels of stress. Our news is filled with anxiety provoking topics such as the economy, layoffs, holiday stress, academic stress, relationship stress, the impact of stress on health and much more. And at work there is a growing demand to do more with less; faster, better, cheaper, with fewer people. Without the right skills to handle these ever increasing challenges our performance suffers. While we may not be able to change our stress-filled environment, we can get at the root cause of our stress by changing how we perceive and react to stress-producing events.



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The Relationship of Challenge, Emotions and Performance:

Whether realized or not, performance is directly affected by challenges (or demands/expectations) and your emotional reactivity to them. For example, imagine I hire you for a position. With your new job you feel eager, excited, optimistic, determined and confident. After you perform very well on the first few projects you're assigned, I become confident that you can handle more projects. In fact, because of having to do more with less, I'm going to give you a lot more projects. My hope and expectation is that you will just keep performing at the outstanding level exhibited when you first joined the company.

However, as project is piled upon project and you find yourself putting in extra hours and trying your best, you reach a point where you ask yourself, "If I don't get all this done, what's going to happen to me?" Frustration, anxiety, fear and panic take over. Now skepticism, pessimism and uncertainty are your constant companions instead of optimism and confidence. And, with your frustration, you find yourself wasting time worrying and second-guessing yourself – time that cannot be spared.

And more importantly, your health becomes affected. Your negative emotional response results in a cascade of some 1,400 biochemical events, some of which result in physiological changes such as increased heart rate, blood pressure, cortisol (the stress hormone), and adrenaline. These events compromise your mental clarity, your emotional balance, your physical energy and personal effectiveness, all of which play a part in communication, rational thought and problem solving, and your state of health. And the increased frequency of these negative emotions can cause you to become indecisive, defensive, short with people and angry when others ask you for support or when they don't support you. In fact, other people are likely feeling the same emotions because you and they exist in the same environment. And stress, like a virus, thrives in this toxic environment.

Emotions and Stress:

Let's examine this disheartening problem more closely. Whenever people are UNABLE to cope with the demands of their environment they experience negative emotions and beliefs which, in turn, manifest as stress. So while our environment is a significant factor in producing stress, ultimately it is the individual's inability to transform negative emotions and beliefs that lies at the core of the problem. The real leverage exists in the word "unable." If people are unable it means they don't know how to, in this case, manage their emotions about what is happening in the environment.

Actions We Can Take:

So what can we do to help ourselves in these difficult times of growing demands? First we need to develop our emotional self-awareness. When we become aware of our emotions, we also become aware of those times and situations where we allow our negative emotions to creep in and take over. Next we need to develop our emotional self-management skills. By developing these skills we can transform negative emotions into positive, productive emotions and behaviors which enable us to think more clearly. In our Emotional Intelligence (EI) skill-building programs, developing emotional self-awareness and self-management skills are the foundation of EI Competence.

True Story Example:

Let me give you an example from a true story of what can happen when you develop these skills. I was delivering our EI training to a group of high-potential directors and vice presidents. The training took place on a Tuesday and Wednesday. One of my participants sent this email on the following Monday morning: "I had been having an extremely stressful week with a crushing, impending feeling of failure/doom that I wasn't going to be able to get everything done to meet some very important deadlines. Since your course, I have been using all the techniques and am amazed how successful they have been. I have been able to get 'on top' of everything that needs to get done with little to no agitation. You very well may have helped me with one of the most significant, positive improvements I have ever made in my life."

What's the Point?

We can make several observations from this true story:

- By developing EI skills, you can improve your performance in today's demanding environment.
- You can develop these skills in a very short period of time and experience dramatic results – it doesn't take three to six months as some people suggest.
- When you develop EI skills, you can manage high-stress situations in-the-moment – so instead of waiting for a yoga class, a vacation, or a meditation time, you can manage negative emotions when they occur and prevent stress from accumulating with its potential negative health impact.

Our program results support these points. Two to three months after our training, we conduct impact interviews. Typically, participants report improvements ranging from 20% to 35% in personal productivity, 25% to 40% in mental clarity, 20% to 40% in stress reduction as well as improvements in teamwork, creativity, management of emotional reactivity, reduced conflict and other critical workplace issues.

About the author

Byron Stock guides individuals and organizations toward excellence by helping them develop their Emotional Intelligence skills as a powerful tool to achieve strategic objectives, lead change and create resilient, high-performing organizational cultures. Learn about Byron's quick, easy, proven techniques to harness the power of your Emotional Intelligence at www.ByronStock.com.

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25 Inspiring Employee Engagement through Emotional Intelligence by Joel H. Head, ACC & Joshua Freedman

Each year, the United States experiences \$450 billion to \$550 billion† in lost productivity due to low employee engagement. Companies have poured millions into programs designed to make people happier and more satisfied at work, but in ten years, employee engagement levels across the U.S. have remained tenaciously static.

What is wrong with this picture?

The approaches to creating engagement have varied from attempting to make the workplace more fun (free food, bring your dog, making work like a game), to being family friendly (on-site day care, flex time), to inclusion strategies (clarify expectations, involve people in decisions), to rewarding performance (time off, more money), to just being nicer at work.

While these sound great (who wouldn't want free food?), there's a simple reason these approaches are failing: The majority of current engagement strategies focus on external mechanisms. True engagement comes from the employee's relationship with the employer and with the work itself. By definition, engagement is an inside job.

Classical vs. Behavioral Economics

We operate in a world governed largely by classical economics: people are presumed to behave rationally. Classical economic theory says that if we pay people for how much they produce, they will produce more. The idea works up to a point; it stumbles due to a basic fact: people do not always behave in a rational way.

Rationally, free food and the other perks might sound great. But research has also shown that these benefits can also be viewed as a means to control behavior (makes sense, since that's the company's real goal).

The Four Keys to Engagement

What drives deeper motivation? Research by Richard Deci, author of *Why We Do What We Do*, highlights a few factors for deep motivation:

- 1) sense of autonomy,
- 2) feeling of competence,
- 3) relatedness to the broader work of the organization, and
- 4) connection to the community of fellow employees.

If material perks are interfering with these factors, then those “motivation schemes” will actually adversely impact desired behavior. The behaviorist approach backfires because it’s actually a way to reduce autonomy (manipulating people), it undermines competence (you don’t earn those benefits through your strengths), there’s no larger meaning, and many corporate benefit programs subtly (or overtly) pit employees against one another.

How to Engage People?

So if we want to recapture the \$350b in lost engagement, how do we support autonomy, competence and relatedness by building stronger relationships?

One answer can be found in emotional intelligence – which, simply stated, is being smarter with feelings. Leaders can become aware of how emotions influence themselves and others. Leaders can learn how their words and actions support each employee’s autonomy, competence and relatedness and either build or tear down relationships.

Emotional intelligence is the primary driver in leader effectiveness because leadership is about using influence and building effective relationships, which are largely emotional tasks. In fact, EI has been measured as contributing 75–80% of the elements for success compared to 20–25% for IQ.

Leaders who practice emotional intelligence are less reactive and more responsive. They know themselves, so they don’t need to prove their own power. Instead, they work WITH others, giving an appropriate level of autonomy.

Emotionally intelligent leaders are attuned to their people. They see their people’s strengths (and weaknesses) clearly, so they can foster that essential sense of competence.

In the Six Seconds Model of Emotional Intelligence, part of EI is being connected with a sense of purpose. This allows the “High EI Leaders” to do a better job helping employees see the link between their daily work and the larger picture.

Finally, leaders who put EI into action are better at relationships. They “get” people and are able to foster genuine collaboration. This fuels stronger interpersonal connection, motivating people through relatedness. The problem is, this trait seems to be waning.

Where Has All the Empathy Gone?

It has been said that people join organizations but leave their supervisors. It’s a problem of relationships – one of those core motivators.

To be effective, today’s leaders have to connect with people on a personal level – understand what drives their people. This “connecting” requires a high level of emotional intelligence, specifically empathy: the ability to sense how others feel and connect at an emotional level.

Bad news: a recent Harvard Business review article notes that the quality senior leaders lack most is empathy.



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Leaders can use emotional intelligence to develop empathy. First, by examining how they feel inside. Second by becoming aware of the impact of their words and actions on others.

Like the other components of emotional intelligence, empathy is learnable. Actively, consistently developing the skills of EI is a “must do” for today’s and tomorrow’s leaders – and it works.

Success Stories: Emotional Intelligence Drives Engagement

Environment-for-successIn a six-month leadership development process at Komatsu, a Japanese maker of construction and mining equipment, engagement increased from 33 to 70%. At the same time, plant performance increased by 9.4%. The pilot project, conducted by a team from the Six Seconds Network, took place at the company’s Este plant and focused on educating line managers in the use of emotional intelligence skills.

In another study by Six Seconds, Amadori, an Italian agro-food sector company and European supplier to McDonalds, emotional intelligence was found to predict 47% of the variation in manager’s performance management scores. Emotional intelligence was also correlated with increased organizational engagement with 76% of the variation in engagement predicted by manager EQ. Finally, plants with higher organizational engagement achieved higher bottom-line results. During this period, employee turnover also dropped by 63%.

“The workplace climate is a driving force in how employees engage in their daily activities,” Massimiliano Ghini, a management professor at Italy’s Alma Graduate School, said. “So the conclusion is simple: If we want business success, we need to equip leaders with the skills to make an environment where employees can work effectively.”

The Bottom Line:

Motivation is an inside job. It means employees must motivate themselves and become engaged, but it is up to leadership to create the conditions where self-motivation is possible.

About the authors

Joel H. Head, ACC, is the Managing Partner of Headwinds Ltd. which he founded in 2002. An entrepreneur, leadership coach and organization performance consultant, Joel works with senior leaders who are passionate about building more engaged and accountable teams, enhancing their own leadership capability, and improving firm performance. He is a Preferred Partner with the Six Seconds Network and has counseled senior executives in the U.S., Canada, Europe and Asia. Learn more at <http://www.headwindsltd.com>

Joshua Freedman is the CEO of Six Seconds, learn more at www.jmfreedman.com

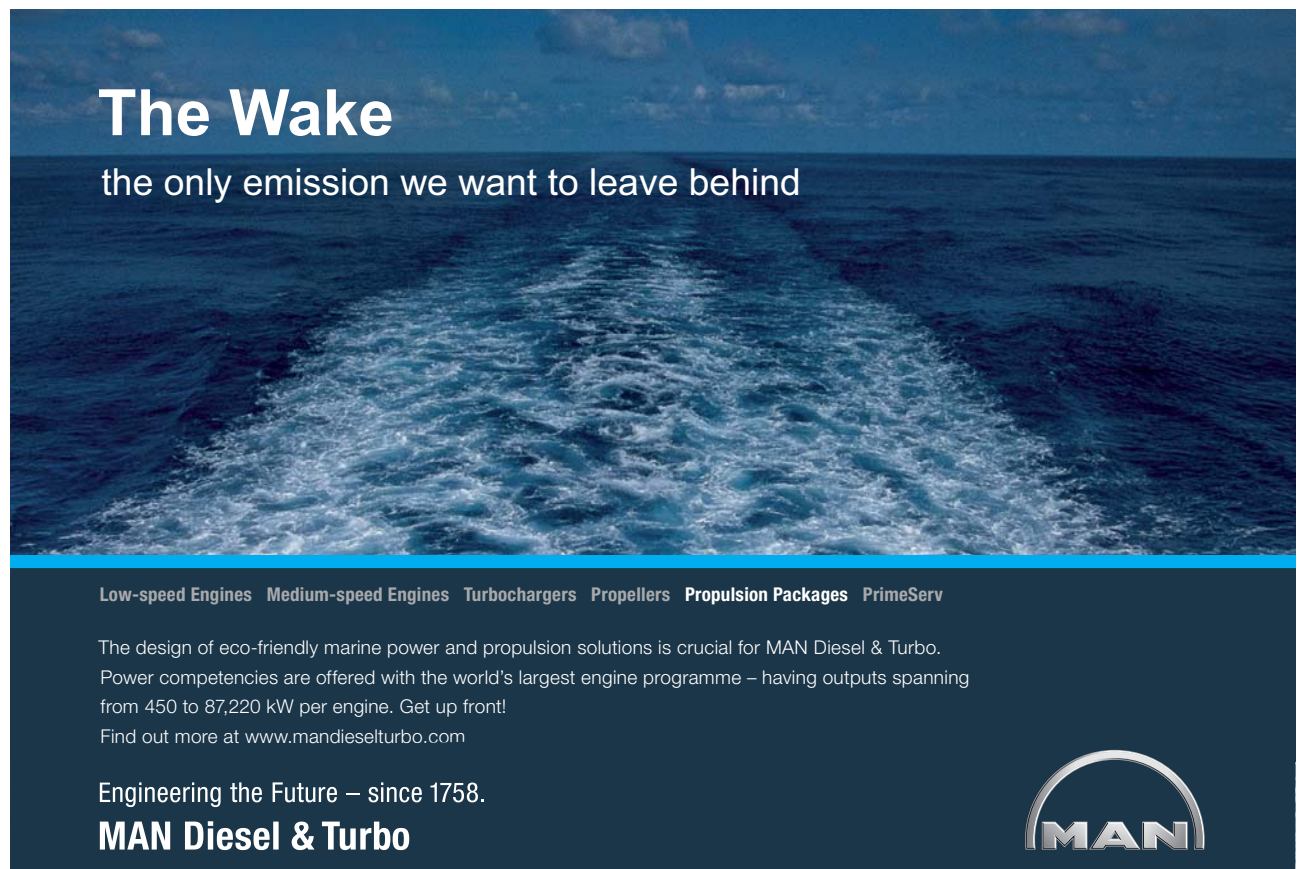
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