

BEING A BETTER PERSON THROUGH EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand yourself and others, and the ability to use that understanding in your work and private life. The 5 capabilities of Emotional Intelligence (EQ) are self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy and effective relationships. Your EQ is usually much more important than your IQ when it comes to being a success or failure at work, at home, or on a committee or team of people.

Habit shapes much of our behavior. We tend to respond to situations in ways we learned many years ago, often in our families. We don't stop to think sometimes about why we act as we do or that there might be better ways. We respond out of habit instead of learning new, more thoughtful ways to interact with family, friends or coworkers. Learning about ourselves and others allows us to explore other ways to think, do or be.

1) The first EQ trait is **self-awareness**. Some people understand their own outlook and peculiarities, and recognize their strengths and weaknesses, better than others. Tests that evaluate personality style, learning style, leadership style or communication style help us to become more aware of our own traits and tendencies. The goal is to use this information to understand yourself better, and to be able to work on improving your weak points and maximizing your strong points.

To be adept at **self-awareness**, tune into your emotional states. Recognize your inherited purpose (the fear or anger you are carrying around from childhood) when it starts to take over your brain. Realize when your self-talk is negative and when it's positive. Choose to do tasks, volunteer for projects or activities or take on job responsibilities that play to your strengths. Avoid situations or projects that aren't a good fit. Choose trainers and mentors that fit your learning and communication styles.

For example, Cindy is precise and analytical, so she is entrusted with keeping the controlled substances log. This is an ongoing project that can't be forgotten or done sloppily. Kari is enthusiastic about new projects so she would be more suited for a quick marketing project. Someone who is mechanically inclined is assigned to equipment maintenance and Jessica, who loves to shop for a bargain, is good at ordering office supplies.

Look for patterns of behavior that help or hurt you. Where do your habitual behaviors and ways of responding trip you up?

When are they strengths?

What ways of learning are effective for you and how could you do more of your training and C.E. that way?

With whom do you communicate well and with whom do you tend to have conflicts?

How is this affected by your personality or communication style?

Be emotionally self-aware, too. Stop occasionally throughout the day and check in with yourself. Are you calm? Stressed? Angry? Express your feelings to others (quietly and calmly). Be authentic and don't play games. These are the behaviors of a self-aware person.

Realize that you are who you are but also that other people aren't like you and may not think like you. Your brain has both innate and learned ways in which it responds under different situations. Some people react to stress by clamming up, some start yelling back and some walk away. Knowing your own patterns helps you to adjust or make changes as needed.

2) Next is **self-regulation**. This means that not only do you have an understanding of who you are but you are able to control how you express yourself. This means you realize when you are acting appropriately for a given situation and are able to adjust or regulate your responses to create a smooth interaction with another individual or your team. If you sense that you are being too loud, demanding, passive, annoying or controlling you recognize that behavior and substitute something that would be more effective. You could name any number of behaviors that might be better or worse ones for a certain situation, the point is you can realize when something you are doing works or doesn't work and adjust to life as you go along.

To improve **self-regulation**, accept responsibility for your emotional responses and learn to manage your emotional triggers, the things that get your inherited purpose or your dinosaur brain going. Can you control your emotions at home and at work?

Do the people you live or work with always know what your mood is, or can you fake it effectively? It's not fair to spew your own frustrations or bad feelings all over the clinic. It's also not appropriate to be overly happy all the time – for a client who just received a bad diagnosis for their pet being too upbeat doesn't seem very caring.

Most people aren't totally one personality style or another, they are a blend. People that tend to be all one style or another have more trouble regulating their behavior. For example, Dr. Boss, the author of this material, is the embodiment of the Driver personality style. She has struggled for 20 years to be less autocratic and more patient. Kari, one of her employees, is the perfect example of an Expressive, has trouble being quiet, laid back or organized. Those who are a mix of the two styles can choose which style of behavior is more appropriate for a given situation and have a larger repertoire of responses.

Self-regulation doesn't mean you have to **change** who you are. It means you **control** who you are. Just as it is helpful to talk faster when speaking with a visual style communicator, or slower for someone who is kinesthetic, it is more effective to change your behavior patterns as needed to facilitate your interactions with others when it comes to your personality style. Dr Boss and Kari may both work hard to modify their natural behavior patterns to suit each other. If they don't, they probably annoy the crap out of each other.

The practice owner tries to give Cindy a heads up when she will be discussing a topic that Cindy will need to give her input about at a staff meeting. The doctor knows

that Cindy is an Analytical personality, and so likes time to think and process information before she has to make a decision about it. She doesn't have to do that with Kari, because Kari likes to make quick, off the cuff decisions.

Kari, on the other hand, knows she needs to do better taking notes and focusing on the task at hand, because she is naturally prone to jumping too quickly from one thing to the next and losing things in the process. She also can't behave for a euthanasia visit the way she would at a new puppy visit. She needs to tone down and slow down to be effective in these situations.

Getting along with a team of people, your boss or your mother all go better if you can recognize how your behaviors are helpful or not and adjust them accordingly.

3) **Self-motivation** is another important EQ trait. Goal oriented people tend to have an easy time setting and meeting goals, and staying motivated to complete tasks and projects. Those who are more relationship oriented find this more difficult. Since you are in charge of your own life, it's up to you to motivate yourself. As an adult, no one else can do this for you. Those who are more motivated tend to complete more schooling, be more successful at work and be more happy and satisfied with their lives.

To be adept at **self-motivation**, strive to Be There, in the moment when performing work tasks. When setbacks occur, avoid self-defeating thoughts, such as "I can't do this" or "I'm going to quit." When you wake up in the morning, start the day off right by thinking good thoughts about the day to come. Figure out what motivates you – power, relationships, status?

What do you need to do to get the recognition that makes you happy and fuels your energy and passion?

What do you want to learn or be?

4) **Empathy** is the next trait. Empathetic people can understand another person's point of view, without judging it or belittling it. They can recognize emotions and feelings in others and are aware when someone, a client or pet, is feeling painful, happy, annoyed or sad.

To be **empathetic**, see the world through the eyes of others and work to recognize and respond appropriately to the emotions of others. Try not to see only black and white. Look for the good in people and situations. Empathy means reading and responding to other people's emotional currents. It focuses on behavior and issues but is not about "fixing people." To improve your relationships, use your life purpose to influence and persuade others and build consensus and support for team goals, instead of letting your personality style, communication style or inherited purpose choose your attitude.

Examples would be realizing that you are an expressive, loud person and that your Analytical or Driver boss might find you annoying or obnoxious. You feel bad that she has to put up with you and you don't expect her to get as excited as you do about something. Robin will say, "I know I'm driving you crazy, Dr. Jones, but I need to bother you one more time." Dr. Jones might say, "Cindy, are you feeling OK today, you seem very quiet."

It means you realize a client who just heard bad news about her pet will be upset and probably doesn't want to chat on her way out. A non-empathetic person would think the client was rude as she left quietly without making eye contact or saying good-bye. A non-empathetic person might not pick up on the fact that a client is getting annoyed with her or that a coworker thinks she just overstepped her boundaries or personal space.

5) Fifth and last, people with high EQ have **effective relationships**. They use all those other EQ traits to form strong bonds with people and learn to interact or work with them effectively, so that a team or a marriage operates smoothly. The longer people have worked together, hopefully the better they understand and adapt to each other, so feeling aren't hurt, feathers aren't ruffled and communication is professional and rewarding.

Signs of ineffective relationships are things like frequent squabbles, people not speaking to each other, angry outbursts, hurt feelings, and especially recurrences of these. If you are having trouble getting along with someone and you have a high EQ, you should be able to analyze both your thoughts, feelings and responses, and those of the person you are having a problem with. Then you can figure out a better approach or have a discussion that can resolve the situation.

Having EQ doesn't mean you can't be yourself or you have to become someone else. It does mean that you spend your life working on being the best person you can be. Whether you take your inspiration from the bible, Stephen Covey, your Grandmother or this handout, wisdom comes through taking the great ideas of others and learning to apply them to your own life. Your thoughts, behaviors and actions are all influenced not only by who you are but by how you stretch yourself and how much you are able to grow.

Here are some situations in which emotional intelligence should be used. What would you do?

- 1) Your youngest child just started school, so you want to change your hours from the evening shift to daytime and you want to take on some training of new associates. You:
 - a. Write down your ideal schedule and job description
 - b. Put it in your manager's mailbox with a note that says if she doesn't give you your preferred hours and tasks you'll quit
 - c. Tell her in person if she doesn't give you your preferred hours and tasks you'll quit
 - d. Prepare a presentation that lays out how this new schedule would benefit the practice
 - e. Prepare a list of tasks that you could take on for her in your new position, thus relieving her stress and reducing her workload
 - f. Prepare a strategy for hiring/training someone to take over the hours/tasks you don't want any more
 - g. Leave all of these in her mailbox
 - h. Hand them to her, ask her to look them over, schedule a time to sit down and discuss them
 - i. Prepare a list of possible objections she might have and strategies for countering them

- j. Give your stuff to someone else and not your manager, she doesn't like you
 - k. Quietly look for another job because you are afraid to ask her for what you want
 - l. Tell everyone in the hospital ahead of time that if she doesn't give you what you want you'll quit
- 2) You just found out you are pregnant. You know you shouldn't be helping with x-rays or anesthesia but the clinic is short-handed. You:
- a. Don't tell anyone about it
 - b. Tell a few close friends at work
 - c. Tell your practice owner or manager immediately so they can plan how to adjust your workload
 - d. Demand to do just out-patient work
 - e. Decide to quit when maternity leave starts but not tell anyone in case they'll fire you
 - f. Put it on the team meeting agenda
- 3) You think you deserve a raise. You:
- a. Wait for your next job review to bring it up
 - b. Write down a list of your accomplishments to bring to a discussion
 - c. Tell your manager if you don't get a raise you'll quit
 - d. Tell everyone else you work with that you should get a raise
 - e. Research the going rate for a person in our area in a similar job position
 - f. Decide you'd better solve those nagging performance problems that keep coming up on your job reviews before sitting down with her to discuss it
 - g. Interview at other hospitals and ask what they're paying
 - h. Quietly seethe about how poorly you are paid
 - i. Tell your manager or practice owner about how badly you need more money
 - j. Tell them that you want the money to buy a new car
 - k. Realize that they really aren't there to solve your problems
 - l. Ask them what you need to do in order to get a raise and be seen as a more valuable contributor
 - m. Ask to present your case at a management team meeting
- 4) You've been feeling really stressed out at work lately. There always seems to be too much to do. You:
- a. Freak out in the pharmacy
 - b. Take drugs
 - c. Cry all the time
 - d. Tell your teammates you are overwhelmed, sit down with them to plan a strategy
 - e. Realize that your dinosaur brain has taken over and you're acting as either a "survivor" (I accept and endure until I can't stand it any more, then blow up or melt down), a "protector" (I shield and suffer, I am a victim) or a "fixer" (I solve and conquer by being abusive to someone else). Resolve to take a step back and find a healthier pattern of behavior.

- f. Figure out what your triggers are and how to avoid them
 - g. Get yourself a book or tape on stress management
 - h. Figure out healthier ways to blow off steam – exercise, volunteering, hobbies
 - i. Quit
 - j. Realize that a lot of your stress is coming from outside of work, resolve to compartmentalize better
 - k. Tell your teammates repeatedly how stressed you are
 - l. Ask your mentor to help you cope better
 - m. Take a vacation even though it's heartworm season
 - n. Take a vacation and then never come back
- 5) You are in a leadership role in the team. The practice has made a decision that you feel you can't live with. You:
- a. Quit immediately
 - b. Argue about it every chance you get
 - c. Do it your way anyway
 - d. Continue to support the mission or decision to the team while quietly looking for another position elsewhere
 - e. Ask to bring it up in a management team meeting
 - f. Realize it's not going to change and you have to either live with it or leave
- 6) You don't think a particular management team member is walking the talk. You:
- a. Quietly take them aside to discuss it
 - b. Tell your manager or practice owner
 - c. Gripe about it behind their back
 - d. Leave them an anonymous note
 - e. Loudly proclaim that they are hypocritical
 - f. Figure if they don't have to play by the rules you don't either
 - g. Quietly scorn them
 - h. Call them on it immediately
- 7) You just had an altercation in the hallway with one of the doctors. You:
- a. Apologize to her later
 - b. Apologize individually to everyone who heard it
 - c. Act like it's no big deal
 - d. Think that it's no big deal
 - e. Realize it makes both of you look bad, especially if you are on the management team
 - f. Apologize at a staff meeting
 - g. Promise to never let it happen again
 - h. Read "Dinosaur Brains"
 - i. Tell several coworkers you can't stand that doctor
- 8) You perceive a big "sleeping dog" in the practice that you think should be addressed. (A sleeping dog is an issue that everyone is tiptoeing around because they are afraid of

what will happen if they wake it up. A “barking dog” is an issue that is out in the open and is being dealt with.) You:

- a. Chicken out, don't discuss it
 - b. Put it on the staff meeting agenda under someone else's initials
 - c. Tell your manager or practice owner
 - d. Ask everyone else what they think
 - e. Bring it up at a meeting
 - f. Think about a possible solution
 - g. Quit
- 9) You really dislike or are not very good at one aspect of your job. You:
- a. Refuse to do that task
 - b. Discuss it with the team members who also do that task, in the middle of an appointment block
 - c. Avoid it whenever possible, leaving it to other people
 - d. Put it down as a goal for improvement on your job review form
 - e. See if someone else on the team likes to do it, arrange for them to take over that task
 - f. Ask to move to another job position
 - g. Quit
 - h. Threaten to quit if you have to keep doing it
 - i. Figure it's no big deal, it's not like you're doing it all day long
 - j. Think about your long-term career strategy
 - k. Gripe about it over and over
- 10) The team is doing a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis at a staff meeting. You:
- a. Pretend you are listening, plan your next vacation in your head
 - b. Fall asleep
 - c. Figure you're only an associate, it doesn't apply to you
 - d. Think of some things to say but don't say them in case someone would laugh at you
 - e. Think these damn meetings are one of the Weaknesses
 - f. Take over the meeting and give all the answers
 - g. Say you have to go to the bathroom
 - h. Participate enthusiastically
 - i. Participate sullenly if called on
 - j. Realize there's a lot to running a business that you hadn't thought of
 - k. Realize that everyone has good ideas to contribute and is part of the plan
 - l. Interrupt and ask people to repeat themselves because you weren't paying attention
- 11) The person you are mentoring has made some mistakes lately. You:
- a. Discuss them when you sit down each week
 - b. Realize you haven't sat down with them for weeks. Resolve to do better
 - c. Fire them

- d. Make a list, give it to your manager or practice owner
- e. Gripe that the person just doesn't get it
- f. Leave a note in their box
- g. Write them up
- h. Assign a book or other homework that will improve their skills in that area
- i. Think about their learning style and how you could coach them more effectively
- j. Save it for their next job review
- k. Ask someone else to be their mentor, this just isn't working

12) You get upset at something a coworker did and ask someone to intercede for you. They talk to the other person and recommend the two of you sit down and talk it out.

You:

- a. Find a quiet time to have a discussion with that person and work out a solution that works for both of you
- b. Deny you were upset, back down so you don't have to talk to them
- c. Refuse to talk, it's all that person's fault
- d. Quit
- e. Ask someone on the management team to be with you during the discussion
- f. Hold a grudge, but never get around to talking
- g. Ask your mentor for advice on how to approach the other person and what to say
- h. Talk to 6 other team members about what you should do while all of them are punched in
- i. Figure you're right and they're wrong so it's their responsibility to change
- j. Realize it's not a big deal, decide to just let it go
- k. Give the person an ultimatum
- l. Make it a goal on your job review form to learn to work better with this person

13) You made a big mistake that hurt a patient or adversely affected the clinic financially.

You:

- a. Pretend nothing happened
- b. Get angry when called on it
- c. Start looking for another job, you'll probably get fired
- d. Admit it, ask how you can help fix it
- e. Refuse to admit it was a big deal
- f. Quit before it's noticed
- g. Apologize profusely
- h. Promise to never do it again
- k. Keep your promise
- l. Forget about it and make the same mistake again later