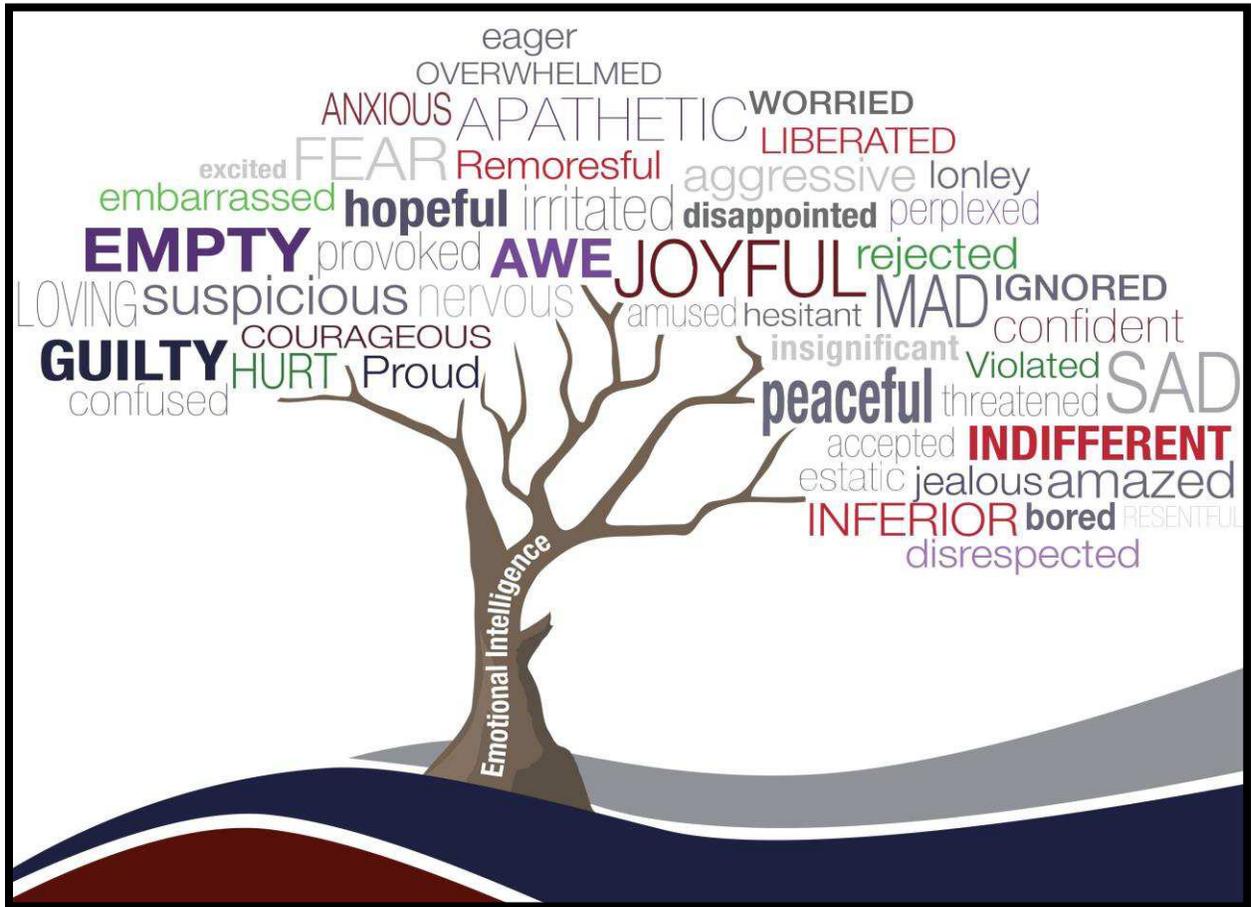


90% of Your Success is due to your Emotional Intelligence (EQ) 3 tips to Boost your EQ to become an extraordinary leader

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How successful are you at maintaining good relationships while producing effective results? Emotional Intelligence is the set of abilities and skills that include having a high level of self and other-awareness, being able to access, understand and manage your emotions, the ability to empathize with others, and great communication skills. Research has show that people with high emotional intelligence tend to be more successful in life than those with lower EQ even if their classical IQ is average.

Many of us understand the impotence of being able to negotiate relationships effectively as part of a successful working environment. The reality is, if you get along with people and take time to establish genuine relationships based on respect, the people who work for you will bend over backwards to make sure you and your team achieve your goals.

The good news is as leaders committed to self-growth, we can always be working on expanding and increasing our EQ. Here are three tips to get you started.

Tip #1 Increase your awareness of yourself and others

One company I consulting with had a CEO who was a “driver” style personality. He spoke at a meeting and then asked for questions or comments. The group was completely silent. After the meeting was over the employees went back to their areas and talked about what they really thought. The CEO had not created an environment where people felt like they could share openly. What was worse is that he either wasn’t aware of it, or didn’t care. You can guess the results this had on his business.

Activity: During your next office meeting, focus on collecting data and identifying the “tone” of the room. Start with yourself. How are you feeling? What is your response to different people in the room? Are there people you are drawn to? Repelled by? Are you happy to be there or not? Now expand your awareness to others in the room. What are their “moods”? Are people making or avoiding eye contact? Smiling? Engaging in small talk? What are the tones of people’s voices? Are people talking over each other or respecting the person who is talking?

At the end of the meeting you can look over your data and make an assessment of the group such as: people were generally avoiding eye contact – it seemed as though people were nervous and reluctant to share their ideas openly. Voices were quiet, no one was interrupting. As a leader, this data gives you information as to what may or may not be happening on your team and helps you decide how to move forward.

Tip #2 Developing Empathy for Others

I once worked for the owner of a company who really didn’t care about the people who worked for him. We could tell, because he would “lay down the law” with what seemed like no regard for what the impact was on his employees. Turnover in that particular company was about 50% during the year that I was there. Needless to say, the cost for his lack of empathy was very high.

Activity: Next time you are in a conversation with someone who has a complaint or a concern, set aside your own personal agenda, opinions and solutions and spend your time getting in that other person’s shoes. Ask yourself questions like – what would I feel like if I had that concern? How would I see things differently if I had that opinion? What is this person’s underlying need that isn’t being expressed or addressed?

An effective leader is able to see problems from multiple perspectives and lets go of rigidity around what the answer to a conflict or challenge might be. By empathizing with another’s situation, the other person feels heard and valued, which are basic human needs. In addition, by seeing things from a new perspective you generate possibilities for creative solutions and innovative ideas that you might not have otherwise seen.

Tip # 3 Upgrade your listening skills – especially if you think you don’t need to!

I was at a meeting this morning engaged in a conversation with a colleague and I noticed my underlying thought was – “I have a meeting to get to, how can I get out of this conversation gracefully?” The truth is most of us think we are good listeners, and most of us are not!

Which of these common bad listening habits do you do?

- Thinking about how you are going to respond to what the person is saying
- Thinking about your agreements/disagreements
- Wondering how you can give advice
- Trying to get out of the conversation
- Trying to find an opportunity to talk about your idea or agenda

Activity: This one is very simple, but not easy. When I listen with full attention, I am actually tired at the end of a conversation. Pick one conversation today and put 100% of your attention on the other person. Ask yourself questions like – what is their concern? What are their ideas? How are they feeling? What are their underlying needs? What is their perspective? If necessary ask for clarification so that you can really understand what they are saying. Refrain from giving advice, agreeing, disagreeing or talking about your own ideas.

An extraordinary leader understands and practices the power of full attention listening. People have an innate need to be heard, to contribute their ideas and to grow. One of the best ways of understanding how to help people grow and contribute is to fully listen to their concerns and ideas. Your people are your most valuable asset - you have a wealth of talent at your fingertips!

If your team or leaders are committed to increasing their emotional intelligence and working relationships, please utilize us as a resource – we would be happy to facilitate a day-long or multi-day program to increase your proficiency in EQ.

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