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"Things do not change. We change."

– Henry David Thoreau

*"In the long run, we shape our lives,
and we shape ourselves."*

– Eleanor Roosevelt

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Five Keys to Enhancing Your Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EQ or EI) can be defined as the ability to understand, manage, and effectively express one's own feelings, as well as engage and navigate successfully with those of others. According to Talent Smart, 90% of high performers at the workplace possess high EQ, while 80% of low performers have low EQ. Emotional Intelligence is absolutely essential in the formation, development, maintenance, and enhancement of close personal relationships. Unlike IQ, which does not change significantly over a lifetime, our EQ can evolve and increase with our desire to learn and grow.

Below are five keys that can enhance one's emotional intelligence:

1. The ability to deal with one's own negative emotions

"We become what we think about all day long."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

Perhaps no aspect of EQ is more important than our ability to effectively manage our own negative emotions, so they don't overwhelm us and affect our judgment. In order to change the way we feel about a situation, we must first change the way we think about it. Neuro-psychiatrist Dr. Daniel Amen developed an easy to practice exercise called "ANT Therapy - Killing our Automatic Negative Thoughts," which helps us examine the nature of our negative experiences, and relate to it in such a way as to reduce our negative emotions. Click on this video link (www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SGDnL1j7lw) to see Dr. Amen explain ANT Therapy (from 01:04 to the end of the clip, and at the very beginning of the next sequence).

2. The ability to stay cool under pressure

"Trouble comes from the mouth." - Chinese proverb

Most of us experience some level of stress in life. How we handle stressful situations can make the difference between being assertive versus reactive, and poised versus frazzled. When under pressure, the most important thing to keep in mind is to keep our cool. Here are some quick tips:

A. If you feel angry and upset with someone, before you say something you might later regret, take a deep breath and count slowly to ten. In most circumstances, by the time you reach ten, you would have figured out a better way of communicating the issue, so that you can reduce, instead of complicate the problem. If you're still upset after counting to ten, take a time out if possible, and revisit the issue after you calm down.

B. If you feel nervous and anxious, put cold water on your face and get some fresh air. Cool temperature can help reduce our anxiety level. Avoid caffeinated beverages which can stimulate your nervousness.

C. If you feel fearful, depressed, or discouraged, try intense aerobic exercises. Energize yourself. The way we use our body affects greatly the way we feel. As the saying goes - motion dictates emotion. As you experience the vitality of your body, your confidence will also grow.

D. If you feel overwhelmed, confused, stuck, or uninspired, go outdoors and clear your head. Go into nature and surround yourself in colors of green and blue, which have a calming effect. Find a panoramic view and look out into the distance. Walk. Take deep breaths. Empty your mind. Come back with a fresh perspective.

3. The ability to read social cues

"We don't see things as they are. We see things as we are."

- Anais Nin

People with high EQ are generally more accurate in their ability to perceive and interpret others' emotional, physical, and verbal expressions. They also know how to communicate effectively to clarify intentions. Based on the writing of Ronald Adler and

There's more to this excerpt!

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