



EQ Hack: Eleven Ways To Improve Your Emotional Intelligence

John Asiegbu

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to all who are committed to being the best version of themselves. May your efforts yield results in due time, when and where it matters.

Acknowledgments

First and foremost I want to thank God for grace and inspiration. You put the gift in me and you are helping me share it with the world. You have been my source and I am grateful. Thank you, Father.

To my Wife, Mosopefoluwa Asiegbu, thank you for being my fiesta treasure and best friend. You believe in me more than I believe in myself. I love you, baby boo.

To my brothers Ogechi Asiegbu and Iheanyichukwu Asiegbu, you guys are the best support system anyone can have. Thank you for all that you do. Greatness abounds. To my big brother Paschal Ugenyi, my story is not complete if your name is not mentioned. Thank you for being a father, brother, and friend. To all my family and friends who supported me throughout the period of this project, I am eternally grateful. Thank you.

Legal Disclaimer

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Introduction

I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.

Maya Angelou

Everyone has aspects of their lives that they can improve. Lisa knows that she can become a more effective parent, but with so much turmoil in her family, she barely knows where to begin. Victor wants to be more effective at work, both in terms of his productivity and relationships with others. Claudette feels out of balance, she has a job that pays well, but she's bored with her life.

Several definitions of emotional intelligence (EI) have been proposed by experts, but the original intent was to understand how some people who are so smart in some ways (have book smarts) can be so dumb in other ways (lack street smarts). A person can have book smarts, but not street smarts, because of a lack of emotional awareness and control, or *emotional intelligence*. You can improve your emotional intelligence. The best way to perk up your emotional skills is through practice in the real world. Just like riding a bike, building your muscles in the gym, playing a musical instrument, or doing any other physical activity that requires synchronizing your brain and your body, you can sharpen your ability to manage your emotions and the emotions of others through practice. You can trust that improving your emotional intelligence is essential and make

a commitment to improving your skills in this area. Ideally, then, take the time when you can devote your efforts to becoming more emotionally aware and in control. Through practice and getting feedback on your performance, preferably by an experienced coach, you can adjust your behavior and become more effective in recognizing and managing your own emotions as well as the emotions of others.

You're off to a great start just by reading this book. In this book, I will show you how you can work on your emotions so that you can begin to make a positive difference in your life. Although each of the skills can help you in some way, you may find some skills more important than others, depending on your current needs. Just remember, practice makes better.

Who is this book for?

Whether you are a chief executive officer or director, a manager or entrepreneur, a coach, a church leader, family member or student, interested in people development or becoming the best version of yourself, then this book is for you.

Chapter 1

Get a Firmer Grip of Self

Much debate exists around the definitions of and differences between emotions, feelings, and moods, but even so, you may find the following simple definitions useful:

Feelings: A feeling includes your subjective, or personal experience of an emotion or sensation. “I feel sad,” or “I feel pain,” or in the words of a famous U.S. president, “I feel your pain.” A feeling is a way that you personally experience something. I may think you look happy or indifferent, but you tell me that you feel sad. Who am I to argue? The expression “gut feeling” really drives home the idea that a feeling is subjective — you can’t prove or make obvious why you feel that way.

Moods: A mood is your mental state (or a state of mind) at a specific time. Your mood sums up your thinking and feeling, and it usually lasts longer than a feeling. It can also refer to a group. You may be in an irritable mood, or the country may be depressed (not just the economy, but the mood of the people). You probably know to stay away from certain people when they’re “in one of those moods.”

Emotions: An emotion is an objective way to look at feelings or what psychologists call “affect.” Most psychologists agree on clear definitions of emotions. So, although you may feel “yucky” (a feeling), a psychologist tries to determine whether the emotion is sadness, depression, irritability, or anger.

You can easily remember the difference between emotions and feelings with this idea: Emotions are the objective state of feelings. Emotions are clear, well-defined, and experienced by all people. Psychologists have identified dozens of emotions that they can define. You can also have a blend of emotions. Think of mixing ingredients together in the kitchen — when you combine flour, milk, and eggs, and then heat the mixture, you create a crepe.

Annoyance and irritability can combine to create rage if you don’t check those emotions. Joy and anticipation can lead to optimism. Feelings are the more subjective aspects of emotions. Some people are better at identifying their feelings than others are. You may find feelings less clear than emotions. For example, Stella overhears a co-worker telling someone that Phil just got the job promotion Stella had applied for. She

had been so sure that she was next in line for the job. As soon as she hears the news, Stella has a queasy, upset feeling in her stomach. She says she feels bloated, probably from something she ate. Although she believes she's feeling queasy — at least, that's her subjective experience — an outside observer could probably figure out that she really feels a bit traumatized and depressed.

What about mood? Well, Julia could probably tell you that she's in a bad mood. But she might think that she's in a bad mood because she ate something that upset her stomach. Without feeling, you don't really live. Your ability to feel joy, happiness, excitement, and even pain, hurt, and loss makes you human. In many ways, modern society takes away your ability to feel. You're overly focused on your thinking skills throughout school, work, and your social life. Going through life without feelings is like living in a black and white movie. You experience shades of gray — when life feels bad, your feelings get darker, and when things feel better, they get lighter.

Self-awareness is being able to clearly see all the different elements that make up your personality and to see them without judgment. You pay attention to your feelings, the way your body feels, and you make note of your reactions to the things that have a direct effect on you and the world around you. It is a major path to being emotionally

intelligent. In many ways, this area is the cornerstone of all the other areas. In order to be aware of others' emotions, for example, you need to be aware of your own emotions. You can become more aware of your emotions by using a notebook to record your feelings at various preset intervals. By increasing your emotional vocabulary and using it to describe your full range of feelings throughout various parts of the day, you can figure out how to pay more attention to your emotions. In addition to describing your emotions, pay attention to their intensity. Rate your emotions from 1 to 10. The better you gauge your emotions, the more easily you can monitor and change them.

Simon knows he's angry. In fact, he's so in tune with his emotions that he immediately knows he's a 9 in anger. Knowing he hit 9 triggers all sorts of cues for him. First, he knows that he has to take a time out. When he hits anything over 8, he knows he has to remove himself from the situation, both mentally and physically. Second, it reminds him of what he doesn't like about himself. He dislikes the thought of not being able to control his behavior. And finally, it reminds him of a time when he lost control of his anger and he hurt someone. That's a behavior he never wants to repeat again.

You can also become more self-aware through mindfulness. When you practice mindfulness, your purpose in life becomes being awake and aware of the moment, first

and foremost. Mindfulness is one of the more popular versions of meditation that psychologists, coaches, and trainers use. Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn developed this technique, which centers on being aware of the present moment. Using this method, you leave behind any judging, thinking, or reflecting that may be part of your usual pattern. You think of the moment like a breath of air and focus on one breath after the other, moment by moment. Mindfulness is a skill that you need to practice if you want to get the most out of it. After you master remaining in the here and now, you can expand your awareness to your different senses. Instead of getting involved in sounds, thoughts, emotions, and so on, however, you just observe them passing through you. In your restful, calm state, you simply attend to the passing experiences. You don't judge or deal with any of your thoughts while they pass through your mind. You observe them, like a person outside of yourself, and then focus back to awareness of your breath.

When you're self-aware, you lessen the chances that you'll be completely thrown by the things that happen, any wrong or inappropriate moves that you might make in response to those things happening, and you'll tend to not make the same mistakes over and over again. You'll still do you; you just won't lose control doing it. You tend to trust your instincts more. You learn from the past, and you learn how to separate your gut feelings from raw emotion and how not to come from a place of fear when you react. You're honest about who you are, and you're able to really hear what your loved ones

say to you, even if their words are critical or full of unasked-for- advice. You don't have to keep up a fake persona (which is exhausting,) so that people around will never know the real you. There's much less conflict in a relationship between two self-aware people who don't hide their true selves.

Chapter 2

Express Your Thoughts, Feelings, and Beliefs

When we hear the question, “How are you?” our instinctive response is, “I’m fine” — in spite of the fact that we may not be fine at all. Our society’s custom and practice is to mask how we’re really feeling and respond with the standard, glib answer.

But what if you went against expectations and expressed what you were really feeling? What if you were forthright about your emotions and didn’t hide them? Well, people would be surprised. But we all know that being honest and authentic about how we feel creates powerful personal connections.

Knowing how to express your emotions can often help you in managing those emotions. You can, of course, bottle everything up and not share your real thoughts, feelings, or beliefs with anyone. But, not only is this approach hard to do, it makes for a very lonely life. Nobody really gets to know you, and you don’t get to know others very

well, either. All humans share the desire to have intimate relationships with a few trusted people.

On the other hand, you can choose to blather out your innermost thoughts, feelings, and beliefs to everyone. This approach can also be a mistake. First of all, some people don't really care about your thoughts and feelings. Second, others might be offended by your disclosures or find them rude. Aim for a middle ground, which I like to call assertiveness. Assertiveness is the appropriate sharing of thoughts, feelings, and beliefs. Basically, you need to let the right people, at the right time, know where you stand.

We mostly tend to seek validation from people because we fear disapproval. More like we are designed to skirt the danger that is social scorn. Public disapproval sure has some risks, but we blow them out of proportion. Fear of others' judgments is a basic human adaptation, but it is a feeble and imprecise mechanism. That's why we worry so much about risking the boss's wrath in requesting a due promotion, defying parents by forsaking the family business or pursuing an uncommon career because it is considered as degrading.

We avoid conflicts and are overly conscious of other people's opinions of us, especially people we regard important. We like those who reciprocate the gesture. The

challenge is, we go overboard and freak out if we make an unsuitable remark or otherwise put our status at risk. We worry about others' consent, regardless of our place on the food chain. The antidote is to accept that we can never get the absolute approval of every in the room no matter what we choose to do.

Every social experience is a subtle dance of dominance and submission. Asking someone to clarify a remark, taking your time to answer a question, suggesting a date—or saying no to someone—require an intuitive understanding of the dance moves. Assertiveness is taking the lead. The odds are, even the most forward among us get it wrong on the side of submission. So unassertiveness becomes, for many people, the default. Implicit self-instructions like, "when in doubt, shut up and go along," sometimes keeps you out of harm's way, and possibly kept your ancestors, out of trouble. But you want to flourish, not just survive.

Today, we have an extra the previous generations never had. We can seek more than just reproduction and survival—we now search for meaning, fulfillment, and contentment. In theory, we know we are free agents, but when we tie ourselves in knots about how to tell the in-laws not to visit without prior notice or agonize about

requesting a salary raise, we really struggle. We want to sit tight and don't rock the boat.

Being on the same page at all times with friends and family made sense to our ancestors. Human prehistory likely exposed them to only a couple of hundred people in the course of their era. On a number of levels, everyone's opinion did matter. Timidity didn't make our ancestors happy, but it helped them to avoid fatal conflict, especially when dealing with strangers.

In a world with a lot more less or not at all costly options, we need not be hyper-cautious about every social encounter. But many of us are still bothered and overly developed concern for how we're perceived by everyone around. In fact, most people are pretty preoccupied perturbing about what you think of them. We have less power over others' opinions than we think, so we might as well control how much we allow their opinions to bother us.

Being assertive doesn't mean you must always get your way or arrogantly flout social norms. The golden meaning of assertiveness resides between the extremes of passivity and aggression. Clear-cut communication always beats cowering or commandeering.

Try monitoring the social risks you avoid and pay attention to the times when you act either passively or furiously. Then look for the assertive alternative. Push yourself to act assertively even if it feels strange and uncomfortable at first. For our ancestors, conditions were often either "safe or sorry." Today, you will be sorry if you're too safe.

Assertiveness without Agony

- Identify your tendency to conform to social norms.
- Learn to tolerate the uneasiness of doing what you think is right even if you feel great emotional pressure to conform.
- Be clear about what you prefer.
- Take your time when responding to questions put to you.

- Refrain from the extremes of passivity or aggression; assertiveness is different from aggression in that you can make your preferences clear without demanding that others comply with them.
- Practice making requests and refusals as well as letting others know your positive views and feedback.
- Acknowledge other people's right to refuse your requests.
- Clearly recognizing the kind of feeling you are experiencing.
- Directly expressing those feelings constructively and respectfully.
- Standing firm for your beliefs and rights.
- Empathetically understanding opposite points of view.

Kim has always thought Ken was rude. She doesn't have the heart to tell him. As a first cousin, she doesn't really have the option to completely avoid feels queasy whenever she knows that she has to spend family time with him. Finally, she discovers how to approach him.

"Ken, I know you like to think those name calling jokes are funny. But I have to tell you, I think they're pretty offensive. And you make me feel pretty uncomfortable when you make them," Kim says. She feels relieved about finally being able to express herself in a way that isn't confrontational and that gets the point across. After all, she's entitled

to let him know how she feels. Fortunately, that has the desired impact on Ken, and he stops making the offensive jokes in Kim's presence.

Assertiveness helps you express feelings, beliefs, and thoughts in a positive, non-destructive way. It's the middle ground between passive and aggressive. As you practice finding the middle ground, you uncover compromises that create win-win experiences.

Chapter 3

Uncover Your Inner Passions

Everyone tends to go about their work from day to day doing what they have to do. But how many people are really excited about the work that they do? I encounter many people who feel that they're stuck in a rut at their jobs. But someone didn't magically pluck them up and place them where they are. Usually, by following opportunities or money, people end up doing the kind of work that they do. Few people strive to do the kind of work that really excites them. Most people have a passion for some kind of work, activity, or interest deep inside, but you can't always easily find it.

Passion is what gives your life meaning. You might be passionate about something that you cannot make your livelihood, but that doesn't mean you'll lead an unsatisfactory life. Find work that provides you with time outside of work to pursue what you're passionate about. Maybe one day, you will be able to turn your passion into your job if you steadily work toward it. Do not feel as though you have to measure success in following your passions by whether or not you've made money from it.

Simply spending time on your passion is enough to find fulfillment, as long as you regularly take time for your passions.

Steve is an engineer by training, but he quickly worked his way into a management position at a large company. He's happy with the money he's earning, but he feels bored with his job. He's managing people, and projects, and doing it well but he has little interest in his work. As a teenager, Steve played the keyboard. He loves music and is involved in a music band. His goal is to move out of his management job and find a more creative line of work that he does part-time, even if he makes less money. He wants to devote the rest of his time.

You've likely heard people discuss the importance of passion before, but has anyone directly told you the benefits of finding and following your passion? By living your passion, you'll push yourself to do better. Any job can wear on you, but if you're doing something connected to your passion, it will seem much less like work. Your passion gives you the determination to keep working hard and also makes what you're doing fun since it's something you're invested in. The people you work with will also feed off the positive emotion you exude and be pushed to achieve more. There are a number of ways to discover your passions.

Discovering and engaging in what you love to do have an amazing impact on your entire life. It's like a little perfect raindrop landing on a previously calm pool of water. The moment the drop arrives, beautiful waves of ever-expanding rings flow across the whole surface, spreading out virtually to perpetuity.

Do an Inventory of Your Talents

What are you good at or have a natural aptitude for? Forget about what you're good at but don't really like doing much. I'm talking about the things you have a knack for that delight or happily occupy you. Are there things you like to do that you don't think you're that good at, that other people have complimented you on? Perhaps you even dismissed or rejected their enthusiasm.

Identifying the things you love, which you're good at is a great way to uncover potential passions. Don't be concerned if what you love isn't practical or common, the more uncommon it is - the more excited you should be about it. Beware though that you don't have to be excellent at something for it to qualify as a passion. You don't have to

ever earn an income from it either, although there is likelihood that people may be willing to pay you for it. Talent can simply be a clue. When it comes to your passions, the only thing that matters is that they are fun.

Pay Attention to the Things You Don't Like

Sometimes the things that irritate us when we see them happening may be an indirect pointer to something we are passionate about. If you get upset when people spell words wrongly or write incorrect sentences, it may mean that you are interested in properly written English. Take a closer look; you may be interested in teaching English language or becoming a Writer. You can take a step further to volunteer in a school to teach the English language or start a blog. Over time things will become clearer, and then you can focus on the one that excites you the most or possibly both.

After a lifetime of being an overachiever doing what everyone expected of her as a nurse, Shilla embarked on a Mexican adventure at 33, she wanted to give herself a break and find time to pursue her freshly discovered passions for writing. Most people thought she had gone nuts, her father got the angriest. He told her she was wasting her life and should let him help her set up her own clinic instead.

He pounded the kitchen table with his fist, shouting “Life isn’t supposed to be fun! When are you going to grow up like the rest of us?”

Thankfully she ignored him, as she did everyone else who tried to discourage her.

A few years later, when it became clear that living and writing in Mexico was one of the best career decisions she ever made, her dad sold his business and moved to Hawaii to write his first novel.

Think of What You Loved to Do As a Child

This is perhaps the simplest way to uncover what pursuits hold the potential to light up your days and make you fulfilled in life. Before the grown-ups get to us with their ideas of how life does not give you what desire but what is available, most of us knew exactly who we are and what would make us happiest.

Were you obsessed with discussing football? Maybe you should analyze sports for radio and TV stations or become a football coach.

Did you love painting or drawing? Sign up for an Art course.

Sang at the top of your lungs until people begged you to stop? Think about joining a local choir, record a song and launch on to a career in music.

Notice When You Lose Track of Time or What You Hate to Stop Doing

When he worked at the clinic seeing a long line-up of sore throats and knees, Stanley watches the clock all day until he was finally done. Yet when he ever he had a patient in front of him who is depressed or anxious or newly diagnosed with a condition that would benefit from a lifestyle change, he often lost his usual urgency and spend a lot of time with them. Not shockingly, his true passion is life and health coaching, where he loves spending a great amount of time teaching and encouraging. What would you love to spend hours doing, that you never get enough time to do? That's a passion, and you probably need to do it more than you are.

Chapter 4

Be Acquainted with Your Strengths and Weaknesses

Some people seem to think that they're good at everything. Others constantly underestimate their strengths. The ideal situation, of course, is to accurately know your strengths and weaknesses. Knowing yourself helps you make choices in life. For example, by focusing on your strengths you can get more of what you want out of life. Pursuing the things you're good at and have a passion for, such as science, music, art, writing, public speaking, fashion, or carpentry, enables you to live a richer and fuller life.

By over-focusing on areas of weakness, unless they interfere with your life, you tend to hold yourself back from getting the most out of life. When you have to make decisions, you may get messages that seem to come from your gut. Certain choices feel good, and others may give you a queasy feeling. You may think of these feelings as messages from your heart, as opposed to your head. People are often guided by their emotional knowledge, which they may not be fully aware of.

Lizzy is a computer programmer. She's on her fourth programming job. She lasted less than a year at each of her previous jobs, quitting after she realized it was boring. You can probably predict that Lizzy will soon be ready to give up on her fourth job. Going through the effort of applying for a job, getting trained, and beginning a project is costly for both the applicant and the organization. Lizzy chose programming as an occupation because it came easily to her. But she has no passion for the work. She's happiest when working with people. She's great at building relationships. Perhaps if she took into account her strength and passion for interacting with people, she'd choose more suitable work, such as sales or human resource roles.

To identify your strengths you have to:

- Listen to your own emotions and the small signs from life.
- Pay attention to the areas in which you get a natural feeling that everything is running smoothly and that you have everything under control.
- Be certain of what your emotions are telling you. Sometimes, these emotions are just a result of an accomplished goal or a finished project. In such a scenario, you experience an emotional rush.

- Investigate your emotions further. After you make sure of what you are really feeling, combine your emotions with a rational explanation of the things you are really good at.

Don't Ignore Your Weaknesses

Growing up, we were taught to identify our strengths and weaknesses and to leverage more on our strengths. It is a popular phenomenon that is being used till date, both by individuals and businesses. As you may have noticed, it is an integral part of most business plans today.

However, I notice that for the individual, we were never really taught to pay as much attention to our weaknesses. It is almost like we are supposed to make them disappear like they never existed, when in fact they could negatively affect us and impact on our effectiveness as individuals. Weaknesses come in different forms and shades, from procrastination to being lackadaisical about tasks, to perpetual lateness, or sometimes gluttony.

Reality check, you cannot be all you desire to be in life by leveraging on your strengths alone. Just like your shadow, your weaknesses are always with you, but unlike your shadow they can affect your life for good or bad, depending on how you handle them. Weaknesses cannot be totally eliminated, they can, however, be managed and sometimes even used to one's advantage. Firstly, you must accept that you are not perfect and that you have flaws, this will save you a lot of friendships and opportunities. People don't do well with individuals that want to prove that they the next best thing after sliced bread. We all have weak points.

Next thing is to identify your weaknesses. For some people, this is easy as their weak points may be easily evident to them. Most of the time, it is people around you that will notice your weak points. Whether they will point it out to you or not, that is dependent on your approachability and acceptability. If you are unapproachable, people will keep things away from you. Also, if you the type that is not teachable, people will not deem it necessary to call your weaknesses to your attention. Success doesn't come only from playing to your strengths. It comes from playing to your strengths in the right situations while understanding and managing your weaknesses.

The following indicators will help you to pinpoint your weaknesses:

- You don't like an activity or you don't feel any positive emotions about it.
- You feel a lack of energy or you procrastinate when faced with this area.
- You get things done, but it takes you more time than others need.
- Others do it much better.

Chapter 5

Put Your Legs in Others' Shoes

Empathy is an extremely powerful emotion. Successful politicians, philanthropists, media personalities, community leaders and business experts find expressing empathy as a very effective skill in relating with people. Increasing your ability to empathize can help you get closer to others, win their support when you need it, and defuse potentially high-charged situations. By showing another person that you really understand where he's coming from, you gain a certain level of respect. You demonstrate, for example, that you're not self-centered.

"I don't really like this party," Sandra says to John.

"But you wanted to meet my friends," John quickly answers.

"Yes, but I'm bored," she replies.

"Maybe you should have another drink," John offers.

"No, I don't think so," responds Sandra.

Poor John, he's missing Sandra's real intent. She really wants to say that she'd prefer to go somewhere where they can be alone. Marcel, not reading the cues very

well, thinks that Bridgette doesn't like his friends. If he paid a bit more attention to what she said and how she was saying it, he could have suggested that they spend another half-hour socializing and then go back to her place. Alas, he had no idea of what he was missing.

Whenever production numbers declined in a utility company, one executive routinely snapped pencils in half and shouted at individuals in production meetings. He was angry and frustrated, but he didn't stop to put himself in the shoes of the other team members. With each of his outbursts, the room fell into silence. Employees called the meeting room "the torture chamber" If the utility company executive had shown an appropriate awareness of the others' perspectives, he might have been able to express his frustration constructively. His emotional energy could have sparked a creative brainstorming and troubleshooting session, instead of shutting the whole conversation down.

Without empathy, you expect others to act and perceive as you do. But everyone sees the world in different ways, and people act based on this personal "map" If you assume everyone has the same map as you, their actions might not make sense. But if

you empathize, you can find a road to travel together. Empathizing with others helps you understand what motivates them so that you can better align their goals with organizational goals, provide constructive feedback, and help solve problems. Whenever you deal with another person, ask yourself "What's this person dealing with right now? What do they want or need from this interaction? What are they feeling?" Asking these questions will help you empathize.

You can start being more empathic by paying more attention to other people. Listen carefully when communicating with someone. Listen to both what they tell you and what they want you to hear. By getting better at picking up and paying attention to what people are really trying to say, you become more empathic.

Listen first: A real conversation doesn't consist of just taking turns talking. For empathic listening, you need to hear the other person's side of the story first, and really listen, without interrupting or getting defensive. Focus on the words and body language without judging the person. Every now and then, take the opportunity to summarize what the person thinks, feels, and needs. This will demonstrate you've really heard him.

Stand in their shoes: Create empathy and understanding by trying to stand in someone's shoes for a while. Write down what you know about a person's interests, background, and situation. Write in the first person, as though you are the person. After such an exercise, you'll have more understanding and empathy – and more positive interactions.

Find common ground: When you search for common ground, focus on the characteristics in someone that are the same as yours and that are positive. This helps raise your awareness of what the other person is feeling. You can turn it into a kind of game to always find something you and the other person share. You should be truthful, but agree with what the person says when you can. This will clearly demonstrate your common ground.

Having strong empathy skills can help you sense others' emotions, understand their perspective, and take an interest in them. Empathy gives you the ability to perceive the spoken and unspoken thoughts and feelings of others, appreciate thoughts and emotions of others and the reasons for them, and respect and value people from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

Chapter 6

Take Charge: Managing Others' Emotions

Suzzy works as a manager at a large grocery store in her neighborhood. Kelly walked in to purchase some items, after picking up all he wanted, he approached the payment point. The computer being used for receiving payments just developed a fault; the cashier was trying to figure out what the issue was. Kelly was not having it, he was in a hurry to go watch a football game, he screamed at the cashier. On hearing the loud voice, Suzzy walked towards Kelly, she apologized to him in a calm tone and received his payment herself using her own computer. Kelly was satisfied; he apologized to Suzzy for the earlier tantrum and gave her a tip for handling the issue in such a professional manner.

Managing someone else's emotions requires a certain amount of skill. It involves a systematic transition of taking someone or a group of people from where they are emotionally to where you want them to be. First, you need to know where you want to lead the other person. Do you want to make someone happy, calm, vigilant, or aware, for example? After you decide how you want her to feel, then you have to know how to guide him or her there. Think of the last time that you heard an inspirational speaker or

saw a film that really moved you. That transfer of emotions that you experienced is what you should try to create.

Impactful experiences usually involve a build-up in which the speaker or movie director sets the stage for where he or she wants you to go emotionally. You can create this build-up yourself by setting a goal or letting the person know where you want to go. Then, you can build your case through stories or examples. You need to convey to the other person that you're both on the same side - and it's in both of your best interests to be on the same page. By being consistent in your body posture, your voice, and your message, you can deliver a potent message that can move the other person's emotions closer to where you want them.

Managing Workplace Emotions

Advances in technology have had a phenomenal impact on our world. Ubiquitous high-speed internet and mobile devices have given constant access to vast quantities of information and completely transformed the way individuals or organizations operate. These changes are usually heralded as promoting speed and efficiency. They are designed to make life easier for the average individual. But all too often, it turns out that the net effect is just the opposite. For many people, the working

day now stretches far beyond the mythical "nine to five", and it rarely finishes when they leave the office.

In every workplace, it is a common complaint that laptops, mobile phones, and tablets mean employees are always on call. Evenings at home are interrupted by conference calls with an overseas buyer or a head office director, and the emails never stop. There is no getting away from them, even at weekends or during the supposed escape of a holiday overseas.

No in-depth market research or weighty academic study is needed to show that technology has added to the general level of occupational stress. Timelines are shorter, demands constant, and expectations higher for some form of "instant" action. And, while that may be a recipe for generating bigger corporate profits in the short term, it can create health problems for individual members of staff and, by extension, for the company as a whole. If a manager is not alert to what's happening, the various pressures will cause morale and performance to suffer. That will become evident in an increased number of sick days, missed deadlines and a falling off in levels of commitment and consistent standards of quality.

However, an emotionally intelligent leader will be fully aware of the forces at work. He or she will see it as a responsibility to read the signs and take well-considered pre-emptive measures. These will ensure that the organization benefits from applying the latest technology, but a good boss will also understand that getting staff to work productively is just as much a matter of having reasonable expectations and of engaging the emotions. Being able to do this is a broadly recognized business skill. The emotional management of others, which allows a leader to influence the moods and feelings of colleagues towards a positive outcome, is often what helps the best executives stand out from the crowd.

There can also be a remarkable difference between the culture of companies which accept and promote a belief in emotional awareness and those which do not. It is no coincidence that the former tend to make it on to those closely studied lists of "most admired" organizations or "best companies to work for". The latter may still be achieving impressive financial results, but they are likely to be the companies wrestling with staff retention issues and struggling to build loyalty.

To create a work environment in which emotional intelligence is seen as genuinely important requires no major upheavals. Anyone can develop the requisite

skills and make them part of the daily routine when dealing with colleagues and subordinates. All it takes to get started is to follow these steps:

Create a positive work environment. If you want people to feel good about where they work, make the office a place where they can at least feel comfortable. Give sufficient thought to the layout, decoration, allocation of space and amenities. Make cleanliness a priority and ensure that everything has a "home", so that desks or corridors are not cluttered with leftover copies of last year's financial report or mysterious cardboard boxes. It is amazing how much difference a few well-placed wall hangings or plants can make, especially if they are displayed in natural lighting. You will soon find that if a team is in surroundings it likes, the work will run more smoothly.

Help people deal with problems. All of us have different "coping mechanisms" when things go wrong at work or in our personal lives. An astute leader will learn to detect how each member of a team deals with their emotional highs and lows, and will carefully assess how to handle each situation. With one person, it might be best to suggest a cup of coffee and a quiet chat; for another, the better move might be to offer extra assistance with an ongoing project. The main point is to be flexible, imaginative

and realize that people may work for the same company, but their emotions can differ dramatically.

Resolve issues; don't avoid them. Often, when managers see someone is obviously unhappy, they think the best solution is to turn a blind eye. They tell themselves the problem will sort itself out or, at best, take the "wait and see" approach. But that rarely works. Instead, a leader should be prepared to tackle potentially difficult issues quickly and appropriately. While an unhappy employee may not want to pour their heart out, it will help them to know that the boss has noticed that there is a problem and is willing to help as necessary.

Motivate with more than money. Many companies are conditioned to think that staff is motivated by money alone, but that is not true. The best leaders also realize the importance of job satisfaction, self-esteem, and empowerment. In combination, these create a positive emotional state, with an impact that can easily outweigh any short-term financial rewards.

Encourage alternative perspectives. The ability to change another person's mood is the hallmark of a leader who possesses real emotional intelligence. It might be a question of finding the one positive among many apparent negatives or of pointing out that when one door closes, another opens. Sometimes, just being prepared to listen goes a long way to solving a problem, by allowing someone to find an alternative perspective of their own.

Help others feel positive. For a boss, the simplest way is to let people know you are interested in them as individuals, not just in what they do in the workplace. This will encourage openness, break down unnecessary barriers and gradually engender a stronger sense of team spirit. Leaders skilled in recognizing and managing the emotions of others regularly achieve superior results. They run teams which work as cohesive units, where everyone feels valued and where the end product is more than the sum of the parts. These attributes will not slow the pace of technological change, but they will create a better working environment by showing employees their feelings are recognized and taken into account.

Chapter 7

Scale Up Your Social Consciousness

The concept of social responsibility is defined as our ability to identify with social groups, among friends, at work and in the community, and to cooperate with others in a constructive and contributing manner. This involves acting in a responsible manner, even though we may not benefit personally.

Socially responsible people are seen as possessing “social consciousness” and a basic concern for others, which is manifested by being able to take on group- and community-oriented responsibilities. This component of emotional-social intelligence is associated with doing things for and with others, acting in accordance with our conscience and upholding a set of agreed-upon social principles, rules, and standards common to the group. Being part of these various groups, in which we find ourselves, entails having a sense of interpersonal sensitivity, accepting others and using their talents for the good of the collective and not just for the good of the self. Another name for social responsibility is “moral competence” (at times referred to as “ethical

competence” as well as “professionalism” in the workplace), which in its simplest form is doing the right thing.

Social responsibility is highly correlated with empathy, indicating that they are sharing a very similar conceptual domain. Based on studies that have examined this factor, it was found that social responsibility is related to identifying and understanding feelings in addition to being aware of emotions; and the underlying construct appears to be related to being sensitive, considerate and concerned about others and their feelings as well as demonstrating responsibility.

Social responsibility surfaced as one of the most important factors thought to determine effectiveness at work. Private companies and government organizations consider it to be the most important characteristic of effective and successful employees. Social responsibility is described variously as “respect and consideration for others,” “loyalty toward people and the goals of the organization,” “cooperation with others,” and “responsibility for both the success and failure of the organization.” Individuals who are seriously deficient in this emotional intelligence ability may develop antisocial attitudes, act abusively towards others and take advantage of people.

Social responsibility is one of the highest levels of emotional experience. It demonstrates that you really care about others, especially those less fortunate. Being socially responsible isn't about personal gain - it's about what you can contribute to help other people. Social responsibility has several levels. At the most basic level, you can donate money to charity or a worthy cause. Although you want to make donations as a part of any socially responsible plan, donations are only a first step in the process.

At the next level, you might help a worthy organization collect money. You can solicit from friends, relatives, neighbors, or people you work with. You can get involved in events that raise money - charitable runs, car washes, walkathons, football, or biking events.

The most effective components of social responsibility involve you personally contributing to a worthwhile cause. Think of some ways that you can help others who may need it. You might want to start by identifying the causes that you see as most important to you. You may feel passionate about spousal abuse, homelessness, food shelters, elderly care, hospitalized people, specific diseases, specific causes, and so on. After you identify a cause that you want to support, think of how you can best

contribute. You can serve on a board, be a volunteer worker, or participate in any of a number of ways. Contact the agency or organization associated with that cause and ask how you can help.

Chapter 8

Own Your Impulses

Managing your own emotions, especially impulsiveness, provides another pillar of emotional intelligence, in addition to being aware of your emotions and managing other people's emotions. By becoming more emotionally self-aware, you better prepare yourself for emotional self-management.

Distract Yourself. One of the ways you can manage your impulses is through Distraction. Urges to engage in impulsive behaviors may be very strong and hard to cope with. However, these urges generally pass fairly quickly. Therefore, if you can distract yourself when experiencing an urge, you may be able to sit with an urge until it passes. Fortunately, there are a number of healthy distraction strategies that may be helpful in riding out a strong urge or emotional experience. Involve your senses in grounding techniques, basically a form of distraction, until you can replace impulsive behaviors with healthier behaviors.

When you sense a problem in impulse control coming on, you can most quickly deal with it by distracting yourself. Shift your thinking by counting to ten or focusing on

prepared distracting thoughts. You can train yourself to quickly change your thoughts, or the subject if in a conversation, to something such as the weather, what you ate for breakfast, where you plan to travel next, a project you're working on, or any other event.

Replace Your Impulsive Behavior. Even though impulsive behaviors may lead to long-term problems, at the moment, they are serving a purpose. For example, they may help you cope with emotional pain. Therefore, one way of preventing impulsive behaviors is finding another, healthier behavior that may serve that same purpose. Healthy behaviors that could replace impulse behaviors include:

- Seeking out a friend
- Writing about your emotions
- Get a coach
- Go for therapy

Identify the Negative Consequences. We tend to be driven by the short-term consequences of a behavior. That is, we usually repeat behaviors that work well for us at the moment, regardless of what their long-term negative consequences are. Therefore, it can be useful to increase your awareness of the long-term negative

consequences of a behavior. One way to do this is by identifying the short- and long-term pros and cons of a behavior.

Change the Consequences of a Behavior. People continue to engage in impulsive behaviors because they do something positive at the moment (for example, taking away anxiety or fear). One way to reduce the likelihood of impulsive behavior is to take away its short-term positive effect. As soon as you engage in impulsive behavior, immediately conduct a chain analysis to connect with why you engaged in that behavior in the first place. In a chain analysis, you try to connect all of the links between the behavior and the consequences. Steps may include:

- Identify the behavior to change.
- Identify what happened prior to the behavior you wish to change.
- Evaluate your thoughts and feelings at that time.
- Identify what your thoughts and feelings made you want to do.

Consider the consequences that occurred. This process will put you back in touch with all those emotions that you were trying to get away from in the first place and

force you to face and cope with them in another, healthy way. It can also be very helpful to reward yourself when you don't engage in impulsive behavior.

Impulsive behaviors can be very difficult to cope with; however, it is possible. Identify some impulsive behaviors that you would like to change, and next time you notice an urge to engage in those behaviors coming on, try one of the coping strategies above. It may be difficult at first; however, with every success, it will become easier and easier to find healthy ways to cope.

Another route to managing your impulse is through Analytic. An analytic approach involves stopping and analyzing your thoughts when you feel impulsive. You can ask yourself questions such as;

- Why am I thinking about this stressful problem or event?
- How can thinking about this stressful problem or event help me?
- Could I be thinking about something else?
- What's a better alternative thought?

Also, you can manage your impulse through Coping. A coping strategy involves a number of specific coping thoughts that you practice in advance. These thoughts include statements such as

- I know I can control my thoughts.
- I can just slow down a bit.
- Let me think this through.
- I don't have to rush with a response.
- I can think of alternatives.

Strategies such as the ones in the preceding list can help you successfully deal with stressful problems or events when you practice them in advance. You can't effectively try out these strategies on the fly. With planning and practice, you can go a long way in dealing with impulsive thoughts, words, and actions.

Chapter 9

Stuck in a Rut: Flexibility is Key

Everyone has routines and set ways of doing things. For a society to run efficiently, it needs a certain amount of rules and regulations. However, you can experience problems when you get stuck in a rut and become inflexible to change. By being too rigid you miss out on opportunities, fall behind in learning new techniques and approaches, and tend to deal with personal and work problems in the same, sometimes unproductive ways.

Do you know what it means to be flexible? Believe it or not, this seemingly straightforward question is actually quite difficult to answer. Some people are flexible when it comes to changing dinner plans. Others have great physical flexibility that allows them to perform incredible athletic feats. Others can promptly switch between using different languages. And so on.

One particular kind of flexibility that is of great interest to affective scientists is emotion regulation flexibility. In a nutshell, this flexibility captures people's ability to

use different emotion regulation strategies as the environment changes. This is important because of the continuous need or change of regulation strategies as a function of contextual demands. For example, cognitive reappraisal might be useful in some situations but not in others. Similarly, a mostly maladaptive strategy, such as avoidance, might be helpful sometimes (e.g., declining a lunch invitation from an obnoxious coworker), but not at other times (e.g., procrastinating when we are in charge of finishing a time-sensitive project at work).

Importantly, the flexibility with which we implement emotion regulation strategies might be critical to our mental health. The variability with which people used acceptance and reappraisal across a number of situations was a better predictor of mental health than the simple average extent to which participants implemented these strategies.

Being emotionally intelligent involves knowing when to stick to and when to switch your emotional attachments. When it's time to move on, people high in emotional intelligence can make that adjustment. If you find change difficult, look at the possible consequences. What might happen if you stay with the status quo? On the other hand, where might you be if you go with the flow? Change is part of growth. Throughout life,

new experiences and new opportunities can provide you with personal and professional fulfillment, and you need to be open to these changes. Although you might find it uncomfortable to try new things, most people find the short term pain worth the long-term gain. Part of growing as a person involves learning new skills and approaches and experiencing new relationships and places.

Pete has been at his job for a little over five years. He feels he can run his area by rote. He knows how efficient he can be and what his capacity is. One day, the company decides to update the equipment that Pete uses to a newer, more efficient model. Pete's quite resistant to any change. He likes things the way they are, and he doesn't want to compromise. Unfortunately, Pete's attitude doesn't find much support in today's workplace. You'd have some trouble trying to find a workplace today in which things stay the same. Being an obstacle to change doesn't help your career advance through rewards or promotions, and it can, in some cases, lead to termination.

Chapter 10

Happiness is Free!

Kate always seems to be in a good mood. Her life hasn't been easy. She's seen her share of tragedies. She lost her mother when she was young, and her brother had a handicap that required her to sacrifice activities and time with friends to help out. But Kate treats every day like it's a new opportunity. She seems to just let go of bad feelings — they don't seem to stick with her for very long. Kate is one of those naturals, and negativity slides off her like she's made of Teflon. Somehow, she always manages to find the bright side of any cloud. As a result, people find her quite infectious. Others like being around her because she has a way of making them feel good, too.

How happy are you? No, really, how happy are you, on a scale of 1 to 10? Are you a 5 or a 7? How about a 9? People high in emotional intelligence are happy people. And they're not just happy because good things happen to them. Happiness, real happiness, which feels like a warm, steady glow inside your body, comes from the inside out. A person who manages this emotion well wakes up happy in the morning. And when he encounters challenges throughout the day, he can maintain a certain level of his

happiness. In fact, his happiness buoys his spirit when encountering the trials and tribulations of daily living, and it keeps his mind clear, preventing him from getting caught up in unproductive self-pity or other non-helpful emotions.

Very few people really know how to manage their happiness. People all too often associate happiness with material goods or with getting things from others. The really happy people are givers. The people who spread happiness tend to be happier. Hopefully, while you develop your emotional intelligence, you remember that it costs you nothing to spread happiness, and what you receive in return is priceless.

Happy people come up with more solutions to problems than sad or depressed people do. Although sad people generally pay more attention to details than happy people, happy people accomplish more than sad people. Of course, because happiness and sadness are emotions, they do fluctuate. So, you can control your mood to serve your own purpose. Being emotionally intelligent involves knowing when to be happy, sad, excited, anxious, or even vigilant. People prefer being around other people who are happy. Happy leaders have followers who are very engaged. You can find many advantages to being happy. People will appreciate you more, you can get through tough times easier, you'll feel better, and you'll be more helpful to others. Research even shows that happy people live longer.

Keeping an Open Mind

The old saying about people who have “never met a stranger” describes people who meet the world with a happy temperament and openness to new people or things. Openness is about offering warmth and good humor to those around you. It is about being willing to make the first move socially while recognizing that the rewards for friendliness are not always immediately enjoyed. Every day is a new opportunity to add to your collection of friends. Humans are social creatures and being kind is a lot more likely to help you build strong and healthy relationships, than offering rudeness to those from whom you might someday need support or assistance.

There is no better way to enter a new day than with a smile on our face. Smiles are contagious and if we are able to muster up the energy to offer our own smile to others, even when our inner world is falling apart, we are likely to begin feeling better ourselves when our smile is returned. Seeing someone offer a genuine smile is emotionally and mentally healing; actually, imagining being smiled at by someone you love is just as powerfully healing. We must wake up and make the conscious choice to smile. If we wake up on the wrong side of the bed, we must find positive things to focus to elevate our mood. The intention to be happy, smile and laugh make us more

productive. Neuroscience has proven that laughter is truly the best medicine. If we are down, being able to see the humor and laugh a little serves to cause immediately decrease stress and increase motivation.

There's Power in Gratitude

Life is extremely complex because we have to balance so many movement elements each day. To stay motivated and inspired, it is helpful to appreciate the simple, easy-to-come-by pleasures life has to offer. To stay productive, we must take time to appreciate hugs from our loved ones, a pat on the back from our bosses or peers, the compliments we get during the day, finding a great parking space in the morning, and the great cup of coffee we had upon waking up. When we are thankful for all that life has to offer, life and career are more fulfilling and easier to enjoy. You should bring a sense of gratitude to your life. Whatever you have in life and wherever you are, you can find some reason to be grateful. Acknowledging your own good fortune – no matter how little can actually enhance your overall wellbeing. Researchers have found that being truly grateful for what you have can have important physical benefits – we sleep better and enjoy better relationships. Not only that, but researchers have also found that your level of gratitude is inversely proportional to your level of depressed feelings. The more

grateful you are in life, the better the chances are that you will actually enjoy what you have!

Never Miss an Opportunity to Show Generosity

Nothing will raise our spirits more quickly than being generous and kind towards others. It's a wonderful experience to see the results of our contributions. It motivates us and makes us desire to be even more productive. We must make it a significant part of our personality to find the holes where we can help, give, or support those in our lives. When we do positive things for others, not only do we become more likable and successful, but we feel good about who we are. We feel a sense of satisfaction when engaged in helping, serving, guiding or loving others. Offering compassion to others is another charitable act that positively influences the giver. When we accept others' shortcomings or cut others slack for their wrongs or missteps, we are valuing humanity over someone's personal flaw. Most of us truly are doing the best we can at any given moment – sure, some days our “best” is far from “enough,” and there are days when we know that we are guilty of giving less where we probably should have given more. No one is perfect or on top of their game every day. If you accept the shortfall of others, the windfall for you is a happier life. For those of us who might imagine that

we always give our best prove this to yourself by giving others a little compassion when they don't measure up to your standards.

The greatest success we achieve in life will not be money, it will be happiness. When we master our own happiness, we have a natural and positive impact on all of those we interact with. Wherever we go, we have the power to make the environment more successful. Remember, happiness is free – don't put a price on it. When you give it, you get it back in folds.

Chapter 11

The Magic of Sleep

Sleep is an important yet underappreciated part of our lives. Without a good night's sleep, we can often suffer different physical and mental issues, such as fatigue, stress, and distracted thinking. Over time, these can build up and contribute to bigger problems such as depression and mood disorders. Getting your sleep right can make a big and noticeable difference in your life. If you are currently experiencing difficulties with your sleep patterns, here are the key principles behind a good night's sleep. Know if you're an early bird or night owl.

Humans often fall into two main categories when it comes to sleep. These are based on differences in our circadian rhythms or sleeping patterns. An early bird prefers to go to bed earlier and wake up earlier, while a night owl prefers to stay up later and wake up later. This is because early birds tend to feel most energized in the morning and night owls tend to feel most energized in the evening and night. Understanding your sleeping pattern is important in creating your sleep schedule to meet your needs. In general, getting 7-10 hours sleep is usually the range most people

need, but when we should get this sleep can depend on whether you're more of an "early bird" or "night owl." Stay consistent with your sleep schedule.

How the Amygdala functions

I don't need to tell you that lack of sleep makes you testy, irritable, and short-tempered. We all know, through experience, how sleep deprivation puts us on a short fuse. Still, as with the cognitive impacts of sleep deprivation, most people don't realize how deeply sleep deprivation, especially when chronic, hurts their emotional well-being, affecting their mental health, their outlook and performance, and their relationships.

Sleep deprivation makes you more emotionally reactive. Whether snapping at a co-worker, getting into a fight with your partner, or losing your cool with your kids, not getting enough sleep increases the likelihood that your emotional responses will be more impulsive and intense. None of these situations are fun or contribute to healthier, happier relationships. But emotional reactivity goes beyond being cranky. That same trigger that makes us irritable with the people around us can be exhausting and

draining, leaving us feeling at the mercy of our emotions and critical of ourselves for not being more adept at managing them.

Even a single night of sleep deprivation sets us up to react more strongly and impulsively to negative or unpleasant situations. And when operating with chronic sleep debt, as so many busy adults do, you contend with this heightened emotional reactivity on a daily basis. We're still learning about the ways that sleep and emotion are connected. But we do know some pretty interesting things about how sleep deprivation affects the complex emotional centers of the brain, making us more likely to overreact or lash out in anger and frustration.

Sleep deprivation increases activity in the amygdala—the emotional rapid-response center of the brain. This part of the brain controls many of our immediate emotional reactions. When short on sleep, the amygdala goes into overdrive, causing us to be more intensely reactive to situations. Interestingly, it's not only our negative emotions, like anger and fear that get a heightened response. Studies show that, when sleep deprived, we're more reactive across the whole spectrum of emotions, positive and negative.

At the same time that the amygdala is fired up, lack of sleep also hampers the communication between the amygdala and the prefrontal cortex, another area of the brain involved in emotional regulation. This part of the brain handles a lot of complex tasks, and one of them is to put the brakes on impulsiveness. The prefrontal cortex is like a traffic cop for emotions: It sees an impulsive reaction and says, “Whoa, slow down, do you really need to be going so fast?” When you don’t get enough sleep, this part of your brain can’t do its job as well, and you become more impulsive and less thoughtful in your emotional responses.

We all go through emotionally-charged experiences every day and throughout our lives. Those experiences get stored in the brain as memories—and sleep plays an important role in processing those memories. Sleep is important in processing painful and difficult memories. This process helps ease the emotional sting these memories can have. It also helps your emotional mind return to a less-charged, more neutral state. This nightly emotional reset is important for your ongoing mental health.

Sleep Versus Negativity

Knowing how our brain's emotional centers are affected by lack of sleep, it's not difficult to imagine how sleep deprivation can contribute to a more negative mindset. Sleeping poorly makes us focus more on the negative, and increases what psychologists call repetitive negative thinking. That's when your mind is stuck in a negative place, going over the same frustrating thoughts again and again. Repetitive negative thoughts are intrusive, difficult to control, and can have a major impact on how you feel and function. They're also linked to the development of mood disorders depression and anxiety.

Sleep-deprived people have more repetitive negative thoughts and are less able to control their minds' fixation on the negative than their better-rested counterparts. The greater the sleep deprivation, the more difficult it was for people to turn their minds away from ruminating on negative thoughts, feelings, and experiences. No one would ever choose to have a mind that's trapped in a cycle of negative thinking. Unfortunately, when you're chronically short on sleep, that's what happens—and it can be a difficult cycle to break. You worry more about the future. Insufficient sleep exacerbates emotional reactivity and fearful responses and creates an often-intractable negative outlook. It also makes us worry more. When we're sleep deprived, we worry

more about the future—especially if we’re prone to worry in general. If you tend to worry, getting plenty of rest is especially critical for maintaining a healthy emotional balance and avoiding the development of chronic anxiety.

Sleep and Empathy

Sleep deprivation also diminishes our capacity for empathy, an emotional skill critical to healthy relationships. Empathy is the ability to understand another person’s feelings, thoughts, and experiences. When sleep deprived, we’re less able to demonstrate empathy for others. That means we’re less able to see things from another person’s point of view and less able to recognize and imagine their feelings. This aligns with other research showing that sleep deprivation impairs our ability to accurately recognize emotions in other people.

These skills of self-awareness, appreciation for others, and empathy are essential parts of our emotional intelligence—and sleep deprivation impairs them, often weakening our bonds of trust and communication in the relationships that are most important to us. Studies show couples that are sleep deprived fight more and resolve conflicts less successfully than well-rested partners. And it only takes one person in a couple to be short on sleep to increase conflicts.

Women experience more anger, more hostility, and more depression first thing in the morning than men do. We know that overall, women's brains expend more energy than men's do. Most scientists chalk this up to women's ability to multitask. That additional energy expenditure means women need more sleep, to restore full, healthy function to their brains. When they don't get the full amount of restorative sleep they need, emotional difficulties can arise. They arise for men, too—but women's may occur more quickly or more often, because of their particular sleep needs.

Sleep's relationship with our emotional lives is another important example of why it is a necessity, not a luxury. Your mental and emotional health—and your relationships with others—depend on getting plenty of high-quality rest. Not having enough sleep doesn't only affect our individual emotional well-being. It also undermines healthy, satisfying relationships. It can sink a healthy sex life. It also can interfere with other forms of intimacy between partners. You feel less connected to—and thankful for—your partner. Of course, being emotionally more reactive and focused on the negative isn't likely to improve anyone's relationship. But sleep deprivation also directly affects how we perceive and treat our partners.

Give Your Sleep the Premium It Deserves

One of the things you can do in developing healthy sleep patterns is to keep the same schedule every day. You should be going to sleep and waking up at relatively the same time every day. This is important to recognize because many people will spend a night or two up really late, and then try to overcompensate by sleeping a lot the next day (usually on the weekends). This inconsistency can really throw off your sleeping pattern and hurt you from developing a steady rhythm to your sleeping pattern. Try your best to follow the same sleep routine every day.

Be physically active during the day. Often a good night's sleep follows a good day's work. The more energy we exert while we are awake, the easier it is to fall asleep once the day comes to an end. If you spend your day being lazy, not physically active, or taking a lot of naps, that is going to make it more difficult to fall asleep when it's actually time to get some rest. All that energy you don't use throughout the day can make you very anxious and fidgety. Your body needs to engage in activity to release energy. Our lives are a cycle of "work" and "rest," so you need to get the "work" part done if you want to get the "rest" part done.

Conclusion

Overall, the more tools you have available to you when you need them, the more emotionally intelligent you're going to be. It's important not to depend on any single tool for all of your emotional support. If you're just getting started, try choosing just one of these tools to focus on for the next week. Write down these easy and simple actions you can take that embody this tool. And when you find yourself needing an emotional boost, actually practice putting the tool into action. Once you build one new tool in your life, move on to another one. Keep building and practicing. Give yourself as many options as possible when it comes to managing your emotions in positive and constructive ways. As with everything in life, emotional intelligence takes time and practice.

I've been practicing these tools for years now, and they have proved effective. I'm not there yet, but it has been more of a positive outcome following these simple steps. The important thing is to be patient with yourself as you build your emotional intelligence toolkit. Keep the long-term in mind each day. Pay attention to small progress. And one day you'll look back and be surprised at your progress.

About the Author



John Asiegbu is recognized as a foremost Emotional Mastery Coach, working with individuals and organizations to maximize and achieve their goals by leveraging on the power of emotional intelligence. He graduated as a Real Estate Professional at the Federal University of Technology Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria. John is also an alumnus of the Eastern Mediterranean University, Cyprus where he graduated with an MBA in Organizational Behavior, with a thesis on Analysis of the Components of Emotional Intelligence. A PMI and CompTIA certified Project Management Professional, with a passion for project leadership, entrepreneurship and talent management.

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