

Emotional Intelligence

Raise your EQ, Emotional Quotient.

In educational psychology, there is IQ, *Intellectual Quotient*, which measures how quickly you can absorb and retain information in order to solve problems. This is a very logical, left brain process. And then, you have the other half of your brain which provides you with your EQ, *Emotional Quotient*. EQ is a very non-logical brain process in which the brain thinks in pictures, textures, and smells. When someone is having a flashback, this is the side of the brain that is activated. When the right brain sees a traumatic “picture,” it reacts as if what it is seeing is true and is happening *right now*. *And, you will experience all the anger, fear and terror that you felt when it first happened.*

You can also visualize very pleasant “pictures” such as lying on the beach, listening to the waves and watching the clouds drift by. The traumatic picture creates fear, anxiety, and stress while the pleasant picture creates relaxation, peace, and a sense of well-being.

The right brain is used in creative projects where you can visualize a solution to a situation and then work out the solution using the left brain to implement it.

The right side and the left side of the brain work very differently. To change the information on the left, logical side of the brain, requires new information. To change the pictures on the right side of the brain requires an infusion of new images and pictures.

In good mental, health both sides of the brain need to be activated and fully functional. Public education focuses on the left-brain processes of reading, writing, and mathematics. Schools seldom offer right brain EQ training.

What is the goal of EQ, Emotional Quotient training?

One of the purposes of EQ is to teach you how to bear the trials, vicissitudes, and chaos of life with a calm mind, thereby robbing misfortune of its strength and burden. So, what preparation does it take to meet the challenges that come upon us?

Having good mental health has often been given as the quick answer. In fact, we are told over and over how important having good mental health is to our well-being. If someone asked you what good mental health consists of, could you tell them? If you could not describe good mental health to someone, how do you know that you have good mental health yourself? How can you make sure that your children and the ones you love have good mental health?

Good mental health is very simple and, at the same time, very difficult to incorporate into your life. As we grew up, we were given many messages that now, as adults, conflict with our good mental health. Below is listed the three elements that produces good mental health.

The Foundation of Good Mental Health K.A.E.

Good Mental Health can be defined as:

K = **Knowing** what you feel when you feel it.

A = **Accepting** what you feel when you feel it.

E = **Expressing** what you feel in acceptable ways.

In counseling, for the therapeutic process to work, a therapist must address at least one of the above three areas. Every therapeutic approach, whether it be from a Freudian, Skinnerian, Gestalt, Rational Emotive, Transactional Analysis or some other therapy approach, must address one or a combination of these three areas. "Therapy" that does not include at least one of the above three, could arguably be called quackery.

Knowing what you feel is essential for mental health because if you don't know what you feel when you feel it, you cannot make appropriate choices from the behaviors that are available to you. "The human body sends 11 million bits per second to the **brain** for processing, yet the conscious mind seems to be able to **process** only 50 bits per second." BK101 Human Brain – Neuroscience

You can only make decisions based on what you are aware of. Your brain receives 11,000,000 bits of information per second, but you can only process 50 bits per second! This is, in part, due to of the training we have received about our feelings. As a result, many people can only process 10 to 15 bits per second. With training, you can increase the amount of data that you consciously process.

The less you are aware of your feelings, the worse decisions you will make about how to respond. If your foot goes to sleep, but you are not aware of it, and you

suddenly stand up, you could stumble or fall. If, on the other hand, you are aware of your foot going to sleep before you stand up, you can move around, stretch your leg and thus prevent the embarrassment of stumbling or falling.

Delayed Awareness is just a variation of not being aware. Have you ever had an exchange with someone, walked away, and five minutes later you suddenly realized, “That person just put me down!” There it is, five minutes later, and the person is gone. It’s too late to respond. Or have you ever laid in bed six hours later thinking, “I should have said _____ when he said _____.”

This delayed awareness may last for minutes, months or even years, preventing you from changing yourself and your responses to others, creating the relationships you want. Eventually, delayed awareness will turn into unawareness. If you are not aware of the lump in your breast or the opportunity for advancement in your field, then you have missed the opportunity that could change your life forever. “If only I had known. . . .”

Freud focused much of his attention on working with the **K** portion of mental health. To him, the area of insight and the uncovering of the unconscious were what he believed produced change. “And what did your mother do to you that made you this way?” Freud attempted to help his clients know what they felt by examining their past experiences. He believed that if someone “knew” then they could change their behavior.

Later therapists, such as Fritz Perls, tried to bring a client’s feelings to awareness by having him emphasize his behaviors or words. “I see you are kicking your foot. Kick it harder. What are you feeling? Who would you like to kick?” Other therapists simply asked questions like “What are you feeling now?” “If those tears could talk, what would they say?” Since it is only as you become aware of (know) what you feel, that you will know what you want, each of these therapeutic approaches sought to bring subconscious and unconscious feelings to awareness.

Traps That Bring You to Unawareness. Being defensive and blaming others are ways many people keep themselves from knowing what they are feeling. If it is someone else’s fault, then a person is not required to examine his own feelings and he gets to be a victim. Unawareness can lead to passive-aggressive behaviors as a way of expressing the anger that the client is not aware of. “It wasn’t anything that I did that got me fired, the boss just had it in for me.”

You may have beliefs that are contradictory. If you have contradictory beliefs, you will have contradictory feelings. You can believe that you are smart and that you are stupid at the same time. Contradictory beliefs will cause you to vacillate between very different feelings—and you will end up feeling confused and crazy. The world is full of examples of the contradictory feelings we have all experienced at times. Remember the old nursery rhyme:

“Rock-a-bye Baby on the tree top;
When the wind blows, the cradle will rock;
When the bow breaks, the cradle will **fall**;
And **down will come Baby, cradle and all.**” (Emphasis supplied)

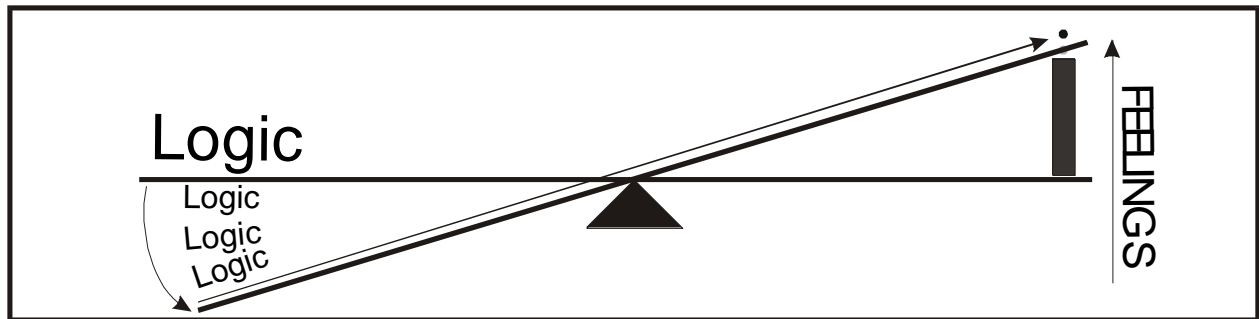
This sounds like it was written by a very angry parent.

When people in therapy say, “I think I’m going crazy,” what I know is that if they have enough awareness to recognize that they feel like that, they are probably not “crazy.” Their feelings are just very contradictory and it makes them feel “crazy.”

I often tell them, “Congratulations! You’re not crazy. Crazy people don’t usually feel crazy, they believe everybody else is crazy.” “Crazy” is a non-psychological term. Schizophrenia is what most people think about when they hear the word crazy. This is where someone has separated from reality. So, *feeling* crazy is different from *being* crazy. Feeling crazy is the result of having contradictory beliefs that you quickly switch back and forth between or believe in simultaneously.

The legal system has divided up insanity into two parts: Temporary Insanity and Insanity. Temporary Insanity is when one emotion becomes so intense that it blocks out the awareness of other feelings. Someone who commits physical abuse on a child while they are angry or does domestic violence against their mate, are often cited as examples of someone who is experiencing temporary insanity.

As the feelings go up, logic goes down because the person has less overall awareness from which to make logical decisions. The Department of Justice says that 80% of all murders are committed by people who know and/or care about the person they just killed!



On the other hand, insanity is often seen as a slow, gradual process in which an individual loses more and more of their awareness of the reality around them until they become schizophrenic. Schizophrenia comes from two Greek words meaning “separated from reality”.

So, when working on your **K** of mental health, be aware that there are many ways to help yourself become aware of what you are feeling.

When you want to help yourself know what you feel, look at:

- 1) The contradictory beliefs you may have,
- 2) The victim language you may use, such as “I can’t” “I have to” “I should” “I must. . . .” “You *make me* angry”, “You hurt my feelings.”
- 3) Cover-up phrases or words such as:
 - a) “I’m just upset,” is really “I’m angry.”
 - b) “I’m jealous” is really “I’m insecure and afraid of losing you.”
- 4) The connection between guilt and punishment. Whenever you feel guilty, you will set yourself up to be punished.
- 5) Anger and depression. Depression is anger turned inward 87% of the time.
- 6) PTSD and Panic Disorder are often the result of flashbacks/pictures in the right brain. The person is usually not aware of the “pictures.”

Therapeutic Techniques to Help You to Become More Aware. Start with using awareness and mindfulness techniques. These include constructive ways of venting your feelings and using visualization techniques to become more aware. Be sure to use paraphrasing, “I am” messages and empathetic responses with your own and other feelings. Use of these techniques can help you to become more aware of your feelings.

Good mental and emotional health **starts** with knowing what you feel when you feel it, but **must** be followed by:

Accepting your feelings. If you cannot or will not accept what you feel, you will start denying your feelings and end up repressing them. Then you will slide back to having problems with the **K** area because repression and denial block awareness of feelings.

It is important to point out that simply accepting your feelings does not mean that you *approve* of how you feel. You can hate and love a person at the same time. Both feelings are okay, not right or wrong, just okay.

Acceptance does not mean approval.

Your job, as a dynamic human being, is to change your judgments about your feelings into a more realistic and helpful thought process. Try saying, "*Isn't it interesting* that I can love and hate a person at the same time? This repetitive phrase will help to "Take the judgments off of yourself."

Whether you are judging others or judging yourself, remember "Judge not that ye be not judged, for in judging another you condemn yourself." It is important to point out that when you are judging another, you will end up feeling judged by others, because you assume others are doing what you are doing!

A very sneaky way in which people judge others is by "forgiving them." How can you "forgive" someone unless you first judged them as having done something wrong? Rather than trying to "forgive", a better way is to learn how to accept others as imperfect human beings that did what they did because of their own problems, bad relationships and/or bad parenting. If they have a problem, let it be their problem—no judgments. Don't make someone else's bad behavior your problem.

You probably learned to judge yourself and others from your judgmental parents. But, if you really want to change, it really does not matter where the non-acceptance started. You just need to acknowledge how judging is affecting your life. Whether your judgements are focused on behaviors or feelings, it makes little difference. Judging is destructive to the one being judged and is destructive to the one making the judgment.

Acceptance doesn't mean approval. Some feelings are harder to accept than others. "I love my baby, but sometimes after doing the one o'clock, two o'clock, three o'clock rock, I want to hurt him. Feeling like that is not acceptable to me. I love my baby and would never hurt him."

I love and I hate. I'm angry with you, and I care about you at the same time. We used to believe that people could only feel one feeling at a time. Not true. Recent research using brain imaging has proven that people have the capacity for several very different feelings simultaneously. When you experience an array of different feelings, embrace them all. You are all of them and they are all very precious.

When working with children, modeling an array of feelings by being open and self-revealing will help them to feel that they are not alone. They will think that if you, as an all-knowing parent, can feel that way, it must be okay for them to have those same feelings. Then, with true empathy, you can say, "I can understand how you must feel, for I have felt similarly." "When my parents would fight, I also felt like it was my fault." "If that had happened to me, I would have been angry too."

The famous therapist, Carl Rogers used the term "unconditional regard"—not reacting in a negative way. He felt that this was a way of getting a client to accept his feelings. "If my therapist can accept me (and my feelings, without judging them) then maybe my feelings are okay after all and it won't be wrong for me to accept them." These techniques are important to helping your children to accept their feelings.

Knowing what you feel and being able to *accept* what you feel brings you two-thirds of the way to achieving and maintaining good Mental Health. Without this next final section, you cannot maintain good mental health. The third necessary component of mental health is:

Express your feelings in acceptable ways. Probably, all therapists work in the areas of **K** and **A** in some combination, but most graduate schools today do not teach the communication skills of expressing feelings in acceptable ways.

This has not always been true. In the 1960's and 1970's when therapeutic techniques of Carl Rogers, Albert Ellis and Gestalt therapy were popular, the therapeutic techniques of Haley, Augsburger and Satir were used as an adjunct and were taught quite extensively.

Today, it seems we have forgotten the affective and communicative approaches and have come full-circle back to the old style cognitive-behavioral techniques. There is nothing wrong with the cognitive-behavioral approaches to therapy.

That is certainly an important part of what I do as a therapist, but I fear that we, as therapists, are ignoring an important part of the overall therapeutic process.

In the 1960's and 1970's, the public was offered numerous courses in communication skills which taught people paraphrasing, problem-solving, assertiveness and how to express feelings in constructive "win-win" ways such as Pairing, Creative Aggression, Parent Effectiveness Training, PET, etc. Today however, we seldom hear about anyone teaching these skills. It is my belief that in order to offer well-rounded and successful therapy, all three components must be included. Clients need access to all three to help them to achieve and to maintain lasting change: **Knowing** what they feel when they feel it, the ability to **Accept** what they feel, and acceptable ways of **Expressing** those feelings.

How We Create Bad Mental Health: Bad mental health is created by doing just the opposite of how we created good mental health. If we do not have an acceptable way of expressing our feelings, people will reject us and choose not to be around us because we have offended them with our harsh, non-caring putdowns and angry outbursts.

Bad mental health starts with not having acceptable ways of expressing feelings. When your child says, "I hate you." How do you respond? "Don't sass me." Slap! Then we compound the problem by saying, "Don't cry, do you want to be a sissy?" Or, "Nice girls don't get angry. You want your face to freeze that way?" We teach children how **not** to express their feelings, but we do not teach them acceptable ways *to* express their feelings. When your child is angry at you, what is an acceptable way for them to express that anger at you? Is it acceptable for your children, from time to time, to feel angry at you? Do not be surprised that your children will learn how to express their anger in the same manner that you express your anger!

When a child's feelings are not acceptable to those around him (those with all the power and "wisdom") their feelings very quickly become unacceptable to them. With no acceptable way of expressing feelings, the only option for the child is to repress their feelings. After repressing their feelings for a period of time, the child will lose awareness of what they are feeling, when they feel it. This is where delayed awareness begins. As a result, the child is no longer able to make good decisions because the child is not aware of their feelings and finds it impossible to set boundaries. These children are then easy prey to be verbally, physically, and sexually bullied. Your job, if you care to accept it, is to reverse this early programming. So, let's get started.

Focus on What You Can Control:

“This is wholly up to you—separate the things that lie within your power from those that do not---make the best use of what is in your power and take the rest as it happens.” Epictetus. You have no power over what your wife/husband does. You have no power over what your parents did or will do. You have no control over what your boss does. And, you have no power over what your children do! Sure, you can lock them in their bedroom or even tie them to their crib, but that does not mean you have power over them. All that means is that you are bigger and stronger! Once they become bigger and stronger than you, you lose the control. They are gone.

The root cause of emotional suffering is found in what you have no control over. Handing power to things you have no direct control over, causes you emotional suffering. What is it then, that you have control over? Only a few things—

Three Levels of Influence That You Have

High influence: things you have total control over include your judgments and actions, “Men are disturbed not by things, but by the view they take of them.” Epictetus. Your mind is the only thing you have total control over! “You have power over your mind – not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength.” Marcus Aurelius. “You feel the way you do right now because of the thoughts you are thinking at this moment.” David Burns, Psychiatrist.

Partial influence: things you have partial influence over include your health, wealth, relationships, and the outcomes of your behaviors. Your choice of lifestyle will often determine how long you will live. Burning the “candle at both ends” most certainly will influence how long the candle last. You do not react to events, people, or words. You react to what they mean to you. And, you are the one who is choosing the meanings

No influence: you certainly have no influence over the weather, your genealogy, “acts of God” and most external circumstances. “If you are pained by external things, **it is not they that disturb you**, but your own judgment of them. And **it is your power to wipe out that judgment now.**” Marcus Aurelius, Emperor. You know anyone who gets angry when that nut and bolt don’t go back together? Or, when the door sticks? Or, when people do not drive on the freeway the way you think they should drive?

**You feel the way you do right now
because of the thoughts you are thinking
at this moment. David Burns MD**

So, what choices do you have? You can accept the world as it is, change what you can, and accept what you cannot change. Or, you can stay in a constant

state of anger, anxiety, and powerlessness. Recognizing that you do not have power over everything in your life can set you free to watch with wonder and amazement how the world continues to survive when you no longer try to control it. That is when you will find happiness and peace of mind.

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