



## White Paper “Emotional Intelligence and Common Sense”

Wendy Sellers, MHA, MHR  
The HR Lady®

Did you know there’s a new name for common sense? I now call it “Emotional Intelligence,” often abbreviated either E.I or E.Q. It’s important to your paycheck, too. Those high in Emotional Intelligence earn an average of \$29,000 per year more than those who lack it. Who knew that old-fashioned common sense could be good for your wallet?

The problem is that what is “common sense” for one group of people (such as a generation) doesn’t always get passed along to the next group. Why? Because osmosis doesn’t work for humans, at least not through occasional or inconsistent interactions. Here’s the point: **common sense isn’t really a sense at all.** It’s a set of skills. Skills are expertise’s or talents that we learn so well that they become automatic. Walking, typing and driving a car are skills that have to be learned. Once we have learned and practiced those skills, they become second nature, or just *common sense* (aka: a specific set of skills learned by a common group of people). Passing along common sets of skills and expected behaviors requires dedication by groups of skilled people to take the time to train and coach less skilled people.

We all recognize this truth when it comes to activities that have obvious consequences. For example, if you don’t learn to drive well (skill), you could hurt someone or worse (consequence). However, many of us don’t realize that emotional and relational skills also must be learned. Emotional Intelligence skills aren’t just about outward activity; they are also about internal thought patterns and sensory focus.

Recent neuroscience tells us that certain Emotional Intelligence skills, especially the relational ones, *must* be learned through **face-to-face** interaction. They can’t be learned from a book, a video, or even online video conferencing (the video refresh ratio is much slower than the human brain). These people skills used to be passed naturally and organically from one generation to the next. However, the pace of our workplace and everyday world plus the use of artificial technology has increased so greatly that this “skill transfer” is no longer happening consistently. Those internal thought patterns that some generations call “common sense” have deteriorated with each generation.

**How much Emotional Intelligence, or relational common sense, is there in your organization?** Do your employees have trouble getting along with each other, management or your customers? Let’s talk.