**Develop Your Emotional Intelligence Action Plan**:

1. Pick an EQ skill to work on.

2. Pick three strategies to begin using for our chosen skill.

3. Choose an EQ mentor – someone who you feel excels in your chosen EQ skill and ask them if they would be willing to give you feedback and guidance. Set up regular meeting times.

4. Keep the following in mind as you apply your chosen strategies:

* Expect success, not perfection.
* Practice, practice, practice. Sheer quantity of practice is the real secret to increasing your EQ skills.
* Be patient. It takes time to realize lasting change.

5. Measure your progress by retaking a self-assessment.

**Strategies for Developing Your Emotional Intelligence Skills**

**Self-awareness Strategies**

**1. Quit treating your feelings as good or bad.** Judging your emotions prevents you from understanding them and keeps you from being able to see the cause of the original feeling. Understand, don’t judge.

**2. Observe the ripple effect from your emotions.** Recognize that when you act out of your emotions, the effects can be long-term.

**3. Lean into your discomfort.**  We tend to try to ignore or minimize unpleasant emotions, but this prevents us from understanding these emotions.

**4. Feel your emotions physically.** Learn to spot the physical changes that come with your different emotions, and you’ll be better able to understand your feelings.

**5. Know who and what pushes your buttons.** This needs to be specific – identify the exact people, situations and environments that trigger your emotions, and make a list. This will allow you to determine the source of your reactions.

**6. Watch yourself like a hawk.** Develop a more objective understanding of your behavior by taking notice of your emotions and behaviors as situations unfold.

**7. Keep a journal about your emotions**. Because emotions are intangible, it’s helpful to write things down in order to understand them better, identify patterns, and track progress.

**8. Don’t be fooled by a bad mood.** A bad mood can overshadow all your emotions, so you need to recognize when it’s the emotional state that’s affecting you rather than an individual emotion, and go through the same process to identify what caused the mood.

**9. Don’t be fooled by a good mood, either.** You should also seed to understand why your good moods happen, both for the sake of understanding your emotions better and to avoid harm that can come from a good mood.

**10. Stop and ask yourself why you do the things you do.** Your emotions will alert you to things you would never know otherwise.

**11. Visit your values.** Contrasting your values with the way your emotions compel you to act is a helpful exercise to increase your self-awareness.

**12. Check yourself.** Observe your facial expressions, body language, clothes, etc.

**13. Spot your emotions in books, movies and music**. Art that you identify with can offer further clues about your emotions. Consider which of these things grabs your attention, and ask yourself why.

**14. Seek feedback.** Because your understanding of your emotions is limited by your one perspective, getting feedback from others is invaluable.

**15. Get to know yourself under stress.** Learn to recognize your personal physiological and emotional first signs of stress, and take the time to rest or recharge before that stress piles up.

**Self-management Strategies**

**1. Breathe right.** Oxygen first goes to your body’s vital functions, then to complex functions that help you stay calm. Learning correct breathing technique and consciously focusing on it when you’re stressed is simple and often-repeated advice, but it is crucial.

**2. Create an emotion vs. reason list.** Make a habit of creating a list whenever your emotions and reasoning are in conflict, with your emotions on one side and rational reasons on the other. Use the list to identify which emotions aren’t valid considerations, and which ones offer important cues that your reason may have missed.

**3. Make your goals public**. By doing this, you will harness the motivation of the expectations of others. Share the right goals with the right people who will keep you accountable.

**4. Count to ten**. Helps to re-engage your rational mind when necessary.

**5. Sleep on it.** When you don’t know what to do, time will often give you clarity by letting emotions to run their course and settle down before you make a decision.

**6. Talk to a skilled self-manager**. Helps you to gain insights to modify your own behavior.

**7. Smile and laugh more.** Because changing your external expression can influence your internal mood.

**8. Set aside some time in your day for problem-solving**. Take 15 minutes each day away from phone and computer to take time to think without disturbance.

**9. Tack control of your self-talk.** Identify your negative self-talk and replace with healthier, positive self-talk.

**10. Visualize yourself succeeding.** Because your brain reacts the same way to visualizing something as it does to you actually experiencing it, visualization is a simple but powerful tool to prime yourself for success. Take the time each night before you go to sleep and visualize yourself acting the way you’d like in situations that you’ve had difficulty with in the past or might have difficulty with the next day.

**11. Clean up your sleep hygiene.** You need 20 minutes of natural morning sunlight each day to reset your biological clock. Avoid caffeine after breakfast, screens for 2 hours before bed, and activities such as working or watching TV in bed.

**12. Focus your attention on your freedoms, rather than your limitations.** Take accountability for what you can influence instead of worrying about things beyond your control.

**13. Stay synchronized.** If your body language doesn’t match the situations, it’s a sign your emotions are out of whack. Be aware of your body language and use it as a cue to address your emotions when necessary.

**14. Speak to someone who is not emotionally invested in your problem.** A second opinion can be invaluable, but only if the other person doesn’t have their own emotions about the particular situation.

**15. Learn a valuable lesson from everyone you encounter.** The key here is in the mindset – if you are looking to learn a valuable lesson fromeveryone you interact with, you will be in a mindset that makes you more open-minded and relaxed. Always be asking yourself what you can learn about yourself or others from others’ behavior and you’ll experience negative emotional reaction much less frequently.

**16. Put a mental recharge into your schedule.** Physical activity gives your brain an important rest, in addition to the physical benefits. Put physical activity in your schedule. Make it a priority.

**17. Accept that change is just around the corner.** People are generally upset by change, so accepting that change is inevitable will save you a great deal of stress.

**Social Awareness Strategies**

**1. Greet people by name.** Using and remembering someone’s name is a basic way to engage them.

**2. Watch body language.** Pay attention to the body language of others so you will be able to recognize cues and adapt accordingly.

**3. Make timing everything.** Focus on the other person’s emotional state and frame of mind, instead of your own, to ascertain the right time for what you need to communicate.

**4. Develop a back-pocket question.** Have a prepared open-ended question for times when a conversation dies, or you need to inject some life into the interaction.

**5. Don’t take notes at meetings.** Most communication happens nonverbally, so try to focus on the person speaking instead of your notes. If you must take notes, make sure to take regular breaks to observe the people and pick up cues.

**6. Plan ahead for social gatherings.** Write down anything you want to accomplish. Planning ahead will allow you to be more emotionally present at the event.

**7. Clear away the clutter.** Improve your listening skills by focusing on the other person’s words and expressions instead of thinking about what you want to say next.

**8. Live in the moment.** Being present wherever you are instead of wasting your time regretting the past and worrying about the future will allow you to be more perceptive of people around you.

**9. Go on a 15-minute tour.** Take 15 minutes each day and walk around your work place and observe emotional cues.

**10. Watch EQ at the movies.** Take the time to watch two movies specifically for the purpose of observing the character’s emotions, body language, relationships, interactions, etc.

**11. Practice the art of listening.** Practice a conscious focus on the speaker, and the tone, speed, and volume of their voice.

**12. Go people watching.** In order to improve your social awareness abilities, go to a coffee shop, grocery store, or other public place with the express purpose of observing people’s emotional states.

**13. Understand the rules of the culture game.** In today’s world, it is important to develop awareness across cultures. It requires patience as you watch and observe, taking extra time to understand the cultural expectations of people outside your own culture.

**14. Test for accuracy.** If you’re not sure what a cue is telling you about someone, you can always ask. State what you see (You seem sad…) and ask a direct question (Did something happen…).

**15. Step into their shoes.** Remember that people have different backgrounds and motivations. Put yourself in their situation, and from the perspective of how they would see things, try to understand why they are acting the way they are.

**16. Seek the whole picture.** Ask people about their perceptions of you. This will help you understand how you appear to others.

**17. Catch the mood of the room.** Moving from perception of individuals to being able to read the room is a big leap in abilities. You’ll probably have a gut feeling, but you will want to observe groups of people to see how they are talking, how they are moving, how they are grouped, etc.

**Relationship Management Strategies**

**1. Be open and be curious.** Sharing things about yourself will leave less room for people to misinterpret you, and the more you know about someone else, the more clearly you can interpret their emotional cues.

**2. Enhance your natural communication style.** Write down the positives and negatives of your style. Ask friends or family to help you define the ups and downs and pick a few to emphasize or to work on.

**3. Avoid giving mixed signals.** Stay aware of your emotions to make sure that your body and voice match your words. If they don’t, explain why so they don’t get mixed signals.

**4. Remember the little things that pack a punch.** Add back some old-fashioned good manners into the way you talk, like “please,” “thank you,” and “I’m sorry.”

**5. Take feedback well.** Appreciate the feedback you get and be mindful of your response.

**6. Build trust.** Start the trust-building process by being the first person to “be open” and share something about yourself. Open communication; willingness to share; consistency in words, actions and behavior; and reliability to follow through all are essential to building trust.

**7. Have an “open-door” policy.** Make a point to be accessible to others.

**8. Only get mad on purpose.** It is healthy to express anger in a way that communicates you have strong feelings or that a situation is serious. Use anger sparingly and purposefully. Don’t let it control you.

**9. Don’t avoid the inevitable.** When you’re faced with a situation you don’t like, don’t withdraw; it only makes things worse. Draw on your EQ skills to find something that helps you through the situation or improves it.

**10. Acknowledge the other person’s feelings.** Accept others’ right to experience their emotions without pushing them aside or elevating them. Respect the right to those feelings, even if you don’t agree. Listen and repeat back what you’ve heard to show your understanding and concern.

**11. Complement the person’s emotions or situation.** We often have a tendency to reflect the other person’s emotions; however, for example, responding to anger with anger will only make things worse. Take the time to consider how you will respond to make the interaction a pleasant one.

**12. When you care, show it.** Small acts of appreciation can create powerful relationships.

**13. Explain your decisions, don’t just make them.** People need to understand why a decision was made in order to support it. Take the time to verbalize your decision process, including what the alternatives were and why you made the decision you did.

**14. Make your feedback direct and constructive.** The key to giving good feedback is to consider the person who is receiving the feedback, and to adapt your approach accordingly. Take the time to consider the person beforehand.

**15. Align your intention with your impact.** Times when your impact didn’t align with your intention will give you clues about the areas of your EQ you can improve. Think about times when you unintentionally caused hard feelings, or relationships that seem illogically strained.

**16. Offer a “fix-it” statement during a broken conversation.** Learn to recognize when a conversation is deteriorating and say something like, “This is hard," or “How are you feeling.” Offer a reset button to restore open lines of communication.

**17. Tackle a tough conversation.** Tough conversations will come up no matter how high your EQ is, but shouldn’t be avoided.