



WHAT'S YOUR EMOTIONAL IQ?

THE TIME, PRACTICE, AND PATIENCE REQUIRED TO UNDERSTAND HOW WE'RE FEELING
BY LAILA ELISE

Acknowledging and managing psychological turbulence, aka “emotional intelligence,” comes naturally to some. For others, it’s difficult even to admit to *themselves* when they’re upset, much less externalize that understanding. Famed psychologist Howard Gardner classified this brand of emotional self-awareness as “intrapersonal” or “interpersonal” intelligence. According to science journalist Daniel Goleman, its five main elements are: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. How to achieve them all?

FIRST STEP, AWARENESS

If you don’t realize when you’re upset or feeling emotional, it can be difficult to connect with others, particularly if you, even accidentally, tend to take it out on them. (We’ve all had that moment at the end of a long stressful work day—a meltdown over the toothpaste tube, toilet

seat, or something similarly innocuous.) Being mindful about what you are feeling takes time, practice, and patience. The same is true for that person in your life who just can’t seem to tell you what’s wrong. So, try to be understanding with them, as perhaps they truly aren’t aware of the answer.

BEING OVERLY EXPRESSIVE ISN'T ALWAYS THE SOLUTION

Self regulation, awareness, and empathy are about understanding how to express and manage emotions in an effective way. While it might feel good to curse and throw plates at the wall, remember: there is a time and a place. While it’s never a good idea to hold it all in, try more productive outlets to release anger and frustration (think yoga, kickboxing, or a long run) so you might be more level headed when the time comes to discuss underlying issue with a partner. While you won’t be able to control emotions

completely, it’s possible to control *reactions* to them and how you communicate what you’re feeling to the important people in your life.

NOTHING WORKS LIKE PRACTICE

Why should this nostrum be any different with regard to social skills? The excuse of, “I’m just not good at talking about my feelings” is an old and *very* tired one. Whether it’s coming from you or a loved one, the only way to move forward is to try. Asking questions can help on both sides of the spectrum, here, and is also a great way to hone social abilities. The next time it feels like it would be easier to leave the room than continue (or, god forbid, start) a conversation, or give a silent nod as a response to end a dialogue or avoid a topic, try asking questions instead. Besides the potential for uncovering something interesting, you may even discover something you didn’t know about yourself. **1**