

NIU EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Coaching Key...Emotional Intelligence: What it is and The Tools

Emotional Intelligence Skills and Related Beliefs

- A. EQ Skills consist of:
1. Naming your feelings, and knowing where you feel your buttons are being pushed in your body.
 2. Accepting the intensity of your feelings.
 3. Deciding and responding in the moment to those feelings.
 4. Being descriptive and neutral with your language, or being “impeccable with your word.”
 5. Knowing your unfinished issues about feelings of self worth, being lovable/likeable, and being competent. This is the key to being able to put your issues aside when it is not appropriate to express them.
 6. Knowing when feelings are related to old unfinished issues and your “toxic nostalgia” is surfacing. This is the key to being able to identify these “old feelings” and put the feelings aside.
 7. Not personalizing others’ behavior. The behavior of others is about them.
 8. Not assuming you know what others are thinking, feeling and their motive/intentions.
 9. Doing your best every day, recognizing it may change.
- B. Core Beliefs determine to what degree you believe you are worthy, competent, and loved.
1. Core Beliefs dictate the rules you live by...what you can and cannot do and how you interpret the events in your life, and how you respond to others.
 2. Core Beliefs dictate your automatic thoughts and feelings about events, people, and yourself. If your automatic thoughts are negative, they are ANTs (Automatic Negative Thoughts) ANTs (Amen, pg 60) can create a negative work environment. (See Summary of ANTS Species handout under How do I know if... I am depressed).
 3. Identifying and making your Core Beliefs positive means the rules you live by will be realistic and flexible.
 4. Effective Beliefs About Employees:
 - Employees have the capacity to direct their destiny.
 - Employees want to perform effectively.
 - Employees can find effective solutions to problems.
 - Mistakes are treasures: a chance to improve rather than a fatal character flaw.
 - A failure is just a lesson to learn for next time...mess up, fix up.

Emotional Intelligence Awareness

Emotionally Intelligent People are able to act in the moment appropriately

1. They *know what they feel and where they feel it in their body*; thus, they have completed the **Elementary School Coursework: Feeling Our Feelings in our Body and Naming the Feeling** (Segal, pgs. 53-77).
 - Recognize your feelings are only messengers. Are you getting the message or avoiding the message? The key is to recognize that your feelings are only information and you can choose how you want to respond.
 - Feelings are related to events, thoughts, dreams, and comments.
 - The thoughts imbedded in feelings are not always accurate and frequently are distorted.
 - Feelings are not good or bad...they are either pleasant or painful. It is from our painful feelings that we learn life’s lessons and grow.
 - When you are protected from your painful feelings, you are robbed of your life and the lessons your feelings bring.
2. They *accept all their feeling regardless of their intensity*; thus, they have completed the **H.S. Coursework: Accepting Those Feelings** (Segal, pgs. 78-100).
 - To get the message from your feelings, you need to be able to accept the intensity of the feeling and respond appropriately at the time.

- When you don't accept the intensity of your feelings, you develop a pattern of avoidance and you begin to question your worth, your competence, and your like-ability.
 - When you don't get the message from your feelings, don't accept the intensity, and don't respond appropriately at the moment, your unspoken hurt wells up inside and your anger makes you feel brittle.
 - When you cannot accept the intensity of your feelings, you do not act in the moment, because you fear you will speak too strongly and therefore lose control, your self-esteem, and ability to fit in.
 - Progressive relaxation and visualizing yourself handling the intense emotion help you learn to manage the intensity of your feelings.
 - When you are skilled at progressive relaxation, you can cue your body to relax at the moment you feel the intense feeling by concentrating on your breathing (3 deep breaths) and the mental cue to relax.
3. *They act on this emotional information with empathy for self and others when responding to others and when making decisions;* thus, they have completed the **College Coursework: Hanging in There** Segal, pgs. 101-123)
- Recognize that your thoughts are not facts. Your thoughts reflect your feelings, fears, and beliefs. Recognize that negative language only describes the negative and interferes with finding positive solutions. The Four Agreements (Don Miguel Ruiz) help you be able to "act with empathy."
 - #1-*Be Impeccable with Your Word* – Describe what you observe rather than judge it. When we judge what we observe then we tend to treat our judgments as facts.
 - #2-*Don't Personalize* - How people treat you is a statement about them. Even when someone says something about you, this person is really making a statement about themselves and their own life issues.
 - #3-*Don't Assume* - Don't try and make assumptions about why somebody did something or about their motivation. When we make assumptions, we tend to treat them as facts and then we react to false information as fact.
 - #4-*Do Your Best* – Recognize your best changes every day according to your energy and your health. (see Not Personalizing and the Four Agreements that Help Communication)
4. *They understand the impact of Automatic Negative Thoughts (ANTs) and know that negative language is like junk food for the brain* (see Summary of ANT Species handout under How do I know if...I am depressed).
- Recognizes that every thought about yourself and others impacts every cell in your body.
 - Use of negative language...leaves a negative impact on the individual and in the group.
 - Negative thoughts pollute your limbic system (bonding and mood center in our brain), your mind, and your body.
 - People who have a lot of negative thoughts are more likely to get sick
 - **Automatic Negative Thoughts** – ANT's – are so automatic that they appear to be feelings and therefore we assume they must be our "true feeling." ANTS do not always tell the truth. Learn to challenge your ANTS and choose to think good thoughts and feel better or choose to think bad thoughts and feel lousy.
5. *They do not allow the past to invade the present (Emotional Debt and Toxic Nostalgia). They acknowledge their feelings and act on this emotional information with empathy for self and others as they respond to others and make decisions.*

When the past invades the present and your future experiences:

A. **Emotional Debt** is "an unexpressed or unnamed feeling that is held onto, distorted, and becomes a symbol for any similar loss or painful event." (Viscott, pgs. 130-167)

1. You know you are storing a feeling in Emotional Debt when you find yourself making excuses, explaining away your guilt, justifying your anger, blaming others and making them the cause of your problems or behavior, or pretending not to care.
2. Your suffering is not because you have been hurt – you suffer because the way you chose to deal with the hurt has kept it from resolving naturally.
3. When hurt or pain is not expressed at the time it occurs, the feeling of hurt/pain is stored.
 - Pain in the present is hurt: *stored hurt converts to anger.*

- Pain from the past is anger: *stored anger converts to guilt*, because you feel bad about how you dealt with it. Guilt is anger turned inward. Animals do not feel guilt, they simply express their anger.
 - *“Hurt that has not yet occurred,” is anxiety* (Viscott, pg 133). Anxiety that is not current and stored in Emotional Debt begins to activate into obsessive worry and self-doubt. Anxiety that is stored too long grows and can become panic (Viscott, pg 133).
4. The purpose of current anxiety is help you determine how real the danger is and what you need to do to avoid it. *When the danger has passed, you determine how close the danger was, learn from it and let go of your fear.*
 5. The key to managing your Emotional Debt is to... *“Decide not to let unimportant things upset you and to accept what you cannot change without taking it personally.”* (Viscott, pgs. 132).

B. **Toxic Nostalgia** is when Emotional Debt is full and you are emotionally overdrawn. The stored unexpressed, unnamed, unfinished emotions get triggered in similar situations and this is when you over-react. Viscott calls this Toxic Nostalgia. We repeat this pattern and can't figure out why things are always the same (Viscott, pgs. 275-329).

1. Toxic Nostalgia “is a subtle mixture of feelings, attitudes, perspectives and needs from different ages all showing themselves at once as the unresolved past attempts to define the present. Your capacity for Toxic Nostalgia limits your freedom to be who you are, to act in your own best interest, or to be open in expressing yourself.” (Viscott, pg. 279)
2. Toxic Nostalgia happens when some trigger awakens the old hurt and *you are presented with another opportunity to feel your loss, examine your hurt, accept the intense feeling, and come to acceptance and peace.*
3. *“How you see your past is how you feel about yourself. Because toxic nostalgic intrusions overstate the negative legacy of the past, they tend to undermine your confidence. They do this because you see the return of old feelings as confirming your worst beliefs about yourself.”* (Viscott, pg. 283). These returning emotions are another opportunity on the way to acceptance and letting go of the loss and hurt by changing the old beliefs about your self.
4. *“Accepting what happened to you reflects your willingness to forgive others and yourself. Forgiveness creates self-acceptance. You accept that you have weaknesses. You know you can fail but realize that no single failure can define your worth as a person.”* (Viscott, pg 283)

Adapted from the following resources:

Amen, Daniel, G. M.D. 1998 Change Your Brain, Change Your Life. New York: Three Rivers Press.

Richo D. 1991. How To Be An Adult: A Handbook on Psychological and Spiritual Integration. Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press.

Ruiz, Don Miguel. 1997. Four Agreements. San Rafael, California: Amber-Allen Publishing Inc.

Segal, Jeanne Ph.D. 1987. Raising Your Emotional Intelligence: A Practical Guide. N.Y.: Henry Holt & Company.

Viscott, David M.D. 1996. Emotional Resilience: Simple Truths for Dealing with the Unfinished Business of Your Past. New York: Three Rivers Press

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