

LESSON 6-2: Healthy Communication

Emotional Intelligence - Self-Awareness

“All learning has an emotional base.” - Plato

*“He who knows the universe and does not know himself knows nothing.”
- Jean De La Fontaine*

“When dealing with people, remember you are not dealing with creatures of logic, but with creatures of emotion.” - Dale Carnegie

WELCOME & PRAYER

PREVIOUS LESSON FOLLOW UP

- From the previous lesson, did you say “I am sorry” to anyone? Did you own or not own the problem?

KICK OFF QUESTION

- Do you know a person who may not have an impressive pedigree of education or a high IQ, but they are clearly a successful leader? What qualities draw other to them?

PRIMARY SCRIPTURES

“A fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back.” (Proverbs 29:11 NKJV)

Discussion Question:

- Can you think of someone who has a limited filter on their emotions that you still consider to be wise? Why or Why not?

BIG PICTURE

- Emotional intelligence (EQ) is a better predictor for success in the workplace than IQ.
- One of the key elements of EQ is self-awareness.
- Unlike IQ, which is relatively fixed, a person can improve elements of emotional intelligence.

CONCEPTS TO UNDERSTAND

Emotional intelligence is a set of emotional and social skills that establish how well we perceive and express ourselves, develop and maintain relationships, cope with challenges, and use emotional information in a meaningful way. Researchers have identified 15 different aspects of emotional intelligence, but this lesson will focus solely on self-awareness.

Emotional self-awareness is the ability to recognize how you're feeling and why you're feeling that way, and the impact your emotions have on the thoughts and actions of yourself and others. This may seem like a soft and fuzzy concept that doesn't fit in the business world; however, the business world is rife with underachieving leaders who have intellectual skills but are lacking in emotional intelligence. Peter Drucker has noted that self-awareness and the capacity to build mutually satisfying relationships provide the backbone of strong management.

In reality, most of us rate poorly in self-awareness. A five-year study on self-awareness revealed that 95% of individuals think they are self-aware, but only 15% actually are. A specific example we can relate to is a survey of American drivers indicating that 93% of us self-rate as above average drivers. Another example is 94% of college professors indicate they were above average as teachers. Obviously, only one-half of us can be above average. While self-awareness is in short supply, few people think it's a weakness of their own. This lesson attempts to make you more aware of your emotions and how these affect our communication.

Self-Awareness Strategies

Self-awareness, like all elements of emotional intelligence, does not have to remain static, but it can be improved by understanding how events affect our emotions. Once we understand this, we can figure out how to respond in a way that our emotions are no longer a barrier to effective communication.

1. **Don't treat your feelings as either good or bad.** They are what they are. You feel emotions as a way to understand something important is happening. Managing your emotions is made easier when you acknowledge that they are occurring without passing judgement on a particular emotion as "bad" or "wrong".
2. **Feel your emotions physically.** When we are placed in a life or death situation, our physical bodies experience an adrenaline rush that can push us past our normal physical limitations. In smaller ways, our bodies release cues that tell us we are experiencing emotions. We should learn to notice the physical changes that occur when we experience certain emotions. Those physical changes may include changes in your pulse, the pace of your breathing, tightness in your muscles, or perspiration. Noting these physical changes can give you a heads-up that you are experiencing an emotion.
3. **Know who and what pushes your buttons.** We all have our pet peeves, circumstances, or specific people in our life that can set us off. Self-awareness of our emotions can be helped by being keenly aware of the exact kinds of situations and people who will trigger a visceral reaction in us. We won't be able to avoid all of these situations and people, but we can manage our reaction when we identify on the front end when an emotion is likely to be triggered.

4. **Acknowledge your values.** In the midst of all of our tasks and responsibilities, we can get focused outward, and lose sight of our inner focus. The external pressure to complete our tasks can force us to act in a way that doesn't reflect our core beliefs and values. For example, we may value mutual respect for those we work with, but the pressures of meeting an important deadline can make us yell at or belittle a co-worker who is not meeting our expectations. Make a list of your core beliefs and revisit that list on a regular basis. That reminder can serve as a guardrail to manage our emotional responses no matter what is happening around us.
5. **Seek feedback.** A key part of emotional self-awareness is getting to know yourself. But in order to test your self-perception in the real world, you will need to get input from others. We may think we are handling our emotions in a certain way, but others may perceive how we express certain emotions in a completely different way. Getting this feedback from a spouse or co-worker is an invaluable tool which helps us see the entire picture of how our emotions affect other people.

EXERCISE

In order to improve your emotional self-awareness, a good first step is to take stock of your emotions, what events trigger those emotions, and how those emotions impact your reaction to different types of events.

For each of the emotions below, identify situations or conversations in the past week that brought up this feeling. How strong was your emotional reaction to the situation? How did you react to the rest of your interaction in that situation?

Emotion	Situation	Reaction
Anger		
Happiness		
Fear		
Anxiety		
Sadness		

Discussion Questions

1. What did you learn by completing the exercise above? Which emotion do you struggle with the most?
2. How do you recognize when an event triggers an emotion in you? Are there physical changes you notice?
3. What are the recurring situations that trigger the strongest emotions in you?
4. What emotions do you express or feel that inhibit your effective communication with co-workers?

TAKE ACTION

- Go to three individuals and ask them, “What emotions do I display that inhibit our communication?” If you are married, one of these must be your spouse. Report back at the next meeting.

CLOSING PRAYER

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- *The EQ Edge - Emotional Intelligence and Your Success* by Steven Stein and Howard Book
- *Emotional Intelligence 2.0* by Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves