What is Emotional Intelligence (EI) comprised of??

5 main categories:

1. **Knowing one's emotions**: Self-awareness (the ability to recognize a feeling as it happens) is the cornerstone of EI and self-understanding.

2. **Managing one’s emotions**: Once your self-awareness increases, and you have a better understanding of how you’re feeling and acting at any given moment, the next step is to manage your behavior in more constructive, more positive ways.

3. **Motivating oneself**: You’ve heard it a thousand times – there is power in positive thinking! Having a high degree of EI is also a reflection of a person’s self-control, whether that means delaying immediate gratification or staying positive in the face of challenging circumstances.

4. **Recognizing emotions in others**: Understanding how YOU feel about a situation or vent might help you to understand how other people would feel in a similar situation. Otherwise known as empathy, the ability to recognize the subtle cues that reveal what other people are thinking and feeling is a valuable social skill. Empathetic people tend to be more tuned in to other people, which means they can often lend the right support or say the right thing without ever being asked.

5. **Handling relationships**: Success in life also depends on how well a person interacts with others, including coworkers, friends or family members. People who are ‘social stars’ are those who can organize and inspire others, reduce conflict in groups, build friendships easily, and respond warmly to other people’s concerns or fears. These are the people who get along with virtually everyone else.

Adapted from *Bringing Yourself To Work: A Guide to Successful Staff Development in Afterschool Programs* by Michelle Seligson & Patricia Stahl (2003)
Self-Reflection and Action Model: An Example

Step one – identify the problem
I have trouble getting people to help with co-op tasks. I’m afraid people will get mad at me for asking them to help, so most of the time when something needs to get done, I just do it myself.

Step two – feelings
Frustrated, angry, fearful, resentful

Step three – body scan
Tightness in my chest, bad feeling in the pit of my stomach, tight muscles

Step four – usual response
I say nothing. I continue to do things myself and resent it.

Step five – satisfaction with response
Unsatisfied

Step six – preferred response
I want to be able to express my preferences.

Step seven – obstacles to preferred response
Worried that my neighbors will be angry or annoyed with me. I’m concerned they’ll think I’m pushy and bossy. I am uncomfortable speaking up.

Step eight – worst/best case possibilities if I changed to my preferred response

Worst case:
They’ll be angry and annoyed with me.

So, then what would happen?

I won’t be liked.

So, then what would happen?

I’ll feel left out.

So, then what would happen?

I won’t want to ask them for help.

So, then what would happen?

I will keep doing things by myself.

**Best case:**

I get other people to help with tasks that need to be done.

I expressed what I wanted, and feel good about myself.

I discovered that no one was angry for asking and some people even appreciated it.

I felt closer to my neighbors and I no longer carry any resentments.

**Step nine – restatement**

I want to be able to express my preferences.

**Step ten – review and reflect**

I feel better about myself and my neighbors. I have less tension/stress because I am not holding onto resentment. After playing out my worst case possibility for expressing my preferred response, it does not seem very realistic. Even if I didn’t get others to help all of the time, I still think I would feel better about myself for saying what I wanted.

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**Self-Reflection and Action Model**

**Instructions:** Choose a recent experience that challenged you, and one that you would have preferred to have a different outcome. Move through the following steps, writing down responses to the prompts. Don’t over-think the process!!

**Step one – identify the problem**

Briefly describe the problem/conflict.

**Step two – feelings**

Identify the feelings you experience when you think about the problem or conflict.

**Step three – body scan**

Where in your body do you experience these feelings?

**Step four – usual response**

Describe what you usually do when you feel this way.
Step five – satisfaction with response
Determine whether you are satisfied with your response.

Step six – preferred response
If you are not satisfied, how would you prefer to respond?

Step seven – obstacles to preferred response
Identify the obstacles to responding the way you would prefer.

Step eight – worst/best case possibilities if I changed to my preferred response
Identify the worst and best possibilities. What is the worst thing that could happen if you responded the way you preferred? Don’t stop at one. Keep asking yourself, “So, then what would happen?” Take this possibility through to the end. Does it start to seem silly or unrealistic?

Now ask yourself, what is the best thing that could happen if you responded the way you preferred?

Step nine – restatement
Restate your preferred response.
Step ten – review and reflect

Review and reflect on the process you just went through. Notice whether (and when) you experienced any change in feelings. What did you learn? Can the learning be applied to other situations?

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Increasing Your Emotional Intelligence

Write it down!

Devote a journal to your reflection process. Divide this journal into 5 sections correlating to each category of emotional intelligence (EI). Keep this journal in a convenient place so that you can jot down ideas/reflections quickly.

For each segment of the journal, record instances where you shined and where you need to devote some more attention. Jot down ideas/feelings/examples from your day, etc. A large part of increasing your EI rests on becoming more aware of your self – of your moods, your feelings, your triggers, etc.

Journaling tips:

- Be as specific and detailed as possible. If you felt awkward at a group meeting, for example, write down why. What was going on? If someone did or said something that made you feel uncomfortable or upset, what was it?

- Don’t feel that you always have to know WHY things happened in order to write down WHAT happened. Sometimes starting with what happened helps you figure out why at a later time.

- Be honest.

- Try to write things down soon after they have happened.

Enhance your problem-solving skills

Use the problem-solving worksheet to review and reflect on problems/conflicts that challenged you, and that would have preferred to have a different outcome.
This model is something that may feel a bit awkward at first. It needs to be practiced! The more you use it, the more it will start to become increasingly natural for you to start thinking in these terms.

Don’t forget! Self-awareness is a continuum. Unlike our IQ (intelligence quotient), our EI is something that can be developed and increased at any age. So, you are encouraged to continue thinking about, reading about, talking about, etc.

**For further reading**

*Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ* by Daniel Goleman; Bantam Books; 10th Anniversary edition (2005)

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Internal and External Factors

Despite our hard work at building positive environments, conflict happens.

Conflict/confrontation – internal factors

- We bring our own emotion.
- Trigger may be from the behavior itself or the person.
- To be effective, we need to be clear and honest about how this affects us, and then take care to control it.
- Be aware of your feelings. Know what’s “triggering” you before you dive in. Take an inventory of your assumptions, judgments and preconceived notions about the people you are working with.
  Examples:
  ✓ This is the tenth time I’ve seen her do this!
  ✓ This person just doesn’t know how to mind his own business!
  ✓ Those members are lazy
  ✓ I’m always picking up other people’s trash
- Pause and take a deep breath. If you react impulsively, you may not achieve the outcome you want. Slowing yourself down helps you be in charge of your emotions instead of your emotions being in charge of you.
- Be clear about your objective and intention. What outcome do you wish to create?
- Make your feelings work for you, not create a diversion from the issue you wish to address.

Conflict/confrontation – external factors

- Join with people before you dive in.
- Inquire. Check out your assumptions.
• Just how much set up you do depends on the nature of the confrontation. Is this a person who knows what you are concerned about? Is there something you don’t know about? Is this a critical situation?

• State the truth with respect and compassion.
  ✓ We are not here to make people wrong. We would like people to be successful.
  ✓ Assess behavior rather than judge people.
  ✓ Be clear and specific.
  ✓ Stay focused. Avoid getting side tracked or off the main concern.
  ✓ Get the person involved.
  ✓ Validate the experience of staff/volunteers.
  ✓ Follow up.

Managing difficult conversations

• What do I want the outcome to be?
  ✓ Begin with the end in mind. Facilitate the conversation. Discuss the outcome of conversation with the people involved. What do we want the goal of this conversation to be?
  ✓ What is reasonable/possible? This may be different than ideal expectations
  ✓ Stay focused on outcome of conversation

• What’s triggering me?
  ✓ Going into this conversation, what will trigger me to get upset?
  ✓ What will offend me?
  ✓ What will spur emotion?

• What can I acknowledge in the other person? Experience/Intention
  ✓ Can I understand their point of view?
  ✓ Don’t use BUT (discounting) … use AND

• What’s my contribution to the problem?
  ✓ Examples: my gut reaction, not clear, slow to respond

• What request can I make?
  ✓ Stay away from blaming
  ✓ Keep in line with desired outcome and be clear about expectations

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Conflict. When you’re in the thick of it, six steps to peace

1. **Cool off**. Step back and get centered.
2. Say what’s bothering you using “*I messages*”. Don’t blame. Avoid sarcasm, put-downs or negative body language.
3. Each person **restates** what they heard the other person say. Reflective listening.
4. Take responsibility. **What’s your part?** How does the conflict impact you? When we take some responsibility – a solution is possible.
5. Brainstorm **solutions**. Seek compromise. Ask for 5 ways to solve the problem.
6. Come to an **agreement**. Affirm, forgive or thank. Listen. When people feel like you understand, they become less volatile.

“We must be the change we wish to see in the world.” Gandhi
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