**Warning Signs that You Lack Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional intelligence is the “something” in each of us that is a bit intangible. It affects how we manage behavior, navigate work issues, and make personal decisions to achieve positive results.  As the quote below illustrates, it is an essential component of being a great leader.

*“No doubt emotional intelligence is rarer than book smarts, but my experience says it is actually more important in the making of a leader. You just can’t ignore it.”*   –Jack Welch

Here are six (6) warning signs that may indicate an underdeveloped EQ.

**1. You get stressed easily.**

People who fail to use their emotional intelligence skills are more likely to turn to other, less effective means of managing their mood. They are twice as likely to experience anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and even thoughts of suicide.

**2. You make assumptions quickly and defend them vehemently.**

People who lack emotional intelligence form an opinion quickly and then succumb to confirmation bias, meaning they gather evidence that supports their opinion and ignore any evidence to the contrary. More often than not, they argue, ad nauseam, to support it.

Emotionally intelligent people let their thoughts marinate, because they know that initial reactions are driven by emotions. They give their thoughts time to develop and consider the possible consequences and counterarguments. Then, they communicate their developed idea in the most effective way possible, taking into account the needs and opinions of their audience.

**3. You hold grudges.**

The negative emotions that come with holding on to a grudge are actually a stress response. Just thinking about the event sends your body into fight-or-flight mode, a survival mechanism that forces you to stand up and fight or run for the hills when faced with a threat.

Holding on to a grudge means you’re holding on to stress, and emotionally intelligent people know to avoid this at all costs. Letting go of a grudge not only makes you feel better now but can also improve your health.

**4. You don’t let go of mistakes.**

Emotionally intelligent people distance themselves from their mistakes, but they do so without forgetting them. By keeping their mistakes at a safe distance, yet still handy enough to refer to, they are able to adapt and adjust for future success. It takes refined self-awareness to walk this tightrope between dwelling and remembering.

Dwelling too long on your mistakes makes you anxious and gun shy, while forgetting about them completely makes you bound to repeat them. The key to balance lies in your ability to transform failures into nuggets of improvement. This creates the tendency to get right back up every time you fall down.

**5. You blame other people for how they make you feel.**

Emotions come from within. It’s tempting to attribute how you feel to the actions of others, but you must take responsibility for your emotions. No one can make you feel anything that you don’t want to. Thinking otherwise only holds you back.

**6. You’re easily offended.**

If you have a firm grasp of who you are, it’s difficult for someone to say or do something that gets your goat. Emotionally intelligent people are self-confident and open-minded, which create a pretty thick skin. You may even poke fun at yourself or let other people make jokes about you because you are able to mentally draw the line between humor and degradation.

If you are a leader and you see these tendencies in yourself, make developing your emotional intelligence a part of your overall development plan. Keeping a journal and sharing your goals with others so they can remind you of times when you slip up are all excellent ways to support your journey.

Catapult offers a Totally Responsible Person class which focuses on this topic and supporting a mindset which does not mire down in guilt or grudge-holding but learns from past situations in a productive manner. We also offer leadership classes. When leaders fail to display emotional intelligence, they truly have an enormous impact on your organization’s morale. Educating leaders about emotional intelligence is a good first step in assisting them identify their weaknesses in this area.

Written by a Catapult Advisor.