

Four Ways Emotional Intelligence Can Transform Your Life

by Chicago Family Business Council

Intelligence from the inside out

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is the ability to recognize, regulate and express one's emotions effectively while also being able to understand the emotions of others.

It's not about being emotional but being intelligent about your emotions.

Unlike IQ which is unchangeable, EQ can be improved with continual practice and patience. As you develop your EQ you'll find yourself becoming a better listener and leader, a more concise communicator and better able to express empathy to those around you. You'll also become a more compassionate family member by feeling prepared to have difficult conversations with the ones you love. Those around you will appreciate your empathy, triggering a chain reaction among family and friends.

Eventually, your life will be reinvented as people feel and mirror the positive impact of being emotionally intelligent. So, what are the elements of Emotional Intelligence and how can they transform your life?

Self-Awareness

Self-Awareness is being aware of your feelings, motives and desires.

Asking clarifying questions to dig deeper into what someone has said helps drive our self-awareness. Think about it – if you express a situation to a friend and they respond with a clarifying question to learn more about the situation, it could expose you to a whole new perspective. Responding to a clarifying question expands your view and allows you to explore areas you wouldn't have known about otherwise.

How can this transform your life? By simply bringing issues to the table, you are relieving anxiety and building confidence. Having an open, honest and non-judgmental discussion using clarifying questions and shared experiences helps to make issues and options more clear. In turn, your relationships and discussions with others will become deeper.

Self-Management

Self-Management is all about managing your emotions.

Will your emotions have a positive or negative impact on those you come in contact with? Self-Management is about regulating yourself and taking responsibility for your actions. Having the ability to identify triggers that hijack conversations such as anger, disappointment, fear and jealousy allow you the opportunity to choose a calm and rational reaction.

How can this transform your life? Allowing yourself time to process reactions and identify your triggers gives you the opportunity to change. You'll find yourself adapting to situations and utilizing self-control to keep feelings and relationships intact. In the end, you'll show others that they can trust you. It also shows that you're accountable for your actions.

Social Awareness

Social Awareness is about understanding your environment and responding to it appropriately.

Do you have a good sense for other's emotions? Paying attention to situations around you and being sensitive to how others are feeling is crucial to social awareness. The best way to develop your social awareness is to listen. When you listen and express empathy to someone, you are validating that person. When someone receives validation, they arrive at their ultimate comfort zone. In this zone, defenses and concerns about negative reactions to their statements disappear and they begin speaking with less hesitation. When hesitation disappears, this person will always disclose more than they would otherwise, and feel much closer to the listener when they do so.

How can this transform your life? Whether it's with a customer, an employee or a relative, listening is what friends do, and it will always provide you with a much broader, deeper perspective of what someone is sharing with you. Listening builds trust and trust builds stronger relationships.

Relationship Management

Relationship Management is all about building deeper, more meaningful relationships.

Being polite is doing what is expected but graciousness goes beyond. Being gracious is the conscious art of doing a bit more than anyone might expect. People expect polite, but they never forget the feeling of being treated graciously. Expressing empathy, listening well and offering shared experience rather than advice are all elements of relationship management.

How can this transform your life? Being gracious inspires the people around you and encourages them to develop themselves. Leadership and communication skills will blossom within yourself and you'll see the impact on your employees and family members too. When stronger relationships are cultivated, teamwork and collaboration will become easier and more effective. The bottom line is the people in your company and family will feel empowered to be the best versions of themselves.

Emotional Intelligence is at the core of everything we do at the Chicago Family Business Council. Our peer-to-peer groups, known as Forums, are the platform in which our members develop and explore EQ. If you're interested in learning more, please contact us.