

## Five Pillars of Emotional Intelligence

**Kathy Simmons, Career Magazine**

### SELF-AWARENESS

*"Know thyself."*  
-Socrates

Self-awareness involves understanding personal emotions and what causes them. It forces you to squarely face shortcomings and mistakes rather than blaming others or making excuses. Self-aware people are confident and comfortable "in their own skin." You'll face the same frustrations as others, but be better equipped to handle them with grace.

An excellent indicator of self-awareness is the manner in which you handle criticism. The immediate human reaction is typically one of defensiveness ("let me tell you what's wrong with you now!") Such a response doesn't exist within emotionally intelligent professionals because they wish to improve themselves. This desire prompts them to actually solicit constructive criticism, and process it in a mature manner.

### SELF-REGULATION

*"While we may not be able to control all that happens to us, we can control what happens inside us."*  
-Benjamin Franklin

Self-regulation helps you master moods and personal behavior. It allows you to balance your life, refusing to shortchange important areas such as play, reflection, and rest. Those lacking self-regulation display stress, poor conflict resolution, and negativity. Regardless of occupation, refraining from acting on impulsive desires (such as the urge to "give someone a piece of your mind") is an emotional competence that high achievers possess.

An example of one who publicly lost the battle of self-regulation is that of Mike Tyson. When he was unable to control his anger and bit off a chunk of Evander Holyfield's ear during their boxing title match, he suffered a three-million dollar penalty, and a year's suspension from boxing. Although your consequences probably won't be this drastic, you can be sure that poor self-regulation will have a detrimental effect on your career.

### MOTIVATION

*"Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm."*  
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Success is impossible without motivation...and motivation is impossible without enthusiasm. Two facts are noteworthy when considering enthusiasm: First, it must come from inside. Do you need a dream job before you can be enthusiastic? No, only a dream attitude! Second, enthusiasm cannot be "faked" - at least not for long. Truly enthusiastic people are genuine. Their vitality is an admirable trait others wish to emulate.

Why is enthusiasm so noticeable? Because it's rare! It's easier to stay on the path of negativity. Optimism is a key motivational competency that typifies outstanding performance. It causes you to focus on the rewards of success rather than the fear of failure. In addition, optimism involves the ability to view a setback as a "manageable circumstance rather than a personal flaw."

## EMPATHY

*"Be not disturbed at being misunderstood; be disturbed rather at not being understanding."*  
-Chinese proverb

Empathy, the ability to understand others, can be extremely helpful in team-oriented situations, where reaching a goal is necessary to everyone's success. Those with empathy are skilled in matters of perception and intuition. Indeed, they seem to have an uncanny ability to adjust their approach to people depending on their particular needs. They are excellent listeners who make others feel valued, important, and respected. Is it any wonder they have a strong support system at work?

Intellect alone won't steer you through treacherous psychological highways of an office full of people, each with a different set of quirky emotional roadblocks and pitfalls. It takes empathy to sense a customer's unhappiness despite his quiet demeanor; read your boss to learn which projects have the most corporate priority; notice a co-worker's stress and offer an encouraging word.

## SOCIAL SKILLS

*"The greatest ability in business is to get along with others and influence their actions."*  
-John Hancock

Employees with strong social skills don't worry about who gets credit. Their strong communication skills, integrity, and consistency build group synergy and good will.

Charles Schwab was paid a salary of one-million dollars a year in the steel business. When walking through one of his mills, he noticed several men smoking directly under a "No Smoking" sign. Rather than berate or admonish them, he greeted the workers warmly, chatted awhile, and then handed each of them a fine, imported cigar. As he was leaving, he said with a wink, "I'd appreciate it if you'd smoke these cigars outside."

Do you think Schwab ever faced another incident involving violation of the "No Smoking" rule by these employees? By creatively allowing his employees to save face, he accomplished his objective in an admirable manner.