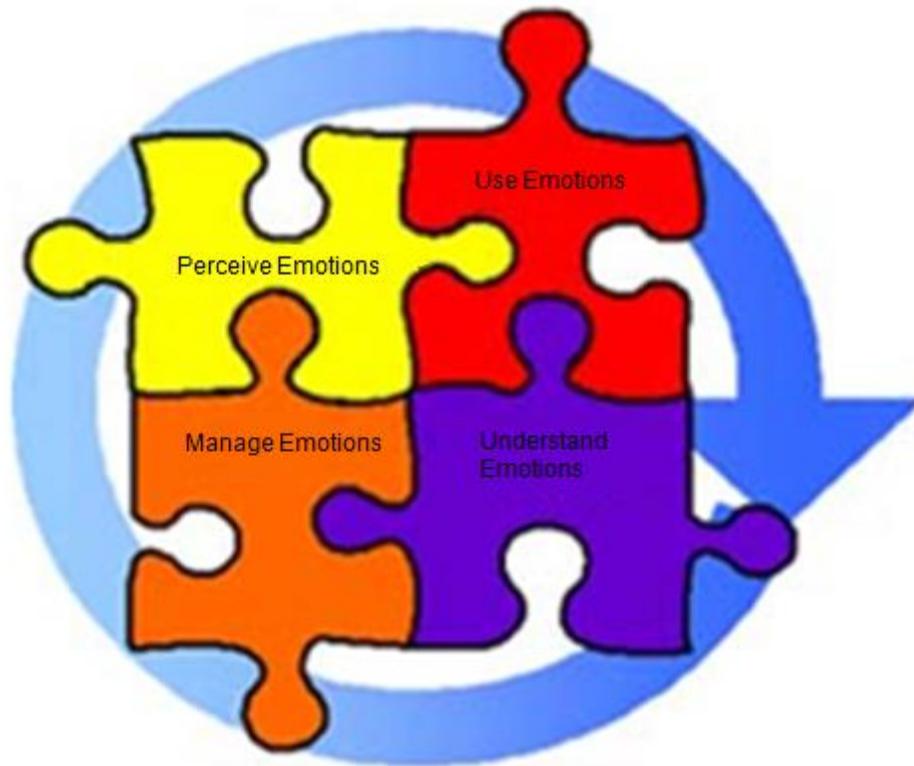


Emotional Intelligence (EQ)



EQ Action Plan and Strategies

My EQ Action Plan

- Explore strategies in the 4 major skill areas:



- Pick two strategies that you think will most improve your personal power and presence (see following pages)
- Identify and collaborate with a mentor, manager or peer who you believe has good EQ skills
- Meet, review, and discuss periodically (weekly / monthly)
- As you improve in your selected strategies, start to look at other strategies for improving your personal power and presence
- Continued self-study – books and additional EQ Training

Self-Awareness Strategies

Self-Awareness is your ability to accurately perceive your own emotions in the moment and understand your tendencies across situations. You use this skill to notice your feelings and judge if your needs are being satisfied.

Strategy	
Stop treating your feelings as good or bad	The downside of treating emotions as good or bad is that judging emotion keeps us from understanding what we are feeling. Next time you are aware of an emotion, take notice, be aware of it – feel it – but don’t judge it. Side note: Always resist the urge to beat yourself up.
Observe the ripple effect from your emotions	If a manager loses his cool in front of the team, the target of the berating is not the only one impacted – everyone is impacted. Emotions are powerful. Observe how you behave affects others – ask others for feedback.
Lean into your discomfort	Our natural inclination is to pull away from painful feelings – next time this happens., move into the discomfort – feel it – ask yourself questions about it and where the pain originates (for you). Facing your fears is a powerful way to learn about yourself.
Feel your emotions physically	The next time you are alone and experiencing strong emotions - check your physiology. Are you tense, is breathing shallow, is your heart rate increased..? As you grow this awareness/skill., you can be physically aware of an emotion before you are mentally aware.
Know who and what pushes your buttons	Pinpoint specific people and situations that trigger your emotions. Having this clear understanding for what pushes your buttons gives you more control because it will come as less of a surprise.
Watch yourself like a hawk	Observe yourself with detachment (an advanced capability) – view your behavior objectively. Avoid getting caught in the moment – be “above” the moment considering the big picture.
Keep a journal about your emotions	With a journal, you can record what events triggered which emotions and your responses. You can also review your journal after the moments have passed to check your objectivity. A great reference that helps you to see yourself more clearly.
Don’t be fooled by a bad mood	Some days we feel like we are under a black cloud – once we take this mindset., we look for things to support our negative mood. Catch yourself here – decide to change your perspective and the mood will pass. BTW - What triggered the bad mood..?
Don’t be fooled by a good mood	Don’t let excitement lead you to do something you may regret. Project is going well – customer asks for scope creep – you allow it without analysis because you feel good – bad idea. Catch yourself when you are in the clouds – bring yourself back to equanimity.

Stop and ask yourself – Why do I do the things that I do..?	Get into the habit of asking yourself why surprising emotions came into being – what motivated you to do something out of character..? With a little practice, you can trace emotions back to their origin and understand the purpose.
Visit your values	Often in the busy pace of life, we can lose sight of what is important in our lives. Without awareness., we can say-or-do things we do not believe in – this results in us feeling uneasy or unhappy with ourselves. First, identify your core values if you haven't already – check in with yourself every day and see if you are being true to yourself.
Check yourself	Is the look you have chosen, one that your mood created, or one you lean on by default..? Your demeanor says a lot about your mood. Take a moment of self-reflection – it is up to you to understand what is underlying.
Spot your emotions in books, movies, and music	If it is hard to assess yourself, try looking for some of that information outside yourself in movies, books, and music. Sometimes you cannot find the words to say what you are feeling until you see it in front of you.
Seek feedback	Everything you see (including you) is clouded by your own lens. This impacts objectivity. Sometimes a second opinion from a friend or co-worker makes all the difference in the world. Other people's feedback can be a real eye opener by showing you how others perceive you.
Get to know yourself under stress	Learn to recognize the first signs of stress – an upset stomach or anxiety and fatigue. Listen to what your body is telling you – take time to recognize the signals in order to recharge your emotional battery.

Self-Management Strategies

Self-Management is your ability to use your awareness of your emotions to stay flexible and direct your behavior positively. You use your self-management skills to express your feelings and act accordingly to benefit the connection.

Strategy	
Breathe right	We often run on shallow breaths for long periods and we are not aware of it. Relax. Shallow breaths cheat us of valuable oxygen we need to think clearly. Be aware and practice proper, deep breathing. Flood your brain with oxygen – it is calming and provides a sense of clarity. Simple yet powerful.
Create an emotion vs. reason list	When making decisions, we often have an internal battle of emotions vs. rational thinking. The next time you sense this happening., capture that information on paper – write it out. With the list in front of you, it will be easier to see whether you should allow the emotional or rational side to determine the decision.
Make your goals public	There is no more powerful motivator than making our goals public. Much of self-management comes down to motivation. When you share you goals with someone, ask him/her to help hold you accountable.
Count to ten	When you feel anger or frustration brewing – take a break (10 seconds) – take a deep breath – regain your composure. Cool down your overheated limbic system. If you are able under duress., get out for a short walk – it can clear your head.
Sleep on it	Like the 10 second interval but better/longer. Time helps us to self-manage because it helps bring clarity and perspective to the thousands of thoughts that swim in our heads. Did you ever write a flame mail, leave it in your draft folder overnight and upon reading the next day – be thankful you did not send it..? 😊
Talk to a skilled self-manager	Find a skilled self-manager – use him/her as a mentor. Offer to share your journal entries. You are bound to learn some new ideas and effective techniques.
Smile and laugh more	Your face can signal emotions to your brain on how you should be behaving. Smiling or laughing can actually lift your mood – proven in research.
Set aside some time in your day for problem solving	Try to put aside 15 minutes each day to calm yourself and make any necessary decisions weighting on you. Also., check in with yourself and objectively evaluate any decisions you have been required to make earlier in the day.
Take control of your self- talk (inner voice / background conversations with yourself	Strong relationship between how you think and how you feel – we often think without awareness. Your self-talk if negative, can damage your ability to self-manage – it is self-defeating. Be aware – catch it. Do not chide yourself. Be pleased for recognizing and move on...
Visualize yourself succeeding	Your brain has a hard time distinguishing between what you experience and what you visualize. The world’s greatest athletes use this practice. Try it anytime – before meetings, at bedtime, in the morning
Clean up your sleep hygiene	Self-management requires patience, flexibility, alertness – it requires us to be at our best and good sleep is part of that foundation. Lack of quality sleep can lead to ruination of careers and lives – consult various sources for tips on good sleep requirements.

Focus attention on your freedoms, rather than your limitations	Focusing on restrictions is demoralizing – and you cannot do anything about it. Instead, focus on where you have options and control. Take accountability for what you can control – focus your energy there.
Stay synchronized	When you are doing a good job of managing your emotions, your body language will be in check. When this is not the case, emotions are getting the best of you. Be aware and keep on it.
Speak to someone who is NOT emotionally invested in your problem	The way our minds are structured, we can get in a single train of thought (rut). Use someone else as a sounding board. New perspectives open up new avenues for us to explore
Learn a valuable lesson from everyone your encounter	Every time someone else causes you to experience an emotional reaction – use that as a mirror to learn something about yourself. If you are caught off guard or put on the defensive, use the opportunity to learn
Put a mental recharge in your schedule	Apart from good sleep., take a walk alone each day at lunch, schedule time after a stressful meeting to relax and compose yourself (also yoga, exercise, meditation). If you do not take steps to keep yourself capably charged, you run the risk of disabling your self-management capabilities.
Accept that change is just around the corner - always	Prepare for change – it is always coming – it should never catch you by surprise. Admit to yourself that even the most stable, trusted facets of your life are not completely under your control. All things are impermanent.

Social Awareness Strategies

Social Awareness is your ability to accurately pick up on emotions in other people and understand what is really going on with them. You use this skill to better understand the other person's needs and feelings.

Strategy	
Greet people by name	Whatever the story is behind your name, it is an essential part of your identify and it feels good when people use your name and remember it.
Watch body language	Our bodies communicate non-stop – purposefully watch for messages from others. With awareness, you can use that information to address what is “really” on a person’s mind for the most positive outcome.
Make timing everything	Ask the right question, at the right time, with the right intention, and the right frame of mind. Be environment and situationally aware. Focus on others instead of yourself so that you can be most effective.
Develop a back pocket question	Sometimes questions do not go as planned – awkward silence feels like an eternity. Have a “stand-by” question ready to go in these instances – a versatile conversationalist knows when to bring this out and kick start a discussion.
Don’t take notes at meetings	News flash – multi-tasking sacrifices your quality of work and more specifically the quality of your interpersonal interaction. Having your head focused on notes, you can miss critical clues that may shed light on how others are thinking or feeling. Try it.
Plan ahead for social gatherings	Think about who is coming – consider some discussion topics in advance. Don’t get caught socially “flat footed” – be prepared. A bit of pre-planning will help you to ease any anxiety and enjoy the event more – that in turn will come through in your demeanor.
Clear away the clutter	To be socially aware you must be socially present – you cannot process the issue at work while you are socializing with your manager. Clean up the mental clutter – write it down if necessary and “let it go” for the evening. Remember.., a conversation is not a competition – don’t try to impress people with your responses – engage with authenticity.
Live in the moment	Planning the future and reflecting on the past are valuable exercises, but doing this throughout the day interferes with what is in front of you – your present.
Go on a 15 minute tour	During your workday, take 15 minutes to notice things you had not seen before. How people interact, family photos on office walls, tone of the hallway. Try this twice a week for a month – you will be amazed at what you learn along the way.
Watch EQ at the movies	We can learn behaviors from the movies – how is that different from observing people in real life..? This month, watch 2 movies with the specific purpose of observing character interactions, relationships, and conflicts. What did you learn..?

Practice the art of listening	Be present for the most effective listening – again, that means to curb the multi-tasking. Stop doing email while on the phone, in discussion – keep off your laptop, engage with people and check their body language – what is it telling you. How do people feel when you give them special attention when they are talking..? Does that help build relationships..?
Go people watching	Take time to observe – people reveal their moods. This is a safe way to pick up signals, observe interactions, and figure out underlying emotions without entering into interactions. Try the mall or local coffee shop – social awareness grows with practice.
Understand the rules of the culture game	Our world is a melting pot of different cultures – most have their own rules. Treat others the way they want to be treated – NOT the way you want to be treated. Listen and watch longer until you learn – ask specific questions - this prevents you from putting a foot in your mouth.
Test for accuracy	You think your socially aware assessment capabilities are strong – test those assumptions. Someone looks down – ask that person how they are feeling – what is going on with them. Was your assessment correct..? If you do not ask, you will never be sure.
Step into their shoes	Walking in the shoes of another – some call this empathy. This is one of our deepest understandings of others. Test your assumptions by predicting behavior in others – you can also check in with people if you are comfortable. The more you practice, the better you will become.
Seek the whole picture	Invite your fans and critics to share their perceptions of you – does that take courage..? What if they are wrong..? What if they are right..? Regardless of their answers.., the perceptions matter because other’s opinions influence you and your life. Good luck. 😊
Catch the mood in the room	Same as 1:1 awareness – but on a larger scale. There are two primary ways to pick up the mood in the room. One is your gut instincts – another is consult with an expert in social awareness. Take notice – are people in groups..? Moving their hands while talking..? What are you picking up from the body language..? Emotions are contagious, meaning they spread from 1 or 2 people until there is a palpable and collective mood that you will “feel” at some level.

Relationship Management Strategies

Relationship Management is your ability to use your awareness of your own emotions and those of others to manage interactions successfully. Relationship management poses the greatest challenge during times of stress.

Strategy	
Be open and be curious	Open means sharing information with others about yourself – this may require some level of trust or familiarity. You can use your self-management skills to determine how open you choose to be. People appreciate your authenticity – this includes genuine interest in others and that cannot be faked.
Enhance your natural communication style	On a piece of paper – describe your natural style – direct, controlled, chatty, intense, whatever... On the left hand side of the paper – list the positives – on the right side., list the cons (confusion, bad reactions). Grow your top 3 positives – work on addressing your top 3 “cons”. Be honest – enlist a friend to assist.
Avoid giving mixed signals	People trust what they see over what they hear – what you say must be congruent with your body language. We can confuse others when we’re out of synch. Pay close attention to your tone and body language – catch any incongruence – explain if necessary.
Remember the little things that pack a punch	Most people will say they rarely receive a “thank you” for their efforts. Be aware of your usage – employ more if it is appropriate. Be aware and appreciate and recognize the efforts of others. Thank you. 😊
Take feedback well	Feedback is meant to help us improve in ways we cannot see on our own – it can be hard to swallow. As you receive feedback, turn on your social skills – hear what is really being said – ask clarifying questions. After you receive the feedback, use your self-management skills to decide what steps to take and make appropriate plans. This can be hard.
Build trust	Some say trust is built rather than depleted by use – this assumes people are not trustful upfront. To build trust, use your self-awareness and self-management skills to be the first to show some vulnerability and share about you – take the first step – do this a little at a time, not in “big bang” fashion. Use social awareness skills to ask the other person what they need to see happen for trust to develop. Be open and curious.
Have an “open door” policy	Make yourself assessable – this will improve relationships. People feel respected and valued when you give them your time.
Only get mad on purpose	Anger exists for a reason – use it purposefully to get results that can enhance relationships. If you get angry – it must be with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way.

Don't avoid the inevitable	Uncomfortable situations which we know exist and which are not addressed are sometimes called "the elephant in the living room" – these must be addressed and resolved. Bad feelings that are not put in the light of day merely fester and become poison. Lead with heart and good intentions – work for a win-win outcome – be genuine and empathetic.
Acknowledge the other person's feelings	We can be quick to use our own emotions as a barometer for a given situation instead of thinking of others. Walk a mile in another person's shoes – grow your own empathy for their feelings and emotions. Hold onto your own thoughts and words – check in with the other person first – exercise your best listening skills. You will end up with a better connection and relationship.
Complement the person's emotions or situation	Tell yourself that your role is to notice other's moods and be there for them in a helpful way. Assume best intentions – take the high road. Demonstrate patience and concern. Demonstrate that you recognize what the other person feels and you think it is important.
When you care, show it	There are great people who do great work around you every day and we do not mention it. When you care, show it. Don't put it off until next week – do something this week or today. Something as simple as a cookie or greeting card can make a huge difference.
Explain your decisions, don't just make them	People appreciate your efforts to explain the information behind a decision – even if it does not change the outcome of the decision. Some people call this "educate and influence". When people understand the mechanics behind a tough choice.., they often accept the outcome more readily – and relationships are made stronger as a result.
Make your feedback direct and constructive	Giving feedback is a relationship-building event – it requires all 4 EQ skills to be effective. Word selection is important – the same key message delivered with the wrong words can be counterproductive. Be direct and check-in often – adjust along the way as necessary depending on responses and body language. At the end, ask the person for their thoughts and suggestions for improved interaction next time.
Align your intention with your impact	Use your social awareness and self-management skills to observe the situation and the people in it – think before you speak or act and make an appropriate and sensitive response. You cannot be multi-tasking, you must take stock of body language, you must be present and truly engaged for a good outcome.
Offer a "fix-it" statement during a broken conversation	Sometimes in a conversation – an unfortunate comment may be made that gets someone upset – it can be innocent, it can be accidental and things degrade. Take that moment to offer a free "fix-it" statement – basically an opportunity to erase the bad and try again. You both need to agree to let go of the blame and focus on the repair. Do you want to be right or do you want resolution..? This strategy can help maintain open lines of communication with conscious effort and practice.
Tackle a tough conversation	Tough conversations are inevitable – don't try running because they will catch up with you. Several books offer advice for how to address. Take the high road – don't be defensive, remain open – practice humility.