



Managing Your Emotions

Everyone experiences emotions at work. Feeling proud when praised for a 'job well done', frustration at colleagues who don't complete their part of a project or annoyance at an angry customer who doesn't realize you are trying your best to help, are just three examples. Many people think that the emotions they experience are the inevitable result of a situation or someone else's behaviour. However, there are ways to manage and control emotions so they work for us, not against us. This is often referred to as Emotional Intelligence. It is the learned ability to recognize, understand and express our feelings accurately in order to control our emotions.

Simply, Emotional Intelligence is:

- Understanding how you and others feel and what can be done to influence these feelings
- Knowing what feels good and what feels bad
- Having emotional awareness, sensitivity and the management skills that will help us to increase our long-term happiness

Key components of Emotional Intelligence include:

Self-awareness

Self-awareness is key to gaining emotional intelligence. It is the ability to recognise and understand our feelings and how these feelings affect our behaviour. By seeing ourselves through

our own eyes, we become aware of our goals, beliefs and values. This can provide us with a new perspective on the situation, which, in turn, can help us to evaluate the feelings that we are experiencing and our reactions to the situation.

Emotional control

Emotional control is an ability to deal with your emotional reactions, control your impulsive reactions and recover from life's upsets. By understanding how you interpret and respond to an event, you can choose an alternative way to feel. An exercise to help you gain emotional control is to keep a diary of your feelings so you can identify the relationship between your thoughts, feelings and actions.

Handling relationships

Strained working relationships or dealing with a difficult customer is something most of us will unfortunately experience during our career. Knowing how to effectively manage these difficult relationships is a very worthwhile skill to have. Ways to build strong working relationships are to:

- Know the boundaries (what can and can't be said or done)
- Examine and review your expectations
- Review the situation from each person's perception (avoid making assumptions on the basis of little evidence)
- Consider how you interact with each other
- Determine what the ideal relationship would be

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Emotions and Conflict

- Dealing with conflict is rarely a comfortable event.
- It is common for the individuals involved to either shy away from the issue or lash out when the conflict becomes too much.
- It is important to remain calm. Reacting in an emotional way will only serve to increase difficult or defensive behaviour in yourself and your colleague.
- You may need to remove yourself from the situation before you can apply the principles of Emotional Intelligence.