

Understanding Yourself And Others, Too

A Discussion of Emotional Intelligence

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There is an old Chinese Proverb that says, “May you live in interesting times.” As managers and leaders in the 21st century, we certainly do live in interesting times.

We have an aging workforce full of mature individuals who are commonly known as “Baby Boomers”. These folks heard their parents talk about WW II, the importance of company loyalty, and staying with a job for 30-plus years. Many believed they would choose to retire from the company where they had spent most of their career.

Of course, we know how most of that has turned out.

As the Baby Boomers start to retire, they are being replaced by “Gen – X,” “Gen – Y,” and the newly dubbed “Gen-Z” or Millennial” generations. The experience of these individuals is far different from that of their parents. They watched their parents go through downsizing, right-sizing, outsourcing, strategic re-alignments, re-engineering, and a variety of other initiatives that all meant the same thing. They were out of a job.....

And we’re not even touching on the corporate greed and fraud that costs tens of thousands of hardworking employees their retirement through lost wealth that had been held in company stock and stock options.

The younger generations are looking at work in an entirely different way than most of us ever thought possible. Now, more than ever before, we have a diversified workforce. Not just from the standpoint of racial or ethnic diversity, but from a variety of diverse viewpoints on what work means, career growth, values, attention spans, career and personal expectations; not to mention the variety of thoughts available on what constitutes a home life, career balance, and the value of loyalty to anything.

What this means to you as a leader is that now, more than ever before, you must become more aware of yourself and how you impact others. You must become a student of human behavior to understand, not just what motivates you, but what motivates and drives those around you. You need to understand that what you say...may not be what someone else hears. And that what you hear...may not be what someone else intended you to hear. You also need to understand that your success is directly tied to your ability to meld all of these different components into a winning team.

The process of understanding yourself and others is called “Emotional Intelligence” (EQ) and reflects how well we know and recognize our own behaviors; how well we are able to manage those behaviors to produce the desired results; how well we understand others around us; and how well we manage our relationships with those people.

Emotional Intelligence (getting the most from yourself and those around you) has replaced Intellectual Intelligence (IQ) as the measuring stick for success in business.

Here is the challenge. Your IQ can be measured through a standardized test you take. The score is based on your correct answers to factual issues and questions. Emotional Intelligence, on the other hand, can be measured in 2 ways: 1) by input received from others based on THEIR perception of how well you understand yourself and them; and 2) your own perception of how well you understand and manage yourself and how well you understand and relate to others.

Comparing these results through a properly administered 360° survey is the best and most effective way to determine your own EQ. Without a formal 360° survey, it's a little bit like looking in the mirror and asking yourself, "Does this shirt/outfit look good on me?" The answer we process mentally from the mirror and the answer that might be provided by others looking at us can be substantially different. But when your future and your career are at stake, you can't afford to let a distorted self-image blur the reality.

The beauty of Emotional Intelligence is that, unlike IQ, EQ can be learned. Once you understand your own level of emotional intelligence, you can take the steps necessary to raise your EQ and your chances of success in life and work.

An engaged and energized workforce leads to higher productivity, reduced costs, improved customer service, and increased profitability. Employee engagement happens when your Corporate Culture, Leadership Style, and Employee Expectations are in synch.

The Fusion Program from ECI Learning Systems is designed to align these 3 concepts in your organization – engaging your employees and creating positive energy that will propel your company to new heights.

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