

SIX SECONDS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Just as people have an intelligence for processing and manipulating ideas, we have a similar capacity for understanding and using emotions. There are many definitions of emotional intelligence to serve different purposes; researchers need a scientific model while practitioners need a practical model. The scientific definition involves sensing, understanding, and using emotions. Our practical definition is, "emotional intelligence is the capacity to get optimal results from your relationships with yourself and others."

To provide a practical and simple way to learn and practice emotional intelligence, Six Seconds developed a three-part model in 1997. To be emotionally intelligent means to "Know Yourself," "Choose Yourself," and "Give Yourself." Our model draws on the work of Peter Salovey, Ph.D. (one of our advisory board members), and Jack Mayer, Ph.D. who first defined EQ as a scientific concept. It also aligns with the model popularized by Daniel Goleman in his 1995 book, *Emotional Intelligence*, which endorses our EQ curriculum *Self-Science*. The Six Seconds' EQ model also aligns with the 15 competencies defined by Reuven Bar-On, Ph.D. in his EQi test, and the structure of Q-Metrics' test, the EQ Map created by Esther Orioli and advisory board member Robert Cooper, Ph.D.

- **Know Yourself** is increasing self-awareness. It is based on understanding how you function.
- **Choose Yourself** is building self-management. It focuses on consciously choosing your thoughts, feelings, and actions.
- **Give Yourself** is developing self-direction. It comes from using empathy and principled decision-making to increase wisdom and to create a more compassionate, healthy world.

We have identified eight key skills, or fundamentals, of emotional intelligence. They are divided into the three parts of the model. Like all kinds of intelligence, there are developmental aspects to this learning (as we get older and more practiced, our abilities become more sophisticated and complex – and one skill builds on another) and our ability to use this intelligence varies situation to situation, day to day.

KNOW YOURSELF

ENHANCE EMOTIONAL LITERACY

Feelings are a complex aspect of every person. While research has identified eight

"core" feelings (fear, joy, acceptance, anger, sorrow, disgust, surprise, anticipation), we each experience dozens, even hundreds, of variations each day. These emotions blend and merge, and frequently they conflict. This EQ fundamental helps us sort out all of

TO PRACTICE EQ...

KNOW YOURSELF

- Enhance Emotional Literacy
- Recognize Patterns

CHOOSE YOURSELF

- Apply Consequential Thinking
- Navigate Emotions
- Engage Intrinsic Motivation
- Exercise Optimism

GIVE YOURSELF

- Increase Empathy
- Pursue Noble Goals

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those feelings, name them, and begin to understand their causes and effects. It also helps us understand how emotions function in our brains and bodies, and the interaction of thought, feeling, and action.

RECOGNIZE PATTERNS

The human brain follows patterns, or neural pathways. Stimulus leads to response and, over time, the response becomes habitual as the pathway becomes a road, the road a highway, and the highway a super expressway. Then it requires extraordinary measures to interrupt the established habit. The patterns include thinking, feeling, and action in a continuous cycle. At a young age, we learn lessons of how to cope, how to get our needs met, and how to protect ourselves. These strategies reinforce one another, and we develop a complex structure of beliefs to support the validity of the behaviors. Often this system of patterns serves us well, and at other times it leads us to unconsciously create the opposite of what we really want.

CHOOSE YOURSELF

APPLY CONSEQUENTIAL THINKING

This “habit of mind” stems from a clear assessment of the consequences of our choices and the ability to imagine the cause and effect relationships. This process allows us to be as impulsive as we truly want to be, but it also allows us to delay gratification when the consequences are undesirable and/or painful. Consequential thinking is key to evaluating and rechoosing our thoughts, feelings, and actions.

We each make countless decisions each hour. What should I eat for lunch? What clothes should I wear today? Which book should I read? Which person should I ask? We make those decisions unconsciously

based on our patterns, habits, and our personal priorities. The choices shape us. In order to create integrity, we must look at the costs and benefits of the small actions as well as the large ones, and align our actions with our intentions.

NAVIGATE EMOTIONS

People are often told to control their emotions, to suppress feelings like anger, joy, or fear, and cut them off from the decision-making process. This old paradigm suggests that emotions make us less effective; nothing could be farther from current research. Feelings provide insight, energy, and often are the real basis for almost every decision. Instead of disconnecting our emotions, we need to slow down our reactions so that we have time to make the most creative, insightful, and powerful decisions. Particularly when dealing with conflict or crisis, we benefit by slowing the process down, carefully engaging both heart and mind, and creating productive solutions.

When we become skilled at sensing, labeling, and using our own emotions, we are able to harness them as a source of information and motivation. Emotions are the fuel for change – the challenge is to refine and utilize that energy – to carefully choose how we will use the power of our feelings.

ENGAGE INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

“Motivation” comes from the Latin meaning “to move.” In essence, we take action because it feels rewarding to do so. The challenge is to manage and sustain our energy levels and ensure that we are able to persevere through the challenges. To do so, we must tap into the part of ourselves that

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has a longer view and find the reward within ourselves. Otherwise, we are dependent on feedback from others and can easily be swayed from our true intentions. As we learn to get the validation we need from inside we create inner strength and the power to continuously grow.

EXERCISE OPTIMISM

Optimism confirms our long-term motivation because it allows us see the future as positive and worthwhile. Optimism is the vehicle to see beyond the present and anticipate the future. It is tied to resiliency and to perseverance, which are two skills that most affect our ability to function despite the stresses and challenges of day-to-day life. Optimism means recognizing that we each have the power to make change – that we make a difference – and that though our efforts the world can improve. Our perceptions of the future create the present; optimistic thinking immediately enhances our lives.

GIVE YOURSELF

INCREASE EMPATHY

Empathy is the ability to recognize and respond to other people's emotions. We actually experience for ourselves the emotions of others; it hurts us to hurt others or to see them hurt. Therefore, we all benefit when that hurt can be resolved. Thus, empathy is the force that validates the Golden Rule. Some parts of empathy are instinctive. For example, infants and toddlers will reach out and touch others in distress; in maternity wards, one infant's tears will lead to a room full of crying babies. These actions are the first steps towards building empathic responses. Unfortunately, this unconscious or instinctive behavior does not automatically

lead to conscious empathy. Instead, these flickering flames must be carefully banked and fueled through role-modeling, reinforcement, and practice. Once people develop empathy on a conscious level, it becomes self-reinforcing because it answers a deep-seated need to build sustaining relationships with others.

PURSUE NOBLE GOALS

Noble goals activate all of the other elements of EQ. Through our goals, our missions, and our acts of human kindness, the commitment to emotional intelligence gains relevance and power for improving the world today and tomorrow. Just as our personal priorities shape our daily choices, our noble goals shape our long-term choices. They give us a sense of direction, they give us a spar to hold in the storm, and they are the compass for our soul. A noble goal provides a measure for your daily actions and invites your best self to step forward.

All the "inside" aspects of emotional intelligence change your attitudes, perceptions, and beliefs. They shape your own life; they help you become the person you want to be. Your noble goals touch the future.

Six Seconds of EQ was written by Joshua Freedman (Six Seconds' Director of Programs) and Anabel Jensen, Ph.D. (Six Seconds' President). Six Seconds is a nonprofit organization teaching people to develop emotional intelligence to create more meaningful lives. For more information, please visit us online: www.6seconds.org