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Articles

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3: EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: MANAGING ANGER

Daniel Goleman tells us in his book *Emotional Intelligence* that the human being has two distinctively different brains: "one that feels and one that thinks". The emotional/rational dichotomy approximates the folk distinction between "heart" and "head". These two minds operate in tight harmony intertwining their two different ways of knowing to guide us through the world.

When it comes to managing emotions, there are two main categories: (a) arousal emotions, and (b) emotions that slow down or suppress. Emotions that arouse include: anger and anxiety. These emotions need to be managed by soothing and calming. On the other hand, emotions that slow down include: depression and sadness. These emotions need activity and stimulation. It is the thinking of the left prefrontal lobe that modifies these emotions which enables the response to be emotionally intelligent.

The processes of emotional intelligence include:

First – the **intra-personal skills** that enable the person to form an accurate picture of oneself, access one's own feelings and draw upon the emotions to guide behavior, and ...

Second – the **inter-personal skills** that provide the ability to understand other people and to discern, respond appropriately to moods, temperaments, motivations and desires of other people.

Emotional intelligence combines the following steps:

1) **INTRA-PERSONAL ABILITIES:**

- a) **Knowing** one's own emotions – self-awareness or recognizing a feeling as it happens.
- b) **Controlling** one's own emotions – the capacity to control and soothe one's self so that feelings can be responded to appropriately.
- c) **Managing** one's own emotions - the capacity to marshal emotions in the service of a goal.

2) **INTER-PERSONAL ABILITIES:**

- a) **Empathy** – the capacity to listen to and be attuned to another person.
- b) **Relate** – the capacity to interact with others smoothly by coordinating moods and dealing effectively with the other person's emotions.



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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: (SUMMARY)

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c) **Optimism** – the capacity to live out of the creative, co-operative, positive approach of "how" to make things happen.

The **intra**-personal emotional intelligence is needed first before moving to the **inter**-personal emotional intelligence. As you will see in the following examples, the principles of agape love are integral to the practice of emotional intelligence.

How to Manage Anger Using Emotional Intelligence

1) Intra-personal (within self)

a) Self-awareness

- Know and recognize the feeling of anger
- express anger by putting it into words (without sinning), e.g. I feel frustration, resentment, bitterness, anger, hate, rage, fury.
- understand the causes of the anger

b) Self-control (all feelings are OK, some responses are not)

- bring the anger under control
- separate and distance from the source of the anger
- be still and know that I am God (relaxation techniques)
- cool down, soothe self and bring the heartbeat down to normal (you cannot think straight if your heart is 10+ beats per minute over normal).
- grace – resist the temptation to respond (ask for the gift of self-control, **Galatians 5:23**)
- put off gratification of responding since ventilation only makes things worse.
- avoid alcohol and mind-altering drugs
- re-appraise the trigger thought, reframe it and put the thought into perspective

c) Self-manage

- mercy – do not judge others
- confess own sin in the situation and take responsibility for it
- forgive the other person for what he/she said or did (also forgive self)
- choose peace over revenge (front left cortex)
- ask Jesus to reveal his will and truth in the situation
- find meaning in the situation – what can I learn?



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2. Inter-personal Relationship (with others)

a) Empathy (needs calmness & receptivity)

- with humility, listen to the other person's perspective without judging or fighting
- with care and compassion, understand the other person's feelings and validate his/her emotions
- connect with the other person's feelings and reflect them back

b) Relate

- be aware of the other person's social and emotional cues (observe, mirror, engage
- in communication and enjoin with the person)
- look for common ground to find a win-win solution
- be sensitive to appropriate and acceptable behavior
- remove the assumption of malice
- look for ways to up-build and uplift the other
- offer acceptance, respect, compassion, love and nurture the other person's growth for his/her well-being.

c) Optimism

- know that you are free of emotional attachment
- creatively explore how you and the person can now relate together
- find the positives in the relationship
