

Emotional intelligence- the key to success



emotional intelligence
charitable trust
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As a psychologist and mental coach I always believed that one should give back to the community. Hence, our EQ Charitable Trust was funded three years ago. Running a private practice, offering emotional intelligence and leadership courses to companies, we believe that children should be taught those life changing emotional intelligence skills too, to cope better and be helped to make the right choices to lead a successful life.

What is emotional intelligence?

EQ, our emotional quotient, is another way of saying 'human effectiveness' and it is important because it sets the stage for our ability to succeed in life. The field of EQ has had a profound impact on the way we think about success.

Typical emotional intelligence skills that are vital for any person to learn are:

- 1. Intrapersonal Skills**
- 2. Interpersonal Skills**
- 3. Stress Management**
- 4. Adaptability**

Different studies have shown that a high level of emotional intelligence helps us to achieve and maintain our goals more effectively. Research on managers and staff in big companies who were tested on their IQ and EQ levels showed that some of the successful managers had lower IQs than their staff but had far higher EQs. This proves that EQ is more important than IQ when working with other people. As Mrs Nala Preusker from the Qondokuhle Primary Schools said: "Our children improved so much after learning the vital EQ skills from the courses offered at our school. We could see that an increased emotional intelligence had a direct influence on scholastic performance of the children."

The EQ Charitable Trust courses are based on Emotional Intelligence and have been developed by psychologists, counselors and other experts from the field of psychology, using contemporary research, literature and practical experienced developed over years in practice and working with other Non-Profit Organization', community crisis centers, as well as in clinical hospital settings.

So many children and teenagers in South Africa have less than adequate social skills, suffer from anxiety, are the subjects of bullying and violence, cannot concentrate, have sleeping problems and even show depressive, PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) symptoms. Children facing these challenges don't have the opportunity to develop the skills to cope well in life and often don't have role models. They tend to slip into negative behavior patterns, such as crime and violence. Especially in our country, we see an excessive amount of violent behavior due to a lack of emotional skills. This often is a result of many parents dying from exposure to of HIV and AIDS, divorcing and breaking up the family unit or simply as a result of not having the time and the funds to educate their children. Sadly, another factor is the repetition of learned behavior, as a result of having grown up in violent household themselves. It was the aforementioned factors, as well as the awareness of the dire need for emotional coping skills, that prompted the development of the courses. After having offered EQ courses for over 6 years, it has become evident that they are very beneficial and life changing.

Pauline Cook, Deputy Principal of the Sherwood Primary school said: " We had a number of children in our school that were violent and had anger issues. We were grateful to receive help in form of the EQ courses. Some of us had given up on those children as they behaved so badly. We could see changes after a few sessions and over a period of two terms those children changed from being bullies into being ladies and gentlemen. One of those children was made prefect, which was an absolute miracle. The behavior of those children changed drastically after having learned emotional intelligence skills."

According to many teachers, parents and principals all children should be learn emotional intelligence skills in school as this equips them with good coping skills for life.

We all come across difficult situations that cause discomfort, stress, sadness and unhappiness. People with a high EQ are able to handle conflicts better than people who have poor intra- and interpersonal skills.

In order to notice emotion while it is happening, you must pay attention to the following:

- **Emotions** are expressed physically and are reflected in your body and posture. Certain behaviours like clenched fists or gritted teeth are good signals that you might be angry or stressed.
- **Thoughts and Beliefs.** Emotions are expressed as thoughts. It is normal for certain thought patterns to only be present when you are

upset. Your learning to notice that those emotion-linked thoughts are present in your mind becomes a clue that you are upset. For example, many people say to themselves, "I can't cope with this and feel that everything is too much!" when feeling stressed, but do not say the opposite to themselves when they are feeling okay.

- **Your Actions.** Emotions change your behaviors. Learn to recognize the way you act while upset. Noticing that you are suddenly raising your voice or starting to speak over other people might be clues that you are upset.
- **Your Triggers.** Triggers are situations, people, places, feelings, thoughts or objects that get you to start thinking or feeling something you would not otherwise have thought or felt. Triggers can start negative thoughts and emotions, which can lead to you becoming upset without your conscious awareness. Identify your triggers by watching for the things that set you off, and then writing them down.

It is important to be aware of your triggers, thoughts and emotions. EQ skills will allow you to be more in control and handle difficult life situations better.

It is encouraging to know that EQ can be learned and it is found to be the missing link in improving mental, scholastic and work performance and change people to lead happier lives.

Buy 500ml water for your business or the next function and support another project.

For more information on the EQ Charitable Trust projects, the campaigns and how to get involved look up: www.eqtrust.org.za.

Anyone should have the opportunity to increase the EQ quotient- it is the greatest gift a person can receive.

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