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A STUDENT'S GUIDE TO COMMUNICATION & SELF-PRESENTATION

RECOMMENDATIONS, RELATIONSHIPS,
RÉSUMÉS, AND INTERVIEWS

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CHAPTER

7

BUILDING A SOLID EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE/EQ

7.1: IQ, EQ, and Personality Make Who You Are

Your IQ, or intelligence quotient, is your ability to learn and typically doesn't change much over the course of your lifetime. Your EQ, or emotional intelligence, is a flexible set of skills that can be acquired and improved with practice. While you can develop a high emotional intelligence even if you aren't born with it, you can't predict emotional intelligence based on how smart someone is. Personality is the final piece that makes you who you are. Personality is the result of hardwired preferences. Personality usually doesn't change much over your lifetime. According to Drs. Travis Bradberry and Jean Greaves, authors of *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*, "Emotional intelligence is your ability to recognize and understand emotions in yourself and others and your ability to use this awareness to manage your behavior and relationships." Your emotional intelligence is the foundation for a host of critical skills—it impacts most everything you say and do each day.¹

¹ Writer, Staff. "About Emotional Intelligence." *TalentSmart*. 8 May 2017. Web. <http://www.talentsmart.com/about/emotional-intelligence.php>

7.2: Don't Employers Want Smart Employees?

Of course they do! However, more and more employers are looking for employees who are smart and competent in their professional skills AND highly competent in “soft skills” or skills that can be best described by an emotional quotient. Soft skills are a group of personality traits that characterize one’s ability to interact with other people. These skills can include social graces, communication abilities, language skills, personal habits, cognitive or emotional empathy, and leadership traits.

They are qualities and skills that cannot be measured on any standardized test and yet are highly valued by academic institutions and businesses. Some of them may sound familiar because they are the very same skills you learned in kindergarten and were evaluated on in school or for your college admission. They are the same skills that we talked about in Chapter 2. They have been important character traits for every generation, and they will continue to rank right up there as important skills to possess because you will need them for future success. Many employers try to maximize their hiring practices by hiring people who already have these skills. In fact, a company called TalentSmart tested more than a million people and found that the upper echelons of top performance are filled with people who are high in emotional intelligence—90 percent of top performers, to be exact. They also discovered that EQ is responsible for 58 percent of your job performance, and those employees with high EQ tend to earn \$29,000 a year more than their lower EQ counterparts.ⁱⁱ

7.3: What Skills Will Increase My EQ?

According to a new CareerBuilder survey, the top 10 skills companies say they look for when hiring a candidate include someone who has a strong work ethic, is dependable, has a positive attitude, is self-motivated, is team-oriented, is organized/can manage multiple priorities, works well under pressure, is an effective communicator, is flexible, and is confident.ⁱⁱⁱ Other important skills and character traits include compassion, kindness, responsibility, empathy, good manners, respect, gratitude, inquisitiveness, love of learning, courage, common sense, spirituality, diligence, grit, resilience,

ⁱ Schmidt, Mike. “Emotional Intelligence (EQ) Stats.” Web. 2017. www.emotionalintelligence.net

ⁱⁱ Grasz, J. “Overwhelming Majority of Companies Say Soft Skills Are Just as Important as Hard Skills, According to a New CareerBuilder Survey.” *CareerBuilder*. 10 April 2014. Web. 10 May 2017. <http://www.careerbuilder.com/share/aboutus/pressreleasesdetail.aspx?ed=12/31/2014&id=pr817&sd=4/10/2014>

ⁱⁱⁱ CareerBuilder. “Top 10 Skills Companies Look for in Hiring.” Web. 2017. www.careerbuilder.com

persistence, creativity, life skills, discernment, integrity, patience, self-control, leadership, and a sense of humor.

Whether you know it or not, you have been practicing and building your EQ skills in your family life, in school, on the playground, on sports teams, and any time you interact with other people. Face it ... there are some people who naturally get along with everyone. You know who these people are. They tend to have very strong interpersonal skills and can pretty much float in and out of different groups of people with little or no effort. Other people have to work harder to develop social skills and relationships with a variety of personalities. The good news is that even if “interpersonal skills” are not your natural strength, they can be enhanced and developed with some effort and practice. Developing these skills can lead to a higher EQ, which will serve you well in future relationships.

7.4: Reading Body Language

Travis Bradberry, president of TalentSmart, wrote a piece for *Entrepreneur* where he shares that reading body language is a critical skill, and that those who are able to read body language can have an edge or advantage in the workplace: ^{iv}

Bradberry goes on to highlight the following important research, “According to UCLA research, only 7 percent of communication is based on the actual words we say. As for the rest, 38 percent comes from tone of voice and the remaining 55 percent comes from body language. If you can become aware of and accurately interpret that 55 percent, you will be a step ahead.”^v

Before you lose sleep over the idea of having to be a body language expert, realize that you have probably in some way or another been reading body language most of your life. Think of a time when you did something your parents were very unhappy with. They may have raised their voice, or maybe they were even yelling at you. Along with that, you probably also noticed that their face was turning red or they were waving their arms around. Now think of a time when they were disappointed with you. They probably told you they were disappointed, but then maybe they turned away from you or wouldn't make eye contact. Now think of a time when they were very happy with something you did. Maybe they hugged you, or their eyes crinkled in the corner because they had such a huge smile.

^{iv} Bradberry, T. “8 Great Tricks for Reading People’s Body Language.” *Entrepreneur*. 18 May 2016. Web. 8 May 2017. <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/275309>

^v Bradberry, T. “8 Great Tricks for Reading People’s Body Language.” *Entrepreneur*. 18 May 2016. Web. 8 May 2017. <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/275309>

Here are some common body language cues:

External or Physical Signs That May Signal Anger/Frustration:

- Crossed or waving arms
- Tight or clenched fists
- Crossed legs
- Red face
- Facial or jaw muscles visibly twitching
- Eyebrows furrowed
- Leaning in toward you or getting “in your face”

External Signs That May Signal Disagreement or Annoyance:

- Turning away from you
- Not making eye contact
- Rolling eyes
- Shaking their head side to side
- Starting to do something else while you are still talking
- Slumping down in a chair or in posture if standing

External Signs That May Signal Happiness or Approval:

- A smile
- Good eye contact
- An upright and engaged posture
- Nodding their head up and down in agreement
- Reaching in for a handshake

In order to be able to read body language well, the first step is to be aware that people can and do give signals about their feelings via external signs. Once you are aware, you can begin watching the people with whom you interact more closely. One thing is for sure, if you notice a shift in physical demeanor or tone of voice, chances are something is going on! It might even be a good idea to state that you feel like something is wrong, but you are not sure what. This then opens the door to communicating more clearly.

VOICES FROM CAMPUS 7.1

Mary's Story . . .

Mary (to her roommate): Ugh, I am so annoyed. We have a group project that we are working on in microeconomics, and today during our group meeting, we were each reporting in on what we have gotten done. Andrea, the person we designated as the group leader, was sitting in her chair, all slumped down with her arms crossed, and I could see her jaw muscle twitching.

JoAnn (roommate): Wow, what do you think that was about?

Mary: Well, I know I only got done about half of what I said I would during last week's meeting, and one of the other group members hadn't actually done anything at all on his list.

JoAnn: Oh, well I am guessing she cares about her grade and feels annoyed. She probably feels like people aren't pulling their weight.

Mary: Well, then why didn't she just say that?

JoAnn: Some people are not comfortable confronting others when they are unhappy. I think you should talk to Mary and the other group members and agree that things have slipped from the plan a bit and develop a new plan to get back on track.

7.5: Developing Personal and Social Competence

Personal competence is your ability to focus on your self-awareness and self-management skills more than on your interactions with other people. This means being aware of your emotions, body language, and tendencies and then managing your behaviors appropriately to stay flexible and positive. Social competence is your ability to understand other people's moods, behavior, and motives in order to improve the quality of your relationships. Can you pick up on emotions in other people and understand what is really going on? Can you read their body language and use it to assess how the conversation is progressing? Can you manage relationships with others by being aware of their feelings and navigating the relationship to a positive outcome?^{vi}

^{vi} Writer, Staff. "About Emotional Intelligence." *TalentSmart*. 8 May 2017. Web. <http://www.talentsmart.com/about/emotional-intelligence.php>