



INSTITUTE *for* HEALTH *and* HUMAN POTENTIAL

Emotional Intelligence: What is it? Why is it Important?

Because of the furious pace of change in business today, difficult to manage relationships sabotage more business than anything else - it is not a question of strategy that gets us into trouble, it is a question of emotions. - John Kotter, Harvard Business School

IQ and technical skills are "threshold requirements" – we need those just to get the job. What distinguishes high performers from average performers, "best boss" from average boss, is Emotional Intelligence (EQ).

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is **the ability to effectively recognize and manage our own emotions and those of others**. Emotions affect our ability to think and process information. When we are angry, upset, or feel threatened, we *lose some of our cognitive ability*. This is part of the "fight or flight" response. Emotional states such as anger "hijack" our brain: the more emotion, the more reasoning ability we lose.

People generally know what they should and should not do. So why do they sometimes do otherwise? We all have "default" behaviors that we have learned over time, and in times of stress, we revert to those behaviors, such as being reactive, controlling, or even lashing out in anger. Why do leaders get derailed and revert to default behaviors? Because our emotions get in the way – and we don't even recognize that our emotions are affecting us.

Every day, supervisors and managers feel the pressure to make decisions under deadlines. Building trust takes time, yet it may be destroyed in an instant, in an act of anger or some other strong emotion. So it is vitally important that all leaders are self-aware, and able to manage their emotions. It is also important for them to be able to forge strong connections with those around them: direct reports, clients, colleagues. By developing their EQ skills, leaders will be more effective and better able to increase employee engagement and loyalty, resulting in improved client satisfaction and greater productivity.

Many organizational issues are related to our emotions. For example, change is an issue at many companies. Well, the root problem is an emotional response. Figure out your emotions, and you can manage your response to change -- and others' responses. In sales organizations, setbacks occur daily. Deals are lost and the response is an emotional one. Maintaining optimism in the face of setbacks is vital.

Higher levels of emotional intelligence in organizations have resulted in improved performance in the following areas:

- reduced turnover
- reduced grievances
- improved sales
- improved production
- reduction in lost time due to accidents and illness.

IHHP's programs have met with unsurpassed success in organizations seeking to improve the performance of their people. Just as we help top athletes who are looking for that extra "edge" in their performance, we can help your people become top performers too!