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Use Your Emotional Intelligence in All Your Relationships

By Susan Dunn

Use Your Emotional Intelligence in All Your Relationships by Susan Dunn, Emotional Intelligence Coach

A recent article I read about what's called "hierarchical relationships" in the work place, reminded me of a very important fact about all relationships. As soon as we start thinking we are better than someone else, or smarter than they are, or more important - across the board - we are in trouble, and the work is in trouble, and the relationship is in trouble.

Why? Because we are never better than someone else, or smarter than they are, or more important than they are, across the board in the absolute sense. Everyone has something to contribute.

Each of us has strengths and weaknesses. Each of us knows something another person does not, or sees it more clearly, or is better at a certain aspect of the situation. In fact it's often the person not on the firing line who has the emotional clarity to perceive what's going on.

In the ideal situation, we rely on the strengths of the other when they're needed, recognizing them and acknowledging them. We work together, laterally, not from a vantage point of being "better than."

Think of all the times your child taught you something. I hear this happening all the time. Yes, you are the parent, and you know many things your child does not know and must be doing your job, but your child is in touch with things. Most of all, they are in touch with themselves, and with their feelings, and with yours. It's hard to fool your child about how you're "truly" feeling, and this can be just the information you need at the time.

The other day I heard a mother snap at her child in the store for asking for a toy. The child started crying and replied, "But why are you mad at me?" It makes perfect sense, when you think about it. To want a toy is normal. To ask for a toy is normal. To ask for a toy when you've been told not to, is also normal, as we all make mistakes, And most importantly, to want something, or to ask for it, or to make a mistake isn't cause for someone else to get "mad."

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We're used to thinking of relationships in a hierarchical manner - the boss over the manager over the employees. But in actuality, everyone is contributing something crucial to the enterprise or they wouldn't be there. I have heard an attorney say to his paralegal, "I could never have done this without you," but it is far too rare, yes?

THE BIRD SANCTUARY

The other day I was in a huge Lowe's store. I was sure I had landed in a bird sanctuary by mistake. Under the huge expanse of the vaulted ceiling, I could hear birds chirping - nice, sweet songbirds, not grackles - and every now and then one would zoom past. When the salesman appeared, I asked him about it. He said, yes, they were there all the time now. I said, "Your poor manager. They don't teach that in MBA school."

Then he told me that every now and then a kitten would come into the store. The first time it happened, they called the manager and he stood there, and no one knew what to do about it. Then one of the saleswomen came up who had done this before ... capturing wild kittens and putting them outside. She asked for gloves and went about the business of luring the kitten and carrying it outside. Whose job was it? She didn't ask. The manager didn't ask.. The other salespeople didn't ask. They just wanted someone who knew what to do about it.

Moving away from the hierarchical relationship is starting to occur simply out of necessity. Many work projects require teamwork now, because they demand more information than any one person has, no matter what their field of expertise. They require more emotional intelligence than IQ because things don't always work out the way we think they will. Emotional intelligence means being creative and flexible in problem-solving.

Also we have to cope with change and speed. Something needs to be done, and done immediately, like the kitten in the Lowe's store, and what's needed is two-sided accountability, that's all.

THE BEES

On a recent cruise (being a coach, I speak on cruise ships), my sister and I stayed on board when it docked at Cozumel to enjoy the pool to ourselves. As we sat poolside, a swarm of bees came aboard. They descended upon one of the loud speakers, and wrapped themselves around it in a dark black cloud. Something about vibrations, my sister said.

My sister lives in San Diego, near the Mexican border, of course, and there are killer bees there. She also knew exactly what to do with them. "Get a vacuum cleaner," she told the staff and crew who were beginning to appear.

No one listened. They cordoned off the area with yellow tape. Others were called. Eventually the captain appeared.

Fast forward ... 45 minutes later a steward was called to bring a vacuum cleaner and the bees were vacuumed up.

WHERE WILL YOU GET HELP

Are ship captain's trained to deal with killer bees, or store managers trained to deal with bird infestations?

Think of this with the relationships in your life - both at work and at home. Do you treat your administrative assistant like she's a few notches down the ladder from you? Do you treat your teenagers like employees? If so, what's going to happen when you need their help on something, or they know about something you don't, and you have to ask. If you set yourself up in this position, you'll feel uncomfortable asking because you'll "lose face."

And if you hold yourself in this exalted position, the person "beneath you" who knows how to do it, will hold silent, to preserve your ego, or to preserve their job, or to avoid making you "mad" and you will have lost.

Whichever way you look at it working partnerships and joint accountability are far more productive than hierarchical relationships.

LISTEN

One last example. When my son was 13 years old, we were riding in the car and I got stopped by a policeman. My son started talking the minute I was pulled over and I turned around and told him to be quiet. I wanted to be able to think.

The policeman checked my license and then looked at my inspection sticker and said it was out-of-date. My son started to try to speak again, and I motioned him to be quiet.

The end of the story ... under the pressure of the situation, it being February, the policeman was reading the wrong date on the inspection sticker, and it actually WAS up-to-date. Finally when I "let" my son speak, he told us both this. He wasn't afraid to make us both look like ... well, like the two confused adult people we were.

Use your emotional intelligence and allow everyone around you the space to contribute. It's a win-win situation.

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Emotional Intelligence vs. Cognitive Intelligence

By Susan Dunn

Emotional Intelligence vs. Cognitive Intelligence by Susan Dunn, MA, The EQ Coach

DEFINITIONS

Emotional Intelligence – Understanding your own emotions and those of others, and being able to use this information to bring about the best outcome for all concerned. Knowing where emotions come from and being able to manage your own and those of others. Knowing what emotions mean and what information they are providing. Being able to work well with others as well as alone. Being able to combine cognitive knowledge with emotional knowledge and use them in tandem.

Cognitive Intelligence – Intellectual abilities such as logic, reason, reading, writing, analyzing and prioritizing. These go on in your own head and utilize only the neocortex, not the emotional centers of the brain which also provide crucial information. These abilities do not require any social skills per se, i.e., you can solve a math equation by yourself, or write an essay, or balance a business' books by yourself.

COMPARISONS

Being effective both alone and as a team player vs. Only effective when working alone

Being able to manage your own emotions vs. Having temper tantrums, sulking or withdrawing

Being able to empathize with others and knowing where they're coming from vs. Not being able to grasp the feelings of others and understand how the emotions are affecting the situation

Using an emotional appeal to convince someone of something v. Using an intellectual appeal to convince someone of something

Knowing that motivation is a feeling word v. Thinking that motivation is a thinking word

EXAMPLE

Bill was brilliant in his field and the best IT person in the office as to technical skills, but his people skills were very low. He was abrasive, arrogant, short-tempered, and a perfectionist. Other people didn't like to work with him, and he was unable to explain things in terms other people could understand.

Mary, who was also in the IT department, had good technical skills and a good education, though it was less than Bill's. However, her emotional intelligence more than made up for this. She was able to handle herself and other people well and to explain things calmly and clearly. People loved to work with her and requested her by name. She received promotion after promotion because of her technical expertise and her high emotional intelligence.

KEY POINT

Many people with very high IQs (cognitive intelligence) do poorly in work and relationships because

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they have low EQs (emotional intelligence). They sabotage themselves because they can't manage their own emotions or those of other people, and they sabotage projects because they may have all the logical, rational and analytical "answers," but they don't have the "soft" skills to move a project forward.

BENEFITS

Emotional intelligence accounts for more success and happiness in life than intellectual intelligence.

RELATED DESTINCTIONS

- Soft skills vs. Hard skills
- Knowing people v. Knowing facts
- Thinking and feeling v. Thinking only

Learn to develop your emotional intelligence as well as your skills and technical expertise and you'll do better in your career. Developing your emotional intelligence is also crucial for personal and family relationships. Hire a certified emotional intelligence coach and get started today. Your career and relationships could depend upon it.

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