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**Ways to Increase Your Personal Power through Emotional Intelligence**

**By Susan Dunn**

**Ways to Increase Your Personal Power through Emotional Intelligence by Susan Dunn, MA,**

**Emotional Intelligence Coach & Consultant**

Personal Power is an Emotional Intelligence (EQ) competency you're probably familiar with by another name. It's your sense of being able to handle yourself and your life. It's the opposite of the "victim" position, where you feel helpless and hopeless. Instead, when you've developed your Personal Power, you feel confident to help yourself, and to ask for help when you need it, and you feel positive about outcomes. You are more willing to take action, and to use solution-focused problem-solving, instead of emotion-focused problem-solving.

You may have thought when you read the title of this article, it was referring to your power in the external world and it is, but this comes only when you have the Personal Power within. You create your world by your thoughts and beliefs, and if you feel helpless and hopeless, you'll create these outcomes. When you have a quiet sense of Personal Power, you are able to accomplish more, and will come to say, "If I couldn't do it, nobody could've."

So how do you develop your Personal Power? You can't function fully until you know yourself, and to know your SELF is to know your FEELINGS. We are our emotions and they are there to guide us.

People in the victim position don't know what they think or feel, and feel they have no rights. Assertiveness is believing in rights - yours and others. It means treating others with respect, and yourself as well. The cornerstone of Emotional Intelligence is self-awareness, and you begin this by doing an EQ Checkin often during the day. Ask yourself, "How am I feeling, emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually?"

I've found in teleclasses that most people can talk immediately about how they feel physically, but don't know what "mentally," "emotionally," and/or "spiritually" mean, so I'll define them so you can get started.

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**HOW DO YOU FEEL MENTALLY?** This refers to your ability to think. Are you alert? Full of ideas? Sluggish? Unable to process? If I asked you to do a math problem, or generate some alternate solutions to a dilemma, how would you do? This is what "mental" is about - your ability to handle information, facts, draw conclusions, formulate a thought, solve a problem, and perform other thought processes.

**HOW DO YOU FEEL EMOTIONALLY?** Everyone takes a stab at this one, but there are two ways to weasel out. One is to say, "I feel like a wrung-out dishrag," and the other is to say, "I think I'm exhausted." In the first case, you're begging out, and in the second case, notice the word "think" was used, which makes it a mental process. Sometimes we lack the vocabulary, and emotional expression is part of Emotional Intelligence. How do you feel **EMOTIONALLY**? Here are some answers, and they begin with "I AM" - sad, angry, frustrated, enraged, discouraged, tired, overwhelmed, elated, optimistic, or resentful. Of course there are many others. One thing you can do to increase your Emotional Intelligence is to learn new words for feelings. Then apply them to your situation.

It's very common to feel "angry," when it contains many layers. It could be from frustration, fatigue, being too hot, having had too much caffeine, righteous indignation, and a range from "annoyed" to "enraged" or "ballistic."

**HOW DO YOU FEEL SPIRITUALLY?** How you answer this depends upon your understanding of a higher power in your life. Some people answer this with "I don't know." Others will say, "I'm very attuned with nature today. I had a long walk with my dog," while others will say, "I feel very connected to those around me. Very warm and loved." You could also say, "Close to God" or "I feel good about life and myself."

Most of us recognize a deeper level in our lives, be it through religion, spirituality, art, culture, music, poetry or nature. Being able to answer "How do you feel spiritually?" may take some work on your part, but then so may the others.

Being able to answer these four questions gets you centered on yourself. If you've been lacking in Personal Power, chances are you may have been exercising too much empathy, or ignoring the feelings of yourself and others, so you are not in touch with your feelings. You often don't know what they are!

Once you know how you feel, and what you want, you have a good chance of getting it! This has nothing to do with manipulation, by the way, nor is it heavy-handed power plays, forcing others to do what we want. Intimidating others with words, threats or body language is bullying. People do this who have an exaggerated opinion of their own rights vs. those of others. What's confusing is that these tactics work ... in the short-term and temporarily. A demanding, intimidating person may be able to get what she wants once, or in limited circumstances or vis a vis other people with no Personal Power, but in the long run, people will avoid, disrespect, or avoid her in the future.

Feeling your Personal Power and behaving in an appropriately assertive manner allows other to respect you. It means stating your position with clarity and confidence. It relieves stress in your life because you cease tolerating behavior that's offensive or that drains your energy. At the same time, it

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increases your chances of getting what you want, because first you must ask. You might ask for more intimacy or more money, less work or less noise, or some acknowledgement and some appreciation.

In order to claim your Personal Power, you need to have self-respect. This is something you accomplish; it doesn't just happen. It means learning to truly love and value yourself, albeit a work-in-progress. With Personal Power, you ARE, you don't DO. If you demand respect from someone, you may get it - temporarily, reluctantly and with confusion (because the other person senses you don't respect yourself) and therefore they don't know how to give it to you. On the other hand, when you are clear about who you are and how you expect to be treated, it will happen.

Each time you fail to stand up for yourself, and treat yourself poorly, or let others do so, you will lose ground you've gained. Again, it's a constant process. Eventually it becomes automatic and part of you, but it takes time, and you will backslide. Each time you do, process your feelings. How were you feeling beforehand? How did you feel afterward? Would you be willing to change your behavior so you don't feel bad? (Yes!)

During the learning process you have to be patient with yourself, and also mindful. You have to be able to catch yourself immediately the minute you slip. If you entertain even the thought of "I'm an idiot," erase it. Replace it with something positive. With time, only positive thoughts will enter your self-talk,

but only if you're mindful about what you say to yourself.

Here are some of the ways you can command respect:

- Knowing your values and having standards, and behaving in accord with them
- Your attitude
- How you treat yourself. If you're willing to abuse yourself, others will join right in.
- Keeping good boundaries. Become committed to living your life with joy, assertiveness and productivity, and refuse to engage with people (even when family!) that can't support this approach.
- Watch your posture, eye contact, walk, and how you hold your head and shoulders.
- Make your SELF known - have opinions, state them, take part in conversations, be present and fully engaged.
- Acknowledge compliments graciously. Say "thank you," instead of, "Oh, it really wasn't much."
- Stop cross-thinking, i.e., did I say or do the right thing? Learn to develop your intuition (an EQ competency), and to go with it and trust it. With practice, you'll act naturally and spontaneously, and stop questioning yourself at every turn. Others will respond to this.
- Eliminate complaining and worrying. They accomplish nothing except to drag you down, and make others think less of you.
- Use solution-focused problem-solving, not emotion-focused problem-solving.

How to get started? Commit to a structured learning program. Take The EQ Foundation Course©. It's available on the Internet and will give you the theory. Then work with a certified EQ Coach. You need time, practice and feedback to change social and emotional skills. You cannot JUST read about it. Then take action. Put into practice what you're learning. With time, you can make great changes!

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## **What Are You Going to Inoculate Yourself Against in 2004?**

**By Susan Dunn**

Ever wonder why there's a new flu vaccine every year? That's because the flu virus mutates a little every year, in order to infect us better, and we have to come up with a new vaccine to keep ahead of the game.

The virus keeps evolving so it can do us in, and we keep trying to find new ways to combat it. There is no such thing as a permanent "flu" vaccine, and there never will be.

Getting the vaccine makes us resistant to that particular strain, or resilient. We're likely to stay healthy and be able to fight it off, or to get over it quickly if we get infected.

Resilience is an Emotional Intelligence competency and the same principle applies: when we learn the skills that give us resilience, we're better able to cope with the stresses of our lives. Today more than ever, the stressors are changing rapidly, and we need to be able to change quickly too; to keep injecting ourselves, as it were, with new "vaccine." Emotional Intelligence gives you the power to do this.

Last year maybe it was a layoff, a forced retirement, depression, or sending your firstborn off to college. This year it may be major surgery, marriage, a promotion, or having your first child. Learning Emotional Intelligence competencies will make you better able to cope with whatever comes your way and will assist you through all your transitions.

The quicker we can change, and adapt, the more resilient we'll be!

Start the year off right by honing your Emotional Intelligence competencies. Take an EQ Foundation course, and work with a certified EQ coach.

Your health depends upon it!

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What Are You Going to Inoculate Yourself Against in 2004?  
Is It Possible to Have Too Much Emotional Intelligence?

## Ways to Increase Your Personal Power through Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence vs. Cognitive Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence: Why It Works So Well

Emotional Intelligence and ACAs (Adult Children of Alcoholics)

147 Killer Epublising Strategies

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