

Advancing the State of Women Worldwide Through Emotional Intelligence

Macey, an office manager for a very large insurance company, seems to have it all. She has a Master's degree in Business Administration, full of energy and is always on the move in the office, she is very charismatic, and has a razor-sharp wit about her, and seems to have a keen sense of knowledge about the insurance industry.

Bearing in mind these raw ingredients of success, Macey should have a successful relationship with her office workers and the productivity of claims should be very high. But in reality, however, employee turnover in her department is high, morale is very low, and the rate of absenteeism among workers in her department is excessive.

On Macey's annual evaluation, Upper management of the insurance company gave her low marks because of the sheer number of customer and worker complaints about her. It seems as though her career was falling apart before her eyes.

Why? The reason is simple.

Macey hurts others with "joking" remarks, reacts negative to constructive criticisms, becomes impatient when her employees bring customer complaint issues to her attention, and she doesn't value her co-workers opinions. She thinks that her way to the job is the only way to do the job right. She butted heads with her employers over one issue after another until..... She eventually was terminated from each job.

What do Macey's actions show?

Well, Macey's actions certainly show that she has a high IQ, but her emotional intelligence skills are truly lacking.

More and more women, like Macey, are finding themselves in leadership positions in the workplace. Research conducted by Daniel Goleman, John Mayer, Peter Salovey, David Caruso, John D. Preston, and many others, have shown that success in the workplace takes a lot more than book knowledge or even hands-on experience. All the energy and advanced degrees in the world cannot overshadow the fact that it takes what is known as emotional intelligence added to IQ to have a healthy job career and a comfortable relationship with family and friends.

What is emotional intelligence? You ask?

Well, emotional intelligence is a different way of being smart. It includes knowing your feelings and using them to make good decisions; managing your feelings well; motivating yourself with enthusiasm and determination; maintaining hope in the face of frustration; exhibiting empathy and compassion; interacting smoothly; and managing your relationships effectively.

According to Goleman, emotional intelligence is what we mean by "good old street smarts," much of which involves good timing, knowing when and how to share sensitive information, understanding how what you say can affect others, and being able to quickly and accurately assess situations, moods, and underlying issues.

Emotional intelligence has a combination of five core skills developed by Peter Salovey and John Mayer: Those five pillars of Emotional Intelligence are; **Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Motivation, Empathy, and People Skills. Since these five areas are so important to being emotionally intelligent** I will give just a brief background of

each area. I am indicating brief because you could spend a great deal of time just discussing one area. At least I could.

First we have;

- **Self-Awareness**

Women with a healthy sense of self-awareness are "comfortable in their own skin." They understand their strengths, weaknesses, emotions, and impact on others. One sign of strong self-awareness is how well a person responds to constructive criticism. They can hear negative feedback without taking a defensive posture, or showing a frowned disapproving face, or responding with a loud pitched voice. Women with strong self-awareness can own up to problems that were created by their behavior and surpass the urge to blame the problem on someone else. Most of the time, she will take responsibility for problems not created by her behavior just to save a fellow co-worker, friend, or family member embarrassment. She also makes personal decisions with certainty and confidence.

- **Self-Regulation**

Not only does the emotionally intelligent woman understand her emotions, she can demonstrate maturity and restraint when revealing them. She does not squash her feelings, (emotional intelligence is not about suppressing your feelings) instead, she expresses her feelings in a manner that shows a high level of judgment and control.

- She has the ability to manage the impulsive urge to cock her head to the side, point her finger in the face of the emotional offender, say many four and five

attacking words in a threatening manner. Instead, she uses reflection and thought to help her shake off negative emotions like anxiety and irritability to bounce back after experiencing life's ups and downs.

- An emotionally intelligent woman with a good sense of self-regulation knows how to choose her battles wisely, behave assertively when necessary, and displays the courage to confront sticky situations with confidence.
- A strong emotional intelligence woman with a good sense of self-regulation knows how to leave a sticky situation without making enemies or damaging the self-esteem of others.
- A woman who has a sense of self-regulation knows that emotional intelligence is not just being sensitive or controlling your feelings; it is both — it is understanding when emotional expression is going to be helpful and when it is going to be problematic."
- **Motivation**
an Emotionally intelligent woman is motivated by a strong inner drive and determination; she is not just simply motivated by money or titles. Once she has established a goal or mission to accomplish, she finds it hard to take no for an answer. She is resilient and optimistic when experiencing disappointments and it takes a lot to disrupt her spirit or break her confidence. She knows how to

direct the emotions of fear, anger, and frustration towards her purpose or mission.

- **Empathy**

A woman in a leadership position that shows empathy is not necessarily easy on her staff. Empathy is not about "being easy and nice all of the time. A matter of a fact, too much niceness can indicate low confidence and assertiveness, specifying a lack of emotional intelligence which can create other problems.

- A woman who is aware of her emotions however, possesses the compassion and understanding of human nature that enables her to connect emotionally with others. Empathy allows her to provide exceptional customer service and respond honestly to an employee's frustration or concern.
- Power wars, backbiting, and disloyalty are not the emotional intelligent woman's style. Rather than getting upset, she has the ability to set a positive tone of cooperation even when things are not going well. It is about having the skill to be empathetic, to manage one's own emotions, and to approach difficulties from a "solution and learning" perspective rather a "problem and blame" perspective.
- She also has the capability of making decisions by understanding and seeing situations from another person's perspective and not just from her own viewpoint.

- **People Skills**

Emotionally intelligent women in leadership are widely respected by their bosses, peers, and employees. They like people and are savvy enough to know what makes them tick. Their ability to quickly build relationships and trust with those on whom they depend seems almost second nature.

- Women with strong people or social skills are really good at articulating and arousing enthusiasm for a shared vision and mission and they really know how to use the power of persuasion.
- Have you ever been confronted by a person strong in people skills to do a job or serve on a committee that you really don't want to do, don't know how to do, and not interested in learning? BUT! By the time this person leaves you, you have agreed to serve on the first committee, plus three others? They have just that much influence. They know how to network and build bonds with others that is mutually beneficial. How is it beneficial? You know that she is a woman of her word. If you asked her to do a job for you and she promised that she would, the job would be done and to the best of her ability no matter how many other job assignments that she has. In other words, a woman with emotional intelligence that is strong in people skills is trustworthy and dependable.

Research shows that emotional intelligence, not I.Q. determines how well we do in life – from our relationships to our career and finances -and ultimately how effective we are at

communicating, leading, making decisions and solving problems. We may be stuck with our I.Q. after about age 18, but our E.I. can change.

Now, the teacher in me tells me that I need to do a quick review of the content area that we covered today;

Our Essential Question for this lesson is;

How do we Advance the State of Women Worldwide Through Emotional Intelligence?

1. Know your emotions. Work on increasing your self-awareness, the ability to recognize a feeling as it happens. Develop the habit of monitoring your feelings from moment to moment.

2. Regulate your emotions. Improve your ability to handle feelings and to recover quickly from upsets and distress.

3. Motivate yourself. Learn to marshal your emotions in order to reach goals. Apply self-control and self-discipline. Practice delaying gratification and stifling impulsiveness.

4. Cultivate empathy. Put yourself in the other person's shoes. Try to recognize, identify, and feel what others are feeling.

5. Manage relationships. Respond appropriately and in helpful ways to the feelings of others. Strive for social competence. Improve your leadership skills.

Now, in closing, let me ease your mind by saying that, it is very rare for an emotionally intelligent person to be strong in all of the areas that I have briefly talked about today.

The good news is, if you do have an area that you would like to improve, development can be made only by being personally motivated and you need to practice extensively through repetition.