

ADVANCING THE
INTELLIGENCE OF OUR EMOTIONAL CONDUCT
In this 21st Century

October 2020 is the Fifteenth annual Emotional Intelligence Awareness Month. This campaign provides an excellent opportunity each year for reminding ourselves and our youth about the helpful and harmful ways that emotions impact our thoughts, feelings and behavior, often to our detriment.

For those not familiar with the subject, the concept of *emotional intelligence* was first introduced in 1995 by author Daniel Goleman in his revolutionary best-seller entitled, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than Our IQ*. This work became the most widely read social science book in the world in just seven years. Today you will find thousands of web-sites about emotional intelligence on the Internet, as such understanding is now known to be an integral part of healthy mind development.

Allowing emotional intelligence to develop by chance is no different than leaving any other valuable aspect of our formal education to chance. Without enough emotional understanding, we may easily give too little consideration to managing the natural effects that emotions have on us.

With healthy behavior being the number one factor in leading us toward a more civilized world, the development of a better understanding about the emotions that drive our behavior may be one of our greatest contributions of this 21st Century toward a more emotionally stable world.

TODAY I AM AMONG A LARGE NUMBER OF CRUSADERS WHO ARE EDUCATING
AND CHALLENGING PEOPLE TO DEVELOP HEALTHIER MINDS AND TO BUILD A
BEHAVIORALLY SAFER WORLD.

This year's Awareness Campaign theme is about how better understanding emotional intelligence can help us cope with the Covid-19 virus pandemic. Even if we weren't in a pandemic, few subjects matter more to our stability and credibility than grasping the social/emotional components of mind development.

Nature's effect on our emotions influences thoughts and behaviors more easily than we realize, particularly when we are not aware of exactly what to watch out for and avoid, and what to nurture instead.

Working through the psychological idiosyncrasies of the mind greatly enhances our well-being, yet our best advantage is to acquire a comprehensive education, similar to major subjects taught to kids today in schools.

Carefully gauging the emotional pressures of life is an important mind function and a critical aspect of emotional intelligence that assists us in increasing our tolerance and clarifying our best judgment.

We know that people use thousands of different kinds of gauges to assist in regulating the safe and efficient operation of sophisticated industrial equipment, as well as the vital apparatuses in their homes and automobiles— assessments that would otherwise be impossible to monitor.

To monitor our physical health, we have such gauges as calorie counters, scales, and nutrition-labeling, as well as a growing number of other health related gauges. We know that paying close attention to these gauges is critical for avoiding minor problems or even downright catastrophes. Yet, if we haven't created enough of our own internal precautionary gauges for regulating our emotions, we may too easily create an imbalance to our emotional well-being. This can be quite traumatic during a pandemic.

We might also compare the effort required to improve our emotional intelligence to the manner in which we learn to become physically healthier. It makes sense that understanding the effects of diet and exercise better equips us for developing healthier bodies. Similarly, better awareness of the effects that our emotions have on our thinking, learning, and behavior enables us to develop healthier minds.

Author and psychologist, Madeline Levine, published a very enlightening book in 2012 entitled, *Teach Your Children Well*. In this work, she shares important findings, notably that, (quote) "Researchers have found that the very characteristics that are most likely to encourage our children's emotional well-being are the same ones that will make them successful in the classroom." (end quote)

Psychologist Levine also explodes the myth that good grades, high test scores, and college acceptance should define the parenting endgame, and explains why values and coping skills matter more than grades, trophies, or fat pay checks. Dr. Levine is among many in the psychological field, who are advocating for education reform, student well-being, and parent education.

In another wonderful book entitled, *The Growth Of The Mind*, Dr. Stanley Greenspan stresses definitively that *emotion*, not *cognitive stimulation*, serves as the mind's primary architect. This is an obvious finding when we consider that almost every idea, decision, action, or reaction involves an often subtle psychological element.

A child who learns little about the nature of emotions compares to a child who learns only part of the multiplication tables. No doubt, both children will have difficulty with certain calculations throughout life; and all too similar to a math deficiency, a child with little understanding of emotions will too easily miscalculate harmful influences and establish dysfunctional habits that lead to a life of behavioral problems. After becoming adults and parents themselves, they may too easily pass along these dysfunctional habits to their next generation. If we are ever to eliminate this continuum of bad habits, young people must be taught to better understand their emotions.

Establishing an interest in the wonders of the mind, however, is not a new idea. Historically, generation after generation has shared emotional wisdom and guidelines—commonly referred to as ethics, morals, manners, virtues, or religious precepts. Intelligent emotional conduct has long been considered important and honorable by various cultural philosophies and religions, assisting people along the way to become more behaviorally civilized. So, you might ask, what is new and different about the modern-day study of emotional intelligence?

1. Emotional intelligence encompasses many of the psychological basics of healthy mind development and as such, is truly an important international initiative.
2. Emotional intelligence places the purpose and criteria for intelligent emotional conduct in an extremely meaningful research-perspective for everyone— regardless of their spiritual or cultural background.
3. Emotional intelligence provides more comprehensive insight into the scope and depth of such wisdom and guidelines.
4. Emotional intelligence emphasizes more clearly that through our own intellect, we can outwit damaging emotional sensations that would otherwise adversely affect us.
5. Emotional intelligence helps us to recognize what we need to comprehend about our minds, particularly our emotions, than has previously been possible to learn or even thought necessary.

Thus, the modern-day study of emotional intelligence teaches us healthier and safer ways to govern our minds from a less controversial perspective. As the 21st Century continues to unfold, expect to discover a growing number of educational programs for parents and kids alike, worldwide, that share valuable lessons about managing emotions.

Let's look back at the 20th Century for a few minutes. We surely realize by now that behavioral scientists significantly improved their understanding of the mind during the latter part of the century.

With MRI microscopic access to clear views of the actual structure of the human brain, neuroscience researchers have discovered that this 2 ½ to 3 pound mass in our heads is the most complex object in the universe. Their research findings have also stressed that, even with all of its complexities, the most important frontier in the whole universe for exploring may very well be right behind our very own eyes!

Thus, researchers became much more familiar with the intricate circuitry, function, and dysfunction of this fascinating, human computing tool during the 20th Century. They were able to identify and validate a vast number of factors that stimulate healthier development— as well as those that prevent it.

Through psychological research, numerous diseases and disorders were named and defined, along with maladaptive and dysfunctional behaviors— many of which have been plaguing humanity for centuries, I might add.

Researchers now realize considerably more about the way the foods we eat and the thoughts we think affect our behavior. Poor nutrition and bad thinking habits can adversely affect our energy level and moods, the quality of our very thoughts and decisions, along with other mental and psychological criteria that direct our everyday lives. The more we know about these factors, the wiser we become regarding our eating and thinking habits.

Technically, the similarity between computers and our minds has also assisted researchers. Just as special training has helped us navigate through many confusing hi-tech equipment functions, we must also better understand the myriad workings of our minds for steering our thoughts and behavior more effectively,

Could it be that for centuries, humans have caused each other unnecessary frustration and grief, simply because they just didn't know enough about their own minds? The answer is "Absolutely!"

Various studies indicate that, just as in learning too little regarding computer equipment on our own, we've only learned to utilize a very small percentage of our minds' real capabilities— which may be primarily due to our limited understanding of emotions.

FOR THE BALANCE OF MY TALK TODAY, I WILL EXPLAIN A FEW MORE BENEFITS OF IMPROVING THE EMOTIONAL ARCHITECTURE OF OUR MINDS, AND THEN SHARE A FEW PARTICULARS THAT SHOULD HELP YOU BETTER UNDERSTAND AND MANAGE YOUR *OWN* EMOTIONS.

Significant benefits of heightening our emotional intelligence include reducing emotional hardships, unhealthy behaviors, and unnecessary conflicts. With greater clarity regarding emotions, society should witness a reduction in carelessness and wastefulness, over-confidence and low self-esteem, obsessions and addictions, as well as neglect and abuse.

Improving the emotional structure of our minds certainly has a positive effect on our general attitude and demeanor. By design, we can improve our outlook and sensitivity toward health, safety, and other meaningful endeavors. We CAN learn to pay closer attention to more of life's purposeful measures. Such understanding helps us reduce misleading assumptions, exaggerations, denials, frustrations, and fears, as well as self-centered over-indulgences.

Developing better understanding of our emotions enhances our well-being, personal and professional relationships, as well as more worldly kinships. All of this would, no doubt, be tremendously advantageous to society. Can you imagine reducing government costs because of unnecessary personal and social dysfunction, such as: divorce, accidents, diseases, lawsuits, high insurance rates, and even world-tension?

WHAT A MYRIAD BENEFITS WE HAVE TO GAIN WHEN WE EMBRACE EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT IDEALS—

To begin improving our EQ, however, we must understand the difference between accepting our immediate *natural reaction* to stressors versus investigating whether there is a more appropriate and intelligent reaction. Let's look at a few comparable examples:

A good physical comparison to natural reactions is how a minor paper cut on a finger feels immediately like a serious cut that requires stitches. Only when we measure the extent of the injury intellectually, do we sense a sigh of relief.

Another comparison is how, without considering to reason with our emotional intelligence, we can often treat a \$1 issue, emotionally, as though it were more like a \$100, or even \$1000 issue— and vice versa— we can treat a \$1000 issue as though it were a \$1 one, as well.

We may also act similar to an animal that is not sedated while being treated by a veterinarian trying to remove a simple splinter from its paw— in just about any similar situation. When dealing with an animal, we know creatures can't reason intelligently, and we would expect the creature may tend to bite the veterinarian who is only trying to remove the splinter. An animal doesn't consider the further harm the splinter could create, nor does it have the intellect to recognize that the splinter is being removed in a medically effective manner for its own benefit.

Let's consider another few examples of situations that demonstrate how our *natural* emotional defenses can be as inappropriate as that of less intelligent creatures. First, consider how easily our minds can become defensive, causing us to avoid something we don't want to do, even when it's a meaningful accomplishment.

Another way the mind become defensive inappropriately, is by luring us into blaming others or stretching the truth without considering whether we are being honest with ourselves or not. How often do we judge others prematurely with too little investigation, by merely accepting under educated opinions on the matter, with little inquiry? Such primitive levels of thinking make our lives more troublesome than necessary and prevent us from overcoming our more difficult emotional challenges.

*Depending on time restraints, the following content of the speech about self-awareness, noted in **blue**, may be excluded or reduced to a brief explanation.*

Recognizing irrational thoughts requires self-awareness, which is not something that we come by naturally. To develop self-awareness requires participating in activities that are designed for such purpose. I will share a few of these with you today. However, you may wish to consider advancing your self-awareness by incorporating the Emotional Institute's first few free lessons at www.e-ii.org. Learning how to become more self-aware improves our chances for recognizing nature's ill influence on our minds, especially our emotions. Structurally, self-awareness is considered to be the foundation upon which further emotional intelligence can most easily be built.

As simple as defining the term, *self-awareness* implies, collecting data for recognizing the true appropriateness of our feelings, thoughts, and behavior requires rather complex understanding and sophisticated investigation.

The strategic importance of self-awareness is not a novel concept. The term implies “knowing thyself,” an idea that has survived for centuries. Historically, Socrates suggested, almost two thousand years ago, that knowing thyself is really important! In the 5th Century AD, Catholic Saint Augustine also expressed the need for better self-understanding when he historically exclaimed:

“Men go abroad to wonder at the heights of mountains, at the huge waves of the sea, at the long courses of the rivers, at the vast compass of the ocean, at the circular motions of the stars, and they pass by themselves without wondering.”

Explorers must have paid little heed to St. Augustine. Yet there is future hope. The phenomenal ending to the 20th Century was a true testament to this adventuresome wonderment of humanity. During this lone hundred-year span, we discovered incredible ways to travel and explore our own planet as well as the entire solar system. Consider NASA’s sophisticated accomplishment of sending a spaceship on a 250 million mile journey and landing an exploratory rover on Mars, while *learning how* to get to know thyself is still a mystery to the masses.

Unfortunately, observing ourselves in a way that provides self-understanding is a difficult task without specific guidance. Thus, we rarely consider the prospects. Yet, clearly, such a process is required in literally every profession imaginable in one form or another.

The self-monitoring process necessary to increase self-awareness might be compared to the bookkeeping direction necessary in quantifying a business’s financial picture. Similarly, without knowing what details to measure and how to assess them appropriately, determining an accurate level of self-awareness might be akin to quantifying a company’s financial statement without knowing how to identify and structure the details involved.

To create a clearer perspective of ourselves, we could also compare the importance of self-monitoring similar to the critical necessity of a computer’s SECURITY software. We must monitor ourselves with a certain degree of concern for screening and blocking out inappropriate feelings, thoughts, or behavior. To accept healthier, smarter, and wiser reasoning options— requires us to be painfully honest with ourselves and to struggle occasionally with our natural emotional tendencies.

For a more thorough investigation, educating ourselves about what constitutes emotional intelligence and inappropriate behavior is crucial. Again, similar to having the vital information programmed into our computer's security software, the more we understand about our emotions, the better our mind's security software, so to speak, is able to identify, qualify, and reduce nature's influence.

GETTING TO KNOW OURSELVES BETTER INCLUDES OBSERVING OUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES, AS WE SCRUTINIZE OURSELVES MORE THOROUGHLY.

As mentioned, though a difficult task without specific guidance, such monitoring builds clearer understanding of our mind's operation. Even though strengths and weaknesses comprise our most distinguishing characteristics, few of them are as naturally self-evident or as memorable as we might think—especially our ineptitudes.

PERHAPS THE MOST OMINOUS BARRIER TO GETTING TO KNOW OURSELVES STEMS FROM AN INABILITY TO LEARN HOW TO GET TO KNOW THYSELF BETTER.

Truly, it is far easier to get to know others than ourselves. Yet, self-awareness has a profound influence on how well we deal with our emotions, as well as how meaningfully we attend to other people and the environment around us.

One of the ways “knowing thyself” is helpful is that such understanding can reduce over-dramatizing potent or hostile feelings. We humans can too easily exaggerate our frustration, sadness, fearfulness, or even excitement. Granted, in some circumstances these feelings may be justified, but because of the mind's natural tendency to become over-exhilarated, these emotions more often promote inappropriate or even harmful reactions.

Do you remember my mentioning how the over-dramatization of feelings can physically make a minor cut seem much more serious than it really is? When understanding this similarity with emotions, we have a much better chance of calming the mind. Try to remember that when strong anxious feelings begin to arise inside, it's best to analyze within ourselves, rather than to verbalize.

In 2001, a popular movie entitled, *The Beautiful Mind*, revealed that learning to become more self-aware can even help us in recognizing symptoms of serious mental problems. The movie was based upon the life of John Nash, a Nobel Laureate in Economics, who by observing his own behavior was able to recognize that he was suffering from illusions caused by mental illness.

ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING ASPECTS OF SELF-AWARENESS IS THAT A FEW MONTHS OF GUIDED INVESTIGATION MAY REVEAL AN UNDERSTANDING THAT EXCEEDS WHAT YOU MIGHT NOT HAVE DISCOVERED OVER THE SPAN OF A LIFETIME!

IN CONCLUSION, the primary architect of the mind, emotion, can influence most every idea, decision, action, or reaction of each day. As such, the accuracy of so much of our judgment relies upon our emotional intellect. This involves being brutally honest with ourselves and accepting the notion of reacting with wiser responses, no matter how convincingly our emotions suggest otherwise.

Without such understanding, we may draw conclusions that are too premature or aggressive. We can unfortunately be too unguarded and accepting of unhealthy suggestions that our thoughts are capable of initiating, just as easily as we accept the idea of eating unhealthy foods. Much like the consequences of poor eating habits, we too often defer to accepting wiser judgments until after serious psychological consequences have arisen.

Developing healthier minds requires our comprehending how nature can influence us each day— through our emotions. When we consider improving our emotional intelligence, we are more readily empowered to connect with our logical thinking process— allowing us to define what is more sensible and practical.

Emotional intelligence training heightens our psychological senses for being more honest with ourselves, which in turn reduces the possibility of fretting about the wrong things— in the wrong ways. With healthy direction, we can learn to pause and analyze what is appropriate to do whenever we sense aggressive feelings toward others.

IN THE LARGER PICTURE OF LIFE, WHAT WE LEARN (AND DON'T LEARN) ABOUT OUR EMOTIONS AFFECTS OUR VERY PATH THROUGH LIFE—

What we do learn certainly has the possibility of making this world a safer, healthier, and happier place. Indeed we **CAN** become better architects of our own minds, emotionally!

I hope this presentation has offered you a glimpse of how crucial it is for us to educate children and adults alike regarding the helpful and harmful influences that affect our minds. A better understanding of our emotions does matter!

In some ways we may think the achievements of the 20th century created a tough act to follow. Yet, what stronger effects on civilization could we hope the 21st century will bring, than improving the emotional structure of our often misunderstood minds.

Thank you for listening and I look forward to sharing more information during this campaign month— to help you improve your emotional intelligence capabilities.

OPTIONAL CLOSING PARAGRAPH FOR A CONTINUED PROGRAM:

In the balance of this program, you will explore a number of activities that offer interesting and effective channels for self-awareness. I thank you for listening. Please stay with us to learn more about the exciting dynamics of emotional intelligence.