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1 How to Use This EQ Self-Study Program

1B LESSON
How our Emotions Enable Learning



"The illiterate of the 21st Century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn."

Alvin Toffler, American sociologist and futurologist (1928 - 2016)

Behavioral research tells us that our emotions have a profound impact on our ability to learn. This lesson should increase your awareness of this fact and help you gain more from our program than otherwise possible. We will review several factors that can set the tone for stimulating a higher level of attention, interest, and effort in learning.

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HARNESSING OUR LEARNING POTENTIAL

Technology contributes significantly toward rapidly evolving research breakthroughs in many socio, politico, and economic arenas, including behavioral science. Alvin Toffler's quote above addresses not only the learning challenges of ever changing computer software, cell phones, digital cameras, and the Internet, but also the new learning and unlearning challenges in every arena of life affected by these continuous technological advancements.

High tech brain imaging and other technological breakthroughs have helped psychologists to better understand the mind and the potential for developing our minds more healthfully. Yet to do so involves many learning challenges that are not unlike those we must overcome with new technology. To improve our minds, we must adjust and readjust the quality of our thoughts and behaviors.

EII's program is designed to optimize the process of learning, unlearning, and relearning while reducing related frustrations. Overall, these lessons should hasten your ability to identify and apply what improves mind development.

This particular lesson reviews some of the most vital influences upon learning: emotions, intelligence, skills, study, and insight. It also lists several factors within these categories that profoundly influence our ability to learn. Lesson 1C then examines nature's distorted influence on learning. Understanding the manner in which learning can be influenced is a critical component of EQ growth.

Please note that this first group of lessons does not include activities supplied in the rest of the lessons, providing instead, several lists worth studying for further familiarization.

"Understanding the factors that influence learning is a necessary prerequisite for improving our EQ and growing wiser, psychologically."

HARNESSING EMOTIONAL FACTORS THAT IMPROVE LEARNING

In a book well worth reading entitled THE GROWTH OF THE MIND, author Dr. Stanley Greenspan stresses that emotion, not cognitive stimulation, serves as the mind's primary architect. As such, harnessing our emotions does matter. With better understanding, we can build healthier minds, by design, and reduce nature's negative influence on our emotions.

No doubt, emotion is the mind's primary architect. Almost every idea, decision, action, or reaction we have involves an often subtle psychological element. Yet traditional educational programs and life experiences do not teach us critical knowledge that would help us advance our emotional development.

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Our initiative to learn is the cornerstone of our success in any endeavor. Emotions can sometimes impact us in ways that stimulate our initiative to learn. At other times accessing such stimulation requires a much higher level of effort than we wish to consider, even when the need is great. Perhaps the list below will spark past memories of times when emotions helped to improve your learning potential.

18 Ways Emotional Factors Improve Learning Potential

Emotional impact words are in *italics*

1. *Inspiring* role models, experiences, or desires
2. *Respect* for your own well-being and relationships
3. Someone's *enthusiastic effort* to stimulate you
4. A *strong regard* for the importance of learning
5. A *wish to avoid* possible *consequences*
6. Someone's behavior *worth* emulating or avoiding
7. *Helpful* skills that *ease* the learning process
8. *Quality* direction that *eases* your ability to learn
9. Applying *effective* strategies and other *discretionary* measures
10. *Appreciation* of another's *expectations and support*
11. Applying *caution* to keep yourself and others safe
12. *Interesting* people or subject matter
13. *Eagerness* to reach personal *goals* and *victories*
14. An *interest* in improving particular knowledge and/or skills.
15. *Incentives* to improve performance and relations with others
16. *Frustration/anger* from not studying EI in the past
17. To not be *embarrassed* from not knowing in the future
18. Strong *determination/ disciplined* habits

When we AREN'T STRIVING to learn, we are susceptible to develop more casual ways of thinking that allow us to 1. Exceed tricky limits without concern, 2. Accept poor judgments without even considering wiser options, and 3. Choose to follow easier EQ guidelines, and ignore harder ones.

In EQ training, we learn to follow self-coaching strategies for adapting to healthier mind development and, thus, higher standards of behavior. With motivation being an intricate, yet necessary learning requirement, coaching from others who are more accomplished can be a major catalyst. When we lack a strong enough coach within, we are more liable to apply unhealthy self-talk and choose easier alternatives. Additionally, without coaching strategies, we can more readily tell ourselves that something is too difficult, frustrating, or boring, rather than steadfastly plodding ahead, applying necessary pressure and self-initiative.

"We can improve our learning potential with better understanding about the helpful and harmful effects of emotions."

Adequate guidance helps us reach for higher standards of emotional conduct, especially in challenging circumstances. While the coaching strategies described below are a valuable part of any learning formula, they carry particular significance when we try to improve our EQ. Accepting these strategies provides long-term benefits. Should we fail to learn or apply any one of these five coaching strategies, our capacity for realizing psychological growth may be limited substantially. The challenge of these strategies is that we might not readily consider them on our own.



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5 Five EQ Coaching Strategies

1. ENCOURAGE A HEALTHY ATTITUDE AND INITIATIVE

We participate most willingly when we are passionate about a subject. Yet the most important subjects we've ever studied may not have been our favorites. The results and consequences—if we didn't study—were probably what drove us to learn. Without a healthy regard and self-initiative toward emotional learning, we are more likely to remain emotionally under-educated.

2. PRACTICE HEALTHY SELF-TALK AND SELF-HONESTY

Motivating ourselves with healthy self-talk helps to direct our lives in wiser, more emotionally stable ways. By questioning how honest we are regarding the quality of our actions, we recognize subtle illusions and ineptitudes that can too easily contribute to poor learning, thus sabotaging our emotional growth. Our irrational excuses and justifications must be acknowledged with self-honesty and suppressed with healthy self-talk.

3. DEVOTE TIME TO THE LEARNING PROCESS

Gaining knowledge and skill requires time for study and practice. Not many of us really learned through osmosis. Some experts say that it takes 30 days of exercising a new task to create a new habit. A commitment to this program of at least 30 minutes a day for 30 days can help build quality results. Once we begin to see improvement, we may become more willing to continue our participation.

4. ACCEPT HEALTHY CHALLENGES

Because of the challenges involved in learning, we may need to postpone more interesting activities to concentrate on studying. When attempting any new challenge, we may be initially irritated. We may feel justified to avoid, rather than accept the healthier, more disciplined option. As we take incremental steps to reprogram our thinking, we strengthen our patience and fortitude.

5. READ AND FOLLOW DIRECTIONS CAREFULLY

For text authors or course instructors, defining and structuring high-quality lesson plans can often require intensive research and costly time. As in using a well-defined road map to reach a desired destination, quality psychological direction can help us reach important goals.

Can you think of other coaching strategies you've used to influence your learning? Take care to watch for your mind to sabotage your growth by excusing or falsely justifying unhealthy actions.

These emotional impacts on learning remind us *that most decisions, choices, actions, and reactions are subtly, yet powerfully charged with emotions. We are more willing to "go that extra mile" when we pursue a healthy attitude and initiative to do so. Our emotional stability relies on our ability to be honest with ourselves, as much as our credibility with others is dependent upon our honesty with them. To maximize healthy development, we must learn to be more accountable toward how well we apply the mind. While facing what appears to be a difficult challenge, we gain strength beyond our natural limits by boldly applying coaching strategies. When we harness our emotions, we find that many challenges are not truly as frustrating or as impossible as we first believed*

> *"We coach ourselves with extraordinary purpose when we are trying to improve the quality of our thoughts and behavior."*

HARNESSING INTELLIGENCE THAT IMPROVES LEARNING

Conventional education programs continually seek ways to improve teaching materials and techniques, as well as motivate student interest and create better study habits. The subjects considered necessary for a well-rounded education have been mainly math, science, history, geography, and our language, plus a more recent commitment to computer operations.

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Teachers rely on student intellect to direct mind function. Yet, operationally, most students inadequately understand their own mind, which limits the use of this sophisticated computing system in their own heads, substantially. Should we eventually give equal time to understanding the operation of our own minds as we do other necessary subjects, we can expect a phenomenal growth of learning and performance— resulting undoubtedly in a far more intelligent and peaceful world. Think of times when you have applied or avoided the following intelligent factors:

4 Intelligent Factors that Improve Learning Potential

1. ACCEPTING HELPFUL GUIDANCE

To use the many complex functions of our computer software, we learn more masterfully from others who are already proficient in understanding. Similarly, becoming skilled with the complex operational functions of our own mind can be much more effectively mastered with quality training.

2. ENDURING HELPFUL DISCOMFORT

If not sedated, a creature suffering from a splinter in its paw will bite a veterinarian who is trying to remove the splinter. The animal lacks the intelligence to accept the discomfort of splinter removal and realize the benefits. Our mutual dislike for pain can cause us to act inappropriately when dealing with temporary discomfort associated with beneficial learning direction.

3. INVESTIGATING FOR MIND MALFUNCTIONS

We possess sophisticated software to protect our computers from a myriad of security problems; yet, unfortunately we can't simply purchase security software to screen for mind malfunctions. Such sophisticated scrutiny requires us to learn what would be considered as malfunctions and to apply our intellect for carefully monitoring and investigating our reasoning, rather than allowing ourselves to think too casually.

4. ADHERING TO GROWTH-ORIENTED REQUIREMENTS

We like to compare growing a healthy mind to optimizing a garden's potential harvest. To do either requires that we obtain adequate understanding of the steps, formulas, and practices involved, as well as what interferes with the process. If we do not follow the necessary requirements that stimulate emotional growth, we can expect dysfunctional and other poor results.

Thus, to obtain optimum results in mind operation, we must seek intelligent guidance. Such knowledgeable support improves our capacity to learn, understand, and reason. As with the successful gardener mentioned above, we need to learn what regulates, nourishes, and fortifies healthy mind development, as well as what prevents it. To harvest the ultimate learning potential from any EQ program and elevate the quality of our actions, we must adhere to intelligent practices, accept discomfort, and monitor ourselves with caution.

"Healthy reasoning depends upon our intellect to assess how well we are processing our thoughts."

Below you will find a list of behaviors that you will be investigating in our program for maximizing EQ growth. They represent intelligent efforts that can be difficult, yet transforming. The numerous strategies and incentives we provide will make these behavioral improvements easier. You may also find it encouraging to take note whenever you catch yourself applying the behaviors below, as well as others mentioned in this lesson.

12 Intellectual Pursuits that Maximize EQ Growth

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- ❑ Examining the quality of your thoughts and reasoning to become more EQ oriented.
- ❑ Journaling answers to revealing questions for building more in-depth self-understanding.
- ❑ Increasing discretion to improve your thoughts, communications, and actions.
- ❑ Strengthening your ability to familiarize, absorb, and apply EQ knowledge.
- ❑ Applying strategies that will help you remain persistent and patient.
- ❑ Recognizing your wisest and healthiest voice within to strengthen your intuitive senses.
- ❑ Practicing self-initiative exercises to reduce problematic behaviors.
- ❑ Eating a healthy diet and exercising to enhance mind and body connections.
- ❑ Applying more meaningful attention and appreciation of others.
- ❑ Becoming more tolerant of others' foibles and maladaptive behaviors.
- ❑ Communicating more effectively to achieve healthier relationships.
- ❑ Searching for your own emotional distortions that interfere with healthy mind development.

Our emotional intelligence is truly an engineering type of behavioral compass. In essence, behavioral scientists are similar to research engineers, helping us understand what we must do to implement healthier self-governance. Following their direction requires us to apply a number of guidelines related to behavioral cause and effect. Such guidelines are not unlike the requirements engineers must follow — whether constructing a house, bridge, or a skyscraper.

This engineering consideration isn't exactly a novel approach. In fact, our first exposure to this way of thinking may have been in early childhood through simple nursery stories like *The Three Little Pigs*. In this particular tale, a cautious brick-laying pig devised an "engineering" plan to construct his house of bricks, while the other two pigs used twigs and straw. While the brick-laying pig considered safe guards against potential forces (the wolf) that could destroy his house, the two other pigs overlooked possible dangers while building their homes with less sturdy materials.

Of course, the more difficult and time-consuming construction process employed by the more cautions pig paid life-saving dividends, while the simple, flimsy construction methods left the other two vulnerable to the wolf's attacks. How many of our own life situations compare to the actions of the mindful pig? How many times have we left ourselves vulnerable like the two oblivious pigs? An engineering approach often requires precautionary measures that are not simple (like the extra heavy-duty work of the brick-laying pig) to ward off problems. In the same vein, while faced with dilemmas in our lives, we may be tempted to opt for the path of least resistance, a decision that may prove costly in terms of wasted time, money, and other consequences.

These intellectual impacts on learning remind us *that to grow a healthy mind, we must acquire the right knowledge and following particular requirements, much like an engineer or student of horticulture must gather knowledge and follow practices necessary to obtain the best results. Applying our emotional intelligence toward learning may entail choosing what is healthy over pleasurable, or practical over what is eccentric. By choosing an intelligent approach, we learn to forego the lures of our more natural emotional interests, instead accepting healthier and wiser options.*

HARNESSING SKILLS THAT IMPROVE LEARNING

Advancing our EQ not only requires harnessing our emotions and intelligence, but also utilizing the skills that assist us in discerning our perception, memory, reasoning, and judgment. The mechanical skills listed below are important study disciplines, which when practiced, stimulate better understanding and improve the absorption of material we are trying to learn. Perhaps you can think of other skills that have influenced your learning as you read the following list.

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Eight Mechanical Skills

1. SHIFT TO A LEARNING MODE OF ATTENTION

When we lack the discipline of a classroom setting, switching to a more concentrated focus from our usual, casual mode of attention becomes a greater challenge. Studying requires us to pay serious attention not only to WHAT we are reading, but also to HOW WELL we are EMPHASIZING important points and COMPREHENDING the material overall.

2. TRY TO GRASP THE "BIGGER PICTURE"

Grasping the reality of our psychological "Bigger Picture" is as important to our overall life as striving for our professional and financial security. We start to grasp the "Bigger Picture" by learning how to analyze certain aspects of our lives, emotionally, and to identify destructive and stifling patterns.

3. GAUGE READING SPEED

Reading, like many other skills we learn in life, can easily be done hastily, yet we must judge when to scan and when to slow down while reading. For materials that require understanding and absorption, it is beneficial to move at a slower pace than we would, say in reading a novel or other casual material.

4. READ OUT LOUD

Reading aloud is a simple and effective way to reinforce attention and retention skills. Repeating valuable points several times aloud can also improve content absorption.

5. MAKE AN EFFORT TO PAUSE

Pausing after each paragraph to analyze its inherent message can be very helpful. Otherwise, the process of juggling reflection while continuing to read new material is virtually impossible. When fatigued, take a break until you feel confident that you can proceed with renewed powers of concentration. Pausing a few minutes to engage in physical exercise or another activity will provide increased energy by stimulating blood flow to the brain.

6. REPEAT AND REVIEW SPECIFIC DETAILS

While instructors may repeat information to reinforce learning, authors may only get away with this convention once or twice. Nevertheless, the student who devotes extra time to reviewing and repeating material gains the benefit of an instructor-type advantage.

7. LEARN HOW TO BETTER MEMORIZE

Taking note of how well we remember different kinds of information can reveal important deficiencies. This kind of attention can also help us determine certain data that only needs familiarization. Once distinguishing these differences, we have a better chance of applying memorizing techniques when we need to. Rarely does reading or writing notes plant complex information in our memory. To improve, we also need to discover newer techniques that streamline the memorization process.

8. HIGHLIGHT IMPORTANT INFORMATION

When preparing for a test, we must familiarize ourselves with key information and memorize all we need to know to hopefully get that "A." To learn quickly and effectively, we must be able to pinpoint important information. Thus, our program includes helpful activities and particular study assignments that highlight the most important information.

You will surely find an advantage by occasionally reviewing these important skills while studying other lessons.

These mechanical skills remind us *that to learn, we must shift to a learning mode of attention and better understand how to apply this attention. By familiarizing ourselves with these skills, we will heighten our EQ significantly more than by merely reading this material as casually as we would pages in a novel. We may also improve how we discern our perception, memory, reasoning, and judgment by noting what we find that our mind more easily forgets.*

"A passion for EQ learning provides a tremendous advantage."

HARNESSING PSYCHOLOGICAL INSIGHT

Psychological insight has not historically been associated with being well-educated or smart, yet the honorable qualities of courage, diplomacy, generosity, and congeniality are revered as highly respected leadership attributes. Each involves extremely meaningful psychological insight.

From pre-school through college, we are directed toward academically purposeful objectives. As we continue our adult education, we may allow ourselves to pursue new learning objectives that have nothing to do with better understanding our minds. Nonetheless, for leading a psychologically well-balanced life, there are important life skill objectives. Many of these were understanding. The life skill objectives listed below are essential for EQ development and a well-balanced life. To improve your psychological insight, consider which of these objectives you may need to pursue further.

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6 Purposeful Life Skill Objectives

1. **Learn to organize and prioritize myself to manage my affairs well**
2. **Study to improve applying my mind more accountably and appropriately**
3. **Lead a safe and balanced life, both physically and emotionally**
4. **Enrich relationship with others and the environment**
5. **Enhance employability and improve financial security**
6. **Nurture special interests and talents that bring forth my gifts**



Psychological insight reminds us *that understanding the emotional intricacies of the human thought process helps to raise the mind's overall efficiency and effectiveness, thus, the quality of our performance. The honorable qualities of courage, diplomacy, generosity, and congeniality are revered as highly respected self-leadership. Each involves extremely meaningful EQ understanding and sacrifice.*

IN CONCLUSION: Applying Due Care to Learning

The willingness to learn is the cornerstone of our success in any endeavor. As mentioned at the outset, the purpose of this first section of lessons is to set the tone for learning and thereby prepare you to read through the rest of the lessons more effectively. By willingly applying the due care suggested here, you will increase your chances of successfully grasping what we are teaching.

This lesson represents the first of several that we offer in helping to improve how you apply your most precious resource, your mind. We are confident that you will find learning from our program an enriching experience. For an increased, yet measured confidence and better realization of your growth, we recommend that you study and review this material, and also take note of how well you are following the suggestions in this lesson. Depending on your current EQ level of understanding, this lesson may make more sense when read again, after studying other lessons in our program.

Regardless of other worthwhile goals you may currently be striving for, understanding your mind better, emotionally, is crucial to your most important assets, your health and well-being. Nonetheless, should you sense any serious doubt or hesitation about proceeding alone with this self-leadership program, you may wish to consider assistance from a personal coach or counselor. Do not hesitate, as well, to contact our Institute via e-mail concerning any problems or questions regarding the use of our materials. For keeping your initiative alive, we also suggest that you note daily any new knowledge or skill you learn, as you experience emotionally intelligent growth.

NOTES



Improving many of life's valuable behaviors is easier when we comprehend more of the emotional complexities of our own mind.