

Fortune Cookies & EQ

Have you ever gotten a negative quip inside your fortune cookie? No. Here are some of the ones I've cracked open: "You will soon be surrounded by good friends and laughter." "Honesty and friendship bring you fortune." "Don't give up. The best is yet to come." "Frequent conversations will fill your heart with joy."

Fortune cookies are always positive missives, and I look forward to reading about my cheerful, prosperous, and hopeful future.

Pretend this article is your next fortune cookie. You've just finished your delicious Asian meal. You've just split your fortune cookie in half. It reads, "She who has great emotional intelligence will have a rewarding life. Read Karen's article to find out more."

What is emotional intelligence?

Research suggests that a person's emotional intelligence, or "EQ," might be a greater predictor of success than his or her intellectual intelligence, or "IQ," despite an assumption that people with high IQs will naturally accomplish more in life.

Emotional intelligence is a person's ability to understand his or her own emotions and those of others and act appropriately using these emotions.

According to Daniel Goleman, the guru of EQ, there are four EQ competencies:

- Self awareness — self confidence
- Self management — adaptability, optimism
- Relationship awareness — empathy, service
- Relationship management — developing others

What does EQ have to do with you?

As a professional and leader of your team, you have an EQ that affects you and your business. Yes, your IQ is important, but that's a given. You wouldn't have gotten into dental school, you wouldn't be in practice, and you wouldn't be a volunteer in your local dental society if you didn't already have your IQ intact.

Your EQ helps define how you relate to your patients, your team, and yourself. Your EQ can make you a better leader and a more satisfied professional financially and emotionally.

How can you enhance your EQ?

Steve Hein, author of "EQ for Everybody," suggests these ways to practice and improve your EQ:

- *Use three-word sentences beginning with "I feel."* Take more responsibility for your feelings. Say, "I feel jealous," vs. "You are making me jealous."
- *Start labeling feelings; stop labeling people and situations.* Say, "I feel impatient," vs. "This is ridiculous." Say, "I feel hurt and bitter," vs. "You are an insensitive jerk." Say, "I feel afraid," vs. "You are driving like an idiot."
- *Analyze your own feelings rather than the actions or motives of other people.*
- *Ask others how they feel on a scale of zero to 10.* Show respect for other people's feelings. Ask, "How will you feel if I do this?" or "How will you feel if I don't do this?"
- *Don't advise, command, control, criticize, judge, or lecture others.* Instead, try to just listen with empathy and nonjudgment.

Karen Cortell Reisman, MS

Reisman, author of two books, speaks about Albert Einstein, her cousin, in a one-woman show, "Letters From Einstein," intertwining personal letters from Einstein in a message about how to thrive in this crazy world. She also speaks about how to Speak For Yourself® so others listen and trust you. To buy Reisman's books or purchase other learning tools, go to www.LettersFromEinstein.com or www.SpeakForYourself.com.



- *Identify your fears and desires.*
- *Validate other people's feelings.* Show empathy, understanding, and acceptance of other people's feelings.
- *Take responsibility for your emotions and happiness.* Stop believing that others cause your feelings. Don't expect others to make you happy.
- *Express your feelings.* Find out who cares, and spend time with them.
- *Develop the courage to follow your own feelings.*
- *Practice getting a positive value from emotions.* Ask yourself, "How do I feel?" and "What would help me feel better?" Ask others, "How do you feel?" and "What would help you feel better?"

What do fortune cookies have to do with EQ?

Fortune cookies represent some of the wise tenets of emotional intelligence — concepts such as staying positive, staying encouraging, and staying the course. Who knows? Maybe your next fortune cookie will say, "Awareness of your feelings is the key to self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is the key to self-improvement."

Source: Steve Hein, www.eqi.org

© 2007 Karen Cortell Reisman, MS ■