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The EQ Journey: What Does it Take to Move from a Reactive to a Proactive Perspective?

“I have found very few things that can change people’s destiny, and emotional intelligence is one of those things,” says lawyer, author and motivational speaker Stephen Barth. “It is one of the most powerful journeys I have found.”

Barth, who’s also a professor at the University of Houston and a successful entrepreneur, launched his own journey into the practice of emotional intelligence (EQ) about 17 years ago. He draws from personal experience when he speaks to groups, including health care professionals, about the path to emotional success.

“There is a huge amount of value for organizations that teach and promote the practice of emotional intelligence,” Barth says. “It is not a fast fix. It is a long, lifetime journey. Once adopted, however, the outcomes and return on investment are enormous.”

He draws from the work of American psychologist and author Daniel Goleman and others in the study of EQ. Barth describes emotional intelligence as the

ability to shift from a reactive personality to a proactive personality. “The four primary characteristics are: self-awareness, self-

motivation, resilience and empathy.” (Goleman adds a fifth characteristic—social skills—to the list.)

Consciously Practice Empathetic Listening

Empathy is the top EQ skill doctors need, says Barth. “A willingness to see something from a perspective other than your own, along with the ability to listen empathetically, can help doctors have better rapport with colleagues, staff, patients and patients’ families.”

Doctors who consistently and consciously hone their relationship, empathy, and problem-solving skills are likely to have a better understanding of what is needed in a given situation, says Sara Canaday, speaker, author, and executive coach. “They will be more effective at communicating in a way



that staff and patients can understand, and are more apt to be able to marshal others toward a common goal.”

“Patient surveys tell us that doctors don’t always deliver the best bedside manner,” says Barth. “We know that doctors are busy. They’re under a lot of pressure. Yet it often comes across to patients as a lack of empathy for what they’re going through, and a lack of ability to listen to them. EQ addresses exactly that: it can help you be empathetic and a good listener even when the pressure is great.”

From his viewpoint as an attorney, Barth has seen what can happen when empathy is ignored and when it is practiced. “In any profession—not just the medical profession—when you treat people with

“If your emotional abilities aren’t in hand, if you don’t have self-awareness, if you are not able to manage your distressing emotions, if you can’t have empathy and have effective relationships, then no matter how smart you are, you are not going to get very far.”

- Daniel Goleman

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Emotional Intelligence Equips Us for Greater Success, and it Can Be Learned

Without self-awareness, the shift to a higher emotional intelligence is unlikely to occur.



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compassion, kindness and empathy, they are far less likely to sue.”

Self-Awareness is the Secret

Without self-awareness, the shift to a higher EQ is unlikely to occur.

“In medicine, the relationships among physicians, colleagues, support and nursing staff have never been more important,” says Barth. “Egos can get in the way, and can make it very challenging for doctors to view things from others’ perspectives. It can be a hard barrier to penetrate. There has to be a willingness to admit we don’t know everything, and an understanding about the value of adding EQ to our skill set.”

Canaday offers resources for self-assessment through her certification in EQi-2.0® from MHS¹. “There are several self-assessments and 360 assessments, and a number of other EQ assessments that can be found on-line, she says. “The ESCI offered via the Hay Group² was developed by some of the foremost emotional intelligence experts in the country.”

“Though a few online

360 assessments are free, I think their efficacy falls short,” Canaday cautions. “I believe that the results are best when analyzed with other psychometric and 360 assessments and interpreted with the help of a coach.” (FAP professionals can point you to EQ assessment tools as well.)

“We have learned from research by MHS and others that EQ is a better predictor of success than IQ. It can account for up to 55% of one’s ability to be a successful leader. Unlike IQ, EQ can be substantially strengthened and developed. Those who lack it can acquire it; those who have it can enhance it.”

- Sara Canaday

Rewriting the Script

In his group presentations, Barth asks his audience, “How many of you would spend one

¹ Multi-Health Systems Inc.
<http://www.mhs.com/>

² Hay Group: Emotional and social competency inventory – (ESCI)
<http://www.haygroup.com/leadershipandtalentondemand/index.aspx>

minute a day to become more peaceful and productive in your lives?” Every hand in the audience goes up, he says, and that opens the curiosity door for them. “EQ is mostly about rewriting the script that’s in your subconscious mind. It’s possible to make this shift with practice, and absolutely everyone has the ability to do it.”

Resources

- Intelligent Emotions: On Self Responsibility, Owning Our Emotional Power, and Changing Our Reactions, e-book by Stephen Barth www.smashwords.com/books/view/417592
- Sara Canaday www.saracanaday.com
- Emotional Intelligence Consortium www.eiconsortium.org (videos, podcasts, and articles)
- Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ, by Daniel Goleman
- Emotional Intelligence 2.0, by Travis Bradberry
- Becoming a Resonant Leader, by Annie McKee, Richard Boyatzis and Fran Johnston
- Feel the Fear...and Do It Anyway, by Susan Jeffers, PhD
- The Art of Happiness, by Dalai Lama and Howard C. Cutler, MD