

LEARNING WITH EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Part 1 – What is Emotional Intelligence?

Transcript

[TEXT: Young African Leaders Initiative, YALI Voices]

Hello, my name is Mensah Philippe Houinsou, and this is learning with emotional intelligence.

About four years ago, I co-founded a continent-wide company aiming at reinforcing food security in Africa. It survived for only two years. Although the company was successful, it was not sustainable because we faced a huge problem of leadership. There was an energy of divergence that created conflict among members of the founding team, which was also the management team. During meetings I would witness feelings of anger, resentment and frustration. Eventually those feelings progressively damaged the bond that once reigned on the team and led to the collapse of the company.

That failure made me notice the impact of our emotions and feelings on our behaviors and how they can propel or destroy initiatives. Therefore, I came to the conclusion that many other wonderful initiatives around Africa might be facing the same issues as people struggle to work together. That was the beginning of the new mission I assigned myself. I wanted to understand the impact of our emotions and feelings on ourselves and people around us and how we can use them to improve leadership in every regard.

In that quest, I discovered the concept of emotional intelligence. And for the last three years, I have witnessed the importance of that concept, and I can affirm with no doubt that as young African leaders we need emotional intelligence to improve our performances and teamwork. The emotional intelligence model we will be looking at in this series of videos is a leadership development tool par excellence.

In the 1990s, two prominent researchers named Peter Salovey and John Mayer published an article entitled “Emotional Intelligence.” That article defined emotional intelligence as a scientifically testable intelligence.

Emotional intelligence, or EQ — which is its short version, meaning emotional quotient — is the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth.

Their “four-branch model” of emotional intelligence includes:

- one, perceiving and sensing emotions;
- two, using emotions to assist thought;
- three, understanding emotions;
- and four, managing emotions.

The concept has evolved tremendously as many like-minded people sought to make it practical. This is the case of Six Seconds, the Emotional Intelligence Network, which is a California-based organization dedicated to the awareness of emotional intelligence worldwide. They have conducted years of research and come up with a wonderful model that can be used by anyone to develop and use EQ. Therefore, they define EQ as the capacity to blend thinking and feeling to make optimal decisions. This is key to having a successful relationship with yourself and others. For example, you can use EQ to renew yourself and manage stress, use emotions such as empathy and compassion to create healthy relationships, or channel your anger and frustration towards transforming positively your life and your community.

Are you perhaps wondering whether EQ is learnable? Well it is, and we will dive into more details about this in our next videos.

So stay tuned. Thank you.

[TEXT: YALINetwork]

[TEXT: Written and Produced by Philippe Houinsou, Certified EQ Practitioner and Mindfulness Trainer]

