

LEARNING WITH EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Part 3 – Knowing Yourself

Transcript

[TEXT: Young African Leaders Initiative, YALI Voices]

Hello. My name is Mensah Philippe Houinsou, and this is Leading with Emotional Intelligence.

After over 20 years of research, Six Seconds has developed and improved a powerful and pragmatic model to help anyone to start using EQ. The model encompasses three major pursuits. The first one is entitled "know yourself," and it is the pursuit we will be focusing on today.

Nelson Mandela once said, "Learn to know yourself ... to search realistically and regularly the processes of your own mind and feelings." That quote sums up the essence of this pursuit, as it requires you to pause and look truly at yourself, just like when you see your reflection in a mirror or water.

Indeed, this is an aptitude that you need to acquire and is the beginning of your journey towards using your emotional intelligence. There are two competencies to be developed here so you begin to know yourself a little better.

Competency Number 1: enhancing your emotional literacy.

Very few people can truly name all the emotions that run through their body every single day. Indeed, this competency requires that you improve the vocabulary of your emotions in order to be able to easily name the emotions you witness every single time. It is believed that naming an emotion is key towards taming it, and doing so, you can start to harness the power that lies in your emotions and eventually channel them towards achieving sustainable goals. For example, when you are going through an episode of anger, your ability to recognize and acknowledge that feeling of anger will allow you to have a hold over it, and thus it loses a huge part of its influence over you. Asking the question, "What I am feeling now?" can be of help in identifying the specific emotion rushing through your body at a given moment. One thing you can do to enhance your emotional literacy is to add more words to your emotional vocabulary and make it a fun exercise to name your feelings at all times.

Competency Number 2: recognizing patterns.

Consider for instance when you were a baby, all you could do was to cry when you feel hungry or when you need to have your diaper changed. Crying or smiling were your ways of expressing how you feel at a given moment. But as you start to grow, you have begun to learn new things such as to crawl, then to walk, then to talk. And every time you develop a new aptitude, you actually create patterns in your brain. The more you practice that aptitude, the stronger your patterns become. Your patterns will get stronger and stronger until the day you will not need to think about performing those aptitudes, as they become automatic. This applies to everything in your life, from the way you perform tasks to the way you deal with situations you encounter. In fact, the brain loves to form and follow patterns — you learn a new thing, and your brain stores it and repeats it rapidly and automatically, freeing you to focus on other matters. You encounter a situation, and your brain stores it and will repeat the exact reaction you had towards that situation. That's how you have been able to develop your leadership skills and personality. But it is important to make sure that those helpful functions are not subverting your conscious intentions and your more complex emotional needs. The problem is that the brain often provides a pattern response to a situation which is not actually similar to a previous situation. This is





more likely to happen when you are going through a crisis. It is like you are on autopilot with an inadequate map, and instead of responding to situations as they appear, you react to them using the same neural pathways engendered by your patterns and experiences. Thus, you fail to be authentic in your actions and behaviors. Therefore, this competency requires that you take off the autopilot so you become free of the hold of your patterns and approach every situation with a neutral mind.

The good news is that you can effectively become more aware of your patterns simply by focusing on the here and now. These are a few questions from Six Seconds that can help you in this endeavor:

- Question Number 1: What I am doing right now?
- Question Number 2: What have I just done?
- Question Number 3: Is that my usual response?

From now on you may start bringing more awareness into your life and identify the patterns you have developed over time. These will either foster your leadership skills or constitute hindrances to your personal and professional development. Take a note of everything for your own record.

Thank you.

[TEXT: YALINetwork]

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

