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10 THINGS EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT PEOPLE do not DO

Emotional intelligence is probably the most powerful yet undervalued trait in our society. We believe in rooting our everyday functions in logic and reason, yet we come to the same conclusions after long periods of contemplation as we do in the blink of an eye 3 .

Our leaders sorely overlook the human element of our sociopolitical issues and I need not cite the divorce rate for you to believe that we're not choosing the right partners (nor do we have the capacity to sustain intimate relationships for long periods of time).

It seems people believe the most intelligent thing to do is not have emotions at all. To be effective is to be a machine, a product of the age. A well-oiled, consumerist-serving, digitally attuned, highly unaware but overtly operational robot. And so we suffer.

Here are the habits of the people who have the capacity to be aware of what they feel. Who know how to express, process, dismantle, and adjust their experience as they are their own locus of control. They are the true leaders, they are living the most whole and genuine lives, and it is from them we should be taking a cue. These are the things that emotionally intelligent people do not do.

01. They don't assume that the way they think and feel about a situation is the way it is in reality, nor how it will turn out in the end. They recognize their emotions as responses, not accurate gauges, of what's going on. They accept that those responses may have to do with their own issues, rather than the objective situation at hand.

02. Their emotional base points are not external. Their emotions aren't "somebody else's doing," and therefore "somebody else's problem to resolve." Understanding that they are the ultimate cause of what they experience keeps them out of falling into the trap of indignant passivity: Where one believes that as the universe has done wrong, the universe will ultimately have to correct it.

03. They don't assume to know what it is that will make them truly happy. Being that our only frame of reference at any given time is what's happened in the past, we actually have no means to determine what would make us truly happy, as

opposed to just feeling “saved” from whatever we disliked about our past experiences. In understanding this, they open themselves up to any experience that their life evolves toward, knowing there are equal parts good and bad in anything.

04. They don’t think that being fearful is a sign they are on the wrong path. The presence of indifference is a sign you’re on the wrong path. Fear means you’re trying to move toward something you love, but your old beliefs, or unhealed experiences, are getting in the way. (Or, rather, are being called up to be healed.)

05. They know that happiness is a choice, but they don’t feel the need to make it all the time. They are not stuck in the illusion that “happiness” is a sustained state of joy. They allow themselves time to process everything they are experiencing. They allow themselves to exist in their natural state. In that non-resistance, they find contentment.

06. They don’t allow their thoughts to be chosen for them. They recognize that through social conditioning and the eternal human monkey-mind, they can often be swayed by thoughts, beliefs, and mindsets that were never theirs in the first place. To combat this, they take inventory of their beliefs, reflect on their origins, and decide whether or not that frame of reference truly serves them.

07. They recognize that infallible composure is not emotional intelligence. They don’t withhold their feelings or try to temper them so much as to render them almost gone. They do, however, have the capacity to withhold their emotional response until they are in an environment wherein it would be appropriate to express how they are feeling. They don’t suppress it; they manage it effectively.

08. They know that a feeling will not kill them. They’ve developed enough stamina and awareness to know that all things, even the worst, are transitory.

09. They don’t just become close friends with anyone. They recognize true trust and intimacy as something you build, and something you want to be discerning with whom you share. But they’re not guarded or closed as they are simply mindful and aware of who they allow into their lives and hearts. They are kind to all, but truly open to few.

10. They don’t confuse a bad feeling for a bad life.

They are aware of, and avoid, extrapolation, which is essentially projecting the present moment into the foreseeable future—believing that the moment at hand constitutes what your entire life amounted to, rather than just being another passing, transitory experience in the whole. Emotionally intelligent people allow themselves their “bad” days. They let themselves be fully human. It’s in this non-resistance that they find the most peace of all.