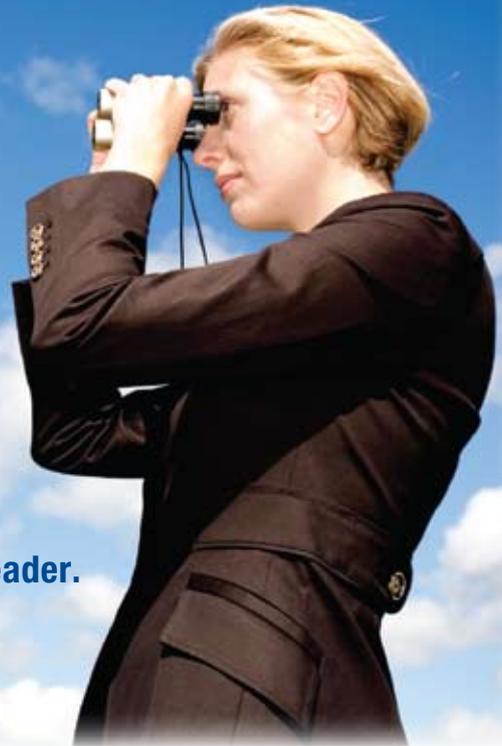


Twelve Heuristics that Will Raise Your EQ



A change of perspective can make you a better leader.

By Jeanne Anne Craig

What's a heuristic? Think of it as a lens to look through, an experience to try out, a way of thinking to try on. The word *heuristic* comes from the same Greek root as *eureka*, what Archimedes was said to have shouted as he ran nude through the streets after he grasped the concept of displacement while in his bathtub.

By engaging in a heuristic, by trying on the lenses, by looking through them for a period of time, you can make serendipitous discoveries. You won't always know the outcome, but if you stay with the experience you may discover something interesting, exciting, or wonderful.

In the process, you will change; you will be transformed. You will raise your emotional intelligence (EQ). Your EQ usually predicts success in life better than your IQ (intellectual quotient). If you have a high EQ, you have a solid sense

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of yourself that is non-negotiable in any context. You're able to stay within integrity and operate out of your values.

Achieving a high EQ is a growth process. Each of the following heuristics is designed to stretch you, challenge you with something new, or nudge you out of your comfort zone:

Heuristic 1: Be an education junkie. Education, both formal and informal, especially education for its own sake that isn't directly related to your job, helps you see the world in a new way.

Heuristic 2: Hire a coach. Working with a personal coach is a guar-

anteed way to keep you out there on the edge, help you identify and reach goals, and accelerate your growth.

Heuristic 3: Do neurobics. As Lawrence Katz describes in *Keep Your Brain Alive: 83 Neurobic Exercises to Help Prevent Memory Loss and Increase Mental Fitness* (Workman Publishing), neurobics are activities (such as taking a different route to work, driving with mittens on, or brushing your teeth with your non-dominant hand) that create new circuits in the brain and boost creative thinking.

Heuristic 4: Be willing to tolerate chaos and confusion. The Dalai Lama believes that when everything seems to be going wrong at once, something wonderful is coming into being. When you feel uncomfortable trying something new, rejoice. Your new high-EQ self is being born.

Heuristic 5: Keep a journal. Be open to discoveries you make as

EQ Characteristics: Where Are You on the Spectrum?

High Emotional Intelligence

- Believes in the rights and dignity of all people.
- Doesn't impose values on others but feels all should respect others' rights.
- Has a solid sense of self and can function autonomously during times of increased anxiety.
- Is self-motivated and can delay gratification.
- Has satisfying personal relationships.
- Copes successfully with broad range of human situations.

Moderately High Emotional Intelligence

- Is responsible, "good" citizen.
- Acts to maintain self-respect.
- Has developed a reasonable sense of self, but can be susceptible to the emotion and anxiety in a situation.
- Has moderately high levels of motivation, delaying gratification.
- Has fairly satisfying personal relationships.
- Copes with most human situations.

Moderately Low Emotional Intelligence

- Tends to direct energy toward what other people think rather than personal goals.
- When anxiety is low, can function well, but regresses when anxiety is higher.
- Depends on others for sense of self-esteem.
- Lacks a solid sense of self.
- Has fairly low levels of satisfaction with relationships.

Low Emotional Intelligence

- Has a "what's in it for me?" attitude.
- Has a poorly developed sense of self.
- Has poorly defined goals and no plan for achieving them.
- Is in dependent relationships, borrows strength to function.
- Has poor ability to sustain relationships.
- Expends much energy keeping anxiety at bay.
- Has a chaotic lifestyle.
- Does not take responsibility for actions, finds blame outside self.

you write and as you read over what you've written before. This process will help you come up with creative solutions and new approaches.

Heuristic 6: Find a way to soothe yourself, and use it when you feel your emotions getting out of control. For example, breathe slowly

and deeply, filling your lungs from the bottom up, until you've calmed down. This may well be the most important heuristic you can use to raise your emotional intelligence. Much of our personal and relationship distress comes out of inadequately processed and managed anxiety.

Heuristic 7: Develop your sense of humor. Learn to laugh at yourself and see the humor in difficult situations.

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Heuristic 8: Accept criticism for the gift it is. If making the change implied in the criticism will enlarge your life, do it. And thank the bestower of such a lovely gift. The improvement raises your EQ.

Heuristic 9: Take a holiday. Listen to your body's need for rest, and take a small holiday from time to time, even when you're not sick. The renewed energy and outlook will more than make up for the time you miss.

Heuristic 10: Find pacers, people who are smarter, better educated, more highly developed, more accomplished than you. You will stretch yourself to keep up with them.

Heuristic 11: Learn to negotiate. When you're having a dispute, get clear on non-negotiables. Discover if there's a solution that will serve both parties. If not, find a compromise.

Heuristic 12: Simplify. Learn to let go of things that intrude on your time and space. Simplifying frees up energy, which raises EQ.

Don't expect this growth path to be entirely smooth. You're not used to this new way, so your system may tell you to change back. If you recognize this as part of the process and not a true obstacle, you can stay the course. The payoff is high, and the cost of not doing so is ultimately feeling half-dead. ■

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