

# **1 HOW TO USE THIS EQ SELF-STUDY PROGRAM**

## **1B Lesson — Reminders to Help You Learn Effectively**

Behavioral research tells us that our emotions have a profound impact on our ability to learn. This lesson is provided to improve your awareness of the effects of emotions. You will review particular factors that help set the tone to stimulate a higher level of attention, interest, and effort toward learning—to help you get more out of this program.

*“The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.” — Alvin Toffler, Sociologist and Futurologist*

*Learning*, according to Webster’s Dictionary, is a general term used to describe knowledge acquired by systematic study in any field of scholarly application. From a more poignant psychological perspective, learning could be described as knowledge acquired, whether through training, practice, or experience, that helps us improve the health and wisdom of our thoughts, words, and actions.

Behavioral research tells us that our emotions have a profound impact on our ability to learn as well as to apply what we learn. Understanding the manner in which our minds deal with the factors described in this lesson provides insight into how our emotions affect learning. If you encounter difficulty learning or applying what you are learning, reread this lesson to ensure that you are dealing with the factors mentioned here, appropriately.

## **HARNESSING THE MIND’S POWER TO LEARN**

The more strategically we apply our minds toward learning, the higher the probability that we will learn effectively. While the coaching strategies described below are a valuable part of any learning formula, they are particularly important in developing *emotional intelligence*. If we fail to include any one of these five coaching strategies, our learning capacity will be substantially reduced.

## **5 Coaching Strategies**

### **1. Encourage a Healthy Attitude and Initiative**

We participate most willingly when we are passionate about a subject. Yet the most important subjects we’ve ever studied may not have been our favorites. The value of the results, and consequences—if we didn’t study—were what counted. Without such healthy regard and self-initiative, it can be difficult to apply the necessary attention to seriously study what is important to learn, especially on our own.

### **2. Practice Healthy Self-Talk and Self-Honesty**

Motivating ourselves with healthy self-talk helps us direct our lives in wiser, more emotionally stable ways. When we question how honest we are being about the quality of our actions, it helps us recognize subtle illusions and ineptitudes that can too easily sabotage the learning process, such as inappropriate opposing feelings of entitled comfort, justifications, impatience, stubbornness, uneducated opinions, denials, and overzealous egos.

### 3. Devote Time to the Learning Process

Gaining better understanding and skill require time to study and practice. Not many of us learn and become skilled by osmosis. Some experts say that it takes 30 days of exercising a new task or better means to create a new habit. A commitment to this program of at least 30 minutes a day for 30 days can help build quality results. Once we begin to improve, we can more willingly continue our participation.

### 4. Accept Healthy Challenges

When learning, the challenges involved can sometimes require us to talk ourselves into waiting longer than we may want to do fun or relaxing things, and instead, to assertively do more difficult things sooner than we want to—especially studying and/or practicing an intricate function. When trying a new healthy challenge, our first reaction may be irritating, emotionally. We may feel a strong need or entitled to do things the way we have been. But if we accept the healthier option, we can improve our patience and fortitude. With effort, a healthy challenge can get easier and more rewarding, as well as pay high long-term dividends.

### 5. Carefully Read and Follow Directions

For text authors or course instructors, defining and structuring high-quality lesson plans can often require intensive research and time. Like sharing well thought out road maps, special recipes and formulas, they can provide powerful insight into important knowledge, effective methods and well-defined steps worth applying. Following such coaching counsel is a major contributor to better understanding.

*A few reflective comments about these coaching strategies: These coaching strategies remind us that we are more than willing to go that first or extra mile when we have a healthy attitude and the initiative to do so. Our emotional stability relies on our ability to be honest with ourselves as much as our credibility with others relies on our honesty with them. While facing what appears to be a difficult challenge, coaching ourselves well helps us realize that it is not truly as problematic and frustrating as we believed it to be.*

*Without a strong enough coach within ourselves, we are more susceptible to take the easy way out, just by telling ourselves that something is too difficult, rather than that we simply need to apply a greater than usual amount of effort. Or perhaps we have not been provided with the amount of high-quality direction required to coach ourselves wisely; to ask ourselves important questions, choose healthier options, assert important priorities, and apply other helpful self-supervising skills.*

## Appreciating the Value of EQ Learning

In order to conduct ourselves in a more emotionally intelligent manner, we learn to become more particular about how we apply our minds and conduct our behavior. By gaining greater understanding of more emotionally objective and effective ways to be, we increase our willingness to accept the efforts necessary to empower ourselves to do the following:

### EQ Empowerments

- Question the quality of our thoughts and reasoning to help us become more EQ oriented.
- Ask ourselves revealing and growth-oriented questions to help us become more self-aware.
- Answer our questions in ways that break down walls that have been preventing us from being honest with ourselves and reducing our concern about the quality of our EQ.
- Pressure and discipline ourselves to act more responsibly.
- Think, communicate, and act with more discretion to help improve quality.
- Remain patient and enduring to improve our emotional balance.
- Listen to the wisest and healthiest voice within us, to strengthen our intuition.
- Improve our professional and personal self-initiative to grow more efficient.
- Improve our diet and exercise to grow more physically healthy.
- Be more outgoing and congenial with others to more meaningfully show we appreciate them.
- Tolerate differences to improve peace among us.
- Cooperate and be fair, as well as share to help improve our relationships with others.

Consider how these EQ empowerments can contribute toward such choices as eating healthier foods, encouraging you to exercise, developing healthier relationships, and mastering other healthy behaviors.

## **HARNESSING THE MIND'S SKILL TO LEARN**

There are strategies we can *employ* that help us learn quicker and more effectively. Without applying them, we are susceptible to more passively learn or even miss learning. To further prepare students for learning, we have listed a few cognitive strategies below that can stimulate a higher level of attention and other efforts that lead to greater absorption and understanding.

### **8 Cognitive Strategies**

#### **1. Shift to a Learning Mode of Attention**

Expanding our knowledge outside a classroom setting obviously places a greater burden on us than within one. It requires us to more seriously pay attention to, not only WHAT we are reading, but also HOW WELL our minds are GRASPING what we are reading and EMPHASIZING important points. Thus, we need to shift our minds from their more casual automatic mode of attention to a more manually directed concentration.

#### **2. Try to Grasp the Big Picture**

Grasping the big picture can be as important in our personal life as in our education and profession. Perhaps, as you read through the lessons for the first time, simply try to get a sense of what each lesson is all about, similar to reading the highlighted brief previews of our lessons. Then reread to reemphasize important points.

#### **3. Gauge Reading Speed**

Reading, like many other things we do in life, can be done hastily more easily than it can—slowly—and more carefully. Even though we may not think about gauging our reading speed, it is to our benefit to try to read materials we want to learn from at a slower pace than we would, say a novel or other casual reading.

#### **4. Read Out Loud**

Reading out loud is a simple and effective way to reinforce attention and absorption. Repeating valuable points several times out loud can also improve retention of them.

#### **5. Pause Frequently**

Pausing after each paragraph to reflect on its particular message can be very helpful, since it's almost impossible to reflect back when our minds move on to the next paragraph's subject-matter. If you become fatigued, take a break and return when you feel better able to follow and absorb the material. If medically able, taking a few minutes to engage in physical exercise or activities that improve the blood flow to the brain may quickly increase your energy to continue.

#### **6. Repeat and Review Specific Information**

While instructors can say things over and over again to reinforce learning, authors can only repeat the information once or twice. However, the student who spends extra time reviewing and repeating important information is providing an instructor-type advantage.

#### **7. Memorize Concepts and Specifics**

It usually takes a person more time to absorb concepts and specific information than just reading or even writing them down. Because of this, you may need to re-read them several times and perhaps even memorize some explanations for better understanding.

#### **8. Quiz About the Most Important Information**

In most any experience, it can be difficult for our minds to logically discriminate, gather, and memorize the most important information to retain for later use. A good example of this is how difficult it can be to home-in on key information and then familiarize and memorize all we need to know to get an "A" on a quiz, within the time-frame we have to do it. We need helpful activities and particular study strategies to help us prepare for quizzes that highlight the most important information.

A few reflective comments about these cognitive strategies: *These strategies remind us that taking the time and applying the effort necessary to familiarize and absorb these lessons will help us heighten our EQ much more than by just reading through them like chapters in a novel. To further develop emotional intelligence, students will need to apply their minds as they read and contribute time to do the activities and quizzes.*

## **Appreciating How We Learn What We Learn**

We learn different things in life for various reasons and in various ways. Some things are easy to learn and others are more difficult, though sometimes what is more difficult is also more wise to do, as well. Some of the motivations behind learning are highly inspiring while others are academically expected or needed and require more direction and discipline. Consider times you have been inspired to learn in the ways described below:

### **Typical ways we are inspired to learn:**

1. Particular people, experiences or desires that stimulate us.
2. Subject-matter that is interesting or fascinating to us.
3. Someone's efforts to teach us and/or materials that stimulate enthusiasm to learn.
4. Our own interest, ambition, and demands on ourselves to learn.
5. A value and healthful regard we have about learning.
6. Our initiative and dedication to be responsible toward learning.
7. Knowing that what we are learning is worthwhile, meaningful, and has benefits/rewards.
8. Recognizing what the consequences would be to not learn particular subject-matter or perform specific tasks and practices.
9. Wanting to prevent or learn from embarrassing mistakes.
10. Other's expectations, support and special incentives.
11. Helpful cognitive skills we have developed that ease the learning process.
12. Quality direction about how to go about learning and lesson plans we willingly follow.
13. Associations, strategies, formulas, practices, study, tests and other specific methods that help us learn.
14. Special discretion and/or treatments we are aware that we need to learn to apply.
15. Our personal safety, well-being, and dignity and/or others.
16. To reach our own personal goals and victories.
17. Our relationships with others; kindness, diplomacy, ethics, etc.
18. To improve job performance and/or to master a task.
19. Laws, rules, regulations, and other healthy guidelines we willingly follow.
20. Intuitive incentives.

A few reflective comments about ways we are inspired to learn: *We each decide whether or not to engage in learning after examining our immediate needs and/or desires, current level of understanding, ability, experiences, and/or priorities. We may find ourselves over-learning some purposeful objectives while ignoring equally important or more purposeful ones. We may even allow ourselves to pursue learning objectives that are far from beneficial and even harmful to us and/or other people, without considering that this is what we are doing. We must therefore be cautious of the subject matter about which we choose to learn.*

Below is a list of purposeful learning objectives that EQ training can help us pursue and balance:

## **Purposeful Learning Objectives**

- To learn what is needed to earn a livelihood and improve our financial security.
- To learn functionally helpful skills to manage our affairs.
- To learn what helps us improve our ability to apply our minds more healthfully.
- To learn what helps keep us safe and balance our lives, emotionally.
- To learn what helps us enrich our relationships with others and the outside world.
- To learn what can healthfully enhance our special interests and talents.

## **HARNESSING THE MIND'S DISTORTED WAYS TO LEARN**

Thus far this lesson has been about reviewing and grasping healthy ways we can apply our minds to nurture learning. Behavioral research warns us, however, that the human mind's development is influenced by both *nurture* and *nature*. Psychologists are well aware of the need for adequate understanding of the mind's emotional characteristics and troubling *tendencies*. Such understanding can make a significant difference in how we apply our minds. Poor direction and inadequate understanding can allow us to accept more distorted reactions and dysfunctional habits than we realize.

Most every decision, choice, action, or reaction that we experience involves a psychological element. Leaving EQ development to chance or a more "natural" approach is no different than leaving any other important aspect of our formal education to abstract ways of learning. Just as performing simple computing operations would be extremely difficult for one who is computer illiterate, performing some even elementary psychological judgments or mind applications can be difficult for one who is emotionally illiterate or developing his/her mind from an overly abstract understanding and perspective.

Our life experiences, for the most part, don't teach us soon enough or in gentle enough ways, what is most important to know, psychologically. The beneficial know-how that EQ training provides improves our ability to reason and tremendously enhances our quality of life. In a sense, this new, more educated approach to mind development is bringing us out of the *emotional* dark ages. We are challenged to look at our minds in a more scholarly way and also recognize that emotional intelligence, itself, is a necessary scholastic endeavor. Without such know-how, emotions can too often seem justified, no matter how damaging. Consider how the following challenges have affected your ability to master healthier behaviors.

### ***Typical reasons why EQ learning can be challenging:***

1. Our thought processing, when in a natural mode, is more strongly driven by emotionally comforting options than emotionally discomfoting, yet healthier ones.
2. Because of our limited understanding about emotions, we are less inclined to allow emotional intelligence and healthier pursuits, in general, to guide and control our emotions.
3. There are a number of things that are simple to understand, yet comprehensive and tricky to apply in action without particular practice strategies or previous steps of learning.
4. We can fail to learn from history what is ineffective or inappropriate, because the mind forgets so easily, thus allowing us to keep applying the same unhealthy approach over and over again.
5. Just as certain foods we put into our bodies can help nourish us and other foods can endanger our health, there are thoughts we can put into our minds that can help us improve our EQ and other thoughts that can endanger our health, emotionally. As with food, those that endanger our health can too easily feel the most satisfying.
6. We can fail to realize how quickly we can pass through the ozone pain, so to speak—while controlling endangering emotions—if we stay with the restraining discomfort until we reach a more comfortable, yet safer atmosphere in the mind.
7. It can often take a stroke of enlightened genius or wisdom to recognize and finally accept applying a particular strategy or practice that helps improve how we respond to endangering potent emotions, as well as to accept the study necessary to improve the quality of our thoughts, communications, and behavior.

A few reflective comments about why EQ learning can be challenging: *As we begin to enhance our EQ learning, our perspective, emotionally, is more natural and undereducated. The more we learn about helpful and harmful reactions to emotions, the less inhibiting the challenge is to develop healthier minds and enrich our life experiences.*

## **Prioritizing Healthier as Well as More Intellectual Minds**

The human brain is not only the most complex organ in the body. It is also considered to be the most complex object in our known universe, according to The Neurosciences Institute in San Diego, California. As complex as it is, we still must rely on our ability to *nurture* our understanding about it to improve our emotional stability.

Computers can provide insight into how the human mind works. If you understand a little about computers, metaphorically, the *brain* could (humbly) be characterized in some ways as a mini-supercomputer. And in such a metaphor, the *mind's knowledge* would be the software. The quality and kind of information programmed into the mind or learned, so to speak, would depend on how well the programmer (person) is able to navigate and control the mind, as well as what the programmer (the person) is inspired or directed to program into it (learn).

Metaphorically, a programmer (the person) would ideally nurture learning to program (accumulate knowledge and practices) intellectually and healthfully. Yet without adequate healthful understanding (having security software), the programmer and mind can accept natural emotionally damaging tendencies (dysfunctions, etc.) that adversely affect the quality of the mind's (computing) operation, similar to how damaging viruses, etc. can have a damaging affect our computers' programs when we don't have security software.

By considering the brain and mind from this technological perspective, it helps remind us that much remains to be programmed (learned) and understood about our minds. If we are to develop, not just more intellectual, but healthier minds—we need to understand more functional basics and improve our minds' understanding, similar to having security software. Highly respected insight, such as wisdom, courage, diplomacy, and generosity are revered for good reason: They all require extremely meaningful EQ understanding and sacrifice not commonly or naturally learned and ideals not easily acted upon by us humans.

The distorted ways in which nature can influence how we learn is a topic covered in most every lesson of our program. Below we have listed a few ways far too common.

### ***Typical ways nature distorts how we learn:***

1. When we fragment information together inappropriately and/or miss adequate investigation or details. Such superficial discernment causes misinterpretations we classify as inappropriate justifications, assumptions, exaggerations, biases, innuendos, or uneducated opinions.
2. When we don't have knowledge, we forget it, or don't follow helpful practices, such as healthy rules, guidelines and steps, tricky formulas and other sophisticated direction. Lacking healthy guidance or not remembering to follow it can cause severe error in related judgment.
3. When we don't internally question and debate to qualify the quality of our reasoning, choices, and decisions or respond honestly as we do attempt to qualify it. Such indiscretion breeds unhealthy thinking and dysfunctional behavior.
4. When we don't understand what is relative. This can make it too easy for us to under appreciate the wrong things and fail to pursue meaningful achievements.
5. When we don't develop a strong enough coach within ourselves to assert healthy self-talk that guides our behavior toward wise victories. Without this healthy self-supervision, we can too easily set ourselves up for failure in important endeavors.
6. When we experience things in perfunctory, stressful or exciting ways and we just react and/or make snap judgments. We stifle our EQ learning ability when we don't objectively weigh how we should react or consider alternatives.
7. When we have the power to endure what is difficult and delay relief—yet our mind demands immediate relief. We can jeopardize our health too easily by choosing natures easier or somewhat magnetically potent approach.

8. When we over-rate independence, liberty, and our creative license to do as we please and under-rate the risk of problems and consequence. Distortion of our judgment becomes clearer when problems occur and consequences result.
9. When we miss or ignore critical direction toward healthy outcomes. When such direction is ignored, it can have it's own consequences and also establish a habit that allows us to ignore other important direction.
10. When we are dishonest with ourselves and others. Self-honesty is necessary to improve our emotional stability and relate healthfully with others.

A few reflective comments about the ways nature distorts how we learn: *Without quality direction and adequate understanding about the mind's emotional characteristics and troubling natural tendencies, we are more susceptible to distorted reactions and dysfunctional habits. The more we learn about the ways nature distorts our thinking, the better equipped we are to avoid dysfunctional habits and instead, build healthier ones.*

## **A Mind Operation WARNING and PRECAUTION**

Many complicated products and other resources come with their own *cause and effect* precautions highlighted in some way, perhaps in the accompanying literature. If we could imagine having mind operation literature, it most likely would come with a WARNING and PRECAUTIONS—at the beginning. The following is our humble understanding of what should be included:

**WARNING!** Please be aware that the human mind is an extremely complex computing system. Due to the limited training and understanding you have had about it, thus far, it can have a tendency to malfunction more frequently than it should. Because of the nature's influence on emotions, your mind is susceptible to developing more primitive habits and damaging reactions than other sophisticated computing systems. If you do not receive enough training to help you direct your mind in a healthful manner, your mind is less inclined to keep nature in check and develop as healthfully and intellectually as otherwise possible.

Due to the mind's complexity and nature-based tendencies, be sure to consider the following operation precautions:

1. Be careful what you let your mind spend time doing or convincing you to do. Understand that, left to its own natural tendencies, the mind will not remind you to do or stop you from doing anything you allow it to do.
2. It is important to be in command and direct the mind to the best of our ability.
3. Understand that it is difficult for the inexperienced mind to recognize and take heed to the consequences of subtle cause and effects.
4. Understand that the mind in a superficial or arbitrary mode of reasoning has difficulty recognizing and taking heed to the consequences of cause and effects.
5. Be aware that the mind has the ability to miss or ignore critical direction toward healthy outcomes --including survival.
6. Understand that independence and liberty to do as we please can be over-rated and jeopardized when the risk of consequence is under-rated.
7. The mind has the tendency to forget far more than it remembers.
8. Be aware that the dysfunctional characteristics of certain actions, issues, and ideas can adversely effect the body, the mind, other human beings, and the environment—with the mind unaware or seemingly inattentive to it!

When we understand how difficult it is to develop the human mind in the healthiest manner on our own, it can become easier to study about it, as well as appreciate and prescribe to this warning!

## **IN CONCLUSION: Broadening Our Perspective**

Our willingness to learn is a cornerstone to our success in any endeavor. As mentioned at the beginning of this lesson, the dynamics of this lesson have been included to set the tone for learning and thereby prepare you to read through the rest of the lessons more effectively. By willingly applying the due care suggested here, you will increase your chances to successfully grasp what we are trying to teach you.

Academically, it is helpful to begin learning about emotional intelligence in a way that minimizes difficulties, yet maximizes the potential for healthy growth. We have tried earnestly to formulate this program in such a way. Our lessons teach you how to improve your emotional intelligence in a manner somewhat similar to that by which you learned the infinite aspects of language and arithmetic. Comparable to teaching one letter or one number at a time, we have begun by explaining the simple, yet important, before advancing to the more comprehensive. We have taken incremental steps to carefully guide you toward the broader scope of emotional intelligence and higher levels of learning about it.

While gaining better understanding about your mind can significantly broaden your perspective to help you see the bigger picture, prioritizing the time to engage in more learning amid a busy schedule can be difficult. If setting aside time is a challenge, perhaps the easiest solution is to set the alarm for a half-hour earlier in the morning. This slight change will allow you to devote 15 hours a month and over 200 hours a year toward additional emotional growth.

This lesson has been the first of several that we offer to teach you how to apply your most valuable resource — located right BEHIND your very eyes — in ways that will build your emotional stability and emotional prosperity. We are confident that you will find learning from our program to be an enriching experience. To continue to consider these learning reminders and better realize your growth, we again suggest that you occasionally reread this lesson.

Please note that most of the lessons in this program have an *Activities* section at the end or within the lesson. This lesson does not have such a section. It does, however, provide many suggestions worthwhile to practice.