

RQ Dimension — Interpersonal Competence

About this Dimension

Interpersonal Competence is an individual's ability to understand and empathize with other people and their circumstances. Resilient people tend to demonstrate the competencies of what, in recent years, has been defined as "emotional intelligence." Emotional intelligence in an individual suggests a high level of self and social awareness and the ability to use this awareness to effectively manage themselves and their relationships with others.

Strategies for Developing the Interpersonal Competence Dimension

Developing Interpersonal Competence involves strategies for developing insight into the emotional make-up of oneself and others and then methods for translating this insight into self- and relationship-management. Efforts to strengthen Interpersonal Competence are wholly dependent upon an individual's ability to be introspective, be open to the need for changing how one interacts with others and be able to modify one's behavior and interactions with others to accommodate their emotional requirements.

- Make two lists. (a) First make a list of things, kinds of people, and situations that attract you. What are you attracted to? What do you find interesting and compelling? And then (b) make a list of things, kinds of people, and situations that you tend to avoid. What do you find unattractive? What repels you? What do you try to avoid at all cost? Finally, (c) identify why you feel attracted or repulsed by these things. How do these attractors/detractors make you feel? Do these feelings ever get in the way of your judgment about things, situations, and people? Are you able to rise above your emotional response to these situations?
- Think of a time when you were really really angry. What caused you to feel this strongly about something? How did this anger translate into your behaviors? Were you able or not able to set aside this anger when you needed to in order to move on in the relationship/situation? What did you do that enabled you to move on — or what prevented you from moving on? What insights about yourself emerge from this assessment of these emotions of frustration and anger?
- Describe a situation where you felt joyful, playful, elated, or peaceful. What caused you to have these feelings? What actions did you take in this situation or in relation to others that led to these positive emotions? What insights about yourself emerge from this assessment of your positive/affirming emotions?
- Identify someone with whom you interact on a regular basis. What are the things, situations, and people that this person is attracted to/drawn toward? What are the things, situations, and people that this person is repelled by and tends to avoid? What are the signs in this other person that indicate attraction or repulsion? To what extent have you ever tested out your assumptions about what this person likes or dislikes? How does your perception of this other person's likes/dislikes influence your own relationship with this person? To what extent do

you modify/shape your own interactions with this person to accommodate his or her likes/dislikes? What insights about yourself emerge from this reflection upon another person's likes/dislikes?

- Think of a recent situation where you sensed that someone you were interacting with was unhappy or frustrated — but didn't directly tell you so. What led you to believe that the person was frustrated/unhappy with you or the situation? Were there specific behaviors or mannerisms that caused you to suspect the other person's emotional state? To what extent do you typically pay attention to these behaviors and mannerisms? Did you "test out" your perceptions/assumptions about the other person's emotional state with that person? How did you test out this perception? If you didn't test out this assumption/perception, why not? What insights about yourself emerge from this assessment of your own ability to accurately read another person's emotional state?
- Identify one thing that you could do enable yourself to be more aware of your emotional state and its response to different situations and people.
- Identify the single greatest obstacle that you see to successfully managing your emotions effectively vs. your emotions controlling you.
- If you are facing a significant challenge or crisis, reflect upon *what* you are feeling as you face this challenge and identify one or two actions that you could take to ensure a healthy, learning-centered, and positive emotional response to this situation.
- Identify your "hot buttons" that can sometimes cause you to act in ways that are counterproductive to healthy interactions with others. Identify positive actions that you can take when others push these hot buttons.