

## **Emotional Intelligence**

As we embrace relationships, along with the energy we share with our family, friends, coworkers, and of course, ourselves, we see how critically significant these interpersonal interactions are to our own emotional development. These evolving relationships are the most obvious barometers of our emotional well being. At their heart, all relationships are spiritual experiences. They nurture us, teach us, and connect us to the souls of others and—most significantly—to the depth of our very own souls.

Through the growth of these various relationships and our continued journey on the path of emotional freedom, we discover extended states of awareness, which stretch out from our souls. This aspect of our humanity is the mirror of relationships; each relationship is a reflection of our own soul and therefore a mechanism to take us to higher states of consciousness.

Emotions are released to restore balance in our psyches. The limits we impose on our emotions originated with the discomfort of our parents. We formed our boundaries by reacting to theirs. They also were taught as children to recognize when an emotion was "too much." Their sense of appropriateness was inherited, and they had little choice but to pass it on. What this means is that our emotional life isn't completely ours. It comes to us secondhand. Every tear we shed, every angry outburst, and every peal of laughter reflects the emotional comfort range of parents and grandparents—people other than us. The emotional intelligence that is unique to each of us can be recaptured, rekindled, and more highly developed if we acknowledge its potential and significance and incorporate three components into our daily activities:

### **Place attention on your emotions**

Each day from the moment you awaken to the moment you go to sleep, place your attention on your emotions. This critical first step will allow you to truly experience love and emotional compassion.

### **Practice empathy**

After that first step has been forged, you are able to look beyond yourself to others. This leads you to the second component of emotional intelligence: empathy. Noticing another's emotions is the essence of communication. Can you feel what another person is feeling? By this I do not mean simply to understand what another person is feeling, but to actually feel it as if it permeates every cell in your body.

### **Manage relationships**

The third component of emotional intelligence is the ability to manage relationships. This is a sensitive combination of being true to oneself, being generous of heart, and being fully present. This is often easier said than done, but reaching out to another with love, compassion, understanding, defenselessness, empathy, and spontaneity takes you to higher planes of spiritual existence.

Managing relationships requires honesty, willingness, and an open heart. This is sometimes more difficult for individuals who are unwilling to make themselves vulnerable. Yet for those willing to take the chance, emotional intelligence is a lifelong gift that provides the gateway to spiritual intelligence—the interdependent co-arising of events: synchronicity, magic, miracles. We all have the capacity to reach that plane of existence if we start with a foundation of emotional intelligence. - DEEPAK CHOPRA -