

# BUILDING THE CAPACITY TO CHANGE™

## EQ DEVELOPMENT IDEAS FOR CHANGE-ABILITY

**EMOTIONAL SELF-AWARENESS:** *The ability to recognize and understand one's feelings and emotions, differentiate between them, and know what caused them and why.*

### DEVELOPMENT IDEAS:

- Increase your feeling word vocabulary.
- Use a feeling word vocabulary list to practice talking about feelings with your family members.
- Play the "freeze game" several times each day. Ask yourself "What am I feeling, thinking, doing right now?"
- Learn where in your body you experience various feelings.
- Think of feelings as messages. When you experience a particular emotion in a situation, ask yourself what the message is.
- Develop a practice of asking yourself "How do I feel about this?" with decisions and choices you are faced with.
- Discuss the emotional content of books and movies with others.
- Listen to different kinds of music and identify the types of feelings each piece evokes in you.
- Go for walks in nature and try to tune all your senses into the experience.
- Clarify your personal values.
- Read *What to Say When You Talk to Yourself* by Shad Helmstetter.
- Take the Emotional Awareness Questionnaire in *Achieving Emotional Literacy* by Claude Steiner.

**SELF-REGARD:** *The ability to look at and understand oneself, respect and accept oneself, accepting one's perceived positive and negative aspects as well as one's limitations and possibilities.*

### DEVELOPMENT IDEAS:

- Practice being as accepting and forgiving to yourself as you are to others.
- Avoid comparing yourself to others.
- Complete a strengths inventory such as *VIA Signature Strengths* at [www.authentic happiness.com](http://www.authentic happiness.com).
- Validate your self-perceptions by gathering feedback from others about yourself. Use formal assessment instruments as well as informal methods.
- To be able to tackle something for which your confidence is low, break the project or activity into small tasks at which you can succeed.
- Seek out and spend more time with people who affirm your skills, self worth and your contribution.
- Identify all the things about you that you can take pride in. Don't be embarrassed to feel or express that pride.
- Don't take yourself too seriously. Laugh at your mistakes and try to learn from them.
- Read *The Six Pillars of Self Esteem* by Nathaniel Branden.

**SELF-ACTUALIZATION** *The ability to realize one's potential capacities and to strive to do that which one wants to do and enjoys doing.*

### DEVELOPMENT IDEAS:

- Ask yourself how satisfied you are with the things that you are presently doing, with your interests. If you are not happy with what you are presently doing, think of what you would like to and can possibly do differently.
- Find one or two activities or hobbies that interest you passionately and pursue them with zeal and commitment.

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- Schedule time each week explicitly for self-actualization pursuits
- Make a list of short-term and long-term goals in pursuing and accomplishing new areas of development, skill and talent.
- Share your interests with others – tell people what interests you.
- Read *The Power of Purpose* by Dick Leider.
- Create a vision for your life that encompasses the following areas: work, relationships, money, spirituality, health. Read *The Empowerment Book* as a resource, by David Gershon and Gail Straub.

**FLEXIBILITY:** *The ability to adjust one's emotions, thoughts, and behavior to changing situations and conditions.*

### DEVELOPMENT IDEAS:

- Don't be afraid of change – accept it as an opportunity to learn new things and grow.
- Practice relaxation techniques to calm your anxiety when you are in uncomfortable, ambiguous situations.
- Notice how often you start to argue with another person's idea. Before you speak, challenge yourself to "try it their way."
- Think of different ways to handle the same situations, do the same things, or approach the same problems or challenges.
- Make periodic changes in your daily or weekly routine to give yourself the opportunity to view things from a different perspective. You may discover more efficient or comfortable routines.
- Continuously engage yourself in learning something new: new hobbies, skills, etc. Expand your comfort zone by challenging yourself.
- Realize that your resistance to change is the brain's natural reaction to it. Tell yourself: "This change is not a threat to me. I can be open to it."
- Read *Too Perfect* by A. Mallinger.

**STRESS TOLERANCE:** *The ability to withstand adverse events and stressful situations without falling apart by actively and confidently coping with stress.*

### DEVELOPMENT IDEAS:

- Avoid leaving things to the last minute.
- Divide larger projects into smaller, more manageable tasks and concentrate only on those tasks that truly require your attention at that moment.
- Develop an exercise routine.
- Whenever you start to feel overwhelmed by all you need to do, make a to-do list with approximate times needed to complete each task. Do the tasks in priority order, and check them off when completed.
- Learn deep breathing techniques.
- Practice visualization in advance of stressful situations.
- Learn and practice the Quick-Coherence technique from Heartmath.
- Leverage your social support system to help manage stress.
- Focus on the things within your realm of control. Don't sweat the small stuff.
- Play more! Recreation means re-create.
- Improve your laughter quotient. Laughing releases health-promoting chemicals.
- Take your earned vacations!
- Read *The Relaxation Response* by Herbert Benson.
- Smile often.

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**HAPPINESS:** *The ability to feel satisfied with one's life, to enjoy oneself and being with others, and to have fun.*

### DEVELOPMENT IDEAS:

- Smile often.
- Laugh.
- Learn what gives you joy and try to cultivate more of it in your life.
- If you cannot eliminate things that make you sad, whenever possible, try to avoid those people and situations that have that effect on you.
- Complain less, think positive, enjoy life more.
- Spend more time with people who make you happy – who make you laugh. It rubs off!
- Pamper yourself.
- Take responsibility for making yourself happy instead of expecting someone else to.
- Try to cheer up others who may be blue. You will feel good as well.
- Read *Happy for No Reason* by Marci Shimoff.

**OPTIMISM:** *The ability to look at the brighter side of life and to maintain a positive attitude; even in the face of adversity.*

### DEVELOPMENT IDEAS:

- Surround yourself with positive thinkers. Avoid negative people whenever possible.
- Make a list of positive affirmations and review them regularly.
- Recognize that your negative self-talk is usually just an interpretation of an event, not necessarily the reality of the event.
- Carry a clicker for a day to record the number of times you use negative self-talk
- When faced with an **A**dversity, examine your **B**elief about it. If it's negative, see if you can shift it to something positive, for a better outcome or **C**onsequence. (ABC Model).
- Avoid the use of the words "always" and "never" when describing or discussing a difficult situation.
- Develop a spiritual practice.
- Read *Learned Optimism* by Martin Seligman, Ph.D.

*Note: These emotional competencies are seven of the fifteen sub-scales measured by the EQ-i®, an assessment of emotional intelligence. Kate Cannon and Kathy Light are certified users of the EQ-i®.*