

MIND BLINDNESS

When was the last time you were able to fully exhale and enjoy what's truly important in life? I'm talking about the kind of deep reflection that sends tingles down your spine, deflating the size of your daily hassles. For me, it's the feeling I get upon granting myself permission to chip away at my favorite pint of ice cream, convinced that nothing could be better than right now. Whatever your moments are, they are rare spots of time that leave you thinking, "This is what it's all about."

These days, the work-life balance scale is tilting heavily towards "work." More than 80% of Americans average 40+ hours on the job, and half of those put in 50+ hours each week. TalentSmart® collected data on 500,000 people in preparing *The Emotional Intelligence Quick Book* and discovered that more than 70% of us do not handle conflict and stress effectively. Time spent at the office is rife with challenges and blindly diving into your work actually reduces your job performance. Why?

AWARENESS BUILDS PERFORMANCE

Most of the battle for using emotional intelligence on the job is won with self-awareness. With just 36% of people understanding their emotions as they happen, the stresses of the workplace are quick to impede performance. And they don't just halt our progress while we're at the office: 87% of the people we tested found their personal lives greatly impacted by their work.

Emotional intelligence (EQ) explains almost 60% of an individual's job performance. EQ skills are so embedded in everything we do and say each day that it's no surprise to see them sway job performance. The trick is that self-awareness, the first of the four EQ skills, is a critical first step in building EQ. It's hard to choose a new course of action if you don't even know it's there.

THROUGH THE EYES OF A CHILD

At first, it sounds counterintuitive to learn self-awareness from a child. Many children don't fully realize how they come across to other people. But young children hold a deep secret that trumps adult knowledge and experience, and this secret not only helps children get the most out of life, it actually helps them survive better than adults in a common life-threatening situation. More on that later.

First, we need to consider how Steve Whitley spends his workday. Steve is a seasoned lawyer who starts each day with a 10-minute cup of coffee. Mind you, he actually spends just 30 seconds drinking. He squeezes gulps in between clicking through emails, jotting down voicemails and rummaging through a mile-high stack of documents. Some mornings, Steve doesn't even glance out at the panoramic view through his fourteenth story window.

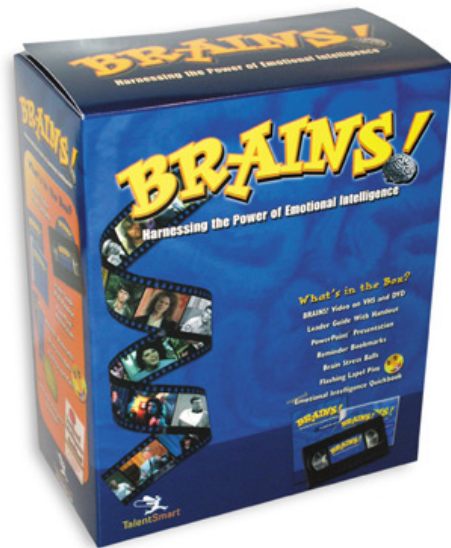
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Downing coffee is not a sign of low emotional intelligence, but powering through your day without contemplating your behavior is. Steve invests little time in self-reflection and often finds himself denying his fatigue, chasing lofty goals at the expense of his health and failing to fulfill the needs of his family and friends.

So why should Steve look through the eyes of a child? Kenneth Hill, author of *Lost Person Behavior*, studied survival rates of different demographic groups lost in the wilderness. Despite the fact that small children lose body heat faster than adults, they survive in the wild longer than experienced hunters, fit hikers and even adults trained in survival by the military. What is their secret to performance that trumps knowledge and experience?

Children survive longer in the wild because they can't help it. Laurence Gonzales explains in his book *Deep Survival*, "Small children do not create the same sort of mental maps that adults do. They also follow their instincts. If it gets cold, they crawl into a hollow tree to get warm. If they're tired, they rest, so they don't get fatigued. If they're thirsty, they drink. They try to make themselves comfortable, and staying comfortable helps keep them alive. They do not yet have the sophisticated mental mapping ability that adults have, and so do not try to bend the map. They adapt to the world they're in."

Unlike small children, adults lost in the wilderness over-think themselves into danger. The same mental process holds true at work; it's what people playfully refer to as "analysis paralysis." Mind blindness happens when we lose focus on the circumstances that surround us and let defining moments drift by beneath our awareness. Emotional intelligence offers a way out by teaching us the skills needed to know what, when, why and how our thoughts and emotions influence our actions. Building EQ ensures that you manage the pivotal responses needed to live a healthier, more successful life.



LOOKING FOR A GOOD WAY TO TEACH EQ?

BRAINS! lives up to the TalentSmart® motto, "No more boring training videos!" Plus, it comes complete with activities, leader materials, participant handouts and a lively, engaging video that showcases blockbuster stars and memorable historical events to illustrate EQ in action.

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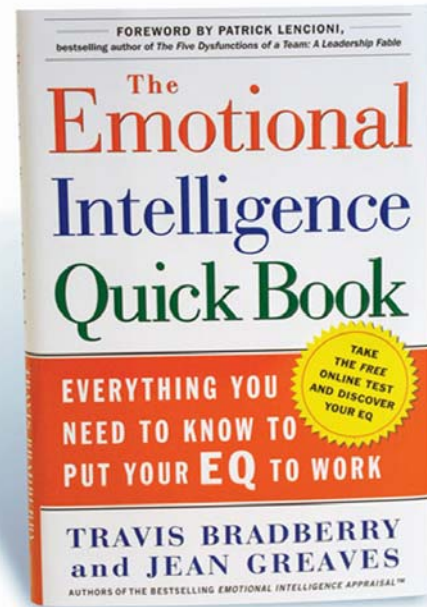
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