9 Ways Emotionally Intelligent People Deal With Conflict

By **CARINA WOLFF** | Sept 2 2016 |

When you're in the midst of a confrontation, it can be pretty hard to think straight. If you're someone who often has a difficult time dealing with an issue, you may want to look at how emotionally intelligent people deal with conflict for inspiration. Knowing how to communicate effectively and paying close attention to the feelings of others can make all the difference in resolving life's inevitable problems, and you might even find that there is less conflict in your life as a result of you respond to situations.

So what makes someone emotionally intelligent? Although emotional intelligence is not a technical term in psychology, it generally refers to a person's ability to notice and interpret emotionality in themselves and others. "A person capable of looking internally, recognizing and labeling their own responses to situations, and then acting in a way that is both constructive and respectful of the internal process shows a strength in emotional intelligence," says Dorian Crawford, PsyD over email.

Luckily, anyone can gain emotional intelligence by engaging in certain habits and taking the time to learn a thing or two about how they react. If you're not sure how to navigate issues with others, pay attention to these nine ways that emotionally intelligent people deal with conflict.

1. They Address Issues Head On

Acting passive aggressive or giving someone the silent treatment isn't exactly the best course of action. "Many people avoid conflicts because they don't want to upset themselves or others," says psychotherapist Matt Traube, MFT over email. "Emotionally intelligent people have learned how to address difficult issues."

2. They Listen

Refusing to see someone's side or acting stubborn only deepens conflict, not resolves it. "Listening to people makes them feel validated," says Traube. "Many conflicts begin because a person feels unheard. Emotionally intelligent people understand that sometimes being correct is less important than having the ability to simply listen."

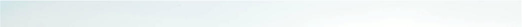
3. They Read Social Cues

Body language matters when it comes to discussing something important. "Emotionally intelligent people have the ability to scan the room and read the cues before anyone has even started talking," says Traube. You should also pay attention to your own body language to create an optimal environment for communication.

4. They Plan Ahead

"It is important to put yourself into the mindset of what your response and the responses of others might be when certain situations arise," says Crawford. "Also, planning ahead is important when deciding about breaking news to people. If something comes up at the office or in your personal life, consider all the ways people might react in order to strategically pass a piece of information along."

5. They Empathize



Nothing bridges a gap quite like empathy. It's hard, but it can help to articulate your point based on how you anticipate someone else is feeling. "Being able to appreciate what the other person is experiencing during any situation will help solve problems quicker, and with a true appreciation of the others' perspective," says Crawford.

6. They Take Breaks

There sometimes comes a point in conversations where things escalate and become too heated. Emotionally-intelligent people aren't afraid to pause the argument and come back once their emotions have dwindled down. "Sometimes taking a break from the conversation is the best option," says Traube. "This will allow the fight-or-flight response to lessen and can create space for effective communication."

7. They Figure Out Their Emotions

It can be hard to express yourself if you're not even sure why you feel a particular way. "When something happens, it is important to take a look at what feelings are stirred up in your own experience," says Crawford. "If you do not take a look at how you are internally reacting to something, your emotions may get the best of you. That does not mean you shouldn't be emotional or ever show emotions. It just means that you should pay attention to why you are reacting the way you are."

8. They Try To Be Flexible

"We don't always know exactly what is going on with others or how past experiences may color current responses to events," says Crawford. "If you are an emotionally intelligent person, you can be flexible in your response to others and avoid a rigid or impulsive remark or reaction. Your flexibility shows that you can read the subtext of situations and respond accordingly."

9. They Pay Attention To Logic

Your emotions are valid, but it can be helpful to take a step back and pay attention to objective logic. "There are those who are so emotionally engaged that all reasoning flies out the window," says Cook. "The emotionally intelligent person has a healthy balance — they listen to their internal feelings, but they also incorporate their logic to reach level-headed decisions."

At the end of the day, negotiations may take some practice, but the more thought you put into dealing with conflict, the better.