

LEAD

## 7 Powerful Habits of People With High Emotional Intelligence

You don't get where you want to be without practice. Here's how and what to practice.

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Think about the people you know who always seem to get what they

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Are they self-centered? Are they their own best advocates? When you think of their success, do you feel happy for them?

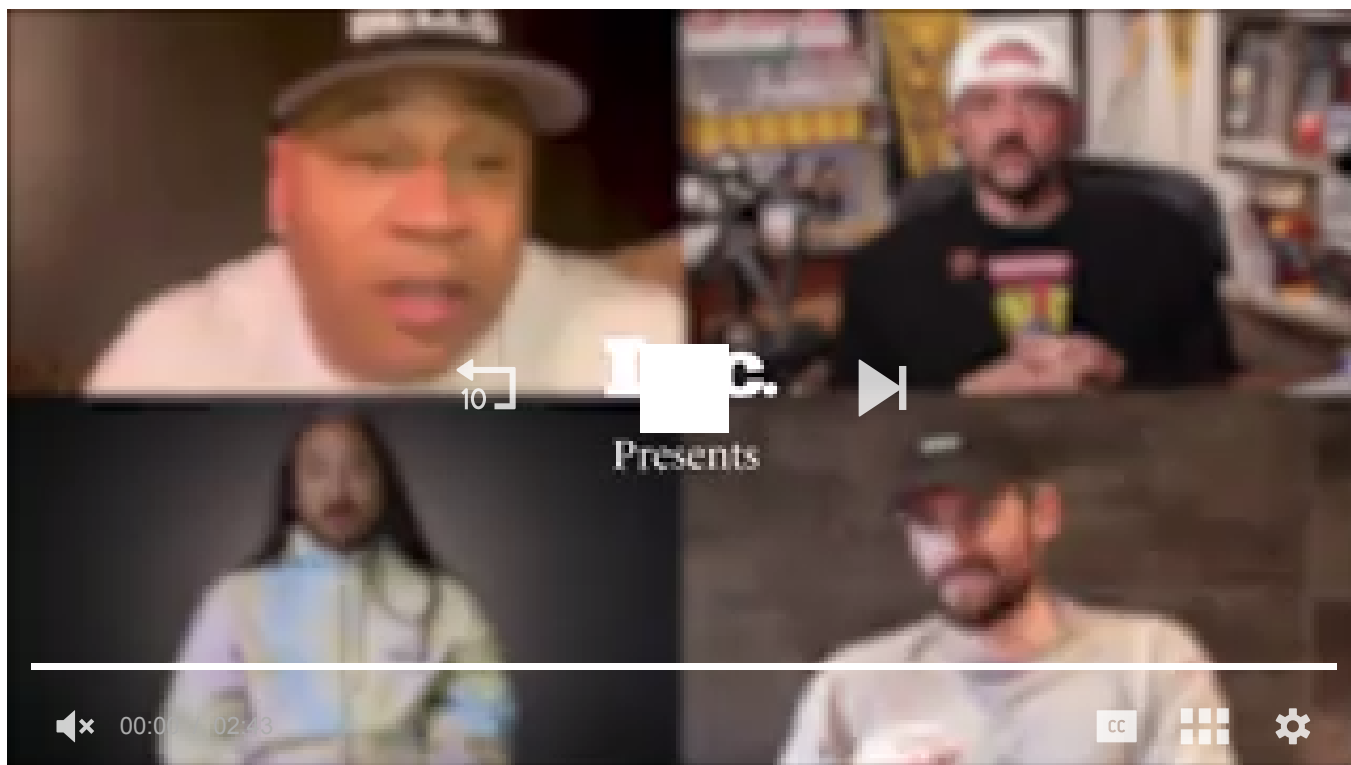
Do you admire them? If you don't, let's assume for our purposes that other people don't admire them either. So how does someone become successful while consistently making enemies?

*Article continues after video.*

#### FEATURED VIDEO

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And if you do admire them, think about that, too. Is it purely the scope of their success that prompts your respect? Or is it something else – perhaps something about the way they make *you* feel about them?

Another word for feelings: emotions. Truly emotionally intelligent people understand this. That's why they work to adopt some very powerful habits that make it easier and more likely for them to get what they want.

Habits like these, for example.

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## 1. They seek to support.

Emotionally intelligent people seek to support other people.

Sounds altruistic, doesn't it? Well it can be. But it can also be strategic – even shrewd.

Because people are concerned about what affects them. They might be kind, decent, noble – even selfless. They're still human beings, who will react to the way things affect them, personally.

So, if you want to engage with people effectively, think about whether your words and actions are offered in a way that seems to support, or to support

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Example: Suppose you're desperate to sell your house. A young couple comes to look at it, beautiful children in tow.

"You have such a beautiful family," you say to them. "You're exactly the type of people I would feel proud to help have this house. I would love to find a way to make that happen."

Everything you said might be true—but you smartly leave out the part about being desperate to sell. That wouldn't be supportive; it would shift the focus to what you need, as opposed to what you can do for them.

It wouldn't be as effective, and it wouldn't be as emotionally intelligent.

## 2. They watch their language.

I don't mean that they don't use curse words. They might.

But emotionally intelligent people learn to be very intentional in their word choices and reactions.

I say this because there are word choices that people with low emotional intelligence make all the time, and that betray them—subtle cues that let the other person in a conversation know that you think your needs are more important than theirs.

I've written about this before. You'll find checklists of some of these phrases [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#). Seriously, they'll help.

Want a quick example? Emotionally intelligent people never say, "I know how you feel."

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Because you can almost never, really, 100 percent know what someone else feels. You can try to, and you can repeat people's words back to them, mirroring their feelings. But it's a very rare circumstance when you can truly understand another person's experience.

We know this intuitively. But some of us say it anyway.

Emotionally intelligent people learn that it sometimes doesn't matter what they *mean* to say. Instead, it matters more what the person they're talking with *hears* and understands.

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### 3. They don't assume.

Two things about human beings: We are impatient, and we are insecure.

Of course, some of us are more so than others. And some of us learn over time to overcome these traits.

We all have them, though, buried as they may be – and that's why we can be prone to rush to fill in the gaps of our understanding.

We assume things that aren't necessarily true, because they square with things we believe or hope to be true—or even that we fear will be true.

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It's a natural, emotional reaction – but it's one that also prevents you getting what you want out of life, because you arm yourself with distorted facts.

An example: You want to make an important sale. You believe the customer truly appreciates your product. You're convinced that he or she wants to make a deal.

And because you want it so badly, you assume that he or she also has authority to act. Or can afford it.

If you're right, you're flying high. If you're wrong, you've allowed your emotions to blind you to reality.

And you're less likely to get what you want as a result.

Emotionally intelligent people stop and think: Am I assuming something that's not actually proven? How would I react differently if I admitted that I did not know?

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## 4. They embrace silence.

Want to know what my favorite kind of problem is? The kind that solves itself if you leave it alone.

A few years back, I was in the middle of a negotiation. There were two things I really wanted to add in order to sweeten the deal.

But I was worried that asking for one or the other of them might risk killing the whole thing. And I was quite confident that asking for both would definitely end it.

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I fell into analysis paralysis. I couldn't decide which if either of the two things I should ask for – or if I should just take what I'd gotten and agree to the deal as-is. (Or, "as-was," I guess.) I waited a day to reply. Then two. Then three.

Now I was worried I'd blown it. But suddenly the other party in the negotiation replied – offering me both sweeteners if I'd sign the deal right away.

It was so cool. I'd played hardball without even meaning to. Problem solved, without actually doing anything.

This can work in a high level, strategic negotiation, and it can also work as a tactic in a simple conversation.

The person on the other side has the some of the same human tendencies that we all do. When you embrace silence, he or she will sometimes make assumptions, and might wind up filling in the gaps to your benefit.

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All because you knew enough to embrace silence, and say nothing.

## 5. They focus when it's time to focus on others.

I used to box – for exercise, not really competitively. One thing that surprised me as I got a bit better was that I'd develop an odd, intense relationship with whomever I was sparring with.

Even if we only fought once and never saw each other again, it was there.

You might think: Relationship? What's that about? Boxers barely talk with each other. Plus, you're literally trying to hit each other the whole time.

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But, during a fight, you're entirely, 100 percent focused on the other person. If you aren't focused, you get decked. And that's what forms the basis for this intense relationship.

If tomorrow I ran into someone I fought for six minutes in 2003, I'm quite sure we'd recognize each other -- and probably have a lot to talk about.

Think about how you feel when another person focuses intensely on you. Assuming you welcome the attention, it tells you: I'm important to this person. The things I do, or that I say to him or her, will find a receptive audience.

Sometimes, it's positive: You're on a romantic date, and it's going very well, and two hours fly by because the conversation is so good. You're completely focused on each other. You hope you can keep it going and see each other again.

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Sometimes, it's negative: The police call and say they want to ask a few questions. Now you're sitting in a small room with a detective on other side of the table, 100 percent focused on you and what you have to say.

Either way, emotionally intelligent people understand that if they can demonstrate focus, they can help the other person fill in some of the gaps with a positive message like: "I am important to this person." Maybe even, "I appreciate knowing that fact."

And that can usually only be positive for you, too.

## **6. They admit their shortcomings.**

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I don't mean they admit shortcomings to other people. They might, but they also admit them to themselves.

Here's a personal example. I once made a math error while doing a rough draft of my taxes, and it sent me into a bit of a tailspin.

It was a very complex year, and I was running several businesses at the same time. But I walked away from my back-of-the-envelope analysis thinking I personally was going to owe about \$170,000 in federal taxes.

I don't know your tax bracket, but that's a big amount of money for me to suddenly owe. It seemed life-changing. I was soon thinking of winding down businesses, selling my home, giving up on being self-employed and having to apply for jobs.

But then a few weeks later, I heard back from my accountant, who is also a great friend. He reassured me that I had made a math error. Part of it involved

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