

APPENDIX F

Emotional Audit

When to Use

Use whenever you are feeling frustrated, impatient, irritated, or other like emotions to help identify the problem and be more strategic in your actions. The Audit helps reduce the “Amygdala Hijacks” when people have outbursts and lose control; they temporarily lose IQ points.

Unlocking the Key

Lack of impulse control has been the undoing of many leaders and athletes i.e. President Clinton, John Edwards, Serena Williams, Tiger Woods and numerous other examples. The Center for Creative Leadership lists the lack of impulse control as one of the main Executive Derailers.

It is difficult to manage your emotions if you don't know what you are feeling. The Self-Awareness cluster of Emotional Intelligence is made up of Emotional Self-Awareness, Accurate Self-Assessment, and Confidence. All three of these are critical in development and are the foundation for raising other competencies. Goleman has stated that the Self-Awareness cluster should be developed first so as to facilitate the development of the other competencies.

The first three questions of the Emotional Audit, “What am I thinking?” “What am I feeling?” and “What do I want?” are designed to highlight your self-awareness of what is actually going “for you in that moment. They help elucidate what may be behind the “closed door,” although with focus these can become apparent. The goal is to become aware of what may have been a hidden or an automatic response. “What do I want now?” helps identify your intention of what you are trying to accomplish in this situation. The fourth question, “How am I getting in my way?” helps you establish your patterns or reactions to your emotional and cognitive state. What are your automatic responses to your state that may be hindering you from achieving your desired intent? Some of these may initially be blind spots, but with the time and assistance of a coach, boss, or co-worker you may “see” these patterns more clearly and then be able to “catch yourself” and “redirect your actions.” The last question, “What do I need to do differently now?” is the strategic question that gives you more choice and allows your actions to better fit your intentions.

To understand your emotions and better manage them, use these questions frequently, especially when you feel yourself getting upset or frustrated, or if your triggers are getting activated. Wait

five seconds until “you get an answer to each question. Waiting allows some awareness of your answers to emerge. Each of these questions light up the Prefrontal Cortex regions while reducing activation in the Amygdala. By accessing the brain’s Prefrontal Cortex you bring back logical thinking and regain your lost IQ points.

Key Examples

Mike was an executive who was getting irritated a lot, especially in meetings, where he felt he was wasting his time. In one meeting he got so hot and upset about a new procedure that he threw his briefcase across the room and swore at everyone in the room, including his boss. Let’s look at his Emotional Audit. Here are Mike’s answers:

1. What am I thinking?

- *“This change makes no sense and will cost me more time doing more bureaucratic _____ (expletive) versus real work. I can’t believe how dumb this is!”*

2. What am I feeling?

- *Frustrated, angry, and helpless.*

3. What do I want now?

- *I want to be able to do my job unencumbered. I want to tell everyone that I don’t agree with this and we shouldn’t do it.*

4. How am i getting in my way?

- *My anger is preventing them from “really hearing my point of view. I am scaring some of them. They see me as out of control and are not listening.*

5. What do i need to do differently now?

- *Take some deep breaths, relax, and address this concern with my boss outside of the meeting. This meeting is not the best place to address my concerns right now.*

- *One key goal for Mike and other executives who have a lack of impulse control is to spend some time with a coach or their boss identifying their triggers and then preparing for meetings or other trigger situations until they feel they can catch themselves before they get too hot.*

Practicing the Key for Yourself

- *Keep the Key out on your desk for easy reference.*

- *Try to catch yourself and your patterns and redirect your actions more quickly each time.*

- *Identify your key triggers with a coach or your boss.*

- *Use the Emotional Audit throughout the day.*

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Emotional Audit Tool

- 1. What am I thinking?**
- 2. What am I feeling?**
- 3. What do I want now?**
- 4. How am I getting in my way?"**
- 5. What do I need to do differently now?**