

Unlocking Success with Self-Awareness and Resilience

By Eric Shepherd

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National Association of Workforce Development Professionals
30 Minutes of Excellence, June 2025

My Personal Journey



Tried to work
my way
through college



Moved to US to
manage a
subsidiary of a
UK Company



CEO of an assessment
software company
Americas: 1992 to 1999
Worldwide: 2000 to 2019



Wrote a book
on how helpful
assessments
can be during
rapid change



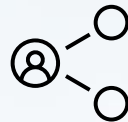
Founded the
Foundation for
Talent
Transformation



Born and raised
in London,
England



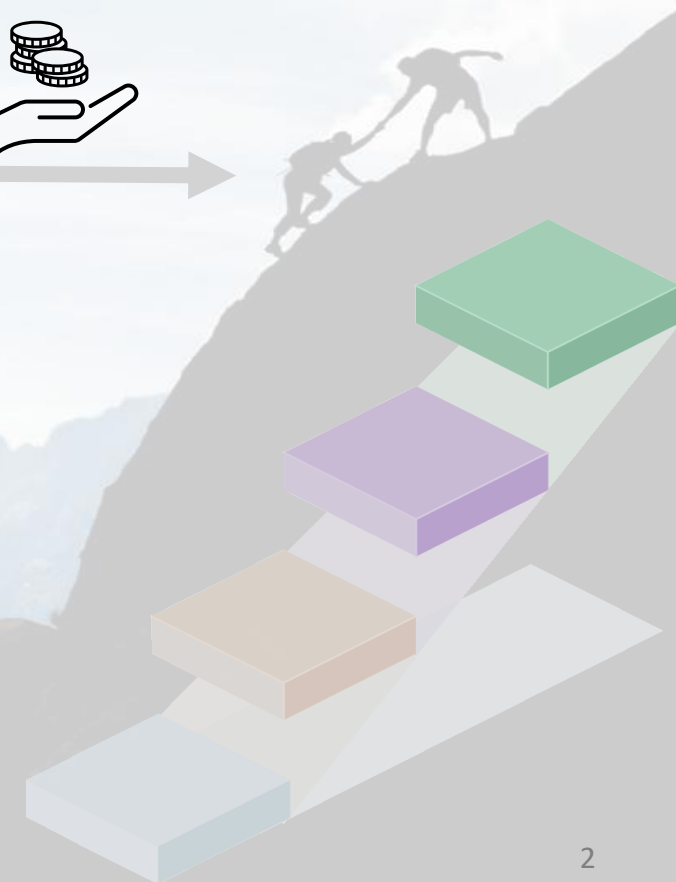
Stumbled into
the computer
industry



Started
distribution
businesses and
sold them



Assessment
software
company sold



Foundation of Talent Transformation

a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

We help individuals build self-awareness, resilience, confidence, and career readiness through free assessments, apps, and AI tools, empowering them to thrive in today's and tomorrow's workforce.



What's Changing

in the world of Workforce Development



Dramatic Shift In Federal Policy

As of June 21, 2025,

163 Executive Orders

have been issued by the new administration

- Key Executive Orders Affecting Workforce Development
 - Preparing Americans for High-Paying Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future
 - Advancing Artificial Intelligence Education for American Youth
 - Restoring Accountability to Policy-Influencing Positions Within the Federal Workforce
- Key Executive Orders Impacting Diversity Equity and Inclusion
 - Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing
 - Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity
 - Defending Women From Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government
 - Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions
 - Executive Order on Military DEI Programs
- Proposals that affect WIOA
 - Consolidate several workforce development programs
 - Reduce funding (\$4.6 billion to \$3 billion)
 - Elimination of Key Programs Job Corps and SCSEP
 - \$1.7 billion cut to WIOA State Grants
 - Elimination of funding for WIOA Youth Activities
 - States have increased control over workforce funds
 - Elimination of >\$183 million for DoL training & employment services
 - 75 million cut from the Dislocated Worker National Reserve

Changing Nature of Work



Industrial Revolution 1

- Meccanization. waterpower, steam power, canals, weaving looms



Industrial Revolution 2

- Standards enabled electrical power, mass production, assembly lines



Industrial Revolution 3

- Computers, data storage and retrieval, supply change management

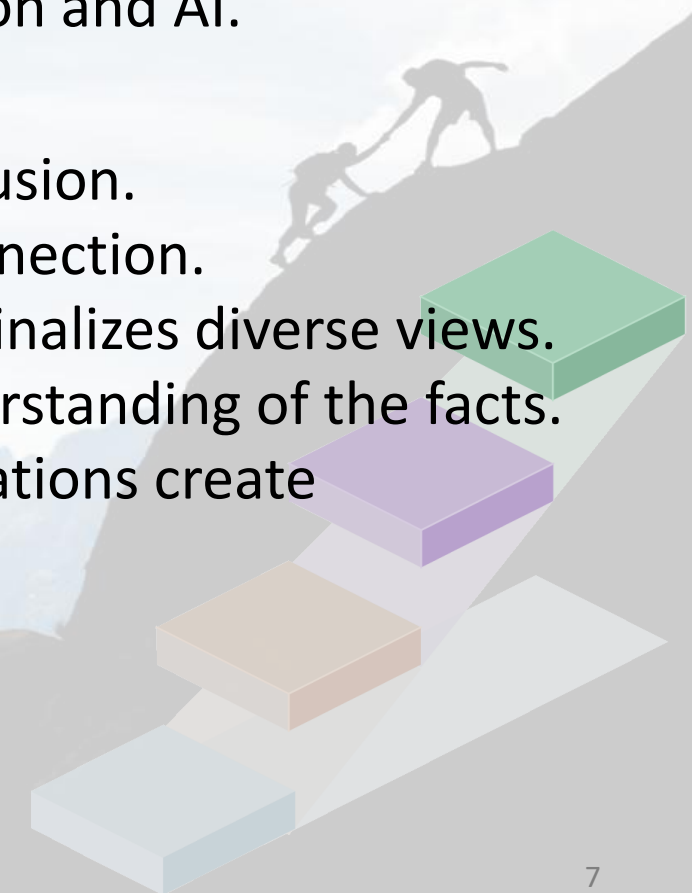


Industrial Revolution 4

- AI, Gen-AI, ML, data harvesting from IoT and social media, cyber/physical

Some Hidden Impacts of Technology

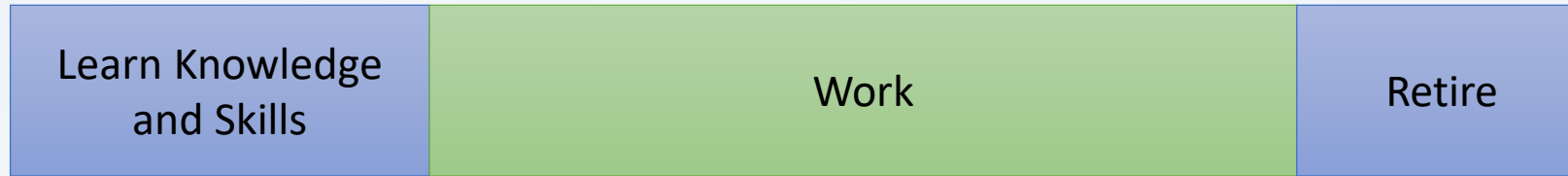
- Jobs At Risk
 - Automation, Robotics, AI, and Gen-AI are putting jobs at risk
- Struggling with Upskilling
 - Rapid innovation leaves many struggling to adapt to automation and AI.
- Social Media
 - FOMO: Fear of Missing Out trigger anxiety and a sense of exclusion.
 - Comparison to others fuel isolation, image anxiety, and disconnection.
 - Algorithmic Echo Chambers: Content reinforces bias and marginalizes diverse views.
 - Misinformation is an Industry: Spreads rapidly, distorting understanding of the facts.
 - Dopamine Hits: Likes, comments, infinite scrolling, and notifications create compulsive use and dependence.
- Always On



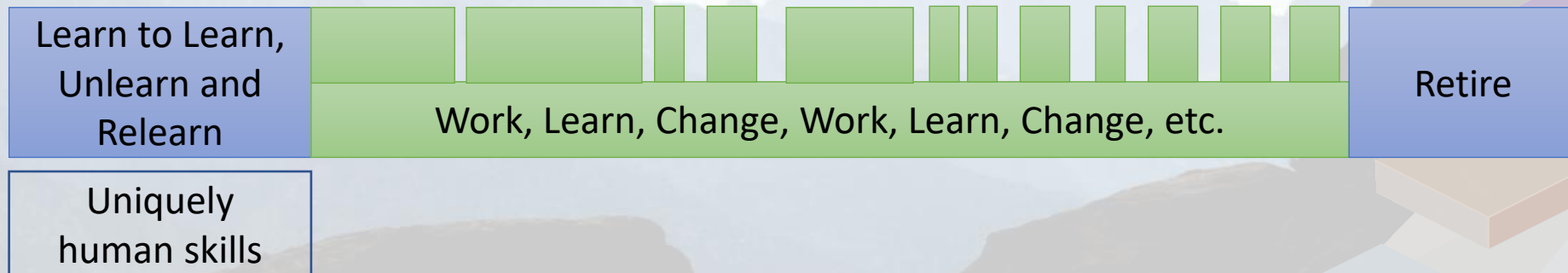
Changing Technology means Changing Patterns of Work

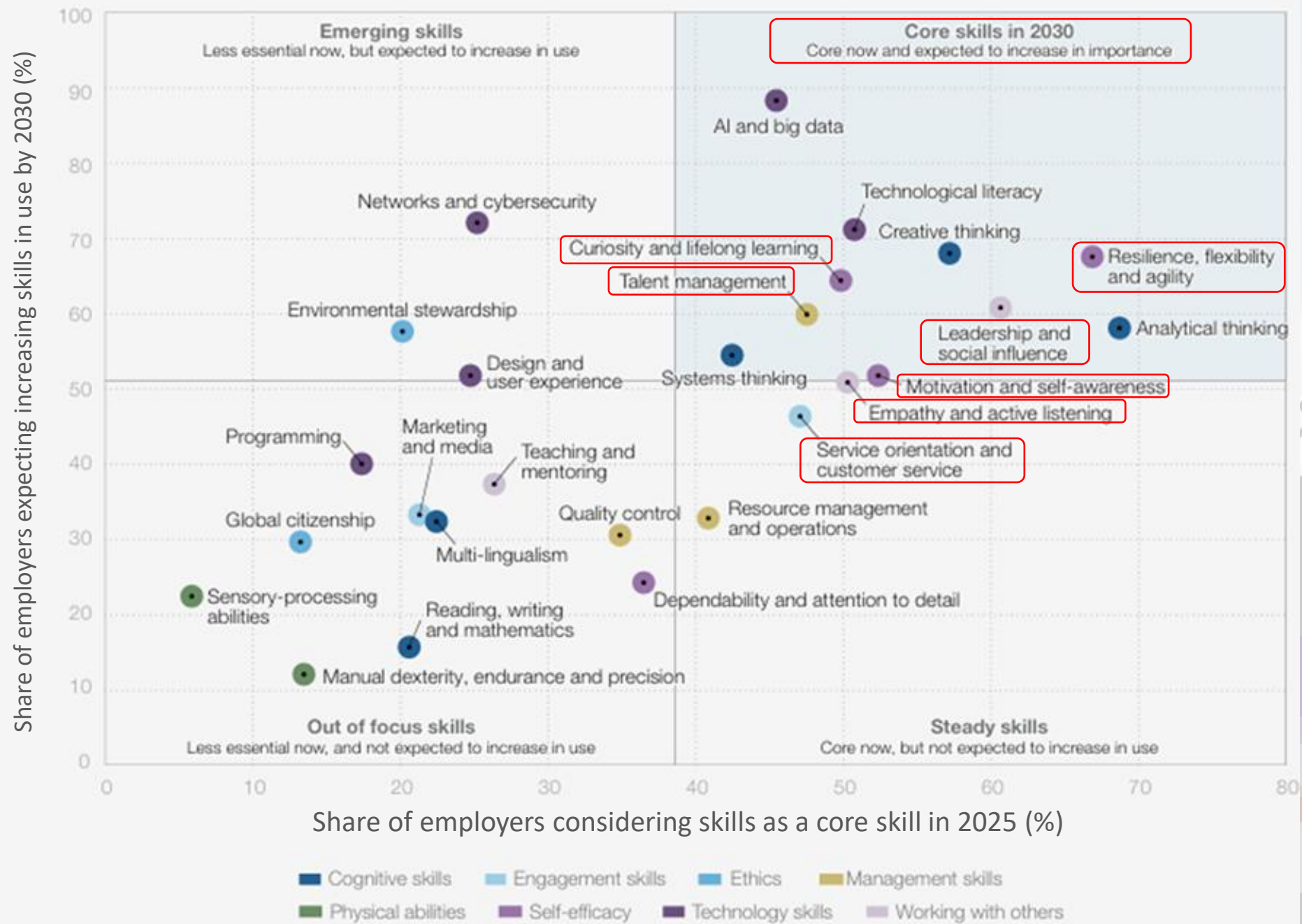
Birth 25 50 75 100

Old Style



New Style





Change Causes Anxiety

You can ease your anxieties by developing self-awareness of your personality, emotions, values, interests, talents, and communication style; embracing change; empathizing with others' perspectives; and nurturing healthy relationships and social connections.



A Poem For You!

The winds of change are blowing strong,
Let go of what you know feels wrong.
But where you can, stand up and strive,
Your actions help our communities thrive.



How We Show Up

Our Personas
How We Show Up



Example
Situations

Healthy
Home

Toxic
Home

Thriving
Workplace

Toxic
Workplace

Sporting
Event

Restaurant

Meeting

People Skills

Self-
Awareness

Self-
Management

Social
Awareness

Relationship
Management

Who We are

Personal
Values

Identity

Personality
Traits

Interests

Life
Experiences

DNA

Being Open To Our Own Levels of Competence



Unconscious
of our
Incompetence



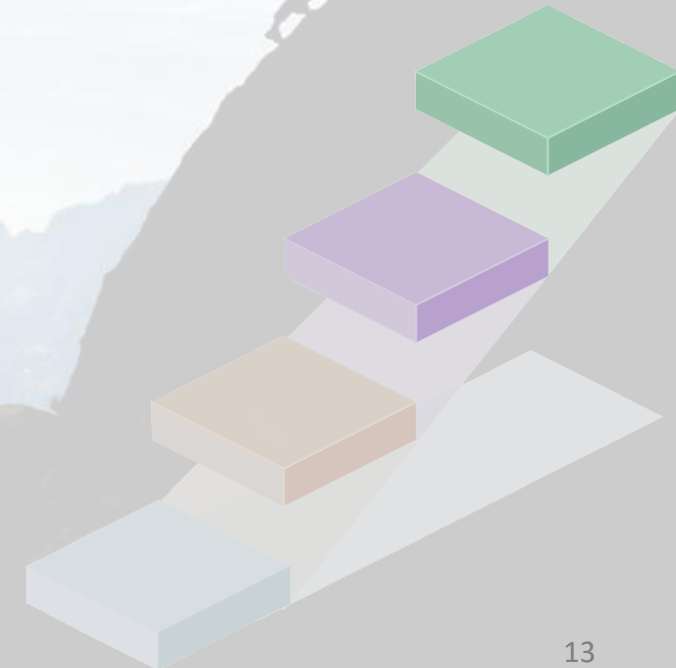
Conscious
of our
Incompetence



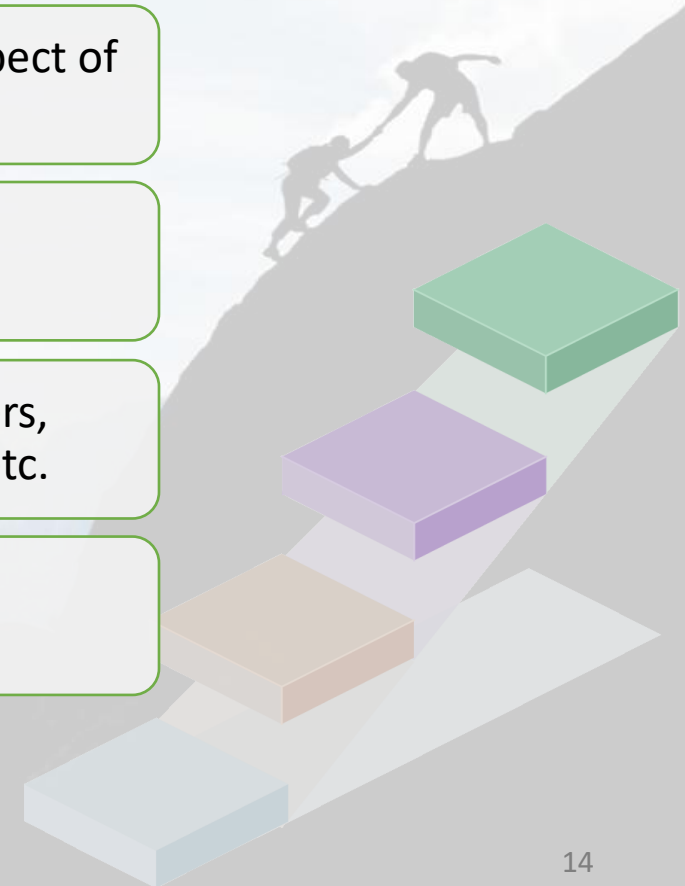
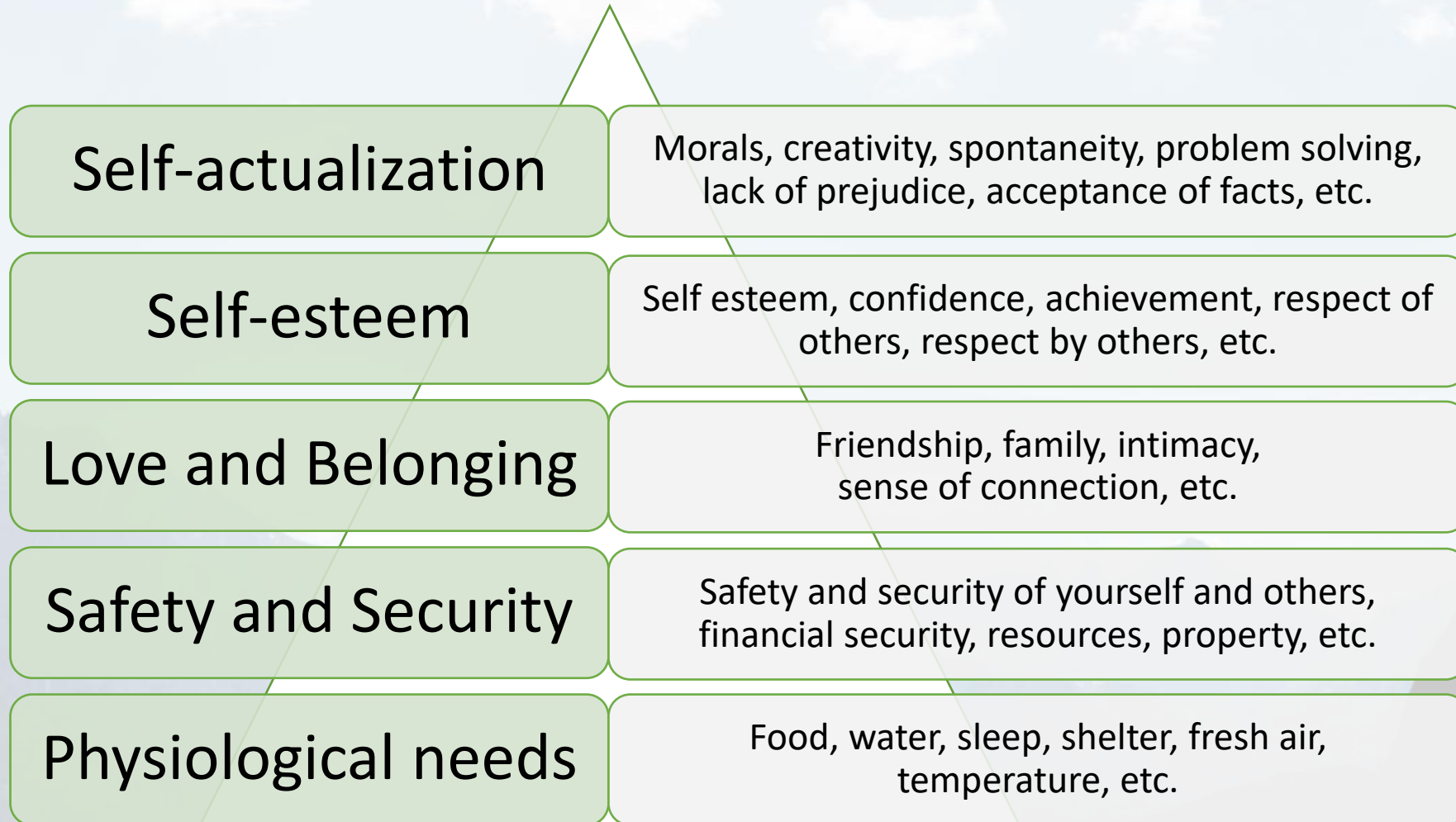
Conscious
of our
Competence



Unconscious
of our
Competence

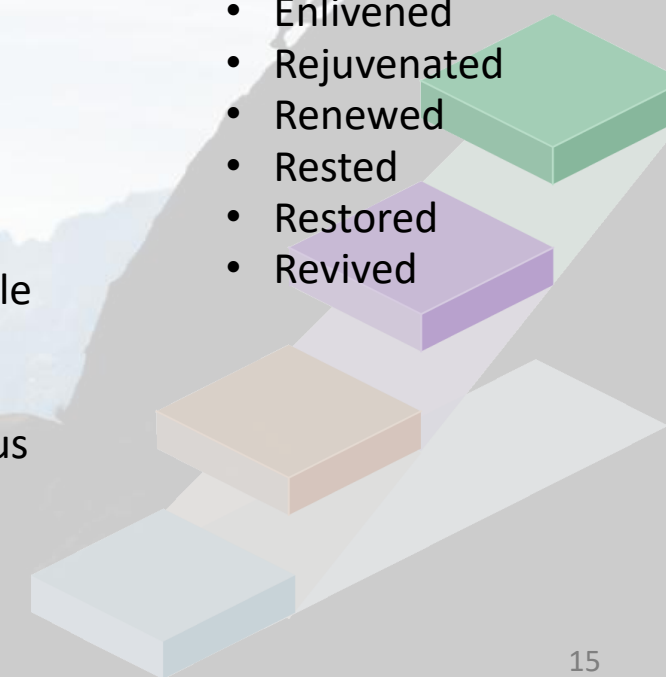


Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



How you might feel when your needs **ARE** met:

- **Affectionate**
 - Compassionate
 - Friendly
 - Love
 - Sympathetic
- **Engaged**
 - Absorbed
 - Alert
 - Curious
 - Engrossed
 - Enchanted
 - Entranced
 - Fascinated
 - Interested
 - Intrigued
 - Involved
 - Stimulated
- **Hopeful**
 - Expectant
- **Encouraged**
 - Optimistic
- **Confident**
 - Empowered
 - Open
 - Proud
 - Safe
 - Secure
- **Excited**
 - Amazed
 - Animated
 - Ardent
 - Aroused
 - Astonished
 - Dazzled
 - Eager
 - Energetic
 - Enthusiastic
 - Giddy
 - Invigorated
- **Lively**
 - Passionate
 - Surprised
 - Vibrant
- **Grateful**
 - Appreciative
 - Moved
 - Thankful
 - Touched
- **Inspired**
 - Amazed
 - Awed
 - Wonder
- **Joyful**
 - Amused
 - Delighted
 - Glad
 - Happy
 - Jubilant
- **Pleased**
 - Tickled
- **Exhilarated**
 - Blissful
 - Ecstatic
 - Elated
 - Enthralled
 - Exuberant
 - Radiant
 - Rapturous
 - Thrilled
- **Peaceful**
 - Calm
 - Clear
 - Headed
 - Comfortable
 - Centered
 - Content
 - Equanimous
 - Fulfilled
- **Mellow**
 - Quiet
 - Relaxed
 - Relieved
 - Satisfied
 - Serene
 - Still
 - Tranquil
 - Trusting
- **Refreshed**
 - Enlivened
 - Rejuvenated
 - Renewed
 - Rested
 - Restored
 - Revived



How you might feel when your needs are **NOT** met:

- **Afraid**

- Dread
- Foreboding
- Frightened
- Mistrustful
- Panicked
- Petrified
- Scared
- Suspicious
- Terrified
- Wary
- Worried

- **Annoyed**

- Aggravated
- Dismayed
- Disgruntled
- Displeased
- Exasperated
- Frustrated
- Impatient
- Irritated
- Irked

- **Angry**

- Enraged
- Furious

- Incensed
- Indignant
- Irate
- Livid
- Outraged
- Resentful

- **Aversion**

- Animosity
- Appalled
- Contempt
- Disgusted
- Dislike
- Hate
- Horrified
- Hostile
- Repulsed

- **Confused**

- Ambivalent
- Baffled
- Bewildered
- Dazed
- Hesitant
- Lost
- Mystified
- Perplexed

- **Disconnected**

- Puzzled
- Torn
- Alienated
- Aloof
- Apathetic
- Bored
- Cold
- Detached
- Distant
- Distracted
- Indifferent
- Numb
- Removed
- Uninterested
- Withdrawn

- **Disquiet**

- Agitated
- Alarmed
- Discombobulated
- Disconcerted
- Disturbed
- Perturbed
- Rattled

- **Embarrassed**

- Restless
- Shocked
- Startled
- Surprised
- Troubled
- Turbulent
- Turmoil
- Uneasy
- Unnerved
- Unsettled
- Upset
- Ashamed
- Chagrined
- Flustered
- Guilty
- Mortified
- Self-Conscious

- **Fatigue**

- Beat
- Burnt Out
- Depleted
- Exhausted
- Lethargic

- **Pain**

- Listless
- Sleepy
- Tired
- Weary
- Worn Out
- Agony
- Anguished
- Bereaved
- Devastated
- Grief
- Heartbroken
- Hurt
- Lonely
- Miserable
- Regretful
- Remorseful

- **Sad**

- Depressed
- Dejected
- Despair
- Despondent
- Disappointed
- Discouraged
- Disheartened

- **Tense**

- Forlorn
- Gloomy
- Heavy Hearted
- Hopeless
- Melancholy
- Unhappy
- Wretched
- Anxious
- Cranky
- Distressed
- Distraught
- Edgy
- Fidgety
- Frazzled
- Irritable
- Jittery
- Nervous
- Overwhelmed
- Restless
- Stressed Out

- **Vulnerable**

- Fragile

- **Yearning**

- Guarded
- Helpless
- Insecure
- Leery
- Reserved
- Sensitive
- Shaky
- Envious
- Jealous
- Longing
- Nostalgic
- Pining
- Wistful

Emotional Intelligence (EI)



What?

- Emotional Intelligence is the ability to recognize, understand, and manage your emotions and those of others.

Why?

- Emotional Intelligence enhances communication, builds stronger relationships, and improves decision-making.

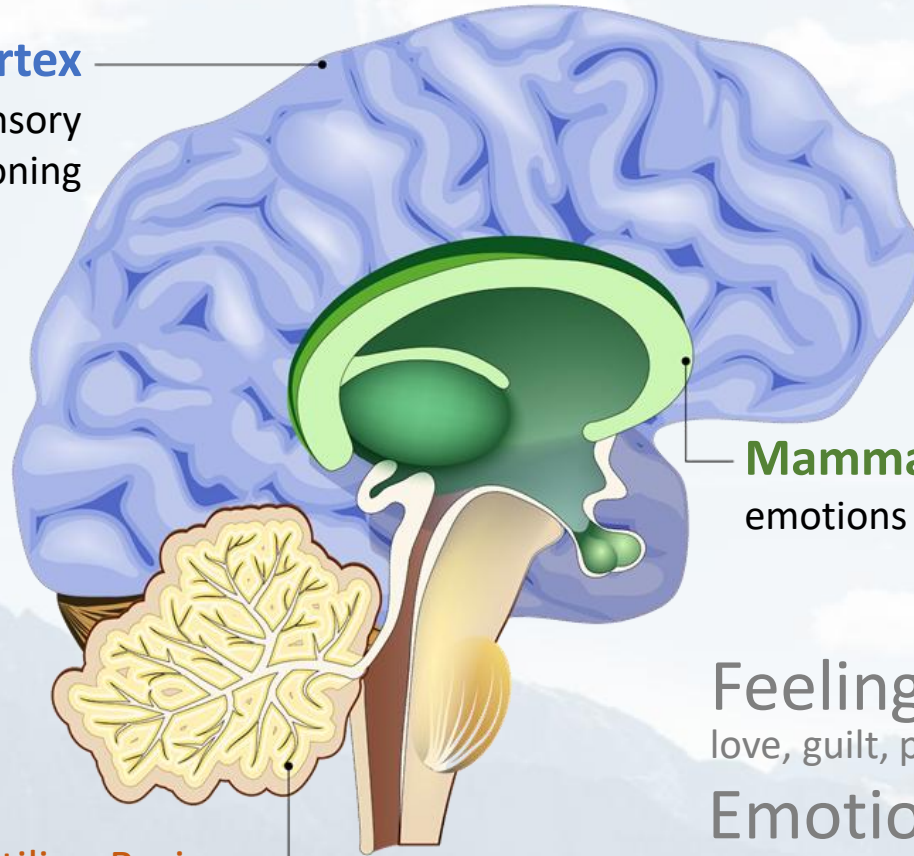
Foundational

- Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Management

The Biology of Emotions and Feelings

Neocortex

cognition, language, sensory perception, spatial reasoning



Mammalian Brain

emotions and feelings

Feelings

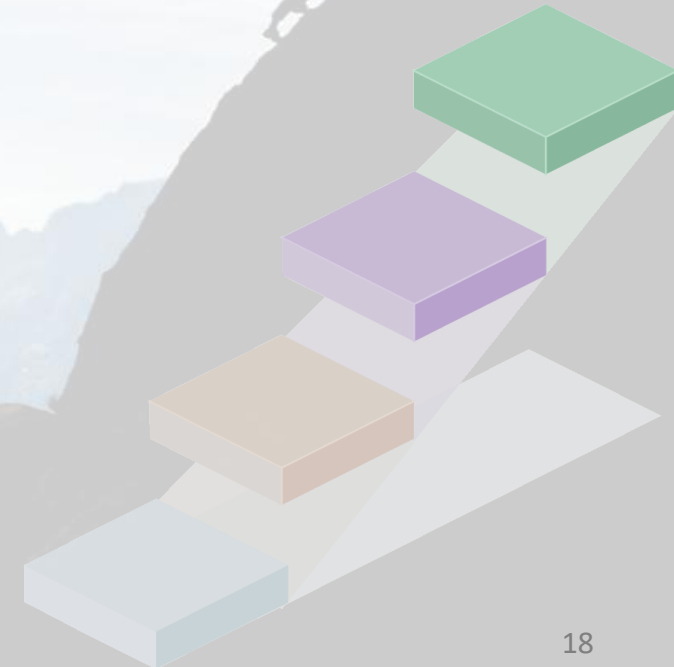
love, guilt, pride, nostalgia, etc.

Emotions

anger, fear, joy, sadness, surprise, etc.

Reptilian Brain

instincts triggering fight, flight or freeze



Without EI We Are Triggered by Our Amygdala

Purpose: Threat Detection, Emotion Processing, Memory Formation

Impact: Stress and Anxiety, Emotional Regulation, Learning and Behavior

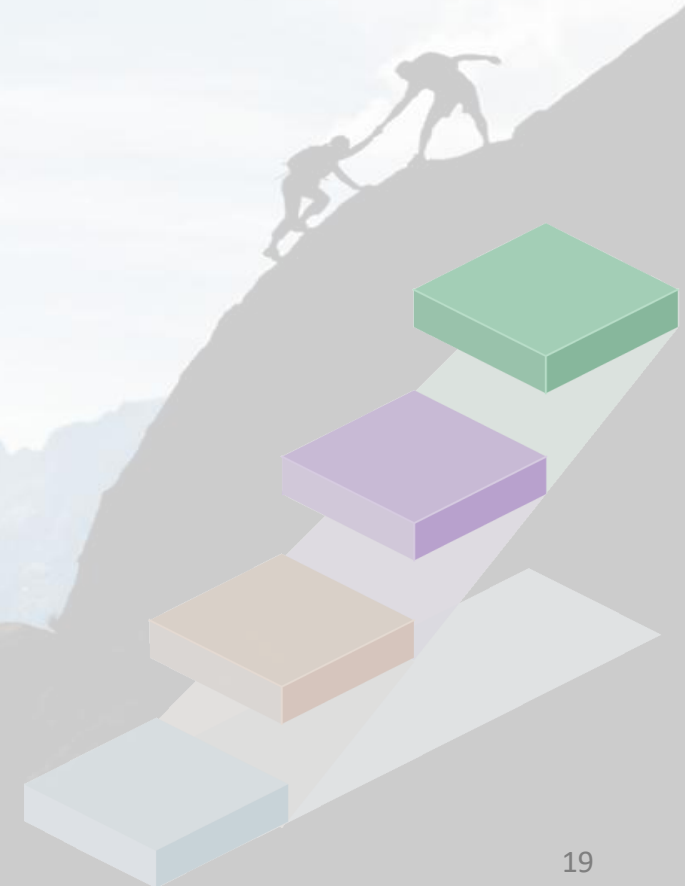
Fight



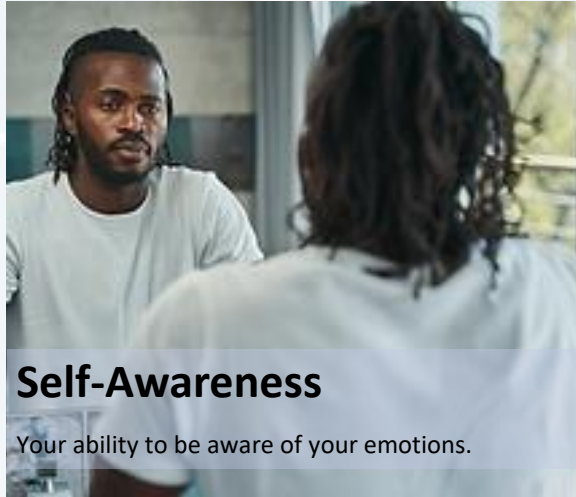
Flight



Freeze



Emotional Intelligence



Self-Awareness

Your ability to be aware of your emotions.



Self-Management

Your ability to manage your emotions effectively.



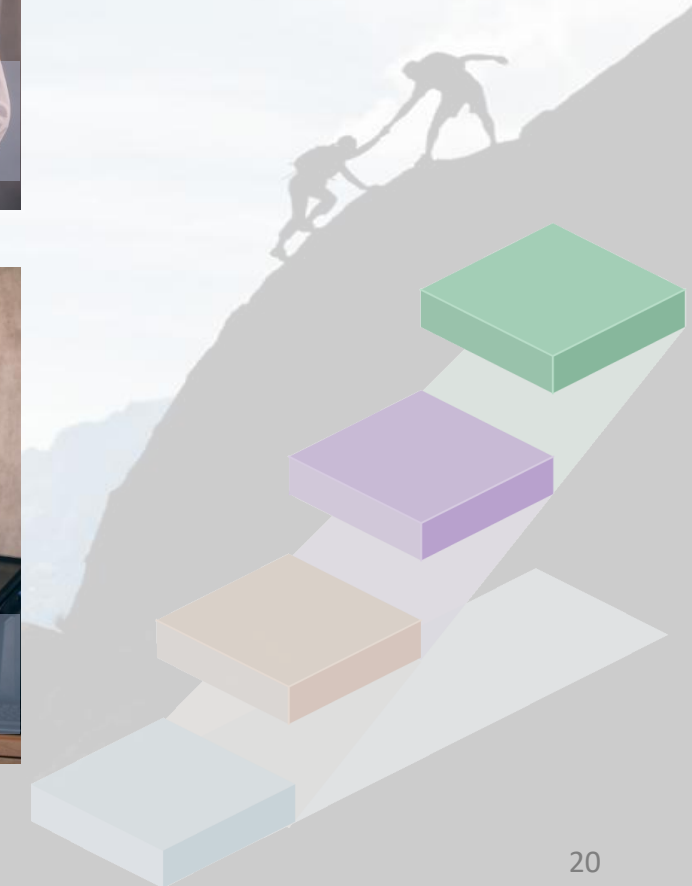
Social Awareness

Your ability to recognize emotions in others.

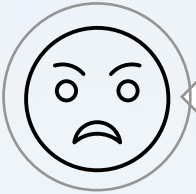


Relationship Management

Navigate emotions when dealing with others.



Develop Your Self-Awareness



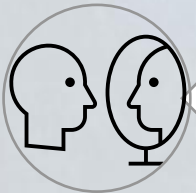
Label your emotions



Learn what triggers your emotions



Recognize how your feelings shape your actions.



Reflect on your feelings



Self-Management



Take deep breaths to stay calm.



Pause before you react.



Build strength to handle tough emotions.



Stay in control, even when stressed.





Recall a recent frustrating interaction with someone

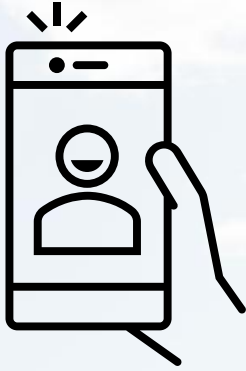
What did you feel
in your mind and
body?

What did you do
to manage your
emotions and
physical reactions?

How did this
impact your
relationship with
that person?

How would you
have come across
to others?

Identify Triggers



- Notice Your Reactions
 - Pay attention to what makes you feel angry, sad, or stressed
- Look for Patterns
 - Think about when and where these feelings usually happen
- Ask Yourself Why
 - Figure out what caused those emotions
- Write It Down
 - Keep a journal to track your triggers and understand them better.

Manage Your Reaction



- Pause Before Reacting
 - Take a deep breath and give yourself a moment to think
- Use Calming Techniques
 - Try deep breathing, counting to 10, or taking a short walk
- Express Yourself Calmly
 - Share your feelings with words instead of yelling or shutting down
- Know Your Escape Plan
 - If things get too intense, step away until you're ready to respond calmly.

Consider Alternatives



- Ask yourself
 - "Is there another way to see this situation?"
- Consider the Outcome
 - How will your reaction affect you and others
- Choose a Better Response
 - Pick an action that keeps things calm and positive.
- Practice Different Reactions
 - Try out other ways to respond next time a trigger happens.

Courage to Pause



“Let me reflect on that and get back to you.”



“That’s interesting—can you tell me more?”



“Help me understand your perspective.”



“What would a good outcome look like for you?”



“I need a minute to think this through.”



“Let’s pause and come back to this.”



“I appreciate you bringing this to my attention.”



“I see this differently, but I’m curious about your view.”



“Can we explore other options together?”



“What am I missing here?”



“I’m not ready to decide yet.”



“I notice I’m feeling emotional right now.”

Social Awareness



Notice other people's feelings



Put yourself in their shoes



Listen before you speak



Be kind and respectful



Read the Room

What are their
fears and
concerns?

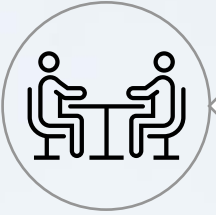
What are they
feeling at the
moment?

Are they
engaged?

Are they
looking to
escape?



Relationship Management



Communicate Clearly



Resolve Conflicts
Calmly



Build Trust



Support Others

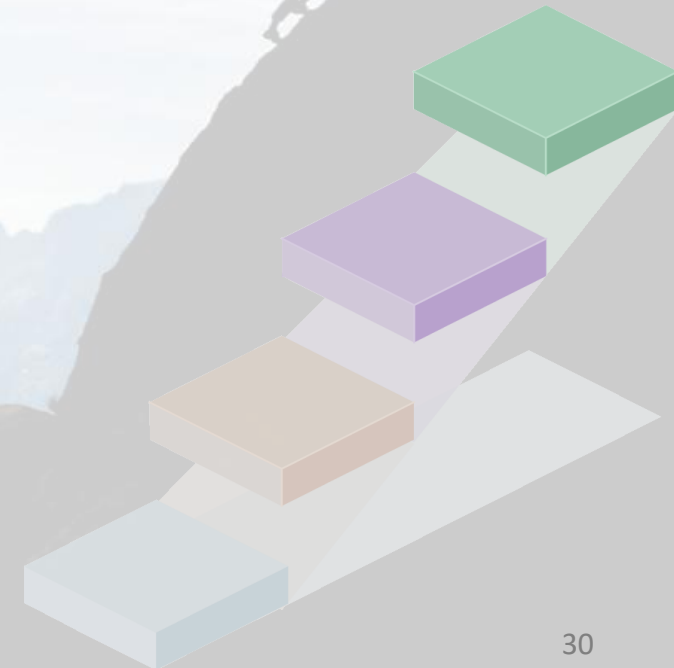


Quick Quiz

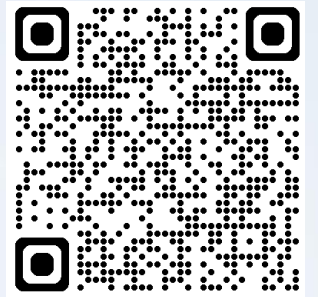


Quiz Questions

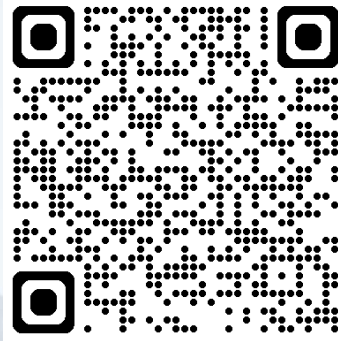
- In times of rapid change, such as shifts in technology and policy, what is a normal and expected emotional response many people experience?
- What is one key benefit of developing self-awareness?
- Which of the following is a practical strategy for managing emotional triggers and improving emotional intelligence?



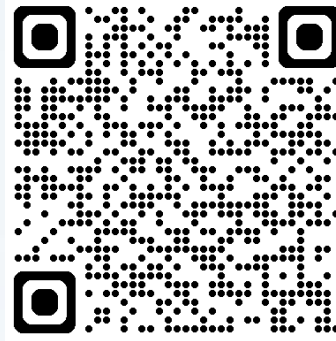
Quizzes: <https://www.talenttransformation.com/quizzes>



Personal Values



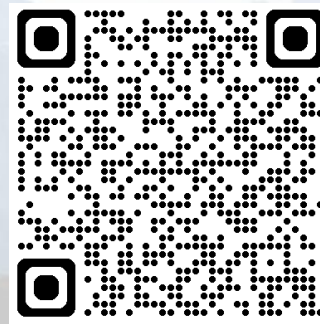
Personality Traits



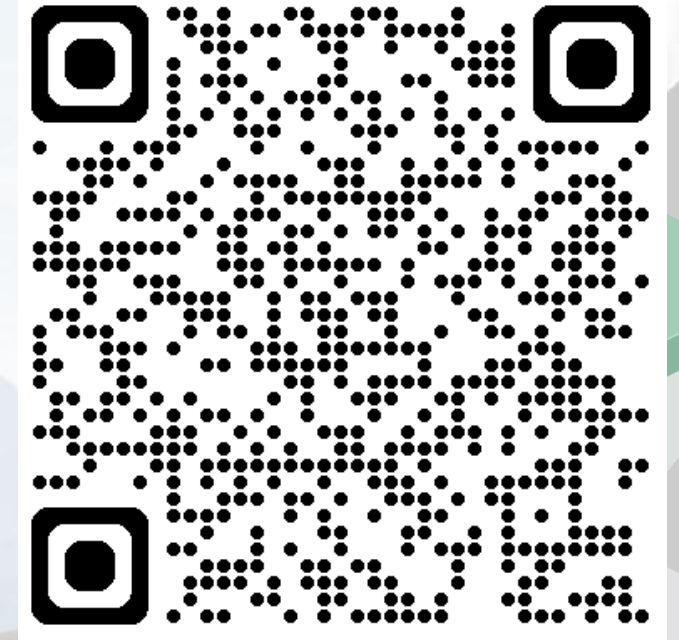
Emotional Intelligence



Learning Mindset



My Talents App



Thank You!

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