

## Six Levels of Emotional Maturity

### Purpose

- Strengthen your understanding of self and of others' subjective perspective, and in turn
- More objectively evaluate the person's potential for both knowing what's right, and doing it
- Facilitate emotional growth – our own and others'

Six Levels of Emotional Maturity indicate different attitudes, perceptions and ways of responding or reacting to situations. At each level people have predictable sets of beliefs, and associated attitudes and behaviors. Attitudes and beliefs change with each level while values remain constant.

### SIX LEVELS OF EMOTIONAL MATURITY

6	Leader
5	Doer
4	Coper
3	Opposer
2	Manipulator
1	Victim

Each of the Six Levels is described in detail in the following exercise inviting you, only for yourself, to assess your level of maturity, for only by looking deeply at ourselves and choosing to act with ever more integrity can we truly be of service to others. The exercise includes risks and developmental tips for each of the levels.

### BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE LEVELS

#### Levels 5 – 6

It is only at levels 5 & 6 that responsible associates and leaders reside who create effective teams that communicate openly and work collaboratively and synergistically toward a common aligned goal. The higher the percentage of people in the organization at these levels, the higher the probability of sustainable success.

#### Level 4

Contributions marginal but first level where not in overwhelm. Empowerment begins here. Focus hiring and training efforts on those whom you believe are interested in opportunities to function at Level 5 and above. Below this level people are overwhelmed and thus unable to integrate new information.

#### Levels 3 – 1

Defensive and reactive to change in increasing amounts going *down* the scale. Training conducted at these levels is an inefficient use of resources.

**The HIGHER the level of emotional maturity the:**

- More essence qualities are being accessed and lived
- Broader and more inclusive, tolerant, generous, responsible, caring and loving the perspective
- Greater the discernment
- Greater the willingness and ability to create, learn, grow, contribute and change positively
- Greater the fundamental sense of security
- Stronger the follow through on intentions and stated and implied promises
- More authentic and honest the communication
- More objective and trustworthy any evaluations
- Less the influence of biases

**Emotional maturity and integrity are inextricably woven together like DNA.**

**Leaders of Emotional Maturity and Integrity exhibit:**

- Presence
- Honesty, authenticity, trustworthiness
- Dignity in how one lives and acts
- Keen discernment
- Wisdom that goes beyond knowledge
- Compassion
- Generosity
- Dominion (sharing power with respect and honor) versus domination
- Resourcefulness
- Enjoyment of life

## **Exercise: Assess Your Own Emotional Maturity**

### **Purpose**

- Better understand your subjective perspective
- Facilitate your own emotional growth
- Understand levels to more objectively evaluate a person's potential for right action, and appropriately facilitate their growth

### **Introduction**

Self reflection, understanding, skill and willingness are essential to being able to facilitate our own and others' growth.

Remember, one of the hallmarks of emotional maturity is the willingness and ability to look honestly and receptively at ourselves with a genuine desire to produce a positive, sustainable outcome.

In this exercise you will not be asked to reveal anything about yourself unless you choose to do so. You are simply asked to take an honest, receptive look *at yourself, for yourself*.

### **To Do This Exercise**

Be honest and receptive.

Observe yourself with perspective and neutrality.

Focus on a challenging situation and your associated thoughts, feelings and actions before identifying your level.

### **Directions**

#### **Think**

About a recent business (or personal) challenge you experienced

#### **Notice**

What happened?

What you were thinking about . . . the situation? yourself? the other person?

How did you feel about . . . the situation? yourself? the other person?

How did you respond (or react) in the situation?

With this in mind,

**Review** the following Six Levels of Emotional Maturity.

## SIX LEVELS OF EMOTIONAL MATURITY

### Level 6 – Leader

- Authentic, present, attentive
- Secure, respects self and others, self confident
- Seeks and considers different points of view
- Sees the big picture without losing sight of the current picture
- Has wisdom; can see beyond logic and reason without losing sight of logic and reason
- Acknowledges and honors personal intuition and is willing to act upon it
- Able to make decisions in a timely manner
- Consistently delivers on his or her promises
- Responsibly proactive
- Strives for excellence versus perfection
- Demonstrates, demands and rewards authenticity
- Communicates concerns forthrightly
- Candidly confronts limitations and problems and learns from them
- Mentors responsibly and compassionately
- Confronts irresponsible behavior

### Developmental Tip

Everyone has more potential and is in a continuous process of growth.

### Level 5 – Doer

Exhibits many of the qualities of Leaders, but with a less developed sense of “I am enough.” Even at this relatively high level, there is still some sense of insecurity, and compared to Level 6, a narrower and thus somewhat more conservative perspective, with a sense of still trying to “make it.” This often manifests as being highly competitive though in a much more constructive manner than the underhanded and dishonest form of competition at Levels 2 and 3.

- Open to positive ideas as long as they don’t disrupt what’s already working
- Progressive and will move forward
- Like things substantiated first
- Pilots ideas before committing further

### Risk

Your fuller potential will not be realized unless you stretch beyond your comfort zone.

### Developmental Tip

Staying present with your personal discomfort as you engage in the current challenge is what allows you to stretch beyond the known to a larger perspective.

## Level 4 – Coper

- Just responsible and motivated enough to keep their job and not much more
- Expend as little effort as possible
- Observe rather than participate
- Not particularly dependable
- Often described as mellow, while also being somewhat nonchalant about details and commitments
- Life is okay – not particularly good or bad

### Risk

Life is not static but dynamic. We are either growing or contracting. Contentment without responsible proactive behavior will eventually deteriorate into complacency and eventually to contraction resulting in dropping down to the antagonism and resentments of Level 3.

### Developmental Tip

Acknowledge and own your laziness. Challenge yourself to create a larger range of interest. Energize yourself toward more engaged, proactive behavior.

## Behavior Below Level 4

As individuals feel increasingly overwhelmed, they move down the levels and correspondingly manifest increasing degrees/amounts of the following:

- Insecurity, fear and anxiety
- Depression and unhappiness
- Narrowed perspectives, self-centeredness, selfishness
- Defensive, reactive, blaming, attention on their weakness and limitations
- Feeling powerless, out of control
- Attempts to control through intimidation (Level 3), covert manipulation (Level 2), or appeasement (Level 1)
- Nonconforming to high levels of justice or fair behavior (though they may pretend to do so)
- Hurtful and destructive (overtly/covertly) to self and others

### Risk

Tolerating any *chronic* low level behavior for whatever justification drains the energy of those around them, stifling authenticity, trust, responsibility, communication, innovation, productivity and morale.

### Developmental Tip for Leaders

Correct this behavior or terminate these individuals. Ending the pattern of *chronic* low level behavior is essential to personal and leadership development and organizational success. Remember that everyone, at various times acutely experiences the entire range of emotions. Experiencing lower level emotions acutely and acting on their messages responsibly is what keeps the condition from becoming chronic.

### **Level 3 – Opposer**

- More destructive than constructive (Only when chronic. Opposition can be a message that something irresponsible/destructive is occurring and responsible action needs to be taken. If the message is ignored or projected as blame, and corrective action not taken, the emotion then becomes chronic, turns negative and destructive)
- Perceive environment as a threat
- Feel overwhelmed, out of control, powerless
- React to negative perceptions and feelings by lashing out, attacking, opposing, exaggerating elements of truth, intimidating others into fear or apathy
- Antagonistic, angry or resentful
- Honors truth and agreements only when convenient
- Blames others rather than be responsible for their own actions
- Skews, exaggerates truth
- Higher level Opposers – overt hostility that is focused and specific (antagonism) in turn decreasing their ability to communicate honestly
- Lower level Opposers – overt hostility that is broad, unfocused and generalized (anger).

When individuals repress overt hostility they deteriorate to Level 2.

#### **Risk**

Feelings of overt hostility are simply messages of some irresponsibility present and a signal that changes are needed. If responsible action is not taken, the energy stagnates, putrefies and turns into exaggerated, hurtful blaming. Any repression has negative consequences. Our capacity for self-observation and correction decreases as we move down the levels of emotional maturity. The chronic Opposer will likely need assistance to move out of Level 3.

#### **Developmental Tip**

Recognize that the lashing out is, at least in part, a projection of the anger, antagonism, resentment you are feeling towards yourself. Ask yourself in what areas you feel threatened, out of control, powerless. What are you most afraid of in yourself? What in you do you want to destroy?

Identify a couple specific ways you could immediately exert more control over that area internally, and externally. Act upon it consistently until it becomes a new habit (at least 21 days in a row). Simultaneously seek therapeutic assistance to resolve the cause of your difficulties, and to gain broader, more consistent control over all your emotions, communication and actions. More control over yourself will make it easier for you to be kinder to yourself, and in turn to others.

## Level 2 – Manipulator

- Insecure, frightened, self-centered, hostile, destructive
- Masters of manipulation/deception
- Afraid to express their insecurity and hostility so rely on put-downs, misdirection, denials, invalidations and skillful lying
- Expert at hiding true intentions
- Does only what's needed for their own survival
- No sense of responsibility, win-win or real concern for others – only pretences
- Get others to doubt their own abilities so they can gain some advantage
- Want others to drop into fear or apathy to believe that if they do not concede to what the Manipulator wants, the consequences will be even worse
- Assume social façade that will cover their hostile, unscrupulous ends (con man)
- View people who act with compassion, honesty, and integrity as simpletons who deserve to be taken advantage of

### Risk

**Chronic behavior at this level is the most destructive of any level because, the energy is intentionally hurtful (hostile, vicious), outwardly directed (projected) and hidden.**

### Developmental Tip

Notice the repeating difficulties in your life – how *you* feel manipulated, put-down, invalidated, denied, and lied to – and how you feel you *must* do the same to others to get what you need. Recognize your covert hostility and compulsion to ‘hurt others before they assuredly hurt you’ as a red flag to immediately find professional therapeutic assistance. Understand that this “justified behavior” is not only externally hurtful but self-destructive. All chronic behavior level 3 and below is both.

## Level 1 – Victim

- Overwhelming sense of powerlessness
- Feels ‘about to lose’ or ‘already lost’
- Little if any sense of responsibility
- Narrow, self-centered, selfish
- Cry, whine, attempt to appease
- Self pity, grief, despair, hopelessness, apathy
- Tries to gain control by getting others to feel sympathetic towards them
- Attempt to make others feel guilty or uncaring if they don't buy into their victim condition
- No matter how much you try to help a Victim, it is never enough
- Giving as a way to ‘buy off’ or appease their imagined oppressor
- Attitude of “Poor me. Look what they've done to me. What's the use? Why bother? I'll never get out of this.”
- Always have ‘unsolvable’ problems

**Risk**

If Victim behavior is tolerated for long, it indicates a codependent situation – depressive and dysfunctional for all concerned. Worse yet, if the emotion of apathy becomes chronic, the likelihood of suicide dramatically increases.

**Developmental Tip**

If the situation is acute, use facilitation skills to move them from apathy/despair to grief (loss) and then to fear. Why? Because you want to shift their attention from total a helpless self-centered state to a state where their attention is beyond themselves (fear of something out there) – a more expanded viewpoint.

Chronic Victims (or any chronic lower level behavior) needs to be responsibly, sensitively and legally terminated. Offer them contact information of therapeutic professionals who can assist them in resolving the cause of their difficulties. Explore and resolve what caused you to hire them in the first place.