Emotional Genius: How to Get Straight A's In Your Love Life

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Would you like to be a "genius" in your love life and personal relationships? Being an "emotional genius" means that you are highly skilled at managing your own moods and maintaining satisfying personal and love relationships.

All of us have a certain kind of intelligence or genius that is partly inherited and partly learned. Some people are "book smart"--they're good in academic subjects, memorizing concepts, and taking tests. Others are "street smart"-- they're skilled at surviving and thriving in the real world of competition and conflict. More recently, we have learned about emotional intelligence--how to be "people smart"--excelling in mastering our own emotions and relating to people in a healthy and rewarding way.

The good news is that you can learn to be an emotional genius by daily practice. Here are four simple tools to help you get started:

1. MANAGE YOUR MOOD: All of us go through mood changes: sometimes we're excited, other times we're sad or depressed. We can get angry, fearful, and anxious, or feel overjoyed, loving, and happy. Depression--profound sadness-- is the common cold of psychology; more people get it than any other psychological disorder. Depression is also one of the biggest causes of relationship conflict and breakup because people who are depressed have less energy, love, and good feelings to give to each other. In the old school thinking, it was believed that women get depressed twice as much as men. New research, however, shows that men and women are equal in their rates of depression; the only difference is that men express depression differently. Instead of crying, sleeping too much, and expressing sadness verbally, many depressed men tend to get aggressive, numb themselves with sex and alcohol, and work too much. Regardless of gender, it's important that you be aware of your emotional temperature--how you're feeling on a daily basis--and take steps to elevate your mood. Find what works best for you to help you feel happier: exercise, meditation, prayer, yoga, writing, communing in nature, and of course, therapy and counseling can be a great boost. New research shows that you can control and manage your emotions; all it takes is a little effort and discipline. Remember, the happier and calmer you are as individual, the happier and calmer your relationship will be.

2. THINK SMART: Many of us are not aware of how powerfully our thoughts can affect our feelings and behavior in relationships. For example, if you're in a relationship, you may have the common

thought: “He (or she) doesn’t love me anymore.” While this thought may have some basis in reality, many times it is exaggerated. A healthier approach is to reality test your thoughts and see if they are true or not. It could be that your partner still loves you, but some of their behavior may be coming from their feelings of sadness and frustration about their own life. You need to analyze your thoughts, communicate honestly with your partner, and see if there is any truth to your cynical and negative thoughts about the relationship. If you find that you’re not thinking logically about your mate, you can reboot your thinking and see your relationship in a more positive light.

3. DEVELOP EMPATHY: The cure to many relationships woes is the simple word, “empathy”--walking in the shoes of your mate, thinking as they think, feeling as they feel. Imagine what it feels like to be your partner. For example, let’s say that when your partner comes home, you sense they are very tired, grumpy, and exhausted. You can say: “Honey, you seem tired and a little exhausted; I’m going to make a nice hot tub for you so you can relax.” By showing empathy in this way, you will help your partner feel better immediately, and they will likely give you positive energy in return.

4. PUT AWAY THE EMOTIONAL TIME BOMB: All of us have hot buttons in relationships--things our partner can say to make us feel instantly mad or sad. Some people, for example, are sensitive about their weight (“you’re getting too fat”) or extended family (“you only support your family, not ours”), or lack of career success (“you’re not making it like you promised”). Any comments like these that touch on vulnerable emotional areas are likely to cause pain in your mate, and will make them react against you. Knowing your partner’s weak points, and deciding not to use them (even when you’re angry) is a sign of emotional and relationship strength. Remember this: When you explode an emotional bomb (a hurtful and attacking comment) against your partner, they are likely to feel resentful and will probably retaliate against you; thus putting your relationship into a downward spiral of hurt feelings, fights, and eventual breakup. Put away your emotional weapons, and focus instead of maintaining healthy communication, giving your partner positive feedback, and adding a good dose of respect and commonsense.
Yes, it’s true: You can be an emotional genius in your personal relationships--someone who is intelligent and highly skilled at mastering your own thoughts and feelings, and in building positive relationships. It’s time now to get straight A’s in your love life; you deserve it.

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