

# Quantum Healing



## 7 Steps to Greater Self-Awareness

"To acquire knowledge, one must study;  
but to acquire wisdom, one must observe."  
- Marilyn vos Savant

Self-Awareness is the core competency of Emotional Intelligence (EI). Greater self-awareness is essential if we are to improve any of the EI competencies, such as self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy and social skills. It is essentially about paying attention to our senses, thoughts, feelings and intuition, and managing our response to that stimulus. It is the key to managing our environment and the constant changes that occur every day – stopping reaction (re-acting out our past patterns) and making conscious choices as to how we will respond. Choosing our response to people, circumstances, events and the world around us is the key that unlocks **personal power** because by choosing our response we also create our reality.

There are many articles, books and web sites that deal with the topic of self-awareness. What is written here is my personal experience gained over the past 18 years. In this brief paper I will describe some basic steps to greater self-awareness. I have broken these steps down into bite size pieces to make them easier to put into practise. My aim is to present the essential concepts and attitudes that will assist you to better understand you, and to assist you to realise some of your immensely powerful potential. Of course, the better we are able to understand ourselves, the better we are able to manage our lives and all of our relationships.

## **Step 1 – Understanding Your Perspective**

**"What is necessary to change a person is to change his awareness of himself."**

**-- Abraham H. Maslow**

It is first of all necessary for us to understand our own perspective and its origins.

### **Exercise 1**

Here are a few questions that you might choose to ask yourself about your family environment that will give you a better understanding of why you think and act as you do:

- How were your parents shaped by their experiences?
- Were they formally educated or were they self-taught?
- What were their attitudes and beliefs?
- Did they have high self-esteem?
- What lessons did you learn from them?
- What were their favourite sayings in response to both 'good' and 'bad' events?
- What words did they use to motivate, support or correct your behaviour?
- What are the favourite sayings and attitudes that you hold that were also held by your parents?
- Would you consider your parents to be role models?
- What are the attitudes, behaviours and beliefs that are directly opposite or distinctly different to those held by your parents?
- Were you born into a rich or poor family?
- Did you have any siblings, and were they older or younger?
- Did you try to emulate your siblings in any way?

Besides your parents and siblings, who were the other prominent people in your life – grandparents, aunts, uncles, neighbours, friends, schoolteachers and others? Their beliefs, values and attitudes can also play an important part in forming your view of life.

We also have different characteristics, personalities, gifts and talents. Our experiences from the time we were in the womb up until now are also unique.

The interplay between us as we uniquely are and our life conditions is extremely complex and the major reason why no two people are exactly alike. We each, therefore, have a unique perspective; a highly personal set of glasses through which we view the world around us.

As a result, our reality is also unique. Our reality is the product of our thoughts, words and actions and no one does it all quite the same as we do. There may be a number of people with whom we share a similar view, and they are likely to be our friends (or maybe

even our enemies) or people we get along well with and thus associate with, but no one actually shares exactly the same perspective of life.

### **Exercise 2**

When you experience an event in your life, see if you can take a moment to stop and observe your automatic reaction to that event. What is that 'voice in your head' saying? What are your feelings telling you? How is your body re-acting?

Try to trace one of these reactions back to a previous event that shaped your response, or what might be your automatic reaction. Do you remember someone doing something similar? When was the first time you reacted this way and why? Does the response serve you now? Could you respond differently to these current circumstances? What do you think would be the real consequences of making a different choice? Would you like to try a different response to see what happens?

## **Step 2 – Respecting Others**

**"Until we take how we see ourselves (and how we see others) into account, we will be unable to understand how others see and feel about themselves and their world. Unaware, we will project our intentions on their behaviour and call ourselves objective."**

**-- Stephen Covey**

If we are to truly acknowledge our unique perspective then we must also acknowledge the perspective of others. No one is wrong simply because they have a different perspective. In fact, it can be highly advantageous for us to associate with others who do have quite a different perspective. For example, provided there is a shared understanding of acceptable behaviour, we tend to invite people of different perspectives to a party as it is almost guaranteed to be lively and interesting. We have the opportunity to hear the views of others and learn from them in a non-threatening way.

There are also times when we tend to associate with those of similar view, especially when we do not want to be challenged. In business teams this is too often the case. It might be boring but it is safe. The team may not be a highly successful problem solving and creative team, but no one 'rocks the boat' and it takes little effort for the team to remain in harmony. However, if any group of people wearing a similar shade of glasses were to look at a problem, they would tend to see the character of a problem in a similar way. Consequently, there is also a good deal of the problem that is not recognised and seen by such a group.

Let's try an analogy. Imagine a group of people (Team 1) sitting at a round table looking at an issue that happens to be in the middle of the table. If those sitting at the table were similar in perspective then they would all see the issue in a similar way. As a consequence, they may argue about the fine points but there would be general agreement about the definition and scope of the problem, and a consensus of how to respond to the problem would be easily achieved. If someone feels 'uneasy' about the group consensus, they will bow to peer pressure and either not voice their concerns or if they do they will often be labelled by the remainder of the group as a 'worrier' or even a 'disruptive influence' – personal attacks are common in rejecting any dissenting view.

Now imagine a group of people of different perspectives (Team 2) sitting around the table. They all see the issue differently and it may take some deft handling of this group to arrive at a consensus of how to handle the issue. Oftentimes emotions will run high as each person expresses their passion for how they see both the problem and the preferred response – especially if they do not feel heard and understood. However, this group will have the ability to see the issue from a greater number of angles, is more likely to be able to discern the true nature of the issue, and is therefore likely to be able to come up with a more effective solution. That is, provided the group is able to regulate and manage their emotions and have a shared intent and willingness to hear each other and achieve a compromise.

Unfortunately, in business, as in life in general, we tend to quite naturally gather people around us who resemble Team 1. Perhaps we are fearful that we will not be able to

handle Team 2, perhaps we do not want our beliefs challenged for underneath our beliefs lay our fears. If we cannot manage our own emotions, and we are not open to learning and growth, we are more likely to opt for Team 1.

The important key to managing Team 2 is to be aware of our own perspective and how that will influence us, especially our emotions. Conversely, when we are open to new ideas we are more apt to listen to, and truly hear, the perspective of others. As we all have different perspectives and each perspective is real and valid, no one is or can be completely wrong – just different. In the words of Ken Wilber, no one is smart enough to be 100% wrong; we all hold a part of the truth.

### **Exercise 3**

When listening to someone else's view, try to really hear what the other person is saying. See if you can observe the key elements of their perspective that make it different from yours. Try to:

- listen without any judgement or thinking of what you will say in response
- listen as if you have never heard this before
- truly hear their perspective
- re-spect - look at the issue with their eyes

What are you hearing that you have not let yourself hear before?

After the person is finished speaking, try to feedback what you have heard so that you can confirm what you have heard. Give yourself time to think and only ask a question to clarify what you have heard – do not give any response to express your view – just listen, until you have agreement from the other person about what you heard.

### **Step 3 - Be Open to New Beliefs and Face Your Fears**

**"Fear is a question: What are you afraid of, and why? Just as the seed of health is in illness, because illness contains information, our fears are a treasure house of self-knowledge if we explore them."**

**-- Marilyn Ferguson**

Beliefs are particular things that we hold to be true ... for us. Our beliefs hold us in a certain focus, what I like to think of as a box within which particular paradigms operate. We see the world in our unique way and that colours our response. Many of us hold onto our beliefs as if they are sacrosanct and we will defend our beliefs almost to the death. It seems funny to me that over the past couple of years I have asked many people if their beliefs were the same as they were 5 years ago, or even two years ago. No one has yet told me they were - their beliefs had always changed to some degree. Perhaps then our beliefs are transitory – they seem totally fixed and in focus at one moment in time but as we continue to grow and learn, and our life circumstances change, so do our beliefs.

Of course, most people know someone who has not changed their beliefs. They are the ones that can often be heard described as 'stuck', 'unable to see reality', 'completely inflexible', 'totally defensive' or 'living in the past.' Do you know someone like this?

We also need to be aware that what might be appropriate in some circumstances may not be appropriate in others. In our younger days a lot of things seemed 'black or white'. As we grow older we have a greater sense of complexity and those same things seem more like different shades of grey.

What keeps us wedded to our beliefs? What keeps us 'stuck' or 'living in the past'? The world, and every person in it, is constantly changing and becoming increasingly complex. It is only the human mind that can handle an increasingly complex world. It is how we think and our ability to change that allows us to make sense of the increasing complexity that we experience. Unfortunately, our beliefs work against us in this regard. Through our beliefs that we desperately hang on to, we increase the gap between where we think we are and where the world has moved to.

So why don't we change our beliefs to keep pace with the reality of change? The answer, in my experience, is simply fear. Under every belief there are fears. Sometimes these fears will seem ridiculous and illogical especially when they are impartially examined and aired.

To develop a greater self-awareness, try looking on your beliefs as 'big assumptions.' Listen to other's perspectives and beliefs and stay open to actually hear what they have to say. Never throw anything out without really understanding what it is that is being conveyed. It is someone else's hard won truth. Their 'big assumptions' might enrich our own. Mentally, put your hand out and just hold the new concept or idea, or the other person's 'big assumption', as if you have just heard it for the first time. Allow your inquisitiveness to take a good look at it from someone else's perspective. Try it on wholeheartedly – you may be surprised what you learn.

#### **Exercise 4**

Try to notice what beliefs you are holding on to that are 'set in stone'. When you express an opinion, see if you can find the core belief underlying that opinion. Now consciously make the assumption that the belief in question is completely wrong or outdated and feel the emotion (s) that arises. See if you can isolate the fear at the core of this belief and have a really good look at it.

- What assumptions are you making that keep that fear in place?
- What will realistically be the consequences if you change your belief?
- What is the origin of that fear? What were the circumstances in which that fear first arose?
- What does that fear tell you about you?
- Does this fear stand on its own in the clear light of day?

Try expressing the nature of this fear to someone else. 'Feel the fear and do it anyway.' You may well find that your fears have little basis in the current circumstances and are just holding you back from learning and growth.

## **Step 4 – Self Responsibility**

**"The world we are experiencing today is the result of our collective consciousness, and if we want a new world, each of us must start taking responsibility for helping create it."**

**-- Rosemary Fillmore Rhea**

Take total responsibility for yourself – you are after all totally responsible for your thoughts, words and actions. No one is going to rescue you from yourself, so there is no use playing the victim.

Your personal boundaries - what is okay for you and what is not - are sometimes difficult to express. We often do not live authentically because we think that we should do this or do that. We tend to live a life of 'shoulds' because we fear that we will be judged, and the really big one - **not liked**. We tend to shape our preferences and actions because we think that is what others want and to do otherwise would risk not being liked or loved. As a result the real you is hidden under a layer of fear.

Own your thoughts, words and actions. Here are a few hints and tips:

- **Consciousness – Being Present.** We are responsible for our level of consciousness; how awake we are when we are engaging in an activity or just listening. How well we perform, what we see and hear is up to us. There is no sense blaming someone else for what you haven't heard or for the poor results. If we are physically present but mentally absent, we cannot blame someone else for the outcome. See later steps in this article.
- **Behaviour.** It is too easy for us to credit someone or something else for our behaviour. "If he/she hadn't said that then I wouldn't have done what I did," "They had it coming, if they had been more reasonable I wouldn't have .....". Other people do not make us act in certain ways. We are responsible for our behaviour, for our decisions and actions and we are responsible for the outcomes.
- **Expectations.** At times we place unreasonable demands and expectations on others only to be disappointed or frustrated when those expectations are not fully met. Expecting someone to suddenly appear and 'rescue' us from our dilemma, or to solve our problem, breeds a sense of hopelessness and helplessness. Nothing will change unless you take action – change your situation by doing something about it. Do not expect that someone else 'should' do something about your situation.
- **Judgments and Values.** Too many of us sit in judgment of others actions and behaviours, criticising their beliefs and values while being unaware of our own. Do you really understand your core values? Seek to understand your core values and act in accordance with those values – and allow others to do the same.
- **Time Management.** There is no sense complaining about not having the time to do the things you like to do. Write down a list of the things that are important

to you, and in accordance with your core values, prioritise them and devote the time you have available doing what you like to do – we all have to compromise and we are responsible for the choices we make.

- **Relationships.** It is easy to blame and resent others when they repeatedly hurt or disappoint you. Make conscious decisions about the people you wish to spend your time with, and how much time and effort you are prepared to invest in developing and maintaining those relationships. If a relationship does not add real value for you, why put your time and energy into it?
- **Happiness.** Happiness and fulfillment is in your own hands. No one else is responsible for your happiness. Choose the friends and activities that validate and support you, bring you joy and support you to express who you are. If you are unhappy, ask yourself what you can do to change your situation.
- **Own Your Life.** In taking responsibility for your life, you will recognise other people's rights to do the same. Other people do not exist as a means to your ends, any more than you live in total service to others needs. People may choose to help one another but no one is born with a right to other people's assets or energy.

### Exercise 5

You can become more responsible by asking yourself two powerful questions several times a day '**What possibilities for action exist?**' And '**What can I do?**'

Instead of just saying, "I want...," try asking yourself, "**What am I willing to do to get what I want?**"

As a daily exercise for two weeks, every morning set aside 30 minutes to answer the question:

**If I were to be more self-responsible today – what can I do?**

Try to find 10 things you can do – they can be small things!  
In the realm of relationships try this for an exercise.

When an issue arises say to yourself (repeatedly if necessary)

**"It is not about them, it is about me...what do I need to learn, what are they mirroring in me?"**

or it may be appropriate to say:

**"What they are saying about me is really about them - it is not about me."**

## **Step 5 – Learn to Observe Yourself**

**"You wander from room to room  
Hunting for the diamond necklace  
That is already around your neck!"**

**-- Jalal-Uddin Rumi**

Have you ever observed yourself getting angry, and due to the circumstances, made a conscious decision not to express that anger because you felt it was inappropriate to do so? Some people in customer service roles experience all sorts of emotions but do not express them.

It is obvious then that we are not our emotions – we experience them but we do not have to 'be them.' You can experience anger and express that you 'feel angry' but you do not have to express that anger even though 'steam might be coming out of your ears'. There is a difference between 'I feel angry' and 'I am angry'.

It does take practise but learning to observe yourself and your emotions is a very powerful skill to develop. As you develop this awareness of your feelings and emotions you can gain a great deal of personal power by not reacting but simply choosing how you respond. I am not suggesting that you go to the opposite end of the unhealthy spectrum and suppress your emotions – suppressed emotions cause all sorts of health issues. All emotions need to be expressed – just find a way to do it in an appropriate way, and at an appropriate time and place.

Many years ago when I was first practising to identify with the 'impartial witness' or 'observer' and consciously choose my responses, I had an experience with a work colleague who was a confrontationalist. He had the habit of very quickly raising the ire of everyone he dealt with by being rude and aggressive. He bullied people so that he could get what he wanted. On this particular occasion he wanted me to fund one of his projects. He was true to form. Our meeting started at 9:30 am and he quickly became aggressive and rude, calling me all sorts of names. My game plan was to respond calmly and state precisely what I needed from him in order for me to give him what he wanted.

I felt quite angry at first but I chose to stick to my game plan and respond calmly and repeat my requirements without responding to his confrontational tactics – I just ignored them. As time progressed I soon realised that as he became angrier, I became calmer which in turn made him even angrier. I also realised over the course of several hours that he felt sillier – my calmness seemed to leave him isolated and he became very aware of his own poor behaviour. After three hours, when he realised that his tactics would not work he started to look for a reason why he should agree with my request. Eventually, he brought himself around to say, "Why didn't you say that earlier?" and "Now I understand what you want, of course I can prepare the plans." I hadn't changed my request from the first 15 minutes. This particular person never tried his bully tactics on me again, although he continued his obnoxious behaviour with every one else including the owner of the company.

Learning to observe your emotions and consciously choosing a response to any given situation develops the skill of identifying with the impartial observer, the non-emotive, egoless witness: the part of you that does not need to re-act, but can choose to respond, with responsibility. I have found this particularly useful in dealing with conflict, to give me time to examine why I am feeling the way that I do, to allow me to listen to the truth of another, to understand the perspectives involved – mine and others – to get to the core of an issue, and to allow others to express their emotions and feel heard and understood.

The essence of learning to identify with the observer is to become aware of where you are resting your attention. For example, you may appear to be listening to someone but your attention has gone elsewhere; perhaps to what you want to say, perhaps completely somewhere else. Men have a reputation for being quite adept at appearing to listen but their minds are elsewhere. Another example, how often do you drive to or from work doing your shopping list in your head, or going over what happened during the day or planning the evening or weekend activities – you are still driving the car but your attention has wandered to another activity.

Try to become aware of just where your attention is and then move your attention to the observer and see an interaction with someone else as if you are sitting aside and watching.

### **Exercise 6**

Become aware of what you are feeling – both positive and negative emotions.

- Where in your body do you feel it?
- What thoughts or circumstances gave rise to those emotions?
- What beliefs are your thoughts based on?
- What are the primary fears under those beliefs?
- What would your normal reactions be?
- What do you now choose to think, say and do in response?

You may like to choose a completely different reaction to this situation – one that you have not tried before. Your spouse/partner and your children provide a rich training ground for you to practise in.

## **Step 6 - Wake Up**

**"This moment is the moment of reality, of union, of truth. Nothing needs to be done to it or to you for this to be so. Nothing needs to be avoided, transcended, or found for it to be so."**

**-- Da Avabhasa**

**"... the only time you ever have in which to learn anything or see anything or feel anything, or express any feeling or emotion, or respond to an event, or grow, or heal, is this moment, because this is the only moment any of us ever gets. You're only here now; you're only alive in this moment."**

**-- Jon Kabat-Zinn**

Most people spend their lives walking around at least half asleep. We are so concerned with what happened yesterday, and worried about what will happen tomorrow, that we are asleep to what is happening **now**.

Our minds can process words at over 300 words a minute. Even the most adept communicator can only speak at less than half that rate. So even if we are fully engaged and listening, and mostly we are not, what are we doing with the other half of the capacity of our mind? Do your thoughts wander off to other times and places like most of us do? Are you busy thinking of a responsive argument that you will say as soon as the other person finishes? Have you ever caught yourself talking before they have finished?

My favourite example of illustrating the capacity of the mind is to recall a motor vehicle accident or near accident. Do you remember what that was like? Did everything appear to progress in slow motion in the 10 seconds before impact? Did you process lots of thoughts during those 10 seconds? What were your powers of observation at that time?

The slow motion that many experience is not some trick of the mind. You were simply awake to the present, your attention was drawn completely into the moment, what happened 30 minutes ago or what will happen in 30 minutes time is irrelevant!

For a few seconds of your life you actually live in the now. Your consciousness is raised to a level that you perhaps have not experienced before and your capacity to take in your surroundings, access what is happening, process thoughts and take action has expanded.

Elite sports people usually have the capacity to be totally in the moment, to be of one pointed focus. They are often described by commentators as appearing to have 'all the time in the world' to execute an action.

We miss so much by not being present and awake, whether that be when listening to someone, listening to our own thoughts and feelings, or simply being present to our surroundings in the moment. You do have the power to be in the now. A lot of people find it immensely satisfying and refreshing to engage in a hobby or sport that captures their attention and demands that they be in the moment - be that woodwork, dancing,

painting, needlework, fishing or even golf. It seems natural that we love being in the present for in those moments we are not weighed down with our self-induced stress.

When you understand what is happening then hopefully you will be in a position to consciously choose to be more present – that is, choose to love what is happening, as it is the only thing that is really happening anyway!

### **Exercise 7**

I recommend that you purchase a copy of 'The Power of Now' by Eckhart Tolle to gain a greater understanding of living in the now.

Throughout your day, consciously choose to be present. When you are aware of your thoughts wandering, or you are daydreaming, gently bring your attention back to the now and observe the reality of what is!

You will have to constantly work at this. You need to get into the habit of regularly checking where your attention is and gently bringing it back to the present. If you are having difficulty with some particular thoughts then maybe it would be better for you to deal with them first, if that is possible. Sometimes just jotting your thoughts down on paper is enough to allow your mind to return to the present.

If you are about to engage in a conversation with a friend or partner, it would be nice if you could develop the habit of checking in with the other person to see if they are in a space to hear what you have to say. Conversely, you could say, "I have a few things on my mind at the moment, could we talk about this in an hour's time so I can give you all of my attention?"

If you are attending lectures or presentations, once you notice you have 'drifted away' from the present, you can bring your mind and attention back to the present by using your body as a guide:

- focus on taking a deep breath, and relax into the present
- notice your posture, and gently bring yourself into a more upright and comfortable posture, and consciously relax your muscles
- if you can, close your eyes for a moment and just move your attention from your head to your toes, checking in with your physical state
- try stretching part of your body and then relaxing or scrunching up your fingers or toes and relaxing them

These simple physical gestures can become anchor points for your attention and gentle reminders for your mind to return to the present - and they feel good to do at the same time!

## **Step 7 – Meditate**

**"Meditation brings wisdom; lack of meditation leaves ignorance. Know well what leads you forward and what holds you back, and choose the path that leads to wisdom."**

**-- Buddha**

With our minds chattering at over 300 words a minute, and usually it is about what happened in the past or worrying about the future, it becomes very difficult for us to be present and listening to the messages that the universe is trying to get through to us. Do you remember the last time you were inspired or had a great idea?

Where were you and what were you doing when you had that moment of inspiration? There are many possible answers to this question that I have received over the years and they include walking, running, fishing or participating in a hobby. My moments often occur when I'm in the shower! Others have reported the bath, or even the 'bathroom'.

So what is happening when we receive these in-spirations? The answer is simple; we have a place or activity that allows our minds to quieten, our egos take a rest, we are open to listening to the universe, or simply our deeper selves. When we engage in our favourite activity we feel relaxed, we give ourselves a rest from the chatter of the mind, and we are able to relieve our stress, which is in essence caused by our chattering mind.

If you really wish to maximise these benefits, take up a practise of meditation. It is not difficult. All you have to do is sit quietly and observe your mind, rather than be it! Here are some more specific directions to help you get started:

### **Exercise 8**

1. Find a nice quiet place where you will not be interrupted.
2. Sit on the floor with your legs crossed or sit upright in a chair. If you are sitting on the floor you may be more comfortable sitting on a cushion so that your legs are not raised but parallel to the floor. If you are in a chair, place your feet firmly on the floor shoulder width apart.
3. Ensure that your spine is straight; now move your head to and fro until you find a point where your head feels comfortably balanced on your spine.
4. Now take two deep breaths and expel the air in your lungs fully, and then just relax and allow your breath to return to its normal rhythm.
5. Now just watch your breath as you breathe in and out.
6. Your mind will still be chattering away initially – do not fight it, the thoughts will slow down. When your thoughts do arise, do not let them capture your attention, let them be there and treat them as clouds floating across the sky. If your attention is captured by a thought, just gently return your attention back to your breath.

This exercise can be done at any time during the day and is best done for 20 minutes each day – now don't tell me you are too busy to re-centre and recharge yourself. Even the practise of doing this for 2 minutes while sitting at your desk at work will do wonders.

I particularly like these words penned by the German philosopher Franz Kafka over a century ago:

*You need not leave your room,  
Remain sitting at your table and listen.  
You need not even listen, simply wait.  
You need not even wait,  
Just learn to be quiet, and still and solitary.  
The world will freely offer itself to you to be unmasked.  
It has no choice; it will roll in ecstasy at your feet.*

Allen Stewart

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[allen@quantumhealing.com.au](mailto:allen@quantumhealing.com.au)