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Sun, Nov 03, 2024 7:01PM 33:19

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

emotional intelligence, relational connectedness, emotional vocabulary, emotional constipation, positive emotions, emotional cup, emotional freedom technique, biblical guidance, emotional reasoning, stress response, cortisol drip, eustress, emotional processing, emotional support, emotional awareness

SPEAKERS

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David, welcome to the Christian Healthy Lifestyle podcast where I help Christians over 40 maximize their health potential so they can age gracefully and live abundantly. I'm your host. David Sandstrom, naturopathic doctor and biblical Health Coach. And this is episode number 161, this episode we're moving through the nine pillars of health. This is pillar number six, which is the P in our MVP, and it's practicing emotional intelligence. Now this is going to be good. This is the kind of Episode You're probably going to want to listen to a couple times and tell your friends about because there's going to be a lot of great, potentially life changing information here. When we increase our emotional IQs, we not only become more aware of our internal emotions, but we become more aware of the emotions that others are experiencing, and that goes a long way toward relational connectedness. Now, human beings are wired for relationships. In pillar number two, we talked about love for others. And that's episode number 155, if you have listened to that one, you may want to check that one out. If we don't connect emotionally, we're not truly connecting with other human beings. Now, I used to pride myself as being a stoic Swede. I actually believed that not experiencing emotions and stuffing my emotions was a strength. I've now learned that I could not have been more wrong. My first exposure to this concept of exploring my emotions was when my wife and I were having some issues, and we knew we needed some help, so we decided to go to a marriage retreat, and we, in order to go to that retreat, we had to do some pre counseling, counseling, and we went to the psychologist's office, and he was talking about how we could connect more emotionally, and he asked me to explain or list for him some of the emotions that I've experienced over the last 90 days. And the best I could come up with was, well, I've been happy, I've been sad, I've been angry, and maybe pissed off a little bit, and that's about all I could come up with, really. That's truly all I could do. So he opens up the door to his desk, and he pulls out a sheet of paper and front and back, and it had about 300 emotional terms on it. He said, Dave, here's what I want you to do. I want you to check the box next to every emotion that you've experienced over the last 90 days, not for your entire lifetime, but just over the last 90 days. So I started going through this checklist, and I said, Okay, frustration, yeah, I've felt that irritation. Yeah, I've felt that before, and before I knew it, I've checked about a third of the emotions on that 300 emotion list. So the counsel looks at it's like over 100 emotions I've experienced over the last 90 days. He looks at the sheet, he looks him in the eye, and he says, You know what this means, Dave, this means you have far more capacity to experience emotions than you realize. I was forever changed, and that set me on a course towards really exploring this topic a bit. And now my wife and I

lead marriage groups. For the last 13 years, we've been teaching people these concepts of getting more in touch with your emotions and the emotions of others in order to enhance your relational effectiveness. Now there's a lot of concepts here to apply to our health and well being. That's what I want to cover here in this episode. So what are emotions? According to Webster's, emotions are mental activity experienced as subjective feelings that translate into physiological and behavioral reactions in our bodies. Now we call them feelings because we often feel reactions in our bodies as a result of experiencing that emotion.

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Now, emotions add color and depth to our life experiences. They also help us interpret and process the events of our lives. They tell us something about what we're going through. Emotions have influence over our thoughts, speech and actions, and all of that has impact on our physiology. Now there's a connection there between our emotions and our physiology that if we care about our health, we shouldn't be ignoring we can't afford to ignore this one.

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Now I wanted to have to tell you that certain emotions can cause measurable changes in our physiology. If we hear a scary noise in the middle of the night, it'll cause our hearts to increase and start racing. Our blood pressure will rise, pupils will dilate. Stress hormones like cortisol become elevated and non urgent tasks like digestion get slowed down. When we experience fear, our fight or flight, reflex kicks in, and the sympathetic nervous system becomes dominant. Another term for that is our body's stress response. The trouble is when. And people are emotionally constipated, fearful or stressful, thoughts and emotions can rule a day, and we can remain in fight or flight for way too long, causing what we call cortisol drip. Cortisol drip is a serious blocking factor to our health and well being. The trouble is we were never designed to live in a chronic, heightened stress response.

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Now some stress is a good thing. A life without any stress would be very boring, unproductive and unhealthy. We need some some level of stress. Now there is such a thing as good stress. It's called eustress, like the moderate exercise, is a form of eustress. When we work out, our muscles get challenged and they get broken down a bit, but at the end of the day, they come back stronger as a result of doing the exercise. Our emotions operate in a similar way. When we experience the full range of human emotions. It can be challenging, but at the end of the day, we're better off experiencing them.

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Shout out to Disney's movie series inside out one and two. They do a great job there. It's actually a masterful job of depicting in a very entertaining way how we experience emotions and how those emotions impact the way we think, speak and act. Excellent movies. Love them both. Now

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positive emotions like love, joy and peace have the opposite effect on our physiology. They stimulate activation of our parasympathetic nervous system, which is our rest and digest side. Now here's an important point. Our bodies prefer to do things like nutrient absorption, cellular repair, detoxification and hormone balancing when we're in rest and digest. So we want positive emotions to hang around. We want to create a friendly environment for positive emotions. It's a critical component to a healthy lifestyle. When it comes to emotions, we should be the ones in the driver's seat. Our emotions should be serving us, not the other way around. We should never allow ourselves to be slaves to our emotions. You know, you can make a really good estimate of someone's intellectual IQ by giving them a simple vocabulary test. The more words you know, the higher your intellectual IQ tends to be. So the first thing we want to do to increase our emotional IQ is to expand our emotional vocabulary, because if we can't put a name to our feelings, then we're going to have a hard time addressing them. If we don't recognize the feeling that's coming our way, we're going to find ourselves reacting to our emotions instead of thoughtfully responding to them. When we simply react, we don't have time to think our behavior is sort of pre programmed for us. Now, on the other hand, responding is pausing for a moment or two and considering how we want to behave as a result of experiencing this emotion that's responding that's how we turn this around and put ourselves in the driver's seat.

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Now a great way to expand our emotional vocabulary is to use an emotion wheel. There's lots of different ones online. Just do a Google search for emotion wheel, and you'll see all kinds of ones pop up. I like one that's put together by an organization called all the feels. And feels is spelled with a z, F, E, E, L, Z. I'll put a link in the show notes to that one. I think it's very useful any emotion wheel has the core emotions in the center and the peripheral or related emotions out towards the perimeter of the wheel. Using an emotion wheel can be a very useful process. It helps us to put a label on what we're feeling, assign a name to it. What the emotion wheel illustrates is that on the inside of the wheel, or towards the center, we have our core emotions, and as we progress further and further towards the perimeter of the wheel, we have all kinds of varying degrees of our emotions connected to those core emotions. The varying degrees generally increase in intensity as we move toward the outside of the wheel. For instance, the core emotion of anger could be experienced as we just feel let down or maybe a little annoyed or frustrated. Moving up the ladder a little bit, we could be irritated. We could feel disrespected, jealous or maybe betrayed. Moving it up even another notch, would be infuriated or resentful or bitter even numb. The same could be said for fear. We could experience fear as being startled or maybe feeling a little insecure or inadequate. Moving that up a notch, we could be frightened or anxious or nervous and apprehensive, and all the way up the ladder here on the fear fear levels, we could be. Feeling dread or threatened or even panicked. So there's a lot of different ways to describe what we're feeling. It's not just fear, it's not just anger. There's a lot of different ways that that can be expressed, and the emotion wheel is super helpful there. Again, our emotions should be serving us. We shouldn't be slaves to them. We're the ones in charge. Now

 10:24

we want to avoid emotional constipation. Now, I know that sounds a little crude, but it's actually a very good metaphor. Now, when we take in food, we put it in our mouths, we chew on it, we start to break it down, and then we swallow when it goes down to the stomach and into our digestive system, where our digestive system goes to work extracting the useful nutrients from it, and then finally it gets eliminated. So the same is true with our emotions. That's how we process emotions. We take these emotions in, we want to chew on them and process them a little bit, then we want to extract

the useful information from them, and when we're done doing that, at the end of that process, we let them go and we eliminate them. So we don't, we don't want to get emotionally constipated. It's usually a bad thing. Of course, when it comes to positive emotions, we don't have to worry about that. We can. We can hang on to those as long as we want emotions in the happy category can linger. That's fine, but even love, joy and peace will have an ebb and flow to them. Once you become aware of some of the principles I'm about to share with you here, you'll be able to make a shift into experiencing more and more positive emotions and having them stick around for longer and longer periods of time. Now, once we put a name onto what we're feeling, we should ask ourselves three different questions. One, what's this emotion telling me about who I am if we're seeing and feeling something others aren't? It could be a clue into our strength zone, into our zone of genius. Maybe God gifted you with an extra dose of compassion. Maybe God gifted you with a vision to start a movement. Now, criticism and sarcasm are not spiritual gifts, all right, we should always be lifting others up right Kingdom work and the abundant life will always include service to others. Maybe God is giving us some insight that other people seem unaware of. If that's the case, we should explore those areas and press into them.

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So the second question we should ask ourselves is, is the intensity of what I'm feeling appropriate for the circumstances. Maybe I'm making a mountain out of a molehill. Now, we've all got hot buttons that we all have sensitive areas that we react harshly to. Now if that's the case, it's usually due to some type of hurt we've experienced long somewhere along the way. Now that'll cause us to form some false or limiting beliefs. In the last episode, episode 160 we talked about how to identify and correct false or limiting beliefs. If you haven't listened to that one, you may want to go back and check out episode number 160. If you're unsure if your reaction is appropriate or in proportion to the event that you're experiencing, ask your spouse or somebody close to you, those people can often see things that we can't.

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Number three, the third question we should ask is, is this emotion serving my health, building efforts, or is it working against them? Is this emotion moving me towards additional stress, or is it producing more peace? If we've identified some of the emotions that aren't serving us and we just can't seem to break free, something to consider is nutritional support. Our brains need nutrients in order to work properly, and of course, I recommend cleaning up the diet and eating unprocessed food as close to its God given natural form as possible. That's always a great idea. But supplements can often help. Products like five, HTP, st, John's Wort, B vitamins, magnesium, they all have proven efficacy in helping to support mood issues, especially with depression and anxiety. I've got a Mood Support Protocol on my fullscript dispensary. Now my protocols are from my listeners, the natural nation only, so just go to Christian healthy lifestyle.com, forward slash protocols. Click on the Mood Support Protocol, and if you've already got an account, you'll be taken directly to that protocol. If not, all you have to do to create a free account is choose a username and password, and you'll get immediate access to the protocol. The account is free. If you sign up using my dispensary link, you'll also lock in a 10% discount for life, and you get free shipping on orders over \$50 you'll get the highest quality medical grade products curated by me me with discount pricing, and you'll be supporting the show in the process. It's a real win, win.



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So there's nothing to lose. Now, another consideration of practicing emotional intelligence is avoiding emotional reasoning. Emotional reasoning says, If I feel it, therefore it must be true. Or in the flip side, if I don't feel it, it can't be true. Both of those assumptions are wrong. If we feel something, it may be true, but it may not be. Feelings are not facts. They're feelings, they're subjective, and they're always subject to all kinds of distortions.

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Now we act on how we feel. Purchase decisions are mostly based on emotions. We make our purchase decisions with our emotions, and then we justify those decisions with our logic. Now this is especially true when it comes to big purchase decisions like buying a house or a car. If our decisions are made primarily with emotions, we've got to understand that our emotions can lie to us. Now I'm not anti emotion, far from it. Emotions are great love, joy and peace make life worth living. Emotions like excitement, creativity, inspiration and hopefulness, they all move the needle for our enjoyment and satisfaction in life. I'm simply saying that we should treat our emotions with care. Now, when it comes to practicing emotional intelligence, one of the most important concepts we should get a handle on is the concept of the emotional cup. Painful emotions are inevitable. If we're living on planet Earth, sooner or later, we're going to be hurt by someone close to us. What do we do with those painful emotions? Most of us just stuff them away and bury them. The trouble is feelings buried alive never die unless we deal with our painful emotions. They linger and accumulate. Even though we're emotional creatures, everyone's capacity to experience emotions is limited. It's finite. Now we can think of our capacity to hold emotion like a red party cup, if the cup is only half full, and we get pushed or shoved, there's a pretty good chance that nothing's gonna spill out. But if our cup is near the top, it's 90% full. When we get shoved, whatever's in our cup is gonna spill out the top. That's what happens with our emotions. We store them in our emotional cup, and when we're stressed, something spills out the top, and that something is not pretty it's usually pretty messy. Now, most of us, because we haven't processed our painful emotions thoroughly, are carrying around an emotional cup that's full of junk. When our cup is filled up with painful emotions like shame, hurt, anger, fear, resentment, bitterness, condemnation, this stuff accumulates, and there's very little room left for positive emotions like love, joy and peace. As a result, various symptoms are going to spill out the top of our emotional cup. We can experience physical symptoms like fatigue or headaches or sleep disturbances, concentration issues. We can experience things that look like obsessive compulsive disorder, certainly, self esteem issues, absolutely addictions would be a symptom of a full emotional cup, short temper, abusiveness, depression and anxiety, impatience, criticism, impulsiveness, escapism, getting involved in alcoholism or pornography or those types of things. Those are symptoms of a full emotional cup. Now that stuff is the stuff that many people spend lots of money on and years in the counselor's office trying to work through, but focusing on those behaviors is just managing the symptoms. And managing our symptoms is going to have very limited impact, because we haven't dealt with the actual cause of the symptoms, which is a full emotional cup. So what psychiatrists do is they end up prescribing pills. Does that sound familiar? That's exactly what the medical industry does with disease.

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Doctors are trained to name it, blame it and tame it. You go to the doctor with some kind of issue, you describe your symptoms, and he takes your collection of symptoms, and he assigns a name to it. He calls it a disease, and then he blames your symptoms on that disease, and then they want to tame it

with drugs and surgery. Now since the psychiatric profession. Has been taken over by the medical industry. Is it any wonder that they call these symptoms of a full cup chemical imbalances? Then they blame your behavior on your symptoms on what they call chemical imbalances, and all they have to offer is more chemicals in the form of pharmaceuticals. All the while, there's been no attempt made at getting after the root cause of what's causing the symptoms. The root cause of most of the symptoms we just talked about is a full emotional cup. The answer is to drain the cup and let the symptoms go away on their own. Remember, our bodies know how to heal all we've got to do is get the obstacles out of the way, and our bodies know how to heal themselves. The same is true with our emotions.

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No one has to teach a baby how to experience emotions. We're born with that capacity. We're born with the capacity to love. We're born with the capacity to experience intimacy with other people. We have the capacity to experience the whole range of human emotions and process them in a healthy way. We get the obstacles out of the way by processing our painful emotions properly and draining the emotional cup. Remember, we don't want to get emotionally constipated. We extract what we can from our painful emotions, and then we let them go. So that begs the question, Well, Dave, well, how do we drain the emotional cup? One of the very effective and practical ways to deal with painful emotions is to use a method called EFT, or emotional freedom technique. Back in episode number 28 of the podcast, I did an interview with Dr Katie Nall, and she went through an exercise with me where we did EFT online. And it's very useful. It's quite useful in releasing emotional blocks. It's very, very good technique. Check that one out, episode number 28 and we should never try to deal with negative emotions alone, we should talk with our spouse close friends, or maybe even a pastor or a counselor. Now I've identified a few of the negative emotions that I believe have the most impact on our health and well being. These are the ones that'll move the needle the quickest, as often say in the show,

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God loves us enough that when he tells us to do something, it's for our benefit, and when he tells us to avoid something, it's for our protection, so we can turn to the Bible for some help in dealing with painful emotions. Jesus himself experienced a whole lot of painful emotions. He experienced betrayal and disappointment and hurt. Jesus wept is one of the, one of the shortest verses in the Bible, right? So I could give you, I could give you dozens of examples of how Jesus experienced emotions. Now, a lot of our painful emotions start with hurt. So let's start there getting over hurt or emotions like sadness and disappointment, always involves comfort. Romans, 12:15, says, Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. When we find other people that are willing to get into our world and identify with what we're feeling, we receive comfort. Matthew 5:4 says, Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted. Now, hurt often precedes anger, so the next emotion I want to address here is anger and resentment.

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Ephesians 4:26, says, Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold. Now some people take this verse to mean that you can't go to bed without resolving your conflict. That's not true. That's not what this verse is teaching. What this verse is teaching is keep a

short leash on your anger. Don't be an angry person. Don't get emotionally constipated with anger, it could give the devil and the enemy of our souls a foothold, give him something to grab a hold of in our lives. Ephesians 4:31, and 32 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice, be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you. Hurting people. Hurt people. Now we're all in same boat. No one goes through life without experiencing some level of hurt, remembering that we're all imperfect. People will help with the letting go process and help us be more motivated to forgive others when they when they trespass against us. Proverbs, 15:1, A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. If someone is angry with us and raises their voice, what's our reaction? We usually follow suit, right? That's what Dr Emerson eggerts calls in his book Love and respect the Crazy Cycle. We can interrupt the Crazy Cycle with a soft answer.

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Now the next one I want to address is fear, anxiety and insecurities. This is a big one for a lot of people. Second Timothy 1:7, says, For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and a sound mind. Now, there's a whole lot in this verse here, but I just want to touch on a couple of points. There is a spiritual warfare aspect to overcoming fear and anxiety. There is such a thing as a spirit of fear. Now, the enemy wants to render us ineffective for Kingdom work. So one of the ways he does that is he paralyzes us with fear. When we're afraid, we're more timid and we're less likely to take bold action. First John 4:18, for there is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. So that begs the question, well, what is perfect love? Perfect love is always others centered. It's always beneficent and focused on others. Philippians, 2:3, Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility, consider others as more important than yourselves. This verse is an illustration of perfect love. When we consider others as more important than ourselves, we're practicing perfect love, and that's the key to getting over fear and anxiety, is getting the focus off of ourselves. First. Corinthians, 13, four and five. Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud, it does not dishonor others. It is not self seeking. Again, we see the focus on others. Love does not dishonor others. It is not self seeking when we're fearful, who are we thinking about? We're thinking about ourselves. What's going to happen to me? God wants us to focus on loving others and meeting their needs, and then there'll be less time or less mental space to worry about ourselves. Well, yeah, Dave, but if I don't worry about myself, who will? God will? He's told us that he'll meet all our needs, and he's trustworthy. First, Peter 5:7, Casting all your cares upon Him. He cares for you. Deuteronomy. 31:6, Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them. For the Lord, your God, goes with you. He will never leave you nor forsake you. So the secret sauce, or the antidote, to overcoming fear and anxiety and replacing it with strength and courage, is to trust in God to cast all our cares upon Him. This is part of what I mean when I say that we maximize our health potential by aligning our lives more fully with God's natural design for spirit, mind and body. When we choose to do things God's way, we don't have to worry about the outcome. God will take care of that for us. All we're required to do is to lay all our cares at the feet of Jesus. He'll take care of the rest, and that's where we'll find real peace. And do I have to say it, peace is health promoting. So the next emotion in our cup is guilt. The biblical antidote for guilt is confession. First John 1:9, If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Now this verse doesn't mean that if we have some petty, unconfessed sin, that we're not forgiven. That's not true. God is more concerned with the condition of our hearts than any outward behavior. When we confess our sins, we're embracing humility, and we're coming into agreement with what God says on the matter, that's what it means to confess. When we come into agreement with God, we experience genuine contrition over our sins and will be changed from the inside out. James 5:16, Confess your trespasses to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed the effective fervent

prayer of a righteous man avails much another emotion that often needs to be addressed is condemnation. Conviction comes from the Holy Spirit. Condemnation comes from the enemy of our souls, or Satan. Romans 8:1 there is their. Four now, no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. If we've done the work that I've just described for the other painful emotions, we will automatically be in alignment with Christ, Jesus, and automatically not walking according to the flesh. This way, we won't be vulnerable to condemnation. The enemy will have no grounds to accuse us with isn't that a beautiful thing? Now, of course, there's more emotions that need to be dealt with, but I think what I've shared here will give you the framework and the tools you need to make some effective changes in the way you approach or handle emotional intelligence moving forward.

 30:47

Well, that was a mouthful, so let's summarize real quick, most people have far more capacity to experience emotions than they realize. It's not a matter of if we get hurt by others. It's a matter of when stuffing or burying our hurt doesn't work, because emotions buried alive never die. One of the fastest ways to increase our emotional intelligence is to expand our emotional vocabulary. We should be careful to avoid emotional reasoning. Emotions are an important part of our decision making process, but feelings are not facts. They're subjective and they're not good objective measures of truth. An essential part to practicing emotional intelligence is understanding the concept of the emotional cup when our emotional cup is full behavioral issues, like controlling behavior, quick temper, addictions, all that junk starts to spill out the top of our cup, which are really just symptoms. The root cause of those symptoms is a full emotional cup. The solution to getting over our symptoms is to drain the cup. The Bible has specific instructions for dealing with painful emotions. If we apply those, well, we'll go a long way towards increasing our emotional intelligence. Hey, if you're getting value out of this content, I sure would appreciate you helping me get the word out. If you've got a like minded friend, would you tell them about the show natural and holistic health from a Christian, biblical perspective, is pretty hard to come by. Your friend will think you're brilliant, and I'll bet they'll thank you for it too. Sometimes people are not familiar with listening to podcasts. If that's the case, everyone knows how to watch a YouTube video. So my channel is Christian, healthy lifestyle. All the episodes are numbered. This is episode number 161 if that doesn't work, you can always send them to my website, Christian healthy lifestyle.com, forward slash the episode number, and that page has an audio as well as a video version of the podcast. That's it for now. Thank you for listening. I appreciate you. I enjoyed serving you. Go out there and live abundantly. I'll talk with you next time. Be blessed. You.