

Women's Ministries Selfcare Corner

Selfcare and Emotional Intelligence

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Self care is often thought of as being selfish, thinking mostly about yourself; but loving yourself is important to being a rounded, well-adjusted person. Jesus said "And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise." Luke 6:31 NKJV. The first requirement for caring for others is to care for ourselves; when we love ourselves, we can love others to the same degree that we love 'me'.

In this article I will use Emotional Intelligence (EQ) as a springboard for caring for ourselves as well as explore Bible characters who faced difficulties and were able to overcome them, using EQ.

To successfully manage our lives, we must first practice self awareness. This speaks to our ability to perceive and understand our emotions and our reactions to those emotions at a point in time. We need to be able to assess what we're feeling and why, in order to navigate to the next stage. Esther faced a difficult task. She was only too aware of the impossibility of barging in on the king. Even though she was queen, and was very beautiful, she did not have that right. Consider the emotions she must have encountered-fear, dread, anxiety, loneliness, and even anger. What must she do? When we face similar situations what do we do? The person who is self aware, develops the ability to disconnect from the 'heat' of the moment and to analyze the situation before acting.

The second area for consideration is self management, that is, what happens when you act or do not act. The self aware person understands not only his or her feelings, but how to effectively handle those feelings. Some persons become so paralyzed that they do nothing. Remember that doing nothing is still an action. Or some persons speak and behave irrationally. Consider Mrs. Job: she was

hurting. She has just lost all her children, her possessions and all good things associated with her life. In her anguish she blamed God and blurted out to her husband, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!" Job 2:9. NKJV. Job's response to her tells me that she was not normally a foolish woman. In that moment of her pain, her emotions clouded her good judgment, hence her worthless advice. Sometimes we fail at managing ourselves and our emotions resulting in critical mistakes. Persons who manage their emotions and actions well, are considered to be personally competent individuals, managing well the crises which life throws at them.

In order to care adequately for ourselves, we also need social awareness, which is, your ability to assess other people's emotions and quickly identify what is going on with them. The popular maxim, 'no man is an island' will always be true therefore in order to relate effectively with others, we need to be able to gauge their feelings by their reactions. When Mordecai first approached Esther, one can tell that she quickly assessed the enormity of the situation and hesitated at this overwhelming assignment that he was giving to her. He was socially aware and pressed her to make a positive decision by appealing to her link to the Jewish people and the unlikely situation that she became queen outside of God's intervention.

The final component in Emotional Intelligence is relationship management. This is a combination of the first three skills which when used effectively, enable us to handle interactions successfully. It also arises from building respectful solid relationships over time which we continually nurture. A sterling example of this is Abigail who was a personally and socially competent woman who was able to disengage her feelings and spring

into quick action to avoid bloodshed. Note the sage advice she gave to David thereby saving her household and herself. 1 Sam.25:23-35 NKJV.

We all face issues, challenges, disappointment and grief in our lives. Let us continually build our competencies and ability to cope but never forgetting Esther's solution – let us fast and pray. This is one way in which we can care for ourselves emotionally and socially as we journey toward the kingdom.