



The Mind-Mouth Connection.

Let's explore the "mind-mouth" connection, how it impacts your success and some simple solutions.

If you,

- find that your mouth sometimes gets you in trouble;
- have you been told you are "too outspoken";
- you like just "setting the record straight" with people;
- you regularly find yourself in debates and arguments;
- you find yourself blurting out comments you regret later;
- you feel it necessary to speak what's on your mind or difficult to "hold your tongue";

then this article is for you (or someone else you may know).

There are many characteristics of people who get ahead in today's business world that could be instructive to all of us. Many of us seek personal improvement, professional development and opportunities to "move up". In some cases, it is not what we know, but how we handle ourselves which will determine that promotion. Specifically, what you have said in the past can be held against you.

Let me start with an overview. There is a plethora of research about leadership and the characteristics of leaders. Often we equate intellectual intelligence as a key element to success. However, research over the past ten or more years indicates that IQ is only predictive of 1-20% of success at a given job, with an average of only 6%. Better yet, emotional intelligence is predictive of 27% to 45% of success depending on the field.

Emotional intelligence (EQ – much like your IQ) is a measure of social and emotional abilities. (There are many books in print on the subject.) One aspect of emotional control is control of our behavior. (That includes our mouths!) Even multi-millionaires in one survey rate cognitive intelligence 21st out of 30 contributing characteristics for success. Honesty, discipline, getting along with people, working harder than others and having a supporting spouse were at the top of their list. 4 out of 5 are elements of EQ. (By the way, EQ is not about personality and can be



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I will be attaching it to the email as a PDF document. If you do not have the Adobe reader, it's free and you can download it directly from <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

And for those who cannot accept attachments, it will be posted online and the URL will be sent as well. This way, you won't miss out on all the formatting; the articles will appear as intended, etc.

Thank you for all your support, feedback and referrals. The best compliment I could ever receive is a referral from you.

improved – unlike IQ.)

What does this have to do with your success? The ability to speak appropriately, the discipline to remain silent and to be attentive to others (with comments locked in your head) and the ability to build rapport (seldom done by just blurting out everything on your mind) are elements included in emotional intelligence.

Part of emotional intelligence is being able to control emotions and the expression of feelings appropriately. A red-flag to me is the person who I hear say something to the effect of “That’s just the way I am” or “I’m just honest, I speak my mind” or “I don’t need to change”. These can be very intelligent people. They have, by their very comments limited their flexibility in dealing with people and situations. Flexibility is key to success. They are expecting everyone else to be flexible with them not vice versa. The person with the most options has the most opportunities for success. So, learning, practicing and honing techniques to increase your flexibility as well as demonstrating your self-discipline is critical to your success.

First, you have to be able to identify that behavior in yourself. You cannot address a development area without recognition of that area. Let me also be clear. Continued development of your strengths does not improve your individual flexibility. It may make you indispensable in one way while minimizing opportunities for growth and professionally expanding your roles. It is not right or wrong, but it is a choice.

Next, assess the situations and interactions which seem to manifest or promote this behavior in you. It could be with subordinates. It could be with long-winded co-workers. It could be in public settings or meetings. It could be when you are under stress. It could be when you feel unsupported. It could be in conflict situations. Perhaps you find you have to have the last word or find yourself explaining the same thing 50 ways instead of getting to the point. Detail these scenarios so you will know when you need to employ certain techniques.

Here are some things you can try. Not all will apply in all situations. But, you will get the idea.

- Plan ahead. Sometimes our reactions are due to our lack of preparation.
- Anticipate reactions you may get, and the responses you wish to have. Think it through before you are in the situation.
- Rehearse your comments before the scenario. Be careful for your tone and body language/facial expression which carry most of the meaning in your delivery.
- Handle the unexpected response or reaction with

silence. Practice silence. It does not come naturally. It can feel uncomfortable but, that is better than putting your foot in your mouth.

- Suspend your answer and listen. Take notes if you must. Make eye contact. Wait until the person is done. Then tell them you would like to address each issue as you have noted.
- Invite the other person to stop you if you are misinterpreting anything.
- Ask an information gathering question such as: Can you tell me more about that? Help me see it from your perspective? What else should I know before I make a decision?
- Stop. Take a breath. Before sharing your “setting the record straight” comments, say something like: That deserves a response, let me think a moment. Gather your thoughts, use your filtering system and think how your next comments might be taken.
- Slow your speech down. Make a slight pause between sentences. Too often our mouths are out-pacing our brains. Engage the brain first.

If you would like help assessing yourself and on techniques to control that mind-mouth connection or other personal-professional development contact Mindset for Performance.