

Good morning, everybody. Dennis Engelbrecht with The Family Business Institute. Please remember, if you have any comments or questions to send them in, and we'll respond to them as best we can.

Today, I want to talk about an article, a book, and a mini ebook that I read about emotional intelligence. And the article really gave one of the simplest and easiest plans to follow for increasing your emotional intelligence, or at least increasing the affect that your emotional intelligence has on the people you come in contact with. And it's really just five easy steps, and I want to talk about those a little bit.

The first thing is the phrase, "Tell me more." So, and again, this works in your personal lives, as well as in your business lives. But you hear about a problem, or you hear about an issue, just the simple phrase, "Tell me more." When you say, "Well, tell me more, that shows your empathy, or at least people feel your empathy," and you oftentimes, get to the heart of the matter. And oftentimes, you could go through several steps of, "Tell me more," because it's sort of like peeling the onion. First of all, they tell you a little bit. You say, "Oh, gee, tell me more about that," or, "That sounds awful. Tell me more." And the next thing you know, you peel back the onion and you've gotten to the real issue or the real problem, and in most conversations you don't. So, tell me more, that's a phrase to remember.

Next phrase, thanks for your understanding, all right? So, cutting into this phrase, thanks for your understanding, there are a couple of things. First of all, there is the thanks part of it, which is also ... again, shows your emotional intelligence. But what you're reflecting is that somebody has given you a gift of listening to you, of understanding you, of going along with something that you're going to do. And you're recognizing that gift.

All right, the next phrase, hello. All right, that sounds pretty simple, right? Hello. But if you think about it, anytime there's a communication, that communication will reflect people's attitudes. You think about it, just answering the phone. If somebody answers the phone and doesn't greet you well, well, you might immediately have an attitude. You can tell him the voice of a person, the message they're sending. So that simple hello is a good greeting.

You may be one of those folks who is very quick to want to just dive on in, and get to the problem, or get to the issue. When you do so, without the simple greeting, hello, your client may, again, immediately get a defensive attitude. When you start with the greeting, and perhaps there's even more than the greeting, again, you create a relaxed situation, or a relaxed attitude that may be more welcoming once you get to the business at hand. So, don't forget the niceties. Don't forget the greet. And don't forget to set up an attitude by saying, "Hello."

The next phrase, am I making sense? The alternative to am I making sense is, do you understand? All right, now notice the subtle differences here. All right, when you say, "Am I making sense?" that's putting sort of the pressure on me. "Have I explained this well? Have you been able to get my message, my reasoning, et cetera?" It sort of puts the onus on me for us to have an agreement. If I say, "Do you understand?" now I've put the onus on you. And I could follow that up subtly in my mind with, "Do you understand you stupid blundering idiot?" That may be the message that actually gets received. So again, it's a subtle difference, but when you're trying to find agreement, or trying to make sure you have understanding, am I making sense is a lot more favorable to do you understand?

The final phrase that was suggested, was silence, all right, pure silence. And what's important about silence? Well, what's important about silence is you're not talking, right? That opens up the space for the other people's ideas. And you know, you've probably heard about silence as a negotiating tactic, and it is a good negotiating tactic. There's a saying that the first person that opens their mouth loses, but that's really not the purpose of this in the emotional intelligence realm.

The purpose of this is really to open the space, to get other's ideas and, to see what they have to say about your ideas in many cases. And silence is really just very effective. People who just continue talking will oftentimes talk themselves out of agreement in a sense, or just wear people down. So, if your message has been said, move to silence, and allow the

other people to agree, not agree, ask questions, say more. And I think you'll find your relationships are improved, and your ability to show your empathy, and for others to feel your empathy will be greatly enhanced.

Again, Dennis Engelbrecht, Digging Deeper. Thanks for tuning in.