

# EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS BY AREA AND COMPETENCIES

(from the EQ Interview)

## SELF-AWARENESS / IMPACT ON OTHERS

- Tell me about a time when you did or said something and it had a positive impact on a coworker, a customer or an employee.
- Tell me about a time when you were surprised about the positive impact your behavior or words had on a coworker, a customer or an employee. How did you learn this information? What did you do when you learned this information?
- Tell me about a time when you did or said something and it had a negative impact on a coworker, a customer or an employee.
- Tell me about a time when you were surprised about the negative impact your behavior or words had on a coworker, a customer or an employee. How did you learn this information? What did you do when you learned this information?
- Describe a time when you knew you did or said something that caused a problem for a coworker, a customer, or an employee. How did you know it caused a problem?
- Can you think of a time when someone interpreted something you said or did in a negative way, even though you didn't intend for it to be negative? Tell me about that.
- How do you know if your words or behaviors have positive/negative impact on others?
- Have you ever noticed that someone at work was having a bad day? How did you know? What did you do?
- Have you ever noticed you were annoying someone at work? What did you base that on? What did you do?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you thought you needed to adjust or modify your behavior? How did you know?

## EMOTIONAL AND INNER AWARENESS

- Tell me about a time when you were distracted or preoccupied about something.
- How did you know? What impact did that have on your performance? What impact did it have on others on work?
- Tell me about a time when you were in a good mood at work. How did that affect your performance? What impact did your mood have on others at work?
- Describe a time when you were angry about something at work. How did that affect your performance? What impact did it have on others at work?
- Describe a time when you were angry about something at work. How did that affect your performance? What impact did it have on others at work?
- Tell me about a time when the mood or attitude of your coworkers, employees, or others affected you.
- Describe a time when you were aware that your mood was affecting how you were behaving at work.
- Tell me about some situations or people that annoy you in your present (or previous) position. Tell me what you do about these situations or people.
- Tell me about a time when you were able to avoid a negative situation at work.
- How did you know it was going to be negative? Tell me what you did.
- Describe some situations or circumstances that bring out your best at work. How do you behave during those times?
- Describe some situations or circumstances that bring out your worst at work. How do you behave during those times? What do you do about those times?
- Tell me about a time when you purposely prepared yourself to deal with a situation that you knew would be negative. What did you do? How did it work out?
- Tell me about a time when something that you had responsibility for at work didn't go well. Whose fault was it? (This is a leading question – it's assuming blame. The candidate should consider her or her role in the problem).
- Tell me about a time at work when others didn't cooperate with you. How would you analyze that situation?
- Tell me about a conflict you had at work. How would you analyze that conflict?
- Have you ever unintentionally insulted or offended someone at work? How did you handle that?
- Tell me about a time when you reacted to something or someone in the workplace in a way that was not aligned with your intentions. What did you do after this situation?

## ACCURATE SELF-ASSESSMENT

- Describe a time when you received feedback about your performance and were in agreement. What did you agree with?
- Describe a time when you received feedback about your performance and you disagreed with that feedback. What did you disagree with?
- Was there ever a time when you initially disagreed with feedback you received and later came to accept it? Tell me about that.
- Were you ever surprised by criticism you received? What was the criticism and why were you surprised?
- What has been a consistent strength of yours? What evidence do you have that this is an area in which you are strong?
- What has been a consistent area of development for you? How do you know that this is an area of development for you?
- List three things you have learned about yourself in the last year that are relevant to the way you work. How did you learn this information? Describe a time when you used this new information.

## SELF-MANAGEMENT

### EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION

- Describe some things that make you angry or frustrated at work. Tell me what you do in those situations.
- Describe some types of situations where you are likely to be annoyed at work. What do you do when you get annoyed?
- Tell me about a time when you were angry with someone at work. What did you do?
- Has there ever been a situation at work where you said something and later regretted saying it? Tell me about that.
- Tell me about a time when you lost your temper at work. What did you do? What result did this have?
- Tell me about a time when you had too much to do at work and it was causing you to feel stressed. What did you do?
- What do you do when you are feeling stressed at work?
- Describe a stressful situation at work. What do you do?
- Describe a situation at work when you were very enthusiastic about something.

- How did your enthusiasm affect others?
- Describe a time when you felt excited about work.
- When do you look forward to going to work?
- Was there ever a time at work when you had to temper your enthusiasm for something?
- Describe a time when you felt grateful at work. What did you do?
- Give me an example of when you expressed gratitude toward someone at work.

## **COURAGE OR ASSERTIVENESS**

- Tell me about a time when you spoke up about something in the workplace. What was the issue? Why did you speak up about it? What did you say? What did others think?
- Has there ever been a situation at work where you wish you had said something in a meeting or encounter but didn't? Tell me about that.
- Describe what you did the last time someone blamed you for something at work that wasn't your fault. What did you do?
- Describe a time when you were right and you knew you were right, but the other party (customer, coworker, your boss) at work didn't believe you. What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you felt something was unfair at work. What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you knew that you were told to do something that you thought wasn't a good idea. What did you do?

## **FOR MANAGERS OR LEADERS:**

- Tell me about a time when you disagreed about the direction of the company or a policy. What did you do?
- Describe a time when you and a peer were at odds about a decision or direction.
- What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when your boss had a particular opinion that differed from yours. What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you disagreed with a goal that you were told to achieve.
- How did that go?

- Describe a difficult performance discussion that you had with an employee.
- Tell me about a time when you decided not to discuss an issue with an employee.
- What did you consider?

## **RESILIENCE**

- Tell me about a time when you felt that you were defeated at work. What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you were distracted or preoccupied about something.
- What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you felt like giving up on something. What did you do?
- Describe a time when you didn't think things could get any worse, and then they did. What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you decided to give up on a goal.
- Tell me about a time when you were overwhelmed at your last job. How often does that occur? What do you do about it?
- Talk about the last time you were criticized at work. How did that go?

## **AWARENESS IN THE MOMENT**

- Tell me about a time when you realized that a conversation wasn't going very well. (Is the candidate able to realize during the situation the dynamics of the situation?) What did you do? (Is the candidate able to redirect the conversation for a better outcome?)
- Tell me about a time when you realized that you weren't speaking up during a meeting. What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you realized that something was best left unsaid. What did you do?

## **PLANNING TONE**

- Tell me about a time when you deliberately planned the tone of a particular conversation. (This indicates that the candidate is aware that tone affects outcome.) How did you do that? (This indicates skill.) What result did it have?
- In your present job, can you tell me about some situations when you must think about how you are going to say something before saying it? What must you consider?
- Tell me about a time when you planned the way you phrased a problem or situation so that you could get the best result.
- Tell me about a time when you missed an opportunity to set the tone in a discussion.
- What happened?

## **EMPATHY**

### **RESPECTFUL LISTENING**

- Think about a time when you didn't understand something in the workplace. What did you do?
- Describe a situation when you didn't understand why someone was acting a certain way or taking a certain position on some issue? What did you do?
- Describe a time when you jumped to conclusions.
- Tell me about a conversation with a coworker, employee, or customer that didn't go very well. What specifically occurred?

### **FOR MANAGERS OR LEADERS:**

- Tell me about a time when you learned something by listening to an employee.
- Describe a time when you asked someone for information about a problem.

### **FEELING THE IMPACT ON OTHERS**

- Tell me about a situation when you sensed something was bothering a peer or coworker. How did you know? What did you do?
- Describe a situation when you knew that something was wrong with a relationship you had with a peer, customer, or supervisor. What did you do?

- Relate a situation in which you determined that something that you did or said didn't go over very well. How did you know?
- Describe a time when you said something or did something that had a negative effect on someone.
- Describe a time when you did or said something that had a negative effect on someone and you were unaware of it until someone else brought it to your attention.

### **FOR MANAGERS OR LEADERS:**

- Tell me about a time when you sensed that an employee was struggling. How did you know? What did you do?
- Tell me about a time you noticed your staff was overwhelmed. How did you know?
- What did you do?
- Describe a time when a change you were implementing caused stress for your staff.
- How did you know? What did you do?

### **SERVICE ORIENTATION**

- Tell me about a time when you offered assistance to someone without being asked. What did you do?
- Describe a situation when you offered assistance to someone even though it was outside of your job description. What did you do?
- Relate an instance when someone needed help and you couldn't help him. What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you recognized that someone needed help. What did you do?
- Describe a situation when you were asked to help someone at work. What did you think about that?
- Was there ever a time when you resented helping someone at work. Tell me about that.

### **FOR MANAGERS OR LEADERS:**

Tell me about a time when a employee was struggling. What did you do?

## **SOCIAL EXPERTNESS**

### **BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS**

- Who are some key people within your organization who you currently must work with on a regular basis to get your work done? Describe your relationship with these people.
- Describe your present responsibility for building and maintaining relationships at work. Whom do you build relationships with? How? Why?
- Tell me about a time when you were able to get something done at work because of a relationship you had with another person.
- Tell me about some of the people whom you have to work with on a regular basis that you find difficult to get along with. What have you done to build stronger relationships with these people?
- Tell me about a situation when you “won someone over” at work? What did you do?
- Tell me about someone who is resistant to you. What did you do?
- Tell me about your relationship with your manager. What works well? What would you like improved?
- What do you do that makes you a good follower?

### **COLLABORATION**

- Tell me how you recently solved a work problem. What process did you use?
- Describe a time when you had to solve a problem that involved or affected other people within the company. How did you solve it?
- Have you ever implemented an idea or solved a problem and had your solution met with resistance? What do you think you could have done to avoid the resistance?
- Describe a time when you sought someone’s ideas or opinions about a project or idea you were working on.
- Was there ever a time when you rejected someone’s idea or opinion about a project? Tell me about that.
- Tell me about a time when you offered your idea or opinion to someone.
- Describe a time when your input improved someone’s work.
- Have you ever offered an idea or opinion at work and had nothing to gain from it? Tell me about that.



## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- Tell me about a dispute with a peer. What was it about? What did you do? How did it end up?
- Tell me about a time when someone suggested something that you disagreed with. What did you say?
- How have you resolved differences with peers or others?
- Tell me about the process you use to resolve your difference.
- Have you ever encountered someone at work who was unreasonable? What did you do?

## FOR MANAGERS OR LEADERS:

- Tell me about a time when there was a dispute between two coworkers. What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you had a conflict with an employee. What did you do? How was it resolved?
- Describe a time when someone felt that you were unfair. What did you do?
- Relate an incident when someone verbally attacked you about something you said or did. What did you do?

## ORGANIZATIONAL SAVVY

- Did you ever have an opportunity to advance a new idea at your last job? How did you go about doing that?
- Tell me about a time when you gained support for an idea that you had. How did you do that? What was this idea important to you?
- Describe a time when you couldn't get support for an idea that you had. What happened? Why was this idea important to you?
- Within your present position, what happens when you run into someone who isn't supporting your efforts to get things done? Describe what you do.
- Have you ever had someone undermine your efforts? What did you do?
- How can you tell who makes decisions in your organization?
- Tell me about a time when you needed support from peers in order to get an idea across. How did you gain that support? Why was it important to you to get that particular idea or initiative accomplished?

## **PERSONAL INFLUENCE – INFLUENCING SELF**

### **SELF-CONFIDENCE**

- Tell me about a time when you took on a task that you considered “out of your comfort zone.” How did you feel? Why did you do it? Did you think you were going to succeed or fail?
- If you were going to try to persuade me regarding something, how would you do it?
- Describe a time when you interjected a different point of view or a different side of an issue. How did you go about doing that?
- Tell me about a time when you were confident enough to disagree with something or someone.
- Tell me about your strengths. How do you know they are your strengths? How do you measure your strengths? What feedback have you gotten that indicates that this quality is a strength?
- Tell me about a time that you were concerned about being successful at a task or you thought you were going to fail. What did you do?
- When do you typically ask for assistance? Describe the last time you asked for help on something.
- How do you think you’re going to perform at this job?

### **FOR MANAGERS OR LEADERS:**

- Tell me about a time when you had to implement a change. What did you say to your staff? How did you convince them to follow you?
- Tell me about a time when you had to lead others in a certain direction and you had some doubts. What did you do? What did you say?
- Have you ever experienced a time when others questioned your ability to lead? Tell me about that. What did you do?

### **INITIATIVE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

- Tell me about a time when you decided on your own that something needed to be done. What did you do?
- Describe a time when you did more than was required on your job. How did you feel about that?
- Have you ever made any improvements to your work without being asked? Give me some examples. How did you do it?

- When you perform your present job, have you ever thought about a way to improve the quality of the product or service that you provide? Tell me about that.
- Have you ever come up with a way to cut costs in your present position? What did that entail? How did you go about doing it?
- Have you ever thought of a way to perform your present job in less time? What did you do about it?
- Tell me about a time when something you did resulted in a change for your department or area. How did you go about doing it? How did you feel about that?
- Have you ever taken the initiative to do something that didn't work out? Describe that situation. What did you do? How did you feel about that?
- Have you ever solved a work-related problem that had been a problem for a long time? What did you do? How did you do it?
- Have you ever taken an action and gotten blamed when it didn't work out? Describe what happened

## **GOAL ORIENTATION**

- Describe some goals for your present position. How were these goals determined?
- Do you meet these goals on a regular basis?
- Have you ever thought that these goals were unrealistic? Why?
- Have you ever had a goal at work that you didn't meet? How did you feel about that?
- Tell me about a goal that you imposed on yourself at work. Why did you decide on that particular goal?
- Tell me about a time when you didn't achieve something that you set out to do.
- What happened? How did you feel about that?
- What goals do you have right now?
- What goals did you accomplish last year?
- Tell me about a time when you didn't feel like working. What did you do?
- Describe your process for setting goals for yourself.

## **FOR MANAGERS OR LEADERS:**

- How do you set goals for those who report to you? Describe the process you use to set goals within your unit or department.
- How have you helped others set goals?
- How do you ensure that the goals are aligned with the business strategy?
- Tell me about a time when someone who reported to you did not reach an important goal. What did you do?

## **OPTIMISM**

- Tell me about a project that you knew was not going to deliver results. How did you know?
- Describe a time when you tried something new at work. How did that work?
- Would you do it again? Why or why not?
- Describe a situation at work when you were optimistic and it affected the outcome.
- Describe a situation at work when others wanted to move forward on something and you didn't think it was a good idea. Why didn't you think it would work? What did you do?
- Describe a time when you were more optimistic than others at work about a project.
- What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when you didn't believe that a project was going to turn out on time, on budget or on track. Why did you think it was going to be a problem?
- Give me a situation where you thought something was going to be successful and it was. How did you know?
- Tell me about a time when someone on your team was negative about an outcome.
- How did it affect you?

## **FLEXIBILITY**

- Describe a time when you had to change your plans to accommodate someone else at work. How did you feel about that?
- Tell me about a time when something at work was changing. How have you adapted to the change? How did you feel about the change?
- Relate a time when you wanted something at work to remain the same, but others didn't. What did you do? How did you feel about that?
- Describe a time when you had to learn something new. How did you feel about that? How have you adapted to the new system?
- Tell me about a time when you had trouble adjusting to a change. What did you find difficult?
- Give me an example of a time when you were flexible.
- Give me an example of a time when you weren't very flexible.
- Tell me about a time when you had to reconsider how to interact or behave because you weren't getting the results you required.
- Were there any behaviors that you had to abandon that worked for you in a previous job that didn't work in a new job? How did you know these behaviors didn't or wouldn't work in your new job?

## **FOR MANAGERS OR LEADERS:**

- Tell me about a time as a manager that you found it necessary to bend the rules.
- What did you do? Why did you do it? How did you feel about it?
- Tell me about a time when you were flexible and accommodated the needs of someone of your staff. How did you feel about that?
- As a manager, have you ever been flexible and later regretted it?
- What types of behaviors did you need to develop when you transitioned from worker to supervisor? From manager to director?
- Were there any behaviors that you had to abandon that worked for you in a previous role that didn't work in a new role? How did you know these behaviors didn't or wouldn't work in your new role?
- Was there ever a time when you changed roles or jobs or organizations that you had to let go of behavior that contributed to your success in past situations

## **PERSONAL INFLUENCE — INFLUENCING OTHERS**

### **LEADING OTHERS**

- Tell me about a time you had an idea and you got other people to follow you. What did you do?
- Describe a time when others relied on you and followed your lead.
- Tell me about a time when you were able to influence others. How did you do it?
- How did you feel about influencing others?
- Describe a time when you took charge of a situation.
- Tell me about a time when others looked to you for direction. What did you do?
- How did you feel about that?

### **FOR MANAGERS AND LEADERS:**

- How do you get people to follow you? What did you do? How do you influence them?
- Tell me about a time when someone was resisting you. What did you do?
- Describe a time when you were able to get people to follow you on a controversial issue.
- Tell me about a time when you united your followers around an issue.
- Describe a time when you influenced people to follow you when you did not have positional authority.
- Give me an example of when you influenced your peers.
- Give me an example of when you influenced your boss.

## CREATING A POSITIVE CULTURE

### FOR MANAGERS AND LEADERS:

- Describe the climate or culture of your present department.
- What specific steps do you take to set the tone within your department?
- How is the climate within your department different from that of other areas within your company?
- What evidence do you have that you've created a positive climate or culture?
- Describe the ideal climate of a department. What actions must a leader take to create an ideal climate?
- Tell me about a time when your staff was not very energized. What did you do?
- Describe a situation when an employee was disrupting the climate you were establishing. What did you do?

### FOR EMPLOYEES:

- Describe a positive working climate. What would it feel like? What do you do to create a positive working climate every day?
- Give me some examples of what you do to ensure that your coworkers have a positive day.
- Give me an example of some actions you've taken with a negative coworker. What have you done to create a more positive working relationship with this person?
- How do you support your supervisor in creating a positive climate in your work unit?

## GETTING RESULTS THROUGH OTHERS

### FOR MANAGERS AND LEADERS:

- Describe results you've achieved in your area within the past year. How did you achieve those results?
- In what areas did you fall short of delivering the results you wanted to deliver?
- Why did you fall short? What could you have done differently?
- Describe how you typically get results from other people.
- Tell me how you set goals for your staff. Give me an example of a time when someone was unable to reach a goal? What did you do?
- Has there ever been a time when no matter what you did, someone was unable to reach a goal? What did you do?
- What have you done to share your expectations with your department?
- Have you ever set a goal too low? What did you do?
- Tell me about a time when someone was resisting you, your ideas, or your authority. What did you do?
- Tell me about a time that you were wrong in the way that you addressed an employee situation.
- As a manager, tell me when you didn't have enough resources to do the job. What did you do?

### FOR EMPLOYEES:

- Describe a situation when your actions helped others achieve results or goals.



# MASTERY OF PURPOSE AND VISION

## UNDERSTANDING PURPOSE AND VALUES

- Describe a time when you were lost in your work in a good way – when time just flew by and you were totally absorbed in what you were doing.
- Tell me about a time when you felt bored at work.
- Describe your ideal job.
- Describe the worst possible job for you.
- What type of work would you find most inspiring?

## TAKES ACTIONS TOWARD PURPOSE

- How did you decide on your chosen field of endeavor, college major, or line of work? What influenced you? What actions did you take to end up in this field?
- What do you like about your chosen field? What do you dislike?
- What actions have you taken related to your career that you were pleased you took? What pleases you about your actions?
- Have you ever pursued a career-related goal, perhaps a credential or a specific job, only to discover that when you achieved your goal you were disappointed? Tell me about that.

## AUTHENTICITY

- Describe a situation where you found yourself in a values conflict. What did you do?
- Tell me about a situation at work where you felt that you had to compromise your beliefs or values.
- Describe a time when you felt very strongly about something that happened at work – something you considered to be an affront to your values. What did you do?
- Tell me how you gain people's trust. What do you do? What actions do you take?
- Tell me about a time when you lost someone's trust.

- Describe how you know you have honored your commitments that you've made to others.
- Tell me about a time when you failed to honor a commitment.
- Has there ever been a time when you promised something at work and were unable to deliver it? How did you feel about that?
- Tell me about a time when you did less than your fair share at work or you got out of a difficult assignment. How did you feel about that?