

## Emotional Intelligence

Several years ago, I received a call from an old friend. He asked if I could carve out some time for us to have a cup of coffee. About a week later we meet. Through the course of the conversation he shared with me his desire to move into full time ministry. I was excited for him and his desire to fulfill what he believed God wanted him to do. As we talked, he mentioned that for the last seven years he only received negative responses from those under whom he served. I inquired more about the negative responses. The consistent feedback received was that he was too easy, gullible, or sympathetic. Unless he could toughen up, they said, he would never make it in ministry.

Right after our conversation, I went home and grabbed an *Engage Your Strengths* workbook, and drove directly to my friend's house. I gave him the workbook and asked him to take the StrengthsFinder assessment. A week later, we met to review his results. His top signature theme was Empathy. We had a long conversation about what Empathy was and what it was not. My friend had an amazing ability to tune into people's lives through their pain. He also would spend the time necessary to help people walk through whatever difficulties they were facing. I encouraged him to embrace his ability to feel what others feel.

That day, my friend walked away with a conviction that he needed to silence the negative influences and follow through on the path God provided. Since then, he has built two orphanages in impoverished nations. He has raised support from countless people to be part of helping those less fortunate than themselves. His Empathy strength drives him to help others relate to other people's pain. The thing that he was told would be a disadvantage to him became his greatest strength.

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